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Causes of Culture: National Differences in Cultural Embeddedness

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What causes national differences in culture? Past attempts to answer this question take insufficient account of how slowly culture changes or of the fact that culture itself influences the social structural, political, and demographic variables identified as causes. Convincing causes of cultural differences must meet three criteria: They should reflect the formative historical experiences of societies, they should not be influenced reciprocally by culture, and theoretically plausible process should explain their impact on culture. I propose and explain causes of national differences in cultural embeddedness, a value orientation that calls upon people to find meaning in life through identifying with their in-group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. Analyses of data from 77 cultural groups (74 countries) demonstrate that cultural embeddedness is greater in ethnically heterogeneous societies, with a relatively short history of viable state institutions, whose historically dominant religion was Islam rather than Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. These causal findings are not due to diffusion of culture to nearby countries or colonies. They hold up even when predicting differences in cultural embeddedness among eight world regions or within Eastern and within Western Europe. This research can be a model for investigating causes of various cultural differences among nations and other groups.

Twenty-six centuries ago, Herodotus the famous Greek historian, undertook perilous journeys through mainland Greece, its important islands, and on to Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Phoenicia, Italy, Sicily, and northward all the way to the region known today as Ukraine. He then wrote nine books in which he described the marvelously strange manners and customs he encountered in the lands he visited. Readers of those books and those who heard his public recitations must have wondered: Where do such societal differences in culture come from? That is the question this chapter addresses.

The writers of the Hebrew Bible addressed this same question in the story of the tower of Babel. Their answer provides a first, important clue to the type of explanation I shall propose. In Chapter 11 of "Genesis" we read:

"..And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the human creatures had built. And the Lord said, "As one people with one language for all, if this is what they have begun to do, nothing they plot will elude them. Come let us go down and baffle their language there so that they will not understand each other's language." Ant the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth"(verses 6-8).

In these verses, the Bible attributes the development of multiple cultures to language differences that do not allow groups to communicate with one another. People can communicate effectively within their own group but not across group lines, so they grow apart into ethnic groups. Each develops unique ways of thinking, believing, acting, and understanding reality.

Different groups develop their own cultural heritage in response to their unique historical experiences. This heritage changes slowly, so cultural elements can persist over hundreds of years. If we are to explain cultural differences, then, we must look for explanatory variables that reflect long-term historical experience. Most attempts to explain cultural differences in the field of cross-cultural psychology have focused mistakenly, in my view, on relatively recent societal experiences. They have overemphasized the causal impact of societal characteristics like recent levels of socio-economic development, political systems, and birth

rates. But such social structural and demographic factors –which are not themselves part of culture– are involved in mutually causal relations with culture.

This chapter examines the pace of culture change and its implications for identifying the sources of cultural differences. I then discuss some prominent explanations of cultural differences and identify problems with these explanations. Next, I clarify the characteristics of factors that could provide better causal explanations. I then illustrate this approach by proposing theoretical explanations for national differences in one cultural orientation, embeddedness. I develop and test a set of hypotheses about the causes of cultural embeddedness, using data from 74 countries (77 cultural groups). Finally, I discuss implications of this approach for future work on causal sources of culture.

Cultural Value Orientations

I view culture as the rich complex of meanings, beliefs, practices, symbols, norms, and values prevalent among people in a society. The prevailing value emphases in a society may be the most central feature of culture (Hofstede, 1980; Inglehart, 1977; Schwartz, 1999; Weber, 1958; Williams, 1958). These value emphases express shared conceptions of what is good and desirable in the culture, the cultural ideals. Cultural value emphases shape and justify individual and group beliefs, actions, and goals. Institutional arrangements and policies, norms, and everyday practices express underlying cultural value emphases in societies. For example, a cultural value emphasis on obedience and security may promote and be reflected in an autocratic political system, a punitive legal system, and in authoritarian child rearing practices.

Each cultural group has its own set of cultural value emphases. I postulate that these emphases evolve as societies confront a set of basic and inevitable issues or problems that arise in regulating human activity (cf. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). People must recognize these problems, plan responses to them, and motivate one another to cope with them. Over time, in each society, implicit, preferred ways to respond to these basic issues evolve and express themselves in the institutions, beliefs, and practices of the society. I refer to the normative grounding of these preferred responses as 'cultural value orientations'.

