



A World of Three Cultures: Honor, Achievement and Joy

Miguel E. Basáñez

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In this book, Miguel Basáñez presents a provocative look at the impact of culture on global development. Drawing on data from governments, NGOs, the World Values Survey and more addressing over one hundred countries, he argues that values, as the "building blocks" of culture, are directly related to the speed with which social, cultural and economic development occurs. Basáñez utilizes quantitative survey data to delineate three cultural hyperclusters across the globe: cultures of honor, which prioritize political authority; cultures of achievement, which emphasize economic advancement; and cultures of joy, which focus on social interactions. According to Basáñez, these cultures evolved chronologically, mirroring the development of agrarian, industrial and service societies.

He argues that a country's developmental path is profoundly influenced by its people's values and culture, as crystallized through its formal and informal governing institutions. Culture is passed down over generations through families, schools, the media, religious institutions, leadership, and the law. Although culture and values are in a permanent state of evolution, leaders and policymakers can also push cultural change in order to promote desirable goals such as economic growth, democratization, and equality.

Over the course of the book, Basáñez introduces two new measures of development: the Objective Development Index (which blends rubrics such as health, education, income, gender equality, political rights and civil liberties, and economic inequality) and the Subjective Development Index (which uses responses to the World Values Survey to classify countries according to their values).

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