

## Chapter 11

### Components of a Pro-Democratic Civic Culture

#### **Rival Theories of Political Culture**

From the start, scholars of political culture have claimed that the functioning and survival of democratic institutions at the system level is closely linked with individual-level value orientations (Lerner, 1958; Almond and Verba, 1963; Eckstein, 1966). Thus, the notion of a population-system linkage that ties political institutions to mass tendencies in individual-level values is essential to the entire literature on political culture. From this perspective, the fate of a political system is largely determined by its people's political attitudes and value orientations. Aristotle in the fifth century B.C. and Montesquieu (1989 [1748]) argued that different forms of government reflect the kinds of virtues that prevail among a people. Awareness of this insight re-emerged in explanations of the Nazi takeover in Weimar Germany, with many observers concluding that this disaster could be traced to the fact that Weimar was a "democracy without democrats" (Bracher, 1971 [1955]).

Starting from the premise that mass orientations were crucial to democracy, Almond and Verba (1963) launched the first comparative empirical survey of the mass attitudes linked with the stability and functioning of democracies. They concluded that a healthy mixture of "subject orientations" and "participant orientations" was conducive to a "civic culture" that helps democracies to flourish. Subsequent comparative empirical studies emphasized the importance of individual-level attitudes and values, in sustaining democratic institutions at the system level (among others see Barnes, Kaase et al., 1979; Baker, Dalton and Hildebrandt, 1981; Putnam, 1993; Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995; van Deth and Scarbrough, 1996; Inglehart, 1997; Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2002; Norris, 2003). The emergence of new democracies in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Central Eastern Europe stimulated another avalanche of political culture studies (among many others see Gibson, Dutch and Tedin, 1997; Hofferbert and Klingemann, 1999; Gibson, 2001; Mishler and Rose, 2000; Bratton and Mattes, 2000; Newton and Norris, 2000; Diamond, 2003). Nearly all of these studies hold that mass tendencies in individual-level attitudes and value orientations are important for the functioning of democracy at the system level. This assumption is the basic justification underlying research on political culture.

Despite the centrality of this claim, few studies have actually tested it (for example, Putnam, 1993; Muller and Seligson, 1994; Inglehart, 1997: chapter 6; Newton, 2001; Paxton, 2002). Most political culture studies simply assume that certain individual-level attitudes are important for democracy at the system level, and this assumption is used to justify analyses of the individual-level determinants of attitudes. But the assumption that mass tendencies in these attitudes have system-level effects remains based on faith, in most analyses of political culture. It is rarely tested, although if it were not true, there would be little point in doing research on political culture.

Instead of taking it for granted that mass tendencies in certain attitudes and value orientations have system level effects on democracy, this chapter tests this claim empirically.

Since very few studies have actually tested this claim, it is not surprising that the thesis that mass attitudes promote the functioning and persistence of democracies, has been questioned. There has been a continuing debate about the causal direction underlying the relationship between mass attitudes and democratic institutions. Rustow (1970), for example, argued that mass support for democracy can result from disappointing experiences with authoritarian rule-- but “intrinsically” democratic values that reflect a deeply-rooted commitment to democratic norms, can only emerge through habituation: that is, learning democratic norms through practice under existing democratic institutions. According to Rustow, democratic mass values are not a precondition for functioning democracies but a *consequence* of them. Similarly, in a sharp critique of Putnam (1993) and Inglehart (1997), Jackman and Miller (1998) claimed that a democratic mass culture results from living under democratic institutions, instead of being conducive to them (see also Muller and Seligson, 1994).

In Chapter 8, we examined these contradictory arguments, hypothesizing that self-expression values reflect a strong commitment to democratic norms, such as liberty and tolerance. Accordingly, we tested empirically whether self-expression values are shaped by previous experience under democratic institutions or whether these values help shape subsequent democratic institutions. The results are unequivocal: controlling for socioeconomic development, prior democratic institutions have only a minor impact on self-expression values; but self-expression values have a strong and significant impact on subsequent democratic institutions, even holding socioeconomic development constant. Likewise, controlling for temporal autocorrelation, self-expression values show a significant impact on democratic institutions but the reverse is not true. These findings suggest that the main causal arrow operates from mass values to democratic institutions, and not the other way around.

Since the evidence indicates that mass values affect democracy, it is important to know precisely *which* mass values affect democracy most strongly. Human development theory implies that self-expression values should be most crucial for democracy, but other social scientists emphasize other values and attitudes. This chapter analyzes empirical evidence from scores of societies, to determine which mass orientations have the strongest impact on democracy.

### **Three Competing Approaches**

The research on political culture falls into three main approaches, with adherents of each approach emphasizing different types of mass values as most important in strengthening democracy. We label these approaches the legitimacy approach (or system-support approach), the communitarian approach (or social capital approach) and the human development approach (or emancipative approach).

In a highly influential work, David Easton (1965) argued that all political systems need legitimacy, which they obtain if their public supports the system’s specific institutions, and the system as a whole. Accordingly, adherents of the legitimacy approach argue that mass support for democracy as a system of governance, and mass confidence in public institutions, provide democracies with the legitimacy that they need to operate effectively (see Gibson, 1997; Klingemann, 1999; Mishler and Rose, 2001; Seligson, 2002). Advocates of this approach consider democracy a limited set of institutional mechanisms that regulate official politics; the operation of democratic institutions is only loosely related to people’s daily lives and does not require a public that has such virtues as tolerance and trust. These virtues have no immediate impact on the political institutions hovering above societies--which makes the requirements of

institutional stability relatively modest: one does not need a highly civic public; it is sufficient that a majority has a fair amount of confidence in these institutions and prefers democracy to any alternative system of government (see Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn, 2000; Newton and Norris, 2000; Anderson and Tverdova, 2001; Newton, 2001). Mass support for democracy is considered to be crucial in de-legitimizing autocracy and legitimizing democracy.

Two other approaches--the communitarian and the human development approach--follow the tradition of the civic culture school in arguing that democracy is more than a limited set of institutional mechanisms that regulate official politics. Instead, democracy is viewed in the perspective of Alexis de Tocqueville (1994 [1837]): as a system of government whose principles are practiced at the grass roots of society, involving citizens who experience and practice democratic norms in their daily lives. Consequently, making democracy work requires more than just having confidence in institutions and preferring democracy to alternative systems of government-- it requires a broader set of civic values.

The communitarian approach emphasizes those values that link the citizens to daily public life and strengthen their social ties and their loyalty to the community (Bell, 1993; Etzioni, 1996). According to Putnam (1993; 2000) such communal orientations create social capital and are reflected in people's activities in voluntary associations and in their trust in their fellow citizens. Thus, communitarians and social capital theorists emphasize voluntary activity in associations and interpersonal trust as the communal ground on which democracies flourish (see Norris, 2002: chapter 8). Another school in the communitarian debate emphasizes the citizens' conformity to laws and their loyalty to rules of good conduct, or what they call "civic honesty" or "trustworthiness," as the moral resource that sustains and strengthens democracy (Huntington, Crozier, and Watanuki, 1975; Levi and Stoker, 2000; Rothstein, 2000). In contrast to dictatorships, democracies have only limited repressive ability in order to enforce laws. Thus, more than any other system of government, democracy depends on citizens' voluntary compliance, or what we will call "norm obedience."

The human development approach shares with the communitarian approach the belief that civic values, rather than just specific orientations towards the political system and its institutions, are important for democracy. Human development theory is a theory of the societal conditions that restrict or widen people's choices. Democracy is a key one of these conditions. It institutionalizes civil and political liberties, providing people legal guarantees to make free choices in their private and public activities. And since human choice is at the heart of democracy, the civic values that make it work effectively are those that emphasize human choice--which we term self-expression values. Thus, not all communal values and forms of social capital are equally important to democracy, but above all those that are motivated by people's aspiration for human freedom and choice. Self-expression values tap this dimension.

Interpersonal trust, norm obedience and activity in associations certainly reflect communal values and social capital, but they do not necessarily reflect emancipative values and the forms of social capital motivated by them. Communal values can be authoritarian and xenophobic, producing "bonding" rather than "bridging" forms social capital that exist in the form of inward-looking networks that expose people to group pressure, rather than emancipating them. From the perspective of human development theory, these forms of communal values and social capital would not operate in favor of democracy-- only emancipative values and the bridging forms of social capital they motivate, do so. Emancipative values give priority to individual liberty over collective discipline, human diversity over group conformity, and civic autonomy over state authority. Bridging forms of social capital are motivated by emancipative

values. They diminish people's dependence on inward-looking groups while integrating them into webs of looser but more diverse human interactions.

