

Confirmation Work as an Open Gate to Church: Surprising Results on non-baptised Confirmands from the Third European Study

Manuela Hees, Wolfgang Ilg

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The Third International Study on Confirmation Work

Wolfgang Ilg | Manuela Hees | Eveliina Hellas |
Linn Sæbø Rystad | Thomas Schlag | Henrik Simojoki (Eds.)

DEVELOPING CONFIRMATION WORK IN EUROPE

Empirical Findings and Perspectives
for Post-Pandemic Times

The Third International Study



An international study involving nine European countries:

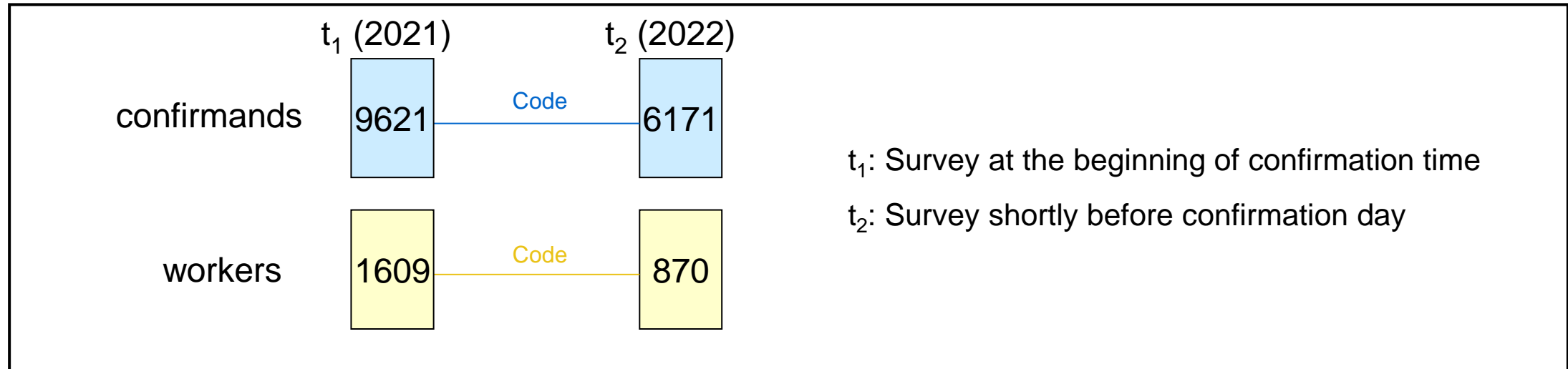
Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland

The project publication and more information is available open access at:

www.confirmation-research.eu

(see chapter 22 for the topic of this paper)

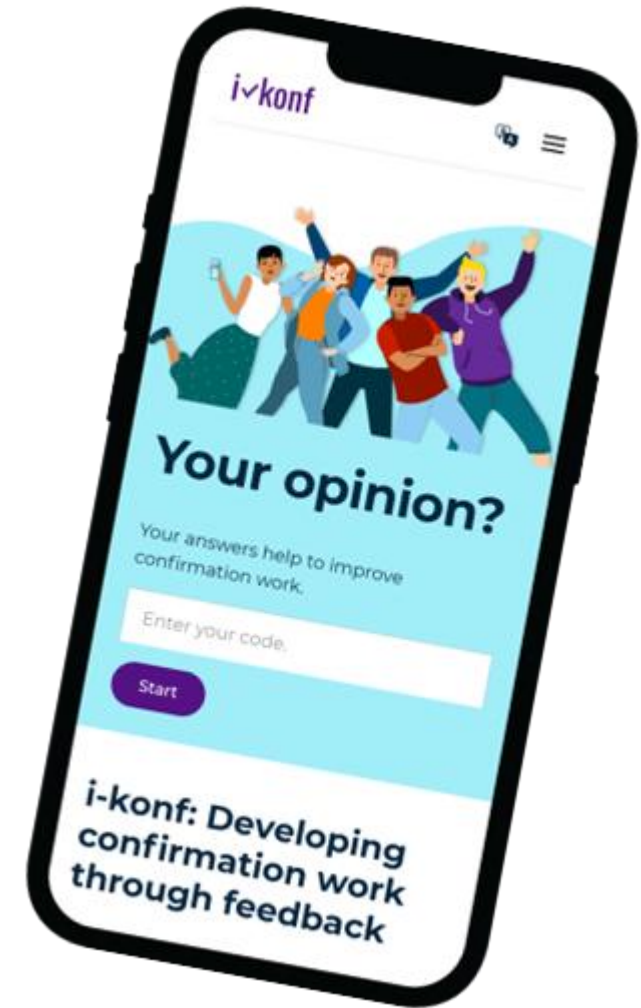
Overview of the third study (2021/2022)



