4

The Backlash Against the Silent Revolution

This chapter first describes our theory and the empirically testable propositions it implies. We then present updated empirical data documenting the silent revolution in cultural values. The next part examines the drivers of these values and begins disentangling the impact of birth-cohort effects from life-cycle and period-effects. The conclusion reflects on the implications of the findings and considers the economic and social conditions most likely to stimulate an authoritarian reflex.

THE SILENT REVOLUTION THEORY

Our theory argues that a cultural silent revolution has heightened polarization over cultural issues in the electorate, provoking an authoritarian backlash among social conservatives. We hypothesize that socially liberal values are spreading through intergenerational population replacement and demographic shifts, causing traditionalists (concentrated among the less-educated and older birth cohorts) to feel threatened, perceiving that respect for their core values and social mores is rapidly eroding. These developments have cumulated over time to reach a tipping point in high-income Western societies. The once-dominant cultural majority has gradually become a minority, endorsing views and norms that were considered normal during earlier eras but are no longer widely respected by the rest of society. Once widely accepted norms such as sexual abstinence before marriage, readiness to fight for one's country, and regular church attendance, now seem quaint to a growing share of society, as do traditional views about the role of women, the subordinate status attributed to racial and ethnic minorities, and intolerance toward outsiders.

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A large body of survey research supports this argument, providing widespread evidence of changing attitudes toward sex and gender, increasing tolerance of homosexuality, abortion, and equal rights for women,[1] as well as growing secularization and the decline of religiosity in high-income societies,[2] and the spread of cosmopolitan orientations rejecting rigid national borders limiting the flow of people, ideas, and products.[3] Since about 1970, high-income Western societies have seen growing emphasis on post-materialist and socially liberal values, especially among the younger birth cohorts and the better-educated strata of society.[4] This has brought rising emphasis on environmental protection, increased acceptance of gender and racial equality, and rights for the LGBTQ community. These sweeping changes have fostered growing tolerance of diverse lifestyles, religions, and cultures; international cooperation and aid for human development; views toward criminal justice that are more liberal; support for democratic governance and civil rights and liberties.[5] Social movements motivated by these values have brought environmental protection, same sex marriage, minority rights, and gender equality to the center of the political agenda, drawing attention away from the classic economic redistribution and welfare issues.

We hypothesize that long-term structural changes in high-income post-industrial societies have been at the heart of culture shifts, particularly intergenerational population replacement, the rapid expansion of access to tertiary education, the growth of gender equality, migration flows creating societies that are more socially diverse, and processes of urbanization. In Western democracies, we argue that these structural developments have gradually eroded traditional bedrock identities that prevailed well into the twentieth century.

There is considerable evidence in the research literature identifying the factors driving the silent revolution. Previous research has established that birth cohort is one of the strongest predictors of support for post-materialist values and socially liberal policy attitudes.[6] Age-related differences in basic values and attitudes might theoretically be attributed to life-cycle effects, as people enter schooling and then the paid labor force, settle down with a partner to raise a family, and then eventually retire. They might also be interpreted as period-effects, arising from watershed events stamping an indelible mark on public opinion, like feelings of security that existed on American soil before the perceived risks of terrorism after 9/11. But they also might also reflect enduring intergenerational differences based on birth-cohort effects: socialization theory suggests that growing up under radically different circumstances

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from those that shaped earlier birth cohorts can leave an enduring mark on core values that subsequently endure throughout one's life. We argue that cultural evolution largely occurs through processes of population replacement, as younger cohorts gradually replace older ones in the adult population. The prevailing values of post-industrial societies evolved through this process, as the post-war birth cohorts, who grew up in prosperous and peaceful societies with comprehensive welfare states during the years after World War II, gradually replaced older cohorts whose formative years had been shaped by mass unemployment and deprivation during the Great Depression, and bloody conflict and destruction during World War I and World War II.

A substantial body of evidence confirms that existential security is conducive to open-mindedness, social tolerance, and trust, secularization, and acceptance of diverse lifestyles, identities, and values.[7] Since the post-war birth cohorts became old enough to be politically relevant, they have altered conventional moral norms and social attitudes in high-income post-industrial societies. The process of intergenerational population replacement in these societies has been gradually transforming Western cultures and challenging ideas that were common among the older generations. As Figure 2.2 demonstrated, the proportion of the European population who spent their pre-adult years during the Interwar era has been steadily shrinking. By 2012, the Interwar and Baby Boom generations had become a minority of the adult population in Europe – yet they remain a bare majority of voters, since they are far more likely to cast a ballot than the young. In the US as well, today Millennials surpass Baby Boomers as the largest sector of the adult *population*, though there are lagged effects in the *electorate*.[8]

Many other factors also seem to play a role in reinforcing the prevailing trajectory of cultural change, particularly the expansion of universities.[9] The college-educated in Western societies are among the strongest proponents of socially liberal and post-materialist values, partly because graduates were likely to have grown up in relatively well-off families. The chasm between the college and non-college educated has been widely observed as one of the clearest and most consistent divisions in the profile of Leave and Remain supporters in the Brexit referendum.[10] Similar patterns have been observed among Trump supporters; for example the CNN exit polls in the 2016 GOP primaries and caucuses reported that, on average, only one-quarter of college graduates voted for Trump, compared with almost half (45%) of those with high school education or less.[11] The educational revolution has transformed the composition of Western societies: one-third of the Interwar generation in Europe had only lower

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secondary education, compared with around 6 percent of Generation X and Millennials.[12] Younger college educated generations have brought socially liberal mores and lifestyles into the mainstream, moving from the era of Mad Men to the era of Modern Family.

Moreover, the role of sex and gender also seem important. Traditional patriarchal values about fixed sex roles, once the predominant view in Western societies, have gradually been displaced by norms favoring women and men's equality in the home, the economy, and politics, more fluid self-ascribed gender identities, and diverse arrangements of cohabitation, marriage and divorce, child-rearing, and families. A wealth of research in sociology, public opinion, and gender studies has documented birth-cohort-linked change in sex role attitudes, in the US and Europe.[13] These studies report that a gender gap can be observed among the more egalitarian younger generations, with women's views shifting further and faster than men's, due in part to women's experience of rising educational levels (see Figure 2.4), growing labor force participation, the ideological impact of the second-wave women's movement, and declining religiosity and marriage rates.

Finally, racial, national, and ethnic identities also predict values. Authoritarian-populist rhetoric is closely associated with rejection of the 'Other,' directed toward diverse targets – thus heightening racism, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and ethnocentrism. These issues are explored in depth in Chapter 6, where we examine the role of belonging to the ethnic majority or a minority group, and of nationality and type of faith on attitudes.

For all these reasons, we expect to find that support for socially conservative attitudes and authoritarian values is disproportionately concentrated among certain social sectors, notably the older generations, white men, rural communities, and the non-college educated. These are all shrinking segments of the population – although they remain a substantial sector of the active electorate that turns out to vote.

The tipping point hypothesis holds that traditional socially conservative values have gradually fallen out of step with the changing cultures of contemporary Western societies. This might conceivably generate a spiral of silence effect, where social conservatives retreat from the public sphere, suppressing the overt expression of politically incorrect views. But growing threats to traditional norms might also be expected to generate feelings of resentment, anger, and a sense of loss – especially for those with authoritarian predispositions that emphasize social conformity

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and intolerance of out-groups. These feelings would tend to make these groups susceptible to racist, sexist, or nativist leadership appeals.[14]

We hypothesize that long-term cultural changes have reached a 'tipping point' where members of the former cultural majority, who still adhere to traditional norms, have come to feel like strangers in their own land. People with socially conservative values have lost their cultural hegemony, activating feelings of resentment toward groups blamed for change. They can blame out-groups with lower social status, such as feminists, LGBTQ activists, immigrants, foreigners, and racial or ethnic minorities. Or cultural resentment can be directed upwards toward elites with higher social status and progressive values, such as academics and intellectuals, Hollywood movie producers, elected politicians, Wall Street executives, and journalists or media commentators. Populist leaders exploit and deepen mistrust of elites, channeling popular resentment against liberal proponents of value change ('Lock her up'), mobilizing anxieties ('radical Islamic terrorists'), identifying enemies ('Fake news'), and providing simple solutions ('Build a wall').

NEW EVIDENCE OF THE SILENT REVOLUTION IN CULTURAL VALUES

We hypothesize that distinctive shared formative experiences shape the attitudes and values of given generations.[15] Consequently, in analyzing new survey evidence for these arguments, we group US and European birth cohorts into generations. Several alternative demarcation points can be identified.[16] The periodization used in this study is based on shared experiences during key turning points in European history that seem likely to have left a mark on each cohort during their formative years of socialization. Thus, World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II are likely to have shaped the formative experiences of older birth cohorts, making their childhood and adolescence much less secure than those of younger cohorts, who spent their formative years in prosperous and peaceful post-war societies with cradle-to-grave welfare systems and expanded educational opportunities.

On this basis, this study identifies four main generational groups:

- The *Interwar* cohort that lived through two World Wars and the Great Depression (born before 1945);
- *Baby Boomers* who came of age during the growing affluence and expansion of the welfare state during the post-World War II era (1946–1964);

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- *Generation X* socialized during the counter-culture era of sexual liberalization and student protest (1965–1979); and
- *Millennials* who came of age under the era of neo-liberalism economics and globalization associated with Reagan and Thatcher (1980–1996).

These cohorts reflect major historical watersheds common across many Western societies, making them suitable for pooled analysis. There are also other major events that could be turning points in specific societies, such as the fall of dictators and subsequent periods of democratization during the 1970s in Spain and Portugal, the era of the military junta in Greece, the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification in Germany, the Thatcherite years in the UK, and the impact of 9/11 in the United States. The transition from Communist party rule during the 1990s had a decisive impact on the politics of Central and Eastern Europe, with divergent pathways of regime change in countries such as Ukraine, Slovakia, Latvia, and Bulgaria. Not every generation marches in lockstep. But the periods used in this study were chosen to reflect major shared events that impacted on a large number of post-industrial societies.

