

## Chapter 10

### Cultural convergence over time?

We have argued throughout the book that the cultural convergence thesis is deeply flawed for many reasons, whether exemplified by theories of 'media imperialism' that were fashionable during the 1970s, ideas of 'Coca-colonization' popular during the 1990s, or the contemporary arguments advocating 'cultural protectionism' today.<sup>1</sup> The convergence thesis rests on the premise that habitual and repeated exposure to the ideas and images transmitted by CNN International, MTV, and Hollywood will gradually undermine indigenous values and norms, hence many deeply-conservative cultures fear that opening the floodgates to the American/Western media will erode faith in religion, respect for marriage and the family, and deference towards traditional sources of authority. But earlier chapters demonstrated how lack of access to globalized mass communications persists in many poorer nations, limiting the diffusion of Western ideas and images. In particular, this book has documented the existence of multiple firewalls which prevent the mass media from penetrating parochial societies and thus influencing the culture in these places.

In this chapter let us loosen this premise, however, on the grounds that, although still restricted, cosmopolitan communications continue to expand worldwide. Channels of mass communications and new information technologies have now become widely accessible to the mass public living in many middle income emerging economies, such as South Africa, Mexico, and Argentina. Barriers to information have also fallen, following the spread of the third wave of democracy starting in the early 1970s, expanding independent journalism, freedom of expression and rights to information, and the plurality of media channels and outlets available to the public. Protectionist barriers to free trade in cultural goods and services have also been lifted, following deregulation and the integration of economies into global markets. Figure 10.1 illustrates the dramatic sustained growth in cosmopolitanism worldwide, an especially steep rise during the last fifteen years. As a result of these developments, today the interconnected networks tying together cosmopolitan societies are denser and faster in many countries, and multilateral media conglomerates have far greater potential capacity to reach, and thus alter, cultural values in these nations.

[Figure 10.1 about here]

Nevertheless the *potential* impact of the mass media still does not necessarily imply that a process of cultural convergence has *actually* occurred to date among contemporary societies around the

world. This chapter is divided into three parts. Previous chapters relied upon data drawn from the most recent wave of the World Values Survey conducted in 2005-7, as this contains the richest battery of items monitoring individual-level use of the news media in a wide range of societies. Part I of this chapter utilizes the full time-series data contained in this survey, aggregated at national-level, to see if there is any systematic evidence indicating that cultural convergence has occurred during the last quarter century among more cosmopolitan societies. The World Values Survey contains time-series survey data spanning twenty-five years, since the early-1980s, for eleven nations. By describing trends over time in these societies we can explore whether the rise in cosmopolitan communications has reduced divergence among national cultures. Part II uses more systematic cross-sectional time-series models, with panel corrected standard errors, to analyze these issues. Lastly part III explores the additional question whether any effects vary significantly by the type of media, comparing the use of television/radio news, reading newspapers, and using the internet.

### **Comparing trends in mass attitudes from 1981-2005**

The eleven countries included in each of the five successive waves of the WVS since the early-1980s do not represent a representative sample of all nations in the world, by any means. Nevertheless societies are drawn from different world regions, religious traditions, democratic histories, and linguistic cultures, including some which have always been at the forefront of cosmopolitanism, such as Sweden and Japan, others exemplified by Mexico and South Africa which have lagged behind in this process, and also South Korea, which has sharply accelerated their integration into global communication networks during the last quarter century. The comparison also includes some of the leading producer nations dominating the sale of cultural products exchanged in global markets, including the United States, Britain, and Germany, as well as some affluent societies with open borders which are net importers of audiovisual programs and which are at the forefront of internet access, such as Sweden and Finland. The comparison also includes three emerging market economies with moderate levels of human development -- Mexico, Argentina, and South Africa. During the late twentieth-century, economic growth remained relatively flat in Mexico, Argentina, and South Africa, although democracy made rapid strides following the restoration of constitutional rule in 1983 in Argentina, the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, and the demise of the PRI's long predominance in Mexico, following the victory of President Vicente Fox in 2000. Today these three economies can be classified as middle income, with average per capita GDP around \$9,000-\$10,000 in 2005, about one third of the level of the United States. The comparison also includes one transitional case - South Korea - which has been transformed

by rapid social, economic, and political change in recent decades. During the late-twentieth century, the country shifted from an agrarian/industrial to a post-industrial service sector economy, and politically from autocracy to democracy. Today the population enjoys affluent and secure lifestyles; for example, average incomes for South Koreans roughly quadrupled during the last quarter century (measured by per capita GDP in Constant \$ in purchasing power parity). Using each wave of the WVS for the eleven countries, with the results aggregated at societal level, generated 55 nation-wave observations in total as the units of analysis.

Most importantly for our purposes, while lacking information about the most isolated and remote developing societies, the comparison includes countries which differ in their experiences of cosmopolitanism. Chapter 5 constructed the Cosmopolitanism Index to reflect the permeability of societies to information flows, reflecting three sub-factors: levels of globalization, media freedom, and economic development. The concept was operationalized by combining standardized annual measures for the KOF Globalization Index, the level of economic development (measured in purchasing power parity in constant international dollars, from the World Bank), and the Freedom House index of media freedom. One minor amendment needed to be introduced to the version of the Cosmopolitanism index used in previous chapters. The Freedom House 100-point scale of media freedom is only available from 1994 onwards, so this cannot be used to analyze the 1981 and 1990 waves of the WVS. In this chapter, therefore, when constructing the composite index we substituted the Freedom House classification of media freedom in each nation-state into free, partly free and not free categories, available annually since 1980. Fortunately the Freedom House categorization of media freedom was closely correlated ( $R=.893$  \*\*\*) with the 100-point Freedom House media freedom index, so this procedure should not make a substantial difference to the results.

[Figure 10.2]

As illustrated in Figure 10.2, the eleven nations with the longest time-series data vary substantially in their intercepts (starting point) and slopes (degree of change), as gauged by the annual Cosmopolitanism index from 1981 to 2005. Seven cases show high and steadily rising levels of cosmopolitanism, including Finland, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Britain, Japan, and the United States. South Korea shows the strongest transformation over these decades, becoming far more closely connected with global markets and networks. Lastly, Mexico, South Africa and Argentina lag behind, according to the Cosmopolitanism index, and these cases can be classified as persistently parochial societies. The logic of the convergence argument suggests that globalized mass communications has the

capacity to exert the strongest impact on social values in the most open societies. If this argument is indeed correct, then cosmopolitan contemporary societies should display considerable similarities in cultures today, and growing convergence over time, as these nations have the weakest barriers to information exchanges. The existence of permeable cultural boundaries, integration into cultural trade on world markets, and the expanded volume and pace of news information and audiovisual entertainment exchanged across national borders, should mean that countries like Britain, the United States, Japan, Germany, and Sweden, which are drawn from different historical traditions, social structures, and religious legacies, gradually come to share increasingly similar values and attitudes. Indeed this fear is at the root of French concerns about 'Americanization', where the combined forces of 'CSI', McDonalds, and Hollywood are believed to undermine the culture of Moliere, Sartre and haute cuisine, an argument advocating new protectionist measures for European television within the European Union.<sup>2</sup> It also follows that, by contrast, more diverse values and attitudes should persist in the more parochial societies, such as South Africa, Argentina and Mexico, which are less tightly integrated into international information flows, global cultural trade, and multilateral communication networks across national borders.

#### *Measuring value change 1981-2005*

What measures are available from the WVS to tap enduring aspects of value change over the last twenty-five years? The survey contains hundreds of items, but our selection is restricted because not all of these are closely or consistently related to each other, nor are they all carried over successive waves. To analyze consistent trends since 1981, identical items need to be analyzed to ensure that any significant changes over time reflect genuine shifts in public opinion, rather than measurement errors arising from question wording or coding. Building upon previous chapters, a subset of items were selected for time-series analysis since 1981, covering five dimensions reflecting the values of religiosity, sexual morality, free-market economics, political engagement, and nationalism. The factor analysis in Table 10.1 lists the items in each scale and the factor loadings, indicating the strength of the correlations amongst the values.

