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Are Levels of Democracy Influenced by Mass Attitudes? Testing a Central Premise of the Political Culture Approach

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The idea that mass attitudes influence the chances of democracy to emerge and survive is the quintessential premise of an entire school of thought in political culture (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1966). It inspired a long tradition of survey-based political culture studies, including work by Inglehart (1977, 1990), Jennings and van Deth (1989), Gibson, Dutch and Tedin (1992), Kaase and Newton (1995), Klingemann and Fuchs (1995), Mishler and Rose (2000), Newton (2001), Bratton and Mattes (2001), Gibson (2001), Rose (2001), Norris (2002), Dalton (2004), Diamond (2003), and Dalton and Shin (2006) among others.

This work deepened our understanding of the relation between people's socioeconomic status and their political attitudes and of the impact of attitudes on voting behavior, civic engagement and protest participation. All these insights are important in their own right. But they tell us little about the central assumption why attitudes are studied in the first place: that they make a difference for the level of democracy a society attains and sustains.

Multi-country studies testing whether mass attitudes affect a society's level of democracy are rare. The few exceptions include work by Muller and Seligson (1994), Inglehart (1997: ch. 6), Seligson (2002), Welzel, Inglehart and Klingemann (2003). The most comprehensive study on this topic has been presented by Inglehart and Welzel (2005: 254-71). Their major finding is that among a number of supposedly pro-democratic attitudes, a syndrome of emancipative

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attitudes (labeled “self-expression values”) is most conducive to high levels of democracy. This is an important finding but its empirical solidity is unclear in three essential points.

First, the impact of emancipative attitudes is shown for only one out of six available indicators of democracy, so it is unclear if the impact of attitudes on democracy persists using alternative measures of democracy. Second, Inglehart and Welzel’s analysis includes no controls for structural societal variables that influence a society’s level of democracy, such as economic development or the equality in the distribution of resources (Boix 2003; Doorenspleet 2004). Thus, we do not know if an effect of attitudes on democracy persists controlling major structural properties of societies. Third, Inglehart and Welzel do not differentiate the sustenance and the attainment of democracy as two distinct ways through which attitudes can be conducive to high levels of democracy. So even if the effect they find is indeed causal, it is unclear in which way exactly it is causal. In summary, our knowledge of whether mass attitudes really help determine a society’s level of democracy, precisely which attitudes do so, and in which ways they do so, is still insufficient. The status of the most central premise of the political culture approach remains ultimately in doubt.

This article tries to fill this gap using the database with the widest coverage of societies for which attitudinal data are available, the World Values Surveys (WVS). In analyzing these data my argument develops in three sections. In the first section I outline the reasons why mass attitudes might affect democracy. In the second section I describe my variables and outline the plan of the analyses. In the third section I follow this plan testing which mass attitudes, if any, show an independent effect on various measures of democracy.

WHY SHOULD MASS ATTITUDES AFFECT DEMOCRACY?

How can mass attitudes affect a society's level of democracy? I assume that mass attitudes can do this if they motivate the mass actions and coalitions that eventually determine which level of democracy is attained and sustained in a society. What reasons and evidence support this assumption?

Karatnycky and Ackermann (2005) demonstrate that mass actions and coalitions that articulate demands for democratic freedoms have a significant influence on whether a society moves from nondemocracy to democracy, whether it moves to incomplete democracy only or to fully fledged democracy, and whether it remains democratic or falls back into a nondemocratic state. This finding reflects a recent turn in democratization research.

In a social movement perspective, authors have come to question the claim of O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Higley and Burton (1989), Karl and Schmitter (1991), Przeworski (1992) and others that democracy is attained and sustained mainly through elite pacts, independent from mass demands. Against this claim it is argued that democracy is most likely to be established and defended when social coalitions and movements that campaign for democratic freedoms find wide support among the population (Foweraker and Landman 1997; Paxton 2002; Schock 2005). As outlined by Markoff (1996), popular support for civil and political freedoms has already been a driving element of the liberal revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, as a result of which early limited versions of democracy have been established. Two centuries later, mass campaigns for democratic freedoms have again been a driving element in many of the democratic transitions that occurred during the Third Wave of democratization (Huntington 1997). Even if one agrees that all transitions to democracy are eventually set into effect by elites, a central finding of

Casper and Taylor (1996) is noteworthy: the chances of a pro-democratic elite camp to manage a democratic transition increase with its support among the public.

This view points to the conclusion that mass support for actions and coalitions that demand democratic freedoms is a significant factor for the chances of democracy to emerge and to survive. If this is so, the mass attitudes *motivating* these coalitions and actions should be a decisive factor in the same sense. No question, pro-democratic mass actions are influenced by many factors, such as the mobilization of sufficient resources and the presence of appropriate opportunity structures. But it is unlikely that resources and opportunities *alone* do generate pro-democratic mass actions, unless people hold the attitudes that motivate their engagement in these actions. The relevance of attitudes resides in their *motivational effect*, channeling mass actions and coalitions towards particular outcomes, such as democracy. Under otherwise equal conditions, the chances of democracy to emerge and to survive should be greater when more people think of democratic freedoms as a valuable good. If one accepts this proposition, there is reason to examine whether and to what extent mass attitudes have a systematic effect on the level of democracy a society attains and sustains.

The next question is which mass attitudes in particular might have a pro-democratic effect. Screening the political culture literature, one finds quite a number of attitudes to which authors assign pro-democratic effects. I propose to group these attitudes into three major types, each of which points to a different motivational effect by which the attitudes in question are likely to impact on democracy.

System Preferences: Based on Easton's (1965) work on political support, many scholars believe that which political system people prefer influences the chances of the given system to survive (Gibson 1997; Klingemann 1999; Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn 2000; Newton and Norris

2000; Bratton and Mattes 2001; Mishler and Rose 2001; Newton 2001; Seligson 2002; Shin and Wells 2005). Thus, mass actions that challenge authoritarian systems and foster democratic ones are more likely when more people prefer a democratic system and reject an authoritarian one. In other words, a combination of pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian system preferences should help a society to sustain and attain high levels of democracy.

Communal Norms: In the tradition of Tocqueville many scholars emphasize the benefits of communal norms that tie people to each other and to their society at large (Putnam 1993). Communal norms manifest collective identities and bonds of solidarity that make people inclined to become engaged in public affairs. Such norms are reflected in the ties that people have to the institutions and associations in their society. They are also reflected in people's adherence to norms of solidarity and in people's trust to their fellow citizens. Communal norms provide social capital, helping to overcome collective action dilemmas: they make it easier for people to join forces, create voluntary associations, and build up civil societies that manifest people power. Because communal norms build the basis of collective actions in general, they build also the basis of pro-democratic actions in particular. Hence, communal norms are supposed to unfold bonding effects that are needed to motivate the actions undermining autocracy and fostering democracy.

