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## **SECULARISATION IN THE NETHERLANDS**

### **Reassessing Cultural Value Orientations and their Impact on Voting Behaviour**

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## ABSTRACT

Drawing upon problems of interpretation in political sociological research, this article questions the common practice to lump together moral traditionalism and authoritarianism. First, it is demonstrated that only moral traditionalism relates to religious orthodoxy. Second, the well-established strong correlation between both value orientations proves solely caused by the circumstance that non-traditionalism and non-authoritarianism go hand in hand: moral traditionalism and authoritarianism are almost unrelated. Third, moral traditionalists are shown to vote for Christian right-wing parties, whereas authoritarianism leads to a vote for a secular right-wing party. Fourth, whereas moral traditionalism proves decisive for the voting behaviour of Christians, it is authoritarianism that underlies the non-Christian vote. These findings, which are consistent with theories on cultural modernisation, lead to the conclusion that attention should be paid to the distinction between these orientations because this aids the interpretation of research findings, and because it is likely that authoritarianism will gain a more central role in politics at the cost of moral traditionalism.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In his classical work *Political Man* (1959), Lipset distinguished economic values from non-economic, cultural values, arguing that political values have a bi-dimensional structure. This distinction has been validated time and again in empirical studies (see for instance Houtman, 2003; Fleishman, 1988; Middendorp, 1991), leading to a general consensus that economic and cultural values differ fundamentally (cf. Evans & Heath, 1995; Evans, Heath & Lalljee, 1996; Heath, Evans & Martin, 1994). Although this is a valuable insight, insufficient attention has been paid to the nature of the cultural dimension: it seems customary in political-sociological research to lump together value orientations and opinions on divergent cultural issues without a clear theoretical justification. Mainly on the basis of empirical arguments, cultural issues are considered interchangeable:

(...) research based on nationally representative data sets, collected among the Dutch population in 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1990, has demonstrated that the so-called F-scale for authoritarianism is strongly related to more conventional measures of cultural conservatism. Examples are intolerance regarding homosexuals, a preference for the maintenance of traditional gender roles, family traditionalism, harsh attitudes toward criminals, and a willingness to limit political freedom of expression (Middendorp 1991: 111). Those findings indicate that there is ample reason to reject too neat a distinction between authoritarianism and culturally conservative political values. Indeed, their strong correlation suggests that it makes more sense to consider them highly interchangeable concepts. (Houtman, 2001: 163)

Achterberg (2004: 337-8) shows the same lack of attention for differences between cultural issues: he describes the contrast between cultural conservatism and cultural progressiveness as a conflict about ‘typical cultural issues such as “law and order”, “rights of suppressed minorities, homosexuals and women” [and] “traditional moral values”’. Flanagan and Lee (2003: 239-240) do something similar: they designate items such as one’s view on freedom of speech, the clarity of good and evil, and sexual freedom all as ‘libertarian items’. This practice is also found in the work of Evans, Heath and Lalljee (1996: 99-100, 112; see also Heath, Evans & Martin, 1994: 130), who compose a cultural scale of, among other things, opinions regarding stiffer sentences, traditional moral values, and law obedience.

The use of cultural issues in the present-day research practice (for more examples, see for instance Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Houtman, 2003) seems, in short, to be based on the notion that a morally traditional value orientation – a conservative stance on moral issues

like gender-relations, sexuality, life, and death – does not differ from an authoritarian stance – which implies aversion of cultural diversity and a rigid conception of social order.

However, this common practice proves to cause problems. For example, De Witte and Billiet (1999) experienced problems of interpretation: contrary to their expectations, a conservative cultural value orientation did *not* predict a vote for the Christian Democrats in Flanders. While discussing their research findings, they blame their operationalisation of cultural value orientations:

(...) the indicators for cultural conservatism were rather ‘though’ [sic] ones, referring to ethnocentrism and authoritarianism mostly. ‘Softer’ indicators, such as moral attitudes and child rearing practices, were lacking. (...) we might have observed different results, if we had been able to use more moderate indicators of cultural conservatism in our study. Future research should try to do so (1999: 113,5).

This recommendation suggests that moral traditionalism is somehow connected to a Christian worldview whereas authoritarianism is not. In this study we will assess to what extent there really is a difference between those cultural value orientations.

## **2. DISENTANGLING MORAL TRADITIONALISM AND AUTHORITARIANISM**

In the west, Christians make up the traditional part of society when it comes to moral issues like gender relations, sexuality, life, and death. Their traditional stance is, of course, deeply inspired by the word of God and socialisation in Christian institutions. These grant legitimacy to a masculine order and the fostering of God-given life. Therefore, for Christians it is generally beyond doubt that this order should be respected and that life should be protected against man-induced changes. Christian religiosity seems, in other words, to be ‘naturally’ tied to moral traditionalism. In the case of authoritarianism, on the other hand, such a ‘natural’ relationship with Christian doctrine appears to be lacking.

