



## HOW HUMAN VALUES EVOLVED IN RELATION WITH ENERGY

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### **Abstract:**

Social values are cultural standards that indicate the general good deemed desirable organised social life. These are assumptions on what is right and important for society. They provide the ultimate meaning and legitimacy for social arrangements and social behaviour. They are the abstract sentiments or ideals. The importance of such values in social life can hardly be exaggerated. A social value differs from individual value. An individual value is enjoyed or sought by the individual which a man seeks for himself. Even though these values are commonly shared, they do not become social values. As distinct from individual values, a social value contains a concern for others' welfare. Social values are organised within the personality of the individuals. They regulate their thinking and behaving.

### **A question can arise here:**

How do societies have different values concerning energy and vice versa?

Energy is a crucial social variable and has sporadically been of interest to sociologists. Recent world events and trends have revived interest and concern. This review traces key themes and arguments in the sociology of energy and critically evaluates the literature. The discussion is organized into four sections: energetic theories of society, macro sociology of energy, micro sociology of energy, and energy policy and other special topics. A concluding section assesses the state of the field and speculate son its future directions. A work by Benjamin Sovacool was discussing the energy policy and the innovative approaches towards conceptualizing the relationship between energy and American society. His book takes on a central quandary in the study of energy and environmental policy: What myths continue to exist in American culture concerning energy, the environment, and society? While the book focuses on the American experience, it will be of interest to those working in the fields of energy policy, energy and the environment, and technology assessment worldwide.

**Key Words:** Humanv Alues, Human Development & Energy

### **Introduction: Ian Morris Theory**

This paper's main focus is on Ian Morris view about societies values and culture. Morris's sees that each human value is associated with a particular way of organizing society, and each form of organization is dictated by a particular way of capturing energy from the world around us. The successive systems of human values are Foraging Values, Farming Values and Fossil-fuel Values. Humanity Stages of Economic development: Hunting, Pastoralism, Farming, Commerce. Each had its own characteristic system of manners. Biggest Changes in Humanity's Environment happened when explosions in energy capture that we call agricultural and industrial revolutions happened. Culture develops when efficiency of the technological means of putting the energy to work increased.

Cultural Evolution = Human Values Changes

Evolution cultural as well as biological is a competitive process, played out through millions of tiny experiments. The society today constrains what it might turn tomorrow, and it is usually messy, noisy, and even violent. Since 1981, a large European project called the World Values Survey (WVS) has interviewed 400,000 people in 100 countries about their values and to figure out if their values can transform from Traditional to "Secular-rational" values.

The Result Shows: The socioeconomic development tends to transform people basic values and beliefs. Socioeconomic Development: Transition from rural societies to post industrial and post- industrial, and service based economics.

### **Morris put Some Definitions for Societies' Communities:**

**Foragers:** Societies that support themselves primarily by gathering wild plants and hunting wild animals. Means as they are hunters-gatherers; hunting of wild animals and gathering of wild plants, and fishing. Foragers exercise no deliberate alteration of the gene pool of exploited resources. Equatorial foragers tend to obtain most of their energy from plants. Arctic and antarctic foragers get most of their energy from animals (especially fish). They live in small groups, mobility is high, store foods for bad times.

**Values:** Political Hierarchy: When a young man kills much meat, he comes to think of himself as a chief or a big man, and he thinks of the rest as his servants or inferiors.

**Mobility:** Because different wild plants and different species of animals and fish migrate at different times during the year, contemporary foragers have to be very mobile. Wealth Inequality is so low among foragers: foragers usually requires people to move around constantly. This can make the accumulation of material wealth not only difficult but also rather pointless. On the other hand, dragging material possessions around the countryside makes hunting and gathering much harder. Foraging is a system of energy capture puts strict practical limits on the accumulation of wealth. Excluding others from access to wild plants that are scattered over a huge area or wild animals and fish that are constantly on the move is normally impossible.

**Who are farmers?**

Are people whose most important source of energy is domesticated plants and animals. Domesticated plants and animals were the original genetically modified organisms. Farmers tend to value hierarchy over equality and are less tolerant of violence. A value as equality, Morris argues:

- ✓ The foods produced by farmers often required more processing (threshing, sifting, grinding, baking, and so on) than those brought home by foragers.
- ✓ The increasingly permanent homes that farmers built required a lot more upkeep and cleaning than foragers' temporary shelters.
- ✓ New sexual division of labor and space.

