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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6nb2z22w>

Journal

American Sociological Review, 66

Authors

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Publication Date

2001-12-01

Peer reviewed

THE STRUCTURAL CONTEXTS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Voluntary association membership varies dramatically among nations, by both the number and the type of associations that people join. Two distinctions account for much of this variation: (1) the distinction between statist versus nonstatist (sometimes called “liberal”) societies, and (2) the distinction between corporate versus noncorporate societies. These two dimensions summarize historically evolved differences in state structure, political institutions, and culture of nations that channel, legitimate (or deligitimate), and encourage (or discourage) various types of associational activity. Membership in associations in 32 countries is examined using data from the 1991 World Values Survey; hierarchical models estimate the effects of individual-level and country-level factors on individual association membership. Results show that statism constrains individual associational activity of all types, particularly in “new” social movement associations. Corporateness, however, positively affects membership, particularly for “old” social movements. Finally, temporal trends indicate some convergence toward Anglo-American patterns of association.

IN CONTEMPORARY nation-states, voluntary associations are important bodies that mediate between the individual and the broader societal environment. Following de Tocqueville’s ([1862] 1981) early statements on the different political organization of America and Europe, political scientists

and sociologists have noted that people of different countries and regions vary in their involvement in associational activity (Almond and Verba 1963; Putnam 1993; Wuthnow 1991). The United States, for instance, is traditionally described as a “nation of joiners,” while some European countries (e.g., France, Italy) and Japan seem to have a much less developed civic orientation. In sum, “country of residence” appears to be “an important predictor of voluntary association joining” (Curtis, Grab, and Baer 1992:150).

Many scholars attribute this variation in civic involvement to the different value systems internalized by members of each society (Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1997). Final explanations often recognize that these value systems may be rooted in larger institutional and ideological structures. These explanations usually emphasize how such structures are mediated at the individual level to produce particular attitudes and behaviors (e.g. “post-materialist val-

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ues,” “trust,” and “social capital”) that are themselves conducive to the formation of voluntary associations, and (ultimately) to the prosperity of democratic institutions (see Putnam 1993, 2000).

This “bottom-up” view of the relationship between civic life and political institutions has been criticized. First, “social capital” or “trust” are, at best, elusive concepts that are not easily connected to observable empirical realities (Paxton 1999; Portes and Landolt 1996; Tarrow 1996; Wuthnow 1999). Second, some authors have contested the “dichotomous thinking that counterposes civil society to the state” (Cohen 1999:283). Instead, they argue that political institutions play an essential role in shaping civic activity—not only the other way around (Levy 1999; Skocpol 1996, 1997; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999; Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson 2000; Tarrow 1996).¹

We draw on a conceptualization of political structure originating in the work of institutionalist sociologists and political scientists (Meyer 1983; Jepperson and Meyer 1991; also see Birnbaum 1988; Dyson 1980; Schmitter 1974). More specifically, we depend on a synthetic typology developed by Jepperson (1992, forthcoming) to argue that institutionalized patterns of political sovereignty and organization—what Jepperson calls the degree of *statism* and the degree of *corporateness*—are associated with distinctive patterns of civic engagement.² Involvement

¹ For similar arguments about nonprofit organizations, see Anheier (1990), James (1989), and Salamon and Anheier (1994, 1997). Related analyses have also been developed in the social movements literature. See, for instance, Kitschelt (1985), Klandermans, Kriesi, and Tarrow (1988), Kriesi et al. (1995), McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996).

² Jepperson (1992) prefers the term corporateness to the more familiar one of corporatism. “Corporatism” in the twentieth century refers canonically to the Italian Fascist state’s practice of managing society via mixed syndical organs; or, in its modern forms, to patterns of institutionalized “peak-bargaining” between economic groups, this time not necessarily subordinate to state oversight. (Scandinavian wage management is a good example.) “Corporateness,” on the other hand, is more neutral and simply refers to the degree to which political representation and incorporation is typi-

ment in volunteer activities does not simply spring from already constituted social groups or from aggregated individual characteristics. Rather, the cultural and organizational dimensions of political institutions are, to a large extent, constitutive of the groups themselves and of the civic activities their members engage in.

TOWARD A STRUCTURAL VIEW ON ASSOCIATIONAL ACTIVITY

The World Values Surveys constitute a unique dataset for testing hypotheses about the structural basis of individual value orientation and behavior. The surveys cover a large sample of countries and a broad set of variables over multiple points in time, including variables relating to the participation of individuals in voluntary associations. These data show that people in different nations differ dramatically in their *level* of involvement in volunteer activities and that these differences are stable over time. The percentage of individuals claiming membership in at least one voluntary association ranges from about 70 percent in the United States and in most Scandinavian nations, to less than 30 percent in Japan and the southern European nations (see Table 1). Also, people in the United States and Scandinavia tend on average to join a greater number of associations.

Countries also vary in the *types* of associational activity their citizens engage in (see Table 2, data described on pp. 815–16). Note that membership levels in the United States are particularly high for religious associations and for categories we identify as “new” social movements (such as environmental or human and women’s rights organizations).³ By contrast, associational activity in a country like Germany is more centered on “old” social movement associations, such as unions and traditional political parties.

cally located and organized at the group level (as opposed to the individual level).

³ See, for instance, Klandermans and Tarrow (1988) and Melucci (1980). We use a categorization similar to Wessels (1997): “New” social movement associations include environmental, women’s, peace, and development associations; “old” social movements include unions, political, and professional associations.

Table 1. Membership in Voluntary Associations for Selected Countries: Percentages and National Ranks from Various Data Sources

Country	Percentage of Individuals Reporting Membership in Any Association, and Country Rank					Average Individual Membership score (Out of 10 Categories of Associations)	
	Almond and Verba (1963)	World Values Survey, 1981		World Values Survey, 1991		World Values Surveys	
		Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	1981	1991
Iceland	—	82	1	86	1	1.64	2.00
United States	57	72	2	68	6	1.40	1.48
Sweden	—	67	3	77	2	1.10	1.47
Denmark	—	64	4	73	4	.96	1.19
Netherlands	—	61	5	75	3	1.20	1.80
Norway	—	61	6	68	7	1.05	1.27
Austria	—	60	7	43	11	1.02	.76
Canada	—	57	8	55	8	.99	1.14
Britain	47	52	9	43	12	.87	.76
Ireland	—	52	10	38	13	.82	.62
West Germany	44	48	11	49	9	.70	.82
Mexico	24	42	12	30	14	.58	.51
Belgium	—	41	13	46	10	.57	.93
Finland	—	40	14	69	5	.40	1.32
Argentina	—	34	15	19	18	.46	.25
Spain	—	31	16	17	19	.45	.26
Japan	—	29	17	26	15	.37	.34
France	—	27	18	26	17	.39	.45
Italy	30	24	19	26	16	.35	.41
Average	—	49	—	49	—	.81	.93

Note: Countries are presented in order of rank for the 1981 World Values Survey.

Despite large differences among countries, individual-level variables continue to provide the main frame of reference for understanding patterns of civic participation, both within and across nations. Previous research has established a strong correlation between volunteering and association membership on one hand, and church attendance, religious orientation, education, income level, gender, and marital status on the other hand (Curtis 1971; Cutler 1976; Greeley 1997; Knoke 1986; Knoke and Thomson 1977; Scott 1957).

