

# **Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism in Post-Communist Eastern Europe**

## **Exploring Cultural Value Divides in Europe's National Political Cultures**

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### **1. Introduction**

Despite, or perhaps precisely because of, the gradual political and administrative unification of Europe the last decades have witnessed an increased interest in differences between Europe's national political cultures. Western Europeans, citizens and politicians alike, have especially raised concerns about Post-Communist Eastern European countries like Russia,

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Hungary and Poland. These countries have inherited the legacy of Communist rule until the late 1980s / early 1990s, which has allegedly shaped their political cultures in ways that do not necessarily coincide with liberal-democratic ideals (Need and Evans 2001; Norris and Inglehart 2004).

Hungary, for instance, has gained a malicious reputation due to its harsh policies to curb the influx of immigrants during the international immigration crisis of 2015. Its right-wing government back then deployed police forces to prevent immigrants from entering the country and launched a media campaign that basically identified them as terrorists (Bocskor 2018; Kiss 2016). In Russia the conservative establishment and the Orthodox Church launched a campaign in 2011 to end public funding of abortion and to criminalize the practice altogether (Rivkin-Fish 2018). Poland, already deeply divided about abortion since the early 1990s, has witnessed pro-life groups and movements clashing noisily with their pro-choice counterparts (Król and Pustułka 2018). Indeed, the Polish public proved massively divided about the issue in 2005, with half of it supporting either position, and this polarization has not disappeared since. The conservative government, the Catholic Church and the media have even been pushing for a further limitation of access to both abortion and contraception. Progressive and feminist organizations have in response joined forces to protest against what they see as excessive state control over women's bodies, with the 'Women's strike' of 2016 exemplifying the continuing salience and divisiveness of the issue until the present day (Król and Pustułka 2018; Żuk and Żuk 2017).

Rightist policies and political stances like the aforementioned are part and parcel of two different cultural value divides, referred to as authoritarian-libertarian and morally traditional-progressive in this chapter. The former value divide is all-out secular and pertains to matters of law and order and immigration. It pits those who accept, or even embrace, cultural and ethnic diversity against those who understand the latter as major social problems

(Flanagan and Lee 2003; Houtman 2003; Stubager 2008). The moral traditionalism-progressiveness value divide, on the other hand, refers to cultural, religious and political conflicts about the legitimacy of religiously inspired traditional moral values pertaining to sexuality, life and procreation, and the family (e.g., gay and lesbian rights, sexual freedom, abortion, euthanasia, women's roles).

The apparent widespread support for both types of rightist stances in at least some Eastern-European countries raise two questions that we address in this paper. Firstly, given that most Western-European countries have meanwhile had their own shares of electoral support for rightist-populist parties and movements, we study whether and how the populations of Post-Communist Eastern European countries do actually differ from their European counterparts in terms of authoritarianism and moral traditionalism. Secondly, we aim to map and explain cross-national and cross-time variation in the overlap between these two value divides, i.e., in the extent to which they are interrelated or remain separate. Indeed, many a student of western politics nowadays treats the two as largely equivalent and blending into one single value divide that is central to a so-called 'new cultural cleavage' in politics (Bornschieer 2010; Kriesi 2010). This is a theoretically significant issue, because despite all the writing about this new cleavage in politics, a theory that satisfactorily accounts for its emergence does thus far not exist. Insight into the conditions that lead the two value divides to coalesce rather than remain separate is surely critical to the construction of such a theory.

To answer our two questions, we analyze survey data from the three waves of the European Values Study (1990, 1999, 2008) for a pool of 44 European countries. In section 2, we first elaborate on the rise of the new cultural cleavage and the two cultural value divides typically identified with it. In section 3 we discuss the necessary methodological issues to then move to our findings in section 4. Finally, section 5 summarizes our results and discusses their theoretical implications.

## 2. The Cultural Turn in Western Politics

This chapter aims for a threefold comparison between Post-Communist Eastern Europe and the rest of Europe, especially Western Europe: in terms of 1) moral traditionalism versus progressiveness, 2) authoritarianism versus libertarianism, and 3) the degree to which these two value divides are interrelated rather than disconnected. As to the latter, we do of course not deny that many studies have demonstrated that the two value divides do indeed tend to overlap, but we argue that this can hardly be expected to be a sort of cross-national constant, so that it is vital to map and explain the existing variation across time and place.

### *2.1. Two Value Divides: One Religious and One Secular*

The first of the two value divides referred to above, *moral traditionalism-progressiveness*, pertains to the contrast between morally traditionalist and morally progressive stances about matters of life and death, family and gender roles, and sexuality, with nowadays attitudes towards abortion and homosexuality arguably standing out as most typical (Adamczyk and Pitt 2009; McGraw 2018; Rudnev and Savelkaeva 2018). The traditionalist pole of this first value divide is closely linked to Christian religion (De Koster and Van der Waal 2007; Laythe, Finkel, and Kirkpatrick 2001), with those concerned embracing religiously inspired “normative guiding standards for prescribing appropriate behavior and proscribing inappropriate behavior” in daily life (Storm 2016, 113). Those standards are understood as pre-given by a higher divine authority, as having proven their efficacy over centuries, and as more fundamental than man-made secular laws (De Koster and Van der Waal 2007; McCullough and Willoughby 2009).