Not all forms of communal values and social capital are conducive to democracy's focus on human choice. Democracy requires values that emphasize human self-expression, which is intrinsically directed against discrimination and specifically focused on the liberating elements of democracy. The human development approach does not endorse Almond and Verba's claim (1963) that a strong component of "subject orientations" is an integral part of a democratic civic culture. Quite the contrary, we argue that weak or ineffective democracy does not reflect a lack of collective discipline, group conformity, and norm obedience. It is more likely that insufficient civic disobedience and self-expression makes the job of authoritarian rulers all too easy. Not a more compliant but a more emancipative outlook is what most societies need to become more democratic.

Self-expression values include a postmaterialist emphasis on personal and political liberty, civilian protest activities, tolerance of the liberty of others, and an emphasis on subjective well-being reflected in life satisfaction. Interpersonal trust also belongs to this syndrome of self-expression values (see Figure 10-2).<sup>1</sup> However, we hypothesize that its linkage to democracy is indirect, operating through its linkage with other components of the self-expression values syndrome-- above all liberty aspirations. Among the various components of the self-expression values syndrome, postmaterialistic aspirations for personal and political liberty are most directly focused on human choice and the rights that guarantee it. Consequently, we hypothesize that these liberty aspirations are most closely associated with democracy.

In short, three distinct approaches emphasize three different aspects of mass culture as being most conducive to democracy: (1) the legitimacy approach (or system support approach) emphasizes institutional confidence and support for democracy. Support for democracy is considered particularly crucial in de-legitimizing autocracy and legitimizing democracy, regardless of the motivations and values underlying support for democracy. (2) The communitarian approach (or social capital approach) emphasizes norm conformity, associational activity and interpersonal trust as producing the community bonds and civic loyalties that enable democracy to flourish; and (3) the human development approach emphasizes self-expression values, particularly liberty aspirations, as the mass orientation most intrinsically relevant to democracy and its emphasis on human choice.

### **Analytic Strategy**

What mass orientations are most crucial to democracy? Tables 11-2 and 11-3 present correlation and regression analyses that measure the impact on democracy of each of the orientations we have just discussed. Let us emphasize that our measures of both formal and effective democracy were made in 2000-2002, while all of the political culture predictors were measured five to ten years earlier: this temporal ordering allows us to interpret the effects we find as reflecting the influence of political culture on democratic institutions.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the regressions in Table 11-2 control for the temporal autocorrelation of democracy, introducing the duration of a society's experience with democracy up to the mid 1990s as an additional predictor, to control for the possibility that democracy in 2000-2002 simply reflects prior levels of democracy—and the linkage between mass values and democracy is simply an artifact of these values' dependence on prior democracy. The duration of a society's experience with democracy generally has a positive influence on its subsequent democratic performance (Wessels, 1997). Controlling this effect, we

examine whether given mass values have an additional impact on subsequent measures of democracy.

Holding the democratic tradition constant also helps us control for the influence of Western culture, since Western societies have the longest democratic tradition. Accordingly, we examine the effects of given mass values on democracy insofar as they are independent from a Western democratic heritage.

The following tables are organized so that one sees the effects of the specific types of mass values on a society's democratic performance, differentiating between formal and effective versions of liberal democracy. It is clear from these tables that the explained variance in merely formal democracy is considerably lower than the explained variance in effective democracy, which indicates that formal democracy is a less socially-rooted phenomenon than effective democracy—a finding that has already been explored in detail in Chapter 8. Aside from this, the same pattern applies to both formal democracy and effective democracy: the mass values that provide the strongest explanation of effective democracy, also provide the strongest explanation of formal democracy. Since effective democracy is the more crucial dependent variable, our interpretation will focus on explaining it.

### **The Legitimacy Approach**

Confidence in institutions has been declining for several decades, in almost all advanced Western democracies (Pharr, Putnam and Dalton 2000; Newton and Norris, 2000; Newton, 2001). Since it is often assumed that high confidence in institutions is crucial to democracy, this sharp decline of confidence has drawn much attention, reviving the thesis of a legitimacy crisis that Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki (1975) articulated in the 1970s. But *is* a high level of confidence in institutions actually crucial to the flourishing of democracy? Do lower levels of confidence in institutions produce less effective democracies? In order to answer these questions we measured each public's average level of confidence in core institutions of the state ("confidence in state institutions") and in all types of institutions for which confidence had been asked ("overall confidence in institutions").<sup>iii</sup>

Confidence ratings are positively correlated across all types of institutions and factor analyses reveal no polarity between confidence in different types of institutions: summarizing institutional confidence over various institutions is meaningful. Using them, the first two rows in Table 11-1 illustrate that there is virtually no significant relationship between people's confidence in institutions and a society's subsequent democratic performance across various types of societies.

#### **(Table 11-1: about here)**

However, it is possible that confidence in institutions does not operate in the same way across different types of societies but is conducive to democracy only within the limits of a democratic heritage. In this case the impact of confidence in institutions would only become evident if one controls for prior experience under democracy. We do so in the regression analyses in Table 11-2, which control for a society's prior democratic tradition. But even holding prior democracy constant, public confidence in institutions has no significant impact on a society's subsequent democratic performance. This holds true whether one analyzes the impact of confidence in state institutions or confidence in all types of institutions. Indeed, if public confidence in institutions has any impact, it tends to be negative rather than positive, as the negative signs of the various correlation and regression coefficients indicate.

#### **(Table 11-2: about here)**

**Table 11-1. Correlates of Democracy Emphasized by Three Approaches**  
(earliest available survey)

Correlates	Correlations with Formal Democracy 2000-2002	Correlations with Effective Democracy 2000-2002
<b>Legitimacy Approach:</b>		
Confidence in State Institutions (early 1990s)	.13 (61)	.33** (61)
Overall Confidence in Institutions (early 1990s)	-.12 (61)	-.04 (61)
Approval of Democracy (mid 1990s)	.38** (60)	.42** (60)
Democracy-Autocracy Preference (mid 1990s)	.57*** (60)	.68*** (60)
<b>Communitarian Approach:</b>		
Voluntary Activity in Social Associations (early 1990s)	-.06 (60)	-.06 (60)
Overall Voluntary Activity in Associations (early 1990s)	-.13 (60)	-.11 (60)
Norm Obedience (early 1990s)	.13 (61)	.25* (61)
Interpersonal Trust (early 1990s)	.37** (61)	.63*** (61)
<b>Human Development Approach:</b>		
Postmaterialist Liberty Aspirations (early 1990s)	.70*** (61)	.80*** (61)
Tolerance of Sexual Liberty (early 1990s)	.50*** (60)	.67*** (60)
Signing Petitions (early 1990s)	.64*** (61)	.76*** (61)
Life satisfaction (early 1990s)	.59*** (61)	.73*** (61)
Self-Expression Values Syndrome (early 1990s)	.72*** (61)	.89*** (61)

Early 1990s: data from earliest available survey of VS II-III (1989-91 or 1995-97).

Mid 1990s: data from earliest available survey of VS III-IV (1995-97 or 1999-2001).

Significance levels: \*p<.10 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 11-2. Explaining Democracy by Political Culture Predictors from Three Rival Schools (separate regressions, each controlled for democratic tradition up to 1995)**

Predictors	Dependent Variable			
	Formal Democracy 2000-2002		Effective Democracy 2000-2002	
	Beta	Partial R <sup>2</sup> (%)	Beta	Partial R <sup>2</sup> (%)
<b>Legitimacy Approach:</b>				
Confidence in State Institutions (early 1990s)	-.09	<b>02</b>	.06	<b>00</b>
Overall Confidence in Institutions (early 1990s)	-.18*	<b>05</b>	-.13	<b>00</b>
Approval of Democracy (mid 1990s)	.20*	<b>05</b>	.16*	<b>05</b>
Democracy-Autocracy Preference (mid 1990s)	.38**	<b>15</b>	.38***	<b>25</b>
<b>Communitarian Approach:</b>				
Voluntary Activity in Social Associations (early 1990s)	-.09	<b>00</b>	-.11	<b>00</b>
Overall Voluntary Activity in Associations (early 1990s)	-.10	<b>00</b>	-.08	<b>00</b>
Norm Obedience (early 1990s)	-.03	<b>00</b>	.04	<b>00</b>
Interpersonal Trust (early 1990s)	.09*	<b>00</b>	.31**	<b>15</b>
<b>Human Development Approach:</b>				
Postmaterialist Liberty Aspirations (early 1990s)	.61***	<b>29</b>	.54***	<b>37</b>
Tolerance of Homosexuality (early 1990s)	.28**	<b>07</b>	.37***	<b>20</b>
Signing Petitions (early 1990s)	.50***	<b>17</b>	.46***	<b>23</b>
Life satisfaction (early 1990s)	.40**	<b>13</b>	.42***	<b>23</b>
Self-Expression Values Syndrome (early 1990s)	.77***	<b>32</b>	.80***	<b>55</b>

Early 1990s: data from earliest available survey of VS II-III (1989-91 or 1995-97).

