

Associative Democracy: Civic Groups, Regime Support, and the Development of Democratic Values in 25 Countries

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The factors influencing democratic consolidation remains a constant research agenda for political scientists. While economic and political factors can be cited as influencing consolidation at the macro-level, ultimately it falls upon the citizenry to accept and promote democratic institutions. Democratic values, such as respect for the rule of law and tolerance of other persons are core values democratic citizens must possess for democracies to remain stable and thus for consolidation to take place. Recently many scholars have put forth the claim that we should look to civil society and especially civic groups in an effort to explain how democratic values can be transferred and maintained in the citizenry at the individual-level of analysis. This paper attempts to examine the effects of civic group involvement on democratic values across 25 countries, which vary greatly in terms of their experiences with democracy. Regionally this includes Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Using the World Values Survey (1995-1998) the analysis reveals differential effects for civic group involvement on democratic values. Results demonstrate a strong, positive relationship between civic association and democratic values cross-nationally. Specifically, a strong relationship is uncovered between religious groups and democratic values. However, this picture varies greatly amongst geographic regions. This demonstrates the increased need to study the differential effects of civic groups on democratic values cross-nationally at the individual level of analysis and examine any special role that religious groups may play in this process.

Key words: *Civic group involvement, Democratic values, Respect for the rule of law, Tolerance, Political action*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern democratic societies are built on the basic idea that everyone is to be guaranteed certain individual rights and that a compromise of interests is necessary in order to allow all citizens opportunities to transform these rights into more substantive possibilities. Democracy thus requires that people obey the rules of the game and make sacrifices for the common good so that all citizens can enjoy a better life. This entails not only respect for the rule of law and having a certain amount of confidence in political institutions, but a certain degree of tolerance for other individuals within society. Many scholars have noted the importance of democratic values, such as tolerance and respect for the rule of law for democratic consolidation to commence (Stokes 1993; Tismaneanu 1995; Gibson et al 1992). A question of great importance is what factors influence the development of such democratic values that are essential for democracies to thrive?

Scholars such as Diamond (1994) have noted that a strong and active civil society is responsible for both democratic consolidation and the dissemination of democratic values that can make such consolidation possible. Others worry that democratic consolidation may suffer when civil society is weakened (Arato and Cohen 1992; Nelson 1996). There are two

lines of research that have examined institutions in civil society and claim that civic group involvement positively influences democratic values. One line of recent scholarship, which traces its lineage back to Alexis de Tocqueville, argues that civil society is a breeding ground for the dissemination of democratic values. Most important among the institutions within civil society for accomplishing such tasks are civic groups.

Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) connects the problems of contemporary democracies such as asocial individualism, political disengagement, and social disconnectedness to the declining membership in voluntary civic organizations. In his two books *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam emphasizes the positive effects of civic associations for developing and maintaining democratic values, such as tolerance and respect for the law, as well as the promotion of community togetherness and civic engagement.

Other scholars such as Verba et al (1995) note that civic groups help to integrate citizens into their political system, by providing them civic skills and mobilizing them to participate in political and civic affairs. These scholars argue that civic groups are important for their role in providing civic education, which emphasizes the importance of political involvement and connection with political affairs. Groups are also important for group mobilization efforts that develop participatory behaviors.

Putnam and other Neo-Tocquevillians assert that strong group association can lead to the acceptance of democratic values in the populace, because civic groups promote social cohesion and expose members to diverse individuals and ideas, which promote trust and tolerance. Others argue that it is due to their ability to provide civic education and opportunities to integrate citizens into the political process. While the idea that civic groups make people internalize democratic values is attractive, critics suggest that the role of civic associations in enhancing democratic values may depend on different types of associations (Borgos and Douglas 1996). According to Seligson (1999), participants in community organizations show enhanced democratic behavior to a much greater degree than those who participate in other associations. Others such as Edwards and Foley (1998) argue that groups are not capable of disseminating values of trust and tolerance as Putnam suggests. Furthermore, many studies are based on small N analyses limited to a single case or certain regions. It is necessary to examine the dynamic relationship between civic associations and democratic values by extending the scope of analysis and by expanding the cases considered.

