The Secular Divide and GAL/TAN Politics:

How Religion Shape Same-Sex Union Legislations' Impact on Attitudes toward Homosexuality in Europe

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Abstract: National contexts have been overlooked by previous comparative studies on the impact of same-sex union (SSU) legislations on public attitudes toward homosexuality. This study examines the role of religion focusing on two aspects: the secular-religious divide and the GAL/TAN political cleavage. Using 2002–2016 European Social Survey from 24 countries, I demonstrate that partnership legislation has more diverging impact in more secular countries, with core church members developing stronger homonegativity. Stronger secular-religious divide in the population and the strength of GAL/TAN political cleavage induce more negative impact for legislation, regardless of individual religiosity or partisanship. The study's analysis of how national contexts influence the impact of SSU legislations on attitudes sheds light on the influence of secularization changes and political polarization enhancing "moral polarization" in Western societies. However, the resulting backlash mostly occurs among strongly religious people, while others become increasingly liberal.

Keywords: Same-sex union, public opinions, morality politics, secularization, GAL/TAN cleavage

1. Introduction

In the past two decades, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights have made great strides across Europe in terms of access to Same-sex unions (SSU). By the beginning of 2023, 14 out of 27 European Union (EU) members have legalized same-sex marriages, and 21 have civil partnership laws for same-sex couples. Meanwhile, LGBT groups across Europe have been receiving increasing public acceptance with the growth in positive public attitudes toward homosexuality (Hooghe and Meeusen 2013).

In parallel with the above-mentioned trends, research examining the relationship between public approval of homosexuality and legislations recognizing SSUs (marriage or partnership) has flourished. SSU legislations are morality policies, which involve debates over fundamental moral values with low technical complexity, generating high public salience and participation (Mooney 1999; Mooney and Schuldt 2008). Therefore, the potential impact of SSU legislations on public attitudes and its driving factors can be complex. Scholars have suggested diverse theoretical possibilities regarding the legislation–attitudes relationship and debated whether legislation affects public attitudes or vice versa; whether legislations positively or negatively impact attitudes; and whether this impact differs across social groups (Flores and Barclay 2016). Cross-national comparative studies show mixed findings with both positive and negative legislative impacts toward attitudes and divergence across groups, particularly the "conservative backlash" (Abou-Chadi and Finnigan 2019; Hooghe and Meeusen 2013; Redman 2018; van den Akker, van der Ploeg, and Scheepers 2013).

While previous studies have focused on general and divergent legislative impacts on attitudes, they have paid little attention to the influence national contexts, particularly those concerning religion, which strongly influences homosexuality's public acceptance (Adamczyk and Liao 2019). Addressing this gap, this study is among the first to investigate how religion shape the impact of SSU legislations, from two different angles. First, the secularization thesis (Norris and Inglehart 2004) suggest that secular contexts generally enable a more positive legislative impact, while the religious polarization thesis (Achterberg et al. 2009) argues that secularity can simultaneously widen the gap between religious and non-religious people. Second, according to the "worlds of morality politics" framework, European political parties differ in their extent of polarization on morality, governed by the GAL (green/alternative/libertarian)/TAN (traditionalist/authoritarian/nationalist) cleavage. The intensity of political conflict on morality could influence both legislation and public attitudes, and their interactions (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012; Hurka et al. 2018). Strong

GAL/TAN political conflict around morality issues can undermine legislative impact, leading to more negative or polarized attitudes. Therefore, this study examines how secularization and the GAL/TAN cleavage shape legislations' impact across Europe. Deploying eight rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) data, I demonstrate that both factors undermine the legislative impact. Moreover, GAL/TAN intensity on a morality negatively influences the impact of partnership legislation on attitudes toward homosexuality, which also spills over to the non-religious and politically moderate population. The study shows how religious–secular conflicts in the process of secularization and morality politicization may undermine or bifurcate the impact of SSU legislations enacted with progressive intentions. Finally, to my best knowledge, the study is also among the first to examine the "worlds of morality politics" framework (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012; Hurka et al. 2018) by combining individual-level and cross-national comparative perspectives.

2. Theoretical Arguments

The legislation–attitudes puzzle

Social scientists have long been interested in the relationship between policy and public opinion; however, most of their focus has remained on economic policies (e.g., Gingrich and Ansell 2012). The impact of a morality policies, such as SSUs legislations, warrants greater attention due to two distinct characteristics. First, morality debates are based on fundamental moral values concerning life, death, and family (Mooney 1999), which are often rooted in religious worldviews. Morality-based opinions and attitudes tend to be persistent and resistant to persuasion using rational reasoning (Mooney and Schuldt 2008). Second, unlike economic policies, morality policies are less technical, making citizens easier to participate in debates (Mooney 1999). Debates on morality issues is likely to elicit public reactions based on their moral perspectives while relying on religious and political authorities instead of economic interests, making such debates more contentious (Mooney and Schuldt 2008). These characteristics complicate the policy–attitudes relationship regarding morality. SSU legislation is a suitable case to study such relationship because beyond the social significance of promoting LGBT rights, the recent increase in liberal legislations provide sufficient variation to empirically examine their impact.

Flores and Barclay (2016) have proposed four scenarios of SSU legislation impact on public attitudes. First, the consensus model suggests that favorable public attitudes are an antecedent rather than the outcome of the legislation, and that the policy is the politicians' response to

public demand for ensuring future political supports (Lax and Phillips 2009; Page and Shapiro 1983). Second, the legitimacy model suggests that policies assisting disadvantaged groups are formulated to raise their legitimacy and access to resources and incentives, while improving the public visibility and traceability of the issue (Pierson 1993); therefore, legislation could facilitate a more positive public attitude toward the issue. Third, the backlash model holds that an increase in negativity toward homosexuality after SSU legislations can occur if majority of the population is prejudiced and discriminatory against homosexuality and interprets the legislation as a threat to the status-quoist social order of heterosexual privilege (Pratto et al. 1994). Finally, the polarization model proposes that people have different or even polarized reactions to the legislation depending on their individual characteristics, such as religion and partisanship (Kreitzer, Hamilton, and Tolbert 2014). The fourth scenario is not mutually exclusive from others.

Previous studies on the impact of SSU legislations have shown mixed findings. Such legislations are generally found promoting positive attitudes in studies from the US (Kreitzer, Hamilton, and Tolbert 2014; Tankard and Paluck 2017), with modest or no polarization between conservative and liberal groups abating over time (Bishin et al. 2016, 2021; Perrin et al. 2018). Cross-national comparative studies also show mostly increased positive attitudes in countries with SSU legislations (Hooghe and Meeusen 2013; van den Akker, van der Ploeg, and Scheepers 2013). However, two recent studies contradict these findings. Redman (2018) finds the legislative impact to be positive but insignificant. Abou-Chadi and Finnigan (2019) show that among European countries, partnership legislation increases negative attitudes, while marriage legislation promotes positive ones. Both studies show that legislation has different impacts between conservative and liberal populations.

The inconsistency in the previous findings suggests that SSU legislations can have varied impacts across countries. Redman (2018) shows that the legislation impacts are less polarized among EU member countries than other countries, and Aksoy et al. (2020) explore the impact heterogeneity through factors such as church membership rate and gender equality. Dotti Sani and Quaranta (2021) show that countries that have adopted SSU legislations but relatively late compared to other countries experience a wide attitude gaps between their liberal and conservative population. Nevertheless, in general, few studies have provided systematic hypotheses testing and explanations on how contextual factors influence legislation impact. The broader literature on LGBT rights identifies religion as a key factor influencing both legislative process and public attitudes toward homosexuality (Adamczyk and Liao 2019).

First, more secular countries are also more likely to have SSU legislations (Budde et al. 2017); however debatably, public attitudes could also be more polarized in such secular contexts due to the widening secular-religious divide in the population (Achterberg et al. 2009; Siegers 2019). Second, religion becomes focal in morality politics, when Christian or conservative political parties try to impede SSU legislations by politicizing traditional morality (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012). Thus, how the two aforementioned religion-related national contexts could shape the impact of legislation on attitudes toward homosexuality is worth investigating. In this study, I specifically examine the moderating effects of secularization and GAL/TAN intensity of morality issues as two religion-based contextual factors that may shape the impact of SSU legislations.

Secularization and the religious-secular divide

Existing evidence shows a strong correlation between religiosity and negative attitudes toward homosexuality, at both individual and national levels (Adamczyk and Liao 2019). Additionally, more religious countries may also have stronger conservative religious and political actors and social norms that obstruct SSU legislations, making the issue more salient and politicized (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012).

In Western societies, increased tolerance toward homosexuality coincides with secularization and a decreasing church membership and attendance due to the declining role of religion-centric worldview and social cohesion (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Religious influence tends to fade as modern science, market economy, and welfare state replaces religion's ideological, economic, and social functions (Ruiter and van Tubergen 2009). However, this monotonic theory is being challenged by the religious polarization thesis stating that increasing secularization expands the polarization between religious and non-religious people (Achterberg et al. 2009). It states that under secularization, more people will leave religion by individual choice. Hence, the remaining religious people would tend to exhibit stronger beliefs and greater insistence on traditional values, leading to a self-selection process (Achterberg et al. 2009). The marginalization of religion further reinforces the religious–secular boundary (Schnabel 2016), strengthening people's religious identity. Consequently, conservative religious groups would further emphasize the "symbolic boundary" between themselves and secularized out-groups and their adherence to traditional moral values, including homonegativity (Schnabel 2016). Notably, having a religious identity does not necessarily require religiosity in practice. For instance, in many Eastern European countries where the influence of religion had largely

weakened during the communist era, Christian identity is still used by conservative groups rallying against same-sex rights as the symbol of defending traditional values and social order (Mole, 2016). There has been contradictory evidence supporting and opposing the polarization thesis in more secular countries, showing a larger and smaller religious divide on moral issues, respectively (Achterberg et al. 2009; Finke and Adamczyk 2008; Storm 2016; Wilkins-Laflamme 2016), warranting further research (Siegers 2019).

Overall, modernization and religious polarization theories suggest that secularization's role in the legislation–attitudes relationship depends on whether it is examined among the general population or between groups. First, secularity provides a tolerant social norm with less homonegativity, paving the way for SSU legislations. Considering the legitimacy model, legislation could be expected to induce more positive public attitudes toward homosexuality. Aksoy et al. (2020) show that legislation has less positive impact on attitudes in countries with more church members. However, membership rate may not be a good measure of a country's religiosity since it is problematic regarding countries with large number of non-practicing members such as the Nordic countries. Second, in secular societies with high religious polarization, conservative religious people can perceive SSU legislation as more threatening to their symbolic boundaries. Thus, enacting SSU legislations in more secular countries could actually increase opposition to homosexuality from the religious people. Therefore, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1.1 (H1.1): In general, SSU legislations have a more positive impact in more secularized countries than in less secularized ones.

Hypothesis 1.2 (H1.2): In general, SSU legislations have a more negative impact in countries with stronger secular-religious divide in the population than those that have less.

Hypothesis 2.1 (H2.1): SSU legislations have more divergent impact in general, and more negative impacts among religious people, in more secularized countries than in less secularized ones.

Hypothesis 2.1 (H2.2): SSU legislations have more divergent impact in general, and more negative impacts among religious people, in countries with stronger secular-religious divide in the population than those that have less.

The GAL/TAN cleavage in morality politics

I consider the extent to which traditional Christian morality is embedded in domestic party politics to be another factor that shapes SSU legislation and its outcomes. In contemporary Europe, the morality issue is governed by the GAL/TAN cleavage (Bakker et al. 2015). GAL parties tend to promote individual freedom and minority rights, and TAN parties tend to defend the existing social order and traditional values. GAL parties (mostly left-wing, social democratic, green, and liberal parties) usually have progressive stances and advocate SSU legislations, whereas TAN parties (mostly Christian democrats, conservative, right-wing, and nationalist parties) claim to defend traditional morality and are against changing the status quo (Budde et al. 2018; Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012).

Further, the intensity of the GAL/TAN cleavage differ across countries. To examine this aspect of SSU policy making, Engeli et al. (2012, 2013) proposed the framework of "two worlds of morality politics" and differentiated countries into the "religious world" and the "secular world.". The "religious world" is characterized by a salient socio-cultural cleavage, often with a strong presence of Christian democratic or church-linked conservative parties, so that morality issues are immensely politicized between political parties, which influence the political agenda and legislation. (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012, 2013). In contrast, in the "secular world," morality issues are less politicized due to a lower presence of religious–conservative political parties and because political conflicts are more centered on the economic cleavage. SSU legislations are not frequently proposed, but when they are proposed they often pass smoothly upon multi-partisan support (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012).[1] Later, Hurka et al. (2018) extended the "two worlds" framework to the "four worlds" framework by adding the "unsecular world" and the "traditionalist world." However, this framework has not been tested at the micro level extensively, except by Arzheimer (2020), who demonstrated limited support for this framework in the case of Germany. Nevertheless, as a comparative framework, it deserves greater research attention by applying cross-national comparative approaches, as aimed for in this study.

