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**The differential impact of religion on the private and public sphere in
comparative perspective**

Loek Halman, Thorleif Pettersson & Johan Verweij

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The Religious Factor in Contemporary Society

The differential impact of religion on the private and public sphere in comparative perspective

Loek Halman, Thorleif Pettersson & Johan Verweij

Key words: religion, differentiation, secularization, individualization, value fragmentation

Abstract

This paper explores the relationships between values in the religious domain and values in other societal spheres. Starting from the general idea that the impact of religion on other domains in life has decreased, we assume 1) a differential impact of religion on the private and public domains; 2) that the impact varies between countries dependent upon the degree of secularization and the speed of secularization. Several more specific hypotheses concerning the interrelationships are developed and empirically tested using the data from the European Values Studies. The hypotheses are partially confirmed, but demonstrate that indeed the relationship between religion and the private domain (e.g. family) has developed differently from the relations between religion and the public areas.

1 INTRODUCTION

A basic element in the theories on the modernization of society is the idea of continual changes in all spheres of social life. These changes are considered to follow the same pattern in all countries (Lane and Ersson, 1996: 17). However, changes in the various domains of life not necessarily occur simultaneously, in the same direction, in the same magnitude or sequence. This questions the idea that the changes 'spring from some underlying condition, such as the emergence of a certain kind of attitude or motivation, an alteration in the basic forms of production, or a revolution in communications' (Tilly, 1984: 45). Apparently, the changes in one domain are, at least, partly independent from the changes in the other domains.

The occurrence of (partly) independent changes is explained by the process of differentiation. All theories of modernization regard this a core process of social change. Differentiation refers to the 'ways through which the main social functions or major institutional spheres of society become differentiated from one another, attached to specialized collectivities and roles, and organized in relatively specific and autonomous symbolic and organizational frameworks within the confines of the same institutionalized system' (Eisenstadt, 1970: 15).

Differentiation is also an important issue in the theories of secularization. Such theories describe and explain the developments in the domain of religion. The decreased involvement in religious organizations and the gradual alterations of people's religious beliefs are assumed to be the ultimate consequences of a process of differentiation. The traditional functions of the churches have become less important in the modern rational world, and religion is assumed to have lost its dominant and imposing position in contemporary society. Many empirical secularization studies have focused on the changes in individual behaviours and belief systems, and reported the decline of the traditional religious beliefs and the rise of what is called a personal religiosity. Although such results indeed indicate a decline in traditional religiosity, they do not reveal the assumed declining impact of religion in society. Religion is assumed to be no longer the 'sacred canopy' influencing most parts of social life, which it has been able to do for so many centuries (Berger, 1969). The once strong relationship between religion and other social domains is assumed to be less self-evident in contemporary society.

In this paper we investigate the relationships between religion and other social domains of life. The aim of the paper is first of all to specify the general idea of the decreasing impact of religion on other domains of social life and to formulate some more concrete hypotheses concerning these relationships. For instance, it seems necessary to make a distinction between the public and private social spheres. Among others Luckmann has argued that the religious decline is primarily found in the public sphere and to a lesser extent in the private sphere. 'Religious norms are no longer applicable in secular institutions, the economy

and the polity, to wit the so called public, objective world; but, are rather restricted to the 'private sphere', the so-called secondary institutions or the subjective world' (Dobbelaere, 1985: 380). Thus, it can be assumed that religion has a differential impact on both spheres of social life. A second aim of this article is to empirically test the hypotheses.

We will first present a theoretical framework for specifying the relationships between religion and other spheres of social life in contemporary traditional and modern societies. This will be discussed in Section 2. The cross-national survey data which will be used to empirically test the hypotheses are described in Section 3. In Section 4 we present the results of the analyses, and in Section 5 we draw the conclusions.

2 DIFFERENTIATION, SECULARIZATION AND SOCIAL VALUES

The main characteristics of traditional society differ in many respects from the main features of contemporary modern society. A salient difference relates to the degree of differentiation. Traditional society is regarded closed, non-differentiated and homogeneous, whereas modern order is open, differentiated and heterogeneous. Through differentiation each social sphere in life became increasingly autonomous and a specialized unit in society with its own set of rules (Münch, 1990: 443), and people gained degrees of freedom of choice and actions (Parsons, 1973: 79).

In traditional societies people's freedom was highly restricted and all life spheres as well as the values within these spheres were assumed to be closely connected. Religion in particular played an important role in traditional society, for it restricted the individual's freedom and governed and shaped the values in the various domains of social life.