To build my theory of cultural value orientations I asked: What alternative, value-based, normative responses might evolve to guide responses to three prominent issues that all societies confront? Responses to each issue identify a dimension on which cultures differ from one another. Opposing cultural value orientations form the poles of these dimensions. These polar orientations are Weberian ideal-types; the cultures of particular groups are located between the poles of the dimensions. I defined each dimension and its polar cultural value orientations on a priori theoretical grounds. The cultural value orientation whose sources this chapter investigates is *embeddedness*.

The embeddedness orientation is one alternative response to the issue of the nature of relations and boundaries between the person and the group: To what extent are people autonomous vs. embedded in their groups? In autonomy cultures, the preferred response is to view people as autonomous, bounded entities who should cultivate and express their own preferences, feelings, ideas, and abilities, and find meaning in their own uniqueness. In embeddedness cultures, the preferred response is to view people as entities embedded in the collectivity. Meaning in life is expected to come largely through identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. Embedded cultures emphasize maintaining the status quo and restraining actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order.

Based on the conceptual definition of each cultural orientation, I specified a set of basic values that express that orientation and might therefore serve as markers of its importance in a society. I selected these values from the 45 (later 46) value items demonstrated to have relatively equivalent meanings across cultures (Schwartz, 1992, 1994, 2005). For the embeddedness orientation, I chose the following 11 value items as potential markers: *social*

order, respect for tradition, family security, national security, politeness, self-discipline, forgiving, obedience, honoring parents and elders, devout, and *wisdom.* A multidimensional scaling analysis of the intercorrelations among the 46 value items, using 195 samples from 70 countries as units of observation and sample means as input, revealed that these items do indeed form a set (Schwartz, 2006). This set also included moderate, clean, protecting my public image, and reciprocation of favors. In the current study, the mean importance of these 15 values in a country measures its cultural embeddedness orientation. Egypt and Yemen are especially high on embeddedness; Switzerland and Austria are especially low.

Associations of national scores on embeddedness with various other country characteristics provide a richer sense of the meaningfulness of this cultural orientation. The following correlations are based on analyses across at least 72 countries and all are greater than $|r| = .50$ ($p < .001$, 2-tailed). Embeddedness correlates positively with national levels of family size, household size, birth rates, corruption in business, and opposition to homosexuality and divorce. Embeddedness correlates negatively with national levels of life expectancy, democracy, rule of law, government effectiveness, women's equality, and public expenditures on health, unemployment, and social security benefits. All of these correlations are significant even controlling country affluence with which embeddedness correlates negatively.

Change in Cultural Values

My goal is to identify factors that constitute historical causes of contemporary national differences in cultural embeddedness. Such factors should not be involved in reciprocal causal relations with embeddedness. Rather they should be exogenous factors, factors whose variation is independent of current or recent national levels of embeddedness. How far back in time need we go in order to identify such exogenous causes? To answer that question we need a sense of the pace of change in cultural values. Three historical case studies of culture change provide an initial perspective on the pace of culture change.

Kohn and Schooler (1983) theorized that the experience of serfdom promotes conformity values and constrains autonomy values. They studied value differences among ethnic groups in America whose ancestors came from European countries in which there never was serfdom or in which it ended some time between 1600 and 1861. They confirmed the hypothesis that the more recent the release of the peasantry in a country from serfdom, the less autonomous the values of the ethnic group in America that had emigrated from that country. Moghaddam and Crystal (1997) traced the value-based norms that govern authority relations and the treatment of women in 20th century Iran and Japan even farther back. They found the roots of these current norms in pre-Islamic times (1500 years earlier) in Iran and in the early Tokugawa era (400 years earlier) in Japan. Putnam (1993) traced the success of democracy in different regions of Italy to cultural roots beginning in the 12th century. These cases suggest that cultural elements can persist for centuries.