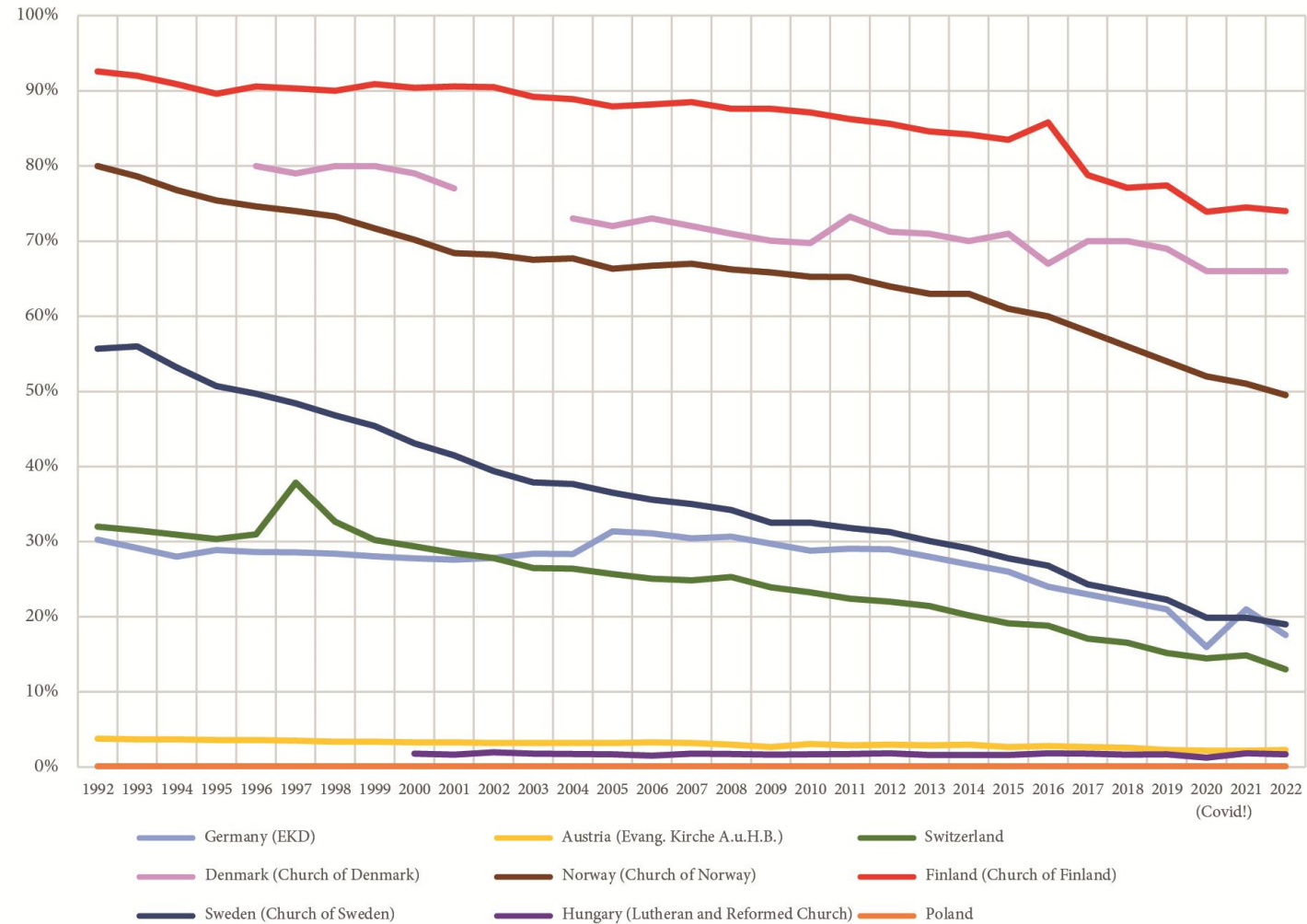
- A study during the pandemic, based on first (2007/08) and second (2012/13) study
- Pandemic leads to distortions (positive bias of participating parishes)
- Special focus points: feedback-based quality development, digital media, teaching-learning processes, effects of the COVID19-pandemic

