

# Value Systems: The Subjective Aspect of Politics and Economics

### MODERNIZATION AND POSTMODERNIZATION

Economic, cultural, and political change go together in coherent patterns that are changing the world in predictable ways.

This has been the central claim of Modernization theory, from Karl Marx to Max Weber to Daniel Bell. The claim has given rise to heated debate during the last two centuries. This book presents evidence that this claim is largely correct: though we cannot predict exactly what will happen in a given society at a given time, some major trends are predictable in broad outline. When given processes of change are set in motion, certain characteristics are likely to emerge in the long run.

The idea that social and economic change go together on coherent trajectories has been attractive but controversial ever since it was proposed by Marx. It is intellectually exciting because it not only helps *explain* economic, social, and political change, but may even provide a certain degree of predictability. So far, most efforts at prediction in human affairs have been exercises in hubris; it is common knowledge that many of Marx's predictions were wrong. Human behavior is so complex and influenced by such a wide range of factors, operating on so many levels, that any claim to provide precise, unqualified predictions is likely to go unfulfilled.

We do not make such promises: one cannot foretell the precise course of social change. Nevertheless, certain syndromes of economic, political, and cultural changes go together in coherent trajectories, with some trajectories being more probable than others. In the long term, across many societies, once given processes are set in motion, certain important changes are likely to happen. Industrialization, for example, tends to bring increasing urbanization, growing occupational specialization, and higher levels of formal education in any society that undertakes it (Lerner, 1958; Deutsch, 1964). These are core elements of a trajectory that is generally called "Modernization."

This trajectory also tends to bring less obvious but equally important long-term consequences, such as rising levels of mass political participation. Thus, although we cannot predict the actions of specific leaders in given countries, we *can* say that (at this point in history) mass input to politics is likelier to play a decisive role in Sweden or Japan than in Albania or Burma. And we can even specify, with far better than random success, what issues are likely to be most salient in the politics of the respective types of societies.

The Modernization trajectory is linked with a wide range of other cultural changes. As we will see, certain cultural values are conducive to the economic accumulation and investment that make industrialization possible, and the sharply contrasting gender roles that characterize all preindustrial societies almost inevitably give way to increasingly similar gender roles in advanced industrial society.

But social change is not linear. Although a specific Modernization syndrome of changes becomes probable when societies move from an agrarian mode to an industrial mode, no trend goes on in the same direction forever. It eventually reaches a point of diminishing returns. Modernization is no exception. In the past few decades, advanced industrial societies have reached an inflection point and begun moving on a new trajectory that might be called "Postmodernization."

With Postmodernization, a new worldview is gradually replacing the outlook that has dominated industrializing societies since the Industrial Revolution. It reflects a shift in what people want out of life. It is transforming basic norms governing politics, work, religion, family, and sexual behavior. Thus, the process of economic development leads to two successive trajectories, Modernization and Postmodernization. Both of them are strongly linked with economic development, but Postmodernization represents a later stage of development that is linked with very different beliefs from those that characterize Modernization. These belief systems are not mere consequences of economic or social changes, but shape socioeconomic conditions and are shaped by them, in reciprocal fashion.

*Modernization Theory: The Linkages between Culture, Economics, and Politics*

The study of Modernization played a major role in social science in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Severely criticized subsequently, since the 1970s the Modernization concept has been widely considered discredited. As Pye (1990) has argued, it may be time to reexamine it. This chapter does so, presenting new empirical evidence and proposing a modified view of how Modernization works.

The central claim of Modernization theory is that industrialization is linked with specific processes of sociopolitical change that apply widely: though preindustrial societies vary immensely, one can meaningfully speak of a model of "modern" or "industrial" society toward which all societies tend to move if they commit themselves to industrialization. Economic development is linked with a syndrome of changes that includes not only industrialization, but also urbanization, mass education, occupational specialization, bureaucratization, and communications development, which in turn are linked with still broader cultural, social, and political changes.

One reason why Modernization theory aroused such great interest was its promise of predictive power: it implied that once a society entered the trajectory of industrialization, certain types of cultural and political change were

likely to take place, ranging from lower birth rates to greater penetration by government, higher life expectancies, increased mass political participation, and perhaps even democracy. Some critics caricatured Modernization theory as implying that economic development would easily and automatically produce liberal democracies, and they dismissed this outlook as naive ethnocentrism. In fact, most Modernization theorists made more qualified prognoses than this, but if we drop the gratuitous assumption that Modernization is easy and automatic, even this claim does not seem totally implausible today.

Modernization theory has been developing for over a century. A wide variety of social theorists have argued that technological and economic changes are linked with coherent and predictable patterns of cultural and political change. But there has been continuing debate over the causal linkages: does economic change cause cultural and political change, or does it work in the opposite direction?

Marx emphasized economic determinism, arguing that a society's technological level shapes its economic system, which in turn determines its cultural and political characteristics: given the technological level of the windmill, a society will be based on subsistence agriculture, with a mass of impoverished peasants dominated by a landed aristocracy; the steam engine brings an industrial society in which the bourgeoisie becomes the dominant elite, exploiting and repressing an urban proletariat.

Weber, on the other hand, emphasized the impact of culture: it was not just an epiphenomenon of the economic system, but an important causal factor in itself; culture can shape economic behavior, as well as being shaped by it. Thus, the emergence of the Protestant Ethic facilitated the rise of capitalism, which contributed to both the Industrial Revolution and the Democratic Revolution: this view held that belief systems influence economic and political life, as well as being influenced by them.

Some of Marx's successors shifted the emphasis from economic determinism (which suggests that the revolutionary Utopia will come spontaneously) toward greater emphasis on the impact of ideology and culture. Thus Lenin argued that by itself, the working class would never develop sufficient class consciousness for a successful revolution; they needed to be led by an ideologically aware vanguard of professional revolutionaries.

Mao emphasized the power of revolutionary thinking even more strongly. Breaking with Marxist orthodoxy, he held that China need not wait for the processes of urbanization and industrialization to transform it; if an ideologically committed cadre could instill sufficient enthusiasm among the Chinese masses, a communist revolution could succeed even in an agrarian society. Mao's faith in the power of ideological fervor to triumph over material obstacles seemed justified by the Chinese communist victory in 1949 over forces with vastly superior financial resources and manpower. On the other hand, the fact that ideological determinism has limits was demonstrated by the disastrous failure of the Great Leap Forward in 1959: to develop a complex society, it seems, one needs experts with specialized knowledge, as well as right-

thinking masses. When building a drainage system or constructing a steel mill, there are ways that work and ways that do not work, regardless of one's ideological perspective.

While conceding an important role to cultural factors, recent Modernization theorists such as Bell (1973) viewed changes in the structure of the workforce as the leading cause of cultural change. For Bell, the crucial milestone in the coming of "Postindustrial society" is reached when a majority of the workforce is in the tertiary sector of the economy, producing neither raw materials, nor manufactured goods, but services. This leads to a massive expansion of formal education, driven by the need for an increasingly skilled and specialized workforce. Other writers such as Lerner (1958) and Inkeles and Smith (1974) emphasized the importance of formal education as the main factor shaping a "modern" worldview.

Does Modernization lead to democracy? In the late 1950s, Khrushchev's reforms gave rise to hopes that the communist bloc might be on the brink of democratizing. The emergence of scores of newly independent postcolonial nations in the 1960s intensified these hopes. But optimism collapsed after the communist elite drove Khrushchev from power in 1964, the Soviet world settled down into a seemingly permanent authoritarian regime under Brezhnev, and authoritarian regimes took over in most postcolonial nations. Rostow (1961) had argued that economic development was inherently conducive to democratization, but by the 1970s most social scientists were skeptical of the idea. Authoritarian regimes seemed to be a permanent feature of the world—even (or perhaps especially) in those communist states that had achieved impressive economic growth. Industrialization could give rise to either democracy or dictatorship.

We propose a revised view of Modernization theory. We agree with the Modernization theorists on their most central point: that economic development, cultural change, and political change are linked in coherent and even, to some extent, predictable patterns. Some trajectories of change are more probable than others because certain configurations of values and beliefs, and political and economic institutions, are mutually supportive—while others are not. Thus, if one knows one component of a society, one can predict what other components will be present with far better than random success.

But while we follow Marx, Weber, and their successors in believing that change tends to take predictable rather than random trajectories, we differ from most Modernization theorists on four essential points:

1. Change is not linear. It does not move in one continuous direction until the end of history. Instead, it eventually reaches points of diminishing returns and has begun to move in a fundamentally new direction during the past few decades.

2. Previous versions of Modernization theory were deterministic, with the Marxist version tending toward economic determinism and the Weberian version sometimes tending toward cultural determinism. We believe that the relationships between economics and culture and politics are mutually support-

ive, as are the various systems of a biological organism. It would be senseless to ask whether the behavior of the human body is "really" determined by the muscular system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, or the respiratory system: each plays an essential role, and all activity ceases if any of them breaks down. Similarly, political systems and economic systems require a supportive cultural system—otherwise they would need to rely on naked coercion, which almost never endures for long. Conversely, a cultural system that was incompatible with its economic system would be unlikely to endure. Economic determinism, cultural determinism, and political determinism are *all* oversimplified: the causal linkages tend to be reciprocal. Unless these systems are mutually supportive, they are unlikely to survive.

3. We reject the ethnocentric perspective of those who equated Modernization with "Westernization": At one point in history, Modernization was concentrated in the West; today it is evident that the process is global, and that in some ways East Asia is now leading the process of Modernization. In keeping with this outlook, we propose a modified interpretation of Weber's (1904–5) thesis concerning the role of the Protestant Ethic in economic development. Weber was correct in viewing the rise of Protestantism as a crucial event in the Modernization of Europe. However, its impact was not unique to Protestantism but was mainly due to the fact that its acquisitive rationality supplanted a set of religious norms that are common to most preindustrial societies and that inhibit economic achievement. Protestantism was uniquely Western, but acquisitive rationality is not. Although industrialization occurred first in the West, the rise of the West was only one version of Modernization.

4. Democracy is not inherent in the Modernization phase, as some Modernization theorists suggested. There are alternative outcomes, with fascism and communism being the most prominent alternatives as Moore (1966) has pointed out. But democracy *does* become increasingly likely as societies move beyond the Modernization phase into Postmodernization. In the Postmodern phase, a distinctive syndrome of changes occur that make democracy increasingly likely—to the point where it eventually becomes costly to avoid.

We have stated four ways in which our view—which might be termed Postmodernization theory—differs from Modernization theory. Let us provide more detail on these points. Chapter 3 will present empirical evidence that supports the central claim underlying both Modernization theory and Postmodernization theory: that technological and economic changes tend to be linked with specific types of cultural, political, and social change. In other words, history tends to move in coherent and to some extent predictable patterns.

#### *Socioeconomic Change Is Not Linear*

The prevailing direction of development has changed in the last quarter century, and this shift is so distinctive that, rather than continuing to use the term "Modernization," we prefer to speak of "Postmodernization." The term "Post-

modern" has been used with scores of different meanings, some of which are associated with a cultural relativism so extreme that it approaches cultural determinism: it asserts that culture shapes human experience almost entirely, unlimited by any external reality. Nevertheless, the term conveys an important insight, suggesting that the process known as Modernization is no longer at the cutting edge, and that social change is now moving in a fundamentally different direction. Moreover, the literature on Postmodernism suggests some of the specific attributes of this new direction: it is a move away from the emphasis on economic efficiency, bureaucratic authority, and scientific rationality that characterized Modernization, toward a more human society with more room for individual autonomy, diversity, and self-expression.

Unfortunately, the word "Postmodern" has become loaded with so many meanings that it is in danger of conveying everything and nothing. In architecture, the term has a clear meaning, designating a style of architecture that departs strikingly from the bare functionalism of "modern" architecture, which had become sterile and aesthetically repelling. The first glass box was a stunning tour de force, but by the one-hundredth box, the novelty had worn thin. Postmodern architecture reintroduced a human scale, with touches of adornment and references to the past, but incorporating new technology. In a similar vein, we suggest that Postmodern society is moving away from the standardized functionalism and the enthusiasm for science and economic growth that dominated industrial society during an era of scarcity—giving more weight to aesthetic and human considerations and incorporating elements of the past into a new context.

