

Testing the Transmission Belt

Do Internal Associational Institutions Affect
National Political Attitudes and Behaviors in the United States?

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Abstract

Democratic theorists are debating the degree to which the “congruence” of associational institutions with national democratic institutions can and should act as a support (or “transmission belt,” in Nancy Rosenblum’s words) for national democracy, by training and socializing citizens in democratic character. After considering these theories and previous research, this project examines the relationships between specific organizational institutions (elections, formal membership, parliamentary procedure, and so on) on members’ attitudes of “diffuse support” (efficacy, congressional approval, satisfaction with democracy, etc.) and participation (voter turnout and campaign engagement). The 1996 National Election Study affords a unique opportunity to combine a deep field of political variables with the characteristics of a set of voluntary associations mentioned by respondents. I describe how institutional data on authority structures in sixty-seven large associations are imputed to NES respondents who mentioned them in the new content of the NES 1996 Auxiliary File on Group Memberships. A factor-analytic measurement model provides latent constructs of organizational democracy, membership constitutionality and organizational success. My initial findings are mostly negative; while there is ample institutional variation among the large associations, there is no transmission belt evident; organizational democracy and membership constitutionality do not appear to be associated with increased diffuse support or political participation.

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Do Associational Institutions Contribute to Democratic Socialization?

Little League Democracy Is No Small Potatoes

The Little League youth baseball organization is a profoundly democratic voluntary association, in which local adult league members elect league presidents, who in turn elect district administrators, who in turn elect regional representatives to the international Board of Directors. The Little League trumpets its democratic form of organization on its web site: “This democratic process is designed to provide both enthusiastic participation and equitable representation from the local to the global level in the administration of the Little League program.” (Little League 2002) Of 1,534 respondents to the post-election 1996 American National Election Study (Rosenstone et al. 1998), 42 (2.7%) mentioned involvement with Little League baseball.¹ In comparison, just 45 (2.9%) mentioned any involvement with either major political party’s organs. The Little League’s philosophy of governance has a non-negligible opportunity to influence the public’s attitudes toward democratic practice.

The Little League allegedly contrasts markedly with the modal form of organization among large voluntary associations in the United States, which have shifted away from a political base in grass-roots membership and toward the professionalized model encouraged by Washington-centric advocacy dependent on mail-order donations (Skocpol 1999) and the regulatory demands of the 501(c)(3) tax code (Hall 1992, 91). Meanwhile, grass-roots participation in voluntary associations as a proportion of the population has apparently

¹Of course, some respondents may have been referring to other organizations with a similar function, much as one says “Xerox” when one means “photocopy” or “Kleenex” when one means “facial tissue.” This form of communication error is a challenge to the accuracy of any project that will mention specific organizations; much work is needed to find a time-efficient way of ensuring we know exactly which organization a respondent belongs to.

dropped precipitously (Putnam 1995; Putnam 2000), particularly in the largest associations (Skocpol 1999).

The Little League's stated aims, along with the broad institutional diversity of American voluntary associations, raise a very practical question: do citizens involved with differing forms of associational governance differ significantly in their political attitudes and behavior in the governmental sphere? Can some associations, by their institutional form alone, acculturate members who are relatively more sophisticated in their approach to politics, more efficacious in their perception of self and government, and more supportive of democratic forms of government?

This project has a single major theoretical goal: to integrate the insights of literature on constitutional design and democratic institutions with the increasing recognition of the political salience of civil society and voluntary associations. We want to know how much participation in civic associations contributes to the formation of capable, supportive, trusting, satisfied and participatory citizens. Does it matter whether the associations themselves are formally participatory and democratic – can associational “schools of democracy” teach a subject they do not themselves practice?

Overview of Theory and Methods

The “logic of congruence” is a basic hypothesis proposed in various guises by scholars including Niccolò Machiavelli, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, Harry Eckstein, John Rawls, Michael Walzer and Robert Putnam. The “weak” version of congruence theory considered here posits that citizens' familiarity with democratic institutional practices, writ small in associations, is a small but measurable support to – rather than a prerequisite for – their legitimacy as rules for governing the national state.

One reason for perennial social-scientific interest in state-society congruence is optimism for the discovery of real, practical policy levers we can pull to address the problem of democratic stability, as Nancy Rosenblum observes with countervailing skepticism (1998, 37). Reforming government can seem an impossibly tall order, but reforming associations seems almost workable, in spite of recent trends toward board-managed, top-down corporate leadership style (Hall 1982, 91). There may be renewed interest in workplace democracy (Cloke and Goldsmith 2002), and associations might certainly follow in the wake of corporations and find some new glory in grass roots. This project makes a modest attempt to contribute to this discussion by gathering data about specific large associations' institutional designs and imputing this contextual information to the 1996 American National Election Study respondents who mentioned those organizations.² The additional data on associations was gathered through an Internet questionnaire of associational leadership.

Rosenblum's and other critiques notwithstanding, my expectations going into the project are in favor of a version of the "logic of congruence"; after all, it is as logical as the mathematics of political economy. If constitutionally democratic institutions can address governmental problems of decision economics (Buchanan and Tullock 1962) and foster social trust through contractual enforcement (Levi 1998), then democratic institutions in associations should logically be able to do the same on a smaller scale. Indeed, some associations, like the Little League, explicitly claim to do so as part of their public recruiting, fundraising and lobbying materials. As discussed below, the transfer of experience from one context is far from automatic – as Rosenblum notes, it is our ability to distinguish contexts that makes culture

²The names of the organizations mentioned are not made public by the NES for confidentiality purposes and are available, in a scrambled form, only by contractual agreement with the NES. Confidentiality issues place a number of regrettable but unavoidable limits on the replicability and publishing of the data underlying this analysis. However, the resulting public data set available on the NES web site as the 1996 Auxiliary File on Group Membership; please see <http://www.umich.edu/~nes/studies/download/nesdatacenter.htm>.

possible (1998, 49)—yet it is eminently possible; it is a relatively simple matter of developing a “mental model” (North 1990) of how democracy works and applying it to various situations where collective debate, decision and action are necessary.

Mark E. Warren’s excellent theoretical essay “What is Political?” correctly asserts the presence of the political throughout civil society, not just in government (Warren 1999). When we are describing democratic self-government, we should not be surprised to find politically-relevant institutions and beliefs in associational contexts. As Warren shows, we may expect that democratic institutions in associations can convert “suppressed” political conflict into political efficacy, controlled conflict and sometimes new consensus, just as they can in governments. Warren’s views dovetail with David Easton’s (1965) conception of the social extensiveness of political systems. In addition to consideration of social or generalized trust, I adopt an implementation of Easton’s terms of diffuse support for the political system as outputs of interest; these include government support (which I argue is essentially the same concept as *external* political efficacy and trust in government), regime support (satisfaction with democracy and elections), and “self-support” (*internal* political efficacy or perceived self-empowerment). For efficiency’s sake, I employ a confirmatory factor-analytic measurement model for these concepts which was introduced in Carlson (1999).

In treating diffuse support as a dependent variable, I am not thereby advancing a utopian vision of democratic citizenship. As many scholars have been at pains to point out (e.g., Hardin 1999), “trust” in government may indeed be badly misplaced, and even support for the regime might be objectively foolish. We should not expect or wish for experiences of associational democracy to inspire ecstatic transports of political enthusiasm for the democratic state. James Madison’s grudging satisfaction with barely controlled factionalism is more to the point. But we have ample evidence that many present-day Americans are not much committed to the

damage-control philosophy that underlies liberal democratic institutions, preferring instead a “stealth democracy” (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), a government that expresses preexisting consensus in a quiet, sanitary fashion. Their discontent with government may be an artifact of misplaced expectations rather than an informed judgment of the regime’s worth. The political ideals of a sizeable proportion of Americans would give pride to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that infamous proto-totalitarian with his facile and dangerous concept of the “general will.” Rousseau’s unwitting disciples cannot be expected to be much satisfied with real-world democracy. I hypothesize, therefore, that citizens with more exposure to democratic associational practices, like those with higher levels of education, are more likely to converge on measurably higher levels of various measures of diffuse support and of political participation. Once discontents derived from partisanship and issue positions are controlled for, convergence above the social mean is a reasonable expectation. Despite their misgivings, actors should benefit from the reduction of uncertainty about how well democratic processes work to control and legitimize authority, on the proverbial principle of “the devil you know is preferable to the devil you do not.” Associational democracy may also build affective tolerance for or even comfort with the boredom of following procedure and witnessing the occasional ugliness of democratic political conflict.

Overview of Findings

At the level of associations responding to the leadership questionnaire distributed in 2002, I find no support for the assumption that organizational function (such as labor, professional and religious) predicts form or that organizations are converging on a particular model; among sixty-seven associations responding, there is wide within-category variation on three latent dimensions: organizational democracy, membership constitutionality and organizational success. Findings of interest at this level demonstrate that organizations with higher degrees of

formally democratic structure are slightly older on average and display wide variation in success as perceived by leaders. The few least democratic organizations report very high levels of organizational success, which might reflect a greater ability for autocratic designs to converge on success. Alternatively, it may indicate that hierarchical designs are somewhat more likely to die out entirely when crisis strikes.

At the level of 1996 National Election Study respondents, the logic of congruence finds little or no ready empirical support. Once basic demographic and political characteristics are accounted for, respondents' exposure to the more democratic and constitutional large associations does not exhibit significant statistical relationships to satisfaction with democracy, trust in government, internal efficacy, reported voter turnout and campaigning. Findings show that the number of associations mentioned by respondents is routinely a significant "predictor" of diffuse support, but a variety of measures of the nature of the association do not improve on the raw count, including indicators of membership, of recent participation, and of specific and indexed institutional forms. The logic of congruence does not receive much support from the empirical portion of this study, though my theoretical expectations remain unsatisfied; the problem may be with the theory or with the measurement approach.

Normative and Positive Theory and the Logic of Congruence

The Transmission Belt Problem

In her tightly-reasoned, critical opus *Membership and Morals*, Nancy Rosenblum decries the tendency to adopt a simplistic "transmission belt" model of civil society, which says that the beneficial formative effects of association spill over from one sphere to another. As if we can infer enduring traits from behavior in a particular setting. As if moral dispositions shaped in one context, public or private, are transferable to dissimilar ones. The "transmission belt" model is simplistic as a general dynamic. It is one thing to say that within face-to-face rotating credit associations "social networks allow trust to become transitive and spread: I trust you, because I trust her and she assures me that she trusts you," (quoting from Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993, 157-158) and quite another thing to show that habits of trust cultivated in one social sphere are exhibited in incongruent groups in separate spheres.

The propensity to assume a “transmission belt” or spillover doubtless reflects the optimistic thought that if we get one set of formative associations “right,” whether by promoting congruence [with the liberal-democratic institutions of government] or the proliferation of key mediating groups, the beneficial effects are multiplied. (Rosenblum 1998, 48)

Rosenblum’s chief targets are the purveyors of the “logic of congruence,” who:

[think] it imperative that the internal life and organization of associations mirror liberal democratic principles and practices. A standard social science thesis views congruence between public institutions and private associations as a key to political stability; recast by political theorists, congruence appears as the key to moral education. (36)

The social scientists among these purveyors include the political sociologists critiqued – one could say publicly spanked – by Brian Barry’s classic *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (1978): Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963), Harry Eckstein (1966), and Seymour Martin Lipset (1960; 1963). Eckstein was the leading proponent of congruence theory; speaking of Eckstein’s book, Barry connects the dots back to John Stuart Mill’s *Political Economy*:

the ‘congruence’ theory rests on the notion that a form of government is legitimised by familiarity with it in other spheres. It is thus closely related to the ‘moral education’ conception of democratic politics held by J. S. Mill, who indeed wrote in the *Political Economy* that ‘. . . a democratic constitution, not supported by democratic institutions in detail, but confined to the central government, not only is not political freedom, but often creates a spirit precisely the reverse’ (Barry 1978, 59; quoting from Mill 1963 [1848], 444)

We can trace the basic logic much further back than Mill, of course. To the ancients I cannot yet speak, but the logic of congruence probably owes some homage to Machiavelli’s civic republicanism and the law-culture congruence found in his claim that “. . . as good customs have need of laws for maintaining them, so the laws, to be observed, have need of good customs.” (Machiavelli 1517(?), Chap. XVIII) And John Locke’s battle with the absolutist Robert Filmer was fought partly on the territory of family-state congruence. Filmer held that fathers had a natural right to absolute sovereignty over their families and that kings were to nations as fathers were to families. Locke did not challenge the family-state congruence-by-analogy claim so much as he refuted Filmer’s account of patriarchal authority over the family (Locke 1690, Chap. VII); for Locke, individuals are born as free with respect to the family as they are to the state, and congruence is a matter of the universality of natural law.

