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Evolution vs. culture as background factors for international intelligence differences

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1 The question

There are large differences in intelligence (ability to think), knowledge (relevant and true knowledge) and the intelligent use of this knowledge across nations.

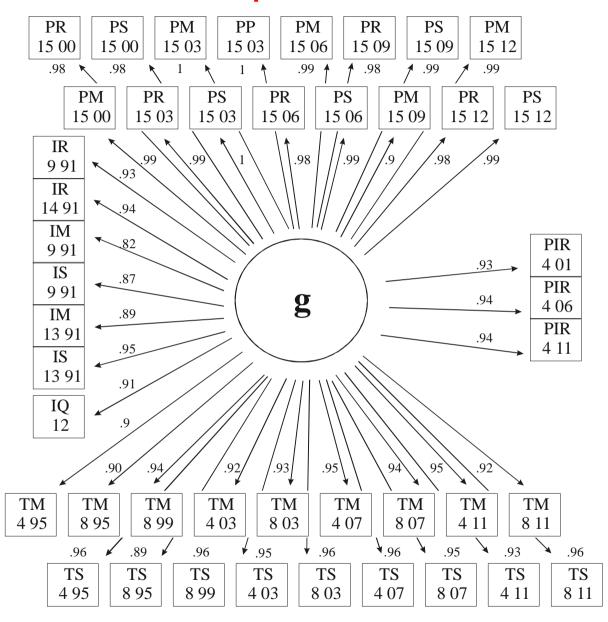
	lowest			h	equ to		
Study	Country	SAS	IQ	Country	SAS	IQ	scho y
TIMSS 2011 4 th grade	Yemen	209	t≈56	Korea S	587	t≈113	t≈11 y
PISA Math 2012 15 year o.	Peru	368	t≈ <mark>80</mark>	Singapo	573	t≈111	t≈ <mark>6</mark> y
IQ Lynn & Vanhanen 2012	Malawi	t≈233	60	Singapo Hong Ko	t≈557 t≈553		t≈16 y

SAS: Student Assessment Score (M=500, SD=100), uncorrected results,

t≈ transformed in other scale,

equ to scho y: difference equivalent pure school attendance years (35 points in SAS, 3 points in IQ, younger students larger, older students smaller increase).

In different test measures the pattern is similar.



G factor of international differences (Rindermann, 2015)



Cognitive ability levels around the world, darker represents higher values (including estimates for 27 countries, 173 measured; R, 15)

There are stable differences in cognitive ability and its indicators across time (relative pattern stability, not absolute; R, 15).

	Tech- nology	Tech- nology		Tec nolo			ech- logy		minent cientists	Enlightenm ent Index
Cognitive ability estimates	-1000	0		+15	00	+2	2000	-	800 to	18th cent.
(in parentheses number of	(Comin)	(Comin	1)	(Con	nin)	(Co	omin)		+1950	(Mokyr)
countries)								(1	Murray)	
CA corrected (max 197)	.48	.36		.82	2		77		.37	.34
SAS mean corr (max 98)	.28	.38		.78	3		71		.36	.32
SAS 95% corr (max 98)	.26	.40		.76	5		75		.37	.33
SAS 05% corr (max 98)	.26	.37		.75	5		68		.35	.32
	Patents	High tech	A	irline	In	no-	Scien	ce	High	Top
	1991-2007	exports	se	curity	vat	ion	Nobe	el	Citations	s univer-
	(WIPO)	2007	20	009-10	20	13	Prize	s	1987	sities
		(WEF)	(<i>A</i>	AERO)	(WI	PO)	1901-20	004	(Cole)	2010-2013
CA corrected (max 197)	.49	.52		.53	3.	33	.37		.44	.74
SAS mean corr (max 98)	.46	.46		.50		79	.35		.42	.61
SAS 95% corr (max 98)	.51	.46		.57	3.	31	.37		.45	.65
SAS 05% corr (max 98)	.41	.45		.45		76	.35		.40	.58
	Cognitive	achieveme	nt	Cognitive achieve		evement C		Cognitive achievement		
	in histo	ory (-1950)		in modernity			total average			
CA corrected (max 197)	.53			.72			.69		9	
SAS mean corr (max 99)	.55			.67			.70			
SAS 95% corr (max 99)		.55			.70		.73		3	
SAS 05% corr (max 99)		.53			.6	54			.6	7

But why?