[Table 10.1 about here]

*Trends in religiosity*

What is the evidence that value change has accompanied the accelerated information flows across national borders, especially in the most open societies? We can first describe trends to illustrate value change and then use time-series regression models to analyze patterns more systematically. Elsewhere we have presented extensive evidence for long-term processes of secularization which have eroded religious values and practices in most affluent nations during the twentieth century, although the historical imprint of religious traditions such as Protestantism and Catholicism remain evident even in contemporary societies.<sup>3</sup> Predominant religious cultures are understood here as path-dependent, adapting and evolving in response to developments in the contemporary world, and yet also strongly reflecting the legacy of the past centuries.<sup>4</sup> We demonstrated elsewhere that the importance of religiosity persists most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially those living in poorer nations, facing personal survival-threatening risks. We argue that feelings of vulnerability to physical, societal and personal risks are a key factor driving religiosity and we showed that the process of secularization -- a systematic erosion of religious practices, values and beliefs -- has occurred most clearly among the most prosperous social sectors living in affluent and secure post-industrial nations.<sup>5</sup>

[Figure 10.3 about here]

Our previous analysis was based on the first four waves of the WVS, from 1981-2001. Figure 10.3 updates this analysis to include the 5<sup>th</sup> wave in 2005-7 as well. The eleven nations where we have consistent time-series data include predominately Protestant and Catholic societies, as well as specific cases reflecting Bhuddist (South Korean) and Shinto (Japan) religious traditions. The graph presents trends in the standardized religiosity scale, reflecting whether people expressed a religious identity, the value of religion measured by the importance of God, and the frequency of attending religious services. The religiosity scale was standardized around the mean. In the predominately Protestant European countries under comparison, the level of religiosity across the five waves of the WVS proved relatively steady and persistently lower than average; in secular Sweden, for example, only one third of the public expressed a religious identity and church attendance was also consistently low. Similar patterns were evident in Britain and Germany. By contrast, from 1995-2005 Catholic Spain registered a sharp fall religiosity, across all indicators that were included in the composite scale; for example the proportion of Spaniards expressing a religious identity fell from two-thirds to less than one half. The distinction observed here reflects trends in attendance at religious services documented in the series of Eurobarometer surveys since the early-1970s, where active religious practices appear to have fallen

further and earlier in Protestant than Catholic European societies.<sup>6</sup> The time-series evidence for South Korea is limited but the available data indicates that the two Asian nations in the comparison are also relatively secular; for example only one quarter of the Japanese public expressed a religious identity.

Yet there are also some persistent contrasts, notably religiosity in the United States which remains a special case among affluent societies and cosmopolitan nations, as many have commonly observed, where all the indicators remain relatively high.<sup>7</sup> Many factors contribute towards American exceptionalism, and we have argued elsewhere that in particular persistent patterns of existential security contribute greatly towards the phenomenon of religiosity in the United States, a society lacking the cradle-to-grave welfare state and the universal health care system which is available in other post-industrial societies. Most strikingly, religiosity is well above average in the three middle income societies, and Argentina and South Africa register a modest rise in religiosity over time, while Mexico shows some trendless fluctuations. On this specific dimension of social values we can conclude from examining the descriptive trends that clear and persistent contrasts are evident between most of the cosmopolitan societies (with the exception of the US) and most of the parochial societies, with no apparent evidence of any convergence among societies occurring during the last quarter century. The parochial societies are consistently above-average in religiosity and, if anything, they become slightly more religious over time. Most of the cosmopolitan societies (except the US) are consistently more secular in their values, with an erosion of religiosity in Catholic Spain. The comparative framework is limited but it confirms previous findings covering a wider range of societies. In short, during this era, when globalization accelerated, there is no clear indication of any convergence over time in religious values among these countries.

#### *Trends in sexual morality 1981-2005*

Elsewhere we have also documented how perceptions about sexual morality, on issues such as tolerance of homosexuality and support for gay rights, attitudes towards marriage and divorce, and ideas about the appropriate division of sex roles in the home and family, paid employment, and the political sphere, are shaped by the predominant culture – the social norms, beliefs and values existing in any society – that in turn rest on levels of societal modernization and religious traditions.<sup>8</sup> Far more liberal social values are widely apparent in most affluent post-industrial societies, especially growing levels of tolerance towards homosexuality and egalitarian roles for women, while more traditional cultures found in most poorer developing nations are usually far more conservative in their values.<sup>9</sup>

Social values are monitored in this chapter by the liberal sexual morality scale comparing attitudes towards divorce, abortion and homosexuality.

[Figure 10.4 about here]

Figure 10.4 illustrates the descriptive trends, revealing a complex pattern. If we just compare the position of countries at the start and end of the series, it is apparent that most of the cosmopolitan societies become more liberal and tolerant in their values over the last quarter century, a shift which is sharpest (irrespective of different religious traditions) in Sweden, Spain, Japan, and the US. By contrast, South Africa remains the most conservative in its moral values during the modern era. Argentina and Mexico are relatively conservative but they register a more liberal trend during this period. South Korea is an interesting case, remaining fairly conservative in moral values according to the composite scale, but Korean attitudes become more liberal towards homosexuality and divorce, while becoming less approving of abortion rights. Fluctuations in public opinion are also notable in certain waves of the survey in Germany (1995), Finland (1990) and the UK (1995), which may reflect contemporary policy debates and legislation about these issues, elite opinion and rhetoric, and the strength of conservative and liberal social movements in each of these countries.<sup>10</sup> Overall therefore the descriptive trends suggests that today societies continue to differ sharply in their liberalism towards sexual morality issues, as evidenced by the contrasts among contemporary Sweden and South Africa, or between contemporary Spain and Mexico. South Africa is also the clearest example of a parochial society with conservative social values which have not changed during the last quarter century, in contrast to the dramatic transformation which has occurred during this era in Spain. The pattern is not wholly clear cut but nevertheless the claim that all societies are steadily converging in their social and moral values does not seem plausible given the divergent trends which are apparent in different nations. Most – but not all – have become steadily more liberal.

#### *Trends in nationalism 1981-2005*

The idea that, as a result of globalization, all societies are abandoning the visceral appeals of nationalism and moving in a steadily more cosmopolitan direction was not established in previous chapters and this also receives little or no support from the time-series evidence. Trends in the strength of nationalism over successive waves of the WVS are monitored with two items, measuring the strength of national pride and also the willingness to fight for one's country. Figure 10.5 illustrates the contrasts in the starting and end points of this series among contemporary societies and the trends over time.

[Figure 10.5 about here]

In this case, the publics in Germany and Japan clearly express the lowest support for nationalism; a persistent pattern which can best be attributed to the enduring historical legacy of their defeat in World War II and the backlash which this experience generated against any use of military force by these countries, as also reflected in current debates in each country about the deployment of their armed forces overseas in a peace-keeping role. There is also a sharp erosion of nationalism in South Korea during this era, especially in willingness to fight for the country. Elsewhere, the US displays relatively high levels of nationalism, although with a fall registered in both indicators during the last decade (thus predating contemporary controversies in the Bush administration's use of force after 9/11 in Afghanistan and Iraq). Public opinion is also relatively nationalistic in two parochial societies, Mexico and South Africa, while rising over time in Argentina. The trends in nationalist feelings are therefore not wholly consistent across the eleven nations under comparison, with the US again proving something of an outlier among post-industrial societies. Overall at least two of the three parochial societies are more nationalistic than average, and there is no evidence that the appeal of nationalism has been eroded in these places so that attitudes converge more closely with the lower support for nationalism typically expressed in, say, Spain, Britain or Germany.

#### *Trends in political engagement 1981-2005*

Trends in civic activism are monitored by political interest and by the propensity to demonstrate and engage in consumer boycotts. In this case, Sweden proves consistently the most active nation under comparison; this confirms previous research which suggests that Scandinavian nations have publics which are characteristically among the highest worldwide in democratic engagement, including in voting turnout and campaign activism, voluntary association membership and generalized social trust, as well as involvement in protest politics.<sup>11</sup> After Sweden, the US and Germany are also relatively strong in the measures of political engagement, although with greater volatility. Certain peaks can possibly be attributed to specific controversial events, such as the process of unification in Germany during the early 1990s, and also particular election campaigns which can mobilize and activate the public, such as the controversial debate about the exceptionally close outcome and the Florida debacle in the 2000 US election. Similarly, the end of apartheid in South Africa generated an outpouring of political activism and interest during the early-1990s. Despite the fluctuations over time, again there is no apparent descriptive evidence suggesting that all countries (or even the most cosmopolitan societies) are steadily converging towards the mean; instead persistent cross-national contrasts remain evident, even among

relatively similar nations, such as those found between active Sweden and relatively apathetic Britain, or between Argentina and Mexico in Latin America.

