

A Typology of Christian Believers According to the Values They Hold

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Background

- Most group comparisons in psychology of religion focus on between-group differences (e.g., religious vs. secular people), but tend to overlook the subtle differences within the same group.
- Making a blanket statement about a group might misrepresent or mask important variations in characteristics of members in that group, resulting in misguided research.

Saroglou et al.'s (2004) Meta-Analysis

*Religious people higher
on...*

- Tradition
- Conformity
- Benevolence
- Security

*Non-religious people
higher on...*

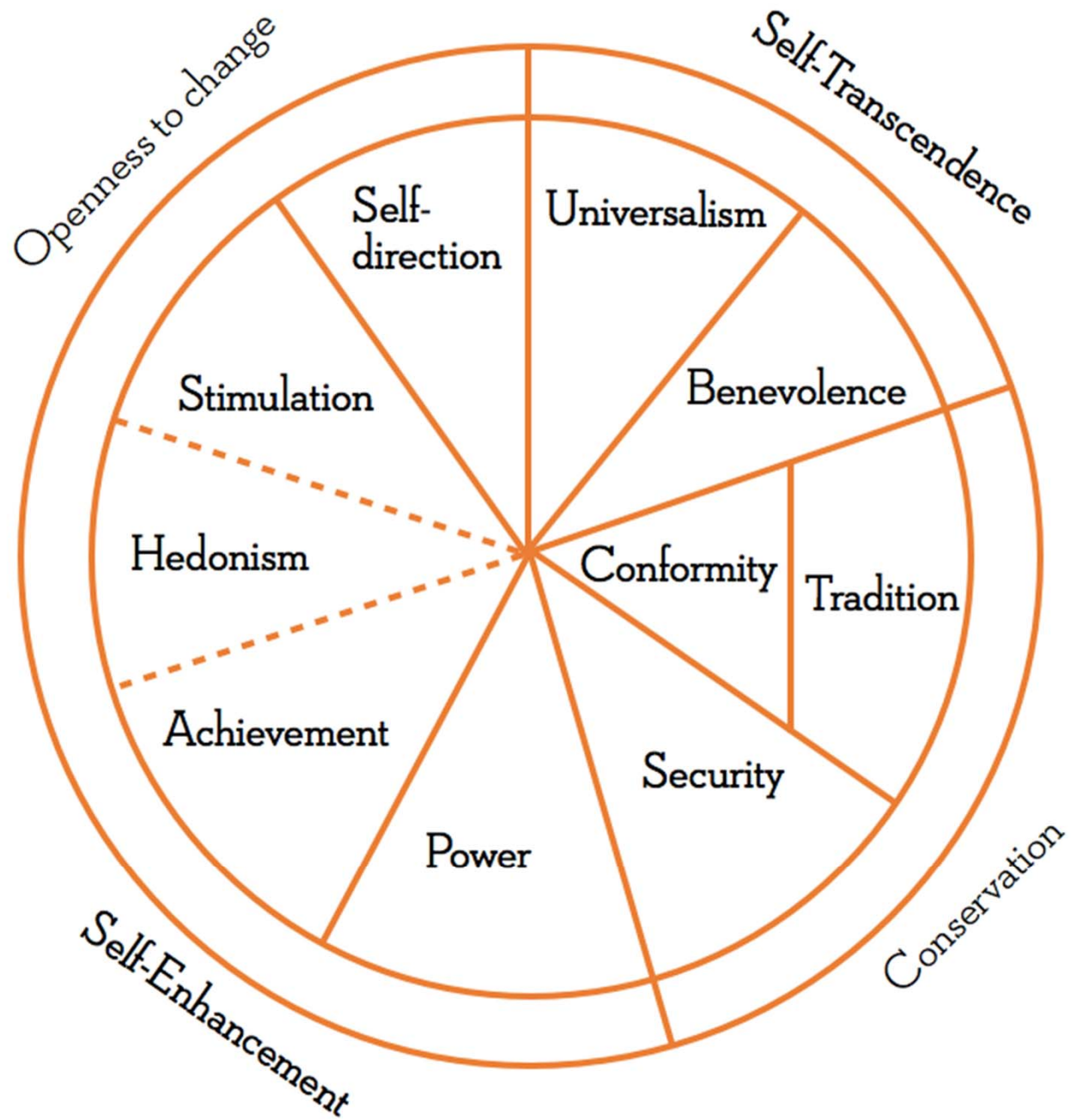
- Stimulation
- Hedonism
- Power
- Achievement
- Self-direction

Background

- Differences in personal values
 - between-group
 - within-group?