Mid 1990s: data from earliest available survey of WVS III-IV (1995-97 or 1999-2001).

For number of cases in each regression, see Table 11-2.

Significance levels: \*p<.10 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Surprising as it may seem in the light of the literature on this subject (see Pharr, Putnam and Dalton, 2000), public confidence in institutions does not seem to affect a society's democratic performance in any systematic way. High or low levels of confidence in institutions can be found in any type of political system, regardless of its democratic performance. Some long standing authoritarian states, such as China, show high levels of confidence in institutions; while some long established democracies, such as the U.S., show low levels of confidence in institutions. Public confidence in institutions does not systematically differ between societies that have a long or a short experience with democracy. And it has no significant impact on a society's subsequent democratic performance, regardless of whether we control for prior democracy or not. This finding casts serious doubt on the importance that has been ascribed to confidence in institutions and its recent decline in most developed societies. It confirms the interpretation (advanced in Chapter 4) that the decline of confidence in institutions does not pose a threat to democracy. On the contrary, it reflects the emergence of less deferential, more elite-challenging publics in modern societies, which we interpret as conducive to democracy.

Our findings suggest that high levels of public confidence in institutions are not a valid indicator of a pro-democratic civic culture. By the same token, low levels of public confidence in institutions do not necessarily pose a threat to democracy. This does not mean that confidence in institutions is entirely irrelevant-- it may be relevant in more specific ways that have not been tested here. But even if this were the case, it remains true that confidence in institutions has no general impact on democracy that operates in the same way across all units of observation. This finding invalidates confidence in institutions as a *general* indicator of a pro-democratic civic culture.

Mass confidence in institutions is unrelated to democracy at the system level but this might not be true of people's support for democracy in general. Intuitively, one would assume that mass support for a democratic system creates pressures to attain or sustain democracy. No doubt, this is why many regional survey programs, including the New Democracies Barometer, the LatinoBarometer and the AfroBarometer, have included questions on people's satisfaction with, and approval of, democracy. We will examine these measures. But we agree with Klingemann (1999) and Rose (1995), who argue that one should not only examine people's support for democracy, but also their rejection or support for non-democratic alternatives. Thus, we measure people's preference for democracy vs. autocracy by subtracting their approval of autocracy from their approval of democracy, producing a measure that reflects people's net preference for democracy. Measuring regime preferences in this way is important because some people do not have a clear understanding of democracy, expressing strong support for both democratic and non-democratic forms of government. In such cases, the individual's support for democracy is partly offset by their support for authoritarian regimes, indicating that they have mixed views. By contrast, other people express strong support for democracy *and* strong rejection of authoritarian forms of government, showing a strong net preference for democracy. These people are classified as "solid democrats."<sup>iv</sup>

One would expect agreement with the statement that "democracies are the best form of government," should show a significant positive correlation with subsequent measures of both formal and effective democracy and it does, as Table 11-1 shows. But controlling for prior democracy this impact becomes insignificant, as Table 11-2 shows. People's preferences for democracy over authoritarian alternatives show a different pattern. The bivariate correlations in Table 11-1 show a significant positive linkage between a public's system preference for democracy over autocracy and subsequent measures of formal and effective democracy.



Controlling for prior experience under democracy, the effect remains highly significant, explaining 25 percent of the variation in effective democracy that is unexplained by prior democracy.

Low levels of confidence in public institutions can and do go together, with strong preferences for democracy over autocracy. Even if people live in a democracy and strongly prefer democracy to authoritarian rule, they may be critical of how specific institutions are currently run by their elites—which results in low confidence in these institutions. This is the case in many Western democracies today: overwhelming majorities of the public support democracy over alternative forms of government, but at the same time express low confidence in institutions and low satisfaction with how democracy is functioning (Klingemann, 1999; Newton, 2001). Living under high degrees of existential security leads people to place priority on self-expression and democracy—but at the same time, they become increasingly critical of authority.

Declining confidence in institutions does not necessarily reflect an erosion of democratic values. And clearly, these orientations are not valid indicators of a pro-democratic civic culture. Preferences for democracy versus autocracy, by contrast, *do* seem to be a valid indicator of a pro-democratic civic culture, and one that operates in the same fashion across all units of observation.

### **The Communitarian Approach**

Both the social capital and the communitarian school emphasize the importance of voluntary associations, arguing that they sustain the communal life and the civil society on which strong democracy rests (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Norris, 2002: chapter 8). This view can be traced to de Tocqueville (1994 [1837]) who viewed voluntary associations as the “schools of democracy.” We created two indices measuring a society’s level of voluntary activity in associations, one measuring the percentage of people being active in specifically social associations and another measuring the percentage of people being active in any kind of voluntary association.<sup>v</sup>

As Tables 11-2 and 11-3 indicate, a society’s level of activity in associations shows no significant effect on its level of democracy whatever, regardless of whether or not we control for prior democracy. Voluntary activity in associations does not explain a significant amount of variation in either formal or effective democracy. This finding holds for activity in social associations and overall activity in associations. Like public confidence in institutions, voluntary activity in associations does not affect democracy in any general way—and probably for the same reasons. Neither public confidence in institutions nor activity in associations is necessarily linked with democracy’s focus on human choice. Simply knowing a society’s level of activity in associations does not tell us whether its people support authoritarian principles or democratic principles. Germany was noted for its high rates of activity in voluntary associations under the Kaisers, but until post-war times Germany’s flourishing associational life did not help foster democracy.

This finding would surprise anyone who assumes that active membership in associations plays a key role in making democracy possible—but the empirical evidence is unequivocal: it gives no support to this assumption-- even if a society’s democratic heritage is held constant, in order to test whether associational activity helps only within the limits of existing democracy. This does not necessarily mean that the level of people’s associational activity is entirely irrelevant to democracy-- but its relevance may depend on the type of *values* motivating these activities.

The finding that voluntary activity in associations is not inherently favorable to democracy, leads us to examine the values that are claimed to be conducive to democracy. Within the communitarian camp, it has been argued that a public whose citizens show a high level of trustworthiness and follow social norms and obey the laws, is particularly important for democracies. These values have been described as “trustworthiness,” “civic morality,” or “civic honesty” (Coleman, 1990; Scholz and Lubell, 1998; Tyler, 1998; Uslaner, 1999; Levi and Stoker, 2000; Rothstein, 2000; Rose-Ackerman, 2001). Following these writers, we created an index of “norm obedience” based on people’s disapproval of dishonest behavior, such as cheating on taxes or avoiding transport fares.<sup>vi</sup>

Tables 11-2 and 11-3 demonstrate that norm obedience has no significant relationship with formal or effective democracy, regardless of whether we control for prior democracy or not. The problem of norm obedience is the same as with confidence in institutions and voluntary activity in associations: it is not specific to democracy’s emancipative focus on human choice. It can reflect loyalty to democratic norms, but it can also reflect Adolf Eichman’s loyalty to Nazi procedures. Norm obedience is not necessarily a sign of civic health. If strong disapproval of norm violations is widespread, this could simply reflect awareness of the fact that high rates of norm violations are a major problem in one’s society—as is suggested by the fact that the Russians score higher on norm obedience than the Finns. In any case, norm obedience shows no impact on a society’s democratic performance and does not seem to be a valid indicator of a pro-democratic civic culture.

Interpersonal trust, by contrast, *does* show a significant positive linkage with both formal and effective democracy (Table 11-1). When we control for prior experience with democracy (Table 11-2), the impact of interpersonal trust on formal democracy becomes less significant, but its impact on effective democracy remains highly significant, explaining 15 percent of the cross-national variance.<sup>vii</sup> Interpersonal trust does have a significant impact on effective democracy, and does seem to be a valid indicator of a pro-democratic civic culture.

So far we have a mixed picture. Two indicators emphasized by the legitimacy approach--public confidence in institutions and approval of democracy--have no consistent impact on democracy; while one indicator—preferences for democracy over autocracy—does have a consistent and significant impact on democracy. Similarly, two indicators emphasized by the communitarian camp--voluntary activity in associations and norm obedience--turn out to have no general impact on democracy; while another indicator--interpersonal trust--has a significant impact on democracy.

### **The Human Development Approach**

When we examine the indicators emphasized by our emancipative version of human development theory, the evidence is unequivocal. As Tables 11-2 and 11-3 illustrate, every component of the self-expression values syndrome has a highly significant impact on a society’s subsequent democratic quality, regardless of whether we control for prior democracy or not. We have already seen that this is true of interpersonal trust, which belongs to this syndrome, though it is its weakest component. But the other components of self-expression values show even stronger effects on democracy, and they explain considerably more of the variation in effective democracy, controlling for the length of time a society has lived under democratic institutions. This is especially true of the orientation that focuses most directly on human freedom: postmaterialistic aspirations for personal and political liberty. Liberty aspirations show the

strongest partial effect on a society's democratic quality, explaining 37 per cent of the variance in effective democracy, controlling for the length of a society's democratic tradition.