Do civic associations facilitate the internalization of democratic values? Are all group associations important in enhancing these virtues? Does this relationship hold true across many countries? While this seems like a fruitful research agenda, as Hooghe (1999) notes, there have been relatively few studies examining the individual-level effects of civic association. The goal of this paper is to examine 25 nations to uncover the individual-level effects of civic group involvement on democratic values across a range of countries which have varied experiences with democracy.

2. CIVIC GROUPS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Scholars have pointed to the importance of civil society for opening up democratic consolidations (Stokes 1993; Diamond 1994). Most admit that civil society is important not only in the beginning of the initial democratization process, but also in maintaining support for democracy over time (Linz and Stepan 1996). One of the core reasons for why a strong and vibrant civil society is important for a democracy to prosper lies in the ability of

institutions in civil society to promote and internalize democratic norms and values in the citizenry (Gibson et al 1992; Weigle and Butterfield 1992; Tismaneanu 1995; Finkel 2002).

Diamond (1999) provides a good conceptualization of what can be considered important democratic values. Diamond argues that basic democratic values are values held by citizens in a democratic country that include: protection of individual rights, respect for the rule of law, support for and accountability in democratic institutions, and respect for pluralism and tolerance in civil society (1999:10-13). When the public shares and internalizes these basic values and supports political institutions, it strengthens the effectiveness of democratic governments and allows democracies to stabilize and persist over time (Hetherington 1998).

While respect for individual rights may provide the framework for all other democratic institutions, public trust and confidence in the accountability of political institutions also play a positive role in enhancing democratic stability. According to Hall (1998) and Shils (1991), trust and confidence in political institutions is essential for democratic consolidation. It demonstrates public support in political leaders and indicates that they are accountable and representative to the public.

Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that the rule of law is a vital element in consolidating democracy and ties in directly to public confidence in the accountability of political actors and institutions. When the judiciary checks the power of elected officials and this system of checks and balances is respected by the other branches of government, they demonstrate to the citizenry that there is a consensus on the rules of the game. This affords a certain degree of legitimacy to a democratic government, which is reflected in the support of those institutions by its citizens.

Tolerance of other ideas is also important in democracies. The protection of individual rights to free speech and expression results in individuals coexisting with others who are very different from themselves. As Rose and Shin (2001) note, when individuals fail to hold these democratic values, democracies are in fact incomplete and face the distinct possibility of disintegration into an authoritarian regime. Civil society has been cited as being able to instill these important values in the citizenry. One institution existing in civil society that has been frequently cited for its ability to instill such values is civic group association.

Civic groups are often cited as important purveyors of civic education, which can lead to the internalization of democratic values. One group of scholars puts forth the thesis that groups help to integrate citizens into the political system, by providing them the requisite civic education and opportunities to participate in civic and political life. This builds support for and integrates them into the political system over time (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba et al 1995). Scholars such as Brady et al (1999) have noted that civic groups help individuals to develop civic skills, such as public speaking, writing, and other skills that allow individuals to become more comfortable participating in politics. Ayala (2000) notes that civic groups are good for democratic societies, because they mobilize members to participate in politics both directly and indirectly. Indirect mobilization refers to the civic education they provide, which gives members the skills necessary to participate in the political process and their community. Direct mobilization refers to the ability of group members to galvanize other group members to participate in civic and political affairs.

According to this argument, it is the collaborative environment of the group that opens up the opportunity for members to work on public speaking skills, writing ability, and the ability to participate in collective decision-making. Learning to collaborate and interact in public forums is essentially a form of civic education and provides an opportunity to develop or

increase such civic skills. It can also emphasize the importance of political institutions and democratic values.