Civic participation is also frequently explained in terms of specific value orientations rooted in the larger social system. Religion, particularly Protestantism, has been found to play an important role in fostering civic orientation (Curtis et al. 1992:149;

Inglehart 1990:48–65, 1997:99). Another “value” frequently referred to is “trust.” Drawing on attitudinal surveys in five nations, Almond and Verba (1963) showed that high levels of civic participation in the United States and Britain (as opposed to Italy, Mexico, and Germany) were associated with high degrees of interpersonal trust. Following on this argument, Inglehart (1990, 1997) found that as societies industrialize, individuals get more education and become wealthier, and therefore emphasize the “postmaterialist” values of well-being, tolerance, and trust—values which in turn support the development of associations (especially “new” social movement associations) and other democratic institutions (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

Table 2. Memberships Scores for Different Types of Associations: 32 Countries from the World Values Survey, 1991

Country	All Types of Associations		“Old” Social Movements	“New” Social Movements	Religious Associations	Number of Individuals ^c
	(of 10 Types) ^a	(of 16 Types) ^b				
Netherlands	1.80	2.75	.42	.50	.36	917
Iceland	2.00	2.60	.99	.17	.50	508
Sweden	1.47	2.14	.84	.26	.10	799
United States	1.48	2.04	.40	.21	.50	1,441
Norway	1.27	1.99	.73	.14	.11	1065
Finland	1.32	1.77	.66	.16	.18	526
Denmark	1.19	1.76	.69	.18	.07	920
Canada	1.14	1.70	.36	.21	.25	1,547
East Germany	1.20	1.65	.73	.14	.20	1,102
Belgium	.93	1.42	.28	.25	.12	2,203
West Germany	.82	1.42	.34	.15	.17	1,589
Estonia	1.00	1.25	.73	.06	.04	882
Latvia	1.03	1.23	.80	.08	.03	618
Britain	.76	1.12	.30	.13	.16	1,373
Austria	.76	1.12	.37	.10	.16	1,267
Russia	.93	1.06	.77	.05	.01	1,582
China	.91	1.04	.66	.06	.01	856
Ireland	.62	.98	.18	.09	.14	973
Lithuania	.77	.92	.55	.07	.03	862
Brazil	.66	.83	.15	.07	.22	1,433
Chile	.59	.82	.14	.06	.18	1,350
Hungary	.60	.72	.40	.03	.11	941
France	.45	.72	.14	.06	.06	825
Bulgaria	.56	.70	.37	.08	.02	864
Mexico	.51	.67	.10	.07	.14	905
Slovenia	.49	.64	.31	.03	.03	866
Portugal	.40	.60	.14	.02	.10	983
Italy	.41	.59	.15	.06	.08	1,818
Japan	.34	.55	.15	.05	.07	634
Romania	.35	.41	.24	.02	.04	1,047
Spain	.26	.41	.09	.04	.05	3,159
Argentina	.25	.36	.06	.01	.07	869

New.

^a Numbers represent the country average membership for the ten types of associations (summed) that were included in both the 1981 and 1991 surveys: welfare, religion, education, union, political, community, Third world/development, environment, professional, youth.

^b Also includes the six additional types of associations included in the 1991 survey: sports, women, peace, animal rights, health, and “other.”

^c Total number of individuals = 36,724.

These explanations are partly rooted in a revival of the Parsonian approach of the 1950s, in which political culture is equated with subjectively internalized values that are themselves analytically separate from political structures and institutions (Somers 1995). In this framework, value orientation determines behavior, and thus voluntary associations develop as a consequence, at the aggregate level, of the actions of numerous individuals sharing similar attitudes or characteristics. Yet historical scholars have shown that such attitudes and practices do not exist, and cannot be thought of, independently from their “dialectical” and historically grounded relationship with institutions (Sewell 1992; Steinmetz 1999:20). Knowledge is “internalized,” and values are formed only if there are institutions that channel them in certain directions (Berger and Luckman 1966). On one hand, political structures constrain the institutional means to pursue civic engagement and thereby shape the possibilities for individual action (Clemens 1997; Skocpol 1985; Skocpol et al. 2000); on the other hand, they serve as social sites where perceptions and ideas about actorhood and sovereignty are played out, institutionalized, and constructed as “legitimate” (Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Steinmetz 1993). As an example, civic engagement may not be particularly prominent in Anglo-Saxon societies simply because people share liberal values. But the dialectical operation of enabling political structures, arm’s-length state policies, and available cultural models that emphasize actorhood may produce a social environment in which civic engagement simply “makes sense.”

POLITY CHARACTERISTICS AND THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ASSOCIATIONS

Following neoinstitutionalist theorists, we contend that individual behavior is channeled or “scripted” by institutionalized cultural frames (Berger and Luckman 1966; Friedland and Alford 1991; Meyer, Boli et al. 1997; Thomas et al. 1987). These frames, which have their roots in the political, religious, and economic histories of nations, operate at both the organizational and cognitive levels. First, they shape the develop-

ment of national systems of rules and institutions (e.g., administrative practices, legal and rights systems, and so on). Comparative research supports the idea that broad institutional factors are responsible for observed cross-national differences in various domains of social activity. For instance, labor market regulation (Western 1997), the provision of social goods (Amenta, Bonastia, and Caren 2001; Esping-Andersen 1999), or the organization of blood-giving (Healy 2000) are patterned systematically around large ensembles of nations sharing similar cultural and institutional characteristics.

Cultural frames also operate at a disaggregated, cognitive level (Dobbin 1994; Friedland and Alford 1991; Meyer, Boli et al. 1997; Thomas et al. 1987). They provide a lens through which individual actors apprehend the world and act within it, defining what Swidler (1986) calls “repertoires of action” (also see Lamont and Thévenot 2000). As such, cultural frames should not be regarded simply as “internalized” value systems that rational individuals use to form their preferences. Rather, they are cognitive scripts, embedded in long institutional traditions and organizational frameworks that shape the social behaviors and practices that are deemed legitimate, even “thinkable.” In this way the cultural frames themselves become constitutive of those individuals and groups. Jepperson (1992), for instance, has argued that polity characteristics shape political opinion and representations of the self in vastly different ways across countries. Jepperson and Meyer (1991) have shown that formal models of organizing are closely related to institutionalized models of the polity. Boyle (2000) has suggested a similar interpretation for cross-national differences in legal activity.

In sum, both theory and empirical evidence indicate that political culture shapes individual action. Thus we expect institutionalized scripts about political behavior to affect the level and character of associational activity across nations.

TWO KEY CONCEPTS: STATISM AND CORPORATENESS

Historical analyses of societal developments over long periods of time have identified two

fundamental dimensions of variation of political structures and institutions: “statism” and “corporateness.” Both concepts, and the two-by-two typology they give rise to are specifically elaborated in the work of Jepperson and Meyer (Jepperson 1992, forthcoming; Jepperson and Meyer 1991; Meyer 1983; also see Birnbaum 1988; Birnbaum and Badie 1983; Dyson 1980; Lipset 1985; Nettl 1968; Schmitter 1974). Briefly, in this view societies differ from one another primarily in the *location* and *organization* of political sovereignty. Jepperson (1992, forthcoming) refers to the first dimension as the degree of “statism,” and to the other dimension as the degree of “corporateness” of the political structure.