Elite-challenging activities also have a significant independent impact on democracy, reflecting that these activities put pressure on elites to be more responsive, and helped to topple authoritarian regimes and establish many of the Third Wave democracies, such as those in the Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, or the Czech Republic (Bernhard, 1993; Diamond, 1993; Foweraker and Landmann, 1997; Paxton 2002: 255-257). But although elite-challenging activities often exert pressure for democracy, they can be also directed toward undemocratic goals, if they are not linked with self-expression values. This explains why elite-challenging activities have a slightly smaller impact on democracy than liberty aspirations—the central element of the syndrome of self-expression values. In addition, even though elite-challenging activities can put institutions under pressure for democracy, these activities are in turn facilitated when democratic institutions are in place—simply because democratic institutions provide the civil and political rights that make elite-challenging activities legal, lowering the risks of participating in them. Elite-challenging activities are therefore influenced by prior experience under democracy, so the democratic tradition captures part of the impact of elite-challenging activities on subsequent measures of effective democracy. But even controlling for how long a society has experienced democracy, elite-challenging activities still have a significant independent impact on subsequent democracy. Elite-challenging activities are not just a product of democracy—they are also a motor of democratization, especially when they are motivated by self-expression values (Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch, 2004). Again, this confirms democracy's rootedness in People Power.

As we have seen, interpersonal trust has a significant impact on democracy, but this effect is considerably weaker than that of liberty aspirations. The same applies to two other components of self-expression values—tolerance of homosexuality and life satisfaction, a measure of people's emphasis on subjective well-being. The reason why tolerance of homosexuality and life satisfaction show a more modest impact on democracy is similar to the case of interpersonal trust: neither trust, nor satisfaction nor tolerance are as sharply focused on civil and political liberties as are liberty aspirations. Nonetheless trust, life satisfaction and tolerance do have some impact on democracy, as parts of the broader syndrome of self-expression values. This leads us to examine the impact of this syndrome as a whole.

The broad syndrome of self-expression values links liberty aspirations with protest activism, tolerance of homosexuality, subjective well-being and interpersonal trust. As the factor loadings in Figure 10-2 indicate (see, p. X, above), postmaterialist liberty aspirations have the highest loadings on self-expression values, followed by elite-challenging activities, life satisfaction, tolerance of homosexuality and interpersonal trust, which has the weakest loading. This creates an asymmetrical linkage with democracy, which is shaped most strongly by liberty aspirations and least strongly by interpersonal trust. But even though this linkage is asymmetrical, the self-expression values syndrome as a whole shows a stronger impact on democracy than any of its components, including liberty aspirations. As Tables 11-2 and 11-3 demonstrate, the strength of self-expression values explains 55 per cent of the variation in effective democracy, controlling for how long a society has lived under democratic institutions. The whole is greater than the average of its parts.

The crucial finding is the fact that the self-expression values syndrome explains far more of the variance in effective democracy than any of the other variables emphasized in the political culture literature. The multivariate regressions shown in Table 11-3 strikingly confirm this point.

**Table 11-3. The Impact of Self-expression Values on Democracy, Controlling for Other Political Culture Indicators**

<u>Predictors:</u>	<u>Dependent Variable: Effective Democracy, 2000-2002</u>				
Years under Democracy before 1990	.12 (1.16)	.11 (1.20)	.13 (1.38)	.11 (1.12)	.08 (.85)
% High on Self-Expression Values in early 1990s	.80*** (8.04)	.72*** (7.36)	.78*** (7.99)	.80*** (8.36)	.72*** (6.89)
Overall Confidence in Institutions in early 1990s	.01 (.23)				.05 (.85)
Democracy-Autocracy Preference in mid 1990s		.15* (2.11)			.16* (2.03)
Activity in Associations in early 1990s			-.07 (-1.06)		-.05 (.79)
Norm Obedience in early 1990s				.05 (.75)	.04 (.69)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.80	.83	.79	.80	.82
N	61	60	59	61	58

Entries are standardized beta-coefficients with T-values in parentheses.  
 Significance levels: \*p<.10 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Controlling for the self-expression values syndrome, none of the attitudes that are not part of this syndrome has a significant impact on democracy; but the impact of self-expression values remains highly significant and is almost completely undiminished when we control for the other political culture indicators, regardless which one we use. Comparing these findings with those in Table 8-4 indicates that the impact of self-expression values on democracy is not an artifact of its linkages with any other societal factor, whether structural or cultural. Although many prominent theories in the political culture literature emphasize other factors, self-expression values seem to play the central role. Many other factors are indeed correlated with democracy, but this is true mainly in so far as they are linked with self-expression values.

**(Table 11-3: about here)**

These findings support the interpretation that the rise of a culture that emphasizes self-expression constitutes the single most important force in strengthening democracy. Considered in this light, effective democracy can be understood as the institutional manifestation of social forces emphasizing human choice and self-expression—as our theory of human development holds. Self-expression values seem to be the most crucial component of a democratic civic culture.

**The Centrality of Liberty Aspirations**

All components of the self-expression values syndrome show significant linkages with democracy. This syndrome involves postmaterialist aspirations for human liberty, interpersonal

trust, elite-challenging activities, tolerance of outgroups (the indicator used here being tolerance of homosexuality), and an emphasis on subjective well-being. These attributes go together because they reflect a culture in which survival is sufficiently secure that outgroups do not seem threatening, people feel safe to trust others, and where self-reliance, creativity and initiative take high priority. Increasingly, freedom of expression and freedom of choice are highly valued, both for oneself and for others.

Strong emphasis on human choice lies at the core of the self-expression values syndrome. This fact becomes clearer when we focus on postmaterialist liberty aspirations, which emphasize personal and political freedom. These aspirations are the most directly relevant to human choice. Liberty aspirations are a postmaterialist phenomenon that tends to be most widespread in postindustrial societies. But liberty aspirations are not unique to postindustrial societies. They exist to varying degrees in all societies, and the extent to which they are present tends to shape a society's affinity to democracy.

The relationship that other mass attitudes have with liberty aspirations indicates how closely these attitudes reflect the emancipative impetus of self-expression values—or its opposite, social conformism. Attitudes that are positively correlated with liberty aspirations emphasize emancipation; and attitudes that are uncorrelated or negatively correlated with liberty aspirations tend to emphasize conformism. This is why some of the attitudes emphasized by the communitarian and the legitimacy approaches were found to have no impact on democracy, while others did: attitudes that have a strong linkage with liberty aspirations, *do* have an impact on democracy, since these attitudes are linked with human choice and freedom. And attitudes that are unrelated to this focus on freedom and choice, have no impact on democracy.

For example, public confidence in institutions has no impact on democracy (see Table 11-2 above), reflecting the fact that confidence in institutions is unrelated to liberty aspirations. Confidence in institutions can be as strong in authoritarian societies as it is in democratic societies. Thus, mass liberty aspirations are essentially uncorrelated with public confidence in state institutions ( $r = .05$ ,  $N = 61$ ) and they have a *negative* (though insignificant) correlation with overall confidence in institutions ( $r = -.18$ ,  $N = 61$ ). By contrast, our multi-item indicator of mass preferences for democracy over autocracy has a significant impact on democracy, reflecting that these preferences correlate strongly and significantly with liberty aspirations at  $r = .53$ .

Similarly, none of the types of voluntary activities in associations showed a significant impact on democracy, reflecting that voluntary activity in associations is not significantly linked with liberty aspirations. But mass levels of subjective well-being, elite-challenging activities and liberty tolerance all show significant effects on democracy, reflecting that all these components are strongly correlated with liberty aspirations, generating the self-expression values syndrome.

**(Figure 11-1: about here)**

Figure 11-1 summarizes these findings, showing that the linkage between a given political culture indicator and effective democracy is a linear function of the given indicator's linkage with liberty aspirations. Indicators that are positively linked with liberty aspirations also show a positive correlation with democracy, and those that are negatively linked with liberty aspirations, are negatively linked with democracy—and the stronger an indicator's linkage with liberty aspirations, the stronger its linkage with democracy.

