Roots of Culture:
Why National Cultures Differ

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How can we explain cultural differences?

Language can explain why there are differences, but…

Why do particular groups have the cultures they do?

How far back should we go to find the roots of particular cultures?

Is globalization making cultures more similar?

Overview

➤ Some dimensions for comparing cultures

➤ The pace of culture change

➤ Prevailing social explanations—their weaknesses as causal explanations

➤ Causes of cultural differences in two basic cultural orientations

  ➤ Theory

  ➤ Evidence across 74 countries

The Heart of Culture: Cultural Value Orientations

Contents of Societal Culture

widespread practices, beliefs, values, artifacts, ways of understanding

Most central: Prevailing value emphases

Hofstede, Inglehart, Globe, Schwartz: dimensions to compare cultures

Prevailing value emphases

➢Value emphases of societies are expressed in daily practices, ways of thought and ways institutions function

➢Value emphases generate, justify and support societal institutions

    ➢*ambition & success* ⬅➡ *competitive legal, market, education systems*

➢Value emphases in society provide standards:
evaluate and promote everyday actions, norms, policies

    modesty & obedience ⬅➡ *widespread conformity norms and behavior*

Evolution of Cultural Value Emphases

➢ All societies confront basic problems in regulating human activity

➢ Societal responses to basic problems emphasize certain values and sacrifice others

➢ Derive 3 bipolar cultural value dimensions/ orientations from societal responses to 3 problems

Egalitarianism (vs. Hierarchy)

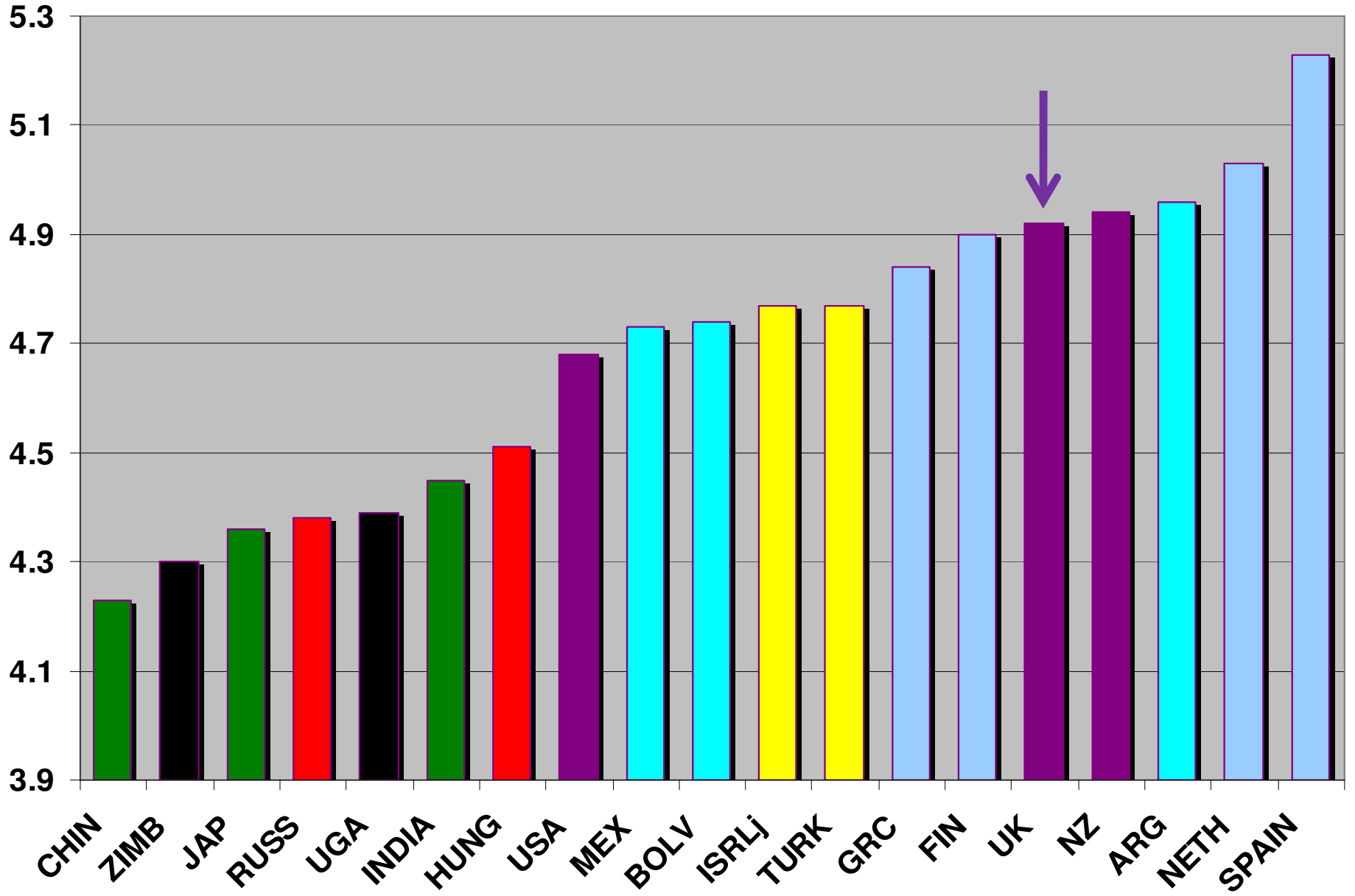Issue: Ideal way to elicit cooperative, productive activity in society

