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## Democracy Satisfaction: The Role of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Local Communities

Paulette Ann Meikle-Yaw

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DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CIVIC  
ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

By

Paulette Ann Meikle-Yaw

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Sociology  
in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

Mississippi State University

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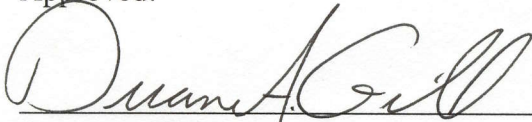
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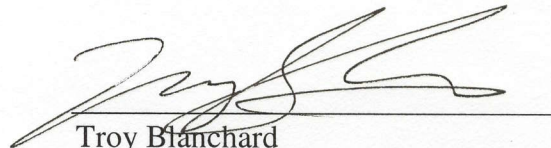
By

Paulette Ann Meikle-Yaw


Approved:



Duane A. Gill  
Professor of Sociology  
(Director of Dissertation)



Troy Blanchard  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
(Committee Member)



Lynn Hempel  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
(Committee Member)



Domenico Parisi  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
(Committee Member)



Xiaohe Xu  
Graduate Coordinator of the Department  
of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social  
Work



Phillip B. Oldham  
Dean of the College of Arts and  
Sciences

Name: Paulette Ann Meikle-Yaw

Date of Degree: May 13, 2006

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Sociology

Major Professor: Duane A. Gill

Title of Study: DEMOCRACY SATISFACTION: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL  
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Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Contemporary United States has witnessed a gradual shift of political responsibilities to local communities. This shift creates opportunities for a greater sense of democracy among individuals in local communities. This dissertation explores how elements of social capital and civic engagement support participatory democratic processes, and ultimately improve the quality of democracy for individuals. The central premise of this research is that democracy satisfaction includes the ability to influence decisions for individual and community benefits. Thus individuals who possess social capital and actively participate in civic life are likely to experience democracy satisfaction.

Trust is specified as a primary social capital measure. Thus, the extent to which “generalized trust” and “particularized trust” account for differences in the levels of individual satisfaction with democracy is examined. A parsimonious typology is developed in which four categories of trusters (total trusters, general trusters, particular

trustees, and skeptics) are delineated and empirically tested. Three categories of civic engagement; *local political*, *representative* and *altruistic* civic engagement are also differentiated and tested for their explanatory value for democracy satisfaction. To achieve this, data from the 2000 American National Election Study were used in logistics regression models.

The study confirms the notion that while trust is important when it comes to democracy satisfaction, it is generalized trust (total and general trustees), rather than particularized trust (particular trustees, and skeptics) that is more important in predicting democracy satisfaction.

The results also show that not all forms of civic engagement predict democracy satisfaction. While representative civic engagement and giving to charity have positive effects on democracy satisfaction, local political civic engagement and volunteering time do not significantly predict satisfaction with democracy. With reference to altruistic civic engagement, results show that giving to charity has a positive effect on democracy satisfaction, but not volunteering time. It is concluded that participatory democracy is impeded in communities with strong particularized trust and limited generalized trust. The study points to futures research opportunities to ascertain the extent to which types of trust and civic engagement are pertinent factors in explaining development efforts in local communities that are deficient in civic culture and participatory democracy.

## DEDICATION

In loving memory of Mr. Alfred Meikle (1917-2003), my precious father, mentor, and friend.

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The completion of this dissertation was made possible through the assistance and generosity of a number of people to whom I owe much gratitude. First and foremost, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my heavenly Father who is the source of my identity, strength, grace and peace, who continually imparts His wisdom, knowledge and understanding to me. Father, I confess my total dependence on you; without You I could not have completed this dissertation, but with You I made it.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This dissertation explores how elements of social capital and civic engagement support participatory democratic processes, and ultimately improve the quality of democracy for individuals. Previous studies exploring issues of social capital, civic engagement, and democracy focus on how trust, social networks and civic engagement, support democratic participation and improve the quality of governance, politics and democracy at macro levels (Gibson 2001; Helliwell and Putnam 2000; Inglehart 1999; Joslyn and Cigler. 2001; Krishna 2002 a and b; Putnam 1993; Uslaner 1999a, 1999b; Brehm and Rahn 1997). There are few studies focusing on individual social-psychological, micro level contextual analysis of social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction. The central premise of this research is that democracy satisfaction includes the ability to impact decisions for individual and community benefits. Thus individuals who possess social capital and actively participate in civic life are likely to be satisfied with democracy.

The dissertation uses micro-level constructs such as formal and informal connections, trust, civic action, beliefs in collective action, and the motivation and ability to act, (which are embedded in the operationalization of social capital and civic

engagement) to explain individual level satisfaction with democracy. Further, it theoretically positions individual level analysis within the structure of local place, conceptually linking micro-level social processes with wider macro-level processes. This is relevant because although no individual can “*own democracy*” per se, he or she can “*own*” a feeling of satisfaction with the way democracy works in his or her local community through experience, and “*owning*” this feeling manifests itself in either positive or negative political action in wider political arenas.

Contemporary U.S. has witnessed a gradual shift of political responsibilities to the local level; a shift fueled by political devolution, a process by which the federal government transfers more responsibilities to local jurisdictions. An underlying assumption is that decentralizing power to the local level creates a greater sense of democracy and therefore a greater sense of influence and ownership among individuals. In this respect, local responsibility increases partnerships and social relations that function as channels of communication within and between various local stakeholder groups. Local community residents have opportunities to participate in civil society, develop a common understanding of social life, develop leadership skills and come together to make more democratic and inclusive decisions. Civil society is therefore the avenue to effective local governance and is critical for “making democracy work” (Putnam 1993, 1995). In response to this shift in political focus, over the past two decades there has been a reemergence of political and scholarly interest in participatory democracy and civil society<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Civil Society is defined as “the network of ties and groups through which people connect to one another and get into community political affairs” (Skocpol and Fiorina, 1999:2). Civil society balances the power of the state and shields individuals from the power of the state. It differs from the state, the economy and

Civil society represents a blend of social and political power through which civic engagement and interacting individuals and groups authenticate its existence. It is enhanced by positive social interactions and prevailing favorable characteristics of localities.<sup>2</sup> “The citizen is located as the member of a larger community precisely outside the family and free of the state in the space of civil society - that same space is where civic engagement can be bred” (Putzel 1997: 945). When citizens carry out tasks that would otherwise be performed by the government, this keeps governmental power “in check.” Moreover, an established civil society maintains and improves democracy by opening communication channels for local political ideas and civic engagement. Civil society provides opportunities for learning, skill building, creating new leaders, and nurturing a *culture of democracy* that acts as a launching pad for average citizens and the younger generation to participate in local and wider political landscapes. Accordingly, a stable and effective civil society not only provides opportunities for individuals to be heard, it provides a milieu for developing trust and other social resources and for developing and organizing attitudes toward participatory democracy and political civic engagement.

In view of such assertions, this dissertation addresses the questions: Are people who are “civically engaged” and who exhibit “generalized and/or particularized trust” more likely to experience greater satisfaction with the way democracy works within the

---

family and kinship relations. Putnam (1993) views civil society as citizen participation in formal organizations, for him civil society is key for successful democracy.

<sup>2</sup> In terms of participatory democracy, the issue is the question of the effect of the setting on social behavior. Wilkinson’s study assumes setting to be important. With the conception of community as a social field, the context (in its spatial and temporal dimensions) can never be separated from the processes of social interaction that define it as a context. The context - and the action “affect” one another. The question then is whether the civil society in one context differs systematically from the actions in other contexts because of contextual effects (see Wilkinson, 1991).

current political environment of a community? What roles do social capital and civic engagement play in aiding people's satisfaction with participatory governance? What forms of social capital and civic engagement are most useful in predicting satisfaction with democracy? To what extent do various dimensions of social capital and civic engagement account for differences in peoples' levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works?

To this end, this study examines the extent to which forms of social capital and civic engagement predict individual satisfaction with the way participatory democracy works. I consider social capital as an effective avenue to explain connections among people (social networks). It illustrates how the depth of these relationships acts as mechanisms that affect individuals' ability to participate in consensus decision making and potentially reinforce their satisfaction with local democratic processes. Examining these issues is particularly relevant as establishing viable civil societies has become a key issue in many states where more governance responsibilities have been placed at the local level. Further as Kim (2000) points out a liberal democratic polity cannot be viably sustained without citizens with civic virtues. Such characteristics Kim argues are "cultivated, reproduced, and reinforced through an active, voluntary associational life in a pluralistically organized civil society" (Kim 2000:198).

Acknowledging that *social capital formation, civic engagement, and systems of participatory decision making* do not exist in a capricious vacuum (instead they occur in a concrete social context within specific economic, social, and political milieu), I contend that local communities provide an ideal setting for nurturing these three phenomena as

participatory democracy resources and ultimately cultivating individual-level democracy satisfaction.

The theoretical soundness of social capital, civic engagement, and civil society perspectives for this dissertation lies in the fact that each encompasses notions of participatory citizenship. However, I focus on social capital and civic engagement as the substance of civil society. Civil society provides an avenue for civic engagement and interaction, and social capital and civic engagement are augmented when people participate and interact with one another in various roles to accomplish short-term and long-term goals. Consequently, societies with an abundant stock of social capital should be more likely to respond to concerns of citizens more readily and effectively work in partnerships, groups, and institutions to achieve common goals. This is especially true when a community is in a crisis mode.

At its highest level of functionality, participatory democracy denotes much more than citizens' capability to articulate their demands. It signifies a mechanism for exerting influence, learning responsibility and civic virtues. It helps residents to purposefully participate in and affect the outcome of various social and political activities. Such participation ultimately affects peoples' psyche/emotions and fosters a sense of contentment and optimistic feelings about local democracy processes.

In essence, prolific participation and strong associational life are the engines behind effective democracy. Putnam (1993a), a noted proponent of the importance of social capital, civic engagement, and civic life in effective democratic processes, centers his argument on how social networks foster trust and civic engagement. In highlighting associational life and its utility for democracy, he states; "networks of civic engagement

that cut across social cleavages nourish wider cooperation” (Putnam 1993a:175). Verba and Nie (1987) also note that participation is important for democracy, not only because it communicates citizens’ needs and desires to the government, but because it is a prime source of satisfaction with one’s own role.

In addition, it can be argued that optimistic worldviews motivate public-spirited citizens to cooperate and coordinate civic activities with confidence that things can be better. An optimistic stance should increase efficacious attitudes and participatory behaviors, which should in turn foster greater returns by creating a fertile breeding ground for the enhancement of one’s satisfaction with the degree of “democratic influence” available to an individual. As stated by Putnam (2000), a pervasive finding from life satisfaction research globally is the idea that the breadth and depth of one’s social connections best predict one’s sense of contentment (Putnam 2000).

Abundant levels of participatory efficacy should therefore augment one’s level of satisfaction with democratic processes. In this vein, I argue that democracy satisfaction should evoke the feeling that one is a part of mutually-beneficial collective actions. As a result, the main objective in this dissertation is to examine the extent to which social capital and civic engagement predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. In doing this I define and measure components of individual level social capital and civic engagement and use them as predictors of democracy satisfaction.

This study is a micro-level analysis and not macro-level. Consequently, measuring and empirically testing community social capital and civic engagement are not among the aims of this dissertation; neither will I measure the extent of actual participatory democracy in communities. Community signifies a contextual background,

a place where patterns and qualities of relationships are developed, where micro-level interaction creates and sustain trust, and where participation that fosters the outcome of satisfaction with the way democracy works resides.

## 1.2 Research Premise

Putnam (1993a) argues that effective governance and democracy is contingent on social capital. Putnam (2000) and Brehm and Rahn (1997) found a notable relationship between strong civic culture and civic engagement. It is argued that peoples' involvement in local organizations should have an independent effect on democracy satisfaction. Therefore, the general question of how satisfied people are with how democracy works in local communities serves as a barometer for social equality and participatory equity in a devolved socio-political system like that of the U.S. Studying relationships between social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction is an important research venture because it encompasses personal attitudes towards the current political milieu and how much this is mediated by a broader social context. I contend that within the current political milieu and contemporary revival of civil society, scholarship should go beyond macro-level analyses of democracy and also include predictors of individual level perceptions of participatory democracy.

The focus of this dissertation is participatory democracy. In this regard, I am interested mainly in two research strands of social capital and civic engagement; (1) empirically examining individuals who exhibit trust<sup>3</sup> and are members of organizations; and (2) contextualizing communities and civic organizations in which individuals interact and participate.

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<sup>3</sup> For this dissertation, the focus is on outcomes of trust rather than trust formation.



### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this dissertation is to evaluate links among social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction within the milieu of participatory democracy (see Figure 1.1). Accordingly, specific objectives of this dissertation are:

(a) To examine “generalized trust” and “particularized trust” (components of social capital) as predictors of democracy satisfaction. In achieving this goal, I disaggregated these two elements of trust both conceptually and empirically. Thus I constructed and empirically tested a parsimonious typology that captures two main ideas: (i) that particularized trust and generalized trust are not mutually exclusive categories; and (ii) that it is useful to distinguish diversity in the combination of, and the degree to which people are particularized trusters and/or generalized trusters.

(b) The second objective is to examine the extent to which these dimensions of social capital account for difference in individual levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works.

(c) The third objective is to examine if civic engagement (*local political civic engagement* such as working on community issues, attending community meetings, contacting a public official or being a member of a local organization, as well as representative *political civic engagement* such as voting) might increase one’s level of satisfaction with the way democracy works<sup>4</sup>.

(d) Finally, assuming that giving to church and charities and volunteering time improve opportunities to contribute to community welfare, I examine how these specific *altruistic* elements of civic engagement influence democracy satisfaction.

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<sup>4</sup> Here, the assumption is organizational membership is local where citizens can actively participate in activities.

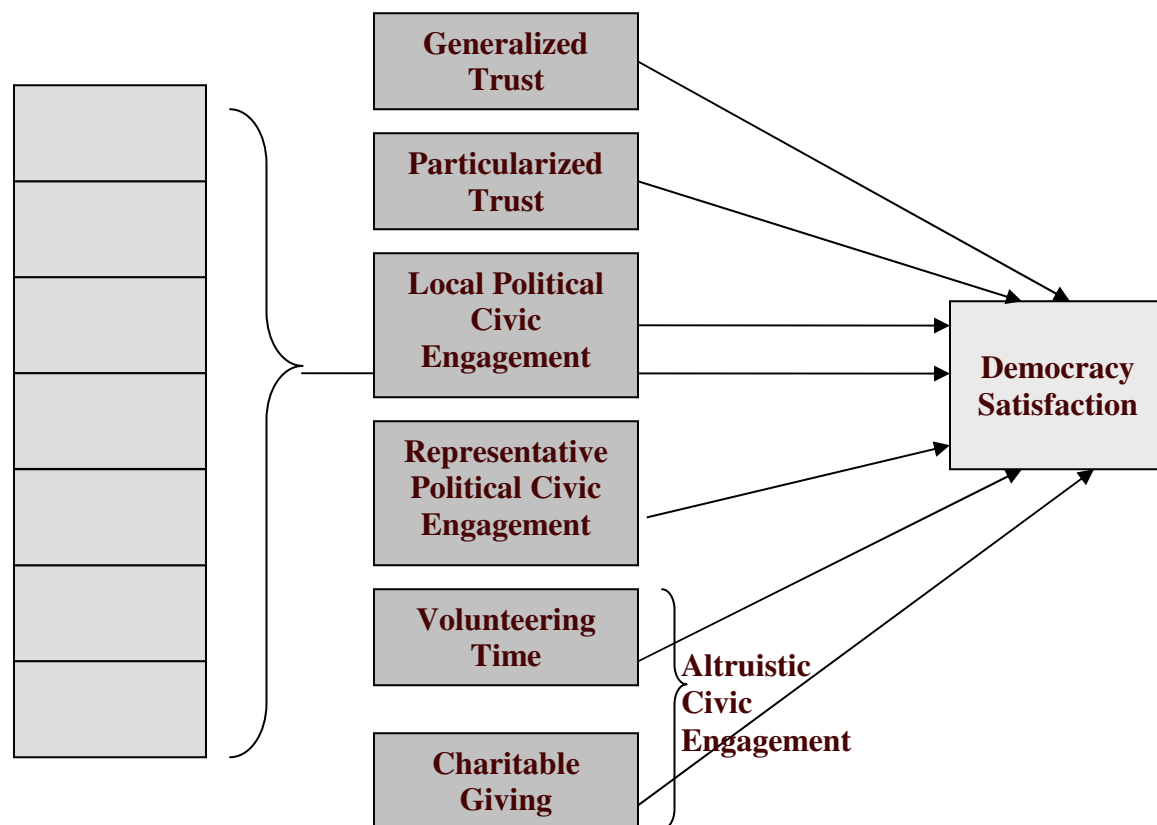


Figure 1.1: Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Democracy Satisfaction Model

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

Researching the issue of how social capital and civic engagement can affect people's ability to influence decision making for individual and community benefits and ultimately their satisfaction with the way democracy works is warranted for a number of general reasons. First, decentralization of political decision making to local government in the U.S. is advancing and the devolution of power is important for local level development initiatives. Second, the importance of participatory democracy in the U.S. is reinforced by George W. Bush's emphasis on enabling and promoting faith-based and community initiatives that address the nation's social problems.

Third, the contemporary importance of democracy satisfaction stems from increasing trends toward the global diffusion of democracy (see Wejnert 2005). Finally, strengthening and spreading democracy is an explicit goal of the foreign policy of George W. Bush's administration and just about every other administration in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Recent efforts by the U.S. to democratize Afghanistan and Iraq (marked by the current deployment of U.S. soldiers in those countries) as well as efforts to help Palestine and Israel achieve peace and democratize are testaments to a continued drive to spread democracy and pro-democratic attitudes. This is further illustrated by the following recent quote from President George W. Bush's, 2005 State of the Union Address: "America's actions will result in the spread of democracy in the broader Middle East."

More specific reasons for this research include the notion that participatory democracy is in reality a socio-political system, which warrants sociological inquiry and analysis because it comprises different levels and forms of social organizations consisting

of intricate networks of human relationships. Studying links between participatory democracy, social capital, and civic engagement is important because efficient democracy is effectively shaped and established when groups are bond together by shared interests and goals. Thus, this study can contribute to the knowledge and practice of sociology. Sociology suggests that when citizens cooperate to solve socio-political problems, positive outcomes occur in terms of (a) establishing trust, (b) social networks, (c) social equality, and (d) effective governance. A potential offshoot of all these processes is satisfaction with democracy, a sharper awareness of this offshoot should aid in understanding the complex and multifaceted nature systems of democratic governance, social interaction, and engagement.

This dissertation contributes to the literature by increasing our understanding of how the individual value of social capital and civic engagement contributes to advancing participatory democracy and satisfaction at a personal-social psychological level (as against regional and state level studies). This understanding is imperative in that, if participatory democracy is effective, it should evoke widespread feelings of satisfaction with the way democracy works among citizens. Empirical work on democracy satisfaction can signify elements of modern progress, overall social welfare, reflected in individual level satisfaction with the way of life in the U.S. In addition, a sense of contentment and positive attitudes toward participatory democracy among individuals can engender efficacy and community support among citizens, creating a fertile ground for local development. This research has potential application for wider social settings and implications for wider social goals and broader political activities.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

Putnam's conceptualization of social capital embraces both an associational (social networks) and a social trust aspect of social capital, but theoretically and empirically (Putnam, 1993a and 2000). As examined in chapter III, social capital and civic engagement have been given a number of different definitions in the social science discipline. "On one hand, social connectedness and civic engagement of individuals such as associational membership are seen as a crucial component of social capital because they embody the capability to mobilize a wide range of personal contacts that are decisive to the improvement and effective functioning of one's social and political life. On the other hand, defined as subjective norms of trust, social capital involves attitudes people have about other people and therefore reveals how individuals are affiliated with each other." (Freitag 2003:937). I concur with Freitag (2003) who argues that even though these two dimensions of social capital are closely interrelated there are reasons to separate them conceptually. He suggests that norms and values like social trust are subjective and intangible, thus embracing a more qualitative dimension. While social networks are objective and observable, thus taking on a more quantitative element.

For this dissertation social capital is defined as:

Social resources that are ingrained in network connections, reciprocity norms, and social trust that facilitate a variety of participatory transactions that allow individuals, groups, and the community at large to cooperate and coordinate activities in achieving mutual goals for mutual benefit.

Civic engagement is defined as:

Conscious individual and group actions aimed at making a difference in community civic life. It entails deliberate and cooperative actions in identifying and solving public concerns both within political and non-political realms.

And finally, democracy satisfaction is defined as:

A sense of contentment, fulfillment and general optimism about one's ability to influence socio-political decision making processes within his/her community.

## **1.6 Organization of the Dissertation**

This chapter provides a brief overview and preamble on the conceptual framework of this study. The research premise, research significance, research objectives, and how this research advances sociological literature are presented. I also describe the logic of the research approach; especially the relevance of social capital and civic engagement, and how these notions contribute to the objectives of my study. In chapter II, the concept of democracy is explained, paying particular attention to the multi-dimensionality of this concept in general and specifically participatory democracy. Notions of civil society and social resources are described in terms of their importance in advancing participatory democracy, the efficiency of governmental institutions, and the political performance of local communities. This chapter examines how participatory processes, social capital, and civic engagement connect citizens to local governance and impact their satisfaction with democracy. The chapter ends with an overview of a participatory democracy perspective and an elaboration of my reasons for focusing on participatory democracy and why "democracy satisfaction" is a viable response variable.

Chapter III reviews literature related to social capital and civic engagement perspectives in light of their explanatory power regarding participation and democracy satisfaction. This provides the theoretical framework for this study. In this regard, a brief historical overview of social capital theory and civic engagement is presented; also there is an overview of different conceptual definitions associated with these perspectives, and a review of the contributions of Putnam. This chapter validates the

explanatory scope of the theory and outlines various dimensions and measurements of social capital, as well as their implications for effective participatory democracy. Chapter III ends with a review of the findings of pertinent research that underpin both theoretical and empirical understandings of the link between participation, social capital, civic engagement, and participatory democracy.

Chapter IV reviews social demographic factors that may enhance or constrain one's ability to develop social capital and to be civically engaged. Thus the chapter reviews literature that examines issues of race; gender; age; human capital; home ownership; marital status, and political orientation as they relate to social capital formation, civic engagement, and ultimately satisfaction with participatory democracy.

The fifth chapter presents the research methodology. It describes data and measures, as well as statistical procedures employed in the study. Specifically, factor analysis and logistic regression are discussed in the context of this research. Chapter VI presents the empirical results.

The final chapter discusses empirical results and their implications. This chapter presents concluding statements, empirical contributions of the study, study limitations, policy implications, and possible areas for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AS CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the concept of democracy and explores its multidimensionality. It is not only important to understand the notion of democracy in general, but exploring the various dimensions of democracy draws attention to its connection to social capital and civic engagement and participatory processes. This discussion sets the stage for my literature review in Chapter III where I elaborate on the part of my conceptual model that highlights democracy satisfaction, civic engagement and social capital theory. In this vein, I focus on specific aspects of participatory democracy and highlight its relevance as a basis for realizing the objectives of this study. A discussion of the centrality of social capital and civic engagement to democracy satisfaction follows. In subsequent sections I present conceptual links between social capital, civic engagement, and participatory democracy which provide a contextual background for this study.

#### 2.2 Democracy

In general, the concept of democracy describes a set of ideals such as dignity, liberty, and equality (Kellner 1975; Tocqueville 1840). In democratic societies,



governance is conducted in such a way that decisions are made by the people themselves or by their elected representatives. Democracy entails governance by consent of the individual, which is consistent with true and honest respect for the dignity and integrity of the individual (Kellner 1975).

Dahl (1998) argues that in principle, democracy provides opportunities for effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda, and inclusion of adults. He argues that these attributes are critical to the democratic process, if citizens are to be politically equal in determining policies of associations. When any of these criteria are violated, its members will not be politically equal and democracy is weakened. Putzel (1997) argues that “.... democracy rests in large part on a notion of individuals as citizens endowed with inalienable rights, despite their location in family, ethnic group, or class” ( p 945).

It is reasonable to assert that the quality of democracy can be assessed by the satisfaction expressed by its citizens. Sait (1940) argues that a democratic way of life requires a full measure of cooperation between different and yet interdependent individuals, and provides opportunities for self-realization. Thus, no effort should be spared to promote mutual understanding and widen areas of common interests.

### 2.2.1 Democracy – A Multi-Dimensional Concept

Democratic governance is traditionally quite complex, yet democracy is conventionally treated as a single dimension concept. Linking multifaceted notions of social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction, requires an understanding for the multi-dimensionality of democracy as a concept. Democracy is a

multidimensional phenomenon (Inglehart 1999) and a value-laden term. Democracy is also an “essentially contested” concept (Berg 1978). As a concept it inherently contains elements of ambiguity, Canache et al., (2001) allude to “acceptable ambiguity” in reference to understanding the concept of democracy. They argue that ambiguity is inherent because democracy involves participation of ordinary citizens in decision making at a community/micro-level over and beyond structural elements of legislative make-up and casting their votes at national elections.

### 2.2.2 The Multidimensionality of Democracy and the Individual

Over six decades ago, Sanderson (1943) argued that the concept democracy is much broader than political freedom, universal suffrage, and parliamentary government. That is, democracy is not a matter of extant social structure. Instead it should be conceived as a process toward an ideal relationship that evolves in the future as in the past, that rests primarily on an attitude of individuals toward others, and a basic faith in a desirable system of human relationships (Sanderson 1943). If democracy is essentially faith in a better way of life whose realization depends on the behavior of each individual (Sanderson 1943), I posit that people who express satisfaction with the way democracy works are in effect expressing approval to the *realization of a better way of life and general welfare* and not only an expression of regime support.

Democracy is largely an expression of a feeling that every person, whatever his or her birth or occupation, shall develop the ability and have the opportunity to take part in democratic processes. Its motive is individualism on one hand and voluntary public service on the other (Sanderson 1943). John Dewey once wrote “Democracy must begin

at home, and its home is the neighborly community” (quoted in Putnam, 2000:337).

Likewise, Morlino (2004) argues that one element of a good democracy is that citizens, associations, and communities enjoy at least moderate liberty and equality.