Barry dispatched the 1960's political sociologists with a cannonade of research design complaints, including the lack of experimental controls and comparative cases, lack of time-series data, poor conceptualization of "values" and "institutions," and tautological causal models – which came first, the democracy or the democratic values? Rosenblum's critique is dense, robust, thoughtful, nuanced, and essentially irrefutable for its carefulness; Barry's was merciless and succeeds on the merits of its targets' many weaknesses. As for Barry, I cannot banish some of his sharper methodological ripostes here, since robustly conceptualized time-series data on the influence of associational institutions is still not available, to my knowledge. Nevertheless, Eckstein's and Mill's central claim for congruence retains some important merits, and more and better empirical research is yet needed to address it. The essential idea of state-society institutional congruence will not die; speaking of the recent resurgence of interest in "vertical and hierarchical" versus "horizontal and voluntary" associations sparked by Robert Putnam's work, Mark Warren (2001, 31) writes, "for pluralists influenced by Tocqueville, the internal structure of an association is the key to its effects."

In recognition of the problems Rosenblum identifies, I propose a "weak" version of congruence theory, which suggests only that citizens who are exposed to democratically governed associations will be measurably better disposed to support democratic government. This version, instead of asking "how much non-democratic association can a liberal state tolerate?" asks instead, "does formal society-state congruence produce detectable changes in diffuse support for a democratic regime and participation in its institutions?" On one hand, it does seem implausible to expect democracy to work in a society almost completely dominated by a hierarchical, autocratic "organizational repertoire" (Clemens 1999). On the other, Rosenblum is right: democratic government does not require "democracy across the curriculum," if you will, such that citizens dissent, debate, campaign, legislate and vote on

everything everywhere. We are surely fools if we think citizens simply cannot differentiate political contexts and alter their behavior from one context to another. Catholics do not necessarily expect government to be organized as the Church is, business executives don't necessarily expect the town hall to respond to commands the way their employees do, children do not often believe all politicians are like their parents, and so on. Of course, some few of each of the above *do* have such expectations, but the exceptions prove the rule. We are greater fools still if we believe that coercive state intervention should or even can mandate real substantive congruence. Rosenblum demonstrates this with extensive, persuasive analysis of legal theory, especially the 1984 *Roberts v. Jaycees* decision forcing the Jaycees to accept female members. Congruence as a state policy for forcible moral education and social organization is deeply troublesome and exposes painful contradictions in liberal democratic theory and practice. But it remains probable that citizens who have at least *some* non-governmental experiences of democratic practice are better suited to act as citizens of a democracy.

Michael Walzer's 1991 essay "The Idea of Civil Society" advances a view of state-society congruence. Walzer says: "Only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society; only a democratic society can sustain a democratic state. The civility that makes democratic politics possible can only be learned in the associational networks; the roughly equal and widely dispersed capabilities that sustain the networks have to be fostered by the democratic state." (Walzer 1991, 302) This specific contention is quoted by Rosenblum (1998, 37) as an example of the strong logic of congruence she is criticizing; but Walzer qualifies his stance a little later with the admission that "[associations] needn't all be democratic, for we are likely to be members of many associations, and we will want some of them to be managed in our interests, but also in our absence. Civil society is sufficiently democratic when in some, at least, of its parts we are able to recognize ourselves as authoritative and responsible participants." (1991, 302)

Following Walzer's lead, I attempt to duck Rosenblum's critique by addressing congruence and the "transmission belt" problem with a less ideological, more pragmatic normative agenda, as well as with supporting empirical research. I agree in principle with some of the premises of advocates of legally enforced congruence. However, I seek consistency with my subject matter by focusing on *voluntary* changes in civil society and the political system as entities that extend beyond government *per se*. Rather than lobbying political actors to legislate democratic standards for civic organizations, I aspire to persuade fellow citizens, especially association members and leaders, of the desirability, reasonability and practicability of extending liberal-democratic theory into the broader associational realm *in appropriate fashion*. Where strong congruence advocates may believe that *every* social form empirically impacts attitudes toward democratic government and should be conformed to democratic practice, I settle for the claim that at least *some* social forms affect attitudes toward democratic government. Further, constituents of most associations should probably consider adopting at least *some* tailored democratic practices for reasons of the internal political economy of information. No simple transmission belt exists; but the transmission metaphor is probably appropriate after all, since transmissions are often very complex contraptions requiring careful examination by observers. I seek to identify connections between association membership and governmental citizenship which are in fact working transmission belts for civic education and democratic attitudes (or at least diffuse support for democratic government). Further, the focus of this investigation is on democratic institutions, the procedures and practices that enable politics (Warren 1999), rather than a more comprehensive vision of liberal congruence that anathematizes all hierarchy, discrimination and exclusion and produces problematic court decisions like *Roberts v. Jaycees*.

Three Logics of Congruence

While *Membership and Morals* primarily focuses on normative and legal arguments against coercive congruence, an earlier treatment (Rosenblum 1994, 76ff) is more explicitly directed at empirical evidence, and identifies three versions of the logic of congruence, which Rosenblum also calls “constitutive democratic theory,” reflecting congruence advocates’ belief that society “constitutes” democratic character. The first version of the logic emphasizes “authority structures,” essentially political institutions within families, businesses and associations. The second emphasizes emotive “mutual concern,” “empathy” and “nurturing,” and the third focuses on social identity and political representation of social pluralism. But Rosenblum’s analysis itself implies that the second and third logics ultimately depend on the first; authority structures are the meat of congruence theories, and the rest is gravy. Empathy and shared identity are simply not meaningful as tools for creating democratic character in the absence of institutional democratic practice in the associations that are supposed to foster them.

Concerning authority structure congruence, Rosenblum regards the literature on family, educational and workplace congruence to have failed to produce any convincing empirical evidence that democratizing homes, schools and businesses has any implications for public morality, “democratic character” and support for democratic government. She notes that literature on associations has not in her experience pursued the same kind of authority-structure-related research:

The authority structure of associations has even less demonstrable connection to aspects of democratic character besides a sense of political efficacy. The more democratic character is thought to turn on having interests and connections beyond oneself, and the more political community is thought to entail “a relationship of heightened mutual vulnerability and responsibility toward each other” (Unger 1986, 36), the more it is attributed to social settings that nurture identification with others and the common interest. (Rosenblum 1994, 83)

Thus the second version of congruence focuses on associations and, instead of formal structure, upholds informal, emotive experiences that produce “mutual connection and care,” with “an

emphasis on affective ties and identification with the well-being of others.” (1994, 83) This second logic echoes the old romanticism of Adam Ferguson’s belief that the “bosom kindles in company” (Ferguson 1782; referenced by Seligman 1997, 31), Tocqueville’s contention that “hearts are enlarged” by associations (Tocqueville 2000 [1835-40], 515), and the sometimes naïve functionalism of Durkheim’s famous “organic solidarity.” (Durkheim 1997 [1893])

The idea of proximity-induced sympathy is picked up by contemporary feminist theory; Rosenblum remarks:

The main theme to emerge from this literature is that a catalogue of traits associated with mothering—a generalized sense of obligation, empathic understanding, nurturing and care—captures the ideal of democratic citizenship and assigns political community its purpose: recognizing the needs and nurturing the self-development of all citizens.”(1994, 83)

. . . On this logic of congruence, a political community of common interest and care is possible only if the maternal stance permeates the entire fabric of social life. By multiplying associations based on affective connection and caring, the politics of conflicting interest is transformed “through institutions that create empathy between the parties and inculcate a common allegiance to common principles.” (Rosenblum 1994, 85; quotation is from Mansbridge 1993, 42)

The quotation from Jane Mansbridge reveals some overlap within Rosenblum’s tripartite typology of logics of congruence; her critique of the vaguely squishy moral value of generic “empathy” or fellow-feeling within associations is incisive, but Mansbridge’s “common allegiance to common principles” might be of a different order entirely, better treated as a reference to authority structures than as emotional affect toward others. As Rosenblum points out, the emotive content of empathy can promote “false unity” which is “no version of democratic community, after all, but fear of deviance and disagreement.” (1994, 85)

Organizations and communities that build cultures of empathy but do not provide structural avenues for conflict resolution can shift from a consensual paradise to an Orwellian hell in a blink. This is a key weakness of the romanticized view of human nature shared by Ferguson, Tocqueville, Durkheim and their cohort, who too often forget to remind their readers of the presumptively benign institutional environment in which “being together” takes place.

Mansbridge's feminism, along with the twentieth-century "contact hypothesis" originating in studies of race relations (Allport 1954; for a very recent treatment, see Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi 2002) improve on the old romanticism by specifying institutional conditions under which the expected interpersonal empathy will emerge; Allport set four conditions for the contact hypothesis, which expects increasing acquaintance to overwhelm racial prejudice: 1) general equality of status; 2) common goals; 3) intergroup cooperation and 4) the support of authorities. In effect, some of the most persuasive arguments for the second form of congruence depend, implicitly or explicitly, on the authority structure specified by the first form of congruence. It is indeed hard to imagine how maternal nurturing can truly be institutionalized. But beside "creating empathy," Mansbridge's reference to institutionalized "common allegiance to common principles" suggests that if disagreement is accepted and structured in a democratic fashion, association members may be socialized to respond *as if* they cared for each other's autonomy and self-respect, whether or not any real empathy exists.

Rahn, Brehm and Carlson (1999), at first glance, appear to have embraced the second version of the logic, although the causal "transmission belt" arrow runs from state to society in our model. We described elections as Durkheim's pseudo-religious "rituals of solidarity," "representative rites" that "activate the important beliefs of the collective" (1999, 127). We found that the 1996 electoral "rites" appeared to stimulate generalized social trust and trust in government. However, our approach focused on social capital production, not the creation of empathy. Critics of social capital continue to perceive romanticism in the concept, even though the major proponents of social capital (e.g. Coleman 1990; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993) do not posit the creation of empathy. Social capital involves no appeal to sentiment; understood correctly, it represents structural traits of social networks that facilitate the diffusion of mutual *obligations* (not sentiments) and individual perceptions of shared community *interests*. These

perceptions may be affected by emotive phenomena, but the connection is not necessary to social capital theories. It is plausible that the first two logics of congruence are causally related, as the increased salience of democratic procedures inspires some “fellow-feeling,” perhaps by providing evidence that citizens all have at least some commitments in common. But any emotional-affect version of congruence ultimately cannot be separated from the institutional context in which affect is developed; the key finding of our paper is that elections are an institutional engine that creates social capital. This finding in turn inspires this current project: if a national election can stimulate trust and efficacy, it stands to reason that the same “ritual” in an associational context may not only stimulate trust internal to the association, but its abstract similarity to the analogous national electoral ritual may strengthen citizens’ support for democracy and trust for fellow citizens.

The third and final logic of congruence described by Rosenblum is one of fostering stronger group identity through associations, as a means to creating pluralism and underwriting the democratic social contract, with its commitment to permit differences of opinion and respect the political equality of the less powerful. The primary focus of the essay shifts from the function of civil society to the function of the state. “Constitutive democratic theories based on the identity group approach to congruence share a common institutional feature: a prescription for guaranteed representation, group rights, or deliberative processes both in government and throughout a wide range of social institutions.” (Rosenblum 1994) In other words, the third logic is similar to one of consociationalism, corporatism, or “pillarization,” where certain oppressed or structurally disadvantaged groups (racial or religious minorities, the poor, labor unions, and so on) are granted formal representation *qua* groups in the state. Some examples of consociational or corporatist states have occurred in Austria, France and the Netherlands, as well as Brazil and Argentina. At the extreme, advocates

of this logic desire not congruence but the wholesale merger of state and society. Rosenblum points out that the problem of defining which groups do and do not deserve corporate representation is in tension with the theory itself, since “the logic of congruence pushes in the direction of inclusiveness” (1994, 89); institutionally empowering the weak is intended to reduce the need for “political domination,” not increase it, thus placing a premium on voluntary identification with identity groups.

The more democratic theory focuses on the self-organization of groups, the more it draws attention to the dynamics of elective affinity, self-chosen social identity, and voluntary associations. Constitutive democratic theory is pushed to acknowledge an almost unlimited array of strong affiliations. (1994, 90)

Once again, Rosenblum’s analysis implicitly points back to associational institutions and authority structure as the root of any logic of congruence. If identity politics are to be supportive of democratic government, they have to be based in associational institutions that permit both self-selection and strong identity.