There have to be long-term stable determinants (pattern stability).

2 What not

Education,
modernisation,
politics,
wealth etc.
are all relevant, but not long-term factors
(theoretically and empirically highly variable).

Geography (drought, heat, "no tameable and domesticable animals and plants" etc.) is a manageable challenge and it is theoretically (contentwise, substantially) not convincing.

- → evolutionary-genetic factors
- → cultural factors

3 Evolutionary approach

Main problem:

Intelligence coding genes and national differences in them are not known, also not their way of work via proteins, neurological structures and neurological processes on cognitive development resulting in psychological intelligence differences.

We cannot explain international differences in cognitive ability based on genes. "A" cannot explain "B" if we do not know "A".

Huge body of indirect evidence (and first, until now not replicated direct evidence) that genes contribute to international cognitive ability differences.

Behavioural genetics and individual differences

High heritabilities (h^2 =.50 to .80) make it rather improbable that genes are not involved in group differences as in international differences (Jensen, 1970, pp. 21ff.; Sesardic, 2005, chapter 4).

But not (logically) compelling (ecological fallacy problem).

Correspondence of intelligence coding genes and intelligence differences at the international level

The COMT Val158Met $(r_{\text{ind}} \approx .25)$ correlates across groups with - agriculture (vs. hunter-gatherer society, r=.41), - latitude (r=.55) and - intelligence (r=.57).

FNBP1L (rs236330) $(r_{\text{ind}} \approx .12)$ correlates across groups with - intelligence (r=.81) (Piffer, 2013).

(One study, group level.)

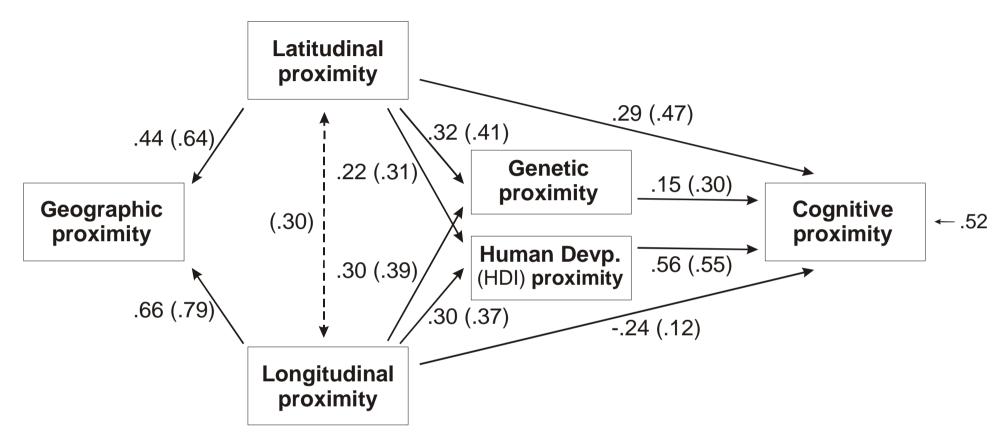
Correspondence of international distributions of general genetic markers and intelligence



Prediction of cognitive ability using two general haplogroup sets and a society developmental indicator (*N*=47 countries) (Rindermann, Woodley & Stratford, 2012)

The effect is robust: in within-country analyses in Italy and Spain for the same genetic markers the same pattern emerged.

