



7-1-2010

# The World Social Situation: Development Challenges at the Outset of a New Century

Richard J. Estes

*University of Pennsylvania*, [restes@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:restes@sp2.upenn.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\\_papers](http://repository.upenn.edu/spp_papers)



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Estes, R. J. (2010). The World Social Situation: Development Challenges at the Outset of a New Century. *Social Indicators Research*, 98 363-402. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9550-6>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. [http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\\_papers/179](http://repository.upenn.edu/spp_papers/179)  
For more information, please contact [repository@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:repository@pobox.upenn.edu).

---

# The World Social Situation: Development Challenges at the Outset of a New Century

## **Abstract**

World social development has arrived at a critical turning point. Economically advanced nations have made significant progress toward meeting the basic needs of their populations; however, the majority of developing countries have not. Problems of rapid population growth, failing economies, famine, environmental devastation, majority-minority group conflicts, increasing militarization, among others, are pushing many developing nations toward the brink of social chaos. This paper focuses on worldwide development trends for the 40-year period 1970-2009. Particular attention is given to the disparities in development that exist between the world's "rich" and "poor" countries as well as the global forces that sustain these disparities. The paper also discusses more recent positive trends occurring within the world's "socially least developed countries" (SLDCs), especially those located in Africa and Asia, in reducing poverty and in promoting improved quality of life for increasing numbers of their populations.

## **Keywords**

Development, social development, economic development, sustainable development, social transformation, social indicators, social progress, international, comparative.

## **Disciplines**

Social and Behavioral Sciences

[*Social Indicators Research*.  
Forthcoming, 2010.  
This manuscript may not  
be cited or quoted  
without the prior written  
consent of the author.]

THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION:  
DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AT THE OUTSET  
OF A NEW CENTURY<sup>1,2</sup>

Richard J. Estes

*University of Pennsylvania*  
School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2)  
3701 Locust Walk  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6214 USA

Tel: 215/898-5531

Fax: 215/573-2099

E-Mail: [restes@sp2.upenn.edu](mailto:restes@sp2.upenn.edu)

---

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2009 Globalization Forum of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for Urban Research (PIUR) held at the University Museum on October 17, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The author acknowledges with deep appreciation the contributions made by Huiquan (Mary) Zhou and Tae Ho Kang during the data collection phase of this project. Without their persistence and attention to detail the project could not have been brought to closure in such a timely manner. Prof. Kim Euiyoung who, as Dean of the Office of International Affairs, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea is thanked for providing the author with a precious block of time during Summer 2009 within which to conduct an in-depth analysis of the data. Amy Hillier of the PennDesign Department of City & Regional Planning of the University of Pennsylvania is thanked for her cartographic contribution to this paper as are Femida Handy and Ram Cnaan of the School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) of the University of Pennsylvania for their good cheer in supporting me through the various stages of this research inquiry.

## Abstract

### **The World Social Situation: Development Challenges at the Outset of a New Century**

World social development has arrived at a critical turning point. Economically advanced nations have made significant progress toward meeting the basic needs of their populations; however, the majority of developing countries have not. Problems of rapid population growth, failing economies, famine, environmental devastation, majority-minority group conflicts, increasing militarization, among others, are pushing many developing nations toward the brink of social chaos. This paper focuses on worldwide development trends for the 40-year period 1970-2009. Particular attention is given to the disparities in development that exist between the world's "rich" and "poor" countries as well as the global forces that sustain these disparities. The paper also discusses more recent positive trends occurring within the world's "socially least developed countries" (SLDCs), especially those located in Africa and Asia, in reducing poverty and in promoting improved quality of life for increasing numbers of their populations.

**KEYWORDS:** Development, social development, economic development, sustainable development, social transformation, social indicators, social progress, international, comparative.

# DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES CONFRONTING ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION

Richard J Estes  
*University of Pennsylvania*  
*School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2)*

## INTRODUCTION

The world social situation is characterized by extraordinary disparities in social, economic and political development. Despite impressive social progress for many countries since 1970 (Estes, 2007a,b,c; UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2009a), much of the world's social landscape continues to be marred by recurrent wars and civil conflicts (Global Security, 2009; SIPRI, 2009; Wikipedia, 2009a,b), chronic human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2009; Freedom House, 2009), corrupt governments (Transparency International, 2009), deepening poverty (World Bank, 2001, 2006), and growing numbers of economic refugees (UNHCR, 2009a,b). Population growth continues to be rapid among the world's poorest countries as does the rate of urban migration in these countries (UNPOP, 2009). And the world's physical landscape has been seriously compromised as well; today, people everywhere are struggling against the effects of deforestation, exhausted soil and animal resources, recurrent floods and other man-made and natural disasters, including the social consequences of depleted mineral and other natural resources (UNDP, 2007/2008; World Resources Institute, 2008a).

The responses of the world's governments to the current social situation reflect a more optimistic view of the future. Their priorities emphasize the need for: (1) a better balance between social and economic development (UN, 2009a; UNDESA, 1995, 2002, 2009); (2) a renewed commitment to people and people's organizations as being at the center of the development process (Sachs, 2005, 2008; Sen, 1999, 2009; Yunus, 2008); (3) the formulation of new development paradigms that better reflect the world's diverse cultures, traditions, and histories (UN, 2009a; UNDP, 1997; World Bank, 2001, 2006); and (4) increased protection of the planet's fragile biodiversity and dwindling natural resources (UNDP, 2006, 2007/2008; World Bank, 2010; World Resources Institute, 2008b, 2009). Renewed attention also is being given to the special needs of historically disadvantaged population groups and their role in helping to

advance the development agenda of nations, regions and, indeed, that of the world-as-a-whole (UN, 2009b; UNICEF, 2008; UNHCR, 2009b; UNIFEM, 2009a).

This paper explores the extent to which the world's nations are succeeding in advancing their social and economic development objectives. More particularly, the paper reports the results of a comprehensive survey of the comparative development successes and failures of 162 nations over the 40-year period 1970-2009. To that end, this paper:

1. reports the results obtained through application of the author's previously developed *Weighted Index of Social Progress* (WISP) to an analysis of worldwide social development trends for the period 1970-2009;
2. using the WISP, identifies the world's major 40-year development successes and failures;
3. using the WISP, identifies the world's *social development leaders* (SLs), *middle performing countries* (MPCs) and *socially least developed countries* (SLDCs);
4. in addition to the 40-year trend data reported on the WISP, provides more recent social indicator data for the five-year period 2005-2009; and,
5. serves as a baseline against which future worldwide social development successes and failures may be assessed.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is the 12<sup>th</sup> in a series of analyses of worldwide and regional social development trends (Estes, 1984, 1988, 1995, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2004a, 2004b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). The purpose of all 12 studies has been: 1) to identify significant changes in "adequacy of social provision"<sup>3</sup> occurring throughout the world and within specific continental and geo-political regions; and (2) to assess national

---

<sup>3</sup> "Adequacy of social provision" refers to the changing capacity of governments to provide for the basic social, material, and other needs of the people living within their borders, e.g., for food, clothing, shelter, and access to at least basic health, education, and social services (Estes, 1988: 199-209).

and international progress in providing more adequately for the basic social and material needs of the world's growing population. These reports also are intended to provide policy analysts and decision makers with otherwise difficult to obtain data concerning a wide range of development phenomena needed to shape policy outcomes at the local, regional, national and global levels. Thus, this paper reports a comprehensive time-series analysis of the social development performances of 162 nations for the period 1970-2009 at four levels of analysis: (1) at the country-specific level;<sup>4</sup> (2) at the subregional (i.e., sub-continental) level; (3) at the regional (i.e., continental) level; and (4) at the level of the world-as-a-whole. Data also are reported for countries grouped by various socioeconomic aggregations developed by the United Nations to classify nations.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Index of Social Progress (ISP)*

The primary instrument used in this study is the author's extensively pre-tested "Index of Social Progress" (ISP). In its present form the ISP consists of 41 social indicators that have been subdivided into 10 sub-indexes (Table 1): *Education* (N=4); *Health Status* (N=7); *Women Status* (N=5); *Defense Effort* (N=1); *Economic* (N=5); *Demographic* (N=3); *Environmental* (N=3); *Social Chaos* (N=5); *Cultural Diversity*

---

<sup>4</sup> Because of their volume, these data are reported separately on the author's website developed specifically for this study: <http://www/sp2.upenn.edu/~restes/WSS09>.

<sup>5</sup> The four primary groupings used in this analysis are: (1) *Developed Market Economies* (DMEs) consisting primarily of economically advanced countries (plus selected middle income countries added to the Organizations of Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] on the basis of their current level of economic development and the rapid pace of that development, e.g., the Czech Republic, Mexico, South Korea, Turkey); (2) the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS) consisting entirely of successor states to the former Soviet Union (FSU), including the Russian Federation; (3) *Developing Countries* (DCs) consisting primarily of low, middle and high income countries located in developing Africa, Asia, and Latin America; and (3) *Least Developed Countries* (LDCs) which, for a variety of historical and socio-political reasons, experience net negative patterns of socio-economic development from one time period to another. A fifth category of countries also exists within this latter cluster of nations, i.e., a subset of LDCs that are "land- or ocean-locked developing countries" (LLDCs), which in addition to being among the world's poorest countries share more or less a common set of barriers to development (UN-OHRLLS, 2009a). In the current analysis, the LLDCs and small island developing countries are classified with the LDCs and are not separated into a group of their own, albeit they are easily identified by an examination of WISP2009 data reported in Table 4 located at the end of this paper. Readers in need of a formal listing of the LLDCs are referred to the following sources: UN-OHRLLS, 2009b,c.

(N=3); and *Welfare Effort* (N=5).<sup>6</sup> All 41 of the ISP's indicators have been established to be valid indicators of social development (Hagerty et al., 2002); indeed, the majority of the ISP's indicators are used regularly by other scholars and researchers of national and international socio-economic development in their comparative inquiries into the nature of social development over time (UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2009a; World Resources Institute, 2009; among others).

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Indicators on the Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP) by Subindex, 2009</b> <b>(41 Indicators and 10 Subindexes)</b>
<b>EDUCATION SUBINDEX (N=4)</b>
Public Expenditure on Education as Percentage of GDP, 2002-2005 (+)
Primary School Completion Rate, 2005 (+)
Secondary School Net Enrolment Rate, 2000-07 (+)
Adult Literacy Rate, 2000-07 (+)
<b>HEALTH STATUS SUBINDEX (N=6)</b>
Life Expectation at Birth, 2007 (+)
Infant Mortality Rate, 2007 (-)
Under-Five Child Mortality Rate, 2007 (-)
Physicians Per 100,000 Population, 2000-07 (+)
Percent of Population Undernourished, 2006 (-)
Public Expenditure on Health as Percentage of Gross Domestic Product, 2006 (+)
<b>WOMEN STATUS SUBINDEX (N=5)</b>
Female Adult Literacy As Percentage of Male Literacy, 2000-07 (+)
Contraceptive Prevalence Among Married Women, 2000-07 (+)
Maternal Mortality Ratio, 2005 (-)
Female Secondary School Enrollment As Percentage of Male Enrolment, 2000-07 (+)
Seats in Parliament Held By Women as Percentage of Total, 2007 (+)
<b>DEFENSE EFFORT SUBINDEX (N=1)</b>
Military Expenditures As Percentage of GDP, 2005 (-)

<sup>6</sup> For methodological reasons, the ISP's 41 indicators are divided between positive and negative indicators of social progress. On the Education Subindex, for example, higher *adult illiteracy* rates are negatively associated with social progress whereas gains in *primary school enrollment* levels are positively associated with overall improvements in development. Thus, not only is the ISP representative of all major sectors of development, the instrument also achieves balance with respect the range of positive and negative factors that are used to assess changes in social progress over time.