According to the "worlds of morality politics" framework, in the religious or the traditionalist world where political parties are highly polarized regarding morality issues GAL parties are

more active in lobbying for SSU legislations (Budde et al. 2018). However, between these two worlds, such initiatives would become more controversial in the context in which TAN parties offer an equally active response against such legislations. Under high GAL/TAN intensity, parties opposing the policy create obstacles by initiating anti-policy campaigns to undermine the policy delivery (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016). In such context, when the GAL parties initiate a SSU legislation, TAN parties could offer a stronger opposition by politicizing the issue and protesting (Euchner and Preidel 2016), or by capitalizing on the existing political system, such as the referendum in Switzerland (Engeli and Varone 2012; Rapp et al. 2014). The expected positive impact of legislation through resource support, legitimacy building, and increased issue salience could be undermined when its execution is hampered. Moreover, in such contexts, polarization between political parties also spills over to the public response regarding the legislation. This is because, people's attitudes are constrained by the parties they support, especially on salient issues (Bullock 2011; Druckman et al. 2013). For issues with high salience, politicization, and polarization, party supporters are also more likely to be divided along the political cleavage (Finseraas and Vernby 2011; Sanz et al. 2021). Parties may also intentionally amplify polarization by radicalizing their stances to influence and mobilize supporters (Iversen 1994). Thus, in the religious and traditionalist world contexts the intense polarization between GAL and TAN parties may fuel hostility among people from opposing camps, further diverging public responses to legislation across partisanship. However, in contexts with low GAL/TAN intensity on morality (the secular and unsecular worlds), such a diverging impact is less likely, as public consensus for the legislation is easy to achieve (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012). Therefore, I draw the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): In general, SSU legislations have a less positive impact in countries with higher GAL/TAN intensity on morality issues than in countries with lower polarization.

Hypothesis 3.1 (H3.1): SSU legislations have a more divergent impact in general, and more negative impact among people identifying with TAN parties, in countries with higher GAL/TAN intensity on morality issues than in countries with lower polarization.

9

Given the salience of the religious–secular symbolic boundary in debates over SSU legislations, GAL/TAN intensity can be expected to divide people not only based on partisanship, but also based on religiosity:

Hypothesis 3.2 (H3.2): SSU legislations have a more divergent in general, and more negative impact among religious people, in countries with higher GAL/TAN intensity on morality issues than in countries with lower polarization.

3. Data and Methodology

Data

In this study, I use eight rounds (2002–2016) of European Social Survey (ESS) data (ESS 2018) to test my hypotheses. The ESS is a biennial survey that collects representative data on the population's attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral patterns across European countries. To better disentangle the legislative impact of SSU legislations from other time-variant contextual factors, I select countries with at least four rounds of data, with gaps no greater than two rounds. Countries are limited to those with Christianity as the major religious tradition (Norris and Inglehart 2004) and stable democracy[3] to rule out substantial cultural and political differences. The sample contains 24 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia.[2] During the observation window, ten countries changed legislation on same-sex marriages, and eight on partnership (Table 1). The sample includes 290,792 individuals under 168 country-round combinations.

Measurements

The study's dependent variable is positive attitudes toward homosexuality measured on a five-level scale for the statement "*Gays and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish,*" (Takács and Szalma 2013); higher levels indicate more positive attitudes. "Don't Know" answers (DKs) are considered as "no opinions" and coded as the medium level. Different treatment of DKs, including treating them as one of other levels or removing those samples are tested for robustness checks.

Table 1: Countries and Legislation

Countries	Rounds	Legislation time	
		Partnership	Marriage
Austria	2002-2006, 2010-2016	2009 (2010)	-
Belgium	2002- 2016	*1998 (2000)*	2003
Bulgaria	2006- 2012	-	-
Switzerland	2002- 2016	2004 (2007)	-
Cyprus	2006- 2012	-	-
Czechia	2002-2004, 2008-2016	2006	-
Germany	2002- 2016	*2001*	-
Denmark	2002- 2014	*1989*	2012
Estonia	2004-2016	2014 (2016)	-
Spain	2002-2016	-	2005
Finland	2002, 2006-2016	*2001 (2002)*	2015 (2017)
France	2002- 2016	*1999*	2013
United Kingdom	2002-2016	2004 (2005)	2013 (2014)
Greece	2002-2004, 2008-2010	-	-
Hungary	2002-2016	2009	-
Ireland	2002-2016	2010 (2011)	2015
Lithuania	2010-2016	-	-
Netherlands	2002-2016	*1998*	*2001*
Norway	2002-2016	*1993*	2008 (2009)
Poland	2002-2016	-	-
Portugal	2002-2016	-	2010
Sweden	2002-2016	*1994 (1995)*	2009
Slovenia	2002-2016	2005	-
Slovakia	2004-2012	-	-

Enforcement time shown in parentheses; legislation before ESS survey window in *italics*.

Legislation data is retrieved from the LawsAndFamilies Database (Waaldijk 2017) and *State-Sponsored Homophobia Report* (ILGA 2019), both documenting legal changes in SSUs across countries over time. Two dummy variables for partnership and marriage legislation are created, respectively. In countries where legislation was enforced later after the enactment, enactment time is used as the critical point, since legislation is regarded as a symbol for promoting public acceptance of homosexuality (Mooney 1999). Table 1 shows the list of countries and legislation time.

Religiosity is measured by combining religious membership and religious participation following the ESS guideline (Billiet 2002): "core members" are people with membership who attend services more than once a month; "marginal members" are those with membership, but low attendance; "non-members" are those without membership. Unfortunately, owing to missing data, this study cannot to test the difference between religious denominations.

Partisanship and GAL/TAN intensity are operationalized along the GAL/TAN party division, where GAL and TAN parties typically support and oppose SSU legislations, respectively, in accordance with the "worlds of morality politics" framework (Budde et al. 2018). Partisanship is measured by the party that the respondent feels closer to compared to others. Further, I distinguish strong and moderate supporters of GAL or TAN parties based on their degree of closeness to the party. The GAL/TAN camp are classified according to the liberty-authority score in the *ParlGov* database (Döring and Manow 2022). People identifying with other or no parties belong to the reference category. I use party identification rather than voting patterns, since I intend to measure stable attachment to the party rather than spontaneous voting preference.

I measure three moderating contextual factors at the country-round level. Secularity is measured by the standard practice of aggregated reverse-coded seven-level (from every day to never) religious attendance scale (Finke and Adamczyk 2008). Secular-religious divide is measured by the difference between the share of non-religious people and core church members, whereas higher value indicates stronger divide. For GAL/TAN intensity, I use party the manifesto data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Volkens et al., 2017), with two items: *Traditional Morality Positive* and *Traditional Morality Negative* measuring the extent to which parties positively or negatively politicize traditional Christian morality issues in their electoral manifestos. I calculate the intensity by taking the distance between major parties (having at least 5% of parliamentary share) on the two extremes. For robustness check, I also calculate the average score including all the parties in each camp, weighted by

parliamentary shares. The CMP data is advantageous because it covers issue salience as manifested in parties' electoral campaigns in addition to their ideological positions.

Modelling Strategy

Since the individuals are nested by countries with vastly varied context, I use mixed-effect models with random intercepts for each country. The legislation–attitudes relationship is subject to high endogeneity between the two variables. Beyond the theoretical possibility of a bidirectional causality, these two variables are likely to be simultaneously influenced by other omitted contextual factors. To rule out the confounding of economic development and party system, I control for logged GDP per capita and unemployment rate, and parliament share of TAN parties, respectively. Further, I estimate a two-way fixed effect linear regression model to control for unmeasured confounding. Fixed-effect models with country-clustered standard errors (Gangl 2010) are later used as a robustness check, despite the risk of obtaining over-conservative estimates by absorbing the contextual effects tested.

The moderation models mutually control for the contextual moderators—secularity, religious divide and GAL/TAN cleavage intensity, as they may influence each other. Individual-level controls include age, gender, urbanization, education, social class,[4] cohabitation, household size, parenthood, and left–right political position. Analyses are adjusted with post-stratification and population size weights (Kaminska 2020). The Appendices (Table A1) present the descriptive statistics.

4. Analysis and Results

Main effects

A baseline model tests the main effects of legislation with controls. Partnership legislation has a negative effect on attitudes toward homosexuality, whereas marriage legislation has a positive effect, but neither are significant. These results offer more support to the consensus model (Flores and Barclay 2016). Detailed results and discussions are presented in Appendices Table A2. In the following models, I proceed to test the main hypotheses.

Secularity level and the impact of legislation

In the next models (Table 2), I test the interactions between legislation, secularity, and individual religiosity. The interaction between partnership legislation and secularity is negative

but not significant. When interacting secularity, partnership legislation, and religiosity, the two-way interaction turns more positive but remains insignificant; the coefficients of both the three-way interaction terms are negative but significant for both marginal and core members. In Figure 1, I plot the predicted attitudes toward homosexuality by religiosity and legislation, across different secularity levels. With partnership legislation, the slope of core members' attitudes changes from positive to negative. The predicted values of attitudes toward homosexuality turn from 4.02 to 3.72 then secularity is highest. The slope for marginal members does not change substantially, and the positive slope for the non-religious members grows slightly steeper with legislation; however, neither value is statistically significant.

The interaction between marriage legislation and secularity shows a positive but insignificant effect. Adding three-way interactions between marriage legislation, secularity, and religiosity, the two-way interaction turns more positive (but is still not significant), and three-way interactions are negative but again significant only for the core members. Marginal members and non-religious people show similar trends for marriage legislation: secularization leads to a greater increase in positive attitudes toward homosexuality, although it is not significant. For core church members, attitudes toward homosexuality again turns would turns more negative with greater secularization and enactment of marriage legislation (see Appendix Figure A3), similar to that of partnership legislation, yet is much more marginal.

Both models reject *H1.1* that secularization boosts legislation's positive impact on average. For *H1.2*, the results show limited evidence for core church members in the case of partnership legislation. Under more secular contexts, core members seem to oppose homosexuality more strongly after partnership legislation, diverging from other groups. Marriage legislation also show such a contrast between core church members and others, but this result is too insignificant.

Table 2: Legislation and secularity on attitudes towards homosexuality
(N = 290,792)

| | Baseline model | Focused legislation | | | |
| | | Partnership | | Marriage | |
	M0	M1.1	M1.2	M2.1	M2.2
Control variables yield similar results and are omitted					
Marginal members	-0.151***	-0.151***	-0.150***	-0.151***	-0.136***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.020)
Core members	-0.479***	-0.479***	-0.412***	-0.479***	-0.468***
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.022)	(0.041)	(0.037)
Partnership legislation	-0.063	-0.060	-0.100	-0.062	-0.064
	(0.075)	(0.073)	(0.077)	(0.074)	(0.075)
Marriage legislation	0.029	0.028	0.030	0.038	0.034
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Secularity	0.441*	0.440*	0.410*	0.457*	0.475*
	(0.208)	(0.208)	(0.204)	(0.218)	(0.220)
Legislation*Marginal members	-	-	0.056*	-	-0.003
			(0.028)		(0.024)
Legislation*Core members	-	-	0.025	-	-0.059
			(0.050)		(0.041)
Secularity*Marginal members	-	-	0.011	-	0.024
			(0.016)		(0.049)
Secularity*Core members	-	-	0.008	-	-0.031
			(0.016)		(0.031)
Secularity*Legislation	-	-0.013	0.111	-0.035	0.033
		(0.055)	(0.076)	(0.061)	(0.053)
Secularity*Legislation *Marginal members	-	-	-0.124*	-	-0.000
			(0.060)		(0.069)
Secularity*Legislation *Core members	-	-	-0.338**	-	-0.237*
			(0.120)		(0.105)
AIC	697595	697595	697371	697593	697431
BIC	698738	697838	697615	697836	697674

