



Intergenerational Value Differences in Latin America: Evidence from the WVS

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April 2021

Some Questions

- Are there significant differences in core values, beliefs and opinions of younger and older Latin Americans?
- What about their political behavior?
- How is public opinion shaped by those differences (if any)?

50 years ago...

- Ronald Inglehart (1971) pointed out a “**shift to a new set of value priorities**”, driven by an unprecedented period of economic prosperity, and particularly visible among younger and more affluent Europeans.

The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies*

RONALD INGLEHART

University of Michigan and University of Geneva

Economic Scarcity and Political Priorities: An Analytic Framework

A transformation may be taking place in the political cultures of advanced industrial societies. This transformation seems to be altering the basic value priorities of given generations, as a result of changing conditions influencing their basic socialization. The changes seem to affect the stand one takes on current political issues and may have a long-term tendency to alter existing patterns of political partisanship. In this article, I will present evidence based on surveys from six countries concerning these processes.

The findings seem to support a specific inter-

Important groups among the populations of Western societies have passed beyond these stages, we believe, and today are acting in pursuit of goals which (unlike symbols of affluence) no longer have a direct relationship to the imperatives of economic security.² These individuals—drawn largely from the younger cohorts of the modern middle class—have been socialized during an unprecedentedly long period of unprecedentedly high affluence. For them, economic security may be taken for granted, as the supply of water or the air we breathe once could.

If this hypothesis is correct, it suggests that intergenerational political conflict is likely. We would expect to find such conflict if it is true

Theory and Data

Inglehart's findings and theoretical expectations became a core component of the **Eurobarometer** surveys, and, later, of the **World Values Survey**.

He was able to measure, both continuously and in a growing number of countries, what he called **Materialist-Postmaterialist values**, which became the basis for a theory of **Intergenerational Value Change**, also known in more recent works as **Evolutionary Modernization Theory**.

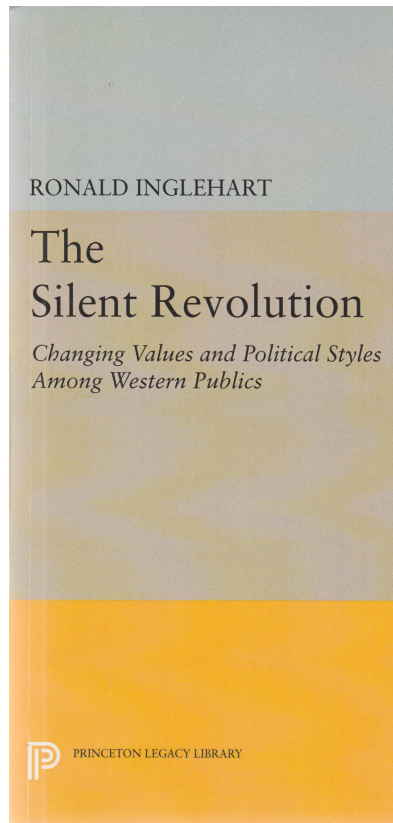
The WVS

"Throughout industrial society, people's basic values and goals are gradually shifting, from giving top priority to economic growth, to placing increasing emphasis on quality of life."

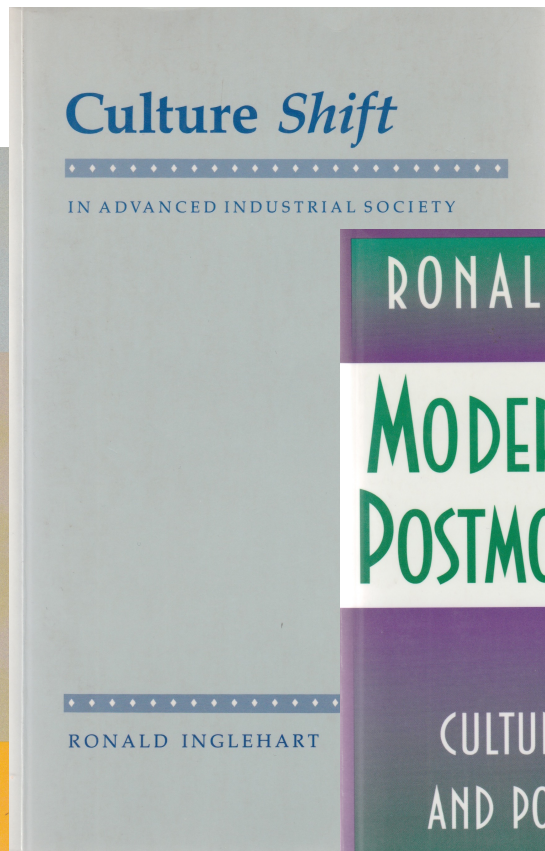
Postmaterialist values were closely related to **environmental** attitudes, and to issues like **gay and lesbian rights, abortion**, and **gender roles**, and a **variety** of other social and political orientations. They were also eroding mass support for nationalism and patriotism.

Postmaterialist values were only "**the tip of the iceberg**" of a broader cultural syndrome of self-expression values and subjective well-being.

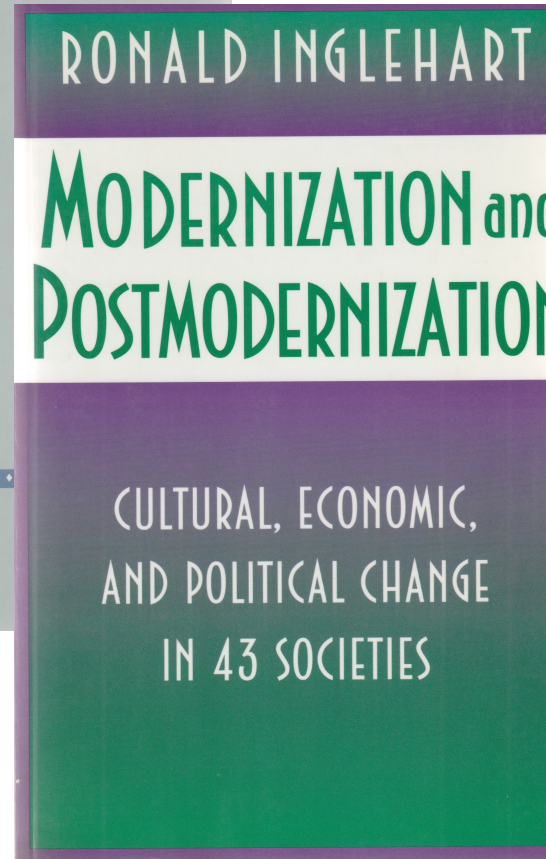
An evolving theory about evolving cultures



