

THE WORLDVIEWS OF ISLAMIC PUBLICS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

To what extent does a common value system exist among the publics of Islamic societies? And to what extent are their values compatible with democratic institutions?

As this chapter demonstrates, using massive body of recent survey evidence, the publics of Islamic countries have distinctive and relatively similar basic values, as compared with the values that prevail in most other societies. To a considerable extent, these differences between Islamic and non-Islamic societies reflect differences in levels of economic development. Modernization theorists from Karl Marx to Max Weber to Daniel Bell have argued that economic development brings pervasive cultural changes, and we find strong empirical support for this thesis: the worldviews of rich societies show striking and systematic differences from the worldviews prevailing among the publics of poorer societies.

But the cultural heritage of given societies also seems to play a significant role: Large differences exist between value systems of the historically Islamic societies and those of other societies, even when we control for levels of economic development. Although basic values are changing over time, the impact of a society's historical heritage remains clearly visible in the value systems of its public today.

For the first time in human history, the World Values Surveys have measured the values of people throughout the entire world (covering 85% of its population). These surveys provide unprecedented insight into how human values vary and how and why they are changing. They give empirical answers to such questions as: Do Islamic countries have distinctive value systems? And if so, how do they differ from those of other cultures? We can also probe into such questions as: Are certain values linked with the emergence and survival of democracy?

Everyone knows that the world is increasingly being penetrated by global mass media. U.S.-made television and Hollywood films are everywhere; the internet provides instantaneous communication between Cairo and Chicago; and young people from Beijing to Buenos Aires are wearing blue jeans and drinking Coke. Even cuisine is being McDonaldized. Globalization seems pervasive. So, one might think, the world's cultures must be converging into one homogenized global value system.

But they aren't. Evidence from the World Values Surveys indicates that the value systems of rich societies are moving in a common direction— but they are not converging (at least, not during the past 20 years, the period for which we have data).¹ Religious differences and other historical differences continue to shape human values today, making historically Islamic societies distinct from historically Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist or

¹ The World Values Surveys and European Values Surveys have been carried out in more than 80 societies, with successive waves conducted in 1981-82, 1990-1991, 1995-1997 and 1999-2001; a fifth wave will be carried out in 2005-2006. For detailed information about these surveys, see the WVS web sites at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>, and the EVS web site <http://evs.kub.nl>.

Confucian societies. We not only find no evidence of convergence—we actually find that the gap between the value systems of rich and poor countries has been growing, not shrinking, during the past 20 years (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005).

Does a coherent “Islamic society” exist? Cultures vary across scores of dimensions. Cultures are complex and each society has a unique history. Furthermore, Islamic societies range half way around the world, from Morocco to Indonesia. Their wealth, geography, population density and climate vary enormously. They speak a variety of languages, and interpret Islam in various ways. Obviously, there is no such thing as one uniform “Islamic culture.”

But analysis of survey data from scores of societies reveals that cross-cultural variation is surprisingly orderly (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). Most of the variation across a wide range of important variables-- from religious values to economic priorities, to gender norms to political values— can be captured by just two dimensions. One can plot every society in the world on a two-dimensional cross-cultural map. This map couldn't possibly capture all the countless ways in which societies vary, but it does account for more than 75 percent of the cross-cultural variation in scores of important beliefs and values, ranging from religious beliefs to political goals, to work motivations, child-rearing norms, sexual norms, and tolerance of outgroups. On these two dimensions, the ten Islamic societies for which we have data, show relatively similar values, in comparison with most other societies.

The worldviews of the people of rich societies differ systematically from those of low-income societies across a wide range of political, social, and religious norms and beliefs. In order to focus our comparisons on some crucial dimensions of cross-cultural variation, we performed a factor analysis based on each society's mean level on given variables, replicating

the analysis in Inglehart and Baker (2000).² The two most significant dimensions that emerged reflected: (1) polarization between *traditional* and *secular-rational* orientations toward authority and (2) polarization between *survival* and *self-expression* values.

By *traditional* we refer to orientations that emphasize religion, family and child-bearing, national pride and respect for authority, and reject abortion and divorce. These values are most widespread in agricultural societies. Industrialized societies tend to emphasize *secular-rational* values, which have the opposite characteristics. Table 1 sums up the orientations linked with this dimension.

(Tables 1 and 2 about here)

But modernization, is not linear—when a society has completed industrialization and starts becoming a knowledge society, it moves in a new direction, giving rise to a second major dimension of cross-cultural variation. The the transition from industrial society to post-industrial societies brings a polarization between *survival* and *self-expression* values. Table 2 gives an overview of this cluster of values. A central component of this dimension involves the polarization between materialist and postmaterialist values, reflecting a cultural shift that is emerging among generations who have grown up taking survival for granted. Self-expression values give high priority to environmental protection, tolerance of diversity and rising demands for participation in decision making in economic and political life. These values reflect mass polarization over whether “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women;” or whether “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl,” and whether “Men make better political leaders than women.” This emphasis on gender

² For details of these analyses at both the individual level and the national level, see Inglehart and Baker, 2000.

Table 1. Traditional vs. Secular-rational values

Traditional values emphasize:

- Religion is very important
- One should teach a child to obey
- A strong sense of national pride
- A main goal in life is to make parents proud
- Divorce is never justifiable
- Abortion is never justifiable
- We need stricter limits on selling foreign goods
- We need more respect for authority

Secular-rational values emphasize the opposite

Note: scores of other attitudes are also linked with this dimension; for a more detailed discussion see Inglehart and Baker, 2000.

