

INDIVIDUALISM, AUTONOMY AND SELF-EXPRESSION: THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT

Basic cultural orientations such as Individualism and Collectivism are not static attributes of given societies, but reflect socioeconomic change. Economic development facilitates a shift toward some of the cultural syndromes associated with individualism and away from some of the cultural syndromes associated with collectivism, resulting in increased emphasis on individual freedom-focused values and reduced focus on traditional hierarchies; these cultural shifts are conducive of the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions.

Data from scores of countries demonstrates that Individualism and Collectivism (as measured by Hofstede and Triandis), Autonomy-Embeddness (as measured by Schwartz), and Survival/Self-expression values (as measured by Inglehart) tap a similar underlying construct which reflects the extent to which people give top priority to individual choice, over survival needs. The high correlation between these measures allows for time series analyses of societal change in cultural syndrome by focusing on change over twenty years in the Inglehart measure. Analyses show that at high levels of economic development, Survival/Self-expression values have increased across generations. We propose one important way that culture changes is under the impact of economic development. Experiencing prosperity minimizes survival concerns, making social values associated with survival less important and allowing for increased focus on social values associated with self-expression and personal choice.

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Introduction.

After years of neglect, culture has entered the mainstream of psychology, with the concepts of individualism and collectivism playing prominent roles, along with related concepts of Autonomy vs. Embeddedness values (Schwartz) and Traditional vs. Secular and Survival vs. Self-expression values (Inglehart). Together these constructs focus on the centrality of the individual vs. the group, group traditions vs. individual wants. Triandis (1995) claims that there is more research on Individualism-Collectivism than on any other psychological dimension and Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelman (2002) cite hundreds of studies dealing with it. Greenfield (2000) sees Individualism/Collectivism as the “deep structure” of cultural differences, from which all other differences evolved. And evidence presented here indicates that this is one of two paramount dimensions of cross-cultural variation (the other being Traditional-religious vs. Secular-rational values, also the subject of a massive literature).

Typically, individualism is conceptualized as the opposite of collectivism especially when contrasting Western and East Asian cultures. Social scientists assume that individualism is more prevalent in industrialized Western societies than elsewhere, arguing that Protestantism and civic emancipation in Western societies resulted in social and civic structures that championed the role of individual choice, personal freedom (including the right not to follow a religion), and self-actualization (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelemer,

2002). Individualism is defined as focus on the individual as the basic unit of analysis, collectivism is defined as focus on the group as the basic unit of analysis, a definition similar to Schwartz conceptualization of the primacy of Autonomy vs. Embeddedness values and Inglehart's definition of Survival vs. Self-expression values as the extent people value individual choice over survival needs.

As we will demonstrate, Individualism-Collectivism taps the same dimension of cross-cultural variation as does Survival/Self-expression values (which reflect the extent to which people give top priority to individual choice, over survival needs). It has been demonstrated that Survival/Self-expression values are becoming more widespread through intergenerational changes that emerge at high levels of economic development when existential constraints on human choice recede (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Welzel, Inglehart and Klingemann, 2003). Furthermore, as we will demonstrate, Schwartz' Autonomy-Embeddedness construct also taps this same dimension.

Individualism-Collectivism, Autonomy-Embeddedness and Survival/Self-expression values all reflect an increasing cultural emphasis on broadening human choice. This trend is linked with economic prosperity, which reduces existential constraints on human choice and liberates people from the pressures of material scarcity; and emancipates people from cultural constraints, which are necessarily relatively restrictive under conditions of scarcity.

Current cultural psychological theorizing encompasses two contradictory visions of culture as both static and malleable. Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon (2002) suggest that static models view culture as a historically pre-determined set of between group

differences based in historical, religious, philosophical, and linguistic differences while malleable models view culture as a current set of relatively pliable between group differences based in focus on the self. In the latter view, just as current average cultural differences emerged, they are dynamic and changing. Typically, psychologists making the point that cultural is malleable have turned to priming studies to show that between country differences can be modeled by changing self-focus in priming studies (e.g. Haberstroh, Oyserman, Kuhnen, & Schwarz, 2002).

This current paper focuses not on individual-level malleability but on society-level malleability, arguing that a powerful force producing such malleability in societal-average values is socioeconomic change and that the specific form of change is channeled by the dual forces of philosophical-religious orientation and political organization (the strengthening of democracy). We outline a model describing the process, shape and direction of change. To provide supporting evidence, we first show that the widely used scales of cultural difference, Individualism and Collectivism (Hofstede, Triandis), Autonomy vs. Embeddedness (Schwartz), and the two dimensions of Traditional vs. Secular values and Survival vs. Self-expression values (Inglehart) are highly correlated, suggesting considerable overlap in the underlying dimensions captured by these labels. Then we use data from one set of measures, Survival/Self-expression values, to extrapolate a more general model of cultural change. We focus on this set because the World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys¹ have measured Survival/Self-expression values at

¹ These surveys cover 80 societies containing almost 85 % of the world's population, and provide time series data from the earliest wave in 1981 to the most recent wave completed in 2002. In order to analyze changes, the values surveys have conducted multiple waves, with a first wave in 1981-82, a second one in 1990-1991, a third wave in 1995-1997 and a fourth in 1999-2001. For detailed information about these surveys, see the

multiple time points across the 20 years from 1980-2000. To foreshadow our results, we will show that cross-nationally, there is a generational shift toward greater acceptance of self-expression values and lower acceptance of survival values in countries with high levels of economic development (see also Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Welzel, 2003; Welzel, Inglehart and Klingemann, 2003). We argue that citizens in societies experiencing economic prosperity (rather than scarcity) are less likely to focus primarily on maintaining their material existence, which emancipates people from the cultural restrictions on personal choice necessary under conditions of scarcity.

Our central thesis is that economic development facilitates a shift toward the free choice aspects of individualism and away from the traditional survival aspects of collectivism, producing increasing emphasis on individual freedom-focused values and weakening the focus on traditional hierarchies. As we will demonstrate, this cultural shift is conducive to the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions.

