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## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES OF THE “NEW EUROPE”<sup>2</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** European nations are undergoing rapid and fundamental changes in response to social, political and economic events that are occurring both within and outside the region. These changes are far-reaching in scope and, ultimately, are expected to result in a redefinition of “Europe” and what it means to be “European.” Using the author’s extensively pre-tested *Index of Social Progress* (ISP), the research reported in this paper: 1) identifies the major changes in social development that have taken place in 36 European nations since 1970; 2) contrasts Europe’s recent social development trends with those of other major world regions (including Asia, Africa, Latin and North America, and Oceania); 3) using aggregate scores on the *Weighted Index of Social Progress* (WISP), identifies Europe’s “social leaders” (SLs), “middle performing countries” (MPCs), identifies Europe’s “social leaders” (SLs), “middle performing countries” (MPCs), and “socially least developing countries” (SLDCs); 4) identifies the major development challenges confronting Europe at the outset of a new decade; and 5) provides baseline data against which future developments in the region may be assessed.

**KEY WORDS:** development, Europe, social developing, social indicators, social progress, social reporting

### INTRODUCTION

European nations are undergoing rapid and fundamental social changes in response to political and economic events occurring both within and outside the region. These changes are rooted in: 1) the emergence of economic trading blocs in North America and Asia (Editors, 2002o; Mason and Turay, 1994; Rosenberg, 1992); 2) region-wide difficulties in competing in the new global market place (Editors, 2000d; Schulz, 2000; UN/ECE, 2001); 3) unfavorable economic growth trends in combination with high rates of unemployment and under-employment (Editors, 2003b; OECD, 2002; World Bank, 2003); and, 4) the collapse, in December 1991, of the former Soviet Union (hereafter “FSU”) and, with it, the sudden



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emergence of a large number of “new” – many poor and politically unstable – “European” countries (Editors, 2002d; UN/ECE, 2001). Added to the region’s development challenges are low fertility combined with rapid population aging (Carlson, 2003; Editors, 2003h; Hewitt, 2002; Stranovik, Stropnik and Prinz, 2000, Vogel, 2002a) and accelerated migration into the region from “developing Europe” and North Africa (Baganha, 2002; Feld, 2000; Keely, 2001; Richmond, 2002; Stalker, 2002; Warnes, 2002).

The response of the region’s leaders to the demands confronting them have been dramatic: 1) the creation of an economic union (the EU) of 15 of the region’s most robust economies (Gilligham, 2003; Pond, 2002; Schimmelfennig, 2002; Wessels, Maurer and Mittag, 2003);<sup>3</sup> 2) a plan to enlarge the EU to 25 member-states by the end of 2004 to include the most economically advanced of the newly independent states of Eastern and Central Europe (Curzon, Landau and Whitman, 1999; Editors, 2001c; Souza and Aarle, 2003; Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003); 3) the adoption of the “Euro” as a single financial currency for the both current and new members of the EU<sup>4</sup> (Delsen, 2001; Editors, 2001b; Verdun, 2002); 4) the ratification of an evolving European Constitution (Editors, 2003f, i, 1); 5) trade liberalization (Editors, 2002j, 1; UN/ECE, 2001); and, 6) in response to the especially profound economic challenges confronting several of the region’s largest economies (primarily Germany and France), a possible “temporary softening” of the fiscal stability rules agreed to by all members of the EU as a condition of their accession to membership (Editors 2003p; UN/ECE, 2001).

Attention also is being given within Europe to the creation of a “basket” of other measures that seek to both stimulate the regional economy and limit the rate of growth in public expenditures: 7) deregulation of public and private industries (Brenton and Manzocchi, 2002; Editors, 2002a, b, e, 2003a); 8) reductions in the size and authority of state bureaucracies (Alber, 2002; Busse, Wurzburg and Zappacosta, 2003; Ferge, 2001; Pierson, 2001); 9) reductions in personal and corporate tax rates (Editors, 2003m; UN/ECE, 2001); 10) increasing privatization of selected public services (Editors, 2002m, 2003c; Hyde and Dixon, 2002); 11) reducing, or at least freezing, growth in central government expenditures (CGE) for social entitlement programs; 12) the impos-

ition of "user" and other consumption fees on selected services (Editors, 2003l, n); 13) wage controls – even at the risk of higher unemployment; and, 14) more rapid devolution of selected welfare responsibilities from central governments to local communities and to families. Pressures also exist to lower further already low retirement ages in an effort to stimulate employment and reduce the less visible problem of under-employment (Brugiavini, 2001; Muller, 1999; Muller et al., 1999).

Unlike responses to earlier economic crises, many European countries are reducing, certainly reassessing, their century-old commitment to the egalitarian principles used to inform much of the region's social policy agenda since the 1930s (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Vogel, 2002b, 2003). Increasingly, the new "social Europe" is placing comparatively greater emphasis on policies that promote "equality of opportunity" rather than, as in the past, on "equality of outcome" (Alber, 2002; Carlson, 2002; Fajth, 1999; Pierson, 2001). At the same time, a growing acquiescence appears to exist in the region of the need for significant labor reforms and, possibly, of the inevitability of higher levels of social and income inequality (Editors, 2000b, c, 2002a, c, e, 2003e; Visser, 2000). If enacted, these latter reforms, almost certainly, will contribute adversely to the already serious problem of "social exclusion" that exists for many of the region's new economic migrants and asylum seekers (Brenton and Manzocchi, 2002; Gijsberts, 2002; Kurczewska, 1999; Morin and Vicens, 2001; Saint-Martin, 2000).

Emulating the model developed in the United States over a period of 200 years (McCarthy, 2003; Van Til, 2001),<sup>5</sup> many European countries now are encouraging the development of "civil society" and other types of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as alternatives for supplementing functions previously assumed by governments or the market, or both (Albo and Zuege, 1999; Antonucci, 2000; Ascoli, 2002; Ehrke, 2000; Marsh et al., 2002; Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003). As a result of this "shifting welfare mix," nearly everywhere in the region families and private enterprises are beginning to absorb increasingly responsibility for welfare financing and service provision – especially in the areas of health, education, elder and child care, arts and culture, and transportation (Carlson, 2002; Hyde and Dixon, 2002).

*Clear Dilemmas, Uncertain Solutions*

Though still at an early stage of implementation in many countries, the region's reforms have produced mixed results and high levels of social tension (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002; Banton, 1999; Dodds, 2000; Farrell, Fella and Newman, 2002; MacMaster, 2001; McLaren, 2003; Rumford, 2000). In some countries, "far-right" political parties and movements have formed in response to the region's challenging economic situation and rapidly changing racial-ethnic mix (Editors, 2002k, n, p). On occasion, mass protests, demonstrations, strikes and even riots have occurred in response to these changes (Editors, 2003j, o). These new economic and diversity-related social conflicts are unfolding even as selected countries in the region continue to struggle with problems of internal civil unrest and international terrorism (Editors, 2002h, i, 2003d, g).

Recent disagreements between the United States and selected countries within Europe over Middle Eastern policies and the recently concluded war in Iraq have added to political tensions between the two regions and, in turn, and have contributed to a measurable weakening of the military, economic and political alliances that have characterized Euro-American relations since the end of the WWII (Editors, 2003q; Larrabee, 2002).

Even as the region's leaders struggle to find "workable solutions" to their mix of development challenges, Europe's current reform efforts almost certainly will change its "social architecture." Almost certainly, too, what it means to be "European" within an expanding geopolitical space will be subject to redefinition (Byatt, 2002; Calleo, 2003; Jasson, 2001; Maccarini, 1999; Pond, 2002; Soysal, 2002; Tallberg, 2003). These challenges are likely to intensify as EU member states eventually are forced to make decisions concerning the admissibility of Turkey and Russia into the EU and into the "New Europe" (Editors, 2000a, f, g).

On a more positive note, the dramatic social changes occurring in Europe have stimulated important refinements to a new set of emerging social constructs in development theory: "social cohesion" (Saint-Martin, 2000), "social exclusion" (Borzaga et al., 2001; De Haan, 1998; Van Winden, 2001), "social reporting" (Noll, 2002; Vogel 2002b), "social space" (Maccarini, 1999), "social capital" (Bertolini and Bravo, 2002; Muntaner, Lynch and Smith, 2001;

Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis and Geliissen, 2002), and "transnational citizenship" (Balibar, 2004), among others. In time, the refinements that emerge from these conceptual efforts will likely add a new set of concepts to development theory and practice for both Europe and elsewhere.

