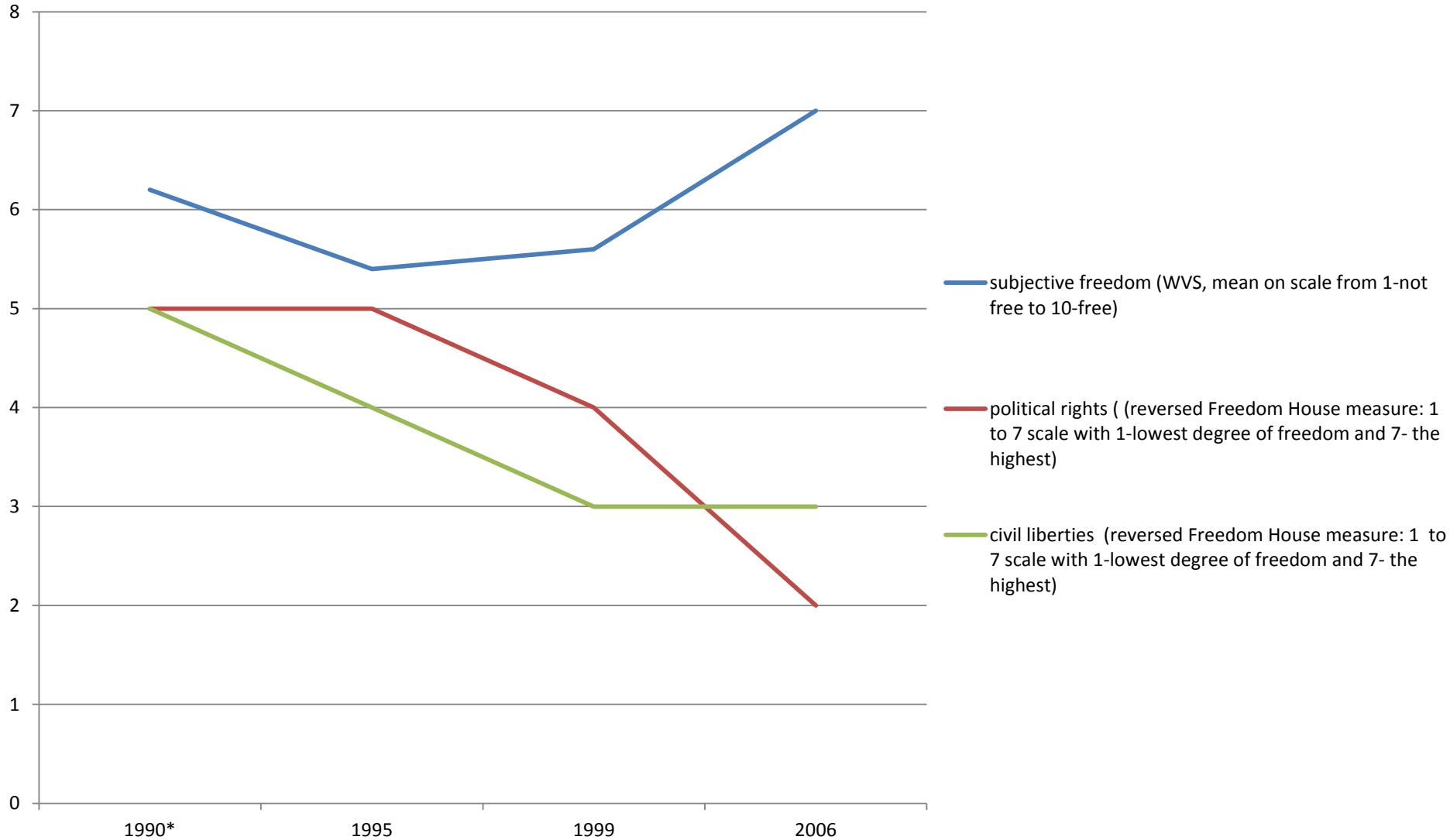


What makes people feel free: Is subjective freedom explained by the same factors in different countries?

Presented by Natalia Firsova at the **Comparative Perspectives on Social Values and Modernization** Conference, on April, 26 2011 St. Petersburg

# Freedom puzzle on Russian data



# Key research questions

## **What is it that makes people feel free?**

- Which political, civil and economic freedoms predict subjective freedom?
- Do the same objective freedoms predict subjective freedom in developed economies and newly emerging market economies?
- Do the same notions of democracy predict subjective freedom in developed economies and newly emerging market economies?

# Why is it important to study subjective freedom

- Human development theory: freedom is a component of subjective well-being

Sen, A. (2001). *Development as freedom*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Welzel, C. & R. Inglehart. 2010. "Values, Agency, and Well-Being: A Human Development Model." *Social Indicators Research* 97 (1): 43-63.

