

# **Reshaping Human Motivations and Society, 1896 – 2014**

**Ronald Inglehart**

**LCSR, Higher School of Economics  
Moscow**

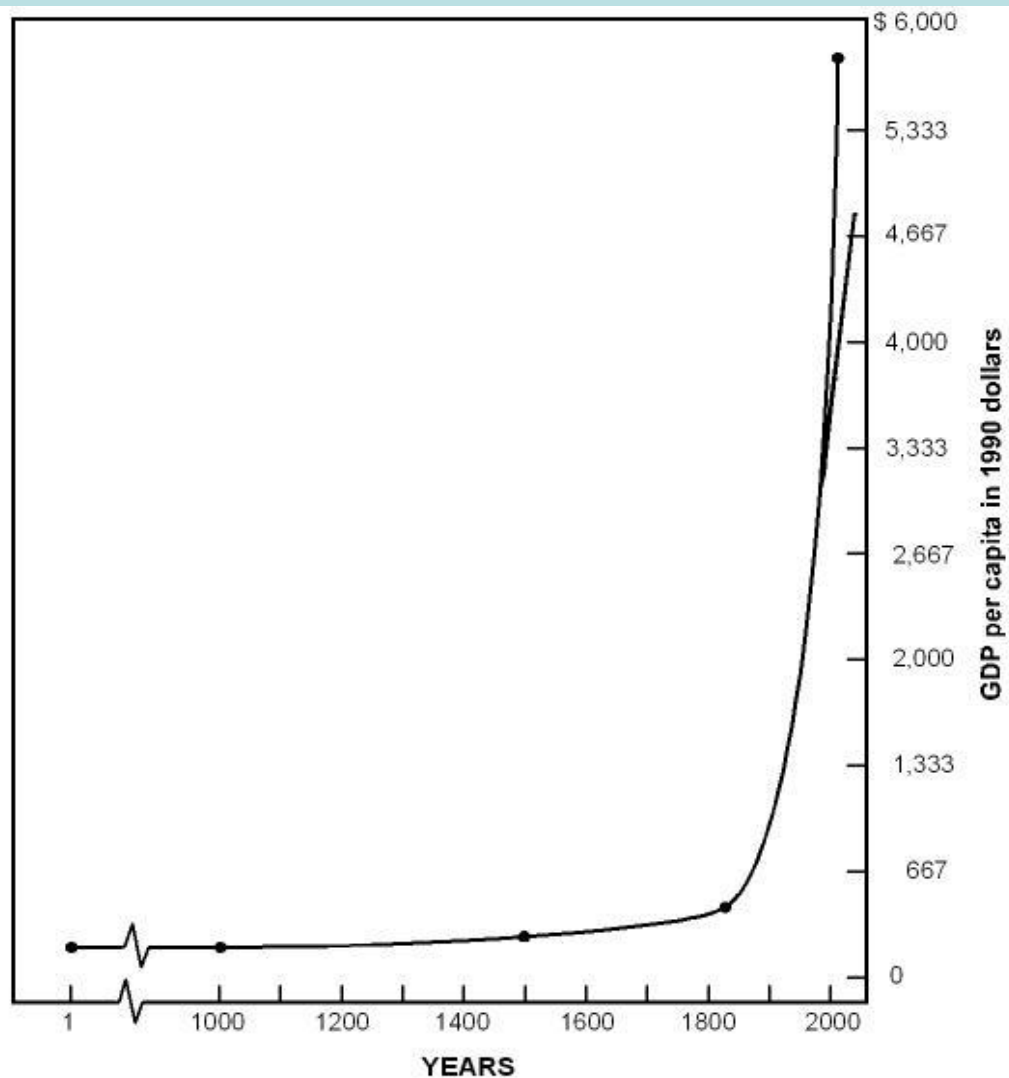
**April 18, 2016**

# Evolutionary Modernization theory

Evolutionary Modernization theory postulates that humans have evolved to give top priority to whatever needs are most crucial to survival. Throughout history, most humans have lived at the edge of starvation. Population rose to meet the food supply and was then held constant by starvation, disease, murder and war, making survival uncertain. **As long as survival is uncertain, survival needs dictate one's life strategy.**

# **A culture is a survival strategy for a people.**

In recent decades, a growing share of humanity has grown up taking survival for granted. This has opened the way for new cultural strategies changing political, economic, religious, social, sexual and child-rearing behavior.



**Global Economic and Demographic growth during the past 2,000 years.**

Throughout most of history, survival was precarious. The vast majority of species that emerged are now extinct.

The societies that survived had certain things in common:

- Strong in-group solidarity
- Solidarity against outsiders
- High human fertility rates
- Rigid adherence to traditional norms

# **CHANGING POLITICAL CLEAVAGES**

**Inequality reflects the balance of power between elites and masses.**

- Hunting and gathering societies are relatively egalitarian: word of mouth communication is sufficient and large differences in private property do not exist.
- In large agrarian societies, literate elites control communication and organization; a small landowning class dominates a vast majority of illiterate peasants/serfs/slaves  
Inequality was high.

- Early industrial society was also dominated by a small industrial-commercial elite that dominated large numbers of workers, producing very high levels of inequality
- But urbanization and mass literacy enabled the working class to mobilize for economic and political bargaining in labor unions and working-class-oriented political parties. Economic inequality declined throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

# Dominant cleavages

- Agrarian economy: landowners vs peasants
- Industrial economy: capitalists vs workers
- Service economy: decline of working class, rise of service class.
- Artificial intelligence economy: Growing economic inequality → 1% vs. 99%

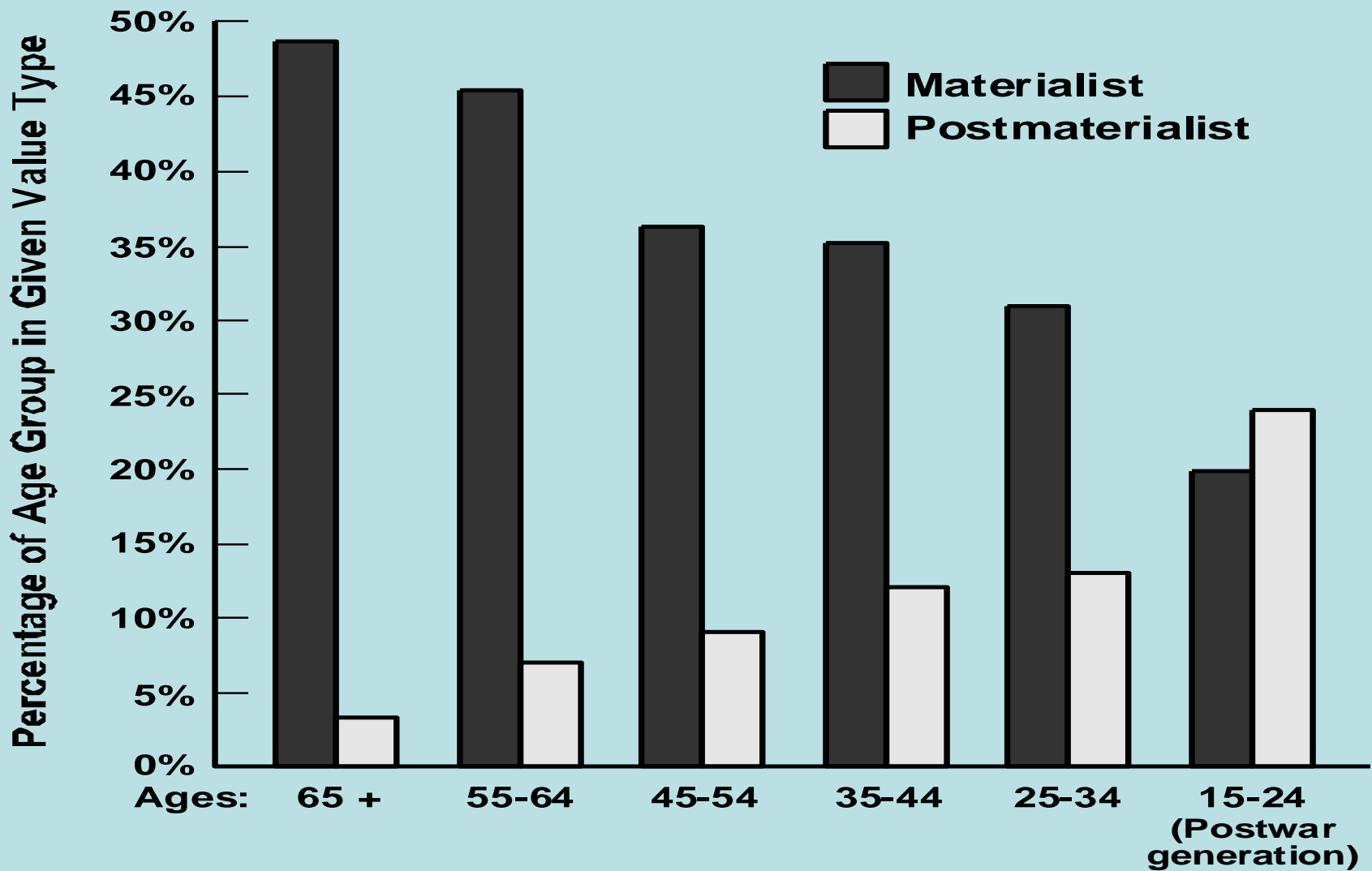
If left to market forces, humans need not apply-- but in democratic polities, growing resources can be harnessed to maximize quality of life.

- In recent decades, the world as a whole has experienced the highest rate of economic growth ever recorded.
- From the 1930s through the 1950s, expanding welfare states reinforced existential security
- And since 1945, the world has experienced the longest period— by far— in which there was no war between major powers
- A growing share of the world's population is growing up under conditions of unprecedented economic and physical security. This is transforming human motivations and behavior.