### *Assessing European Social Progress*

This paper assesses the extent to which European nations are succeeding in advancing their far-reaching social development agenda. More specifically, the paper:

- reports the results obtained through application of a statistically weighted version of the author's previously developed *Index of Social Progress* (ISP; WISP) to an analysis of European development trends since 1970;
- identifies Europe's major 30-year social development successes and failures in responding to at least the basic needs of its residents;
- identifies Europe's "social development leaders" (SLs), "middle performing countries" (MPCs), and "socially less developed countries" (SLDCs);
- compares the major social development trends occurring in Europe with those observed for other major world regions;
- identifies and briefly discusses the major social, political, and economic forces that are likely to influence Europe's further development toward the year 2010 and beyond; and,
- provides baseline data against which future developments in Europe region may be assessed.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is the fourth in a series of analyses of world-wide social development trends (Estes, 1984, 1988, 1998b, 2004).<sup>6</sup> The purpose of all four studies has been: 1) to identify significant changes in "adequacy of social provision" occurring throughout the world; and 2) to assess national and international progress in providing more adequately for the basic social and material needs of the world's growing population.

*Index of Social Progress (ISP)*

The primary instrument used in this study is the author's extensively pre-tested "Index of Social Progress" (ISP). In its present form the ISP consists of 40 social indicators<sup>7</sup> that have been subdivided into 10 subindexes (Table 1): *Education* (N = 3); *Health Status* (N = 7); *Women Status* (N = 5); *Defense Effort* (N = 1); *Economic* (N = 5); *Demographic* (N = 3); *Environmental* (N = 3); *Social Chaos* (N = 5); *Cultural Diversity* (N = 3); and *Welfare Effort* (N = 5). All 40 of the WISP's indicators are judged to be valid and reliable indicators of social development; indeed, the majority of the ISP's indicators are used regularly in other studies comparative social development (Noll, 2002; Vogel, 2002b).

*Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP)*

Owing to the volume of data gathered for this analysis only statistically-weighted index and subindex scores will be reported. The study's statistical weights were derived through a two-stage varimax factor analysis in which each indicator and subindex was analyzed for its relative contribution toward explaining the variance associated with changes in social progress over time. Standardized subindex scores were then multiplied by the factor loadings to create weighted subindex scores. Composite Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP) scores were obtained through a summation of the weighted subindex scores.<sup>8</sup> The formulae used in the computation of WISP index and subindex scores are summarized in Table 2.

*The WISP Versus Other Measures of Social Progress*

The Index of Social Progress differs from other measures of social development in the number, range, and relevance of the indicators used in its construction. In all cases, the ISP is judged to be a more comprehensive, valid, and reliable instrument for assessing changes in social development *over time* than other indices used to measure international social progress (e.g., Gross National Product [GNP], Gross Domestic Product [GDP], the UNDP's "Human Development Index" [HDI], among others).

TABLE I

Indicators on the Weighted Index of Social Progress (WISP), by Subindex (N = 10 Subindexes, 40 Indicators)

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**Education Subindex (N = 3)**

- Primary School Completion Rate, 1992–2000 (+)
- Average Yers of Schooling, 2000 (+)
- Adult Literacy Rate, 2000 (+)

**Health Status Subindex (N = 7)**

- Physicians Per 100,000 Population, 1990–99 (+)
- Percent of Children Immunized Against DPT at Age 1, 1999 (+)
- Percent of Population Using Improved Water Sources, 2000 (+)
- Percent of Population Undernourished, 1996–98 (-)
- Infant Mortality Rate, 2000 (-)
- Under-Five Child Mortality Rate, 2000 (-)
- Life Expectation at Birth 1, 2000 (+)

**Women Status Subindex (N = 5)**

- Female Secondary School Enrollment as Percent of Males, 1995–97 (+)
- Seats in Parliament Held by women as Percent of Total 1999-2000 (+)
- Contraceptive Prevalence among Married Women, 1990–2000 (+)
- Maternal Mortality Ratio, 1990-98 (-)
- Female Adult Literacy as Percent of Males, 2000 (+)

**Defense Effort Subindex (N = 1)**

- Military Expenditures as Percent of Gross Domestic Product, 2000 (-)

**Economic Subindex (N = 5)**

- Per Capita Gross National Income (PPP), 2000 (+)
- Percent Growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 1999–2000 (+)
- Total External Debt Service as Percent of Exports of Goods and Services, 2000 (-)
- Uemployment Rate, 1998-2000 (-)
- GINI Index Score, most recent year (-)

**Demography Subindex (N = 3)**

- Average Annual Population Growth Rate, 1990–2000 (-)
  - Percent of Population Aged < 15 Years, 2000 (-)
  - Percent of Population Aged > 64 Years, 2000 (+)
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TABLE I  
Continued

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<b>Environmental Subindex (N = 3)</b>
– Nationally Protected Areas (%), 1996 (+)
– Per Capita Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 1998 (–)
– Average Annual Disaster-Related Deaths Per Million Population, 1990–2000 (–)
<b>Social Chaos Subindex (N = 5)</b>
– Strength of Political Rights, 2000 (+)
– Strength of Civil Liberties, 2000 (+)
– Perceived Corruption Index, 2000 (–)
– Total Deaths in Major Armed Conflicts Since Inception, 2000 (–)
– Number of Externally Displaced Persons per 100,000 Population, 1999 (–)
<b>Cultural Diversity Subindex (N = 3)</b>
– Largest Percentage of Population Sharing the Same or Similar Racial/Ethnic Origins, 2000 (+)
– Largest Percentage of Population Sharing the Same or Similar Religious Beliefs, 2000 (+)
– Largest Share of Population Sharing the Same Mother Tongue, 2000 (+)(–)
<b>Welfare Effort Subindex (N = 5)</b>
– Age First National Law – Old Age, Invalidity & Death, 1999 (+)
– Age First National Law – Sickness & Maternity, 1999 (+)
– Age First National Law – Work Injury, 1999 (+)
– Age First National Law – Unemployment, 1999 (+)
– Age First National Law – Family Allowance, 1999 (+)

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### *Data Sources*

The majority of the data used in the analysis were obtained from annual reports supplied by individual countries to the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Office of Policy Studies of the US Social Security Administration, and other international data collection organizations. Data for the *Social Chaos* and *Environ-*

TABLE II

Statistical Weights Used in Constructing the Weighted Index of Social Progress

$$\text{WISP00} = [(\text{Factor 1}) * 0.697] + [(\text{Factor 2}) * 0.163] + [(\text{Factor 3}) * 0.140]$$

where:

- Factor 1 = [(Health\* .92) + (Education\* .91) + (Welfare\* .72)  
+ (Woman\* .91) + (Social Chaos\* .84) + (Economic\* .71)  
+ (Diversity\* .64) + (Demographic\* .93)]
- Factor 2 = [(Defense Effort\* 0.93)]
- Factor 3 = [(Environmental\* 0.98)]

\* Derived from factor analysis using varimax rotation. For purposes of comparability across the time series, the same statistical weights were used in all four investigations: 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

*mental* subindexes were obtained from independent scholars and private, non-governmental, organizations including Amnesty International (AI), Freedom House, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IRCRC), the Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI), and Transparency International (TI). Data for the *Cultural Diversity* subindex were obtained from both the *World Factbook* and independent scholars working in the fields of comparative language, religion and ethnology.

#### *Country Selection*

Thirty-six European countries were selected for inclusion in the analysis (Table 3). The primary criterion used in the selection of these countries included the availability of timely, reliable and comprehensive social indicator data. Countries with missing, inadequate, incomplete, or seriously distorted data on three or more indicators, and for which reasonable estimates of the missing data could not be determined, were excluded from the analysis.

#### *Time Frame*

Index and subindex findings are reported separately for each of four time periods, i.e., 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000; thus, the study provides a cross-sectional analysis of the "state" of European social development over a 30-year period.<sup>9</sup> Current indicator data for

TABLE III  
 Selected Population-Related Indicators for Europe Ranked by Development Grouping, 2000–2003 (N = 36)

Countries	WISP 2000 (Base = 163)	WISP00 RANK (Base = 163)	Population (Millions) 2003	Population Growth Rate 2000–15	Age Dependent Population		Life Expectation at Birth 2000	Infant Mortality 2000	Average Years of Schooling 2000
					< 15 Years 2015	> 65 Years 2015			
<b>Social Leaders (SL)</b>									
Sweden*	107	1	8.8	-0.2	12.4	22.3	80	3	11.4
Denmark*	107	1	5.3	0.2	15.1	19.5	76	4	9.7
Norway*	104	3	4.5	0.3	15.8	18.2	79	4	11.8
Finland*	101	4	5.2	na	14.2	20.7	77	4	10.0
Luxembourg*	100	5	0.4	1.1	17.3	16.0	77	5	na
Germany*	100	5	82.0	-0.1	12.1	21.0	77	4	10.2
Austria*	100	5	8.1	-0.2	11.8	20.0	78	5	8.4
Iceland	98	8	0.3	0.6	18.7	14.0	80	4	na
Italy*	98	8	57.5	-0.3	12.0	22.4	79	5	7.2
Belgium*	97	10	10.2	na	13.9	19.9	78	5	9.3
United Kingdom*	96	11	59.4	0.1	15.1	18.9	77	6	9.4
Spain*	96	11	39.9	-0.2	12.5	19.8	78	4	7.3
Netherlands*	95	13	15.9	0.2	14.7	17.8	78	5	9.4
France*	94	14	59.2	0.2	17.4	18.6	79	4	7.9
Ireland*	94	14	3.8	1.0	21.8	13.8	76	6	9.4

