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The Relationship Between Democratization and Civicness In Transitional Post-Communist Countries

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Abstract

Democracy and civic involvement are core values of contemporary Europe. To what extent do citizens' attitudes relate with democratization, a process in which half of the continent was involved in recent years? By examining 16 post-Communist countries in their transition process until 1998, this article reveals that the level of political culture and tolerance in society makes a difference regarding their democratic achievements. At the same time, the interpersonal trust, authoritarian attitudes, and materialist values are long-standing attitudes in society that do not explain the change in democratic performances. Consistent with previous research on Western Europe, our analysis provides a useful basis for further investigation about democratization.

Introduction

Since the early 1970s a growing number of states (from Latin America to Mediterranean Europe) initiated a process of political liberalization (Huntington 1991) that would have paved the way to the establishment of democratic regimes in those areas in the following decade (Linz and Stepan 1996). The breakdown of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s and the subsequent re-enfranchisement of Central and Eastern European countries, previously located beyond the Iron Curtain, seem to represent the continuation of this global trend in its European dimension (Diamond and Plattner 2002).

In the early 1990s, a number of re-enfranchised states and newly-established statehoods arisen from the ashes of the USSR adopted fresh constitutional charters (often patterned after the Western models) aiming at embracing liberal democracy. Free elections were held throughout the former Eastern bloc, while proactive inclusive measures

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were adopted by the new national leaderships aimed at favouring citizens' political participation.

In the mid-1990s these developments seemed to increasingly attract the interest of the scholarly community as reflected in the greater number of books, journal articles, and dissertations devoted to the study of the democratization processes, most of which embracing a comparative perspective. In line with this general trend, cohorts of liberal scholars predicted a global democratic expansion, whose defining traits have been first proposed by Fukuyama (1992). He maintained that "[w]hat we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1992, 4).

Less than two decades later, this prediction proved to fall short and the actual state of things appear more complicated. Especially in the new states built on the remnants of the USSR, the initial efforts towards democratic transition experienced frequent stalemates, followed by authoritarian reversals[1]. In this respect, the liberal approach proposed by Fukuyama appears of little utility in assessing today's political trends. Frequently, the democratic attempts of the early 1990s proved to be only on paper and they often appeared functional to the establishment semi-authoritarian and corrupted regimes. The political leaders who took advantage of the situation usually proposed themselves as champions of national independence (e.g. Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan, Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus, Eduard Shevardnadze in Georgia, and Leonid Kravchuk in Ukraine). With a political influence mainly derived from their previous position in the Soviet establishment, these leaders often represented continuity with the non-democratic regime rather than the change they advertised. This represents only the dark side of the coin. The successful story comes from Central and Eastern European (CEE) institutions and plural party systems. Free, competitive, and fair elections have rapidly become the rule and democracy-minded political elites granted a successful completion of the transition. Although in some of these countries the passage from theory to practice still presents unresolved problems such as extreme political polarization, lack of

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[1] After timid liberal reforms many former-Soviet republics experienced democratic reversals (e.g. Belarus and the so-called Stan republics)

political accountability and a low level of citizens' civil and political awareness, the difference among the two types is striking and the success of the latter is unquestionable as confirmed by their recent full inclusion in the Euro-Atlantic regional structures.

This article explores the relationship between civic attitudes and the democratization process in Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union (CEEfSU) for the period between 1993-1998.[2] With a case selection based on the most similar systems design, we consider this region as largely marked by common political and economic heritage where the analyzed countries faced similar challenges following the collapse of Communism. Being aware of the different levels and speeds of the democratization process (i.e. the outcome of the transitions in the area), we analyze what components of societal civic attitudes make a difference in transition. In the light of Putnam's findings, we propose a consistent set of indicators to capture the complexity of (and the degree of variance among) post-Communist societies and their impact on the democratization processes. We hypothesize the existence of a relationship between the degree of societal openness and pluralism and the outcome of the transitions. In this work, we intend to functionally expand Putnam's indicators of civicness beyond the borders of Italy and to empirically test their effectiveness in explaining democratization processes. The puzzle that emerges from a preliminary overview of the democratization processes is characterized by the high variation in terms of the outcomes of the transition in CEEfSU. A clearer understanding of the post-1990 political developments in the area therefore requires an accurate analysis of the factors deemed to determine such variation. Based on the multi-level democratization process emphasized by Linz and Stepan (1996), democratization can be successful if citizens' attitudes favour it. Our research is guided by the following question: *what civic factors can explain different degrees of democratization processes in post-Communist countries?* In doing so, we use survey data and basic statistics to display and compare country level results.

Given the focus on the role of civil society in the process of democratization, the analysis does not include the impact of additional

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[2]   Our analysis of the democratization processes stops in 1998, when many countries started the EU accession negotiations. We identify that year as the end of the transition as the external formal recognition of their democratic successes occurred.

exogenous factors deemed to play an important role in the phase of post-authoritarian transition. Indeed, notwithstanding the relevance of international pressures on one nation's internal affairs (Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996; Holmes 1997), the relative weight of these pressures and their effectiveness can be hardly measured at the societal level. The study will valuably contribute to a broader understanding of the transition processes as it aims at providing an original interpretative framework, alternative to those models proposed by the existing literature on democratization (Diamond et al. 1990; Hadenius 1992; Elster et al. 1998; Munck and Verkuilen 2002).

Our paper starts with a review of the relevant literature on democratization and civicness with particular references to the post-Communist environment. Consequently, we propose a consistent set of hypotheses designed to assess the effectiveness of our indicators. The following section describes the nature of our data, the process of case selection, and the used methodology, including operationalization. The findings, both at general and country-level, and conclusions tackle the results and implications of our analysis, building another basis for further research

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses
In this section we will discuss the major theoretical tenets of our analysis and we will derive from them consistent hypotheses. We will first present a general discussion of our key concepts looking at the most relevant literature and we will present some general implications related to our argument. We will then move on to define our hypothetical framework, where we will touch more specific aspects concerning the nature of the relationship between democratic success and societal civicness.

