

**What makes people feel free: Subjective freedom in comparative
perspective
Progress Report**

Presented by Natalia Firsova, PhD Student in Sociology at HSE
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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 materialist and post-materialist priorities predict subjective sense of freedom and how this influence is moderated by country's overall prosperity?

Why is it important to study subjective freedom?

- Human development theory: freedom is a component of subjective well-being (Sen 2011; Welzel & Inglehart 2010)
- Sociology of consumption: Zygmunt Bauman's theory that freedom in the contemporary society has transformed into consumer freedom of choice

Theoretical framework

- Freedom in the sense of individual *autonomy* is different from, but related to *situational freedom* (Levine 1981) in the form of political rights, civil liberties and free markets.
- Freedom is a universal notion, but its importance for individuals could differ from society to society and over time (Welzel forthcoming).
- In less affluent 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.

Data

- European Values Study and World Values Survey (VS) 1981-2004
- 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
 - Trade freedom
 - Fiscal freedom
 - Government spending
 - Monetary freedom
 - Investment freedom
 - Financial freedom
 - Property rights
 - Freedom from corruption
 - Labor freedom
- World Bank GDP per capita

=> the data will cover 1981-2004 or 1995-2004 periods

Progress of the project

Country-level analysis

Individual-level analysis

Crucial feedback

Use hierarchical linear modeling with GDP for cross-level interactions.

Exclude from analysis economic freedoms irrelevant to subjective freedom; use factor analysis to construct an index of economic freedoms; normalize & rescale variables.

Include into analysis social tolerance, Corruption Perception Index, Good Governance Index and GDP growth on societal level and autonomy in performing daily activities, ideological correlates, income, and financial satisfaction on individual level.

Hypothesis

With higher GDP people's sense of freedom determination is shifting from materialist priorities to post-materialist priorities.

The dependent variable

- the subjective sense of freedom operationalized 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.

Materialist and post-materialist indices construction

Formative indices construction based on **materialist** and **post-materialist** priorities questions.

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'.

Materialist index:

$$\text{Mati}=(e001=1)*1+(e001=2)*1+(e003=1)*1+(e003=3)*1+(e002=1)*0.5+(e002=2)*0.5+(e004=1)*0.5+(e004=3)*0.5$$

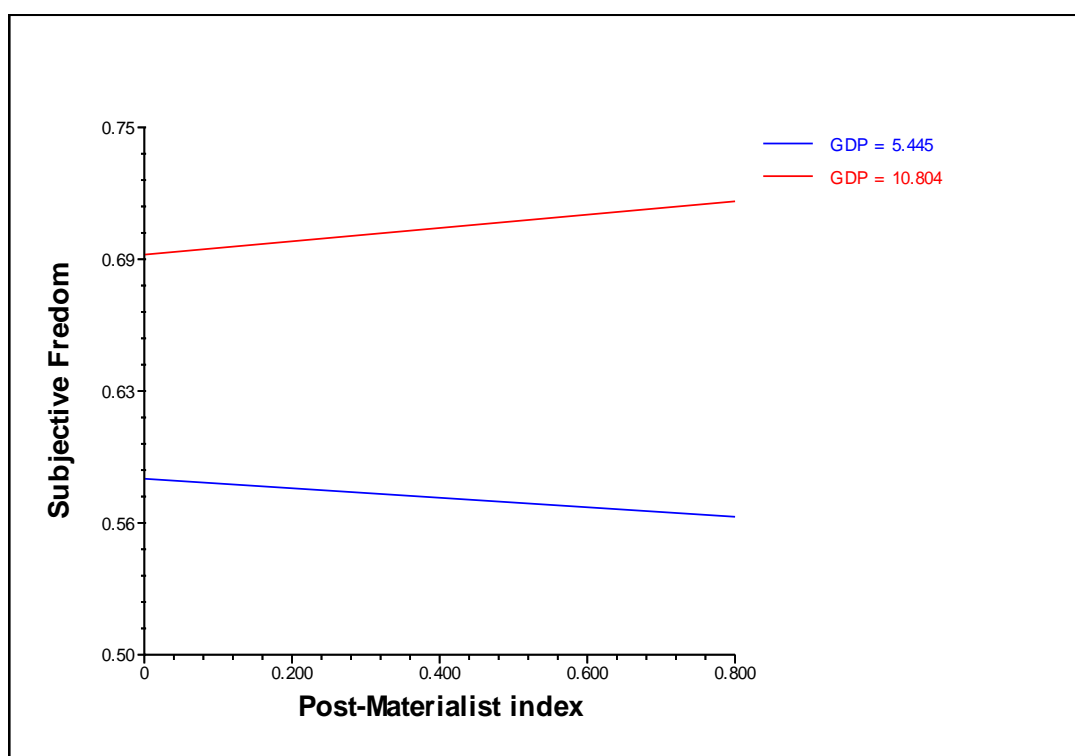
Post-materialist index:

$$\text{Postmati}=(e001=3)*1+(e001=4)*1+(e003=2)*1+(e003=4)*1+(e002=3)*0.5+(e002=4)*0.5+(e004=2)*0.5+(e004=4)*0.5$$

Multi-Level Logistic Regression: Subjective Freedom, 1999-2004 Values Survey

	Model 1 (min GDP)			Model 2 (max GDP)		
Level 1 (58,717 Respondents)	R ²	3.42 %		3.42 %		
Level 2 (64 Countries)	R ²	78.80 %		78.80 %		
	b	t		b	t	
Intercept	.547	20.918**		0.675	19.937**	
Political rights and civil liberties index***	.031	0.983		.031	0.983	
Log of GDP pc	.03xxx	-3.723**		.03xxx	-3.723**	x.xxx
Marital status (1 = Married)	.010	3.801**		.010	3.801**	
Age	-.171	-5.357**		-.171	-5.357**	
Age squared	.187	4.385**		.187	4.385**	
Higher education (1 = Higher education)	.027	5.509**		.027	5.509**	
Household income	.195	7.971**		.050	3.892**	
Log of GDP pc	-.027	-4.375**		-.027	-4.375**	
Post-Materialist index	-.024	-1.411		.031	2.325*	
Log of GDP pc	.010	2.097*		.010	2.097*	
Gender (1 = Female)	-.015	-2.893**		-.015	-2.893**	
Variance Components (Random Effects)	Variance Component	χ^2	d.f.	Variance Component	χ^2	d.f.
Level 2						
Intercept	.005	4823.6**	61	.005	4823.6**	61
Age	.013	327.54**	63	.013	327.54**	63
Age squared	-.	-.		-.	-.	
Higher education (1 = Higher education)	-.	-.		-.	-.	
Household income	.005	342.93**	62	.005	342.93**	62
Post-Material index	.001	138.99**	62	.001	138.99**	62
Gender (1 = Female)	-.	-.		-.	-.	
Level 1	0.069			0.069		

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; Restricted Maximum Likelihood; Convergence: Main-Effect Model: 3 iterations; Cross-Level-Interaction Model: 31 iterations;
the pseudo R² for the multilevel regression models is calculated according to the simplified formula of Snijders&Bosker (1999)
***as measured by Freedom House



Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Thank you for your attention!

natalia_firsova@yahoo.com
nfirsova@hse.ru