Value Change in Industrial Societies

Ronald Inglehart, Scott C. Flanagan


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**VALUE CHANGE IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES**

Ronald Inglehart has argued that, while most of the major political parties in Western countries tend to be aligned along a social class-based axis, support for new political movements and new political parties largely reflects the tension between materialist and postmaterialist goals and values. This has presented something of a dilemma to the traditional parties, and helps account for the decline of social-class voting. Scott Flanagan takes issue with Inglehart’s interpretation in several particulars. Although their views converge in many respects, Flanagan urges conceptual reorientations and adumbrates a different interpretation of post–World War II political development in Europe and Japan.

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**Diminishing Marginal Utility at the Societal Level**

Ideology lags behind reality. Though Karl Marx died in 1883, his analysis of political conflict continued to fascinate, and sometimes mesmerize, social critics and social scientists for much of the following century. His thesis captured an important part of reality for the early phases of industrial society. But with the evolution of advanced industrial society new conflicts and new world views have emerged, making the economic conflicts Marx emphasized less central to political life.

This development reflects a principle that might be called the diminishing marginal utility of economic determinism: economic factors tend to play a decisive role under conditions of economic scarcity; but as scarcity diminishes, other factors shape society to an increasing degree. In this article we will examine evidence of this phenomenon, first from an aggregate cross-national perspective, then with time-series data at the individual level. The two types of evidence converge, pointing to a diminishing degree of both economic determinism and class-based political conflict as advanced industrial society emerges. Figure 1 provides an illustration.

**Figure 1. The Diminishing Marginal Utility of Economic Determinism: 1975 Male Life Expectancy at Birth, by GNP per Capita**

![Graph](image)

As Figure 1 demonstrates, human life expectancy is closely linked to a nation's level of economic development, especially at the low end of the economic continuum: it is virtually impossible for poor nations to attain a high average life span. A large number of countries cluster tightly together at the low end of the spectrum on both income and life expectancy, with such nations as Chad or Bangladesh showing per capita gross national products below one hundred dollars and a male life expectancy of 35 years or less in 1975. Just above them is a group of 20 nations having per capita GNPs of less than three hundred dollars and life expectancies of less than 45 years.

The curve rises steeply with relatively modest increases in wealth, until it reaches about two thousand dollars per capita. Thereafter, the curve levels off. Economic factors become less decisive, and lifestyle factors more so: longevity becomes less and less a question of adequate nutrition and sanitation facilities, and more and more a question of cholesterol intake, tobacco and alcohol consumption, exercise, levels of stress, and environmental pollution.

The leveling off of the curve does not simply reflect ceiling effects. In 1975 only a few nations had male life expectancies above 70 years; but in the ensuing decade, several nations raised them by several years. By 1982, female life expectancy in Switzerland had risen to 81 years, and this almost certainly does not represent the ultimate biological ceiling. Most developed nations still have considerable room for improvement—but it is no longer so closely tied to economic development. Thus, despite rising income, male life expectancy in the Soviet Union has declined in the last decade, apparently as a result of rising alcoholism rates.

As our hypothesis implies, a logarithmic transformation of GNP per capita shows a much better fit with life expectancy than does a linear model: the former explains 61% of the variance in life expectancy, and the latter only 37%. Figure 1 shows untransformed GNP per capita in order to demonstrate the diminishing impact of economic gains directly. Another illustration of this phenomenon is the fact that among the poorer half of these nations, raw GNP per capita explains 44% of the variance in life expectancy; while among the richer half it accounts for only 14%. Similar patterns of diminishing returns from economic development are found with numerous other indicators of the quality of life. Caloric intake, literacy rates, the number of physicians per capita, and other objective indicators all rise steeply at the low end of the scale but level off among advanced industrial societies.

Equality of income distribution also increases sharply with economic development, up to a level of about 35 hundred dollars per capita; but above that threshold there is virtually no further rise. Figure 2 shows this curve (inverted by comparison with Figure 1, since high scores on the vertical axis represent high levels of inequality). In 70% of the nations with a GNP per capita below 35 hundred dollars, the top tenth of the population got more than one-third of the total income (in some cases as much as 57%). In none of the nations with a GNP per capita above 35 hundred dollars did the top tenth of the population get more than one-third of the total income; their share ranged from as low as 17% in Communist countries, to a high of 33% in Finland.

Does this cross-sectional pattern reflect a longitudinal trend? The point has been debated. The most reliable longitudinal data come from economically advanced countries which have shown little increase in income equality during the past 30 years. But if we interpret the pattern as reflecting a curve of diminishing returns rather than a linear trend, this finding is exactly what we would expect: it is only
in the earlier stages of economic development that we would find large amounts of change. The United States, for example, moved toward substantially greater income equality from 1890 to 1950, but has shown little change since then: absolute levels of income continued to rise, but relative shares changed only slightly. Conversely, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong have made a dramatic leap from poverty to prosperity only recently—and all have shown significant increases in income equality (Chen 1979).

Why do we find a curvilinear relationship between economic development and income equality? In the early phase, we believe, it reflects a process of social mobilization, engendered by economic development: industrialization leads to urbanization and mass literacy, which facilitate the organization of labor unions and mass political parties and the enfranchisement of the working class. Economic development does not necessarily have this effect, but it enhances the chances of transforming the masses from isolated and illiterate peasants into organized citizens with the power to bargain for a more equal share of the pie.

But why does the curve level off among mature industrial societies? There are two main reasons. First, as one approaches perfect equality, one necessarily reaches a point of diminishing returns. If one reached the point where the top tenth had only 10% of the income, any further transfer of income would be a move away from equality. None of these societies has actually reached this point, but some are getting close: in East Germany, the top tenth gets only 17% of the total income, according to official sources (these figures may exaggerate the degree of income equality in Eastern Europe: a Czech analysis cited by Connor [1979, 216-18] estimates that income equality in Eastern Europe is no greater than in some Western countries). In any event, there seems to be a practical limit, for all societies use different rates of pay to motivate their labor force. China, during the Great Cultural Revolution, may have emphasized economic equality more heavily than any other nation in modern times, but some income differences were still retained. To motivate the people, the regime relied on a combination of intense moral exhortation and coercion. This system had severe drawbacks; the current Chinese regime has shifted toward less coercion and more reliance on economic incentives. The fact that Norway, Sweden, and Denmark have significantly greater income equality than the United States, West Germany or France, indicates that the latter countries could move farther toward equality without becoming ineffective economies, or coercive societies. But the Scandinavian countries seem to be approaching the limit.
of what is possible in a democratic political system.

Why this is so, reflects a second basic principle: political support for increased income equality reaches a point of diminishing returns at a level well short of perfect equality. Przeworski and Wallerstein (1982) have demonstrated through mathematical modeling that under appropriate conditions workers and capitalists would reach a compromise in rational pursuit of their material interests: capitalists would consent to democratic institutions through which workers can effectively press claims for material gains. And workers would consent to profits in the expectation that they will be invested productively, improving their future material gains. Thus, given democratic institutions, some inequality of income may be acceptable to the lower-paid groups.

But as one moves closer to an equal income distribution, the political base of support for further redistribution becomes narrower. In a poor society where the top 10% gets 40%–60% of the total income, the vast majority would benefit from redistribution. In a society in which the top tenth gets only 20%–25% of the total income, far fewer people will benefit from further redistribution, and they will benefit proportionately less; a majority may even stand to lose by additional redistribution more than they would gain. This does not constitute a moral justification for not moving further toward equality; but it does constitute a serious practical problem. Under these conditions, the political base for further development of the welfare state is simply not there, at least not in so far as the citizens are motivated solely by economic self-interest. Ironically, further progress toward equality would come not from an emphasis on materialistic class conflict, but through an appeal to the public's sense of justice, social solidarity, and other nonmaterial motivations.

Is there any chance that such appeals would work? We believe that there is. In the long run there seems to be a tendency for the pursuit of economic self-interest itself to reach a point of diminishing returns in advanced industrial societies, and gradually give way to postmaterialist motivation, including greater emphasis on social solidarity (Inglehart 1971, 1977). A large body of survey data, gathered during the past 15 years, suggests that economic development makes a sense of economic deprivation less widespread among mass publics, and consequently, a less important cause of political conflict.

This conclusion is not surprising. After the fact, it may even seem self-evident. It is not: it has been hotly debated and cannot be viewed as conclusively proven even now. A quarter of a century ago, the end-of-ideology school concluded that growing prosperity was giving rise to a politics of consensus in an age of affluence; the subsequent explosion of protest in the late 1960s led many to conclude that this school had been completely wrong. In fact, their analysis of what had been happening was partly correct; like Marx, they simply failed to anticipate new developments. While economic cleavages become less intense with rising levels of economic development, they gradually give way to other types of conflict.

Thus far we have seen indications that economic development leads to a diminishing impact of economic influences on such objective characteristics as life expectancy and economic equality. But do such changes actually reshape the political preferences of mass publics?