In their study of democratization processes and democratic performances in South America and Mediterranean Europe, Linz and Stepan identify three levels of analysis: behavioral, attitudinal and constitutional features. The first deals with the non-existence of a significant group of citizens within the state able to overthrow the democratic regime, whereas the second assumes that even when facing severe crises, the vast majority of the people support political changes, only if they take place within the democratic framework of the state. At constitutional level, the conflict has to be solved according to the norms and regulations democratically established, their violation being costly

and inefficient (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). We acknowledge the validity of this multi-level approach. Given our concern towards the societal determinants of democracy we will try to identify indicators consistent with Linz and Stepan's first level of analysis.

The long-lasting emphasis on society-level attitudinal features has its roots in the early studies on civic culture and citizens' feelings towards democracy. The five-nation comparative analysis developed by Almond and Verba (1963) on citizens' political participation in the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico represents a milestone in the field which paved the way for successive studies focused on the features of social organizations. The two scholars claim that "the development of a stable and effective democratic government [...] depends upon the orientations that people have to the political process – upon the political culture" (Almond and Verba 1963, 498). Their findings contributed to bring to light the strict relationship between collective people's attitudes and democratic development. More specifically, they found that the people in the more stable democracies (USA and UK) presented a higher level of political involvement and civic awareness than those in more unstable and recent democratic regimes (Italy, Germany, and Mexico), still marked by political parochialism and civic detachment.

Following Almond and Verba's concern towards micro-level characteristics of the societies, Putnam's contribution *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993) shifted its analysis towards the "features of social organizations, such as trust, norms, and networks" (Putnam 1993, 167), thereby formalizing the defining traits of the concept of social capital. In his study he made use of this conceptual tool to explain the different performances of 20 Italian regions. He assumed a direct causal relationship between citizenry and democracy, thereby claiming that the higher the stock of social capital in a given society, the higher the quality of its institutional and democratic performance.

The selection of our set of societal indicators will adopt this citizen-centred perspective. In our attempt to test Putnam's claim beyond the former Iron Curtain we will attempt to read the breakdown of democracy and the failure of democratization processes as the consequence of a weakly developed civil society. In this sense, a fully enfranchised and aware citizenry can be seen as the best medicine against endogenous authoritarian reversals. To put it another way, we

expect that those societies (like Russia, Ukraine, Belarus etc.), where fully-democratic attempts failed, or where national leaderships did not succeed in consolidating extremely fragile liberal institutions, dramatically lack citizens' political involvement and democratic awareness as well as interpersonal trust and societal tolerance.

This reasoning is in line with Linz and Stepan's findings (1996) on democratic transitions in South America and Mediterranean Europe. The two authors recognize the primary role played by civic culture and non-governmental participatory networks the process of democratic consolidation. The same phenomenon is also acknowledged in other studies (O'Donnel and Schmitter, 1986; Gibson, 2001, Teorell, 2002). Linz and Stepan (1996, 7) define civil society as "that arena of the polity where self-organising groups, movements and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests". In their perspective, pro-democracy action at the citizen level and mounting pressures towards reforms perpetrated by semi-structured mass organizations represented one of the key factors which guaranteed a successful democratic transition in CEE. In this regard, the pro-reform umbrella organizations in the Eastern bloc such as Public Against Violence (PAV) and Civic Forum (CF) in Czechoslovakia and Solidarity in Poland appear to perfectly mirror Linz's idealtype of *bridging* NGOs.

According to Linz and Stepan, the presence of a vibrant civil participation seems to be necessary, but not sufficient, to secure a successful transition to democracy. They identify five fundamental characteristics needed for the completion of a fully-fledged and irreversible democratization. Two of them deserve particular attention: "*first* the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. *Second*, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society" (Linz and Stepan 1996, 7).

Partially in line with Linz and Stepan's findings, Paxton's analysis on *Social Capital and Democracy* proposes a more complex relationship, looking at the recent developments in post-Soviet states. He argues "the relationship between social capital and democracy to be reciprocal and mutually reinforcing" (Paxton 2002, 260).

To put it simply, some still immature civic networks together with pro-reform elites facilitated the collapse of the authoritarian rule and

facilitated the emergence of democratic tendencies. On the other hand, the process of liberalization - promoted by the so-called *doves* of the collapsing regime - provides more room and wider opportunities for public participation to exert an active role in the transition. In other words, it creates more favourable conditions for new associative experiences (Huntington, 1991). This course continues towards higher democratic consolidation. Borrowing a famous statement from O'Donnell and Schmitter's work on transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe, Paxton contends that "no transition can be forced purely by opponents against a regime which maintains the cohesion, capacity, and disposition to apply repression" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 21).

Given our intention to test Putnam's indicators, we will not investigate the directionality of the relationship between democracy and civicness in this article. What is nonetheless important to recognize is Paxton's primary focus on societal organizations' role during the transition, which appears rather in line with the arguments discussed above.

Before moving on to the definition of our hypotheses, one last point deserves to be touched regarding Inglehart's contribution to the understanding of citizens' feelings and values in modern societies. In the process of definition and operationalization of the multi-dimensional concept of civicness and in the construction of our indexes, we looked upon Inglehart's studies on culture and society. Among others, three of them particularly deserve to be mentioned *Modernization, Cultural Change, and The Persistence of Traditional Values* (Inglehart and Baker 2000), *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles in Advanced Industrial Society* (Inglehart 1971), and *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Inglehart 1990). In addition, a functional application of Inglehart's method is provided by Esmer's *Is There an Islamic Civilization?* (2002). This work appears to be particularly helpful, given the aims and the scope of our analysis.