Objective

- To examine the within-group variation of Christians on personal values, using Schwartz's conceptual framework



Method

- 1,431 Chinese Christians recruited from
 - 300+ congregations in Hong Kong and Macau
 - 7 universities in Hong Kong and Macau
- Online survey on various subjects, including
 - Religious behaviors
 - Personal values

Schwartz Value Survey

- 57 items

- 1 ____EQUALITY (equal opportunity for all)
- 2 ____INNER HARMONY (at peace with myself)
- 3 ____SOCIAL POWER (control over others, dominance)
- 4 ____PLEASURE (gratification of desires)
- 5 ____FREEDOM (freedom of action and thought)
- 6 ____A SPIRITUAL LIFE (emphasis on spiritual not material)
- 7 ____SENSE OF BELONGING (feeling that others care about me)

Schwartz Value Survey

- 57 items
- Rating on 9-point scale
 - -1 – against my principles
 - 0 – not important
 - 7 – of supreme importance
- Cronbach alphas = .52-.84

Method

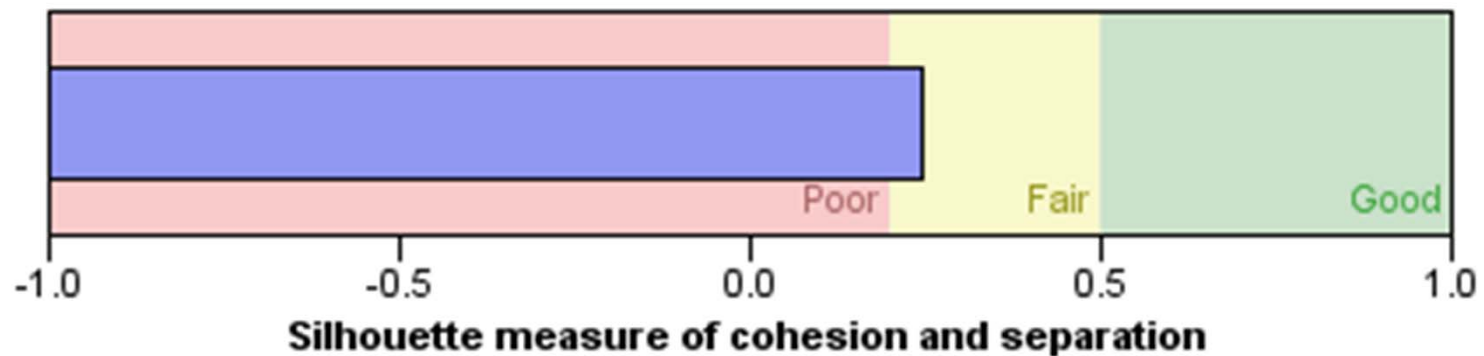
- Two-step cluster analysis
- Unlike K-mean clustering, the two-step procedure is totally data-driven
- The first step is known as preclustering, in which a cluster features (CF) tree is created by scanning all observations.
- Afterwards, the clustering algorithm assigns cases into clusters based on the preclusters.

- Two-step clustering avoids overfitting (creating too many groups to account for diverse responses to different dimensions) by examining Akaike Information Criterion (AIC).
- AIC not only rewards good fit, but also penalizes over-fitting and complexity.

