

North American Convergence, Revisited

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ABSTRACT

This article revisits previous surveys regarding value changes in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The earlier evaluation showed that a convergence of values among these North American nations was occurring. This most recent study confirms that trend in several areas (though national and regional distinctions remain), contradicting other predictions to the contrary. Whether one is afraid of change or is eager for it, this study indicates that all three North American countries are, inevitably, experiencing that change.

Key words: North American convergence, economic integration, culture, values, trade, continental integration

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INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the three co-authors jointly considered the question of whether value changes in Mexico, the United States, and Canada were related and, further, whether the trajectories of value change were in any way linked to greater economic integration. We explored the findings from the second wave of the World Values Survey (wvs) with respect to the region while the NAFTA discussions were starting.¹ We analyzed the trajectories shown by values from 1980 and 1990 (Inglehart, Basáñez and Nevitte, 1994; 1996), the only two points in time then available from the wvs.

The predicted trajectories of value change in 1990 were based on Inglehart's framework of materialists and postmaterialists, using the 1980 data as a benchmark.² The analysis also examined age cohorts to explore possible generational dif-

¹ For simplicity's sake, we refer to the five World Values Surveys (wvs) throughout this text as 1980, 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005, although the exact dates in some countries may lag one or two years behind. Details for the World Values Survey methodology, question wording, and full description can be found at Inglehart, Basáñez, *et al.* (2004) or at www.worldvaluessurvey.org. We thank Roger Aleph Méndez for his valuable assistance.

² A massive body of evidence gathered from 1970 to the present demonstrates that an intergenerational shift from materialist to postmaterialist priorities has been occurring in industrialized societies (Inglehart, 1971; 1977; 1990; 1997; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Inglehart, 2008). The underlying theory is based on two key hypotheses:

1. Virtually everyone wants freedom and autonomy, but people's priorities reflect their socioeconomic conditions: they tend to place the highest value on the most pressing needs. Material sustenance and physical security are immediately linked with survival and, when they are scarce, people give top priority to these "materialistic" goals. But, under conditions of prosperity, people become more likely to emphasize "postmaterialist" goals such as belonging, esteem, and esthetic and intellectual satisfaction.
2. To a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's pre-adult years and these values change, mainly through intergenerational population replacement. Although older generations tend to transmit their values to their children, if one's first-hand experience is inconsistent with one's cultural heritage, it can gradually erode.

During the past several decades, most of the population of advanced industrial societies has *not* grown up under conditions of hunger and economic insecurity. This has led to a gradual shift in which needs for belonging, esteem and intellectual and self-expression have become more prominent. There is no one-to-one relationship between socioeconomic development and the prevalence of postmaterialist values, for one's subjective sense of security is shaped by a society's social welfare institutions as well as its mean level of income. Furthermore, people's basic value priorities do not change overnight: a society's values tend to change through intergenerational replacement.

More than three decades ago, Inglehart (1971) found dramatic age differences in the proportions of people emphasizing materialist and postmaterialist values, respectively, among the populations of six Western countries. To measure these values, he asked people which goals they considered most important for their country, choosing between such things as economic growth, fighting rising prices, maintaining order, the fight against crime (which tap materialist priorities), and freedom of speech. These values emphasize giving people more say in important government decisions, more say on the job, and a society where ideas count, which tap postmaterialist priorities. Representative national surveys carried out in 1970 revealed huge differences between the values of young and old in all of these societies. Among those aged 65 and older, people with materialist value priorities outnumbered those with postmaterialist value priorities by more than 12:1. But as one moved from older to younger cohorts, the balance gradually shifted toward a diminishing proportion of materialists and a growing proportion of people with postmaterialist values. Among the youngest cohort (those from 18 to 25 years old in 1970) postmaterialists outnumbered the materialists.

ferences. Two surprises emerged from that analysis. First, the predictions were right in 31 out of 34 key variables we reviewed. Second, a pattern of values convergence between the three countries was on course.

This convergence finding contradicted Lipset's *continental divide* thesis. More surprising, it appeared that none of the countries were leading the convergence. That original study was undertaken nearly two decades ago. All three countries have, since, experienced NAFTA for over a decade. And there are also three new measures of the wvs now available (1995; 2000 and 2005). Meanwhile, at least two books were published contradicting our proposition (Samuel Huntington's in the U.S. and Michael Adam's in Canada). With new data in hand, it is now timely to revisit the basic question originally asked in 1990: has the NAFTA region convergence continued, has it stabilized, or has it reversed?

THE ORIGINAL CONVERGENCE FINDINGS

The original 1990 exploration considered six areas of investigation: 1) Cultural, economic, and political change in North America; 2) Changing patterns of world trade and changing North American linkages; 3) Compatibility and change in the basic values of North American people; 4) The erosion of institutional authority and the rise of citizen intervention in politics; 5) A search for a new balance between state and economy, individual and society; 6) Dissolving borders in North America.

That analysis demonstrated that a great deal of social, economic, and political value change did take place in all three societies, and most of the changes conformed to a predictable pattern. We found evidence of a systematic intergenerational shift, and most of the changes that took place from 1980 to 1990 could actually be predicted from patterns that were visible in the 1980 baseline data. A total of 31 variables shifted in the predicted direction from 1980 to 1990. Using the same strategy, we are now more confident to forecast further value changes that are likely to take place during the coming decades.

Each country experienced a shift from materialist to postmaterialist orientations in each of the three populations and outlined the causes of that intergenera-

During the past 35 years, the predicted value shift occurred. In the early 1970s, materialists outnumbered postmaterialists by a 4:1 ratio in the six countries surveyed then. By 2006, postmaterialists had become as numerous as materialists. Since 1970, these values have been measured in many additional countries. For example, in the earliest U.S. survey, in 1972, materialists were three times as numerous as postmaterialists; by 2006 there were 2.5 times as many postmaterialists as materialists in the U.S. Materialist/postmaterialist values are closely linked with many other social values, which have tended to move in the same direction as the shift toward postmaterialism.

tional value shift. That shift had its origins in the formative experiences of the younger generation throughout advanced industrial societies. The historically unprecedented prosperity that has characterized Western societies since World War II, together with the safety net provided by the welfare state in the past few decades, had given rise to a situation in which a growing share of the public no longer gave top priority to the quest for economic and physical security. Instead, there was growing concern for the quality of life.

This shift in basic value priorities has far-reaching implications; they seem to be linked with generational changes in prevailing motivations to work, in religious outlook, sexual norms, and political goals. There was also evidence of a gradual erosion of traditional nationalism and ethnocentrism, giving rise to an increasingly cosmopolitan sense of identity. Further, these orientations shaped support for economic and political integration among all three populations.

The major story emerging from that 1990 analysis was that the value systems of the three North American societies were gradually shifting, and the direction of value change was consistent with the broad transformations that were taking place in most advanced industrial states. North Americans were on a common trajectory of change moving toward: 1) free market economics; 2) democratic political institutions; and, 3) globalization.

The United States, Canada and Mexico moved in the early 1990s toward continental free trade to avoid isolation in a world that was increasingly organized into regional trading networks and to exploit the advantages that come from stable access to large markets. In some respects, continental free trade might be viewed as “window dressing”, a formal regularization of *de facto* economic integration that had been welding the three economies together since the 1950s. But that perspective obscures the fact that comprehensive continental free trade represented a substantial policy shift for each of the three partners.

LIPSET, HUNTINGTON, ADAMS, ET AL.

To what extent do Americans, Canadians, and Mexicans share common values? Or, more precisely, are the *main values* in each of these three countries compatible? The weight of the historical evidence leads some to assume that they are not compatible –and the gulf between the values of Mexican people, on one hand, and those held by populations of the United States and Canada, on the other, appears to be particularly wide.

In his celebrated analysis of American society, David Riesman (1950) argued that individualism (emphasized as a distinctive U.S. trait by a long line of observers going back to Alexis de Tocqueville) was disappearing. An *inner-directed* personality type was gradually being replaced by *other-directed* people. Another landmark study of the 1950s, William Whyte's (1956) *The Organization Man*, reached similar conclusions: the Protestant ethic of hard work, thrift, and competition as the route to individual salvation was giving way to a belief in *belongingness* as the ultimate goal. Both Riesman and Whyte had grave misgivings about what they saw as the decline of individualism in America.

This absence of a North American cultural consensus was not just a question of the cleavage between Mexico and her two northern neighbors. Seymour Martin Lipset, the foremost comparative analyst of the political cultures of the United States and Canada, in a series of influential studies carried out over a period of nearly three decades, argued that the United States and Canada experience a *continental divide* reflected in enduring differences in basic values and political styles (Lipset, 1990). One influential historical explanation for North American cultural variation, provided by Louis Hartz (1964), argued that each of the three new societies were settled by very different founding peoples.

Scores of journalistic accounts, by contrast, described the 1980s in the United States as a decade characterized by an explosion of individual greed and the abdication of collective responsibility. An insightful study by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) concluded that the central problem of U.S. life was that individualism had grown cancerous. They sought to rediscover cultural traditions that could limit and restrain the destructive side of individualism.

These diagnoses at first seem contradictory: do Americans have too little individualism or too much? Examined more closely, however, they turn out to be compatible. They deal with different aspects of a complex change that is taking place in the relationship between the individual and society, a process of change that is not uniquely American, though it may be particularly acute there.

Two recent formulations that contradicted our *convergence* finding are supplied by Michael Adams (2003) and Samuel Huntington (2004). Adams's book, based on values survey research, contains the main conclusion in its title: *Fire and Ice: The U.S., Canada and the Myth of Converging Values*. Huntington finds the huge Hispanic migration as a very serious threat to America's national identity.

Adams is a knowledgeable and experienced commercial researcher with frequent access to the electronic media. His book is aimed at a more general audience. To be sure, there are elements of the Adams analysis that are supported by our data. However, the *convergence* finding cannot be debunked on grounds of Canadians'

popular vote. A detailed critique of the methods used to arrive at Adams's divergence conclusion is supplied by Smith (2005).

Huntington's *Who Are We?* argues that the United States has been and, in many ways, should remain a Christian, Anglo-centric country. That tradition, according to Huntington, is currently threatened by migration's multiculturalism (particularly from Hispanic sources), imperiling the primacy of English language and culture. Accordingly, Huntington challenges the wisdom of affirmative action, bilingual education, and dual citizenship and fears that the U.S. foreign policy is dictated in Mexico City. Unlike mainstream Canadian and Mexican analysis, Huntington lacks confidence in the strength of U.S. culture.