Emancipative Ideals: Following Sen's (1999) notion of "development as freedom," Welzel, Inglehart and Klingemann (2003) place democracy in a human development framework within which democracy is seen as an emancipative achievement because it is centered on civil and political freedoms designed to empower people. If this is true and the essence of democracy is indeed human emancipation, it is logical to assume that emancipative ideals provide the chief stimulus in motivating people to struggle for democratic freedoms. According to Inglehart and

Welzel (2005) these emancipative ideals become manifest in a syndrome of “self-expression values,” the various components of which emphasize human freedom, equality, and tolerance. The larger the proportion of people emphasizing these ideals, the likelier is it that a significant portion of the population becomes active in campaigns for democratic freedoms, be it to establish them, to defend them or to widen them.

Summing up, three different types of mass attitudes are considered as being relevant in helping to determine which level of democracy is attained and sustained in a society. First, a combination of pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian *system preferences* supposedly motivates people to resist authoritarian systems and to support democratic ones. Second, *communal norms* are assumed to overcome collective action dilemmas so that people find easier together to struggle for democratic freedoms. Third, a syndrome of *emancipative ideals* is claimed to give people the firmest motivation to stand up for democratic freedoms. If these propositions hold true, a wide social radius in the respective attitudes should be conducive to high levels of democracy. To see for which, if any, of these attitudes this is true, is the purpose of my analyses.

VARIABLES, DATA SOURCES, AND PLAN OF THE ANALYSES

Measures of Mass Attitudes

I measure attitudes using the WVS, which provides data for some 70 societies representing 75 percent of the world population.¹ I use data from the *earliest* available surveys of the second to fourth WVS-rounds², covering the period from 1989 to 1999, with most of these measures taken from the early 1990s (the mean year of measurement is 1993). Using these data I measure societal-level tendencies in individual attitudes. Only societal-level aggregations of attitudes can affect democracy, for democracy only exists at the societal level. I aggregate each attitude by

calculating national percentages of people holding the attitude in question. Percentage measures indicate the social radius that an attitude has in a society. The general assumption is that the more widespread an attitude is in a society, the stronger is its aggregate impact on democracy.

System Preferences: In measuring people's preferences for a democratic system it is standard to ask them how good an idea it is "to have a democratic system" and how strongly they agree with the statement that "democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government." I measure the national percentages of people expressing strong agreement with these statements. However, explicit preferences for democracy do not necessarily involve a corresponding rejection of authoritarian rule, in which case the democratic preferences can be meaningless. Thus, it became standard to check a public's preferences for a democratic system against its rejection of an authoritarian system (Klingemann 1999; Bratton and Mattes 2001; Mishler and Rose 2001; Shin and Wells 2005). Therefore, I include two items, asking for people's stance to the idea of "having the army rule" and "having strong leaders who do not have to bother with parliaments and elections." I measure national percentages of people expressing a strong rejection of these statements.³

Communal Norms: Following standard practice I measure communal norms by attitudes showing how large a share of a population is tied to the associations and institutions of its society, how large a share adheres to norms of solidarity, and how large a share trusts its fellow citizens (Knack and Keefer 1997; Levi and Stoker 2000; Rose-Ackerman 2001; Norris 2002: ch. 8). I differentiate ties to associations by measuring national percentages of people reporting membership in any of three types of "sociotropic" associations (charity, environmental, cultural associations) and in any of three types of "utilitarian" associations (professional associations, labor unions, political parties). With respect to confidence in institutions, I measure national

percentages of people expressing at least “quite a lot of confidence” in each of three types of “state” institutions (army, police, civil service) and in each of three types of “political” institutions (government, parliament, political parties). I measure adherence to norms of solidarity by percentages of people expressing a strong rejection of each of the three following forms of selfish behavior: “accepting a bribe in the course of one’s duties,” “claiming government benefits for which one is not entitled,” and “cheating on taxes.” Insofar as people’s trust in their fellow citizens is concerned, I measure the national percentage of people saying that “most people can be trusted.”

Emancipative Ideals: Inglehart and Welzel (2005) describe a broad syndrome of “self-expression values” that taps emancipative ideals. The respective components include: “liberty aspirations” reflected in postmaterialist priorities for civil liberties (freedom of speech) and political liberties (more say in government decisions, more say in one’s community), “affinity to expressive actions” reflected in self-reported participation in such activities as petitions,⁴ “tolerance of human diversity” reflected in the acceptance of homosexuality, and again “trust in people” reflecting an altruistic attitude to people in general. I measure each of these attitudes by the percentage of people holding the respective attitude.

As this overview shows, trust in people is contested. On one hand, it is seen as a communal attitude, indicating a sense of reciprocity with other members of one’s community. On the other hand, trust in people is seen as an emancipative attitude, indicating a generally positive view of ordinary people. According to the latter view, trust in people is supposed to share with other emancipative attitudes a “general belief into human potentialities” (Lasswell 1951:502). Hence, an emphasis on people’s freedom, on tolerating the diversity among people, and on trust in people should all go together in an overarching emancipative orientation. Yet,

whether trust in people is indeed tied to emancipative attitudes or to communal attitudes is an empirical question that only a factor analysis can decide.

Table 1. Dimensional Structure of Mass Attitudes

	DIMENSIONS		
	System Preferences	Communal Norms	Emancipative Ideals
Support of Idea of Democracy	.90		
Support of Democratic System	.88		
Rejection of Strong Leader	.81		
Rejection of Army Rule	.58		.53
Confidence in State Institutions		.77	
Ties to Sociotropic Associations		.71	
Norms of Solidarity		.67	
Liberty Aspirations			.83
Affinity to Expressive Actions			.79
Tolerance of Human Diversity			.78
Trust in People			.69
Explained Variance	16.2%	24.8%	27.3%

Principal Components Analysis with varimax rotation. Extraction of factors with Eigenvalues greater 1. Keyser-Meyer-Olkin measure is .70. Loadings smaller .40 not displayed. Listwise deletion (N=64 national populations).