Table 2. Survival vs. Self-expression values

Survival values emphasize:

- Economic security over self-expression
(Materialist over Postmaterialist values)
- Men make better political leaders than women;
men have more right to a job than women
- Good income and safe job over a sense of accomplishment
- Homosexuality is never justifiable
- Reject foreigners
- Are unhappy, dissatisfied with life
- Non-involvement in politics, environmental protection

Self-expression values emphasize the opposite.

Note: scores of other attitudes are also linked with this dimension; for a more complete list, see Inglehart and Baker, 2000.

equality is part of a broader syndrome of tolerance of outgroups, including foreigners, gays and lesbians. The shift from survival values to self-expression values also includes a shift in child-rearing values, from emphasis on hard work toward emphasis on imagination and tolerance as important values to teach a child. And it goes with a rising sense of subjective well-being that is conducive to an atmosphere of tolerance, trust and political moderation. Finally, societies that rank high on self-expression values also tend to rank high on interpersonal trust. This produces a culture of trust and tolerance, in which people place a relatively high value on individual freedom and self-expression, and have activist political orientations. These are precisely the attributes that the political culture literature defines as crucial to democracy.

The unprecedented wealth that has accumulated in advanced societies during the past generation means that an increasing share of the population has grown up taking survival for granted. Thus, priorities have shifted from an overwhelming emphasis on economic and physical security toward an increasing emphasis on subjective well-being, self-expression and quality of life. Mass values have shifted from Traditional toward Secular-rational values, and from Survival values toward Self-expression values in almost all advanced industrial societies that have experienced economic growth.

(Figure 1 about here)

Figure 1 shows a two-dimensional cultural map on which the value systems of more than 80 societies are depicted. The vertical dimension represents the Traditional/Secular-rational dimension, and the horizontal dimension reflects the Survival/Self-expression values dimension. Both dimensions are strongly linked with economic development. This reflects a finding of fundamental importance: the value systems of rich countries differ systematically from those of poor countries. Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the U.S. and all of the other societies in our sample that the World Bank classifies as “high income” societies, rank relatively high on both dimensions. Without a single exception, all of the high income societies fall in the upper right-hand corner of our global cultural map.

Conversely, every one of the countries that the World Bank classifies as “low income” societies fall into a cluster at the lower left of the map; India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ghana and Peru all fall into this economic zone that cuts across the African, South Asian, ex-Communist, and Orthodox cultural zones. The remaining societies fall into an intermediate cultural-economic zone. One rarely finds such a clearly structured pattern in social science research. As modernization theory implies, economic development seems to propel societies in a predictable direction, regardless of their cultural heritage.

Economic development interacts with a society’s cultural heritage

Nevertheless, distinctive cultural zones persist. Cultural change is path dependent. Different societies follow different trajectories when they experience economic development, because each society’s historical and cultural heritage also shapes its culture. Huntington (1996) emphasized the role of religion in shaping the world's eight major civilizations or

"cultural zones": Western Christianity, Orthodox, Islam, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, African, and Latin American. Our analysis reveals consistent differences between historically Protestant and historically Roman Catholic societies within Western Christianity. These nine cultural zones were shaped by religious traditions that are still powerful today, despite the forces of modernization.

(Figure 2 about here)

As Figure 2 demonstrates, all four of the Confucian-influenced societies (China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) have relatively secular values, constituting a Confucian cultural zone, despite substantial differences in wealth. The Orthodox societies constitute another distinct cultural zone, and the eleven Latin American societies show relatively similar values as Huntington argued. And despite their wide geographic dispersion, the English-speaking countries constitute a relatively compact cultural zone. Similarly, the historically Roman Catholic societies (e.g., Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium and Austria) display relatively traditional values when compared with Confucian or ex-Communist societies with similar levels of development. And virtually all of the historically Protestant societies (e.g., West Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland) rank higher on both the traditional-secular rational dimension and the survival/self-expression dimension than do the historically Roman Catholic societies.

Religious traditions have had an enduring impact on the contemporary value systems of the 80 societies. But basic values do not reflect religion alone. A society's culture reflects its entire historical heritage. A central historical event of the twentieth century was the rise and fall of a Communist empire that once ruled one-third of the world's population. Communism left a clear imprint on the value systems of those who lived under it. All of the