#### *Neither Cultural Determinism Nor Economic Determinism*

We disagree with the cultural determinism that is sometimes linked with the concept of Postmodernism. Postmodern writers are certainly correct in thinking that everyone perceives reality through some kind of cultural filter. Moreover, these cultural factors are steadily becoming a more *important* component of experience as we move from societies of scarcity, in which economic necessity limits one's behavior rather narrowly, to a world in which human will increasingly prevails over the external environment, allowing broader room for individual choice: this is a major reason why the Postmodern perspective has become increasingly credible.

But we reject the notion that cultural construction is the *only* factor shaping human experience. There is an objective reality out there too, and it applies to social relations as well as to natural science. External reality is crucial when it comes to the ultimate political resource, violence: when you shoot someone, that person dies regardless of whether he or she believes in ballistics or bullets. Similarly, though an architect has considerable scope for choice and imagination, if one forgets objective engineering principles, the building may collapse. Partly for this reason, architecture has preserved a healthy respect for reality. Similarly again, among physicists and astronomers, cultural biases play

a minimal role. Despite some nonscientists' garbled references to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, there is a worldwide consensus among natural scientists that they are studying a reality that exists independently of their preconceptions;<sup>1</sup> a theory eventually triumphs or is rejected depending on how well it models and predicts that reality—even if it violates people's long-standing beliefs.

The fact that some Postmodern writers' grasp of the physical sciences is a bit shaky was demonstrated rather strikingly in 1996, when Alan Sokal, a physicist irked with Postmodernist claims that objective reality had dissolved in the physical sciences, submitted an article to *Social Text*, one of this school's leading reviews. His article, entitled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," began: "There are many natural scientists, and especially physicists, who . . . cling to the dogma . . . that there exists an external world, whose properties are independent of any individual human being. . . . It has thus become increasingly apparent that physical 'reality,' no less than social 'reality,' is at bottom a social and linguistic construct; that scientific 'knowledge,' far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it" (Sokal, 1996: 217–18).

Though the text that followed was full of nonsense, this viewpoint was all too congenial to many Poststructuralists. Sokal went on to solemnly proclaim a long series of palpable absurdities about physical reality, including claims that the force of gravity and pi were socially constructed.

According to the *New York Times* account, this article was reviewed by a half dozen members of the review's editorial board, none of whom seemed to realize that the piece was a broad self-parody; they caught on shortly after the article was published, when the author himself revealed that it was a hoax.

This is not the first time that an august body has taken pi to be a social construct. In the nineteenth century, the Indiana state legislature passed a resolution officially declaring that pi would henceforth be a round 4.0, instead of the

<sup>1</sup> The Heisenberg principle is often misread as indicating that the laws of physics do not really govern the universe, which is fundamentally disorderly and unpredictable. At the ultimate level of smallness, the universe *is* probabilistic, not deterministic. Thus, the behavior of individual photons is unpredictable. But large numbers of photons behave in ways that are indistinguishable from being deterministic; and since human beings normally only deal with enormous numbers of photons, the behavior of light can be predicted very accurately by deterministic physical laws.

Other laws of physics are also slight oversimplifications of reality. For example, though the laws of gases say otherwise, it is conceivable that all of the air molecules in the reader's vicinity could suddenly rush to the far end of the room and remain there until you died a horrible death. The reader need not worry. This is technically possible, but the probability is so overwhelmingly low that it would not be expected to occur even once during the entire lifetime of the universe (or even in many lifetimes of the universe). At the microlevel, the universe is probabilistic; this is a very significant fact. But it is extremely misleading to leap from this fact to the conclusion that Newton and Avogadro had it all wrong, and that the universe is disorderly and your brain could spontaneously explode at any moment. Technically, it could. But it's not likely to happen until long after the sun and the stars have all disappeared from the sky.

inconvenient 3.1416; but this may be the first time that the proposition has been accepted by a panel of Ph.D.'s.

Despite this bit of entrapment, Postmodern thinkers are making a valid and profoundly important point in emphasizing that everyone's perception of reality is shaped by his or her subjective values and preconceptions. Moreover, these factors help shape even natural scientists' perceptions of reality—though not quite to the extent that some Postmodernists seem to think it does.

As Kuhn (1962) pointed out, objective tests alone do not immediately cause an entire scientific paradigm to be rejected; as inconsistent observations accumulate, the dominant paradigm may increasingly be called into question and new explanations proposed, but the new paradigm generally comes to be accepted through intergenerational replacement of scientists, more than through conversion of the older scientists. This reflects the fact that the cognitive structures of the older generation are organized around the old paradigm; it is far easier for the new generation to integrate their thinking according to the new paradigm than it is for the older generation, which would have to dismantle elaborate cognitive structures of inconsistent previous learning. At any given time, natural science reflects a cross-cultural consensus depending, ultimately, on how well given interpretations model and predict an external reality. The fine arts are at the opposite extreme. Aesthetic preferences largely *are* a matter of cultural predispositions.

Social phenomena fall between these extremes. Human behavior is heavily influenced by the culture in which one has been socialized. But objective factors set limits too, a recent example being the collapse and abandonment of state-run economies from Czechoslovakia to China: in running an economy, there are ways that work and ways that do not work.

Nevertheless, the term "Postmodern" is potentially useful: it implies that social change has moved beyond the instrumental rationality that was central to Modernization and is now taking a fundamentally different direction. This book does not discuss in any detail the various writers who have been labeled Postmodern: it is not about them. It deals with a set of empirical changes that are taking place among mass publics and will examine some specific ways in which the direction of social change has shifted. They include the fact that, while Modernization was not necessarily linked with democratization, Postmodernization *does* seem to be inherently conducive to the emergence of democratic political institutions.

#### *Functional Analysis and Predictable Syndromes of Change*

Economic, cultural, and political change go together in coherent patterns. The two most influential proponents of Modernization theory, Marx and Weber, agreed on this point. They disagreed profoundly on *why* economic, cultural, and political changes go together. For Marx and his disciples, they are linked because economic and technological change determines political and cultural

changes. For Weber and his disciples, they are linked because culture shapes economic and political life.

Both Marx and Weber had major insights. We believe that economics shapes culture and politics—and vice versa. The causal linkages tend to be reciprocal. Political, economic, and cultural changes go together because societies without mutually supportive political, economic, and cultural systems are unlikely to survive for long: in the long run, the respective components either adapt to each other or the system flounders. And systems do indeed flounder: most of the societies that have ever existed are now extinct.

A culture is a system of attitudes, values, and knowledge that is widely shared within a society and is transmitted from generation to generation. While human nature is biologically innate and universal, culture is learned and varies from one society to another. The more central and early learned aspects of culture are resistant to change, both because it requires a massive effort to change central elements of an adult's cognitive organization, and because abandoning one's most central beliefs produces uncertainty and anxiety. In the face of enduring shifts in socioeconomic conditions, even central parts of culture may be transformed, but they are more likely to change through intergenerational population replacement than by the conversion of already socialized adults.

By culture, we refer to the *subjective* aspect of a society's institutions: the beliefs, values, knowledge, and skills that have been *internalized* by the people of a given society, complementing their external systems of coercion and exchange. This is a narrower definition of culture than is generally used in anthropology, because our purpose here is empirical analysis. We will examine the degree to which internal cultural orientations and external social institutions are linked empirically, rather than simply assume that they are. Building everything into one's definition of culture would make the concept useless for this type of analysis.

Any stable economic or political system has a compatible and supportive cultural system which legitimates that system. The people of that society have internalized a set of rules and norms. If they had not, the rulers could only get their subjects to comply with their rules by external coercion, which is costly and insecure. Moreover, to be effective in legitimating the system, cultures set limits to elite as well as mass behavior—shaping the political and economic systems, as well as being shaped by them. The process is not teleological, but it operates as if it were: societies with legitimate authority systems are more likely to survive than those without them.

Like Axelrod (1984), we find the evolutionary perspective a useful way to analyze how cultures and institutions develop: certain characteristics survive and spread because they have functional advantages in a given environment. Elster (1982) argues that functionalist interpretations of institutions are fundamentally flawed because they anthropomorphize institutions, postulating a purpose without a purposive actor—a view that has become widely accepted. But this criticism actually only applies to a crude and naive type of function-

alist interpretation. Biologists today regularly use functionalist interpretations, especially when dealing with evolution. For example, plants are said to have developed bright flowers and nectar in order to attract bees so that the bees will fertilize them. Other plants are said to have developed poisonous leaves to discourage animals and insects from eating them. The newly hatched cuckoo chick pushes the other eggs out of the nest so that the parent birds will devote all their efforts to nourishing the cuckoo. And mammals living in the far North have developed white fur in order to be less visible against the snow.

Although they use this interpretation, neither biologists nor social scientists accept the crude teleological assumptions that Elster attributes to functional analysis. This mode of explanation is not used because biologists think that flowers or newly hatched cuckoos are consciously planning ahead or because they believe that evolution is guided by an anthropomorphic force. They use it because it is the most direct and parsimonious way to discuss the interaction between random mutations and natural selection that causes most mutations to die out—except for those with some functional advantage that enhances the organism's chances for survival. The mutations do not occur in order to serve some function; but they survive and spread because they do. A similar principle applies to functional interpretations of society. Dawkins (1989) argues convincingly that cultural traits or "memes" that function relatively well in a given environment replicate and spread for the same basic reason as do genes: they confer a survival advantage. Axelrod (1984) has demonstrated that certain strategies of conflict or cooperation function better than others and eventually drive out competing strategies.

Among the numerous types of societies that ever existed, the great majority have disappeared and the process is still going on. At the start of the twentieth century, absolute monarchy was the most widespread form of government. Today it has dwindled to a handful of surviving cases. Fascism spread rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s, and then all but disappeared in the 1940s, with a few loosely fascist regimes surviving until the 1970s. The most recent case of mass extinction among societies has been the sudden collapse of communist regimes, which until recently controlled one-third of the world's population. Authoritarian state-run economies proved to be unworkable and uncompetitive in a high-technology environment. Although many of the ex-communist societies are still run by ex-communist elites, even the hard-liners among them are unlikely to return to the Stalinist model: it is a type of society that eventually proved to be dysfunctional.

Political institutions are also shaped by processes of natural selection. Some institutions survive for long periods, but most do not: three-quarters of the national constitutions now in effect were written since 1965. And even the surviving institutions undergo mutations. Thus, legislatures no longer initiate much legislation in most societies, but they do fill a legitimating function. Legislatures themselves do not possess a conscious will to serve a legitimating function—but the fact that they fill this function is a major reason why they survive and spread. A great many new constitutions have been written in the

past decade, and virtually all of them give prominent roles to legislatures. This reflects a widespread awareness that in the contemporary world those political systems that have legislatures are more likely to enjoy legitimacy and to survive and flourish than are those without them.

### *Is the Modernization Concept Ethnocentric?*

A standard criticism of Modernization theories is that they are either ethnocentric or teleological or both. Some of the early Modernization literature *did* simplistically equate Modernization with becoming (1) morally superior and (2) like the West. The flaws in this perspective are pretty obvious. Few people would attribute moral superiority to Western society today, and it is evident that East Asia is now at the cutting edge of Modernization in many respects.

But there is nothing ethnocentric in the concept that social change tends to take coherent, broadly predictable trajectories. In a given economic and technological environment, certain trajectories *are* more probable than others: it is clear that in the course of history, numerous patterns of social organization have been tried and discarded, while other patterns eventually became dominant. At the dawn of recorded history, a wide variety of hunting and gathering societies existed, but the invention of agriculture led to their almost total disappearance. They were displaced because agriculture has functional advantages over hunting and gathering. An account of the displacement of hunting-gathering societies by farming societies in precolonial Africa attributes this shift to an interaction between economic, biological, and cultural factors:

Farming and herding yield far more calories per acre than does hunting wild animals or gathering wild plants. As a result, population densities of farmers and herders are typically at least 10 times those of hunter-gatherers. That's not to say that farmers are happier, healthier or in any way superior to hunter-gatherers. They are, however, more numerous. And that alone is enough to allow them to kill or displace hunter-gatherers.

In addition, human diseases such as smallpox and measles developed from diseases plaguing domestic animals. The farmers eventually became resistant to those diseases, but hunter-gatherers do not have the opportunity. So when hunter-gatherers first come into contact with farmers, they tend to die in droves from the farmers' diseases.