[Figure 10.6 about here]

*Trends in economic values 1990-2005*

Lastly we lack suitable items monitoring adherence to capitalism economic values over the whole series of waves, but since 1990 we can compare ideological left-right orientations, support for greater income equality, and attitudes towards the role of the state and markets. If the spread of cosmopolitan communications, especially the consumer values reflected in commercial advertising and popular entertainment has encouraged the diffusion of support for global capitalism in recent decades, as claimed by McChesney, then this should be evident by comparing trends in public opinion.<sup>12</sup> Figure 10.7 presents the evidence from the survey. On economic values, public opinion across the eleven countries under comparison indeed displays a greater cross-national consensus than the other dimensions of public opinion compared so far. Despite the diversity of the role of the state within each of these countries, and indeed the political ideology of the regime in power, nevertheless there appears to be broadly similar and relatively steady levels of support for liberal economic values. Indeed the overall profile of trends in the smaller welfare state of Sweden and in the pro-free market and neo-liberal United States appear remarkably similar. Moreover although free trade agreements and the reduction of protectionism have gradually opened economic borders throughout this period, especially within the EU, where there is a gradual trend in economic values, this is in a more collectivist or leftwing direction, as shown most clearly in Germany, Argentina, and even the United States. The shift is modest but it is also in the opposite direction to that predicted by those who argue that globalization is designed to convert people to capitalist values.

[Figure 10.7 about here]

To summarize and compare change across each of these scales the countries included in all waves of the World Values Survey were classified into types of society. An examination of the mean annual ratings of nations on the Cosmopolitan index during this 25 year period indicated that three countries could be classified as persistently more parochial than the annual average score on the index, including Mexico, Argentina and South Africa. Another seven nations could be classified as persistently more cosmopolitan than average every year (Sweden, Finland, Germany, Britain, the United States, Japan and Spain). Lastly the case of South Korea was dropped from the analysis, since it changed from a

parochial to a cosmopolitan society during this era. Figure 10.8 examine trends in three of the value scales for each wave of the survey and for each type of society. The summary clearly shows how the value divergence between parochial and cosmopolitan societies over the last quarter century either persists (on the liberal sexual morality scale), or even widens (concerning feelings of nationalism and the strength of religiosity). There is no evidence here, or with the other value scales, of any gradual convergence between the two. This further confirms the lack of convergence already observed among nations, including societies which could be expected to prove most interconnected and tied together by deep cultural bonds and communication networks, such as Britain and the United States in the Anglophone world, or Sweden and Finland in Scandinavia, Germany and Spain in Europe, Argentina and Mexico in Latin America, or Japan and South Korea in Asia. The slopes may be similar (the degree of change over time, such as the shift towards more liberal and tolerant views on sexual morality in cosmopolitan and parochial societies), but the intercept (the starting point for the series for each nation and type of society) usually remains different. Convergence over time is predicted as a result of denser communication flows, but instead the evidence reveals the enduring imprint of distinctive historical traditions which continue to be apparent today on contemporary cultures.

[Figure 10.8 about here]

### **Cross-sectional Time-series Models**

Does the growth in cosmopolitan communications actually drive value change? So far we have relied upon descriptive statistics and visual illustrative graphics based on national means, but multivariate analysis is necessary to determine the significance of any changes over time. When developing more rigorous tests, the research design relies upon cross-sectional time-series (CSTS) data from the pooled World Values Survey including all five waves, facilitating comparison over space and time. This sort of panel dataset consists of repeated observations (by wave) on a series of fixed (non-sampled) units (the nations included in the World Values Survey). The survey, conducted in five waves since 1981, covers in total around 95 contemporary nation-states (excluding dependent territories and sub-regions, such as Northern Ireland and Puerto Rica). The nation-wave is thus the basic unit of analysis, generating a maximum of 239 total observations across the whole survey, although the number can be lower where data is missing data for specific items in particular countries.

The analysis of cross-sectional longitudinal data faces certain similar challenges to those encountered using multilevel analysis.<sup>13</sup> Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression estimates are based on

the assumption that errors are independent, normally distributed, and with constant variance. Survey data of the same nations measured in successive waves over time violates these assumptions and raises certain potential statistical problems. In particular, autocorrelations are generated because, with time-series data, the same countries are being counted repeatedly and the additional observations do not provide substantially new information. The danger of using OLS is that the study will fail to identify the lack of independence between cases and will subsequently reach false conclusions. The beta coefficients in any regression analysis will remain unbiased but the disturbance terms from the errors (i.e. omitted variables) are likely to be correlated. Ordinary least squares regression models in these circumstances would tend to under-estimate standard errors, suggesting that significant relationships exist when in fact they do not.

Various options are available to overcome the problem of both auto-correlated and heteroscedastic disturbances found in cross-sectional time-series datasets, such as generalized least squares models, as used in earlier chapters for the multi-level regression analysis. Following the advice of Betz and Katz, however, when comparing relationships across countries and across time, this chapter uses Ordinary Least Squares linear regression with Panel Corrected Standard Errors (PCSE) to measure the impact of the independent variables (societal-levels of cosmopolitanism and the year of the survey) on the value scales across each nation and wave of the survey.<sup>14</sup> This approach is particularly well suited to the dataset as the number of countries under comparison (N=95) is greater than the number of waves (W=5). Nevertheless the robustness of the results needs checking given the potential problem of missing data where the same countries are not observed in successive waves.<sup>15</sup> The use of panel-corrected standard errors with fixed effects is also an appropriate approach where the data contains a convenience sample of nations. Estimating random effects would be more suitable if the survey was based on a random sample of all countries worldwide.<sup>16</sup> The use of fixed effects has its costs, however, since this makes it harder for any slowly-changing variables to appear substantively or statistically significant.<sup>17</sup>

The analysis tests the effects on the cultural value scales of the national-level Cosmopolitanism index, representing the permeability of societies to information flows and the wave of the survey, representing change over time. Table 10.2 presents the results of the analysis, including the beta coefficient (the slope), the panel-corrected standard errors, and the intercept (constant), along with listing the number of observations (nation-waves) and the number of nations and waves used for each model.

[Table 10.2 about here]

The overall results confirm that the cosmopolitanism index was significantly related to each of these value scales and in the expected direction that we have already observed, confirming the more descriptive evidence. Hence compared with more parochial societies, more cosmopolitan societies were characteristically less religious and nationalistic in their cultural values, as well as displaying more liberal sexual moralities and greater political engagement. They were also less supporting of neo-liberal free market economics; although regarded by some as the home of capitalist values, in fact many affluent societies believe that the state needs to continue to play an important role in the economy. Overall we can conclude that the degree to which societies are open to cosmopolitan communications is related to modern social values, but this does not imply that all countries worldwide are converging in their values. As discussed further in the conclusion, culture is not static, and far from parochial societies converging to become similar to cosmopolitan ones, instead all societies are gradually shifting in their values, and the pace of change means that often it is the more affluent post-industrial nations and the more open societies around the world which are moving further and faster in this process.

#### **Does the type of media matter?**

Lastly, one important issue which has not yet been addressed in this study concerns whether different effects arise from use of television/radio news, newspaper readership, and Internet use. As the most international information resource, the Internet might well be expected to encourage more cultural change than either TV news or newspapers, which are typically far more localized and nationalized in their structure and contents. Obviously there is no water-tight contrast; people often use multiple overlapping sources of information, such as a morning newspaper, radio news on the commute to work, the internet for breaking stories occurring during the day, and then the radio or TV news in the evening. As a result, we would not expect very strong effects to arise from any single type of news media. In addition, many use the internet to find out about community events and local news, just as the international coverage of foreign affairs is extensively covered by channels such as CNN International and by reporting of world news in newspapers. We would need more detailed data monitoring particular patterns of media habits in more detail to try to tease out these sorts of contrasts. Nevertheless, in general information let us assume the proposition that the internet has the greatest capacity to connect us to event happening around the world, as on this media often has the greatest capacity to permeate all countries worldwide, except for those with strict censorship or filtering,

without regard to national borders. By contrast, use of newspapers and/or radio/TV could be expected, on balance, to provide more local and national information.

