QUANTIFYING CULTURE IN POLICY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This research demonstrates a methodology to quantify cultural characteristics, demonstrating household level data can be included in economic models. Open source data provides a wealth of opportunity for policy planners and program administrators. This paper offers examples of how they might be used to include culture. World Bank data from Albania is indexed into a cultural composite that claims to provide a window into the household expression of the deepest values of a local culture. This paper also offers useful data sources for evidence-based techniques to include cultural or personal characteristics as tools for policymakers and practitioners to increase returns to inputs and better integrate approaches across a diverse regional context. Whether dynamic or static, economic literature acknowledges that culture impacts the heart of society's functioning and makes analysis of cultural correlations with development both necessary and controversial in policymaking as well as practice. The challenge is greater in the European Union context, which seeks to communicate, if not to unify, policies across widely divergent cultures and traditions. In designing plans that promote economic growth and development, praxis research may tend to weight incentives and structures far more than cultural or personal characteristics. However, this is a missed opportunity as there are several catalytic or obstructive cultural values linked to development, including attributes of a culture's religions, ethical values, entrepreneurial orientations, and networking tendencies such as social trust.

The methodology employs reliable open-access data with subjective questions that fit Fowler's faith development theory and provided panel data so lag effects can be assessed in future research. The 2003 World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) data for Albania, Wave 2, was chosen because the subjective questions provided non-religious self-assessments that could be indicative of the theory's requirements and application as a cultural composite. Albania was chosen because of its unique political and cultural history, which may insulate this analysis from some typical research biases in faith toward certain religions or developed regions. During its long Soviet occupation, the Albanian culture was denuded of most all religious expression through forced communism. After its liberation, if people reverted to any religion, historical Islamic traditions were embraced. This avoids the academic tendency to study Christian or American and advanced European cultures and economies.

Scores from multiple questions focusing on – individual care, institutional care and care for others – were averaged into a cultural composite and divided into three levels of faith development: individual, institutional and independent. This analysis found 17% in Level 1, 64% in Level 2 and 19% in Level 3. Fowler's study, though not representative, found 3%, 83% and 13% in these levels. The Cr-\(\alpha\) of 54.4% is usually considered low however, the literature suggests this may be a reasonable reliability for cultural variables. Level 2 and 3 can then be used as dummy variables, assuming everyone has a Level 1 faith development, which includes Fowler's Stage 0 Undifferentiated, Stage 1 Projective-Intuitive, and Stage 2 Mythic-Literal. This is the first step for an analysis quantifying culture.

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POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This paper encourages policy makers and program administrators to explore the wealth of cultural data sources now available to researchers, including an embrace of intuitive assessments which practitioners may compile themselves. Cultural data may require theory-based inductive, deductive and abductive approaches, as presented here, the latter being a process for finding the simplest way to explain an observed phenomenon. The key is to formulate or adopt a strong theoretical base for the hypothesis of either what aspect of culture is playing a given role and what available variable can be appropriately taken as a proxy for that cultural aspect. Cultural composites may be primary data or compiled an index or dummy variable. And while the goal is use of culture in quantitative analysis, simple descriptive statistics of qualitative or categorical data also may help shape and execute policy.

Diverse academic literature in economics cites culture as a top factor in development, along with education and human capital. Similarly, on a growing list of 145 growth determinants, culture/religion is listed as the 7th most robust alongside secondary education/human capital, which is ranked 6th. Many individual or household tendencies derived from culture may be tested qualitatively or quantitatively, and there are now valid scientific techniques to do so. While economists and other researchers have shown hesitance from culture may be tested qualitatively or quantitatively, and there are now valid scientific techniques to do so. While economists and other researchers have shown hesitance from culture to include culture in policy making, effective methods and better data now make it easier to distinguish individual preferences and include testable, culture-based phenomena to improve our perspective of policy aims and outcomes.

To examine culture requires a thorough understanding of both the environment and the theory behind any selection of proxy or composite variables. This paper offers practical techniques for applying theory to quantify culture and then include those factors in research, policy-making and administration. And the proxy chosen is constructed from one of the most controversial and most difficult aspects to measure: faith. Extensive testing and literature emerged from human development disciplines to describe the stages of faith development by Fowler (1981). However, this is not a measure of religious affiliation, belief or adherence. In fact, this theory was chosen because it is a universal human trait and specifically non-religious. Unfortunately, the theory is likely mis-named and instead of representing colloquial faith or belief, this theory describes a sense of ultimate purpose, meaning an evaluative engagement which captures the essence attempted by many cultural models. To compile this composite, non-religious subjective questions from an available World Bank survey were used, for one of the least religious countries in Europe, Albania in 2003. The composite term Faith Indicator is used in line with the theory’s language but its the underpinnings are a comprehensive proxy for core cultural aspects measured at the household level.

**Keywords:** Evidence-Based Policy, Cultural Composites, Qualitative Analysis, Quantifying Culture

INTRODUCTION

Culture represents “our deepest beliefs, values, sense of identity, ways of life and longings” (Hoksbergen & Wilber, 409), and policy makers work in cultural spheres and may find it useful to have an overview of the literature on quantification of culture, with recommendations for incorporating proxies in public administration. Culture is a broad and complexly layered environment for any public program from design to delivery. So over the last 50 years, research in many fields has increasingly included, perhaps at first by happenstance, methods to measure and analysis culture, especially in international business management. More recently economic literature, which defines culture in various ways has begun to recognize it as a fundamental determinate of growth and as a key driver of development.

British activist Raymond Williams called culture ‘two or three of the most complicated words in the English language’ (Williams, 1976, 76). While its importance may be undeniable, it is difficult to define, let alone to operationalize. Culture as a “structure of feeling” (Williams, 2001, i) has an ineffable air, yet is a foundation of society. When the NBER asked if ‘culture affects economic outcomes’ Guiso, Sapienze and Zingales (2006) respond hopefully that while “economists have been reluctant to rely on culture as a possible determinant of economic phenomena… better techniques and more data have made it possible to identify systematic differences in people’s preferences… These developments suggest an approach to introduce cultural-based explanations that can be tested and are able to substantially enrich our understanding of economic phenomena.” (2)
Yet, there is no common definition. Is culture a set of habits acquired from society or is it a shared way of interpreting experiences? The literature does agree that culture is multi-layered and present as both expressed and implicit elements, with certain underlying assumptions provided about life itself (Adkisson, 2014, 91). These views developed over a long period of time to become stable elements shared among people in a group. (Taras and Steel, 2006, 359). Yet the aspects of a culture are not equally decisive. Some are values that set an ideal or evaluative standard for conduct and expectations. Others offer a more malleable, situational ethos expressed in the context of certain spheres of activity or institutional frameworks. So researchers must have a clear theoretical view of what aspects of culture are being observed and measured. Researchers and practitioners must then fit the observations into a model or for a population being studied based on the observer’s experience.