**Features:**

- ✓ Security against starvation, unemployment, old age destitution.
- ✓ Means of accumulating wealth in a reasonably safe form.

**Forced Labor:**

- ✓ Forced Labor was almost unknown within foraging societies.
- ✓ Farming societies seem to have shifted toward forced labor because they had to neither kinship nor the market could generate the labor needed to build the ships, harbors, roads without which their (relatively) huge populations could not have fed themselves or maintained their societies.
- ✓ Their values can be summed up in the civilized form of life, Intellectual and moral, rulers are gods because they are rich, punishment for those who ignored obligations, elite class appeared, discrimination appeared between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, violence in wars between neighbours.
- ✓ Fossil Fuels depended on fossilized Plants and solar energy when sunlight hits the earth, where plants photo synthesize it into chemical energy; animals eat the plants, converting their chemical energy to kinetic energy; and humans eat plants and other animals.
- ✓ Fossil- fuel users tend to value equality of most kinds over hierarchy and to be very intolerant of violence.

**Fossil Fuel Society is a Product of Two Innovations:**

- ✓ The discovery that coal could be burned to release heat: However, coal began to rival wood as energy source: burning wood to boil water and then using the steam to power pistons. Ex: Egypt: providing their gods with steam- powered temple doors that appeared to open magically by themselves.
- ✓ What about plants and animals: People of course still needed to eat, which meant that domesticated plants and animals remained vital source of energy.

But fossil fuels quickly transformed farming too. Trains and steamships had made it much easier and cheaper to offer food to people; chemical fertilizers, gasoline for tractors, and electricity to pump water to fields directly increased output. Machines powered by fossil fuels reduced the economy's need for muscle power. Their values are:

Transformation of moral systems; societies moved from agraria to industria; people recalibrated their values. Rousseau announced in *The Social Contract* that the only source of political legitimacy was the “general will”. People wrote their constitution in the name of “We the people” rather than in the name of God or king. “Law is the expression of general will”. Eternal Values, evolving Values, And the Value of the Self Foragers: “Of course we have headmen! In fact we're all headmen.. Each one of us is headman over himself.”

Farmer: “For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.” Early fossil Fueller: “The human being is subject only to laws given by himself. Autonomy is. The ground of the dignity of human nature.” *The Evolution of Values: Biology, Culture, and Shape of Things to Come*

- ✓ Biologicizing Ethics (Sociobiology): Darwin began to explain the mechanisms that drive the biological evolution “descent with modification” The affection by exogenous inputs.
- ✓ Competition and quantifiability: Social Conflicts.

**Two assumptions:**

- ✓ There are several core values that nearly all humans care about deeply. There is a room for debate over what belongs on the list, but fairness, justice, love, hate, respect, loyalty, preventing harm, and a sense that some things are sacred seem to be strong candidates.
- ✓ These core values are biologically evolved adaptations.

**Views:**

- ✓ Sociological Positivism: Human beings have a capacity for valuing, but what people actually value can be wholly explained by sociological forces, which may in turn be driven by evolutionary forces.
- ✓ Enlightenment View: Human beings have a capacity for valuing, and that capacity has some natural tendency to attach itself to real moral values. But like our capacity for scientific knowledge, it develops slowly through history, and manages to bring its proper object, real moral values, only slowly into view.
- ✓ Distortion View: Human beings have a capacity for valuing, and that capacity has some natural tendency to attach itself to real moral values, but its tendency to do that is vulnerable to distortion by sociological forces. Our values are subject to distortion but what is called “Ideology”.

**Other Arguments Agree/Disagree With Morris Theory:**

Christine M. Korsgaard: She challenges the adequacy of Morris’s treatment of moral values. She distinguishes between the “positive values” that as a descriptive matter actually prevail in particular societies and the “real moral values” that are actually true and that people ought to hold. She argues that “positive values can serve that evolutionary and social functions that Morris identifies for them only if the people who hold them take them to be real moral values”.