Hypotheses
This section deals with our set of theoretically-consistent hypotheses to be tested. For each indicator of civicness we include brief theoretical descriptions and arguments, followed by hypothesized relationships.

Liberal political culture

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We expect the concept of *Liberal political culture* to be highly sensitive with regard to countries' democratic ranking as it is supposed to directly measure citizens' liberal political feelings (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). Although explicit measures of "satisfaction with democracy" are available, we believe that more indirect measures are less exposed to a both methodological and conceptual bias. First, the adoption of direct measurements of democratic satisfactions could create an endogeneity problem. Most experts' evaluations and democratization indices account for satisfaction with democracy in one form or another. Second, a functional support for democratic change is not always associated with the presence of a democratic character. In his work on Islam and democracy, Esmer (2002, 14) identifies at least two *caveats* in this respect:

> "First, being a democrat is very fashionable in the contemporary world […] and it is very easy to be a "democrat" in the abstract. Thus the answers can be expected to be biased towards democracy because of global trends and the operation of a social desirability effect. Second, such a question will suffer from context contamination. An individual living under an authoritarian system that does not deliver to her/his satisfaction is more likely to say 'democracy is best' that an individual who is very satisfied with the performance of the system regardless of its authoritarian or totalitarian nature".

In line with this last point, it is at least likely that among the democrats on papers -a considerable portion of respondents which perceived themselves as detached from the power detained by an authoritarian elite- just look at (electoral) democracy as a useful tool to defeat the current establishment and substitute it, while maintaining the same authoritarian attitudes to safeguard their newly-established individual supremacy. In this view liberal-democracy is far from being considered the final goal of the challengers. Aware of these *caveats*, we hypothesize that:

H1: The higher the level of political culture and societal openness, the higher the likelihood of a successful democratic transition.

Social capital
Almond and Verba (1963) reveal the relevance of interpersonal trust as one of the main pillars of the civic culture. Putnam (1993), while maintaining the importance of this character, also emphasizes the positive link between citizens' involvement in non-governmental associational networks (say, their collective expressive participation) and

the democratic performance of national institutions. In addition, interpersonal trust and citizens' networks appear to be inextricably correlated.

Similarly, Gibson stresses the importance of social networks composed of weak and numerous ties which "must span relatively heterogeneous segments of society, rather than being clan or kinship based" (Gibson 2001, 52). Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H2: The higher the degree of interpersonal trust at societal level, the higher the chances for the democratic transition to succeed[3].

Absence of authoritarian personality
In the early 1950s, Adorno (together with his colleagues of the Frankfurt school) proposed the defining traits of a so-called authoritarian personality which appeared to be a further development of Fromm's psychological concept of authoritarian character. According to Adorno, widespread authoritarian feelings among one country's citizenry powerfully contributed to the establishment of fascist regimes in interwar Europe. In his work he mainly looked at Hitler's rise to power and at the diffusion of Nazi schizophrenia throughout Germany with particular regard to mass anti-Semitic attitudes. Therefore the absence of these attitudes among the population seems to be consistent with democratic consolidation. Following this reasoning, we hypothesize that:

H3: The lower the level of authoritarian attitudes among the citizenry, the higher the likelihood for a pluralistic societal platform to consolidate (i.e the higher the chances for a democratic logic to take place).

Materialism / Post-Materialism
In the early 1970s Inglehart developed the theory of post-materialism, claiming that a "silent revolution" (Inglehart 1971) was gradually redirecting individuals' in a less acquisitive and materialistic fashion. Starting from Maslow's hierarchy of human goals, he maintained that in western, advanced and post-industrial societies, an increasing number of citizens' started to give high priority to non-material values such as personal freedom, self-expression, humanism, and environmental

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[3] The idea is quite similar with what Rousseau introduced as the opposition between "the general will" and "the will of the general".

protection. Needless to say – according to Inglehart's definition - we expect a higher percentage of post-materialists in those societies characterized by greater economic and social wellbeing where the satisfaction of basic human needs is taken for granted by most of the citizens. There are no relevant mentions in the literature regarding a direct correlation between post-materialist attitudes and democratization; however we suppose that citizens with such feelings display different values and visions which might be in a positive relationship with democratic success. Accordingly, Inglehart (1994, 20) asserts that post-materialism is "particularly conducive to *unconventional political action*", thereby confirming its original character. We hypothesize that:

H4: The higher the need for post-materialist goals among the citizenry, the higher the support for democracy at societal level.

Tolerance
A certain degree of cultural, religious, and political tolerance represents a fundamental ingredient for the growth of democratic awareness at the societal level as it paves the way for the establishment and the maintenance of a plural democratic environment. An uninterrupted interactive dialogue between swinging majorities and minorities therefore seems highly requisite. In addition, it seems to be strongly correlated with the establishment of weak interpersonal ties (say, bridging networks) and the fostering of mutual trust. According to Esmer (2002, 14): "a democrat is a tolerant person – tolerant of different ideas, different lifestyles, different religions and ethnicities, etc." Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

H5: More tolerance towards different ideas and customs within society provides a solid basis for a plural society to consolidate (i.e. more favourable conditions for democracy).

Research Design, Data Source, and Variable Operationalization

As this study traces relationships, there are no dependent and independent variables. However, for the sake of simplicity and consistency with our formulation of hypotheses, we will use the term "dependent variable" for democratization and "independent variables" for the five components of civicness (Putnam 1993). We hypothesize the presence of a bottom-up effect whose direct impact on the democratization process can be assessed by means of these indicators at

the citizen level. Following Inglehart (2000) and Gibson's (2001) prescriptions, we selected indicators that aim at recording the level of citizens' political participation, their personal attitudes, as well as their degree of interpersonal trust and tolerance (Gibson 2001. 56-59). In line with our hypotheses, Inglehart's (2000) cultural approach assumes that political changes originate from citizenry's socio-cultural characteristics, thereby playing a crucial role in the emergence and in consolidation of democracy.

