

Democratization as an emancipative process: The neglected role of mass motivations

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Abstract. Despite major differences, prevailing approaches in democratization research have one thing in common: they downplay the role of mass attitudes. This article criticizes the neglect of mass attitudes, arguing that it ignores the very essence of democratization. In light of human development theory, democratization is essentially an emancipative process, for it manifests human freedom by empowering people with civil and political rights. From this premise, the author concludes that democratization should be driven by emancipative forces in the population and that these forces are reflected in particular mass attitudes: liberty aspirations. Based on evidence from the Values Surveys, the analyses show that more widespread liberty aspirations facilitate progress and impede regress in the process of democratization. No other indicator – including GDP/capita and social capital – outperforms the effect of liberty aspirations on democratization. The article concludes that human development theory is useful because its emphasis on people empowerment highlights something that has been ignored in the democratization literature: emancipative motivational forces in the population.

Introduction

People do not seem to matter in democratization research. In the literature that is known since O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) as the 'transition paradigm' (for recent overviews of the literature, see Geddes 1999; Bunce 2000), one learns little about attitudinal tendencies in the population and their role in democratization. The same is true for structural theories of democratization such as modernization theories, class power theories or conflict theories (an overview of these theories is given in Doorenspleet 2004). Unless they ignore mass attitudes entirely, they consider them as epiphenomenal reflections of a society's structural properties. Even the type of research most strongly devoted to study mass attitudes (i.e., the political culture literature) maintains that pro-democratic mass attitudes help existing democracies to flourish but do not necessarily contribute to the *process* of democratization (Almond & Verba 1963; Putnam 1993; Inglehart 1997; Hofferbert & Klingemann 1999; Rose 2001; Gibson 2001; Newton 2001; Norris 2003; Dalton 2004).

This article tries to shake the established view that mass attitudes are of secondary relevance to democratization processes. To do this, I proceed as follows. First, I outline briefly how the three leading theories in democratization research (structural theories, elite-choice theories and political culture theories) downplay the role of mass attitudes in processes leading toward more or less democracy. Second, from a 'human development' perspective, I argue that the undervaluation of mass attitudes ignores the very essence of democratization. From this perspective, democratization is essentially an emancipative process because it empowers people by granting them civil and political freedom. This leads me to the conclusion that democratization processes should be driven by emancipative motivational forces among the population. Third, I argue that mass liberty aspirations reflect these emancipative forces. Fourth, I employ quantitative analyses to examine the effect of mass liberty aspirations on progress and regress in the process of democratization, measured as shifting levels in civil and political freedom. Fifth, I test the robustness of this finding against various modifications, including rival explanatory factors of democratization such as per capita GDP and social capital. Finally, I conclude that human development theory is useful because it highlights what the democratization literature has neglected: emancipative motivational forces that nurture social pressures to democratize.

Theoretical discussion

The neglect of mass attitudes in leading approaches of democratization research

In spite of major differences, structural theories, elite-choice theories and political culture theories have one thing in common: none of them ascribes mass attitudes a significant causal effect on processes of democratization. Structural theories of democratization consider the emergence and survival of democracy as a function of a society's prevailing structural properties such as its level of economic development, its internal social or ethnic divisions or its position in the world economy. Modernization theory claims that economic wealth is the most conducive factor to democratization (for an overview of the huge modernization literature see Diamond 1993; for a recent contribution see Boix & Stokes 2003). For class-power theory, the most important factor is the size of the working class (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). For world system theory, the decisive factor is an advantageous position in the world economic system (Wallerstein 1974; Bollen & Jackman 1985). For conflict theories, the prime factors are little internal divisions within societies as indicated by a low degree

of income inequality and little ethno-linguistic fractionalization (Dahl 1973 [1971]; Muller & Seligson 1994; Muller 1997). Finally, for spatial diffusion theories, the major factor of democratization is a society's exposure to democratic neighbors (Starr 1991; Linz & Stepan 1996). None of these structural theories places much emphasis on the role of pro-democratic mass attitudes. Implicitly they assume that mass attitudes operate in favour of democracy only insofar as they reflect a society's fundamental structural properties. In other words, should an attitudinal effect on democratization exist, it will vanish as soon as one controls for the appropriate structural variable.

The assumption of structural primacy is legitimate, but must be tested empirically before one can accept it. So far, however, advocates of structural theories only tested various structural factors against each other, leaving attitudinal effects entirely out of their research designs (examples are Bollen & Jackman 1985; Gasiorowski & Power 1998; Doorenspleet 2004).

Since the work of O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), the elite-choice approach has become the leading paradigm in transition research. Its advocates maintain that democratization processes are neither determined by a society's structural properties nor are they driven by broader attitudinal tendencies among the population. Democratization is considered an elite-managed process (Bunce 2000). Even if mass demonstrations are involved, elite theorists maintain that what type and level of democracy will be institutionalized is ultimately a matter of elite choice (among others Higley & Gunther 1992; Marks 1992; Przeworski 1992). Unlike adherents of structural theories, advocates of the elite-choice approach did not ignore the effect of mass attitudes on democratization. They explicitly denied its existence (Karl & Schmitter 1991:270). However, this denial is an untested axiom, not an empirically validated finding. Even the approach that places most emphasis on mass attitudes – the political culture approach – did not put much effort into analyzing the impact of mass attitudes on democratization as a process. In fact, the huge political culture literature includes only four studies that examine the impact of mass attitudes on democratization in a multi-country analysis (Muller & Seligson 1994; Inglehart 1997: Chapter 6; Hadenius & Teorell 2005; Inglehart & Welzel 2005: Chapter 8).¹ Apart from the study by Inglehart and Welzel, none of them found a pronounced attitudinal effect, concluding that pro-democratic mass attitudes are essential for the florescence of already existing democracies, but not for the process of democratization.

In summary, there is widespread consensus regarding the secondary importance of mass attitudes in democratization. If not completely ignored, mass attitudes are either considered mere reflections of a society's structural properties or they are declared irrelevant for the elites' institutional choices. At

best, mass attitudes are seen as important for democracy to flourish, but not for the process of democratization.

Alternative research perspectives: Social movements and mass mobilization

The dismal view on mass attitudes is problematic in the perspective of social movement and mass mobilization theories. These perspectives (in general, see Markoff 1996; Foweraker & Landman 1997; McAdams et al. 2001) focus on the masses, not just elites. They deliberately address people's attitudes, dealing with the goals of mass movements into which people are mobilized on the basis of their attitudes (Klandermans 1984; McAdams 1986). The mobilization of mass attitudes supporting the goals of a democracy movement is a key factor of institutional change to democracy in this perspective.