The environment of civic groups is beneficial in developing civic skills leading to civic and political participation and integration into the political system, but the actual mission of the group need not be political. Verba et al elaborate on the issue of why non-political civic groups can foster political participation, “running a rummage sale to benefit the church day care center or editing a church newsletter provides opportunities for the development of skills relevant to politics even though the enterprise is expressly non-political (1995: 383). Developing and utilizing these skills is an indirect way that groups can facilitate civic and political participation, democratic values, and integration into the political system.

The second form of mobilization that stems from civic group membership is direct mobilization. According to Pollock (1982), this type of mobilization involves members motivating other members to become involved in their political system. Direct mobilization comes from efforts by group members to get other members of the group involved in group projects and undertakings. The importance of recruitment and direct mobilization for political participation has a long history in political science (Abramson and Claggett 2001; Brady et al 1999; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wielhouwer and Lockerbie 1996).

Other scholars note that civic groups are also important for democracy because they help to instill values, such as tolerance of other persons and ideas. For Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) and other aptly termed neo-Tocquevillians, civic groups are able to foster tolerance and respect for democracy, because they connect individuals to their community and expose members to a diverse demographic set. Putnam (2000) argues that when individuals join civic groups they are exposed to new ideas and different persons within the group. They are also exposed to different people through interacting with others in their community due to group projects. Over time, group members become more tolerant of other ideas and other persons as a result of their experiences in the group. Groups that provide for these experiences are termed heterogeneous social groups, according to Putnam.

The conditions placed on civic groups to foster generalized social trust, tolerance, and reciprocity is twofold. First, group members must engage in heterogeneous social interaction. Heterogeneity refers to diversity. This essentially means one must be exposed to people of different races, socioeconomic status, creeds, etc. As Putnam states, “frequent interaction among a diverse set of people tends to produce a norm of generalized reciprocity” (2000: 21). Exposure to diverse persons can come about in two ways as a result of group involvement.

The group itself can have a heterogeneous membership base, which entails a diversity of membership. The alternative to this is that the group exposes its members to many different kinds of persons outside of the group. Traditional civic groups in the United States such as the PTA, Masons, and many church groups should qualify for this designation according to Putnam. In other words, groups must have either internal, demographic heterogeneity, or groups prompt involvement with a diverse demographic set.

Putnam notes that not all groups foster these democratic values. He contrasts heterogeneous groups to homogenous groups. Homogenous groups fail to expose their members to diversity, which is why members of these groups do not have higher levels of generalized social trust and tolerance, as a result of group involvement. Sometimes homogenous groups even produce group-based trust at the expense of producing distrust in those outside of the group. Groups fitting this description include any group that is distrustful of outsiders and often times, the Ku Klux Klan and urban gangs are cited (Putnam 2000: 21-

22). It is the inward-looking nature (i.e. group membership is homogenous and members only associate with each other) that precludes them from developing democratic values.

The second criterion is that groups provide for face-to-face interactions among members. Most traditional civic groups meet this criterion. The exception is what Putnam (1995) refers to as “tertiary associations” or groups whose members simply pay dues to gain membership. Groups in the United States such as the NRA or AARP, where members rarely meet face-to-face, but pay membership fees to national associations, are examples of such tertiary associations. Many trade and professional groups also meet this classification. Putnam excludes these from groups able to produce democratic values, such as social trust and tolerance. They do not provide for the diverse social exchanges necessary to influence and condition the individual perspectives and attitudes of group members.

The expectation that one can draw from both of these literatures is that civic group involvement is likely to have a positive relationship with the development of democratic values. However, even Putnam notes that not all groups will produce democratic values. Critics such as Foley and Edwards (1999) and Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) disagree with the claim that civic groups can promote such values in the first place. These scholars argue that values created in the group do not extend outside the boundaries of the group itself. So while trust and tolerance may develop in the group it will not result in these values being extended to society as a whole. Empirical support for these arguments can be found on both sides.

