

Cultural Change, Democracy and the Democratic Peace Thesis

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Modernization brings two sets of changes in the role of mass publics

1. Social mobilization and cognitive mobilization:

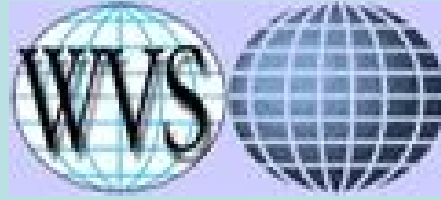
these bring growing mass participation:

2. Changing values:

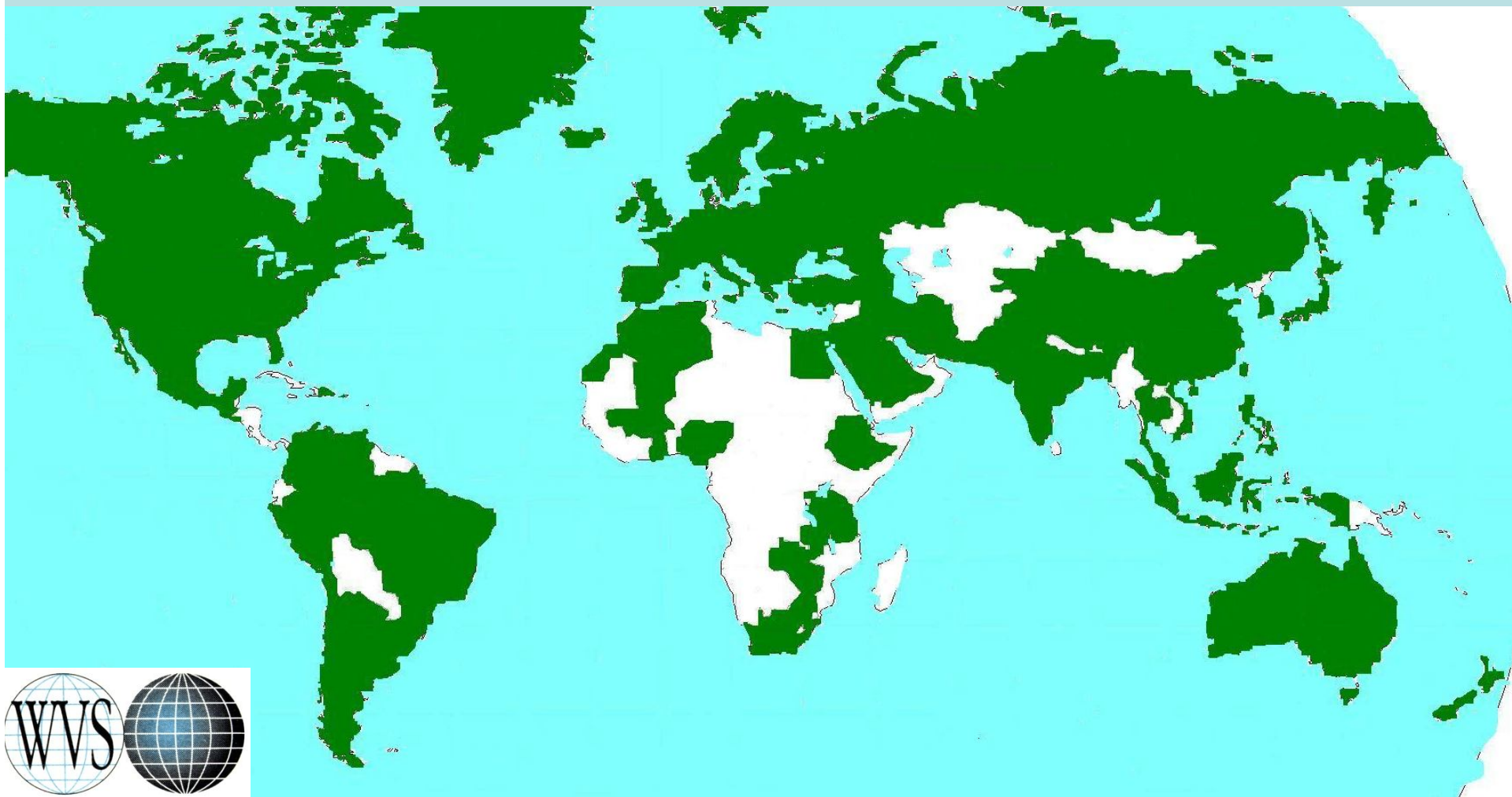
this leads to greater emphasis on autonomous choice in life, and democratic political institutions in politics.

economic development is bringing systematic value changes

- These motivational changes have important implications
- A common trend toward:
 - gender equality
 - greater tolerance of gays, foreigners, outgroups
 - diminishing xenophobia
 - **democracy**



These findings are based on
empirical evidence from the first
global survey of mass values and
worldviews—
the World Values Survey



**Countries surveyed at least once in the World Values Surveys
99 countries, containing almost 90 % of the world's population (2007)**

Development and cultural change move in two major phases

Industrialization brings a shift from **Traditional** values to **Secular-rational** values.

