



In This Section

- ▶ WVS wave 7
- ▶ Who we are
- ▶ What we do
- Findings & Insights**
- ▶ Data and Documentation
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Paper Series
- ▶ Contact Us
- ▶ News

Findings and Insights

[Home](#) > Findings & Insights

The WVS has over the years demonstrated that people's beliefs play a key role in economic development, the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions, the rise of gender equality, and the extent to which societies have effective government. Some of the key findings of the work are described below.

Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map

The map presents empirical evidence of massive cultural change and the persistence of distinctive cultural traditions. Main thesis holds that socioeconomic development is linked with a broad syndrome of distinctive value orientations. Analysis of WVS data made by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel asserts that there are two major dimensions of cross cultural variation in the world:

1) Traditional values versus Secular-rational values and

2) Survival values versus Self-expression values.

- *Traditional values* emphasize the importance of religion, parent-child ties, deference to authority and traditional family values. People who embrace these values also reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia and suicide. These societies have high levels of national pride and a nationalistic outlook.
- *Secular-rational values* have the opposite preferences to the traditional values. These societies place less emphasis on religion, traditional family values and authority. Divorce, abortion, euthanasia and suicide are seen as relatively acceptable. (Suicide is not necessarily more common.)
- *Survival values* place emphasis on economic and physical security. It is linked with a relatively ethnocentric outlook and low levels of trust and tolerance.
- *Self-expression values* give high priority to environmental protection, growing tolerance of foreigners, gays and lesbians and gender equality, and rising demands for participation in decision-making in economic and political life.

The two dimensions have been created by running factor analysis over a set of ten indicators. The ten indicators used (five to tap each dimension) were chosen for technical reasons: in order to be able to compare findings across time, we used indicators that had been included in all four waves of the Values Surveys. These ten indicators reflect only a handful of the many beliefs and values that these two dimensions tap, and they are not necessarily the most sensitive indicators of these dimensions. They do a good job of tapping two extremely important dimensions of cross-cultural variation, but we should bear in mind that these specific items are only indicators of much broader underlying dimensions of cross-cultural variation [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

TABLE 2.2. Two Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Variation: Individual-Level Analysis

	Factor Loadings
Traditional values emphasize the following (Secular-rational values emphasize the opposite): ^a	
God is very important in respondent's life.	.70
It is more important for a child to learn obedience and religious faith than independence and determination. (Autonomy index)	.61
Abortion is never justifiable.	.61
Respondent has strong sense of national pride.	.60
Respondent favors more respect for authority.	.51
Survival values emphasize the following (Self-expression values emphasize the opposite): ^b	
Respondent gives priority to economic and physical security over self expression and quality of life. (4-item Materialist/Postmaterialist Values Index)	.59
Respondent describes self as not very happy.	.59
Homosexuality is never justifiable.	.58
Respondent has not and would not sign a petition	.54
You have to be very careful about trusting people.	.44

Note: The original polarities vary; the above statements show how each item relates to the given factor. Total N = 165,594; smallest N for any of the above variables is 146,789.

^a First factor explains 26 percent of total individual variation; secular = positive pole.

^b Second factor explains 13 percent of total individual variation; self-expression = positive pole.

Source: World Values Survey data from 125 surveys carried out in three waves in 65 societies.

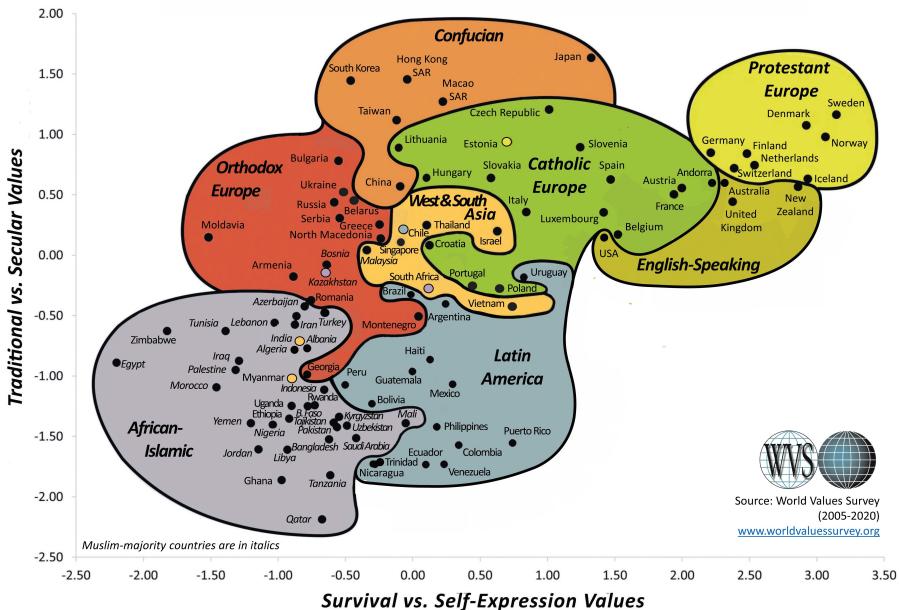
The global cultural map (below) shows how scores of societies are located on these two dimensions. Moving upward on this map reflects the shift from Traditional values to Secular-rational and moving rightward reflects the shift from Survival values to Self-expression values. A somewhat simplified analysis is that following an increase in standards of living, and a transit from development country via industrialization to post-industrial knowledge society, a country tends to move diagonally in the direction from lower-left corner (poor) to upper-right corner (rich), indicating a transit in both dimensions. However, the attitudes among the population are also highly correlated with the philosophical, political and religious ideas that have been dominating in the country. Secular-rational values and materialism were formulated by philosophers and the left-wing politics side in the French revolution, and can consequently be observed especially in countries with a long history of social democratic or socialistic policy, and in countries where a large portion of the population have studied philosophy and science at universities. Survival values are characteristic for eastern-world countries and self-expression values for western-world countries. In a liberal post-industrial economy, an increasing share of the population has grown up taking survival and freedom of thought for granted, resulting in that self-expression is highly valued.

