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The entanglement of religion and politics in Europe: How and why religious and political worldviews merge in times of uncertainty

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Abstract

The article discusses the relationship between religious and political worldviews and argues that both types of phenomena share three features: they offer (a) robust structures of meaning (nomizations), (b) clear moral guidelines (Manichaeism), and (c) a prophecy of the future (eschatologies). Using data from the European Values Study of 2008/2009 (n = 29,995) we found that Catholic and Orthodox respondents reveal higher amounts of conservatism than the average respondent whereas Protestants are slightly more liberal and socialist. Orthodox individuals had the highest affinity for fascist worldviews. Multilevel logit regression models further show that especially fascist and conservative worldviews are based on nomizations, Manichaeism, and eschatological beliefs. The same accounts for all religious worldviews with the lowest effects found for Protestants and the highest for European Muslims. Analyses also show that the three basic elements of worldviews are more relevant for individuals living in countries with greater economic deprivation and inequality.

Over the last decade, a significant social, political, and economic dynamic of disintegration has affected Europe, set into motion by the 2007/2008 financial crisis and a dramatic increase in armed conflicts in neighboring regions such as Ukraine, the Middle East, and North Africa (see HIIK 2018). While the political tensions in Ukraine led to enormous changes in the economic conditions and life chances of European citizens (see Shambaugh et al. 2012), governmental oppression in the Middle East and North Africa triggered large waves of migration, which in turn were exploited by right-wing anti-European movements. These developments changed not only the established social structures of European societies, but also the political power relations within and between European states and led to the increasing vulnerability of the European Union as an integration project.

Upon close inspection, the protests accompanying these developments relate less to the redistribution of material resources and matters of social inequality than to *ideological* concerns: they reflect worldview conflicts, the most apparent being the clash between a "cosmopolitan" center and a "counter-cosmopolitanism" periphery (Rensmann and Schoeps 2010; Hampton 2011; Hamed Hosseini 2013). In other words, collective actors have been engaging in contentious politics on the basis of diverging (socially shared but individually manifested) "schemes of interpretation" (Schütz 1944: 502) that lent meaning to these particular social crises. As such, religious schemes of interpretation seem to have once again gained importance, as the discourse about the alleged "Islamization" of Europe and violent assaults by right-wing movements purportedly defending "the Christian occident" on the one hand, and radical Islamic groups waging war against "the infidels" on the other hand, indicate (see Juergensmeyer 2013; Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014).

The religious charge of political conflicts is striking here. Religious semantics seem to be used to draw group boundaries between what are actually diverging political camps. The *conflation* of religious and political schemes of interpretation is a specific type of a broader set of analytically distinguishable relationships between the religious and political sphere, others being *antagonism* and *coexistence*.[1]

The first type, *conflation*, is at the center of this article, which addresses the ideological structure that underlies religious and political worldviews. This analysis seeks to provide deeper insight into how people employ religious and political worldviews as mental resources in order to (a) understand and (b) evaluate the world they live in as well as to (c) imagine a feared or desired future. Rather than excluding each other, these schemes of orientation support each other

[1] Brubaker (2012) similarly argued that, regarding the relationship between nationalism and religion(s), four constellations can empirically be observed: both spheres in some cases are antagonistic to each other, in others complementary, coexisting, or totally overlapping.

and thereby link what Schütz and Luckmann (2003 [1973/84]) dubbed "provinces of meaning." More precisely, we posit that religious and political perspectives are connected through at least one of three general elements of belief systems: (a) to offer robust and encompassing *cognitive* world interpretations ("nomization"), (b) to provide *moral* guidelines of "good" and "evil" ("manichaeism"), and (c) to offer *emotionally* charged prophecies of the future ("eschatologies").

Following that discussion, we explicate our empirical investigation into whether such linkages, indeed, exist, and more precisely adjudicate which function underlies which specific worldview. To that end, we analyse the European Value Study data of the survey-wave 2008/2009. Because these data precede the most recent events being addressed in the public debate, they offer proof that what appears to be a new development was already taking shape many years ago. Before digging deeper into the theoretical and empirical analysis regarding the conflation of political and religious worldviews, we commence by specifying our underlying conceptual notion of "worldviews."

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The term "worldview" in the sense of "*weltanschauung*," or a general notion of "ideology"[2]—quite popular in the early days of the sociology of knowledge—has become somewhat out-dated in today's social science terminology. Since 1989, historical developments in Europe have made the term seemingly superfluous. Instead of integrated and systematic knowledge structures, the inhabitants of the "post-ideological" world society allegedly carry rather diffuse and fragmented mind-sets.

If this assessment was ever valid, the still-young 21st century seems to have proven that the underlying development was at least only temporary. Given the recent resurrection of ideologies around the globe, Daniel Bell's verdict about "the end of ideology" (Bell 1960) seems to have been made too rashly. The success stories of the New Right and Jihadism but also of a more fundamental type of economic Neoliberalism seem to indicate that we are living in a world that is everything but "post-ideological" and that can hardly be characterized as inhabited by actors with only fragmented or pluralistic mind-sets (see Barber 1995; Bauer 2018).

[2] The term "worldview" as we use it here resembles the descriptive connotation of the term "ideology" (for an overview see Eagleton 1994) and "*weltanschauung*" as it was used in the early literature of the sociology of knowledge. For a meta-theoretical discussion of the concept of "*weltanschauung*" for the humanities and social sciences, see Mannheim's *On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung* (1952). We use the term "worldview" or "*weltanschauung*" in this paper because we believe it is more useful to reserve the concept of "ideology" for phenomena fitting the narrower Marxian notion.