## **Institutional Confidence and Interpersonal Trust**

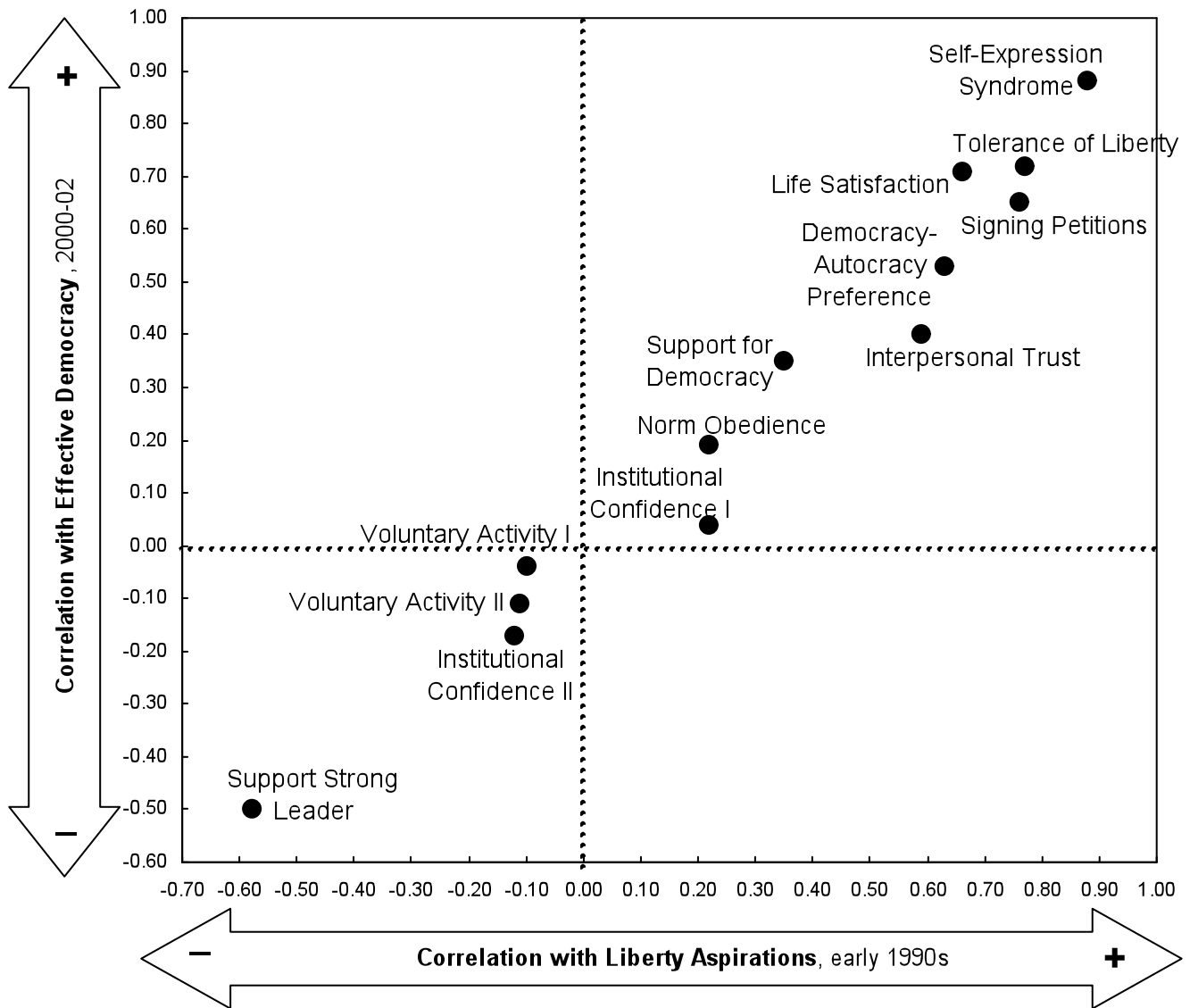
It is significant that confidence in institutions and interpersonal trust have different relationships with liberty aspirations. This finding is consistent with Putnam's (1993) distinction between "horizontal" trust and "vertical" trust.

Confidence in institutions is vertically oriented because it reflects trust in institutionalized hierarchies through which authorities exert power over the public. As Putnam argues, strong forms of vertical trust are typical of societies with strong hierarchical ties. These ties strengthen the intensity of trust but at the same time restrict its social radius: one's trust focuses narrowly on the authority of leaders but does not include equals outside one's primary group (see also Banfield, 1958; Fukuyama, 1995, 2000).

By contrast, generalized interpersonal trust is horizontally oriented because it reflects trust between equal citizens. Horizontal trust characterizes egalitarian middle class societies in which people are linked with each other by webs of diverse economic and civic interactions. Horizontal trust is not necessarily intensive but its social radius is relatively large. Horizontal trust reflects the "strength of weak ties" in that it is "bridging" rather than "bonding" (see Granovetter, 1973). Horizontal trust reflects and creates autonomously motivated civic interactions, and consequently, it is linked to emancipation rather than conformism. Accordingly, horizontal trust is more conducive to civic cooperation that puts elites under democratizing pressure, than is vertical trust. Strong vertical trust can help make people obedient to dictatorial power.

In keeping with this reasoning, Rokeach (1960) and Rosenberg and Owens (2001) argue that high levels of trust in other people indicate an "open-minded" social climate, which is typical of societies that emphasize liberty. This explains the positive societal-level linkage between interpersonal trust and liberty aspirations. By definition, societies in which liberty aspirations are strongly emphasized, are driven by an emancipative spirit, which in turn implies a critical orientation towards hierarchies and authorities (Nevitte, 1996). This explains the weak but negative linkage between liberty aspirations and confidence in institutions. Since liberty aspirations reflect autonomy from, or even defiance toward institutionalized authority, they

**Figure 11-1. Mass attitudes are linked with Effective Democracy mainly in so far as they are linked with Liberty Aspirations.**



diminish public confidence in institutions— particularly in so far as this confidence reflects an authoritarian outlook.

According to some social capital theorists, interpersonal trust between citizens and public confidence in the working of institutions should go together (see Newton, 2000). In fact, they do not, because they are located on opposite sides of the conformism-emancipation polarity: confidence in institutionalized authority reflects social conformism rather than human emancipation; but trust in one's fellow citizens reflects emancipation.

### **Conformist and Challenging Forms of Civic Activism**

Postmaterialist liberty aspirations help us to distinguish between different kinds of trust as well as between different kinds of civic engagement. Elite-challenging forms of activism--such as participating in demonstrations, boycotts and petitions--are positively linked with mass liberty aspirations: the percentage of people that have signed a petition, attended a demonstration or joined a boycott correlates with postmaterialist liberty aspirations at a highly significant level ( $r = .62$ ). Elite-challenging activities reflect a critical citizenry whose members are able and willing to put incumbent authorities under pressure to respond to their demands. By contrast, conventional forms of civic participation based on activity in hierarchically organized formal associations such as political parties and labor unions tend to be elite-dominated. This type of activity is closer to conformism in the conformism-emancipation polarity.

Hence, we find that mass liberty aspirations are positively linked with elite-challenging activity; but voluntary activity in formal associations shows a slightly negative relationship with liberty aspirations (see Figure 11-1). In keeping with this fact, elite-challenging activism does have a significant impact on democracy, but activity in associations does not, as Tables 11-2 and 11-3 demonstrated.

Many traditional associations, in particular churches, labor unions and political parties, are bureaucratically organized and dominated by small circles of leaders. They reflect Michel's (1962 [1912]) Iron Law of Oligarchy. Consequently, as liberty aspirations have become more widespread in postindustrial societies, membership in these traditional bureaucratic associations has been declining (see Putnam, 2000, Norris, 2002: chapter 9). Florida (2002) describes this as the "end of the organizational age" in which large scale organizational machines produced regimented troops of uniform followers. This does not mean that people with strong liberty aspirations are political nihilists who only seek to maximize their private goals. On the contrary, in liberty-oriented societies people tend to engage in expressive forms of civic activity that allow more individual autonomy and self-determination. These activities, which allow people to engage and disengage as they choose, have become considerably more widespread during recent decades (see Norris, 2002: chapter 10). As Chapter 4 demonstrated, the proportion of people taking part in petitions, demonstrations and civic boycotts rose markedly from 1974 to 2000 in all eight Western societies from which data are available (see also Dalton, 2001; Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch, 2003).<sup>viii</sup> The overall level of civic activity in modern democracies has not declined—it remained constant or increased (Norris, 2002: chapter 8). But it has shifted away from conformist forms of participation, toward elite-challenging forms of expressive activity. These activities have become such an integral part of people's usual repertory that they are no longer considered unconventional and no longer attract much coverage in the mass media.

Until now, social capital theorists have mainly measured activity in formal bureaucratic associations in order to assess levels of civic cooperation-- ignoring the relevance of elite-challenging activities, although these activities also reflect the operation of societal networks,



coordinated collective action and civic cooperation—the core of the definition of social capital from Bourdieu (1986) to Coleman (1990) to Putnam (1993). We would even argue that elite-challenging activities are a better indicator of the civic type of social capital that works to the benefit of democracy than are conventional civic activities. For elite-challenging activities reflect a liberty-oriented and critical public that is able to organize resistance and mobilize People Power. History has shown that this is the most effective antidote to authoritarian methods and despotic leaders.