[Table 10.3 about here]

To test for the effects of using these different news media we can run similar multi-level models to those already used for monitoring the effects of the media use scale. These control for the social and demographic characteristics of individuals, compare the effects of use of TV/radio, newspaper reading and Internet use, and the societal-level effect of living in a more cosmopolitan society. For comparison across different types of cultural values, we can use the five value scales already developed in this chapter, comparing all the societies included in the 5<sup>th</sup> wave of the WVS, which monitored patterns of news media use. The results summarized in Table 10.3 show that use of the Internet was indeed strongly and significantly related to lower support for religious values and nationalism, while being positively associated with liberal sexual moral values and political engagement. In this regard, use of the Internet reflected the typical pattern found as a result of education, generating more secular, liberal, and tolerant modern values. Use of newspapers was also negatively related to religiosity, and positively associated with liberal sexual morality, free market economic values, political engagement and, by contrast to use of the Internet, more nationalistic feelings. The pattern for TV/radio use was more mixed, contrary to those theorists assuming that consumption of the electronic audiovisual media inevitably leads towards more modern values. Hence habitual users of radio/TV news is linked to stronger religious values and practices and more nationalistic feelings, as well as towards greater political engagement and support for free market values, whilst having no significant impact on liberal sexual morality values. Obviously these tests to try to disentangle the effects of use of different types of news media are limited in certain important regards, as we would really need far more information about the frequency of use and attention, and the typical local, national, and international contents that people were exposed to through these media, to go further with this analysis. Still the results provide some additional reasons to question the more sweeping assumptions about the effects arising from the globalization of the media. The analysis suggests that the impact of this process varies by type of media, as well as by type of society and by the type of social sector.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

Previous interpretations of the accumulated evidence derived from the World Values Survey suggest that the polarization thesis is a more accurate depiction of cultural change rather than the

convergence thesis. In an earlier study, based on the first four waves of the WVS, Inglehart and Welzel emphasized: "In recent decades, a simplistic version of globalization theory gained widespread currency, holding that the globalization of the mass media and communication networks was producing cultural convergence; we were heading towards a "global village" in which everyone was on the same wavelength. The evidence presented here demonstrates that this view is false – in fact global trends are moving in the opposite direction. The values of the publics in rich countries are changing rapidly, while those of low-income societies are changing much more slowly or not at all. As a result, a growing gap is opening up between the basic values of the publics of rich versus poor countries."<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere we have documented the growing divergence around the world in religiosity, with richer societies usually becoming far more secular in their values and practices.<sup>19</sup> We have also shown the expanding gap in attitudes towards gender equality, with egalitarian attitudes spreading throughout post-industrial societies while developing nations typically remain far more traditional in their views about the roles of women and men.<sup>20</sup> These studies conclude that the imprint of historical cultural traditions, for example the distinct values and beliefs found in predominately Protestant, Catholic and Muslim societies, often persist in the face of societal modernization, even when the strength of religious practices has faded.

Building upon this foundation, this evidence can now be updated to examine whether cosmopolitan societies are similar in their value orientations and whether they have experienced a gradual convergence over time. Comparison of societies classified in accordance with the Cosmopolitanism Index allows us to go further than previous studies by testing whether cultural values in cosmopolitan societies have indeed changed faster and further than in parochial nations.

The results of the analysis presented in this chapter suggest certain important factors which the convergence thesis overlook or underestimate. The evidence indicates that culture in post-industrial nations is far from static or uniform. Convergence assumes an unchanging view of the cultural values existing in richer nations, as well as exaggerating the degree of consensus in the core values shared by Americans and Europeans. Convergence assumes that developing societies assimilate American/Western cultures. But post-industrial societies are also experiencing profound long-term processes of value change – and they also differ significantly amongst themselves. There is a wealth of research demonstrating that self-expression values – exemplified by attitudes such as tolerance of homosexuality, support for gender equality, more secular beliefs, concern about environmental protection, and willingness to become engaged through direct action and protest politics --are just some of the cultural dimensions where the younger generation living within rich nations differs

significantly from their parents and grand-parents.<sup>21</sup> Far from a static and homogeneous 'Western culture', the process of value change is thus a moving target which affects all countries in the world. As we demonstrated, countries such as Sweden, Britain, and Germany have experienced important changes in their core values during the last quarter century. In this regards, the process of cultural change is similar to the issue of rising living standards in OECD nations; living standards have improved in many emerging market economies, such as India, Brazil and China, fuelled by surging growth rates, but this does not mean that average incomes have yet caught up with post-industrial economies, which have also been growing. Moreover important cultural differences exist even among Protestant and Catholic Europe, as well as between Europe and the United States. The persistent imprint of deep-rooted cultural traditions, left by the legacy of the world's religions, as well as distinctive historical experiences, ethnic cleavages, and social structures, also mean that the values typically found in contemporary post-industrial societies differ in important ways. The evidence we have considered throughout the book provides strong grounds for skepticism about the more exaggerated claims concerning the threats to cultural diversity found in countries and societies around the world. The media matters, but only under certain conditions. Parochial societies continue to display distinctive cultural values to those found in the more cosmopolitan nations, and the latter also diverge sharply among themselves. Just to emphasize some of the outliers among those we have compared, America is far more religious and nationalistic than most post-industrial societies, while Sweden remains the most liberal in sexual morality and the most politically engaged. Even while countries may move in a similar trajectory as they evolve over time, there is little evidence that these national difference have gradually merged over the last quarter century; despite being one of the most open and globalized societies in the world, Sweden is far from becoming America, while the U.S. is also far from becoming Sweden. Let us go on to consider the policy debates surrounding these issues, by multilateral agencies such as the EU and UNESCO, and reflect upon the broader implications of the analysis of changes in cultural values for protectionist or free market communication policies.

**Table 10.1: Dimensions of cultural values**

	Religiosity	Liberal sexual morality	Free-market economics	Political engagement	Nationalism
Religious identity	.829				
Importance of God	.827				
Frequency of attending religious services	.749				
Approval of divorce		.840			
Approval of abortion		.786			
Approval of homosexuality		.780			
Approve income differences as incentives			.720		
People should take responsibility to provide for themselves			.694		
Left-right self-placement scale			.504		
Participated in demonstration				.778	
Participated in boycott				.774	
Political interest				.606	
Willingness to fight for country					.783
National Pride					.682

**Notes:** Individual-level Principal Component Factor Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

**Table 10.2: Cross-sectional time-series regression models explaining societal-level mean value scales**

	Religiosity	Liberal sexual morality	Free-market economics	Political engagement	Nationalism
Cosmopolitanism index (Globalization+ Development+ Freedom)	<b>-9.37***</b> (.1.04)	<b>10.25***</b> (1.06)	.295 (.415)	<b>3.87**</b> (.497)	<b>-3.02***</b> (.250)
Survey year	<b>-2.44 ***</b> (.402)	.495 (.549)	-1.11 (.609)	<b>-.571**</b> (.223)	.938 (.066)
Constant	61.6	32.6	59.3	38.1	81.2
R <sup>2</sup>	.32	.54	.05	.29	.15
Number of observations	195	199	161	170	176
Number of nations	75	76	72	74	72
Max number of waves	5	5	4	5	5

**Note:** All independent variables were standardized using mean centering (z-scores). Models present the results of the Cross-Sectional Time-Series linear regression models with panel-corrected standard errors, using Stata/SE .xtpcse (for details, see Appendix C). Missing data was treated on a pair-wise basis. The table presents the beta coefficient, (the panel-corrected standard error below in parenthesis), and the significance. P.\*=.05 \*\*=.01 \*\*\*=.001. See appendix A for details about the measurement, coding and construction of all variables. Significant coefficients are highlighted in **bold**.