We can compare several indicators of values across generational cohorts and over time, including (i) adherence to materialist or post-materialist values; (ii) attitudes toward socially liberal and socially conservative policy issues, such as gay rights, gender equality, and immigration; (iii) ideological self-identification as liberals or conservatives; (iv) support for authoritarian or libertarian personal values, such as obedience and security; and finally (v) political trust, as an indicator of the appeal of populist rhetoric. To confirm the robustness of our key findings, we examine trends in each of these variables, drawing on a range of alternative surveys where time-series data are available in America and in Europe.

Post-Materialism

The first component of our argument, the 'silent revolution' theory of value change, holds that conditions of existential security experienced by Western societies during the post-war decades brought an intergenerational shift toward post-materialist and socially liberal values. A substantial body of survey evidence has documented the cultural transformation that occurred during the last half century.[17] Time-series and cohort analysis has demonstrated growing support for socially liberal attitudes among the younger generations and the college educated

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in Western societies.[18] The spread of post-materialist values arises primarily through long-term processes of inter-generational replacement, as the Interwar cohort fades away and Baby Boomers and the Millennials replace them in the adult population. Time-series survey data demonstrate the intergenerational value shift in six European countries, from a 4:1 preponderance of materialists over post-materialists in 1970, to a preponderance of post-materialists over materialists by the late twentieth century.[19]

More than 45 years ago, it was argued that 'a transformation may be taking place in the political culture of advanced industrial societies. This transformation seems to be altering the basic value priorities of given generations as a result of changing conditions influencing their basic socialization.'[20] In the 1990s, the Beliefs in Government project analyzed the Eurobarometer data and concluded that an overall rise in post-materialism had occurred across much of Western Europe during the prior two decades – and the shift was consonant with the effects of generational replacement.[21] Subsequent birth cohort analysis in EU member states during the longer period 1970–1999 (when measurement ended in the Eurobarometer surveys) confirmed that post-war birth cohorts continued to bring an intergenerational shift from materialist to post-materialist values, as the younger cohorts gradually replaced the older ones in the adult population.[22] This analysis also reveals clear period-effects, reflecting the current economic conditions: the intergenerational differences persist, but all cohorts shift toward views that are more materialist in times of economic downturn during the late-1970s (with the OPEC oil crisis) and again in the early 1980s (with the surge in unemployment). With subsequent economic recovery, each cohort shifts back again toward their long-term baseline, so that across this 30-year span, given cohorts remain at least as post-materialistic as they were at the start.

The time-series results from the Mannheim Eurobarometer trend file can also be compared across nine diverse European societies. As Figure 4.1 shows, the proportion of post-materialists and materialists varies across countries. Thus, Denmark displays the clearest crossover effect, where the proportion of materialists in the population has steadily dropped and post-materialists have displaced them. In several other countries, including France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the UK, the evidence suggests that materialists were the predominant group in society during the early 1970s, but this proportion dropped sharply, closing the gap between materialists and post-materialists. Some distinctive patterns can also be observed in certain societies, notably in Germany after reunification between West and East.

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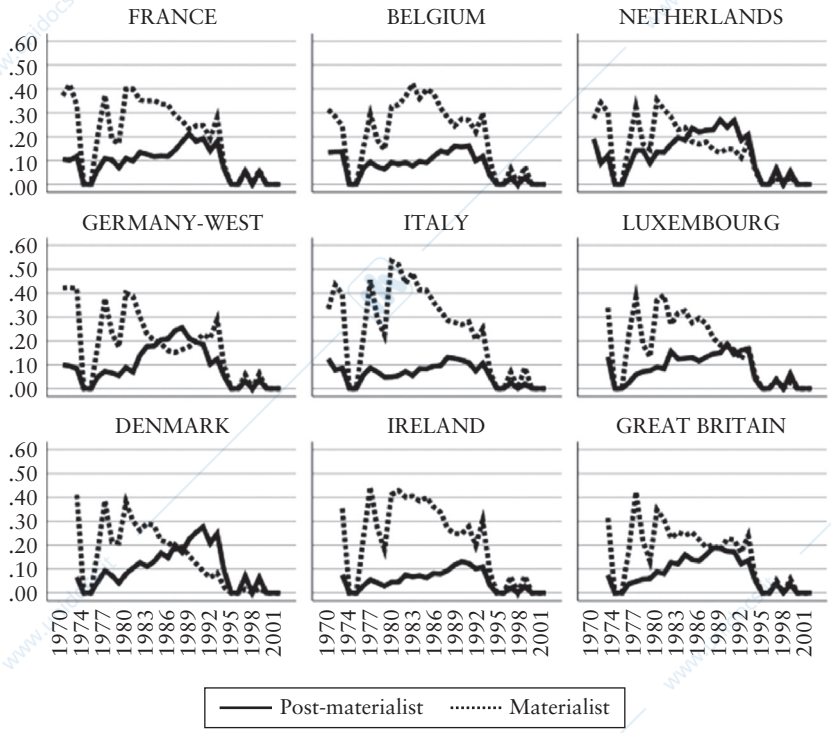

FIGURE 4.1. *The proportion of materialist and post-materialists in Europe, 1970–2002*
Note: Calculated as the proportion of materialists and post-materialists in nine EU member states (France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland, and Britain).
Source: The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trends File 1970–2002.

Socially Liberal and Conservative Attitudes Toward Policy Issues

To broaden the analysis of longitudinal trends in cultural values, we turn to other measures. Evidence from the World Values Survey demonstrates that Western societies have been getting steadily more socially liberal on many issues over several decades, especially among the younger generation and college-educated middle classes. The trajectory of value change first became evident in Western societies during the early 1970s, bringing an era of student protests.[23] This cultural revolution was expressed through shifts toward social liberalism in mainstream left-wing political parties, as well as the rise of Green parties, and the mobilization of new social movements advocating environmental protection and fighting climate change;

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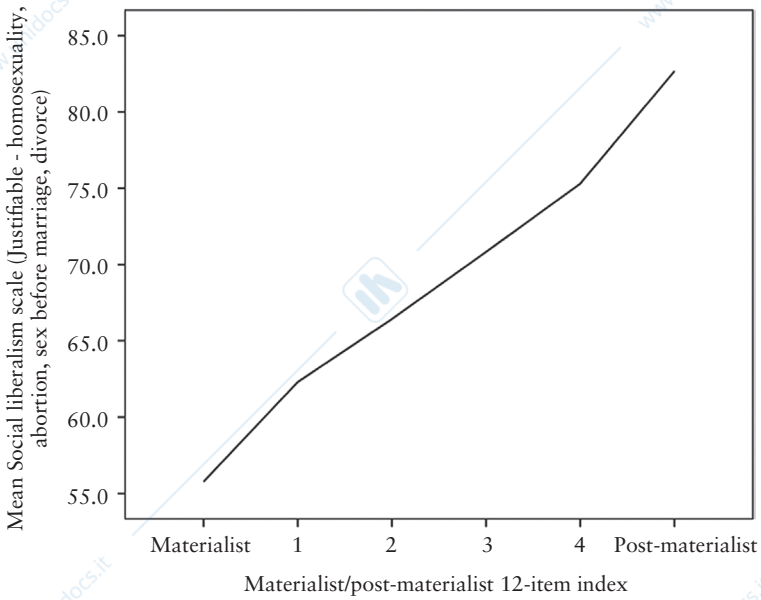

FIGURE 4.2. *Socially liberal values correlate with post-materialist values*
Note: The socially liberal value scale (100-point standardized) includes how far the following are seen as justifiable: homosexuality, abortion, sex before marriage, and divorce. The materialist/post-materialist index is based on 12 value items. Data are from the WVS-6 (2010–2014) in the following seven post-industrial societies: Australia, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, and United States.
Source: World Values Survey 2010–2014, Wave 6. N. 10,576.

LGBTQ rights to employment in the military, adoption, and same sex marriage; civil rights for minorities like the Black Lives Matters movement; feminist networks with global mobilization on behalf of gender quotas in elected office; anti-domestic violence, and anti-sexual harassment, international assistance for humanitarian disasters and economic development, and human rights around the world.[24] Drawing on data from seven post-industrial societies from the World Values Survey (6th wave), Figure 4.2 shows the strong association between socially liberal attitudes, as measured on scales monitoring tolerance of homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and pre-marital sex, with the 12-item scale of post-material values.

This growth of liberal values is confirmed when replicated elsewhere in Western societies using other survey evidence. Hence, after reviewing public opinion trends toward a range of domestic and foreign policy issues, using data from the International Social Survey Program, the NORC General

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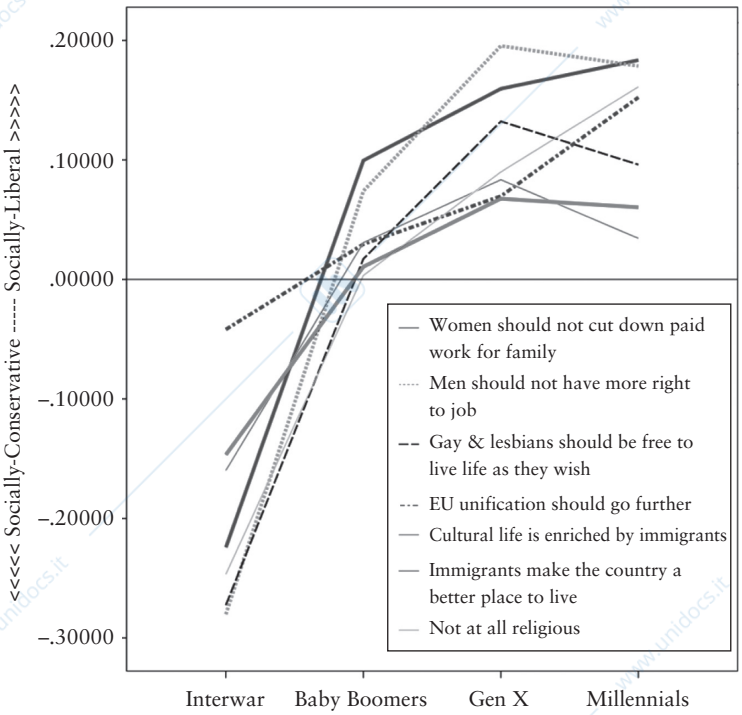