This paper reviews relevant literature on quantification of culture in Section 1. Section 2 presents a unique theoretical approach to quantifying culture, using Fowler’s Stages of Faith Development as a proxy for culture as an example of a cultural composite drawn from 2003 World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) data for Albania. A household-level Faith Index is compiled as a proxy for the sense of deepest meaning in the culture, and so the methodology and data source employed to obtain that cultural composite is described in Section 3. Section 4 makes specific recommendations for policy makers and public administration practitioners to apply techniques offered in the literature or in this construct to their particular contexts. Finally, Section 5 provides brief conclusions.

1. Cultural Composites in the Literature

“The notion that economic behaviors are socially/culturally conditioned has become more widely accepted” (Adkisson, 2014, 89). Four sections provide a review of literature on quantifying culture, economic literature including culture, other possible proxies for culture such as social capital, and human development literature for Fowler’s stages of faith. Adkisson (2014) outlines six streams for quantifying culture. They rely some of demographic data but mostly, for the last fifty years of research, on attitudinal survey data with the caveat that “any source of information about culture will have its weaknesses” (Adkisson, 97). One of the many challenges for this line of research is the internal reliability of the data proxies. Do cultural measures really measure what the research supposes, and does it matter? A meta-study of cultural analysis by Taras, Rowney and Steel (2009) evaluated 121 separate instruments for quantifying culture and found internal reliability, usually reported as Cronbach’s alpha, at questionable to low acceptable reliability scores. An earlier meta-analysis of 508 studies by Taras and Steel (2006) found the same (Taras, Rowney and Steel, 2009, 368). The authors speculate that low consistencies relate to the nebulous nature of defining culture, and the mixture of personal character traits (like personality) in with social dominate customs. Problems are exacerbated because no objective agreement exists on whether self-reporting surveys, which remain the primary tool for data collection, are accurate or effective to estimate population norms from individual responses. (Taras, Rowney and Steel, 2009, 364). There are also challenges with researchers assuming equivalencies between difference cultures or simplifying complex constructs in single variables. For example, “according to Schaffer and Riordan (2003), approximately 79% of cross-cultural studies published between 1995 and 2001 used country as proxy for culture” (Taras, Rowney and Steel, 2009, 358). That broad measure hardly seems to serve as an effective proxy for cultural patterns below the national level.

1.1 Literature and Data Sources for Quantifying Culture

Continuing a long line of research that adopts nationality, religious affiliation or socioeconomic data as a proxy for culture, Lieske (1993) employs regional demographic U.S. data to compile county-level composites. Using cluster and principle component analyses, Lieske identifies regional subcultures to compare with outcomes such as social issues or election participation (Adkisson, 96). This work is ongoing and publically accessible at http://publius.oxfordjournals.org/content/suppl/2011/04/23/pjr018.DC1/pub-2009-em-0050-File004.pdf. Similarly, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) and the World Values Survey (1981) are gathering longitudinal cultural data, with the World Values Survey Wave 7 to be complete and available for free-access by mid- to late- 2020 at www.worldvaluessurveu.org. Both of these sources gather attitudinal data through surveys. Schwartz et al (2012) present 19 specific cultural values whose composites are less quantified than other studies but may be useful for descriptive statistics and research design (Adkisson, 97). Inglehart et al. (2004) presents summary data for 80 societies form the World Visions Surveys along two dimensions: traditional vs. rational authority and survival vs. self-expression values. Much of his summary data is available in their article tables.
Three significant researchers survey the attitudes of mainly managers and employees of multinational corporation across several countries: Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and House et al (2004) in the ongoing Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Research Program (GLOBE). Hofstede initially surveyed IBM employees in 72 countries, and his dimensions are probably the mostly commonly used to quantify culture: acceptance of unequal social power structures, the tendency to avoid unstructured or changing situation, reliance on individualism, and adoption of tough versus tender “masculine” social models. Trompenaars and Hamden-Turner created national indices by surveying 8,841 manager and employees in 43 countries along seven (7) dimensions, similar to Hofstede. These add some questions relevant to management decisions such as rules versus relationships, time orientation, and status achievement and are presented in their book, Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business. Finally, the largest survey is House et al (2004) for the GLOBE Project, which surveyed 17,000 managers in 951 organizations primarily in financial, food, and telecommunications industries (Adkisson, 96) along nine dimensions, notably adding personal traits such as Assertiveness to the Hofstede and Trompenaars models.

Adkisson (2014) presents six studies which pair certain cultural measures with growth or other economic issues. Building on Frank, Hofstede and Bond (1991) and Gwartney, Lawson and Hall (1996), Johnson and Lenartowicz (1998) explored Hofstede measures of culture as they relate to economic freedom, and how economic freedom correlated with economic growth. Mathers and Williams (2011) provide a similar analysis, where Beugelsdijk, Van Schaik and Arts (2006) reverse the standard model to make the culture index dependent on growth, finding that culture is both influenced by growth (endogenous) and independent of growth (exogenous). Achievement Needs (N-Achievement) and Achievement orientation versus tradition adherence paired with economic growth by Granato, inglehart and Leblang (1996) and McClelland (1961). Other studies presented include cultural values on political institutions Swank (1996); diplomat parking violations on home country corruption scores (Fisman and Miguel, 2007); culture and environmental sustainability (Park, Russell and Lee, 2007); and cultural impacts on acceptance of income inequalities, as measured by GINI coefficient in Native America tribal reservations (Mushinski and Pickering, 2000).

The “relationship between entrepreneurial culture, regional innovativeness and economic growth in Europe.” (Adkisson, 102) is explored by Beugelsdijk (2007). The authors created an entrepreneurial culture index using the European Values Survey (europeanvaluesstudy.eu), which is yet another good resource for cultural data. Apetrei, Kureshi and Horodnic (2015) conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with entrepreneurs working in countries other than their home countries and identified four approaches to adapting national culture and business cultures: delegating to local managers to adapt to the local culture, trying to understand and accommodate local traditions, setting a company standard irregardless of local culture, and to compromise between the two.

1.2 Economic Analysis of Culture

Many economists consider culture essentially irrelevant to development (p. 411). Hernando de Soto finds culture a “largely untestable” (p. 411). Economist Mancur Olson suggests people everywhere and in all cultures will respond similarly when institutions secure rights to property and enforce contracts (2000). “Jeffrey Sachs calls the cultural thesis a myth [based on] prejudice rather than measurable evidence’ (Sachs, 2005, p. 317)” (Hoksbergen & Wilber, 2008, 411). And even in Economics and Culture, David Throsby (2001) acknowledges the lack of interest in “culture” in the economic development literature but fails to offer objective, aggregating analysis for culture’s value as a factor in development. Tremendous evidence shows that societies can grow economically without adopting the cultures of more advanced economies. “Ireland, South Korea, France, the United States, and now China and India can all enjoy the fruits of economic progress without fundamental changes to their cultures.” (Hoksbergen & Wilber, p. 411).