Defining individualism and collectivism and related terms

Individualism and collectivism

Modern usage of the term individualism is closely connected with the work of Hofstede (1980), who defined *individualism* as a focus on rights above duties, a concern for oneself and immediate family, an emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, and basing identity on one's personal accomplishments. Although Hofstede's initial research did not measure individualism and collectivism as two separate dimensions, his

World Values Survey web sites at <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu> and <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>, and the European Values Survey web site <http://evs.kub.nl>.

framework foreshadowed the multi-dimensional issues relevant to understanding cultural difference -- power distance and what he termed a culture's masculinity-femininity (Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1995). According to Oyserman Coon, & Kemmelmeier (2002), individualism implies that (a) creating and maintaining a positive sense of self is a basic human endeavor, (b) feeling good about oneself, personal success, and having distinctive personal attitudes are valued; and (c) abstract traits (as opposed to situational descriptors) are central to self-definition. Individualism implies that open expression and attainment of one's personal goals are important sources of well-being; and that causal inference is generally oriented toward the person rather than the situation because the self is assumed to be stable. Consequently, individualism promotes a decontextualized, as opposed to situation-specific, reasoning style. Lastly, individualism implies a somewhat ambivalent stance toward relationships. Individuals need relationships and group memberships to attain self-relevant goals, but relationships are costly to maintain. Individualists balance off relationships' costs and benefits, leaving relationships when the costs of participation exceed the benefits; consequently, relationships and group memberships are impermanent and non-intensive.

The core element of collectivism is the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals. In these societies, social units with a common fate and common goals are central; the personal is simply a component of the social, making the in-group crucial. Oyserman and her colleagues (2002) argued that collectivism implies that (a) group membership is a central aspect of identity and (b) valued personal traits reflect the goals of collectivism, such as sacrifice for the common good. Furthermore, collectivism implies

that (a) life satisfaction derives from successfully carrying out social roles and obligations and (b) restraint in emotional expression is valued to ensure in-group harmony.

Cognitively, collectivism suggests that (a) social context, and social roles figure prominently in perceptions and causal reasoning and (b) meaning is contextualized.

Finally, collectivism implies that (a) important group memberships are seen as fixed “facts of life” to which people must accommodate; (b) boundaries between in-groups and out-groups are stable, relatively impermeable, and important; and (c) in-group exchanges are based on equality or even generosity principles.

Traditional vs. secular values and Survival vs. Self-expression values

Empirically, individualism and collectivism are closely linked to two other organizing frameworks of values developed independently by Inglehart and by Schwartz. First we describe the values framework developed by Inglehart. In a factor analysis of national-level data from the 43 societies included in the 1990 World Values Survey, Inglehart (1997) found that two main dimensions accounted for over 70 percent of the cross-national variance in a pool of variables tapping basic values in a wide range of domains ranging from politics to economic life and sexual behavior. He termed these “Traditional vs. Secular-rational values” and “Survival vs. Self-expression values.” Together, these axes explain most of the cross-national variance in a factor analysis of ten indicators—and each of these dimensions is strongly correlated with scores of other important orientations, reflecting a common underlying dimension focusing on human emancipation and choice (as Table 1 below illustrates).

(Table 1 about here)

We replicated Inglehart and Baker's factor analysis, and then identified the attitudes that are closely correlated with the Survival/Self-expression dimension. Table 1 shows the wide range of beliefs and values that are strongly correlated with this dimension. A central component involves the polarization between Materialist and Postmaterialist values. As can be seen in Table 1, the Traditional vs. Secular-rational values dimension reflects the contrast between societies for which religion is very important and those for which it is not and this distinction is correlated with other related value choices. Societies near the traditional pole emphasize the importance of parent-child ties and deference to authority, along with absolute standards and traditional family values, rejection of divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide as possible personal choices. These societies have high levels of national pride, and a nationalistic outlook. Societies with secular-rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics.

Similarly, societies that differ in Survival vs. Self-expression values also differ in a range of values that can be seen as Materialist vs. Post-materialist values. That is, those endorsing self-expression values also give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of diversity (including gender equality, and tolerance of outgroups – foreigners,

Table 1. Correlates of Survival vs. Self-expression Values

SURVIVAL VALUES emphasize the following:	
Attitude:	Correlation:
*R. gives priority to economic and physical security over self expression and quality of life [Materialist/Postmaterialist Values]	.87
Men make better political leaders than women	.86
R. is not highly satisfied with life	.84
A woman has to have children to be fulfilled	.83
R. rejects foreigners, homosexuals and people with AIDS as neighbors	.81
*R. has not and would not sign a petition	.80
*R. is not very happy	.79
R. favors more emphasis on the development of technology	.78
*Homosexuality is never justifiable	.78
R. has not recycled something to protect the environment	.76
R. has not attended a meeting or signed a petition to protect the environment	.75
A good income and safe job are more important than a feeling of accomplishment and working with people you like	.74
R. does not rate own health as very good	.73
A child needs a home with both a father and a mother in order to grow up happily	.73
When jobs are scarce, a man has more right to a job than a women	.69
A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl	.67
Government should ensure that everyone is provided for	.69
Hard work is one of the most important things to teach a child	.65
Imagination is not of the most important things to teach a child	.62
Tolerance is not of the most important things to teach a child	.62
Leisure is not very important in life	.61
Scientific discoveries will help, rather than harm, humanity	.60
Friends are not very important in life	.56
*You have to be very careful about trusting people	.56
R. has not and would not join a boycott	.56
R. is relatively favorable to state ownership of business and industry	.54

SELF-EXPRESSION VALUES take opposite position on all of above

The original polarities vary; the above statements show how each item relates to this values index. The five items used in the factor analysis that generated this dimension are indicated with an asterisk. To make cross-time comparisons possible, only items that were asked in all four waves of the survey were used—hence some items that show very strong correlations with this dimension were not used to generate this factor.

Source: World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys.

gays and lesbians) and value broad-based participation in decision-making in economic and political life as well as child-rearing values emphasizing teaching the child imagination and tolerance rather than hard work. Societies that rank high on survival values tend to emphasize Materialist values, show relatively low levels of subjective well-being and report relatively poor health, are relatively intolerant toward outgroups, low on interpersonal trust, and they emphasize hard work, rather than imagination or tolerance, as important things to teach a child. Societies high on self-expression values tend to have the opposite preferences on all of these topics. Environmental protection issues are also closely linked with this dimension, as well as an emphasis on gender equality and the toleration of gays and lesbians.