FIGURE 4.3. *The silent revolution in socially liberal values in Europe by generation*
Note: All items have been standardized around the mean (using Z-scores).
Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

Social Survey, and Gallup, Dalton concluded that one consistent trend has been the growing tolerance of social liberalism: 'Contemporary publics are becoming more tolerant of individual diversity and are more interested in protecting individual freedoms. These trends appear in attitudes toward social equality, moral issues, and the quality of life. Paralleling these changes is a decline in respect for authority.'[25] The European Social Survey illustrates these trends; Figure 4.3 displays some of the substantial shifts in social values by birth cohorts in a wide range of more than 30 European societies, with the younger birth cohorts being substantially more liberal and cosmopolitan than their parents or grandparents, whether monitored by feelings toward European Union unification, the positive impact of immigrants for multiculturalism, tolerance of gay and lesbian lifestyles, more secular identities, and egalitarian attitudes toward the role of women in the paid workforce. The tipping

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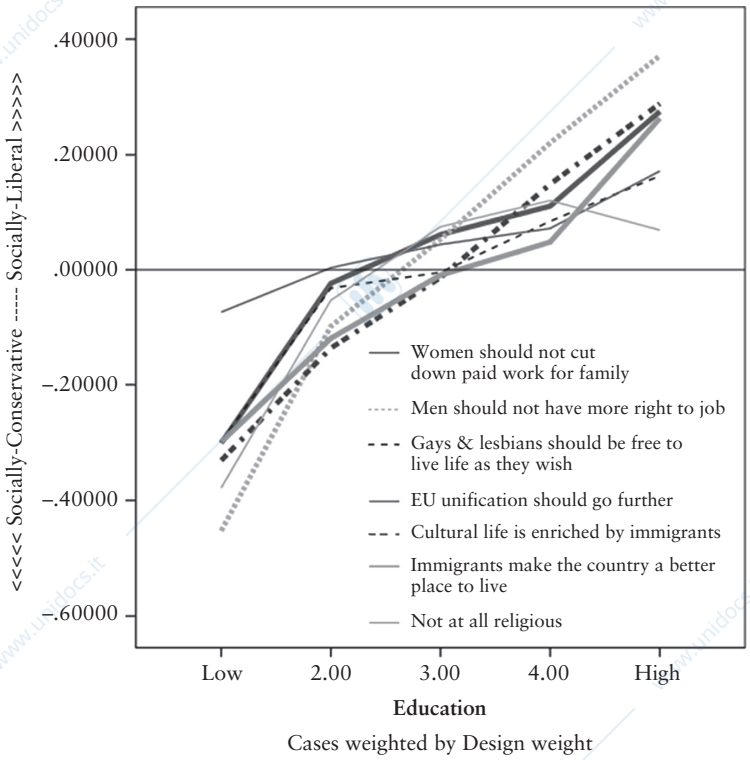

FIGURE 4.4. *The silent revolution in socially liberal values by education*
Note: All items have been standardized around the mean (using Z-scores).
Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

point in the balance of opinion occurs among the Baby Boomers, with liberalism continuing to rise among the Millennials and Generation X.

When the same issues are compared by level of educational attainment, a similar pattern can be observed (see Figure 4.4): those with college education consistently express attitudes that are more liberal than those with only secondary school education. Needless to say, age and education are closely correlated, because of the expansion of higher educational levels during recent decades.

The United States differs culturally from European societies in many respects, including the strength of religiosity and church-going practices.[26] Accordingly, data from the International Social Survey Program show that the US public is more conservative than comparable West European societies, with Americans favoring a smaller role for government on healthcare, pensions, housing, and less state intervention in

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providing jobs, reducing income differentials, and controlling prices.[27] Similarly, cross-national differences have been found in attitudes toward the family, marriage, children, and gender roles, when comparing Britain, Ireland, the US, and Germany. But the differences between the young and old were much larger than the Transatlantic differences.[28]

The trajectory of value change on social issues in America closely mirrors European trends by generation and education. Since 2001, for example, Gallup's annual Values and Beliefs polls have monitored moral approval of a wide range of issues, showing that today an overwhelming majority of Americans approve of birth control, divorce, extramarital sex, gay or lesbian relations, birth out of wedlock, and doctor-assisted suicide.[29] American public opinion has moved in a steadily more socially liberal and tolerant direction on 13 out of the 19 issues monitored by Gallup since the beginning of the twenty-first century – and none of these issues shows a significant shift toward values that are more conservative (see Table 4.1). Since 1994, the Pew Research Center has also regularly monitored American attitudes toward fundamental social values, such as the role of government in aiding the poor, views on racial discrimination, attitudes toward immigration, and opinions toward environmental protection. Pew reports that the gap between the Democrats and the Republicans on these types of issues widened during the Obama years, and reached record levels under Trump.[30] Party polarization on social values has become greater than gaps by race, religion, education, and age.

Ideological Identities

Are these patterns of values and attitudes reflected in how people see themselves ideologically?[31] It is not clear that most people have consistent ideological views in their policy attitudes across a range of dimensions and over time. In a classic article, Philip Converse argued that most Americans cast ballots based on group identities, not ideological considerations.[32] Ordinary Americans continue to display weakly constrained and inconsistent policy attitudes.[33] Nevertheless most people can and do offer a position when asked in surveys where they place themselves on left–right scales, and whether they regard themselves as Liberal or Conservative, suggesting that these labels are meaningful to many respondents. This type of information therefore provides another useful clue about the self-identified location of the electorate.

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TABLE 4.1. *The silent revolution in social values in America, 2001–2017*

	First year asked %	2017 %	Change %
MORE LIBERAL VIEWS			
Gay/lesbian relations	40	63	23
Having a baby outside of marriage (2002)	45	62	17
Sex between an unmarried man and woman	53	69	16
Divorce	59	73	14
Medical testing on animals	65	51	−14
Polygamy (2003)	7	17	10
Human embryo stem cell research (2002)	52	61	9
Doctor-assisted suicide	49	57	8
Cloning humans	7	14	7
Pornography (2011)	30	36	6
Suicide	13	18	5
Death penalty	63	58	−5
Sex between teenagers (2013)	32	36	4
NO CHANGE			
Extramarital affairs	7	9	2
Gambling (2003)	63	65	2
Birth control (2012)	89	91	2
Abortion	42	43	1
Cloning animals	31	32	1
Animal fur clothing (buying/wearing)	60	57	−3

Note: The items were first asked in the survey in 2001 unless otherwise indicated.
Source: Gallup Annual Values and Beliefs poll, 2001–May 2017.[34]

Consequently, it is significant that in 1999 Gallup found that 39 percent of Americans said that their views on social issues were conservative or very conservative, while 21 percent said that they were liberal or very liberal – a conservative preponderance of almost two to one. But by 2015, Gallup found that as many Americans described themselves as socially liberal as said they were socially conservative.[35] This does not mean that public opinion is consistently socially liberal on all policies, and there are significant variations in attitudes toward specific issues such as gun control, abortion, or civil rights. But quite strikingly, while

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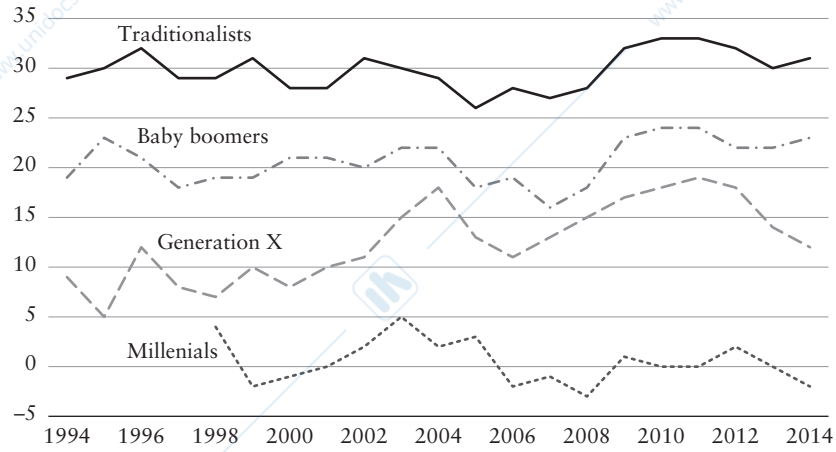

FIGURE 4.5. *Trends in conservative minus liberal self-identification, US by generation, 1994–2014*
Note: The figures are the percentage identifying as conservative minus the percentage identifying as liberal in each year. Positive scores indicate a conservative advantage. Millennials born 1980–1996; Generation X born 1965–1979; Baby boomers born 1946–1964; Traditionalists born 1900–1945.
Source: Gallup Polls 2015, http://news.gallup.com/poll/181325/baby-boomers-likely-identify-conservative.aspx.

most older Americans see themselves as ideologically conservative, this pattern reverses itself among the young. By 2015, Gallup reports that among the Interwar generation (born before 1945), 17 percent describe their political views as liberal, while almost three times as many (48 percent) see themselves as conservatives. This pattern reverses itself among younger birth cohorts; among the Millennials born after 1980, 30 percent see themselves as liberal and only 28 percent describe their views as conservative. As later chapters demonstrate, this generation gap in ideological identities is also reflected in party preferences and voting choices.