### 2.2.3 Democracy Satisfaction

Several scholars have indicated that democracy satisfaction is multifaceted, ambiguous, and value laden (Norris 1999) and therefore subject to multiple interpretations (Canache, Mondak, & Seligson 2001; Karp & Shaun 2003). Canache et al., (2001) appositely allude to the notion that the unit of analysis of most “satisfaction with democracy” studies is the individual, which suggests that satisfaction with democracy is a summary indicator of individual-level satisfaction. They argue that when answering this question, the respondent is influenced by a mix of considerations, that is; *thoughts concerning the community*, (local-level participatory elements) the nation’s political system and incumbent leaders (including local-level leaders). In this context, I argue that democracy satisfaction includes an individual’s feeling of optimism and feeling of having the power to produce a desired effect in and around his or her local community.

Democracy satisfaction should evoke the feeling that *I am a part of mutually beneficial collective actions of problem solving in my community*.

“Satisfaction with democracy” is one of the most widely used indicators of individual attitudes toward the political system (Karp and Shaun 2003; Karp & Bowler, 2001). In general, it is intended to measure support for the political system and is assumed to be an indicator of the diffuse support necessary for institutions to build legitimacy. Questions tapping into the issue of satisfaction with democracy have been

widely administered in a number of countries and regularly appear on Eurobarometer (EB) surveys. In the U.S., the following question was added to the American National Election Studies on 11/10/2000, “On the whole, are you *satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied* with the way democracy works in the United States?” (ANES 2002). Responses to this question provided an appropriate dependent variable for this dissertation and the validity of this variable has been firmly established in research literature.

In their attempt to establish the construct validity of the satisfaction with democracy survey question as an indicator of system support, Anderson and Guillory (1997) reviewed past work on the issue. They found ample evidence to support that “satisfaction with democracy” is an indicator of actual system support and not coterminous with support for the serving government. They conclude that the validity of satisfaction with democracy as an indicator “constitute a successful validation of the indicator as a measuring instrument for a generalized attitude towards the political system on the legitimacy dimension” (Anderson and Guillory 1997:7).

In general, literature affirms the multidimensionality of the concept of democracy satisfaction, it involves more than approval of voting procedure, opinions about national institutions, incumbent political representative approval, or performance endorsement of a regime. Implicit in the notion of democracy, is an idea that citizens’ feelings about democratic processes inheres at the local community level where collective acts of democracy are carried out. Also, implicit is an idea that individual community members who are affected by a decision should have the chance to participate in making that decision.

### 2.3 Participatory Democracy

This research is based on the premise that people's perceptions and opinions of their satisfaction with democracy, includes their perceived ability to impact local decision making. An individual's experience of democracy satisfaction is analytically related to the type of democracy, thus it is important to distinguish between *participatory democracy* and *representative democracy*. The primary difference between participatory democracy and representative democracy is that participatory democracy embraces self-exploration and self development of the citizenry and representative democracy facilitates expressions of perceived interests, but does not necessarily help citizens uncover their real interests (Bachrach and Botwinick 1992). Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens (1997) note that representative democracy combines four main features: regular free and fair elections; universal suffrage; accountability of the state's administrative organs to the elected representatives; and effective guarantees for freedom of expression and association as well as protection against arbitrary state action.

Dahl (1998) suggests that in addition to voting equality, enlightened understanding and effective participation are necessary criteria for effective democratic processes. Bachrach and Botwinick (1992) argue that the strength of participatory democracy is that as people participate in the political process they become increasingly informed, which in turn, helps them achieve new levels of involvement and awareness. They argue that participation does not only result from political consciousness, it also facilitates its creation. They further note that even when all four requirements noted by Huber et. al (1997) are met, a country may be far from equal in collective decision making. Further, representative democracy does not entail an equal distribution of actual

political power. Therefore, they endorse participatory democracy characterized by high levels of local level participation with systematic differences across social categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender.

Substantiated by the forgoing assertions, I use democracy satisfaction as an indicator of individual satisfaction with local level democracy. I further argue that if individuals achieve democracy satisfaction, it is partly from their involvement in the process of participatory democracy at the community level, hence my focus on participatory democracy as against representative democracy.

An academic appeal of participatory democracy is ingrained in a need to prevent the creation of a deep-rooted class of self-serving elites. To prevent this, democracy would need to form an array of egalitarian institutions to ensure, to the extent justifiable, equal start for all, equal opportunity for all, and a high degree of social mobility (L1, 1999). L1 (1999) argues that a potential problem of representative democracy is the detachment and alienation felt by many "small" people because there seems to be no way for them to influence public policy. Thus representative democracy needs liberal institutions such as autonomous associations, civil society, and ample room for political mobilization and individual participation. Autonomous associations are not only legitimate but are necessary to democracy on a large scale (L1 1999).

Moreover, the relevance of participatory democracy as an avenue to experience democracy satisfaction lies in the fact that it engages citizens in “making decisions,” rather than in “making demands” (Radcliff and Wingenbach 2000). The former implies intensive face-to-face participation in small settings allowing deliberation and reasoned argument. The latter involves the mere expression of political preferences such as the anonymous

act of voting. “Making demands’ does not psychologically engage the individual in the manner proposed by advocates of participatory democracy and hence is unlikely to provide the same benefits as “making decisions” (Radcliff and Wingenbach 2000:981).

“Making decisions” is relevant to democracy satisfaction because it reveals the “true” interest of the community whereas “making demands” may not. Radcliff and Wingenbach (2000), argue that given the same set of self-interested preferences, the style of participation in each situation leads to different consequences for participants. Institutions of community life support local level participatory democracy (as against representational democracy) because they bestow opportunities for civic engagement and legitimacy to local organizations as well as engage people in policy processes.

Participatory democracy implies that citizens expect frequent consultation regarding issues that affect their lives. It is important because it curtails a vertical relation between citizenry and the state and reduces passivity among citizens. Verba, Lehman, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) found a positive relationship between individuals’ civic association and their political participation. Participation is based on a democratic ideal of citizen representation in local decision-making. Oliver (2000) argues that large size discourages participation, partly because people are less likely to be mobilized and are less interested in local political life. When citizens become involved in working out a mutually acceptable solution for a project (civic engagement) that affects their community, they increase interpersonal ties and trust (social capital) and grow into democratically responsible citizens and reaffirm democracy (Shepherd and Bowler 1997).

I focus on participatory democracy in this dissertation because it is considered to have a positive intervening impact on people’s satisfaction with democracy. I assert that

participatory democracy embraces a personal and social-psychological substance of democracy, beyond the national political realm, to strengthen *social-cultural dimensions* of democracy. In general, the literature shows that the social context of participatory democracy implies interaction in small polity size rather than in large areas of population, where individuals have opportunities for self-exploration, self-expression, consultation and participation in decision making. This assertion ties in with ideas that individuals may be satisfied with participatory democracy because they are able to influence local decision making through civic engagement<sup>1</sup>, but they may be quite dissatisfied with state-level and national-level democracy (representative democracy).

In addition, satisfaction with democracy as conceived in this dissertation does not necessarily reflect democracy at national and state levels (particularly as an indicator of general attitudes toward the political system). More specifically, individual feeling of democracy satisfaction is exemplified in participation in various communities and faith based organizations, neighborhood associations and voluntary associations - participatory organizations, rather than representative institutions. Participation is a process that puts participatory democracy into effect and in the context of this research; it is instrumental but not an end in itself. Such participation is a means to spread the *burden of responsibility* to a wider sphere of people and to stimulate democracy satisfaction.

Given this premise, and concurring with proponents of participatory democracy, civil society, civic engagement, and social capital, I conceptualize satisfaction with democracy in terms of individuals' perception of their ability to influence decision-

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<sup>1</sup> Civic engagement implies individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Scholars have used the terms civic engagement, political participation and civic participation interchangeable. In this dissertation I tend toward civic engagement, but I recognize these other concepts as describing fundamentally the same phenomena.



making at the community level. Nevertheless, I recognize that a representative system of democracy is still vital. Urbinati's (2000) asserts that in the character of democratic politics (even in a devolved political environment like the U.S.), participation and representation are not alternative forms of democracy; instead they are related forms constituting a continuum of political action in modern democracies.<sup>2</sup>

#### **2.4 Social Capital and Civic Engagement: Implications for Participatory Democracy**

Social capital and civic engagement are theoretical companions of participatory democracy perspective because they are imbued with elements of participation for the mutual benefit of individuals and community. A core idea of social capital as it relates to democracy satisfaction is that it is a resource for shared action. Civil society and participatory democracy are maintained by collective action, and social capital and civic engagement are beneficial in advancing issues associated with collective activities such as participatory democracy.

It has been established that social capital aids in the creation democratic societies. Examining former communist societies with weak civic traditions, Putnam (1993) argues that without norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, "amoral familism, clientelism, lawlessness, ineffective government, and economic stagnation" seem "likelier than successful democratization and economic development" (p183). Not only does social capital help create democracy in a country that is not democratic, it can help to maintain or improve existing democracies like the U.S. (Paxton 2002). In the former case, Paxton argues it works through well-established associations that counter a state's

<sup>2</sup> Urbinati (2000) presents a cogent argument for the relevance of representation in the article entitled "*Representation as Advocacy: A Study of Democratic Deliberation.*"

ability to directly oppress citizens and provides an arena for developing organized opposition to non- democratic regimes. In the latter case such associations “teach tolerance, promote compromise, and stimulate political participation and train leaders – all of which contribute to a healthy democracy” (Paxton 2002:257).

Putnam’s (1993) research in Italy relates to performances of regional governments but his study of social capital and civic engagement can be interpreted with reference to community relations that affect individual interactions. Perhaps one of the most important benefits that social capital bestows on participatory democracy is its capacity for mobilizing and dispensing opportunities for social network connections and civic engagement within communities.

## **2.5 Civic Engagement and Participatory Democracy**

Democracy is often considered to be superior to all other forms of government (Kellner 1975), because it implies that ordinary people share in some form of influence in the collective power that constitutes the state in which they live (Patterson 1999). Theories highlighting the importance of civic participation in non-political-organizations and social ties of community as the image of American democracy have their tradition in Tocqueville’s ideas presented in his 1835 book *Democracy in America*. Impressed by the diversity of associations, Tocqueville noted that American democracy was driven by town meetings, associations, and other visible forms of civic engagement, to which he attributed its success. He viewed participation in these non-political associations as vital in countering tendencies toward individualism. Also, he suggested that civic participation was fueled by the belief that in general people are cooperative, trustworthy and helpful.

Putnam's (1993) empirical study found that dense networks of civic engagement fostered by civil associations generated greater effectiveness in regional governments in Northern Italy. In this dissertation, I extend Putnam's (1993, 1995, 2000) as well as Tocqueville's emphasis on the importance of strong and active associational life in advancing civic actions among citizens as well as fostering attitudes and inclinations toward participatory democracy.

Without social networks that helps establishment of civic organizations and participation in local decision making, democracy is impeded. By extension, communities and their institutions share a history through which people develop common purposes, interests, and traditions that ultimately bind them together and help them decipher pertinent local issues and participate in larger political issues. Interaction in daily living leads to common interests, mutual identity, and commitment in the local territory (Wilkinson 1991). Therefore, a foundation for people's development as members of society and enjoying their democratic status in a concrete way lies in local civic engagement.

I argue that democracy satisfaction is cognitive; it resides in one's psyche, it is *attitudinal* rather than *behavioral* - involving some measure of contentment about being able to influence democracy and enhance one's civic spirit. But this emotionally and psychologically inclination toward democracy is difficult to achieve without interaction within civic organizations. When social connectedness exists, people can more easily communicate their preferences and become involved in decision making, leading to greater opportunities for local participation and greater opportunities for experiencing a sense of democracy satisfaction. I posit that satisfaction with democracy reflects political

attitudes and feelings and is largely a qualitative/psychological/ internalized phenomenon. Note, however, that it is invariably fuelled by collective efficacy, civic engagement and influence and it is difficult to achieve by “*bowling alone*” - to use Putnam’s (2000) popular metaphor.

Accordingly, the importance of civic engagement in fuelling individual democracy satisfaction has taken on new meaning because it is in civic institutions that individuals can develop the will to act collectively and enter into democratic processes (Warren 2001). Indeed, social capital and civic engagement makes American democracy work (Couto and Guthrie 1999; Putnam 1993a). Social norms and role expectations in civic organizations affect peoples’ perceptions of civil society and democratic participation. The thrust toward greater local participation can be understood within the context of the desire to establish new mechanisms of inclusion and involvement as a means of social cohesion (Chandler 2001). Warren (2001) further describes the importance of civil society in the U.S. and the importance of creating organizations that enhance grassroots political and democratic power. He recognizes the need to develop civic associations that cut across lines of class, gender and race. He aptly points out that faith based organizations have a central role to play in grassroots political involvement, as well as in efforts to revitalize democracy in America (Warren 2001).

Over three decades ago Dahl (1967) argued that most democracies are too big to foster citizens’ ability to actively determine aspect of their lives as a collectivity. He reasoned that in order to facilitate civic participation and have an entity large enough to generate meaningful political discourse large cities should be divided into municipalities of between 50,000 and 200,000 in size. “America has changed from a country bifurcated

between isolated rural towns and big central cities to one that consists largely of small and medium-sized suburbs” (Oliver 2000:361). Civic engagement takes place in smaller delimited physical territories – at a smaller spatial scale. For example, Oliver (2000) found a negative relationship between civic engagement and city size. City boundaries define communities and smaller places are civically richer (Oliver 2000).

Although Putnam (2000) implies that small town communities in the U.S. are rife with trusting people, I maintain that the idea of small size from this point of view can potentially counter one of the main arguments presented in this dissertation. This is because small town communities can be populated with *particularized trusters* and not *generalized trusters*.<sup>3</sup> I argue *generalized trust* is beneficial for civic-mindedness and civil society and ultimately some satisfaction with the way democracy works as we will see later in Chapter III.

## 2.6 Social Networks and Participatory Democracy

The quintessence of social capital is it is a resource that gives optimum utility when it is shared, shared through social networks consisting of individuals and organizations. In effect, all individuals or social groups have some form of social capital to invest or activate in a variety of social, economic, and political settings. Brehm and Rahn (1997) argue that from an individual standpoint, social capital manifests itself as a tight reciprocal relationship between levels of civic engagement and interpersonal trust. Therefore it is argued that, “A well connected individual in a poorly connected society is

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<sup>3</sup> Generalized trust is trust that can be generalized to people who are strangers. Particularize trust refers to people who have faith in their own kind; who are skeptical of strangers and consider them as untrustworthy. Uslander refers to *generalized trust* and *moralistic trust* in his 1993b and 2002 work. For this dissertation I use *generalized trust* throughout.

not as productive as a well connected individual in a well connected society. And even poorly connected individuals may derive some of the spillover benefits from living in a well-connected community” (Putnam 2000:20).

As pointed out by Lin (2000), however, “not all individuals or social groups uniformly acquire social capital or receive expected returns from their social capital” (p 786). Thus, social capital is not homogenous in all communities.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, certain structural characteristics of networks such as size, density, extent of closure, and diversity of the backgrounds, along with relational aspects such as inequality, shape the social capital capacity of a network (Winter 2000). These structural characteristics of social capital influence the nature of one’s social capital. Similarly, Verba and Nie (1987) contend that participation remains a powerful social force for increasing or decreasing inequality depending on who takes advantage of it.

Bonds of social capital affect the quality of participation (Paxton 2002). In recognizing links between social capital, civic engagement, and participatory democracy and, by extension, establishing the importance of such links to individual feelings of democracy satisfaction, I concur with Forrest and Kearns (2001). They underscore eight basic tenets of social capital and civic engagement that are pertinent for participatory democracy (see Figure 1.2). In Figure 1.2, I adjusted this presentation by incorporating implications for participatory democracy based on my review of the literature.

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<sup>4</sup> See Lin 2000 for an analysis of why groups encounter differences in social capital deficits and/or return deficits.

<b>Component of Social Capital/Civic Engagement</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Implications for Participatory Democracy</b>
1. Empowerment	When people feel they have a voice, are involved in processes that affect them and can take action to initiate changes.	This fosters civic society, as Putnam posits that civil society contributes to successful governance and democracy.
2. Participation	Citizens take part in social and community activities so that local events are well attended.	Participation creates a pool of social capital that upholds civic engagement and participatory democracy. Pooled actions can make a difference, as citizens work to set goals to meet the needs and desires of the community.
3. Associational activity and common purposes	When people cooperate this results in the formation of formal and informal groups to further collective interests.	Leads to people becoming civically engaged - contacting public officials to voice their demands on government on behalf of the community (community level civil society activism) – which is associated with higher levels of democracy. With regard to Putnam’s idea of “civic virtue.” Civic virtue is most potent when rooted in supporting networks of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous and connected individuals is primary for effective participatory democracy.
4. Supporting networks and reciprocity	Individuals and organizations cooperate to support mutual or one-sided gain; an expectation that help is available if needed.	

Figure 2.1: Domains of Social Capital, Civic Engagement and their Implications for Participatory Democracy.

Figure 2.1 continued

5. Collective norms and values; trust	That people share common values and norms of behavior.	This promotes community interests and increase people's propensity and willingness to organize into democratic groups and set and achieve common goals for the community. It facilitates efficiency in civic engagement through coordinated actions.
6. Trust	That people feel they can trust their co-residents and local organizations responsible for governing or serving their area.	Trust is a precondition for participatory democracy. Generalized trust in particular, with its outward focus fosters <i>bridging to diverse</i> groups and communities that fuels the emergence of participatory democracy.
7. Safety	That people feel that they can trust resulting in no restrictions of public space due to fear.	In general a sense of safety lubricates social life and frees people to participate in local political affairs.
8. Belonging	That people feel connected to each other and their home area and have a sense of belonging to the place and its people.	Community attachment sustains local civic engagement.

Source: Adapted from Forrest and Kearns 2001.



Wright (1976) concurs with participation outside the political sphere in the sense that it creates a community where citizens show more respect for each other. He arrives at this conclusion despite having previously argued that community could be conceived of as a place where interests of citizens are respected even though some are not able to actually participate in making policies.

Countering Pateman's (1970) argument that "mere presence" is not sufficient evidence for participation, Wright maintains that even *sub-participatory* acts, such as being present at meetings, involves exerting influence. If participation requires action, Wright argues that certain body language communication such as "raising an eyebrow or folding one's arm across one's chest, or the "negative action" of being conspicuously unmoved by entreaty, which feeds back to the speaker" (1976:229-230), may in fact cause people to feel they are influencing the democratic process.

## **2.7 Participatory Democracy: Social Context**

Invariably, local input in political decisions through participatory democracy occurs at a local or community level. Thus in the current political milieu, community has re-surfaced as a meaningful unit of social organization. It is a setting where individuals participate in society and a place for production and maintenance of social capital. Community is a place where social capital is translated into people power and is a place of local power and civic virtue that facilitates greater citizen participation and possibly a higher individual-level satisfaction with democracy. Thus, active citizen participation, dynamic associational life, horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation, and mutual

trust are major forms of civic community resources.<sup>5</sup> Participatory democracy and civic engagement facilitate coordination and cooperation at the community level, which promotes growth of associational relationships in local areas.

Devolution of decision making provides citizens a legitimacy to participate in local organizations, build local social resources, enhance self-determination, and build civic community agency. Social capital enhances the state of civic engagement and social trust in liberal democracies. In this sense, social capital comprises stocks of active associations among people inclusive of trust, shared values, mutual understanding, and actions that connect members of social networks and communities that make cooperative action possible (Cohen and Prusak 2001). Thus, in exploring the question; can the public policy of devolution advance participatory democracy and ultimately impact levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works? social networks and civic engagement are key variables.

It has been established that successful and healthy democracies and economies are those possessing dense webs of community participation (see Walters 2002). Communities with civic activism and moral behavior, where individuals give others their due, are more prosperous (Putnam 1993b; Uslaner 1999a).

Coleman (1988b) emphasizes the importance of communities in terms of benefits they yield to individuals. Over many years of living and sharing in physical proximity to each other and sharing norms of trust and reciprocity within social networks, a feeling of cooperation and connectedness develops among individual, groups, and the wider community. As a result, and beyond aiding civic engagement, positive outcomes of social capital are manifested in communities with high levels of social capital as community

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<sup>5</sup> According to Putnam 1993a, civic communities value civic participation, solidarity, and integrity.

members feel a sense of safety as neighbors informally keep watch on each other properties and children can be sent to play outside because tight community control ensures the welfare of neighborhood children (Coleman 1988b).

In communities with low levels of social capital, there is less trust among neighbors, parents do not feel a sense of safety and may keep their kids under close watch at home or deliberately provide adult company for them as they play in the neighborhood. Abundant levels of social trust serve to reduce transaction costs in local communities and markets. Indeed, the most common function attributed to social capital is that it is a source of network-mediated benefits beyond the immediate family (Portes 1988).

A pervasive theme emerging in research literature is a view that concepts of community and democracy are connected in theories of civil society, participation, civic engagement, and social capital (Paxton 1998). Coleman (1988a) argues that the value of social resources depends on social organization. Social capital combines organizational resources with other resources to produce different system-level behaviors and different outcomes for individuals (Coleman 1988a). “The function identified by the concept of “social capital” is the value of these aspects of social structure to actors as resources that they can use to achieve their interests” (Coleman 1988a: S101).

People are increasingly able to participate in civic engagement that affects their personal life thus increasing potential for improving their satisfaction democracy. This scenario is congruent with Putnam’s assertion that, as property of communities and nations, social capital is simultaneously a cause and effect. Similarly, Schuller (2001) argues that social capital is generally understood as a matter of relationships, as a property of groups rather than the property of individuals (Schuller 2001). Consequently,

community is viewed as a place where social capital resides through social networks. As Brehm and Rahn emphasize:

Social capital is an aggregate concept that has its basis in individual behavior, attitudes, and predispositions. Multiple institutions nurture the habits and values that give rise to social capital, including community and other voluntary associations, families, church organizations, and cultural patterns (Brehm and Rahn 1997:1000).

This dissertation assumes that communities with well developed social capital foster participatory democracy and civic virtues that positively impact democracy satisfaction. In other words, *collective* social capital is more applicable for participatory democracy than social capital as an *individual resource*. Community represents a decision-making system as a whole where the individual is merely a part of that system.

Although some scholars (e.g., Portes 1998) contest Putnam's (1995a) argument that social capital is community property, the idea is applicable in explaining impacts of networks of associations on democracy satisfaction. A community that has a well-developed social infrastructure tends to engage in collective action for community betterment (Flora 1998). Coleman argues that unlike other forms of capital, "social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors" and dense social networks are necessary for the emergence of social capital (Coleman 1988a:S98). He emphasizes the importance of norms of reciprocity in the collectivity when he states, "a prescriptive norm within a collectivity that is an especially important form of social capital is the norm that one should forego self interest and act in the interest of the collectively" (Coleman 1988a: S104).

Expectations and obligations within social structures exert influence on individual action. Therefore, in terms of communities and the wider society, social structure

influences actions of individual actors based on obligations and expectations, and these same obligations and expectations in turn influence the nature of social structure.

Coleman observes that social capital is inherent in the structure of family relationships but he also states, "Social capital resides in the functional community, the actual social relationships that exist among parents, in the closure exhibited by the structure of relations, and in the parent's relations with the institutions of the community"

(1988b:387). For example, Coleman found that community social capital is a factor that enhances educational attainment, which ultimately decreases social inequality.

## **2.8 Participatory Democracy: The Importance of Civil Society**

This section supports a view that civil society promotes civic engagement, social capital formation, and participatory democracy. In general, civil society enhances democracy by mediating between citizens and the state (see Putnam 1993a). Bryant (1993) asserts that a sociological variant of civil society refers to a non-market space or arena between the individual/household and the overarching state affording possibilities of concerted action and social self-organization. Bryant maintains that civil society comprises social relations and communications between citizens; they may or may not be informed by law and state policy, but are not necessarily dependent on them.<sup>6</sup>

The idea is not an unadulterated opposition between state and civil society.

Instead, "...there is a dialectical interaction between state and civil society. The state is

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<sup>6</sup> Neocleous (1995) argues that civil society is usually seen as the source of radical democratic processes. In his interpretation of Hegel and Marx's conceptualization of civil society, he argues that we cannot talk of civil society without the state. He notes that civil society is actually shaped and ordered by the state. He points out that Hegel sees state and civil society as structurally integrated with each other in a series of interlocking mechanisms. Thus although civil society and state are separated conceptually, in reality there is some level of penetration of civil society into state. For example, he points to the fact that problems generated by the capitalist system of needs within civil society require administrative regulation by the state.

transformed by changing civil society; civil society is transformed by a changing state. Thus, state and civil society form a fabric of tightly interwoven threads, even if they have independent patterns” (Fatton 1995:67).

The strength of civil society is maintained by high levels of mutual trust among individuals and organizations, norms of reciprocity, a shared sense of identity, and willingness to participate in voluntary work. Organizations encourage civic involvement by developing citizens’ skills that enable them to engage in political participation (see Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie 1993).

Networks of civic associations facilitate the stability and effectiveness of participatory democracy.<sup>7</sup> “Civil society, understood as the realm of private voluntary association, from neighborhood committees to interest groups to philanthropic enterprises of all sorts, has come to be seen as an essential ingredient in both democratization and the health of established democracies” (Foley and Edwards 1996:38). Verba and Nie (1987) argue that voluntary associations not only increase the likelihood that people will participate but represent a social institution that is central to studies of democratic participation. They assume voluntary associations allow more opportunities for participation in small units than do larger political organizations.

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<sup>7</sup> An association is defined as a formally organized named group, most of whose members are not financially compensated for participation (Knoke 1986). It is these kinds of associations that are relevant for this research to a large extent, and not those that are primary groups such as family, private sector or bureaucratic organizations. In this context, organization refers to a broad set functionally specialized societal subsystems: such as church related groups, social movement organizations or their local chapters , political parties, professional societies, business and trade organizations, fraternal and sororal organizations, recreational clubs, civic service associations, charity, social welfare councils, communes, cooperatives, and neighborhood organizations.

These groups usually have face-to-face contact at local meetings (Popielarz 1999). Most associations argues Knoke (1986) embrace principles of egalitarian and voluntary participation, perform essential integrative tasks for a society, and account collectively for significant amounts of economic and political activity in advanced industrial nations. In the cases where associations attempt to influence governmental decisions, they are acting as interest groups (Knoke, 1986).