<b>Table 1</b> <b>Indicators on the Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP) by Subindex, 2009</b> <b>(41 Indicators and 10 Subindexes)</b>
<b>ECONOMIC SUBINDEX (N=5)</b>
Per Capita Gross National Income (as measured by PPP), 2006 (+)
Percent Growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 2000-06 (+)
Unemployment Rate, 2006 (-)
Total External Debt As Percentage of GDP, 2007 (-)
GINI Index Score [most recent year] (-)
<b>DEMOGRAPHY SUBINDEX (N=3)</b>
Average Annual Rate of Population Growth, 2000-06 (-)
Percent of Population Aged <15 Years, 2006 (-)
Percent of Population Aged >64 Years, 2006 (+)
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUBINDEX (N=3)</b>
Percentage of Nationally Protected Area, 2004 (+)
Average Annual Number of Disaster-Related Deaths, 2000-2008 (-)
Per Capita Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2004 (-)
<b>SOCIAL CHAOS SUBINDEX (N=6)</b>
Strength of Political Rights, 2008 (-)
Strength of Civil Liberties, 2008 (-)
Number of Internally Displaced Persons Per 100,000 Population, 2006 (-)
Number of Externally Displaced Persons Per 100,000 Population, 2006 (-)
Estimated Number of Deaths From Armed Conflicts (low estimate), 2002-05 (-)
Perceived Corruption Index, 2008 (+)
<b>CULTURAL DIVERSITY SUBINDEX (N=3)</b>
Largest Percentage of Population Sharing the Same or Similar Racial/Ethnic Origins, 2007 (+)
Largest Percentage of Population Sharing the Same or Similar Religious Beliefs, 2007 (+)
Largest Share of Population Sharing the Same Mother Tongue, 2007 (+)
<b>WELFARE EFFORT SUBINDEX (N=5)</b>
Age First National Law—Old Age, Invalidity & Death, 2009 (+)
Age First National Law—Sickness & Maternity, 2009 (+)
Age First National Law—Work Injury, 2009 (+)
Age First National Law—Unemployment, 2009 (+)
Age First National Law—Family Allowance, 2009 (+)

Owing to the volume of data gathered for this analysis only statistically weighted index (WISP) and sub-index (SI) scores are reported in this paper. The study's statistical weights were derived through a two-stage principal components and varimax factor analysis in which indicator and subindex scores were analyzed separately for their relative contribution toward explaining the variance associated with changes in social progress over time. Standardized indicator scores (N=41) were multiplied by their respective factor loadings, averaged within their subindex, and the average subindex scores (N=10), in turn, were subjected to a second statistical weighting. The resulting values from this two-stage statistical weighting process formed the basis for computing the composite Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP) scores as summarized in Table 2.<sup>7</sup> Statistically unweighted Index of Social Progress (ISP) scores are reported on the author's previously identified project website for those investigators who may wish to reanalyze the data using their own system of statistical weights.

**Table 2**  
**Statistical Weights Used in Constructing the**  
**Weighted Index of Social Progress<sup>8</sup>**

$$\text{WISP2009} = \{ [(\text{Factor 1})^* .697] + [(\text{Factor 2})^* .162] + [(\text{Factor 3})^* .140] \}$$

*where:*

$$\text{Factor 1} = [ (\text{Health}^* .92) + (\text{Education}^* .91) + (\text{Welfare}^* .72) + (\text{Woman}^* .91) + (\text{Social Chaos}^* .84) + (\text{Economic}^* .71) + (\text{Diversity}^* .64) + (\text{Demographic}^* .93) ]$$

$$\text{Factor 2} = [ (\text{Defense Effort}^* .93) ]$$

$$\text{Factor 3} = [ (\text{Environmental}^* .98) ]$$

<sup>7</sup> A fuller description of these procedures is summarized in Estes (1988), pp. 199-209.

<sup>8</sup> For purposes of comparability across time, the same statistical weights were used in all five of the study's time periods.

### *WISP vs. Other Measures of Social Progress*

The Index of Social Progress differs from other measures of social development in the number and representativeness of the indicators used in its construction. In all cases, the ISP is judged to be a more comprehensive instrument for assessing *changes in social* (rather than economic) *development* than other indices of national and international progress, i.e., more so than either Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP), per capita income level (PCGNI), Gini coefficients, or the frequently cited United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) three-item "Human Development Index" (HDI)<sup>9</sup>. The strength of the WISP viewed from this perspective rests in the comprehensiveness of its subindexes and their capacity to be aggregated and disaggregated to suit the needs of particular data users and policy analysts. Further, the majority of indicators included in the WISP are now used by other quantitatively-oriented investigators of social and economic development in their studies of more specialized aspects of comparative development--as examples see the "Happy Planet Index" of the New Economics Foundation (NEF, 2009) and the "Global Peace Index" of Vision of Humanity (2009), among others.

### *Data Sources*

The majority of the data used in the analysis were obtained from the annual reports supplied by individual countries to specialized agencies of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Social Security Association (ISSA), and other major international data collection organizations. Data for the *Environmental* subindex were obtained from the World Resources Institute (WRI), the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), and the World Bank. Data for the *Social Chaos* subindex were obtained from Amnesty International (AI), Freedom House (FH), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRC), the Stockholm International Peace and Research

---

<sup>9</sup> The components of some of these metrics, however, are included in the WISP's Economic subindex.

Institute (SIPRI) and Transparency International (TI). Data for the *Cultural Diversity* subindex were gathered from the *CIA World Factbook* (2009), the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2008) and from the work of independent scholars in the fields of comparative language, religion and ethnology including that of Tanja Ellingsen (1995) currently of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

### *Country Selection*

The 162 countries selected for inclusion in the analysis satisfied at least three of the following four criteria: (1) a population size of at least one million persons or approaching one million persons in 2005; (2) a reasonable degree of political stability such that timely and reliable data collection and reporting were possible; (3) the availability of comprehensive social indicator data; and (4) inclusion in the author's prior studies of national and global social development trends. Countries with missing, inadequate, incomplete, or seriously distorted data on three or more of the study's 41 indicators were excluded from the analysis unless reasonable estimates of the missing data could be made.<sup>10</sup>

Table 3 identifies the 162 countries included in the present analysis. The table groups these countries by continental and subcontinental groupings and, then, next to each country, is a symbol indicating to which of the study's four socio-political developmental groupings the country is assigned by the United Nations, i.e., *Developed Market Economies* (DMEs, N=34), *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CISs, N=21), *Developing Countries* (DCs, N=66) or *Least Developed Countries* (LDCs, N=41). These are the same categories and analytical clusters used by the author in earlier reports of global social progress.

[Insert Table 3 About Here]

### *Time Frames*

---

<sup>10</sup> Owing to problems of data availability and integrity, some societies with populations of one million or more people experiencing major social chaos could not be included in the present analysis.

Index and subindex findings are reported separately for each of the study's five time periods, i.e., 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2009; thus, the study provides a cross-sectional analysis of the "state" of world social development for the same set of countries over a 40-year time period.

### *Levels of Analysis*

Throughout the paper data are reported at four levels of analysis: (1) development trends occurring for the world-as-a-whole (N=1); (2) development trends occurring at the at the continental [N=6] and sub-continental levels [N=19]; (3) development trends occurring by socioeconomic development grouping (N=4); and, (4) development trends occurring within each of the 162 countries included in the present analysis, albeit detailed summaries of country-specific findings by subindex are reported separately on the project's website (see footnote #4).

## PART I:

### WORLD

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

#### Continental and Subcontinental Findings

The study's worldwide findings are summarized in Figures 1 and 2 which report WISP scores for countries grouped by continents for each of the study's five time periods. Using WISP2009 data as the frame of reference, a number of trends are clearly apparent from analysis of these data.

[INSERT Figures 1 & 2 ABOUT HERE]

1. The world's three *most socially developed* regions are *Australia-New Zealand* (M= 84), *Europe* (M= 84), and *North America* (M= 77).<sup>11</sup>
  - a. These three regions had already attained the world's most favorable WISP ratings by 1970 (M= 78) and they continued to improve their WISP profiles between 1970 & 1980 (M= 80) and, again, between 1980 & 1990 (M= 91).
  - b. All three of the most socially advanced continental groupings, however, lost ground between 1990 & 2009 (M= -11.0%) with the most significant social losses occurring in the North American region (M= -17.2%)—equivalent to nearly three-fourths of the region's social gains between 1970 and 1990.
  - c. Most of the social losses in the North American region between 1990 and 2009 can be accounted for by the introduction of fiscally conservative policies that resulted in diminished social programs for the “poor,” the “near poor,” the “working poor” as well as losses in programmatic supports for persons unable to succeed in the highly competitive economies of North America, i.e., those persons Europeans describe as the “socially excluded” (e.g., persons with serious physical or psychiatric disabilities, the unemployed, homeless persons, and those with other types of significant social or cultural impediments) (Council of Europe, 2009; Ward et al. 2009). Children and the elderly persons fared especially poorly during the region's recent economic recession as evidenced by the increase in numbers of impoverished persons among these population groups (Casey Foundation, 2009; Rowland & Lyons, 1996). The numbers of displaced homeowners (Kingsley, et al. 2009), homeless persons (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009), and persons with limited or no access to regular health care (de Navas-Watt et al., 2008) also increased during this time period.

---

<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, “M” refers to the average or mean score(s) on the Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP); “Md” refers to median scores and “SD” refers to the standard deviation. When used, all three numbers are presented in relation to the same interval-level variable and every effort is made to not jump around in comparing different variables at the same time using different units of measurement.

- d. The *social erosion* that occurred in North America between 1990 and 2009, but especially between 2000 and 2009, took place under both “progressive” and “conservative” political administrations. Further, reductions in the growth of social provisions in the *United States*, as well as actual reductions themselves, occurred as a result of the country’s engagement in two extraordinarily expensive wars in West and South Central Asia, i.e., Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively. As this author has noted in previous studies of social development nations cannot simultaneously support a policy of “guns and butter” and expect to succeed at both...no matter how large their national treasuries, particularly when wars are fought over great distances. These policies also lead inevitably to the dismantling of critical social infrastructure on which domestic human services programs depend; and the reverse is true as well, i.e., nations cannot fight expensive wars and maintain large budgets for social spending. This clearly is the situation currently in the *United States*.
  - e. Even so, comparatively minor differences currently characterize the development profiles of the world’s three most socially progressive regions (M= 81) and, as such, the nations that make up these regions can continue to be considered “first world” relative to other groupings of nations included in the present analysis (Estes, 2004b).
2. The *African* region (M= 21.2), as has been from the situation from the initiation of these studies in the 1970s, is the world's *socially least developed* region.
    - a. WISP scores for the African region-as-a-whole were consistently lower relative to those observed for other world regions for the first 30 years of the study and, indeed, as seen in Figures 1 & 2, remained either relatively stagnant or declined steadily for the region between 1970 & 2000, i.e., from a slight increase of +0.6% between 1970 & 1980, to a decline of -2.2% between 1980 & 1990, and a substantial decrease of -10.1% between 1990 & 2000.

- b. The 30-year pattern of marginal gains and major social declines occurred despite the preferential international developmental assistance that has been provided to the African region since the launching of the First UN “Development Decade” in December, 1961.
- c. The region’s past and, to a great extent, its recent history of social declines are associated with a number of well known factors (Estes, 1995; Leonard & Straus, 2003; Obioma, 2001):
  - i. The comparative youthfulness of many of Africa’s nations as fully independent, sovereign, nations (most did not achieve independence until the mid-1960s or even more recently [CIA, 2009]);
  - ii. The often crippling post-colonial legacy that continues to plague many of these countries (the *Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Zimbabwe*);
  - iii. The region’s long-standing ethnic conflicts (to the point of genocide in some situations, e.g., *Rwanda*) which, in nearly all cases, predate Africa’s history of colonial occupation;
  - iv. The unparalleled inequality and subjugation inflicted on the Southern African subregion through Apartheid (*Namibia and South Africa* and, to a lesser extent, *Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland*) (Wikipedia, 2009c);
  - v. Widespread political corruption following independence through to the present time (e.g., *Cote D’Ivoire, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia*);
  - vi. Authoritarian rule combined with a history of crushing oppression of opposition political forces at a level and for a period of time unknown in other world regions (e.g., *Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Zimbabwe*);
  - vii. A seeming inability to harness the region’s rich human and natural resources that exist in plentiful supply in many of the region’s nations (e.g., *Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe*);



- viii. An inability to overcome serious infrastructure limitations especially within the region's landlocked countries but also within nearly all of its poorest LDCs (e.g., road building, water and irrigation systems, communications networks, decentralized health networks and polyclinics, etc.); and,
  - ix. Recurrent famines (especially in Middle and Central Africa), problems of serious deforestation (especially for subsistence and commercial agricultural purposes in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1980), and the rapid spread of infectious and communicable diseases (especially HIV/AIDS in Middle and Southern Africa but also tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhea, and hepatitis, among others [Hotez & Fenwick, 2007] across wide expanses of the continent) also undermine life expectation (M= 49.6 years) and weaken the capacities of people to engage in development-oriented activities.
- d. Combined with the above problems has been a set of extraordinary difficulties in making productive use of the financial and technical assistance provided to the region by the international community (Glennie, 2008; Moyo, 2009).
- i. A substantial share of the international aid provided to Africa through the years, for example, instead of promoting self-sufficiency has pushed some nations into deeper debt and increased dependency on the aid granting bodies which, contrary to their central mission, seeks to promote increased independence and self sufficiency.
  - ii. The preceding phenomenon contributed to the emergence of yet another group of LDCs, i.e., a "fifth" world of development or a so-called group of "heavily indebted poor countries" (HIPC/IMF, 2009; World Bank, 2009b). In a comparative sense, external debt levels in the HIPCs are so high that virtually none of these nations are expected to be able to generate sufficient internal resources to

fully work reconcile their external debt obligations (IMF, 2009; World Bank, 2009)

- iii. Widespread corruption also has contributed to the phenomenon facing the HIPCs. This is especially problematic given the large amount of international assistance that has been “redirected” from their original purpose to the pockets of the ruling elites (in many case, to the military). These thefts of precious international funds not only deprive developing countries of the monetary resources needed to finance development initiatives but also burden them with additional debt obligations for which they received little or no benefit (Keleher, 1999; Moyo, 2009; SIIA, 2003).

