

Consequences of Post-Materialism

Testing Predicted Changes and an Extension to the Theory of
Post-Materialism

Felicia Eklund

Abstract

Post-Materialism is a theory introduced in the 1970's. Post-Materialism is set of values that is stated to have changed, foremost in industrial countries. This shift in values is predicted to lead to changes in attitudes, actions and the social structure, because those who prioritize Post-Materialist values are suggested to think and identify themselves differently. In this thesis, changes in environmental concern, political participation and gender equality are tested. In addition to this, a modern but controversial extension to the theory is tested, being consumption, to see if Post-Material values have any influence on the way the public consumes. Statistical method is used to see changes over time. The results show that Post-Materialism does not seem to lead to more concern for the environment or new ways of consumption. Political action and gender equality on the other hand seems to have a connection to Post-Materialism, although they are both in decline in some of the most Post-Materialist countries.

Keywords: Post-Materialism, political participation, concern for the environment, gender equality, consumption

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Post-Materialism is a theory that was initiated in the 1970's. It states that the values in industrial countries have gone through a gradual change, and that security and economy are no longer as important as they once were. The most prominent writer in the field is Ronald Inglehart (Carter 2007, p 95). To measure these values, the public is asked to prioritize between 12 statements. Those who prioritize physical and economical security are considered Materialists. Those who value esteem, intellectual and aesthetic expression are considered to be Post-Materialists (Inglehart, 1977, p 40-42). The theory's main concept is to explain why these changes in values have occurred. To a large part it is explained with different changes that industrial countries have gone through. These are economic growth, more education, more safety and greater access to information. These structural changes are supposed to change the public's values (Inglehart, 1977, p 8). A deeper exposition of what Post-Materialism is and the suggested reasons for why it has occurred is presented in chapter 2.

1.2 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to find out if there are any tangible consequences of Post-Materialism. The theory of Post-Materialism states that in some countries a new set of values have emerged. The focus of the theory is on what have caused this change. What I want to find out is whether changed values have had any effect on the societies they have occurred in. My research questions are as follows.

Have Post-Materialism led to changes in attitudes, activities or the social structure?

Is it possible to extend the theory of Post-Materialism, so that it can also be said to have led to changes in consumption patterns?

I want to find out whether the change in values towards Post-Materialism is only mental, or if it leads to more changes in the countries with a high degree of Post-

Materialism, as opposed to those with a low degree. In 1977, Inglehart predicted some changes would occur as a result of Post-Materialism, and I will test if he is correct in these predictions over 30 years later. The changes predicted are amongst others environmental concern, political participation and gender equality. Hence, there are three dimensions of predicted social changes that I will investigate.

- Changes in attitudes → Environmental concern
- Changes in activity → Political participation
- Changes in social structure → Gender equality

I also want to know if it is possible to include an other variable now, in the 21th century as an extension to the theory of Post-Materialism.

- Changes not predicted by the theory → Consumption patterns

I think it is important to investigate which factors in society that affect the attitudes and activity of its members as well as the social structure, and in this case I will examine if Post-Material values are one of the factors that have an influence on these three dimensions.

I include consumption because I am interested in the ideas of a re-valuation of consumption. The level of consumption in industrialized countries is by many seen as unsustainable. 20 percent of the richest countries in the world account for 80 percent of worldwide consumption (Chasek 2010, p 325). From an environmental perspective, it is not sustainable to equalize this condition by allowing developing countries to catch up. Instead industrialized countries must cut down on their consumption, and preferable change the way they consume. If it turns out that Post-Material values would consequence in the Industrialized world to actually consume less or in a more sustainable way, then that would be considered a positive development.

Inglehart does not define values as a concept, he only defines the operational difference between attitudes and values, being that values are less situation-bound, more general and more resistant for modification than attitudes are (Inglehart, 1977, p 29). I will therefore use the same definition of values as Björn Badersten does. A value is something that is good or bad, or better or worst than another one. Values are often, but not necessarily, connected to some sort of action, or absence on action. Values can also be related to a specific state of mind of what is good in a specific situation. (Badersten, 2006, p 21-22)

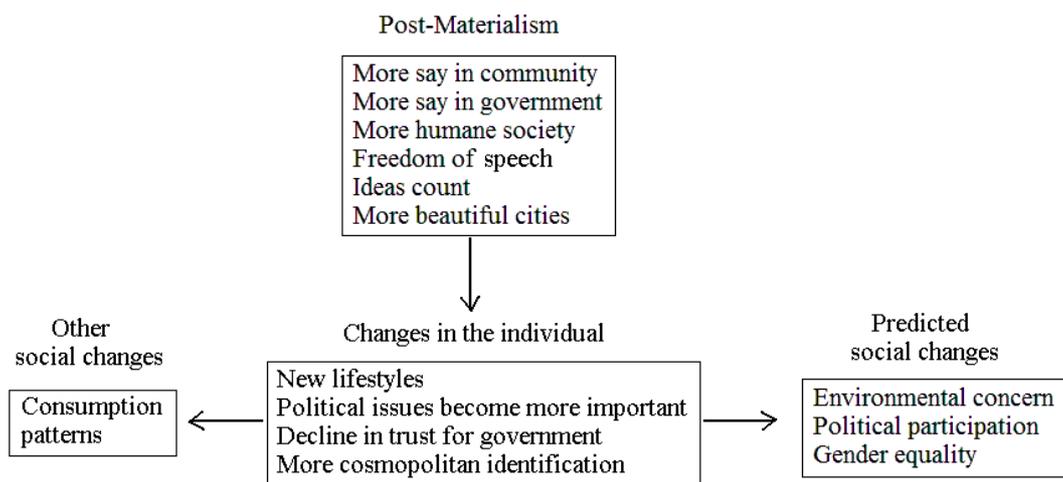
The definition of social change is any alternation in the cultural, structural or ecological characteristics of a social system such as society (Johnson, 2000, p 285). I here refer to change in social practices and structures for which a change in the though process of people is necessary. This means it reflexes a consciousness of the public that is relevant for the development of society, and I therefore also include attitudes as a dimension of the social sphere relevant for social change, which is a slight stretch of the original meaning of the term.

Inglehart uses the term society in his work when he talks about geographical entities. Here, I use the term country instead. This is because the empirical material used is collected by country, and I want to avoid confusion.

1.3 Hypothesis

Inglehart predicts that people with a higher degree of Post-Materialism will have a greater increase in their concern for the environment, than people with a low degree. They are also more likely to participate politically through other channels than the traditional ones, and gender equality is more likely to improve in societies with a high degree of Post-Materialism. My hypothesis is that this is correct.

The causal chain of why a shift in values would cause social changes is shown in the figure below. In chapter 2 I will further explain what Post-Materialism is, here only a short summary is presented. The causal mechanism that would make Post-Materialism lead to measurable social changes is that Post-Materialists identify and prioritize their needs differently. This creates an internal change in them, which makes them look differently at themselves and their environment, which is suggested to change their attitudes, actions and in the long run the social structure. Post-Materialists have different lifestyles than Materialist, they engage more in specific political issues and their trust for governmental institutions is lower (Inglehart, 1977, p 12-16). They also tend to identify themselves as “citizens of the world” as opposed to their local town or country (Inglehart, 1977, p 330-333).