For Huntington, one core premise is that nationalism matters. As such, it is a cultural argument: the defense of U.S. values such as individualism, the work ethic, achievement orientation, morality, and the like. The existing evidence about Hispanic assimilation, however, simply does not support Huntington's fears.

But what of the demographic ancestry of the U.S. population? Huntington departs from the assumption that the American core is an Anglo-Protestant legacy derived from England. However, the largest single demographic contribution to today's U.S. population is Germany, not England or Ireland (Statistical Abstract of the U.S.; 2007: table 50). Americans recognize their ancestors as German (48 million), Irish (34 million), English (28 million), and Italian (16 million), among the largest groups. Is it the perception of cultural similarities or of a beneficial influence from Germans that prevent criticisms and resistance to such blending in the United States? The implication is that the Hispanic culture is different and/or harmful, hence the criticisms and resistance.

These decades' worth of experience with NAFTA and the emergence of alternative perspectives in the intervening years since the original study make it worthwhile to reconsider with more recent data. With 25 years of data in hand, what is the trajectory of value change in the three countries? Are values becoming closer, as predicted, or are they growing further apart? To answer these questions, we look at the distribution of the three countries on Inglehart's values map (Inglehart, 1997: 93). This analysis was not available in 1990 but it offers a coherent and synthetic way to look at the overall trajectory, taken over time, by the three countries.

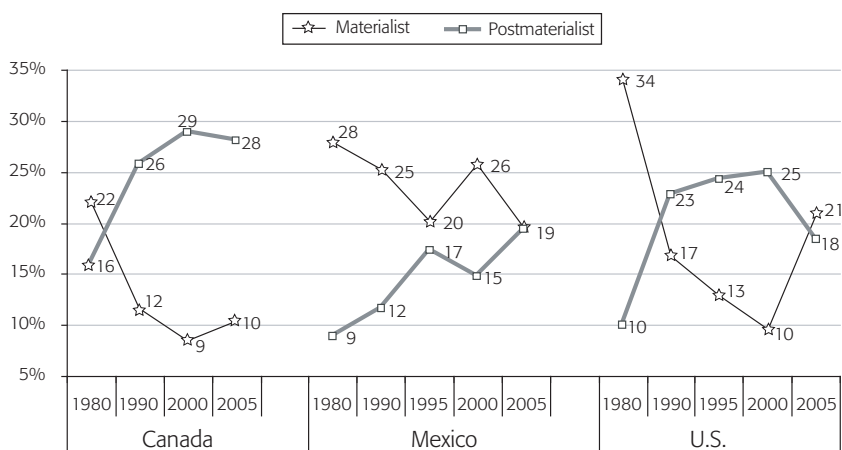
MATERIALIST AND POSTMATERIALIST VALUES IN NORTH AMERICA (1980-2005)

One of the most powerful predictors of change emerging in that 1990 analysis centered around Inglehart's (1971) materialist-postmaterialist theory. A key element

associated with this theory is that the proportion of materialists and postmaterialists in a single country is influenced by the reality and perception of the internal safety and the economic performance of their country. Hence, the balance between these two polar groups is dynamic –i.e. it increases and decreases over time. The correlation found between these values and the inverted inflation rate is striking (Inglehart, 1990: 94).

As the data show, there is evidence of a dynamic divide of the materialist–postmaterialist variety in the NAFTA region. The proportion of change of these two polar segments of the population over time in the three countries shows a very different pattern. The *mixed* segment is omitted from the graph, as it is the remnant percent and has remained constant around 60 percent.

Figure 1
MATERIALIST AND POSTMATERIALIST VALUES



Canada is clearly the most postmaterialist of the three countries (28 percent), whereas Mexico (20 percent) is slightly above the U.S. (18 percent). However, most important is the gap between postmaterialists and materialists that, in Canada, amounts to a ratio of nearly 3 to 1, whereas Mexico and the U.S. are nearly in balance: 1 to 1.

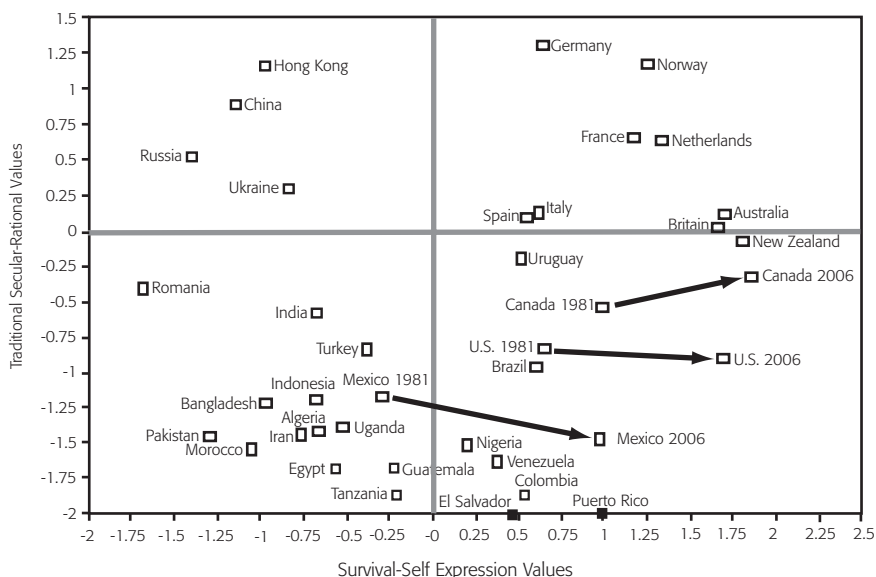
However, it is clear that the proportion of materialists in Canada and the U.S. declined, substantially, between 1980 and 2000 and, then, the trajectory reversed: slightly in Canada (9 to 10 percent) and sharply in the U.S. (10 to 21 percent). Is this

one effect of 9/11? It consequently also impacted the otherwise rising trajectory of postmaterialists: slightly in Canada (29 to 28 percent) and sharper in the U.S. (25 to 18 percent). The rising pattern of post-materialism in Mexico seems steadier, with a minor drop in 2000 (17 to 15 percent).

NORTH AMERICA TRAJECTORIES ON INGLEHART'S WORLD VALUES MAP

Inglehart's global values synthesis is a very valuable tool because it enables the analysis not only of positions but of trajectories. It allows for the analysis of such demographic factors as generational change while, also, explaining the effects of such structural factors as education, urbanization, jobs moving into the service sector, and others, encapsulated in the materialist–postmaterialist dimension.

Figure 2
 INGLEHART'S WORLD VALUES MAP



According to that approach, it appears that the patterns of change in the NAFTA region are more complex. Notice that between 1981 and 2006, the three countries move in a similar trajectory on the horizontal axis (economic-social) of Inglehart's

value map but they diverge on the vertical axis (political-cultural). In other words, the three countries are becoming more economically developed –hence the displacement to the right side of the map. They all embrace more self-expression values. However, Canada is becoming more secular, whereas Mexico became less secular and went back to more traditional values. It is possible that in Mexico and, to some extent also in the U.S., the political-cultural divergence might be attributable to the emergence of greater income inequality.

After reviewing the extent of convergence and divergence across the nearly 300 variables included in the WVS, as well as the trajectories shown by the three countries on the Inglehart's world values map (shown in Figure 2), the conclusion is that the NAFTA region is not diverging as Huntington and Adams propose. But nor is it *only* converging. As he did almost two decades ago, Moreno (2005: 49) has presented a detailed review of the trajectory of Mexico in the world values map during this period and shows how Mexico moved from 1980 to 1990 in the same pattern as Canada shows and then Mexico's trajectory broke to head south of the chart. Furthermore, Nevitte's analysis of Canadian values shifts (Nevitte, 1996) reports complementary changes.

The following paragraphs introduce new data and the exploration is structured in five segments: 1) Views toward a NAFTA union; 2) Economic values and attitudes; 3) Political values and attitudes; 4) Family values; and 5) Personal values.

PART ONE: TOWARD A NAFTA UNION?

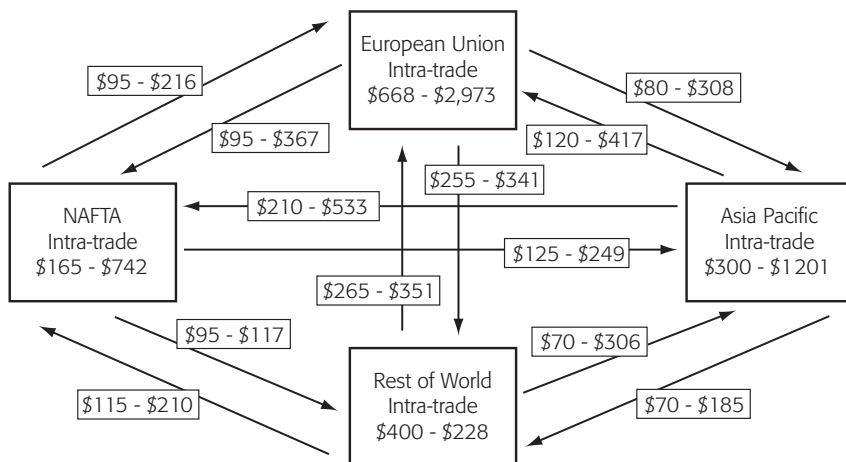
World Trade Flows

The assumption, widely shared by classic integration theory, is that interaction promotes similarities in values which, in turn, lead to higher levels of mutual trust (Deutsch, 1969). How, then, have trade flows in the world changed since 1989?

According to the data in Figure 3, total trade in 1989 was US\$3 128 billion and, in 2004, it was US\$8 745 billion, an increase of 279 percent in 15 years. Although the NAFTA countries represent a larger gross product and population than Europe, in terms of intra-trade Europe is, nevertheless, four times stronger than the NAFTA region (US\$2 973 billion versus US\$742 billion), basically the same ratio shown in 1989 (US\$660 billion versus US\$165 billion).

Notice that NAFTA, Europe and Asia intra-trade grew in the 15-year period (4.49, 4.45 and 4.00 times, respectively) at the expense of the decline of the rest of the world's intra-trade. NAFTA shows barely the largest expansion of all regions, as

Figure 3
 WORLD TRADE FLOW, 1989 AND 2004 (BILLIONS OF US DOLLARS)



Source: World Trade Organization, *World Trade Statistics 2005*, Statistical Appendix, Table A2, p. 194.

it formally started in 1994. Otherwise, it would show a much lower level than the current one. However, if total trade is taken into account (i.e. imports, exports and intra-trade), NAFTA does not show a very promising picture: Europe is getting 46 percent of the world's total trade share, Asia 25 percent, NAFTA a modest 18 percent and the rest of the world 11 percent. Have these shifting patterns of trade been accompanied by shifts in the identities of citizens within the NAFTA countries?

