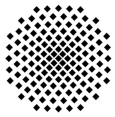
Prof. Dr. André Bächtiger
Institute for Social Sciences
Department of Political Theory and
Empirical Research of Democracy



Universität Stuttgart

Seminar Paper

Ethical Positions and Decision Making

Examining the (gendered) effects of Ethical Positions on Moral Decision Making using the Trolley Experiment

Fabio Votta
Student ID: 2891518

Marlon Schumacher
Student ID: 2954594

Quynh Nga Nguyen
Student ID: 2949965

Abigail Alexander-Haw
Student ID: 3197952

Matthias Rosenthal
Student ID: 2882873

Nora Rohr
Student ID: 2955027

Annemarie Hertner
Student ID: 2947556

Rosa Seitz
Student ID: 2876533

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate support for populist parties in Europe. While populism is an intensely debated topic, most scholarship is plagued with conceptual conflations between different variants of populism.

To avoid such conceptual confusions, this paper adopts a minimalist definition to identify core features that all subtypes of populism have in common, namely anti-establishment attitudes as well as their opposition to globalization.

While previous authors used economic and cultural factors to determine support for populism, we propose a theoretical model that distinguishes between *traditionalist and progressive populism*. This model involves two steps:

In order to operationalize our conceptual considerations, we use the *Chapel Hill Expert Survey* dataset and combine it with *European Social Survey* data to identify respondents that vote for and/or identify with populist parties.

We estimate a multinomial logistic regression to test our hypotheses. Our models lend support for our theoretical expectations. Economically deprived individuals are more likely to support either variant of populism. Yet individuals who hold traditional values are more likely to support traditionalist populism, whereas the effect goes in the opposite direction for the support of progressive populism.

Further research might be able to build upon our conceptualization and give more attention to the different variants of populism, so as to not conflate the distinct explanatory frameworks that come along with them.

Seminar: Political Framing

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1 Introduction

The following Chapter 2 discusses our theoretical framework and classification of European populist parties, as well as some of the general challenges when it comes to quantifying and analyzing populism in Europe. In Chapter 3, the used research methods are introduced and the classification of European parties is done with the help of k-means clustering. Afterwards, Chapter 4 reports on the multinomial logistic regression and its results. Finally, the conclusion (Chapter 5) gives a summary of the results and derives implications for further research.

2 Theory

3 Methods and Data

3.1 Online Experiment

The online survey-experiment was conducted over a period of one week. The studied subjects were chosen beforehand through dispension of digital invitations by members of the project group. This way three hundred subjects were selected. As a result of the selection method the sample reflects a very high percentage of students as well as a very low age and a political centre-left attitude on average (see below).

The pooled subjects were randomized into three groups each receiving a different treatment in between the first and the second query of a decision in one of two ethcial dilemmas. The two different dilemmas were the described ‚trolley-problem' and the ‚fat man-problem' (see attachement for descriptions). These two dilemmas were distributed randomly among the three treatment-groups.

It should be noted though that the randomized assignment of subjects to one of the three treatment-/control-groups was flawed. This can be derived from a comparison of the mean-values of this studies main-variables: The compared mean-values by groups for the dependent variable in dichotomous (?) and continous forms, as well as the variables for gender, age and the primary indepent variables Idealism and Relativism show some significant differences (see below). The following analysis should therefore be interpreted with caution and keep in mind possible effects of non-random group-assignment.

Chosen subjects got to read a insertion text and had to fill in a survey regarding their general ethical position (Forsyth 1980) as well as their personality and political attitude. The they were asked to make a first decision in one of the two ethical dilemmas via dichotomous Yes/No choice and continous tendency-rating (towards intervening or staying passive). Afterwards each of the three groups received a treatment:

- The first group, which comes closest to a ‚control group', had to read a short text conerning ethics (see attachement).
- In the second group each subject received identical utilitarian and deontological arguments. Three arguments each argued for or against an intervention in the ethical dilemmas (see attachement).
- The third group participated in a one-week-long asynchronous dialog on a digital platform. "Smartopinion" allowed the participants to post and comment their own arguments for or against any decision in the ethical dilemma or comment on one of 6 pro/contra-arguments (3 each utilitarian/deontological) which were posted beforehand by the project group. The discussion was moderated by project members who didn't intervene in the dialog at any given point.

After these treatments the subjects were once again asked for their decision in their respective ehtical dilemma in the forms of choice and rating and answered a questionnaire concerning their socio-dempographic background.

3.2 Dataset

The resulting dataset consists of 93 variables and data from 300 subjects. The studied sample depicts a high percentage of students (approximately 92 percent) and therefore reflects a low age (24 years) a political centre-left attitude (4.7 on a scale from 1 to 10) and a relatively high political interest (3.2 on a scale from 1 to 4) on average. The exact population cannot be determined, because of arbitrary selection mechanisms within some steps of the research process (dispension of invitations, reaction to invitations etc.). The interpretation of any results from this study should therefore be carried out with caution, even with respect to the population of german students/students from Stuttgart.

3.3 Operationialization and Factor Analysis

The factors under study were operationalized as follows:

The dependent variable, the decision in one of two ethical dilemmas, was gathered in the form of a dichotomous choice between Interevention and Passivity and a continous tendency on a scale from 1 (Pro-Passivity) to 11 (Pro-Intervention). The main independent variables, the different ethical ideologies of the subjects under study, were gathered as german versions of the twenty ‚Ethical-Position'-items originally developed by Forsyth (1980).

These items ask the respondent for their reaction to ethical statements concerning one of the two dimensions (Idealism and Relativism) identified by Forsyth, on a scale from 1 ‚Completely disagree' to 9 ‚Completely agree' (Forsyth 1980: 178).