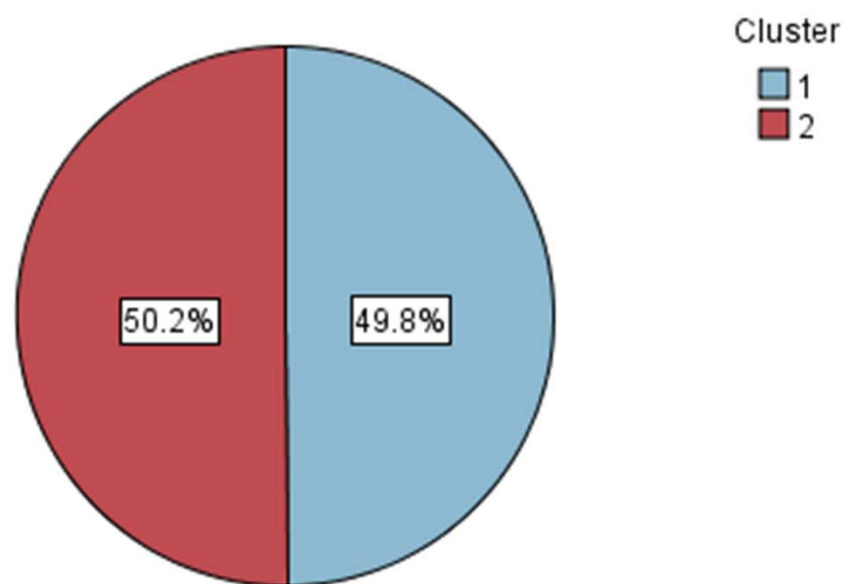
Model Summary

Algorithm	TwoStep
Inputs	10
Clusters	2

Cluster Quality

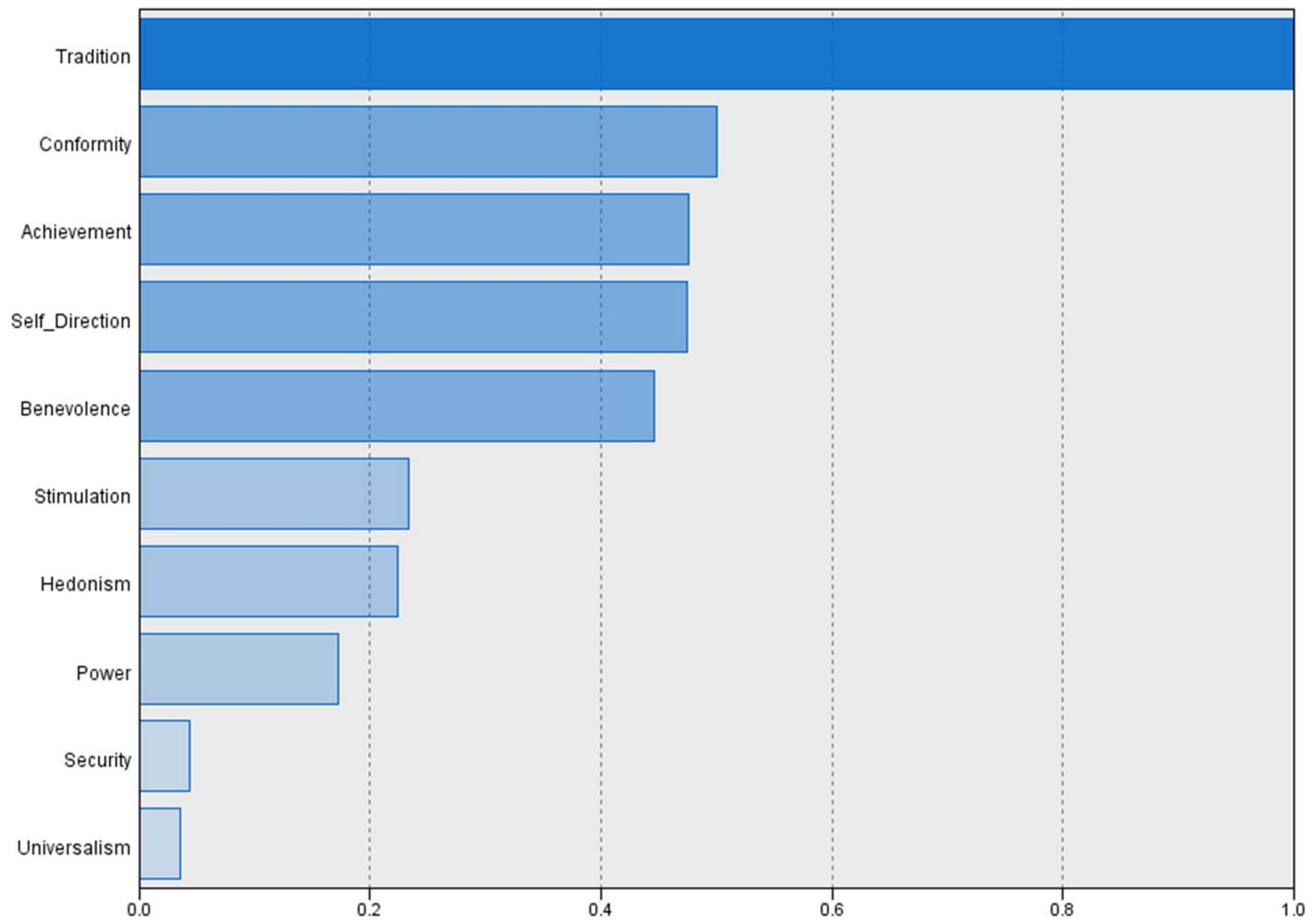


Cluster Sizes



Size of Smallest Cluster	713 (49.8%)
Size of Largest Cluster	718 (50.2%)
Ratio of Sizes: Largest Cluster to Smallest Cluster	1.01