In modern society, however, the traditional Christian religious dogma's are no longer self-evidently accepted. Instead people have become free to decide for themselves what to believe in. Substantiated by different kinds of analyses, most sociologists assume that religion has lost substantial parts of its former impact on most segments of social life. The process of differentiation has reduced religion to 'a subsystem alongside other subsystems' (Dobbelaere, 1993: 24), and resulted in a loss of the social significance of religious institutions, religious activities and religious moods of thinking (Wilson, 1982: 149; 1996: 16). Religion in nowadays society is regarded as one among many institutional spheres in life, a sphere that has to compete with other social spheres which often appear to be more appealing and attractive. 'Separate institutional specialists compete for areas of control that previously were mainly church prerogatives. While religious institutions still proclaim their definitions of deviance and use some measures of social control, their influence is limited in most modern countries' (McGuire, 1981: 222).

People in contemporary society take part in different universes of meaning, each governed by its own set of values, and no longer guided by a single coherent set of values. The values governing the various spheres of life are 'no longer sanctioned directly by religious beliefs, but by an autonomous rationality' (Smelser, 1973: 275). Waters has stated that each life sphere 'becomes self-referential in terms of values' (Waters, 1994: 309). As a result, 'the churches have lost their influence in many domains' (Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere, 1995: 79).

Although religious organizations still (may) try to affect various sectors of social life, decreasing numbers of people are exposed to their efforts. A decreasing number of church members is attending religious services frequently. This is not the least evidenced in the Scandinavian countries (Gustafsson, 1994; Riis, 1994). In other countries, like the Netherlands, France, and Great Britain, increasing numbers of people do not even belong to one of the churches (Halman and de Moor, 1994). Religion appears to have lost a substantial part of its attraction to an increasing number of people in the Western world.

Even among those who attend religious services regularly, fewer are inclined to accept part and parcel of the traditional orthodox religious dogmas. 'The churches have lost much of their impact ad intra: as a consequence, individuals may reject the 'menu' of church beliefs, instead recomposing a religion a la carte constructing their own religious patchwork' (Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere, 1995: 115). In other words, the orthodox belief systems and moral convictions, preached by the churches and in earlier days (assumedly) acknowledged by the majority of people, who were also churchmembers, are replaced by diversified individual belief systems and socio-moral convictions. Religion has also become 'a private matter, shorn of social control, divested of its cultural connotations, released from its institutional contexts and liberated from its erstwhile social functions' (Wilson, 1996: 33).

As a result of differentiation each social life sphere is increasingly organized around the performance of its respective function (Colomy, 1990: 485), and religion is assumed to have lost much of its former encompassing influence over the other spheres of social life. The impact of religion on other social domains in life has been the subject of, among others, classical studies by Herberg (1955) and Lenski (1961). They focused on the situation in the United States, but surprisingly their conclusions were quite each others opposites. Whereas Herberg concluded that 'Americans think, feel, and act in terms quite obviously secularist at the very time that they exhibit every sign of a widespread religious revival' (Herberg, 1955: 15), was Lenski's conclusion that 'religion in various ways is constantly influencing the daily lives of masses of men and women in the modern American metropolis. More than that: through its impact on individuals, religion makes an impact on all the other institutional systems of the community in which these individuals participate' (Lenski, 1961: 289).

Both classical studies were confined to the American situation, and it appears that the actual patterns of secularization are different in the Western world. One of the most recently debated issues in secularization theory concerns the differences in this regard between North America and Europe. The comparatively high levels of religious involvement in the United States are regarded as an important counterexample against the generally more secularized Europe. Thus, it has been concluded that 'not only has religion failed to decline in the United States, it is clear that American religious activity and involvement have increased very substantially over the past centuries' (Stark and Iannaccone, 1992: 2030). From such findings, it has even been concluded that the whole idea of secularization is a myth (Greely, 1985).

The American exception may be put in an even broader perspective. It has been argued that 'the trajectories of secularization in the major sectors of Christianity, such as Europe (East and West), North America, Africa, and Latin America, tend to be very different. Secularization emerged as a theme in Western Europe offering to provide some account of the European situation. 'It was generally assumed that Europe was the "lead society" and that other parts of the world just needed time to catch up. What now needs to be explored, however, is the extent to which Europe itself may be exceptional. Just as analysts once spoke of American exceptionalism, so it may now be appropriate, at least in the context of religion, to speak of European exceptionalism' (Martin, 1996: 35). Thus, the theories on the weakened impact of religion on other social domains, caused by i.a. social and cultural differentiation, might primarily pertain to the exceptional case of Europe. Because of the peculiar situation in the United States we have decided to focus on Europe only.