Concern for the environment. More interest in political issues in combination with cosmopolitan identification is suggested to lead to more concern for the environment, since Post-Materialists see themselves as a part of the whole world. Hence their attitude to global issues such as sustainable development is supposed to be more of a top-of-mind issue for them (Inglehart, 1977, p 14).

Political participation. Post-Materialists prioritize more say in governmental decision-making and in their community, which implies a wish to influence. Interest in political issues, but yet decline in their trust for the government is suggested to make them participate politically more through alternative channels, as opposed to traditional channels such as elections (Inglehart, 1977, p 16).

Gender equality. More engagement in political issues can also involve issues such as gender equality. New lifestyles is suggested to emerge as a consequence of involvement in these issues, and the gender roles are suggested to change (Inglehart, 1977, p 13). In the long run, this should lead to a structural change towards greater gender equality in the more Post-Materialist countries.

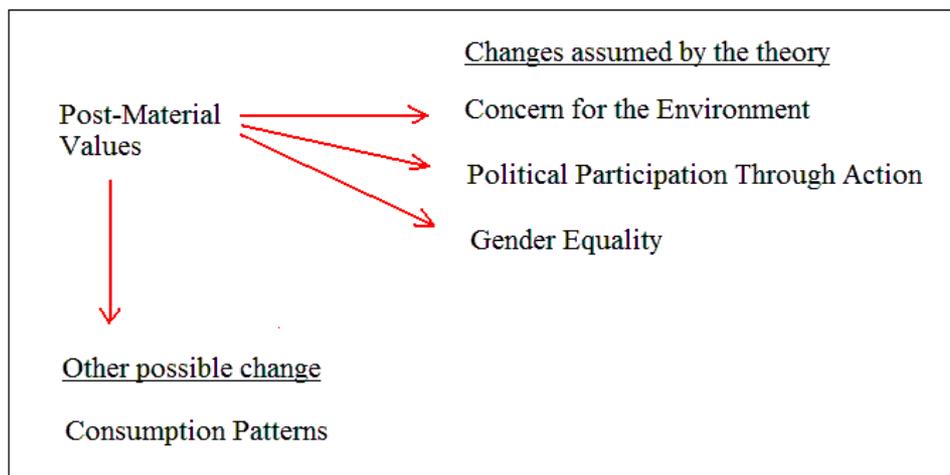
Consumption patterns. The second part of my hypothesis is that consumption patterns will look different in countries with a higher amount of Post-Materialism. This is not part of Ingleharts predictions. The mechanism that I suggest could cause this difference is that Post-Materialists identify there needs differently and they prioritize economical values low (see chapter 2). My hypothesis is therefore that what Inglehart calls new lifestyles might manifest itself through lifestyles where the public consume in a more conscious and less luxurious way. This is based on the premise that the things you can buy for money are not as valued by people with a high degree of Post-Materialism. To consume in a conscious way could also be a tool to pressure companies to make a certain type of products available, and hence a way to influence, which is important to Post-Materialists.

1.4 Theoretical Perspective

The epistemological standpoint in this thesis is empiricist, which means that it is possible to gain empirical knowledge about different aspects of society. The theoretical perspective is positivism. According to positivism, the social world has regularities and it is therefore possible find objective truths about it. (Baylis et al, 2008, p 178)

1.5 Operational definitions

I will start with examining the change the theory predicted to change as a consequence of Post-Materialism, which are here hypothesized to be correct. These are increase in non-traditional forms of political participation, increase in concern for the environment decrease in concern for the economy, the roles of women will be more equal to those of men and changed lifestyles (Inglehart, 1977, p 5-16). My operational definitions of these, meaning the variables I will test them by, are as follows.



1.5.1 Changes in Attitudes: Concern for the Environment

For the re-valuation of the environment and the economy, I have chosen the same index for. The index is of normative character since I could not find a better fitting indicator. This is hence the only variable that does not measure concrete activity, it only indicates whether the public prioritizes protection of the environment or creation of economic growth and jobs. Although this data only covers opinions, I find it important to control for. I test this variable because these priorities could indicate environmental attitudes and awareness. Awareness of environmental issues is the first step to act more sustainable from an environmental perspective on an individual level, as well as for voting for greener parties. To prioritize the environment over the economy gives a hint of development in this direction.

1.5.2 Changes in Activity: Political Participation Through Action

Political participation is said to change in a way where protests against the elite will be more common (Inglehart, 1977, p 16). Therefore I will test this statement through data on political action (petitions, boycotts, demonstrations and so on). I use this operational definition instead of for example election participation, since the change is said to be of a challenging character, as opposed to the traditional channels to participate politically.

1.5.3 Changes in the Social Structure: Gender Equality

The indicator I have chosen to estimate the change in gender roles is data on inequalities in pay in the industry between men and women. I have chosen this indicator since it gives a picture of how valued women's work are in relation to the work by men. Differences can either be due to how high positions females get

in the industry, or on whether their work is not as valued as high as their male co-workers in terms of unequal pay for the same work. If there is a great difference, this index it tells something about how gender-related qualities are viewed upon, no matter the reason for unequal pay, and hence it gives a picture of gender roles in the countries from a perspective of gender equality.

1.5.4 Other Possible Change: Consumption Patterns

Life-styles are much harder to find indicators for, especially since the literature on Post-Materialism does not specify in what way these would change. Therefore, I have chosen to try a variable the theory does not explicit predict changes in: consumption. The reason I have chosen to see if Post-Materialism could lead to a change in consumption patterns is that Post-Materialists identify their needs differently. Since they prioritize economical needs low, could this lead to a change in life-style that would involve a decline in consumption? Here I use data from more sources than Quality of Government, since this is a controversial extension to the theory of Post-Materialism.

1.6 Method and Material

The main material for this thesis is the political science literature on Post-Materialism (Inglehart, 1977), since the purpose of this work is to test the theory of Post-Materialism. I complement this with other literature on political science along with statistical material from Quality of Government Dataset and scientific articles.

Quantitative, statistical method is used to examine countries that have a similar degree of Post-Materialism, but differ in other variables. I do my selection of cases entirely based on the countries' position on the scale of Post-Materialism from the most recent survey, being from 2008. The countries are ranked on a scale from 0 being the most Materialist (which is the opposite of Post-Materialist), to 5 being the most Post-Materialist. The research presenting the levels of Post-Materialism, that I base my selection on, is performed by World Value Survey's cross-section data (QoG Codebook "wvs_pm12", p 245-246) (see appendix).

I use two clusters with six countries in each, from each end of the scale of Post-Materialism. In the cluster with the highest level of Post-Materialism (2.67 to 3.04), the countries are (highest fist) Andorra, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Sweden and Germany. In the cluster with the lowest level of Post-Materialism (1.1 to 1.3) the countries are (lowest fist): Albania, China, Pakistan, Hungary, Taiwan and Russia. I use several cases in order to make it easier to generalize the results.

I will use these clusters in time-series diagrams to be able to see if their patterns attitudes, actions and social structures have changed from the 1950's until 2008. I have chosen to start in the 1950's where data is available, because the

theory states that the changes started after World War II. I use one cluster from each end of the scale to see if Post-Materialism could be the cause of changed behaviour, by seeing if the clusters differ from each other. Hence, Post-Materialism is here the independent variable. Unfortunately, there is not data available for the dependent variables for all of the countries, but I will work with what I have.