The factor analysis in Table 1 reveals a three-dimensional space giving empirical support to my conceptual typology. Pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian preferences go together in a common dimension of system preferences. Confidence in state institutions, ties to sociotropic associations, and norms of solidarity go together in a dimension of communal norms.⁵ Liberty aspirations, affinity to expressive actions, tolerance of human diversity, and trust in people cluster in a dimension of emancipative ideals. In light of these findings, trust in people is an emancipative attitude, not a communal one. It is more widespread when other emancipative attitudes are more widespread. Conversely, the radius of trust in people is unrelated to the radius of communal attitudes.⁶ These results justify summarizing trust in people with other

emancipative attitudes in an overall measure of a society's emancipative orientation. This is done using the factor loadings in Table 1 as weights in an additive combination of the component attitudes. In the same way I create summary indices for the other two dimensions of attitudes, system preferences and communal norms.

Measures of Democracy

Levels of democracy are my dependent variable, so I measure them at a time *after* mass attitudes, that is, over the period 2000-2004. I use indices measuring the absence or presence of democracy in degrees. This approach is based on the assumption that the elements defining democracy can be in place to different extent and in combinations of differing completeness (Elkins 2000).

A classical approach defines democracy by constitutional constraints on state power and by popular controls over state power. An index using information on power limitations and popular controls is the Polity IV index (Marshall and Jaggers 2000), which yields a scale from –10 (pure autocracy) to +10 (perfect democracy). As with all other indices, I transform this index into a percentage scale from 0 to 100. I label this index “limits and control of power.” Another approach defines democracy by “free” popular elections to fill power positions. For this definition I use Vanhanen's (2003) index of electoral democracy, which combines measures of the “inclusiveness” and the “competitiveness” of national elections. This measure is labeled “electoral inclusion and competitiveness.” A third perspective defines democracy by the rights it grants citizens. Two indices employ this definition. Cingranelli and Richards (2004) use information on human rights practices to assess what they call “physical integrity rights” (on a scale from 0 to 8) and “empowerment rights” (on a scale from 0 to 10). I combine these indices to measure “integrity and empowerment rights.” Likewise, Freedom House (2005) ranks

countries in terms of “civil liberties” and “political rights” (both measured on scales from 1 to 7). Again, I use a combined measure of “civil and political freedom.” The broadest measure of democracy is one of the World Bank’s five “good governance” indicators, which they label “voice and accountability.” This measure is a combination of various aspects of democracy taken from nineteen different sources (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi 2005).

These indices measure democracy from different definitional perspectives. Yet one suspects that these are just facets of one underlying concept, democracy, the components of which might have one thing in common: they tap an aspect of people empowerment. This seems indeed to be true. The factor analysis in Appendix-Table 2 shows that “limits and control of power,” “electoral inclusion and competition,” “integrity and empowerment,” as well as “civil and political freedom” all represent just one underlying dimension—democracy--with factor loadings of .89, .90, .90 and .96. This justifies summarizing these four democracy indices into a factor-weighted combination that indicates a society’s “summary democracy level.” This is my sixth measure of democracy, transformed into a scale from 0 (complete absence of democracy) to 100 (full presence of democracy).⁷

Plan of the Analyses

My analyses employ a six-step test of whether mass attitudes at time 1 have an independent effect on levels of democracy at time 2. In step one I sort out the mass attitude that shows the most consistent effect on all six measures of democracy. In steps two and three I subject this effect to two independence tests, isolating the attitudinal effect from a society’s structural properties and from its prior experience with democracy. As these tests confirm the existence of an independent attitudinal effect on democracy, I analyze in steps four and five why exactly it

exists: because mass tendencies in the respective attitude help bringing increases in the level of democracy; or because they help preventing decreases in the level of democracy; or because they do both--depending on the initial level of democracy.

ANALYSES

Step 1: Which Mass Attitude is the Most Influential One?

Table 2 shows beta-coefficients for 96 bivariate regressions in which the percentage measures of each attitude are used as predictors for each of the six indices of democracy. As expected, mass support for democracy always has a positive effect on levels of democracy. But the effect is insignificant in most regressions. Mass rejection of authoritarian systems, too, shows a positive effect on democracy but this effect is significant in all regressions. It is even stronger than the effect of the combined measure of support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian rule. Rejection of authoritarian rule is quite plausibly a better indicator of pro-democratic system preferences, showing a stronger effect on levels of democracy, when support of democracy itself is inflated by lip service.

The social radius of ties to associations shows positive effects on democracy but they are very small and always insignificant. Thus, more widespread ties to associations do not contribute to higher levels of democracy. They are not detrimental to democracy either; they simply do not systematically affect democracy, neither positively nor negatively. By contrast, norms of solidarity and confidence in institutions both show significantly negative effects on democracy. Thus, a wider social radius in these attitudes contributes to *lower* levels of democracy.

Table 2. Zero-Order Effects of Mass Attitudes on Levels of Democracy

	Dependent Variables: Level Measures of Democracy (after 2000)					
	Limits and Control of Power 2000-03 (#17)	Electoral Inclusion and Competition 2001 (#18)	Integrity and Empowerment Rights 2000-03 (#19)	Civil and Political Freedom 2000-04 (#20)	Voice and Accountability 2000-04 (#21)	Summary Democracy Level 2000-03/04 (#22)
Attitudinal Predictors (Ø mid 1990s)						
System Preferences:						
Rejection of Army Rule (#01)	.40***	.57***	.67***	.59***	.62***	.65***
Rejection of Strong Leader (#02)	.21*	.35**	.43***	.38***	.42***	.45***
Support of Democratic System (#03)	.08	.20	.26*	.19	.25*	.28*
Support of Idea of Democracy (#04)	.03	.08	.16	.10	.14	.16
<i>Summary Indicator:</i>						
Democratic Orientation (#05)	.18	.33*	.43***	.34**	.39***	.44***
Communal Norms:						
Confidence in State Institutions (#06)	-.28*	-.31***	-.27	-.26*	-.20*	-.30**
Confidence in Political Institutions (#07)	-.33*	-.28**	-.31**	-.31*	-.27*	-.30**
Norms of Solidarity (#08)	-.29*	-.34**	-.26*	-.23*	-.24*	-.26*
Ties to Sociotropic Associations (#09)	.08	.08	.06	.12	.06	.03
Ties to Utilitarian Associations (#10)	.01	.12	.04	.07	.01	.01
<i>Summary Indicator:</i>						
Communal Orientation (#11)	-.20	-.31**	-.22*	-.20	-.18	-.22*
Emancipative Ideals:						
Liberty Aspirations (#12)	.59***	.61***	.67***	.73***	.73***	.73***
Affinity to Expressive Actions (#13)	.54***	.69***	.68***	.68***	.74***	.72***
Tolerance of Human Diversity (#14)	.47**	.64***	.62***	.58***	.63***	.67***
Trust in People (#15)	.32**	.49***	.49***	.41***	.50***	.51***
<i>Summary Indicator:</i>						
Emancipative Orientation (#16)	.61***	.74***	.77***	.76***	.82***	.81***
N	62-68					

