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Questioning the Merits of the Self-Expression Syndrome

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Congruency Theory Revisited

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Abstract

This thesis provides a critical account of Inglehart's and Welzel's (2005) concept of the self-expression syndrome. In their variant of Modernization Theory, this increasing orientation to a broadening of human choice is the driving force for democratization. A massive body of cross-national evidence has been provided, linking high levels of these emancipative values with democratic performance. It is argued here that the explanatory power of self-expression values may be a catch-up effect and that an ever more emancipative culture may eventually become detrimental to (representative) democratic performance. Congruency theory is invoked to investigate how the self-expression syndrome corresponds to the input and output aspects of representative polities. Some tentative empirical findings from the World Values Surveys indicate that highly self-expressive individuals are more likely to participate in unconventional activities as well as in voluntary associations than others and that they are not substantially less likely than others to endorse political trade-offs. They are furthermore found to be somewhat more likely to engage in some forms of civic defection. Methodological issues, suggestions for further research and policy implications are discussed.

Introduction

The challenge posed by celebrity social scientist Robert Putnam and his associates (1993) of “How to make democracy work?” (and how to make it work better) stands to this day. Responses vary widely; including, amongst others, those stressing the importance of socio-economic development or legal-institutional setup for democratic performance. Ever since Almond’s and Verba’s (1963) seminal study on “The Civic Culture” mass beliefs as explanatory variables have also commanded much scholarly attention.

A recent contribution in this vein comes from Inglehart and Welzel (2005) who put value orientations center stage in their *Human Development* variant of Modernization Theory. Based on a massive body of empirical evidence, they argue that the “underlying theme of this process (of democratization) is the broadening of human choice” (2005: 2). They present strong cross-national findings, suggesting emancipative values and their socioeconomic correlates as the driving force in the expansion of democratic rule.

The change from survival to self-expression values reflects the development towards what is often referred to as postmodernity, the transition which is typically undergone only when a society has accumulated so many resources (typically through rational industrialization) as to achieve unprecedented levels of (distributed) affluence. Self-expression values emerge in societies in which survival can be taken for granted. Rather than mere physical security, “subjective well-being, self-expression and quality of life” (World Values Surveys 2006) are valued. The self-expression syndrome is more than just a continuation of rationalization and secularization – when modernity is

achieved, human development, according to Inglehart and Welzel (2005), moves into a different direction, transcending the old contrast. Indicators of the self-expression syndrome include: liberty aspirations, justification of homosexuality, willingness to sign petitions, high life satisfaction and interpersonal trust. Low or negative scores on these indicators reflect a survival-oriented mindset.

The following paper provides a critical review of the merits and demerits of emancipative value change for representative democratic systems and aims to provide some qualifications. It is argued that as levels of emancipative values in postindustrial societies rise further, an unchecked cherishing of human choice may be detrimental to fruitful political cooperation systems. It thereby appears possible that the strong empirical support in cross-national analyses on which Inglehart and Welzel base their argument is but a catch-up effect of emancipative values as nations transition from industrial to postindustrial societies. The self-expression syndrome would then best be understood not as a sufficient, but as a necessary condition for democracy that needs to be held in check and complemented by other orientations to maintain democratic performance amongst the newly emerging highly emancipated citizenries.

Inglehart and Welzel themselves point out that cultural change (and its implications) need not be a linear process (2005: 20): it is accordingly hypothesized here that at high levels of emancipative values, the process takes yet another bend and turns against democratic performance. The research question discussed here is normatively inspired by Congruency Theory and a deliberative model of democracy.

As an empirical investigation of the matter proved difficult and possibly premature, I concentrate in this paper on the conceptual reservations

against the self-expression syndrome. I present some tentative, largely descriptive empirical tests for the claims made below. The paper concludes with a methodological discussion and some suggestions for further research and policy implications.

Theoretical Background

Conceptual Criticism: Congruency Theory Revisited

When Almond and Verba first stressed the importance of mass beliefs for democratic performance, they argued that any participatory political system required a political culture consistent with the institutions it is made up of, more specifically, an explicit affirmative orientation on the side of the citizens towards “both the input and output aspects of the political system” (1963: 18). It is obvious from their work that Almond and Verba refer with this *congruency* not just to lip-service to democratic procedures, but rather to a deep-rooted understanding and approval of the substantive logic of democratic rule. I will outline in the following how the postindustrial rise in emancipative values - the *self-expression syndrome* (Inglehart & Welzel 2005) - may be incompatible with this requirement for *congruency* between the political system and the orientations of its citizens.

On the input side, democratic rule requires – at least some – citizens to conceive of, debate on and decide upon competing options¹. It should

¹ While compulsory voting clearly is a contested issue, a general inclusiveness certainly is a widely shared democratic ideal.

go without saying that these options need to be internally coherent and generally possible to implement. In ever more complex societies, where decision makers may frequently encounter trade-offs between equally desirable goals, these options must also specify the degree to which one goal is favored over the other: in this respect, only “either-or” decisions are *political* decisions when no “as-well-as” is possible (Beck et al. 1994). Examples include: global warming vs. nuclear power, human rights protection vs. pacifism or various issues concerning the reform of the welfare state.