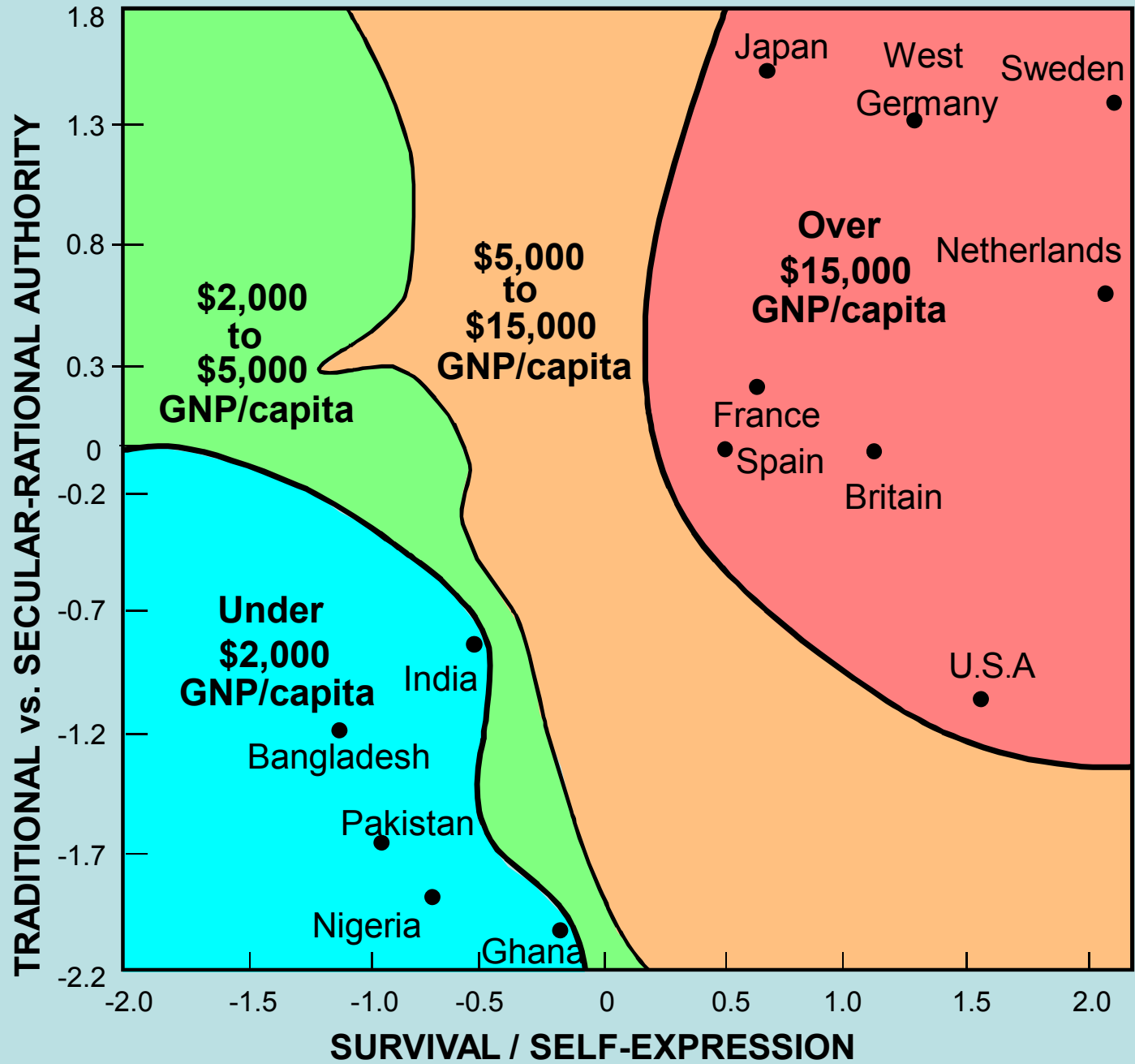
Postindustrial society brings a shift from **Survival values** to **Self-expression** values

Human values turn out to be surprisingly coherent. Scores of important values are tapped by these two dimensions of cross-cultural variation.

Consequently, the world's societies can be plotted on a two-dimensional cross-cultural map.

These two dimensions reflect the fact that

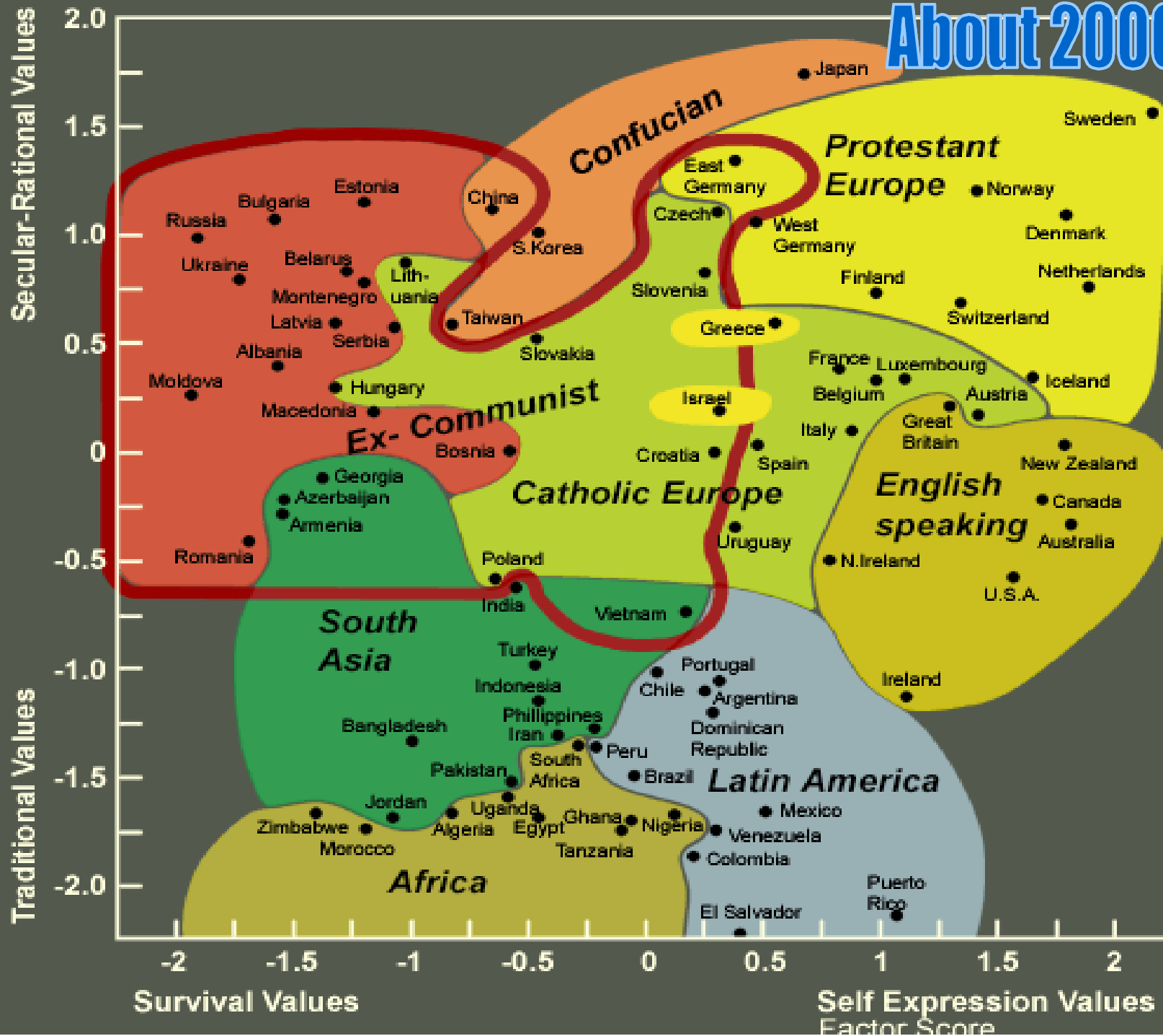
**economic development and
cultural values are intimately linked**



Despite the cultural changes linked with modernization, a society's traditional cultural heritage continues to shape its value system

Cultural change is path-dependent

About 2000



These two dimensions of cross-cultural variation are very robust

- They emerge when measured in many different ways, using different indicators, different sets of countries and they emerge in the 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2006 waves of the World Values Survey