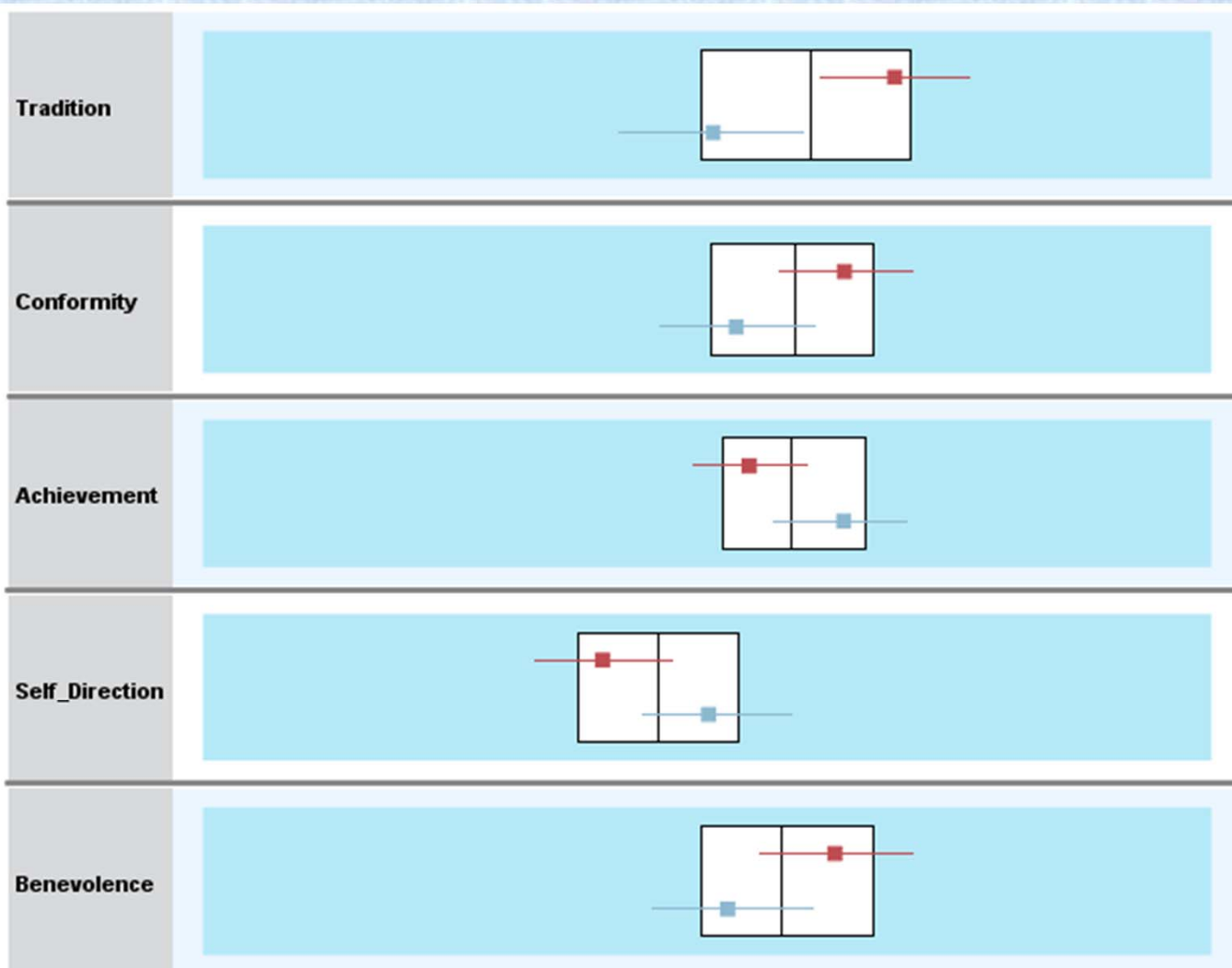
Predictor Importance

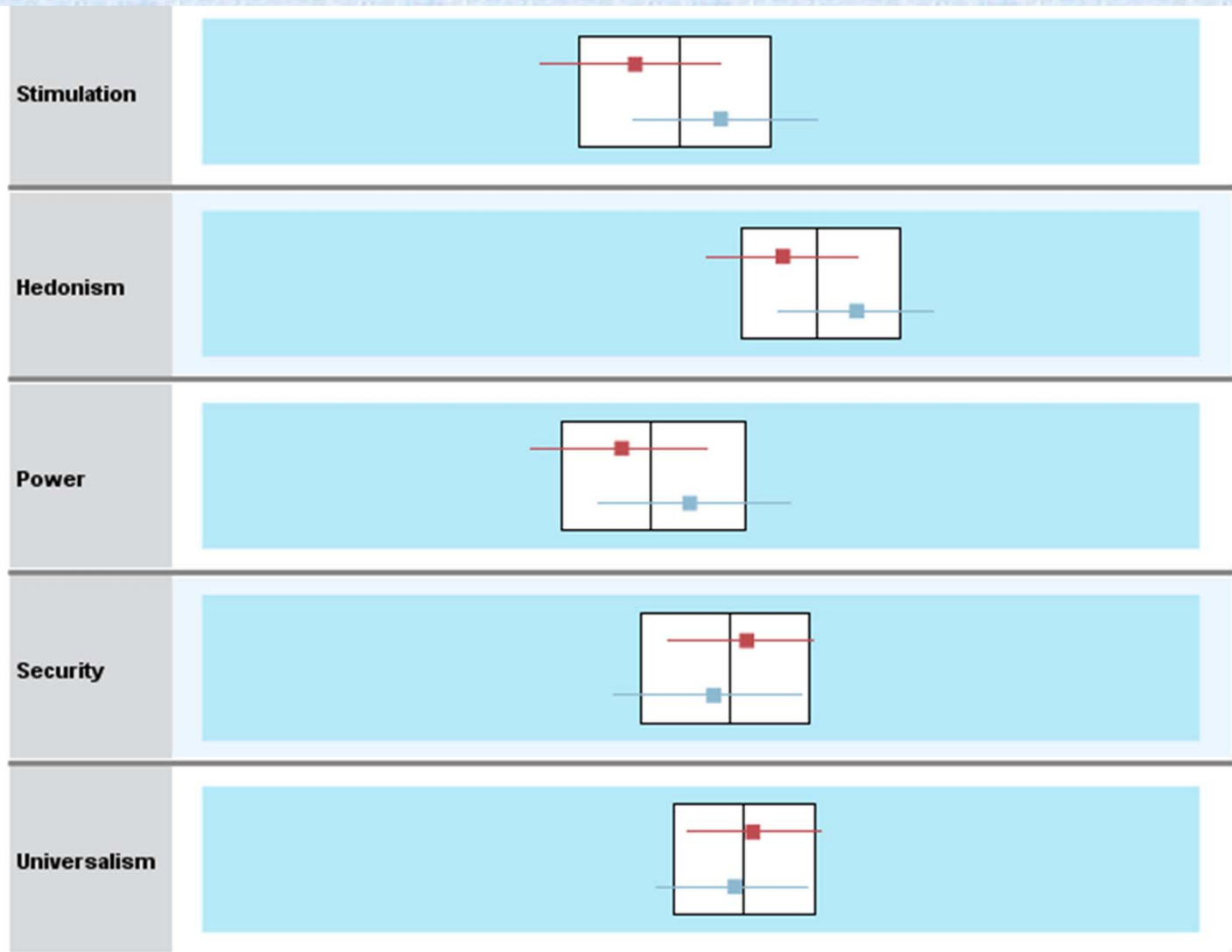


Size	<div><div></div></div> 50.2% (718)	<div><div></div></div> 49.8% (713)
Inputs	Tradition -1.98	Tradition -0.42
	Conformity -0.41	Conformity 0.29
	Achievement 0.53	Achievement -0.02
	Self_Direction 0.68	Self_Direction 0.07
	Benevolence 0.25	Benevolence 0.81
	Stimulation -0.51	Stimulation -1.21
	Hedonism 0.38	Hedonism -0.33
	Power -1.24	Power -1.91
	Security 0.18	Security 0.35
	Universalism 0.30	Universalism 0.43

