

# EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY, MASS CULTURE, AND THE QUALITY OF ELITES: THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*This article demonstrates that low corruption and high female representation among elites are two characteristics of elite quality that go closely together and help make “formal” democracy increasingly “effective.” However, the quality of elites is not an inherently independent phenomenon but is shaped by a pervasive mass factor: rising self-expression values that shift cultural norms toward greater emphasis on responsive and inclusive elites. Self-expression values, in turn, tend to be strengthened by growing human resources among the masses. Considered in a comprehensive perspective, these various components are linked through the emancipative logic of Human Development: (1) human resources, (2) self-expression values, (3) elite quality, and (4) effective democracy all contribute to widen the scope of human autonomy and choice in several aspects of people’s lives: their means and skills, their norms and values, as well as their institutions and rights.*

## Introduction

The spread of democracy that took place in recent decades by the Third Wave of democratization (Huntington 1991) attracted extraordinary academic attention (see, for instance, O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Higley and Gunther 1992; Casper and Taylor 1996; Linz and Stepan 1996). At the beginning of the Third Wave, some political scientists interpreted the newly emerging democracies as the beginning of a glorious democratic era (Fukuyama 1989; Pye 1990). After a while, however, a more realistic view became dominant, reflecting the insight that democratic regimes do not work everywhere with similar effectiveness. Observers noticed that many of the newly emerging democracies show severe deficiencies, especially in their human rights performance. O’Donnell (1993) and Finer (1999), among others, warned against confusing “façade democracies” with “effective democracies.” According to these authors (see also, Linz and Stepan 1996; Rose 2001), the difference between façade democracies and effective democracies rests in the “rule of law” and its most fundamental manifestation: people’s freedom rights.

The adoption of a constitution that grants freedom rights—such as having free speech and information, religious freedom, freedom of professional and artis-

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tic activities, freedom of private and public self-expression, as well as freedom of choice in elections and referenda—is a necessary condition for democracy. Without these rights, there can be no democracy. But legal guarantees do not suffice to make freedom rights effective. As outlined in earlier work (see, for example, Almond and Verba 1963) and re-emphasized in recent work (see, among others, Heller 2000), beneath a surface of legal guarantees, there can be informal social mechanisms that hinder people in practicing their rights effectively. Among the mechanisms that reduce the effectiveness of given rights, elite corruption and elite closure are the most detrimental ones, since both work against core principles of democracy. Elite corruption, on one hand, violates the rule of law; elite closure, on the other hand, undermines the equality of rights. Whether there is democracy in at least a formal sense, depends on people's constitutional entitlement to freedom rights. But whether democracy is effective or not does not automatically follow from the institutionalization of rights. It depends on the features of a society's elites: their sensitivity to people's rights and their openness to underprivileged groups, among which women are the potentially largest one, accounting for at least half of the population in any society.

From a human development perspective that focuses on human autonomy and choice (see Welzel 2002; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003), freedom rights are essential because they give people a legal space to exert autonomous choices in their private and public activities. Hence, the freedom rights performance is a prime indicator of a democracy's intrinsic quality. This insight is shared by both human rights theorists (Donnelly 1993; Haas 1996) and proponents of sustainable development (Anand and Sen 2000; Sen 2001).

The increased attention to freedom rights meets two other lines of research that have been strengthened in recent times: one is concerned with the role of elite corruption as a mechanism that undermines rule of law (Lipset and Lenz 2000; Olson, Swarna, and Sany 2000; Rose 2001), and the other is concerned with elite closure against women as a phenomenon that reflects violations of the equality of rights (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Paxton 2000).

Low corruption among elites and openness of elites to potentially underprivileged groups, such as women, are essential to the effectiveness of given freedom rights. The presence of legal guarantees for freedom does not mean that these rights work in practice. A formal democracy, such as India, is not necessarily equal to an effective democracy in which people face no social barriers that prevent them from exerting their rights (Heller 2000). One of the conditions needed to make given freedom rights effective is that a society's decision makers respect and follow these rights in their activities. Wide spread corruption among decision makers, by contrast, indicates that elites make their service to the people dependent on bribes instead of rights—which violates the rule of law. Without rule of law, given freedom rights are worthless no matter what their status is in a constitution. Hence, low elite corruption, or what I call “elite integrity,” is an indispensable factor in making freedom rights effective (Lipset and Lenz 2000; Rose 2001).

Another indicator of effective democracy is elite openness to potentially underprivileged groups, such as women (Paxton 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2003). A nation's constitution may grant equal freedom rights to both women and men, but to the degree that women are excluded from the elites, these rights are ineffective for half of the population (and even a majority in most countries). Heavy under-representation of women among a nation's decision makers indicates that there are discriminating social sanctions at work, preventing women from exerting their rights as effectively as their male compatriots. Hence, female representation is a crucial factor in making given freedom rights fully inclusive and effective. The ideal of democracy prescribes an equal use of freedom rights for both sexes. It is therefore legitimate to measure a society's democratic performance against this ideal. Thus, the degree of female representation among elites, or "elite openness," is another core indicator of effective democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Recent research has emphasized the role of corruption and female representation among elites, and few scholars will doubt that low corruption and high female representation among elites help to make democracy more effective. However, corruption and female representation have been examined in complete isolation from each other, as if these two factors had little in common. This is implausible because both corruption and female representation are basic characteristics of the quality of elites. These characteristics indicate the elites' responsiveness to ordinary people's rights and their openness to women as the largest underprivileged group in any society. In the following, I conceptualize low elite corruption as "elite integrity" and high female representation as "elite openness." Moreover, I present evidence that elite integrity and elite openness go closely together, converging in a common dimension that I interpret as an "elite quality factor." As I will show, elite quality operates as an efficacy factor that determines how effective given freedom rights are in practice. Depending on the scope of freedom rights that are legally guaranteed, there may be high or low levels of formal democracy. But it depends on the quality of elites as to how effective these rights are in practice.

On the other hand, elite quality is not an inherently independent phenomenon. Quite the contrary, the quality of elites reflects a pervasive mass-factor: a cultural shift towards rising emphasis on self-expression in which mass demands for accountable and inclusive elites are strengthened at the same time.

At this point I refer to work by Inglehart (1997) as well as Inglehart and Baker (2000). These authors have identified a broad dimension of survival vs. self-expression values that tends to unfold with growing human resources among the masses. But I go one step further. Following Welzel (2002), as well as Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003), I argue that there is an even broader dimension of Human Development that integrates (1) human resources, (2) self-expression values, (3) the quality of elites, and (4) effective democracy into one theme, in which each part widens the scope of choice in particular aspects of people's lives:

their means and resources, their beliefs and values, as well as their rights and institutions. Growing human choice on a mass-scale is the common denominator of all the components involved here.

In the first part, I describe the measures and data sources. The second part proceeds with quantitative analyses on the cross-national level, presenting evidence for the relationships described above. The third part ends with a theoretical conclusion, unfolding my theory of Human Development.

### **Data and Measurement**

ELITE INTEGRITY (i.e., low elite corruption): To measure elite integrity, I use the corruption perception scores from Transparency International.<sup>2</sup> These scores are expert ratings. They judge how corrupt the political, bureaucratic, and economic office holders of a country are, that is, in how far decision makers sell their services as “favors” for the price of a bribe. One indication of the validity of these estimates is that they strongly correlate with aggregate measures of the citizens’ perception of elite corruption in representative surveys (Rose 2001). The Transparency scores range from 1 to 100, with 100 indicating the greatest amount of corruption. Reversing these scores, one obtains a measure of law-abiding elite behavior or elite integrity. I use the most recent scores referring to the end 1990s.

ELITE OPENNESS (i.e., high female representation): To measure female representation, or elite openness, I use the “gender empowerment index” provided by the United Nations. This standardized index is based on the percentages of women that are represented in a country’s legislatures, in high ranking administrative offices, and in business management positions (see Human Development Report 2001 for description of data sources and scaling procedures). Female representation in high offices is a valuable measure of elite openness because women are the largest potentially discriminated group in any society, accounting almost everywhere for at least half of the population. The opportunities of women to shape their living conditions and to practice their rights effectively are diminished to the degree that women are excluded from the elites. Unequal opportunities and rights violate core principles of democracy. Hence, openness of elites to the female population is a core factor in making formal democracy effective. The gender empowerment index provided by the United Nations measures the degree of female representation on a scale from 0 to 1. I take measures referring to the end 1990s and use them as an indicator of elite openness.