Empirical analyses of cultural value orientations across countries have examined the extent to which national differences change or remain stable. Inglehart and Baker (2000) studied change in the scores on two value dimensions of 38 countries that participated in the World Values Survey (WVS). Over an average interval of nine years, national scores on 'traditional vs. secular rational values' correlated .91 and scores on 'survival' vs. 'self-expression values' correlated .94. Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003) studied change in 'emancipative values' (values that emphasize human choice). National scores for 50 countries from the WVS in 1990 correlated .95 with scores in 1995. Between 1995 and 2000, national scores for 27 countries correlated .94. I examined change in the embeddedness cultural orientation in 21 countries over an average interval of seven years. Several of the countries had undergone major social change during the 1988-99 period of the study (China, Hong Kong, Poland, Hungary) and many of the samples were not very well-matched across the two times. Nonetheless, the correlation was .90. In sum, cultural differences are quite stable: The relative positions of countries on cultural value orientations change very slowly.

Causal Explanations of Cultural Differences

The slow change in cultural differences has clear implications for potential causal explanations. The major causes of cultural differences are unlikely to be found in current or recent aspects of the social structure or of other characteristics of societies. Georgas, van de Vijver, and Berry (2004) sought to understand differences in the value emphases of countries using what they call ecosocial indices. These included sets of variables from the economy, ecology, education, mass communication, population, and religion domains. From the perspective of this chapter, their analyses entailed examining relations of social structural, demographic, and one type of cultural factor (religion) to the core cultural variable of value orientations. They found that national scores on various value dimensions related systematically to the cluster membership of countries based on the ecosocial indices. Some value dimensions were measured in about 1970, others in about 1992. The two strongest and most consistent predictors of ten different value dimensions were an affluence factor, based on data from 1987 to 1989, and the current majority religion in the country.

Can these two variables be viewed as causes of cultural differences? The observed pace of culture change precludes treating as causal contextual variables measured at approximately the same time as the cultural value orientations. Only if the relative affluence of countries and their majority religion have been stable for many decades or, perhaps, centuries, would this be justified. This is apparently not the case for affluence. Using gross domestic product per capita (GDPpc) as an index of affluence, only 43% of the 1990 variance in GDPpc was shared with 1913 GDPpc across 44 countries. Between 1950 and 1990, 49% of the GDPpc variance was shared across 48 countries.[1] The dominant religion has not changed in most countries during the last century. Nonetheless, there are cases where the current majority religion differs from the historical religion that would have influenced cultural value development many decades ago. A few examples: Roman Catholicism is now the majority religion in the Netherlands, historically, it was a Protestant country. Fiji is currently predominantly Christian, historically, traditional beliefs dominated. Such beliefs also dominated in several African countries where Islam or Christianity is now the majority religion.

Gouveia and Ros (2000) specifically examined economic and social characteristics of countries that might explain variation in the embeddedness cultural orientation, among others. The major predictors of higher embeddedness that they identified were higher birthrates, fewer elderly, and lower affluence. These findings were based on data from 17 countries measured only a few years earlier than the embeddedness indexes. Thus, we can have little confidence that they point to causes.

Inglehart and Baker (2000) explicitly sought to understand causes of national differences on their two cultural value dimensions. They too found that a measure of affluence and the dominant religion were significant predictors. Their analyses identified the percentage of the labor force employed in industry and in services and the experience of communist rule as additional causes. Sensitive to the issue of slow change in cultural value orientations, they used the historical religious heritage of each country to measure religion and they took measures of their other variables from some 15 years prior to the values data. Historical religious heritage and the effect of communist rule over 40 years may be appropriate, but measuring the other variables with a time lag of only 15 years is probably too short to identify causes of culture. Because culture may well change more slowly than these presumed causes, at least part of the association between them may reflect the earlier influence of culture.

What is a sufficient time lag to identify causes of culture? The major cross-national studies of culture based their estimates of cultural value orientations on aggregated data from samples with an average age between 35 and 40. Most theories of value development and

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[1] Sources: *World Bank Development Report 1992* and Maddison, A. (1995). *Monitoring the World Economy, 1820-1992*. Paris: OECD Development Centre.

cultural transmission postulate that the critical period of value formation is in the mid-teens (e.g., Inglehart, 1997). This suggests that causal variables should be measured at least 20 years earlier. A second requisite for persuasive causal variables is that they be exogenous to culture. That is: (1) Their measurement must clearly precede the measurement of culture; (2) There must be plausible mechanisms that link them to the level of the cultural variable; and (3) The cultural variable they presumably cause must not influence them.

