**The Impact of Culture, Judicial Independence, and GDP on Personal Freedom**

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### Introduction

- This study explores some of the potential antecedents of personal freedom, including Judicial Independence, Culture, and GDP per capita.
- Ratan Dheer of Eastern Michigan University has drawn a connection between culture and Personal Freedom and found that individualism in particular “positively moderates the effects of personal freedom.” (Dheer 2019).
- The Journal of Private Enterprise has found a connection between culture and Personal Freedom, which they define as being made up of aspects of Personal Freedom, such as frequency of civic engagement. The Journal finds that Economic Freedom is positively correlated with these elements of well-being (Nikolaev, 2019).
- Lastly, Niclas Berggren and Jerg Gutmann of the University of Hamburg found that Judicial Independence is “Positively and robustly related to personal freedom in all its forms.” (Berggren, 2019).

### Methodology

- The data used for cultural dimensions in this study came from Hofstede’s cultural comparisons. (Hofstede 2019).
- The dependent variable data of Personal Freedom was obtained from The World Bank (World Bank 2019).
- The data collected regarding the independent variable of Judicial Independence came from the World Economic Forum. (World Economic Forum 2019).
- GDP per Capita was collected from The World Bank, and is measured out of 80,296 (World Bank 2019).
- There was a final sample of 73 countries that had complete data for all variables used in this study.

### Results

In Chart 3, Hierarchical Regressions, Model 1, it is shown that all but one cultural aspect is significant when compared to the dependent variable of Personal Freedom.

In Model 2 in which Judicial Independence was now added into the model, Judicial Independence and five of the cultural dimensions remained significant.

In Model 3 the independent variable GDP was added into the model. In this Model only two of the cultural aspects and GDP remained significant.

In the final model all non-significant items were removed.

### Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Freedom</td>
<td>48.62</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>21,347.555</td>
<td>27.9960</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>65.96</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>61.31</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAI</td>
<td>43.10</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>48.76</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVR</td>
<td>43.022 ***</td>
<td>4.677 ***</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bold = P<.05**

### Hierarchical Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>Adj R^2</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>.428 ***</td>
<td>.330 ***</td>
<td>21.877 ***</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>.434 ***</td>
<td>.334 **</td>
<td>20.562 ***</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>.448 ***</td>
<td>.348 **</td>
<td>21.347 ***</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bold = P<.05**  
**Bold = P<.01**  
**Bold = P<.001**

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**Discussion**

- One important fact that can be taken away from this study is that culture clearly plays a very impactful role on the amount of Personal Freedom a country has, explaining 40% of our variance.
- The cultural aspects that significantly influence Personal Freedom are UAI and IND
- It should be mentioned that Judicial Independence does have a significant role in evaluating Personal Freedom, when GDP has not been entered into the model. (see Chart 3, Model 2).
- Through elections and public demonstrations it may be possible for citizens to increase their country’s levels of judicial independence and subsequently their personal freedom
- Given the potential importance of Judicial Independence, governments should consider what could be done to strengthen Judicial Independence if they desire to improve their citizens’ Personal Freedom.

**Limitations and Future Research**

- Two of the main limitations that were encountered were our general sample size and distributions.
- It is believed that other antecedents should be explored, as 35% of the variance in relation to what influences Personal Freedom is still unexplained.
- Among the next steps to this research are to examine potential mediation and moderation effects among these and other potential variables.
- In future research studies, efforts should be made to study the effects of culture, including Hofstede’s newer rankings of Indulgence and Long-Term Orientation, on different societal aspects such as individual freedoms, education levels, gender disparities, and wealth distribution.