Finally, only in a farming society—with its stored food surpluses and concentrated villages—do people have the chance to specialize, to become full-time metalworkers, soldiers, kings and bureaucrats. Hence the farmers, and not the hunter-gatherers, are the ones who develop swords and guns, standing armies and political organization. Add that to their sheer numbers and their germs and it is easy to see how the farmers in Africa were able to push the hunter-gatherers aside. (Diamond, 1993)

Although a few hunting and gathering societies still survive today, they comprise less than one one-thousandth of the human population. After supplanting them, agricultural societies were dominant for many centuries, until

the industrial revolution finally gave rise to a fundamentally new pattern of society. The transition to industrial society is far from complete, but today almost every society on earth has at least begun to industrialize, and it seems likely that within the next century, most of humanity will live in predominantly urban industrialized societies.

This does not mean that all societies will be identical. Industrial societies have a wide variety of cultures and institutions. But their common characteristics are also striking: virtually without exception, they are characterized by high degrees of urbanization, industrialization, occupational specialization, the use of science and technology, bureaucratization, reliance on legal-rational authority, relatively high levels of social mobility and emphasis on achieved rather than ascribed social status, high levels of formal education, diminishing sex role specialization, high standards of material well-being, and much higher life expectancies than were ever achieved in agrarian or hunting and gathering societies. Hunting and agriculture will not disappear from the earth—but they will no longer be the predominant way of life. They will shape the worldview of a small minority of the population (and even the remaining hunters and farmers will have their lives transformed by the fact that they live in a predominantly urban industrial world).

It is neither ethnocentric nor teleological to assert that hunting and gathering societies gave way to agricultural societies. It is a simple historical fact. It *would* be ethnocentric to assert that the people living in one type of society are inherently wiser, nobler, or morally superior to those living in another—but that gratuitous claim has nothing to do with the logic of the effort to discern which type of society is most likely to survive and spread in a given economic and technological environment. The people of industrial society are not more admirable than those of agrarian society, nor does history have an anthropomorphic preference for the former; but it *is* clear that a majority of the world's population once shifted from hunting and gathering into the agrarian mode—and are now moving into the industrial mode. They have done so because in a given technological and economic environment, certain forms of society have functional advantages over others. Moreover, modern industrial society is not the end of history. The process of cultural evolution is still going on. This book will explore the cultural changes that go with both Modernization and Postmodernization.

For many years, it has been alleged that cultural interpretations of society are inherently conservative. This is a half-truth. The Marxist Left did indeed view emphasis on cultural factors as reactionary, but more recently the Postmodern Left has strongly emphasized the crucial role played by subjective perceptions and cultural values. From this perspective, recognizing the decisive influence of cultural factors is considered a prerequisite to social progress.

Nevertheless, there is some truth in the idea that culture *itself* tends to be a conservative influence. The cultural approach argues that (1) people's responses to their situation are shaped by subjective orientations that vary cross-

culturally and within subcultures, and (2) these variations in subjective orientations reflect differences in one's socialization experiences, with early learning conditioning later learning, making the former more difficult to undo. Consequently, action does not simply reflect external situations. Enduring differences in cultural learning also play an essential part in shaping what people do and think.

These postulates of the cultural approach have important implications for social change. Cultural theory implies that a culture *cannot* be changed overnight. One may change the rulers and the laws, but to change basic aspects of the underlying culture generally takes many years. Even then, the long-run effects of revolutionary transformation are likely to diverge widely from revolutionary visions and to retain important elements of the old pattern of society. Furthermore, when basic cultural change does occur, it will take place more readily among younger groups (where it does not need to overcome the resistance of inconsistent early learning) than among older ones, resulting in intergenerational differences. An awareness of the inertia linked with cultural factors may be dismaying to those who would like to believe they have a quick fix for deep-rooted social problems. But this awareness is essential to any realistic strategy of social change, and therefore is likely to produce policies that are more effective in the long run, than a perspective which simply denies that cultural factors are important. An awareness of the fact that deep-rooted values are not easily changed is essential to any realistic and effective program for social change.

The Marxist Left saw cultural factors as opiates of the people—forms of false consciousness that could only distract the attention of the masses from the real problems, which were economic. They found it attractive to believe that the proper indoctrination could speedily wash away all previous orientations: if the right elite, guided by the one true ideology, could take power and enforce the right programs, all social problems could be quickly solved.

Unfortunately, Marxist programs designed to bring swift and massive change to entire societies overlooked the reality of cultural persistence. When these programs did not correspond to the deep-rooted values and habits of the peoples on whom they were targeted, they could be implemented only through massive coercion. The most ambitious programs of rapid social change required enormous coercion and failed nevertheless: Stalin's Forced Collectivization and Great Purges and Mao's Great Leap Forward and Great Cultural Revolution not only failed to create a New Soviet Man, or a new Chinese culture, but led to enormous human suffering and ultimately were immensely counterproductive.

The Postmodern Left tends toward the other extreme, sometimes presenting culture as virtually supreme. There are no objective limits or standards: everything is determined by one's cultural perspective—to such an extent that any reference to objective reality is viewed as almost reactionary.

Both of these extremes distort the role of culture. This book presents empirical evidence that culture *is* a crucial part of reality. But it is only part of it.

## CHANGE IS NOT LINEAR: POSTMODERNIZATION

Another way in which early versions of Modernization theory were deficient lay in the fact that they presented a linear view of social change: the future, everywhere, would simply be more of the same. Marx's tendency to do this is particularly well known, but he had plenty of company. With the advantages of a longer time perspective, it has become evident that such linear projections are far too simple. Although industrial society has become widespread (as Marx correctly predicted), it is not the end of the road. This book presents evidence that, beyond a certain threshold, social change takes a fundamental change in direction. In the past few decades, advanced industrial societies have moved through an inflection point, from the Modernization phase into a Postmodernization phase.

This book does not examine the intellectual history of Postmodern thought and will refer to Postmodern writers only in passing. It is, instead, an empirical analysis of how a Postmodern worldview is spreading among mass publics: as it will demonstrate, a Postmodern cultural shift is taking place that manifests many of the key characteristics discussed by Postmodern thinkers. This book will not discuss how Postmodern thought developed among these writers; but we *will* examine the reasons why they have become widely influential. No one has fully explained *why* Postmodern culture has emerged: a vast amount has been written about it, but the explanation has been almost entirely at the level of the intellectual history and permeation of Postmodernism. This is an important aspect of Postmodernism, but it is not an adequate explanation of why popular culture today is strikingly different from what it was a generation or two ago. Should we assume that the masses have been profoundly influenced by the writings of Foucault and Derrida? They may have had some (largely indirect) impact. But the change is mainly due to the fact that the firsthand life experience of mass publics in recent decades has been profoundly different from that of earlier generations. Deep-rooted changes in mass worldviews have taken place that enabled Postmodern ideas to find a receptive audience. This is why a Postmodern worldview that would almost certainly have been generally rejected a generation earlier has gained widespread acceptance in the last few decades.

It is not easy to give a brief account of Postmodern thought: there are several different versions of Postmodernism, and multiple readings of given authors. The literature is complex, contradictory, full of hyperbole, and sometimes reads like gibberish. *Question*: What is the difference between the Mafia and a deconstructionist? *Answer*: A deconstructionist makes you an offer you can't understand.

Ambiguity is a central component of Postmodern worldviews, and some writers seem to consider it a virtue. This is unfortunate because, underlying the ambiguous rhetoric, a real and important phenomenon is emerging. Another key tenet of Postmodernism is incredulity toward all metanarratives: all ideologies, religions, and other overarching explanations including natural sci-

ence (and Postmodernism itself) cannot be believed. There is no external standard against which theories can be tested.

This perspective is carried to an extreme by Lyotard (1979) who depicts natural science as having dissolved into a relativism characterized by abrupt ruptures and sudden unforeseen changes of direction. His interpretation, which has had wide influence, implies that science, like normative thought, is no longer oriented by any external reality. Baudrillard (1983) also tends toward this extreme, implying that there is no objective reality out there.<sup>2</sup> This picture of science is one that few natural scientists would recognize. It is true, as Kuhn (1962) pointed out, that the development of knowledge is partly a social enterprise in which, when paradigm shifts occur, there is a temporary breakdown of the prevailing theoretical consensus. Kuhn's finding concerning the structure of scientific revolutions is frequently misinterpreted to mean that science itself is culture-bound. This is not the case: as we have noted, when a paradigm shift occurs, the split in acceptance is mainly along generational lines, based on different degrees of commitment to prior learning. The fact that science has a hermeneutic aspect does not mean that Indian or Chinese scientists are rejecting an interpretation that is accepted by French or German scientists. Instead, what occurs is an intergenerational culture lag.

But even these historic paradigm shifts involve much less discontinuity than Lyotard seems to imagine. Thus, Einstein's astonishing and paradigm-shifting breakthrough did *not* cause the previous body of scientific knowledge to be discarded. Newtonian physics continued (and continues) to function quite adequately: it simply became a special case within a broader Einsteinian framework. Many decades later, Newtonian calculations were used to take people safely to and from the moon: Einstein's limits become significant only under far more extreme conditions than are normally experienced on earth, or even in lunar voyages.

The way for Einstein's revolution was prepared by a series of findings that were inconsistent with the implications of Newtonian physics. Einstein developed a new theory that resolved these inconsistencies and generated a number of precise predictions that were then confirmed by a series of empirical tests that left little room for doubt that Einstein was right. These findings (with some delay) gave rise to a new theoretical consensus that gained acceptance from Buenos Aires to Tokyo.

Today, we seem to be on the brink of a new paradigm shift in physics—but it is unlikely to consign previous research to oblivion. Instead, the work of both Newton and Einstein will continue to apply, though within a still broader the-

<sup>2</sup> Thus, in 1991 Baudrillard asserted with characteristic hyperbole that the Gulf War did not take place: it was all a media event (Baudrillard, cited in Lyon, 1994: 52). But whether or not the war took place was not simply a question of one's cultural perspective: thousands of corpses testified to the fact that it was a reality. From the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, German revisionist historians have argued that the Holocaust did not really take place—it is just a case of the victors writing history. In this case, millions of corpses constitute a fact that goes beyond questions of interpretation.



oretical framework. The emerging Grand Unified Theory is designed to integrate all of the laws of physics into one coherent theory that will account for everything that has happened in the physical world from the birth of the universe to the present moment. Far from disintegrating into discontinuous and mutually incomprehensible islands of short-lived insights, natural science seems to be moving toward a mega-metanarrative. This is precisely the opposite of what Lyotard's followers seem to believe.

Nevertheless, stripped of its hyperbolic extremes, the literature on Postmodernity is dealing with a very real and important phenomenon: the world (or, at least, large parts of it) has moved onto a different trajectory from the one it had been following since the industrial revolution. And this new trajectory corresponds, in many respects, to what Postmodern observers claim is happening. Although there still is an external reality out there, culture does indeed have a tremendous influence on how reality is perceived. Moreover, the relative importance of culture seems to be increasing. On this new Postmodern trajectory, economic rationality determines human behavior less narrowly than before: the realm of the possible has expanded, and cultural factors are becoming more important. An empirically demonstrable cultural shift is taking place. The great religious and ideological metanarratives are losing their authority among the masses. The uniformity and hierarchy that shaped modernity are giving way to an increasing acceptance of diversity. And the increasing dominance of instrumental rationality that characterized Modernization is giving way to a greater emphasis on value rationality and quality of life concerns.

As this book will demonstrate with empirical evidence, a Postmodern shift in mass values and attitudes actually *is* taking place. This is why the ideas of Postmodern writers have found a receptive audience in recent decades. Although our analysis of empirical evidence cannot solve Postmodernity's normative questions, it does enable us to identify where the Postmodern shift is occurring and how fast it is moving, and it helps explain why it is taking place.

Has the entire world suddenly turned Postmodern, as some writers seem to assume? The empirical answer is No. Instead, some societies (such as Nigeria) are starting to modernize; others (such as China) are now modernizing very rapidly; still others (such as South Korea), seem to be reaching a turning point where they may be about to begin Postmodernization; and still others, such as Britain, Germany, and the United States, are well into the Postmodernization process—but even they do not lead the world in this respect. As we will see, the evidence indicates that the Nordic countries and the Netherlands are now the most Postmodern societies on earth.

This book will not merely chart the progress of Postmodernization; we will propose a theoretical explanation of *why* it is taking place. Before doing so, let us try to categorize Postmodernist thought: to a large extent, the changes that are occurring among mass publics correspond to these ideas. But how true this is depends on what version of Postmodernism one has in mind.