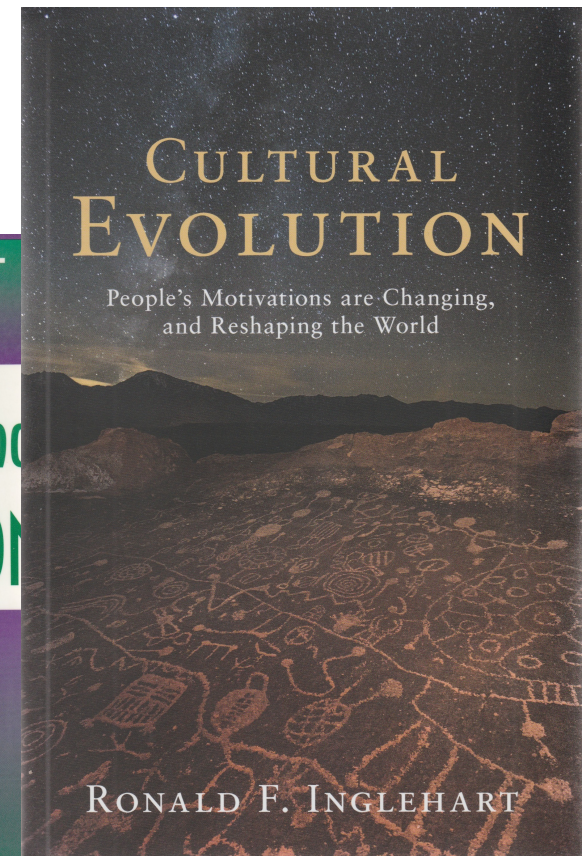
1977



1990



1997

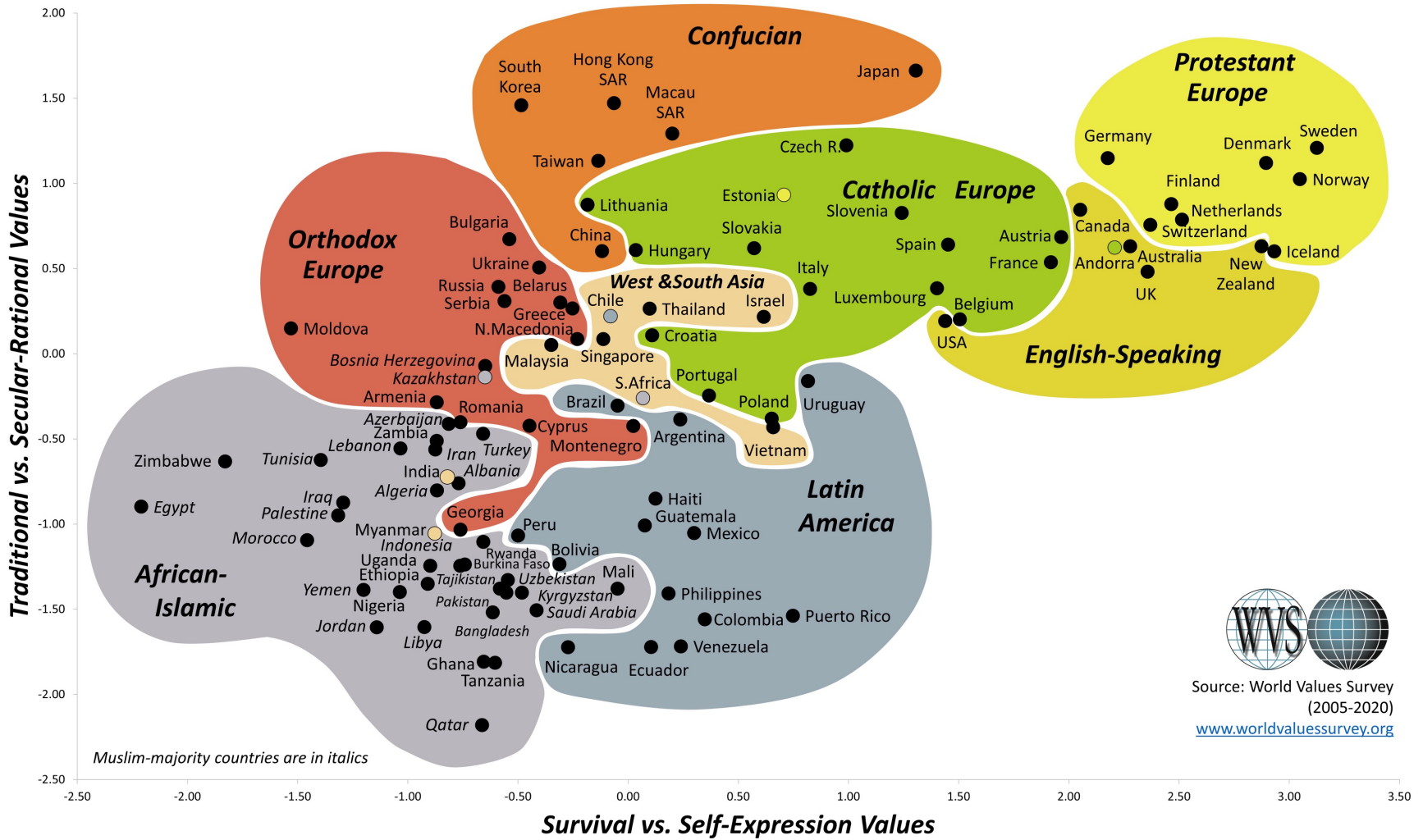


2018

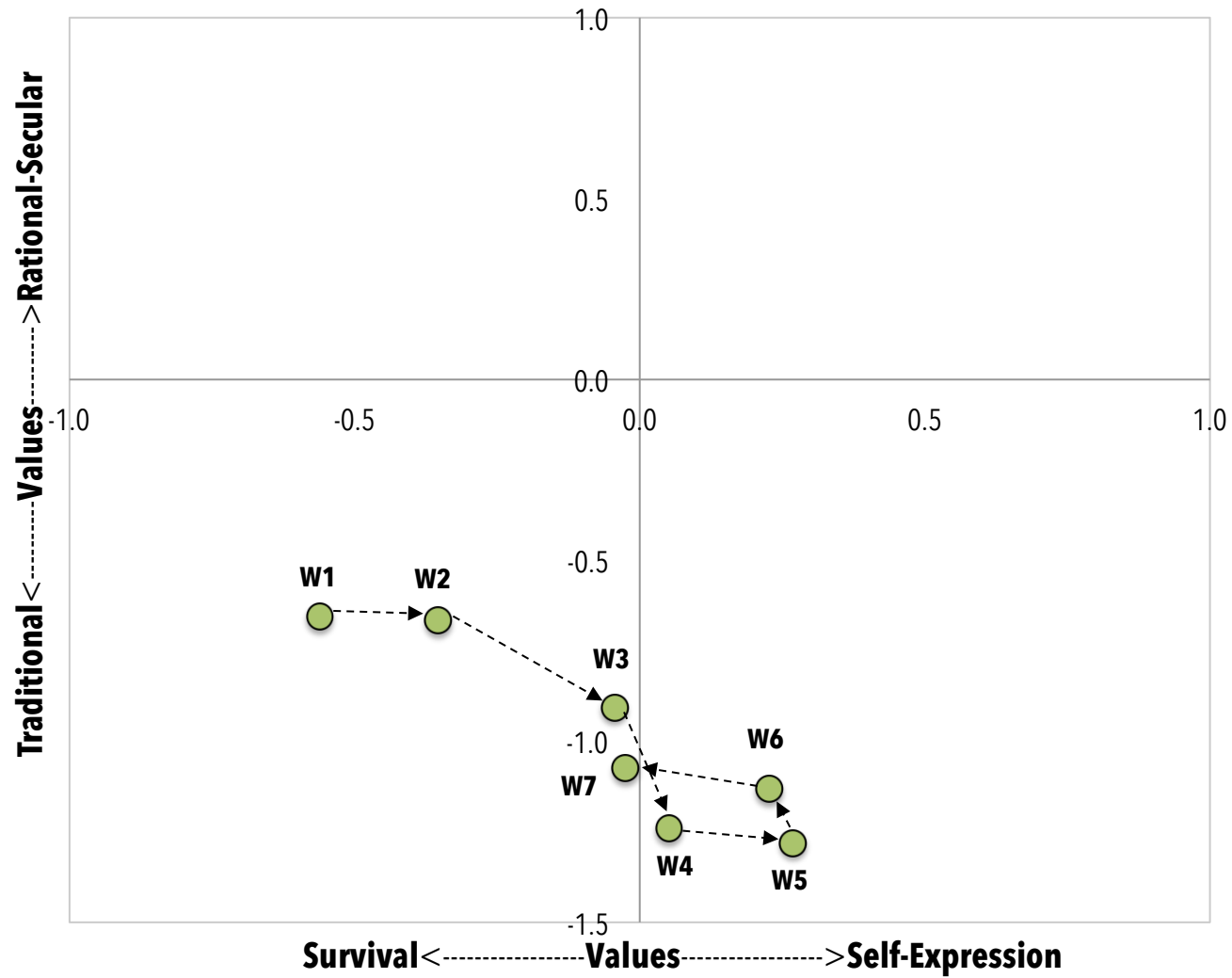
A Correct Early Suspicion

- If Inglehart's theory was right, "what was taking place in the rich Western countries would not be taking place in the low-income countries."
- Latin America as a puzzle: developing countries with sharp socio-economic contrasts