The contrasting pole is represented by moral progressivists who tend to be non-religious and endorse the liberty to make individual lifestyle choices. They do as such not

ground their moral principles in religion and do indeed reject the latter's notion of predefined social roles as well as its claims to unquestionable divine authority (Brown 2009; Houtman, Aupers, and De Koster 2011). Such moral progressiveness sparks electoral support for the political parties of the New Left that have since the 1970s advocated individual liberty and opposed institutional coercion, be it by the churches, the state or corporations. Moral traditionalists, on the contrary, are triggered by the moral permissiveness this implies, which leads them to unite around Christian-Democratic or similar morally conservative parties (Knutsen 1989).

The second relevant value divide pertains to *authoritarianism-libertarianism* and deals with the strictly secular matters of immigration and law and order. It is rooted not so much in religion, but rather in education (Houtman 2003; Stubager 2008; Van de Werfhorst and De Graaf 2004). The less educated are less likely to embrace immigration and the ethnic and cultural diversity brought by it, since they tend to value order and control over individual freedom (Stubager 2010). This is why the less educated have become the happy hunting ground for New-Rightist political parties that boast anti-immigrant sentiments and populist zeal (Betz and Johnson 2004; Steenvoorden and Hartevelde 2018). The more educated, on the contrary, tend to be libertarian, i.e., to embrace ethnic and cultural diversity and to foreground individual liberty (Flanagan and Lee 2003; Stenner 2005).

## *2.2. A Transformation of Cleavage Politics*

The value divides of moral traditionalism versus progressiveness and authoritarianism versus libertarianism are typically understood as basically interchangeable, because they both reflect a more general opposition between cultural conservatives and cultural progressives (e.g., Flanagan and Lee 2003; Houtman 2003; De Witte and Billiet 1999). The two are as such held to be jointly central to a newly emerged 'cultural cleavage' that has since the 1960s

transformed western politics. Cleavage politics generally conceived refers to the prevalence of (1) structurally embedded social groups with (2) opposing values and/or interests that are (3) reflected in distinctive voting patterns (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Bartolini and Mair 1990). Traditionally most research has been devoted to the so-called ‘class cleavage’, which pits a leftist-leaning working class against rightist-voting privileged classes in a political struggle that revolves around redistributive politics, i.e., the desirability of state intervention in matters of economic distribution between classes (Dalton 1996).

In most western democracies the dominance of this class cleavage has shattered from the 1970s onwards due to cultural issues capturing western political agendas, causing a steady decline of the traditional relationship between class and voting (Clark and Lipset 1991; Elff 2007; Kriesi 2010; Nieuwbeerta 1996). According to Inglehart (1977), this transformation of cleavage politics is due to the coming of age in the 1960s of a new, so-called ‘postmaterialist’ generation that has brought cultural issues pertaining to personal liberty, strengthening of democracy and acceptance of cultural diversity to the forefront of democratic politics. This coincided with the emergence of new types of political parties, from the 1970s onwards those of the New Left and from the 1980s onwards those of the New Right – parties that do not so much engage in conflict about economic distribution between classes, but foreground different, albeit contrasting, types of cultural values instead (Elff 2007).

Unlike traditional ‘old’ left versus right class voting, class does not explain voting for these new types of parties. For while the middle class is indeed markedly more culturally progressive than the working class, this is not due to its class-based economic position, but rather to its education, which here operates as an indicator for cultural capital rather than class in an economic sense (Achterberg and Houtman 2006; Houtman 2003; Houtman and Achterberg 2010). In combination with the increased political significance of cultural issues since the 1970s this has led to a transformation of cleavage politics in the West, more

specifically a proliferation of a new cultural cleavage with leftist-voting well educated pitted against rightist-voting low educated (Achterberg 2006; Van der Waal, Achterberg, and Houtman 2007).

### *2.3. Where and Why Are the Two Value Divides Most Strongly Connected?*

Because many empirical studies have demonstrated positive correlations between moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism, the two value divides have often been combined to distinguish between cultural conservatism and cultural progressiveness more generally conceived (e.g., Flanagan and Lee 2003; Houtman 2003; De Witte and Billiet 1999). Stenner (2005, 2009) has however demonstrated that the two can and should be distinguished theoretically and empirically, principally due to the fact that moral traditionalists are specifically triggered by violations of religiously inspired norms, while authoritarians dismiss threats to sameness and conformity more generally. Indeed, the oft-found overlap between moral traditionalism and authoritarianism does at a closer and more critical look in fact stem from an overlap between their respective counterparts, i.e., moral progressiveness and basically secular libertarianism (De Koster and Van der Waal 2007). This is because moral progressiveness and secular libertarianism alike foreground individual liberty and oppose institutional coercion, be it by religious institutions or otherwise.

Basing themselves on data from the Netherlands, one of the most secularized and morally progressive countries in the world (Norris and Inglehart 2004), De Koster and Van der Waal do nonetheless suggest that the relationship between the two value divides is identical across national contexts. A recent article by ourselves suggests otherwise: it demonstrates that processes of secularization spark a dual rejection of moral traditionalism and authoritarianism in the name of personal liberty, which leads the two value divides to coalesce (Pless, Tromp, and Houtman 2020). This is because a decline in religion's social

significance erodes the dominance of religiously informed moral traditionalism and increases the appeal of individual liberty and personal authenticity (Brown 2009; McLeod 2007). Such foregrounding of personal freedom is indeed precisely why the so-called ‘counter culture’ of the 1960s boasted a critique of religious and secular authority alike (e.g., Roszak 1972; Zijderveld 1970).