SELF-EXPRESSION VALUES: I will show that core characteristics of the quality of elites, namely elite integrity and elite openness, reflect emancipative orientations among the masses. I operationalize emancipative orientations as self-expression values. In order to measure self-expression values I use the largest available database, the European/World Values Surveys, which cover 73 countries repre-

senting 80 percent of the world’s population.<sup>3</sup> I measure self-expression values using a scale of factor scores summarizing several attitudes that Inglehart and Baker (2000) have identified as indicators of self-expression values. I use data

**Table 1. The Dimension of Self-Expression Values**

Variables:	Levels of Analysis:		
	Individual level within nations (mean loadings)	Individual level across nations (pooled loadings)	Aggregate cross-national level
Strong self-expression values imply:			
- Tolerance of human diversity <sup>a)</sup>	.47	.68	.82
- Inclination to civic protest <sup>b)</sup>	.45	.65	.81
- Liberty aspirations <sup>c)</sup>	.54	.59	.82
- Trust in people <sup>d)</sup>	.54	.47	.64
- Self-satisfaction <sup>e)</sup>	.15	.44	.70
Weak self-expression values imply the opposite.			
Explained variance	23%	29%	54%
Number of cases	137	158,803	137
	national surveys	individuals	nation per wave units

*Notes:* Entries are factor loadings. Explorative principal components analysis (extraction of factors with ‘Eigenvalues’ above 1 advised), no rotation. *Source:* European/World Values Surveys I-IV.  
<sup>a)</sup> “Not mentioned” for “disliked neighbors” coded “1” and dichotomized against 0; scores added for neighbors with AIDS (V58) and homosexual neighbors (V60). Aggregate data are national averages on this 0-2 scale.  
<sup>b)</sup> “Already done” for “signing petitions (V118) coded “1” and dichotomized against “0.” Aggregate data are national percentages already done.  
<sup>c)</sup> Respondents’ first and second priorities for “giving people more say in important government decisions” and “protecting freedom of speech” (V106-107) added to a four-point index, assigning 3 points for both items on first and second rank, 2 points for one of these items on first rank, 1 point for one of these items on second rank and 0 for none of these items on first or second rank. Aggregate data are national averages on this 0-3 scale.  
<sup>d)</sup> Respondents believing “most people can be trusted” (V27) dichotomized as “1” against “0.” Aggregate data are national percentages of people trusting.  
<sup>e)</sup> 10-point rating scale for life satisfaction (V65). Aggregate data are national averages on this 1-10 scale.  
*Source:* Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003).

based on a replication of their analyses published in Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003). Table 1 is taken from this source.

The emancipative logic of self-expression values points to what Putnam (2000) and Dahl (2000) termed “enlightened understanding” or what Rawls (1993) calls a “rational sense of reciprocity.” People who have self-respect and emphasize their liberty tend to show great respect of the liberty of their fellow citizens. In a way, it is natural when people who emphasize their own liberty respect other people’s liberty as well. Self-expression values, in this sense, reflect the logic and the experience of mutual human exchange, which rests on giving and taking: people tend to treat their peers like they have been, and want to be treated, by them (Axelrod 1983). Thus, self-expression values do not only include an “ego-emphasizing” attitude, reflected in liberty aspirations<sup>4</sup> and an inclination to protest activities (such as signing petitions),<sup>5</sup> but also an attitude of openness

towards “alter-ego,” as reflected in tolerance of human diversity and interpersonal trust (see the footnotes in Table 1 for the operationalization of these variables).

Moreover, self-expression values are linked with greater life satisfaction, implying that striving for self-expression is embedded in human motivation in that it creates stronger feelings of fulfillment. Maslow has already emphasized this (1988:100). Additional support for this insight is given by recent results in experimental psychology, showing that people whose activities are targeted at “promotion” feel happier than people whose activities are directed towards “prevention” (Förster, Higgins, and Idson 1998).

As Table 1 shows, factor loadings increase systematically from the individual level within nations to the pooled individual level to the aggregate level across nations. The reasons for this phenomenon have been explained in Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003) and are only briefly mentioned here. First, there are pronounced mass tendencies within nations that bound individuals’ value orientations into a relatively small range. Individual-level variations within this range are to a large degree random. Thus, the linkage between individual-level attitudes is not clearly structured within nations: hence, the smallest factor loadings at the individual-level within nations. Second, variations in mass tendencies between national populations are more pronounced and less random than individual-level variations within nations. Therefore, taking cross-national variation into account by pooling individual-level data brings the linkage between individual-level attitudes more clearly to the fore: compared to the individual-level within nations, the factor loadings are larger at the pooled individual-level. Third, but still there are measurement errors at the individual level. Aggregating the data to the national level eliminates this measurement error (random deviations from a mean cancel each other out), making the linkage between mass attitudes even more evident: hence, the strongest factor loadings occur at the aggregate-level.

### **The Elite Quality Factor**

Figure 1 shows the relationship between contemporaneous measures of elite integrity and elite openness (see Appendix, Table A1 for an overview of all measurements). The graph shows a strikingly strong relationship, reflecting that rising levels of elite integrity go hand in hand with rising levels of elite openness.

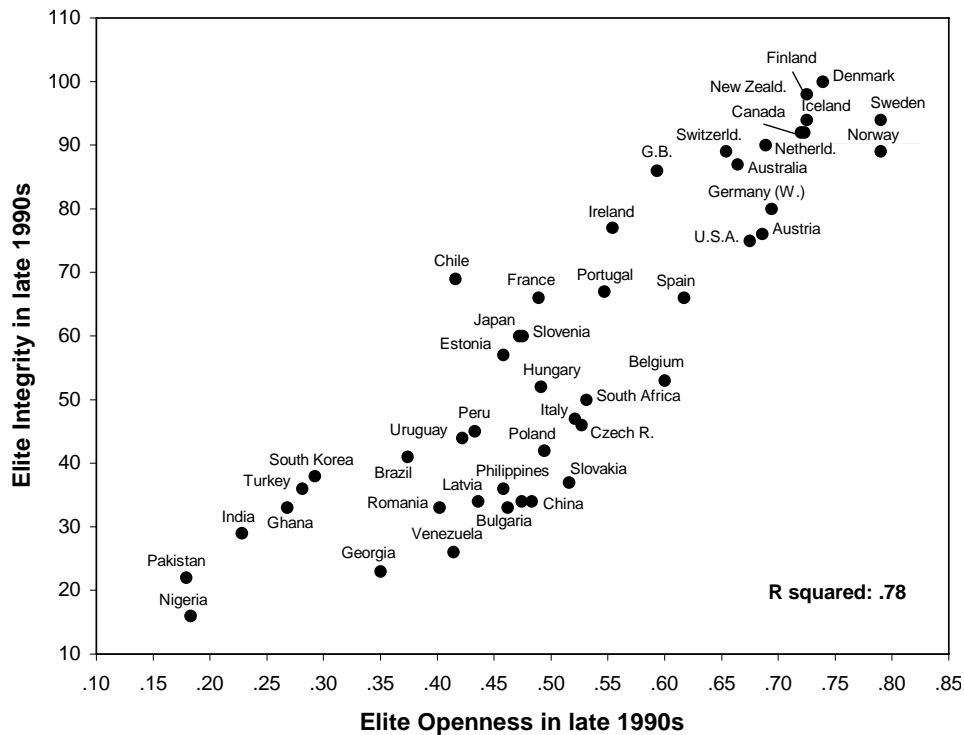
The close relationship shown in Figure 1 supports the argument that elite integrity and elite openness are twin elements, representing the same underlying dimension: the overall quality of elites. Clearly, this justifies summarizing elite integrity and elite openness into one factor scale, with little loss of information. Indeed, both variables correlate with a common underlying factor by  $r=.98$ . Hence, I calculated a factor scale adding z-standardized scales of elite integrity and elite openness, transforming the resulting index into a range from 0 to 1. In

the following, this factor scale is labeled as the “elite quality factor”:<sup>6</sup>

$$\text{Elite Quality Factor} = \text{Elite Integrity} + \text{Elite Openness}$$

The combination of elite integrity and elite openness reflects the “quality” of elites with respect to a particular feature of democracy: the effectiveness of