- **Economic development brings increased economic and physical security and reduced vulnerability to disease. This is conducive to increased cultural openness, which leads to less hierarchical, more democratic institutions.**
- Growing **existential security** → changing values → growing tolerance of gays, gender equality; more participatory behavior; democracy
- Changing values and cultural norms interact with rising education and information access to produce more open, tolerant, and creative societies

Basic values normally change slowly— as new generations replace older ones.

In 1970, a six-nation survey tested the thesis of intergenerational value change. It found large differences between the extent to which younger and older generations emphasized Materialist or Postmaterialist values.



**Figure 1. Value type by age group, among the Publics of Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands in 1970.**

Source: European Community survey of February, 1970; based on original 4-item Materialist/Postmaterialist values battery.  
Reprinted from Inglehart, 1990: 76.

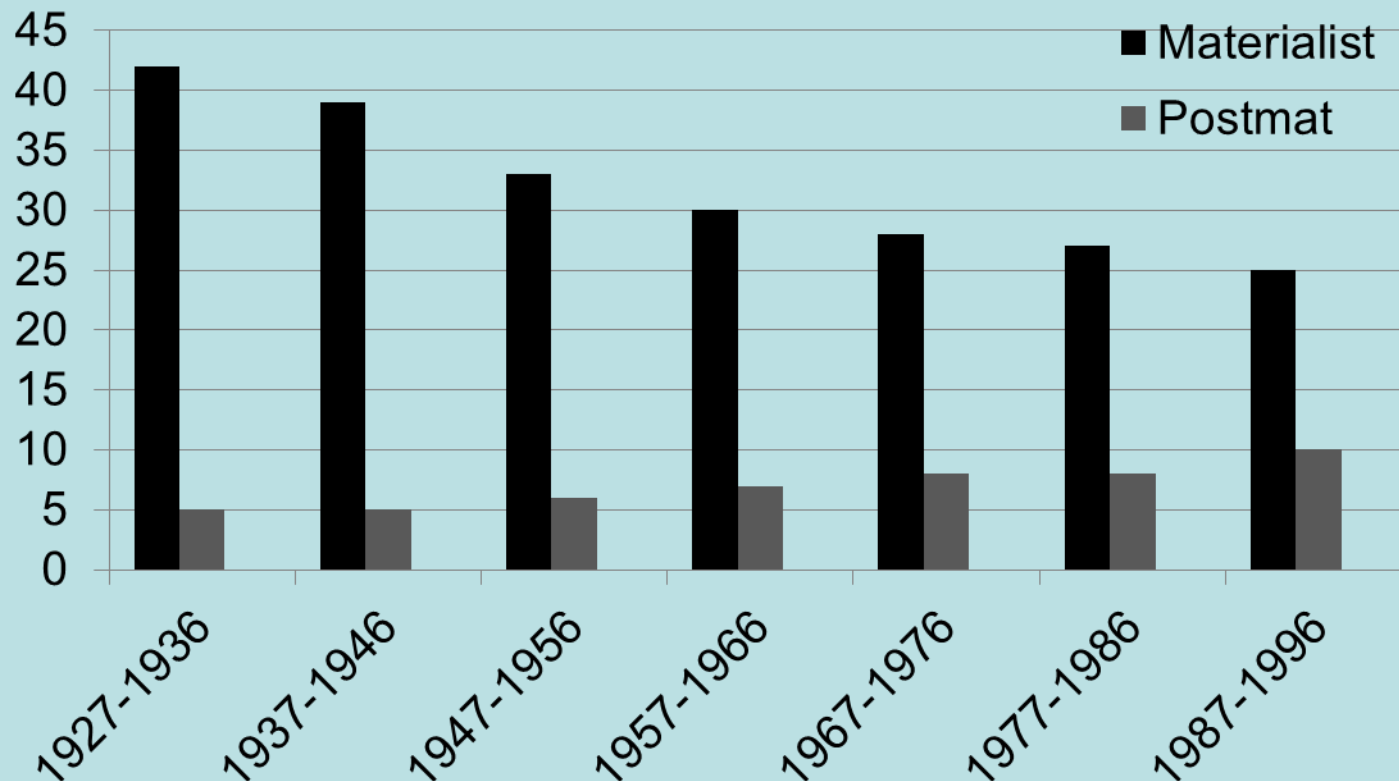
In 1970, Materialists outnumbered Postmaterialists in these 6 West European countries by 14:1 among the oldest cohort—

and by 4:1 among the population as a whole.

By 2000, Postmaterialists were more numerous than Materialists.

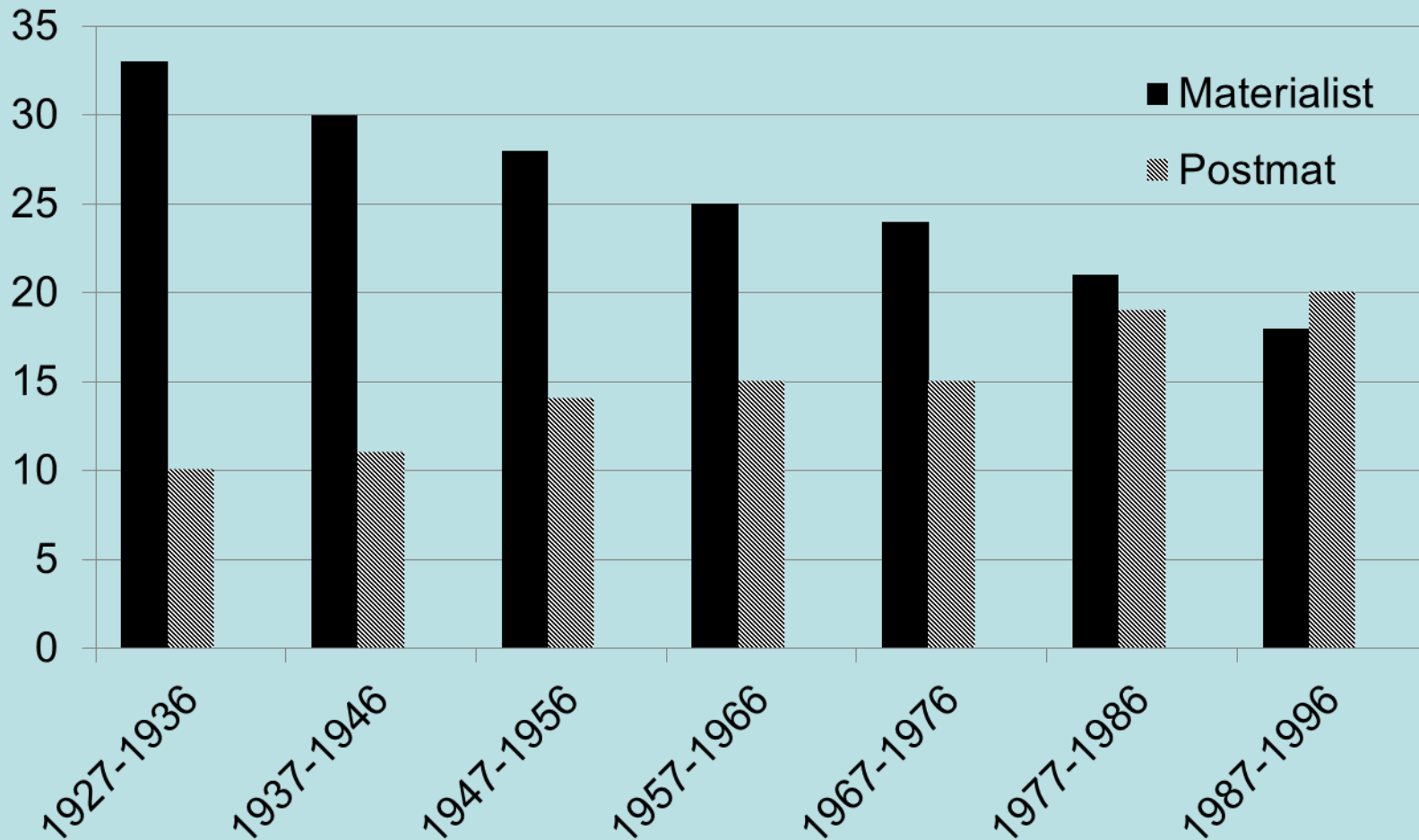
This value shift has stagnated in Western Europe in recent years. Younger cohorts are no longer substantially more Postmaterialist than the next older ones in these countries.

But the value shift has begun to reshape other parts of the world.



## **Materialist vs. Postmaterialist values by birth cohort, in Ex-communist members of the European Union**

(Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Rep., Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia)



## Materialist vs. Postmaterialist values by birth cohort in eight Latin American countries

(Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay), 2005-2012).

