## The Desire for Gender Order:

# The electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes for far-right parties

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### **Abstract**

In the Western world, the far-right is increasingly opposed to transgender identities, which is remarkable as opposition in prior decades came primarily from Christian parties. The position of the far-right begs the question of whether their supply of anti-transgender opposition reflects a demand by an electorate holding anti-transgender attitudes. Building on prior literature on the dimensions of cultural conflict, this study posits two theories to understand anti-transgender attitudes among the electorate. The dominant theory suggests that anti-transgender attitudes have a social basis in religious orthodoxy and is prevalent among those with traditionalist attitudes. Alternatively, this study - inspired by the reification theory - proposes that the far-right electorate also holds antitransgender attitudes, which has a social basis in an aversion to diversity and is prevalent among those with authoritarian attitudes. Analysing data from the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study of 2023 (DPES), this study tests these two theories about the place of anti-transgender attitudes within the dimensions of cultural conflict and assesses its electoral relevance in the Netherlands. The findings indicate that both theories are necessary to explain anti-transgender attitudes in the Netherlands. First, authoritarianism as well as traditionalism relates to anti-transgender attitudes, which indicates that it is not evidently an issue of the traditionalist dimension, and substantiates the relevance of both theories. Second, those with more traditionalist attitudes vote for Christian parties, while those with more authoritarian attitudes vote for the far-right, which aligns with the dominant theory. Third, those who hold anti-transgender attitudes are more likely to vote for either Christian parties or the far-right, which also substantiates the relevance of both theories. These findings consistent with the reification theory - show the existence of a (non-religious) authoritarian electorate that holds anti-transgender attitudes for distinctly different reasons than the traditionalist electorate. This implies that - contrary to some secularisation theories - a post-Christian morality does not equate a morally progressive worldview.

# **Keywords**

Value divides, traditionalism, authoritarianism, voting behaviour, anti-transgender attitudes.

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### 1. Introduction

The last decades have seen a widespread surge of anti-transgender sentiment in the public sphere (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018, pp. 7–8). This is partly voiced by those religiously inspired, such as Catholic politicians in Italy and France, who base themselves on Vatican social teachings (Garbagnoli, 2016, pp. 194–201; Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018, pp. 11–12). However, it is also voiced by (non-religious) far-right politicians (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018, pp. 12–14). For instance, in the United States of America, Donald Trump signed an executive order on his first day as president stating that the federal government only recognises two sexes, either male or female, which was later followed by a ban on transgender athletes from participating in women's sports (Graves, 2025, paras 1 & 2; Mulvihill & Johnson, 2025, paras 1 & 2). This all, with the aim of "defending women from gender ideology extremism and restoring biological truth" (The White House, 2025). Similarly, in Europe, Hungary's government, under the leadership of Viktor Orbán, strongly posited itself against any LGBTQIA+ rights, going so far as to ban pride parades in early 2025 (Spike, 2024, paras 1–5, 2023, paras 1–3, 2025, para. 1). Even in 'the bastion of tolerance', the Netherlands, a right-wing parliamentary majority stopped the transgenderwet, a piece of legislation that would have made it easier for transgender people to change their passport to their gender identity (Slomp, 2024, paras 1– 5).

Christian opposition to matters concerning sexuality and gender roles is not remarkable as it can be explained by certain (orthodox) readings of the Bible and socialisation in religious institutions (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 15; Pless et al., 2023b, p. 336); however, the position of the far-right is, especially in the Netherlands where it is indicative of a shift of positioning by these parties. For a long time, the far-right posited themselves - at least rhetorically - as guardians of the rights of women and gay people (Bracke, 2012, p. 238; Hekma & Duyvendak, 2011, p. 626). Described as 'Femonationalism' (Farris, 2017, pp. 10–13) and 'Homonationalism' (Puar, 2007, pp. 1–36), the far-right utilised these progressive and tolerant stances to form a (self-constructed) contrast with the intolerant 'Other', often immigrants with an Islamic background, creating a tension between 'Islam' and 'secular modern tolerance' (Akkerman, 2015, pp. 52–58; Bracke, 2012, pp. 248–249; Hekma & Duyvendak, 2011, p. 626). However, while these progressive positions concerning the rights of women and gay people are relatively stable, their tolerance seems not to be extended towards all members of the LGBTQIA+ community. On the contrary, they have disentangled sexual diversity (LGBA) from gender diversity (TQI+) and started to target the latter (Fiers & Muis, 2021, p. 396; Segers, 2024, p. 14).

This shift at the level of the political parties is scientifically relevant because it might mirror a similar shift in cultural attitudes at the individual level. Political sociologists have long indicated that

cultural attitudes are separated into two dimensions: one cultural and one economic (For an overview see Achterberg & Houtman, 2009, pp. 1649–1651). Within the cultural dimension, a further distinction is made between *the progressivism-traditionalism sub-dimension*, which includes issues such as abortion, gender roles, and gay rights, and *the libertarian-authoritarian sub-dimension*, which includes issues concerning immigration, cultural diversity, and law and order (Bornschier, 2010, pp. 21–23; De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 14; Pless et al., 2023b, pp. 338–341). These sub-dimensions differ significantly not only in the issues that they consist of but also in voter characteristics and party preferences, with traditionalists being more religious and voting for the Christian parties, while authoritarians are less tolerant of diversity and vote for far-right parties (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, pp. 16–17; Pless et al., 2023a, pp. 22–24). If the shift at the party level is reflected at the level of individual attitudes, this would mean that the two cultural dimensions converge on anti-transgender attitudes, which is a novel development considering the distinct differences between the two.

Provided the novelty of this potential development, this study *aims to elucidate how attitudes* on transgender issues relate to the two established dimensions of cultural conflict, and what its electoral relevance is. It does so utilising the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) of 2023 (Jacobs et al., 2024). The choice is made for the DPES of 2023 for several reasons: first, surveys that contain items questioning anti-transgender attitudes are rare, however, since the *transgenderwet* was a salient topic during this election, the survey includes multiple items that measure attitudes towards transgender identities (Voogd et al., 2023, p. 26); second, the DPES includes multiple items measuring both cultural dimensions; third, published in 2023, the dataset is relatively recent, and therefore more reflective of contemporary attitudes towards transgender-identities; fourth, located in the Netherlands, the data are gathered in a majority non-religious and progressive country (CBS, 2023, Section 3.1.1; Inglehart, 1997, pp. 156–157). This means that if anti-transgender attitudes are present among the non-religious Dutch electorate, it is less likely influenced by Christian culture and institutions compared to majority Christian countries, and more likely indicative of a separate (unique) attitudinal development.

The structure of this study is organised in four parts. The second chapter provides a theoretical framework that lays out the theoretical development of the cultural dimensions, a potential explanation for anti-transgender attitudes in the libertarian—authoritarian sub-dimension, and the hypotheses. The third chapter, the methodology, consists of the data, operationalisation, and analysis, after which the results are presented in the fourth chapter. The last chapter of the study, the discussion, synthesises the study's findings, discusses its theoretical and societal implications, and sets out limitations with future points of venture.

### 2. Theoretical framework

## 2.1. The Cultural Cleavage: History and Consensus

Ever since Lipset & Rokkan's (1967, pp. 9-11) seminal work on political cleavages: *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, political attitudes have been classified into two distinct dimensions: one cultural and one economic. On the one side, attitudes towards issues concerning redistribution were put, such as income taxes, tax cuts for companies, and the responsibility of governments to provide housing for their citizens. On the other side, all other issues - ranging from the right to abortion and the rights of gay people to the preference for a strong leader and an aversion to cultural and ethnic diversity - were put. While this was a valuable insight, it also led to a tendency to 'lump together' different cultural issues under the assumption that they were interchangeable (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 2).

The first progression in clarifying an internal structure of the cultural dimension was provided by De Koster & Van Der Waal (2007, pp. 16–17), who distinguished the progressivism—traditionalism and libertarian—authoritarian sub-dimensions, which now forms the dominant perspective on the dimensions of cultural attitudes. They showed that there is a distinct difference between those who disapprove of abortion and gay rights, and those who prefer a strong leader and cultural uniformity. They separated the dimensions, with on the one side those who are concerned with matters of gender and sexuality - the traditionalists. On the other side, there are those who are concerned with matters of cultural uniformity, immigration, and law and order - the authoritarians. A distinction that has since then been empirically substantiated numerous times (Achterberg et al., 2008, pp. 63–71; Pless et al., 2023b, p. 22).

