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Globalizing Personality

A PERSONALITY INVENTORY

Objectives

- Identify cultural motifs originating in non-Western societies and their impact on shaping the global order.
- Recognize individual personality as variation on the cultural motif.
- Locate self in relation to civilizational perspectives.
- Compare and contrast civilizational perspectives.

ANALYZING YOUR LIFE HISTORY

Developing a Global Personality

Objectives

- Relate theories of development to individual personality development.
 - Recognize the importance of age cohort in personality development.
 - Recognize the importance of macro- and microlevel events in personality development and their interplay.
 - Recognize the increasing capacity and role of the individual in taking charge of his or her own personality development as cognitive and moral development proceed.
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Personalities develop, like other living systems, from simple, nondifferentiated systems to very complex systems. Think about babies. They have, basically, two ways of responding to their environment, crying and cooing. By the time children are toddlers, they have quite complex personalities. They can differentiate many responses to subtly different emotional experiences. They know the differences among some different types of love and respond to their families, friends, and pets, more or less appropriately, in different ways. This differentiation of emotional responses, such as types of love,

continues well into adulthood. This occurs with respect to emotions, knowledge, beliefs, cognition—in short, to all aspects of personality. Erik Erikson (1950/1963) has outlined the basic framework through which this “epigenesis” occurs. As we develop, we expand and refine our perceptions and our responses according to fine distinctions that we were not able to make when younger.

Personality also develops in terms of how a people can understand the world and how they can process what they understand. Cognitive theorists such as Jean Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) have documented how we develop from relying on the concrete experiences of our senses as infants to the ability to generate knowledge based on our capacity to formalize thoughts and manipulate abstract concepts. George Herbert Mead (1934/1962) documented the evolution of who we learn from, from imitating the specific people in our immediate environment, “our significant others,” to “generalized others”—no one specific person but everyone in general.

People are individual variations on the cultural motifs to which they are exposed, possibly their narrow subculture but more likely their society, and increasingly of their civilization and of the globe. The more cultural material we have available to us, the more choices we have in determining and developing who we are or who we want to become as individuals. Increasingly with globalization, we can draw on the events and experiences of people the world over to develop our individual personalities. Even the traveler who never leaves his or her couch can develop a “global” personality through newspapers, radio, television, and now the Internet.

This is one of the most promising and perilous dimensions of globalization. Exposure of people all over the world to the cultural values, beliefs, and perspectives of other cultures changes everything about social life, as we have been seeing. It changes the relationships between individuals and their society, other societies, and humanity as a whole. Exposure to events from the local to the global provides us with “material” to shape who we are. This gives each of us more choice as we attempt to define a good world, a good society, a good person. (Of course, the value I place on choice is itself culturally bound and very contentious in many societies.)

Each of us is a singular variation on the range of possibilities, narrowed first by our realm of direct and indirect exposures, second by our choices. We might belong squarely within one cultural motif; we might borrow from many.

A Personality Inventory

This personality inventory is based on the work of the World Values Survey Association (2000; see also European Values Study Foundation and World Values Survey Association, 2006). This association of social scientists has interviewed thousands of people in close to 100 countries, periodically since the 1980s. Ronald Inglehart (2006) has developed much of the theoretical

basis of the survey and analysis of survey results, basing much of his work on Huntington's (1993) "clash of civilizations." Inglehart argues that civilizational cultures can be differentiated primarily on the basis of two dimensions: traditional versus secular rational value systems and concern for survival versus concern for self-expression.

The societal scores that Inglehart and Welzel (2006) derived are composites based on individuals' answers to the survey questions. The societies are clustered into civilizational groupings based on societal scores and cultural heritage. This seems a valid projection because, as we have learned, each of us builds our personalities with the raw materials that come to us through socialization (interaction) from our culture. We internalize it. The only way that culture is expressed or made real is through the activities of people and the artifacts that they create.