In this regard, reorientations of American civic life since the 1960s have been spurred by social movements and advocacy groups (Skocpol 2003). “Americans are reinventing community too – joining flexible small groups and engaging in ad hoc volunteering while supporting expert advocates who speak for important values on the national stage” (Skocpol 2003:221). Engagement in civil society and participatory democracy more often than not take place at the local, community, or city level. As mentioned earlier, community, as used in this study, implies a structural role in enhancing democracy at the local place; a structural element through which much of micro-level social interactions occur. Inherently, increased community connectedness is key in effective policy development and implementation, particularly in a devolved socio-political system like the U.S. Civil society is important for participatory democracy because a major attribute of civil society is citizens’ inclination to act in the interest of the community and beyond their self interest.

### 2.8.1 Civil Society, Social Networks, and Participatory Democracy

Civil society provides a path for addressing economic prosperity and development, social well-being, moral issues, and environmental regulations, and other concerns of citizens in their communities. Civil action usually occurs in non-privatized collective realms; it is voluntary rather than compulsory, and persuasive rather than coercive. Nonetheless, we should be mindful that civil associations are not necessarily always separate from, or replacements for official politics. In reality they may even serve as avenues for influencing public opinion and driving public policy (Galston 2000).

The notion of civic culture was first proposed by Almond and Verba in 1963. The hypothesis is that the viability of democratic institutions is strongly affected by attitudes such as “belief in one’s ability to influence political decisions, feelings of positive affect for the political system, and the belief that other citizens are basically trustworthy” (Muller and Seligson 1994:635). As political decentralization in the U.S. expands, greater emphasis is placed on civic culture and how participation in local organizations, associations, and voluntary activities can enhance democracy. The rebirth of “civil society” that encourages democratic social networks is contingent upon local participation.

The renewal of civic society signifies a revival of democracy at the community level that can challenge the state and federal levels of governance. In essence, civil society’s virtue lies in its ability to constrain government behavior by stimulating citizen activism, exerting pressure on the state, and inculcating pluralistic democratic values (Booth and Bayer Richard 1998). This reduces the dominance of decisions by public bureaucrats who have high levels of technical proficiency, but who are not directly held responsible to citizens of affected localities (DeSario and Langton 1987). “Perhaps the most valuable benefit participation could confer on the participants would be for participation to serve as a means toward realizing the goal (and means) described as community” (Wright 1976: 234). Civil society breeds social networks, which establishes the basis of mutual trust and cooperation (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). This is critical for effective participation. Although this is not the focus of this study, it should be



noted that several authors have pointed to the “dark side” of civil society and political organization<sup>8</sup>

## 2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews the concepts of democracy. It explores the multidimensionality of the concept. Particular attention is devoted to participatory democracy because unlike representative democracy, participatory processes are fueled by trust, social networks and civic engagement. The chapter also contextualized these processes within civil society by showing a link between participatory democracy and civil society and how social capital ties these two phenomena together. The discussion suggests that cooperative social networks, trust, and active civic engagement are important social capital resources that facilitate participatory democracy, efficiency of governmental institutions, and economic performance of contemporary societies. This chapter highlights the value of social capital, civic engagement, and civil society in advancing democratic processes. Effective participatory democratic processes it is

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<sup>8</sup> Not all contemporary scholars embrace the optimistic views associated with strong local social life, civic engagement and successful participatory democracy. Skocpol (2003) diverges from Putnam by highlighting connections between associational forms of social capital and inequality, group marginalization and the potential ills of decision-making by elitist networks. Chambers and Kopstein (1996) do not agree with perspectives on participation that suggest that participation is a panacea. They examine civic participation that weakens liberal democracy which they call “bad civil society. They make three claims. (a) That the problem of bad civil society is more serious for the civil society argument than is usually acknowledged even in stable democracies like the United States. (b) The problem of bad civil society requires the introduction of a comparative analysis to get the right angle on the problem. They argue that the right angle involves asking the question, why do people join “bad” organizations? (c) They then argue that socioeconomic factors are very important in understanding why people join “bad” organizations, and this in turn means that we need to put civil society theory back into contact with some traditional issues of social justice.

argued, stimulate optimistic attitudes about such processes, which foster trust, a sense personal efficacy and general satisfaction.

Consequently the chapter demonstrates how participatory processes can connect citizens to local governance. The conceptual framework, however, is incomplete because the discussion provokes ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about mechanisms involved. Thus, the first section of Chapter III provides an in-depth review of the theory of social capital and civic engagement, particularly in a context of civil society and people’s active engagement in civic life and the implications for effective democratic processes. The chapter explores how the notions of social capital and civic engagement can be defined and operationalized. It points to the role of these two notions in solving collective action problems in democracies.

## CHAPTER III

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth review of social capital and civic engagement perspectives and further examines their utility in explaining relationships between participatory democracy and democracy satisfaction. I first examine the intellectual lineage of social capital theory by presenting a brief historical overview of the theory, its definitions, its dimensions, and measurements. Next, I explore how the concept of social capital is defined and operationalized by Putnam (1995a, 1995b, 2000). Putnam is a major proponent of the thesis that social capital and civic engagement are prerequisites for effective democratic processes. He examines attributes of social resources that enhance democracy, thus I focus on relationships among different components of social capital such as trust, cooperation, social networks, and effective democracy.

I then examine dichotomized social capital concepts such as *particularized* and *generalized trust*, *bonding* and *bridging* social capital, and *weak* and *strong* ties. These form a foundation for achieving my research objectives. I then discuss strengths and weaknesses of these dichotomies and focus on their implications for civil society, effective participatory democratic processes, and ultimately, individual democracy satisfaction. This section continues with a discussion on links between various

dimensions of social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction, as well as an examination of new a direction for trust and its consequences for civic engagement.

Finally, I review extant research that examines theoretical and empirical understandings of social capital, civic engagement, participation, and democracy in the U.S., as well as international perspectives.

### **3.2 Social Capital and Civic Engagement**

#### **3.2.1 Why Social Capital?**

Social theory aims to identify principles that make concrete empirical social phenomena understandable, i.e., general principles that lead to an explanation and understanding of social relationships (Abel 1952; Mulligan 1960). As a social theory, social capital is understood across a spectrum of social science disciplines and is widely used by scholars, policymakers, and practitioners (Kilpatrick, Field, and Falk 2001).

Over the last 20 years, social capital and civic engagement have been used in sociology to describe social processes and have accumulated a pool of principles that help predict a range of social outcomes. The widespread use of social capital theory in modern sociological literature in explaining a variety of empirical realities supports its dynamic potency as a mechanism for understanding outcomes of individuals and community well-being. I approach this study with an understanding that social capital theory and the notion of civic engagement offers systematically related sets of statements that are empirically testable. It draws on the theory of social capital/civic engagement as an explanatory model for achieving a deeper understanding of democracy satisfaction.

### 3.3 Social Capital: Intellectual Roots

Social capital has become rather ubiquitous in the analysis of various social problems by scholars over the last three decades. Although French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986), American sociologist James Coleman (1988), and more recently Robert Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) are credited with launching the theory into its intellectual prominence in a range of social science disciplines, the notion of social capital has its intellectual foundation in the early work of Hanifan (1916, as cited by Putnam 2000) and Jacobs (1961).<sup>1</sup>

Hanifan was a state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia and in his discourse on rural schools, he raised the importance of community involvement for the success of schools. He referred to social capital as tangible substances that are important in the everyday lives of people. Elements of social capital are invoked in his ideas of fellowship; social intercourse, mutual sympathy, and goodwill among members of social units (see Putnam 2000). The concept reappeared 55 years later in Jacobs (1961) writing on urban planning research. She incorporated the concept in her analysis of neighborhood self-government by arguing that networks in cities are an irreplaceable form of social capital that are linked to urban prosperity and neighborhood stability (Jacobs 1961).

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<sup>1</sup> Putnam is a noted Harvard Professor of Public Policy who has been credited with sparking the current popularity of social capital in social science research in the U.S. See Robert D. Putnam. "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community" New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000; "*Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*." *Journal of Democracy*. 6:65-78, 1995 and Putnam, Robert, and Lewis Feldstein; with Don Cohen. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Portes (1998) cites a cursory mention of the concept in the literature of the 1970s by Loury (1977) who critiqued neoclassical theories of racial income inequality. By the 1980s, Coleman launched the concept into the consciousness of social scientists (see Coleman 1988a, 1988b). The indelible intellectual impression left by Coleman set the stage for Putnam's contribution to theoretical and empirical advancements of the concept in the 1990s. Putnam's theoretical modernization of the concept in the 1990s and his illustration of its strength as an analytical tool in explaining civic engagement and a range of social issues sparked an unbridled proliferation of the concept's use in contemporary interdisciplinary work.

Nonetheless, a more accurate lineage of the concept can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century sociologists (Portes 1998).<sup>2</sup> Portes reminds us ideas about how involvement and participation in groups can have positive life-course outcomes for individuals and community dates back to Durkheim's work emphasizing group life as a solution for anomie and self destruction. Durkheim's notion of social solidarity and the idea of *social integration*, (which essentially links the individual to the group) were used in explaining variations in suicide. He found that suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of the social groups, of which the individual forms a part (Durkheim 1964: 213). The phenomenon of networking is also embedded in Marx's distinction between an atomized class-in-itself and a mobilized and effective class-for-itself (see Portes 1998). These early perspectives can be viewed as precursors to the contemporary and more theoretically refined and coherent perspective - social capital.

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<sup>2</sup> See Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) for a comprehensive analysis of the early contribution to trust and associational life by the likes of Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Simmel.

Social capital has been referred to as a neo-capital theory in contrast to Marx's classical theory (see Lin 1999b; 2000). Conceptualization of social capital is rather elastic and has been assigned a number of different definitions, thus there are divergent interpretations in the literature. Robison, Schmid and Siles (2002) attribute divergent definitions to its adoption by various social science disciplines. Despite the divergent and even multi-dimensional conceptualization of the concept, the ubiquity of social capital theory in social science can be attributed to its appealing simplicity in explaining a wide range of social phenomena, such as democratization, social stability, economic prosperity, and social cohesion.

### 3.3.1 The Scholarly Value of Social Capital Theory

Over the last three decades, steadily expanding bodies of research have used social capital to empirically test and predict a range of outcomes from community cohesion/ development, to crime control (Flora and Flora 1993; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam 1993a; Rosenfeld, Messner, and Baumer 2001; Wilkinson 1991). It has been used to predict success of second generation immigrants, as well as economic success of immigrant communities (Portes and Macleod 1999; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Sanders, Nee, and Sernau 2001). In addition, scholarly work has shown its positive effect on educational attainment and status attainment (Coleman 1988a and Lin 1999a). Indeed, Putzel (1997) argues that the magnitude of its utility is in a fashion comparable to the fate of "human development" and "sustainable development" in recent years.

Moreover, its theoretical constructs have been satisfactorily measured and extensively tested in extant social and political research. For example, Coleman (1988a)

was among the first to operationalize *social capital* as “both parents in the household,” “parents work outside the home,” “the number of children in the family,” and “parental expectations for children attending college.” Putnam (1993, 1996) operationalized social capital as the quality of associational life, newspaper reading, and voter turn out.

### 3.3.2 Limitations of the Theory

Despite its wide applications, a major problem with social capital is that it is ill-defined, with different authors attributing different meanings to the concept (Durlaf 1999). Social capital theory is widely criticized for its imprecision in conceptual definitions, for a lack of consensus of meaning and effects, an absence of consensus on how to measure it, and hence, its value as an analytical construct. Questions have been raised about its heuristic value in light of extensions of the concept (see Portes 1998, Paxton 1999).

## 3.4 Social Capital: Definition and Interpretations

Social capital may be broadly conceived of as access to social resources embedded in social relations and is understood to mean stocks of trust, norms, networks, and/or reciprocity that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Bourdieu 1983; Cohen and Prusak 2001; Coleman 1988a, 1988b; Paxton 2002; Putnam 2000, 1995; Uslaner 1999a). Like other forms of capital - human, physical, and financial capital, social capital has value. Its value is found in the ways in which individual lives are made more productive by social ties (Putnam 2000) and it is accumulated through social interaction and incorporates expectations of reciprocity. Smart (1993) argues that



social is the most tentative and least secure of these forms of capital, while economic capital is the most “objective, certain and enforceable.

The kinds of resources referred to as social capital are social because they inhere within particular social relationships and are contingent on the sustainability of relationships within which obligations are contained. If such obligations can be enforced and imposed on the obliged third parties, then it is not social capital but economic capital (Smart 1993).

Smart further deduces that social obligation is always potential and once it is used, it no longer exists, and until then there is no guarantee that the obligation will actually be reciprocated. No one knows how much they have until they try to use it. In this regard, Smart suggests that social capital is nebulous because of the ways in which it is created, that is, through exchanges of reciprocity, gifts, and favors (Smart 1993).

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) narrow the concepts to action within collectivities and goal seeking characteristics of its members; conceptualizing social capital as expectations for action within a collectivity that affect economic goals and goal-seeking behavior of its members, even if these expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993).

Bourdieu provides a succinct but encompassing definition of the concept, stating, “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resource which is linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (1986:249). Social capital may be institutionalized by way of a title and good family name, but this must be worked for on an ongoing basis. Implicit in Bourdieu’s conceptualization of social capital is the idea that realized or potential

resources accumulate from social networks based on mutual acquaintance or recognition that are institutionalized to some extent.

From Bourdieu's perspective, social capital is created and sustained through interactions between individuals and a society that is stratified by social and economic inequalities. Invariably, one result of social capital is economic return gained through participation in networks that offer mutual benefits. He argues that privileged groups in society have potential to maintain their privileges through intergenerational transfer of social and cultural capital.

Bourdieu's version of social capital encompasses social obligation, advantages of connections or social position, and trust (Smart 1993). Bourdieu notes that connection and obligation are not necessarily unintentional from the perspective of an individual or collective; instead they are products of investment strategies "consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term" (Bourdieu 1986:251).

Lin (1999b) notes that Bourdieu views social capital as representing a process by which individuals in the dominating class, by mutual recognition and acknowledgment, reinforce and reproduce privileged groups that controls various forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social).<sup>3</sup> People access other forms of capital through social capital, which allows them to move up the social ladder.

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<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu conceptualizes four forms of capital; economic, social, cultural and symbolic. **Economic capital** (reminiscent of Marx's productive capital) refers to money, commodities means of material production, and other material assets (See Smart 1993 and Moi 1991). **Cultural capital** consists of cultural goods, including artistic knowledge and educational credentials. Education is an important resource controlling the access to cultural capital. Cultural capital includes family background, educational credentials and cultural goods. Cultural capital like economic capital confers legitimacy. With cultural capital the legitimacy that it confers is regulated by educational and artistic institutions not by the government. In order to maintain the legitimacy of cultural capital it is reproduced in the educational

Coleman works within underlying theoretical constructs similar to Bourdieu's, but takes a different slant in his definition of social capital. He approaches social capital by two strands of social action. The first approach is from an economic or a rational action standpoint, where the actor is motivated by the goal of maximizing benefits. Second, he sees "the actor as socialized and action as governed by social norms, rules, and obligations" (Coleman 1988a:S95).

These two viewpoints are evident in his definition of social capital. Social capital is not a single entity, it consists of "some aspects of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors - within the structure" that produces outcomes that would not otherwise be possible (Coleman 1988a:S98). Coleman defines social capital by what it does, rather than what it is. "The function identified by the concept of 'social capital' is the value of these aspects of social structure to actors as resources that they can use to achieve their interests" (Coleman 1988a: S101).

Coleman (1988a) empirically tests the concept in his work on the importance of social capital in securing human capital. Like Bourdieu, Coleman uses individuals or small groups as his unit of analysis, highlighting benefits that accrue to individuals or families through their ties with others (Portes 2000). Coleman concludes that high levels of parental investment, family social capital, and community networks lowers dropout rates among U.S. school children. Human capital is crucial for the development of children's intellect and is most valuable when social capital is also accessible. Portes

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system. Education is the vehicle for the transmission of culture. It is pivotal in construction of an individual's habits. The "higher class" defines what is to be regarded as culturally worthy for themselves and others. **Social capital** we have seen consists of networks of family, friends, acquaintances, and contacts.

(1998) points out that the merit of Coleman's work rests in his elevating the concept of social capital in American sociology and establishing empirical rigor to the concept. However, Portes (1998) recognizes Coleman's limitations in his definition of social capital; particularly how his vague definition opened the way for relabeling a number of different and even contradictory processes as social capital (Portes (1998:5).

Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam have overlapping tenets in their definition of social capital, but they show variance in how they utilize the concept and the social scale on which they apply the theory (Winter2000). Table 3.1 provides a conceptual outline of social capital as presented by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam.

Table 3.1  
Summary of Definition, Purpose, and Analysis of Social Capital

	Definition	Purpose	Analysis
Bourdieu	Economic resources embodied in social networks. Resources that provide access to group goods.	To secure economic capital.	Individuals in class competition.
Coleman	Aspects of social structure that actors can use as resources to achieve their interests.	To secure human capital	Individuals in family and community settings. Highlight the social context of education.
Putnam	Trust, norms and networks that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefits.	To secure effective democracy and economy.	Regions in national settings.

Adapted from Winter (2000).

### 3.5 Social Capital: A Closer Look at the Contribution of Putnam

In the following section I highlight the work of Putnam who is a prominent and widely cited contemporary of the theory of social capital, particularly as it converges with democratic theory and practice. Putnam's work is highlighted because in addition to his contribution to the soundness of social capital as a theory, he produced one of the most influential works on the link between social capital and successful democracies (see Putnam 1993a). Putnam's findings have prompted debate and research on the issue of social capital and effective democracy. His work informs aspects of the theoretical and conceptual background of this dissertation.

#### 3.5.1 Putnam on Social Capital

Putnam is recognized for refining and introducing social capital theory to political sociology. His conceptualization of social capital emphasizes *informal* forms of social organization such as trust, norms, and networks. He refers to social capital as, "features of social life - networks, norms, and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam 1996:34). He also sees social capital as the, "norms of reciprocity and networks of civil engagement" that are created by participation in civil organizations (1993:167). Robison et al., (2002) argue that in the case of Putnam, the basis for social capital (trust and norms) can be separated from statements of what social capital can do (improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions) and where social capital resides (networks).

Putnam's contribution to the popularity of social capital as an intellectual endeavor began in his widely influential 1993 work, "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy," a study of regional governments in that country. Supported

by empirical evidence, Putnam makes convincing and cogent arguments on how social capital works at the regional level to enhance democratic institutions and economic development in Italy. He illustrates the idea that social capital provides a key to effective democracy.

Putnam operationalizes social capital at a different scale (that is in terms of outcomes for regions and nations) than Bourdieu and Coleman. His studies emphasize the idea that trust and reciprocity facilitates collective action and fosters economic and political development at regional and national levels. Putnam used aggregate cross-sectional data for 20 regions in Italy. Later in his U.S. study, he utilized individual level indicators of trust and civic participation in a longitudinal data analysis to come to his popular conclusion that there is a decline in social connectedness and civic association in the U.S (Putnam, 1993a, 1995a and 1995b).

In his 1993 work Putnam found that regions in Italy possessing high levels of associational activities not only had higher levels of social capital, but had more successful regional governments. Thus, almost identical administrative establishments that existed in different regions produced notably divergent levels of governmental performance, which Putnam attributed to differences in associational life and other social capital resources.

In general, social capital applies to a society's capacity to generate the kinds of voluntary associations that encourage individuals to cooperate with each other, thereby sustaining democratic pluralism (Putnam, 2000).

Putnam (2000) conceives that citizens have a disposition towards civic engagement. However, in Putnam's 2000 U.S. study his widely known figure of speech

“bowling alone” exemplifies his concern about declining civic engagement, social trust, and generalized reciprocity and their negative impact on democracy. Putnam first drew attention to an impending decline in civic engagement in the U.S. in his 1995 *Journal of Democracy* article. He further developed this claim in his 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*. There he provides evidence indicating a decline in vibrancy of civil society in the U.S. since the 1960s. He maintains that the foundation of “civic community” has been eroding in the U.S. since then.

To summarize Putnam’s theory of social capital, it can be said that it is primarily based on levels of social and political trust, and on membership in social networks and community organizations. Faithful to Tocqueville’s “art of association,” Putnam underscores social capital as the “norms of reciprocity and networks of civil engagement” (1993a:167) which are created by participation in civic organizations. In practice, this approach to social capital directs attention to two features of collectivities: the degree of interpersonal trust and the level of civic engagement (Rosenfeld, 2001).

Putnam’s study of democracy in regions in Italy advances our understanding of social capital; demonstrating why it is important and how social capital and civic engagement work at community and regional levels. Putnam’s systematic examination of the concept “offers both a conceptual and methodological framework to understand and to measure the development of civil society seen as so crucial to the democratization process” (Putzel 1997: 939-40). Putnam’s (1993) work on the civic conception of society has been influential in making social capital a core topic for discourse and research on democracy and political organization.

In sum, social capital is broadly conceptualized as: (a) quantity and/or quality of resource that an actor (individual or group or community) can access; or (b) a resource that is located in social networks. The former emphasizes the utility of social resources and the latter emphasizes the utility of network characteristics (Lin 2000). Implicit in definitions of social capital, is: (a) its ability to generate positive outcomes through shared trust, norms, and values; (b) benefits secured by membership in social networks (Portes, 1998); and (c) the desirability of collective understanding and action.

### **3.6 Social Capital Enhanced in Local Communities**

The preceding discussion on Putnam highlights participation in communities as a core element of social capital. Several conceptualizations of social capital encapsulate aspects of social-structural features that facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within a given structure (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990). For example Putnam emphasizes, “features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (1993a: 35-6).

The following brief segment shows that production and maintenance of collective social capital is essential for participatory democracy. Among the manifestations of social capital in communities are civil participation, voluntary work, the development of associational networks, increased knowledge, and a sense of belonging and heightened confidence in a community’s capacity and ability to set and achieve goals. The success of participatory democracy is rooted in civil society and it is strengthened and sustained by these social capital outputs.



Brehm and Rahn (1997) contend that multiple institutions nurture habits and values that lead to social capital formation. Strong social networks enable communities to solve collective action problems by facilitating cooperation and coordination among individuals and groups. Individuals are connected to the collectivity, social capital as a collective asset is imperative, and these collective assets and features are available to all members of the group regardless of which members actually promote, sustain, or contribute to such resources (Lin 1999b). Although Coleman's empirical analysis focused on the individual level unit of analysis, he also refers to the outcome of social capital at the community level.

Coleman argues that community connections are important benefits to accrue to individuals. Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and behaviors that bind together members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible (Cohen and Prusak 2001).

"Social networks have value" (Putnam 2000:19). A community with very high levels of civic engagement may solve problems by social networking, independent of governmental intervention. Dalton and Ong (2003) emphasize that participation in social groups independent of the state develops interpersonal skills and resources that benefit democratic participation, encourages tolerance and trust in others, broadens world perspectives, and provides practice in deliberation and decision-making. As Sanderson notes, "...it is the asocial individual who has few group associations, the one who is not socialized, who impedes democracy in any area of association" (1943:6). A generous body of research that promotes an understanding that social capital is a positive resource

that helps solve problems and which boosts democracy and individual and community goal attainment. In general social capital is portrayed as a positive resource for organization of civic life and for enhancing democratic processes. It is depicted as a powerful source of norms, information channels, and associations that promote group solidarity, coordination, and cooperation in civil society.

In summary, the relevant literature demonstrates results that support benefits of social capital for community cohesion, economic advantages, increased productivity, information flow, mutually accountable associations between public officials and citizens, democracy enhancement, health and social well-being, lower crime rates, and higher educational achievements (Bullen 2000; Coleman 1998a, 1998b; Deth 2002; Flora and Flora 1993; Lin 1999a; Portes and Macleod 1999; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam, 1993a, 1995a, 1995b, 2000. Rosenfeld, Messner, Baumer 2001; Sanders, Nee and Sernau 2001; Wilkinson 1991). Definitions generally embrace virtues of, and desirable outcomes wherever social capital is present - a real sense of harmony of associational life, trust, and polity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Despite glowing accounts of the positive side of social capital to participation, there are negative outcomes as well. Some social associations symbolize the “negative side” of social capital and have deleterious repercussions for democratic processes. Various authors have drawn attention to the “negative side” of social capital, such as social exclusion, the use of social capital for malevolent and antisocial purposes, strong negative in-group solidarity that lead to the domination and exclusion of others are not committed to democratic goals, (e.g. the Ku Klux Klan). Likewise, inner-city gangs can accumulate high levels of in-group solidarity and through their strong in-group alliances, but may be negative for the wider society – *negative externalities* (see Berman 1982, Bourdieu 1986, Chambers and Kopstein 1995, Coleman 1988a, Durlauf 1999, Keong 2000, Portes and Landolt 1996, Putnam 2000 and Woolcock 1998). The negative side associated negative repercussions for democratic processes. As an alternative view, the negative face of social capital is an important analytical tool for examining inherent and associated issues as they relate to effective participatory democracy. Unfortunately, because of data limitations, I do not address the negative side of social capital in this study.

### 3.7 Social Capital, Civic Engagement, and Democracy Satisfaction

Pursuant of the debate on the relationship between participation and democracy, Chambers and Kopstein posed the question, “Which is better for democracy, self-absorbed individualism or associational participation?” (2001:838). The clear answer for them is, “associational participation holds more promise for democracy” (Chambers and Kopstein 2001:838). A related body of literature substantiates the view that social capital enhances democratic engagement and advances the quality of democracy (e.g. Gibson 2001; Inglehart 1999; Joslyn and Cigler 2001; Krishna 2002a; Putnam 1993; Uslaner 1999a). The general verdict is that associational participation and civil society enhance democracy. Participation in local civic activities provides avenues for individuals to identify and solve common goals with or without the help of government. Verba et al., (1995) argue that political skills within a community are developed as a consequence of civic engagement in secondary associations.

Given these assertions, I posit that social capital and civic engagement can be a driving force behind a ‘*state democracy-community democracy-individual democracy*’ satisfaction synergy, each mutually supporting, reinforcing, and sustaining the other. By this I mean that social capital and civic engagement can create and sustain democracy in several ways. First, networks of civic engagement and trust are essential forms of social capital in democracy enhancement. Communities with high levels of social capital are usually successful at galvanizing participatory support of the democratic process. A dense network of local institutions with face-face activities can serve to bind people together, increase the number of connections, and provide the setting that can potentially

foster a feeling of trust and individual level satisfaction with democracy which may ultimately positively impact state level democratic processes.