The present paper is intended as a theoretical reflection and an empirical analysis of the underlying dynamics justifying those doubts about the disappearance of coherent and manifest *weltanschauungen*. To do so, we use a sociology-of-knowledge-approach that is based on a specific concept of "worldviews." We define the latter, following Mannheim (1997 [1980]: 91), as "a structurally linked set of experiential contextures which makes up the common footing upon which a multiplicity of individuals together learn from life and enter into it." This definition implies four general characteristics:

> (1) Worldviews are considered *pre-theoretical* forms of experience, perceptions, evaluations of reality, and of orientations of action. Mannheim (2002 [1929]: 2f.) suggested that individuals are born into an already-ordered world that they experience both cognitively and emotionally. In this regard, the sociology-of-knowledge approach diverges from the one social-psychology often applies, which mainly refers to the cognitive dimension (see Koltko-Rivera 2004: 25). Further, worldviews, as structures of meanings and evaluations, are encompassing. They comprise different spheres of life and thus are "ordered universes" (Klass 1995).
>
> (2) For Mannheim (2002 [1929]: 50), worldviews are not idiosyncratic but *socially shared* and relate to pre-existing systems of symbols (see von Bredow and Noetzel 2009: 149). Schütz and Luckmann (2003 [1973/84]: 29-32) considered such "sharing" of worldviews feasible only in "the world within our reach," the everyday life. Here, we "naturally" meet other human beings who supposedly share our points of view and who seemingly interact within the same cultural framework. While the underlying "facticity of the other" is the basis for all collective forms of knowledge, similar social contexts constitute the basis of specific shared worldviews (see Schütz and Luckmann 2003 [1973/84]: 35).[3]
>
> (3) Worldviews are relatively *robust*. Schütz and Luckmann (2003 [1973/84]) hold that situational interpretations as such must be considered quite steady given that we usually process situational information automatically when we are familiar with the situation. In some cases, however, actors observe inconsistencies regarding situational interaction orders. They then are eager to solve such incongruities (see also Garfinkel 1967; Goffmann 1974). Worldviews transcend situational interpretation orders and offer more fundamental schemes of orientation; hence, they are less often thwarted by situational anomalies. To some extent, they are even able to resist reality (see Johnson et al. 2011: 140). Worldviews thus are robust but, as Schütz and Luckmann suggested (2003

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[3] In a similar but less developed form, Mannheim construed the social embeddedness of subjective worldviews with the following words: "It is the direction of this will to change or maintain, of this collective activity, which produces the guiding thread for the emergence of their [the group's] problems, their concepts, and their forms of thought" (2002 [1929]: 3).

[1973/84]: 216) in accordance with Scheler (1960), not necessarily logically congruent. The need to solve contradictions between interpretative elements of worldviews emerges only when situational conditions force the reconsideration of previously irrelevant elements (Schütz and Luckmann 2003 [1973/84]: 217). This might be the case when alternative worldviews gain influence.

(4) Worldviews often have *behavioral consequences* (see Koltko-Rivera 2004: 22); they are not merely "interpretations" of the world but also entail a conative dimension. Sometimes this includes violent forms of action. Studies in social psychology have shown that especially when individuals perceive uncertainty as emotionally threatening, they start to defend their worldviews more aggressively (see van den Bos et al. 2006; Hogg et al. 2013; Schmeichel and Martens 2005).

Following Mannheim (2002 [1929]: 104), we differentiate among four different types of political worldviews ("*weltanschauungen*"): conservatism, [4] liberalism, socialism, and fascism. We will discuss the elements constituting each specific worldview in the section dealing with the operationalization of our concepts (see also Appendix A1).

The term "religion" is used in this paper in a rather ideological and less institutional connotation. Despite the controversial debate about the exact meaning of the term "religion" in the social sciences (McCutcheon 1995; Horii 2015), most authors agree that religion must be considered a multilevel phenomenon. The term refers to at least five dimensions: the experiential, the ritualistic, the ideological, the intellectual, and the consequential dimension (see Glock 1954, 1962; Glock and Stark 1965: 19). Our paper thus deals only with a specific fraction of the phenomenon, the ideological one. Glock (1962: 99) defined this dimension as a "set of beliefs to which [a religion's] followers are expected to adhere."

Although we are well aware that the dimensions of "belonging" and "believing" might not always coincide (see Davie 1990; Lind 2003; Voas and Crockett 2005), we contend that denominations can be considered a proxy measure of different "sets of beliefs." The underlying supposition in this respect assumes that religious beliefs constitute a specific type of worldview (in accordance to Johnson et al. 2011: 139); religious worldviews are analytically distinguishable from political worldviews in so far as they include beliefs about the transcendental (see Berger 1967; Luckmann 1967; Luhmann 2002). Thus, they can be specified as schemes of understanding—life orientations that relate all spheres of everyday life to each other and to nature, the cosmos, and the transcendental, including the divine.

[4] In *Ideology and Utopia,* Mannheim (2002 [1929]) mentions two types of conservatism: "Bureaucratic Conservatism" and "Conservative Historicism." For the sake of lucidity, we confine our typology to one comprehensive form of conservatism.

THE BASIC FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEWS AND THEIR POLITICAL INTEGRABILITY

Having defined our basic concepts, we will now proceed with a theoretical analysis of the relationship between political and religious worldviews. The main question guiding the following pages is: on which grounds do political and religious worldviews join forces? To answer this question, we will approach the phenomenon from the angle of the sociology of religion. First, we will discuss what scholars consider the descriptive function of religious worldviews, namely their ability to offer a stable and all-encompassing *nomos* (i.e., a manifest structure of meaning). Secondly, religious worldviews are based on moral distinctions between "good" and "evil." The religions most prevalent in Europe—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism—all entail a certain notion of *sin,* which builds the basis for this binary evaluation scheme. As a third function of religion, we will describe the concept of *eschatology* (i.e. the utopian and/or dystopian prophecy of the destiny of humanity, a potential afterlife, or about eternity). The goal of this part of the paper is to establish the basic assumption that political worldviews, each in its own way, connects to one of those three functions and, by that, is connectible to religious ones. We will make use of the respective literature of sociological and political theory to argue this case.[5]

Nomizations: The Social Construction of Certainty

In *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), Berger argued that one of the main functions of religion is to offer a "nomos"; that is, a robust structure of meaning that explains not only social relations and society but also the relationship between humans and nature, the world and the cosmos, and this life and the next (see also Berger and Luckmann 2011 [1966]). In comparison to other rather diffuse *nomoi,* religious narratives have the advantage to legitimate and secure their construction of meaning by attributing sacral character to social institutions and roles. Existential questions, like how anomic events such as death, illness, and catastrophes can be understood, are answered by referring to trans-historical "truths."