Inglehart, R., R. Foa, C. Peterson & C. Welzel. 2008. "Development, Freedom and Rising Happiness: A Global Perspective 1981-2006." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3 (4):264-85.

- Sociology of consumption: Zygmunt Bauman's theory that freedom in the contemporary society has transformed into consumer freedom of choice

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1988. *Freedom*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Consuming Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Davis, Mark. 2008. *Freedom and Consumerism: Critique of Zygmunt Bauman's Sociology*. Ashgate Publishing.

# Specific contribution

- To human development theory: problematization of the notion of freedom by cross-country comparisons
- To the sociology of consumption: testing empirically the theoretical proposition of Zygmunt Bauman that freedom in the contemporary society has transformed into freedom to consume

# Theoretical framework

- Freedom in the sense of individual *autonomy* is different from, but related to *situational freedom* (Levine, 1981: 16) in the form of political rights, civil liberties and free markets.
- Accents on what is most important for individuals could differ from society to society and over time.
- The paradox of the simultaneously rising subjective freedom in 1995-2005 Russia and the falling scores of its political and civil freedom, as measured by Freedom House, seems to support Bauman's idea.
- More generally, in newly emerging market economies, people's notion of freedom focuses on economic freedom. From the viewpoint of postmaterialism people prioritize economic freedom before political freedom becomes important for them.

Levine, Donald N. 1981. Rationality and Freedom: Weber and Beyond, *Sociological Inquiry*, 51, 1, pp. 5-25.

# Data

- European Values Study and World Values Survey (VS) 1981-2008
- Freedom House indices of political rights, civil liberties, and overall status of freedom 1972-2009
- Heritage Foundation & WSJ index of economic freedom and its components 1995-2010

Business freedom

Investment freedom

Trade freedom

Financial freedom

Fiscal freedom

Property rights

Government spending

Freedom from corruption

Monetary freedom

Labor freedom

- World Bank GDP per capita

=> the data will cover 1981-2008 or 1995-2008 periods

# The dependent variable

- the subjective sense of freedom, measured by the VS score as an answer to the ‘How much freedom of choice and control’ question on a 1-10 scale.

A173. Some people feel they have a completely free choice and control over their lives, while other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. Please use this scale where 1 means “none at all” and 10 means “a great deal” to indicate how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out.



# Hypotheses

At the country-level, average scores in the various societies' sense of freedom are regressed on measures of political freedom and economic freedom as alternative explanations.

Hypothesis1: for the group of newly emerging market economies, economic freedom (or some of its components, e.g. monetary, fiscal and trade for consumerism) will predict subjective sense of freedom

Hypothesis2: for the group of affluent economies, political freedom (or some of its components) will predict subjective sense of freedom

# Hypotheses - continued

At the individual level, people's sense of freedom is correlated with items indicating either **materialist** or **postmaterialist** priorities.

E003. If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? And which would be the next most important? First choice 1 '**Maintaining order in the nation**'; 2 '**Give people more say**'; 3 '**Fighting rising prices**'; 4 '**Protecting freedom of speech**'

E001. People sometimes talk about what aims of this country should be in the next ten years. On this card are listed some of the goals which different people would give top priority.

Would you please say which ones of these you, yourself, consider the most important? First choice 1 '**A high level of economic growth**'; 2 '**Strong defence forces**'; 3 '**People have more say about how things are done**'; 4 '**Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful**'.

Hypothesis3. In newly emerging market economies, materialist priorities should be a better predictor of people's sense of freedom than postmaterialist, as opposed to developed countries.

# Developed markets with time points of data availability

Australia	1995, 2005	Japan	1990, 1995, 2000, 2005
Austria	1990, 1999	Malta	1991, 1999
Belgium	1981, 1990, 1999	New Zealand	1998, 2004
Canada	1982, 1990, 2000, 2006	Norway	1982, 1990, 1996, 2008
Cyprus	2006	Portugal	1990, 1999
Denmark	1981, 1990, 1999	Singapore	2002
Finland	1990, 1996, 2000, 205	Slovenia	1992, 1995, 1999, 2005
France	1981, 1990, 1999, 2006	South Korea	1982, 1990, 2001, 2005
Germany	1981, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2006	Spain	1981, 1990, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2007
Greece	1999	Sweden	1982, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2006
Hong Kong	2005	Switzerland	1989, 1996, 2007
Iceland	1984, 1990, 1999	Taiwan	1994, 2006
Ireland	1990, 1999	The Netherlands	1990, 1999, 2006
Italy	1990, 1999, 2005	United Kingdom	1981, 1990, 1999, 2006