The evidence suggests that at high levels of economic development, public support for the classic economic policies of the Left tends to diminish. Table 1 sums up the responses of eleven Western publics to a set of questions dealing with three key issues underlying the classic Left-Right polarization. These questions were asked in Euro-Barometer surveys carried
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Table 1. Support for the Classic Economic Policies of the Left by Level of Economic Development, 1979–1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation (Ranked by per Capita Gross Domestic Product)</th>
<th>1982 GDP per Capita (European Currency Units)</th>
<th>Reducing Income Inequality</th>
<th>More Government Management of the Economy</th>
<th>More Nationalization of Industry</th>
<th>Mean for 3 Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Greece</td>
<td>3,958</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ireland</td>
<td>5,408</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Italy</td>
<td>6,287</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Northern Ireland</td>
<td>6,852</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Belgium</td>
<td>8,735</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Great Britain</td>
<td>8,755</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Luxembourg</td>
<td>9,407</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Netherlands</td>
<td>9,830</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. France</td>
<td>10,237</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Germany</td>
<td>10,927</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Denmark</td>
<td>11,194</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Based on combined results from Euro-Barometer nos. 11, 16, and 19; respective Ns are 8,884 for 1979; 9,909 for 1981; and 9,790 for 1983. See ICPSR codebooks for details concerning fieldwork. Data on GDP per capita are from Eurostat, *Structural Data* (Luxembourg 1985).

*Text of questions: “We’d like to hear your views on some important political issues. Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following proposals? How strongly do you feel [show card] (1) Greater effort should be made to reduce income inequality. [Those who said they agree or agree strongly are classified in this table as favorable.] (2) Government should play a greater role in the management of the economy. (3) Public ownership of industry should be expanded. In the 1983 survey, the polarity of Item 2 was reversed: while 70% of the 1 of the publics agreed that government should play a greater role in 1981, only 52% rejected the proposal that government should play a smaller role in 1983. For Item 2, these figures are based on the 1981 and 1983 results, only, giving equal weight to the two formulations. Missing data are excluded from percentage base.

out in 1979, 1981, and 1983 in the 10 member nations of the European Community (Greece, not yet a member, was not surveyed in 1979). The questions deal with redistribution of income, government control of the economy, and nationalization of industry—the central elements of the traditional Left’s prescription for society. They were worded as follows:

We’d like to hear your views on some important political issues. Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following proposals? How strongly do you feel? (1) Greater effort should be made to reduce income inequality; (2) Government should play a greater role in the management of the economy [in 1983, this item was reversed, to refer to “a smaller role” and its polarity recoded accordingly]; (3) Public ownership of industry should be expanded.

Though a majority supports greater income equality in every country, while further nationalization of industry is rejected by majorities everywhere except in Greece and Ireland, the relative levels of support for these three policies among the publics of given nations show impressive consistency both across items and across time. Taken together, the results add up to a remarkably clear picture of which publics are most favorable to the classic Left economic policies—and the picture does not correspond to conventional stereotypes.

Everyone knows that Denmark is a leading welfare state, with advanced social legislation, progressive taxation, a high level of income equality, and well over half the GNP going to the public sec-
Figure 3. Support for the Classic Economic Policies of the Left by Level of Economic Development, 1979–83

Gross Domestic Product per Capita in ECU, 1982

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage Supporting Classic Left Economic Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Ireland</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on responses to three items, asked in three surveys.

The French show more support for these policies than their economic level would suggest, which may be linked with the fact that France also has an incongruously high level of economic inequality. But France constitutes the only significant anomaly. The other 10 societies show an almost perfect fit between level of economic development and support for the classic economic policies of the Left.

These findings suggest that the principle of diminishing marginal utility applies at the societal level, as well as the individual level. Greece is an economically underdeveloped country, with many living in extreme poverty and a small affluent elite. In such a context, the balance between rich and poor can be redressed only by strong government intervention. Denmark, on the other hand, is a rich country that has long since developed some of the most advanced social-welfare policies in the world and one of the world’s highest rates of taxation. Almost 60% of the GNP is spent by the government, approaching the point where it becomes impossible to move much farther in this direction (even in the Soviet Union, the government’s share probably isn’t over 75%). In Denmark, further redistribution by the government seems less urgent than in Greece; and the costs of government intervention impinge on a larger share of the popula-
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tion. The incentives to press further with the traditional economic policies of the Left become relatively weak, and public resistance relatively strong.

In this sense, the policies that dominated the agenda of the Left throughout most of this century are running out of steam. Increased state intervention was desperately needed to alleviate starvation and social upheaval in the 1930s; was essential to the emergence of the welfare state in the postwar era; and still makes sense in some areas. But in others, it has passed a point of diminishing returns. The renewed respect for market forces that has emerged throughout most of the industrial world recently reflects this reality. It can be debated whether Gary Hart had come up with the right "new ideas" in 1984, but his recognition of the need for a new liberal agenda was well founded. His rival, Walter Mondale, doggedly but helplessly stuck to the New Deal formula a half century after the New Deal.

The neoconservative claim that the classic welfare state policies have failed is false, however. Quite the contrary: in countries like Denmark these policies have largely solved the problems they are capable of solving and have thereby reduced the demand for more of the same. Insofar as they succeed, they reach a point of diminishing returns and begin to cede top priority to problems that have not been solved.

Any attempt to turn back the clock to the savage laissez-faire policies of the early twentieth century would be self-defeating, ultimately leading to a resurgence of class conflict in all its former harshness. But the fundamentalists of the Left are equally self-defeating in their rigid adherence to a traditional program based on class conflict and state ownership and control of the means of production.

This does not mean that economic factors are no longer politically important. On the contrary, some of the most signifi-
cant recent research in political science has demonstrated strong linkages between fluctuations in the economies of Western nations, and support for the incumbent political party (Hibbs, Rivers, and Vastilatos 1982; Kramer 1971; Tufte 1978). But this research has also produced a surprising finding: while support for the incumbents does reflect the performance of the national economy, it does not seem motivated by individual economic self-interest. The electorates of advanced industrial societies do not seem to be voting their pocketbooks, but instead seem primarily motivated by "sociotropic" concerns: rather than asking "What have you done for me lately?" they ask "What have you done for the nation lately?" (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981).

Recent research carried out in France, West Germany, Italy, and Great Britain confirms that there—as in the United States—the linkage between the economic cycle and support for the incumbents is overwhelmingly sociotropic (Lewis-Beck 1986).

In short, economics remains an important influence on electoral behavior, but it reflects sociotropic motivations rather than class conflict. The politics of advanced industrial societies no longer polarize primarily on the basis of working class versus middle class; and the old issues, centering on ownership of the means of production, no longer lie at the heart of political polarization.

Political Change at the Individual Level

The argument presented above is implicit in the materialist–postmaterialist value-change thesis; it is new only in its application to the societal level. In this section we examine political change at the individual level. Here we have a rare opportunity: the chance to test a set of predictions about social change that were
published years before the data by which they are tested came into existence.

At the individual level, our hypothesis concerning the diminishing role of economic factors, is supplemented by a second basic hypothesis: that early-instilled values tend to persist throughout a given individual's life. In context with the unprecedented economic development of the postwar era, these hypotheses imply a shift from materialist toward postmaterialist values. At the individual level, we should find sizable and persisting differences between the value priorities of young and old, reflecting their differing formative experiences; but at the societal level, this shift will manifest itself only gradually, as one generation replaces another. Moreover, because this shift involves basic goals, it implies a gradual change in the types of issues most central to political conflict and in the types of political movements and parties people support. Finally, it also implies a decline in social-class voting and increasing polarization over noneconomic values (Inglehart 1971, 1977).

The intergenerational value differences these hypotheses predict have now been explored extensively, in 26 different nations. Survey after survey reveals dramatic differences between the goals emphasized by old and young. Moreover, cohort analysis demonstrates that there is no tendency for given birth cohorts to become more materialist as they age, as they would if these differences reflected life-cycle effects. In 1985, given birth cohorts were fully as postmaterialist as they had been 15 years earlier. There were significant short-term fluctuations, reflecting period effects linked with inflation (Inglehart 1985a, 1985b). But by 1985, inflation had subsided almost to the 1970 level. With period effects held constant, there is no sign of the gradual conversion to materialism that would be present if a life-cycle interpretation were applicable. When short-term forces returned to normal, a substantial net shift toward postmaterialism was manifest, most of it due to intergenerational population replacement (Abramson and Inglehart 1986).

The predicted intergenerational value shift seems to be confirmed by a massive amount of empirical evidence, but the predicted changes in prevailing types of political cleavages have barely been touched on. Let us examine the relevant evidence.

From Class-based to Value-based Political Polarization

The idea that politics is a struggle between rich and poor can be traced to Plato. But unquestionably the most influential modern version of this idea has been Marx's argument that throughout industrial society, social class conflict is the central fact of political life, and the key issue underlying the Left-Right polarization is conflict over ownership of the means of production. Marx's influence is reflected not only in a vast literature of social criticism but also in the existence of an entire family of political parties that were inspired by his writings and, in varying degrees, purport to be guided by his analysis. The rise of postmaterialism makes this analysis less adequate today. Let us consider why.

