

Article

Why Are Conservative Young Evangelicals in Norway Avoiding Right-Wing Politics?

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Abstract: Drawing on new survey data, this article elaborates on how young evangelicals in Norway navigate between a secular majority and evangelical subgroups. It shows how they combine pro-fertility norms with liberal attitudes towards migration. Explaining why they avoid both left- and right-wing politics, the article elaborates on the central role the Christian Democratic party plays for young evangelicals in Norway.

Keywords: youth; evangelical; Norway; secularization; politics

1. Introduction

In his comprehensive international study of religion and secularization, Ronald Inglehart (2021) claims that young people in Norway are not likely to be very religious, at least not in a traditional sense. Due to the success of the welfare state, young people have a higher level of security and emphasize individual choices, consequently abandoning religion. Even though it is easy to find support for this broad claim, it is not the whole picture. This article focuses on a group of young people from the evangelical movement in Norway who may not fit Inglehart's story of secularization. Inglehart is not blind to contradictions in his central claim and acknowledges religious people in secular societies, and he often links them with right-wing politics. This leads us to another relevant debate about evangelicals and politics, an ongoing discussion in both the public and academia. In the United States of America, the evangelical's role in politics has been much discussed, especially after 81 percent of white, self-proclaimed evangelicals voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 election (Smith and Martínez 2016). Even though evangelicals' actual support for Trump was more nuanced (Ayrís 2020), the narrative of evangelicals as a political force for right-wing politics remains.

Drawing on data from a survey of young people attending an evangelical summer festival or camp in 2020, held by an evangelical youth organization in Norway, this article discusses how religious factors, such as attendance in church, faith, and the role of the Bible, affect five different values: three pro-fertility norms and two political values. Political values regarding migration and environmental stewardship are often discussed from a left-to-right perspective, as will be the case in this article. I will also discuss the role of Christian political parties in general and, specifically, the Christian Democratic Party (CD). The main question asked in this article is:

How does the religiosity of young Norwegian evangelicals affect their social values and support for Christian political parties?

To help understand the young evangelicals in Norway, I will also make a comparison with young evangelicals in Sweden, as there are several similarities and some important differences. They share much of the same origins; a distinction is that most of the evangelical revivals happened inside the Lutheran church in Norway and saw the establishment of prayer houses, whilst the revival movement in Sweden mostly resulted in free churches (Halldorf 2020). Another difference of particular importance to this article is that the Christian Democratic Party in Sweden has changed its attitude towards migration from



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being open towards migration to advocating for a far stricter policy (Demker 2021). In other words, it now leans further to the right. In addition, I shall also make a comparison with young people in Norway in general. A quantitative comparison will be carried out on two political values, and a comparison of the remaining three political values and voting behavior will also be compared.

2. The Case of Norway

Norway is an interesting case to study because it is a secular country with an evangelical minority. When examining the ways in which evangelical youth in Norway relate to values and political questions, it is relevant first to highlight particular aspects that are key to understanding what is meant by 'evangelical' in the Norwegian context. The term 'evangelical' is rarely used in Norway and, as in other contexts, it is not straightforward to define to what extent a denomination is evangelical or not (Noll 2010). Historically, Norway is a Lutheran society, where Christianity has been the dominant religion for about 1000 years. Participation in the protestant reformation movement in Norway was a political decision in 1536. Until 1845, it was not legal for other churches to be established in Norway, and the Lutheran church was the state church until 2012. An official Norwegian Governmental Report (NOU 2013) introduced "a society open to religious and worldview diversity" as the ideal for how society should relate to different religions and denominations. Even though the former state church still has a strong position in the population and holds certain privileges, other religious groups, including evangelical denominations, officially have equal status in society (Breistein and Furseth 2017). The evangelical movements in Norway draw their origins from the revival movements that took place throughout the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. These revivals often challenged the majority church, but still, to a large extent, took place within the Church of Norway. One of the main reasons given for the internal nature of these revivals was Hans Nielsen Hauge, the most important revivalist in Norway, and his legacy. Even though the state and the church persecuted him, he strongly urged his followers to remain inside the state church and not establish communities outside the main church. These movements worked according to an inner mission strategy to renew the Lutheran state church from within, and they made a case-by-case decision as to whether the local priest was someone they could cooperate with or not. At the same time, a small number of the converted did leave the state church and established various free churches (Try 1986).