In representative systems, citizens are furthermore required to delegate some of these decisions to members of parliament.

On the output side, democratic *rule*, for once, requires the acceptance of democratically reached, collectively binding, typically *majority* decisions.

These limitations essentially reflect what Almond and Verba (1963: 2) have stressed in their description of modern social organization as a mixture of “rationality and authority”.

At face value, the self-expression syndrome, stressing above all the broadening of human choice, includes no explicit endorsement of the limitations of either the input or the output side to the democratic process. Welzel (2005a) in fact explicitly finds that rising emancipative values indeed cause representative democracy to loose support as individuals desire more choices for themselves². But even leaving aside the limitations of parliamentary democracies for now, it appears worthy

² It is acknowledged that additionally, part of the loss of support for representative systems may be due to the inadequacy of party systems towards changing value orientations.

to question whether considering these limitations, an unconditional stress on increasing human choice alone really is an adequate approach to democratic rule. From Inglehart's and Welzel's argument it does not appear entirely unreasonable to assume that at some level of emancipative values, citizens will not only have overcome illegitimate restrictions of human choice, but may be increasingly reluctant to endorse *any* limitations to their emancipation, be that real-life constraints in political decision-making or the binding nature of democratic rule.

It is possible that societies dominated by highly emancipated people – taking things to the extreme – face dangers of political fragmentation and paralysis. These citizens may, because of their anti-authoritative outlook, display less civicism as they are less cooperative towards society as a whole and show less trust in its institutions.

At this point, it may be adequate to point out I do not mean to equate emancipative value change with a trend to increased egoism, as others have done. The self-expression syndrome may very well be a primarily *humanistic* project as Inglehart and Welzel caution us (2005: 144). Also, I do not share the gloomy – and simplified – perspective of some conservative critics who fear that increasing (emancipated) political demands will overburden the political system. Rather, I wish to draw attention to the possibility that an unlimited cherishing of human choice may overburden citizens and paralyze the democratic process.

The proponents of the self-expression syndrome argue that their emancipative logic entails an “enlightened understanding” (Putnam 2000) or “rational sense of reciprocity” (Rawls 1993). It is assumed that the appreciation of liberty causes them to show great respect for the liberty of others, too (Welzel 2002a: 321). Surely – as pointed out in the above – the emphasis on the broadening of human choice that is

reflected in emancipative values must not be mistaken for egoism and it is safe to assume that highly self-expressive individuals, not the least because of their high interpersonal trust, will generally be benevolent towards other citizens and accord emancipation from constraint a universal validity. What remains deeply questionable to me, however, is whether their focus on increasing human choice will allow them to recognize the rights of their fellow citizens in institutionally and impersonally issued constraints and cause them to adhere to, for instance, tax legislation. Simply put, the question stands whether the self-expression syndrome would not, in its opposition to authority and constraint, render citizens susceptible to free riding. It is not self-evident that the logic of mutual human exchange will work, even when this exchange is mediated through abstract, necessarily constraining institutions (such as taxation) that are centerpiece to highly differentiated societies.

Empirical Analysis – An Approximation

The most straightforward empirical test for the demerits of high levels of emancipative values for democratic performance would naturally be to follow Inglehart's and Welzel's example and to compare democratic performance over different levels of self-expression values at the aggregate (country) level. As democratic performance is an aggregate phenomenon, this clearly would be the ideal strategy superior to an investigation of individual-level relationships. There are however several reasons, why this – at least for the time being – is not a feasible approach.

For once, the number of countries with sufficiently high self-expression scores, is relatively limited, decreasing the chances for reliable and significant test results. Moreover, the variance in democratic performance between these countries is rather small, and subject to manifold intervening variables such as path-dependent institutional traditions that may render the relationship invisible. In general, considering the large within-country variation in emancipative values, it appears questionable whether their demerits at high levels could already have translated to and be discernible at the aggregate level.

I will therefore investigate the claims made here by means of three proxy concepts at the individual level: type of political participation, willingness to accept political trade-offs (addressing the input side of the political process) and acceptance of civic defection (addressing the output side). Not only should relationships between emancipative values and these concepts be easier to detect, but a discussion of them should also contribute to a refined critique of the democratic implications of the self-expression syndrome. Despite the fact that democracy is an aggregate phenomenon, political participation, acceptance of trade-offs and civic defection are some of those key phenomena at the individual level that moderate the micro-to-macro transition that is reflected in the input processes and the opposite transition of the output processes (Teorell & Hadenius 2006: 104).

To test the association between emancipative values and the three proxy concepts means of the respective concepts (see operationalization below) are compared over deciles of self-expression values^{3,4}. All

³ All individuals were categorized in deciles over the entire scale of self-expression values, no matter whether all values were actually present or not. The categorization into deciles is thereby independent from the distribution of self-expression values in

observed differences are significant, unless reported otherwise. Respective tests are included in the appendix⁵.