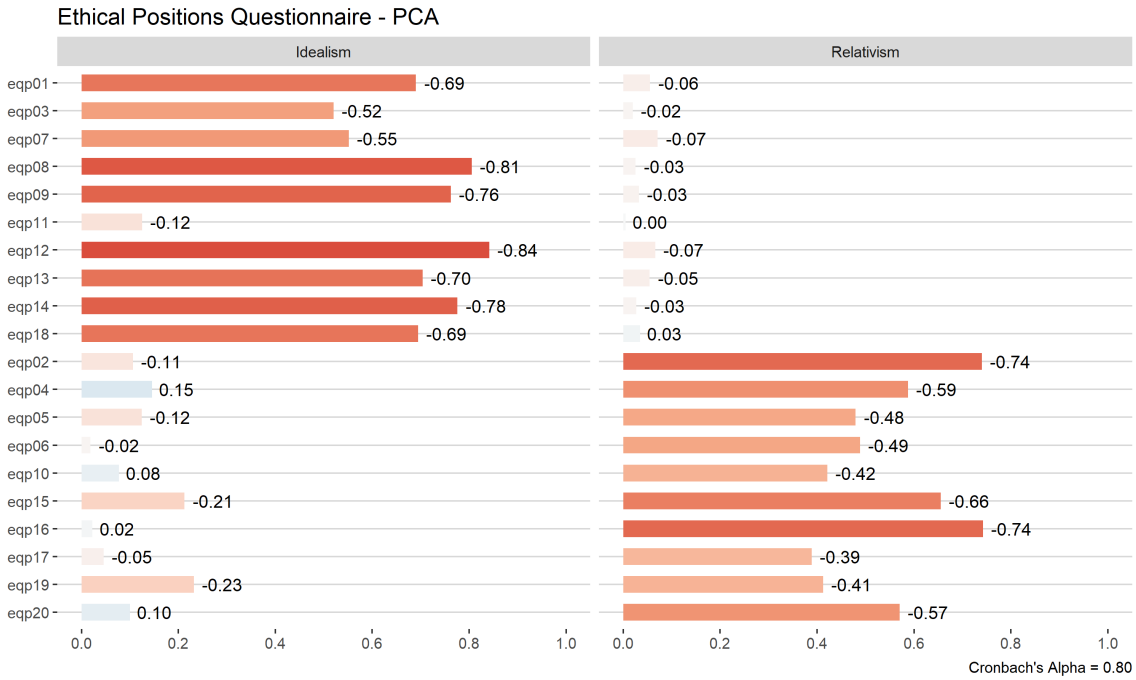
One example for such a (Idealism-)statement is:

> "A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree" (Forsyth 1980: 178).

The used translation of the ‚Ethical Position Questionnaire' was taken from Strack and Gennerich (2007: 13) (see attachement). To validate and extract the two dimensions, ‚Idealism' and ‚Relativism', from the data, a Explorative Factor Analysis (Principal Component Analysis) was conducted and indices, each consisting of their dimensions 10 variables, were formed (see below). The selected control variables were age (continuous), gender (dichotomous) and frequency of church attendance from 1 ‚More than once a week' to 6 ‚Never'.

In order to validate the two dimensions Idealism and Relativism, from the Ethical Positions Questionnaire, a factor analysis with the rotation method varimax was performed.

Figure 1: Principal Component Analysis



N = 278. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

The factor analysis (Figure 1) shows that the variables of the ethical positions questionaire load very well without any cross-loads (cut off value: 0.40). Only the loading of eqp11 is too low (-0.12) to take into account. With the remaining variables the variables Idealism and Relativism were created.

3.4 Randomization and Descriptive Statistics

This section will introduce some basic descriptive statistics of the used variables. Table 1 shows summary statistics for the used variables.

Figure 2 shows a comparison between the experimental groups by age, gender, Idealism and Relativism. As mentioned before, the randomization of the groups was flawed. Regarding the comparison between the experimental groups by age and gender, the differences are significant. The control group has a women proportion of over 52%, whereas only 41% of the discussion group are women. In addition, there is a strong outlier in the control group with over 50 years in the age.

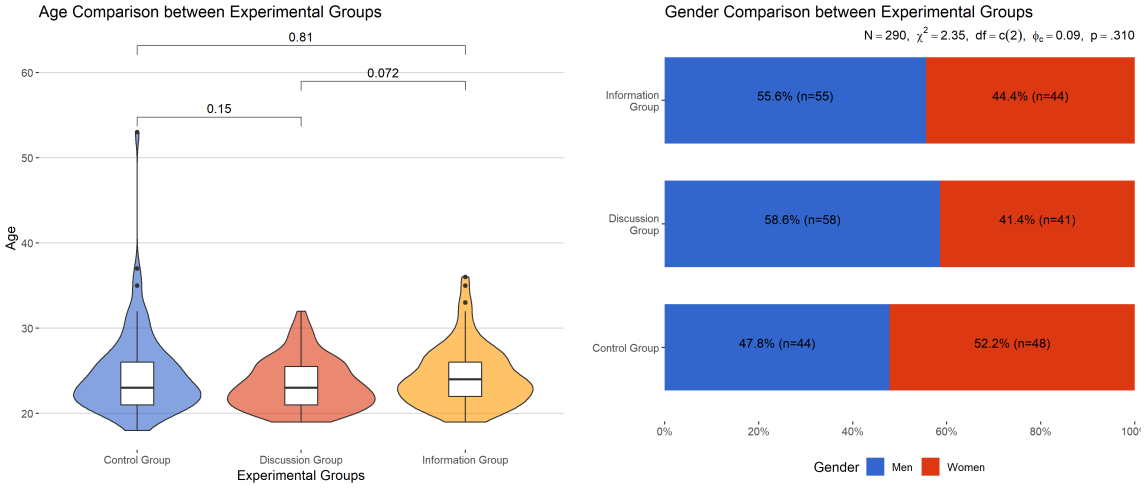
Moreover, there are also significant differences between the experimental groups regarding the main independent variables Idealism and Relativism. Concerning this issue, the following analysis should be interpreted with caution.

When it comes to the question of whether it is morally justifiable to switch the track or even push a

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	Skew	Kurt
Switch Track T1	290	5.76	2.91	6	1	11	-0.03	-0.90
Switch Track T2	290	5.56	2.91	6	1	11	0.01	-0.94
Push Person T1	290	4.29	2.83	4	1	11	0.55	-0.72
Push Person T2	290	4.18	2.86	4	1	11	0.60	-0.64
Idealism	290	0	1	0.18	-3.40	1.73	-0.86	0.37
Relativism	290	0	1	0.11	-3.21	2.34	-0.35	0.02
Gender	290	1.46	0.50	1	1	2	0.17	-1.98
Age	289	24.09	3.86	23	18	53	2.14	10.52
Church Attendance	278	1.87	1.04	2	1	6	1.38	2.06
Control Group	290	0.32	0.47	0	0	1	0.78	-1.39
Discussion Group	290	0.34	0.47	0	0	1	0.67	-1.56
Information Group	290	0.34	0.47	0	0	1	0.67	-1.56