Hoksbergen and Wilber (2008) wrote “Culture and Development” for the International Handbook of Development Economics. It is noteworthy that this appears in the 27th chapter of volume two, bespeaking of its relative importance, to define culture as: “Our deepest beliefs, values, sense of identity, ways of life and longings. This makes it unsurprising that a discussion of culture and its significance for development generates controversy. For economists, interest in culture has centered on its support of traits that contribute to economic growth, that is thrift, hard work and reinvestment by the middle class; hard work, obedience and contentment for the working class. (pp. 409-410) Despite its utilitarian interest, economics has long viewed culture as significant in the motivations to pursue profit, and “religious beliefs helped direct and shape subsequent economic development. Economic reasons alone are insufficient to account for the extraordinary power of entrepreneurial and rational profit-seeking in the modern world.” (p. 410)
Yet, the literature cites culture as a top factor in development. Similarly, on a growing list of 145 growth determinants, culture/religion is listed as the 7th most robust with secondary education/human capital, which is ranked 6th. Many individual or household tendencies derived from culture may be tested qualitatively or quantitatively, and there are valid scientific techniques to do so. In their meta-survey of “Empirics of Growth and Development”, Durlauf, Kourtellos and Ming Tan (2005), writing from the field of growth econometrics, review the literature’s ever-expanding set of reported growth determinants. “In a 1999 survey, Durlauf and Quah listed a total of 87… potential growth determinants studied in the literature. By the time of Durlauf, Johnson, and Temple’s 2005 survey, the number had risen to 145.” (2005, 40) Obviously, many possible determinants exist beyond Solow’s two neoclassical variables: “factor accumulation and exogenous technical change… [Others] include a range of economic, political, geographic, and social factors” (33). The literature differentiates between determinants of growth that are “fundamental” vs. ‘proximate’ to growth (39), and Durlauf et al identify approaches in the literature for analyzing the robustness of drivers, and from these methods, they use the literature’s analysis to narrow down candidates to a few robust drivers. They finds six (6) factors: initial income, capital accumulation, human capital measured by secondary education, and life expectancy — with three relatively robust variables: political stability, trade openness and culture (43-44).

While culture may affect outcomes, it may also be affected by the same. This endogenous-exogenous dichotomy is complicated by questions of identifying proxies for quantification and to determine causation direction in correlation. Many economists critique misuse of culture in models, such as social capital (van Staveren and Knorrina, 2007) or a broader tendency to categorize local culture as either ‘good or bad for growth’ (Sen, 2004). Others recognize culture as a vital part of economic choices, though not necessarily determinant of outcomes (Myrdal, 1968), or as useful to some utilitarian end. Stulz and Williamson (2003) see an openness in culture that can promote financial economics.

Models that do include culture, frame it as a rational personal choice, a utility function, or a risk-reduction instrument. (Hoksbergen & Wilber, 2008, 415) But these who include culture as integral to development, express concern that existing cultures can be over-run (Goulet, 1980, 23) by global forces. Technology may promote different dominant values (such as individualism), standardize, syncretize or centralize activity across cultures through government, currencies, or norms of business. And economic policies may apply an overarching ethic of cost-benefit efficiency that leaves little room for local cultures. The challenge is to promote growth while protecting cultural identity without forcing what Goulet terms “the cruel choice” (1971, 1980): either stay poor or abandon your culture to succeed.

Economic literature covers assorted aspects of culture from nationality to stated value preferences, from social capital to household socioeconomic demographics, from religiosity to efforts in workplace innovation. Most studies use well-established regressors for personality traits like optimism or persistence; religious affiliations; or networks and trust. Hoksbergen and Wilber’s review of “Culture and Development” (2008) discusses a large body of literature debating culture in recent economic research. Rao and Walton (2004) define culture as “relationality”, or a set of interactive phenomena “constantly in flux.” (4) This view is far different than Guiso et al (2003 and 2006) who see culture as traditions handed down. Whether dynamic or static, the literature acknowledges culture is at the heart of society's functioning: “our deepest beliefs, values, sense of identity, ways of life and longings” (Hoksbergen & Wilber, 409), which makes analysis of cultural impacts on development both common and controversial in economics.

A leading proponents of culture as key to development is Harrison (1985, 1992, 1998, 2001), author of *WhoProsper: HowCulturalValuesShapeEconomic andPoliticalSuccess*. Harrison listed catalytic and obstructive cultural values for development, including attributes of a culture's religions, ethical values, entrepreneurial orientations, and networking tendencies such as social trust (Hoksbergen & Wilber, 413). But many economists see culture as far less significant than incentive structures (Olson, 2000; de Soto, 2000; Sachs, 2005; Easterly, 2006; Throsby, 2001) or as an expression of an incentive structure (Casson, 2006). Yet others follow sociology's train of thought (Weber, 2002; Parsons, 1968) in emphasizing the necessity of culture for development (Hagen, 1962), either as a catalyst or as a response. Hoselitz (1957) emphasizes how culture removes barriers preventing labor mobility and division of labor. David McClelland defined “n-achievement” as a critical driver of economic development by cultural means, such as child-rearing practices, though he finds few ways to actually promote n-achievement beyond cross-pollinating developed country people and entrepreneurs in developing nations (McClelland, 1961; Hoksbergen & Wilber, 412). Landes' sweeping work (1998) on global historical development does not focus primarily on cultural aspects, as much as multi-modal determinants, but he concludes throughout that “culture can make all the difference” (522) in people's ability to recognize and capitalize on opportunities. Likewise, Weil (2005) agreed with Guiso et al to find positive benefits from cultural values that influence development.
1.3 Other Measures as Culture

Though economic literature suggests effects of social capital on economic outcomes is negligible, unless expanded to include other personal or cultural characteristics, many sources of social capital data are being developed with subjective questions, such as in the World Bank Surveys and World Values Surveys. Knack and Keefer (1997) find: “indicators of trust and civic norms from the World Values Surveys for a sample of 29 market economies [linked to] measurable economic performance…[However,] memberships in formal groups – Putnam’s measure of social capital – is [sic] not associated with trust or with improved economic performance.” (1251) This is a critical finding because Putnam made two key points about social capital which suggest Fowler’s Faith Development theories ($2) may offer better explanatory models. Social capital relies on group memberships, as Weber did with Protestantism, and trust, which Putnam acknowledges is complicated and comes in many different forms: “The theory of social capital presumes that, generally speaking, the more we connect with other people, the more we trust them, and vice versa…. Although social trust – trust in other people – and political trust – trust in political authorities – might be empirically related, they are logically quite distinct. I might trust my neighbors without trusting city hall.” (Putnam, 1995, 665)

Including personality traits requires a sophisticated tool like the Life Orientation Test (Scheier and Carver, 1985), though research do it all the time. Character assessment is difficult to couple with longitudinal surveys, and difficult to determine which traits are preferred. For example, optimism exhibits assumptions of a preferred state and risks overestimating probabilities of success, but pessimism is advantageous in research, as a “productive paranoia” (Collins, 2001). There are risk of misidentifying traits. The theoretical underpinning is lacking to distinguish positive and neurotic characters in self-administered tests. Even the formal Life Orientation Test fails to identify unhealthy traits when asked to distinguish between optimism from neuroticism. (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994).