Each of us is a creator and a reflection of our civilizational culture. We are also its bearers. Each of us is a unique variation. Just as within a family, although all of the members share in the basics of family identity, each is unique. Each has a role in creating and bearing family culture. Each bears it, but each person does it in his or her own unique way.

In the following exercise, you will calculate your score on a select group of questions from the World Values Survey (2000). The questions were chosen from among those that Inglehart (2006) found, through a factor analysis, to be the most discriminating questions.¹ Questions concerning gender roles were eliminated from this questionnaire as they are used in another exercise in the workbook.

You will calculate two scores when you complete the questionnaire. One score locates you on the traditional versus secular rational dimension (y -axis), the other on the survival versus self-expression dimension (x -axis). Your personal score on this questionnaire is not a scientifically derived score, and your placement on the map cannot be more than an approximation. The primary purpose of the questionnaire is to help you understand your own attitudes and preferences and, by contrast and comparison, the attitudes and preferences of people from civilizational perspectives around the world. You will also be able to compare your location to that of your classmates and your classmates as a group to the United States as a bearer of Western civilizational identity.

If you study the Inglehart and Welzel (2006) cultural map of the world, you may be surprised by the location of some societies (see Figure 6.1). This is because the scores are composite. We have learned that people may "compartmentalize." While they may adopt secular views with respect to some dimensions of life, such as the economic, they may retain traditional or religious values with respect to other dimensions. Similarly, they may be more focused on survival in some aspects of life and self-expression in others. This would be the case for individuals as well, maybe even you.