Figure 2: Randomization - Sociodemographics

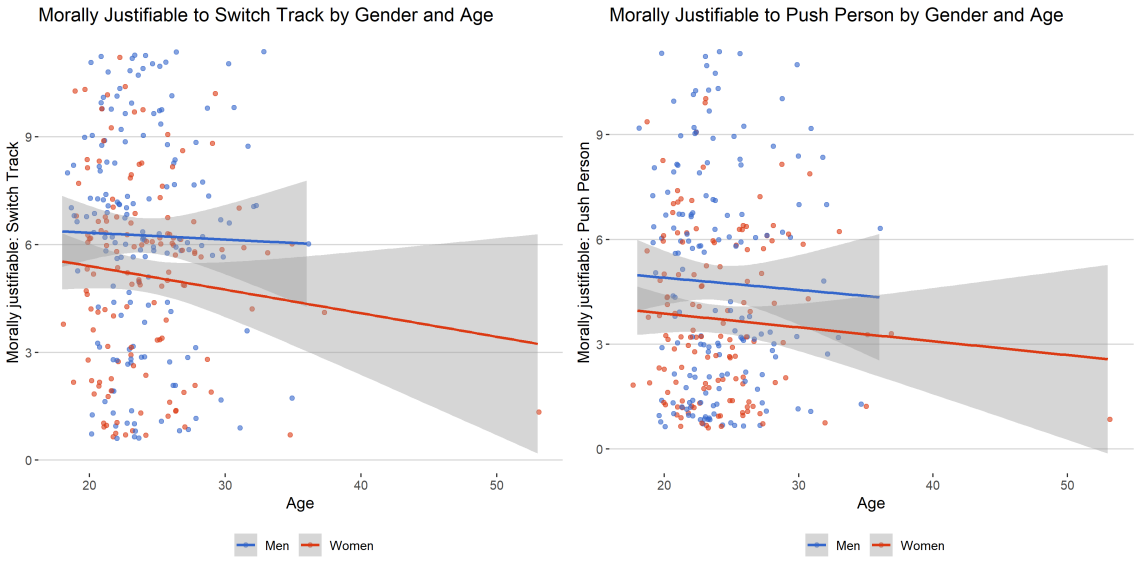


N = 278. P-Values are reported. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

person, there are differences in age and gender (see Figure 3).

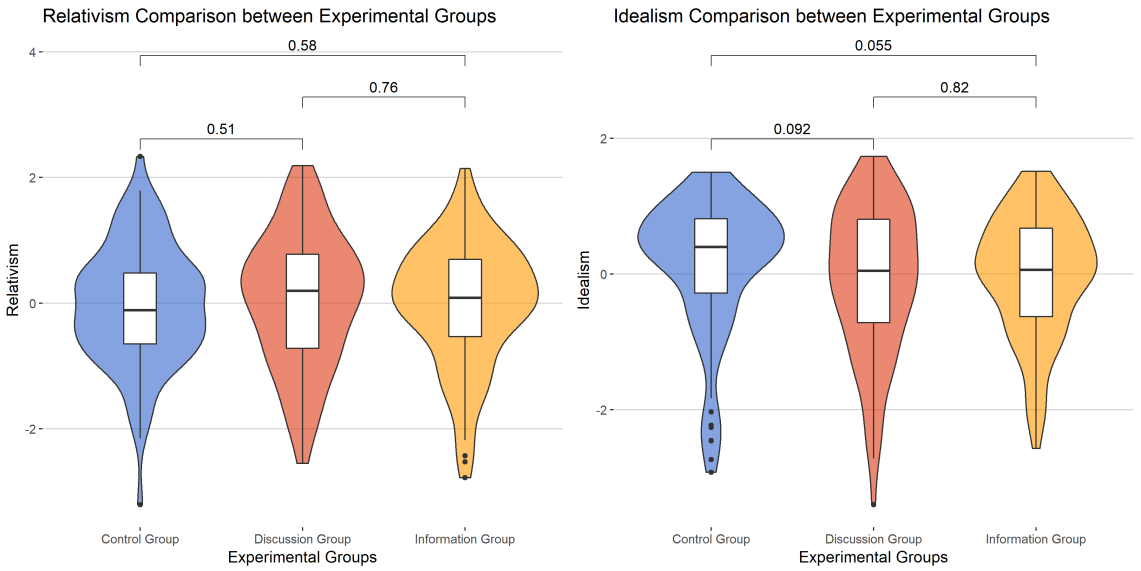
Older people as well as female persons consider both scenarios less morally justified. A comparison of the means, regarding the gender, the differences between men and women are clearly significant in both scenarios. However, comparing the two scenarios shows that switching tracks is more likely to be morally justified than pushing a person.

Figure 3: Randomization - Dependent Variables



N = 278. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Figure 4: Randomization - Independent Variables



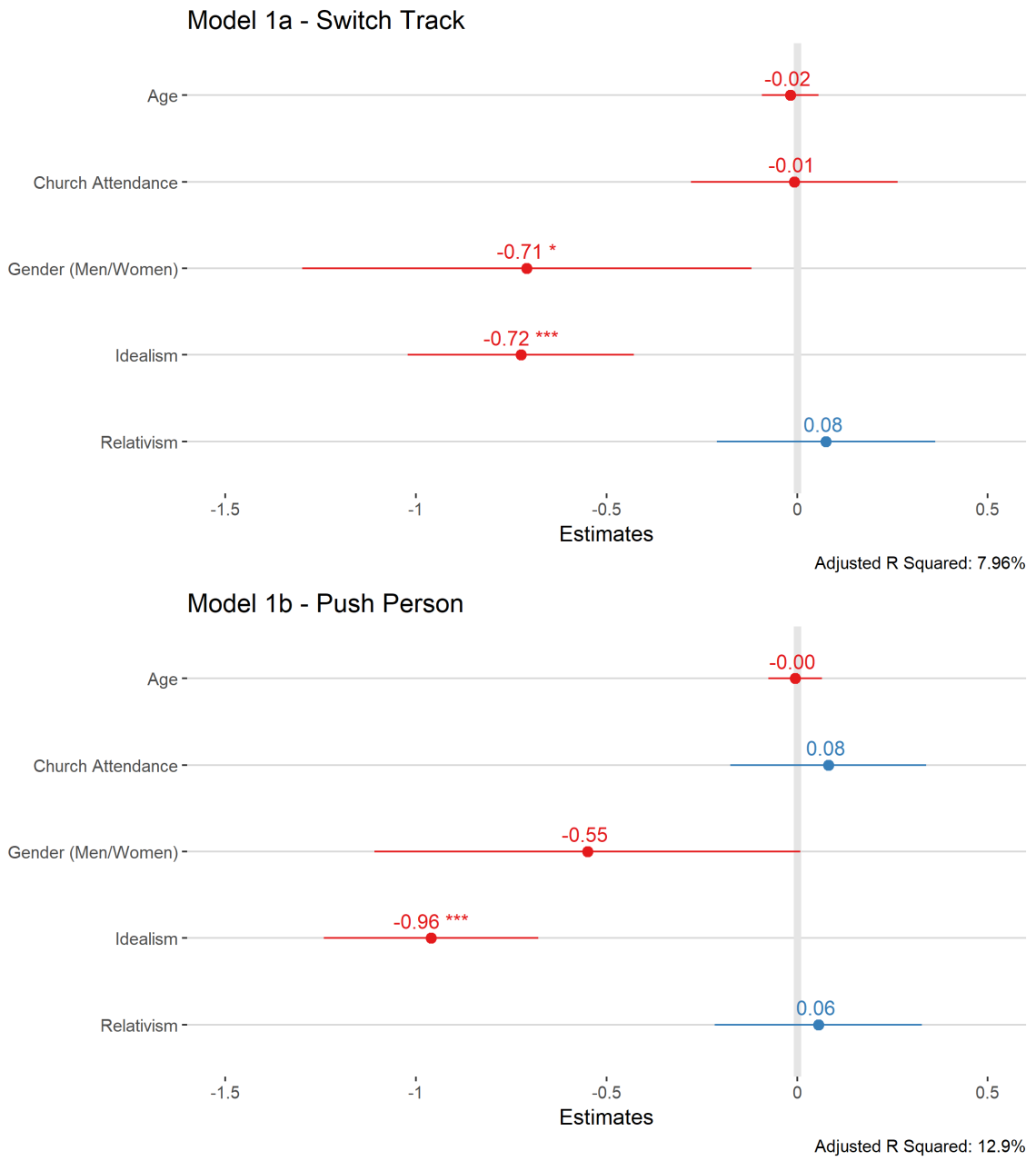
N = 278. P-Values are reported. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