Switzerland	93	16	7.2	-0.2	12.1	22.1	80	4	10.5
Hungary#	91	18	10.0	-0.5	13.3	17.4	71	9	9.1
Portugal*	90	20	10.0	na	15.3	18.0	76	6	5.9
Greece*	90	20	10.6	-0.1	12.7	21.2	78	5	8.7
Bulgaria##	89	22	7.9	-1.0	12.2	17.9	72	13	na
Czech Republic#	88	24	10.3	-0.2	12.8	18.7	75	4	na
Slovakia#	87	25	5.4	na	14.9	13.7	73	8	9.3
Slovenia#	85	27	2.0	-0.2	12.0	18.5	75	5	7.1
Poland#	85	27	38.6	-0.1	14.6	14.8	73	9	9.8
<i>SL Total (N = 24)</i>			<i>462.5</i>						
<i>SL Avg (N = 24)</i>	<i>95.2</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>19.3</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>18.6</i>	<i>76.8</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>9.1</i>
<b>Middle Performing Countries (MPC)</b>									
Estonia#	81	31	1.4	-1.1	13.7	16.9	71	8	na
Belarus	78	33	10.2	-0.4	14.3	14.0	68	11	na
Romania##	77	34	22.4	-0.3	15.2	14.6	70	19	na
Latvia#	77	34	2.4	-0.6	12.6	17.8	70	10	na
Yugoslavia	76	37	10.6	0.1	20.0	13.1	72	13	na
Lithuania#	74	39	3.7	-0.3	13.0	16.6	73	9	na
Ukraine	71	41	49.6	-0.9	12.8	15.7	68	13	na
Croatia	70	43	4.7	na	16.8	16.9	73	8	na
<i>MPC Total (N = 8)</i>			<i>105.0</i>						
<i>MPC Avg (N = 8)</i>	<i>75.3</i>	<i>36.5</i>	<i>13.1</i>	<i>-0.5</i>	<i>14.8</i>	<i>15.7</i>	<i>70.6</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>na</i>

TABLE III  
Continued

Countries	WISP 2000 (Base = 163)	WISP00 RANK (Base = 163)	Population (Millions) 2003	Population Growth Rate 2000-15	Age Dependent Population		Life Expectation at Birth 2000	Infant Mortality 2000	Average Years of Schooling 2000
					< 15 Years 2015	> 65 Years 2015			
<b>Socially Least Development Countries (SL)</b>									
Russian Federation	67	47	145.5	-0.6	13.6	13.8	65	16	na
Moldova	67	47	4.3	-0.2	16.7	10.2	68	18	na
Albania	65	49	3.1	0.6	22.7	8.0	74	20	na
Macedonia FYR	63	53	2.0	0.1	15.1	13.0	73	14	na
<i>SLDC Total (N = 4)</i>			<i>154.9</i>						
<i>SLDC Avg (N = 4)</i>	<i>65.3</i>	<i>49.0</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>17.0</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>70.0</i>	<i>17.0</i>	<i>na</i>
<i>Total (N = 36)</i>			<i>722.4</i>						
<i>Regional Average</i>									
<i>(N = 36)</i>	<i>87.4</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>-0.1</i>	<i>14.8</i>	<i>17.1</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>9.1</i>
<b>United States</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>283.2</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12.0</b>

Sources: Economist, 2003b; OECD, 2002; UNDP, 2002; World Bank, 2000, 2003.  
Member countries of the EU (N = 15). # Countries approved to enter the EU in late 2004 (N = 8); ## Applicant countries to the EU (N = 2). NA indicates either "not available" or "not applicable".

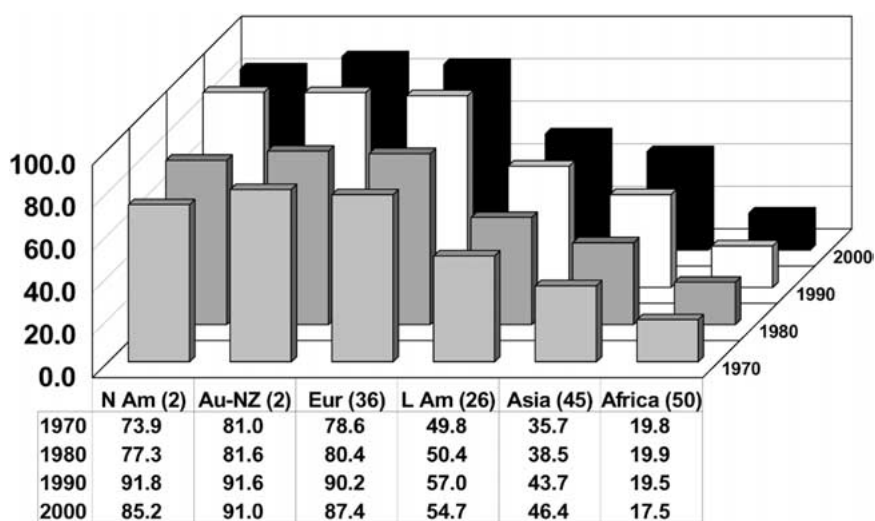


Chart 1. Average WISP Scores by Continent (N = 161), 1970–2000.

selected variables contained on the WISP are reported in Tables 3–6. For comparative purposes beyond the European region, these tables also include indicator data for the United States.

#### *Levels of Analysis*

Data are reported for three levels of analysis: 1) development trends occurring in Europe vis-a-vis those of other world regions; 2) sub-regional variations; and, 3) development trends occurring in each of the 36 countries included in this analysis.

#### EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Charts 1 and 2 summarize the study's major findings on the WISP for all 163 countries included in the larger analysis of social development trends worldwide (Estes, 1998b; 2004). These time-series data cover the period 1970–2000 and reflect comparative WISP performance for countries grouped by six continental groupings, i.e., North America (N = 2), Australia-New Zealand (N = 2), Europe (N = 36), Latin America (N = 26), Asia (N = 45), and Africa (N = 50).

TABLE IV  
Selected Economic Indicators for Europe Ranked by Development Grouping, 2000–2003 (N = 36)

Countries	PC GDP (PPP) 2000	GDP Growth rate 2003	Inflation Rate 2003	Unemploy- ment Rate 2003	% Share of Income/Consumption		GINI Score (varied)
					Top 20% (varied)	Bottom 20% (varied)	
<b>Social Leaders (SL)</b>							
Sweden*	\$24,277	1.3	1.8	5.0	34.5	9.6	25.0
Denmark*	\$27,627	1.2	1.9	6.0	34.5	9.6	24.7
Norway*	\$29,918	0.7	2.1	3.5	35.8	9.7	25.8
Finland*	\$24,996	0.7	1.6	9.8	35.8	10.0	25.6
Luxembourg*	\$50,061	5.1	1.7	1.9	36.5	9.4	26.9
Germany*	\$25,103	-0.2	1.2	10.6	38.5	8.2	30.0
Austria*	\$26,765	1.0	1.1	4.4	38.0	6.9	31.0
Iceland	\$29,581	3.0	2.4	2.3	na	na	na
Italy*	\$23,626	0.3	2.7	8.7	36.3	8.7	27.2
Belgium*	\$27,178	0.8	1.5	13.0	37.3	8.3	28.7
United Kingdom*	\$23,509	1.8	3.1	5.0	43.2	6.1	36.8
Spain*	\$19,472	2.1	2.8	11.4	40.2	7.5	32.5
Netherlands*	\$25,657	-0.9	2.2	5.4	40.1	7.2	32.6
France*	\$24,223	0.0	1.9	9.5	40.2	7.2	32.7
Ireland*	\$29,866	6.6	4.2	4.3	42.9	6.7	35.9

