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## DEMOCRATIC VALUES: DYNAMICS OF SUPPORT

### **Democratic Consolidation and Stabilization**

Democratic transition scholars have sought to explain similarities and differences both within and between regions with regard to the emergence and growth of democratic regimes. The situation of former state socialist countries in East Central Europe, Southeast Europe, and the former Soviet Union (i.e., the so-called Fourth Wave of Democratization) poses a distinctive challenge due to the unique constellation of forces contributing to the dismantling of communist rule and the simultaneous political and economic changes that ensued. Compared with transitions of the Third Wave of democratization in Latin America and Southern Europe, in former state socialist countries, political leaders generally advocated severing ties with the old order, making a stark break with the previous regime (Bunce 2003). Scholars argue that the form democratization is taking in former state socialist societies differs remarkably from previous democratic transitions in Latin America and Southeastern Europe that constitute the Third Wave (Bunce 2003; Parrot 1997). Moreover, variation is apparent among the general public of different countries, as the changes have taken different trajectories in East Central Europe, Southeast Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

For democratic consolidation to occur, democratic institutions and practices are ingrained in the political culture and expressed in the democratic norms and values of the general public. Simply stated, when democracy is seen, by the public especially, as “the only game in town,” democratic consolidation has occurred (Linz and Stepan 1996). Yet, this process is complex, involving attitudinal and behavioral changes in addition to institutional or

constitutional changes, thus making it likely to be a lengthy process that takes years, decades, or even generations to fully realize.

Scholarship since the early to mid-1990s suggests that the trajectories of change in former communist/state socialist countries exhibit considerable variation. From similarities between the former state socialist countries that include institutional legacy and the timing and agenda of the transformation, substantial differences have emerged regarding the economic and political pathways to change (Bunce 2003). Not only has the sequencing of institutional development differed (e.g., economic changes in Hungary and Poland are cases in point), but the entrenchment of some democratic values and principles, as reflections of structural-level political changes, differs across social groups in many countries. From the initial euphoria regarding the change to a democratic political structure, citizens have expressed widely ranging views regarding how democracy is developing in their national setting. Poland's status as the first country to break with the communist regime produced considerable uncertainty and to some degree paved the way for others, lowering the risks of transition for other (former) members of the Soviet bloc. Coupled with the role of mass mobilization in toppling the previous regime, the shape of emerging democracy in Poland offers a unique case to explore individually (as well as in comparison with other emerging democracies), as democratic values may have a unique composition and distribution among the general public.

## **Previous Research on Democratic Values**

Prior to the 1990s, most research focused on single countries for analysis of democratic values, and, moreover, tended to focus on advanced industrial countries such as the United States, West Germany, and Britain. Studies of democratic values have recently broadened to encompass newly democratizing countries in East Central Europe, Southeast Europe, and the former Soviet Union (Dalton 1994; Evans and Whitefield 1995; Gibson, Duch, and Tedin 1992; Mishler and Rose 1999; Rose and Mishler 1994; Waldron-Moore 1999; Weil 1991; Whitefield and Evans 1995). Research has shown that widespread acceptance of democratic values is apparent in the United States, but that support may be weaker in other contexts, especially among citizens in emerging democracies in former state socialist countries.

In general, research suggests that democratic values are considered to be a prerequisite for a stable and effective democratic system. Abstract items gauging support for democracy broadly can provide important information

about generalized support for basic democratic principles, structures, and procedures (Finkel, Sigelman, and Humphries 1999). Yet, the manner in which democratic values have been conceptualized ranges widely, from single-item indicators gauging quite abstract views of democracy to survey items designed to capture more nuanced expressions of democratic values.

While the level of abstraction is important to consider in measuring democratic values, an equally salient issue is the influence that democratic longevity can have on espoused support for democracy. Yet, foundational studies of democratic values were completed in countries with long-standing democratic histories. Broad-ranging support could thus potentially be explained by the prior (i.e., historical) timing of democratic consolidation. In an established democracy, for example, distrust of the government, dissatisfaction with institutional performance, and/or opposition to national policy (as expressions of dissatisfaction) are viewed as a demand for democratic reform, not as opposition to democratic rule (Klingemann 1999; Mishler and Rose 1999). Thus, the novelty of transitions in former state socialist countries needs to be addressed alongside measurement concerns.

Research on democratic principles, norms, and values is important for the discussion of applied attitudes such as political tolerance and political behaviors like voting. At present, however, there is some uncertainty as to the prevalence of democratic attitudes in countries with less established democratic histories where democratic attitudes may not be as firmly entrenched among members of the general public. Exploring how democratic values are developing in nascent democracies thus offers substantial contributions to the literature.