Further, social capital allows for collective action to advance the common good and democracy. Putnam (1993) concludes that horizontally organized voluntary associations that cut across social cleavages are more likely to nourish wider social cooperation, reinforce norms of reciprocity, and thus, make democracy work. He found that civic minded individuals are trusting of others even when they differ in opinions pertaining to important issues (Putnam 1993).

Second, abundant social connections form pipelines for communication through which political and civic information (current and previous) flow among citizens. Not only is knowledge made available, a sense of bonding, shared identity, and common aspirations in solving local political problems affect one's psyche and can potentially increase one's sense of satisfaction with democracy. Finally, the sum total of *trust*, *networks*, *norms of reciprocity*, *associations*, and *cooperation* helps coordinate collective political activities in communities.

I argue that social capital, as a process, is central in influencing the development of participatory democracy, and in turn influences the individual's feelings about the democracy process. Using the premise that social capital provides a viable avenue for analyzing satisfaction with democracy, I make the following theoretical propositions that:

(a) People who are engaged in horizontally organized voluntary and other civic organizations are more likely to express satisfaction with local democracy than those who are not civically engaged.

(b) Individuals who participate in civic activities and engage locally with the welfare of others will have greater democracy satisfaction.

(c) Further, individuals who have high levels of trust in other people, and in particular strangers, will have greater democracy satisfaction. Therefore, I assert that the relationship between democracy and trust has a mutually beneficial relationship. However, as explained in the following section, not all forms of interpersonal trust may contribute to democracy.

### 3.8 Trust and Civic Engagement

In this section I elaborate on trust as a main property of social capital and civic engagement, both of which are important tenets for this study. Some scholars use the term trust interchangeably with social capital, while others conceive of *trust as a qualitative dimension of social capital* (Falk and Guenther 1999). Trust is a multi-dimensional concept and it may be defined as "... the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995:712). Simmel (1950) notes that trust is "one of the most important synthetic forces within society" (p. 326).

Trust embraces both *cognitive* elements (e.g., competence, reliability, professionalism) and *affective* elements (e.g., caring, emotional connection to each other) (McAllister 1995)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> These elements are important for social capital building and effective civic engagement. However, this dissertation will not focus on these two constructs of trust per se.

As a socio-psychological concept, trust embraces elements of confidence, expectation, motivation, cooperation, collaboration, mutual obligation, and reciprocation working together in a complex social milieu. Trust comprises consciously or unconsciously giving discretion to another to affect one's interests and provides social cohesion for coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits (Hardin 2001; Hiemer 2001; Putnam 1993, 1995, 2000). A trusting society is a civic society and a civic society is a civil society (Uslaner 1999b).

Putzel (1997) questions the mechanics of trust, that is, how networks and norms operate to strengthen or weaken individual and group efforts. Although he recognizes how the existence of networks and norms that underpin trust between individuals and groups can foster exchange by reducing risks and making behavior more predictable, he argues that whether or not these networks will contribute to democracy has more to do with the political ideas and programs transmitted through them. Influenced by Putzel's observation, this dissertation makes a connection between trust and people's satisfaction democracy works.

Luhmann (1980) maintains that social complexities cannot be managed without others acting on our behalf. In the same vein, Yamagishi, Cook, and Watabe (1998) argue that as long as we interact with others, we face problems of social uncertainty (i.e., the risk of being exploited in social interaction), which is ubiquitous in all human societies. They suggest that we engage in social interactions with others to improve our own material or psychological welfare. Through interaction, however, we make ourselves vulnerable by exposing ourselves to being exploited by others. Thus in seeking welfare, we enter the risk of incurring costs. Trust reduces uncertainties and complexities

of modern life and enables cooperative action. Indeed trust is necessary for civil society to function and for effective participatory democracy.

Cook (2001) posits that trust relationships are fundamental to the stability of democratic societies and for conducting social and economic affairs in an organized manner. Putnam also emphasizes the value of trust as a dimension of social capital. Broadly speaking, he suggests, the more people connect with other people, the more trust is established among them (Putnam 1995). Trust aids in enhancing the quality of a society's social interactions as it promotes cooperation. Trust makes democracy work (Putnam, 1993). "Trustworthiness lubricates social life" by producing "a norm of generalized reciprocity" (Putnam 2000:21).

Trust inheres in the individual (Uslaner 2002), but the value of trust in social networks is portrayed in Coleman's argument that a group that has extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a similar group without comparable trustworthiness and trust (Coleman 1988b). Trust makes for a vibrant community in that it leads people to take active roles in their community, to behave morally, and to compromise (Uslaner 1999a).

### 3.8.1 Generalized Trust vs. Particularized Trust

What type of trust is most likely to foster support for participatory democracy and satisfaction with the way democracy works? A fundamental theme emerging in the literature is the greater the trust that citizens have for others, the more likely they are to participate in civic activities. In Chapter II I showed why it is conceptually astute to distinguish between participatory democracy and representative democracy, likewise, it is imperative that a distinction be made between forms of trust. In his research on

democracy and social capital, Uslaner (1999a) theorizes that democratic societies are trusting societies. The kind of trust that contributes to social capital, however, is trust that can be generalized to people who are strangers, as compared to trust that is particular and limited to one's family or group (in-group). Generalized trust is a foundation for civil society (Uslaner 1999b); it is a moral idea that links people to strangers (Uslaner and Brown 2003). Uslaner and Brown (2003) argue that trust is fundamentally based on adult experiences and participation in civic and political life. Particularized trusters have faith in their own kind; they are skeptical of strangers and consider them as untrustworthy. Compared to generalized trusters, particularized trusters generally participate less or not at all in civic life (Uslaner 1999b, 2002).

Particularized trust tends to create group attachments that cause group identities that exclude others. This increases factionalism and decreases chances that conflicts can be settled by democratic means. The idea of strong particularized trust producing less trust in people in general has also been advanced by Paxton (1999), Gellner (1998), Hawthorn (1988) and Yamagishi et al. (1998). The benefits of particularized trust are more likely to occur at the personal and micro-level among people who share frequent face-to-face interaction, rather than at the wider general level that facilitates democratic processes.

Conversely, generalized trust (or moralistic trust) helps in the building of large-scale, complex, interdependent social networks and institutions accruing benefits at the macro-level. As such, it is central in the development of effective democracy (Uslaner, 1999a). Generalized trust represents more of a "public-face" role in the utilization of



social capital and thus provides a context for individuals to experience a sense of satisfaction with democracy.

Generalized trust is the default expectation of trustworthiness of others. “People who are high on general trust (high trusters) assume that other people are trustworthy until evidence is provided indicating otherwise” (Yamagishi 2001:124). This motivates people to leave the security of established in-group relations and look for external opportunities. Uslaner (1999a) contends that generalized trust in others leads people to socialize with other people and to join voluntary associations. It also makes them more likely to engage in a variety of other collective actions united by common values that are vital for participatory democracy. He further posits that generalized trust is a moral commitment and that generalized trusters are usually more optimistic and do not necessarily base their decisions to get involved in their communities with an expectation of reciprocity. They have a distinctive outlook on civil society, that is, one society united by common values (Uslaner, 1999b).

Paxton (1999) argues that the notion of generalized trust is a pertinent feature of national-level social capital. Generalized trust makes people more willing to interact with people who are not known well. It motivates people to take part in their communities, to set goals and solve collective problems, endorse moral commitments, and heightens their sense of obligation to fellow citizens.

As previously noted, particularized trust operates more profusely at the micro-level, and it makes people withdraw from wider civic life, embracing a more ‘private-face’ in the use of social capital. Compared to particularized trusters, generalized trusters are more likely to engage in macro-level activities such as identifying and solving

community problems, voting, using the Presidential campaign fund check-off on federal income tax forms, giving to charity and volunteering time, and associating with people who are different from themselves (Uslaner 1999a, 2002). Although generalized distrust prevents people from engaging in social interactions, Yamagishi (2001) argues that social intelligence (or social shrewdness) allows people to assess the degree of risk that may arise from social situations that requires interaction with strangers who might provide the opportunity for new and beneficial outcomes.<sup>6</sup> “Generalized trust allows people to move out of familiar relationships in which trust is based on knowledge accumulated from long experience with particular people” (Brehm and Rahn 1997:1008). Given that outcomes in a democracy are by nature uncertain, this kind of trust is necessary for people to engage in democratic activities and may even be necessary for engagement in economic transactions between strangers (see Brehm and Rahn 1997).

Closely akin to the concept of generalized trust and of particular value for effective participatory democracy is Putnam’s (2000) idea of generalized reciprocity (as opposed to specific reciprocity). Generalized reciprocity creates social capital by fostering long term relationships and through mutual obligation and responsibility for action. With generalized reciprocity, an actor does not necessarily expect a reciprocated exchange immediately. Putnam (2000) explains: I will do this for you now without expecting anything back from you now, with the expectation that someone else will do something for me some time in the future. “...altruistic behavior and obligations will be repaid at some unspecified time, at some unspecified location, by an unspecified person.

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<sup>6</sup> Yamagishi, in his 2001 article “*Trust as Social Intelligence*” defines social intelligence as the ability to detect and process signs of risks in social interactions. This is different from abstract intelligence, which is the ability to manipulate language and numbers? It also differs from practical intelligence, which is the ability to solve problems.

Generalized attitudes of trust extend beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction and incorporate people who are not personally known (Freitag, 2003). Generalized reciprocity notes Putnam, reduces transactional costs of daily interactions. Thus when participants in civil society possess generalized reciprocity, they offer selfless actions in the short term that they hope will add to cooperation and the welfare of other citizens in the future.

Highlighting the value of reciprocity, Chambers and Kopstein (2001) argue that reciprocity entails recognition of other citizens as moral agents deserving civility, even those with whom we might have deep disagreement. Generalized trust then, upholds the inherent moral nature of democracy. Consequently people with high levels of trust do not fear that they will be taken advantage of by following the rules because they expect others will follow them also (Brehm and Rahn 1997). Putnam (2000) suggests that a community that has high levels of trust and generalized reciprocity is more efficient than one that is distrustful, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter in facilitating economic exchange. I conclude that efficiency arises because mutual reciprocity among diverse people eventually becomes part of the internalized values of civil society.

### **3.9 Trust Typology**

A review of the trust literature reveals a tendency to treat trust as an all-encompassing concept. When trust is further dissected it is often presented as a dichotomy. For example McAllister (1995) identified and analyzed two trust types: cognitive-based and affective-based trust. Williams (1988) distinguished between thick

trust and thin trust. Thick trust is the kind of trust that is based on frequent interaction in close ties relationship. Thin trust is trust in the “generalized other” trust in people who are strangers - trust in society at large. Uslaner classified trust into particularized and generalized Uslaner (1999), as well as moralistic and strategic trust Uslaner (2002). Uslaner’s classification is relevant for predicting democracy satisfaction. A drawback to this approach, however, is that dichotomies are presented as mutually exclusive categories.

A typology that addresses this limitation can be developed using an argument that particularized and generalized trust can be further defined into sub-constructs reflecting diversity among categories of particularized and generalized trusters.

The typology is based on the theoretical proposition that having trust is better than having no trust when it comes to democracy satisfaction, and there is a difference in trust between particular trusters and general trusters. In this regard, I offer a typology that classifies trusters into four groups reflecting varying levels and combinations of the two types of trust (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2

## Trust Typology

<b>Type of Truster</b>	<b>Generalized Trust</b>	<b>Particularized Trust</b>
Skeptic	Low	Low
Particular truster	Low	High
General truster	High	Low
Total truster	High	High

This typology demarcates four groups of trusters as follows: (a) Skeptics -- those who are at a low level on particularized trust and also low on generalized trust; (b) Particular trusters -- those who are low on generalized trust but are high on particularized trust; (c) General trusters -- those who are high on generalized trust but low on particularized trust; and (d) Total trusters -- those who are high on both particularized and generalized trust. This typology refines my research hypotheses.

From the typology we can infer two types of generalized trusters; total trusters and general trusters. On one hand, general trusters have high levels of generalized trust and low levels of particularized trust. For example, a person may trust strangers more than people of their own kind for example family members and friends because of some emotional abuse in the past, low self esteem, betrayal, or unfavorable memory associated with family members and those who are of his/her kind. Thus close ties ambivalence leads him/her to develop caution in trusting family or anyone who wants to share in close associations - "*getting hurt by the one you love syndrome.*" Embroiled by cognitive processes that create personal level distrust, general trusters may be skeptical of particularized relationships and view relationships with strangers as more positive, reinforcing, and respectful. In addition, because they are not obligated to be intimately demonstrative or offer care and concern for strangers, they are more open to socializing and depending on people who are not close kin or friends with a feeling of relative security. On the other hand, a total truster not only has healthy personal relations but he/she enjoys high perceived trust all-around and thus healthy relations with strangers may increase involvement in civic life and create greater satisfaction with the way democracy works.

The typology indicates a type of trustor that is the “particular trustor.” This group tends to trust family and friends and be suspicious of strangers. This group is more likely to withdraw from civic engagement than general trustors and total trustors.

Skeptics tend to distrust all on a *continuum of trust*, from next of kin ties on one end, to total strangers on the other end. They border on the line of being doubters, harboring distrusting beliefs for everyone. Uslander and Brown ( 2003) also argue that people who do not trust others will be less likely to participate in civic life. I assume that total trustors and general trustors will be more satisfied with democracy than particular trustors and skeptics. In terms of satisfaction with democracy, this typology allows one to empirically ascertain differences between total trustors and general trustors. I propose that total trustors should be more satisfied with democracy than general trustors because they exhibit a higher-order trust than general trustors. Particular trustors and skeptics are assumed to participate very little in civic life and probably experience very little satisfaction with the way democracy works. Thus, I hypothesize that:

- a) People who are total trustors are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.
- b) General trustors are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.
- c) Particular trustors are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.

### 3.10 Other Forms of Social Capital

This brief section examines social networks as they relate to participatory democracy. Social capital is an intangible resource that is enmeshed in social networks and can act as a conduit through which people may actively experience participatory democracy. Ties among individuals based on trust and reciprocity, for example, are processes for generating participation in civic organizations and influencing democratic processes. The underlying logic of generalized trust and particularized trust can further be understood in the context of Putnam's dichotomy of bonding (or inclusive) and bridging (or exclusive) social capital as well as Granovetter's (1973, 1983) social capital dichotomy of *weak ties* and *strong ties*. Bonding social capital occurs when people with similar backgrounds, values or interests enter into relationships and work together to achieve shared goals, "...undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity" (Putnam 2000:22). These associations according to Putnam are inward looking, close knit, and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups (Putnam 2000). Although social capital is relational, its influence on democracy is most profound when relationships are among heterogeneous groups. Heterogeneity of social connections promotes linkages with diverse groups and across a broad range of resources or opportunities (Narayan and Cassidy 2001).

Bridging social capital on the other hand, connects people from different backgrounds (e.g., different races, neighbourhoods, clubs, religion, and socio-economic divide) and within the community or outside of the community to work together for the benefit of their community. These networks and alliances are outward looking and comprise people of different social cleavages. Putnam sees such connections as essential

not only for community cohesion but also for democracy and the prosperity of community and "... are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion" (2000:22).

Like strong ties relationships, particularized trusters are inward looking. Ties are developed from repeated interpersonal interaction, and can basically be regarded as a fuel for "bonding social capital" involving homogenous groups and reinforcing exclusive identities. This form of social capital is good for "getting by" in that it supports specific reciprocity (rather than generalized reciprocity) and mobilises solidarity. In contrast, generalized trust fuels bridging social capital which is more externally focused and "links" people from different socio-economic classes and race.

Linking consists of relationships embedded in institutional arrangements that support the exchange of power, wealth, and status among different social groups (Putnam 2000; Schuller 2001). Relationships with those in power positions are useful for furnishing valuable resources. It facilitates links to external networks and information and is good for crystallizing efficient democratic processes (see Figure 3.1). Communities with a large number of social ties inherently have potential for high levels of *bonding, bridging, and linking* social capital and have more opportunity for effective democracy.

*Linking* social capital holds a key position in the overall functioning of civil society and democratic processes. The key to the success or failure of democratic institutions lies not in the character of civil society, "but in their responsiveness as institutions - in their ability to mediate conflict by hearing, channeling, and mediating the



multiple citizen demands that modern societies express through civil and political associations alike” (Foley and Edwards 2001:49).

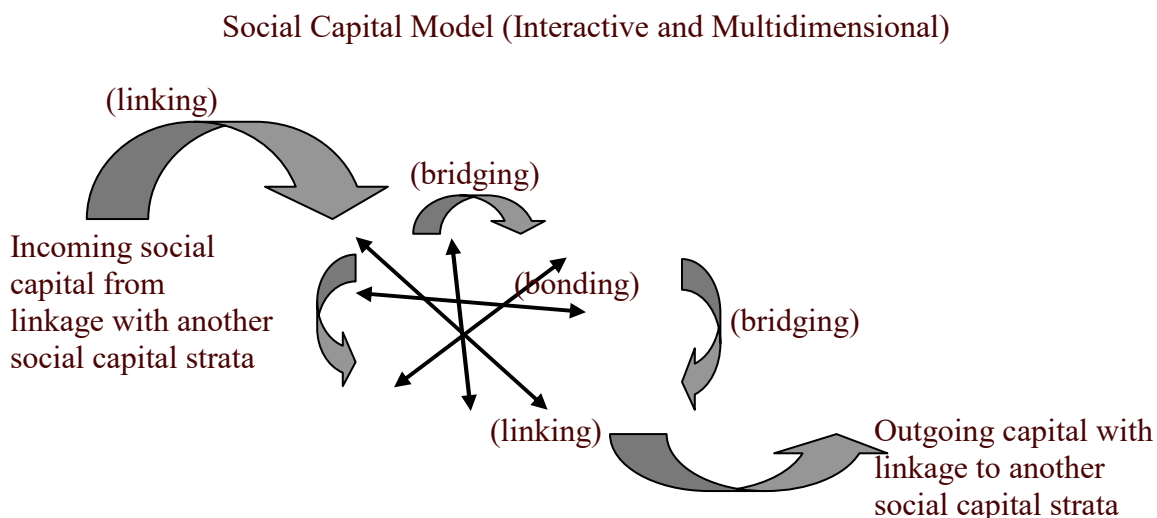


Figure 3.1 Social Capital Model (Interactive and Multidimensional)

Source: Mengistu and Tigineh, 2003.

Granovetter’s (1973, 1983) distinction of *the strength of weak ties* differentiates between strong ties, (those between close connections) and weak ties (those between acquaintances rather than family and close friends). Based on this view, it can be argued that individuals who are connected to more weak ties have a greater range of associates and greater opportunities for participation in civic activities and experience satisfaction with the way democracy works.

Strong ties are established when people see each other frequently over long periods of time. Strong ties stay within groups such as family, friends and other people to

whom one is closely knitted. This form of social capital fosters micro-level interactions and local cohesion. Weak ties are acquaintances; they are relationally defined by infrequent contact, and those to whom one is “weakly” tied are usually extra local and are more likely to have different social characteristics and perhaps geographic distance. Weak ties are more likely to have different social characteristics than members of a strong tie group. Association with weak ties connects individuals and opens doors to information flow and increased opportunities. Such ties are essential for effective civil society and democracy as channels to unknown information and resources that are limited or unavailable among strong ties.

With reference to social networks and human interaction, an overarching principle that distinguishes the concepts of *weak ties*, *generalized trust*, and *bridging social capital*, from *strong ties*, *particularized trust*, and *bonding social capital* is the issue of “outlook.” The former concepts are “outward looking” and involve resourceful interaction with diverse groups, while the latter are “inward looking.” The outward focus of weak ties for example, “serves as information bridges across cliques of strong ties and can offer people access to resources that are not found in their strong-tie relationships” (Constant, Sproul, and Kiesler 1996:120). These ties are social resources that are embedded in social structure and are maintained by norms of trust and reciprocity (Granovetter 1973). When individuals are seeking jobs or political allies:

....It follows, then that individuals with few weak ties will be deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and will be confined to the provincial news and views of their close friends. This deprivation will not only insulate them from the latest ideas and fashions but may put them in a disadvantaged position in the labor market, .....Furthermore, such individuals may be difficult to organize or integrate into political movements of any kind, since membership in movements or goal-oriented organizations typically results from being recruited by friends. While

members of one or two cliques may be efficiently recruited, the problem is that, without weak ties, any momentum generated in this way does not spread beyond the cliques. As a result, most of the population will be untouched (Granovetter 1983:202).

Since participatory democracy is based on an “outward” outlook, social interaction with distant acquaintances and its success depends on bridges in networks. The inward foci of strong ties, particularized trust and bonding social capital are counterintuitive to building participatory democracy, and can potentially undermine democracy by limiting the skills and dispositions that are necessary for participation in civil society and for making democracy work.

Despite a high risk of social uncertainty associated with generalized trust (see Yamagishi et al. 1998), the outward focus of generalized trust that fosters *bridging to diverse* groups and communities is necessary for participatory democracy to emerge; particularly in a multicultural society like the U.S. If participatory democracy embraces ideals of equality and liberty, then forms of “outward” social capital that generate collective action are more valuable than “inward” social capital in effecting participatory democratic processes. In spite of Putnam’s (1995a, 2000) popular claim of declining trust in the U.S. (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3), Americans are greater generalized trusters in comparison to other societies. For example, Yamagishi et al. (1998) found that in comparison to Japanese society, the level of general trust is much higher in American society. Japanese are more distrustful of strangers, feel a greater sense of security within established and stable relationships, but are more distrustful of people outside the realm of particularized relationships.

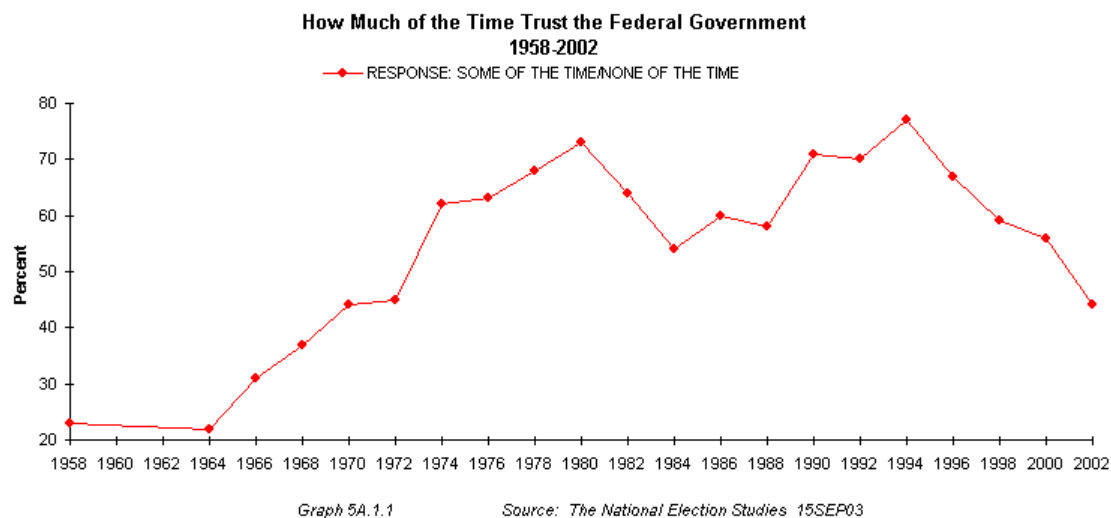


Figure 3.2: Trust in the Federal Government (A)

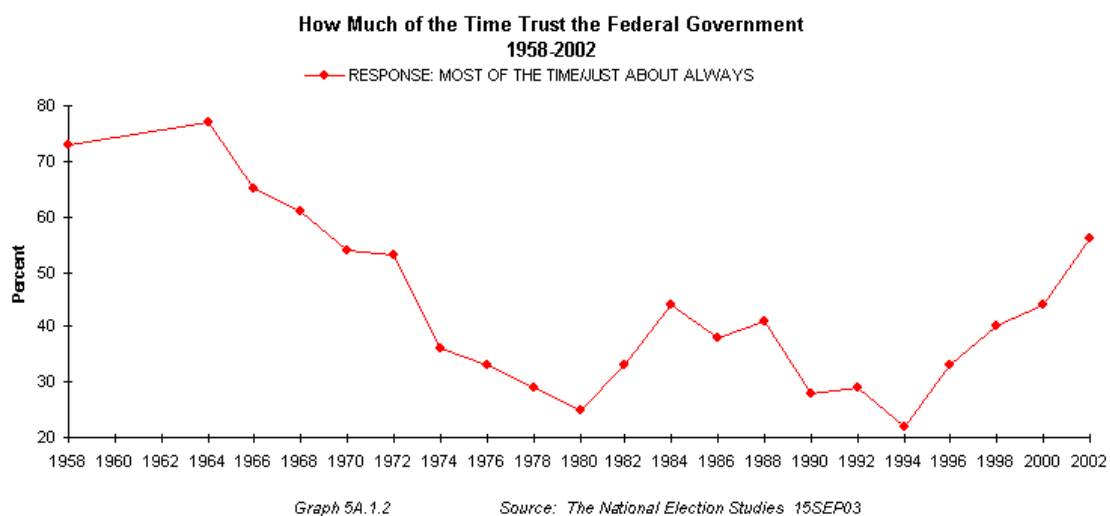


Figure 3.3: Trust in the Federal Government (B)

In view of the core argument of this dissertation, it follows that there are links among civic participation and generalized trust and satisfaction with democracy. When people trust others, particularly strangers, they are more likely to take an active role in their community (Uslaner 1999a; Walters 2002). Generalized trusters have an optimistic world view. For them, the world is a good place and in general other people have good motives. Their stance makes it easy for them to think that people will work locally and within the wider society. They believe that they can make the world a better place and are willing to cooperate with strangers for the betterment of their communities (Uslaner 1999b).

Thus, I assert that generalized trust is central in shaping civic behavior. In addition, people who participate locally in enhancing the welfare of others in the community - through neighborhood associations, voluntary organizations and faith-based groups are more likely to influence the democratic process and by extension experience higher levels of satisfaction with democracy.

### 3.10.1 Civic Engagement

Putnam (1993, 2000) and (Tolbert et al. 1998) present ideas of civic engagement that provide a suitable rationale for assessing people's feeling about democracy. In particular, elements of democracy are to a large extent experienced by participating in groups, clubs, and/or organizations. The work of Putnam and Uslaner provides a backdrop for elucidating how trust and joining and participating in groups and organizations can enhance people's feeling of social optimism and levels of local democracy satisfaction.