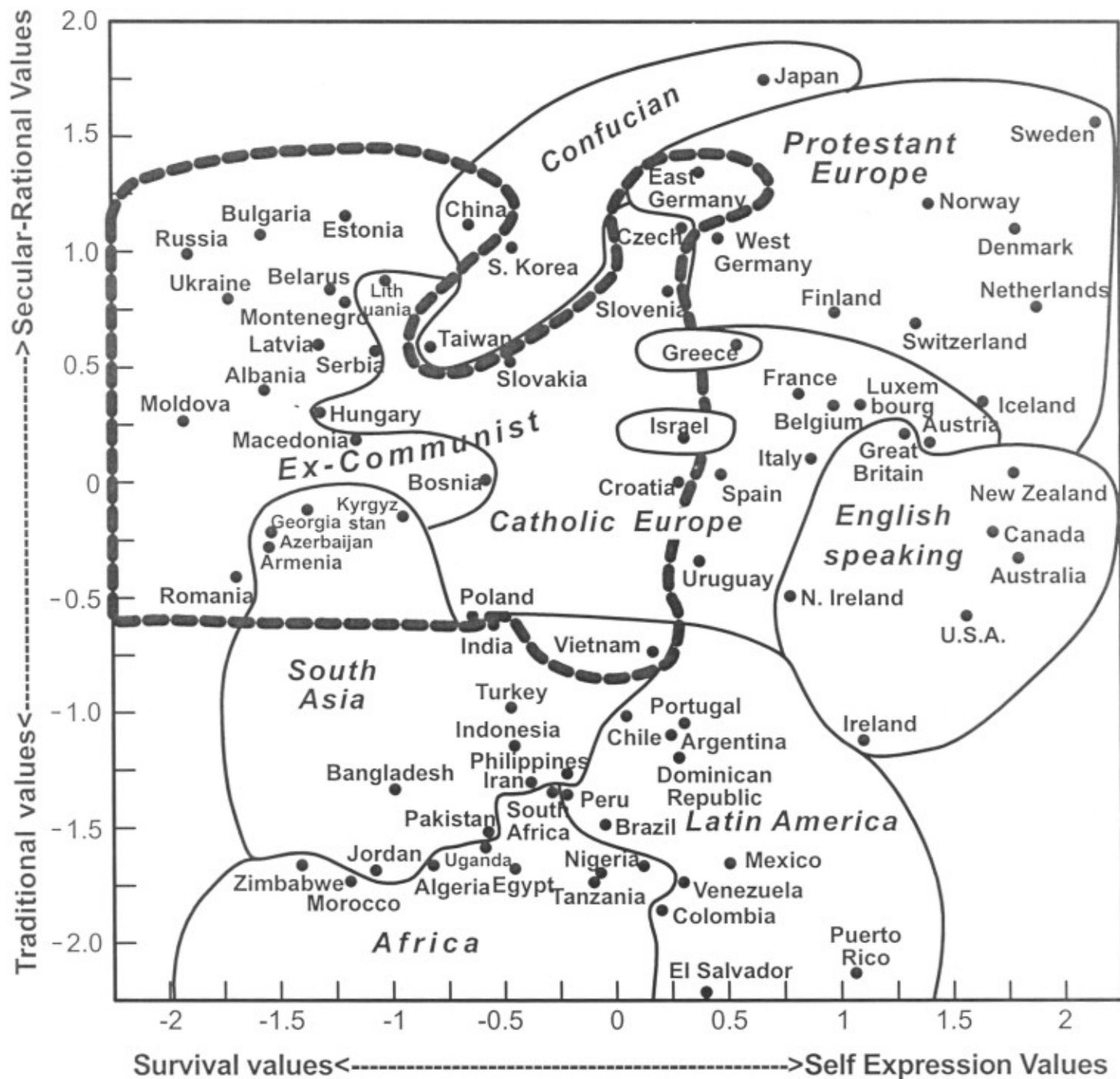


Figure 2. Cultural Zones of 82 societies.

CultMap03

ex-communist societies all fall into the upper left-hand quadrant of our cultural map, ranking high on the Traditional/secular-rational dimension (toward the secular pole), but low on the Survival/self expression dimension (falling near the survival-oriented pole). A broken line encircles all of the societies that have experienced communist rule, and they form a reasonably coherent group. Not surprisingly, communist rule seems conducive to the emergence of a relatively secular-rational culture. And, although they are by no means the poorest countries in the world, these societies have recently experienced the collapse of communism, shattering their economic, political and social systems—and bringing a pervasive sense of insecurity. People who have experienced stable poverty throughout their lives tend to emphasize survival values; but the collapse of one's social system produces a sense of unpredictability and insecurity that leads people to emphasize Survival values even more heavily than those who are accustomed to an even lower standard of living.

There is considerable diversity within the former communist zone. The basic values prevailing in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and East Germany are close to those of the West European societies on both major dimensions. These societies have experienced relatively successful transitions from communism to market economies—and they were historically shaped by the Protestant or Roman Catholic religious traditions, rather than by the Orthodox tradition.

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

decades of communist rule having more impact than four decades). But an Orthodox tradition seems to reduce emphasis on Self-expression values, by comparison with societies historically shaped by a Roman Catholic or Protestant cultural tradition.

The Islamic Societies in Global Perspective

As of 2002, the World Values Survey included fourteen predominantly Islamic societies, and their locations on the global cultural map are depicted on Figure 3. Most of them are “low income” societies, as classified by the World Bank, and accordingly they tend to emphasize traditional and survival values—but there are two distinct clusters, reflecting distinctive historical experiences. Ten societies—Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia—fall into a “mainstream Islamic” cluster, in the lower left-hand quadrant of the map. The publics of these societies tend to emphasize traditional values and survival values, but the publics of the three wealthiest of these countries— Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran—place more emphasis on Secular-rational and Self-expression values than most other members of this group. Although Saudi Arabia is the original center of Islam and is governed by an absolute monarchy, its public does *not* have the most traditional value system of any Islamic country—quite the contrary, the Saudi public emphasizes Self-expression values more strongly than any other Islamic public. Since these values are closely linked with mass support for democracy, it would be a serious mistake to assume that the Saudi public is uninterested in democratization. The mainstream Islamic societies are concentrated in the lower left-hand quadrant of the global cultural map, but they are not unique in emphasizing preindustrial values— the public of Zimbabwe falls closer to the lower left hand corner than the public of any other society, and the publics of Puerto Rico, Colombia and El Salvador emphasize