The postmaterialist outlook is linked with one's having spent one's formative years in conditions of economic and physical security. Hence it is more prevalent among the postwar generation than among older cohorts, and tends to be concentrated among the more prosperous strata of any given age group.

The political implications are significant and at first seem paradoxical. Postmaterialists give top priority to such goals as a sense of community and the nonmaterial quality of life, but they live in societies that have traditionally empha-
sized economic gains above all, even at the expense of these nonmaterial values. Hence, they tend to be relatively favorable to social change. Though recruited from the higher-income groups that have traditionally supported the parties of the Right, they tend to shift toward the parties of the Left.

Conversely, when postmaterialist issues (such as environmentalism, the women’s movement, unilateral disarmament, opposition to nuclear power) become central, they may stimulate a reaction in which part of the working class sides with the Right, to reaffirm the traditional materialist emphasis on economic growth, military security, and domestic order.

The rise of postmaterialist issues, therefore, tends to neutralize political polarization based on social class. Though long-established party loyalties and institutional ties link the working class to the Left and the middle class to the Right, the social basis of new support for the parties and policies of the Left tends to come from middle-class sources. But at the same time, the Left parties become vulnerable to a potential split between their postmaterialist Left, which seeks fundamental social change, and their materialist constituency, which tends to take a traditional stance on the new issues raised by postmaterialists.

In 1972, this phenomenon temporarily split the Democratic party in the United States, when an insurgent movement won the presidential nomination for George McGovern. Though he won the postmaterialist vote overwhelmingly, much of the normally Democratic working-class electorate voted Republican, and social-class voting fell almost to zero, as Figure 4 demonstrates. This was an extraordinary election in which nearly half of all Democratic-party identifiers voted for the Republican candidate. In subsequent elections, many Democrats returned to their normal political loyalties, partially restor-
West German national parliament for the first time.

A longstanding truism of political sociology is that working-class voters tend to support the parties of the Left, and middle-class voters those of the Right, throughout Western society. This was an accurate description of reality a generation ago, but the tendency has been getting steadily weaker. As Figure 4 illustrates, social-class voting has declined markedly during the past few decades. If 75% of the working class voted for the Left, and only 25% of the middle class did so, one would obtain an Alford class-voting index of 50 (the difference between the two figures). This is about where the Swedish electorate was located in 1948, but by 1985 the index had fallen to 31. Norway, Sweden, and Denmark have traditionally manifested the world's highest levels of social-class voting, but all have shown declining levels of social-class voting during the past three decades (Borre 1984, 352). In the United States, Great Britain, France, and West Germany in the late 1940s and early 1950s, working-class voters were more apt to support the Left than were middle-class voters by margins ranging from 30 to 45 percentage points. In the most recent national elections in these countries, this range had shrunk to 8–18 points. In the most recent national elections (from 1983 to 1986) class voting fell to or below the lowest levels ever recorded to date, in Britain, France, Sweden, and West Germany. Though long-established political-party loyalties tend to maintain the traditional pattern, it is being eroded by (1) new support for the Left coming increasingly from middle-class postmaterialists; and (2) by working-class shifts to the Right, in defense of traditional values (Inglehart 1977; Lipset 1981).

It is important to note that the class-conflict model of politics is not a mere straw man: a few decades ago it provided a fairly accurate description of reality. But that reality has changed gradually but pervasively to the point where today, class voting in most democracies is less than half as strong as it was a generation ago. This change seems linked with intergenerational population replacement: throughout Western Europe, social-class voting indexes are about half as large among the postwar birth cohorts as among older groups.

We have argued that Western politics are coming to polarize according to social class less and less, and according to values more and more. We have just seen evidence of the former. Now let us examine evidence of rising polarization according to materialist-postmaterialist values. Figure 5 sums up voting intentions by value type from almost 95 thousand interviews carried out in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium from 1970 to 1985. A vast number of nation-specific events took place in these six nations during 15 turbulent years, which we will not attempt to discuss here. The overall pattern is clear,
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however: from 1970 to 1985, there was a trend toward increasing polarization on the basis of materialist-postmaterialist values.

In 1970, 61% of the materialists intended to vote for parties of the Right and Center, as compared with 40% of the postmaterialists. Materialists were likelier than postmaterialists to vote for the Right by a ratio of almost exactly 1.5 to 1. This already was a sizable difference, but it has grown steadily larger since 1970. In 1973, the ratio had increased to 1.8 to 1. In 1976–78, it grew to 1.9 to 1. By 1979–81 it was slightly more than 2 to 1. And in 1982–85, the ratio had risen to 2.3 to 1. This changing ratio was mainly due to a loss of postmaterialist votes by the parties of the Right. In 1970, 40% of the postmaterialists supported parties of the Right and Center; in 1982–85, only 25% did so; 75% were voting for the Left.

But which Left? In order to fully understand the significance of what has been happening, we must differentiate between various forces within a changing and divided Left. There has been only a modest increase in the proportion of postmaterialists voting for the two major long-established parties of the Left, the Socialists and Communists. In 1970, they drew 48% of the postmaterialist vote; in 1982–85, they got 53%. The major gains have been made by New Politics—above all, Ecologist—parties. In 1970 these parties won 13% of the postmaterialist vote. In 1982–85, they obtained 22%. The New Politics gains reflect two countervailing trends: (1) stagnation or decline of the Marxist New Left parties of the 1960s and early seventies; and (2) spectacular growth of Ecology parties, having a distinct and still evolving ideology concerning the quality of the physical and social environment. They have grown from almost nothing in the mid-1970s, to being the largest component of the New Politics parties. In the last few years, Ecology parties have won representation in the national parliaments of Belgium, Luxembourg, and West Germany, and in the delegations to the European Parliament elected in 1984 from Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Their future potential may be even more than meets the eye, as we will see below.

The rapid growth of the Ecologists and the decline of the New Left parties of the 1960s reflect an important characteristic of both sets of parties: they have not yet developed strong voter loyalties or party organizations. Whether they ever will is an open question. If they don't, in the long run their electorates will probably be absorbed by larger parties that modify their ideological stance sufficiently to present an attractive alternative, just as the Socialist party has absorbed much of the New Left electorate in the Netherlands, partly capturing it, and partly being captured by it. We will not attempt to forecast the fate of given parties in given countries; it is influenced by the party's leadership, the strategies they adopt, and by nation-specific events, as well as by the values of the electorate. Figure 5 makes one thing clear, however: since 1970 there has been a growing tendency for electoral behavior to polarize on the basis of the materialist–postmaterialist value cleavage.

Postmaterialists have become increasingly likely to vote for the Left but this trend has become increasingly selective, with the Postmaterialist vote going to parties that have distinctive programs tailored to postmaterialist concerns. One striking consequence is that the Communists have lost their relative appeal to postmaterialists. In the early and mid-1970s, postmaterialists were about 2.5 times as likely to vote for the Communists as were materialists. By the mid-1980s, there was little difference between the two groups.

When postmaterialism emerged as a significant political force in the 1960s, its proponents tended to express themselves
in Marxist slogans, which were then the standard rhetoric of protest in Western Europe. To a large extent the term Left meant the Marxist parties, and it was natural for the postmaterialists to assume that they were Marxists. But in fact there were profound and fundamental disparities between the goals of the postmaterialists and those of the Marxist Left, as the postmaterialists gradually discovered. These disparities became apparent in France earlier than in other countries—partly because the crisis of May–June 1968 brought to light the basic contradiction between the bureaucratic and authoritarian materialism of the French Communist party, and the postmaterialist desire for a less hierarchical, more humane society, in which the quality of life was more important than economic growth. Even there ideological reorientation took many years. But today, a Left has evolved in France that is increasingly non-Marxist or even anti-Marxist, and increasingly independent of the Soviet Union. The French Communist party, on the other hand, has remained one of the most authoritarian and Moscow-oriented parties in the West, with disastrous electoral consequences. After winning 20%–25% of the vote in most French elections from 1945 to 1978, the Communists suffered a sharp decline in the 1980s, falling to 16% of the vote in 1981, then to 11% in 1984, and dropping below 10% in the 1986 election. Though the degree varies from country to country, by the 1980s communism had lost its disproportionate appeal to the growing postmaterialist constituency in Western Europe.

With this has come the decline of the Communists’ relative appeal to youth. For decades it had been axiomatic that the young were disproportionately likely to vote Communist: “If a man isn’t a Communist when he’s 25, he has no heart; if he’s still a Communist when he’s 45, he has no head.” This linkage between youth and the Communist party, however, was not a biological constant; it was based on the belief that the goals of a specific younger generation converged with those of the Communist party.