***: p<0.001; **: p<0.01; *: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

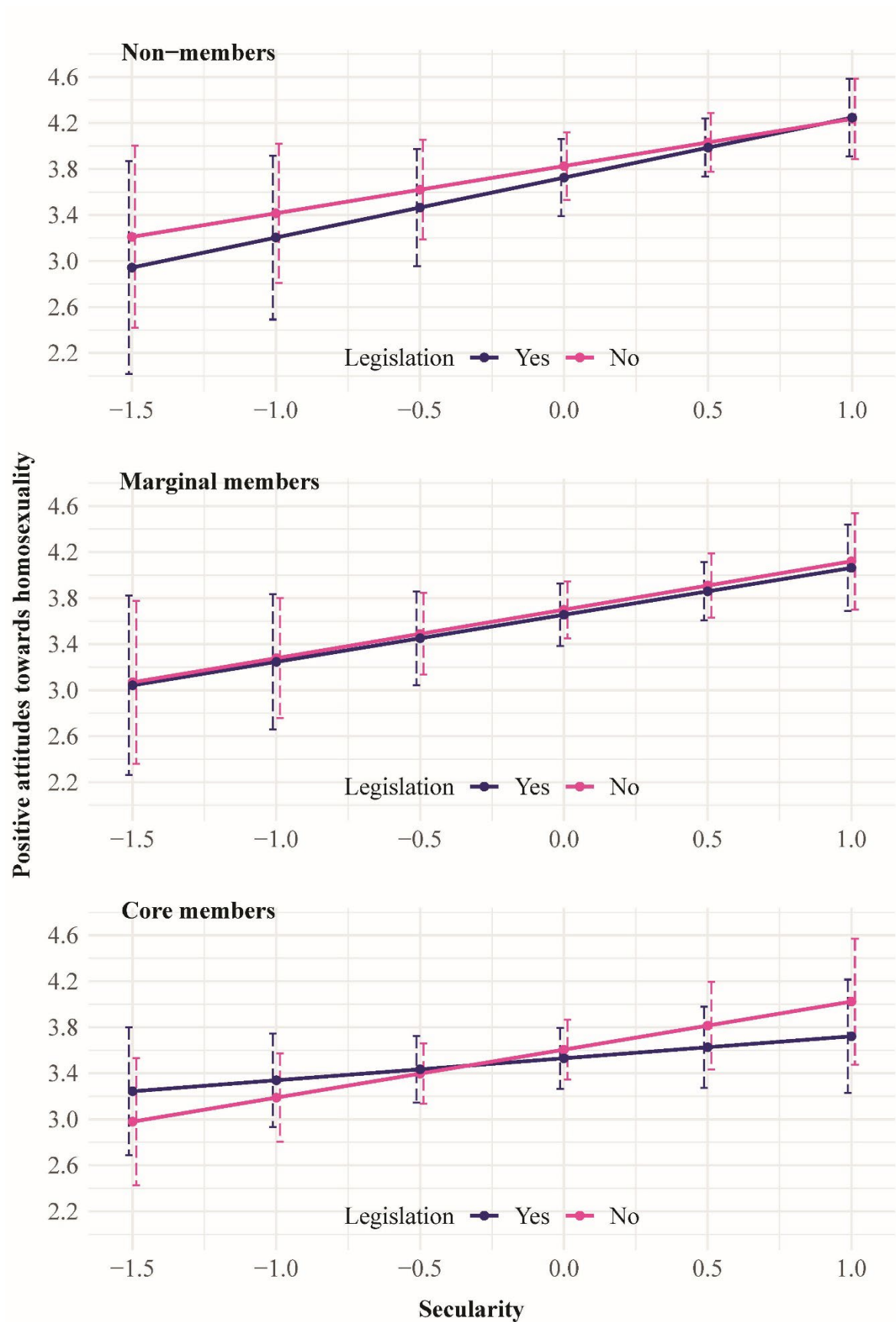**Figure 1: Partnership legislation, secularity and religiosity**

Table 3: Legislation and religious divide on attitudes towards homosexuality
(N = 290,792)

	Baseline model	Focused legislation			
		Partnership		Marriage	
	M0	M3.1	M3.2	M4.1	M4.2
Control variables yield similar results and are omitted					
Marginal members	-0.151***	-0.151***	-0.148***	-0.151***	-0.136***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.023)	(0.021)
Core members	-0.479***	-0.479***	-0.414***	-0.479***	-0.472***
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.024)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Partnership legislation	-0.063	-0.059	-0.065	-0.062	-0.063
	(0.075)	(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.074)	(0.075)
Marriage legislation	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.034	0.045
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.027)
Religious divide	-0.789	-0.764	-0.770	-0.822	-0.793
	(0.452)	(0.479)	(0.483)	(0.455)	(0.462)
Legislation*Marginal members	-	-	0.017	-	-0.034
			(0.030)		(0.020)
Legislation*Core members	-	-	-0.033	-	-0.013
			(0.049)		(0.032)
Divide*Marginal members	-	-	0.019	-	0.004
			(0.040)		(0.042)
Divide*Core members	-	-	0.004	-	-0.116
			(0.037)		(0.075)
Divide*Legislation	-	-0.032	0.062	-0.067	-0.016
		(0.109)	(0.142)	(0.132)	(0.095)
Divide*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-	-0.077	-	0.017
			(0.137)		(0.093)
Divide*Legislation*Core members	-	-	-0.432	-	-0.326*
			(0.236)		(0.133)
AIC	697595	697595	697416	697591	697422
BIC	698738	697838	697670	697835	697665

***: p<0.001; **: p<0.01; *: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Figure 3: Marriage legislation, religious divide and religiosity
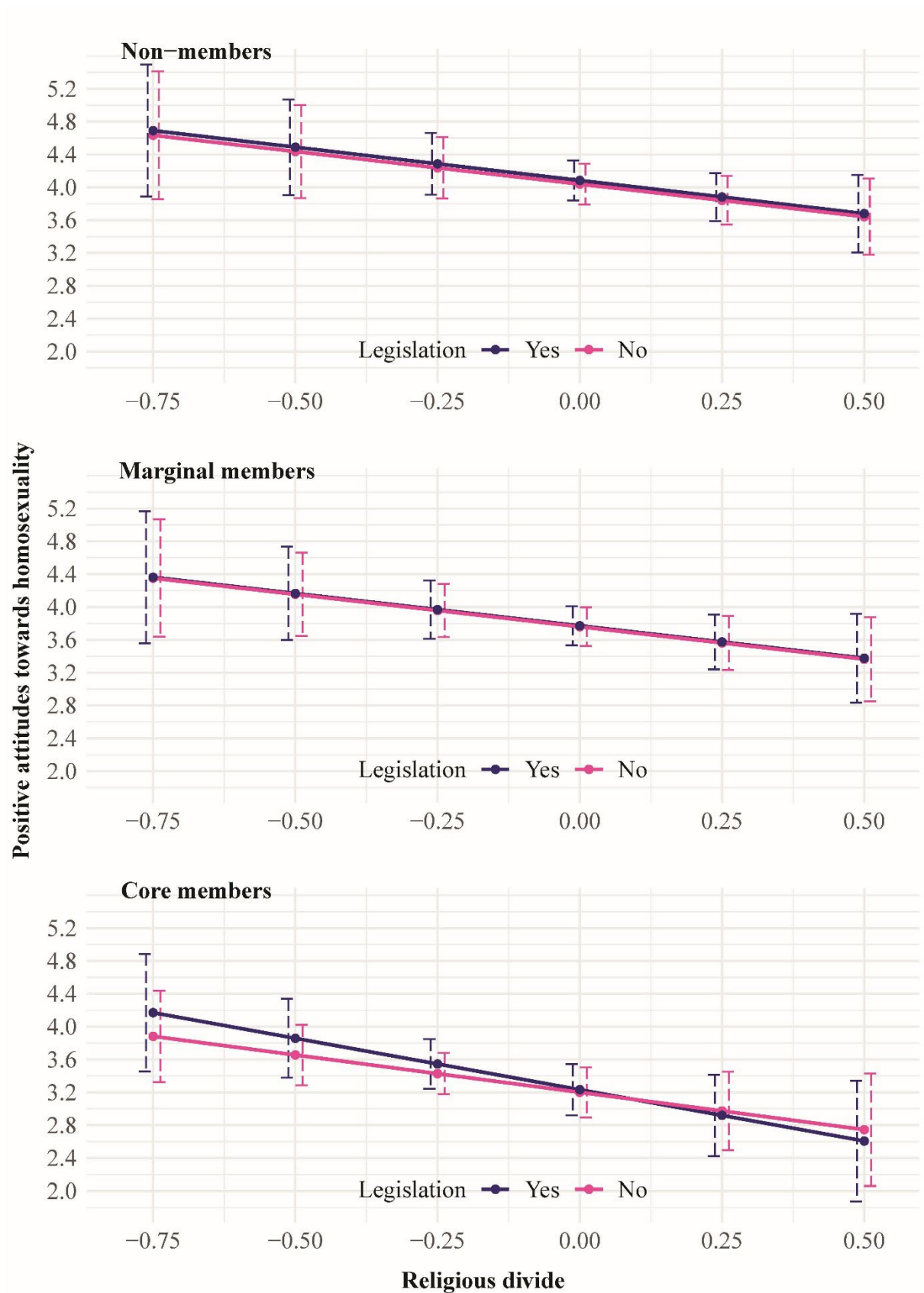
Secular-religious divide and the impact of legislation

Table 3 shows how religious-secular divide shapes the impact of SSU legislations. Overall, neither the two-way and three-way interactions are statistically significant, with the only exception of core members in the case of marriage legislation. When the divide between the religious and secular population is greater, core members seemingly turn massively against homosexuality with the passage of marriage legislation. Yet, plots of predictive values indicate that such change is very marginal (Figure 2). The case is similar for partnership legislation, even without statistical significance (Figure A2). Hence, results only lend marginal supports to *H2.2*, while *H2.1* should not be approved.

GAL/TAN cleavage and the impact of legislation

In following models (Tables 4–5), I test how GAL/TAN intensity influences legislative impact. Models show a negative and significant effect of the two-way interaction between partnership legislation and GAL/TAN intensity, indicating that high polarization undermines partnership legislation's impact. Then three-way interactions with religiosity are added. The two-way interaction term remains negative and significant, while the three-way interaction is positive and significant for marginal members. Figure 3 shows that when polarization increases, attitudes toward homosexuality diverge based on enactment and non-enactment of partnership legislation. For all groups of religiosity, the legislative impact turns more negative at higher polarization levels, with the predicted value of attitudes decreasing around 0.2 points at the highest level of polarization. While the legislation–polarization coefficient stays negative and significant, there are no significant partisanship differences. Figures 4–5 also show that for high GAL/TAN intensity, the partnership legislation impact turns more negative for all partisan group, with TAN party moderate supporters showing the greatest moderating effect. When polarization is at 16, the predicted acceptance of homosexuality of moderate TAN people drop from 3.49 to 3.23. For marriage legislation, it shows a different story. Under high polarization, only core church members and TAN party supporters develop stronger homonegativity when polarization is high, indicating a polarization in the public. The GAL party supporters show also backlash in attitudes towards homosexuality, yet, the differences are not substantial as showed by the figures.

The results marginally support *H3*, *H3.1* and *H3.2*, depending on type of legislation, indicating that public opinion can reflect that GAL/TAN intensity of politicized morality issues in the parliament. When the polarization between GAL and TAN parties increases, partnership

legislation yields a more negative impact on attitudes toward homosexuality, regardless of the religiosity level or partisanship. More marriage legislation, stronger political polarization intensifies the gap between the more conservative and more liberal groups in the society in terms of the legislative impact.

As a remark, one may notice that most effect sizes are small at 0.1 or 0.01 levels, and the changes in attitudes are marginal across independent variables. The reason may be that the dependent variable measure "*Gays and lesbians should be free to live their own lives as they wish*" is vague and provides limited variation (Keuzenkamp 2011). In Figure 9, I descriptively plot the changes in this indicator's level within the ESS survey window 2002–2016. For each category of religiosity or partisanship, with the current measure, the attitude toward homosexuality, only increases by approximately 0.3 points. The graph is consistent with the finding that individual-level identity factors, such as religiosity and partisanship, provide the strongest effects. Hence, the effects found are substantial enough to demonstrate a change in attitudes at a level of 0.1 points. The choice of the dependent variable of attitudes toward homosexuality constitutes an important limitation. Nevertheless, it is the only item on homosexuality surveyed in all ESS rounds that could fit a longitudinal study design.

Robustness checks

While assessing the robustness of the findings (Table A3 – A9), one might first doubt treating the DK answers for the dependent variable as the medium level of positive attitudes, since these respondents might have included extremely homophobic people unwilling to answer due to concerns about social desirability. Robustness analyses combine them with respondents showing the most negative level, or any other levels, or by exclude them; the results remain robust. Second, since the dependent variable can be regarded as ordinal, I fit order logistic models and obtain robust results. Third, I also run models using fixed-effect specification, controlling for years after the passage of legislations, and excluding Austria, where the legislation is made by supreme court instead of the parliament. Results are remaining consistent.