Data Collection & Method

The analyses presented here are based on a sub-sample of the current wave of the World Values Surveys⁶ (field time: 2005-2006).

It follows from the above argument on congruency between the political system and political culture that only democratic countries can be included in testing the possible negative effects of emancipative values on democratic performance: in partially or undemocratic regimes, there is no coherence in any case and any emancipative values may be regarded

the respective population. With this procedure we follow Welzel's suggestion (Chris Welzel 2007-02-28, personal communication).

⁴ It is acknowledged that from a methodological point of view, categorizations are somewhat problematic, as they tend to alter the variance of the original distribution. A test leveraging the full variance of the continuous independent variable (self-expression values) that satisfied the model assumptions was however not readily available. Most importantly, the test had to allow for a non-linear association between the variables, as is outlined in the above. The mean comparison over the deciles of the independent variable was therefore chosen as the most robust, non-linear test with the least demanding model assumptions.

⁵ As normality over the different levels of the independent variable (self-expression values) could not be assumed, Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed for each of the tested relationships.

⁶ The dataset used here was kindly provided by Dr. Chris Welzel, member of the directory board of the World Values Survey Association. At the time of these analyses, the integrated dataset was not yet complete and included only a sub-sample of all the countries that are part of the current wave. As recency of fieldwork is of utmost importance for this investigation, I have opted for data from the yet incomplete instead of any of the older, completed waves.

as justifiable for the purpose of regime change. The sample was therefore further limited to only post-industrial societies with a high score on Inglehart's and Welzel's (2006) measure of effective democracy^{7,8}.

The World Values Surveys is a global research project conducted by an international network of social scientists, the World Values Surveys Association (WVSA), since 1981 to investigate socio-political and cultural change⁹. The detailed questionnaires are administered in face-to-face interviews to national samples of 1000 to 3500 interviewees, in a total of 82 countries, representing 85% of the world's population in its last wave (2000)¹⁰. The samples are representative of their respective societies with regards to several economic, political, religious, and cultural demographics. The resulting data enable the so far most encompassing comparison of mass values and beliefs influencing social and political life. The project is locally funded. Datasets are available for download free of charge.

Self-expression Values & Two Types of Political Participation

A change from conventional modes of (political) participation and associational membership to unconventional forms has been analyzed as

⁷ Included are: France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, USA, Japan, Australia, Sweden, Finland, New Zealand, and Andorra.

⁸ Inglehart and Welzel define effective democracy as formal democracy graded by some measure of elite-integrity. The measure combines Freedom House rankings of civil liberties and political rights with a "control of corruption" score from the World Bank.

⁹ All of the below information about the World Value Survey has been retrieved from its website at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org> or the sourcebook (2005).

¹⁰ The current 2005 wave is not yet completed as noted in the above; respective data is not yet available.

one central reflection of value change in general and of the self-expression syndrome in particular in much of the related body of literature (Welzel 2002b).

Under conventional modes of participation are subsumed here membership in political parties and/or trade unions, both of which are traditional political actors in many liberal democracies. Depending on their topical area, two kinds of voluntary associations are differentiated: one concerning recreational or educational activities, the other humanitarian, environmental or charity issues¹¹. It is hypothesized that these two strands of associations may be differently affected by emancipative value change, as the latter of them closely approximates the paradigm of New Social Movements, which as is argued in the below is intimately tied to self-expressive aspirations (see below; Offe 1984). Unconventional participation, following Welzel and associates (2004) includes elite-challenging activities such as lawful demonstrations, boycotts and petitioning. Hypotheses are developed for each of these four types.

Associational membership has traditionally received much praise in the literature for its civicness. Communitarian thinker Alexis de Tocqueville (as cited in Putnam et al. 1993) suggested that civic citizens need to be educated in voluntary associations or “schools of democracy” as he put it. Repeated diagnosis of decline in associational membership (ibid.) has therefore caused substantial concern, much of which was relieved by the classic finding from the seminal Political Action Study, stating that rising levels of unconventional participation may be coinciding with, but do

¹¹ Four other types of associations included in the current wave of the World Values Survey have been discarded here for conceptual reasons.

not go at the expense of, conventional participation (Barnes & Kaase 1979).

Barnes' and Kaase's results may have been overstated and caused researchers to adopt an inadequately uncritical perspective on the changing patterns of political participation and associational membership. Forms of unconventional participation systematically differ in their political logic from conventional modes of participation and associational life in at least four ways that are of relevance for the representative process.

For once, the issues that are represented in unconventional forms of participation are different from those of other modes. Typically, these organizations make protest demands, following a negative logic ("against", "stop" ...) and they maintain "at best rudimentary (...) platforms" (Offe 1985: 829). Their claims are not part of an encompassing agenda, but are non-negotiable single issues. Consequently, unconventional modes of participation do not have to face trade-offs between goods, and are structurally incapable of bargaining, compromise and issue-linkages. While this is an effective strategy to mobilize people and to communicate concerns, it is an incentive structure that distorts the political competition at the expense of political parties, possibly contributing to their legitimacy deficit. Additionally it is a political logic that is not in line with the limitations to the input aspects of democratic governance as stated above. I therefore believe it may be a lot too simple to say that merely the repertoire of political participation is changing (Welzel 2002b).