Without careful attention to the extent to which members themselves control the group’s self-definition—and at the limit their ability to split off and form new groups in the event of intractable divisions about what elements of group culture or needs they are defining—this approach to congruence is fatally weakened. (1994, 92)

Thus the identity and authority structure versions of congruence are not separate logics; they are interleaved. To be congruent with a democratic state with some variety of the social contract philosophy at its root, associations must exhibit some organizational analog to democracy. If members cannot control their own public identification, the identity is not likely to be a source of efficacy and other attributes of democratic character. I argue further that, to be congruent with a democratic state in generating meaningful political identities, associations must exhibit some analog to citizenship: that is, membership, which defines the terms of the individual’s identification with the group. Associations with formal membership systems should provide a stronger basis for internally participatory organizations than associations

with informal or undefined membership systems, and should strengthen the legitimacy of decisions that are made by members.

G. K. Chesterton, in a spirit both of hilarious ridicule and of grudging approval, described the United States as “the only nation in the world that is founded on creed” (Chesterton 1922), meaning that American citizenship is ultimately defined by allegiance to principles, not strictly by birth. Just as citizenship delimits the scope of rights and duties in the governmental sphere to those who (perhaps implicitly) assent to the moral legitimacy of the nation, so membership standards and associational “creeds” can define an association’s non-negotiable “unconditionalities” (Seligman 1997) and create legitimate space for healthy internal debate and democratic decision-making. For example, a religious group that finds internal debate about a particular doctrine to be intolerable can make internal democracy feasible by restricting membership to those who commit themselves *a priori* to accept that doctrine and suffer expulsion if they come to deny it. Thus my institutionalist approach to congruence endorses the permissive, nuanced pluralism advocated by Rosenblum and also by Warren; there is room for exclusiveness and even for traditional hierarchy alongside internally democratic forms, as long as constitutional provisions clarify the scope of democratic practice.

Ultimately, the three logics of congruence boil down to one, having to do with authority structure. The institutionalization of a democratically-congruent associational authority structure serves multiple functions: it facilitates understanding of analogous institutions in government and elsewhere; it is necessary, if not sufficient, to the regular production of empathy for one’s fellow member or fellow citizen; and it legitimates the concomitant institutionalization of strong group identity through a membership system.

The Case for the Transmission Belt

As Rosenblum argues, nondemocratic, hierarchical and discriminatory associations may certainly perform indispensable social functions and should not be hounded into formal “isomorphic” conformity with the governmental sector of the political system. But the complexity of human experience she describes, such as our ability to “differentiate among contexts” and “discriminate among associations” as a “discipline of culture” (Rosenblum 1998, 49), is symptomatic of the very same human cognitive capacity that allows us to abstract the parallels between associational governance and public government, from one political system to another, and to “transmit” information, skills and habits from one sphere to another. Democratic learning or socialization cannot take place where democracy is not practiced, and therefore we can expect to find evidence of such learning only where association members experience or witness democratic practice.

Eckstein’s and Mill’s case for the basic fungibility of democratic learning is reasonable. Parliamentary procedure, elections, representation, subsidiary jurisdictions and other common liberal-democratic forms are part of a basic “organizational repertoire” (Clemens 1993) or “mental model” (North 1990) citizens can reference in new contexts. Citizens who have witnessed or participated in these forms are more likely to acquire the vocabulary, to understand the purpose of particular rules, to have realistic expectations about outcomes, and to routinize the lowest-common-denominator forms of deference to others and role-based “institutionalized trust” (Seligman 1997) for other actors that are basic features of a democratic culture.

Belief in the efficacy of various kinds of society-government transmission belts is a perennial feature of American politics. The early leaders of the United States made innumerable comments about the basis of “popular government” in a morally- or religiously-educated, civic

citizenry (Dawson 2001). Tocqueville, as has recently been emphasized by many scholars, famously posited a transmission of civic skills and values from political groups to the rest of civil society, naming “political associations as great free schools to which all citizens come to be taught the general theory of association.” (Tocqueville 2000 [1835-40], 522). Congress itself is formally committed to the idea: Title 36 of the U.S. Code grants largely symbolic federal charters to ninety-eight organizations, mostly related to military or public service. Several of these charters cite purposes to form patriotism, moral character and discretion to make better citizens (Congress 2003).

Whenever and wherever high stakes decisions are made, democratic theory has logical validity that does not depend on the scale or the purpose or subsidiary character of the governed population. One need not have a knack for formal theory – and I for one do not – to appreciate the logic of the findings of institutionalist economists. As Buchanan and Tullock showed (1962), there is no one decision rule appropriate to all decisions; the cost to a constituent of being excluded from the decision-making body may swamp the costs of being involved in making the decision. It stands to reason that any large association of human beings occasionally faces circumstances in which the use of a democratic decision rule is appropriate or even imperative, along with the requisite skills and habits of mind appropriate to democratic decision-making. Constitutions are the means by which such associations, governmental or not, determine which decision rule is to be employed under what circumstances; an organization which *never* employs democratic means is both restricted in its capabilities for handling conflict and does not much develop in its members the skills and habits connected with governmental democratic institutions.

Empirical Studies of Variations in Associational Institutional Design

Data-Driven Studies

A number of scholars have addressed the issue of associational variations from both theoretical and empirical directions, and there is wide agreement on the necessity to distinguish one association from another when evaluating their effects, rather than treating all memberships as the same. Nevertheless, a great deal of present theory and data-driven research continues simply to count memberships or group associations by associational type (labor, sports, veterans, and so on). Much has been done, yet there is much to do if we are to begin to understand the linkages between the various institutions of self-government – for meaningful political institutions are found not only in the organs of the state, but in the organizations and movements that make up the whole of civil society. The central problem is finding a measurement strategy that can capture complex institutional configurations across a wide variety of associations. This project takes a stab at the problem, with apparently limited success.

Putnam's focus on drawing distinctions between horizontally- and vertically-structured networks (1993, 173) and between social capital that is "bridging" – outward-looking and contextually fungible – or "bonding" – inward, exclusive and contextually non-transferable – (Putnam 2000, 22ff) have inspired significant discussion, debate, and sometimes undeserved derision. To my knowledge, only a few have endeavored to operationalize them in terms of characterizing specific organizations in a large-scale study. Dietlind Stolle's work (1998; 2000; Stolle and Rochon 2001) is among the most relevant. Stolle (1998) addresses attributes of specific organizations such as internal diversity and average level of engagement, with impressive and useful results; contextual diversity, engagement and "weak ties" produce greater generalized trust in members. Her data was collected from members in attendance at

meetings for selected associations and explicitly does not include evaluation of the authority structure of the organizations because the organizations she selected differ very little in structure (1998, 502). Being concerned primarily with social capital, Stolle addresses generalized trust, but not efficacy or democratic satisfaction as outcome variables.

Indeed, most of the extant research concerns the production of generalized trust. Stolle and Rochon (2001) differentiate the effects of various types of associations in Sweden, Germany and the U.S., but do not have data on specific organizations or movements; they also find that associational diversity produces generalized trust. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) speculate about the effects of institutional differences, but do not have specific data on associational institutions. They muse that African-American churches “have special potential for stimulating political participation” because “internal structure nurtures opportunities to exercise politically relevant skills.” (383) But there is no specific data on those internal structures in their analysis; the presence of the structures is apparently inferred from the authors’ anecdotal experience and observation and from the values of the outcome variables themselves.³ Uslaner (2002) uses, among other sources, the same 1996 American National Election Studies data I employ here, but uses the available associational type categories only. Uslaner finds that no associational type produces any measurable effects on generalized trust in a reciprocal analysis, except for church groups, which he finds *reduce* trust (Uslaner 2002, 134). His conclusion is that civic engagement has no presumptive relationship with generalized

³Unfortunately, I have no data specifically on predominantly African-American church polities either, despite determined efforts to locate informants and persuade them to respond. But my data does permit comparison of fifteen denominations, some of which are ethnically diverse.

trust.⁴ While I focus on “diffuse support” rather than generalized trust below, I have not found that associational structure affects survey responses intended to measure generalized trust.

The research that first interested me in this topic (Brehm and Rahn 1997; Rahn, Brehm, and Carlson 1999) used confirmatory factor analysis to reveal different loadings of associational types (labor, sports, veterans, and so on) on a latent construct called “civic engagement,” but left us to speculate on what institutional effects, if any, might underlie the loadings. For example, did labor unions and veterans associations load weakly on civic engagement primarily because they are relatively compulsory associations, as we suggested then? (Veterans associations are voluntary, but many veterans were drafted into the status that makes them eligible for those associations.) Or do labor unions and veterans groups have some other characteristic that sets them apart? We need data on specific organizations, not just classes of them, to address these issues.⁵

In a reciprocal structural-equations model of General Social Survey data, Brehm and Rahn (1997) also found (and overlooked in discussion) an aberrant coefficient in an otherwise virtuous cycle between civic engagement (associational memberships in the sixteen GSS categories), interpersonal trust, and confidence in institutions (the executive, legislative and

⁴I have reproduced Uslander’s three-stage least squares analysis of the 1996 NES data per his description in page 132 note 4 and Table 5.4. I am unable to replicate his result, despite taking great care in checking and rechecking the variables. Unlike him, I find strong reciprocal relationships between trust and involvement in several of the associational types he isolates (cultural, business, ethnic, children’s and church groups). Given the very great complexity of the 1996 dataset, I would hazard a guess that one of us has miscoded some key variables; further, given the sheer number of complex datasets Uslander covers quickly in a few pages and my own years of meticulous data handling with this single dataset, I humbly submit that Uslander is more likely to be in error. There are a great number of variables in the 1996 codebook that are not complete without complex recoding, combining with other variables and correctly handling missing data.

⁵The usual associational categories are somewhat arbitrary, as was revealed by the degree to which multiple NES 1996 respondents mentioned one organization in several different categories. Some of the categories may be more useful as memory prompts for respondents than as analytical tools. The categories are not consistently of the same class; for example, religious affiliation, member age and charitable purposes are orthogonal dimensions; a single organization might suit all three categories. Is the Salvation Army a charitable service to the needy, a church, or a church-affiliated organization? Is the National Education Association a professional society or a labor union?

judicial branches of the federal government). The three endogenous variables were found to be mutually reinforcing to various degrees, except where civic engagement was *negatively* associated with confidence in institutions. The finding raises questions about the logic congruence; if the coefficient is not an artifact of the complexity of the model, associations may be teaching something other than democracy and thus undermining confidence, or associational involvement may alert members to failings of federal institutions. Unfortunately, the 1996 NES examined here does not include the specific questions about Congress, the Presidency and the Supreme Court found in the GSS, so comparisons must be indirect.

When it comes to measurement, Marc Hooghe (2003) has recently published a very persuasive study using Belgian data that shows that the raft of non-findings on the effects of associations may well be due to a failure to account for associational exposure the same way we do for educational exposure: cumulatively. Despite the Tocquevillean analogy between associations and schools, we measure years of education even for people who have not been in school for decades, but not years of associational experience for past members. Hooghe finds quite remarkable effects of past involvement in youth associations in adults of all ages. While the NES data employed here does not include this improved measurement method, Hooghe's findings suggest caution in interpreting the measurements we have. For example, Wollebaek and Selle (2002) argue from their statistical findings with Norwegian data that passive membership is not distinct from active membership in its effect on three measures of social capital (trust, networks and civic engagement), an observation they describe as contrary to Robert Putnam's hypotheses about the importance of face-to-face encounters. However, there is no assurance that today's passive members were not active members in the past whose present-day levels of social capital were boosted primarily at the time of joining and early participation, as Stolle suggests is a possibility (1998, 508).

The effect of associations may be yet more arcane. Wollebaek and Selle argue that associational institutions serve as social infrastructure, a repository of norms and resources supportive of collective action. They suggest a “counterfactual thought experiment”:

What would the level of social capital be like if associations were absent? Regardless of whether those joining associations possess more social capital than nonjoiners to begin with, associations contribute to the sustenance and transformation of values and norms because they are an important part of the political, social and cultural infrastructure of society. The existence of a multitude of visible voluntary associations is in itself evidence of the value and rationality of collaborative efforts, even for individuals who do not actively take part themselves. (2002, 57)

After challenging some of Putnam’s less controversial claims, Wollebaek and Selle thus deliver an argument for his most controversial claim in *Making Democracy Work*: that social capital can endure as a sort of dormant cultural resource – untilled but fertile soil – over decades or even centuries, as he suggests took place in northern Italy between the era of medieval city states and the 1980s. For example, Putnam remarks that the founding in 1865 of a cooperative in Altare drew on much older rituals (1993, 150). His description of medieval forms of association emphasizes the institutionalization of procedures for taking collective action and resolving disputes (1993, 126) in ways that persist in present-day cultural memory.