Cultural Map



Latin America's Trajectory in the Cultural Map



Wave Number and Years

W1: 1981-1984

W2: 1990-1993

W3: 1994-1998

W4: 1999-2004

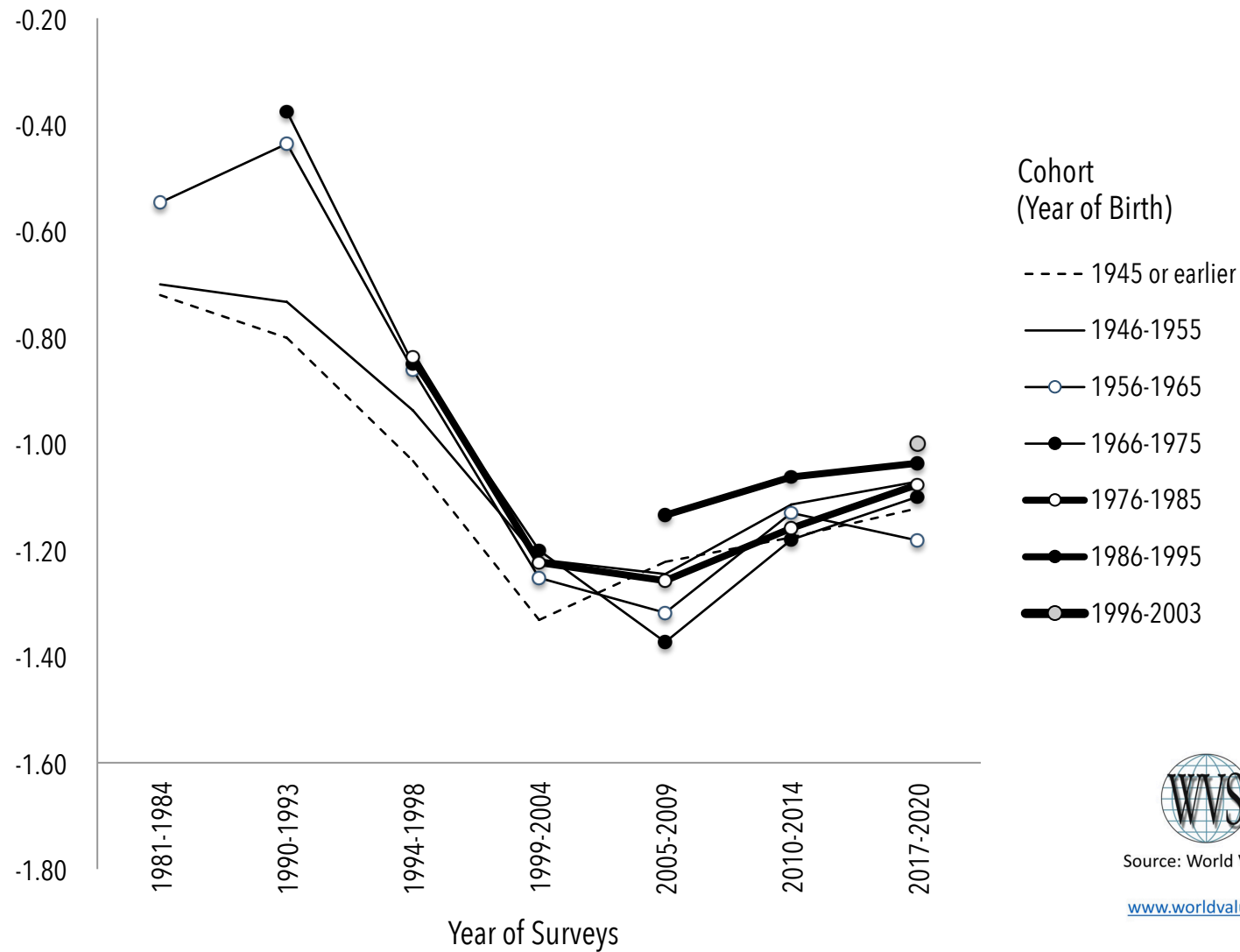
W5: 2005-2009

Financial Crisis

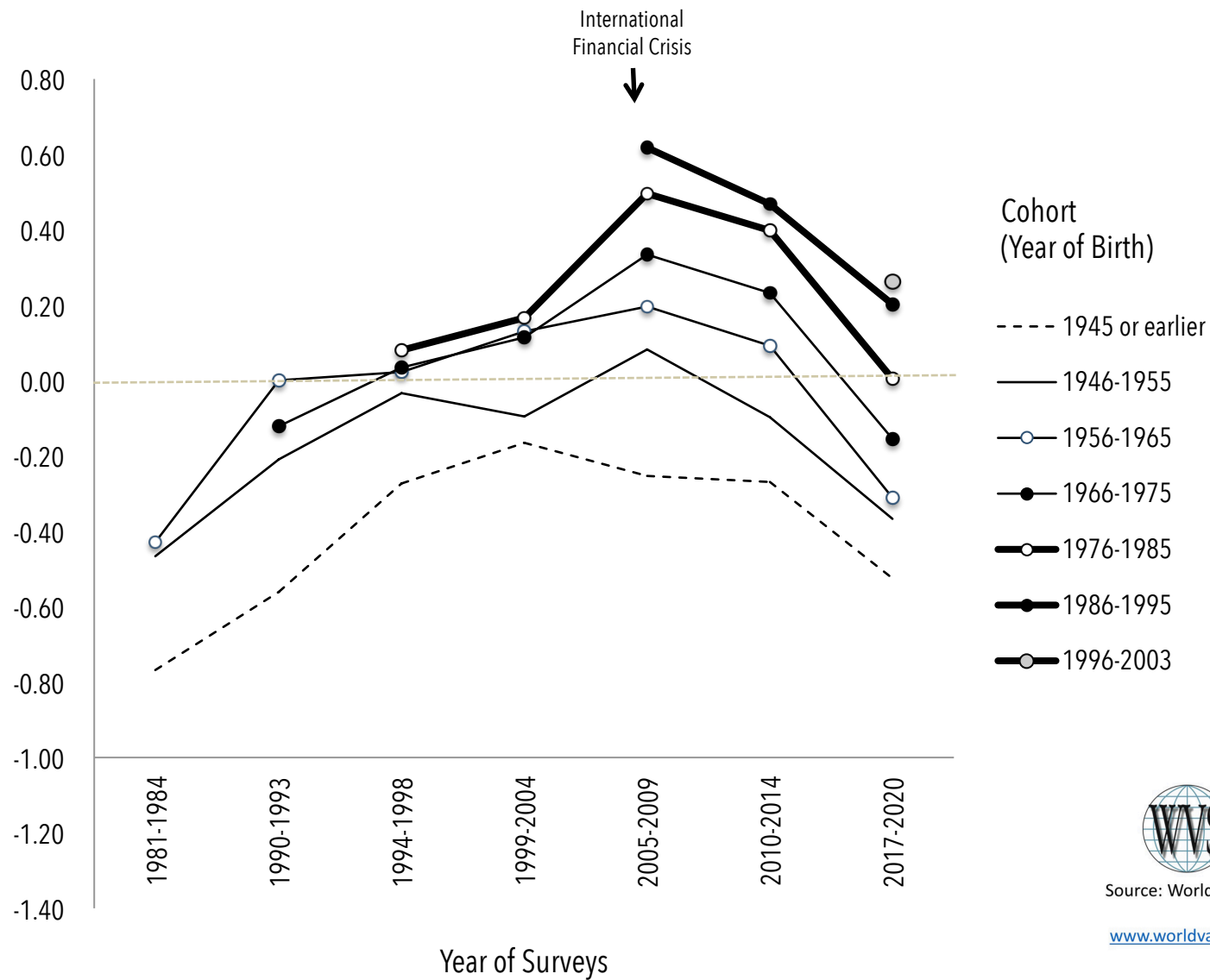
W6: 2010-2014