Can and should socialize individuals to
- accept others as morally equal
- transcend selfish interests
- cooperate voluntarily in getting society's work done

Value items

Equality	Honesty	Responsibility
Social justice	Loyalty	Helpfulness

Egalitarianism Comparison

Embeddedness (*vs. Autonomy*)

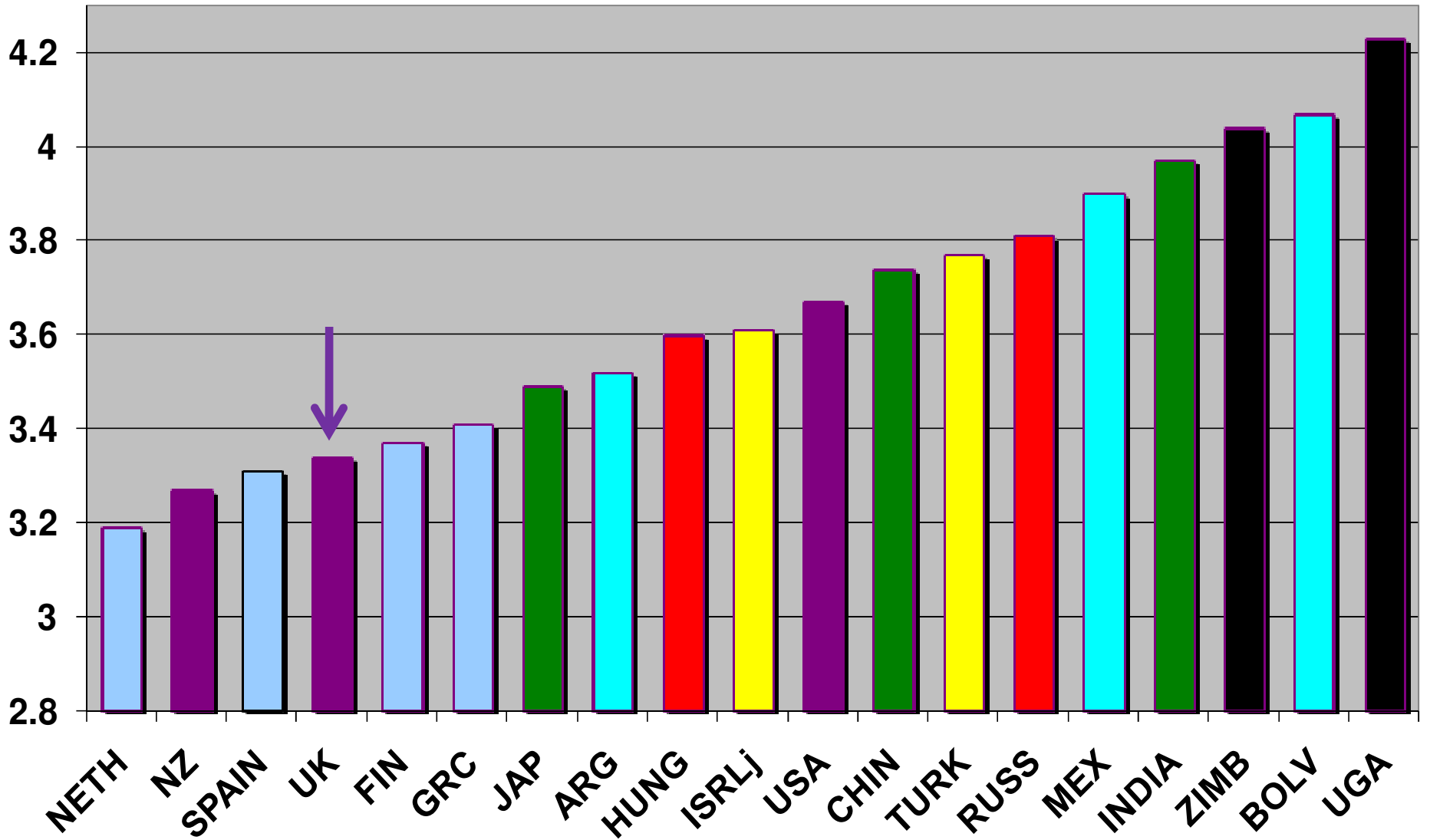Issue: Ideal relationship between individuals and groups