That belief persisted until recently. As Figure 6 demonstrates, the two postwar cohorts among the West European publics were markedly more likely to support the Communist party than were their elders in each of the Euro-barometer surveys carried out during the 1970s. But the differences were growing weaker in 1978 and 1979. In the early 1980s, Communist support among the two postwar cohorts continued to decline, falling to, or even below the level of older cohorts. The young and the postmaterialists had shifted to other parties.

Where did they go? For the most part, not to the parties of the Right, despite a good deal of recent talk about the grow-
Values in Industrial Societies

Table 2. Support for Traditional Left and New Politics Parties by Age Cohort in Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Denmark, Ireland and Benelux, in 1984–85 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Years</th>
<th>Communists</th>
<th>Socialists and Social Democrats</th>
<th>Ecologists and Other New Politics Parties</th>
<th>Right and Center</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postwar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966–70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956–65</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946–55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prewar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936–45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926–35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916–25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906–15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1906</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Combined data from Euro-Barometer nos. 21, 22, and 23 (April and November 1984 and April 1985) weighted according to population of each nation (total number reporting a voting intention, 19,492).

ing conservatism of youth. The old Left clearly is in decline, which presents an opportunity for enterprising and adaptive parties of the Right and Center. But given the option, younger voters gravitate toward New Politics parties, above all the Ecologists, rather than toward the Right.

As Table 2 demonstrates, support for the Communists no longer bears much relationship to age. The Socialists and Social Democrats have also lost their special appeal for the young in most countries. Nevertheless, support for the parties of the Right and Center is substantially weaker among the three postwar cohorts than among all of the older groups. There is no overall trend to the Right. Instead, the slack is taken up by a pronounced rise in support for the Ecologists and other New Politics parties. Consequently, the relative strength of the Communists and the New Politics parties has shifted dramatically among the young. Among the cohorts born before World War II, Communist support outweighs New Politics support by as much as 2:1 or 3:1. In the cohort born in 1946–55, the New Politics parties are slightly stronger than the Communists. And among the two young-est cohorts, support for the New Politics parties outweighs support for the Communists by margins of 2:1 and nearly 4:1.

Neither the young nor the postmaterialists automatically vote for any party that claims to represent the Left. They are influenced by past loyalties, like other voters. But when they abandon these loyalties, they do so in order to support the party that seems most likely to attain their goals, which are not necessarily those of the old Left, and emphatically not those of rigidly authoritarian parties such as the French Communist party. The old Left parties are losing ground among the young: they win the support of only 44% of the 1945–65 cohort, and only 36% of the 1966–70 cohort. But the Right need not win them by default. When an option is available that addresses the postmaterialists’ concerns, they tend to take it. The evidence indicates that the Left can win the young provided it develops programs that appeal to the postmaterialists, as well as the old Left constituency—clearly not an easy task, but not an impossible one.

Though Western communist parties are in decline, it is extremely unlikely that
they will disappear. They still have millions of hard-core loyalists. Moreover, they have made important contributions to politics in their societies: by advocating greater economic equality they stimulated mainstream parties throughout the West to adopt welfare state policies that were motivated, in part, by the need to meet the challenge from the Left, but that helped their societies adapt to the contemporary world.

Today, Marxism itself needs to readapt—and for the sake of survival, is likely to do so. The Italian Communist Party already has reshaped itself extensively. Conservative Marxist parties like the French Communist Party will eventually be forced to do so, regardless of what the current leadership prefers. The need for change is so clear that it is taking place even in societies ruled by communist parties, with first Yugoslavia and Hungary and more recently, the People’s Republic of China moving to relax the grip of central controls and allow greater freedom of expression. As the 1980s draw to a close, the Soviet Union itself is experimenting with ways to liberalize its economy and society. Even Marxist movements must respond to the forces of history.

Conclusion

The rise of a new axis of politics, based on polarization between postmaterialist values and traditional cultural values, and the decline of class-based polarization, has left Western political systems in a schizophrenic situation. Most of the major political parties have been aligned along the class-based axis of polarization for decades, and established party loyalties and group ties still hold much of the electorate to this alignment. But the most heated issues today tend to be New Politics issues, on which support for change comes mainly from a postmaterialist middle-class base. This creates a stress that can be resolved in two ways: by a repositioning of the established parties; or by the emergence of new ones. Both have been taking place.

The Marxist interpretation of society seems in decline throughout the industrialized world. Its emphasis on economic factors as the driving force of history provides a good first approximation of reality in the early stages of industrialization, but is of diminishing value as scarcity diminishes and new problems emerge. Similarly, the policies that are needed to counter the ruthless exploitation of capitalism in its laissez-faire stage, reach a point of diminishing returns in advanced welfare states. Where government spending is already 40%–60% of GNP, there is less potential to move further in this direction; and the concentration of power in big government itself becomes an increasingly serious problem. The old assumption of the Left that more government was automatically better has lost its credibility. But to elevate government nonintervention into a theological principle is equally untenable. Some of the emerging problems of advanced industrial society will require more government intervention, not less. Within the next few decades, we will need to shift from petroleum to other energy sources or face dislocations far more severe than the OPEC-triggered recessions of the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Developing solar energy and nuclear fusion to meet this need requires a massive research and development effort, decades ahead of time, that market forces are not making and are not likely to make. Governmental inertness in such areas may be disastrous.

The meaning of Left and Right has been transformed. The key Marxist issue—nationalization of industry—remains a central preoccupation only to Marxist fundamentalists like the embattled hard-liners of the British Labour party. Properly handled, nationalization does little harm; but it is not the panacea it once appeared to be. And in so far as it diverts attention
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from increasingly pressing problems concerning the nature of modern war and the quality of the physical and social environment, it can be downright counterproductive—for it provides no solution to these problems. Nationalized factories pollute just as much as private ones. Indeed, in so far as nationalization merges the political regulators and the military-industrial complex into one cozy elite, it may even make things worse. Thus, according to a recent UNESCO study, East Germany is the most severely polluted nation in Europe, with air and water pollutant levels two to three times as high as those in West Germany. And it is no coincidence that the only nuclear-power-plant accident that has cost human lives, occurred in the Soviet Union, where public pressures for safety measures are minimized and, until recently, plants were built without containment structures, using a type of graphite reactor that Western countries stopped building decades ago because it was too hazardous. Though their environmental problems are even more severe and their arms expenditures at least as high as those in the West, the political systems of the East European countries rule out the emergence of independent and vigorous environmentalist movements or peace movements comparable to those in the West. It is relatively easy for the ruling elite to simply ignore such issues: officially, the problems underlying them exist only in capitalist countries.

War is as old as human society, but modern technology has given it new implications: today, it could terminate the human race. This fact has shaped a post-war generation for whom war has a different meaning from what it had in previous history. If one still accepts the Marxist conventional wisdom that war is caused by capitalist greed for profits, then one has a ready solution: abolish capitalism. But the fact that most of the bloodiest battles of the past decade have been fought between nominally Communist countries—with Cambodia against Vietnam, Vietnam against China, China against the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union against Afghanistan—has led to growing skepticism that the answer is this simple. The problem is rooted in the mentality of a military-industrial complex deeply rooted on both sides of an obsolescent ideological boundary.

The old ideological paradigm no longer corresponds to reality. Neither the Marxist fundamentalists nor the laissez-faire fundamentalists have adequate answers for the problems of advanced industrial society. The goals of individuals and the challenges facing society are different from those of a generation ago.

RONALD INGLEHART

University of Michigan

This controversy harks back to a debate I started with Ronald Inglehart in 1979 (Flanagan 1979), which has found its clearest expression to date in an exchange of articles in 1982 (Flanagan 1982a, 1982b; Inglehart 1982). There are two reasons for revisiting this debate now. First, Inglehart’s most recent contribution to the values debate, presented above and in a companion piece, represents a significant shift in his position, which I believe brings his argument much closer to my theoretical view. Second, new data is now available to present a definitive test, at least in the Japanese context, of the issues that divide us. Thus, I believe we are finally in a position to take a giant step towards a resolution of the debate.

The crux of the debate revolves around my argument that there are two distinct kinds of value change taking place in the advanced industrial democracies and that Inglehart has obscured this distinction by collapsing indicators of both into a single scale. My argument has been that these
Figure 7. Inglehart's View of Cleavage Structures in Advanced Industrial Democracies

![Diagram showing Libertarian/Postmaterialist, New Politics/New Left, Old Politics, Authoritarian + Materialist]

two kinds of change are not only conceptually distinct but are explained by different causal phenomenon and exhibit different patterns of relationships with key demographic and political variables.

Libertarian-Postmaterialist Values

The distinctions between our respective positions can be confusing because we use overlapping but not identical kinds of indicators to measure our respective scales, and similar labels to identify different conceptual phenomenon. To help clarify the differences, Figures 7 and 8 depict our contrasting conceptualization of value change, with the types of indicator items used to measure the scales presented in boxes. Each line represents the axis of a value cleavage, with labels on either side of the cleavage indicating the political impact of the particular type of value orientation defined by the cleavage.