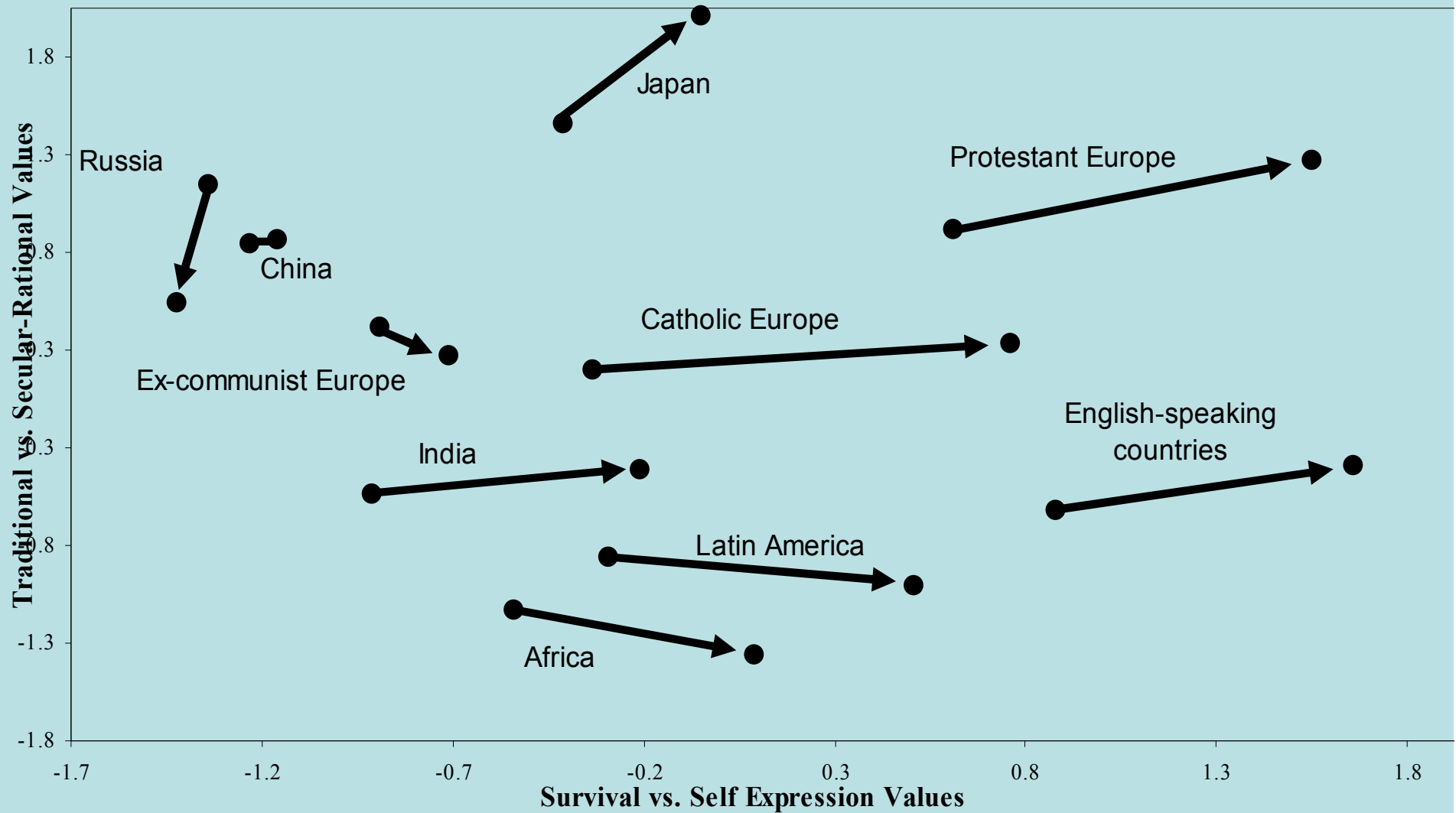
About 2006

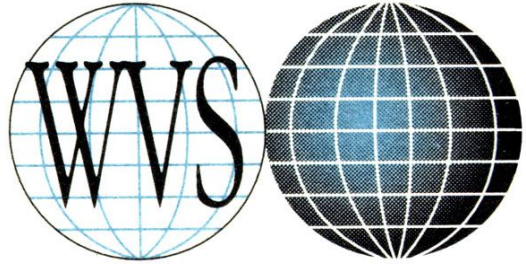


Cultural change

- From 1981 to 2007, all high-income societies moved (in varying degrees) from the lower-left toward the upper-right on the cross-cultural map— placing increasing emphasis on Secular-rational values and Self-expression values
- In much of the former Soviet Union, the economic, political and ideological implosion that followed the collapse of communism, led to a resurgence of traditional values and survival values.

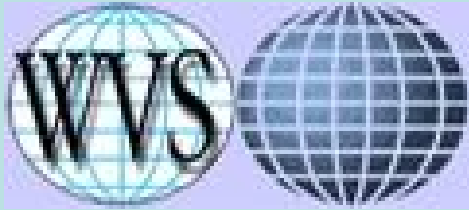
Changes over time, 1981-2007





These value changes have important societal-level consequences

For example, a public's score on the Traditional/Secular-rational dimension is strongly linked with their society's human fertility rate.



developed societies are moving toward:

- increasing gender equality
- greater tolerance of gays, foreigners, outgroups
- More emphasis on individual autonomy and freedom of choice
- increasing emphasis on self-expression and political liberalization → democratic institutions

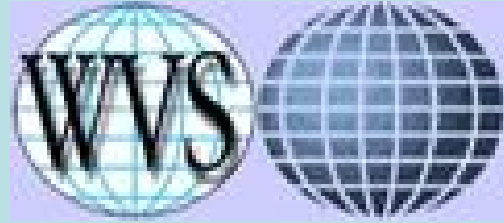
Culture matters– a lot

- The linkages between individual-level values and societal-level phenomenon such as gender equality in economic and political life are remarkably strong