People are role players embedded in groups, who should:

➤ maintain group traditions and solidarity

➤ restrain potentially disruptive impulses & actions
➤ find meaning in life through identifying with the group and its goals

Value items

Honoring Elders	Moderation	Politeness
Respecting Tradition	Devoutness	Social Order
Obedience	Wisdom	Family Security
Self-Discipline	Forgiveness	National Security

Embeddness Comparison

Pace of Cultural Change

➤How far back to look for causes?

➤Depends on pace of change

➤Kohn & Schooler (1983): US ethnic group differences in valuing moral autonomy, intellectual flexibility, non-conformity

  ➤Time since release of peasantry from serfdom in Europe

  ➤Longer time since release, higher autonomy values

  ➤Scandinavia (no serfdom), England/Ireland (1603-25), German States (1807-33), Sth & Central Italy (1848), Eastern Europe (1861)

Pace of Cultural Change 2

➢ Moghaddam & Crystal (2000): norms for authority relations/treatment of women 20th century

  ➢ Iran: roots in pre-Islamic times [1500 years]

  ➢ Japan: roots in early Tokugawa era (400 years)

Core cultural values persist for centuries

Pace of Change in Cultural Values 3

➢ Embeddedness & Egalitarianism

➢ 21 countries, 36 Sample pairs

➢ Average interval 7.1 yrs. (during 1988-99)

➢ Countries undergoing major social change (China, Hong Kong, Poland, Hungary)

➢ Imperfect matching for most pairs

Embeddedness *r* = .90   Egalitarianism *r* = .90

Relative orientations change very slowly

Explanations of Culture Change

- Inglehart & Baker (ASR 2000) data ~1995
  - Tradition/Secular Rational, Survival/Self-Express
  - Economic (GDPpc, % labor force industry, services) ~15 yrs earlier
  - Historical religious heritage, Ex-Communist

- Georgas, van de Vijver, Berry (JCCP 2004)
  - data (Hof-4)~1970, (Ing-2 & Schw-1) ~1992
  - Affluence (Factor—GNPpc, energy consumption, calories, etc.) 1987-89
  - Religion: Current majority sect

Problems in Past Research I

Sufficient time period to *cause* culture?

➢ Culture measured as average individual values

➢ Typical samples average age 35-40

➢ Critical value socialization in mid-teens

➢ Should measure causal variables 20 yrs earlier

Measurement too recent to identify causes

Problems in Past Research II

➢ Reciprocal causality or exogenous (unidirectional)?

➢ Exogenous cause must:
  ➢ clearly precede culture measurement
  ➢ have plausible mechanisms linking it to culture level
  ➢ not be influenced by culture

➢ Culture reciprocally influences political & economic factors
  ➢ Socio-economic level ⟷ embeddedness/autonomy
  ➢ Democracy ⟷ egalitarianism/hierarchy

Search for truly exogenous causes

Samples and Data 1

➢ 77 cultural groups, 76 countries, N=55,022

➢ Dominant cultural group: average of school teacher & of university student samples

➢ Items with near equivalent meaning in within-country analyses, based on within sample MDS of ten types of individual values

Samples & Data 2

➢ Countries in every inhabited continent

➢ 9 Sub-Saharan Africa, 6 East Asia, 6 South-East Asia, 3 North America, 8 Latin America, 7 Middle East & North Africa, 17 East (ECentral) Europe, 17 West Europe, 3 Oceania

➢ Representing 79% world population

➢ Median year 1995, 80% between 1991-98

Egalitarianism Cause: Religion

➢ RomCath & Prot $\xrightarrow{+}$ Egalitarianism

  ➢ Medieval period, RC counter-balance hierarchical power of kings & feudal rulers

  ➢ Popes embraced egalitarian govt protections for weak

  ➢ Since late 19C, Pr & RC ideologies promoted Christian Democratic parties across Europe & Latin America

