Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2015

Edited by

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BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON
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Trends, Patterns, and Determinants of Interreligious Partnerships in Austria (1971–2001)

Raya Muttarak and Maria Rita Testa

It is well observed over the past decades that intermarriage has been increasing in Western societies both for interethnic/interracial unions (Haandrikman 2013; Muttarak 2010; Rosenfeld 2008; Spörlein, Schlueter, and van Tubergen 2014) and interreligious marriage (Lehrer 1998; Sherkat 2004). A decline in hostile attitudes toward intermarriage, decreasing demographic differences across groups, and a rise in the number of native-born individuals with migration background have contributed to a continuing increase in interethnic/interracial unions. While interethnic/interracial marriage has been classically regarded as the litmus test of immigrant assimilation (Gordon 1964), religious intermarriage might signify other aspects of social development in a society. The modernization theory suggests that a decline in the salience of religion in social life can primarily explain the increase in the rates of intermarriage across religious groups. As other forms of stratification, such as formal education and skill, have gained importance in determining an individual's position in a society, ascriptive characteristics such as race and religion play less of a role in assortative mating (Kalmijn 1991).

Similar to other ‘modern’ European countries, Austria has been experiencing secularization characterized by an increase in the number of people without religious affiliation, a decline in church membership, and a rise in religious pluralism (Goujon, Skirbekk, Fliegenschnee, and Strzelecki 2007). Meanwhile, the country has undergone various demographic changes, namely, a decline of fertility among its Catholic population along with a considerable rise in migration whereby immigrant women have, on average, higher fertility rates than native Austrians. Such demographic dynamics substantially contributed to the religious diversification of the country (Goujon and Bauer 2015). This raises an important question on how these demographic and societal transformations shape personal preference and structural opportunity in partnership choice.

Empirical evidence from Germany (Hendrickx, Schreuder, and Ultee 1994), the Netherlands (Hendrickx, Lammers, and Ultee 1991), and Switzerland (Schoen and Thomas 1990) consistently demonstrates a decline in religious homogamy among Catholics and Protestants. The previous study from Austria by Lutz (1985) also documents an increase in religious intermarriage between 1970 and 1983. Such an increase particularly concerned marriages between Protestant women and Catholic men, or men

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1 The research presented in this paper is part of the WIREL project on “Past, present and future religious prospects in Vienna 1950–2050” funded by WWTF, the Vienna and Science Technology Fund (2010 Diversity-Identity Call).
without religious affiliation, and was notably pronounced in the regions where Protestants were the majority group, such as Burgenland. The study also investigates the religious affiliation of children born in interreligious couples and finds that these children are more likely to grow up without any religion than children born to endogamous Protestant or Catholic couples (Lutz 1985). Given a steady increase of foreign citizens in Austria since the mid-1980s (Statistics Austria 2013) and a continuing decline of the Catholic population, the changing religious composition can influence an opportunity to meet and form a union with out-group members.

Endogamy and homogamy are primarily determined by three social forces, namely, the preferences for certain spousal characteristics, the influence of ‘third parties’ or the social group, and the context of the marriage market (Kalmijn 1998). First, typically preferences of marriage candidates are to marry someone who is similar in terms of, for example, economic status, education, religion, and cultural background. As education and/or occupational status became an important attribute in modern societies, this weakened the importance of ethnicity or religion in preferences for spouse's characteristics. It is therefore expected that higher educational attainment increases the chance of forming a partnership across religious boundary likewise. Second, ‘third parties’ such as the family, the church and the state may discourage intermarriage through sanctions in various forms. While interfaith marriages were denounced by the Catholic church and various Protestant denominations for the past centuries, the mass movement in secularization in Austria since the late 1960s (Goujon, Skirbekk, Fliegenschnee, and Strzelecki 2007) diminished the role of religious institutions in social life. Thus, it is assumed that interreligious partnerships increase over time as the country becomes more secularized. Lastly, endogamy and homogamy is also determined by an opportunity to meet out-group members, i.e. group size and how a group is dispersed geographically. Migration substantially changed religious landscape in Austria and contributed to an increase in religious diversity, which subsequently is expected to raise intergroup contact and interreligious partnership formation likewise.