These sub-dimensions within the cultural dimension needed to be separated for three important reasons. First, Europe became increasingly secular, which meant that religiously inspired issues relating to sexuality and gender, such as gay rights, divorce, and gender roles, became of lesser importance to the general public (Achterberg et al., 2008, pp. 63–71; Bornschier, 2010, pp. 21–23). Meanwhile, increased "demands for identity (hence nationalism), for homogeneity (hence xenophobia), and for order, hierarchy, and strong leadership (hence authoritarianism)" were perceived in the general public, providing evidence for a division in the cultural dimension (Ignazi, 2003, p. 201). Second, research of voter backgrounds indicated that here too, a distinction could be made (Achterberg & Houtman, 2009, pp. 88–89; De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, pp. 16–17; Pless et al., 2023a, pp. 22–23; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015a, p. 598). As stated before, the social basis of the progressivism-traditionalism sub-dimension is the divide between the secular or non-religious and the religious, which reflects in voter backgrounds as those more progressive tend to be secular while those more traditionalist tend to be religious. However, this division did not hold for

the other sub-dimension. The third reason that these dimensions needed to be separated was based on voting behaviour (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 15; Pless et al., 2023b, pp. 338–341). Those with more traditionalist attitudes tend to vote for Christian right-wing parties, while those who have more authoritarian attitudes tend to vote for radical right-wing parties.

### 2.2. The Curious Case of Trans Identities

The dominant theory - as posited in the prior sub-chapter - suggests that opposition towards transgender identities is to be categorised under the progressivism-traditionalism dimension and is predominantly present within Christian parties, as it concerns an issue of gender and sexuality. However, the far-right, which is associated with the libertarian—authoritarian dimension, also opposes transgender-identities, which begs the question *if* anti-transgender attitudes are widespread among (authoritarian) voters and *why* this could be the case. A possible answer to the question of *why* this sentiment could be wider spread among authoritarian voters is the *reification theory*.

The far-right's - authoritarian - electorate is predominantly lesser educated, which led political sociologists to theorise what could form the motivation for this voting behaviour. With educational level as a point of venture, economic and cultural explanations were suggested (Gidron & Hall, 2017, pp. 68–77; Mutz, 2018, p. 8; Spruyt et al., 2016, p. 342). First, economic explanations were provided; the lesser educated vote for far-right parties out of economic discontent (Haugsgjerd & Kumlin, 2017, pp. 4–9; Sipma et al., 2023, pp. 9–10; Sipma & Berning, 2021, p. 8; Spruyt et al., 2016, p. 342). However, if economic explanations were driving their votes, the centre-left or far-left would be a more natural choice, as the left traditionally stood up for those with financial difficulties. So, a second explanation was proposed for this 'unnatural' voting behaviour; the lesser educated vote for far-right parties not out of economic, but cultural discontent (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 76–80; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 317–321). It was argued that education not only affects one's economic position, but also one's cultural capital. The degree of cultural capital, in turn, underlies authoritarianism, with the lesser educated - who accumulated less cultural capital being more favourable towards authoritarian policies to subdue their cultural discontent. It would be this authoritarianism - grounded in (a lack of) cultural capital - that drove the lesser educated towards voting for the far-right.

Although the cultural explanation provided a logical model, a clarification for *why* cultural capital underlies authoritarianism had yet to be provided; hence, the *reification theory* was introduced. In their studies explaining 'unnatural' voting behaviour, Achterberg & Houtman (2006, pp. 78–79) and Van Der Waal & De Koster (2015, pp. 316–321) theorised that cultural capital could explain authoritarian attitudes through (de)reification. Cultural capital, they state, entails the extent to

which one can 'recognise cultural expressions and comprehend their meaning' (Bourdieu, 2010 as discussed by Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, p. 78). The more cultural capital one accumulates, the more one can deconstruct the culture around oneself, which leads to a dereified concept of culture. However, if one has access to less cultural capital, their perception of culture and those who deviate from it tend to be more reified: culture is a natural given norm, and those who deviate from it are thus *unnatural*. It is this explanation - of the lesser educated having accumulated less cultural capital and therefore more strongly tending to perceive cultural as reified - that clarifies why cultural capital underlies authoritarian attitudes. The reification theory has since then been used to explain why those who hold more authoritarian attitudes tend to be more averse to diversity, and has been empirically substantiated numerous times (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 88–89; Gabennesch, 1972, p. 868; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, pp. 436–438; Manevska & Achterberg, 2013, pp. 445–446; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 333–336).

The reification theory has so far been used to understand voting behaviour for the far-right (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 88–89), opposition to trade openness (Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 333–336), and anti-immigration attitudes (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, pp. 436–438; Manevska & Achterberg, 2013, pp. 445–446), but not yet for anti-transgender attitudes for which it could prove an effective explanation. Provided that the concept of trans-identities are relatively novel to the wider public (in contrast to homosexuality), and provided that it is perceived as going against a widespread laypeople's conception of gender as based on one's biological sex and thus dichotomous, the reification theory seems a fitting explanation for the presence of anti-transgender attitudes among those that are not religious. Those who are more tolerant of diversity might be inclined to deconstruct the dominant cultural conception of gender as social constructions, while those less tolerant and in favour of order might hold on more strongly to naturalistic and essentialist conceptions of the dominant culture and fervently reject those who deviate from it. The question that now rests is *if* this sentiment is widespread among voters and proves to be electorally relevant.

## 2.3. Hypotheses

To elucidate how anti-transgender attitudes relate to the cultural dimensions and measure their electoral relevance for Christian and far-right parties, multiple hypotheses are proposed. According to the dominant perspective, both anti-transgender attitudes and anti-homosexuality attitudes should be under the traditionalist dimension. The source of this dimension is religious orthodoxy. Hence (1a), it can be expected that both anti-transgender and anti-homosexuality attitudes are strongly associated with religious orthodoxy, as both concern gender and sexuality, topics that,

according to the dominant theory, are part of the traditionalist dimension. However, (1b) if anti-transgender attitudes come forth out of a resistance against cultural diversity, as this study proposes, the association between religious orthodoxy and anti-trans attitudes should be weaker compared to religious orthodoxy and anti-homosexuality attitudes because it is partly manifested from a different source: reification.

Furthermore, the left side of the dimensions - progressivism and libertarianism - are strongly associated because both emphasise freedom over religious or state coercion, which means that, generally, those who are more progressive tend to be more libertarian as well. However, the association on the right between traditionalism and authoritarianism is more diffuse (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 16). Again, this is because traditionalism and authoritarianism have different sources in religious orthodoxy and reification. This means that anti-homosexuality attitudes and antitransgender attitudes can be attributed to both dimensions. On the one hand, based on the dominant theory, these attitudes would align naturally with the traditionalist dimension, as an essentialist conception of man and women - similarly to anti-homosexuality attitudes - can be grounded in the Bible. On the other hand, based on the proposed reification theory, anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes can be grounded in an aversion to diversity. However, given the far-right's aforementioned relatively progressive stance towards homosexuality, it is expected that this aversion will be directed primarily to more contemporary deviations from the 'norm'. So, (2) if the proposed theory is true and the disturbance of cultural uniformity also drives anti-homosexuality and antitransgender attitudes, both should be *positively* associated with authoritarianism, but anti-transgender attitudes, should be *more strongly* associated with authoritarianism as it is a more contemporary form of diversity that is less accepted compared to homosexuality.