This conception of associations as “institutions in which norms and resources are embedded” should become central to a revised understanding of the logic of congruence. The “transmission belt” mechanism probably does not require the comprehensive congruence that Nancy Rosenblum correctly decries as an enemy of liberal pluralism. But some weak congruence should at least provide a boost in system support for democratic government by giving more citizens experience with the tools of democratic decision-making and action-taking. Active participation by all in democratic associations is probably not necessary any more than active participation by all in democratic government. Nevertheless, exposure to the “demonstration effect” of democratic procedures might have measurable impact on attitudes related to those procedures. Ideally, we could observe and measure such exposure across the

spectrum, in family, school, business, church and associations. Such data is not likely to emerge from anything but a colossal new study, but the data presented below may at least give a glimpse of the effects of associational structure, which appears to be quite limited.

Participant Observation

Another approach to developing knowledge of associational diversity is participant observation. In the same volume with Stolle and Rochon, Carla Eastis observed the differences between two local music-performance groups (Eastis 2001). Like Rosenblum, she concludes that complexity is the order of the day: “some organizations broaden social networks, participants in others develop strong values that may or may not be supportive of democratic institutions, still other organizations train individuals in civic skills, and, of course, some associations do all or some combination of these.” (168) However, the “weak congruence” question addressed here is not whether autocratic associations may not serve some public purpose, but whether democratic associations have specific measurable effects.

Nina Eliasoph’s *Avoiding Politics* (1998) is an ethnographic *tour de force* about the internal workings of a number of local associations in the Pacific Northwest. She observed “political evaporation,” in which Americans seem to “strain themselves” to avoid any situation that might imply public responsibility or require public discussion; by an unspoken normative convention, political conversations are held only in “backstage” whispers, and acknowledgment of the public purpose behind what political activism does occur is veiled in favor of a statement of personal interest. Eliasoph notes that activists “who were working within ethnically or racially bounded groups were much more connected to institutional powers: churches, civil rights groups, nationalist ethnic organizations,” and therefore much more secure as “representatives of the organization” – as opposed to the “mainstream” volunteers who saw themselves as “representatives of ‘the common person’” – in taking

confrontational or “complaining” positions that were unacceptable to the “civic manners” of the mainstream. (1998, 58-9) Some internal parliamentary institutions are necessary to make political discussion and debate comfortable, or at least “unavoidable;” associations that are loosely structured around informal consensus can easily evolve the kind of norms of silence described by Eliasoph.

I have observed this problem in the classroom; for example, just minutes after I had described the virtues of parliamentary procedure and challenged students to stop and *think* about the political implications of the way they conducted their discussions, the class’ elected chairperson said:

Are we all agreed that [this topic] is what we want to do? [Two or three nods, otherwise silence]
OK, great, that’s decided. Let’s move on to the next issue.

Of course, the fact was they were not all agreed, but in the chair’s haste to demonstrate her efficiency and decisiveness, she omitted any procedure that would formally call for individual assent, and the dissenters quietly acquiesced, saying later “it really wasn’t worth it” to protest. But the information economics and the “principal-agent problem” tell us it often *is* worth it; important decisions are more likely to fail if they are made without the benefit of information known only by those who must comply with the decision to make it work (Miller 1992, 78ff). The chair’s “efficient” hurry only wasted time, bottling up the dissenters until the next meeting, when the need to make the policy practical revealed the discontent and put the issue back on the table for another round of discussion, this time with some hard feelings into the bargain.

Brief observation of two formally democratic and procedurally deliberative North Carolina associations suggest that what Eliasoph calls “political condensation” can indeed be induced by internal associational institutions; we might say institutional democracy is a “political rainmaker.” The procedural ritual of doing business through discussion and voting is a socializing force that should inculcate both respect for rules and a sense of personal

competence. For example, one participant in the North Carolina PTA, a local school principal, told me, "I used to hate bylaws, but now I see the beauty of bylaws. You want to know something, just open them up and there it is, all settled." The context of this comment was on handling conflict within the organization. His initial perception was that the complex associational bylaws were inefficient and offered open doors for gratuitous dissent, but through experience he came to recognize them as tools for channeling and managing conflict. Far from avoiding politics, he can embrace them in the confidence that the bylaws will structure and limit conflict and legitimize controversial decisions. People with such practical experiences certainly might be more understanding of the public "sausage factory" appearance of Congress (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995).

Data: The 1996 NES and the Group Membership Auxiliary File

1996 American National Election Study

In this section, I introduce the dataset I have developed, with much assistance from the National Election Studies (NES), to attempt to answer some of the questions raised by the transmission belt problem described above. The project is derived from the 1996 NES, a very ambitious survey project. In addition to the usual gigantic battery of questions on political issues, candidates, attitudes and demographics, the investigators included an extended list of questions on associations and voluntary groups. As in many other data sets, respondents were asked about categories of associations they might adhere to. The General Social Survey, used in Brehm and Rahn (1997), has asked respondents about membership in seventeen categories of groups. The 1996 NES expanded and revised the list to twenty-two categories. Some GSS categories merged: the GSS's separate categories for professional and farm societies became a single "work-related" category, sports and hobbies became a single "leisure" category;

fraternal, service and campus Greek groups became a single “service or fraternal” category. Several new categories were added, including churches *per se* and religiously affiliated groups (the GSS asked only about “church-affiliated groups”), senior citizens’ groups, women’s groups, charities (“service to the needy”), cultural services and self-help groups. Types of political groups were expanded from the GSS’s vague “political clubs” to include political issue groups, nonpartisan civic groups, liberal and conservative groups, and political parties.⁶

The NES also asked more respondents, collecting associational data from 1,534 post-election respondents, while the 1994 GSS (the most recent GSS to employ the association questions) used a split sample of 511 persons, about one-sixth of the total 2,992 interviewed. The NES also prompted responses by naming major groups in the questions for some categories (such as the American Legion, the PTA, the Knights of Columbus, and so on). Finally, where the GSS has usually asked only for a yes-or-no answer to the question “are you a member?”, the NES asked respondents to mention up to four “involvements” in each category, to *name the groups* and to indicate six additional aspects of participation for each group: membership, dues-paying, donating, attending meetings, joining in other activities, and the frequency of political discussion. Each respondent thus could mention and name up to a theoretical maximum of eighty-eight associations; the observed maximum was thirty mentions. The naming of specific groups differentiates the 1996 NES from otherwise similarly detailed studies, such as Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995).

One practical result of the NES’s thorough measurement design is a significantly higher estimate than the GSS provides of the percentage of Americans who are presently involved in at least one association. The 1994 GSS produced a raw figure of 71.5% of respondents with membership in at least one of the sixteen categories, while the 1996 NES counts 84.9% with at

⁶See **Table 5** in **Appendix A** on page 58 for more detail on these changes.

least one “involvement,” 82.1% with one or more *memberships*, 78.2% paying some dues or donations, 70.7% attending meetings or activities, and 37.2% perceiving politics discussed “often” or “sometimes” in at least one involvement. **Appendix A** shows that the biggest increases over the 1994 GSS were a result of explicitly including churches as a category and of distinguishing involvement from membership, especially for adults involved in youth groups.

For reasons of confidentiality, the respondents’ open-ended names for the groups they mentioned are suppressed in the publicly available data. Through a cautious “Special Access Request” (SPAR) process approved by the National Election Studies Board, I gained restricted access to these names and the full set of per-mention variables (membership, dues-paying, donating, meeting-attending, activity-going and political discussion). Respondent case numbers were scrambled in the data I received, in order to diminish the risk that a respondent’s confidentiality could be compromised by matching their organizational affiliations to their demographic profiles. I also received permission to contact the head offices of only the very largest associations mentioned in the data, reducing the risk of contacting a former NES respondent to the vanishing point. The situation is similar to the privacy-versus-science debates common to medical records, commercial data and government security programs. The combination of the public data and the very specific group names could be a powerful tool for identifying respondents and violating their confidentiality, so we must cope with stringent limits on what can be done with the data.

Data Structure and Associational Leadership Questionnaire

However, what can be done is significant. I made multiple passes through the list of over 4,700 open-text mentions recorded by the NES interviewers; given the size of their task and the time pressure the NES interviewers were under, the data included a significant number of multiple associations mentioned in a single data entry (such as “Little League, Boy Scouts” as a

single mention) as well as duplicate entries for the same organization by the same respondent. My revised version of the data numbers 4,678 associational mentions made by 1,305 respondents. I then identified 161 organizations that were mentioned by at least two respondents. These large organizations accounted for 2,030 or 43.3% of all the respondent group mentions.

One approach to this data would have been to collect documentary materials on each organization and code institutional forms through content analysis. However, the task would probably be too complex and tedious for hired coders, and my own coding decisions might be too easily colored by my theoretical expectations. Representatives of the organizations would be more defensible judges of their own institutions, and it would also be much easier for an organizational informant to undertake the effort of contextualizing organizationally-specific terms into categories general enough to permit comparison across organizations. Therefore, I designed and tested a questionnaire for organizational leadership in the spring of 2002, then fielded it on the Internet to ease delivery and data-entry and to provide convenient, instant access for leaders. I contacted 125 of these large associations by phone and follow-up e-mail between June and December of 2002, usually beginning with their public relations or communications departments.⁷ Where organizations formed part of a loose-knit federation or religious denomination, I treated the entire movement as a single association and contacted the office closest to a U.S. national level and asked them to represent the entire group to the best of their ability. I requested a knowledgeable and authorized informant to complete a the fifteen-to-thirty minute long Internet questionnaire.

⁷The 36 remaining organizations were all small (with two or three respondents). Some twenty of these were discovered in the data too late to be included, due to variable spellings or naming discrepancies (I developed a new search technique that uncovered some new matches); most were smaller labor unions with long, hard-to-type acronyms. A few others were too local and might have led to confidentiality risks; the NES uses cluster samples which increase the chance of very local associations receiving multiple mentions.

By April 2003, eighty-one informants from sixty-seven organizations completed the questionnaire.⁸ Several more provided partial responses but did not reach the final page that set permissions to use the data. I made a concerted effort to locate only authoritative, well-informed respondents with long experience in their organizations. Informants included several chief executives, presidents and executive directors; many more vice presidents and assistant directors; a large number of public relations or communications directors; in a few cases, a communications staff member or research librarian responded, and a few more organizations had internal governance specialists who took on the task with relish. I have no reason to suppose that rank or any other characteristic would systematically bias responses, but it is possible.

Figure 1 displays the relationships between the four data tables involved. As shown in the figure, I began with the original 1,714 NES respondents, 1,534 of whom answered the post-election survey. Of these, 1,305 mentioned at least one association, up to an actual maximum of thirty. The arrow and the one and infinity symbols indicate that the database relationship is “one to many” – each respondent could make many associational mentions. The second data source is the set of 4,678 associational mentions. Each of these mentions was reviewed and coded with several additional categorical variables based only on the text; for example, a hypothetical case in the hobby and sport category might say “baseball league,” clarifying that the association in question is specifically a sport rather than a hobby group; bible studies and homeowners’ associations were similarly identified. The histogram shows the relative frequency of mentions; churches were mentioned more than twice as often as the runner-up

⁸An Adobe Acrobat printout of the Internet questionnaire is available online at: http://www.duke.edu/~nec/ps/diss/survey/duke_survey.pdf. Interested parties may contact the author for an login to view the live version (nec@duke.edu). Specific associations are not named in connection with their scores in accordance with confidentiality promised to informants; some associations would certainly not have been forthcoming about internal difficulties without this promise.

business and professional associations. The next relationship is “many to one”; there may be up to several hundred mentions in the data referring to one particular association. I identified 161 specific associations – including some loosely knit named movements, federations and denominations – with at least two mentions each. The largest of these had 266 mentions⁹; forty-one associations had just two mentions. The black boxes overlaid on the third histogram show the proportion of each bar for which we have data; for example, twelve of the forty-one associations with two mentions responded. The next and final relationship is again “one to many”: each large association could have one or more informants responding to the Internet questionnaire. Due to the fairly high requirements for time and expertise to respond to the survey, relatively few organizations did provide multiple informants; in a very few cases, the secondary informants not recruited by me were obviously not qualified to respond and have been excluded. In the end, just ten associations provided multiple informants, eight with two informants and two with four informants. Several of these were among the largest and most complex associations, however, so the additional information is valuable.

Because the first relational link in the database is scrambled for confidentiality, a great deal of information represented by these four levels of analysis has to be condensed to connect it with the original respondents’ data. The data was collapsed to the respondent level in stages, then unscrambled by the NES staff, so that I never had access to linked data that might have allowed association names to be attached to specific respondents. The auxiliary file’s codebook describes the various methods used to collapse the data; the variables are sums, means or maximums as appropriate. For example, responses on electoral competitiveness from multiple informants were averaged to give a single score for each organization; this score is then linked

⁹ This large group is the Roman Catholic Church, a fact that cannot be concealed. I am sympathetic to those who object to categorizing the Catholic Church and perhaps other churches and movements as mere “associations.”

to mentions of that organization, and each respondent received an overall score representing the average electoral competitiveness of all of the set of sixty-seven responding associations he or she actually mentioned.