Elite-challenging activities emerge from the networks of civil society. But these networks are relatively informal and volatile, and their numerical importance is not reflected in the statistics on formal membership in associations: bureaucratic organizations keep membership rolls; ad hoc organizations do not. In contrast to membership in bureaucratic organizations, elite-challenging political action works outside the mechanisms of institutionalized elite control and is largely organized by the citizenry itself. This is one of the reasons why authoritarian regimes attempt to suppress self-organized mass action. It is inherently democratic, subverting authoritarian controls. By contrast, authoritarian regimes do not necessarily suppress bureaucratically organized associations-- they find it relatively easy to control them.

The impact that various indicators of political culture have on a society's subsequent democratic performance, reflects how closely these indicators are linked with liberty aspirations, as Figure 11-1 above demonstrated. This finding emphasizes the emancipative nature of democracy: Democracy works best in a culture that emphasizes human choice.

### **Intrinsic and Instrumental Support for Democracy**

Most of the research on the linkages between mass attitudes and democracy has focused on measuring overt support for democratic institutions. This is understandable: the most obvious and direct way to measure support for democracy would be to ask people if they favor democracy, and whether they prefer it to other forms of government. But, as we have seen, certain other attitudes, which constitute the syndrome of self-expression values, are even *better* indicators of the extent to which a given society's political culture is conducive to democracy, than is overt support for democracy itself.

A decade has passed since the Third Wave of democratization brought an avalanche of new democracies into being, raising the question, "How solid is support for democracy in these countries?" In the intervening years, public support for democracy has faded in some countries, many of which are democratic in name only. Studies of Russian political culture (Fleron and Ahl, 1998; Gibson, 1996, 1997, 2001; Gibson and Duch, 1994; Miller et al., 1994; Rose, 2000) have pointed out that a solid majority of the Russian people support democratic institutions. With varying nuances, these studies concluded that the outlook for democracy was good.

Although this literature is perfectly correct in finding that most Russians have favorable attitudes toward democracy, when these findings are examined in broader cross-cultural perspective one finds that support for democracy is relatively weak in Russia—indeed, it is weaker than in almost any other country among the more than 70 societies covered by the Values Surveys. Moreover, by some important indicators, pro-democratic orientations among the Russian people became weaker, not stronger, during the 1990s. To some observers, it is unclear how long even the pretense of electoral democracy will survive in the Soviet successor states, apart from the Baltic Republics (Brzezinski, 2001).

The prospects for democracy in Islamic countries also have been questioned, with some writers arguing that the basic values of Islamic publics may be incompatible with liberal

democracy (Huntington, 1996). Contrary to this claim, we find surprisingly widespread support for democracy among the ten Islamic publics included in the 1999-2001 wave of the World Values Surveys. But how reliable are the standard indicators of support for democracy?

Several major empirical research programs monitor public support for democratic institutions, including the New Democracies Barometer, the New Russia Barometer, the LatinoBarometer, the AfroBarometer, and the Values Surveys. Some degree of consensus has developed concerning which items are most effective, so that certain questions, measuring overt support for democracy, are regularly utilized in these surveys. These questions seem well designed, and they demonstrate internal consistency: people who say they favor democracy on one indicator, tend to favor democracy on other indicators. But our faith in these measures rests entirely on their face validity: no one has demonstrated that a high level of mass support for these items actually is conducive to democratic institutions.

Today, overt support for democracy is widespread among publics throughout the world. In country after country, clear majorities of the population endorse democracy. In the last two waves of the Values Surveys an overwhelming majority of the population in virtually every society described “having a democratic political system” as either “good” or “very good.” In the median country, fully 92 percent of those interviewed gave a positive account of democracy. The Russian public ranked lowest, with 62 percent expressing a favorable opinion of democracy. The next lowest figure was found in Pakistan, where 68 percent favored democracy. Though Pakistan ranks relatively low, most of the Islamic countries surveyed rank relatively high: in Albania, Egypt, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Morocco and Turkey from 92 to 99 percent of the public endorses democratic institutions—a higher proportion than in the U.S. Islamic publics may be anti-Western in many respects but, contrary to widespread belief, the democratic ideal has powerful appeal in the Islamic world.

At this point in history, democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the planet. This has not always been true. In the 1930s and 1940s, fascist regimes won overwhelming mass approval in many countries; and for many decades, communist regimes had widespread support. But in the past decade, democracy has become virtually the only political model with global appeal. Although Francis Fukuyama may have exaggerated in calling this “The End of History,” we do seem to be living in a genuinely new era in which the main alternatives to democracy have been discredited.

Research on political culture was motivated by the assumption that pro-democratic attitudes are conducive to democratic institutions. If this is true, democracy should be most prevalent in countries where pro-democratic attitudes are widespread. But this is an empirical question, not something that can simply be assumed. And the evidence indicates that, although mass responses to these questions do tend to be correlated with democracy at the societal-level, many of them are weak predictors, as Table 11-1 (above) demonstrates.

Overwhelming majorities agree that “Having a democratic political system is a good way of governing this country,” but this item turns out to be a relatively modest predictor of societal-level democracy--showing correlations of only .38 and .42 with the formal and effective versions of actual democracy in Table 11-1. The Albanians and the Armenians are likelier to agree with this item than are the Swedes and the Swiss. The well-designed multi-item index, which measures system preferences for democracy versus autocracy, has stronger explanatory power than any of its components, as Table 11-1 also demonstrates. This index shows a .57 correlation with formal democracy and a .68 correlation with effective democracy. Countries that rank high on support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule tend to be effective democracies.

Thus, the standard items used to monitor mass support for democracy cannot be taken at face value—but a well-designed multi-item index does provide a good predictor of how democratic a given society actually is.

But several component attitudes of self-expression values (none of which refers explicitly to democracy) are even stronger predictors of effective democracy than this index of explicit support, as the bottom half of Table 11-1 demonstrates. The extent to which a society has an underlying culture of elite-challenging action and the extent to which its people give high priority to subjective well-being, freedom of speech and self-expression is an even more powerful predictor of effective democracy than whether people say they prefer democracy to autocracy. Liberty aspirations are the strongest single predictor of how democratic a society is. People emphasizing human liberty value democratic freedom intrinsically, and do not support democracy only in so far as it is linked with prosperity. Thus, liberty aspirations show a .80 correlation with a society's level of effective democracy—a far stronger linkage than any of the items that measure explicit support for democracy; indeed, it is a much more powerful predictor of system level democracy than the four-item index measuring people's preference for democracy over autocracy.

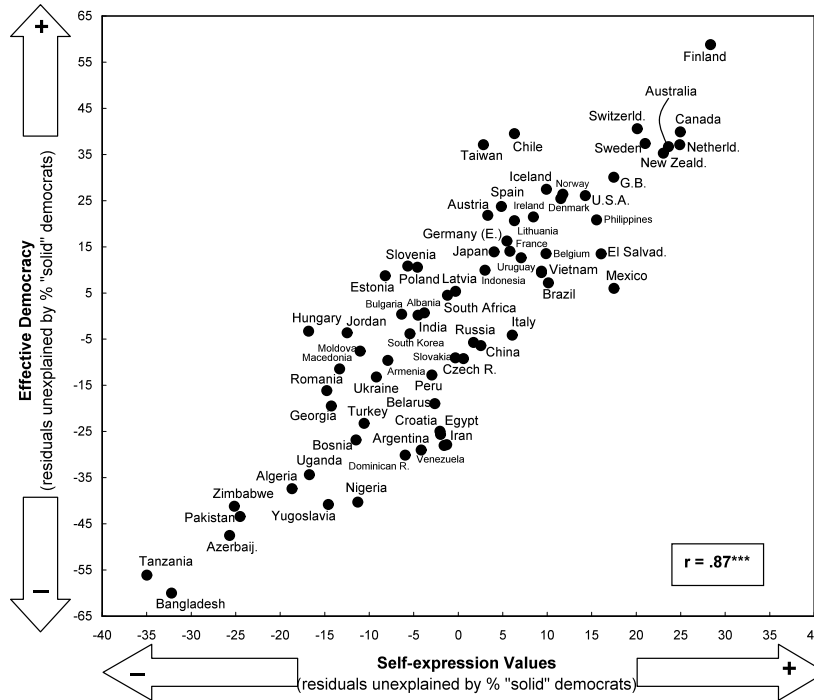
Perhaps the most surprising finding is the fact that mass preferences for democracy over autocracy have no independent impact on democracy, when we control for self-expression values (see Table 11-3). The items used to measure system preferences explicitly ask about support for democracy and for authoritarian alternatives. In terms of face content, they might seem to provide ideal measures of a democratic political culture—but empirically, they prove to be much weaker predictors of democracy than are self-expression values. This is an important and by no means obvious finding. To illustrate it, Figures 11-2a and 11-2b show the impact of system preferences for democracy versus autocracy and self-expression values on effective democracy, with mutual controls.