Our analysis includes 16 post-Communist countries (more than half of the entire universe of CEEfSU countries).[4] There are 9 missing cases for methodological reasons: lack of data and lack of variation. A few countries (e.g. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) cannot be investigated as their citizens do not participate in international surveys. At the same time, the CEE countries are quite similar in terms of civic attitudes and democratization and thus we include one for illustrative purposes.

Our empirical assessment of the attitudes and attributes of the civil society is based on cross-country survey data collected by the World Values Survey (WVS) initiated in 1981 by Jan Kerkhofs and Ruud de Moor. The data used in this study has been gathered by different teams of scholars and researchers within the framework of the WVS project, whose primary aim is to to assess the state of socio-cultural, moral, religious and political values of different cultures around the world[5]. In particular, we rely on the second WVS wave that covers 41 countries in the period spanning 1995-1996. Given our analytical concerns, we believe that in the mid-1990s it is already possible to observe a relevant impact (if any) of the civil society on the process of democratization.

When it comes to the assessment of one country's degree of democratic success, we rely on the Freedom House (FH) ratings that include a large number of indicators ranging from women rights and number of NGOs, to the characteristics of the electoral process. A useful collection of FH aggregated data was developed and kindly made available by Pippa

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[4] Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

[5] Further details available at http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

Norris[6]. The dataset contains additional trend-data on the social, economic, and political characteristics of more than 200 nations.

Given the nature of our data, we use simple statistics that, in the end, better depicts the characteristics of the relationships. Our analysis has three successive steps. We first present some figures that summarize the relative weight of each single indicator mentioned in the previous section and its relevance ("presence") in the region. We then shift our analysis to the country level, thereby presenting the relevance of our set of indicators in each of the 16 polities. Finally, we assess their relationship with the democratization process. Given the small number of cases (16) and the limited number of categories in our interval variables (standardized from ordinal); correlation is the best statistical tool available. Its simplicity in presenting the results also makes our results easier to read and to interpret.

Assessing the democratic success
Before moving on to the core of our analysis and to the results, a few words deserve to be spent concerning the nature of our index of democratization. There are, in particular, three main weaknesses emphasized in the literature about this index (Gherghina 2007, 93): the context sensitivity is problematic when establishing the equivalence of different indicators, each component listed in Freedom House's checklist is measured on an ordinal 5-point scale that is never justified, and the results Freedom House provides are not replicable (e.g. although in 2006 it released the scores for subcategories, no set of coding rules or sources of information are provided to the public and, as a consequence, their study cannot be repeated).

However, for the goal of the current research, the majority of these inconveniences are canceled by the fact that Freedom House uses the same methodology for all post-Communist states, has similar source data; they attempt to interpret these data as close to their standard and assigns scores that can be easily compared. Before explaining the coding procedure for this research, we summarize the methodology used by Freedom House.

Freedom House's first report "Freedom in the World" dates back to 1972. Despite several methodological limits and some criticisms

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[6] Dataset available at http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris/Data/Data.htm

regarding its alleged pro-US positions, it is the most common index of democratization and it has been used as a reliable measure of democracy for researchers and scholars (Norris and Inglehart 2002). The final ranking of each country's level of democratic freedom, which ranges from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free), represents the combined average of two scores regarding citizens' political rights (PR) and their civil liberties (CL). Both are 7-point scales. The former looks at each country's level of electoral democracy, while the latter refers to liberal democracy. The reference point of FH assessment is liberal democracy as is stated: "the survey operates from the assumption that freedom for all peoples is best achieved in liberal democratic societies"[7].

Yet, several countries that have met certain minimum democratic standards are designated as "electoral democracies". They must meet the following basic standards: 1. a competitive multiparty political system; 2. universal adult suffrage for all citizens; 3. regularly contested elections conducted in conditions of ballot secrecy, reasonable ballot security, and in absence of massive voter fraud, and that yields a result that is representative of the public will; 4. significant access of major political parties to the electorate through media and through generally open political campaigning. This determines a satisfactory ranking in the PR scale. According to the Freedom House "electoral democracy differs from liberal democracy in that the latter also implies the presence of a substantial array of civil liberties"[8]. Those countries scoring from 1 to 2.5 in the combined measure are labelled as "free", those between 3 and 5 are labelled as "partly free", and those from 5.5 upwards are labelled as "not free".

More methodologically, the rating process relies on a set of ten records (grouped into three categories) concerning political rights and fifteen records (grouped into four categories) regarding civil liberties. Raw scores for each question are from 0 (the lowest degree) to 4 (the highest degree of rights and liberties). The sum of the points awarded in each scale determines the (PR and CL) ratings. The list of the analytical categories follows:

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[7] FH Freedom in the World – Methodology [http://www.freedomhouse.org/]

[8] Ibid.

Table 1 – FH Rating of the Post-Communist Countries

Country	1993-95 FH average rating	1996-98 FH average rating
Armenia	4,33	3,67
Azerbaijan	2,00	2,83
Belarus	3,50	2,00
Bosnia	2,00	3,00
Bulgaria	6,00	5,50
Croatia	4,00	4,00
Estonia	5,67	6,50
Georgia	3,17	4,33
Latvia	5,50	6,33
Lithuania	6,17	6,50
Macedonia	4,67	4,67
Moldova	3,67	4,67
Russia	4,50	4,33
Serbia	2,00	2,00
Slovenia	6,50	6,50
Ukraine	4,33	4,50

Source: Calculated on the basis of the Freedom House ratings, available at: www.freedomhouse.org, last accessed October 11, 2008.