Although these dimensions have much in common with other well-known comparative typologies, they are unique in two important ways: First, they provide a *general* conceptual tool for understanding cross-national polity variation, rather than a description of a *specific* set of differences (e.g., Esping-Andersen’s [1990] “three worlds” of welfare capitalism, which are based on cross-national differences in political resources).⁴ Second, they are grounded theoretically in the historical analysis of the long-term macro-evolution of societies, rather than being derived from clusters of observed variation (e.g., Inglehart’s culture groups).⁵ These differences avert the possibility of tautology or reverse causality between our analytical framework and the outcome we seek to explain.

We now describe statism and corporateness in detail, summarizing the typifications advanced by Jepperson (forthcoming) and providing empirical details about the varying shape of civic engagement across polity forms. We then formulate testable hypotheses about the plausible impact of statism

and corporateness on associational activity in different nations.

STATISM. In modern societies, political sovereignty historically has been derived from two major institutions: the state and civil society. From an analytical point of view, these institutions define a continuum between two ideal types, with a centralized and totally autonomous state apparatus at one end and a form of political power totally decentralized within an active and organized society at the other (Jepperson forthcoming; Jepperson and Meyer 1991). Existing polities fall somewhere within this continuum.⁶

France and Germany exemplify high statism, although most continental European countries, particularly those with an absolutist legacy, are also examples. In such countries, the state constitutes a separate and superior order of political governance that derives much of its legitimacy from a well-developed bureaucratic elite, as well as from a long history of authoritarian political rule (esp. Germany, Austria, Russia, and Japan). Civil society, on the other hand, is regarded as a source of chaos and anomie (Jepperson and Meyer 1991:216) and is therefore often subject to some form of central state control—from outright oppression in the earlier periods to administrative supervision and guidance in more recent times.

Anglo-Saxon countries, by contrast, are situated toward the low end of the “statism” scale. Bureaucratic development emerged relatively late, and political culture remains firmly centered on the idea of a self-governing society, largely autonomous from the state (Birnbaum and Badie 1983). The state derives its legitimacy from its function as the representation of civil society, which is considered to be the principal locus of public life. The public bureaucracy is much less

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⁴ Esping-Andersen’s (1990) three-regimes typology does not (1) explain the historical sources of each regime (liberal, social-democratic, and “conservative”), and (2) does not properly account for southern European cases, including France (Morgan 2000; see Esping-Andersen 1999 for an attempt to deal with these issues).

⁵ Inglehart’s (1997) “cultural ensembles” are based mainly on national differences in dominant religious orientations (also see Inglehart and Baker 2000).

⁶ Scholars often have noted that religious doctrines and trajectories partly account for the degree of “statism” of political structures (Meyer and Jepperson 2000). For instance, Durkheim ([1893] 1984) and Weber ([1922] 1978) both saw the Protestant sects as the early carriers of liberal individualism; Zaret (1989) interprets English democratic discourse as a consequence of religious sectarianism; Gorski (1993) emphasizes the role of disciplinary revolutions in explaining state strength.

elaborate and rationalized than it is in statist systems.⁷

Intuitively, the statist political form should discourage voluntary activism and the nonstatist form should facilitate it. In statist systems, the persistence of a centralized ideology of decision-making has traditionally kept associations at bay from the true centers of power (Veugelers and Lamont 1991). France, for instance, never completely parted from its long tradition of civil society surveillance and the centralization of associational activity under the tutelage of the state.⁸ Since the time of absolutism, all political regimes have regarded collective organization with suspicion, and treated local and intermediary institutions as potentially dangerous. Freedom of association in France remained subject to restrictions until 1901, far later than did other elements of democratic rule (e.g., universal suffrage for men), and even after that date associational activities continued to be hampered by complex administrative procedures. Still today, “minority” identities (e.g., regional and ethnic identities) are associated with factionalism, which conflicts with the universalistic framework of incorporation promoted by the state.

Because it is less culturally legitimate in statist countries, civil society receives little institutional encouragement. In Italy, for instance, the legal environment within which associations operate lacks coherence, as does the pattern of financial support (Perlmutter 1991:178). Consequently, voluntary organizations are poorly equipped to be effective actors in the public sphere. In spite of the global renewal of civil society ideologies, governments in statist polities have found it difficult to “empower” associations to take over responsibilities traditionally shouldered by the state. The failed strategy of “associational liberalism” promoted by French governments in the 1980s in their attempt to liberalize the economy serves as an

⁷ This point is exemplified by the tradition of amateurism in the British civil service (Hecló and Wildavsky 1974) and the weak boundaries between the inside and the outside of government in the United States (Hecló 1988).

⁸ Rosanvallon (1990), for instance, characterizes the French state as the “tutor of society” (literally, “l’état instituteur du social”).

example of the extent to which institutional legacies continue to shape state-society relations (Levy 1999).

In nonstatist societies, by contrast, both prevailing cultural frames and institutions historically have actively promoted civic engagement. Nineteenth-century Britain burgeoned with a mosaic of local civic institutions—voluntary associations, communities, clubs, and trade unions. The state, by contrast, “existed mainly to serve the convenience and protect the rights of individuals in private life” (Harris 1990:67) without interfering with property rights and the individual pursuit of commercial activities (Mann 1986:107). Associations often worked in symbiosis with administrative institutions, rather than against them (Morris 1990:440). Similarly, political culture in the United States was forged through the experience of community self-government and has remained fiercely defensive of local autonomy and initiative since then (Bellah et al. 1985; Dobbin 1994). Even as federal economic and social responsibilities grew during the twentieth century, the state came to rely on civil society’s activism and encouraged its expansion, for example, by involving voluntary groups in the implementation of welfare policies (Skocpol 1992, 1996, 1997; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999).

The Scandinavian states also exhibit a culturally supportive and benevolent attitude toward associations, albeit in a different manner from Anglo-Saxon countries. Voluntary action in Anglo-Saxon countries is still cast in a powerful liberal ideology that continues to celebrate voluntarism as autonomous and jealously defends its arm’s-length relationship from government (Wuthnow 1991:300–301).⁹ In Scandinavia, on the other hand, the boundaries between the state and civil society are more blurred. Boli (1991:101) points out that in Swedish, “both terms [‘state’ and ‘civil society’] are often used synonymously.” In spite of a

⁹ This relationship is illustrated by the fact that the voluntary sector in both Britain and the United States still relies mainly on voluntary income (Beckford 1991:43). This situation differs markedly from arrangements in more corporatist countries, where “voluntary” associations derive most of their finances from state grants.

considerable role in society and the economy, Scandinavian states typically do not appropriate political sovereignty. Rather, political sovereignty is vested in society as a collection of organized, legitimate interests that are then orchestrated or “mediated” by the public authority (a structural feature discussed below as “corporateness”). Indeed, because of the relatively egalitarian context in which social privileges were abolished early,¹⁰ a “strong” civil society was allowed to develop (especially around the free church and labor movements). By the nineteenth century in Sweden, the practice of “consultation” between central administrative institutions and civil society groups, which later evolved into a full-fledged system of patronage of the voluntary sector through financial backing and integrated participation in public decision-making, was already well institutionalized (Heclø and Madsen 1987; Micheletti 1995). With the development of the social-democratic welfare state, which motivated constant interactions, the embeddedness of the state in society became routinized as a legitimate mode of economic and social governance in which “consensus-oriented” policies were centrally negotiated among all interested parties (Schmitter 1974; Schmitter and Lehbruch 1979).