Changes in mass beliefs have massive social consequences

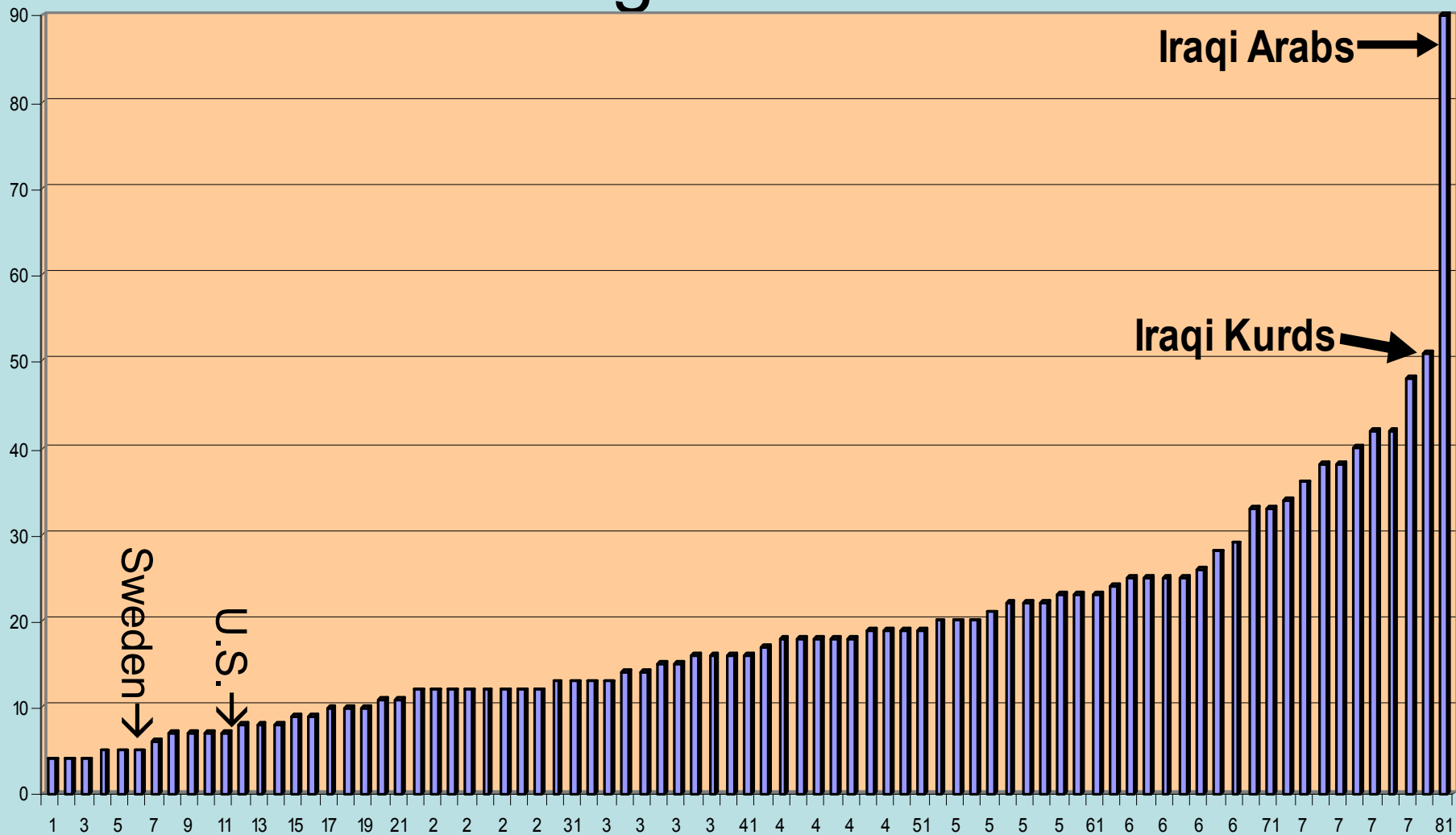
Tolerance of foreigners is strongly related to a society's level of "existential security"

The rise of the knowledge society brings rising tolerance of diversity – conversely, xenophobia has become increasingly widespread in insecure societies such as much of the former USSR and Iraq



- Iraq experienced a reign of terror under Saddam, followed by military occupation and daily suicide bombings
- xenophobia is currently far higher in Iraq than in any other society for which data are available

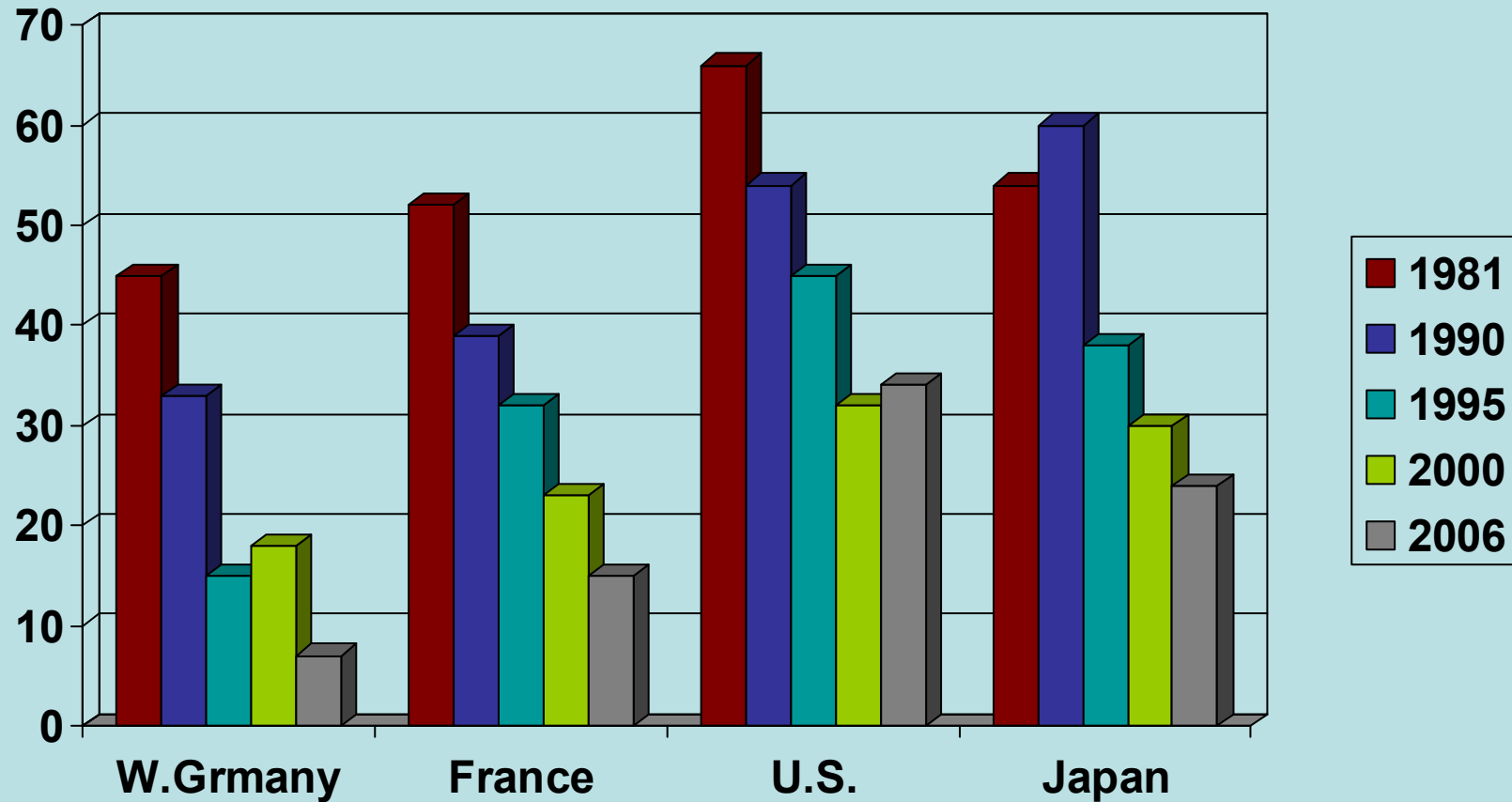
% who would not want foreigners as neighbors among 80 societies