**Figure 1. Elite Openness and Elite Integrity**



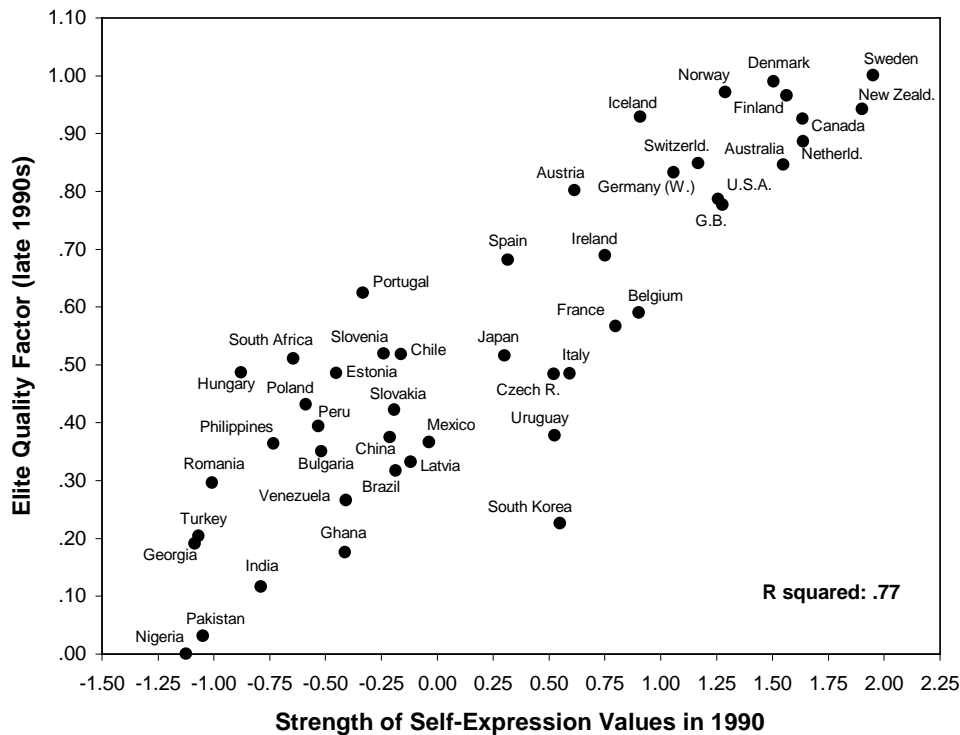
given freedom rights. And, this is true for both components of the elite quality measure. Elite integrity, on the one hand, indicates how far the elites abstain from corruption, thus, basing their service to the community on rights instead of bribes. Elite openness, on the other hand, reflects how far the elites are open to the female population—which is a prime criterion for gender-equality in the practice of given opportunities and rights.

Unlike other authors (see, for instance, O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Higley and Gunther 1992), I do not consider elite characteristics as something inherently independent. Instead, I believe that features of a nation’s mass culture have a strong imprint on elite characteristics. In particular, I hypothesize that emancipative orientations among the population are a powerful social force in shaping the quality of elites. Rising self-expression values make the public sensi-

tive to such moral questions as equal civic rights, gender discrimination, and corruption—putting elites under the pressure of mass expectations that are targeted at equal and effective freedom rights. Evidence from the World Values Surveys, indeed, shows that publics that place strong emphasis on self-expression have large proportions of people who refuse the statement “men make better political leaders than women” and who are sensitive of “how much respect there is for human rights in their country.”

The latter findings nourish the expectation that the strength of self-expression values among the public fuel elite integrity and elite openness. The evidence supports this assumption. Cross-national variations in the strength of self-expression values among the public explain 71 percent of the cross-national differences in elite integrity and 73 percent in elite openness (not documented here). And, since elite integrity and elite openness represent a common factor of elite quality, it is logical that self-expression values must have a similarly strong impact on precisely that factor. As Figure 2 demonstrates, this is actually the case: cross-national differences in self-expression values explain 77 percent of the cross-national differences in the quality of elites.

**Figure 2. The Impact of Emancipative Values on the Quality of Elites**



Reflecting on the causality in the relationship between self-expression values and elite quality, one must recognize the temporal order of the variables in Figure 2. The self-expression values in this figure refer to the year 1990, while the measures of elite quality refer to the end 1990s, which is almost ten years later. Since effects cannot precede their causes, the quality of elites at the end 1990s cannot have produced self-expression values among mass publics in 1990. But let me elaborate a bit more on the question of causality.

### **Elite Behavior and Mass Culture**

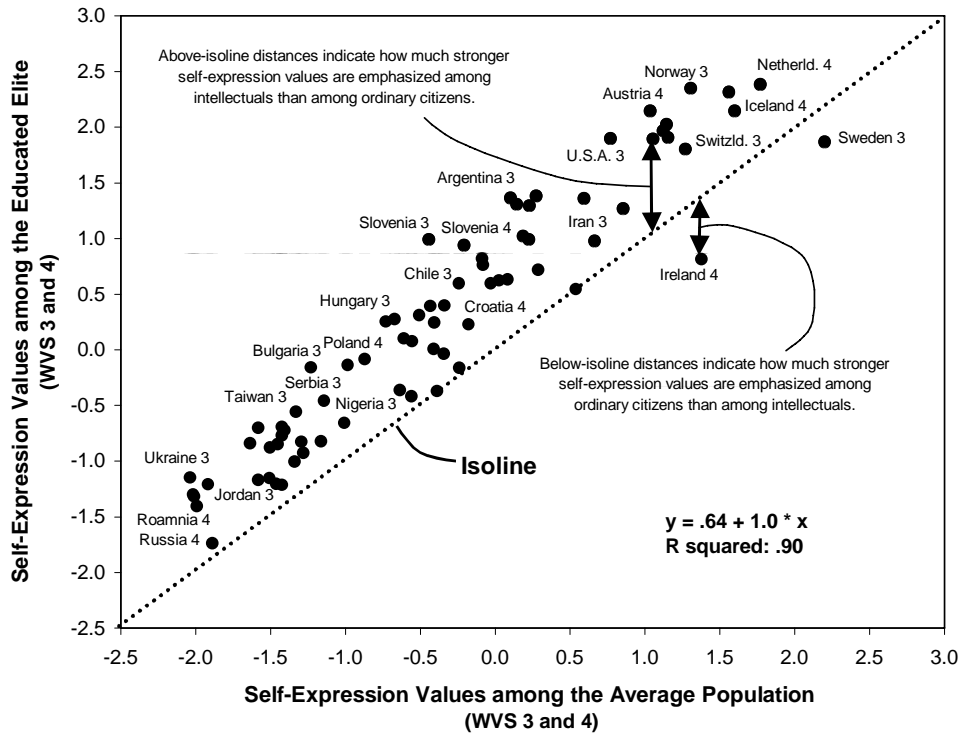
The linkage between elite quality and self-expression values depicts the relationship between elite behavior and mass culture. The causality of this relationship may be rather complex, such that there is not a one-directional effect of mass culture on elite behavior but a reciprocal relationship. For instance, the elites may not avoid corruption and open their ranks for women because they are pushed to do so by mass expectations deriving from self-expression values. Instead, the elites themselves may have internalized emancipative orientations that channel their behavior towards less corruption and less exclusion of women. But even so, the question remains whether the elites' own value orientations either shape or reflect those of the masses.

Almost all research on elite attitudes indicates that elites have distinctive orientations that differ considerably from non-elites (see, for instance, Brint 1984; Dalton 1985; Iversen 1994). In particular, elites tend to be more liberal, more progressive, and more postmaterialistic than the average population. However, most of this research has been done within Western societies, with limited evidence on the cross-national variation between elite orientations. Hence, we have little knowledge which attitudinal differences are larger: the differences between elites across nations or the within-nation differences between elites and non-elites. Considering this question, the World Values Surveys provide a reasonable testing ground because the cross-national variance of this global sample can hardly be larger.

Although the World Values Surveys are not elite surveys, one can use a crucial insight of elite research in order to take advantage of these data: elites in any society are disproportionately recruited from the most highly educated layers of the population. Hence, people with university education form the primary pool of elite recruitment. Given that this is true, one can use the orientations of people with university education as a proxy for the orientations that prevail among the elites. Based on this premise, Figure 3 plots for each nation the strength of self-expression values among people with university education against the strength of self-expressions found among the rest of the population.<sup>7</sup>

The "isoline" in this figure marks all locations of national publics that are possible on the condition that the educated elite and ordinary citizens place identical emphasis on self-expression values. Accordingly, deviations from the "iso-

**Figure 3. Emancipative Values among the Educated Elite and the broader Masses**



line” measure the margin by which the educated elite’s emphasis on self-expression surpasses or falls below that of the ordinary citizens. Upward-deviations from the “isoline” indicate how much more emphasis the educated elite places on self-expression. Downward-deviations indicate how much less emphasis the educated elite places on self-expression. As one can see, almost all national publics are located above the “isoline.” This implies that a nation’s educated elite usually places stronger emphasis on self-expression values than the average population. One may interpret this finding as a universal emancipative effect of education: university education tends to promote emancipative orientations.