The degree of statism, in sum, should have profound effects on patterns of civic activity. Some polities produce cultural models and institutions that de-emphasize involvement in voluntary associations as a legitimate (and effective) mode of political action and concentrate decision-making authority in the hands of the state. Others have a more fluid demarcation between the public and the private spheres that allows “private” actions to be more legitimate in the “public” context (Jepperson 1992:165–66). Thus we formulate our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Polities with a low degree of statism will exhibit higher overall lev-

¹⁰ At the end of the nineteenth century, Sweden, like most other small European states, did not have a powerful landed class. Rather, the aristocracy had long been co-opted by the state and was primarily concentrated in the bureaucracy (Anderson 1974:171–91; Heclø and Madsen 1987; Stephens 1995:171–72).

els of associational membership than will statist polities.

While statist polities should generally discourage engagement in *all* forms of associational activity, the persistence of traditional cleavages in civil society, as well as the lack of institutional legitimacy and support, should make it even harder, comparatively, for “new” associational forms to emerge and gain momentum—especially those associated with specializing claims and identities. Previous empirical work likewise suggests that new social movement organizations are much weaker in France and in the southern European countries than they are elsewhere in Europe (Duyvendak 1995). This leads us to Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2: Statism will have a strong negative effect on membership in “new” social movement associations.

CORPORATENESS. Along a second dimension, polities vary in the way in which social actors are incorporated—what Jepperson (1992, forthcoming) calls the degree of “corporateness.” Some social systems assign sovereign “actorhood” to private persons and typically locate sovereignty for interest representation in individuals—with group action being legitimate *only* as the embodiment of individual wishes. Other systems assign a higher moral purpose to organized groups, empowering individuals chiefly as members of broader collectives that have specific “rights and functions” (Jepperson and Meyer 1991:214–17). In such countries, society is organized along “corporate” lines, that is, around collectives united (most of the time) by a particular economic project. Historically derived from a feudal and patrimonial past in which society was organized by estates, corporate institutions (from the old guild forms in the former eastern and central European empires to the modern “peak associations” of Scandinavia) still represent the main channels of public activity.

Our suspicion is that stronger corporate organization, because of its “intermediary” status, should encourage civic activities and thus lead to a more developed voluntary sector. Historically, the state in corporate polities has played a supportive role toward col-

lective institutional arrangements as a way of promoting economic and political “order” (e.g., in Germany) (Anheier 1991:68) or social “consensus” (e.g., in Scandinavia). The military tradition in the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian empires gave rise to an ordered conception of society as a collection of separate groups with distinct attributes and functions. In the absence of political rights, the old German and Austrian status groups (*Stände* or estates) gave birth to the modern corporate associations (*Verbände*), which then gathered into powerful federations. These large, centralized associations became part of a mode of governance largely orchestrated from above, yet incorporation of such groups into the public sphere is neither taken-for-granted nor automatic. Rather, the state and public administration usually retain discretionary authority to decide which associational groups may have access.¹¹

In a country like Sweden, by contrast, corporateness is more “functional” (Jepperson 1992:121). Its origins are to be found in historical patterns of state-society alliance and in the unified, broad-based class movements that developed during the twentieth century. As a result, its representative dimension is better established than it is in Germany or Austria, where corporateness emerged from guilds and other hierarchical orders and was more “status-oriented.”

In corporate countries, the state encourages *all* forms of collective organization as the main channel for political incorporation and usually provides generous support—provided associations are large, nationwide, democratically run, and structured in a centralized way that authorizes negotiation and bargaining with administrative institutions.¹² The carriers of corporate interests play substantive social roles, often being closely integrated with policymaking institutions and assuming broad administrative

¹¹ A similar case can be made for the ex-socialist nations in which “the auxiliary institutions of the party state (trade unions, youth organizations, professional associations)” served to organize the incorporation of civil society during the one-half to three-quarters of a century of Communist rule (Ekiert 1991:286).

¹² On migrant associations in Sweden, see Soysal (1994:91).

responsibilities, for example in the management of welfare provisions. Social regulation is thus mainly ensured by cooperation, both between groups and the state, and among corporate groups themselves.

This mode of governance differs from countries with individualist political cultures. In Anglo-Saxon nations, individuals, rather than groups, are supposed to be the best judges of their own interests and are consequently empowered as their own legitimate representatives (Jepperson and Meyer 1991). Although important variations remain as to “which” individuals constitute the ultimate source of political legitimacy—American universalism and veneration of the self-made man, for instance, contrasts sharply with the British traditional deference to “gentlemen”—these nations share a focus on decentralized decision-making authority and representation (Lipset 1963).

France, and to a certain extent the southern European and Latin American nations generally,¹³ falls in the same category, albeit for different reasons. In France, the empowerment of the individual as opposed to the group is the result of a revolutionary past directed at the abolition of feudalism and privileges, which fostered a strong cultural aversion to any form of “corporatism.” The word even has a pejorative connotation in French, “denoting parasitic, protected groups that receive undeserved advantages at the expense of the common group” (Levy 1999:10). Consequently, relations among social units, and between social units and the state, tend to be more conflictual, as evidenced by the high levels of institutionalized class struggle, the

¹³ There is a legitimate concern that the Catholic nations in our sample (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and most Latin American countries) could be included in the “corporate” category. They all have a powerful estate tradition (the “latifundia”). In addition, many of these countries have undergone prolonged periods of authoritarian rule during the twentieth century that attempted, in various ways, to organize society along corporatist lines through “state-licensed intermediaries,” often relying on traditional authoritative orders like the church and the army (Williamson 1985). Yet by and large these efforts by dictatorships were only partially successful, and few of these “corporate” elements remain embedded in the social structure (for a discussion of fascist Italy, see Dyson 1980:59).

radicalism of social movement organizations (most prominently unions), and center-periphery cleavages in France and Italy.

The degree of “corporateness” thus represents a second important structural dimension for understanding variation in associational activity. Because they legitimate centralized incorporation, universalism, and collective organization, corporate social institutions should increase the *level* of associational activity. Western (1997), for instance, has shown that institutions such as the “Ghent system,” in which unions are responsible for the provision and administration of unemployment benefits, generally boost membership levels and encourage the development of collective (class) consciousness. Our third hypothesis generalizes this argument:

Hypothesis 3: Because they promote collective, inclusive forms of political incorporation, corporate polities will foster higher levels of associational membership than will noncorporate polities.

We also can formulate hypotheses about the *type* of civic engagement that corporateness encourages. Historically institutionalized patterns of societal organization in corporate polities should lead us to expect a greater emphasis on activities linked to economic sectors, such as unions and professional associations, but also to political parties, which are partly aligned with economic interests. (These have been labeled “old” social movement associations because they typically developed during the early part of the twentieth century.) Furthermore, the considerable legitimacy of these institutions as the primary mode of political incorporation, and the highly centralized nature of governance, should allow them to become more encompassing and expand into new areas of social action, thereby preventing the erosion or archaism common in other countries. Interestingly, Scandinavian unions have been relatively immune to the sharp downward trend in membership most of their western European counterparts have experienced over the last three decades (Western 1997). Hence, our fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Associational activity in highly corporate nations should dispropor-

tionately emphasize “old” social movement associations.

