Civic Engagement:
Mexico in Comparative Perspective

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Synopsis: What have been the consequences of democratization for civic engagement in Mexico in comparison to a broad range of transitional, consolidating and established democracies? To consider these issues, Part I of this paper sets out the theoretical framework contrasting perspectives emphasizing secular decline in traditional forms of civic engagement with modernization theories stressing the reinvention of political activism. Part II describes the comparative framework, data sources, and measures used in the study, drawn from both aggregate indicators and from the World Values Survey. To explore the evidence Part III compares three behavioral indicators of political activism, including levels of electoral turnout, engagement via civic associations, and experience of protest politics. Part IV then turns to the cultural comparisons by examining support for democracy as an ideal and evaluations of its actual performance, as well as patterns of institutional confidence. The conclusion reflects on the key findings about civic engagement and their implications for the process of consolidation of democracy for Latin America in general, and for Mexico in particular.
During the late 1980s and early 1990s the flowering of transitional and consolidating third wave democracies generated a wave of institution building around the globe. International agencies like the World Bank came to understand that good governance was not a luxury that could be delayed while more basic social needs were being met, like the provision of clean water, basic health care and schooling, but instead the establishment of democracy was an essential pre-condition for effective human development and management of poverty, inequality and ethnic conflict. The downfall of many undemocratic regimes in Latin America, Central Europe, Asia and Africa created new opportunities for political development that were recognized by the donor community. Subsequent histories show that the process of deepening democracy and good governance has proved fraught with many difficulties, with little change to many repressive states in the Middle East, only fragile and unstable consolidation in many African nations, and even occasional reversions back to authoritarian rule exemplified by Zimbabwe and Pakistan.

In Latin America the process of deepening the quality of democratic governance has also had a checkered and uncertain history. Following the currency crisis, Argentina has been plagued by government instability, strikes, demonstrations and roadblocks. In oil-rich Venezuela, the attempted coup against President Hugo Chavez, and subsequent massive street protests for and against the regime, brought back memories of times thought long past. In Colombia the inability of the government to negotiate a settlement with the FARC guerrillas has failed to stem persistent problems of violence, kidnapping, and drug-related crime. As a result of divided government and weak parties, Brazil has frequently experienced legislative-executive stalemate and policymaking logjams, generating what has been termed ‘deadlocked democracy’, or a crisis of governability. Despite adopting the panacea of sweeping market reforms, much of the region’s economies currently remain stagnant with endemic problems of massive unemployment, ballooning national debts, widespread poverty, the deterioration of public services, and rampant crime. The aftermath of 9/11 and other developments have deflected international attention away from the region and towards other global problems including nation building in Afghanistan, terrorism in the Middle East, and problems of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Of course the regional picture in Latin America is not wholly gloomy; other important gains in recent years include Mexico’s rapid and substantial progress towards stable consolidation and effective party competition, following the displacement of PRI in the presidency for the first time in over seventy years, as well as greater limits on the powers of the presidency and renewed attention to issues of human rights. Moreover Peruvian elections replaced former President Alberto Fujimori’s corrupt regime. Elections continue to be maintained; out of the 35 nations in the Americas, the 2001-2 Freedom House report rates 32 as electoral democracies, with 23 states regarded as free, 10 as partly free, and only 2 (Cuba and Haiti) as not free. Nevertheless, on balance, the more optimistic hopes commonly expressed in the early 1990s have often been replaced by more cautious assessments of further progress towards democratic consolidation.

What have been the consequences of democratization for civic engagement in Latin America? In this study, this concept is understood to encompass both behavioral dimensions such as political activism and attitudinal dimensions exemplified by approval of democratic ideals and trust in government. It is important to examine civic engagement because the consolidation process requires broad acceptance of the democratic ‘rules of the game’ throughout society, so that democratic institutions become deeply embedded in the culture and hence more resistant to destabilizing threats and populist challenges. Some commentators have painted a gloomy picture of trends in recent years, suggesting that the exaggerated optimism about the consequences of democracy common just a decade ago in Latin America have subsequently faded, to be replaced by signs of creeping public disillusionment with democracy, fuelled in large part, some suggest, by the deteriorating state of the economy. Yet the cross-national survey evidence comparing public opinion in Latin America remains limited, especially in terms of analyzing long-term trends, and use of just one or two selected indicators can provide a misleading interpretation of general patterns. Any comprehensive analysis needs to draw upon multidimensional indicators of civic
engagement, incorporating both behavioral and attitudinal indicators, comparing many countries around the globe. This process can establish the broader context to enable comparison with the results of public attitudes towards democracy in Mexico, as monitored by the Mexican National Political Culture and Citizen Behavior Survey 2001.

To consider these issues, Part I sets out the theoretical framework contrasting perspectives emphasizing secular decline in traditional forms of civic engagement with modernization theories stressing the reinvention of political activism. Part II describes the comparative framework, data sources, and measures used in the study, drawn from both aggregate indicators and from the World Values Survey. We focus exclusively on cross-national differences in this short paper, leaving aside important and well-established variations among groups and individuals based on standard social variables such as gender, class, age, education, or ethnicity, or based upon other related social and political values. To explore the evidence Part III compares three behavioral indicators of political activism, including levels of electoral turnout, engagement via civic associations, and experience of protest politics. Part IV then turns to the cultural comparisons by examining support for democracy as an ideal and evaluations of its actual performance, as well as patterns of institutional confidence. The conclusion reflects on the key findings about civic engagement and their implications for the process of consolidation of democracy in Latin America in general, and in Mexico in particular.

Part I: Theoretical Framework

There is widespread agreement among democratic theorists ranging from Jean Jacques Rousseau to James Madison, John Stuart Mill, Robert Dahl, Benjamin Barber, David Held and John Dryzak that mass participation is essential to the lifeblood of representative democracy, although there is continued debate how much civic engagement is thought either necessary or desirable. Theorists advocating ‘strong’ democracy suggest that citizen activism and deliberation is intrinsically valuable in and for itself. More minimalist conceptions, proposed by Schumpeterian theorists, suggest that the essential role of citizens should be relatively limited, confined principally to the periodic election of parliamentary representatives, along with the continuous scrutiny of government actions. But whether extensive or more limited, all theorists agree that participation is one (although only one) of the basic indicators of the health of any democracy.