In Norway, as in the Nordic countries in general, the welfare state model holds a strong position. Drawing from a range of quantitative data, Inglehart (2021) argues that the success of the welfare state model leads to high levels of security that may explain why belief in God is so low in these societies. The welfare state model implies high state support for healthcare, education, childcare, and pensions, and is backed by both left- and right-wing political parties in Norway. Additionally, evangelical churches tend to support the welfare model. Historically, there has been a close relationship between the free churches and Norway's labor movement (Eidberg 2003). A similar relationship in the Swedish context has been well explained by Halldorf (2021), where he claims that evangelicals in Europe are more in the center of the political spectra than in the US. Throughout the twentieth century, the evangelicals and the labor movement gradually drifted apart (Rokkan 1967). This particularly accelerated during the 1970s, when there was a conflict between many Christian groups and the Social Democratic Party because of the liberalization of the abortion law (Botvar 2009). Starting as a regional political party in the western part of Norway in 1933, the Christian Democratic Party (CD) gradually became a stable national party in the center of Norwegian politics (Aardal 2000) after World War II. In 2018, the CD engaged in a major discussion over whether they should support a left- or right-wing government. A slight majority leaned towards the right, and the party became part of a conservative coalition government. In 2021, the coalition lost the election and resigned.

Norway also has a right-wing Christian Party with an unequivocal stance toward abortion and other pro-fertility norms. The party is quite new and small, securing its

first local representatives in 2011, and has never had representation in parliament. In the 2021 election, it gained support from 0.4 percent of the votes ([Valgdirektoratet 2021](#)). The party openly identifies with the Republican Party in the United States and supported Trump's presidency. As a right-wing political party, they also advocate for restrictive migration politics.

3. Being Evangelical in a Secular Society

Living in a secularized society, the young evangelicals in Norway need to navigate between the evangelical and the secular. Being evangelical means that they belong to a special subculture in society. A subculture functions as a network that affects what we do and how we feel, and shapes our attitudes ([Wright 1997](#)). Our convictions are formed in relation to other people who are important to us. If we are introduced to opinions not shared by the group we belong to, we seek to conform to the group ([MacKuen and Brown 1987](#)). As a distinct subculture, it is expected that young evangelicals see themselves as different from the rest of society. This involves personal conversions, giving the Bible authority, looking to Jesus as their savior, and the view that faith should have practical consequences for life ([Bebbington 1989](#)). At the same time, evangelical subgroups are part of a society where religion has relatively little influence on the societal level. In many parts of the world, there is a relationship between evangelicals and right-wing politics. Evangelicals who are politically conservative more often see a connection between their faith and the political sphere than evangelicals with moderate or liberal political attitudes ([Wilcox 1990](#)). In an earlier work, Norris and Inglehart also highlight the relationship between evangelicals and Christian political parties ([Norris and Inglehart 2011](#)).

As an evangelical, one must balance values that are seen as important in the subgroup and values that are important in society at large. In this article, I will focus on attitudes directed toward both the private and public spheres. To evangelicals, pro-fertility norms hold importance, and three issues in the survey are relevant: abortion, same-sex relationships, and cohabitating before marriage. Even though there are variations in views, according to research, evangelicals generally tend to support conservative family values ([Smith 2002](#)). On the other hand, Norwegian society is dominated by liberal stances on these questions. All these questions are politically relevant and have been debated in the parliament related to new laws and regulations. In 1978, the parliament passed a law that allowed for self-determined abortion after week twelve of pregnancy. In 1993, Norway became the second country in the world to establish a Partnership Act that regulates same-sex relations. Over the last few years, same-sex couples have gradually gained the same rights as heterosexuals, regarding marriage and adopting children. Cohabiting relationships are also regulated by law, and it is also rare to marry without living together first, especially among young people in Norway ([SSB 2012](#)). All in all, among Norwegian people in general, liberal attitudes toward pro-fertility norms dominate.