Collecting feedback with www.i-konf.eu

- i-konf was developed and tested during the study
- i-konf can be used by parishes free of charge
- feedback as the basis of quality development:
An important approach for congregations!



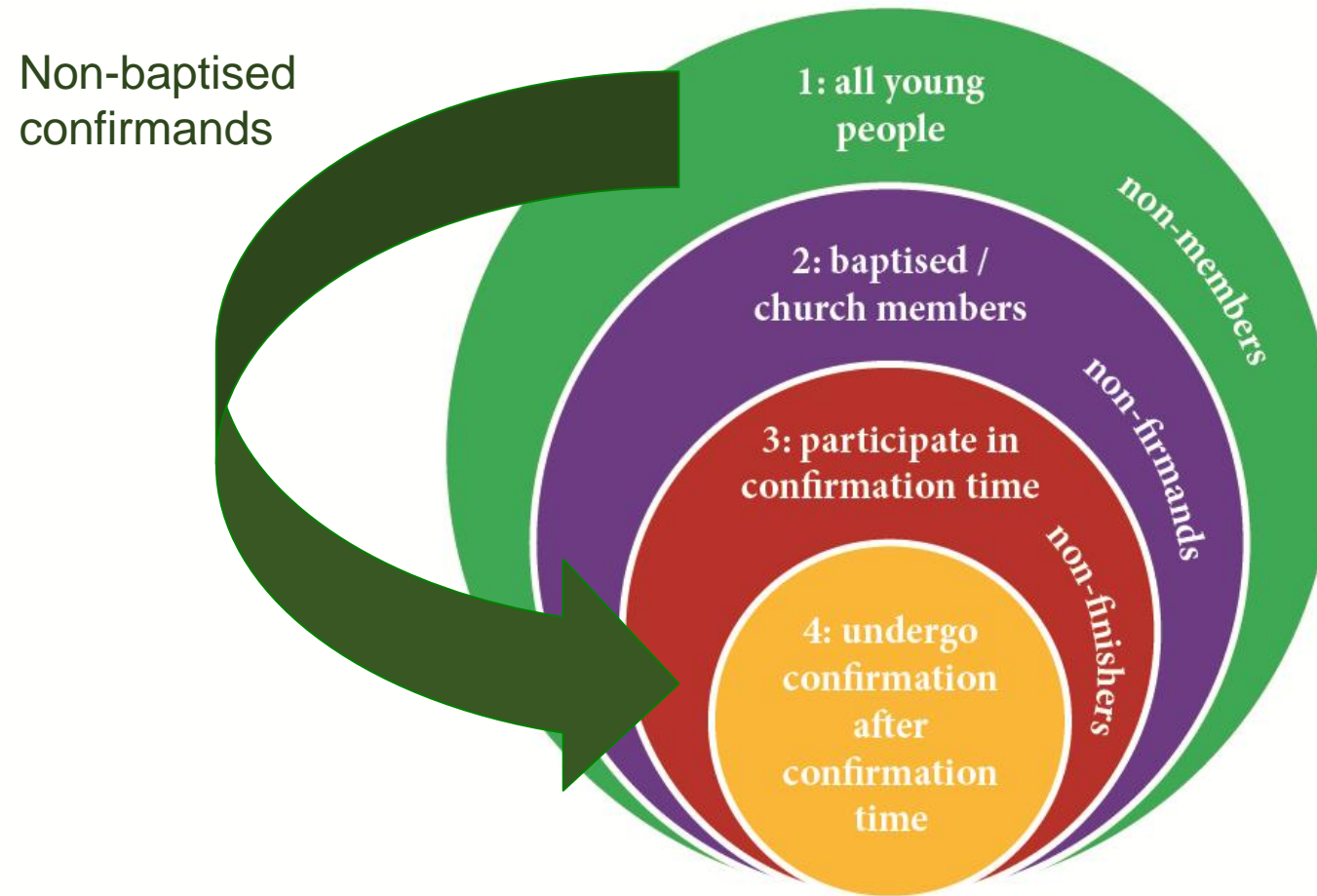
Total Participation Rate in Confirmation (as a Share of all Young People)



