POLITICAL SATISFACTION IN OLD AND NEW DEMOCRACIES

Christopher J. Anderson
Department of Political Science
Binghamton University

Abstract
This paper examines the determinants of cross-national differences in political satisfaction across established and new democracies. On the basis of directly comparable data from over twenty West and East European countries collected between 1993 and 1995, it investigates political culture and performance-based explanations of cross-national differences in support for the political system, and it compares the usefulness of these theories across both mature and emerging democratic systems. The analysis suggests that political culture and system performance both are associated with levels of satisfaction with the political system in older democracies. Moreover, it shows that the influence of political culture is weaker than indicators of current performance once alternative explanations are taken into account. In contrast, political satisfaction levels in emerging democracies are unrelated to political culture or system performance. Overall, the results indicate that the structure of democracy satisfaction is dissimilar in old and new democratic systems.

Send all correspondence to:
Christopher J. Anderson
Department of Political Science
Binghamton University (SUNY)
Binghamton, NY 13902

E-mail: canders@binghamton.edu
Fax: (607) 777-2675
Phone: (607) 777-2462
POLITICAL SATISFACTION IN OLD AND NEW DEMOCRACIES

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the established democratic systems of Western Europe have been subject to increasing pressures created mainly by economic problems and the absence of a common enemy. One side-effect of such pressures has been a trend toward lower levels of citizen satisfaction with the way democracy works (Kaase 1995; Kaase and Newton 1995). The end of the Cold War also has produced considerable challenges for the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. After an initial enthusiasm for democratic governance in the early 1990s, problems with the economic transition, the construction of civil society, and the implementation of political reforms have led to widespread disillusionment with politics among citizens of newly emerging democratic systems (Mishler and Rose 1996).

Political scientists have long argued that low levels of citizen support can pose serious problems for democratic systems because both the functioning and the maintenance of democratic polities are intimately linked with what and how citizens think about democratic governance (Lipset 1959; Powell 1982, 1986). This is not only the case for more mature democratic systems; it is equally true for systems undergoing democratic transitions. In fact, questions of popular support for democratic governance are particularly important for emerging democracies because citizen support is of practical and immediate relevance for the continued stability of emerging democratic institutions (Mishler and Rose 1997). Understanding why democracies differ in their levels of public approval for democratic governance is thus important for theoreticians and policymakers alike.

There is significant cross-national variation in support for democratic governance. Among the West European countries, for example, Italians are notoriously dissatisfied with the way their democracy works, whereas citizens in the Scandinavian countries, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands typically express a great deal of satisfaction (Fuchs, Guidorossi, Svensson 1995). Students of empirical democratic theory have sought to
explain such differences with the help of two related sets of variables: democratic history and political culture on one hand and system performance on the other. Proponents of the former—also labeled the civic culture approach—have argued that countries come with historical memories as well as deeply embedded and distinct cultural backgrounds. These scholars have focused on the ways in which different democratic experiences and concomitant political values affect support for the political system (Almond and Verba 1965; Inglehart 1988; Lipset 1959). Others have argued that differences in citizen satisfaction with democratic governance can be explained by focusing on system outputs. Specifically, researchers have concentrated on the way in which political and economic performance affect whether citizens are satisfied with the way democracy works (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Finkel, Muller, and Seligson 1989; Harmel and Robertson 1986; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Miller and Listhaug 1990; Weatherford 1984,1987).2

While a theoretical case can be made for each perspective’s independent as well as their combined ability to explain cross-national variation in system support, the overall empirical evidence in favor of each (or both) remains inconclusive. There are several reasons for this. First, most studies of support for democratic governance have focused only on a small number of countries at any one time. In addition, such studies often have “loaded the dice” in favor of their preferred explanation by focusing exclusively on finding support for one set of factors instead of examining the relative explanatory power of each while controlling for others. Finally, the vast majority of studies has focused on the mature democracies of Western Europe and North America.

Any one of these research strategies is appropriate under different circumstances—for example, to determine the face validity of an explanation or usefulness of a variable; when data constraints do not allow for the testing of hypotheses with a larger number of countries; or when these systems are virtually the only ones that can be studied. As a consequence, students of comparative system support have yet to address the following questions in a very systematic fashion: (1) What is the relative strength of civic culture- and performance-based explanations in models of system support? That is, when examined in tandem, which one
provides greater empirical leverage? (2) Are these explanations, which typically are put to use to explain
differences in system support in older democracies, useful for understanding such differences across the
emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe? These are the questions that guide the present study.

Aside from contributing to the literature on system support in advanced industrial societies, these
questions (and the answers to them) have theoretical and practical implications for political scientists more
generally. A perennial issue of concern has been whether theories developed in one context have much
leverage in another. Applying old theories to new data—such as applying theories developed in the context of
American politics to other countries or applying theories developed in established democracies to those
undergoing transitions—is a common modus operandi, but also one that frequently has been fraught with
conceptual and empirical problems. The questions raised in this study speak directly to the issue of how we
can conduct fair and comparable tests of our theories with new data and in new contexts.

The results also should add to our understanding of political behavior in countries undergoing
democratic transitions by indicating whether our theories have much leverage in such settings. Note, however,
that such a research strategy is not designed to maximize the explained variance in the dependent variable of
interest (democracy satisfaction). In fact, because theories that work well in Western Europe may not work as
well in Eastern Europe, the tests reported on below may point to particular weaknesses in both theory and data
that require additional attention by political scientists.

On the basis of directly comparable data collected in 13 of the member states of the European Union
as well as 11 of the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe between 1993 and 1995, this study
investigates political culture and performance-based theories of cross-national differences in support for the
political system, and it compares their explanatory power across both mature and emerging democratic
systems. The analysis suggests that political culture and system performance both are associated with levels
of satisfaction with the political system in older democracies. Moreover, it shows that the influence of political
culture is weaker when current economic and political performance is taken into account. In contrast, political
satisfaction levels are unrelated to political culture or system performance in emerging democracies. Overall, the results thus indicate that the structure of democracy satisfaction is dissimilar in old and new democratic systems.