    ➢ parties favored parliamentary democracy

    ➢ protecting weak from abuses of market & political power

    ➢ consultation among government, industry, unions

    ➢ cut across classes & across rural/urban divide

➢ Eastern religions $\xrightarrow{-}$ Egalitarianism

  ➢ more accepting of hierarchy

  ➢ less involved in social policy emphasizing equality

Egalitarianism Cause: Ethnic Heterogeneity

➢ Select 2 people randomly: Do they belong to different groups (Fractionalization: Alesina et al. 2003)

    ➢ More groups & more equal numbers ⟶ higher

    ➢ Measured early 90s; very little change 50yrs

➢ Heterogeneity ⟶ Egalitarianism

    ➢ Ethnic interests strong basis for organized action

    ➢ Produces conflicting needs

        languages (schooling), life styles (desirable public goods, permissible dress), regions/neighborhoods (infrastructure investment)

    ➢ Reduces inter-group trust, willingness to contribute to public goods, belief other groups will share fairly
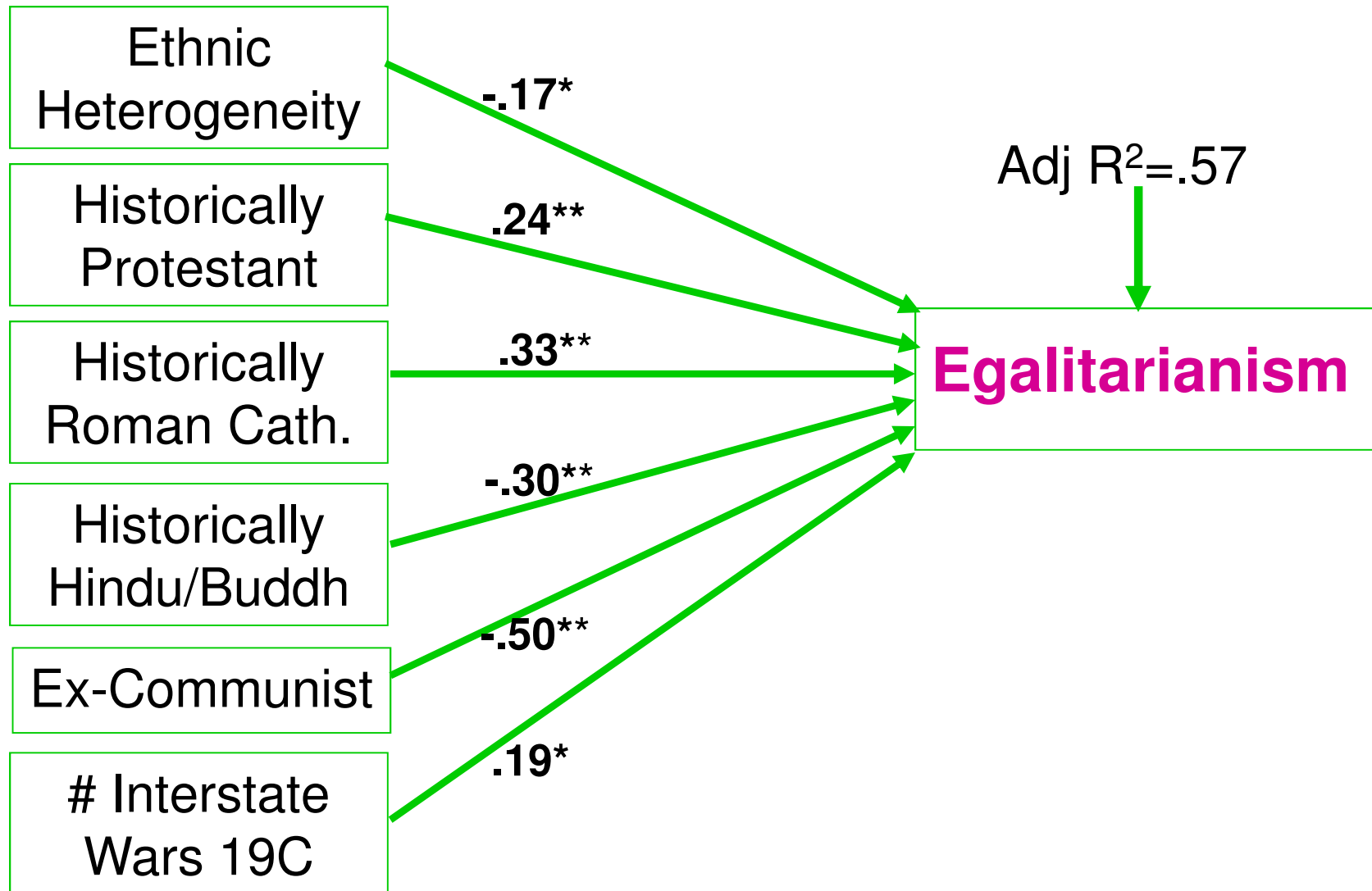
Egalitarianism Cause: Communism