Using nationality or religion as a culture proxy offers enormous amounts of research. Multiple fields produced recent studies on religion, including political science, economics and sociology, but many deal with U.S. issues or with critical regions like the Middle East. The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium formed to look at developing economies with representation by six religious systems: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and indigenous belief traditions. Research focused on India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania was produced by Singh, Marquette and Alolo’s 2007 review of “Political Science, Religion and Development.” The authors found “very little of the current output is focused on developing countries” (1), so instead they reviewed links in the political science literature between development and democratization, good governance, human rights, social capital and conflict (2). However, religion does not seem a strong explanatory variable for economic growth. Weber’s Protestant Ethic is widely discounted, as in Becker and Wößmann’s (2009), “Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History,” and in sociology, Barro and McCleary (2003) make “a key research contribution in the new literature exploring the macroeconomic effects of religious beliefs… [did] not find that their results are robust” (Durlauf, Kouretellos, Tan, 2006, 1059).

Iannaccone’s (1998) review of two hundred articles for the economics of religion literature may be useful for finding cultural determinants in development, even if “beyond the research and professional interests of most economists” (1466). Research into religiosity asserts character derived from cultural influences have a place in economic analysis, though they are often viewed “as a category of behavior largely immune to the rational calculus.” (1468) Iannaccone reviewed articles on microeconomic religious behaviors and the economic consequences of religion (1466) but found little research done outside of Europe and the U.S. For economic consequences, studies show “religion is not the province of the poor or uninformed. In numerous analyses of cross-sectional survey data, rates of religious belief and activity tend not to decline with income, and most rates increase with education.” (1470) He cites social science studies over forty years investigating an “empirical relationship between income and/or education and numerous measures of religiosity… Since the mid-1970s economists have weighed in… Their basic results, however, mirror those of the sociologists: education is a weak but generally positive predictor of religious participation… Wage effects are almost always dwarfed by those of age, gender and religious upbringing.” (Iannaccone, 1998, 1470)

However, culture is included in economic analysis, it is clear that the literature does view culture in general and even religious culture in particular as a component of economic decisions and possibly of outcomes. Arizpe (2004) famously quipped that UN: “Culture is not part of development; development is part of culture,” and the literature on faith development may explain better the phenomena these economists now observe.
2. Fowler’s Stages of Faith Development Theory

A weakness acknowledged regarding many studies that quantify culture is the use of too simple proxies and the surveying of populations, such as Hofstede (1980), that focus primarily on corporate managers in multinational firms. Culture cannot be captured by simple labels or isolated professional groups. It resides in the hearts and homes of every person in a community. Fowler’s Faith Development Theory (FDT) may not be the perfect window into souls, but using random representative household-level data may at least provide a window into people homes. This theory may be mis-named. Fowler’s faith development might be a promisingly sophisticated cultural alternative to, or use of the substantial amount of data collected for, Social Capital. Social bonds successfully identified may be a result of a capacity better explained by universal human development in Fowler’s FDT. James Coleman offers an excellent and fitting treatment on “Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital” (1988) – later revised as a chapter of Eric Lesser’s Knowledge and Social Capital (2000). Coleman describes three forms: expectation/obligation, information channels and social norms. This structure is then analyzed on high school dropout rates for any effect within or outside of families. However, at its core, Coleman’s work is seeking to answer one primary question: beyond how environment shapes people to pursue rational actions, what is the “internal springs of action that give the actor a purpose or direction.” (S96). So perhaps, the core assumptions of a given culture and this ultimate aim of the internal springs of action that shape Social Capital may lie in human development view of non-religious faith.

Fowler’s approach to universal stages of faith offers insights into fundamental questions driving research. Some research links faith directly as a form of social capital (Candland, 2000; Furby et al, 2006; and Dinham, 2006), yet they rely on measuring religious affiliation – i.e. membership – and not any assessment of individual or household maturity in faith. This is the mistake identified in the literature as oversimplifying culture or misappropriating a variable to stand for an overly broad representation of culture, such as nationality.

2.1 Fowler’s Faith Development Theory

Fowler holds what is termed ‘faith development,’ as a universal human trait, not specific or even connected to any religious identity. When this hypothesis is presented, the first question is usually: Doesn’t faith just mean religion or hope? Not at all. Faith maturity does benefit from religious practice, just as physical development is enhanced by organized training for sports; cognitive skills excel with formal education, and psychosocial abilities grow in a healthy home environment. A rich body of literature presents faith as a universal quality not tied to religious affiliation, doctrinal belief, parochial history, social setting, or group action. Faith is one’s deep sense of a guiding purpose or meaning in life – one’s steering wheel, to borrow a popular metaphor, and not just a spare tire.

The proper question is, can Fowler’s development scale be operationalized to significantly explain cultural or economic outcomes? Quantifying faith development outside of religious affiliation or attitudes, for inclusion in a cultural or economic model is a unique contribution to the literature. The current UN approach to global development promotes a joint emphasis on building human capacity and economic capacity. Finding ways to include unmeasured variables, like faith, may offer insights into how to reach such holistic goals. It may also provide the literature more tools for explaining why some households in economies react differently, or experience different outcomes, than peers, given similar circumstances.

Fowler’s six stages (plus intermediary transitional stages) are reduced to three levels:
- Level 1: Instinctive
- Level 2: Institutional
- Level 3: Independent

In 1981, Faith Development emerged with James Fowler’s Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning. This new discipline arose as a composite of several branches of Human Development. Fowler tested his theory through primary, qualitative data, going beyond the current research in psychosocial, physiological, moral, cognitive and perspective development. Where development economics may focus ultimately on human well-being and output, faith development focuses on the ultimate purpose or meaning people place on their lives – what they ultimately trust, who they believe they are, and how they see the world.
Faith here is not religion. The literature defines it as a universal and interactive orientation toward one’s highest goals, rather than a measure of practice or belief. Fowler’s fundamental assumption is that all people have faith, and it grows in stages, similar to economic development or other areas of human development. Earlier stages are critical, but inferior, to later development… and stagnation or regressions can occur. In economics, earlier levels are also foundational, but inferior, to advanced economies, and stagnation or recession is possible. So faith may not be foreign to economics, but the literature previously had no way to translate faith into a quantitative analysis or mathematical language economics can use.