Secondly, the quality of interaction in unconventional forms of participation cannot be equated with the cooperative experience of associational membership. Most theorists of social capital have cherished

specifically the contributions of voluntary associations as these would uniquely foster a spirit of cooperation and trust – even among strangers (see, for instance, Fung 2003; Putnam et al. 1993). As Putnam (1993) puts it: “Taking part in a choral society or a bird-watching club can teach self-discipline and an appreciation for the joys (and the difficulties) of successful collaboration”. It is hard to conceive of unconventional political participation – which by definition is a loosely-bound, ad-hoc activity – that would require comparably meaningful and comprehensive cooperation as is required by many voluntary associations on a regular basis. Fung (2003: 517) argues that the Toquevillian ideal of cooperation “in the pursuit of common goals” cannot be attained in unconventional participation its “scale, value pluralism, time constraints and complexity” but only in associational life. Amongst others, he lists respect for the rule of law as a civic virtues of secondary associations and Putnam (2000: 136-137) finds that members of associations “comply more fully with their tax obligations” – something that from a merely conceptual point of view is incompatible with the self-expression syndrome, which tends to negate authority and restriction of human choice. On these grounds Welzel’s (2002b: 30) assumption that social movements can be *Schools of Democracy* just like voluntary associations appears problematic.

Thirdly, also from the point of view of congruency theory, associational membership differs substantially from unconventional modes of participation. After all, associations serve as “large free schools” for democracy only if, and partly because, they function democratically in their internal processes (Diamond 1999). Unconventional modes of participation, particularly new social movements, have uniformly been described as anti-hierarchical, informal (Stolle & Hooghe 2005: 159; Offe 1985) and networked (Castells 2004) both of which, albeit counter-intuitively, clearly are not modes of democratic organization. Networks,

being comprised of horizontally organized “autonomous interconnected nodes” (Castells 2004: 3) can by definition not be subject to social control. Democratic rule however is always about collectively binding decisions. Offe (1985: 829) goes as far as saying that the most prominent values in New Social Movements “are autonomy and identity (with their organizational correlates such as decentralization, self-government and self-help) and opposition to manipulation, control, dependence, bureaucratization, regulation, etc”. By their organizational incentives and their logic of their claims, New Social Movements are “often involved in zero-sum politics, which are the antithesis of compromise and moderation”¹² (Kaase & Newton 1995: 27)

Lastly, another significant difference between unconventional participation and voluntary associations lies in the role the latter can play in deliberation; according to Medearis (2005), associations are also schooling citizens in the ideal of *Communicative Action* (Habermas 1984): they are forums for a non-violent discourse, in the only coercion is exerted by the rationality of the better more rational argument. Clearly, considering the nature of claims described as typical for unconventional forms of participation in the above is not easily compatible with a notion of non-violent communication.

To sum up, Stolle & Hooghe (2005: 166) may be right that “traditional associations and participatory mechanisms are not *irreplaceable* with regard to their socialization function”. But when they are to be replaced by

¹² It is acknowledged that in the past, New Social Movements have often put on the agenda issues that were subsequently integrated into the platforms of conventional parties and gave birth to new – typically Green – parties in various countries (Medearis 2005: 55).

another form of participation this mode has to be similarly congruent with the political system and teach its citizens a similar political logic. I believe that much of the optimistic works on unconventional participation have not yet adequately addressed the potential mismatch between the political system and the changing political structure of unconventional participation that I have outlined in the above.

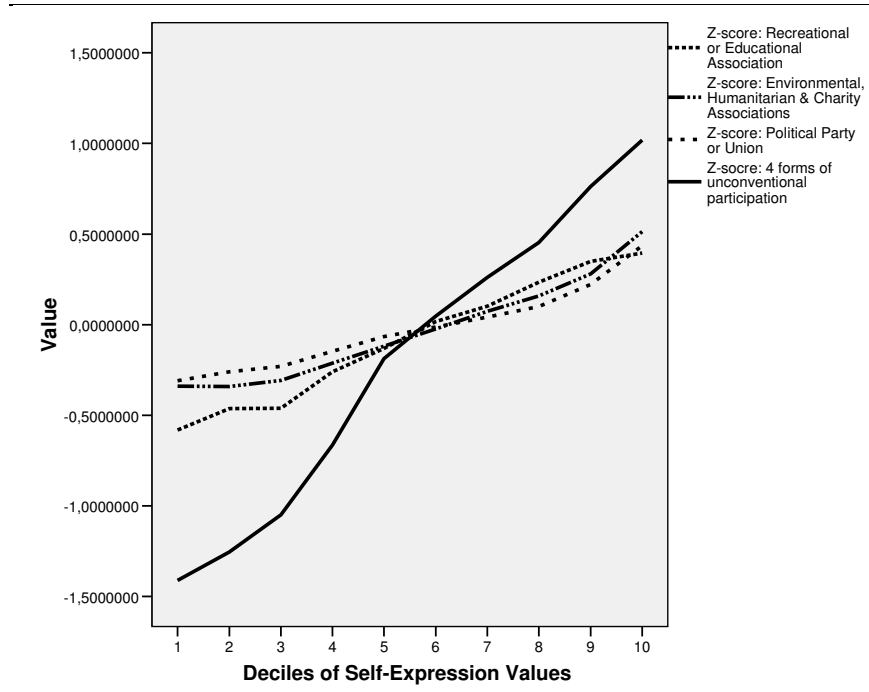
Following from this argumentation, it is hypothesized that:

- (1) Highly self-expressive individuals are less likely to be a member of recreational / educational associations and/or political parties / unions than
 - (a) mildly self-expressive individuals (U-shaped non-linear relationship)
 - (b) to be a member of another associationas the underlying political logic of these forms of involvement is incompatible with an unchecked stress on emancipation.

- (2) Highly self-expressive individuals are more likely to be a member of environmental / humanitarian associations and/or participate in unconventional forms of involvement than
 - (a) mildly self-expressive individuals
 - (b) to be a member of another associationas these modes provide a good fit with their emancipative orientations.

Figure 01: Three forms of associational membership and (four) forms of unconventional participation over different levels of self-expression values¹³.

N= 13919, sample-wide standardized scores. Higher scores (in standard deviations) indicate higher likelihood for membership or unconventional participation, respectively¹⁴.



Clearly, the data do not offer support for the most daring hypothesis 1a): highly self-expressive individuals are *not* less likely than mildly self-expressive individuals to be a member of recreational / educational

¹³ Question wording: “(...) For each one, could you tell me whether you are an active member (2), an inactive member (1) or not a member of that type of organization?”; “Have you / would you sign a petition / joining in boycotts / attending in peaceful demonstrations / other? – (1) have done; (2) would do; (3) would never do.”

¹⁴ The four items on unconventional participation have been recoded accordingly.

associations or political parties / unions. The above visualization disconfirms the hypothesis of a catch-up effect of emancipative values on political activity. By contrast, Welzel and his associates (2005: 128) still appear to be right that there is in fact no general pattern of decline in membership in voluntary associations. Also there is no trade-off between unconventional participation and associational membership as found by Welzel and his associates (ibid.: 140)

These findings are incompatible with first indications for a trade-off between the two forms of participation comes from Klein (2006: 303) who found that non-violent civil disobedience is negatively correlated to conventional political participation in young Germans aged 18 to 29.

All other hypotheses are confirmed, but only with regard to the mean differences towards unconventional participation. Highly self-expressive individuals are substantially more likely to participate in unconventional participation than other individuals.

Differences between the remaining forms of participation remain marginally small to the degree that they are negligible.

Self-expression Values & Political Trade-offs

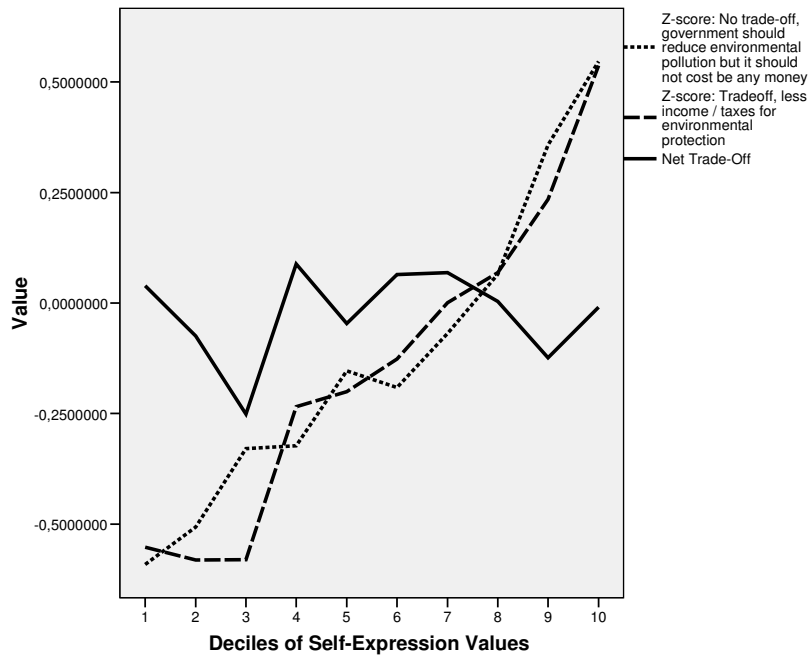
Following from the above discussion, it will not be tested whether the self-expression syndrome in fact causes citizens to be less willing to endorse political trade-offs. Willingness to endorse a political trade-off is as operationalized as the propensity of participants who favor environmental protection, even when material disadvantages (taxes, lower income) are associated.

It is hypothesized that:

- (1) Highly self-expressive individuals are less likely to accept a trade-off between environmental protection and material than mildly self-expressive individuals (U-shaped non-linear relationship).
- (2) Highly self-expressive individuals are less likely to favor a trade-off than no trade-off.