Reciprocal causality probably links cultural value orientations to many of the variables suggested as their cause. Although country affluence influences culture, for example, it is influenced by cultural embeddedness vs. autonomy. The 1995 autonomy/embeddedness score in 64 countries explains 19% of the *change* in GDPpc between 1950 and 2004.[2] A plausible explanation is that cultural autonomy promotes growth because, as economies become more industrialized or move into services, they require increased creativity, innovation, and independence. Cultural embeddedness may restrain such change because it emphasizes conformity and maintenance of traditional patterns.

The level of democracy in countries may also influence culture, but this influence too is reciprocal. Autonomy/embeddedness and the egalitarianism/hierarchy scores in 64 countries in 1995 explain 34% of the *change* in level of democracy between 1972 and 2002.[3] Both autonomy and egalitarianism promote and legitimize the granting of civil rights and political influence to individual citizens because they assume individuals are capable of responsible decision-making. Hierarchy and embeddedness promote and legitimize preserving the concentration of power in the hands of leaders and viewing citizens as unfit for socially responsible, independent decision-making. The bottom line is that the search for truly exogenous causes of culture must be wary of reciprocal influences.[4]

Causes of Cultural Embeddedness Orientation

This chapter presents data on three probable causes of national differences in the cultural embeddedness orientation. There are doubtless other causes as well. However, these variables meet the criteria for plausible endogenous causes and each contributes uniquely and significantly to our understanding of why contemporary countries differ as they do.

Religion. The first potential cause of national differences in cultural embeddedness is the historically dominant religion in each country, the religion of the majority during the formative period of the state. For this purpose, I used the dominant religion during the 19th century. If the country emerged later (e.g., Israel, India, Pakistan), I used the historically dominant religion of the population that formed that state. I created dummy variables for six religions: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam, Eastern (combining Hindu and Buddhist), and Traditional Beliefs. The analyses contrasted each religion with all of the others, including Judaism for which there was only one country.

I hypothesized that particular religions promote embeddedness and others weaken it. Specifically, Islam should promote embeddedness because, although all religions tend to tie the individual to the community, Islam is likely to do so especially strongly (Lewis, Lambton, & Holt, 1977). In Islam, religious law governs all behavior, emphasizing group solidarity and downplaying the importance of the individual. It builds a sense of shared communal fate through recalling a once glorious past in which it ruled much of the civilized world, and it seeks to unite the faithful in the struggle to recover that glory. It emphasizes the values of its in-group in contrast to the dominant Western world whose values it rejects.

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[2] This is based on predicting the residual variance in 2004 GDPpc not explained by 1950 GDPpc.

[3] This is based on predicting the residual variance in 2002 democratization not explained by 1972 democratization.

[4] Schwartz (2007) reports analyses that show the reciprocal influence between cultural values and family size as well.

In contrast, both Catholicism and Protestantism should weaken embeddedness compared with other religions. Throughout the 'dark ages', church scholars preserved intellectual traditions that were rooted in Greek and Jewish sources and that stressed the centrality of the individual and challenged accepted scientific and social views. Building on these sources, Western Christianity and, later, Protestantism in particular, emphasized individual salvation, autonomy, and moral responsibility (Woodhead, 2004). From the 19th century on, churches developed social institutions that took responsibility for many functions formerly left to extended primary groups such as health care, schools, and social welfare. From late in the century, social convictions nurtured by Western Christianity were the underpinning of ideologies that held the state responsible, through its institutions, to provide for and protect the individual, thereby reducing individuals' dependence on their in-groups. These ideologies took political form in the development of Christian Democratic parties across Europe and Latin America which promoted social welfare policies that dramatically changed the status quo of societal organization (Fogarty, 1957; Mainwaring & Scully, 2003).