4 Analysis

In this Section, the regression models are reported and interpreted in regard to their implications for the previously derived hypotheses. In sum, XX models were estimated, which are depicted in coefficient plots (see plot XX to XX).

First, the models with the dependent variable at time t1 (before the treatment) are analyzed. Model 1a shows the results for scenario 1, model 1b for scenario 2. The factor idealism has a strong negative effect, meaning that the more idealistic a person is, the less they tend to switch and push (Model

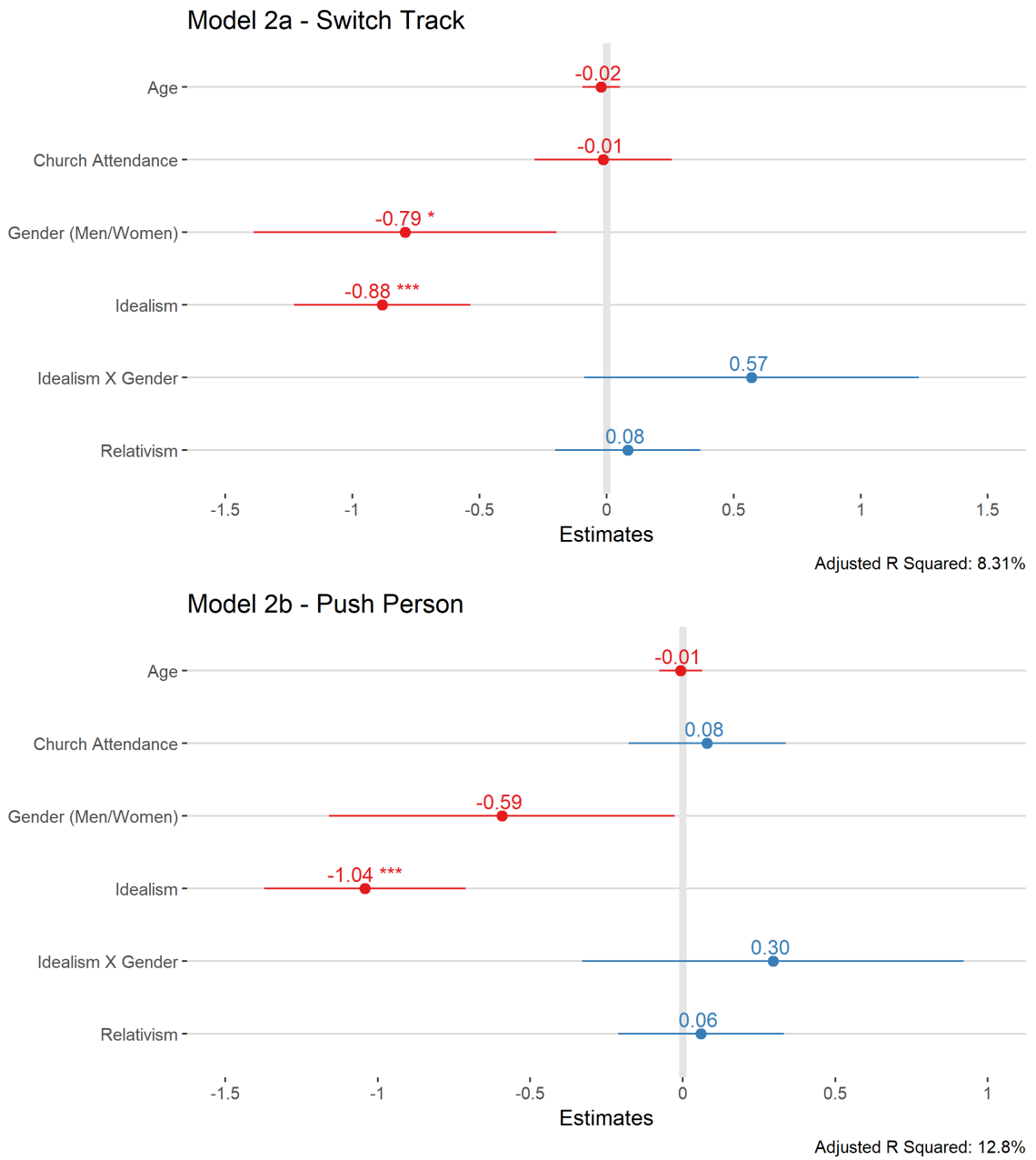
Figure 5: Models 1



$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

1a: b = xx , p< 0.001 and Model 1b: b = xx , p< 0.001) . Relativism in turn has a positive sign, but is statistically insignificant and has only a marginal coefficient size (Model 1a: b = and Model 1b: b =). It has to be noted that the Rˆ2 statistics are not particularly large, indicating only 9, 6% and 14,5% explained variance of the dependent variable for the Models 1a and 1b, respectively. Nevertheless, for the previously derived hypotheses H1a, which states that, the more idealist an individual, the less likely it will switch/push, confirming evidence can be noted. The same holds true for H1b, which assumes that relativism has no effect on an individual's decision to switch/push.

Figure 6: Models 2 - Idealism



$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. N = 278. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

As a next step, models with the dependent variable after the treatment are estimated (t2). Here, we control for the variable at the time t1, which means that the other independent variables only predict the variance of the dependent variable which differs from the one at t1. Positive coefficients indicate opinion change in the direction of higher values on the dependent variable, negative coefficients in turn indicate negative opinion change. In general, the R^2 values in all of the t2-models therefore indicate a high amount of explained variance, due to the fact that the judgment at the time t2 is highly dependent on the judgment at t1, wich is included in the models.