The leadership questionnaire attempted to capture institutional practices in a general enough fashion to allow a wide range of organizations to answer without too much confusion about terms; to this end, it was moderately successful. A few informants misunderstood the meaning of terms such as “volunteer” or “local branch,” despite instructions explaining the intended general meaning of the terms. However, informants were given the opportunity to type an open-ended clarification to most questions, and these notes were usually adequate to make recoding of answers to fit the intended question meaning a simple matter in the vast majority of cases.¹⁰

Results

Associational-Level Results

The resulting data on the sixty-seven associations is remarkable for its variation; if there is any “institutional isomorphism” from a “structured organizational field” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) imposing homogeneity on these associations, it is relatively weak or lurks below the radar of this measurement approach. The array of forms is dramatic in its diversity. For example, as **Table 1** shows, almost two-thirds of the organizations, with 1,080 total respondent mentions in the 1996 NES¹¹, reported having an official membership system; twenty organizations with 209 respondent mentions did not. Four organizations with multiple

¹⁰Interested parties can view the Stata “do file” that documents and performs all of the editing on the organizational-level data at: http://www.duke.edu/~nec/ps/diss/data_and_stats/orgsGetOrgsEdit.do. Most of the edits are my clarification of informants’ open-ended “Other - please explain” answers.

¹¹Note that some respondents may have mentioned more than one organization in this set of forty-one, so the total number of respondents involved is smaller. Precisely how much smaller cannot be determined due to the scrambled link between mentions and respondent records.

informants varied in their responses and scored 0.5 on this variable, accounting for 146 respondent mentions. A very similar breakdown occurs between organizations reporting that members join through a formal process of application, orientation, nomination, election, or initiation of some sort. But these two groups of organizations are not at all identical; the two variables are only moderately correlated at 0.45.

Some of the most important data for theoretical purposes is on internal elections. Informants were asked whether their group's top leader was elected in any way, and if so by what constituency. They were then asked if their organization held any elections at any level; if so, they were asked to indicate the competitiveness and frequency of the elections and the size of the electorate in the highest-level election. **Table 2** shows significant variation in this area as well; twenty-eight organizations with nearly half of the respondent mentions of these associations do not elect their top leadership figure, or the "election" is conducted by a Board or similar small, elite body. But election by representatives and direct membership votes are to be found in plenty.

Additional questions addressed formal and informal authority structure, policymaking practices and meetings. Twenty-four organizations with 296 mentions said the organization's highest formal authority was held by elected representatives of the membership; only fourteen of these, with 205 mentions, also said that the highest *informal* authority was also held by those representatives. Another five associations with 127 mentions said elected representatives held informal but not formal authority. All told, informants from thirty-two associations with 38% of the mentions said elected representatives held at least some formal or informal authority. When asked what procedure was necessary to make major policy changes in the organization, twenty-eight associations with 552 mentions reported that a convention or other assembly of the

membership was required to approve changes; another five associations with 170 mentions had at least one of multiple informants who said a membership convention was necessary.

Evaluating the role of specific associational institutions is a potentially interesting task, but too broad for the scope of this paper. Evaluations can be greatly simplified if we can develop latent measures that summarize the exposure of NES respondents to various dimensions of associational political institutions. **Appendix B** presents just such a model, using confirmatory factor analysis to generate a score for each of the sixty-seven associations on three latent constructs: organizational democracy, membership constitutionality, and organizational success. As the appendix explains, the variables sum up covariation in responses to the survey questions. The highest scores on the organizational democracy scale are assigned to convention-governed associations with open, parliamentary-style meetings, frequent, competitive elections and elective top leadership; the lowest scores have few or none of these features. The highest scores on membership constitutionality go to associations with official, documented, strictly enforced membership standards with member responsibilities and a formal member induction process. The organizational success scores are highest for associations whose informants perceived the lowest turnover in volunteer supporters, the highest levels of commitment and general civic behavior, as well as the highest estimate of performance and recent trend in performance on the association's primary mission. Each of these latent variables is rescaled to range between zero and one.

The first readily apparent fact is that the associational categories are not very good proxies for institutional forms. As **Figure 2** shows, within-category variation is quite significant in almost every category for which we have multiple associations, on both the organizational democracy and the membership constitutionality dimensions. Of the categories with data for multiple associations, only veterans' groups range over less than a third of the organizational

democracy continuum, and only the business and professional and service and fraternal categories cover less than half the continuum. The high democracy scores for veterans' groups are a fine illustration of Rosenblum's argument about human abilities to differentiate associational contexts. Participation in the military, by most accounts one of the most hierarchical institutions extant in the U.S., is connected with associational forms that mimic military command structures less than they do the democratic Constitution the military is tasked to defend.

One preliminary research question of interest is the bivariate relationships between institutional forms and measures of organizational success. **Figure 3** plots perceptions of success in the sixty-seven responding associations against their scores for organizational democracy and membership constitutionality. On the right hand of the figure, there is a small and statistically insignificant positive relationship between the membership constitutionality measure and the organizational success measure. On the left hand side, a more interesting result emerges. Democracy appears at first glance to inhibit organizational success. The regression line has a downward slope with a 95% confidence interval that does not include the line with a slope of zero.¹² But the bivariate relationship is strongly heteroskedastic; that is, the variation in organizational success increases as organizational democracy increases, which violates the assumptions of regression analysis and raises questions about the relationship. Although they are not numerous, the less democratic associations express higher perceptions of success; the highest scorer on the organizational success measure is a church denomination that prides itself on its efficiently autocratic organization.¹³ Meanwhile, the most democratic

¹²Confidence intervals are technically meaningless for nonrandom samples like this group of associations, but some scholars continue to use them as a simple convention for judging the strength of evidence. It is only for the latter purpose that I mention them here.

¹³For the sake of associational informant and 1996 NES respondent confidentiality, I am not identifying specific organizations except where their identity is very likely to be obvious to informed

(continued...)

associations vary the most, from the least successful straggler (a once-mighty and very old fraternal organization now in the throes of redefining itself) to a very democratic labor union proud of great success.

One possible interpretation of this pattern would be to infer that less democratic organizations are generally successful, while more democratic associations are more likely to struggle. Certainly some longstanding criticisms of democratic regimes might be applied to associational democracies as well; popular influence may hinder effective implementation of necessary but unpopular policies, and policy gridlock or a kind of “political business cycle” (Hibbs 1977) with inefficient policy instability may afflict the organization. On the other hand, it is also possible that the lower left quadrant of the graph is empty simply because autocratic associations that face crisis simply die out.¹⁴ Some very weak evidence for this latter interpretation can be found in **Figure 4**, which shows that among these sixty-seven associations, older cases are slightly more likely to be democratic than newer ones.¹⁵ The shallow slope of the bivariate regression line lends little credence to claims that new organizations are less democratic on average than older ones, and it is not at all steep enough to leave room for any alarmist “falling sky” pronouncements. Nor is it apparent that the “iron cage” is turning old organizations into autocracies. Of course, formal democratic institutions may be a facade for autocracy, but the questionnaire results are generally quite consistent with informal expectations in cases I know well enough to judge.

¹³(...continued)

observers; however, some mention of the associational characteristics seems necessary to establish the credibility of the data. For the sake of clarity, the denomination mentioned here is *not* the Roman Catholic Church. Two very experienced informants agreed closely that the Church is a decidedly mixed and complex set of institutions with both autocratic and democratic elements, and its scores reflect this complexity. It is necessary to isolate the Catholic Church’s influence due to its large size, but it is an extreme outlier on any of the dimensions discussed here.

¹⁴Or, of course, they may merely refuse to respond to surveys from Ph.D. candidates.

¹⁵If this nonrandom sample of associations were truly random, the slope would not be statistically significant, since the 95% confidence interval includes a line with slope of zero.

The data is not at all decisive when it comes to evaluating the relationship between democratic forms and organizational success. However, given that it includes many of the largest such associations in the United States, it does at least suggest that democratic organization and strong membership constitutionality are at least not uniformly detrimental to organizational success, since some quite self-contentedly successful groups in several functional categories are very democratic in formal structure.

Respondent-Level Results

The 1996 National Election Studies Auxiliary File on Group Memberships (Rinden, Carlson, and Studies 2003) was updated with the aggregate associational institutions data described above in early August 2003. There are 1,305 respondents with some group mentions data, 912 with scores for at least one of the 67 large associations with institutional information, and 897 with scores on the latent constructs for organizational democracy, membership constitutionality and success. The organizational democracy construct – the critical independent variable for congruence theory – is imputed to these 897 respondents as two variables: first, an average of all their mentions of large associations with democracy scores, and second, the maximum score among all mentioned large associations with scores. The maximum version operationalizes the “weak congruence” concept; where the use of an average implies that less democratic organizations would have a countervailing negative effect on attitudes and behaviors, the maximum implies that any exposure at all to a more institutionally democratic association is enough to produce the expected effects.

Figure 5 displays histograms of the average and maximum organizational democracy distributions, with overlays showing some of the largest relevant categories in the data. As members of the largest group with data, most Catholics with just one membership are found in the tallest column just below 0.4 on the scale of zero to one. Retirees, Southern Baptists, United

Methodists and members of large veterans' organizations are also likely to be influenced by particularly large cases in the associational set.¹⁶ As the bottom portion of the figure shows, most of the 897 respondents with scores have at least one membership in the upper range of the scale, limiting variation on the scale. By comparing the two distributions, we can see that veterans' groups are significantly responsible for the difference between average scores and maximum scores. Veterans are likely to be members of several associations, and thus have average scores across the spectrum; but they also have the highest maximum scores due to the highly democratic structure of the largest veterans' groups. Given the limitations of this data, many more Americans may have at least one exposure to an association with internally democratic institutions.

Preliminary multivariate modeling results of these scores are discouraging indeed for congruence theory, or at least a small victory for those who disparage efforts to quantify such complex things. A variety of models of attitudes and behaviors reveal no robust relationships with democratic associational authority structures as measured here.¹⁷ I do not reproduce these myriad models, since there would be little value in table after table showing nothing of real interest. Further investigation may reveal some defensible effects, but the probability is that any such effects will be convoluted and easily challenged. I have never seen a set of variables so little correlated with anything else; the data is remarkable at least for that fact. Models included individual attitudinal dependent variables of internal efficacy ("politics are too complicated,"

¹⁶Please note that information on which respondents actually mentioned a Catholic church, for example, or a specific veterans group, is not contained in the public release data. The best we can do with the data is to identify respondents with scores who are *likely* members of the very largest associations, including retirees, veterans and active churchgoers. But the category variables are very helpful in narrowing down the likely cases.

¹⁷By "robust", I mean that a significant effect persisted despite minor changes in the configuration of independent variables entered in the model. I experienced a few "Eurekas" followed by disappointment as it became clear the effect was a random artifact of a specific combination of variables. Missing data problems mean that the N can change drastically, producing random subsets of the larger dataset in which significant coefficients emerge by chance.

“people like me don’t have a say”), trust in government (“trust the government in Washington to do what is right”), and regime support (“satisfied with democracy in U.S.,” “elections make the government pay attention”) as well as scores for latent constructs of the above named general concepts (internal efficacy, etc.) derived from multiple indicators by the measurement model employed in Carlson (1999). Also modeled were reported voter turnout and reported campaign engagement (attending a meeting, volunteering for a campaign, wearing a button, etc.). Independent variables in these models ranged from very simple models to full batteries of demographic and political variables, including efforts to locate any interaction effects or multicollinearity that might be obscuring the influence of the associational institutional variables. Efforts were also made to control for the influence of the larger cases, especially Catholicism, with little effect. Estimators appropriate to the various dependent variables were employed, including ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, probit, ordered probit and multinomial logit.

To be fair to congruence theory, these tests are a “least likely” research design looking for measurable impact with relatively crude measurements. There are a variety of measurement issues to consider:

- The total amount of potential error in the models is distressing. For the sake of demonstrating the challenges such a project faces, here is a list, which is probably not comprehensive: sampling error in selecting potential respondents; nonresponse bias (the 1,714 pre-election respondents in 1996 compose just 71% of the selected sample); “mortality” from the pre- to post-election interviews (about 10% attrition); panel effects that might distort responses from the 1,197 post-election respondents who were long-term participants in the 1992-1997 NES panel study; measurement error in the attitudinal and behavioral dependent variables; respondent errors in recalling their associations and item

nonresponse bias, especially at the end of the list of twenty-two categories; interviewer errors in transcribing association names; the omission of small associations from the data; errors in my detection of and contact with large associations in the 4,700 association mentions (I found 125 out of 161 before beginning the process); nonresponse by large associations (the sixty-seven responding are just 41% of the 161 found); informant error in characterizing their associations; errors in my handling of open-ended “Other, please explain” answers; aggregation errors in collapsing the data to the respondent level; and model misspecification errors in attempting to detect congruence effects.