The Secular Decline of Political Activism and Civic Engagement?

What is the state of political activism and civic engagement today? Two schools of thought are common in the literature. On the one hand, the declinist vision suggests that in the late twentieth century many post-industrial societies have experienced steady secular trends of citizen withdrawal from the traditional channels of political participation. Symptoms of this malady are thought to include sagging electoral turnout, rising anti-party sentiment, and the decay of civic organizations. Concern about these issues has been expressed in public speeches, leader columns, and academic studies. These voices are heard most commonly in the United States, but similar echoes resonate in many other democracies. The declinist vision stresses that this pattern is particularly evident across many affluent post-industrial societies and older democracies, although similar symptoms may be found elsewhere in consolidating democracies and developing nations. Since the contagion has afflicted many societies, the explanations are sought in general causes rather than in particular experiences within each nation.

The standard view emphasizes a familiar litany of civic ills that are believed to have undermined the democratic channels traditionally linking citizens to the state. Elections are the most common way for people to express their political preferences and the half-empty ballot box is taken as the most common symptom of democratic ill health. The idea of representative democracy sans parties is unthinkable, yet studies of party organizations suggest the desertion of grass roots members, at least in Western Europe, during recent decades. An extensive
literature on partisan dealignment has established that lifetime loyalties anchoring voters to parties have been eroding in many established democracies, contributing towards sliding turnout, and producing a more unstable electorate open to the sway of short-term forces. Political mobilization via traditional agencies and networks of civic society like unions and churches appears to be under threat. Structural accounts emphasize that union membership is hemorrhaging due to the decline of jobs in manufacturing industry, changing class structures, flexible labor markets, and the spread of individualist values. Theories of secularization, deriving originally from Max Weber, suggest that the public in modern societies has been abandoning church pews for shopping malls. The bonds of belonging to the plethora of traditional community associations and voluntary organizations may be becoming more frayed and tattered than in the past. Putnam presents the most extensive battery of evidence documenting anemic civic engagement in America, displayed in activities as diverse as community meetings, social networks and associational membership. Surveys of public opinion suggest growing public cynicism about government and public affairs has become pervasive in the United States, at least before the events of 11th September, while citizens have become more critical of the institutions of representative government in many other established democracies.

The causes underlying any common secular decline in civic engagement are complex and different commentators have emphasized alternative factors that are thought to have contributed towards these developments, whether deep-rooted experiences of the great depression and two world wars affecting the formative years of the pre-war and post-war generations; the process of globalization eroding the powers and autonomy of the nation-state; the focus of the media on scandals corroding faith and trust in traditional institutions and figures of authority; the closure of the great ideological left-right divisions between the major parties following the end of the Cold War, the ‘death of socialism’ and the rise of ‘catch-all’ parties; the proliferation of single-interest groups and causes creating a fragmentation of demands and multidimensional policy agendas in the political system, making it more difficult for government to satisfy diverse interests; and rising public expectation and the failure of government performance to match these expectations in delivering basic services.

But before we consider explanation, are these concerns about civic decline actually justified? If participation is indeed in steady secular free-fall across all modes, and many types of society, weakening linkages between citizens and the state, then this should indeed be a genuine cause for alarm. But although often widely assumed, in fact the evidence of secular decline often remains scattered and patchy; consistent and reliable longitudinal trend data is limited; and most previous systematic research has been restricted to case studies of particular countries, particularly the United States, and comparative but patchy evidence among established democracies in Western Europe, making it hard to generalize more widely. Often alarmist anecdotal evidence is blown out of proportion as a ‘crisis of democracy’ whereas steady-state politics receives less attention. Given all these limitations, we need to update the analysis and examine the broader picture of trends in recent decades where evidence is available across many nations, including transitional and consolidating as well as established democracies.

The alternative perspective suggests that rather than an erosion, the nature of political activism has been reinvented in recent decades by a diversification in the agencies (the collective organizations structuring political activity); the repertoires (the actions commonly used for political expression); and the targets (the political actors that participants seek to influence). The surge of protest politics, new social movements, and Internet activism can be understood to exemplify different aspects of this phenomenon. If the opportunities for political expression and mobilization have fragmented and multiplied over the years, like a swollen river flooding through different tributaries, democratic engagement may have adapted and evolved in accordance with the new structure of opportunities, rather than simply atrophied. Why might we expect that modes of
political activism might change over time? The most plausible reason is provided by modernization theories suggesting that the driving factor underlying these changes is the long-term process of human development, notably rising levels of literacy, education and wealth. In this view there are distinct patterns of civic engagement which are evident in agrarian, industrial and post-industrial societies, although the pace of change is conditioned by the structure of the state, the role of mobilizing agencies in any particular society, and the resource and motivational differences among groups and individuals.21

Modernization theories build upon the work of Daniel Bell, Ronald Inglehart and Russell Dalton, among others. These theories are attractive because of the claim that economic, cultural and political changes go together in predictable ways, so that there are broadly similar trajectories, which form coherent patterns. These accounts are summarized schematically in Table 1. Modernization accounts suggest that economic shifts in the production process underlie changes in the state, in particular that rising levels of education, literacy and wealth in the transition from agrarian subsistence economies to industrialized nations generate the conditions favoring expanded citizen participation. When citizens are given the opportunity to express their political preferences through the ballot box, then rising educational levels during the first stage of industrialization can be expected to foster electoral turnout, as well as encouraging broader aspects of civic engagement like the growth of party and trade union organizations in urban, industrial areas. Yet we can expect a ceiling effect from the impact of human development. In particular, once primary and secondary education become ubiquitous throughout the population, producing the basic cognitive skills that facilitate civic awareness and access to mass communications in industrial societies, then further gains in the proportion of the population attending college and ever-rising levels of personal wealth, income and leisure time in postindustrial society do not, in themselves, produce further improvements in voting participation.