Within Europe, however, it has been demonstrated that the religious decline is less noticeable in the Southern countries as compared to the Nordic ones. In the former countries, the religious involvement is considerably higher; the confidence in the churches appears stronger, and people are more inclined to believe in a traditional Christian way (Ester et al., 1994). Not unlikely that such differences exist in Europe's as a result of different outlooks of the main religious traditions. The 'seeds of individualism were manifest much earlier in Protestantism. In contrast to Catholics, Protestants are personally responsible before God in religious matters, and the church has a lesser role as mediator between the believer and God. The Catholic church, with its extensive, dogmatic, collective creed imposes a more collective identity upon its faithful' (Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere, 1995: 81). The distinction between Catholic and Protestant countries resemble the North-South divide. The Northern Protestant countries appeared to be more secularized than the Southern Catholic ones.

These considerations lead to the formulation of a first hypothesis to be empirically tested in this paper. It takes into account the different degrees of secularization and its consequences for the impact of secularization on other domains of social life.

H1. The more secular a country is, the weaker the impact of religious values on the values in the other domains of society.

However, religion's weakened impact is assumed to be especially noticeable in the socio-political realm in contrast to matters concerning the private, familial life (Berger, 1969: 129-134; Luckmann, 1967: 85). Due to a differential development in the public and the private spheres it is expected that the impact of religion is still prevalent in the private world in contrast to the public, covering the secular institutions, the economy, and politics. The public sphere in particular is characterized by functional rationality, e.g. efficiency, effectiveness, cost-benefits calculations etc. As the public sectors of e.g. economy and politics developed their own functions, rationalities, values, norms and attitudes, traditional religion became increasingly dysfunctional to these sectors. However, such a functional differentiation is less likely in the private sphere, e.g. the meaning of marriage, family life, childbirth, etc., in modern affluent society. As Luckmann argued, the private sphere 'is the one modern theme which can be supported by the surviving forms of institutionally specialized religion with the least contradiction in their "internal logic"' (Luckmann, 1967: 113).

Thus religion with its overarching claims was more or less 'forced' to withdraw from the public domain, whereas it remained influential for matters concerning family life and personal growth (Fenn, 1972: 31), or in other words, for matters 'relevant to interpersonal relations, for face-to-face contacts, for the intimacies of the family, courtship, friendship, and neighborliness' (Wilson, 1976: 6). In most countries the churches do not interfere directly with politics, although they argue for their views in moral issues, like abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, family life. As such, it can be argued that the churches, and religion in general, have lost substantial parts of their significance in public political issues, but less with respect to private. As Bellah has noted 'outside this sphere of personal morality the (...) church has little to say about wider social commitments' (Bellah et al., 1986: 231). Hence, it can be assumed that the impact of religion will be stronger on the private sector than on the public sphere.

Several studies seem to indicate that indeed religion in nowadays society is still an important source for attitudes, norms and values in the domains of family life, but of less significance for values, attitudes and norms in the public domain, e.g. politics and the economy. 'A large and growing body of theory and research indicates that religious communities and belief systems help to shape a variety of attitudes and behaviors germane to family life: the selection of marital partners, marital quality, desired and actual family size, the timing of family formation, attitudes towards gender roles, and sexual attitudes and conduct, to name but a few areas of inquiry' (Ellison and Sherkat, 1993: 313). Thus, there seems to be some empirical support for the view that religion has a fairly strong impact on family life, the core of the private social domain of life.

In comparison to religion's impact on family life, religion's impact on public,

social life seems less certain, although in some studies fairly strong connections are reported. For instance when relating religious intrinsic and extrinsic attitudes to various forms of social behaviour, such as discrimination, extrinsic religion is found to be related to a wide range of 'socially undesirable' variables such as prejudice and discrimination. It has been argued, however, that this might be attributed to an imperfect validity of the extrinsic measures. Thus, the extrinsic scale may be 'tapping, rather inadvertently, individual differences in more pervasive personality or cognitive characteristics, with religion merely providing the vehicle of manifestation of this trait' (Kirkpatrick and Hood, 1990: 454).

The conclusion that religion has less impact on attitudes and behaviours in the public sphere, might also be substantiated from the political sciences, where it is suggested that the religious cleavage is of less importance for political involvement and voting behaviour, although the opposite view is also advanced (Jagodzinski, 1996). The suggestion might also find support from yet another group of studies, i.e. those who concern the relation between religion and work values, another classical research area in the social sciences of religion. In this field, 'most research suggests that religion is largely irrelevant to the work experience' (Davidson and Caddell, 1994: 135; cf. Lindseth and Listhaug, 1994). It has even been suggested that 'in the absence of other institutions capable of providing a coherent, overarching values system, it also seems likely that companies will increasingly serve that role, filling needs for personal (and material) development' (Harding and Hikspoors, 1995: 453). Thus, in the area of work, the direction of causation might be reversed from religion's impact on work behaviour (the Weber thesis) to work experience as the provider of 'religion' (overarching meaning systems).