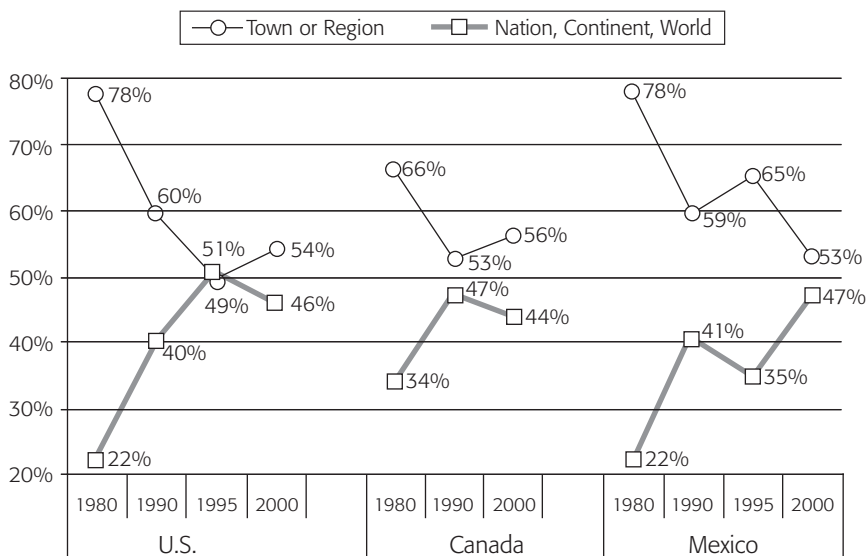
Economic competition is the engine behind the formation of regional trade blocks. Lagging behind in the race makes a region weaker and more vulnerable. There should be no higher priority than reducing the gap between Mexico and the rest of NAFTA, to unleash the consumer power of 70 million more Mexicans. The establishment of the NAFTA fund proposed by Pastor that would invest US\$200 billion for infrastructure should be included on the trilateral agenda (Pastor, this issue).

Belonging to Geographical Units

Since 1980, the wvs has asked: "To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong, first of all: 1) The locality or town where you live; 2) The region of the country in which you live; 3) Your country as a whole; 4) North America as a whole; 5) The world as a whole?" The changes in 25 years are impressive and they

show a consistent pattern: in all three countries, there was a substantial shift from emphasis on the town or region in which one lives toward broader geographical units. We observe a pervasive shift from a parochial to a more cosmopolitan focus of identity but national identities have not been abandoned.

Figure 4
LOCATIONS PEOPLE FEEL THEY BELONG TO



In 1980, 8 out of 10 people in Mexico and the U.S. and nearly 7 out of 10 in Canada felt they belonged to the town or region in which they lived. By 2005, identification with the parochial option had eroded considerably. Canadian erosion is weaker but parallels her NAFTA partners. From a ratio of 8-to-2 and 7-to-3 in favor of the more local choice, the three countries have moved to a near balance of 1-to-1 with the larger geographical groups.

This is not an isolated finding. It seems to be part of a broader shift from a parochial sense of identity toward an increasingly cosmopolitan outlook, which is very important given an increasingly global world. Here again, these changes were predicted by our model.

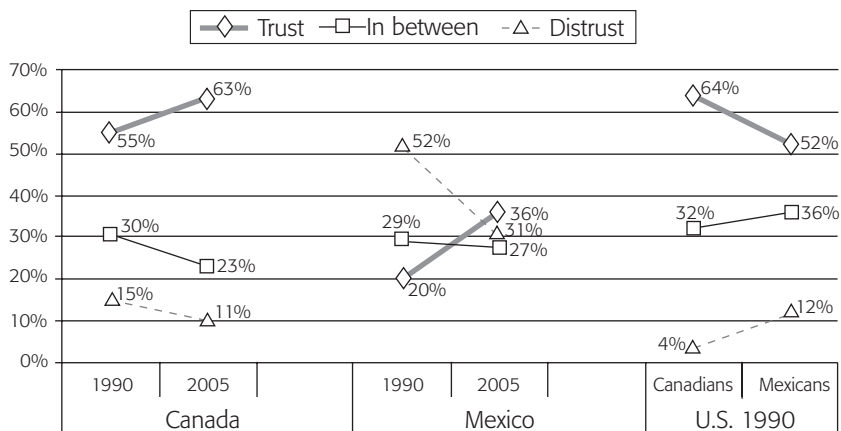
If there is, indeed, a secular trend away from relatively parochial outlooks toward a sense of belonging to broader geographic units, this bodes well for a potential

North American political community or, even, broader forms of integration. We should not over-interpret the data, however. In all three countries, the trend seems to be moving toward a more cosmopolitan sense of identity. But these changes are occurring gradually.

Feelings of Trust among North American People

As the Figure 5 shows, the feeling of trust that is essential for healthy business and social relations has improved between the three countries. A majority of Canadians, in 1990 (55 percent), trusted Americans and that percent increased over the 15-year period to 63 percent.

Figure 5
 TRUST OF PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONALITIES

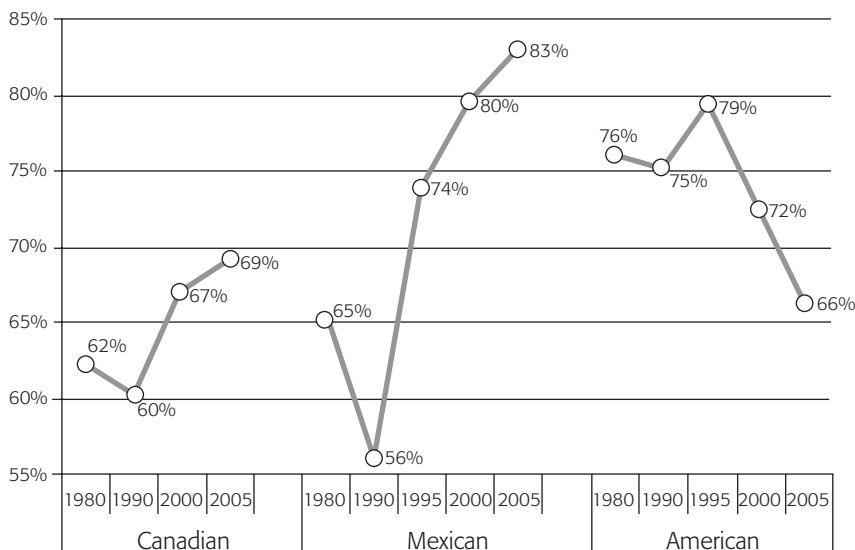


The changes among Mexicans follow the same trajectory as among Canadians. The sentiment in Mexico, in 1990, clearly was of distrust (52 percent) but, now, distrust has dropped to 31 percent. This same question in the U.S. was not repeated by the wvs after 1990. However, according to the most recent data, 64 percent of Americans trusted Canadians and 52 percent trusted Mexicans.

National Pride

In 1980, 76 percent of the U.S. public said that they were “very proud” to be Americans: these levels of national pride were significantly higher than among Canadians (62 percent) or Mexicans (65 percent). But significant changes have taken place. Most recent data show that American levels of national pride have dropped to 66 percent, similar to those of Canadians (69 percent). Mexicans show the highest levels of pride (83 percent). But even more interesting is the pattern of change shown in the region. The Mexicans’ impressive rise, after 1990, may reflect the enthusiasm for democracy that awoke within society after the massive mobilization by the political opposition during the presidential campaign of 1988. Its subsequent electoral victories at local and state levels reinforced the trend until the opposition won the presidency in 2000. All these events in Mexico led to a sense of an expansion of liberty (Moreno, 2005: 62).

Figure 6
HOW PROUD YOU ARE TO BE... (PERCENT WHO SAID “VERY MUCH”)



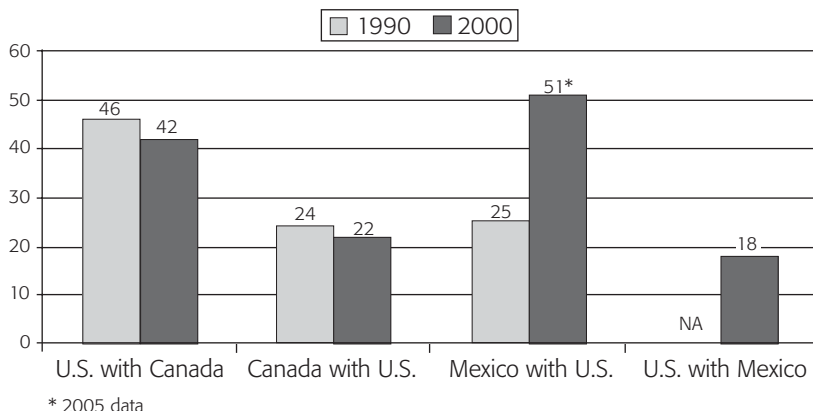
Doing Away with Borders

To examine variations in public enthusiasm for continental political integration, the WVS asked the three populations a very direct and simple *bottom-line* question: “All things considered, do you think we should do away with the border between the United States and Canada/Mexico?” This question goes far beyond any proposal currently being discussed by the governments of these countries. But the levels of support for political union are much higher than a projection based on past history would predict, especially in Canada and Mexico.

About one in five Canadians (22 percent) and Americans (18 percent) favor abolishing the border with their southern neighbor. And nearly half of all American respondents (42 percent) and Mexicans (51 percent) support doing away with their northern neighbor’s border. The question about the Mexican border was not asked in the U.S. in 1990 but it was included in 2000 and shows a quite similar level to Canadians’ responses about the border with the U.S.

While levels of support for political integration have declined somewhat among Americans and Canadians, Mexicans’ readiness to consider that option has increased from 25 percent to 51 percent. One possible explanation for the Mexican change is the steep increase of migration to the U.S. in the last 25 years. That increase has been propelled by vast unemployment and the income per capita stagnation in real terms since 1982.

Figure 7
 ABOLISHING NAFTA BORDERS (PERCENT IN FAVOR)



Source: 1990, 2000, and 2005 World Values Survey.