W7: 2017-2020

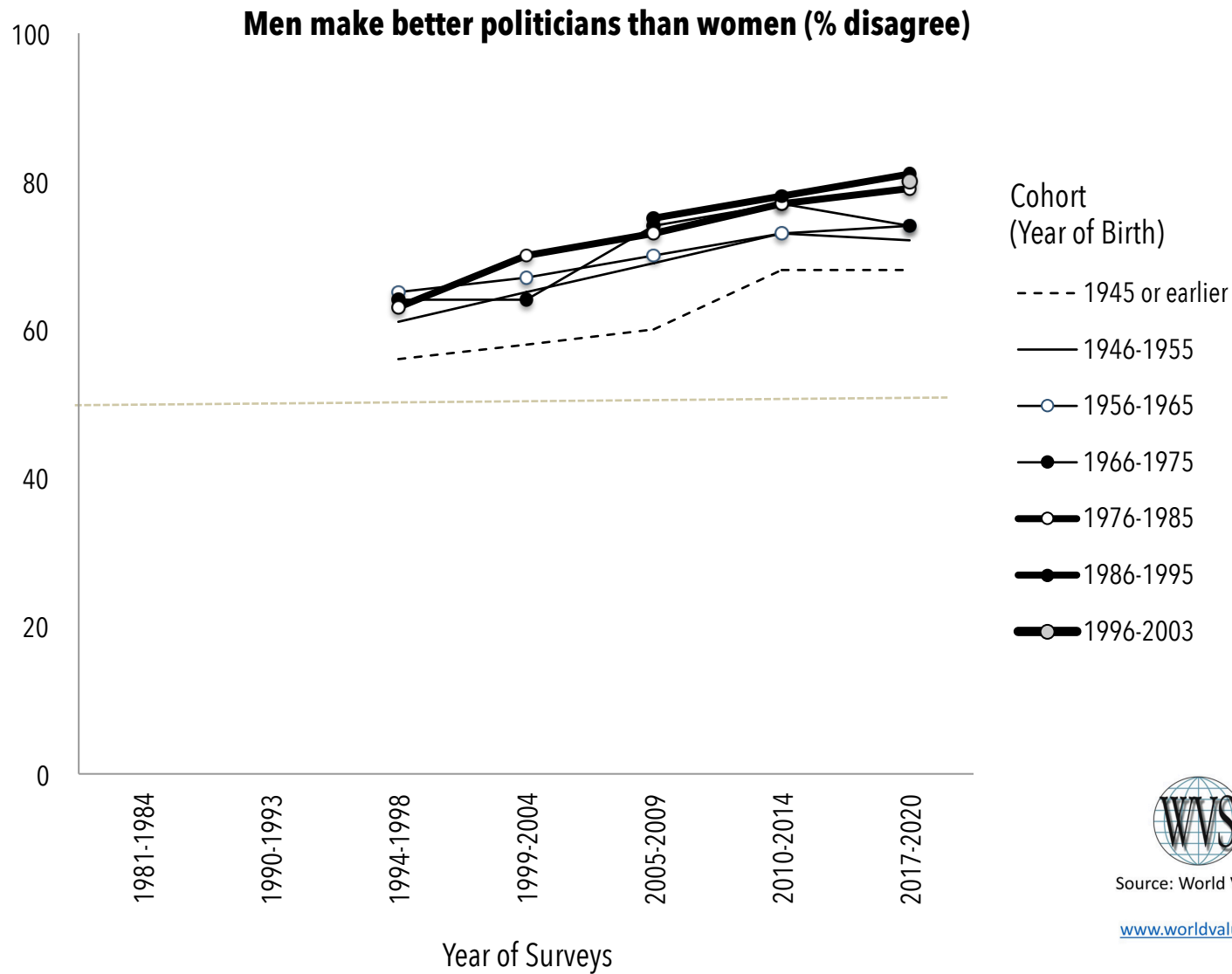
Intergenerational Differences on the Traditional Values' Axis



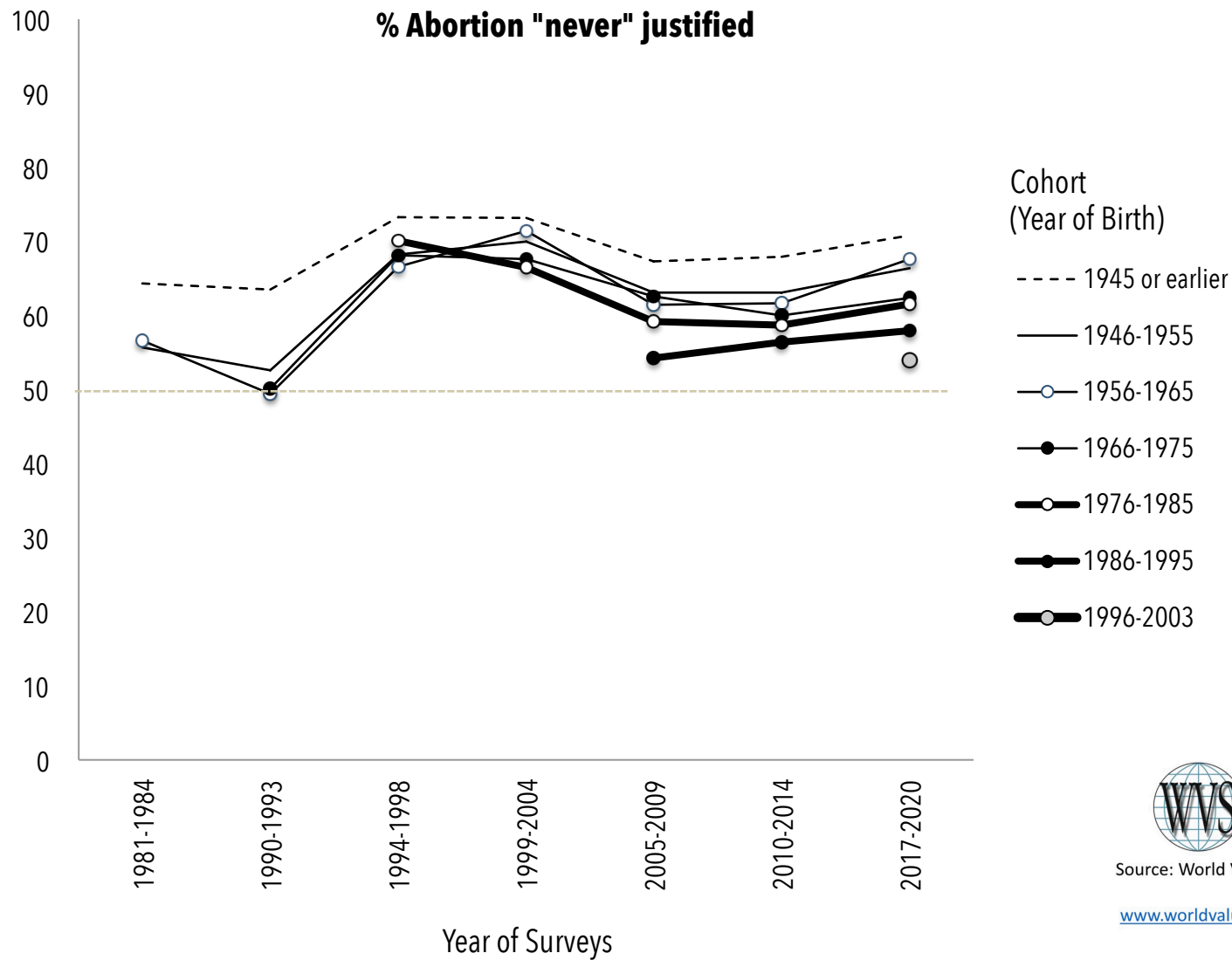
Intergenerational Differences on Survival/Self-Expression Values



A sense of gender equality is gradually on the rise...