From such studies, it seems necessary to make a difference between religion's impact on the private and public domains. The impact of religion is generally stronger on values in the private domain than in the public. In 'the modern context religion influences more the private than the public realm' (Tamney and Johnson, 1985: 361). In this article we investigate the impact of religion on both domains of social life, and we will test the following hypothesis which differentiates the impact of religion on the private and public spheres of social life. This can be called the privatization hypothesis:

H2. The impact of religious values on the values in the private sphere will be less weak than on the values in the public sphere, the more secular a country is.

Such hypotheses assume a correspondence between what might be regarded as two different measures of secularization: the general level of religious beliefs and church involvement on the one hand, and the impact of religious involvement on other social spheres, on the other hand. Both hypotheses can be investigated using cross sectional data from countries of different degrees of secularization.

However, since secularization denotes a dynamic process of change, a longitudinal analytical strategy is also of considerable interest. Since a rich set of longitudinal data is available (cf. below), we will also investigate changes over time. Although the time span covered by these data is limited to a nine-years interval (1981-1990), we will test the following hypothesis that:

H3. The more a society has secularized in a particular period of time, the larger the decline of impact of religious values on the values in the other spheres.

Finally, the decreasing levels of religiosity in society can be regarded the engine of changes in the more secular parts of society. In other words, since religiosity is on the wane, the values in the public and private sphere will have changed too. The hypothesis to be tested is that the shifts occurring in these secular domains can be attributed to the changing (i.e. decreasing) levels of religiosity.

H4. The more religiosity has decreased in a society, the larger the changes in values in the public and private sphere will be.

3 DATA AND METHODS

The hypotheses will be tested using the survey data from the European Values Studies (EVS) in 1981 and 1990. EVS was fielded in almost all European countries as well as in the USA and Canada (see e.g. Ester et al., 1994). The questionnaire covered a number of orientations in various domains of life: religion and morality, work and leisure time, society and politics, family and marriage, sexuality and education. In each of these domains, several scales or dimensions have been constructed displaying several value orientations (Halman and Vloet, 1994). For our analyses we have selected a variety of orientations (constructs) in the public sphere, e.g. politics and work, and the private sphere, e.g. family. The following measures will be used.

In the religious domain three measures are selected: Personal Religiosity, Orthodoxy, and Church Adequacy. *Personal Religiosity* is measured by answers to questions about religious self-determination, subjective importance of one's belief in God, if one gets comfort and strength from religion or not, and frequency of moments of prayer. *Orthodoxy* is measured by eight items on belief in God, the soul, sin, life after death, heaven, the devil, and hell. *Church Adequacy* is measured by questions of whether the churches are giving adequate answers or not to man's moral, family, and spiritual problems.

For the private sphere we have selected three orientations referring to family life: Traditional Family Pattern, Traditional Parent-Child Relationships, and Conformity. *Traditional Family Pattern* is measured by answers to questions on whether children need both father and mother to grow up happy, and disapproval

of a woman wanting to be a single mother. *Traditional Parent Child Relationships* are measured by two questions on whether children are obliged to love and respect their parents, and parents to do their best for their children even at the expense of their own well-being. *Conformity* is measured by six questions about the importance to teach children good manners, dependence, non-imagination, determination, religious faith, and obedience.

In the political domain a great variety of orientations are available. We have selected three measures of social-political issues: Political participation, Left-right orientation, and Materialism-Postmaterialism. *Political participation* is indicated by partaking in or willingness to be engaged in political activities like signing petitions, boycotts, lawful demonstrations, unofficial strikes, and occupying building. It not only measures real action aspects, but also evaluative aspects of protest behaviour and combining them indicates, what is often called protest potential (Evans and Hildebrandt, 1979: 554). *Left-right* is a well-known and frequently used concept to identify and classify political issues and people's political and societal ideas and opinions. The left-right schema can be seen 'as a mechanism for the reduction of complexity, which serves primarily to provide an orientation function for individuals and a communications function for the political system' (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990: 205). An commonly used indicator of left and right is to ask respondents to place themselves on a scale ranging from left (=1) to right (10). Such an indicator was also used in the European Values Study. *Post-Materialism* is measured by the short Inglehart (1977, 1990) battery on maintaining order in the nation, giving people more say in important government decisions, fighting rising prices, and protecting freedom of speech.

