

*Does the Religious Factor Still Matter?
Twenty Years of the European Values Surveys.*

Olivier Galland & Yannick Lemel
LSQ, Paris

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Theoretical Background. Disappearance or Ubiquity of Religion?

The traditional secularisation thesis states that religion is incompatible with modern society (Comte)

Today some analysts observe the dramatic decrease of religious participation in Europe and conclude that religion will disappear from European societies. For instance, Bruce (2001) predicts a complete disappearance of Christian denominations in Britain by the year 2030.

At the opposite some sociologists think that religion is a universal aspect of the human condition. They interpret the changes not as a loss of religion but as a “privatization of religion”, i.e. “*the direct access of private consumers to the stock of significations which constitutes the various religious traditions*”. At the same time, “*a unitary moral order no longer exists*” (Luckman, 1967).

We want to use the *European Values* survey in order to find some support to one or another of these thesis

Data. The European Values Surveys

The *European Values Survey* is a major source of information on changing values and their correlates in Europe.

Three rounds of the *EVS* in 1981, 1990 and 1999 with an increase in the number of countries involved.

Numerous domains are covered: religion, socioeconomic life, politics, morality, work, family, marriage, sexuality. 22 synthetic scales were constructed.

Our work examines the eleven European countries for which the three waves are available:

Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France,
Italy, Ireland, Iceland, the Netherlands,
the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden.

Unless otherwise stated, each country will be weighted by the share of its population.

(adapted and revised from Halman & Vloet, 1994)

- Religiosity
- Significance of God
- Church involvement
- Ethics
- Civil morality
- Support to authority
- Confidence in institutions
- Rejection of neighbours
- Post-materialism
- Political involvement
- Non-conventional political participation
- Left-Right
- Personal development
- Localism
- Traditional family pattern
- Importance of work
- Instrumental orientation to work
- Voluntary organisations participation
- Secretary best paid
- Equality vs. freedom
- In favour of technological development
- Trust

Summary of Findings

1. We did not find a complete fragmentation of values as the Luckman perspective could have suggested [See](#) ;
2. We found that a consistent scale of “traditionalism” constructed with the questions dealing with ethics and acknowledgment of the authorities allows us to classify the whole population as well as subparts of it [See](#) ;
3. The religious affiliation is still a strong predictor of the value orientations and is correlated with traditionalism. Nevertheless there are no strong differences between Catholics, Protestants and other church members. The main differences are between church members and non-church members [See](#) .

THE “FRACTAL” PATTERN of VALUES.

An object is said to be fractal if we can recognize (exactly or approximately) the same shape at different magnification scales.

Obviously, the “fractal” characteristic of such an object as the value system couldn’t be “demonstrated”. Simply, the idea could be illustrated.

The pattern

[See](#)

A similar pattern in each period

[See](#)

A similar pattern in each country

[See](#)