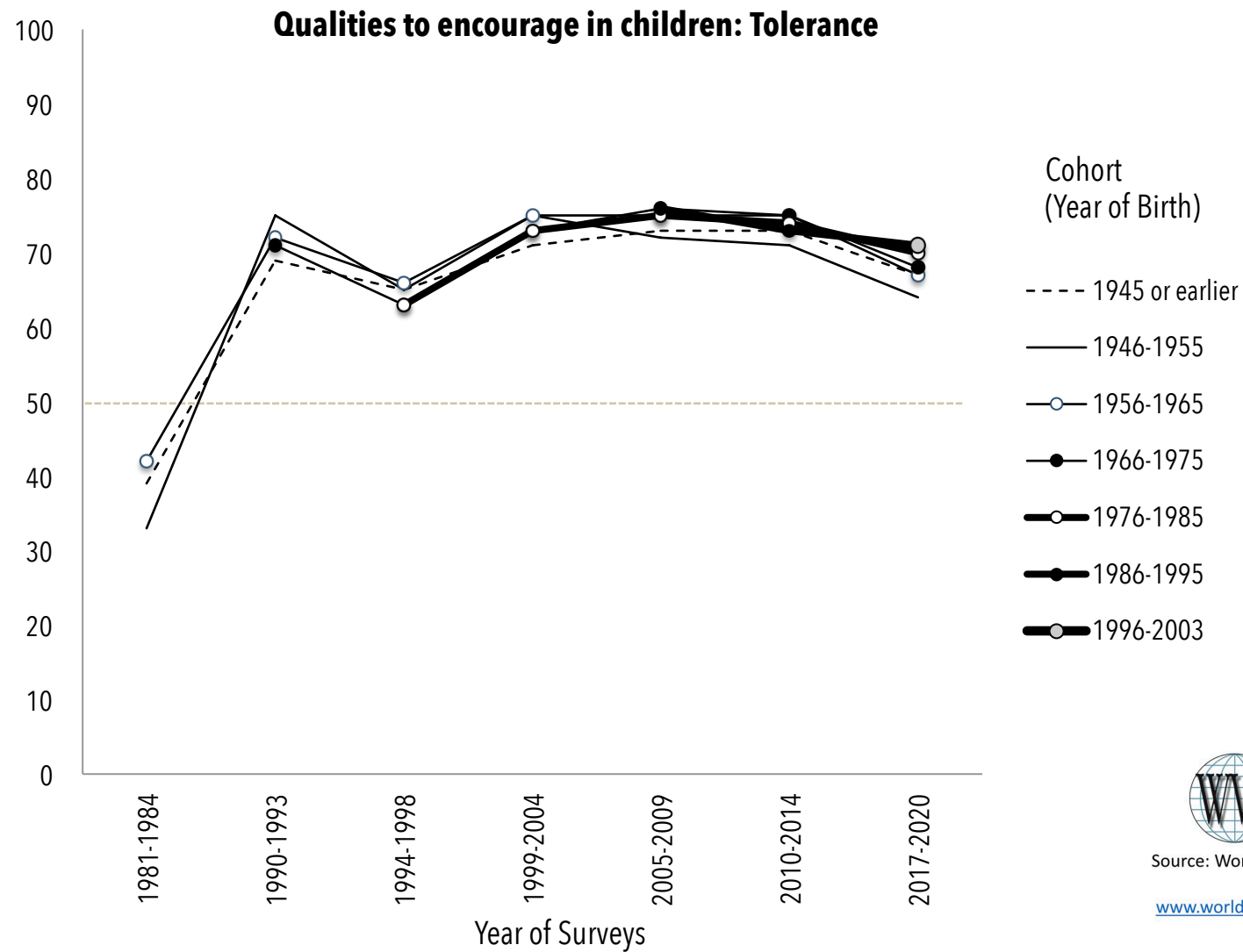
...but the majority is against abortion, even among younger generations



Source: World Values Survey
(2005-2020)

www.worldvaluessurvey.org

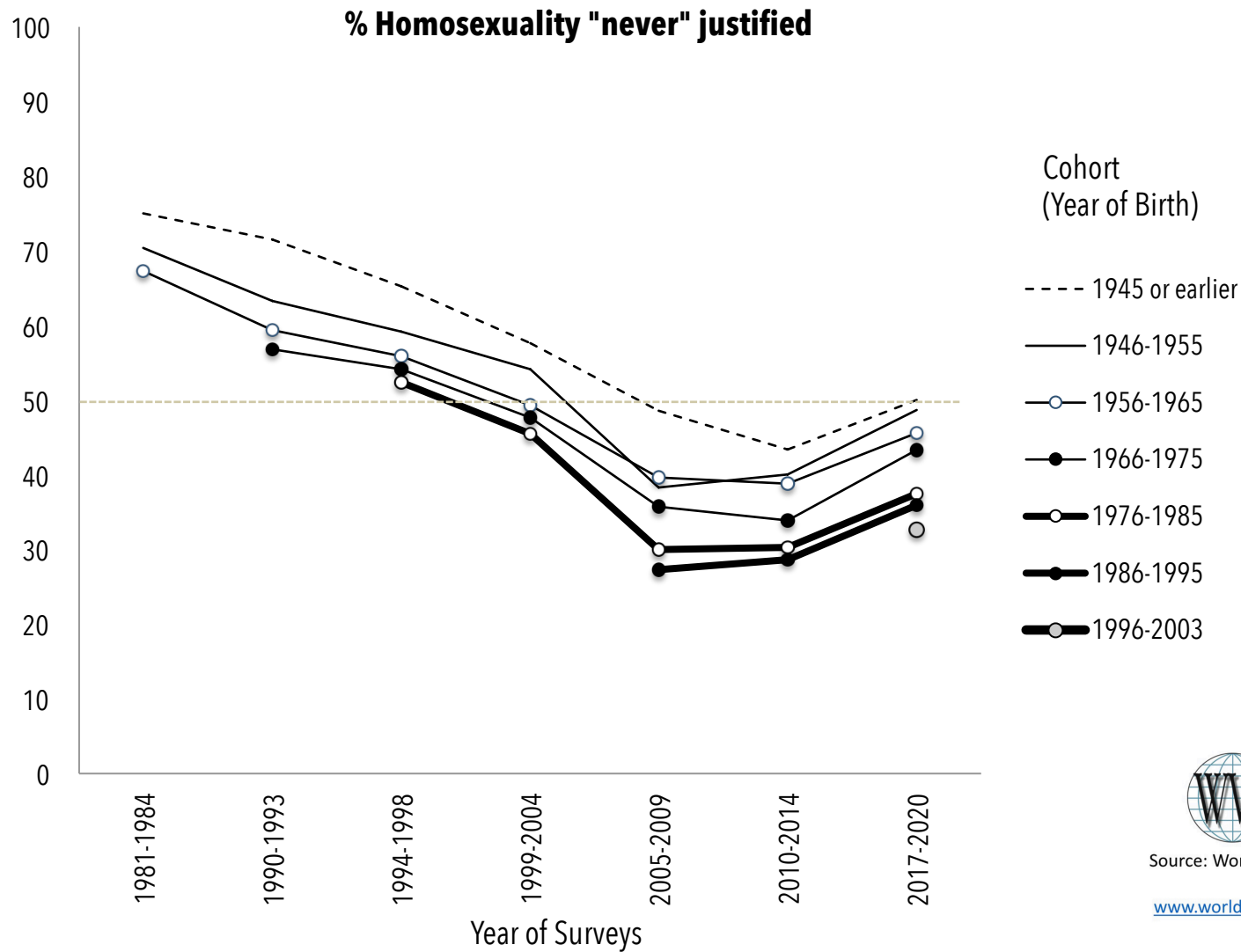
Tolerance as a principle is well regarded



