

Political culture and social capital

Definitions

- Democracy: see Dahl / Schumpeter
- Political trust: a belief that the political system will function even when you're not watching
- Political legitimacy: that which is required for us to accept what the political system imposes on us
- Civic engagement: voluntary activity outside coercion of the state, not necessarily political

Key literature

- [Almond and Verba \(1963\)](#): cross-national studies which show that democracy happens because citizens have democratic attitudes
- [Putnam \(2000\)](#): social capital measured by informal associations, formal associations, and generalised trust
war and technology → individualisation of leisure (more heterogeneity), urbanisation → decline of social capital → problems for democratic functioning
- [Paxton \(2002\)](#): argues the relationship between institutions and social capital is reciprocal
- [Dalton and Welzel \(2014\)](#): assertive vs allegiant distinction
postmaterialist, focus on input rather than output

Methodological points

- Endogeneity problems: not being able to separate the effect of the independent variable from other variables
- Omitted variable bias: e.g. economic modernisation
- Simultaneity (or reverse causality): feedback loop e.g. behaviour and beliefs may be shaped by the form of government

1.1 What is political culture?

- Our attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system
- Political culture is made up of cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations towards the political system ([Almond and Verba 1963](#))
 - Cognitive: what do you think?
 - Affective: what do you feel?
 - Evaluative: how do you judge?
- Political: not the same as ideology, but more diffuse and less goal directed
- Culture: relatively stable over time and reproduced by political socialization

1.2 Why is political culture important?

- The type of political culture is important because having the type of political culture congruent with the regime type stabilizes that country
- The sources and effects of political culture are also important because it may be endogenous to democracy or caused by democracy?

1.3 What are [Almond and Verba's \(1963\)](#) ideal types of political culture?

- **Parochial**: you are unaware (politics seems distant) and apolitical (you just care about family etc) e.g. Mexico, Italy
 - No cognitive orientations towards the political system
- **Subject**: you are aware of politics but apolitical (you are just receiving orders, and don't see an active role in government for yourself) e.g. Germany, communist states
 - Cognitive orientations towards the output aspects of the system
- **Participant**: you are aware and political – strongly engaged in the process and think it right that you participate e.g. USA: lots of people are involved in local government, campaigns etc
 - Cognitive orientations toward both the input and output aspects of the system
- These cultures are congruent with traditional, authoritarian, and democratic systems respectively
 - Congruence is indicated by positive affective and evaluative orientations in the appropriate areas
- The civic culture is an allegiant participant political culture (a mix of deference and participation)
- Why is a full participant culture not ideal?
 - Efficiency: things are slower and lack of trust
 - Polarization if everybody is heavily engaged

1.4 Where does political culture come from?

- Economic argument (modernization, post-materialist) – people started demanding things like self-expression and a say in government (after material needs were satisfied) ([Dalton and Welzel 2014](#))
 - **Example** South Korea
 - Education, urbanization, exposure to mass media (Almond and Verba)
- Religious argument: different traditions → pro or anti democratic attitudes
 - Organizational skills
 - Bonding vs bridging social capital ([Putnam 2000](#)): bonding when there are lots of religious groups → society breaks down into small groups

- Conservative values / laws of God at odds with making laws by popular vote
- Protestantism (encouraging mass literacy) vs Catholicism
- Institutional argument: institutions are causally prior to institutions
 - Institutional learning theory: if the system works then people trust it ([Muller and Seligson 1994](#))
 - Bidirectional causality ([Paxton 2002](#))
 - See Davis and Robinson (2006)

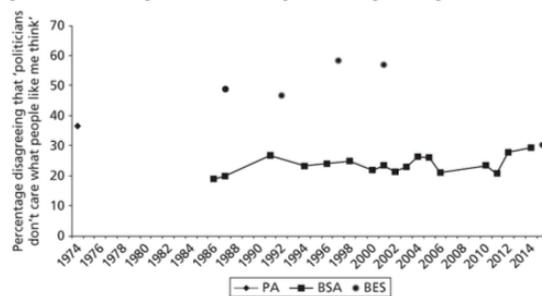
1.5 Why might political culture change over time?

- Influence from foreign countries
- Institutional learning theory: see above
- Economic modernisation model: post-materialist tendencies

1.6 What are the trends in political culture?

- There has been declining trust in government and people are less satisfied with the way democracy works in their country in developed countries in recent decades (Norris 1999); but people still think that democracy is the best form of government
- There have been trendless fluctuations (no systematic trend) in satisfaction with democracy ([Norris 2011](#))

Figure 8.12. The feeling of disconnect from politics is long-standing



Source: 1974 Political Action Survey (PA), British Social Attitudes Surveys (BSA), British Election Surveys (BES)

- (Heath 2018)
- In Europe, there is some cross-national variation but generally support for democracy is high, trust in political institutions is middling and support for strongman authoritarianism is low. Not many trends overall and following slides show little cohort or period trends. No sign of Europeans tiring of democracy ([Wuttke et al 2020](#))
- Young Europeans are more, not less, satisfied with the way democracy works in their country ([Zilinsky 2019](#))

1.7 Does civic culture underpin civic participation? ([John et al 2011](#))

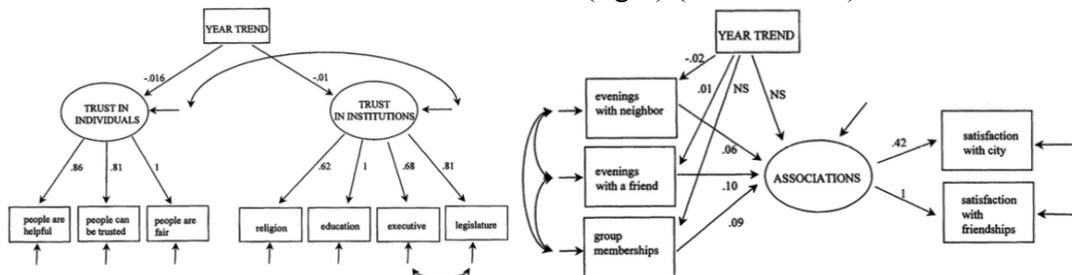
- People who lobby their politicians (individually or collectively) are less trusting of institutions and less likely to think those in their neighbourhood would act to solve a social problem (low neighbourhood social norms)
- Fondness for and identification with your neighbourhood increases participation, i.e. you are more likely to do something about a local problem if you care about your neighbourhood and think your neighbours and local government are unlikely to do anything about it
- This is somewhat at odds with civic culture theory but makes sense

2.1 What is social capital? (Putnam 2000)

- The features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives
 - [Essentially, the resources you get from having a rich social network (participation in common endeavours)]
- It is an important factor influencing the quality of democracy, economic performance, health, etc
- Bonding vs bridging: bonding is within groups, bridging is between groups
- Measurements of social capital
 - Public engagement (e.g. voting, political action)
 - Inter-personal association (e.g. socializing, volunteering)
 - Inter-personal trust
- Note: there is an important debate as to whether trust is supposed to flow from associational membership. The reverse causal direction seems more plausible

2.2 What are the trends in social capital in the US?

- Social capital has been declining in the US mainly due to the demise of the peculiarly civic war-time generation, but also TV and some other factors (Putnam 2000)
 - Technological advancement → leisure time more individualized, a lesser need to find other people for entertainment
 - Spread of suburban sprawl: people living further apart, rise of the car, deindustrialization → harder to organize things
- Consider time spent in civic association activity (e.g. community, political, church or trade union meetings) (Andersen et al 2006)
 - Stable or increasing in Canada, NL and UK
 - Decreasing among US women but not US men, even after controlling for social characteristics and time in other activities
 - Maybe due to decline in state support
 - These findings cast doubt on the generational replacement argument for social capital decline in the US
- There has been declining trust in individuals and institutions in the US (left); and no trend in levels of social interaction in the US (right) (Paxton 1999)

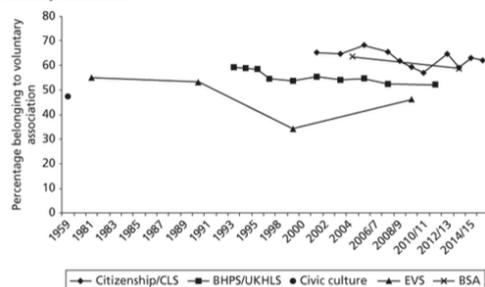


- Consider age, period and cohort effects in the US (Schwadel and Stout 2012)
 - “Informal association with neighbors declined across periods while informal association with friends outside of the neighborhood increased across birth cohorts
 - Formal association was comparatively stable with the exception of relatively high levels of formal association among the early 1920s and early 1930s birth cohorts
 - Trust declined considerably across both periods and cohorts, though the oldest cohorts are less trusting than those born in the 1920s through the 1940s”

- These findings are contrary to Putnam's suggestion of systematic decline across cohorts

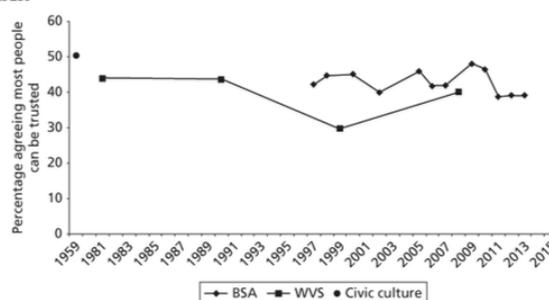
2.3 What are the trends in social capital in the UK?

Figure 8.10. There is some evidence of a slight long-term decline in membership of voluntary associations



Source: Citizenship Survey and Community Life Survey (CLS) (England), British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), 1959 Civic Culture Study, European Values Surveys (EVS), British Social Attitudes Surveys (BSA)

Figure 8.11. There is perhaps some evidence of a slight long-term decline in social trust



Source: British Social Attitudes Surveys (BSA), World Values Survey (WVS), 1959 Civic Culture Survey

- (Heath 2018)
- While there has been no decline in associational membership, there has been a decline in trust since the 1950s ([Hall 1999](#))

Table 1 Social trust, 1998-2017

	1998	2004	2007	2008	2014	2017
Level of trust	%	%	%	%	%	%
People can be trusted	47	46	45	45	47	54
Cannot be too careful dealing with people	49	51	51	51	48	42
<i>Unweighted base</i>	807	853	906	1986	1580	1595

- Recent increase in BSA measure of interpersonal trust ([Li et al 2018](#))

2.4 Why might social capital be good for democracy? ([Putnam 2000](#))

- Increases trust in individuals towards each other
- Increases mutual tolerance and understanding
- Enhances capacity / provides avenues for collective action
- Reduces costs of home security
- Enhances political skills of the citizenry

2.5 Why might social capital not be good for democracy?

- Membership of voluntary organisations is a poor foundation for good citizenship, because of these reasons:
 - People join homogeneous groups [joining echo chambers does not lead to increased tolerance and understanding]
 - Civic participation does not lead to political participation
 - Not all groups promote democratic values [or skills relevant to politics; some groups may be irrelevant to democracy, others may be undemocratic]
 - Groups don't teach what good citizens need to know: democracy is messy, inefficient and conflict-ridden ([Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005](#))
 - [So quality matters, not just quantity]
- Not all groups are the same (in terms of skills they gain, relevance to politics)

- Self-selection effects: people who have more time and resources are more likely to participate; they are also the people who are more likely to be involved in politics → the elites may just dominate politics [but see [Minkoff \(2016\)](#)]

3.1 What is the relationship between political culture and social capital?

- Political culture is about attitudes and orientations towards the political system
- Social capital is about social interaction and trust
- Social capital may be the heart of a healthy political culture
 - More social capital → easier to be a participant

3.2 What are the effects of political culture and social capital?

- **General hypothesis** Political culture / social capital influences political and social outcomes, especially the quality of democracy, governance, or economic performance (but no consensus on how exactly)
- **General problem** Which is the correct causal direction?

3.3 What is [Almond and Verba's \(1963\)](#) view?

- They conduct cross-national survey research on five countries
 - Italy: Alienated
 - Mexico: Alienated and Aspiration
 - Germany: Political detachment and subject competence
 - US: Participant Civic Culture
 - Britain: Deferential Civic Culture
- They stop short of claiming that political culture causes democracy, but claim that “A stable and effective democratic government ... depends upon the orientations that people have to the political process—upon the political culture.”
- They praise the deferential political culture of Britain as being superior to that of Germany and Italy

3.4 What are the problems with Almond and Verba's (1963) views? Why might the civic culture not be the 'best' culture for democracy?