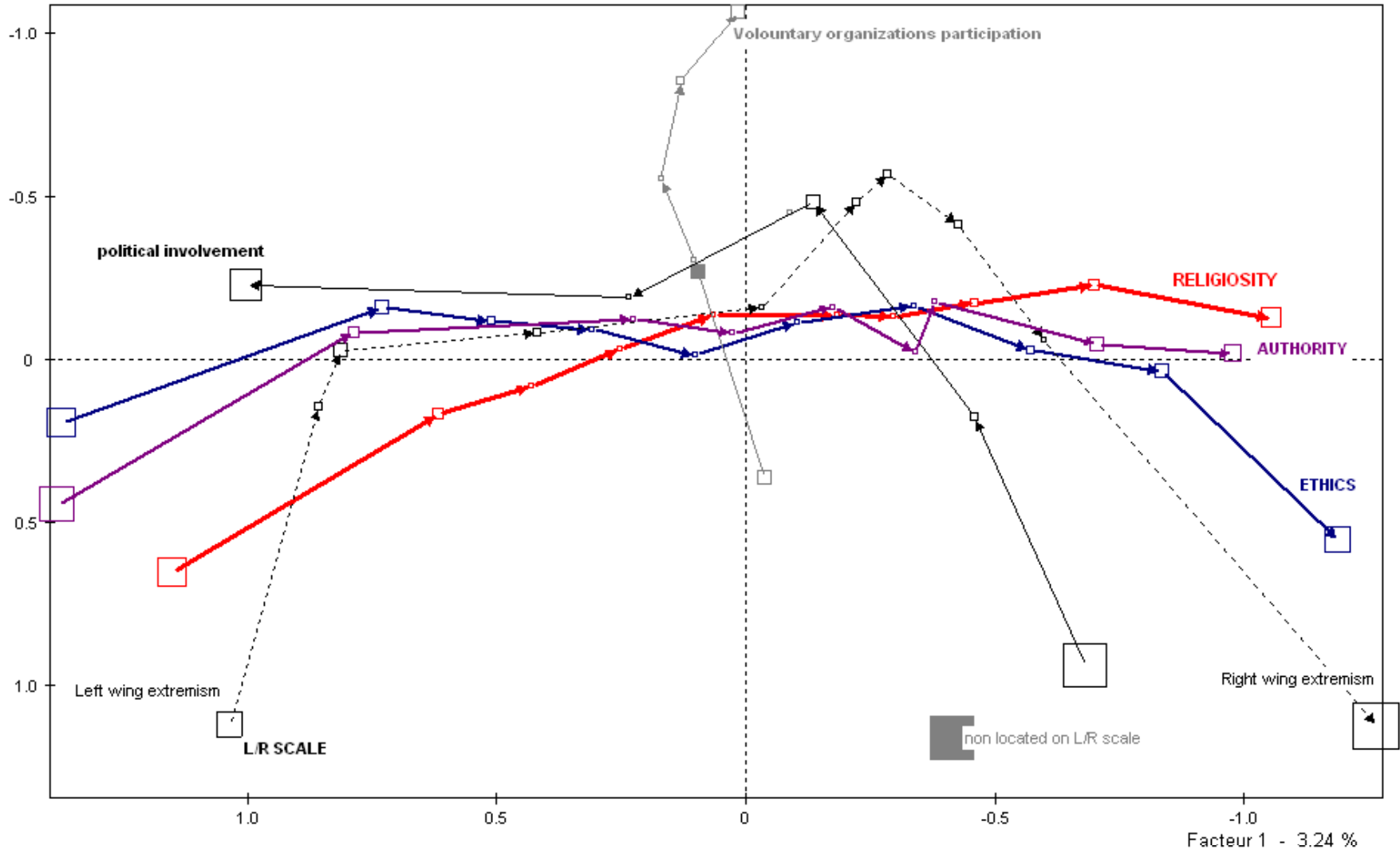
A similar pattern in each sub-group

[See](#)



The Overall Pattern

Facteur 2 - 2.10 %



MCA, all scales, components 1-2, the most heavily loaded scales



A Similar Pattern in Each Period

The ten most heavily loaded scales on the first factor, each EVS round separately

	<i>1981</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1999</i>
<i>Support to authority</i>	13,2 (1)	11,4 (2)	10,1 (2)
<i>Ethics</i>	12,3 (2)	12,7 (1)	13,9 (1)
<i>Left-right</i>	10,1 (3)	9,4 (4)	10,0 (4)
<i>Religiosity</i>	10,0 (4)	9,8 (3)	10,3 (3)
<i>Confidence in institutions</i>	8,6 (5)	7,3 (8)	6,1 (8)
<i>Political involvement</i>	8,3 (6)	8,3 (6)	7,7 (6)
<i>Post-materialism</i>	7,3 (7)	7,6 (7)	5,2 (10)
<i>Church involvement</i>	7,2 (8)	6,3 (9)	7,1 (7)
<i>Traditional family pattern</i>	6,5 (9)	8,4 (5)	8,7 (5)
<i>Civil Morality</i>	5,8 (10)	5,2 (10)	5,6 (9)