To find out whether this is empirically observable, we will assess the relationship between the extent to which one endorses the central axioms of Christianity – religious orthodoxy – and moral traditionalism and authoritarianism respectively. If moral traditionalism is related to Christian religiosity and authoritarianism is not, religious orthodoxy will logically only be related with the former.

We use data from the series *Cultural Changes in the Netherlands* - a longitudinal survey project that started in the seventies, which is executed by the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office. Since the Netherlands are highly secularised today, we use the 1975 file (Middendorp, s.d.) wherein Christians and non-Christians are about equally represented, allowing for meaningful statistical comparison. This survey is representative of the Dutch population aged sixteen to seventy-four. The total number of respondents is 1977, which is 77 percent of the initially selected.

The items used to measure *moral traditionalism* are questions or propositions concerning gender-relations, homosexuality, the family, and reproduction like: ‘a woman is more capable of bringing up small children than a man is’, ‘homosexuals should be firmly dealt with’ and ‘if a woman so wishes, it should be possible for her to have an abortion’. Principal component analysis reveals a first factor with high loadings for all items, which explains 29 percent of the variance. The items form a good scale: Cronbach’s alfa is 0.76.<sup>1</sup>

*Authoritarianism* is measured using seven Likert-items that belong to the F-scale available in the file. These are questions or propositions as: ‘there are two sorts of people: the strong and the weak’, ‘most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked and feeble-minded people’, and ‘what we need are fewer laws and institutions and more courageous, tireless, devoted leaders whom people can trust’. Principal component analysis yields a first factor which explains 33 percent of the variance. The reliability of the scale is sufficient: Cronbach’s alfa is 0.66.<sup>2</sup>

*Religious orthodoxy* is constructed with eight items used for the same purpose by Middendorp (1991). It contains questions like: ‘do you believe in heaven’, ‘do you believe in eternal life’ and ‘do you regard the bible as the word of God’. Principal component analysis yields a first factor explaining 50 percent of the variance. With a Cronbach’s alfa of 0.83, the scale is good.

Table 1 represents the findings of the zero order-correlation analyses of *moral traditionalism* and *authoritarianism* with *religious orthodoxy*.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix for details – the translations from Dutch are adopted from Middendorp (1991). All items are standardised. Only respondents with less than three ‘missing values’ on these items are assigned a score on this scale. All this applies to all other scales as well.

<sup>2</sup> The scales for *moral conservatism* and *authoritarianism* can be constructed separately in a meaningful way, because confirmatory factor analysis indicates that a model in which their respective items are explained by two latent factors fits the data better than a model in which only one latent factor is specified. Details are available from the authors upon request.

**Table 1: Zero order-correlations of moral traditionalism and authoritarianism with religious orthodoxy**

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Religious orthodoxy</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>p</i>
Authoritarianism	-0.03	963	0.420
Moral traditionalism	0.31	952	< 0.001

Despite the large random sample there is no significant correlation between *authoritarianism* and *religious orthodoxy* whatsoever. The positive correlation between moral traditionalism and *religious orthodoxy* is, on the contrary, significant and rather strong. This clearly indicates that a Christian worldview is connected to moral traditionalism, but not to authoritarianism.

Consequently, another question arises: how is it possible that two scales that are strongly correlated – being the main argument in many studies to lump them together in some sort of cultural conservatism scale – differ to such an extent in their correlation with a measure of religious orthodoxy? Their different relationship with religious orthodoxy suggests that the well-established strong correlation between the two value orientations may be mainly caused by a convergence at the other end of the ideological spectrum – a convergence between non-traditionalism and non-authoritarianism. This is based on the following considerations.