Those who emphasize survival values have not engaged in recycling, have not attended environmentalist meetings or supported environmental protection in other ways; but they favor more emphasis on developing technology and are confident that scientific discoveries will help, rather than hurt, humanity. Those with self-expression values tend to have the opposite characteristics. They are more aware of technological risks, more sensitive to human rights and more attentive to discrimination against underprivileged groups.

One of the most important social changes of the past few decades has been the revolution in gender roles that has transformed the lives of a majority of the population throughout advanced industrial society. Since the dawn of recorded history, women have been narrowly restricted to the roles of wife and mother, with few other options. In recent

decades, this has changed dramatically. Several of the items in Table 1 involve the role of women: The survival/self-expression dimension reflects mass polarization over such questions as whether “A woman has to have children to be fulfilled;” or whether “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women;” or whether “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.” But one item taps this dimension particularly well: the question whether “Men make better political leaders than women.” Responses to this question are very strongly correlated with the survival/self-expression dimension—almost as strongly correlated as is the Materialist/Postmaterialist values battery.

These dimensions of cross-cultural variation are robust. Inglehart and Baker (2000) provide full details on how these dimensions were measured, together with factor analyses at both the individual level and the national level, demonstrating that the same dimensional structure emerges at both levels. Moreover, when the 1990-1991 World Values factor analysis was replicated with the data from the 1995-1998 World Values surveys, the same two dimensions of cross-cultural variation emerged as from the earlier surveys—even though the new analysis was based on surveys that covered 23 additional countries that were not included in the earlier surveys.

Autonomy vs. Embeddedness values

In a separate empirical approach to understanding cross-national convergence and divergence of values, Schwartz and his colleagues studied values in a series of surveys of students and teachers in scores of societies. Based on the assumption that all societies must resolve basic tensions between individual and group needs in some way, Schwartz has

examined a large array of value choices. Dimensional analysis reveals an Autonomy-Embeddedness construct that fits well with the basic notions of individualism and collectivism. According to Schwartz:

“In autonomy cultures, people are viewed as autonomous, bounded entities. They cultivate and express their own preferences, feelings, ideas, and abilities, and find meaning in their own uniqueness. *Intellectual autonomy* encourages individuals to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently. Important values in such cultures include broadmindedness, curiosity, and creativity. *Affective autonomy* encourages individuals to pursue affectively positive experience for themselves. Important values include pleasure, exciting life, and varied life.”

“In embeddedness cultures, meaning in life comes largely through social relationships, identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. Embedded cultures emphasize maintaining the status quo and restraining actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order. Important values in such cultures are social order, respect for tradition, security, obedience, and wisdom.” (Schwartz, 2003).

Individualism and collectivism are strongly linked with the values expressed in Autonomy vs. Embeddedness and Survival vs. Self-Expression, Traditional vs. Secular values

Using data the country-level measures of Individualism-collectivism provided by Hofstede (1980, 2001) and Triandis (1989, 2001, 2003), Schwartz’s (1992, 1994, 2003) country-level Autonomy country-level scores, and Inglehart’s (1997, 2000) country-level Self-expression values scores, we examined overlap in these constructs. Empirically, mean national scores on these three variables show correlations that range from .62 to .70, with an average strength of .66. Factor analysis of the mean national scores, reveals that Individualism, Autonomy and Self-expression values measure a single underlying dimension; only one dimension emerges and it accounts for fully 78 percent of the cross-national variance (see Table 2). Triandis’ individualism-collectivism ratings are also highly correlated, dimension ($r = .88$), but it makes little sense to add it to this factor

analysis, since his scores are based on Hofstede's data, supplemented with estimated scores for a number of additional countries.² Although crude, this analysis suggests that individualism, autonomy and self-expression values all tap a common dimension of cross-cultural variation, reflecting relative emphasis on human emancipation and choice. High levels of Individualism go with high levels of Autonomy and high levels of Self-expression values. Hofstede's, Schwartz's, Triandis' and Inglehart's measures all tap cross-cultural variation in the same basic aspect of human psychology-- the drive toward broader human choice. Societies that rank high on self-expression tend to emphasize individual autonomy and the quality of life, rather than economic and physical security. Their publics have relatively low levels of confidence in technology and scientific discoveries as the solution to human problems, and are relatively likely to act to protect the environment. These societies also rank relatively high on gender equality, tolerance of gays, lesbians, foreigners and other outgroups; show relatively high levels of subjective well-being, and interpersonal trust, and they emphasize imagination and tolerance, as important things to teach a child.

This dimension is remarkably robust. It emerges when one uses different measuring approaches, different types of samples and different time periods. Hofstede found it in the late 1960s and early 1970s, analyzing the values of a cross-national sample of IBM employees. Schwartz measured it in surveys of students and teachers carried out from 1988 to 2002; and Inglehart first found it in analysis of representative national samples of the publics of 43 societies surveyed in 1990; the same dimension emerged in

² Hofstede's Power Distance rankings are also strongly related to this dimension; $r = -.72$.

representative national samples of 60 societies, interviewed in 1995; and in surveys of the publics of more than 70 societies carried out in 2000. This dimension seems to be a robust and enduring feature of cross-cultural variation—so much so that one could almost conclude that it is difficult to *avoid* finding it if one measures the basic values of a broad sample of cultures.

(Insert Table 2 About Here)

Table 2.

The Individualism/Autonomy/Self-expression dimension: Emphasis on Human Choice	
(principal component analysis)	variance explained 78%
Inglehart, Survival/Self-expression values	.91
Hofstede, Individualism-Collectivism rankings	.87
Schwartz, Autonomy-Embeddedness , (mean of student/teacher samples)	.87

Source: based on mean national scores for the respective measures. High scores on the respective dimensions reflect Self-Expression values, Individualism and Autonomy.

A dynamic perspective on cross-cultural differences: Economic prosperity as a source of cultural change

As the previous section clarified, a number of theoretical-empirical approaches overlap in suggesting that societies differ systematically in whether the group or the individual is centralized. Although important, describing these differences does not provide a framework to understand the extent to which these are more or less permanent attributes of given cultures, how societies come to make value choices favoring the group or the individual, or how these choices may change over time in systematic ways. Two basic organizing themes have been suggested – concerns about survival and religious/philosophical meaning systems.