Brehm and Rahn (1997) find support for the above arguments in the United States. According to these scholars, there is a significant relationship between, civic groups, social trust, and civic engagement. Contrary to this finding, Newton and Norris provide empirical evidence that membership in voluntary organizations is not related to democratic values. They argue that it is difficult to say that those citizens who are active in voluntary organizations would develop the social trust and cooperative habits that lead to democratic values, such as confidence in political institutions (2000: 63-65).

These arguments have also been examined within different countries, which has led to divergent findings. Seligson (1999) examines the relationship between civic association and democratic participation in six Spanish-speaking countries in Central America. He finds that democratic behavior depends on participation in different types of associations. According to Seligson, although participation in community associations is a predictor of democratic behavior, he finds no evidence for this relationship with other forms of civic group association. Borgos and Douglas (1996) find support for Seligson’s findings. These scholars demonstrate that community associations are more productive for the health of a democracy than other types of civic group involvement. Bowler et al (2003) find evidence that art group membership is heavily related to political engagement in Europe. Eastis (1998) argues that democratic norms and values may be produced from civic groups, but are strongly influenced by organizational characteristics, which may help to explain the different findings of these scholars.

It may just as easily be the case that each country has a separate political, social, and cultural context that influences the relationship between civic groups and democratic values. This may indicate that it is difficult to make very sweeping statements about this general relationship across countries and continents. While studies have examined this relationship in the United States (Brehm and Rahn 1997), in Latin America (Borgos and Douglas 1996; Seligson 1999), Russia (Tismaneanu 1995), states of the former Soviet Union (Stokes 1993),

and Europe (Laursen 1999; Bowler et al 2003), fewer studies have been done in Asia or across a range of countries.

Some scholars suggested early on that Asia's Confucian culture may be a hindrance to democratization. Huntington argues that, "only Western culture provides a suitable base for the development of democratic institutions, and consequently that democracy is largely inappropriate for non-Western societies" (1991: 298). Other scholars such as Di Palma (1991) and Friedman (1994) argue that Asian countries are no less hospitable to democracy than Western countries.

The goal of this paper below is to improve upon past studies by examining the relationship between civic association and democratic values across 25 countries in an effort to get a more clearly defined picture of whether or not civic groups influence democratic values in each of these countries and if certain groups are more likely to induce these values in citizens than others. It considers the influence of civic group membership on democratic values in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Latin America, and Asia. While other studies have looked at cases on each of these continents, this paper attempts to forge consistency by testing for any relationship between democratic values and civic groups in all of these countries using the same data set, so as to avoid any complications from testing this hypothesis across countries using different data and measures.

It also attempts to pay particular attention to Asia, as it has been examined much less frequently than the other nations in the analysis. South Korea, India, Taiwan, Philippines, and Bangladesh are included in the analysis so as to examine this relationship in Asia and compare the effects to other countries. Table 1 provides a list of the countries in the analysis (see Table 1). One can see that a host of countries are included in the analysis that range in their experiences with democracy from established democracies, such as the United States and Germany, to newly minted democracies such as Lithuania, to countries that have little or limited experiences with democracy, such as Russia and Nigeria.

While these countries have varied social and political environments, democratic values are inherently attitudinal characteristics and civic group involvement is an individual-level behavior. Because of this, it is fruitful to examine the relationship in question at the individual-level utilizing survey data. Below, the analysis will provide some empirical evidence of the effects of civic group involvement on democratic values in these countries.

Table 1. Countries Included in the Analysis

Latin America	Asia	Aberrant Cases	Eastern Europe	Western Europe
Brazil	Bangladesh	United States	Bulgaria	Germany
Chile	India	Australia	Croatia	Norway
Mexico	Philippines	Nigeria	Estonia	Finland
Venezuela	South Korea		Lithuania	Spain
	Taiwan		Latvia	Sweden
			Ukraine	
			Russia	

Source: *World Values Survey*, 1995-1998.