Correspondence of general genetic proximity and intelligence proximity at the international level



Prediction of cognitive ability proximity by latitudinal, longitudinal and genetic proximity (N=67 correlations and 840 comparisons; Becker & Rindermann, 2014)

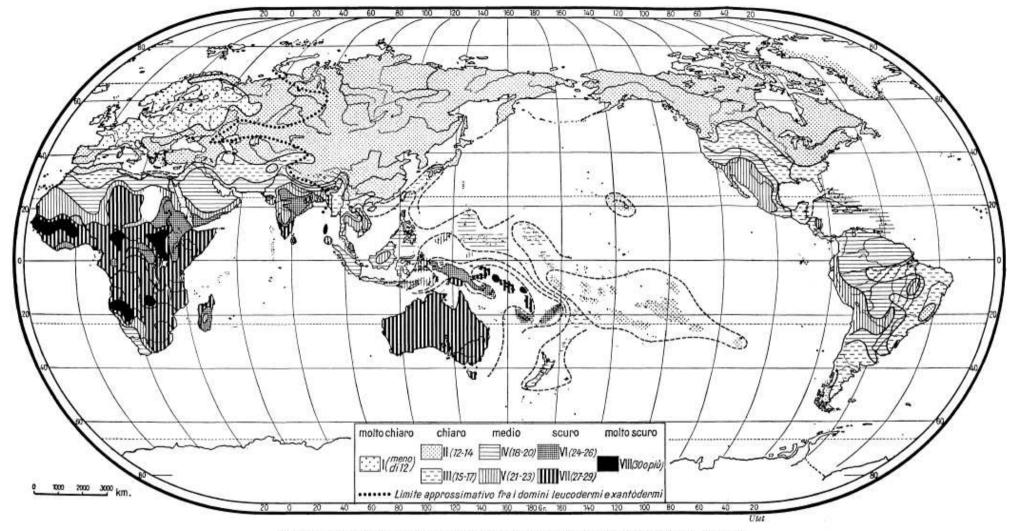
Skin brightness (skin colour)

(About the used term: Not colour is measured, but reflectance. Colour is not the relevant aspect, but high or low melanization. "Reflectance" is not the correct evolutionary association: Skin didn't become "reflecting" as white to protect against sun but lost melanization to enable more vitamin D synthesis in regions with less sunlight.)

Only indicator variable, no causal variable.

Maybe pleiotropic effects (Jensen, 2006), but no proof.

Individual level: r=.20 (Jensen, 2006).



DISTRIBUZIONE DELLA VARIA INTENSITÀ DEL COLORE DELLA PELLE (R. BIASUTTI).

(Biasutti, 1967, p. 224, Tavola VI)

	CA	SAS M	SAS M	SAS 95%	SAS 05%	GNI 2010
	(corrected)	(corr., all)	(ncorr.,	(nc., high	(nc., low	HDR
			PTP)	ability)	ability)	
Jablonski & Chaplin, ad.	.82 (.64)	.58	.69	.66	.69	.68 (.56)
(education partialled out)	(.62)					(.50)
Templer & Arikawa	.90 (.87)	.81	.79	.78	.76	.54 (.31)
(education partialled out)	(.82)					(.20)
Biasutti, adapted	.87 (.74)	.76	.74	.70	.75	.50 (.26)
(education partialled out)	(.80)					(.19)
Skin brightness average	.87 (.74)	.74	.74	.69	.74	.50 (.25)
(education partialled out)	(.80)					(.18)
Skin brightness average	.76	.71	.68	.64	.69	.34
excluding sub-S-Africa						

 N_{maxJC} =48, N_{maxTA} =129, N_{maxB} =188, N_{maxA} =188 or N_{maxNAf} =145 countries. In parentheses partial correlations, first distance to equator (absolute latitude) partialled out, second school quality mean and adult education mean.