Examples

- Societies that have high scores in Traditional and Survival values: Zimbabwe, Morocco, Jordan, Bangladesh.
- Societies with high scores in Traditional and Self-expression values: the U.S., most of Latin America, Ireland.
- Societies with high scores in Secular-rational and Survival values: Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Estonia.
- Societies with high scores in Secular-rational and Self-expression values: Sweden, Norway, Japan, Benelux, Germany, France, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and some English speaking countries.

Cultural map - WVS wave 7 (2017-2021) [Provisional version] ([click figure to enlarge](#))

The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map (2020)



Citation format when re-printing the map: The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map - World Values Survey 7 (2020) [Provisional version]. Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

The **traditional versus secular-rational values** dimension reflects the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not, but deference to the authority of God, fatherland, and family are all closely linked with each other. The importance of the family is a major theme: in traditional societies, a main goal in most people's lives is to make their parents proud; and one must always love and respect one's parents regardless of how they behave; conversely, parents must do their best for their children, even at the cost of their own well-being; and people idealize large families (and actually have them: high scores on this dimension correlate strongly with high fertility rates). Although the people of traditional societies have high levels of national pride, favor more respect for authority, take protectionist attitudes toward foreign trade, and feel that environmental problems can be solved without international agreements, they accept national authority passively: they rarely discuss politics. In preindustrial societies the family is crucial to survival. Accordingly, societies at the traditional pole of this dimension reject divorce and take a pro-life stance on abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. They emphasize social conformity rather than individualistic striving, support deference to authority, and have high levels of national pride and a nationalistic outlook. Societies with secular-rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

The **survival versus self-expression** dimension taps a syndrome of tolerance, trust, emphasis on subjective well-being, civic activism, and self-expression that emerges in postindustrial societies with high levels of existential security and individual autonomy. At the opposite pole, people in societies shaped by existential insecurity and rigid intellectual and social constraints on human autonomy tend to emphasize economic and physical security above all; they feel threatened by foreigners, ethnic diversity, and cultural change - which leads to intolerance of gays and other outgroups, insistence on traditional gender roles, and an authoritarian political outlook. A central component of this dimension involves the polarization between materialist and postmaterialist values. These values tap an intergenerational shift from emphasis on economic and physical security, toward increasing emphasis on self-expression, subjective well-being, and the quality of life. This cultural shift is found throughout postindustrial society; it emerges among birth cohorts that have grown up under conditions in which one can take survival for granted. These values are linked with the emergence of growing emphasis on environmental protection, the women's movement, and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life. During the past thirty years, these values have become increasingly widespread in almost all postindustrial societies. Societies that emphasize survival values have relatively low levels of subjective well-being, report relatively poor health, and are low on interpersonal trust, relatively intolerant of outgroups, and low on support for gender equality. They emphasize materialist values, have relatively high levels of faith in science and technology, and are relatively low on environmental activism and relatively favorable to authoritarian government. Societies that rank high on self-expression values tend to have the opposite

preferences on all of these topics. Overall, self-expression values reflect an emancipative and humanistic ethos, emphasizing human autonomy and choice. When survival is uncertain, cultural diversity seems threatening. When there isn't enough to go around, foreigners are perceived as dangerous outsiders who may take away one's sustenance. People cling to traditional gender roles and sexual norms, emphasizing absolute rules and old familiar norms, in an attempt to maximize predictability in an uncertain world. Conversely, when survival begins to be taken for granted, ethnic and cultural diversity become increasingly acceptable - indeed, beyond a certain point, diversity is not only tolerated but becomes positively valued because it is interesting and stimulating. In postindustrial societies, people seek out foreign restaurants to taste new kinds of cuisine; they pay large sums of money and travel long distances to experience exotic cultures. Changing gender roles and sexual norms no longer seem threatening [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

The past few decades have witnessed one of the most dramatic cultural changes that has occurred since the dawn of recorded history, the shift toward gender equality, enabling women to choose from among a much wider range of life trajectories than ever before. Polarization over new gender roles is a major component of the survival versus self-expression dimension: one of its highest-loading issues involves whether men make better political leaders than women. In the world as a whole, a majority still accepts the idea that men make better political leaders than women; however, this view is rejected by growing majorities in postindustrial societies and is overwhelmingly rejected by the younger generation within these societies. Equal rights for women, gays and lesbians, foreigners, and other outgroups tend to be rejected in societies where survival seems uncertain but are increasingly accepted in societies that emphasize self-expression values. Thus, each of the two major phases of modernization - industrialization and the emergence of postindustrial society - gives rise to a major dimension of cross-cultural variation [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