Entries are standardized beta-coefficients from bivariate regressions. Numbers in brackets after the # sign indicate the location of the variable description in the Internet-Appendix under "Variable List" attached to this paper. Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.005

In the case of solidarity norms, the anti-democratic effect might hint to a widespread misinterpretation of this attitude. If many people reject cheating on taxes and other forms of unsocial behavior, this can mean that such behavior is so pervasive in a society that many people see it as a major problem and reject it for this reason. If this so, more widespread rejection of unsocial behavior in fact indicates a more widespread violation of solidarity norms, not a more widespread practice of them. In this case, the anti-democratic effect of this attitude is to be expected because in the absence of solidarity norms it is unlikely that people join forces to keep elites under democratic pressures.

Confidence in institutions, too, shows a negative effect on levels of democracy. This seems counter-intuitive at first glance. But it makes sense, if more widespread confidence means a larger proportion of uncritical citizens (Norris 1999; Klingemann 1999). In this case mass pressures that keep elites responsive should be largely absent. In other words, widespread confidence in institutions should discourage pro-democratic mass actions, in which case the anti-democratic effect of this attitude is understandable.

Each component of emancipative ideals shows a highly significant and strongly positive effect on each of the six indicators of democracy. Among these components, the two highest loading ones--liberty aspirations and affinity to expressive actions--represent most clearly the liberating impetus of emancipative ideals. Accordingly, they show the strongest effects on a society's level of democracy. The weakest component of emancipative ideals—trust in people—also shows a significant pro-democratic effect but it is the weakest effect among all four components. Still, the summary indicator of emancipative ideals has an even stronger pro-democratic effect than each of its components alone.

On the basis of zero-order effects, a public's overall emancipative orientation shows by far the most consistently significant and strongest positive influence on all six measures of democracy. As Appendix-Tables 3-1 and 3-2 show, this result holds regardless against which other mass attitude one controls the effect of a public's emancipative orientation. Among all supposedly pro-democratic attitudes, emancipative ones seem to be the most influential. For this reason, the following analyses focus on this mass attitude, testing the independence of its pro-democratic effect.

Step 2: Is the Effect of Emancipative Attitudes Free From Structural Causality?

Structural theories of democracy, such as world system theory, modernization theory, and resource distribution theory, have been widely tested and confirmed (Gasiorowski and Power 1998; Boix 2003; Vanhanen 2003; Doorenspleet 2004; Ruta 2006). This raises the question of how our findings relate to these theories. Structural theorists hold that a society's social and economic properties are the decisive determinants of democracy. Confronted with the previous finding, advocates of these theories might argue that a public's emancipative orientation reflects these properties and shows an effect on democracy only because of this. If this were true, the emancipative orientation would show no pro-democratic effect once one controls for a society's structural properties. Regression analyses in Table 3 illustrate the impact of a public's emancipative orientation on democracy, controlling for the four structural properties that are regularly found to be most important for democracy: per capita GDP indicating economic wealth; a society's profit from world market integration measured by the per capita return of exports; the equality of the distribution of socioeconomic resources measured by Vanhanen's (1997) index of resource distribution; and ethnic fractionalization.

Table 3. The Strongest Attitudinal Effect on Democracy under Control of a Society's Structural Properties

Dependent Variables: Level Measures of Democracy (after 2000)						
Predictors (early-mid 1990s):	Limits and Control of Power 2000-03	Electoral Inclusion and Competition 2001	Integrity and Empowerment Rights 2000-03	Civil and Political Freedom 2000-04	Voice and Accountability 2000-04	Summary Democracy Level 2000-03/04
Per Capita GDP in PPP (#30)	-.34 (-1.08)	.05 (.22)	-.15 (-.65)	-.17 (-.68)	-.12 (-.56)	-.05 (-.22)
Per Capita Return of Exports (#31)	-.07 (-.42)	.23 (1.74)	.25 (1.92)	-.01 (-.05)	.08 (.71)	.07 (.58)
Equal Resource Distribution (#32)	.42 (1.44)	-.01 (-.01)	.09 (.40)	.28 (1.16)	.26 (1.26)	.11 (.53)
Ethnic Fractionalization (#34)	-.07 (-.69)	-.18* (-2.09)	-.15 (-1.82)	-.07 (-.78)	-.09 (-1.16)	-.13 (-1.69)
Emancipative Orientation	.57** (2.90)	.48*** (2.91)	.60*** (3.95)	.66*** (4.10)	.62*** (4.52)	.69*** (4.64)
Adjusted R ²	.36	.61	.63	.58	.69	.70
N	65	65	66	66	66	64

Entries are standardized regression coefficients (betas) with T-ratios in parentheses.

Numbers after the # sign indicate location of the variable description under "Variable List" in internet appendix attached to this paper.

Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.005

The effect of a public's emancipative orientation still shows the strongest and most significant pro-democratic effect if one isolates it from the effects of a society's structural properties. By contrast, even though *all* of these structural properties show significant zero-order effects on levels of democracy⁸, *none* of these effects remains significant when a public's emancipative orientation enters the picture.⁹ The pro-democratic effect of a public's emancipative orientation is largely free from structural causation.

Step 3: Is the Effect of Emancipative Attitudes Free From Reverse Causality?

It is possible that the pro-democratic effect of a public's emancipative orientation only exists because this orientation is itself produced by prior democracy. In this case the causal order would be exactly reversed. If this were so, the effect of the emancipative orientation on subsequent democracy must become insignificant as we isolate it from the influence of prior democracy.

The regressions in Table 4 control the effect of the emancipative orientation for a society's ethnic fractionalization and the three socioeconomic variables used before. However, as I also intend to introduce controls for prior democracy, collinearity problems can become serious. Therefore, I summarize the three socioeconomic variables into one variable, labeled "economic development factor," since they represent a common underlying dimension.¹⁰

I introduce two controls for prior democracy. First, I include lagged measures of the respective dependent variables, taken from a period immediately before a public's emancipative orientation was measured (i.e., 1984-88). This procedure isolates the emancipative effect from the part that depends on a society's *recent* democratic experience. Second, I include the number of years in a country's history spent under democracy until 1988, which isolates the emancipative effect from the part that depends on a society's *entire* democratic tradition.