Richard Seaford: Seaford uses the biological perspective claiming that human values have evolved biologically in the seven to eight million years since we split off genetically. Because our biology has not changed very much in ten to fifteen thousand years since farming began, anthropologists, psychologists, and historians find that a few core concerns treating people fairly, love and hate, preventing harm, agreeing that some things are sacred all over the world, regardless of time or place. To some extent, human values are genetically hard wired. From his point of view, farming is perfectly consistent with egalitarian values. Farming has frequently allowed large- scale societies, in which typically the control both of wealth distribution and of violence is lost by the majority to a small group at the center who also exercise some ideological control. But farming societies may also be small- scale, in which case the values that Morris has identified as those of the foraging band may be less constrained. Seaford criticizes Morris theory. In his point of view, he explained that Morris presents his account of the past as potentially a guide for the future. He does not claim that human choices are entirely irrelevant. But he does believe that the changes in values were ‘as close to inevitable and anything can be in history’. And he has crucially dismissed the idea of appealing to our biologically based universal values.

Robin Hanson: A review made by Robin Hanson on Morris’s theory saying that a lot of today’s political disputes come down to a conflict between farmer and forager ways, with forager ways slowly and steadily winning out since the industrial revolution. For him, it seems we acted like farmers when farming required that, but when richer we feel we can afford to revert to more natural-feeling forager ways. The main exceptions, like school and workplace domination and ranking, are required to generate industry-level wealth. We live a farmer lifestyle when poor, but prefer to buy a forager lifestyle when rich. He argues that: “Individuals who saw a norm violation could tell others, and then the whole band could discuss what to do about it. Once a consensus formed, the band could use weapons to enforce their collective decision. As needed, punishments could escalate from scolding to shunning to exile to death. Common norms included requirements to share food and protection, and bans on violence, giving orders, bragging, and creating subgroup factions.”

When they felt on good terms with the group, people could relax and feel safe. They then become more playful, and acted like animals generally do when playful. Within a bounded safe space, behaviour becomes more varied, stylized, artistic, humorous, teasing, self-indulgent, and emotionally expressive. For example, there is more, and more varied, music and dance. New possibilities are explored.

A feeling of safety includes feeling safe to form more distinct subgroups, without others seeing such subgroups as threatening factions. And that includes feeling safe to form groups that tend to argue together for similar positions within talky collective discussions, and to disagree with the larger group. After all, it is hard for a talky collective to function well unless members are allowed to openly disagree with one another.

But when the group was stressed and threatened by dominators, outsiders, or famine, the collective view mattered less, and people reverted to more general Machiavellian social strategies. Then it mattered more who had what physical resources and strength, and what personal allies. People leaned toward projecting toughness instead of empathy. And they demanded stronger signals of loyalty, such as conformity, and were more willing to suspect people of disloyalty. Subgroups and non-conformity became more suspect, including subgroups that consistently argued together for unpopular positions.

People who feel less safe are more afraid of changing whatever has worked in the past, and so hold on more tightly to typical past behaviours and practices. They are more worried about the group damaging the talky collective, via tolerating free riders, allowing more distinct subgroups, and by demanding too much from members who might just up and leave. Also, those who feel less able to influence communal discussions prefer groups norms to be enforced more simply and mechanically, without as many exceptions that will be more influenced by those who are good at talking.

In the much larger farmer social groups, simple one layer talky collectives were much less feasible. Farmer lives had new dangers of war and disease, and neighbouring groups were more threatening. The farmer world more supported property in spouses and material goods and had more social hierarchies, farmer law less relied on a general discussion of each accused, and more reliable food meant there was less call for redistribution. Farmers worked more and had less time for play. Together, these tended to reduce the scope of safe playful talky collectives, moving society in a rightward direction relative to foragers.

Morris divides human history into three great eras of foraging, farming, and industry. Furthermore, Morris suggests that a new era may start by 2082, perhaps based on brain emulations of the entire human population. He notes that these different past eras have been associated with dramatically different values, and suggests that the next era will also have very different values. So far remarkably similar to what I've been saying here for years!

Morris resists the idea that some eras have correct values while others have incorrect values. Instead he sees each era's values as adapted to the environment of that era, i.e., to its technical methods of production and survival. Morris also sees the modes of energy production as central and even defining of those environments. Which is why he calls our industry era the "fossil fuel" era.