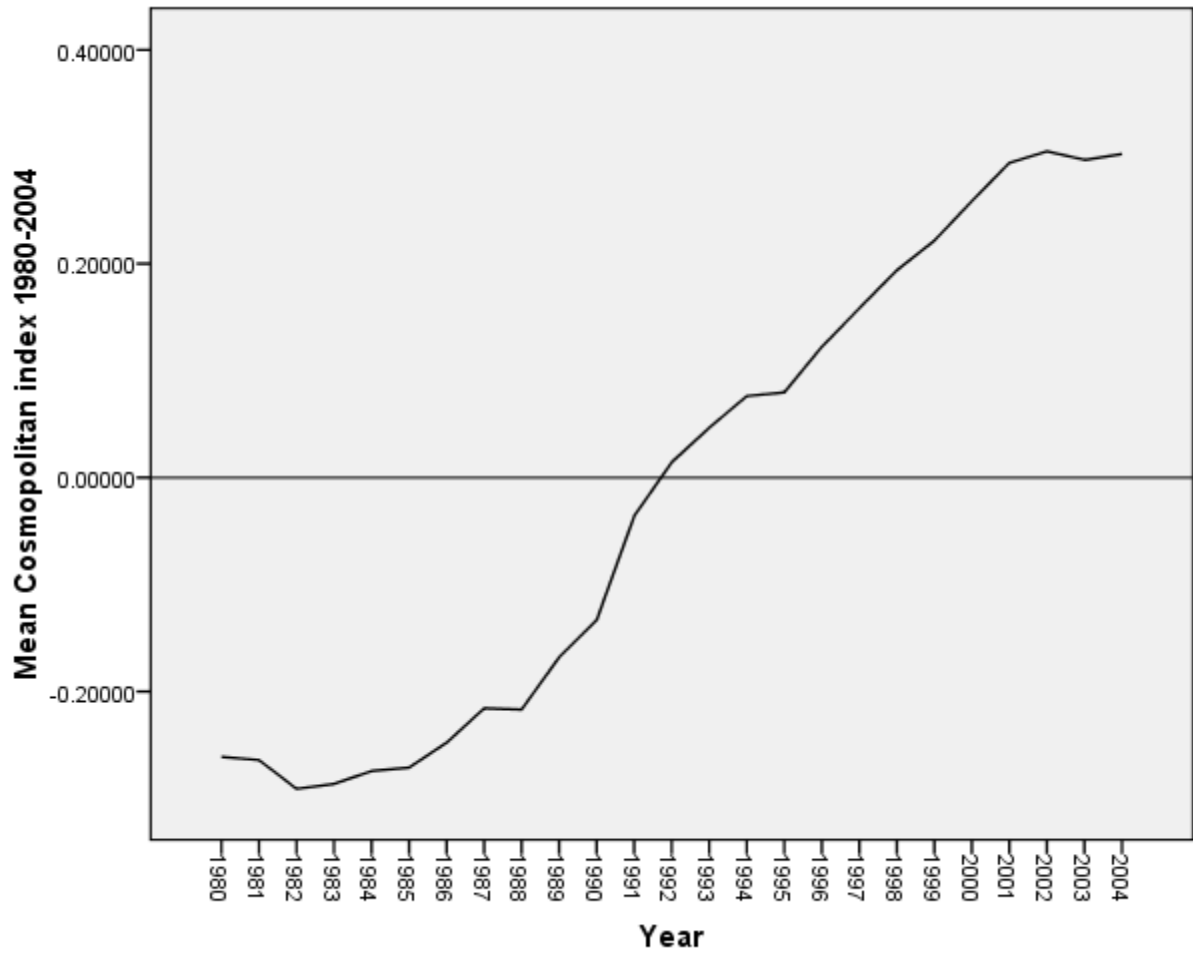
**Source:** World Values Survey 2005-7.

**Table 10.3: Multilevel regression models explaining social values by type of media**

	Religiosity	Liberal sexual morality	Free- market economic s	Political engagemen t	Nationalis m
<b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL</b>					
<b>Demographic characteristics</b>					
Age (years)	<b>2.96***</b> (.093)	<b>-2.28***</b> (.101)	<b>.681***</b> (.093)	<b>1.00***</b> (.093)	<b>.625***</b> (.083)
Gender (male=1)	<b>-3.09***</b> (.083)	<b>-.887***</b> (.090)	<b>.566***</b> (.082)	<b>2.16***</b> (.083)	<b>1.18***</b> (.074)
<b>Socioeconomic resources</b>					
Household income 10-pt scale	-.155 (.093)	<b>1.15***</b> (.100)	<b>2.12***</b> (.090)	<b>.446***</b> (.092)	<b>.538***</b> (.082)
Education 9-pt scale	<b>-.224*</b> (.109)	<b>2.44***</b> (.118)	<b>.278**</b> (.108)	<b>4.08***</b> (.109)	<b>-.928***</b> (.097)
<b>Media use</b>					
Newspaper use scale	<b>-.597***</b> (.123)	<b>.339**</b> (.136)	<b>.265*</b> (.117)	<b>1.15***</b> (.127)	<b>.701***</b> (.101)
TV/Radio use	<b>.655***</b> (.091)	-.130 (.100)	<b>.211*</b> (.096)	<b>1.09***</b> (.094)	<b>1.22***</b> (.081)
Internet use	<b>-1.31***</b> (.121)	<b>1.271***</b> (.132)	-.099 (.112)	<b>.770***</b> (.124)	<b>-.784***</b> (.100)
<b>NATIONAL-LEVEL</b>					
Cosmopolitanism index (Globalization+Development+Freedom)	<b>-10.7***</b> (2.32)	<b>12.9***</b> (1.39)	<b>-2.41</b> (.690)	-1.12 (1.00)	<b>-4.55***</b> (1.13)
Constant (intercept)	65.30	39.56	55.25	35.46	84.33
Schwartz BIC	518,830	498,975	359,445	482,119	427,223
N. respondents	58,641	55,787	42,283	54,928	49,837
<b>N. nations</b>	45	44	42	45	43

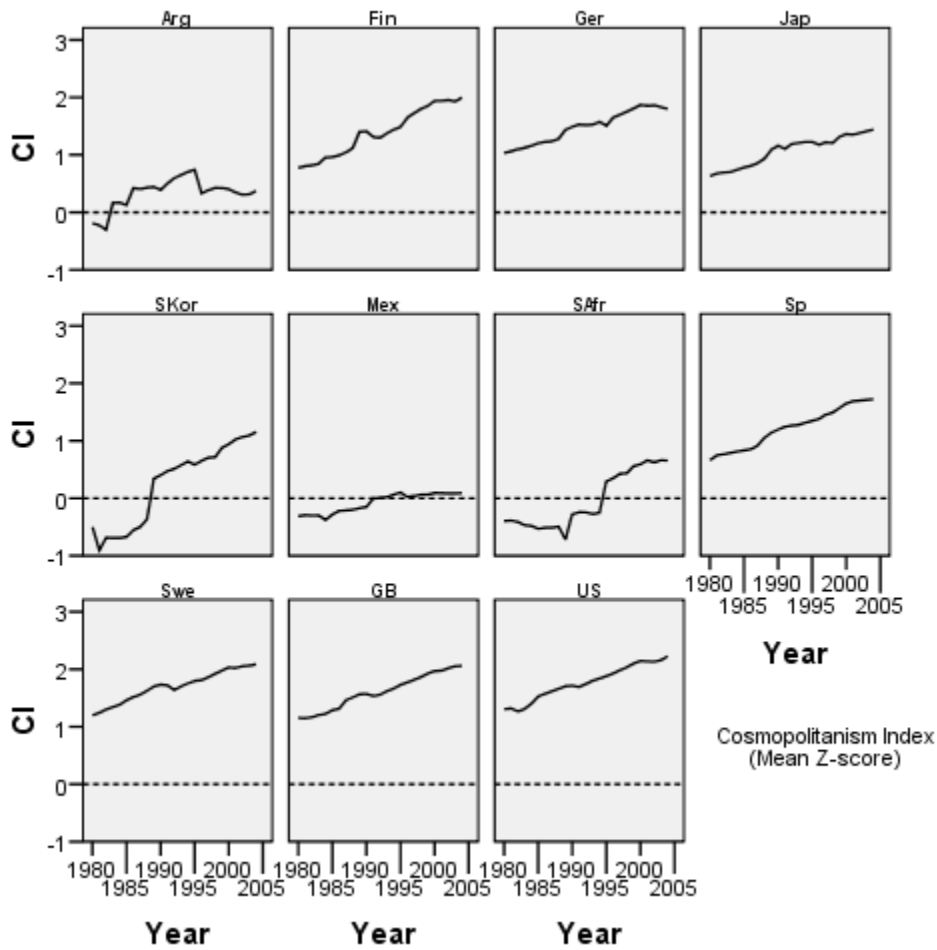
**Note:** All independent variables were standardized using mean centering (z-scores). Models present the results of the REML multilevel regression models (for details, see Appendix C) including the beta coefficient, (the standard error below in parenthesis), and the significance. The 100 point scales are constructed from the items listed in Table 10.1. The media use variables monitored regular use of newspapers, radio/TV news, and the internet, as binary (0/1) dichotomies. P.\*=.05 \*\*=.01 \*\*\*=.001. See appendix A for details about the measurement, coding and construction of all variables. Significant coefficients are highlighted in **bold**. **Source:** World Values Survey 2005-7