Hence, this study aims to investigate trends and patterns of interreligious partnerships in Austria over the period 1971–2001. Specifically, this study examines: (1) how individual characteristics in particular educational attainment and religious affiliation shape interreligious partnership patterns; (2) the role of educational assortative mating on trends in interreligious unions; and (3) how changing religious composition in region of residence influences interreligious partnership formation.

Data and Methods

This analysis is based on the 1971, 1981, 1991, and 2001 population censuses, consisting of 10% samples of households in Austria. Data are obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), maintained and publicly made available by the University of Minnesota (Minnesota Population Center 2014). Apart from a large sample size, another advantage of using the micro-census data is the availability of information for all members in a household. We are able to identify family interrelationships among individuals within
the same household and link characteristics of one family member to another. This allows us to select couple(s) in a household and identify the religious affiliations of both partners.

In this study, an interreligious union (or partnership) refers to a partnership (both marriage and cohabitation) between a man and a woman of different religious affiliations. We also consider cohabiting couples because cohabitation has become a more common form of partnership in Austria. Since the interest is to investigate the trends and patterns of interreligious unions, the analysis includes only men and women who are currently in a partnership and living with a spouse/partner at the time of census collection. For those whom information on religious affiliation is not available are excluded from the analysis. The final sample includes 692,101 couples, of which 13% are unions between men and women of different religious affiliations.

**Dependent Variable**
Logistic regression models are used to estimate the predictors of being in an interreligious union. The outcome of interest is being in interreligious partnership: coded 1 if an individual has a partner with a different religious affiliation; 0 otherwise.

**Independent Variables**
Determinants of interreligious unions include individual and contextual characteristics which can influence preferences and opportunities to meet and form a partnership with a member of a different religious group.

Individual characteristics are: age, religious affiliation, and education. Age is divided into seven groups: (1) 15–24; (2) 25–34; (3) 35–44; (4) 45–54; (5) 55–64; (6) 65–74; (7) 75 years and over. Religion is categorized as follows: (1) no religion; (2) Catholic; (3) Protestant; (4) other Christian; (5) Jewish; (6) Muslim; and (7) other religion. Educational attainment is divided into four hierarchical categories: (1) lower secondary; (2) vocational and apprenticeship (including intermediate technical and vocational school and apprenticeship); and (3) higher secondary (including grammar school and higher technical and vocational secondary school that provide a university entrance diploma); and (4) post-secondary.

Educational assortative mating is included to test whether couples in interreligious unions are more likely to be homogenous in terms of educational attainment. This variable is divided into three categories: (1) M > F (hypergamy: male partner has a higher level of education than the female partner); (2) M = F (homogamy: male and female partners have the same level of education); (3) M < F (hypogamy: male partner has a lower level of education than the female partner).

For contextual characteristics, religious composition in the region of residence is included. To measure the religious diversity in each region, we apply Simpson’s Reciprocal Diversity Index (1/D) with

\[
D_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{s_j} n_{ij}(n_{ij} - 1)}{N_j(N_j - 1)}
\]
while $s$ is the total number of religious groups in region $j$; $n$ is the total number of members of a religious group $i$ in region $j$; and $N$ is the total number of population in region $j$. The index has to be interpreted in the following way: the higher the value, the greater the diversity. If the index is equal to 1, this means that there is only one religious group in a region. As a regional unit, we use the smallest geographical area available in the data, i.e., the Eurostat NUTS3 (European Union’s spatial classification system Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) that divides Austria into 35 regions.

Year dummies are also included in the models in order to capture the trends of interreligious unions over the period 1971–2001.