- Conceptual problems
 - Perhaps countries have different conceptions / experiences of democracy
 - Historical factors (e.g. dictatorship, losing WWII) are neglected
 - Society isn't static; cultures may change over time
- Causal problems
 - Reverse causality: institutional learning theory ([Muller and Seligson 1994](#))
 - Reverse causality: maybe democracy encourages participation
 - Confounding variables: e.g. economic development may cause changes in both political culture and democracy
- Theoretical problems
 - Allegiant citizens (allegiant to the regime and view the political system positively) vs assertive citizens (developing self-expressive values and hence more likely to challenge the political system → support for principles but not practice of democracy): the former are too deferential ([Dalton & Welzel 2014](#))
 - We need to be less worried about participation, the problem is too much apathy and mistrust
 - Mistrust vs distrust: mistrust (scepticism) is good because you monitor

the government; distrust (cynicism) is bad because you always assume the government is bad

- Too much trust → possible lack of participation and lack of accountability → incentivises bad or selfish performance from political elites

3.5 What are the other views?

- There is insufficient evidence for an association ([Muller and Seligson 1994](#))
 - Support for gradual reform (as opposed to the status-quo or revolution) is correlated with the level of democracy, i.e. political culture is relevant
 - The democratic stability has an impact on interpersonal trust
 - Otherwise no evidence for association between culture and democracy in either direction
- There is evidence that social capital influences the quality of democracy and democracy influences social capital ([Paxton 2002](#)) → either virtuous or vicious cycle
- Democratic aspirations increase democratisation ([Norris 2011](#))
 1. Trendless fluctuations in system support (not decline)
 2. Satisfaction with democratic performance is generally lower than democratic aspirations (the **democratic deficit**)
 3. Gap is due to:
 - a. growing public expectations (from education)
 - b. negative media coverage
 - c. falling government performance
 4. But it is ameliorated by income and social trust
 5. The democratic deficit reduces political participation (contrary to [John et al. \(2011\)](#)) & voluntary law compliance (i.e. more alienation than radicalisation)
 6. Democratic aspirations (in 1995) increase democratisation (measured by the average level of democracy between 1995-2008)
 - **Caveat** No control for the prior level of democratisation → the correlations could be due to endogeneity problems
- Assertive not allegiant culture improves democracy ([Dalton and Welzel 2014](#))
 - DV: accountable governance and effective governance
 - No economic controls in Lagged DV model
- Support for democracy has a positive effect on level of democracy ([Claassen 2019](#))
 - DV: V-Dem scores
 - Significant effect within democracies, smaller effect within autocracies

4.1 What are the alternative explanations for the spread of democracy?

- Widespread religious participation can influence democratic norms
 - Sense of hierarchy / acceptance
 - Emphasis on traditional values (and thus resistance to change)
 - Transferable skills in terms of engaging with community
 - Elicits interpersonal trust
 - See Woodberry (2004)
- Economic equality matters (inequality → incentive not to democratise)
- Institutions matter (see e.g. Linz)
- Other explanations: modernization, warfare, the spread of ideas

Political culture readings

[*Almond and Verba \(1963\) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 1 An Approach to Political Culture](#)

[*Almond and Verba \(1963\) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 13 Group Differences in Political Orientation](#)

[Almond and Verba \(1963\) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 15 The Civic Culture and Democratic Stability](#)

[Almond and Verba \(eds\) \(1989\) Civic Culture Revisited Ch 1-3, 10](#)

[Citrin and Stoker \(2018\) Political Trust in a Cynical Age](#)

[Collier \(2017\) Culture, Politics, and Economic Developments](#)

[*Dalton and Welzel \(2014\) The Civic Culture Transformed Ch 1](#)

[Heath et al \(2018\) Social Progress in Britain Ch 8 The Challenge of Social Corrosion](#)

[John, Fieldhouse and Liu \(2011\) How Civic is the Civic Culture? Explaining Community Participation Using the 2005 English Citizenship Survey](#)

[Wuttke, Gavras and Schoen \(2020\) Have Europeans Grown Tired of Democracy? New Evidence from Eighteen Consolidated Democracies, 1981–2018](#)

[Zilinsky \(2019\) Democratic deconsolidation revisited: Young Europeans are not dissatisfied with democracy](#)

*Almond and Verba (1963) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 1 An Approach to Political Culture

Link: <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2102/10.1515/9781400874569>

Summary

- Almond and Verba set the groundwork for discussions on political culture. Most prominently, they outline three main kinds of political culture

Theoretical argument

- The world is headed towards a political culture of participation
 - The democratic state offers citizens the opportunity to make political decisions; the totalitarian state offers the role of “participant subject”
- A democratic participatory political system requires a political culture consistent with it but this is difficult because the image of democracy conveyed to elites of newly democratic nations heavily stress ideology and legal norms, but what needs to be learned in a democracy is a matter of attitude and feelings which is harder
- The Civic Culture: “a pluralistic culture based on communication and persuasion, a culture of consensus and diversity, a culture that permitted change but moderated it”
 - “The civic culture is a participant political culture in which the political culture and political structure are congruent”
- Political culture: “the specifically political orientations—attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system”
 - Modes of political orientation (different types of attitudes)
 - Cognitive: knowledge of and beliefs about the political system
 - Affective: feelings about the political system
 - Evaluative: judgments and opinions
 - Objects of political orientation (different classes of political objects)
 - The “general” political system (includes feelings as patriotism or alienation, such cognitions and evaluations of the nation as “strong” or “weak,” and of the polity as “democratic / constitutional / socialistic”
 - Input objects: the flow of demands from the society into the polity and the conversion of these demands into authoritative policies
 - Output objects: the process by which authoritative policies are applied or enforced
 - Self as participant: the content and quality of norms of personal political obligation / sense of personal competence regarding the system

Types of Political Culture

	<i>System as General Object</i>	<i>Input Objects</i>	<i>Output Objects</i>	<i>Self as Active Participant</i>
Parochial	0	0	0	0
Subject	1	0	1	0
Participant	1	1	1	1

- **Parochial political culture** e.g. African tribal societies and autonomous local communities (Almond and Coleman 1960)
 - No specialised political role but combined w/ other economic & religious roles

- No expectations of change initiated by the apolitical system
- No internalisation of norms to regulate relations to this political regime
- “The remote tribesmen in Nigeria or Ghana may be aware in a dim sort of way of the existence of a central political regime. But his feelings toward it are uncertain or negative, and he has not internalised any norms to regulate his relations to it.” [individuals are essentially apolitical]
- **Subject political culture** e.g. French royalists that are aware of democratic institutions but do not accord legitimacy to them
 - Passive awareness of the system; has affective and evaluative orientations toward the system and its policies
 - Orientations likely to be affective and normative rather than cognitive [individuals only involved as recipient of orders]
- **Participant political culture** (most compatible with democratic political structures)
 - “Members of the society tend to be explicitly oriented to the system as a whole and to both the political and administrative structures and processes”; they are activists
 - Individuals hold orientations towards all four classes
- A congruent political structure would be one appropriate for the culture, where political cognition is accurate and where affect and evaluation is favourable
- The civic culture is a mixed political culture
 - In the first place, the civic culture is an allegiant participant culture
 - More important, in the civic culture participant political orientations combine with and do not replace subject and parochial political orientations
 - In a sense, the subject and parochial orientations "manage" or keep in place the participant political orientations
 - It is a balanced political culture in which political activity, involvement, and rationality exist but are balanced by passivity, traditionality, and commitment to parochial values

Evaluation

- **Strengths** Large sample size: cross-national survey across five countries: the US, Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico; approximately 1,000 (mostly)-structured interviews were conducted in each country between 1959 and 1960
- **Weakness** Despite Almond and Verba’s attempt to demonstrate that the “connecting link between micro and macropolitics is political culture” (p.32), there is almost no role for micropolitics – for individual agency – in their account (Pavone 2014)

*Almond and Verba (1963) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 13 Group Differences in Political Orientation

Link: <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2102/10.1515/9781400874569>

Summary

- Almond and Verba seek to isolate a number of group characteristics that they believed might be correlated with differences in political orientation. They are education, sex, social class and religion. They find that education has the strongest relationship with political attitudes

Findings

- Educational groups differ from one another substantially, and in a similar way, in each nation (cross-national uniformity); The more educated person is more likely to:
 - Be aware of the impact of government on the individual
 - Report that he follows politics and pays attention to election campaigns, have more political information and is willing to engage in political discussion and with a wider range of people
 - Consider himself capable of influencing the government (reflected by responses to questions on what one could do about an unjust law and in respondents' scores on the subjective competence scale)
 - Be a member—and an active member—of some organisation e.g. civic organisations, interest groups, church groups, social groups etc
 - Express confidence in his social environment: to believe that other people are trustworthy and helpful
- “The educated individual is, in a sense, available for political participation. Education, however, does not determine the content of that participation.”
- Higher education tends to reduce national differences in political participation, suggesting that the nature of political culture is greatly determined by the dist. of edu.
- Men showed higher frequencies and higher intensities than women in practically all the indices of political orientation and activity they employed
- In the US and the UK, “where women report high rates of social interaction in their communities, and where they report almost as frequently as men that they feel free to discuss politics, the family becomes part of the system of political communications”

Evaluation

- **Weakness** Faced some data limitations
 1. Comparisons of demographic subgrouping would have required a larger sample size; with n = 1000 approximately, they quickly ran out of cases as controls were introduced;
 2. The substance of their interviews focused on the structure of political systems rather than policy orientations or social attitudes and lifestyle; but subcultural differences are ideological as well as structural

Almond and Verba (1963) The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations Ch 15 The Civic Culture and Democratic Stability

Summary

1. The civic culture is a mixed political culture: individuals are active in politics but also passive; this is key in maintaining a balance of governmental power & responsiveness
2. The gap between actual political behaviour of individuals and the perception of their ability to act and their obligation to act is essential in maintaining the mixed political culture and for keeping elites in check
3. Types of political involvement must be balanced
4. Social trust is an important component of the civic culture
5. There must be a balance between consensus and cleavage

1. The civic culture is a mixed political culture

- In the civic culture, many individuals are active in politics, but there are also many who take the more passive role of subject. The active citizen maintains his traditional, nonpolitical ties, as well as his more passive political role as a subject
- The subject and parochial orientations modify the intensity of political participation and also penetrate and modify the participant orientations (social attitudes and interpersonal attitudes affect political attitudes)
- **Why the civic culture is good for democracy** A government must have power and leadership and make decisions; on the other hand it must be responsible to its citizens
→ balance between governmental power and governmental responsiveness is needed
→ this is achieved by the civic culture, where the citizen is active yet passive, involved yet not too involved, influential yet deferential (p.476)

2. The gap between individuals' behaviour and their perceptions

- There is a gap between the actual political behaviour of individuals and the perception of their ability to act and their obligation to act. Everyone thinks they have more influence than they actually do and think they should participate more than they actually do
 - The lack of actual participation allows governments elites to act
 - The fact that citizens see themselves as influential and obligated to take an active role creates a potential of citizen influence and activity (p.481)
- Living in a civic culture allows the ordinary person to be more likely to maintain a steady and high rate of exposure to political communications, to be a member of an organisation, and to engage in informal political discussion. These activities do not indicate active participation in the decision-making process of a society, but make participation more possible by preparing the individual and also by creating a better political environment for such participation (p.482)
- That politics has relatively little importance for citizens is an important part of the mechanism by which the set of inconsistent political orientations keeps political elites in check, without checking them so tightly as to make them ineffective (p.483)
 - The balance between activity and passivity can be maintained only if the issues of politics are relatively mild. If politics becomes intense and remains intense, the inconsistency between attitude and behavior will become unstable
- For the mechanism to work, the political elite must also share in the same belief that ordinary citizens ought to participate in politics and that they are influential

3. Types of political involvement must be balanced

- There must be a balance between instrumental and affective orientations to politics. Politics must not be so instrumental and pragmatic that participants lose all emotional involvement. Also, the level of affective orientation to politics ought not to become too intense
 - If too pragmatic: loyalty to a political system will be too unstable as it relies only on outcomes
 - If too pragmatic: this may lead to politics of opportunism leading to cynicism
 - If too affective: this endangers the balance of activity and passivity, as it relies on low salience of politics, leading to mass movements that can lead to democratic instability; or, the political elite cannot be kept in check
 - In the United States and Britain the more the respondent considers himself capable of participating in politics, the more likely he is to receive affective satisfaction from the political system and to evaluate positively the instrumental performance of that system → the political participant receives both instrumental and emotional gratification from their participation (p.489)

4. Social trust is an important component of the civic culture

- Social trust and cooperation facilitates political cooperation among citizens, without which democratic politics is impossible. Social trust between citizens and the political elite makes citizens willing to turn power over to the elite. Social trust also acts as a buffer between the individual and the political system, and thereby reduces the “availability” (in Kornhauser’s use of the word) of the ordinary citizen for involvement in unstabilizing mass movements (p.490)

5. There must be a balance between consensus and cleavage

- If there are no cleavages, politics is not important, the elites’ decisions are not important. If there are too many cleavages, issues would be so fully reinforced by social indications that it would threaten democracy; there will be no peaceful resolution of political differences which is associated with democracy
 - Cleavage = partisan affiliations closely related with primary group affiliations
- These cleavages are moderated by social norms that place social relations over politics. The balance relies on the contradiction between the norm that primary groups should not be partisan and the reality that primary groups are in fact homogenous in the partisan sense. This balance must exist among both citizens and the political elite