The next section discusses the measurement of political satisfaction and provides some descriptive evidence across the countries included in the study. Subsequently, I develop and test models of democracy satisfaction in both Western and Eastern Europe. After discussing the results, I conclude with some implications for future research.

**Measuring System Support in Old and New Democracies**

Efforts to systematically compare mass support for the political system frequently have been frustrated by the unavailability of appropriate data measuring citizen attitudes in a sufficiently large number of countries. One of the few data sources that permits such an undertaking are the Eurobarometer surveys-covering the member states of the European Union-and the more recent Central and Eastern Eurobarometer surveys, which include most of the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and several of the successor states of the Soviet Union.4

To assess levels of system support at similar points in time across all cases included in the analysis, I rely on data collected with the help of identically-worded surveys conducted during 1993, 1994, and 1995. For 1993 and 1994, the West European data include random national samples for Belgium, Denmark, France, (West) Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. For 1995, it also includes the new EU member states Austria, Finland, and Sweden. The Central and East European data include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, (East) Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.5

Given the state of the debate about the conceptualization and measurement of system support broadly conceived, political support is defined as satisfaction with democracy. Appropriately, the question wording
for the support measures differs slightly across the established and emerging democracies in order to account for different political realities in these environments. Citizens in the member states of the European Union were asked: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (our country)?” In Central and Eastern Europe, respondents were asked: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in (our country)?” System support was measured by the percentage of respondents who indicated that they were very or fairly satisfied with democracy.⁶

Satisfaction with democracy measures system support at a low level of generalization. It does not refer to democracy as a set of norms or ideal principles, but to the functioning of the actual system people live in. Moreover, while democracy satisfaction is measured by responses to a question that is directed at the system, it also invites “an evaluative rather than a purely emotional response. Thus, it measures neither diffuse nor specific support in the Eastonian sense, but a form of support not recognized or inadequately conceptualized by Easton” (Kuechler 1991, 279; see also Fuchs and Klingemann 1995). The use of this item therefore assumes that “support reflects a sort of emotionally-biased running tally that citizens keep on the performance of a system” (Kuechler 1991, 280).⁷

This measure does not capture citizen attitudes toward democratic constitutions as the written rules of the game or as ideal versions of them. Several scholars have investigated the determinants of support for such principles in countries undergoing democratic transitions (e.g., Gibson 1996; Evans and Whitefield 1995; Miller, Hesli, and Reisinger 1997; Waldron-Moore 1999). The present study differs from such efforts by focusing on people’s responses to the actual process of democratic governance (Weil 1989). That is, it analyzes citizen attitudes toward a country’s “constitution in operation” (Lane and Ersson 1991: 194) or its “constitutional reality” (Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995: 328). The phrasing of the Eurobarometer survey question also is particularly useful for analyzing support in the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe because there is unlikely to be much consensus in these societies regarding democracy as an abstract principle.
given that “few citizens have very well developed or firmly-held beliefs or attitudes in these regards” (Mishler and Rose 1996: 558). Thus, to avoid the measurement of what Converse has called “non-attitudes” (Converse 1964), the assumption is that people in new democracies have little experience with democratic theory but ample experience with the real world they live in (Mishler and Rose 1996: 559).

The data used here also are useful because of the number and range of cases that can be analyzed. The Eurobarometer data are among the few available sources that permit an analysis of mass political support across a meaningful number of countries to enable researchers to conduct cross-national statistical analyses, and they uniquely allow for a direct comparison of attitudes toward the system in established as well as emerging democracies. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses across the countries included in this study, averaged over the 1993-95 period.

(Table 1 about here)

The data shown in Table 1 suggest that democracy satisfaction is significantly lower in Central and Eastern Europe than in Western Europe. This holds true at both ends of the distribution. The highest levels of democracy satisfaction in Western Europe can be found in countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands; they are about twice those of the highest levels in Central/Eastern European states such as the Czech Republic, East Germany, Poland, and Estonia. Conversely, the lowest levels of satisfaction in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia) are roughly half those of the lowest levels in the West (Italy, Portugal, Spain). Support ranges from 70-80% in the highest West European democracies to only about 10-20% in the lowest Eastern ones.

**Explaining Democracy Satisfaction from a Cross-National Perspective**

How can we explain such differences? The political culture approach argues that cross-national
differences in support for democratic governance can be explained by the relative presence or absence of a civic (or democratic political) culture (Almond and Verba 1965; Inglehart 1988; Weil 1989). According to this view, a democratic political culture is the result of distinct national heritages, traditions and historical legacies at the level of countries and distinct socialization experiences at the level of individual citizens (Inglehart 1990). While there is some debate as to whether civic culture attitudes—that is, attitudes supportive of democratic politics—are the effect or cause of democracy (Barry 1978; Karl and Schmitter 1991), it is clear that the two cannot easily be disentangled (see, however, Muller and Seligson 1994). It has been shown that a long democratic history is a superb indicator of what can be called a civic culture or democratic “syndrome” (Finkel, Muller, and Seligson 1989; Inglehart 1988; Muller and Seligson 1994). And although questions of measurement and causal direction abound in this literature, few would dispute that political culture and democratic history are important elements in citizens’ orientations toward the political system. Lower levels of citizen satisfaction with democracy in countries without a democratic history or countries with more recently established democratic institutions like Spain and Portugal at first glance appear to testify to such differences in countries’ political cultures (see Table 1).