## **Democratic Values in the Former State Socialist Context**

Research gauging views of democracy in the early years following the breakdown of state socialism between 1989 and 1991 suggested widespread support for some democratic principles, democratic orientations, democratic values, and general views of democracy (Gibson, Duch, and Tedin 1992; Rose and Mishler 1994; Waldron-Moore 1999; Weil 1991; Whitefield and Evans 1995). These results were somewhat surprising, and seemed to contradict the expectation that it takes time (i.e., years or even decades) for citizens to embrace democratic norms and principles. Yet, some assert that this initial support was likely inflated, magnified by extreme dissatisfaction with aspects of the previous regime across most of the region. Notions of

demonstration effects and a honeymoon period of initial widespread support for the democratic regime were advanced as explanations for this seeming anomaly (Finkel, Sigelman, and Humphries 1999).

However, endorsement of democratic values among citizens in former state socialist countries was largely selective. Citizens generally expressed support for competitive elections and the rights of individuals against the state, while widespread variation could be noted on other measures of democratic values (Finkel, Sigelman, and Humphries 1999). Of the eight publics explored, Poland ranked fifth, when averaged on all seven indicators<sup>1</sup> (above Estonia, Russia, and Ukraine, respectively). Upon closer inspection of the values for Poland's public, a mixed reaction to the current regime could be discerned. That is, Poles were critical of various aspects of democratic development, including current democratic practice and the extent to which government actions reflect the majority of citizens' views. Support was more mixed, however, with regard to citizen influence on the election of the government and whether voting matters in the grand scheme of things (Evans and Whitefield 1995). But generally, these patterns were similar across publics of the seven other former state socialist countries included in their analysis.

### ***Democratic Values in the Polish General Public***

Research gauging views of democracy in Poland in the early years following the breakdown of state socialism suggests widespread support for *some* aspects of democracy, but not necessarily for all measures of democratic principles, values, and norms. While democratic values were present among Poles, previous research demonstrated that they do not exactly replicate patterns noted in studies of more established democracies (i.e., the United States and advanced industrial countries) (Dalton 1994; Evans and Whitefield 1995; Michta 1997; Mishler and Rose 1999; Slomczynski and Shabad 2002). In general, a mixed reaction to the current regime was observed. That is, Poles were critical of various aspects of democratic development, including current

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<sup>1</sup> Question wording of items gauging support for democratic values are as follows: "The government acts for the benefit of the majority in society"; "Everyone has an influence on the election of the government"; "People like me have no say in what the government does"; "Elected officials don't care much what people like me think"; "On the whole, what governments do in this country reflects the wishes of ordinary people"; "There is no point in voting because the government can't make any difference"; and "How would you evaluate the actual practice of democracy here in (respondent's country) so far?"

democratic practice and the extent to which government actions reflect the majority of citizens' views. Support was more mixed, however, with regard to citizens' influence on the election of the government and the extent to which voting matters (Evans and Whitefield 1995).

Similarly, Michta (1997) argued that, overall, Poles seemed supportive of democracy as a political system, though citizens expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of the regime in power, particularly how the system was functioning. The proportion of Poles, for example, who considered democracy the best form of government steadily increased in the early 1990s (Michta 1997).<sup>2</sup> Yet, some stark differences remained in views of democracy across social categories, including age groups, income categories, and occupational groups, and between men and women (Michta 1997).

Slomczynski and Shabad (2002) contend that Poles were more supportive of some principles of democracy than others, including notions of minority rights, constitutionalism, and relying on negotiation and compromise to resolve political conflicts. Democratic principles showing more limited support include interest-group pluralism, competency of the masses to choose political representatives, universal suffrage, and mass media freedom. In addition the authors noted substantial polarization with regard to the right to protest and run for office, the necessity of a multiparty system, and that ordinary citizens were also to uphold the rule of law (Slomczynski and Shabad 2002). Moreover, differences in democratic orientations were especially pronounced between men and women (Oakes 2002).

Prior studies thus suggest that democratic values may be somewhat ambiguous in Poland as they are developing, and, further, that they may be developing unevenly across the general public. In established democracies, such dissent or debate over the applicability of abstract democratic values to concrete, everyday practices is not viewed as a challenge to the democratic system, but instead is seen as a healthy, functioning democratic political culture (Klingemann 1999; Mishler and Rose 1999). The question of how democratic values are taking shape in emerging democracies in the former state socialist context generally, and in Poland more specifically, is, at present, incomplete.