Statistical method show what the development looks like over time empirically for the indicators I have chosen. I will not do individual analyses for the results of each country, only look at the patterns the countries make together as a cluster. Statistical method contribute with showing if there is any correlation between the level of Post-Materialism and the indicators. However, it does not contribute to the explanations of why the pattern evolve the way they do, which is necessary to conclude if there is a causal connection between the variables, or just a sporadic correlation. Therefore I complement with articles on the subject in these sections, and use deductive reasoning to evaluate if the connection could be causal or not. Deductive reasoning is when conclusions can be reached through logic, taken the given premises are correct. Since it is the dependent variables I am looking for, it is an analysis of consequence I will perform (Teorell and Svensson 2007, p 27).

The quantitative data I have used have all been selected by the Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg (www.qog.pol.gu.se). The institute have created a database of their own with a selection from many other databases, which reliability have been controlled for. The Quality of Government Dataset was awarded with the Lijphart, Przeworski, Verba Prize for Best Dataset by the APSA Comparative Politics Section in 2009. (Teorell, 2010, p 2) I have tried not to use data from only one source within Quality of Government, in order to diverse the selection of empirical material.

Changes in consumption is not mentioned in the literature of the theory. This section will therefore be my contribution, to test if this type of behaviour also can be included in the theory of Post-Materialism as a modern extension. Since this is a controversial extension, I will use two sources of empirical material to test it by. The first one is from Quality of Government, and the second one is a Greendex from National Geographic. National Geographic is not considered to be a scientific source, but this research was only ordered by National Geographic, and carried out by GlobeScan, a company that performs qualitative and quantitative analyses and surveys (Kritski, 2012). It can be considered reliable since the participants' demographic status has been checked for to avoid over-representation, the margin of error is low (+/- 3.1 percent 95 percent of the time in each country) and the survey has been carried out with an extensive number of participants, 17 000 per country (National Geographic, Greendex Methodology). It is relevant to bring the Greendex in because it measures different kinds of consumption, as opposed to Quality of Government that only measures amount.

1.7 Limitation

My research question has a very high level of abstraction, even if it is a specific phenomenon I examine. I will therefore limit it by only getting data for these four variables, with the twelve cases I have stated. As presented, three of the variables are my operative definitions of what the theory states will change in terms of attitudes, activity and social structure, and consumption is what I think could be an additional variable effected by Post-Materialism.

One of the limits of my thesis is that there is a risk of ecological fallacy. This means that those who are interviewed about their Material/Post-Material values might not be the same people who have taken part in the research about political participation, environmental concern, gender equality or consumption. To check for this risk, I would need to do interviews myself, to see if it is the same people, which I do not have time or space to do in this thesis.

Another limitation is that I do not check for if the suggested causes for Post-Materialism also could be the reasons for changes in attitudes, activity and social structure. Since they cause the first change (change towards Post-Material values), it might just as well be the cause to the second change too (the social changes). Here, I will not test if the variables suggested to cause Post-Materialism correlates with the social changes, which would open up for them being the real reason for social change, not Post-Materialism. Here I only argue for the logic of a causal connection between Post-Materialism and social change.

1.8 Disposition

My disposition is made in a way so that it is possible to attain a full picture of why Post-Materialism would lead to changes in attitudes, activity and social structure. I will start by giving a summary of what Post-Materialism as a phenomenon is, by the presenting the way it is measured. Then I will outline the mechanisms in society that are suggested to have caused a shift from Materialism to Post-Materialism. This is necessary as these are the premises that are underlying a causal relationship between Post-Material values and social changes. I will analyse whether it is true as the theory claims, that attitudes, action and social structure are affected by the countries' level of Post-Materialism. In addition I will examine if Post-Materialism can be extended to changes in consumption patterns.

If it turns out that Post-Materialism does not manifest itself through any measurable social changes, then it is not very useful to political science and opens the theory up to criticism.

2 What Post-Materialism is

To fully understand what it means to have a high level of Post-Materialism, it is necessary to show in what way Post-Materialism is measured. The material used to measure the change in values from Materialism to Post-Materialism, is based on surveys asking people to prioritize a number of statements.

The World Value Survey is an institute that performs independent surveys. The method they use is interviews. The interviews regarding Post-Materialism are introduced with the line “*There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of this country should be for the next 10 years...*”. The respondents are then asked to prioritize between 12 statements, and put the one they find most important first. The text in italic below the statements explain what needs the statements are considered to represent. If the respondents prioritize the statements regarded to be Materialistic high, they are considered to be Materialists. If they prioritize the statements regarded to be Post-Materialistic high, they are considered to be Post-Materialists.

The following six statements are regarded to be Materialistic:

- Fighting rising prices.
- Maintaining a high rate of economic growth.
- Maintain a stable economy.
(These three represent economic security)
- Maintaining order in the nation.
- The fight against crime.
- Making sure that this county has strong defence forces.
(These three represent physical security)

The following six statements are regarded to be Post-Materialistic:

- Seeing that people have more say in how things get decided at work and in their community.
- Giving the people more say in important government decisions.
- Progress toward a less impersonal, more humane society.
(These three represent needs of belonging and esteem)
- Protecting freedom of speech.
- Progress towards a society where ideas are more important than money.
(These two represent intellectual needs)
- Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful.
(This represents aesthetic needs)

(Inglehart, 1977, p. 40-42)

The last statement does not tend to be prioritized as high by the people that prioritize the other Post-Material values high. This Inglehart explains with a misinterpretation of the statement (Inglehart, 1977, p 48).

2.1 Causes to a Shift from Materialism to Post-Materialism

The following four pillars are the main suggested reasons for a change in values from Material values to Post-Material values, according to Inglehart. These are physical security, economical security, education and information (Inglehart, 1977, p 5). Post-Materialism is stated to be most likely to occur in industrial countries, which often have a great deal of these variables in their societal structure (Inglehart, 1997, p 11).

Physical security. The first suggested reason for a change of values in industrialized countries is the great amount of physical security the people in these countries have experienced after World War II. One of the premises that the theory of Post-Materialism assumes, is that Maslow's needs satisfaction hypothesis is true. Maslow states that there are five needs, where physiological needs and needs to feel secure are the most basic ones. Without these, people will not be motivated to try to satisfy the three higher needs, being needs of belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. (Maslow, 1954, p 38) This means that physical safety is necessary to satisfy the two lowest steps in the need satisfaction hypothesis, physiological needs and needs to feel secure. The absence of war for the generation after World War II therefore makes them see threats for their lives as distant, and can afford to put greater focus on their quality of life. Security is still important to them, but relatively speaking it is not as immediately pressing as it used to be for prior generations. (Inglehart, 1977, p 3)

Economical security. The second reason for a shift towards Post-Materialism is economical security. Inglehart states that the reason these countries experience economical security is technological developments, which enable a greater deal of productivity, leading to economic growth, which leads to a wealthier state and a wealthier population (Inglehart, 1977, p 8-9). The majority of people in these countries have their basic needs secured. In the selection of cases used in this thesis the Post-Material countries have significantly higher GDP per capita than the Materialist countries (The World Bank, data on GDP per capita 2011). Most of the people responding to Post-Materialistic values are people from the middle class (Inglehart, 1977, p. 180). Traditionally the working class is the most progressive, but Inglehart suggests that is changing and now the middle class is the most progressive social segment (Inglehart, 1977, p 180).