In contrast to cultural and historical theorists, a number of scholars focusing on system performance have argued that mass attitudes toward the political system depend much more on what kinds of outputs it produces (Easton 1975). This line of research repeatedly has identified apparent performance-related weaknesses as important influences on citizen dissatisfaction with democratic politics in western democracies. Such performance indicators usually include both political and economic performance. Writing about the state of contemporary democracies during the 1970s and 1980s, for example, scholars found that systems were suffering from an overload of citizens’ demands (Brittan 1975; Huntington 1974) or from a lack of responsiveness to demands articulated by a citizenry with increased participatory inclinations (Barnes and Kaase 1979; Jennings and van Deth 1989). Similarly, scholars of democratization have pointed out that the success of democratic consolidation depends on levels of democratic performance (Lipset 1959). Specifically,
if citizens do not perceive democracy to work as it should—that is, if it does not function in accordance with
democratic principles valued by the citizenry—the legitimacy of the regime and the system as a whole is called
into question (Huntington 1991; Rose and Mishler 1994).

Despite these findings, political performance seldom has been incorporated explicitly into
explanations of satisfaction with democracy and political institutions. Instead, researchers have focused
extensively on the effects of macroeconomic performance on support for the political system because “the
government is assumed to possess the tools and abilities to solve social problems” (Weatherford 1984: 189).
Over time, evaluations of both economic and other kinds of policy performance shape the reputations of
political institutions and the political system as a whole because the policy-process involves multiple
governmental agents and a lengthy gestation period. As a result, it has become commonplace to assume that
the performance of polity and economy influences what ordinary people think about governments and political
systems (Anderson and Guillory 1997).

To assess, therefore, whether and how well cultural and performance-related theories fare relative to
each other in explaining differences in democracy satisfaction, the first part of the study examines the mature
democracies of Western Europe. Because the rise of democratic systems in the countries of Central and Eastern
Europe is a recent phenomenon, much of the theorizing and most of the empirical studies about system support
in democracies have occurred with western systems and experiences in mind. This means that scholars have
examined the influence of cultural and performance-related factors mostly on the basis of theories generated
about, and data collected in, the democracies of Western Europe and North America. The second part of the
analysis subsequently investigates whether there is structural equivalence in the determinants of democracy
satisfaction in old and new democracies; that is, whether the factors that affect support in western and more
established democracies also affect support in newer ones.

Modeling Democracy Satisfaction in Comparative Perspective: Data and Measures

8
Logically, the establishment of democratic/republican procedures and institutions precedes the measurement of support for the system; this assumes a chain of causality running from democratic history and culture on one hand to satisfaction with democracy on the other (Muller and Seligson 1994). Following Almond and Verba’s prediction that support for democratic values in Western societies is likely to increase as a function of continued experience with democracy, and Dahl’s assertion that the chances of stabilizing a democracy are a function of time (Dahl 1989: 315), we would expect that countries that have been democracies longer have a higher percentage of citizens satisfied with democracy than countries that became democratic more recently (see also Thomassen 1995: 393).

A number of scholars have relied on similar research strategies. Muller and Seligson’s analysis of civic culture and democracy with a sample of 20 democracies, for example, reports a .83 path coefficient between years of continued democracy and a civic culture index (Muller and Seligson 1994). Similarly, Inglehart finds that the length of time that democratic institutions have persisted is positively correlated with levels of political satisfaction (Inglehart 1990). Finkel, Muller, and Seligson (1989), finally, attribute the greater susceptibility of the German Weimar Republic to regime breakdown to the relative youth of its system in comparison to democracies such as France, Britain and the United States. While it is difficult to disentangle the exact causal paths of a country’s democratic history and related variables such as political culture, it also is clear that democratic age constitutes a good summary indicator of a larger democratic syndrome.

Following well-established practice, I thus rely on the number of years of continuous democracy since 1920 as an indicator of democratic history (Inglehart 1997; Muller 1988). At minimum, it is reasonable to assume that this indicator captures the extent to which democratic institutions are stable in the country considered. To gauge whether a democratic political culture exists at the level of individual citizens and how firmly it has been entrenched, I rely on interpersonal trust as an individual-level indicator of the civic culture syndrome. Specifically, this item—taken from the 1990-91 World Values Survey—asks people whether “most people can be trusted,” and is a commonly-used indicator of social capital (Inglehart 1990; Muller and Seligson
In the present context, I hypothesize that countries with higher scores on the trust indicator have higher levels of democracy satisfaction.\textsuperscript{12}

However, scholars interested in system performance would argue that the existence of a democratic system of government alone says little about how well a particular democratic system functions. It also says little about whether current performance of the system may compete with, and possibly supersede, a democratic political culture and history as determinants of system support. Therefore, this study examines the effects of current political and economic performance on satisfaction with democracy while also controlling for age of democratic institutions and social capital. Given that a number of empirical analyses have shown that “most people associate democracy with liberty” (Thomassen 1995, p.384; see also Conradt 1981), I hypothesize that the performance of the democratic political process matters for citizen satisfaction with democracy. Put in Easton’s terms: I assume that it is not just the existence of a black box that matters to citizens, but also what goes on inside the box—that is, how and what kinds of outputs are produced.

To measure political performance, I rely on indicators of levels of democracy. This measure rates the extent to which citizens have regular and legally sanctioned opportunities to participate in the political process and express and obtain opinions and information about it. The indicators are taken from the Freedom House and are intended to capture how free a country’s political institutions and practices are (Gastil 1995; see also Inkeles 1991). Countries that score high on the index are considered more democratic than those that score low (the Freedom House indicator was reversed for the purposes of this analysis, with high scores denoting a freer system; see the Appendix).\textsuperscript{13}

I assess the impact of economic performance on political support by measuring economic growth (% change in real annual GDP).\textsuperscript{14} A number of studies have found that economic performance is related to trust in government and satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Guillory 1995; Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 1993; Weatherford 1992). GDP growth is a particularly useful indicator of macroeconomic performance because it is a more general summary indicator of a country’s economic performance than specific labor market
(employment) or consumer price statistics.\textsuperscript{15} It also is an indicator that is more widely available across a greater number of countries to permit the kind of cross-national analysis attempted here. I hypothesize that countries with higher levels of economic growth also have a greater proportion of citizens who score high on democracy satisfaction. Economic growth figures are taken from the Eurostat Yearbook (see Appendix).