Finally, we consider global trends in associational activity over time. Some theorists have argued that social life is now increasingly organized at the international level (Boli and Thomas 1999; Meyer, Boli, et al. 1997). The organizations that comprise this “world society” are largely modeled after liberal polities, especially the United States, and therefore actively promote the two main institutions on which such social systems rest (*i.e.*, strong markets and civil societies) (Meyer, Frank, et al. 1997; Somers 2001). We thus expect that the expansion of the world society in the recent period has induced a global shift toward liberal models of political organization, typified by high levels of association and the growth of “new” social movements.

DATA AND METHODS

Our primary aim is to discern the effects of country-level polity characteristics (statism and corporateness) on individual associational membership within a given country, net of other relevant individual-level and country-level factors. Data on associational activity are derived from the 1981 and 1991 World Values Surveys (WVS), which include nearly 90,000 respondents from 43 countries (World Values Study Group 1994). Because certain questionnaire items are not available for every country, our main analyses of 1991 data contain information on roughly 37,000 individuals in 32 countries. Respondents were asked whether they “belonged to” (*i.e.*, held membership in) voluntary associations of different types (*e.g.*, religious organizations, sports groups, environmental associations, and so on). Ten categories of association were measured in the 1981 survey, and six were added in the 1991 survey.¹⁴ We combined these variables to

¹⁴ The categories included in the WVS are: (1) social welfare services for the elderly, handicapped, or deprived people; (2) religious or church organizations; (3) education, arts, music, or cultural activities; (4) trade unions; (5) political parties or groups; (6) local community action on issues like poverty, employment, housing, racial equality; (7) Third World development or

construct scores reflecting overall membership, as well as membership in associations of particular broad types.¹⁵ The dependent variables are measured as follows:

OVERALL ASSOCIATIONAL MEMBERSHIP. Measured by summing for each individual all 10 associational categories available in both the 1981 and 1991 surveys. For example, an individual who is a member of at least one environmental association and at least one religious association would receive a score of 2 on this measure. Individuals with no memberships in any category would score 0. The maximum possible score is 10.¹⁶

OLD SOCIAL MOVEMENT MEMBERSHIP. Old social movements are measured by the sum of memberships in categories for trade unions, political parties, and professional associations.

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT MEMBERSHIP. New social movements are measured by the sum of memberships in categories for environmental associations, Third World development associations, women's organizations, and peace organizations.¹⁷

human rights; (8) conservation, the environment, ecology; (9) professional associations; (10) youth work (e.g., scouts, guides, youth clubs, etc.); (11) sports or recreation; (12) women's groups; (13) peace movement; (14) animal rights; (15) voluntary organizations concerned with health; (16) other groups.

¹⁵ Note that these scores are not the actual number of memberships an individual holds. The survey data indicate *membership in one or more* associations of each category. The membership score variable, which is a sum of categories, underestimates the number of memberships in cases where an individual is a member of more than one association in a given category. Still, it is the best measure available for a large sample of individuals and countries, and it is likely to be highly correlated with actual membership data.

¹⁶ We observed nearly identical results when we used the full array of categories available in the 1991 survey. We use this smaller set of categories to allow the comparison between the 1981 and 1991 time periods.

¹⁷ There is some debate as to which of the available categories reflect new social movement associations. To ensure that our results were not an artifact of the particular categories chosen, we reconstructed our indicator using various combinations of associational types that are considered "new" social movement associations (e.g., using only environmental associations and Third World

We consider a series of individual-level and country-level factors that may affect these measures of associational activity. Variable descriptions and descriptive statistics for all variables are listed in Table 4. Variables warranting additional explanation are discussed here. Country-level independent variables are measured as follows:

STATISM. This concept is measured dichotomously based on Jepperson and Meyer's (Jepperson 1992, forthcoming; Jepperson and Meyer 1991) description of state structure and polity characteristics. For countries not coded in those sources, we created codes by applying their same definitions (statist polities = 1).

CORPORATENESS. This measure is dichotomous, again based on research by Jepperson and Meyer (corporate polities = 1). Table 3 summarizes the classification on the dimensions of statism and corporateness for selected countries.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, logged (Summers and Heston 1991). The idea that national development strengthens democratic institutions and behaviors goes back to modernization theory and is a core tenet of political sociology (Lipset 1960). On one hand, societal wealth is associated with the collective resources required to support associations. On the other hand, societal wealth is associated with enhanced education, more leisure time, and other individual-level characteristics that may increase association membership. We leave it as an empirical question whether there are direct effects of societal-level development, controlling for mediating individual-level factors (i.e., individual socioeconomic indicators).

DEMOCRACY. Democracy is measured as a 10-point scale reflecting the institutionalization of political democracy (Jagers and Gurr 1995).¹⁸ In addition to providing the

development associations). Results were consistent.

¹⁸ Wessels (1997) and others measure democracy as the number of years of continuous democracy, arguing that long periods of uninterrupted democracy are required for the formation of societal associations. To address this question, we tried using two other measures of democracy: a dummy variable indicating nations that were

Footnote 19 deleted. Other notes renumbered. Footnotes 20 and 21 reversed.

Table 3. Variation in National Polity Structure: Statism versus Corporateness

Degree of Corporateness	Degree of Statism	
	Low	High
Low	United States , Britain, Canada	France , Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latin America
High	Scandinavian countries	Wilhelmine Germany , postwar Germany, Austria, Central and Eastern Europe, Japan

Source: Adapted from Jepperson (1992, chap. 3).

Note: Countries shown in bold type are closest to the ideal type.

political freedoms to engage in civic activities, democracy is thought to foster a participatory political culture that leads to the formation of voluntary associations. It remains to be seen whether these arguments, rooted primarily in studies of American democracy, can be generalized to democracies elsewhere in the world.¹⁹

Individual-level characteristics may also affect membership in associations. We employ a standard array of such indicators, attempting to maintain consistency with other empirical work on this topic (e.g., Curtis et al. 1992; Moyser and Parry 1997) (see Table 4).

We use hierarchical models to analyze association membership (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992). Multi-level models are appropriate in this case because we are interested in an individual-level outcome that is affected by both individual-level and country-level variables. To simply aggregate individual-level membership scores into a country-level dependent variable would overlook the individual-level processes that affect association membership.²⁰ To model an individual-level

outcome as a function of individual-level and country-level variables using OLS regression would overlook characteristics of the error structure resulting from the commonalities of individuals within countries, which violate the assumptions of the OLS regression model. Hierarchical models, on the other hand, explicitly incorporate both individual-level and group-level error.