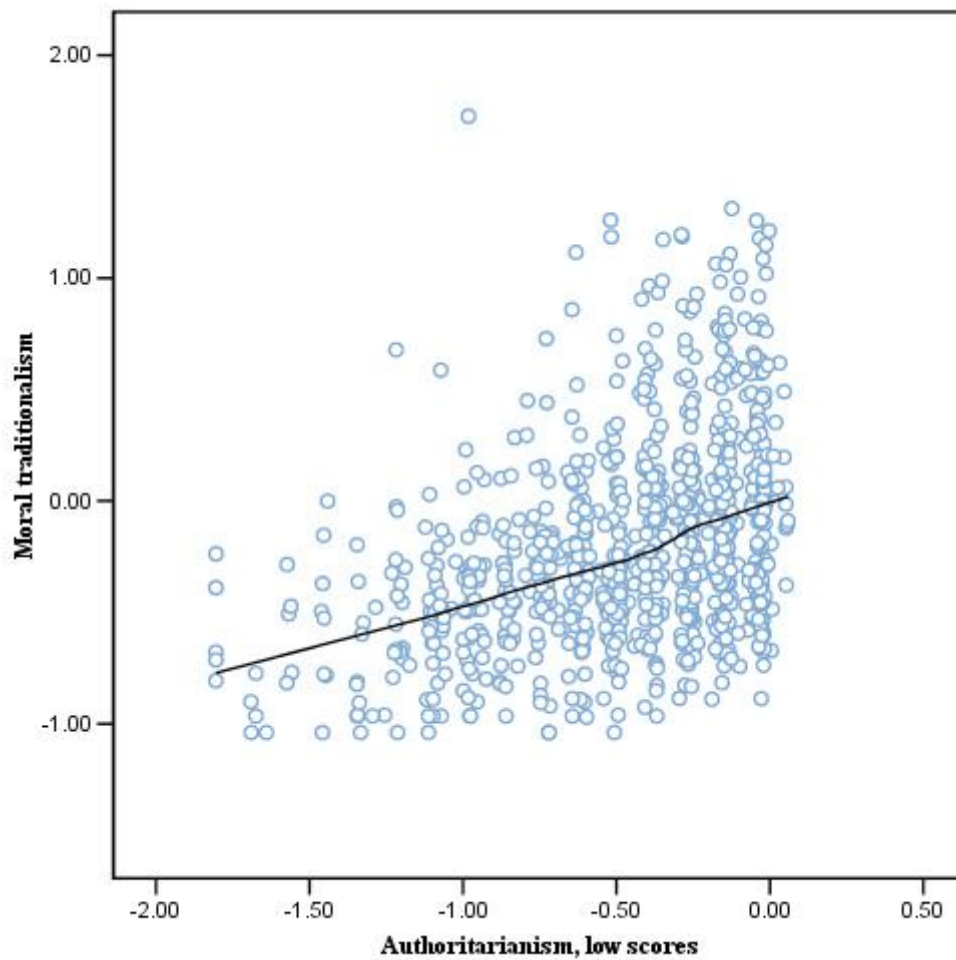
An individual strongly attached to individual freedom logically considers traditional moral values equally oppressive as authoritarianism: both imply the oppression of individual self-realisation. S/he will therefore reject them and adhere to their antipoles: non-traditional moral values and non-authoritarianism. Therefore a considerably linear correlation is to be expected at these sides of the value orientations. However, moral traditionalism does not necessarily correlate equally strongly with authoritarianism. Although both imply the restriction of individual freedom, the findings mentioned above indicate these orientations have different backgrounds. Whereas moral traditionalism is founded on legitimacy, because it is religiously inspired, authoritarianism has to do with coercion. Adhering to traditional ideas concerning gender-relations, homosexuality, the family, and life and death stemming from one's Christian notion of the good life seems to differ from a strong attachment to a rigid and coercive social order.

To assess these notions we split *authoritarianism* into an authoritarian and non-authoritarian half and correlate both with *moral traditionalism*. The division of

*authoritarianism* is based on the median, yielding equal sized groups allowing comparison.<sup>3</sup> These subpopulations with respectively low and high scores consist of 936 respondents each.

The graphics of the correlations of both halves with *moral traditionalism* (figure 1 and 2) are clear.

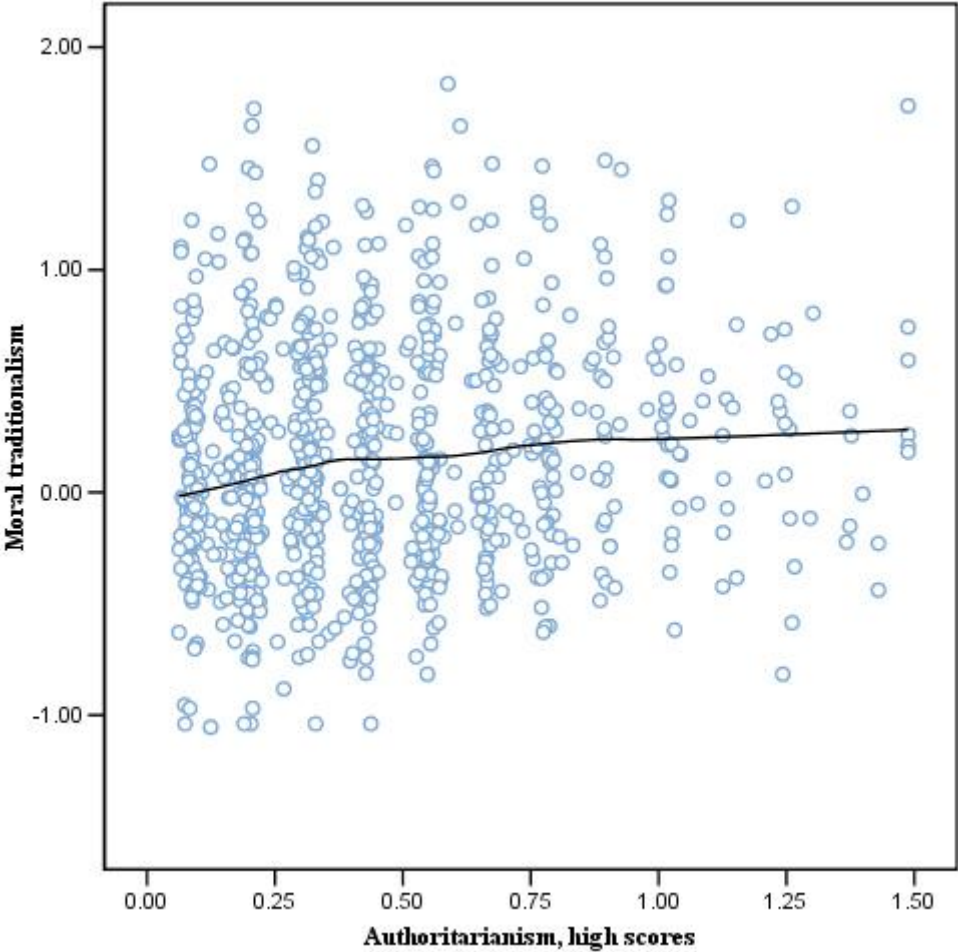
**Figure 1: Correlation between moral traditionalism and the first half of authoritarianism, N = 910**