Morris does little to argue for the centrality of energy production tech in era environments. He doesn't identify possible alternative centrality concepts with which to compare his view, nor does he offer evidence that might distinguish his energy-centrality from other views. Instead, Morris seems content to just assume energy centrality. While this stance didn't at all persuade me of energy centrality, nothing anything else in his book seems to actually depend on this claim. So I'm happy to just set it aside, and focus on other issues.

Morris's most interesting claim is that values during each era were adapted in great detail to the environments of those eras. And Morris fills up most of his book with details on both the environments and values of past eras. Enough details to make it clear that different eras did in fact have distinctively different environments and values. There are in fact typical forager environments, typical forager values, and so on for farming and industry. Yes there are exceptions, but that doesn't invalidate the basic patterns.

However, Morris actually doesn't try very hard to give specific explanations matching the specific features of each typical environment to specific features of each typical value set. It seems that his belief in strong adaptation of values to environments isn't much based on such specific matches. Instead, Morris mainly just seems to be very impressed by how consistently different were the environments and values of each era. It is as if he reasons "why would all the farming values be like each other, and yet so different from foraging values, if not for being adaptations to the new distinct farming environment?"

But while it is hard to deny great selection of cultures, including their values, during the foraging and farming eras, the case for selection seems to me to be far weaker for our industry era. Industry has seen less than a dozen generations of humans, and most of them are today rich enough to suffer little selection from insufficient material wealth. Yes, we have seen terrible wars, but they have been small and rare enough to impose only very mild selection pressures.

Values that Morris has in mind as being adapted to each era are grand things like favouring democracy, open markets, gender equality, and rule of law, and disfavouring violence, slavery, and wealth-inequality. The World Values Survey has tracked changes in such values and found that they are not much attributable to more successful nations displacing other nations, or even more successful people replacing others within a nation.

Instead the literature on cultural value change suggests that it is the same people who are changing their values over time, and that this change is caused to a substantial extent by increasing wealth. This does not look like selection at all, but looks instead like the revealing of a common internal conditionality in human values. Because our values are conditional on our wealth, they naturally move toward the industry-era value set as we get rich. My guess here is that we are reverting to forager era values, at least outside of work, as we less feel the strength of farmer-era pressures like fear, religion, and conformity.

Morris does mention that some people have challenged his claim that industry values are adapted by pointing to our low and falling industry era fertility rates, which seem very hard to understand as adaptive behaviour. In response, Morris points out that we haven't seen the long term effects of that low fertility yet, and notes that the low fertility rich might still win in the future by becoming highly copied brain emulations. But even if that ends up happening, it seems hard to see low industry fertility as an adaptation designed to produce that outcome.

He disagrees with Morris about the causes of industry era value changes, while still agree that the values of the next era are likely to be quite different from industry era values, and that those values would be well adapted to that next era. While I'm not sure what reasons Morris would offer for that claim, my reasons are specific to my analysis of the details of a new era based on brain emulations.

In sum, Morris gets an awful lot right about history, and about the future. I just wish he had attended a bit more to the details of how values get selected, and which values are in fact adaptive in which environments.

#### **Conclusion:**

The idea that energy has economic and social consequences is of course well understood. There are direct connections between energy use and quality of life and people's behaviours and attitude. Some

researchers were trying to gain a sense of how energy use affects quality of life for other societies and how energy choices influence life both at home and around the world. For Morris, Human culture and values evolve over time. The dominant factor shaping human culture is how people capture fuel for energy from their environment. Human history moved through three main stages, each with its own values. Foraging cultures came first. Foragers support, Morris looks at culture as a society's way to adapt to sources of energy capture. The better adapted they become, the more available energy they can extract. People have always used energy. Thousands of years ago, early humans burned wood to provide light, heat their living spaces, and cook their food. Today, people use more energy than ever from a variety of sources for a multitude of tasks and our lives are undoubtedly better for it. As a conclusion that, no one can deny that energy has positive and negative impacts on societies. Access to affordable, secure, safe, and clean energy is beneficial for humans; while making sure that they will have a positive impact on humanity's values can't be guaranteed.

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