Cross-cultural variation is highly constrained. If the people of a given society place strong emphasis on religion, one can predict that society's relative position on many other variables, from attitudes toward abortion, feelings of national pride, and the desirability of more respect for authority to attitudes toward child-rearing. The second dimension reflects another wide-ranging but strongly correlated cluster of variables involving materialist values (such as maintaining order and fighting inflation) versus postmaterialist values (such as freedom and self-expression), subjective well-being, interpersonal trust, political activism, and tolerance of outgroups (measured by acceptance or rejection of homosexuality, a sensitive indicator of tolerance toward outgroups in general). Self-expression values emphasize tolerance of diversity and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life. The shift from survival values to self-expression values is linked with a rising sense of existential security and human autonomy, which produces a humanistic culture of tolerance and trust, where people place a relatively high value on individual freedom and self-expression and have activist political orientations [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

Live Cultural map - WVS (1981-2015)

Live cultural map over time 1981 to 2015.



Socioeconomic Development and Cultural Change [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

We have identified two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation. Are they linked with socioeconomic development, as we hypothesize? On the map below, the vertical axis reflects the polarization between traditional and secular-rational values: societies that emphasize traditional values fall near the bottom of the map, whereas those with secular-rational values fall near the top. The horizontal axis reflects the polarization between survival values and self-expression values: societies that emphasize survival values fall near the left-hand side of the map, whereas those with self-expression values fall near the right. As this map demonstrates, socioeconomic development is strongly linked with a society's basic cultural values. The value systems of richer countries differ dramatically and systematically from those of poorer countries. All of the "high-income" societies (as defined by the World Bank) rank relatively high on both dimensions, falling into a zone toward the upper right-hand corner. Conversely, all of the "low-income" societies fall into a zone on the lower left. The middle-income societies fall into an intermediate culturaleconomic zone. Socioeconomic development tends to propel societies in a common direction, regardless of their cultural heritage.

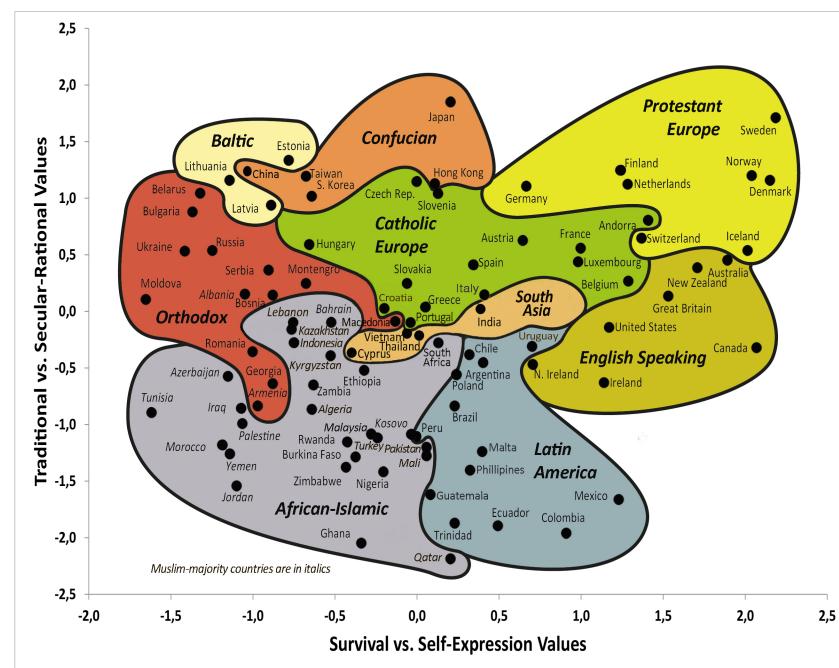
Per capita GDP is only one indicator of a society's level of socioeconomic development. Furthermore, the changing nature of the labor force defines three distinct stages of socioeconomic development: agrarian society, industrial society, and postindustrial society. The traditional versus secular-rational dimension is associated with the transition from agrarian to industrial society, showing a strong positive correlation with the percentage of the work force in the industrial sector and a negative correlation with the percentage in the agricultural sector; it is only weakly linked with the percentage in the service sector. The shift from an agrarian mode of production to industrial production is linked with a shift from traditional values toward increasing rationalization and secularization. The survival versus self-expression dimension is linked with the rise of a service economy. It shows high correlation with the size of the work force in the service sector, but is only weakly (and negatively) related to the size of the industrial sector.