The analyses of Table 4 indicate that against both controls the pro-democratic effect of a public's emancipative orientation remains highly significant. In other words, the pro-democratic effect of emancipative ideals is free from reverse causation.

Table 4. The Strongest Attitudinal Effect on Democracy under Control of Structural Properties and Prior Democracy

Predictors:	Dependent Variables: Level Measures of Democracy (after 2000)					
	Limits and Control of Power 2000-03	Electoral Inclusion and Competition 2001	Integrity and Empowerment Rights 2000-03	Civil and Political Freedom 2000-04	Voice and Accountability 2000-04	Summary Democracy Level 2000-03/04
Economic Development Factor (#33)	-.01 (-.03)	.53* (2.30)	.50* (2.27)	.16 (.77)	.36 (1.85)	.29 (1.46)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-.03 (-.29)	-.15 (-1.61)	-.10 (-1.08)	-.04 (-.37)	-.06 (-.76)	-.11 (-1.31)
Initial Democracy Level ^{a)}	.17 (.99)	-.17 (-1.03)	-.14 (-.87)	-.01 (-.05)	-.12 (-.78)	-.13 (-.87)
Years under Democracy until 1988 (#23)	-.24 (-1.22)	-.15 (-.98)	-.17 (-1.16)	-.16 (-.98)	-.11 (-.79)	-.08 (-.62)
Emancipative Orientation	.69** (3.30)	.50** (2.89)	.57*** (3.65)	.75*** (4.45)	.68*** (4.70)	.71*** (4.84)
Adjusted R ²	.37	.61	.64	.58	.69	.71
N	64	64	65	65	65	63

Entries are standardized regression coefficients (betas) with T-ratios in parentheses.

Numbers after the # sign indicate location of the variable description in the Internet-Appendix for this paper under "Variable List".

^{a)} Respective dependent variable measured 1984-88, except for "voice and accountability" for which score on overall democracy dimension in 1984-88 is used.

Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.005

Step 4: How Do Emancipative Attitudes Contribute to High Levels of Democracy?

A public's emancipative orientation indeed seems to be conducive to high levels of democracy. But how exactly are emancipative ideals conducive to high levels of democracy? There are three alternatives: more widespread emancipative ideals help prevent losses in the level of democracy; or they help achieving gains in the level of democracy; or they do both--depending on the level that is given.

To test these possibilities I create two variables using a society's summary democracy level. First, for each society I calculate the absolute value of its *loss* in democracy from the pre-survey period (1984-88) to the post-survey period (2000-04). The loss ranges from 0 in case of no decline to a maximum of +100 in case a society had declined from the 100-percent level to the 0-level.¹¹ Analogously, for each society I calculate the absolute value of its *gain* in democracy. The gain, too, ranges from 0 in case of no increase to a maximum of +100 in case a society had climbed from the 0-level to the 100-percent level.

When analyzing democratic losses and gains one must take into account that societies have greatly varying loss and gain potentials, depending on their initial levels of democracy. The loss potential equals the initial democracy level: a society at the 60-percent level can lose 60 percent. A society's gain potential, too, depends on its initial democracy level, though inversely: it is the difference between 100 and the initial democracy level. A society at the 60-percent level can gain another 40 percent to reach the 100-percent level. It is clear that actual losses and gains can only be influenced within the limits of what a society could lose and gain. Hence, loss and gain effects must be considered in regard to the possible losses and gains. Otherwise they are not comparable.

A first step to make loss effects comparable over societies with different loss potentials is to limit the analysis to societies that have more to lose than to win. This applies to societies whose loss potential is above 50 percent. But even societies sharing a more than 50 percent loss potential still vary greatly in that potential, namely from something above 50 to fully 100 percent. This must be taken into account. For a loss of 30 points in a society with a loss potential of 60 is as sizeable as a loss of 50 points in a society with a loss potential of 100. In both cases a society lost half of what it could lose. The most accurate way to take variation in loss potentials into account is to include it as a control predictor among the explanatory variables. This means to consider loss effects *under constant* loss potentials.

The same logic applies to democratic gains. First, I focus on societies having more to gain than to lose, including only societies whose gain potential is above 50 percent. Yet, even societies sharing a more than 50 percent gain potential vary considerably in this potential. So I include it as a control predictor among the explanatory variables, making gain effects comparable across societies with greatly varying gain potentials.

Taking hold of loss and gain potentials is also a way to model an exogenous factor: the general pro-democratic trend that characterized the Third Wave. For if there is a trend that favors democracy anyway, a high start level of democracy alone should provide some protection against democratic losses. In this case the size of the loss potential has a negative effect on democratic losses. Likewise, if there is a trend favoring democracy anyway, a low start level of democracy alone should provide some guarantee to achieve large democratic gains. In this case the gain potential has a positive effect on actual democratic gains.

Table 5. The Strongest Attitudinal Effect on Losses and Gains in Democracy Controlled for the Loss/Gain Potentials

Predictors (mid 1990s):	Dependent Variable: Loss in Democracy Level (#24), cases with loss potential greater 50 included ^{a)}			Dependent Variable: Gain in Democracy Level (#25), cases with gain potential greater 50 included ^{b)}		
	Loss Potential (#26)	-.36* (-1.90)		-.12 (-.56)	_____	_____
Gain Potential (#27)	_____	_____	_____	.49*** (3.58)		.52*** (4.75)
Emancipative Orientation		-.53** (-3.03)	-.45* (-2.10)		.54*** (4.00)	.57*** (5.26)
Adjusted R ²	.09	.25	.23	.22	.28	.54
N	27	26	26	42	40	40

Entries are standardized regression coefficients (betas) with T-ratios in parentheses.

Numbers after the # sign indicate location of the variable description in the Internet-Appendix for this paper under "Variable List".

^{a)} Cases included: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Dominican Rep., Finland, France, Great Britain, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, U.S.A., Uruguay, Venezuela.

^{b)} Cases included: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Croatia, Czech Rep., Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe.

Significance levels: * p<.10 ** p<.05 ***p<.005

As Table 5 shows, the loss potential has a negative effect on actual democratic losses, explaining some 9 percent of the real losses. Adding a public's emancipative orientation, the explained variance in democratic losses increases to 23 percent. This increase comes from a *negative* effect of the emancipative orientation on democratic losses. Even though there already is a loss minimizing trend, a public's emancipative orientation adds its own effect to reduce democratic losses.