One could start by dividing Postmodern thought into three broad schools:

1. Postmodernism is the rejection of modernity: that is, of rationality, authority, technology, and science. Within this school, there is a widespread tendency to equate rationality, authority, technology, and science with Westernization. From this perspective, Postmodernism is considered to be the rejection of Westernization.

2. Postmodernism is the revalorization of tradition. Since Modernization drastically devalued tradition, its demise opens the way for this revalorization.

3. Postmodernism is the rise of *new* values and lifestyles, with greater tolerance for ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity and individual choice concerning the kind of life one wants to lead.

These three versions of Postmodernism all capture important elements of what is taking place; though they are not incompatible, they emphasize different things.

Let us start with the rejection of modernity. Modernization offers great rewards, but imposes huge costs. It dismantles a traditional world in which the meaning of life is clear; warm, personal communal ties give way to an impersonal competitive society geared to individual achievement. Industrialization vastly increases human productivity; but (especially before labor unions and working-class political parties bring countervailing pressures to bear against capitalism) it gives rise to inhuman working conditions. Marx criticized not only the ruthless economic exploitation of early capitalism, but also the tremendous psychological costs of industrialization.

Decades later, Weber saw the rationalization of society as an inexorable aspect of Modernization; though it facilitated economic growth and public order, ever-increasing rationalization was disenchanting the world, forcing humanity into a painfully narrow iron cage of bureaucracy and mass production. What Weber deplored was the ubiquitous penetration of *instrumental* rationality: the rationality of immediate means was driving out the rationality of ultimate ends. Subsequently, Heidegger (1946, 1949) and Horkheimer and Adorno (1947) carried the critique of modernity farther, arguing that the instrumental rationality of industrialization had, ironically, undermined any absolute moral standards and given rise to new forms of irrationality and repression, culminating in the horrors of Hitler and Stalin. Instrumental rationality had virtually banished value rationality.

Today, this trend is beginning to reverse itself: instrumental rationality gained an exaggerated predominance during the rise of industrialization, but today, for reasons we will discuss in this book, a growing segment of society is concluding that the price is too high. Rationality, science, technology, and authority are here to stay; but their relative priority and their authority among mass publics are declining.

Within this first version of Postmodernism, there is a widespread tendency to confound rationality, authority, technology, and science with Westernization. Some of the (now outmoded) Modernization literature also equated Modernization with Westernization. If Postmodernism is the rejection of modernity, it would logically follow that Postmodernism is the rejection of

Westernization. This perspective is found in the work of Lyotard and Derrida, who tend to equate modernization with Western imperialism.

Western imperialism was an important phenomenon: it was brutally imposed on the rest of the world, it deserved to be rejected, and it deserves the scorn with which Postmodern writers treat it. But equating Modernization with Westernization is not a useful way to proceed. It emphasizes superficial and accidental aspects of Modernization and ignores the core process. Wearing Western clothing was not crucial; industrialization was. Moreover, it is inaccurate to equate modern imperialism with Westernization. In the number of people it subjugated, the Japanese empire was the second largest colonial empire in history and was fully as oppressive as any Western empire.

The essential core of Modernization is a syndrome of changes closely linked with industrialization: this syndrome includes urbanization, the application of science and technology, rapidly increasing occupational specialization, rising bureaucratization, and rising educational levels. It also includes one more thing, which was the motivating force behind the whole process: industrialization was a way to get rich.

By getting rich, one could dispel hunger, acquire military strength, and obtain a number of other desirable things, including a much longer life expectancy than was possible in preindustrial society. Adopting a life strategy aimed at getting rich becomes compellingly attractive from the perspective of low-income societies, once it has been demonstrated that it can be done. Furthermore, as we will show in this chapter, economic development actually seems to be conducive to subjective well-being (though only up to a certain point in history). In short, industrialization and the Modernization syndrome that goes with it were an attractive package. It carries a high cost, and from the viewpoint of advanced industrial society these costs may seem excessive. But from the perspective of most preindustrial societies, it seemed worth the price.

This constitutes another crucial difference between Modernization and Westernization: Western imperialism was imposed on non-Western societies, which almost universally rejected it when they were free to do so. By contrast, the goal of Modernization (that is, the industrialization syndrome) has now been adopted by almost every society on earth—and non-Western societies show no sign of wishing to abandon it. Quite the contrary, it is being pursued today with far more enthusiasm in the non-Western world than in the West. The Postmodern critique of Modernization comes overwhelmingly from within *Western* societies.

By the 1960s, the tendency to equate Modernization with Westernization had been abandoned by most Modernization theorists. And even if one goes by obvious external indicators, this concept has been outdated since at least 1980, when Japan became the world's leading automobile producer—outdoing the United States at Fordism itself. During the ensuing decade, Japan also attained the highest GNP per capita of any major nation, leading the world in attaining the fruits, as well as the tools, of Modernization. Historically, the Industrial Revolution occurred first in the West. But there is nothing uniquely

Western about technology and industrialization, or even bureaucratic rationality. Mathematics came to Europe from India and Egypt. China was the technologically most advanced society in the world for most of the past 2,000 years, losing its technological lead only in the seventeenth century (and it is not inconceivable that the nation will regain it). Similarly, another key aspect of modernity—bureaucracy—originated in China. The idea that rationality and technology are Western inventions is simply a myth. In the modern era, Westerners raised them to unprecedented levels and applied them to production to an unprecedented degree, but they are part of the human heritage, not something uniquely European. Today, East Asian and Southeast Asian societies are achieving the world's highest rates of economic growth and are at the cutting edge of Modernization in numerous other respects. Japan has become the world leader in various aspects of modernity, from consumer electronics to human life expectancy. And in recent years a growing flow of Western experts have made the pilgrimage to Japan to study the secrets of Japanese management, just as the Japanese earlier made the reverse voyage to learn industrialization from the West.

Another perspective views Postmodernism as the revalorization of tradition. This reverses one of the most prominent trends associated with Modernization. In the early modern era, the astonishing achievements of science and industry gave rise to a myth of Progress and radically discredited tradition. "New" became virtually synonymous with "good." But more recently, the instrumental rationality of modernity has lost its prestige. This has not only opened the way for tradition to regain status, but created a need for a new legitimating myth. In the Postmodern worldview, tradition once again has positive value—especially non-Western traditions. But the revalorization of tradition is sharply selective. Despite their ubiquitous presence in the traditional societies of both the Western and non-Western world, the norm that "Women's place is in the home" and the stern prohibition of extramarital sex are not among the aspects of premodern tradition that Postmodern writers admire.

The rise of new values and lifestyles is a profoundly important aspect of what is taking place today, throughout advanced industrial society. Derrida (1979, 1981) emphasizes this aspect of Postmodernity. Although Postmodernization *does* involve a downgrading of modernity and a revalorization of tradition, the emergence of a new culture is even more crucial, in our view. The best documented example of the rise of new values is the intergenerational shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist value priorities that seems to be taking place throughout advanced industrial society (Inglehart, 1971, 1977, 1990); but the rise of new values and lifestyles is taking place across many other aspects of life, from sexual orientation to religion.

### *Critical Theory*

Apart from the Postmodern thinkers, Habermas (1984, 1987) has developed the most influential recent philosophical critique of modernity. Habermas dif-

fers from the Postmodern school on a number of points. One major disagreement is that, while Postmodernism tends to depict Modernization as a basically bad choice and rejects it, Habermas argues that while it imposed high costs, it also brought major benefits. Modernization is an unfinished project; we should build on it rather than reject it. Although we think that the process of change has taken a fundamentally new Postmodern turn, we agree with Habermas on this point. Industrialization provided more than just noisy, polluting automobiles and mindless television sitcoms. It provided two things that would be considered valuable from almost any cultural perspective: (1) greatly enhanced chances for survival, as measured by human life expectancy, and (2) higher levels of subjective well-being. Empirical evidence will be presented below in support of these assertions.

Another major disagreement centers on the fact that Postmodern thinkers conclude that there is no longer any basis by which universal moral standards could be validated: both God and Marx are dead. Habermas has not given up: he argues that moral norms may be merely social conventions, but if they are, it is imperative to develop rules for arriving at universally acceptable conventions. In a new version of the social contract, Habermas argues that a rational basis for collective life can be achieved only when social relations are organized so that the validity of every norm depends on a consensus arrived at in communication free from domination. Against the Postmodern position that moral rules are simply myths created by the ruling elite to justify the social order they control, Habermas argues that it *is* possible to reach a moral consensus that is not simply dominated by the ruling elites. Here again, we think he is right, and this debate raises a crucial question: Are cultural norms simply tools of the ruling elite? In order to answer this question, let us examine the relationship between authority and culture.

#### *Authority and Culture*

Marx defined ideology as false consciousness—that is, a consciousness shaped by power-holders to justify their right to rule (and to exploit), and to make it seem inevitable. The insight that culture is closely linked with power is important. It would be naive to believe that culture is neutral: in virtually every society, it legitimates the established social order—partly because the dominant elite try to shape it to help perpetuate their rule.

One of the leading themes in the literature on Postmodernism is the claim that culture is used to legitimate political authority; Foucault is a prominent advocate of this view. An extreme version of this position would hold that every reality is a politically constructed system of myths, and the key task of the social critic is to deconstruct these myths, which are simply a means to justify privilege and exploitation.

Without a doubt, culture serves to legitimate the social order. From an elite perspective, this may even be the most important thing it does. But it certainly is not the *only* thing it does. Culture integrates society in terms of common

goals, satisfies intellectual and aesthetic needs, and finally—no insignificant point—also places some restraints on elites.

The extreme position, that mass belief systems are completely dominated by elite interests, assumes a degree of mass manipulability that is simply unrealistic. Recent historical developments illustrate this point. Thus, after 70 years of controlling the Soviet Union's educational systems, public discussion, the mass media, churches, and all other channels of communication to an historically unprecedented extent, the Soviet elite ultimately was not able to shape the worldviews of their people to conform to their goals: toward the end, not even the Soviet elite really believed the official ideology.

Western advanced industrial societies are also changing—whether their elites like it or not. A modern worldview that was once firmly established has gradually given way to Postmodern values that emphasize human autonomy and diversity instead of the hierarchy and conformity that are central to modernity. In both cases, a major factor leading to basic cultural change was the fact that the life experience of a new generation gave rise to new perceptions of reality. For the reality of one's firsthand experience ultimately intrudes. The official truth, propagated by the dominant elite, usually has a great deal of influence. But the firsthand life experience of ordinary people *also* counts—and ultimately may have even greater credibility than the official truth. How do established worldviews begin to crumble?

#### WHY IS THE POSTMODERN SHIFT OCCURRING?

The shift toward Postmodern values is not the first time that a major cultural shift has occurred. The transition from agrarian society to industrial society was facilitated by a shift from a worldview shaped by a steady-state economy. This worldview discouraged social mobility and emphasized tradition, inherited status, and communal obligations, backed up by absolute religious norms; it gave way to a worldview that encouraged economic achievement, individualism, and innovation, with increasingly secular social norms. Today, some of these trends linked with the transition from "Traditional" to "Modern" society have reached their limits in advanced industrial society, where change is taking a new direction.

This change of direction reflects the principle of diminishing marginal utility. Industrialization and Modernization required breaking the cultural constraints on accumulation that are found in any steady-state economy. In Western European history, this was achieved by the rise of the Protestant Ethic, which (though it had a long intellectual history) was like a random mutation from a functional perspective. If it had occurred two centuries earlier it might have died out. In the environment of its time, it found a niche: technological developments were making rapid economic growth possible, and the Calvinist worldview complemented these developments beautifully, forming a cultural-economic syndrome that led to the rise of capitalism and eventually to

the industrial revolution. Once this had occurred, economic accumulation (for individuals) and economic growth (for societies) became the top priorities for an increasing part of the world's population; they are still the central goals for much of humanity. But eventually, diminishing returns from economic growth lead to a Postmodern shift that in some ways constitutes the decline of the Protestant Ethic.

Advanced industrial societies are now changing their sociopolitical trajectories in two fundamental respects:

1. Value systems. Increasing emphasis on individual economic achievement was one of the crucial changes that made Modernization possible. This shift toward Materialistic priorities entailed a de-emphasis on communal obligations and an acceptance of social mobility: increasingly, social status became something that an individual could achieve, rather than something into which one was born. Economic growth came to be equated with progress and was seen as the hallmark of a successful society.