Religious "truths" are continually confronted by rival interpretations of the world, both sacral and secular ones (see Berger 2001: 436). Each of the many worldviews fulfills the function of offering a commonly shared and comparatively

[5] Social psychological studies on worldviews (see e.g. Johnson et al. 2011: 143) point in a similar direction by differentiating among ontological/epistemological, axiological, and teleological components. Johnson et al. further mentioned a semiotic component—referring to symbols, gesture and language—and a praxeological component—referring to social norms and sanctions.

stable description of the world and a matching plausibility structure. While, in principle, an indefinite set of explanations and everyday life theories is available, only integrated worldviews offer a degree of certainty that is robust enough to withstand new knowledge and new empirical data.

The economic, social, and political dynamics of an increasingly changing world can compel people to navigate new, alternative, and different worldviews. Indeed, pluralism undermines absolute truths and can therefore be unsettling and threatening. This might, in turn, increase demand for clear and robust interpretations of the social in late modernity—a historical period characterized by accelerated social change (see Berger 2001; Rosa 2013). In such contexts, the convergence of political and religious worldviews can be a way to cope with uncertainty. Formerly differentiated "provinces of meaning" are integrated into a single *structure* of meaning (see Barber 1995). Considering the still-increasing rate of individual and cultural exchange, connected to a growing set of possibilities, a *conflation* of religious and political worldviews could, in the words of Luhmann (1977), "decrease contingency."

In the empirical part of the paper, we will analyze this relationship more closely by investigating whether high levels of conviction about one's own religious beliefs correlate with certain political worldviews. We expect that, in particular, political worldviews with a rather absolute and monistic concept of the world (like fascism and, to some extent, conservatism) compared to worldviews that highlight plurality (like socialism and liberalism) integrate with religious ones via the function we label—using Berger's (1967: 87) terminology—"nomization." The following hypotheses result from those considerations:

> Hypothesis 1a: Individuals expressing fascist worldviews are more likely to hold that there is only one true religion compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

> Hypothesis 1b: Individuals expressing conservative worldviews are more likely to hold that there is only one true religion compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

Manichaeism: The Fight of "Good" Against "Evil"

Thinkers of the structuralist school of the sociology of religion, such as Émile Durkheim (1954 [1912]) or Talcott Parsons (1973, 1974), highlighted the moralistic nature of religion. According to this line of thought, religious communities share a moral system based on a generalized set of values that facilitates social integration (Glock 1960; Gerard 1985).[6] Durkheim and Parsons

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[6] Glock, for example, formulated this relationship in the following way: "[...] religion serves

assumed that these structures are more important for relatively fragile societies. Inglehart and Norris (2004), for example, found that in societies in which people experience a secure social and political environment, religious values lose their importance while remaining influential in high-risk societies. However, it can be shown that value orientations, at least in Europe, are less influenced by theological knowledge than by practicing religion (Schnabel and Groetsch 2015).

An important basis for religious moral beliefs and respective ethics is the notion of "sin" (see Weber 1993 [1921]: 43ff.). This conceptualization organizes not only the inner drives of an individual but also the phenomenological world by using the categories of "good" and "evil." As such, it offers a clear-cut evaluation system. In cases where religious movements intervene with worldly affairs it is often by using such narratives of "sin" (see Sherkat and Ellison 1997; Bader and Froese 2005).

From the perspective of Carl Schmitt's political theory (see Schmitt 2008 [1933])—a position that has most prominently been adapted by Chantall Mouffe (1993, 2005)—"the political" is constituted by the dichotomy of "friends" versus "enemies," which also derives from a Manichean distinction between "good" and "evil." The boundaries between "us" and "them," especially when based on manifest ideologies, have profound moralistic implications. Times of uncertainty and circumstances that are perceived as threatening group boundaries often gain ontological connotations of "good" versus "evil." In such circumstances, political worldviews come into play because they can operate as a narrative of who belongs to which category (see e.g. Blumer 1958; Quillian 1995; Alexander 2006).

We posit that the importance of Manichean semantics and moralistic narratives for political worldviews make them compatible with religious ones. Moralistic dichotomies of "good" and "evil," again, are not equally prevalent in all worldviews. They are only compatible with ideologies that are based on an *ontological* concept of morality, which is especially the case for conservatism and fascism:

> Hypothesis 2a: Individuals expressing fascist worldviews are more likely to hold that there are clear guidelines between "good" and "evil" compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

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the central and crucial function in society of supporting what has been variously called social integration, social solidarity, and social cohesion [...]. Underlying this proposition is the still more general one, that in order to maintain itself, every society must achieve some consensus around a set of basic values, some agreement that they are meaningful and afford an appropriate basis for social organization and common action" (Glock 1960: 49).

> Hypothesis 2b: Individuals expressing conservative worldviews are more likely to hold that there are clear guidelines between "good" and "evil" compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

Eschatologies: Narratives About the End of Days

The third and final function of religion lies in its ability to transcend the here and now and to envision a future world (Durkheim 1954 [1912]; Luckmann 1967; Riesebrodt 2007; critically: McCutcheon 1995; Stausberg 2010). This purpose not only concerns the spiritual experiences in everyday life but also questions about "beginning- and end-of-life issues" (Lizza 2010) concerning birth, death, the end of days, and the beyond. Almost all religious worldviews entail "eschatologies," that is prophecies about life after death and provision of soteriological or salvation goals (Meister 2009). Such narratives concern paradisiac or apocalyptic stories—often they are comprised of both—like the Christian teachings of the Last Judgment and of Heaven and Hell. Because realization of the most fundamental longings for peace, happiness, and fulfillment does not take place in the inner-world, religions tend to shift attainment of such to the beyond, often as reward for inner-worldly behavior.