Concerns about survival

It has been suggested that societies may emphasize collective values because, in resource poor contexts, survival depends on the ability of individuals to work together in supportive groups, making survival of the group central, this initial level of scarcity may permanently set in motion a society weighted toward collectivism (Oyserman, Kemelmeier, & Coon, 2002). Following this line of reasoning, the extent survival or self-expression values (and Individualism vs. Collectivism) are centralized reflects the extent physical survival is perceived to be secure or insecure. Throughout most of history, survival has been precarious for most people. Malnutrition and associated diseases were the leading cause of death. Under these conditions, survival values take top priority.

Survival is such a fundamental goal that if it seems uncertain, one's entire life strategy is oriented by this fact.

Religious/philosophical meaning systems

Alternatively, it has been suggested that worldviews/religions/philosophies may shape emphasis on interdependence or independence of individuals – again, with historical differences becoming fixed social frameworks even when conditions change. Within the West, Protestantism and Catholicism were seen in this way, Weber (1904/1958) argued that a key difference between Protestant societies and Catholic societies was the individual focus linked with Protestantism, versus the collective focus of Catholicism. Tönnies's (1887/1963) emphasized the distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, or community and society. *Gemeinschaft* reflects mutual sympathy, habit, and common beliefs that have an intrinsic value to their members; associations based on *Gesellschaft* are intended to be means to specific ends. More recently, Nisbett (2003) argues for differences in Eastern and Western thought based on whether figure and ground are contrasted (individual as separate) or viewed as a whole (individual as part of the group).

Fitting survival and religious/philosophical themes into a model about cultural change

While interesting, neither survival nor religion-based frameworks propose a systematic model of how cultures change. More than a century ago, Tönnies suggested that economic development tends to bring systematic changes in worldviews. We follow this line of reasoning, as reintroduced by Inglehart (1971). Inglehart (1971) proposed that, as a result of the rapid economic development and the expansion of the welfare state that followed World War II, the formative experiences of the younger birth cohorts in advanced

industrial societies differed from those of older cohorts in fundamental ways that were leading them to develop different value priorities. Specifically, he argued that throughout most of history, the threat of severe economic deprivation or even starvation has been a crucial concern for most people, resulting in relatively high levels of traditional as opposed to humanistic values. The post war generation in most industrialized societies experienced an historically unprecedented degree of economic security, leading to a gradual shift from "Materialist" values (emphasizing economic and physical security above all) toward "Postmaterialist" priorities (emphasizing self-expression and the quality of life). This would mean that both Protestant-shaped and Catholic-shaped societies should be moving toward more valuation of self-expression values, though the movement would be shaped by the initial contours set by these divergent worldviews. Evidence of the proposed intergenerational value change began to be gathered by Inglehart and his colleagues cross-nationally in 1970; a long time series has now been built up, making it possible to carry out cohort analyses over a 30-year period. The results demonstrate that the predicted intergenerational value change has indeed taken place (Inglehart, 1997: 131-159).

More recent analyses indicate that this shift is only one component of a broader cultural shift, from Survival values to Self-expression values (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Data from scores of societies indicates that self-expression values increase over time as economic prosperity increases. But this shift does not occur uniformly enduring religious-ideological worldviews and historical experiences shape the contour of the shift.

In recent history, a growing number of societies have attained unprecedented levels of economic development. Real per capita GNP has risen to levels far higher than were ever experienced before the 20th century—in some cases, 30 or 40 times higher. Increased societal wealth and the emergence of the welfare state have reduced the danger of starvation to a peripheral concern—opening up a much broader range of choice in people’s selection of religious and political orientations, their partners, their careers, their leisure activities and lifestyles. While it is undeniable that wealth and secular, self-expression values are linked, we argue that the causal path is more strongly from increasing wealth to values shift rather than the reverse (values shift encouraging increased societal wealth).

Self-Expression values: a dynamic perspective on cross-cultural differences

We borrow from regulatory focus theory to make our case for this causal reasoning. Regulatory focus theory (e.g., Förster, Higgins and Idson, 1998; Higgins, 1999) proposes that in situations that make salient threat and the need for survival, individuals become “prevention focused” seeking to avoid problems and failures even if the cost is high. Conversely, when situations focus attention on the possibility of attaining gains and successes, individuals become “promotion focused” seeking to attain goals and not miss opportunities for advancement. Because promotion focus targets chances of success, concerns about possible costs of failure pale in comparison to concerns about missing chances to fulfill one’s potential. Conversely, because prevention focus targets chances of failure, concerns about possible costs of avoiding failure pale in comparison to concerns about failure itself – failing to be the person one ought to become, failing to keep one’s

children safe, failing to live up to standards. Even subtle shifts in situations can prompt shift in self-regulatory focus. Indeed, promotion and prevention focus seem physiologically linked to approaching (or bringing toward the self) stimuli and avoiding (or moving away from the self, pushing away) stimuli.

We extrapolate from this mostly experimental social psychological evidence to propose that when social situations involve insecurity and threats, people are more likely to be oriented toward a “prevention focus,” applying survival strategies and trying to avoid harmful losses and failures. Conversely, when social situations involve secure and opportunities for advancement and achievement, people are more likely to be oriented toward a “promotion focus,” striving to attain successes through initiative, creativity and self-expressive strategies. From this perspective, economic development is immensely important because it changes the social situation of whole populations on a permanent basis. When economic development removes concerns about survival, a “promotion focus” becomes an enduring part of a society’s cultural outlook, as reflected in a growing dominance of self-expression values over survival values. In this way, cultural change at a societal level is parallel to individual psychological mechanisms of change.

In sum, liberation from threats to material existence reduces the centrality of survival-focused values and gives higher priority to freedom of choice. This change has immensely important societal implications, transforming orientations toward religion, politics, job motivations, leisure, sexual norms, child-rearing norms and other aspects of life. In all of these domains, with prosperity comes a growing emphasis on human choice and autonomy in the selection of their religious and political orientations, their mates, their

careers and their lifestyles. This increasing emphasis on human choice brings growing public pressures that keep elites accountable and strengthen democratic institutions (Welzel, 2003).