Switzerland	\$28,769	0.0	0.3	3.6	40.3	6.9	33.1
Hungary#	\$12,416	2.7	4.7	6.5	34.4	10.0	24.4
Portugal*	\$17,290	1.9	3.7	4.0	43.4	7.3	35.6
Greece*	\$16,501	4.1	3.9	11.1	40.3	7.5	32.7
Bulgaria##	\$5,710	4.1	10.3	16.3	36.8	10.1	26.4
Czech Republic#	\$13,991	2.2	20.1	8.9	35.9	10.3	25.4
Slovakia#	\$11,243	3.3	12.9	18.8	31.4	11.9	19.5
Slovenia#	\$17,367	0.0	10.8	7.5	37.7	9.1	28.4
Poland#	\$9,051	2.1	0.8	16.1	39.7	7.8	31.6
<i>SL Avg (N = 24)</i>	<i>\$22,675</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>38.0</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>29.2</i>
<b>Middle Performing Countries (MPC)</b>							
Estonia#	\$10,066	5.3	4.0	14.8	45.1	7.0	37.6
Belarus	\$7,544	4.4	168.6	2.0	33.3	11.4	21.7
Romania##	\$6,423	5.5	45.7	10.8	39.4	8.0	31.1
Latvia#	\$7,045	9.0	2.7	8.4	40.3	7.6	32.4
Yugoslavia	na	4.9	na	na	na	na	na
Lithuania#	\$7,106	4.3	1.0	11.1	40.3	7.8	32.4
Ukraine	\$3,816	10.0	na	11.9	37.8	8.8	29.0
Croatia	\$8,091	4.1	5.4	16.1	38.0	8.8	29.0
<i>MPC Avg (N = 8)</i>	<i>\$7,156</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>37.9</i>	<i>10.7</i>	<i>39.2</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>30.5</i>

TABLE IV  
Continued

Countries	PC GDP (PPP) 2000	GDP Growth rate 2003	Inflation Rate 2003	Unemploy- ment Rate 2003	% Share of Income/Consumption		GINI Score (varied)
					Top 20% (varied)	Bottom 20% (varied)	
<b>Socially Least Development Countries (SL)</b>							
Russian Federation	\$8,377	6.8	14.0	11.4	53.7	4.4	48.7
Moldova	\$2,109	6.3	31.3	11.1	46.8	5.6	40.6
Albania	\$3,506	5.6	27.8	18.0	na	na	na
Macedonia FYR	\$5,086	-4.7	13.0	34.5	na	na	na
<i>SLDC Avg (N = 4)</i>	<i>\$4,770</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>21.5</i>	<i>18.8</i>	<i>50.3</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>44.7</i>
<i>Regional Average (N)</i>	<i>\$17,525</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>12.1</i>	<i>9.8</i>	<i>39.0</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>30.5</i>
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$34,142</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>40.8</b>

Sources: Economist, 2003b; OECD, 2002; UNDP, 2002; World Bank, 2000, 2003.  
Member countries of the EU (N = 15). # Countries approved to enter the EU in late 2004 (N = 8); ## Applicant countries to the EU (N = 2). NA indicates either "not available" or "not applicable".

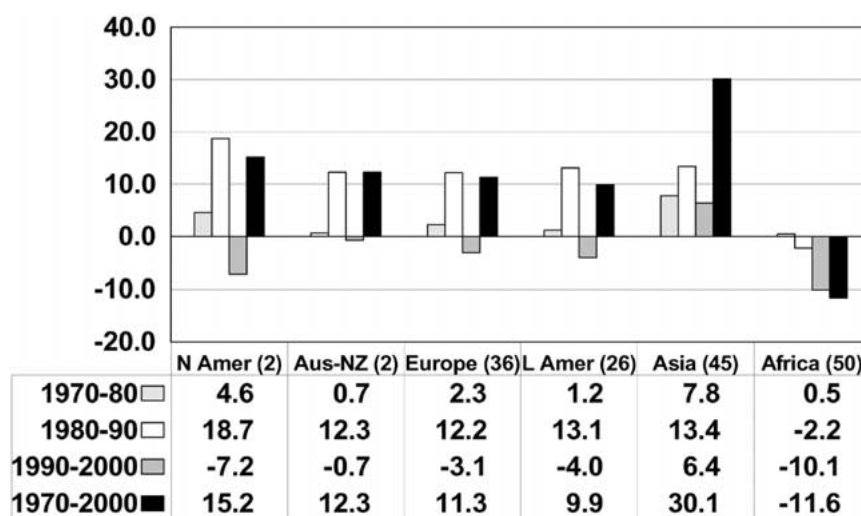


Chart 2. Percent Change in Average WISP Scores by Continent (N = 161), 1970–2000.

1. The world's most socially developed regions are North America, Australia-New Zealand, and Europe. These regions had already attained the most favorable WISP ratings by 1970; further improvements on the index continued to accumulate between 1970–1980 and, again, between 1980-1990 (Chart 1). Today, comparatively few differences characterize the development profiles of the socially advanced countries of North America (2000 WISP Average = 85), Australia-New Zealand (2000 WISP Average = 91), and Europe (2000 WISP Average = 87).
2. The world's socially least developed regions are Africa (2000 WISP Average = 18) and Asia (2000 WISP Average = 46). WISP scores for the African region consistently were lower relative to those attained by other world regions for the entire 30-year period studied.
3. As reported in Chart 2, substantial gains occurred on the WISP for five world regions between 1970 and 2000: Asia (+30%); North America (+15%); Australia-New Zealand (+12%); Europe (+11%); and, Latin America (+10%). Unfortunately, four out of five of these regions experienced net social losses on the WISP during 10-year period 1990–2000: North

America (−7%), Latin America (−4%), Europe (−3%), and Australia-New Zealand (−1%).

In the main, the recent net social losses reported for the North American, Australia-New Zealand and European regions are associated with decade-long economic problems, the emergence of conservative national governments in many countries, a general trend toward the devolution of political authority and fiscal responsibility from central to local governments and to the private sector (Ascoli, 2002; Karlson, 2002). Environmental issues and higher levels of diversity-related social conflict also contributed to the lower average WISP scores for these regions in 2000.

4. The 50 nations of the African region also experienced social losses on the WISP for the 10-year period 1990–2000 (an average region wide loss of −10%). Africa's 10-year social losses were most pronounced in the Middle Africa (−33%) and East Africa (−31%) subregions and were less dramatic in the continent's oil-rich Northern (−5%) subregion (Estes, 2004). Net 10-year social gains on the WISP, however, were observed for Africa's human capital and natural resource rich Southern (3%) region. Some recent, but only modest, gains in social progress also were measured for Africa's currently war-ravaged Western subregion (+2%).<sup>10</sup>

Africa's continuing unfavorable economic situation, recurrent wars, high levels of diversity-related social conflict, and public corruption account for most of the region's decades-long social losses. Africa's current social development situation is all the more tragic given the region's "least development countries" (LDCs) have been the preferential recipients of international development assistance since at least 1980 (including debt rescheduling and forgiveness, reduced tariffs on exports, and rising levels of foreign private sector investments). HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, however, have combined with the region's geographic isolation, failed political systems, inadequate social infrastructures to exacerbate the already impossible situation that exists for Sub Saharan Africa's deeply impoverished nations.

5. Asia experienced an additional +6% gains in the region's average WISP scores between 1990 and 2000. Asia continues to be the most rapidly developing region in the world with a net gain on the WISP of +30% between 1970 and 2000 – an especially impressive accomplishment given that the region includes the world's two population "super giants", i.e., China (Population = 1.2 billion) and India (Population = 1.1 billion). Both the nature and pace of social development occurring in China and India differ markedly from one another with the most dramatic improvements in social development since 1990 occurring in China which attained a 2000 WISP score of 56 vs. only 34 for India (Estes, 2004).

Asia's steady social progress is associated with consistently higher rates of economic expansion, an overall slowing in average population growth rates, the end of decades-old civil and intra-regional wars, significant advances in the health and education status of the region's women and children, and increased attention on the part of many of the region's governments to the social needs of their elderly and other historically disadvantaged population groups.

The recipient of a vast amounts of international development assistance since 1985, recent gains in Asian social development are the direct result of these past social investments (Estes, 1992, 1996b). These gains are reflected across a broad range of socioeconomic sectors, albeit the political infrastructure of many of the region's countries continues to lag far behind that of other rapidly developing world regions and subregions (e.g., China, North Korea, Myanmar).

