



The Relationship between Religiosity and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment



Nathan Singer Weisbrod, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

Introduction

- Research on immigrant sentiment ranges from the association between TV news sources and anti-immigrant sentiment (Rose, 2018), anti-immigration sentiment amongst Latino Americans (Knoll, 2012), and the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and physiological threat sensitivity (Mustafaj, 2022).
- Another US study looked at Christian Nationalism specifically and if religious activity vs inactivity interacted with the strength of the relationship with anti-immigrant sentiment (Stroope, 2021).

Research Questions

- Do religious Americans who are high practicing hold stronger anti-immigrant sentiments than those who are low-practicing? How do these groups compare to non-religious Americans?
- Does this relationship differ between men and women?

Methods

Sample

The sample is from ANES 2020, which has 8,280 pre-election interviews. It was conducted online, by phone, and by video call. ANES has a cross-sectional sample that is weighted to represent the population of non-institutionalized citizens of the United States above 18 years old.

Measures

An original composite of 10 questions is used to measure the anti-immigrant sentiment on a numerical scale. 10 would be all anti-immigrant responses, 0 would be all non-anti-immigrant responses (including neutral or unsure responses).

The study's explanatory variable will be two levels of religious practice, with non-religious as a control.

Results

Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis showed that religiosity and percent of anti immigrant responses endorsed were significantly associated, with both practicing groups differing significantly from the Non-Religious group ($p < .05$). There was not a significant difference between High and Low Practicing ($p > .05$).

Multivariate

- After testing, sex is not a moderator in the relationship between religiosity and percent of anti-immigrant responses endorsed.
- Sex of respondent does not significantly affect the relationship ($p > .05$).
- Being male is significantly associated with a higher percent of anti-immigrant responses endorsed. This is visually apparent especially in the Low-Practicing and High-Practicing categories.