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<sup>3</sup> Other criteria that can be used to split authoritarianism yield approximately the same results, since authoritarianism has a normal distribution.

**Figure 2: Correlation between moral traditionalism and the second half of authoritarianism, N = 881**



The scatter plots and the lowess-lines drawn in them, which give an estimate of the regression function, indicate a stronger positive linear correlation of *moral traditionalism* with *authoritarianism* in the group with low scores on *authoritarianism* than in the group with high scores.<sup>4</sup> In order to make the correlations of both subpopulations comparable, we quantified their strengths. The relevant data are shown in table 2.

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<sup>4</sup> Since a lowess-line is never *exactly* linear – even when the regression function itself is linear – the almost straight line in the figure forms strong evidence for the existence of a linear correlation.

**Table 2: Zero order-correlations between moral traditionalism and different parts of authoritarianism**

<i>Scale</i>	Moral traditionalism	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Authoritarianism	0.42***	1792	0.175
Authoritarianism, low scores	0.40***	910	0.157
Authoritarianism, high scores	0.14***	881	0.018

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The positive correlation of *moral traditionalism* with the non-authoritarian half of *authoritarianism* is rather strong – almost as strong as with the entire authoritarianism scale. The correlation with the second, authoritarian, half is substantially weaker. The explained variance at the authoritarian half is almost nine times smaller than at the non-authoritarian half ( $p < 0.001$ ).<sup>5</sup> Part of the correlation may have disappeared only because of the splitting of *authoritarianism*, but the difference between the halves is so large that this cannot be the only reason for the difference. The correlation with *moral traditionalism* is thus to be attributed almost completely to the non-authoritarian side of *authoritarianism*. This means that – in spite of the high correlation between *moral traditionalism* and *authoritarianism* – these two dimensions can be distinguished empirically.

### 3. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN MORAL TRADITIONALISM AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Problems of interpretation arising in studies on voting behaviour if the two value orientations are not distinguished, have lead us to the assessments presented above. Now we know that moral traditionalism and authoritarianism can be distinguished empirically, the question remains: do these value orientations differ in their implications for voting behaviour?

De Witte en Billiet (1999) expected that moral traditionalism – their ‘soft’ indicators – would lead to a vote for the Christian Democrats. Our finding that a *Christian* worldview relates to a more traditional stand on moral issues seems to support this suggestion. Since, in

<sup>5</sup> Of course, a similar analysis can be conducted by splitting *moral traditionalism* instead of *authoritarianism*. This yields comparable results: the correlation between the non-traditional half and *authoritarianism* is 0.312 ( $p < 0.01$ ), and 0.196 ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the traditional half and *authoritarianism*. The explained variance at the traditional half is more than 2.5 times lower then at the non-traditional half ( $p < 0.01$ ).

general, conservatism leads to voting for a right-wing party, it is plausible that moral traditionalism leads to a vote for a *Christian* right-wing party. Authoritarians, on the other hand, are expected to vote for a *secular* right-wing party. If a highly legitimate guideline for the arrangement of society – such as Christian faith – is missing, force or coercion may be considered the only option to ‘maintain’ social order. Since secular right-wing parties are most oppressive when it comes to cultural issues (Ignazi, 2003), these seem the ‘natural’ allies of authoritarians.

We will assess these expectations by means of logistic regression analyses in which the dependent variable is a dichotomy of Christian right-wing parties versus secular right-wing parties – the former categorised as 2 and the latter as 1.<sup>6</sup> *Moral traditionalism*, *authoritarianism*, and *Christian identity* are included to find out how these variables relate to each other. *Christian identity* is measured as a standardized dichotomy based on self-identification in which both religious groups – Protestants and Roman-Catholics – are categorised as Christians (51,9%), and all other categories as non-Christians (47,4%). Besides, we include *economic conservatism* to control for class effects.<sup>7</sup>

*Economic conservatism* is measured with a scale of nine Likert-items. It contains propositions and questions like: ‘the government should oblige employers to share in the profits to the same degree that shareholders do’, ‘government tax on higher incomes should be [strongly increased....strongly decreased]’ and ‘the government should make many more grants available to children of less well-to-do-families’. Principal component analysis reveals a first factor explaining 48 percent of the variance. Cronbach’s alfa being 0.86, the items form a reliable scale.