Education. Higher education is the third suggested reason for value change. This is because it is a tool to train cognitive skills, and has an effect on the students political awareness. But Inglehart notes that it is not necessarily causal in this direction, that education would make people Post-Materialists, it could be the other way around, that values inspires them to study (Inglehart, 1977, p 9-10). Higher level of education is supposed to reflect more than intake of information. It creates general cognitive development, informal communication patterns and a certain way of thinking (Inglehart, 1977, p. 75). Informal communication patterns refer to the idea that people with higher education talk to different kinds of people than uneducated, or find other channels of information.

Information. Some argue that we are living in an age of information. Inglehart states that the public will be more interested in their surroundings as a causal effect of greater access to information, which is the last reason for a shift from Material values to Post-Material values. This will result in more citizen participation, and what he calls “elite-challenging” activities, as the public will want to have more say in the process of decision-making. (Inglehart, 1977, p 4). The media plays a key role in the distribution of contemporary news and information to the public (Ingehart, 1977, p 11). It becomes more important to the public to keep itself updated. New techniques makes this easier, which adds up to increased awareness among the public.

3 Social Changes as a Consequence of Post-Materialism

The theory of Post-Materialism emphasizes changing values. But if values change, other changes could occur as a result of this. This is not the main focus of the theory, but it suggests some social changes. Inglehart states that there is a full set of changes going on, among others he mentions gender roles, life-styles, ecology, economy, politics and morals (Inglehart, 1977, p 6-7).

Erich Fromm is a sociologist concerned with what aspects affects changes in behaviour. According to him, the modern definition of “activity” is purposive behaviour that seeks to result in socially useful changes. Alienated activity is when these changes happens incident to external and internal forces, while non alienated activity means that one perceive himself as a subject of the activity, and hence doing it on purpose (Fromm, 2003, p 120). To me, the values prioritized by Post-Materialists, such as more say in decision-making, ideas count and freedom of speech, indicates that non alienated activity in society should be important to them, which could lead to different forms of social changes.

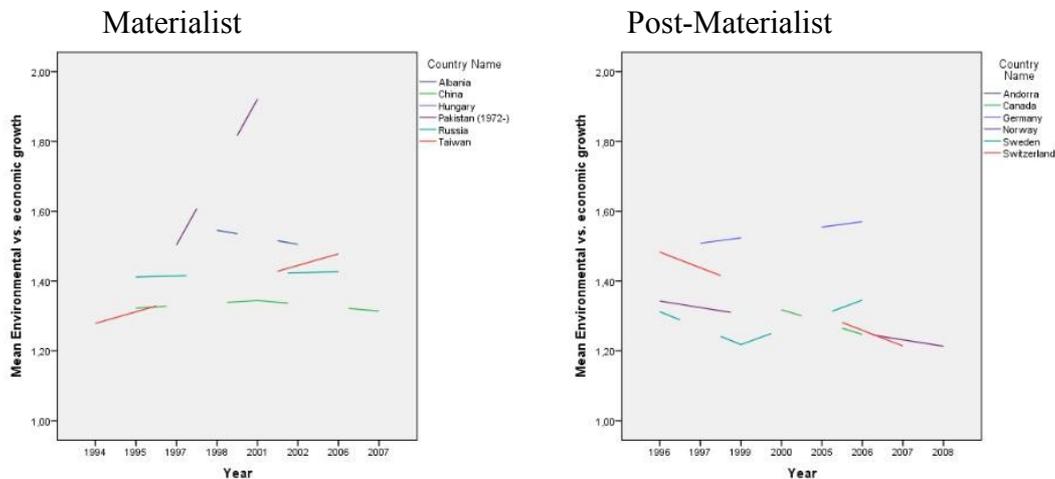
I will here concentrate on changes in attitudes for concern for the environment relative to the concern for the economy. Next I will look at the way people participate politically by measuring the amount of political action. The social structure, gender equality, will be checked for by looking at the differences in pay. In the next chapter I will in addition to this bring up possible related change in life-styles, by looking at consumption patterns.

3.1 Concern for the Environment

In the 1960's, environmental issues started to slowly become concerns in the consciousness of peoples' minds, as a concern for the future of humanity (Bardi, 2011, p 6-9). Since the 1980's, a rapid growth in environmental groups have emerged and have become a significant force in most industrialized countries (Carter, 2007, p 142-144). Post-Materialists are identify themselves as cosmopolitans, and they are more involved in political issues. This suggests they could be concerned for global challenges, such as the environment.

Inglehart states that one of the political issues Post-Materialist could get more involved in is concern for ecology and protection of the environment. To test this, data complied by the institute World Value Survey have been used. In the survey people have been asked to chose the statement that comes closer to their own opinion. (1) *Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if*

it causes lower economic growth and some losses of jobs. Or (2) Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent (QoG code book, “wvs_b008” p 235). This means that lower numbers on the scale indicates more concern for the environment.



These diagrams only show the attitudes of people, but it seems like there is no great difference between the Materialist and the Post-Materialist countries. The Materialist countries have curves with a rather even development ending in values between between 1.31 and 1.51, except for Pakistan that is almost entirely concerned for the economy in their latest survey, with a value of 1.92. Taiwan have a development of attitudes towards economic growth, while Russia and China have pretty even attitudes over time along with Albania that only have a slight development towards protection of the environment. The most Post-Materialist countries stay in the range of 1.21 and 1.35 in their latest surveys, except for Andorra that have larger numbers. Of the Post-Materialistic countries, Canada, Switzerland and Norway are getting increasingly concerned for the environment, while Sweden goes in the opposite direction.

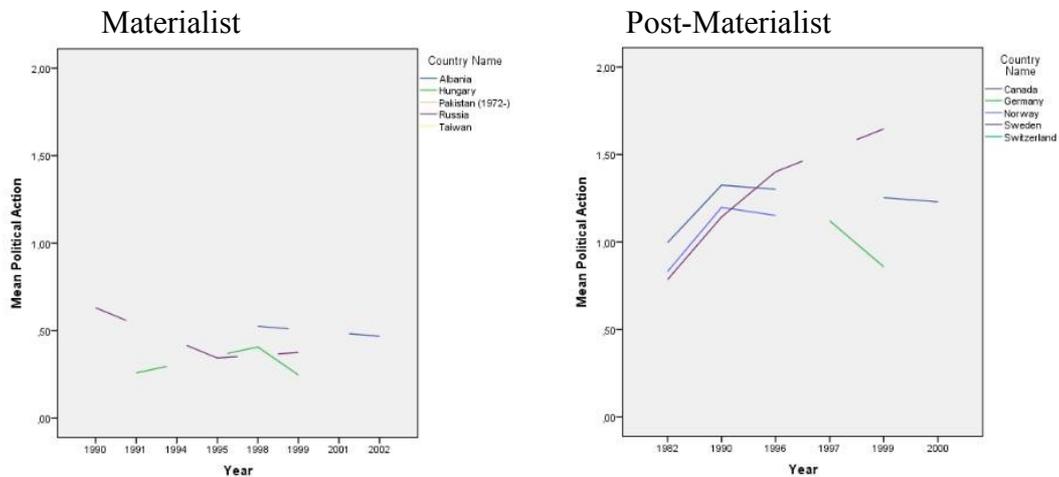
No significant difference in attitudes can be seen between the clusters through this indicator. The trend over time only indicates that the environment it becoming slightly more important in the Post-Materialist countries.