The turn to moral progressiveness spawned by secularization thus strengthens the overlap between our two value divides because it increases the numbers of those who oppose moral traditionalism and authoritarianism alike. This is why the most secularized Western-European countries display the strongest overlaps between both value divides, while the correlation between the two is only weak or even completely absent in massively religious ones: because the former countries are less morally traditionalist than the latter (Pless, Tromp, and Houtman 2020). Having confined our earlier analysis to Western Europe, we study in what follows whether this theory also holds for Post-Communist Eastern-European countries. For in terms of secularization many of these countries are quite different from Western-European ones. Some of them have experienced religious revivals after the end of Communism, others have remained as secular as they were back then, and yet others have much like Western Europe been exposed to secularization (Kulkova 2015; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Northmore-Ball and Evans 2016; Philpott 2007).

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1. Data*

We analyze survey data for 44 European countries from the three waves (1990, 1999, and 2008) of the European Values Study (EVS 2011), countries with markedly different levels of



religiosity and moral traditionalism. We exclude the first wave of the study (1981) since most Eastern-European countries only joined the survey in 1990. The resulting dataset includes more than 108,000 individuals nested within 100 contexts (country-year combinations) with an average number of respondents of 1,119. The list of the 44 countries, their distribution across Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe, and the descriptive statistics for all variables used in our analysis can be found in Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix.

### *3.2. Method*

We employ a similar analytical approach as in our previous study of Western Europe (Pless, Tromp, and Houtman 2020), i.e., a two-stage multilevel analysis (Fairbrother 2014; Franzese 2005). In the first stage we compute zero-order correlations between moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism for each of the 100 contexts under study separately. In the second stage we then use these correlations as our dependent variable in multilevel regression analysis to study whether the strength of the link between the two value divides is indeed stronger in more secularized countries because the latter are less morally traditionalist. Doing so, we hence treat the 100 contexts as units of analysis, with countries serving as a second-level grouping variable. This two-stage approach does not only provide computational benefits (e.g., we fit models with two levels instead of adding the individual level as a third one), but also prevents the problem of obtaining statistically significant results with negligible effect sizes at the individual level (a problem caused by extremely large samples at the individual level).

We introduce our explanatory variables in the model in a stepwise fashion, starting with an exploration of regional differences in the strength of the link between moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism, with a focus on Post-Communist Eastern Europe. We then step by step enter contextual religiosity and contextual

moral traditionalism, which enables us to see whether and how initially recorded differences between the four European regions can be attributed to initially contextual differences in religiosity and ultimately differences in morally progressiveness between the regions (i.e., whether the link between the two value divides is indeed stronger in more secular countries *because* the latter are more morally progressive). We control for time in all models and because the two value divides have so often been found to be interconnected we also control for contextual authoritarianism in models that include contextual moral traditionalism.

### 3.3. Measurement

Our scale for *moral traditionalism-progressiveness* measures respondent's moral stances on matters of life and death, procreation and family life. We construct it from responses to five questions that indicate whether a respondent finds homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, divorce, and suicide justifiable (see Table A3 in the Appendix for details). Only those who responded to at least four of these five questions were assigned a score for moral traditionalism. The items were first standardized and then combined with equal weights, after which the resulting scale was recoded to range from 0 to 10, with 10 indicating strongest moral traditionalism. The scale is highly reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.81.<sup>3</sup>

The scale for *authoritarianism-libertarianism* measures one's attitudes towards immigration, and law and order via five questions. Four of them measure one's opposition to having 1) immigrants, 2) people of different race, 3) Muslims, and 4) ex-criminals as

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<sup>3</sup> Cronbach's Alpha exceeds 0.8 in 26% of our 100 contexts, falls within the range of 0.7-0.8 in 55% of them, and is between 0.6 and 0.7 in only 17 of them. Only Georgia and Armenia in 2008 yield a Cronbach's Alpha lower than 0.6: 0.51 for Georgia and 0.55 for Armenia.

neighbors, while an additional fifth one measures whether one thinks the native born should have priority in getting a job (see Table A3 in the Appendix for details). Because the questions about opposition to Muslims as neighbors and about privileging the native born on the labor market were not asked in the first wave, we have assigned scale scores as mean standardized scores to all those who responded validly to at least three of these five questions. The scores were then transformed to range from 0 to 10, with 10 indicating strongest authoritarianism. The resulting scale is fairly reliable with an overall Cronbach's Alpha of 0.64.<sup>4</sup>

These two scales enable the construction of our dependent variable, i.e., the strength of the connection between the two value divides, measured as the zero-order correlation between moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism for each of the country-year contexts separately. For all contexts combined this correlation is 0.24, the highest ones being those for Greece and Slovenia in 1999 (both 0.32) and the lowest one being negative (-0.13 for Kosovo in 2008). The intra-class correlation (ICC) of 0.53 points out that multilevel modeling is required to account for country-level variation in the dependent variable.

Our explanatory variables are contextual religiosity and contextual moral traditionalism. *Contextual religiosity* is computed for each of the country-year combinations as the mean score of an individual-level scale that consists of attending religious services at least once a month and believing in god, heaven, hell, sin, and life after death. All of these six variables are binary, yet strongly correlated and loading heavily on one factor with an

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<sup>4</sup> The authoritarianism-libertarianism scale is sufficiently reliable in 92% of our contexts with only eight of them yielding a Cronbach's Alpha between 0.4 and 0.5. The lowest reliability is observed for Malta in 1990 (only 0.43).