Figure 7: Models 2 - Idealism Interaction Plots

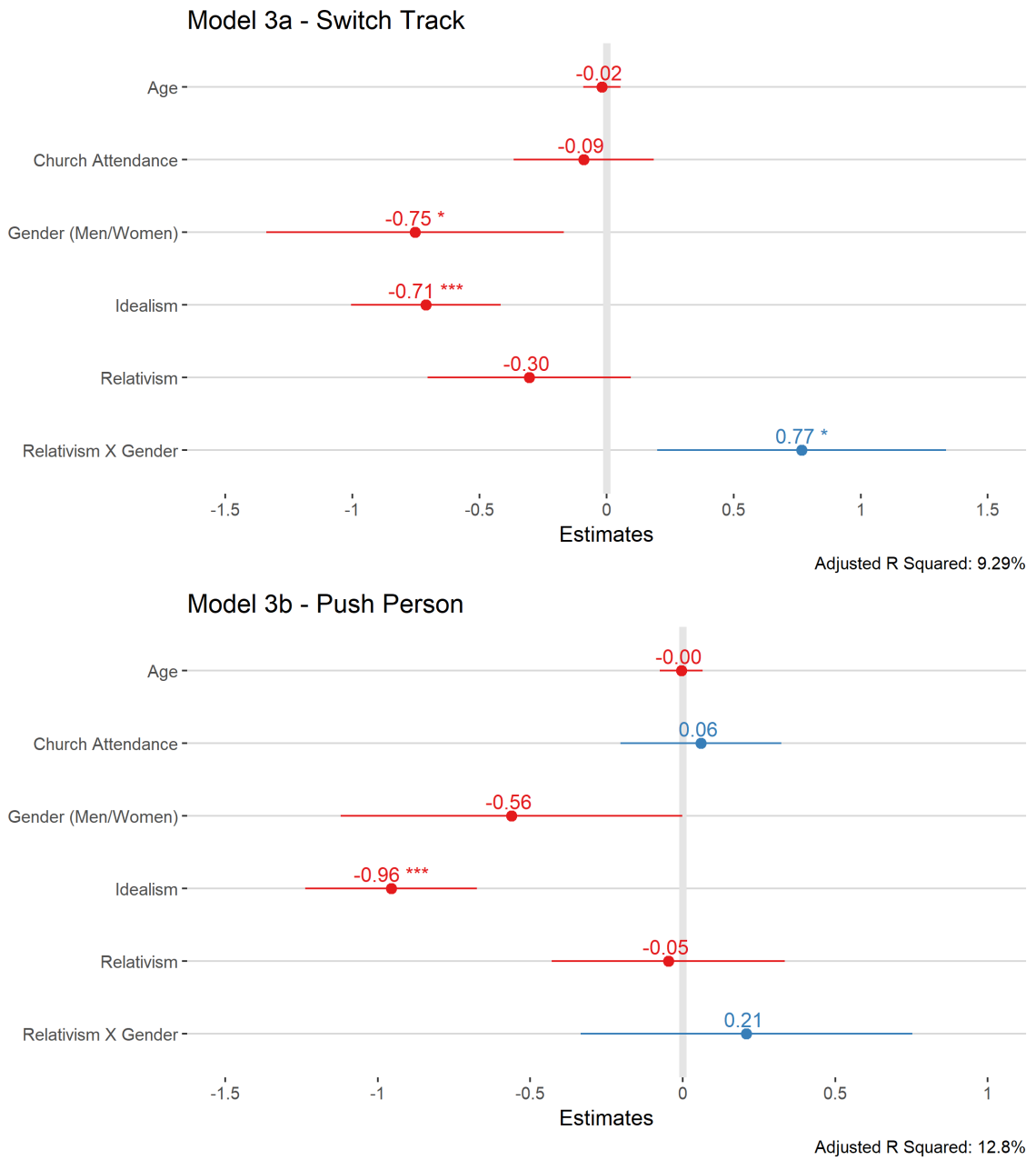
N = 278. 90% confidence intervals are shown.
Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Model 2a depicts the results for the scenario 1 dependent variable, Model 2b for scenario 2 (see plot XX and XX). First, it comes to attention that the treatments have a strong effect. The discussion group has negative coefficients for both scenarios, indicating that persons which engaged in discussion had, compared to persons of the control group, a opinion change in the direction of "not switching/pushing" (Model 2a: b = -0.73, p< 0.01 and Model 2b: b = -0.81,p< 0.01). Regarding the information group, these effects can be observed as well, although not as strong (Model 2a: b = -0.46, p< 0.05 and Model 2b: b = -0.56, p< 0.05). The opinion change in the discussion group is more negative, but the differences to the information group are not as large and not statistically significant. Regarding idealism, for scenario 1 a rather weak and insignificant effect can be observed (b = -0.15), while relativism has no observable effect on opinion change at all (b = 0.00). The results for scenario 2 are insignificant as well, but differ in regard to relativism, which now has a weak negative effect (b = -0.14), while the effect of idealism did not change much (b = -0.09).

In Models 3a and 3b, an interaction effect with the treatment and idealism is estimated to test hypothesis H2a and H2b (Compared to the control group, information and discussion treatment, respectively, strengthen the effect of idealism on decision to not switch/push) . Plot xx and XX show the marginal effects for the interactions, respectively. The reported results do not point in the direction assumed in the hypotheses. XXX Hier wären die Interaction plots toll.XXXX