Democratization studies in the line of social movement and mobilization theories emphasized that elite actions do not take place in a social vacuum (Markoff 1996; Foweraker & Landman 1997; McAdams et al. 2001; Paxton 2002). None of the democratization processes of the so-called 'third' and 'fourth' waves were exclusively elite-made (Casper & Taylor 1996). They emerged on the ground of more broadly based campaigns for civil and political freedom, involving wider parts of the mass public into various civil-societal activities (Diamond 1993; Bernhard 1993; Paxton 2002; Gibson 2001). This is most obvious in such cases as South Korea or Czechoslovakia where widespread mass demonstrations gave the regime transition its momentum. Yet even in such cases as Hungary or Chile where massive anti-regime demonstrations were absent, various other forms of public involvement, from petitions to hearings to association meetings, did take place (Foweraker & Landman 1997; McAdams et al. 2001). According to Casper and Taylor (1996), this is quite natural: pro-democratic actors in a 'transition game' always try to strengthen their bargaining position, which they do by giving evidence to the support they have in the broader public. What varies is *how much* mass support pro-democratic actors are able to mobilize. As social movement theorists maintain (Klandermans 1984; McAdams 1986), mobilizing broad support presupposes the widespread presence of 'attitudinal affinities' favouring a particular movement's goals. If this is so, the social radius of pro-democratic attitudes must be a decisive factor in determining how much public support can be mobilized in favour of a democracy movement. More widespread pro-democratic attitudes should help mobilizing broader parts of the public to support pro-democratic actors.

At any point, determined power holders may decide to suppress a democracy movement. Yet suppression is not an unrestricted option. The state's coercive power is limited by the social radius of mass mobilization and the mass attitudes nourishing it (Tilly 1978). Had pro-democratic attitudes in

China in 1989 been so widespread as to fuel demonstrations throughout wider parts of the country, tanks on Tiananmen Square could not have terminated the movement. Conversely, had pro-democratic attitudes in Czechoslovakia in 1989 been limited to student protests at a single place, the communist leaders could easily have suppressed the movement. I conclude that favourable mass attitudes are an essential factor in mobilizing public support for pro-democratic actors and their actions. With more widespread pro-democratic attitudes, more public pressure can be mobilized in favour of democratic goals, which makes democratic outcomes more likely than when pro-democratic attitudes are less widespread.

Human development and the emancipative essence of democracy

The next question is which attitudes are most pro-democratic. More precisely: Which mass attitudes are most clearly targeted at the essence of democratization? To answer this question, one must first get an idea of the essence of democratization. Many quantitative studies of democratization use the Freedom House ratings, equating regress and progress in democratization with the shrinkage and growth of civil and political freedom (Burkhart & Lewis-Beck 1994; Muller & Seligson 1994; Inglehart 1997; Hadenius & Teorell 2005). This means equating progress in democratization with the growth of freedom and regress in democratization with the shrinkage of freedom. The emphasis that prominent accounts of democratization place on freedom is no coincidence. Historically, the idea of civil and political freedom forms the very origin of democracy and has been at the heart of any democracy movement from the Enlightenment until today (Markoff 1996). There is virtually no democracy movement in history that did not claim civil and political freedom as its major goal (Foweraker & Landman 1997). Invariably, democracy movements have been civil and political rights movements (McAdams et al. 2001).

Emphasizing civil and political freedom means focusing on the emancipative essence of democracy (Dahl 1973 [1971]; Diamond 1993; Rose 1995). In the perspective of human development (Sen 1999:156), this is the only appropriate way to deal with democracy, for human development is itself an emancipative concept, focusing on the societal conditions that promote human freedom and choice (Welzel 2003; Welzel et al. 2003). Human freedom cannot be realized without civil and political rights. These rights alone entitle people to shape their lives according to their own choices. Democratization in this sense is reflected in rising levels of civil and political freedom. Because this process aims at empowering people, it is essentially an emancipative process. Accordingly, it should be driven by emancipative motivational forces among the people themselves. I argue that mass liberty aspirations reflect these emancipative forces,

widening the recruitment-pool of pro-democratic actors and the basis of their mass support. More than any other supposedly pro-democratic attitude, liberty aspirations (i.e., aspirations for decision-making freedom) are targeted at democracy's core human achievement: civil and political rights.²

Analytical design: A three-step sequence of democratization

Regress or progress in democratization is reflected in shifting levels of civil and political freedom. The shift from one level of freedom to another operates over a three-step sequence. There is an *initial phase* with a given start level of freedom, followed by an *intermediate phase* in which the level of freedom is shifting, leading to a *final phase* in which the resulting level of freedom is reached. How far such changes in freedom have advanced is best analyzed by comparing the resulting levels of freedom with the initial levels of freedom. Should it be true that mass liberty aspirations help levels of freedom to rise, then these aspirations *must* be present just at the time when these levels do rise. This is logical from a collective action perspective: freedom can only rise through pro-democratic actions and pro-democratic actions can only be supported on the basis of liberty aspirations that are present when these actions take place.

Following these rationales, I first measure mass liberty aspirations in an intermediate period in which freedom has been shifting. Second, I analyze the effect of these liberty aspirations on *subsequent* levels of freedom. Third, I control this effect for the *prior* levels of freedom. In short, I analyze the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom under control of prior freedom. This control is appropriate for two reasons. First, it makes sure that I analyze resulting levels of freedom only insofar as they are unexplained by initial levels of freedom. To the extent this is the case, freedom has indeed changed, meaning that one analyzes an effect on the regime *dynamics* in freedom (i.e., democratization). Second, I analyze the effect of liberty aspirations only insofar as they are unaffected by the initial levels of freedom, eliminating the possibility that the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom is an artifact of liberty aspirations being produced by prior freedom. This is an exercise in exploring 'Granger-causality': I analyze the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable controlling for prior levels of the dependent variable.³