Figure 1. Levels of Faith Development

Level 2 and Level 3 faith development is also not age-related or an inevitable progression or persistence in action toward a goal. While the initial stages do require certain degrees of physical, social, cognitive and moral development, these differences disappear by adulthood. Neither does faith development refer to a lack of reasoning or ‘blind leaps.’ Albert Hirschman (1967), an influential development and political economist of the late 20th century, spoke of “the principle of the hiding hand” suggesting that misjudging complexity can stimulate our creativity to find new ways to overcome unforeseen obstacles. In 1969, he applied this concept of incomplete planning knowledge to his pioneering call for unbalanced growth as a way to accelerate development in poor economies. However, the literature invalidates his effect, finding it only occurs 22% of the time. ‘Malevolent hiding hands’ occur at other times to bring delay or end projects – otherwise known as the Planning Fallacy (Flyvbjerg & Sunstein, 2015). Such views of ‘blind leaps of faith’ are popular, but the faith development literature suggest a more complex process. For example, while a “hiding hand” expects unintended outcomes from the unknown, faith intends outcomes and, in fact, shapes them.

Level 2 begins with Fowler’s Stage 3 “Synthetic-Conventional Faith,” which often emerges in the teen years, from approximately age 12 to early adulthood. This stage can be the plateau or perch on which most people’s lifelong faith stagnates. “If the transition from Synthetic-Conventional to Individuative-Reflective faith does not occur before or during the mid-life [Levinson] transition, its chances of occurring at all decrease markedly.” (Fowler, 1981, 112) It is the stage where many high-functioning adults with sincere faith operate for all of their adult lives.

“In this period we see the emergence of mutual interpersonal perspective taking (Selman, 1974, 1976)…. Where we say: ‘I see you seeing me [and] I see the me I think you see.’” (Fowler & Dell, p. 39) Here people construct stories from many sources and adopt conventions to understand who they are in relationship to groups. Adolescents especially need “mirrors... trusted others in which to see the image of person-alty emerging and to get a hearing for the new feelings, insights, anxieties and commitments that are forming… to help focus the new explosiveness and many-ness” of inner life as they are shaping a personal myth of the self (151). Formal operational thinking used in math and science enable teens to begin ‘think about their thinking’ – to see patterns and attach greater meanings, in order to project concrete expectations onto their own future lives.
Also, combined in Level 2 is Stage 4 “Individuated-Reflective Faith.” This involves two necessary elements: “critical distancing from one’s previous assumptive value system and the emergence of an executive ego” (179). If one is completed but the other is not, a person will likely remain at Stage 3. This might occur when a person marries, goes off to college, moves to a new town to start a job, or joins the military. If that process allows them to see the relativity of their inherited “conventional” points of view, but they fail to find a way to assert their own personal authority to evaluate these new stories, statuses and symbols for themselves, they may just replace one outside authority with another or become even more reliant on them – locked in Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional Faith. Maturation to Stage 4 “constructs a perspective genuinely aware of social systems and institutions… [with a] richness of mutual interpersonal perspective taking” from Stage 3 – but goes on to see all people are transitioning as some social standards hold beyond personal application. A new purpose or meaning within the institutional or social structures must be found, based not on the needs of others, but on one’s own views (p. 181). Stage 4 Faith has the ability to demythologize and critically reflect on the meanings of their most sacred symbols, without rejecting the explicit language of the culture, to separate what is applicable to one’s own life. This de-mystification allows for creative comparisons and extrapolations which deepens one’s faith life (and thus the purpose, trust and ultimate meanings of existence.}

Level 3 “Independent Faith” unites Stage 4 Individuated-Reflective Faith with the most unattainable Stage 5 “Conjunctive Faith” and Stage 6 “Universalizing Faith.” Fowler, in a 30-year retrospective, combines the three stages in a grouping called the “Later Stages of Faith… It is not unusual for many not to reach the latter stages.” (Fowler & Dell, p. 40-41). Conjunctive Faith can hold two diametrically opposed thoughts as valid without need to resolve the inherent tension. It is an acceptance, if not embrace, of the “complementarity or mutuality” of existence (p. 185). Conjunctive faith involves going beyond the explicit ideological system and clear boundaries of identity that Stage 4 worked so hard to construct and… [come] to terms with the fact that the conscious ego is not master in its own house… Stage 5 accepts as axiomatic that truth is more multidimensional and organically interdependent than most theories or accounts of truth can grasp. (p. 186)

The few people who attain a **Stage 6 Universalizing Faith** exhibit qualities that “shake our usual criteria of normalcy. Their needlessness to self-preservation and the vividness of their… feel for transcendent… devotion to universalizing compassion [may] offend our parochial perceptions of justice.” (p. 200). However, they have a vision that “their community is universal… [where] particularities are cherished… [but] life is both loved and held too loosely” than our views of goodness and prudence can usually accommodate (pp. 200-201). Those at this stage of faith are rare and often are more loved in death than in their lives, such as a Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. It may be that only the hammer of history can forge them, more than any intentionality of their own, to become a Mahatma Ghandi.

But they are not perfect. Far from self-actualized, they can have enormous flaws and an undue attention to what seems irrelevant. Mother Teresa’s care for the hopelessly disenfranchised and dying illustrates this. Into a world of triage, comes a person oddly indifferent to norms or self. Universalizing Faith is one simultaneously subversive of all we hold most dear or true and an affirmation of the value and worth of everyone, if not everything. Ultimate self-sacrifice is a hallmark of Stage 6 faith.

In closing, Fowler would stress that faith is both natural and separate from beliefs. Use of the English word “faith” to denote doctrine, tradition or praxis is a recent construct of the last 500 years. for most of human history, faith was a love affair, transcendent trust upon which beliefs rested. Manifestation of faith in people is as diverse as it is fundamental; it is as personal as it is pervasive. ‘What makes us human,” Fowler writes, “is our capacity for trust in promises beyond ourselves to sustain the life, identity and meaning we cannot live without’ (p. 292). Faith is how we see the unseen, expect the unknowable and stand in the great vastness of the universe and existence, without losing our own significance or our care for others.

### 2.2 Faith Development Literature

Fowler’s FDT relates to finding meaning, orientation and value in life. The empirical literature suggests as a universal trait everyone uses which explains how people see themselves and the world – and direct their lives by that view. Faith is about one’s ultimate purpose and focus of trust. These definitions arose from 359 extensive qualitative interviews with people from diverse backgrounds, ages, etc. (though not a random or representative sample) building upon the literature from several fields in human development: psychology lifespan research from Jean Piaget in
cognitive development, Eric Erikson in psychological development, Lawrence Kohlberg in moral development, Robert Selman in perspective- or role-taking, and Daniel Levinson in stages of life-crisis in development. The taxonomy differs by discipline, but overall, human development finds that people develop in stages, which overlap and retrace throughout their lives with common aspects for all people.