Hier am Samstag weiter arbeiten

Figure 8: Models 3 - Relativism

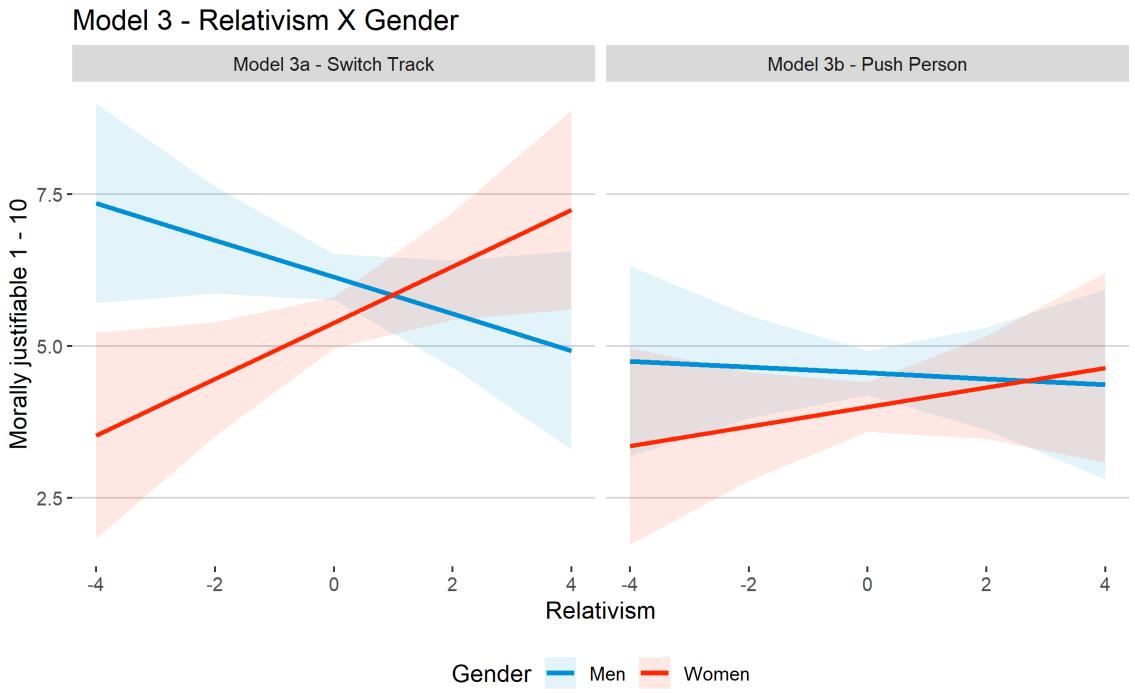


$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. N = 278. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

In Models 4a and 4b, an interaction effect with the treatment and relativism is estimated. Plot xx and XX show the marginal effects for the interactions, respectively. It appears that for relativism, there is... XXX Auch hier wären die Interaction plots toll.XXXX

Hier am Samstag weiter arbeiten H3a: In general, relativism has no effect on the direction of opinion change. -> nicht ganz so bestätigt, bisschen durcheinander die effekte, aber alle nicht signifikant H3b: The more relativist an individual is, the more likely it will switch/push after receiving discussion treatment. -> effektrichtung stimmt, aber nicht signifikant und nicht sehr starker effekt

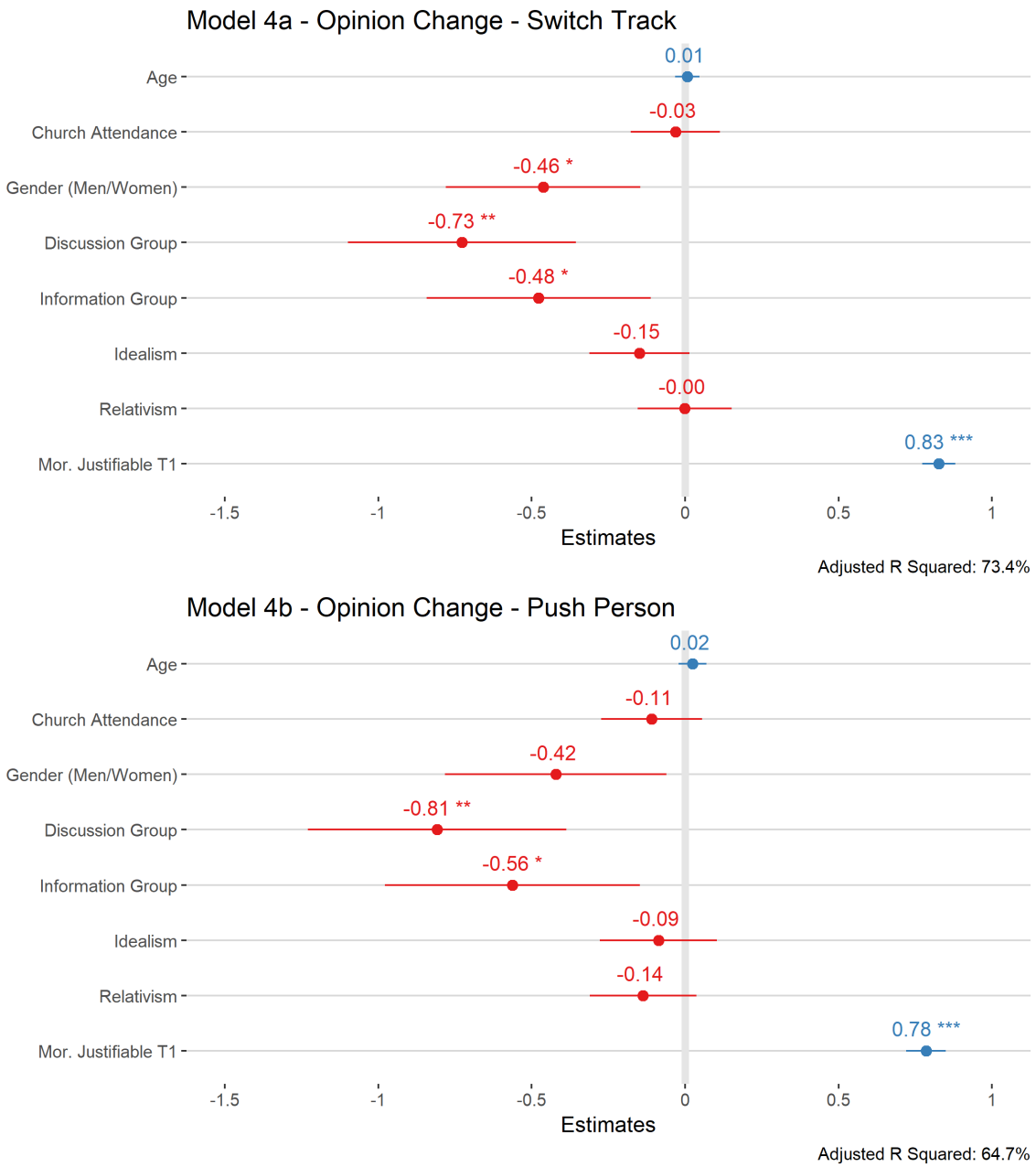
Figure 9: Models 3 - Relativism Interaction Plots



N = 278. 90% confidence intervals are shown.
Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Regarding the control variables for the dependent t1 variable, none of them reaches statistical significance. In both models, a negative effect is observed for gender. Women score lower on the dependent variables, meaning that they are less inclined to switch/push. For both scenarios, church attendance has a really small positive effect, while age has no observable effect at all. Regarding the the control variables in the t2 models, gender has a negative and weakly significant effect, indicating that opinion change was more negative for woman than man. The other control variables have only weak and insignificant effects.