**Descriptive Results**

**Trends in Interreligious Unions: 1971–2001**

Figure 4.1 presents percentages in interreligious unions over the period 1971–2001 by religious affiliation and gender. For both men and women, interreligious partnerships steadily increased for both Catholics and Protestants. The rates of interreligious unions increased from 4% to 6% and from 7% to 13% for Catholic men and women, respectively. Similarly, the percentages of Protestant men and women in interreligious unions increased substantially, from 43% to 60% and from 49% to 64%, respectively. On the contrary, for Muslims, the proportion of those in interreligious unions declined sharply in 1981 and the trend has not changed much since. The fall in interreligious partnerships for Muslim men and women went hand-in-hand with a steady increase of Muslim populations in Austria. With the rise in the share of Muslim populations, endogamy became easier and it became less necessary to look for an out-group partner. For Jewish populations, the rates of interreligious unions declined from 36% in 1971 to 26% in 2001 for men but increased from 18% to 26% for women. The proportion of interreligious partnerships fluctuated over the period observed for this group.

Almost half of men with no religious affiliation are in interreligious partnerships as compared to approximately 16% of their female counterparts. These rates remained fairly stable over the time period. The meaning of interreligious unions, however, differs for those with no religion since this means they are in a partnership with a partner with a particular religious affiliation. In this sense, looking at the mentioned above result from a female perspective, women with a particular religious affiliation are far more likely than their male counterparts to form a union with a male partner who has no religion.

**Patterns of Interreligious Unions**

Table 4.1 presents the distribution of a partner’s religion by the respondent’s religious affiliation for both men and women using the pooled data from the four censuses. Religious homogamy is the most common partnership pattern for all religious groups but the rates differ between men and women. Unsurprisingly, interreligious unions commonly involve a partnership with a Catholic-background partner. This is because
Catholicism is the majority religion in Austria, thus opportunities to form partnerships with Catholics is higher than with other religious groups. This is particularly the case for Protestant men and women, 47% and 43% of them, respectively, of which have a Catholic partner. Even for Muslim men and women, Catholicism is the most common religious group of their partner for those in interreligious unions. Those with no religious affiliation is the second most common group being partnered with, when any given religious group marries out, followed by Protestant.
The patterns of interreligious partnerships differ between men and women as well as by religious background. Catholic and Protestant women intermarry more than their male counterparts while the opposite is true for Jewish and Muslim women. The rate of endogamy for Muslim women is the highest across religious groups and gender, with 96% of them having a partner who is also Muslim, as compared to 87% of Muslim men. There are also significant gender differences among those with no religious affiliation, with as many as 40% of men with no religion having a Catholic partner, compared to only 13% of their female counterparts.

Religious Diversity at the Regional Level and in Interreligious Unions

The 35 Austrian regions (NUTS3) are substantially diverse in terms of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Vienna, the capital city, is Austria's most densely populated province and international migration further contributes to its highest population growth of 21% in the country by 2030 (Hanika, Kytir, Biffl, and Wisbauer 2011). Graz and Linz, the second and third biggest city in Austria, will also record strong population growth of

Table 4.1: Distribution of unions by religious affiliation of male and female partners, 1971–2001 (pooled dataset)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents' religion</th>
<th>No religion</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Other Christian</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Other religion</th>
<th>N cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>85,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>539,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>37,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>7,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>12,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>9,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>54,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>567,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>40,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>7,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>11,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>9,587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Row percentage

The patterns of interreligious partnerships differ between men and women as well as by religious background. Catholic and Protestant women intermarry more than their male counterparts while the opposite is true for Jewish and Muslim women. The rate of endogamy for Muslim women is the highest across religious groups and gender, with 96% of them having a partner who is also Muslim, as compared to 87% of Muslim men. There are also significant gender differences among those with no religious affiliation, with as many as 40% of men with no religion having a Catholic partner, compared to only 13% of their female counterparts.
15% and 10% respectively. Such diverse regional population structure consequently resulted in different religious landscape throughout the whole country. Map 4.1 presents maps of Austria in 1971 and 2001 showing religious diversity and proportion of interreligious unions in 35 regions. The darker the color, the higher the religious diversity in the region. Correspondingly, the larger the circle, the higher the proportion of couples in interreligious unions in the region. Map 4.1 shows that indeed religious diversity is greater in regions with large cities such as Vienna, Graz, Linz, Salzburg, and Klagenfurt. Likewise, interreligious unions seem to be more common in a region with higher religious diversity.