➢Ex-communist state ⟶ Egalitarianism

  ➢40 years externally imposed totalitarian rule

  ➢Reduces interpersonal & inter-group trust

  ➢Reduces belief that voluntary cooperation can manage interdependence society

Egalitarianism Cause: 19C Wars

Interstate wars 1823-1900 $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Egalitarianism

- ➢ 19C wars of state formation required expansions of civil rights to promote mobilization citizen armies

- ➢ Elites persuaded or forced to broaden social & political rights & share resources with lower classes

- ➢ Institutional innovations intended to protect all regardless of status (social security)

- ➢ 19c wars due not to culture but to arbitrary gerrymandering of borders (post-Napoleon, colonial)

Causes of Egalitarianism: Betas

Ethnic Heterogeneity

Historically Protestant

Historically Roman Cath.

Historically Hindu/Buddh

Ex-Communist

Interstate Wars 19C

-.17*

.24**

.33**

-.30**

-.50**

.19*

Adj R^2=.57

Egalitarianism

*p<.05, ***p<.01, 2-tailed   N=76

Embeddedness Cause: Religion

➢ 19ᵗʰ century Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Islam, Eastern [Hindu, Buddhist], Traditional Beliefs

➢ Religion $\xrightarrow{\ +/-\ }$ Embeddedness

  ➢ Tie individual to community (especially Islam)

  ➢ Past 1500 yrs, RC & Pr encourage autonomy of individual more

    ➢ In 'dark ages', preserved & expanded scientific & philosophical literature encouraging open investigation

    ➢ Individual salvation and moral responsibility

    ➢ 19C Church built institutions (schools, hospitals, welfare) that reduced individuals' dependence on in-group or fostered them thru' Chr Dem political parties

Embeddedness Cause: Ethnic Heterogeneity

➢ Heterogeneity $\xrightarrow{+}$ Embeddedness

  ➢ Ethnic in-group more salient basis of identity, shared goals, authority, deserving conformity

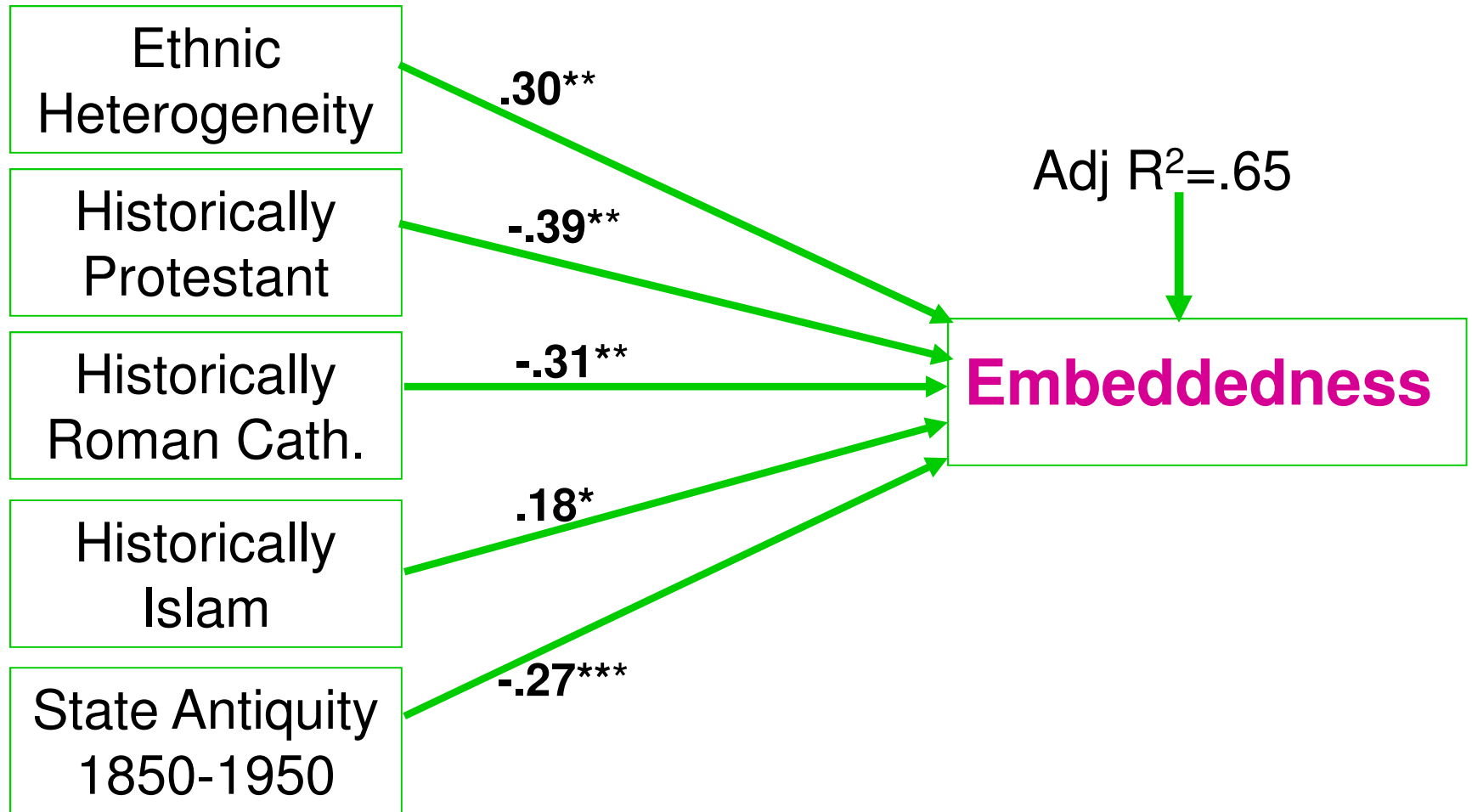 ➢ In-group greater source of meaning, protection, provision of goods & resources