Each score derives from analysts and academic advisors' fieldwork in each country. Regardless of the unavoidable degree of subjectiveness, they make use of a broad and diversified range of sources of information, including internal and foreign news reports, academic analyses, NGOs, think tanks, individual contacts as well as first hand resources[9]. We present two aggregate scores of freedom which cover the 1993-95 and the 1996-98 periods. Each period represents the combined average of the 7-point rankings for the selected years. Following a process of recoding our scores ranging from 0 (the lowest degree of freedom) to 1 (the highest degree of freedom).

As the concept of democratization represents by definition a dynamic process, we measured the democratic development of the 16 nations included in our sample by calculating the average difference between the each country's rating in the first (1993-95) and the second (1996-98) period. A positive score therefore represents positive progresses

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[9] For criticisms see Kenneth A. Bollen, "Political Rights and Political Liberties in Nations: An Evaluation of Human Rights Measures, 1950 to 1984," in Human Rights and Statistics, eds Jabine, T.B. and Pierre Claude, R. (University of Pennsylvania Press).

towards democracy, whereas a negative one represents a reversal in the transition process.

Liberal political culture
We created an aggregated ordinal index dealing with "Alternatives to democracy" and "Problems with democracy", as the raw sum of four WVS battery questions [see Appendix]. All eight items were originally defined as a four-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" (score 1) to "strongly disagree" (score 4).

Six out of eight variables were positively polarized with higher values representing pro-democracy attitudes, whereas two required to be recoded considering their semantic peculiarities. Following a process of recoding, the final index ranges from 0 (lowest level of liberal political attitudes) to 1 (highest level of liberal political attitudes).

Social capital
We propose an index of "social capital" composed of nine ordinal WVS variables [see Appendix]. The first one is a dichotomous item which measures citizens' trust in people with trustful respondents scoring 1 and others scoring 0. The other eight items form a battery of questions in WVS opinion poll. They take into account citizens' membership in voluntary associations. The eight items are scored on a three-point scale ranging from "active member" (score 1) to "inactive member" (score 0.5) to "don't belong" (score 0). The final measure goes from 0 (absence of social capital) to 9 (highest degree of social capital). Following a process of recoding, the final index ranges from 0 (lowest level of social capital) to 1 (highest level of social capital).

An additional specification appears to be noteworthy in this regard. In WVS original battery, a further item was included recording respondents' membership in religious organizations. Following Putnam's prescriptions (1993) on such kinds of associations in his distinction between *bridging* and *bounding* organizations, we exclude them from our analysis of social capital. Accordingly, Paxton defines the latter as "isolated associations [which] could intensify inward-focused behaviour, reduce exposure to new ideas, and exacerbate existing social cleavages. For these reasons, associations that are connected to the larger community should be more beneficial to democracy than associations that remain isolated" (Paxton 2002, 259). Therefore, we do not consider that item as a reliable indicator of citizens' social capital.

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Absence of authoritarian personality

Adorno (1954) identified at least four components which define authoritarian minds at the individual level: conformism, submissiveness to authority, intolerance, ridged and stereotyped thought patterns. Accordingly, we created an index of authoritarian personalities, which collects several indicators for each of the four dimensions (see Appendix). Our measure represents the sum of ten standardized dichotomous variables with score 1 meaning the absence of a specific authoritarian attitude and score 0 recording its existence. Consequently, following a process of recoding, the original index goes from 0 (strongest authoritarian attitudes) to 1. Six out of ten original WVS variables required re-orientation as they were negatively polarized.

Considering the primary role of rigid child-rearing practices in the development of authoritarian characters, five of my items come from a battery of questions dealing with children's education and their initial family socialization.

Materialism / Post-Materialism

In line with Inglehart's prescriptions, WVS includes an index measuring respondent's post-materialist attitudes. Inglehart's rationale is conceived as follows: "If you had to choose among the following things, which are the two that seem the most desirable to you?
- Maintaining order in the nation
- Giving people more say in important political decisions
- Fighting rising prices
- Protecting freedom of speech
[…] On the basis of the choices made among these four items, it is possible to classify our respondents into value priority groups, ranging from a 'pure' acquisitive [materialist] type to a 'pure' post-bourgeois [post-materialist] type with several intermediate categories [mixed type]" (Inglehart 1994, 38). After a necessary recoding process, my index ranges from 0 (materialist) to 1 (post-materialist). As we can see, our index is measuring the level of post-materialism in a given society and we will consider it as ordinal.

Tolerance

In order to measure citizens' tolerance, WVS questionnaires provide a broad battery of ten questions (see Appendix). We selected a set of seven indicators which test respondents' attitudes towards a variety of least

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liked groups. All the items are dichotomous and required recoding, thereby scoring 0 when intolerance towards one group is mentioned and 1 when it is not. The final ordinal index represents the sum of the seven and, after a process of recoding, it ranges between 0 (least tolerant) and 1 (most tolerant).

Findings

The general picture of the analyzed post-Communist countries reveals two variation patterns of civic features. On the one hand, we observe different performances regarding these attitudes. Table 2 includes on rows the averages of every indicator, the range, the standard deviation, minimum and the maximum value (all indicators have values between 0 and 1). The levels of political culture and of tolerance are the highest in this respect, with most of their values above the average. In this way, most individuals from the post-Communist countries have the tendency to be detached from authoritarian styles of doing politics. Following this feature, quite a similar attitude is registered towards cultural, religious, and political tolerance: there are more people that have a higher degree of tolerance compared to those that have less degree. Their maximum values show that these are the indicators that reach the highest scores. The standard deviations are the highest among the chosen indicators, showing that the populations of the CEE countries are not as homogenous on these dimensions as they are on others.