[Table 1 about here]

In postindustrial societies, common trends including rising standards of living, the growth of the service sector, and expanding educational opportunities are thought to have contributed towards a new style of citizen politics.22 This process is believed to have increased demands for more active public participation in the policymaking process through direct action, new social movements, and protest groups, simultaneously weakening deferential loyalties and support for traditional hierarchical organizations and authorities such as churches, parties and traditional interest groups. Nevertheless there are some important differences within the modernization perspective, discussed fully elsewhere.23 Inglehart suggests that societal modernization leads to the replacement of traditional involvement in activities like voting and party membership by the rise of new forms of more demanding activities, like involvement in new social movements and referendum campaigns, in a zero-sum game. But it may be preferable to see this process as supplementing, rather than displacing, traditional channels of political expression and mobilization, so that the alternative channels of political expression coexist in representative democracies. In this view, many mainstream activists will turn strategically to whichever alternative form or mode of political organizing they feel will be most effective, whether campaigning through parties and elections, working through traditional interest group organizations such as trade unions and civic associations, or publicizing their concerns through demonstrations and protests on the streets.24

Accordingly if the declinist thesis provides the most accurate depiction of developments then we would expect to find consistent secular trends showing falling civic engagement, at least in post-industrial societies, measured by standard indicators such as electoral turnout and membership of traditional civic associations such as unions and churches. Cultural indicators would include greater disillusionment with democratic ideals and discontent with the performance of democratic governments. Alternatively if modernization theories provide a more satisfactory account, then we would expect to find systematic variations in political behavior among agrarian,
industrial and postindustrial societies, measured by contrasts in levels of electoral turnout and membership of civic associations, as well as levels of protest activism. In terms of cultural indicators, modernization theories suggest continued and growing support for democratic ideals, even if citizens become more critical of the performance of particular institutions, incumbents, and political leaders.

**Part II: Data and Evidence**

Within the space of a paper we can only sketch out some of these issues and arguments, which are covered far more fully elsewhere. This study seeks to analyze evidence by comparing countries around the globe, maximizing the advantages of the ‘most different’ comparative strategy. Much existing research on political participation is based upon the United States, as well as established West European and Anglo-American democracies. Yet it is not clear how far we can generalize more widely from these particular countries. Patterns of participation that gradually spread with the spread of democracies in the mid-19th and early 20th century, following the long-term process of industrialization, are unlikely to be the same as those found in Latin American nations that have experienced authoritarian regimes and military rule, or Central European states which lived under communist party hegemony. If distinctive historical experiences stamp their cultural mark on these nations, a path-dependent pattern, they may continue to influence patterns of political activism today.

Moreover as the earliest comparative studies have long stressed, political systems offer citizens widely different structures of opportunity to become engaged in their own governance. In pluralist societies like the United States, for example, voluntary organizations, professional associations, and community groups commonly mobilize people into politics, with the church playing a particularly important role. In contrast in Western Europe, mass-branch party organizations often play a stronger role. And in many developing societies, such as the Philippines and South Africa, grassroots social movements draw people into protest politics and direct action strategies within their local community. In short, patterns of activism in both Western Europe and the United States may prove atypical of the range of transitional and consolidating democracies elsewhere. There have been attempts to generalize about Latin American culture based on comparison of just a few countries like Chile, Mexico and Costa Rica, but given the great diversity among Latin American nations we need to draw broader comparisons to reflect the substantial contrasts in political performance and economic development that exist in this region, as well as some potential similarities with cultures in newer democracies in Central Europe.

Given these considerations, this study follows the well-known conceptualization of Prezeworski and Teune in adopting the ‘most different systems’ research design, seeking to maximize contrasts between a wide range of societies to distinguish systematic clusters of characteristics associated with different dimensions of political activism. Clearly there are some important trade-offs involved in this approach, notably the loss of the richness and depth that can come from case-study comparison of a few similar countries within relatively similar regions. A broader canvass increases the complexity of comparing societies that vary widely in terms of cultural legacies, political systems, and democratic traditions. Yet the strategy of attempting a worldwide comparison, where data is available, has multiple advantages. Most importantly, the global framework allows us to examine whether, as theories of societal modernization claim, patterns of political activism evolve with the shift from traditional rural societies, with largely illiterate and poor populations, through industrial economies based on manufacturing base, with a growing urban working class, to post-industrial economies based on a large service sector middle class.

Countries were classified for analysis according to levels of human development. The Human Development Index produced annually by the UNDP provides the standard measure of societal modernization, combining levels of literacy and education, health and per capita income.
This measure is widely used and it has the advantage of providing a broader indicator of the well being of a society than simply levels of economic income or financial wealth. The only distinction made to the standard UNDP classification used here is that nations ranking highest in human development were subdivided into ‘postindustrial societies’ (the most affluent states around the world, ranking 1-28 with the highest HDI score in the UNDP index, and mean per capita GNP of $23,691) and ‘other highly developed societies’ (ranking 29-46 by the UNDP with mean per capita GNP of $9006). This subdivision was selected as more precise and consistent that the conventional use of OECD member states to define industrialization, since a few OECD member states like Mexico and Turkey have low development, although in practice most countries overlap.

Over the years there have been many attempts to measure levels of democracy and the Gastil index measured annually by Freedom House has become widely accepted as one of the standard measure of democratization. Freedom House provides an annual classification of political rights and civil liberties around the world. For this study, the history of democracy in each nation state worldwide is classified based on the annual ratings produced from 1972-2000. An important distinction is drawn between 39 older democracies, defined as those with at least twenty years continuous experience of democracy (1980-2000) and a current Freedom House rating of 2.0 or less, and 43 newer democracies with less than twenty years experience of democracy and a current Freedom House rating of 2.5 or less. Following the Freedom House rankings, other countries were classified based on the most recent ratings (1999-2000) into semi-democracies (which are often referred to as ‘partly-free’, ‘transitional’ or ‘consolidating’ democracies) and non-democracies (which includes a wide variety of regimes lacking political rights and civil liberties, including military-backed dictatorships, authoritarian states, elitist oligarchies, and ruling monarchies).