**(Figures 11-2a and 11-2b: about here)**

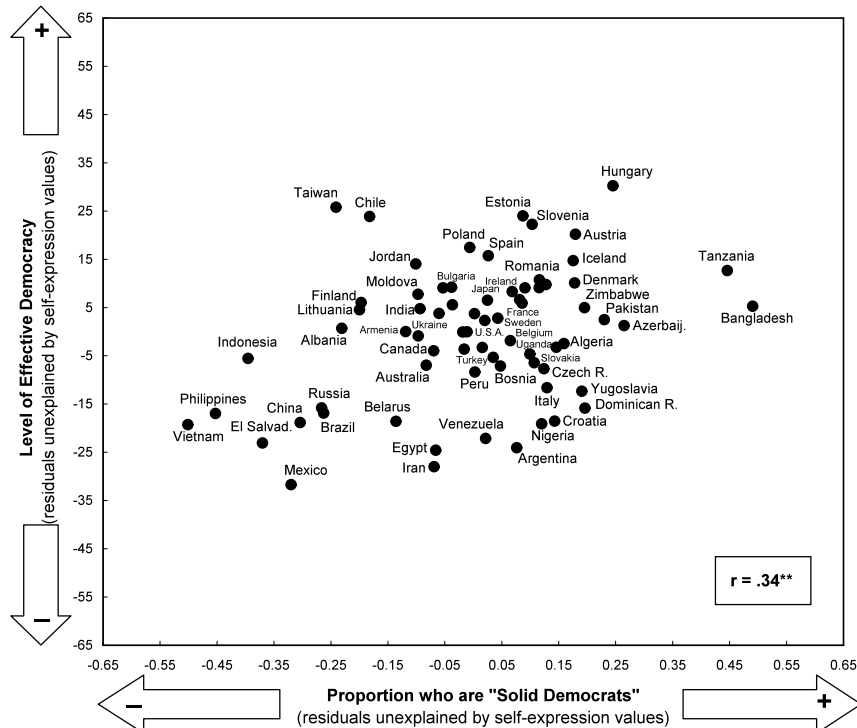
Based on evidence from all four waves of the Values Surveys, Figure 11-2a shows the impact of self-expression values on effective democracy, controlling for the percentage of people expressing strong preferences for democracy over autocracy (the “solid democrats”) in each society. As this figure indicates, societies with more widespread self-expression values than their percentage of solid democrats would suggest, also have higher levels of effective democracy than their percentage of solid democrats would suggest (see the locations of Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and Australia). Conversely, societies with less widespread self-expression values than the percentage of solid democrats would suggest, have lower levels of effective democracy than their percentage of solid democrats would suggest (see the locations of Nigeria, Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Venezuela). Overall, variation in the strength of self-expression values that is independent of the percentage of solid democrats, explains 76 per cent of the variation in effective democracy that is independent of the percentage of solid democrats. Self-expression values have a very strong impact on effective democracy, controlling for the percentage of solid democrats.

Figure 11-2b shows the impact of mass preferences for democracy versus autocracy (the percentage of “solid democrats”) on effective democracy, controlling for the strength of self-expression values. There is a weak relationship that only exists because of one single leverage case: Vietnam.<sup>ix</sup> Without Vietnam, there would be no relationship at all. Anyway, the percentage of solid democrats in such societies as Hungary, Nigeria or Croatia is much higher than the strength of self-expression values in these societies would suggest; whereas, countries like

**Figure 11-2a. The impact of self-expression values on Effective Democracy, controlling for each country's percentage of "solid democrats."**



**Figure 11-2b. The impact of the percentage of "solid democrats" on its level of Effective Democracy, controlling for its level of Self-expression values.**



Mexico, Russia or Taiwan have a lower percentage of solid democrats than the strength of self-expression values in these countries would suggest. Much of the variance in the percentage of solid democrats is independent of the strength of self-expression values. But this independent variation in the proportion of solid democrats accounts for only 12 per cent in the variation of effective democracy. Thus, decoupled from self-expression values, preferences for democracy over autocracy do not have a strong impact on effective democracy. These preferences are linked with effective democracy mostly in so far as they are linked with self-expression values.

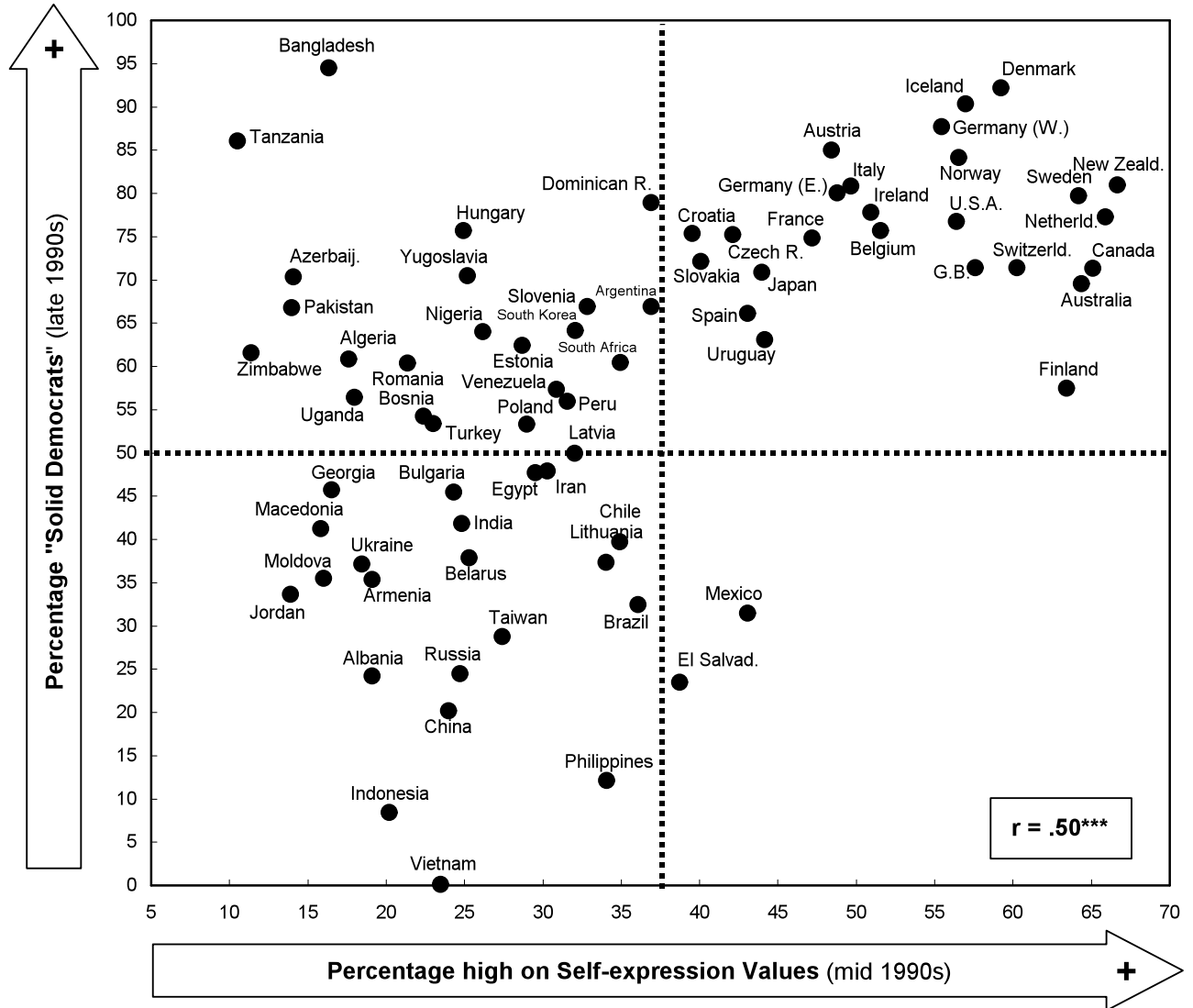
The relationship between self-expression values and seemingly solid support for democracy is interesting, as Figure 11-3 demonstrates. Self-expression values explain about 25 percent of the variance in the percentage of solid democrats. But this effect reflects a curvilinear relationship, indicating that widespread self-expression values are a sufficient but not necessary condition to create majorities of solid democrats. If more than 43 percent of the public emphasizes self-expression values (which is Mexico's level), a majority of its citizens will be "solid democrats." There are no exceptions: above this level of self-expression values, one invariably finds a majority of solid democrats. But the reverse does *not* hold: societies whose citizens place relatively low emphasis on human self-expression can show either high or low levels of overt support for democracy, ranging from almost 0 percent in Vietnam to 95 per cent in Bangladesh. Lip service to democracy can be based on a variety of motives, including the belief that being democratic means being rich and powerful. Accordingly, public support for democracy is not necessarily linked with a culture that emphasizes human choice.