The choice of the intermediate phase is restricted by the availability of survey data suited to measure mass liberty aspirations. The second and third rounds of the European/World Values Surveys (henceforth: Values Surveys), conducted in 1989–1991 and 1995–1997, provide data with the widest coverage of countries.⁴ Thus, the temporal range of these data defines the intermediate phase as reaching from 1989 to 1997. This in turn determines the choice of the

start and final phase from which I take measures of the initial and resulting levels of freedom. The final phase must start after the intermediate phase ends. Because the intermediate phase ends in 1997, the final phase must start no earlier than 1998. Likewise, the start phase must end before the intermediate phase starts. Since the intermediate phase starts in 1989, the start phase must end no later than 1988. To strengthen the temporal separation between the three phases, I let the start phase end in 1987 (i.e., one year before the intermediate phase starts). Likewise, I let the final phase start in 1999 (i.e., one year after the intermediate phase ends). Furthermore, the final phase should extend to the most actual date, taking into account what level of freedom a country has eventually achieved. The most actual date is 2004. So the final phase ranges from 1999 to 2004. For reasons of symmetry, the start phase should also cover a six-year period. This is the phase from 1982 to 1987. Summing up, I specify the following three-step sequence:

Start (pre-survey) phase	Intermediate (survey) phase	Final (post-survey) phase
Initial levels of freedom	Shifting levels of freedom	Resulting levels of freedom
1982–1987	1989–1997	1999–2004

How adequately does this sequence reflect real events? Preferably the start and final phases should show more stable levels of freedom than the intermediate phase, which should show significant shifts in freedom levels. As Figure 1 illustrates, this is the case. Using an additive 0–12 scale of Freedom House's civil and political rights scores,⁵ the diagram shows on a yearly basis the average level of freedom among all independent nations in the world (labeled 'universe of states') and among the 61 nations of the Values Survey sample used here (labeled 'VS-sample'). The average level of freedom in the VS-sample hovers constantly above the level of freedom in the universe, reflecting that the VS-sample over-represents long established democracies as well as newly emerged democracies. Yet, the trajectory of changes in freedom in the VS-sample equals almost perfectly the trajectory found in the whole universe of states. This is obvious from the fact that the two trend lines run strikingly parallel. Hence, the overall global trend in democratization is very well reflected in the VS-sample, making this sample suitable to test general theories on democratization.

It is evident from Figure 1 that the survey period covers the world's major upward shift toward more civil and political freedom – an historic move that

has been described as an ‘explosion of democratization’ (Doorenspleet 2000). By contrast, the two six year-periods before and after the surveys cover more stable times in which the overall level of freedom is not or at least not so steeply increasing as in the survey phase. However, the steepest increase in freedom is located in the earlier part of the survey period from 1989 to 1993. Thus, whenever available I take measures of liberty aspirations from the earlier part of this period (i.e., from the second round of the Values Surveys conducted in 1989–1991). This applies to 42 societies. For another 19 societies I take measures from the third round of the Values Surveys conducted in 1995–1997.⁶ The adequacy of this procedure depends on whether liberty aspirations in 1995–1997 can be considered as reasonable proxies for liberty aspirations in 1989–1991. This seems to be the case because the correlation

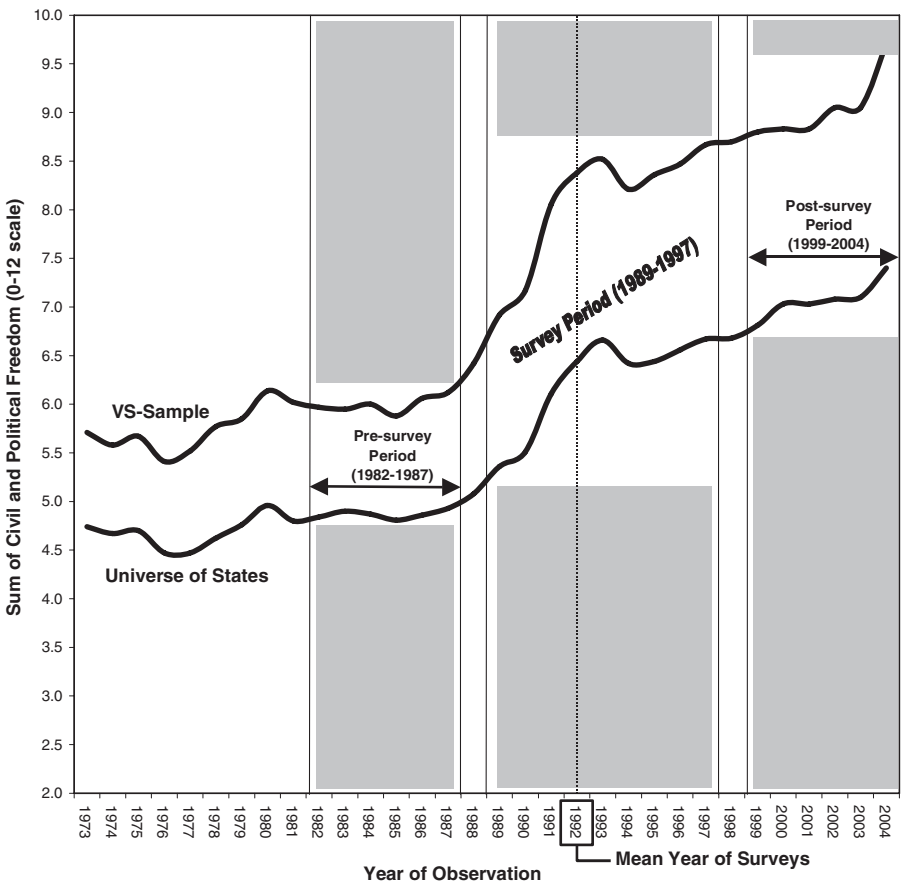


Figure 1. Temporal structure of analysis.

between the earlier and the later measure points at $r = 0.91$ ($N = 30$). This indicates that given mass tendencies in liberty aspirations did not dramatically change over the short time from 1989–1991 to 1995–1997, implying that the later measure is indeed a reasonable proxy of the earlier measure. Nevertheless, I take the bulk of survey measures from the earlier period so that the mean survey year is 1992. This year is located exactly in the steepest phase of the global democratization trend. Should mass liberty aspirations ever have fueled pressures to democratize, they had to be present in exactly this phase.

Dependent and independent variables

Dependent variables

Because human development theory favours a concept of democracy that features human freedom, I use the civil and political rights scores provided by Freedom House as the main measure of democracy.⁷ I use this measure in two variants. First, I follow the convention in using an additive scale of civil and political rights (labeled ‘sum of civil and political freedom’). This combination of civil and political freedom has the disadvantage of allowing high scores in one component to compensate for low scores in the other. A high score in political freedom will yield at least a medium overall score of freedom, even if the score in civil freedom is zero. This is inappropriate ignoring that deficient civil rights render abundant political rights ineffective.

