

BRIDGE OR BARRIER?

Religion and Immigrants' Commitment to Democracy

Introduction

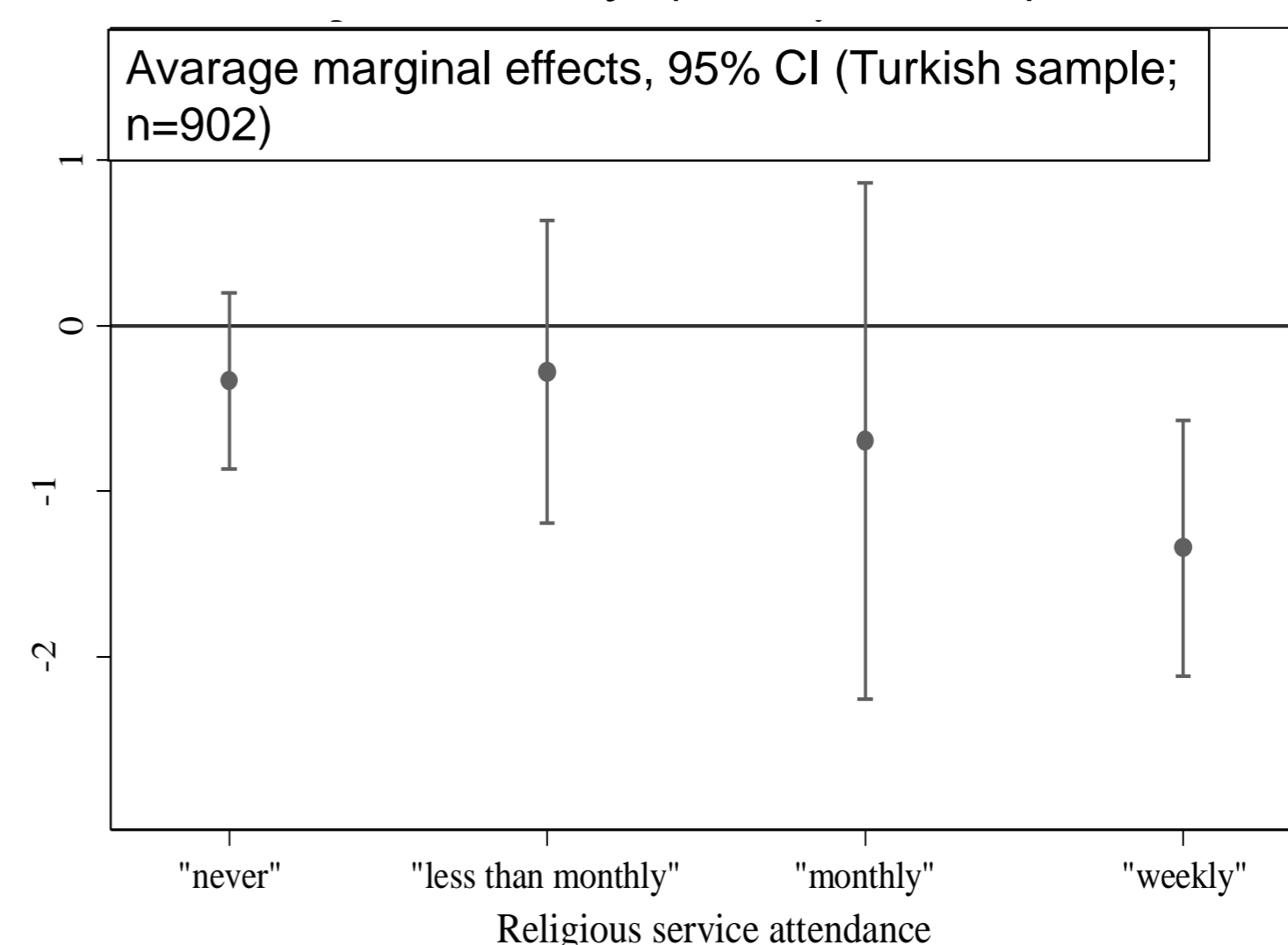
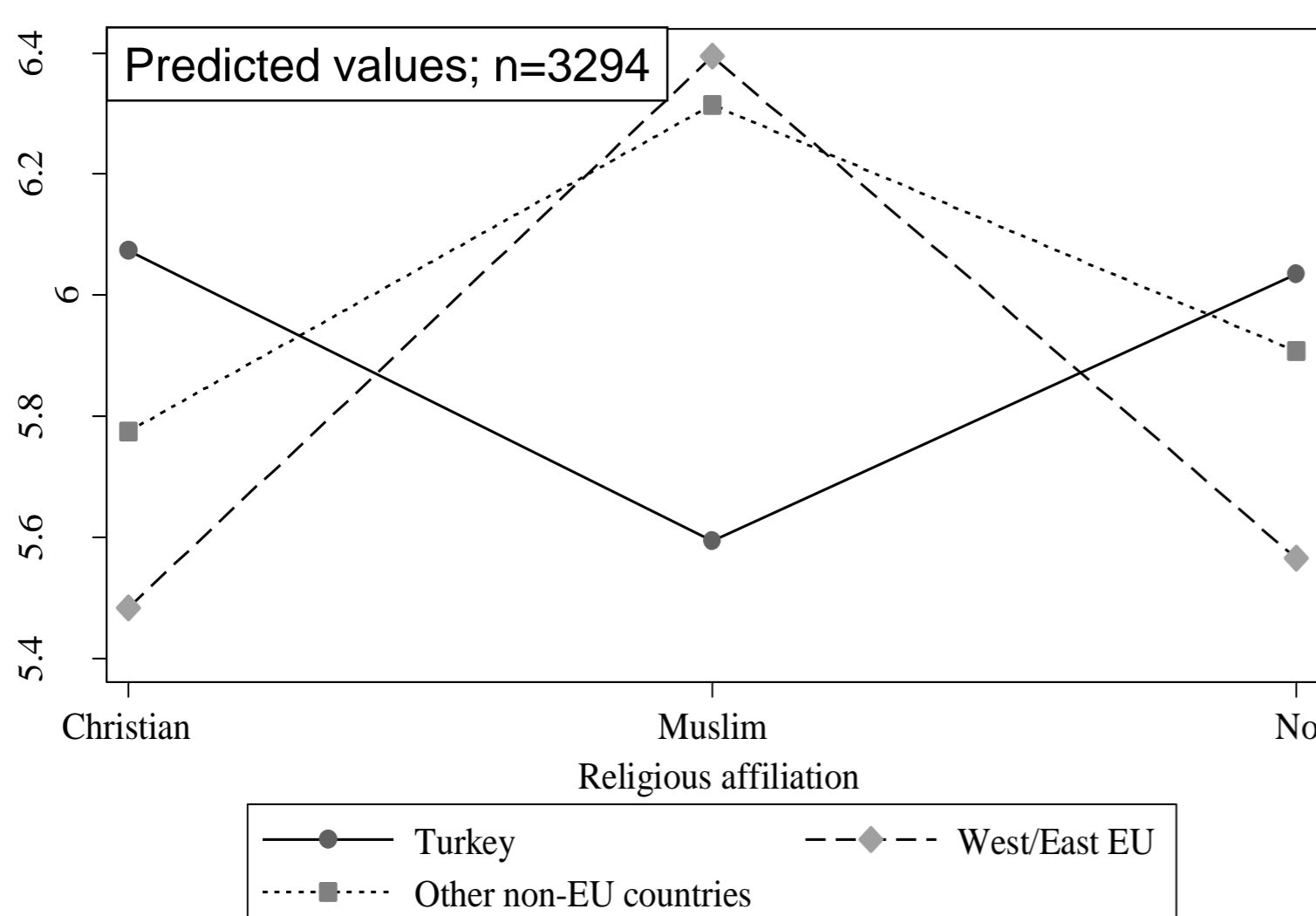
- **Political Islam and recurring events of terrorism across Europe:**
 - Prevailing views in historically Christian democracies (e.g. Germany):
 - Islam is threat to democracy due to its cultural values (e.g. Huntington 1996).
 - Muslim immigrants lack psychological democratic commitment and hence political integration.
 - Contradictory research findings:
 - Muslims do show positive attitudes towards democracy (Gundelach 2010; Tessler 2002).
 - Muslims and Christians do not differ in levels of democratic skills (Grundel and Maliepaard 2012).
- **Own research contribution:**
 - Non-essentialist perspective on the impact of religion.