The study draws upon aggregate data in 193 independent nation-states derived from many sources, such as levels of electoral turnout monitored from 1945 to 2000 by International IDEA, and much of the analysis is based on survey data from the four-wave World Values Study (WVS) of public opinion conducted in over 75 societies in the early 1980s, the early 1990s, the mid-1990s, and the 1999-2001. We can first examine the behavioral indicators of turnout, associational membership, and protest activism, providing perhaps the strongest test of patterns of civic engagement, before comparing cultural support for democracy and political institutions.

Part III: Trends in Political Activism

Following the tradition established by Sidney Verba and his colleagues, the study of political participation has long focused on comparing alternative modes, such as voting, community organizing and contact activity, each with distinct demands and rewards. To examine alternative forms of political activism this study focuses upon three distinct types; electoral turnout understood as the most widespread act experienced by most citizens, civic activism within community associations and voluntary organizations, due to the interest in this generated by theories of social capital, and lastly experience of protest activism, understood as exemplifying less orthodox forms of political expression and mobilization. Factor analysis in Table 2, drawing upon selected items measuring each form of activism from the WVS, confirmed that these three dimensions of civic engagement were indeed distinct, as expected.
than many other forms of activism. Nevertheless voting participation is one of the most common indicators of the health of democracy and also one where we have the richest and most reliable cross-national official data over many decades. Patterns of electoral turnout can be measured either as a proportion of the registered electorate or as a proportion of the voting age population. The latter has the great advantage of including any large groups of citizens, like women or ethnic minorities, who may be denied full citizenship rights in casting a vote. The trends in valid votes cast as a proportion of the voting age population are presented most simply in Figure 1, which provides the first substantial evidence supporting the modernization thesis.

[Figure 1 about here]

The trends show that during the last fifty years, countries with rapid human development have seen substantial growth in electoral turnout, especially in Asia and Latin America. At the same time concern that postindustrial societies are inevitably experiencing a deep secular erosion of voting participation during the last half century are greatly exaggerated. Overall the majority of postindustrial nations saw a long-term pattern of trendless fluctuations or stability in electoral participation. Regression models (not shown here) revealed that only eight postindustrial societies experienced a significant erosion of voting turnout over successive decades since 1945. While there is good evidence for a slight short-term fall in voting participation during the 1990s across many postindustrial societies, the timing of the shift means that this cannot plausibly be attributed to the sort of glacial socioeconomic trends like suburbanization or secularization that are at the heart of modernization theories. We can speculate about alternative explanations for the short-term decline at this stage, but whatever the explanation, which requires further systematic analysis, the pattern suggests that this phenomenon requires us to focus on short-term political developments more than long-term socioeconomic trends.

[Figure 2 about here]

To examine turnout in more detail, Figure 2 shows the trends from 1945 to 2000 broken down by country for all the developing societies with continuous elections during this period. Providing further confirmation of the basic claim of modernization theory, the growth in voting participation is most notable in throughout Latin America, as electoral democracies gradually became consolidated, such as in Nicaragua, Peru, Chile, Uruguay and Peru. The time-series models therefore serve to provide further confirmation of the proposition that the shift from agrarian towards industrialized societies is associated with growing voting participation, which suggests that we need to look more closely and systematically at what it is about the modernization process that may be driving rising turnout, particularly the role of education, wealth and literacy.

[Figures 3 and 4 about here]

To look at the trends in Mexico in more detail Figure 3 presents the results of Congressional and Presidential elections since 1946. In common with many other Latin American nations, the steady rise is evident over successive elections during the 1950s and 1960s before reaching a plateau with a series of elections showing trendless fluctuations around the mean. Interestingly despite the interest and the prospects for change surrounding the 2000 election, this did not bring an exceptional number of voters to the polls. Moreover if we compare average turnout in Mexico during the 1990s with the broader range of 35 American countries (see Figure 4) the results demonstrate that Mexico is below average, with considerable variations shown between leaders such as St. Lucia, Uruguay, Antigua and Barbuda, and Chile, all with turnout over 80%, and other laggards, including Haiti, Colombia and Guatemala, ranking lowest. We can therefore conclude that electoral turnout worldwide has not experienced a secular slide; in fact during the last half century the reverse pattern is true and the expanding numbers of voters going to the polls is most evident in societies that have gone through a period of rapid social modernization.
Civic Associations and Social Capital

But what of other more demanding forms of civic engagement? Much of the concern in recent years, generated by the work of Robert Putnam, has focused on social capital\textsuperscript{35}. Traditional interest groups and new social movements have long been thought to play a vital role in mobilizing participation in plural societies. What is most striking about modern theories of civic society is the claim that typical face-to-face deliberative activities and horizontal collaboration within voluntary associations far removed from the political sphere, such as sports clubs, agricultural cooperatives, or philanthropic groups, promote interpersonal trust, fostering the capacity to work together in future, creating the bonds of social life that are the basis for civil society and democracy. Organized groups not only achieve certain instrumental goals, it is claimed, in the process of doing so they also create the conditions for further collaboration, or social capital.

For Putnam, social capital is defined as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."\textsuperscript{36} Most importantly, this is therefore understood as both a \textit{structural} phenomenon (social networks) and a \textit{cultural} phenomenon (social norms). This duel nature often creates problems associated with attempts to measure social capital that commonly focus on one or the other dimension, but not both. Three core claims lie at the heart of Putnam’s theory. First, that horizontal networks embodied in civic society, and the norms and values related to these ties, have important consequences, both for the people in them and for society at large, producing both private goods and public goods. Moreover Putnam goes further than other contemporary theorists in arguing that social capital has significant political consequences. The theory can be understood as a two-step model of how civic society directly promotes social capital, and how, in turn, social capital (the social networks and cultural norms that arise from civic society) is believed to facilitate political participation and good governance. Lastly, in \textit{Bowling Alone} Putnam presents the most extensive battery of evidence that civic society in general, and social capital in particular, has suffered substantial erosion in the postwar years in America. Putnam is suitable cautious in extending these claims to suggest that similar trends are evident in other similar post-industrial societies, but if these countries have experienced similar secular changes in technology and the media to those that are claimed to have caused the slide in civic engagement in the United States, then by implication there should be some evidence of a parallel fall in social capital in these countries as well.