The gain potential has a positive effect on actual democratic gains, explaining some 22 percent of the real gains. Adding a public's emancipative orientation, the explained variance increases to 53 percent. This increase comes from a *positive* effect of the emancipative orientation. Even though there already is a gain maximizing trend, a public's emancipative orientation adds its own effect to increase democratic gains.

In summary, a public's emancipative orientation helps to minimize democratic losses (when there is more to lose than to win) and to maximize democratic gains (when there is more to gain than to lose). In other words, it helps both to *sustain* and to *attain* high levels of democracy.¹² This finding holds against controls of the general pro-democratic trend, so losses and gains in democracy are not simply a diffusion phenomenon driven by exogenous trends. They also depend on internal conditions, among which mass emphasis on emancipative ideals seems to play a significant role.

Step 5: Summary Effects on Overall Democratic Change

I analyzed the effect of emancipative ideals on dynamics in democracy separately for losses and gains. This was necessary to check if these ideals helps both impeding regress and promoting progress in democratization or if only one of these two possibilities holds true. Because we have

seen that both possibilities apply, I can now summarize the two pro-democratic effects in just one model covering all societies at once.

For that matter, I summarize losses and gains in a single variable measuring “overall democratic change.” With losses getting larger the overall change yields growing negative values, down to a minimum of -100 in case a society moved from the 100-percent level of democracy to the zero level. With increasing gains the overall change yields growing positive values up to a maximum of $+100$. Both pro-democratic effects—loss minimization and gain maximization—operate in the same direction on this scale: loss minimization is an upward move from larger to *smaller negative* changes; gain maximization, too, is an upward move from smaller to *larger positive* changes. The two effects only capture different areas on the same underlying scale.

Democratic changes can only be influenced within the limits of the given potential for change. The change potential is fixed by the initial level of democracy, which determines what amount of change is possible in which direction. Thus, the analysis includes the change potential as an additional predictor of actual changes. This makes change effects comparable across societies with greatly varying potentials for change. No society has to be excluded from this model on the grounds of a too small potential for change. For each society can greatly change in at least one direction. Covering the full set of countries allows me to include the structural control predictors used before: the economic development factor and ethnic fractionalization.

Table 6 shows two models, one uses the summary measure of a public’s emancipative orientation, and another decomposes this measure into its components. Comparing the two models clarifies that a public’s overall emancipative orientation has a more strongly positive effect on democratic changes than any of its four components. Still, the decomposed model

makes it evident that the pro-democratic effect of emancipative ideals is mostly carried by its two strongest loading components: the percentage of people with liberty aspirations and the percentage of people having an affinity to expressive actions. These two components represent most clearly the liberating impetus of emancipative ideals. The percentage of people tolerating human diversity has a considerably weaker pro-democratic effect that slightly fails the significant threshold, while the weakest loading component of emancipative ideals, the percentage of people trusting other people, shows no significant pro-democratic effect under control of other emancipative attitudes.

Table 6. Decomposing the Strongest Attitudinal Effect on Overall Democratic Change

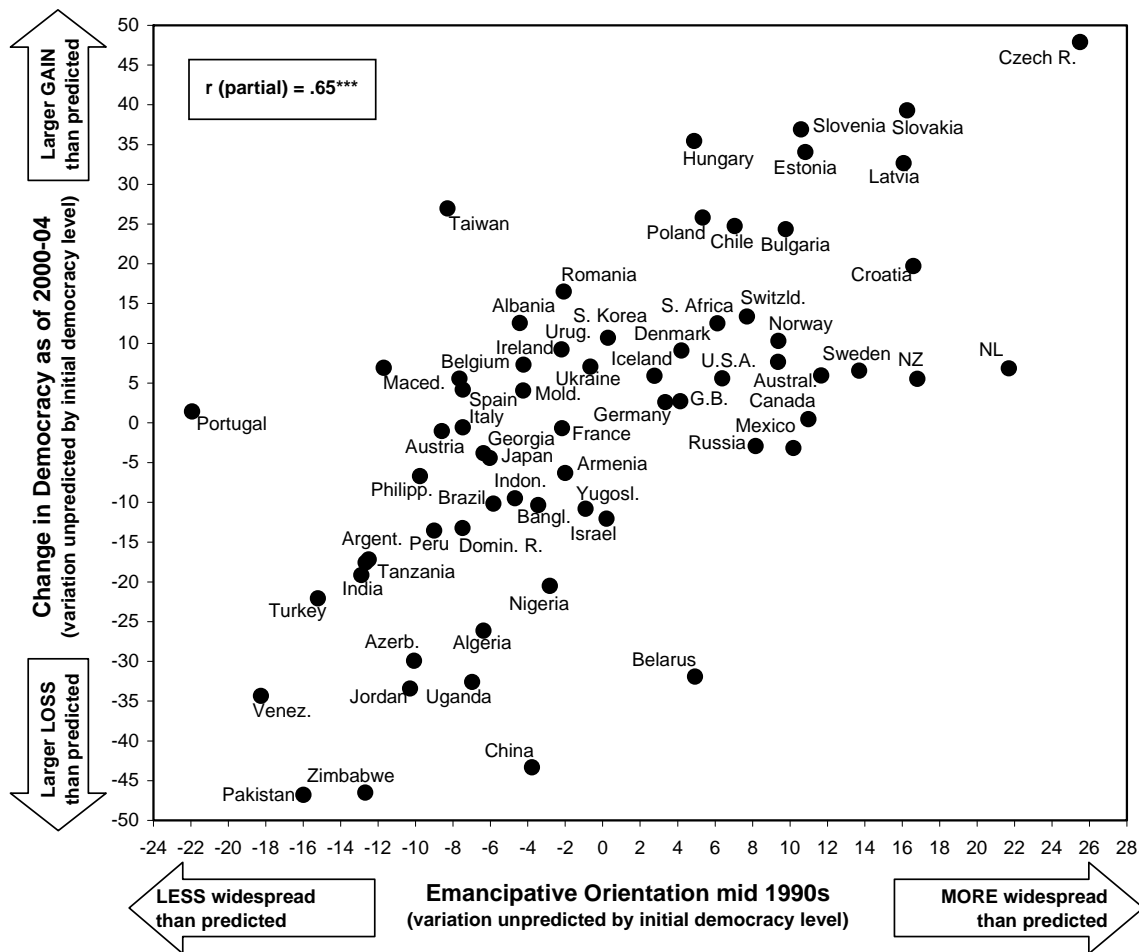
Predictors (mid 1990s)	Dependent Variable: Overall Democratic Change (#28)			
	Summary emancipative orientation as predictor		Emancipative orientation decomposed into separate predictors	
Change Potential (#29)	- 1.49***	(-10.04)	- 1.62***	(-10.72)
Economic Development Factor	.23	(1.26)	.33	(1.83)
Ethnic Fractionalization	- .13	(-1.70)	- .16*	(-2.16)
Emancipative Orientation	.70***	(4.90)	_____	
Liberty Aspirations	_____		.43***	(3.46)
Affinity to Expressive Actions	_____		.27**	(2.59)
Tolerance of Human Diversity	_____		.13	(1.39)
Trust in People	_____		- .02	(-.17)
Adjusted R ²	.71		.73	
N	64		64	