Among evangelicals, attitudes concerning migration are varied, both in Norway and internationally. For example, evangelicals in the United States, especially white evangelicals, tend to have restrictive views towards migration ([Melkonian-Hoover and Kellstedt 2019](#)). This restrictive attitude tends to be driven more by political and social factors than by faith, even if Melkonian-Hoover and Kellstedt indicate that church attendance can generally predict a positive attitude towards migration. Based on their reading of scripture and a focus on hospitality, some evangelicals support immigration.

This supportive attitude, while more of an exception in the United States, dominates in Magnus [Hagevi's](#) (2018) study of evangelicals in Sweden. He finds that evangelicals are less xenophobic than the general population and explains this by a positive correlation between church attendance and openness towards migrants. The same seems to be the case in the United Kingdom, where members of evangelical churches are more open to migration than the average population ([Gaddini 2022](#)). Among Norwegians, attitudes towards migrants and migration vary a lot. As in other Nordic countries, the most negative attitudes are directed toward Muslim immigrants ([Lövheim et al. 2018](#)). Hans Morten [Haugen](#) (2017)

finds that young people in Norway with active involvement in the church are more positive towards people of other faiths than nominal church members. This positive attitude is not new; in Sweden, Christian voters are generally more positive towards migrants, refugees, and the environment than the average population (Bjereld and Gilljam 1991).

When it comes to environmentalism, several studies claim that evangelicals are less concerned about the environment than the general population (Schwadel and Johnson 2017). As far back as 1967, Lynn White claimed that Christianity was to blame for the environmental problems of today because of the theological principle of humanity ruling over nature (White 1967). Building on White's theory, Andrew Greeley (1993) shows that evangelicals have less concern for the environment than others and that there is a significant correlation between biblical literalism and disregard for the environment. This is not because of Bible reading in itself, but rather due to a rigid attitude on how religion should be understood. The importance of the view of the Bible is also highlighted in other studies as being crucial in explaining traditional and conservative attitudes (Smith et al. 2018). This paradigm of evangelicals against the environment has been challenged by evangelical scholars in Norway, who strongly argue that a Christian life should be a motivation to take care of the environment (Tangen 2020; Jakobsen 2022). Empirical studies from Europe also nuance the picture. In a newer study focused on 22 European countries, Hagevi shows that both protestant and secular groups have lower-than-average concern for the environment and that Catholics have a more positive attitude towards the environment. Personal religious involvement did not affect people's attitudes toward the environment (Hagevi 2014). In a study comparing Sweden and the United States, Hagevi further criticizes White, showing that evangelicals in Sweden are concerned about the environment. On the other hand, parts of the evangelical movement in the United States are quite negative. He claims that to understand attitudes toward the environment, the cultural context has to be taken into account (Hagevi 2008). A comparison between Norway and the United States also shows a more positive attitude toward the environment among churchgoers in Norway than in the United States (Botvar 1998).

4. Results

In this section, I will see how religious factors, such as attendance, faith, and the role of the Bible, affect young evangelicals' values towards pro-fertility norms, the environment, and migration. I will also see how they relate to political parties, with a special focus on Christian parties.

As stated, the evangelical youth population sample was based on participation in a Christian event. The data show that the sample has a very high level of church attendance in general, meaning that this was not just a specific or isolated visit to an event. Eighty-three percent attend some kind of church activity at least once a week.

Only 6 percent of the young evangelicals attend less than once a month. There is a tendency for young people to attend more often as they get older, that is, when they are in their 20s. Even though more girls than boys attend church, the boys who attend are more active than the girls. The majority find the Bible important (28%) or very important (56%) in their lives. Those who attend often find the Bible more important than those who attend less often. The pattern is similar in looking at how important faith is for how they live their lives: 29 percent find it important, and 59 percent very important. Girls find both a bit more important than boys, and both increase in importance with age.

Table 1 shows that the three factors measuring pro-fertility norms all point in a conservative or traditional direction. The respondents are most clearly restrictive when it comes to abortion, and almost half of the sample strongly disagree with abortion based on socio-economic reasons. The majority also disagree, or strongly disagree, with the statement that living together before marriage is unproblematic and that people who are in a same-sex relationship can have a leading role in a Christian organization. There is a small group holding the opposite attitudes. Regarding the environment, almost half of the young evangelicals are uncertain about their own views, and very few have strong

opinions. Regarding migration, the majority express a view that migration is not a threat to Norwegian culture. In short, young evangelicals tend to be conservative on questions related to pro-fertility norms, such as abortion, cohabitation, and same-sex relations; they are uncertain about environmental protection, and they have an open view of migration.