The relative conservatism and liberalism of each American generation has been consistent. The age-related gap in liberal/conservative values does not reflect life-cycle effects, where younger people become more socially conservative as they age. Instead, cultural evolution is driven by generational replacement, as older cohorts are gradually replaced by Millennials and Generation X in the US population. As Figure 4.5 demonstrates, in annual Gallup polls since the mid-1990s, Millennials (born 1980–1996) have consistently been the most liberal generation, while the Interwar

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TABLE 4.2. *The balance of conservatives and liberals in America by generation, 2015*

Generation	Birth years	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Conservative–liberal gap
Millennials	1980–1996	28	40	30	−2
Generation X	1965–1979	35	39	23	+12
Baby boomers	1946–1964	44	33	21	+23
Interwar	1900–1945	48	33	17	+31
All		38	36	24	+14

Note: Proportion responding to 'How do you usually see yourself?'
Source: Gallup Polls 2015, http://news.gallup.com/poll/181325/baby-boomers-likely-identify-conservative.aspx.

generation (born 1900–1945) have consistently been the most conservative. Through the glacial but irresistible process of population replacement, as older Americans die and younger cohorts take their place, this is gradually shifting the overall balance of American public opinion in a more liberal direction. Adherence to traditional views has not disappeared. A large minority of older Americans express conservative views on such issues as the acceptance of legal abortions, global climate change, racial and sexual equality, immigration, gun rights, the legalization of marijuana, and same sex marriage. But the direction of ideological change in American public opinion, especially the social liberalism of the Millennial generation, is consistent with similar developments observed across the Atlantic.[36]

In Europe, we compare where respondents place themselves on left–right scales that are used to monitor ideological identities, with the analysis broken down by generational cohort. The scales sum up party positions across a wide range of issues, although the specific meaning of 'Left' and 'Right,' and the policies associated with them, vary over time and across societies.[37] Previous studies using survey data have analyzed how supporters of radical right parties identify themselves ideologically, reporting that they usually locate themselves on the extreme right on 10-point left–right scales.[38]

The results in Figure 4.6 show a generation gap similar to the one observed in the US; the Pre-War and Interwar generations consistently show the most right-wing identities throughout the 35-year period, with the Baby Boomers and Generation X closely positioned, while Millennials display the least right-wing position. The cohort differences persist over the decades of Eurobarometer surveys.

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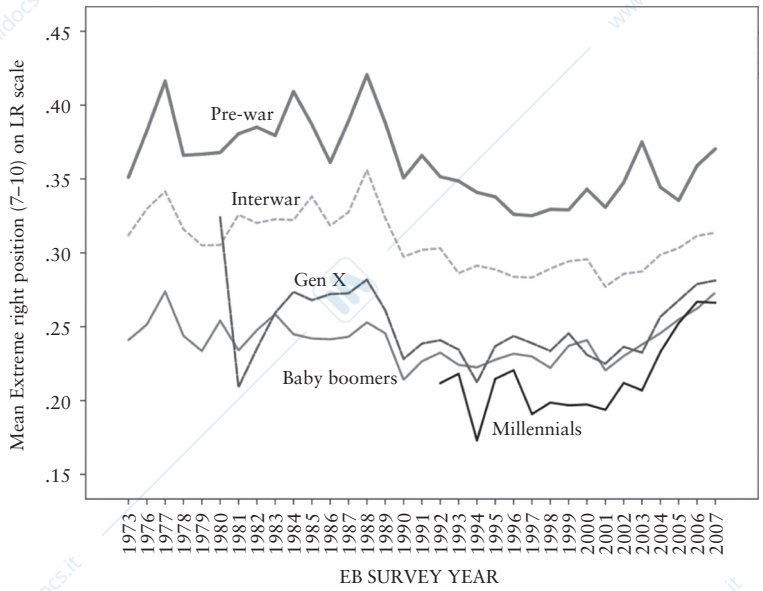

FIGURE 4.6. *Ideological left–right self-identification by generation, Europe, 1970–2007*
Note: Ideological position on the extreme right (7–10) are compared by ideological self-placement on a 10 point left–right scale.
Source: Eurobarometer 1970–2007.

Authoritarian Values

Our theory argues that social conservatives are a shrinking share of the overall population, *and* they tend to have authoritarian predispositions, making them intolerant of non-conformity with established social norms. Consequently, social liberals accepting new norms concerning gender identities, secular ethics, sex before marriage, and racial equality are not merely seen as different, but are condemned by conservatives as morally corrupt. Normative threats, such as feelings of moral decay, national decline, and social disorder, dramatically magnify the impact of authoritarianism by exacerbating racial, political, and moral intolerance, strengthening the use of stereotyping and discrimination against minorities.[39]

Analysis of the World Values Survey data covering seven high-income societies, presented in Figure 4.7, demonstrates the strong association between endorsement of authoritarian values (the Schwartz using items measuring the personal importance of security, conformity, and tradition), and a battery of items monitoring socially conservative or liberal attitudes (using 10-point scales concerning the justifiability of homosexuality,

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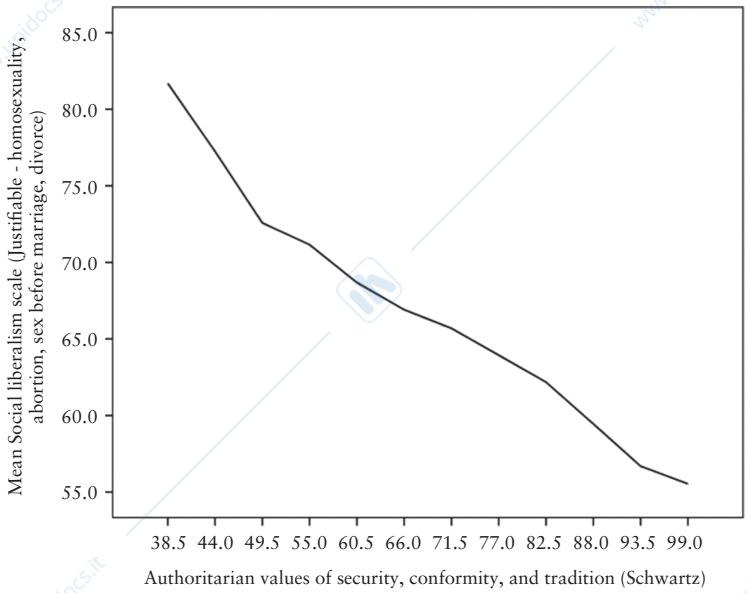

FIGURE 4.7. *Socially liberal values are negatively correlated with authoritarian values*
Note: The social liberalism 100-point standardized scale includes how far the following are seen as justifiable: homosexuality, abortion, sex before marriage, and divorce. The authoritarian values index is based on combining five items using the Schwartz scale to measure the personal values of security, conformity, and tradition. Data are from the WVS-6 (2010–2014) in the following seven societies: Australia, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, and United States.
Source: World Values Survey 2010–2014, Wave 6. N. 10576.

abortion, pre-marital sex, and divorce). As the graph shows, those with authoritarian values are by far the most socially conservative toward these moral issues, with the relationship showing a steady linear pattern.

Many other previous studies have observed the links between generations and social liberalism that we have also documented here. But to what extent have Western societies reached a tipping point in the balance between authoritarians and libertarians in the electorate? To answer this question, we draw on the pooled European Social Survey, waves 1–7. To measure authoritarianism, the study selected five items from a battery originally developed by Schwartz for cross-national comparisons of personal values, as listed in Table 4.3. The preamble asks: '*Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you.*' Respondents are presented with a wide range of statements designed to reflect diverse values. Five of the items listed in Table 4.3 were selected to monitor adherence

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TABLE 4.3. *Measuring citizen's authoritarian and libertarian values (Schwartz scales)*

Variables	Description	Authoritarian values	Libertarian values
ipbhprp	*It is important to her/him always to behave properly. She/he wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.*	.728	
impsafe	*It is important to her/him to live in secure surroundings. She/he avoids anything that might endanger her/his safety.*	.711	
ipstrgv	*It is important to her/him that the government ensures her/his safety against all threats. She/he wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.*	.704	
imptrad	*Tradition is important to her/him. She/he tries to follow the customs handed down by her/his religion or her/his family.*	.652	
ipfrule	*She/he believes that people should do what they're told. She/he thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.*	.652	
impdiff	*She/he likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She/he thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.*		.783
ipadvnt	*She/he looks for adventures and likes to take risks. She/he wants to have an exciting life.*		.710
ipcrtiv	*Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her/him. She/he likes to do things in her/his own original way.*		.700
impfree	*It is important to her/him to make her/his own decisions about what she/he does. She/he likes to be free and not depend on others.*		.601
ipudrst	*It is important to her/him to listen to people who are different from her/him. Even when she/he disagrees with them, she/he still wants to understand them.*		

Note: The Schwartz value scales in the European Social Survey (ESS) use the following question: 'Now I will briefly describe some people. Please listen to each description and tell me how much each person is or is not like you. Use this card for your answer.' Response categories to the above questions in 6-point scales range from 1 'Not very much like me' to 6 'Very much like me.' The coefficients in the table are generated by principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation and kaiser normalization. The scales have a high level of reliability.

Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

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to authoritarian values, including the core concepts of conformity (the importance of behaving properly and following traditions), security (the importance of living in secure surroundings and that of a strong government to protect against threats), and deference (the importance of following rules and doing what one's told). To measure libertarian values, five other items were selected, reflecting the values of non-conformity, independence, and personal autonomy (the importance of being free and not dependent on others). Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation confirmed the dimensionality of the selected items listed in Table 4.3 and the expected division between Authoritarian and Libertarian values. The scales displayed a high level of reliability when compared with equivalent measures.[40] The value scales were each summed from these items and then standardized around the mean (Z-scores) for ease of comparison.

It should be emphasized that these items refer to individual predispositions and personal value preferences.[41] In this regard, they are similar to the older items used to measure authoritarianism in terms of the importance of teaching children about the values of manners, obedience, and conformity. The selected items are designed to tap personal values across multiple societies. They do not seek to gauge public attitudes toward specific public policy issues, such as the rights of minorities, equal opportunities for women, or strengthening police powers, which might be influenced by support for given candidates or parties, and thus be open to the risk of endogeneity.

Figure 4.8 shows the tipping point in the proportion of the electorate endorsing authoritarian and libertarian values (as measured by the Schwartz scales) across Europe. The overall results show strikingly divergent patterns between birth cohorts, and a tipping point in these values among European publics, as predicted by our theory. Thus, across Europe, the Interwar generation displays the highest levels of authoritarian values, while support for these values steadily declines among the younger generation and Millennials. By contrast, the reverse pattern is evident for the libertarian values scale, which shows growing support as we move from older to younger birth cohorts, with the strongest endorsement among the Millennials. As a result, the trend lines cross, showing the hypothesized tipping point in the balance of rising levels of libertarian versus authoritarian values by cohorts. Thus, among the Interwar generation, in the pooled European data, authoritarian values clearly outweigh libertarian values. The reverse situation can be observed among Millennials.