Regarding the electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes, based on the dominant theories, it is expected that (3a) anti-homosexuality attitudes relate *positively* with voting for Christian parties, while (3b) it relates *negatively* with voting for far-right parties. However, if the proposed theory is correct, these relations would be different for anti-transgender attitudes. Instead, for anti-transgender attitudes, it is expected that (3c) it relates *positively* with voting for Christian parties, (3d) and *positively* with voting for far-right parties. Lastly (4), if the proposed reification theory holds, the relationship between anti-transgender attitudes and voting for far-right parties

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Although these hypotheses seemingly contradict the prior hypotheses, there is a distinct difference between cultural attitudes towards a political issue and the salience of this issue to guide voting behaviour. A proportion of the far-right electorate might hold anti-homosexuality attitudes - as tested through hypothesis 2 - but these attitudes have not been conducive for a far-right vote in prior studies (De Koster et al., 2013, pp. 397–398; Linders et al., 2024, pp. 12–13; Spierings, 2021, pp. 179–180; Spierings & Glas, 2021, pp. 459–464). This is different for Christian parties, which do rely on their electorates anti-homosexuality attitudes (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 15; Pless et al., 2023b, p. 336).

should be stronger in interaction with authoritarianism because those who are more authoritarian tend to be specifically averse to diversity.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Data

The *Dutch Parliamentary Election Study* of 2023 (DPES) is used to test the proposed hypotheses (Jacobs et al., 2024). The choice is made for this specific dataset because it is one of the largest (*n* = 5640) and most recent representative surveys on political attitudes in the Netherlands (Voogd et al., 2023). Furthermore, surveys that contain items questioning anti-transgender attitudes are rare, but since the *transgenderwet* was a salient topic during the 2023 election, the survey includes multiple items that measure attitudes towards transgender identities (Voogd et al., 2024, pp. 151–155). Additionally, the dataset provides ample items to measure the different cultural dimensions, voter behaviour, and various demographics such as gender, age, and education (Voogd et al., 2023, p. 26). For these reasons, the DPES is a fitting choice for this study.

The data for the DPES 2023 were collected in three waves from two existing panels, the *Long-term Internet Studies for the Social-Sciences* (LISS)-panel and the I&O-panel, but managed through a single data institute, *Centerdata*, and collected with identical surveys (Voogd et al., 2023, Section 1.2). The three waves consisted of a pre-election survey (between the  $16^{th}$  of October and the  $14^{th}$  of November), a post-election survey (between the  $24^{th}$  of November and the  $10^{th}$  of December), and a second post-election survey (between the  $11^{th}$  and the  $31^{st}$  of December). One representative sample of the population was surveyed from the LISS-panel, and one from the I&O panel. 4.8% of the initial responses were excluded for bad quality (n = 419) from the two surveys (n = 8659). Of the initial responses, a representative sample was formed (n = 5640), 73% of which completed all three waves (n = 4135).

# 3.2. Operationalisation

For the analyses, several indicators are required. (1) An indicator is needed for anti-transgender attitudes. (2) Indicators are needed for anti-homosexuality attitudes and religious orthodoxy. (3) An indicator is needed for authoritarianism. (4) Furthermore, an indicator is needed of what political party respondents voted for in the 2023 parliamentary election, which can be used as a dependent variable. (5) Additionally, indicators for sex, age, income, education, and religious denomination are needed as control variables.<sup>2</sup>

The DPES has three items to measure attitudes towards transgender identities. These items are quasi-interval on a Likert scale from one to five and question if 'people should be able to change their gender in their passport from the age of 16 without a declaration from an expert', 'if someone

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A complete overview of all used items and the recoding's are provided in Appendix A.

has thought it through, a sex change can be a good idea' and 'there is something wrong with people who neither feel like a man nor like a woman'. A factor and reliability analysis are conducted, after which the items are aggregated and used as a scale measuring anti-transgender attitudes. The scale is sufficiently reliable with a Cronbach Alpha of .75.4

For anti-homosexuality attitudes, the DPES 2023 includes a single item that questions if 'same-sex couples should have the same right to adopt children as heterosexual couples'. The DPES further includes a set of seven quasi-interval items under 'religiosity', which align with prior operationalisations of religious orthodoxy (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 5; Pless et al., 2023a, pp. 12–13). These items question, for example, church attendance, how often respondents read their holy book, and how dogmatic the reading of their holy book is. Of these seven items, one item questioning if voting during elections is a good deed according to your religion is excluded as it does not align with the concept being measured. Furthermore, the item questioning if all fellow believers are free to interpret our religious sources as they wish is indicated by the factor analysis to be a bad fit and therefore excluded. The remaining five items are aggregated and used as a single item for religious orthodoxy, which is very reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .87.

Authoritarianism is based on the conceptualisation of De Koster & Van Der Waal (2007, p. 3), and the operationalisations of De Koster & Van Der Waal (2007, p. 3) and Pless et al. (2023a, pp. 12–14). They operationalised it through items measuring three elements that form the dimension: law and order, cultural uniformity and anti-immigration attitudes. The DPES 2023 provides ample items to form this dimension. For instance, 'The next government must reduce the annual number of immigrants allowed to enter the Netherlands', 'the will of the majority should always prevail, even over the rights of minorities', and 'The Dutch culture is threatened by immigrants.' A total of six quasi-interval items are used, two items for every element that forms the dimensions. These items too are analysed through factor and reliability analyses and aggregated into the libertarian—authoritarian scale. This item is very reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .82.

All other indicators are present in the DPES as single items. For the dependent variable, there is an item measuring which party the respondent voted for in the 2023 parliamentary elections. This item is recoded to represent the electorates of the two political party families important to the analysis and a third category for the remaining parties: far-right, Christian, and other. These classifications are based on prior research and contain those parties traditionally considered far-right

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The author is aware that within the transgender community, non-binary identities are part of the broader framework of trans-identities. However, provided that they are perceived by the wider public as deviations from the binary framework of male and female, they are aggregated into a single variable to better encapsulate the public's attitude.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The results of all factor and reliability analyses are found in appendix B.

or Christian (Linders et al., 2024, p. 9). Under the category 'other' are included two new parties with inconclusive ideologies that participated in the 2023 parliamentary elections - NSC and BBB. BBB can be categorised as part of the centre-right (Based on policy decisions see Louwerse & Otjes, 2023, Section 6; based on electoral analysis see Van der Schelde & Kanne, 2023, paras 4–6; based on ideological analysis see Voerman & De Jonge, 2023, Section 4) and the far-right (Voerman & De Jonge, 2023a, Section 4), while NSC can be categorised as centre-right (based on electoral analyses see Otjes & Rooduijn, 2023, paras 19–22; based on ideological analysis see Voerman & Léonie, 2023, Section 5) and Christian (Voerman & De Jonge, 2023b, Section 1; Wit, 2023).

To elucidate the effect different classifications can make, two sensitivity analyses are conducted that require further recoding of the item measuring voting behaviour.<sup>5</sup> For the first sensitivity analysis, the NSC and BBB electorates are taken out of the category 'other' and added to either the far-right or the Christian party family. In the first set, NSC is included as a Christian party, in the second set, BBB is included as a far-right party, and the third set includes NSC as a Christian party and BBB as a far-right party. For the second sensitivity analysis, the category 'other' is further dissected and seven political party families are analysed: centre-right, centre-left, far-right, far-left, Christian, agrarians (BBB), and reformists (NSC). Five sets are created based on these political party families, taking into consideration the ideological inconclusiveness of NSC and BBB. In the first set, the classification is as described as described above, in the second set, NSC is classified as centreright and BBB as far-right, in the third set, NSC and BBB are classified as centre-right, in the fourth set NSC is classified as Christian and BBB as centre-right, and in the fifth set NSC is classified as Christian and BBB as far-right. These sets contain all possible political party family combinations. However, various fractional parties are omitted from the analysis, which include: LEF, 50Plus, LP, Nederland met een Plan, PartijvdSport, Piratenpartij - De Groenen, Politieke Partij voor Basisinkomen, Samen voor Nederland, and Splinter. Together, these parties did not add to a single percent of the sample and including them would then fractionalise the analysis unnecessarily.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> An overview of the different political party family sets created for the first and second sensitivity analysis are provided in Appendix C and D.

**Table 1.**Descriptive statistics main variables

	n	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Authoritarianism	5524	1	7	3.8	1.0
Religious orthodoxy	5305	1	7.5	2.1	1.4
Anti-homosexuality attitudes	4057	1	5	2.1	1.1
Anti-transgender attitudes	5353	1	5	2.9	1.1

Numerous items are used as control variables in the multinomial logistic regression. The items included gender, age, education, religious denomination, and income, which are based on the control variables used in prior research into the electoral relevance of cultural attitudes in the Netherlands (De Koster et al., 2013, p. 592). Gender includes 1: male (49.3%), 2: female (50.6%), and 3: other (.01%), which is recoded into 1: male, and 2: other. Age (m = 52, SD = 17.79) is based on the year of birth. Education includes nine categories 1: elementary/primary education (1%), 2: secondary lower/higher vocational (15.7%), 3: tertiary vocational (26.9%), 4: higher secondary (13.9%), 5: tertiary higher vocational (23.3%), university Bachelor/Master/PhD (17%), 7: other (.2%), 8: did not (yet) finish any schooling (.7%), and 9: does not yet follow any schooling (1.4%). This is recoded into three categories - lower education, medium education, and higher education according to the ISCED guidelines (CBS, 2025; Eurostat, n.d.; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2021). Those without education were excluded from the analysis. Religious denomination is included and entails 1: none (52%), 2: Christianity (35.3%), 3: Islam (1.9%), 4: Buddhism (.08%), 5: Hinduism (.6%), 6: Judaism (.3%), 7: other (1.5%). This is recoded into 1: none, 2: Christianity, 3: Islam, and 4: other. Lastly, income in three categories 1: no income to €2000, 2: €2001 - €4500, and 3: €4501 - €8500+.