In Postmodern society this emphasis on economic achievement as the top priority is now giving way to an increasing emphasis on the quality of life. In a major part of the world, the disciplined, self-denying, and achievement-oriented norms of industrial society are giving way to an increasingly broad latitude for individual choice of lifestyles and individual self-expression. The shift from "Materialist" values, emphasizing economic and physical security, to "Postmaterialist" values, emphasizing individual self-expression and quality of life concerns, is the most amply documented aspect of this change; but it is only one component of a much broader syndrome of cultural change.

2. Institutional structure. We are also reaching limits to the development of the hierarchical bureaucratic organizations that helped create modern society. The bureaucratic state, the disciplined, oligarchical political party, the mass-production assembly line, the old-line labor union, and the hierarchical corporation all played enormously important roles in mobilizing and organizing the energies of masses of people; they made the industrial revolution and the modern state possible. But they have come to a turning point for two reasons: first, they are reaching limits in their functional effectiveness; and second, they are reaching limits in their mass acceptability. Let us consider both factors.

#### *Functional Limits to the Expansion of the Bureaucratic State*

The rise and fall of the Soviet Union illustrates the limits of the centralized, hierarchical state. In its early decades, the USSR was remarkably efficient in mobilizing masses of relatively unskilled workers and vast quantities of raw materials to build the world's largest steel mill and the world's largest hydroelectric dam, and to attain one of the fastest rates of economic growth in the world. Although Stalin starved and murdered millions of Soviet citizens, the economic and military achievements of the Soviet state were so impressive that they convinced many people throughout the world that this type of society was the irresistible wave of the future. Soviet economic growth was re-

markable in the 1950s, was still impressive in the 1960s, tapered off in the 1970s, and stagnated in the 1980s. Partly, this happened because a hypertrophied bureaucracy paralyzed adaptation and innovation. Bureaucracy is inherently deadening to innovation, and this problem became acute once the Soviet Union had moved past the stage of simply importing already proven technology from the West and was attempting to innovate in competition with the West and Japan. But the problem was not only the failure of central economic planning to cope with an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society. It also reflected a collapse of motivation and morale. Absenteeism rose to massive proportions, alcoholism became a tremendous problem, and confidence in government eroded until finally the entire economic and political system collapsed. Although the Soviet example is the most striking case, similar manifestations of the diminishing effectiveness of hierarchical, centralized bureaucratic institutions can be seen throughout industrial society. State-run economies are giving way to market forces; old-line political parties and labor unions are in decline; and bureaucratic corporations are losing ground to more loosely organized and participatory types of organization.

These organizational and motivational changes are intimately related. One reason for the decline of the classic bureaucratic institutions of industrial society is the fact that they are inherently less effective in high-technology societies with highly specialized workforces than they were in the earlier stages of industrial society. But another reason for their decline is the fact that they also became less *acceptable* to the publics of Postmodern society than they were earlier, because of changes in these people's values.

The mass production assembly line broke down manufacturing into simple standardized routines that were repeated endlessly. This was marvelously effective in turning out masses of relatively simple, standardized products. But a price was paid for the increased productivity that resulted: the workers became cogs in huge centrally coordinated machines. Marx, Weber, and others were concerned with the alienation and depersonalization of industrial society that made one's work uninteresting, dehumanizing, devoid of meaning. In societies of scarcity, people were willing to accept these costs, for the sake of economic gains. In affluent societies, they are less willing to do so.

Modern bureaucracy makes a similar tradeoff involving loss of individual identity and autonomy for the sake of increased productivity; this enables it to process thousands or millions of people, using standardized routines. It, too, is inherently depersonalizing: in a rational bureaucracy, individuals are reduced to interchangeable roles. Bureaucracy strips away spontaneity, personal likes and dislikes, individual self-expression and creativity. Nevertheless it was an effective tool for coordinating the efforts of hundreds or even millions of individuals, in the large organizations of modern society.

But its effectiveness and its acceptability are eroding. Postmodern values give a higher priority to self-expression than to economic effectiveness: people are becoming less willing to accept the human costs of bureaucracy and of rigid social norms. As this book will demonstrate, Postmodern society is char-

acterized by the decline of hierarchical institutions and rigid social norms, and by the expansion of the realm of individual choice and mass participation.

Up to the middle of the twentieth century, "Modernization" was an unambiguous term. It referred to urbanization, industrialization, secularization, bureaucratization, and a culture based on bureaucratization—a culture that requires a shift from ascriptive status to achieved status, from diffuse to specific forms of authority, from personalistic obligations to impersonal roles, and from particularistic to universalistic rules. In some areas this Modernization process is still going on. But elsewhere, trends that were central to the Modernization process have undergone a fundamental change of direction.

For example, one of the most striking phenomena of the past two hundred years was the rapidly expanding scope of government. Industrial societies became increasingly centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratized. Until recently, highly centralized state-run economies and societies like the Soviet Union seemed to be the logical end point of Modernization. One might view this trend as profoundly progressive, with the Marxists, or deplore it as threatening to human liberty, with Schumpeter (1947) and Orwell (1949)—but the growth of government seemed inexorable. At the start of the twentieth century, government spending in most societies consumed from 4 to 10 percent of gross domestic product. By 1980, it ranged from 33 to 60 percent of a much bigger output in Western societies, and 70 to 80 percent in some socialist societies. Increasing government ownership and control of the economy seemed to be the wave of the future.

It was not. During the 1980s, further expansion of the state reached a point of diminishing returns, both functionally and in terms of mass acceptance. It first ran into growing political opposition in the West and then collapsed in the Eastern bloc.

The mass production assembly line and the mass production bureaucracy were the two key organizational instruments of industrial society, and in the early phase of Modernization they had a high payoff—enabling factories to produce millions of units and governments to process millions of individuals through standardized routines. But the trend toward bureaucratization, centralization, and government ownership and control has reversed itself. Modern economies lose their effectiveness when the public sphere becomes overwhelmingly large. And public confidence in hierarchical institutions is eroding throughout advanced industrial society.

#### *Cultural Changes Leading to Postmodernization*

An equally basic change in the direction of change has been a shift in the predominant norms and motivations underlying human behavior. Virtually all agrarian societies were characterized by value systems that stigmatized social mobility. This was inevitable, given their steady-state economies. The main source of wealth was land, which is in fixed supply: the only way to become rich was by seizing someone else's land—which probably required killing the

owner. Such internal violence was threatening to the survival of any society and was repressed by norms that emphasized acceptance of the status into which one was born and stigmatized the ambitious and the arriviste. At the same time, traditional societies emphasized duties of sharing and charity—which helped compensate the poor for the absence of social mobility, but further undermined the legitimacy of economic accumulation.

The rise of a Materialistic value system that not only tolerated economic accumulation but encouraged it as something laudable and heroic was a key cultural change that opened the way for capitalism and industrialization. Weber (1904–5) examined this process in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, but his work can be seen as a case study of a more general phenomenon. Today the functional equivalent of the Protestant Ethic is operating most vigorously in East Asia and is fading away in Protestant Europe, as technological development and cultural change have become global phenomena.

Precisely because they attained high levels of economic security, the populations of the first nations to industrialize have gradually come to emphasize Postmaterialist values, giving higher priority to the quality of life than to economic growth. This shift has been taking place throughout advanced industrial society during the past few decades, as we will see in chapter 4. With this has come a shift from the politics of class conflict, to political conflict based on such issues as environmental protection and the status of women and sexual minorities. Marxist ideology, based on economic determinism, was an immensely influential guide for interpreting the transition from agrarian to "modern" or industrial society. It is outmoded for the analysis of "Postmodern" society.

To clarify what we mean by this term, let us examine the specific changes that are linked with Postmodern values. Some of these trends differ radically from those of Modernization.

#### *The Origins of Postmodern Values: Existential Security*

A new worldview is gradually replacing one that has dominated Western society since the Industrial Revolution. The consequences of this transformation are still taking shape, and elements of the older culture are still widespread, but the major features of the new pattern can be discerned.

This shift in worldview and motivations springs from the fact that there is a fundamental difference between growing up with an awareness that survival is precarious, and growing up with the feeling that one's survival can be taken for granted.

The urge to survive is common to all creatures, and normally survival is precarious. This reflects a basic ecological principle: the population of any organism tends to rise to meet the available food supply; it is then held constant by starvation, disease, or predators. Throughout most of history, this principle has governed the lives of all organisms, including humanity. Until very recently, the survival of most human beings was precarious.

Eventually, culture began to soften the competition for survival among humans. Although the ways in which this was done varied enormously from one society to another, virtually all traditional societies established cultural norms that limited the use of violence and repressed aspirations for social mobility. On one hand, they emphasized sharing and charity among those who were relatively well-off, stigmatizing accumulation as greed; and on the other hand, they justified acceptance of the existing social order by the poor. And cultural norms limiting reproduction softened the ruthless competition for survival that overpopulation brought.

A few centuries ago, cultural changes in Protestant Europe led to the reversal of the traditional stigma against economic accumulation, and a Materialistic worldview began to spread. Using new technology and organizational techniques, production began to outpace population growth. Nevertheless, well into the twentieth century, severe economic scarcity still prevailed widely: the Marxist view that people and history were motivated primarily by the struggle for economic goods was a fairly accurate first approximation of the driving force underlying the modernizing phase of industrial society.

The economic miracles and the welfare states that emerged after World War II gave rise to a new stage of history, and ultimately laid the way for the rise of Postmodern values. Fundamental changes in formative experiences have given rise to a distinct value system among a growing segment of those raised in advanced industrial societies during the years since World War II. The postwar birth cohorts in these societies grew up under conditions profoundly unlike those that shaped previous generations. They differed in two respects: first, the postwar economic miracles produced levels of prosperity that were literally unprecedented in human history. Real per capita income in most industrial societies rose to levels several times as high as had ever been experienced before the war, and in some cases (such as Japan) to levels 20 or 30 times higher than ever before. The economic pie became much bigger; this alone would tend to encourage a greater sense of economic security.

But the impact of unprecedented prosperity interacted with a second factor: the emergence of the modern welfare state. A sense of existential security, not absolute wealth, is the crucial variable, and the welfare state reinforced economic growth in producing a sense of security. The pie was much bigger than ever before, and it was distributed more evenly and more reliably than before. For the first time in history, a large share of the masses grew up with the feeling that survival could be taken for granted.

This led to a process of intergenerational value change that is gradually transforming the politics and cultural norms of advanced industrial societies. The best documented aspect of this process is the shift from giving top priority to economic and physical security, to giving top priority to self-expression and the quality of life. This shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist priorities has been measured annually since 1970 in surveys carried out in a number of Western societies. A massive body of evidence is now available, and it demonstrates that an intergenerational shift has been taking place in the predicted di-

rection. This shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist value priorities has brought new political issues to the center of the stage and provided much of the impetus for new political movements.

More recent research indicates that the rise of Postmaterialism itself is only one aspect of a still broader process of cultural change that is reshaping the political outlook, religious orientations, gender roles, and sexual mores of advanced industrial society (Inglehart, 1990). These changes are related to a common concern: the need for a sense of security that religion and absolute cultural norms have traditionally provided. In advanced industrial societies during the decades since World War II, the emergence of unprecedentedly high levels of prosperity, together with the relatively high levels of social security provided by the welfare state, have contributed to a decline in the prevailing sense of vulnerability. For the general public, one's fate is no longer so heavily influenced by unpredictable forces as it was in agrarian and early industrial society. This has been conducive to the spread of Postmodern orientations that place less emphasis on traditional cultural norms—especially those norms that limit individual self-expression.

#### THE THEORY OF INTERGENERATIONAL VALUE CHANGE

Let us reexamine the theory of intergenerational value change in light of recent findings. Our theory is based on two key hypotheses (Inglehart, 1977):

1. *A Scarcity Hypothesis.* An individual's priorities reflect the socioeconomic environment: one places the greatest subjective value on those things that are in relatively short supply.
2. *A Socialization Hypothesis.* The relationship between socioeconomic environment and value priorities is not one of immediate adjustment: a substantial time lag is involved because, to a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years.