First it should be noted that our three scales, my two and Inglehart’s one, are measured by essentially only three kinds of items. What I call libertarian and Inglehart and others label postmaterialist items are essentially identical. Looking across the full collection of items that have been designated by these labels, we find they include an emphasis on personal and political freedom, participation (more say in government, in one’s community, and on the job), equality, tolerance of minorities and those holding different opinions, openness to new ideas and new life styles, environmental protection and concern over quality-of-life issues, self-indulgence, and self-actualization (Calista 1984; Hildebrandt and Dalton 1978; Inglehart 1977; Lafferty and Knutsen 1985). There may be some minor differences over which of the above elements are more or less central to these two concepts, but to the extent that they are all found to cluster, I expect none of the above authors would have trouble accepting any of these elements as part of the concept of postmaterialism. I include them all in my notion of libertarianism, so we have two different labels representing the same cluster of items. While I believe that Inglehart’s term postmaterialism is a misnomer as a characterization of either the causes or nature of this value cluster, I will label it here libertarian-postmaterialist to clarify that regardless of how we choose to identify these items, we are measuring essentially the same set of values.

The differences emerge at the other end of our scales. I have used the term materialism in a more limited sense than Inglehart to identify the emphasis attached to economic concerns, both for oneself and
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one's society. In my sense of the term, then, *materialists* are those who place a high priority on a stable economy, economic growth, fighting rising prices and, at the more personal level (the private domain), on securing a high-paying job, adequate housing, and a comfortable life. Inglehart includes in his *materialism* concept, however, a second set of non-economic issues, namely support for a strong defense, law and order, and fighting crime. I label this second set of non-economic issues as one component of an *authoritarian* value orientation. This *authoritarian* orientation designates a broader cluster of values, which, along with concerns for security and order, includes respect for authority, discipline and dutifulness, patriotism and intolerance for minorities, conformity to customs, and support for traditional religious and moral values. To avoid confusion, I will use the term *materialism* in this discussion to refer to my definition of the term rather than his.

As Figure 7 shows, Inglehart in his original argument presented us with one dimension of value change. Those holding his combination of what I label *materialist* and *authoritarian* value orientations defined the Old Politics for him, while those with the libertarian-postmaterialist orientation the *New Politics* or *New Left*, terms which he used virtually synonymously. He made no mention of a New Right.

This conceptualization encounters difficulty when it attempts to explain realignment. On the one hand we can readily grasp why the younger generation of highly educated, middle-class respondents, whose families have traditionally supported the Right for economic reasons, may now be induced to vote Left as a result of their socialization into libertarian-postmaterialist values. Inglehart's argument breaks down in trying to explain why working-class voters should abandon their historic support of the parties of the Left. Here his argument has rested on a variation of the *embourgeoisement* thesis that he still endorses (Inglehart and Rabier 1986, 458). In his original formulation he wrote that working-class respondents who "have attained a certain level of prosperity relatively recently" will "continue to place a comparatively high value on defending and extending their recent gains" (Inglehart 1971, 992). Because the value priorities of these working-class respondents remained primarily acquisitive or materialist, their growing share of the good life would lead them to become more economically conservative and, hence, potential recruits for the conservative parties.

However, while the working-class Tory phenomenon is well documented, it is capable of explaining the behavior of only a deviant portion of the working class (Goldthorpe et al. 1968; Hamilton 1967). Conservative parties do not defend the economic interests of the working class, and certainly we cannot expect a major realignment of working-class support from Left to Right based on the economic appeals of conservative parties. Moreover, realignment via *embourgeoisement* applies only to the most affluent portion of the working class. However, since affluence in Inglehart's formulation is the primary cause of postmaterialism, these are the very workers most likely to be developing postmaterialist values, which should only reinforce their traditional support for the Left.

In contrast to Inglehart's view, my conceptualization defines two distinct dimensions along which values are changing. The first value cleavage, running along the lower-left-to-upper-right diagonal, taps the priority a respondent attaches to economic issues as opposed to non-economic, value issues. This cleavage divides materialists from nonmaterialists and the Old Politics from the New Politics. Since materialists attach primary importance to economic concerns, they
tend to relate to politics in economic terms, which corresponds to the traditional class politics of the Old Right and the Old Left party alignments. Conversely, the nonmaterialists emphasize the importance of value concerns over economics. This emphasis on value issues defines the New Politics and includes, for example, both prochoice and right-to-life alternatives and both strong defense and antinuclear positions. Nonmaterialists, then, are those holding either authoritarian or libertarian value preferences, and those who place a higher priority on the kinds of issues defined by these value preferences than on economic issues.

The New Politics is divided by the second value cleavage, which distinguishes the New Left from the New Right. Those falling on the libertarian side of this second value cleavage support for the New Left issue agenda, including liberalizing abortion, women's lib, gay rights, and other new morality issues; protecting the environment, antinuclear weapons, and other quality-of-life issues; and support for protest activities, more direct forms of participation, and minority rights. On the other side of this value cleavage, the authoritarianists endorse the New Right issue agenda, which includes right-to-life, anti-women's lib, creationism, antipornography, and support for traditional moral and religious values; a strong defense, patriotism, law and order, opposition to immigration and minority rights, and respect for the traditional symbols and offices of authority.

Figures 7 and 8 are presented to demonstrate the contrasting ways that Inglehart and I have chosen to combine three types of items into our respective scales. Figure 9 depicts the full cleavage structure and its implications for realignment. As in Figure 8, Axis 1 again divides the Old Politics from the New Politics and materialists from nonmaterialists on the basis of the relative salience accorded to economic, as opposed to value, issues. The relevant cleavage on the New Politics side of Axis 1 is Axis 2, which divides the New Left from the New Right and libertarians from authoritarians. The relevant cleavage on the Old Politics side of Axis 1 is Axis 3, which divides the Old Right from the Old Left and the middle class from the working class. As the dotted extension of the New Left-New Right value cleavage into the Old Politics domain in Figure 9 suggests, the Axis 1 value priority distinction and the Axis 2 value preference cleavage are essentially independent of each other. Thus we should expect to find libertarian-materialists as well as authoritarian-materialists. The line is dotted in the Old Politics domain because for the materialist, who places greatest priority on economic concerns, the libertarian-authoritarian distinction will have little effect on his or her voting behavior. Similarly, the Axis 3 class cleavage extends as a dotted line into the New Politics domain, but for nonmaterialists these class distinctions will not be paramount in their voting decisions.

It is important, therefore, to reach an independent determination of a respondent's position on both value dimensions. An authoritarian-libertarian value preferences scale will tell us whether the respondent is likely to support the New Right or New Left issue agenda. A materialist-nonmaterialist value priorities scale will tell us whether these New Poli-
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tics kinds of value concerns or the Old Politics economic issues will be foremost in
the voter's mind when he or she makes a choice. This latter distinction is par-
ticularly important for predicting the behavior of cross-pressured voters, who,
for example, may fall on the Left side on the Old Politics cleavage because of their
working-class occupations and union memberships but on the Right side of the
New Politics cleavage because of their authoritarian values.

The conceptualizations of value change in Figures 8 and 9 can explain the realign-
ment of working-class voters to the Right more effectively than can Inglehart's con-
ceptualization (Figure 7). Across Axis 2 in Figure 9 there has been a long-term shift
from authoritarian to libertarian values associated with the changing circum-
stances under which younger generations are being socialized and the growth of
higher education. As the number of libertarians in the advanced industrial democ-
racies reached a critical mass, they began pushing for New Left issues and achieving
some successes. The increasing articulation of libertarian values and the protest
movements organized to press for the adoption of the New Left agenda
mobilized a backlash among authoritarians, who felt that their basic values and
way of life were being threatened. This increasing polarization on the New
Politics issues in turn heightened their salience in relation to the Old Politics
class issues, which were already on the decline due to growing affluence and the
success of the welfare state. Thus the shift across Axis 2 from a heavily asymmetric
balance in favor of the traditional authoritarian values to a more symmetric
balance between authoritarian and libertarian values heightened the salience of
New Politics relative to Old Politics issues, thereby inducing movement across
Axis 1 as well. Since education is related to the class and values cleavages in a
cross-cutting pattern, associating high

education with both the Old Right and the
New Left, the combined trends on both
dimensions promote the middle-class-to-
the-Left and working-class-to-the-Right
realignment pattern Inglehart and others
have been describing.

One thing that is new in Inglehart's most recent contributions is that he is now
beginning to adopt much of the terminology of the Figure 9 conceptualization
explicitly. However, he is doing this without in any way revising or altering his
scale, which collapses the two dimensions into one and hence treats authoritarian
values and the New Right issue agenda as essentially synonymous with materialism.
This approach of grafting a new terminol-
ogy onto his old conceptualization simply
adds to the confusion.