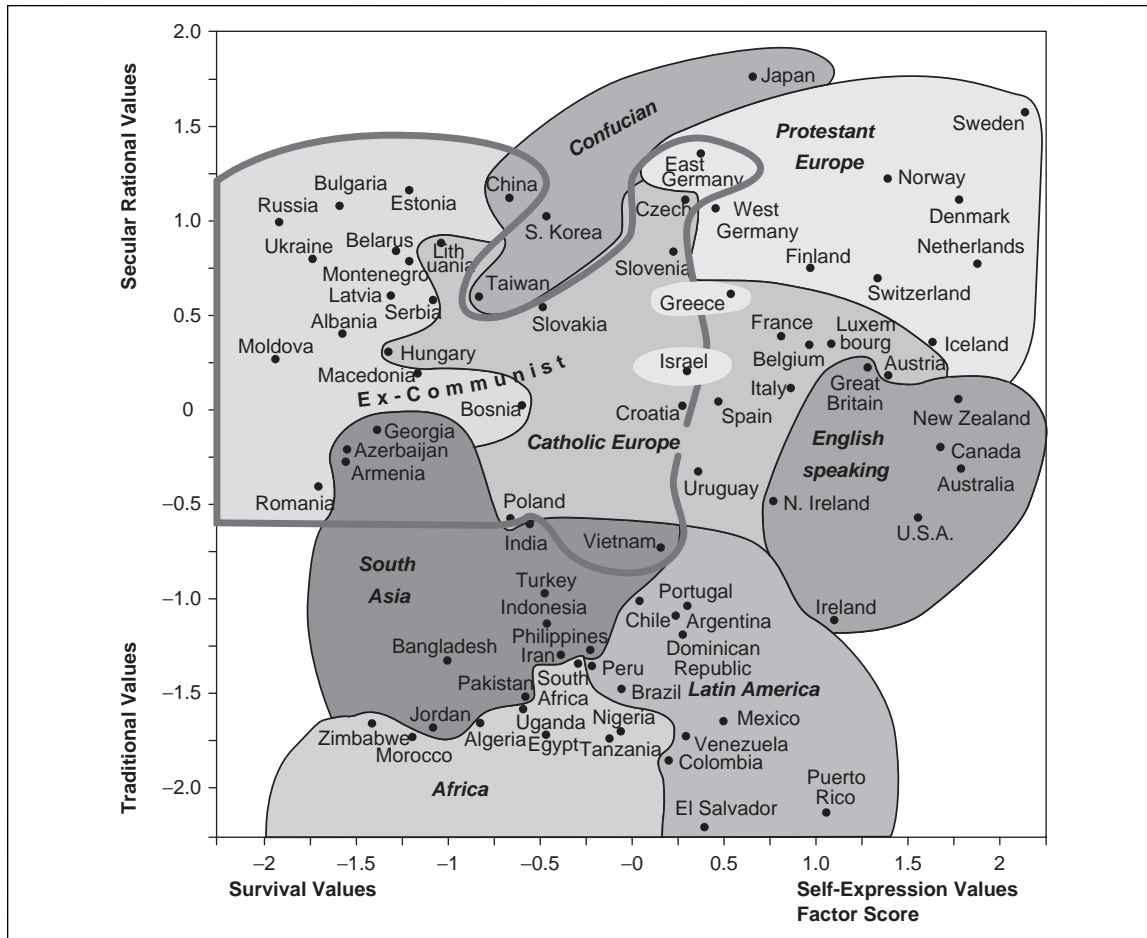


Figure 6.1 Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World

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PERSONALITY INVENTORY EXERCISE

DATA COLLECTION

Complete this survey yourself. Tally your score according to the key at the end of the survey. Place your scores on the grid provided. Compare your placement with the Inglehart and Welzel (2006) cultural map.

1. Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Choose the one from each pair that you consider more important.

a. Independence	Obedience
b. Hard, physical work	Imagination
c. Tolerance and respect for people not like you	Religious faith
d. Determination, self-perseverance	Respect for authority
2. Which of these comes closest to your view? Abortion is best left up to the woman.
 - a. Tend to agree
 - b. Tend to disagree
3. Which of these comes closest to your view? Greater respect for authority would greatly improve our society.
 - a. Tend to agree.
 - b. Tend to disagree
4. There are clear guidelines for good and evil.
 - a. Tend to agree
 - b. Tend to disagree
5. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

	A Great Deal	Quite a Lot	Not Very Much	None at All
Religious leaders				
The police				
The press				

6. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?
 - a. Most people can be trusted
 - b. Need to be very careful
7. Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?
 - a. Would try to take advantage
 - b. Would try to be fair

8. Homosexuality is never justifiable.
 - a. Tend to agree
 - b. Tend to disagree
9. Now I would like to ask you something about the things that would seem to you personally most important if you were looking for a job. Which would be more important to you?
 - a. A safe job with no risk of closing down or unemployment
 - b. Doing an important job that gives you a feeling of accomplishment
10. Now I will briefly describe some people. Would you please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you.
 - a. It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative, to do things one's own way.
 - b. Living in secure surroundings is important to this person; to avoid anything that might be dangerous.
 - c. It is important to this person to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything that people would say is wrong.
 - d. Looking after the environment is important to this person; to care for nature.
 - e. Tradition is important to this person; to follow the customs handed down by one's religion or family.
11. I am:
 - a. Happy or very happy
 - b. Not very happy
12. With friends, I am more likely to discuss:
 - a. Politics
 - b. Religion
13. The environment needs to be better protected even if it means a loss of some jobs.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
14. A child needs a home with both a mother and father to grow up happily.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree

SOURCE: Questions are adapted and used by permission from the 2000 World Values Survey. Copyright © 2000. World Values Survey: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