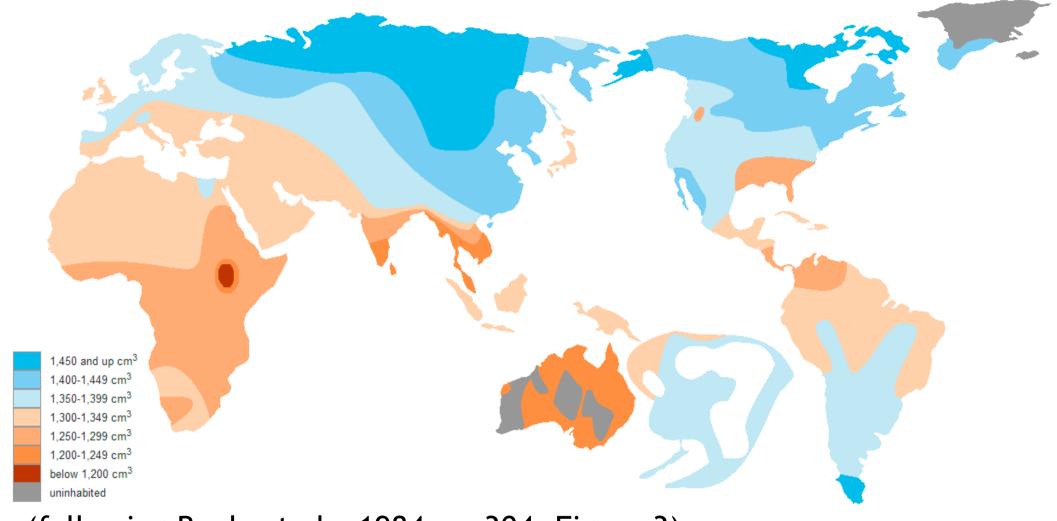
Comparisons with the Jablonski and Chaplin data (r=.91, N=43) and the original Biasutti data (r=.98, N=129) show that the numbers of Templer and Arikawa are correct.

But: Source of data? Newer and more data needed.

Brain size (cranial capacity)

Brain size and intelligence are related:

- *individually*: r=.56 (Deary et al., 2007, meta-analyses lower at around r=.40, Rushton & Ankney, 2009);
- *evolutionarily*: increase of brain size in evolution (r=.95; Henneberg & de Miguel, 2004, p. 27);
- *historically*: in 20th century head and brain sizes increased and similarly average intelligence of each generation (Lynn, 1990);
- cross-nationally (N=164) using data from Beals et al. (1984) cranial capacity and intelligence correlate at r=.77 (and cranial capacity with absolute latitude at r=.70 [Meisenberg, personal communication]).



(following Beals et al., 1984, p. 304, Figure 3)

	CA	SAS M	SAS M	SAS 95%	SAS 05%	GNI 2010
	(corrected)	(corr., all)	(ncorr.,	(nc., high	(nc., low	HDR
			PTP)	ability)	ability)	
Cranial capacity, Beals,	.73 (.50)	.59 (.32)	.56 (.33)	.52 (.28)	.56 (.34)	.45 (.22)
Meisenberg smoothed	(.54)	(.27)	(.22)	(.11)	(.26)	(.22)
Cranial capacity, Beals,	.58 (.35)	.52 (.29)	.51 (.32)	.46 (.26)	.52 (.33)	.34 (.13)
not smoothed	(.47)	(.37)	(.35)	(.26)	(.36)	(.20)
Cranial capacity, Beals,	.68 (.46)	.58 (.33)	.56 (.36)	.52 (.29)	.57 (.37)	.42 (.19)
both combined	(.53)	(.33)	(.30)	(.20)	(.34)	(.22)
C. capacity/height, Beals,	.67 (.59)	.42 (.23)	.44 (.28)	.38 (.21)	.47 (.33)	.30 (.13)
Meisenberg smoothed	(.53)	(.04)	(.10)	(04)	(.19)	(.01)

In parentheses first row: distance to equator (absolute latitude) partialled out, second line school quality mean and adult education mean partialled out.