Conclusion

- A balance of political roles is necessary to maintain democratic stability. An excessive participant culture maintains too much pressure on elites to allow them to perform effectively. An excessive subject or parochial culture does not exert enough pressure to maintain responsiveness
- A stable and effective democratic government [...] depends upon the orientations that people have to the political process – upon the political culture

Evaluation

- Its assumptions of equilibrium and balance are never explicitly justified
- Civic culture is only incompletely embodied in the five societies discussed
- The generalisations drawn are time and culture bound

Ch 1 (Almond)

- *The Civic Culture* argued that this rationality-activist model of democratic citizenship was *one* component of the civic culture, but not the sole one... Only when combined in some sense with its opposites of passivity, trust, and deference to authority and competence was a viable, stable democracy possible
- Education and media exposure turned out to be powerfully related to civic competence and participation, but the political propensities associated with education were primarily cognitive in character
- The principal criticism of the political culture literature is that it imputes a causal direction... implying that the culture produces the structure
- It is quite clear that political culture is treated [in *The Civic Culture*] as both an independent and a dependent variable, as causing structure as being caused by it

Ch 2 (Lijphart)

- The civic culture is generally treated as the independent variable by Almond and Verba, and democratic stability as the dependent variable... this does not necessarily imply that the independent variable is the cause and the dependent variable the effect
- Almond and Verba view political culture as mutually interdependent and reinforcing
- Whether or not the balance between power and responsiveness can safely shift to the advantage of the latter component without endangering the overall stability of the system is an empirical question... The fact that the two countries where people have long enjoyed various forms of direct democracy such as the referendum and the initiative—Switzerland and the United States—are also rather conspicuously among the politically more conservative and socially and economically less equal Western democracies should serve as a warning to unrestrained advocates of participatory democracy

Ch 3 (Pateman)

- Almond and Verba imply the political culture and political structure of the liberal democracies have developed together, taking the US and UK as their model of “stable” democracies, and it is hard to see how this stability could have been maintained if political structure and political culture did not “fit” each other; it is the lack of such nice congruence that poses problems for stability in, say, Italy or Mexico
- No explanation is offered for the striking relationship that emerges between socioeconomic status and feelings of political competence
- The question of how the social pattern of the civic culture interacts with the political structure is never answered
- *The Civic Culture* assumes that all citizens can be treated equally as “carriers” of the civic political culture
- The balance of the civic culture is between the rationality of the working-class (and female) tendency not to be politically active, and the male and middle-class rational participation. For the latter, political activity may be regarded as a benefit, not a cost
- To change the relevant balance across class and sex would therefore require some radical changes in the institutional structure of liberal democracy
- If, as Almond and Verba argue, pluralism is an important foundation of liberal democracy, *democratic pluralism*, or the democratization of everyday life, is equally

important for the development of a democratic political culture, and as a basis for participatory democracy

- The ancient and radical idea was that in a democracy *all citizens* were experts about their own political life... now it is held to be a system where citizens alienate their right to decide about their own political lives to nonpolitical experts

Ch 10 (Verba)

- *The Civic Culture* tackled the *macropolitical problem of democratic stability*
- The assumption was that a number of forces led to the development of political attitudes that would be supportive of a democratic political system—education; democratization of nongovernmental authority systems in the family, the school, and the workplace; general trust in one's fellow citizens
- We believed basic political attitudes were transmitted from generation to generation, through the family and the school; formed early in life and had a good deal of stability
- Focus on the survival of democracy: our dependent variable was the likelihood of survival

Abstract

- Addresses the long-term decline in trust and its potential causes (especially in the US)
- While dispositions can anchor trust levels, the dominant research findings show that the sources of variation and change in trust are political, if multifaceted, in nature

Introduction

- Trust is relational and domain-specific (A trusts B [the object] to do X [the domain])
- Mistrust - doubt or skepticism about trustworthiness; distrust - settled belief that the other is untrustworthy

Measurement

- Current measures offer only 3-4 options; the trend is towards more granular measures
- Trust in authorities and support for the political regime not discriminated well

Down and down the rabbit hole

- Americans' trust in their national govt has declined over the past 50 years (see ANES)
- The majority of countries exhibit a loss of confidence in their legislature (WVS/EVS)
- US: There is now almost no trust in the government among partisans of the out-party

Sources of variation and change

- Many factors identified, but there is no consensus as to which are the most important
- **Persona:** Trust/distrust could be stable dispositions, due to genetics / early political socialization / varying experiences across different demographics (but weak evidence)
- **Politics:** The underlying thread for the "p"s below is that trust declines when governments and institutions fail to meet expected goals or follow prescribed norms
- **Policy dissatisfaction:** The more recent literature on trust gives scant attention to this
- **Performance:** Bad economic times generally diminish trust, but which aspect of economic performance is most important remains uncertain; salience of government successes/failures may be important; as may the nature of the threat (internal/external)
- **Partisanship and polarization:** Polarization amplifies conflict and failure to give credit, encourages brinkmanship and gridlock on important issues → trust reduced
- **Process and probity:** Procedural justice / moral conduct / scandals
- **Mass media:** Effects on political attitudes hard to identify; findings are inconsistent

The political relevance of trust in government

- Effects on individual attitudes/behaviour: difficulty identifying direction of influence
- **Policy preferences:** The core claim is that people will not be willing to support policies that entail personal risk or sacrifice if they do not trust the government
- **Participation:** Trust could inspire engagement / weaken impulse to participate; the argument that mistrust spurs engagement rather than withdrawal is looking stronger
- **Vote choice:** Consistent results: political mistrust motivates anti-incumbent behaviour
- **Compliance:** Numerous studies have demonstrated that trust in government is correlated with attitudes related to compliance, especially concerning tax paying

Conclusion Distrust manifested through populism → alarms about the solidity of democracy

Summary

- Collier (2017) reviews the literature on culture from the fields of economics, psychology, and economic history, noting the importance of culture in societal development

Findings

- “A culture manifests the behaviour generated by its specific values and narratives, and that behaviour may be dysfunctional”
 - Peer esteem arises from actions that are well regarded by others because they conform to societal norms; Self esteem arises from actions that conform to norms but have been internalised in a way that to conform is a “moral ought, not a private want”; it is other people’s values that the agent internalises
- Greif (1994) conducts a historical study of 11th Century Mediterranean traders
 - Genovese merchants, had individualistic values that traced back to Christian concepts of the direct relationship of the individual to God; Jewish Maghrebi merchants, had collectivist values that he traced back to Islam
 - Trust among the Maghrebi meant they did not have to build formal contract-enforced organisations; Ultimately, the institutions that were solutions for the Genovese reaped larger-scale economies that outcompeted the Maghrebi merchants
- Besley & Persson (2016) present a formal model of culture where value is endogenous
 - Some people in society value democratic rights, not from material self-interest but from the other-regarding value of human rights, which is intrinsic to democracy; If the government breaches democratic rights, the person participates in public protest
 - Kuran (1989): the probability that a protest succeeds depends on its scale; Different societies have exogenously different initial proportions of people who hold democratic values; the more there are, the more likely protest will succeed
 - Endogenous element: children have the same values as their parents but if their parents have different values, they adopt the value of the parent who seems happier; in a society with few adults who value democracy, kids choose not to adopt ‘failure’
- Akerlof & Kranton (2011): values are often internalised by means of an identity
- Antisocial capital; Hjort (2014): workers in a multi-tribe flower packing factory had other-regarding values sufficiently strong that they are willing to sabotage the incomes of other tribes at the expense of their own income; demonstrates that tribal identity came packaged with norms, values, and narratives
- Charron et al. (2013): key professions, such as the judiciary, are distinctively influential; whether or not they are trustworthy sets the norms for ordinary people

Introduction

- **Allegiant model** (Verba et al): A cluster of orientations that supposedly support a democratic polity, including allegiance to the regime, pride in the political system, and modest levels of political participation; most apparent in the US and UK
- **Assertive model** (Inglehart et al): Contemporary publics are developing more assertive, self-expressive values that contrast with the allegiant values of the *Civic Culture* model, thus changing the nature of democratic citizenship
- Today, assertive orientations characterize established democracies, with some evidence that they are also emerging in the developing world [e.g. third wave]

The evolution of political culture research

- See elsewhere for a summary of Almond and Verba (1963)
- Tension: their framework is influenced by modernization theory and open to the idea that socioeconomic modernization changes citizen preferences and expectations; but comparative politics scholars largely overlooked the parallel message that social modernization would also increase feelings of efficacy, autonomy, and political tolerance that might lead to new patterns of assertive democratic participants
- Two implications: (1) the congruence thesis assumes that regime stability and effective government are more likely if the political culture is congruent with the regime form; (2) *The Civic Culture* had a constrained view of the values of the ideal democratic citizen [e.g. allegiance as a core virtue of stable democracy] due to the specter of hyperparticipation by antidemocratic groups in interwar/postwar Europe

A counterview

- See elsewhere for a summary of Almond and Verba (1989)
- Inglehart (1990): social modernization would give rise to postmaterialist values in nondemocratic regimes, which is potentially a powerful delegitimizing force against authoritarianism
- Scope of research extended beyond Western democracies → consistent finding that support for democracy as a principle was widespread across established democracies, new democracies, and nondemocracies (sharp contrast to Almond and Verba)
- Scholars started to differentiate different types of democratic support
- Scholars tried to disentangle what people around the world understand about the term democracy → there is a core liberal understanding of democracy among ordinary ppl

TABLE 1.1. *Aspects of Allegiant and Assertive Citizenship*

Domain	Allegiant Citizens	Assertive Citizens	Democratic support	Support for both the principles of democracy and its practice (satisfied democrats)	Strong support for the principles of democracy but weak support for its practice (dissatisfied democrats)
Value priorities	Output priorities with an emphasis on order and security limit input priorities that might emphasize voice and participation; materialist/protective values predominate	Input priorities with an emphasis on voice and participation grow stronger at the expense of output priorities with an emphasis on order and security; postmaterialist/emancipative values prevail over materialist/protective values	Democracy notion	Input-oriented notions of democracy as a means of voice and participation mix with output-oriented notions of democracy as a tool of delivering social goods	Input-oriented notions of democracy as a means of voice and participation become clearly dominant
Authority orientations	Deference to authority in the family, at the workplace, and in politics	Distance to authority in the family, at the workplace, and in politics	Political activism	Voting and other conventional forms of legitimacy-granting activity	Strong affinity to nonviolent, elite-challenging activity
Institutional trust	High trust in institutions	Low trust in institutions	Expected systemic consequences	More effective and accountable governance?	

Summary

- Using data from a variety of sources, such as the British Election Surveys, Heath et al. (2018) found that the cohesive forces in British society do not include all sections of the society equally, marginalising the young, the less educated and the Irish, Welsh, and Scottish nationalists. However, in the big picture, Britain did not become more divided

Theoretical argument

- Social cohesion: “members of the society feel that they belong to a common national community, feel morally obliged to follow the norms of the community, and feel some responsibility for the welfare of its other members”

Findings

- The sense of belonging in the UK has been high and stable over time since the 1980s; “There is no sign in these data that the rise of inequality in the 1980s led to widespread corrosion of feelings of national pride or belonging”
- Socio-economic differences in strength of national pride are very small and have not changed over time; age differences are larger than socioeconomic divisions
- The proportion endorsing a British identity has been declining in Northern Ireland and Scotland over time; this is important because Britons do make quite a sharp distinction between helping their fellow citizens (78%) and helping those who are not part of the national community (55%)
 - University students and ethnic minorities more likely to support helping the others elsewhere in the world; may be because higher educated more susceptible to social desirability bias
- The rise of educational differentiation in attitudes towards the EU may perhaps reflect the growing importance of cultural concerns as opposed to instrumental ones
- Despite rising inequality, there has been less divergence on the topic of redistribution; divergence between objective levels and ‘opportunities to wealth’ narrative
- “There are major socio-economic divisions both in sentiments (social trust and feelings of disconnect from politics) and behaviour (voluntary association membership and election turnout)”

Evaluation

- **Weakness** Time-series data limitation: there has been no tradition of asking about British values in survey research so cannot find data on British values over time

John, Fieldhouse and Liu (2011) How Civic is the Civic Culture? Explaining Community Participation Using the 2005 English Citizenship Survey
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00891.x>

Summary

- John, Fieldhouse and Liu (2011) test whether four types of citizen act – influencing institutions individually, collective civic, citizen governance and community voluntarism – are influenced by orientations, including trust in government institutions, moral motivations, neighbourhood social norms and neighbourhood affect

Theoretical argument

- Types of civic behaviour (note: not to do with parties)
 - CB1: Influence institutions individually; “when citizens attempt to influence rules, laws or policies through their individual actions, such as contacting a politician or bureaucrat”
 - CB2: Collective civic; “acts of citizen cooperation also designed to influence rules, laws and policies, like signing petitions and going on demonstrations”
 - CB3: Citizen governance; “may take place in informal and semi-formal form, such as a tenants’ group”
 - CB4: Community voluntarism; “a form of ethical self-governance that emerges when an individual is aware of the public benefit in their actions, such as leading a committee and befriending or mentoring people”