For these reasons, I prefer a multiplicative combination of the civil and political rights scores (labeled ‘product of civil and political freedom’). To do this I first equate the highest possible political rights score (7) with 100 per cent. This allows an interpretation of political rights in terms of percentiles of the possible maximum. Then I standardize the civil rights scores to a maximum of 1.0, yielding any fraction of 1.0. Finally, I multiply the political rights scores with the civil rights scores, weighting percentiles for political rights by fractions of 1.0 for civil rights. This combination does not allow a high civil rights score to compensate for a low political rights score. Even a maximum civil rights score of 1.0 cannot do more than simply reproduce a given percentile of political rights. A 25 per cent score for political rights cannot grow by multiplying it with a maximum score of 1.0 for civil rights. On the other hand, a low civil rights score (say 0.25) can seriously downgrade even a 100 per cent score in political rights (yielding a 25 per cent score for the product of civil and political freedom). For validity tests, I also use two alternative measures of democracy: the ‘constitutional democracy’ index provided by the Polity IV

project (Gurr & Jagers 1995; Marshall & Jagers 2000) and the 'electoral democracy' index provided by Vanhanen (2003).⁸

Independent variables

Following Flanagan (1987), Welzel (2003) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005: part II), I operationalize liberty aspirations as the priority that people place on freedom of expression (civil freedom) and people empowerment (political freedom). For that matter, I use three of the six postmaterialist items from the 12-item materialism/postmaterialism battery. These items are worded: 'Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities', 'Giving people more say in important government decisions' and 'Protecting freedom of speech'. People are asked to indicate how important they consider these items as their country's goal for the next ten years. They can give each item either top priority (coded 2), second priority (coded 1) or no priority (coded 0). I arrange these priorities on a six-point ordinal scale from 0 to 5 where 0 indicates no liberty aspirations (no priority on any of these items) and 5 indicates maximum liberty aspirations (top priority on two items, second priority on the remaining one).⁹ A public's overall emphasis on liberty aspirations is measured as the arithmetic sample mean on this scale, which can yield any fraction of a maximum 5.0.

Liberty aspirations differ from the extended version of postmaterialism in that they exclude three of the six postmaterialist items – namely 'Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful', 'Progress towards a less impersonal and more humane society' and 'Progress towards a society in which ideas count more than money'. These rather idealistic items are distinct from the three liberty items and should be treated accordingly (Flanagan 1987). To demonstrate that the idealist items differ in their relevance to democracy from the liberty items, I use an index of 'idealist aspirations' created analogously to the index of liberty aspirations. A public's overall emphasis on idealist aspirations is measured by the sample mean, again yielding any fraction of a maximum 5.0.

Liberty aspirations differ from the short version of postmaterialism in that they include a third liberty item not included in the short version of postmaterialism ('Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities'). To demonstrate that the inclusion of this third item creates a closer linkage to democracy, I include the short version of liberty aspirations based on only two of the three items. This yields a 0–3 ordinal index of liberty aspirations. Accordingly, the sample mean on this shortened version of liberty aspirations can obtain any fraction of a maximum 3.0.

The interpretation of sample means is not very intuitive. Fractional averages on multi-point scales do not provide an idea about how widespread an attitude is in a society. The fact that the Dutch sample scores at 3.45 on the 0–5 scale of liberty aspirations tells us little about the social radius of liberty aspirations in the Netherlands. From a collective action perspective, this is a clear disadvantage because one would like to know how wide the recruitment pool of people is who can be mobilized on the basis of liberty aspirations. Accordingly, I introduce another aggregate measure of liberty aspirations – namely the percentage of people per nation who have at least moderate liberty aspirations (i.e., respondents scoring at 2 or higher on the 0–5 index).¹⁰

Another modification of this percentage index of liberty aspirations is based on ‘resource-mobilization theory’ (Tilly 1978). This theory argues that mobilizing people for a social movement requires human resources such as money, information and time, and that people’s aspirations are mobilized into more powerful movements if more human resources are available. In other words, given liberty aspirations are mobilized into more powerful social pressures to democratize if they interact with more abundant human resources. I model this interaction in that I weight the national proportions of people with liberty aspirations for the abundance of human resources in each nation. To measure human resources, I use the Human Development Index from 1990, or 1995 if the earlier measure is not available (UNDP 2000). This index yields fractions of 1.0, with smaller fractions indicating a greater lack of human resources.¹¹ Multiplying the percentage index of liberty aspirations by this fraction index of human resources means depreciating the percentage of people with liberty aspirations to the extent by which a public lacks human resources. This procedure deflates the raw proportion of people with liberty aspirations to the proportion that is *mobilizable* on the basis of human resources. In summary, I use as independent variables: an arithmetic mean index of idealist aspirations, an arithmetic mean index of liberty aspirations based on two liberty items, an arithmetic mean index of liberty aspirations based on three liberty items, the raw percentage of people with at least moderate liberty aspirations, and a resource-weighted percentage index of liberty aspirations.¹²

Empirical analyses

Zero-order correlations

Figure 2 displays national level correlations between the four measures of democracy, on the one hand, and the five measures of mass attitudes, on the

other. The diagram shows a consistent pattern. First, all four measures of democracy are by far most weakly correlated with people's idealistic aspirations (on average at $r = 0.38$), confirming that idealistic aspirations are of much less relevance to democracy than liberty aspirations. Accordingly, it is not only conceptually, but also empirically, justified to dissociate liberty aspirations from other aspects of postmaterialism. Second, the two-item version of liberty aspirations shows the next weakest correlations with each measure of democracy (on average at $r = 0.61$), considerably weaker than any of the three-item versions of liberty aspirations (which on average correlate at $r = 0.72$ with democracy). Thus, adding the third item to the measure of liberty aspirations is indeed a significant improvement in representing the linkage between mass attitudes and democracy. Third, the three-item versions of liberty aspirations are less clearly distinct. It is, however, noteworthy that the more easily interpretable percentage index of liberty aspirations correlates at least as strongly with democracy as the arithmetic mean index (at $r = 0.71$ on average compared to 0.70 for the arithmetic mean index). Finally, the resource-weighted version of liberty aspirations is most strongly correlated with democracy (at $r = 0.76$ on