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<sup>2</sup> Though using different public opinion data, these results are similar to those noted in Mishler and Rose (1999). The authors note that between 1991 and 1995, support for the current regime in Poland experienced the greatest increase (relative to six other new democracies: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia), from 52 percent in 1991 to 76 percent in 1995 (Mishler and Rose 1999). Only the Czech Republic's citizenry expressed higher, sustained support for the current regime (71 percent in 1991 and 1992, 78 percent in 1993, and 77 percent in 1995) (Mishler and Rose 1999).

## *Research Hypotheses*

This research seeks to address the gap in the literature on how democratic values are taking shape in the former state socialist context by exploring the composition and sources of democratic values in Poland during a time of rapid social change. As a theoretical and methodological extension of previous scholarship, I employ structural equation modeling in an investigation that takes into account sociodemographic, political, and generational explanations of the emergence of democratic values.

Latent levels of democratic values are explored in relationship to three hypotheses. First, the cleavage hypothesis argues that notable differences remain among various social groups in the development of democratic values. Support for the cleavage hypothesis would be noted if sociodemographic and social structural indicators influence democratic values. Second, a political context hypothesis proposes that political orientations, especially interest in politics, views of the former regime, and views of the role of the state influence democratic values. Evidence in support of the political context hypothesis would be demonstrated if political orientations consistently influence democratic values over and above sociodemographic (i.e., cleavage) factors. Third, a generational hypothesis proposes that democratic values may be the result of experience with prior institutional legacies that resonate in the present context. If generational differences are apparent, then the influence of historical context cannot be ruled out as a factor in the development of democratic values in the former state socialist context. The results generally point to some support for each of the cleavage, political, and generational hypotheses with regard to how attitudes related to democratic governance and majoritarian rule are developing in Poland.

## **Data, Methods, and Measurement**

The data used in analyses presented here are from POLPAN, a panel data set of a national sample in Poland, consisting of 1,700 respondents who were interviewed in 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2003. In conjunction with various survey research organizations, researchers affiliated with the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences collected data from a representative sample of the Polish general public in five-year increments beginning in 1988, thus creating a longitudinal data set with four time points in the most recent wave. Survey respondents have been queried on a number of different attitudes and behaviors related to political and

economic views that encompass previous and current arrangements, employment-related experiences, key sociodemographics, and a variety of social attitudes. The analyses presented in this chapter focus on data from 1998 and 2003.

### *Dependent Variable*

The scale of democratic values created from a subset of questions in the POLPAN data set has two dimensions, democratic governance and belief in majoritarian rule. Exact question wording and frequencies of survey items from 1998 and 2003 can be found in Table 17.1 (presented later in the chapter). Democratic governance reflects institutional aspects of democratic orientation, including belief in the role of elections (scaled), rule of law, universal voting rights, and the importance of having more than one party in a political system. The prodemocratic response to each of these four questions is disagreement with the individual questionnaire items. Belief in majoritarian rule, the second dimension, incorporates aspects of negotiation crucial to the democratic process, including the role of compromise (scaled), majority rule, and the right to voice dissenting views. Agreement with each of the three survey items represents a prodemocratic orientation. Both democratic governance and belief in majoritarian rule represent latent levels of democratic values.<sup>3</sup> While these scales do not exactly replicate previous scales of democratic values,<sup>4</sup> they represent empirical extensions of a number of theoretical frameworks considered to have a long-standing influence in the field (Dahl 1971, 1989).

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<sup>3</sup> Results from confirmatory factor analyses (not shown) show support for democratic values as two dimensions, democratic governance and majoritarian rule, across both time points, in terms of overall model fit (i.e., model fit statistics) and the component fit of the model (i.e., individual parameter estimates). The fit for 1998 is very good, while the overall model fit statistics for 2003 are lower, but within an acceptable range for comparative purposes. More detailed results are available from the author.

<sup>4</sup> Using the 1998 wave of the data, Slomczynski and Shabad (2002) created a scale of democratic values comprised of thirteen indicators. I include seven of the same indicators in a modified scale of democratic orientations for both 1998 and 2003 for consistency across the time points and as a conservative modeling strategy. Exact replication of the 1998 scale in 2003 was not possible due to the unavailability of five questions. One indicator has been excluded for theoretical and methodological reasons, designed to capture respondents' opinions about the role of objectivity for those in political service.

*Sources of Democratic Values*

This section describes the variables used in comparing social groups and in path model analyses seeking to uncover determinants of democratic values. The analyses incorporate four sociodemographic and social structural variables to capture arguments of the cleavage hypothesis (Michta 1997). Two indicators of position in the social structure are included, measures of education (in years) and urban residence (urban = 1). Two demographic variables are included: sex (female = 1) and age (in years).