Examples of this subtle shift in terminol-
ology are abundant in his recent dis-
cussions of the value change-realignment
phenomenon. In this discussion, Inglehart
first reiterates the argument that he and
others have made explaining why the
New Politics values cleavage is an impor-
tant phenomenon to study even though
there is as yet little evidence that it has
induced a realignment of party systems in
the advanced industrial democracies.
That argument points out that the expres-
sion of the New Politics value cleavage in
patterns of party support is inhibited by
frozen party loyalties and institutional-
ized interest-group-to-party linkages
(Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984; Flana-
gan and Dalton 1984). Nevertheless the
rising salience of the New Politics is
increasingly placing these party systems
under stress. Perhaps Inglehart's most
important contribution in this regard is to
demonstrate that the meaning of Left and
Right is changing among the elites and
mass electorates of these societies from
economic-issue orientations to non-
economic-value-issue orientations (Ingle-
hart 1984). And most recently, he demon-
strates that the amount of class-party
realignments that can be shown to have

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already taken place is mostly benefiting New Left and New Right parties rather than the traditional Old Left and Old Right parties and that beyond that, there exists considerable potential support in these electorates for New Left and New Right kinds of parties (Inglehart and Rabier 1987; and the opening to this Controversy).

In this discussion of the shift from the Old Politics to the New Politics and its implications for realignment, he seems to buy into many of the distinctions presented in the conceptualizations of Figures 8 and 9. He says that the New Politics issue polarization “primarily reflects the new noneconomic issues” and that “the issues that define Left and Right for Western publics today are not class conflict [issues], so much as a polarization between the goals emphasized by post-materialists, and the traditional social and religious values emphasized by materialists” (Inglehart and Rabier 1986, 470, 471; emphasis added). While still using the term materialists, the cluster of values and issues preferences that emerge from his own factor analyses reported in his 1984 and coauthored 1986 pieces as being associated with self-placement on the Right end of a Left-Right scale are that the military-defense effort should be stronger, the existing social order should be defended, terrorism should be punished more severely, nuclear power plants are essential, the unemployed don’t want to work, there are too many immigrant workers, one should sacrifice oneself for one’s country, abortion is wrong, religion is important, and God exists. To apply the label Materialist to these New Right issues is clearly a misnomer. Moreover, the New Left issues he identifies (pro-environment, abortion, peace, homosexual rights, etc.) clearly did not “stimulate a materialist reaction” in the sense of an increased concern for economic issues. Quite to the contrary, the New Left issues have helped to crowd the economic issues off the agenda and have rather provoked the emergence of the above New Right set of moral and religious issues.

Here we begin to see the problems inherent in the theoretical arguments and conceptual labels that Inglehart has attached to his value scale. The emergence in his own studies of a New Right cluster of noneconomic value issues around the New Politics cleavage that fit my definition of authoritarian values implies a delinking of the New Right with the concept of materialism. The point is that the New Right is as much nonmaterialist as the New Left. The program of the National Front, the French example of a New Right party, stresses law and order, restrictions on immigration, opposition to abortion and anticommunism. It is because these issues have little or nothing to do with traditional class issues and material, economic concerns that the New Right parties are able to draw their support disproportionately from the working class, as Inglehart so clearly demonstrates.

A New Theoretical Basis for Materialism

In my view, the most important fresh contribution found in Inglehart’s analysis presented above is the new theoretical basis he provides for understanding the shift from materialist to nonmaterialist issue priorities. He labels this argument “the diminishing marginal utility of economic determinism.” The diminishing-marginal-utility approach is a much sounder theoretical foundation for explaining the shift from economic to noneconomic value priorities than Maslow’s need hierarchy. Maslow presents us with a theory of psychological development and motivation arguing that an individual reared in an environment in which lower-level needs are satisfied will develop into a mature personality, one
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who as an adult is better able to cope with the deprivation of lower-level needs and hence is insulated from need regression (Maslow 1970). In contrast, Inglehart’s items typically tap issue priorities in the domain of public policy. He is, then, dealing with a vastly different phenomenon, and thus the inappropriateness of the Maslowian argument leaves him with no rationale for explaining why respondents would not increasingly place a higher priority on the issue of rising prices when inflation becomes an increasingly serious problem in their country. Indeed the evidence suggests that they will (Flanagan 1982b).

What the diminishing marginal utility concept suggests, however, is something quite different than the Maslowian early-childhood-socialization notion. As Inglehart’s Table 1 and Figure 3 demonstrate, the higher a nation’s GNP per capita, the weaker both the felt need for further reducing income inequality and the other classic economic policies of the Left designed to redistribute the wealth more equally. As Inglehart argues, after a certain level of equality has been achieved, further movement in the direction of perfect equality has a diminishing marginal utility, as there is less and less left to redistribute, and fewer gain and more lose in the process.

Figure 1 in his companion piece (Inglehart and Rabier 1987), most clearly presents the lesson that is to be learned from the diminishing-marginal-utility thesis. As median income goes up in a nation, the ratio of what the respondent views would be the absolutely necessary income to what the actual household income is drops. In other words, more people find themselves with a comfortable surplus. Their basic economic needs are being met, so economic issues become less intensely held and are assigned a relatively lower priority than they were when household income was at or below the level of absolutely necessary income. All other things being equal, the proportion of non-materialists will rise as average household income within a nation rises above a level perceived as necessary to provide the basic necessities of life. As the margin of surplus income increases, the citizen’s expenditure of energy in support of economic issues will yield a diminishing marginal utility, and the nonmaterialist is born.

Being a nonmaterialist at time one, however, does not ensure that a respondent will still assign a relatively low priority to economic concerns at time two. As has been shown elsewhere, the relative priority that a respondent attaches to economic issues in relation to other concerns varies across the life cycle as the respondent’s economic responsibilities and burdens change (Flanagan 1982a; Milkis and Baldino 1978). A respondent’s priorities will also shift in response to short-term changes in perceptions of how well-off he or she is. Aggregate stability in the proportion of materialists, therefore, is a function of national affluence and will remain rather stable so long as economic conditions in the country do not change. Nevertheless, aggregate stability can mask considerable instability at the individual level.

Inglehart claims that his diminishing-marginal-utility (DMU) argument is not new but was implicit in his original value-change thesis. Rather, the logic of the DMU argument as a causal explanation of value change is completely different from his original Maslowian approach. It should be recalled that it was his reference to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs that enabled Inglehart to claim that the materialism-postmaterialism value change was the product of early childhood socialization. The Maslowian analogy gave birth to the idea that socialization under conditions of affluence and security create a distinct prioritization of needs that immunizes the individual from regression to lower-level concerns as an
adult, even if the conditions of life change. Apparently Inglehart has found that there is a diminishing marginal utility in citing Maslow for his purposes, and indeed we find no references whatsoever to Maslow or the need hierarchy in either of his two current companion pieces. I believe history will show that his Maslowian argument was a clever analogy that did not fit.

In contrast, childhood socialization logically plays no role in the DMU argument. An estimation of the diminishing marginal utility of added increments of income is a rational-choice assessment based on the individual's current level of need and sense of relative deprivation. This assessment, then, is very much a context-dependent phenomenon, very similar to the life-context arguments that Milkis and Baldino (1978) and I have made. What is new in Inglehart's notion is that he has changed the relevant context from the individual level, a level at which we would expect to find considerable change across the life cycle, to the societal level. In doing so, he has convincingly made the case that we should find important thresholds in national income and household income, which, once crossed, yield aggregate shifts in the relative priority attached to economic concerns. These thresholds are probably not absolute but rather are likely to shift somewhat in line with changing societal standard-of-living expectations. Still, the notion that at some point a sufficient surplus should lower the priority attached to economic issues and to further increasing one's income, not in every case but in the aggregate, is compelling.

The diminishing marginal utility notion provides some legitimacy for using the term postmaterialist. I have preferred the term nonmaterialist because of my focus on the fluctuation that occurs on the individual level across the life cycle. However, the notion that advanced industrial societies as a whole are moving towards a lower priority ranking for materialistic concerns suggests more of a unidirectional shift, perhaps justifying the post- prefix. Still this is clearly not the kind of irreversible phenomenon as suggested by the Maslowian arguments. Indeed we would expect that serious economic problems, such as runaway inflation or depression, would alter the current assessments of many respondents as to the relative priority that should be attached to economic concerns.

Thus, we are dealing with two distinct kinds of value change explained by very different kinds of causal phenomenon. On the one hand we are witnessing an eclipse of the salience of economic issues. This trend is explained by the diminishing-marginal-utility argument. As the affluence of, and equality within, nations increases, the percentage of the population that enjoys a cushion of surplus income above what is needed for the basic necessities of life grows. For these people, noneconomic issues begin to gain in salience relative to material, economic concerns. There may be some variation in the priority accorded to economic issues at the individual level over time, with changes in fortune and life context, and also short-term setbacks at the aggregate level associated with economic downturns. Over the long haul, however, we should be seeing a net growth in the proportions of postmaterialists—as here defined in terms of the relative priority attached to economic issues (Old Politics) as opposed to noneconomic, value issues (New Politics).