3. DATA AND ANALYSIS

Hypothesis testing relies on the *World Values Survey* (1995-1998). The *World Values Survey* is used to model the effects of civic group membership on democratic values cross-nationally. It provides appropriate data on group association and democratic values essential to test the above hypotheses. The third wave of the *World Values Survey* (1995-1998) is utilized, because it contains a more extensive data set than previous surveys. Survey questions are consistent within 25 countries, which allows them all to be included in the analysis.

3.1. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable used in the analysis is democratic values. As noted above, the most important elements of democratic values can be conceptualized as individual rights, respect for the law and legal system, confidence and trust in political actors and institutions, and tolerance (Diamond 1999). Three of these elements concern values or attitudes (respect for the rule of law, confidence in government, and tolerance), whereas the presence and protection of individual rights is something endemic to a country itself. Since this paper deals with the influence of civic group involvement on democratic values which are attitudinal characteristics at the individual level of analysis, the three attitudinal factors are used to represent the concept of democratic values.

The dependent variable is operationalized with 4 questions measuring confidence in government and the police (which represents confidence in government), confidence in the legal system (representing support for the rule of law), and a measure for pluralism. In the survey respondents are asked the following questions concerning the legal system, the police, and the government in their country, "I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them?" The response categories were (1) a great deal (2) quite a lot (3) not very much (4) not at all. These survey questions are used to operationalize confidence in government and respect for the rule of law.

Pluralism is operationalized with the following survey question, "please tell me which comes closest to your views." (1) to build good human relationships, it is important to understand other's preferences (2) to build good human relationships, it is most important to express one's preferences clearly. The first response is considered indicative of a tolerant position, because it expresses an attitude of the respondent that it is important to be tolerant of and understand the opinions of others. The second category represents less importance given to respecting the preferences of others.

These measures are dichotomized and placed together into an added index to operationalize the overall concept of democratic values in the analysis. Variable categories are collapsed in the first three measures so that the responses "a great deal" and "quite a lot" = 1 and "not very much" and "not at all" = 0. The pluralism measure is recoded where support for pluralism = 1 and no support = 0.

3.2. Independent Variables

Civic group involvement is the main independent variable in the analysis. Civic group involvement is measured through membership in a variety of civic groups. A list of voluntary associations used in the 1995-1998 *World Value Survey* includes 7 groups: (1) church or

Table 2. Group Association and Political Action Cross-Nationally

Group Type	Sign Petition	Demonstration	Boycott	Strikes	Occupy Building
Charity	76%	63%	55%	33%	21%
Professional	70%	56%	50%	33%	23%
Environmental	75%	65%	56%	34%	18%
Art	77%	61%	54%	34%	21%
Sports	79%	63%	56%	34%	20%
Church	73%	54%	47%	26%	16%
Church	75%	65%	56%	34%	18%
Political Party	74%	61%	52%	32%	20%

Source: *World Values Survey*, 1995-1998.

*Percentages are rounded and based on weighted data

religious organization; (2) sport or recreation organization; (3) art, music or educational organization; (4) labor union; (5) political party; (6) charitable organization, and (7) professional association. While there may be a discrepancy in including political party as a civic group, Berman (1997) notes that they may be a source of political and civic activity in many societies, so it is included in the analysis.

These group memberships comprise the main independent variables in the analysis. Age, gender, political interest, and education are controlled for in the analysis. Outside of political interest, levels of political participation are controlled for in the analysis as well. This is due to the fact that interest in politics and the political system could explain respondents' level of democratic values, instead of civic group membership. Furthermore, as Verba et al (1995) have noted, civic groups can also have a positive influence on political engagement. Table 2 demonstrates that civic group members are quite active politically (see Table 2). One can see that for the most part the majority of all group members claim to have signed petitions, demonstrated, and have engaged in a boycott. Around 30% on average have been involved in a strike and almost 20% on average have reported occupying a building or factory.