- My choice of questions for the institutional questionnaire may not adequately capture relevant aspects of authority structure. In particular, more detailed data on decentralization and local autonomy would probably be helpful; Allison Rinden’s parallel contribution to the 1996 NES Auxiliary File on Group Membership may prove useful in this respect (Rinden, Carlson, and Studies 2003). Better questions might yield better results; however, the difficulty of reaching leadership informants and securing responses suggests that studies of this sort will be infrequent at best, *unless some institutional entity can legitimize ongoing research in the eyes of associational leaders* and manage the volume.
- The data used here does not allow very much differentiation of the respondents’ relative levels of participation in the various associations mentioned. We cannot determine whether respondents are even aware of the authority structures of the associations they mentioned. Some data similar in detail to Verba, Schlozman and Brady’s treatment of civic skills (1995) would be helpful. However, if Wollebaek and Selle (2003) are correct that active participation is not necessary, this may not be an issue; and it is at least reasonable to claim that associational institutions may affect members even when they are not conscious of the effect, since that is clearly the case for governments.

- The leadership questionnaires may reflect a very different perception of reality than that experienced by respondents; the Weberian “iron cage of [bureaucratic] isomorphism” (Dimaggio and Powell 1983) may exist at a level not captured here. Future research that questions a large sample directly about their experiences of democratic authority structures might succeed in identifying congruence effects. Multiple elite informants from each association could have improved measurement as well. However, the logistical overhead for such a study would be very significant, perhaps even more expensive and time-intensive than the 1996 NES. While it might be possible to economize by comparing only members of a fixed set of associational cases, it would still be necessary to question members about most or all of their associations to ensure that the selected cases are actually responsible for observed effects.
- Most respondents belong to many associations large and small for which we still have no authority structure data. If the “weak” version of congruence theory is accurate, any one of these unmeasured associations, in addition to family, workplace and school experiences, might be adequate to provide a detectable “boost” in democratic character. In that case, many respondents with lower measured values of the maximum exposure to organizational democracy variable would have higher scores if all their associations were correctly measured. However, the data set does include all but two of the twenty largest associations considered, and accounts for over 30% (1,455 out of 4,678) of respondents’ associational mentions and almost 75% of the 2,030 mentions of large associations with at least two mentions, so coverage would have had to be extensive indeed to add enough of the many smaller organizations to improve measurement significantly.
- Some of the attitudinal dependent variables are fairly resistant to modeling with available data, generally yielding small values of R-squared or small improvements in log-likelihood

ratios, even with large sets of usually powerful variables, such as education and partisanship. These individual 1996 NES items are also not the ideal dependent variables from a congruence theory point of view; some much more pointed questions about attitudes toward the constitutional order, legislative debate, political tolerance, efficacy, electoral procedures and other “stealth democracy” items would be more persuasive. However, I believe the multiple-indicator latent variables borrowed from my earlier paper do an admirable job of measuring the key concepts of internal and external efficacy and regime support, and they simply do not appear to respond to the associational authority structure variables.

In addition to data quality, multicollinearity is another candidate explanation for the complete lack of findings. The average organizational democracy score is independent of the total number of associational mentions, but the maximum score is not; the more mentions a respondent made, the greater the probability the respondent mentioned at least one high-democracy association. The correlation coefficient is a modest 0.21, but several models responded to the entry of both variables by dramatically eroding the otherwise strong effect of the number of mentions, which suggested some multicollinearity.¹⁸ With both the number of mentions and the democracy scores entered in the right hand side of an equation, we could presumably differentiate the effects of associational institutions from the general social connectedness represented by the sheer number of associations. Collinearity would jeopardize this ability. To evaluate the effects, I entered each variable separately in otherwise identical models and compared the magnitude of the substantive effects. Although the maximum associational democracy score was barely significant by itself in some models, its substantive

¹⁸Other independent variables such as education and income also tend to correlate with the number of mentions, so the addition of yet another correlate as an exogenous can be troublesome even if the bivariate correlation is modest.

effects are too small to be anything other than a weak proxy for the number of mentions; and the average democracy score, uncorrelated with total mentions, is never significant in the same models.

There may be some small redemption for this hard-won data. For example, there are significant regional and urban-rural differences in associational participation; the most democratic associations have more members in some areas than others, and this may have implications for macro-level social or institutional capital theories of collective action. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the maximum organizational democracy score on the Census Bureau's four-region subdivision of the country confirms statistically significant differences ($F=6.53$, meaning over six times as much variation is accounted for as would be likely to happen with a random noise variable). **Table 3** shows these figures: the Northeast and West have mean scores for maximum exposure to organizational democracy about 0.05 below the national average of 0.65 on the scale of zero to one, while the North Central (Midwest) and South regions are both above average.

The regional relationship holds only for the North Central (Midwest) region in a multivariate setting; **Table 4** shows the results for an ordinary least squares regression with the maximum organizational democracy score as a *dependent* variable. As previously reported, respondents with more mentions are more likely to have a high maximum exposure score; every additional membership is associated with a 0.02 increase on the scale from zero to one. Controlling for active Catholics is a must given the size of the group; Catholics score 0.19 lower on average but still exhibit enough internal variation to replicate most of these results with Catholic respondents only. Age and income are not significant predictors. More educated respondents are slightly *less* likely to belong to democratic associations; each step on the NES' seven-point "educational summary" from no high school to advanced degree yields a 0.012

decrease in the score. Blacks and Hispanics do not differ significantly from whites on this dimension. Church attenders score slightly lower and partisans score slightly higher, but these results are not quite significant at the 95% confidence level. Each step on the Census six-point “belt” scale from urban to rural predicts a score 0.015 higher. While the South’s distinctiveness disappears (perhaps because the rural and education variables pick up much of the effect of highly democratic church denominations prevalent in the South). Even after controlling for urbanity, Midwesterners score about 0.08 higher on average; the Midwest’s reputation for civility might have some basis in the greater presence of very participatory large associations.

Conclusion

If there is a society-to-state transmission belt that passes through associational institutions, I have yet to locate it convincingly. A strong logic of congruence would require that all associations exhibit some democratic characteristics for the sake of stable democratic government. A weak version of the logic requires only that each citizen have *some* opportunity outside of government to rehearse democratic practice. Although I am not able to provide evidence that weak congruence effects exist as hypothesized, it is clear from this data that strong congruence is certainly not necessary, as theorists including Nancy Rosenblum, Mark Warren and Michael Walzer have argued. Respondents belonging to associations with very low scores for organizational democracy do not appear to exhibit anti-democratic attitudes or behaviors. The data does not contradict Rosenblum’s argument that citizens are quite capable of distinguishing the grounds for associational autocracies from the philosophy that undergirds democratic government.

Further research with this data or new approaches might reveal some support for the weak version of the logic of congruence. However, it may be difficult to detect. It seems likely that only a small minority of Americans have no exposure at all to democratic practice; there is

likely to be some democratic socialization found among the many influences of families, schools, churches, businesses, local governments and quasi-governments, as well as the thousands of associations too small to have been measured in this project. Whether that socialization is adequate to the tasks set for it by democratic theorists is another matter. The ideal quantitative approach to this research question would involve increased detail from respondents at the membership level, including both the civic skills and time-and-money detail included in Verba, Schlozman and Brady's study (1995) as well as the institutional exposure data I pursued here. The ultimate research coup would permit hierarchical modeling of characteristics at the associational and individual levels, which was not possible here due to the confidentiality restrictions. But respondents would have to agree to give up quite a bit of confidentiality to provide such data, and that hurdle could make the data very suspect due to response bias. The task might be accomplished by a long-term Internet panel with high respondent trust levels and the luxury of spreading the multitude of associational questions over several weeks or months.

Tables and Figures

The following pages contain the tables and figures referenced in the text in the order of their appearance.

Figure 1 - Diagram of Relational Data Structure

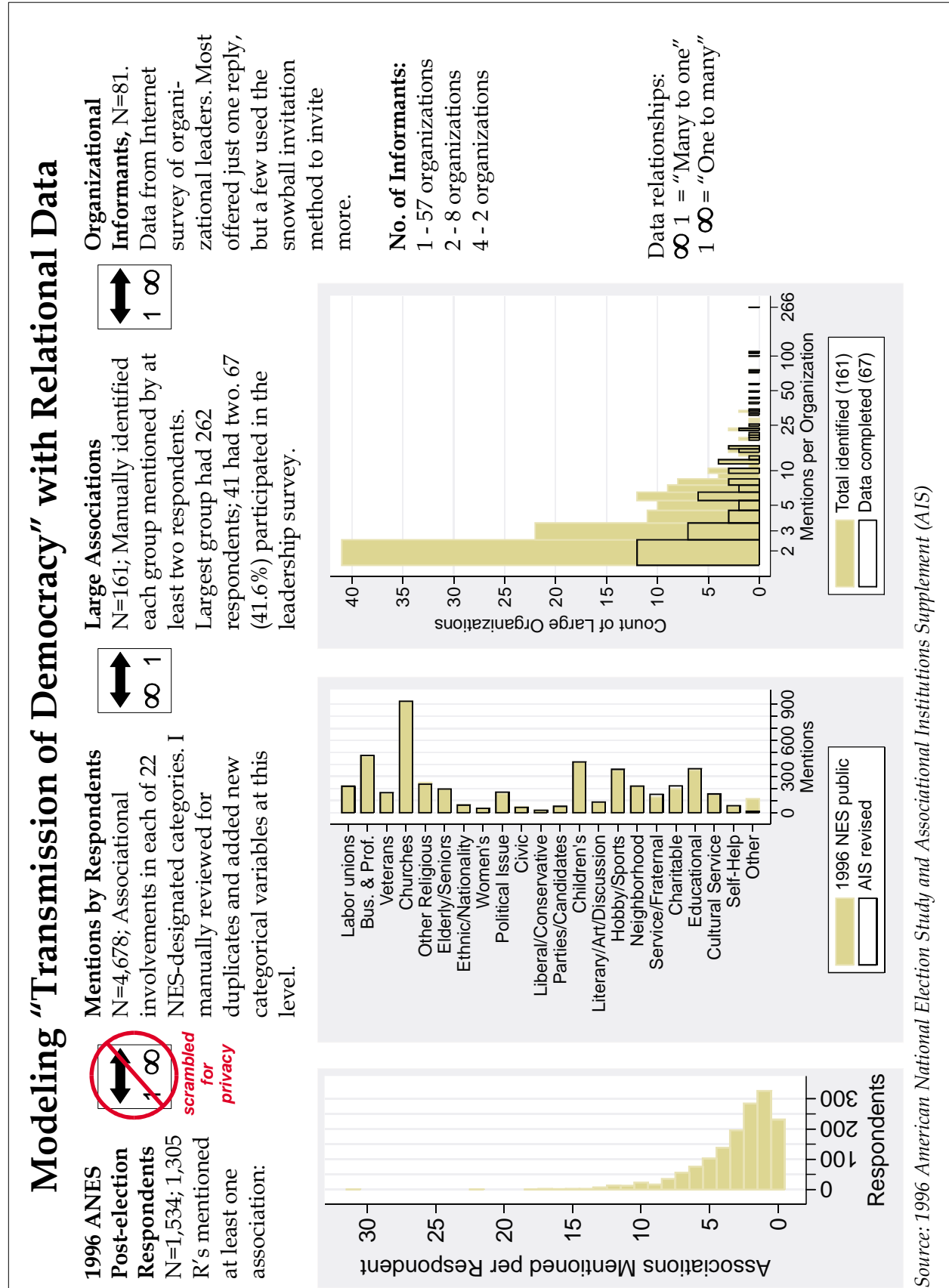


Table 1 - Sample Membership System Variables by Organization

Variable	Large Associations	Mentions	Percent of Mentions
Total with Data	67	1,464	
<i>Official membership system?</i>			
Yes	41	1,080	73.8%
(Informants differ)	4	146	10.0%
No	20	209	14.3%
<i>Members inducted formally?</i>			
Yes	41	1,060	72.4%
(Informants differ)	3	56	3.8%
No	21	319	21.8%