The patterns also reflect the distinctive experiences of different countries; Figure 4.8 shows how the tipping point varies by birth cohort across countries in different European regions. Thus, the cross-over between

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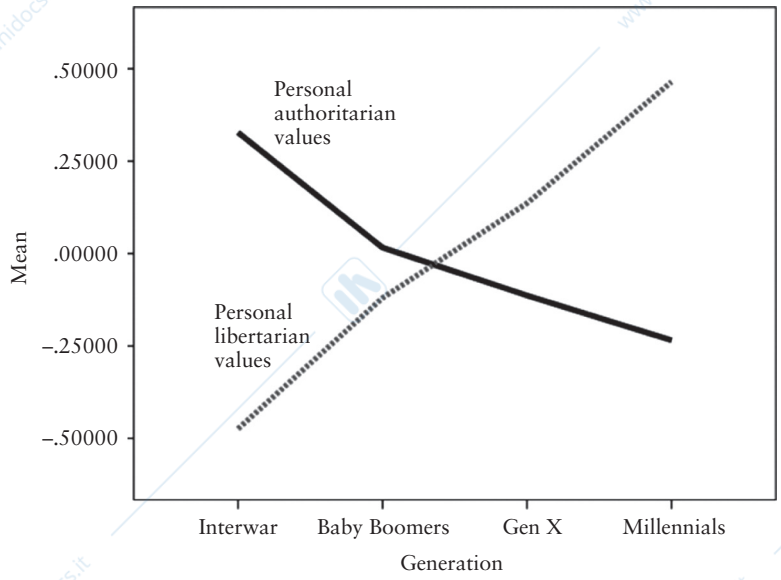

FIGURE 4.8. *The tipping point in authoritarian and libertarian values by generation, Europe*
Note: The trend lines illustrate the mean standardized (z-scores) for the Schwartz authoritarian and libertarian value scales. For their construction, see Table 4.3.
Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

authoritarian and libertarian values, reverses earliest among the Baby Boom generation in Norway, Denmark, and Finland, all affluent post-industrial societies and long-established liberal democracies, with strong egalitarian cultural traditions and comprehensive cradle-to-grave welfare states. Several Northern European societies show a similar profile, such as France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland – all affluent knowledge economies. By contrast, the tipping point is reached later (among Generation X, born in the mid-1970s), in Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Greece, and Italy. The gap barely reverses itself in post-communist Europe, such as in Ukraine, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and in Turkey (where no reversal occurs), reflecting the sluggish economic growth and the later (and unstable) democratic development of several states in this region.

ANALYZING AGE–COHORT–PERIOD EFFECTS

What are the underlying drivers of authoritarian values, socially conservative attitudes, and populist orientations? And how can we disentangle

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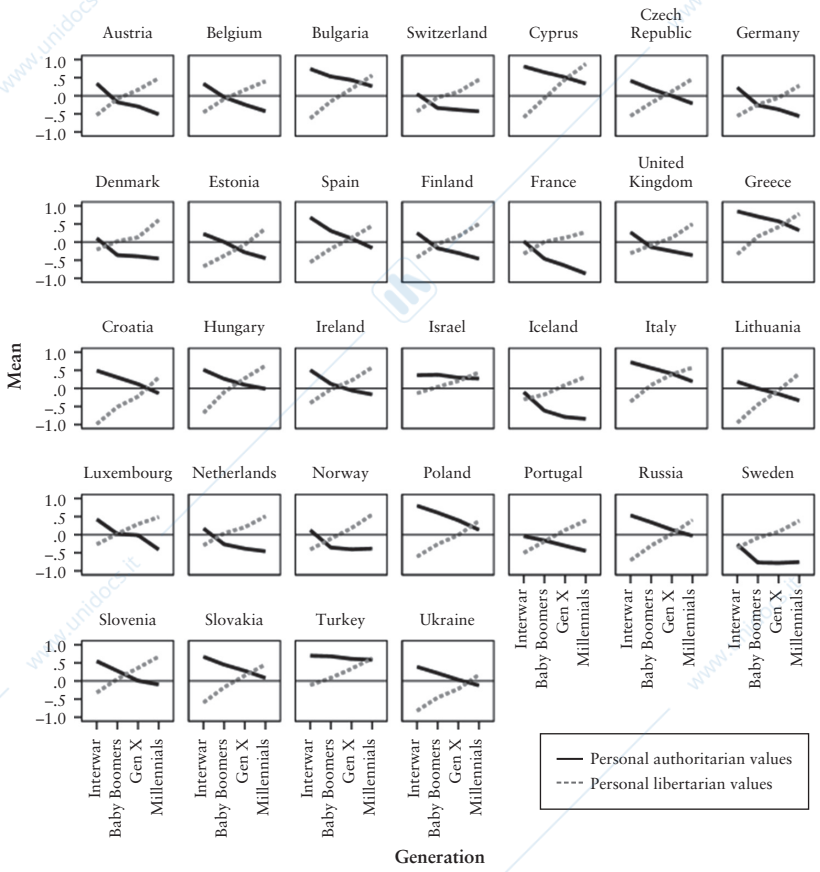

FIGURE 4.9. *The tipping point in authoritarian and libertarian values by generation and European country*
Note: The trend lines illustrate the mean standardized (z-scores) for the Schwartz authoritarian and libertarian personal value scales. For their construction, see Table 4.3.
Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

birth cohorts (generations) from the effects of life cycles (as people age) and periods (defined as events like the financial crash happening during particular years)? The classic identification problem is that each of these may possibly be influencing cultural values and two of these effects are always confounding. If socially liberal values are increasing this could be attributed to generational differences in attitudes among Interwar and Millennial cohorts, or it could be because people become more conservative as they age, or it could be because events mean that all people have changed their values over time.

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To disentangle these effects we use both panel and cross-sectional datasets. Following Tilley, age is measured indirectly using the underlying indicators of social ageing, in particular marriage and children.[42] This allows us to model the significance of the birth cohort (generation), the years of the survey, from 2002 to 2014 (period), and marriage and children as the proxy indicators of the life cycle (age).

A series of models entering these variables in blocks using OLS regression was used for the analysis. In each table, Model 1 tests the effects of generation (birth cohort). Model 2 adds controls for the year of the European Social Survey, to see whether there are any significant period-effects, which can be interpreted as associated with the occurrence of specific events, such as the 2007 financial crash or the migrant crisis. Model 3 adds controls for compositional effects arising from education, sex, social class (using the Goldthorpe scheme), religiosity, and urbanization, since older and younger generations vary systematically in these characteristics. The aim is to establish the effects of generation, independently of the fact that Millennials are better educated, more urbanized, and less religious than the Interwar generation. Finally, Model 4 also controls for life-cycle effects associated with ageing, in particular marriage and children.

Subsequent chapters will expand this framework by analyzing additional economic factors (including socio-tropic indicators such as household income, subjective feelings of financial security, and the experience of long-term unemployment, and ego-tropic indicators, such as satisfaction with the performance of the national economy), as well as the effects of ethnicity (such as race, type of religious faith, citizenship, immigration status, and nationality).

Authoritarian Values

Table 4.4 predicts support for authoritarian values, as measured by the Schwartz scale. The results in the successive models confirm that birth cohort is an important predictor of support for authoritarian values. As expected, in Model 1, the Interwar generation proved significantly more likely to endorse authoritarian values than successive generational cohorts, with Millennials being the most libertarian. Authoritarianism fades steadily in the pooled European sample as we move from older to younger birth cohorts, supporting the cultural change thesis, which emphasizes the process of generational population replacement.

Model 2 adds the year of the ESS survey to the analysis, serving as a proxy for period-effects from 2002 to 2014. In particular, two events

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TABLE 4.4. *Predicting authoritarian values*

		Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
Models		B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.
Generation	Interwar (1900–1945) (Ref)	0.00															
	Boomers (1946–1964)	−4.48	0.07	−0.15	***	−4.61	0.07	−0.15	***	−3.12	0.07	−0.10	***	−3.52	0.07	−0.12	***
	Generation X (1965–1979)	−6.38	0.07	−0.19	***	−6.51	0.07	−0.20	***	−4.46	0.07	−0.13	***	−4.90	0.08	−0.15	***
	Millennial (1980–1996)	−8.15	0.08	−0.23	***	−8.48	0.08	−0.24	***	−6.66	0.08	−0.19	***	−6.33	0.08	−0.18	***
Year	Y2002 (Ref)					0.00				0.00				0.00			
	Y2004					0.88	0.10	0.02	***	0.80	0.10	0.02	***	0.81	0.10	0.02	***
	Y2006					−0.02	0.10	0.00	N/s	0.24	0.10	0.01	***	2.11	0.13	0.05	***
	Y2008					2.33	0.10	0.06	***	2.38	0.09	0.06	***	4.23	0.12	0.11	***
	Y2010					2.52	0.10	0.07	***	2.74	0.09	0.07	***	4.59	0.12	0.12	***
	Y2012					2.52	0.10	0.07	***	2.19	0.10	0.06	***	3.96	0.13	0.10	***
	Y2014					1.45	0.10	0.03	***	1.48	0.11	0.03	***	3.25	0.13	0.08	***
	Manager									−1.93	0.10	−0.04	***	−2.08	0.10	−0.05	***
	Routine non-manual									−1.15	0.08	−0.03	***	−1.27	0.08	−0.04	***
	Petty bourgeoisie									−1.00	0.09	−0.02	***	−1.19	0.08	−0.03	***
	Skilled manual									0.43	0.10	0.01	***	0.27	0.10	0.01	***
	Manual (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
Education	Education (5-point scale low to high)									−0.62	0.02	−0.06	***	−0.63	0.02	−0.06	***

(*continued*)

TABLE 4.4 (*continued*)

		Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
Models		B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.	B	d. Error	Beta	Sig.
Sex	Men (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
	Women									−0.83	0.05	−0.03	***	−0.74	0.05	−0.03	***
Urbanization	Urbanization (1–5 scale urban to rural)									0.28	0.02	0.02	***	0.30	0.02	0.03	***
Religiosity	How religious are you? (10-pt scale)									1.11	0.01	0.23	***	1.09	0.01	0.23	***
Children	No children under 18													0.00			
	Children under 18													1.23	0.06	0.04	***
Marital status	Never married													0.00			
	Married													3.00	0.12	0.07	***
	Separated or divorced													1.71	0.15	0.02	***
	(Constant)	77.31	0.05		***	75.95	0.09		***	71.32	0.13		***	69.27	0.15		***
	Adjusted R2	0.04				0.04				0.11				0.11			

Notes: OLS regression models predicting citizen's support for authoritarian values measured by the Schwartz scale. P *** .001, ** .01, * .05, N/s = Not significant. The Interwar generation and the unskilled manual class are the excluded reference categories.