To account for arguments in the political context hypothesis, three measures of political attitudes are included: interest in politics, views of the previous socialist regime, and views of the role of the welfare state. Interest in politics captures an individual's internalization of democratic norms. Evaluation of the previous regime may influence the development of democratic values (Mishler and Rose 1999). Two measures of the former regime are included: an evaluation of the previous socialist regime and views of the welfare state. Evaluation of the previous regime is captured by response to a question asking whether the socialist regime generally brought a majority of people in Poland gains or losses. Views of the role of the state is a latent variable comprised of views regarding state responsibility for providing jobs for those wanting to work (scaled), state responsibility for providing access to higher education for children from poor families, state responsibility for reducing differences in people's incomes, and a recognition that differences in people's incomes are too large.<sup>5</sup>

A generational explanation proposes that there may be differences between historical generations in democratic values. These cohorts represent individuals growing up or reaching adulthood in the following historical periods: World War II (born between 1920 and 1933), Socialist State (born between 1934 and 1948), Solidarity Movement (born between 1949 and 1960), Radical Social Change (born between 1961 and 1971), and Post-Communist or Former State Socialist (born between 1972 and 1982) (reference category). Cohort categories account for groups of individuals who would have experienced similar formative experiences with regard to socialization generally and a particular political socialization. If differences exist between these cohorts, then it is possible to see change over time,

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<sup>5</sup> Indicators were rescaled such that higher values show agreement that the state should play a role in providing jobs, and so on. In brief, both overall model fit indices and the component fit of the model of welfare state policies demonstrate excellent fit of the model to the data for both 1998 and 2003. More detailed results are available from the author.



represented by the evolution and entrenchment of democratic values across different age categories (Weil 1991).

I explore three research hypotheses. First, the cleavage hypothesis argues that notable differences remain among various social groups in the development of democratic values. Second, a political context hypothesis proposes that political orientations, especially interest in politics, views of the former regime, and views of the role of the state influence democratic values. Third, the generational hypothesis suggests that democratic values may be the result of experience with prior institutional legacies that resonate or spill over into the present context. Results point to some support for the cleavage, political, and generational hypotheses with regard to how democratic values are developing in Poland. The implications of this research are discussed below, especially in relation to unanticipated results.

## Results

Using a single-indicator approach to understanding support for democracy provides only a partial picture of how democratic values are taking shape in Poland during the time of rapid social change. In 2003, POLPAN respondents were asked such a question. Frequencies of this variable indicate that 39 percent of respondents answered that, for people like them “democracy is always the best form of government,” with 20 percent saying that a nondemocratic government is better, and 41 percent replying that there is no difference between them. Considering multiple indicators of democratic values complements and furthers our understanding of how democratic values are taking shape.

Table 17.1 shows frequencies for questionnaire items that are included in the scales of democratic values. Glancing over the table, it is apparent that there are some aspects of democracy that Poles generally support and some that appear to be more contentious. Across both 1998 and 2003, Poles are generally supportive of rule of law, with 83 percent and 90 percent, respectively, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement, “If a good person actually governs, he or she need not obey the law.” Focusing on 1998, elements of democracy that are supported quite widely among the public include especially the influence of mutual concessions for problem-solving, the meaning of democratic elections, and the right to criticize decisions. For each of these three indicators, clear majorities express strong agreement or agreement: 85 percent, 68 percent, and 79 percent, respectively. In looking at these indicators in 2003, while majorities can be discerned for each of the

same indicators, there is some decline (i.e., from 85 percent to 72 percent and from 79 percent to 69 percent), with notable proportions responding in a neutral manner compared with five years prior.

**Table 17.1.** Frequencies of Questionnaire Items for Scales of Democratic Values

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>Democratic governance 1998</i>					
Elections are not necessary if political leaders represent the interest of citizens.	25	26	9	23	17
If a good person actually governs, he or she need not obey the law.	6	6	5	28	55
Some groups of people should be stripped of their voting rights.	16	23	14	24	23
In Poland, it would be enough to have one good party for governance; others would be unnecessary.	19	15	10	28	28
<i>Beliefs in majoritarian rule 1998</i>					
In politics, mutual concessions are the best way of solving difficult problems.	42	43	9	5	1
Democracy means that after the elections the minority must yield to the majority.	28	40	9	15	8
In politics the minority should have an unlimited right to criticize decisions made by the majority.	40	39	12	7	2
<i>Democratic governance 2003</i>					
Elections are not necessary if political leaders represent the interest of citizens.	16	35	5	33	11
If a good person actually governs, he or she need not obey the law.	4	4	2	17	73
Some groups of people should be stripped of their voting rights.	10	33	7	16	34
In Poland, it would be enough to have one good party for governance; others would be unnecessary.	21	15	9	28	27
<i>Beliefs in majoritarian rule 2003</i>					
In politics, mutual concessions are the best way of solving difficult problems.	29	43	24	4	1
Democracy means that after the elections the minority must yield to the majority.	20	43	22	10	5
In politics the minority should have an unlimited right to criticize decisions made by the majority.	27	42	23	5	1

*Note:* Italics emphasize agreement or strong agreement with the pro-democratic response to the statements.