**Analysis**

The analysis proceeds in several steps: First, I present partial (bivariate) as well as multivariate Ordinary Least Squares models of democracy satisfaction levels in Western Europe. It is necessary to conduct separate analyses for Western and Eastern European countries because of the slight difference in the wording of the democracy satisfaction measures. To enlarge the number of cases and degrees of freedom and thus to allow for meaningful tests of statistical significance, I pooled the data for the three years (1993-95). Subsequently, I report the results of an identical set of analyses for the Eastern and Central European states. Finally, I examined the effects of the same set of variables on changes in democracy satisfaction over the 1993-95 period.

To account for heteroscedasticity frequently present in the kind of data used here, I report OLS estimates using White robust standard errors (Greene 1993; White 1978). White’s robust standard errors procedure corrects the OLS covariance matrix when heteroscedasticity is present in the data. Thus, the usual set of OLS coefficients is reported, but with the revised, robust covariance matrix.\textsuperscript{16} The Breusch-Pagan test statistic reported in the tables tests for the hypothesis that the data are homoscedastic.\textsuperscript{17} Given the small number of time points in the data set (3), autocorrelation should not pose a problem for inference.

**Explaining Democracy Satisfaction in Western Europe**

**Bivariate Models**

Table 2a displays bivariate models estimating the impact of cultural and performance-related variables
on democracy satisfaction among the West European countries. The bivariate model results showed the hypothesized relationships (Models 1-4). All variables achieved conventional levels of statistical significance, and all coefficients were in the hypothesized direction. When we examined the total variance explained \((R^2)\) by each of the four variables, we found that they were very similar \((R^2=.13-.23)\), though the cultural variables independently accounted for a slightly larger share of the variance.

Thus, in line with previous work, the bivariate models showed that age of democracy, social capital, level of freedom, and economic performance all were significantly related to democracy satisfaction in the hypothesized direction across the sample of West European democracies. This implies that the empirical results reported so far support both theoretical perspectives. Their relative strength was roughly equal, with \(R^2\)'s in a similar range. However, it is difficult to determine on the basis of this analysis with much certainty which factors had a stronger impact on democracy satisfaction. To examine such differences, the subsequent analysis controlled for plausible alternative hypotheses.

(Table 2a about here)

**Multivariate Models**

I estimated three multivariate models: a political culture model that included the years of continuous democracy and interpersonal trust (Model 5), a system performance model that included the level of freedom and economic growth (Model 6), and a full model that included all variables (Model 7).\(^{18}\) Table 2b reports the results of the multivariate analyses.

(Table 2b about here)
satisfaction across West European democracies in a model that only included cultural variables (Model 5). However, the significance of the social capital indicator was much reduced once democratic longevity was taken into account. In contrast, the level of democracy (political performance) and economic growth (economic performance) both continued to exert significant influence in the multivariate performance model (Model 6). When we compare the total variance explained by culture and performance, we find that performance was able to explain more than a third (36%) of the variance, while culture explained about a fourth (24%).

Finally, when both cultural and performance variables were included in the full model (Model 7), it turned out that the performance indicators were far more significant determinants of cross-national differences in levels of democracy satisfaction. In fact, both democratic longevity and social capital dropped out of the equation (Model 7). This consistently was the case in all the pooled estimations that controlled for outliers as well as year-by-year differences (not shown here).

Statistically speaking, the results shown in Model 7 indicate that a one unit increase on the seven-point Freedom House scale corresponded to roughly a 25 percentage point increase in the level of democracy satisfaction; similarly, a one percent increase in real GDP growth translated into roughly a 2.5 percentage point increase in democracy satisfaction among the West European democracies. Substantively, these results mean that citizens in countries with higher levels of political and economic performance (that is, freedom and civil rights and a sound macroeconomy) also displayed higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works. Moreover, both political and economic performance were more important than democratic history and social capital once we controlled for alternative hypotheses in the multivariate model.

Overall, the analysis shows that proponents of cultural and performance-based theories both could claim support for their perspectives when we did not control for competing explanations; that is, democratic history and current performance both explained differences in system support across mature democracies, and they did so quite effectively in bivariate formulations. However, when variables measuring both perspectives were included in a multivariate model, performance factors turned out to have the stronger substantive effects.
Political Satisfaction in New Democracies

Are the explanations for differences in democracy satisfaction across Western Europe applicable to Central and Eastern Europe? That is, is there structural equivalence in attitudes toward the political system across mature and emerging democracies?19 If we can extrapolate from existing theories, the answer should be yes. However, there is a growing literature to suggest that we may not. Specifically, two related arguments point to the particularities of the transition experiences that may prevent citizens in new democracies from responding the way citizens in older democracies do.

The first argument is based on the notion that diffuse support is largely absent in new democracies. In fact, scholars have found that levels of support are systematically lower in Central and Eastern Europe than in the West (Tóka 1995; for an overview, see Miller, Hesli, and Reisinger 1997). Because these systems have existed for a very short period of time relative to the more mature democracies of the West, government and system support is expected to be primarily affected by economic performance. That is, in the absence of a well-developed democratic culture à la Almond and Verba, economic motivations are expected to dominate evaluations of how the political system works (Kitschelt 1992; Przeworski 1991). In the context of the present study, this would suggest that indicators of a nascent democratic political culture or even democratic performance in terms of freedom indicators should have little to no effect on levels of satisfaction with the way democracy is developing. Instead, macroeconomic performance should be the most significant, and possibly exclusive, determinant of system support.