Embeddedness Cause: State Antiquity

State Antiquity 1850-1950 (Putterman 2004)

➢ Score: foreign/local govt.; % area of modern country ruled

➢ Antiquity gives opportunity & time for growth of formal government & other society-wide secondary institutions

➢ Secondary institutions weaken embeddedness & promote autonomy

  ➢ reduce role of in-group as basis of communal action & protection
  ➢ enable individuals to find positions based on own skills & interests

➢ Country level of antiquity 1850-1950 is exogenous cause due to historical events not to existing culture

State Antiquity [−]⟶ *Embeddedness*

Causes of Embeddedness: Betas

Affluence vs. Exogenous Predictors

Does country affluence explain variance not explained by exogenous variables?

	Embeddedness	Egalitarianism
	N=76	N=76
% Explained by Exogenous Vars.	**65%**	**57%**
% Added by GNPpc 1980	**12%**	**3%**

Affluence explains little added cultural variance

Diffusion: Galton's Problem

➢ Did cultural diffusion within regions lead to overestimating significance of findings?

  ➢ 76 groups not independent units

  ➢ overestimate statistical significance in analyses

  ➢ sufficient countries to analyze within 2 regions: East (17) & West (16) Europe

➢ Embeddedness: No—same within large regions

➢ Egalitarianism: Perhaps, weaker within regions

Conclusions

➢ Basic culture changes slowly ⟶ seek causes in measurable historical experience of societies

➢ Link causes to cultural dimension with theory: e.g., state antiquity, wars of state formation, particular religions, ethnic heterogeneity, what else?

➢ Recognize reciprocal influence with socio-demographic factors: including as predictors obscures exogenous causes