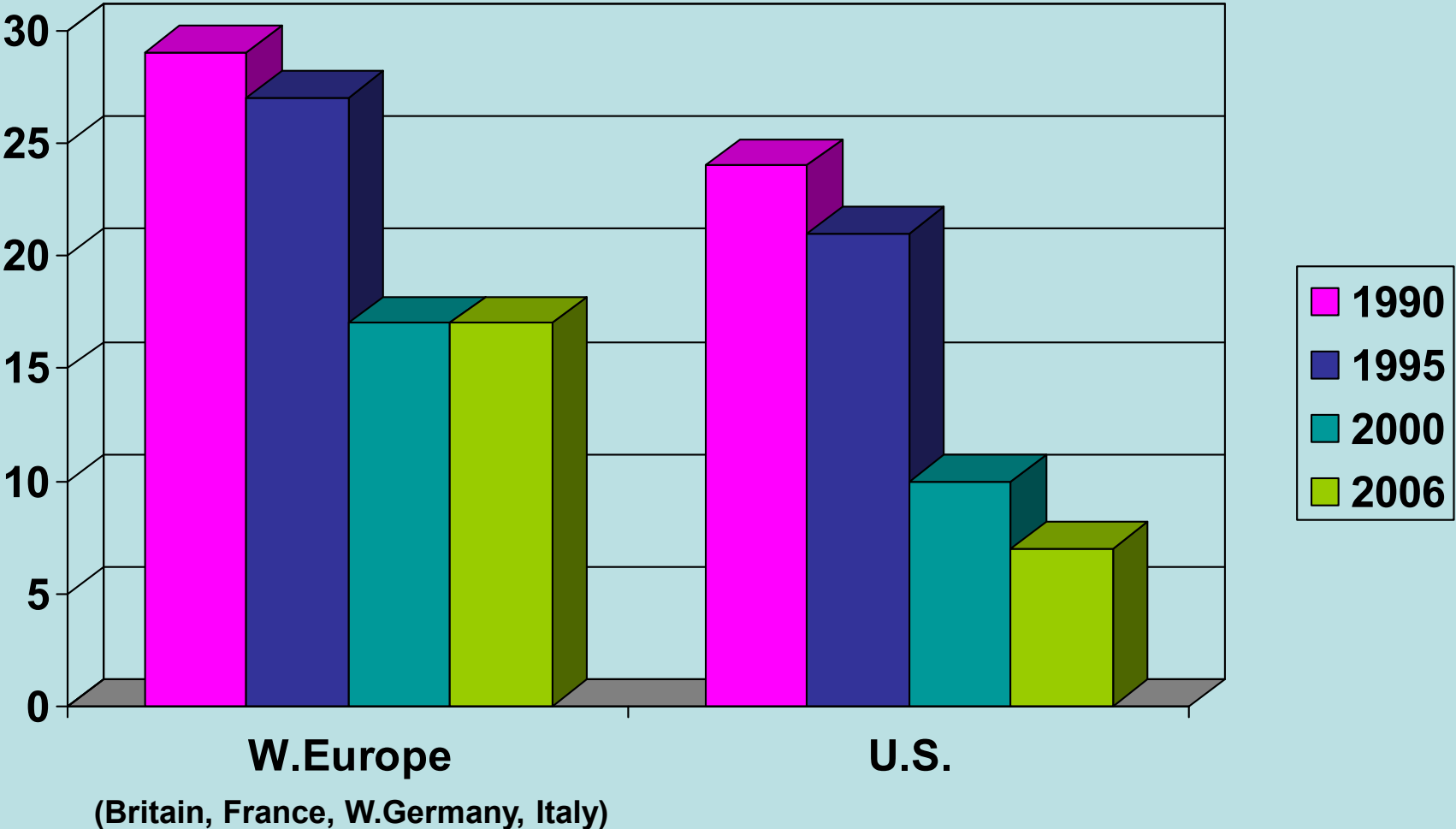
Conversely, high levels of existential security →

- Rising support for gender equality
- Increasing tolerance of gays and lesbians

Percentage saying “Homosexuality is NEVER acceptable”