Table 2: Averages and Extreme Values of Civic Indicators

Statistics	Pol. Culture	Trust	Materialism	Attitudes	Tolerance
Mean	0.60	0.23	0.30	0.48	0.56
Range	0.25	0.23	0.26	0.17	0.30
Std. dev.	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.07
Minimum	0.49	0.08	0.21	0.42	0.42
Maximum	0.74	0.31	0.47	0.59	0.72
N	16	16	16	16	16

At the other extreme we find the social trust (networking with other people) and the materialistic preferences of individuals. The low level of trust implies that in the years of transition, the legacies of the atomized Communist societies were still present in the entire region, with quite

homogenous populations in their answers (small standard deviation, the second after that of attitudes). The scores on materialism are also not surprising for the analyzed period especially if we remember that those were the years of the great economic reforms, harsh times for entrepreneurs in those countries, and the economic perspectives were still in shadow. The minimum scores of these two indicators support these assumptions, whereas their maximum scores barely pass the minimum values of political culture and tolerance. The scores registered for the absence of authoritarian personality at the individual level indicate a medium position. The absence and presence of stereotypical and authoritarian attitudes is spread quite evenly among the citizens of the democratizing countries, with the most homogenous answer.

Figure 1: Civic Features in Post-Communist Countries
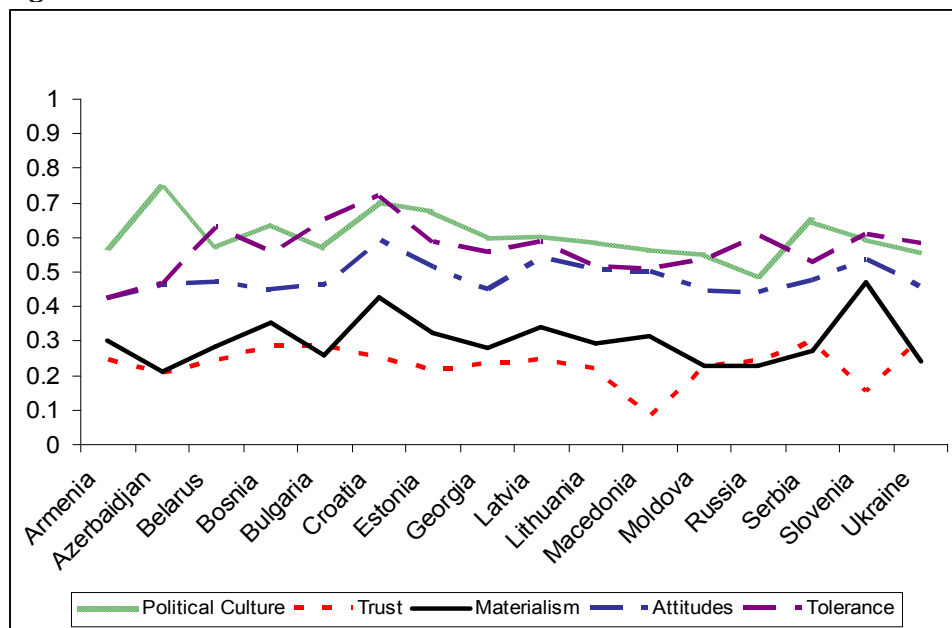
On the other hand, a brief analysis of the extremes of each indicator (performers and losers) provides relevant information for our study. When looking at the level of political culture, the most striking result is in the case of Azerbaijan, a country where three quarters of the respondents situate themselves on the democratic side although Heydar Aliyev ruled the country until 2003 as a dictator.[10] These scores may be

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[10] In 2003, Heydar Aliyev was succeeded by his son, Ilham Aliyev, reelected as president also in the 2008 elections (labeled by OSCE as not meeting the democratic principles).

interpreted in two ways. First, as they represent the situation only a few years after independence, they may reflect the hopes of people in democratic principles. Second, not excluding the first interpretation, it is possible that the Azerbaijani population consider Aliyev's rule as democratic and thus understand democratic values close to his style. The country with the least developed political culture is Russia, quite similar in ruling techniques with Azerbaijan, but with opposing attitudes of the citizens.

Regarding tolerance, Croatia is the leader (the country was also the second on the political culture dimension), with Armenia and Azerbaijan at the other extreme. The latter country appears again in the picture, this time with a small degree of tolerance rather than openness towards these democratic values. Rejecting authoritarianism and displaying intolerance is a unique recipe that Azerbaijan proposes. If this would have worked, the country would become a referential study for democratization. In any case, the question mark appears to be solely on political culture; as for the other indicators, the country scores below the average. Croatia is the country where authoritarian attitudes are least appreciated, whereas Armenia and Russia are situated at the bottom of the ranking for this indicator. Both low score countries repeat the weak performances that they have on political culture and tolerance.

The trust indicator brings the most counter-intuitive results in terms of extremes. Ukraine is the best example of social networking with a score that is twice as large as the most pessimistic country in terms of inter-personal trust – Slovenia. Looking at their democratic records, these opposing situations are not according to our expectations with Slovenia as one of the best performers in democratization and Ukraine lagging behind until an Orange revolution burst. However, the timing is relevant as the first years after Communism provided Ukraine with hopes for improvement until *Kuchma* came to power (during approximately the years of this survey). The Slovenian citizens have the highest post-materialist expectations, whereas Azerbaijan is the country where most of the people focus on the materialist needs. This result can be explained by looking at different economic performances of the countries included in the sample. As discussed above, the degree of post-materialism in a given society is strictly related to the satisfaction of the primary materialistic needs. Slovenian citizens seem to find themselves in a privileged position, considering the favorable economic

conditions of their country and its impressive economic growth in the mid-1990s (Hadenius, 1992).

Figure 2 displays the levels of democratization in 16 post-Communist countries, calculated as the average difference between the Freedom House scores in the 1996-1998 period and 1993-1995 period. As explained in our methodological section, the negative score imply a loss in the democratic performance, a de-democratization. A quarter of the examined states undergo such a process in the analyzed period (i.e. Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria[11], and Russia).