Forming One Country

Another direct and *bottom-line* question aimed to test support for integration under different scenarios is: “Would you favor or oppose having Canada/Mexico and the United States form one country, if ‘it meant that you would enjoy a higher standard of living/it means losing this country’s cultural identity/it meant that we could deal more effectively with environment issues like acid rain and air pollution/it meant that Canada would form 12 new states in the United States/it meant slightly lower taxes but fewer government services/it meant a better quality of life?’”

Survey Year	U.S. with Canada 1990 - 2000	Canada with U.S. 1990 - 2005	Mexico with U.S. 1990 - 2005
Better quality of life	81 - 77	50 - 41	64 - 53
Environmental issues	79 - 66	56 - 41	53 - NA
Higher std. of living	72 - 59	38 - 27	61 - 49
Public/private health care	67 - NA	12 - NA	51 - NA
12 / 32 new states	60 - 37	18 - 11	24 - 25
Less tax/services*	45 - 34	17 - 12	37 - 18
Cultural identity	43 - 10	11 - 5	16 - 12

* The 1990 question in Mexico was “more taxes but better services.”
NA: Not Available

As Table 1 shows, one scenario clearly decreases support for political union in all three populations: the scenario that relates to culture. But on that count, the effects are the weakest for the U.S. Concerns for national cultural identity underpin both the Canadian and Mexican publics’ opposition to the idea of continental political union. In a way, it is a similar argument to that of Huntington: fear of a culture weakening. A comparison of how publics react to the higher standard of living and cultural identity scenarios once more graphically illustrates the fundamental dilemmas between the trade-offs of achieving economic gains and the threat posed to collective values that political union implies.

The very high levels of support for political union, evident in 1990, have now declined to more moderate levels. However, notably, in 2000 a majority of Americans

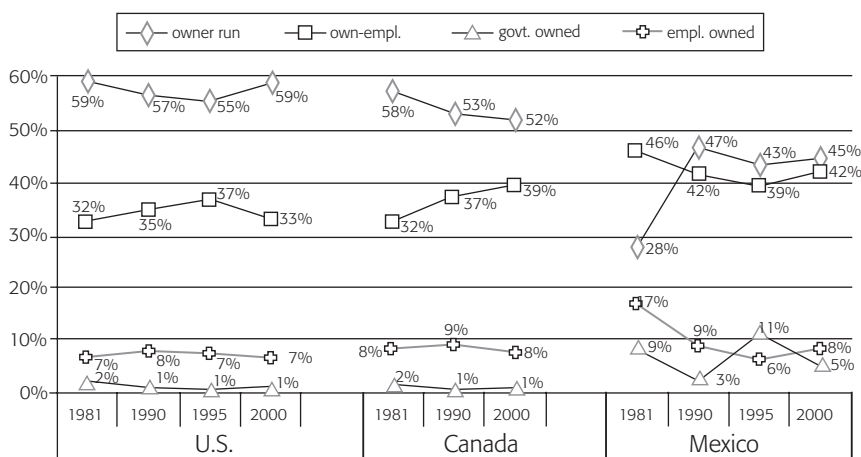
were favoring a union when it came to quality of life (77 percent), environment (66 percent), or standard of living (59 percent). Meanwhile, 53 percent of Mexicans also favor it if *quality of life* improves, while Canadians do not. In 1990, 43 percent of Americans were in favor of forming one country with Canada, even if cultural identity were at risk. By 2000, that percentage shrank to 10 percent.

PART TWO: ECONOMIC VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Who Should Run Business in North America

The ongoing cultural shift does not easily fit into conventional models of left and right. Though we find evidence of a deep-rooted trend away from the Marxist model for society, it is not simply a move back to orthodox capitalism. Figure 8 illustrates this aspect of what is happening. From 1980 to 1995, support for employee participation in management of business and industry rose significantly among both the Canadian and U.S. populations. In Mexico, on the other hand, where post-materialism was not linked with employee participation, support for this option declined. This reversal of patterns between what happened in Mexico and what happened in her two Northern neighbors is a further reflection of fundamental differences in the historic situations of the respective countries.

Figure 8
 WHO SHOULD RUN BUSINESS IN NORTH AMERICA

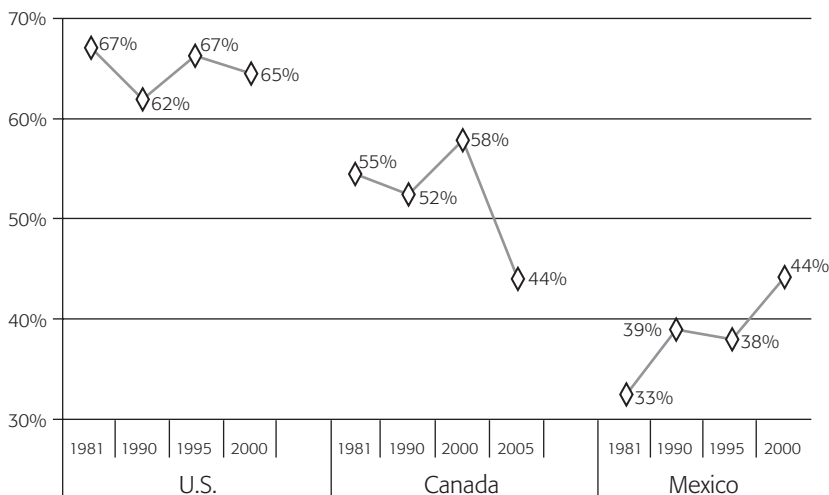


Contrasting changes are taking place in Mexico, on the one hand, and the United States and Canada, on the other, but the net result has been to make the prevailing economic ideology in these countries more similar. Starting from a tradition that combined a strong, highly centralized state with widespread suspicion of individual entrepreneurs, the Mexican public has been moving toward growing acceptance of classic capitalist principles. Starting with strongly pro-capitalist traditions, the people of the United States and Canada continue to reject state ownership and control but are moving toward a more egalitarian version of private enterprise.

Attitudes toward Authority

Orientations toward authority are fundamental to economic, social, and political relationships, and wvs evidence from 1980 and 1990 surveys show that profound changes and a shift toward egalitarian outlooks are taking place in nearly all societies for which we have data (Nevitte, 1996).

Figure 9
SHOULD PEOPLE FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS AT WORK? (PERCENT WHO AGREED)



The responses to a question about whether one should follow the instructions of one's superiors at work, even if one does not agree with them, are very illuminating. In all three countries, the young are less likely to support this idea than are the

old. It is not difficult to offer an explanation for this finding. It could be based on life cycle effects: the young are less likely to be in positions of authority so they are less likely to endorse it than are the old. But it would be equally plausible to see this pattern as reflecting a historic decline in emphasis on unquestioning obedience to authority, linked with rising educational levels, changes in the nature of work, and intergenerational value shifts that place greater emphasis on individual autonomy.

In both the United States and Canada, the age-related differences are paralleled by a consistent set of repeatedly encountered value differences, in which postmaterialists contrast with materialists in the same way that the young contrast with the old. But here again, Mexico does not conform to the pattern: though we find differences across age groups that are similar to those found in the U.S. and Canada, there is no evidence of a parallel decline in emphasis on authority across the three value types.

Once again, the changes that took place concerning following instructions at work after 1980 reveal a shift in the direction that the intergenerational change model predicts, among both the U.S. and Canadian publics –and a shift in the reverse direction in Mexico pointing to the convergence, as Figure 9 shows. Starting from a considerably lower base than their northern neighbors, the Mexican public became more supportive of following the instructions of one’s superiors in the workplace. Note that this trend applies specifically to following instructions at work. The Mexicans are not becoming more authoritarian in general: the overall trend is in the opposite direction. But acceptance of entrepreneurial authority has been growing. Even after this shift, Mexicans remain less committed to following instructions than Americans, but they have moved toward acceptance of traditional capitalist norms at the same level as Canadians.

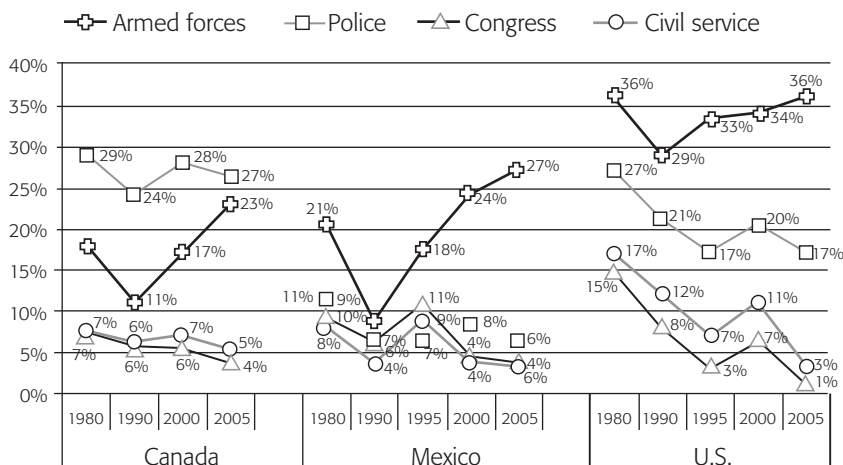
PART THREE: POLITICAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES

Confidence in Governmental Institutions

Figure 10 shows the percentages of respondents who expressed “a great deal” of confidence in each of the following groups in their country: 1) the armed forces; 2) the police; 3) parliament (or Congress); and 4) the civil service. The American public expresses higher levels of confidence in their armed forces than do Mexican and Canadians. Also, Canadians are more confident in their police than Americans, whereas Mexicans show very little confidence in police. The civil service and Congress/Parliament in the three countries are at their lowest levels. Ratings of these

four groups tend to go together in all three countries and it seems to continue to be the case, with the exception of the armed forces (Dalton, 1996; Kaase and Newton, 1995).

Figure 10
A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN...



Like other shifts, these differences seem to be a symptom of a generational change. Postmaterialists tend to register lower levels of confidence in these institutions than do materialists. These findings are consistent with our argument that a sense of insecurity tends to motivate support for strong institutions and for strong political authority in particular. Having experienced a relatively high sense of economic and physical security throughout their formative years, postmaterialists are less inclined than materialists to support the idea of strong centralized authority relations.

The familiar conjunction of age-related differences, together with value-related differences, points to the possibility of a shift over time toward the outlook of the younger and more postmaterialist respondents. In all three countries, confidence in government institutions in 2005 was lower than in 1980. The single exception is the case of the armed forces.