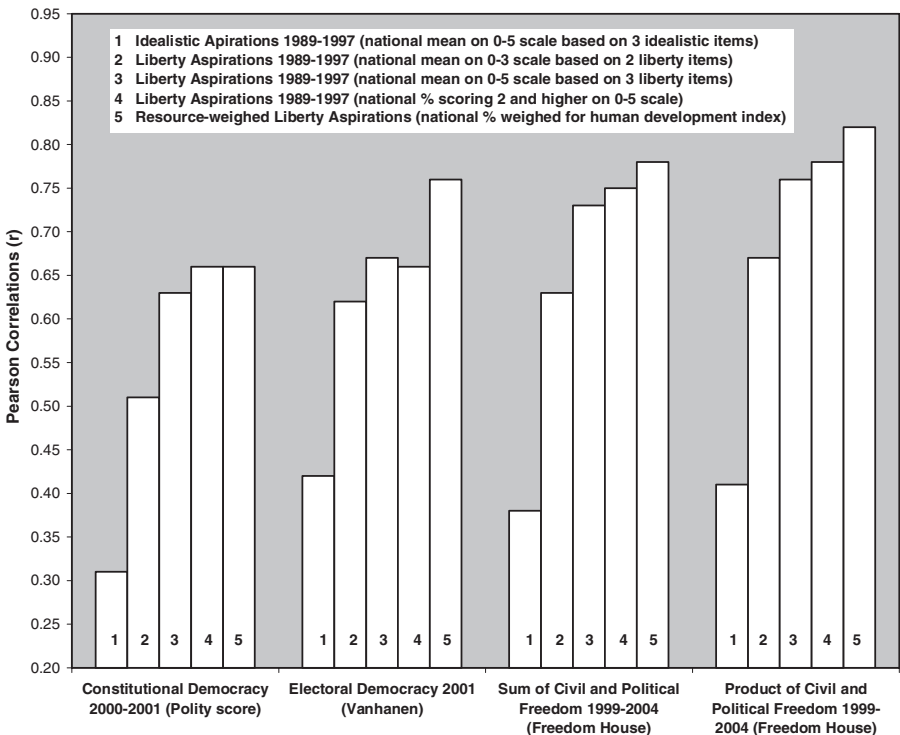


Figure 2. Correlations between measures of mass attitudes and measures of democracy.

average). Thus, deflating the raw percentages of people with liberty aspirations to percentages that are mobilizable on the basis of available human resources represents the linkage of population attributes with democracy even better.¹³

Visual illustrations

Figure 3a illustrates the zero-order effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom using the raw percentages of people with liberty aspirations in the left diagram and the resource-weighted percentages in the right diagram. In both cases there is a highly significant effect such that more widespread liberty aspirations tend to be reflected in higher levels of civil and political freedom thereafter.

One can consider these diagrams as illustrating the interplay between the institutional choices of elites and the channeling of these choices by mass aspirations. For that matter, a society's exact location on the y-axis can be seen as reflecting its elites' choice in selecting a specific level of civil and political freedom. Yet the shape of the corridor that limits the overall distribution of societies depicts how strongly mass liberty aspirations channel the elites' choices. How strong is this channeling effect? On the one hand, mass liberty aspirations channel the existing levels of freedom along a relatively broad corridor, meaning that mass attitudes leave elites a wide range of choice in selecting a specific level of freedom. If, for example, the proportion of people with liberty aspirations is around 50 per cent, elites can choose any level of freedom from the 20th percentile (the level of Russia) to the 75th percentile (the level of Romania). Yet, the range of the elites' institutional choices is far from being unconstrained. Quite the contrary, the boundaries of the choice corridor are moving upward linearly with more widespread liberty aspirations. If, for example, liberty aspirations capture around 70 per cent of the population, the elites seem unable to choose a freedom level beneath the 60th percentile (the level of Mexico and Argentina).

Looking at the diagram on the right in Figure 3b, it becomes obvious that resource-tied liberty aspirations channel the institutional choices of elites even more narrowly along a linear growth trend: with resource-tied liberty aspirations capturing around 35 per cent of the population, the lowest level of freedom that elites can choose is at the 8th percentile (Belarus); with 40 per cent it is at the 20th percentile (Russia); with 45 per cent at the 35th percentile (Venezuela); with 55 per cent at the 60th percentile (Argentina); and with 60 per cent at the 85th percentile (Japan).

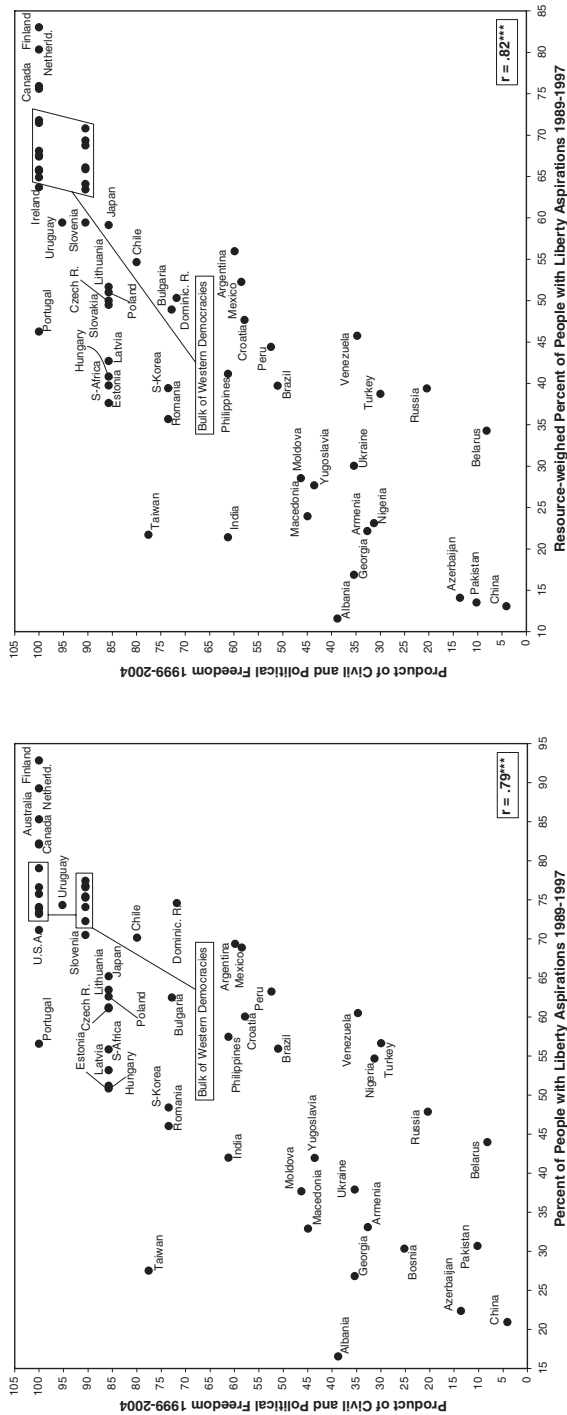


Figure 3a. The zero-order effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent democracy.