The scarcity hypothesis is similar to the principle of diminishing marginal utility in economic theory. The complementary concept of a need hierarchy (Maslow, 1954) helped shape the survey items used to measure value priorities. In its simplest form, the idea of a need hierarchy would probably command almost universal assent. The fact that unmet physiological needs take priority over social, intellectual, or aesthetic needs has been demonstrated all too often in human history: starving people will go to almost any length to obtain food. The rank ordering of human needs varies as we move beyond those needs directly related to survival; Maslow's need hierarchy does not hold up in detail. But there does seem to be a basic distinction between the "material" needs for physiological sustenance and safety, and nonphysiological needs such as those for esteem, self-expression, and aesthetic satisfaction.

The recent economic history of advanced industrial societies has significant implications in light of the scarcity hypothesis. For these societies are a striking exception to the prevailing historical pattern: they still contain poor peo-

ple, but most of their population does *not* live under conditions of hunger and economic insecurity. This has led to a gradual shift in which needs for belonging, esteem, and intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction became more prominent. Other things being equal, we would expect prolonged periods of high prosperity to encourage the spread of Postmaterialist values; economic decline would have the opposite effect.

But it is not quite that simple: there is no one-to-one relationship between economic level and the prevalence of Postmaterialist values, for these values reflect one's *subjective* sense of security, not one's economic level *per se*. While rich individuals and nationalities tend to feel more secure than poor ones, these feelings are also influenced by the cultural setting and social welfare institutions in which one is raised. Thus, the scarcity hypothesis must be interpreted in connection with the socialization hypothesis.

One of the most pervasive concepts in social science is the notion of a basic human personality structure that tends to crystallize by the time an individual reaches adulthood, with relatively little change thereafter. This concept permeates the literature from Plato through Freud and extends to the findings of contemporary survey research. Early socialization seems to carry greater weight than later socialization.

This, of course, does not imply that no change occurs during adult years. In individual cases, dramatic behavioral shifts are known to occur, and the process of human development never comes to a complete stop (Erikson, 1982; Levinson et al., 1979; Brim and Kagan, 1980). Nevertheless, human development seems to be far more rapid during the preadult years than afterward, and the great bulk of the evidence points to the conclusion that the statistical likelihood of basic personality change declines sharply after one reaches adulthood (Block, 1981; Costa and McCrae, 1980; Jennings and Niemi, 1981; Jennings and Markus, 1984).

Taken together, these two hypotheses generate a clear set of predictions concerning value change. First, while the scarcity hypothesis implies that prosperity is conducive to the spread of Postmaterialist and Postmodern values, the socialization hypothesis implies that neither an individual's values nor those of a society as a whole are likely to change overnight. Instead, fundamental value change takes place gradually; largely it occurs as a younger generation replaces an older one in the adult population of a society.

Consequently, after a period of sharply rising economic and physical security, one would expect to find substantial differences between the value priorities of older and younger groups: they would have been shaped by different experiences in their formative years. But there would be a sizable time lag between economic changes and their political effects. Ten or 15 years after an era of prosperity began, the age cohorts that had spent their formative years in prosperity would begin to enter the electorate. A decade or so might pass before these groups began to occupy positions of power and influence in their society; another decade or so would pass before they reached the level of top decision makers. But their influence would become important long before this

final stage. Postmaterialists are more highly educated, more articulate, and politically more active than Materialists. Consequently, their political impact tends to outweigh that of the Materialists.

The socialization hypothesis complements the scarcity hypothesis. It helps account for apparently deviant behavior: on one hand, the miser who experienced poverty in early years and relentlessly continues piling up wealth long after attaining material security; and on the other hand, the saint who remains true to the higher-order goals instilled by his or her culture, even in the face of severe deprivation. In both instances, an explanation for the seemingly deviant behavior of such individuals lies in their early socialization.

The unprecedented economic and physical security of the postwar era has led to an intergenerational shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist values. The young emphasize Postmaterialist goals to a far greater extent than do the old, and cohort analysis indicates that this reflects generational change rather than aging effects. At the time of our first surveys, in 1970–71, Materialists held an overwhelming numerical preponderance over Postmaterialists, outnumbering them by nearly four to one. By 1990, the balance had shifted dramatically, to a point where Materialists outnumbered Postmaterialists by only four to three. Projections based on population replacement suggest that by the year 2000 Materialists and Postmaterialists will be about equally numerous in many Western countries (Abramson and Inglehart, 1992).

Postmaterialists are not non-Materialists, still less are they anti-Materialists. The term "*Post-materialist*" denotes a set of goals that are emphasized *after* people have attained material security, and *because* they have attained material security. Thus, the collapse of security would lead to a gradual shift back toward Materialist priorities. The emergence of Postmaterialism does not reflect a reversal of polarities, but a change of *priorities*: Postmaterialists do not place a negative value on economic and physical security—they value it positively, like everyone else; but unlike Materialists, they give even higher priority to self-expression and the quality of life.

Thus, Inglehart (1977: 179–261) found that an emerging emphasis on quality of life issues was being superimposed on the older, class-based cleavages of industrial society. Although social class voting was declining, it had by no means disappeared (and was unlikely to do so). But while the old class-based polarization over ownership and control of the means of production had once dominated politics, it was increasingly sharing the stage with new Postmaterialist issues. Both industrial and preindustrial cleavages persisted, beside cross-cutting new issues.

The shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist priorities is a core element of the Postmodernization process. In early industrial society, emphasis on economic achievement rose to unprecedented levels. While traditional societies stigmatized social mobility and individual economic accumulation, modern industrial societies provided a positive evaluation of economic achievement. The Captain of Industry became a cultural hero, and the nineteenth-century U.S. Supreme Court interpreted "the pursuit of happiness" to mean "freedom

to accumulate property." The core societal goal of the Modernization process was economic growth. This made a good deal of sense. Early industrializing nations had only recently acquired the technological means to cope with chronic scarcity. In such societies, where malnutrition is the main cause of death, economic achievement is an overwhelmingly important part of the pursuit of happiness. The transition from preindustrial society to advanced industrial society brings a change from a life expectancy of 35 or 40 years, to one of 75 or 80 years. This is a huge improvement.

As the possibility of starvation receded from being a major concern to an almost insignificant prospect for most people, prevailing values gradually changed. Economic security is still something that everyone wants, but it is no longer a synonym for happiness. Increasingly, the publics of advanced industrial societies have come to emphasize quality of life concerns, sometimes giving environmental protection priority over economic growth. Thus, emphasis on economic achievement rises sharply with the Modernization process, but then levels off as Postmodernization occurs. Societies in which Postmaterialists are most numerous have lower growth rates than those in which Materialists are overwhelmingly predominant—but the former tend to have higher levels of subjective well-being. Postmodernization brings declining emphasis not only on economic growth itself, but also on the scientific and technological developments that make it possible; emphasis shifts from coping with survival, to maximizing subjective well-being.

#### *The Risk Society*

Ironically, as survival has become unprecedentedly secure, the peoples of advanced industrial societies have become increasingly sensitive to risk. Indeed, one of the most influential critics of postmodern society characterizes it as Risk Society (Beck, 1992). According to this diagnosis, the distributional conflicts over "goods" (such as property, income, and jobs) that characterized industrial society have given way to distributional conflicts over "bads," such as the risks of nuclear technology, genetic research, and the threat to the environment. With industrialization, the religious certainties of feudal society were eroded, but they gave rise to an increasing degree of existential security; with the rise of Postmodern society, the risks of life have become incalculable and increasingly escape the control mechanisms of society. In this updated version of the doctrine of late capitalism, the ecological crisis takes over the role previously played by the legitimation crisis of late capitalism.

It is ironic that in societies where human life expectancy has risen by 20 years during the last century, concerns about risk have become central political issues. It is ironic, but logical: for it is precisely *because* the risk of starvation has receded almost to the vanishing point that people have been able to redirect their concerns from pervasive daily uncertainty concerning survival to more remote concerns such as the ecological crisis. The very success of the welfare states of advanced industrial society in providing an unprecedented de-

gree of existential insecurity has given rise to the expectation that the state can and should ensure everyone against all uncertainties. As Samuelson has put it,

The reason for this paradox is entitlement: a postwar word and concept. By entitlement, I mean more than the catalogue of well-known government benefits (Social Security being the most prominent) or various modern "rights" (such as the "right" of those in wheelchairs to public ramps). Entitlement expresses a modern conviction, a broader sensibility, that defines Americans' attitudes toward social conditions, national institutions and even the world. Increasingly, we have come to believe that certain things are (or ought to be) guaranteed to us. We feel entitled. Among other things, we expect secure jobs, rising living standards, enlightened corporations, generous government, high-quality health care, racial harmony, a clean environment, safe cities, satisfying work, and personal fulfillment. (Samuelson, 1995: 4)

What Samuelson attributes to American society holds true of other Postmodern societies. As long as people were overwhelmingly engaged in coping with survival, more remote concerns had little salience. But the attainment of existential security does not bring Nirvana. Postmodern society has brought increasing attention to quality of life problems, and far more demanding standards for societal performance. As a net result, people probably worry as much as ever, but they worry about different things: there are profound differences in the behavior and worldviews of people who feel insecure about their personal survival and people who worry about global warming.

#### *Stress, Coping Strategies, and Belief Systems*

Far-reaching though it is, the rise of Postmaterialist values is only one aspect of a still broader process of cultural change that is reshaping orientations toward authority, religion, politics, gender roles, and sexual norms among the publics of advanced industrial society. What is driving this broad shift from survival values toward well-being values? This question is illuminated by recent research in social psychology on the relationships between stress, coping strategies, and belief systems.

People who feel that their survival is threatened react with stress; this stimulates efforts to cope with the threat. But high levels of stress can become dysfunctional and even life-threatening. One's belief system mediates the response to new or threatening situations, helping the individual deal with stress and shaping the strategy used to cope with the threat. If one *has* a belief system that provides a sense of predictability and control, it reduces stress to a level conducive to coping behavior (Rotter, 1966). In the absence of such a belief system, people experience a sense of helplessness, leading to withdrawal instead of coping behavior; these withdrawal responses may take the form of depression, fatalism, resignation, or alcohol or drug abuse (M. Inglehart, 1991).

Virtually all of the world's major cultures have belief systems which provide reassurance that, even though the individual alone cannot understand or



predict what lies ahead, it is in the hands of a benevolent higher power. One's future may be unpredictable, but this higher power will ensure that things work out. Both religion and secular ideologies provide assurance that the universe is not random, but follows a plan which guarantees that (in this world or the next) everything will turn out well. This belief reduces stress, enabling one to shut out anxiety and focus on some immediate coping strategy. Without such a belief system, extreme stress is likely to produce withdrawal reactions.

Religion is the dominant influence on the belief systems of most preindustrial societies. In religious worldviews, the higher power is an omniscient and benevolent God. Stress is reduced by a system of absolute rules that govern many aspects of life and maximize predictability. In secular societies, the state or a strong political leader fills the role of the higher power. Under conditions of great unpredictability, people have a powerful need to see authority as not only strong, but also benevolent—even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Communist ideology provided a functional equivalent to religion, furnishing an explanation of how the universe functioned and where history was going. Although many of Marx's predictions eventually turned out to be wrong, the ideology provided a sense of predictability and reassured people that infallible leaders were in charge.

#### *The Authoritarian Reflex*

In societies undergoing an historical crisis, a phenomenon has been observed that might be called the Authoritarian Reflex. Rapid change leads to severe insecurity, giving rise to a powerful need for predictability. Under these circumstances, the Authoritarian Reflex takes two forms:

1. Fundamentalist or nativist reactions. This phenomenon frequently occurs in preindustrial societies when they are confronted with rapid political and economic change through contact with industrialized societies; and it is often found among the more traditional and less secure strata in industrial societies, especially during times of stress. In both cases, the reaction to change takes the form of a rejection of the new, and a compulsive insistence on the infallibility of old, familiar cultural patterns.

2. Adulation of strong secular leaders. In secularized societies, severe insecurity brings a readiness to defer to strong secular leaders, in hopes that superior men of iron will can lead their people to safety. This phenomenon frequently occurs in response to military defeat or economic or political collapse.

Thus, disintegrating societies often give rise to authoritarian and xenophobic reactions. Pogroms broke out in the declining years of Czarist Russia, and after its collapse power was seized by rulers who were even more ruthlessly authoritarian than the czars. Similarly, the Great Depression of the 1930s helped bring Hitler to power in Germany and contributed to the rise of fascist dictators in a number of other countries, from Spain to Hungary to Japan.