But: Source of data? Newer and more data needed.

Evolutionary theories

Cold-winter-theory

Selection by climatical harshness: challenges better copable with higher intelligence.

Richard Lynn (1987, 2006); Edward Miller (1991); Michael Hart (2007); Philippe Rushton (1997/1995).

r/K-theory

Selection towards higher parental investment in individual offspring. Intelligence an attribute of a *K*-strategy more useful in cold climates. Philippe Rushton (1997/1995).

Novel challenges

Selection by novelty: challenges better copable with higher intelligence.

Satoshi Kanazawa (2004).

High cognitive ability level of Jews and genetic theories Selection by society: constraints better copable with higher intelligence.

E.g. Cochran & Harpending (2009).

Evidence for recent (accelerated) evolution among humans

E.g. resistance against infectious diseases, lactose tolerance (lactase persistence), skin brightness, systems of respiration and circulation (Cochran & Harpending, 2009).

If other traits were recently modified why not intelligence too?

Sedentism, agriculture, densification and urbanisation → burgher personality effect (including intelligence). E.g. Clark (2007); Cochran & Harpending (2009, pp. 113ff.); Frost (2010); Unz (2013).

Summary on evolutionary-genetic factors

No direct or only weak direct evidence (genes→physical structures and processes→intelligence; differences in gene frequencies across nations correlated with differences in intelligence).

But huge indirect evidence.

Theoretically and empirically the best source: cranial capacity. Bigger brains lead to higher intelligence. Empirical evidence on different levels.

But also a rather cautious measure of a possible evolutionary impact.

All genetic theories are in the long run environmental theories, environmental pressures, which have resulted via selection in genetic and physic changes.

		Skin	Cranial	Consangui	CA
		brightness	capacity	nity	(corrected)
Skin brightness,	$r(r_p)$	1	.61 (.57)	60	.87 (.83)
mean	N	(179)	(179)	(75)	(179)
Cranial capacity,	$r(r_p)$.61 (.57)	1	21	.58 (.47)
own assigment	N	(179)	(179)	(75)	(179)
Consanguinity	$r(r_p)$	60	21	1	62 (60)
	N	(75)	(75)		(75)
G factor evolution	$r(r_p)$.90 (.88)	.90 (.89)	-	.81 (.74)
	N	(179)	(179)		(179)
G factor genes	r (r _p)	.91 (.90)	.70 (.71)	77 (76)	.77 (.75)
	N	(75)	(75)	(75)	(75)

First line correlations and in parentheses partial correlations (GNI per capita partialled out). Skin brightness (Biasutti-Jablonski-mean) and cranial capacity (own assignment) in the same country samples of 179 nations.

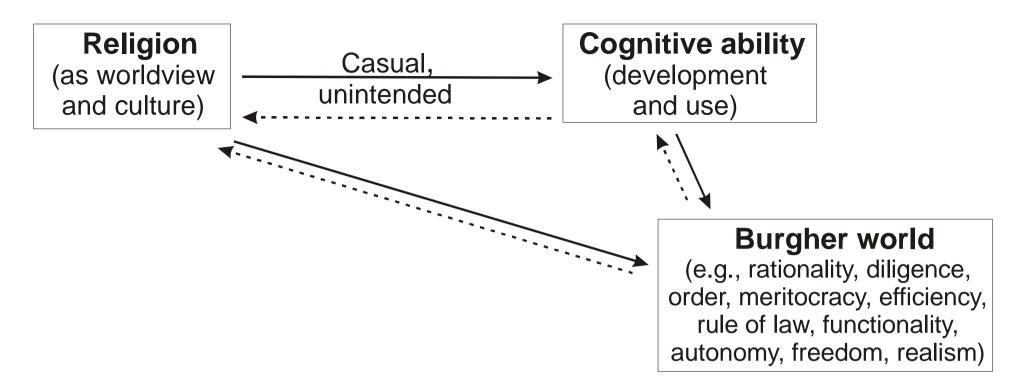
4 Cultural approach

Culture is a worldview ("Weltanschauung") that *describes* the world and how it *should* be and via both and changing the behaviour of people *shapes* this world.