If democracy is limited or non-existent in communities, civic engagement is a means that helps to bring it into being. Nevertheless, certain kinds of social cleavages and bonded associational activities that occur within groups may actually impede rather than advance democracy. I review these issues in the next section.

As mentioned earlier, the intellectual roots of civic engagement has been traced to de Tocqueville, who alluded to the fact that American Democracy was fueled by town meetings, associations, and other visible forms of civic engagement. Putnam (1996) claims that the U.S. still outranks many other countries in the degree of its community involvement and social trust. However, it is not so much the quantity of civic engagement; it is the quality that is important for effective participatory democracy.

Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific political and non political activities such as faith-based civic activities, working with local non-profit developmental committees, working in a homeless shelter, serving on a neighborhood association, writing a letter to an elected official, and voting. A civically engaged individual has potential for a feeling of satisfaction with democracy.

Literature indicates that most civic engagement measures consist of percentage of civic denominations, number of third places (local places that allows interaction, engagement and problem-solving), and the number of associations. Putnam measures social capital by associational life, newspaper readership, voter turn out, and participation in local associations. Others measures include the number of civic groups and the size of their memberships in society, size of memberships in sports clubs, bowling leagues political clubs and so on.

### 3.10.2 Civic Engagement and Community

Civic engagement preserves democracy and demands accountability from officials. Putnam refers to civic engagement as people's connections with the life of their communities and not merely with politics (1995:665). Civicness can be found in individuals or in entire communities. Other proponents of civic engagement and its positive impact on the social network and quality of life in communities include Lyson and Tolbert (1996); Tolbert and Lyson, (1999); Lyson, Torres and Welsh, (2001) and Tolbert, Irwin, Lyson, and Nucci (2002).

Civic engagement has many manifestations in communities, ranging from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement, to electoral participation (Lyson and Welsh 2001, Tolbert, Lyson, and Irwin 1998). It can include efforts to directly address an issue, working with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with institutions of representative democracy. In general, the literature asserts an idea that civic participation in a variety of associations is important for building democracy.

Reiterating findings from the work of Almond and Verba (1963) on *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Walters (2002) notes that larger institutions that are close enough to the individual to allow him or her some participation and yet close enough to the state to provide access to power are a necessary part of the democratic infrastructure. Societies that possess dense networks and cultures of association-particularly of voluntary association-manifested in all manner of groups for sport, religion, neighborhood activity and so on are rich in social connectedness. Membership in these various groups sustains trust and an ethos of reciprocity and cooperation (Walters 2002).

To this end, voluntary associations are a prime means by which the function of mediating between the individual and the state is performed. Through them the individual is able to relate himself effectively and meaningfully to the political system (Walters 2002). In other words, secondary associations form a vital part of informal networks that integrates citizens into the political process. Through participation in associations and communities, people acquire a certain public mindedness. Through numerous associations and networks a community is built up in which people trust one another, regard one another as citizens, and sustain a whole set of expectations about the responsibilities of the political system (Walters 2002).

In a similar sense, Goodhart (2005) expresses concern about the tendency of some academics to associate sheer density of associations with the strength of democracy. Others, he suggests emphasize the habits and values instilled through citizens' immersion in associational life. He argues that participation in voluntary associations shape individual attitudes to consider common values over and above selfish interests. This sense of common values develops social capital and helps to weaken the power of the modern bureaucratic state (Goodhart 2005). Galston (2000), in reference to the multiplicity of functions that voluntary organizations perform, states:

By strengthening social bonds, they can reduce the dangers of anomie. They can foster the bourgeois virtues that modern democratic societies need, and they can nourish the habits of civic engagement. They can help form opinions that shape deliberation in democratic public institutions. They provide vehicles for the noninstrumental expression of moral convictions as norms for the wider society. And of course, they offer opportunities for groups of citizens to conduct important public work through collective action outside the control of government (Galston 2000: 69).



### 3.11 Is There a New Direction for Trust and its Consequences for Civic Engagement?

In his recent book, *The Moral Foundations of Trust*, Uslaner (2002) highlights the importance of trust in democratic societies, but challenges the established conventional relationship between trust and civic engagement. Uslaner argues that trust is by no means the only and rarely the most important factor shaping civic engagement. Further, trust is not important for most forms of civic engagement. He argues that joining civic groups may generally be good, but civic groups do not produce trust (Uslaner, 2002). He observes that civic engagement does not necessarily lead to building more trust among strangers. He argues that declining trust has no clear relationship with civic engagement at the aggregate level, but trust has impeded collective action where high levels of cooperation are important between different groups.

Uslaner's views are contrary to popular claims in the literature. For example Putnam asserts that trust and reciprocity are generated from participation in civic organizations and that there is a reciprocal relationship between civic engagement and trust (1993, 1995a). Putnam further states that "the theory of social capital presumes that, generally speaking, the more we connect with other people, the more we trust them, and vice versa" (1995a:665). He also claims that "trust and civic engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor - social capital" (Putnam 1995b: 73) and that dense horizontal networks reinforce trust and civic norms (Putnam 1993a).

Like Uslaner, Claibourn and Martin (2000) argue that the widespread relationship between interpersonal trust and civic engagement in the literature is overstated. In their study they found no evidence to support the proposition that interpersonal trust encourages group memberships. They found only marginal evidence to support the idea

that belonging to groups makes individuals more trusting. They further argue that the “theoretical connection between trusting and joining is neither obviously positive nor generalizable across all groups and individuals” (Claibourn and Martin 2000:268).

Brehm and Rahn (1997) found a strong reciprocal relationship between civic engagement and interpersonal trust. Thus individuals who trust others tend to join more associations, and members of groups tend to trust others. Uslander’s primary notion is that the forms of social capital such as social network, trust, and civic engagement are not interchangeable; trust precedes the other two elements. In other words, participation in organizations does not necessarily build trust and generalized trust is not related to participation in organizations.

Uslander argues that most voluntary organizations do have a sufficiently diverse membership to build trust in strangers. He contends that there are those who join organizations to meet with people with similar interests and trust is not necessarily required in such cases. Further, if people become trusters or distrusters early in life, their worldviews may have already been formed before getting involved in civic life. Uslander (1999b) draws attention to Tocqueville’s early recognition of the fact that trust is the precursor to civic engagement rather than its consequence. Uslander (2002) justifies this divergent view by showing that *optimism* and *economic equality* are the foundations of generalized trust. The increase in inequality since the 1970s is the most important single factor shaping the decline in trust in the U.S. As inequality has increased, optimism has fallen and led to a decline in trust. Uslander claims that there has been an overall decline in civic engagement, but he maintains that this is not related to trust. Instead, Uslander

indicates that tolerance and social inequality are critical elements defining the levels of trust in society.

Cook asserts that we sometimes have *acts of 'pure' altruism* in which an action is taken on behalf of another for purely moral reasons - that is, it was the *right thing to do*" (2001:xv, italics added). Indeed, it could be argued that people participate in civic organizations not only because of trust but out of "pure" acts of altruism.

### 3.12 Political Civic Engagement vs Altruistic Civic Engagement

From the early studies of Tocqueville and Verba (1965), and later Putnam (1993a, 2000) associational membership has been shown to advance democratic processes.

Literature shows that there are conceptual variations in the notion of civic engagement.

Civic engagement measures encompass diverse activities from to bird club membership to bowling and football league membership, to participating in church group activities,

Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) and evangelical church movements. From

volunteering time and giving to charity, to voting and various other forms of political

activities (see Putnam 1993a, 1995a, 2000; Paxton 1999 and Verba et al. 1995). Verba et

al (1995) note that political activities underlie non political organizations of civil

society. They suggest that:

“Undertaking activities that themselves have nothing to do with politics – for example, running the PTA fund drive or managing the soup kitchen – can develop organizational and communications skills that are transferable to politics. In addition, these nonpolitical institutions can act as the locus of attempts at political recruitment” (p. 40).

Putnam (1993a) emphasizes the importance of non-political civic engagement as an avenue for effective democratic processes. Putnam argues that positive effects of membership in associations do not necessarily require that the association be political. Membership in non-political associations fosters democratic norms and develops skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavors. He argues; “Taking part in a choral society or a bird-watching club can teach self-discipline and an appreciation for the joys of successful collaboration” (Putnam 1993a:90).

Exactly how membership in a choral society or a bird-watching club can bring about increased civic engagement and democratic governmental performance is intellectually elusive. Perhaps the pathway lies in the notion that people who are engaged in such group activities tend to have more time and are more open to or optimistic about participation in civic activities. Also, they may produce children who are socialized into norms and networks that foster more optimistic views about interacting with others, and who are more aware of group obligations that may stimulate and develop their interests in public life and civic engagement. However in this regard, participation is likely to reflect the social class make-up of such groups (particularized trust). Nonetheless, Verba and Nie (1987) found that participation increases mainly when people are exposed to relevant political stimuli. Their findings, however, did not completely refute the idea that even non-political organizations lead to political participation, as 40 percent of the “hobby group” sample reported that their group took part in community affairs and 35 percent said that there was some political discussions in their group.

In attempts to overcome conceptual variations in civic engagement, some scholars have categorized different types of civic engagement. Verba et al. (1995) for example,

distinguished civic engagement into political and non political activities. They posit that political engagement encompasses voting, working for, or contributing to electoral campaigns and organizations; contacting government officials and attending protest marches or demonstrations. It also includes activities such as working informally with others to solve community problems, volunteering on locally elected and appointed boards.

Parker (1983) also categorized participation into official and non-official. The former involves individuals playing roles or occupying official positions in organizations. The latter refers to people who hold a specified position within an organization but they nevertheless act on behalf of the organization.

Freitag (2003), in his study of democracy and social capital in Japan and Switzerland uses active membership to measure associational life and distinguishes between five different types of associational engagement as follows: (a) political associations (political groups and environmental organizations), (b) economic associations (labor unions and professional organizations), (c) cultural associations (church or religious and art, music or educational organizations), (d) community organizations (welfare and charitable organizations), and (e) private interest associations (sport or recreation organizations).

In addition, Acock and Scott (1980) designated a dichotomy of civic political participation that distinguishes between highly visible behavior and less visible behavior. They contend that high visibility political participation includes active political behaviors that can become known to others, actions such as voting, wearing campaign buttons and working for a candidate. While low visible political participation refers to passive public

behaviors such as gleaning political information from listening to and watching political debates in the electronic media.

For this study I posit, when it comes to democracy satisfaction civic engagement is important, but different types of civic engagement may have different implications for satisfaction with democracy; therefore, I also differentiate categories of civic engagement. I argue that civic engagement conceptually reflects different forms of prosocial behaviors both at the local level and in wider political arenas, and different forms of civic engagement should have different levels of explanatory value for democracy satisfaction. To capture this idea I conceptualized two categories of civic engagement: *political* and *altruistic*. *Political civic engagement* refers to those activities that seek to deliberately identify and solve public issues, which often require some level of organizational commitment or at least attending community meetings and voting in representative politics. I further argue that although people who are civically engaged generally have interest in solving public problems and believe in the greater public good, but their activities may take place at the local level, or at the wider societal level. Therefore, I posit that in the context of democratic processes, political civic engagement should be split between an element that represents local level participatory activities and an element that represents wider representative politics (see figure 3.4).

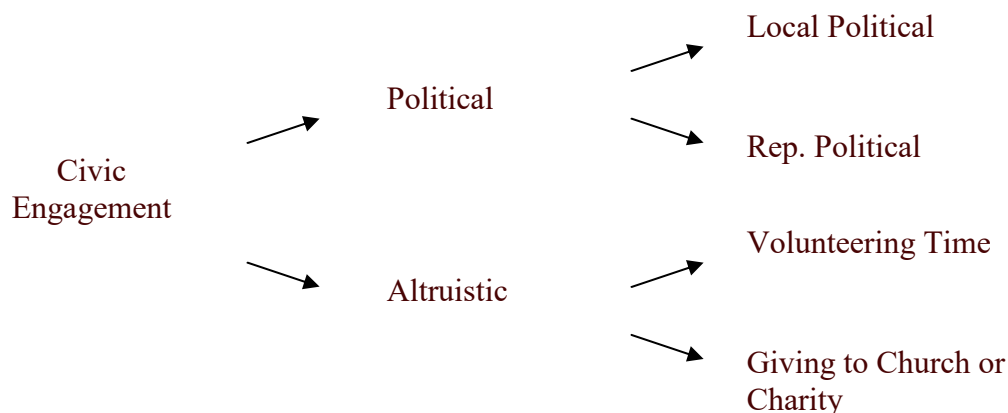


Figure 3.4. Dimensions of Civic Engagement

Local level civic engagement encompasses activities geared toward strengthening the socio-political, socio-economic, and overall social welfare of communities. Such activities engage individuals and heightened their awareness of community problems and kindle commitment to solving these problems. That means citizens have some input in local policies and in the creation of self-sustaining social political systems that build their feelings of democracy satisfaction and attachment to community. Relevant measurements of local level political civic engagement are as follows: working on community issues; attending community meetings; contacting a public official or being a member of a local organization. *Representative civic engagement* includes those activities that support broader political regimes and the election of government authorities. A primary measure of representative political civic engagement is voting.

Charitable giving and volunteering time are other forms of civic engagement. In the literature charitable giving and volunteering time are pegged with notions of generalized reciprocity, sympathy, moral obligation and emphatic feeling, all of which

are associated with altruistic behavior (see Fisher and Ackerman 1998; Murnighan, Kim and Metzger 1993). For this study, *altruistic civic engagement* such as giving to charity and volunteering time, denote pro-social behaviors that stem from empathy and behaviors that specifically promote the survival of others beyond self interest, and does not necessarily tie one to organizational membership, or a commitment to attending regular community meetings. They are free from the kinds of commitment and group participation that would be necessary to build communities and execute local responsibilities and tackle long-term developmental goals. Thus, I hypothesize that:

- a) People who are engaged in local political civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.
- b) People who are engaged in representative civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.
- c) People who are engaged in altruistic civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.



### 3.13 Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Democracy: Other Relevant Research Findings

Literature on people's satisfaction with democracy in the U.S. is sparse. Empirical research backing the ample supply of theoretical understanding of social capital, participation and democracy in the US is also rare. Paxton (2002) states that despite the longtime theoretical association between social capital and democracy, quantitative empirical affirmations of the relationship are rare and qualitative studies provide little concrete evidence because they tend to be descriptive and theoretical.

Putnam (1993, 2000) popularized the links between social organization, democracy and economic growth in political sociology. Putnam's (1995) path-breaking essay and his 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*, drew attention to an apparent decline in community-based associations in the U.S. The core reason for this he asserts is a weak civil society in the U.S. that has led to decreased 'civic engagement' and 'social trust.' As mentioned earlier, Putnam argues that there is a decline in active group membership in communities; moreover, those who are joining are not joining the kinds of organizations that stimulate the formation and development of social capital.

Earlier in this chapter, I alluded to Putnam's (1993) in-depth analysis of social capital, civic values and the performance of democratic and economic institutions in Italy. In this study, Putnam conducted a comparative assessment of regional governments in two regions of Italy, the Northern/Central region and the Southern region and showed how social capital can explain regional variations in economic growth and governmental performance.

He noted that the north central region of Italy was characterized by civic engagement, trust, tolerance, equality, and social solidarity. These stocks of social capital

were embedded in horizontal networks of civic engagement which enhanced effective democratic processes. Putnam found that the north/central regions of Italy had more lateral social relationships that were based on equality. These regions also had stronger civic traditions and individuals had higher levels of trust in political institutions. Regional governments were also strong and successful. On the other hand, and even more revealing, were the divergent findings in the ‘*uncivic*’ region of southern Italy. The southern region was characterized by limited stocks of social capital, apathy towards politics, more vertical social relationships, and poor civic traditions. In comparison to the northern and central areas, the southern region was found to be inundated with malfunctioning regional governments, which Putnam related to lower stocks of social capital in that region.

The main findings of Putnam’s work highlight the critical importance of citizen participation, a thriving civil society and social capital in effective and successful regional governments and prosperous economies. It is not surprising that citizens of the north/central region expressed greater satisfaction with the quality of democracy and governmental performance than citizens in the Southern region of Italy.

In another regional study in Italy, Helliwell and Putnam (2000) used social capital variables to predict per capita output growth. They found that social capital explains economic as well as political differences in Italy. They used an index of associations (composing of newspaper readership and political behavior), institutional performance, and citizen satisfaction with government as indicators. Using multiple regression techniques they regressed regional output growth in Italy on initial output and measures of civic community, institutional performance, and satisfaction with government. These

variables explained differences in regional growth rates and they concluded that the higher the levels of social capital the greater the economic growth.

In later works, Putnam investigated trends in participation and social capital in the U.S. (Putnam 1995a, 1995b, 2000). He found that both social capital and participation have declined. The question thus arises; does declining social capital and participation matter for participatory democracy? In the context of his research, the answer is “yes.” The literature is rife with evidence to show that these are the basic resources for effective civic life and participatory democracy and ultimately individual satisfaction with the way democracy works.

On another international front, Krishna (2002b) studied sixty-nine village communities in two north Indian states to examine how social capital and participation work in these setting. She found that institutions and social capital work together in support of active participation and concludes that social capital matters and its effects are magnified when capable agents are available to help individuals and communities connect with public decision-making processes.

The extent of the importance of civiness and trust in democratic processes can be illustrated by studies of democratic political organizations. Letki (2003) examined relationships between social capital and democracy in the formerly communist part of East-Central Europe and found that the major factors causing low levels of political engagement are part of the Communist heritage. These include low levels of social capital (interpersonal trust and membership in voluntary associations) and the anti-democratic norms and attitudes learned through participation in the non-democratic system. Therefore, she argues that skills and attitudes gained from participation in

groups, such as voluntary associations or the Communist party, and exposure to the democratic political processes are more important for the ‘civicness’ of a community than whether its members trust each other (Letki 2003).

Others have shown a reciprocal relationship between associational life and democracy. For example, Paxton (2002) used data from a large cross-national study to assess the interdependent relationship between social capital and democracy. Using different types of international non-governmental organizations and trust as measures of social capital, she introduced an alternative hypothesis that social capital can increase democracy and that democracy can increase social capital through a reciprocal effect. Her study confirmed the reciprocal effect thesis where social capital was found to affect democracy and democracy also affected social capital. She further found that associations that are connected with the wider community have a positive effect on democracy, while isolated associations have a negative effect.

In the U.S., Joslyn and Cigler (2001) use 1996 pre- and post-election American National Election Studies panel data to assess relationships between involvement in voluntary associations and attitudinal changes that are supportive of democratic principles and system legitimacy. Their study linked individual-level behavior to changes in national-level attitudes. Using three attitudinal measures of democratic support: *trust in government*, *external efficacy*, and *absolute differences* they examined the effects of reported levels of group involvement and attitudes toward democracy.

They concluded that the more group involvement citizens enjoy; the more likely they are to report a post-election increase in attitudes that are considered supportive of democratic processes. “The more extensive an individual’s group involvement, the

greater the likelihood he or she finds that the experience of a presidential election enhances such fundamental democratic orientations as political trust and efficacy” (Joslyn and Cigler 2001:366). Joslyn and Cigler (2001) substantiate a link between social capital (through group participation) and enhancement of democracy processes. In addition, they conclude that involvement in private associational activities further strengthens democratic feelings.

Echoing the work of Putnam (1993, 2000), Paxton (2002) confirms that strong social networks help to create and maintain democratic participation. Invariably, extant work supports the view that social capital enhances the state of civic engagement and social trust in liberal democracies.

### 3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth review of social capital and civic engagement perspectives and further examines their utility in explaining relationships between participatory democracy and democracy satisfaction. It examined the intellectual lineage of social capital theory by presenting a brief historical overview of the theory, its definitions, its dimensions, and measurements. It explored how the concept of social capital is defined and operationalized by Putnam (1995a, 1995b, 2000). The chapter examined dichotomized social capital concepts such as *particularized* and *generalized trust*, *bonding* and *bridging* social capital, and *weak* and *strong* ties. These formed a foundation for achieving my research objectives. I then discussed strengths and weaknesses of these dichotomies and focused on their implications for civil society, effective participatory democratic processes, and ultimately, individual democracy

satisfaction. A discussion on links between various dimensions of social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction, as well as an examination of new a direction for trust and its consequences for civic engagement followed. Finally, I reviewed extant research that examines theoretical and empirical understandings of social capital, civic engagement, participation, and democracy in the U.S., as well as international perspectives.

## CHAPTER IV

### PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters forms of trust and levels of civic engagement of individuals are presented as powerful predictors of satisfaction with democracy. Opportunities to participate in democratic processes and enjoy some level of satisfaction with the process, however, are influenced by social demographic factors. The question arises, satisfaction for whom? In this chapter I argue that satisfaction with participatory democracy depends on who is participating and the social experiences of the participants. Opportunities to participate in political processes are not equally available to everyone. For example, educational attainment, political attitudes, and socio-economic characteristics of individuals may enhance/constrain political participation, and ultimately levels of democracy satisfaction. I show that individual citizens as participants are related to a set of personal characteristics such as social status, race, age, and so on (Verba and Nie 1987; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) that may constrain participation.

In their 1993 article entitled “*Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?*” Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1993b) found that citizens who actively participate and those who do not are different in their demographic attributes and economic circumstances. Moreover, they note that participation differences among ethnic groups can be attributed to a very large extent to unequal access to political resources and other vital resources such as education, rather than rational abstention (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

#### **4.2 Race and Age**

Race, ethnicity, and gender may be factors that inhibit or enhance opportunities for participation. Historical factors may also bear weight on demographic composition of participants in civic groups. Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1993a, 1993b) argue that a major task faced by democracies is the incorporation of previously excluded racial and ethnic minority groups; groups that have long been the objects of discrimination by dominant groups. Various outcomes are reported in the literature regarding minority dispositions, attitudes and participation in democratic processes.

Researchers have found a range of relationships between demographic variables and social capital. Uslander (2002) found that African Americans and younger people are more likely to be particularized trusters. Stolle (2001) asserts that older people in the U.S., are more trusting. Lin’s (2000) study shows that that social groups based on race and gender have differential access to social capital. Females and minority group members have known disadvantages based on structural constraints and normative dynamics of social interaction/associated networks. Claibourne and Martin (2000) found



that whites are more trusting, which is consistent with the hypothesis that individuals with relatively higher degrees of power are more trusting. Speaking to membership in organizations Verba and Nie note “If one’s education is higher, if one is white rather than black, and middle-aged rather than young, one is more likely to be an active member in organizations” (1987:181).

Guided by an assumption that race and age as well as other extraneous variables may have possible effects on the strength and the nature of the relationship between the main independent variables and democracy satisfaction in this study I control for race and age as well as an array of other variables, specifically: homeownership, gender, human capital, marital status and political orientation.

### **4.3 Human Capital**

Can other forms of capital influence participatory democracy and one’s feeling of satisfaction with the way democracy works? Although social capital focuses on social relationships and norms and is measured by trust, values, attitudes, group participation and membership, human capital centers on individual agents. It encompasses investment in technical skills and knowledge, and it is generally measured by length of schooling and academic and technical qualifications. Coleman and Bourdieu have established a link between social capital and human capital by suggesting that social capital helps in creating human capital. Lin (1999) shows that human capital induces social capital. According to Coleman (1988a), human capital is education. To this end, I propose that people’s level of formal education should influence their satisfaction with the way democracy works indirectly through its intervening effect on social capital and civic

virtues. “Indeed, the number of years of schooling is generally the single strongest determinant of any number of social capital type variables” (Glaeser 2001:40).

People with higher formal education may potentially experience higher satisfaction with the way democracy works than those with less education on the basis that they participate more in civil society. Formal education as expressed here does not include unstructured informal information and knowledge that is provided from membership in social networks that were described earlier in this chapter.

Individuals generally invest in human capital to increase *economic returns*, but it can also have *social returns* as well as *civic returns*. Putnam (1995a) found that education is a very strong predictor for all the various forms of civic engagement including social trust and membership in different types of groups as well as other forms of political and social participation. Putnam notes that the two last years at college made twice as much difference to trust and group membership as the first two years of high school. Even more striking is his finding that the four years of education between fourteen and eighteen years have ten times more impact on trust and group membership than the first four years of education. In this relationship, Putnam found no difference between male and females or among different races (1995a:667).

Uslaner 2002 found that people with higher education are more likely to be generalized trusters. In addition, education may instill liberal values, such as the preference for equality of opportunity and respect for individual rights and liberties. Education enlarges individual perspectives, whereby the better educated may be more willing to endorse new political strategies and be more tolerant of diverse political and social views (Walden-Moore 1999). With regard to predicting democracy satisfaction,

the assumed relationship is linear, where higher educational attainment increases potential to improve participation in civil society and advance participatory democratic processes and ultimately satisfaction with t democracy.

#### **4.4 Other Demographic Factors**

Literature suggests that marital status, gender, and social class are among the chief demographic determinants of participation in political processes. In the following section I briefly examine effects of these variables on political participation.

##### **4.4.1 Marital Status**

People who are married may have a greater psychological stake in the established order and would therefore be more likely to participate in the political processes to affirm and boost their commitment to the moral order (Kingston and Finkel 1987). Kingston and Finkel (1987) evaluated the notion that marital status has an independent effect on political attitudes and participation. They found that people who are married have a somewhat higher voter turn out rate than singles. Singles are, however, more disposed to political participation beyond voting.

Claibourne and Martin (2000) argue that although married or partnered people are expected to be more likely to join groups because of the reduction in anxiety a ‘buddy’ brings, they found the opposite to be the case. They suggest that this may be so because individuals who are not partnered participate in voluntary groups to compensate for the absence of a partner. Given these findings, marital status is introduced in the empirical analysis in chapter 5 as a control variable to see whether married people are more likely to experience satisfaction with democracy based on their participation in local problem

solving and politics. Social class and gender may also affect the way people interact with each other in a participatory democracy system and ultimately their satisfaction with democracy.

#### 4.4.2 Gender

Women's low rate of participation at the highest levels of politics is a known and enduring problem in gender stratification (McDonough, Shin, and Moises 1998; Paxton and Kunovich 2003). If the principle of equality is upheld in a democracy, marginalized groups should be adequately represented. Women are underrepresented in national politics; 13 percent of the U.S. House of Representative and 14 percent in the Senate (Paxton and Kunovich 2003). Although cognizant that women are more likely than men to be members of the gender segregated voluntary groups, I posit that women are more likely to be predisposed to participate in solving local collective problems through organizing projects and leading local organizations.