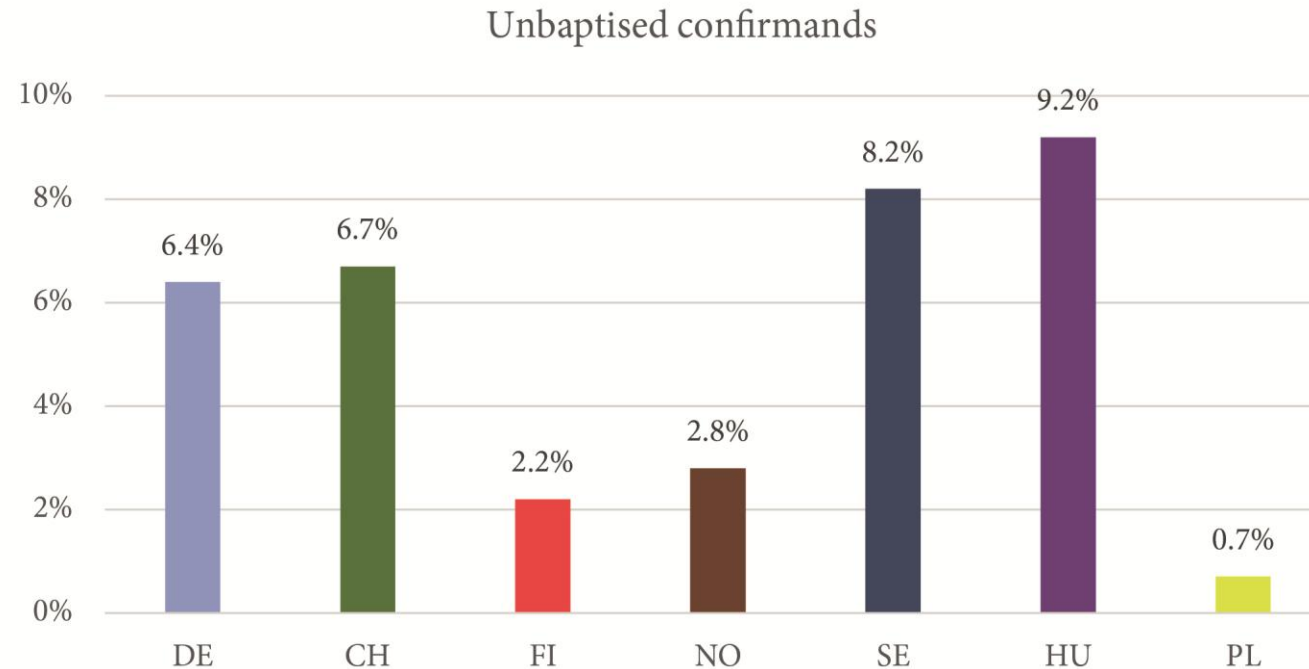
Why researching distanced confirmands?

- Declining numbers of church members and confirmands.
- Declining religious socialisation before confirmation time
- Confirmation time as the most intense contact with church
- Confirmation time is highly attractive, also to non-protestant „outsiders“
- The groups of distanced confirmands have hardly been investigated so far