# 3.3. Analyses

Multiple analyses are conducted in SPSS to test the different hypotheses. First, a correlational analysis is run between the items indicative of anti-transgender attitudes, anti-homosexuality attitudes, religious orthodoxy, and authoritarianism to test hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2. Second, two multinomial logistic regressions are conducted to test hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, and 4. The two multinomial logistic regressions differ in reference group. Hypothesis 3c is only answerable with the electorate of Christian political parties as the reference category. Hence, the first multinomial logistic regression uses the far-right electorate as a reference category to answer hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3d, and 4, and the second uses the electorate of Christian political parties to answer hypothesis 3c. The

choice is made for multinomial logistic regressions as the dependent variable is of a nominal measurement level with more than two categories - far-right, Christian, and other.

Through multiple models - that are similar for both multinomial logistic regressions - the different hypotheses are tested. In the first model, the items for authoritarianism and antihomosexuality attitudes are added to validate that the items indeed relate to distinct political party families and to test hypotheses 3a and 3b. The second model includes anti-transgender attitudes through which hypotheses 3c and 3d are tested. The third model includes the interaction effects between authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes to test hypothesis 4. Given the fragmentation of the data in various political party families and the further dispersion of the data through multiple continuous independent variables, the analyses are bootstrapped in the fourth model. This process constrains potential instability through bias or skewness - problems especially severe in dispersed and sparse data - providing more robust results (Bull et al., 2001, p. 62; Efron & Tibshirani, 1994, pp. 184–188; Haukoos & Lewis, 2005, pp. 360–362). A bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap of 1000 samples is conducted. BCa bootstrap is preferred over the percentile bootstrap as it accounts for asymmetric data dispersal (Carpenter & Bithell, 2000, pp. 1154–1155; Efron, 1987, p. 171; Stine, 1989, pp. 278–279). In all models, the control variables are included.

Next to the multinomial logistic regressions, two sensitivity analyses are conducted. These consist of replicating the third model of the multinomial logistic regression that has the far-right as the reference group, but with different sets of political party families to trace how changes in the classification influence the results. The first sensitivity analysis shows how the results change when the NSC and BBB electorates are included as either Christian or far-right instead of 'other'. Three sets are created based on the possible classifications - for an overview of the different sets, see Appendix C. The second sensitivity analysis shows how the results change when the category 'other' is dissected into multiple political party families, and when the NSC and BBB electorates are classified differently among these political party families. For an overview of the different sets of the second sensitivity analysis, see Appendix D. Through the sensitivity analyses, the robustness of the results is further increased as potential arbitrariness in the classification process is minimised.

### 4. Results

## 4.1. Assumptions

Prior to the analyses, the assumptions for the correlational analysis and the multinomial logistic regression were validated. As for the correlational analysis, the items are all on an interval measurement level. The items have a linear relationship except for authoritarianism and religious orthodoxy, which show a near-zero association. However, this raises no concern as prior studies have shown that these items are theoretically and empirically significantly different and should not be strongly related (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 6; Pless, 2023, p. 40; Pless et al., 2020, p. 13). Furthermore, anti-transgender attitudes and authoritarianism are normally distributed, but anti-homosexuality attitudes and religious orthodoxy are both skewed to the left, reflecting the progressive attitudes towards homosexuality and atheism in the Netherlands. Provided the size of the sample, this will not pose a problem (Field, 2018, p. 227). After the scales were created, boxplots were used to trace outliers. One outlier was found and deleted; this was a faulty code for religious orthodoxy with a score of 10, whereas the maximum possible score is 7.5.

As for the multinomial logistic regression, the dependent variable is nominal with multiple categories, and the measurement levels of the independent variables are either continuous, nominal, or ordinal. All independent variables are normally distributed, and the sample is large enough to account for the number of predictors. As a rule of thumb, ten respondents were considered a minimum for each added predictor, which the smallest subpopulation exceeded by sixty (Peduzzi et al., 1996, p. 1373). No multicollinearity concerns or outliers are found.

### 4.2. The cultural dimensions

The correlational analysis between authoritarianism, religious orthodoxy, anti-transgender attitudes, and anti-homosexuality attitudes substantiates the relevance of the dominant theory and the proposed theory. It was hypothesised based on the dominant theory that (1a) both anti-transgender and anti-homosexuality attitudes are strongly associated with religious orthodoxy. However, 1b) if anti-transgender attitudes come forth out of a resistance against cultural diversity, as the proposed theory argues, the association between religious orthodoxy and anti-trans attitudes should be weaker compared to religious orthodoxy and anti-homosexuality attitudes, as it is partly explained by a different source. Furthermore, compared to authoritarianism, (2) if the proposed theory is true and the disturbance of cultural uniformity *also* drives anti-homosexuality and anti-transgender attitudes, both should be *positively* associated with authoritarianism, but anti-transgender attitudes should be *more strongly* associated with authoritarianism.

As for the first two hypotheses, Table 2 shows that religious orthodoxy is correlated with both anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes, which aligns with the dominant theory and corroborates hypothesis 1a. Furthermore, the correlation between religious orthodoxy and anti-homosexuality attitudes (r = .36) is higher than the correlation between religious orthodoxy and anti-transgender attitudes (r = .22). This corroborates hypothesis 1b and suggests that anti-transgender attitudes might also manifest from a different source than religious orthodoxy. Based on the results, this is the case, as authoritarianism also correlates with anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes. However, the strength of the correlations is reversed compared to religious orthodoxy. Authoritarianism is more strongly correlated with anti-transgender attitudes (r = .37) than with anti-homosexuality attitudes (r = .30), which aligns with proposed theory and corroborates hypothesis 2. Overall, the findings suggest that there is evidence to corroborate hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2, substantiating the distinct relationship between authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes, and depicting a more entangled perspective on the cultural dimensions.

**Table 2.** *Zero-order correlations of authoritarianism, religious orthodoxy, anti-transgender attitudes, and anti-homosexuality attitudes.* 

	Authoritarianism	Religious orthodoxy	Anti-transgender attitudes
Religious orthodoxy	.02		
n	5301		
Anti-transgender attitudes	.37**	.22**	
n	5347	5150	
Anti-homosexuality attitudes	.30**	.36**	.57**
n	4053	3918	4031

*Note.* \*\* Indicates p <. 01.

## 4.3. The electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes

What remains to be answered is the potential electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes. The prior analysis shows that anti-transgender attitudes correlate with authoritarianism and religious orthodoxy. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the strength of the correlations between anti-transgender attitudes and the cultural dimensions differs. Prior studies already indicated the electoral effect of the cultural dimensions, with authoritarianism correlating with voting for the far-right, and traditionalism with voting for Christian parties (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 15; Pless et al., 2023b, pp. 338–341). Hence, the differing strength of the correlations between anti-transgender

attitudes and the cultural dimensions might also translate into different electoral relevance. To test and compare the electoral relevance of authoritarianism, anti-homosexuality attitudes, and anti-transgender attitudes, two multinomial logistic regressions are conducted. The results of these two regressions can be seen in Tables 3 and 4 - the first has the far-right electorate as a reference group, the second the electorate for Christian parties.

 Table 3.

 Explaining the electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes for far-right parties

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Christian	Other	Christian	Other	Christian	Other	Christian	Other
Authoritarianism	-1.68	-1.53	-1.73	-1.39	-1.75	-1.40	-1.75	-1.40
	(.12)**	(.08)**	(.12)**	(.08)**	(.13)**	(.08)**	(.12)**	(.08)**
Anti-homosexuality	.56	12	.52	.08	.51	.07	.51	.07
attitudes	(.07)**	(.05)*	(.08)**	(.05)	(.08)**	(.05)	(.08)**	(.06)
Anti-transgender	-	-	.08	50	03	61	03	61
attitudes			(.11)	(.07)**	(.12)	(.08)**	(.12)	(.09)**
Authoritarianism *	-	-	-	-	.16	.16	.16	.16
anti-transgender					(.10)	(.08)*	(.09)	(.005)*
attitudes								
Controls included	Yes.		Yes.		Yes.		Yes.	
Nagelkerke (Pseudo)	.41		.43		.43		.43	
$\mathbb{R}^2$								
n	3510		3493		3493		3493	

Note. Multinomial logistic regression with the far-right electorate as the reference category. Entries are log-odds with the standard error in parentheses. Model 4 is bootstrapped based on 1000 samples. Results are controlled for age, gender, religious denomination, education, and income. The full table showing results of all individual control variables is included in Appendix E.