The second and distinct trend is the one that defines the change in value preferences. Within the so-called New Politics can be detected a long-term, gradual movement from the New Right to the New Left poles, as a function of age (intergenerational change) and education. Space constraints will not permit a full elaboration here of the causal mechanisms, elaborated elsewhere, behind this
pattern of value change (see Flanagan 1979, 1982a, 1984). In brief, the argument is that an intergenerational pattern of value change along the authoritarian-libertarian (A/L) dimension has resulted from four major changes in the basic conditions of life under which successive generations have been socialized—a growing equality in incomes and lifestyles, the accelerating pace of change, the advance and diffusion of scientific knowledge, and the rise of the “no-risk” society (Aharoni 1981). These changes are increasingly liberating mankind respectively from the constraining conditions of subservience to authority figures, conformity, ignorance, and insecurity, and enabling the individual to pursue more fully the goal of self-actualization. Given the nature of many of these changes in basic life conditions, which are driving the change along the A/L value dimension, it is not difficult to understand why the increasing levels of higher education found in the advanced industrial societies are also playing an important role in diffusing libertarian values.

Moreover, he seems to have the evidence to make good on those claims.

Such a finding is central to his argument because it supports his notion that the materialist-postmaterialist change is a function of early learning that insulates the individual against later change. However, the problem here is that while Inglehart labels his scale materialist-postmaterialist, 75% of the items used to operationalize the scale rather tap the authoritarian-libertarian dimension. This latter dimension, which measures how respondents divide on the New Politics value cleavage, is not affected by changes in the economy. Changes in one’s income, all other things being equal, will not affect one’s position on abortion, pornography, or nuclear weapons or one’s respect for authority. The relative aggregate stability of Inglehart’s scale over time in the face of changes in the economic context, therefore, is derived in large part from the fact that his scale, in essence, is tapping more of the New Left–New Right (libertarian-authoritarian) cleavage than the New Politics–Old Politics (materialist–nonmaterialist) division.

What further confounds our ability to disaggregate the two dimensions combined within his scale is the format of his value-priority questions, which artificially forces an association between his materialist and authoritarian items. Whether using his original 4-item format or his expanded 12-item version, respondents are typically presented with groups of four alternatives and asked to select their first and second priorities. In each case two items are—to use my terminology—libertarian (e.g., free speech and participation); one item is authoritarian (e.g., defense); and one is materialist (e.g., rising prices). This presents the respondent with a dilemma of constrained choice. Libertarians who are also nonmaterialists will naturally select the two libertarian items. Libertarians who are materialists, placing greater priority on
their economic than on their value concerns, will pick the one materialist item and then, having no other materialist item to pick, will select one of the libertarian alternatives, dropping them into Inglehart's mixed category. Authoritarian-materialists, following the same logic, will pick the materialist item first and then select the authoritarian option.

The real problem, however, is confronted by the authoritarian-nonmaterialists. As a nonmaterialist the respondent will be mostly concerned with the non-economic, value issues. But he or she finds only one authoritarian option. As an authoritarian, the respondent is very unlikely to select either of the libertarian options and thus, by default, is most likely to pick up the economic option as a second choice. The result is that the authoritarian-nonmaterialists are classified as materialists, which is an incorrect coding for a materialist-nonmaterialist scale but a correct coding if we view Inglehart's scale as a stand-in for the authoritarian-libertarian scale.

This logic explains two important characteristics of Inglehart's scale. First it helps us understand why we always find a heavily skewed distribution with many materialists and typically only 5%-15% postmaterialists, while the authoritarian-libertarian type of scale tends to divide samples much more evenly. Although both types of nonmaterialists are properly sorted, the authoritarian-materialists are classified as materialists while the libertarian-materialists are classified as mixed. Secondly, and more importantly, whatever real association there may be between authoritarian and materialist orientations is greatly exaggerated by the constrained-choice feature, which forces authoritarian-nonmaterialists to select the materialist option.

The answer to this problem is to adopt an item format that allows an independent and unconstrained assessment of the priority of all three types of items identified in Figure 7—libertarian, authoritarian, and materialist. This is a little tricky, due to the inherent differences between value priorities and value preferences. The materialism items are designed to tap the relative importance of economic and value concerns, both of which are presumably positively valued by the respondent. In contrast, authoritarian and libertarian values stand in opposition to each other, with those who stand at one pole typically viewing the opposite set of preferences in a negative light.

The solution to these problems is to follow the approach developed for the 1976 German Youth Survey conducted by the United States Information Agency (see Dalton 1981). Respondents are handed a card with a number of social and personal goals listed and in each case are asked to indicate whether they feel that their society places too much or too little emphasis on that goal. For the value-priority items, this allows for a rough ranking of the items' importance; for the value-preference items it indicates on what side of the New Politics value cleavage the respondent is found. Since all three types of items are asked in the same way, this procedure will enable us to determine how they cluster in an unconstrained situation. If Inglehart is correct, the materialist items on economic concerns should cluster with the security subset of authoritarian items, and the rest of the authoritarian items should lie distinctly outside of that cluster. If I am correct, all the authoritarian items should cluster together while the materialist items form a distinct separate cluster. A third option somewhere in the middle would be to find that all the authoritarian and materialist items cluster together.

The data to test these conflicting hypotheses comes from a 16-item value question I designed using the above unconstrained format administered in a 1984 nationwide Japanese survey of university-educated respondents. Due to the rich-
ness of the value themes tapped by the survey, it was possible to add several more items, bringing the total to 21, with 9 libertarian, 8 authoritarian and 4 materialist items. As shown in Table 3, the libertarian items cover the themes of participation, support for minorities, open-mindedness, personal freedom and freedom of speech, improving the quality of life, self-fulfillment, and self-indulgence. The authoritarian items include the themes of patriotism, a strong defense, respect for authority and strong leaders, preserving traditional morals and values, conformity, and intolerance of dissenters. The materialist priorities were measured by the four items identifying those who place high emphasis on maintaining high economic growth, securing a high-paying job, and working hard and saving for the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items by Type</th>
<th>1st Unrotated Factor</th>
<th>Three-Factor Rotated Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal freedom</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving people more say in government decisions</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing benefits for disadvantaged</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving environment and quality of life</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active citizen participation in local politics</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being open-minded to new ideas</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking personal fulfillment</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>7.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living for today and enjoying oneself</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>7.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialist items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing a high-paying job</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hard and saving for the future</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining high economic growth</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>-.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel our society is not too materialistic</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>-.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserving traditional morals and values</td>
<td>-.197</td>
<td>.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following custom and neighbors' expectations</td>
<td>-.325</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few strong leaders better than parties</td>
<td>-.343</td>
<td>-.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>-.352</td>
<td>-.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing for strong defense forces</td>
<td>-.492</td>
<td>-.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No room in Japan for dissenters</td>
<td>-.509</td>
<td>-.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism and loyalty most important</td>
<td>-.631</td>
<td>-.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should increase defense spending</td>
<td>-.637</td>
<td>-.468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The three-factor solution was derived from a varimax rotation.
future and those that do not feel that their society overemphasizes material things.

As Table 3 shows, the libertarian items all load positively on the first unrotated factor and the authoritarian items all load negatively, while the four materialist items all fall in the middle, closer to a zero loading. Even more dramatically, the table demonstrates that with the exception of two libertarian items and one materialist item that have somewhat ambiguous loadings, the rotated three-factor solution neatly divides the three types of items, with the libertarian items loading on the first factor, the authoritarian items on the second factor, and the materialist items on the third. In discussing the exceptions below, it is important to note that all of the items included in each of the three reported value domains drawn in Table 3 load highly on a first unrotated factor when the analysis is limited to only those items within a given value type. The inclusion of these three items (marked ?) within their identified value domain is only brought into question because of the presence of other factors on which they also load.

Each type of item was then combined into a scale and the resulting three scales were then correlated with each other and with several key demographic and attitudinal items as shown in Table 4. As expected, a strong inverse correlation was found between the libertarian and authoritarian scales (−.32). Moreover, the libertarian scale is inversely associated with age (−.28) and positively correlated with the Left ends of the Right-Left self-placement and party identification scales (.30 and .28 respectively). Conversely, the authoritarian scale is associated with old age (.30) and the political Right (−.41 and −.39). The strength of these correlations is somewhat further increased when all the libertarian and authoritarian items are combined into a single scale. In marked contrast, the materialism scale yields no significant correlations with either age or political preference. Unfortunately, the relationships with the other key demographic variable, education, could not be tested because the sample was limited to the university educated. However, the relationships reported in Table 4 are precisely those reported in my earlier study (Flanagan 1982a), only now the materialism scale is derived from the kinds of materialism items Inglehart employs (rather than on a post hoc basis from a most-important-problem question), so there can be no question of comparability. The earlier study included education and class, and we can infer that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales and Variables</th>
<th>Libertarian</th>
<th>Authoritarian</th>
<th>Combined Authoritarian-Libertarian</th>
<th>Materialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian scale</td>
<td>−.32</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>(−.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism scale</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>(−.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−.28</td>
<td>−.39</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>(−.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-Left party identification</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>−.41</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>(−.05)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All correlations are significant at the .001 level except those in parentheses, which are not significant even at the .01 level.
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relationships would be the same here if the sample had not been restricted on those dimensions.