Consequently, Figure 4.2 examines the correlation between religious diversity index values and the rates of interreligious unions in different Austrian regions across the period 1971–2001. It is shown that religious diversity had increased over time as have the rates of interreligious unions. The correlation between religious diversity and interreligious partnerships is positive and statistically significant, especially in the 1971 and 1981 censuses. Religious diversity increased substantially in 1991 and continued to rise in 2001. Accordingly, over the period 1971–2001, interreligious partnerships had become more common across Austria. Even in the regions with the lowest religious diversity, the proportion of interreligious partnerships is greater than 5% in the year 2001.

Vienna, has the highest religious diversity as well as approximately the highest rates of interreligious unions. However, although religious diversity had been increasing steadily in Vienna, the rates of interreligious unions did not catch up as such in the years 1991 and 2001. This is reflected in the fact that Vienna is appearing as an outlier in the 1991 and 2001 scatter plots in Figure 4.2. Moreover, the correlation between religious diversity index values and the share of interreligious unions declines in these last two census years. This suggests that apart from a macro-structural context, which represents an opportunity to meet potential partners from other religious groups, preferences based on individual characteristics could also play an important role in partnership choice.

**Multivariate Results**

In the next analysis, we perform a series of logistic regression models estimating the probability of being in interreligious unions for men and women separately, as displayed in Table 4.2. Model 1 is the additive model that estimates the main effects of individual demographic characteristics, religious diversity, and census survey year on the likelihood of being in an interreligious partnership. Model 2 is the interaction model in which a set of interaction effects are considered: between religious affiliation and education, between year and education, and between year and educational homogamy. The models are estimated with robust standard errors, i.e., by taking into account the possibility that the observations within regions are non-independent (intraclass correlation).

Model 1 shows that the relationship between age and the propensity to be in an interreligious union differ between men and women. Men in the younger age groups (those aged 15–34), have a higher propensity to be in an interreligious union than those in the
Map 4.1  Religious diversity and proportion of interreligious unions in 35 Austrian regions, 1971 and 2001
Weinviertel
West-und
Südsteiermark
Linz
Graz
Vienna