Eigenvalue of 4.8 that explains 91% of the variance. The resulting scale (mean standardized scores) is highly reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.86 and is recoded to range from 0 (least religious) to 10 (most religious). The least religious context is Bulgaria in 1990 (1.97) and the most religious one Malta in 1990 (9.18). *Contextual moral traditionalism* is computed for each of the country-year combinations as the mean score of the individual-level scale for moral traditionalism discussed above. The least and most morally traditional contexts are respectively Sweden in 2008 (3.42) and Kosovo in 2008 (9.35). *Contextual authoritarianism* is computed in a similar fashion, i.e., by averaging individual levels of authoritarianism within each country-year context. It ranges from a low 1.66 in Sweden in 1999 to a high 4.74 in Bulgaria in 1990.

Finally, *time* is measured as the respective wave of the EVS (1990, 1999, 2008) and is entered in the models as a continuous predictor, and *region of Europe* distinguishes between countries in Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. The composition of the four regions can be found in Table A1 in the Appendix.

#### **4. Results**

We start with a comparison of Post-Communist Eastern Europe with the rest of Europe, especially Western Europe, in terms of both the two relevant value domains and the overlap between them. We then move to an explanation of variations in the latter by testing whether the strength of the link between the two is indeed stronger in more secularized countries because the latter are less morally traditionalist.

#### *4.1. Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism in Europe*

Table 1 presents the mean levels of moral traditionalism and authoritarianism in 2008, as well as the correlation between these two cultural divides for all 44 European countries separately, for the four European regions composed out of these 44 countries (Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Europe), and for Europe as a whole.

It is clear that the Northern-European countries feature the lowest levels of moral traditionalism (all countries score below 4.52 with an average of 4.15 for Northern Europe as a whole) and authoritarianism alike (all below 3.00 with a Northern-European average of 2.28). It is also clear that the link between the two value divides is strongest in Northern Europe: the correlation is 0.21 on average, never falls below 0.16 (Finland) and reaches a maximum of 0.26 (Denmark). The Western-European countries are more morally traditionalist (5.51 on average) as well as more authoritarian (2.70) than the Northern-European ones. The link between the two value divides is also slightly weaker here: 0.16 for the region as a whole, ranging from 0.03 (Northern Ireland) to 0.22 (Austria and France).

Southern Europe is the most morally traditionalist part of Europe with mean moral traditionalism levels around 7.43, which is hardly surprising given the high number of massively religious countries in this region (e.g., deeply religious Malta with an average score of no less than 8.38). The countries in the south of Europe do also feature higher levels of authoritarianism than either Northern or Western Europe (3.65 on average), while the link between the two value divides is weaker in this region (0.11 on average, but with sizable differences between countries). These differences pertain especially to a contrast between on the one hand older Southern-European democracies like Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece, all with lower levels of traditionalism and authoritarianism and with stronger links between the two (around 0.2 and higher), and on the other hand former Yugoslavian Post-Communist countries with variegated combinations of traditionalism, authoritarianism, and relationships

between the two, the latter ranging from negative in Bosnia and Kosovo, to weakly positive in Slovenia (0.10) and Serbia (0.13) and more strongly positive in Montenegro (0.20).

*Table 1. Mean Levels of Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism, and Mean Traditionalism-Authoritarianism Correlations per Country, 2008 (EVS wave 4).*

Country	Mean Moral Traditionalism	Mean Authoritarianism	Traditionalism-Authoritarianism Correlation
Denmark	3.93	2.05	0.26
Finland	4.37	2.96	0.16
Iceland	4.51	2.16	0.23
Norway	4.51	2.08	0.21
Sweden	3.42	2.12	0.17
<i>Northern Europe</i>	<i>4.15</i>	<i>2.28</i>	<i>0.21</i>
Austria	5.84	3.48	0.22
Belgium	5.15	2.30	0.13
France	4.62	1.81	0.22
Germany	5.63	2.69	0.14
Ireland	6.73	3.42	0.21
Luxemburg	4.89	2.47	0.19
Netherlands	4.56	2.68	0.20
Switzerland	5.16	1.99	0.17
UK	5.52	2.86	0.10
Northern Ireland	6.96	3.29	0.03
<i>Western Europe</i>	<i>5.51</i>	<i>2.70</i>	<i>0.16</i>
Albania	7.96	4.27	0.17
Bosnia	8.15	3.68	-0.04
Croatia	7.48	3.54	0.20
Cyprus	8.41	4.12	0.05
Greece	6.95	3.27	0.20
Italy	6.89	3.25	0.21
Malta	8.38	4.40	0.13
Montenegro	7.62	3.40	0.20
Portugal	6.67	2.96	0.05
Serbia	7.60	3.87	0.13
Slovenia	5.64	3.82	0.10
Spain	5.27	2.42	0.19
Macedonia	7.59	3.98	0.05
Kosovo	9.35	4.05	-0.13
<i>Southern Europe</i>	<i>7.43</i>	<i>3.65</i>	<i>0.11</i>

Armenia	8.58	4.35	0.13
Bulgaria	7.04	4.00	0.09
Belarus	6.71	3.96	0.05
Czech Republic	5.67	4.07	0.04
Estonia	7.05	4.15	0.00
Georgia	8.50	4.54	-0.08
Hungary	6.55	3.23	-0.05
Latvia	7.13	3.77	0.03
Lithuania	6.96	4.40	0.15
Moldova	8.66	3.85	0.10
Poland	7.44	3.59	0.09
Romania	7.75	3.57	0.01
Russia	7.04	3.89	0.01
Slovakia	6.48	3.76	0.12
Ukraine	7.91	3.47	0.12
<i>Eastern Europe</i>	<i>7.30</i>	<i>3.91</i>	<i>0.05</i>
<i>Europe</i>	<i>6.61</i>	<i>3.39</i>	<i>0.24</i>