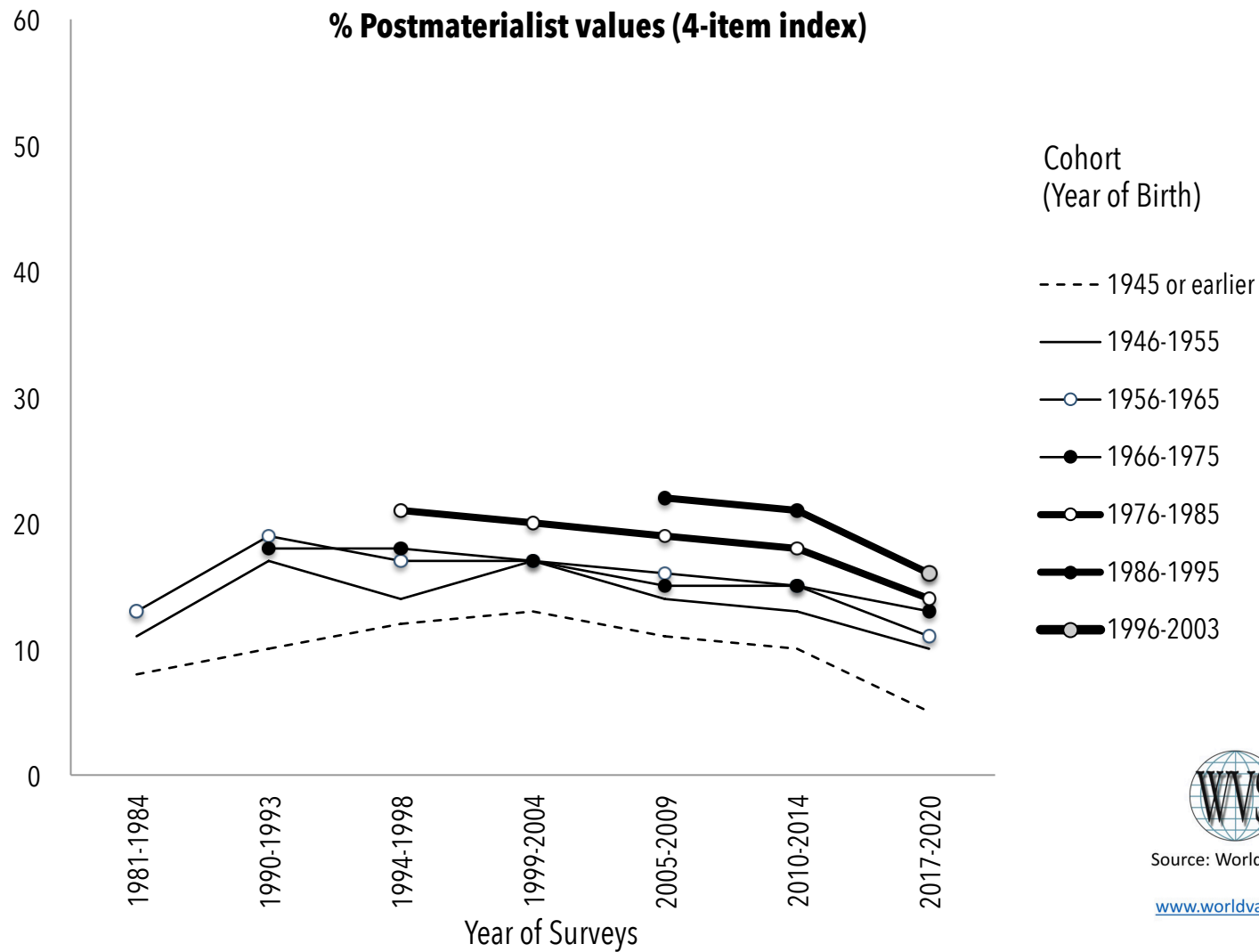
Source: World Values Survey
(2005-2020)

www.worldvaluessurvey.org

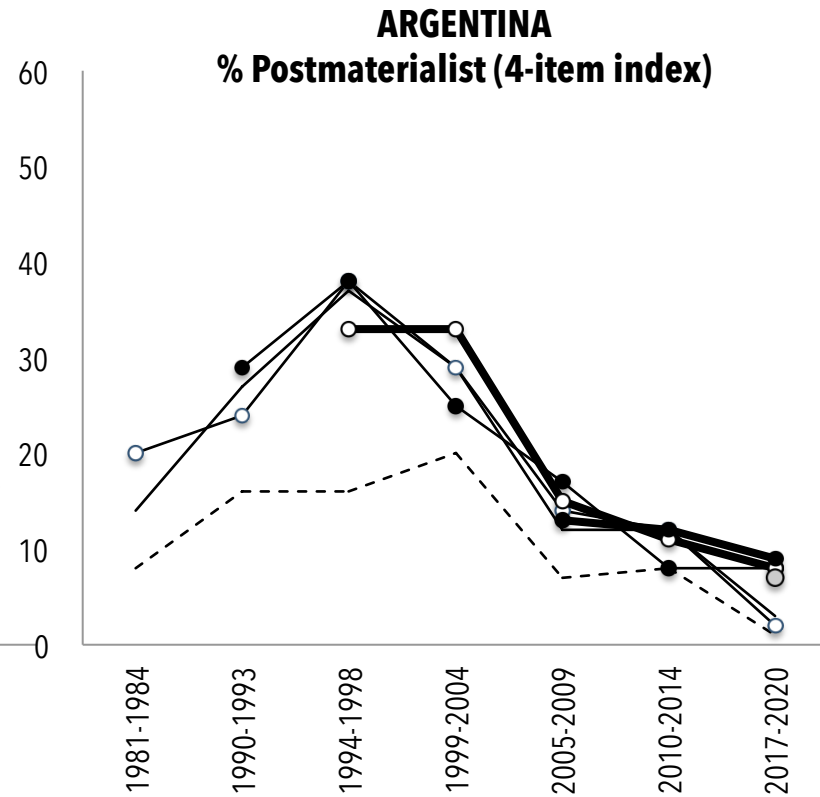
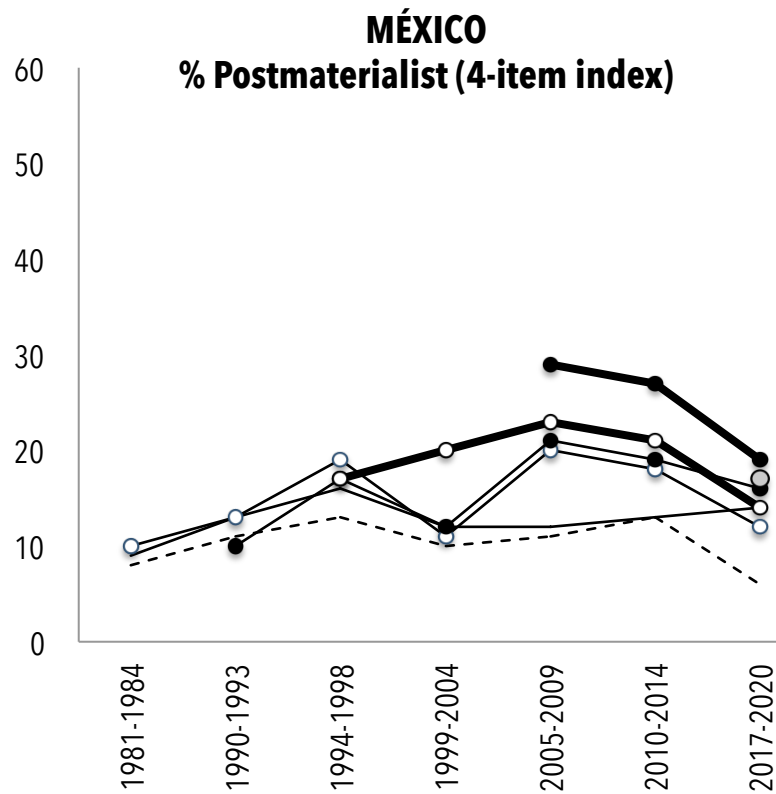
Intolerance for homosexuality (LGBTQ) has declined, but is bouncing back