Table 3 shows the results of the analyses.

In a first model, only the control variables are included. Not surprisingly, a *Christian identity* leads to a vote for Christian right-wing parties. In a second model, *moral traditionalism* is added, reducing the effect of *Christian identity*. So, in concurrence with the findings presented above, the original effect of *Christian identity* is partly mediated by *moral traditionalism*, which has the strongest effect. In agreement with our expectations, *moral traditionalism* inspires a vote for Christian right-wing parties too. Whereas the inclusion of *authoritarianism* in a third model virtually does not alter the effect of *Christian identity*, it leads to an increase in the effect of *moral traditionalism*. As expected *authoritarianism* has a

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<sup>6</sup> Christian Democrats (CDA) and orthodox Christian parties (ARP, CHU, GPV, KVP, SGP, and RKPN) are coded as right-wing Christian parties (2), and the conservatives (VVD) as secular right-wing party (1).

<sup>7</sup> Christian right-wing parties generally propagate more economic redistribution by the state than secular right-wing parties. By controlling for *economic conservatism* the ‘pure’ cultural effects we aim to demonstrate remain.

negative effect, indicating that it underlies a vote for secular right-wing parties. These findings indicate that moral traditionalism and authoritarianism have different implications when it comes to voting.

**Table 3: Logistic regression analyses of voting for a Christian right-wing party (2) versus voting for a secular right-wing party (1). N = 765**

	<i>B (S.E.)</i>		<i>B (S.E.)</i>		<i>B (S.E.)</i>	
Constant	0.312**	(0.111)	0.331**	(0.113)	0.357**	(0.114)
Economic conservatism	-0.809***	(0.148)	-0.926***	(0.155)	-0.982 ***	(0.159)
Christian identity (no = ref)	1.339***	(0.103)	1.182***	(0.106)	1.198***	(0.108)
Moral traditionalism			1.213***	(0.211)	1.348***	(0.223)
Authoritarianism					-0.419*	(0.192)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	0.413		0.457		0.463	

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The fact that moral traditionalism appears to be derived from Christian religiosity, while authoritarianism does not appear to be, suggests that these value orientations might also differ in *salience* between Christians and non-Christians. For Christians, moral traditionalism is likely to be highly salient, since it is based on their comprehensive system of belief, whereas – because of the lack of such an ideological basis – no significance to non-Christians is to be expected. Authoritarianism, on the other hand, is probably only salient for non-Christians. For them, the proper arrangement of society can no longer be grounded on a clear encompassing grand narrative. Therefore, the maintenance of social order and the disapproval or approval of the cultural diversity that has arisen due to this lack of comprehensive guidelines is likely to be a major controversy. Since this conflict largely coincides with the distinction between authoritarianism and non-authoritarianism, these value orientations are expected to be of importance for non-Christians.

This difference in importance is likely to be reflected in differences in voting behaviour, since the extent to which value orientations are salient finds expression in the extent to which people base their voting behaviour on these value orientations. Because traditionalism and authoritarianism are related to the right wing of the political spectrum (Ignazi, 2003), moral traditionalism probably is of more importance for right-wing voting behaviour for the Christians than for non-Christians, while for authoritarianism the opposite is expected to be true.

In a final analysis we assess this idea by splitting the file in Christians and non-Christians and incorporating the supposed relations in path models. The dependent variable in these models is *right-wing voting behaviour*, measured by respondents' party political preference. Therefore we use the question for which party the respondent would vote if there were to be elections for parliament at the moment of the survey. We placed the parties on a continuum by scaling the question for party political preference with the left-right self-identification of the respondents – which is a five-point scale with a range from 'very left' to 'very right'.

In order to control for other effects, we include variables in our models that have been demonstrated to be theoretically and empirically important for voting behaviour (compare Houtman, 2003; Middendorp, 1991), as far as this is possible with our dataset. Besides the three scales mentioned above, *income* and *level of education* are incorporated as explanatory variables, and *gender* as control variable.<sup>8</sup> *Income* is measured as standardised gross family income. *Level of education* is measured at quasi-interval level by combining several questions into one standardised variable. This variable measures the highest level of education completed, whereby seven levels of education are distinguished.

To assess our expectations we execute a conditional test with a multi-sample analysis (see Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993: 51-84). We therefore construct identical path models for the Christian and non-Christian subpopulation. In this analysis *economic conservatism*, *moral traditionalism*, and *authoritarianism* are modelled as endogenous explanatory variables. *Gender*, *level of education*, and *income* are modelled as exogenous variables. *Right-wing voting behaviour* functions as an endogenous dependent variable.