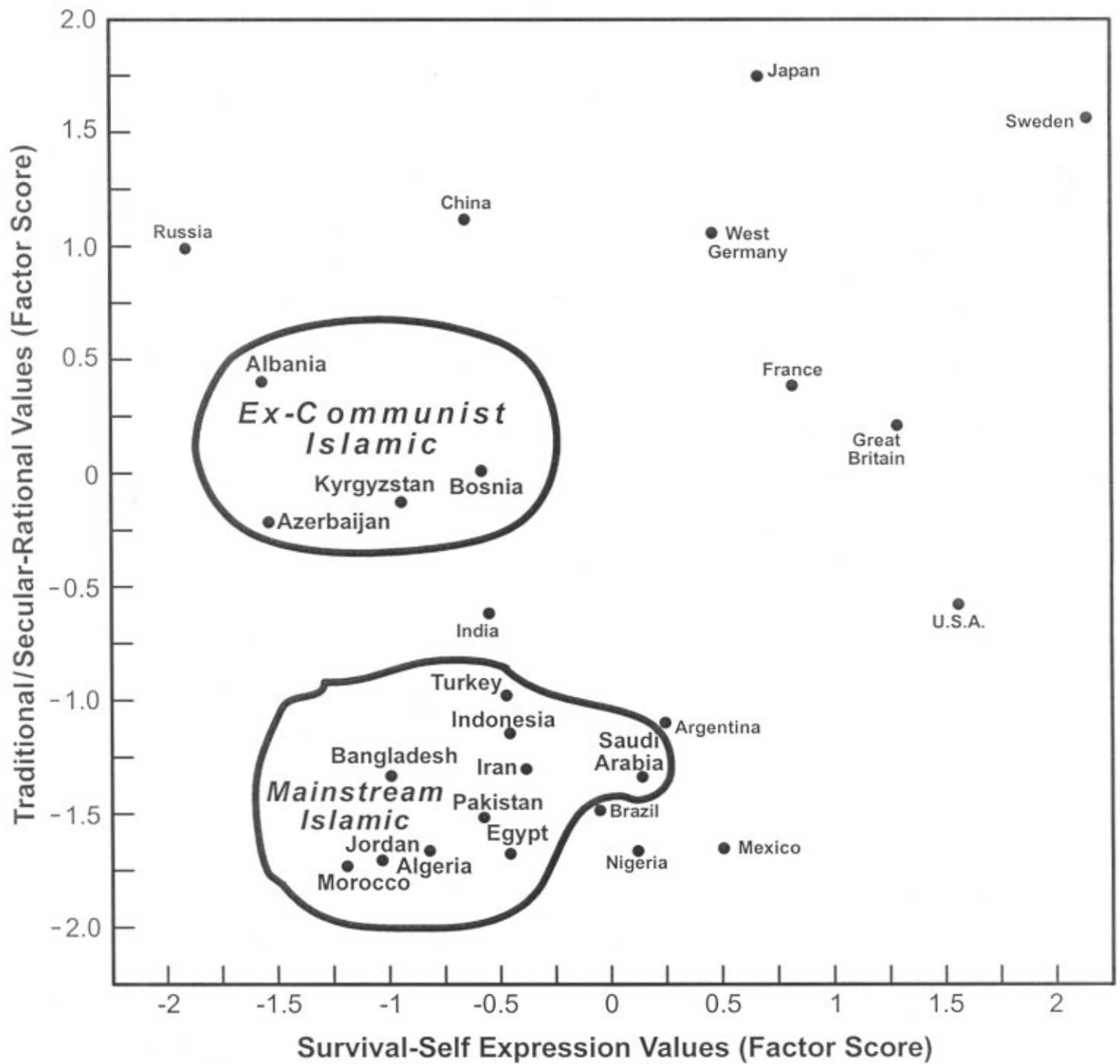


Figure 3. The values of Islamic societies
in global perspective.

traditional values more strongly than any Islamic public. Although the mainstream Islamic societies do have distinctive values, forming a reasonably compact cluster, this largely reflects their level of economic development.

(Figure 3 about here)

Even more striking evidence of the fact that value systems are conditioned by a society's historical experience emerges when we examine the values of four predominantly Islamic societies that have experienced communist rule—Albania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Bosnia. These societies form a separate cluster, distinguished from the mainstream Islamic cluster by the fact that the publics of the ex-communist Islamic societies place are much more likely to emphasize Secular-rational values than the publics of any of the mainstream Islamic societies. The communist regimes made massive efforts to eradicate traditional religious values and replace them with the communist ideology, and the four to seven decades under communist rule experienced by these societies, has left a manifest impact. Thus, we find not one but two clusters of Islamic societies, differentiated by whether or not they have experienced communist rule.

(Table 3 about here)

We have compared the belief systems of the people of Islamic societies with those of other regions on two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation. This provides a useful overview, but it is operating at a high level of generalization. Now let us examine how these societies differ on some of the specific variables linked with each of the two main dimensions.

Table 3 shows cross-cultural variation in five of the most important variables that are closely linked with the Traditional/Secular-rational dimension. As we have noted, dozens of other variables are also strongly correlated with this dimension, but these five illustrate the

**Table 3. Differences across major cultural zones in the components of
Traditional/Secular-rational values**

Region	% saying "God is Very Important in my life"	% very proud of Nationality	% favoring More respect for authority	% Low on Autonomy Index	% saying Abortion is Never justifiable	Mean score on Traditional/ Secular- rational values
Protestant Europe (11)	12	38	43	37	18	1.018
Confucian (4)	9	23	28	36	31	.937
Orthodox (13)	30	42	57	55	29	.571
Catholic Europe (14)	27	47	59	55	31	.210
English-speaking (7)	33	59	68	59	32	-.259
South Asia (3)	64	79	64	66	55	-.816
Islamic (14)	78	73	68	74	59	-1.031
Latin America (11)	78	79	79	75	69	-1.322
Africa (6)	74	75	65	78	72	-1.499
Overall mean:	44	56	61	60	43	-.164

general pattern. This table shows the percentage emphasizing the position linked with the *Traditional* pole, so high scores indicate Traditional values. On all five variables, the publics of the ex-communist countries are much less likely to have traditional values than the publics of societies that did not experience communist rule: for example, the publics of the Soviet successor states are less than half as likely to say that “God is very important in my life” than are the publics of non-communist societies; they also rank much lower on national pride, are less likely to say the “more respect for authority would be a good thing,” are more likely to emphasize independence and determination as important things for a child to learn (autonomy vs. obedience), and are less likely to believe that abortion is never justifiable. The largest gap is between communist and non-communist societies, but the publics of the Soviet successor states tend to be even more secular than the publics of the other ex-communist societies.