In the domain of work, EVS distinguished three dimensions (Zanders, 1994) which will be used in our analyses: Personal Development, Comfort, and Material Conditions. *Personal Development* is indicated by the importance attached to work qualities like using initiative, responsibility, achieving something, using one's abilities, interesting job. *Comfort* qualities are not too much pressure, generous holidays, good hours, job respected by people. *Material Conditions* refer to work attributes like good pay and good job security.

Since we are not so much interested in the bivariate relationships (between two single orientations) but more in the relationships between domains of values (social spheres of life), we have constructed scales for each domain by applying factor analysis to the respective orientations in each domain. The interpretation of the meaning of the scale scores is evidenced by their designations, and is fairly obvious from the nature of the specific subdimensions that contribute to each factor. Thus, the higher the level of Personal Religiosity, Orthodoxy, and Church Adequacy, the higher the General Religiosity Score. The higher the level of Traditional Family Pattern, the ('traditional' or 'prescribed') Parent Child Relations, and Conformity, the higher the Traditional Family Values Score. In the

same manner, the higher the level of Post-Materialism, the higher the level of protestprone and the more leftist position on the left-right scale, the higher on the Political Individualism score. Finally, the more comfort qualities are judged important in work, the more material conditions are seen as important work attributes, and the more people feel that material conditions are important in a job, the higher the score on the Work dimension.

The actual relationships between the religious domain and the other life spheres are determined by applying Structural Equation Modelling as available in LISREL. The models which will be tested are rather simple and straightforward. We investigate the relationships between the religious domain on the one hand and work, politics, and family on the other. Since we are only interested in the relationships between the religious domain and the public and private sphere, we are not concerned about the mutual relations between the political domain, the labour sphere and the private realm. In Figure 1, the model is graphed.

These analyses are performed for five countries of different degrees of secularization. The general level of secularization can be determined from the measures of religiosity, orthodoxy and church adequacy. The higher the scores on these orientations, the less the degree of general secularization. In Table 1 these scores are displayed and the rankings of 15 countries, participating in the EVS-study, are indicated.

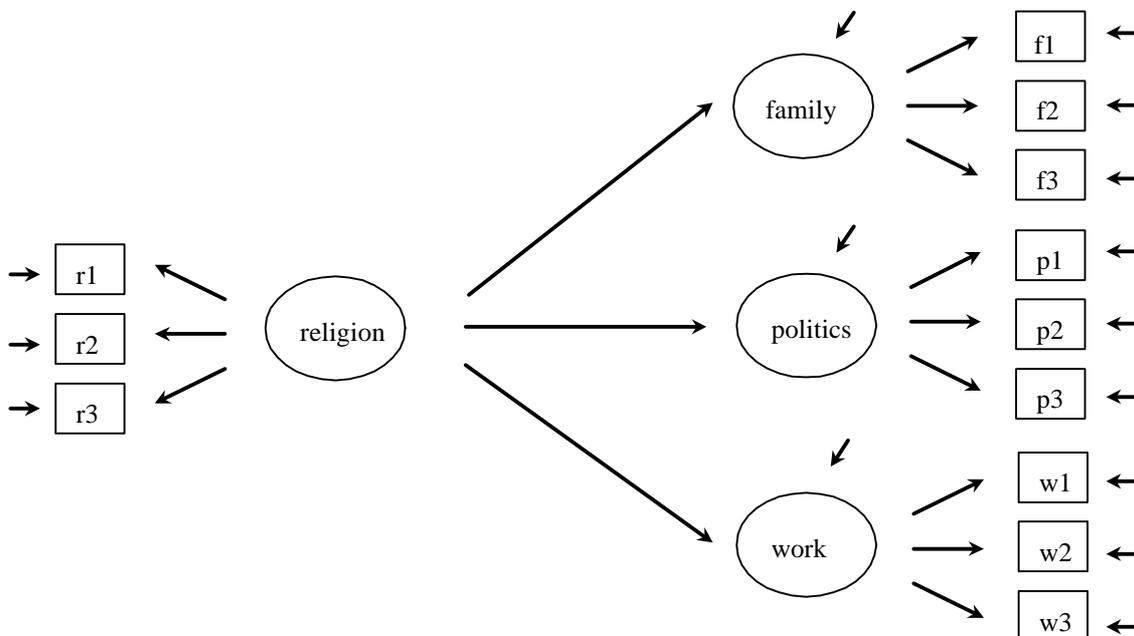


Figure 1. Causal model

Table 1. Rankorders on each religious variable and an overall mean score, EVS 1990

	religiosity	orthodoxy	adequacy	mean
United States	1	2	1	1.33
Northern-Ireland	4	1	2	2.33
Italy	2	5	4	3.67
Ireland	3	3	6	4.00
Canada	5	4	3	4.00
Spain	7	8	5	6.67
West Germany	8	9	8	8.33
Great-Britain	9	6	11	8.67
Iceland	6	7	13	8.67
Belgium	10	12	7	9.67
Netherlands	11	10	9	10.00
Norway	12	11	10	11.00
France	13	13	12	12.67
Sweden	14	14	14	14.00
Denmark	15	15	15	15.00