Religions are worldviews, the oldest and due to their long-term impacts the most important ones.

Religions take effect via

- the *original message* (initial holy text),
- the exemplary figure of the *religious founder* and his role model function,
- the interpreted and revised doctrine and its changing understanding across time and
- via the *lived practice* in present time.



Theoretical model for effects of religion on cognitive ability and the development and preservation of a burgher world

Worldviews and religions matter, ideas change people, we want to give three examples:

(1) North vs. South America

"The British colonies had a better educated population, greater intellectual freedom and social mobility. ...

The 13 British colonies had nine universities in 1776 for 2.5 million people. New Spain [Mexico], with 5 million, had only two universities ..., which concentrated on theology and law.

Throughout the colonial period the Inquisition kept a tight censorship and suppressed heterodox thinking." (Maddison, 2001, p. 108)

(2) Youth in Germany with Christian or Muslim religion

Higher religiosity among Muslim youth is corresponding to lower education

while among Christian youth (Germans or immigrants) higher religiosity corresponds to higher education (Baier et al., 2010, pp. 90f.).

For violence, the religious effect is reversed:
More religious Christian immigrants become less violent
while more religious Muslim immigrants become more violent
(Baier et al., 2010, pp. 117f.).

(3) Communism versus liberty

South Korean children are about 6 to 8 cm taller than their North Korean peers (Schwekendiek & Pak, 2009).

West Germans were around 1 to 2 cm taller than past East Germans (Komlos & Kriwy, 2003).

Religions and their impact on education and thinking

(sketchy and shortened, content of religion and its practice)

Catholicism

- + Truth in Bible has to be interpreted.
- + Scholastic philosophy of reason (Thomas Aquinas; e. g. Sombart, 1998/1913).
- + Education by monasteries and orders.
- + Institutional education of the religious elite.
- + Rule of law. In European history mental power independent from secular power.
- Traditionally intellectual elites have no own family and no own children.
- Problems of paternalism and dogmatism.

Protestantism

- + Appreciation and practice of own reading and own thinking (e. g. Hegel, 2001/1837).
- + Liberty and autonomy (Martin Luther).
- + Appreciation and practice of education, order (including rule of law, = meritocracy) and industry (e. g. Weber, 2001/1905).
- + Traditionally intellectual elites with own family and with own children in social and genetic exchange with other leading groups (e. g. merchants).
- Problems of radicalism or dissolution.

Islam

- + Antimagic approach, ban on pictures.
- ± Written language without vowels.
- Violation of rationality from 11th century to this day.
- Learning in Koran schools as rote learning of given truth without own thinking/questioning.
- No liberty, no rule of law.
- No equal rights for women results in low educational level of women and this leads to lower educational competence as mothers for children.

Animism

- + Frequently with very complex constructions of the world.
- Magic is seen as method to find truth; magic as short cut with avoidance of strenuous rational thinking and with avoidance of critical proof of empirical hypotheses (e. g. Lévy-Bruhl, 1923/1922).
- No necessity of own reading and own and rational thinking.

East-Asian Confucianism

- + Appreciation and practice of education, learning and hard work (e. g. Weber, 1951/1920).
- ± Even though there is no appreciation of independent thinking learning and thinking to solve given problems and as achievement for the family are strongly held in high esteem.

Judaism

- + Appreciation and practice of own reading Torah and Talmud (Murray, 2007).
- + In Occident appreciation of education at the marriage market.
- + In Occident since 19th century high appreciation and practice of education and own thinking (e. g. Van Den Haag, 1969; Nisbett, 2009) as legitimate ways out of marginalisation.
- Problems of radicalism or dissolution.