köszönöm תודה! děkuji

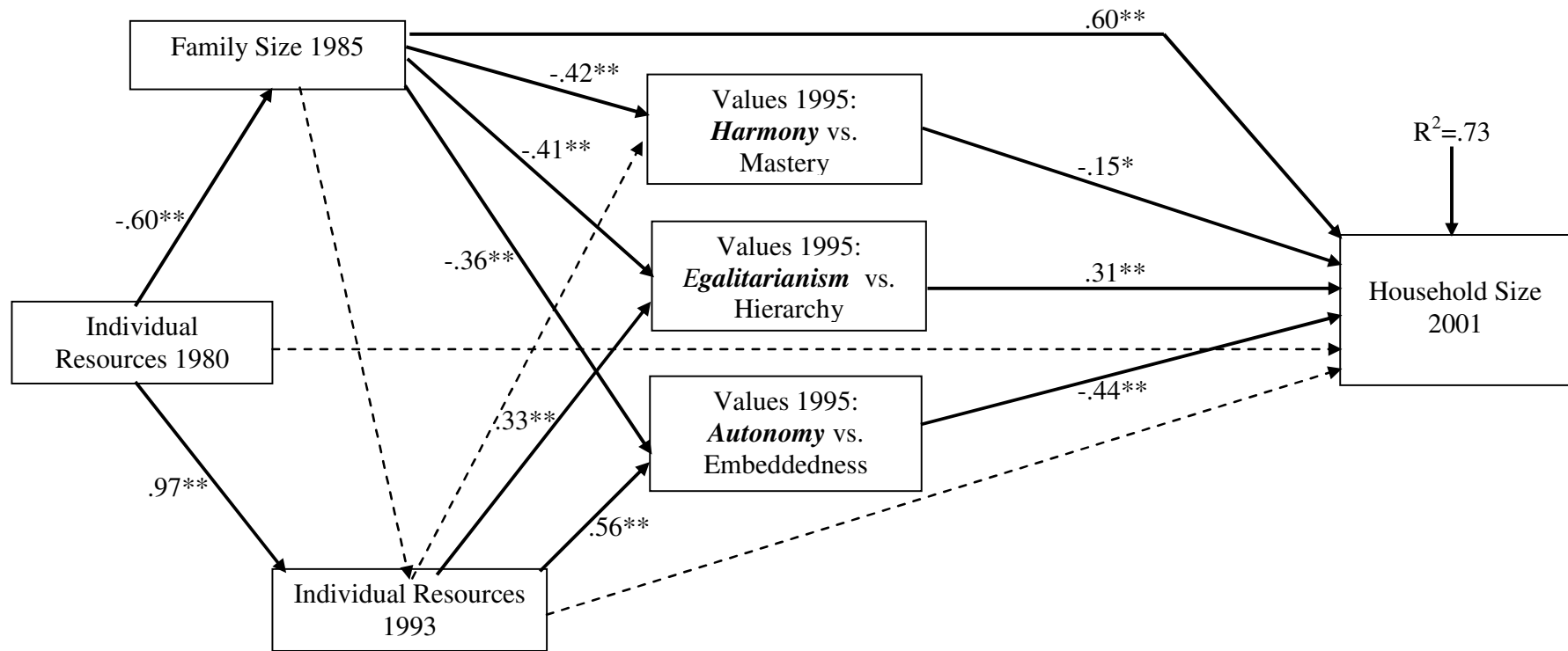mahalo 고맙습니다

thank you

merci 谢谢 danke

Ευχαριστώ شكراً!

どうもありがとう gracias

Pace of Change in Cultural Values 3

➢Inglehart & Baker (2000) 38 countries WVS

   ➢Same country average 9 yrs (during 1981-97)

   ➢Traditional/Secular-Rational:

   Spearman r_s = .91

   ➢Survival/Self-Expression:

   Spearman r_s = .94

Relative positions of nations on value dimensions change very slowly

Notes: Broken arrows indicate nonsignificant paths. **p<.01, *p<.05.