Figure 2: Degrees of Democratization in Post-Communist Countries
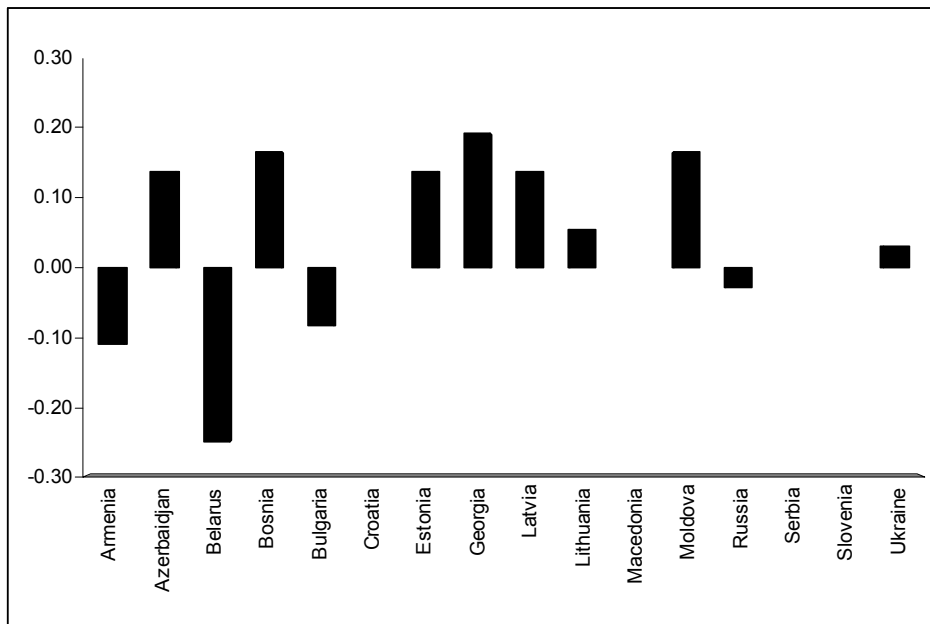
A quarter of the countries do not register differences in their democratic performance (i.e. Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia), whereas half of the countries face a process of democratization that ranges from

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[11] The negative score of Bulgaria can be explained by the events that marked the country in the second half of the analyzed decade. A dramatic financial crisis, due to the initial impact of the liberal economic reforms, coupled with a collapse of the party system (of which the political crisis of the Bulgarian socialist represents only the most evident sign), certainly contributed to a slight decrease in the democratic ranking of the country. It is however, noteworthy to mention, that this phenomenon was not accompanied by dramatic changes in citizens' democratic attitudes.

small changes (e.g. Ukraine) to large changes (e.g. Bosnia, Moldova, and Georgia). Out of the countries that did not register any change in this period, Slovenia is the only performer that has a score of 6.5 that did not suffer modifications.

With these general points in mind, we should turn now to the analyses of relationships between every indicator and the degree of democratization.

Political Culture and Tolerance Matter
The small number of cases raises a few difficulties in our analysis. Thus, we do not expect to find statistical significance, but its absence can be justified by our choice. From the entire post-Communist world, we have selected more than half of the cases, with samples that made it representative for various categories of democratizing states. In this respect, our conclusions are not biased by the lack of statistical significance, as the population to which we may generalize is smaller than what we include in our analysis. Moreover, we limit our assessments to the examined cases to avoid biased conclusions.

Table 3 includes the correlation coefficients between each indicator of civic attitudes and democratization.[12] The results show that the indicators on which the highest scores were registered in the region are also those related with democratization: the political culture and the tolerance.

In approximately one third of the examined countries (r = 0.35), the fact that their citizens consider democracy as "the only game in town" positively correlates with the level of democratization. Bluntly put- the fact that people believe in the values of democratization make the process both smooth and possible. These results support our

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[12] We found a high correlation between materialism and authoritarian attitudes (0.74**) and tolerance and authoritarian attitudes (0.54*). However, we can confidently test the relationship of each indicator with democratization due to their different conceptual nature and reasoning. The degree of materialism reflects individual sphere of needs, whereas authoritarian attitudes represent a more collective character of conformist behavior and of deference towards the authority. Again, a low level of authoritarian attitudes does not automatically imply a high level of tolerance. Even if tolerant individuals might well present low levels of authoritarian feelings, the latter is not a sufficient condition, as tolerance (unlike non- authoritarianism) also implies openness towards the others.

hypothesized relationship and complement the theoretical argument of Linz and Stepan (1996) according to which democratization takes place at more levels, one of them being the attitudinal one. Democratic institutions can evolve, but cannot survive in an environment that does not provide incentives for development or where citizens think and act against them. As the causal mechanism between political culture and democratization is beyond our goal, we cannot discuss about the priority of one variable. However, the importance of political culture sets the bases for further investigation also in those cases that display high levels of political culture, but no democratization (e.g. Azerbaidjan, Bosnia, and Serbia).

Table 3: Civic Indicators and Democratization: Dynamic and Static Analysis

Relationships between democratization and….	Correlation coefficients[13]
Political Culture	0.35
Trust	-0.04
Materialism	-0.03
Attitudes	0.04
Tolerance	-0.20
N	16

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The relationship between tolerance and democratization goes in a direction opposite of what was expected. Thus, in one fifth of the countries, a low level of tolerance implies a high degree of democratization. Apparently, the dialogue between majority and diverse minorities is not a prerequisite for democratization. This relation is not strange if we return to our discussion about countries that democratize and champions of tolerance. Two of the countries that score high on this indicator (Croatia and Slovenia) do not democratize, having a (relatively) high and stable level of democracy. At the same time, countries that democratized in the analyzed period (Bosnia, Moldova, and Georgia) are at the beginning of their transitions, they start their transitions quite late (Soviet dismantling or ongoing wars) and legacies of the past are present. In this respect, we cannot exclude exogenous or externally-driven factors to play a decisive role. The presence of national

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[13] Reported correlation coefficients are Pearson's R.

or religious minorities within the state's border (and the presence of kin-states keen to exert their influence in one country's internal affairs) clearly favor societal polarization and might well determine a low level of tolerance towards the *others*. On the contrary, in more homogeneous polities the emergence of a tolerant citizenry seems more likely to take place, as no internal or external treat can be clearly recognized.