The traditional versus secular-rational values dimension and the survival versus self-expression values dimension reflect industrialization and the rise of postindustrial society, respectively. This reflects a two-stage process of cultural modernization. In the first phase of modernization, the industrial sector grows at the expense of the agricultural sector. This process of industrialization is linked with the rationalization of authority, reflected in rising secular-rational values. As the proportion of the work force in the industrial sector exceeds the work force in agriculture, a society's belief system tends to shift from traditional to secularrational values. Cross-national variation in the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society explains 32 percent of the variation in secularization. But this process

has no significant impact on the survival versus self-expression values dimension: industrialization does not promote the rise of self-expression values. This is one reason why industrialization brought universal suffrage but did not necessarily bring democracy. The mass values that emphasize individual autonomy and emancipation are not yet widespread in most early industrial societies, which historically were almost as likely to adopt fascist or communist systems as they were to adopt democratic institutions. The value systems of industrial societies emphasize the rationalization of authority, rather than emancipation from authority. The fact that industrialization does not support an emancipative ethos explains why there is no strong specific link between industrialization and democracy. All industrial societies produce mobilized publics, introducing universal suffrage and various other elite-directed forms of participation. But industrialization was about as likely to produce authoritarian forms of mass participation as democratic forms.

In the second phase of modernization, the service sector grows at the expense of the industrial sector. This postindustrial economic transformation is linked with another change of authority orientations, the emancipation from authority, reflected in rising self-expression values. As the percentage of the work force in the service sector grows and the size of the industrial sector shrinks, a society's belief system tends to shift from survival to self-expression values: this process explains 67 percent of the variation in self-expression values. But the rise of postindustrial society has no impact on the traditional versus secular-rational values dimension. Postindustrialization brings emancipation from both traditional and secular authority, giving rise to an emancipative ethos. This is why liberal democracy becomes the prevailing political system in postindustrial societies. The linkage between the rise of the service sector and the strength of selfexpression values is replicated at the individual level. Within any given society, those with higher incomes, higher education, and jobs in the service sector tend to emphasize self-expression values more strongly than the rest of their compatriots, falling higher and to the right of them on this map.

Cultural map - WVS wave 6 (2010-2014) ([click figure to enlarge](#))



Previous versions of the cultural map and the more complete current version all show consistent cultural clusters. Although these clusters represent a society's entire historical heritage, including factors that are unique to a given country, the clusters are remarkably coherent. They indicate a systematic pattern that exists despite the singularities of each society. Two systematic historical factors are particularly important in grouping societies into coherent clusters: the societies' religious tradition and their colonial histories. Thus, the historically Protestant societies tend to rank higher on the survival/self-expression dimension than the historically Roman Catholic societies. Conversely, all of the former communist societies rank relatively low on the survival/self-expression dimension. The historically Orthodox societies form a coherent cluster within the broader ex-communist zone - except for Greece, an Orthodox society that did not experience communist rule and ranks much higher on

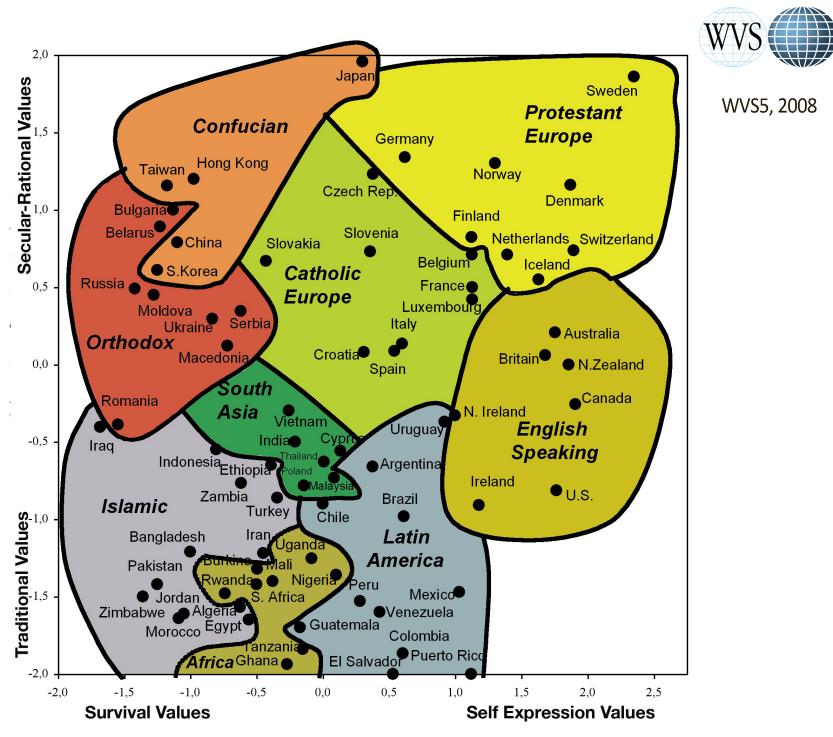
self-expression values than the other Orthodox societies. The Islamic societies fall into two clusters: a larger group containing the main-line Islamic societies (Indonesia, Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, and Egypt) constitutes a relatively compact group in the southwest quadrant of the map, whereas the Islamic societies that experienced communist rule (Azerbaijan and Albania) are much more secular than the other Islamic societies. Differences in per capita GDP and occupational structure have important influences on prevailing worldviews, but historical cultural influences persist.