Data and methodology

- Data: core sample component of the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005; Face-to-face fieldwork in 2005, achieving 9,691 interviews
- Methodology: Structural Equation Models (SEMs)

Findings

- Orientations and dispositions
 - Trust; trust in govt institutions e.g. police, courts, parliament, local council
 - “Citizens with higher levels of political trust are less likely to attempt to influence institutions than those who trust government institutions less.”
 - Norms; neighbourhood social norms; e.g. shared neighbourhood values, people help neighbours, people would do something if they see children paint graffiti
 - Norms are negatively related to influencing institutions individually but is unrelated to other forms of civic behaviour
 - Moral; moral motivations e.g. right to free education, have elections, free healthcare, a job
 - Positive effect on community voluntarism but not on other forms of civic behaviour
 - Affect; neighbourhood affect e.g. feel belonging to a neighbourhood, close-knit neighbourhood
 - Positive impacts of neighbourhood affect on all types of civic behaviour

Wuttke, Gavras and Schoen (2020) Have Europeans Grown Tired of Democracy? New Evidence from Eighteen Consolidated Democracies, 1981–2018
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123420000149>

Summary

- Wuttke, Gavras and Schoen (2020) examine generation-based arguments on democratic trends. They find that attitudes toward democracy in Europe remain stable and at a high level when queried as a generic term, but in some countries there has been evidence of growing susceptibility to regime types incompatible with democracy

Theoretical arguments

- The democratic deconsolidation hypothesis predicts growing disenchantment with democracy in Western societies, especially among young people
 - Mounk (2018): younger generations are affected by the recent economic crises, which may lead to dissatisfaction of the prevailing regime – democracy; in the broader context, democratic dissatisfaction may be a period effect – uniform decreases from one point in time to the next irrespective of an individual's position in the life cycle and generational affiliation – resulting from the inability of democracies to control the economic crises
 - Gurri (2018): unlike the individualised tech environments the younger generation grew up in, the democratic decision-making process is slow by design and does not respond to individual preferences (collectively binding decisions are made)
- Modernisation theorists predict democratic fatigue to come from older generations, especially the interwar generation; the young generation grew up in relative material comfort compared to the older generation and have values that emphasise self-expression instead of assertiveness; they may be more critical of political authorities and institutions but are steadfast in their support for the principles of self-governance

Data and methodology

- Data: European Values Study (EVS) surveys
- Methodology: Generalised Additive Model (GAM)

Findings

- Stability or rebounds of trust in democratic institutions in most countries between 1981-2018; Strongman governance (strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament) has not grown more popular in most countries aside from Italy, Slovakia and Spain; May be because Italy faced political turmoil
- The recent rise in democratic regime preferences is mainly due to period effects; Generational effects are modest and there is no consistent evidence for either the democratic deconsolidation or modernisation theory hypotheses
- U-shaped curve observed in Norway and Sweden; cohorts that came of age in 1960-1970 where there are many protests likely to oppose authoritarian government but younger generation more open to strong leaders who do not have to bother with parliament; generational replacement unlikely to lead to erosion of democratic support at the societal level because older generation replaced by pro-strong leader young

- Although military rule remains disavowed across the continent, “in a few societies – France, Norway, Slovenia and the United Kingdom – the favourability of a military takeover has increased as of late, particularly among the most recent generation”

Evaluation

- **Strength** Avoids cherry-picking by publishing all evidence on website; <http://democracy.alexander-wuttke.de/>
- **Weakness** There is no solid definition for younger generation in the literature; they use the generation categories as 15–29, 30–59, 60+ which may not match with other literature
 1. Results not directly comparable; mitigated by estimating smoothed nonlinear cohort effects that retrieve any cohort commonalities among groups of individuals born in temporal proximity
 2. 15-year-olds also unable to vote in most countries

Zilinsky (2019) Democratic deconsolidation revisited: Young Europeans are not dissatisfied with democracy

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1077/2053168018814332>

Abstract

- Young people are generally more satisfied with democracy than older citizens
- Satisfaction with democracy has increased among Europeans of all ages

Introduction

- Across Europe, satisfaction with democracy declined during the financial crisis in the late 2000s, but it rebounded after 2012. Notably, the recovery in democratic sentiment was stronger among the young
- No evidence showing that young people are becoming more critical of democracy

Background and motivation

- A recurring worry among observers of (and participants in) politics is that democracy is standing on shaky ground
- The objective of this paper is to assess whether young people in Europe view democracy differently than older citizens

Data and research design

- This study analyzes responses to the European Social Survey, a cross-national academic survey carried out since 2002

Results

- In each of the eight survey rounds since 2002 [to 2017], the average young European viewed democracy more positively than people who were relatively older
- Satisfaction with democracy has been rising among young Europeans for four rounds of surveys in a row now, and the last three increases in democratic evaluations among people under 25 have been significant
- When the only variable used to predict democratic evaluations is age, the expected proportional reduction in error is slightly negative: anyone aiming to predict attitudes would be no worse off ignoring the information about age

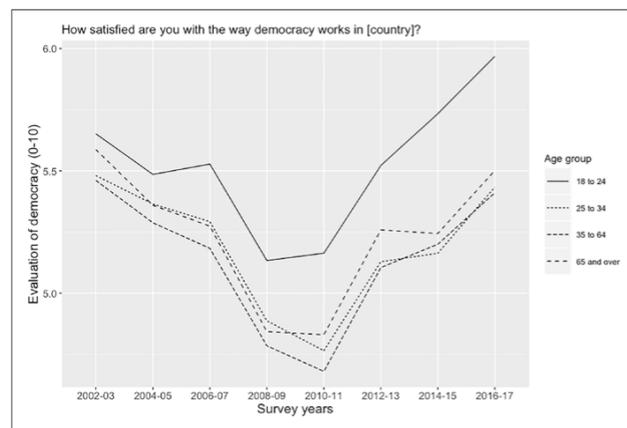


Figure 1. Evaluations of democracy among Europeans since 2002. ESS waves 1–8, (N=353,998).

Additional evidence

- There is no indication of strong pessimism among the current cohort of young Europeans in particular; after 2013, the difference in views between the youngest respondents and the remaining respondents has widened

Conclusion

- Evidence from the ESS reveals no patterns consistent with the notion that young citizens are less satisfied with democracy than middle-aged or older individuals

Social capital readings

[Hall \(1999\) Social capital in Britain](#)

[Li, Smith and Dangerfield \(2018\) Social trust](#)

[Minkoff \(2016\) The Payoffs of Organisation Membership for Political Activism in Established Democracies](#)

[Paxton \(1999\) Is social capital declining in the United States? A multiple indicator assessment](#)

[Putnam \(2000\) Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community Ch 1, 2, 21](#)

[Schwadel and Stout \(2012\) Age, Period and Cohort Effects On Social Capital](#)

Hall (1999) Social capital in Britain

Abstract

- Recent findings show an apparent erosion in the United States over the post-war years of ‘social capital’, but no equivalent erosion in Britain
- Proposes explanations for the resilience of social capital in Britain, rooted in educational reform, the transformation of the class structure, and government policy
- Stresses the importance of the distributive dimensions of social capital and the impact that governments can have on it

Introduction

- Social capital: the propensity of individuals to associate together on a regular basis, to trust one another, and to engage in community affairs
- Britain has long had some of the densest networks of civic engagement in the world

The trajectory of social capital

- The overall levels of **associational membership** in Britain seem to be at least as high today than they were in 1959, and even when the respondents’ levels of education are held constant, the basic inclination of the vast majority of the British populace to join associations remains roughly the same today as it was in the 1950s
- Support for **charitable endeavour** (voluntary work) has not dropped; most studies of the voluntary sector in Britain today conclude that it is extensive and vibrant
- Even a conservative interpretation would suggest that there has been some expansion in **informal sociability** over the past forty years (e.g. socializing, going to pubs)
- **Generation effects**: the data do not provide strong support for the contention that those born after the Second World War are less inclined to participate actively in associational life than those born before the war, as Putnam finds in the United States
- Overall levels of **social trust** declined between 1959 and 1990 (there is almost certainly a period effect here); the erosion in social trust has been more substantial among some groups than others (e.g. working class more than middle class)

Explaining levels of social capital

- **Conventional causal theories**: expansion of the welfare state, suburbanization, more women in the labour force, changes in family structure marked by higher divorce rates and more single-person households → but no erosion in levels of social capital
- **Educational revolution** (marked by massive expansion of secondary/postsecondary education): (1) increased the number of people with higher levels of education, given that higher levels of education lead to greater community involvement; (2) increased the average impact of each additional year of higher education on the recipient
- **Changes in class structure**: middle class people have more organization affiliations than working class people and are likely to be active in more organisations; middle class social networks tend to be more extensive and diverse; these differences appear to be widening over time, but the size of the middle class itself has increased dramatically in Britain since 1950 → sustained levels of social capital in Britain
- **Government policy**: encouraged and sustain voluntary community involvement, accompanied by large public expenditures via grants and fees for services
- **Social trust**: has fallen over the post-war years, not due to urbanization or a “Thatcher effect”, but perhaps because of (1) changes in a person’s material position,

(2) differences in value-systems (those with self-regarding systems tend to have significantly lower levels of social trust), or (3) change in the character of associational life

Social capital and politics in Britain

- **Electoral turnout** has remained broadly stable since the mid-1950s, and the number of citizens who engage in political participation beyond voting has risen dramatically
- **Political attentiveness** has not declined noticeably in post-war Britain
- Mixed picture regarding **political efficacy** and **political trust**: there is considerable controversy about the extent to which these feelings have actually declined in Britain
- Political trust does seem to be closely associated with social trust (both have fell)
- Although aggregate levels of social capital and political engagement in Britain remain high, they are **distributed very unevenly** across the population. For the most part, political activism and the associational life that sustains it have remained middle-class phenomena in Britain and the preserve of those in middle age

Conclusion

- No significant erosion of social capital in Britain → suggests that the erosion of social capital that Putnam and others find in the American case is not a uniform phenomenon across the industrialized democracies
- The quality of associational life in Britain clearly merits more investigation: those organizations may not involve their members in as much face-to-face interaction as their predecessors once did; and there is some evidence that organizations dedicated explicitly to the public interest, whether from a religious or political perspective, have experienced larger declines than other kinds of associations.
- Levels of social capital can affect governments and the success of their policies, but governments can and do affect the levels of social capital in their nation

Li, Smith and Dangerfield (2018) Social trust

Link: <https://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-35/social-trust.aspx>

Summary

- **Social trust** refers to the level of confidence people have in the moral orientation or trustworthiness of their fellow citizens
- **No sign that social trust in Britain is in decline:** In fact, increase from 2014-17
- **Doing things ‘with’ people engenders trust:** Participation in social activities is linked to trust, but this is less the case for political activities and voluntary work
- **There is a strong social foundation to trust:** Education and class have a strong link to trust even when age and people’s social connectedness are taken into account

The trend of social trust in Britain

- 1998-2014: ~45% of the public said that they believe most people can be trusted
- 2017: 54% (BSA), statistically significant increase but could be sampling variation

Social differences in trust (differences between social / economic / demographic groups)

- **Age:** Older people tend to have greater faith in strangers, but possible generational effect (older generations are more trusting), life-course effect (aging → become more trusting), socio-economic effect (older people tend to be economically more secure)
- **Education:** Those with the highest level of education (degree or another higher education qualification) had levels of trust around 20 percentage points higher than those with qualifications lower than GCSE or no qualifications
- **Class:** Similar differentials are found with regard to managerial and professional occupations versus routine manual workers
- **Ethnicity:** Differences between White people and EMs have been mixed over time

Social foundations to trust

- **‘Social’ activities:** the more frequently one undertakes leisure, sports and cultural activities with other people, the more likely one is to hold a trusting view
- **Civic activities** (in “charitable or religious organisations that do voluntary work”): there is a clear division between activists and non-activists
- **Political activities:** most do not participate, but those who do, even once in the last year, show a greater likelihood of trusting their fellow citizens (but small sample size)
- **Participation is heavily stratified by education & class:** Higher level of education → more likely to have taken part in social, political and civic groups in the last year; same for occupational categories (except for political participation: no relationship)
- Older people (aged 61+) are less likely to have participated in social, political and civic groups in the last year; EMs are more likely to have participated in political and/or civic groups in the past year but no significant differences for social groups
- Both the number of ties and social status of those ties are particularly stratified by education and socioeconomic class
- The status of social network, participation in social activities, education, class, and age, all have significant and independent effects on trust

Conclusions

- Decline in political trust hasn’t extended to social trust; besides encouraging social participation, the government should focus on reducing socio-economic differences

Minkoff (2016) The Payoffs of Organisation Membership for Political Activism in Established Democracies

Summary

- Minkoff assesses the effects of different types of membership (active / passive) in different types of organizations (civic / political) on political activism
- Results demonstrate that organizational membership increases levels of nonconventional political action (across all four types)
- Focusing only on the subset of joiners suggests that the distinction between active and passive membership is less pronounced than skeptics of such symbolic affiliation have argued (the most significant difference is whether one is a member or not)