Dynamics is not everything
The inter-personal trust, the attitudes and the materialist values do not relate with democratization. The correlation coefficients are close to 0 (i.e. the absence of a relationship). Nevertheless, these components of civicness correlate with democratic features in one instance. When running separate bivariate correlations between each indicator and the degree of democratic performance for the 1993-1995 and 1996-1998 periods, the relationships are quite obvious. Thus, for both periods, almost one third of the countries with citizens that display low levels of inter-personal trust have better democratic performances than those countries where trust is a common habit (r = -0.3).

Moreover, the orientation towards post-materialism makes a difference. With similar values for the democratic periods (r = 0.35), the correlation coefficient indicates that one third of the countries where citizens are oriented towards post-materialist values reach better democratic performances. This evidence supports our hypothesis with the amendment that it does not apply to democratization, but rather to democratic performance. In the same category the strong relationships that meet our expectations are the authoritarian attitudes. In this respect, in 4 out of 10 countries, citizens with low authoritarian attitudes correspond to higher democratic performances than those citizens that come from an environment with strong authoritarian attitudes (r = 0.4).

This supplementary testing indicates that people's attitudes can be related with democratic developments before and after expressing their opinions. The high consistency between the values of the correlation coefficients indicate that people's answers with respect to trust, materialist values, and authoritarian attitudes do not change dramatically over night and correspond to the democratic situation in two different periods. Despite these valuable findings, none of the indicators can be related with the democratization process. People's attitudes about these three issues are not able to explain the (d)evolution of the democratic status of a country. The absence of a relationship

between the democratic dynamics and any of these issues may also be due to the fact that each of the indicators hides lasting values, principles that need time to be rooted and legacies that are still in place.

Conclusions

Although facing quite similar regimes previously, the post-Communist countries have different levels of democratization. Our analysis checked whether specific societal factors can explain this difference in democratization. After testing five components of civicness, we observe that political culture and the level of tolerance within societies are directly related with democratization. According to our expectations, pro-democratic attitudes in society allow more than one third of the countries to faster democratize than those that do not display such attitudes. Contrary to our expectations, one in five societies with less tolerant attitudes towards other groups have higher chances to democratize. Our explanation for this result is that when surveys were made, the legaices of Communism were still present in the analyzed societies.

There are three societal features that do not explain change in democratic performances: the interpersonal trust, authoritarian attitudes, and materialist approaches. The results show that these are long-standing values in society that do not change over a short period of time. Most likely, a longitudinal analysis of the entire democratization and democratic consolidation period) will reveal relevant patterns for these three indicators as the separate analysis for 1993-1995 and 1996-1998 democratic achievements.

There are two major implications that these findings bring. At the theoretical level, the study shows that there are no reasonable arguments that Western and Eastern societies are completely different. With a set of indicators extracted from a Western survey and based on the logic employed by Almond and Verba (1963) and Putnam (1993), our findings show that two components of civicness correlate with democratization, whereas three others are valuable for long-term analyses. At the empirical level, the results show that civicness is a variable to account in the study of democratization. Although most studies focus on the institutional and behavioural components of democracy, the attitudinal dimension is relevant and may explain changes uncovered by previous research.

Connected with the latter argument, in the attempt to detect patterns of democratization, further research can focus on a longitudinal investigation that includes the entire universe of post-Communist countries. As long as the indicators that we propose are not context sensitive, further investigation can trace societal attitudes in post-authoritarian transitions, thus including Latin America and Southern Europe for earlier periods of their transition. Moreover, the current exploratory study sets the basis for causal investigations. Once detected, the relationship between attitudes and democratization has an open space to check for causal directions (see Paxton 2002). Does democratization lead to these attitudes, or do the attitudes enhance democratization? Providing an answer is challenging, but built on real bases as indicated by our findings. The identification of what matters and what does not seems therefore the first, but essential step to advance our understanding of the democratization processes as political and social phenomena.

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Appendix

Liberal political culture

ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOCRACY	Original polarization (WVS)
Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections or parliament	+
Having experts, not government, who take decisions according to what they think is best	+
Having an army rule	+
Having a democratic political system	-

PROBLEMS WITH DEMOCRACY	Original polarization (WVS)
In democracies the economic system runs badly	+
Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling	+
Democracies are not good in maintaining order	+
Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government	-

Social capital

Generally speaking, would you say that most of people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?
Sport recreation organization
Art, music or educational organization
Labour union
Political party
Environmental organization
Professional association
Charitable organization
Any other voluntary organization

Absence of authoritarian personality

	Original polarization (WVS)
Regardless of what qualities and faults of one's parents are, one must always love and respect them	-
Priority for children: independence	+
Priority for children: imagination	+
Priority for children: tolerance and respect for other people	+
Priority for children: religious faith	-
Priority for children: obedience	-
Does not like to have as neighbours: Muslims / Jews / Christian / Gypsies	-
Does not like to have as neighbours: Homosexuals	-
If someone said that individuals should have the chance to enjoy complete sexual freedom without being restricted, would you tend to agree or disagree?	+
Good thing: greater respect for authority	-

Tolerance

People with criminal records
People belonging to a different race
Emotionally unstable people
Muslims / Jews / Christian / Gypsies
Immigrants / foreign workers
People with AIDS
Homosexuals