<sup>\*</sup>p < .05, \*\*p < .01

The results substantiate the relevance of the dominant theory, which holds in explaining votes for Christian parties. However, the proposed theory also holds as anti-transgender attitudes increase the chance of voting for far-right and Christian parties. First, as part of the dominant theory, (3a) it was expected that anti-homosexuality attitudes would relate positively with voting for Christian parties and (3b) negatively with voting for far-right parties. Model 1 shows that stronger antihomosexuality attitudes increase the likelihood to vote for Christian parties compared to the far-right (B = .56, p = <.01) - aligning with the dominant theory. However, anti-homosexuality attitudes also increase the likelihood to vote for the far-right compared to voters of other parties (B = -.12, p =<.05), which contradicts the dominant theory. Although when anti-transgender attitudes are added in model 2, the increased likelihood of voting for the far-right when stronger anti-homosexuality attitudes are held, loses its significance. Furthermore, the non-significance remains consistent in model 3, where the interaction between authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes is added, and in model 4, which bootstraps the results, which substantiates the robustness of the result and aligns with the dominant theory. As for the significant effect of anti-homosexuality attitudes in increasing the likelihood to vote for Christian parties, this remains consistent in all other models. Hence, the results align with the dominant theory and corroborate hypotheses 3a and 3b.

Second, as part of the dominant theory, (3c) it was expected that anti-transgender attitudes would relate positively with voting for Christian parties. However, based on the proposed theory, (3d) it was expected that it would *also* relate *positively* with far-right parties. To test hypothesis 3c, the second multinomial logistic regression is conducted with the electorate of Christian parties as the reference category, the results hereof are shown in Table 4. This second regression is necessary as the first regression only depicts the relevance that anti-transgender attitudes have when compared to far-right parties, which shows how voters for Christian parties compare in their anti-transgender attitudes to the far-right. Hence, an analysis is necessary that compares Christian voters' position towards transgender identities to that of other voters. Model 2 in Table 4 shows that the results of the second regression align with the dominant theory, anti-transgender attitudes significantly increase the chance of voting for Christian parties compared to other parties (B = -.58, p = <.01). This result remains effective when compared to other parties in model 3 (B = -.58, p = <.01) and in model 4 (B =-.58, p = <.01), which means that the result holds when the interaction is added and the bootstrap is conducted. Furthermore, based on the proposed theory, hypothesis 3d posits that anti-transgender attitudes relate positively with voting for far-right parties, which the results also align with. Similarly to Table 4, Table 3 Model 2 shows that anti-transgender attitudes significantly increase the likelihood of voting for far-right parties when compared to other parties (B = -.50, p = <.01), which aligns with the proposed theory. Again, this result holds when compared to other parties in model 3

(B = -.61, p = <.01) and model 4 (B = -.61, p = <.01). Hence, the results provide evidence for the dominant and proposed theory, corroborating hypotheses 3c and 3d.

 Table 4.

 Explaining the electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes for Christian parties

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Far-right	Other	Far-right	Other	Far-right	Other	Far-right	Other
Authoritarianism	1.68	.15	1.73	.33	1.75	.35	1.75	.35
	(.12)**	(.09)	(.12)**	(.10)**	(.13)**	(.10)**	(.12)**	(.10)**
Anti-homosexuality	56	68	52	44	51	44	51	44
attitudes	(.07)**	(.06)**	(.08)**	(.07)**	(.08)**	(.07)**	(.08)**	(.07)**
Anti-transgender	-	-	08	58	.03	58	.03	58
attitudes			(.11)	(.10)**	(.12)	(.10)**	(.12)	(.09)**
Authoritarianism *	-	-	-	-	16	001	16	001
anti-transgender					(.10)	(.08)	(.10)	(.07)
attitudes								
Controls included	Yes.		Yes.		Yes.		Yes.	
Nagelkerke (Pseudo)	.41		.43		.43		.43	
$R^2$								
n	3510		3493		3493		3493	

*Note*. Multinomial logistic regression with the electorate of Christian parties as the reference category. Entries are log-odds with the standard error in parentheses. Model 4 is bootstrapped based on 1000 samples. Results are controlled for age, gender, religious denomination, education, and income.

<sup>\*</sup>p < .05, \*\*p < .01.

Additionally, it was expected that (4) the relationship between anti-transgender attitudes and voting for far-right parties should be stronger in interaction with authoritarianism because those who are more authoritarian tend to be specifically averse to diversity. Interestingly, an interaction effect is found in model 3 (B = .16, p = <.05), which holds in the bootstrapped analysis of model 4 (B = .16, p = <.05) as can be seen in Table 3. However, the effect contradicts the proposed theory, instead suggesting that the interaction between authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes increases the likelihood of voting for parties other than the far-right. Hence, hypothesis 4 has to be rejected. The result suggests that a combined increase of authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes leads voters to different parties than the far-right. However, the sensitivity analyses provide inconclusive results.

# 4.4. Sensitivity analyses

Provided the ideological complexity of the Dutch political landscape, two additional multinomial logistic regressions are conducted with different political party family classifications to assess the robustness of the results - these are the sensitivity analyses. The first sensitivity analysis that is discussed adds NSC and BBB to the primary analysis. As previously discussed, both parties have inconclusive ideologies, but gained a significant proportion of the votes in the 2023 election. In the prior analyses, they are included under the category 'other', but they can be classified as Christian in the case of NSC and far-right in the case of BBB. Therefore, the first sensitivity assesses how the incorporation of NSC and BBB into these political party families changes the results. The second sensitivity analysis also assesses how the results change when NSC and BBB are included in various political families. Additionally, it dissects the category 'other' into the centre-right, centre-left, the farleft, agrarians, and reformists. So, not only can NSC and BBB be classified as Christian or far-right, but also as centre-right, and once on their own as agrarian (BBB) and reformist (NSC). The second sensitivity analysis is conducted to gain a broader and fine-tuned idea of the electoral relevance of antitransgender attitudes, and its results are found in Appendix F. For an overview of the parties that the different models contain, see Appendix C for the first sensitivity analysis and Appendix D for the second sensitivity analysis.

**Table 5.** *Electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes - sensitivity analysis with NSC and BBB* 

	Primary analysis		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
			NSC as Christian		BBB as far-right		Combination	
	Christian	Other	Christian	Other	Christian	Other	Christian	Other
Authoritarianism	-1.75	-1.40	-1.18	-1.51	-1.64	-1.35	-1.08	-1.5
	(.13)**	(.08)**	(.09)**	(.09)**	(.12)**	(.08)**	(.09)**	(.08)**
Anti-homosexuality	.51	.07	.28	.06	.48	.03	.26	.02
attitudes	(.08)**	(.05)	(.06)**	(.06)	(.08)**	(.05)	(.06)**	(.06)
Anti-transgender	03	61	25	63	.08	52	15	54
attitudes	(.12)	(.08)**	(.09)**	(.09)**	(.12)	(.08)**	(.09)	(.08)**
Authoritarianism*anti-	.16	.16	02	.18	.13	.10	07	.10
transgender attitudes	(.10)	*(80.)	(.09)	*(80.)	(.10)	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)
Controls included	Yes.		Yes.		Yes.		Yes.	
Nagelkerke (Pseudo)	.43		.39		.44		.41	
$R^2$								
n	3493		3493		3493		3493	

*Note*. Multinomial logistic regression with the far-right electorate as the reference category. Entries are log-odds with the standard error in parentheses. Results are controlled for age, gender, religious denomination, education, and income.

<sup>\*</sup>p < .05, \*\*p < .01.