*e. However, and despite these profoundly negative trends, since the year 2000 appreciable changes have been recorded on the WISP for the African region-as-a-whole. And these changes are significant!*

- i. Between 2000 and 2009 average WISP scores increased from 17.5 to 21.2, a net gain of +21.2% in just 10 years.
- ii. A change of this magnitude represents a remarkable turnaround for the African region and reflects one of the most rapid gains ever recorded on the WISP.
- iii. Further, the 10-year gains reported for the African region are broad-based and suggest that, after many years of social declines, Africa, as a region, may be on the move toward promoting a higher standard of well-being for her people.
- iv. The broad-based nature of these changes is summarized in the data reported in Figures 3 & 4.
- v. And the region’s social progress is continuing despite the many obstacles to development outlined above as well as in the long list of additional economic chal-

lenges confronting the continent summarized by the African Development Bank (African Development Bank Group, 2009).

- vi. Though the average WISP2009 scores of African nations are still modest when viewed from a comparative perspective with other world regions, Africa's recent development accomplishments must be appreciated within the context of the profoundly downward spiral that characterized the continent's past development for the 30-year period 1970-2000.
3. WISP scores for the *Asian* region for 2009 show a steady and positive pace forward (M= 45.9 in 2009 vs. 37 in 1970). Though the region's average WISP numbers, like those of Africa, also seem low in comparison with the high levels of social achievement reported for the group of DMEs (Group M= 82.6) and CIS nations in 2009 (Group M= 68.6), one must consider these scores in the context of Asia's size, complexity, and political history since at least 1960. For example, Asia: (a) consists of 53 sovereign nations and 9 territories and societies of which several are part of larger political entities (e.g., *Macau SAR, Hong Kong SAR, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands*, etc.); (b) contains 60 percent of the world's total population (4.1 billion persons)...including three of the world's population "super giants," i.e., *China, India, and Indonesia*; (c) is home to more than 70% of the world's population officially classified as "poor," i.e., persons and families living on less than \$1.25-\$2.00 per day (UNDP, 2009); and (d) is the world's most culturally diverse geo-political region (CIA, 2009; ESCAP, 2008; Estes, 2007b).
- a. *Asia* also has been one the world's *least peaceful* regions with revolutions, civil wars, and intra-regional warfare more the rule than the exception for the better part of the last century (SIPRI, 2009).
  - b. Even today, many of the on-going conflicts that have carried over from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century are being fought on Asian soil, i.e., *Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan* as well as internal

insurgency movements in *Indonesia, Burma, Chechnya, India, Turkey, and Yemen*, among others (Wikipedia, 2009a).

- c. Thus, a gain of +24.1% in WISP values achieved by the Asian region between 1970 and 2009 is, indeed, significant, particularly given Asia's geographic size, political complexity and cultural diversity.

[Insert Figures 5 & 6 about here]

- i. At the subregional level, social gains have been especially rapid for the nations of East, South East, and West Asia (Figure 5).
  - ii. Many of the newly independent nations of South Central Asia (e.g., *Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan*, etc.) lag substantially behind the social accomplishments of Asia's other subregions (Estes. 2007a). Problems of political authoritarianism, in combination with widespread poverty and comparative geographic isolation, contribute to the relatively slow pace of development in these countries.
- d. Today, WISP scores for the Asian region-as-a-whole more closely approximate those for the world-as-a-whole than those attained by any other of the continental grouping (World  $M= 48.8$ ,  $SD= 28.2$ ). This is not surprising since such a large share of the world's population resides within the region.
- e. Among the factors that account for *Asia's* recent development successes are:
  - i. its export-led approach to economic development;
  - ii. an ability to quickly adopt and improve sophisticated electronic and other technologies for use in manufacturing and other industrial processes;
  - iii. an uncanny ability to quickly export the improved value added technologies back to the original creators of the technology;

- iv. though advancing slowly, increased recognition of the important contribution that can be made by women to broad-based socio-economic development...as well as to management and to public governance;
  - v. in many cases, a renewed willingness to suspend centuries-old antipathies toward neighboring states in order to pursue shared economic and social goals;
  - vi. the creation of new political space that permits the development and strengthening of civil society organizations as partners in developments;
  - vii. a widely shared commitment to full implementation of the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and,
  - viii. steady, though slow, progress toward improving the region's social welfare infrastructure...especially in providing for the basic material needs of the region's historically disadvantaged population groups (Estes, 2007b).
- f. Factors that continue to represent major challenges to development for the *Asian* region include:
- i. the unpredictability of global markets for the goods and services produced by the region's export-led economies...forces over which the region's economies can exert comparatively little influence;
  - ii. the staggering poverty that continues to exist throughout many parts of the region, especially in *China*, *India*, and *Indonesia*;
  - iii. continuing high rates of fertility *in combination* with rapidly increasing life expectation;
  - iv. continuing out-migration of many of the region's talented young people to the DMEs or to the BRICs<sup>12</sup>;

---

<sup>12</sup> The BRICs consist of four of the world's most rapidly developing countries: *Brazil*, *the Russian Federation*, *India*, and *China*.

- v. continuing rapid rates of rural to urban migration usually with the absence of adequate infrastructure in the population receiving centers for meeting even the most basic housing and employment needs of these migrants;
- vi. still in many countries, the absence of sufficient political space for civil society organizations to operate effectively as partners with governments and markets in promoting national and regional development goals and objectives;
- vii. in many of the region's countries, limited opportunities for women to participate fully in the process and benefits of development, especially in West and East Asia but also in the South Central and South Asia subregions;
- viii. the persistence of wars and other on-going long-standing conflicts, at least political tensions, in various parts of the region; and,
- ix. the absence of transparency in both critical public and private sector activities.

4. The pace of social development in *Latin America* has been comparatively slow, but nonetheless steady, and generally positive during much of the 40-year period of this study. The trend simply has not been an accelerated one (Estes, 1996).

[Insert Figures 7 & 8 about here]

- a. WISP scores for Latin America, for example, increased only +13.0% between 1970 & 2009 (from 49.8 to 56.2) and virtually all of this improvement took place during one decade, i.e., 1980-1990 (from 50.4 to 57.0, Figure 7).
- b. The 20-year period since 1990 witnessed no appreciable changes in social development for the Latin American region-as-a-whole (M= +2.7%, Figure 8) this was the case despite substantial social gains for selected Central and South American countries (e.g., *Brazil* [+24 WISP rank positions between 2000 & 2009], *Nicaragua* [+16 ranks], *Honduras* [+12 ranks], and the *Bahamas* [+10 ranks]).

As reflected in Figure 2, then, net 40-years gains in social development did occur within each of the world's six continental groupings: *Asia* (+24.0%); *Latin America* (+13.0%); *Africa* (+9.3%); *Europe* (+6.7%); *North America* (+6.1%); and *Australia-New Zealand* (+4.4%). The amount of progress that occurred for each continental grouping was highly variable, however, with the result that developmental progress for each continental grouping can be thought of as highly *asynchronous*, i.e., as being characterized by considerable variability both within and across the development groupings and, within groupings, between the WISP's 10 sectors of development (e.g., Health Status, Education Status, Women Status, etc.). This observation is particularly relevant for understanding the data reported in Figure 9 which ranks continental performance in terms of the world's 19 major continental subregions.

[Insert Figure 9 about here]

As expected, Figure 9 provides additional evidence of the highly favorable social development accomplishments of the *European* (Ranks 1 & 2, 4 & 5), *Australia-New Zealand* (Rank 3) and *North American* (Rank 6) regions. Indeed, the subregions located within these continents predominate at the top of the 19 sub-continental rankings reported in this Figure. However, and also near to the top of the list, are the *East Asian* (Rank = 7), *South American* (Rank = 8), *Central American* (Rank = 9), *Caribbean* (Rank = 10), and *West Asian* (Rank = 11) subregions. All five of these subregions attained average WISP scores that placed them either at or well above average scores attained for the world-as-a-whole (World M= 48.8). And not far behind this group of 11 more socially advantaged subregions is the *North African* subregion with a subregional average WISP score of 44 and a subregional ranking of 12.

The findings reported in both the regional and subregional regional analyses, then, confirm that the most significant changes on the WISP between 2000 and 2009 occurred within the world's three poorest and least developed regions: *Asia*, *Latin America*, and *Africa*. At the same time the world's already well off DME countries held their own and further solidified their advantaged social positions but

did not move very far ahead of where they began in the 1970s. Many complex socio-political factors account for this result but their “also ran” position in 2009 has allowed lesser developed regions and subregions to gain ground relative to the more socially advanced regions.

Thus, and on the basis of our continental analyses, the world’s two most populous regions—*Asia* and *Latin America*--which together, accounted for 75% of the world’s total population in 2009 (5.1 billion persons)—are judged to have made the most significant social development progress between 1970 and 2009 and to have made even more dramatic gains between 2000 and 2009. The *African* continent, though, based on the most recent social indicators data, apparently has awakened to a new development future. Recent development gains on the continent gives rise to a new sense of optimism concerning a possible end to the downward spiral that has characterized African development since at least the 1960s. In the scale of things, many readers might judge that this is the way it should be given the centuries of colonial occupation, recurrent warfare and the high levels of social and economic to which these nations and their populations have been subjected, in some cases, for longer than five centuries.

#### Findings by Development Groupings

As dramatic as the WISP findings are for countries when measured by continental groupings, the findings are even more significant when examining WISP trends by the study’s four socioeconomic development groupings<sup>13</sup>, i.e., *Developed Market Economies* (DMEs), the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS), *Developing Countries* (DCs), and *Least Developed Countries* (LDCs) which include extremely poor land- and ocean-locked countries (often referred to as the “fifth world” of development). These are the groupings that will be used in the remainder of the analysis.

[Insert Figures 10 & 11 about here]

---

<sup>13</sup> See footnote #5 for a fuller explanation of the countries included in each category of this typology.



Figures 10 & 11 report WISP data for countries organized by the four development groupings. As reported in these figures, DME nations (N=34) consistently had the highest WISP scores over time and, therefore, held the highest WISP rank positions worldwide in 2009. This does not come as a surprise given earlier reports by the author on the social advantages of the DMEs relative to other clusters of nations (Estes 2007a,b). But the comparatively high position of the CIS countries (N=21) on the WISP was a surprise, albeit their high social ranking had been reported by this author in earlier studies (Estes, 1998a, 2007a). The “surprise” element in this data is the speed at which the group of Central and Eastern European CIS nations are developing relative to their Asian counterparts (Tables 3 & 4). The European group of CIS nations (N= 13) are benefiting appreciably from their European roots and from their renewed trading and political relationships with Western European neighbors, e.g., *Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Ukraine, Poland*, among others (Estes, 2007a). Under conditions of renewed political and economic freedom, these countries have been able to move ahead at an accelerated pace and this movement is reflected in their WISP scores. The Asian CIS countries (N= 8), on the other hand, have not benefited from their new freedom to the same extent and have turned instead to familiar trade and political relationships with partner nations that pre-dated the 1991 breakup of the former Soviet Union. Some of the Asian CIS nations have retained communist forms of governance while others have democratically elected leaders who function under authoritarian rule (i.e., *Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan*). This latter group of countries are experiencing extremely limited economic growth despite the fact that they have natural resources that are in great demand by global markets, especially petroleum and petrochemicals.

Figures 10 & 11 also confirm that the group of 66 developing countries are performing at a rapid pace in advancing their WISP scores with an average net gain of +16.4% between 1970 and 2009. Apart from some downward trends in scores for the 1990-2000 decade, social gains for this group have steadily advanced with especially rapid gains occurring during the 1980-1990 decade—the period just prior to the collapse of the former *U.S.S.R.*

*But most dramatically of all, Figures 10 & 11 confirm that the most significant improvements on the WISP between 2000 and 2009 occurred within the group of 41 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (+47.7%)! This dramatic leap forward following a precipitous drop in WISP scores for the same group of nations between 1990 & 2000 (-16.6%) and was, in turn, preceded by net social losses on the WISP each decade since the study's baseline period (1979-1980), i.e., -16.8%, -12.2%, and -16.6%, respectively. These 30-year losses make the turnaround in WISP gains for the 2000-2009 period even more striking...and that much more welcomed by specialists in the in the international development field. The gains, in this writer's judgment, can be attributed directly to the near clearly focused attention being given to the satisfaction of basic human needs in the LDCs embodied in the United Nations' *Millennium Development Campaign* launched in mid-2005 (UN Millennium Project, 2005; United Nations, 2009a). Even at this early stage of implementation the campaign is working though not always at the pace or to the extent that many had hoped for but working, nonetheless, in beginning to lift tens of millions of desperately poor people out of poverty that were untouched by earlier development campaigns (United Nations, 2009a; UNIFEM, 2009b).*

As evidenced by the data reported in Figures 10 and 11, considerable variation exists with respect to development trends occurring within the world's four development groupings. These trends, in this case primarily improvements, are most notable among the group of 41 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) *which experienced historically unparalleled levels of social progress on the WISP between 2000 and 2009* (group average net increase = +43.7%). Less impressive, but still appreciable, 10-year improvements in WISP scores of +2.2% occurred for the group of 66 Developing Countries (DCs) included in the study. Net average 10-year group improvements on the WISP also occurred for the group of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (M= +1.0 %) but the group of 34 Development Market Economy (DMEs) nations included in the study experienced net social losses on the WISP during the 10-year 2000-2009 period (M= -7.3 %).