Table 2 - Election Variables by Organization

Variable	Large Associations	Mentions	Percent of Mentions
Total with Data	67	1,464	100.0%
<i>Top leader elected?</i>			
No	6	60	4.1%
(Informants differ)	1	266	18.2%
By Board of Directors, etc.	21	353	24.1%
By member representatives	22	437	29.8%
(Informants differ)	1	101	6.9%
By membership directly	16	247	16.9%
<i>Are elections competitive?</i>			
Very competitive	10	210	14.3%
(Informants differ)	4	142	9.7%
Somewhat competitive	15	569	38.9%
Occasionally competitive	12	89	6.1%
(Informants differ)	1	3	0.2%
Rarely competitive	15	165	11.3%
Never competitive	4	58	4.0%
[Missing, no elections are held]	6	228	15.6%
<i>How frequent are elections?</i>			
More than one per year	5	401	27.4%
Every one to two years	44	654	44.7%
Every two to four years	6	84	5.7%
(Informants differ)	2	40	2.7%
Every four or more years	4	57	3.9%
[Missing, no elections are held]	6	228	15.6%
<i>How large is electorate?</i>			
Very large (several thousand or more)	18	333	22.7%
(Informants differ)	1	101	6.9%
Moderately large (several hundred or more)	22	349	23.8%
(Informants differ)	2	43	2.9%
Moderately small (20-30 or more)	8	39	2.7%
Very small (up to 20-30 people)	10	371	25.3%
[Missing, no elections are held]	6	228	15.6%

Figure 2 - Within-Category Institutional Variation

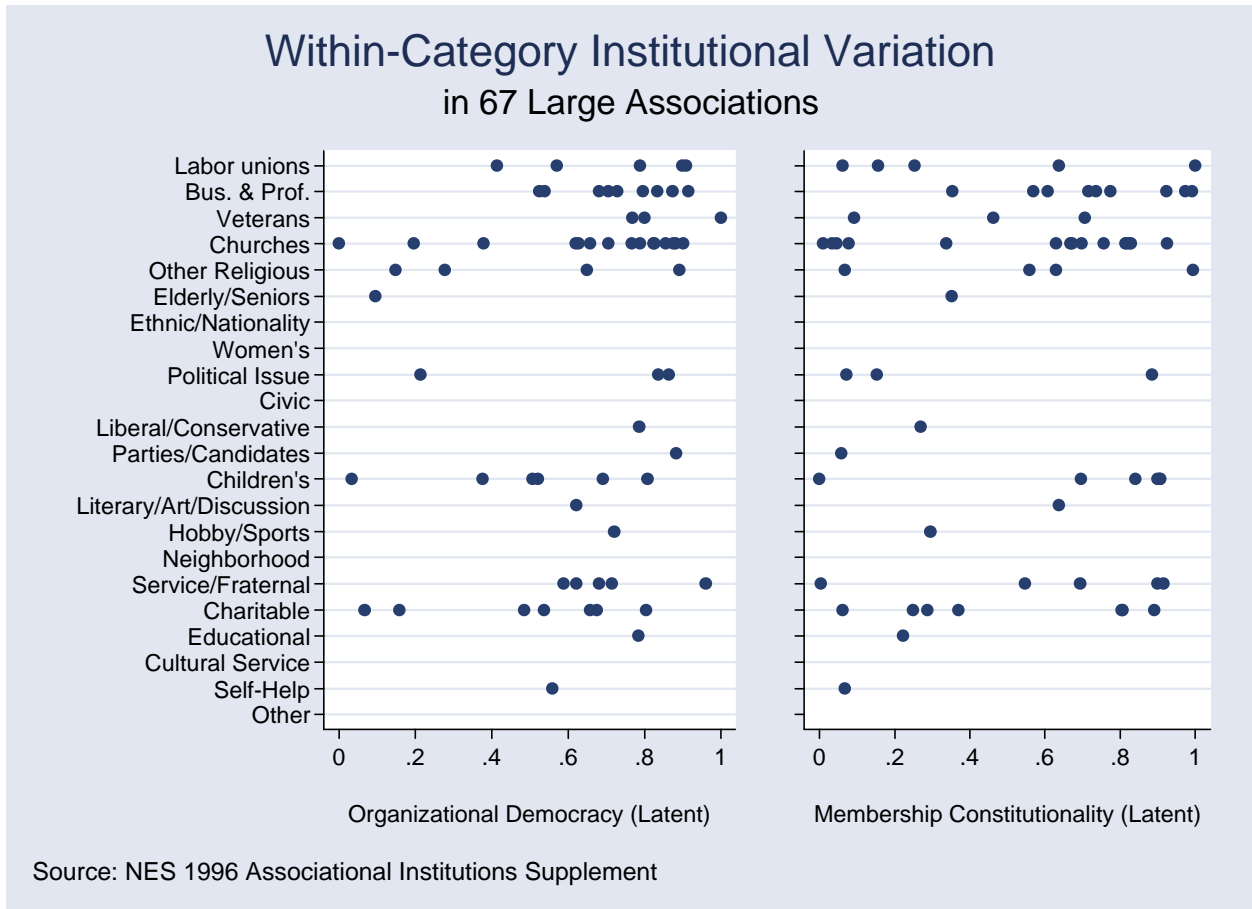


Figure 3 - Organizational Success by Organization Democracy and Membership Constitutionality