**Figure 10.1: The rise in cosmopolitanism worldwide, 1980-2004**



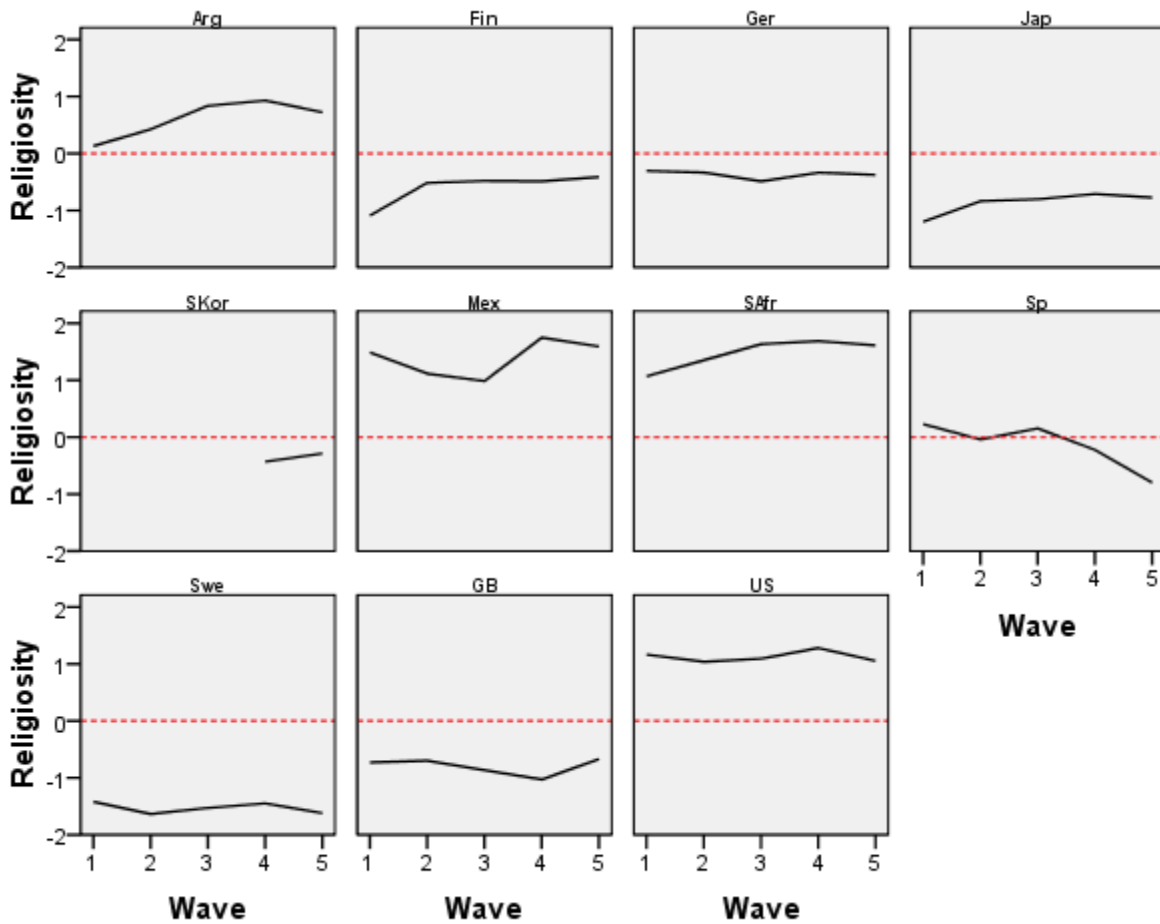
Note: The Cosmopolitanism index is conceptualized as the permeability of societies to information flows and it is constructed according to levels of globalization, media freedom, and economic development, with all indices standardized around the mean (z-scores). See text for details.

**Figure 10.2: The rise in cosmopolitanism, selected nations**



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point Cosmopolitanism Index scale, see Chapter 5 and Technical Appendix A. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each year, from 1980 to 2005.

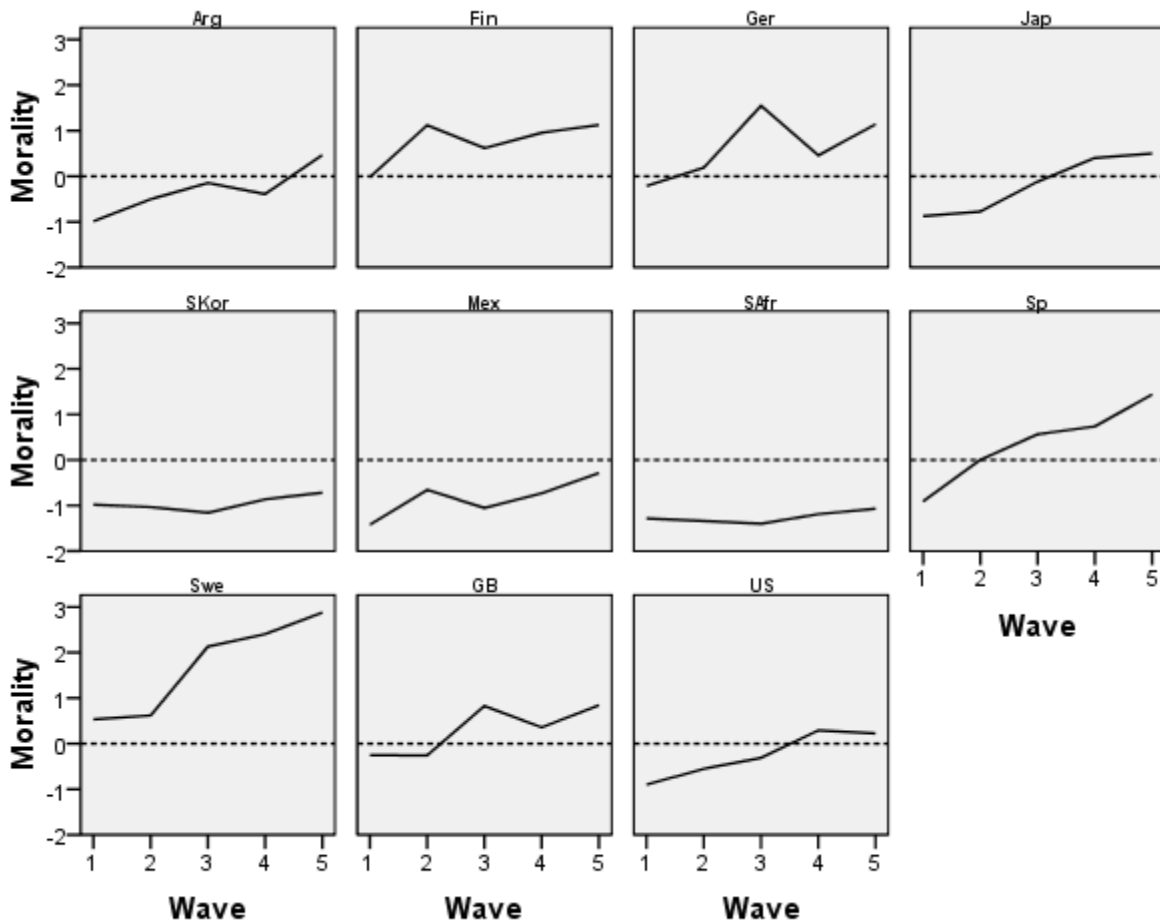
**Figure 10.3: Trends in religiosity, 1981-2005**



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point religiosity scale, see Table 10.1. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each wave of the WVS from Wave 1 (1981-3) to Wave 5 (2005-7).

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

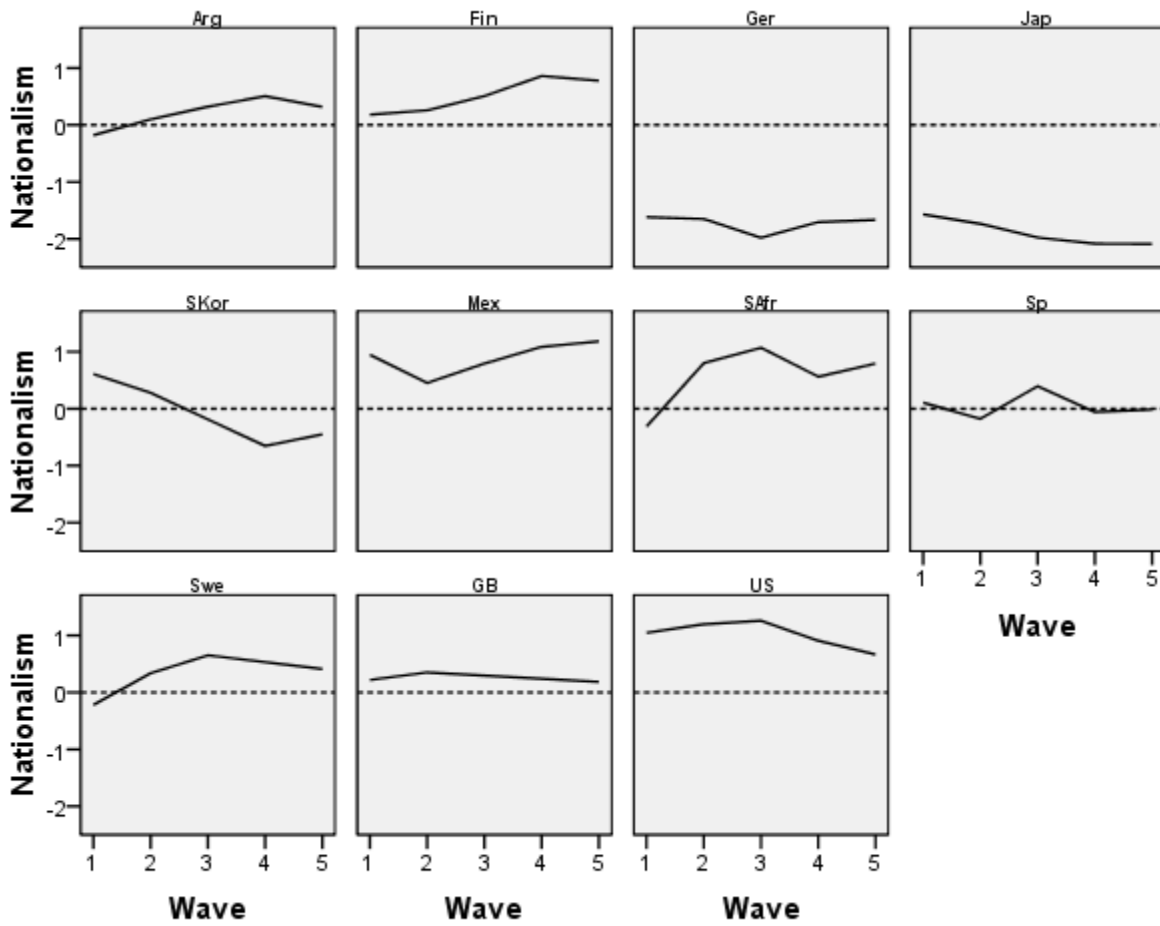
Figure 10.4: Trends in liberal sexual morality, 1981-2005