Table 4: Legislation and GAL/TAN cleavage on attitudes towards homosexuality –
religiosity (N = 290,792)

	Baseline model	Focused legislation			
		Partnership		Marriage	
	M0	M5.1	M5.2	M6.1	M6.2
Control variables yield similar results and are omitted					
Marginal members	-0.151***	-0.151***	-0.154***	-0.151***	-0.140***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.013)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Core members	-0.479***	-0.479***	-0.416***	-0.479***	-0.467***
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.020)	(0.041)	(0.037)
Partnership legislation	-0.063	-0.074	-0.062	-0.063	-0.060
	(0.075)	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.075)	(0.074)
Marriage legislation	0.029	0.027	0.026	0.028	0.048*
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.021)
GAL/TAN cleavage	0.001	0.003*	0.003	0.001	-0.004
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Legislation*Marginal members	-	-	0.017	-	-0.024
			(0.018)		(0.027)
Legislation*Core members	-	-	-0.096*	--	-0.105***
			(0.045)		(0.027)
Cleavage*Marginal members	-	-	0.000	-	0.004
			(0.001)		(0.003)
Cleavage*Core members	-	-	0.000	-	0.007*
			(0.002)		(0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-	-0.010*	-0.014**	-0.000	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation* Marginal members	-	-	0.009**	-	-0.001
			(0.003)		(0.006)
Cleavage*Legislation* Core members	-	-	0.007	-	-0.035***
			(0.012)		(0.008)
AIC	697595	697551	697412	697595	697510
BIC	698738	697795	697656	697838	697754

***: p<0.001; **: p<0.01; *: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Figure 3: Partnership legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and religiosity

Non−members

Marginal members

Core members

Positive attitudes towards homosexuality
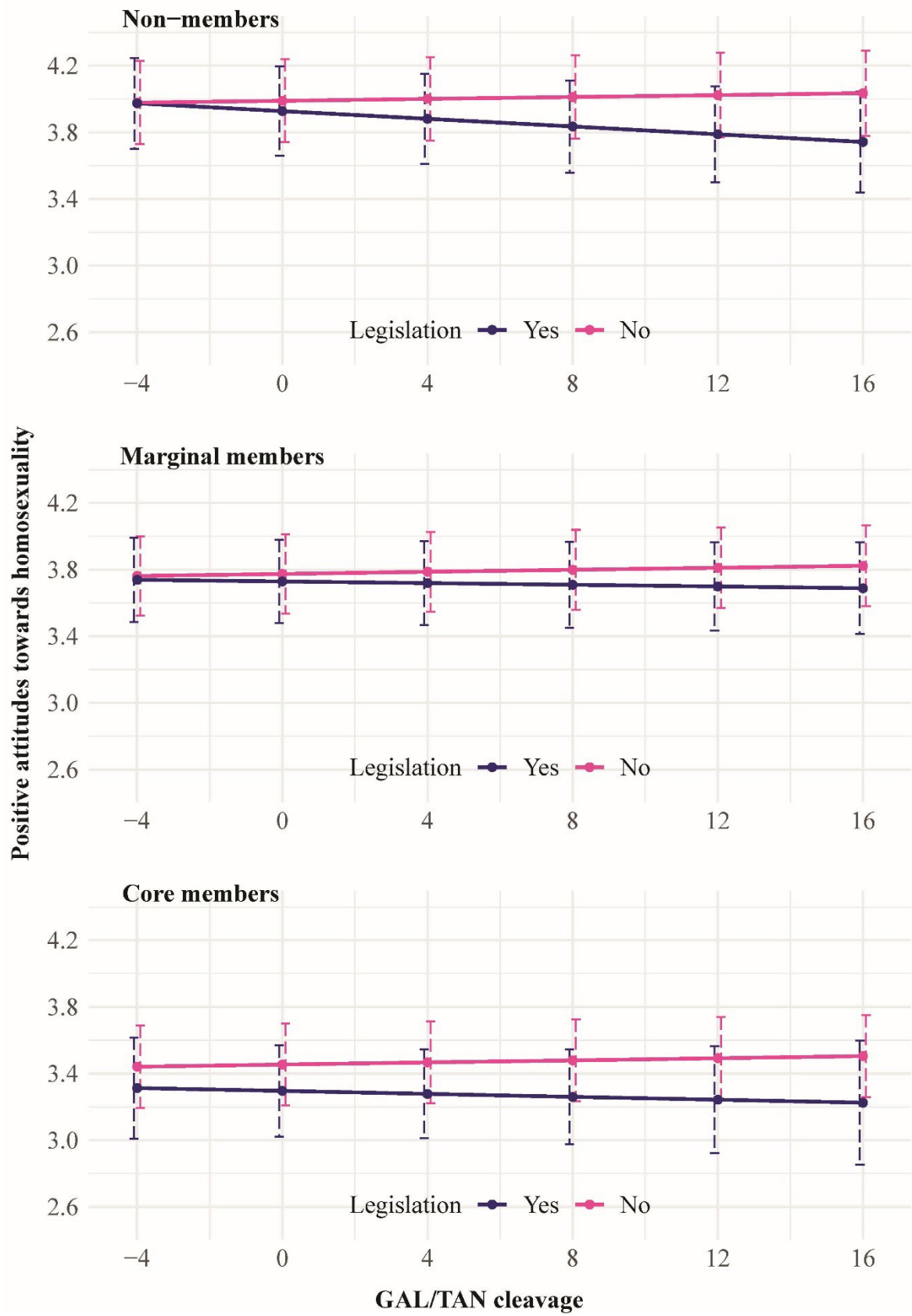
GAL/TAN cleavage

Legislation → Yes → No

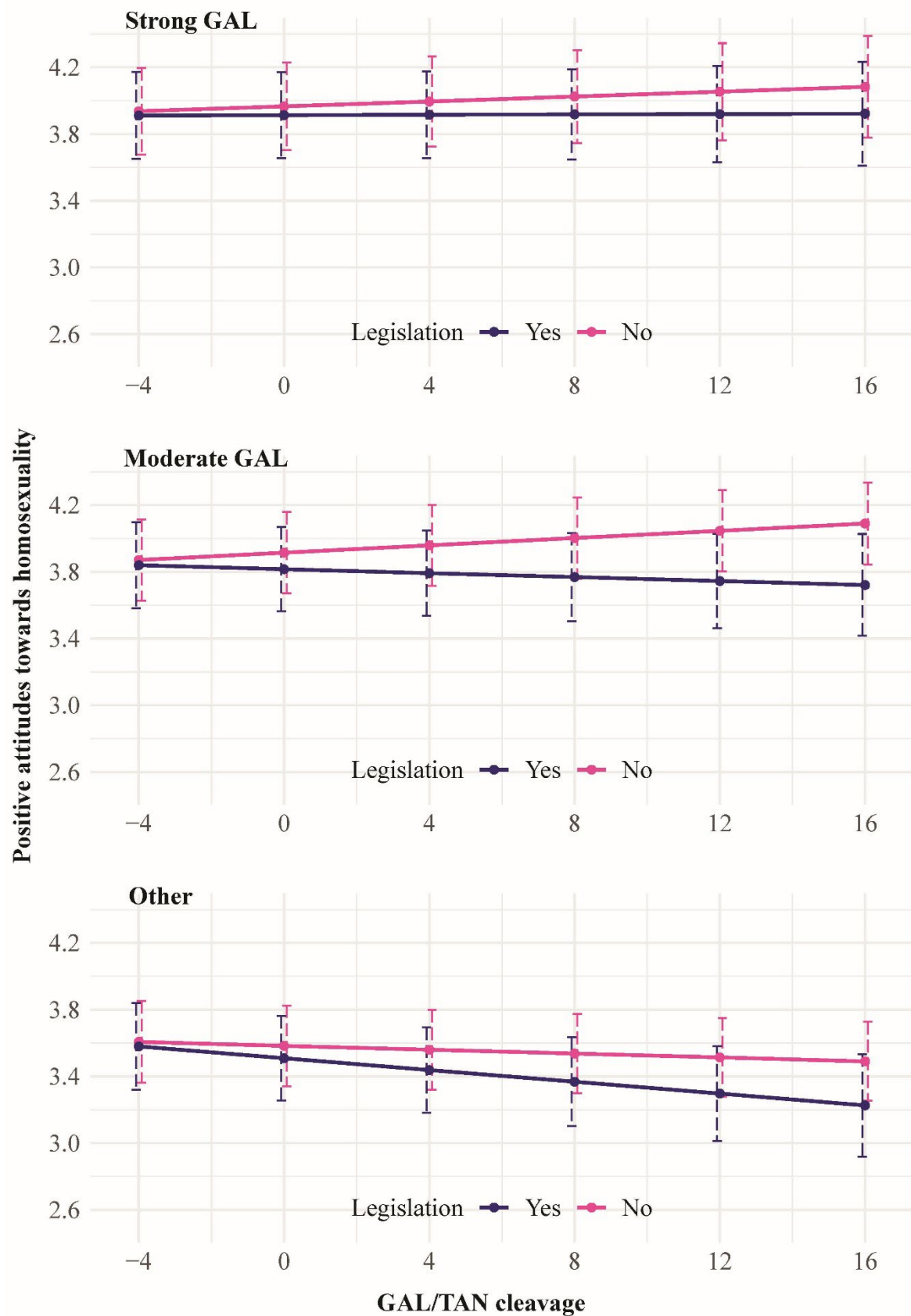**Figure 4: Partnership legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and partisanship (1)**

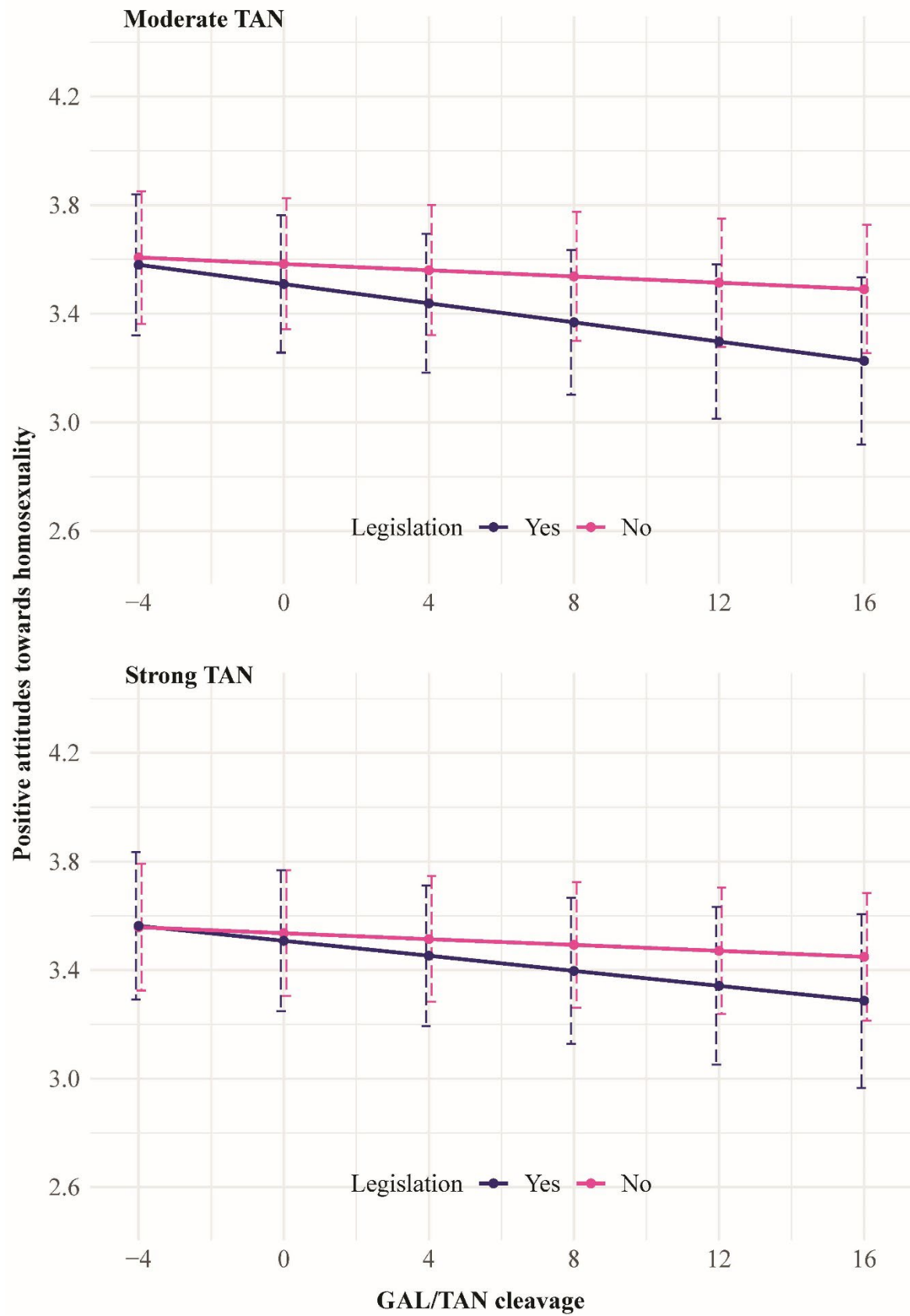**Figure 5: Partnership legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and partisanship (2)**

