



"CULTURE MATTERS: HOW VALUES SHAPE HUMAN PROGRESS"  
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WITH

Lawrence E. Harrison  
Ottawa

Dept. of Foreign Affairs  
Min. des Affaires Étrangères  
LAWRENCE E. HARRISON  
DEC 13 2005  
Return to Departmental Library  
Retourner à la bibliothèque du Ministère

**"CULTURE MATTERS: HOW VALUES SHAPE HUMAN PROGRESS"  
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WITH  
LAWRENCE E. HARRISON**

**CCFPD**

**October 6, 2000  
Ottawa**

I. Presentation

Lawrence Harrison proposed that the unsatisfactory progress of humankind toward prosperity and political pluralism during the past half century may be a function of cultural values and attitudes. Colonialism (imperialism) and dependency are no longer viable explanations for poverty and authoritarianism, he argued. As well, exceptions to geographic and climate explanations (determinism) abound (e.g., Iceland, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc.). The chief in thinking is epitomised by Jacques Ferrard, Charles, ideological transformation from foreign Latin American dependency theorists to a proponent of free market reform as Minister of Finance, and the enthusiastic support of Ronald Reagan's policies. The weight of the dependency school is on the decline from an Africa where some people want to express the view that colonizers can not be blamed for the continent's economic failure. In a similar vein, Harrison proposed that racism and discrimination are no longer satisfactory explanations for minority underachievement in the United States. Culture, he went on to say, may be the key to why certain ethnic groups "do better" relative to others.

Drawing attention to Alexis de Tocqueville and Max Weber, as the intellectual progenitors of the cultural interpretation of development, Harrison outlined key factors which, he suggests, determine whether a culture is progressive or not. They include traits such as agency, respect for work, and other factors (presented in the table below). Therefore, for any society to develop, it has to have the progressive cultural traits and characteristics. Harrison drew attention to a "cultural program" to transform the present stagnant culture of Peru (where a Peruvian revolution is "progressive") school, teaching the "10 Commandments of Development". However, he remains sceptical about the practical steps across localized progress-promote societies should take to end the (perceived) majority cultural fragmentation of