PART II:  
WORLD SOCIAL LEADERS AND  
SOCIALY LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Table 4 identifies the world's *Social Leaders* (SLs, N= 42/162), *Middle Performing Countries* (MPCs, N= 74/162), and *Socially Least Developed Countries* (SLDCs, N= 46/162). Three criteria were used to assign countries to these categories: (1) overall performance on the WISP in 2009; (2) the consistency of their WISP performance since 1970; and, (3) individual country performance on the WISP *relative to all 162 countries included in the study*.<sup>14</sup> Embedded in this table are the mean (M), median (Md) and standard deviation (SD) values for each of the three clusters of countries and, at the end of the table, the same measures of dispersion are reported for all 162 countries included in the study.

[Insert Table 4 About here]

Social Development "Leaders" (SLs)

Based on their overall WISP performances, 42 countries are classified as world "Social Leaders" (SLs): 29 "Developed Market Economies" (DMEs); 9 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); and 4 "Developing Countries" (DCs). As reported in Table 4, the majority of these countries are located in Europe, North America, and, in the cases of *Japan*, *Hong Kong* and *Taiwan*, in Asia. *Australia* and *New Zealand*--countries whose majority populations and social systems originated in Europe--also appear on the list. The social systems of *Japan*, *Hong Kong* and *Taiwan* were heavily influenced by European and North American systems as well. Thirteen Eastern European countries (e.g., *Bulgaria*, *the Czech Republic*, *Hungary*, *Poland*), the Baltic States (i.e., *Estonia*, *Latvia*, and *Lithuania*), as well as the selected succes-

---

<sup>14</sup> Countries were inversely ranked on the WISP from 1 to 162 with lower rank numbers indicating more favorable WISP rankings.

sor states to the former Soviet Union (e.g., *Belarus, Croatia, Slovenia, Ukraine*) are included within the group as are four developing countries in Latin American (i.e., *Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Uruguay*). This is the first study period for which Latin American countries were included among group of Social Leaders and does mark a substantial rise in the WISP rank positions of these countries *relative to that of all 162 countries included in the study*.

With certain exceptions, most notably Cuba, all other SLs are countries with open market economies and multi-party political systems (CIA, 2009). As a group they share similar ideological commitments on a broad range of social, political, and economic issues; they also share histories of progressive social legislation that have resulted in more or less universally available social welfare programs (USDHHS, 2009). Indeed, many SLs allocate as much as 50%-70% of *total* central government revenues to domestic social spending (OECD, 2009).

With the exception of *Germany* (Rank= 3), many of the world's top-ranked "socially advanced" countries tend to be comparatively small and culturally homogenous, i.e., *Denmark* and *Sweden* (both of which share first place in the ranking system), *Norway* (Rank= 3), *Iceland*<sup>15</sup> (Rank= 5), *Austria* (Rank= 6) and *Finland* (Rank= 7). The populations of these countries ranges from between 0.31 million (*Iceland*) to 9.06 million (*Sweden*) and are predominately white and, with the exception of *Austria*, Protestant.

Further, SLs have distinguished themselves on the basis of their sustained high levels of social and economic development *over time*. In comparison with other clusters of countries, SLs enjoy consistently lower population growth rates (M= 0.3%), higher average life expectation (M= 77.4 years), very low rates of infant and child deaths (M= 5.8 and 6.8, respectively), and high levels of adult literacy (98.2%) (UNDP, 2009). The majority of SLs also have strong, diversified, and dynamic economies (World Bank, 2009). Unemployment rates are high in some of the European SLs (e.g., including 18.9% for *Spain* and 12.2% for *Belgium* in October 2009 [Editors, 2009:109]) but, in general, inflation for these

---

<sup>15</sup> The impact of the financial crisis that afflicted *Iceland* in 2008 & 2009 occurred after the data collection phase of the present study ended. For stories from governmental sources and in the popular media concerning the crisis see: Government of Iceland, 2009; Stoddard, 2009.

countries tends to be low. As a result, SL per capita income levels are high (either exceeding by a comfortable margin or approaching a group average of \$35,000 PPP) and nearly all SLs have access to more favorable exchange rates for their domestic currencies, especially those located in the Euro-zone (OECD, 2009). In addition, SL per capita debt levels, though startling high for some SLs (e.g., *Ireland* [\$448,000]; *Switzerland* [\$177,000]; *United Kingdom* [\$172,000]; the *Netherlands* [\$137,000]) (Wikipedia, 2009d), are substantially lower than those which exist for most developing countries, especially the group of “heavily indebted” developing countries (IMF, 2009; World Bank, 2009b).

The majority of SLs also are characterized by comparatively low levels of diversity-related social conflict, albeit conflict between indigenous populations and newly arrived immigrants is on the increase in many European SLs, but particularly in those countries with limited experience in receiving large numbers of migrants as permanent residents (Coenders, et al., 2009; Loch, 2009; Meuleman et al., 2009; Pehrson, et al., 2009). Only a few SLs have engaged in wars or other significant international conflicts since the end of the second World War<sup>16</sup> with the result that, as a group, the percentage of GDP allocated to military purposes by the SLs has remained low for several decades—an average of just 1.6% of central government expenditures in 2009 (CIA, 2009).

The social situation of women in the SLs is one of universal female primary and secondary school participation levels (100% as a percentages relative to male enrollment rates), higher levels of adult female literacy (99% relative to male literacy rates), significantly reduced maternal mortality ratios (11.3 per 100,000 live births), and more or less routine access to contraception (72.3% of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 years). Even so, the social situation of women in the SLs lags behind that of men, especially in the economic sector, e.g., job opportunities, wages paid, and in the number of women holding elected positions in national parliaments (on average, just 23.7% [SD= 10.4]), albeit wide fluctuations in the percentage of national elected offices held by women do exist from country to country, e.g.,

---

<sup>16</sup> Exceptions to this general pattern are *France*, *the United Kingdom*, and the *United States* all three of which are actively engaged in wars in *Iraq* and *Afghanistan*.

*Sweden* (47%), *Finland* (42%), *Norway* (38%), *Denmark* (37%), *Netherlands* (36%), *Iceland* (32%) (UNDP, 2009; UNIFEM, 2009b).

WISP scores for the SLs averaged 84.2 (SD=6.6) in 2009; scores range from a low of 73 for *Taiwan* to an exceptionally high score of 98 for *Sweden* and *Denmark* each of which retained the highest overall WISP scores (and WISP rank position) for the last two decades.

On average, SLs improved their WISP positions by two ranks between 2000 and 2009, from a group median rank of 21/163 in 2000 to a group median rank of 19/162 in 2009 (SD= 12.2). Significant 10-year WISP rank position losses, however, were observed for *Ireland* (-21 ranks), the *United States* (-8 ranks), *Taiwan* (-7 ranks), *Canada* (-7 ranks), *Switzerland* (-7 ranks), the *Netherlands* (-6 ranks), *Luxembourg* (-5 ranks), *Australia* (-5 ranks), and *Hong Kong* (-5 ranks). *Finland* (-3 ranks) and *New Zealand* (-3 ranks) also lost rank positions in 2009 relative to their world standing in 2000. These losses in rank position occurred for two reasons: (1) significant socio-political-economic changes taking place within the countries themselves; and (2) the remarkable push upward of countries newly recognized as SLs, i.e., those with WISP ranks equal to 31 or lower in 2000, i.e., *Belarus*, *Estonia*, *Taiwan*, *Uruguay*, etc. The net effect of the development successes experienced by these countries has resulted in an increase in their relative WISP rank position and a concomitant drop in the rank positions of nations who rank positions were previously thought to be relatively secure.

Of interest as well is that approximately 17% of the world's population of 6,790 million in 2009--about 1,146 million people--reside in the world's SLs. SL share of the world's total population, however, is expected to decline steadily until at least the year 2025 by which time somewhat less than 15% of the world's then total population of approximately 8,000 million is expected to reside in SLs (UNPOP, 2009).

#### Socially Least developed Countries (SLDCs)

Forty-six (N=46) countries are classified as "Socially Least Developed Countries" (SLDCs): 37 "Least Developed Countries" (LDCs) and 9 "Developing Countries" (DCs). The majority of SLDCs are located

in Sub-Saharan Africa and the developing regions of Asia and Latin America (Table 4). To date, 37 of the SLDCs have been officially classified by the United Nations as "least developed countries" (LDCs).<sup>17</sup>

WISP scores for the SLDCs range from a low of -14 for *Afghanistan* to a high of 27 for *Malawi*. WISP scores for the SLDCs averaged only 12.7 (SD= 11.0) in 2009, well below the group average score of 84.2 (SD= 6.6) achieved by the SLs for the same time period! Ten-year net gains on the WISP occurred for 22 of the 46 SLDCs, including for some of the world's poorest of the poor nations: *Liberia* (+81%, Rank= 161), *Chad* (+77%, Rank= 159), *Central African Republic* (+35%, Rank= 153), *Guinea* (+65% Rank= 148), *Burundi* (+182%, Rank= 147), *Mozambique* (+189%, Rank= 145), *Uganda* (+68%, Rank= 143), *Djibouti* (+22%, Rank= 141), *Mali* (+24%, Rank= 137), *Yemen* (+96%, Rank= 137), and *the Gambia* (+31%, Rank= 137). All other SLDCs experienced net losses in both their 2009 WISP scores and in their 2009 WISP rank position relative to that held by them in 2000 (Table 4).

Despite the social gains already identified for selected SLDCs, many of which are very significant, the pace of social progress for the SLDCs since 2000 remains sluggish, e.g., *Ethiopia* (-221%, Rank= 140), *Iraq* (-59%, Rank= 143), *Niger* (-344%, Rank= 148), *Nigeria* (-70%, Rank= 152), the *Democratic Republic of the Congo* (-193%, Rank= 154), and *Sierra Leone* (-96%, Rank= 155). The social situation in these continues in 2009 continues to be much the same as that initially described by the Brandt Commission in 1980 (Brandt, 1980),

Many hundreds of millions of people in the poorer countries are preoccupied solely with survival and elementary needs. For them work is frequently not available or, when it is, pay is very low and conditions often barely tolerable. Homes are constructed of impermanent materials and have neither piped water nor sanitation. Electricity is a luxury. Health services are thinly spread and in rural areas only rarely within walking distance. Primary schools, where they exist, may be free and not too far away, but children are needed for work and cannot be easily spared for schooling. Permanent insecurity is the condition of the poor. There are no public systems of social security in the event of unemployment, sickness or death of a

---

<sup>17</sup> The phase "least developed countries" (LDCs) was created by the United Nations in 1971 to describe the situation of the world's "poorest and most economically weak of the developing countries, i.e., countries characterized by formidable economic, institutional and human resource problems, which are often compounded by geographical handicaps and natural and man-made disasters" (see UN-OHRLLS, 2009d for current resolutions pertaining to recognition of and special UN support for the LDCs).

wage-earner in the family. Flood, drought or disease affecting people or livestock can destroy livelihoods without hope of compensation.

The poorest of the poor...will remain..outside the reach of normal trade and communication. The combination of malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, high birth rates, underemployment and low income closes off the avenues of escape... (p. 49).

Commenting on the transnational nature of today's poverty the authors of the 1994 Human Development Report (1994) commented,

Poverty is no longer contained within national boundaries. It has become globalized. It travels across borders, without a passport, in the form of drugs, diseases, pollution, migration, terrorism and political instability.

The elimination of transnational poverty is at the heart of the Millennium Development Campaign as is the international campaign to achieve the eight goals associated with this Campaign by the year 2015...or as soon thereafter as is practical (UN, 2009a; UNHCR, 2009b; United Nations Millennium Project, 2005). The importance of this far-reaching agenda is all the more critical given that, today, approximately 14% of the world's population--926 million people--reside in the world's SLDCs...and their proportion as a share of the world's total population may well increase should the MDGs fail to achieve their targets! This is particularly the case with Goal #1 which calls for the he eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. Should the world community not achieve that goal the number of persons living in extreme poverty almost certainly will continue to rise in which case as many as 18% - 20% of the world's then projected population of 7,295 million people in 2015 (131,310 million people) could reside in deeply impoverished SLDCs (United Nations, 2009a; UNPOP, 2009).<sup>18</sup> With even a moder-

---

<sup>18</sup> Increases in the populations of the SLDCs will result from a combination of continuing high fertility and declining rates of adult morbidity. Quite simply, SLDCs, due largely to continuing advances in public health, are expected to add to the size of their populations at both ends of the age pyramid for the foreseeable future (UNPOP, 2009).



ate level of success in reaching the objectives of Goal 1, however, the cycle of recurrent poverty could be broken for many of people within the poorest SLDCs. Such an outcome would result in a more optimistic view of the future that would inspire others both within the same country and within other SLDCs more generally that they, too, could control their own destinies to a greater extent than previously had been believed to be the case.