Table 1. Young evangelicals in Norway. Political attitudes, percent.

	Abortion (Wrong)	Cohabitation (Problematic)	Same-Sex Relations (Negative)	Environment (Reduce Living Standards)	Migration (No Threat to National Culture)
Strongly disagree	6.8	11.8	16.2	8.6	2.3
Disagree	8.5	9.1	9.7	19.8	3.3
Partly agree/do not now	19.0	19.4	20.6	43.1	16.0
Agree	22.0	31.5	22.3	20.6	33.3
Strongly agree	43.8	28.2	31.2	7.8	44.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Variable cohabitation, same-sex relations, and migration have been reversed in this table.

Table 2 summarizes five regression analyses, where each of the five political questions is the dependent variable, and gender, age, church attendance, and importance of the Bible and the Christian faith are used as independent variables.

Table 2. Young evangelicals in Norway. Linear regression analyses with five political values as dependent variables. Pearson's r.

	Regression 1: Abortion (Wrong)	Regression 2: Cohabitation (Problematic)	Regression 3: Same-Sex (Negative)	Regression 4: Environment (Reduce Living Standards)	Regression 5: Migration (No Threat to National Culture)
Gender (1 = male 2 = female)	−0.086 *	−0.037	−0.168 ***	0.160 ***	0.096 *
Age (15–25)	0.074 *	0.143 ***	0.161 ***	−0.111 **	0.072
Attendance	00.67	0.207 ***	0.143 ***	0.003	00.11
Bible	0.413 ***	0.277 ***	0.313 ***	0.093	−0.006
Faith	0.080	0.144	0.055	−0.087	−0.003
Explained variance	0.291	0.341	0.293	0.045	0.120

*** sign on 0.001-level, ** sign on 0.01-level, * sign on 0.05-level. Variable cohabitation, same-sex, and migration have been reversed in this table.

The regression analyses reveal that the social background variables are less important than the religious variables when explaining attitudes toward political questions related to pro-fertility norms. The view of the Bible is an important factor in explaining restrictive attitudes toward abortion. The Bible variable also plays an important role in explaining a conservative attitude toward cohabitation and same-sex relations. Still, here also, attendance (higher attendance = more conservative), age (older = more conservative), and, in terms of same-sex relations, also gender (female = more conservative) play a role. The more general term 'faith' is not significant; in other words, it is not faith in itself that is important, it is how this faith is expressed in the importance of the Bible and attendance in Church that are significant. The regression analysis also reveals that religious factors are not important for the respondents' attitudes toward either the environment or migration. Females are more concerned with the environment, which is slightly more important for the youngest, but the explained variance for both environment and migration is very low.

Table 3 compares the scores on variables between three samples: young evangelicals in Norway and Sweden, and young people in Norway in general. The first three questions are not in the Norwegian Election Survey (2017). However, Norwegians tend to be quite liberal in these matters. Comparing the findings between Norway and Sweden, young evangelicals have a more conservative attitude toward abortion in Norway than in Sweden.

The attitude towards cohabitation and same-sex relations are the same in both Norway and Sweden. The Norwegian evangelicals are least concerned about the environment; they are less concerned than both the general youth in Norway and the Swedish evangelicals who would be most willing to reduce their living standards if they knew it was beneficial for the environment. This table also strongly emphasizes that the young evangelicals in Norway are not xenophobic; they are a bit less open than the young evangelicals in Sweden, and far more open than young people in Norway in general. In sum, the young evangelicals in Norway have a similar conservative attitude toward pro-fertility norms as the young Swedish evangelicals. They are less concerned about the environment than both other groups, and, together with the young Swedish evangelicals, they are significantly less afraid of negative consequences regarding migration than young people in Norway in general.

Table 3. Comparison of political attitudes among evangelicals in Norway, evangelicals in Sweden, and youth in general in Norway (Means 1–5).