Theoretical argument

- Debate has centered on the question whether new, more passive, forms of associational membership yield the kinds of individual- and societal-level benefits long thought to characterize traditional forms of more active, face-to-face forms of voluntary participation
- Debate has also considered the question whether the presumptive benefits of membership accrue across all forms of voluntary associations, such that involvement in nonpolitical organizations translates into the political realm by serving as “schools of democracy” / “free spaces” for developing communal trust & political engagement

Data and methodology

- Data: Based on a unique combined data set that includes data drawn from the 2002 European Social Survey (ESS) and the U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy (USCID) survey fielded in mid-May to mid-July 2005 with a random sample of 1,001 Americans (Howard et al. 2006)
- The independent variable (or “treatment”) of interest is organizational membership
- The outcome of interest, political activism, is measured as the number of nonelectoral political activities that the respondent participated in during the past year
- Covariates include gender, education, age, income, labor market participation, marital status, presence of children in the home, and native or immigrant status, and a measure of religious denomination

Findings and conclusion

- In general, organization membership increases levels of nonconventional political action for active and passive members in both political and civic groups
 - Effects may have previously been overestimated because of selection bias
- The influence of organizational membership varies across membership and organizational forms, and one’s underlying probability of getting involved
- Results suggest that those individuals who are least likely to become involved compared to nonjoiners experience more significant politicizing gains from their membership (across all four types) – those who have to overcome the most structural barriers to participate will gain the most
- Alternatively, the payoffs of active versus passive membership in civic organizations are higher for those who are more likely to participate to begin with, whereas there appear to be no significant differences across propensity levels between active and passive members of political organizations

Paxton (1999) Is social capital declining in the United States? A multiple indicator assessment

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/210268>

Abstract

- Paxton provides a model of social capital that has explicit links to theories of social capital and that analyzes multiple indicators of social capital over a 20-year period
- The results do not consistently support Putnam’s claim of a decline in social capital, showing instead some decline in a general measure of social capital, a decline in trust in individuals, no general decline in trust in institutions, and no decline in associations

Introduction

- Despite scholarly interest in a possible decline of US social capital, no consensus on the trend → two problems: (1) gap between concept and measurement (compounded by a lack of consensus on the meaning of the term); (2) reliance on single indicators (→ cannot capture the concept adequately; cannot account for measurement error)

What is social capital?

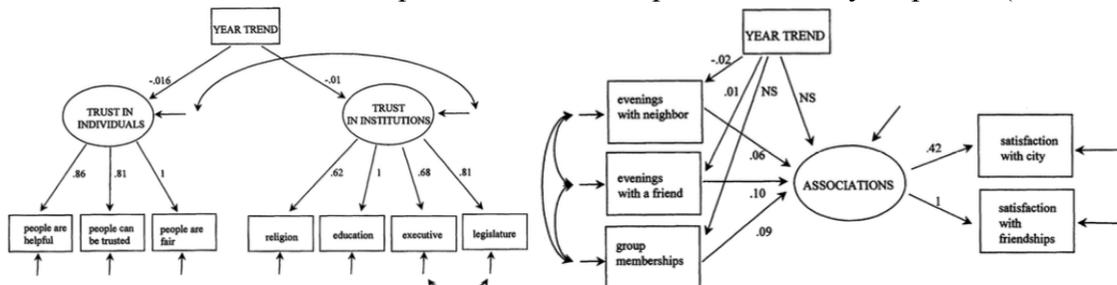
- Definition: social capital involves the mutual occurrence of two components: (1) objective associations between individuals (there must be an objective network structure linking individuals), (2) a subjective type of tie (must be reciprocal, trusting, and involving positive emotion); which in turn produces a capacity for action
- Social capital within a *single group* need not be positively related to social capital at the *community level* (e.g. high social capital within militarist groups)

More on social capital: its components and effects

- **Trust** can occur in at least three levels of the social structure: in the isolated dyad, between individuals in the presence of third parties, and between an individual and a collection of individuals, such as an organization or an institution
- **Associations** fall into two types: individuals can be informally connected to others through friendship choices and other types of network ties, or individuals can be connected to others through formal group memberships
- At the aggregate level, an increased capacity for action should imply aggregate-level gains in productivity or efficiency

Model

- I use data from the General Social Surveys (GSS) because it contains multiple indicators for both components of social capital over a 20-year period (1975-94)



- Latent (unobserved) variables are enclosed in ovals, while observed variables are represented with boxes; straight arrows indicate a causal relationship, while curved two-headed arrows indicate a covariance that is unexplained in the model

Results

- The measurement model for trust and associations are consistent with the data
- There is no significant change in the parameters of the model over time. This means that it is safe to test for changes in the level of social capital over time, because the relationship between the general level of social capital and its indicators has remained stable over the 20-year period
- The analysis of change in social capital has shown a decline in trust and no change in associations
- But time may not have a linear effect: both components of social capital, trust and associations, do show evidence of a nonlinear trend
- Period effects: when shocks to trust in institutions related to specific events are allowed in the model, there remains no separate general decline in trust in institutions
- As the combination of both trust and associations, social capital shows declines over the 20-year period

Conclusion

- In summary, my results do not consistently support Putnam's claim of a decline in social capital. I do find that my measure of social capital, as a combination of trust and associations, shows a decline over the time period. This is mainly due to a strong and consistent decline in trust in individuals over the period 1975–94—about a 0.5% drop per year. I do not find a general decline in trust in institutions, however, once scandals in particular years are included
- While trust in individuals has declined over the time period, the second component of social capital, the level of associations, remains unchanged. Membership in groups has not declined, and there has been little practical change in the amount of time that individuals spend with neighbors and friends outside the neighborhood

Summary

- Ch 1 introduces some terms (e.g. social capital) and gives an overview of the book
- Ch 2 outlines trends in political participation in America in the 20th century
- Ch 21 discusses the relationship between civic participation and health of democracy

Ch 1 Thinking about Social Change in America

- In the 1950s and 60s, civic participation was booming; since then, community groups across America have been dying off as they are no longer revitalised by new members
- Social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them
 - Differs from civic virtue. Civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations
- Social capital has a private face and a public face
 - Individuals form connections that benefit our own interests (e.g. finding jobs, companionship) → private good
 - But social capital has externalities – a poorly connected individual may derive some of spillover benefit from living in a well-connected community e.g. if crime rate in neighbourhood is lowered by neighbours keeping an eye on one another's homes, I benefit even if I am antisocial → public good
 - Social connections sustain rules of conduct through networks by fostering norms of reciprocity. Trustworthiness lubricates social life
- However, social capital can have negative external effects e.g. power elites exploit their networks, urban gangs, NIMBY movements
- Bridging vs bonding is the most important distinction regarding types of social capital
 - Bridging (inclusive) – networks which are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages e.g. civil rights movement, youth service groups
 - Better for linkage to external assets and information diffusion, generate broader identities and broader reciprocity
 - Bonding (exclusive) – networks which tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups e.g. ethnic fraternal organisations, fashionable country clubs
 - Good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilising solidarity
 - May generate out-group antagonism
 - These are not “either-or” categories, but “more or less” dimensions

Ch 2 [Trends in] Political Participation

- Declining electoral participation since 1960s – down by 25% over the last 20-30 years
 - Putnam attributes this to generational change, as voters who came of age before or during the New Deal and WWII are replaced by voters who came of age later (he thinks there is very little individual change)
- Decline in interest in politics and current affairs in younger generations – down by 20% over last 20-30 years
 - The post-baby boom generations are substantially less knowledgeable about public affairs, despite the proliferation of sources of information

- The rate of party identification has been falling despite the increase in party finances – down from 75% in 1960 to less than 65% in late 1990s
- Declining involvement in grassroots events for parties campaign activities
 - Professionalisation and commercialisation of politics in America, relying less on volunteer networks among partisans and on techniques of mass marketing
- Participation increasingly based on money rather than time
 - While membership in a political club decreased by 50% between 1967–1987, the fraction of the public that contributed financially to a political campaign nearly doubled
- Declining number of people running for or holding office (at all levels e.g. school board, town council) – decrease by 15%
- The decline in communal activities has followed a similar pattern to partisan and electoral participation
- The forms of participation that have declined most are those that reflect organised activities at the community level. Those that have declined least are those that one can undertake as an individual (e.g. petitions)
- This disjunctive pattern of decline—cooperation falling more rapidly than self-expression—may well have encouraged the single-issue blare and declining civility of contemporary political discourse

Ch 21 Democracy

- In this chapter I consider both the conventional claim that the health of American democracy requires citizens to perform our *public* duties and the more expansive and controversial claim that the health of our *public* institutions depends, at least in part, on widespread participation in *private* voluntary groups—those networks of civic engagement that embody social capital
- Voluntary associations and the social networks of civil society that we have been calling “social capital” contribute to democracy in two different ways
- External effects on the larger polity
 - Voluntary associations allow individuals to express their interests and demands on government and to protect themselves from abuses of power by their political leaders
 - Social networks allow political information to flow (e.g. your water cooler discussions, sharing views)
 - Public life is discussed in these networks
 - It amplifies and multiplies the voices of individuals
- Internal effects on participants themselves
 - Associations and less formal networks of civic engagement instill in their members habits of cooperation and public-spiritedness as well as practical skills necessary to partake in public life
 - Community bonds keep individuals from falling prey to extremist groups that target isolated individuals
 - Members learn how to run meetings, speak in public, organise projects, debate public issues with civility social and civic skills are learnt
 - Associations serve as forums for deliberation over vital public issues
 - Associations allow individual to learn civic virtues – active participation in public life, trustworthiness (through repeated interactions), reciprocity (more likely to display concern for others, even if you disagree)

- But there are doubts on whether associations are good for democracy
 - Some groups are antidemocratic e.g. KKK
 - Associations distort government decision making – policies deliver goods to those who are the most well-organised rather than the greater good for the greatest number
 - This also tends to privilege those who already have more resources. Social capital is self-reinforcing and benefits those who already have a stock on which to trade i.e. the well-connected
 - Ideologically homogeneous groups may create political polarisation and even extremism
- Civic engagement matters on both the demand side and the supply side of government
 - **Demand side** Citizens in civic communities expect better government, and (in part through their own efforts) they get it (i.e. they hold governments accountable, so governments act better)
 - **Supply side** Social capital lowers transaction costs and eases dilemmas of collective action, allowing government to work more efficiently, increasing the likelihood of success
- Social capital reinforces government legitimacy → I trust other people will pay their taxes, so government is something for “us”

Schwadel and Stout (2012) Age, Period and Cohort Effects On Social Capital

Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41683191>

Summary

- Schwadel and Stout (2012) investigate the potential age, period and cohort effects on social capital in the US. While they did not find conclusive evidence of both formal and informal associations declining, the level of trust reflected in the General Social Survey, where they obtained their data from, decreased considerably

Data and methodology

- Data: 1972-2010 General Social Survey
- Methodology: age-period-cohort (APC) intrinsic estimator models

Findings

- Social capital, defined as the resources embedded in social networks characterized by trust and reciprocity, is pivotal to the civic health of a democratic society
- Putnam's operationalisation: informal association (socializing with friends and relatives), formal association (voluntary organization membership), generalised trust
- "Informal association with neighbours declined across periods while informal association with friends outside of the neighbourhood increased across birth cohorts"
 - No overall declines in informal association
- "Formal association was comparatively stable with the exception of relatively high levels of formal association among the early 1920s and early 1930s birth cohorts"
 - "Respondents born in the inter-war years, particularly the 1922 and 1932 cohorts, have relatively high numbers of voluntary organisation memberships, and the 1892, 1907 and 1957 cohorts have relatively few"
 - Only moderate changes; does not suggest decline of social capital
- "Trust declined considerably across both periods and cohorts, though the oldest cohorts are less trusting than those born in the 1920s through the 1940s"
 - "Controlling for age and period effects, there are large across-cohort declines in all three measures of individual trust"
 - Members of Generation X and the millennial generation report the lowest levels of trust; their probability of agreeing that people are helpful, fair and can be trusted is between .05 and .10 below the mean

Evaluation

- **Strength** Large sample size accumulated over many years
- **Weakness** Limited data on millennials

Political culture, social capital and democracy readings

[Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan \(2012\) Religion and Support for Democracy: A Cross-National Test of the Mediating Mechanisms](#)

[Claassen \(2019\) Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?](#)

[Dahlum and Knutsen \(2017\) Democracy by Demand? Reinvestigating the Effect of Self-Expression Values on Political Regime Type](#)

[Ferland \(2016\) Retrospective ideological representation and its impact on democratic satisfaction](#)

[Foa and Ekiert \(2017\) The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society Reassessed](#)

[Fukuyama \(2014\) Political Order and Political Decay Ch 7 Italy and the Low-Trust Equilibrium](#)

[Hetherington and Husser \(2011\) How Trust Matters: The Changing Political Relevance of Political Trust](#)