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point liberal sexual morality scale, see Table 10.1. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each wave of the WVS from Wave 1 (1981-3) to Wave 5 (2005-7).

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

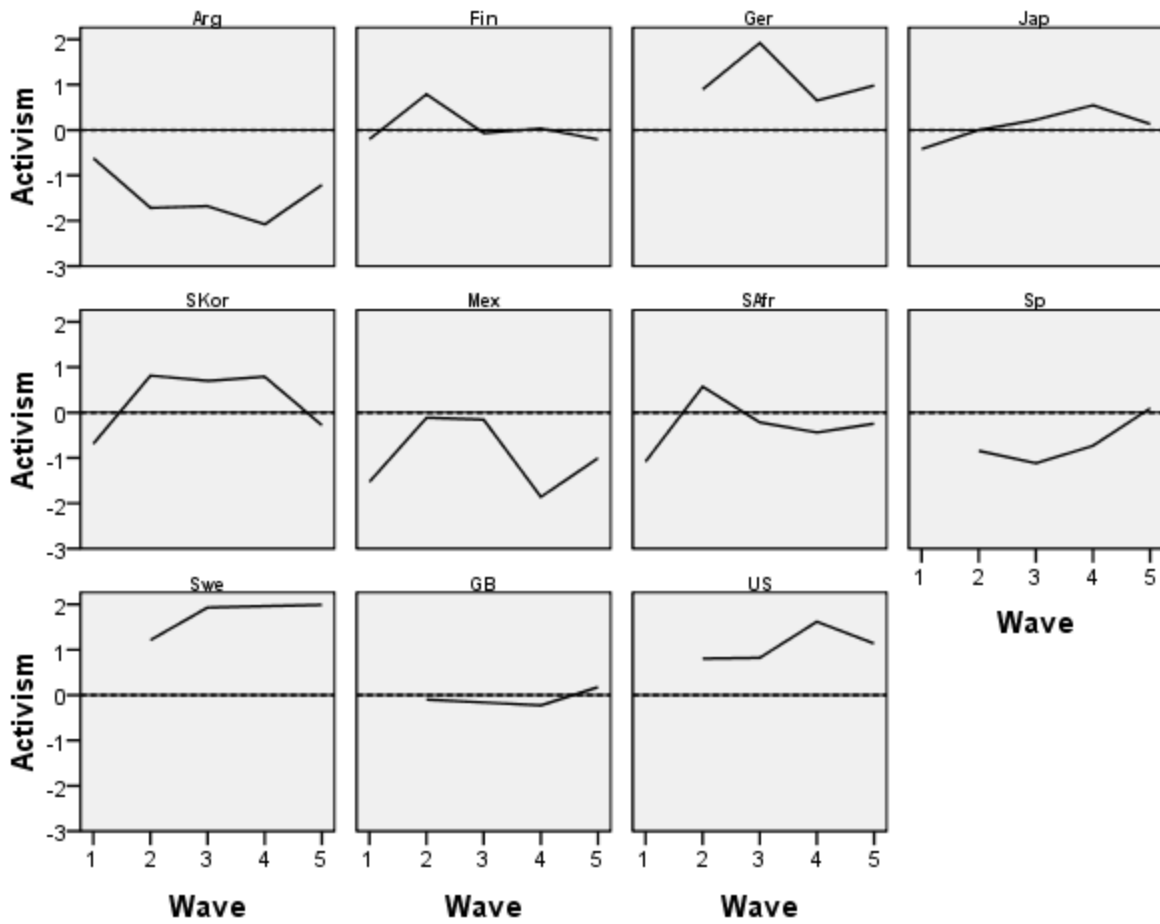
Figure 10.5: Trends in nationalism, 1981-2005



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point liberal nationalism scale, see Table 10.1. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each wave of the WVS from Wave 1 (1981-3) to Wave 5 (2005-7).

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

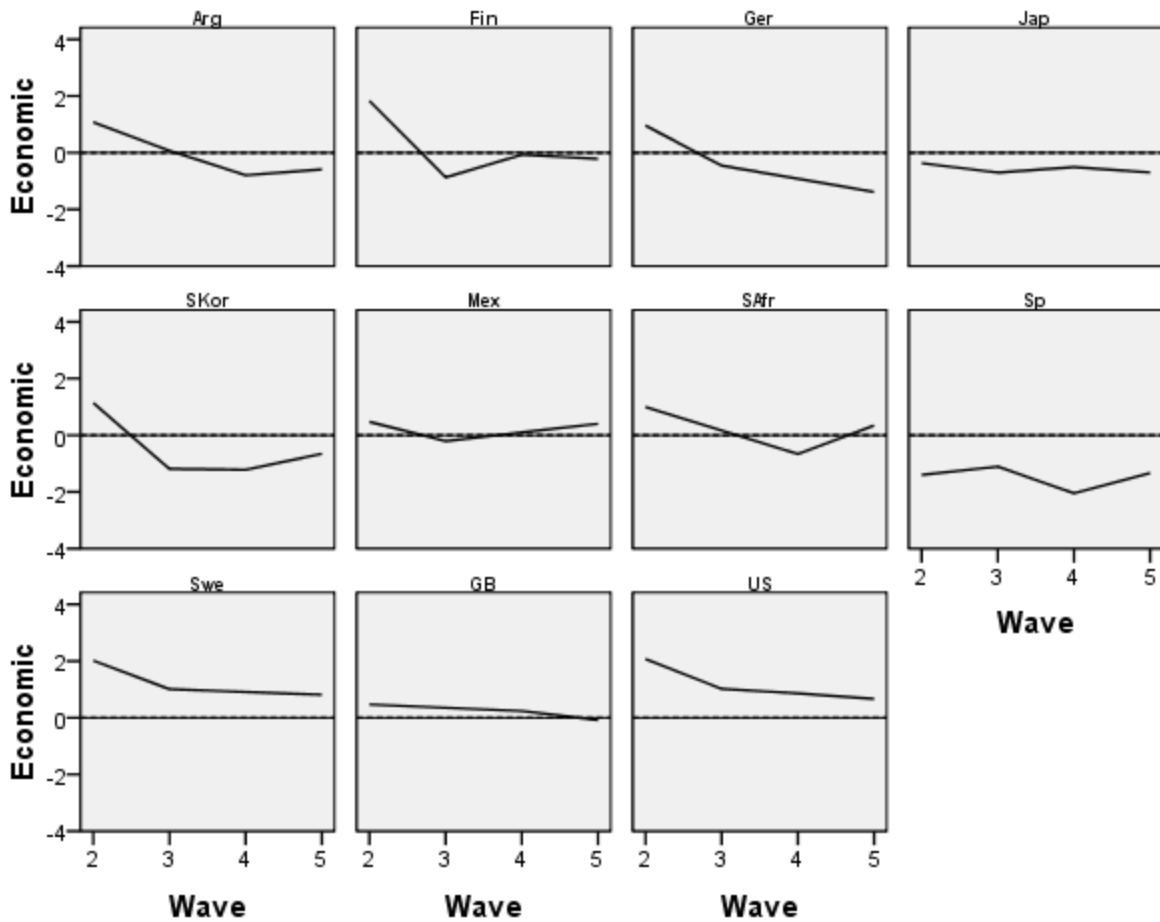
**Figure 10.6: Trends in political engagement, 1981-2005**



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point political engagement scale, see Table 10.1. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each wave of the WVS from Wave 1 (1981-3) to Wave 5 (2005-7).

