



Modernization and Postmodernization

Ronald Inglehart

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Ronald Inglehart argues that economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in coherent and even, to some extent, predictable patterns. This is a controversial claim. It implies that some trajectories of socioeconomic change are more likely than others--and consequently that certain changes are foreseeable. Once a society has embarked on industrialization, for example, a whole syndrome of related changes, from mass mobilization to diminishing differences in gender roles, is likely to appear. These changes in worldviews seem to reflect changes in the economic and political environment, but they take place with a generational time lag and have considerable autonomy and momentum of their own. But industrialization is not the end of history. Advanced industrial society leads to a basic shift in values, de-emphasizing the instrumental rationality that characterized industrial society. Postmodern values then bring new societal changes, including democratic political institutions and the decline of state socialist regimes. To demonstrate the powerful links between belief systems and political and socioeconomic variables, this book draws on a unique database, the World Values Surveys. This database covers a broader range than ever before available for looking at the impact of mass publics on political and social life. It provides information from societies representing 70 percent of the world's population--from societies with per capita incomes as low as \$300 per year to those with per capita incomes one hundred times greater and from long-established democracies with market economies to authoritarian states.

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