Ethnic Heterogeneity. I hypothesized that greater ethnic heterogeneity leads to a stronger emphasis on cultural embeddedness. Ethnic heterogeneity is greater the larger the number of different ethnic groups in a country and the more equal their size. The greater the number and numerical equality of ethnic groups, the more salient ethnicity is likely to be everyday life. High salience of ethnic divisions encourages identification with one's own ethnic in-group, self-definition in terms of ethnic group membership, sharing in and identifying with in-group goals, reliance on the in-group as the main source of meaning, protection, and reciprocal provision of goods and resources, and conformity to the authority of the in-group in defining desirable life styles. These are the emphases of an embeddedness culture.

I measured ethnic heterogeneity with the Alesina et al. (2003) index of ethnic fractionalization. This index measures the probability that any two randomly selected people from a country will belong to different groups. The reasoning regarding relations of ethnic heterogeneity to embeddedness applies in part to linguistic and religious heterogeneity too. Because ethnicity captures the sharpest group divisions across the full set of countries, however, I limit my analyses to ethnicity heterogeneity. Uganda is the country highest in ethnic heterogeneity, South Korea is the lowest.

The heterogeneity data are largely from the early to mid-1990s. This would be a problem if there have been substantial shifts in the ethnic composition of countries over the previous 30 plus years, or changes in the definitions of ethnic groups. It would raise the possibility of reciprocal influence between ethnic heterogeneity and cultural embeddedness. Based on historical analyses and correlations with earlier measures of fractionalization, however, Alesina et al. (2003) conclude that "ethnic fractionalization displays tremendous time persistence." Moreover, cultural embeddedness is conducive to opposing immigration by foreign ethnic groups (Schwartz, 2007). Hence, past reciprocal influence would favor a negative association between ethnic heterogeneity and cultural embeddedness, the opposite of my causal hypothesis.

State Antiquity. The embeddedness cultural value orientation encourages and legitimizes identification with the extended primary group, conformity to its expectations, and maintenance of its traditions. These normative expectations are likely to be taken for granted when social conditions make the individual highly dependent on the in-group to supply life's material, social, and emotional resources. These conditions change with the emergence of the state. The development of secondary institutions in the wider society (e.g., formal governments, schools, courts, hospitals, armies, large corporations) reduces the importance of extended family groups. These groups become less critical bases of communal action and sources of protection and provision for the individual. Instead, there is encouragement for recruiting individuals into positions in society based on their individual skills and interests. These changes weaken the

cultural embeddedness value orientation and promote the autonomy orientation that legitimizes and promotes pursuit of individual talents, interests, and preferences.

The longer a viable state has existed in the territory that currently constitutes a country, the more opportunity there has been for secondary institutions that free the individual from dependence on extended family groups to develop and become effective. For every 50 year interval from the year 0 to 1950, Putterman's (2004) 'state antiquity' index measures the extent to which territories were governed in a manner that encouraged development of formal modes of self-government and secondary institutions. The index reflects (a) the existence of a government above the tribal level during the interval, (b) whether the government was indigenous or externally imposed, and (c) the proportion of the territory of the modern country that it controlled. I used the state antiquity index covering the 1850-1950 period as a potential cause of (lower) cultural embeddedness. [5]

Empirical Analyses

I assessed the causes of cultural embeddedness with data from 77 cultural groups in 74 countries. These countries include approximately 80% of the world's population and are located on every inhabited continent. I treated French-speaking and English-speaking Canada, Jewish and Arab Israel, and East and West Germany as separate cultural groups. The geographical distribution of cultural groups is as follows: 9 Sub-Saharan Africa, 7 North Africa and Middle East, 6 East Asia, 6 South-East Asia, 3 North America, 9 Latin America, 17 East Europe, 17 West Europe, 3 Oceania. The median year of data gathering was 1995, with 80% between 1991 and 1998. For 58 groups, data were obtained from elementary and high school teachers and from university undergraduate students. I averaged the embeddedness scores of the teacher and student samples for a group score. In the 18 cases where only one or the other type of sample was available, I estimated the score of the missing sample by regression and then averaged the two scores.

