

Changing Values in the Islamic World and the West

Social Tolerance and the Arab Spring

Ronald F. Inglehart

About 45 years ago, I suggested “a transformation may be taking place in the political culture of advanced industrial societies. This transformation seems to be altering the basic value priorities of given generations as a result of changing conditions influencing their basic socialization” (Inglehart, 1971, p. 991). This chapter traces the evolution of values in Western countries since 1970, and examines to what extent similar value changes are transforming other countries today, with special attention to Muslim-majority countries. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005) demonstrated, the rise of postmaterialist values is part of a broader set of cultural changes that tend to bring democratization. But, although the recent Arab Spring seemed to be installing democratic regimes across the Arab world initially, it met an early frost. In the 2014 Freedom House ratings, not a single Muslim-majority country was coded as “Free”—meaning, the country has sufficiently high levels of political rights and civil liberties to be considered a democracy—although a clear majority of non-Muslim countries were ranked as “Free.”

The initial evidence of intergenerational value change came from surveys carried out in six West European societies. They revealed large differences between the value priorities of older and younger generations. Among the older cohorts, *materialist values*, emphasizing economic and physical security, were overwhelmingly predominant; however, as one moved from older to younger birth cohorts, *postmaterialist values*, emphasizing autonomy and self-expression, became increasingly widespread. The differences were striking. Among those age 65 years or older, materialists were fully 12 times as numerous as postmaterialists; among those born after World War II (who were younger than 25 years in 1970), postmaterialists were slightly more numerous than materialists.

If, as I argued, these age differences reflected intergenerational value change (and not simply a tendency for people to become more materialist as they aged), then we should expect to find a gradual shift from materialist to postmaterialist values as younger birth cohorts replaced older ones in the adult population. The implications were far-reaching, for these values were linked closely with a number of important orientations, ranging from emphasis on political participation and



freedom of expression, to support for environmental protection, gender equality, and democratic political institutions.

The value change thesis was controversial from the start. Various critics argued that the large age differences found in 1970 reflected life cycle effects rather than intergenerational change (e.g., Boeltken & Jagodzinski, 1985). Younger people had an inherent tendency to prefer postmaterialist values such as participation and free speech; but, as they matured, they would come to have the same solid materialist preferences as their elders, so we would find no change in the values of the society as a whole.

The value change hypothesis, in contrast, holds that young people are not necessarily more postmaterialist than their elders. This happens only if they have grown up under substantially more secure living conditions than their elders. We would not expect to find intergenerational value differences in stagnant societies. And, if future generations no longer grew up under more secure conditions than their elders, we would no longer find intergenerational value differences even in western Europe. On the other hand, these intergenerational differences exist because the degree of security or insecurity that one experiences during one's preadult years has a lasting impact. Consequently, as postwar birth cohorts replace older ones in the adult population, we witness a shift from materialist to postmaterialist values in these societies.

Intergenerational value change, by its very nature, moves slowly, but its long-term impact can be profound. More than four decades have passed since the hypothesized shift from materialist to postmaterialist values was published. Have the predicted changes actually taken place?

The shift toward postmaterialist values, I argue, is driven by changing existential conditions—above all, the change from growing up with the feeling that survival is precarious, to growing up with the feeling that survival can be taken for granted. Throughout most of history, survival has been uncertain for the vast majority of the population. But, the remarkable economic growth that occurred during the era following World War II, together with the rise of the welfare state, brought fundamentally new conditions in advanced industrial societies. The postwar birth cohorts spent their formative years under levels of prosperity that were unprecedented in human history, and the postwar welfare states reinforced the feeling that survival was secure. Finally, although the older birth cohorts had experienced the life-threatening events of World War I and World War II, the postwar birth cohorts grew up in a new era. Since 1945, the world has experienced the longest period in recorded history without war between major powers. There were huge differences between the formative experiences of the postwar birth cohorts and all the older cohorts, producing major differences in their value priorities. These differences started to become obvious when a postwar birth cohort emerged into political relevance two decades after World War II, contributing to the era of student protest during the late 1960s and 1970s. A widespread slogan among the protesters was “Don't trust anyone over 30!”

As we will see, a massive body of evidence demonstrates that an intergenerational shift from materialist to postmaterialist priorities has been occurring. But, it is only one aspect of a broader cultural shift from survival values to self-expression

values, which is bringing new political issues to center stage and encouraging the spread of democracy.

This theory of intergenerational value change is based on two key hypotheses (Inglehart, 1977):

1. *A scarcity hypothesis*: Virtually everyone aspires to freedom and autonomy, but people tend to place the highest value on their most pressing needs. Material sustenance and physical security are linked immediately with survival, and when they are scarce, people give top priority to these materialistic goals. However, under prosperous conditions, people become more likely to emphasize postmaterialist goals such as belonging, esteem, and aesthetic and intellectual satisfaction.
2. *A socialization hypothesis*: The relationship between material conditions and value priorities is not one of immediate adjustment. To a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years, and these values change mainly through intergenerational population replacement.

The scarcity hypothesis is similar to the principle of diminishing marginal utility. It reflects the basic distinction between the material needs for physical survival and safety, and nonmaterial needs such as those for self-expression and aesthetic satisfaction.

During the past several decades, advanced industrial societies have diverged strikingly from the prevailing historical pattern; most of their population has *not* grown up under conditions of hunger and economic insecurity. This has led to a gradual shift in which needs for belonging, esteem, and intellectual and self-expression have become more prominent. The scarcity hypothesis implies that prolonged periods of high prosperity tends to encourage the spread of postmaterialist values—and that enduring economic decline has the opposite effect.

But, there is no one-to-one relationship between socioeconomic development and the prevalence of postmaterialist values, for these values reflect one's subjective sense of security, not simply one's objective economic level. One's sense of security is shaped by a society's social welfare institutions as well as its income level, and is also influenced by the general sense of security prevailing in one's society. Furthermore, people's basic value priorities do not change overnight; the scarcity hypothesis must be interpreted in connection with the socialization hypothesis.

One of the most pervasive concepts in social science is that one's basic personality structure crystallizes by the time one reaches adulthood. A large body of evidence indicates that people's basic values are largely fixed when they reach adulthood, and change relatively little thereafter (Inglehart, 1977, 1997; Rokeach, 1968, 1973). If so, we would expect to find substantial differences between the values of the young and the old in societies that have experienced a rising sense of security. People are most likely to adopt those values consistent with what they experienced firsthand during their formative years. This implies that intergenerational value change occurs if younger generations grow

up under different conditions from those that shaped earlier generations, so that the values of the entire society change gradually through intergenerational replacement.