We lack reliable time-series trends but we can compare a wide range of societies at different levels of human and political development to see where they stand in terms of the strength of membership in voluntary organizations\textsuperscript{37}. The 1995 WVS item measured associational membership as follows: "Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations; for each one, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member, or not a member of that type of organization?" The list included nine broad categories, including church or religious organizations, sports or recreational organizations, political parties, art, music or educational organizations, labor unions, professional associations, charitable organizations, environmental organizations, and any other voluntary organization. The range covers traditional interest groups and mainstream civic associations, as well as including some new social movements. The measure allows us to analyze patterns of membership in the most common types of associations, including religious-based, union and environmental groups that provide some of the classic linkage organizations with political parties. Social trust was gauged in the 1995 WVS by the question: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” This measure remains limited for many reasons. It gives respondents the option of a simple dichotomy, whereas most modern survey items today present more subtle continuous scales. The double negative in the latter half of the question may be confusing to respondents. No social context is presented to respondents, nor can they distinguish between different categories, such as relative levels of trust in friends, colleagues, family, strangers, or compatriots. Nevertheless this item has become accepted as the standard indicator.
of social or interpersonal trust, following its use as a long time-series in the American GSS since the early 1970s, so it will be adopted here to facilitate replication across different studies.

[Figure 5 about here]

The result of the comparison in Figure 5 show some striking clusters of societies that strongly relate to cultural legacies in regions around the world. Societies richest in social capital, located in the top right-hand corner, include the Nordic nations (Norway, Sweden and Finland), as well as Australia, West Germany and Switzerland. The United States proves to be exceptionally high on associational activism, as others like Curtis et al. have long emphasized\(^{38}\), while being moderately strong on social trust. If there has been a systematic erosion of American organizational involvement, then this has been from a relatively high base, and many other strong and stable democracies manage effectively with lower levels of activism.

In contrast, many nations fall into the opposite quadrant as impoverished in social capital, including the ex-Soviet republics in Central Europe, such as Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Russia, which clustered together with low trust and activism, along with Turkey\(^{39}\). Slightly greater associational activism but equally weak bonds of interpersonal trust characterize the South American nations like Uruguay, Venezuela and Argentina\(^{40}\). The Central American nations seem to be located between the position of the United States and South American societies, characterized by moderately low in social trust and yet greater organizational linkages. The three African nations cluster together in the bottom right-hand quadrant, as nations of joiners with extensive membership but low social trust. And in the opposite quadrant the three societies sharing a Confucian cultures (China, Japan and Taiwan) all display moderate social trust, yet relatively low organizational involvement\(^{41}\). Japan may have what Fukuyama terms ‘spontaneous sociability’\(^{42}\), with a strong sense of shared norms and a culture of personal trust, but weaker institutionalized associations. The ‘mixed’ societies are important theoretically, and we need to consider further the cultural and institutional reasons leading to the trusting non-joiners, and the joining distrusters.

The patterns were confirmed by multivariate analysis (not shown here) showing that Central and Eastern Europe were significantly weaker than average in civic society, while Latin America was significantly more mistrusting, and the Scandinavian societies were higher than average on both dimensions. The overall distribution suggests that long-standing historical and cultural traditions function to imprint distinctive patterns on clusters of nations, despite some outliers. We can dispute the nature, origins and meaning of social capital, but it appears that whatever the Nordic ‘X’ factor is, the ex-Soviet societies lack.

Protest activism

Many studies have drawn attention to rising levels of political protest whether understood as the spread of ‘demonstration democracy’ (Etzioni 1970), the growth of the ‘protest society’ (Pross 1992), an expression of ‘global civic society’ (Kaldor 2000), or more popularly in the contemporary headlines as the rise of the so-called ‘Genoa generation’\(^ {43}\). Commentators often report that protest politics has grown in recent decades and perhaps the most common explanation, and the primary reason for concern, suggests that growing political disaffection with the conventional institutions of representative government has generated this phenomenon. This approach was exemplified in the mid-1970s by the widely influential Trilateral report ‘The Crisis of Democracy’ by Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki\(^ {44}\) which regarded the May 1968 street uprisings and their subsequent reverberations with dismay as a serious threat to the stability of representative government. Yet an alternative perspective suggests that regarding demonstrators as anti-state radicals reflects popular stereotypes common in the framing of social movements during the sixties, when the American news media focused on hippies, yippies and Black Panther radicals, and the European press conveyed images of 1968 student revolutionaries in Paris, London and Berlin, but that this image may no longer reflect patterns of participation in the
contemporary world, if the demonstration population has gradually ‘normalized’ over the years to become mainstream and conventional. Does there continue to be a distinct dimension of ‘protest’ politics, or has this now become merged with other common activities like joining unions or parties? Following the tradition established by Barnes and Kaase, protest activism is measured using five items in the World Value Survey, including signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, and occupying buildings or factories. The results of the factor analysis presented in Table 1 confirmed that these activities did fall into a distinct dimension compared with the others already examined throughout the study, including electoral participation and belonging to civic groups like unions, religious-organizations, sports and arts clubs, professional associations, charitable associations, environmental groups.

Figure 6 examines the actual experience in different countries of protest politics and of demonstrations, representing one of the most popular forms of direct action. The results show that demonstrations and protest activism were most popular in affluent postindustrial societies, as modernization theory predicts. In countries such as Belgium, Sweden and Italy one third or more of the population have protested at some stage in their lives, far more than are currently members of political parties. In the middle of the distribution there are a wide range of nations, from the United States to Russia, where protest politics varies substantially. Lastly in the bottom left-hand corner are the nations that are lowest in both demonstration and protest activism, according to the 1999-2001 WVS data, including Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina (prior to the current surge in protests), as well as Vietnam and Zimbabwe where such activities are officially discouraged. It appears that protests and demonstrations have become fairly widespread in many established democracies and affluent societies, as modernization theories suggest, so that it is no longer appropriate to see these as ‘unconventional’ forms of civic engagement. Evidence presented elsewhere, examining the attitudinal and social characteristics of the demonstration population in Belgium, shows also that diverse groups participate in these actions, and that similar factors like interest and efficacy which help to predict participation in traditional forms of civic engagement also help predict engagement in demonstrations.