SCORING

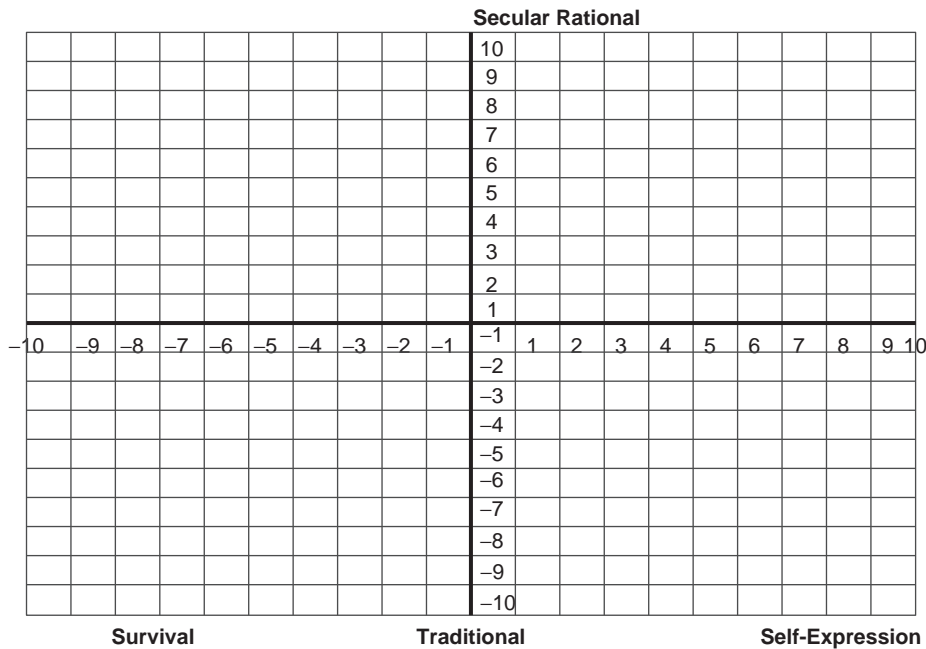
To score the inventory: Locate each survey respondent's choices from the questions above on the chart below. Tally the scores for each of the choices in each column separately to find a score for "traditional versus rational" and "survival versus self-expression." Scores will range from -10 to $+12$. Write each survey respondent's score as a plot point (x,y) using survival versus self-expression as x and traditional versus rational as y .

Item	Traditional vs. Secular Rational	Survival vs. Self-Expression
1. Child	Independence +1 Obedience -1 Religious faith -1 Determination +1 Respect authority -1	Hard work -1 Imagination +1 Tolerance +1

Item	Traditional vs. Secular Rational	Survival vs. Self-Expression
2. Abortion	Agree +1 Disagree -1	
3. Respect authority	Agree -1 Disagree +1	
4. Good/evil	Agree -1 Disagree +1	
5. Religious leaders	Great deal OR A lot -1 Not at all OR Not much +1	
6. Trust or not		Can trust +1 Be careful -1
7. Fair or not		Take advantage -1 Be fair +1
8. Homosexuality		Agree -1 Disagree +1
9. Job		Safe job -1 Important job +1
10. a. New ideas		Very or somewhat like +1 Not or not at all like -1
b. Secure surroundings		Very or somewhat like -1 Not or not at all like -1
c. Behave properly	Very or somewhat like -1 Not or not at all like +1	
d. Environment	Very or somewhat like +1 Not or not at all like -1	
e. Customs	Very or somewhat like +1 Not or not at all like -1	
11. Happiness		Happy or very happy +1 Not very happy -1
12. Religion/politics	Religion -1	Politics +1
13. Environment		Agree +1 Disagree -1
14. Child/home		Agree -1 Disagree +1
Total Scores		

ANALYSIS OF DATA

1. Chart your score on the following graph. Chart the scores of the class, if they are available.
2. Find your position in this complex of civilizations based on finding your point on the graph below.
3. Superimpose the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map.
4. Where would the class mean scores fall? How does this compare to the cultural map?



DISCUSSION

1. In which civilizational complex did your score fall?

2. Where did those of your classmates fall?

3. If you derived a composite score for your classmates, where did it fall in relation to the composite score of the United States on the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map?

4. How mixed or monolithic are we, as members of the United States, as bearers of our civilizational perspective?

5. Analyze the questions on the inventory. What factors determine where a society falls on the “traditional versus secular rational values” dimension?

6. Analyze the questions on the inventory. What factors determine where a society falls on the “survival versus self-expression values” dimension?

7. How would you characterize the countries within each civilizational cluster?

8. In many analyses, the hidden assumption is that as societies develop, they will “modernize” and adopt typically “American” attitudes. What do you think of that argument?