Source: The European Social Survey Cumulative File Rounds 1–7. N. 330,315 respondents in 31 European countries.

during this period can be expected to have catalyzed latent authoritarian feelings. The first was the 2007–2013 financial crisis in OECD countries, especially the effects on unemployment and austerity cuts in social welfare in Mediterranean Europe, which heightened feelings of economic insecurity. The migrant crisis is another landmark event, which brought refugees and asylum seekers flooding into Europe in leaky boats that had crossed the Mediterranean and arduous overland journeys through Southern Europe. Migrants came from diverse religions and cultures, but the majority were Muslims, often seeking to escape conflict in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, as well as from poorer countries like Eritrea in North Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East. Eurostat estimates show the number of refugees seeking asylum in the European Union rose slowly from 2006 to 2012, increasing in 2012–2014, then accelerating sharply following Angela Merkel's open door policy for Syrian refugees into Germany, announced in the summer of 2015, before stabilizing in 2016 at the higher level, then falling again in 2017.[43]

It is not possible to disentangle the impact of such events cleanly at aggregate levels. But the initial results in Model 2 show a pattern of trendless fluctuations in authoritarian values from 2002 to 2006, but a significant jump observed for 2008–2012. This suggests that the shock of these events may have reinforced these values – an issue explored in depth later in this book.

Model 3 shows that even after controlling for the social background characteristics of younger and older cohorts, the generation gap in authoritarian values remains significant and large. In other words, contrasts in libertarian and authoritarian attitudes among Interwar and Millennial generational cohorts are not attributable only to the different social characteristics of these groups.

In addition, education also proves significant and negative, confirming as expected that support for values that are more authoritarian is concentrated among the less-educated sectors of the population. This finding confirms decades of research, having been repeatedly observed ever since the earliest studies of this topic, including Gordon Allport's work on the nature of prejudice, Samuel Stouffer's study of support for communism, and Seymour Martin Lipset's thesis of working-class authoritarianism, all published in the mid-twentieth century.[44] Education is consistently associated with attitudes that are more tolerant toward out-groups, including ethnic, religious, and racial minorities.[45]

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The precise reasons *why* the more educated are more socially liberal and tolerant are difficult to disentangle, however, since the association could be attributed to both cultural and material insecurities.

On the one hand, differences in socio-economic status may be important, since access to higher education is skewed toward those coming from relatively prosperous middle-class families. Moreover, formal educational qualifications help to determine subsequent life-chances, social mobility, and occupational careers (and thus future economic status and material security). Writers, academics, journalists, artists, and scientists may also have liberal views on race, sexuality, and diversity because they are more likely to thrive under conditions of openness, meritocracy, and social change than those with lower knowledge, skills, and abilities.[46]

At the same time, however, studies seeking to determine the origins of socially liberal views have concluded that education is far more important than occupational class.[47] Moreover, the education correlation in Model 3 persists even with controls for social class. Instead of an economic thesis, several scholars suggest that the linkage mechanism connecting education with views that are more libertarian may well arise from socialization effects.[48] Hence, it has been argued that tolerance of diversity and difference is fostered through the cultural values, knowledge, and cognitive skills learned through formal schooling.[49] Multicultural educational programs may also serve to strengthen intergroup relations, with textbooks integrating awareness of diverse experiences and cultures, and citizenship or civics education.[50] Informal processes may also play a role, if the experience of attending schools and colleges promotes intergroup contact and expands interpersonal networks. Contact theory, developed in the 1950s by Gordon Allport, holds that under certain circumstances, connections between majority and minority group members can promote tolerance and acceptance, especially where groups have equal status and share common goals.[51] Similarly, Putnam has argued that personal communications and associational networks among people from diverse backgrounds, with different ideologies, and characteristics, can build 'bridging' social capital, promote social trust, and facilitate social cooperation.[52] And Russell Hardin emphasizes that knowledge builds social trust.[53] From this perspective, ignorance and dogmatic thinking are likely to be closely associated with practices of intolerance, prejudice, and stereotyping. Where people lack understanding about individuals, peoples, or places, then observable group characteristics are more likely to function as heuristic shortcuts to form blanket judgments. Politics may be seen by those with little schooling and few analytical skills in simplistic

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black-and-white terms, attracting them to demagogic populist leaders, promising easy short-term fixes and offering slogans instead of policy programs to address complex social problems ('Build a Wall').

Among the other controls for compositional effects, occupational class was strong and significant. Compared with the unskilled manual workers, which serve as the default category, middle-class groups are less likely to endorse authoritarian values, with professional and managerial groups displaying the least support. In 1959, Seymour Martin Lipset observed that the working class were usually less progressive than the middle class, where liberalism was defined in non-economic terms such as by respect for individual liberty, equality for ethnic and racial minorities, tolerance for internationalist foreign policies, and support for liberal immigration laws. As Lipset characterized this orientation, the lower strata and less educated are less sophisticated and therefore predisposed to view politics in black-and-white terms, making them more likely to support extremist movements and leaders that promise quick and easy fixes rather than viewing problems of reform in complex gradualist terms.[54] Almost six decades later, the evidence suggests that this pattern can still be observed.

As reported in previous studies, a modest gender gap can be observed, with men being slightly more likely to endorse authoritarian values than women; the exact reasons for the gender gap are difficult to establish.[55] One factor could be that men may generally feel a stronger sense of cultural grievances from the impact of feminism, their loss of predominant bread-winner status, and changing attitudes toward gender equality in the home, workforce, and public sphere. These developments may be perceived by older generations as violating traditional social norms about the roles of women and men which prevailed during earlier decades, threatening patriarchal beliefs about status and power.

Urbanization was also negatively related, with support for authoritarian values strongest in rural and non-metropolitan areas, rather than in urban areas that have multicultural populations – an issue explored in more depth in Chapter 6.

The strength of religiosity, closely linked with conformity toward a wide range of traditional values, is also positively and strongly associated with authoritarian values. Religious attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are often closely linked with social conservatism, as well as being far more pervasive among the older generations in Europe.[56]

In short, authoritarian values are generally strongest among the working class, men, the less-educated, residents living in rural areas, and among the most religious.[57] Nevertheless, even with these controls, the

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impact of generation on authoritarian values remains significant and is the second strongest predictor (after religion) in model 3.

Finally, Model 4 adds controls for marriage and children as proxy variables for life-cycle effects. Both factors are significant but their effects are weaker than those observed for birth cohorts.[58] Authoritarian values may be strengthened by life-cycle effects as people age, and seem to have been affected by period-effects linked with the 2007 financial crisis – although further scrutiny is given in the next chapter to examine this interpretation. But the largest differences observed in these values are between older and younger generational cohorts. Controls for all these variables do not weaken the significant generational gaps already observed in Europe and the United States, revealing large differences between the authoritarian cultural beliefs of the Interwar cohorts from subsequent generations, especially the Millennials, who widely reject these values.

Socially Liberal Attitudes

Are these results found only in the specific items we have used to gauge cultural values? As an additional robustness test, Table 4.5 uses a similar design to predict endorsement of social liberalism or conservatism. This is measured in a composite scale constructed from the items listed in Figure 4.5 concerning approval of women's role in the paid labor force, men's right to a job, homosexual freedoms, EU unification, religiosity, and immigration.

The results of successive models in Table 4.5, predicting socially liberal attitudes, display a similar profile to that already observed, confirming the importance of birth cohorts, as well as the role of education, social class, religiosity, and urbanization. This is hardly surprising given the close correlation between socially conservative attitudes and adherence to personal authoritarian values that was documented earlier (see Figure 4.8). Birth cohort is important, with the Millennial birth cohorts being much more socially liberal than the Interwar generation. The role of education is also strong and significant, as observed previously in Figure 4.5, confirming the link between formal schooling and liberal attitudes, such as tolerance toward gay rights, immigrants, and gender equality. In addition, women, middle-class households, the urban, and the secular were somewhat more socially liberal. And with the proxies for life-cycle effects, those with children and those who were married were slightly more conservative, but the generation gaps persisted even with these controls. The overall factors predicting greater social liberalism or

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TABLE 4.5. *Predicting socially liberal attitudes*

		Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
Models		**B**	**SE**	**Beta**	**Sig.**	**B**	**SE**	**Beta**	**Sig.**	**B**	**SE**	**Beta**	**Sig.**	**B**	**SE**	**Beta**	**Sig.**
Generation	Interwar (1900–1945) (Ref)																
	Boomers (1946–1964)	2.73	0.10	0.10	0.00	2.65	0.10	0.09	0.00	1.61	0.10	0.06	0.00	1.70	0.10	0.06	0.00
	Generation X (1965–1979)	3.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	3.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	1.50	0.10	0.05	0.00	1.52	0.12	0.05	0.00
	Millennial (1980–1996)	3.33	0.11	0.10	0.00	3.10	0.11	0.09	0.00	2.53	0.11	0.08	0.00	2.20	0.12	0.07	0.00
Year	Y2002 (Ref)																
	Y2004					−1.76	0.09	−0.06	0.00	−1.39	0.09	−0.05	0.00	−0.30	0.13	−0.01	0.02
	Y2008					1.08	0.09	0.04	0.00	1.19	0.08	0.04	0.00	1.19	0.08	0.04	0.00
Class.	Manager									2.73	0.13	0.07	0.00	2.81	0.13	0.08	0.00
	Routine non-manual									1.67	0.09	0.06	0.00	1.74	0.09	0.06	0.00
	Petty bourgeoisie									0.53	0.12	0.01	0.00	0.63	0.13	0.02	0.00
	Skilled manual									0.27	0.13	0.01	0.04	0.34	0.13	0.01	0.01
	Manual (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
Education	Education (5-point scale low to high)									1.04	0.03	0.11	0.00	1.03	0.03	0.11	0.00
Sex	Men (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
	Women									−1.11	0.07	−0.04	0.00	−1.16	0.07	−0.04	0.00

(*continued*)

TABLE 4.5 (*continued*)

Models		Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
		B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Urbanization	Urbanization (1–5 scale rural to urban)									−0.24	0.03	−0.02	0.00	−0.25	0.03	−0.02	0.00
Religiosity	How religious are you on 10-pt scale									−0.24	0.01	−0.05	0.00	−0.23	0.01	−0.05	0.00
Children	No children under 18 (Ref)													0.00			
	Children under 18													−0.37	0.08	−0.01	0.00
Marital status	Never married (Ref)													0.00			
	Married													−1.63	0.15	−0.05	0.00
	Separated or divorced													−1.63	0.20	−0.03	0.00
	(Constant)	54.84	0.07		0.00	55.12	0.09		0.00	53.94	0.17		0.00	54.09	0.17		0.00
	Adjusted R2	0.01				0.017				0.045				0.046			

Notes: OLS regression models predicting citizen's support for the socially liberal attitudes scale. P *** .001, ** .01, * .05, N/s = Not significant. The Interwar generation and the unskilled manual class are the excluded reference categories.

Source: The European Social Survey Cumulative File Rounds 1–7. N. 330,315 respondents in 31 European countries.

conservatism largely confirm the patterns observed for authoritarian values, strengthening confidence in the results.

Populist Orientations

Finally, are similar associations found among those endorsing anti-establishment attitudes, as measured by distrust of core democratic institutions? Populist leaders combine condemnation of politicians, parliaments, and mainstream parties, with claims that the only legitimate authority derives from the people. The ESS survey lacks suitable measures of faith in the people (an issue examined further with other survey data in chapter 11) but it does measure confidence in parliaments, political parties, and politicians. Combining these items allows us to construct a 30-point populism scale, where a higher score reflects deeper institutional mistrust.

In contrast to the previous analysis, Table 4.6 demonstrates a mixed pattern of political mistrust by birth cohort: compared with the Interwar generation (as the default category), Baby Boomers and Generation X showed slightly more mistrust in political institutions but the Millennials were fairly similar to the oldest cohort. Model 1 in Figure 4.10 illustrates how authoritarian values clearly and consistently divide generational cohorts, but *populism does not show a similar pattern*. In fact, Baby Boomers and Generation X were slightly more critical of these political institutions than the Interwar and the Millennial cohorts. These results are largely consistent with those found in previous studies.[59]

These generational patterns persisted in successive models applying the standard controls. Model 2 adds the year of the survey. Instead of a steadily linear growth in political mistrust over time, the results suggest that levels were steady from 2002 to 2006, before peaking in 2010–2012, and then falling back to the levels observed at the start of the series. This suggests a potential period-effect and Chapter 5 will explore how far this can be explained by economic conditions during these years.

As Model 3 indicates, men also expressed slightly more confidence in political institutions than women, a long-standing pattern observed elsewhere.[60] Mistrust was also stronger among the working classes and less educated. By contrast, slightly more confidence in political institutions was expressed by those employed in professional and managerial occupations and by the college educated, who also have more political knowledge. Finally, to examine life-cycle effects, those with children and the married were more cynical about political institutions than those without children or the never married.

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TABLE 4.6. *Predicting populist orientations*

		Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
Models		B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig-	B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Generation	Interwar (1900–1945) (Ref)	0.00						0.00				0.00					
	Boomers (1946–1964)	1.66	0.12	0.04	***	1.54	0.12	0.03	***	2.35	0.12	0.05	***	1.85	0.12	0.04	***
	Generation X (1965–1979)	1.32	0.13	0.03	***	1.19	0.13	0.02	***	2.38	0.13	0.05	***	1.53	0.14	0.03	***
	Millennial (1980–1996)	0.26	0.13	0.01	***	−0.08	0.13	0.00	N/s	−0.29	0.14	−0.01	*	−0.29	0.14	−0.01	*
Year	Y2002 (Ref)					0.00				0.00				0.00			
	Y2004					−5.59	0.15	−0.09	***	−5.99	0.14	−0.10	***	−6.61	0.21	−0.11	***
	Y2006					−5.05	0.15	−0.08	***	−4.99	0.15	−0.08	***	−4.99	0.15	−0.08	***
	Y2008					−2.92	0.14	−0.05	***	−2.99	0.14	−0.05	***	−3.00	0.14	−0.05	***
	Y2012					−1.41	0.14	−0.02	***	−2.93	0.16	−0.05	***	−2.93	0.16	−0.05	***
	Y2014					−4.95	0.15	−0.08	***	−6.53	0.17	−0.10	***	−6.51	0.17	−0.10	***
Class	Manager									−5.07	0.17	−0.07	***	−5.08	0.17	−0.07	***
	Routine non-manual									−2.97	0.13	−0.06	***	−2.99	0.13	−0.06	***
	Petty bourgeoise									−1.00	0.15	−0.01	***	−1.09	0.15	−0.02	***
	Skilled manual									1.36	0.18	0.02	***	1.29	0.18	0.02	***
	Manual (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
Education	Education (5-point scale low to high)									−1.47	0.04	−0.09	***	−1.48	0.04	−0.09	***
Sex	Men (Ref)									0.00				0.00			
	Women									−2.05	0.09	−0.05	***	−1.91	0.09	−0.04	***

Urbanization	Urbanization (1–5 scale rural to urban)						0.80	0.04	0.04		0.82	0.04	0.05		
Religiosity	How religious are you on 10-pt scale						–0.60	0.02	–0.08	***	–0.61	0.02	–0.08	***	
Children	No children under 18 (Ref)										0.00				
	Children under 18										1.73	0.10	0.04	***	
Marital status	Never married (Ref)														
	Married										0.57	0.24	0.01	*	
	Separated or divorced										1.75	0.32	0.01	***	
	(Constant)	61.45	0.09		***	64.76	0.13		***	71.87	0.22		***	71.60	0.22		***
	Adjusted R2	0.00				0.01				0.033				0.034			

Notes: OLS regression models predicting support for the populist orientations – scale measured by mistrust in politicians, parties, and parliaments. P *** .001, ** .01, * .05, N/s = Not significant. The Interwar generation and the unskilled manual class are the reference categories.

Source: The European Social Survey Cumulative File Rounds 1–7. N. 330,315 respondents in 31 European countries.

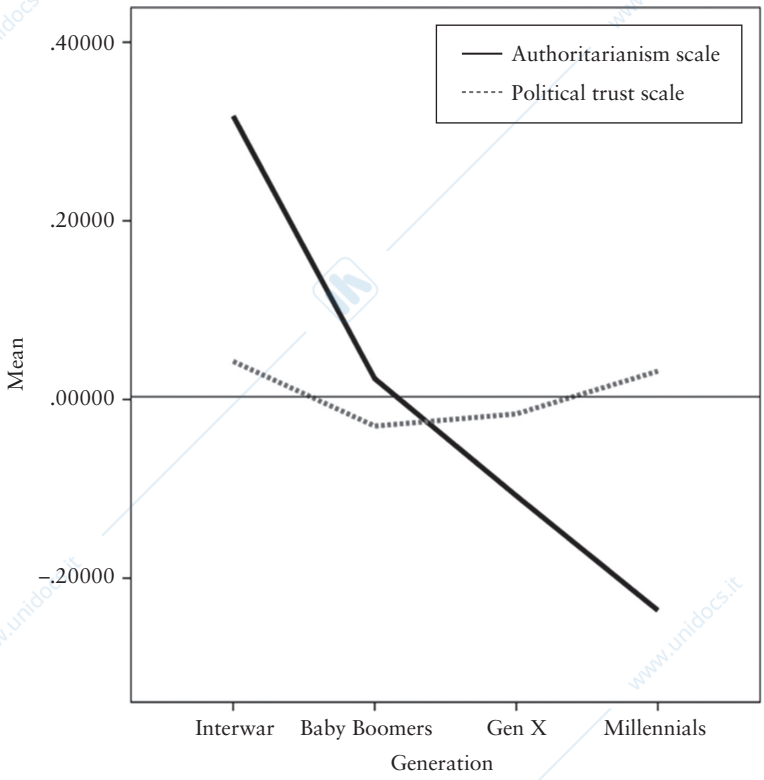

FIGURE 4.10. *Support for authoritarian values and political mistrust by generational cohort, Europe*
Note: The trend lines illustrate the mean standardized (z-scores) for the Schwartz authoritarian and the political trust scales.
Source: The European Social Survey, Cumulative File Rounds 1–7.

To examine the results by country, we compare the simple correlations between generations and authoritarian, socially liberal and populist values for each of the 32 countries in the ESS. Table 4.7 shows that *generation is significantly linked with authoritarianism in every country under comparison*, in a consistent pattern, with the older cohorts always endorsing authoritarian values more than the Millennials.