These two hypotheses generate several predictions concerning value change. First, although the scarcity hypothesis implies that prosperity is conducive to the spread of postmaterialist values, the socialization hypothesis implies that fundamental value change takes place gradually. To a large extent, it occurs as younger generations replace older ones in the adult population. After an extended period of rising economic and physical security, one would expect to find substantial differences between the value priorities of older and younger groups, because they would have been shaped by different experiences during their formative years. However, a sizeable time lag would occur between economic changes and their political effects. Fifteen or 20 years after an era of prosperity began, the birth cohorts that spent their formative years in prosperity would begin to enter the electorate.

Per-capita income and educational levels are among the best readily available indicators of the conditions leading to the shift from materialist to postmaterialist goals, but the theoretically crucial factor is not per-capita income itself, but one's sense of existential security—which means the impact of economic and physical security is mediated by the given society's social security system.

To test the value change hypothesis, we asked people which goals they considered most important, choosing between things such as economic growth, a fight against rising prices, maintenance of order, and the fight against crime (which tap materialist priorities); and freedom of speech, a society in which people have more say in important government decisions and more say on the job, and a society in which ideas count (which tap postmaterialist priorities). Representative national surveys in six West European countries in 1970 revealed huge differences between the values of young and old in all these societies. As Figure 1.1 indicates, among those age 65 years and older, people with materialist value priorities outnumbered those with postmaterialist value priorities by more than 12:1. But, as one moves from older to younger cohorts, the balance shifts gradually toward a diminishing proportion of materialists and a growing proportion of people with postmaterialist values. Among the youngest cohort (those from 18–25 years in 1970), postmaterialists outnumber materialists. If we assume the value priorities of given birth cohorts are stable, this implies that, during the 1930s, when the two oldest cohorts were in their 20s and 30s, materialists must have outnumbered postmaterialists by at least 10:1 among the adult population of these countries. In that era, the Marxist model of politics, dominated by class conflict and economic issues, provided a reasonably good fit approximation of reality. However, the cross-sectional evidence in Figure 1.1 also implies that, as the four oldest birth cohorts died off during the four decades following 1970, we should observe a major shift in the motivations of these societies, with postmaterialists becoming as numerous as materialists, bringing a corresponding shift away from economic issues toward increasing emphasis on quality of life and expressive issues.

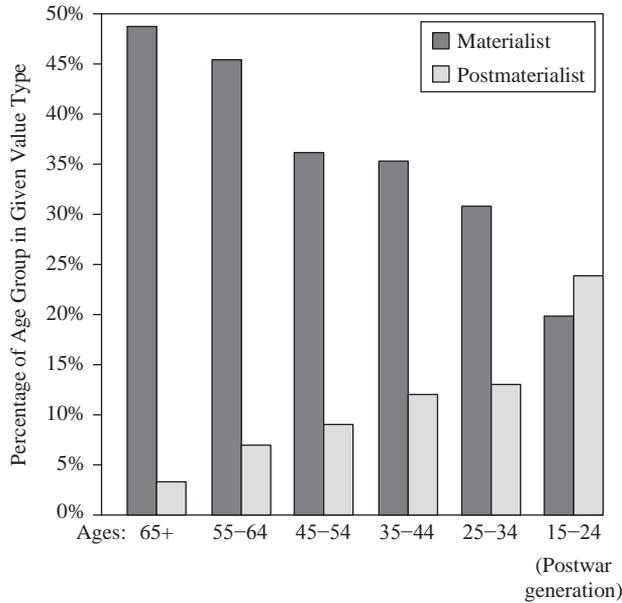


Figure 1.1 Value type by age group, among the populations of England, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands in 1970. Source: European Community Survey of February 1970. Based on original four-item materialist/postmaterialist values battery. Reprinted from Inglehart, 1990: 76.

Cohort Effects Versus Life Cycle Effects

But are these value differences stable? Do these age differences reflect enduring birth cohort effects or transient life cycle effects? With data from just one time point, one cannot be sure—and the two interpretations have very different implications. The life cycle reading implies that the young will become increasingly materialist as they age, so that by the time they are 65 years old, they will have become just as materialist as the 65 year olds in 1970, which means that society as a whole will not change at all. The cohort effects interpretation implies that the younger cohorts will remain relatively postmaterialist over time, and that as they replace the older, more materialist cohorts, the prevailing values of the society will change profoundly.

Cohort analysis provides the only conclusive way to answer this question and it requires (a) survey data covering a long time period; (b) surveys carried out at numerous time points, enabling one to distinguish period effect from life cycle and cohort effect and (c) large numbers of respondents in each survey, because when one breaks a given national sample down into six or seven birth cohorts, the sampling error margin rises to the point where noise begins to drown out the signal.

Figure 1.2 shows the results of a cohort analysis that follows given birth cohorts for almost 40 years, using data from Euro-barometer surveys that included the materialist/postmaterialist battery in almost every year from 1970 to 1997; supplemented with data from the fourth and fifth waves of the World Values Surveys (WVSs), carried out in 1999 and in 2007 to 2009.¹ This figure pools the data from Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands to provide large samples and relatively stable estimates of each cohort's position at a given time, which is calculated by subtracting the percentage of materialists from the percentage of postmaterialists. Thus, at the zero point on the *y*-axis, the two groups are equally numerous. The proportion of postmaterialists increases as one moves up; the proportion of materialists increases as one moves down in Figure 1.2.

If the age differences shown in Figure 1.1 reflected a life cycle effect, then each of the cohort lines would move downward toward the materialist pole, with each cohort becoming more materialist as one moves across Figure 1.2, from 1970 to 2009. If the age differences reflect stable birth cohort effects, the pattern would be horizontal, with each birth cohort remaining about as postmaterialist at the end of the time series as it was at the start.

But, we also need to take period effects into account. Our theory implies that negative short-term effects such as a major recession will tend to push all cohorts downward in response to current conditions; but, with recovery, they will return to their former level, so that in the long run they will remain about as postmaterialist as they were at the start. Over short periods, a period effect that pushed all the cohorts downward could give the misleading impression that the age differences reflected life cycle effects. But, in the long run, positive and negative fluctuations tend to cancel each other out.