Religious traditions have an enduring impact on the contemporary value systems of these societies, as Weber, Huntington, and others have argued. But a society's culture reflects its entire historical heritage. A central historical event of the twentieth century was the rise and fall of a communist empire that once ruled a third of the world's population. Communism has left a clear imprint on the value systems of those who lived under it. All of the societies that experienced communist rule fall into a large cluster in the upper-left quadrant of the map.

The influence of colonial ties is apparent in the existence of a Latin American cultural zone. The Philippines could also be placed in this zone, reflecting the fact that despite their geographical remoteness, the Philippines and Latin America share the imprint of Hispanic colonial rule and the Roman Catholic Church. Former colonial ties also help account for the existence of an Englishspeaking zone containing Britain and the other English-speaking societies. All seven of the English-speaking societies included in this study show relatively similar cultural characteristics. The impact of colonization seems especially strong when reinforced by massive immigration from the colonial society. Thus, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina are all relatively near each other on the border between Catholic Europe and Latin America: the populations of Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina are largely descended from immigrants from Spain and Italy.

These maps indicate that the United States is not a prototype of cultural modernization for other societies to follow, as some modernization writers assumed. In fact, the United States is a deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other postindustrial society except Ireland. On the traditional/secular dimension, the United States ranks far below other rich societies, with levels of religiosity and national pride comparable with those found in some developing societies. The United States does rank among the most advanced societies on the survival/self-expression dimension, but even here, it does not lead the world. The Swedes, the Dutch, and the Australians are closer to the cutting edge of cultural change than the Americans [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

Cultural map - WVS wave 5 (2008) (click figure to enlarge)



How Real Are the Cultural Zones? [Source: Chapter 2 from Inglehart, R & C. Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press].

The location of each society on the global cultural map is objective, determined by a factor analysis of survey data from each country. The boundaries drawn around these societies are subjective, using Huntington's (1996) division of the world into several cultural zones. How "real" are these zones? These boundaries could have been drawn in a number of different ways, because these societies have been influenced by many factors. Thus, some of the boundaries overlap others - for example, the ex-communist zone overlaps the Protestant, Catholic, Confucian, Orthodox, and Islamic cultural zones. Similarly, Britain is located at the intersection of the English-speaking zone and Protestant Europe; empirically, it is close to all six of the other English-speaking societies, and our map includes Britain in that zone. But with only slight modification, we could have drawn these borders to put Britain in Protestant Europe, for it is also culturally close to those societies. Reality is complex. Britain is both a historically Protestant European country and an English-speaking country, and its empirical position reflects both aspects of reality. Similarly, we have drawn a boundary around the Latin American societies that Huntington postulated to be a distinct cultural zone: all ten of them do indeed show relatively similar values in global perspective. But with only minor changes, we could have drawn this border to define a Hispanic cultural zone that includes Spain and Portugal, which empirically are also relatively close to the Latin American societies. We could also draw a still broader boundary that included Latin America, Catholic Europe, and the Philippines and Ireland in a broad Roman Catholic cultural zone. All of these zones are both conceptually and empirically justifiable. The two-dimensional cultural maps are based on similarity of basic values, but they also reflect the relative distances between these societies on many other dimensions, such as religion, colonial influences, the impact of communist rule, the structure of the work force, and level of economic development.

Modernization theory implies that as societies develop economically, their cultures will tend to shift in a predictable direction, and our findings fit this prediction. Socioeconomic differences are linked with large and pervasive cultural differences. Nevertheless, we find clear evidence of the influence of long-established cultural zones. Eight of the nine zones outlined on the cultural maps show statistically significant relationships with at least one of the two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation. Do these cultural clusters simply reflect socioeconomic differences? For example, do the societies of Protestant Europe have similar values merely because they are rich? The answer is no. As our analyses show, whether a society has a Catholic or Protestant or Confucian or Orthodox or communist heritage makes an independent contribution to its position on the global cultural map. Nevertheless, the influence of socioeconomic development is pervasive. Per capita GDP shows a significant impact on traditional/secular-rational values, for five of eight cultural zones. Moreover, per capita GDP shows a significant impact on survival/self-expression values against controls for each of eight cultural zones. The percentage of the labor force in the industrial sector influences traditional/secular-rational values even more consistently than does per capita GDP, showing a significant impact in seven of the eight regression analyses. The percentage of the labor force in the service sector has a significant impact in six of the eight regressions on survival/self-expression values [...].

Another important factor is religion. Protestant or Catholic societies display distinctive values today mainly because of the historical impact their respective churches have had on societies as a whole, rather than through the contemporary influence of the church on given individuals. For this reason we classify Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands as historically Protestant societies: historically, Protestantism shaped these countries, even though today (as a result of immigration, relatively low Protestant birthrates, and relatively high Protestant rates of secularization) they may have more practicing Catholics than Protestants. These findings suggest that, once established, the cross-cultural differences linked with religion have become part of a national culture that is transmitted by the educational institutions and mass media of given societies to the people of that nation as a whole. Despite widespread talk of the globalization of culture, the nation remains a key unit of shared experience, with its educational and cultural institutions shaping the values of almost everyone in that society. The persistence of distinctive value systems seems to reflect the fact that culture is path dependent. Protestant religious institutions helped shape the Protestant ethic, relatively high levels of interpersonal trust, and a relatively high degree of social pluralism - all of which probably contributed to the fact that industrialization occurred earlier in Protestant countries than in the rest of the world.