For our analyses we have selected Sweden and the Netherlands as examples of the most secularized countries, Ireland as a much less secularized country, and Spain and West Germany as countries of intermediate levels of general secularization. In terms of structural religious characteristics we have selected two Catholic countries, two countries with mixed religious traditions, and one Protestant country.

4 RESULTS

First of all, we have investigated the associations¹ between religiosity on the one hand and the orientations in other spheres of life, e.g. politics, family and work, on the other. The LISREL model actually estimates the effects of religiosity, indicated by the three religious measures, on the domains of politics, family, and work. These domains are indicated by the respective measures. We did not impose equality constraints, as can be achieved in multi-group comparisons. We have analyzed the models in each country separately.

Table 2 displays the results of the LISREL analysis². The unstandardized coefficients enable us to test the hypothesis that the more secular a country is, the weaker the impact of religion on the other domains will be. As expected, the more religious a country is the stronger the impact of religion on the private sphere. The influence of religion on family values is strongest in Ireland (the

least secularized country) and the weakest in Sweden and the Netherlands (the most secularized countries).

In the case of politics, however, the hypothesis can not be corroborated completely by the analyses. The impact is strongest in Spain and Ireland, but also in the Netherlands. The effects of religion on work values are negligible small in all countries.

Table 2. Unstandardized effects of religion on family, politics and labour, pairwise deletion, EVS 1990

Degree of secularization	Values in societal spheres		
	Family	Politics	Labour
Ireland	.16*	-.11*	.00
Spain	.10*	-.14*	.00
West Germany	.10*	-.07*	-.02*
Netherlands	.09*	-.11*	.01
Sweden	.05*	-.03*	.01

*: p<.05

Thus, as far as the impact of religion on the private sphere is concerned, the first hypothesis can be corroborated. The hypothesis is not substantiated in the case of religion's impact on work and politics.

Table 3 displays the summary of the results of the LISREL analyses to test the hypothesis that religion has a differential impact. Religion has still an impact on the values in the private domain but not on the values in the public domain, e.g. politics and work. The results indicate that only in West Germany, religion has a significant influence on all three domains. In Spain, The Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland there are only significant effects of religion on especially the family and to a lesser extent on politics. There hardly exists any significant relationships at all between religiosity and the domain of work. The highest (and significant) effect is found in West Germany (-.13). Similar results for West Germany were reported by Lindseth and Listhaug (1994: 94-95). Thus, compared to the impact of religiosity on the private and political domains, the effect of religion on work is hardly worth mentioning. Religion and work appear to be almost totally separated in all the countries.

Table 3. Standardized effects of religion on family, politics and labour, pairwise deletion, EVS 1990

Degree of secularization	Values in societal spheres		
	Family	Politics	Labour
Ireland	.86*	-.69*	-.01
Spain	.83*	-.78*	.01
West Germany	.69*	-.48*	-.13*
Netherlands	.70*	-.62*	.06
Sweden	.42*	-.27*	.03

*: p<.05

Compared to work, the impact of religion on politics is much stronger in all countries investigated here. The standardized coefficients range from -.27 in Sweden to -.78 in Spain. However, the family values appear strongest influenced by the religious domain, which corroborates the expectations. The coefficients range from .42 in Sweden to .86 in Ireland. So, even in the most secularized countries like Sweden and the Netherlands, it can be observed that religion has a rather close connection with the values in the private sphere, but also in the political domain.

In summary, the impact of religion has been shown to be most salient in the private domain. The second hypothesis can thus be substantiated by our data. However, the (sometimes equally) strong impact of religion on politics refutes the idea that religion is not important for the public sector. In short, the privatization hypothesis has been partially confirmed and partially refuted by the data.