For almost a century, political theology has investigated the relationship of religious eschatologies (as a doctrine of last things) and modern political worldviews such as socialism and fascism. In his dissertation of 1947, Taubes (2009 [1947]), for example, unraveled the roots of apocalyptic beliefs and illustrated their influences for modern revolutionary thinking. Eschatologies, both political and religious ones, for Taubes, all speak of a fundamental "turning point," after which everything will be different. Voegelin (1952), following Taubes, coined the phrase "to immanentize the eschaton" for this phenomenon, indicating the secularization of the central religious motives of salvation and resurrection. As a consequence, secular eschatologies transfer the hopes and final goals—that religious eschatologies locate in the next life—to human history. For Löwith (1949), this premise even meant that the modern idea of a teleological history itself shows the marks of Christian and Jewish Messianism.

The elective affinity of religious and secular utopias shaped the political reality in the Latin American socialist movement of the "Liberation Theology" phase (see Smith 1991), implying that a just society is the realization of God's will. In this regard, political action will lead to a "better," more egalitarian, democratic, and humanistic society (Evans 1992). However, some studies have shown that (particularly apocalyptic) eschatologies can have a negative effect on political participation (see Guth et al. 1995) or even benefit right-wing movements (see White 2001) as they also promise the future realization of a "better"—in this case, more nationalistic, homogeneous—society.

Whether the connection between socialist worldviews and religious beliefs applies to Europe (as recent studies have shown a *negative* correlation between left-wing party voting behavior and religious affiliation) (see Broughton and Napel 2000; van der Brug et al. 2009) remains uncertain. Indeed, the ways in which socialist beliefs in a "better" society and religious salvation goals are linked is an empirical question; as such the following hypotheses will be tested before conclusions can be made:

> Hypothesis 3a: Individuals expressing socialist worldviews are more likely to carry eschatological beliefs compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

> Hypothesis 3b: Individuals expressing fascist worldviews are more likely to carry eschatological beliefs compared to individuals with no definite political worldviews.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

Operationalization

We now test the theoretical assumptions and respective hypotheses using international data from the European Values Study of 2008/2009 (integrated data set ZA4800), the only multiple-country survey that offered the variables we needed. The European Values Study (EVS) is a large-scale, cross-national survey research program that provides information about individual beliefs, preferences, attitudes, and values of European citizens. We limit our analysis to the 27 states that were members of the EU at the time of the data collection.[7] The total number of respondents interviewed during this wave of the EVS and who completed all items used in the multivariate analyses reported below amounts to 29,544. Of those respondents 54.6% were female and 45.4% male. The average age of the sample was 47.9 years (sd = 17.56) and the average educational experience 11.6 years (sd = 3.02).

In the previous section, we mentioned three functions that integrate political and religious worldviews: the nomization of the social, Manichean morals of good and evil, and eschatological beliefs. Table 1 shows the items used to operationalize these three concepts.

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[7] We choose to reduce the sample to EU countries because the EU provides a standardized legal and economic context that is obligatory for all its members. This also includes economic measures applied after the economic crises of 2007/08 and which caused a particular inner EU dynamic.

Table 1: Operationalization of Nomization, Manichaeism, Eschatologies

Dependent Variables	Item	Proportion
Nomization (v128)	"There is only one true religion."	16.26%
Manichaeism (v104)	"There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances."	23.63%
Eschatology (v121/v122)	"Do you believe in hell/heaven?"	29.83%

Note: n = 29,544.

The idea that only one's own interpretation and explanation of the world holds truth and the rejection of other structures of meaning are expressed in item v128, reading: "There is only one true religion." A total of 16.26% of respondents agreed with this item. Manichaeism, the belief that there are unambiguous categories of "right" and "wrong," was assessed with item v104: "There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances." Almost one-quarter of the sample agreed with that statement. The concept of eschatological beliefs was measured with the items v121 and v122, which were combined into a binary variable gaining the value 1 if respondents said they believed in both heaven and hell, as was the case for 29.83%.[8]

Earlier, we identified four types of political worldviews: socialism, liberalism, conservatism, and fascism. Understanding that the basic feature of worldviews is to integrate all spheres of life, we use a comprehensive measure of three sub-indices covering basic dimensions of society: culture, economy, and private (family) life (see Appendix A1).

The first criterion used to assign a particular type is a respondent's attitude toward cultural heterogeneity and acceptance of pluralism. While socialists presumably hold a culturally pluralistic view of society, the fascist worldview adheres to a particularistic and exclusive notion of who belongs to a nation and who does not. The economy index differentiates between state-centred and economically liberal opinions on how a society should organize the distribution of its resources. Finally, the index concerning the generational and gendered order of

[8] Such a specific measure might appear rather unsatisfying but available data sets do not provide a more general one. However, people who believe in Heaven or Hell are very likely to believe in the soteriological goals of salvation and redemption. These beliefs can be understood as directed toward the future and as portraying utopian visions. They suggest a close proximity of contents and structural principles to other types of utopian ideas that provide the hope of a "better" future and imply an escape from the "injustice" or "decadence" or "social ills" of the "here and now."

society comprises statements regarding beliefs about intimate relationships, having children, and the role of the mother. This dimension is essentially used to differentiate between conservative and more liberal ideas as to how familial and gendered relationships should be.

To develop a typology of individual worldviews, we used a combined measurement of those three dimensions: all variables were standardized with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 to account for different scales of the variables. The values were then summed up and divided by the number of items used per sub-index.[9] The final assignment to one of the four worldviews was achieved by using the criteria documented in Table A1: respondents who, for example, had below average values on the family-index, above average values on the economy/state-index, and values lower than one standard deviation from the mean of the culture-index were assigned to the group "socialist worldviews." The other classifications were ascribed respectively.