To achieve such a break through, however, will require persistence and determination on the part of all stakeholders in the global community in advancing new paradigms for development *that place people and people's development at the heart of the development process* (Estes, 1993; Moyo, 2008; Prahalad, 2006; Sachs, 2005, 2008; Sen, 2009; Yunus, 2008). Such a paradigm shift will not be easy to achieve but, even so, a paradigm shift of this magnitude is a prerequisite to the peaceful revolution that is needed to bring about the social transformations required to liberate the world of the poverty and centuries-old conflicts whose solutions are within our grasp.

#### Middle-Range Performing Countries

Seventy-four (N=74) of the study's 162 countries are classified as "Middle Performing Countries" (MPCs) on the WISP: 53 "Developing Countries" (DCs); 12 "Commonwealth of Independent States" (CIS); 4 "Least Developing Countries" (LDCs)—*Bangladesh* (WISP= 38, Rank= 107), *Cambodia* (WISP= 31, Rank= 112), *Cape Verde* (WISP= 51, Rank= 81), and *Lesotho* (WISP= 46, Rank= 98); and 5 "Developed Market Economies" (DMEs)—*Israel* (WISP= 68, Rank= 46), *Mexico* (WISP= 60, Rank= 55), *Singapore* (WISP= 58, Rank= 61), *South Korea* (WISP= 67, Rank= 49), and *Turkey* (WISP= 53, Rank= 70). The LDC members of the group of MPCs typically fall at the bottom end of the MPC spectrum but their recent development performances do, nonetheless, qualify them for inclusion in the group as "low" mid-range performing countries. Similarly, many of the DMEs included in the MPC group are *non-high income* members of the 30-country, Paris-based, Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) and, only recently, have themselves been reclassified by the OECD from DC to DME status, e.g., *Mexico*, *South Korea*, and *Turkey* (OECD, 2009). All five countries are located in the top tier of MPC nations.

The MPCs contain a total of 4,503 million people, approximately 66% of the world's total. Nearly all of the MPCs are located in the developing regions of Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Three of the world's four largest population centers, all located in Asia, are grouped with the MPCs, i.e., *China* (WISP= 49, Rank= 87), *Indonesia* (WISP= 39, Rank= 105), and *India* (WISP= 34, Rank= 109). All three of these countries experienced net losses on the WISP between 2000 and 2009 (-12.7%, -12.5%, and -0.7%, respectively). In the cases of *China* and *Indonesia* net losses also were observed in WISP rank positions between 2000 and 2009, i.e., from a rank of 69 to 87 for *China* and from a rank of 92 to 105 for *Indonesia* (Table 4). *India*, on the other hand, and despite its WISP score losses, advanced two ranks positions between 2000 and 2009 from 111 to 109 (Table 4). Even small changes of this magnitude are significant given the large size of the culturally diverse populations that reside in these countries, i.e., *China* (1,300 million), *India* (1,200 million), and *Indonesia* (240 million).

WISP scores for the MPCs in 2009 range from a low of 29 for *Ghana* to a high of 71 for *Armenia* (Table 4); the group's average WISP score is 51.0 (SD=10.6)--just 2 points higher than the average WISP score of the world-as-a-whole (M=48.8, SD= 28.2). Further, the majority of MPCs experienced 10-year net increases in both WISP scores (+1.7%) and WISP rank positions averaging (+1.4 ranks) per country. The most significant WISP rank positional gains for the 74 countries in this group occurred for: *Algeria* (Rank Change = +25), *Brazil* (Rank Change = +24), *Cape Verde* (Rank Change = +18), *Turkey* (Rank Change = +18), *Uzbekistan* (Rank Change = +17), *Nicaragua* (Rank Change = +16), *Tunisia* (Rank Change = +15), *Honduras* (Rank Change = +12), *Bahrain* (Rank Change = +12), *Fiji* (Rank Change = +11), *Viet Nam* (Rank Change = +11), the *Bahamas* (Rank Change = +10), and *Jordan* (Rank Change = +10). The most significant social losses as measured by a drop of 10 or more WISP rank positions between 2000 and 2009 occurred for just six MPCs: *Turkmenistan* (Rank Change = -23), *Indonesia* (Rank

Change = -21), *Tajikistan* (Rank Change = -21), *China* (Rank Change = -18), *Macedonia* (Rank Change = -14), and *Suriname* (Rank Change = -10). The populations affected by WISP rank losses totaled 1,594 million persons--35.3% of the total population of the MPCs and, due to the inclusion of *China* and *Indonesia* in the group, 23.4% of that of the world-as-a-whole.

The MPCs are highly heterogeneous; indeed, enormous differences characterize the countries grouped at the top and at the bottom of the list. In general, the majority of countries located at the top of the list are well on their way toward becoming SLs (e.g., *Armenia*, *Chile*, *Cyprus*, *the Russian Federation*, *Israel*, *Moldova*, *South Korea* and *Brazil*). The countries at the bottom of the list—i.e. the lowest performing MPCs—are in danger of drifting into SLDC status, e.g., *Ghana*, *Qatar*, *Gabon*, *Cambodia*, *Guatemala*, *Swaziland*, and *India*. Already, three of the MPCs in the bottom third of the list have been officially classified by the United Nations as "least developed countries" (LDCs), i.e., as part of the "the fourth world," or as the "poorest of the poor" nations, i.e., *Lesotho* (Rank= 98), *Bangladesh* (Rank= 107), *Cambodia* (Rank= 112).

Middle performing countries located in the middle of the list on Table 4 have the potential of moving toward either SL or SLDC status. The trend since the year 2000, though, is for the majority of these countries to move closer to SL status and to do so at a fairly rapid pace; indeed, of the 27 mid performing MPCs, 19 are moving in a positive upward direction with eight of them doing so with double digit increases in their WISP rank positions between 2000 and 2009: *Algeria* (+25 ranks), *Turkey* (+18 ranks), *Cape Verde* (+18 ranks), *Nicaragua* (+16 ranks), *Bahrain* (+12 ranks), *Honduras* (+12 ranks), *Viet Nam* (+11 ranks), and *Jordan* (+10 ranks). The remaining nine mid-MPCs also are making great strides forward. Concern does exist, though, for the nine mid-performing MPCs that lost social ground between 2000 and 2009...some at an disquieting pace: *China* (-18 ranks), *Kuwait* (-7 ranks), *Macedonia* (-14 ranks), *Dominican Republic* (-9 ranks), *Kazakhstan* (-6 ranks), *South Africa* (-3 ranks), *Malaysia* (-3 ranks), *Thailand* (-2 ranks), and *Egypt* (-1 rank).

The proportion of the world's population living in the MPCs is expected to remain more or less constant well into the middle of the present century, i.e., to include 2 out of every 3 people on the planet (UNPOP, 2009). The group's most rapid population increases, as in the past, will continue to take place among the poorest countries located at the bottom one-third of the list (and, within this group, among the poorest of these nations).

Figure 12 reflects a cartographical distribution of WISP development scores for countries and regions ranging from Zone 1 (most developed—DMEs) to Zone 5 (least developed—SLDCs). This graphic makes vividly clear the concentration of high and low levels of development in particular regions and subregions of the world with the most favorable patterns found in Europe and predominately in those countries that trace their social histories to Europe, e.g., *Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States*, etc. Conversely, the least favorable concentrations of development, i.e., the SLDCs, are found in Central and Middle Africa as well as in Central, South, and Southeast Asia. The MPCs, on the other hand, are widely scattered throughout Central and South America, among the successor states to the former Soviet Union in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, as well as in among countries located in Northern and Southern Africa, and East and West Asia. Comparative time-series charts covering the full 40-year period of the study are available on the project's electronic website.

[Insert Figure 12 about here]

## DISCUSSION

Following decades of comparatively modest social improvements for most nations, once again, the majority of the world's countries are strengthening their capacity to satisfy at least the basic needs of their growing populations. In this report, and unlike past reports of worldwide social progress, the most remarkable social gains (M= +47%), occurred among the world's poorest and least socially developed countries (SLDCs). This trend represents a remarkable turnaround in global development and reflects most favorably on poorer countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia.

Appreciable gains in social provision also are reported for the group of 66 Developing Countries (DCs) included in this study. Once again, these positive trends represent a departure from past analyses of national social capacity which reported uneven patterns of social development for the DCs considered as-a-group. Similarly, very positive social development gains were observed between 2000 and 2009 for the European members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (N=13, M= +2.4%), albeit generally negative trends were found to exist within the majority of Asian CIS members (N=8, M= -2.1%) which, as-as-group, have as yet to avail themselves of the social benefits associated with more open economic and political systems (CIA, 2009). Within both the DCs and the European CIS nations, low levels of corruption, in combination with high levels of participatory democracy, are associated with higher performances on the WISP which, in turn, contribute directly to increases in performances across all ten social sectors measured by the WISP, e.g., Health Status, Education Status, Women Status, Population Status, Diversity-Related Social Conflict, Welfare Effort, and so on.

Throughout the entire 40-year period covered by this analysis the majority of the 34 Developed Market Economies (DMEs) retained their position as “World Social Leaders” (SLs). As to be expected, the WISP rank position of individual DME countries varied from one time period to next but, even so, their overall WISP profile remained strong *relative to all 162 countries included in the analysis*. As a group, though, DMEs did not advance their overall WISP scores; indeed, between 2000 and 2009 the WISP scores for DMEs as-a-group declined by an average of -7.3%. This decline in average WISP values is accounted for by actual changes that took place within DMEs themselves (e.g., economic downturns, shifts in budgetary priorities, engagement in wars, etc.) but also by the significant advances that took place in other development groupings *relative to the DMEs*. Even so, the top ranking group of DMEs continue to serve as exemplars of social development by which less developed DMEs and other groupings of nations can compare their own social progress in responding to the needs of their populations (e.g., *Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Iceland, Austria, Finland, Italy, France, and Luxembourg*).

Overall, the patterns of worldwide social development summarized in this paper are very dynamic indeed. And the picture presented contains many surprises...not the least of which is the dramatic increases on the WISP observed for the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs)--most of which are located in Sub-Saharan Africa and among the poorer countries of South, and Southeast Asia. While surprising, these findings are much welcomed and speak favorably to the efforts of governments in these countries to address a broad range of social issues within their countries and subregions. The recent success which they are experiencing also provide early evidence of the success of the *Millennium Development Campaign* in at least partially achieving the Campaign's far-reaching goals focused on reducing global poverty and in removing the barriers that inhibit human development throughout the world (UN, 2009a; UNHCR, 2009b; UN Millennium Project, 2005). These metrics of the MDGs' early successes in advancing its eight development goals comes in the midst of a historic worldwide economic recession, i.e., at a time when most would expect significant social contraction, not expansion, especially among the world's poorest nations. But, to date, this appears not to be the case, at least for some LDCs and Low-ranking Middle Performing Countries (MPCs). Those of us working in the international development field can only hope that these early successes are harbingers of even greater achievements yet to be realized as the Millennium Development Campaign continues to unfold.

The preceding sentiment is best captured by the Nobel Peace Laureate and founder of the Grammeen Bank movement in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, who, in concluding his volume on *Creating a World Without Poverty* (2007), wrote:

*All human beings have the inner capacity not only to care for themselves but also to contribute to increasing the well-being of the world as a whole. Some get the chance to explore their potential to some degree. But many never get any opportunity to unwrap this wonderful gift they were born with. They die with their gifts unexplored, and the world is deprived of all they could have done...*

*It is possible to eliminate poverty from our world because it is not natural to human beings—it is artificially imposed on them. Let's dedicate ourselves to bringing an end to it at the earliest possible date and putting poverty in the museums once and for all (p. 233).*

Putting poverty in museums is a realistic ideal toward which many of us can aspire. To do so, though, first requires a commitment. Then it requires knowledge. And, then, knowledge and commitment must be brought together to create *praxis*, i.e., action fully informed by knowledge such that *neither the heart nor the brain alone* is in control of the change process...but, rather, both working together inform the effort. The poor and other disenfranchised people understand the importance of praxis well and, through experience, have learned not to trust those who would try to convince them otherwise; after all, historically, in matters of social change it is the bodies of the poor that have littered the streets of revolutionary cities...not those of the elites.

At the outset of a new century, the need is apparent for new, more dramatic, initiatives that will transform all of the world's nations into more caring and socially productive societies. Some of these initiatives have been identified in this paper (Estes, 1993; Moyo, 2008; Prahalad, 2006; Sachs, 2005, 2008; Sen, 2009; Yunus, 2008). All emphasize realization of the three goals on which the world's leaders already agree: (1) the elimination of absolute poverty everywhere; (2) enhanced popular participation at all levels of social organization; and, (3) more equitable sharing of the planet's abundant resources.