Social Psychological Theory

- Positive attitude towards democracy is a matter of subjective experiences of satisfaction with regime's responsiveness to individual's needs.
 - Influenced by psychological membership in social groups (e.g. Tajfel and Turner 1979).
- **Religion has two group-level dimensions** (e.g. Ben-Nun Bloom 2014):
 - Religious behaviour (e.g. religious service attendance):
 - Positive in-group experiences of social support (e.g. Lechner 2015) and democratic socialisation (e.g. Putnam 2000)
 - Religious belonging (self-identified group membership, e.g. Islam):
 - Inter-group experiences between Christian majority outgroup and Islam minority ingroup of boundary drawing and discrimination (e.g. Alba 2005, Zolberg and Woon 1999)
 - Immigrants have multiple group memberships/identities (e.g. Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012).
 - Effect of Muslim belonging is depended on Turkish group membership and second-generational belonging.

Method and Results (GSOEP 2005, 2010)

- Multivariate correlated random-effects models of satisfaction with democracy (scale: 0-10).



- There is an independent positive effect of religious attendance on democracy satisfaction.
- The effect of Muslim belonging varies by ethnic background: Negative effect for Turkish and positive effect for non-Turkish first- and second-generation immigrants.
- The negative Muslim effect among Turks is dependent on second-generational belonging as well as a 'weekly' attendance of mosques and religious services.