Multiple correspondence analysis, all scales, whole population

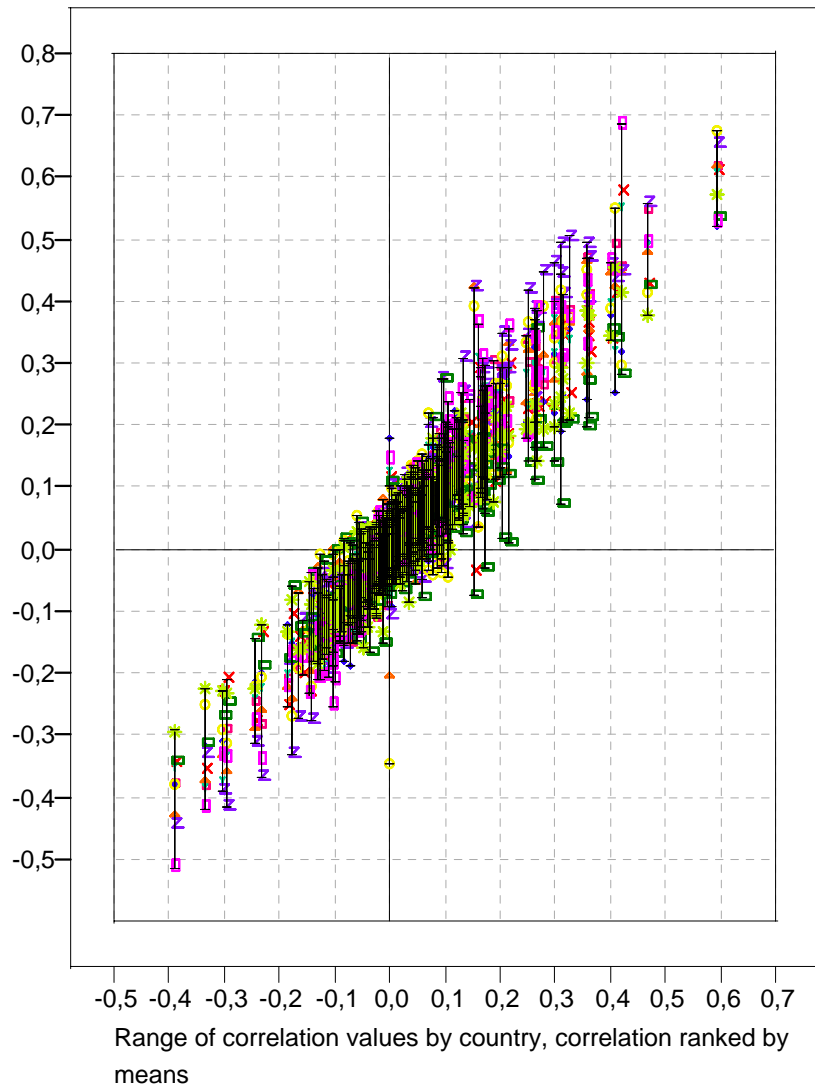
Similar stabilities could be observed for other dimensions but decrease with rank of the factor



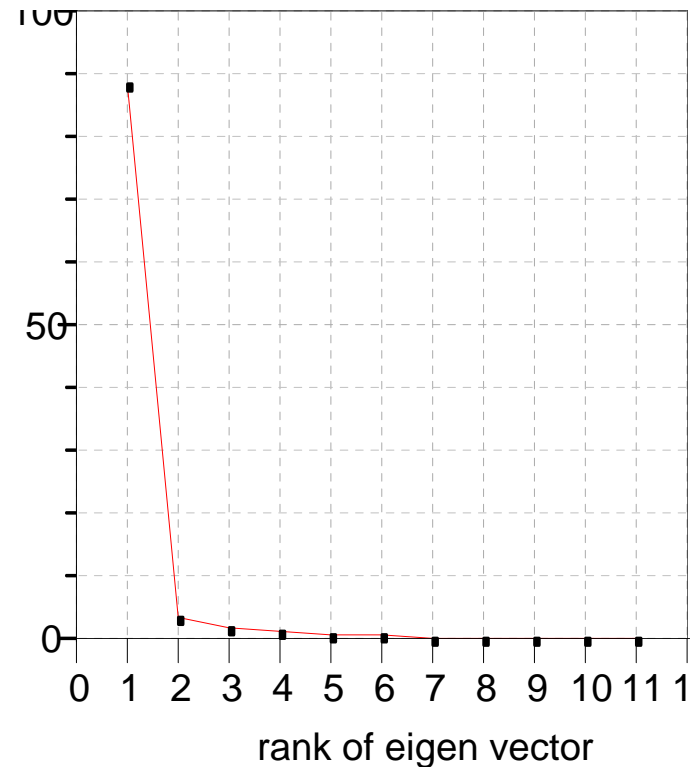
A Similar Pattern in Each Country

The 210 correlations between the 22 scales are rather similar from one country to another