Materialist/Postmaterialist values are just one component of a broader dimension of cross-cultural variation—

Survival/Self-expression values

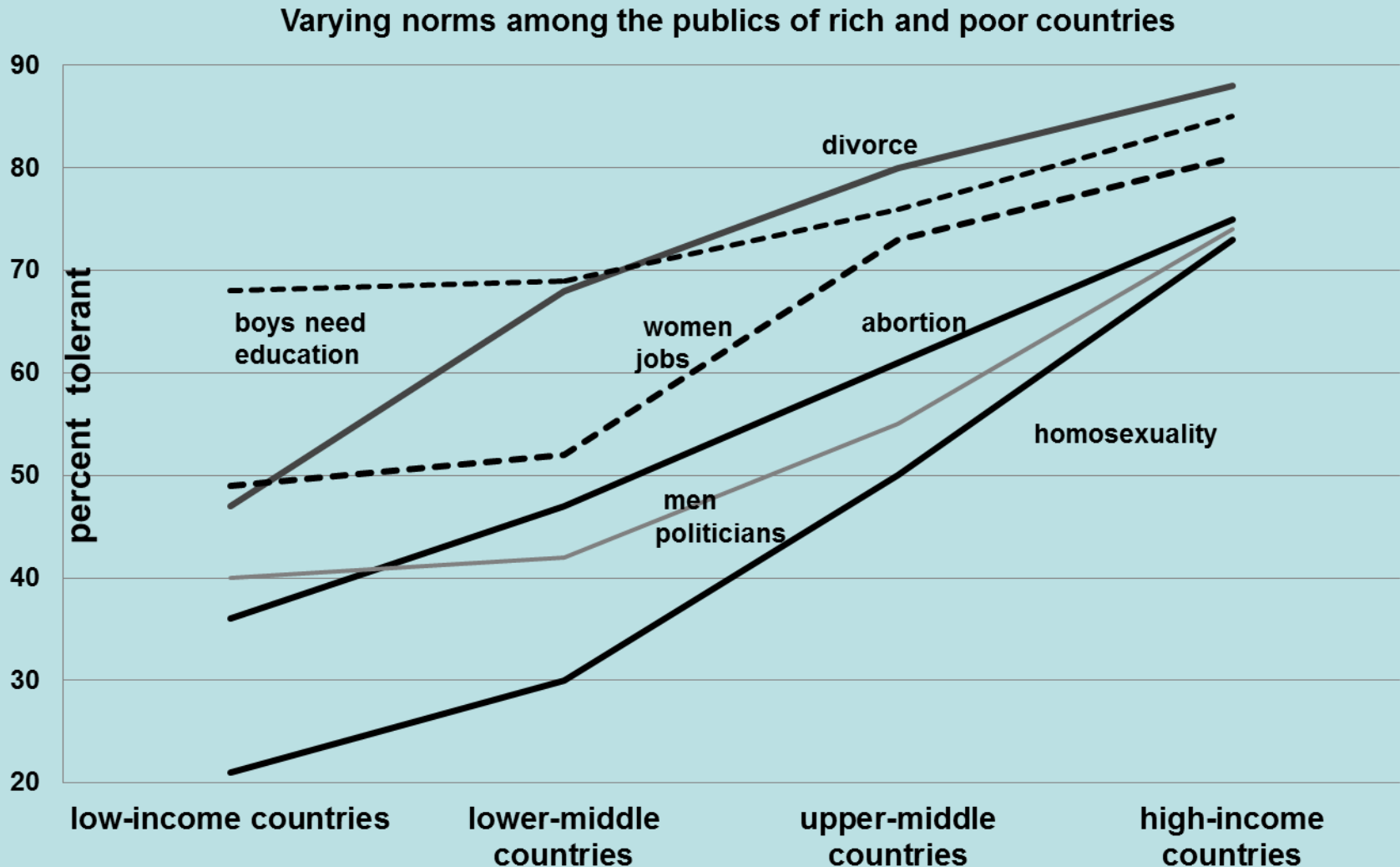
Another component of Self-expression values is a shift from Pro-fertility norms to Individual-choice norms.

All agrarian societies had high infant mortality rates and low life expectancies. The average woman had to produce 6 to 8 children to replace the population. Societies that survived encouraged women to stay home and have many children, and discouraged any sexual behavior not linked with reproduction.

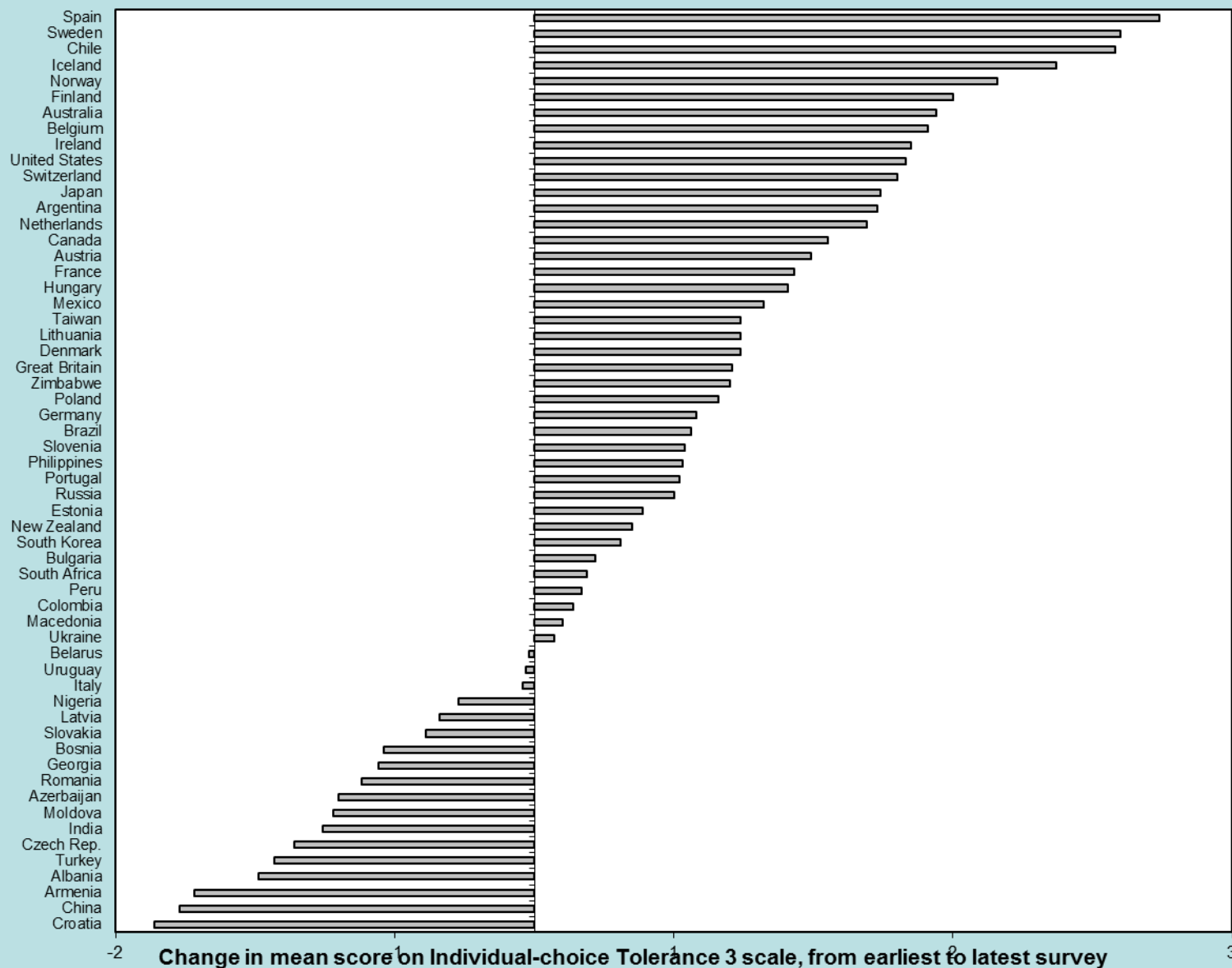
## Another major component of Self-expression values

1. The publics of societies that have attained high levels of existential security shift from Pro-fertility norms to Individual-choice norms.
2. This shift is much more advanced in high-income societies than in low-income societies
3. Because virtually all world religions endorse Pro-fertility values, this shift is retarded by religiosity.

# Economic development brings diminishing support for fertility-maximizing norms, and rising tolerance of individual-choice norms



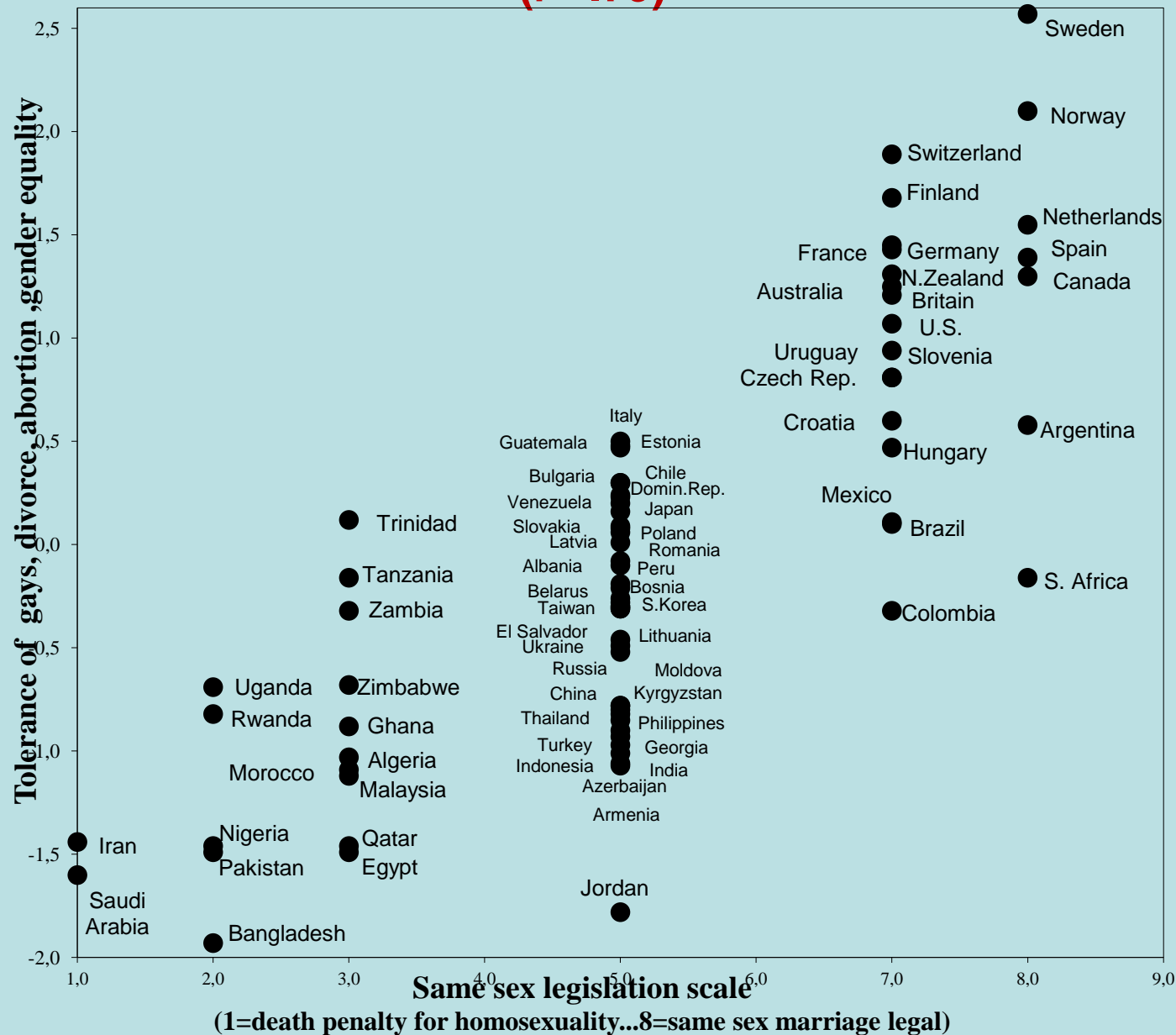
# Changes in Individual-choice Tolerance from earliest to latest available survey



- The shift from pro-fertility norms to individual-choice norms has led to rising gender equality and to growing acceptance of gays and lesbians.