However, the margins by which the educated deviate from the population (consider the distances from the “isoline”) are very small and almost constant (varying slightly around a .64 standard unit). Indeed, the distances from the “isoline” are much smaller than the distances between the different national publics. Accordingly, differences in emancipative orientations are much more pronounced between nations than between the educated and non-educated within nations. In fact, cross-national differences between the emancipative orientations of the educated are to 90 percent explained by corresponding differences between the masses. Hence, although there is a universal effect of education making the educated more emancipative than the broader public, the margin of this effect is bound

within the broader public's central tendency.

The broader public's central tendency has a much stronger impact on the emancipative orientations of the educated than has their education. This is a clear indication that the educated do not and cannot freely choose the level of emancipative values that they might consider as appropriate for the rest of the population to follow. Otherwise, much larger differences between the values of the educated and those of the masses would have to be observed: showing that the educated could run ahead at any level of emancipative values, leaving the masses behind with a considerable catch up time-lag, resulting in much larger differences than the ones observed in this cross-section. What we see, however, is that the emancipative orientations of the educated rest closely on those of the masses, being only slightly enhanced by higher education.

Provided that elites are primarily recruited from the educated stratum of the population, these findings suggest that even if the elites are guided by their own values to avoid corruption and female exclusion, these values will rest on corresponding values among the masses. In other words, self-expression values among the masses channel elite values and behavior towards greater integrity and openness. Thus, the quality of elites is derivative of mass cultural features, such as those reflected in self-expression values.

To be sure, this does not exclude the presence of reciprocal effects—such that high elite quality, once it is in place, unfolds a positive reversal effect in strengthening already existing self-expression values. But even if so, this does not rule out a prior effect of self-expression values on elite quality—which is my core argument.

Yet, I cannot rule out the possibility that the effect of self-expression values on elite quality simply reflects an artifact of other social forces. There are at least three broader social forces that might be responsible for this effect: religious traditions, past democratic experience, and economic development.

### **Alternative Explanations**

**RELIGIOUS TRADITION:** Following Max Weber (1958 [1904]), sociologists pronounced that religious traditions have a lasting impact on a society's overall make-up. More specifically, Protestant societies have been described as being more attuned to individual liberty, freedom rights, rule of law, and gender equality. For instance, Protestant societies have been among the first to introduce female suffrage. More recently, Huntington (1996) outlined that liberal traditions once primarily typical of Protestant societies are nowadays shared by many Catholic societies as well. There is a much sharper division between “Western Christianity” (i.e., Protestantism and Catholicism) and “Oriental” societies (non-Western religions of Eurasia, including Orthodox Christianity), the latter being historically linked to the tradition of “Asian Despotism.”

Provided that both elite integrity and elite openness are positively influ-

enced by liberal traditions and negatively by despotic traditions, one would assume that the liberal tradition of the “West” is reflected in comparatively high levels of elite quality among Protestant and Catholic societies; while the despotic tradition of the “Orient” is reflected in a low elite quality among societies with a non-Western religious tradition.

The religious tradition of a society can be measured by the religious composition of its population. In historically Protestant societies, Protestants are still the largest religious group and in historically Islamic societies, Muslims are the largest religious group and so on; while societies that were influenced by different religious traditions show a mixed religious composition. I gathered data on the proportions of a society’s religious groups<sup>8</sup> (Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, “other believers”<sup>9</sup>) and tested if the size of these religious groups is linked with elite quality. Actually, this turned out to be the case: the proportion of people of a Western religion (Catholics and Protestants) has a significantly positive impact, and the proportion of people of a non-Western belief has a significantly negative effect on the quality of elites. To be more specific, among Western beliefs, Protestantism has a stronger positive effect than Catholicism; while, among non-Western beliefs, Islam has a stronger negative effect than other non-Western beliefs.

To capture the full explanatory power of the religious composition, I added the proportions of all major religious groups—after having them multiplied by “impact factors,” that is, weights<sup>10</sup> whose signs indicate the direction and whose magnitudes indicate the strength of their influence on elite quality. This “impact weighted” religious composition captures a Western versus non-Western religion dimension, with Muslims and Protestants as the most extreme opposites at its two poles:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Impact Weighted Religious Composition} = \\ .65*\% \text{Protestants} + .03*\% \text{Catholics} - .23*\% \text{Orthodox} - .45*\% \text{Muslims} \\ - .31*\% \text{Other Believers} \end{aligned}$$

**DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE:** Political scientists have claimed that a country’s past regime experience is important for many of its current features (Linz and Stepan 1996). As these authors maintain, this is most evident for the length of a country’s experience with democracy. There are obvious reasons that the length of the democratic experience should have an influence on both components of the elite quality factor.

In the long run, the existence of democratic institutions should produce higher rates of elite integrity because democracy institutionalizes sanctions against corrupt elites—sanctions that do not exist in autocracies (Dahl 2000). For instance, democracies entitle people to deselect a ruling party if its leaders proved to be corrupt. Moreover, democracies establish press freedom and informational pluralism, which enables the media to monitor and delegitimize corrupt elite behavior. Likewise, democratic institutions provide the female population access

to more channels of public activity and better judicial protection against discrimination than do other regimes. Hence, other conditions being equal, elite integrity as well as elite openness should be positively linked with democracy.

Provided that democratic institutions indeed have these effects, they should be the stronger, the longer the time democracy has had to unfold these effects. Hence, the length of a society's democratic experience should increase both components of the elite quality.

I measure the democratic experience by the number of years a country spent under democratic institutions. Since this experience should be temporally prior to the dependent variable, elite quality, I measure the number of years under democracy until 1990.<sup>11</sup>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: There are obvious reasons why economic development, too, should increase both components of the elite quality factor. Economic development is linked with rising mass prosperity, rising levels of formal education, and growing access to information. This process increases the monetary, technological, intellectual, and informational resources of the public, equipping people with greater means and skills to exert popular pressure on parasitic elites, which should tend to increase elite integrity.

In addition, economic development should tend to increase elite openness to women. Economic development puts a premium on professional activities that involve cognitive rather than manual work. Since physiological sex differences are irrelevant for cognitive work, professional activities in modern societies are far less dependent on sexual differences. This is reflected in a growing female participation in both the labor market and higher education. Moreover, leadership roles in developed societies are based on formal education. Since larger proportions of women tend to acquire high levels of formal education, their chances to enter the elites are growing. Hence, other things being equal, elite openness to women should improve with economic development.

I measure economic development by the human resources available to the masses, using an index of human resources provided by Vanhanen (1997). This index measures the accumulation and distribution of material, monetary, and intellectual resources and combines them multiplicatively to produce an overall index of human resources.<sup>12</sup> I prefer this composite measure to single indicators, such as per capita GDP, in order to operate with a more complete measure of human resources.<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted that aggregate measures of human resources reflect a long-term factor. Societal stocks of human resources are not only present once they are measured but have accumulated over long periods of time. Consequently, a society that shows contemporary high levels of human resources had already been on high resource-levels for quite a while. Hence, although the measure of human resources I am using refers to the late 1980s, this measure is indicative of resource-levels in earlier years as well.

### Controlling Alternative Explanations

How do religious tradition, democratic experience, and available human resources perform in predicting the quality of elites compared to self-expression values? Is the effect of self-expression values shown in Figure 2 simply an artifact of these factors? I guess “no.” For even if these three factors have independent effects on the quality of elites, it is implausible that these effects do completely bypass the impact of prevailing mass values. In my view, the social force that pushes elites

**Table 2. Explaining the Quality of Elites: Regression Analyses**

Dependent Variable: <b>Elite Quality Factor</b> in late 1990s (elite integrity plus elite openness)				
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>
Predictors:	B (T-value)	B (T-value)	B (T-value)	B (T-value)
Self-Expression Values <sup>a)</sup>	.26*** (12.05)	.21*** (7.56)	.24*** (7.06)	.21** (4.31)
Religious Tradition <sup>b)</sup>		.003** (3.19)		
Democratic Experience <sup>c)</sup>			.0003 (.82)	
Human Resources <sup>d)</sup>				.003 (1.37)
Constant	.48*** (22.76)	.45*** (22.59)	.45*** (13.45)	.37*** (10.11)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.76	.80	.76	.77
N	46	46	46	46

a) Factor scale, scores aggregated at the national level (see Table 1, right column).

b) Impact weighted religious composition during 1980s (factor scale).

c) Years under democracy until 1990.

d) Vanhanen-index of Human Resources, late 1980s.