To control for these potential issues, reported levels of political participation are recorded. The *World Values Survey* asks the following question, "Now I'd like you to look at this card. I am 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." Five of the categories are: sign petition, join in boycotts, attend lawful demonstrations, join unofficial strikes, and occupy buildings or factories. Responses are coded (1) have done (2) might do (3) would never do. To measure political participation, these measure are dichotomized (1) = have or might do (0) would never do and are combined into an added index.

4. RESULTS

Do civic organizations facilitate democratic values? Is this relationship equivalent across countries? The results are estimated below with multivariate regression models utilizing Huber-White Heteroskedastic error correction to match the properties of the dependent variable.

Table 3. Least Squares Analysis of Group Association and Democratic Values in 25 Countries with Huber/White Standard Error Correction

Independent Variable	B	S.E.
<u>Group Membership</u>		
Political Party	-.026	.028
Union	.106***	.020
Charity	.056**	.026
Professional	-.096***	.029
Church	.083***	.018
Sports	.093***	.021
Arts	-.013	.024
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Participation Index	-.024***	.006
Political Interest	-.192***	.010
Gender	.035**	.015
Age	.0003***	.0001
Education	-.045***	.004
Constant	2.711***	.046
N: 20681		

Source: *World Values Survey, 1995-1998*

***P<.001 **P<.05

Table 3 lists the results of the analysis, which considers the effects of group membership on democratic values across all 25 countries (see Table 3). Overall, results are very positive concerning the effects of group membership on the dependent variable. The coefficients indicate that union, charity, professional, church, and sports group membership influence democratic values. Only political party and arts group membership are not related to the dependent variable. This demonstrates that generally group membership does in fact influence democratic values in a positive manner, which confirms the research hypothesis above.

Professional group membership is negative indicating that this relationship is not necessarily always positive. An explanation for this finding may be found with Putnam's (2000) assertion that not all groups are heterogeneous groups that would affect these attitudes positively. It may also be the case that many professional groups are tertiary organizations where members simply pay dues. This would preclude them under Putnam's logic from influencing individual attitudes, because members do not personally interact with one another and/or are not exposed to diverse persons and ideas.

All of the control variables also influence the dependent variable in the analysis. One can also see an interesting finding, in that politically interested and engaged persons are actually less likely to have these basic democratic values than their less engaged counterparts. Perhaps it could be the case that these individuals are disaffected or it could be a byproduct of the participation index containing many protest behaviors. Overall, this model provides strong evidence that democratic values and group membership are strongly related, which confirms the research hypothesis.

To provide more descriptive results, the 25 original countries are broken down into 4 general geographic regions: Latin America, Asia, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe. Leaving aside the aberrant cases (United States, Australia, and Nigeria), the effects of group

Table 4. Least Squares Analysis of Group Association and Democratic Values in Latin America with Huber/White Standard Error Correction

Independent Variable	B	S.E.
<u>Group Membership</u>		
Political Party	.038	.068
Union	-.042	.065
Charity	-.019	.064
Professional	.080	.068
Church	.405***	.042
Sports	-.017	.051
Arts	-.019	.056
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Participation Index	-.022	.014
Political Interest	-.155***	.022
Gender	-.066*	.031
Age	.006***	.002
Education	-.036***	.009
Constant	2.13***	.112
N: 4741		

Source: *World Values Survey, 1995-1998*

***P<.001 **P<.05

membership on democratic values is examined on a regional basis beginning with Table 4. Table 4 presents the results of this relationship in Latin America (see Table 4).

Results indicate that only church group membership has influence on the dependent variable in the model. However, the coefficient is positive and its size is very large compared to its standard error and other variables in the model. This seems to indicate that churches play an important role in developing democratic values in Latin America. As Verba et al (1995) have noted, churches provide excellent training grounds for civic education and the development of civic skills, which may help to explain this finding. While church group membership positively influenced the dependent variable in the general model, one can note a difference in the overall influence of civic group membership on democratic values when considering this relationship on a regional basis in Latin America.