0 5 10 15 20 25 30
0 5 10 15 20 25 30

% Interreligious union
Religious diversity index

1991
r=0.85, p=0.000

2001
r=0.78, p=0.000
Table 4.2 Estimates from the logistic regression models on the probability of being in interreligious unions: 1971–2001 pooled dataset. Odds ratio (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (ref: 35–44 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–24</td>
<td>1.103**</td>
<td>(1.038–1.172)</td>
<td>1.101**</td>
<td>(1.038–1.167)</td>
<td>0.895***</td>
<td>(0.851–0.941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>1.083***</td>
<td>(1.058–1.108)</td>
<td>1.078***</td>
<td>(1.053–1.103)</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>(0.973–1.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>0.923***</td>
<td>(0.893–0.953)</td>
<td>0.921***</td>
<td>(0.891–0.952)</td>
<td>1.006</td>
<td>(0.977–1.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>0.840***</td>
<td>(0.812–0.869)</td>
<td>0.835***</td>
<td>(0.807–0.865)</td>
<td>0.956+</td>
<td>(0.911–1.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>0.745***</td>
<td>(0.716–0.775)</td>
<td>0.740***</td>
<td>(0.711–0.770)</td>
<td>0.868***</td>
<td>(0.840–0.897)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 years and over</td>
<td>0.711***</td>
<td>(0.681–0.743)</td>
<td>0.706***</td>
<td>(0.676–0.737)</td>
<td>0.744***</td>
<td>(0.677–0.817)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status (ref: never married)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married</td>
<td>1.920***</td>
<td>(1.834–2.009)</td>
<td>1.933***</td>
<td>(1.847–2.023)</td>
<td>1.915***</td>
<td>(1.793–2.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian citizenship</td>
<td>1.672***</td>
<td>(1.357–2.059)</td>
<td>1.596***</td>
<td>(1.293–1.970)</td>
<td>1.332+</td>
<td>(0.998–1.777)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion (ref: no religion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>0.668***</td>
<td>(0.038–0.124)</td>
<td>0.049***</td>
<td>(0.025–0.095)</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>(0.507–1.259)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>1.262</td>
<td>(0.788–2.022)</td>
<td>0.926</td>
<td>(0.527–1.627)</td>
<td>9.112***</td>
<td>(6.239–13.307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Christian</td>
<td>0.499*</td>
<td>(0.291–0.857)</td>
<td>0.334***</td>
<td>(0.210–0.532)</td>
<td>2.099***</td>
<td>(1.585–2.779)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.517***</td>
<td>(0.436–0.613)</td>
<td>0.531***</td>
<td>(0.454–0.620)</td>
<td>1.222**</td>
<td>(1.076–1.388)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>0.274***</td>
<td>(0.142–0.527)</td>
<td>0.162***</td>
<td>(0.075–0.351)</td>
<td>0.313***</td>
<td>(0.219–0.448)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other religion</td>
<td>0.432***</td>
<td>(0.292–0.640)</td>
<td>0.277***</td>
<td>(0.181–0.425)</td>
<td>2.466***</td>
<td>(2.248–2.706)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (ref: lower secondary)</td>
<td>intermediate secondary</td>
<td>1.547*** (1.453–1.647)</td>
<td>1.340*** (1.238–1.451)</td>
<td>1.739*** (1.555–1.944)</td>
<td>1.824*** (1.602–2.078)</td>
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<tr>
<td>higher secondary</td>
<td>2.138*** (1.941–2.355)</td>
<td>1.851*** (1.663–2.061)</td>
<td>2.035*** (1.692–2.448)</td>
<td>2.135*** (1.728–2.640)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education homogamy (ref: M = F)</td>
<td>M &gt; F</td>
<td>0.905*** (0.873–0.939)</td>
<td>0.833*** (0.762–0.911)</td>
<td>1.520*** (1.408–1.641)</td>
<td>1.657*** (1.505–1.824)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M &lt; F</td>
<td>1.553*** (1.468–1.643)</td>
<td>1.867*** (1.626–2.142)</td>
<td>1.058 (0.958–1.169)</td>
<td>1.133** (1.040–1.233)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year (ref: 1971)</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1.021 (0.955–1.092)</td>
<td>1.100+ (0.990–1.221)</td>
<td>1.027 (0.971–1.087)</td>
<td>1.129** (1.045–1.220)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1.078 (0.923–1.259)</td>
<td>1.247* (1.040–1.496)</td>
<td>0.952 (0.809–1.120)</td>
<td>1.092 (0.908–1.312)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0.921 (0.774–1.095)</td>
<td>1.014 (0.821–1.253)</td>
<td>0.939 (0.741–1.191)</td>