Significance Levels: \*  $p < .100$  \*\*  $p < .010$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

for more integrity and openness is the public and its demands, rather than anonymous social factors, such as religious tradition, democratic experience, and human resources. For the reasons just mentioned, these factors probably also have an effect, but one that is less direct and at least in part mediated through their impact on mass values. Hence, religious tradition, democratic experience, and human resources may well add to the effect that self-expression values have on elite integrity and elite openness. But it does not seem likely that these factors simply rule out the impact of self-expression values.

Regression analyses in Table 2 demonstrate that the impact of self-expression values on the quality of elites is not just an artifact of other social factors: not only does this effect remains robust against controls for religious composition,

regime experience and human resources; self-expression values also show the most significant single effect on the quality of elites.

Controlling for self-expression values, only the religious tradition has a significant effect on the quality of elites, adding 4 percent of explained variance to the sole impact of self-expression values (compare models 1 and 2). By contrast, neither the past democratic experience nor human resource levels add a significant effect to that of self-expression values on elite quality. The democratic experience, in particular, is literally irrelevant. With human resources, the case is different insofar as their effect comes closer to the significance-hurdle and reduces to some degree the T-value of self-expression values. As I will show in the next section, this reflects that human resources absorb part of the effect of self-expression values because self-expression values themselves are shaped to a considerable degree by human resources.

### What Shapes Self-Expression Values?

Self-expression values are the strongest single force in shaping the quality of elites. But what, in turn, shapes the rise of self-expression values? Regression analyses in Table 3 provide some insights. A society's past democratic experience, its religious tradition,<sup>14</sup> and its accumulated human resources all have a significant effect on self-expression values. In fact, self-expression values tend to be the

**Table 3. Explaining the Strength of Self-Expression Values among Populations: Regression Analyses**

Dependent Variable: <b>Self-Expression Values</b> about 1990 (factor scores)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Predictors:	B (T-value)	B (T-value)	B (T-value)	B (T-value)
Religious Tradition <sup>a)</sup>	.02*** (4.94)	.01*** (4.14)		.02*** (4.12)
Democratic Experience <sup>b)</sup>	.01*** (7.31)		.004* (2.12)	.003* (1.77)
Human Resources <sup>c)</sup>		.04*** (12.71)	.04*** (8.48)	.03*** (7.52)
Constant	-.51*** (-6.23)	-.99*** (-12.71)	-1.05*** (12.42)	-.94*** (-11.52)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.68	.82	.79	.83
N	71	73	71	71

a) Impact weighted religious composition during 1980s (factor scale).

b) Years under democracy until 1990.

c) Vanhanen-Index of Human Resources, late 1980s.

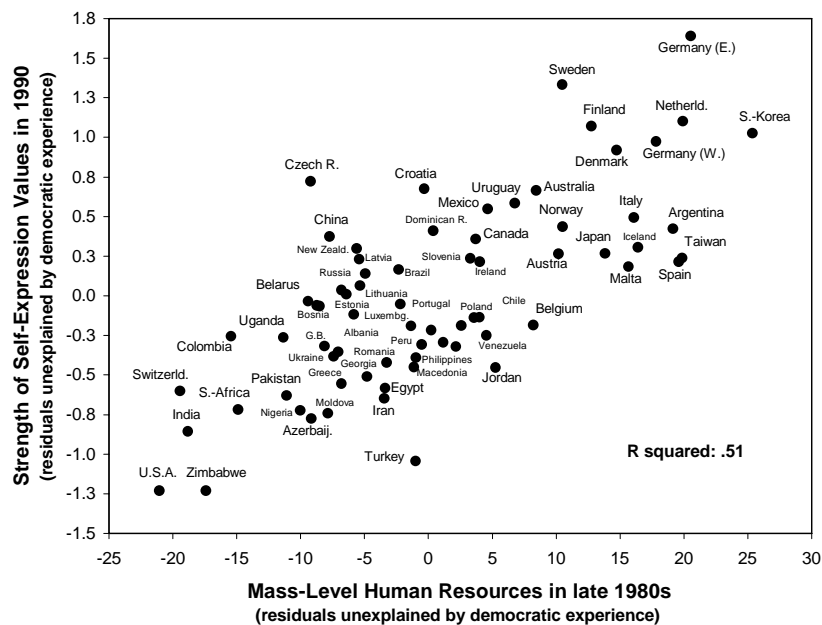
Significance Levels: \*  $p < .100$  \*\*  $p < .010$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

stronger, (1) the longer a society's past experience with democracy, (2) the stronger the presence of Western religious traditions and the absence of non-Western religious traditions, and (3) the greater its accumulated human resources. These three effects account for 83 percent of the cross-national differences in self-expression values.

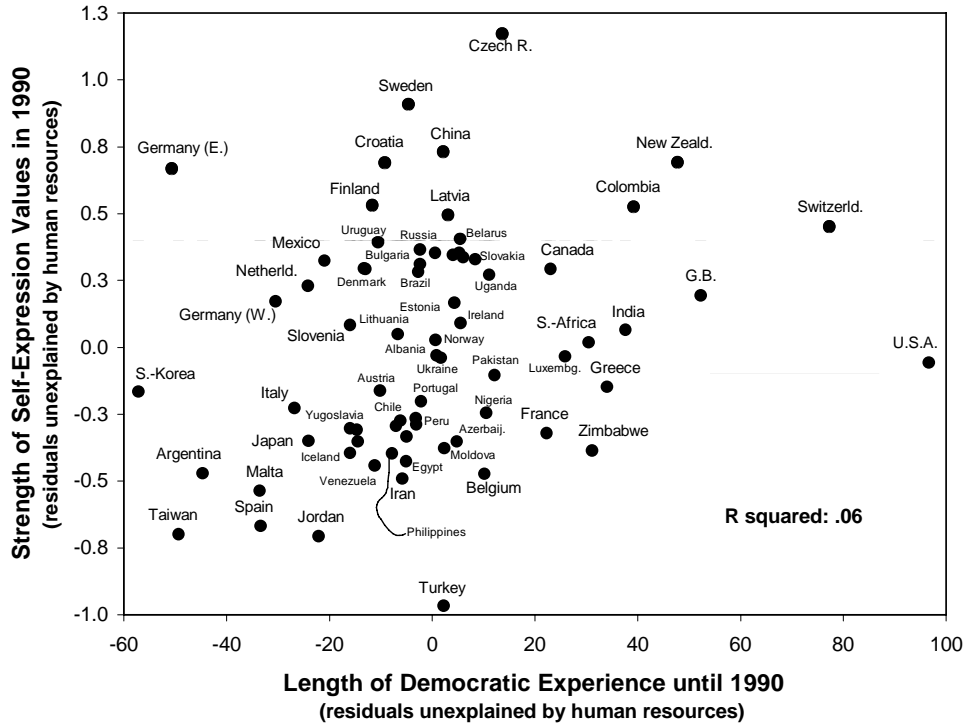
Yet, the relative strength and significance of these effects differ greatly. To reach this conclusion, compare models 1 to 3 with the full model (model 4). Removing the democratic experience from the full model (see model 2) reduces the explained variance in self-expression values by only 1 percent; and removing religious tradition (see model 3) reduces the explained variance by 4 percent; but removing human resources (see model 1) reduces it by 15 percent. Accordingly, a society's accumulated human resources have, by far, the strongest impact on its emphasis on self-expression values; while the democratic experience, once again, turns out to have an almost negligible effect.

To illustrate this finding, Figures 4A and 4B depict the partial effects of human resources and the democratic experience on self-expression values, under mutual controls. Isolating the effect of human resources on self-expression values from the effect of the democratic experience (Figure 4A), human resources still explain 51 percent of the variance in self-expression values. By contrast, isolating the effect of the democratic experience from that of human resources (Figure 4B), explains only 6 percent in the variance of self-expression values. These figures

Figure 4A. The Impact of Human Resources on Emancipative Values  
(Effect isolated from Democratic Experience)



**Figure 4B. The Impact of Democratic Experience on Emancipative Values  
(Effect isolated from Human Resources)**



illustrate clearly that self-expression values reflect primarily the presence of human resources—irrespective of the democratic experience. Thus, the emergence of an emancipative culture is hardly derivative of pre-existing democratic institutions. This finding strongly supports Putnam (1992) and Inglehart (1997) against the claims of Muller and Seligson (1994) and Jackman and Miller (1998) who have argued that a democratic culture is endogenous to democratic institutions.

Comparing these findings with those of Table 2 points to the following conclusions. First, controlling for self-expression values, past democratic experience has no direct effect on the quality of elites; at best, the democratic experience has a negligible indirect effect that operates through its minor impact on self-expression values—the factor with the strongest direct effect on elite quality. Second, controlling for self-expression values, the religious tradition has a weak direct effect on the quality of elites and a similarly weak indirect effect operating through its small effect on self-expression values. Third, controlling for self-expression values, human resources have no direct effect on the quality of elites but a strong indirect effect that operates through their pronounced impact on self-expression values.