A multi-level model consists of an individual-level equation and one or more group-level equations. We specified an individual-level (level-1) equation with its own error term, much like an ordinary regression. In addition, the constant of the individual-level equation is modeled as a function of country-level properties (level-2) and a second “group-level” error term. The equations estimated for our base model are:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Membership} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Age}) + \beta_2(\text{Male}) \\
 & + \beta_3(\text{Education}) \\
 & + \beta_4(\text{Married}) \\
 & + \beta_5(\text{Religion}) \\
 & + \beta_6(\text{Employed}) + \epsilon, \quad (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

Equation
“repaired”

$$\begin{aligned}
 \beta_0 = & \gamma_0 + \gamma_1(\text{Corporateness}) \\
 & + \gamma_2(\text{Statism}) + \gamma_3(\text{GDP}) \\
 & + \gamma_4(\text{Democracy}) + \epsilon. \quad (2)
 \end{aligned}$$

We employ a nonlinear Poisson model because our dependent variable, the number of memberships held by an individual, is a “count” (i.e., a nonnegative integer). A linear relationship is not appropriate given the highly skewed nature of the data and the fact that a linear model might nonsensically predict “negative” memberships for some cases.

continuously democratic since 1900, and a continuous measure reflecting the number of years of continuous democracy. Results (not presented here) were similar to those from models using the 10-point democracy scale.

¹⁹ Unfortunately, only a few nondemocratic countries are included in the World Values Survey. A larger sample of nations would be needed to draw confident conclusions about the effects of democracy on associational activity.

²⁰ Such aggregate models produce results generally consistent with the hierarchical models shown below. Such a result makes sense in this case, where the country-level predictors are extremely strong.

Table 4. Definitions and Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in the Analyses: 32 Countries from the World Values Survey, 1991

Variable	Definition	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Country-Level Variables</i>			
Corporateness	Measured dichotomously (1 = nation is high on corporateness dimension) (Jepperson 1992).	.66	.48
Statism	Measured dichotomously (1 = nation is high on statism dimension) (Jepperson 1992).	.56	.50
Democracy	Measured by 10-point democracy index (Jagers and Gurr 1995).	7.94	3.24
National economic development	Measured by Real GDP per capita (log) (Summers and Heston 1991).	9.08	.62
<i>Individual-Level Variables</i>			
Overall association membership	Measured by the number of categories of association (of 10) in which respondent is a member.	.80	1.16
“New” social movements membership	Measured by memberships in <u>categories</u> reflecting old social movements associations.	.17	.51
“Old” social movements membership	Measured by memberships in categories reflecting new social movements associations.	.29	.52
Age	Age measured in years.	42.59	16.38
Gender	Measured dichotomously (male = 1).	.48	.50
Education	Measured using a 4-point index (higher = more educated).	2.61	.99
Marital status	Measured dichotomously (married = 1).	.62	.49
Religious belief	Measured on a 4-point scale (4 = religion is “very important”, 1 = “not at all important”).	2.52	1.07
Employment status	Measured dichotomously (part-time or full-time employee = 1).	.62	.49
Trust	Measured dichotomously (1 = respondent agrees that “most people can be trusted”).	.36	.48
Post-material values	Measured on a 3-point scale (see Inglehart 1997).	1.93	.64

Note: Number of individuals = 36,724.

Individual-level coefficients are constrained to be constant across groups and are assigned an error variance. We do not specify cross-level interactions among variables. Multi-level Poisson models were estimated using restricted penalized quasi-likelihood (PQL) estimation with the program HLM 5 (Raudenbush et al. 2000; also see Guo and Zhao 2000).

RESULTS

LEVEL OF ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Table 5 presents the results of hierarchical Poisson models predicting the level of individual association membership in all types

of associations (Tables showing random effects for models are available from the authors on request).

Model 1 is our base model, which leaves out individual-level attitude variables—trust and post-materialism. We present models without these variables to avoid possible concerns about the direction of causality. (Because of their theoretical interest, however, we include these variables in Model 2 despite these caveats.)

Individual-level variables have effects that are consistent with the literature, whether the prior studies were single-country analyses (e.g., Moyser and Parry 1997) or cross-national studies (e.g., Curtis et al. 1992). Age, education, and religiosity have positive and

Table 5. Hierarchical Poisson Regression Coefficients Showing the Effects of Selected Independent Variables on Individual's Overall Level of Association Membership: 32 Countries from the World Values Survey, 1991

Independent Variable	Model 1 (Base Model)	Model 2 (Full Model)
<i>Country-Level Variables</i>		
Statism	-.643 ⁺⁺⁺ (.136)	-.580 ⁺⁺⁺ (.118)
Corporateness	.354 ⁺⁺ (.110)	.178 ⁺ (.098)
Democracy	-.013 (.024)	-.0008 (.022)
GDP per capita (log)	.161 (.146)	.054 (.137)
<i>Individual-Level Variables</i>		
Age	.005 ⁺⁺⁺ (.0008)	.006 ⁺⁺⁺ (.0009)
Gender (male = 1)	.063 ⁺ (.026)	.058 ⁺ (.024)
Education	.291 ⁺⁺⁺ (.021)	.246 ⁺⁺⁺ (.019)
Marital status (married = 1)	.115 ⁺⁺⁺ (.018)	.109 ⁺⁺⁺ (.018)
Religious belief	.154 ⁺⁺⁺ (.016)	.150 ⁺⁺⁺ (.017)
Employment status (employed = 1)	.392 ⁺⁺⁺ (.039)	.387 ⁺⁺⁺ (.043)
Trust in others	—	.225 ⁺⁺⁺ (.025)
Post-materialist values	—	.178 ⁺⁺⁺ (.020)
Constant	-3.14* (1.32)	-2.57* (1.25)
Log-likelihood (× 10 ⁴)	-5.85	-5.73

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Number of individuals = 36,724.

⁺*p* < .05 ⁺⁺*p* < .01 ⁺⁺⁺*p* < .001 (one-tailed tests)
^{*}*p* < .05 ^{**}*p* < .01 ^{***}*p* < .001 (two-tailed tests)

significant effects on association membership, as do the dichotomous variables indicating married, male, and employed individuals. The coefficients for employment and education are particularly large. Hierarchical Poisson coefficients can be interpreted by exponentiation, which yields a multiplier on the rate of membership (Raudenbush et al. 2000). The coefficient of

.392 for employment corresponds to a multiplier of 1.48 (exp[.392] = 1.48), representing a 48-percent increase in association membership for employed individuals. A single point increase on the education scale reflects a 34-percent increase in membership. Moreover, college-educated individuals (scoring 4 on the index) have more than twice the level of association membership compared with those having only a few years of education.

Country-level variables also have large effects on association membership. As hypothesized, statism has a negative and significant effect on association membership: The statism coefficient of -.643 corresponds to a 47-percent decrease in association membership (exp[-.643] = .526). In other words, membership levels in statist countries are roughly half those in nonstatist countries. Hypothesis 1 is thus supported. In addition, as predicted, corporateness has a positive and significant effect on membership, supporting Hypothesis 3. The coefficient of .354 reflects a 42 percent higher rate of association membership in corporatist countries (exp[.354] = 1.42). When combined, the effects of statism and corporateness produce dramatic differences: Association membership in corporatist, nonstatist countries like Sweden is 2.70 times that of noncorporatist, statist nations like France (inverting the .526 multiplier for statist, corresponds to a 1.90 multiplier for nonstatist; [1.90][1.42] = 2.70).

In Model 1, neither GDP per capita (logged) nor democracy has significant effects on association membership. GDP per capita tends to be positive across various model specifications, but generally does not come close to statistical significance. The coefficient for democracy is near zero. These findings may be a result of the relatively small range of countries, and thus lack of variation in these measures. Effects of GDP and democracy might be more pronounced in a larger sample of countries that includes many nations other than the industrialized Western democracies.