Considerable 30-year variation exists on the WISP, then, for the world's major continental groupings. Between 1970 and 1990 the world's most economically advanced regions continued to add to their overall levels of social development, albeit some of these gains were lost during the 10-year period that ended in 2000. Already the world's socially least developed region, Africa, as a region, continued to lose social ground over the entire 30-year period of the study. The average net social gains reported for Asia and Latin America are especially important given the high levels of financial

TABLE V  
 Selected Social, Environmental and Technological Indicators for Europe Ranked by Development Grouping, 1999–2002  
 (N = 36)

Countries	% Seats of Parliament Held by Women		Official Development Assistance		Perceived Corruption Index (PCI) 2001	Foreign Labor & Popluation		Pop PC Tons CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions 1998	% Manufact Exports Hi-Tech 2000	Patents Per Million 2000
	2002	2001	ODA as % GDP 2001	% ODA to LDCs 2001		% Total Pop 1999	% Total Labor F 1999			
<b>Social Leaders (SL)</b>										
Sweden*	42.7	0.81	29	9.0	5.5	5.1	5.5	22	271	
Denmark*	38.0	1.03	32	9.5	4.9	4.4	10.1	21	52	
Norway*	36.4	0.83	33	8.6	4.0	3.0	7.6	4	103	
Finland*	36.5	0.32	29	9.9	1.7	1.5	10.3	27	187	
Luxembourg*	16.7	0.82	32	8.7	36.0	57.3	18.2	17	202	
Germany*	31.7	0.27	23	7.4	8.9	8.8	10.1	18	235	
Austria*	26.8	0.29	33	7.8	9.2	10.0	7.9	14	165	
Iceland	34.9	na	na	9.2	na	na	7.6	12	15	
Italy*	9.8	0.15	27	5.5	2.2	3.6	7.2	9	13	
Belgium*	23.3	0.37	25	6.6	8.8	na	10.0	10	72	
United Kingdom*	17.9	0.32	31	8.3	3.8	3.7	9.2	32	82	
Spain*	28.3	0.30	12	7.0	2.0	1.0	6.2	8	42	
Netherlands*	36.0	0.82	25	8.8	4.1	3.4	10.5	28	189	
France*	10.9	0.32	24	6.7	5.6	5.8	6.3	24	205	
Ireland*	12.0	0.33	48	7.5	3.1	3.4	10.4	48	106	

Switzerland	23.0	0.34	30	8.4	19.2	18.1	5.7	19	183	
Hungary#	8.3	na	na	5.3	na	na	5.8	26	26	
Portugal*	18.7	0.25	43	6.3	1.9	1.8	5.5	5	6	
Greece*	8.7	0.17	8	4.2	na	na	8.0	9	na	
Bulgaria##	26.2	na	na	3.9	na	na	5.7	na	23	
Czech Republic#	15.0	na	na	3.9	na	na	11.5	8	28	
Slovakia#	14.0	na	na	3.7	na	na	7.1	4	24	
Slovenia#	12.2	na	na	5.2	na	na	7.3	5	105	
Poland#	20.2	na	na	4.1	na	na	8.3	3	30	
<i>SL Avg (N = 24)</i>	22.8	0.46	28.5	6.9	7.6	8.7	8.4	16.8	102.8	
<b>Middle Performing Countries (MPC)</b>										
Estonia#	17.8	na	na	5.6	na	na	11.9	30	1	
Belarus	10.3	na	na	na	na	na	5.9	4	50	
Romania##	10.7	na	na	2.8	na	na	4.1	6	71	
Latvia#	17.0	na	na	3.4	na	na	3.2	4	71	
Yugoslavia	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	
Lithuania#	10.6	na	na	4.8	na	na	4.3	4	27	
Ukraine	7.8	na	na	2.1	na	na	7.0	na	84	
Croatia	20.5	na	na	3.9	na	na	4.2	8	9	
<i>MPC Avg (N = 8)</i>	13.5	na	na	3.8	na	na	5.8	8.3	44.7	

TABLE V  
Continued

Countries	% Seats of Parliament Held by Women 2002	Official Development Assistance		Perceived Corruption Index (PCI) 2001	Foreign Labor & Popluation		Pop PC Tons CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions 1998	% Manufact Exports Hi-Tech 2000	Patents Per Million 2000
		ODA as % GDP 2001	% ODA to LDCs 2001		% Total Pop 1999	% Total Labor F 1999			
<b>Socially Least Development Countries (SL)</b>									
Russian Federation	7.6	na	na	2.3	na	na	9.8	14	131
Moldova	12.9	na	na	3.1	na	na	2.2	3	42
Albania	5.7	na	na	na	na	na	0.5	1	na
Macedonia FYR	6.7	na	na	na	na	na	6.2	1	19
SLDC Avg (N = 4)	8.2	na	na	2.7	na	1 na	4.8	4.8	64.0
<i>Regional Average</i>									
(N = 36)	19.3	0.46	28.5	6.0	7.6	8.7	7.5	14.0	86.9
<b>United States</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>289</b>

Sources: Economist, 2003b; OECD, 2002; Transparency International, 2001; UNDP, 2002; World Bank, 2000, 2003. Member countries of the EU (N = 15). # Countries approved to enter the EU in late 2004 (N = 8); ## Applicant countries to the EU (N = 2). NA indicates either "not available" or "not applicable". PCI refers to the "Perceived Corruption Index", developed by Transparency International (TI, 2001); scores are inversely related to degree of perceived corruption (0 = low; 10 = high).

TABLE VI

Central Government Expenditures (CGE) and Public Spending Priorities for Europe Ranked by Development Grouping (N = 36)

Countries	CGE Expenditures as % GDP 1999	Public Expenditure % GDP			Military Expenditure	
		Education	Health	Debt	As %	As %
		1995-97	1998	Services 2000	GDP 2000	CGE 1999
<b>Social Leaders (SL)</b>						
Sweden*	39.5	8.3	6.6	na	2.1	5.5
Denmark*	36.0	8.1	6.9	na	1.5	4.2
Norway*	37.0	7.7	7.0	na	1.8	5.0
Finland*	33.4	7.5	5.2	na	1.3	4.5
Luxembourg*	na	4.0	5.7	na	0.7	na
Germany*	32.6	4.8	7.9	na	1.5	4.7
Austria*	40.3	5.4	5.9	na	0.8	1.5
Iceland	na	5.4	7.4	na	0.0	na
Italy*	41.9	4.9	5.6	na	2.1	4.7
Belgium*	47.8	3.1	6.3	na	1.4	3.1
United Kingdom*	36.4	5.3	5.8	na	2.5	6.9
Spain*	32.8	5.0	5.4	na	1.3	6.1
Netherlands*	45.9	5.1	6.0	na	1.6	5.9
France*	46.2	6.0	7.3	na	2.6	5.9
Ireland*	33.3	6.0	5.2	na	0.7	2.6
Switzerland	27.6	5.4	7.6	na	1.1	5.1
Hungary#	43.4	4.6	5.2	17.4	1.5	3.9
Portugal*	38.8	5.8	5.1	na	2.1	5.4
Greece*	30.9	3.1	4.7	na	4.9	3.1
Bulgaria##	35.7	3.2	3.9	9.9	3.0	8.7
Czech Republic#	35.5	5.1	6.6	9.4	2.0	6.3
Slovakia#	37.2	4.7	5.7	13.5	1.8	4.4
Slovenia#	40.5	5.7	6.7	na	1.2	3.2
Poland#	35.2	7.5	4.7	6.5	1.9	6.1
<i>SL Avg (N = 24)</i>	<i>37.6</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>4.9</i>

TABLE VI  
Continued

Countries	CGE Expenditures as % GDP 1999	Public Expenditure % GDP			Military Expenditure	
		Education	Health	Debt	As %	As %
		1995-97	1998	Services 2000	GDP 2000	CGE 1999
<b>Middle Performing Countries (MPC)</b>						
Estonia#	35.6	7.2	5.1	8.6	1.6	4.5
Belarus	30.9	5.9	4.6	0.8	1.3	4.1
Romania##	35.5	3.6	3.8	6.4	2.1	4.7
Latvia#	35.4	6.5	4.0	7.9	1.0	2.5
Yugoslavia	na	na	na	na	na	na
Lithuania#	31.1	5.9	4.7	8.0	1.8	3.9
Ukraine	26.0	5.6	2.9	11.5	3.6	8.2
Croatia	48.3	5.3	9.5	12.8	3.0	9.8
<i>MPC Avg (N = 8)</i>	<i>34.7</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>5.4</i>
<b>Socially Least Development Countries (SL)</b>						
Russian Federation	22.0	3.5	na	4.6	4.0	22.4
Moldova	29.7	10.6	2.9	10.5	0.4	3.8
Albania	29.8	na	2.0	0.7	1.2	4.5
Macedonia FYR	na	5.1	5.3	4.5	2.1	10.4
<i>SLDC Avg (N = 4)</i>	<i>27.2</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>10.3</i>
<i>Regional Average</i>						
<i>(N = 36)</i>	<i>36.0</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>5.6</i>
<b>United States</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>

\* Member countries of the EU (N = 15). # Countries approved to enter the EU in late 2004 (N = 8); ## Applicant countries to the EU (N = 2). NA indicates either "not available" or "not applicable".

poverty and social chaos that have characterized these regions in the recent past.

#### EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Thirty-year social development trends for Europe are summarized in Charts 3 and 4. WISP scores are reported in these charts both for

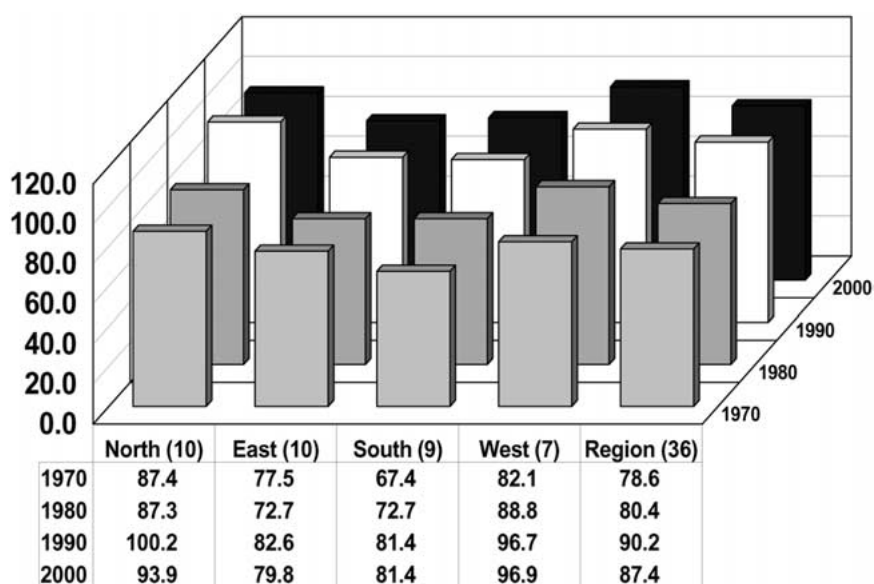


Chart 3. Chart 3. Average WISP Scores for Europe by Subregion (N = 36), 1970–2000.

the region-as-whole (N = 36) and for each of the region’s four subregions: Western Europe (N = 7), Southern Europe (N = 9), Eastern Europe (N = 10), and Northern Europe (N = 10). Regional performances on the WISP’s ten *subindexes* are reported separately in Charts 5 and 6. Country-specific WISP scores for 2000 are reported in Chart 7 which rank orders countries by overall development level. Selected social indicator data for all 36 countries included in the analysis are reported in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 which also rank orders and groups countries by their overall social development performance as either a regional “social leader” (SL), “middle performing country” (MPC), or “socially least developing country” (SLDC).

#### *Regional Performance on the WISP*

Europe’s regional scores on the WISP averaged 79, 80, 90 and 87 for 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000, respectively (Chart 3). In comparison with other world regions, Europe ranked second in 2000 on the WISP in overall level of social development, i.e., a net improvement of one rank between 1990 and 2000 (average WISP scores for the North American region dropped from 1st to 3rd during the same time period). Even so, comparatively few differences characterize

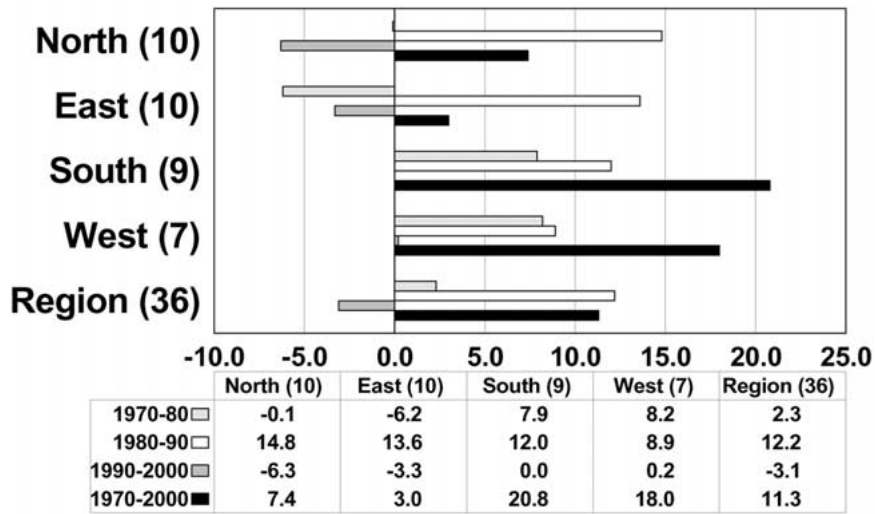


Chart 4. Percent Change in Average WISP Scores for Europe (N = 36), 1970–2000.

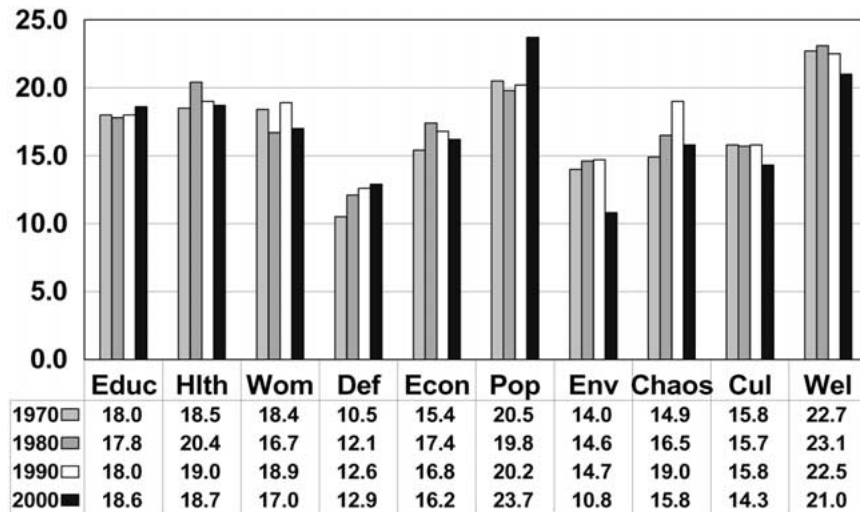


Chart 5. Average WISP Subindex Scores for Europe (N = 36), 1970–2000.

the 2000 development levels of the world’s three leading continental groupings of nations.

The *pace* of social change occurring in Europe, however, is more modest than that observed for other socially advanced regions, i.e., a 30-year net increase of +11% for the European region compared

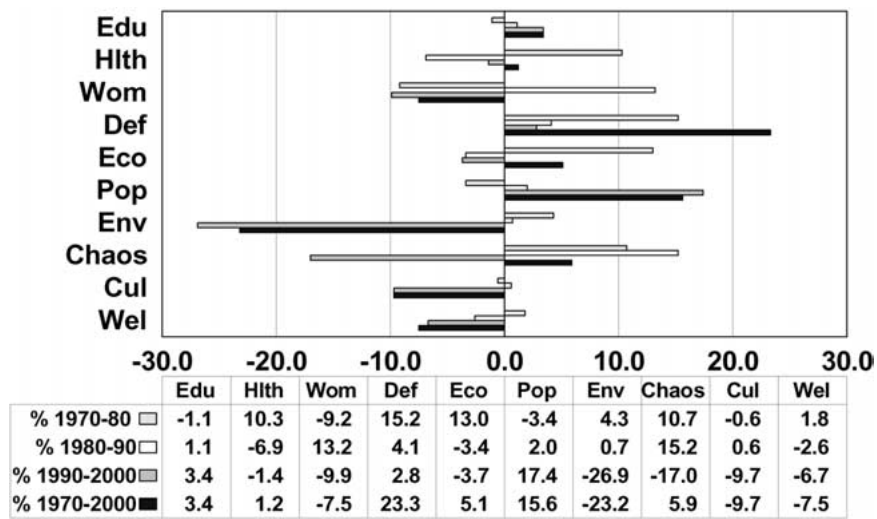


Chart 6. Percent Change in Average WISP Subindex Scores for Europe (N = 36), 1970–2000.

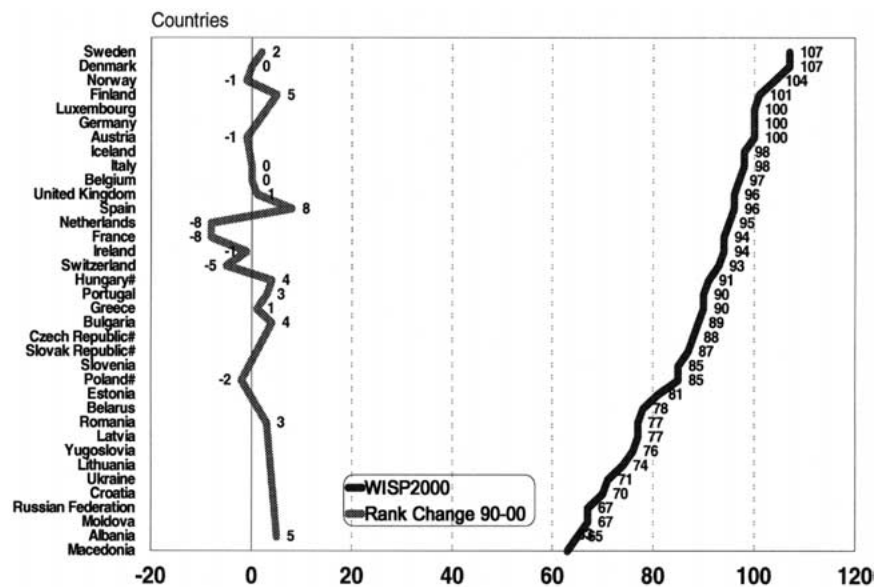


Chart 7. Rank Ordered WISP Scores & Net Rank Changes for Europe, 1990–2000 (N = 36/163).

with net gains in the WISP of approximately +30% and +15% for the Asian and North American regions, respectively (Chart 2).