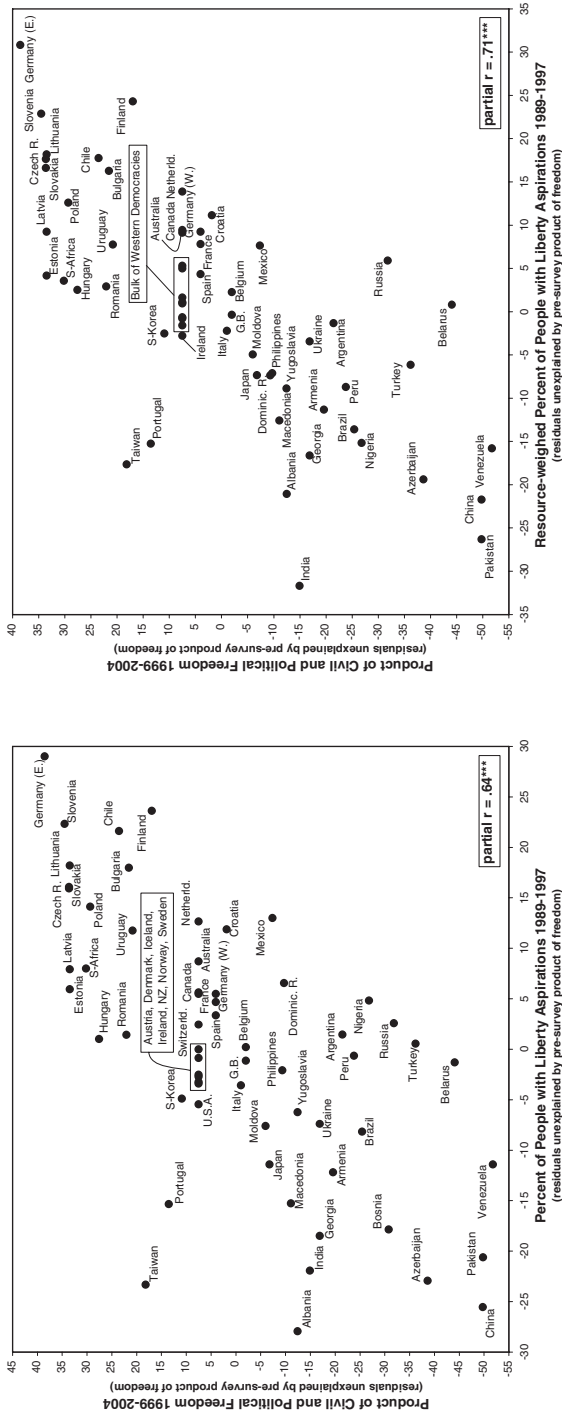


Figure 3b. The effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent democracy controlled for prior democracy.

The question of causality

The linkage between liberty aspirations and freedom shown in Figure 3a can exist for two reasons. One is that liberty aspirations helped to bring higher levels of freedom if these levels were not yet high before, and to preserve high levels of freedom if these levels were already high before. Alternatively, liberty aspirations could themselves be the product of prior freedom so that they simply reflect the impact of earlier freedom on later freedom. In this case, the apparent effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom would simply be an artifact of freedom's autocorrelation over time.

Which of these alternatives is true can be tested by holding prior freedom constant. Doing so assures two things: one explains subsequent freedom only insofar as it is unaffected by prior freedom, and liberty aspirations explain subsequent freedom only insofar as they are themselves unaffected by prior freedom. To the extent to which the effect of liberty aspirations holds against this control, it can be considered 'Granger-causal'. At the same time, this is an analysis of regime *dynamics* in freedom, for the variation in subsequent freedom that is unexplained by prior freedom measures exactly the *change* in freedom.

What happens when one controls prior freedom? The two partial plots in Figure 3b indicate the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom controlling for prior freedom. Evidently mass liberty aspirations do show a significantly positive effect on subsequent freedom, *even if* we control prior freedom. What does this mean? Societies having more widespread liberty aspirations than their prior level of freedom suggests also reach higher levels in subsequent freedom than their prior level of freedom suggests. Slovenia, Lithuania and Chile exemplify this rule. These societies had much more widespread liberty aspirations than one would expect given their very low initial levels of freedom. These unexpectedly widespread liberty aspiration helped these societies to reach unexpectedly high levels of freedom thereafter. Vice versa, societies having less widespread liberty aspirations than their prior level of freedom suggests, also reach lower levels of subsequent freedom than their prior level of freedom suggests. This is exemplified by Azerbaijan, China, and Pakistan. They have liberty aspirations that are less widespread than expected even taking their very low initial level of freedom into account. This unexpectedly low spread of liberty aspirations helps explain why these societies stagnated at unexpectedly low levels of freedom thereafter. Overall, mass liberty aspirations do have an effect on subsequent freedom – independent of prior freedom. Again, this pattern is even more obvious when we look at resource-tied liberty aspirations. Resource-tied liberty aspirations channel civil and

political freedom so narrowly that the position of the handful of existing outliers appears all the more exceptional, sharpening the overall pattern.¹⁴

The VS-sample covers all existing variation in prior and subsequent levels of freedom. It includes some twenty long-established stable democracies that kept a high level of freedom throughout the whole study period. The sample also includes tottering democracies such as Peru and Venezuela that had a relatively high level of freedom in the start period, but fell down to somewhat lower levels thereafter. Moreover, the sample includes continuously authoritarian countries such as Azerbaijan, Belarus, China and Pakistan. These countries remained on a low level of freedom throughout the study period. Finally, the sample includes some 35 newly emerged democracies and semi-democracies. These countries had been on a very low level of freedom in the start period, but moved up to higher levels of freedom (though to varying degrees). This group is composed mostly of ex-communist countries, but it also includes a number of countries outside the former communist bloc (e.g., Chile, South Africa, Taiwan and South Africa).

Controlling for prior freedom in a sample of such variety makes it unlikely that liberty aspirations show a uniformly positive effect on subsequent freedom. This effect could only show up because liberty aspirations operate in favour of freedom in two different ways at the same time: they help promote progress in freedom where the prior level of freedom is low *and* reduce regress in freedom where the prior level of freedom is high. The alternative interpretation that the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom simply reflects an effect of prior freedom is eliminated by controlling prior freedom.