The Eastern-European countries, finally, are only slightly less traditionalist than the Southern-European ones yet more authoritarian than the rest of Europe. The average level of moral traditionalism within this group of countries is 7.30, ranging from 5.67 in the Czech Republic to 8.66 in Moldova. In all countries within this category, mean authoritarianism is as high as 3.91, ranging from 3.23 in Hungary to 4.40 in Lithuania and 4.54 in Georgia. The two value divides are also less strongly correlated in Eastern Europe, with an average correlation of no more than 0.05. Ten out of the fifteen countries in this region feature (typically insignificant) correlations below 0.10, with the lowest ones – that even turn out to be negative – recorded for Georgia (-0.08) and Hungary (-0.05). Indeed, only five Eastern-European countries show correlations higher than 0.10, with none of these being higher than 0.15 (e.g., Moldova, Slovakia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Lithuania).

To sum up, the Eastern-European countries feature levels of moral traditionalism that are among the highest in Europe, only slightly below massively religious Southern Europe,

and they stand out as more authoritarian than the rest of Europe. The link between the two value divides is moreover decidedly weaker in Eastern Europe than elsewhere in Europe, even though there are substantial differences between the various countries within this cluster.

#### 4.2. Exploring the Link between the Two Value Divides

We now turn to a more detailed analysis of differences in the strength of the link between moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism across Europe.

Figure 1. The Link between Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism across Europe (Zero-Order Correlations, EVS 1990, 1999, 2008)

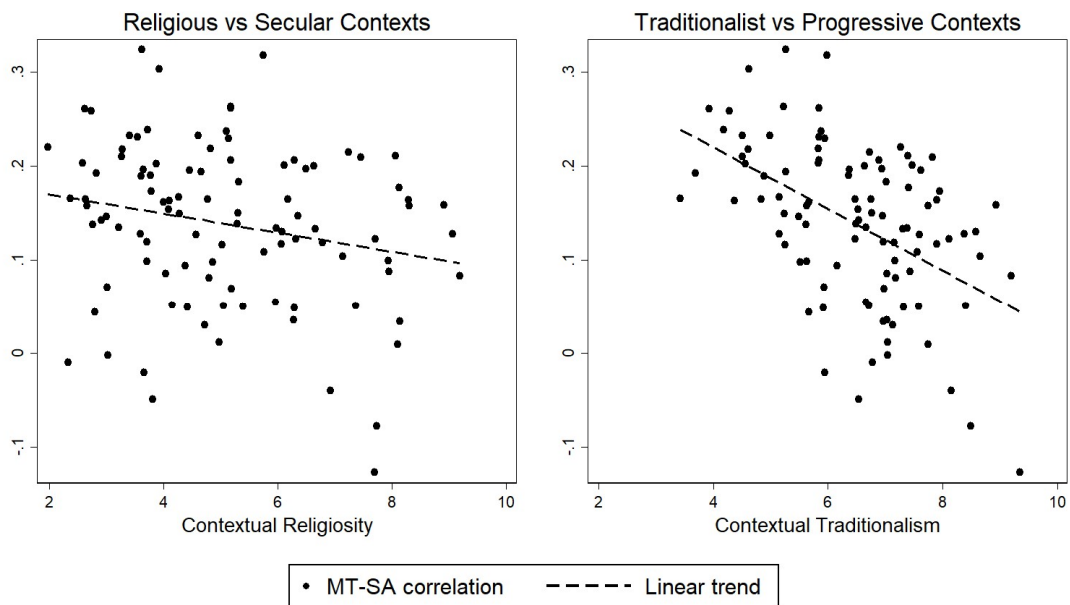


Figure 1 displays its strength across contexts with different levels of religiosity on the one hand and contexts with different levels of moral traditionalism on the other. The left-hand side of Figure 1 demonstrates that the most secular countries of Western Europe boast the strongest connections between our two value divides, even though the pattern is quite weak.



If we plot the same correlations against contextual moral traditionalism rather than contextual religiosity (see the right-hand side of Figure 1), however, the pattern is considerably more pronounced, with strongest links between the two value divides in the least traditionalist countries.

Figure 2. Religious versus Secular Contexts: The Link between Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism in Four European Regions (Zero-Order Correlations, EVS 1990, 1999, 2008).