So that a strong common pattern is discernible

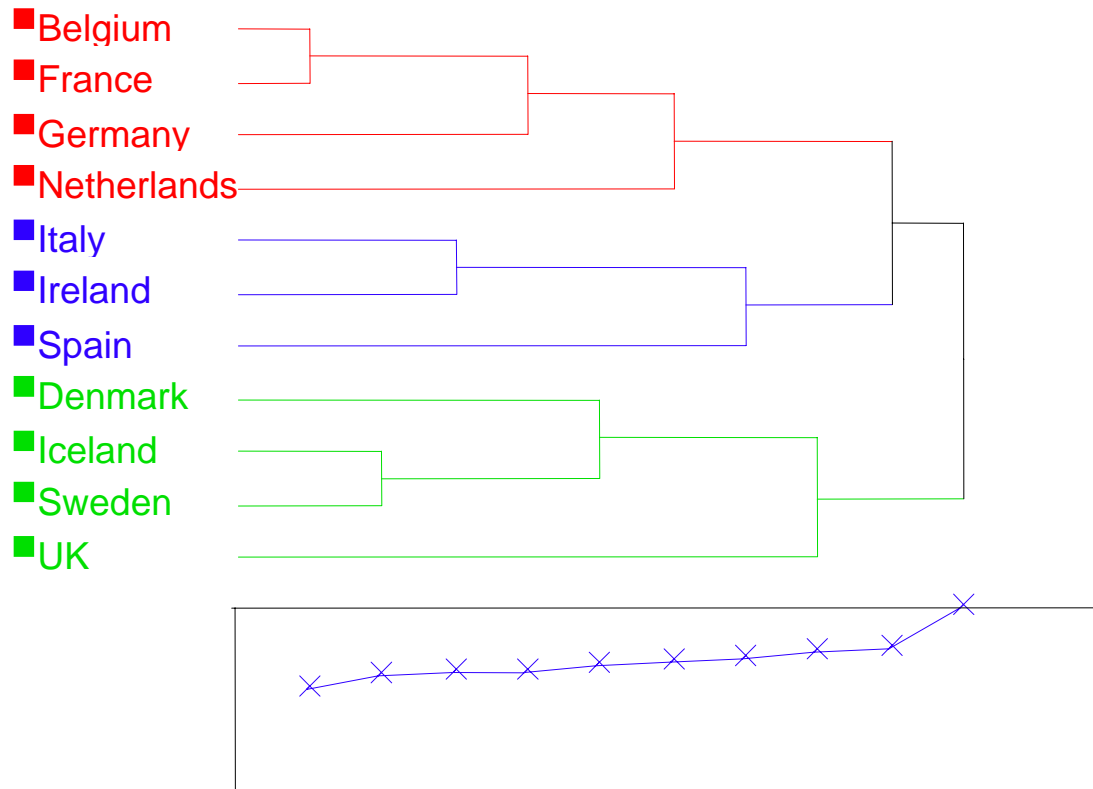


Component analysis of the eleven correlation matrixes



Despite Similarity, Three Sub-Patterns

Clustering of the correlation matrixes, Ward method



Three clusters:

- The “conservative” countries;
- The “catholic” countries;
- The “Nordic” or “Scandinavian” countries to which the UK is related.



A Similar Pattern in Each Cluster

The ten most heavily loaded synthetic scales on the first factor, three groups of country separately

	<i>“conservative”</i>	<i>“catholic”</i>	<i>“Nordic”</i>
<i>Support to authority</i>	12,1 (1)	12,1 (2)	13,7 (1)
<i>Ethics</i>	12,0 (2)	12,8 (1)	10,3 (3)
<i>Left-right</i>	9,6 (3)	10,6 (4)	10,2 (4)
<i>Religiosity</i>	8,9 (4)	10,8 (3)	10,9 (2)
<i>Church involvement</i>	7,9 (5)	7,1 (8)	6,1 (8)
<i>Political involvement</i>	7,8 (6)	8,4 (6)	3,7 (12)
<i>Confidence in institutions</i>	7,4 (7)	8,5 (5)	9,4 (5)
<i>Post-materialism</i>	7,2 (8)	6,5 (9)	4,1 (10)
<i>Traditional family</i>	7,2 (9)	7,4 (7)	7,7 (7)
<i>Civil morality</i>	6,3 (10)	3,0 (11)	8,2 (6)
<i>Non-conventional political participation</i>	2,9 (12)	1,3 (12)	3,1 (11)
<i>Importance of God</i>	4,6 (11)	4,4 (10)	4,7 (9)



A Similar Pattern in Each Sub-group

Young/Old

CORR (P1y,P1o) 0,99

CORR (P2y,P2o) 0,95

CORR (P3y,P3o) 0,70

For each sub-population separately a component analysis is made, the factor are constructed and then extrapolated to the whole population.