The demographic make-up of associations can affect the democratic process. Popielarz (1999) notes that men and women typically belong to different organizations. Her study shows that women are more likely than men to belong to gender-segregated groups. She also found that women are less likely to belong to integrated associations than are men and that women's voluntary organizations outnumber men's groups by approximately two to one and are generally larger than men's groups.

#### 4.4.3 Social Class

The literature suggests that civic participation is linked to social and economic status (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Uslaner and Brown 2003; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In general, more educated and more economically well off people are more civically engaged than people who are poor and less educated, in reality participants generally come from the more advantaged portions in society (Verba and Nie 1987). Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1993a) show that the socioeconomic position of group members matters appreciably in terms of their ability to express their political rights and to be civically engaged. In their *standard socioeconomic model of participation*, Verba and Nie (1987) claim that the social status of an individual – his/her job, education, and income – determines to a large extent how much he/she participates. Verba and Nie (1987) and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) found individuals with higher incomes are more likely to join groups than individuals with lower incomes. To this end inequality is more obvious when participation depends more on contributions of money than on contributions of time.

Uslaner and Brown (2003) argue that inequality suppresses participation in that, not only do the poor participate less, but in communities where inequality is rife, the poor feel that they are powerless and they shy away from participation. They also argue that inequality leads to lower levels of trust which in turn leads to less civic engagement - “...trust rest on a psychological foundation of optimism and control over one’s environment. Where inequality is high, people will be less likely to believe that the future looks bright, and they will have even fewer reasons to believe that they are masters of

their own fate” (Uslaner and Brown 2003:2). Rosenstone and Hansen 1993 sum up the relationship between social class and participation with the following insight:

“Participation in politics .....has a price, a price that is some combination of money, time, skill, knowledge, and self-confidence. Some people are better able to pay the price than others. In economic life people with money can consume more of (almost) everything, from fancy meals to fast cars to flashy clothes. In social life people with greater resources can do more of (almost) everything, from entertaining friends to joining organizations to volunteering at schools, churches, and charities. So, too, in political life, People with abundant money, time, skill, knowledge, and self-confidence devote more resources to politics, not because politics gives them more return (although it might) but because they can more easily afford it. Citizens with lots of income can simply afford to do more - of everything - than citizens with little money. The wealthy have discretionary income that they can contribute directly to political parties, candidates, political action committees, and other causes. Moreover, money is fungible - it can be freely converted into other political resources that make it easier for people to take part in politics. A car is not a necessary condition for political action, for example, but having one makes it much easier to get to a school board meeting, a political rally, or a candidate’s campaign headquarters. Money can be used to hire someone to do the daily chores--to clean the house, buy the groceries, cook dinner, baby-sit the kids—and free up time for politics. Thus, if people want to participate in politics, money makes it easier for them to do so” (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993:12-13).

Although the importance of social class and income inequality as constraining factors for civic participation and democracy satisfaction is apparent, available data is limited and does not permit empirical confirmation in this dissertation.

#### **4.5 Home Ownership**

Economics is one of the primary factors influencing attitudes toward democratic processes and it has been found to have a strong impact on satisfaction with democracy (see Anderson & Guillory, 1997). I posit that certain socio-economic factors for

example; home ownership, may indirectly impact satisfaction with democracy, through increased civic engagement. Glaeser (2001) found that homeownership increases the level of investment in social capital. His empirical evidence supports the notion that homeownership is an asset and its value is closely tied to the quality of the community. Thus, it creates a direct financial incentive for investment in social capital (Glaeser 2001).

Similarly, Saunders (1990) examines the growth of home ownership in Britain in the post World War II period. He found that home ownership and the preference for home ownership is widespread among all classes in Britain particularly since the 1970s. He analyzed home ownership mainly in the light of consumer preferences. He counters the view that home ownership leads to privatized behavior, instead he found that people who are home owners are more civically engaged because of the ontological security that they enjoy.

DiPasquale and Glaeser (1999) also found that homeowners are more involved in local communities, working to solve local problems and that home ownership encourages investment in social capital. They establish that home owners are involved in more non-professional organizations than non-owners. They also found that homeowners are 15 percent more likely to vote in local elections and six percent more likely to work to solve problems than renters. Given these findings, I intend to empirically ascertain if homeownership influences satisfaction with democracy.

#### 4.6 Chapter Summary

The preceding analysis supports the proposal that participating in issues concerning the public heighten people's interests and confidence in their ability to affect local decision making and that persons who participate in these issues should experience high levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works. This study seeks to empirically assess the explanatory power of various components of social capital in explaining people's level of democracy satisfaction. Controlling for social demographic factors, a National Election Studies survey dataset is utilized to examine citizens' civic engagement and generalized trust (social capital) and how these attributes affect people's level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the United States.

The following chapter presents the research methodology. It revisits the research questions and defines social capital and civic engagement variables. It describes data and measurements. In particular, the measurement of generalized trust and particularized trust is discussed in the context of the literature review as well as four categories of trusters; total, general, particular and skeptic. Next, the analytical strategies employed in testing the research hypotheses of this study are described. Specifically, factor analysis and logistic regression are discussed in the context of this research.



## CHAPTER V

### METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 Introduction

The principal objective of this dissertation is to evaluate links among social capital, civic engagement, and democracy satisfaction within the context of participatory democracy. It addresses four research questions: (a) Are people who are “civically engaged” and who exhibit “generalized and/or particularized trust” more likely to experience greater satisfaction with the way democracy works within the current political environment of a community? (b) What roles do social capital and civic engagement play in aiding people’s satisfaction with participatory governance? (c) What forms of social capital and civic engagement are most useful in predicting satisfaction with democracy? (d) To what extent do various dimensions of social capital and civic engagement account for differences in peoples’ levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works?

Social capital is not only used for its theoretical strength in this study, but also as an analytical tool for studying democracy satisfaction among individuals. An analytical strength of social capital lies in the notion that it can be used as a viable predictor of levels of satisfaction with participatory democracy. One way that researchers get around the vagueness of theoretical concepts in social capital theory as alluded to in Chapter III, is to be specific about identifying and measuring the types of social capital that are

projected to produce certain outcomes. “Once a concept has been properly measured, the likelihood that valid and consistent research findings concerning its causes and effects in some larger social process can be discovered and increased” (Parker 1983:872).

### 5.1.1 Defining Social Capital and Civic Engagement Variables

In this dissertation, trust is specified as a primary social capital measure.

Empirical measurements of trust as a component of social capital are grounded in the theoretical interpretations discussed in Chapter III. The theoretical grounding critical to my civic engagement measures is also presented in Chapter III. In essence it is argued that associational participation is better than self-absorbed individualism for democracy to be effective (Chambers and Kopstein 2001). Elements of democracy are to a large extent experienced by participating in groups, clubs, and/or organizations (Putnam 1993, 2000; Tolbert et al. 1998). The work of Putnam and Uslaner provides a backdrop for elucidating how joining and participating in groups and organizations can enhance people’s feeling of social optimism and levels of democracy satisfaction. It is argued that if democracy is limited or non-existent in communities, civic engagement is a means that helps to bring it into being. It is also argued that civic engagement conceptually reflects different forms of prosocial behaviors both at the local level and in wider political arenas, and different forms of civic engagement should have different levels of influence on satisfaction with democracy. In order to capture this idea I conceptualized two categories of civic engagement: *political* and *altruistic*.

Uslaner’s (1999a) definition of generalized and particularized trust are utilized.

Variables that capture generalized trust (trust in strangers) and particularized trust (strong

ties) are operationalized. As mentioned earlier, in an effort to achieve analytical simplicity; I created a trust typology that delineates more precise measurements of generalized trust and particularized trust as follows:

Type of Truster	Generalized Trust	Particularized Trust
Skeptic	Low	Low
Particular truster	Low	High
General truster	High	Low
Total truster	High	High

Precise measurements of trust are derived from the trust typology and are operationalized by defined characteristics of four groups of trusters: total trusters; general trusters; particular trusters; and skeptics. This typology clarifies the analysis of empirical data. In addition, the sub-constructs are measurable and offer increased rigor of conceptual and statistical models. Categories of trusters identified in this typology expand the scope of empirical analysis by allowing tests of the impact of trust on democracy satisfaction. The typology also allows for the identification of low and high trusters as well as the testing of differences between total trusters and general trusters and between particular trusters and skeptics.

In chapter III, I hypothesize that total trusters and general trusters will be more satisfied with democracy than particular trusters and skeptics. This typology allows me to statistically ascertain differences between total trusters and general trusters with regard to democracy satisfaction. I posit that total trusters should be more satisfied with democracy than general trusters because they exhibit a higher-order trust than general trusters.

To ascertain this relationship, I first created a generalized trust index and a particularized trust index. These indices were used to create measurements for four categories of trusters identified in the trust typology.

The civic engagement indicator consists of three categories to reflect my conceptual classification that is outlined in Chapter III as follows: local political civic engagement; representative political engagement; and altruistic civic engagement. Political civic engagement refers to those activities that seek to deliberately identify and solve public issues, which require some level of organizational commitment or at least attending community meetings and voting in representative politics. I further divide political civic engagement between an element that represents local level participatory activities and an element that represents wider representative politics.

*Local level civic engagement* includes activities that engage individuals and heightened their awareness of community problems and kindle commitment to solving these problems. *Representative civic engagement* includes those activities that support broader political regimes and the election of government authorities. *Altruistic civic engagement* such as giving to charity and volunteering time, denotes pro-social behaviors that stem from empathy and behaviors that specifically promote the survival of others beyond self interest, and does not necessarily tie one to organizational membership, or a commitment to attending regular community meetings.

## 5.2 Data

Data from the 2000 American National Election Study (ANES) were used to test the following six research hypotheses:

- a) People who are total trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.
- b) General trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.
- c) Particular trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.
- d) People who are engaged in local political civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.
- e) People who are engaged in representative civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.
- f) People who are engaged in altruistic civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged.

The 2000 ANES was conducted by the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and comprised of a pre-election interview and a post-election re-interview. The study population for the study was all United States citizens of voting age on or before the 2000 Election Day, and who live in the forty-eight contiguous states. The surveys are based on multistage representative cross-section samples of citizens of voting age, living in private households. A freshly drawn cross-section of the electorate was taken in 2000 to yield 1,807 cases. The core survey involved face-to-face interviewing of 1,000 respondents, the remaining were

interviewed by random-digit dial telephone sampling (ANES, 2002). Data used for this study were drawn from the pre-election survey with a sample size of 1,807. For all of the variables used in this study, I treated the response categories indicating “don’t know” “refused,” “not applicable,” and “no post interview” as missing categories, thus the sample size was reduced to 1270 from 1,807 cases after listwise deletions.

Since a specific goal of this dissertation is to analyze selected social capital variables that adequately predict satisfaction with democracy, the ANES dataset proved to be appropriate. Not only does it offer a solid dependent variable, but it offers a range of social capital and civic engagement indicators as well as demographic variables that are appropriate individual level independent variables for this study.

Although many substantive themes in the 2000 questionnaire are a continuation of past topics, the 2000 ANES study measured several new concepts including:

- *Democracy Satisfaction* – specifically respondents' views on satisfaction with democracy; and,
- *Social Trust*: specifically trust derived from perceptions of the trustworthiness of neighbors, other community members, and coworkers.

The addition of these new variables by the ANES in 2000 allows me to empirically examine the effects of trust on democracy satisfaction.

## 5.3 Measurements

### 5.3.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable “Democracy Satisfaction” was generated from the question “On the whole, are you satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all

satisfied with the way democracy works in the United States?” The response categories are 4 point Likert scale items: 1 = satisfied; 2 = fairly satisfied; 3 = not very satisfied; 4 = not at all satisfied (ANES 2002). For this dissertation, the categories 1 to 4 were reverse coded, so that category 4 represents the highest level of satisfaction. A test of skewness was performed for this variable. A skewness statistic of 0.70 showed that the distribution was skewed and to correct this, the variable was dichotomized. Thus, for the purposes of multivariate analyses, I recoded this 4-point variable into binary categories, where “satisfied” consists of the items ‘satisfied’ and ‘fairly satisfied’ and “not satisfied” consists of the items ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not at all satisfied.’ Dichotomizing the dependent variable is useful because it precisely distinguishes between people who are satisfied with democracy and those who are not.

## **5.4 Independent Variables**

Multiple indicators of social capital and civic engagement compose my independent variables.

### **5.4.1 Civic Engagement Variables**

A local political civic engagement index was created by combining questionnaire items from the ANES that measure respondents’ participation and membership in community organizations, as well as working on community issues. Also, because one of the attributes of participatory democracy is the ability for citizens to petition their elected officials, a question that measures if respondents contacted public officials to express an

opinion was included. Questionnaire items used as indicators of civic engagement, are listed in Table 5.1

Table 5.1  
Civic Engagement Measurements

Civic Engagement Index Variable	Indicator/Questionnaire Item	Responses recorded:
Local Civic Engagement Index	(a) <i>Involvement in community work</i> “During the past 12 months, have you worked with other people to deal with some issue facing your community?”	Yes = 1 and No = 0
	(b) <i>Contact with public official in the last year</i> During the past twelve months, have you telephoned, written a letter to, or visited a government official to express your views on a public issue?	Yes = 1 and No = 0
	(c) <i>Attending community meetings</i> During the past twelve months, did you attend a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?”	Yes = 1 and No = 0
	(d) <i>Membership in organization</i> Not counting membership in a local church or synagogue, are you a member of any of these kinds of organizations?” <sup>1</sup>	Yes = 1 and No = 0
Representative Civic Engagement	Which of the following statements best describes you?” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I did not vote (in the election this November).</li> <li>2. I thought about voting this time, but didn't.</li> <li>3. I usually vote, but didn't this time.</li> <li>4. I am sure I voted</li> </ol>	1-3 into 0= “did not vote” and category 4 into 1= vote.

<sup>1</sup> “Here is a list of some organizations people can belong to. There are labor unions, associations of people who do the same kinds of work, fraternal groups such as Lions or Kiwanis, hobby clubs or sports teams, groups working on political issues, community groups, and school groups.



Table 5.1 continued		
Altruistic Civic Engagement	(a) <i>Volunteering Time</i> “Many people say they have less time these days to do volunteer work. What about you were you able to devote any time to volunteer work in the last 12 months or did you not do so?”	Yes = 1 and No = 0
	(b) <i>Giving to Church or Charity</i> “Many people are finding it more difficult to make contributions to church or charity as much as they used to. How about you -- were you able to contribute any money to church or charity in the last 12 months?”	Yes = 1 and No = 0

Since the local political civic engagement indicators are moderately correlated (see table 5.2) a composite score was developed using exploratory factor analyses (EFA) which reveals that the indicators are unidimensional. Through this procedure I was first able to choose a set of items from a wider group to be included in the final composite measures. EFA also allowed me to show that the civic engagement items in the indices load the same factor, as well as identify those that did not. This was done by principal component analysis extraction method with an orthogonal varimax rotation. Before conducting the factor analysis, correlation matrixes were generated in order to observe patterns of interdependence among civic engagement measures. Four items composed the local political civic engagement index (“wkcomm” - worked on community issue in last year, “puboffi” - contacted public official to express views on a public issue, “commeet” - attend community meeting about issue in last year, “orgmemb” - is respondent a member of any organizations). Overall, the strength of these relationships is moderate. Reliability tests were carried out for each factor.

The Eigenvalue for local political civic engagement is 2.019 explaining 65.09 percent of the variance. The Cronbach’s alpha for this composite score is .664.

Representative civic engagement is a nominal variable that measured whether respondents vote or not. Altruistic civic engagement was measured by giving to church or charity and volunteering time represents *altruistic civic engagement*. Both are treated as separate binary independent variables.

Table 5.2

Local Political Civic Engagement Correlation Matrix

	Worked on community issue in last year	Contacted public official to express an opinion in the last year	Attend community meeting about issue in last year	Respondent is a member of any organizations
Worked on community issue in last year.	1.00			
Contacted public official to express an opinion in the last year	.350**	1.00		
Attend community meeting about issue in last year	.495**	.338 **	1.00	
Respondent a member of any organizations.	.283**	.215**	.324**	1.00

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01.

### 5.5 Trust Variables

As noted earlier, the kind of trust that is more likely to contribute to democracy satisfaction is trust that can be generalized to people who are strangers, or ‘generalized trust’ (Uslaner, 1999a). First, I empirically distinguished between the two trust variables *generalized trust* and *particularized trust*. Thus, a generalized trust index was created from questionnaire items that measured respondents’ trust in strangers. I used the measure that is most frequently used in the literature, “Generally speaking, would you

say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (See Table 5.3). Uslaner (2002) points out that this question refers to faith in people we do not know, and it also implies a generalized world view rather than specific experiences. Other items that comprise the generalized trust index measure whether people are helpful or selfish, and whether people take advantage of others or act fairly.

Uslaner (2002) points out that it is generally more difficult to get a measure of particularized trust since surveys usually do not ask about trust in friends and family members. Although it is generally argued in the literature that particularized trust entails trust in people who are similar (for example by race as argued by Uslaner 2002), I argue that the benefits of particularized trust are more likely to occur at the micro-level among people who share frequent face-to-face interaction; with increased class and residential segregation, it is likely that neighbors are similar in socio-economic standing and in some cases by race and ethnicity. For example, there tends to be a spatial polarization of those who occupy secondary and non-standard jobs in an ethnicity split labor market. Also, recent work in this area has generally found high levels of ethnic segregation with low levels of integration in some communities and the growth of an immigrant underclass (see Borjas, 1994 and Massey et al.1993). Consequently, for the particularized index, I use questions that dealt with trust among close associates such as neighborliness. This represents a form of social capital that fosters micro-level interactions and potentially community cohesion. Items included the following: (a) Are neighbors just looking out for themselves? (b) Do neighbors treat others with respect? and (c) Do neighbors try to take advantage of others? I anticipate a positive relationship between these trust variables and democracy satisfaction. I also expect that indicators of generalized trust

will emerge with more robust explanatory power for democracy satisfaction than indicators of particularized trust.

Tables 5.4 to 5.5 provide correlation matrixes for the items that comprise generalized trust, and particularized trust indices. The row and column variables are positively correlated. Overall, the strength of these relationships is moderate. The highest correlation of 0.511 is between the items “People are trustworthy” and “People do not take advantage, they act fairly.” Since the *generalized trust and particularized* indicators are moderately correlated composite scores were developed using exploratory factor analyses (EFA) which reveal that the indicators are unidimensional. Through this procedure I was first able to choose a set of items from a wider group to be included in my final composite measures.

Three items measuring trust in strangers (“trusyes1” – People are trustworthy, “trusyes2” – People do not take advantage, they act fairly, “trusyes3” – People are helpful, not selfish) composed the “generalized trust” index. Three items measuring trust in people who are in close association (“neiadvno” - neighbors do not take advantage of each other, “respyes” - neighbors treat each other with respect, and “neihnyes” - neighbors are honest) comprise the “particularized trust” index.

EFA also allowed me to show that the generalized trust and particularized items in the indices load the same factor, as well as identify those that did not. EFA produced an Eigenvalue for generalized trust is 1.953 explaining 65.09 percent of the variance. The Cronbach’s alpha for this composite score is .731. The Eigenvalue for particularized trust is 1.744 explaining 58.14 percent of the variance. The Cronbach’s alpha for this composite score is .610.

Table 5.3  
Trust Measurements

Trust Index Variable	Indicator/Questionnaire Item	Responses recoded as:
Generalized Trust Index	(a) <i>Trust (1)</i> “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?”	1 = Most people can be trusted and 0 = Can't be too careful.
	(b) <i>Trust (2)</i> measures whether people are helpful or selfish, measured by two questionnaire items; (a) “Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are just looking out for themselves?”	“Try to be helpful” (which indicates trust in others and generalized reciprocity) recoded into 1 and “just looking out for themselves” (no generalized trust) into 0.
	(b) <i>Trust (3)</i> Whether people take advantage of others do they act fairly, measured by the questionnaire item; “Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?”	I recoded the responses “try to be fair” (meaning trust in others) into 1 and “take advantage” (no trust) into 0.
Particularized Trust Index	(a) Are neighbors just looking out for themselves? Measured by the questionnaire item; “I'm going to ask you a few questions about the people you regularly see in your neighborhood. In general, with these people in mind, would you say that they are just looking out for themselves all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, hardly ever, or never?”	4= Never 3 = Hardly ever 2 = Some of the time 1 = Most of the time 0 = All of the time (The higher the value the higher is particularize trust)
	(b) Do neighbors treat others with respect? Measured by the questionnaire item; “Again, thinking about those people you see in your neighborhood, would you say they treat others with respect all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, hardly ever, or never?”	0 = Never 1 = Hardly ever 2 = Some of the time 3 = Most of the time 4 = All of the time (The higher the value the higher is particularize trust)
	(c) Does honest describe neighbors Measured by the questionnaire item; Would you say that honest describes the people in your neighborhood extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?	4 = Extremely well 3 = Quite well 2 = Not too well 1 = Not well at all (The higher the value the higher is particularize trust)

Table 5.4

## Generalized Trust Correlation Matrix

	People are trustworthy	People do not take advantage, they act fairly	People are helpful, not selfish
People are trustworthy	1.00		
People do not take advantage, they act fairly	.511*	1.00	
People are helpful, not selfish	.444**	.473**	1.00

\*p&lt;.05, \*\*p&lt;.01.

Table 5.5

## Particularized Trust Correlation Matrix

	Neighbors do not take advantage of each other	Neighbors treat each other with respect	Neighbors are honest
Neighbors do not take advantage of each other	1.00		
Neighbors treat each other with respect	.264**	1.00	
Neighbors are honest	.459**	.385**	1.00

\*\*p&lt;.01.

Table 5.6

Items Used in the Generalized Trust, Particularized Trust and Local Political Civic Engagement

	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Eigenvalue	Factor Loading
<b>Generalized Trust</b>			.731	1.953	
People are trustworthy	2.81	1.992			.809
People do not take advantage, they act fairly	3.84	1.814			.824
People are helpful, not selfish	2.35	1.894			.786
<b>Particularized Trust</b>			.610	1.744	
Neighbors do not take advantage of each other	3.96	.800			.758
Neighbors treat each other with respect	1.96	.790			.696
Neighbors are honest	1.84	.687			.828
<b>Local Political Civic Engagement</b>			.664	2.019	
Respondent worked on community issue in last year	3.91	1.780			.776
Respondent contacted public official to express an opinion in the last year	4.17	1.624			.656
Respondent attend community meeting about issue in last year	3.85	1.812			.787
Is respondent a member of any organizations?	3.29	1.980			.605

Table 5.6 illustrates that each factor shows moderate levels of internal consistency, or reliability, with alpha scores of 0.73 for *generalized trust*, 0.61 for *particularized trust*, and 0.66 for *local political civic engagement*. Factor loadings range from 0.78 to 0.82 for *generalized trust*, from 0.70 to 0.82 for *particularized trust* and from 0.60 to 0.79 for *local political civic engagement*, showing fairly good correlations between variables and the factors. Eigenvalues are all greater than 1.

It was mentioned earlier that the *generalized trust* and *particularized trust* indices were used to create measurements for the four categories of trusters identified in the trust typology, thus to empirically test four categories of trusters as predictors of democracy satisfaction, I generated mean values for the *generalized trust* and *particularized trust* indices. The mean for *generalized trust* is 1.9189 and for *particularized trust* 2.6528. High trusters are those with values that are greater than the means, and low trusters are those with values that are less than or equal to the means. Specific categories of trusters were computed in SPSS using the following syntaxes:

Total truster:	Particularized is > than 2.6528 and Generalized trust is > 1.9189
General truster:	Particularized is < than 2.6528 and Generalized trust is > 1.9189
Particular truster:	Particularized is > than 2.6528 and Generalized trust is < 1.9189
Skeptic:	Particularized is < than 2.6528 and Generalized trust is < 1.9189

For analytical purposes dummy variable were created to capture the effect of each type of truster on satisfaction with democracy.



## 5.6 Social Demographic Variables

An assumed basic bivariate relationship between forms of trust and civic engagement with democracy satisfaction would be simplistic (Patterson 1999). From the literature, I identified those factors that may constrain the civic behavior of individuals, and ultimately their satisfaction with democracy. Thus, I isolated seven variables that are potentially confounding factors as follows: education, age, marital status, race, home ownership, gender and political orientation. These variables were measured as follows:

(1) *Education* is measured on an ordinal scale. The categories are less than high school, high school and greater than high school. The recoded education variable was arrived from responses to the question that measured the respondent's years of education; what is the highest degree that you have earned?

(2) *Race* is measured on a nominal scale and was recoded into white, black and other race. This is self reported measured by the questionnaire item; "Respondent's race is."

(3) *Gender* is a nominal variable identifying the respondent as either male or female; 1 = male; 0= female. This is measured by the questionnaire item; "Respondent's sex is."

(4) *Age* was measured on an interval scale by the questionnaire item: "What is the month, day and year of your birth?" Age is calculated by subtracting the year of birth from 2000 and has been recoded into a categorical variable as follows: 18 to 34 years, 35 to 54 years and 55 to 97 years (18 thru 34=1; otherwise 0, 35 thru 54=1; otherwise 0, and 55 thru 97=1; otherwise 0).

(5) *Marital status* is a nominal variable, coded 1 = married; 0 = not married. This is measured by the questionnaire item: “Are you married now and living with your (husband/wife) or are you widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never married?”

(6) *Political orientation* is also a nominal variable, categorized as democrat, republican, and other. Political orientation is measured by the questionnaire item: “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”

(7) *Homeownership* is a nominal variable recoded into own, rent, and other tenure, measured by the questionnaire item: “Do you/Does your family own your home, pay rent, or what?”

## 5.7 Statistical Methods

Logistic regression is a main statistical procedure used in this study to determine the main predictors of democracy satisfaction. This is because the primary dependent variable; “Democracy Satisfaction” is dichotomous and has binary responses; satisfied = 1 and not satisfied = 0 (see Jennings, 1986). Logistic regression technique allows an appropriate prediction of discrete outcomes. The objective of logistic regression is to correctly predict the probability of a certain event occurring, in this case; satisfaction with how democracy works or no satisfaction. The logistic regression model to be used is simply a non-linear transformation of the linear regression (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, and Wasserman 1996). A "logistic" distribution is generally an S-shaped distribution function that is similar to the standard-normal distribution. Because the dependent variable is binary (therefore not normally distributed) OLS regression would violate

assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity. Also the predictions for the probability of the event ‘satisfied’ or ‘not satisfied’ would lie outside the acceptable 0-1 interval.