A related perspective points to problems associated with applying theories developed on the basis of established democracies to new contexts. Specifically, it argues that political attitudes and, by implication, cross-national differences in democracy satisfaction, either cannot be measured in a meaningful fashion in transition societies or have to be accounted for by factors not specified in established models of system support (cf. Converse 1964; see also Gunther, Sani, and Shabad 1988; MacIntosh and MacIver 1992; Rose 1992;
Stokes 1996). If measured attitudes vary randomly or if they are driven by different cognitive processes than in the established democracies, traditional cultural/historical and performance-based variables used in the West would be unable to explain any variance in cross-national differences in system support.

**Explaining Democracy Satisfaction in Central and Eastern Europe**

To test for structural equivalence—that is, to test old theories in new contexts in a way that allows for a direct comparison across areas—it was important to analyze differences in democracy satisfaction in emerging democracies in a way that closely resembled the analysis conducted with the sample of mature democratic systems. Thus, to remain as analogous as possible to the analyses of the West European democracies, the analyses for the Central and East European states relied on the number of years of continuous democracy since 1920 as an indicator of states’ differential democratic experiences; social capital was measured by the same interpersonal trust item as in the case of Western Europe (see Appendix). Support for the political culture argument may be detectable even in new democracies depending on their path of, and length of experience with, democratization. Similarly, social capital should be related to democracy satisfaction as in the West European context. If the argument made for older democracies holds, I expected a positive correlation between these variables and the level of democracy satisfaction.

As in the analysis of the West European democracies, current experience with and performance of democratic institutions and practices also was measured by the levels of freedom. Finally, economic performance also was measured in a manner identical to the analysis of West European systems (% change in real GDP growth). The sources of all variables were identical to the West European portion of the analysis, with the exception of the economic growth measure, which was taken from the United Nations *Economic Survey of Europe in 1996-97*, which contains economic indicators for the period under study (1993-95). Both were expected to be positively correlated with levels of democracy satisfaction.

**Results**

15
Table 3 displays bivariate as well as multivariate models estimating the impact of cultural and performance-related variables on democracy satisfaction among the West European countries. The bivariate model results did not discover any statistically significant relationships (Models 1-4). Although the coefficients for democracy age, freedom, and economic growth were in the expected directions, none of them was close to achieving conventional levels of statistical significance. In fact, this was the case both in the bivariate and in the multivariate formulations (Models 5-7).

Thus, the results did not support the notion that political culture or system performance help us understand systematic differences in levels of democracy satisfaction across the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Overall, the individual coefficients’ insignificance and the overall models’ dismal performance in terms of total variance explained (R²’s between 1 and 9 percent), suggested quite clearly that old theories did not perform very well in new contexts. Thus, at first blush, these results speak quite clearly against structural equivalence and in favor of discarding or amending our old theories in new contexts.

**Explaining Changes in Democracy Satisfaction in Europe**

Part of the failure of culture- and performance-based explanations of democracy satisfaction to provide much leverage in the new democratic systems of Eastern Europe may lie in the fact that attitudes about the political system were still in considerable flux during the period investigated here. Thus, to examine whether the variation in the dependent variable was random (that is, by definition unexplainable) or systematic, additional analyses estimated whether the two perspectives help explain changes in democracy satisfaction. If countries started out at uniquely- or randomly-determined levels of democracy satisfaction during the early 1990s, an analysis of changes in these levels may reveal an underlying dynamic that is consistent with
traditional theories of system support.

Specifically, I analyzed multivariate models identical to those described above, using the change in the level of democracy satisfaction between 1993 and 1995 as the dependent variable. The independent variables were identical to those used in the previous analysis, with the exception of the freedom indicator, which also was scored as the change in the level of freedom. In a slight variation on the hypotheses described earlier, I presumed that higher scores on the civic culture or performance indicators would be associated with positive changes in democracy satisfaction. Table 4 shows the results of these analyses.

(Table 4 about here)

As it turned out, neither civic culture nor performance variables exerted much influence on changes in democracy satisfaction among the West European democracies. However, when we look at the Central and East European cases, we found that the performance indicators displayed significant coefficients. Specifically, countries experiencing higher levels of economic growth also saw their citizenry increase their satisfaction levels with democratic governance during the transition years. However, countries with higher levels of freedom actually saw their levels of democracy satisfaction decline over the 1993-95 period. Thus, contrary to expectations, more political freedom also translated into more freedom to express dissatisfaction with the performance of the political system. Although the variables were able to explain 55 percent of the variance in Central and Eastern Europe and 37 percent among the West European cases, these results were based only on a small number of cases and thus should be considered exploratory and suggestive at this point. They do indicate, however, that variations in democracy satisfaction are not random.

Discussion and Implications

Levels of satisfaction with the workings of democratic governance vary widely, both across old and
new democratic systems. How can such cross-national differences be explained? Moreover, are the explanations that account for such differences among old democracies applicable to new ones? On the basis of data collected in over twenty established and emerging democracies, this study sought to accomplish several goals: First, it sought to systematically test the validity of competing theories of system support based on notions of democratic history/culture and system performance with data from a comprehensive sample of countries. Furthermore, it sought to specify the notion of system performance to include a political dimension alongside an economic one. Second, the study was an attempt to examine the validity of existing theories of system support formulated with mature democracies in mind in the context of newly emerging democratic systems.