# Individual-choice tolerance and laws concerning homosexuality

( $r = .79$ )



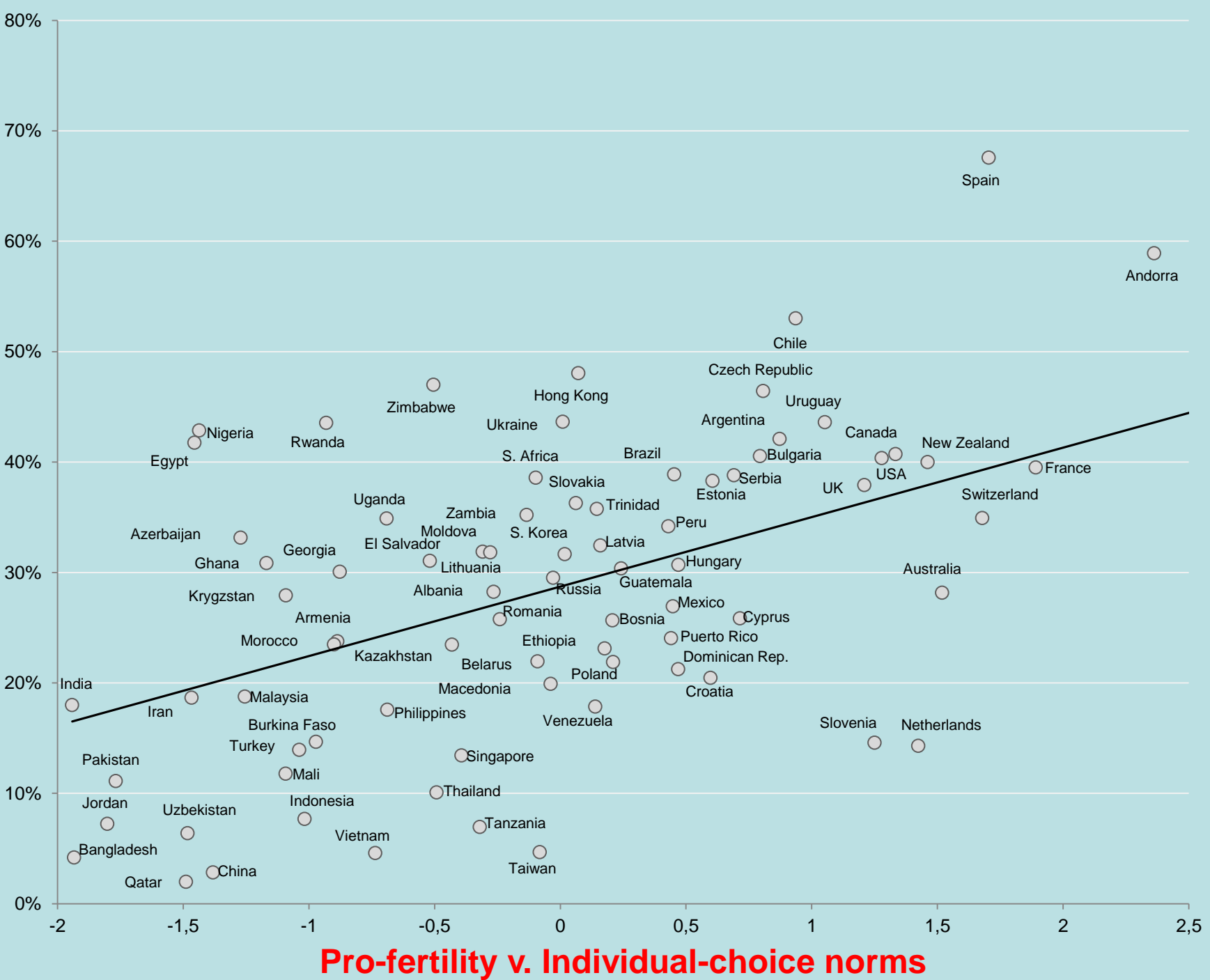
- The shift toward Individual-choice norms also contributes to declining willingness to fight for one's country— as part of a broad feminization of culture.

- Societies dominated by Pro-fertility norms are patriarchal. the rise of Individual-choice norms is linked with rising gender equality—and with declining rates of violence. In 1950, young men from 15 to 29 years of age accounted for almost half of all murders in the U.S. although they constituted only 11 percent of the population.

- Societies dominated by Pro-fertility norms allow sex only within marriage, imposing sexual repression on unmarried young men.

Throughout history, societies have encouraged young men to demonstrate their fitness through heroic acts of violence, motivating them to risk their lives in war. The ideal leader is the Alpha Male who demands unquestioning obedience in combat. War may provide their only opportunity for sex, with rape and booty being fringe benefits of successful war

**% Unwilling to fight for Country**



The Long Peace also reflects the fact that war is no longer profitable.

# The changing cost-benefit calculus of war

Agrarian societies have a zero-sum economy:

Land is the only means of production and it is finite. You can only get more by taking it away from someone else— which usually requires killing him.

Population rises to meet the food supply.

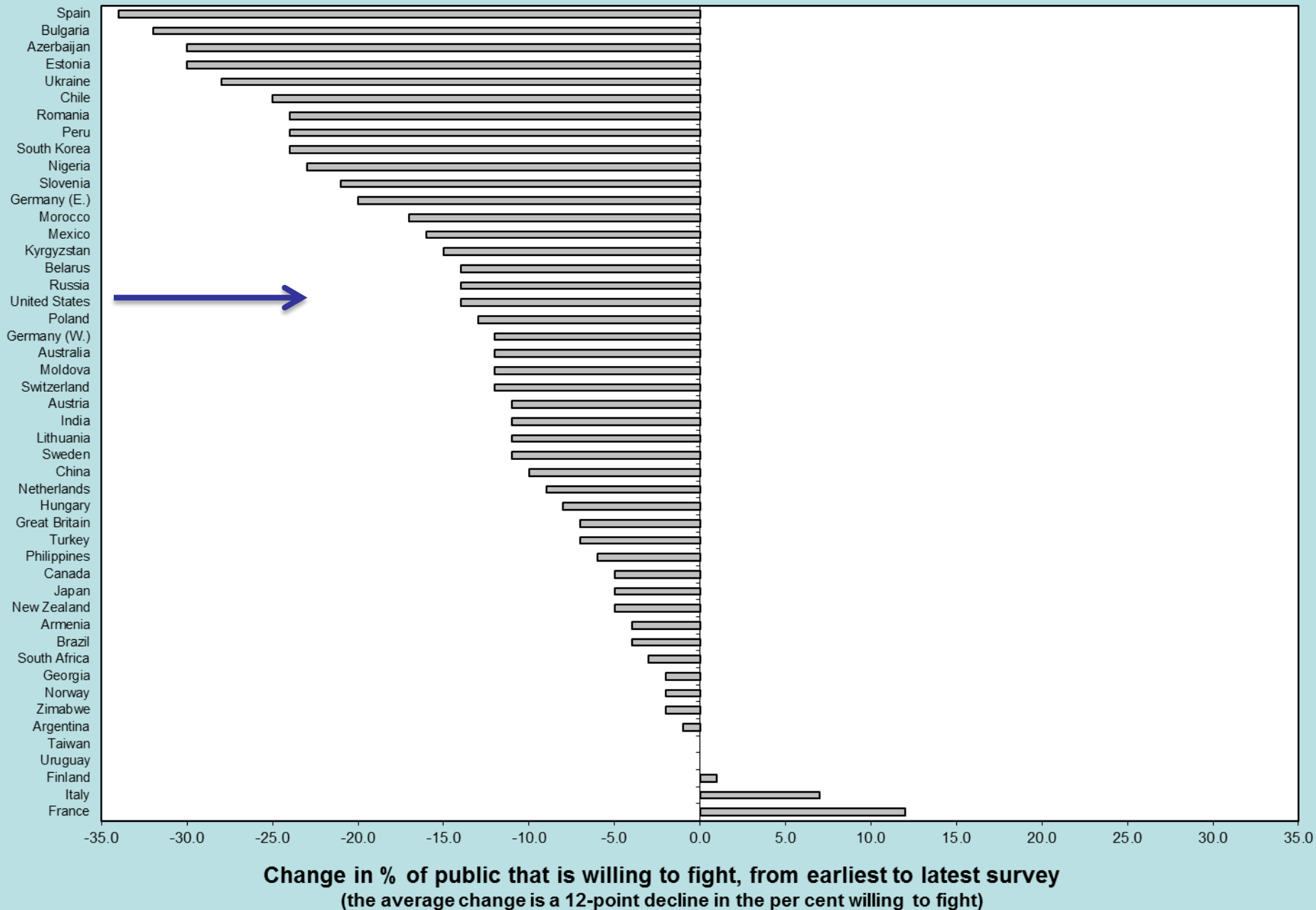
When there is barely enough pasture or farm land to support your tribe, if another tribe comes along, it is literally us or them: xenophobia is realistic and humans have evolved to respond xenophobically when survival is uncertain.