To test the hypotheses, I regressed the cultural embeddedness orientation scores on their five postulated causes. Figure 1 presents the results of this analysis. Together, the five predictors explain 65% of the variance in cultural embeddedness.
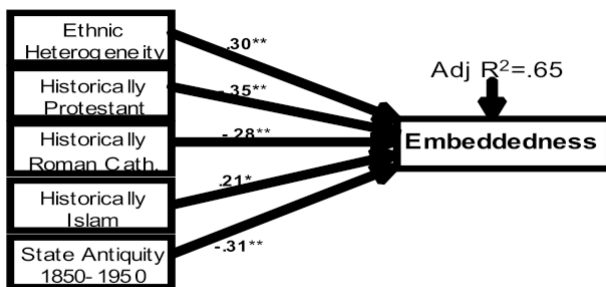
*p<.01, **p<.001, 2-tailed

Figure 1. Causes of Cultural Embeddedness across 77 Cultural Groups: Betas.

Each makes a unique, significant contribution. Cultural embeddedness is greater in countries with more ethnically heterogeneous populations and in countries where Islam is the historically dominant religion. Cultural embeddedness is weaker in countries where Western Christianity (Protestant or Roman Catholic) dominated during their formative years and in

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[5] Data available at http://www.econ.brown.edu/fac/Louis_Putterman/antiquity%20index.htm. I used version 3.

countries whose history of state building was less likely to encourage development of formal modes of self-government and secondary institutions during the century from 1850 to 1950.

Possible Problems with the Causal Analysis

Ignoring Affluence. Might the causal explanations confirmed by the regression be overestimates? Country affluence relates reciprocally to cultural embeddedness, hence, it is not purely exogenous. Nonetheless, affluence might have some causal influence that the analysis attributes to the other causes. To estimate the maximum possible causal impact of affluence, I regressed cultural embeddedness on GDPpc in 1985 (the latest year prior to measuring embeddedness for which affluence data is available for all countries). This maximum estimate assumes that affluence causes cultural embeddedness with no reciprocal causality, contrary to what we know. The analysis attributed a maximum of 36% of the variance in cultural embeddedness to GDPpc. This compares with 65% for the exogenous causes.

I then asked: Does affluence explain any variance in cultural embeddedness that the five exogenous causes do not already explain? In a hierarchical regression, I entered the five exogenous causes first, followed by GDPpc. GDPpc added only 7% to the explained variance. Some of this added variance reflects the influence of embeddedness on affluence. Hence, it appears that affluence itself is best seen as a very weak cause of cultural embeddedness. Even after affluence is included as a predictor, the five exogenous causes contribute significantly, all $p < .01$.

Galton's Problem. Galton pointed out that cultural and institutional features of a population often diffuse to other societies, creating non-independence among units of analysis (Naroll, 1973). This causes a problem for regression analyses using countries as the unit of analysis because the inferential statistics assume independence among the countries. The current analyses may therefore overestimate the statistical significance of the findings and may even misidentify some causes.

Diffusion is especially likely among geographically proximate countries or countries that share a common colonial experience. Because of their more frequent contact, nearby societies are more likely to influence one another's values, norms, practices, institutions, religion, and language and even to impose them on one another, as colonial regimes often do. The diffusion of culture through trade and migration can also occur more easily over short distances. Studies that examine the cultural values of many countries point to the importance of diffusion. They conclude that the world is composed of cultural regions, characterized in large part by geographical proximity (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Schwartz, 2006). Georgas et al. (2004) suggested that one way to reduce Galton's problem is to analyze clusters of countries that form cultural regions rather than to analyze single countries. The following analyses utilize cultural regions to take into account the diffusion of culture across countries.

Mapping countries on the seven cultural value orientations in my theory revealed eight culturally distinct world regions (Schwartz, 2006). The question is whether the causal factors we have identified explain regional differences in cultural embeddedness. That is: With regions rather than countries as the unit of analysis, is the pattern of association between the postulated causes and cultural embeddedness still the same? For each region, I computed the mean score on state antiquity and on ethnic fractionalization and the proportion of countries in the region for which each religion was historically dominant. With only eight regions, a regression including five predictors is not feasible. I therefore report correlations with the mean cultural embeddedness score across the eight regions. Table 1 reveals strong correlations in the expected direction for each postulated cause. This confirms the robustness of the findings with 77 cultural groups. It supports the inference that interdependence among groups due to diffusion did not produce misleading findings.