In order to test the more dynamic hypotheses (H3 and H4) on secularization, the five countries are classified according to the velocity of the general decreases in general religiosity. Such a classification is obtained from the rankings of the five countries based on the shifts between 1981 and 1990 in the three religious measures. The results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Changes in secularization over time, first figure equals 1990-1981 (a negative score means that secularization increased), the second figure equals the rankorder over 15 countries (see Table 1)

	religiosity		orthodoxy		adequacy		mean rankorder
Spain	.054	4	-.145	14	.067	1	6.33
Sweden	-.099	8	-.050	9	-.158	6	7.67
West Germany	-.047	6	-.062	11	-.184	9	8.67
Ireland	-.068	7	-.024	6	-.436	15	9.33
Netherlands	-.203	13	-.074	12	-.091	4	9.67

The religious decline is most pronounced in The Netherlands and Ireland in contrast to Spain and Sweden. According to hypothesis 3, the impact of religion on other social domains is expected to have declined most in the two first mentioned countries, and least in the two last mentioned.

This prediction is tested by applying LISREL multi-group comparisons for each country separately. The correlations between the indicators and the respective latent variables (religion, politics, family and work) have been set equal in both years. The estimated effects of religion on the domains of politics, family and work can thus be compared over time, and the results are displayed in Table 5.

The changes in associations between the values in the religious domain and values in the other domains of social life are hardly worth mentioning, but they are not always in the predicted direction. In Spain the ties between religion and family have decreased, as did the relation between religion and politics. In Sweden religion and family are still hardly connected, whereas in West Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands the associations have increased slightly.

Table 5. Unstandardized effects of religion on family, politics and labour, pairwise deletion, EVS 1981 and 1990

Speed of secularization	Values in societal spheres					
	Family		Politics		Labour	
	81	90	81	90	81	90
Spain	.12*	.09*	-.17*	-.14*	-.02	.00
Sweden	.04*	.04*	-.04*	-.04*	-.04*	.01
West Germany	.09*	.10*	-.09*	-.08*	-.03*	-.02*
Ireland	.13*	.16*	-.11*	-.10*	.00	.00
Netherlands	.07*	.08*	-.11*	-.12*	-.01	.01

*: p<.05

The privatization hypothesis can thus be confirmed in these countries, for the effects of religion on politics have decreased as expected. Spain and Sweden are the anomalies in this respect. Sweden because of hardly any changes, Spain because the developments were in the opposite direction as far as the effect of religion on the private domain is concerned. In Sweden the process of secularization did not proceed very fast during the eighties and this is reflected in the negligible small changes in reported effects of religion on both the public and private spheres.

The examination of the fourth hypothesis on the effect of the decreasing levels of religiosity (or increase in Spain) on the changes in the other domains can be achieved by applying MCA analyses with General Religiosity as a covariate. Table 6 summarizes the results of these analyses.

As will be clear from these results, there hardly are significant changes to report in the private sphere as well as in the domain of work. And if changes can be reported they appear to be real changes due to time and they can rarely be attributed to the decreasing levels of religiosity. In other words the changes within the domains, if they occurred, are due to other factors than to the decreasing levels of religiosity.

An exception to this general conclusion may be found in the Dutch and Irish cases, although even here the changes over time are hardly worth mentioning. In the Netherlands the decreased adherence to the traditional view on family is partially caused by a decline in religiosity. In Ireland the introduction of a control variable general religiosity causes a widening gap between the prevailing orientation towards family life in 1981 and 1990. Earlier we concluded already that religion in the Netherlands still has an impact on the political domain. This appears also from the MCA analyses. The effect of time decreases as General religiosity is introduced as a covariate.

Table 6. Deviations from the mean sores (factor score mean = 0)

	Ireland		Spain		West Germany		Netherlands		Sweden	
	81	90	81	90	81	90	81	90	81	90
Politics	-.23	.23	-.23	.27	-.24	.18	-.20	.21	-.07	.07
adjusted	-.20	.20	-.22	.26	-.23	.17	-.17	.16	-.05	.05
eta-beta	.23	.20	.25	.24	.21	.20	.21	.17	.07	.06
Family	.00	.00	-.04	.04	.12	-.10	.08	-.06	-.02	.02
adjusted	-.05	.06	-.04	.04	.11	-.09	.02	-.02	-.04	.04
eta-beta	.00	.06	.04	.04	.11	.10	.07	.02	.02	.04
Work	-.11	.13	.03	-.03	.06	-.03	-.19	.19	-.29	.27
adjusted	-.11	.13	.03	-.03	.06	-.04	-.19	.19	-.28	.26
eta-beta	.12	.12	.03	.03	.04	.05	.19	.19	.28	.27

So, in the Netherlands, the shifts in the political domain can be partially attributed to decreasing levels in General Religiosity. In the other countries the shifts in the political orientations can not be assigned to changes in the religious domain. In general, it must be concluded that changes in the private and public sphere, can not be attributed to the decreasing levels of religiosity.