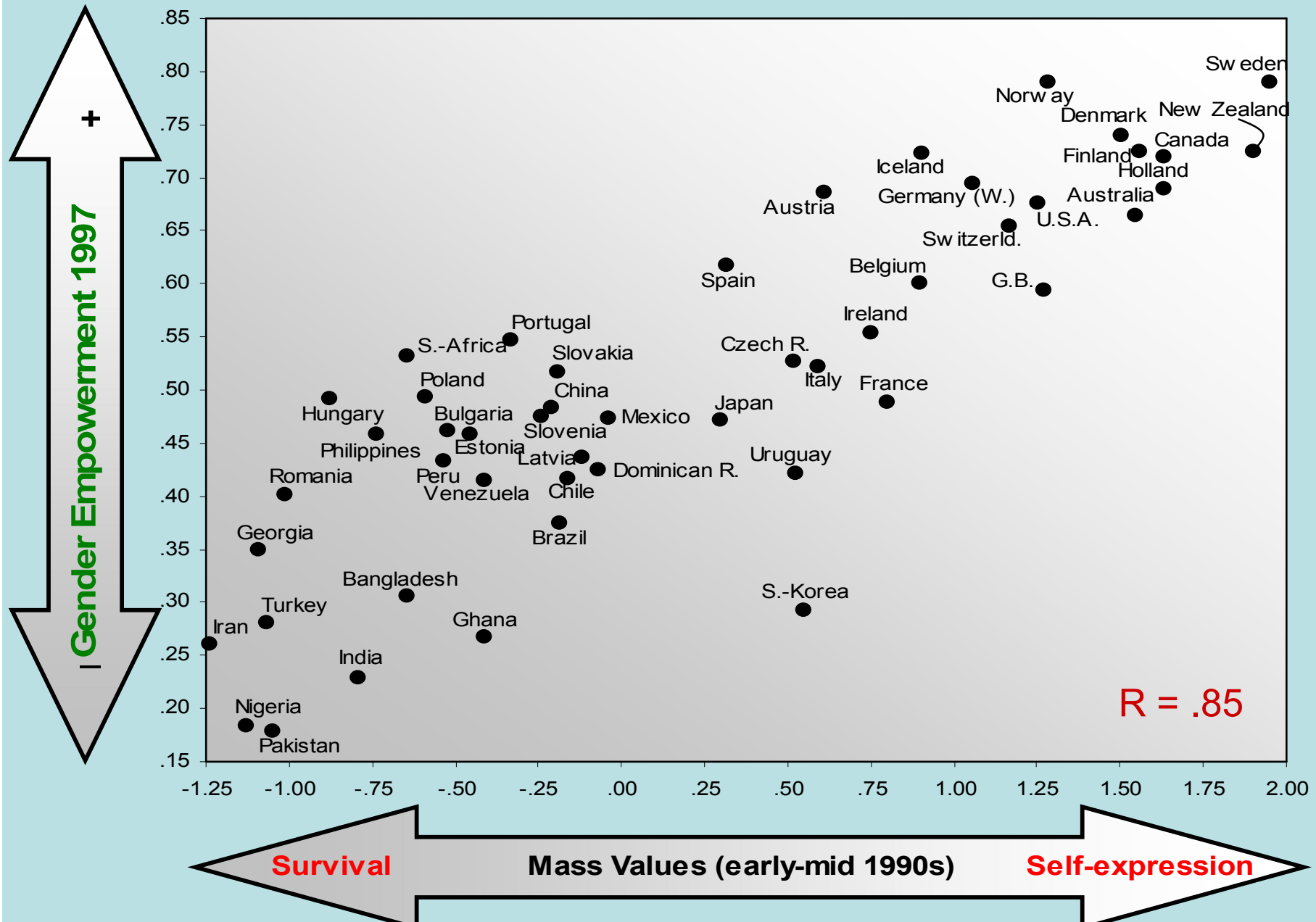
% saying “When jobs are scarce,
men have more right to a job than women”

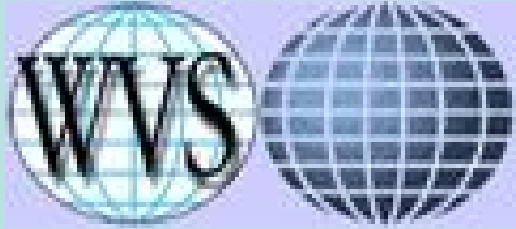


rising emphasis on Self-expression
values is strongly linked with
gender equality

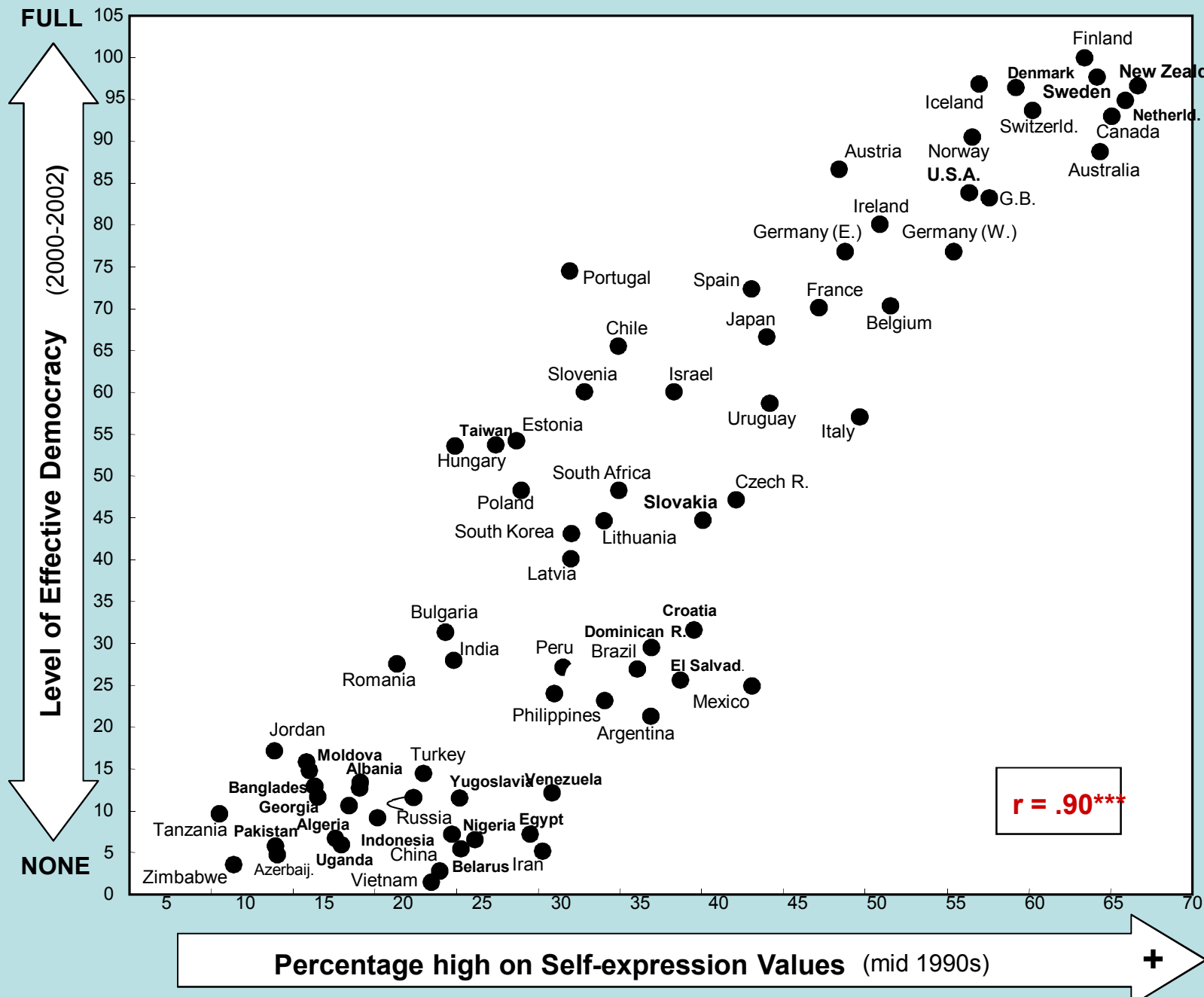
(as indicated by the
UN Gender Empowerment Measure)

Self-expression values and gender equality





A society's relative emphasis on survival vs. self-expression values is also strongly linked with how **democratic** it is