Attitude	Evangelicals Norway	Evangelicals Sweden	Youth Norway *
Abortion (wrong)	3.88	3.19	-
Cohabitation (problematic)	2.55	2.55	-
Same-sex relations (negative)	2.43	2.43	-
Environment (reduce living standards)	2.99	3.7	3.36
Migration (no threat to national culture)	3.15	3.39	1.27

* Norwegian Election Survey (2017). Variable cohabitation, same-sex relations, and migration have been reversed in this table.

The last part of the analysis focuses on how age, gender, religious variables, and values affect political party preference. First, it is interesting to look at the role a specific political party plays in this respect.

Among the young evangelicals, 66 percent have the Christian Democrats (CD) as their first choice, and, out of those who did not have it as their first choice, 47 percent of those who initially selected left-wing parties opted for the CD as their second choice, and 70 percent of those who had right-wing parties in the first place selected the CD as their second choice.

During the parliamentary election in 2021, this party received 3.8 percent of the votes in total. Looking at how young people voted, they received even less support (Table 4). This means that young evangelicals are voting very differently from young people in general. The strong support for this party among young evangelicals is followed by support for the conservative party (9%). Of the parties on the left, the Centre Party receives 7 percent, and the Green Party 4 percent. The remaining parties on the left receive 8 percent together. The main second choices comprise the CD or parties close to this one, such as the Conservative Party (35%), the Centre Party (16%), and the Green party (5%). As a second choice, the more right-wing-oriented party, The Christian Party, receives no more than 6 percent. This indicates that young evangelicals are reluctant to vote for right-wing parties, even when these have an explicit Christian profile. The Christian Democratic party describes itself as being in the center of the political spectrum, but leaning towards the right.

What are the party preferences of the Swedish evangelicals? It is not possible to make a strict comparison of the political parties, but it is still possible to see some clear differences. Even though the Christian Democrats (23%) play an important role as the largest political party for the young Swedish evangelicals, this is much less important than for the Norwegians. Additionally, the Centre Party (22%) and the Conservative party (22%) play a more important role in Sweden than in Norway. In addition to the lower support for CD in Sweden, the number of people who do not know who to vote for is also interesting: in Sweden, this is 41 percent, while, for those who are old enough to vote in Norway, it is only 12 percent. This clearly shows that CD is a much more dominant choice among the young evangelicals in Norway than for the Swedish young evangelicals, who are much more split and uncertain about party choice than their Norwegian counterpart.

Table 4. Affiliation with a political party. Young evangelicals and young people in Norway in general, percent.

Political Party	Young Evangelicals First Choice	Young Evangelicals Second Choice	Young People in General *
Red	1	1	6
Socialistic Left	3	2	18
Green	4	12	8
Labour	4	4	19
Centre	7	15	10
Liberal	1	4	10
Christian Democratic	66	24	2
Conservative	9	31	13
Progress	2	1	13
The Christian Party	3	6	

* Statistics Norway (SSB 2021): General election 2021, 18–21 years.

Even though there is one dominant political party among the young evangelicals in Norway, the left-to-right scale is still helpful in understanding some of the nuances in voting behavior. Table 5 shows a regression analysis, with the left-right political scale as the dependent variable. However, since one political party is so dominant in the sample, a regression analysis with voting for the CD, or not, has been carried out as a dummy variable. The differences this makes in the regression will be commented on.

Table 5. Young evangelicals in Norway. Regression analyses with left-to-right party preference scale and voting for CD, or not, as dependent variables.

Independent Variable	Left to Right (1–10)	Voting for CD (1.0)
2 = female	0.033	0.005
Age (15–25)	−0.119 **	−0.037
Bible important	−0.005	0.034
Faith important	0.071	0.004
Attendance	0.098 *	0.056
Abortion (not wrong)	−0.160 **	−0.198 ***
Cohabitation (unproblematic)	−0.057	−0.147 *
Same-sex relations (positive)	−0.125 *	−0.123 *
Environment (reduce living standards)	−0.231 ***	0.023
Migration (no threat to national culture)	0.233 ***	0.126 ***
Explained variance	0.245	0.198