These findings can be summarized into two major effects: a society's self-expression values are most strongly influenced by its accumulated human resources; but even controlling for human resources as their strongest predictor, self-expression values still have the most powerful direct effect on the quality of elites.

### **Formal Democracy, Effective Democracy, and Façade Democracy**

I argued that elite integrity and elite openness converge in an overall factor of elite quality. The quality of elites, I argued further, indicates how effective given freedom rights work in a society's practice. The quality of elites, in other words, operates as an efficacy factor. But the quality of elites is by no means indicative of the *scope* of rights that is made effective. The quality of the elites may be so high that it makes a given scope of freedom rights fully effective, but precisely the scope of these rights may be very narrow. This situation is unlikely but logically possible. It would correspond to an authoritarian regime whose elites are almost uncorrupt and very open to women. In this case, citizens would not be deprived of their rights by elite corruption and women would not be hindered more than men to exert their rights, but still these rights could be small. Given rights would be fully effective but the scope of these rights would be narrow. Certainly no one would characterize such a situation as an effective democracy.

These reflections clarify that the quality of elites—although it makes given rights more effective—*cannot* compensate for deficiencies in the scope of rights. Hence, in order to obtain a meaningful measure of effective democracy, one must operationalize the interaction between the scope of freedom rights<sup>15</sup> and the quality of elites as the factor that makes these rights more or less effective.

Doing this in a way that does not allow the elite quality factor to compensate for deficiencies in the scope of rights requires a weighting procedure: I weight a given scope of freedom rights by the elite quality factor, measured in fractions from 0 to 1. In this case, the elite quality factor cannot do more than reproduce a given scope of freedom rights. Even if we have a maximum elite quality of 1.0 (no elite corruption and fully proportional representation of women), this factor cannot multiply a narrow scope of freedom rights. The elite quality factor can only make effective the scope of rights that is given: autocracy remains autocracy, whatever the quality of the elites. On the other hand, low elite quality can heavily devalue a wide scope of freedom rights, creating large variances in the degree of "effective" democracy among "formal" democracies.

A wide scope of freedom rights, or formal democracy, still is a necessary condition to reach a high score in effective democracy, but it is not enough. The elite quality factor must be also on a high level, which is realistic. Imagine a country whose constitution includes a full range of freedom rights and imagine this country is governed by highly corrupt elites that exclude women almost completely from their ranks. Wouldn't it be justified to conclude in such a case that

people, and women in particular, are deprived of their constitutional rights, leaving these rights largely ineffective? My answer is “yes” and so I measure effective democracy as follows:

$$\begin{matrix} \text{Effective Democracy} = & \text{Formal Democracy} * & \text{Elite Quality Factor} \\ \text{(Percentages)} & \text{(Percentages)} & \text{(Fractions from 0 to 1)} \end{matrix}$$

where Formal Democracy measures the scope of institutionalized freedom rights, and where the Elite Quality Factor summarizes measures of elite integrity and openness.

How are formal democracy and the elite quality factor related to effective democracy? Figures 5A and 5B display an interesting result. Obviously, the elite quality factor and formal democracy have a very different relationship to effective democracy, although this result is in no way pre-determined by the way I combine these components to create the measure of effective democracy. While the elite quality factor shows a strongly linear relationship to effective democracy, formal democracy deviates largely from effective democracy: huge differences in the lower four fifths of formal democracy do not create corresponding differences in

Figure 5A. Formal Democracy and Effective Democracy

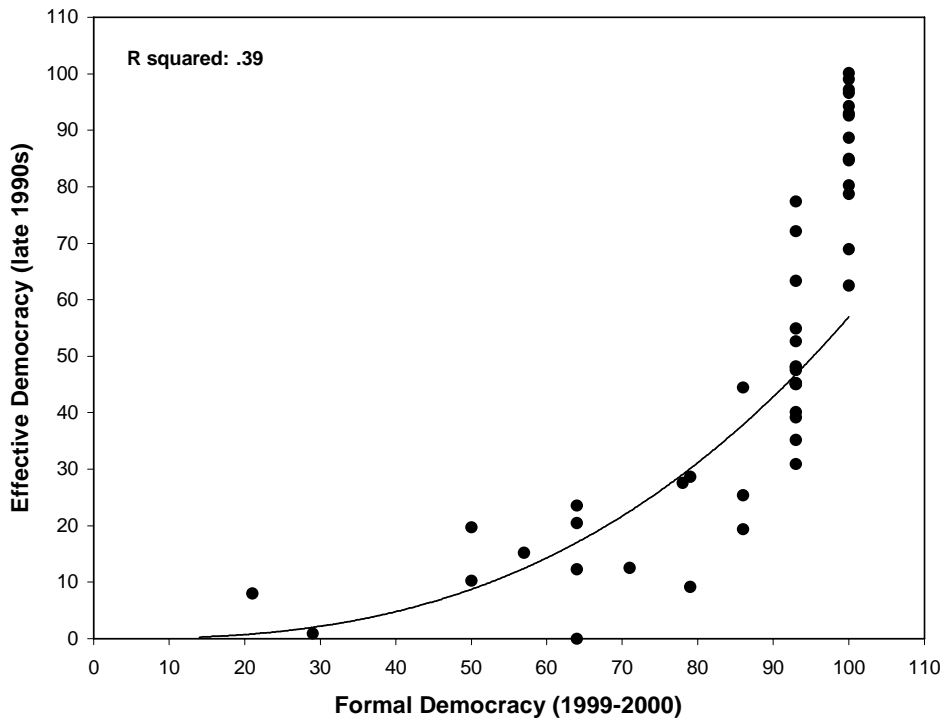
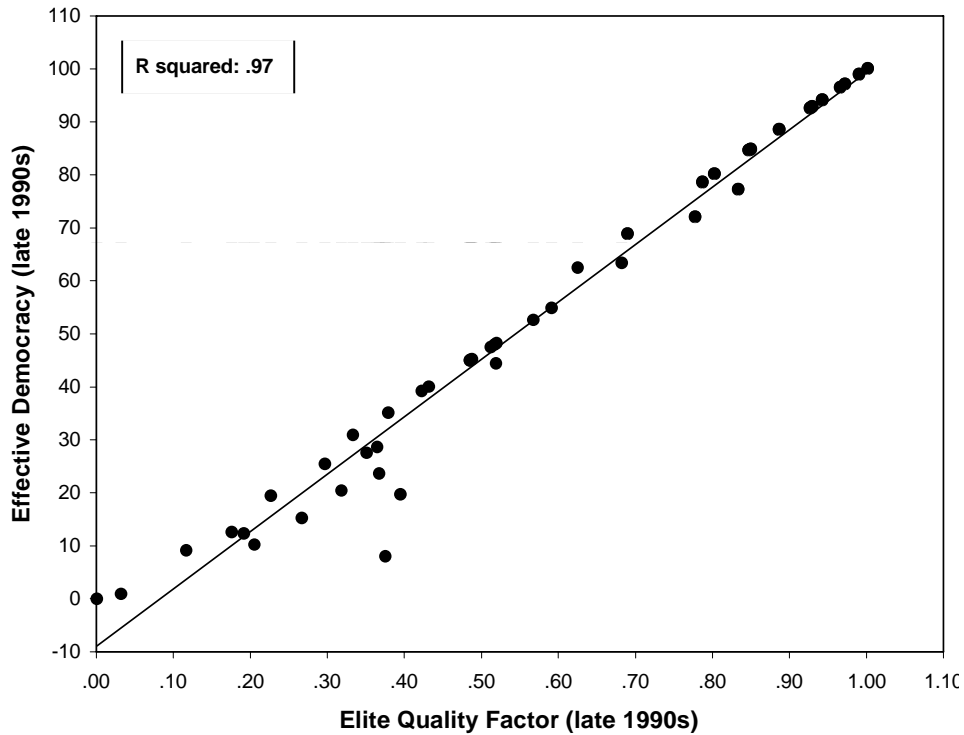


Figure 5B. The Quality of Elites and Effective Democracy



effective democracy; whereas strong homogeneity in the upper fifth of formal democracy allows for large variations in effective democracy.

According to this result, there are nations, such as India and China, that differ greatly in their levels of formal democracy, but high elite corruption and strong elite closure against women devalue these differences considerably: whether a constitution contains many or few freedom rights does not make much of a difference, if these rights are ineffective. On the other hand, many nations that share similar high levels of formal democracy show huge differences in elite corruption and elite closure, producing large differences in effective democracy. In summary, large differences in formal democracy can result in little differences in effective democracy and low differences in formal democracy can translate into large differences of effective democracy.