# Why did the Long Peace start so late?

- By the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, war was no longer a cost-effective route to prosperity, as Angell (1909) pointed out. Initially, this view was widely accepted— but World War I and World War II seemed to discredit it.
- Changes in the objective rationality of war were insufficient— subjective worldviews also had to change.
- The leaders of many major nations remained the prisoner of pre-industrial worldviews.

- The trend toward less willingness to fight for one's country is pervasive.
- Among the 49 countries for which we have time series data (across a mean span of 17 years) only three publics became more willing to fight for their country.

# Shift in the % saying they would be willing to fight for their country, 1981-2012



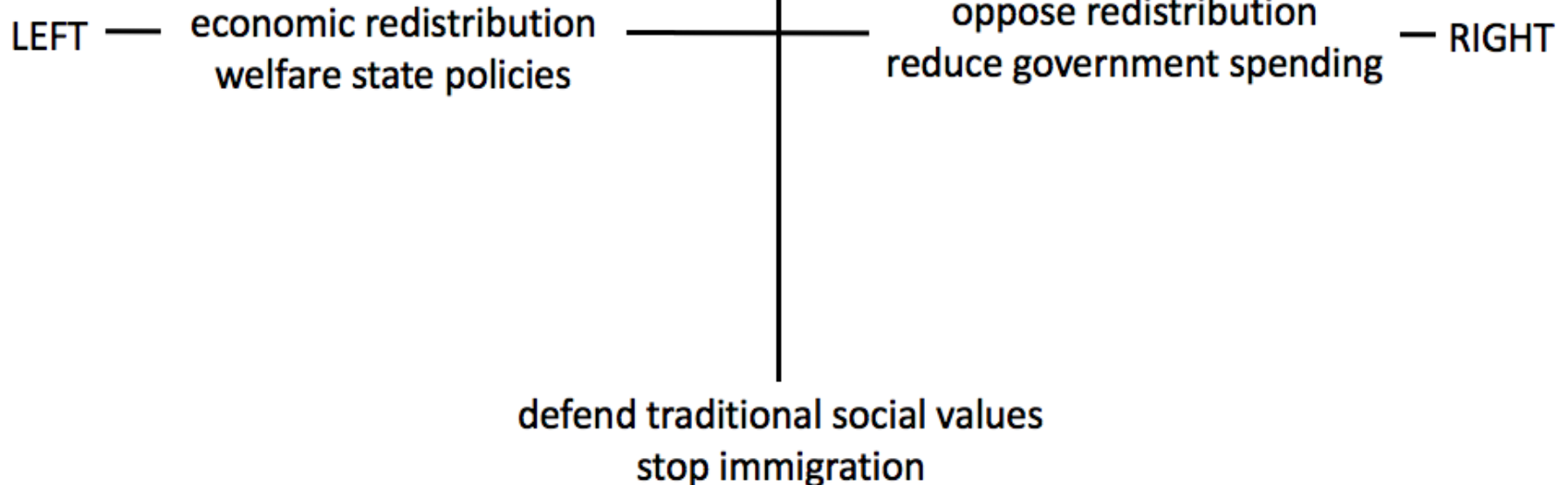
# What lies ahead?

- But the economic stagnation of recent decades has been reinforced by rising inequality. In recent decades, virtually all of the gains have gone to the top 10%. Globalization and large-scale immigration have reinforced the cultural backlash against Postmaterialist issues, with authoritarian xenophobic parties rising, from the National Front in France to Donald Trump in the U.S.