Based on this operationalization, 4.85% of the respondents can be classified as holding distinct socialist worldviews, 4.14% had liberal worldviews, 14.17% conservative ones, and 5.18% fascist ones. Thus, only about one-third of the respondents revealed manifest and integrated worldviews. The rest of the respondents had rather mixed and heterogeneous views toward familial, economic, and cultural issues. This finding seems plausible considering the plurality of most of the EU states (see e.g. Van der Zweerde 2009).

In Figure 1 we present the distribution of the four political worldviews separated by country. As can be seen, substantial differences exist: Socialist worldviews are most prominent in Sweden (16.46%), Finland (14.74%), France (11.56%), and Denmark (10.92%). Sweden (16.77%) and Denmark (9.97%) also have the highest values of liberal worldviews, followed by the Netherland (7.86%) and Ireland (7.82%). Conservative worldviews are especially popular in Malta (39.49%), Greece (23.99%), Cyprus (22.78%), and Germany (21.70%). The first three also show the highest rates of fascist worldviews (Cyprus 13.89%, Malta 12.28%, Greece 12.30%). Another country with a significant proportion of respondents revealing fascist beliefs is Hungary (12.11%). The country with the least proportion of inhabitants with distinct worldviews is the Netherlands (18.54%). In Malta, on the other hand, more than half of the respondents (53.30%) hold manifest political worldviews.

Religious worldviews were measured via the self-report of one's belonging to a specific denomination. Because some scholars (e.g., Davie 1990; Lind 2003; Voas and Crockett 2005) have raised doubts regarding the correlation between "believing" and "belonging," we first ran an analysis measuring the relationship

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[9] The validity and reliability of the three indices were tested using rotated factorial analyses (orthogonal Varimax method) as well as reliability analyses. The lowest factorial loading of an item was 0.38; Cronbachs Alphas are all higher than 0.63.

between the two dimensions. We found significant differences (t = 122.16, p = 0.000) between respondents regarding the item "How important is religion in your life?" (scale ranging from 0, *not at all important,* to 3, *very important*) when comparing respondents who reported belonging to a religious denomination (m = 1.82, sd = .95, n = 21,266) and those who do not belong to any religious denomination (m = 0.61, sd = .77, n = 8,536). This finding clearly indicates that the two dimensions of "believing" and "belonging" are, to some extent, related. This connection especially pertains to Muslims, who reported the highest values of religiosity (m = 2.29, sd = .82, n = 669), whereas Protestants reported the lowest ones (m = 1.37, sd = .94, n = 4,024).

The distribution of religious denominations in the total sample is as follows: individuals reporting affiliation to the Catholic Church constitute 39.72% (n = 11,915) of the sample; 13.47% (n = 4,041) said they belong to one of the Protestant denominations; 13.27% (n = 3,979) self-identified as Orthodox, and 2.24% (n = 673) as Muslim. The other religious groups, such as Jews, Hindus, evangelical Christians, and Buddhists, were only weakly covered by the sample (all below 1%), so we subsumed them under the label "other" (2.56%); 28.7% do not belong to any religion.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of worldviews by country. The picture mirrors the known distribution of denominations in Europe, with Romania, Greece, Cyprus, and Bulgaria as mainly orthodox countries; Sweden, Finland, Denmark as well as Great Britain as mainly Protestant ones; and the rest (with the exception of the Netherlands, Latvia, Germany, Estonia, and the Czech Republic) as mainly Catholic countries. The biggest proportion of Muslims can be found in Cyprus (32.51%) and Bulgaria (12.17%).