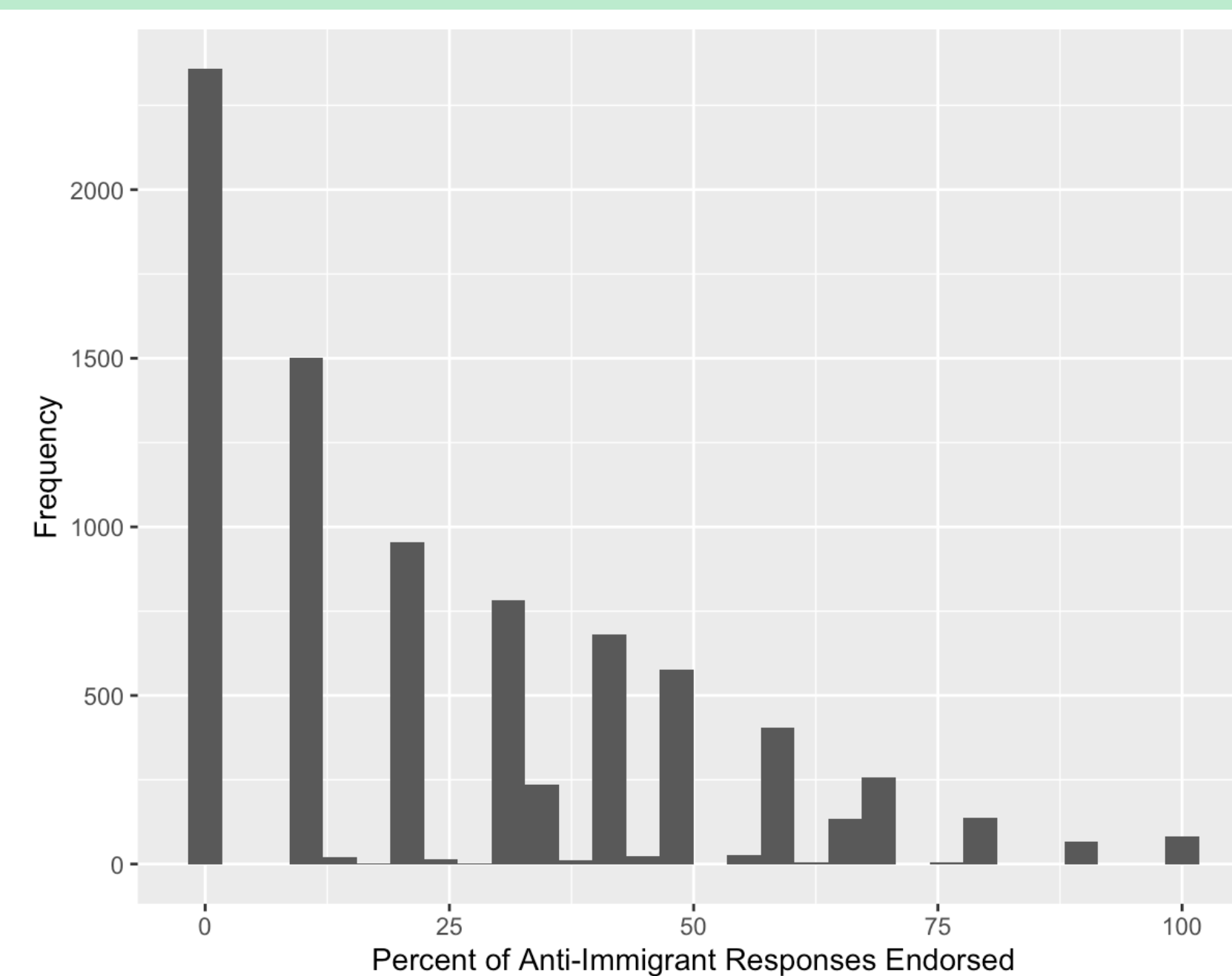


Figure 1: Percent of Anti-Immigrant Responses Endorsed Frequency

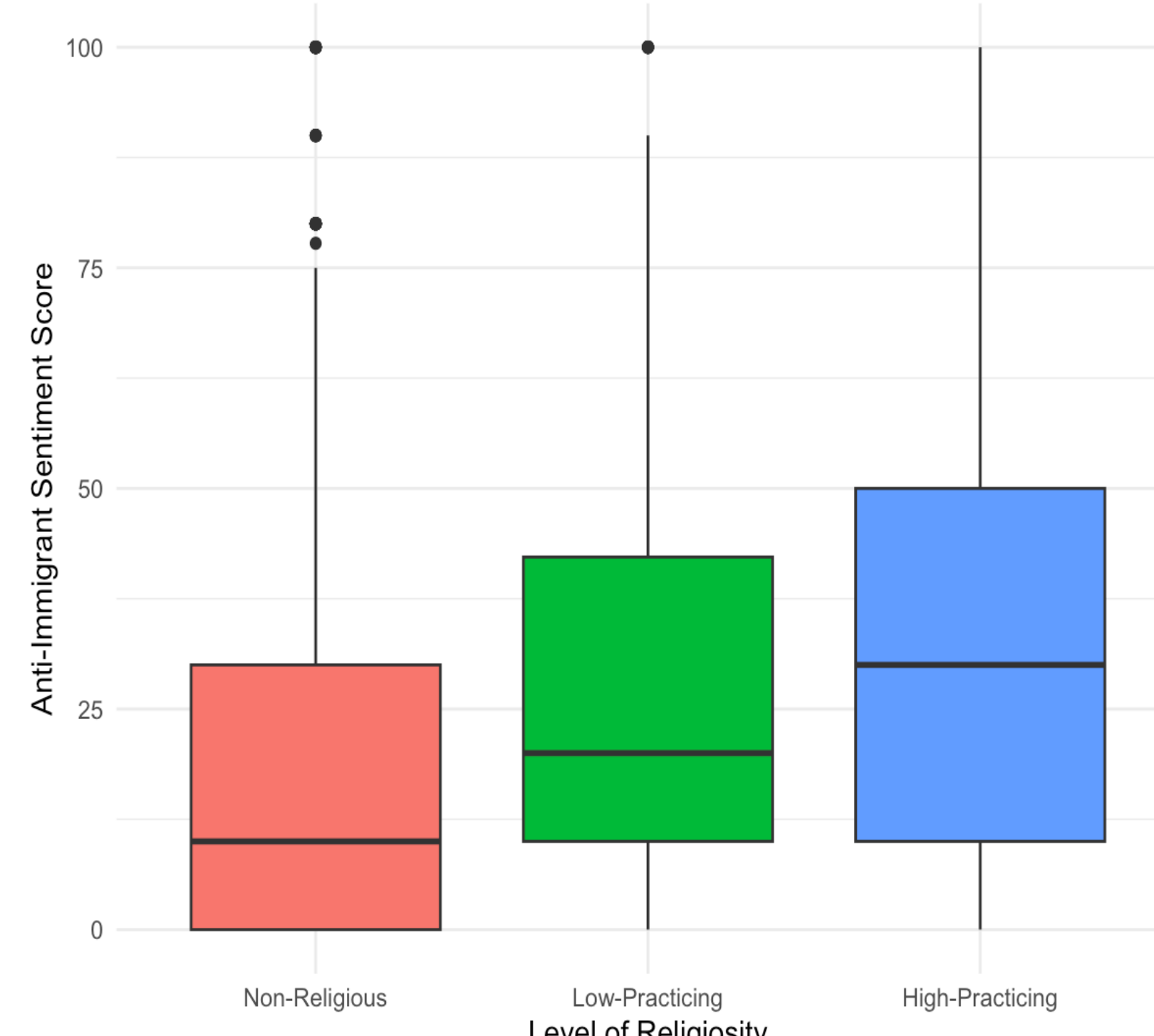


Figure 2: Mean Percent of Anti-Immigrant Responses Endorsed by Religiosity Level

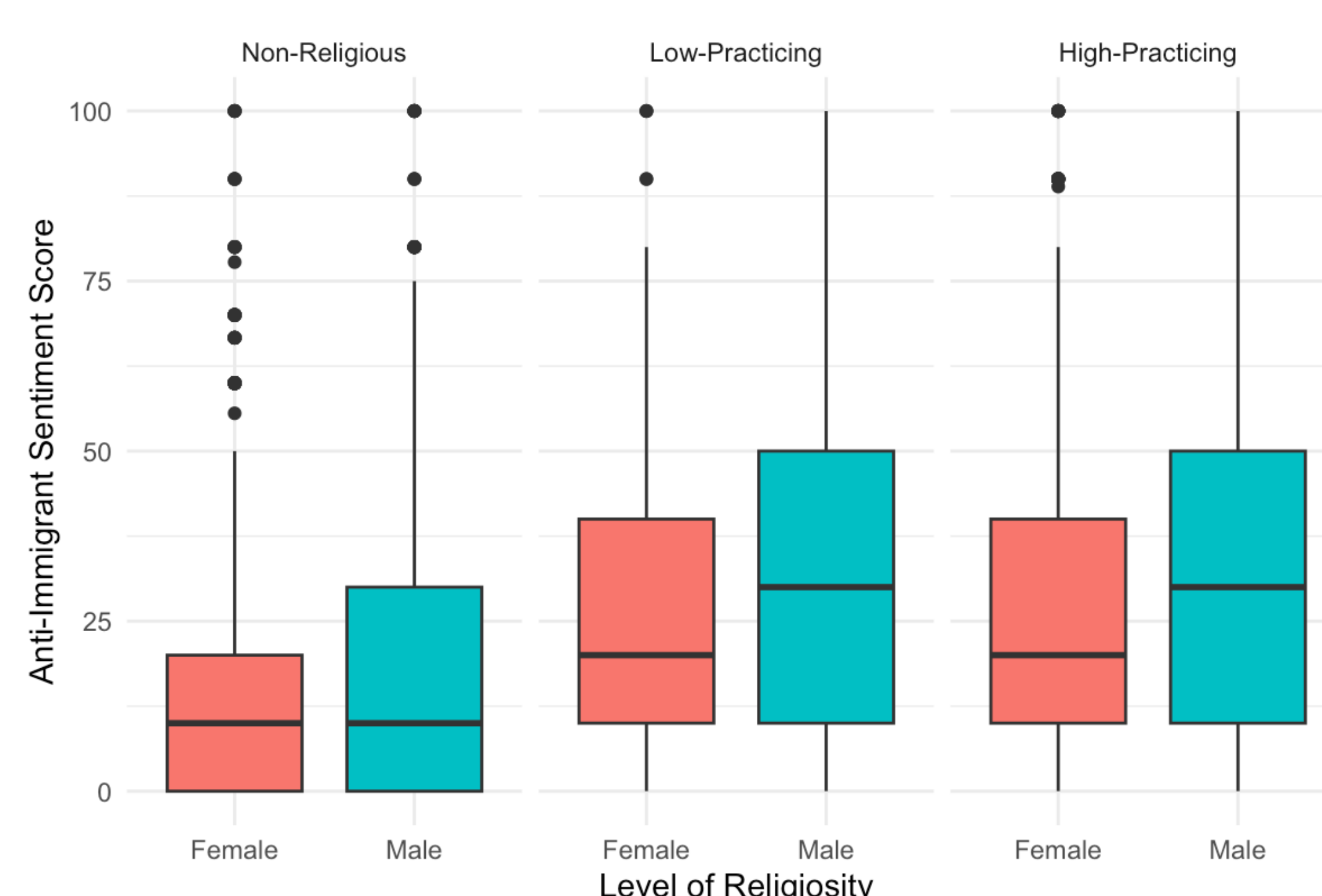


Figure 3: How is Anti-Immigrant Sentiment Associated with Religiosity Level and Sex

Discussion

- A plurality of respondents had 0 anti-immigrant responses endorsed, and increasingly small portions had more responses endorsed.
- There is a significant positive relationship between higher anti-immigrant sentiment and being religious compared to non-religious.
- However, there is not a significant difference in this study between high-practicing and low-practicing religious respondents.
- Men and women differ in each category, with men holding higher levels of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in each level of religiosity.
- Future research is needed to determine in which religions level of practice has a significant impact.

References

- Mustafaj, Matea, Guadalupe Madrigal, Jessica Roden, and Gavin W. Ploger. "Physiological Threat Sensitivity Predicts Anti-Immigrant Attitudes." *Politics and the Life Sciences* 41, no. 1 (April 2022): 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2021.11>
- Stroope, Samuel, Heather M. Rackin, and Paul Froese. "Christian Nationalism and Views of Immigrants in the United States: Is the Relationship Stronger for the Religiously Inactive?" *Socius* 7 (January 1, 2021): 2378023120985116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023120985116>