Figure 10: Models 4 - Opinion Change



$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. N = 278. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown.
Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

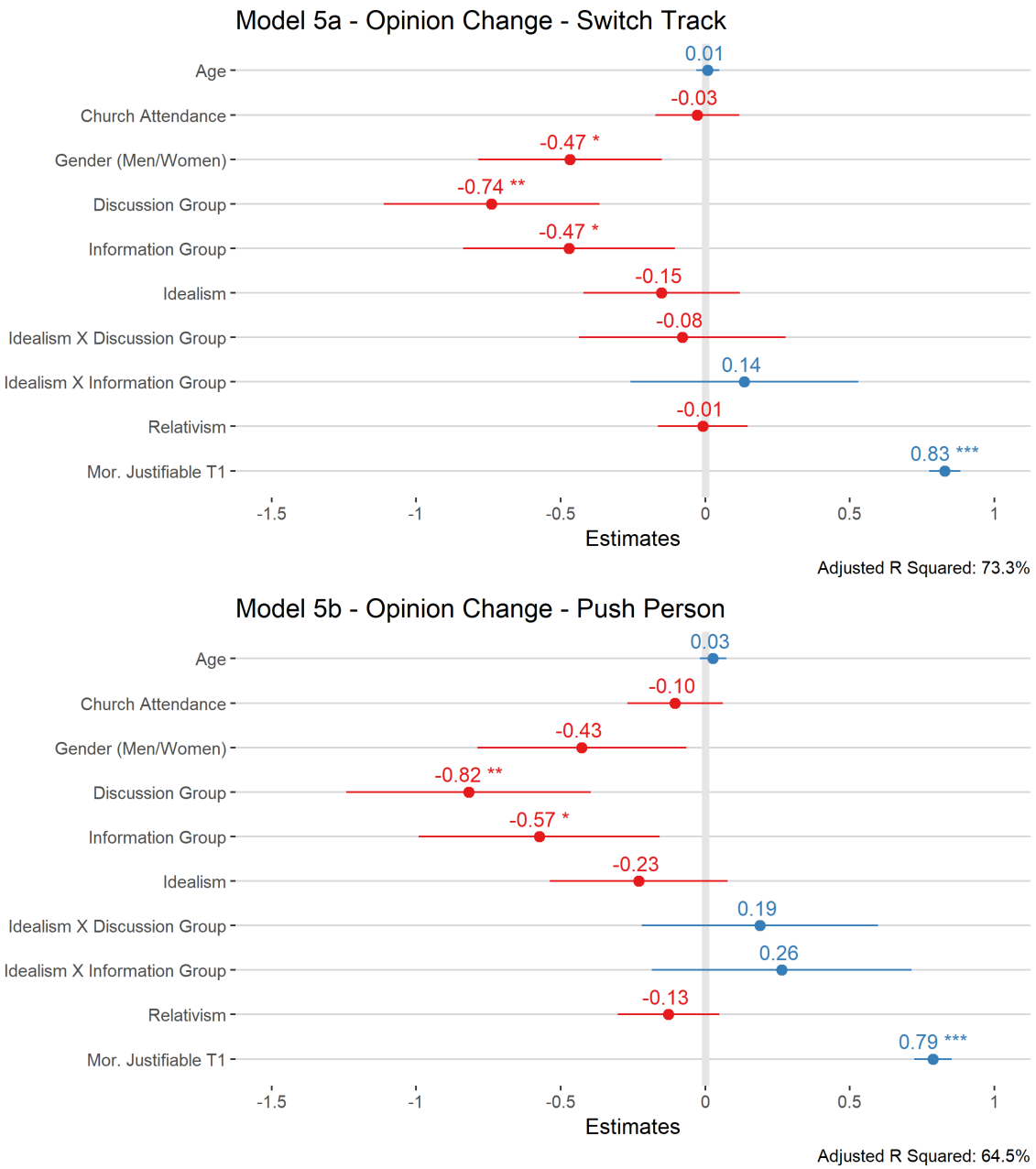
5 Conclusions

Hypothesen die bestätigt wurden kurz erwähnen

Überlegen, warum Hypothesen ggf. nicht bestätigt wurden

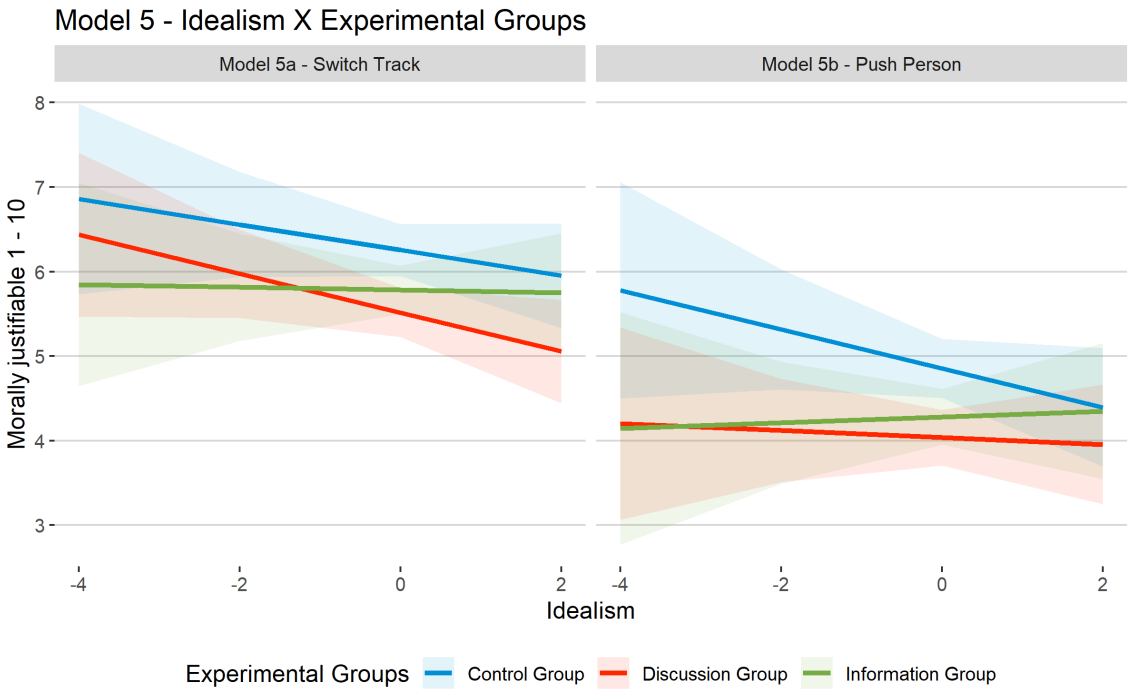
Hier die Theorie zu Geschlecht einfügen? → yoh da haben ma doch wat. Kann man zsm diskutieren