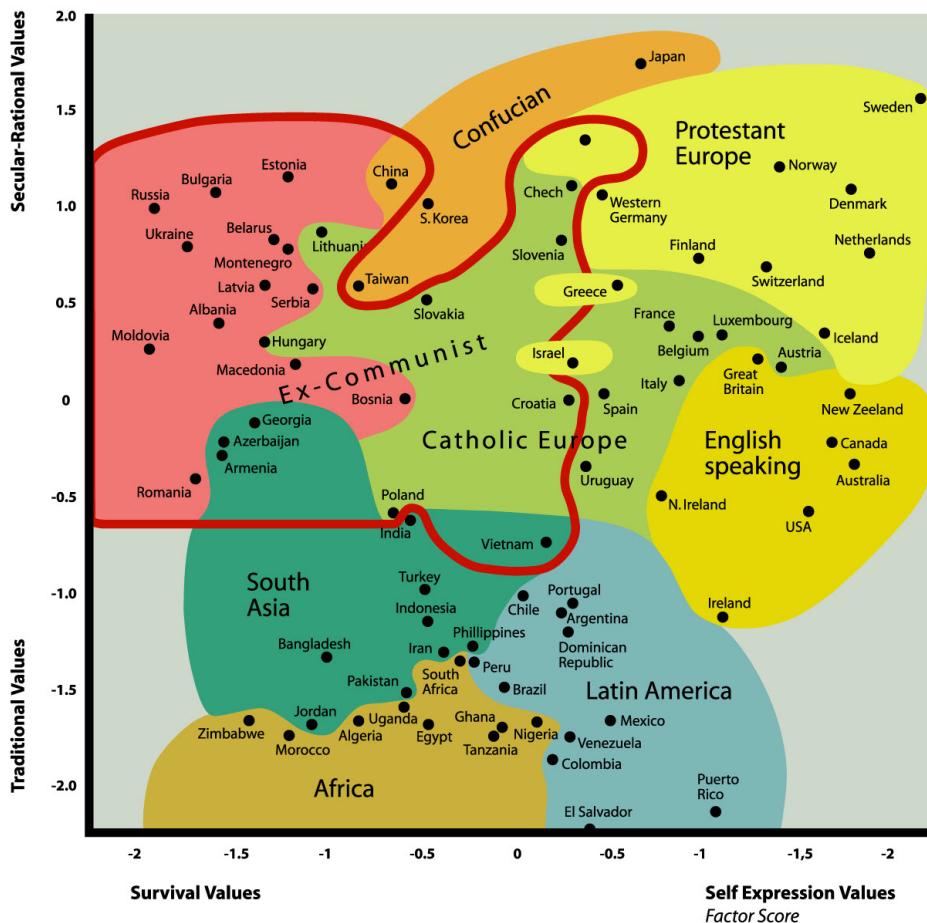
TABLE 2.5. *Cultural Zone Deviation Factors on Two Dimensions*

Cultural Zone	Number of Surveys ^a	Factor for Traditional/ Secular Values ^b	Factor for Survival/ Self-Expression Values ^c
Protestant Europe	35	.59	.54
English-speaking	20	-.72	.58
Catholic Europe	44	-.19	.05
Confucian	13	1.25	-.49
Orthodox	30	.40	-.50
Latin America	22	-.49	-.03
South Asia	10	-.44	-.29
Islamic	22	-.53	-.71
Sub-Saharan Africa	11	-.95	-.45

^a In all four waves.^b Based on waves 1–3 surveys, adjusted for GDP per capita, percentage in industrial sector, years of communist rule.^c Based on waves 1–3, adjusted for GDP per capita, percentage in service sector, years of communist rule.

The extent to which both secular-rational values and self-expression values are present can be explained by a combination of retarding and driving forces, with tradition and modernization influencing both processes of cultural change. But the balance between these forces differs greatly. A society's cultural tradition has much stronger impact on traditional/secular-rational values than on survival/self-expression values, whereas self-expression values are much more strongly shaped by the forces of modernization than by those of tradition. In this broader historical perspective, one must go beyond Weber: it is not the rationalization of authority but the emancipation from authority that becomes the dominant trend of modernization, transforming modernization into a process of human development that promotes human emancipation on all fronts. This humanistic transformation of modernity has important societal-level consequences. Human development strengthens civil society, political liberties, good governance, and gender equality - and makes democracy increasingly likely, where it does not yet exist, and increasingly responsive, where it already exists. Self-expression values play a major role in this process.

Cultural map - WVS wave 4 (1996) ([click figure to enlarge](#))



Aspirations for Democracy

The desire for free choice and autonomy is a universal human aspiration, but it is not top priority when people grow up feeling that survival is uncertain. As long as physical survival remains uncertain, the desire for physical and economic security tends to take higher priority than democracy. When basic physiological and safety needs are fulfilled there is a growing emphasis on self-expression values. Findings from the WVS demonstrate that mass self-expression values are extremely important in the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions in a society. With industrialization and the rise of postindustrial society, generational replacement makes self-expression values become more wide spread and countries with authoritarian regimes come under growing mass pressure for political liberalization. This process contributed to the dramatic Third Wave Democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s and is one of the factors contributing to more recent processes of democratization.

