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Atlas of European Values

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Loek Halman, Ruud Luijkx and Marga van Zundert, eds,
Atlas of European Values, European Values Studies, Vol. 8. Leiden:
 Brill/Tilburg University, 2005, 140 pp., ISBN 900414460, €129.

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Since 1981, three cross-national surveys have been organized under the heading European Values Studies (EVS). Moreover, World Values Studies were carried out in 1985. The large amounts of data that were collected have been published on websites (www.europeanvalues.nl) and analysed in numerous books and articles.

This atlas summarizes and presents the findings of the 1999/2000 wave to a larger audience, through 200 maps, graphs and charts in full colour. The findings are introduced for the non-specialist. Scholars from Tilburg University (which initiated the research project and has been coordinating it ever since) comment on the findings in short 'outlooks'. Pictures, printed on two full pages, illustrate the themes of this volume, namely: Europe, family, work, religion, politics, society and well-being.

By bringing together a wealth of information in an attractive way, the Atlas is a powerful testimony of Europe's diversity. The audience will primarily consist of politicians, journalists, civil servants and others who can afford to spend the €129. They will gain access to information that would otherwise be filed in scholarly publications. Yet, the atlas may also be an advantage to academic sociologists. They will be able to validate their hypotheses and assumptions on a wide range of subjects. For example, Scandinavians are said to be liberal minded, but Norway has the highest score on 'blind obedience': '60 percent of Norwegians follow instructions immediately' is one of the catchphrases.

This example also illustrates the limitations of the approach: this exact figure is nowhere to be found in graphs, nor in the accompanying text. Those who are interested in the details have to look elsewhere. The same is true for those who are interested in correlations and explanations. The atlas presents intriguing examples of how the data are distributed not only by country or region, but also by gender or

age. It does not, however, answer the question of what it *means* that, for example, older people tend to have a less global orientation: is it an effect of age, cohort, or time? Still, the atlas is a very stimulating appetizer, precisely because it raises these questions.

The quality of the introductions and comments is quite diverse. Some confront scholarly opinions, for example on post-materialism, with the facts that are provided; others merely utter personal, political, or scientific opinions on the issue, more or less regardless of what the data tell us.

I was primarily interested in the section on religion. Earlier publications (Draulans and Halman, 2005) have indicated that most of the theories about secularization were not sustained by these cross-national data. It appeared that the traditional religious European landscape, consisting of Catholic, Protestant, mixed, Orthodox, and (since Turkey was included in the survey) Muslim countries, is still a major factor in the explanation of differences. Yet, this is not the message that is presented in the atlas. The two-page photograph that introduces the section is a picture of an eastern style meditation room with the figure of Christ in the background. This image suggests the idea that religion is giving way to spirituality. This is, indeed, what both the introduction and the 'outlook' claim. The introduction, written by a journalist who is not mentioned among the authors, characterizes Europe's religion as a 'cafeteria religion' or a 'church-free spirituality'. In fact, no data are presented on a growing interest in spirituality, or on historical trends whatsoever, since the atlas only covers the 1999/2000 data.

The outlook mentions the 'new suppliers of the religious market' as well, and makes a claim for Rodney Stark's religious market theory. Again, his hypothesis was not supported by the analysis of EVS data (Draulans and Halman, 2005; see also Halman and Draulans, 2006). In contrast to Stark's thesis that religious pluralism produces higher levels of religious attendance, dominantly Catholic and dominantly Orthodox countries have higher scores on religiosity. It would have been easy and accurate to mention this, or rather, to stick to the findings at hand.

As to the discussion of the relation between religiosity and commitment to the church, the accompanying text of the atlas is somewhat confusing. The introduction focuses exclusively on 'believing without belonging'. Grace Davie has coined this expression to indicate the category of people who do believe in God, but do not attend church. In the UK, and maybe elsewhere in Europe, this may correspond to a perspective on the church as a public utility: it should be there when you need it. In an accompanying text, the atlas reverses the expression and labels the UK as 'belonging without believing' because of a *relatively* low score on items about belief and saliency among church attendants. This labelling obscures the fact that the content of Davie's characterization of religion in Britain is sustained by EVS data. There are more people in the UK that believe in God and appreciate a religious service at death, marriage or birth, than the numbers in the segment of church attendants.

What EVS data do reject is the thesis that 'believing without belonging' is a dominant pattern in Europe (Halman and Draulans, 2004: 314). According to the EVS measurement, believing *and* belonging is the dominant pattern. The text in the atlas, however, insists on separating the two. It seems that the not-so-exciting scholarly interpretation has been replaced by another interpretation that is not incorrect, but hardly does justice to earlier analyses by the EVS team.

Of course, it is tempting to say more than can be justified by the findings. However, if the only question asked is to choose among four statements about God ('a personal God'; 'some God, spirit or life force'; 'don't know'; 'no God') the interpretation should leave an issue such as creationism versus evolution theory aside. In general, the texts in this chapter embellish the complex information with provocative, sometimes irrelevant and incorrect, statements, where they should introduce the non-specialist reader to the relevance of the findings and an interpretation.

However, the most important part of an atlas is, of course, the maps. They are a great help to quickly figure out how countries score on various variables, to detect patterns between countries and between variables. The column charts are a bit more difficult to deal with, since the EVS nowadays includes so many countries. All the former Eastern European countries and republics, from Lithuania and Montenegro to Azerbaijan, are represented. One has to remember the Internet suffix abbreviations to grasp the meaning of the charts. (Those interested in Britain, however, should mind that *gb* is used instead of *uk*.) A bookmarker helps with this, as it does with identifying the various colours, which are sometimes difficult to distinguish. These are all, I should add, disadvantages of the enormous luxury that EVS presents.

The quality of the data has been discussed in earlier reviews. In my opinion, despite the well-known flaws, the scope and relevance of the data justify the publication of this book. At the very least, this atlas is a sophisticated coffee-table book. Yet, I believe it is more. It enriches our knowledge of Europe and is a great stimulus to using the EVS data both in European policy-making and in our own scientific work.

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