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Table 1. Correlations of Causal Factors with Cultural Embeddedness across Eight Cultural
Regions

 Causal Predictors

r

one-tailed probability

Mean State Antiquity

$-.78$

$<.02$

Mean Ethnic Heterogeneity

$.69$

$<.05$

Mean Proportion Historically Protestant

$-.67$

$<.05$

Mean Proportion Historically Roman Catholic

$-.50$

$=.10$

Mean Proportion Historically Muslim

$.66$

$<.05$

A second way to assess the causal influence of the proposed factors, relatively free of the influence of diffusion, is to neutralize the effects of diffusion by studying the causes of variation in cultural embeddedness across the countries within cultural regions. The 17 countries in the East European region and 17 in the West European cultural region sufficed to permit separate regressions assessing the effects of the postulated causal variables within each of these regions.

Within the East European region, the postulated causes account for 64% of the variance in cultural embeddedness. Cultural embeddedness is weaker in countries lower in state antiquity during the preceding century ($p < .01$) and in countries whose historically dominant religion is Roman Catholicism ($p < .01$) or Protestantism ($p < .02$) (contrasted with Eastern Orthodox and Muslim). Ethnic heterogeneity does not contribute significantly. Within the West European region, the postulated causes account for 66% of the variance in cultural embeddedness. Cultural embeddedness is also weaker in countries lower in state antiquity ($p < .01$) and where Protestantism ($p < .02$) and Roman Catholicism ($p < .10$) were the dominant religions (contrasted with the Orthodox populations, i.e., Greeks and Greek Cypriots). Again, ethnic heterogeneity does not add significantly.

To check whether the weakness of ethnic heterogeneity as a predictor in these two regions suggests that it is not a robust cause, I compared its correlations with cultural embeddedness in each of the eight regions. This comparison revealed that the correlations are

particularly weak in East and West Europe and much higher (r > .54) in four of the regions. The latter correlations, together with the strong predictive power of ethnic heterogeneity at the regional level, support the robustness of ethnic heterogeneity as a causal factor. In sum, this second assessment of the causes of cultural embeddedness, which controlled effects of diffusion, reinforces the conclusions from the analyses that used 77 countries and cultural groups as the unit of analysis.

Conclusions

This chapter is an initial step toward identifying likely causes of national differences in cultural value orientations. I have brought evidence to show that basic cultural elements like value orientations change slowly over decades and perhaps centuries. Moreover, the relative positions of countries on these orientations are quite stable over considerable periods. Consequently, when seeking the causes of cultural value differences, it is necessary to examine factors in the historical past of societies, not recent social structural, political, or demographic variables. To qualify as persuasive causes rather than mere correlates, these factors must meet three criteria: (1) They must refer to a variable that predates the measurement of culture by at least several decades; (2) There must be a convincing theoretical rationale for how they affect the level of the cultural variable; and (3) They must not be subject to reciprocal influence by the cultural variable itself.

The measures of affluence and other indexes of socio-economic development (e.g., literacy, division of labor) and of current or recent political and demographic variables that many researchers have related to culture do not meet one or more of these criteria. Many of these factors were measured too recently and/or are reciprocally influenced by cultural value orientations. I have proposed three types of causes that do meet the three criteria. They explain a substantial proportion of the variability in cultural embeddedness orientations across 77 cultural groups (74 countries). I have explicated how high state antiquity, low ethnic heterogeneity, and being rooted in Western Christianity rather than in Islam all reduce the need for individuals to depend on the extended ingroup. These factors thereby undermine the legitimacy of the normative expectations of cultural embeddedness and the functional advantages of this orientation for organizing daily life.

Future research should seek convincing causes of national differences in other cultural value orientations such as those of Hofstede, Inglehart, and my other six cultural orientations. The approach of this chapter can provide a model. The diffusion of cultural elements to nearby countries or to colonies poses a challenge to those who undertake this task. As we have seen, however, this challenge is not an insurmountable. To understand why the cultures of countries, ethnic groups, or other cultural units differ from one another, as Herodotus and daily observation attest, is a fascinating and exciting goal.

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