The results of the first sensitivity analysis broadly substantiate the findings of the primary analysis. However, slight differences occur when the NSC and BBB electorates are added. As seen in model 1 of Table 5, classifying the NSC electorate as Christian, changes the results of antitransgender attitude from non-significance to a significant increased likelihood to vote for the farright (B = -.25, p = <.01). Furthermore, including the NSC electorate as Christian lowers the degree of anti-homosexuality attitudes as can be seen by comparing the primary model and model 1. This indicates that the electorate of NSC is not suitable to be classified as Christian, as they significantly change prior results that are based on traditional Christian electorates. In model 2, the BBB electorate is included as far-right, which does not alter the results as much as the inclusion of NSC does. Compared to the primary analysis, the log-odds for authoritarianism and anti-transgender attitudes lowers a little bit, which suggests that those who vote for BBB hold weaker authoritarian and anti-transgender attitudes, lowering the overall value for these items. Based solely on these results, it is difficult to state whether BBB voters should be categorised as far-right. In model 3, both NSC and BBB are included, and expectedly similar distortions are seen. Interestingly, including the BBB electorate as far-right makes it that the significant interaction of authoritarianism and antitransgender attitudes in the primary analysis and model 1 is no longer significant in models 2 and 3. This suggests that the BBB attracted voters with more authoritarian and anti-transgender attitudes, which made the interaction previously significant.

The results of the second sensitivity analysis results - although interpreted with caution - further substantiate the prior findings. The results need to be interpreted with caution as the data was sparse and over-dispersed - through dissection of the category 'other' and the creation of multiple political party families - reducing model stability. As a result of data instability, the goodness-of-fit is disputed and significant in some models, which further indicates the need for a cautious understanding of the results. Nonetheless, across all models, the model fit is significant, the Nagelkerke (pseudo)  $R^2$  indicates moderate explanatory power, and the results align with theoretical expectations and prior research. Hence, it is worthwhile to discuss its results - provided in Appendix F.

Notably, the second sensitivity analysis substantiates the unsuitability of the NSC and BBB electorate as a Christian or far-right. Furthermore, it shows the added benefit of using multiple political party families through increased explained variance. As can be seen in model 1, the agrarians (BBB) have a negative log-odd on authoritarianism (B = -.63, p = <.01) and antitransgender attitudes (B = -.43, p = <.01). The reformists (NSC) share a similar negative log-odd, which indicates that more authoritarian and anti-transgender voters prefer to vote for the far-right. Although a similar analysis is not conducted with the electorate of Christian parties as a reference

group, the prior analyses indicated that anti-transgender attitudes also increase the likelihood of voting for Christian parties. Hence, the unsuitability of the NSC and BBB electorate in these party families. As for the explained variance, the Nagelkerke (pseudo)  $R^2$  of the prior analyses remained between 41% and 43%. This increased to 44% in the first sensitivity analysis. However, it ranges between 54% and 58% in the second sensitivity analysis, which is a considerable increase, and suggests that there is an added explanatory benefit in the usage of more political party families. The question however remains to what extent this explanatory benefit compares to the increased sparsity and model instability.

### 5. Discussion

In the light of enacted transphobic policies in countries such as Hungary and the United States of America, and a shift in position by far-right politicians in the Netherlands, this study aimed to elucidate the relationship of anti-transgender attitudes to the dimensions of cultural conflict and assess its electoral relevance in the Netherlands (Fiers & Muis, 2021, p. 396; Graves, 2025, paras 1 & 2; Mulvihill & Johnson, 2025, paras 1 & 2; Segers, 2024, p. 14; Spike, 2024, paras 1–5, 2023, paras 1–3). Prior studies that form the dominant theory on the dimensions of cultural conflict and its electoral relevance distinguish two dimensions - traditionalism and authoritarianism - that contain distinct political issues, are manifested from different social bases, and have different electoral effects (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, pp. 16–17; Pless et al., 2020, p. 15, 2023a, p. 22). The dominant theory is unable to explain the increased anti-transgender rhetoric voiced by the far-right, as according to this theory, the far-right's electorate holds predominantly authoritarian attitudes, while traditionalists (traditionally) hold conservative attitudes towards matters of gender and sexuality. So, if the supply of anti-transgender rhetoric is reflective of the attitudes held by the electorate, this forms a substantive puzzle for the dominant theory. An alternative theory is proposed to supplement the dominant theory - the reification theory. This theory posits that opposition from the far-right to transgender identities can be understood as an aversion to deviations from the perceived natural state of culture (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 76-80; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 316–321).

As for the cultural dimensions, the findings indicate the necessity for both theories, their distinctiveness, and the convergence of the cultural dimensions on anti-transgender attitudes. *First*, the dominant theory holds for the traditionalist dimension as both anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes strongly correlate with religious orthodoxy. This indicates that - similarly to anti-homosexuality attitudes - anti-transgender attitudes are plausibly sourced by a dogmatic or literalist interpretation of the Bible or other religious texts. The proposed theory is a conceivable supplement to the dominant theory, as the authoritarian dimension also correlates with anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes, which is challenging to explain through the dominant theory. Building on prior studies, it is plausible that the rejection of transgender identities -similarly to opposition against other deviations from the dominant culture - comes from a reified worldview (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 88–89; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, pp. 436–438; Manevska & Achterberg, 2013, pp. 445–446; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 333–336). *Second*, the findings reinforce the dimensions' distinctiveness as authoritarianism and religious orthodoxy have a very low correlation. Furthermore, it was argued that homosexuality would be opposed more by those religiously orthodox as it is more directly sourced by the Bible (De Koster &

Van Der Waal, 2007, pp. 16–17; Pless et al., 2023a, pp. 22–24), while the Dutch far-right has historically defended the rights of gay people but might be more averse to a contemporary deviation from cultural norms such as transgender identities (Akkerman, 2015, pp. 52–58; Bracke, 2012, pp. 248–249; Hekma & Duyvendak, 2011, p. 626; Puar, 2007, pp. 1–36). These nuances are reflected in the findings, which further substantiate the dimensions' distinctness. *Third*, the findings indicate that, contrary to the dominant theory, the two dimensions converge in their opposition to transgender identities, and to a lesser extent, in opposition to homosexuality. This is crucial, as prior theory expected issues concerning gender and sexuality to be predominantly related to the traditionalist dimension.

As for the electoral relevance, the findings again indicate that the dominant theory and the proposed theory both hold, supplementing each other in explaining how cultural attitudes guide voting behaviour. *First*, the dominant theory holds in explaining voting behaviour for Christian parties and partially for the far-right. The findings indicate that stronger anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes make a vote for Christian parties more likely, which further substantiates the relevance of gender and sexuality issues for the traditionalist dimensions and Christian parties. Similarly, authoritarian attitudes make a vote for the far-right more likely, which also aligns with the dominant theory's established connection between the far-right and authoritarian attitudes. *Second*, the proposed theory holds in explaining voting behaviour for the far-right concerning gender and sexuality issues. The findings indicate that stronger anti-transgender attitudes make a vote for far-right parties more likely. Similarly to the findings of the correlational analysis, this effect is difficult to explain from the dominant perspective but is plausibly explained through the reification theory.

These findings have several theoretical implications concerning the dimensions of cultural conflict and the electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes - starting with the former. The crucial finding of this study concerning the dimensions of cultural conflict, is that attitudes on transgender identities cannot unambiguously be classified under either dimension. The theoretical implication hereof is that the dimensions require frequent re-interpretation of their content as societal discussions and issue salience develops. As for the electoral relevance, the crucial finding here is the importance of anti-transgender attitudes as a motivator for far-right voting behaviour. In comparison to all other parties, those who hold stronger anti-transgender attitudes are more likely to vote for far-right parties. The only exception are those who vote for Christian parties, as they also hold anti-transgender attitudes, however, they do so to a lower degree than those who vote for the far-right. The theoretical implication hereof is that the conception of anti-transgender attitudes as remnants of Judeo-Christian heritage that will slowly deteriorate as modernisation and secularisation continue to

develop is unfounded (Inglehart & Norris, 2003, pp. 10–20). On the contrary, the findings - found in a majority non-religious country - point towards an opposition against transgender identities that is widespread, and distinctly different from religious opposition.