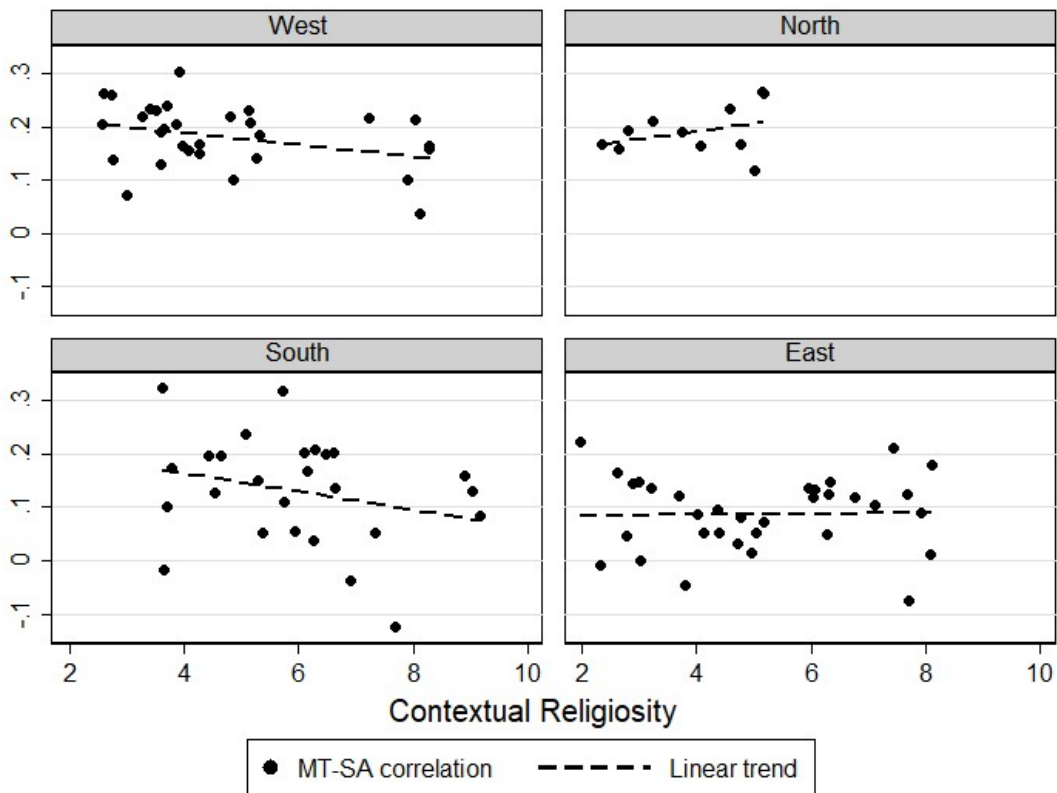
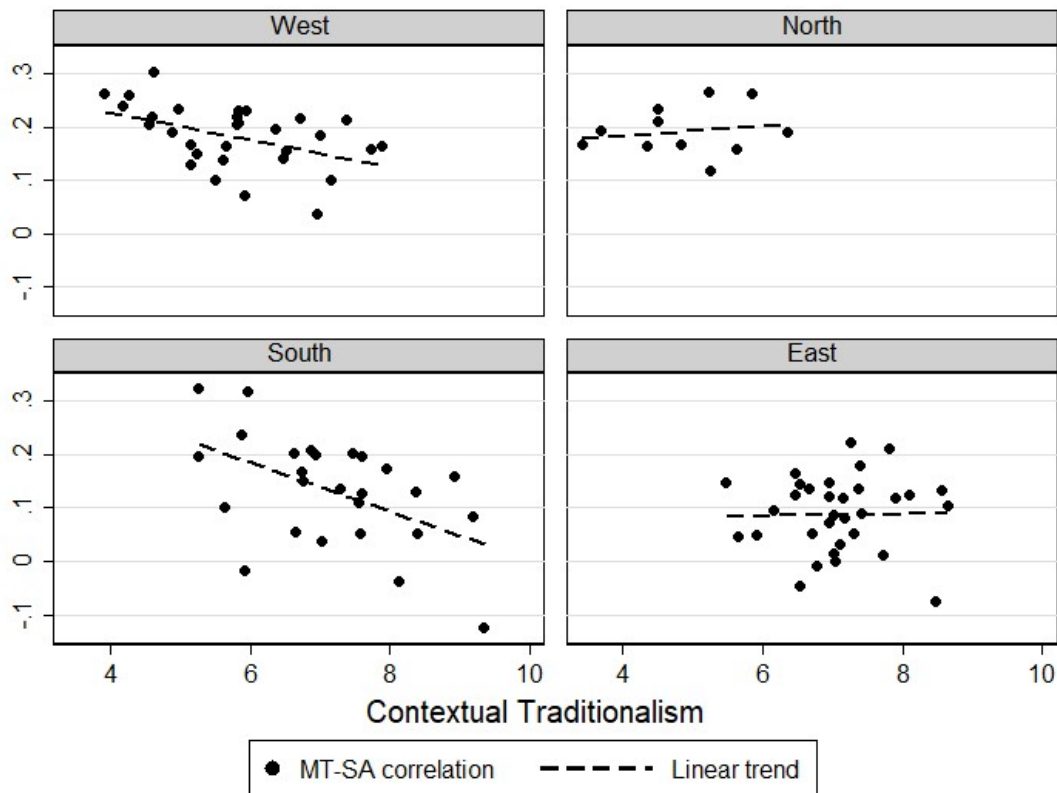


Figure 3. Traditionalist versus Progressive Contexts: The Link between Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism in Four European Regions (Zero-Order Correlations, EVS 1990, 1999, 2008).



While there are thus definitely stronger links between our two value divides in the more secular and less traditionalist countries, we now inspect whether these patterns do also exist for the four European regions separately. To find this out, we plot the correlations between the two value divides against contextual religiosity (Figure 2) and contextual moral traditionalism (Figure 3) for the four regions of Europe separately. Western and Southern European countries demonstrate clear negative relationships, i.e., weaker correlations between the two in more religious and more traditionalist contexts.

This is quite different for Northern and Eastern Europe. In Northern Europe, which is extremely secular and non-traditionalist, we find quite strong relationships between the two value divides. This region in effect straightforwardly supports our theory that low religiosity

and low traditionalism go hand in hand with a strong overlap between the two value divides. Eastern-European countries, on the other hand, are on average more religious and considerably more traditionalist and show weaker correlations between the two value divides. Representing the opposite ends of the overall patterns predicted by our theory, the patterns found for Northern and Eastern Europe are as such also consistent with our theory.