<td>1.154 (0.899–1.481)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious diversity index</td>
<td>2.514*** (1.511–4.181)</td>
<td>2.454*** (1.505–4.002)</td>
<td>120.882*** (46.964–311.139)</td>
<td>127.349*** (50.136–323.476)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction terms</td>
<td>Catholic*secondary</td>
<td>1.436*** (1.283–1.607)</td>
<td>1.046 (0.971–1.128)</td>
<td>1.139* (1.032–1.369)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protestant*secondary</td>
<td>1.480*** (1.294–1.691)</td>
<td>1.189* (1.032–1.369)</td>
<td>1.496*** (1.281–1.747)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other Christian*secondary</td>
<td>1.545*** (1.259–1.896)</td>
<td>1.040 (0.805–1.344)</td>
<td>1.040 (0.805–1.344)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jewish*secondary</td>
<td>0.890 (0.669–1.184)</td>
<td>0.890 (0.669–1.184)</td>
<td>1.527*** (1.219–1.913)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim*secondary</td>
<td>1.731*** (1.457–2.058)</td>
<td>1.339* (1.022–1.756)</td>
<td>0.842* (0.720–0.984)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other religion*secondary</td>
<td>1.626*** (1.453–1.819)</td>
<td>1.760*** (1.483–2.089)</td>
<td>0.709** (0.563–0.894)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Catholic*tertiary</td>
<td>2.388*** (1.771–3.221)</td>
<td>1.526** (1.110–2.099)</td>
<td>1.501* (1.067–2.111)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protestant*tertiary</td>
<td>1.526** (1.110–2.099)</td>
<td>0.872 (0.706–1.077)</td>
<td>1.760*** (1.483–2.089)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other Christian*tertiary</td>
<td>2.591*** (2.008–3.343)</td>
<td>2.591*** (2.008–3.343)</td>
<td>1.333* (1.017–1.747)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish*tertiary</td>
<td>1.143 (0.841–1.552)</td>
<td>1.143 (0.841–1.552)</td>
<td>1.090 (0.863–1.394)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other religion*tertiary</td>
<td>3.353*** (2.408–4.669)</td>
<td>3.353*** (2.408–4.669)</td>
<td>1.501* (1.067–2.111)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1981*secondary</td>
<td>0.898+ (0.804–1.003)</td>
<td>0.898+ (0.804–1.003)</td>
<td>0.898+ (0.804–1.003)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991*secondary</td>
<td>0.793*** (0.716–0.877)</td>
<td>0.800*** (0.736–0.869)</td>
<td>0.800*** (0.736–0.869)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2001*secondary</td>
<td>0.870* (0.769–0.984)</td>
<td>0.870* (0.769–0.984)</td>
<td>0.870* (0.769–0.984)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2  Estimates from the logistic regression models on the probability of being in interreligious unions: 1971–2001 pooled dataset. Odds ratio (ORS) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) in parentheses. (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR CI</td>
<td>OR CI</td>
<td>OR CI</td>
<td>OR CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981*tertiary</td>
<td>0.822* (0.704–0.960)</td>
<td>0.744** (0.610–0.907)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991*tertiary</td>
<td>0.676*** (0.582–0.784)</td>
<td>0.620*** (0.531–0.723)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*tertiary</td>
<td>0.754** (0.621–0.915)</td>
<td>0.560*** (0.489–0.640)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981*M&gt;F</td>
<td>1.028 (0.945–1.119)</td>
<td>0.906*** (0.865–0.949)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991*M&gt;F</td>
<td>1.140*** (1.074–1.210)</td>
<td>0.895*** (0.861–0.929)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*M&gt;F</td>
<td>1.106* (1.014–1.207)</td>
<td>0.842*** (0.803–0.883)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981*M&lt;F</td>
<td>0.859*** (0.788–0.935)</td>
<td>0.943* (0.889–1.000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991*M&lt;F</td>
<td>0.790*** (0.696–0.898)</td>
<td>0.929** (0.879–0.982)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*M&lt;F</td>
<td>0.753*** (0.639–0.886)</td>
<td>0.896* (0.822–0.976)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.332*** (0.215–0.514)</td>
<td>0.416*** (0.263–0.557)</td>
<td>0.042*** (0.029–0.062)</td>
<td>0.040*** (0.028–0.058)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n: 697,714 697,714 692,100 692,100
Log likelihood: −212858 −212337 −234239 −234089
DF: 25 29 25 29
Pseudo R²: 0.246 0.248 0.136 0.137