*** sign on 0.001-level, ** sign on 0.01-level, * sign on 0.05-level. Variable abortion and migration have been reversed in this table. * The most common way to create a left-to-right scale is to include it in the survey; this was not done in this case. Therefore, this proxy has been created from low to high, based on Stortingsvalgundersøkelsen from SSB (2019): Red, Socialistic Left, Green, Labor, Centre, Liberal, Christian Democratic, Conservative, and Progress. The last party, The Christian Party, is not in the parliament and is not placed on this scale by Stortingsvalgundersøkelsen. As they define themselves as a right-wing party, for the purposes of this article, it is placed to the right of the Progress Party. The objections against creating the scale in this way are acknowledged, though it is meaningful for this article to be able to run left and right analyses. Voting for CD, or not, is a dichotomous dependent variable, and an ordinary OLS regression has been used, even though it is debated (Hellevik 2009).

Among the young evangelicals, age and gender seem to have relatively little impact on political behavior. There is a tendency for the youngest to lean more to the left than those in their 20s. This could mean that young evangelicals become more conservative with age. In terms of significant effects after control for other independent variables, religious variables do not play an important role, except for attendance, which does have a significant but small effect. The most important variables are environmentalism and attitudes toward migration, where four out of five have a significant effect. This means that a traditional view of pro-fertility norms pushes in the direction of the right. Support for migration and the environment has the opposite effect and pushes the evangelicals toward the left side of the spectrum.

If we use voting for the CD, or not, as a dependent variable, the picture becomes a little different. Environmental support has no significant effect on voting for the CD party. To summarize, we see that, in general, conservative attitudes toward pro-fertility norms go together with voting to the right. Most important in this respect is a restrictive view on abortion, which also is the most important issue for the CD. On the other hand, support for the environment and a positive view of immigration points to the left. Support for the environment did not play a role in voting for the CD, while a positive attitude towards migration did.

To sum up, this article shows that most young evangelicals hold conservative or middle positions on pro-fertility norms. Within the group of young evangelicals, those who find the Bible, belief, and attendance most important also hold the most conservative attitudes. This is in line with what could be expected. There are, however, no significant relationships between the religious variables and social issues, such as migration and environmentalism. Having positive attitudes towards migration and environmental protection correlates with voting leftwards. When it comes to voting for the Christian Democrats, as most evangelicals indicate that they do, only migration attitudes point in this direction. Both pro-fertility norms and liberal views on migration correlate with voting for the CD.

5. Materials and Methods

This paper's empirical data consists of a survey among those who had attended one of the youth camps/festivals held by evangelical organizations in Norway in 2019. The young people affiliate with different organizations, have been categorized into three general groups. First, there is the non-Lutheran free churches encompassing the Pentecostal (19%), Baptist (8%), and Mission Church (8%). Second, there is the Lutheran prayer house movement with formal ties to the folk church, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) (29%), and Inner Mission Federation (ImF) (5%). Third, there is a Lutheran Free Church (13%), holding to a Lutheran theology but separated from the former state church. There is also a fourth group that participated at an event held by one of the organizations mentioned but who self-identify primarily as part of the Church of Norway (10%), and lastly, 8% who had another religious background, or did not want to answer.

The data were collected between June and August 2020 using a digital survey. The survey was sent to 2,162 young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who had participated in an event or camp during the summer of 2019. The majority of the sample is aged between 17 and 20. Altogether, 825 people responded. Of these, 164 were excluded because they did not give informed consent (40) or completed less than half of the questionnaire (124). This left 661 respondents (response rate 31%), of which 37 percent were males and 63 percent were females.

The five questions that will be focused on from the questionnaire are Likert scale variables with values ranging from one to five; 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The pro-fertility statements are (1) "People living in same-sex relations can hold a leading position in church"; (2) "It is unproblematic that people live together before marriage"; (3) "It is wrong to have an abortion even if the family is poor and cannot support another child". The other two factors measured attitudes towards the environment and migration, using these statements: "I would agree on a lower payment if I knew the money would be used to help the environment"; and, regarding migration, "Migration is a serious threat to the Norwegian culture." The political party preference variable was formulated as follows: "If you had the right to vote, and there was a government election tomorrow, what party would you vote for?" The respondents then indicated their first and second choice from a list of all parties currently in the parliament, plus the Christian Party of particular interest for this article. The empirical data were analyzed using cross-tables, comparing means, and linear regression analysis.