Evidence of the postulated shift over time from the World Values Survey

Do postmaterialist values emerge among birth cohorts that grew up under conditions in which people take survival for granted and no longer feel the existential insecurity that restricts human autonomy and choice? We do indeed see an intergenerational shift from emphasis on economic and physical security, toward increasing emphasis on self-expression, subjective well-being and quality of life concerns (Inglehart, 1971, 1990, 1997). During the past 30 years, these values have become increasingly widespread throughout advanced industrial societies, but they are only one component of a much broader dimension of cultural change. Analyses of the Values Survey data shows that over time, the emergence of high levels of material prosperity and the reduction of existential threats to survival at the societal-level tends to transform human motivations and worldviews, bringing fundamental changes in various domains of human values from job motivations to gender roles, and leading to political changes that are conducive to the emergence and survival of democratic institutions (Welzel and Inglehart, forthcoming).

In keeping with this claim, Self-expression values are much more widespread among the publics of rich countries than in poor ones (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Further, this framework explains the anomaly noted in Oyserman and colleagues' (2002) meta-analyses, which showed that Japanese, are no lower on

individualism than Americans. Moreover, in wealthy societies we find large intergenerational differences, with younger birth cohorts being much more likely to emphasize Self-expression values than are members of the older cohorts. The intergenerational change toward Self-expression values is based on intergenerational differences in societal prosperity. Accordingly, the Values Survey time series data show that from 1981 to 2000, most countries that experienced high levels of prosperity moved toward increasing emphasis on Self-expression values. That the effect is due to prosperity is bolstered by the fact that the effect was found only in prosperous countries and not in low-income countries.

Economic development is associated with predictable changes away from absolute norms and values, toward a syndrome of increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting, and self-expressive values that emphasize human choice. We find large and pervasive differences between the worldviews of people in rich and poor societies; their basic values and beliefs differ on scores of key variables, in a coherent pattern. Richer societies tend to be high on both self-expression and secular values, while low-income societies tend to be high in survival and traditional values. Does this mean that economic development brings predictable changes in prevailing values? The evidence suggests that it does: time series evidence from the World Values surveys shows that with economic development, societies tend to move from the values prevailing in low-income societies, toward the values prevailing in high-income societies (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Inglehart and Baker (2000) also show that shift from traditional to secular values is linked with the transition from agrarian society to industrial society: societies with secular-rational values tend to

have a low percentage of their work force in the agricultural sector ($r = -.49$) and a high percentage of industrial workers ($r = .65$). The shift from survival to self-expression values, on the other hand, is linked with the transition from industrial society to a knowledge society, showing a .72 correlation with the percentage of the labor force in the *service* sector.

The World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys show that substantial changes have occurred in the values and beliefs of the publics of advanced industrial societies, even during the relatively brief time span since 1981.³ These changes are closely linked with long-term economic changes that are reflected in a society's level of prosperity. Societies that experience economic development tend to shift their emphasis from Traditional values and Survival values, toward increasing emphasis on Secular-rational values and Self-expression values.

Evidence that shift toward societal values shift moves with shift toward democracy

The finding that cross-nationally, as social wealth increases, social valuation of Survival decreases (and of Self-expression increases), meshes well with a self-regulatory frame. This suggests to us that socio-cultural change is systematic and follows lines that are rooted in the architecture of the human psyche. Subjective emphasis on human choice becomes strengthened as soon as objective existential constraints on human choice recede. This has further consequences, as we will demonstrate. Mass emphasis on human choice

³ In order to analyze changes, the values surveys have conducted multiple waves, with a first wave in 1981-82, a second one in 1990-1991, a third wave in 1995-1997 and a fourth in 1999-2001. For detailed information about these surveys, see the World Values Survey web sites at <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu> and <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>, and the European Values Survey web site <http://evs.kub.nl>.

tends to favor the political system that provides the widest room for choice: democracy. Thus, democracy is not simply a matter of institutional rationality. It is part and parcel of a broader human development syndrome that is ultimately anchored in human psychology.

Abundant human resources are conducive to Self-expression values because they diminish existential constraints on human choice. In keeping with this interpretation, we find a .84 correlation between the Individualism/Autonomy/Self-expression dimension, and the UN Human Development index (which measures the level of such human resources as incomes, education, and health).

Religious-ideological worldview and national heritage as contexts shaping the course of cultural change

In spite of these similarities across societies with increasing wealth, we also see differences -- cultural change given wealth seems dependent on religious/philosophical worldview as well. The fact that a society was historically Protestant or Orthodox or Islamic or Confucian gives rise to cultural zones with distinctive value systems that persist when one controls for the effects of economic development (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). A society's culture reflects its entire historical heritage, including religious traditions, colonial ties, the experience of communist rule and its level of economic development.

Throughout history, one of the key functions of religion has been to provide a sense of security and predictability in a dangerous and unpredictable world. High levels of uncertainty about survival can bring a sense of helplessness and despair. Virtually all traditional religions have alleviated this by providing a sense that one's fate is in the hands

of benevolent higher power, who will ensure that things work out for the best, provided one follows a certain set of clear, absolute and inflexible rules—the very inflexibility of which, enhances one’s sense of predictability. Various religious traditions have shaped people’s value systems quite apart from the extent to which they experience high or low levels of existential security. Throughout most of recorded history, religion was the dominant response to conditions of insecurity, but in modern times such ideologies as fascism and communism provided secular forms of reassurance and predictability, claiming to provide infallible answers under the leadership of infallible rulers. The rigid, absolute rules of traditional religions provided a vitally-needed sense of security in a highly uncertain world; but they conferred it at the cost of rigid constraints on individual autonomy: the range of human choice concerning gender roles, sexual behavior and sexual orientation, and other aspects of life style were narrowly confined by absolute rules. The pressures to conform within totalitarian ideologies were different, but equally rigid. The emergence of unprecedentedly high levels of existential security, for most of the population in advanced industrial societies, has eroded the need for absolute rules and opened the way to an increasingly broad scope for human choice. However, what is meant by choice is shaped by the nature of the society’s religious/philosophical traditions.