Massive insecurity is conducive not only to a need for strong authority figures to protect one from threatening forces, but also to xenophobia (Tajfel,

1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hamilton, 1981; Jackson and Inglehart, 1996). Frighteningly rapid change breeds an intolerance of cultural change, and of different ethnic groups. Thus, in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the price of cotton went down, lynchings of Blacks went up in the South. This was a reaction to insecurity, not a cognitive response to the belief that Blacks were manipulating the price of cotton: the lynchings were aware that Blacks had little influence on the cotton market (Beck, Massey, and Tolnay, 1989). Similarly, the Great Depression of the 1930s gave rise to the twin phenomena of Hitler and anti-Semitism—and ultimately, to the Holocaust. There was nothing inevitable in this horror story. It occurred in a society that previously had been more tolerant toward Jews than had Russia or France and had one of the most socially integrated Jewish communities in Europe. It reflected traumatic insecurity caused by military defeat and political and economic collapse, rather than anything uniquely German. In a hauntingly parallel phenomenon, the collapse of the economic and political systems of what used to be the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has given rise to ultranationalism and “ethnic cleansing.”

#### *Postmodernism: Declining Emphasis on Political, Economic, and Scientific Authority*

All societies depend on some legitimating formula for authority: unless their leaders' decisions are seen as legitimate, they rest solely on coercion. A central component of Modernization was the shift from religious authority to rational-bureaucratic authority, justified by claims that the governing institutions were conducive to the general good.

A major component of the Postmodern shift is a shift away from *both* religious and bureaucratic authority, bringing declining emphasis on all kinds of authority. For deference to authority has high costs: the individual's personal goals must be subordinated to those of a broader entity. But under conditions of insecurity, people are more than willing to do so. Under threat of invasion, internal disorder, or economic collapse, people eagerly seek strong authority figures who can protect them.

Conversely, conditions of prosperity and security are conducive to pluralism in general and democracy in particular. This helps explain a long-established finding: rich societies are much likelier to be democratic than poor ones. This finding was pointed out by Lipset (1960) and has been confirmed most recently by Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994). The reasons why this is true are complex (we will examine them in chapter 5); but one factor is that the authoritarian reflex is strongest under conditions of insecurity.

Until recently, insecurity was a central part of the human condition. Only recently have societies emerged in which most of the population did *not* feel insecure concerning survival. Thus, both premodern agrarian society and modern industrial society were shaped by survival values. But the Postmodern shift has brought a broad de-emphasis on all forms of authority.

*Changing Religious Orientations, Gender Roles, and Sexual Norms*

The rise of Postmodernism is the reverse of the Authoritarian Reflex: Postmaterialist values characterize the most *secure* segment of advanced industrial society. Postmaterialist values developed in the environment of the historically unprecedented economic growth and the welfare states that emerged after World War II. And they are a core element of a Postmodern shift that is reshaping the political outlook, religious orientations, gender roles, and sexual norms of advanced industrial society. Two factors contribute to the decline of traditional political, religious, social, and sexual norms in advanced industrial societies.

The first is that an increasing sense of security brings a diminishing need for absolute rules. Individuals under high stress have a need for rigid, predictable rules. They need to be sure of what is going to happen because they are in danger—their margin for error is slender and they need maximum predictability. Postmaterialists embody the opposite outlook: raised under conditions of relative security, they can tolerate more ambiguity; they are less likely to need the security of absolute rigid rules that religious sanctions provide. The psychological costs of deviating from whatever norms one grew up with are harder to bear if a person is under stress than if a person feels secure. Taking one's world apart and putting it together again is extremely stressful. But Postmaterialists—people with relatively high levels of security—can more readily accept deviation from familiar patterns than can people who feel anxiety concerning their basic existential needs. Consequently, Postmaterialists accept cultural change more readily than others.

The second reason is that societal and religious norms usually have a function. Such basic norms as “Thou shalt not kill” (the Judeo-Christian version of a virtually universal social norm) serve an important societal function. Restricting violence to narrow, predictable channels is crucial to a society's viability. Without such norms, a society would tear itself apart.

Many religious norms such as “Thou shalt not commit adultery” or “Honor thy father and mother” are linked with maintaining the family unit. Various versions of these norms are also found in virtually every society on earth because they serve crucial functions. But in advanced industrial society, some of these functions have dwindled.

The role of the family has become less crucial than it once was. Although the family was once the key economic unit, in advanced industrial society one's working life overwhelmingly takes place outside the home. Similarly, education now takes place mainly outside the family. Furthermore, the welfare state has taken over responsibility for survival. Formerly, whether children lived or died depended on whether their parents provided for them, and the parents' survival depended on their children when they reached old age. Today, though the family is still important, it is no longer a life or death relationship; its role has largely been taken over by the welfare state. The new generation can survive if the family breaks up—or even if neither parent is around. One-

parent families and childless old people have vastly better chances for survival under contemporary conditions than ever before. As long as it threatens the survival of children, society is apt to view divorce as absolutely wrong: it undermines the long-term viability of society itself. Today, the functional basis of this norm and other norms reinforcing the two-parent family has eroded: does that mean that society changes its values? No—at least, not immediately.

Cultural norms are usually internalized very firmly at an early age, and backed up by prerational sanctions. People's opposition to divorce does not simply reflect an individual's rational calculation that “the family is an important social unit, so I should stay married.” Instead, divorce tends to be made a question of good and evil, through absolute norms. Norms that constrain people's behavior even when they strongly want to do something else are norms that have been taught as absolute rules, and inculcated so that their consciences torture them if these norms are violated. Such societal norms have a great deal of momentum. The mere fact that the function of a given cultural pattern has weakened or disappeared does not mean that the norm immediately disappears. But it opens the way for that norm to weaken gradually, especially if those norms conflict with strong impulses to the contrary.

Norms supporting the two-parent heterosexual family are weakening for a variety of reasons, ranging from the rise of the welfare state to the drastic decline of infant mortality rates, which means that a couple no longer needs to produce four or five children in order for the population to reproduce itself. Experimentation and testing of the old rules takes place; gradually, new forms of behavior emerge that deviate from traditional norms, and the groups most likely to accept these new forms of behavior are the young more than the old, and the relatively secure, more than the insecure.

The Postmodern shift involves an intergenerational change in a wide variety of basic social norms, from cultural norms linked with ensuring survival of the species, to norms linked with the pursuit of individual well-being. For example, Postmaterialists and the young are markedly more tolerant of homosexuality than are Materialists and the old. This is part of a pervasive pattern. Postmaterialists have been shaped by security during their formative years and are far more permissive than Materialists in their attitudes toward abortion, divorce, extramarital affairs, prostitution, and euthanasia. Materialists, conversely, are likely to adhere to the traditional societal norms that favored childbearing, but only within the traditional two-parent family—and that heavily stigmatized any sexual activity outside that setting.

Traditional gender role norms from East Asia to the Islamic world to Western society discouraged women from taking jobs outside the home. Virtually all preindustrial societies emphasized childbearing and childrearing as the central goal of any woman, her most important function in life, and her greatest source of satisfaction. In recent years, this perspective has been increasingly called into question, as growing numbers of women postpone having children or forego them completely in order to devote themselves to careers outside the home.

## EXISTENTIAL SECURITY AND THE RISE OF POSTMODERN VALUES

Throughout advanced industrial society, there is evidence of a long-term shift away from traditional religious and cultural norms. This decline of traditional norms is closely linked with the shift from Materialist toward Postmaterialist values. In terms of face content, this is not obvious: none of the survey items used to measure Materialist/Postmaterialist values makes any reference whatever to religion or to sexual or gender norms. Nevertheless, all of these values are components of a broad cultural change linked with the transition from industrial to postindustrial society. The shift to Postmaterialism and the decline of traditional religious and sexual norms go together because they share a common cause: the unprecedented levels of existential security attained in contemporary advanced industrial society that grows out of the economic miracles (both Western and Asian) of the past several decades, and the rise of the welfare state.

In the highly uncertain world of subsistence societies, the need for absolute standards and a sense that an infallible higher power will ensure that things ultimately turn out well filled a major psychological need. One of the key functions of religion has been to provide a sense of certainty in an insecure environment. Not only economic insecurity gives rise to this need: the old saying that "there are no atheists in foxholes" reflects the fact that physical danger also leads to a need for belief in a higher power. But in the absence of war, prosperity and the welfare state have produced an unprecedented sense of security concerning one's survival. This has diminished the need for the reassurance that religion traditionally provided.

These same factors have weakened the functional basis of a pervasive set of norms linked with the fact that, throughout most of history, the traditional two-parent family was crucial to the survival of children, and thus, of society. These norms ranged from disapproval of divorce, abortion, and homosexuality, to negative attitudes toward careers outside the home for married women. As we will see, it is precisely in the most advanced welfare states that mass adherence to traditional religious and family norms has declined most rapidly. This is no coincidence. These factors are also changing another major aspect of people's worldviews: respect for authority is declining throughout advanced industrial society.

The difference between feeling secure or insecure about survival is so basic that it has led to a wide-ranging but coherent syndrome of changes, from the "survival" values that characterized agrarian and early industrial society, to the "well-being" values that characterize advanced industrial society.

The difference between whether one views survival as uncertain, or assumes that it can be taken for granted, is central in shaping people's life strategies, giving rise to very distinct worldviews. Throughout most of history, in both agrarian and early industrial society, survival has been uncertain for the great majority of the population; consequently, they have emphasized survival values. Postmodern values grow out of the unprecedented mass prosperity of ad-

vanced industrial societies in which, for the first time in history, large segments of the public take survival for granted. These contrasting value systems have ramifications that extend across politics, economics, sexual and family norms, and religion, as table 1.1 illustrates.

The shift from modern to Postmodern values is eroding many of the key institutions of industrial society, through the following changes:

1. In the political realm, the rise of Postmodern values brings declining respect for authority, and growing emphasis on participation and self-expression. These two trends are conducive to democratization (in authoritarian societies) and to more participatory, issue-oriented democracy (in already democratic societies). But they are making the position of governing elites more difficult.

Respect for authority is eroding. And the long-term trend toward increased mass participation is not only continuing, but has taken on a new character. In large-scale agrarian societies, political participation was limited to a narrow minority. In industrial society, the masses were mobilized by disciplined elite-led political parties. This was a major advance for democratization, and it resulted in unprecedented numbers of people taking part in politics by voting—but mass participation rarely went much beyond this level. In Postmodern society the emphasis is shifting from voting, to more active and issue-specific forms of mass participation. Mass loyalties to long-established hierarchical political parties are eroding; no longer content to be disciplined troops, the pub-

TABLE 1.1  
Security and Insecurity: Two Contrasting Value Systems

	<i>Survival Is Seen as</i>	
	<i>Insecure</i>	<i>Secure</i>
1. Politics		
Need for strong leaders		De-emphasis on political authority
Order		Self-expression, participation
Xenophobia/fundamentalism		Exotic/new are stimulating
2. Economics		
Priority to economic growth		Quality of life = top priority
Achievement motivation		Subjective well-being
Individual vs. state ownership		Diminishing authority of both private and state ownership
3. Sexual/Family Norms		
Maximize reproduction—but only in two-parent heterosexual family		Individual sexual gratification Individual self-expression
4. Religion		
Emphasis on higher power		Diminishing religious authority
Absolute rules		Flexible rules, situational ethics
Emphasis on predictability		Emphasis on meaning and purpose of life

lic has become increasingly autonomous and elite-challenging. Consequently, though voter turnout is stagnant or declining, people are participating in politics in increasingly active and more issue-specific ways. Moreover, a growing segment of the population is coming to value freedom of expression and political participation as things that are good in themselves, rather than simply as a possible means to attain economic security.

But these changes have had a traumatic impact on the old-line political machines of industrial society, which are in disarray almost everywhere. Throughout the history of industrial society, the scope of state activities had been growing rapidly; it seemed to be a law of nature that government control of economy and society would continue to expand. That trend has now reached a set of natural limits—both for functional reasons and because of eroding public trust in government and a growing resistance to government intrusion. The people of each society tend to assume that this erosion of confidence is due to factors unique to their own country; in reality, it is taking place throughout advanced industrial society.

Xenophobia thrives under conditions of rapid change and insecurity. Today, this is especially evident in what used to be Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, and ethnic hatred has not disappeared even in more secure industrial societies. But xenophobia is less widespread in secure societies than in insecure ones; and in long-term perspective, the more secure societies seem to be moving toward increasing acceptance of diversity. Finally, Postmodern politics are distinguished by a shift from the class-based political conflict that characterized industrial society, to increasing emphasis on cultural and quality of life issues.