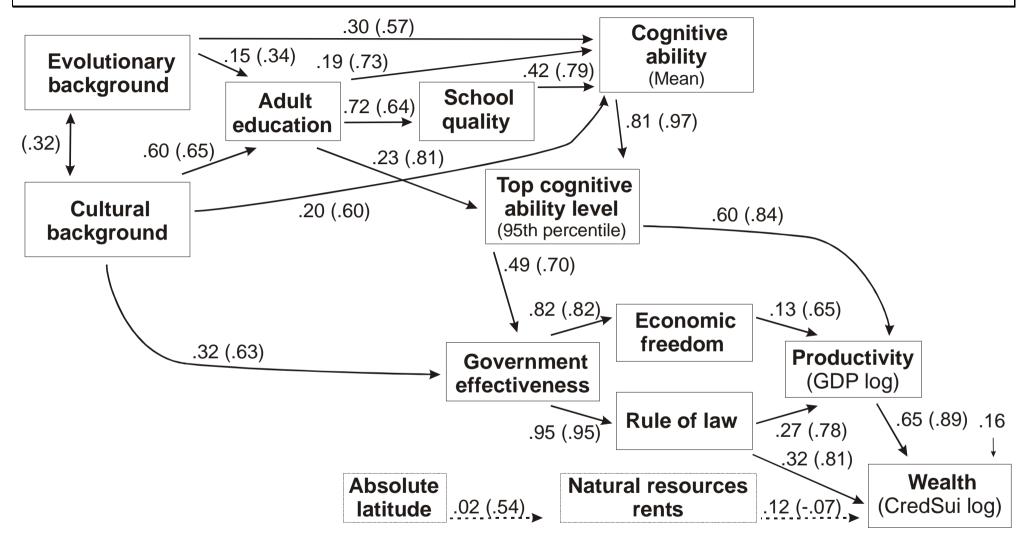
	CA	SAS M	Adult	Books
	(corr.)	(corr., all)	education	
Animism	65 (38)	53 (26)	53 (08)	31 (15)
Judaism	.08 (.03)	.05 (.02)	.08 (.06)	.08 (.06)
Christianity	.26 (.31)	.22 (.32)	.46 (.44)	.39 (.39)
Catholicism	.15 (.17)	.02 (.14)	.23 (.02)	.04 (.06)
Orthodoxy	.22 (04)	.10 (13)	.22 (.13)	.02 (12)
Protestantism	.19 (.23)	.35 (.40)	.33 (.48)	.60 (.62)
Islam	26 (63)	39 (68)	37 (55)	48 (53)
Hinduism	04 (.03)	13 (.00)	09 (13)	02 (08)
Buddhism	.15 (.21)	.14 (.14)	01 (06)	03 (.10)
Confucianism	.31 (.38)	.30 (.32)	.14 (.00)	.04 (02)
Weighted	.60 (.66)	.62 (.73)	.66 (.57)	.64 (.65)
religions				
N	199	108	193	85

Correlations with percentages of members in countries (in parentheses excluding developing countries)

Weighted Religions = $(Prot \cdot 1) + (Cathol \cdot 0.5) + (Orthodox \cdot 0.2) + (Rest-Christ \cdot 0.3) + (Muslim \cdot (-0.4)) + (Hindu \cdot (-0.4)) + (Buddh \cdot 0.2) + (Animist \cdot (-1)) + (Confuc \cdot 0.8) + (Jew \cdot 0.8).$