5 DISCUSSION

In this article we have investigated the impact of religion on the public and the private sphere, using survey data from the European Values Studies in 1981 and 1990. The main idea concerned the differential development of religion's influence on the private and public sectors. Thus, we hypothesized that the impact of religiosity on the values in the private sphere should be stronger compared to the values in the public sphere. This hypothesis was substantiated by the data. The religious orientations proved to be consistently stronger related to the private, family sphere than to the public, political, and labour sphere, independent of the degree of secularization of the countries under study. The hypothesis that in highly secularized countries religion has no impact at all could not be confirmed. The same is true for the idea that only in the least secularized countries the impact of religion is still salient, and that in countries with intermediate levels of secularization the impact of religion is limited to the private domain only. The hypothesis that in countries, where secularization has proceeded more rapidly, the impact of religion on other domains has decreased more than in countries where secularization proceeded less swiftly, could not be confirmed. The

observed (minor) shifts in values in the public as well as in the private spheres could not be attributed to the decreasing levels of religiosity.

Several aspects of our findings need critical assessment. These concern among other things that the findings might be spurious and contaminated by other factors than the ones assumed here, the distinction between the public and the private, the method of data analysis, and the short-time period nature of the EVS data.

The results demonstrate that the relationship between religion and family has developed differently compared to the relationships between religion and politics and work. However, it is well known from psycho-sociological studies of values and attitudes that the relationships between values, attitudes, and behaviour depend on a great variety of factors. Some kinds of human behaviour in the broad sense are better predicted from certain kinds of human behaviour than from others, regardless of whether the value or attitude domain under study concerns family or politics.

One of the indicators we used for the political domain was postmaterialism. It can be argued that although the materialism-postmaterialism dimension by operational definition concerns public issues, the dimension is in theory also related to issues concerning the private sector, such as partner relations, sexuality, etc. (Inglehart, 1990). Thus, it may be argued that one of the indicators for the public sector, in theory also may concern the private. This may also be the explanation for the indication in the results of LISREL, that the model could be improved by introducing correlations between the private domain and the political domain.

As for the family domain we have selected indicators which concern e.g. the family as an 'institution' as well as views on gender and parent-child roles. It is not self-evident that such aspects are confined to the private sector, at least not the sense this sphere was defined. By such arguments, the relevance of the investigated dimensions as indicators of the private and the public sectors might be questioned. The choice of these indicators was, however, restricted by the values included in the EVS study.

Further, it is essential to underline that the EVS data only concern the restricted time period 1981-1990. In relation to the 'grand theories' of a long-term, continuous process of social differentiation, the period under study is indeed a marginal one. Our results must be assessed in this perspective. In this context, the forthcoming data from the 1999 EVS study, will allow interesting checks on whether the tendencies reported here were confined or not to the previous decade.

Besides such critical assessments of our results, at least one possible bearing for future developments in the political sector deserves comments. According to our results, the religious values were of less importance for the public sector than for

the private. Given the assumption that the religious decline will continue, that religion's impact on the public sphere will continue to be of lesser magnitude, that the increase of political individualism will continue, and that its impact on other values in the public sector will increase, it is tempting to forecast that the former, stabilizing impact on the political arena provided by the religious orientations, will decrease. In a comparative EVS-study on value profiles in Catholic and Protestant countries, a similar conclusion was made. Religious involvement was more associated with the perseverance of the present political system, than with the renewal and change of it (Pettersson, 1996).

Given the developments assumed by our theoretical analyses, it is equally tempting to forecast that decreasing parts of the populations are holding such religious value systems as described here, would be more easily mobilized for conservative protests against the modernization of relations within the private familial sphere, than for the support of various modernization policies within the public. Thus, it might be argued that our results forecast religious cleavages in the political system primarily in issues related to family politics.

Notes

1. The correlations between religion and the three separate domains are equal to the standardized coefficients. However, the results were not the same when compared with a model where only correlations between religion and the three domains are hypothesized.
2. Evaluation of the LISREL models in 1990

	χ^2	p	df	gfi	agfi		
Ireland	257.23	0.0	51	.95	.92		
Spain	241.90	0.0	51	.97	.95		
Germany	500.98	0.0	51	.93	.	9	0
The Netherlands	518.24	0.0	51	.90	.85		
Sweden	253.50	0.0	51	.95	.92		

It should be noted that the models can be improved by introducing correlations between the domains of family and politics, which can be established by estimating direct effects between both domains, or by estimating a correlation between their error components. However, for the purposes of this paper, we are not interested in these associations.

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