Postmaterialism in Latin America: not growing



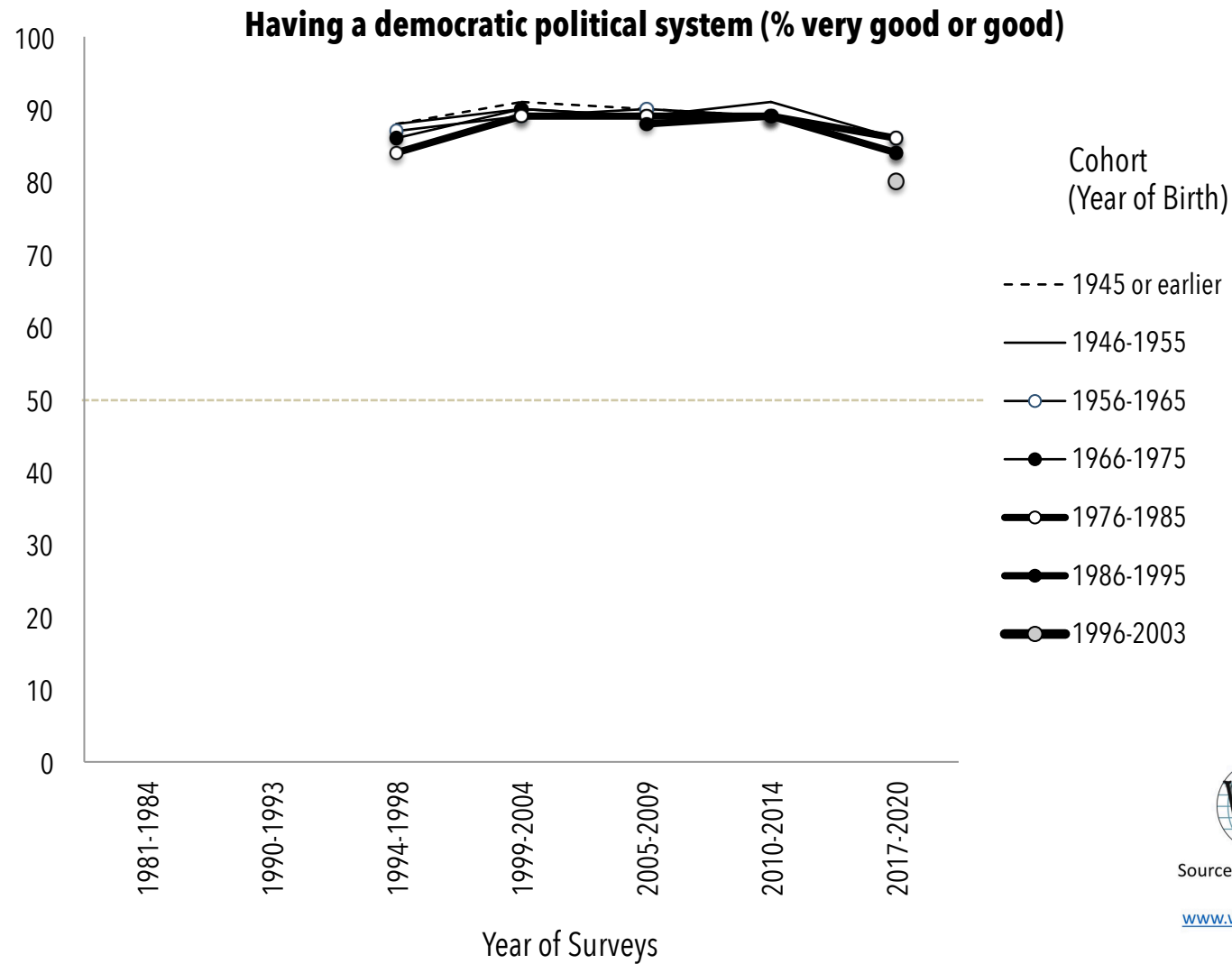
...and, actually, going down



Source: World Values Survey
(2005-2020)

www.worldvaluessurvey.org

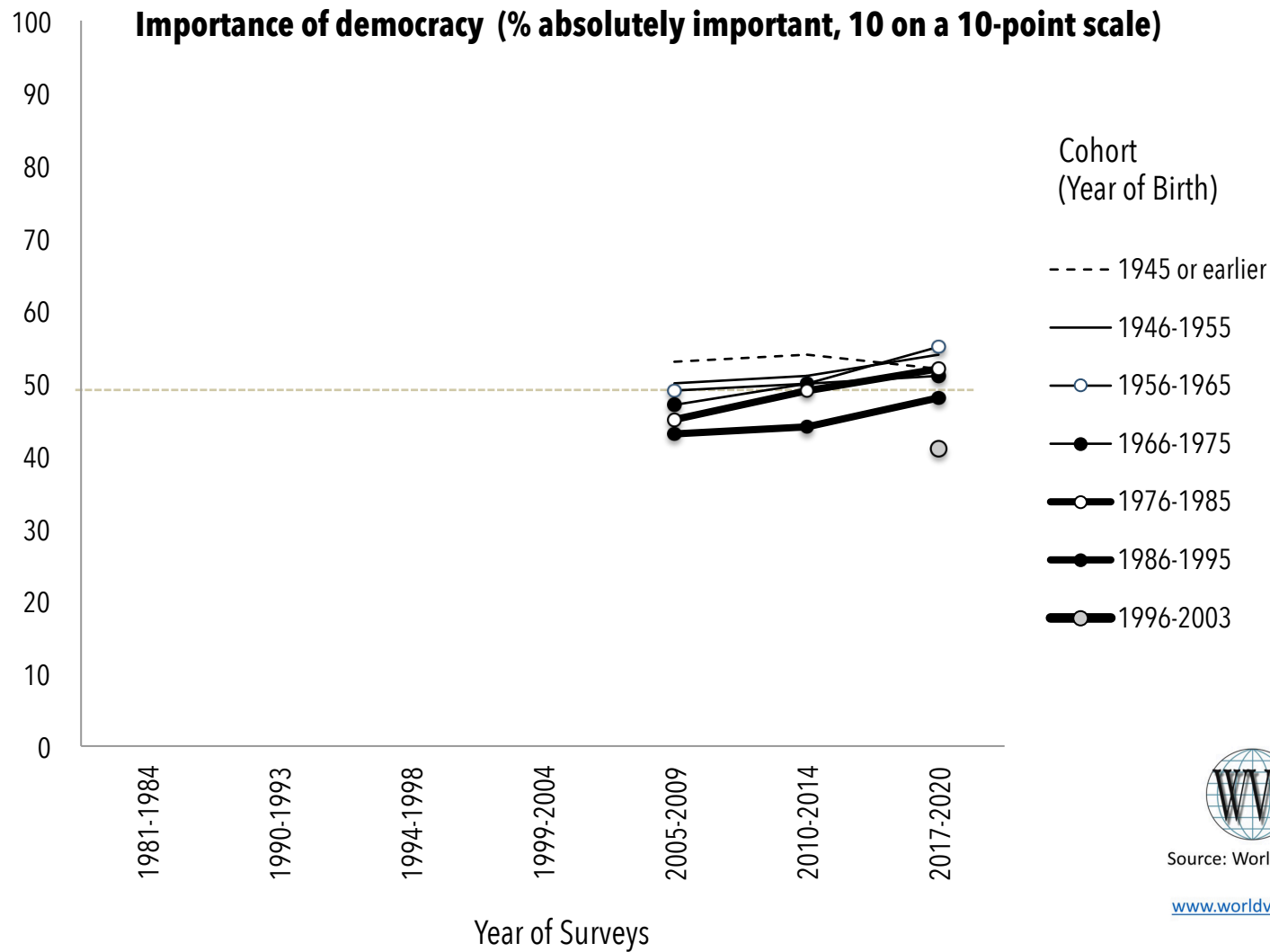
Democracy enjoys a high support



Source: World Values Survey
(2005-2020)