Part IV: Public Opinion Towards Democracy

So far we have examined political activism but what is the state of public opinion towards democratic governance in Latin America and elsewhere? As Mark Falcoff summarizes the situation in the region, based on the results of the 2001 Latinobarometer survey by MORI in 17 nations:

“Fifteen years ago Latins talked about democracy as if it were a magical cure for all their ills. Today, the mood is tending to the reverse—for many the problem would seem to reside in the procedures by which people elect their leaders. In a poll conducted by… Latinobarómetro… the only country in the region where support for democracy was found to have increased in the past year is Mexico, presumably as the result of the election for the first time of an opposition candidate to the presidency. Even so, it grew by only a single percentage point—from 45 to 46 percent…Elsewhere the numbers are far more disturbing. On one hand, most citizens apparently subscribe to the broad objectives of a democratic capitalist society; on the other, they have little or no faith in the capacity of their institutions to take their societies where they want to go.”

Marta Lagos, director of the Latinobarómetro which has conducted annual surveys since 1995, suggested that public opinion in Latin America in the 200 survey remains ‘conflicted and ambivalent’, with strongest support for democracy in Costa Rica, Uruguay and Argentina, only tentative democratic commitment in most of the other nations, and a ‘crisis’ of public attitudes in a
few. The 1998 Hewlett survey monitored public opinion in Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico, and on the basis of the analysis Roderic Ai Camp cautiously concluded that among Latin Americans there is no consensus on what democracy means, as different cultures emphasized either its political or its socioeconomic dimensions.

Yet assessments of public opinion from particular countries within the region suffer from certain common limitations. First, if these studies fail to draw comparisons with the broader picture of comparable transitional and consolidating democracies around the globe, or with long-term trends in each nation, then the benchmarks used for any evaluation can prove misleading. For example, if 60% of Latinos agree with the statement “Democracy is preferable to any other form of government”, as reported in the 17-nation 2000 Latinobarómetro, it is difficult to tell if the cup is half full or half empty. Is this level of agreement consistent with public opinion in transitional and consolidating democracies elsewhere? Are citizens in Latin America more or less favorable towards democratic ideals than others in, say, Russia, South Africa, or Taiwan? The results need to be understood within a broader longitudinal or cross-national context.

Even more importantly, cultural responses towards the political system are multidimensional so that over-reliance upon single indicators of either attitudes or behavior can generate a distorted interpretation of the state of public opinion. Instead we need multiple measures to build up a composite understanding of citizen’s evaluations of their political systems. No single measure can be regarded as definitive, but collecting different pieces of the puzzle assembles a more reliable overview. Unfortunately this greatly limits how far we can rely upon some previous analysis; for example Alejandro Moreno compared a measure of “support for democracy” in Latin America based on a single index using seven variables from the 1995 World Values Study. Based on this he concluded that “support for democracy” differs among countries, as well as by age, education, level of information, values, and ideologies. Yet replication of the index using principle component factor analysis and the same data revealed that there were in fact two dimensions within the single measure, reflecting support for democracy as an ideal and support for democratic performance. The unfortunate conflation of these two dimensions into a single measure can only lead towards muddy and confusing results, given that it can be perfectly consistent and logical to believe in the democratic ideal and yet disapprove of its performance, or vice versa.

As argued elsewhere, systems support is a multidimensional concept that includes different indicators. David Easton’s seminal framework distinguished between support for the community, the regime and the authorities. These distinctions provide an essential starting point but greater refinement of categories can be made to reflect significant theoretical and empirical gradations within different parts of the regime. In Easton's conception the regime constituted the basic framework for governing the country: people could not pick and choose between different elements of the regime, approving of some parts while rejecting others. Yet in practice citizens do seem to distinguish between different levels of the regime, often believing strongly in democratic values and ideals, for example, while proving critical of the way that democratic governments work in practice. People also seem to make clear judgments concerning different institutions within the regime, such as expressing confidence in the courts while simultaneously disapproving of Congress. Accordingly the original Eastonian classification can be usefully expanded into a five-fold framework distinguishing between political support for the community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors. These levels can be regarded as a continuum ranging from the most diffuse support for the nation-state down through successive levels to the most concrete support for particular politicians.

Within the space of this brief paper we will focus on three indicators where there has been perhaps the greatest concern expressed in Latin America: namely public opinion towards regime principles (support for democracy as an ideal), regime performance (how well people
believe that democracy works in practice), and institutional confidence (trust in government and in the civil service). The measures selected for comparison emerged as distinct in factor analysis (not reproduced here), forming consistent scales, and the specific questions used in the analysis are listed under each of the figures.

Figure 7 shows the cross-national patterns in support for democratic ideals and performance. Many of the established democracies show the highest levels of approval, including Germany, Australia, Denmark, and Sweden. Yet as Klingemann noted in an earlier study, support for democracy as an ideal has become widespread throughout most societies in the world, including newer democracies such as Bangladesh, Croatia and Venezuela. The Latin American nations cluster in the middle of the distribution, with Mexico slightly lower than its regional cousins. The country proving the most disillusioned with both the ideals and performance of democracy is Russia, although many of the Central and Eastern European countries also cluster towards the lower end of the distribution. Therefore Mexico shows slightly lower support for democracy than Argentina, Chile or Venezuela, yet at the same time Mexicans have greater faith in democracy than citizens in many post-Communist states.