(Figure 1 about here)

Figure 1 shows a two-dimensional cultural map on which the value systems of 80 societies are depicted. The vertical dimension represents the Traditional/Secular-rational dimension, and the horizontal dimension reflects the Survival/Self-expression values dimension. Both dimensions are strongly linked with economic development: the value

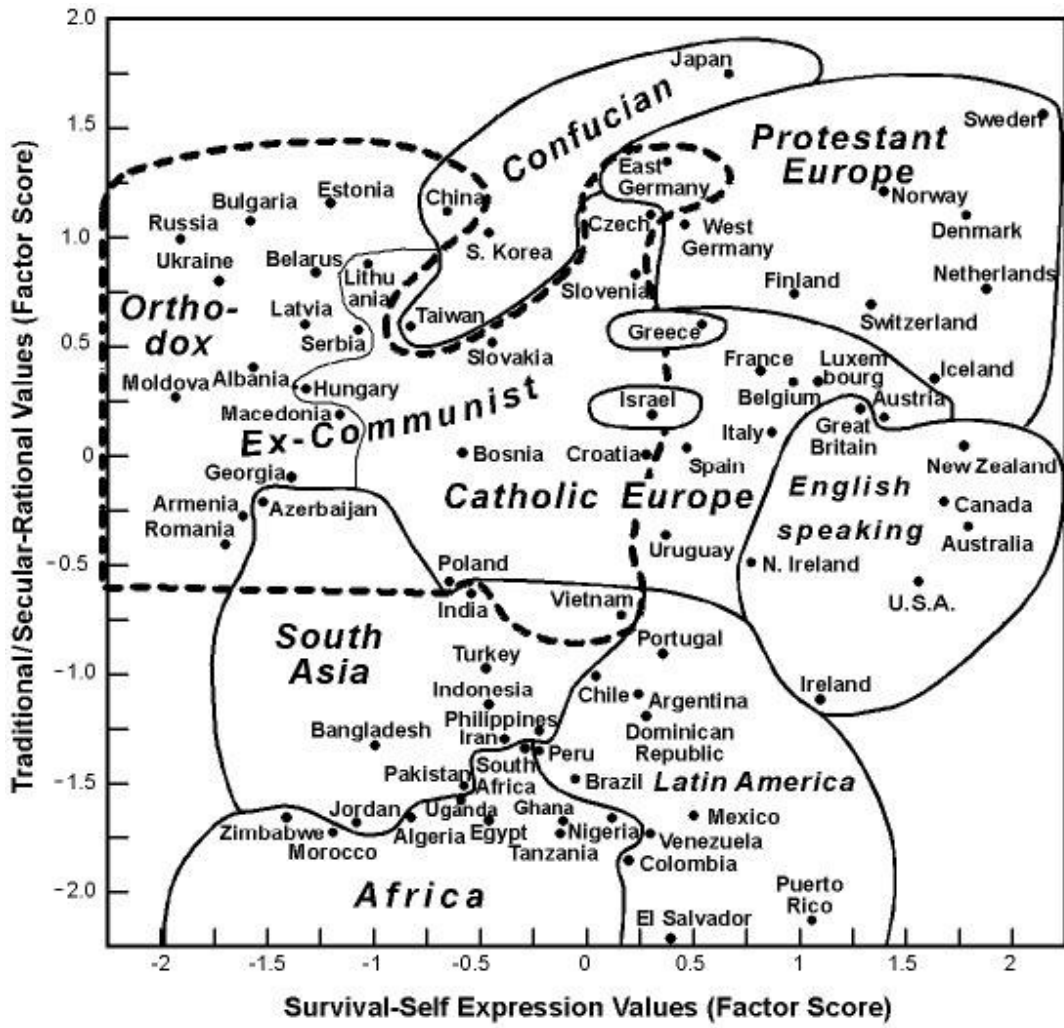


Figure 1. Values in Global Perspective.

CulMap04

systems of rich countries differ systematically from those of poor countries. Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the U.S. and all other societies with a 1995 annual per capita GNP over \$15,000 rank relatively high on both dimensions—and without exception, they are located in the upper right-hand region of Figure 1.

Conversely, all of the societies with per capita GNPs below \$2,000 fall into a cluster at the lower left of the map; this economic zone cuts across the African, South Asian, ex-Communist, and Orthodox cultural zones. The remaining societies fall into two intermediate cultural-economic zones. Economic development seems to shape societies' value systems in a predictable fashion, regardless of their cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, distinctive cultural zones persist two centuries after the industrial revolution began. Different societies move on different trajectories even when they are subjected to the same forces of economic development, in part because situation-specific factors - a society's religious/philosophical or national heritage, also shape how a particular society develops. The forces of economic development channel cultural change into a relatively broad corridor that leaves considerable variation unexplained. Much of this remaining cultural variation is explained by religious traditions. Huntington (1996) has emphasized the role of religion in shaping the world's eight major civilizations or "cultural zones": Western Christianity, Orthodox, Islam, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, African, and Latin American. These zones were shaped by religious traditions that are still powerful today, despite the forces of modernization.

All four of the Confucian-influenced societies (China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) have relatively secular values, constituting a Confucian cultural zone, despite major differences in wealth. The Orthodox societies constitute another distinct cultural zone, as Huntington argued. The eleven Latin American societies show relatively similar values. And despite their wide geographic dispersion, the English-speaking countries constitute a relatively compact cultural zone. Similarly, the historically Roman Catholic societies (Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium and Austria) display relatively traditional values when compared with Confucian or ex-Communist societies with the same proportion of industrial workers. And virtually all of the historically Protestant societies (e.g., West Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland) rank higher on both the traditional-secular rational dimension and the survival/self-expression dimension than do the historically Roman Catholic societies.

Religious traditions appear to have had an enduring impact on the contemporary value systems of the 80 societies. Another source of long-lasting ideological imprints are the institutions and ideals that formerly imperial powers have imposed on other societies. This can be seen in two distinctive groups of countries: the English-speaking countries that once have been parts of the British Empire and have been influenced by Britain's liberal tradition; and the post-communist countries that have been directly or indirectly controlled by the Soviet Union and experienced the Leninist version of state-socialism. Accordingly, communism left a clear imprint on the value systems of those who lived under it. East Germany remains culturally close to West Germany despite four decades of Communist rule, but its value system has been drawn toward the Communist zone. And although

China is a member of the Confucian zone, it also falls within a broad Communist-influenced zone. Similarly, Azerbaijan, though part of the Islamic cluster, also falls within the Communist superzone that dominated it for decades. Changes in GNP and occupational structure have important influences on prevailing worldviews, but traditional philosophical/religious worldview or national heritage influences persist. Economic development shapes the corridor along which cultural change tends to move ahead. But this corridor is relatively broad: Within it there is much cultural variance that is unexplained by economic development. Most of this remaining variance reflects a society's ideological heritage, nourished by religious traditions and imperial legacies.