3.2 Political Participation Through Action

Post-Materialists put high value on “Giving the people more say in important government decisions” and “Protecting freedom of speech”. Since these are seen as important by Post-Materialists, it is suggested that they would be more interested in participating politically than Materialists. Existing institutions change slowly at the same time as a new set of values occurs, so one predicted effect of Post-Materialism is that new political movements and organizations will form, in order for these people to be able to express their opinions, along with

other forms of protest activity (Inglehart, 1977, p 15). Inglehart also argues that the the time the process of change will take depends on how skilled the public is at expressing it's views, and on how open the given political framework is. The forms of election, number of strong parties, and the freedom of the press are some of the factors in the political structure that should be taken into account (Inglehart, 1977, p 6).

The data used to test these forms of action is from World Value Survey and shows the amount of political action. The respondents have been asked how many of the following political actions they actually have carried out: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes or occupying buildings or factories. The number of these five statements that the respondents claim they have participated in, then rank them on a scale from 0 to 5 (QoG code book, “wvs_act” p 244). Higher numbers on the scale means more political action.



Note that the early increasing trend in political action among the Post-Materialist countries is due to that the diagram starts in 1962, and then jump straight to 1990, while the Material countries miss data from before 1990. The part where both of the diagrams have data, between 1990 and 2000, still indicates that there is a difference in amount of political action between Materialist and Post-Materialist countries.

The most previous data for the Materialist countries have results between 0.25 and 0.47, while the most Post-Materialist countries have results between 0.86 and 1.65. This indicates that these forms of political actions are more frequently occurring in Post-Material countries. The amount of political action therefore seems to follow the predicted pattern. In the diagram of the Materialist countries Albania and Hungary have a decrease in political action, while Russia have a slight increase. In the Post-Material countries only Sweden have an increase, while the political action in Canada, Norway and Germany is decreasing.

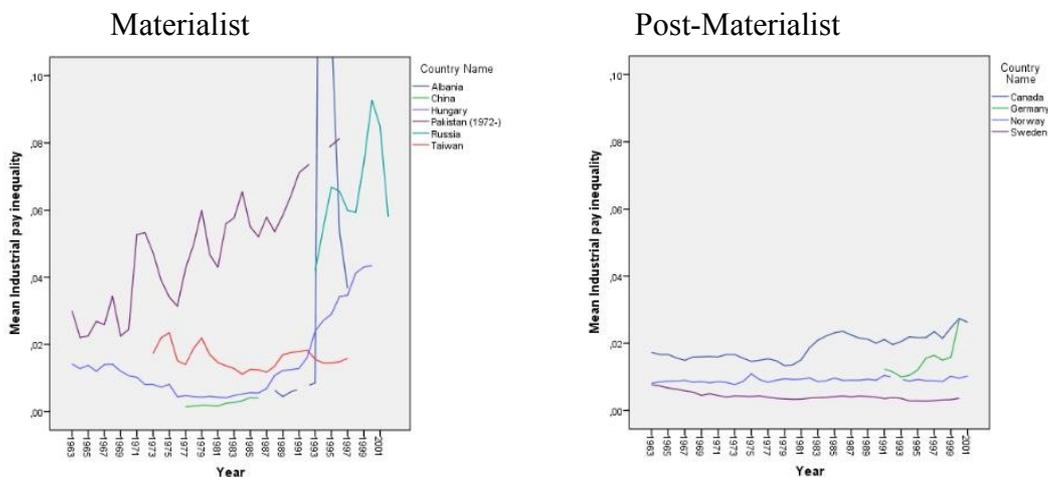
One explanation to an early increase in political participation through action is the higher level of education, one of the suggested reasons for Post-Materialism. This is suggested to create a shift in the distribution of political skills, which creates an increasing potential for political participation (Inglehart,

1977, p 367). Therefore it is unexpected that the trend over time is showing a decline in political action in three out of four Post-Materialist countries. Education is suggested to enhance feelings of citizen duties. This, in combination with cognitive skills which makes the public confident about their understanding of the political system is suggested as an alternative explanation to the expected increase in traditional political participation in the most Post-Materialistic countries. Interest in politics is said to consequence in increased election participation, the traditional channel for political participation (Denny and Doyle, 2008, p 291-293), and could be expected to do the same for these alternative ways of participation too.

Media is contributing with a large part of the updates of what is doing on around locally, and in the rest of the world. According to Valenzuela the information media distribute is the same information most people repeat when asked about a specific political issue, which they have not reflected on to any extent (Valenzuela, 2009, p 757). To organize through alternative channels, such as political action, is often a sign of stronger engagement though. Hence it is strange that the trend is going down in the Post-Materialist countries.

3.3 Gender Equality

Another issue Post-Materialism are suggested to be concerned about is gender equality. New life-styles have emerged, and this could lead to a structural change in gender equality. It is hard to give a fair picture of how equal a society is in comparison to another one, in terms of gender equality. Different indicators one can consider are percent of school attendances by males and females, attitudes in which of the genders that makes a better boss or percentage of women in the parliament. Here, the indicator used is data on the changes over time in pay inequalities across industrial categories in the manufacturing sector. The data is compiled by the United Nations International Development Organization. (QoG code book, “utip_ipi” p 193-194) Larger numbers means greater pay inequality.



These diagrams seem to indicate differences in pay inequalities in at least some of the Materialist countries compared to the Post-Materialist ones. Albania had a great jump in inequality between 1993 and 1997, but aside from that the Materialist countries stay within a range of 0.004 and 0.08. The Materialist countries China and Taiwan seem to have as low numbers as the Post-Materialistic countries, while the progress in Pakistan, Hungary and Russia shows greater inequality over time. The Post-Materialist countries stay within the range of 0.004 and 0.03. Sweden and Norway has the most equal pay, and their levels are steady over time. The most surprising feature here is however the increase in inequality in Germany and Canada over time.

An explanation for lower pay for women is that employers undervalue women's work, put them on lower positions and hence they get lower pay. However, some employers argue that the differences in pay are due to other factors than the gender of the employees, and that the pay was agreed upon as a result of bargaining with the relevant labour union. According to Davies, it is unlawful in some countries to pay men and women differently for the same work if the employer alone decides the pay, and if labour unions were involved, the responsibility to pay proper still remains on the employer (Davies, 1989, p 63). Another reason for increased pay inequalities could be an increase in performance pay, which provides a channel for individual pay setting which seems to favour male employees. This too is an issue addressing gender equality, though.

4 Related Change: Consumption

Inglehart states that in the long run, the public will place less emphasis on material consumption and security, and instead concentrate on humanistic and aesthetic goals (Inglehart, 1977, p367). Less emphasis is not the same as reduction in consumption. But since the economy is less prioritized by Post-Materialists, it should not be as important to them to try to gain self-esteem by showing off the goods they own. Self-expression and to make a change is instead what is prioritized by Post-Materialists, and therefore they might be more aware in the way they consume. But could this lead to a decline in consumption?