For example, the estimated probability is:

$$p = [\exp(a + BX)]/[1 + \exp(a + BX)]$$

or

$$p = 1/[1 + \exp(-a - BX)]$$

With this functional form:

- if you let  $a + BX = 0$ , then  $p = .50$
- as  $a + BX$  gets really big,  $p$  approaches 1
- as  $a + BX$  gets really small,  $p$  approaches 0.

### 5.7.1 Data Analysis

The overall data analysis process began by screening the data to isolate missing values. The data were downloaded from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Listwise deletion was used to remove redundant categories such as “don’t know” and “not applicable” from all the variables. Independent variables were reverse coded so that they are consistent in the same direction.

To satisfy the certain assumptions of logistic regression such as collinearity and linearity, appropriate diagnostics were observed. To ensure efficiency of the parameter estimates, an ordinary least squares regression was used to detect possible collinearity problems in all logit models. Collinearity exists when two independent variables are highly correlated with each other; if two highly correlated variables are included in the logistics regression model then this would lead to imprecise measurement of their contribution to explaining the variance in the dependent variable. A method that is widely used to detect multicollinearity problems in Variance inflation factors (VIF). These

factors measure the extent to which the variances of the estimated regression coefficients are inflated (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, and Wasserman.1996). Using a rule of thumb that suggests that VIFs of higher than 10 is cause for concern (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, and Wasserman.1996), no collinearity problems were diagnosed in all the regression models as VIF values are all less than 10

To identify outlying cases I used the Dbeta test (see Menard, 1995). The test results showed that all cases across for the independent variables were less than 1 indicating no outliers. After performing these statistical diagnostics and data reduction techniques, I began the next stage of the statistical analysis by conducting a univariate analysis to ascertain descriptive information about the sample and for each variable used in this study. The purpose was to facilitate exploration, description, and comparison of variables in the model. Next, I proceeded with a bivariate analysis to examine the relationship between various pairs of variables and sets of variable by using the t-test (for gender and marital status) and one way ANOVA (for race).

As mentioned earlier, exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were then employed for all composite measures; generalized trust, particularized trust and local political civic engagement in order to ascertain their factor loadings and to establish their unidimensionality. Through this procedure I was able to choose a set of items from a wider group to be included in my final composite measures. It also allowed me to show that the items in the indices load the same factor, as well as identify those that did not. This was done by principal component analysis extraction method with an orthogonal varimax rotation. Before conducting the factor analysis, correlation matrixes were

generated in order to observe patterns of interdependence among the particularized trust, generalized trust, and civic engagement measures.

## 5.8 Regression Models

A series of logistic equations were constructed which attempted to predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. To estimate the factors that are important in explaining levels of satisfaction with democracy, I used block regression technique to produce a set of logistic regression models. Block regression shows how much variance is explained by the addition of a set of variables to the overall logistics regression equation. Thus, I began the analysis by first accounting for the effect of several social demographic variables on democracy satisfaction by regressing democracy satisfaction on these variables: age, education, gender, marital status, homeownership, political orientation and race in Model 1. This was done so that I could more precisely ascertain the effect of my main independent variables in subsequent equations, by removing the effect of these socio demographic variables.

The socio-demographic variables are all dummy variables and in the equations, skeptics are the reference category for the trust variable. Other tenure is the reference category for homeownership, for education high school is the reference category, white is the reference category for race. Male for gender, not married for marital status and other for political orientation. In model 2, I added the trust dummy variable. Then local political civic engagement, representative civic engagement and the altruistic were added in model 3. Model 4 is the full model where I include all independent variables. Model 5 is the reduced model which is the most parsimonious model, containing all significant

predictors of democracy satisfaction. The goal of Model 5 is to rerun all the independent variables that contributed significantly to explaining the response variable.

After running logistic regression models, and before making inferences from them, the next step was to assess the fit, (Pregibon, 1981), that is, “how well the model fits the data” (Menard 1995:41). Chi-squared goodness of fit statistics (Model  $X^2$ ) are reported, which test for “the statistical significance of the variation *unexplained* by the logistic regression model” (Menard 1995:22). Thus, for each model, Model  $X^2$  is examined in order to ascertain levels of goodness of fit for each model and improvement between models. In addition, I report the B estimates (log-odds), exponential ( $\beta$ s), the significance levels of all my predictor variables, Wald statistic model chi square statistic and associated degrees of freedom as well as the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  in chapter VI.

In this chapter, I identified the variables used in the study, explained how they are measured, and statistically described them. In next chapter the results of the bivariate relationships and multivariate statistical models are presented.

## CHAPTER VI

### EMPIRICAL RESULTS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical analyses. First, basic univariate and bivariate results are reported which explore, describe, and compare results with those of the regression models. Next, it discusses the results of the multivariate analysis. In order to analyze relationships between democracy satisfaction and the range of social capital and civic engagement predictors, a series of multivariate regression analyses were conducted. In addition, changes in parameter estimates when a new block of variables is added in subsequent models are presented. Finally, research hypotheses are revisited and the extent to which they were supported by the empirical results is discussed.

The objective of the multivariate analysis is to show which elements of trust and civic engagement predict satisfaction with democracy for individuals. Several regression models were estimated. Each regression model is presented separately. Model 1 includes social demographic variables that examine the extent to which such characteristics account for variation in democracy satisfaction.

A specific goal of this dissertation was to examine if exhibiting “generalized trust” and “particularized trust” might account for differences in the levels of one’s satisfaction with the way democracy works. Thus, in model 2 a dummy variable for trust

was added. Controlling for the effects of the social demographic variables, Model 2 tests the hypothesis that people who are total trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics.

A third model is estimated to determine if various civic engagement variables predict democracy satisfaction. Thus, in Model 3 a set of civic engagement variables were added to the equation (excluding the trust variables). This was done to estimate the magnitude of the direct effect of civic engagement on democracy satisfaction, controlling for the sociodemographic variables. In Model 4 all the predictor variables were included thus it is referred to as the full model. Finally, the results of Model 5 are presented. This is a parsimonious model that best fits the data.

## **6.2 Univariate Analysis/ Descriptive Statistics**

This section provides information about the descriptive statistics for all variables used in the logistic regression models. Table 6.1 shows the descriptive statistics. Forty three percent of the sample is males and 56 percent females. The average education of the sample in terms of years of schooling is 13.75, and the majority (64.6 percent) has greater than high school educational attainment. Regarding the racial composition of the sample, whites are disproportionately represented in the sample accounting for 80.4 percent, blacks 10.5 percent, Hispanics 4.3 percent, Asians 1.5 percent, Native Americans 1.3 percent, and others 2.1 percent. The age of respondents ranges from 18 to 96 and the average age of those sampled is 46.94. Just over fifty percent of them are married and approximately 70 percent own their own home. Thirty four percent are democrats, 26.1 percent are republicans and 39.3 percent are other, the largest percentage.



A mean of 1.90 on a scale of 1 to 4, with a standard deviation of 0.79 for the dependent variable democracy satisfaction, indicates that most people in the sample are fairly satisfied with the way democracy works and that there is moderate variation in the distribution.

### **6.3 Bivariate Results**

This section presents bivariate analysis to give some preliminary indication of how the variables used in the logistic regression models are empirically related. I examine the relationship between various pairs of variables and sets of variables by using the t-test (for gender and marital status) and one way ANOVA (for race). This was done as a backdrop for the multivariate analysis. The bivariate analysis allowed me to define my conceptual models more precisely. Also, the relationships generated in the bivariate analysis were further substantiated in the multivariate analysis.

There is no difference between males and females with regard to democracy satisfaction, as indicated by t-tests results (see table 6.2). However, t-test results show that there is a difference in democracy satisfaction between those who are married and those who are not (table 6.3).

Table 6.1

## Descriptive Statistics for Logistic Regression Models

Variables	Mean	SD	Range	Freq.	%
Democracy Satisfaction	0.897	0.394	0 to 1		
Social Capital					
Generalized trust	1.9189	1.1495	0 to 3		
Particularized Trust	2.6528	.70452	0 to 3		
<i>Total Truster</i>	0.56	0.4966	0 to 1		
<i>General Truster</i>	0.20	0.4019	0 to 1		
<i>Particular Truster</i>	0.10	0.3001	0 to 1		
<i>Skeptic</i>	0.14	0.3448	0 to 1		
Civic Engagement					
Local Political Civic Engagement	15.2157	5.091	4 to 20		
Representative Civic Engagement (Voting)	3.48	1.025	1 to 4		
Altruistic Civic Engagement					
<i>Giving to Charity</i>	1.79	1.596	1 to 5		
<i>Volunteering time</i>	3.27	1.982	1 to 5		
Social Demographic Variables					
Gender					
<i>Male</i>				559	44.0
<i>Female</i>				711	56.0
Race					
<i>Black</i>				133	10.5
<i>White</i>				1021	80.4
<i>Other</i>				116	9.1
Education (no of years)	13.81		2 to 7		
<i>Less than High School (&lt;12 years)</i>				128	10.1
<i>High School (12 years)</i>				323	25.4
<i>Greater than High School (&gt;12years)</i>				819	64.6
Age	46.84		18 to 96		
<i>18 to 34 years</i>				314	24.7
<i>35 to 54 years</i>				561	44.1
<i>55 to 97 years</i>				395	31.1
Marital Status					
<i>Married</i>				684	53.9
<i>Not Married</i>				586	46.1
Home ownership					
<i>Own</i>				876	69.0
<i>Rent</i>				354	27.9
<i>Other tenure</i>				40	3.1
Political Orientation					
<i>Democrat</i>				439	34.6
<i>Republican</i>				332	26.1
<i>Other</i>				499	39.3

(N=1270 for all the variables)

Table 6.2

## T-Test for Democracy Satisfaction and Gender

Democracy Satisfaction	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.601	.206	.631	1268	.528	.0141	.02228
Equal variances not assumed			.633	1212.701	.527	.0141	.02221

Table 6.3

## T-Test for Democracy Satisfaction and Marital Status

Democracy Satisfaction	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	37.670	.000	3.068	1268	.002	-.0679	.02211
Equal variances not assumed			3.037	1171.914	.002	-.0679	.02234

Analysis of variance tests were run to compare differences among racial groups (more than two groups in this case) where the null hypothesis is that there is equality of all means across these groups. The results show that at least one pair of comparisons is different as indicated by the results; ( $F= 3.225$ ;  $P<0.001$ , see table 6.4). Also I ran a chi-square test of independence where the association between democracy satisfaction and race is significant, which also initially confirms that blacks and whites have different attitudes regarding democracy satisfaction.

Table 6.4

One-way ANOVA for Democracy Satisfaction and Race

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.924	10	.492	3.225	.000
Within Groups	192.197	1259	.153		
Total	197.121	1269			

## 6.4 Multivariate Results

Tables 6.5 to 6.10 detail the results of democracy satisfaction logistic regression models. Each model adds a set of variables to assess the relative importance of different variables on democracy satisfaction.

### 6.4.1 Model 1

As mentioned in Chapter III, marital status, gender, and education are among the chief demographic determinants of participation in political processes observed in the literature. The results show that social demographic factors have divergent effects on the satisfaction with the way democracy works (see Table 6.5).

The empirical results show coefficients for gender and marital status do not have significant effects on democracy satisfaction. No significant difference was found between men and women regarding their satisfaction with the way democracy works. The regression results for gender does not support my earlier assertion that women are more likely to be predisposed to participate in solving local collective problems through organizing projects and leading local organizations, and therefore experience satisfaction

with participatory democracy. This finding may be explained by wider structural disadvantages associated with social networks and participation as well as by inequalities that potentially exist in local association.

However, education was significant which initially suggests that people with higher levels of education have a higher level of satisfaction with the way that democracy works. Specifically, the parameter estimate indicates that people with more than high school education have odds ratio of 1.57 times higher than those with less than high school. These results corroborate findings in the literature where education has a direct and constitutive effect on democracy satisfaction (Anderson and Guillory 1997, Glaeser 2001, Putnam 1995a, Uslaner 2002 and Walden-Moore 1999).

Other social demographic factors such as age show significant, but rather small effects in model 1. Specifically, middle aged people have a lower chance to experience satisfaction with how democracy works than older citizens. The coefficients indicate that people in the age cohort of 35 to 54 years have a 41.2 percent lower chance of experiencing democracy satisfaction than people who are between age 55 and 97. This result confirms Stolle's (2001) assertion that older people are more trusting in the United States, which could impact their satisfaction with democracy.

Race shows significant effects on the response variable. (This association was picked up earlier in the preliminary ANOVA and Chi-square results). Blacks are significantly less likely than whites to experience democracy satisfaction. More precisely, blacks have 50.3 lower chance of experiencing satisfaction with democracy than whites.

Table 6.5

Model 1: Logit Estimates of Social Demographic Variables on Democracy Satisfaction

Social Demographic Variables.	Democracy Satisfaction		
	Estimate	S.E.	Wald
<sup>1</sup> Homeownership			
<i>Own</i>	0.235 (1.265)	0.406	0.335
<i>Rent</i>	0.093 (1.097)	0.415	0.050
<sup>2</sup> Education			
< <i>High School</i>	-0.295 (0.744)	0.247	1.422
> <i>High School</i>	0.453** (1.573)	0.168	7.239
<sup>3</sup> Race			
<i>Black</i>	-0.697** (0.497)	0.228	9.294
<i>Other race</i>	-0.683 (0.504)	0.430	2.524
<sup>4</sup> Gender			
<i>Female</i>	-0.094 (0.909)	0.150	0.400
<sup>5</sup> Marital Status			
<i>Married</i>	0.298 (1.348)	0.158	3.548
<sup>6</sup> Political Orient.			
<i>Democrat</i>	0.783*** (2.188)	0.180	19.032
<i>Republican</i>	0.804*** (2.234)	0.202	15.819
<sup>7</sup> Age			
<i>18 to 34 years</i>	-0.287 (0.749)	0.214	1.801
<i>35 to 54 years</i>	-0.530** (0.588)	0.1865	8.088
Model X <sup>2</sup>	74.63***		
Degree of Freedom	12		
^Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.091
N	1270		

\*p&lt;.05; \*\*p&lt;.01; \*\*\*p&lt;.001

1. Other tenure is the reference category.

4. Male is the reference category.

7. Age 55 to 97 years is the reference category.

^ Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> summarizes variance accounted for by the model (SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5)

2. High school is the reference category.

5. Not married is the reference category

(exponential -B)

3. White is the reference category.

6. Other is the reference category.

The results in model 1 also indicate that there is a strong and significant link between people who are proclaimed democrats and those who are republicans and a sense of satisfaction with the way democracy works. The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 2.2 times greater for both democrats and republicans than for people who belong to the “other” category of political orientation. Like democrats, the odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 2.2 times greater for republicans than for people who belong to the “other” category of political orientation. Home ownership is not a significant predictor of satisfaction with the way democracy works.

A Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of 0.091 for Model 1 indicates that 9.1 percent of the variance in democracy satisfaction is explained by the social demographic variables. The low  $R^2$  suggests that the social demographic variables included in model 1 do not add substantially to the overall predictive value of the model.

Model 1 also contains fit statistics represented by model chi-square (Model  $X^2$ ). This model has an acceptable levels of goodness of fit, based on model  $X^2$  which is significant at the .000 level (see table 6.5). A Model  $X^2$  result of 74.63 with 12 degrees of freedom is significant at the 0.001 level. This indicates that the goodness of fit of the overall model is significant and that Model 1 is a better model than the one with the intercept only.

Table 6.6

Model 2: Logit Estimates of Trust Variables on Democracy Satisfaction

Democracy Satisfaction			
	Estimate	S.E	Wald
<i>Social Capital (Trust typology)</i>			
<sup>1</sup> Total Trusters	1.209*** (3.351)	0.219	30.432
General Trusters	0.807** (2.240)	0.292	1.467
Particular Truster	0.267 (1.306)	0.220	7.627
<b>Social Demographic Variables.</b>			
<sup>2</sup> Homeownership			
Own	0.185 (1.203)	0.415	0.198
Rent	0.426 (1.203)	0.426	0.189
<sup>3</sup> Education			
< High School	-0.142 (0.866)	0.253	0.318
> High School	0.296 (1.345)	0.174	2.899
<sup>4</sup> Race			
Black	-0.447* (0.640)	0.235	3.606
Other race	-0.672 (0.510)	0.448	2.243
<sup>5</sup> Gender			
Female	-0.105 (0.900)	0.153	0.471
<sup>6</sup> Marital Status			
Married	0.227 (1.255)	0.162	1.974
<sup>7</sup> Political Orient.			
Democrat	0.755*** (2.127)	0.183	17.123
Republican	0.744*** (2.105)	0.205	13.086
<sup>8</sup> Age			
18 to 34 years	-0.050 (0.951)	0.222	0.051
35 to 54 years	-0.411* (0.662)	0.191	4.623
Model X <sup>2</sup>	113.90***		
Degree of Freedom	15		
<sup>^</sup> Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.137
N	1270		

\*p&lt;.05; \*\*p&lt;.01; \*\*\*p&lt;.001



Table 6.6 continued

1. Skeptics are the reference category.	2. Other tenure is the reference category.	3. High school is the reference category.
4. White is the reference category.	5. Male is the reference category.	6. Not married is the reference category
7. Other is the reference category.	8. Age 55 to 97 years is the reference category.	( <i>exponential -B</i> )
^ - Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> summarizes variance accounted for by the model (SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5)		

#### 6.4.2 Model 2

When democracy satisfaction was regressed on the variables total truster, general truster and particularized truster along with the seven social demographic variables, total and general trusters had a strong and significant effect.

The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 3.3 times greater for total trusters than skeptics. This effect is significant, confirming the hypothesis that people who are total trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics. Hypothesis II which states that general trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics, is also confirmed. Results show the odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 2.2 times greater for general trusters than skeptics. The effect is, however lower than the effect of total trusters. Model 2 confirms the theoretical reasoning that there is a difference between people who are all-around trusters and those who only trust strangers.

The results failed to confirm the hypothesis that particular trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics. Therefore the results of the study substantiates the thesis that while trust is important when it comes to democracy satisfaction it is generalized trust (total and general truster), rather than particularized trust that is more important in predicting democracy satisfaction.

With the addition of the trust dummy variable: race, age, and political orientation remained as significant predictors of democracy satisfaction. The effect of the political orientation variable was marginally reduced and the effect of race marginally improved.

Blacks have a 36 percent lower chance of being satisfied with the way democracy works than whites. The effect of education on democracy satisfaction was no longer significant with the addition of the trust variable.

Model 2 has an acceptable levels of goodness of fit, based on model  $X^2$  which is significant at the .000 level (see table 6.6). A Model  $X^2$  result of 113.90 with 15 degrees of freedom is significant at the 0.001 level. This indicates that the goodness of fit of the overall model is significant. In Model 2, the addition of trust variables improved the model as the change in Model  $X^2$  of 39.27 is statistically significant at the .001 level.

Regarding explained variance represented by the Nagelkerke  $R^2$ , by comparing Model 1 with Model 2, the addition of trust variables increased the strength of the model. A Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of 0.091 for Model 1 indicates that 9.1 percent of the variance in democracy satisfaction is explained by the social demographic variables. When the trust variables were added in Model 2 this increased to 13.7 percent.

#### 6.4.3 Model 3

While controlling for the effects of the social demographic variables, Model 3 shows that not all forms of civic engagement significantly predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. While representative civic engagement and giving to charity have positive effects on democracy satisfaction, local political civic engagement and volunteering time do not significantly predict satisfaction with the way democracy works.

The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 1.9 times greater for people who are engaged in representative civic engagement than those who are not civically engaged in this manner.

The hypothesis that people who are engaged in altruistic civic engagement are more likely to experience satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged is only partially corroborated. Giving to charity has a positive effect on democracy satisfaction, but not volunteering time. The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 1.6 times greater for people who give to charity than those who are not civically engaged in this manner.

With the addition of the civic engagement variables, race, age, and political orientation as social demographic variables, the data continued to be significant predictors of democracy satisfaction. The effect of the political orientation variable was further reduced but only marginally. The effect of race decreased, in this model, in that blacks have a 54.4 percent lower chance to be satisfied experience democracy satisfaction than whites.

Model 3 also has an acceptable levels of goodness of fit, based on model  $X^2$  which is significant at the .001 level (see table 6.7). A Model  $X^2$  result of 99.79 with 16 degrees of freedom is significant at the 0.001 level. This indicates that the goodness of fit of the overall model is significant.

Table 6.7

Model 3: Logit Estimates of Civic Engagement Variables on Democracy Satisfaction

Democracy Satisfaction			
	Estimate	S.E	Wald
Civic Engagement			
<i>Local Political</i>	0.011 (1.011)	0.017	0.408
<i>Representative (Vote)</i>	0.655*** (1.926)	0.182	12.956
Altruistic			
<i>Volunteer time</i>	0.119 (1.125)	0.172	0.475
<i>Give to Charity</i>	0.479** (1.612)	0.187	6.497
Social Demographic Variables.			
<sup>1</sup> Homeownership			
<i>Own</i>	0.145 (1.156)	0.414	0.122
<i>Rent</i>	0.181 (1.199)	0.424	0.183
<sup>2</sup> Education			
<i>&lt; High School</i>	-0.184 (0.831)	0.254	0.525
<i>&gt; High School</i>	0.250 (1.284)	0.180	1.921
<sup>3</sup> Race			
<i>Black</i>	-0.791*** (0.453)	0.232	11.589
<i>Other race</i>	-0.740 (0.477)	0.436	2.875
<sup>4</sup> Gender			
<i>Female</i>	-0.109 (0.896)	0.153	0.5123
<sup>5</sup> Marital Status			
<i>Married</i>	0.215 (1.239)	0.161	1.761
<sup>6</sup> Political Orient.			
<i>Democrat</i>	0.706*** (2.026)	0.183	14.896
<i>Republican</i>	0.676*** (1.966)	0.206	10.821
<sup>7</sup> Age			
<i>18 to 34 years</i>	-0.077 (0.926)	0.222	0.120
<i>35 to 54 years</i>	-0.419* (0.658)	0.189	4.876
Model X <sup>2</sup>	99.79***		
Degree of Freedom	16		
<sup>^</sup> Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.121
N	1270		

\*p&lt;.05; \*\*p&lt;.01; \*\*\*p&lt;.001

Table 6.7 continued

1. Other tenure is the reference category.	2. High school is the reference category.	3. White is the reference category.
4. Male is the reference category.	5. Not married is the reference category	6. Other is the reference category.
7. Age 55 to 97 years is the reference category.	( <i>exponential -B</i> )	

^ Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> summarizes variance accounted for by the model (SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5)

Comparing Model 3 with Model 2, the addition of civic engagement variables did not increase the strength of the model. A Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> of .121 for Model 3 indicates that 12.1 percent of the variance in democracy satisfaction is explained by the civic engagement variables. When the trust variables were added in Model 2 this increased to 13.7 percent.

#### 6.4.4 Model 4

In Model 4 (table 6.8) all the variables are included. Thus, it is referred to as the full model. Total trusters remains as strong predictor of democracy satisfaction, although the effect was slightly diminished, in that, the odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 2.8 times greater for total trusters than skeptics. This result suggests that social capital variables may be acting as intervening variables in this model.

Table 6.8

Model 4: Logit Estimates of Social Capital and Civic Engagement on Democracy Satisfaction

	Democracy Satisfaction		Wald
	Estimate		
<i>Social Capital</i>			
<sup>1</sup> <i>Total Trusters</i>	1.040*** (2.830)	0.225	21.228
<i>General Trusters</i>	0.688* (1.989)	0.296	0.503
<i>Particular Truster</i>	0.160 (1.173)	0.225	5.397
<i>Civic Engagement</i>			
<i>Local Political</i>	0.784 (1.016)	0.018	0.784
<i>Representative (Vote)</i>	7.809** (1.686)	0.186	7.809
<i>Altruistic</i>			
<i>Volunteer time</i>	0.082 (1.085)	0.175	0.221
<i>Give to Charity</i>	0.424** (1.529)	0.192	4.869
<i>Social Demographic Variables.</i>			
<sup>2</sup> <i>Homeownership</i>			
<i>Own</i>	0.115 (1.122)	0.422	0.074
<i>Rent</i>	0.239 (1.269)	0.432	0.305
<sup>3</sup> <i>Education</i>			
<i>&lt; High School</i>	-0.086 (0.917)	0.257	0.112
<i>&gt; High School</i>	0.158 (1.171)	0.185	0.731
<sup>4</sup> <i>Race</i>			
<i>Black</i>	-0.551* (0.577)	0.239	5.293
<i>Other race</i>	-0.726 (0.483)	0.450	2.604
<sup>5</sup> <i>Gender</i>			
<i>Female</i>	-0.115 (0.891)	0.155	0.547
<sup>6</sup> <i>Marital Status</i>			
<i>Married</i>	0.165 (1.179)	0.164	1.008
<sup>7</sup> <i>Political Orient.</i>			
<i>Democrat</i>	0.688*** (1.991)	0.185	13.778
<i>Republican</i>	0.644** (1.904)	0.208	9.527

Table 6.8 continued

<sup>8</sup> Age			
18 to 34 years	0.079 (1.082)	0.226	0.1223
35 to 54 years	-0.332 (0.718)	0.193	2.945
Model X <sup>2</sup>	129.45***		
Degree of Freedom	19		
<sup>^</sup> Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.155
N	1270		

\*p&lt;.05; \*\*p&lt;.01; \*\*\*p&lt;.001

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Skeptics are the reference category. | 2. Other tenure is the reference category.       | 3. High school is the reference category. |
| 4. White is the reference category.     | 5. Male is the reference category.               | 6. Not married is the reference category  |
| 7. Other is the reference category.     | 8. Age 55 to 97 years is the reference category. | ( <i>exponential -B</i> )                 |
- <sup>^</sup> - Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> summarizes variance accounted for by the model (SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5)

Models 4 also shows that not all forms of civic engagement predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. Representative civic engagement and giving to charity still have positive effects on democracy satisfaction. Even after accounting for the social demographic variables, representative civic engagement and giving to charity still have a positive and significant influence on satisfaction with the way democracy works. However, the effect is slightly diminished. The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are now 1.7 times greater for people who are engaged in representative civic engagement than those who are not civically engaged in this manner.