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

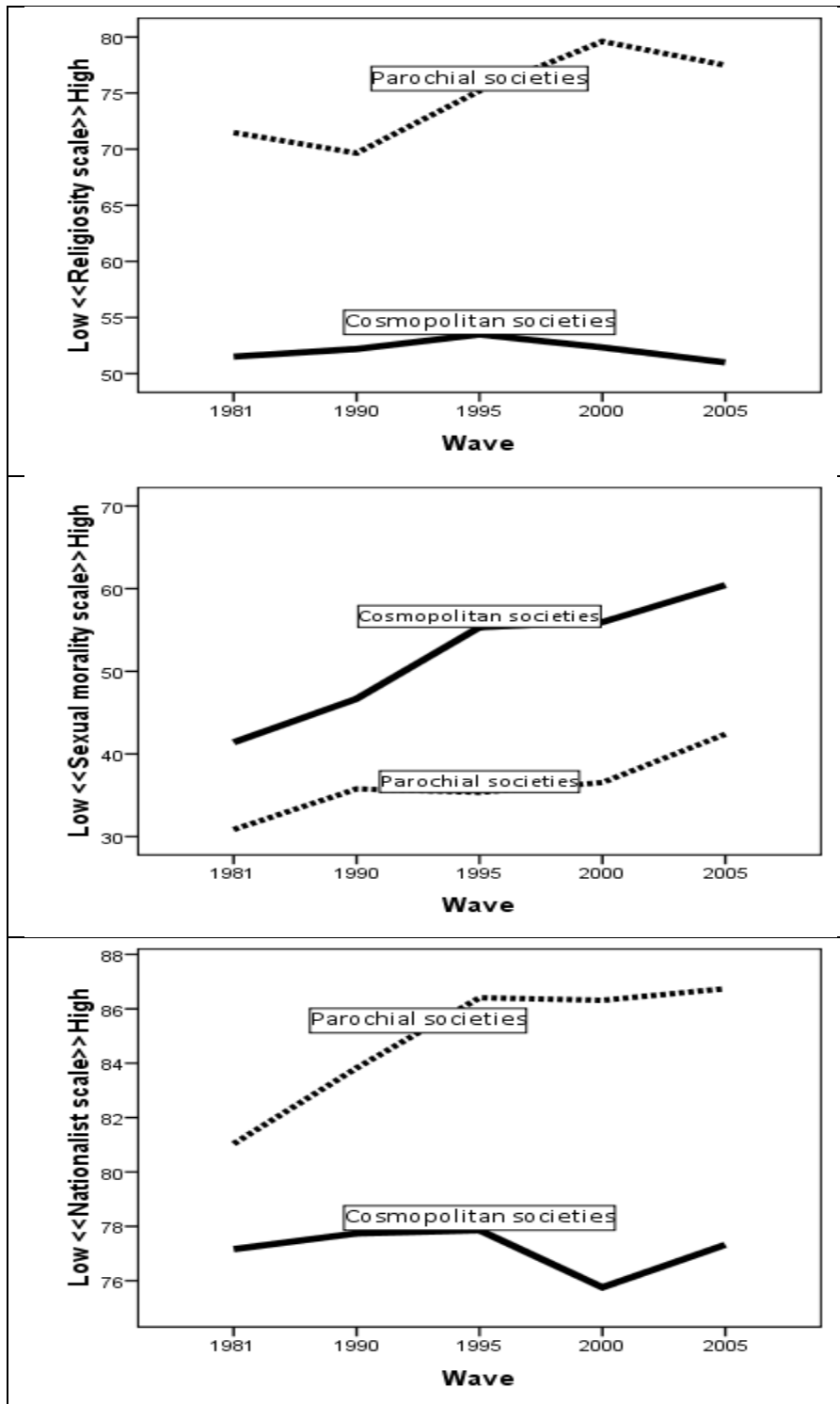
**Figure 10.7: Trends in support for free market economic values, 1990-2005**



**Note:** For the construction of the 100-point economic values scale, see Table 10.1. The graph illustrates the standardized (z-score) national means for each wave of the WVS from Wave 2 (1990-1) to Wave 5 (2005-7).

**Source:** World Values Survey, 1981-2005

**Figure 10.8: Persistent divergence between parochial and cosmopolitan societies, 1981-2005**



**Note:** Trends from 1981-2005 in mean value scales in successive waves of the World Values Survey in 10 nations, including three persistently parochial societies (Mexico, Argentina and South Africa) and seven persistently cosmopolitan societies (Sweden, Finland, Germany, Britain, the United States, Japan and Spain). For the construction of the 100-pt value scales, see Table 10.1.

**Source:** World Values Survey 1981-2005.

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- <sup>1</sup> Herbert J. Schiller. 1973. *Communication and Cultural Domination*. White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press; Thomas L. McPhail. 1983. *Electronic colonialism: The future of international broadcasting and communication*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; D. Howes. Ed. 1996. *Cross-cultural Consumption: Global markets, local realities*. London: Routledge; G. Ritzer. 1993. *The McDonalozation of Society*. Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press; G. Ritzer and A. Liska. 1997. 'McDisneyization'. In *Touring Cultures: Transformation of travel and theory*. Eds. C. Rojek and John Urry. London: Routledge; Benjamin Barber. 1996. *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- <sup>2</sup> Alexander Stephan. 2007. *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*. Berghahn Books; Mark Wheeler. 2004. 'Supranational regulation: Television and the European Union.' *European Journal of Communication* 19(3): 349-369; M. Burri-Nenova. 2007. 'The new audiovisual media services directive: Television without frontiers, television without cultural diversity.' *Common Market Law Review* 44: 1689-1725.
- <sup>3</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Politics and Religion Worldwide*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>4</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker. 2000. 'Modernization, Globalization and the Persistence of Tradition: Empirical Evidence from 65 Societies.' *American Sociological Review*. 65: 19-55.
- <sup>5</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Politics and Religion Worldwide*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>6</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Politics and Religion Worldwide*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>7</sup> Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. Eds. 2002. *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few and the Many*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- <sup>8</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World* New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- <sup>9</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, cultural change and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press; John Scott. 1998. 'Changing attitudes to sexual morality: A cross-national comparison.' *Sociology-The Journal of The British Sociological Association* 32 (4 ):815-845.
- <sup>10</sup> Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox. 2003. 'Causes and consequences of public attitudes toward abortion: A review and research agenda.' *Political Research Quarterly* 56(4 ): 489-500 .
- <sup>11</sup> Pippa Norris. 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Political Activism Worldwide*. New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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<sup>12</sup> Robert W. McChesney. 1999. *Rich Media Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>13</sup> James A. Stimson. 1985. 'Regression in time and space: A statistical essay.' *American Journal of Political Science* 29:914-47; Cheng M. Hsiao. 1986. *Analysis of panel data*. New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Nathaniel Beck and Jonathan Katz. 1995. 'What to do (and not to do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data.' *American Political Science Review*. 89: 634-647; Nathaniel Beck and Jonathan Katz. 1996. 'Nuisance vs. substance: Specifying and estimating time-series cross-sectional models.' In *Political Analysis* Ed. J. Freeman. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Beck and Katz argue that for time-series cross-sectional datasets, Feasible Generalized Least Squares approaches that estimate the error process with an AR1 model are less accurate and efficient than OLS with Panel Corrected Standard Errors. To double-check the robustness of the specification, models were run using both methods, and the choice did not affect the substantive interpretation of the results.

<sup>15</sup> See Sven E. Wilson and David M. Butler. 2007. 'A lot more to do: The sensitivity of time-series cross-section analyses to simple alternative specifications.' *Political Analysis* 15 (2): 101-123.

<sup>16</sup> Cheng M. Hsiao. 1986. *Analysis of Panel Data*. New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Nathaniel Beck and Jonathan Katz. 1995. 'What to do (and not to do) with Time-Series Cross-Section Data.' *American Political Science Review*. 89: 634-647.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, cultural change and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. p133.

<sup>19</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Politics and Religion Worldwide*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World* New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald Inglehart. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, cultural change and democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.