Figure 02: Willingness to enter accept political trade-offs concerning environmental protection over different levels of self-expression values¹⁵.

N= 7406¹⁶, sample-wide standardized scores. Higher scores (in standard deviations) indicate higher likelihood to endorse the respective option¹⁷.



¹⁵ Question wording: “I would agree to an increase in taxes if the extra money were used to prevent environmental pollution”; “The Government should reduce environmental pollution, but it should not cost me any money”; “I would give part of my income if I were certain that the money would be used to prevent environmental pollution”: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) strongly disagree, (4) strongly disagree.

¹⁶ In this analysis, only those participants (53%) who ranked environmental issues more important than economic growth were included. It is argued that only these participants were sufficiently concerned about environmental issues to potentially accept a trade-off.

¹⁷ Items have been recoded and added accordingly.

The mean comparison above provides no support for hypothesis 1. In fact, the opposite holds true; self-expression values are continuously associated with both higher endorsement for the trade-off and the non-trade-off in favor of environmental protection. The differences between the two options are marginally small over all levels of self-expression values. There is at best, a slight tendency, visualized by the *net propensity for trade-off* for highly self-expressive individuals to favor the no-trade-off solution over its costly alternative.

While this finding does not provide positive support for the hypothesis that the self-expression syndrome is not compatible with trade-offs or institutionally constrained altruism, it is worthy to note that the mean comparison also does not indicate an opposite finding. Highly self-expressive individuals are *not* as may appear consequential from the notion of generalized reciprocity and enlightened rationality less likely to abandon irrational no-trade-offs options in their political preferences than mildly or hardly self-expressive individuals.

Self-expression Values & Civic Defection

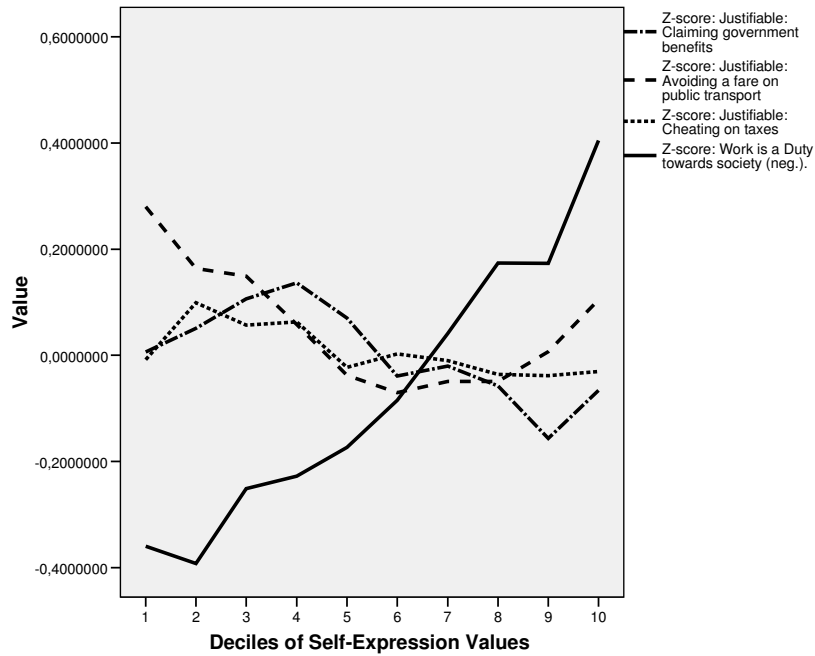
Lastly, it will be investigated whether the self-expression syndrome causes citizens to be less trustworthy, less willing to cooperate (through institutional constraint) and less law-abiding. This concept of *Civic Defection* is operationalized as the likelihood to approve of tax and benefit cheating, free-riding on public transport and the understanding of work as a duty towards society. Proponents of emancipative value change might respond to this operationalization that it is confounded by respect for authority. I maintain that the four items included in this test are in fact not about authority in itself, but reflect precisely the problem of cooperation that is channeled through necessarily coercive and abstract institutions. *Civic defection* provides the Litmus test for Welzel's (2002) assumption that the cherishing of human choice in self-expressive individuals causes them to accord the same privileges to their fellow citizens, even when this exchange happens only in a mediated way.

Following from the above, it is thereby hypothesized that:

- (1) Highly self-expressive individuals are more likely to approve of civic defection than mildly or hardly self-expressive individuals.
- (2) Highly self-expressive individuals are less likely to consider work as duty towards society than mildly or hardly self-expressive individuals.

Figure 03: Four forms of civic defection over different levels of self-expression values.¹⁸

N= 13919, sample-wide standardized scores. Higher scores (in standard deviations) indicate higher likelihood to approve of the respective behavior. Higher scores on the “work as duty”-item indicate a stronger rejection of the notion.



The above mean comparison provides some support for the notion that self-expressive individuals are more likely to approve of civic defection

¹⁸ Question wording: “Please specify for each of the following statements how strongly you agree or disagree with it! (...)”. “Work is a duty towards society: Strongly agree (1); agree (2); neither (3); disagree (4); strongly disagree (5)”.

“Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified or something in between (...). Never justifiable (1) ... - ... - Always justifiable (10)”.

with regard to illegitimately claiming government benefits and even more clearly concerning free-riding on public transport. Mean differences remain rather small, though (0,2 SDs). With regard to both variables, there is some support for the hypothesized non-linear U-shaped relationship between emancipative value orientations and civic defections.

The above mean comparison also provides strong support for the notion that work is increasingly not regarded as a duty towards society over rising levels of emancipation.

Discussion

Summary of Findings & Suggestions for Further Research

The above empirical investigation provides little support for the claims initially made. Only with regard to the understanding of work as a duty towards society, and, with some qualifications, two other indicators of civic defection, can I present some support for my thesis.

These (largely) non-findings notwithstanding, I find a word of methodological caution in order at this point: considering the quality of the empirical evidence presented here, I maintain, that the scarce quantitative support for the abovementioned arguments does not render them irrelevant.

Rather, I see a need for further, more thoroughly operationalized empirical research, investigating the merits and demerits of emancipative value change in terms of its congruency to the representative policy and its input and output aspects. In particular, future empirical projects should address the following shortcomings of this investigation:

- Future empirical investigations should include measures that are less susceptible to “lip-service” demand effects. To analyze the effects of emancipative value change on the logic of political issues and alternatives, researchers should employ robust “trade-off” items that present interviewees with realistically complex and ambiguous choices.
- In this context, researchers may find it helpful to use ranking rather than rating formats in their survey instruments. While ranking batteries surely have their own methodological pitfalls such as ipsativity (for a review see Inglehart & Klingemann 1977, 1996; Bürklin et al. 1994), they provide a powerful tool against demand effects and meaningless lip-service responses. Klingemann and Inglehart (1996: 323) are right when they argue that “priorities are not an artifact of survey research. They exist in the real world and minds of the people”. It has become obvious in the highly controversial (and repetitive) ranking-vs.-rating debate that this issue is one that is intricately intertwined with the substantive perspective taken on the social world. Ranking and rating simply measure different aspects of it and it may just be so that ranking, as a format, is inadequate to grasp the claims made here.
- Future research should especially focus on young people as these may, lifecycle-effects notwithstanding, be the best seismograph for the consequences of value change, as for instance Klein (2006) has argued.

Outlook & Policy Implications

Despite all the qualifications that I have raised here, I wholeheartedly agree with Welzel (2005a: 11) that emancipatory tendencies have the capacity to revitalize our democracies through new forms of participation, new kinds of issues and – maybe most importantly – a constant and increasing pressure to change and further develop our democratic systems. I hope that it has become clear from my critical discussion of the self-expression syndrome that I share an appreciation for a broadening of human choice and I am opposed to those who argue along the lines of conservative analysts of the 1970s (such as Huntington, cited in Offe 1985) who mistakenly take increasing citizen demands as a threat to (democratic) rule and wish to isolate the institutional policy from it.

My point with this paper is, that to fully realize the democratic potential of emancipative value change, it needs to be kept in check by carefully designed institutions that ensure a congruent match between the political system and the demands towards its input and output aspects. Even in postindustrial society, electorates cannot have the cake and eat it.

As Dalton (2002: xiv) amply puts it: “These changes (...) create new opportunities to expand the democratic process, as well as new risks”. The opportunities are clear. The risks lie in a distorted political competition, in which unrealistic claims are represented and in which understanding for constraints and willingness to cooperate through institutions is dwindling. Most importantly, democrats must not resignate in the face of the new challenges and emerging dysfunctionalities. I therefore disagree with Dalton and others who posit democratic participation as an end in itself without any checks or qualification. Their explicit willingness to “partially sacrifice (...)

efficiency (...) to ensure a more important goal – popular control of elites” (Dalton 2002: 257) is the product of a fundamental misunderstanding concerning the relation between democratic processes and policies. In essence, efficiency *is* a democratic concept. Not only in economic terms but also in the political process, the efficiency of our actions determine what benefits can be distributed to the citizenry.

Through clever institutional design – most importantly the urgent implementation of plebiscites – postindustrial democracies will be able to leverage the benefits of a rejuvenated but sustainable political process. This optimism, again, I share with Dalton (2002: xiv): “the ability to adapt is what gives democracy its strength”.

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Appendix

Appendix 01: Kruskal-Wallis for deciles of self-expression values vs. forms of (political) participation.