Because we have data from numerous time points, we can see that period effects clearly *are* present. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005) demonstrated, they reflect current economic conditions, particularly inflation levels. During periods of economic difficulty, each birth cohort moves downward, becoming more materialist; with recovery, each birth cohort moves upward again, becoming more postmaterialist, but the differences between given birth cohorts are relatively stable. Consequently, these period effects have no lasting impact. The younger cohorts remain relatively postmaterialist despite short-term fluctuations and, over four decades, we find no overall tendency for the members of given birth cohorts to become more materialist as they age. Indeed, most cohorts are slightly more postmaterialist at the end of this time series than they were at the start.

During this four-decade span, the three oldest birth cohorts have left the sample. First, the 1896-to-1905 cohort, then the 1906-to-1915 cohort, and finally the 1916-to-1925 cohort disappeared, as the number of surviving members in the cohort became too small to provide reliable estimates. These cohorts were replaced by three new ones, born during 1956 to 1965, 1966 to 1975, and, most recently, 1976 to 1985. The cohort analysis presented in Figure 1.2 shows no evidence whatsoever of life cycle effects. Time series evidence covering four decades makes it clear that the age-related differences found in 1970 reflect lasting cohort

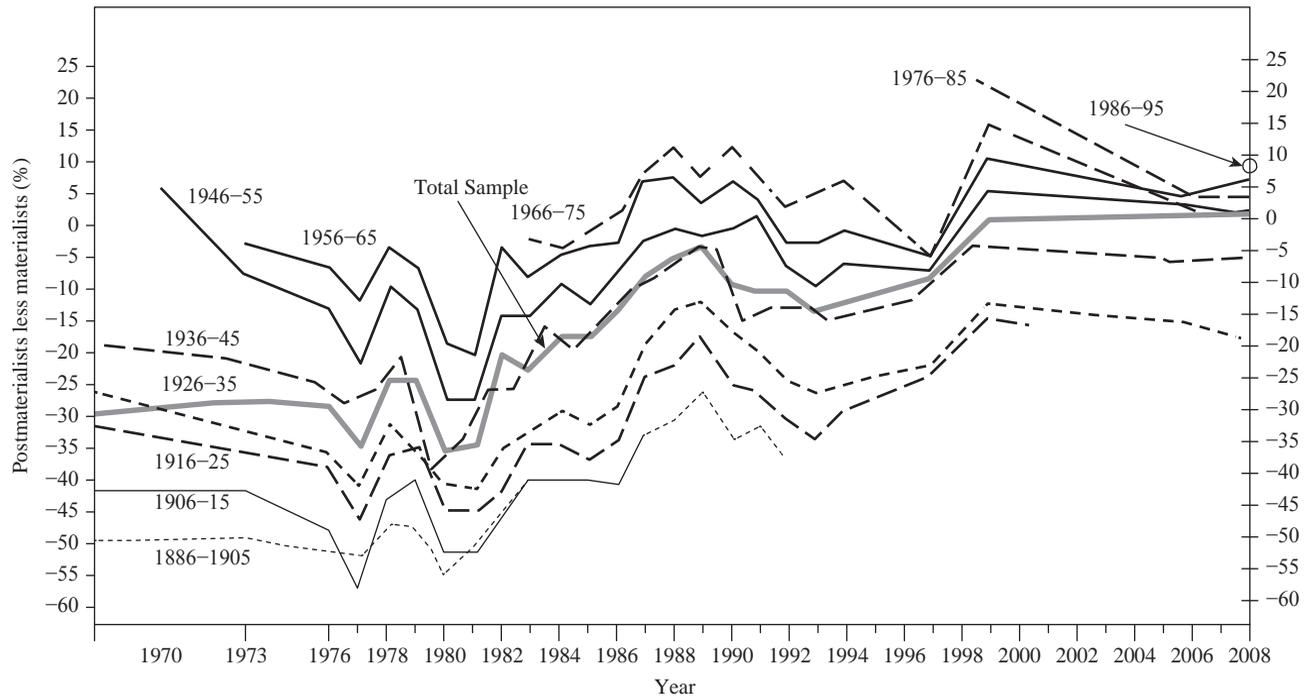


Figure 1.2 Cohort analysis. Percentage of postmaterialists less the percentage of materialists in six West European countries—Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands—1971 to 2009. (Data from 1970 through 1997 are from Euro-Barometer surveys; data from 1999, 2006 and 2008–2009 are from European Values Study/World Values Survey.)

differences. This implies that as the younger, less materialist cohorts, replace the older ones in the adult population, these societies should shift from materialist toward postmaterialist values.

This is precisely what happened. During the past four decades, we find a substantial net shift toward postmaterialist values among the six populations first surveyed in 1970 (and in the United States and other Western countries for which we have time series data). The heavy shaded line in Figure 1.2 shows the net shift toward postmaterialist values among the adult population as a whole at various time points from 1970 to 2009. During the early 1970s, materialists heavily outnumbered postmaterialists in all these countries. In the six West European countries, materialists were four times as numerous as postmaterialists (and 21 times as numerous as postmaterialists among the oldest cohort). Similarly, in the United States, materialists were three times as numerous as postmaterialists. During the ensuing years, a major shift occurred. By 2000, postmaterialists were slightly more numerous than materialists in western Europe and twice as numerous as materialists in the United States. The predicted shift toward postmaterialist values took place.

Strikingly similar findings have been reported by researchers in other disciplines—from anthropology to biology. Thus, Gelfand et al. (2011) distinguished between cultures that are “tight” versus “loose,” arguing that these qualities are shaped by the ecological and human-made threats the societies encountered historically. These threats increase the need for strong norms and severe punishment of deviant behavior. Tight societies have autocratic governments that suppress dissent, control crime sternly, and are relatively religious. Testing these predictions against survey data from 33 countries, Gelfand et al. (2011) found that nations that encountered severe ecological and historical threats had relatively strong norms and low tolerance of deviant behavior. Severe existential pressures tend to produce “tight” cultures whereas fading pressures lower the need for rigid norms, producing “loose” cultures that are less restricted by religion and more tolerant of deviance.

Similarly, Thornhill and colleagues (Thornhill, Fincher, & Aran, 2009; Thornhill, Fincher, Murray, 2010) found that historic vulnerability to infectious disease is linked with collectivist attitudes, xenophobia, and low support for gender equality—all of which hinder the emergence of democracy. Fincher, Thornhill, Murray, and Schaller (2008), rated 98 societies on a collectivist–individualist scale, and found that a high threat of disease goes with collectivist attitudes, controlling for wealth and urbanization. As the threat from disease diminishes, individualism and tolerance increase. These findings have very similar implications to those of Inglehart et al.