It has been argued that Inglehart's theory on Post-Materialism is not applicable to consumption, since a high level of Materialism is about putting emphasis on physical and economical security, not about owning property. There is a distinction between Post-Materialism and Anti-Materialism. Post-Materialism is about values, while Anti-Materialism is a perspective which refuses to put value on material things (Moors, 2003, p 396-397). I do not mean to suggest that Post-Materialism should equal Anti-Materialism. Ideas are more important than money for Post-Materialists. This is predicted to manifest itself through changes in lifestyles, and I suggest that consumption is a possible part of one's life-style that might be affected by Post-Materialist values. This is not because Post-Materialists would refuse to put any value on material things, but because they might reflect more about the way they consume. If Post-Materialists is manifested through political participation, concern for the environment and gender quality, a modern interpretation of the theory might be applicable to consumption too.

Lifestyles and social practices goes hand in hand. Values and practices does not necessarily do so, though. People that state that it is their intention to act in a sustainable way may still not do so at all times and under all circumstances. For example, one can be concerned for the environment and still not change their lifestyle in accordance to this attitude. (Spaargarden, 2003, p 689)

First, I will see if the amount of consumption is lower in the Post-Materialist countries than in the Material ones, which is the first part of my hypothesis. Second, I will see if the way people consume have changed towards more sustainable consumption from an environmental perspective, which is the second part of my hypothesis.

4.1 Amount of Consumption

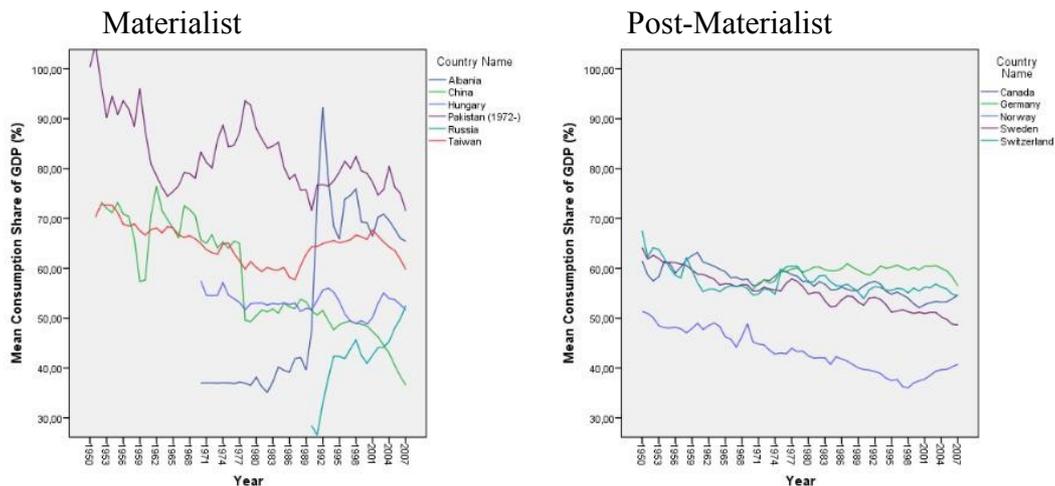
Fromm developed his thesis only a year before Inglehart released his work. Fromm's thesis states that there are two modes of existence. These are the being

mode of existence and the having mode of existence. These modes address completely different perspectives on how the individual experiences life, and which will be the dominating perspective depends on what characterizes the society and its citizens as individuals. People who come from the having mode of existence identify themselves with what they have (Fromm, 2003, p 42). Those who align with the being mode of existence on the other hand have their sources of identification not from what they keep with them, but from what they express (Fromm, 2003, p 118).

This can contribute to a sociological explanation of another way Post-Materialism could manifest itself. Fromm's way of thinking in terms of "having" versus "being" can be associated with Post-Materialism through Maslow's needs satisfaction hypothesis, by which both Fromm and Inglehart are influenced. A person who aligns with the being perspective is more likely to engage in self-expression which is important to them as a source of identification, and therefore they do not feel fear of losing what they have, since their belongings do not contribute to who they are (Fromm, 2003, p 136).

Belonging and esteem, intellectual needs and aesthetic needs are values that characterize Post-Materialists, but that individuals with the being perspective are likely to prioritize too. This is because they get their source of identification from what they express as opposed to what they have. This is not to say that all Post-Materialists have the being perspective. It is only to suggest that people who prioritize Post-Material values might have a similar relationship to the things they consume, that might make them consume in a less luxurious way. To consume in a conscious way seems to have become more of a virtue too, and it is widely seen as socially desirable (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 11).

To test if Post-Materialism correlates with the amount of consumption, I here use data on consumption share of GDP. The data is compiled by Penn World Table from 1950 to 2007 (QoG code book, "pwt_csg", p 151).



These time-series diagrams show that the consumption share of the GDP is not only lower in the most Post-Materialist countries, but also that it is steadily declining in these countries. The most Materialist countries on the other hand

differ in their patterns. In 2007, the Materialist countries kept within the range between 36.51 and 71.50 percent of consumptions share of the GDP, as opposed to the Post-Materialist countries that all stayed in the range between 50.73 and 56.44 percent. The decline is the most interesting feature, as this is the only variable except for concern for the environment that show an expected pattern over time for this selection of Post-Materialist countries, and not only amount relative to the Materialist countries.

Consumption share of GDP is not the best tool to measure change in consumption, though. This is partly because the numbers presented depend on the other parts of the GDP, being import, export, governmental expenditures and investments (Fregert and Jonung, 2010, p 57). It is also because it does not reveal what kind of consumption the data concern. Therefore, a Greendex have been considered to evaluate if sustainable consumption have changed.

4.2 Sustainable Consumption

Consumption can be seen from an environmental, global approach too. In that context, daily routines, consumption behaviour and lifestyles are important components which needs a certain structure to promote sustainable practises (Spaargarden, 2003, p 687).

Another way to indicate how conscious the public is about their consumption is to measure in which ways they try to convert to sustainable consumption, which remains a global challenge. National Geographic have published annual Greendex surveys since 2008, carried out by GlobeScan, a company that performs qualitative and quantitative analyses and surveys (Kritski, 2012). In these surveys, 17 000 respondents per country have participated to increase the reliability of the data (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 12). Greendex ranks how environmentally sustainable different countries' consumption and behaviour is according to a number of indicators (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 2).

National Geographic uses a selection of 17 countries. Three of these match this thesis' selection of Materialistic countries (China, Hungary and Russia), and three match this selection of Post-Materialistic countries (Germany, Sweden and Canada). Of these, the Post-Materialist countries have the least sustainable behaviour in the overall ranking, which includes all of the variables measured. When asked of how guilty they are about their impact on the environment, it is surprisingly the countries with the lighter green footprints that feel the most guilty. Here, China feels the most guilt while Germany doesn't feel very guilty at all. Still it is according to the same survey the people in the least environmentally friendly countries that feel most able to help improve the environment as individuals. (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 4-5)

Environmentally friendly consumer behaviour is here measured in areas related to transportation, household energy and resource use, consumption of food and everyday consumer goods as well as what people are doing in order to

minimize the impact their activities have on the environment. (National Geographic, “Greendex 2012” p 2-3) The two sub-variables interesting for the testing of change in consumption patterns between the Post-Materialistic and Materialistic countries are foremost consumption of food and goods.