Model 2 includes two individual attitude variables thought to affect political participation: “trust in others” and post-materialist values. Both have positive, significant effects on association membership. Association membership, however, is sometimes

Table 6. Hierarchical Poisson Regression Coefficients Showing the Effects of Selected Independent Variables on Individual's Level of Membership in "Old" and "New" Social Movement Associations: 32 Countries from the World Values Survey, 1991

Independent Variable	"Old" Social Movements		"New" Social Movements	
	Model 3 (Base Model)	Model 4 (Full Model)	Model 5 (Base Model)	Model 6 (Full Model)
<i>Country-Level Variables</i>				
Statism	-.414 ⁺⁺⁺ (.095)	-.356 ⁺⁺⁺ (.092)	-.982 ⁺⁺⁺ (.238)	-.922 ⁺⁺⁺ (.184)
Corporateness	.529 ⁺⁺⁺ (.093)	.249 ⁺⁺ (.079)	-.015 (.169)	.080 (.142)
Democracy	-.0003 (.020)	-.010 (.021)	.019 (.024)	-.002 (.022)
GDP per capita, log	.019 (.116)	-.013 (.116)	.276 (.235)	.215 (.202)
<i>Individual-Level Variables</i>				
Age	.009 ⁺⁺⁺ (.001)	.009 ⁺⁺⁺ (.001)	.007 ⁺⁺⁺ (.002)	.009 ⁺⁺⁺ (.002)
Gender (male = 1)	.227 ⁺⁺⁺ (.041)	.194 ⁺⁺⁺ (.040)	-.432 ⁺⁺⁺ (.075)	-.448 ⁺⁺⁺ (.076)
Education	.274 ⁺⁺⁺ (.027)	.226 ⁺⁺⁺ (.023)	.357 ⁺⁺⁺ (.039)	.267 ⁺⁺⁺ (.039)
Marital status (married = 1)	.179 ⁺⁺⁺ (.019)	.174 ⁺⁺⁺ (.019)	.008 (.041)	-.000 (.042)
Religious belief	-.046 ⁺⁺⁺ (.014)	-.041 ⁺⁺ (.013)	.105 ⁺⁺⁺ (.027)	.111 ⁺⁺⁺ (.027)
Employment status (employed = 1)	.819 ⁺⁺ (.057)	.798 ⁺⁺⁺ (.057)	.244 ⁺⁺⁺ (.047)	.242 ⁺⁺⁺ (.051)
Trust in others	—	.144 ⁺⁺⁺ (.022)	—	.333 ⁺⁺⁺ (.043)
Post-materialist values	—	.130 ⁺⁺⁺ (.022)	—	.378 ⁺⁺⁺ (.039)
Constant	-3.08 ^{**} (1.01)	-2.85 ^{**} (1.02)	-5.92 ^{**} (2.27)	-6.07 ^{**} (1.91)
Log-likelihood ($\times 10^4$)	-4.78	-4.65	-5.70	-5.74

New coef.
and S.E.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Number of individuals = 36,724.

⁺ $p < .05$ ⁺⁺ $p < .01$ ⁺⁺⁺ $p < .001$ (one-tailed tests)

^{*} $p < .05$ ^{**} $p < .01$ ^{***} $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

thought to affect social capital and trust (Orum 1989; Paxton 2001), and thus reverse causality may be clouding the results. They should be interpreted with caution. In any case, our main findings are unchanged.

TYPE OF ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Table 6 presents the results of models predicting membership in specific *types* of associations. Models 3 and 4 predict membership in "old" social movement organiza-

tions: political parties, trade unions, and professional associations. Individual-level variables have effects consistent with models of overall association membership, with the exception of religious belief, which has a significant negative effect.

Statism has a negative and significant effect on old social movement membership, although the effect is smaller than in models of overall level of membership. Corporateness has a positive, significant effect on membership in old social movements that is

larger than the coefficient in the analyses of overall membership (Model 1). In Model 3, the coefficient of corporateness is .529, indicating a 70-percent higher rate of membership compared to noncorporatist nations ($\exp[.529] = 1.70$). Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Models 5 and 6 contain results for membership in new social movement associations. Individual-level coefficients again depart little from those for models of overall membership. Marital status ceases to have an effect, and the coefficient for gender becomes negative and significant, indicating higher levels of membership among women than men. This result is partly due to the fact that women's organizations are included in the "new" social movements category.²¹ "Trust" and "post-materialist values," added in Models 4 and 6, have positive and statistically significant effects on membership for both old and new social movements.

Statism has a strong negative effect on new social movement membership, consistent with Hypothesis 2. Indeed, statism has a larger negative effect on new social movements than on any other organization type, corresponding to a 63-percent lower level of membership ($\exp[-.982] = .374$). Corporateness, on the other hand, has a slight negative but nonsignificant effect on new social movement membership, in contrast to its strong positive significant effect on old social movement and overall membership. The general positive effect of corporateness on association membership does not extend to new social movements—perhaps because old social movements are so well institutionalized that they preempt or crowd out new forms of associational activity.

METHODOLOGICAL CHECKS

We conducted several methodological checks on our results. First, we conducted analyses across a range of statistical models and methods of estimation to ensure that our results were not an artifact of our methods. Our main findings were consistent across

²¹ When "women's organizations" are excluded from the category, the coefficient for gender remains negative but is no longer statistically significant.

OLS regression models, hierarchical linear models, ordinary Poisson models, and negative binomial models. Likewise, minimal differences were observed between robust and ordinary standard errors, or when using different methods of estimation.²²

Second, issues of model specification and omitted variable bias are always a concern. To address this, we incorporated a variety of other country-level and individual-level variables in our models, including: national-level educational expansion, political regime characteristics, individual socioeconomic status, political views, TV-viewing habits,²³ and many others. (Additional tables are available from the authors on request.) These variables were not included in our main analyses for the sake of parsimony and to avoid the loss of cases because of missing data. None of these variables affected the findings regarding statism and corporateness.

Third, Curtis, et al. (1992) suggest that religious organizations are distinctive in terms of membership patterns compared with other types of associations. To ensure that religious organizations do not bias our results, we estimated our models omitting religious organizations in our overall association membership indicator. Findings were consistent.

Fourth, we also conducted similar analyses based on a sample including *only* industrialized democracies—eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia were excluded. The main findings again were unchanged.

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

CROSS-LEVEL INTERACTIONS AND THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP. Our discussion of corporateness suggests corollary hypotheses regarding cross-level interaction effects that yield insights into the *meaning* of associational membership in different nations. Our earlier description of the various polity types suggests that the encompassing, inclusive nature of corporate institutions might

²² This addresses concerns voiced by Guo and Zhao (2000) regarding PQL estimation.

²³ This variable is suggested by Putnam (2000). We find, however, a significant effect in the opposite direction than Putnam would predict. TV-viewing has a positive, significant effect on association membership.

foster an “automatic,” less voluntaristic form of civic engagement—reflecting an individual’s location in society and the economy (e.g., a worker joining his industrial union) rather than the more proactive behavior of a participant in the public sphere (e.g., a mother mobilizing against drunk driving). In noncorporate nations, membership is less taken-for-granted and might thus depend more directly on individual attitudes and values. Consequently, one would predict that individual-level attitudes and capacities would have a smaller effect on association membership in corporate nations and a greater effect in noncorporate nations.