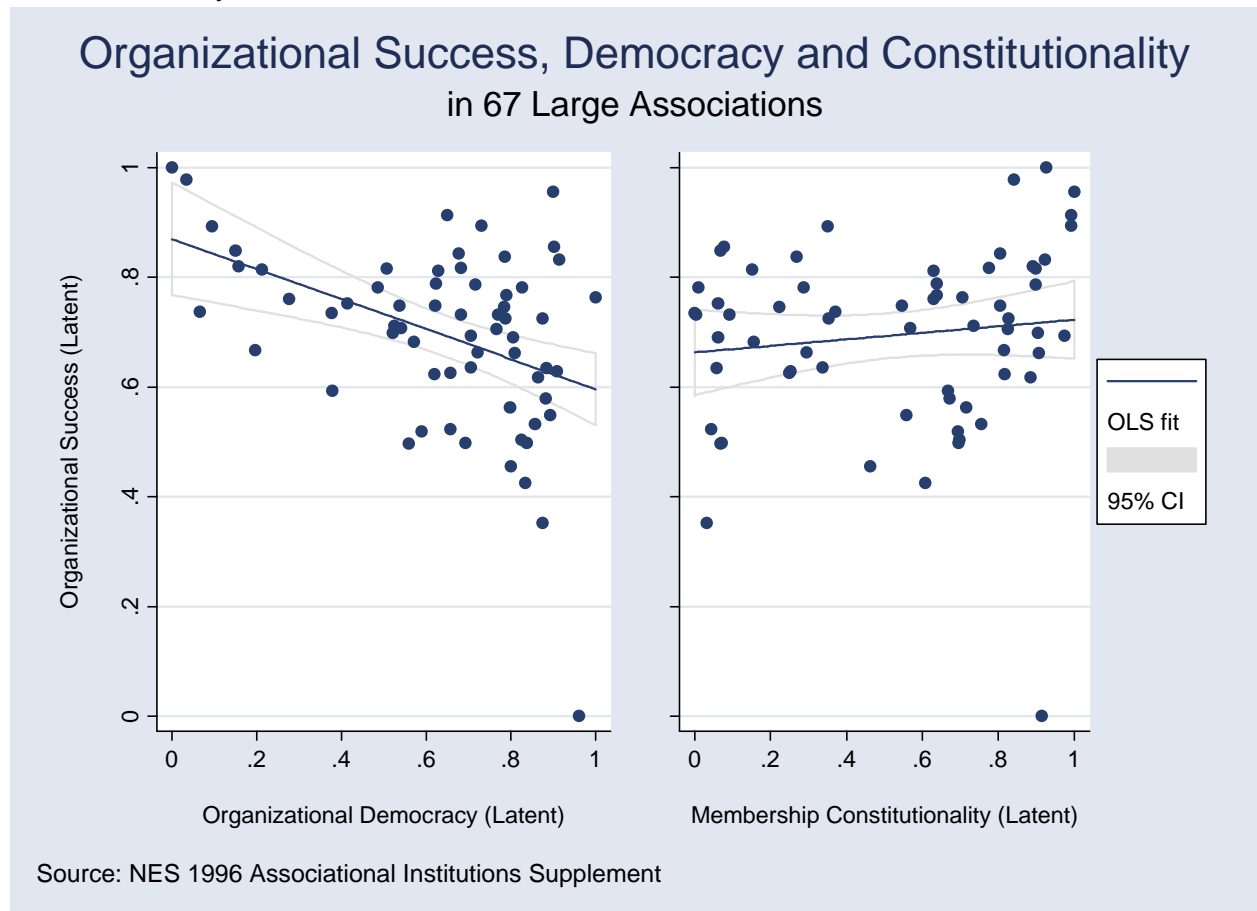


Figure 4 - Organizational Age and Participatory Institutions

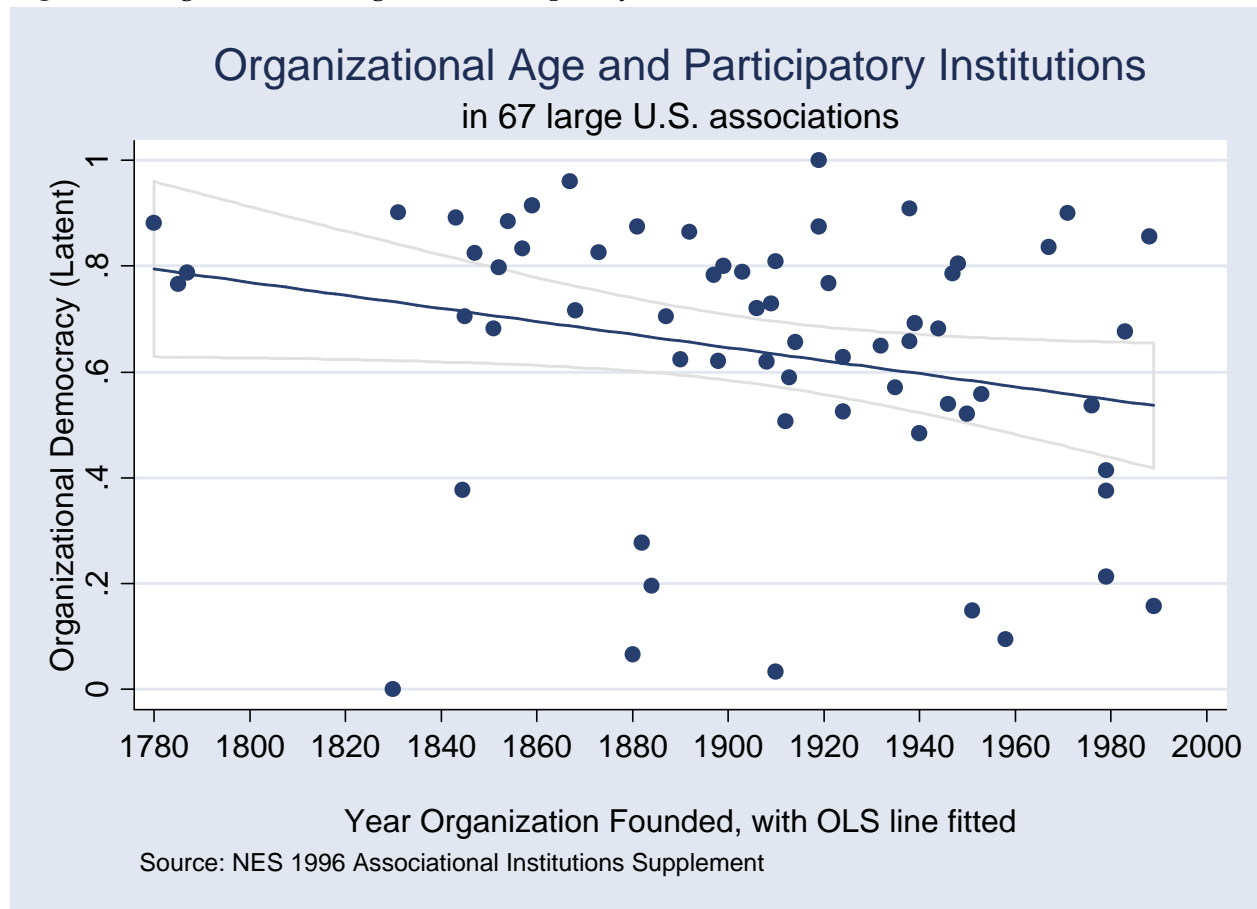


Figure 5 - Histograms of exposure to organizational democracy

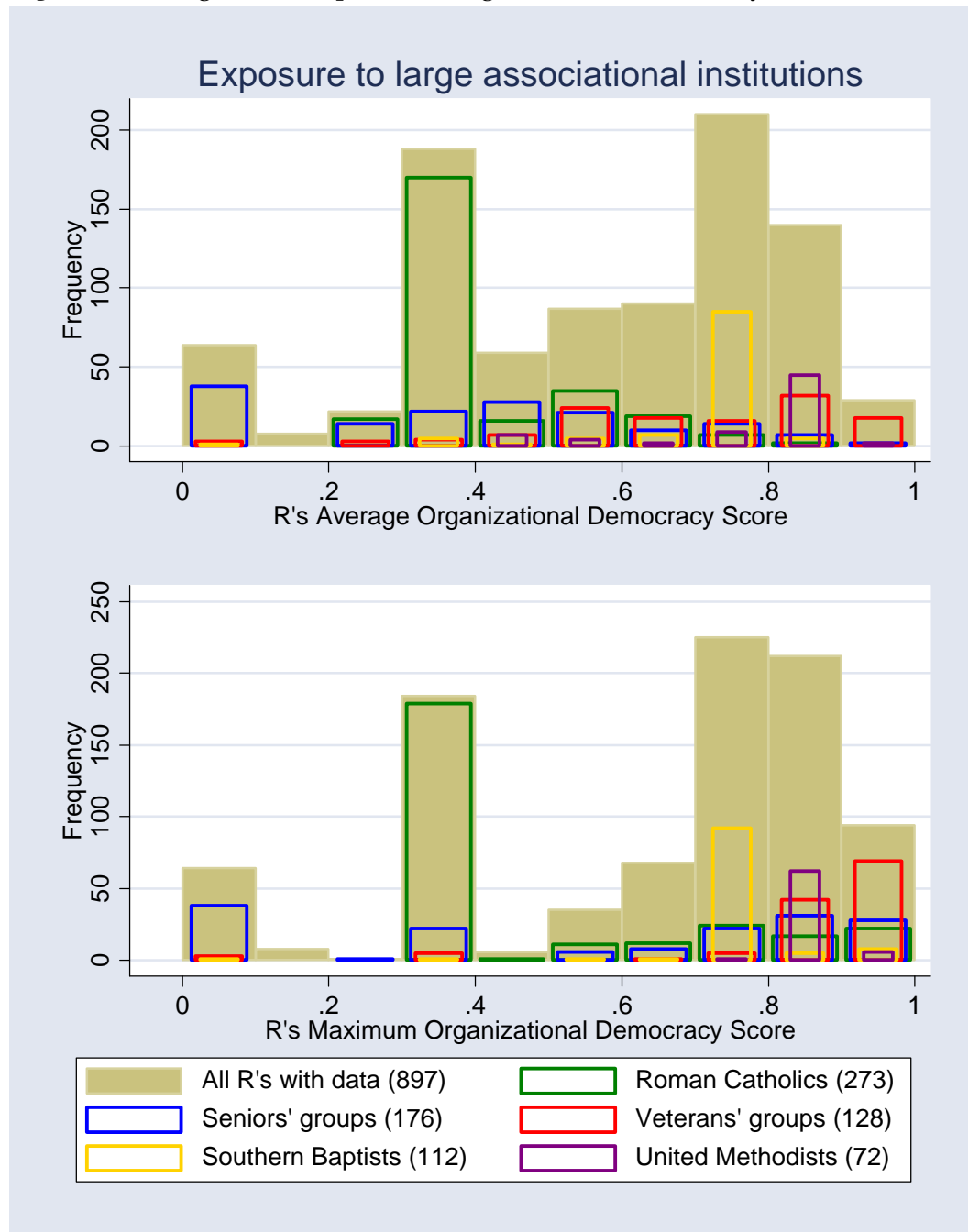


Table 3 - Organizational democracy scores by Census region

Census Region	Overall N	N w/scores	% w/scores	Mean Avg. OD*	Mean Max. OD*
Northeast (New England, NY & PA)	260	147	56.5%	0.511	0.593
North Central (Midwest)	458	247	53.9%	0.586	0.681
South (from VA & WV to TX & OK)	642	331	51.6%	0.617	0.675
West (MT to NM and westward)	354	172	48.6%	0.543	0.605
Total	1,714	897	52.3%	0.577	0.650

* OD = Organizational Democracy

Table 4 - Regression model of maximum organizational democracy score*Dependent variable: maximum organizational democracy score, range from 0 to 1*

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
Constant	0.509***	0.065
Total associational mentions	0.020***	0.002
Roman Catholics who mentioned any church affiliation	-0.186***	0.019
Log of family income in dollars	0.132	0.011
Age in years	0.0006	0.0005
Educational summary (seven point scale from grade eight or less to advanced degree)	-0.012*	0.006
Blacks	-0.031	0.032
Hispanics	-0.021	0.031
Religious attendance (six point scale from never to more than weekly)	-0.009	0.005
Strength of partisanship (absolute value of seven-point partisan identification scale)	0.017	0.009
Census belt (six point scale from most urban to most rural)	0.016**	0.006
Census Region: North Central (Midwest)	0.076**	0.026
Census Region: South	0.024	0.025
Census Region: West	-0.010	0.028

*Significance: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$*

Appendix A: 1994 GSS and 1996 NES Categories of Associations

Table 5 below compares the percentages of respondents responding “yes” to membership in the GSS category or naming at least one association in the NES category. The NES asked if respondents paid dues or donated (“money”) or attended meetings or activities (“activity”). The “discuss” column counts mentions where politics were discussed “sometimes” or “often.”

Table 5 - 1994 GSS and 1996 NES Associational Categories

Category (with 1994 GSS for comparison)	1994 GSS (N=511)		1996 NES (1,534 post-election respondents)			
	member	involved	member	Last 12 months:		
				money	activity	discuss
1 Labor unions	11.8%	14.0%	13.6%	11.0%	6.2%	7.3%
2 Work-related: business, professional or farm		17.1%	16.2%	13.1%	11.9%	6.9%
GSS: Professional or academic societies	18.7%					
GSS: Farm organizations	3.7%					
3 Veterans' organizations such as the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars (GSS: Veterans' groups)	7.9%	7.9%	6.3%	6.2%	3.3%	2.7%
4 Local church , parish or synagogue		58.5%	55.5%	53.7%	43.7%	8.7%
5 Other orgs. affiliated with your religion such as the Knights of Columbus or B'nai B'rith or a bible study group		12.8%	11.9%	8.3%	9.7%	2.5%
GSS: Church-affiliated groups	33.4%					
6 Orgs. for the elderly or senior citizens?		11.5%	10.6%	8.6%	4.4%	5.1%
7 Orgs. representing your own particular nationality or ethnic group such as the Polish-American Congress, the Mexican-American Legal Defense, or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People? (GSS: nationality groups)	3.5%	3.8%	3.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%
8 Orgs mainly interested in issues promoting the rights of women --an organization such as the National Organization for Women, Eagle Forum, or the American Association of University Women?		1.5%	1.2%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%
9 Organizations active on any particular political issues such as the environment or abortion (on either side), or gun control (on either side) or consumer rights, or the rights of taxpayers or any other issues?		6.4%	5.8%	5.0%	1.9%	4.6%
10 Nonpartisan civic organizations interested in the political life of the community or nation--such as the League of Women's Voters or a better government association?		2.0%	1.7%	1.4%	1.6%	1.2%

Table 3 (continued)

Category (with 1994 GSS for comparison)	1994 GSS		1996 NES (1,534 post-election respondents)			
	(N=511)		<i>Last 12 months:</i>			
	member	involved	member	money	activity	discuss
11 Organizations that support general liberal or conservative causes such as Americans for Democratic Action or the Conservative Caucus?		0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12 Organizations active in supporting candidates for elections such as a political party organization? GSS: Political clubs	4.7%	3.1%	2.7%	1.5%	1.1%	2.4%
13 Groups in which children might participate, such as Girl Scouts, 4-H, youth sports leagues such as soccer or Little League? GSS: Youth groups	10.4%	16.0%	11.3%	12.5%	13.3%	1.3%
14 Literary, art , discussion or study groups	9.8%	3.5%	3.3%	1.8%	3.1%	1.0%
15 Hobby clubs, sports or country clubs, bowling leagues, or other groups for leisure time activities? GSS: Sports groups GSS: Hobby or garden clubs	21.6% 9.2%	18.0%	17.0%	14.1%	14.3%	3.9%
16 Associations related to where you live-- neighborhood or community associations, homeowners' or condominium associations, or block clubs?		13.3%	12.7%	9.6%	10.0%	3.3%
17 Service or fraternal organizations such as the Lions or Kiwanis or a local women's club or a college fraternity or sorority? GSS: Fraternal groups GSS: Service clubs GSS: School fraternities or sororities	10.1% 10.1% 5.7%	8.1%	7.8%	6.3%	5.7%	1.4%
18 Organizations that provide services in such fields as health or service to the needy --for instance, a hospital, a cancer or heart drive, or a group like the Salvation Army that works for the poor?		10.1%	6.6%	6.2%	5.9%	1.7%
19 Educational institutions-- local schools, your own school or college, organizations associated with education such as school alumni associations or school service organizations such as the PTA? (GSS: school service groups)	16.1%	18.3%	16.5%	13.1%	12.0%	4.5%
20 Organizations that are active in providing cultural services to the public--for example, museums, symphonies, or public radio or television?		6.7%	6.0%	5.7%	3.5%	1.8%
21 Support or self-help groups such as AA or Gamblers' Anonymous?		2.8%	2.3%	1.8%	2.0%	0.4%
22 Any other organizations (GSS: Any other groups)	10.7%	6.4%	5.7%	5.0%	3.6%	2.5%
Total with at least one	71.5%	84.9%	82.1%	78.2%	70.7%	37.2%

Appendix B: Associational Institutions Measurement Model

Table 6 below shows the results of a confirmatory factor analysis performed on the sixty-seven associations replying to the Internet leadership questionnaire. The model, created by the CALIS procedure in SAS System 8, is weakly defensible; the small N presents a challenge. The model has a Goodness of Fit Index of 0.66 and an RMSEA estimate of 0.096. However, each of the latent variables can also be created by an identical scale with a very satisfactory Cronbach's alpha (ranging from 0.74 to 0.79 as shown in the rightmost column of the table below), and the resulting scores are correlated with the corresponding alpha scales with coefficients above 0.95. I have retained the CALIS output because it offers a more informative description of the contributions of the various indicators and because it simultaneously estimates covariation among the latent variables. The model is not the random result of endless tinkering; the model is very similar to the first, theoretically-driven attempt. A few indicators were dropped due to too little variation. For example, the membership constitutionality construct, for example, was intended to include indicators of constitutionality in local-center relations and in leadership selection procedures, but almost every association indicated documented procedures governed those areas.

Three latent constructs are modeled. The first, organizational democracy, uses every available institutional indicator related to elected authority and participatory policymaking. The highest loadings are for the use of parliamentary procedure in meetings and for meeting agenda widely published in advance. All but two of the indicators have t -values of two or greater, and the Cronbach's alpha for a scale of the same indicators is 0.78. The second construct is a measure of membership constitutionality, reflecting the degree to which members are formally distinguished from non-members; a scale of the same indicators has an alpha of 0.79. Finally, the third construct measures organizational success in achieving the primary

mission and retaining high-quality, committed volunteers; this construct is indicated by informants' subjective ratings on a seven-point scale of volunteer commitment, turnover and general civiness and of mission performance and the trend in mission performance.

Table 6 - Confirmatory Factor-Analytic Measurement Model with Organization-Level Data

Indicator Name	CALIS Loading	SE	t-value	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Organizational Democracy Index</i>				0.78
Formal authority is held by elected representatives	1.00			
Informal authority is held by elected representatives	0.86	0.43	2.00	
Top leadership is elected	1.23	0.50	2.45	
Any leadership elections at all	1.40	0.53	2.60	
Degree of electoral competition	1.00	0.45	2.19	
Election frequency	0.79	0.41	1.88	
Electorate size	1.24	0.50	2.46	
Convention required for major policy changes	1.35	0.52	2.56	
Policy-making meetings open to full membership	1.15	0.48	2.37	
Volunteers participate in local meetings	0.57	0.38	1.46	
Volunteers can place new business on agenda	1.40	0.54	2.60	
Meetings occur at predictable intervals	1.08	0.47	2.29	
Meeting agenda are published and accessible in advance	1.92	0.66	2.89	
Meetings are conducted according to by-laws	1.53	0.57	2.69	
Meetings follow parliamentary procedure	2.01	0.68	2.92	
<i>Constitutional Membership Index</i>				0.79
Association has an official membership system	1.00			
Members have responsibilities to fulfill	1.42	0.38	3.72	
Members can lose standing if responsibilities are not met	0.98	0.33	3.01	
Members join through a formal process	1.42	0.38	3.73	
An official document sets membership standards	1.57	0.41	3.87	
Membership is informal in practice	-0.79	0.31	-2.58	
Membership standards are strictly enforced	0.84	0.31	2.70	
<i>Organizational Success Index</i>				0.74
Volunteer commitment	1.00			
Membership turnover	0.73	0.18	3.92	
Volunteers' civicness	0.71	0.19	3.84	
Mission performance	0.79	0.19	4.23	
Mission performance trend	0.65	0.18	3.53	

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