In the table below the results from the two sub-variables goods and food are presented. The scores are calculated from a number of indicators, and to the left of that the change between 2008 and 2012 is presented in percent.

	<u>Goods</u>		<u>Food</u>	
	Score	%	Score	%
<u>Materialist</u>				
China	56.8	+1.2	63.7	+1.8
Hungary	49.3	+2.5	61.5	+2.5
Russia	47.9	+6.4	60.4	+0.2
<hr/>				
<u>Post-Materialist</u>				
Germany	47.1	+3.3	61.9	+2.3
Sweden	46.1	-2.1	64.8	+1.6
Canada	45.7	+1.3	60.9	-1.8

The consumption of goods does not change notably in any of the countries in the selection, except for in Russia, where the increase is higher. The rest of the countries all have increase in environmentally friendly consumption in this area, on between 1.2 and 3.3 percent, except for Sweden that have a decrease for unknown reasons. Of the two Post-Materialist countries, Sweden and Germany prefer reusable products more than the other nationalities. The Post-Materialist countries do re-cycle more than the others. A reason for this can be regulations and facilitating infrastructure. Among the Materialist countries, the Chinese are the most likely to buy second-hand. Environmentally friendly products are becoming more popular, except for in Russia. (National Geographic, “Greendex 2012” p 10-11) The Materialist countries have the highest scores in the index of goods consumption, which means they leave the smallest green footprint

In the index concerning food consumption, all of the countries have gotten better from an environmental perspective, except for Canada which have had a negative development. It is not clear why the development Canada have been negative. How often the respondents eat meat is regarded, which is common except for in Germany and Hungary. Russians, Chinese and Germans consume locally grown food most frequently. But the Germans also consume a lot of bottled water, more than any other country in the sample. (National Geographic, “Greendex 2012” p 8-9)

It is strange that the development is not more sustainably increasing in the Post-Materialist countries, since there are more environmentally friendly options on the European food and goods markets nowadays (Spaargarden, 2003, p 694). Two out of three of the Post-Materialist countries in the cluster used here are

European. This means the option is provided to the public, but they do not seem to chose it more in this area as a consequence to this.

Green consumer behaviour is widely seen as socially desirable. People seem to act more environmentally friendly than people think they do (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 11). Barriers to sustainable consumption are lack of trust of companies' environmental claim and a lack of leadership that would make sustainable consumption a pressing issue (National Geographic, "Greendex 2012" p 2).

Another reason stated to influence the amount of environmentally friendly consumer behaviour is the possibilities offered to the public to do so. According to Spaargarden, a combination of actors willing to act sustainable and a structure made to facilitate such a behaviour are both needed for a change in consumer behaviour to change notably. The lifestyle of the actors play a key role in the change, at the same time as the system needs to provide the tools for a changed lifestyle (Spaargarden, 2003, p 689).

5 Summary

The variables said to cause a shift in values towards Post-Materialism are economical and physical security, as well as increase in education and information. The most Post-Material countries I have examined in my selection have all been industrial countries with a relatively high standard in these fields. The Materialist countries are on the other hand of mixed character.

The scores on the scale of Post-Materialism could be interpreted in two ways. It could either be as Inglehart suggests, that high levels of economical and physical safety in combination with education and access to information makes people prioritize other values than the ones they take for granted, because these are the values they are longing for. The other option is that the public in these countries actively appreciate the development they already have seen, that freedom of speech have been widespread for some time, ideas are valued and their societies already have a progress towards a more humane climate. Both the education system and media is emphasizing the importance of these, to a large part by showing what it is like in countries where these values are not incorporated in the politics and social climate. Maybe the fear of oppression and tyranny from the government seems like a more pressing threat than war and hunger, at least relatively seen.

The social changes that was predicted to occur more in Post-Materialist countries were according to Inglehart increase in concern for the environment, increase in elite challenging political participation, and increase in equalization between the genders. The hypothesis of this thesis is that these predictions are correct. Quantitative method has been used to test these predictions. The table below show the collected results.

	<u>Mean level</u>	<u>Confirms hypothesis</u>	<u>Increase over time (% cases)</u>	<u>Confirms hypothesis</u>
Concern for the environment:				
Materialist	1.53		40 %	
Post-Materialist	1.22	Yes, but weak	60 %	Yes, but weak
Political participation through action:				
Materialist	0.36		33 %	
Post-Materialist	1.22	Yes	25 %	No
Gender equality through equal pay:				
Materialist	0.04		0 %	
Post-Materialist	0.02	Yes	0 %	No

In the first column, the mean level between the countries in each cluster is calculated with the most recent scores of the each indicators. This is to show how the two clusters differ in amount. In the second column, the percentage of numbers of countries in each cluster that have had an increase in their scores are presented. The purpose of this is to show to what degree the trend is increasing for the three indicators. Next to the data one can see if this confirms the hypothesis or not.

The environment have been a pressing issue for governments and people all over the world since the 1960's, and Inglehart have predicted that concern for the environment will be increasingly important for Post-Materialists. This is above all because the theory of Post-Materialism is based on priorities of other values than the economy, which is considered to be Materialistic. Hence it is peculiar that any of the countries in this cluster shows progress of focus towards economic growth over protection of the environment. The data show, that there is not a great difference in amount of people prioritizing the environment over the economy. In the development over time, protection of the environment is becoming a slightly greater concern for the people in the Post-Materialistic countries, but not notably more than in the Materialistic countries, which is surprising.

The level of political action is higher in the Post-Materialistic countries in comparison with the Materialistic ones. The differences in amount between the clusters are notable, although none of the countries here tested scored more 1.65 in there latest survey. This is itself very not much, since the measurement of political action is on a scale between 0 to 5. The political participation through action in the Post-Material countries is significantly higher relative to the Materialist ones, but the participation is declining in two of three cases in this cluster. This is unexpected, since the theory predicts a steady increase. The development in the Materialistic countries is similar over time, though on a lower level. Post-Materialists are more likely to respond that more say in the government and the community is important to them, and they do use it more than the Materialistic countries. It seems like they are getting less interested in doing so, though. It is possible that the suggested reasons for Post-Materialism, increased education and information flows, makes the people in these countries aware that these things are important, although a large portion of them themselves are busy elsewhere. Freedom of speech is another value important to people in these countries, but this could as well be something they find important as a principle, although they do not feel that they have an urge to make use of it as often as they used to, at least not through the channels here measured in the data of political action. Still, the amount is significantly higher in the Post-Materialist countries, which is in line with the hypothesis.