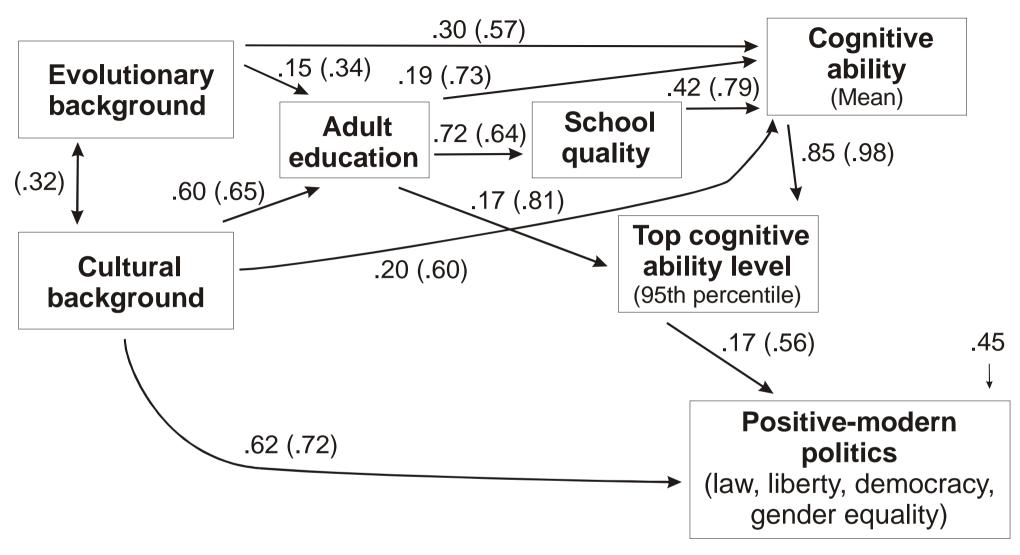
	Enlight.	Trust	Rule of	Demo-	Political	Economic	Gov.	Low
	(Mokyr)	(WVS)	law	cracy	freedom	freedom	effec.	corrp.
Animism	18	30	40	27	19	38	46	36
Judaism	01	01	.07	.10	.07	.05	.09	.07
Christianity	.23	.07	.38	.60	.61	.28	.38	.36
Catholicism	.10	14	.22	.37	.44	.12	.24	.19
Orthodoxy	08	06	04	.14	.01	.04	02	08
Protestantism	.38	.54	.44	.42	.42	.32	.40	.52
Islam	16	16	33	51	53	16	32	33
Hinduism	05	06	03	.04	.02	01	01	04
Buddhism	06	.07	06	15	21	09	03	07
Confucianism	04	.23	.15	.00	02	.13	.18	.17
Weighted	.34 (.36)	.44 (.46)	.62 (.60)	.66 (.67)	.64 (.58)	.45 (.58)	.64 (.65)	.63 (.61)
religions								
N _{max}	186	117	198	189	194	180	198	183

5 Path models



Global wealth model

direct: $\beta_{\text{Evo}\to\text{CA}}=.30$, $\beta_{\text{Cul}\to\text{CA}}=.20$; total: $\beta_{\text{Evotot}\to\text{CA}}=.37$, $\beta_{\text{Cultot}\to\text{CA}}=.50$



Global politics model (political well-being)

For politics the impact of culture is much stronger than for wealth $(\beta_{\text{Cultot}\rightarrow\text{Pol}}=.71, r_{\text{Cul-Pol}}=.72 \text{ vs. } \beta_{\text{Cultot}\rightarrow\text{Wealth}}=.32, r_{\text{Cul-Wealth}}=.61).$

6 Conclusion

Background factors evolution and culture are theoretically and empirically important global factors explaining stable pattern differences between nations in cognitive ability and in aspects of economy, politics and society.

See also research in economics: e.g. by Spolaore and Wacziarg (2013), "How deep are the roots of economic development?":

"The evidence suggests that economic development is affected by traits that have been transmitted across generations over the very long run ... biologically (via genetic or epigenetic transmission) and culturally (via behavioral or symbolic transmission)." (p. 325)"

Limitations:

Empirical proof for historical and macro-social processes will be never as compelling as the experimental proof of theories at the level of individuals.

Longitudinal reciprocal effects difficult to model (with empirical data).

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