Table 5: Legislation and GAL/TAN cleavage on attitudes towards homosexuality – partisanship (N = 290,792)

	Baseline model	Focused legislation			
		Partnership		Marriage	
	M0	M5.1	M5.3	M6.1	M6.3
Control variables yield similar results and are omitted					
Strong GAL	0.184***	0.185***	0.162***	0.184***	0.197***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.024)	(0.026)
Moderate GAL	0.108***	0.108***	0.119***	0.108***	0.114***
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.028)
Moderate TAN	-0.047*	-0.047*	-0.065*	-0.047*	-0.072***
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.026)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Strong TAN	-0.029	-0.030	-0.076**	-0.029	-0.050*
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Partnership legislation	-0.063	-0.074	-0.091	-0.063	-0.064
	(0.075)	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.075)	(0.075)
Marriage legislation	0.029	0.027	0.025	0.028	0.029
	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.020)	(0.026)
GAL/TAN cleavage	0.001	0.003*	0.004**	0.001	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Legislation*Strong GAL	-	-	0.037	-	-0.048
			(0.036)		(0.026)
Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-	-0.009	-	-0.040
			(0.030)		(0.028)
Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-	0.019	-	0.106***
			(0.029)		(0.028)
Legislation*Strong TAN	-	-	0.064*	-	0.071
			(0.032)		(0.063)
Cleavage *Strong GAL	-	-	0.004	-	0.005
			(0.004)		(0.003)
Cleavage *Moderate GAL	-	-	0.008***	-	0.006**
			(0.001)		(0.002)
Cleavage *Moderate TAN	-	-	-0.011***	-	-0.011***
			(0.001)		(0.002)
Cleavage *Strong TAN	-	-	-0.010***	-	-0.009***
			(0.001)		(0.002)
Cleavage *Legislation	-	-0.010*	-0.011*	-0.000	0.004
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)

Cleavage *Legislation*Strong GAL	-	-	0.004 (0.005)	-	-0.011* (0.005)
Cleavage *Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-	-0.006 (0.003)	-	-0.017*** (0.005)
Cleavage *Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-	-0.000 (0.005)	-	0.011 (0.009)
Cleavage *Legislation*Strong TAN	-	-	0.003 (0.007)	-	-0.002 (0.017)
AIC	697595	697551	697374	697595	697380
BIC	698738	697795	697628	697838	697634

***: p<0.001; **: p<0.01; *: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

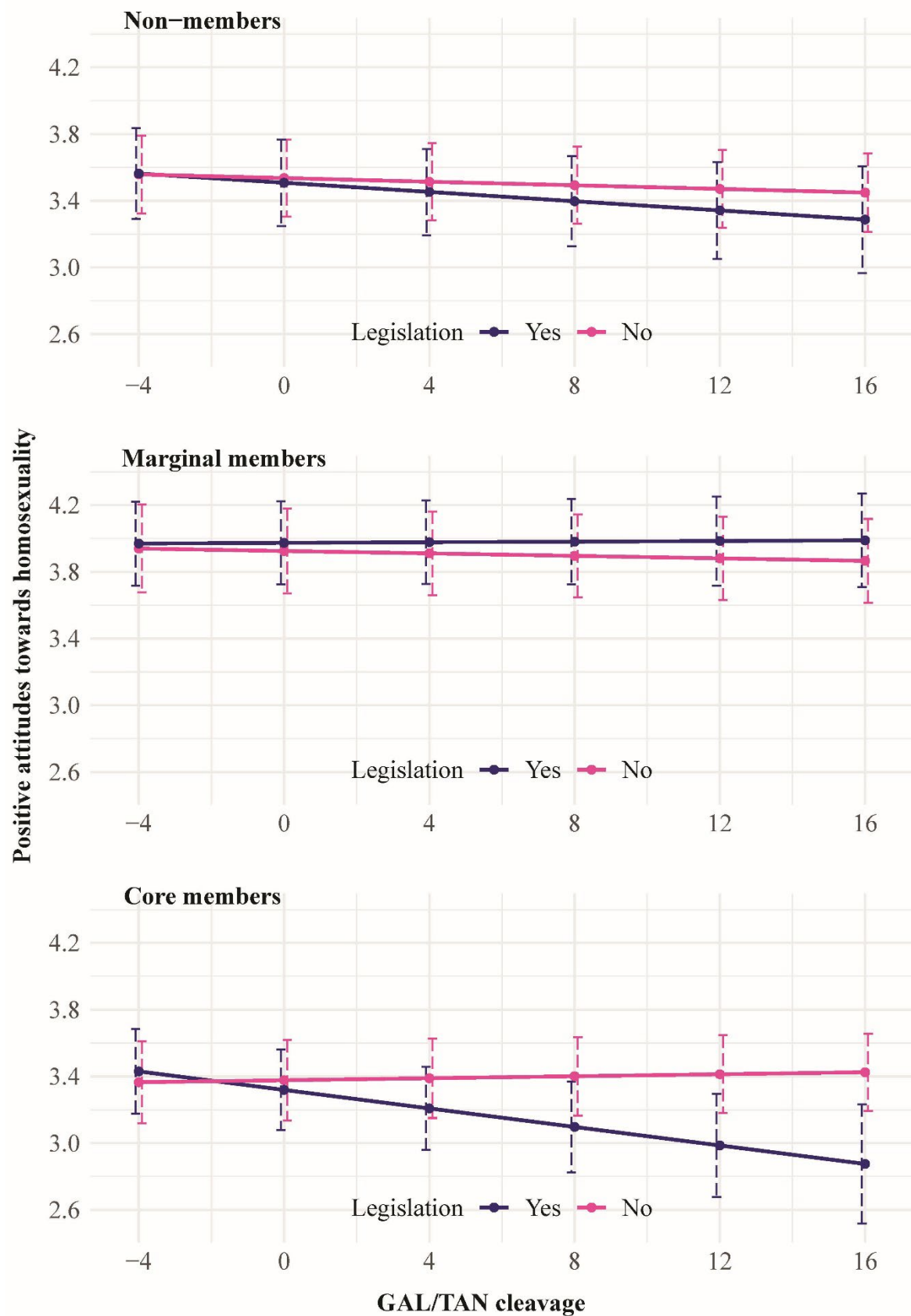**Figure 6: Marriage legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and religiosity**

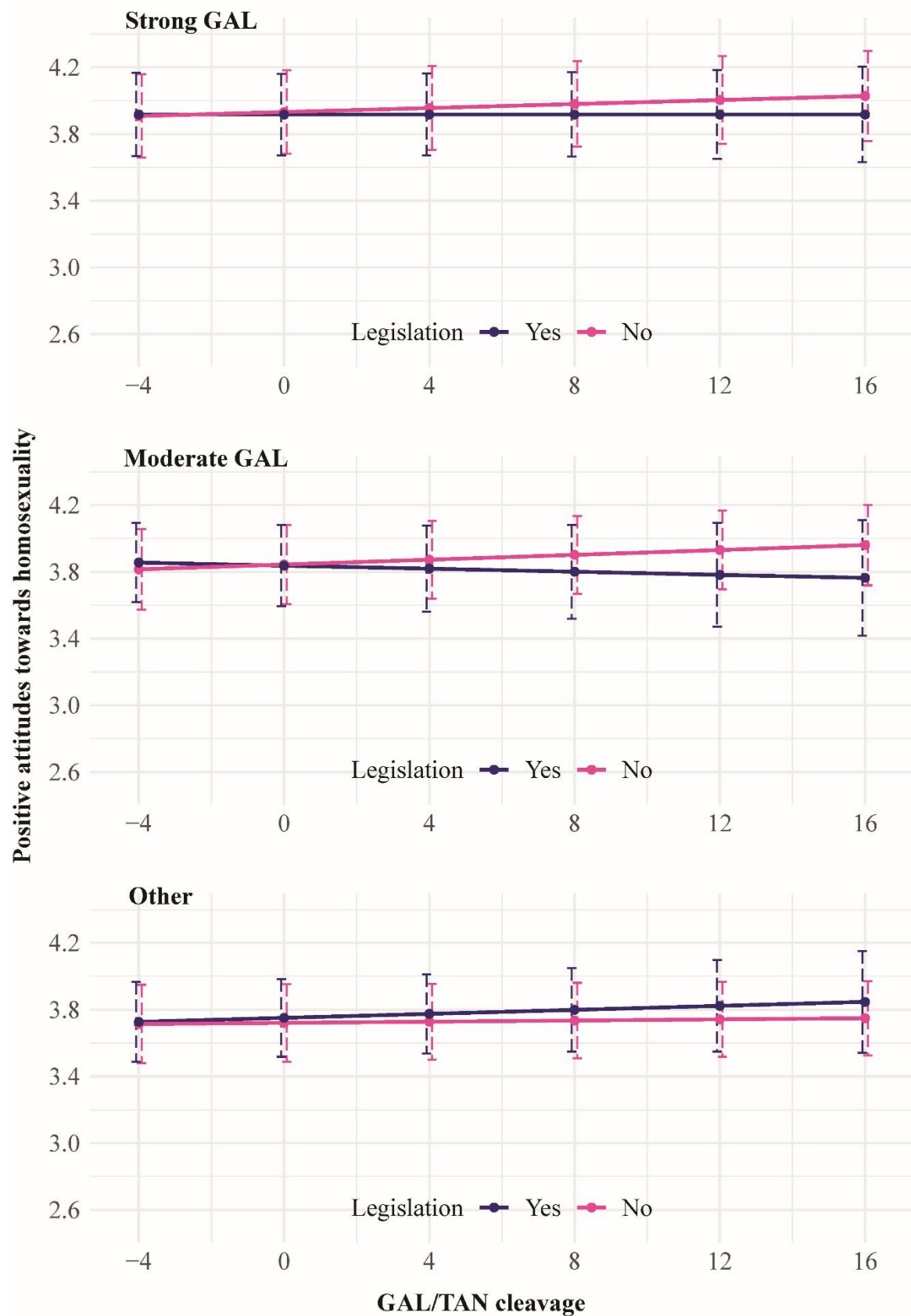**Figure 7: Marriage legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and partisanship (1)**