Ranks

	Deciles of	N	Mean Rank
Recreational or Educational Association	1,00	212	5120,96
	2,00	492	5629,51
	3,00	1123	5660,93
	4,00	1521	6515,01
	5,00	2358	7102,03
	6,00	2577	7702,92
	7,00	2589	8049,56
	8,00	2264	8628,67
	9,00	1403	8983,84
	10,00	710	9260,17
	Total	15249	
Environmental, Humanitarian & Charity Associations	1,00	212	6360,88
	2,00	488	6415,08
	3,00	1119	6522,37
	4,00	1527	6780,39
	5,00	2353	7190,02
	6,00	2559	7528,38
	7,00	2591	7883,26
	8,00	2256	8159,20
	9,00	1400	8578,21
	10,00	713	9319,31
	Total	15218	
Political Party and Union	1,00	211	6355,51
	2,00	488	6711,04
	3,00	1116	6769,37
	4,00	1523	7047,11
	5,00	2351	7355,28
	6,00	2558	7506,46
	7,00	2583	7726,35
	8,00	2262	7893,67
	9,00	1402	8467,10
	10,00	709	9157,32
	Total	15203	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Recreational or Educational Association	Environment al, Humanitaria n & Charity Associations	Political Party and Union
Chi-Square	1102,225	744,081	428,839
df	9	9	9
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,000	,000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Deciles of Self-Expression Values

Appendix 02: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for three items on a trade-off between income/taxes and environmental protection.

Correlations

		part of income for environment	higher taxes for environment	Government should reduce environmental pollution
part of income for environment	Pearson Correlation	1	,689**	,338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000
	N	10142	9972	9845
higher taxes for environment	Pearson Correlation	,689**	1	,388**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000
	N	9972	10244	9937
Government should reduce environmental pollution but it should not cost me any money	Pearson Correlation	,338**	,388**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	
	N	9845	9937	10272

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 03: Kruskal-Wallis for deciles of self-expression values vs. willingness to enter a trade-off between income / taxes and environmental protection.

Ranks

	Deciles of	N	Mean Rank
Zscore: Government should reduce environmental pollution	1,00	13	1870,85
	2,00	50	1946,37
	3,00	160	2270,22
	4,00	308	2287,58
	5,00	715	2548,73
	6,00	960	2494,52
	7,00	1076	2673,98
	8,00	1060	2875,61
	9,00	789	3322,64
	10,00	450	3606,96
	Total	5581	
Zscore: Higher taxes or lower income for environmental protection	1,00	13	1873,35
	2,00	50	2039,26
	3,00	151	2014,83
	4,00	303	2428,95
	5,00	708	2446,60
	6,00	956	2551,53
	7,00	1083	2777,61
	8,00	1062	2842,07
	9,00	778	3114,11
	10,00	439	3594,54
	Total	5543	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Zscore: Government should reduce environmental pollution	Zscore: Higher taxes or lower income for environmental protection
Chi-Square	358,809	290,680
df	9	9
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Deciles of Self-Expression Values

Appendix 04: Pearson's correlation for four indicators of civil defection.

Correlations

		Work is a duty towards society	Justifiable: claiming government benefits	Justifiable: avoiding a fare on public transport	Justifiable: cheating on taxes
Work is a duty towards society	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 9712	,095** ,000 9542	,149** ,000 9571	,127** ,000 9568
Justifiable: claiming government benefits	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,095** ,000 9542	1 15491	,473** ,000 15415	,404** ,000 15357
Justifiable: avoiding a fare on public transport	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,149** ,000 9571	,473** ,000 15415	1 15595	,519** ,000 15455
Justifiable: cheating on taxes	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,127** ,000 9568	,404** ,000 15357	,519** ,000 15455	1 15546

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 05: Kruskal-Wallis for deciles of self-expression values vs. four indicators of civil defection.

Ranks

	Deciles of	N	Mean Rank
Zscore: Justifiable: claiming government benefits	1,00	198	7580,78
	2,00	475	7885,72
	3,00	1096	7912,88
	4,00	1514	8082,40
	5,00	2369	7816,37
	6,00	2596	7530,83
	7,00	2610	7562,01
	8,00	2294	7481,89
	9,00	1412	7189,76
	10,00	713	7609,77
	Total	15277	
Zscore: Justifiable: avoiding a fare on public transport	1,00	204	8370,47
	2,00	488	8138,13
	3,00	1115	8077,79
	4,00	1533	7784,11
	5,00	2373	7414,18
	6,00	2608	7424,99
	7,00	2622	7527,61
	8,00	2301	7641,86
	9,00	1412	7946,57
	10,00	716	8432,97
	Total	15372	
Zscore: Justifiable: cheating on taxes	1,00	204	7439,86
	2,00	481	7919,80
	3,00	1104	7757,53
	4,00	1517	7749,11
	5,00	2372	7383,79
	6,00	2611	7716,41
	7,00	2617	7639,49
	8,00	2303	7648,59
	9,00	1405	7787,27
	10,00	715	7887,67
	Total	15329	
Zscore: Work is a duty towards society	1,00	33	3701,05
	2,00	129	3630,11
	3,00	378	4003,85
	4,00	771	4088,68
	5,00	1487	4280,56
	6,00	1715	4525,82
	7,00	1737	4796,13
	8,00	1603	5161,67
	9,00	1027	5129,15
	10,00	526	5675,36
	Total	9406	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Zscore: Justifiable: claiming government benefits	Zscore: Justifiable: avoiding a fare on public transport	Zscore: Justifiable: cheating on taxes	Zscore: Work is a duty towards society
Chi-Square	59,039	78,067	20,088	304,595
df	9	9	9	9
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,000	,017	,000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Deciles of Self-Expression Values