Entries are standardized regression coefficients (betas) with T-ratios in parentheses. Numbers after the # sign indicate location of the variable description in the Internet-Appendix under "Variable List".

Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.005

Figure 1 illustrates the partial effect of a public's emancipative orientation on democratic change, controlling for the change potential (i.e., the initial level of democracy). It is evident that more widespread emancipative ideals channel democratic changes from otherwise unexpected losses at the lower left end to otherwise unexpected gains at the upper right end. This channeling effect does not describe a straight line. Rather it demarcates a corridor, the width of which can be interpreted as the degree of freedom left to elites in determining a society's level of democracy. But apart from a handful of exceptional over- and underachievers, the corridor is relatively narrow showing that elite choices are significantly constrained by mass preferences.

Figure 1. The Partial Effect of Emancipative Attitudes on Overall Democratic Change (controlling for the change potential)



Robustness Tests

How robust are the effects shown in Table 6? I conducted a number of robustness tests. The White-test gives no indication of heteroscedastic residuals. In the second model, for example, the White's chi square statistic reveals a value of 3.99 for the effect of liberty aspirations. This value is under the critical threshold (which is 12.59 for six degrees of freedom at the .05-significance level). There does not seem to be a problem with the fact that the dependent variable, overall democratic change, is limited by a theoretical minimum of -100 and a maximum of +100: as Appendix-Table 6 shows, none of the change scores predicted by the second model of Table 6 falls outside the range of -100 to +100 (the same is true for the first model).

Considering collinearity statistics, variance inflation factors are below 10.0 for all effects in Table 6, which by rule of thumb is the critical threshold. Using the more rigid threshold of 5.0 there is some collinearity involved (economic development has an inflation factor of 7.40). To see which predictors are robust when collinearity suggests to include only smaller subsets of predictors, I apply a robustness test introduced by Leamer (1985), called "extreme bounds analysis" (EBA). This test regresses a dependent variable on all possible combinations of smaller subsets of predictors, looking for each predictor in how many regressions it shows the correct sign and is significant. Only predictors that show the correct sign and are significant in all combinations are considered robust. The results are straightforward: in the first model, a public's emancipative orientation and only a public's emancipative orientation passes the EBA test. In the second model, the percentage of people with liberty aspirations and an affinity to expressive actions both pass the EBA-test and only these two indicators pass it. Thus, various combinations of smaller subsets of predictors confirm the results of the full models in Table 6.

Regression results in small samples can be sensitive to particularly influential cases. Looking at case-influence statistics, the DFFITs identify the Czech Republic and Pakistan as leverage cases and China, Belarus, Portugal and Taiwan as outliers. Using a variant of robust regression, “bounded influence estimation” (Welsh 1980), to correct the effect of such influential cases does not alter the results of Table 6. This is shown in Appendix-Table 7 in which still the same effects are significant with negligible differences to the coefficients of Table 6.

To check in how far the regression results are sensitive to possible variations in sample composition I used a bootstrapping procedure which randomly redraws the sample a hundred times and runs the same regression over each draw, yielding a hundred different estimates of regression coefficients, standard errors, and T-ratios. The results are displayed in Appendix-Table 8. They show that the average T-ratios obtained by the bootstrapping regressions come very close to those in Table 6 and the mean error of the average estimates of the bootstrapping procedure is pretty small. Bootstrapping tells us that the initial model is robust.

The WVS has oversampled some regional groups of countries and undersampled others. Among the new democracies those in the former communist bloc are oversampled. Sub-Saharan Africa is most heavily undersampled, including only South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Fortunately, no world region is entirely excluded (apart from the small Island states of Oceania). This makes a regional correction of sampling bias possible. Doing so is reasonable under the assumption that the societies we have from undersampled regions are not particularly untypical of these regions (for which there is little evidence). For the sample correction I treated eleven world regions as sampling units and calculated the probability for countries of each of these regions to be included in a random sample of countries in the world. Then I divided these random probabilities by the probability of countries from the same region to

be found in the WVS sample. This yields a weight that downweights or upweights countries to the extent to which the WVS has over- or undersampled countries from their region. Appendix-Table 9 documents the calculation of these weights. Finally, I reestimated the two models in Table 6 introducing the weight variable into a weighted least squares regression.

As Appendix-Table 10 indicates, this procedure reduces the explained variance in democratic change to 63 percent but does yield no differences in relative effect size and significance for the first model in Table 6. It yields some differences for the second model, however: affinity to expressive actions is now more significant and stronger in its effect than liberty aspirations (which are still significant). These differences do nevertheless confirm the finding that it is components of emancipative ideals that matter for democratic change. Among these components, only the relative weight has shifted from the percentage of people with liberty aspirations to the percentage with an affinity to expressive actions. In any case, none of the performed robustness tests raises doubts against the finding that the social radius of emancipative ideals is a significant factor to democratic change.

CONCLUSION

Mass emphasis on emancipative ideals shows a significant effect on levels of democracy measured subsequently. This effect is not an artifact of structural factors; it does not depend on other mass attitudes; and it is independent from prior democracy. Specifying the mechanism by which emancipative ideals are conducive to democracy, this occurs because emancipative ideals help minimizing decreases as well as maximizing increases in the level of democracy, depending on the initial level of democracy. Apparently, emancipative mass orientations constitute a motivational force that operates *uniformly* in favor of democracy.