#### *4.3. Explaining the Link between the Two Value Divides*

We now move to multilevel analysis to test our theory about why the links between the two value divides are stronger in some countries and regions than in others. We begin by fitting a simple model that only includes control variables. Model 1 in Table 2 shows that the link between the two value divides is considerably weaker in countries in Southern and Eastern than in Western Europe. On average, the correlation is 0.053 lower in the South than in the West, and 0.094 weaker in the East than in the West. The link between the two is thus strongest in the North and the West, followed by the South, and then the East.

In Model 2, we include contextual religiosity into the equation. It has a weak negative effect on the strength of the link: more secular countries do indeed demonstrate a slightly stronger link between moral traditionalism and authoritarianism. At this point, Southern contexts no longer differ from Western ones, which means that contextual religiosity actually accounts for the weaker correlations between the two divides in Southern Europe. Even controlling for contextual religiosity, however, Eastern Europe still differs from Western Europe.

Model 3 then demonstrates that bringing contextual traditionalism into the equation eliminates all regional differences whatsoever. Contextual moral traditionalism has a strong and substantial negative effect on the strength of the link under study: with one unit increase in contextual moral traditionalism, the correlation between the two divides decreases by

0.029. This translates into a difference in the correlation of no less than 0.172 between the least and most traditionalist contexts, with all other variables held constant.

*Table 2. The Link between Traditionalism and Authoritarianism across Europe: Multilevel Regression Analysis Results.*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Contextual traditionalism			<u>-0.029</u> *** (0.009)	<u>-0.036</u> *** (0.012)
Contextual religiosity		<u>-0.009</u> * (0.005)		0.006 (0.007)
European region (reference=West)				
North	0.010 (0.034)	0.003 (0.035)	-0.017 (0.033)	-0.018 (0.033)
South	<u>-0.053</u> ** (0.025)	-0.043 (0.026)	0.001 (0.029)	0.002 (0.029)
East	<u>-0.094</u> *** (0.024)	<u>-0.090</u> *** (0.024)	-0.045 (0.030)	-0.041 (0.031)
Time (wave)	-0.015* (0.008)	-0.014* (0.008)	-0.022*** (0.008)	-0.024*** (0.008)
Contextual authoritarianism			-0.006 (0.018)	-0.004 (0.018)
Constant	0.228*** (0.030)	0.268*** (0.039)	0.435*** (0.066)	0.447*** (0.067)
<i>Random effects (variances):</i>				
Country	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)
Country-year	0.004 (0.001)	0.004 (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)
Number of contexts	100	100	100	100
Number of countries	44	44	44	44
Snijders/Bosker R <sup>2</sup> (context level)	0.25	0.26	0.34	0.34
Snijders/Bosker R <sup>2</sup> (country level)	0.33	0.32	0.41	0.42

Standard errors in parentheses; unstandardized coefficients reported.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The link between the two divides is in effect stronger in the more secular European countries, but is this indeed *because* the latter are the least morally traditionalist ones? Model 4 proves

that this is indeed the case: it is contextual traditionalism that accounts for the strength of the link between the two divides, not contextual religiosity. The effect of the former even increases, while that of the latter loses its statistical significance. All regional dummies have become insignificant here, which means that the previously recorded differences between Eastern and Western Europe are actually due to differences in levels of moral traditionalism. In short, our two value divides do indeed overlap less in Eastern Europe, because countries in this region are more morally traditionalist.

## **5. Conclusion and Discussion**

In this chapter we have studied whether and how Post-Communist Eastern-European countries differ from the rest of Europe in terms of religiously informed moral traditionalism-progressiveness and basically secular authoritarianism-libertarianism. These two value domains have in the past decades only increased in political salience, both in response to Europe's political and administrative unification and as an outcome of the marked cultural turn in political culture since the 1970s. Our first principal finding is that Post-Communist Eastern-European countries do indeed differ from the rest of Europe in both respects. They feature levels of moral traditionalism that are among the highest in Europe, indeed only slightly below those of the massively religious Southern-European countries, and they stand out as more authoritarian than the rest of Europe. Post-Communist Eastern-European countries do as such boast political cultures that are less cosmopolitan and less open to acceptance of cultural diversity and individual liberty than those in the rest of Europe.

We have also studied variations across Europe in the strength of the overlap between the two value divides. This leads us to the conclusion that, even though often suggested

otherwise, the two do not necessarily blend into one single, more generally defined value divide between cultural conservatives and cultural progressives. Confirming a previous analysis that remained confined to Western-European countries, the two value divides do only coalesce in the wake of processes of secularization, because the latter spark a dual rejection of moral traditionalism and authoritarianism in the name of personal liberty (Pless, Tromp, and Houtman 2020). The other way around, moral traditionalism-progressiveness and authoritarianism-libertarianism tend to remain distinct value divides in the most religious parts of Europe.