Cluster Comparison

■ 2 ■ 1





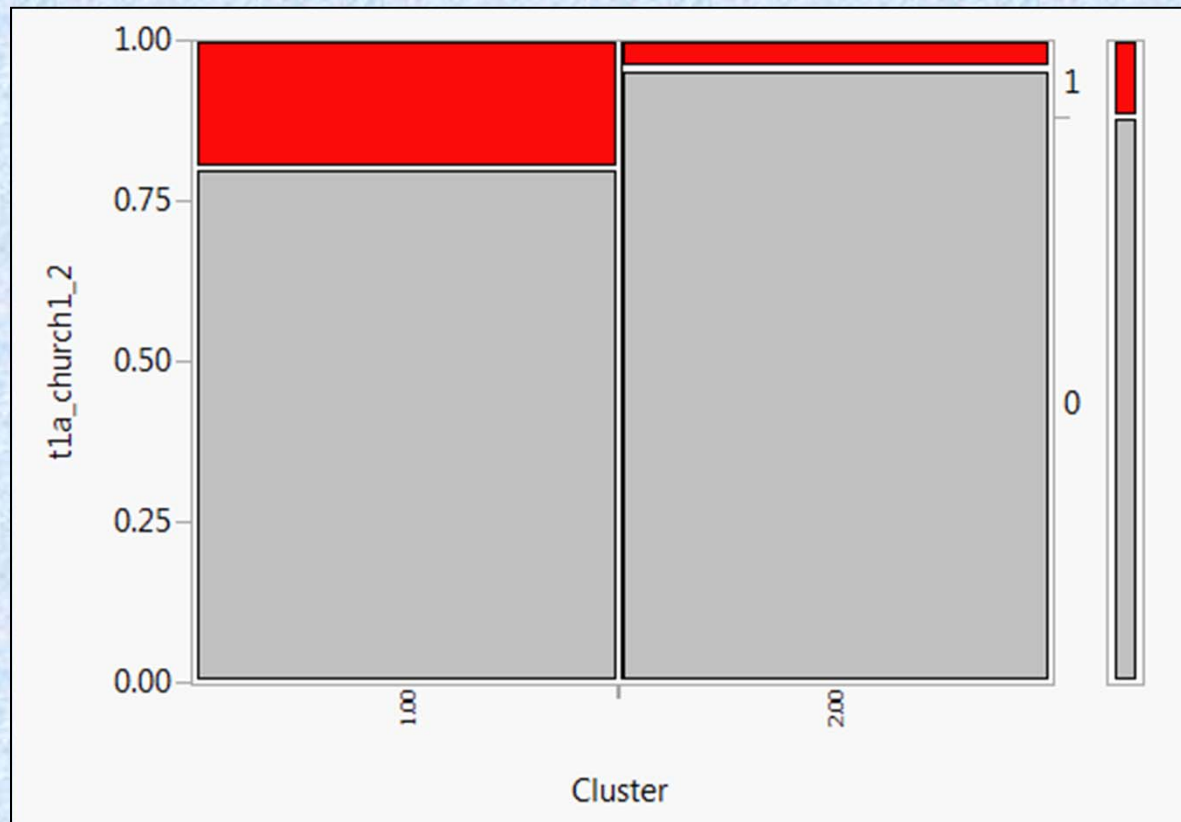
Two Distinct Groups

- Compared to Christians in Cluster 1, Christians in Cluster 2 are
 - Higher on personal focus values, such as self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism, achievement, and power
 - Lower on social focus values, such as conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism. Security is considered self-focused
- Cluster 1: Personal-focused Christians
- Cluster 2: Social-focused Christians