When we examine the results from each of the nine cultural regions, we find a more complex picture. Overall, Protestant Europe has the most secular public, but the ranking varies on given variables. The Confucian publics actually show more secular orientations than the Protestants on most of these variables, but rank slightly behind them on the index as a whole. The publics of the Orthodox countries consistently rank about third, ranging from as high as 2nd to as low as 4th on these variables. The publics of Catholic Europe are slightly *less* likely to say that “God is very important in my life” than are the publics of the Orthodox societies, but they are slightly more traditional on the other variables. Overall, the rankings of given cultural zones are remarkably consistent across all five variables: if you know a region’s ranking on one of them, you can predict where it will fall on the other four with considerable accuracy. On every variable, the Protestant and Confucian cultural zones *always* fall among the three lowest-ranking regions, and at the opposite extreme, sub-Saharan Africa

and Latin America *always* fall among the three highest-ranking regions. And although the mainstream Islamic publics tend to emphasize very traditional values, the 14 Islamic societies as a whole have somewhat less traditional values than the Latin American publics and the sub-Saharan African publics.

(Table 4 about here)

Table 4 provides details concerning six variables closely linked with the Survival/Self-expression dimension. High scores indicate that a given region emphasizes Self-expression values relatively strongly. Thus, the non-communist countries as a whole have a score on the Materialist/Postmaterialist values index of -11, indicating that the Materialists outweigh the Postmaterialists by 11 percentage points. The preponderance of Materialists is much stronger in societies that have experienced communist rule: Materialists outnumber Postmaterialists by 43 percentage points in the Soviet successor states and by 31 percentage points in the other ex-communist societies. Similarly, happiness levels and tolerance of homosexuality are much lower in the Soviet successor states than in the societies that have not experienced communist rule, with the other ex-communist societies falling in between these two extremes: in the never-communist zone, 33 percent of the public describes themselves as “very happy,” as compared with only 7 percent in the ex-Soviet societies, and 16 percent in the other former communist societies.

Attitudes toward homosexuality are negative throughout the world. Respondents were asked to rate the acceptability of homosexuality on a ten-point scale ranging from 1 = never justifiable, to 10=always justifiable. Over half of the respondents in the world as a whole chose point 1, indicating total rejection; the remaining respondents were distributed over points 2 through 10. Thus, this table differentiates between those who indicated “some”

Table 4. Differences across major cultural zones in the components of Survival/Self-expression values

	Postmat minus Materialist	% Very Happy	Some tolerance, homosexuality	Have signed petition	Trust People	Disagree, men make better politicians	Mean score, Survival/Self- expression values
English speaking (7)	10	40	68	66	38	79	1.553
Protestant Europe (11)	-9	29	73	53	46	84	1.007
Latin America (11)	-5	40	46	23	16	64	.428
Catholic Europe (14)	-14	21	57	42	24	57	.323
South Asia (3)	-29	38	35	15	29	43	-.113
Confucian (4)	-36	21	40	35	42	53	-.268
Africa (6)	-25	39	19	15	14	42	-.288
Islamic (14)	-32	23	10	16	28	35	-.814
Orthodox (13)	-39	10	31	18	23	43	-1.161
Overall mean:	-19	26	43	33	28	51	.050

tolerance of homosexuality (choosing points 2 through 10) versus those who indicated that it was completely unacceptable. In the non-Islamic world, 51 percent express “some” tolerance—but in the Islamic societies, only 10 percent do so. The percentage who report having signed a petition in the last five years also varies greatly, with 36 percent of the public in non-Islamic societies reporting that they have done so, as compared with only 16 percent in the Islamic societies.

These large differences in tolerance of outgroups such as gays and women have political implications—for tolerance of outgroups among the public, is closely correlated with stable democracy at the institutional level. Though overwhelming majorities of the publics of Islamic societies endorse democracy as a general goal, they show much lower levels on such underlying qualities as tolerance and the Postmaterialist valuation of freedom of speech and political participation as goods in themselves. These attributes seem to play a crucial role in the emergence and survival of liberal democracy.

The right-hand column of Table 4 shows how each of these orientations breaks down across the eight cultural zones. Again, the rankings on one variable are generally consistent with the rankings on the other variables. Overall, the Orthodox cultural zone ranks lowest of any region in emphasis on Self-expression values—with the Islamic cultural zone ranking second. Given the remarkably strong linkage that has been found between Self-expression values and stable democracy (Inglehart, 2003), this finding may have significant implications.

Gender Inequality and Democracy

Fish (2002) notes that only a few of the 47 predominantly Islamic societies (and none of the Arabic-speaking Islamic societies) qualify as democracies, even by the most minimal standards. He argues that their marked lack of gender equality is a crucial reason for this

finding. As evidence of greater gender inequality in Islamic societies than in other societies, Fish points to the large gap between the educational levels of men and women in Islamic societies; and the substantial difference in sex ratios between Muslim and non-Muslim countries: “A deficit of females relative to males often stems from various forms of lifelong discrimination against girls and women,” including sex-selective infanticide. Fish suggests that the unquestioned dominance of the male in relations between men and women, creates a culture of domination, intolerance and dependency in social and political life.