[Mondak and Canache \(2014\) Personality and Political Culture in the American States](#)

[Muller and Seligson \(1994\) Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships](#)

[*Norris \(2011\) Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited](#)

[*Paxton \(2002\) Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship](#)

[Putnam \(1993\) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy](#)

[Reher \(2014\) Explaining cross-national variation in the relationship between priority congruence and satisfaction with democracy](#)

[Stecker and Tausendpfund \(2016\) Multidimensional government-citizen congruence and satisfaction with democracy](#)

[Theiss-Morse and Hibbing \(2005\) Citizenship and Civic Engagement](#)

Abstract

- Religion can be a source of undemocratic attitudes but also a contributor to democratic norms
- The private aspect of religious belief is associated with traditional and survival values, which in turn decrease both overt and intrinsic support for democracy
- The communal aspect of religious social behaviour increases political interest and trust in institutions, which in turn typically lead to more support for democracy
- Data from 54 countries from waves 4 and 5 of the WVS suggest there is some regularity in these mechanisms that extend beyond religious denomination

Theoretical arguments

- There are three dimensions of religiosity
 - Belief: theology and social theology
 - Behaviour: private practice (e.g. prayer) and social practice (e.g. services)
 - Belonging: identification with a particular denomination and/or movements
- Religious belief is associated with conservative and traditional values, incompatible with democratic values → value conflict → negative effect on support for democracy
 - Religion is based on belief and transcendent truth; democracy encourages scepticism and the belief that laws are contextual and open to change
 - Religion emphasizes the duties of believers to God and their surroundings based on laws of behaviour, thought and faith; democracy emphasizes the right to believe, act and think independently
 - **Evidence** A meta-analysis of 15 countries and 3 main monotheistic traditions finds positive association of religiosity with conservation and security values, and negative association with openness to change and self-expression values (Saroglou et al 2004)
- Religiosity as an institution influences one's social network and political behaviour
 - Involvement in social religious networks contributes to democratic attitudes due to the traditional role of religious institutions as agents of mobilization – great potential for deliberative democracy, organisational and philosophical bases for a wide range of social movements, aid in developing civic skills and democratic norms
 - Elites often act to politicize religious group identity and mobilize the corresponding constituency → encourage their public to practice their democratic rights as citizens
 - Religious institutions are frequently used as mobilization venues → frequent participation in religious networks increases a group's political salience and political awareness, and individual interest in politics + increases the likelihood of political representation and resources → enhanced political efficacy and confidence and political institutions
- Overt democratic support: citizens' declaration of general endorsement of the democratic regime and of deeming it desirable for their country
 - Overt support is still viewed as a necessary condition for the thriving of a democratic culture and the legitimacy of democratic regimes

- Overt support may not manifest genuine support for democratic values; possibly supported due to social desirability / hope for potentially beneficial institutional outcomes in terms of material benefits [so could be instrumental, not intrinsic]

Data and methodology

- Data: Waves 4 and 5 of the WVS, collected in 1999–2001 and 2005–07 respectively
- Methodology: Multilevel path modelling, a variant of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), was used to test the argument that traditional and survival values mediate the effect of religious belief, while confidence in institutions and interest in politics (social capital) mediate the effect of social religious behaviour on support for democracy

Findings

- Basically all the results support the theoretical argument
- There is conclusive support for the positive mediating effect of political interest, while the mediating effect of trust in institutions is positive only for overt support and negative for support for democratic procedures (also, no effect on non-instrumental support)
- As opposed to the case of religious belief, the direct effect of social religious behavior typically remains positive and statistically significant. That is, involvement in religious social networks has an independent positive effect on pro-democratic attitudes that is not accounted for by political interest and confidence in institutions

Conclusions

- It has been argued that advancement of religious freedom may promote the return of religion which in turn may undermine democratic political culture
- Religiosity, depending on its dimension, has differential effects on both overt and intrinsic support for democracy
- The effect of private devotion on support for democracy is due almost fully to the association of religious belief with traditional and survival values, while the effect of religious behaviour on democratic attitudes is due largely to the increased interest in politics and trust in democratic institutions
- Once values are accounted for, religious belief has no direct effect on support for democracy, suggesting that specific religious teachings contribute to anti-democratic sentiments only insofar as they enshrine traditional and survival values
- Social religious behaviour, however, often holds a positive direct effect on support for democracy even if the mediating effects of political interest and institutional trust are taken into consideration
- The mechanisms through which social religious behaviour affects support for democracy seem to depend more on the context: mediation process is mostly replicated for Catholics, Muslims, Evangelicals and Buddhists, but to a lesser extent among Orthodox Christians and not at all among mainline Protestants

Evaluation

- **Strength** The authors are able to account for both individual and national-level variation in attitudes towards democracy
- **Strength** The study simultaneously examines the interrelations between these three variables: religiosity, values, democracy

Claassen (2019) Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?

Summary

- Public support for democracy has a positive effect on subsequent democratic change, adjusting for prior levels of democracy
- Public support for democracy is more robustly linked with the endurance of democracy than its emergence in the first place

Theory

- Without public support, democracy is insecure and likely to fail if a crisis arises (Easton, 1965; Lipset, 1959)
- Lipset (1959) – political legitimacy – the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society – is one of the principal requisites of stable democracy
- Easton (1965, 1975) – citizens may support (1) the nation (2) the regime (3) the government
- Easton (1965, 1975) – public support for the regime may be diffuse (focus on principles of the regime, substantive support) or specific (focus on material outcomes of regime i.e. instrumental) diffuse support linked to political legitimacy
- Principled support for democracy helps ensure the survival of the regime

Evidence

- Using data from 150 countries over 30 years, allows adjustment to account for effects of unobserved country-specific confounds and influence of previous levels of democracy
- Uses V-Dem measures – have 5 conceptualisations of democracy, uses more indicators, uses country experts to code indicators, and aggregates indicators into subcomponents
 - Uses liberal democracy index – measures political institutions that make rulers responsive to citizens through electoral competition for electorate's approval
 - Uses liberalism index – captures factors protecting individual and minority rights against tyranny of the state and of the majority
- Support is positively and significantly related to subsequent democratic change
 - A permanent 1-sd increase in democratic support is expected to have SR effect on democracy of 0.88 (on scale of 0-100) and LR effect of 7.83. changes in public support exert an influence on political regimes for many years
- Effect of support is concentrated in systems that are already democratic support appears to help sustain democracy, does not appear to help autocracies democratise
- Satisfaction with democracy (specific support for democracy) exerts little or no independent effect on the rise or fall of democracy
- Diffuse support helps sustain democratic regimes, aside from any specific support that democracy may attract due to instrumental performance

Dahlum and Knutsen (2017) Democracy by Demand? Reinvestigating the Effect of Self-Expression Values on Political Regime Type
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123415000447>

Abstract

- Modernization theory: democracy is argued to emerge and thrive in countries where liberal or freedom-oriented values (so-called self-expression values) are widespread
- We find no evidence that self-expression values *cause* democracy. Self-expression values do not induce democratization nor enhance democratic survival; nor do we find effects from any sub-components of such values (e.g. generalized trust)
- We find indications that a country's experience with democracy enhances self-expression values, corroborating the so-called institutional learning hypothesis

Introduction

- There is a cross-country correlation between self-expression values and democracy
- However, there is no positive relationship between changes in self-expression values and in democracy from the early 1990s to the early 2000s

Argument (self-expression values as a force for democracy) and alternative argument

- Inglehart and Welzel's Revised Theory of Modernization (RTM): two links
- (1) Socio-economic development → value changes: individuals mired in scarcity aspire to satisfy basic economic needs, while individuals whose needs are satisfied strive for self-realization and autonomy; (2) self-expression values → democracy: democratic institutional structures provide the supply of freedoms, while demand is related to citizens' values; and a tendency toward congruence is supposedly inherent
- Mass support may not be crucial to regime survival (autocrats can choose repression)
- Democracy may largely emerge because of other factors than popular values (e.g. international developments, domestic elite strategies, demands for redistribution)
- Even within modernization theory, economic changes can affect regime type through multiple channels (e.g. urbanization, increased education), so RTM's focus on self-expression values as the critical channel is not necessarily valid
- **Institutional learning theory**: individuals' values, preferences and behavior are heavily influenced by the institutional environments within which they operate, thus democratic institutions establish norms and values which then shape people's values

Methodology

- Using WVS data, Inglehart and Welzel argue that values cause democracy
- But inferring from cross-country correlations to a causal relationship is problematic: (1) omitted variables e.g. country-specific factors could drive values *and* democracy; (2) the causation may be the other way around (as per ILT); (3) possible spatial clustering of democracy *and* of particular values; (4) divergent histories of democracy
- We use panel data instead of cross-sectional data → can control for country fixed-effects & account for endogeneity (values endogenous to experiences w/ democracy)

Empirical analysis

- Self-expression values have no effect on democracy once country-fixed effects and the endogeneity of values are accounted for; this supports the argument that (1) democratization processes are spurred by factors other than self-expression values; (2) the observed cross-country correlation partly reflects democracy's effect on popular values

Conclusion Doubt that having a relatively liberal population is a requirement for viable democracy

Ferland (2016) Retrospective ideological representation and its impact on democratic satisfaction

Summary

- Proposes a measure of how close a citizen's preference is to the actual policies enacted by the incumbent government – retrospective ideological representation
- Retrospective ideological representation has a substantive impact on citizen's democratic satisfaction and greater than the prospective ideological representation (the ideological distance between position of respondent and policy promises made by the government before election) citizens care about what they have received (in terms of spending) rather than what they expect to receive
- Increasing democratic satisfaction would require such actual citizen-government congruence. e.g. PR systems which proportionally translate votes into seats may produce policy that departs from citizen preferences due to presence of extreme small parties in coalition governments

Theory

- Retrospective ideological representation = ideological distance between position of a respondent and incumbent government at the end of its term in office represents what people actually receive
- Prospective ideological representation = ideological distance between position of respondent and elected government after an election represents what people expect to receive

Evidence

- Retrospective ideological representation has substantial impact on citizens' satisfaction with way democracy works
- Prospective ideological representation on satisfaction with democracy is previous studies are partly spurious and consequence of not considering effect of retrospective ideological representation

Summary

- Empirical point: civil societies in (postcommunist) Central and Eastern European countries are not as feeble / structurally deficient as commonly assumed
- Methodological point: broader measures of civic and social institutions are able to predict the diverging transition paths among postcommunist regimes

The weakness of postcommunist civil society thesis

- The conventional wisdom regarding the weakness of postcommunist civil society is challenged by e.g. the events of 1989-91, the fact that communist regimes repressed associational structures but also built their own, subsequent institutional divergence
- Notwithstanding this conventional wisdom, since 1989 most countries of postcommunist Europe have experienced steady democratic consolidation

Assessing civil societies in the postcommunist world

- **The organizational structure of civil society:** data do not suggest widespread civic disengagement or 'stagnation' in postcommunist Europe; rather, they indicate a diversity of civic trajectories that is consistent with the diversity in political outcomes
- **The behaviour of civil society actors**
- **The normative orientation of civil society actors**
- **The public sphere:** far from exhibiting political disillusionment or withdrawal, 'cognitive mobilisation' was already a feature of the late communist era, survived into the transition period; little evidence of uniform weakness or political disengagement

Estimating the impact of civil society on democratic consolidation

- Variation in democratic transition outcomes can be explained by initial variation in civic strength
- The non-robust and sometimes negative effect of voluntary membership upon democratic transition shows that it is not 'social capital' *per se* that is beneficial for democracy, but rather, the kinds of civic behaviour which reinforce the support for and functioning of democratic institutions (e.g. protests which ensure accountability, monitoring of human rights that allow civic organizations to provide a check on politicians and public officials, connections to international civil society)
- In some regions (e.g. central Europe, southeastern Europe, the Baltic states), civil society actors have the resources & structures necessary for making democracy work

Conclusion: civil societies in postcommunist Europe

- Postcommunist civil societies do not appear as uniformly feeble; after examining the different dimensions of civil society organisation and behaviour we find no evidence of deterioration over time as the decline of older organisational forms is balanced by the arrival of new organisations and expanding ties to international civil society
- Earlier literature has focused on one dimension of civic life (typically membership in voluntary organisations), used limited data sources (typically public opinion surveys), so pursuing a multidimensional strategy → more complex, more interesting picture
- **Implication** Regardless of the policies of external actors, civic legacies will prove the ultimate precondition for success/failure at democratic transition attempts elsewhere

Fukuyama (2014) Political Order and Political Decay Ch 7 Italy and the Low-Trust Equilibrium

Summary

- In this chapter, Fukuyama explains how the quality of government varies across Italy, weaknesses of the Italian state in the South, the origins of Mafia, Italy's struggle with clientelism and corruption, and the importance of trust for good government

Theoretical argument

- Putnam's argument: the huge variance that exists in the quality of local governments across the different regions of Italy is due to the difference in the level of social capital; poor government performance in the South is due to historical strong authoritarian government and clientelism
- Note: Clientelism is the exchange of goods and services for political support, often involving an implicit or explicit quid-pro-quo