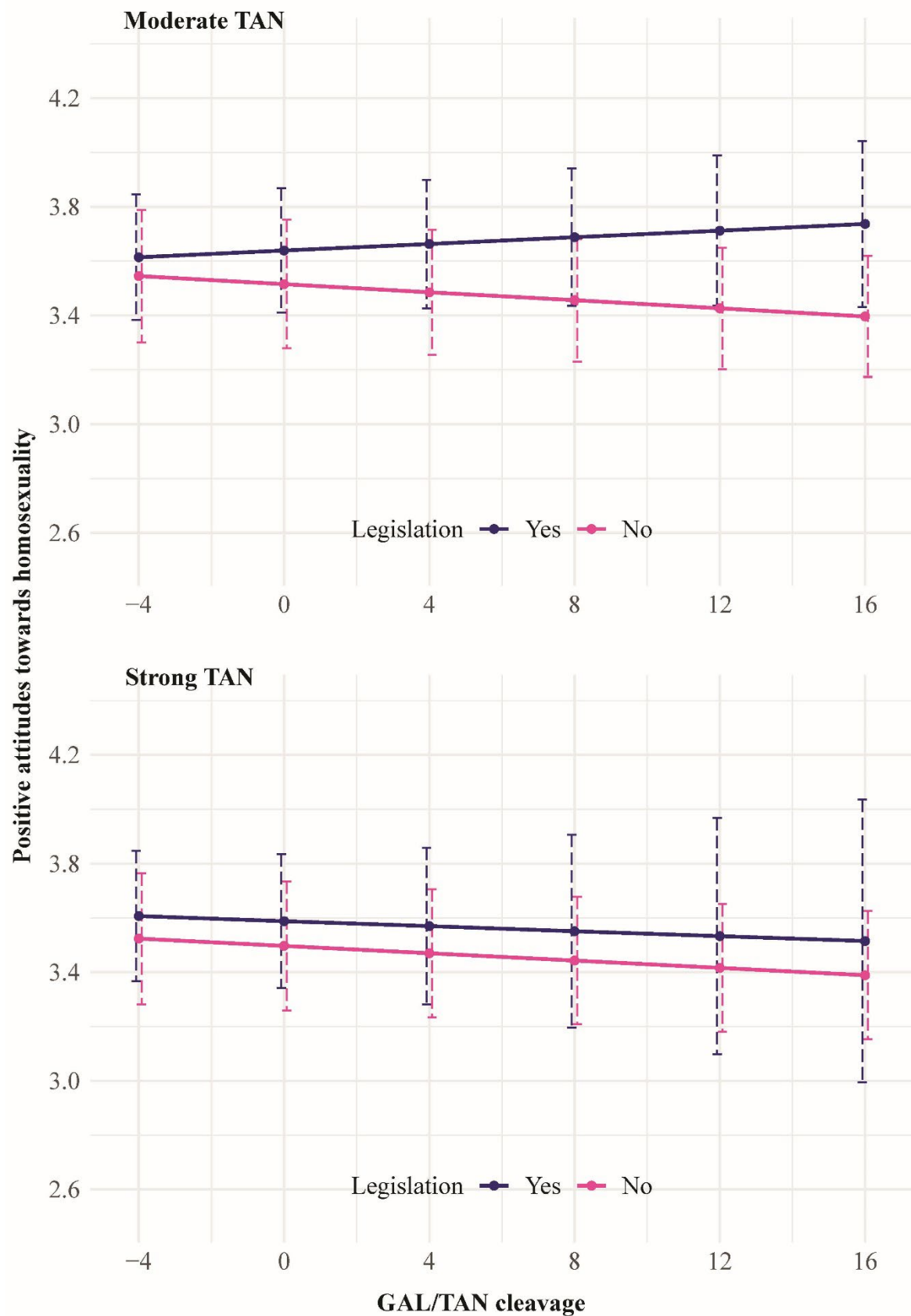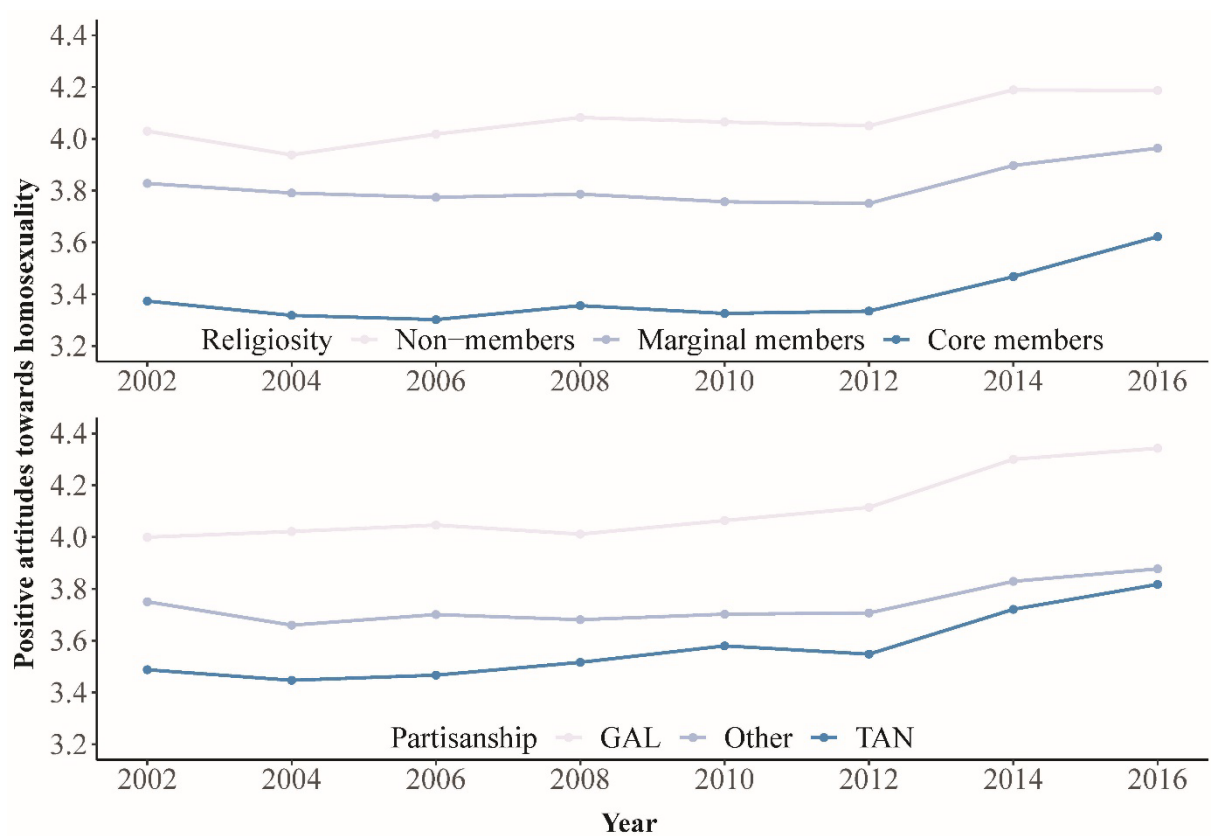**Figure 8: Marriage legislation, GAL/TAN cleavage and partisanship (2)**

Figure 9: Trends towards homosexuality

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, I examined how two religion-related national context dimensions—secularization and GAL/TAN intensity on morality issues—shaped the impact of same-sex marriage and partnership legislations on public attitudes toward homosexuality. Previous studies have largely overlooked the potential moderation of contextual factors, especially regarding religion. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, this is among the first studies to investigate how religion-related contexts alter the impact of legislation on attitudes toward homosexuality.

The main effects of legislations obtained resemble those observed by Abou-Chadi and Finnigan (2019): negative for partnership legislation and positive for marriage legislation, and more negative for religious people than non-religious people. Nevertheless, all the effects lose statistical significance in the current study. While baseline models support the consensus model of legislation impact, further analyses of the different trajectories of legislative impact shaped by contextual factors suggest that the impact could lean toward the backlash and polarization models (Flores and Barclay 2016) under high secularization and GAL/TAN intensity.

Contrary to the hypothesis on secularization theory, secularization did not seem to facilitate a more positive legislative impact, which suggests SSU legislations and the increasing positive attitudes toward homosexuality could be endogenous consequences of secularization itself (Adamczyk and Liao 2019; Budde et al. 2017). Regarding the religious polarization thesis, the results showed only a limited support, only among the core religious members. Under higher secularity, core church members are likely to react more negatively to partnership legislation, diverging from the marginally religious and the non-religious groups. Similar divergence from core members occurs for marriage legislation when secularity or secular-religious divides are high, but to a much lesser extent. Core religious members might have perhaps perceived greater isolation and deprivation within a more secular context, invoking more negative reactions to SSU legislations; however, such effects are nevertheless small in the current study.

GAL/TAN intensity over morality issues is more relevant in undermining the expected positive legislative impact on attitudes. This study provided nuanced evidence showing that morality issues' polarization and politicization not only hinder legislations, but also affect the legislative impact on attitudes at the individual level. This study is among the first to examine how the "worlds of morality politics" framework (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012; Hurka et al. 2018) influences micro-level outcomes cross-nationally. When parties exhibiting polarized and politicized stances on morality, the legislation could be perceived as more controversial

and attitudes against progressive legislation can be more easily mobilized, especially for the highly conservative people. For partnership legislation, its legislative impact on attitudes turns more negative under high GAL/TAN intensity in general, and is not limited to the religious and politically conservative groups. Similar to the moderating role of secularization, for marriage legislation, GAL/TAN intensity influences core church members and TAN party supporters diverging toward stronger homonegativity.

Overall, the study provides broader implications for the currently debated "moral polarization" in Western societies (Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Rapp 2016). Previous literature suggests a growing value contrast between religious and secular populations with increasing secularization (Achterberg et al. 2009; Wilkins-Laflamme 2016), which could be enhanced by GAL/TAN intensity (Iversen 1994). This study finds that these religion-based contexts contribute toward the religious–secular conflict by bifurcating the legislative impact across religiosity levels, without necessarily polarizing public opinion. Both secularization and GAL/TAN intensity could increase the impact divergence by making core church members further diverge from others in their attitudes, although such divergence is marginal. Like what Fiorina and Abrams (2008) suggest, polarization among parties as political elites does not translate into a polarization in public opinion. However, GAL/TAN intensity may make the legislation more controversial and lower general public support, as seen with the suppression of GAL/TAN intensity due to partnership legislation's impact. Remarkably, this suppression is present across religiosity and partisanship. However, one should not draw a pessimistic conclusion based on the results of the study, since the "backlash" over legislation (i.e., rising homonegativity after SSU legislations), occurs mostly among highly religious core church members, who are declining in number due to cohort replacement (Voas and Doebler 2011). Moreover, the negative impact is also small. Marginal church members and non-religious people show strikingly similar patterns, indicating that the majority of the population approves of progressive legislations. Most countries are witnessing a rise in positive attitudes toward homosexuality among both religious and secular groups, despite the divergence in the growth rate of grow positive toward homosexuality observed in the study, similar to the pattern presented by Dotti Sani and Quaranta (2021).

Regarding the different impacts of partnership and marriage legislations, one may speculate that partnership legislation first incited controversies and buffered the subsequent negative sentiments for a more positive consensus for marriage legislation. Alternatively, partnership legislation may be more feasible in highly polarized contexts. Abou-Chadi and Finnigan (2019)

also suggest that more inclusive legislation such as equal marriage rights generate more inclusive attitudes. However, with only few countries experiencing both legislation changes in the current sample, such interpretations based on countries' stage in the legislative process or presuming genuine differences between the two legislations should be taken with caution. In addition, a robustness check showed that people strongly identifying with GAL parties show a significant reduction in positivity toward homosexuality after the enactment of marriage legislation under high GAL/TAN intensity, seemingly echoing the recent debate on how European left-wing parties would lose conservative working-class supporters by overemphasizing cultural liberalism (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). However, this interpretation should also be treated cautiously since the effect is not robust, and the effect size is very small when presented with marginal effects.

This study has the following limitations to be discussed. First, despite the finding that secularization and GAL/TAN intensity can shape legislative impact, the study did not distinguish the possible mechanisms behind these effects. The data used did not enable an analysis of whether secularization creates divergence via self-selection of religiosity or reinforces the religious-secular boundary (Achterberg, et al. 2009); nor is it clear whether the GAL/TAN intensity effect stems from policy blocking (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2016) or people simply following their parties (Druckman et al. 2013). To delineate these mechanisms, future studies should utilize multiple sources of panel data on individual and party levels. Another possible approach is individually test the influence of each party's position on the party supporters. However, the size of the current data would not be sufficient to support the approach, and it should be realized with larger nationnal surveys that includes substantial number of supporters even from minor parties. Second, due to considerable missing data, I was unable to test whether legislative impact differs between religious denominations. Although actual religiosity tends to be a stronger predictor, denominations do show differences in attitudes toward homosexuality (Adamczyk and Liao 2019). The effect of marginal church members can be biased without accounting for denominational differences. Finally, considering the data limitations, the current study is not perfect for operationalization of the proposed theories. For instance, one would argue that the public attention should depend more on the debate process. Future study could potentially capitalize media or even social media data to more accurately estimate how the public opinions are shaped during the debate process. Finally, the study has not fully captured the heterogeneity of legislation forms. Within the same legislation category of either partnership or marriage, there exist variations in policy provisions

such as the adoption rights for adoption for homosexual couples, which is an issue that could trigger stronger backlash among the conservative population (Eggert and Engeli 2015; Keuzenkamp 2011). Future research could further examine the impact of such clauses in the legislation.

To conclude, the study was the first to examine the importance of contextual factors in shaping the outcomes of SSU legislations. Future research should explore other factors contributing toward the heterogeneity of legislative impact, especially regarding provisions for adoption rights, as previously discussed. Studies should also expand the analysis of legislative impact in different cultural or political contexts, for example, taking Taiwan as an Asian example, where same-sex marriage legislation underwent a referendum backlash (Biswas 2018). Additionally, conducting a longitudinal data with a longer time frame, or deploying experimental or qualitative approaches could help a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms of legislative impact on attitudes toward homosexuality. Deploying measures capturing more variation in attitudes toward homosexuality (Keuzenkamp 2011) is also important. Finally, the impact of "worlds of morality politics" (Engeli, Green-Pedersen, and Larsen 2012; Hurka et al. 2018) is under researched at the individual level compared to the party level, except for a test on Germany (Arzheimer 2020. Similar theoretical and analytical frameworks could be applied to other social policies within the morality politics framework, such as euthanasia and abortion.