Similarly, analyzing cumulative results from the Values Surveys, Inglehart and Norris (2003), find that Muslims and their Western counterparts are worlds apart when it comes to their attitudes about sexual liberalization and gender equality. For example, 53 percent of those surveyed in Western nations express some degree of tolerance for homosexuality, compared to just 10 percent of those surveyed in Islamic societies. Similarly, Western publics are much likelier to support gender equality, divorce, and abortion, than are Islamic publics. Inglehart and Norris (2003) find that Finland, Sweden, West Germany, Canada and Norway are at the top of the international gender equality scale, while Morocco, Egypt, Bangladesh and Jordan rank at the bottom, concluding that “An Islamic religious heritage is one of the most powerful barriers to the rising tide of gender equality.”

As we have seen (see Table 2), support for gender equality and tolerance of homosexuality are key indicators of the Survival/Self-expression values dimension—and a society’s position on this dimension is strongly correlated with its level of democracy, as indicated by its scores on the Freedom House ratings of political rights and civil liberties. This relationship is remarkably powerful ($r = .83$) and it is clearly not a methodological artifact or an intra-cranial correlation, since the two variables are measured at different levels

and come from different sources (Inglehart, 2003). Virtually all of the societies that rank high on survival/self-expression values are stable democracies. Virtually all of the societies that rank low on this dimension have authoritarian governments. The correlation between survival/self-expression values and democracy is significant at a very high level, and probably reflects a causal linkage. But what is causing what?

One interpretation would be that democratic institutions give rise to the self-expression values that are so closely linked with them. In other words, democracy makes people healthy, happy, non-sexist, tolerant and trusting, and instills Postmaterialist values. This interpretation is appealing and if it were true, it would provide a powerful argument for democracy, implying that we have a quick fix for most of the world's problems: adopt democratic institutions and live happily ever after.

Unfortunately, the experience of the Soviet Union's successor states doesn't support this interpretation. Since their dramatic move toward democracy in 1991, they have not become healthier, happier, more trusting, more tolerant or more Postmaterialist: most of them have moved in exactly the opposite direction. The fact that their people are living in economic and physical insecurity, seems to have more impact than the fact that their leaders are chosen by free elections.

Democratic institutions do not automatically produce a culture that emphasizes self-expression values. Instead, it seems that economic development gradually leads to social and cultural changes that make democratic institutions more likely to survive and flourish. That would help explain why mass democracy did not emerge until a relatively recent point in history, and why, even now, it is most likely to be found in economically more developed countries—in particular, those that emphasize self-expression values over survival values.

This is cause for concern, but not a reason for resignation. During the past few decades, most industrialized societies have moved toward increasing emphasis on Self-expression values, in an intergenerational cultural shift linked with economic development. And despite the relative weakness of democratic institutions in Islamic societies, there is evidence that the publics of these societies see democracy as a highly desirable goal.

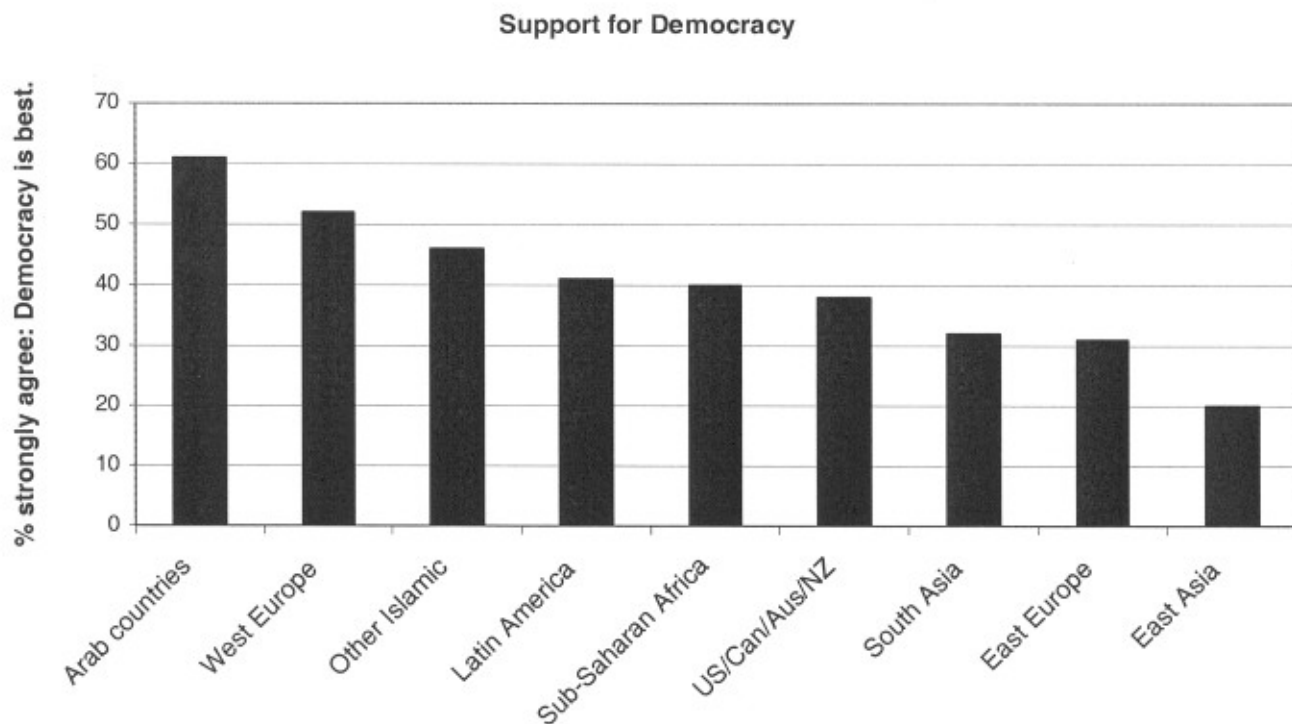
Do Islamic publics reject democracy?