The empirical analysis showed that age of democracy, social capital, and political and economic performance all were related to levels of democracy satisfaction in the mature democracies of Western Europe. Existing theories of system support together successfully explain a moderate share of the variance in cross-national differences in system support in mature democracies (about 40%). However, the results also revealed that performance indicators had greater explanatory power than indicators of political culture and history when the two were tested alongside each other. Thus, the results reported here indicate that the debate about whether it is one or the other that matters can be summed up by saying that frequently-reported bivariate results for political culture do not hold in multivariate estimations. In fact, they suggest that previous studies of the effects of democracy age on democracy satisfaction may have overestimated the size of its independent effect because other factors were insufficiently accounted for.

That political and economic performance indicators were more powerful determinants of democracy satisfaction levels than age of democracy and interpersonal trust—that is, measures of democratic political culture and history—came as a surprise given that mature democracies have a considerable reservoir of diffuse support for, or goodwill toward, the political system. Because cultures change slowly and political values are deeply imbedded, it would have been reasonable to assume that the potential for any erosion of that support
by bad economic times or low levels of political performance is limited.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that part of the reason for these results may be statistical in nature because there is more variation across countries in terms of performance than political culture. Moreover, a long democratic history may in fact have contributed to high levels of freedom and a well-functioning market economy. To what extent current performance is driven exogenously by democratic history is a question that needs to be addressed in future studies. However, it is worth noting that both cultural/historical and performance-based theories together explained more of the variance than either of them did on their own.

In addition, the fact that performance factors had a stronger effect on democracy satisfaction than culture and history may partially have been a function of the question used to gauge system support. After all, it is designed to elicit responses about the performance of the political system and thus may incorporate a bias toward finding performance-related effects. With some goodwill, we can thus report that culture was dealt a significant blow by the analysis, but that it should not be written out of the story entirely (yet). Further investigation is needed to establish precisely the causal ways in which political legacies and social capital affect current political and economic performance and possibly affect democracy satisfaction indirectly.

The second question taken up in this study concerned the effects of performance-based and cultural factors on democracy satisfaction in the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Specifically, the study sought to establish whether there is a structural equivalence in aggregate attitudes about democratic governance across old and new democratic systems. The answer turned out to be a resounding “no, ... but.” Differences in satisfaction levels across emerging democracies were not systematically related to either cultural or performance measures, but when we examined the effects of system performance on changes in democracy satisfaction, it turned out to have statistically significant effects. In contrast to prior expectations, however, countries with higher levels of freedom were more likely to experience a drop in democracy satisfaction between 1993 and 1995. We can speculate that this may be the result of the dynamics and uncertainty
associated with the transition process. In contrast to the predictability of political and economic life under the Soviet-style system, democracy appears noisy and contentious. Thus, countries that achieved high levels of freedom relatively early during the process of democratization may also have citizens who are yet uncomfortable with the disorder of democracy. Or, they simply may feel more comfortable registering their displeasure with it.

It is, of course, also possible that the results for Central and Eastern Europe also may be affected by difficulties of measurement not usually encountered in research on stable democracies. There may be generic measurement error in the economic indicators—there is considerable economic activity not reported in official statistics—and public opinion surveys may be less reliable in, say, Romania than Germany. Moreover, with regard to the specific analyses presented here it also is the case that there is little variance on the democracy age variable, and the trust scores all line up at the low end of the distribution.

Finally, the results reported in this study showed that conventional theories of system support were better able to explain variance in satisfaction levels among the mature democracies of Western Europe than the emerging democracies of the former Soviet bloc. If we assume that these results are not simply a product of model (mis)specification, they point to either measurement or theoretical issues. Conducting surveys of citizens in contexts that did not encourage the expression of one’s true opinion on political matters to anyone other than close friends may involve problems with measurement reliability not present in the West (MacIntosh and MacIver 1992). Moreover, such attitudes may be less firmly embedded and more subject to random variation than in more mature democracies. The measurement and interpretation of attitudinal data in such contexts thus may be more problematic than has been acknowledged to date. But even if we were able to measure attitudes in emerging democracies as precisely as in the mature ones, it still is possible that better theories are needed to explain variation in democracy satisfaction among systems undergoing democratic transitions. It is plausible that citizen attitudes in systems undergoing radical change are driven by fundamentally different processes compared to attitudes in countries that have had democracy for some time.
Put simply, the process of how people reason about democracy may be fundamentally different from the West.

What do these results mean for the study of system support and politics in mature and emerging democratic systems? On a theoretical level, an optimistic conclusion would state that current theories of system support are able to explain a significant share of the variance in levels of system satisfaction across mature democracies. However, this conclusion is tempered by the fact that they are not very successful at doing so in systems undergoing democratic transitions.

In the end, the results point to the need to be particularly cautious when applying old theories and collecting new data in contexts different from those where the theory was originally formulated. We cannot assume and need to carefully monitor empirically whether and to what extent theories developed with the established democracies of the West in mind hold much leverage when applied to new cases and new settings. Similarly, we may not always be able to treat answers to survey questions in transition societies as equivalent to those we typically collect in the mature democracies. The genuine testing of theories under a variety of conditions requires a true comparison of analogous models and careful attention to basic questions of validity, reliability, and theory-construction.
APPENDIX A. DATA SOURCES

DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION
Source: Eurobarometer surveys and Central and Eastern Eurobarometer surveys, based on random national samples of approximately 1,000 respondents in each country, 1993-95. These surveys were conducted twice a year in the West European countries, in March/April and October/November of each year. The semi-annual results were averaged for each country. In the Central and East European states, surveys were conducted once a year during the first half of the year. The democracy satisfaction measure is based on the question: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (our country)?” (Western Europe); “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in (our country)?” (Central and Eastern Europe). Percentage of respondents who indicated that they were very or fairly satisfied with democracy.

AGE OF DEMOCRACY

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

FREEDOM
Source: Gastil, Raymond, various years. Freedom in the World. New York: Freedom House. The freedom indicator measures political rights and civil liberties, ranking countries from 1 (free) to 7 (not free). The index was inverted for the purposes of analysis.