Analyzing Your Life History: Developing a Global Personality

There is a trite but true saying that each of us is “a product of our time.” It means that we have been shaped not only by our genetic heritage, not only by our interactions with particular people, but also by the local, national, and international events that occur in our lifetimes, even if we were not direct participants.

As we move through stages of development, the social world that influences our personality grows larger. We move from understanding and influence of “significant others” such as our family and friends to the “generalized other,” people who we may never meet. We move from being influenced by only our direct experience of the world, like touching a hot stove, to being influenced by the experiences, real or potential, of others.

In the following exercise, we will examine an aspect of our personalities that we might not consider very often, our “global” personality. To get yourself thinking along these lines, consider these questions:

- What comes to mind when you think of your country, when you think of yourself as an “American”?
- When you think of people in other countries, what images come to mind?
- How do you think of yourself and your country in relation to these others?
- What macro- and microlevel events have helped shape your image of the world and of your place in it?

For most baby boomers, the Vietnam War was an international event of dramatic consequence. This event was “mediated” for us in many ways. Newspapers carried coverage of the events. Television captured the horror of war and delivered it to us nightly. Our parents might have discussed it at dinner. (Parents and children had dinner together more often in the 1960s than they do now.) Rallies at campuses and “teach-ins” gave us other perspectives. We talked to our friends about it. If you were in the military or in the war itself, you had a very different perspective. The civil rights movement and Watergate, as national events, had significant impact. As with the war, these events filled the newspapers and news waves, consuming much of our personal and public conversations and dialogues.

Many things at the microlevel influence our image of the world. I, personally, was taught, over 12 years of religious education, that the word *catholic* meant universal. The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s taught all Roman Catholics to be more ecumenical. We went “trick or treating” for UNICEF and collected money for children at missions in far-away lands.

Consider events and issues that have occurred in your lifetime or have shaped your personality heritage. What were they? How did you learn of them? Who “mediated” them for you? How were they mediated? What messages were you given about them? What did you learn of them? How do they influence your image of the world around you and your place in it? No single event makes us who we are, but some events do stand out for their impact.

ANALYZING YOUR LIFE HISTORY EXERCISE

Developing a Global Personality

Think about the features of your “global personality.” How do you feel about being “an American,” about your place and the place of our country in the rest of the world? How do you view people from other countries and other countries themselves?

What activities, interactions, and events helped you to shape your personality? Who “mediated” them, helped you to understand (or misunderstand) them—parents, friends, teachers, the media? What were the messages you received about global and national events that have occurred in your lifetime? Have you heard about other events that influence your view of the world, your place in it, and America’s? At what life stages did these forces affect you? Students may interview each other for this exercise.

Resource: Timeline of Events

Characteristics of My Global Personality	Events, People, and Forces That Influenced This Trait and Messages I Received About Them	Primary Stage(s) During Which This Trait Formed

Some Influential Global and National Events	
1989/1991	Fall of Berlin Wall and breakup of Soviet Union
1991	First Gulf War
1993	Genocides in breakup of Yugoslavia
1994	Genocide in Rwanda
2000	U.S. presidential election "decided by" Supreme Court
2001	World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks
2003	War in Iraq
2003	Genocide in Sudan
2004	Tsunami in Southeast Asia
2006	Hurricane Katrina
2008	Global financial crisis

Some Influential Global and National Issues and Topics	
Global climate change	HIV-AIDS
Nuclear weapons	Biodiversity
Energy dependence/independence	Human Rights
Globalization	Education
Hunger and poverty	Homelessness
Pollution	Recycling
Jobs and trade	Health Care

DISCUSSION

1. Who were your primary influences early in life?

2. Compare and contrast this with later stages.

3. How did your levels of cognitive development and/or moral development influence your responses to and interactions with various agents of socialization?

4. What has been the role of the mass media—television, newspapers, Internet, and so on—on the development of your global personality?