Figure 1: Distribution of Political Worldviews Per Country

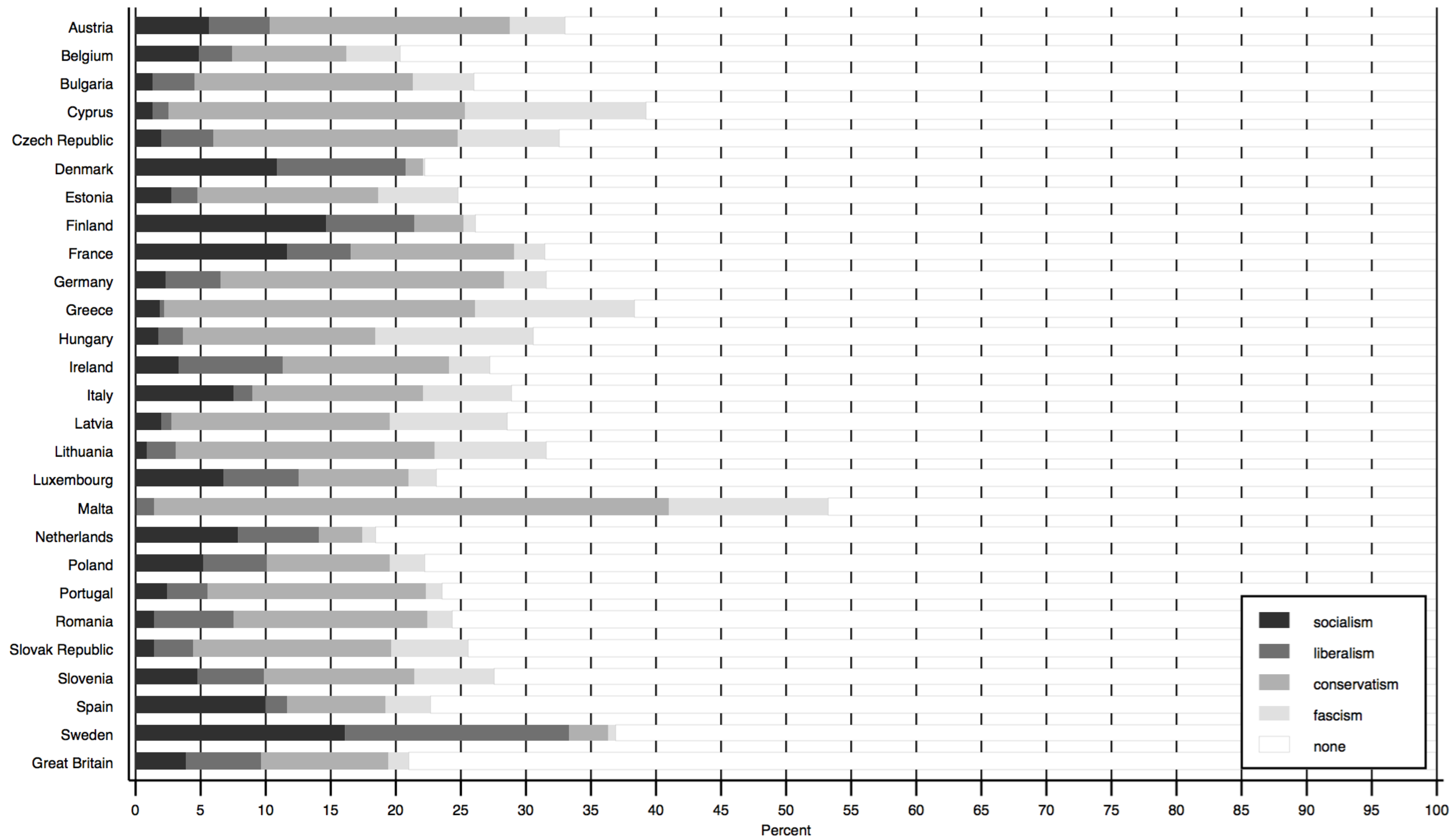
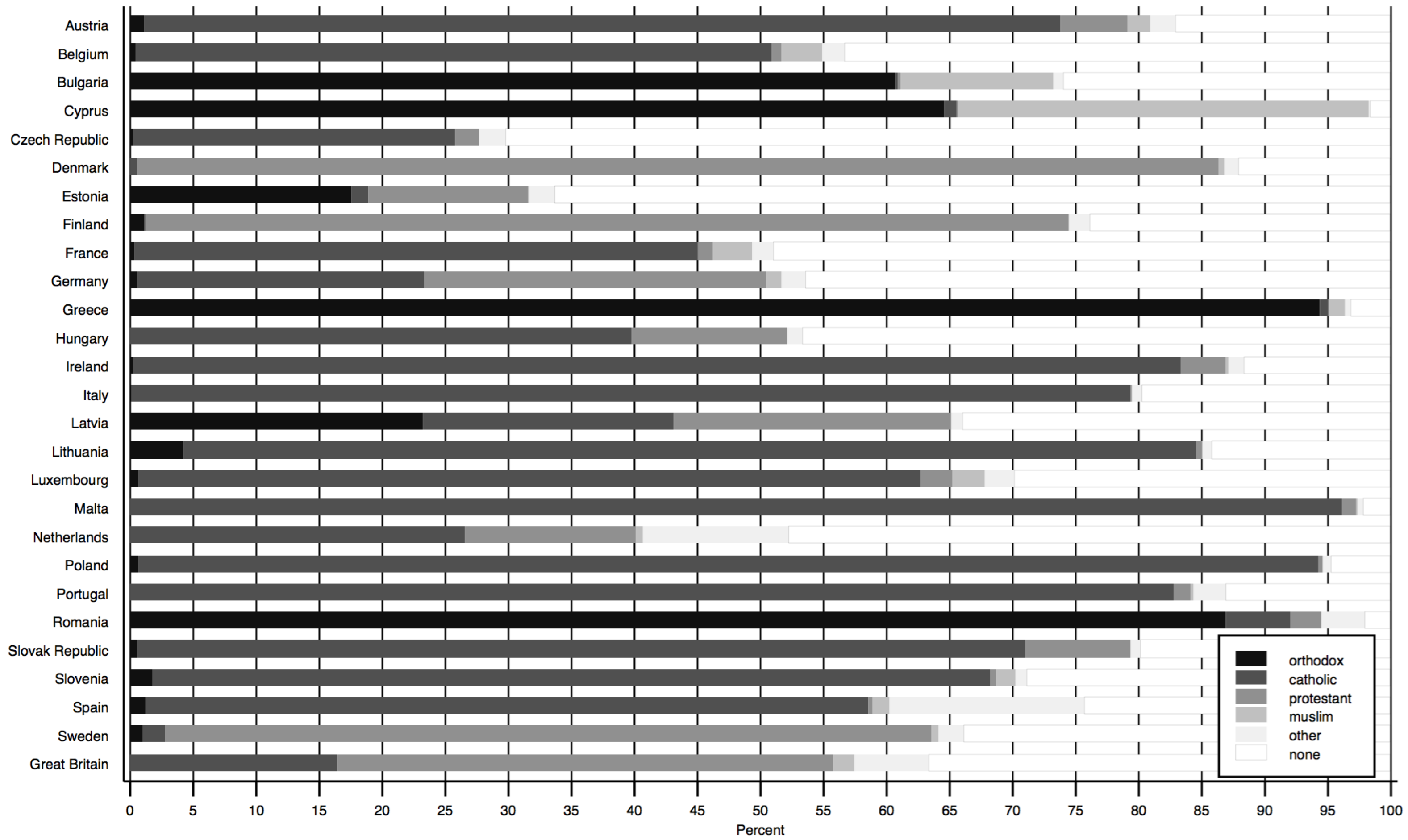


Figure 2: Distribution of Religious Worldviews Per Country



Bivariate and Multivariate Analyses

Before testing our hypotheses, we will have a brief look at the bivariate relation between religious and political worldviews. Table 2 reports the distribution of the four political worldviews for each of the religious denominations. Keeping in mind that only a moderate percentage, in fact, holds a definite political worldview, we can conclude that the Catholic (17.21%) and the Orthodox sub-sample (19.68%) showed proportions of conservative worldviews above the average of 14.17% of the whole sample. Protestants and Muslims, on the other hand, were significantly less prone to hold such worldviews. The former group also reported somewhat more liberal and social and somewhat less fascist worldviews. The Orthodox respondent group, compared to the overall distribution, consists of higher proportions of individuals with fascist worldviews and lower degrees of socialist and liberal ones.