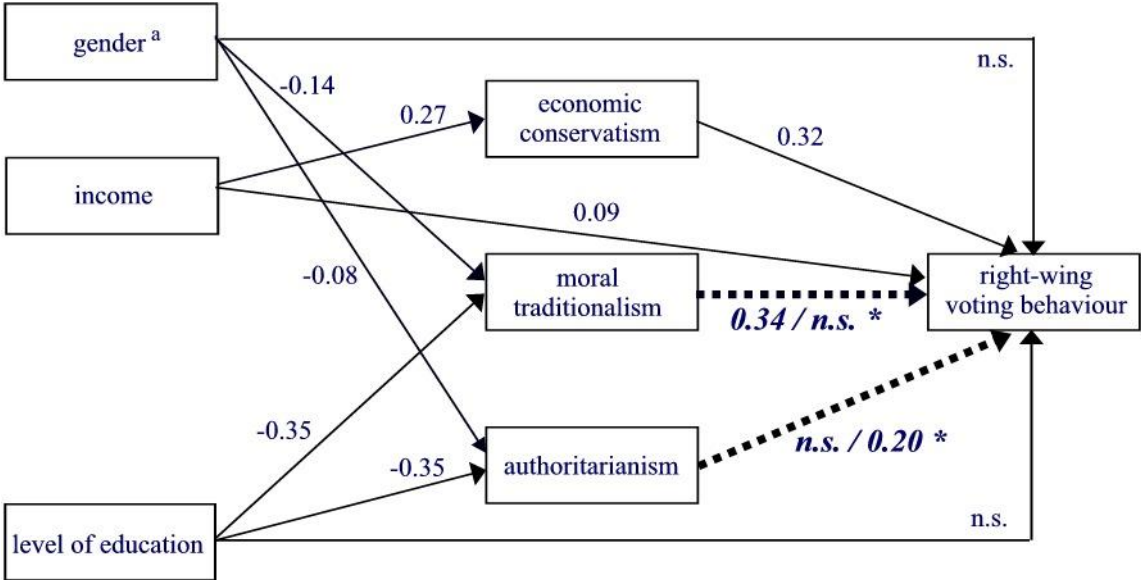
Because several variables are of ordinal level of measurement and do not satisfy the condition of a multivariate normal distribution, both models are fitted to an asymptotic covariance matrix. By this, the standard errors are estimated with the 'Weighted Least Squares' (WLS) method (Jöreskog et al, 1999: 181). The parameters of these models are estimated with the 'Maximum Likelihood' (ML) method. In this we follow Jöreskog et al., who conclude this yields more likely results than the WLS method, which is commonly used for these kind of models, if smaller samples are fitted to an asymptotic covariance matrix (1991: 190). Because of the ML method and multi-sample analysis, we test the fit of the models with the covariance matrix with the 'Satorra-Bentler Scaled  $\chi^2$ '. This is necessary because the regular  $\chi^2$  does not take into account the non-multivariate normal distribution of

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<sup>8</sup> Men are coded as 1, women are coded as 2.

the variables in our models. Besides this, the ‘Satorra-Bentler Scaled  $\chi^2$ ’ is recommended for a multi-sample analysis (Jöreskog et al, 1999: 180).

**Figure 3: Path model for both categories, N = 619 / 509\***



\* In the Christian and the non-Christian category respectively.

<sup>a</sup> Men are coded as 1, women are coded as 2.

All coefficients depicted are significant at five percent level, unless indicated otherwise (n.s.)

In a multi-sample analysis, two models are considered as nested. A first  $\chi^2$  – test verifies if both models with an identical parameterisation, *and* equal estimated values of the parameters fit the data. The second test is executed with several *different* estimated parameters *per* model. This means that the values of some parameters are considered to differ between the Christian and non-Christian subpopulation. In our case these are the parameters of the correlations between *moral traditionalism* and *right-wing voting behaviour* and between *authoritarianism* and *right-wing voting behaviour*. The conditional test shows that the second model fits the data significantly better than the first model.<sup>9</sup> This means that the effect of *moral traditionalism* and *authoritarianism* on *right-wing voting behaviour* differs between the Christian and non-Christian subpopulation. Figure 3 shows both models. All

<sup>9</sup> The  $\chi^2$  of the model with unidentical values for some parameters needs to be extracted from the  $\chi^2$  of the model with identical values for all parameters. In this case: 64.322 – 51.150 = 13.172 Taking the degrees of freedom of both models into account, it is possible to verify the significance of this difference. With a difference of two degrees of freedom, the difference in  $\chi^2$  should at least be 5.991 to be significant at five percent level. This condition is satisfied.

paths incorporated in both models are depicted. The parameters that differ by subpopulation are depicted as dotted lines.<sup>10</sup> All relevant data are shown in table 4.