Institutional Confidence

Much concern about public support for democracy relates to trust and confidence in the core political institutions linking citizens and the state. Of course to some extent confidence in government could be expected to rise and fall as part of 'normal' politics, reflecting evaluations of the state's delivery of economic growth or public services. But if there are persistent patterns indicating that people no longer have any faith in the effectiveness and performance of the government, in the integrity and efficiency of public sector civil servants, or in other institutions such as faith in the legitimacy, honesty and integrity of the electoral process, then potentially this could have significant consequences by undermining faith in democracy as an ideal. Figure 8 shows the patterns of institutional confidence in the government, civil service, parliament and political parties, each measured on 4-point scales from low to high, across the dozen American societies where data is available from the mid-1990s onwards. The results show some predictable variations, with confidence greatest in the countries with experience of stable democracy, namely Canada, the United States, Chile and Uruguay. By contrast, Argentina, the Dominican Republic and Peru lag behind. Mexico turns out to be fairly middling in their distribution and to have fairly even scores across the four types of institutions.

Part V: Conclusions and Implications

What are the implications of this study both for assessing general theories of civic engagement and, in particular, for understanding the political culture of Mexico? The declinist theory of civic engagement suggests that in the late twentieth century many post-industrial societies have experienced widespread citizen disengagement from the traditional channels of political participation. Symptoms of this malady are thought to include sagging electoral turnout (perhaps exemplified by recent British elections), rising anti-party sentiment (illustrated by sudden surges in support for far-right extremists like Le Pen's Front National in France and the Pym Fortuna party in the Netherlands), and the decay of civic organizations such as parties, churches and unions. Unpredictable outbreaks of protests can also be regarded as destabilizing for governments, whether at meetings of world leaders in Seattle, Gothenberg and Genoa, or on the streets of Buenos Aires, Caracas, and San Salvador Atenco.

The modernization theory outlined in this study suggest that socioeconomic shifts in the production process underlie changes in the state, in particular that rising levels of education, literacy and wealth in the transition from agrarian subsistence economies to industrialized nations
generate the conditions favoring expanded citizen participation at the ballot box. The subsequent transition from industrial to postindustrial societies, with growing levels of education, information and communications, lays the foundation for citizen engagement in more demanding forms of political expression, organization and mobilization, exemplified by demonstrations. The older forms of traditional civic engagement do not thereby necessarily atrophy, in a zero-sum game, although newer channels supplement older ones. More cognitively-skilled and informed citizens can become more critical of the operations of government and the performance of traditional political institutions, but at the same time they display considerable reservoirs of faith in the principles and ideals of representative democracy. The evidence presented throughout this paper provides consistent empirical support for this account, whether in terms of behavior such as electoral turnout, associational activism, or protest politics, or attitudinal indicators of democratic cultures, although at the same time the pace of change due to the modernization process is conditioned in any particular nation by the structure and institutions of the state, the role of mobilizing agencies in any society, and the resource-based and motivational differences among groups and individuals.

How does Mexico fit into this general interpretation? The first systematic micro-level comparative survey of political attitudes and behavior, developed in Almond and Verba’s seminal Civic Culture (1963), regarded Mexico as a country combining aspiration and alienation. The five-nation study found that many Mexicans expressed pride in their political system and aspirations to participate in politics, as well as confidence in their ability to do so. Yet at the same time Mexicans had the lowest levels of political activity, voluntary association membership, and political information. As Almond and Verba summarized their assessment: “Many Mexicans lack political experience and skill, yet their hope and confidence are high; combined with the widespread participant aspirational tendencies, however, are cynicism about and alienation from the political infrastructure and bureaucracy.”

Four decades later, if we draw together the findings comparing Mexico with other Latin American nations at similar levels of development, the evidence presented in this study presents a more complex picture. Long-term post-war trends show that, in common with many Latin nations, Mexico has experienced increased levels of electoral participation, although at the same time patterns during the last thirty years show trendless fluctuations. Mexico also has relatively low mean turnout (Vote/VAP) during the 1990s in comparison with other Latin American states. In terms of social capital, Mexicans are moderately active in voluntary associations and community organizations (and also above-average in Latin America), but also fairly low in social trust (even if trust has grown in recent years). And Mexico has little participation in protest politics and demonstrations, as well as displaying little faith in democratic ideals and approval of democratic performance, and moderate confidence in political institutions. It is difficult to make any strict comparison with the base-line Civic Culture, given different measures and comparative frameworks. Nevertheless the broader cross-national study suggest that some of the older elements of the Mexican political culture persist, while other indicators such as associational activism seem to present a different picture to the situation four decades ago. Basic cultural attitudes and patterns of political behavior acquired through the home and family, workplace, and community during formative youth and adolescence can be expected to shift only gradually, and therefore to lag well behind institutional reforms. It remains to be seen how far the substantial institutional changes experienced in recent years in Mexico as part of the democratic consolidation process -- notably genuine adversarial party competition, the rotation of government and opposition in power facilitating electoral accountability, a more limited presidency, and closer electoral races, as well as broader long-term trends in human development -- have the capacity to generate renewed civic engagement and confidence in the political process, especially among the younger generation, in subsequent decades.
Table 1 Typology of Stages of Societal Modernization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>From Agrarian to Industrial Societies</th>
<th>From Industrial to Postindustrial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>The population shift from agrarian villages to metropolitan conurbations.</td>
<td>The diffusion from urban areas to suburban neighborhoods. Greater social and geographic mobility, including immigration across national borders, generating the rise of more multicultural societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human capital</strong></td>
<td>Growing levels of education, literacy and numeracy with the spread of basic schooling.</td>
<td>Rising levels of education, especially at secondary and university level, generating increased levels of human capital and cognitive skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce</strong></td>
<td>The shift from extraction and agriculture towards manufacturing and processing.</td>
<td>The rise of the professional and managerial occupations in the private and public sectors, and greater occupational specialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Status</strong></td>
<td>The rise of the working class and the urban bourgeoisie, and the decline of peasant society and traditional landed interests.</td>
<td>The move from ascribed occupational and social roles given at birth towards achieved status derived from formal educational qualifications and careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Conditions</strong></td>
<td>Growing standards of living, rising longevity, and expanding leisure time.</td>
<td>Economic growth fuelling an expanded middle class, rising living standards, improved longevity and health, and growing leisure time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Media</strong></td>
<td>The wider availability of mass-circulation newspapers and periodicals, and, during the twentieth century, access to electronic mass media.</td>
<td>The shift in the mass media from mass broadcasting towards more specialized narrow casting with the fragmentation of media outlets across markets and technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td>The expansion of the franchise, the growth of Weberian bureaucratization and reliance on legal-rational authority in government.</td>
<td>The growth of multilayered governance, at the global and local levels, as well as the expansion in the non-profit sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Protection</strong></td>
<td>The development of the early foundations of the welfare state and the elements of social protection for sickness, unemployment and old age.</td>
<td>Market liberalization and the contraction of the state, displacing social protection increasingly to the non-profit and private sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family structures</strong></td>
<td>The shrinkage from extended to nuclear families, the gradual reduction in the fertility rate.</td>
<td>The erosion of the nuclear family, the growth of non-traditional households, and changing patterns of marriage and divorce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex roles</strong></td>
<td>The entry of more women into the paid workforce.</td>
<td>Growing equality of sex roles in the division of labor within the home, family and workplace, and the rise of women (especially married women) in the paid labor force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural values</strong></td>
<td>Material security, traditional authority, and communal obligations.</td>
<td>Quality of life issues, self-expression, individualism and post-materialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic engagement</strong></td>
<td>Expansion of voting participation and membership of traditional civic organizations like parties and unions.</td>
<td>Stability of traditional forms of civic association and expansion of more demanding forms of political activism, including new social movements and protest politics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Dimensions of Political Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Civic Activism</th>
<th>Protest Activism</th>
<th>Voting Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belong to environmental organization</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to charitable organization</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to art, music or educational organization</td>
<td>.643</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to professional association</td>
<td>.638</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to political party</td>
<td>.584</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to sport or recreational organization</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to church or religious organization</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to labor union</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a lawful demonstration</td>
<td></td>
<td>.765</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join in boycotts</td>
<td></td>
<td>.764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join unofficial strike</td>
<td></td>
<td>.756</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign a petition</td>
<td></td>
<td>.687</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupy buildings or factories</td>
<td></td>
<td>.680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted in election</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Variance 20.1 19.6 7.2