The fundamental social changes implied by these goals are complex and they will not yield easily to quick or simple solutions. Rather, sustained investments over the long term are required to reverse the underlying conditions that have trapped a large portion of the world's population in poverty and degradation. At the center of an effective change effort must be a commitment to strengthening the capacity of people to provide for their own needs on their terms and with the objective of achieving their goals. No other approach to development can expect to succeed in helping the world's poor and poorest countries liberate themselves of the deeply entrenched patterns of mal-development that have held their populations hostage for so long. *Praxis*, the meaningful engagement of people through knowledge-based action, must be at the center of the strategy and, at the center of praxis, must be people themselves with an unwavering commitment to their own development and the realization of the fullness of their own potential.

REFERENCES

- Amnesty International (AI): 2009, "The State of the World's Human Rights, 2009." Available at: <http://thereport.amnesty.org/>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Buchholz, T.: 2007, *New Ideas From Dead Economists: An Introduction to Modern Economic Thought*. 2nd Edition. (Penguin, New York ).
- Casey Foundation, Annie E.: 2008, *Kids Count Data Book, 2008*. Available at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2008/Default.aspx>. Accessed October 31, 2009.
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): 2009, *World Factbook*. Available at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>. Accessed April 2, 2009.
- Coenders, M., Lubbers M., & Scheepers, P.: 2009, "Opposition to civil rights for legal migrants in central and eastern Europe: Cross-national comparisons and explanations," *East European Politics & Societies* 23(2), pp. 146-164.
- Council of Europe: 2009, *Investing In Social Cohesion: Investing in Stability and the Well-Being of Society*. Proceedings of the First Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Cohesion held in Moscow, Russian Federation 26-27 February. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/source/MoscouConferenceProgrammes\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/source/MoscouConferenceProgrammes_en.pdf). Accessed November 13, 2009.
- de Davas-Watt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Smith, J.C.: 2008, *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2007* (Current Population Reports of the U.S. Census Bureau, Washington DC).
- de Soto, H.: 1989, *The Other Path* (Harper & Row, New York).
- Editors: 2009, Economic and financial indicators, *The Economist*, October 31, p. 109.
- Ellingsen, T.: 1995, *Ethnic Witches' Data Set: Linguistic, Religious and Ethnic Fragmentation, 1945-94* (University of Trondheim, Trondheim, Norway).
- Encyclopedia Britannica: 2008, *Almanac, U.S. Edition* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago).
- Estes, R. J.: 1984, *The Social Progress of Nations* (Praeger, New York).
- Estes, R. J.: 1988, *Trends in World Social Development* (Praeger, New York).
- Estes, R. J.: 1993, "Toward sustainable development: From theory to praxis," *Social Development Issues* 15(3), pp. 1-29.
- Estes, R. J.: 1995, "Social Development Trends in Africa: The Need for a New Development Paradigm," *Social Development Issues* 17(1), pp. 18-47.



- Estes, R. J.: 1996, "Social Development Trends in Latin America, 1970-1994: In the Shadows of the 21st Century," *Social Development Issues* 18(1), pp. 25-52.
- Estes, R. J.: 1998a, "Social Development Trends in the Successor States to the Former Soviet Union: The Search For a New Paradigm," in Kempe R. Hope, Jr., *Challenges of Transformation and Transition From Centrally Planned to Market Economies*, (United Nations Centre for Regional Development, Nagoya), pp. 13-30.
- Estes, R. J.: 1998b, "Trends in World Social Development, 1970-95: Development Prospects For a New Century," *Journal of Developing Societies* 14(1), pp. 11-39.
- Estes, R. J.: 2004a, "The World Social Situation: 1970-2009." Available at: <http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/article.php?id=1736>. Accessed October 25, 2009.
- Estes, R. J.: 2004b, "Development challenges of the New Europe," *Social Indicators Research* 69(2), pp. 123-166.
- Estes, R. J.: 2005a, "Global change and indicators of social development," in Marie Weil (Editor), *The Handbook of Community Practice* (Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA).
- Estes, R. J.: 2007a, "Development Challenges and Opportunities Confronting Economies in Transition," *Social Indicators Research* 83(3):375-411.
- Estes, R. J.: 2007b, "Asia and the New Century: Challenges and Opportunities," *Social Indicators Research* 82(3):375-410.
- Estes, R. J.: 2007c, *Advancing Quality of Life in a Turbulent World* (Springer, Dordrecht NL).
- Estes, R. J.: 2010, *Development Challenges at the Outset of a New Century* (in preparation).
- Freedom House: 2009, *Freedom in the World, 2009*. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2009>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Glennie, J.: 2008, *The Trouble with Aid: Why Less Could Mean More for Africa* (Zed Books, London).
- Global Security.org: 2009, *The World at War*. Available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/index.html>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Government of Iceland: 2009, *Timeline on the unfolding of the Icelandic financial crisis*. Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Available at: <http://www.iceland.org/info/iceland-crisis/timeline/>. Accessed October 29, 2009.
- Hagerty, M., Vogel, J., & Moeller, V.: 2002, *Assessing Quality of Life and Living Conditions to Guide National Policy: The State of the Art*. Special issue of *Social Indicators Research*, 58(1-3), pp. 1-440.
- Peter J. Hotez, P. J., Molyneux, D. H., Fenwick, A., Ottesen, E., Sachs, S.E., & Sachs, J. D.: 2007, *Incorporating a rapid-impact package for neglected tropical diseases with programs for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria*. *PLoS Medicine* 3(No 5 e102).

- International Monetary Fund (IMF): 2009, Debt Relief Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/pdf/hipc.pdf>. Accessed October 15, 2009.
- Keleher, R.: 1999, "Can IMF lending promote corruptions?" Testimony before the Joint Economic Committee Study (of the US House of Representatives)." Available at: <http://www.house.gov/jec/imf/corrupt.htm>. Accessed November 1, 2009.
- Kingsley, G. T., Smith, R.E., & Price, D.: 2009, The Impacts of Foreclosures on Families and Communities: A Primer. Available at: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411910>. Accessed October 31, 2009.
- Leonard, D. and Scott, S.: 2003, Africa's stalled development (Lynne Rienner, Boulder).
- Loch, D.: 2009, "Immigrant youth and urban riots: A comparison of France and Germany," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(5), pp. 791-814.
- Meuleman, B., Davidov, E. & Billiet, J.: 2009, "Changing attitudes toward immigration in Europe, 2002-2007: A dynamic group conflict theory approach," *Social Science Research* 38(2), pp. 352-365.
- Moyo, D.: 2009, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, New York).
- National Coalition for the Homeless: 2009, *Homeless in America*. Available at: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>. Accessed October 31, 2009.
- New Economics Foundation (NEF): 2009, The Happy Planet Index. [http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z\\_sys\\_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=289](http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=289). Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Obioma, I.: 2001, *Contending Issues in African Development: Advances, Challenges, and the Future* (Greenwood Press, London).
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): 2009, *Members and partners*. Available at: [http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en\\_36734052\\_36761800\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_36734052_36761800_1_1_1_1_1,00.html). Accessed on October 31, 2009.
- Pehrson, S., Vignoles, V. L., & Brown, R.: 2009, "National identification and anti-immigration prejudice: Individual and contextual effects of national definitions," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72(1), pp. 24-38.
- Prahalad, C. K.: 2006, *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits* (Upper Saddle River NJ: Wharton School Press).
- Rowland, D., Lyons, B.: 1996, "Medicare, medicaid and the elderly poor," *Health Care Financing Review* 18(2), pp. 61-85.
- Sachs, J. D.: 2005, *The End of Poverty* (Penguin Press, New York).

- Sachs, J. D.: 2008, *Commonwealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (The Penguin Press, New York).
- Sen, A.: 1999, *Development as Freedom* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York).
- Sen, A.: 2009, *The Idea of Justice* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge).
- Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA): 2003, *Corruption and Development Aid. A Special Report*. Available at: <http://www.siiainline.org/files/Special.Report.2003-08-Corruption-Devt-Aid.pdf>. Accessed November 13, 2009.
- Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI): 2009, *SIPRI Yearbook, 2009: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (SIPRI, Stockholm).
- Stoddard, K.: 2009. How Iceland's financial crisis unfolded, *The Guardian*, January 26. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/26/iceland-crisis-timeline>. Accessed October 29, 2009.
- Transparency International: 2009, *Global Corruption Report, 2009*. Available at: <http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations: 2009a, *The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2009*. Available at: [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG\\_Report\\_2009\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_Report_2009_ENG.pdf). Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations: 2009b, *Enable: Promoting the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities*. Available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): 2008, *The State of the World's Children, 2008: Excluded and Invisible* (UNICEF, New York).
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA): 1995, *World Summit for Social Development*. Proceedings available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/index.html>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA): 2002, *World Summit on Sustainable Development*. Conference preparatory materials are available at the following website: <http://www.un.org/jsummit/>. Follow on materials are available at the implementing Secretariat—the DESA's Division for Sustainable Development [ <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml> ]. Accessed on October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA): 2009, *United Nations Development Agenda—Development for All*. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/UNDA\\_BW5\\_Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/UNDA_BW5_Final.pdf). Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): 1997, *Human Development to Eradicate Poverty* (Oxford University Press, New York).

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): 2006, *Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis* (Oxford University Press, New York).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): 2008, *Human Development Report, 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World* (Oxford University Press, New York).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): 2009, *Human Development Report, 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (Oxford University Press, New York).
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM): 2009a, *Gender Issues*. Available at: [http://www.unifem.org/gender\\_issues/](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/). Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM): 2009b, *Progress of the World's Women, 2008/2009*. Available at: [http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/media/POWW08\\_Report\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/media/POWW08_Report_Full_Text.pdf). Accessed October 29, 2009.
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): 2008, *Statistical Overview* (ESCAP, Bangkok).
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): 2009a, *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02afce6.html>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): 2009b, *MDGs and Refugees*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e5a9e56.html>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- United Nations Millennium Project: 2005, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. (Earthscan, New York and London).
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS): 2009a, *The criteria for LDCs*. Available at: <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/l dc/l dc%20criteria.htm>. Accessed October 13, 2009.
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS): 2009b, *List of LDCs*. Available at: <http://www.unohrlls.org/en/l dc/related/62/>. Accessed October 13, 2009.
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS): 2009c, *LDC Facts and Figures*. Available at: <http://www.unohrlls.org/en/l dc/related/63/>. Accessed October 13, 2009.
- United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS): 2009d, *Resolutions*. Available at: <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/l dc/resolutions.htm>. Accessed November 13, 2009.

- United Nations Population Division (UNPOP): 2009, World Population Prospects: 2008 Revisions. Available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008\\_highlights.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2008/wpp2008_highlights.pdf). Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Vision of Humanity: 2009, Global Peace Index, <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi/results/rankings.php>. Accessed October 10, 2009.
- Ward, T., Orsolya, O. L, Sutherland, H., & Toth, I. G. (Editors): 2009, European Inequalities: Social Inclusion and Income Distribution in the European Union (TARKI Social Research Institute Inc., Budapest).
- Wikipedia: 2009a, List of On-going Conflicts. Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ongoing\\_conflicts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ongoing_conflicts). Accessed October 15, 2009.
- Wikipedia: 2009b, List of Wars 2003-Current. Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/wars\\_2003-current](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/wars_2003-current). Accessed October 15, 2009.
- Wikipedia: 2009c, South Africa under apartheid. Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Africa\\_under\\_apartheid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa_under_apartheid). Accessed October 16, 2009.
- Wikipedia: 2009d, "Debt per capita." Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debt\\_per\\_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debt_per_capita). Accessed November 3, 2009.
- World Bank: 2001, World Development Report, 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty (Oxford University Press, New York).
- World Bank: 2006, World Development Report, 2006: Equity and Development (Oxford University Press, New York).
- World Bank: 2009a, World Development Report, 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography (Oxford University Press, New York).
- World Bank: 2009b, (HIPC) The Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEBTDEPT/0,,contentMDK:20260411~menuPK:528655~pagePK:64166689~piPK:64166646~theSitePK:469043,00.html>. Accessed October 15, 2009.
- World Bank: 2009c, World Development Indicators (The World Bank, Washington DC).
- World Bank: 2010, World Development Report, 2010: Development and Climate Change (Oxford University Press, New York).
- World Health Organization (WHO): 2008, The World Health Report, 2008: Primary Health Care—Now More Than Ever (World Health Organization, Geneva).
- World Resources Institute (WRI): 2008a, World Resources: Roots of Resilience (World Resources Institute, Washington DC).

World Resources Institute (WRI): 2008b, Protecting Forests to Save the Climate: REDD Challenges and Opportunities. Available at: <http://earthtrends.wri.org/updates/node/303>. Accessed October 11, 2009.

World Resources Institute (WRI): 2009, The 6th Extinction and Protected Areas. Available at: <http://earthtrends.wri.org/>. Accessed October 11, 2009.

Yunus, M.(with Weber, K.): 2008, Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism (Public Affairs, New York).