Sensitivity checks

Figure 3b shows that the percentage of people with liberty aspirations has a causal effect on subsequent freedom insofar as this effect is independent of prior freedom. I conducted various tests to examine the robustness of this effect, all of which are documented in the Internet Appendix.¹⁵ First I looked at sensitivity measures. They all are clearly within tolerable limits, meaning that the effect of liberty aspirations on freedom is not contaminated by heteroskedasticity, collinearity and influential cases. Second, I varied the composition of the sample, first, by excluding twenty established democracies that have been on a very high level of freedom throughout the whole study period and, second, by excluding the 19 countries for which survey data have only been available from the later round of the Values Surveys in 1995–1997. None of these variations in the sample composition affected the direction or significance of the effect of liberty aspirations. Third, I weighted the VS-sample such that its distribution of prior and subsequent freedom is identical to the whole

universe of states. Using these weights in a weighted least squares regression strengthens the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom. Sensitivity checks leave little doubt about the robustness of the effect of liberty aspirations on changing freedom.

Alternative explanatory factors

No one denies that the institutional choices of elites are always the ultimate step in democratization. However, precisely because democratization is eventually managed by elites, there is only one reason why mass liberty aspirations show a robust effect on democratization: they *do* constrain the institutional choices of elites. This insight, however, does not invalidate structural theories of democratization. Adherents of these theories tend to consider mass attitudes as a mere reflection of underlying structural factors. Confronted with the evidence shown above they would probably suspect that the effect of liberty aspirations vanishes if one includes the relevant structural variable. Modernization theorists would see the relevant variable in indicators of economic development, such as per capita GDP. Adherents of rival structural theories would champion the role of the size of the working class (class power theory), an economy's export power (world system theory), low income inequality and little ethnic fractionalization (conflict theories), or the exposure to democratic neighbors (diffusion theories).

Yet does the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom break down under control of any of these structural factors? The regression results in Table 1 give a clear answer. The effect of mass liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom remains unaffected in its direction and significance and only slightly diminished in strength, regardless of which structural factor one includes. And none of the structural factors discussed in the democratization literature show an effect on subsequent freedom as equal in strength and significance as the effect of liberty aspirations.¹⁶ In short, the effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent freedom is in no way absorbed by structural effects. Mass motivations are an autonomous factor in democratization.

Interestingly, liberty aspirations do not figure prominently in the political culture literature. Quite the contrary, the political culture literature emphasizes mass attitudes that are quite distinct from liberty aspirations. Most of these attitudes are deduced from the concepts of civic culture or social capital (see, among others, Putnam 1993; Gibson 2001; Newton 2001; Rose 2001; Mishler & Rose 2001; Norris 2003; Dalton 2004). They include interpersonal trust, outsider tolerance, institutional confidence, membership in associations, protest activity¹⁷ and overt support for democracy. Because the political culture literature neglects liberty aspirations, it is all the more interesting to see

Table 1. The effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent democracy, controlled for structural factors

Predictors	Dependent variable: Product of civil and political freedom, 1999–2004						
Pre-survey level of freedom, 1982–1987	-0.27 (-2.02)	-0.07 (-0.57)	0.22* (1.71)	0.02 (0.16)	-0.11 (-0.83)	-0.01 (-0.01)	-0.10 (-0.50)
% people with liberty aspirations, 1989–1997	0.61*** (5.35)	0.74*** (6.28)	0.60*** (4.81)	0.73*** (6.02)	0.86*** (6.44)	0.53*** (3.89)	0.56*** (4.10)
Gross domestic product/capita, 1995	0.53** (3.61)						0.20 (0.98)
Exports per capita in US\$, c. 1990		0.19* (1.74)					0.03 (0.23)
% workforce in industry, 1990			0.29** (3.24)				0.13 (1.28)
Ethnic fractionalization index, 1990s							
Gini index for income inequality, 1990s				-0.18** (-2.07)			-0.07 (-0.75)
Regional diffusion of freedom, 1999–2004					-0.16* (-1.81)		
Adjusted R ²	0.67	0.66	0.63	0.62	0.64	0.64	0.68
Number of nations	61	59	56	59	43	61	55

Notes: Entries are standardized regression coefficients (beta) with T-ratios in parentheses. See 'Variable List' in the Internet Appendix for specification of variables and data sources. Significance levels: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

how they perform in explaining subsequent freedom when controlling for the attitudes championed in the political culture literature.

As Table 2 demonstrates, under inclusion of liberty aspirations, none of the widely praised civic culture indicators show a pronounced effect on subsequent freedom. Actually, they all become insignificant in the fully inclusive model. The fact that no other attitudinal factor shows a pronounced effect on democracy when liberty aspirations are included is most notable in the case of overt support of democracy. Should not any attitude, including liberty aspirations, operate to the benefit of democracy *because* it increases people's overt support for democracy? The answer is 'no' because overt support for democracy can be expressed for superficial motives that do not reflect an intrinsic support of the values that are inherent to democracy (Inglehart & Welzel 2003). Liberty aspirations, by contrast, reflect intrinsic support: they are not inflated by lip service to the fashionable term 'democracy'. They reflect an intrinsic valuation of the essence of democracy: decision-making freedom.

Attitudinal tendencies in the population are relevant to subsequent freedom insofar – and only insofar – as they are linked with liberty aspirations. Figure 4 illustrates this point, showing that a mass attitude's linkage with freedom is a function of its linkage with liberty aspirations. Apparently, democracy is an institutional reflection of mass emphasis on human freedom. This is a straightforward confirmation of human development theory, which holds that democratization is essentially an emancipative process.

Conclusion

Mass liberty aspirations show a causal effect on subsequent freedom controlling for prior freedom. I found no other factor that shows a stronger effect on democratic freedom than the social radius of liberty aspirations. This finding is in contradiction with several established views in democratization research. First, it disconfirms the axiom of elite-choice approaches that the institutional choices of elites are unconstrained by mass attitudes. Second, the tendency of structural theories to treat mass attitudes as mere reflections of structural factors is disconfirmed. Mass attitudes have an effect on democratization that is independent of structural factors. Third, in its search for the most pro-democratic attitudes, the political culture literature failed to identify the attitude that is most clearly targeted at the essence of democracy: liberty aspirations. Accordingly, none of the indicators praised in the political culture literature affects democracy as strongly as mass liberty aspirations.¹⁸ The finding that mass liberty aspirations have a stronger effect than any other structural or attitudinal factor discussed in the literature underlines the

Table 2. The effect of liberty aspirations on subsequent democracy, controlled for other attitudinal factors