Systematic Definition of Distanced Confirmands



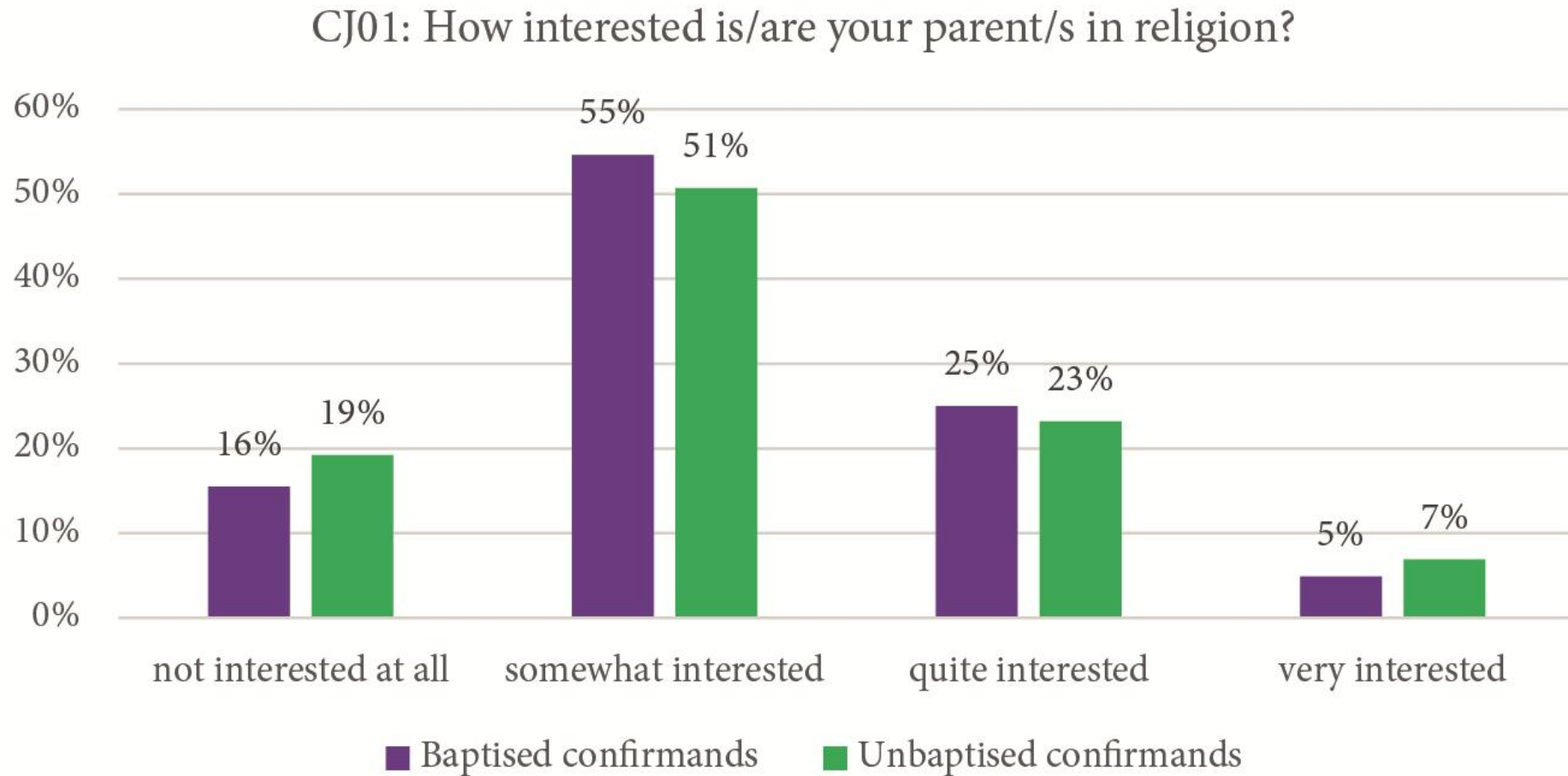
Unbaptized confirmands—a relevant group in confirmation work



$N_{\text{Total}} = 9704$ $N_{\text{DE}} = 3378$, $N_{\text{CH}} = 1132$, $N_{\text{FI}} = 2810$, $N_{\text{NO}} = 898$, $N_{\text{SE}} = 1056$, $N_{\text{HU}} = 292$, $N_{\text{PO}} = 138$.

- Statistical analyses in the countries show that the proportion of unbaptised confirmands is rather stable over time or even growing.