This research was combined with scholarship by ethicist Richard Niebuhr who postulated that faith forms in the earliest stages of infancy and grows through experiences “of trust [in] the search for an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a center of value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning” (Fowler, 5) Fowler incorporated this with the German-American systematic theologian Paul Tillich’s view, expressed in popular and scholarly journals, that faith is about our ultimate concern – ‘life wagers that shape how we invest our deepest loves and most costly loyalties.’ (4-5) Neibuhr and Tillich saw faith as a “universal human concern” regardless of religious affiliation. Fowler then bridged this universality with human development theory by working with his mentor and colleague, comparative religionist Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Smith’s reading of history made a “first, seminal distinction between religion and faith [which he held as] deeper and more personal than religion… [a] way of responding to transcendent value and power perceived and grasped through… cumulative tradition.” (9)

As Fowler interviewed people, he noticed patterns in responses, which, as he analyzed, appeared distinct and separate from other stages of psychosocial, physiological, moral, cognitive and perspective development. Every person seemed to have a life-orienting or meaning-explaining “faith” that matured along discernable paths. He formulated intentional research to test his theory and published the pioneering work in Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (1981). Since then, a sizeable body of empirical literature has grown.

Faith development, if measureable, stands as a possible candidate for a proxy of household- and individual-level cultural measures of our deepest core values. For Fowler, faith is a universal human quality imbedded in all our daily activities and through which we strive to fulfill our ultimate purpose. Metaphorically, faith is an account where we store our deepest meanings, or most feel their absence. And that overriding drive may potentially affect the utility, production and other functions so often used in economics and public policy analysis. And it may embody a culture’s highest aims, which are buried in the member’s consciousness.

There are a long list of specific objections (and responses) in the literature, which Heywood (2008), Coyle (2011) and others catalogue. Since “Fowler’s theory has virtually colonised the field” (Heywood, 2008, 264), this level of scrutiny is expected. “Across a range of publications, the major clusters [are] in Dykstra and Parks (1986a); Fowler, Nipkow, and Schweitzer (1991); Astley and Francis (1992); and a special issue of the International Journal for the Psychology of Religion (Streib, 2001a)” (Coyle, 284). Objections to Fowler’s framework may be summarized in four broad camps. Religious scholars often believe Fowler’s absence of God or religion from the definition is “theologically inadequate” (Dykstra, 1986). At the opposite, some researchers resist “how relatively uninterested Fowler himself seems to have been in the empirical testing of the theory, leaving most of the investigative footlogging to his students while he concentrates on applying his ideas to ever more diverse areas of human life” (Heywood, 2008, 264). Fowler responded (1992) that FDT does not intend to disprove views that faith can be understood theologically or religiously, “rather he pointed out that its concern is with understanding the phenomenology of how people develop ways of relating to their world and to themselves in light of their understandings of ultimate reality, however they conceive that.” (Coyle, 285). Related to cultural critiques that FDT fails to account for the “development of the self” (163), this is an academically valid concern, especially in light of FDT’s rejection of Maslow’s self-actualization as the ultimate goal. And a group of scholars has structural objections, especially in psychology who ask if the theory adapts to modern cultures of diversity and the more emotional drives that motivate people. Fowler has a professional reputation as erring on the cognitive side of human development more than the feeling side.

### 2.3 Models for Measuring FDS

Several quantitative measurements or scales attempt to offer more efficient ways to measure faith maturity. These include: Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson, 1989; Canavan, 1999; Clore, 1997; Green & Hoffman, 1989; Hammond, 1993; Hiebert, 1993; Leak, Louks, & Bowlin, 1999; Swensen, Fuller & Clements, 1993… (all of which) open the possibility that data on faith development could be correlated easily with other scales such as on personality factors or well-being. There is, however, no coherent and homogeneous faith development scale construction among 53 empirical studies reviewed. (Streib, 2005, 106) In twenty short years, FDT drew empirical research worldwide, though Fowler’s
“Center for Faith Development at Emory University… never sought to establish rigid research coordination or to propagate a sacrosanct theory and methodology” (99-100). “There is a Manual for Faith Development Research (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1986, 1993)… and a large number of dissertations have been done… constituting a tradition that is, however, far from being homogenous” (Streib, 2005, 100).

Streib’s second critique also applies here to possible problems in application or methodology of analysis. He says that FDT leans toward interpretive analysis “rather than… surface phenomena such as knowledge, assent to a statement, or report of a practice” (100). Half of the 53 empirical studies followed manual guidelines, some with groups “such as people dealing with HIV… chemical dependency, or the loss of a relative” (105). Cross-cultural and gender-focused studies were common. And several test if “two or more theoretical and methodological perspectives may complement each other” (105). Streib (2005) lists six scales that were designed, and many were used in studies. Purker (2006) does an excellent job describing the components of each scale in detail: The Fowler Scale (Barnes, Doyle & Johnson, 1989); Green and Hoffman (1989) Survey; Stages of Faith Scale (Swenson, Fuller & Clements, 1993); Hiebert’s long mailer scale (1993); Clore’s psychometric measure (1997); and the Leak Faith Development Scale (2003, etc.). These various tools were tested for validity and reliability to varying degrees, but the criticism is that “the construction of scales for measuring faith development is an unfinished project” (Streib, 2005, 107).

One proposal for measuring faith seems the most objective, statistically valid, and practically useful for research. Twenty years after FDT appeared, Gary Leak, Anne Loucks, and Patricia Bowlin (1999) developed eight-questions, with two choices, called the Faith Development Scale (FDS). Their goal, building on aforementioned surveys such as a nine-item scale by Barnes et al (1989) and the more detailed scale by Green and Hoffman (1989), was to replace the dominant controversial scales used to measure “Intrinsic (IR) and Extrinsic (ER) Religious Orientation” (105).

The first duplicable aspect of FDS is its use of a few short questions to assess orientation across all six stages. Attempts to index each stage separately proved far too cumbersome, complex and inadequate as an evaluation tool. There are empirical reasons to deal with general categories of faith, rather than measuring specific stages (Batson et al., 1993, pp. 74-75). Researchers performed several validation tests on their scale, including: content validity, expert review; re-test validity; and a Cronbach α test, with “an 8-item scale with an acceptable internal consistency” (180). However, “given the inherent complexity within each faith stage (i.e. each stage is composed of several diverse facets), it may not be possible to achieve high levels of internal consistency in a global faith development measure. We preferred to have a scale that is sensitive to several stages in order to enhance breadth of coverage and content validity, even at the expense of internal consistency, which is likely to be elusive in a comprehensive faith development scale. (fn 3, 110)

The FDS was also tested for unidimensionality. The FDS was validated next using 3 different studies, each with unique aims, and one of the study was modified into 3 separate forms to test divergent study objectives. The results of all five individual studies using FDS showed promise as a brief, global measure of faith development. (Leak, Loucks & Bowlin, 1999, 121) One other advantage of the FDS is that peer rating provided an important and stringent validity test for the FDS. The peer-rating methodology allowed us to move beyond an exclusive reliance on self-reports. FDS also seems validated using “indirect indicators… of mature faith” (121), though no single proxy exists. They looked for traits of tolerance to evaluate progress toward Stage 5. Therefore, this research reveals no inherent problem relying on traits or constructs indicated by or consistent with the Fowler theory to indicate faith maturity.

