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*The Postmaterialist Shift and Individualization in The Black Sea – Baltic Region.*

## THE POSTMATERIALIST SHIFT AND INDIVIDUALIZATION IN THE BLACK SEA – BALTIC REGION

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### 1. What Has Become of the Theory of Modernization?

Classical modernization theory embraces social theorists as diverse as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Daniel Bell, and Samuel Huntington. The main claim of the theory of modernization concerns natural developments in the economic and political structures of societies. The theorists have divided along two major lines of argumentation. On the one hand, Marx, Bell and others claim that “social being determines social consciousness”, i.e. socioeconomic development is the major driving force behind cultural development. On the other hand, Weber and, later, Huntington have underlined the cultural component behind different paths in the development of societies. There are also complex theories such as that of Parsons that combine both the development of culture and technology as the sources of social change.

While in philosophy this division has been epitomized in the dichotomy of socioeconomic formation vs. civilizational approach. In the 20<sup>th</sup>-century social and political theory, it was mostly presumed that all societies shared the same ways of development by sharing either capitalist or communist futures. The concepts of the “first” and “second” worlds have both reflected and shaped common ways of thinking about social development.

However, social research has detected “deep-rooted changes in world views” [1, p. 215] that have been happening in the last thirty years across the globe. The challenge to sociology has been to theorize the empirically discovered changes and to update the existing theories of modernization. Since that time, two major strands of modernization theory have gained momentum. The generalization strand attempts at seeing through cross-national evidence in order to explain why common social change takes place over the globe and what are the underlying factors behind it. The most prominent social and political theorists of this direction are R. Inglehart and C. Welzel [2; 3]. The other,

particularization strand of thinking takes on a perspective of “multiple modernities” (S. Eisenstadt) [4]. This approach supports the idea that “modernity and Westernization are not identical” [5, p. 2], i.e. there are Chinese, Japanese, or Indian modernities that can be found along the “axial civilizations” [5, p. 7]. A common feature of both strands is the desire to capture “the nature of the modern world” [4, p. 283]. In addition, both of them clearly deny the idea of social convergence leading to the state of common values being shared across the globe. More profoundly, these theories aim at discovering patterns and reasons for the common change and diversity while not attaching to social reality the self-explanatory concept of “globalization.” This paper takes on the former approach. Taking into account the unique condition of post-Soviet countries, where the abrupt fall of economic well-being has caused a steep increase in the importance of materialist values [2, c. 64] and a decrease in subjective well-being [1, p. 218], another theory might be needed in order to describe and analyze prevailing values and tendencies for the post-Soviet region [6, p. 429]. Luckily, Inglehart and Welzel’s theory is well-suited to describe value change as space rather than arrow, which means that plural directions of development are still possible.

## 2. Double Value Shift And The Emancipative Turn

Originally, Inglehart described two major value shifts. The first one was connected to the growth of welfare and the movement from “survival” to “self-expression” values. The second shift detected by the surveys was the movement from “traditional” to “secular-rational” behaviour [2, c. 39]. Later, due to the ambiguity invested in the chosen labels, and to the progress in research, the dimension titles were changed. To pinpoint the facts that, as people obtain existential security, individuals gain greater independence of thinking and self-reliance [2, p. 14]. Inglehart and Welzel also “specify this syndrome as ‘human development’, arguing that its three components have a common focus on broadening human choice.” Socioeconomic development gives people the Objective means of choice by increasing individual resources; rising emancipative values strengthen people’s subjective orientation towards choice; and democratization provides legal guarantees of choice by institutionalizing freedom rights [7].

The older groups that we re brought up in ex-Communist societies exhibit stronger secular-rational values than do those of comparable age in any other type of society During the last two decades, however, these societies experienced economic stagnation and the intergenerational differences flatten out – virtually disappearing among the young. Conversely, the oldest cohorts in

advanced industrial societies show much more traditional values than do their peers in ex-Communist societies; but advanced industrial societies show a steeper slope that continues longer, so that their youngest cohorts are even less traditional than are their peers in the ex-Communist societies [8]

What has become of individual resources in Black Sea – Baltic Europe after the 1990s? To explore the data, I use the 3<sup>rd</sup> (1994-1999) and 5<sup>th</sup> (2005-2008) waves of World Values Survey in the countries of Moldova, Russia, Ukraine (both waves) and Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, and Turkey (5<sup>th</sup> wave) [9].

The cross-wave comparison of emancipative, traditional-secular, and survival-self-expression values shows the following results:

1. The average shift in emancipative values in 1994-2008 has been almost inexistent (.37 to .37) and non-significant (ANOVA,  $p < .05$ ). When Turkey is out of the sample, then the shift is from .37 to .38 (on a 0 to 1 scale), and it is significant.

2. However, the shifts in secular and self-expression values the difference are identified in divergent directions. Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova share a shift towards the “self-expression” values and from towards “traditional.”

3. In emancipative values, Ukraine and Russia are moving to “traditional”, albeit the group average is relatively low which is no surprise as in the Soviet Union, overt religious practices were prosecuted. By contrast, in Moldova, “secular” values have increased in the 2000s.

4. The shift of Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine to “self-expression” values has been unanimous. Notably, the average of “self-expressional” value in Turkey (-.34) in 2005-2008 is relatively higher to “self-expression” than in Ukraine (-.63), Moldova (-.93), or Russia (-.62) (variables vary from -1; to 1).

Inglehart and Baker proposed a revised theory of modernization, showing that cultural zones have a significant additional impact on the effect that individual resources have on emancipative values [10, p. 370]. In the Black Sea – Baltic region, more observations at different time points should be made before the patterns could be truly studied. However, even the first glance at country averages shows that the value scores in Belarus are statistically not different from Russia or Ukraine.

The growth of self-expression values speaks in favor of the economic progress reached so far in the post-Communist countries. The decrease in “secular” values is a reflection of the growing meaning of the church in society as well [11]. Here, Belarus is no different from its neighbouring countries except Latvia, where the values more traditional. As of the 2005-2008 wave, Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova scored higher than Turkey in emancipative and secular

values, while Turkey was leading in self-expression values. While theory says that the emancipative values are a better grounded indicator, the tentative conclusion is that the Black Sea – Baltic region is heterogeneous within itself but there are distinct similarities in the values of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, and no full consistency in the hierarchy of self-expression and the rising emancipative values.

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