These theoretical implications solicit future research. First, as described, the findings of this study point towards an anti-transgender opposition that is distinctly different from religious opposition. Through prior research, the reification theory proves to be a plausible explanation as the source of this opposition (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006, pp. 88–89; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, pp. 436–438; Manevska & Achterberg, 2013, pp. 445–446; Van Der Waal & De Koster, 2015b, pp. 333–336). Future studies could empirically expound this theory, elucidating the relationship between cultural capital, anti-transgender attitudes, and far-right voting behaviour. Additionally, a comparison between religious orthodoxy, cultural capital, and anti-transgender attitudes could further dissect the sources that drive opposition against transgender identities. Second, a longitudinal study and a crosscountry comparative study could further track the development of the dimensions of cultural conflict. The findings of this study suggest that the dimensions developed over time. Whereas prior studies could differentiate traditionalism and authoritarianism based on gender and sexuality related issues, the current study shows its alignment on anti-homosexuality attitudes and anti-transgender attitudes. Hence, a longitudinal study, showing its development over time is worthwhile. Furthermore, the current study is based on data gathered in the Netherlands, which is a predominantly non-religious country. A relevant contribution can be made by replication the analysis in different countries with either non-religious or religious majorities to investigate if this contextual factor is of influence. As prior studies have shown, as secularisation develops, the traditionalist dimension decreases in relevance while the relevance of the authoritarian dimension increases (De Koster & Van Der Waal, 2007, p. 13; Pless et al., 2023b, p. 338, 2023a, p. 22). Hence, it is conceivable that in religious countries, the dominant theory holds, as traditionalism is still relevant and anti-transgender attitudes might primarily come from its religious orthodox social basis. However, in non-religious countries such as the Netherlands, the proposed theory might hold as the traditionalist dimension is of decreased relevance, while - as this study has shown - anti-transgender attitudes are still prevalent.

Concluding with the societal impact, the crucial implication of this study is that the rise of secularisation does not bring forth an area of progressivism; instead, religious opposition to matters concerning gender and sexuality is superseded by authoritarian opposition, for which there is substantial electoral relevance. As De Koster et al. (2010, p. 43) described in their discussion on post-Christian morality, the process of secularisation does not equate to a process of increasing tolerance. On the contrary, as the reification theory explains, the deterioration of Christian morality created a sense of cultural insecurity for those who are lesser educated, which formed the soil of

intolerance towards those who deviate from the dominant culture. However, whereas De Koster et al. (2010, p. 43) focused primarily on ethnic intolerance, this study indicates that gender minorities are also part of this aversion to diversity. All in all, the available evidence indicates that authoritarianism is not merely the primary dimension of cultural conflict in society, but it also subsumes issues previously belonging to the traditionalist dimension under its desire for (gender) order.

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# 8. Appendix

# 8.1. Appendix A, Items and recoding

Table 1.

Used items and recoding

Variables	Coding	Recoding
Anti-transgender attitudes		
People should be able to change their gender in	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	-
their passport from the age of 16		
without a declaration from an expert.		
If someone has thought it through, a sex change	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	-
can be a good idea		
There is something wrong with people who	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	Reversed
neither feel like a man nor like a		
women		
Anti-homosexuality attitudes		
Same-sex couples should have the same right to	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	-
adopt children as heterosexuals		
couples		
Religious orthodoxy		
How often do you generally attend church, the	1: once a week or more - 5: (almost)	Reversed
mosque or religious services? Is	never	
that:		

Independently of whether you attend religious group worship or not, how religious would you say you are?	1: not religious - 10: very religious	-
My religion is an important part of myself	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	Reversed
How often do you read the Bible, Quran or other	1: (almost) never - 5 once a week or	-
holy book outside a religious	more	
gathering?		
How often do you think about the way you should	1: never - 5: very often	-
behave based on your religion?		
Authoritarianism		
The next government must reduce the annual	1: fully agree, 5: fully disagree	Reversed
number of immigrants allowed to enter the		
Netherlands.		
WI 11 1 10 11 0 1		
Where would you place yourself on a line from 1	1: keep own culture - 7: assimilate	-
to 7 where 1 means preservation of own culture		
for people with a migration background and 7		
means that they should fully adapt?		
The government should prevent the construction	1: fully agree - 4: fully disagree	Reversed
of new Mosques in the Netherlands		
The Dutch culture is threatened by immigrants.	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	Reversed
It would be good if, for certain crimes, the death	1: fully agree - 5: fully disagree	Reversed
penalty would be reintroduced.		

Where would you place yourself on a line from 1 to 7 wherein 1 stands for the parties that think the government is acting too tough on crime, and 7 stands for the parties that think that the government should be tougher on crime?	1: too strict - 7: more strict	
Control variables Gender	1: male, 2: female, 3: other	1 [1]: male
Gender	1. maic, 2. ichiaic, 3. other	2 [2 and 3]: female and other
Age at election day in years	Ratio	-
Highest education (completed) of respondent	1: elementary/primary, 2: Secondary	1 [1, 2, and 3]: lesser education
ringhest education (completed) of respondent	lower/higher vocational, 3: Tertiary	2 [3 and 4]: medium education
	vocational, 4: Higher secondary, 5:	3 [5, 6, and 7]: higher education
	Tertiary higher vocational, 6: University	5 [5, 6, and 7]. Ingher education
	Bachelor/Master/PhD, 7: other, 8: Did	
	not (yet) finish any schooling, 9: Does	
	not yet follow any schooling	
Religious denomination	0: none, 1: Christianity, 2: Islam, 3:	1 [0]: None
	Buddhism, 4: Hinduism, 5: Judaism, 6:	2 [1]: Christianity
	other	3 [2]: Islam
		4 [3, 4, 5, and 6]: Other
Income	1: No income, 2: €500 or less, 3: €501 -	1 [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]: lower income
	€1000, 4: €1001 - €1500, 5: €1501 -	2 [ 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]: medium income

€2000, 6: €2001 - €2500, 7: €2501 - 3 [11, 12, 1

3 [11, 12, 13, 14, 15]: high income

€3000, 8: €3001 - €3500, 9: €3501 -

€4000, 10: €4001 - €4500, 11: €4501 -

€5000, 12: €5001 - €6000,13: €6001 -

€7000, 14: €7001 - €8000, 15: €8001 or

more

#### 8.2. Appendix B, Factor analyses

Table 1.

Factor and reliability analyses for anti-transgender attitudes (N = 3294)

Item	Anti-transgender attitudes
People should be able to change their gender in their passport from the	.77
age of 16 without a declaration from an expert.	
There is something wrong with people who neither feel like a man nor	84
like a woman	
If someone has thought it through, a sex change can be a good idea	.84
Eigenvalue	66.81
KMO	.68
Cronbach's alpha	.75
	( )

*Note.* The table is based on the component matrix. Bartlett was significant (p = <.01)

**Table 2.** Factor and reliability analyses for religious orthodoxy (N = 2219)

Item	Religious orthodoxy*	Religious orthodoxy
How often do you generally attend church, the	85	85
mosque or religious services?		
Independently of whether you attend religious	.83	.84
group worship or not, how religious would you		
say you are?		

To what extent do you agree with the following	85	85
statement? My religion is an important part of		
myself		
How often do you read the Bible, Quran or other	.85	.85
holy book outside a religious gathering?		
How often do you think about the way you	.83	.83
should behave based on your religion?		
All my fellow believers are free to interpret our	.25	-
religious sources as they wish.*		
Eigenvalue	60.23	71.45
KMO	.84	.84
Cronbach's alpha	-	.87

*Note.* The table is based on the component matrix. Bartlett was significant (p = <.01).

**Table 3.**Factor and reliability analyses for the libertarian - authoritarian sub-dimension (N=3370)

# Item Libertarianism - authoritarianism The government should prevent the construction of new Mosques in .8

The government should prevent the construction of new Mosques in .8 the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands some think that people with a migration background -.61 should be able to live in the Netherlands while preserving their own culture. Others think that they should fully adapt to the Dutch culture.

<sup>\*</sup>The results are based on an analysis with the item 'literalism of religious sources' included.

69
.83
.84
66
55.23
.87
.82

*Note.* The table is based on the component matrix. Bartlett was significant (p = <.01)

### 8.3. Appendix C, Party family sets for the first sensitivity analysis

#### Table 1.

Party family set for the first sensitivity analysis

Party family set	Political parties
Primary analysis	
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, and BVNL
Christian	CDA, CU, and SGP
Model 1	
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, and BVNL
Christian	CDA, CU, SGP, and NSC
Model 2	
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, BVNL, and BBB
Christian	CDA, CU, and SGP
Model 3	
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, BVNL, and BBB
Christian	CDA, CU, SGP, and NSC

Note. Each set had a third category, 'other', which contained all other political parties.

# 8.4. Appendix D, Party family sets for the second sensitivity analysis

Table 1.