Our goal now is to find out whether and to what extent the three elements *nomizations*, *Manichaeism*, and *eschatological thinking* might constitute a common denominator for religious and political worldviews. To this end, we estimated multilevel logistic regression models (see Guo and Zhao 2000) that control for sex, age, education, and general importance of religion on the individual level as well as social inequality (GINI-coefficient), social welfare (GDP per capita in PPS), and political instability (measured with the index "Political Stability and Absence of Violence," ranging from -2.5 [weak stability] to 2.5 [strong stability]) on the country level.[10] As argued, the perceived decline of economic, social, and political stability in particular appears to have contributed to an increasing demand for secure worldviews. The indicators used here, accordingly, reflect the differences of economic and political contexts.

A necessary condition for the application of multilevel models is a sufficient share of context-level variance of the dependent variable. To test this condition, we estimated a "null model" for each of the dependent variables. We found ICC values of 0.174 for the variable "nomization"; 0.108 for the variable "Manichaeism"; and 0.230 for the variable "eschatology." Except for the latter, these values suggest rather low cross-country variance, but are sufficiently high (>0.10) to allow for multilevel analyses.

[10] The measures were retrieved from the *Eurostat* and *World Bank* databases, respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of Religious and Political worldviews

	Catholic	Protestant	Orthodox	Muslim	other	none	Total
Socialism	3.52	6.98	1.86	4.75	6.13	6.97	4.85
Liberalism	3.15	7.13	2.16	3.42	3.39	5.15	4.14
Conservatism	17.21	8.76	19.68	10.40	9.52	10.66	14.17
Fascism	5.72	2.57	9.05	4.46	3.39	4.08	5.18
none	70.40	74.56	67.25	76.97	77.57	73.13	71.66
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Notes: frequencies in %; n = 29,995; $Chi^2(20) = 979.7288$, $p < 0.000$.

In the theoretical part of the paper, we explained that a conflation of political and religious worldviews increases the stability of everyday life theories because they mutually support each other. Both phenomena function as *nomoi* that structure expectations and offer explanations for social processes. Our analyses of models 1 and 2 in Table 3 show that nomizations are, as assumed in hypotheses 1a and 1b, particularly relevant for conservative and fascist worldviews. They correlate positively and significantly with the respective concepts, while the effects for socialism and liberalism are negative. This finding seems plausible as the two former worldviews tend to be attractive to individuals who prefer rule-obeying behaviour and an authoritarian social order.

Regarding the *religious* worldviews, we observe differences in the degree—although not in the direction—of the effects. Muslim and Orthodox respondents, in particular, are convinced that only one religion holds absolute truth. Those effects are independent from the salience of religion for individuals (measured with the question "How important is religion in your life?" and a 4-point scale; values 0, *not important*, to 3, *very important*; m = 1.47, sd = 1.05).

The effects are also stable when adding the three context variables mentioned above: the Political Stability Index, the GINI measure of social inequality, and the welfare measure of the GDP per capita. Only the latter, however, shows a slightly significant effect.[11]

Models 3 and 4 in Table 3 document those worldviews entailing *moralistic* notions of "good" and "evil." We assumed a correlation between religious manichaeism and political worldviews due to specific contexts in which political identity boundaries of the type "friends vs. enemies" are grounded in quasi-ontological moralistic narratives of "good" and "evil." Hypotheses 2a and 2b suggest that this link applies especially to fascism and conservatism. The empirical findings in Table 3 show that this is, indeed, the case. Liberals, on the

[11] Note that the number of cases of the context level is far lower (n = 27) than that for the individual level. For that matter, we also interpret effects with a p-value between 0.05 and 0.1.

other hand, seem less certain about clear moral boundaries, and Socialists do not even believe that they exist.

Concerning the religious worldviews, we found no significant effects for orthodox and Protestant respondents if we controlled for the importance of religion. Members of the other denominations, however, reported higher degrees of Manichaeism.

From the three context variables, only the GINI measure gains significance: in countries with higher rates of social inequality, respondents agree more strongly that clear boundaries between "good" and "evil" exist. This finding could be an indicator that environments of social uncertainty and inequality encourage the reification of moralistic boundaries.

Finally, hypotheses 3a and 3b assumed that at least some types of religious and political worldviews show affinities because of their common function of offering prophecies of a future world. Socialism and Catholicism, for example, merged during the 1960s Liberation Theology phase in South America. Fascist ideology, on the other hand, has often embraced an apocalyptic vision of the future. With the empirical data we have at hand, we are now able to test whether those ideas are, to some extent, based on religious narratives such as beliefs in "heaven" and "hell," indicating salvation and redemption in a future beyond.

Models 5 and 6 in Table 3, indeed, show a similar picture like the previous ones: Fascism and Conservatism, as well as all of the religious worldviews we observed, positively correlate with eschatological beliefs, whereas the coefficient representing the effect of liberal worldviews is not statistically significant, and that of socialism is negative. This finding contradicts hypothesis 3a, which states that socialism and religious eschatologies might be related. At least in Europe, such a correlation does not exist in any of the countries we observed.

Regarding the context variables, we found that the higher a country's GDP, the less popular the belief in an afterlife in "heaven" or "hell" and, respectively, that social inequality contributed to this belief. The political stability of a country, again, seems to have no influence.