Empowerment of Citizens

WVS researchers have identified how the empowerment of ordinary citizens can lead to democracy. This process of human development enables and motivates people to demand democracy, leading to regime changes that entitle people to govern their lives. Growing action resources (such as education), and the spread of self-expression values leads to the emergence of democratic institutions, that enable people to gain growing freedom of choice in how to live their own lives, and to choose their political regime.

Globalization and converging values

During the past 30 years, the world has witnessed profound changes in political, economic and social spheres and increasingly rapid technological advances. This is often attributed to the phenomenon of globalization. Capital markets are today integrated around the globe and movies and books circle the world in seconds. Hundreds of millions of people visit the same websites, watch the same TV channels and laugh at the same jokes. These examples have contributed to the belief that globalization brings converging values, or a McDonaldization of the world. In fact, analysis of data from the World Values Survey demonstrate that mass values have not been converging over the past three decades. Norms concerning marriage, family, gender and sexual orientation show dramatic changes but virtually all

advanced industrial societies have been moving in the same direction, at roughly similar speeds. This has brought a parallel movement, without convergence. Moreover, while economically advanced societies have been changing rather rapidly, countries that remained economically stagnant showed little value change. As a result, there has been a growing divergence between the prevailing values in low-income countries and high-income countries.

Gender Values

Findings from the WVS indicate that support for gender equality is not just a consequence of democratization. It is part of a broader cultural change that is transforming industrialized societies with mass demands for increasingly democratic institutions. Although a majority of the world's population still believes that men make better political leaders than women, this view is fading in advanced industrialized societies, and also among young people in less prosperous countries.

Religion

The data from the World Values Survey cover several important aspects of people's religious orientation. One of them tracks how involved people are in religious services and how much importance they attach to their religious beliefs. In the data from 2000, 98% of the public in Indonesia said that religion was very important in their lives while in China only three percent considered religion very important. Another aspect concerns people's attitudes towards the relation between religion and politics and whether they approve of religious spokesmen who try to influence government decisions and people's voting preferences.

Happiness and Life Satisfaction

The WVS has shown that from 1981 to 2007 happiness rose in 45 of the 52 countries for which long-term data are available. Since 1981, economic development, democratization, and rising social tolerance have increased the extent to which people perceive that they have free choice, which in turn has led to higher levels of happiness around the world. The popular statistics website Nationmaster publishes a simplified world happiness scale derived from the WVS data. The WVS website provides access to the WVS data, allowing users to carry out more complex analyses, such as comparing happiness levels over time or across socio-economic groups. One of the most striking shifts measured by the WVS was the sharp decline in happiness experienced in Russia and many other ex-communist countries during the 1990s.

Catalogue of Findings

Supplementing and further detailing these insights, here follows a catalogue summarizing the 30 most crucial findings of the WVS:

- . Much of the variation in human values between societies boils down to two broad dimensions: a first dimension of "*traditional vs. secular-rational values*" and a second dimension of "*survival vs. self-expression values*".^[5]
- . On the first dimension, traditional values emphasize religiosity, national pride, respect for authority, obedience and marriage. Secular-rational values emphasize the opposite on each of these accounts.^[5]
- . On the second dimension, survival values involve a priority of security over liberty, non-acceptance of homosexuality, abstinence from political action, distrust in outsiders and a weak sense of happiness. Self-expression values imply the opposite on all these accounts.^[5]
- . Following the 'revised theory of modernization,' values change in predictable ways with certain aspects of modernity. People's priorities shift from traditional to secular-rational values as their *sense of existential security* increases (or backwards from secular-rational values to traditional values as their *sense of existential security* decreases).^[5]
- . The largest increase in existential security occurs with the *transition from agrarian to industrial societies*. Consequently, the largest shift from traditional towards secular-rational values happens in this phase.^[5]
- . People's priorities shift from survival to self-expression values as their *sense of individual agency* increases (or backwards from self-expression values to survival as the *sense of individual agency* decreases).^[5]
- . The largest increase in individual agency occurs with the *transition from industrial to knowledge societies*. Consequently, the largest shift from survival to self-expression values happens in this phase.^[5]