Fig. 1

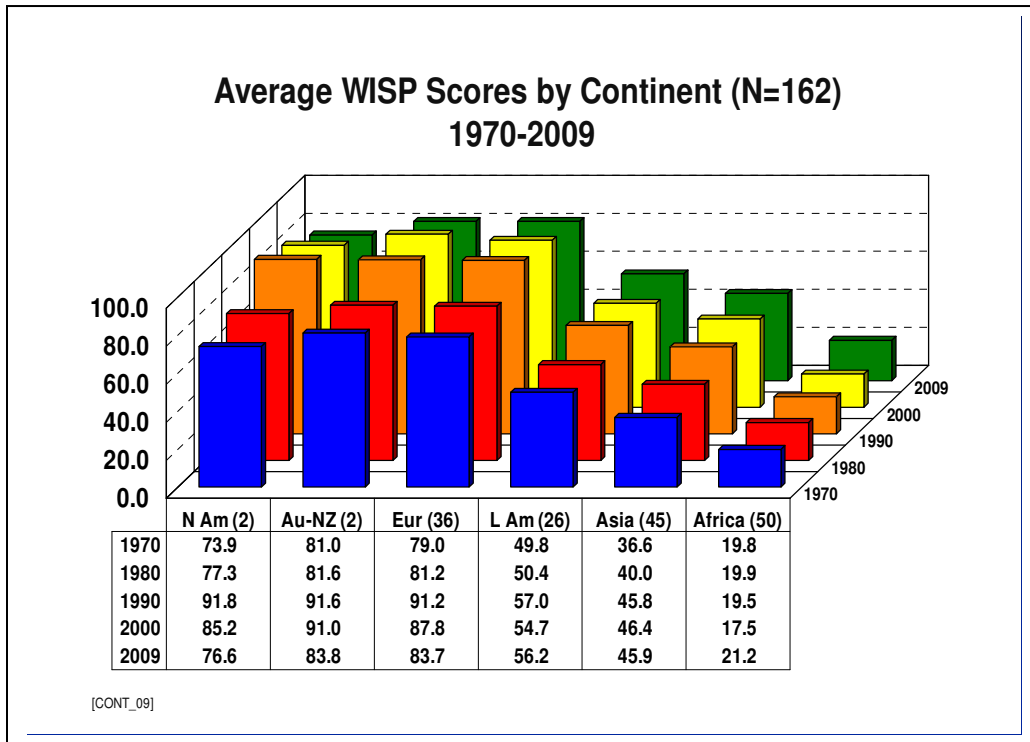


Fig 2

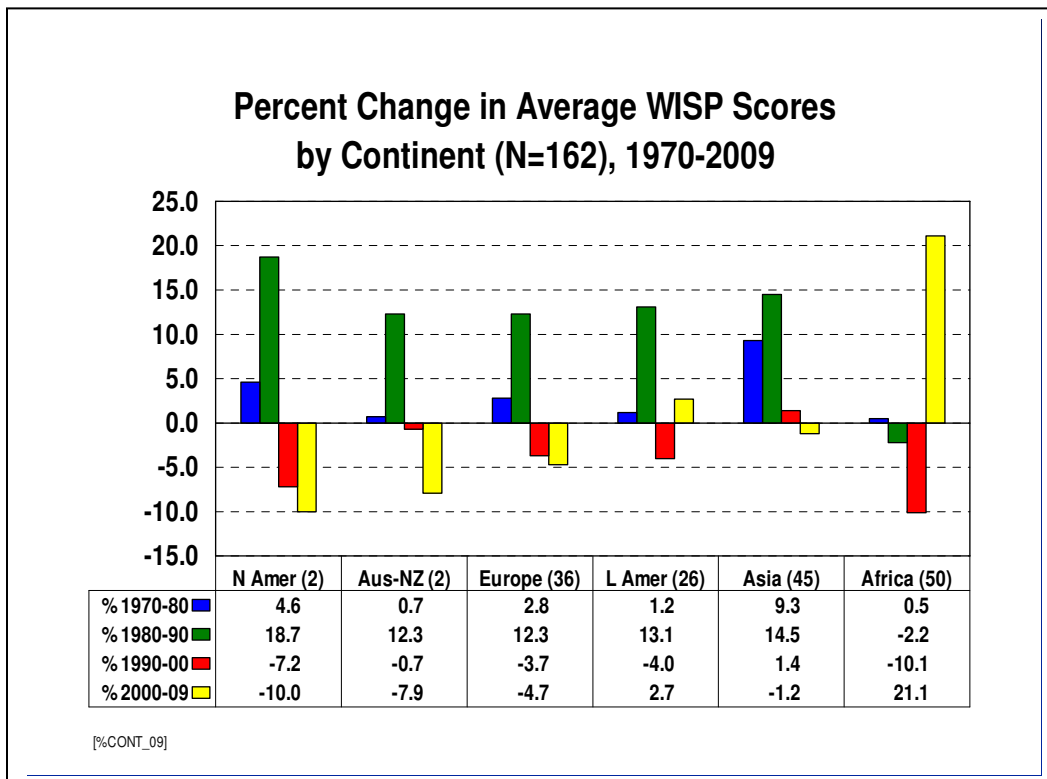


Fig 3

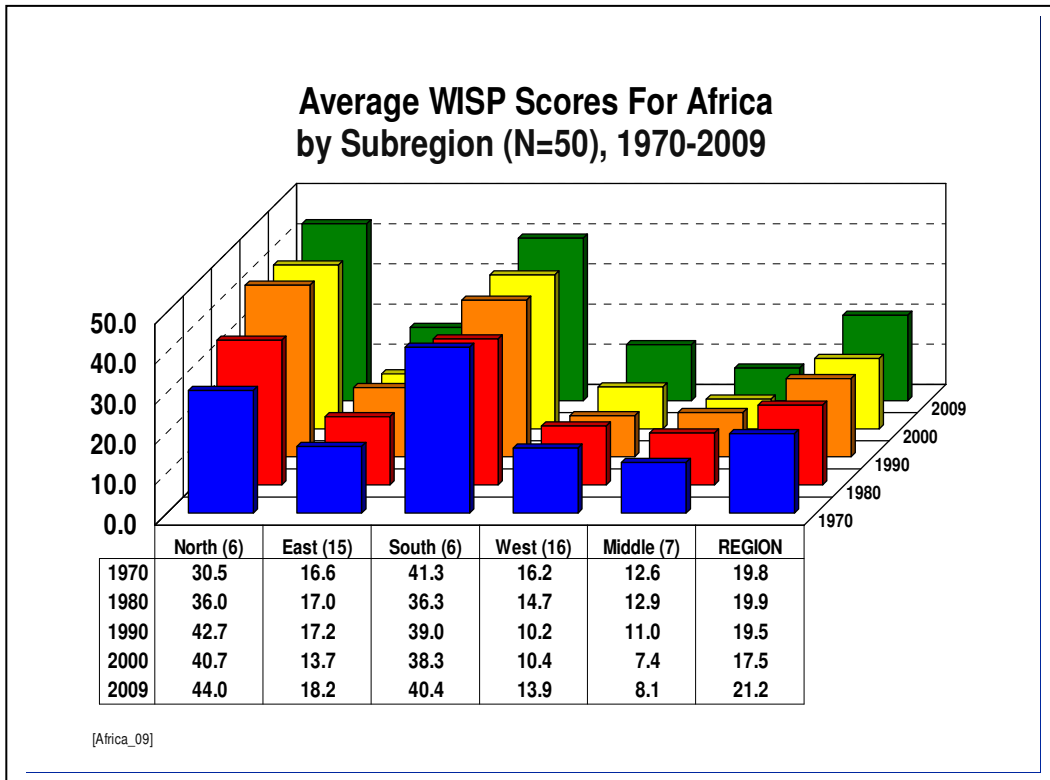


Fig. 4

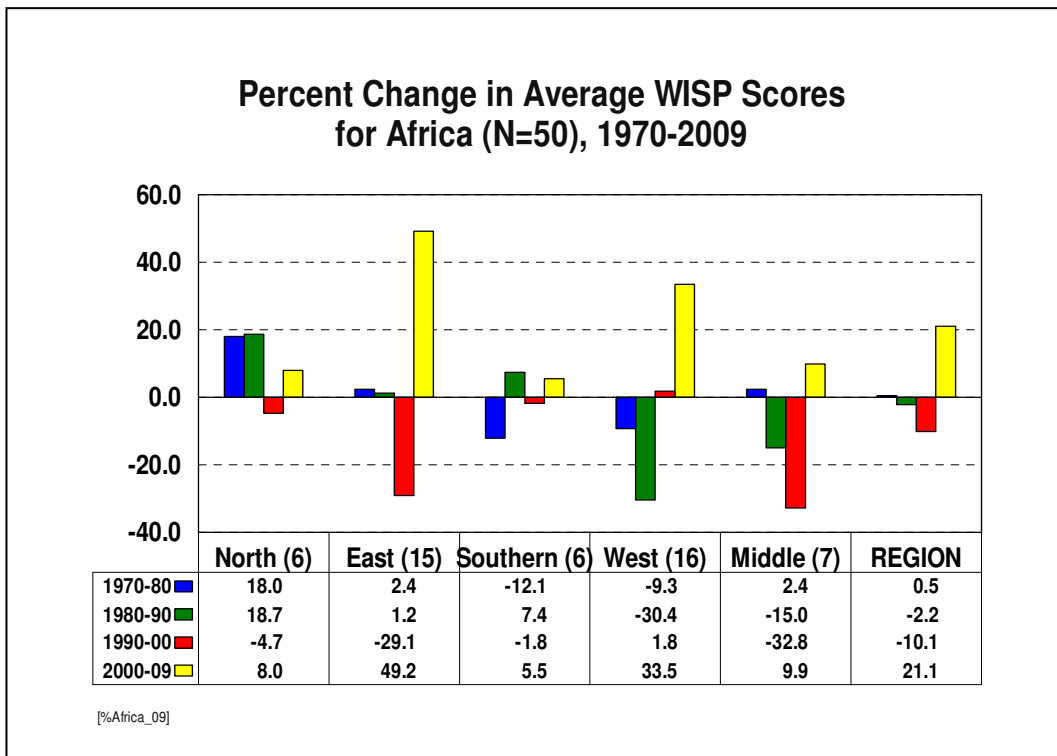




Fig. 5

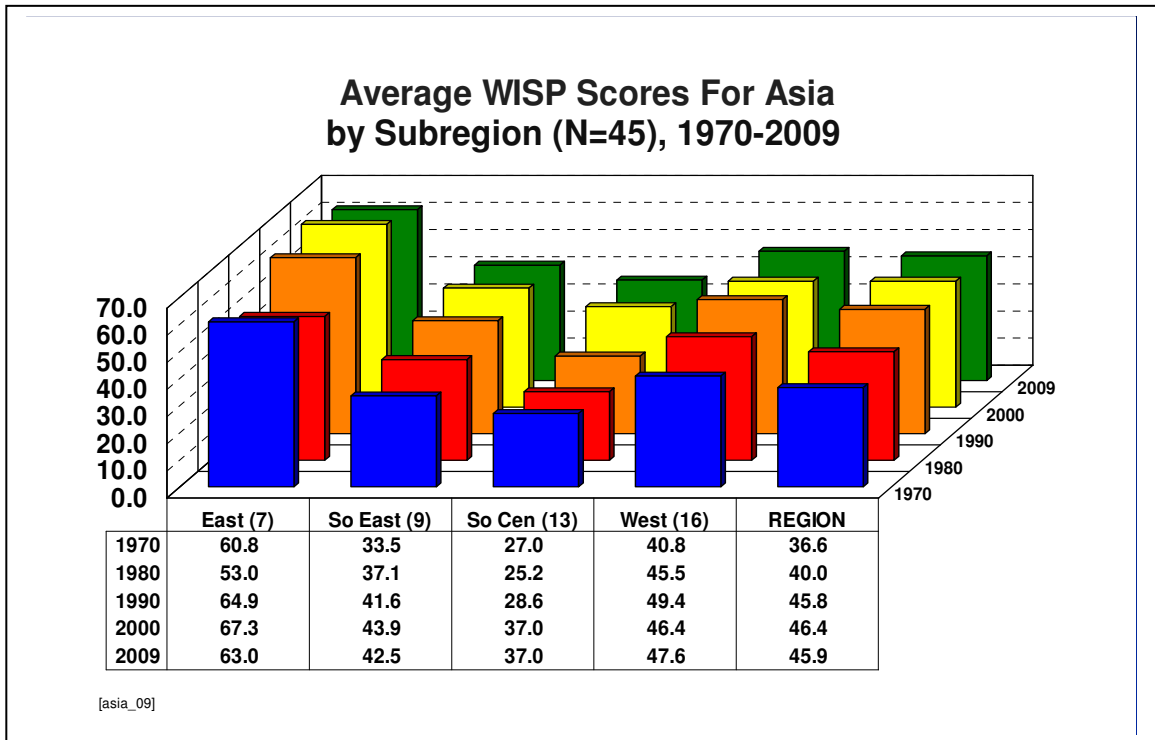


Fig. 6