*** p<0.001
** p<0.01
*p<0.05, + p<0.1

Note: (a) Robust standard errors in parentheses.
(b) The variable educational homogamy has three categories: (1) M > F refers to a couple where a male partner has a higher level of education; (2) M = F refers to a couple where male and female partners have the same level of education; and (3) M < F refers to a couple where a male partner has a lower level of education.
age group 35–44 (which is the reference category in the models). By contrast, men in the older age groups (age 45 or above) have a lower propensity to be in an interreligious partnership than men in the reference category. Similarly, women in the older age groups (55 and above) are less likely to have a partner from other religions than those aged 35–44 years, but in this case the young women, aged 15–25 years, are also less likely to be in interreligious unions. Both for men and women alike, those who are never married, divorced/separated, and widowed experience a higher likelihood to be in an interreligious partnership than the married ones. Furthermore, the propensity of being in an interreligious union is positively associated with educational attainment. This holds true for both men and women. However, the pattern of the relationship between educational assortative mating and the likelihood of being in an interreligious union differs between men and women. For men, the odds of having a partner from a different religion reduces by 9% in a couple where the man has higher education than the woman (M > F). It increases by 1.6 times in a couple where the female partner has higher education than the male partner (M < F). The opposite is true for women, in a couple where the man has higher education than the woman, the odds of being in an interreligious union increases by 1.5 times. With respect to religious affiliation, the likelihood of being in an interreligious union differs between men and women. Compared to individuals with no religion, men from any other religious background, except for Protestants, significantly have lower propensity for intermarriage. This is, however, not necessarily the case for women. Apart from Muslims and Catholics, adherents of other religious groups actually have higher likelihoods of being in interreligious unions than those with no religion. Religious diversity has a significant positive relationship with the likelihood of having a partner from a different religion. The magnitude of the association is additionally much bigger for women than for men.

Model 2 includes the interaction terms between educational attainment and religious affiliation to explore whether the positive relationship between education and the propensity of having a partner from a different religion is the same across religious groups. For men, we find that compared to individuals with no religion, most religious groups have much less chance of being in an interreligious union in a low education group. Yet, in higher education groups (at least from secondary onwards), the differences in the propensity of being in an interreligious union among religious groups becomes smaller. In other words, educational attainment moderates the impact of religious affiliation on interreligious partnership formation. The pattern, however, is less clear for women. The differences in the likelihood of having a partner from a different religion between Muslim women and women with no religious affiliation become smaller with higher educational attainment. Yet for other religions there is a great variation depending on the level of education and the religious groups under observation.

In model 2 we also explore changes in the impacts of educational attainment and the patterns of educational assortative mating on interreligious partnership over time. Interestingly, all the interaction terms between year and educational attainment are negative, suggesting that the positive effects of educational attainment on the propensity to
form a partnership with someone of a different religion has continuously declined since 1981. Similarly, the interaction terms between year and educational assortative mating are also statistically significant and show that the differences have become smaller over time. For example, in 1971 the odds of being in an interreligious union for men in a couple where a female partner has higher education were 1.9 times greater than their counterparts who have the same level of education as their female partners. The odds, however, decline to 1.4 times greater in 2001. A further descriptive analysis shows that while interreligious unions have been increasing over time for all couples’ educational compositions, the rate of increase is much higher among couples where men and women have the same level of education (results not shown but available upon request).

Discussion

Based on the household micro-census data for Austria for the years 1971–2001, we have explored trends, patterns, and determinants of interreligious partnerships over time. We find that, overall, interreligious unions had increased in this period, which could partially be explained by the rise in religious diversity in every region of Austria. Greater religious diversity in the region of residence means an individual has more opportunities to meet members of other religious groups. Likewise, a declining share of Austria’s Catholic population and the rising number of those with no religious affiliation (Goujon, Skirbekk, Fliegenschnee, and Strzelecki 2007) could also contribute to an increase in interreligious partnerships, since individuals with no religious affiliation are generally more likely to be in cross-group relationships (Muttarak 2014).