This finding is particularly important from a theoretical point of view. For it provides a vital building block for the construction of a theory that can satisfactorily explain the rise of the much-discussed new cultural cleavage in politics, organized as it is around one single value divide that blends the two that we have distinguished in this chapter. For no such theory exists thus far, despite the many studies that have meanwhile been devoted to this new cultural cleavage. The most typically cited theory in this context is without doubt Inglehart's (1977) about the 'silent revolution'. This is however first of all a theory about cultural change due to cohort replacement, with new birth cohorts being more 'postmaterialist' than their predecessors, at least as long as affluence and security characterize their formative experiences. A viable account of the new cultural cleavage should however not so much theorize the cultural-political differences between birth cohorts, but rather those between high and lowly educated. Now Inglehart obviously recognizes that 'postmaterialism' is not only typically found among the younger birth cohorts, but also among the higher educated. Those who have unlike Inglehart himself tested his vital hypothesis that the latter can be attributed to formative experiences of affluence have however without exception felt forced to reject it (see the discussion in Houtman 2003, 66–82).

While most students of the new cultural cleavage have meanwhile come to agree that educational differences are central to it, it is still far from agreed why the new cultural value divide triggers different educational categories differently, and indeed how and why it has emerged in the first place. Our analysis in this chapter suggests that the shrinkage of the religious domain may offer a more promising answer to the latter question than increases in affluence, changes in class structures, or related economic transformations.

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## Appendix

*Table A1. Sample Sizes for Countries and Waves.*

Country	1990	1999	2008	N	Region
Austria	1272	1363	1279	3914	West
Belgium	2437	1758	1472	5667	West
France	921	1413	1431	3765	West
Germany	2846	1586	1710	6142	West
Ireland	956	881	707	2544	West
Luxembourg	0	1049	1428	2477	West
Netherlands	969	973	1454	3396	West
Switzerland	0	0	1150	1150	West
Great Britain	1358	815	1383	3556	West
Northern Ireland	295	819	390	1504	West
Albania	0	0	1145	1145	South
Bosnia Herzegovina	0	0	1342	1342	South
Croatia	0	893	1259	2152	South
Cyprus	0	0	795	795	South
Greece	0	899	1322	2221	South
Italy	1725	1719	1054	4498	South
Malta	341	958	1313	2612	South
Montenegro	0	0	1320	1320	South
Portugal	1074	816	1247	3137	South
Serbia	0	0	1195	1195	South
Slovenia	804	900	1242	2946	South
Spain	2313	955	1268	4536	South
Macedonia	0	0	1068	1068	South
Kosovo	0	0	1400	1400	South
Denmark	874	903	1194	2971	North
Finland	467	863	824	2154	North
Iceland	652	885	701	2238	North
Norway	1107	0	1055	2162	North
Sweden	919	915	855	2689	North
Armenia	0	0	1370	1370	East
Bulgaria	861	711	1048	2620	East
Belarus	0	733	1148	1881	East
Czech Republic	1872	1655	1408	4935	East
Estonia	0	711	1287	1998	East
Georgia	0	0	1226	1226	East
Hungary	892	0	1423	2315	East
Latvia	329	748	1235	2312	East
Lithuania	0	595	890	1485	East
Moldova	0	0	1222	1222	East
Poland	887	936	1317	3140	East
Romania	978	875	1093	2946	East
Russian Federation	0	1663	1097	2760	East
Slovakia	933	1048	1171	3152	East

Ukraine	0	805	1080	1885	East
Total	28082	31843	52018	111943	

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables in Use.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Individual level</i>					
Moral traditionalism	111,943	6.47	2.54	0	10
Authoritarianism	111,943	3.23	1.96	0	10
Religiosity	111,943	4.97	3.67	0	10
<i>Contextual level</i>					
Traditionalism-authoritarianism correlation	100	0.14	0.09	-0.13	0.32
Contextual moral traditionalism	100	6.49	1.27	3.42	9.35
Contextual religiosity	100	5.10	1.81	1.97	9.18
Contextual authoritarianism	100	3.26	0.72	1.66	4.74
<i>Moral traditionalism items</i>					
Homosexuality justifiable	108,589	7.00	3.37	1	10
Abortion justifiable	110,383	6.57	3.01	1	10
Suicide justifiable	110,300	8.42	2.42	1	10
Divorce justifiable	109,133	6.53	3.22	1	10
Euthanasia justifiable	111,385	5.64	2.96	1	10
<i>Authoritarianism items</i>					
Immigrants as neighbors	111,317	0.17	0.37	0	1
People of different race as neighbors	111,414	0.14	0.35	0	1
Muslims as neighbors	111,314	0.21	0.40	0	1
Ex-criminals as neighbors	111,300	0.50	0.50	0	1
Jobs scarcity vs migrants	109,455	2.43	0.86	1	3
<i>Religiosity items</i>					
Belief in God	106,832	0.76	0.43	0	1
Belief in life after death	102,853	0.51	0.50	0	1
Belief in hell	107,392	0.34	0.47	0	1
Belief in heaven	107,478	0.47	0.50	0	1
Belief in sin	108,223	0.60	0.49	0	1
Attending church at least monthly	111,353	0.32	0.47	0	1



Table A3. Moral Traditionalism and Authoritarianism: Factor Analysis.

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
<i>Moral traditionalism</i>			
Homosexuality		0.649	0.515
Abortion		0.764	0.414
Suicide		0.564	0.678
Divorce		0.636	0.594
Euthanasia		0.767	0.404
<i>Authoritarianism</i>			
Immigrants	0.887		0.211
Race	0.837		0.290
Muslims	0.837		0.297
Ex-criminals	0.426		0.772
Jobs scarcity vs migrants	0.340		0.816
Variance explained (two factors)			0.99
Correlation between factors			0.23
Total N (individuals)			108,684

Blanks represent loadings <0.3; Factor analysis (IPF) based on polychoric correlation matrix with Oblimin rotation; all items are standardized.