This data material is compared with two other data sets. One is a survey conducted in 2021 among 205 bible school students in Sweden from ten different evangelical bible schools; 302 people attended, so, even though the total number is a bit low, the response

rate of 68% is good. Most of the respondents are 19 (46%) or 20 (28%) years old, and 60 percent are female and 40 percent are male. This survey used the same questions (in a Swedish translation) and also asked about voting behavior, in relation to the Swedish parliament (Zeiffert 2022).

The other data source was Stortingsvalgundersøkelsen 2017 (The Norwegian Election Survey 2019), where I have analyzed the 285 respondents between 18 and 25 years old, among whom 4 percent are members of a free church, and 57 percent are members of the Church of Norway. Seventy percent of the respondents never or rarely attend religious meetings, and only five percent attend at least once per week.

6. Discussion

The young evangelicals in Norway taking part in this survey have a high level of religious practice, and these practices affect their values in different ways. A high level of church attendance among young evangelicals shows that the religious organizations they are part of are important to them. The group they belong to shapes their understanding and attitudes, and the longer they stay members, the more they share the group's values. This may explain why young evangelicals in their 20s are more conservative and less uncertain about their attitudes than the youngest. Being active in an evangelical subgroup and reading the Bible on a regular basis, to a large extent, explains their support for pro-fertility norms. A possible explanation for this tendency, not explored in this article, could also be that a large portion of those who disagree leaves the organization, as there is a high number of dropouts (Zeiffert 2018). So far, this indicates a strong subgroup that differs from the majority society and is in line with traditional evangelical stands. According to Inglehart (2021), conservative attitudes toward pro-fertility values lead to a more right-oriented political view. On this basis, we would expect to find prominent skepticism toward migration and environmental care. The regression analysis, however, shows that religious variables do not affect attitudes toward migration and the environment. Even the most active ones have liberal attitudes toward migration. The lack of clear tendencies regarding the environment can indicate two things. First, there is not much trace of an anti-environmental attitude among young evangelicals. Secondly, the effort from Norwegian theologians to create an eco-theology for evangelicals is not an important part of the young evangelicals' attitude. This leads us toward a more nuanced, complicated picture of young evangelicals. An interesting question for further research could also seek to explain the difference between the young Norwegian and Swedish evangelicals. Several evangelical churches have a high proportion of migrants. This is especially the case with the Baptist and Pentecostal churches (Eriksen 2023). However, churches with a low proportion of immigrants are also positive about immigration. On the other hand, young evangelicals have conservative attitudes towards pro-fertility values that collide with the dominant views in society.

Norway has two political parties that label themselves as Christian parties. We could expect, based on Inglehart, that, considering their pro-fertility values and the ongoing evangelical Trump debate, evangelicals would lean more towards the political right. The small right-wing Christian Party in Norway has an unequivocal stance toward abortion and other pro-fertility norms. However, there is almost no support for this political party among young evangelicals. As a right-wing political party, they also advocate for restrictive migration politics. This attitude is not shared by the young evangelicals in Norway and is a reason to avoid right-wing parties. They have found 'their own' political party in the center of the political spectrum, the Christian Democrats. The young evangelicals in Norway highly support this small political party, and, in this respect, the CD is also their tool for influencing society. Even though this is a minor political party, its strategic position in Norwegian politics gives them an influence that exceeds what could be expected based on its size alone. When the margins are small between the left and right majority, this party has been at the tipping point on several occasions, most recently in 2018, when abortion was high on the agenda.

A comparison between young evangelicals in Norway and Sweden highlights, even more, the role of the CD in Norway. The young Swedish evangelicals, despite having similar values, have a much weaker connection to the CD party in Sweden; their support from young evangelicals is one-third of the support the CD gained from this group in Norway. One possible explanation for this difference could be that the Norwegian CD party has a liberal stance toward migration, in contrast to their Swedish counterpart.

The young evangelicals in Norway have a conservative theology, visualized by pro-fertility values. These values draw them towards the political right. At the same time, they hold a liberal attitude towards migration, which draws them towards the political left. The CD is the only party that combines these two issues and, therefore, explains why they gain such massive support from young evangelicals in Norway.

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