Protest activism: “Now I’d like you to look at this card. I’m going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I’d like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it, or would never, under any circumstances, do it.”

Source: World Values Survey, mid-1990s
Figure 1: Turnout trends per decade by type of society, 1945-2000

Note: Turnout is calculated as the number of valid votes cast as a proportion of the voting age population in all parliamentary and presidential elections.

Source: Calculated from International IDEA database Voter Turnout from 1945 to 2000. www.idea.int.
Figure 2: Mean turnout per decade in developing societies with continuous elections, 1945-2000

Note: Turnout is calculated as the number of valid votes cast as a proportion of the voting age population in all parliamentary and presidential elections. For details of the classification see Appendix A. The comparison includes all developing societies that held at least one national election per decade 1945-2000. Source: Calculated from International IDEA database Voter Turnout from 1945 to 2000. www.idea.int.
Figure 3: Turnout in Mexican elections

Turnout (Vote/VAP) Mexican Elections, 1946-2000

Source: International IDEA database Voter Turnout since 1945. www.idea.int
Figure 4: Turnout in the Americas, 1990s (Votes cast as a proportion of Voting Age Population)

Source: International IDEA database Voter Turnout since 1945. www.idea.int
Figure 5: Social Capital (Social Trust and Associational Activism), mid-1990s

Note: Voluntary Organization: Number of organizations that people actively belong to such as cultural societies, unions, parties and sports clubs. Social trust: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” Source: World Values Survey 1995-7.
Figure 6: Experience of Protest Politics, 2000

Protest activism

Note: *Demonstration* "Have you ever attended a lawful demonstration?" Protest Activism: "Have you ever…signed petition, joined in boycotts, attended a lawful demonstration, joined unofficial strikes, occupied buildings or factories?"

Figure 7: Attitudes towards democratic ideals and performance

Note: Democratic Performance Agree/Disagree "Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling" and "Democracies aren't good at maintaining order". Democratic Ideals: "Democracy may have its problems but it's the better than any other form of government" and "Having a democratic system...is very good". Source: World Values Survey 1999-2001.
Figure 8: Confidence in Political Institutions, Americas

Note: “I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence (4), quite a lot (3), not very much (2), or none at all (1)?…The government in (capital city)/ the civil service/ parliament/ political parties” Source: World Values Survey 1995-2001.


3 For an annual assessment of the state of democracy and changes worldwide see Freedom House. Freedom in the World. see www.freedomhouse.org.


6 The World Bank estimates that after increasing from 0.6 percent in 1999 to 3.8 percent in 2000, LAC's annual GDP growth declined to 0.6 percent in 2001, and is expected to remain near that level in 2002. This is the result of a weak global economy, deterioration in Argentina's economic situation, falling world trade, low coffee prices, drought, and declining tourism revenues. Despite immense resources and dynamic societies, deep inequalities of wealth persist in most LAC countries, with almost one-third of the region's people (168 million of the region's 510 million people) living in poverty (on less than $2 per day). Nevertheless there is evidence of long-term progress during the last decade; the World Bank estimates that the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day in the region had declined from 16.8 percent to 12.1 percent in 1999. See http://lnweb18.worldbank.org.


8 For an annual assessment of the state of democracy and changes worldwide see Freedom House. Freedom in the World. see www.freedomhouse.org.


32 The main differences are the exclusion of Hungary and Poland (ranked as by UNDP as highly developed), Mexico and Turkey (both ranked as medium developed), and the inclusion of Singapore as post-industrial. Hong Kong is also included in the UNDP list but excluded from this study, as a dependent territory. See Appendix A for the detailed classification of all nations.
Societies are defined based on the annual ratings provided by Freedom House since 1972. The level of freedom is classified according to the combined mean score for political rights and civil liberties in Freedom House's 1972-2000 annual surveys Freedom of the World. www.freedomhouse.org


It should be noted that the item wording on associational activism altered in successive waves of the WVS preventing any reliable comparisons over time.


For a discussion of the cases of China and Taiwan see T.J. Shi. 2001. 'Cultural values and political trust - A comparison of the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan.' Comparative Politics 3(4): 401-412.