The exploratory analyses we conducted on this issue support these claims. First, we found that cross-level interactions between corporateness and individual-level variables such as education tend to be negative and significant. Education has a significantly smaller coefficient in corporate societies where membership tends to be taken for granted. Where association membership is optional (and thus dependent on individual initiative), education is a more important determinant of membership; where membership is “automatic,” education matters less.

Second, preliminary examination of data on “active participation” in voluntary associations (as indicated in the World Values Surveys by individuals “doing unpaid work” for an association) also supported this point. While corporateness is highly predictive of association *membership*, we found that it is uncorrelated with *active participation* in an association. This issue is extremely important and deserves more systematic study. The fact that “membership” and “active participation” in associations might diverge constitutes a powerful reminder of our main theoretical argument—that the shape and structure of “civil society” varies across nations and that the “meaning” of civic activities is highly differentiated depending on the societal and cultural context. For instance, many authors have noted that unions in corporatist countries are much more “consensual” than they are in noncorporatist countries. Also, typical members in corporatist countries are more “passive”—leaving negotiations to a professionalized class of experts. By contrast, although they have much lower membership levels overall, similar organizations

in statist countries have different “repertoires of collective action” and carry out more protest activities (Therborn 1995; Tilly 1986). A similar point can be made about the disconnection between church membership, which is pervasive in corporate societies like Sweden and Germany, and religious practice (e.g., praying and church attendance), which is low in those countries (see Gustaffson 1982).²⁴ Polity characteristics such as statism and corporateness may prove helpful in understanding such variation.

NATIONAL TRENDS FROM 1981 TO 1991. Given recent concerns about a secular decline in voluntary association membership, we briefly explore national trends from 1981 to 1991.²⁵ Again taking cues from neoinstitutional theorists, we argue that the postwar dominance of liberal ideologies in world society (i.e. ideas that emphasize the authority of individuals as legitimate social actors) (Frank and Meyer forthcoming; Frank, Meyer, and Miyahara 1995; Meyer, Boli, et al. 1997; Meyer, Frank et al. 1997; Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1998; Thomas et al. 1987) might generate convergence around “American-style” visions of associational life resulting in higher levels of association over time and more emphasis on “new” social movement membership. The 1980s witnessed considerable progress of the liberal order internationally, in domains as varied as economic organization, trade, education, and individual rights. Also, the collapse of the Eastern bloc and several Latin American dictatorships has generated tremendous interest in civil society and substantial efforts (on the part of international organizations, for instance) to engineer a revival of grassroots institutions.²⁶ Therefore, we expect that, from

²⁴ We thank John Meyer for drawing our attention to this point.

²⁵ Unfortunately, we cannot extend analyses to the 1995 World Values Survey. Changes in the survey rendered the question noncomparable.

²⁶ Both the World Bank and the United Nations, for instance, started substantial programs of collaboration and financial sponsorship of civil society organizations in the 1980s. These programs received further impetus in the 1990s and are thriving today. (For the World Bank, see <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/NGOs/home>; for the the United Nations, see

1981 to 1991, patterns of associational activity worldwide will have shifted toward higher levels of associational activity overall, as well as a greater emphasis on the new social movements that are characteristic of liberal, noncorporatist societies.

Table 1 (see p. 3) shows trends from 1981 to 1991 in the average number of memberships for selected countries. It is clear that average membership increased for most countries. A few nations (e.g., Argentina and Japan) faced a decrease in associational memberships. Most, however, experienced expansion—sometimes quite dramatic expansion (e.g., Finland and Belgium). Among the 19 countries with membership data for both 1981 and 1991, the national membership average increases from .81 to .93. A paired sample *t*-test confirms that the overall increase from 1981 to 1991 is statistically significant (*t*-value = 1.87, 19 countries, $\alpha < .05$, one-tailed test). The increase appears substantial, especially considering that it occurred over a brief 10-year period. A *t*-test also confirms a statistically significant increase in new social movement activity throughout the world, from .054 to .092 (*t*-value = 2.68, 19 countries, $\alpha < .05$, one-tailed test).²⁷ That is, 9.2 percent of people in the average country claim membership in a new social movement association in 1991. At the aggregate level, countries thus appear to be shifting toward the “liberal” model of associational activity, perhaps as a result of the global dominance of such models and institutions in world society. However, multivariate analyses are needed to draw firm conclusions about the causes of these trends.

CONCLUSION

Polity characteristics strongly influence how people associate in different nations. Statism has a deterrent effect on involvement in associational activities that is especially strong for new social movement activities. Cor-

http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/home.htm. Accessed October 2001.)

²⁷To allow a comparison between 1981 and 1991, new social movements are measured by environmental and development association categories.

poratness, on the other hand, encourages membership in associations, especially in unions and other old social movements. These polity effects operate strongly over and above individual-level variables such as individual education, employment and marital status, and so on, as well as other country-level variables such as economic development and democracy. Thus, polity characteristics shape not only the *level* of involvement in associational activities across countries, but also its social *modalities*—the *types* of associations joined, and possibly other outcomes, such as whether participation is active or passive.

Finally, our results contain some suggestive evidence about what the future might hold. On one hand, observed trends over time seem to lend some credence to the idea of a long-term convergence toward a “liberal” model of political incorporation. Certainly the worldwide diffusion of a powerful liberal vision, in which “civil society” is regarded as the most important agent of a successful democracy, is not irrelevant to this transformation. Indeed, direct interventions to promote civic engagement (especially in developing nations and former socialist countries) have become somewhat of a panacea for international actors and professional communities in search of new models after the failure of state-centered forms of societal development (e.g., see Van Rooy 1998).

On the other hand, our general argument warrants a more cautious assessment. The fact that associational activity is firmly set in broad, historically evolved social structures and cultural frames also suggests that such forms of involvement may not be so easily “engineered.” To the extent that the nature and possibilities of civil society are shaped by these patterns of polity organization, then, actions that seek to enhance it may have only a limited effect.

Our research reflects a different approach to the comparative study of associations than has been commonly used. We have argued that associations ought to be studied using a structural framework that focuses on historically evolved patterns of polity organization and that stresses the relevance of large-sample comparative analysis for testing institutional and historical hypotheses. These patterns are well known to historical schol-

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ars and social movement theorists but are often overlooked in large cross-country studies, which typically focus on individual-level processes.

Our findings, moreover, suggest the need for new images of voluntary association. People do not “just join” voluntary associations because they are wealthy, educated, or trusting, or have particular interests or social problems to address. The act of joining, and the particular types of organizations people join, are embedded in cultural and institutional arrangements defined at the level of the national polity. These national characteristics shape whether voluntary involvement is rational, legitimate, or simply possible, and the way in which it will occur. Thus, where political institutions and culture encourage centralized and consensual voluntary action, mobilization typically occurs within large, strong, established channels; where they discourage association, mobilization is likely to be fragmented and perhaps more antagonistic. Finally, where institutions encourage decentralized access to the political sphere, mobilization will be widespread and competitive. The individual “choice” of civic engagement makes sense only in relation to these highly structured contexts of action, which define both its limits and its strengths.

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