



Freedom Rising: Human Empowerment and the Quest for Emancipation

By Christian Welzel

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This book presents a comprehensive theory of why human freedom gave way to increasing oppression since the invention of states - and why this trend began to reverse itself more recently, leading to a rapid expansion of universal freedoms and democracy. Drawing on a massive body of evidence, the author tests various explanations of the rise of freedom, providing convincing support of a well-reasoned theory of emancipation. The study demonstrates multiple trends toward human empowerment, which converge to give people control over their lives. Most important among these trends is the spread of "emancipative values," which emphasize free choice and equal opportunities. The author identifies the desire for emancipation as the origin of the human empowerment trend and shows when and why this desire grows strong; why it is the source of democracy; and how it vitalizes civil society, feeds humanitarian norms, enhances happiness, and helps redirect modern civilization toward sustainable development.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Freedom Rising is a singularly impressive study of how social modernization can transform societies and their citizens. Welzel marshals data from the World Values Survey to support his human empowerment model with an impressive store of empirical evidence. This is likely to be the decade's most important book on political development and political culture."

Russell J. Dalton, University of California, Irvine

"Freedom Rising is an exceptionally ambitious book. It takes a tour of human history that ends with some insights into the possible future of advanced post-industrial societies, based on penetrating analyses of a massive body of empirical evidence. The author argues convincingly that, although the rise of the state initially brought diminishing human freedom, since the Enlightenment this trend began to revert itself, bringing increasing emphasis on human rights and making democracy more probable in countries around the world. This book will be controversial for it makes a major contribution to our understanding of how history moves."

Ronald F. Inglehart, University of Michigan and Higher School of Economics, Moscow and St Petersburg

"Freedom Rising offers a comprehensive evolutionary theory of emancipation that covers the entire process of civilization. This theory is tested using data of a global scale. The approach is as bold as it is inspiring. It describes the long road toward sustainable human empowerment, and it demonstrates that the desire to achieve free choice and equal opportunity drives the process toward democratic rule. Freedom Rising and its theory will not go uncontested. However, this magnum opus has all it needs to become a classic text of our discipline."

Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Social Science Research Center Berlin and Baheceshir University Istanbul

"Why does the history of civilization orient humanity increasingly away from tyranny? In addressing this immensely profound question, the author first proposes a new sequential theory of human emancipation. Then he corroborates its universal validity by analyzing the individual- and societal-level characteristics of more than 150,000 individuals in almost 100 societies, representing 90 percent of the world's population. Empirically and theoretically, Freedom Rising constitutes a major milestone in the search for universal laws of democratization and human empowerment."

Doh Chull Shin, Center for the Study of Democracy, University of California, Irvine

About the Author

Christian Welzel is Chair of Political Culture Research at the Center for the Study of Democracy, Leuphana University Lueneburg, Germany, and President of the World Values Survey Association. He is also special foreign consultant to the Laboratory of Comparative Social Research at the Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg, Russia, and a permanent affiliate of the Center for the Study of Democracy at the University of California, Irvine. A repeated recipient of large-scale grants from the German Science Foundation, Welzel is the author of more than one hundred scholarly publications in high ranking peer-reviewed journals in sociology, political science and psychology. His recent books include *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy* (with Ronald Inglehart, Cambridge, 2005), *Democratization* (with Christian Haerpfer, Patrick Bernhagen and Ronald Inglehart, 2009) and *The Civic Culture Transformed: From Allegiant to Assertive Citizens* (with Russell J. Dalton, Cambridge, 2014).

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