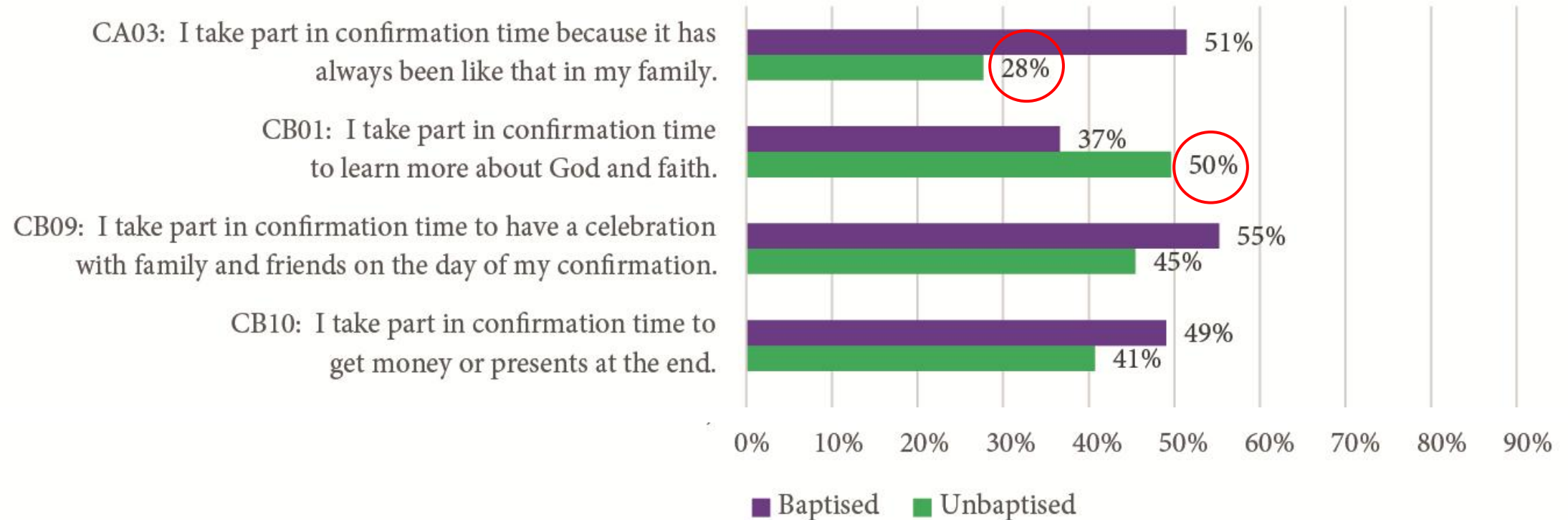
Comparison of Parents' Level of Religiosity



$N_{\text{Baptised}} = 9078$, $N_{\text{Unbaptised}} = 495$.

Scale: 1= Very interested, 4= Not interested at all.

Differences in the Attitudes of Baptised and Unbaptised Confirmands (t1/t2)