Findings

- "Putnam argues that the Normans established strong centralised government in southern Italy and that this vertical power undermined the ability of citizens to form horizontal linkages of trust or association." Fukuyama thinks this idea is problematic:
 1. The Norman kingdom of Sicily formally ended in 1194 (too long ago); "there was also a powerful, centralised Norman kingdom ruling England, and a Viking kingdom in Denmark, yet neither England nor Denmark developed a pattern of clientelistic government"
 2. During the Middle Ages, "no European government was able to set up a truly dictatorial centralised state capable of penetrating and controlling the whole of society in the manner of the Chinese or, later, the Russians"; Italy was more of a local tyranny with national weakness
- Instead, Fukuyama posits that Italy's clientelism is a modern phenomena, originating in 1861 when Italy was unified under the northern Piedmontese monarchy; the Northern middle-class were interested in creating a modern state; Piedmont was not a strong leader, and, faced with peasant revolts, "the northern bourgeoisie controlling the new national government made a pact with the local oligarchy in the South"
- The Weak State and the Rise of Mafia according to Diego Gambetta
 - Mafiosi are private entrepreneurs whose function is to provide protection of individual property rights in a society in which the state fails to perform this basic service; i.e. state cannot monopolise the threat of violence (or violence) to do things e.g. to enforce property rights
 - "The Mafia ... thrives in a low-trust society like that of Sicily because it can provide credible protection services in the short run. But it perpetuates a climate of violence and fear, which lowers levels of trust for the society as a whole"
- Clientelism
 - Clientelism in the South was reinforced by the government's economic policies, which led to developments in the North but not the South (wide development gap)
 - The growth of government-directed investments in the South endorsed political clientelism because the local deputy or secretary gets the credit for

appropriating the budget; Mafias play a key role in securing the electoral base for these politicians and are rewarded through control over public contracting

- Trust
 - Trust can be good or bad depending on the context the agent is in (e.g. would be bad to have trust in thieves-ridden neighbourhood; trust allow for cooperation without having to rely on rigorous formal contracts)
 - The quality of government thus depends critically on trust or social capital; “The vast majority of law-abiding behaviour is based rather on the fact that people see other people around them obeying the law and act in conformity to the perceived norm.”
 - “Since the mafiosi were not themselves trustworthy individuals, distrust of government metastasised into distrust of everyone” leading to overall low trust

Hetherington and Husser (2011) How Trust Matters: The Changing Political Relevance of Political Trust

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00548.x>

Summary

- People need to trust the government to support more government; but trust matters more than previously thought. It can serve not just liberal domestic policy, but also conservative foreign policy (both involve increased government intervention)
- The relative salience of different issues affects how people are primed; priming in turn affects the level of political trust and the influence of trust on the political system

Theoretical argument

- Political trust = ratio of people's evaluation of government performance relative to their normative expectations of how government ought to perform
 - Often a function of changes in perceived performance on important problems like the economy, although longer term factors (social trust) can contribute to fluctuations in political trust
 - Political trust serves as a decision rule for people: if they trust the government, they should likely support more government involvement
 - Political trust is especially important when people are asked to make either material or ideological sacrifices
- Priming = changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations
- When people are asked to evaluate the government, they don't necessarily express a single evaluation of the entire government, but rather one of several evaluations of different parts of it. What they express depends on what part they are considering, which depends on how salient different issues are, as dictated by the media. Thus their trust changes according to what they understand the government is and does
- When international issues increase in salience, political trust goes up (Hetherington and Rudolph 2008)
- Trust's effect on preferences in an issue domain ought to be conditional on that domain's salience (see conclusion)
- When national security becomes salient, the effect of trust on defence and foreign policy is particularly strong and wide ranging, as most Americans have little personal experience with or information about the world abroad. Thus preferences in this domain tend to be more uncertain and as trust is important in overcoming uncertainty, trust will play a bigger role in determining preferences

Data and methodology

- Data: 2000–2004 National Election Study panel survey

Findings and conclusion

- We find strong positive interactions between political trust and issue salience in two policy domains over time. When defense issues become salient, people are primed to evaluate government trustworthiness with defense-based considerations in mind, which, in turn, causes trust to affect preferences in this domain. When race and redistribution become salient, people are primed to evaluate govt trustworthiness with welfare state considerations in mind, which, in turn, causes trust to affect preferences in that domain

Summary

- Mondak and Canache (2014) build on from research in personality psychology and cross-cultural psychology, to investigate whether aggregate personality measures compiled in the American states correspond with patterns in political culture

Data and methodology

- Data: Measures for Big Five (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) obtained from voluntary, self-administered Internet survey; N = 619,397
- Methodology: OLS regression, complemented with multinomial logistic regression

Findings

- “Coefficient estimates reveal substantial overlap between personality and the other variables, and especially between personality and white ethnic diversity”
 - Statistically significant coefficients for all Big Five: openness (1%), conscientiousness (5%), extraversion (1%), agreeableness (10%) and neuroticism (1%) when white ethnic diversity controlled for
- Strong relationships between Big Five personality traits and politically relevant variables, including state-level ideology and political culture, and also civic culture and its component indicators
- Relationships are complex; e.g. they found a strong positive link was observed between state-level conscientiousness and crime
 - Interpretation 1: personality does not exert a direct causal force because high conscientiousness (people are hard-working, punctual and responsible)
 - Interpretation 2: living where crime is prevalent prompts people to be conscientious
 - Interpretation 3: where conscientiousness is high, preferences will be against social liberalism and a large, active government; lower funding for education so high crime

Evaluation

- **Strengths** (1) large sample size; (2) avoids reference group effects that burden cross-national analyses by conducting state-level analysis (people might be comparing their personality with those around them but people differ across the world so metric might change, but less likely to be a problem within a country with shared language); yet, the US is a big place and different ethnic mix in different areas so potentially different language used (controlling for ethnic minority diversity does not suffice)
- **Weakness** Sample is not representative as survey is voluntary and distributed through the internet → median age of respondents is 24

Muller and Seligson (1994) Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships

Abstract

1. Most civic culture attitudes do not have any significant impact on change in democracy
2. Interpersonal trust seems to be an effect rather than a cause of democracy
3. Support for gradual reform of society instead of revolutionary change has a positive impact on change in democracy

Theoretical argument

- Almond and Verba (1963): civic culture causes democracy
- Alternative: civic culture attitudes are an effect of democracy
- Inglehart (1990) supports Almond and Verba's conclusion, as his model showed that half of the variance in the persistence of democratic institutions can be attributed to the effects of political culture alone (p.46)
 - **Problem** Inglehart doesn't consider that democracy may have an effect on civic culture; his analysis assumes there is only a unidirectional relationship
 - **Problem** The inclusion of life satisfaction as a component of civic culture is not justified and the other components (i.e. interpersonal trust and the lack of support for revolutionary change) should be analysed individually since they are conceptually distinct
 - **Problem** He assumes that the percentage of the labour force in service occupations is the only relevant macrosocietal determinant of democracy apart from the level of economic development

Findings

- Most civic culture attitudes do not have any significant impact on change in democracy
- Interpersonal trust seems to be an effect rather than a cause of democracy
 - Interpersonal trust is one kind of civic culture attitude that has been assumed by many scholars to be an important attitudinal prerequisite of the establishment of stable democracy
 - However, variation in the percentage of the general public with high levels of interpersonal trust is unrelated to change in a country's level of democracy. High levels of trust also do not necessarily promote democratization
 - **Examples** Argentina, Portugal and Spain registered substantial increases in level of democracy from 1970s to 1980s despite relatively low interpersonal trust levels of 21%, 28% and 35%; Belgium, France and Italy were able to maintain high levels of stable democracy despite low interpersonal trust levels of 29%, 26% and 27%
 - Interpersonal trust is related to democracy as an effect. This arises due to the nature of democracy as working through peaceful collective action of groups of citizens, thus the institutional opportunities for cooperation promote high levels of interpersonal trust
- Support for gradual reform of society instead of revolutionary change has a positive impact on change in democracy [thus supporting the civic culture thesis]

- Support for gradual reform of society is not a function of prior experience of democracy, level of economic development, income inequality and subcultural heterogeneity. High levels of support for gradual reform of society could compensate for the presence of variables that are not conducive to democratisation
- **Example** Honduras has the lowest level of economic development and highest level of income inequality in the sample. However, 85% of the general public prefers gradual reform to revolutionary change or defending the status quo, which is the highest level in the sample. The high support for gradual reform may be the decisive influence on the transition from authoritarian to democracy, in a country whose prospect for democracy from the perspective of macroeconomic preconditions was quite poor

Conclusion

- Overall, the results of the analysis are not supportive of the thesis that civic culture attitudes are the principal or even a major cause of democracy – this is at odds with Inglehart's (1988, 1990) conclusion
- The most important explanatory variable in their analysis of the causes of democratization is not an attitude of the general public but rather a macroeconomic variable, income inequality

*Norris (2011) Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited

Summary

- **Democratic deficit:** the tensions that arise from the imbalance between the public's demand for democracy (measured by strong adherence to democratic values and rejection of authoritarian alternatives) and the perceived supply of democracy (monitored by public dissatisfaction with the democratic performance of governments in each country)

Part I Introduction [motivation and model]

- Motivations: concern about falling political trust in democracies, old and new; concern about a global democratic recession
- Central arguments
 - **Trendless fluctuations:** Contrary to the prevalent view, public support for the political system has not eroded consistently across a wide range of countries around the world – including in established democracies
 - **Democratic deficit:** In many countries today, satisfaction with the performance of democracy continues to diverge from public aspirations
 - The most plausible potential explanations for the democratic deficit suggest that this phenomenon arises from some combination of growing public expectations, negative news, and/or failing government performance
 - The democratic deficit has important consequences – including for political activism, for allegiant forms of political behavior and rule of law, and ultimately for processes of democratization
- General model of democratic deficits



- **Demand-side theories** focus upon enduring cultural shifts among the mass citizenry (e.g. modernization theory, social capital theory)
- **Intermediary accounts** emphasize the role of political communications in how people learn about democracy and regime performance
- **Supply-side theories** lay the blame for public dissatisfaction with either the *process* or the *policy* performance of democratic governments, as well as with the *institutional arrangements*

Part II Symptoms [trends]

- Ch 4: In terms of system support in a range of established democracies (ANES, GSS, Eurobarometer), there is no consistent decline in either institutional trust or national

pride [but rather fluctuations]; it is essential to distinguish trends in public attitudes that operate at different levels rather than treat 'political support' as all of one piece

- Ch 5: Cross-national patterns of system support in more than fifty countries around the world (WVS) show that (1) the endorsement of democratic attitudes are almost universal, irrespective of regime type; (2) compared with other types of regimes, autocracies display stronger confidence in public sector agencies and also feelings of nationalism; (3) pro-democratic attitudes are stronger among established democracies that have experienced this form of governance over many decades, or even centuries, including levels of satisfaction with democracy, endorsement of democratic attitudes, and the rejection of autocracy
- Ch 6: Descriptive inference shows that the democratic deficit is not increasing within either old or young democracies

Part III Diagnosis [causes]

- **Demand** (Ch 7): Democratic aspirations were not found to be associated with processes of human development nor with age effects; but educational levels, self-expression values, social trust, and associational activism all help to predict higher democratic aspirations. However, only the effects of education actually widened the democratic deficit [push against the idea of modernization as a cause]
- Ch 8: Enlightened democratic knowledge was significantly strengthened at the macro-level by longer historical experience of democratic governance in any state, by cosmopolitan communications, and by levels of economic development. At the micro-level, the cognitive skills and knowledge derived from education as well as access to news media information also strengthened enlightened political knowledge
- **Intermediary** (Ch 9): Exposure to news and information from newspapers, television and radio news, and the internet was found to have strengthened democratic values and aspirations, even after controlling for factors such as age, income, and education that characterize news users. The effects on democratic satisfaction proved more mixed, but users of television and radio news proved more satisfied with democracy, not less. Moreover, regular use of all these media reduced the democratic deficit
- **Supply** (Ch 10): *Process* performance helps to explain satisfaction with the way democratic government works. Among the *policy* indices, economic development and a subjective sense of well-being were important, but most of the other more specific economic, social, and environmental performance indicators weren't significant. Among the *institutional* factors, satisfaction with democracy was indeed strengthened by support for the winning party, but overall institutional arrangements did not appear to be important → closing the democratic deficit is thus largely about strengthening processes of democracy and the quality of governance

Part IV Prognosis [implications]

- Ch 11: Democratic orientations matter, but the actual evidence linking them with patterns of political activism is far from straightforward: democratic aspirations played a significant role in bolstering indicators of citizen interest & protest activism, as well as reinforcing compliant behavior by citizens in accordance with the law; democratic aspirations contributed to sustainable democratic regimes
- Democratization and legitimacy: in countries that have recently transitioned from autocracy, in particular, any deep and enduring democratic deficit is often thought to undermine processes of regime consolidation