Western levels of economic security have not continued to rise during the past two decades. Economic growth has been relatively stagnant and increasing income inequality has created a situation in which there has been little or no growth in real income for most of the population. The negative impact of economic stagnation and income inequality on economic security has been reinforced by cutbacks in the welfare state and high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth. The shift toward postmaterialist values has tapered off in

these Western countries. Thus, in the most recent surveys, the youngest cohorts are no more postmaterialist than the other postwar cohorts. The one surviving prewar cohort remains distinctive, with materialists still outnumbering postmaterialists, but intergenerational population replacement no longer brings a shift toward postmaterialist values.

In contrast with the striking intergenerational value differences in 1970 that are shown in Figure 1.1, Western countries no longer show sizeable differences between the values of younger and older birth cohorts. A major value transition occurred. In 1970, materialists vastly outnumbered postmaterialists in all Western countries. By 2000, postmaterialists were slightly more numerous than materialists, but because postmaterialists tend to be concentrated among the more secure, better educated, and more articulate strata of society, they set the tone; their values have become politically correct. The culture of high-income Western countries has been transformed, but intergenerational value change is no longer a major factor. Except for the very old, young and old have pretty similar values.

But, the logic of the postmaterialist shift has significant implications for many countries. Although the rates vary widely from country to country, the world as a whole has been experiencing unprecedented economic growth since 1980, with India and China recently experiencing annual growth rates well more than 6%. These countries are still in the phase of rising materialism that characterizes early industrialization. But, if they continue on their current trajectories, they will eventually reach a stage when younger generations will have grown up under conditions in which they take survival for granted. Many other countries—from Mexico to Singapore—are approaching or have already attained this level.

In the world as a whole, the ratio between materialists and postmaterialists varies tremendously according to a society's level of economic development. Low-income countries and strife-torn countries show an overwhelming preponderance of materialists, whereas prosperous and secure ones show a preponderance of postmaterialists. Materialists outnumber postmaterialists in Pakistan 55:1 and, in Russia, 28:1; but, in the United States, postmaterialists outnumber materialists 2:1 and, in Sweden, postmaterialists prevail 5:1. There is no guarantee that the rapid economic growth the world as a whole experienced from 1980 to 2008 will continue, but in those countries that do attain high levels of existential security, we would expect intergenerational value change to take place.

Postmaterialist Values: Part of a Broader Cultural Change

The shift toward postmaterialist values is only one aspect of a still broader process of cultural change reshaping the political outlook, religious orientations, gender roles, and sexual mores of advanced industrial society (Inglehart 1990, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel 2005). The emerging orientations place less emphasis on traditional cultural norms, especially those that limit individual self-expression.

To identify the main dimensions of global cultural variation, Inglehart and Baker (2000)² carried out a factor analysis of each society's mean level on scores of variables, tapping into a wide range of values. The two most significant dimensions

that emerged reflected (a) a polarization between *traditional* and *secular-rational* values and (b) a polarization between *survival* and *self-expression* values.

Traditional values place strong emphasis on religion and respect for authority, have relatively low levels of tolerance for abortion and divorce, and have relatively high levels of national pride. *Secular-rational* values have the opposite characteristics. Agrarian societies tend to emphasize traditional values; industrializing societies tend to emphasize secular-rational values.

The second major dimension of cross-cultural variation is linked with the transition from industrial society to postindustrial societies, which brings a polarization between *survival* and *self-expression* values. As Table 1.1 demonstrates, the polarization between materialist and postmaterialist values is a sensitive indicator of this dimension; the conditions that give rise to postmaterialist values are also conducive to self-expression values. But, self-expression values encompass a number of issues that go well beyond the items tapped by postmaterialist values. For example, self-expression values reflect mass polarization over such issues as whether “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women” or whether “Men make better political leaders than women.” This emphasis on gender equality is part of a broader syndrome of tolerance of outgroups, including foreigners, gays, and lesbians. Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of diversity, and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life, and support for individual autonomy in general.

The shift from survival values to self-expression values also includes a shift in child-rearing values, from emphasis on hard work toward emphasis on imagination and tolerance as important values to teach a child. Societies that rank high on self-expression values also tend to rank high on interpersonal trust and have relatively high levels of subjective well-being. This produces an environment of trust and tolerance in which people place a relatively high value on individual freedom and self-expression, and have activist political orientations—the attributes that the political culture literature defines as crucial to democracy.

A major component of rise of self-expression values is a shift away from deference to all forms of external authority. Submission to authority has high costs; the individual’s personal goals must be subordinated to those of external authorities. Under conditions of insecurity, people are generally willing to do so. Under threat of invasion, internal disorder, or economic collapse, people seek eagerly strong authority figures that can protect them from danger.

Conversely, conditions of prosperity and security are conducive to tolerance of diversity in general and democracy in particular. This helps explain a long-established finding that rich societies are much likelier to be democratic than poor ones. Under conditions of insecurity, people may be willing to submit to authoritarian rule, but with increasing levels of existential security, they become less willing to do so.

The rise of self-expression values brings an intergenerational change in a wide variety of basic social norms—from cultural norms linked to survival of the species, to norms linked to the pursuit of individual well-being. For example, younger birth cohorts are markedly more tolerant of homosexuality than their

table 1.1 Orientations linked with survival versus self-expression values

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

The original polarities vary; the statements made in the table show how each item relates to this values index.

elders. And younger cohorts are substantially more favorable to gender equality and are more permissive in their attitudes toward abortion, divorce, extramarital affairs and euthanasia. Economic accumulation for the sake of economic security was the central goal of industrial society. Ironically, its attainment set in motion a process of gradual cultural change that has made these goals less central and is now bringing a rejection of the hierarchical institutions that helped attain them.

Intergenerational Shift from Survival Values toward Self-Expression Values

Throughout advanced industrial societies, the younger age cohorts emphasize self-expression values much more heavily than their elders, in a pattern similar to that found earlier with postmaterialist values. As we have seen, given birth cohorts did not become more materialistic as they aged. This holds true for the shift from survival to self-expression values as well, although we do not yet have a massive time series database comparable with what is available with materialist/postmaterialist values. But, we do have evidence from six waves of the World Values Surveys (WVSs) carried out from 1981 to 2013. From the start of this time series, younger birth cohorts placed more emphasis on self-expression values than older cohorts, and they did not move away from self-expression values toward survival values as they aged from 1980 to 2000. Throughout this period, younger birth cohorts continued to place more emphasis on self-expression values than older ones. And although each of the birth cohorts aged by several decades during this period, none of them placed less emphasis on self-expression in 2012 than in 1981—as would have happened if these age differences were simply reflective of life cycle effects.