Table 3: Multilevel Logit Regression Models of Nomization, Manichaeism, Eschatology

(EVS2008/9)

	Nomiz. 1	*Nomiz. 2*	*Manich. 1*	*Manich. 2*	*Eschat. 1*	*Eschat. 2*
Constant	-2.519***	-2.734**	-1.796***	-4.092***	-2.666***	-4.105**
	(.150)	(.836)	(.140)	(1.021)	(0.165)	(1.256)
Individ. Level						
socialism	-0.748***	-0.743***	-0.218**	-0.216**	-0.420***	-0.418***
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.089)	(0.089)
liberalism	-0.800***	-0.798***	0.073	0.073	-0.100	-0.100
	(0.144)	(0.144)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.088)	(0.088)
conservatism	0.329***	0.329***	0.219***	0.218***	0.171***	0.170***
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.04)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.043)
fascism	0.436***	0.435***	0.183**	0.183**	0.150*	0.149*
	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.066)	(0.066)
catholic	0.880***	0.886***	0.138**	0.139**	1.310***	1.311***
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.058)	(0.058)
protestant	0.620***	0.627***	0.009	0.006	0.98***	0.980***
	(0.093)	(0.092)	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.073)	(0.072)
orthodox	1.237***	1.206***	0.081	0.062	1.457***	1.439***
	(0.104)	(0.103)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.090)	(0.090)
muslim	1.576***	1.558***	0.372**	0.362**	2.912***	2.900***
	(0.129)	(0.128)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.121)	(0.121)
other	1.422***	1.423***	0.416***	0.418***	1.564***	1.567***
	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.099)	(0.099)
import. of	0.594***	0.594***	0.192***	0.192***	0.800***	0.800***
relig. (0-3)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
sex	0.190***	0.189***	-0.083**	-0.084**	0.128***	0.128***
(1=female)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.031)
age	0.005***	0.005***	0.008***	0.008***	-0.009***	-0.009***
(in years)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
education	-0.135***	-0.136***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.034***	-0.034***
(in years)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Country level						
GINI		0.025		0.080**		0.060^{+}
		(0.023)		(0.028)		(0.035)

GDP per capita		-0.004+ (0.002)		-0.003 (0.002)		-0.007^{*} (0.003)
political stability		-0.158 (0.229)		0.306 (0.283)		0.511 (0.348)
var(Constant)	.198 (.059)	.132 (.039)	.317 (.090)	.210 (.060)	.450 (.126)	.320 (.090)
Log-likelihood	-10405.2	-10399.8	-15166.7	-15161.3	-13223.0	-13218.5
n	29,544 (27 countries)					

Notes: SEs in parentheses; reference categories of political and religious worldviews: "none"; residual variance fixed at pi^2; $^{+}p<0.10$, $^{*}<0.05$, $^{**}<0.01$, $^{***}<0.001$.

To summarize the findings of the control variables on the individual level, we can say that the models indicate that higher educated, younger, male respondents were less likely to hold one of the three beliefs—exceptions being Manichean beliefs, which are slightly more pronounced with men, and eschatological beliefs, which are found more often among young respondents. The salience of religion in all models is positively associated with the dependent variables, which was to be expected.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of our paper indicate that conservative and fascist worldviews in particular relate to religious ones. This finding applies particularly to orthodox belief systems – and, in the case of conservatism, to Catholic ones. While those bivariate findings might not be surprising given what we know from studies of religious party affiliation and the role of religion in varying political systems (see Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Riis 1989; Broughton and Napel 2000; Knippenberg 2006; van der Brug et al. 2009), the discoveries of our multivariate analyses investigating *why* this is the case constitute an important contribution to the literature on the intersection of religion and politics. We were able to show that the most prominent features of religious belief systems – (a) to produce distinct and robust structures of meaning (function of "nomization"); (b) to offer clear-cut moralistic evaluation systems (function of "Manichaeism"); and (c) to transcend the here and now in which late-modern individuals find themselves trapped (function of "eschatologies") – are most apparent in two types of political worldviews: conservatism and fascism. Together, the respective ideological mixture constitutes what might be considered an integral, comprising, and coherent worldview structure that allows actors to cope with what appears to be an insecure and ambiguous world.

Considering that the analyses also suggest that these three functions are most important in countries with higher social inequality (except for the first one) and lower economic wealth (except for the second one), the economic crises that had started to loom at the horizon just months before the data used here were collected might have already set into motion the dynamics we have been witnessing more clearly in the more recent past. In times of risk and uncertainty, people search for stable structures of meaning, moral guidelines, and visions of the future (sometimes apocalyptic ones), which they find in religious belief systems but also in combinations of such systems with political ideologies, especially those promising certainty, moral rigidness, and narratives of purification.

This being said, we admit that our contribution can only be a prelude to further investigations. The data at hand supports our macro- and micro-theoretical reflections, but they just represent one point in time and "only" one geographical region: Europe. Further studies investigating the functional similarities of religious and political worldviews would ideally be able to use longitudinal and global data. Whether and how our results fit non-European contexts like the Americas, the Middle and the Far East, and Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, remains to be seen.

However, what this study has made clearer is that only if we stop treating the religious and political fields (of study) as separate, and instead ask *why and under which conditions* both fields attract the same "players," will we be able to understand the recent social developments, which appear to be accompanied by a (re-)sacralization of the political.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Operationalization of Four Types of Worldviews Via Three Sub-indices

	Social. (4.85%)	**Liberal.** (4.14%)	**Conserv.** (14.17%)	**Fascism** (5.18%)
1 Culture a. immigrants take away jobs from [nationality] (v268) b. immigrants undermine country's cultural life (v269) c. immigrants increase crime problems (v270) d. immigrants are a strain on welfare system (v271) e. immigrants will become a threat to society (v272)	$x_i < m_C - sd_C$	$x_i < m_C$	$x_i > m_C$	$x_i > m_C + sd_C$
2 Economy a. individual vs. state responsibility for providing (v194) b. competition good vs. harmful for people (v196) c. state to give more freedom to firms vs. control firms more effectively (v197) d. private vs. government ownership business (v199)	$x_i > m_E$	$x_i < m_E - sd_E$	$x_i < m_E$	$x_i > m_E$
3 Family a. long-term relationship is necessary to be happy (v153) b. duty towards society to have children (v156) c. it is child's duty to take care of ill parent (v158) d. pre-school child suffers by working mother (v160) e. women want a home and children (v161)	$x_i < m_F$	$x_i < m_F$	$x_i > m_F$	$x_i > m_F$

Notes: single items and additive indices standardized; assignment rules indicating deviation from the mean of the respective index; values do not add up to 100% because individuals without definite worldviews are not included