Similarly, giving to charity has a positive effect on democracy satisfaction, but not volunteering time. Even after including all others variables, this effect was not eliminated but it was only slightly diminished. The explanatory power of age disappears in the full model, but the race and political orientation are still significant predictors of democracy satisfaction.

Model 4 also has an acceptable level of goodness of fit, based on a model  $X^2$  result of 129.45 with 19 degrees of freedom which is significant at the .000 level (see table 6.8). In Model 4 the addition of all variables improved the model, as the change in Model  $X^2$  of 29.66 is statistically significant at the .001 level. Model 4 is a good model compared to model 3. Adding all the independent variables improved the model.

Comparing Model 4 with Model 3, the addition of all the independent and social demographic variables increased the strength of the model. A Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of .161 for Model 4 indicates that 16.1 percent of the variance in democracy satisfaction is explained by the independent variables.

#### 6.4.5 Model 5

The effect of total trusters on democracy satisfaction was consistent through all the models. The effect of total trusters on democracy satisfaction is however slightly reduced in model 5 when compared to its effect in model 4. In model 5 the odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 2.78 times greater for total trusters than skeptics. The effect is also slightly decreased for general trusters in this model, given that the odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are now 1.1 times greater for total trusters than skeptics (see Table 6.9).



Table 6.9

Model 5: Logit Estimates of Social Capital and Civic Engagement on Democracy Satisfaction

Democracy Satisfaction			
	Estimate	S.E.	Wald
<i>Social Capital</i>			
<sup>1</sup> Total Trusters	1.025*** (2.787)	0.216	24.030
General Trusters	0.675** (1.129)	0.290	5.401
Particular Truster	.583 (1.129)	0.220	0.302
<i>Civic Engagement</i>			
Representative (Vote)	0.509** (1.663)	0.174	8.587
Altruistic			
Give to Charity	0.416** (1.516)	0.180	5.321
<i>Social Demographic Variables.</i>			
<sup>2</sup> Race			
Black	-.556** (0.573)	0.233	5.672
<sup>3</sup> Political Orient.			
Democrat	0.642*** (1.904)	0.181	12.563
Republican	0.672** (1.958)	0.206	10.622
Model X <sup>2</sup>	117.82***		
Degree of Freedom	8		
<sup>^</sup> Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>			0.142
N	1270		1270

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

1. Skeptics are the reference category.

2. White is the reference category.

3. Other is the reference category.

<sup>^</sup> - Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> summarizes variance accounted for by the model (SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5)

Representative civic engagement and giving to charity still have a positive and significant influence on satisfaction with the way democracy works in model 5. The effect remains more or less the same as in the full model. The odds of experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works are 1.78 times greater for people who are

engaged in representative civic engagement than those who are not civically engaged in this manner. Similarly, giving to charity has a positive effect on democracy satisfaction, but not volunteering time. This effect remains the same as in Model 4.

Model 5 also confirms that the odds of blacks being satisfied with the way democracy works is 43.3 percent less than whites. This effect is consistently significant across all the regression models. This signifies that blacks do not feel that they have the ability or opportunity to impact decision making for mutual individual and community benefits.

Being either democrat or republican are highly significant variables in Model 5. Their strong explanatory power for satisfaction with democracy is consistent across all models. This finding may be attributed to their affiliation with long established political organizations. I surmise that even though there is downturn in the number of people expressing confidence in these two established parties nationally (manifested in a downturn in voter turnout from 63% in 1960 to 51 percent in 2000 – see Appendix I). These political parties have greater organization than local organizations, and are generally more stable and politically viable. Thus, political party membership apparently generates some satisfaction of being able to influence political processes, legitimized by the individual being a part of the electorate. Further, many people may feel political bonding with main representative political institutions even though opportunities to influence decision making is expressed infrequently through voting.

Model 5 also has an acceptable level of goodness of fit, based on a model  $X^2$  result of 117.52 with 7 degrees of freedom which is significant at the .000 level.

Including only the significant independent and social demographic variables in Model 5 did not increase the strength of the model over model 4. A Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of 0.141 for Model 5 indicates that 14.2 percent of the variance in democracy satisfaction is explained by these significant variables.

This chapter presented the results of the empirical analyses. Basic univariate and bivariate results were first reported, and then results of the multivariate analysis were presented. Research hypotheses were revisited and the extent to which they were supported by the empirical results was discussed. In the final chapter a discussion of these empirical findings is presented and conclusions are derived.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of empirical findings for the hypotheses in this study which were drawn from the review of literature. In addition, the chapter presents the theoretical contributions of the study, its policy implications and several limitations. Finally, possible directions for future studies are suggested.

#### 7.2 Discussion of Findings

The main purpose of the study is to define and measure components of individual levels of social capital and various elements of civic engagement and to use them as predictors of democracy satisfaction. The dependent variable, democracy satisfaction, was defined as sense of contentment, fulfillment and general optimism about one's ability to influence socio-political decision making processes. The research goal is placed within the context of participatory democracy where it is argued that local level participation increases the likelihood of achieving democracy satisfaction. More specifically, I sought to examine to what extent "generalized trust" and "particularized trust" account for differences in the levels of individual satisfaction with democracy. A parsimonious typology was developed in which four categories of trusters (total trusters,

general trusters, particular trusters, and skeptics) were delineated and empirically tested. This typology is based on two elements of social capital: particularized trust and generalized trust. The typology was backed by the theoretical reasoning that having trust is better than not having trust when it comes to satisfaction with democracy. Accordingly, these categorical measures indicate that there is differentiation in levels of interpersonal trust. The logistics regression results confirm that the odds to be satisfied with the way democracy works are 2.58 greater for total trusters than skeptics.

The results failed to confirm the hypothesis that particular trusters are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works than skeptics. Therefore, the results of the study confirm the notion that while trust is important when it comes to democracy satisfaction it is generalized trust (total and general trusters), rather than particularized trust that is more important in predicting democracy satisfaction. It can be concluded that participatory democracy is impeded in communities with strong particularized trust and limited generalized trust.

This study also explores how civic engagement affects individual levels of satisfaction with democracy. To achieve this, I identified three types of civic engagement: *local political civic engagement*; *representative civic engagement*; and *altruistic engagement*. These sub-constructs are theoretical contributions to the literature that offer more comprehensive explanations for democracy satisfaction. Also, categories are important contributions because previous works have not precisely distinguished social capital and civic engagement variables when examining democracy satisfaction. This civic engagement typology allows research to derive more precise conclusions because previous conceptualizations ignored embedded groups.

In this regard, I examine how these more specific elements of social capital and civic engagement increase the likelihood of finding those people who experience satisfaction with democracy. The empirical results show that not all forms of civic engagement predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. While representative civic engagement and giving to charity have positive effects on democracy satisfaction, local political civic engagement and volunteering time do not significantly predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. The hypothesis that people who are engaged in altruistic civic engagement are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who are not civically engaged is only partially confirmed. For example, giving to charity has a positive effect on democracy satisfaction, but not volunteering time.

The study produced important and generalizable findings regarding trust and democracy satisfaction. In general, generalized trust is most powerful in conditioning satisfaction with the way democracy works. The hypothesized association between total trust and satisfaction with the way democracy works is strongly confirmed by the results of this study. This study shows that total trust is represented by people who trust strangers as well as family, friends, neighbors and other close associates and it is a robust predictor of satisfaction with the way democracy works. General trust, represented by people who trust strangers but not family, friends, neighbors and other close associates is another important predictor of democracy satisfaction, albeit at a slightly lower level of robustness. Particular trust which is denoted by people who trust family, friends, neighbors and other close associates is not a significant predictor of democracy satisfaction.

To this end, this dissertation reveals that the presence of trust in local communities, in and of itself, is not an adequate predictor of satisfaction with the way democracy works. This study shows that mode of trust is critical; different modes of trust have different outcomes for satisfaction with democracy. Generalized trust (denoted by total trusters and general trusters) is more important in predicting people's level of satisfaction with democracy than particularized trust.

Therefore, the proposition can be derived that generalized trust is a better activator of participatory democracy because it reflects deeper and more internalized values of concern for public welfare by the individual. Generalized trust reflects a worldview shaped by experience and deep values (see Uslaner 1999a).

As with trust, not all types of civic engagement variables predict satisfaction with the way democracy works. The study confirms the hypothesis that people who are engaged in representative civic engagement (voting) are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works than those who do not vote. It seems, therefore, that purposive action by individuals in wider representative politics conveys some affinity to local participation and a sense of satisfaction with participatory democracy at the local level. This may be because people who express high levels of satisfaction with democracy experience psychological empowerment, a sense of personal efficacy, and the ability to influence democratic processes in the local communities. For example, Deth (2002) reviewed several recent empirical analyses of social capital and democracy and concluded that positive and direct relationships have been found between voting and participation in voluntary organizations.

This strong link between representative civic engagement and democracy satisfaction is an important finding in light of the fact that Putnam (1995, 2000) articulates a view of general decline in voter turnout. He associates this decline to a general down turn in interpersonal ties and ties with the political system in the U.S. He also makes the point that declining civic engagement has deleterious effects on democracy. Thus, it could be argued that if voting is a predictor of democracy satisfaction, and that lack of satisfaction with democracy may be attributed to a down turn in voter turnout. Prior to Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, findings that sparked the renewed concerns in the overall decline of civic engagement and social connectedness within communities, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) found a decline in national level engagements and noted that participation in American national elections fell by nearly 13 percent between 1960 and 1988. In addition, their 1988 findings revealed that citizens were considerably less likely than they were three decades before to contribute time or money to a political party or candidate, to attend political meetings or rallies, or to try to convince others to vote. The *US Census Bureau* (2002) found that only 60% of citizens in the U.S. voted in 2000. Skocpol and Fiorina (1999) also found that civic engagement is declining in the U.S. and they noted that since the 1960s, the voting rate for the general population has dropped by 25 percent. In this vein, I conclude if representative civic engagement is a good predictor of satisfaction with local level democracy, declining voter turn out should become a major policy concern in the U.S.

The study also shows that giving to church and charity, as an element of altruistic civic engagement, is a good predictor of democracy satisfaction, but this was not the case for volunteering time. Implications are that people who give to church and charities have



some confidence in the ability of these organizations to take care of the general survival and welfare needs of others in their communities. Such individuals display generalized trust and faith in generalized reciprocity. In a sense, they are solving the problems of people who are strangers and who are different from themselves; and, they are also indirectly affecting the decision making processes in these organizations.

Some people who volunteer time (which is assumed to be more likely at the local level) on the other hand, may feel that at a personal level they help others but they do not necessarily derive a sense civic empowerment, or contentment, fulfillment and general optimism about their ability to influence socio-political decision making processes within their community.

Moreover, and in concurrence with Stolle (2001), for such individuals volunteering involves trusting and associating with people of their own kind (particularized trust), and this form of particularistic volunteering does not foster generalized trust which is key for promoting satisfaction with democracy. The particularistic nature of volunteering is underscored by Parker (1983) as he draws attention to the earlier work of Booth et al. (1968), who found that participation in voluntary groups, correlates with socio-economic status, and Cohen and Kapsis (1978) who found a correlation between volunteering and race and ethnicity. For other individuals, volunteering time may be deliberately and rationally expended for personal interest and gain, and not necessarily to support wider public good. For example, some people may volunteer time to improve their chance for future employment (see Day and Devlin 1998).

Even though it has been widely argued that an engaged citizenry is at the center of participatory democracy, the study failed to confirm the assertion that local political civic engagement would in fact increase an individual's level of satisfaction with the way democracy works. This is contrary to Tocquevillian precepts. This is a surprising result as one would expect that actual participation in local civic engagement (over and above representative civic engagement) would be the most viable way of influencing local decision making and identifying and resolving public concerns both within the political and non-political realms.

These findings imply that in practice, local political civic engagement does not predict satisfaction with the way democracy works after controlling for social demographic variables. This counterintuitive finding may be attributed to the fact that participation in local political civic organizations may not enhance an individual's ability to participate in the community decision making process *per se* - that is "Making Decisions" as against "Making Demands" (Radcliff and Wingenbach 2000). This marks an intersection of some of the negative faces of social capital and "bad" civil society. Although Putnam (1993a) argued that dense horizontal networks strengthen trust and civic norms, he also draws our attention to the fact that while associations can inculcate habits of cooperation, solidarity and public- spirit-mindedness (Putnam 1993a), it can have some social networking in groups can have detrimental effects for the wider community (Putnam 1995). Further other civic groups that are separated by class and ethnicity may build within group cooperation and trust, but discourage "out-group" affiliations leading to the reinforcement of particularized trust and attitudes. In some cases, by generally reflecting the lopsided balance of class, ethnic and sexual power,

organizations of civil society tend to inevitably “privilege the privileged” and “marginalize the marginalized” (Fatton 1995). Some group members may feel left out of the decision making processes, or feel that their opinions are irrelevant even when they are civically engaged.

Civically engaged group members may not necessarily have a voice because there is poor “internal organizational democracy” that represents citizens' interests, or deficient “internal organizational democracy.” What then is internal organizational democracy? It exemplifies high level connectedness and trust among local group members, which enhances the ability of all group members to effectively engage in dialogue with each other regardless of position on a hierarchical stratum, maintaining mutual respect at all levels in affecting and achieving collective goals. If this condition is not pervasive, then not all types of local political civic engagement within the community contribute to a feeling of satisfaction with the way democracy works. Local political engagement should allow all participants some meaningful control over the decisions that affect them, if satisfaction with the way democracy works is to be heightened.

As noted earlier, Putnam (1993) found that civic engagement is important to the extent that a community with very high levels of civic engagement may solve problems by social networking, independent of governmental intervention. But not all local political organizations and institutions offer horizontal participation of all members in decision-making. Some group members may merely be present without making decisions. Local level political civic organizations are not necessarily nonhierarchical or based on equality, which is an essential ingredient for “civicness.” Participants may not only be unequal in power or status, but it is highly plausible that the struggle for position

and power that pervades state and federal level bodies has infiltrated hierarchically structured local level civil organizations which keep some members out of decision-making. Thus, “patron–client” relationships can find their way into local civic organizations, rather than horizontal ties. Harkening back to elements of *elitist theory*, political elites within communities are likely to be decision makers whose power plays a stronger role within organizations. "It is the irony of democracy that the responsibility for the survival of liberal democratic values depends on elites, not masses." (Dye and Ziegler 1970:229).

The lack of democracy satisfaction among people who participate in local political civic engagement may be linked to particularized trust and the idea of diversity as an opportunity constraint. Diversity may not be evident in group membership, as previously observed by Uslaner (1999b). He noted that most organizations do not have the diversity in membership that is required to cultivate trust in strangers. He further argues that people join organization to socialize with people who have similar interests (bonding), which does not require building trust. Sticking with people like one’s self does not create the opportunity to bond with those who are different. Uslaner (2002) also argues that ethnic or racial segregation is a barrier to the formation of generalized trust, particularly when racial and ethnic minority groups feel excluded from power and wider resources.

Further, the motivation of group members may be divergent. The possibility exists that some people participate in civic activities for egoistic interests rather than for pure altruistic reasons. This maximizes their personal utility. Thus, their identity with the outcome would be personal satisfaction rather than a desire to support the interests of the

community. They have a weak obligation to community. Their behavior may reflect some underlying rational calculation based on self-interest. People who are interested in elevating themselves may not necessarily work toward participatory democracy or toward experiencing satisfaction with the way democracy works. Others may participate but may feel that there has been a violation of their expectation of generalized reciprocity; and, therefore they would feel minimal satisfaction from participating.

### 7.3 Policy Implications

Participation in community decision-making is a key element in an individual's sense of satisfaction with the way democracy works. Given the importance of generalized trust in the prediction of satisfaction with the way democracy works and the observed decline in generalized trust in the U.S. reported by (Putnam, 2000), findings of this study should spark policy concern for this issue, particularly in efforts that address generalized trust. Should generalized trust be given primacy over civic engagement in policy development geared toward participatory democracy? It is comprehensible that collaborative networks and associations are equally integral to society.

Consequently, policy implications of the findings of this research are diverse. First, increasing the powers of local and regional decision-making bodies (local institutions, faith-based bodies and voluntary organizations) is not sufficient for effective participatory democracy. Neither is the density of local political civic organizations within a community by itself a determinant of individual level efficacy and satisfaction with the way democracy works. On the issue of democracy satisfaction, an abundance of local political civic organizations within the community may not achieve full democratic

potential. Thus, policies that encourage the formation of and participation in local groups alone may be counterintuitive if generalized trust is not present in local communities. Then again, the popular slant in the literature is participation in local groups is vital, as social networks build generalized trust and cooperation in communities, as people work together in groups (see Putnam. 1993a, 1995 and 2000). Putnam (1995), for example, notes that people who join organizations are people who trust. He suggests that causation direction is derived from joining to trusting.

Second, given the strong generalized trust and democracy satisfaction complementarities, if community members are not predisposed to total and general trust and harbor feelings that they cannot effectively influence the process of local administration responsibilities and affect community deliberations, participatory democracy may be underdeveloped. The findings of this research beg the question – “how can generalized trust be rapidly increased in local communities?” If generalized trust is low in local communities, then participatory democracy is impeded. Implicit in the notion of effective participatory democracy is the need for generalized trust since coercion is not tied to the process. Situations that foster the democratic ideal of equality and “local civic organizational democracy” allow all members to actively participate in consensus decision-making processes. This is more critical in building people’s level of satisfaction with the way democracy works. Trust-based collaborative networks that acknowledge and deal with opportunity constraint factors are necessary for true democratization at the local level. Thus, in promoting prudent policies for generalized trust new initiatives should be developed and approached through the eyes of people who normally have few, if any, chances to influence the decision making process.

Third, since contemporary policies in the U.S. have largely been driven by the decentralization of public responsibilities and power, participatory democracy is central in aiding socio-political processes. In the current political environment, and in a country where democracy is largely fully institutionalized, more attention should be placed on participatory democracy and investment in cognitive resources that generate generalized trust. Therefore, micro-level policy mechanisms that develop, support and sustain moral trust are essential. As Radcliff and Wingenbach (2000) imply, participatory democracy unlike representative democracy involves “making decisions” that psychologically engages the individual. Public policy should focus on promoting generalized trust and organizational democracy in local communities. Generalized trust is shown to be a strong predictor of how satisfied people feel with the way democracy works. It underpins the devolution of federal governance as it spreads to diverse sites (in civic associations, partnerships and local communities). Generalized trust enhances levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works (and ultimately the building of democratic communities). Promoting types of civic engagement opportunities that increase peoples’ involvement in consensus decision-making is a necessary component of participatory democracy. It should build people’s satisfaction with the way democracy works. Policies and programs that foster civic engagement, even at a minimum level, are essential in an environment where there is a sense of sharing equally in a common political culture with a common heritage, a common present, and a common destiny among individuals (see Patterson 1999).

Finally, from a policy perspective, I can conclude from this research that high levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works can re-affirm participatory

democracy. In addition, the degree to which local civic organizations establish community linkages can impact people's feeling of democracy satisfaction as people may feel a sense of mutual cooperation when they feel attached to an organization's mission. If individuals feel a sense of dissidence with the organization, a feeling of apathy and eventual disillusionment with the democratic process may ensue. It is important that such feelings be curbed because as decentralization becomes more ingrained and the U.S. government pursues strategies that promote people-centered development, increasing importance will be placed on participatory democracy.

Since participatory democracy, civic engagement and social capital are interrelated concepts, in the future, ANES surveys (or other national surveys) should strive to capture the multifaceted nature of democracy by distinguishing between representative democracy and participatory democracy, and by distinguishing among forms of civic engagement. This effort would improve the empirical strength of the democracy satisfaction measure and reduce, or possibly resolve the ambiguity of the measure, and improve the predictive strength of civic engagement variables.

To further understand the fundamental issues affecting people's satisfaction with the way democracy works and to fully exploit democracy in community groups, additional studies using other factors such as: social class, mutual respect; transparency; inclusiveness in civic bodies and gaps in access to information channels warrant investigation.

Deth (2002) surveyed several studies and found a lack of empirical evidence for macro-level interpretations of democratization and social capital conceptualized as collective good. My study focused on individual level analysis, it too ignored critical



structural features of social relationship and community level analyses that might have shown different outcomes. Future research agenda could link contextual community analysis by measuring and testing community social capital (for example bridging and bonding social capital) and civic engagement as well as the extent of participatory democracy in communities. How do these variables impact democracy satisfaction? Also, how opportunities for participation and social interaction vary from community to community could be assessed. The capacity of various communities to commit to carry out certain tasks and the delivery of certain services, may also vary depending on the levels of satisfaction the citizens feel with the way that democracy works, which affects meaningful decision making.

Spatial class differences also warrant investigation. The increase in the number of gated communities, and effect of *the new geography of class* as proposed by Florida (2002) where some communities have a concentration of the creative class, while others are populated by working class and service class people, pose an area of concern for participatory democracy. Yet another area for contemporary research is religion and democracy satisfaction, particularly the role of faith-based initiatives in communities with a high concentration of minorities.

#### **7.4 Limitations of the Study**

This research has a few drawbacks relating to data availability that ultimately limited the rigor of aspects of the statistical testing of my conceptual model. For example, the index of particularized trust would have been more keenly measured with data that more precisely ascertained trust among friends and family members.

The literature is replete with the idea that the chance an individual has to participate in political problem solving in local communities is often a function of his or her social status. The ANES data set for this study included individuals who lived in privately owned housing. Residents of publicly owned or subsidized housing were excluded are often among the poorest residents of communities. Thus, data were not available to test all the important dimensions that would signify the capacity constraint of inequality in the development of social capital and civic participation. In the future, ANES could consider including residents of publicly owned housing in the sample population.

Although issues surrounding the negative face of social capital are reasonably important in terms of the inherent problems they pose for effective participatory democracy. Not much work has been done in this area.<sup>1</sup> Alternative views on social capital may lead to alternative findings. It would have been insightful therefore, to introduce and develop the Weberian concept of social closure in the light of the creation of “bad social capital” and examine how this may impact democracy satisfaction. However, due to data limitations, by virtue of the fact that social class was self reported and under reported, this critical analysis was not developed in this dissertation.

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars such as Berman (1982), Portes and Landolt (1996), Durlauf (1999) and Putnam (2000) have underscored some negative aspects of social capital. <sup>1</sup> Portes (1998) presents two reasons for emphasizing the negative side of social capital. One is to avoid a tendency to present community networks, social capital, and collective sanctions as un-mixed blessings and a second is to keep analyses within the bounds of serious sociological analysis rather than as moralizing statements.

There are indications of negative normative associations as well as positive ones. Some social associations symbolize the “negative side” of social capital and have deleterious repercussions for democratic processes. Calling attention to the negative side of social capital, Bourdieu (1986) argues that when group members control who join the group, this leads to the exclusion of certain individuals. Coleman recognizes potential negative manifestations of social capital when he warns, “a given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others” (1988a: S98).

Finally, even with these limitations this dissertation points to the scope for local level analyses through the collection of primary social capital data. Such local studies should deliberately dissect more precise and ideal measures of trust and civic engagement, and incorporate measures of social class, religiosity, tolerance and social closure. Research opportunities exist to advance our understanding of the extent to which generalized trust (total trusters and general trusters) and particularized trust (particular trusters and skeptics) are pertinent factors explaining development efforts in local communities that are deficient in civic culture and participatory democracy.

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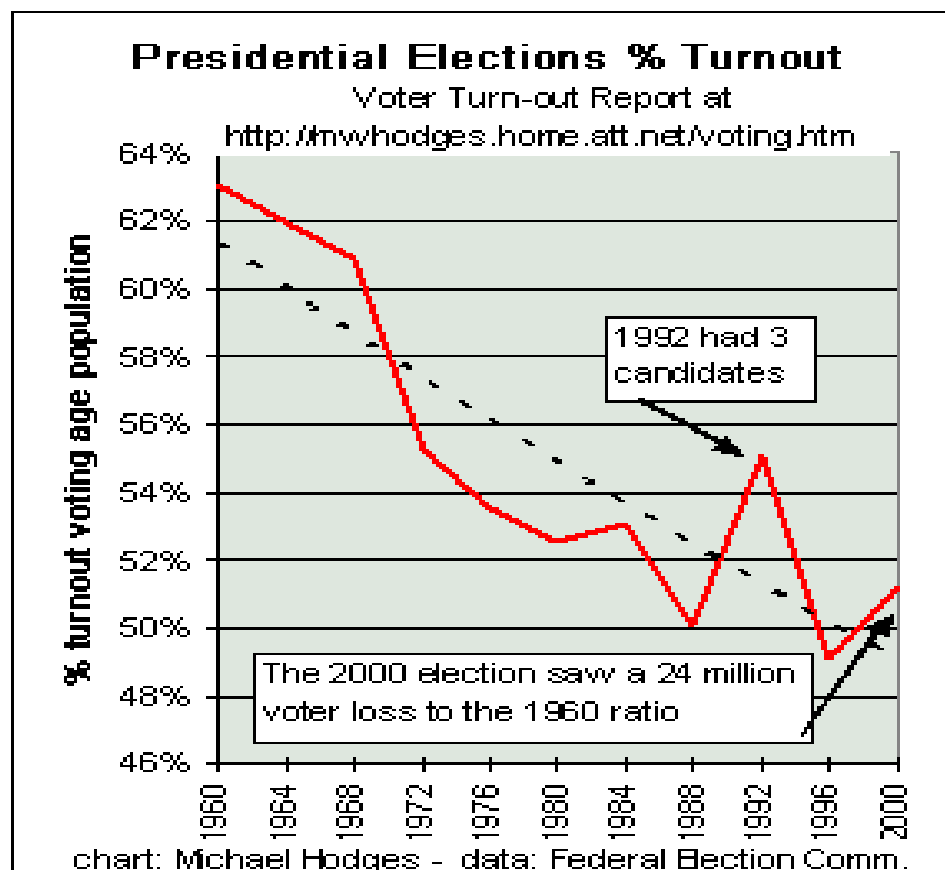
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APPENDIX I

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: PERCENTAGE TURNOUT





Source: Grandfather Economic Report Series

<http://mwhodges.home.att.net/voting.htm#trend> (retrieved: 10. 11. 05)