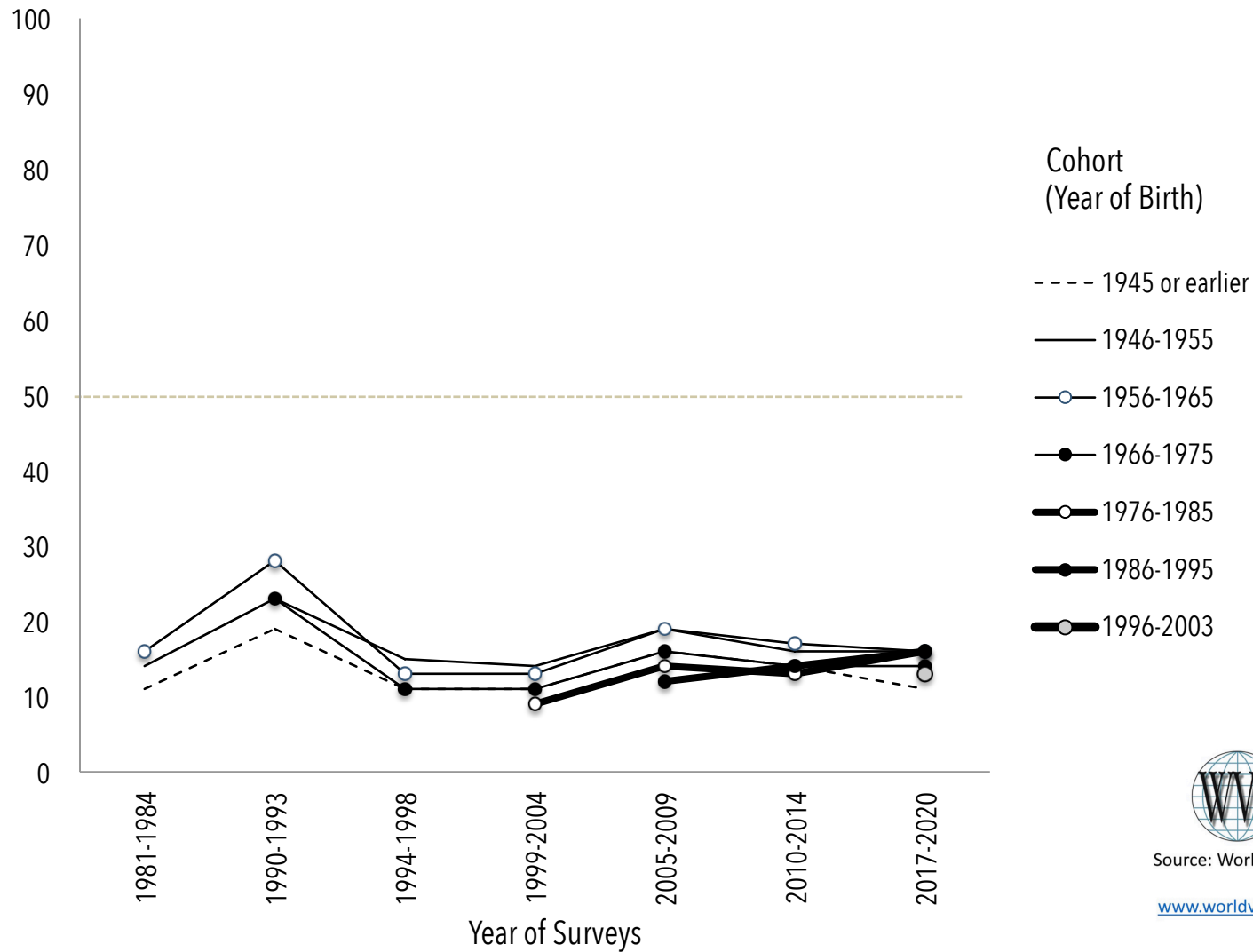
www.worldvaluessurvey.org

The importance of democracy has a slight generational gap

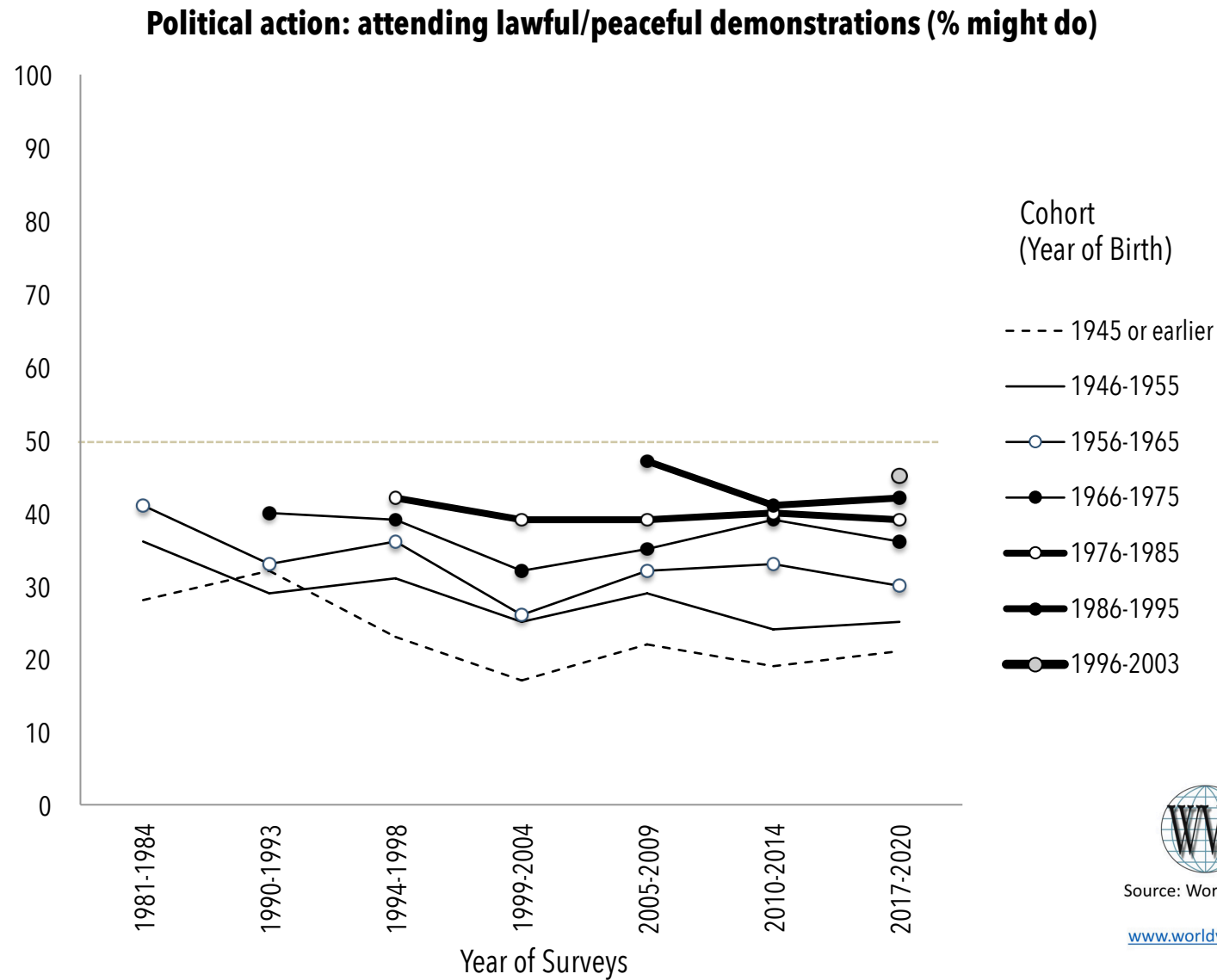


No significant generational differences on political action

Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations (% have done)



...but striking differences on potential for political action



Final thoughts

- There are indeed some generational gaps in values and opinions but they seem related to issues on the survival-self expression values dimension.
- Latin America's value change seemed to have reverted after the 2008 financial crisis (perhaps not just because of it, but certainly around it), and part of that reversion is showing some backlash in attitudes of tolerance.
- ...And the pandemics

Please visit worldvaluessurvey.org. Thank you!