The most important finding in Table 3 is that the security items Inglehart uses to measure materialism cluster with the authoritarian items while the economic items stand alone. The most important finding in Table 4 is that the pattern of relationships supports my argument that the materialism-nonmaterialism and authoritarian-libertarian dimensions of change are explained by different causal phenomenon and yield contrasting patterns or relationships with key demographic and political variables.

The most interesting unexpected finding in Table 4 is that materialism is positively correlated not only with the authoritarian scale (.23) but also with the libertarian scale (.13). Since I have viewed materialism as essentially an utilitarian orientation, I expected some significant correlation between the authoritarian and materialist items based on the following logic: The relative importance a respondent will place on the economic issues of the day—inflation, depression, unemployment, further economic growth, etc.—is a function of both the respondent's margin-of-income surplus and the extent to which the respondent perceives that his or her economic interests are being threatened by those issues. Thus new middle-class professionals in the advanced industrial democracies are likely to be nonmaterialists, both because of the substantial cushion their incomes provide them with beyond the basic necessities of life and because the skills they possess are highly valued in postindustrial economies, providing them with great job security. Conversely, the blue-collar worker is more likely to be a materialist, both because of his or her smaller income surplus and because this respondent's skills are increasingly becoming obsolete, thus heightening concern over livelihood.

The finding of positive correlations with both of these opposite value preferences suggests that those lying towards both of the extreme ends of the authoritarian-libertarian value dimension might have other kinds of inducements beyond utilitarian evaluations. It may be that something in the values themselves that are held by the extreme form, or pure type, of authoritarian or libertarian predispose each of them towards materialist priorities. Clues as to what these motivations might be are derived from the three items in Table 3 with ambiguous loadings. The materialism item working hard and saving for the future actually loads slightly more heavily on the authoritarian dimensions than on the materialism dimension. Elsewhere I have argued that the values of frugality, discipline, and hard work are part of the traditional authoritarian orientation (Flanagan 1979).

One might just mark this down as a bad item, since it combines the authoritarian orientation towards diligence and the traditional "Confucian" and "protestant" work ethics with the materialist concern with economic well-being. If we look more deeply, however, we may find a psychological materialism; that is, the authoritarian's preoccupation with discipline and hard work, in contrast with the self-indulgent libertarian orientations, which place a high priority on leisure activities, may be related to the same heightened need for power and sense of weakness that drive one to identify with established authority figures and symbols. Thus the same insecurities that prompt one to support a strong military and law and order may also motivate hard work, frugality, and a heightened effort to maximize one's economic security to placate anxieties about one's own weaknesses and lack of power. Psychological studies have provided evidence suggesting that such authoritarian needs for power and feelings of weakness and insecurity are the product of child-rearing practices that stress discipline over affec-
tive ties, a behavioral distinction that has been shown to correlate with class and education (Adorno et al. 1950; Winter 1973). Thus, a number of lower-class, low-education authoritarians may also be psychological materialists.

Just as revealing is the loading of the two libertarian items, seeking personal fulfillment and living for today and enjoying oneself, on the materialism factor. This suggests a Yuppie type of terminal materialism. Some libertarians who are preoccupied with self-fulfillment and self-indulgence may place an excessive valuation on maintaining a strong economy, acquiring high-paying jobs and surrounding themselves with all the material trappings of affluence. While for some libertarians, materialism may only be a secondary instrumental priority, something to be valued because it makes other life goals possible; for others, materialism may become an end in itself—a terminal value—because of the status, self-esteem, sense of achievement, comfort, self-indulgence and other gratifications that it provides. Some libertarians, then, may be susceptible to a “terminal materialism” in which, notwithstanding their relative affluence, increasing their wealth, possessions, and consumption of the good life comes to be valued more highly than other kinds of libertarian values. Thus, for them, economic issues may take precedence over their support for the New Left issue agenda.

The diminishing-marginal-utility thesis is a powerful one for explaining why there is a higher proportion of nonmaterialists in the United States than in Colombia. However, after reaching and surpassing some level of societal and personal affluence, further gains in affluence will have little effect on altering one’s value priorities, and we are left with having to explain why some upper-middle-class respondents are still materialists. Indeed there is some evidence of a countertrend in the United States running against the logic of the diminishing-marginal-utility thesis. The American Council on Education’s (1973–86) annual nationwide surveys of roughly two hundred thousand entering college freshmen, which began 20 years ago, have documented a growing emphasis on materialism. In 1966 only 45% of the respondents nationwide selected money: being well off as an essential or very important life goal. By 1976 this had increased to 52% and by 1986 to 74%. Undoubtedly for some of these entering freshmen, money is viewed as a strictly secondary instrumental priority. On the other hand, it is likely to be a vital priority for others and the notion of a Yuppie type of terminal materialism may be useful here in explaining the failure of materialism to wither away among some of the affluent.

As shown in Figures 10–11, when the three items with ambiguous loadings are dropped and the remaining 18 items are factored again, the factor plots yield three tightly clustered and distinct value domains. The plot of the first and second factors in Figure 10 depicts a sharp differentiation of the libertarian and authoritarian items along both dimensions while the materialism items fall near the origins of both axes. The plot of the second and third factors show the libertarian and authoritarian items splitting on the second factor but lying close to the origins on the third, while the materialist items load heavily on the third factor but lie close to the origins on the second.

When the value scales are recomputed based on the smaller set of 18 items, the correlation between the libertarian and materialism scales drops from .13 to an insignificant but still positive .04. The correlation between the authoritarian and materialism scales also drops from .23 to .18, and if the two authoritarian items loading below .40 are removed, the correlation declines further to .14. The finding of a higher correlation between authoritarianism and materialism in the
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Figure 10. Two-Dimensional Plot of the Item Factor Loadings for the 18-Item Three-Factor Varimax Rotated Solution (horizontal axis = factor 1; vertical axis = factor 2)

Note: Items 1–7 are respectively the first seven libertarian items listed in Table 3. Items 8–10 are the three materialist items (omitting working hard), and Items 11–18 are in order of the Table 3 listing of the eight authoritarian items.

The case of a class-constrained sample of university-educated respondents, where the utilitarian argument discussed above is likely to have less relevance, suggests that even among the highly educated there are still more authoritarians who are psychological materialists than there are libertarians who are terminal materialists.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Inglehart’s theory of postmaterialist value change and his related research clearly constitutes one of the most important theoretical contributions in the comparative field over the last two decades. My argument here and elsewhere has been that Inglehart was correct in identifying an important value cleavage with strong relationships to vote choice and important implications for realignment. Where we differ is in my claim that he has incorrectly conceptualized and measured the value cleavage that divides the New Left and New Right. To date, Inglehart has resisted tampering with his scale because it “works.” As I have shown, however, it continues to work for the wrong reasons—namely that it is rather tapping the authoritarian-libertarian dimension while at the same time causing a forced constraint between the authoritarian and materialist items, making it very difficult to disentangle the two distinct value dimensions using his procedures.

The conceptualization of the politically salient value cleavage that divides the advanced industrial democracies has been dominated by the notion of materialism for too long. As the wide variety of conceptual subdimensions associated with the authoritarian-libertarian scale suggests, we now need to cast our nets more broadly to determine what clusters with what, and in this regard much work remains to be done. While the results reported above appear to provide definitive proof for my arguments, some cautions are in order. A sample that cut across all levels of educa-
tion might have yielded somewhat higher correlations between the authoritarian and materialism scales, due to the utilitarian argument. Also, in other countries cultural differences might somewhat affect what does and does not cluster within the authoritarian and libertarian factor spaces. Notwithstanding these caveats, the above evidence makes a strong case for now moving beyond Inglehart’s original scale and developing two distinct scales. The two-scale approach is superior because it enables us to distinguish between the materialist-nonmaterialist value-priority dimension, which simply identifies whether the Old Politics economic issues or New Politics value issues are of higher salience to the respondent, and the authoritarian-libertarian dimension, which identifies whether the respondent is likely to support the New Left or New Right issue agendas.

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References


Notes

1. My response to Inglehart’s new contribution grew out of my review of a conference paper he presented at the IPSA conference in Paris in July 1985, which in published form was divided into two articles, including the above offering and a second one published elsewhere (Inglehart and Rabier 1986). My comments, therefore, will occasionally refer to this second companion piece as well.

2. This Japan’s Successor Generation survey was conducted under the sponsorship of the United States Information Agency in October and November of 1984, yielding 803 completed questionnaires of university-educated Japanese between the ages of 20 and 31. I am greatly indebted to the principal investigator of the study, James S. Marshall of the East Asia and Pacific Branch of the USIA’s Office of Research, for including my value battery in the survey and making the data available to me (see Marshall 1985).
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