# Emerging markets with time points of data availability

Argentina	1984, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2006	Lithuania	1990, 1997, 1999
Brazil	1991, 1997, 2006	Malaysia	2006
Bulgaria	1990, 1997, 2006	Mexico	1990, 1996, 2000, 2005
Chile	1990, 1996, 2000, 2005	Morocco	2001, 2007
China	1990, 1995, 2001, 2005	Pakistan	2001
Colombia	1996, 1998, 1999, 2005	Peru	1996, 2001, 2008
Czech Republic	1990, 1991, 1998, 1999	Poland	1989, 1990, 1999, 2005
Egypt	2000, 2008	Romania	1993, 1998, 1999, 2005
Estonia	1990, 1996, 1999	Russia	1990, 1995, 1999, 2006
Hungary	1982, 1991, 1998, 1999	Slovakia	1990, 1991, 1998, 1999
India	1990, 1995, 2001, 2006	South Africa	1990, 1996, 2007
Indonesia	2001, 2006	Thailand	2007
Jordan	2001, 2007	The Philippines	1996, 2001
Latvia	1990, 1996	Turkey	1996, 2001, 2007

Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured political rights, civil liberties, and economic freedom without country fixed effects

Dependent variable: population's mean sense of freedom

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	1995-2008	1995-2008	1981-2008	1981-2008	1995-2008
Log of GDP per capita	.13(.05)*	.14(.06)*	.21(.06)***	.19(.06)***	.12(.07)*
Freedom House combined index	-	.01(.02)	-.01(.03)	-	-
Political rights	-	-	-	.10(.08)	.12(.10)
Civil liberties	-	-	-	-.15(.11)	-.14(.14)
Heritage Foundation economic freedom	.02(.01)**	.02(.01)***	-	-	.02(.01)***
Constant	4.39(.41)***	3.40(.63)***	4.99(.55)***	5.30(.60)***	4.37(.01)***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.26	.20	.21	.27
N	160	159	214	214	159

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured political rights, civil liberties, and economic freedom without country fixed effects

Dependent variable: population's mean sense of freedom

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	1995-2008	1995-2008	1981-2008	1981-2008	1995-2008
Freedom House combined index	-	-.01(.02)	-.08(.02)***	-	-
Political rights	-	-	-	.10(.09)	.13(.10)
Civil liberties	-	-	-	-.29(.10)**	-.20(.13)
Heritage Foundation economic freedom	.035(.01)***	.03(.01)***	-	-	.03(.01)***
Constant	4.66(.38)***	4.78(.50)***	7.18(.12)***	7.29(.12)***	5.10(.01)***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.24	.12	.16	.26
N	161	160	217	217	160

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured political rights, civil liberties, and economic freedom with country fixed effects

Dependent variable: population's mean sense of freedom

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	1995-2008	1995-2008	1981-2008	1981-2008	1995-2008
Log of GDP per capita	.67(.28)*	.63(.26)*	.44(10)***	.41(.09)***	.59(.25)*
Freedom House combined index	-	-.04(.10)	-.03(.06)	-	-
Political rights	-	-	-	.07(.11)	.02(.18)
Civil liberties	-	-	-	-.17(.10)	-.12(.02)
Heritage Foundation economic freedom	-.02(.02)	-.02(.02)	-	-	-.02(.02)
Constant	2.11(1.57)	2.71(1.70)	3.18(1.00)**	3.53(.87)***	3.07(1.52)*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.74	.74	.77	.77	.74
N	160	159	214	214	159

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured freedoms with country fixed effects and cross terms, on two groups of countries: developed and newly emerging market economies

Dependent variable: population's mean sense of freedom

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	1995-2008	1995-2008	1981-2008	1981-2008	1995-2008
Lgdppc	.28(.26)	.40(.23)*	.34(.09)***	.33(.08)***	.52(.19)**
neme*lgdppc	.47(.43)	.34(.39)	.18(.23)	.11(.19)	.14(.32)
Polciv	-	.12(.14)	-.14(.04)**	-	-
neme*polciv	-	-.14(.20)	.15(.07)*	-	-
Pr	-	-	-	-.36(.06)***	.72(.15)***
neme*pr	-	-	-	.50(.15)**	-.66(.26)*
Cl	-	-	-	.01(.07)	.06(.13)
neme*cl	-	-	-	-.20(.21)	-.20(.32)
Econ	-.00(.02)	-.01(.02)	-	-	-.02(.02)
neme*econ	-.01(.04)	-.01(.04)	-	-	.01(.04)
Constant	2.94(1.56)*	2.49(1.69)	3.27(.99)**	3.77(.81)***	2.34(1.59)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.71	.70	.74	.76	.70
N	115	114	162	162	114

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001



# Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured political rights, civil liberties, and economic freedoms without country fixed effects in 1995-08