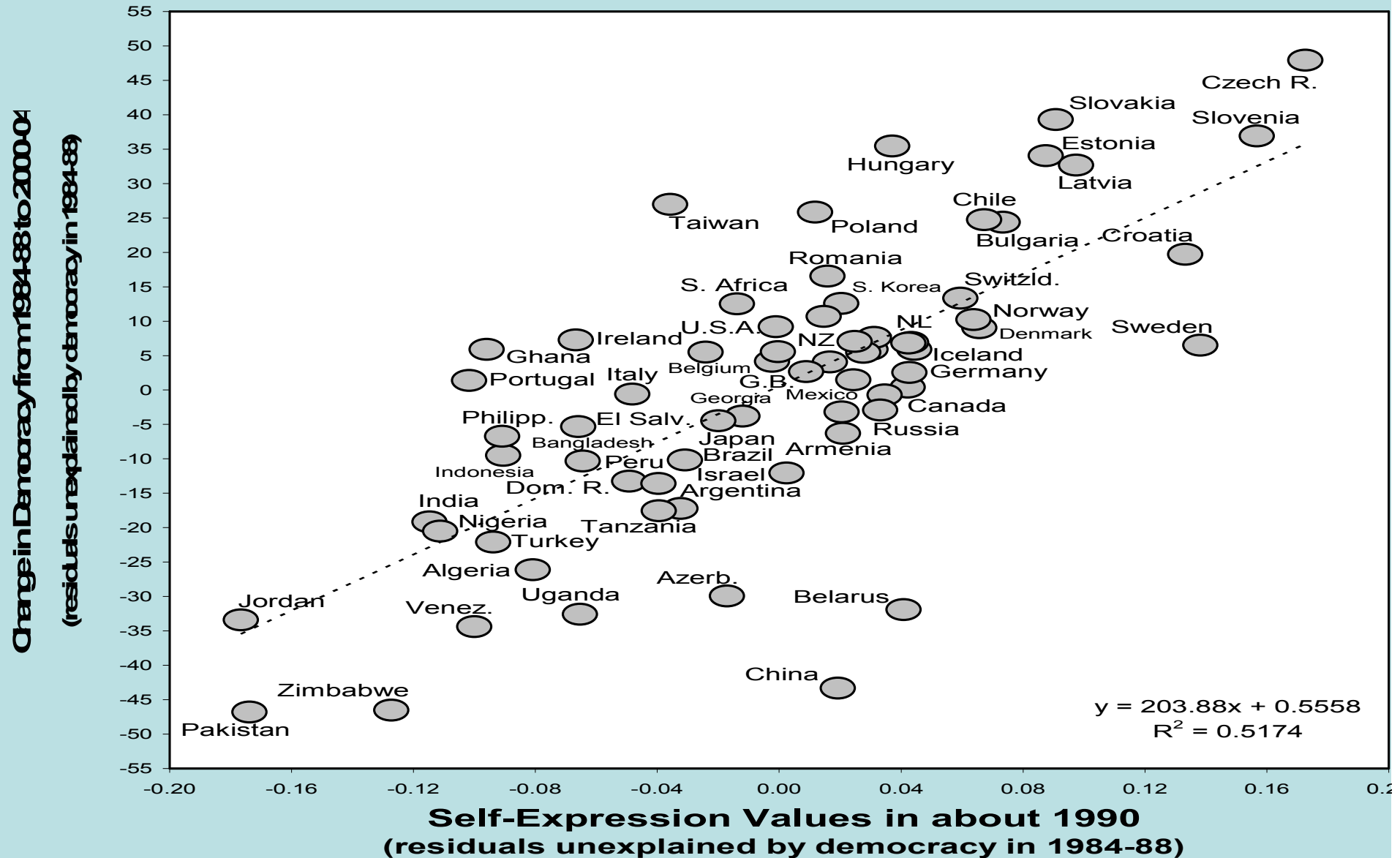


Self-expression values and Effective Democracy.

- And even controlling for prior levels of democracy, self-expression values have a powerful impact: they explain over half of the variance in **CHANGES** in levels of democracy during the Third Wave of democratization from 1984 to 2004

Change in levels of democracy

by Self-expression values, controlling for prior levels of democracy

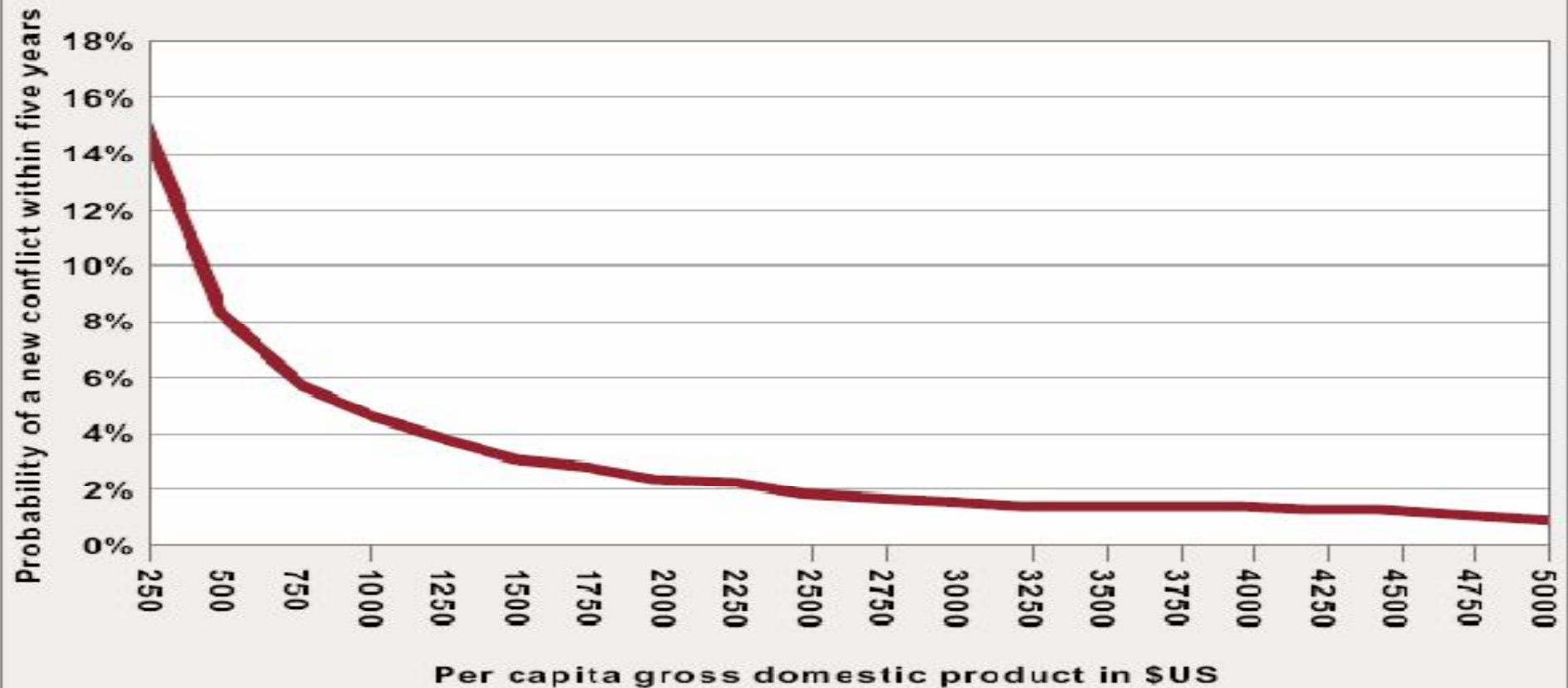


- The democratic peace thesis holds that democracies almost never fight each other.
- This implies that the spread of democracy is conducive to international peace.
- Democracy has been spreading. Why?