**Table 4: The influence of the cultural value orientations on right-wing voting behaviour**

	Coefficient	Standard error
<i>Christians (N = 619)</i>		
Moral traditionalism	0.336*	0.114
Authoritarianism	-0.072	0.051
R <sup>2</sup> voting behaviour	0.255	
<i>Non-Christians (N = 509)</i>		
Moral traditionalism	0.072	0.0485
Authoritarianism	0.196*	0.0505
R <sup>2</sup> voting behaviour	0.198	

\*  $p < 0.05$

The effect of *moral traditionalism* on *right-wing voting behaviour* is, as expected, stronger in the Christian subpopulation (0.34;  $p < 0.05$ ) than in the non-Christian subpopulation (0.07; n.s.). A one-sided test shows this difference is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The influence of *authoritarianism* on *right-wing voting behaviour* is smaller in the Christian subpopulation (-0.07; n.s.) than in the non-Christian subpopulation (0.20;  $p < 0.05$ ). According to a one-sided test, this difference is significant as well ( $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that for Christians moral traditionalism is indeed more salient than for non-Christians, while for authoritarianism it is the other way around.

#### 4. SECULARISATION AND THE MALADIES OF MODERNITY

Our analyses indicate that a bi-dimensional structure in cultural value orientations exists. Moral traditionalism can be distinguished empirically from authoritarianism, and these value orientations differ in their implications for voting behaviour. These findings seem in line with theories on cultural modernisation.

Although many different concepts are used to describe the process of cultural transformation that took place in the west during the last decades – ranging from

<sup>10</sup> In the model the error covariances between the endogenous explanatory variables *economic conservatism*, *authoritarianism*, and *moral conservatism* are set free. For clarity's sake this is not depicted in this figure.

‘postmodernisation’ (Bauman, 1995) and ‘reflexive modernisation’ (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1991) to ‘detraditionalisation’ (Heelas, Lash & Morris, 1996) – these basically denote the same: a transition from a society in which value orientations and identities that are considered highly legitimate are ‘pre-given’ by grand narratives, to a late modern society in which value orientations and identities lose their traditional legitimacy and meaning. As Christian religiosity traditionally has been the most comprehensive grand narrative, this process of cultural modernisation is perceptible most clearly as the process of secularisation.

Traditionally the way one should think, feel, and act was self-evidently diverted from one's Christian faith. Due to the process of secularisation, the proportion of people that do not derive their identity, meaning, and the accessory value orientations from a comprehensive ideology – the non-Christians – has increased. The way they handle cultural differences is based on reflection on society and ‘the self’.

Those who lack Christian guidelines for thinking, feeling, and acting, experience many contradictory values without hierarchy or arrangement. For them, the existing social institutions have lost their once taken for granted legitimacy (see Berger et al., 1974, who refer to this as the ‘homeless mind’). This cultural condition forms the breeding ground upon which anomie and alienation, the two ‘maladies of modernity’ (Zijderveld, 2000: 198-201), develop.

These maladies share as a common feature that social institutions are no longer experienced as self-evident and legitimate. Apart from this common feature they differ considerably. Whereas, in the sociology of culture’s sense, anomie stands for discontent with the absence of a meaningful social order, alienation stands for the desire to free oneself from an overbearing meaningless institutional order, which is considered a hindrance (Zijderveld, 2000). Feelings of anomie therefore go hand in hand with an authoritarian stand, as has been demonstrated time and again (see e.g. Lutterman & Middleton, 1970; McDill, 1961; Middendorp, 1991; Srole, 1956), while the anti-authoritarian counterculture from the sixties and seventies, as well as the new social movements which sprang from it, are inspired by feelings of alienation (Houtman, 2004; Roszak, 1968; Zijderveld, 1970).

Our research findings can be interpreted in the light of this theoretical framework. First, the finding that religious orthodoxy relates to moral traditionalism, whereas it does not relate to authoritarianism seems logical. Only moral traditionalism appears to be derived from the ‘pre-given’ grand narrative of Christianity, of which religious orthodoxy is a clear expression.

Second, precisely because it is derived from this encompassing ideology, moral traditionalism is based on legitimacy. Authoritarianism, on the other hand, stems from the lack of certainty, reassurance, and a framework for interpretation that has arisen due to the process of secularisation. Because of this difference in their backgrounds, it can be understood that these value orientations hardly correlate at their traditional and authoritarian sides – our second finding.

Third, focusing on the right side of the political spectrum where the differences come to light, we have demonstrated that moral traditionalism leads to a vote for a Christian right-wing party, whereas authoritarianism underlies the vote for a secular right-wing party. Since the Christian guidelines for thinking, feeling, and acting on which moral traditionalism is based are a central element of Christian parties, the former relationship can be interpreted. The latter relationship seems to be related to the connection between anomie and authoritarianism. Those lacking clear-cut guidelines and longing for social order – the anomic – are authoritarian. They turn to secular right-wing parties, because such parties propose measures of coercion and law and order to deal with cultural diversity and problems of social order most strongly.

Fourth, moral traditionalism is important for Christians and not for non-Christians, most likely because only for the former this value orientation is religiously ‘pre-given’. Authoritarianism, on the contrary, is merely salient for non-Christians. Apparently since they are susceptible to the maladies of modernity, the conflict on the rigidity of social order and approval of cultural diversity that is related to authoritarianism appears to be important for them.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The suggestion that moral traditionalism is somehow connected to a Christian worldview while authoritarianism is not, underlying our study, has proven to be sound. Since our research findings show this clearly, one wonders why this insight has not been given its due in political sociology thus far. The reason might be attributable to the adherence to progressive values by most social scientists (cf. Ladd & Lipset, 1975). As mentioned, in their vision there is no principal distinction between moral traditionalism and authoritarianism: both are considered curtailing. Therefore, the correlation between the values they adhere to themselves might be considered self-evident. Consequently, they do not recognise that something different occurs at the other end of the spectrum.