	Dependent variable: population's mean sense of freedom									
Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Log of GDP per capita	.26(.07)***	.23(.06)***	.26(.06)***	.28(.07)***	.15(.07)*	.21(.07)**	.20(.06)**	.23(.07)**	.17(.09)*	.28(.09)**
Political rights	.11(.09)	.13(.10)	.11(.10)	.12(.10)	.07(.09)	.11(.10)	.12(.10)	.12(.10)	.12(.09)	.02(.10)
Civil liberties	-.16(.14)	-.19(.15)	-.17(.14)	-.20(.13)	-.11(.09)	-.17(.14)	-.17(.10)	-.18(.14)	-.16(.13)	-.07(.13)
Business freedom	-.01(.01)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.013(.006)*
Trade freedom	-	-.00(.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.00)
Fiscal freedom	-	-	.01(.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01(.00)
Government spending	-	-	-	.01(.00)***	-	-	-	-	-	.009(.004)*
Monetary freedom	-	-	-	-	.01(.00)**	-	-	-	-	.005(.003)*
Investment freedom	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.00)	-	-	-	-.00(.01)
Finance freedom	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01(.00)	-	-	.00(.00)
Property freedom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.00)	-	-.00(.00)
Freedom from corruption	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.00(.00)	.008(.004)*
Constant	5.32(.70)***	5.40(.74)***	3.90(.78)***	4.04(.80)***	4.94(.65)***	5.36(.71)***	5.19(.71)***	5.19(.67)***	5.31(.74)***	4.09(.77)***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.23	.28	.33	.29	.23	.23	.23	.23	.41
N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

# Regressions explaining sense of freedom with objectively measured freedoms; with country fixed effects and cross terms on two groups of countries: developed and newly emerging market economies in 1995-08

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Lgdppc	.44(.23)*	.11(.13)	.35(.14)*	.26(.29)	.33(.20)	.34(.15)*	.38(.15)*	.30(.16)*	.34(.17)*	.58(.28)*
neme* lgdppc	.25(.36)	.58(.32)*	.25(.33)	.35(.40)	.17(.34)	.08(.27)	.24(.29)	.26(.29)	.29(.32)	-.03(.46)
Pr	.62(.11)***	.57(.06)***	.59(.08)***	.52(.16)**	.56(.09)***	.57(.08)***	.59(.07)***	.48(.21)*	.56(.08)***	.05(.27)
neme*pr	-.66(.26)*	-.49(.23)*	-.50(.24)*	-.46(.26)*	-.49(.20)*	-.58(.22)*	-.53(.23)*	-.46(.28)*	-.47(.23)*	-.23(.31)
Cl	.05(.14)	.09(.15)	-.00(.11)	.02(.17)	.04(.18)	.02(.12)	.07(.16)	.01(.16)	.03(.15)	.17(.13)
neme*cl	-.04(.30)	-.28(.40)	-.17(.36)	-.24(.41)	-.14(.37)	-.06(.33)	-.23(.33)	-.02(.35)	-.18(.37)	-.11(.33)
Bus	-.00(.01)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.02(.01)*
neme*bus	-.02(.02)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02(.02)
Trade	-	.01(.00)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.02(.02)
neme*trade	-	-.03(.02)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.04(.03)
Fiscal	-	-	-.01(.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.02(.01)
neme*fiscal	-	-	.01(.02)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.01(.02)
Govsp	-	-	-	.00(.01)	-	-	-	-	-	.01(.01)
neme*govsp	-	-	-	.01(.02)	-	-	-	-	-	.02(.02)
Monet	-	-	-	-	.04(.02)	-	-	-	-	.05(.02)*
neme*monet	-	-	-	-	.00(.02)	-	-	-	-	-.05(.02)*
Invest	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.01)	-	-	-	-.00(.01)
neme*invest	-	-	-	-	-	-.02(.01)	-	-	-	-.02(.01)*
Finance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.00)	-	-	-.01(.00)*
neme*financ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.01)	-	-	.01(.01)
Prop	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.00(.01)	-	-.03(.01)*
neme*prop	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.02(.01)	-	-.05(.02)**
Corrupt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00(.00)	-.00(.00)
neme*corrup	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01(.01)	.01(.02)
Constant	2.54(.02)	2.83(1.51)*	2.59(1.50)*	2.53(1.96)	2.45(2.13)	4.11(1.50)**	2.50(1.60)	3.10(1.46)*	2.28(1.72)	.45(2.11)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.73	.70	.70	.70	.72	.74	.70	.71	.70	.77
N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114	114

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: \* p<.10; \*\* p<.01; \*\*\* p<.001

# Some conclusions from exploratory analysis

- A large part of variation in the subjective freedom remained unexplained. A measure of social liberalization and more sensitive measure of democratization as candidate explanatory variables?
- Monetary freedom and investment freedom seem to be the only candidates out of objectively measured economic freedoms to explain variability in subjective freedom at the country level
- A more nuanced method of analysis is worth trying. Multi-level design with individual sense of freedom as dependent variable: level one = person, level two = country

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

# Thank you!

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