- . The value differences between societies around the world show a pronounced *culture zone pattern*. The strongest emphasis on traditional values and survival values is found in the Islamic societies of the Middle East. By contrast, the strongest emphasis on secular-rational values and self-expression values is found in the Protestant societies of Northern Europe.[\[6\]](#)
- . These culture zone differences reflect different *historical pathways* of how entire groups of societies entered modernity. These pathways account for people's different senses of existential security and individual agency, which in turn account for their different emphases on secular-rational values and self-expression values.[\[6\]](#)
- . Values also differ within societies along such cleavage lines as gender, generation, ethnicity, religious denomination, education, income and so forth.[\[7\]](#)
- . Generally speaking, groups whose living conditions provide people with a stronger sense of existential security and individual agency nurture a stronger emphasis on secular-rational values and self-expression values.[\[7\]](#)
- . However, the *within*-societal differences in people's values are dwarfed by a factor five to ten by the *between*-societal differences. On a global scale, basic living conditions differ still much more between than within societies, and so do the experiences of existential security and individual agency that shape people's values.[\[7\]](#)
- . A specific subset of self-expression values—*emancipative values*—combines an emphasis on freedom of choice and equality of opportunities. Emancipative values, thus, involve priorities for lifestyle liberty, gender equality, personal autonomy and the voice of the people.[\[8\]](#)
- . Emancipative values constitute the key cultural component of a broader process of *human empowerment*. Once set in motion, this process empowers people to exercise freedoms in their course of actions.[\[9\]](#)
- . If set in motion, human empowerment advances on three levels. On the socio-economic level, human empowerment advances as growing *action resources* increase people's capabilities to exercise freedoms. On the socio-cultural level, human empowerment advances as rising *emancipative values* increase people's aspirations to exercise freedoms. On the legal-institutional level, human empowerment advances as widened *democratic rights* increase people's entitlements to exercise freedoms.[\[6\]](#)
- . Human empowerment is an *entity of empowering capabilities, aspirations, and entitlements*. As an entity, human empowerment tends to advance in virtuous spirals or to recede in vicious spirals on each of its three levels.[\[10\]](#)
- . As the cultural component of human empowerment, emancipative values are highly consequential in manifold ways. For one, emancipative values establish a *civic form of modern individualism* that favours out-group trust and cosmopolitan orientations towards others.[\[11\]](#)
- . Emancipative values encourage *nonviolent protest*, even against the risk of repression. Thus, emancipative values provide social capital that activates societies, makes publics more self-expressive, and vitalizes civil society. Emancipative values advance entire societies' civic agency.[\[12\]](#)
- . If emancipative values grow strong in countries that are democratic, they help to *prevent movements away from democracy*.[\[13\]](#)
- . If emancipative values grow strong in countries that are undemocratic, they help to trigger *movements towards democracy*.[\[13\]](#)
- . Emancipative values exert these effects because they encourage mass actions that put power holders under pressures to sustain, substantiate or establish democracy, depending on what the current challenge for democracy is.[\[13\]](#)
- . Objective factors that have been found to favour democracy (including economic prosperity, income equality, ethnic homogeneity, world market integration, global media exposure, closeness to democratic neighbours, a Protestant heritage, social capital and so forth) exert an influence on democracy mostly insofar as these factors favour emancipative values.[\[13\]](#)
- . Emancipative values do not strengthen people's desire for democracy, for the desire for democracy is universal at this point in history. But emancipative values do change the *nature of the desire for democracy*. And they do so in a double way.[\[14\]](#)
- . For one, emancipative values make people's understanding of democracy more liberal: people with stronger emancipative values emphasize the empowering features of democracy rather than bread-and-butter and law-and-order issues.[\[14\]](#)
- . Next, emancipative values make people assess the level of their country's democracy more critical: people with stronger emancipative values rather underrate than overrate their country's democratic performance.[\[14\]](#)
- . Together, then, emancipative values generate a *critical-liberal desire for democracy*. The critical-liberal desire for democracy is a formidable force of democratic reforms. And, it is the best available

predictor of a country's effective level of democracy and of other indicators of good governance. Neither democratic traditions nor cognitive mobilization account for the strong positive impact of emancipative values on the critical-liberal desire for democracy.^[14]

- . Emancipative values are the most single important factor in advancing the empowerment of women. Economic, religious, and institutional factors that have been found to advance women's empowerment, do so for the most part because they nurture emancipative values.^[8]
 - . Emancipative values change people's life strategy from an emphasis on securing a decent subsistence level to enhancing human agency. As the shift from subsistence to agency affects entire societies, the overall level of subjective well-being rises.^[9]
 - . The emancipative consequences of the human empowerment process are not a culture-specific peculiarity of the 'West.' The same empowerment processes that advance emancipative values and a critical-liberal desire for democracy in the 'West,' do the same in the 'East' and in other culture zones.
^[15]
 - . The social dominance of Islam and individual identification as Muslim both weaken emancipative values. But among young Muslims with high education, and especially among young Muslim women with high education, the Muslim/Non-Muslim gap over emancipative values closes.^[16]
- A coherent overview of all these findings can be found in [Welzel's Freedom Rising](#) (for a full citation, see bibliography below).

PRESIDENT

Christian Haerpfer
christian_haerpfer@univie.ac.at
 WVSA President
 University of Vienna
 Institute of Political Science
 Vienna 1010, Austria

SECRETARIAT (WVSA Headquarters)

Kseniya Kizilova
wvsa.secretariat@gmail.com
 Head of WVSA Secretariat
 Institute for Comparative
 Survey Research
 Vienna 1040, Austria

LEGAL SEAT

Bi Puranen
bi.puranen@worldvaluessurvey.org
 Secretary-General
 Institute for Future Studies
 Stockholm, Sweden 101 31

DATA ARCHIVE

Jaime Diez-Medrano
jdiezmed@jdsurvey.net
 Director of the WVSA Archive
 Pza Manuel Rodrigo 1, B-1E
 Madrid, Spain 28043

Copyright @2020 World Values Survey Association