Confidence in Non-Governmental Institutions

The data tell a similar story concerning confidence in non-governmental institutions. The rating of churches, press, private companies, unions, and TV reflects another

er cluster of empirically-related responses. Again, in all three countries, the young express lower levels of confidence in these institutions than the old and postmaterialists exhibit lower levels of confidence than materialists.

Figure 11
 A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN CHURCH

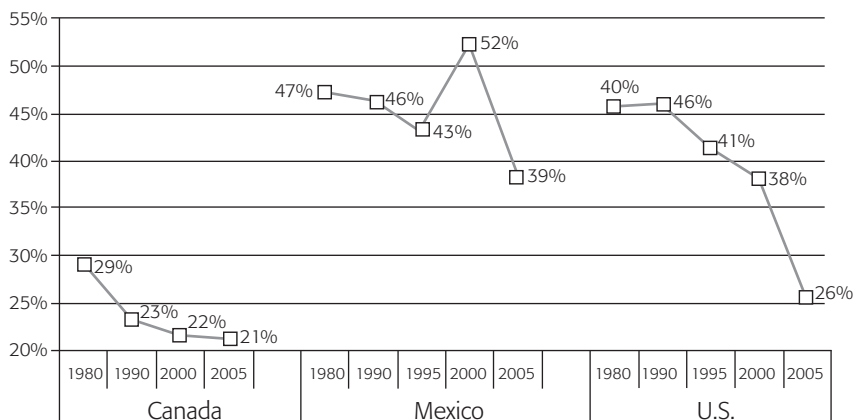
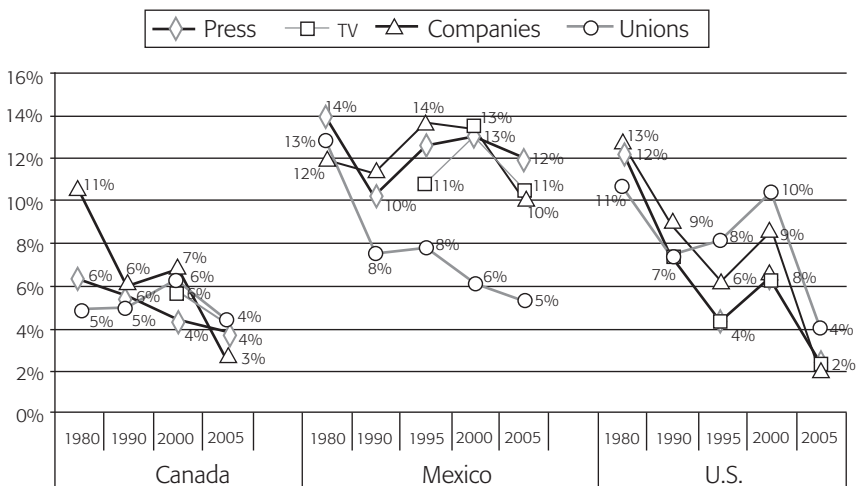


Figure 12
 A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN...



These two related charts are plotted apart because the scale for church is too high to compare with the other variables, at very modest levels.

Once again, we found the symptoms of an intergenerational shift that seems to reflect the higher levels of economic and physical security that shaped the formative years of the younger cohorts. Also, once again, we found that the 1980 data enabled us to predict the changes that took place the following decade. In both the United States and Canada, confidence in all non-governmental institutions declined, including the church, as Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate.

One important reason that may be influencing the decline in “church confidence” is the cases of pederast priests that received a great deal of public attention in recent years. The Mexican data show little change in “church confidence” from 1980 to 1995 and a recovery in 2000, but the decline continued in 2005. Figures 11 and 12 provide a detailed breakdown of how ratings of each of the non-governmental institutions changed over time in the three countries.

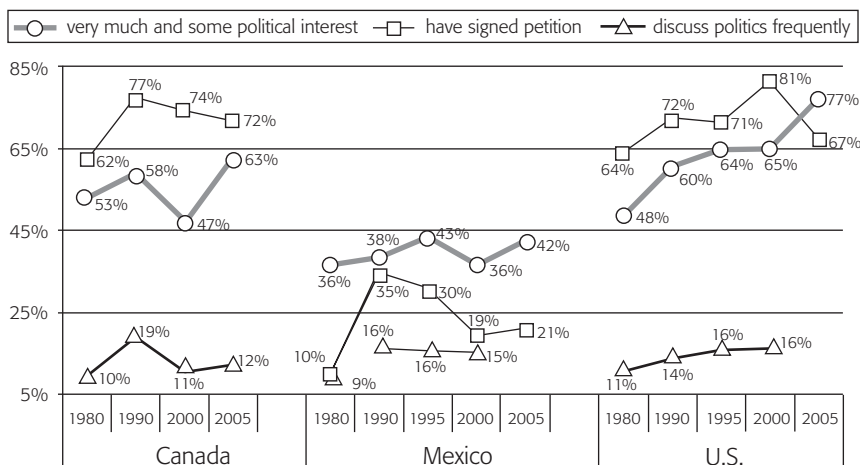
Conventional Participation

Inglehart (1990) followed given cohorts over a period of nearly two decades and confirmed the interpretation that the youngest cohort virtually always shows lower levels of voting turnout and political interest than the next older group, generally those in their 30s. The low politicization of the young clearly does reflect a life-cycle phenomenon. Furthermore, the very oldest groups also showed relatively low rates of conventional participation. The young were less politicized because they were not yet fully integrated into political life but the old showed lower rates of participation because they had lower educational levels than younger cohorts.

Figure 13 shows the percentages at which the three North American publics engage in three closely correlated forms of behavior: 1) discussing politics; 2) being interested in politics; and, 3) having signed a political petition. Using age and post-materialism as prediction tools, the hypothesis we presented in 1990 was that this trend would continue to rise.

As we have stated, this pattern reflects the fact that postmaterialists consist of those who have been raised under conditions of relative economic and physical security. They tend to take immediate survival needs for granted and have more time and energy to spend on more remote and abstract activities, such as politics. Here, the younger groups do not show higher levels of conventional political participation than the older groups: we attribute this trend to life-cycle effects that suppress evidence of an underlying generational change. Postmaterialists, how-

Figure 13
 CONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION



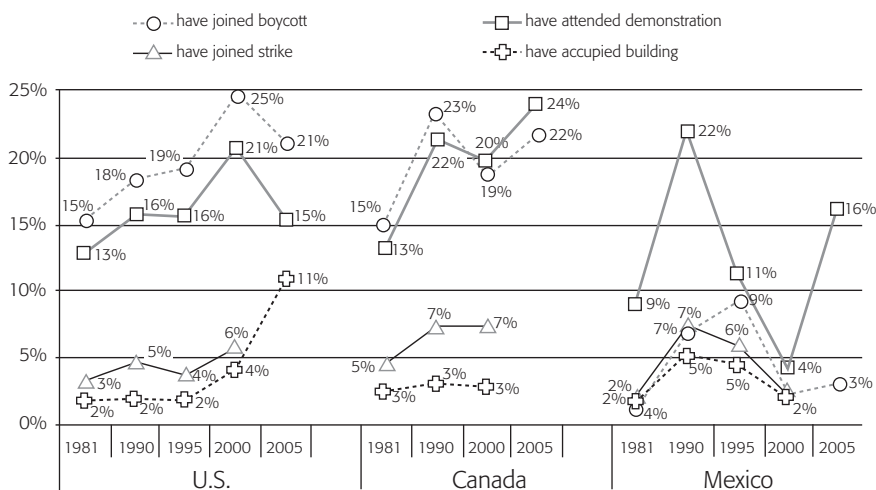
ever, do show relatively high levels of participation. The fact that postmaterialist values are linked with higher rates of conventional political activity should reinforce the trend by which higher educational levels tend to produce a gradually rising potential for mass political participation.

How do we explain the well-known phenomenon of declining rates of voter turnout in the light of these findings? Here, there seem to be two distinct and seemingly contradictory trends. Despite the fact that the younger, better educated birth cohorts show higher political discussion rates than do their elders, they have lower levels of political partisan loyalty. The younger cohorts are better educated and more apt to be interested in politics, to discuss politics, and to sign petitions, but they are distinctly less likely to have a sense of party loyalty.

Unconventional Participation

Do these patterns of conventional participation also apply to unconventional participation? The wvs contains a battery of questions concerning one's readiness to take part in four forms of *unconventional political action*: boycotts, demonstrations, unofficial strikes, and building take-overs.

Figure 14
UNCONVENTIONAL PARTICIPATION



In all three countries, the data show that younger respondents are much readier to engage in *unconventional political action* than older ones. The differences between younger and older cohorts are striking: the young group is at least three times as likely to engage in unconventional political action as the oldest group. We also found strong correlations between *unconventional political action* potential and materialist-postmaterialist values. Do the changes over time confirm this interpretation?

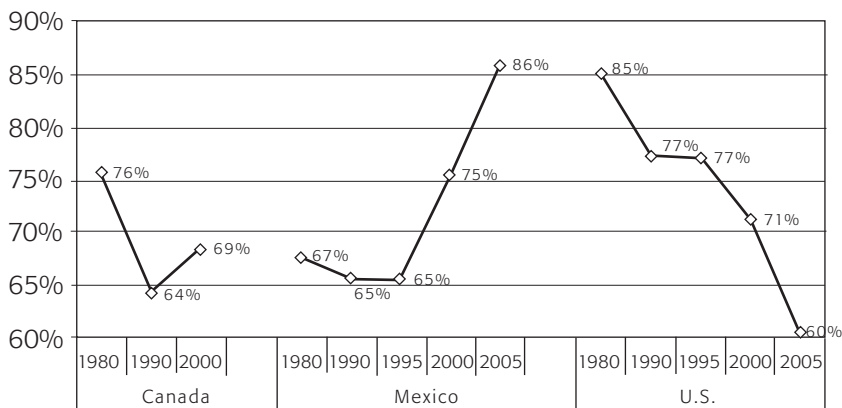
As Figure 14 shows, the answer is “yes” for Canada and the U.S., but the patterns for Mexico are mixed. We found significant increases in mass potential for *unconventional participation* in the U.S. and Canada. Although the increase was impressive in both the United States and Canada, in 1990, it was truly remarkable in Mexico, which rose from a position far behind both of her northern neighbors in 1980, to ranking in 1990 almost as high as they did and, then, back, again, in 2000, to rise once more in 2005.