2. In the economic realm, existential security leads to increasing emphasis on subjective well-being and quality of life concerns; for many people, these become higher priorities than economic growth. The core goals of Modernization, economic growth, and economic achievement are still positively valued, but their relative importance is declining.

There is also a gradual shift in what motivates people to work: emphasis shifts from maximizing one's income and job security toward a growing insistence on interesting and meaningful work. Along with this comes a twofold shift in the relationship between owners and managers. On one hand, we find a growing emphasis on more collegial and participatory styles of management. But at the same time, there is a reversal of the tendency to look to government for solutions to such problems and a growing acceptance of capitalism and market principles. Both trends are linked with a growing rejection of hierarchical authority patterns and rising emphasis on individual autonomy. Ever since the era of *laissez-faire* capitalism, people have almost automatically turned to government to offset the power of private business. Today, there is a widespread feeling that the growth of government is becoming functionally ineffective and a threat to individual autonomy.

3. In the realm of sexual behavior, reproduction, and the family, there is a continued trend away from the rigid norms that were a functional necessity in

agrarian society. In these societies, traditional methods of contraception were unreliable, and children born outside a family with a male breadwinner were likely to starve; sexual abstinence except in marriage was a key means of population control. The development of effective birth control technology, together with prosperity and the welfare state, have eroded the functional basis of traditional norms in this area; there is a general shift toward greater flexibility for individual choice in sexual behavior, and a dramatic increase in the acceptance of homosexuality. This not only continues some of the trends associated with modernity, but breaks through to new levels. Gays and lesbians have come out of the closet, and unmarried parenthood is a normal part of prime time television.

4. In the realm of ultimate values, we also find both continuity and striking change. One of the key trends associated with Modernization was secularization. This trend has continued, where established religious institutions are concerned: the publics of most advanced industrial societies show both declining confidence in churches and falling rates of church attendance and are placing less emphasis on organized religion. This does not mean that spiritual concerns are vanishing, however: for we also find a consistent cross-national tendency for people to spend *more* time thinking about the meaning and purpose of life. The dominance of instrumental rationality is giving way to growing concern for ultimate ends.

These trends reflect the unprecedented security that has developed in Postmodern society. Economic accumulation for the sake of economic security was the central goal of industrial society. Ironically, their 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.

#### PREDICTING CULTURAL CHANGE

The theory of value change generates a number of clear predictions. Table 1.1 outlines a set of qualitative shifts linked with growing existential security. This table shows what *kinds* of values we would expect to become more widespread as Postmodernization takes place. But the theory is not limited to qualitative predictions concerning the general direction of cultural change. It also generates a set of quantitative predictions concerning where and how fast these changes should occur. The scarcity hypothesis postulates that a sense of existential security is conducive to Postmodern values. This gives rise to the following predictions:

1. In cross-national perspective, Postmodern values will be most widespread in the richest and most secure societies; the publics of impoverished societies will place more emphasis on survival values.

2. Within any given society, Postmodern values will be most widespread

among the more secure strata: the wealthier and better educated will be most likely to hold a whole range of security values, including Postmaterialism; the less secure strata will emphasize survival priorities.

3. Short-term fluctuations will follow the implications of the scarcity hypothesis: prosperity will enhance the tendency to emphasize well-being values; economic downturn, civil disorder, or war will lead people to emphasize survival values.

4. Long-term changes will also reflect the scarcity hypothesis. In societies that have experienced high levels of security for several decades, we should find a long-term shift from survival values toward well-being values. This is not a universal trend that sweeps the entire world, like the popularization of pop culture fostered by the global mass media. Instead, the shift toward well-being values is occurring mainly in those societies that have attained such a high level of prosperity and safety that a substantial share of the population takes survival for granted; it is not found in societies that have not experienced rising prosperity. On the other hand, it is *not* a uniquely Western phenomenon: it should appear in any society that *has* experienced the transition to high mass security.

The socialization hypothesis postulates that neither an individual's values nor those of a society as a whole will change overnight. In connection with the scarcity hypothesis, this generates three additional predictions:

5. In societies that have experienced a long period of rising economic and physical security, we will find substantial differences between the value priorities of older and younger groups: the young will be much likelier to emphasize well-being values than the old. This reflects the fact that the young experienced greater security during their formative years than did the old. Fundamental value change takes place mainly as younger birth cohorts replace older ones in a given society.

6. These intergenerational value differences should be reasonably stable over time: though immediate conditions of security or insecurity will produce short-term fluctuations, the underlying differences between younger and older birth cohorts should persist over long periods of time. The young will not take on the values of the old as they age, as would happen if the intergenerational differences reflected life-cycle effects; instead, after two or three decades have passed, the younger cohorts should still show the distinctive values that characterized them at the start of the period.

7. In cross-national perspective, large amounts of intergenerational *change* will be found in those countries that have experienced relatively high rates of economic *growth*: if differences between the values of young and old were a normal feature of the human life cycle, they would be found everywhere. But if, as our theory implies, this process of value change is driven by historical changes in the degree of security experienced during one's preadult years, then the age differences found in a given society will reflect that society's economic history: the difference between the values of young and old will be largest in countries like Western Germany or South Korea that experienced the greatest

increases in prosperity during the past 40 years; and conversely, the difference between the values of young and old will be small or nonexistent in such countries as Nigeria and India, which experienced relatively little increase in per capita income from 1950 to 1990.

Thus, high *levels* of prosperity should be conducive to high *levels* of Postmaterialism and other Postmodern values; high rates of economic *growth* should produce relatively rapid rates of value *change* and relatively large intergenerational *differences*.

8. Finally, the theory of intergenerational value change not only yields predictions about what kinds of values should be emerging and where, but even predicts how much value change should be observed in a given period of time. Since the change is based on intergenerational population replacement, if one knows the distribution of values across birth cohorts in a given nation and the sizes of the cohorts, one can estimate how much change will be produced in a given time span, as a result of intergenerational population replacement. With the four-item Materialist/Postmaterialist values battery, for example, population replacement should produce a shift toward Postmaterialism of approximately one point per year on the Materialist-Postmaterialist percentage difference index (Abramson and Inglehart, 1992).

#### *Authoritarianism and the Postmodern Shift*

We have just described a syndrome of cultural changes through which people are shifting from one belief system to another. Under conditions of insecurity people seek strong authority; this is part of a worldview that also embraces ethnocentrism, traditional gender roles, and traditional religious norms.

This is not the first time that such a configuration of orientations has been observed. Several decades ago, Adorno et al. (1950) demonstrated that orientations toward authority, aggression toward outgroups, and a high degree of adherence to social conventions go together in a syndrome that they called *The Authoritarian Personality*. This work was controversial, evoking numerous critiques on both theoretical and methodological grounds. Despite massive criticism, this thesis generated an immense body of research that has survived and evolved over the years, with particularly significant recent contributions being made by Altemeyer (1981, 1988).

From the outset of our research, the Authoritarian Personality thesis seemed potentially relevant to the rise of Materialist/Postmaterialist values that are at the core of Postmodern values. A standardized set of authoritarianism items was used in a cross-national exploration of nationalism and internationalism. The results were disappointing: dimensional analysis showed that the authoritarianism items did not cluster together as they theoretically should (Inglehart, 1970).

Subsequent pilot tests gave similar results. Authoritarianism items showed relatively weak relationships with each other; some were closely related to the Materialist/Postmaterialist dimension, but others tapped quite different di-

mensions. Authoritarianism, as originally operationalized, has a poor empirical fit with Materialism/Postmaterialism.

The theoretical basis of authoritarianism is not necessarily incompatible with that of Materialism/Postmaterialism, but there are important differences in focus. The initial concept of authoritarianism emphasizes the psychodynamics of harsh discipline in early childrearing, rather than influences from the broader economic and political environment. On the other hand, Hyman and Sheatsley (1954), in their critique of the original study, argue a cognitive explanation: certain respondents, especially those from a lower socioeconomic level, may show an authoritarian-type response because this is a more or less accurate reflection of the conditions governing their adult lives; Altemeyer also endorses this interpretation. Our own interpretation of the genesis of Materialist/Postmaterialist values contains elements of both positions. It emphasizes the importance of early experiences, but links them with one's formative experiences as a whole, and not just parental discipline.

The original authoritarianism hypothesis does not predict either the age-group differences or the social class differences that are strikingly evident in our data. Quite the contrary, studies of authoritarianism have found that children tend to be *more* authoritarian than adults. It would not be impossible to reinterpret the *Authoritarian Personality* hypothesis in such a way as to explain the age and class differences. One might argue that childrearing practices vary according to social class and have changed over time. But if one did so, one would then need to seek an explanation of *why* they vary and *why* they have changed. Quite probably, one would eventually trace this explanation to the economic and political changes on which we rest our own interpretation.

Another important distinction between authoritarianism and Materialist/Postmaterialist values lies in the way they are measured: authoritarianism reflects *levels* of support for given positions; Materialist/Postmaterialist values deal with *priorities*—that is, the relative *rank* of various goals. This distinction is crucial, and will be discussed at some length in chapter 3. Our theory implies that an intergenerational change in *priorities* is taking place—and *not* that people no longer value economic security. Nevertheless, the two streams of research agree on one major point: orientations toward authority are related to a broad range of other orientations, forming the core of a coherent worldview.

#### *Changing Mass Values: Testing Our Predictions*

We now have a large body of empirical evidence on cultural change, from surveys carried out in more than 40 societies over the past 25 years. Using these data, this book will test these predictions. Chapter 4 focuses on the relatively detailed and abundant body of data concerning the Materialist/Postmaterialist value shift; chapters 8 and 9 examine the evidence of a much broader process of cultural change involving religious, civic, sexual, and economic norms as well as Materialist/Postmaterialist values.

The following chapters examine survey data from societies containing 70

percent of the world's population. For 21 of these societies, we have time series data from the World Values surveys carried out in 1981 and 1990. For several societies, we also have detailed time series data on value changes from 1970 to 1994. The evidence from these surveys indicates that advanced industrial societies are moving on a common trajectory. To a striking degree, societies in Western Europe, North America, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and East Asia are undergoing similar cultural changes in politics, economics, sex and gender norms, and religion. Although they have widely varying cultural traditions and start from very different levels, they are generally moving in the same direction.

Do the values linked with secure survival actually move in the predicted direction from 1981 to 1990? As we will see below, on the whole our predictions hold up very well when tested against data from the 21 nations surveyed in both 1981 and 1990. About 40 variables were strongly correlated with existential security. These variables move in the predicted direction in most countries for which data are available. Moreover our predictions hold up best in those countries that experienced relatively prosperous circumstances; they fail to apply in those countries that experienced economic decline and political upheaval—precisely as the theory implies.

These findings suggest that social science can sometimes have predictive power: when we are dealing with relatively enduring aspects of the outlook of given birth cohorts, we can anticipate that change will tend to move in a specific direction, as intergenerational population replacement occurs. Other factors such as the rise and fall of the economic cycle or war and peace will also shape the outlook of a given society at a given time. But in the long run, across many societies, such situational factors tend to cancel each other out: the influence of intergenerational population replacement, on the other hand, tends to work in a specific direction for many decades, and its cumulative impact can be great.

This study was motivated by the belief that mass belief systems have important economic, political, and social consequences. Although it has long been believed that given cultural patterns tend to go with given economic and political systems, this belief has rested mainly on impressionistic evidence: it has been difficult to demonstrate empirically because, until recently, cross-culturally comparable measures of beliefs and values have not been available on a global scale. Empirical evidence from 43 societies demonstrates that cultural patterns are, indeed, linked with important economic and political variables—and that the cross-level linkages are astonishingly strong.

Chapter 5 examines the causal linkages between culture and democracy in greater detail; chapter 6 focuses on the linkages between culture and economic growth. In both cases, the evidence suggests that culture is not just a dependent variable, but has an important impact on both democracy and economic growth.

The evidence we will examine makes it clear that—as both Marx and Weber argued—belief systems, economics, and politics *are* intimately related. Their

linkages seem to reflect neither a simple Marxian causality (with economics driving culture and politics) nor a simple Weberian causality (with culture driving economics and politics), but reciprocal causal relationships. Cultural, economic, and political systems tend to be mutually supportive in any society that survives for long. They help shape each other, and they are changing the world in ways that are to some extent predictable.