Not surprisingly, communist rule seems conducive to the emergence of a relatively secular-rational culture: the ex-communist countries in general, and those that were members of the Soviet Union in particular (and thus experienced communist rule for seven decades, rather than merely four decades) rank higher on secular-rational values than non-communist countries. And to an equally striking extent, ex-communist countries in general, and former Soviet countries in particular, tend to emphasize survival values far more heavily than societies that have not experienced communist rule.

Decades of communist rule had a significant impact on the values and beliefs of those who experienced it, but a given cultural heritage can partially offset or reinforce its impact. Thus, as Inglehart and Baker (2000) demonstrate with multiple regression analysis, even when we control for level of economic development and other factors, a history of communist rule does account for a significant share of the cross-cultural variance in basic values (with seven decades of communist rule having more impact than

four decades). But an Orthodox tradition seems to reduce emphasis on Self-expression values, by comparison with societies historically shaped by a Roman Catholic or Protestant cultural tradition. Central and East European countries have a shared experience of communist rule, but their respective religious traditions set them on distinct trajectories that were not erased by communism. A given society's culture continues to reflect its ideological heritage today. The two major sources of this heritage, religious traditions and imperial legacies, are still visible.

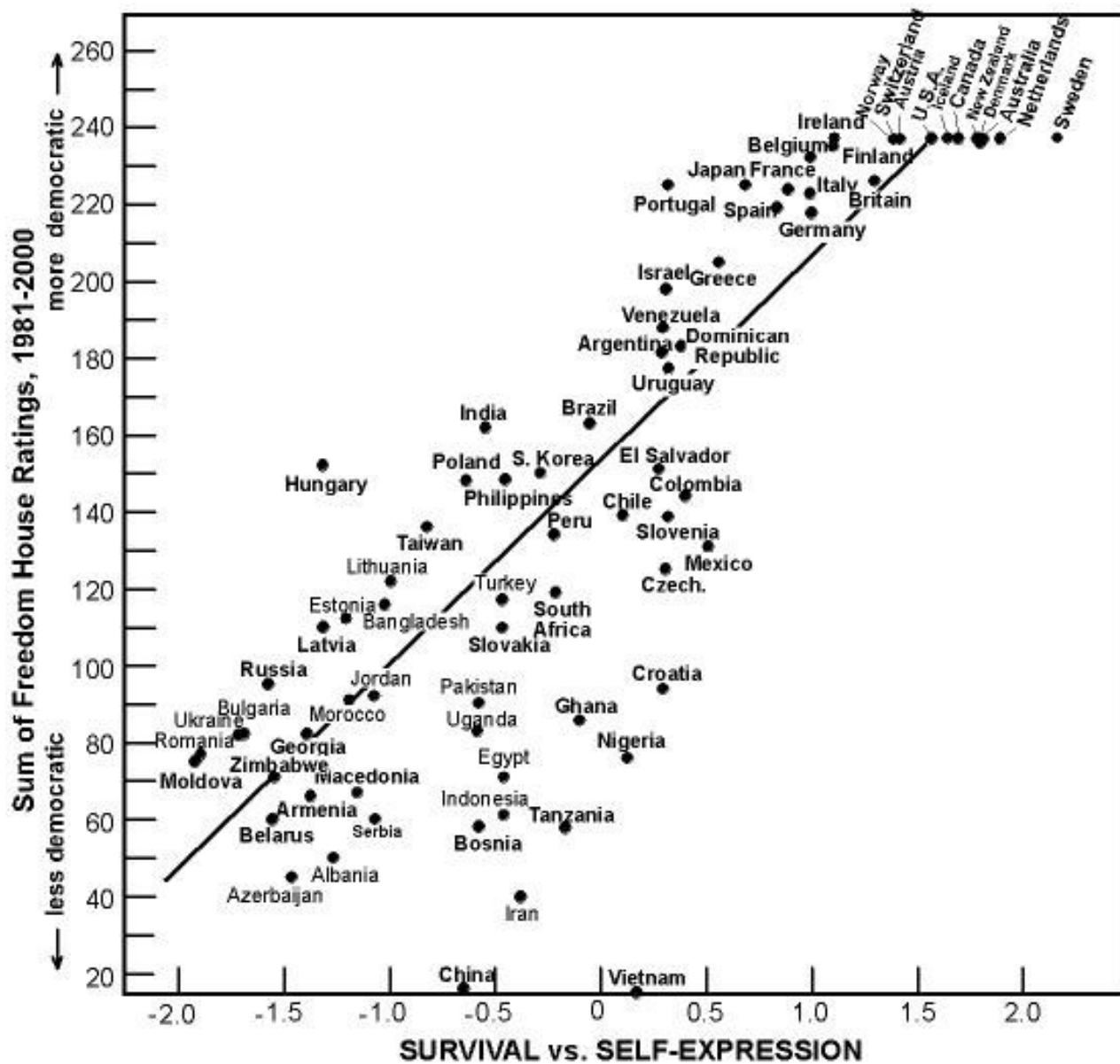


Figure 2. Self-expression values and democratic institutions.
 $r = .83, N = 76, p < .000$

Source: World Values Surveys/European Values Surveys, latest available survey.
 Polarity of Freedom House rating has been reversed to make high scores indicate high levels of democracy.

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(Figure 2 about here)

Survival/Self-expression values are linked with Democracy.

The psychological attributes that we have been discussing are not merely an interesting aspect of cross-cultural variation. They affect how societies function, sometimes with immensely important consequences. As we have argued, the dimension of cross-cultural variation tapped by Individualism-Collectivism, Autonomy/Embeddedness and Survival/Self-expression values has a common theme, emphasizing freedom of choice. Consequently, the presence and strength of this emphasis represents an emancipative social force that acts powerfully on the emergence and strengthening of democracy—a political that is explicitly designed to minimize elite domination and maximize human choice.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between each country's score on the Survival/Self-expression dimension, and its levels of democracy as measured by the expert ratings generated by Freedom House, from 1981 to 2000. The levels of democracy in the countries analyzed here are closely linked with their scores on the Survival/Self-expression dimension. There are a few outliers. China, Vietnam and Iran have lower levels of democracy than their publics' values would predict: a determined elite, in control of the military, can repress mass aspirations—at least for a considerable time. And Hungary, India and Portugal show higher levels of democracy than their publics' values would predict: pro-democratic elites can sometimes accelerate the pace of democratization. But overall, the linkage between political culture and political institutions is remarkably strong, producing a .83 correlation.