The Mexican phenomenon seems linked with the surge of political activism that increasingly called into question the one-party domination of Mexican politics by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) until its defeat in 2000. Thereafter, a sort of disenchantment about the possibilities of democracy occurred. The Mexican public increasingly became involved in both conventional and unconventional action during the 1990s but withdrew thereafter.

Greater Respect for Authority

In all five waves, representative national samples of the Mexican, Canadian and U.S. publics were told: "I'm going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the future. Please, tell me, for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind?" One of the possible changes mentioned was "greater respect for authority."

Figure 15
 GREATER RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY (%)



In all three countries, in 1980, the young were less likely than the old to say that greater respect for authority would be a good thing. The difference across age groups was relatively small in Mexico and quite steep in Canada. By itself, this does not prove anything about intergenerational change: one can easily imagine explanations for this pattern that would be based on a life-cycle interpretation. The old are likelier than the young to be in positions of authority and, so, to be oriented more favorably toward it.

Most members of the oldest group (those 65 to 85 years of age at the time of the survey) are less likely to be in positions of authority, yet they are, on the whole, the ones who are most favorable to greater respect for authority. With wvs data, it is possible to test the two competing interpretations. We found that, in all three countries, the postmaterialists are less likely to endorse greater respect for authority than are materialists. Again, the relationship is of modest strength in Mexico but quite pronounced in Canada, with the United States falling in between.

Once again, our two sets of indicators give converging signals with the young differing from the old in the same direction that the postmaterialists differ from the materialists. This finding suggests a process of intergenerational value change and predicts that support for *greater respect for authority* should gradually decline. Do the data support or reject this hypothesis?

As Figure 15 illustrates, the answer is both. In the U.S., there was much less emphasis on authority in 2005 than in 1980, as well as some decline in Canada. But in Mexico, which also showed the weakest linkages with age group and value type in 1980, the decline is relatively modest from 1980 to 1995, and then, a sharp and counter-intuitive increase occurs. One possible explanation may lie in the enthusiasm that the democratization process unleashed during the 1990s. The step-by-step victory of the opposition parties at the municipal, state and –finally, in 2000– national elections may have produced an increase in *respect for authority*.

PART FOUR: FAMILY VALUES

The analysis so far has focused on economic and political outlooks. Is there evidence of similar patterns of change when it comes to primary relations?

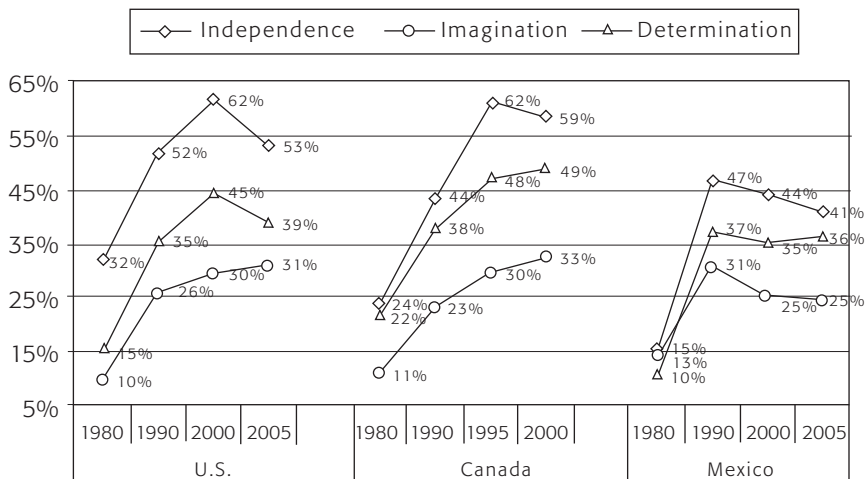
Children's Qualities

The wvs asked respondents what values people consider important in child rearing. Our respondents were told: "Here's a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please, choose up to five."

They were shown a list of 10 qualities, ranging from "obedience" to "unselfishness." Among these 10 items, five are of particular interest. It turns out that people tend to emphasize either the goals of "independence," "imagination," and "determination" or the goals of "obedience" and "religious faith." Those who choose one item in the first group are likely to emphasize the other items in that group as well, but they are not likely to emphasize "obedience" or "religious faith." Values like "independence," "imagination," and "determination" reflect the priority of encouraging a child to think for themselves. Those who choose "obedience" and "religious faith" value conformity to established authority and respect for established social norms.

In all three countries, according to the wvs data, the younger cohorts tend to emphasize autonomy more strongly than do the older groups. Longitudinal research

Figure 16
 CHILDREN'S QUALITIES (%)



carried out in the United States has demonstrated that, between the 1950s and the 1980s, the American public's emphasis on conformity to authority in childrearing gradually declined and there was a corresponding rise in emphasis on "autonomy" (Alwin, 1986). An emphasis on independence, imagination, and determination seems to be linked with postmaterialist values. Because we know that there has been an intergenerational shift from materialist to postmaterialist values, this fact, too, suggests that a related shift may be taking place in childrearing values.

Shifts in the relative emphasis on independence, imagination, and determination took place in all three countries between 1980 and 2000: all three populations moving in the direction predicted by the correlations with age and postmaterialist values. In both the United States and Canada, emphasis on the three "autonomy" values showed a substantial jump during the first decade. But the change that took place in Mexico was even more dramatic. In 1980, the Mexicans were less than half as likely to emphasize autonomy values as were their North American neighbors. By 1990, they had almost caught up to other North Americans. However, the trend seems to have reversed: during the 1990s in Mexico and, after 2000 in the U.S. and Canada. None reverted to the 1980's level but a reversal did occur.

Table 2
CHILDREN'S QUALITIES (PERCENT)

	U.S.			Canada			Mexico					
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980	1990	2000	2005
Independence	32%	52%	62%	53%	24%	44%	62%	59%	15%	47%	44%	41%
Imagination	10%	26%	30%	31%	11%	23%	30%	33%	13%	31%	25%	25%
Determination	15%	35%	45%	39%	22%	38%	48%	49%	10%	37%	35%	36%
Average	19%	38%	45%	41%	19%	35%	46%	47%	13%	38%	35%	34%
Obedience	28%	38%	32%	29%	21%	28%	31%	33%	44%	45%	59%	58%
Religious faith	38%	55%	53%	51%	23%	31%	33%	32%	35%	40%	52%	39%
Average	33%	47%	43%	40%	22%	29%	32%	32%	40%	43%	55%	49%

Family Duty

Clear and readily interpretable patterns do not emerge for all dimensions. One apparent and striking exception concerns the ties between parents and children: whether a child needs both a father and a mother, whether a woman needs children in order to be fulfilled, and parents' duties toward their children. In both the United States and Canada, there was an increase, rather than a decrease, in emphasis on family duty from 1980 to 1990. The rise is modest in both countries but it runs counter to the trends that would be predicted by most of the earlier evidence. Only the Mexican public moved in the expected direction, from 1980 to 1990, with a sizeable decline in emphasis on family duties.

The pattern here is complex. In contrast with the consistent pattern found with most age-related variables, the increase, over time, did not move in the same direction as the trend across age groups, at least not in the United States and Canada. The observed anomalies are small. Both the rise in an emphasis on family duty that we find from 1980 to 1990 for the U.S. and Canada and the reversal in the age pattern for those two countries are small enough that either –or both– could be attributable to sampling error. But they are also consistent with the interpretation that for several decades the prevailing trend has been toward declining emphasis on family values. It appears, however, that this trend is now leveling off and may be reversing itself. De-emphasis on the family may have reached a floor: the nuclear family may still have a vital function to fulfill.

Figure 17
 FAMILY DUTIES

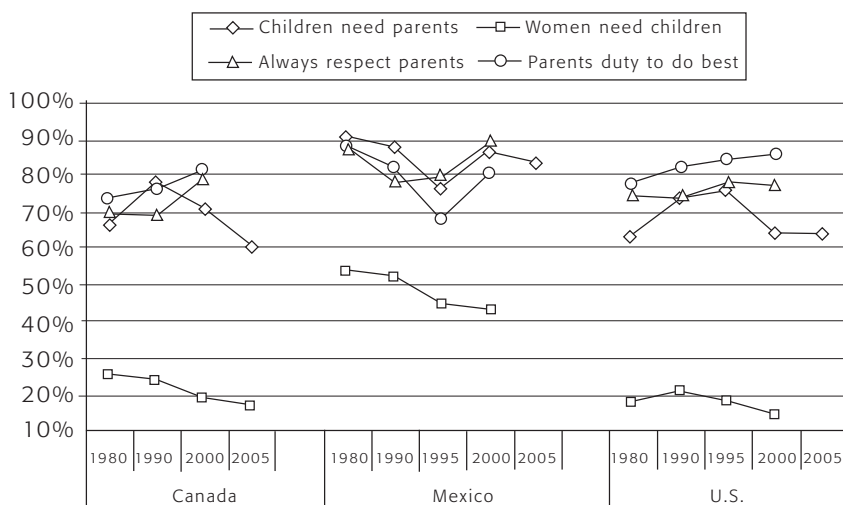


Table 3
FAMILY DUTIES

	Children need Parents	Women need children	Always respect parents	Parents duty to do best
Canada				
1980	66	26	70	73
1990	78	24	69	76
2000	71	19	79	81
2005	61	17	NA*	NA
Mexico				
1980	91	54	88	88
1990	88	52	78	82
1990	76	45	80	67
2000	86	43	90	80
2005	83	NA	NA	NA
U.S.				
1980	63	18	74	77
1990	74	21	74	82
1990	76	18	78	84
2000	64	15	77	85
2005	64	NA	NA	NA

* Not available.

From the economic vantage point, the advantages of a large family unit have undoubtedly become less crucial. But there are certain psychological functions which the family unit fulfills and which no other institution seems to be able to fulfill equally well. Whether the reversal of expectations represents a turning point in the decline of family ties is too difficult to determine in the absence of more data. But the possibility stands as an intriguing one.

Sexual Permissiveness

Two main reasons are usually offered to explain the decline of traditional religious social and sexual norms in advanced industrial societies. The first is that an increasing sense of security brings a diminishing need for absolute norms. Individuals under high stress need rigid, predictable rules. They need to be sure of what is

going to happen because their margin for error is slender and the consequences of an unexpected turn of events could be fatal.