**(Figure 11-3: about here)**

At the individual level, support for democracy tends to be linked with self-expression values because almost everyone who places strong emphasis on self-expression also supports democracy. But many who do not emphasize self-expression values, support democracy for other reasons such as the belief that democracy means being secure and prosperous. These other motives are instrumental; they do not reflect a high valuation of democracy per se, they reflect support for democracy in so far as it is thought to be linked with prosperity and order, and this type of support can quickly vanish if a society's experience under democracy is disappointing. Our findings suggest that overt mass support for democracy leads to effective democracy only in so far as it is linked with self-expression values.

The fact that various other attitudes can motivate people to express overt support for democracy has been demonstrated by Bratton and Mattes (2001). Using survey data from the AfroBarometers, Bratton and Mattes found that individual-level support for democracy is strongly linked with performance evaluations, especially those concerning economics and law and order: people who believe that democracies are more successful than other regimes in managing economic development and reducing social tensions, tend to prefer democracies to other types of political systems. We replicated this analysis with data from the Values Surveys, with similar results (see Table 11-4): what people believe about the policy performance of democracies<sup>x</sup> (which taps instrumental support) is a stronger predictor of their system preference for democracy, than is their emphasis on self-expression values (which tap intrinsic support). This pattern is universal since it holds true for all five types of societies: in all types of societies, from postindustrial societies to ex-communist societies to low-income societies, instrumental support motives explain more of people's system preferences for democracy than do intrinsic support motives. To be sure, people with strong self-expression values strongly support democracy, but people who place little emphasis on self-expression values also express support

Figure 11-3. The impact of Self-expression values on overt support for democracy.



**Table 11-4. Explaining Individual-Level Support for Democracy by Instrumental and Intrinsic Motives**

Predictors	Dependent Variable: <b>Democracy-Autocracy Preference</b>											
	Postindustrial Democracies			Developing Societies			Western Ex-communist Societies			Eastern Ex-communist Societies		
	Intrinsic	Instrumental	Combined	Intrinsic	Instrumental	Combined	Intrinsic	Instrumental	Combined	Intrinsic	Instrumental	Combined
Emphasis on self-expression values	.26	—	.20	.13	—	.12	.22	—	.15	.17	—	.11
Performance expected of democracy	—	.39	.38	—	.33	.34	—	.41	.38	—	.48	.44
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.07	.15	.21	.02	.11	.14	.05	.17	.19	.03	.23	.25
N	13,119	27,950	12,307	18,831	21,082	17,571	4,835	11,333	4,586	16,816	21,654	15,500

Entries are standardized beta-coefficients. All coefficients significant at the .001-level.

Data taken from Values Surveys III-IV (1995-2001).

for democracy, if they believe that democracies are good at running the economy and maintaining order.

**(Table 11-4: about here)**

Support for democracy does not necessarily reflect intrinsic support—even when one’s measure is a well-designed multi-item index of net preferences for democracy over autocracy. Overt support for democracy reflects intrinsic support only in so far as it is linked with self-expression values—and this linkage captures only a minor part of the variance in support for democracy. In many countries, support for democracy is heavily inflated by instrumental motives. Precisely because the questions used to measure self-expression values make no explicit reference to democracy, they are not inflated by the tendency to give lip service to democracy, which has become a socially desirable term. Overt support for democracy itself is not the most important ingredient in a pro-democratic civic culture. More important still are the motives underlying this support— indicating whether support is merely instrumental, or reflects the intrinsic commitment to democracy that is tapped by self-expression values.

The contemporary world is no longer divided between those who favor, and those who oppose democracy; the vast majority favor democracy—and the main distinction now is whether people support democracy for instrumental or intrinsic reasons. In postindustrial democracies, intrinsic supporters constitute the great majority of those who support democracy. In Eastern ex-communist countries and low-income societies, on the other hand, although high proportions of the public express overt support for democracy, intrinsic supporters constitute only a small share of this group.<sup>xi</sup> These are precisely the societies where we find the lowest actual levels of democracy. Rising self-expression values provide intrinsic support for democracy—the kind of support that is most crucial for democracy to emerge and survive.

### **Summary**

Our findings point to three conclusions:

- (1) We find strong evidence that a broad set of civic values focusing on freedom and self-expression—are more important to democracy than is overt support for democratic institutions. This is true because democracy is not a merely institutional phenomenon-- it also involves citizens. As de Tocqueville, Almond and Verba, Eckstein, Putnam and others have argued, making democracy work requires civic values among the public.
- (2) Among the civic values, trust in other people is important for democracy—but mainly through its linkage with other components of self-expression values such as liberty aspirations, which have a more direct relationship to democracy. Postmaterialist liberty aspirations reflect an intrinsic preference for democratic procedures and rules and an intrinsic, not an instrumental, preference for democracy.
- (3) Mass participation in the classic bureaucratically organized associations, and public confidence in hierarchically organized institutions, often reflects an emphasis on social conformism rather than on autonomy. Since human autonomy is at the heart of democracy’s focus on choice, attitudes that emphasize social conformism are not positively linked with democracy at the system level.

Democracy is not just a set of rules that depend solely on institutional engineering. It is an inherently normative concept that emphasizes free choice, autonomy, and emancipation (see Macpherson, 1977; Donnelly, 1993). To put these norms into practice, requires more than lip service to the now-fashionable term, democracy. It requires a commitment to human choice and autonomy, which is tapped by self-expression values. These values give priority to individual



liberty over collective discipline, human diversity over group conformity, and civic autonomy over state authority. Unless support for democracy is coupled with these emancipative values, it is virtually irrelevant to effective democracy at the system level. Effective democracy is not simply a matter of institutional arrangements; it reflects deep-rooted normative commitments. These commitments take on new prominence with the shift from survival values to self-expression values, reshaping the emphasis of social forces from social conformism to civic emancipation, in keeping with the logic of human development. Our indicator of self-expression values was developed only in recent years and undoubtedly can be improved. But it seems to be the most powerful indicator of a democratic civic culture that is currently available.

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- i This statement applies solely to *generalized* interpersonal trust, not to *intimate* interpersonal trust. The former is less intensive but has a broader social radius, which is important in sustaining the diversity of human interactions that keep complex modern societies working. Intimate interpersonal trust, by contrast, is limited to closely-knit groups that can exist in isolation from each other with no bridging ties. Intimate interpersonal trust does not produce the kind of social capital that is needed for the diverse interactions of complex societies.
- ii As in the analyses of Chapter 8, all attitudinal data are taken from the earliest available survey of the Values Surveys II (1989-1990) and III (1995-97). We do this in order to keep attitudinal data temporally prior to our dependent variables, formal and effective democracy measured in 2000-2002.
- iii For details on measurement, see Internet appendix, #52-53 under Variables.
- iv We measured people's "approval of democracy," their "democracy-autocracy preference" and deduced from this whether people are "solid supporters" of democracy. For measuring approval of democracy, see #55 under Variables; for the democracy-autocracy preferences, see #56; for solid support of democracy, see #57.
- v For measurement details, see Internet appendix, #61 and #62 under Variables.
- vi For measuring norm obedience or disapproval of dishonest behavior, see Internet appendix, #63 under Variables.
- vii Following Norris (2002: chapter 8) in combining civic trust with civic activism in associations in order to create an overall index of social capital, does not improve the explanation of a society's democratic performance. All of the impact of the overall social capital index comes from civic trust and none from activism.
- viii The data from the Roper Institute that Putnam (2000) presents as evidence that people are becoming less likely to sign petitions in the U.S., contradicts the results from the World Values Surveys--which show a clear increase in rates of participation in petitions in the U.S., and in virtually all other Western democracies. Since a similar pattern of growth is found in all Western democracies for which data are available, this seems to be the prevailing trend.
- ix The very low percentage of "solid democrats" in the case of Vietnam reflects a very high percentage of respondents expressing support for the army rule. In a country in which the army is a symbol of national liberation these figures require a different interpretation. However, we display data as they are, not eliminating cases that do not fit into the pattern.
- x We measure performance evaluations of democracy referring to such statements as "democracies have too much squabbling" or "democracies are bad in maintaining order." For details, see Internet appendix, #65 under Variables.
- xi To calculate the percentages shown in Figure 11-4, we dichotomized the "solid supporters" of democracy (see Internet appendix, #57). Those placing relative strong emphasis on self-expression values (i.e., those scoring above zero on the factor scale) were classified as "intrinsic supporters;" those with weaker emphasis on self-expression values fell into the other group (see Internet appendix, #58).