As an indicator on whether or not inequalities between the genders have decreased more in the Post-Materialistic countries than the Materialistic ones, I have used data on inequalities in pay in the industrial sector. According to this data, the levels of gender equality seems to be significantly higher in the Post-Materialist

countries. The Materialist countries have higher amount of inequality, except for in China and Taiwan that have the same values as the Post-Materialist countries. The mean level of the clusters confirm the hypothesis since the Post-Materialist countries does have a higher level of gender equality according to this indicator. The surprising part is that gender equality seems to deteriorate in both of the clusters and hence the development is going the complete opposite direction than expected, although the amount of inequality is lower in the Post-Materialist countries. This means Inglehart is partially right here, although this is the way it looked before 1977 too, when the book was written. The development after that does not look to positive though, although the change in the Post-Material countries is not very big. It is hard to tell if this trend is due to inequalities in pay for the same work or if men tend to get higher positions in the industrial sector. Either way the equality between the genders does not seem to improve, using this variable as an indicator.

To get a picture of whether the amount of consumption has declined more in the Post-Materialist countries than the Materialist ones, consumption share of GDP have been used as an indicator. To gain information on whether sustainable consumption that have changed or not, Greendex have been used. The mean level on the Greendex is a mean between latest scores in the food consumption index and the goods consumption index, while the mean level of consumptions share of GDP is a mean of the latest scores from the Quality of Government data.

	<u>Mean level</u>	<u>Confirms hypothesis</u>	<u>Increase over time (% cases)</u>	<u>Confirms hypothesis</u>
Amount of consumption (share of GDP):				
Materialist	56.3		17 %	
Post-Materialist	51.0	Yes, but weak	0 %	Yes
Sustainable consumption (Greendex):				
Materialist	56.6		100 %	
Post-Materialist	54.4	No	33 %	No

In this table it seems like the amount of consumption share of GDP is only slightly higher in the Materialist cluster than the Post-Materialist one. The Materialist countries on the other hand have a vary of developments in their consumption share of GDP, making it hard to distinguish any pattern common for them, even if their mean level is only slightly higher than the Post-Materialist countries'. In the Post-Materialist cluster however, there is a steady trend of decline. This data is relative to the other sub-variables the countries' GDP consist of, and therefore it is not the most reliable material. Also, it does not reveal what kind of consumption that has changed. Therefore, the Greendex from National Geographic have been considered too.

The Greendex measures how environmentally friendly the populations consumption is. In this data, a complete different picture is presented. According to this index the Materialist countries does not only have a more sustainable food and goods consumption, they are getting increasingly better. The Post-Material countries on the other hand is getting less sustainable in two out three cases. This is the opposite of what the hypothesis of this thesis. That Post-Materialist countries score worse than the Materialist countries is strange in a number of ways. There is a high level of living standard in these countries, and the structure is there to make it easier to act greener for them. At the same time, many of the countries in the cluster showed a trend towards prioritizing the environment over economic growth more and more over time. The tools are there for them, and they state that it is increasingly important to them to see a more sustainable development, still they do not seem to change their habits in accordance to this. When considering the Greendex on the other hand, it seems more likely that the decline in consumption as share of GDP is misleading and more due to the other parts of this measurement. To change one's way to consume could be a way to put pressure on companies, or to take one's own responsibility for the milieu. This could be an alternative way of action, a way though living with a sustainable lifestyle. However, it does not seem like the needs people satisfy when they consume have changed. Since sustainable consumption is greater in the Materialist countries, one can assume that Post-Materialism does not affect the way people look at consumption as a part of their lifestyle they find important to change.

6 Conclusions

Have changes occurred in attitudes, activities and the social structure as a consequence of Post-Materialism?

There seems like more changes in activities, here measured by political participation and the social structure, here measured by gender equality, in the Post-Materialist countries than in the Materialist ones. There does not seem to be a significant difference in attitudes though, here measured by concern for the environment. But are is the greater amount of political political participation and gender equality necessary a consequence of Post-Materialism? The explanations suggested for why Post-Materialism occur are a great amount of economical and physical security as well as education and access to information. Could these be the real reasons for more political participation and gender equality? Education and information gives the mental tools required to influence in an efficient way, for example. Many of the values prioritized by Post-Materialists are about the wish to be able to influence – in governmental decision-making, in the community, through freedom of speech. This drive to make a change does seem a more likely reason for political participation than the for pillars suggested to cause Post-Materialism. To create gender equality, acknowledgement of the issue is often the first step in pushing the issue onto the agenda for change. Involvement ease this process. Therefore these social changes are more likely to be consequences of Post-Materialism, than to only correlated with it.

Is it possible to extend the theory of Post-Materialism, so that it can also be said to consequence in changed patterns of consumption?

Although the data on consumptions share of GDP seemed to confirm the hypothesis that consumption would decline more in the Post-Materialist countries than the Materialist ones, this seems to be more due to the other variables GDP consist of. The Greendex, showing the amount of sustainable consumption makes it rather look like the Materialist countries are more aware in their way to consume. Hence, this hypothesis is rejected.

Considering that the Post-Materialist countries have a higher amount of political participation through action and gender equality, but that they are both in decline, maybe Post-Materialism as a theory of importance is simply outdated. It used to be true that Post-Materialists acted this way politically, and that these sort of structural changes ones occurred, but the more recent development have not gone in the same direction.

To sum up, it seems like theory of Post-Materialism is limited in its ability to predict changes that would come with changed values. These values does not seem to have very strong causal relations to measurable social changes. To be a theory as widespread as it has become, it seems to only reflect values, which take little action. The theory itself is only about values, it is what it measures, and the way the statements are asked to be prioritized by the respondents are about what aims should be prioritized by their country, not necessary the way they themselves wish they will act for the next decade. Still, in the Greendex, the people who acted the least in line with sustainable consumption was the same people who thought they were able to do the most change as individuals. It is not a far stretch to think these people consider themselves to be able to change other parts of the social structure too. Pay inequalities, for example, is something those citizens which have the role of employers have the greatest capacity to change. And all citizens of free democracies have the ability to participate politically through channels of action, if they have the drive to do so. Why then does inequality get greater, and political action decline? This could be a consequence of people who have lost their drive. It could also be a consequence of people who are relatively satisfied already, because they already have the ability to satisfy their needs, the higher ones too.

Political action did increase from 1960's until 1990 in the most Post-Materialist countries. It is not increasing much any more. Gender inequality was always always lower in the Post-Materialist countries, which could imply that this has to do with the structures of these countries, rather than changed values. Recently the inequality is even getting greater there. Concern for the environment is on the rise in the Post-Materialist countries, but the difference in amount from the Materialist countries is not significant. The additional factor, consumption, is showing a contrary pattern than here expected when it comes to sustainable consumption. Hence, the theory does according to me have little to contribute to political science. It is no wonder that people who live under conditions of satisfying physical and economical security do not actively long for more of this. They prioritize other values, but this does not seem to manifest itself as much as it could have.

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8 Appendix

The program used, SPSS, does not allow display of the values of the variables from Quality of Government Institute. The only way possible to verify that these are the most Materialistic and Post-Materialistic countries from the countries participating in the survey of Post-Materialism is by making a diagram. I have correlated Post-Materialism (World Value Survey, “wvs_pm12”) with GDP per capita (Gleditsch, “gle_gdp”) in order to make the diagram clearer, since they would otherwise be too close to each other to be distinguished. My selection of cases are the only ones filled with grey and with labels, since they are the relevant cases for this thesis.

World Value Survey has only done the survey in 91 countries, so these countries are the most and least Post-Material countries out of those.