Similar results are found regarding political interest. As in Table 3 political interest is negatively related to the dependent variable. All of the other control variables are statistically significant and related to the dependent variable as well. However, levels of political participation are not shown to influence the dependent variable as in Table 3.

Table 5 considers this relationship in Asia (see Table 5). In Asia one can note that only charity group membership is statistically significant. It demonstrates a positive influence on the dependent variable in a similar fashion as did the church group membership in Table 4.

All of the control variables are significant except for gender. As in the previous two models political interest is negatively related to the dependent variable. Furthermore, as in Table 3, the participation index is negatively related to the dependent variable. This is beginning to establish a pattern for highly participatory individuals and democratic values.

Overall, the general research hypothesis is confirmed in part by these findings, although not as robustly as in the general model.

Table 5. Least Squares Analysis of Group Association and Democratic Values in Asia with
Huber/White Standard Error Correction

Independent Variable	B	S.E.
<u>Group Membership</u>		
Political Party	.037	.060
Union	-.001	.063
Charity	.123**	.062
Professional	.111	.060
Church	.026	.041
Sports	-.088	.050
Arts	-.027	.054
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Participation Index	-.091***	.012
Political Interest	-.121***	.023
Gender	.072	.039
Age	.002**	.001
Education	-.018**	.007
Constant	2.76***	.115
N: 4473		

Source: *World Values Survey*, 1995-1998

***P<.001 **P<.05

Table 6 provides regression estimates for Western Europe (see Table 6). Union membership, professional association membership, and sports groups all are statistically significant and related to democratic values. However, professional group membership is negatively related to the dependent variable as in the general model. These findings also support the basic research hypothesis as many groups in the analysis are related to democratic values.

As in the majority of the previous models, the same pattern holds true for political participation and political interest. Politically interested persons are less likely in Western Europe to hold democratic values than their less involved counterparts. This may indicate that interested persons are disaffected at some level.

Finally, Table 7 provides regression estimates for Eastern Europe (see Table 7). Findings are very similar to Latin America. Only church group membership is statistically significant and related to the dependent variable. The coefficient sign is also positive indicating church group membership has a positive relationship with democratic values. This analysis demonstrates basic support for the research hypothesis.

The same pattern is apparent with politically involved individuals in this model as in the other models. The participation index and variable for political interest are statistically significant and the coefficient sign is negative. This indicates both have a negative relationship with the dependent variable. All of the other control variables are also statistically significant and thus related to the dependent variable as well.

Table 6. Least Squares Analysis of Group Association and Democratic Values in Western Europe with Huber/White Standard Error Correction

Independent Variable	B	S.E.
<u>Group Membership</u>		
Political Party	.014	.059
Union	.205***	.038
Charity	.084	.052
Professional	-.257***	.065
Church	.040	.036
Sports	.084**	.038
Arts	.016	.047
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Participation Index	-.042**	.013
Political Interest	-.108***	.021
Gender	-.018	.036
Age	.001	.001
Education	.049***	.008
Constant	2.59***	.110
N: 4473		

Source: *World Values Survey, 1995-1998*

***P<.001 **P<.05

Table 7. Least Squares Analysis of Group Association and Democratic Values in Eastern Europe with Huber/White Standard Error Correction

Independent Variable	B	S.E.
<u>Group Membership</u>		
Political Party	.082	.086
Union	-.011	.035
Charity	.073	.071
Professional	-.179	.103
Church	.325***	.046
Sports	.110	.057
Arts	.106	.061
<u>Control Variables</u>		
Participation Index	-.063***	.010
Political Interest	-.091***	.019
Gender	.100**	.032
Age	.0006**	.0003
Education	-.064***	.007
Constant	2.38***	.088
N: 4473		

Source: *World Values Survey, 1995-1998*

***P<.001 **P<.05

5. DISCUSSION

Altogether the analysis has uncovered a set of very interesting results and has proven fruitful for hypothesis testing. The general picture that has developed has been a positive one. Civic group association does seem to influence the development of democratic values. Furthermore, this relationship is mostly a positive one.