The evidence suggests that major cultural changes are occurring through an intergenerational value shift linked with the fact that the younger birth cohorts have grown up under greater levels of existential security than those that shaped the formative years of the older cohorts. As Inglehart and Welzel (2005) demonstrated, emphasis on self-expression values is linked strongly to the extent to which a given society actually approaches gender equality in political and social life. Even more strikingly, the shift toward self-expression values is conducive to the spread and flourishing of democratic institutions.

How Different Is the Islamic World?

The Arab Spring that erupted in December 2010 inspired widespread hope that it would bring a wave of democratization similar to the one that swept East Asia and eastern Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most of the new democracies that were established in East Asia and eastern Europe are still flourishing, but the democratizing surge of the Arab Spring has largely floundered. In a world where most other countries have democratic governments, the 2014 Freedom House report does not code a single Muslim-majority country as “Free.” Among 18 Arab-speaking countries, only four—Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Lebanon—are even listed as “Partly Free.” The situation is slightly better among the 19 non-Arab Muslim-majority countries, where nine—Albania, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, and Turkey—are “Partly Free.” Throughout the rest of the world, in contrast, 57% of all countries are considered “Free,” and an additional 30% are categorized as “Partly Free.”

These findings might be interpreted as giving new credibility to Samuel Huntington’s (1993, 1995) hotly contested thesis that the Islamic world and the West are divided by a clash of civilizations. Why did the recent wave of

democratization fail in most Arab countries? Huntington's response would be that the Islamic world lacks the core political values that gave birth to representative democracy in Western civilization: separation of religious and secular authority, rule of law and social pluralism, parliamentary institutions of representative government, and protection of individual rights and civil liberties as the buffer between citizens and the power of the state. This claim is not entirely implausible. According to the latest Freedom House rankings, about two thirds of the world's countries are now electoral democracies. But, among the 47 countries with an Islamic majority, only one fourth are electoral democracies, and none of the core Arabic-speaking societies falls into this category.

But, this does not prove Huntington was correct, since it tells us nothing about the underlying beliefs of the Islamic populations. The results of the latest wave of the WVS, conducted in 2010 to 2013 provide an extensive body of relevant evidence. Asking questions that explore values and beliefs in more than 100 countries, the WVS is an investigation of sociocultural and political change that covers more than 90% of the world's population.

A comparison of the data yielded by these surveys in Islamic and non-Islamic societies around the globe confirms the first claim in Huntington's thesis: Culture does matter; indeed, it matters a lot. Historical religious traditions have left an enduring imprint on contemporary values. But, Huntington was mistaken in assuming that the core clash between the West and Islam is over political values. Today, the populations of almost every country in the world—whether Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or Confucian—see democracy as the best form of government.

The 2010 to 2014 WVS asked representative national samples of the public of each country whether they thought various ways of governing their country would be very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad. The options included "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections"; "Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country"; "Having the army rule"; and "Having a democratic political system." In virtually every country in the world, democratic political systems were endorsed by a larger share of the population than any other alternative. This includes the populations of the 17 Muslim-majority countries. As Figure 1.3 demonstrates, overwhelming majorities of the populations of both the Arab-speaking Islamic countries and the other Islamic countries rated a democratic system as either "very good" or "good." Support for these options among Islamic populations was about as high as among the populations of Western countries, and was significantly greater than among the populations of post-Communist countries or societies with a Confucian historical heritage.

At this point in history, democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the world. In country after country, a clear majority of the population describes "having a democratic political system" as either "good" or "very good." This represents a dramatic change from the 1930s and 1940s, when fascist regimes won overwhelming mass approval in many societies; and from the 1920s until the 1980s, Communist regimes had widespread support. However, in the past few decades, democracy has become virtually the only political model with

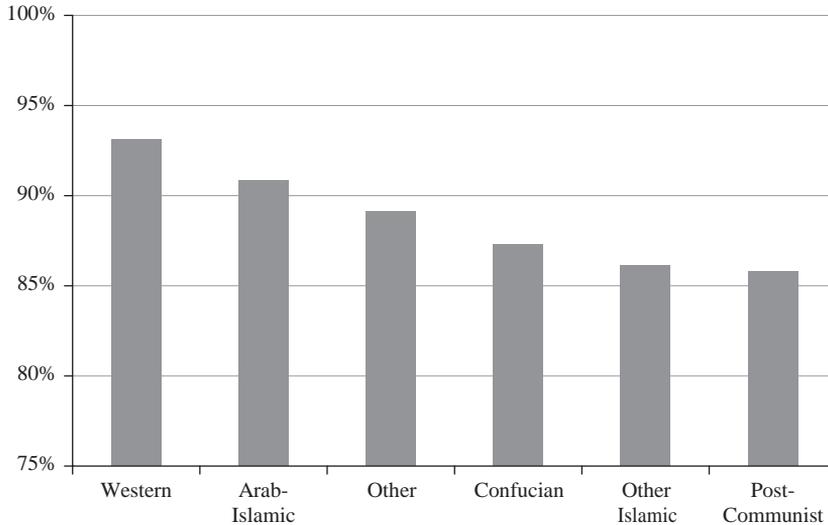


Figure 1.3 Support for a democratic system in six cultural zones. Values are a percentage of those who view a democratic system as “good” or “very good.” (2010–2014 WVS.)

global appeal, regardless of cultural heritage. A solid majority of the public in both Western and Muslim countries gives democracy high marks as the most efficient form of government, with 68% disagreeing that “democracies are indecisive” and “democracies aren’t good at maintaining order” (all other cultural regions and countries, except East Asia and Japan, being far more critical). And equal numbers of respondents on both sides of the civilizational divide (61%) firmly reject authoritarian governance, expressing disapproval of “strong leaders who need not bother with parliament and elections.”

As Inglehart and Norris (2003) and Norris and Inglehart (2004) point out, the real fault line between the West and Islam—which Huntington overlooked completely—concerns gender equality and sexual liberalization. The values separating the two cultures have more to do with eros than demos. As younger generations in the West have gradually become more liberal on these issues, Islamic societies have remained the most traditional ones in the world.