*Paxton (2002) Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship

Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3088895>

Summary

1. Social capital is beneficial for the creation of democracy
2. Social capital is beneficial for the maintenance of democracy
3. Different types of associations have different effects on democracy
4. There is a reciprocal effect of democracy on associations

Introduction

- Paxton focuses on the direct measurement of associations rather than aggregate attitudes, which was done by Almond and Verba (1963)
- Definition of social capital ([Paxton 1999](#))
 - It requires an objective network of ties among individuals
 - It requires that the ties among individuals be trusting, reciprocal, and emotionally positive
- Social capital is used to operationalize a vibrant associational life

Theoretical argument

1. Social capital is beneficial for the creation of democracy
 - a. It provides a space for the creation and dissemination of discourse critical of the present government
 - i. Group ties shield individuals from outside sanctions and allow unorthodox or dissenting views. Milgram's (1965) classic research shows individuals are more likely to defy established authority in the presence of confederates
 - ii. Informal social ties are important in spreading information about grievances. Opp and Gern (1993) find that having friends critical of the East German regime was an important determinant of an individuals' tendency to protest
 - b. It provides a way for active opposition to the regime to grow
 - i. Social capital provide resources for organisation of movements and collective action
 - ii. Social ties allow people to recruit support for their movements
2. Social capital is beneficial for the maintenance of democracy
 - a. Formal memberships in voluntary associations increase the amount of political participation
 - i. It creates feelings of duty and increases a sense of interdependence with others and produces a habit of participation
 - b. Social capital also increase quality of participation, contributing to the creation of a public sphere
 - i. A public sphere is a space outside established authorities for informed, reasoned, rational-critical discourse → strengthen democratic virtues (open-mindedness, tolerance etc) and creates informed and reasoned public opinion
 - ii. Relationships increase communication and flow of information → increase access to political ideas + extremist ideas more easily challenged

- iii. Helps to socialise the next gen → ensures stability of democracy
3. Different types of association have different effects on democracy
 - a. **Example** A militia or ethnic separatist group might have high internal social capital but exacerbate society cleavages in the larger community.
 - b. Negative effects are expected when there is high within group trust but low between group trust → indicates strengthening of cleavages
4. There is a reciprocal effect of democracy on associations
 - a. More associations will exist if governments allow them to exist. Totalitarian regimes often actively oppose the formation of associations. Once associations exist, they help support democratisation which in turn allow for more associations
 - b. Thus, there is a reciprocal and mutually reinforcing effect

Data and methodology

- Data: WVS and the Union of International Associations
- Methodology: cross-lagged panel design

Findings and conclusion

- The findings have shown that the relationship between social capital and democracy is reciprocal
- Certain types of associations do better in promoting democracy. Connected associations had a strong *positive* influence on democracy, while isolated associations had a strong *negative* influence on democracy

Putnam (1993) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy

Summary

- Explores the crucial importance of social capital in Italian regional governments
 - Changing formal institutions can change political practice
 - Social context & history profoundly condition the effectiveness of institutions
 - Most institutional history moves slowly

Ch 1 Introduction: studying institutional performance

- **Context** After a century as a strongly centralized state, in 1970, the Italian govt began to implement a constitutional provision to set up regional governments
- Regional experiment: on paper, the twenty institutions are virtually identical, but the social, economic, political, and cultural contexts into which the new institutions were implanted differed dramatically

Ch 2 Changing the rules: two decades of institutional development

- The regional reform has significantly affected grassroots politics in Italy
- The new institutions have taken root, gained autonomy, and (slowly) won constituent support; they have attracted an up-and-coming cadre of professional politicians
- **Positives** The regional governments are more familiar with regional realities and more accessible to regional demands than the remote Roman ministries they replaced. They provide multiple laboratories for policy innovation. They help to nurture a moderate, pragmatic, tolerant style of policy making and conflict management—"a new way of doing politics". They engage the interests of regional social groups and community leaders, & are gradually earning cautious approval from their constituents
- **Negatives** The administrative efficiency that some regionalist reformers anticipated has not materialized; the regional reform appears to be exacerbating, rather than mitigating, the historical disparities between North and South

Ch 3 Measuring institutional performance [how successful were the regional govts?]

- Index of institutional performance: constituted by 12 indicators
- Some regional governments have been consistently more successful than others; these differences in performance have been stable over more than a decade, and are widely recognized by their constituents (both ordinary citizens and community leaders)
- Some places are better governed than others, even when the governments involved have identical structures and equivalent legal and financial resources

Ch 4 Explaining institutional performance [why were some govts more successful?]

- Four measurements of civil society: incidence of newspaper readership, vibrancy of associational life, turnout for referenda, incidence of preference voting for a particular candidate from the party list (a negative indicator)
- There is a strong correlation between regional governmental performance and the strength of the civic community (92)
- Some regions of Italy are blessed with vibrant networks and norms of civic engagement, while others are cursed with vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of distrust. These differences in civic life turn out to play a key role in explaining institutional success

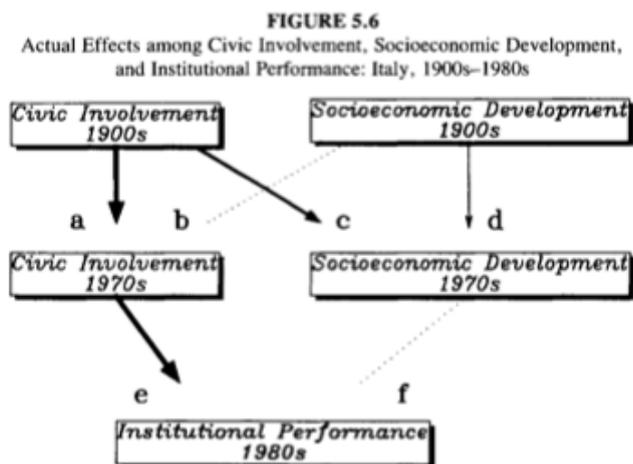
- The success/failure of regional governments was wholly uncorrelated with virtually all measures of political fragmentation, ideological polarization, social conflict (117)
- By far the most important factor in explaining good government is the degree to which social & political life in a region approximates the ideal of the civic community

Ch 5 Tracing the roots of the civic community [why are some regions more civic?]

- Around 1100, two contrasting and innovative regimes were established in different parts of Italy—a powerful monarchy in the south (hierarchical and autocratic) and a remarkable set of communal republics in the center and north (egalitarian)
- From this early medieval epoch through the unification of Italy in the 19th century, we trace systematic regional differences in patterns of civic involvement and social solidarity (the two systems evolved by their own logic, the first gaining experience of ‘vertical’ cultures and institutions, the second of ‘horizontal’ ones)
- One could have predicted the success or failure of regional govt in Italy in the 1980s w/ extraordinary accuracy from patterns of civic engagement nearly a century earlier
- The prosperity of the communal republics was arguably the consequence, as much as the cause, of the norms and networks of civic engagement

- Our bivariate model (Figure 5.6) is too simple to account for all of the factors that may influence regional economic progress, such as natural resources, convenience to major markets, and national economic policies. Nevertheless, the evidence of this chapter dramatizes the power of historical continuities to affect the odds of institutional success

- Note: thick arrows = strong predictor, no arrow = no correlation



Ch 6 Social capital and institutional success [why is the past so powerful?]

- Basic idea 1: social equilibria are self-reinforcing, thus they can persist over time
- Basic idea 2: the equilibrium with civic engagement brings better outcomes
- In all societies, dilemmas of collective action hamper attempts to cooperate for mutual benefit, in politics and economics; third-party enforcement is an inadequate solution
- Voluntary cooperation depends on social capital. Norms of generalized reciprocity and networks of civic engagement encourage social trust and cooperation; individuals are able to be trusting (and not merely gullible) because of the social norms and networks within which their actions are embedded. In turn, stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative
- **Virtuous circles** result in social equilibria with high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement, and collective well-being. These traits define the civic community. Conversely, the absence of these traits in the uncivic community is also self-reinforcing. Defection, distrust, shirking, exploitation, isolation, disorder, and stagnation intensify one another in a suffocating miasma of **vicious circles**
- Norms and networks of civic engagement contribute to economic prosperity and are in turn reinforced by that prosperity

Reher (2014) Explaining cross-national variation in the relationship between priority congruence and satisfaction with democracy

Summary

1. Citizens do care about a lack of congruence beyond the left-right axis
2. The level of political interest moderates this relationship

Citizen satisfaction

- Citizen satisfaction with democracy is a central indicator of regime support and the overall legitimacy and stability of democratic systems
- Citizen satisfaction is influenced by their evaluations of input and output dimensions of democracies
- Input: procedural quality of democracy i.e. whether they approve of the process
- Output: substantive results produced by the polity they live in e.g. economic growth

Citizens do care about a lack of congruence

- Citizens do care about a lack of congruence beyond the left-right axis and also become less satisfied when the government deviates from their views on matters of redistribution, European integration and with smaller effect sizes – on social lifestyle, immigration and environmental protection

The level of political interest moderates this relationship

- Citizens with a strong interest in politics suffer most from policy deviations and are sensitive to deviations on the more specific dimensions like environmental protection. Those who have low interest in politics tend not to care about such issues
- This can be attributed to the high demand for responsiveness on the government that those who have high political interest have → resulting in more sensitivity to policy incongruences

Stecker and Tausendpfund (2016) Multidimensional government-citizen congruence and satisfaction with democracy

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12147>

Summary

- Stecker and Tausendpfund (2016) find that citizens are less satisfied with democracy when their views differ from that of the government on policy dimensions beyond the general left-right axis into areas such as redistribution, European immigration, social lifestyle, immigration and environmental protection. The extent of which depends on their level of political interest
- Level of interest matters more than degree of representation

Theoretical argument

- Citizens' satisfaction with democracy (SWD)

Data and methodology

- Data: 2010 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the 2008 and 2012 waves of the European Social Survey (ESS) covering 15 countries containing the responses of some 45,000 citizens and the policy positions of 31 cabinets
- Methodology: OLS regressions with fixed country effects

Findings

- “On average, citizens' SWD decreases when the government of the day deviates from the citizens' preferences. Most importantly, this reductive effect extends beyond incongruence on the left-right axis and is almost equally strong for European integration and clearly present on matters of redistribution”
 - A perfectly anti-EU citizen will have their satisfaction with democracy suppressed by around nine points on the 0–100 satisfaction-scale when she or he is facing a perfectly pro-integrationist government and vice versa for a pro-EU citizen

Evaluation

- **Strength** First comparative study of multidimensional government-citizen policy congruence
- **Weakness** Combined ESS and CHES surveys; Adams et al (2011): citizens are sensitive to their perceived ideological distance to parties which are not in line with measures considered objective by political scientists; therefore, Stecker and Tausendpfund (2016) had to rely on expert positions on left-right alignment; also low adjusted-R² at around 0.2 although as more controls were introduced the value increased to 0.389

Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Summary

- Belonging to voluntary associations is a woefully inadequate foundation for good citizenship for three reasons
 - The voluntary associations people are most likely to join are decidedly homogeneous and therefore incapable of generating the benefits claimed
 - Civic participation does not lead to political participation, and in some cases actually turns people away from politics, leaving them less, not more, politically engaged
 - Many groups do not pursue the kinds of goals that would be necessary for promoting democratic citizenship
- Good citizens need to learn that democracy is messy, inefficient, and conflict-ridden. Voluntary associations do not teach these lessons

Civic participation as the cure-all

- Volunteering is said to instill civic values, enhance political behavior, and improve democracy and society
- (1) Interaction among diverse people will automatically enhance democratic values (e.g. tolerance, interpersonal trust, sense of political efficacy)
- (2) Civic participation fosters political participation (active group members learn civic skills and passive group members are more likely to be recruited)
- (3) Democracy is strengthened by widespread involvement in voluntary associations; voluntary associations increase social capital in communities

Why civic participation is not a panacea

- (1) Groups tend to be homogeneous because groups attract people similar to members and encourage similarity among members; in turn, membership in a homogeneous group would not improve the extent to which trust is generalized to people outside it
- Also, conflicting viewpoints can dampen the desire to become involved in civic participation → people rarely become involved in heterogeneous groups
- The evidence that joining voluntary associations (homogeneous or heterogeneous) increases civic values is decidedly weak
- (2) Voluntary association activity might not increase political activity
 - Associations increasingly limit members' participation
 - The federal government's role is less likely to stimulate political participation
 - Civic participation leads to negative views of democratic governance
 - Increased generalised trust enables more free riders (wrt politics)
- (3) Groups can be antidemocratic, disengaging members from the political system

Civic engagement and the good citizen

- Participatory democrats and advocates of civic participation often assume that people want to be involved in politics, but many people are not interested in politics
- Voluntary groups perform wonderful services and have undeniable value to society, but their effect on democratic politics is tenuous and possibly negative
- The route to enhancing meaningful civic life is not badgering people to become engaged because politics is fun and easy; it is asking people to become engaged because politics is dreary and difficult