According to the latest Freedom House rankings, almost two thirds of the 192 countries around the world are now electoral democracies. But among the 47 countries with an Islamic majority, only one fourth are electoral democracies—and none of the core Arabic speaking societies falls into this category. Why hasn't democracy taken hold in these countries?

One response has been that the Islamic world lacks the core political values that gave birth to representative democracy in Western civilization. But those who have advanced this claim have presented little or no empirical evidence about whether Western and Muslim societies exhibit deeply divergent values. Indeed, very little empirical evidence has been available about the beliefs of Islamic publics— until now. The two most recent waves of the World Values Survey (WVS), conducted in 1995–96 and 2000–2002, provide an extensive body of relevant evidence. These surveys included five Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Morocco) plus nine other predominantly Islamic countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkey). Because of the severe democratic deficit in Arab societies, these countries will be analyzed separately from the other Islamic societies in the remainder of this article.

(Figure 4 about here)

Figure 4. Support for democracy in nine cultural zones.



Regional groupings. **Arab countries:** Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco; **Other Islamic:** Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey; **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe; **Western Europe:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom; **Eastern Europe:** Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia; **English-speaking:** Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.S.A.; **Latin America:** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela; **East Asia:** China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan; **South Asia:** India, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam.

Despite claims of a clash of civilizations between the West and the rest, the evidence from the Values Surveys reveals that at this point in history, democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the world. And the publics of Arab countries are particularly likely to endorse democracy, as Figure 4 demonstrates. In response to the item “Democracy may have many problems but it’s better than any other form of government,” 61 percent of the publics of the five Arab countries agreed strongly—a figure higher than the 52 percent registered in 16 West European countries or the 38 percent strong agreement in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. If we combine the percentage who “agree” with those who “agree strongly,” overwhelming majorities consider democracy the best form of government in all nine regions and in virtually every society. Table 5 shows the percentage that view democracy as the best form of government, in every country for which data are available. The figures range from a low of 69 percent in Iran, to highs of 98 percent in both Bangladesh and Egypt. Clearly, the publics of Arab countries (and Islamic societies in general) do not reject democracy: overwhelming majorities want it.

(Table 5 about here)

This does not mean that it will come automatically. As younger generations in the West have gradually become more supportive of gender equality, Islamic nations have remained the most traditional societies in the world. Commenting on the disenfranchisement of women throughout the Middle East, the United Nations Development Report observed in 2002 that “no society can achieve the desired state of well-being and human development, or compete in a globalizing world, if half its people remain marginalized and disempowered.” The fact that gender equality tends to go hand in hand with democratization makes it disturbing that support for gender equality in Arab countries is lower than in any other region

Table 5. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY
(Percent agreeing that “Democracy may have problems
but it’s better than any other form of government”)

Denmark	99	Latvia	89
Bangladesh	98	Peru	89
Egypt	98	Serbia	89
W Germany	97	Turkey	88
Iceland	97	Tanzania	88
Austria	97	Algeria	88
Greece	97	U.S.	87
Netherlands	96	Canada	87
Uruguay	96	Australia	87
Azerbaijan	96	Belarus	87
Croatia	96	El Salvador	87
Morocco	96	Zimbabwe	87
Norway	95	New Zealand	87
Albania	95	S Africa	86
Luxemburg	95	Georgia	86
Italy	94	Bulgaria	84
N Ireland	94	Taiwan	84
Sweden	94	Slovakia	84
Malta	94	Hungary	83
France	93	Brazi	83
Ireland	93	Ukraine	83
Czech Rep	93	Chile	82
E Germany	93	Pakistan	82
Venezuela	93	Macedonia	81
Dominican Rep	93	Mexico	80
Uganda	93	Philippines	79
Belgium	92	Kyrgyzstan	78
Spain	92	Britain	78
Japan	92	Romania	78
India	92	Moldova	78
Montenegro	92	Saudi Arabia	74
Bosnia	92	Armenia	73
Argentina	91	Vietnam	72
Finland	91	Indonesia	71
S Korea	91	Iran	69
Switzerland	91	Russia	62
Puerto Rico	91	Nigeria	45
Lithuania	91		
Slovenia	90		
China	90		
Estonia	90		
Jordan	90		
Poland	89		

Source: Data from most recent Values Survey (the 1999-2002 wave for most countries, from the 1995-96 wave for Uruguay, Azerbaijan, Norway, Dominican Rep., Switzerland, Australia, Georgia, Taiwan, Brazil and Armenia).

of the world. As Figure 5 demonstrates, in the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand, fully 72 percent of the public disagrees with the statement that “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.” At the other end of the scale, only 14 percent of the publics of the Arab countries disagree with this statement. Table 6 shows the levels of support for gender equality in jobs, within each society. Islamic publics, including the Arab publics, overwhelmingly view democracy as the best form of government. This is an important and encouraging finding. But they still lag on some of the important underlying attitudes of tolerance and equality that seem to help sustain democracy.