ECONOMIC GROWTH (annual change in real GDP)
Sources:
### APPENDIX B. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WESTERN EUROPE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy satisfaction</td>
<td>53.70</td>
<td>16.34</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>83.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in democracy satisfaction</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>-9.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy</td>
<td>54.30</td>
<td>22.99</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in freedom</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>10.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EASTERN EUROPE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy satisfaction</td>
<td>30.82</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in democracy satisfaction</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>-10.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>25.73</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in freedom</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>-30.34</td>
<td>9.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Kornberg, Allan, & Harold D. Clarke. (1992). *Citizens and Community: Political Support in a Representative*


### TABLE 1. LEVELS OF DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION IN EUROPE, 1993-95 (in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>SATISFACTION</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/Eastern Europe</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Eurobarometer and Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1993-95.*
TABLE 2a. BIVARIATE REGRESSION MODELS OF DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1993-95 (Dependent variable: % satisfied)
(OLS estimates corrected for heteroscedasticity; White robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>MODEL 1</th>
<th>MODEL 2</th>
<th>MODEL 3</th>
<th>MODEL 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic history/culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy (in years)</td>
<td>.36***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital (trust)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom (high=free)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25.36**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth (% Δ in real annual GDP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.70***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>34.18***</td>
<td>28.42***</td>
<td>-117.26*</td>
<td>47.71***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.37)</td>
<td>(6.62)</td>
<td>(57.32)</td>
<td>(3.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breusch-Pagan χ² (df)</td>
<td>.40 (1)</td>
<td>.26 (1)</td>
<td>.60 (1)</td>
<td>.25 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>14.38</td>
<td>14.92</td>
<td>15.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p < .05; **: p < .01; ***: p < .001
### TABLE 2b. MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION MODELS OF DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1993-95 (Dependent variable: % satisfied)

(OLS estimates corrected for heteroscedasticity; White robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>MODEL 5</th>
<th>MODEL 6</th>
<th>MODEL 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic history/culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy (in years)</td>
<td>.21** (.08)</td>
<td>.15 (.08)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital (trust)</td>
<td>.34 (.19)</td>
<td>.12 (.21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom (high=free)</td>
<td>29.02*** (7.55)</td>
<td>23.93** (7.69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth (% Δ in real annual GDP)</td>
<td>3.18*** (0.81)</td>
<td>2.18* (1.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>28.28*** (6.42)</td>
<td>-149.00** (52.27)</td>
<td>-125.49* (52.63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj. R² | .24 | .36 | .38 |
Breusch-Pagan χ² (df) | .26 (2) | .85 (2) | 4.69 (4) |
SEE     | 14.24 | 13.06 | 12.83 |
N       | 33    | 33    | 33    |

*: p < .05; **: p < .01; ***: p < .001
TABLE 3. REGRESSION MODELS OF DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, 1993-95

Dependent variable: % satisfied (OLS estimates corrected for heteroscedasticity; White robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>MODEL 1</th>
<th>MODEL 2</th>
<th>MODEL 3</th>
<th>MODEL 4</th>
<th>MODEL 5</th>
<th>MODEL 6</th>
<th>MODEL 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic history/culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy (in years)</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital (trust)</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>System performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom (high=free)</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth (% Δ in real annual GDP)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>27.36***</td>
<td>32.91***</td>
<td>18.21</td>
<td>30.73***</td>
<td>31.55***</td>
<td>18.71</td>
<td>23.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breusch-Pagan χ² (df)</td>
<td>2.02 (1)</td>
<td>4.62 (1)</td>
<td>1.77 (1)</td>
<td>3.5 (1)</td>
<td>4.95 (2)</td>
<td>1.78 (2)</td>
<td>4.92 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td>10.66</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>11.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p < .05; **: p < .01; ***: p < .001
### TABLE 4. MODELS OF CHANGE IN DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION IN EAST-CENTRAL AND WESTERN EUROPE, 1993-95
(Independent variable: Change in % satisfied, 1993-95)
(OLS estimates corrected for heteroscedasticity; White robust standard errors in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>WESTERN EUROPE</th>
<th>EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic history/culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of democracy (in years)</td>
<td>.16 (.11)</td>
<td>-1.27 (2.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital (trust)</td>
<td>-.04 (.11)</td>
<td>.01 (.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in freedom (high=free)</td>
<td>-9.43 (9.93)</td>
<td>-11.14* (4.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth (% Δ in real annual GDP)</td>
<td>-.55 (1.09)</td>
<td>1.00*** (.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.81 (6.47)</td>
<td>8.95 (6.25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WESTERN EUROPE</th>
<th>EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breusch-Pagan χ² (df)</td>
<td>2.72 (4)</td>
<td>2.05 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: p < .05; **: p < .01; ***: p < .001

1. In the past, students of system support have focused on trends in support as well as cross-national differences in support levels. While both are important, we focus on the latter for the purposes of this study (for examples of trend analyses, see Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 1993; Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995; Mishler and Rose 1996).

2. A number of scholars have pointed out that these theoretical perspectives are not necessarily incompatible, and that superior system performance and democratic longevity may mutually reinforce one another. See, e.g., Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Lipset 1994; Muller and Seligson 1994).

3. Good examples of what I call applying old theories to new data are found in the literature on voting behavior. Many researchers have sought to apply the Michigan model of voting behavior to other democracies; similarly, scholars recently have sought to theories of economic voting to new democracies in both Central and
Eastern Europe and Latin America. See, e.g., Pacek and Radcliff (1995) for a discussion.

4. For simplicity, I refer to the emerging democracies simply as Central and Eastern Europe or as Eastern Europe throughout the paper, although some of the cases actually are located in South-Eastern Europe and the Baltics. Similarly, I refer to the democracies of the European Union as Western Europe, though some could more appropriately be classified as Southern Europe.