Commenting on the disenfranchisement of women throughout the Middle East, the United Nations Development Program has argued that “no society can achieve the desired state of well-being and human development, or compete in a globalizing world, if half its people remain marginalized and disempowered.” But this “sexual clash of civilizations” taps into far deeper issues than how Muslim countries treat women. A society’s commitment to gender equality and sexual liberalization is a powerful indicator of how strongly that society supports social tolerance—a core prerequisite for effective democracy.

In attitudes toward gender equality and sexual liberalization, the cultural gap between Islam and the West widens into a chasm. On the matter of equal rights

and opportunities for women—measured by such questions as whether men make better political leaders than women or whether university education is more important for boys than for girls—Western and Muslim countries score 82% and 55%, respectively. Islamic societies are also much less tolerant of homosexuality, abortion, and divorce. The comparative cross-national surveys in seven Middle Eastern countries cited elsewhere in this book include several questions on morality. Respondents were asked to rate between 1 point and 10 points the morality of violence against other people, stealing other’s property, telling lies to protect one’s interests, and premarital sex. In many of these surveys, premarital sex was considered more immoral than prevarication, theft, or violence against others. This is one more piece of evidence that the contrast between the values of Western and Muslim-majority societies involves norms concerning sexual behavior rather than democracy. Virtually all Muslim-majority populations express favorable attitudes toward democracy, but they are much less tolerant than Western populations concerning gender equality, premarital sex, and homosexuality.

Along with postmaterialist values, these issues are part of the broader syndrome of tolerance, trust, political activism, and emphasis on individual autonomy that constitutes self-expression values, as Table 1.1 indicated. The extent to which a society emphasizes these self-expression values has a surprisingly strong bearing on the emergence and survival of democratic institutions. Among the countries included in the WVS, support for gender equality—a key indicator of social tolerance—is linked closely with a society’s level of democracy.

The world as a whole shows a clear intergenerational shift toward growing support for gender equality, but the trend is very uneven. Among the 35 high-income non-Muslim majority societies included in the WVSs, all 35—without a single exception—show strong intergenerational differences, with the younger birth cohorts being more favorable to gender equality than the older cohorts, and in most countries the differences are very large. This holds true not only of Western high-income countries but also of Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea.

Muslim-majority societies show a mixed pattern. In 13 countries—Albania, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Turkey, Palestine, Bangladesh, Jordan, Malaysia, Burkina Faso, Egypt, and Iraq—we find statistically significant tendencies for younger respondents to be more favorable to gender equality than their older compatriots. This tendency ranges from rather strong in Albania to relatively weak in Iraq (though 34 of the 35 non-Islamic high-income countries show stronger intergenerational differences than Albania). And 14 other Muslim-majority countries—Libya, Pakistan, Mali, Yemen, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Bahrain, Indonesia, and Azerbaijan (plus half-Muslim Nigeria)—show little or no evidence of an intergenerational shift toward growing support for gender equality.

What accounts for this bifurcation of Muslim-majority countries on movement toward gender equality? One point is clear: None of the four ex-Soviet Muslim majority countries shows evidence of an intergenerational shift toward gender equality, although why this is true is not clear, particularly as these four countries are markedly more secular than most Muslim-majority societies. For the world

as a whole, high-income countries show much stronger evidence of an intergenerational shift toward growing support for gender equality than low-income countries, but within the Islamic world this tendency is less evident. The populations of rich countries such as Qatar and Bahrain show no intergenerational differences whatsoever. The Muslim-majority countries that show the largest intergenerational differences tend to be located on the Mediterranean and have relatively strong exchanges with Europe, but there are several exceptions. The reasons underlying the bifurcation of the Muslim world into two groups, only one of which shows evidence of an emerging intergenerational shift toward growing support for gender equality demands further research.

This question has important political implications because, as Figure 1.4 indicates, attitudes toward gender equality have a surprisingly strong linkage with democracy ($r = .82$). In every stable democracy, a majority of the public disagrees with the statement: Men make better political leaders than women. None of the societies in which less than 30% of the public rejects this statement has a democratic government. In China, one of the world's most autocratic countries, a majority of the public agrees that men make better political leaders than women, despite a party line that has long emphasized gender equality. In practice, Chinese women occupy few positions of real power and face widespread discrimination in the workplace. India is a borderline case. The country is a long-standing parliamentary democracy with an independent judiciary and civilian control of the armed forces, but it is also marred by a weak rule of law, arbitrary arrests, and

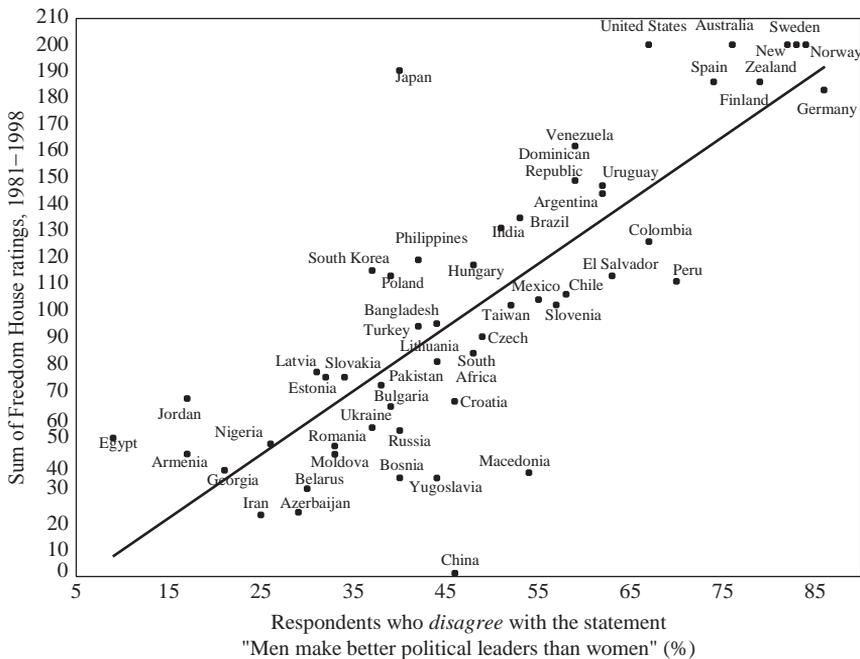


Figure 1.4 Gender equality and democracy.

extrajudicial killings. The status of Indian women reflects that duality. Women’s rights are guaranteed in the Constitution, and Indira Gandhi led the nation for 15 years. But, domestic violence and forced prostitution remain widespread in India and, as Figure 1.4 indicates, about half of the public believes that men make better political leaders than women.