What about other political culture approaches that consider different attitudes as conducive to democracy, such as communal norms and democratic system preferences? I found that mass tendencies in these attitudes affect democracy only insofar as they are linked with emancipative ideals: if one isolates communal norms and democratic preferences from emancipative ideals, they have no significant effect on democracy. For democratic preferences, this tells us that they become effective only in connection with the deeper commitment to democratic norms that is reflected in emancipative ideals. Without this connection, overt system preferences seem to indicate non-consequential lip service. In regard to communal norms, the findings raise doubts that they reflect a strong form of social capital as is often suggested. The central point of social capital is its contribution to overcome collective action dilemmas, so any norm or ideal motivating collective actions is a form of social capital. If this is so, emancipative ideals constitute a particularly important form of social capital, as they apparently channel collective actions toward democracy.

What do the findings say about *structural theories* of democracy that emphasize a country's basic economic and social features? To be sure, the findings do not rule out these factors. Rather they show that structural factors have an effect on democracy mostly insofar as they help to widen the radius of emancipative ideals in a society. This is obvious from the finding that socioeconomic development and other structural factors do have a strong zero-order effect on democracy but these effects almost vanish once I control for emancipative ideals. Apparently, existing structural effects are largely transmitted through their effects on mass preferences, as Lipset (1959:84-85) proposed decades ago.

What about the regime choices of elites that have been so strongly emphasized in early accounts of democratic transitions? Unquestionably, the choices of elites eventually determine

which level of democracy a society attains and sustains. Elite actions abrogate or set into effect democratic freedoms. As most scholars will agree, elite actions are to some degree constrained and to some degree free, reflecting the voluntarism inherent in elite choices. If one reads my model in these terms, one could say that the degree of determination of the model reflects the constraint part of elite choices, while the degree of variance left unexplained by my model reflects the free part in elite choices. If this so, the regime choices of elites are to some 70 percent constrained and to some 30 percent free. When one accepts this conclusion, the regime choices of elites are at least more constrained than early “transitologists” have assumed.

As every model, my model operates within certain limitations, two of which are noteworthy. First, my model focuses on inner-societal forces of democratization. This is a limitation because inner-societal forces can become effective only if international regime alliances do not block them. Just before the period of my investigation two anti-democratic regime alliances had been dissolved: the U.S. gave up its support of right wing authoritarian regimes in Latin America and Asia, and the Soviet Union abandoned its military guarantee of communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. Only after this had happened, could emancipative mass attitudes become a major force of democratization in hitherto undemocratic societies. Without the existence of this force, however, the change of regime alliances alone could not have instigated a major democratic trend.

Second, emancipative mass orientations can operate as a force of democratization only in democratization cases of the “societal-led” type. This is surely the modal type of democratization, both in the invention of modern democracies two centuries ago and in the Third Wave of democratization of recent decades. But it is not the only type. Instead, it contrasts starkly with the “externally induced” type of democratization, typical of post-war democracies

such as Germany, Italy, and Japan after World War II or (perhaps) Afghanistan and Iraq after the anti-terror wars. But the latter type is clearly less frequent and more specific. Still, even in the externally induced type of democratization, emancipative ideals might eventually become relevant: the extent to which they spread can be a major factor in the consolidation of post-war democracies.

Finally, there remains a missing link in my argument. As I argued, the most plausible reason why emancipative ideals provide a pro-democratic force is that these ideals motivate the mass actions that release democratizing pressure. This can be pressure to establish democratic freedoms when they are not in place or to defend and widen them when in principle they are there. Unfortunately, the conversion of ideals into actions cannot be demonstrated as precise estimates of the percentage of people engaged in pro-democratic mass actions are not available for the same countries for which data on the percentage of people holding emancipative ideals are available. There is only indirect side-evidence to this effect. When one separates people's self-reported participation in such mass actions as demonstrations, boycotts, and petitions from emancipative attitudes, one finds that emancipative attitudes have a strong effect on these actions, regardless of whether the level of democracy is low or high (Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch 2005). If this result is taken for serious, it indicates that emancipative ideals motivate indeed corresponding mass actions, in both democratic and nondemocratic societies.

My findings point to a specific understanding of the cultural underpinnings of democracy. Democracy seems first of all to be anchored in a culture that embraces emancipative ideals, as Lasswell (1951) supposed more than half a century ago. This is quite logical if one considers democracy as an essentially emancipative achievement, designed to empower people. In any case, democracy is an inherently normative concept that needs corresponding value

orientations among the people to make its emergence and survival likely. The most central premise of the political culture approach seems after all to have to some grain of truth.

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Endnotes

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- ¹ For information on the questionnaire, methods, and fieldwork visit the website: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>.
- ² The Internet-Appendix linked to this paper describes which country measures are taken from which of these rounds.
- ³ A description of variables can be found under “Variable List” in the Internet-Appendix mentioned in the previous footnote. The number after the # sign in my tables indicates where in the variable list the description of the respective variable can be found.
- ⁴ Literally speaking, participation in expressive action is a behavior, not an attitude. However, we deal with *self-reported* behavior from which no one knows if it is *real* behavior. But regardless of whether it indicates real behavior or not, what we know is that it indicates at least an affinity to this behavior, in which case we measure an attitude. Thus, I stick to the use of the term attitudes.
- ⁵ Using confidence in political institutions instead of confidence in state institutions, and ties to utilitarian associations instead of ties to sociotropic associations, yields similar results.
- ⁶ The finding that trust goes together with emancipative attitudes but not communal ones holds on the individual level as well. This is shown in Appendix-Table 1.
- ⁷ The “voice and accountability” measure is itself based on some of the other democracy measures. This would include an element of tautology when including this measure, too, in the measure of the overall democracy level.
- ⁸ Appendix-Table 4-1 shows these zero-order effects.
- ⁹ The pro-democratic effect of emancipative orientations remains the strongest and most significant effect also when one controls it for other structural factors than those used in Table 3. This is true when one uses Boix’s (2003) measure of an economy’s “asset specificity” (the share of fuel and mineral exports on all exports) instead of the per capita return of exports. It is true when uses logged per capita GDP instead of GDP. It is true when one uses the Gini-coefficient instead of the distributional measure from Vanhanen (1997) used by Boix (2003). And it is true when one uses the size of the industrial workforce instead of ethnic fractionalization. This is documented in Appendix-Table 4-2.
- ¹⁰ Per capita GDP, per capita return of exports, and equal resource distribution load at .96, .90 and .84, respectively, on a common “economic development factor.”
- ¹¹ Appendix-Table 11 displays these data.
- ¹² We have tested if the growth in emancipative ideals affects democratic losses and gains in addition to the given radius of these ideals. As Appendix-Table 5 shows, it does not.