The second reason is that societal and religious norms usually have a function. Such basic norms as “Thou shalt not kill” help restrict violence to narrow, predictable channels. Without such norms, a society would tend to tear itself apart. Many religious norms such as “Thou shalt not commit adultery” or “Honor thy father and mother” are linked with maintaining the family unit. As long as divorce threatens its children’s survival, society is apt to view divorce as intolerable. These particular functions, however, have become less crucial than they once were.

As Figure 18 and Table 4 show, disapproval of homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, and divorce have all declined in the three countries during this period. By 1980, Mexico showed the highest disapproval levels, followed by the U.S., while Canada was already quite permissive. By 2005, the majority of all three populations were found to approve these behaviors. The only exception concerns abortion in Mexico. In contrast, throughout the whole 25-year period, attitudes toward divorce have been the most permissive of all, despite the clear objection of the Catholic Church.

Figure 18
 SEXUAL PERMISSIVENESS (PERCENT WHO SAID “NEVER JUSTIFIED”)

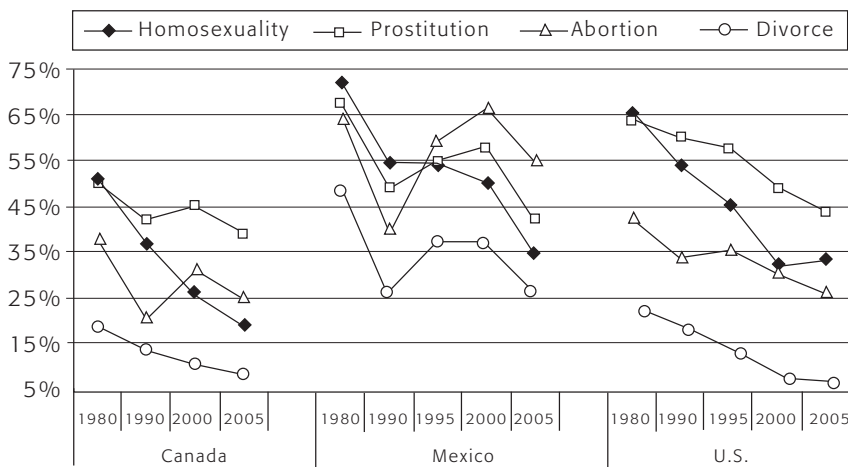


Table 4
SEXUAL PERMISSIVENESS
(percent who said "never justified")

	Canada				Mexico				U.S.					
	1980	1990	2000	2005	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005
Homosexuality	51	37	26	19	72	55	55	50	34	65	54	45	32	33
Prostitution	50	42	46	39	67	49	55	58	42	64	60	58	49	44
Abortion	38	20	31	25	64	39	59	67	55	43	34	36	30	26
Divorce	19	13	11	9	48	26	37	37	26	22	18	12	7	6
Average	39	28	28	23	63	42	51	53	39	49	41	38	29	27

PART FIVE: PERSONAL VALUES

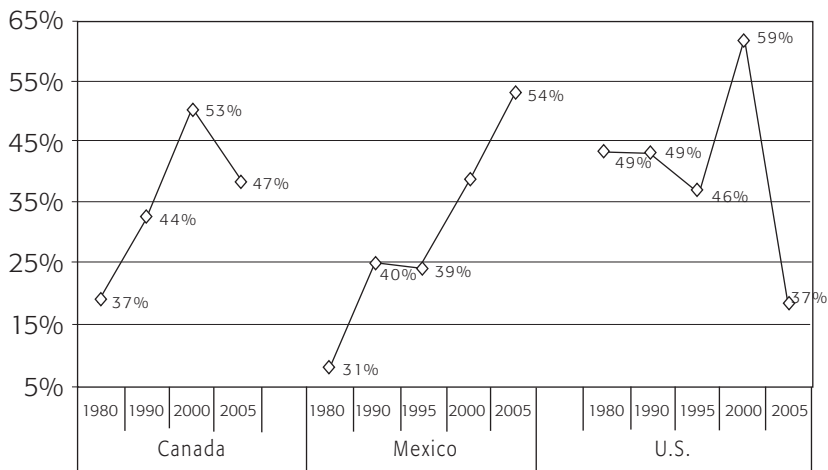
Meaning and Purpose of Life

Historically, religion provided answers to such questions as: "Where are we going?" "Where do we come from?" or "Why are we here?" In modern times, people increasingly turned to the physical sciences or to ideologies such as Marxism for answers to these questions. Today, the shift toward postmaterialist values brings a growing concern for the meaning and purpose of life.

Postmaterialists are less likely to hold traditional religious beliefs than are those with mixed or materialist values, but they are more likely to emphasize "religious seeking" (Kojetin, 1988). The World Values Survey data confirms this interpretation. In each nation, our respondents were asked: "How often, if at all, do you think about the meaning and purpose of life?" The responses are related to value types in the three North American countries.

Postmaterialists are less likely than materialists to state that they believe in God in virtually every society for which we have data. But they are significantly more likely to state that they spend time thinking about the meaning and purpose of life. This finding holds true despite the fact that older people are more religious than their younger counterparts. It seems likely that this trend reflects a life cycle effect: the old are more apt to spend time thinking about the meaning of life because they are nearing the end of their lives, not because they were born at an earlier point in history. If this is the case, then a life cycle effect may be superimposed on a generational change, suppressing the age relationship. If so, we would expect the spread of postmaterialist values to bring a growing tendency for people to spend time thinking about the meaning and purpose of life. This is precisely what we found, as Figure 19 demonstrates.

Figure 19
 OFTEN THINK ABOUT MEANING OF LIFE



The U.S. did not change between 1980 and 1990, but, in both Canada and Mexico, we found strong increases in the percentage of the public who “often” think about the meaning and purpose of life. The trend reached very high levels in 2000 in all three countries. Mexico moved even higher in 2005, whereas both Canada and the U.S. receded, probably as an impact of the decrease of postmaterialists linked to 9/11 as hypothesized above.

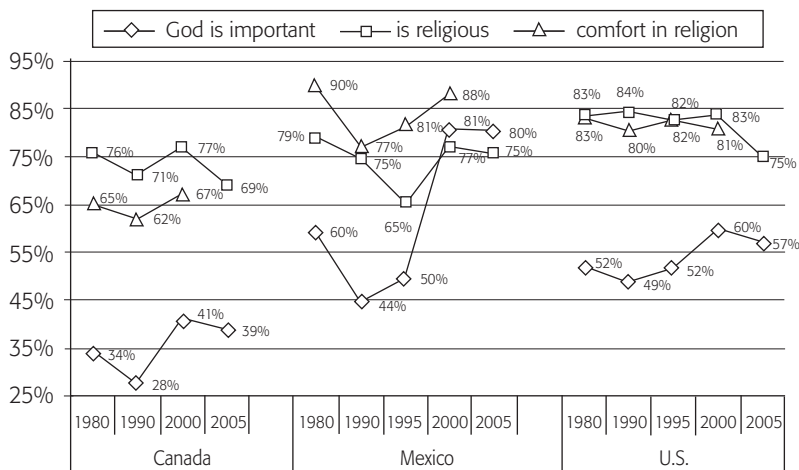
Religiosity

For most respondents, attitudes toward religion may well be the most central and important component of their worldview. Whether or not one believes in God is a powerful predictor of a wide range of other orientations. Religion has remarkably broad ramifications.

The most sensitive indicators of this dimension are: 1) whether the respondents say that God is important in their lives (rated on a 10-point scale); 2) whether or not they describe themselves as religious; and, 3) whether or not they say they get strength and comfort from religion. These attitudes are strongly correlated with age. In all three countries, the young place far less emphasis on religion than do the older respondents. In the U.S. and Canada, the members of the oldest cohort are about twice as likely as the young to rank high on religiosity. In Mexico, the differences are equally striking.

As Figure 20 illustrates, in all three countries, from 1980 to 1990, religiosity declined but increased again during the next period. The change was slight in the U.S. but sizeable in both Canada and particularly in Mexico.

Figure 20
RELIGIOSITY

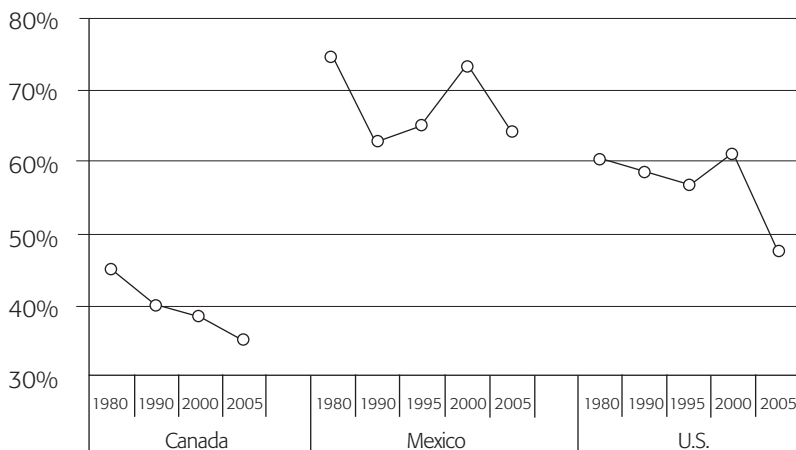


Church Attendance

To what extent are attitudes and behavior on the same trajectory? Our 1980 surveys show that in all three countries, church attendance rates were substantially lower among the young than among the old. Also, these age differences were paralleled by consistent differences across value types: postmaterialists attend church less frequently than do materialists.

This finding suggests that we cannot count on a given cohort to become more faithful in their church attendance as they grow older: the age differences may reflect different formative experiences which have left the younger generations with a weaker attachment to religion. Our 1980 data predicted declines in church attendance for that decade. As Figure 21 demonstrates, we find confirming evidence in all three countries for the entire 1980–2005 period, with a recovery in Mexico and the U.S. in 2000. The change was very modest in the United States in the first decade and would not be worth mentioning if it did not occur in the broader context of

Figure 21
 CHURCH ATTENDANCE



confirming indications that were found there. In both Canada and the U.S., on the other hand, we find relatively large declines in church attendance since 1990.