Predictors	Dependent variable: Product of civil and political freedom, 1999–2004						
Pre-survey level of freedom, 1982–1987	-0.02 (-0.12)	0.03 (0.20)	0.08 (0.12)	0.01 (0.08)	-0.04 (-0.35)	0.01 (0.06)	-0.16 (-1.25)
% people with liberty aspirations, 1989–1997	0.74*** (6.40)	0.72*** (5.67)	0.71*** (5.94)	0.77*** (5.55)	0.77*** (5.84)	0.66*** (4.71)	0.52*** (3.76)
% people trusting other people, 1989–1997	0.16* (1.72)						0.12 (1.09)
% people tolerating outsiders, 1989–1997		0.07 (0.64)					0.14 (1.11)
% members in voluntary associations, 1989–1997			-0.09 (-1.06)				-0.09 (-1.05)
Mean confidence in institutions, 1989–1997				0.15* (1.83)			0.14 (1.46)
% supporting democracy, mid-1995–1997					0.19* (1.88)		0.16 (1.53)
% people having protested, 1989–1997						0.25** (2.22)	0.12 (0.32)
Adjusted R ²	0.62	0.59	0.59	0.62	0.63	0.60	0.64
Number of nations	61	61	60	61	60	60	57

Notes: Entries are standardized regression coefficients (beta) with T-ratios in parentheses. Survey data aggregated from earliest available survey of VS II–III. See Internet Appendix under ‘Variable List’ for variable specifications and data sources. Significance levels: * p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01.

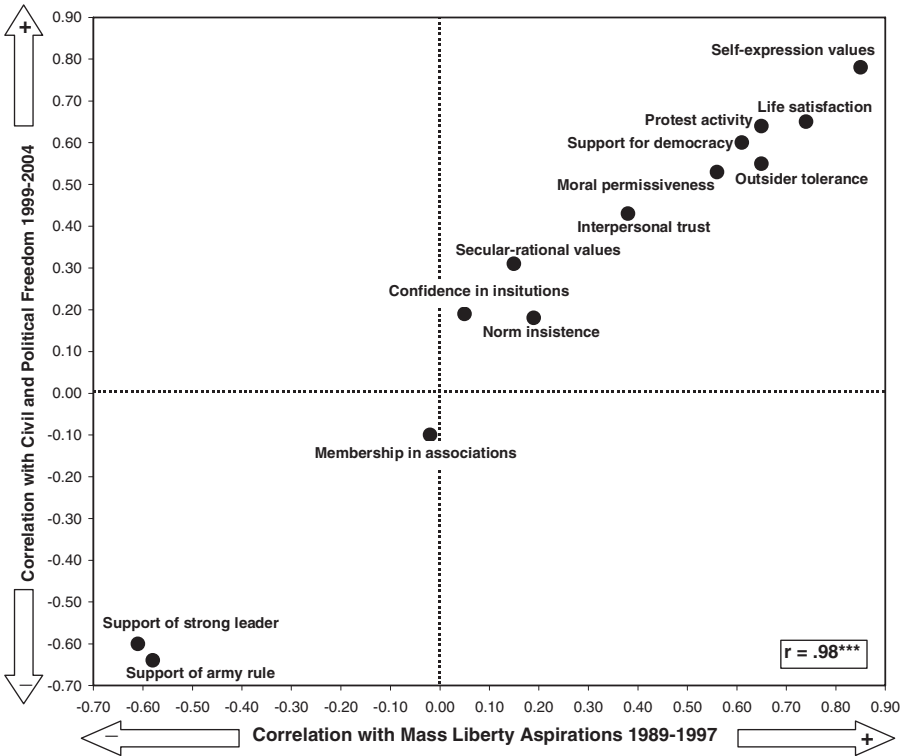


Figure 4. The linkage to democracy as a function of the linkage to liberty aspirations.

adequacy of human development theory. Because of its emphasis on the emancipative nature of democracy, this theory leads one to search for the emancipative motivational forces nourishing social pressures to democratize. Mass liberty aspirations reflect these emancipative forces. People and their attitudes are a significant factor in democratization.

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Notes

1. Note 1 in the Internet Appendix gives more details to these studies. The Internet Appendix is located online at: www.iu-bremen.de/schools/shss/cwelze/07996 (menu:

- 'Appendices'). It includes technical details on data sources, scale constructions and model specifications as well as additional analytical notes.
2. Note 2 in the Internet Appendix outlines why mass liberty aspirations are not an exclusive property of established democracies, but can and do emerge in authoritarian regimes as well.
 3. According to Granger (1969) the effect of an independent variable X on a dependent variable Y can only be considered as causal insofar as the effect holds for controls of prior measures of Y .
 4. For World Values Survey data, questionnaire and codebook, consult the World Values Survey Association's webpage: www.worldvaluessurvey.org. For data provided by the European Values Study Group, see: <http://evs.kub.nl>.
 5. I reversed the polarity of the 1–7 scales for civil and political rights so that larger figures indicate higher levels of freedom. I added the two scales and subtracted the number 2 obtaining a 0–12 overall index for freedom.
 6. To see for which country I took survey data from which round of the Values Surveys, see Note 3 in the Internet Appendix.
 7. For the relationship of these measures to other indices of democracy, see Bollen and Paxton 2000.
 8. See 'Variable List' in the Internet Appendix for more details on these and other variables.
 9. Since two of the three items appear in the same battery, only one of them can obtain top priority. Hence, the possibility that all three items obtain top priority is precluded.
 10. I experimented with percentage scales setting the cutting point at 3 and 4 on the 0–5 index. This did of course change the percentage figures, but it did not affect the effect of liberty aspirations. See Note 4 in the Internet Appendix.
 11. For the Human Development Index, see 'Variable List' in the Internet Appendix.
 12. Note 5 in the Internet Appendix outlines why liberty aspirations are not a postmaterialistic phenomenon.
 13. On the part of the democracy measures, the linkage between mass attitudes and democracy is most strongly represented by the product of civil and political freedom, indicated by an average correlation of $r = 0.69$ with all five attitudinal measures. The respective correlations being 0.65 for the sum of civil and political freedom, 0.63 for electoral democracy and 0.55 for constitutional democracy.
 14. See Note 6 in the Internet Appendix for an explanation of the outliers India, Portugal and Taiwan, on the one hand, and Belarus and Russia, on the other.
 15. See Note 7 in the Internet Appendix for sensitivity checks.
 16. The same pattern applies using resource-weighted percentages instead of raw percentages.
 17. Membership in associations and protest activity are not attitudes, but behavior. However, behavior involves an attitudinal affinity. Reported behavior in particular measures an attitudinal affinity.
 18. See Note 8 in the Internet Appendix on the role of international factors.

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