Level of education (number of schooling years)

CORR (P1low,P1high) 0,99

CORR (P2low,P2high) 0,92

CORR (P3low,P3high) 0,43

So, corr (P1y P1o) is an indicator of the degree to which the first dimension of values is different from the young persons to the old ones



THE FIRST DIMENSION AS TRADITIONALISM

Results

[See](#)

Traditionalism

[See](#)

The first dimension as traditionalism [See](#)



The First Dimension. Results

<i>Ethics</i>	13,1
<i>Support to authority</i>	11,9
<i>L/R scale</i>	10
<i>Religiosity</i>	10
<i>Political involvement</i>	8,3
<i>Traditional family</i>	7,6
<i>Confidence in institutions</i>	7,5
<i>Post-materialism</i>	6,9
<i>Church involvement</i>	6,9
<i>Civil morality</i>	5,7

The ten most heavily loaded scales on the first factor :

two are political scales

two are religious scales

six are values scales dealing with morality and attitude towards authority and institutions



Traditionalism

- Tradition consists in “*respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one’s culture or religion provides. Tradition values demand responsiveness to immutable expectations from the past*” (Schwartz, forthcoming)
- The scales the most heavily loaded on the first factor are consistent with this definition of tradition: moral strictness, confidence in institutions and support to authority suggest the stability of norms, by their contents itself and by the respect that is due to those who are in charge of applying them.
- There are good theoretical and empirical arguments to interpret the first factor as the attitude towards tradition and to develop a synthetic scale of traditionalism.



Synthetic Scales of Traditionalism

	Cronbach's Alpha	Correlation with F1
<i>Traditionalism 1</i> Ethics, authority, traditional family, confidence institutions	0,70	0,89
<i>Traditionalism 2</i> Traditionalism1 + religiosity	0,74	0,91
<i>Traditionalism 3</i> Traditionalism2 + L/R scale	0,76	0,94



THE GREAT DIVIDE.

Weber assumed that every major religious group develops its own distinctive orientation that influence the values and the daily actions of its adherents. Following Weber, Catholics and Protestants are inclined to adopt different orientations.

Actually, Lenski (1958) found that the traditionalistic orientation of Catholics is different from the rationalistic orientation of the Protestant, at least in the US. Support to the Weberian thesis is rather common in contemporary sociology....



The Question About the Religious Affiliation

The basic question is:

«Do you belong to a religious denomination? If yes, which one: Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Orthodox, Other? ».

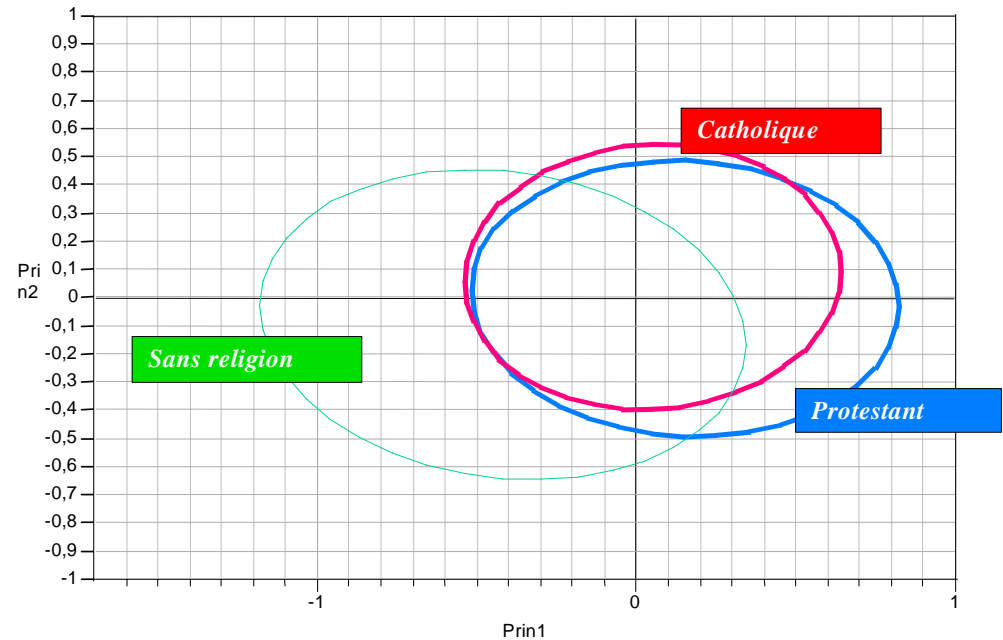
	<i>Whole sample</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1999</i>
<i>Catholic</i>	51%	54%	48%
<i>Protestant</i>	25%	30%	24%
<i>Unchurched</i>	22%	14%	27%