The correlations between generation and socially liberal values were observed across two dozen diverse countries, with the younger cohorts being more liberal than the older ones – but this pattern was significant and reversed in four post-communist states (Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Bulgaria) and it was insignificant in three other post-communist

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TABLE 4.7. *Correlations between values and generational cohorts*

	Authoritarian values		Social Liberalism		Populism	
Austria	−0.27	**	0.14	**	0.01	N/s
Belgium	−0.29	**	0.17	**	−0.09	**
Bulgaria	−0.17	**	−0.04	**	0.05	**
Switzerland	−0.17	**	0.20	**	−0.09	**
Cyprus	−0.23	**	0.08	**	0.20	**
Czech Republic	−0.22	**	0.00	N/s	−0.07	**
Germany	−0.24	**	0.07	**	−0.06	**
Denmark	−0.18	**	0.11	**	−0.04	**
Estonia	−0.03	**	0.02	N/s	−0.03	**
Spain	−0.31	**	0.20	**	0.06	**
Finland	−0.24	**	0.12	**	−0.09	**
France	−0.25	**	0.20	**	0.00	N/s
UK	−0.21	**	0.24	**	−0.04	**
Greece	−0.22	**	0.05	**	0.14	**
Croatia	−0.24	**	0.11	**	0.02	N/s
Hungary	−0.22	**	0.04	*	0.01	N/s
Ireland	−0.22	**	0.21	**	0.05	**
Israel	−0.05	**	0.08	**	0.01	N/s
Iceland	−0.22	**	0.09	*	−0.02	N/s
Italy	−0.21	**	0.11	*	0.02	N/s
Lithuania	−0.20	**	−0.08	**	−0.01	N/s
Luxembourg	−0.23	**	0.20	**	0.01	N/s
Netherlands	−0.21	**	0.17	**	−0.08	**
Norway	−0.16	**	0.02	N/s	−0.05	**
Poland	−0.28	**	0.10	**	−0.02	N/s
Portugal	−0.16	**	0.04	**	−0.03	**
Russia	−0.22	**	−0.15	**	0.02	*
Sweden	−0.16	**	0.16	**	−0.08	**
Slovenia	−0.26	**	0.10	**	0.03	*
Slovakia	−0.22	**	0.00	N/s	0.08	**
Turkey	−0.06	**	0.04	*	0.03	*
Ukraine	−0.17	**	−0.05	**	0.09	**

Source: The European Social Survey Cumulative File Rounds 1–7. N. 330,315 respondents in 32 European countries.

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societies (Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Estonia). This suggests that there were important contrasts in the formative experiences shaping birth cohorts in Western and Eastern Europe – above all, the effects of the transition from Soviet rule, an issue examined further in Chapter 5.

Finally, the correlations for populism, as measured by distrust of politicians, parties and parliaments, were far more variable across countries. Thus in around one-third of the countries under comparison, including several in Southern and Eastern Europe, older cohorts were *more* populist than the younger cohorts. In Scandinavia and Northern Europe, however, this situation was reversed, with the Millennials more populist than the Interwar generation. And other cases, including France, Hungary, and Poland, showed no significant generational gaps in political mistrust. Chapter 8 explores whether similar generational patterns can be observed, not just in values but also in votes for Authoritarian-Populist parties.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter suggests several major findings.

First, updating previous research, the evidence demonstrates that *the silent revolution continues to transform Western societies on a wide range of social issues,* including those involving sexuality and gender, religion and faith, race and ethnicity, and national versus cosmopolitan identities. Far from a conservative revival, or slow-down in progressive change, the survey data confirm that the long-term trajectory of cultural evolution has continued to move Western cultures in a more socially liberal direction over successive decades. It should be noted that these developments predated the impact of situation-specific effects like the banking crash of 2007, or the influx of migrants flowing into Europe following Angela Merkel's decision to open German borders in 2015, or Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 Electoral College. Subsequent chapters will examine the impact of period-effects, linked to such contingent events, in accelerating the effects of long-term culture shifts.

Secondly, we tracked the primary drivers of these culture shifts. The evidence confirms that *the silent revolution during the second half of the twentieth century was closely associated with processes of intergenerational value change*. This was also reinforced by the expansion of university education in knowledge societies that demand more skilled employees, by growing gender equality as women enter the paid workforce and political leadership, and by urbanization as younger professionals

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leave rural areas to study, work, and live in multicultural metropolitan cities. These findings are in line with many previous studies, which have also found that libertarian and authoritarian values vary substantially by birth cohort. The more libertarian values of younger citizens can be seen as primarily generational, rather than the result of life-cycle effects linked with getting married and having children, or period-effects linked with specific events like passage of same-sex marriage laws.[61] The factors predicting support for socially conservative and authoritarian values – particularly generational cohort, education, religiosity, and urbanization– are consistent with the sociology of the voting support for radical right parties documented in many previous studies.[62]

Thirdly, we argue that *the silent revolution has catalyzed a major cultural backlash*. Socially conservative and authoritarian values are strongest among the Interwar generation (1900–1945) and Baby Boomers (1946–1964), a steadily shrinking sector of the general population due to demographic turnover. Social conservatives with authoritarian orientations are likely to react to these trends with growing feelings of resentment at the erosion of respect for their core values and beliefs. This is the essence of the backlash against 'political correctness,' in which sexist language, anti-foreigner sentiments, or the expression of racist attitudes are condemned by the liberal consensus and silenced in mainstream political debate. Traditionalists believing in the importance of social conformity are likely to feel that modern social mores taken for granted by the younger generations, such as the acceptance of multicultural lifestyles, tolerance of ethnic diversity, cosmopolitan borders, and fluid gender identities, are not simply mistaken – they are morally wrong.[63] Traditionalists have reacted against cultural changes that have left them feeling like strangers in their own land – and feeling that they have lost status and respect in their own societies. Moreover this is not simply a myth or an irrational belief; traditionalists *have* lost battles in culture wars. The authoritarian reflex is likely to fuel resentment both upwards toward elites and downwards toward out-groups of lower status. This orientation makes people open to the appeals of populist leaders, where the 'fake media' are claimed to be 'enemies of the people,' so-called experts and intellectuals are denigrated as partisan hacks, mainstream parties are seen as out-of-touch with the 'real' people, and elites are regarded as deeply corrupt in their moral values. Bitterness is also likely to be directed 'downwards,' scapegoating immigrants and ethnic minorities that are seen as threatening to Western lifestyles, security, and Christian traditions.

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Fourthly, what are the political consequences? *Polarization among those endorsing socially conservative and socially liberal values in Western societies is expected to increase the salience of the cultural cleavage in party competition and the public policy agenda.* Demands for restrictions on immigration and the expression of ethnic and religious identities, such as wearing the hijab, fears of Islamic terrorism, hostility toward LGBTQ rights, and appeals to xenophobic nationalism, are now potent wedge issues. These cut across the traditional left–right axis of post-war party competition over the economy, social and foreign policy. Cultural issues generate opportunities for Authoritarian-Populist leaders to exploit public disaffection and to propose actions addressing public concerns.[64] Cultural divisions also heighten tensions among ideological factions within mainstream parties, such as Trump's hostile takeover within the Republican Party. Similar cultural divisions have split the UK Conservative Party over whether Britain should negotiate a hard or soft exit from the European Union. An extensive body of research demonstrates that public support for extremist social movements, intolerant hate groups, and radical right-wing parties is especially strong among those holding authoritarian values.[65] Values on the 'demand' side of the political marketplace, however, are not automatically translated into votes, legislative seats, ministerial office and inclusion in governing coalitions, and the 'supply-side' of this complex process is analyzed in subsequent chapters.

Finally, *the generational differences shown here are expected to help explain important variations observed in the social profile and strategic appeals of different types of populist parties.* On the one hand, libertarian populists, exemplified by Bernie Sanders, the Five Star Movement, and Podemos, seek to mobilize support among younger cohorts by criticizing corrupt mainstream parties and establishment elites, while simultaneously endorsing gay rights, environmental protection, and social justice for minorities. By contrast, Authoritarian-Populist parties typically target older generations through anti-establishment rhetoric while also defending traditional conservative values linked with family, faith, and patriotism, rejecting tolerance of diverse lifestyles, open borders, and multiculturalism. The cultural backlash is expected to lead toward support for Authoritarian-Populist leaders and parties that promise to resist the winds of change and the liberal consensus, making 'America great again.'

The theory seems to fit many cases, notably the older profile of the Leave supporters in Brexit and Trump voters in America, as documented in later chapters. But populist parties do not march in lock-step and they respond strategically to the cultural legacies of each country.

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Thus, xenophobic nativist appeals on certain dimensions coexist in some cases with greater tolerance of sexually liberal values on others. For example, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has a stridently anti-foreigner platform, regarding Islam as alien to Germany. AfD challenged Angela Merkel's decision to let in around 1.3 million undocumented migrants and refugees, mainly from the Middle East, and demanded strict border controls against EU policy. It has also used populist rhetoric, for example in the neo-Nazi phrase 'Lügenpresse' ('lying press'). Yet, since 2015, Alice Weidel, an openly lesbian woman, has been one of the co-leaders of the party, suggesting that homophobia is not inevitably linked consistently with nationalism. Similarly, in the Netherlands the founding leader of the xenophobic List Pim Fortuyn was openly gay, positioning the party as a defender of traditional Dutch socially tolerant values against the traditional culture of immigrants drawn from Muslim-majority countries. The platform of the Danish People's Party also claims to protect the cultural heritage of the Danish people, and defends freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of belief, while simultaneously rejecting multiethnic and multicultural assimilation of migrants.[66] Populist parties are not identical across countries, or over time. Nevertheless, as Chapter 7 will demonstrate, many Authoritarian-Populist parties consistently adopt socially conservative policies across a wide range of issues, campaigning against immigration and adopting anti-European Union rhetoric, as well as taking hardline conservative positions on issues such as reproductive rights, gay rights, and Christianity.

Before examining these issues, however, we need to consider the intervening impact of medium-term conditions that many expect to deepen the authoritarian reflex. Debate continues about the role of economic insecurity on values and votes, including conditions of unemployment, the impact of global trade, and the decline in jobs in factories and mills. Similarly, the growth of multicultural diversity, especially the sudden influx of refugees and immigrants and the resultant European refugee crisis, is also widely blamed for fueling support for nationalism. The next chapters go on to explore the impact of both economic downturns and the growing ethnic diversity of Western societies on authoritarian and populist values.

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