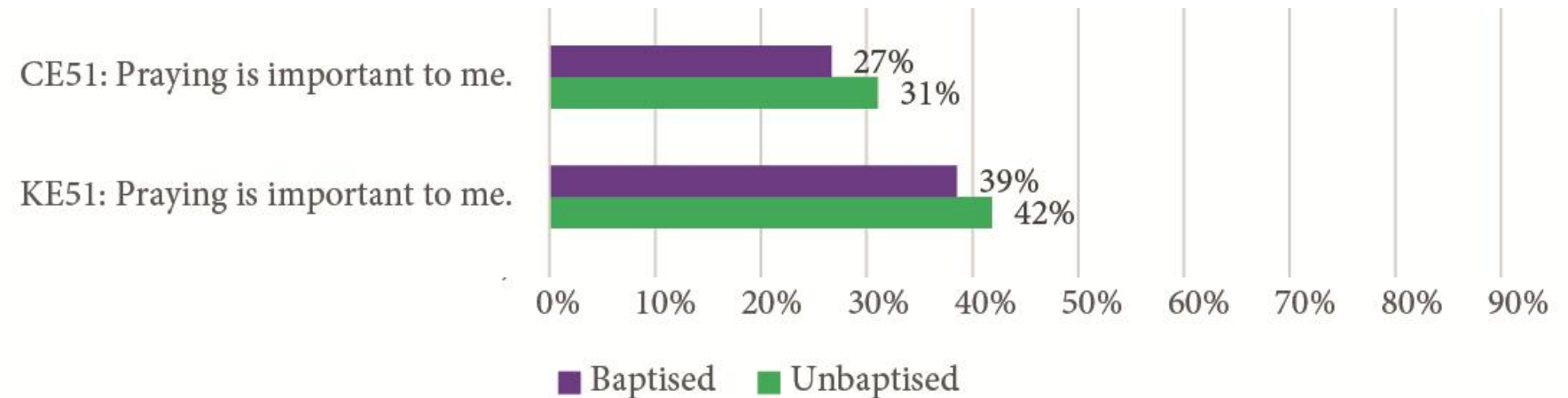


$N_{\text{Baptised}} = 2937-8628$, $N_{\text{Unbaptised}} = 170-452$.

Scale: 1= Not applicable at all, 7= Totally applicable; Yes (%) = Share of positive response (5, 6, 7).

All differences between the baptised and unbaptised are significant on a 1 %-level except for KE51 and KP01 (both not significant).

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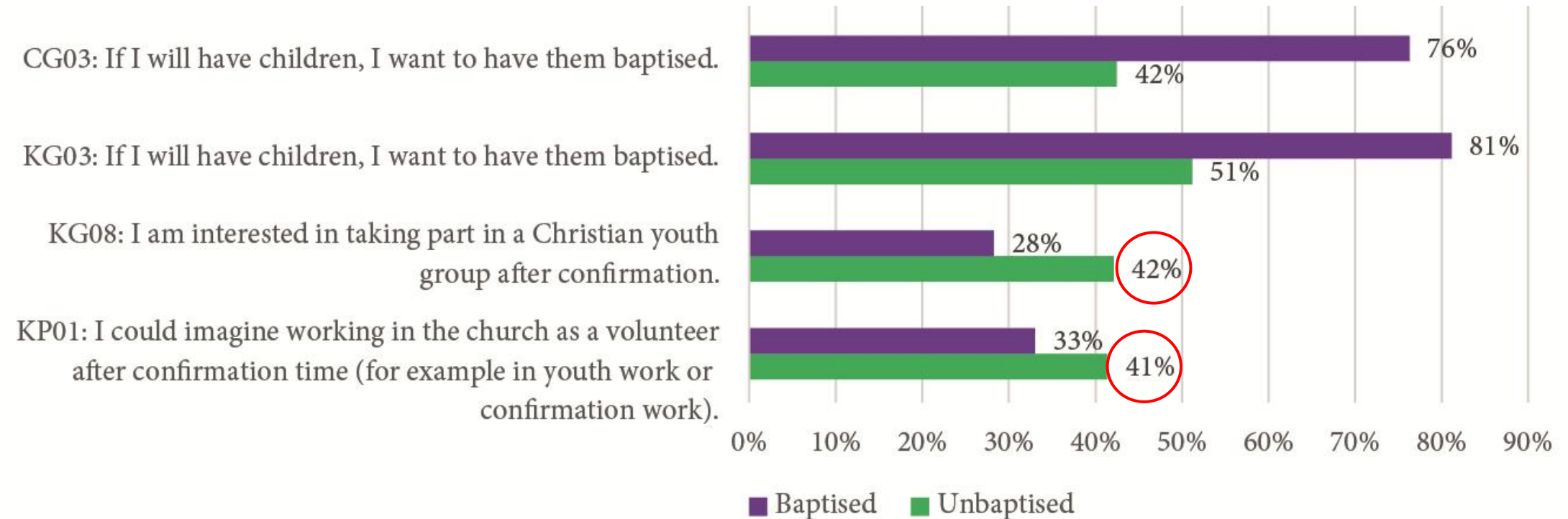


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Unbaptised confirmands: Questions for church development

By inviting unbaptised young people to confirmation time, the Protestant Church currently offers the only format outside of infant baptism in which large numbers of people are baptized.

1. (How) Can confirmation time be developed as an open gateway to faith and the church?
2. Are unbaptised young people systematically invited to confirmation time?
3. Does confirmation time have a “good reputation” locally, making them attractive to attend?
4. In the debates about a missionary church, is confirmation work given the importance it actually has?