Party family sets for the second sensitivity analysis

Political parties
VVD
D66, PvdA/Groenlinks, and Volt
PVV, FvD, JA21, and BVNL
CDA, CU, and SGP
SP, PvdD, DENK, BIJ1
BBB
NSC
VVD and NSC
D66, PvdA/Groenlinks, and Volt
PVV, FvD, JA21, BBB, and BVNL
CDA, CU, and SGP
SP, PvdD, DENK, BIJ1
VVD, BBB, and NSC
D66, PvdA/Groenlinks, and Volt
PVV, FvD, JA21, and BVNL
CDA, CU, and SGP

Far-left	SP, PvdD, DENK, BIJ1
Model 4	
Centre-right	VVD and <b>BBB</b>
Centre-left	D66, PvdA/Groenlinks, and Volt
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, and BVNL
Christian	CDA, CU, NSC, and SGP
Far-left	SP, PvdD, DENK, BIJ1
Model 5	
Centre-right	VVD
Centre-left	D66, PvdA/Groenlinks, and Volt
Far-right	PVV, FvD, JA21, BBB, and BVNL
Christian	CDA, CU, NSC, and SGP
Far-left	SP, PvdD, DENK, BIJ1

8.5. Appendix E, Complete results of the first multinomial logistic regression Table 1.

Explaining the electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes for far-right parties

Expressions the elector at recertainee of and it ansignment attitudes for fair right										
	Model 0		Model 1	Model 2			Model 3		Model 4	
	Christian	Other								
Authoritarianism	-	-	-1.68	-1.53	-1.73	-1.39	-1.75	-1.40	-1.75	-1.40
			(.12)**	(.08)**	(.12)**	(.08)**	(.13)**	(.08)**	(.12)**	(.08)**
Anti-homosexuality	-	-	.56	12	.52	.08	.51	.07	.51	.07
attitudes			(.07)**	(.05)*	(.08)**	(.05)	(.08)**	(.05)	(.08)**	(.06)
Anti-transgender	-	-	-	-	.08	50	03	61	03	61
attitudes					(.11)	(.07)**	(.12)	(.08)**	(.12)	(.09)**
Authoritarianism *	-	-	-	-	-	-	.16	.16	.16	.16
anti-transgender							(.1)	*(80.)	(.09)	(.005)*
attitudes										
age	01	01	02	03	02	03	02	03	02	03
	(.004)*	(.003)**	(.005)**	(.003)**	(.005)**	(.004)**	(.005)**	(.004)**	(.01)**	(.004)**
Gender - men	316	392	25	25	25	11	26	18	26	12
	(.14)*	(.09)**	(.17)	(.11)*	(.17)	(.11)**	(.17)	(.11)	(.18)	(.12)
Religion - none	73	13	.03	10	.05	08	.05	08	.05	08
	(.65)	(.26)	(.81)	(.34)	(.81)	(.34)	(.81)	(.34)	(5.45)	(.36)
Religion - Christianity	1.88	35	2.46	15	2.45	.08	2.46	08	2.46	079
	(.63)**	(.26)	(.79)**	(.34)	(.79)**	(.35)	(.79)*	(.34)	(5.45)**	(.37)
Religion - Islam	1.33	2.02	-18.91	1.686	-19.13	1.747	-18.95	1.85	-18.95	1.8

	(1.38)	(.76)**	(.0)	(.89)	(.0)	(.88)*	(.0)	(.86)*	(9.19)	(6.38)*
Religion - Other	Ref.									
Education - Low	-1.49	-1.74	89	-1.14	9	-1.18	89	-1.17	89	-1.17
	(.21)**	(.14)**	(.25)**	(.17)**	(.26)**	(.17)**	(.26)**	(.17)**	(.26)**	(.17)**
Education - medium	-1.37	-1.27	86	83	85	84	84	83	84	83
	(.17)**	(.11)**	(.2)**	(.13)**	(.2)**	(.14)**	(.2)**	(.14)**	(.2)**	(.13)**
Education - high	Ref.									
Income - low	2	01	47	.02	53	01	52	01	52	01
	(.25)	(.14)	(.3)	(.17)	(.3)	(.18)	(.3)	(.18)	(.3)	(.18)
Income - medium	.12	05	.004	.05	01	.05	01	.05	01	.05
	(.18)	(.11)	(.21)	(.14)	(.21)	(.14)	(.21)	(14)	(.21)	(.14)
Income - high	Ref.									
Nagelkerke (Pseudo)	.18		.41		.43		.43		.43	
$R^2$										
n	4675		3510		3493		3493		3493	

*Note.* Multinomial logistic regression with the far-right electorate as the reference category. Entries are log-odds with the standard error in parentheses. Model 5 is bootstrapped based on 1000 samples.

<sup>\*</sup>p < .05, \*\*p < .01.

## 8.6. Appendix F, Complete results of the second sensitivity analysis

 Table 1.

 Electoral relevance of anti-transgender attitudes - sensitivity analysis with multiple party families

v	O	, ,	1 1 2 0		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	NSC - reformist	NSC - centre-right	NSC - centre-right	NSC - Christian	NSC - Christian
	BBB - agrarian	BBB - far-right	BBB - centre-right	BBB - centre-right	BBB - far-right
Centre-right					
Authoritarianism	-1.13	96	-1.04	-1	97
	(.11)**	(.09)**	(.09)**	(.10)**	(.10)**
Anti-homosexuality	.04	.04	.08	.07	.02
attitudes	(.005)	(.06)	(.06)	(.07)	(.07)
Anti-transgender	36	26	38	36	24
attitudes	(.11)**	(.09)**	(.10)**	(.10)**	(.10)**
Authoritarianism *	12	12	03	05	18
anti-transgender	(.11)	(.08)	(.09)	(.10)	(.10)
attitudes					
Centre-left					
Authoritarianism	-2.57	-2.42	-2.55	-2.52	-2.4
	(.12)**	(.11)**	(.12)**	(.12)**	(.11)**
Anti-homosexuality	07	10	06	05	09
attitudes	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)	(.08)
Anti-transgender	90	78	90	88	76
attitudes	(.11)**	(.10)**	(.11)**	(.11)**	(.10)**

Authoritarianism *	.03	03	.05	.03	05
anti-transgender	(.12)	(.11)	(.12)	(.11)	(.11)
attitudes					
Christian					
Authoritarianism	-2.03	-1.88	2.02	-1.34	-1.2
	(.14)**	(.13)**	(.14)**	(.1)**	(.09)**
Anti-homosexuality	.52	.49	.52	.28	.25
attitudes	(.08)**	(.08)**	(.08)**	(.06)**	(.06)**
Anti-transgender	.02	.13	.01	25	14
attitudes	(.13)	(.12)	(.13)	(.1)*	(.09)
Authoritarianism *	.25	.19	.25	.02	05
anti-transgender	(.12)*	(.11)	(.12)*	(.09)	(.09)
attitudes					
Far-left					
Authoritarianism	-1.94	-1.8	-1.92	-1.92	-1.79
	(.13) **	(.12)**	(.13)**	(.13)**	(.12)**
Anti-homosexuality	06	08	06	03	07
attitudes	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.10)	(.09)
Anti-transgender	70	59	70	68	57
attitudes	(.12)**	(.12)**	(.12)**	(.12)**	(.11)**
Authoritarianism *	.20	.13	.22	.19	.12
anti-transgender	(.12)	(.11)	(.12)	(.12)	(.11)
attitudes					

Agrarians					
Authoritarianism	63	-	-	-	-
	(.16)**				
Anti-homosexuality	.14	-	-	-	-
attitudes	(.10)				
Anti-transgender	43	-	-	-	-
attitudes	(.16)**				
Authoritarianism *	.13	-	-	-	-
anti-transgender	(.15)				
attitudes					
Reformists					
Authoritarianism	-1.08	-	-	-	-
	(.11)**				
Anti-homosexuality	.09	-	-	-	-
attitudes	(.07)				
Anti-transgender	39	-	-	-	-
attitudes	(.11)**				
Authoritarianism *	01	-	-	-	-
anti-transgender	(.11)				
attitudes					
Controls included	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Nagelkerke (Pseudo)	.58	.58	.58	.54	.54
$R^2$					

n 3216 3216 3216 3216 3216

*Note*. Multinomial logistic regression with the far-right electorate as the reference category. Entries are log-odds with the standard error in parentheses. Results are controlled for age, gender, religious denomination, education, and income.

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01.