However, there were some problems revealed in the validation process. It was difficult to separate some personal traits from mature faith. The absence of a relationship with Agreeableness is especially troubling because this aspect of personality is characterized by such things as helpfulness and forgiveness (coupled with compliance and passivity), characteristics deemed important in people with mature faith (e.g., Meadow & Kahoe, 1984). Of course, this apparent deficiency in the FDS may be traced instead to a neglect within Fowler’s theory given its emphasis on cognitive processes. (122) and it is entirely possible that Leak et al misinterpret characteristics of Fowler’s faith stages in their effort to find a replacement for unsatisfactory religious-oriented tests now in use. The theory simply may not hold “agreeableness” as a sign of maturity in faith. In fact, Stage 6, at least, seems specifically not to do so.
3. Methodology

Subjective questions from the 2003 LSMS data from Albania were used to create a proxy cultural composite using the household’s level of faith development. This research required reliable, open-access data with subjective questions which would fit the Fowler FDT, and which provided future and past panel data years so lag effects could be assessed. The 2003 World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) data for Albania, Wave 2 out of 3, was chosen because the subjective questions provided non-religious self-assessments that could be indicative of the FDT. Albania was chosen for its unique political and cultural history, which may insulate this analysis from typical research biases toward religions or developed regions. During its long Soviet occupation, the Albanian culture was denuded of most religious expression. After its liberation from communism, if people reverted back to any religion, it was historical Islamic traditions. This avoids the academic tendency to study Christian or American and advanced European culture. Scores from multiple questions were grouped into three categories – individual focus, institutional focus and supporting people outside one’s social network. These were then averaged into a cultural composite score and divided into three levels: individual, institutional and independent faith development. Two dummy variables were created for attainment of Level 3 Faith Development and for Level 2, for future research.

3.1 Albania

In 2006, Albania agreed with the European Union (EU) to establish guidelines (Nikolovska, 2008) for more internal development and for greater regional cooperation. This movement began the long, difficult process toward accession into the EU and follows a relatively successful period of high growth, though with unusually high levels of internal and international migration by Albanian citizens. Now the nation will focus on enhancing human capital by improving higher education and expanding labor markets. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ranks Albania’s current primary and secondary education system below average. However, the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index (UNDP HDI) classifies Albania as “High” at 0.716 with a ranking of 75th next to Mexico, Sri Lanka and Lebanon (hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI).

Near the time of the 2003 World Bank LSMS, Nikolovska (2008) summarized the Albanian economy in this way:

“The country remains one of the poorest in Europe, with an estimated GNI per capita of about US$2,510 in 2005. Real GDP growth averaged more than 7% per year between 1994 and 2001 and about 5% per year since 2002. As a result Albania not only recovered but exceeded its pre-transition [from Communist rule] GDP level. In 2007 the estimated real GDP reached a level of 152 (compared with level of 1989 = 100). High GDP growth rates have been accompanied by a massive reduction in poverty. The fraction of the population whose real per capita monthly consumption is below Lek 4,891 (at 2002 prices) fell from 25.4% in 2002 to 18.5% in 2005. This means that roughly 235,000 out of about 800,000 poor people in 2002 were lifted out of poverty in that period. The extremely poor population, defined as those with difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs, decreased from about 5% to 3.5%. (Nikolovska, 3).

Albania was chosen as a data source for reasons of accessibility and applicability. Data is available to test if FI correlate with economic development longitudinally for both individuals and households. Three World Bank Survey panels for 2002, 2003 and 2004 provide useful t1+ wages for 2003. Moreover, they include subjective responses as well as earnings, education and other data needed for this model. The personal activity questions are particularly well-suited for trying to determine a subject’s faith maturity.

The historic background of Albania is also an advantageous area for this research. Wiped clear of many influences, which might otherwise skew the impact of faith factors, this nation, is a uniquely blank slate for the study of faith as proposed in this model because the FDT intends to test non-religious, non-confessional aspects of human faith. Stampini, Carletto and Davis (2008) published a study in Eastern European Economics on “International Migration from Albania: The Role of Family Networks and Previous Experience.” They explained how: “Until 1990, Albania was virtually isolated from the rest of the world. During the communist period (1944-90), international migration ceased [and] was... severely punished. Since the fall of the communist regime in 1990, international migration has reached almost exodus proportions” (50).
Research on faith is often conducted in predominantly Christian, Western or advanced contexts. Albania is largely agnostic, with a tradition of Islam, and struggles both economically and educationally. And most of the coming EU reforms did not take place during or before the 2002-2004 study period. For economic development focusing on the impact of human capital, Albania was a relatively newly minted economy without vestiges of modern European institutional or social supports, which might cover individual or household contributions/deficiencies to wage rates. The nation reset politically, economically and (in a highly unique way) culturally, after an extended period of Communist rule. Albania transitioned to a democratic, capitalist economy in 1991, and before Communist control, its population was Muslim. 2003 is a convenient period to study. It is a decade after the messy 1991-1992 transition from violent communism that included an aftermath of years of civil strife, multiple collapsing pyramid schemes, and predatory capitalism policies mistaken for market initiatives. All this turmoil led to an effective breakdown of the state in 1996, making 2003 distant enough to filter out some static of previous crises and structures.

Quantitative and qualitative data in 2003 and 2004 Albania World Bank Living Standards Surveys (LSMS) came with additional waves for 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008, and 2012. Technical assistance was provided by the World Bank, and all of surveys were conducted by the National Institute of Statistics of Albania (2003, 2004). If the initial interviewee was not present, other members of the household (as long as they were part of the household at the first survey) were questioned. This provided a higher response rate, minimized bias with peer input, and offered a broader perspective to determining the household context in terms of faith. Only 2003 has the data needed for FI. However, the surveys include household IDs.

Faith Indicators could use World Values Survey (WVS) data to fit FDT. At a minimum, literature suggests validating a psychodynamic scale with a comparison tool that measures a similar effect to see if the two find the same results. However, the WVS does not include socioeconomic data (such as wages and educational attainment). Based on the personal data collected, the survey questions provided good fits for a Fowler-Leak quantification of non-sectarian faith as proxies for faith indicators (FI), along with appropriate socioeconomic data (education, age, wage rates, etc.).