As Figure 1.5 indicates, Muslim-majority countries rank lower than any other major cultural group in support for gender equality. According to evidence from the 2010 to 2014 WVS, fully 81% of the population of Western countries disagrees with the statement that men make better political leaders than women. In both the Confucian-influenced countries and the “Other” category, clear majorities of 58% and 59%, respectively, reject that claim. In the post-Communist countries, this figure is 47%. But, belief in gender equality drops sharply among Islamic populations; the claim of male superiority is rejected by only 21% in the Arab-Islamic countries and by 26% in the “Other” Islamic countries.

Responses to the statement “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women” produces similar results. In Western countries, 70% of the public disagree with that statement. In Post-Communist countries, the figure is 55%; in the “Other” category, it is 50%; and in Confucian societies, it is 30%. However,

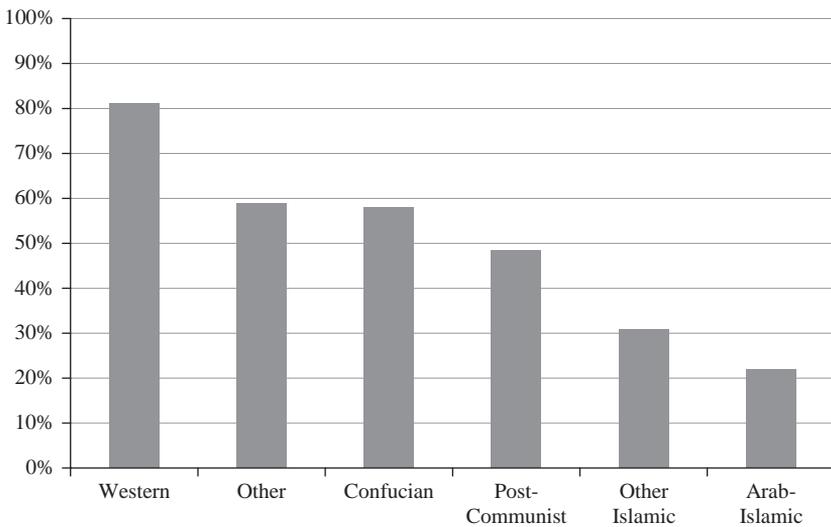


Figure 1.5 Support for gender equality in six cultural zones. This graph indicates the percentage of respondents who disagreed with the question: Do men make better political leaders than women? *Arab-Islamic*: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Qatar, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq; *Confucian*: China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea; *Other*: Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Trinidad, Thailand, Philippines, Ghana, and Zimbabwe; *Other Islamic*: Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, and Azerbaijan; *Post-Communist*: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Armenia, and Georgia; *Western*: United States, Sweden, Germany, Cyprus, Australia, and New Zealand. (2010–2014 WVS.)

it falls to 21% and 20% in Arab-Islamic countries and Other Islamic countries, respectively.

Attitudes toward homosexuality provide an excellent litmus test of a society's commitment to equality. Tolerance of well-liked groups is never a problem; the crucial test of social tolerance is how a society treats its most unpopular groups (Gibson, 1992). Today, relatively few people express overt hostility toward other classes, races, or religions, but rejection of homosexuals remains widespread. The WVS asked representative national samples of populations of throughout the world about which groups they would be willing to have as neighbors. Globally, homosexuals proved to be the least-liked group. In response to another WVS question, measuring whether homosexuality is ever justifiable on a 10-point scale, about half the world's population, selected 1 point—meaning, “never.” Like gender equality, this attitude is linked strongly to a country's level of democracy. Among authoritarian and quasi-democratic states, rejection of homosexuality is deeply entrenched. In the latest available survey, 99% of the public in both Egypt and Bangladesh said homosexuality is “never” acceptable; the corresponding figures were 94% in Iran, 92% in China, and 71% in India. The populations of stable democracies were much more tolerant. Only 32% of the US public said that homosexuality was never acceptable, and the figures were 26% in Canada, 25% in Britain, 19% in Germany, and 10% in the Netherlands.

Islamic societies are neither uniquely nor monolithically low on tolerance toward sexual orientation and gender equality. Many of the Soviet successor states rank about as low as most Islamic societies. On the whole, however, the populations of Muslim-majority countries not only lag behind the West but behind all the other categories of societies, as Figure 1.6 indicates. Even more strikingly, the gap between the West and Islam is even wider among the younger age groups than it is among older respondents. Although the younger birth cohorts in many Muslim-majority societies are becoming more tolerant, more liberal, and less religious than their elders, the intergenerational differences in most Western societies are considerably larger. Consequently, cultural change is moving much faster in Western societies than in the Muslim world, producing a growing cultural gap.

Any claim of a “clash of civilizations” based on fundamentally different political goals held by Western and Islamic societies is a gross oversimplification. Support for the goal of democracy is widespread among Islamic populations, even among those living in the most authoritarian regimes. But, Huntington was correct in claiming that cultural differences have taken on a new importance, forming the fault lines for future conflict. Although the populations of virtually every country in the world now endorse the goal of democracy, there is no global acceptance of the self-expression values (such as social tolerance, gender equality, and trust) and the postmaterialist emphasis on participation and freedom of speech that are crucial to democracy. Today, these divergent values constitute the real clash between Islamic societies and the West.