With respect to who intermarries with whom, we find that Catholicism is the most common group to be partnered with when an individual is in an interreligious union. Given the importance of group size in determining the opportunity structure of the marriage market, (i.e., the chance for members of different religious groups to meet and form a partnership; Blau 1994), it is easier for members of other religions to meet a Catholic person. Being the largest group, accounting for 74% of total population in Austria 2001 (Goujon, Skirbekk, Fliegenschnee, and Strzelecki 2007), the relative availability of Catholics makes it more probable to encounter them in everyday life.

Likewise, the finding that the odds of being in interreligious partnership is much greater for women than for men with an increase in religious diversity in a region of residence is worth discussing. The spatial entrapment hypothesis developed to explain why women are more likely to search for job close to their residential area can also be applicable to a marriage market (Hanson and Pratt 1995). It is explained that women’s domestic responsibilities restrict their spatial mobility to be within a short distance of the home. If women are less mobile than men, their spouse search is consequently likely to occur in the area where they live. Thus, while religious diversity in a region of residence increases the likelihood of being in interreligious union both for men and women, it seems to matter more for women since they are more likely to meet their potential partner close to home.
Apart from opportunity structure, i.e., religious diversity and group size, interreligious partnership formation significantly varies by age, gender, religious affiliation, and education. Those in younger age groups have a higher propensity to have a partner from a different religion, in line with the prediction of the secularization theory that foresees a decline in the salience of religion or the influence of religious groups upon family decision-making of younger members (Kalmijn 1998).

We also find substantial gender and religious variation, with Catholic and Protestant women far more likely to be in an interreligious partnership than their male counterparts, while the opposite is true for Jewish and Muslim women. The lower share of Muslim women in interreligious unions can be partly explained by Islamic law, which prohibits women from marrying non-Muslims on the grounds that children from such a union would be lost to Islam (Kulczycki and Lobo 2002). Meanwhile, the higher conversion rate of intermarried Jewish women might explain why we observe lower rates of interreligious partnerships among Jewish women (Lowenstein 2005).

The finding that hypogamy, i.e., a partnership where the female partner has a higher education than the male partner, is more common in interreligious unions as opposed to religious endogamy might be due to a marriage squeeze for certain religious groups. In many countries where the gender gap in educational attainment has turned around, shortage of supply of educationally qualified men for women with high education leads to an increase in female educational hypogamy (Esteve, García-Román, and Permanyer 2012). Hypogamy is more common in interreligious partnerships possibly because religious endogamy represents a traditional practice comprising of men and women with the same religion and educational hypergamy (where the male partner has higher education than the female partner). Thus, when a highly educated woman needs to marry down, it may be easier for her to marry out of her religious group. The association between hypogamy and interreligious union declines when hypogamy becomes common, as shown in the interaction terms between year and educational assortative mating.

Conclusion

Interreligious partnership formation is a product of both opportunity and preferences in partner choice. The changing demographic composition in Austria, coupled with a decline of its Catholic population and an increase in the number of persons with no religious affiliation and non-Catholic religionists, have contributed to shaping the patterns of interreligious unions in the country. While interreligious partnerships have increased as a whole, there has been substantial variation by religious group and gender. In the meantime, the rise in educational attainment, especially for females, might also have led to an increase in interreligious unions; however, educational gradient has become less important over time. While this study focuses only on Austria, a similar pattern is possible in other European countries with similar demographic and socioeconomic development especially with respect to secularization, educational expansion
and international migration. Such comparative study is possible for future research using microcensuses from the IPUMS database for the countries where information on religion is asked, e.g., Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

References