If the distinction between moral traditionalism and authoritarianism will be taken into account in empirical assessments, this will probably lead to less ‘unexpected’ research findings such as those of De Witte & Billiet (1999). Besides, conclusions like: ‘religion has by far the strongest effect on the libertarian-authoritarian vote’ (Middendorp, 1989: 289), would probably be a thing of the past. The libertarian-authoritarian vote in this study was, by now unsurprisingly, based on a scale partly consisting of moral traditional items.

Furthermore, the common practice of lumping authoritarianism and moral traditionalism together probably underestimates voting on the basis of cultural value orientations in general, since the growing proportion of non-Christians due to the process of secularisation will most likely have led to a declining salience of moral traditionalism and an increasing salience of authoritarianism. Studies aiming to show the rising salience of cultural voting behaviour (Achterberg, 2006; Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Houtman, 2001), would probably have made their point more clearly if these had taken the distinction between moral traditionalism and authoritarianism into account.

Since western societies have become more secular in recent decades, the number of people who lack clear ‘pre-given’ guidelines from Christianity has been growing. Taking our research findings into account, this might be the driving force of the rising salience of new left-wing parties and new right-wing parties in recent decades. After all, the non-authoritarian and authoritarian stances towards cultural issues converge strongly with the new left and new right political agenda respectively. The analyses of De Witte and Billiet underpin this suggestion. Authoritarianism did not predict a vote for the Christian Democrats: it had by far the strongest negative effect on voting for a new left-wing party and the strongest positive effect on voting for a new right-wing party.

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## APPENDIX

**Table 5: Factor loadings of the moral traditionalism items**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Homosexuals should be firmly dealt with	0.76
Do you think that homosexuals should be left as free as possible to live their own life or do you feel that this should be opposed as much as possible? [Leave as free as possible...oppose as much as possible]	0.70
Homosexuals should be eradicated from society	0.68
In a firm it is unnatural when women hold a position of authority over men	0.62
It is not as important for a girl to get a good schooling as it is for a boy	0.53
A married couple decides on principle not to have children although there are no medical objections. Can you approve of such a point of view or do you think it unacceptable?	0.53
A woman is more capable of bringing up small children than a man is	0.49
After all boys can be educated more freely than girls	0.49
To check the population expansion. birth-control should be strongly advocated	0.38
Are there circumstances in which abortion should be allowed?	0.34
If a woman so wishes. it should be possible for her to have an abortion	0.34
Suppose a physician is able to put someone out of his/her misery at his/her own request by giving him/her an injection. What do you think he should do? [Give the injection...don't give the injection]*	0.34
Eigenvalues	3.45
$R^2$	0.29
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.76

\* Authors' translation from Dutch codebook of datafile.

**Table 6: Factor loadings of the authoritarianism (F-scale) items**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Most people fall short of your expectations when you get to know them better	0.65
Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral crooked and feeble-minded people	0.61
There are two sorts of people: the strong and the weak	0.59
Young people often revolt against social institutions that they find unjust; however when they get older, they ought to become resigned to reality	0.57
What we need are fewer laws and institutions and more courageous tireless devoted leaders whom people can trust	0.56
Ill-mannered people cannot expect decent people to want to mix with them	0.55
Nowadays more and more people are prying into matters that should remain personal and private	0.50
Eigenvalue	2.33
$R^2$	0.33
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.66

**Table 7: Factor loadings of the religious orthodoxy items**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Do you believe in heaven?	0.82
In the devil?	0.81
In hell?	0.79
Do you believe in eternal life?	0.72
Did Adam and Eve exist?	0.69
Do you regard the bible as the word of God?	0.65
Do you think that praying has some meaning?	0.61
Do you believe in purgatory?	0.49
Eigenvalue	3.96
$R^2$	0.50
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.83

**Table 8: Factor loadings of the economic conservatism items**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Are you in favour or against the government taking radical measures to reduce the differences in ownership of property?	0.79
Are you in favour or against the government taking radical measures to reduce the differences in income levels?	0.78
The government should oblige employers to share in the profits to the same degree that shareholders do	0.73
Government tax on higher incomes should be [strongly increased...strongly decreased]	0.71
The government should allow for the minimum income to rise more sharply than other income-levels	0.70
Do you want the differences between higher and lower incomes to increase, decrease or remain as it is?	0.68
There are individuals who own a lot and others who own very little. Do you want these differences in the ownership of property to become larger, to become smaller or to remain as it is?	0.64
Surtax should be [strongly increased...strongly decreased]	0.61
The government should make many more grants available to children of less well-to-do-families	0.60
Eigenvalue	4.31
$R^2$	0.48
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.86