Europe's comparatively slower pace of social development is explained by a number of factors: 1) the region's already highly advanced social development status; 2) the region's recent difficulties in accelerating economic growth beyond a low-moderate level; 3) continuing high levels of unemployment, but especially high levels of long-term and youth unemployment; 4) recent downward revisions in the region's high levels of social protection; 5) the collapse of the FSU and its highly negative short- and near-term impact throughout Europe; 6) the enormous social, cultural, economic and political heterogeneity that characterizes the "New Europe"; 7) rising levels of diversity-related social conflict; and 8) the more favorable patterns of technological and economic change taking place in the Asia and North America.

The eventual development of a European "identity" and the emergence of at least a tentative European Constitution could contribute significantly toward removing many of the impediments that currently are slowing the region's pace of social development.

#### *Subregional Performance on the WISP*

Considerable variation exists in the development trends of Europe's four subregions. Chart 3 confirms that Europe's most developed subregions are its Western (N = 7) and Northern subregions (N = 10) with 2000 WISP scores averaging 97 and 94, respectively. Conversely, Europe's Southern (N = 9) and Eastern (N = 10) subregions are the least socially developed with 2000 WISP scores averaging 81 and 80, respectively.

Significant differences also exist with respect to the *pace* of social change occurring in each of the subregions. The region's most significant 30-year improvements occurred in the Southern (+21%) and Western (+18%) subregions followed by 30-year net improvements of +7% in Northern Europe; by comparison, development trends in East Europe advanced an average of only +3% between 1970 and 2000 (Chart 4). Hence, social development continued to advance most rapidly in those subregions that already were the most developed *at the outset of the study*; the slowest and most negative

social changes occurred in Europe's already most disadvantaged subregion.

In general, European patterns of subregional development mirror those observed for other world subregions, i.e., comparatively higher, and more rapid, rates of development within Europe's already socially advanced subregions and correspondingly slower rates of development in its already most socially disadvantaged subregions (Estes, 1990, 1995, 1996a, b, 1998a).

#### *European Regional Performance on the WISP Subindexes*

European performances on the WISP subindexes are summarized in Charts 5 and 6. The region's performances on the 10 subindexes were consistently strong and exceeded average subindex performances for nearly all other world regions and, certainly, for those of the world-as-a-whole (Charts 1 and 2). The social trends reflected in these data also are consistent with those previously reported by the author for earlier decades of European social development (Estes, 1986, 1997).

The region's social performances in 2000 were particularly strong on eight of the WISP's ten subindexes (Chart 5): *Population* (2000 Average = 24), *Welfare Effort* (2000 Average = 21), *Health Status* (2000 Average = 19), *Education* (2000 Average = 19), *Women Status* (2000 Average = 17), *Economic* (2000 Average = 16), *Social Chaos* (2000 Average = 16), and *Cultural Diversity* (2000 Average = 14). By contrast, and somewhat surprisingly, the European region performed less favorably on the *Defense Effort* (2000 Average = 13) and *Environmental* (2000 Average = 11) subindexes. The region's less impressive performances on these subindexes suggests the need for even greater attention within Europe to reducing further defense and military expenditures and for increasing investments in environmental protection. Fortunately, steady improvements on the *Defense Effort* subindex between 1970 and 2000 added to the region's overall improvement in this sector of +23% over the 30-year period. Region wide changes in the *Environmental* sector, however, reflect net 30-year losses of -27% (all of which occurred during the 10-year period 1990-2000).

These subindex findings suggests the more or less *synchronous* nature of social development in Europe; however, important vari-

ations exist both within and between the Defense and Environmental sectors vs. Europe's exceptional performance in the more traditional "social" sectors (Estes, 2004).

EUROPEAN "SOCIAL LEADERS" (SLs), MIDDLE PERFORMING COUNTRIES (MPCs), AND "SOCIALLY LEAST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" (SLDCs)

Despite Europe's highly favorable WISP performances *as-a-region*, significant variations exist in the WISP performances of individual countries. These differences are reflected in the composite scores and ranks reported in Chart 7 and Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6. Table 3, for example, identifies Europe's "Social Leaders" (SLs), "Middle Performing Countries" (MPCs), and "Socially Least Developing Countries" (SLDCs) *relative to all 163 countries included in the larger study of social development trends worldwide* (Estes, 2004).

*Europe's Social Development "Leaders" (SLs)*

Ranked by overall level of social performance on the WISP (Table 3), Europe's social development leaders (SLs) are: Sweden (WISP = 107; Rank = 1); Denmark (WISP = 107; Rank = 1); Norway (WISP = 104; Rank = 3); Finland (WISP = 101; Rank = 4); Luxembourg (WISP = 100; Rank = 5); Germany (WISP = 100; Rank = 5); Austria (WISP = 100; Rank = 5); Iceland (WISP = 98; Rank = 8); Italy (WISP = 98; Rank = 8); Belgium (WISP = 97; Rank = 10); United Kingdom (WISP = 96; Rank = 11); Spain (WISP = 96; Rank = 11); Netherlands (WISP = 95; Rank = 13); France (WISP = 94; Rank = 14); Ireland (WISP = 94; Rank = 14); Switzerland (WISP = 93; Rank = 16); Hungary (WISP = 91; Rank = 18); Portugal (WISP = 90; Rank = 20); Greece (WISP = 90; Rank = 20); Bulgaria (WISP = 89; Rank = 22); Czech Republic (WISP = 88; Rank = 24); Slovakia (WISP = 87; Rank = 25); Slovenia (WISP = 85; Rank = 27); and Poland (WISP = 85; Rank = 27).

Nearly all of the top 20 countries listed above have been ranked as SLs since the initiation of WISP surveys in 1970. The majority of these SLs already are members of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)<sup>11</sup> and as of September 2003, twenty (N = 21) are either current members, or soon-to-be-

members, of the European Union; an additional SL, Bulgaria, is under consideration for accession to the EU as well.<sup>12</sup> In all, 64% of the Europe's total population of 722 million persons, i.e., 463 million, reside in its SLs (Table 3).

WISP scores for the region's SLs averaged 95 in 2000 – an average score well above that attained by any other grouping of socially advanced countries worldwide (Chart 1). Further, Europe's SLs are characterized by the region's highest average per capita GDP (\$22,675), lowest average rate of inflation (4.1%), and lowest average rate of unemployment (8.1%), albeit European SL performances on all three indicators are appreciably less favorable than those attained by SLs located in North America and Australia-New Zealand (Table 4; Editors, 2003b). European SLs also currently are experiencing sluggish rates of economic expansion (+1.8%) relative to both to the region's MPCs (+5.9%) and SLDCs (+3.5%) and to SLs located elsewhere in the world (Estes, 2004).

Of importance, too, is the rapid population aging occurring in Europe's SLs, i.e., 19% aged 65 years or older vs. 16% and 11% for the region's MPCs and SLDCs, respectively (Table 3). One outcome of rapid population aging for the region's SLs, but consistent with the region's general approach to social policy, has been the creation of an extensive network of social programs that reduce the economic risks associated with retirement, disability, solitary survivorship, and other age-related threats to income security (USDHHS, 2002). Though highly effective, these social programs also are quite expensive consume a large share of both total CGE and GDP (Table 6).

#### *Europe's Socially Least Developing Countries (SLDCs)*

The region's four socially least developing countries (SLDCs) are: Macedonia (WISP = 63; Rank = 53); Albania (WISP = 65; Rank = 49); Moldova (WISP = 67; Rank = 47), and the Russian Federation (WISP = 67; Rank = 47).