The Great Divide (1)

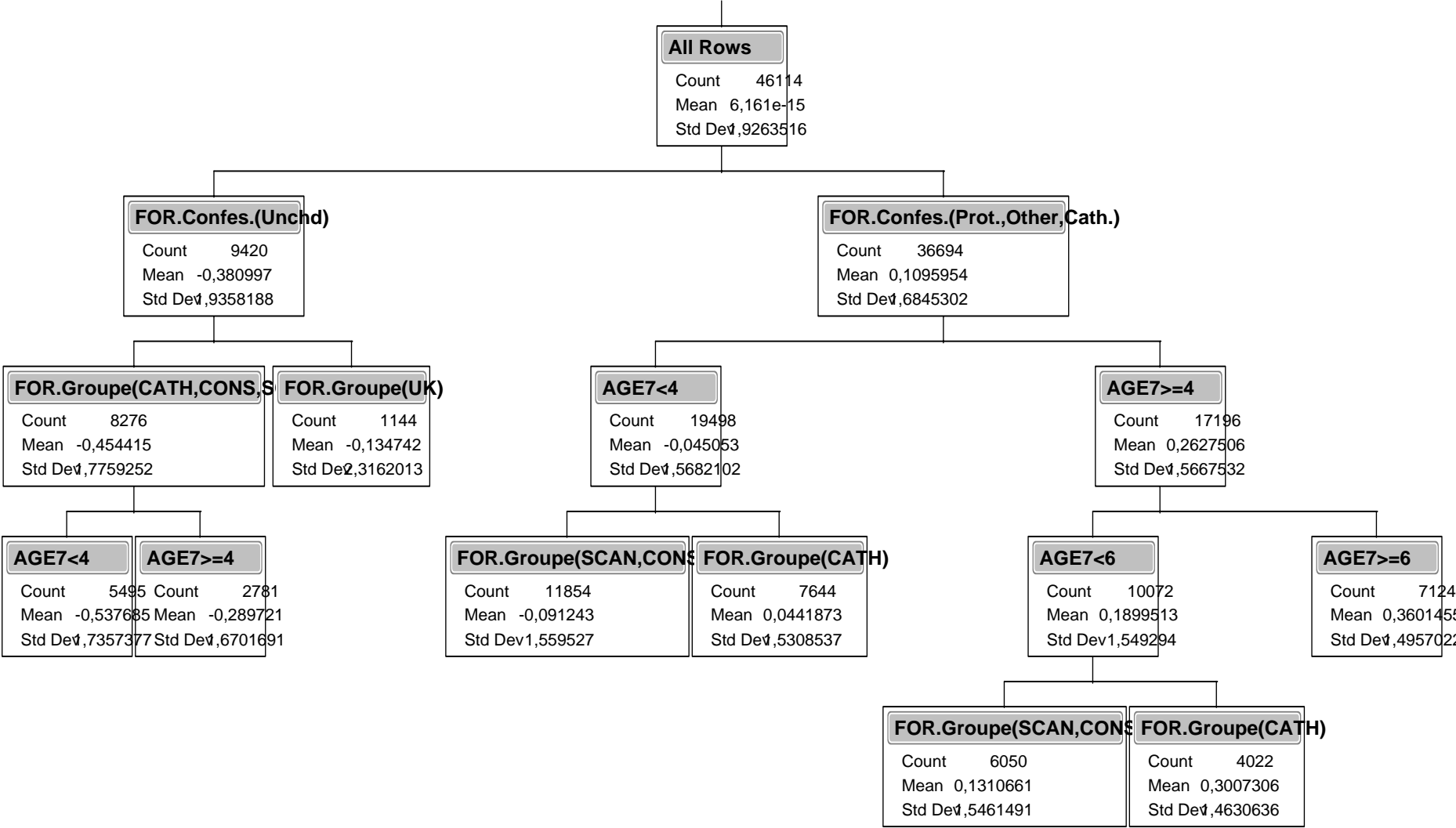
Roman Catholics and Protestants

- > are very different from the “unchurched” persons,
- > and have similar value orientations

*Component analysis,
scales on church involvement excluded ,
whole population,
50% of persons unchurched or
belonging to “catholic” or protestant
denomination inside each ellipse*



The Great Divide (2)



Regression tree of the first factor, CA , all scales, whole population.
 Explained variables: Date, Country, Age, Class position, Income, Religious affiliation