The data selected does not assume an overly simply representation but balances the possible cultural traits within a household by looking at several subjective measures and then combining those into on cultural composite to create a dummy variable useful for further analysis.

### 3.2 Tri-Level Ordinalization of Qualitative Data

Faith Indicators (FI) were quantified using a theory-based rubric which assigned Fowler’s seven stages and 5 fluid transitions to one of three Levels, using the subjective survey questions available. Levels are shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Fowler Stages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Instinctive Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undifferentiated-Projective-Literal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Institutional Faith</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conventional-Synthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Independent Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuative-Conjunctive-Universalizing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 lists the 2003 LSMS Subjective questions used to provide the best, simple with to indicate a faith level. Level 3 of faith development leans toward self-sacrifice; Level 2 suggests cooperation with an institutional or societal framework; and Level 1 primarily suggests self-interest alone. Questions b10a_q01, 03, and 6a represent personal views of one’s own situation. Satisfaction with one’s current financial situation a 1 rating was scored as a Level 3, and the middle rating of 2 or 3 were scored as a Level 2. A Rating of 4 was scored as a Level 1. On the 5-point scale of Perception of Future Financial Situation, the top two (1, 2) produced a Level 3, and the next two (3, 4) is Level 2. Rating of 5 (deteriorate) is Level 1. For Afford to Invite Friends or Family over, a ‘yes’ is Level 3; a ‘no’ is Level 2.

The next grouping (b10a_q3) found an average school of the head of household and spouse ratings of their satisfaction with their Life in General, Health and Dwelling. Other questions were omitted because they did not fit the FDT model. An average household score was rated as: 1 ≤ (Level 1) < 2; 2 ≤ (Level 2) ≤ 5.5; and 5.5 < (Level 3) ≤ 7. Expectations of help for others in need is addressed in b10a_q11: Level 3 if >2; Level 2, if 1 or 2; and Level 1 if “no one” or none.
Finally in b10a_q12, we address willingness to help others. Level 2 will help institutionally in schools, health centers, with road/access or water/garbage problems. Level 3 helps people in conflict or in most need. Level 1 helps no one.

Table 2. Faith Indicator Composite Construction, from Albania 2003 LSMS Data Subjective Module 10

- **b10a_q01** Satisfaction with Current Financial Situation (1 fully to 4 not at all)
- **b10a_q03** Perception of Future Financial Situation (1 improve to 5 deteriorate)
- **b10a_q6a** Afford to Invite Friends or Family Over to Your Home (1 yes or 2 no)

**b10b_q3** Average Household Satisfaction from:
- **b10b_q3a** Head of HH Satisfaction with Life in General (1 worst to 7 best)
- **b10b_q3b** Head of HH Satisfaction with Health (1 worst to 7 best)
- **b10b_q3c** Head of HH Satisfaction with Dwelling (1 worst to 7 best)
- **b10c_q3a** Spouse Satisfaction with Life in General (1 worst to 7 best)
- **b10c_q3b** Spouse Satisfaction with Health (1 worst to 7 best)
- **b10c_q3c** Spouse Satisfaction with Dwelling (1 worst to 7 best)

**b10a_q11**: In a disaster, who do you expect to financially assist your neighbors:
- **b10a_q11a** No One
- **b10a_q11b** Family
- **b10a_q11c** Friends or Neighbors
- **b10a_q11d** Community or Political Leaders
- **b10a_q11e** Religious Organizations
- **b10a_q11f** Other

**b10a_q12**: Have You Worked in the Village to Solve Communal Problems with:
- **b10a_q12a** Schools
- **b10a_q12b** Health Centers
- **b10a_q12c** Conflict Between People
- **b10a_q12d** Road/Access Problems
- **b10a_q12e** People in the Most/Severe Need
- **b10a_q12f** Water/Garbage Services

Source: 2003 LSMS Albania World Bank Survey, Household Data file W2_hh_all.sav

After constructing the variables and rating them as Level 1, 2 or 3, households with missing data were removed (696 deleted) for n = 1,454. Scores from the three categories – individual focus, institutional focus and a focus on helping or supporting others – were averaged for a cultural composite score and divided into three levels: Level 1 Individual Faith, Level 2 Institutional Faith and Level 3 Independent Faith development. Fowler’s initial study, though not random or representative, found 3%, 83% and 13% in these respective levels. This analysis found 17% in Level 1, 64% in Level 2 and 19% in Level 3. The Cronbach $\alpha = 54.4\%$, which is usually considered low however, the literature suggests may be reasonably reliable for cultural proxies. It is assumed that everyone has a Level 1 faith development or greater. This includes Fowler’s Stage 0 Undifferentiated, Stage 1 Projective-Intuitive, and Stage 2 Mythic-Literal. So, the composite was used to create two dummy variables for inclusion in comparison or regression models with other outcomes or traits. This is the first step for an analysis quantifying culture.
4. Practitioner Recommendations

Administrators can use their experience and intuition to suggest explanations for the behavior they observe. Finding a strong, comprehensive theory and carefully selecting Longitudinal, attitudinal and demographic data is available now which can be used to compile cultural composites either for descriptive statistics or for analysis. This paper reviewed the literature for quantifying cultural proxies to provide practitioners with possible data sources and examples of how various disciplines approach cultural quantification. Policy makers should feel comfortable following these examples and using new data sources as the tools fit the context. Professionals should also feel confident in trusting their experience and observations to employ inductive, deductive and abductive reasoning to find data that seems to fit what is being observed. Then the presentation of the cultural data collected can either be presented categorically or included in a comparative or correlative analysis to explain and better target program effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

Longitudinal, attitudinal and demographic data is available now which can be used to compile cultural composites either for descriptive statistics or for analysis. This paper reviewed the literature for quantifying cultural proxies and demonstrated the new construction of a cultural composite based on a strong theoretical underpinning of culture as the ultimate store of meaning for a society at the individual or household level. The results matched the proportions of the initial theory research and can now be used, as other cultural variables are in either an economic model or in comparison with some other variable.

If the Albanian 2003 sample is indicative of a developing population, approximately 17% operate with a cultural awareness centered almost entirely on their own needs and expectations; 64% operate with the culture to support and contribute to the institutional framework and an exceptionally high 19% operate with a willingness to both exemplify and defy their cultural ideals. Understanding the constituents of a region, based on levels of faith development (or search for ultimate meaning and awareness of others around them) may help policy makers and practitioners design and deliver more effective programs. Future research is needed to design clear manuals from translating commonly accessible subjective data from sources such as this World Bank LSMS from other countries and time periods. And the next step is now to include this quantification of culture into economic and other models to evaluate household cultural development’s correlation with outcomes.
REFERENCES