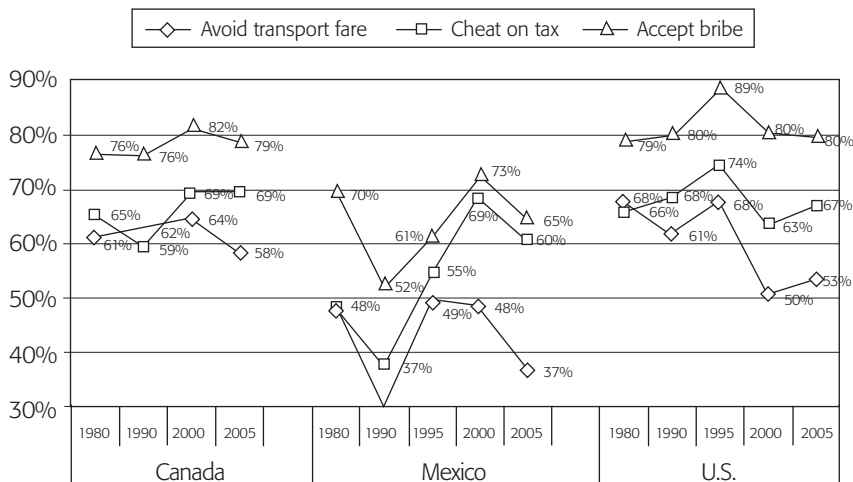
Civil Permissiveness

The pattern of changes in levels of civil permissiveness is more ambiguous. It is measured by asking respondents about avoiding paying public transportation fares, cheating on taxes, and accepting bribes in the course of their duties. In the United States and Canada, there is a shift toward greater civil permissiveness from 1980 to 1990. In Mexico, on the other hand, the change is large but it cannot be attributed to intergenerational population replacement; most of it seems to reflect nation-specific period effects.

During the late 1980s, there was a sharp decline in trust in government and a sharp rise of mass politicization in Mexico, apparently coupled with rising opposition to the PRI's continued dominance of Mexican politics. In 1995, both the U.S. and Mexico experienced decreased tolerance for civil permissiveness, the former, slightly, and the latter, dramatically. In 2000, Canada and Mexico moved towards less civil permissiveness, whereas it increased in the U.S. In 2005, the opposite is found: Canada and Mexico became more permissive and the U.S., slightly less.

These findings indicate that the shift observed above toward sexual permissiveness is not a shift toward permissiveness in general. We are not dealing with a nihilistic trend toward the feeling that "anything goes," including theft and bribes.

Figure 22
CIVIL PERMISSIVENESS (PERCENT WHO SAID “NEVER JUSTIFIED”)



Instead, the trend toward greater sexual permissiveness reflects increasing acceptance of certain specific forms of individual self-expression. They point toward decriminalization of what are sometimes referred to as “victimless crimes.” Recent changes in Mexico seem very distinctive, but both the U.S. and Canada remain non-permissive when it concerns this cluster of attitudes.

The young are more permissive than the old in all three countries, as was true with attitudes toward sexual behavior. Furthermore, the postmaterialists tend to tolerate slightly higher levels of civil permissiveness than do materialists. Here, the pattern is much less clear cut than it was with sexual permissiveness.

Canadian postmaterialists rate slightly higher on tolerance of civil permissiveness than do the materialists in that country, but the difference is much smaller than the one linked with sexual permissiveness. In Mexico, the postmaterialists were actually less permissive than the materialists in 1980, but they caught up with the general trend in the region during the latter waves. Data on values are not available for the U.S. in 1980, but, after 1990, data indicate that U.S. postmaterialists and materialists are nearly equally divided.

Summary Comparison

What does the addition of new data tell us? First, the analytical framework we used for the analysis back in 1990 (namely, the materialists–postmaterialist framework)

Table 5
TRAJECTORY SUMMARY (NET SUM OF DISTANCES IN VALUES, 1990-2005)

	Canada		U.S.		Mexico		1990 Distances		2005 Distances					
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	US-Ca	US-Mx	Ca-Mx	US-Ca	US-Mx	Ca-Mx	Average	
1 Belonging to town	44%	34%	41%	57	45%	41%	59%	11%	3%	-8%	22%	0%	0%	1%
2 Trust in Americans*	55%	63%												
3 Proud of nationality	62%	60%	69%	76%	75%	66%	65%	15%	19%	4%	38%	-3%	-17%	-14
4 Doing away with borders	24%	22%	42%		46%	42%		22%	21%		43%	20%	-9%	29%
5 Forming one country	50%	41%			81%	77%		31%	17%		48%	36%	24%	60%
6 Business managed by owner	58%	53%	52%	59%	57%	59%	28%	45%	3%	7%	20%	7%	15%	7%
7 Following instructions	55%	52%	44%	67%	62%	65%	33%	39%	10%	23%	14%	46%	21%	20%
8 Confidence in govt. inst.	29%	23%	21%	46%	46%	26%	47%	39%	0%	-23%	46%	5%	-13%	-18%
9 Confidence in non-govt. inst.	7%	20%	13%	12%	16%	16%	4%	8%	8%	12%	24%	3%	7%	5%
10 Conventional participation	10%	19%	12%	11%	14%	16%	9%	16%	-2%	3%	10%	4%	1%	-3%
11 Unconventional participation	15%	23%	22%	15%	18%	21%	1%	7%	3%	-5%	11%	16%	3%	0%
12 Respect for authority	76%	64%	69%	85%	77%	71%	67%	65%	12%	-1%	26%	3%	-4%	-7%
13 Children's qualities: traditional	22%	29%	32%	33%	47%	40%	40%	43%	4%	-13%	35%	7%	-9%	-16%
14 Family duty	59%	62%	60%	58%	63%	60%	80%	75%	1%	-12%	-13%	26%	1%	-14%
15 Sexual permissiveness	39%	28%	23%	49%	41%	27%	63%	42%	3%	-14%	28%	4%	-12%	-16%
16 Meaning of life	37%	44%	47%	49%	49%	37%	31%	40%	9%	4%	18%	-10%	-17%	-8%
17 Religiosity	58%	54%	58%	73%	71%	71%	76%	65%	6%	-12%	35%	12%	-10%	-23%
18 Church attendance	41%	27%	25%	43%	44%	37%	54%	43%	17%	-17%	35%	12%	-10%	-21%
19 Civil permissiveness	68%	66%	69%	71%	70%	66%	55%	40%	30%	26%	60%	-2%	13%	15%
								Average distance			Average distance			
								5.9			5.3			

* The negative average value (-24%) points to a reduction of the "trust" distance in the 1990-2005 period. The percentages within boxes correspond to the 2000 wvs wave.

remains useful as does the new application of the Inglehart's values map. Second, the increase of trade, investments, border crossings, communication, tourism, and labor reinforce mutual trust. Third, the key values reviewed on economic and political matters seem to be moving in a much more synchronized way. Our interpretation is that Mexico used to lag far behind its continental neighbors in economic and political practices and institutions but is catching up rapidly and entering into the normal path of modern democratic and economic life.

Fourth, when we come to a more internal and personal realm as family and personal values are, it is impressive how the three countries' values also move up and down very similarly. We interpret this finding as some sort of "fine tuning" that is operating at the individual level throughout a variety of mechanisms produced by the enormous amount of interaction in the region, which also reinforce proximity. Finally, Adams and Huntington's challenges do not seem to stand. As Table 5 shows, the shift trend between the three countries from 1990 to 2005 converges in 25 out of 54 values (46 percent); diverges in 20 (37 percent); and is parallel in 9 (17 percent). It is a weak convergence, but it is not a divergence. Particularly, findings between Canada and the U.S. show converging trends in 13 out of 19 value shifts (68 percent) with 4 divergences and 2 parallel results. On the other hand, Canada and Mexico converge in 5 trends, diverge in 7, and are parallel in 4, whereas the U.S. and Mexico converge in 7, diverge in 9, and are parallel in 3.

The average distance shown at the bottom row of Table 5 confirms the weak convergence. While the 1990 distances between the countries averaged 5.9 (590 percent), by 2005, it is slightly reduced to 5.3 (530 percent). The trajectory is weak but maintains the trend that was observed in 1990.

CONCLUSIONS

Adams's claim of divergence may reflect a selection of values. But that is not the overall picture, as the wvs data shows. Huntington's image that the deepening of NAFTA will lead to massive Hispanic immigration into the United States and, ultimately, that the English-speaking culture and, perhaps, even the democratic political institutions of the United States will be swept away by a Hispanic flood seems unrealistic. Comparisons between the values of two or three countries inevitably draw attention to differences. Placing value change in a broader perspective, as we show in the World Values map (Figure 2), provides a useful corrective. Those data clearly show that the value shift on these basic dimensions in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are moving along the same trajectories. In the long run, a deepening of the

NAFTA relationship would almost certainly result in less Mexican immigration to the U.S., as was the case for Spain after joining the European Union (Royo, 2003: 305-309).

The experience of the European Community seems instructive for North America. A half-century has passed since the Treaty of Rome established the European Common Market. At that time, it was still taken for granted that the Germans and French were hereditary enemies who naturally hated each other and were doomed to fight a major war every few decades. After more than five decades of working together, these feelings of antagonism have gradually disappeared. Today, opinion surveys indicate that the French public views the Germans as their closest ally and most trusted partners; German attitudes toward France are almost equally positive (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007). This is an immensely important change in the political landscape of Europe, though one which has largely escaped attention because it has taken place so gradually.

As we have seen, one of the major sources of opposition to the economic integration of North America is grounded in the fear that integration would erode the distinctive cultures of neighboring countries. This fear is not wholly unfounded: there is evidence that, in many respects, the basic values of Canadians, Mexicans, and Americans have been gradually converging. But these changes were taking place even before the free trade agreements and would probably continue in any event. One should not underestimate the degree to which different peoples can live under common economic and political institutions and still retain a high degree of cultural diversity. Some convergence will almost inevitably take place between the three countries regardless of whether formal integration takes place. The fear that all three publics will become one dull, homogeneous mass, however, seems unrealistic.

As other analysts in each of these three countries have repeatedly shown, variations in regional cultures within each of these countries have remained remarkably robust and resistant to homogenization. Francophone Québécois, for example, have retained vibrant and distinctive cultural outlooks after more than a century of co-existence with their Anglophone counterparts. Furthermore, they have managed to maintain this cultural co-existence within the same broad institutional structures (Gagnon and Iacovino, 2006: 114-121).

Whether one is afraid of change or is eager for it, all three North American countries are inevitably experiencing that change. Technological and economic developments will continue to reshape these societies. The question is not whether one accepts change or excludes it; the question is how societies adapt to it. On the whole, strengthening a North American free trade area and deepening ties seems likely to give the peoples of these countries more control over their destiny and more resources to help cope with change than they would have otherwise.

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