All four the region's SLDCs are located in either Southern (Albania and Macedonia) or Eastern Europe (Moldova and the Russian Federation) and each nation was under the direct influence of the FSU. Following the collapse of the FSU in 1991 each SLDC, in turn, has been subject to exceptional levels of social, political

and economic turmoil (Howard, 2003; Kopecka and Mudde, 2003; Rose and Munro, 2003). Tragically, all four countries continue to experience varying levels of political instability, diversity-related social conflict and, at best, only moderate prospects over the near-term for significant improvements in their economies (Table 4; UN/ECE, 2001). Even so, the region's SLDCs are rich in human and natural resources and share an ideological orientation that can serve as a launching pad for promoting more rapid social progress over the near-term. The Russian Federation, for example, already is a member of the "G8+1"<sup>13</sup> group of nations and is seeking "candidacy status" for membership in the EU. As of this writing, however, neither Albania, Macedonia, nor Moldova were under consideration for inclusion in the EU.

Average WISP scores for the SLDCs since 1991 are the lowest in Europe and, overall, reflect a pattern of comparative slow social development, i.e., an average score of 62 and 66 for 1995 and 2000, respectively. Further, SLDC average per capita income levels (\$4,770), unemployment (19%) and inflation rates (22%) are the least favorable in the European region (Table 4). Wealth distribution also tends to be the less equitable within the SLDCs with 50% of total household earnings being "captured" by the top 20% of income earners vs. only 5% by the bottom 20% of income earners (Gini Coefficient = 44.7).

The region's SLDCs contain approximately 155 million persons, about 21% of Europe's total population (Table 3). Unlike elsewhere in Europe, fertility in the SLDCs is comparatively high with an under-age-15-years population of 17%; SLDC aged comprise only 11% of the population vs. a region wide average of 17% (Table 3). Public expenditures in the SLDCs for targeted social programs to assist the poor, the unemployed, elderly persons, the sick and disabled, children and families, and others at high risk of poverty and social exclusion are the lowest among European nations (Table 6). The highly disadvantaged position of the region's SLDCs pose special challenges for the EU other regional bodies that are seeking to hasten the process of European harmonization and integration, including that of the region's SLDCs.

*Europe's Middle-Range Performing Countries*

An additional eight countries were identified on the WISP as European Middle Performing Countries (MPCs): Estonia (WISP = 81; Rank = 31); Belarus; (WISP = 78; Rank = 33); Romania (WISP = 77; Rank = 34); Latvia (WISP = 77; Rank = 34); Yugoslavia (WISP = 76; Rank = 37); Lithuania (WISP = 74; Rank = 39); the Ukraine (WISP = 71; Rank = 41); and, Croatia (WISP = 70; Rank = 43).

Like the region's SLDCs, all eight countries either were part of the FSU or under its direct influence. Today, all eight countries are fully autonomous nation-states characterized by varying degrees of open market economic and participatory political systems. Most also are characterized by emerging civil society organizations that supplement, replace or compete with services and other activities provided by their respective public sectors (Meier-Dallach and Juchler, 2002; Sokolowski, 2001). Approximately 105 million people live in the region's MPCs, about 15% of Europe's total population (Table 3). Nearly all of the population of the region's MPCs live the urban areas and, as a result, the economies of these countries are in the process of being transformed from agriculture to manufacturing and services (World Bank, 2002: 56–58, 2003). Population aging is increasing rapidly within these countries as well (16% are 65 years of age or older) but fertility in the MPCs, as elsewhere in Europe, is on decline; youth under the age of 15 years currently account for less than 15% of the MPC population mix (Table 3).

Income distribution is more equitable in the MPCs than in the region's SLDCs, but still quite concentrated with a subregional Gini Coefficient averaging 30.5. Per capita income levels in the MPCs averaged only \$7,156 in 2000, albeit but the pace of MPC economic expansion is the most rapid in Europe (6%); but so, too, is inflation which averaged 38% through much of 2003 (Table 4).

Though substantially lower than that of the SLDC's (19%), unemployment in the MPCs is high (11%). The absence of adequate employment for large segments of their economically active population is driving many of the unemployed to seek economic opportunities elsewhere in Europe, the Middle East and North America. The loss of substantial numbers of highly educated and skilled young

people within a comparatively short period of time represents a major assault on the human resource base of the MPCs – human and other skill resources they very much need for rebuilding their own new economies and political systems.

With respect to overall patterns of social development, European MPCs very much are in “the middle” and confirm the highly uneven nature of the development trends that are occurring within these countries. WISP scores for the MPCs, for example, averaged 74 and 75 in 1995 and 2000, respectively with the most favorable 5-year increases observed for Belarus (+15%); composite scores for the Ukraine and Lithuania during the same period declined by –9% and –2% respectively.

Despite the difficult economic challenges confronting them, and much like the region’s SLs, European MPCs have a long history of organized, well integrated, systems of social provision (USDHHS, 2002). In recent years what were previously entirely publicly-financed and provided programs have been supplemented by alternative programs and services provided by the subregion’s rapidly expanding network of for-profit and not-for-profit civil society organizations. As a result, social expenditures for health, education, housing and income support programs remain high in the MPCs and, as for European SLs, account for a large share of total CGE and GDP (Table 6; World Bank, 2002: 82–84).

## CONCLUSIONS

European nations have a long and distinguished record of success in providing for the social, political, and economic needs of their populations. Indeed, the region’s social achievements often have served as the yardstick by which other nations have judged their own social accomplishments. The analysis summarized in this paper offers clear evidence of the high degree of consensus that exists in Europe concerning both the goals and means of social development. Evidence also is provided of the region’s ability to advance development objectives across societies whose cultures and social systems differ significantly from one another.

The dramatic social, political and economic changes occurring in Europe today are likely to challenge all of the region’s long-

held assumptions. Chronically slow rates of economic growth, moderate inflation levels, high unemployment, rapid population aging, low fertility, and declining export opportunities are placing enormous strains on the fiscal and political capacity of many of the region's countries. Large scale migration into the region of persons from developing countries is changing fundamentally the European "social fabric". Further, the political map of Europe itself has been changed by the sudden emergence of some 26 "new" European nations since 1991 – the majority of which are considerably poorer than other parts of Europe and have had little or no recent experience in operating free market economic or democratic political systems.

Certainly, the near term social development challenges confronting Europe's social leaders are daunting: 1) achieving a "European identity" among such a disparate group of autonomous nation states; 2) accepting the EU's new members from Central and Eastern Europe as full and equal partners; 3) resolving centuries-old diversity-related social conflict; 4) agreeing on at least a functional "European Constitution"; 5) containing civil unrest and threats of terrorism from both within and outside the region; and, 6) revisiting, with the goal of re-strengthening, the region's historical transatlantic partnership with the United States. As part of its approach to economic reforms, the European region also needs to give serious consideration to which in which increasing priority can be assigned to: 7) realigning and restructuring its existing systems of post-secondary education; 8) promoting technological innovation and entrepreneurship; 8) taking action steps in support of its extensive basket of environmental protection agreements; and 9) resolving the region-wide dilemmas of large-scale population mobility from high- to low-fertility countries. The realization of these goals will require the region's leaders to adopt a more proactive and inclusive approach to achieving a fully integrated "New Europe."

#### NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the *2003 Annual Conference on Quality of Life in Sweden* sponsored by the Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Ministry of Social Affairs held in Stockholm, Sweden (October).

<sup>3</sup> The European Union (EU) currently consists of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. An additional 10 countries will join the EU in late 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Three additional countries are under review for EU membership: Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

<sup>4</sup> As of November 2003 Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom were not members of the “Euro” monetary system.

<sup>5</sup> Other partners in the “welfare mix” include the State, the Market, and Families/Households (Evers & Wintersberger, 1988; Vogel, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> “Adequacy of social provision” refers to the changing capacity of societies to provide for the basic social, material, and other needs of the people living within their borders, e.g., for food, clothing, shelter, and access to at least basic health, education, and social services, etc. (Estes, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> For methodological reasons, the ISP’s 40 indicators are divided between positive and negative indicators of social progress. On the Education Subindex, for example, higher adult illiteracy rates are negatively associated with social progress whereas gains in primary school enrollment levels are positively associated with overall improvements in development.

<sup>8</sup> For a fuller explanation of these procedures and the system of statistical weights that resulted from application of these procedures see Estes, 1988: 199–209.

<sup>9</sup> Data for the majority of successor states to the former Soviet Union (FSU) are reported for 1995 & 2000 only.

<sup>10</sup> Among other countries, West Africa includes Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.

<sup>11</sup> Established in 1960, the mission of the OECD is to “promote economic cooperation and development (among member states).” The current members of the OECD (N = 30) are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The EU also has an “special” membership with the OECD.

<sup>12</sup> Iceland and Spain are neither members nor candidate members of the EU.

<sup>13</sup> Established in October 1975, the purpose of the G-8 is to “to facilitate economic cooperation among the developed countries that participated in the Conference on International Economic Cooperation held in several sessions between December 1975 and June 1977”. Current members of the G-8 include:

Canada, the EU (as one member), France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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