Notes:

1. To clarify, the morality politics context is independent of the religiosity of the country's population in influencing legislation and its impact. For instance, despite having a highly secular population, the Netherlands belongs to the "religious world" in terms of morality politics, with a strong Christian democratic party. Therefore, the country experienced difficulty in legislating same-sex marriages until 2001 (Timmermans and Breeman 2012).
2. In Austria, the fourth and fifth rounds the survey were conducted 2–3 years after regular times and are regarded as subsequent rounds to match with other countries. The second-round data of Finland and the fourth-round data of Lithuania are excluded as they lack measures on religiosity and post-stratification weight, respectively.
3. Defined by having electoral democracy under the classification of *Regimes of the World* (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018)

4. Class status is classified by current/previous occupations. Those without labor market experience categorized as "non-employed."

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Appendices:

Table A1: Descriptive statistics			
Individual level variables (N = 290,792)			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Positive attitudes towards homosexuality	1	5	3.81	1.15
Age	15	90	47.98	18.40
Household size	1	22	2.69	1.40
Political left-right scale	0	10	5.07	2.05
Gender	Male		46.69%	
	Female		53.31%	
Residence	Urban		62.57%	
	Rural		37.43%	
Parenthood	With children		36.98%	
	Without children		63.02%	
Cohabitation status	With partner		59.42%	
	Without partner		40.58%	
Religiosity	Non-members		40.67%	
	Marginal members		35.51%	
	Core members		24.03%	
Partisanship	Strong GAL		19.64%	
	Moderate GAL		6.94%	
	Other		54.80%	
	Moderate TAN		4.78%	
	Strong TAN		13.85%	
Educational level	Lower education		31.28%	
	Medium education		43.56%	
	Higher education		24.95%	
	Other education		0.21%	
Class status	Manual workers		31.65%	
	Non-manual workers		54.53%	
	Farm workers		4.58%	
	Other occupations		0.61%	
	Non-employed		8.63%	
Country-round level variables (N = 168)			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Secularity (centered)	-1.67	0.85	0.00	0.64
Religious divide (centered)	-0.82	0.59	0.00	0.35
GAL/TAN cleavage (centered)	-4.98	24.86	0.00	4.94
Logged GDP per capita (centered)	-1.04	0.80	0.00	0.36
Logged unemployment rate (centered)	-1.04	1.24	0.00	0.45
Share of TAN parties				
Partnership legislation	With legislation		60.12%	
	Without legislation		39.88%	
Marriage legislation	With legislation		25.00%	
	Without legislation		75.00%	

Table A2: Baseline models on attitudes towards homosexuality
(N = 290,792)

Age	-0.011***
	(0.001)
Female	0.198***
	(0.013)
Urban residence	-0.006
	(0.017)
Education: Medium level as reference	
Lower education	-0.104***
	(0.011)
Higher education	0.085***
	(0.017)
Other education	0.005
	(0.032)
Class status: Non-manual workers as reference	
Farm workers	-0.268***
	(0.030)
Manual workers	-0.170***
	(0.013)
Other occupations	-0.042
	(0.023)
Non-employed	-0.226***
	(0.026)
Cohabitation	0.022
	(0.011)
Household size	-0.039***
	(0.007)
Parenthood	0.031*
	(0.012)
Political right	-0.034***
	(0.004)
Secularity	0.441*
	(0.208)
Religious divide	-0.789
	(0.452)
GAL/TAN cleavage	0.001
	(0.002)
Share of TAN parties	0.294*
	(0.108)
Logged GDP per capita	-0.461***
	(0.150)
Logged unemployment rate	-0.056
	(0.053)
Round: 2002 as reference	
2004	0.032
	(0.032)
2006	0.099**
	(0.034)
2008	0.273***

	(0.049)
2010	0.313***
	(0.049)
2012	0.367***
	(0.065)
2014	0.465***
	(0.076)
2016	0.556***
	(0.051)
Religiosity: Non-members as reference	
Marginal members	-0.151***
	(0.023)
Core members	-0.479***
	(0.041)
Partisanship: Others as reference	
Strong GAL	0.184***
	(0.024)
Moderate GAL	0.108**
	(0.025)
Moderate TAN	-0.047*
	(0.018)
Strong TAN	-0.029
	(0.024)
Partnership legislation	-0.063
	(0.075)
Marriage legislation	0.029
	(0.025)
Constant	4.243***
	(0.013)
AIC	697595
BIC	697838

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Most results from control variables are also consistent with previous findings (Abou-Chadi and Finnigan 2019; Hooghe and Meeusen 2013; van den Akker, van der Ploeg, and Scheepers 2013). Younger people, females, the higher-educated, non-manual workers and people in cohabitation partnerships are more positive to homosexuality, while people who live in larger families, without children and a position on the right side of the political scale on average show more negative attitudes. Religious people are more negative towards homosexuality, while people identifying with GAL parties are more positive. People living in more secular countries have more positive attitudes towards homosexuality. There are no significant main effects of secular-religious divide, strength of GAL/TAN cleavage or unemployment rates. Surprisingly, GDP per capita has a negative and significant effect, but it turns positive when not controlling for period. The explanation may be that the effect is absorbed into the period effect; and that it accounts for the slight decline and stagnation of positive attitudes towards homosexuality before 2008, which coincides with the pre-crisis economic boost. The share of TAN parties has a significant positive effect on attitudes towards homosexuality, but it also turns non-significant after removing the period control.

Table A3: Robustness check – fixed-effect models
(N = 290,792)

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.061	-0.102	0.038	0.033
	(0.073)	(0.077)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Secularity	0.434*	0.403	0.453*	0.471*
	(0.208)	(0.204)	(0.218)	(0.220)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.014	0.111	-0.039	0.021
	(0.056)	(0.077)	(0.062)	(0.049)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.124*	-	-0.000
		(0.060)		(0.069)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	-0.339**	-	-0.238*
		(0.121)		(0.105)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.060	-0.067	0.034	0.044
	(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.031)	(0.028)
Divide	-0.767	-0.775	-0.829	-0.800
	(0.485)	(0.490)	(0.460)	(0.467)
Divide *Legislation	-0.032	0.063	-0.073	-0.022
	(0.110)	(0.141)	(0.134)	(0.096)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.079	-	0.017
		(0.137)		(0.093)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.435	-	-0.326*
		(0.236)		(0.133)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.075	-0.064	0.027	0.047*
	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Cleavage	0.003*	0.003	0.001	-0.004
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.010*	-0.015*	-0.000	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.009**	-	-0.001
		(0.003)		(0.006)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.007	-	-0.036***
		(0.012)		(0.008)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.075	-0.093	0.027	0.027
	(0.064)	(0.064)	(0.021)	(0.026)
Cleavage	0.003*	0.004**	0.001	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.010*	-0.011*	-0.000	0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.004	-	-0.011
		(0.005)		(0.005)
Cleavage*Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-0.006	-	-0.017**
		(0.003)		(0.005)

Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-0.000 (0.005)	-	0.011 (0.009)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	0.003 (0.007)	-	-0.002 (0.017)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.067 (0.071)	-0.116 (0.075)	0.066 (0.043)	0.057 (0.040)
Secularity	0.372 (0.207)	0.333 (0.204)	0.409 (0.216)	0.410 (0.217)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.023 (0.053)	0.103 (0.070)	-0.079 (0.071)	-0.014 (0.058)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.122* (0.056)	-	-0.004 (0.076)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	-0.319** (0.109)	-	-0.243* (0.101)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.065 (0.076)	-0.082 (0.079)	0.056 (0.036)	0.062* (0.032)
Divide	-0.461 (0.524)	-0.498 (0.522)	-0.573 (0.480)	-0.570 (0.486)
Divide *Legislation	-0.058 (0.113)	0.062 (0.134)	-0.136 (0.147)	-0.068 (0.108)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.103 (0.128)	-	0.005 (0.102)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.445* (0.219)	-	-0.352** (0.132)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.082 (0.063)	-0.084 (0.062)	0.036 (0.025)	0.053* (0.024)
Cleavage	0.003* (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.009 (0.005)	-0.014* (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	0.002 (0.005)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.009** (0.003)	-	-0.000 (0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.009 (0.011)	-	-0.035*** (0.007)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.082 (0.063)	-0.090 (0.062)	0.036 (0.025)	0.045 (0.030)
Cleavage	0.003* (0.001)	0.003* (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.011* (0.004)	-0.000 (0.005)	0.004 (0.007)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.001 (0.006)	-	-0.014** (0.005)
Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-0.007 (0.004)	-	-0.022*** (0.005)

Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	0.000 (0.005)	-	0.011 (0.009)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	0.000 (0.007)	-	-0.003 (0.016)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		**Marriage**	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.058	-0.100	0.028	0.017
	(0.075)	(0.077)	(0.033)	(0.035)
Secularity	0.470*	0.434*	0.480*	0.493*
	(0.216)	(0.212)	(0.225)	(0.227)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.010	0.123	-0.021	0.047
	(0.056)	(0.078)	(0.057)	(0.051)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.127*	-	-0.005
		(0.059)		(0.069)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	-0.358**	-	-0.252*
		(0.121)		(0.109)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.057	-0.065	0.027	0.031
	(0.080)	(0.081)	(0.029)	(0.027)
Divide	-0.868	-0.881	-0.910*	-0.885
	(0.481)	(0.484)	(0.461)	(0.468)
Divide *Legislation	-0.022	0.079	-0.051	0.014
	(0.111)	(0.148)	(0.126)	(0.091)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.074	-	0.011
		(0.141)		(0.094)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.460	-	-0.351*
		(0.243)		(0.141)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.071	-0.062	0.024	0.041*
	(0.066)	(0.064)	(0.019)	(0.021)
Cleavage	0.003**	0.004	0.001	-0.003
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.010*	-0.015**	0.001	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.009**	-	-0.001
		(0.003)		(0.006)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.008	-	-0.035***
		(0.012)		(0.009)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.071	-0.090	0.024	0.024
	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.019)	(0.025)
Cleavage	0.003**	0.004**	0.001	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.010*	-0.011**	0.001	0.005
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.004	-	-0.010
		(0.005)		(0.006)
Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-0.007*	-	-0.017**
		(0.003)		(0.005)

Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	0.001 (0.005)	-	0.012 (0.009)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	0.003 (0.007)	-	-0.001 (0.017)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Table A6: Robustness check – ordered logistic models
(N = 290,792)

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.129	-0.217	0.085	0.167*
	(0.142)	(0.167)	(0.067)	(0.078)
Secularity	1.062**	1.065**	1.045*	1.135**
	(0.390)	(0.394)	(0.418)	(0.427)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.010	0.207	0.037	0.111
	(0.121)	(0.204)	(0.114)	(0.098)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.234	-	-0.013
		(0.167)		(0.119)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	-0.566	-	-0.472**
		(0.303)		(0.162)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.127	-0.140	0.089	0.200**
	(0.152)	(0.175)	(0.061)	(0.067)
Divide	-1.824*	-1.756*	-1.819*	-1.712*
	(0.800)	(0.814)	(0.798)	(0.821)
Divide *Legislation	-0.039	0.085	0.067	0.066
	(0.245)	(0.355)	(0.267)	(0.230)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.094	-	0.038
		(0.330)		(0.132)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.654	-	-0.603***
		(0.525)		(0.164)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.157	-0.120	0.100*	0.212***
	(0.120)	(0.124)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Cleavage	0.005*	-0.001	0.002	-0.009
	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.022*	-0.026	0.002	0.007
	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.014	-	0.002
		(0.008)		(0.009)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.010	-	-0.062***
		(0.024)		(0.013)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.157	-0.186	0.100*	0.092
	(0.120)	(0.115)	(0.043)	(0.049)
Cleavage	0.005*	0.006*	0.002	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.022*	-0.022*	0.002	0.009
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.014)
Cleavage*Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.009	-	-0.022*
		(0.011)		(0.010)
Cleavage*Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-0.013	-	-0.024
		(0.007)		(0.013)

Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-0.000 (0.012)	-	0.026 (0.018)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	0.000 (0.014)	-	-0.003 (0.032)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Table A7: Robustness check – Austria excluded
(N = 277,926)