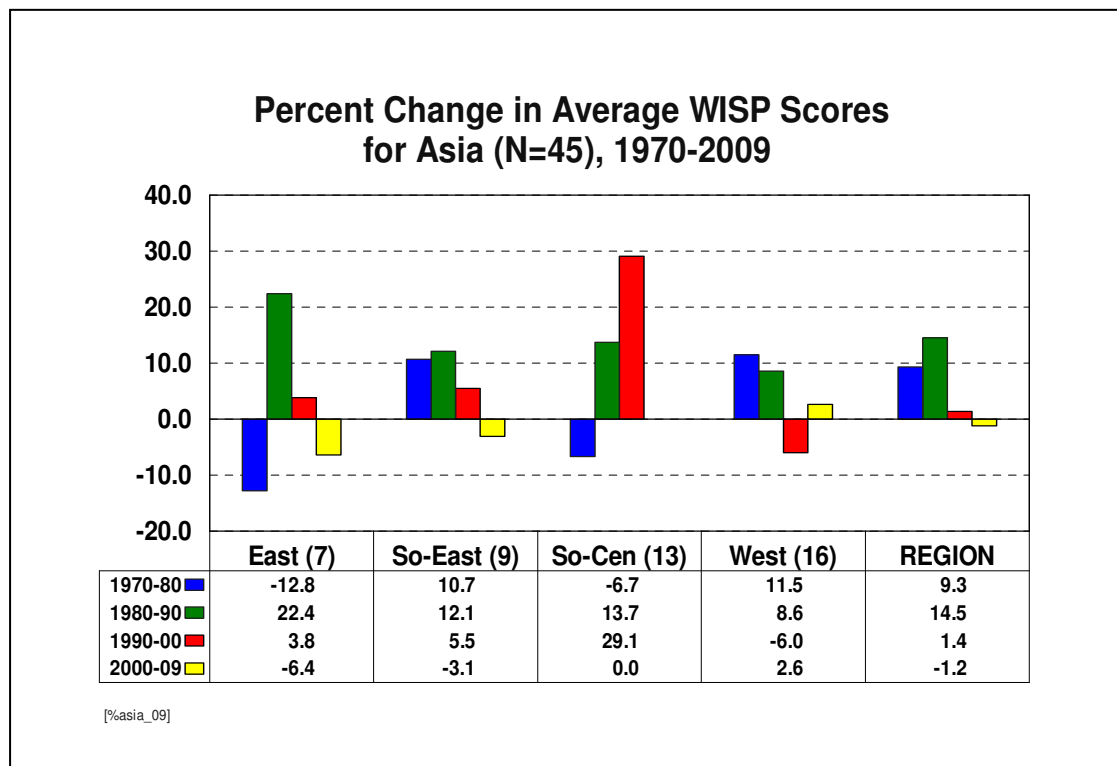


Fig. 7

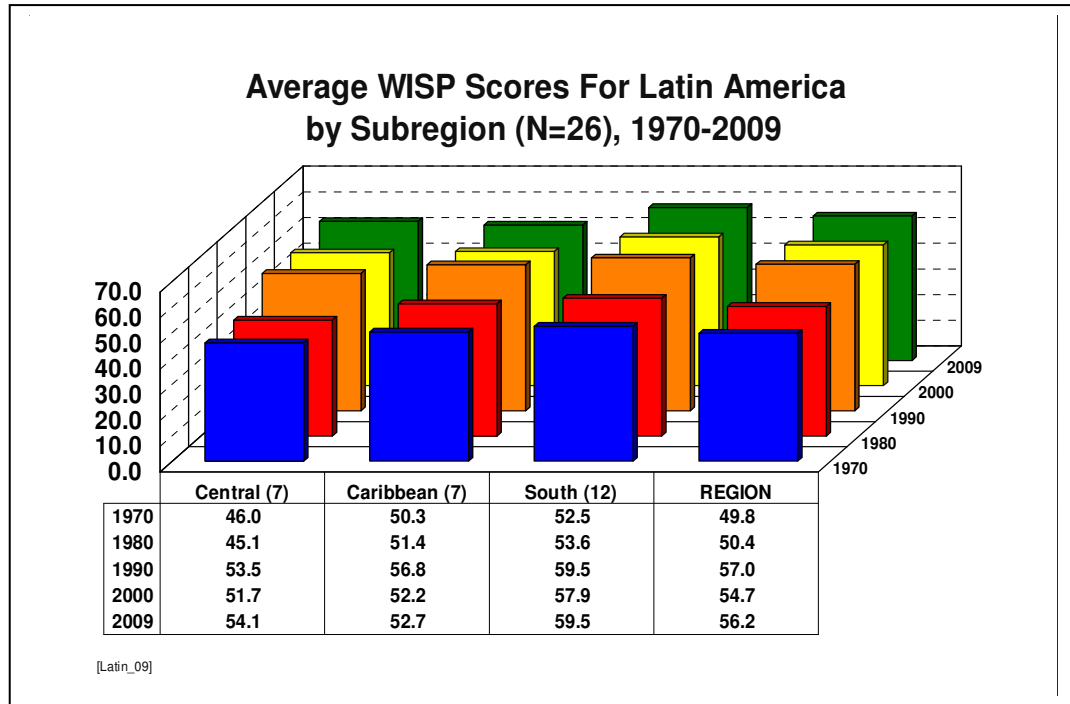


Fig. 8

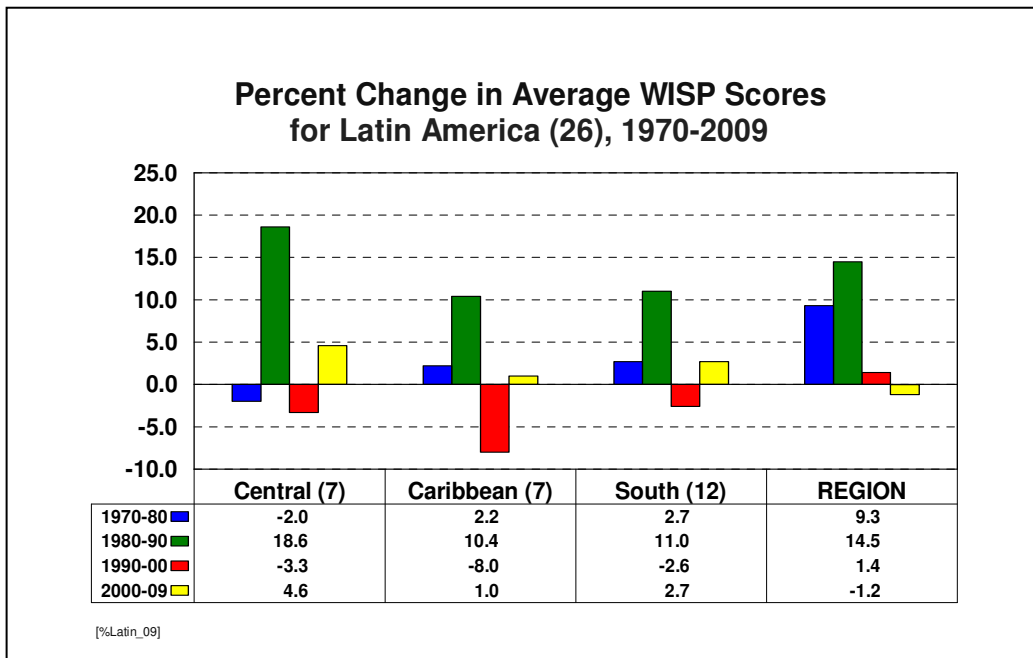


Figure 9

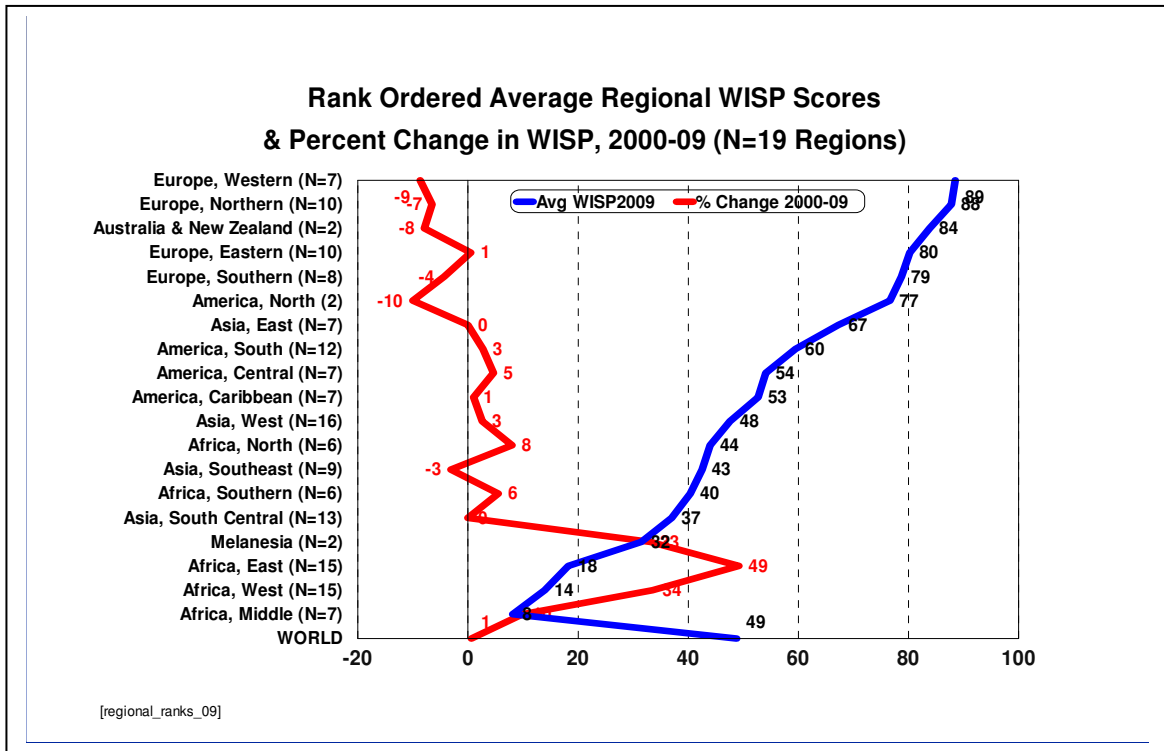


Fig. 10

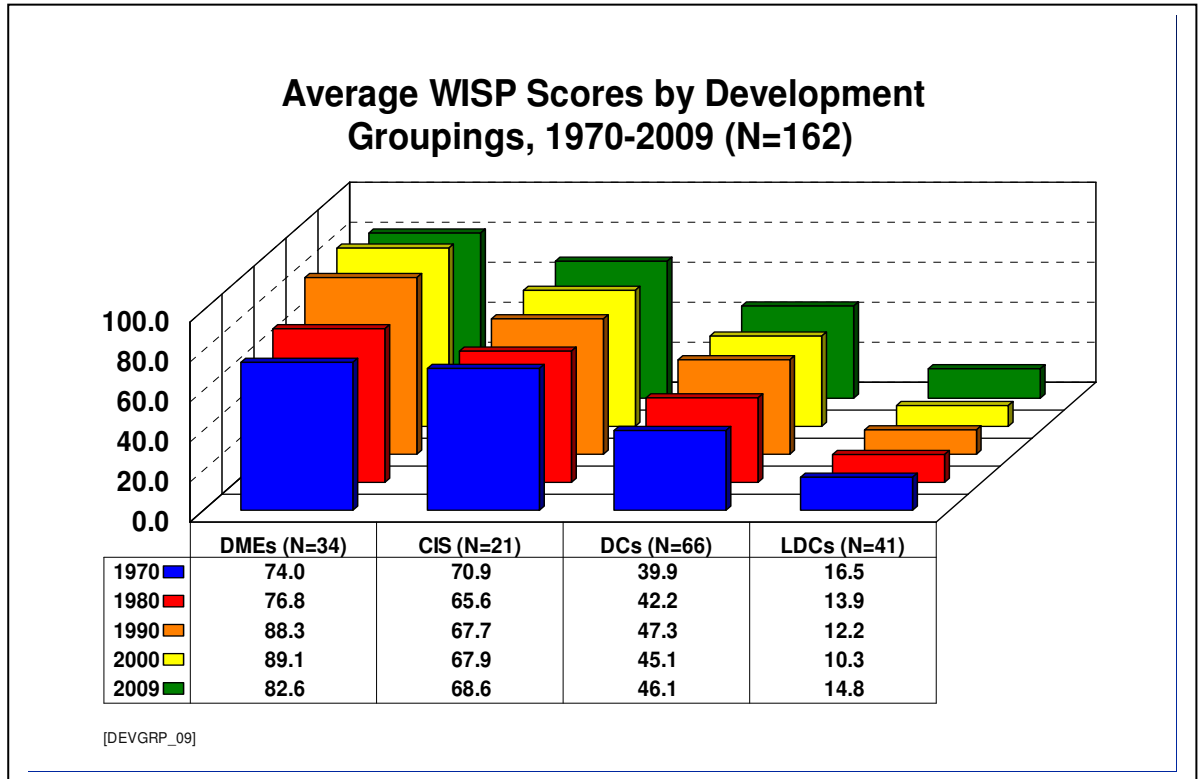


Fig. 11