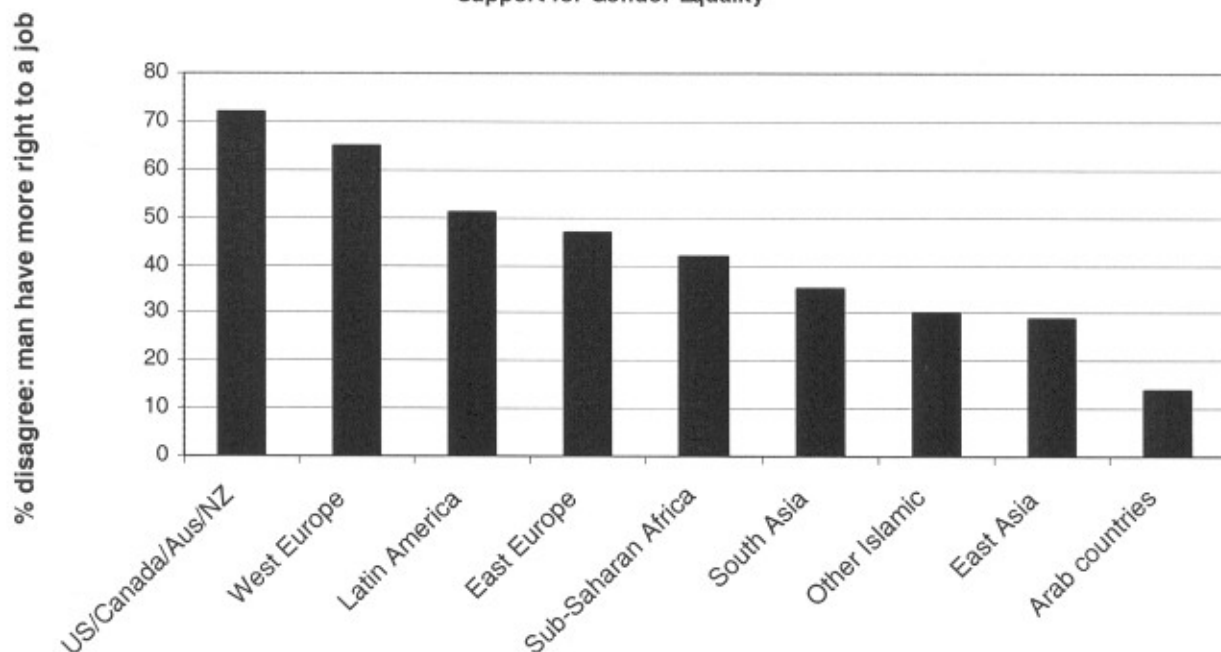
(Figure 5 about here)

Conclusion.

Islamic societies have relatively similar basic values in comparison with societies with other cultural traditions—but it is important to distinguish between mainstream Islamic societies and those that have experienced communist rule. The mainstream Islamic group forms a compact cluster on the global cultural map despite having a wide geographical dispersion, from Morocco to Indonesia. The ex-communist Islamic societies have much more secular-rational values than the mainstream Islamic societies, which emphasize traditional *religious values strongly*.

Strong majorities of the publics of all 14 Islamic societies view democracy as the best form of government but they rank relatively low on Self-expression values, which are strongly linked with stable democracy. But they are not unique in this respect: societies with an Orthodox tradition, and the Soviet successor societies, rank even lower than the Islamic societies on this dimension. Although there is some tendency for Islamic societies to be characterized by low levels of tolerance and support for gender equality, even controlling for

Figure 5. Support for Gender Equality in nine cultural zones.



Regional groupings. **Arab countries:** Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco; **Other Islamic:** Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey; **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe; **Western Europe:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom; **Eastern Europe:** Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia; **English-speaking:** Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.S.A.; **Latin America:** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela; **East Asia:** China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan; **South Asia:** India, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam.

Table 6. SUPPORT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

% **disagreeing** that “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women”

Iceland	94	S Africa	53
Sweden	93	Austria	53
Denmark	89	Russia	53
Netherlands	83	Venezuela	53
U.S.	82	Chile	51
Norway	80	Bulgaria	48
Canada	77	Uganda	48
Ireland	76	Bosnia	48
Estonia	75	Romania	47
N Ireland	74	Singapore	46
Puerto Rico	73	Poland	45
Greece	73	Vietnam	45
Croatia	73	China	43
Finland	73	Malta	43
Belgium	70	Moldova	40
Latvia	69	Indonesia	40
Colombia	69	Kyrgyzstan	39
France	68	Macedonia	35
Spain	68	Albania	32
Hungary	68	India	31
Slovenia	68	Turkey	31
Britain	67	Armenia	31
Australia	67	Nigeria	30
Peru	67	Azerbaijan	28
Dominican Rep	67	S Korea	27
Luxemburg	66	Georgia	26
Czech Rep	65	Iran	23
Lithuania	65	Japan	21
Belarus	64	Algeria	20
New Zealand	64	Ghana	19
Argentina	61	Pakistan	18
Portugal	61	Bangladesh	17
Ukraine	61	Philippines	16
Mexico	59	Morocco	12
E. Germany	59	Jordan	12
Italy	57	Egypt	10
Serbia	57	Saudi Arabia	9
Montenegro	57	Taiwan	7
Tanzania	56	El Salvador	6
Switzerland	55	Brazil	2
Zimbabwe	54	Uruguay	2
Slovakia	54		
W Germany	53		

Source: World Values Survey (latest available survey for given country).

per capita GNP, these characteristics can largely be attributed to their relatively low levels of economic development. The more prosperous Islamic societies rank as high on Self-expression values as do many of the new democracies in East Asia and Eastern Europe. There is no reason to doubt that the Islamic publics' aspirations for democracy can be realized in the future, particularly if they attain reasonable levels of economic security.

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