# The New Politics Dimension and the Economic Left-Right Dimension

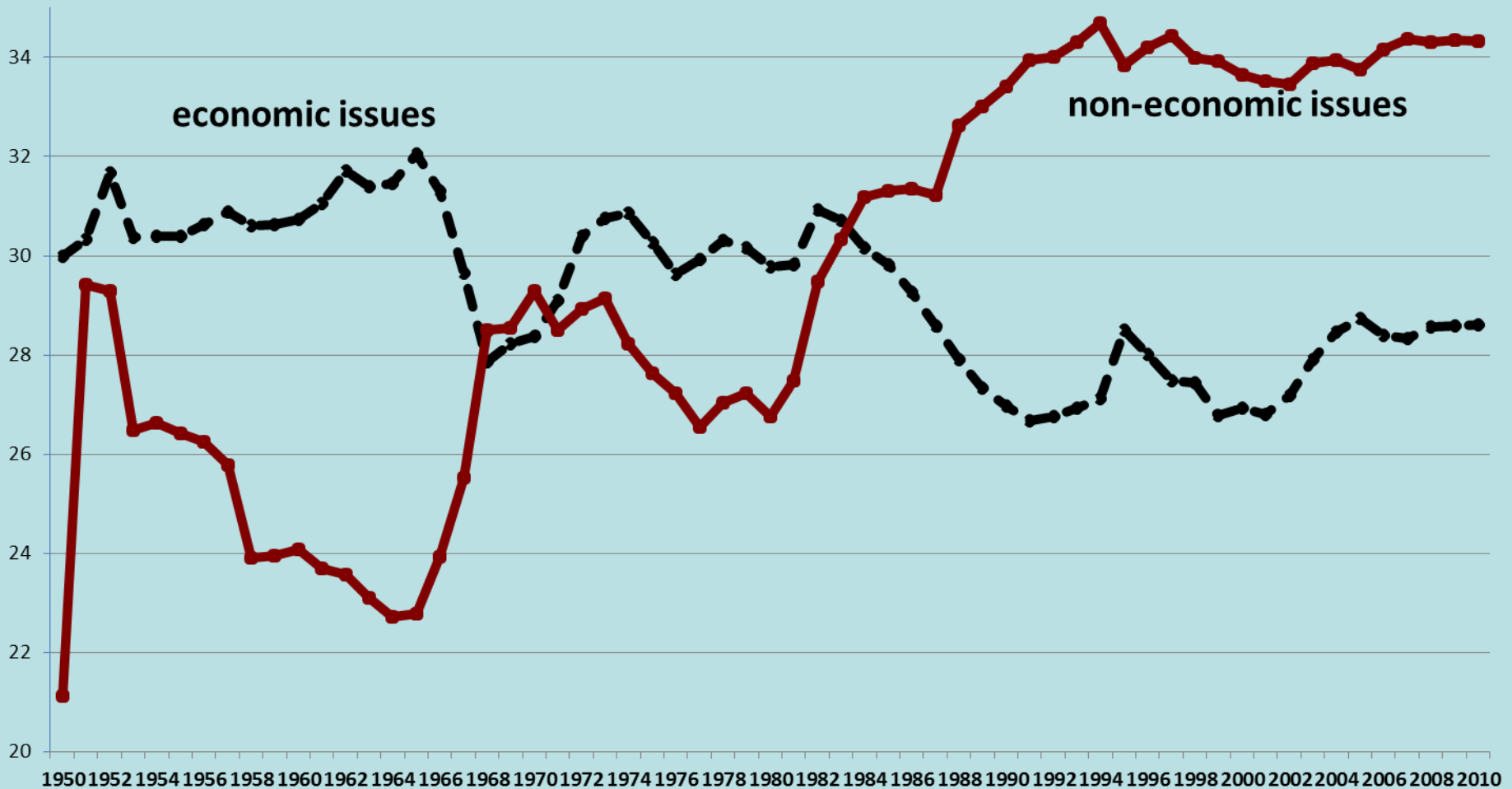
## NEW POLITICS DIMENSION

environmental protection  
gender equality  
rights for gays, immigrants

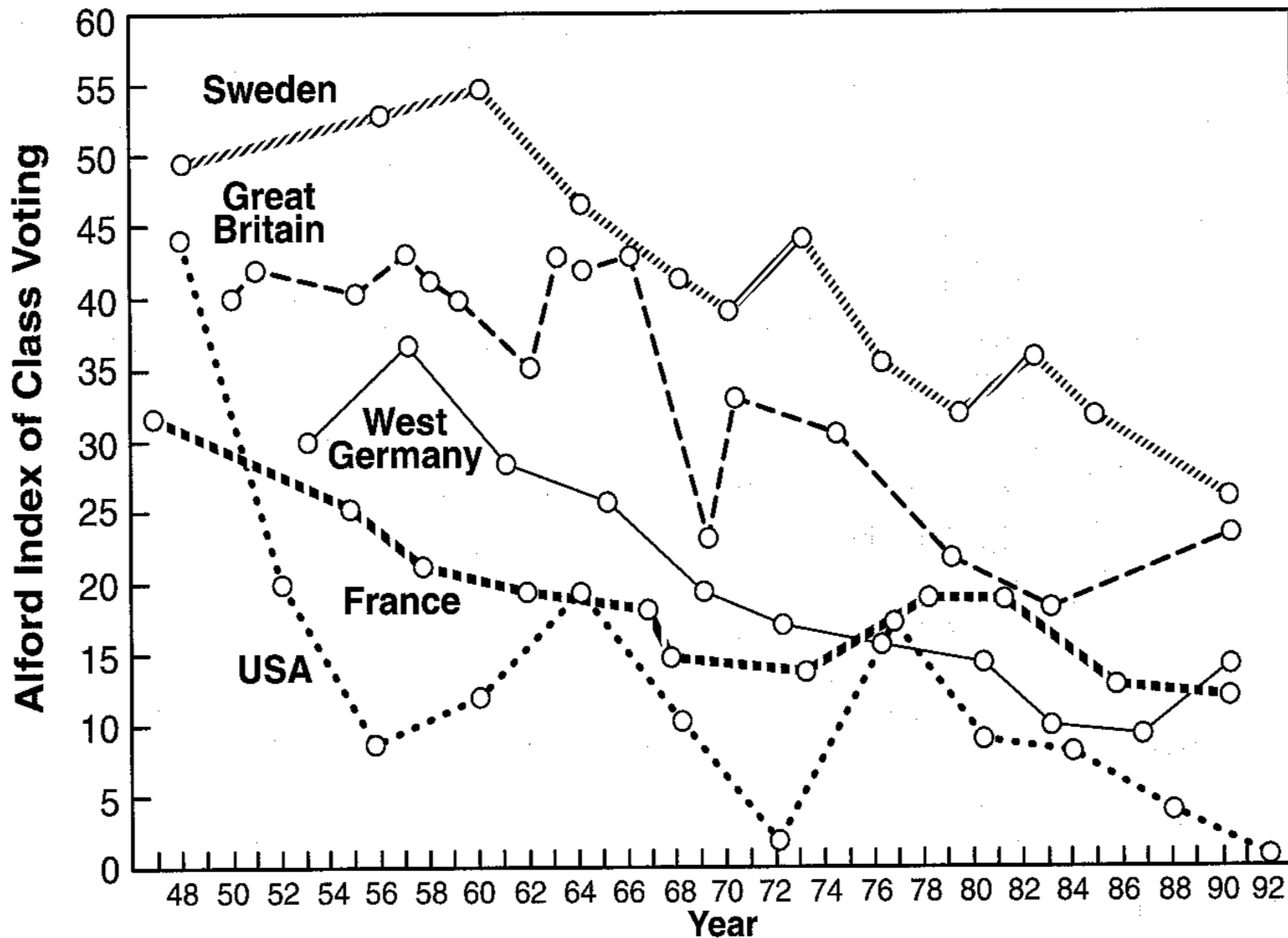


Postmaterialists emphasized new non-economic issues that cut across class lines. Postmaterialist causes such as environmental protection, anti-war movements and gender equality became increasingly prominent in the politics of developed societies, and emphasis on economic redistribution declined in political parties' election campaigns.

## Changing salience of economic vs non-economic issues in party programs, 1950-2010



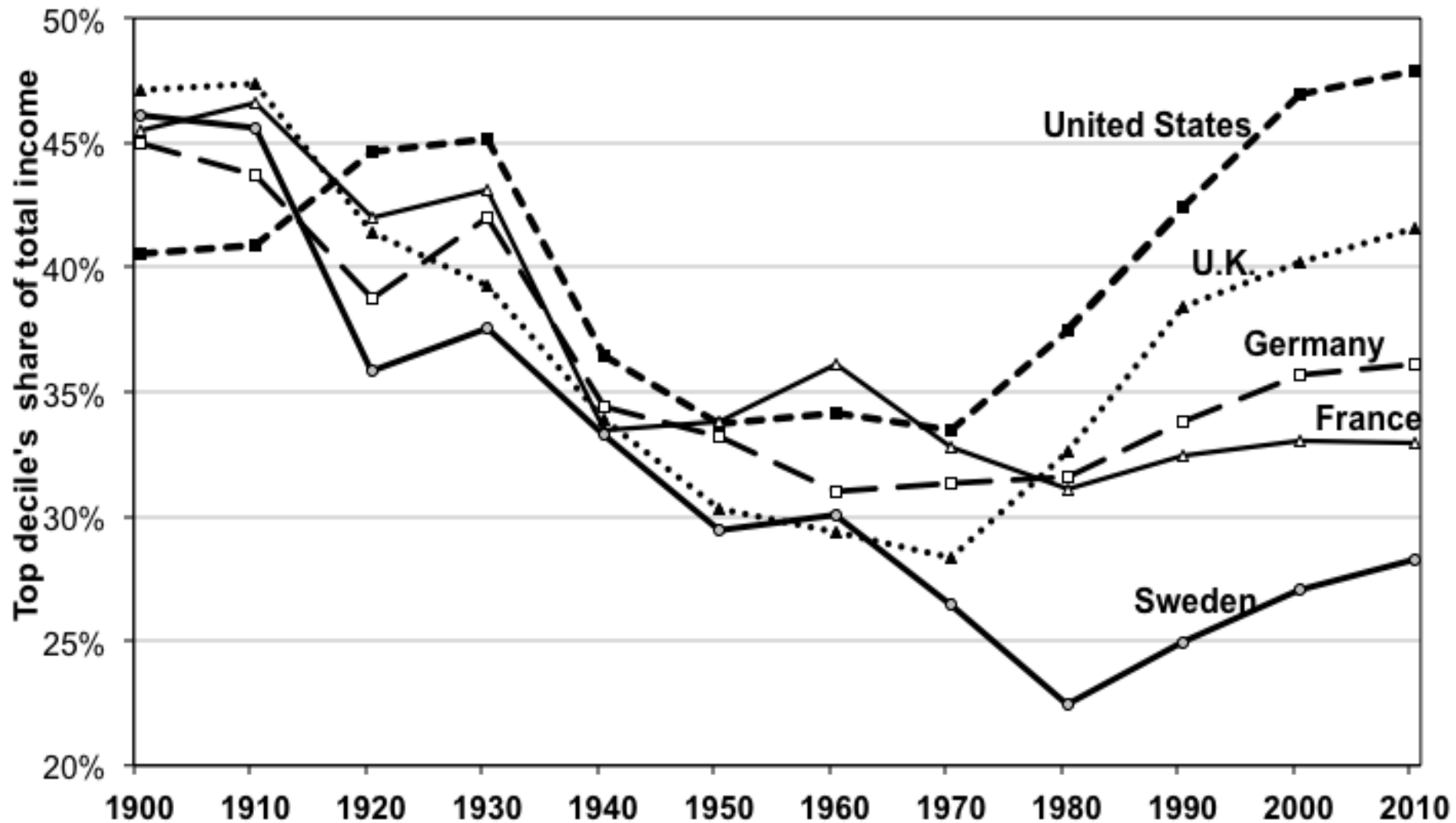
# The decline of social class voting, 1945-1992



With the shift from manufacturing to the service sector, the percentage of industrial workers in high-income societies declined. Globalization further weakened the bargaining power of Western workers: they were directly competing with low-cost workers in China, India and Southeast Asia.

Since about 1970, income inequality has risen dramatically in most industrial societies. The economic gains of the past few decades have gone almost entirely to the top ten percent, mainly the top one percent. Today, income inequality in the U.S. is even greater than it was in 1900.

## The top decile's share of total income in Europe and the United States, 1900-2010



From 1979 to 2012, the real incomes of the top 10 percent of U.S. earners increased by 76 %--

While the incomes of the bottom 90 **decreased** by 9%.

Although real GDP grew by 146% during this period, real income declined for 90 % of the population.

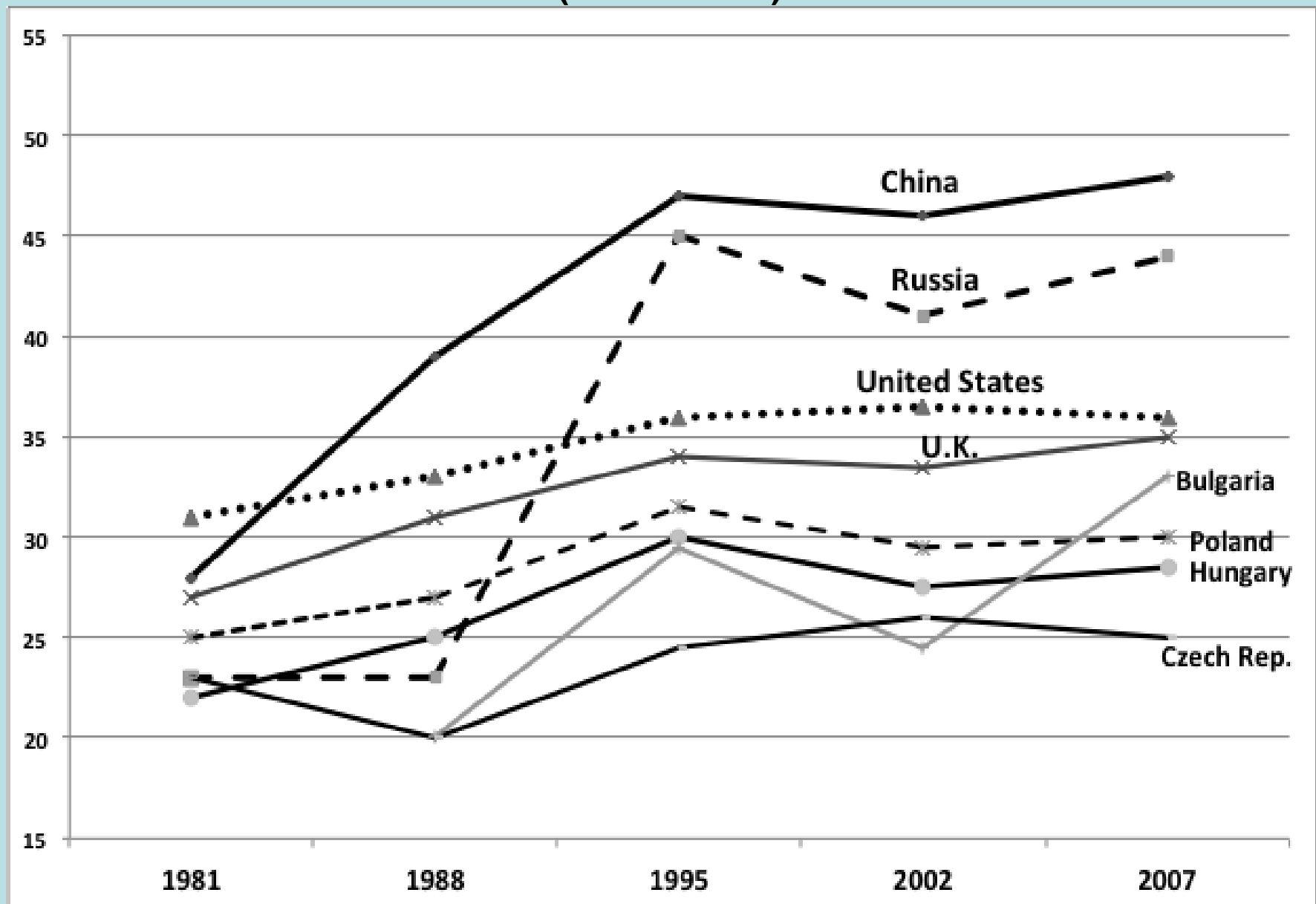
In terms of household net worth, the top 0.01 percent of Americans now own as much as the bottom 90 percent.