5. For the West European cases, Greece and Luxembourg also were available. However, these were excluded from the analysis because the corresponding civic culture variables (see below) were not available for these countries. I selected the Central and East European countries to be included in the study on the basis of Freedom House indicators. Those countries that scored 4 or higher on the inverted Freedom House index were included in this study as these levels of democracy are sufficiently high to allow a systematic comparison with the democracies of Western Europe. East and West Germany are included as two separate cases, given the significant differences across the two (see also Table 1).

6. Studies that have employed the democracy satisfaction measure as a dependent variable include Anderson (1998); Anderson and Guillory (1997), Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg (1993), Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson (1995), Harmel and Robertson (1986), Kornberg Clarke (1994), and Lockerbie (1993). See also Powell (1986), who employs satisfaction with democracy as an independent variable.

7. Clarke and Kornberg (1992), p.47, n. 24 and Kornberg and Clarke (1992), pp.114-16 and (1994) report on a variety of tests designed to establish construct validity of the satisfaction with democracy question as an indicator of system support. Similarly, Fuchs (1993), p.242, examines the validity of the satisfaction with democracy indicator and finds that the results constitute “a successful validation of the indicator as a measuring instrument for a generalized attitude towards the political system on the legitimacy dimension.” Weil (1989), pp.692-693, provides some indirect construct validity for the satisfaction with democracy indicator as well by reporting high positive correlations with political trust. Finally, Anderson (1998) reports that the correlations between government support and democracy satisfaction in seven West European countries are positive but small and range between .11 and .26, with an average Pearson correlation of .19. All these findings point toward the conclusion that satisfaction with democracy is clearly an indicator of actual system support and not coterminus with support for the incumbent government.

8. Although there is considerable overlap between cultural/historical and performance-based explanations of cross-national differences in support for the political system, it is useful to differentiate them for the purposes of this overview.

9. A small number of scholars have focused on more specific kinds of political institutional performance such as party systems or government stability. See, e.g., Anderson (1998); Anderson and Guillory (1997); Harmel and Robertson (1986); Miller and Listhaug (1990).

10. For exceptions, see, e.g., Pina, McDonough, and Barnes (1994); Seligson (1993).

11. Frequently, efforts to study the determinants of political satisfaction across countries are handicapped by the unavailability of directly comparable data measuring system performance and political culture. Thus, any of the operational decisions described below should be evaluated with this caveat in mind. The data are constrained by availability on both ends of the period studied.
12. Of course, these two variables are not the only ones that could be considered as measures of civic culture and democratic history. However, they have the advantage of being available on a cross-national basis and having been employed by other scholars in a variety of studies (thus facilitating comparisons across studies).

13. Regarding the validity of this indicator, see the contributions in Inkeles (1991). It also would be interesting to examine the effects of institutional variables such as presidentialism/parliamentary system. Unfortunately, this is problematic in the present context because of the lack of variation among the West European cases (France is the only presidential system).

14. A number of scholars have argued that levels of economic development are associated with levels of democracy. The literature on this topic is too voluminous too cite here. For a good overview, see Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994) and Putnam (1993). Given that most analysts have not sought to draw a link between economic development and mass attitudes (and instead have focused on a more indirect connection of the two via democratic stability), this variable is not included in the models analyzed below. To the extent that economic development drives the stability of democracy and a democratic political culture, it also should be associated with higher levels of satisfaction with the workings of democratic government, but only indirectly. Results including this variable are available from the author.

15. Unfortunately, directly comparable economic perception questions were not available for a sufficiently large number of countries to permit statistical analyses or comparison across types of democracies.

16. The White procedure is a method of testing for and estimating with heteroscedasticity in the linear regression model. The underlying model is $y_i = \beta'x_i + \epsilon_i$, $E[\epsilon_i] = 0$, $\text{Var}[\epsilon_i] = \sigma^2 \omega_i$. The ordinary least squares (OLS) estimator of $\beta$, $b = (X'X)^{-1}X'y$ is consistent, and has the covariance matrix $\text{Var}[b] = \sigma^2(X'X)^{-1}X\Omega X(X'X)^{-1} = \Sigma$. The usual estimator, $V = s^2(X'X)^{-1}$ may not be consistent if the variables in $x \otimes x$ are correlated with the observation specific variances, $\omega_i$. White’s consistent estimator of $\Sigma$ is $S_w = (X'X)^{-1}[\Sigma \epsilon x, x'](X'X)^{-1}$. For the underlying theory of this estimator, see White (1978) or Greene (1993).

17. The Breusch-Pagan statistic tests the hypothesis of homoscedasticity. It is has a limiting chi-squared distribution with degrees of freedom equal to the number of independent variables not including the constant term.

18. To ensure the robustness of the results, additional analyses also controlled for the most significant outlier, Italy (see Anderson and Guillory [1993] for a similar approach). Furthermore, to ensure that combining data from three years did not pose any problems for inference because of possible effects driven by the year in which the data were collected, the models were estimated with controls for 1993 and 1994 (1995 was the reference category). The year-by-year variable failed to achieve statistical significance. We also estimated these models separately for each year. The conclusions drawn from these additional analyses do not differ much from those presented below, with the exception of being somewhat weaker with regard to their statistical significance tests. They can be obtained from the author.

19. Aside from the theoretical concerns highlighted for the purposes of analysis, there are additional reasons to conduct a systematic examination of the determinants of political satisfaction in new democracies. First, few studies of system support in Central and Eastern Europe have sought to explain cross-national differences in support, and they typically have not sought to explain differences across a meaningful number of countries. Second, they typically have investigated the micro-level determinants of democratic commitment at the level of individuals within countries. Third, earlier studies mostly have focused on explaining support for democratic
norms and ideals (Mishler and Rose 1996).