The global trend of the past several centuries has been toward economic development. And economic development tends to give rise to growing mass emphasis on human choice and self-expression—providing social and cultural conditions under which democracy becomes increasingly likely to emerge and survive. The evidence in Figure 2 suggests that a number of societies may be closer to democracy than is generally suspected. For example, Mexico’s position on the Survival/Self-expression values axis is only slightly lower than that of Argentina, Spain or Italy. Probably by no coincidence, Mexico made the transition to democracy in 2000, shortly after the Mexican survey was carried out. A number of other societies are also in this transition zone, including Turkey, the Philippines, Slovenia, South Korea, Taiwan, Poland, Peru, Chile and South Africa. Both China and Vietnam are experiencing rapid economic growth, which tends to bring a shift toward Self-expression values. The communist elites of these countries are committed to maintaining one-party rule, and as long as they retain control of the military, they should be able to remain in power. But their people show a cultural predisposition toward democracy that is inconsistent with their political institutions’ very low rankings on the Freedom House ratings. In the long run, repression of a people’s aspirations for self-expression is likely to exert growing costs. In the booming coastal regions of mainland China one can already observe how the emergence of a prosperous, educated, and self-confident middle-class erodes the communist party’s authority and control over society.

Authoritarian rulers of some Asian societies have argued that the distinctive “Asian values” of these societies make them unsuitable for democracy. In fact, the position of most Asian countries on Figure 2 is about where their level of economic development

would predict. Japan ranks with the established Western democracies on both the Self-expression values dimension, and on its level of democracy. And Taiwan and South Korea's positions on both dimensions are similar to those of other relatively new democracies such as Poland, the Philippines, Chile or Slovenia. The publics of Confucian societies may be readier for democracy than is generally believed.

All of the Islamic societies rank below the midpoint on the Survival/Self-expression dimension. But we do not find an unbridgeable chasm between Islamic societies and the rest of the world. The belief systems of these Islamic countries fall roughly where one would expect them to be on the basis of their level of economic development. The most developed of them, Turkey, is now in the transition zone along with such countries as South Africa and Slovenia; and the public of the second richest of these Islamic countries, Iran, shows a surprisingly pro-democratic political culture: in the last two national elections, overwhelming majorities of the Iranian public voted for reform-oriented governments-- only to have their aspirations thwarted by a theocracy that controls the army and secret police.

Inglehart and Welzel (forthcoming) examine the syndrome of economic prosperity, changing values and democratic institutions, demonstrating *why* economic development goes with democracy: cultural change towards stronger emphasis on self-expression provides the major link between economic development and democratization. They first test the impact of self-expression values at Time 1, on subsequent levels of democracy at Time 2. They find that a society's mean score on the Survival/Self-expression dimension has by far the most powerful influence on its level of democracy. Although economic

development is at the root of this causal sequence, it is important mainly in so far as it contributes to the emergence of Self-expression values.

They then test the reverse causal model: that democratic institutions cause a shift from Survival values to Self-expression values. Since these values show a .83 correlation with democracy, if one used democracy alone as a predictor of these values, it would “explain” most of the variance. But when economic development is also included in the regression, they find that democratic institutions explain only an additional 2 % of the variance in Self-expression values, beyond what was explained by economic development and religious heritage. Culture seems to shape democracy far more than democracy shapes culture.

Theoretical considerations also suggest that the strong linkage between self-expression values and democracy shown in Figure 2 reflects, at least in part, the impact of political culture on democracy. One way to explain the strong linkage we have observed between political culture and democracy, would be to assume that pro-democratic attitudes are *caused* by the presence of democracy, emerging through “habituation” or “institutional learning” from the use of democratic institutions. Confronted with the evidence in Figure 2, proponents of this view would argue that democratic institutions give rise to the self-expression values that are so closely linked with them. In other words, democracy makes people tolerant, trusting, and happy, and instills Postmaterialist values. This interpretation is appealing and suggests that we have a quick fix for most of the world’s problems: adopt a democratic constitution and live happily ever after.

Unfortunately, the experience of most of the Soviet successor states does not support this interpretation. Since their dramatic move toward democracy in 1991, the people of these societies have not become more trusting, more tolerant, happier, or more Postmaterialist: for the most part, they have moved in exactly the *opposite* direction, with the sharp decline of their economy and society (Inglehart and Baker 2000). Evidence of declining support for democracy is also striking in Latin America. From 1995 to 2001, support for democracy declined among the publics of all 17 Latin American countries surveyed, with an average decline of 12 % (LatinoBarometer report, July 2001). Clearly, sheer experience with democratic institutions does not necessarily bring them growing acceptance and legitimacy.

Human Development and Cultural Change

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modernization theorists from Marx to Weber speculated about the future of industrial society, emphasizing the rise of rationality and the decline of religion. In the twentieth century, non-Western societies were expected to abandon their traditional cultures and assimilate the more advanced ways of the West. Obviously, this has not happened.

Although few people would accept the original version of modernization theory today, one of its core concepts still seems valid: the insight that economic development produces pervasive social and cultural consequences, from rising educational levels and occupational specialization, to changing gender roles and increasing emphasis on individual autonomy. The World Values Survey and European Values Surveys data demonstrate that the worldviews of the people of rich societies differ systematically from

those of low-income societies across a wide range of political, social, and religious norms and beliefs. And such seemingly different phenomena as economic development, self-expression values and democracy, that may appear to be completely distinct at first glance are actually systematically linked through their common focus on human choice—generating a coherent syndrome of human development.

Our findings suggest that in order to understand the functioning of human societies, social scientists have much to learn from understanding the mass psychological mechanisms that govern the formation of human values—probably more than from the abstract formal models that dominate the rational choice paradigm.

As this chapter has demonstrated, Individualism is not a static individual-level psychological attribute but is closely linked with processes of socioeconomic development. Individualism-Collectivism and Autonomy-Embeddedness tap the same dimension of cross-cultural variation as does Survival/Self-expression values; these attributes are becoming more widespread through intergenerational changes that emerge at high levels of economic development, which liberates people from the constraints of material scarcity; and from cultural constraints that tend to be narrowly restrictive under conditions of scarcity. This transformation of human motivations is conducive to the emergence and survival of democracy—the political system designed to maximize free choice.

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