The net worth of the 400 richest Americans is more than that of 60 percent of all U.S. households.

Since the collapse of communism, income inequality has risen even more sharply in Russia and China than in the U.S. or Great Britain.

# Net Household Income Inequality Trends: Russia, China and the West, 1981-2007

(Gini indices)



Conservative economists argue that market forces will eventually offset the sharply-rising trend toward income inequality:

Though industrialization led to the decline of the agricultural employment, it created even larger numbers of high-paid jobs in the industrial sector.

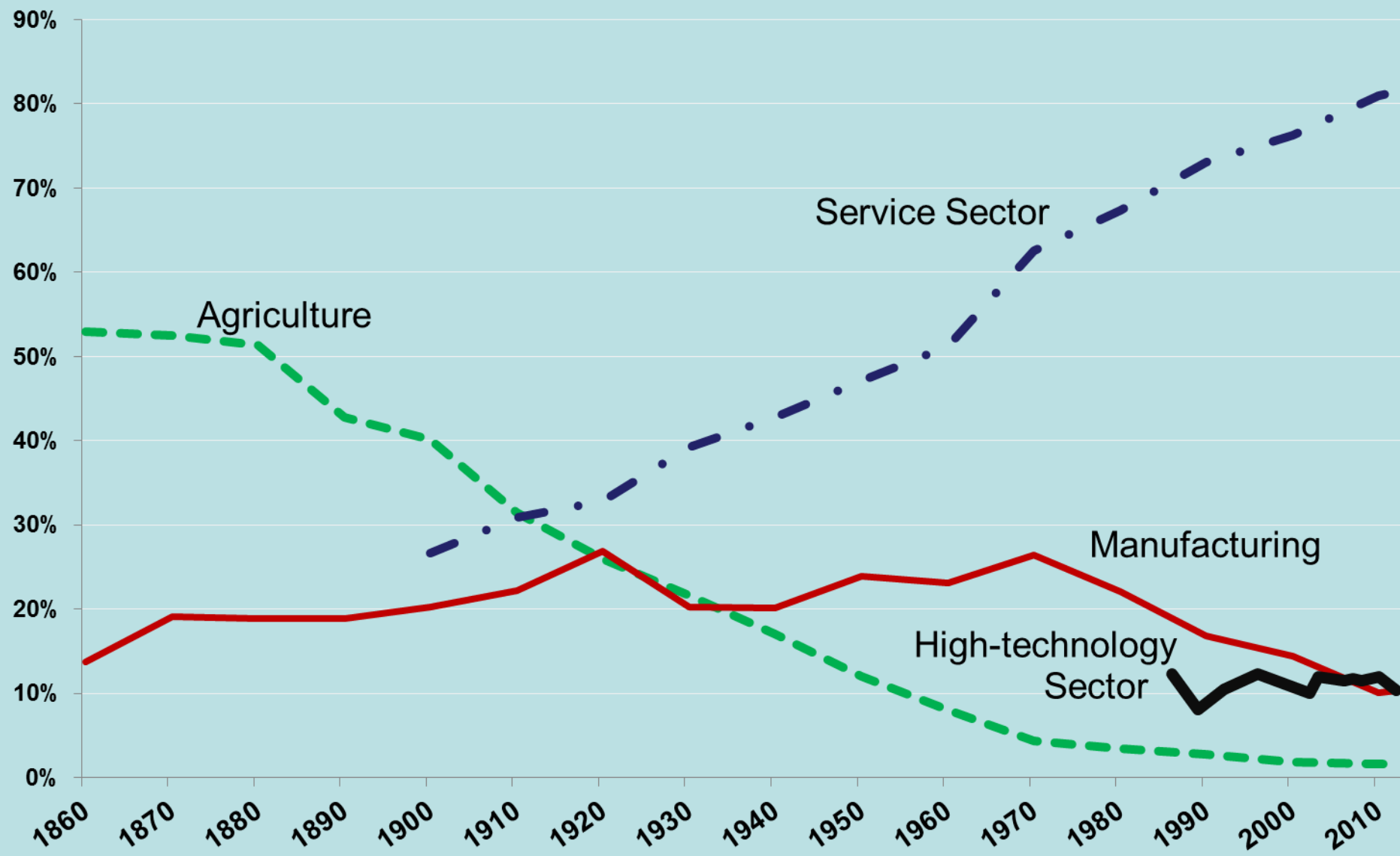
Similarly, it is claimed, the shift from industrial manufacturing will create large numbers of high-paid jobs in the knowledge sector.

But it isn't doing so.

Although the decline of industrial jobs has been more than offset by rising employment in the service sector, this is largely producing relatively poorly-paid jobs.

Jobs in the **high-technology sector** (such as Microsoft, Google, pharmaceuticals) are well-paid— but the percentage of people working in the high-technology sector has been flat for the last 25 years.

Percentage of Workforce by Sector, 1860 - 2012



**50 years ago, the largest employer in the U.S. was General Motors, whose workers earned an equivalent of \$50 per hour (in today's money).**

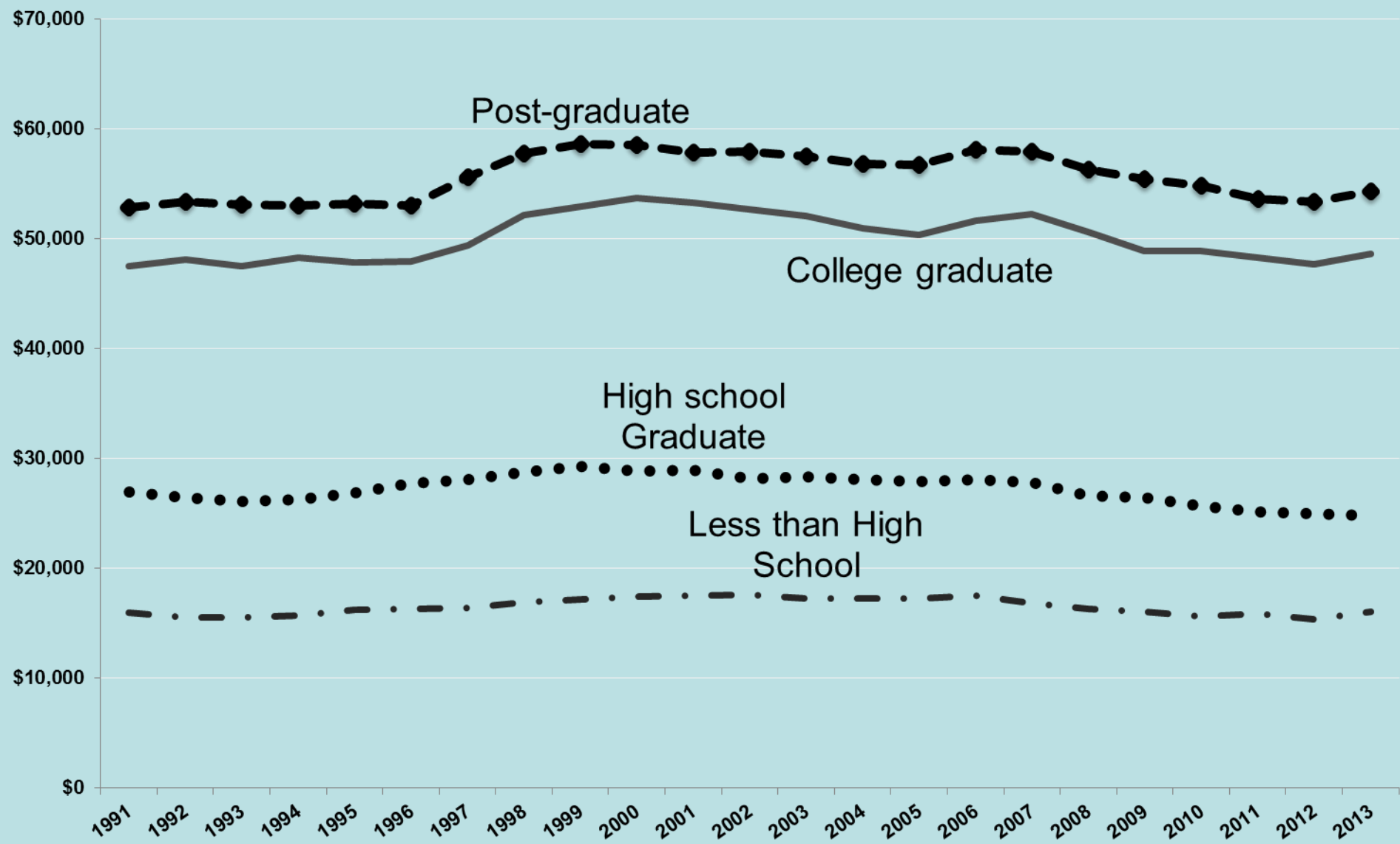
**Today, the largest employer — Walmart — pays around \$8 per hour.**

**GM employees not only had higher real incomes—they had greater job security, and much more extensive health and retirement benefits.**