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.024 (0.071)	-0.074 (0.079)	0.038 (0.035)	0.035 (0.036)
Secularity	0.472* (0.213)	0.441* (0.206)	0.486* (0.222)	0.505* (0.224)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.047 (0.034)	0.087 / -0.135*	-0.030 (0.061)	0.027 (0.053)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	(0.066) / -0.346**	-	0.002 (0.069)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	(0.134) / -0.135*	-	-0.235* (0.104)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.127 (0.152)	-0.140 (0.175)	0.089 (0.061)	0.200** (0.067)
Divide	-0.652 (0.486)	-0.658 (0.494)	-0.779 (0.472)	-0.749 (0.480)
Divide *Legislation	-0.131 (0.082)	-0.029 (0.151)	-0.056 (0.130)	-0.007 (0.094)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.082 (0.148)	-	0.019 (0.093)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.439 (0.252)	-	-0.324* (0.133)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.157 (0.120)	-0.120 (0.124)	0.100* (0.043)	0.212*** (0.044)
Cleavage	0.003* (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.003)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.009* (0.004)	-0.014* (0.005)	0.000 (0.005)	0.005 (0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.009** (0.003)	-	-0.001 (0.006)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.007 (0.012)	-	-0.035*** (0.008)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.157 (0.120)	-0.186 (0.115)	0.100* (0.043)	0.092 (0.049)
Cleavage	0.003* (0.001)	0.004** (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.001)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.009* (0.004)	-0.010* (0.004)	0.000 (0.005)	0.005 (0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.003 (0.005)	-	-0.011* (0.005)
Cleavage*Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	-0.007* (0.003)	-	-0.018*** (0.005)

Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-0.001 (0.005)	-	0.011 (0.009)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	0.003 (0.007)	-	-0.002 (0.017)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
Secularity - Religiosity				
Secularity	0.481	0.452	0.479	0.496
	(0.275)	(0.269)	(0.272)	(0.278)
Secularity*Legislation	-0.058	0.067	0.007	0.061
	(0.065)	(0.089)	(0.066)	(0.086)
Secularity*Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.120*	-	0.010
		(0.056)		(0.064)
Secularity*Legislation*Core members	-	-0.337**	-	-0.228*
		(0.121)		(0.097)
Religious divide - Religiosity				
Divide	-0.799	-0.807	-0.912	-0.883
	(0.552)	(0.546)	(0.517)	(0.512)
Divide *Legislation	-0.129	-0.034	-0.032	0.007
	(0.108)	(0.126)	(0.103)	(0.088)
Divide *Legislation*Marginal members	-	-0.077	-	0.039
		(0.134)		(0.089)
Divide *Legislation*Core members	-	-0.433	-	-0.301*
		(0.230)		(0.125)
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Cleavage	0.000	-0.000	-0.001	-0.006
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.008	-0.013*	-0.004	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.009**	-	-0.001
		(0.003)		(0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.007	-	-0.035***
		(0.012)		(0.009)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Cleavage	0.000	0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.008	-0.010*	-0.004	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong GAL	-	0.004	-	-0.012*
		(0.004)		(0.006)
Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	0.008***	-	-0.018**
		(0.001)		(0.006)
Cleavage* Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-0.011***	-	0.009
		(0.001)		(0.009)
Cleavage* Legislation*Strong TAN	-	-0.010***	-	-0.003
		(0.001)		(0.017)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

Table A8: Robustness check – controlling years after legislation (N = 290,792)

Table A9: Robustness check – GAL/TAN cleavages by entire blocks, weighted (N = 277,926)

	Focused legislation			
	Partnership		Marriage	
GAL/TAN cleavage – Religiosity				
Legislation	-0.078	-0.064	0.033	0.053*
	(0.058)	(0.055)	(0.029)	(0.022)
Cleavage	0.020*	0.018	-0.003	-0.015*
	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.031***	-0.037**	0.004	0.013
	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Cleavage*Legislation*Marginal members	-	0.011	-	-0.001
		(0.006)		(0.004)
Cleavage*Legislation*Core members	-	0.012	-	-0.036*
		(0.015)		(0.015)
GAL/TAN cleavage - Partisanship				
Legislation	-0.078	-0.097	0.030	0.023
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.029)	(0.035)
Cleavage	0.018***	0.023***	0.001	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Cleavage*Legislation	-0.030***	-0.037***	0.002	0.013
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Cleavage*Legislation*Strong GAL	-	-0.006	-	-0.023***
		(0.007)		(0.007)
Cleavage*Legislation*Moderate GAL	-	0.022	-	-0.016
		(0.012)		(0.009)
Cleavage*Legislation*Moderate TAN	-	-0.049***	-	0.013
		(0.013)		(0.013)
Cleavage*Legislation*Strong TAN	-	-0.033**	-	-0.028
		(0.010)		(0.021)

***: p<0.001;**: p<0.01;*: p<0.05; standard errors shown in parentheses

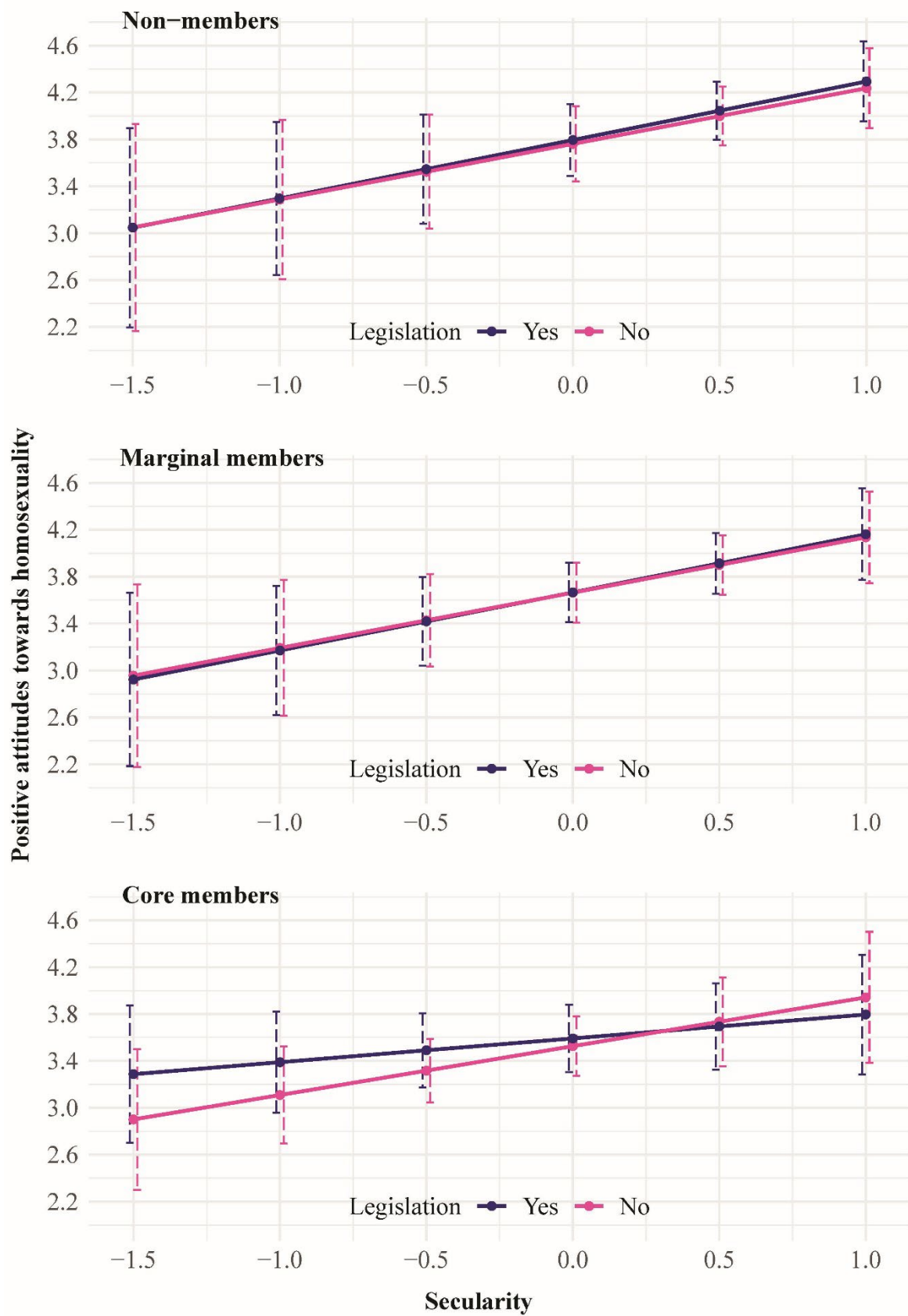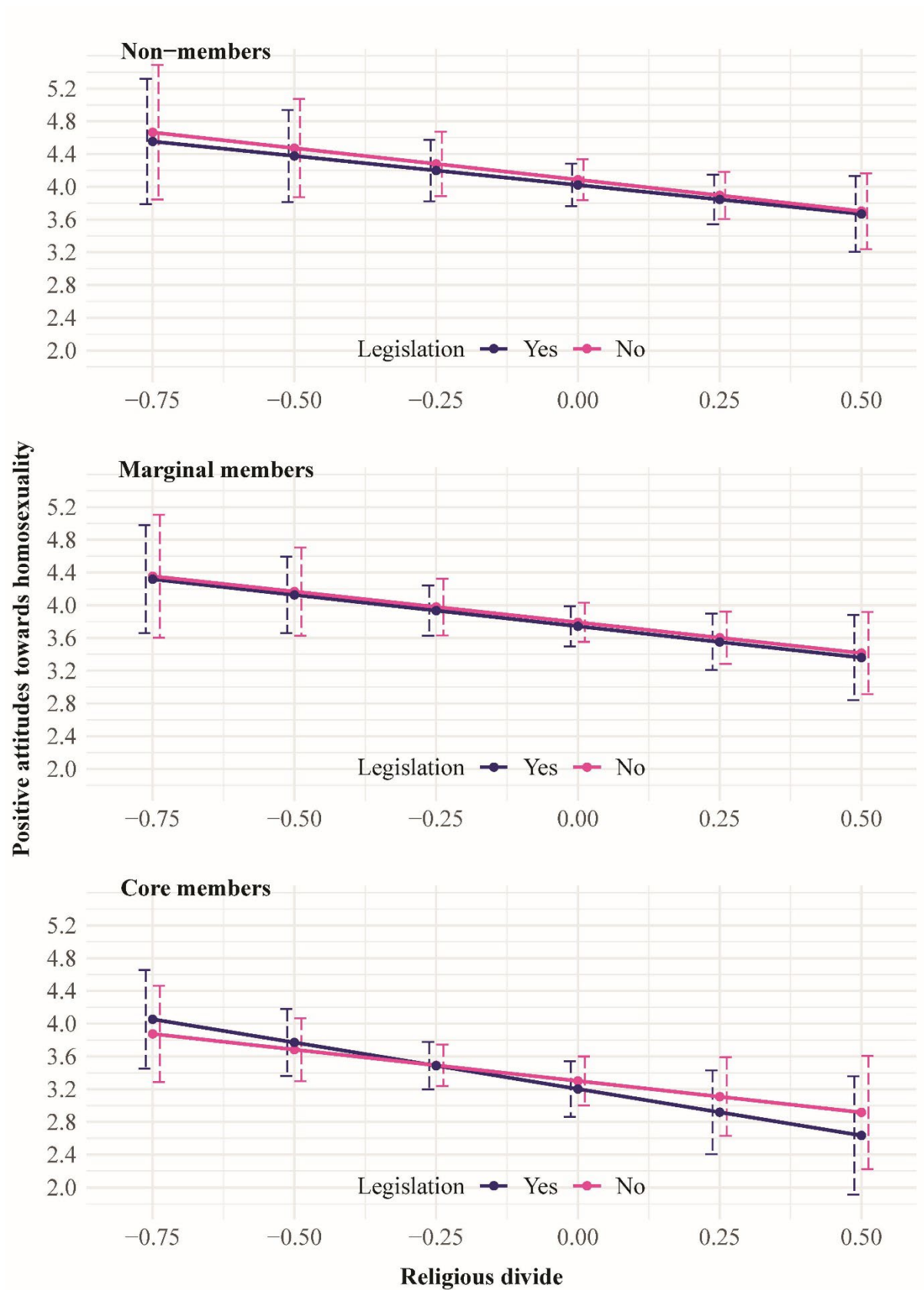**Figure A3: Marriage legislation, secularity and religiosity**

Figure A4: Partnership legislation, religious divide and religiosity