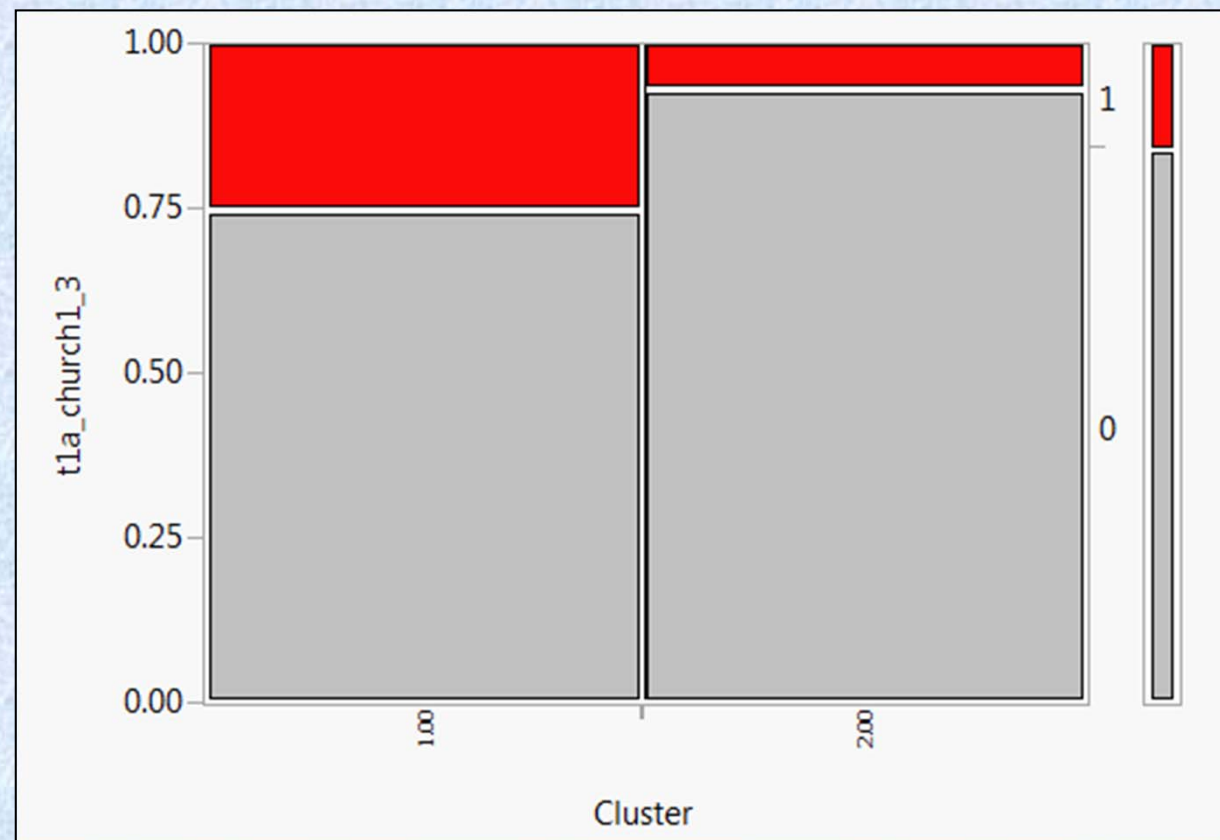
Cluster Membership and Religious Activities

Religious activity	Chi-sq	p
Read one or more Christians books in the past year	89.975	<.0001
Evangelized one or more persons in the past year	82.086	<.0001
Partiicipated in mission meetings in the past year	93.315	<.0001
Supported mission work in the past year	69.268	<.0001
Not participate in any of the above in the past year	0.51	0.7748
Attended Christian fellowship in the past month	74.994	<.0001
Attended Christian cell group in the past month	63.485	<.0001
Attended Christian seminars, Sunday school...etc. in the past month	56.887	<.0001
Served in the church in the past month	86.306	<.0001
Not participate in any of the above in the past month	6.27	0.0435
Read the Bible and pray alone in the past week	19.806	0.006
View or listen to Christian mass media in the past week	11.802	0.107

- For example, more social-focused Christians read one more Christian books (larger red area) than did personal-focused Christians.



- More social-focused Christians shared their faith with others (larger red area) than did personal-focused Christians.



Cause and effect?

- However, we cannot determine the cause-and-effect relationship based on the data alone.
- Do Christians read more Christian books and do other things because their personality is more social-focused, or are they social-focused because they do those things?