The general model which examines this relationship across all 25 countries shows the strongest relationship. Union, charity, professional, church, and sports groups all influence the dependent variable. Political party does not, but then again there may be some speculation as to whether this qualifies as a traditional civic group. Many members of political parties only pay dues or simply consider themselves a member. They are not engaging in substantive interaction with other group members and other individuals within their community.

The same might be said about professional group which is shown to negatively influence democratic values in Western Europe and in the general cross-national model. The reason may go back to Putnam (2000) who claims that groups are only able to connect individuals to each other and their broader community and political system, when they are local groups that individuals can interact in on a personal level. Since political parties and many trade and professional groups may meet these criteria of what Putnam considers "tertiary organizations", they would lack the appropriate mechanism to positively influence democratic values. Outside of professional group and political party membership, all of the other groups that are statistically related to democratic values have a positive influence on those values cross-nationally. This lends strong support to the research hypothesis.

Of all groups however, church group membership demonstrates the strongest effect on democratic values across all regions. It is the only group membership that positively influences democratic values in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and according to the general model, across all 25 countries in the analysis. Furthermore, in Latin America and Eastern Europe it is the only civic group membership that fosters democratic values. This finding is welcome, although not entirely surprising. Both lines of research in this area including those conducted by Putnam (2000) and Verba et al (1995), note that religious organizations can be breeding grounds for civic education and diverse community interaction.

These findings also demonstrate that Asia is not inhospitable to democracy as some have suggested. Civic groups are shown to influence democratic values in these countries. If democracy is sustainable in these Asian countries, perhaps scholars should look increasingly at civil society and civic groups to help foster the values that make democratic societies function properly.

A curious finding in the analysis is that political interest is negatively related to democratic values, except in the case of Latin America. This seems counterintuitive since one would expect those participating in their political system to have a great deal of support for it. According to Claibourn and Martin (2000), distrust of government can be a motivator for participation and involvement with government. It could very well be those that are upset with their political and civic leaders are likely to participate in the democratic process and hold negative current views of their government.

For example, Mangum (2003) finds evidence that distrust in government influences the decision to vote among African-Americans in the United States. It may be the case that these same individuals are participating in civic and political life and actually report a lack of these democratic values, but these may be short-term beliefs rather than long-term dispositions that

are not captured by the survey instrument. Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) note that if people are generally trustful and confident in political leaders and institutions, they are likely to see no apparent need to participate in a system they perceive as functioning well. So it may be the case that even if politically involved individuals are participating in the political system, they may very well be motivated by distrust and thus lose confidence in their perception of democratic values, demonstrating this through unconventional forms of political behavior.

The findings of this paper have important implications for how scholars view the connection between civil society, civic groups, democratic values, and democratic consolidation in general. Evidence herein suggests that a strong civil society can contribute to the development of basic democratic values, which are a necessary precondition for democracy to flourish. The analysis uncovers differential effects for this relationship when considered cross-nationally and when this analysis is broken down on a regional basis. This demonstrates that scholars may not be able to necessarily view this as being a very general or potentially generalizable relationship, unless the varied effects of civic groups in each country are taken into consideration.

What has been shown to be generalizable is that civic groups do in great part contribute to democratic values. The effects of specific civic groups may simply vary depending on country or region. Church groups do however hold a special place in this relationship in the analysis herein. If churches are social institutions where individuals can learn civic skills, interact with a broad range of persons in their community, and help individuals to become integrated into their political system as many scholars suggest, perhaps scholars should investigate their special role in civil society further. The current analysis suggests this may be a fruitful venture.

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