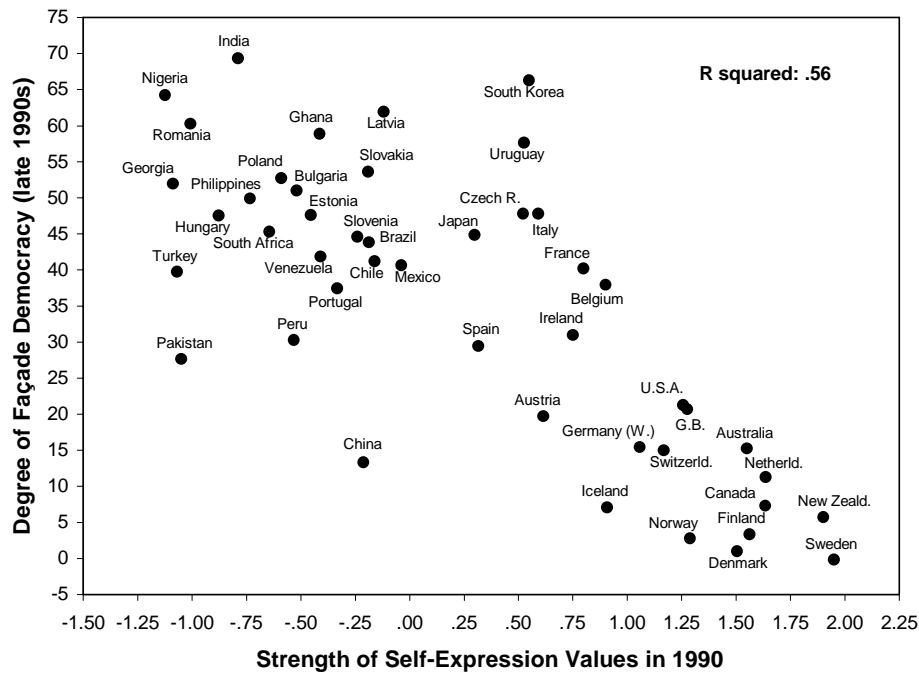
The finding that degrees of formal democracy deviate strikingly from effective democracy, while the elite quality factor is strongly in line with effective democracy, is crucial. It demonstrates that the quality of elites operates as a force that rectifies formal democracy's aberrations from effective democracy. And, since the elite quality factor is itself strongly influenced by self-expression values, this factor shapes democracy in a way that brings it in line with emancipative mass

values. Thus, while variations in *formal* democracy are to some degree random to self-expression values, variations in *effective* democracy correspond systematically with these values.

To be sure, where self-expression values are strong, there is almost always a high degree of formal democracy: in each society in which the public's emphasis on self-expression is stronger than in Croatia, the level of formal democracy reaches at least 70 percent of the possible maximum. Self-expression values are therefore a sufficient condition to create high levels of formal democracy. But high levels of formal democracy can also exist in societies whose citizens place little emphasis on self-expression values: societies who place the same or weaker emphasis on self-expression than the Croats can be on almost any level of formal democracy. Hence, self-expression values are a sufficient but not a necessary condition to create formal democracy.

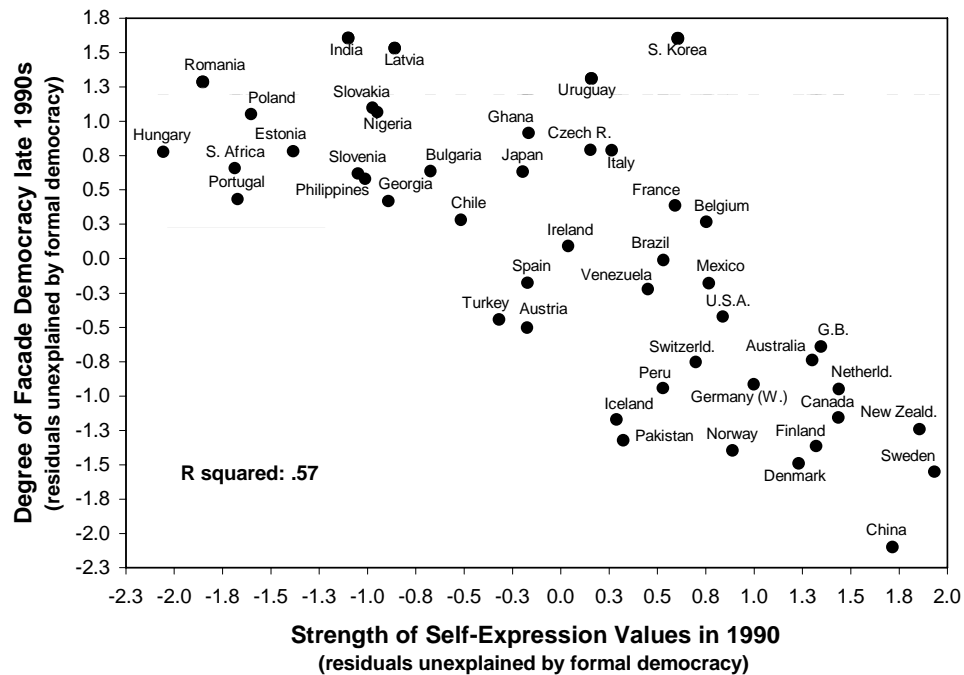
Formal democracy is random to emancipative cultures in the sense that a high degree of formal democracy can exist in any culture, whether self-expression values are strong or not. But when formal democracy exists in a culture with little emphasis on self-expression, the quality of the elites is usually very poor: translating the relatively high degree of formal democracy into a low degree of effective democracy. On the other hand, when formal democracy is present in an

**Figure 6A. The Impact of Emancipative Values on Façade-Democracy**



emancipative culture, the elite quality factor is usually very high, giving formal democracy its full effectiveness.

**Figure 6B. The Impact of Emancipative Values on Façade Democracy**  
(Effect isolated from Levels of Formal Democracy)



Precisely in those cases where the degree of effective democracy is much lower than the degree of formal democracy, it is because of a poor quality of the elites—in response to a weak emancipative culture. This can be demonstrated using the difference between formal democracy and effective democracy as a measure of façade democracy:

$$\text{Façade Democracy} = \text{Formal Democracy} - \text{Effective Democracy}$$

According to this measure, the degree of façade democracy is larger the more the level of formal democracy exceeds the level of effective democracy (the reverse case is impossible). In other words, façade democracy shrinks as the gap between formal and effective democracy closes. In the best case, the degree of façade democracy is zero.

Consider now Figure 6A. As this figure demonstrates, the degree of façade democracy shrinks systematically with the strength of self-expression values among publics. In other words, the stronger the emancipative imprint of a

mass culture, the weaker the façade character of democracy. The only outliers in this respect are China and Pakistan who show a surprisingly low level of façade democracy given the weakness of emancipative values among their populations. This, however, is due to the fact that both China and Pakistan have very low levels of formal democracy, such that there can be no large gap between formal and effective democracy. Therefore, Figure 6B controls for the level of formal democracy. China and Pakistan are no longer outliers and the same finding occurs again: the degree of façade democracy shrinks systematically with increasing self-expression values among the masses.

According to these findings, rising self-expression values represent a social force that tends to close the gap between formal and effective democracy. There can be any level of formal democracy, irrespective of the strength of self-expression values among the population. But strong self-expression values among the masses are needed to produce the elite quality that makes formal democracy effective. Hence, effective democracy is much more closely linked to the emancipative force of self-expression values than is formal democracy. Formal democracy is a less systematic and more random phenomenon than effective democracy.

### **Conclusion**

Although various factors play an important role in creating effective democracy, a major part of the story can be reduced to an emancipative sequence: (1) accumulated human resources on a mass-scale tend to strengthen people's emphasis on self-expression values; (2) mass-level self-expression values in turn fuel elite integrity and elite openness; (3) these elite characteristics converge in an joint factor of elite quality that increases the effectiveness of given levels of formal democracy.

Asking for the logic of this sequence, one can identify one underlying theme: Human Development. Following Welzel (2002), as well as Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003), I conceptualize Human Development as the growth of human autonomy and choice in major aspects of people's lives. Available human resources are the most existential contribution to human autonomy and choice, providing people with the means and skills that widen the range of possible activities. If growing human resources reduce existential constraints on human autonomy and choice, people begin to place more emphasis on self-expression, giving rise to an emancipative culture in which human autonomy and choice are a highly valued. Rising self-expression values, in turn, fuel elite integrity and elite openness, since self-expression values are inherently linked with mass expectations that are targeted at making the elites responsive and inclusive. Elite integrity and elite openness converge in an efficacy factor: this factor makes effective the choices to which people are entitled by formal rights. This eventually results in effective democracy—the institutional reflection of growing human autonomy and choice among the masses.