Figure 6. *Causal model predicting change in average household/family size with socioeconomic level and cultural values across 73 countries*
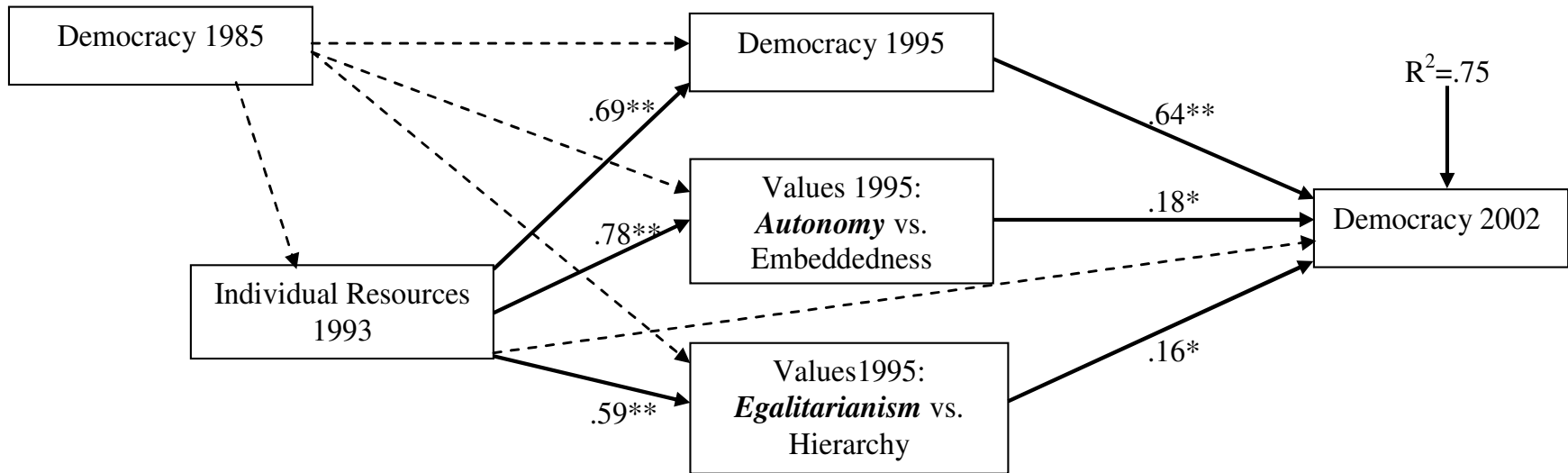
Figure 5a. *Causal model predicting change in democracy with socioeconomic level and cultural values across 73 countries*
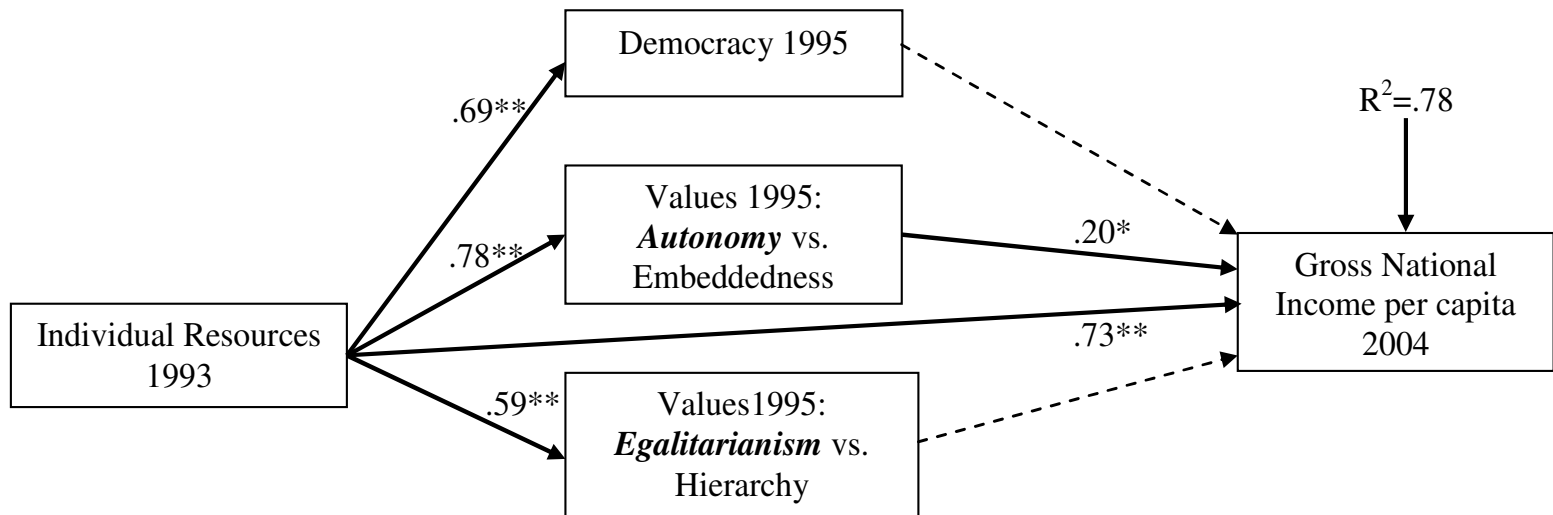Notes: Broken arrows indicate nonsignificant paths. **p<.01, *p<.05.

Figure 5b. *Causal model predicting change in socioeconomic level with democracy and cultural values across 73 countries*

Countries & Regions

- Cultural diffusion across neighboring or related countries (Galton)
    - 76 groups not independent units
    - overestimate statistical significance in analyses
    - sufficient countries to analyze within 2 regions: East (17) & West (16) Europe

- Embeddedness
    - Exogenous explain 75% variance in EE, 64% in WE (no Islam)
    - Across 76 groups, exogenous explain more variance than 7 regions as dummies (65%>60%)

    Findings not seriously influenced by diffusion

Countries & Regions 2

➢ Egalitarianism

  ➢ Correlations in expected direction within regions

  ➢ Exogenous explain minimal variance within regions [no variance on xcommunism]

  ➢ Across 76 groups, 7 regions explain more variance (62%>56%), both explain unique variance (region 11%, exogenous 6%)

  ➢ Together, 3 exogenous (war, xcom, RC) & 3 regions (WEur, Conf, SthAsian) predict significantly

Diffusion apparently influences strength of exogenous effects