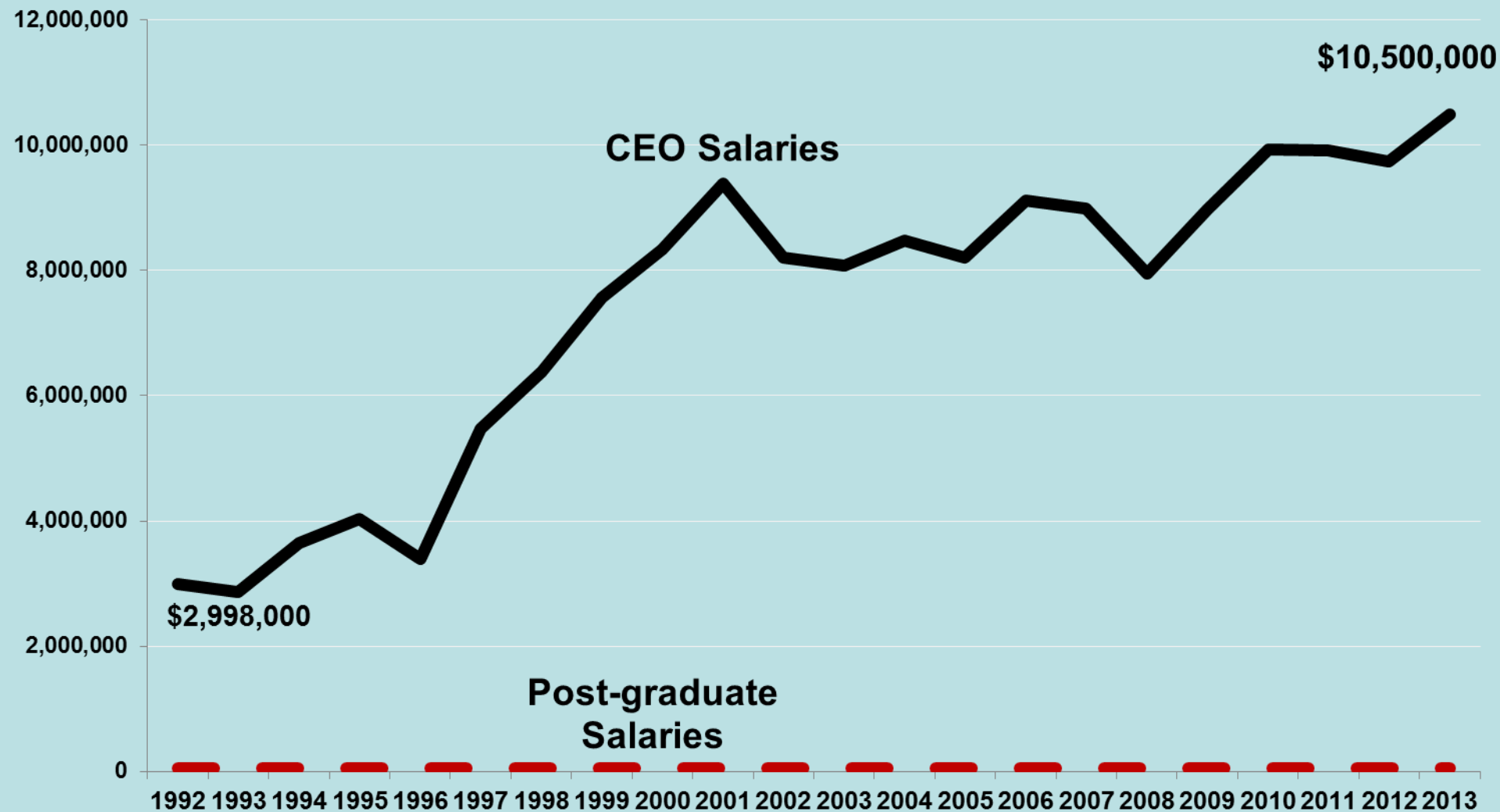
- Today, computer programs are not only replacing low-skilled jobs. Increasingly, artificial intelligence is replacing lawyers, journalists, academics, doctors, and other highly-educated professionals.
- Large corporations have taken over the medical profession, computerizing or outsourcing many jobs and reducing professionals to a commodity.

- It is widely-known that– despite massive economic growth-- since 1970, the real incomes of less-educated workers in the U.S. have been stagnant.
- Since 1990, this has also been true of people with university degrees– and even of people with post-graduate degrees.

## Median real income by Education Level, U.S. 1991-2013



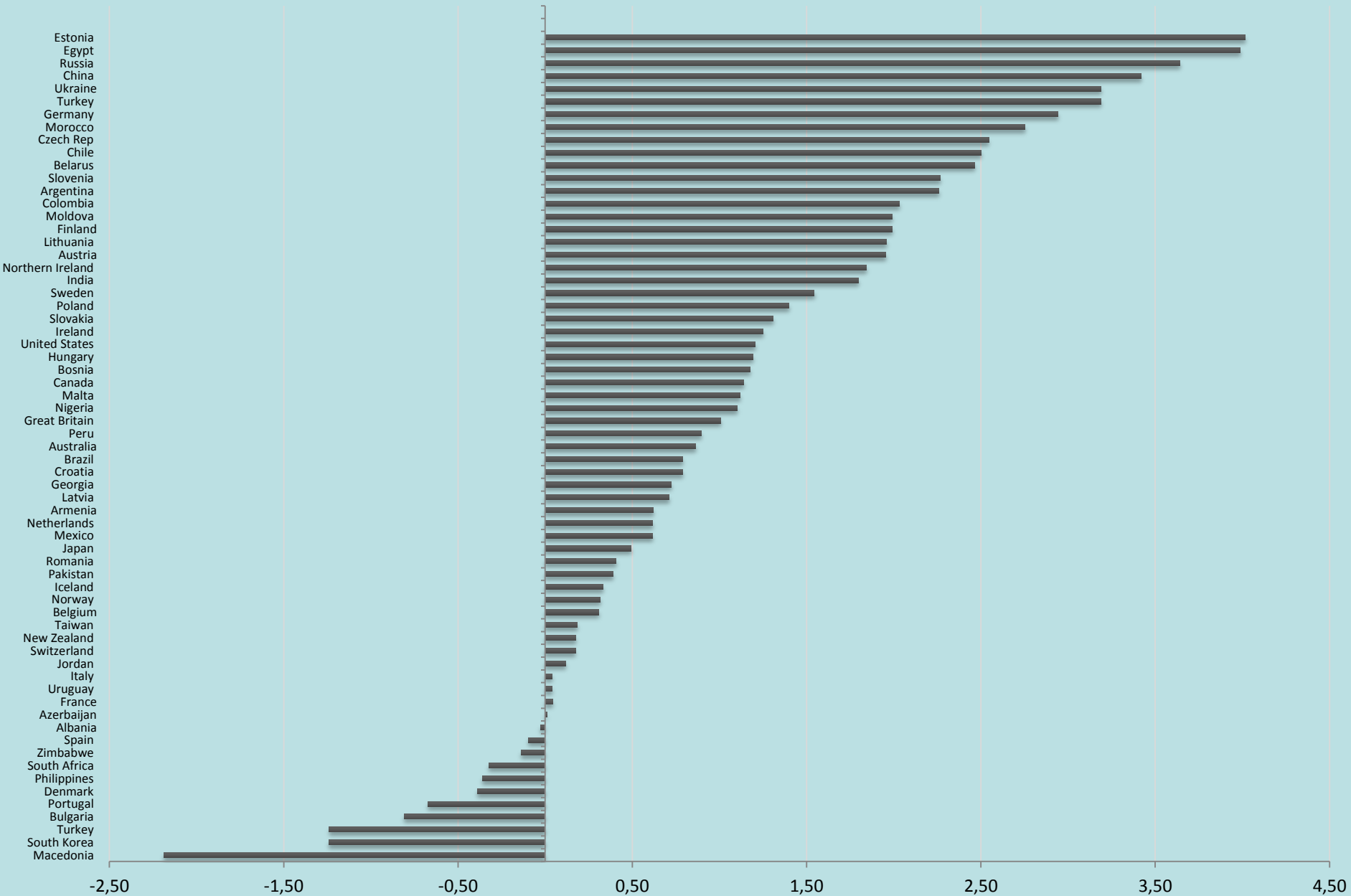
# Median salary of Top-500 CEOs vs. median salary of people with post-graduate education, 1992-2013 (in 2013 dollars)



- Today, the real conflict of interest in advanced industrial societies is no longer between the working class and the middle class. It is between the top one percent and the remaining 99 percent of the population.
- The electorates have not yet become mobilized along these lines— partly because low-income voters are diverted by non-economic issues such as abortion or same-sex marriage.

- But during the past 25 years, the publics of most countries have been growing increasingly concerned about the problem of rising income inequality.

# Changing Attitudes toward Income Inequality, 1989-2014



- U.S. politics reflect responses to the challenges of globalization and the emergence of a knowledge society, with Trump manifesting an authoritarian, xenophobic approach reaction, and Sanders groping for a response to growing economic inequality.
- But both rebellions reflect the fact that a large share of the electorate of both major parties has lost faith in the established party leaders

- The changes Sanders proposes are inadequate. Market forces are moving toward an economy that doesn't need a human workforce. Building tariff walls (or immigration walls) won't solve this problem.
- The vast majority (perhaps 90 %) of the workforce will have precarious, poorly-paid jobs.

But democracies are not governed by market forces alone. A coalition based on the 99 percent could redirect the state to reallocate an increasingly large GDP by creating jobs that provide useful roles for humans in health, education, research and development, infrastructure, environmental protection and the arts and humanities.

The goal: maximizing the quality of life, instead of blindly maximizing GDP.



**END**

This report was presented at the 6th LCSR International Workshop  
“Trust, Social Capital and Values in a Comparative Perspective”,  
which will be held within the XVII April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development.

April 18 – April 22, 2016 - Higher School of Economics, Moscow.

<https://lcsr.hse.ru/en/seminar2016>

Настоящий доклад был представлен на VI международном рабочем семинаре ЛССИ  
«Доверие, социальный капитал и ценности в сравнительной перспективе»,  
прошедшего в рамках XVII Апрельской международной научной конференции НИУ ВШЭ «Модернизация экономики и общества».

18 – 22 апреля, 2016 – НИУ ВШЭ, Москва.

<https://lcsr.hse.ru/seminar2016>