Figure 11: Models 5 - Idealism



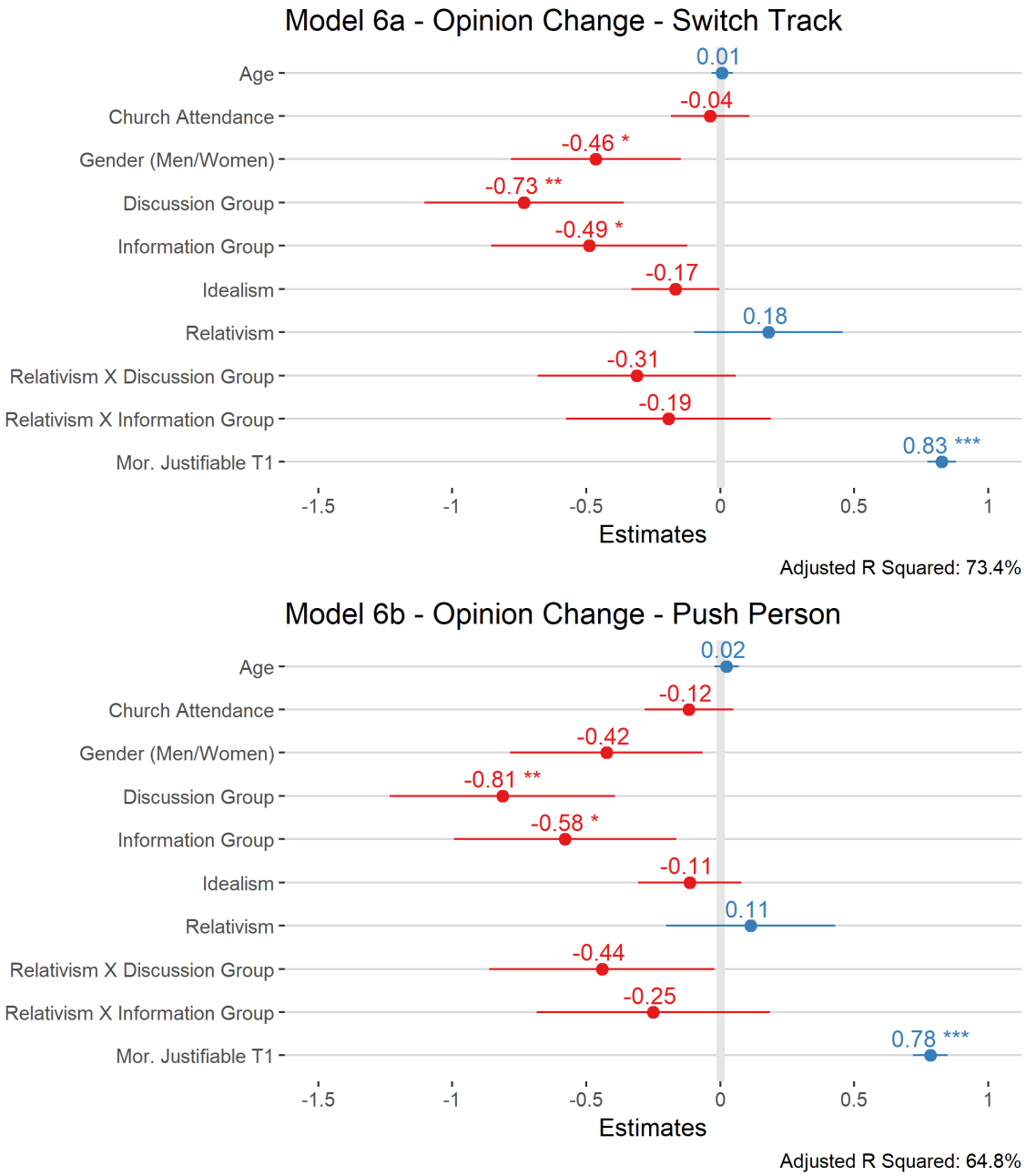
$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Figure 12: Models 5 - Idealism Interaction Plots



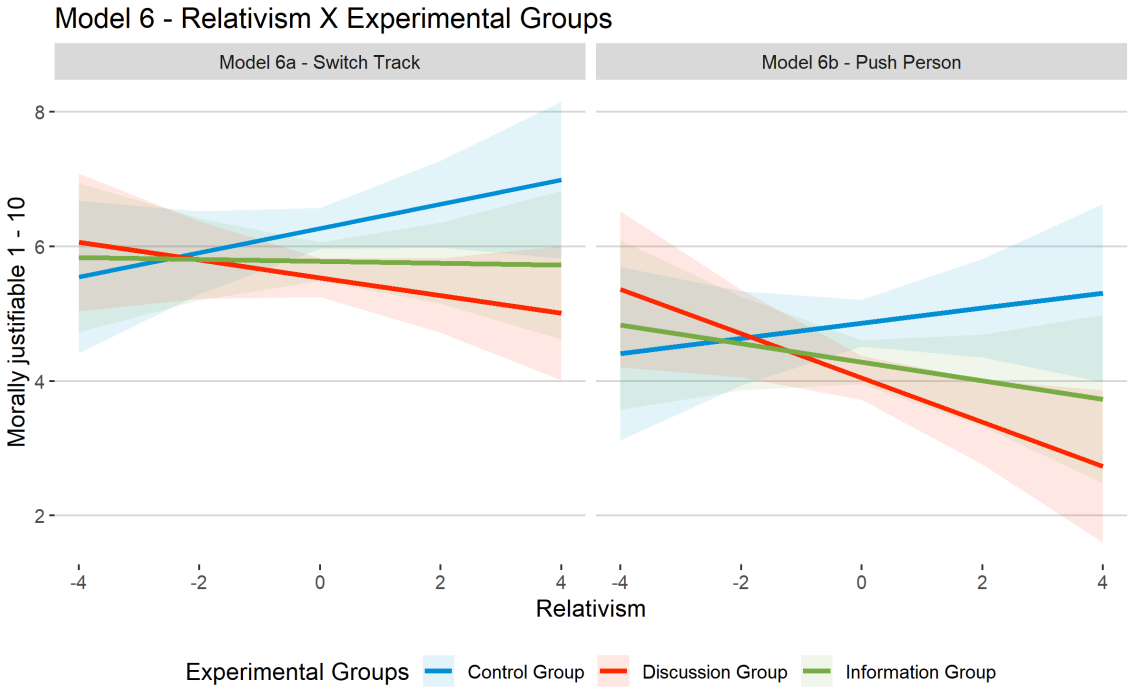
N = 278. 90% confidence intervals are shown.
Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Figure 13: Models 6 - Relativism



$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$. N = 278. Unstandardized regression coefficients. 90% confidence intervals are shown. Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

Figure 14: Models 6 - Relativism Interaction Plots



N = 278. 90% confidence intervals are shown.
Own calculations based on data from Online-Survey Experiment.

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7 Appendix

Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit versichern wir, dass wir die vorliegende Hausarbeit selbständig und nur mit den angegebenen Hilfsmitteln verfasst haben. Alle Passagen, die wir wörtlich als auch sinngemäß aus der Literatur oder aus anderen Quellen wie z. B. Internetseiten entnommen haben, sind deutlich als Zitat mit Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht.

Stuttgart, 30.09.2018