But, economic development is conducive to changing attitudes in virtually any society. Modernization brings systematic, predictable changes in gender roles. Industrialization brings women into the paid workforce and reduces fertility rates dramatically. Women become literate and begin to participate in representative

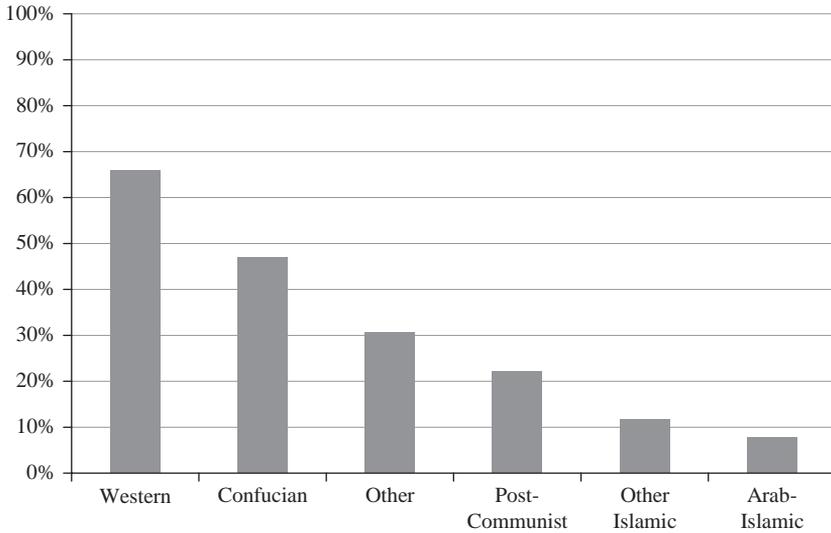


Figure 1.6 Tolerance of homosexuality in six cultural zones. This graph indicates the percentage of respondents who expressed any degree of tolerance to the question: Is homosexuality ever justifiable? *Arab-Islamic*: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Qatar, Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq; *Confucian*: China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea; *Other*: Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Trinidad, Thailand, Philippines, Ghana, and Zimbabwe; *Other Islamic*: Turkey, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, and Azerbaijan; *Post-Communist*: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Armenia, and Georgia; *Western*: United States, Sweden, Germany, Cyprus, Australia, and New Zealand. (2010–2014 WVS.)

government, although still have far less power than men. Then the postindustrial phase brings a shift toward greater gender equality as women move into higher status economic roles in management and gain political influence within elected and appointed bodies. Thus, the populations of relatively industrialized Islamic societies such as Turkey hold views on gender equality and sexual liberalization that are very similar to those held in other new democracies.

Cultural attitudes—and deep-rooted support for democracy—is linked closely with modernization. Women did not attain the right to vote in most historically Protestant societies until about 1920 and, in Roman Catholic Europe, not until after World War II. In 1945, only 3% of the members of parliaments around the world were women. In 1965, the figure had risen to 8%, in 1985 to 12%, in 2002 to 15%, and in 2014 to 22%.

The forces of modernization are starting to transform Islamic societies. The 2007 to 2013 wave of the WVS shows evidence that a process of intergenerational value change similar to the one that transformed the political cultures of Western societies during the decades after 1945, is now at work in Muslim-majority countries. Interestingly, the process tends to be more advanced in the countries that

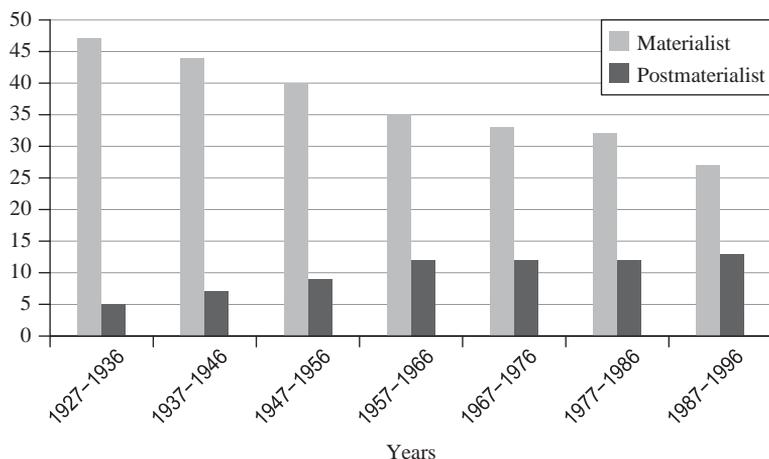


Figure 1.7 Materialist versus postmaterialist values by birth cohort in nine Muslim-majority countries. (World Values Survey and European Values Study, 2007–2013.)

played leading roles in the recent Arab Spring uprisings than in other Muslim societies.

Figure 1.7 shows the shifting balance between materialist and postmaterialist values in nine Muslim-majority countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Palestine, Jordan, Turkey, Albania, and Indonesia. Among the oldest birth cohort, materialists outnumber postmaterialists by a ratio of more than 10:1; among the youngest birth cohort, the ratio is slightly more than 2:1, which is roughly the ratio found among the youngest prewar cohort in western Europe in 1970. The ratio is clearly shifting, although it has not yet produced a cohort in which postmaterialists outnumber materialists, as was true of the first postwar West European cohort in 1970.

This pattern does not hold true for all Islamic countries for which we have data. In 14 other Muslim-majority countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Mali, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Malaysia) the age-related differences are relatively weak (median $r = -.05$). The countries that show evidence of relatively strong intergenerational value change do not have the highest levels of per-capita gross domestic product (which are found in the Gulf states), but they do have significantly greater life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates, and lower fertility rates than the other Islamic countries. Thus, the median life expectancy in the countries shown in Figure 1.7 is 74.8 years; the median life expectancy in the other countries is 68.9 years. Survival tends to be relatively secure in the Muslim-majority countries that show relatively high rates of intergenerational value change. Moreover, apart from Indonesia, these countries are clustered on or near the Mediterranean and have relatively flows of population to and from western Europe. These countries also show relatively strong evidence of intergenerational change in attitudes toward gender equality.

The bifurcation of Muslim-majority countries into two groups—one of which shows clear signs of an intergenerational shift toward growing support for gender equality and postmaterialist values whereas the other does not—suggests that the cultural changes linked with modernization have only begun to impinge on the Muslim world and they are doing so unevenly. The fact that these changes have been transforming the populations of literally *all* non-Muslim high-income countries suggests, but does not prove, that in the long run they will also affect increasing numbers of Muslim-majority societies.

Simply holding elections and having a parliament will not establish effective democracy in the Muslim world. And it seems unlikely that many Arab-speaking countries will, in the near future, establish an enduring wave of democratization like the one that swept eastern Europe during the final days of the Cold War. But, there are signs that a process of intergenerational change is beginning to transform the culture of these countries. Culture has a lasting impact on how societies evolve, but culture is not destiny.

Notes

1. The samples are weighted to reflect each country's population. Because the 2006 World Values Survey did not include Belgium, we used data from the 1999 Belgian survey in the pooled analysis. This tends to reduce the amount of change observed from 1999 to 2006, but the distortion is minimal because Belgium contains only 4% of the population of the six countries.

2. For details on how these factor analyses were carried out at both the individual and societal levels, see Inglehart and Baker (2000).

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