In summary, mass-level human resources, self-expression values, the quality of elites, and effective democracy are linked through the emancipative logic of Human Development. With its common focus on human choice, this overarching process of Human Development champions an intrinsic value of human nature. For making choices is the most typical ability of the human species.

It reflects an existential logic that the sequence of Human Development starts with economic development. The economy signifies a society's patterns of physical subsistence. This is, without doubt, the sphere where the most existential conditions of a society originate. These existential conditions tend to be reflected in a society's culture. Self-expression values that emphasize human choice do not emerge in poor societies where scarce resources impose severe existential constraints on human choice. Although self-expression values manifest themselves in ways that reinforce their comfortable economic conditions, such reciprocal effects do not completely reverse the causal arrow. An emancipative culture is not completely derivative of advantageous economic conditions, but it is to a large degree.

Similarly, we consider it logical that our model assigns causal priority to culture over institutions. Culture includes the values and beliefs that define which sorts of institutions are more easily accepted and practiced. Hence, institutional designs (and even more so their efficacy) tend to reflect culture. This reflection, too, manifests itself in ways that reinforce its cultural conditions. But again, such reciprocal effects cannot completely reverse the causal arrow. Democratic institutions can be designed from scratch, but how they function is largely influenced by a culture's emancipative outlook. Unfortunately, the reverse way does not work: an emancipative culture that sustains democracy cannot simply be designed through institutional engineering. A well-written constitution is not enough to make it work, as the historical evidence of crumbling democracies has shown.

I do not claim that history has always followed a progressive path of Human Development, as described here. Quite the contrary, Human Development is a very recent phenomenon in history because it presumes mass-levels of human resources that have nowhere been reached earlier than after World War II. Although *formal* democracy is an older phenomenon, the levels of *effective* democracy that some countries, such as those in Scandinavia, reach nowadays are very recent—thanks to unprecedented levels of elite integrity and elite openness.

Public pressure on elites was probably never greater than nowadays. One should consider, in this context, the increasingly important role of the global information flow. Never before in history have ordinary people on almost any place on the globe had such easy access to performance evaluations, enabling them to criticize their elites, as soon as they fall short of international standards in human rights, fair elections, corruption, or gender empowerment. Publics whose citizens place strong emphasis on emancipative values are readily prepared to measure their elites by the rankings, scores, and evaluations provided by such organizations as Freedom House or Transparency International.

## NOTES

- 1 I conceptualize effective democracy in terms of a society's democratic performance, not its economic performance. One can consider economic development as a precondition or consequence of democracy, but not as a definitional part of it. Democracy is an inherently institutional phenomenon. Hence, effective democracy can only mean how effective a democracy's prime institutions are realized in practice. Freedom rights are among democracy's prime institutions, and elite integrity as well as elite openness are core indicators of how far these rights are set into practice.
- 2 Data and methodological report can be obtained from Transparency International's homepage: <http://www.transparency.org>.
- 3 Data from the first to the third wave of the World Values Surveys can be obtained from the International Consortium for Political Research (ICPSR) under the study-number 6160. Data from the fourth wave are not yet public domain. More detailed information on questionnaires, methods, and fieldwork can be obtained from the World Values Study Group's homepage: <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu>. For the data provided by the European Values Study Group, see <http://evs.kub.nl> and Halman (2001).
- 4 Although these items are taken from the postmaterialism scale (see fn. 3 in Table 1), I have reason to distinguish them as "liberty aspirations" from other components of postmaterialism, namely preferences for a "less impersonal society," "beautiful cities," and "a society in which ideas count more than money." The postmaterialist interpretation implies that these are "new" values that emerged only recently in postindustrial societies. I, however, believe this is not true in the case of liberty aspirations, which are historically related to the rise of prosperous "middle classes" as, for instance, in ancient Athens, in seventeenth century England, or in South East Asia during recent decades. This is argued in more detail by Welzel (2002).
- 5 As noted by Barnes and Kaase et al. (1979), signing petitions is a low cost form of civic protest. Hence, a society with many people who sign petitions has a rich opportunity structure for low cost protest. This in turn implies that there must be many people who invest in the higher costs, which are necessary to create low cost opportunities for all.
- 6 All subsequent results referring to this elite quality factor have also been calculated using its two components, elite integrity and elite openness, separately. The results have been the same (not documented here).

- 7 Numbers after the country labels in Figure 3 indicate whether data are drawn from the third or fourth wave of the World Values Surveys.
- 8 Data are taken from the Britannica Book of the Year (1996) and refer mostly to the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- 9 “Other believers” include Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, Taoists, Shintoists, and Animists.
- 10 These weights indicate the correlations between the elite quality factor and the percentages of the various religious groups. Using these correlations as weights for the religious groups, whose percentages are added after having been weighted, produces a religious composition factor that measures the impact of the nations’ religious composition on the quality of elites.
- 11 These years have been counted from the beginning of a nation’s independence (or from 1850 onward in case of countries that have not been independent before 1850) until 1990. Countries that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have been coded like their former mother country as long as they belonged to it. A year has been counted as one under a democratic constitution, if a country obtained at least +6 points on the –10 to +10 “Autocracy-Democracy” index from Gurr and Jagers (1995). I chose +6 because it marks the threshold from which a country is closer to the democratic pole (+10) than to the neutral point (0) on the –10 to +10 scale. This index is based on an analysis of constitutions considering the extent of restrictions on executive power and the dependence of legislatures and government from the electorate. Data and methodological description can be obtained from the homepage of the “Polity 98” project: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/polity>. I use these data here because they reach farther back in time than the scores from Freedom House and, therefore, are more adequate to measure the length of the democratic experience.
- 12 Vanhanen creates three subindices. The subindex of “physical resources” is generated from the share of family farms in the agricultural sector (weighted for the agricultural sector’s share in GDP) and the deconcentration of non-agricultural resources (measured by 100 minus the share in GDP generated by the state, foreign enterprises, and large national trusts). The subindex of “intellectual resources” is measured by the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants and the literacy rate. The subindex of “occupational diversification” (“social complexity” in my terminology) is produced from the proportion of the urban population and the percentage of the non-agricultural work force. All component variables are standardized before they are combined to the subindices. The three subindices are each combined additively from their component variables, assuming that each

subindex represents a unique dimension. The same assumption then leads to a multiplicative combination of the three subindices to create the overall index of individual resources. This index is standardized to 100 as the maximum. For a detailed description of scale construction, see Vanhanen (1997:42-63) and the appendices of his book for extensive documentation of data sources.

- 13 The use of GDP can be misleading in the theoretical context of human development. For instance, by exploiting natural resources, some oil exporting countries became extremely rich, showing exceptionally high figures of per capita GDP. But people in these societies lack other resources that are important for human autonomy and choice, including education and access to information.
- 14 As before, the religious tradition measures an “impact weighted” religious composition, using correlation coefficients as weights for religious groups whose percentages are then added. Here, however, the dependent variable is not elite quality but self-expression values. So I used the correlations between self-expression values and the religious groups: Impact weighted religious composition = .58\*%Protestants + .14\*%Catholics - .30\*%Orthodox - .46\*%Muslims - .28\*%Other Believers. As before, this variable basically reflects a Western vs. Non-Western religion factor, here measuring the impact of the nations’ religious composition on the self-expression values among their people.
- 15 In order to measure the scope of given freedom rights, I use scores for civil and political rights from Freedom House (see Freedom in the World 2000). These scores range from 1 to 7 on both scales, with 1 indicating the largest range and 7 indicating the lowest possible range of rights. I reversed these scores such that higher values indicate a larger range of rights. Then I added the scores for civil and political rights to create an overall index for the scope of freedom rights. From the theoretical perspective of human development, this summation is appropriate since people need both “negative” freedom (i.e., civil rights protecting their private choices) and “positive” freedom (i.e., political rights offering opportunities for public choice) in order to act as emancipated citizens. I standardized the additive civil and political rights scale, equating the highest possible value with 100 percent. And, I used the most recent scores for the years 1999 and 2000 (averaged), making sure that these measures are temporally subsequent to the self-expression values measure and contemporaneous to the measure of elite quality. For the research methods and scaling procedures of Freedom House see their homepage: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>. For an evaluation of the validity of these scales see Bollen and Paxton (2000).

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