Is the democratic peace due to democracy– or to modernization?

- Azar Gat argues that it's mainly due to cultural changes linked with modernization. Earlier in history, democracies fought each other very frequently
- Today, virtually all democracies are economically and culturally highly modernized– which is a major reason why they don't fight each other

The link between war and poverty



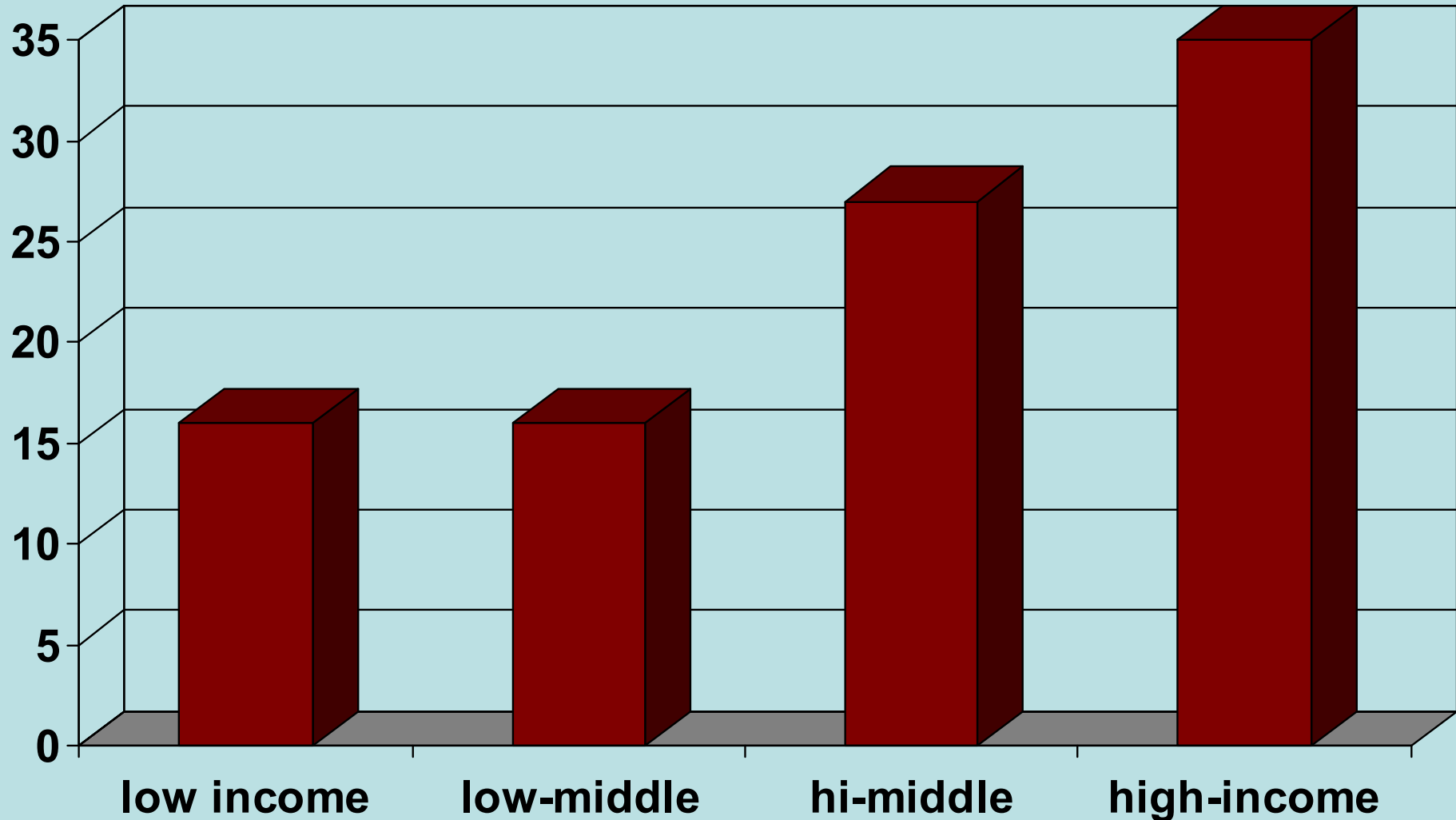
Source: Humphreys and Varshney, 2003²⁵

Poverty is associated with weak state capacity.
The greater the poverty and the lower the state capacity, the higher the risk of war.

- And economic development is linked with a diminishing willingness to fight for one's country

The Democratic Peace thesis.

% saying they would **not** fight for their country,
by level of economic development



cultural change → lower tolerance for casualties

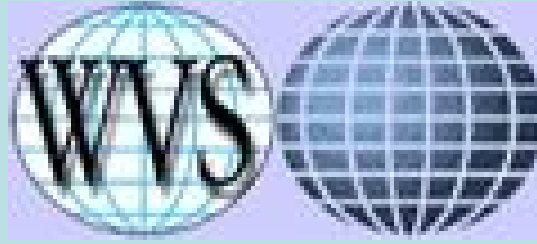
- In the Civil War, the U.S. suffered 618,000 combat deaths. This exceeded the total loss of life in all of the country's subsequent wars.
- On an average day in World War II, approximately 25,000 people lost their lives. A total of 60 million lives were lost.
- In Vietnam, public support for the war disappeared in the U.S. after 58,000 American lives were lost in several years of war
- The 2003 war in Iraq lost the support of a majority of the public after 3,000 American lives were lost
(equivalent to less than 3 hours of World War II).

These trends are not irreversible

- If these cultural changes are largely driven by rising existential security, then

IF the current global economic crisis becomes the Great Depression of the 21st century, these trends would start to move in reverse.

- We could face resurgent xenophobia, nationalism, authoritarian government– and rising risk of war.



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