Aspects of democracy and democratization that are arguably more contentious in the Polish general public include the role of political parties, voting rights, and the role of elections. While majorities of survey respondents provided a pro-democracy answer regarding the role of political parties in both 1998 and 2003 (i.e., 54 percent and 53 percent, respectively), a large minority of respondents expressed the alternate view (i.e., 34 percent and 36 percent, respectively). A similar situation can be noted with regard to beliefs about voting rights. That is, 47 percent of those surveyed in 1998 and 50 percent in 2003 expressed disagreement or strong disagreement that some individuals should be stripped of their voting rights, and substantial minorities (i.e., 39 percent in 1998 and 43 percent in 2003) expressed the opposite view about political rights. The example of views about the role of elections also underscores this point about contentious issues regarding the way democracy is taking shape in Poland. In 1998, 40 percent and in 2003, 44 percent of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that elections are not necessary if political leaders represent their citizens. And, in fact, majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement about elections (i.e., 51 percent in both 1998 and 2003). Overall, while Poles are supportive of a democratic political system, the manner in which democratic values are developing suggests an emerging democratic political culture.

Table 17.2 shows regression results of path-model analyses conducted to assess the relative contribution of demographic, social learning, and political perspectives to the development of democratic values, expressed as latent levels of democratic governance and belief in majoritarian rule. Blocks of variables are introduced into the models in order to show the patterning of relationships. A few patterns should be noted for their consistency across models presented in Table 17.2 with regard to democratic governance—the influence of living in a nonurban area, years of education, and age. Each of these variables has a negative influence on individuals' views of democratic governance in 2003. Individuals living in rural areas, those who have completed more years of schooling, and younger individuals are likely to express lower levels of views of democratic governance. Individuals with a positive evaluation of the socialist regime express higher support for democratic governance, net of other effects. Individuals with a more negative view of the role of the welfare state expressed lower evaluations of democratic governance.

With regard to influences on beliefs in majoritarian rule in 2003, a few patterns stand out—the influence of living in an urban area, years of education, and age. Individuals living in urban areas and those who have completed more years of schooling are more likely to express belief in majoritarian rule, while younger individuals are likely to express lower levels of belief in

**Table 17.2.** Democratic Governance and Majoritarian Rule in 2003 Regressed on Cleavage, Political Context, and Generational Hypotheses ( $n = 1,198$ )

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	dem. gov.	maj. rule	dem. gov.	maj. rule	dem. gov.	maj. rule	dem. gov.	maj. rule	dem. gov.	maj. rule
Female	-0.200*** (0.072)	-0.499*** (0.052)	-0.196*** (0.074)	-0.527*** (0.054)	0.033 (0.072)	-0.482*** (0.055)	0.027 (0.074)	-0.460*** (0.057)	0.029 (0.074)	-0.454*** (0.056)
Age	-0.07*** (0.002)	-0.024*** (0.001)	-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.023*** (0.002)	-0.003† (0.002)	-0.022*** (0.002)	-0.004† (0.002)	-0.021*** (0.002)	-0.009*** (0.004)	-0.035*** (0.003)
Urban residence	-0.470*** (0.073)	0.321*** (0.053)	-0.406*** (0.073)	0.279*** (0.052)	-0.261*** (0.069)	0.307*** (0.053)	-0.263*** (0.070)	0.318*** (0.054)	-0.273*** (0.069)	0.310*** (0.053)
Education	-0.289*** (0.016)	0.075*** (0.011)	-0.268*** (0.016)	0.058*** (0.001)	-0.186*** (0.016)	0.073*** (0.012)	-0.186*** (0.017)	0.071*** (0.012)	-0.191*** (0.017)	0.065*** (0.012)
Interest in politics	—	—	-0.041 (0.042)	0.074** (0.031)	-0.020 (0.040)	0.079** (0.030)	-0.017 (0.041)	0.068** (0.031)	-0.030 (0.041)	0.052† (0.031)
View of socialist regime	—	—	0.231*** (0.040)	-0.135*** (0.028)	0.091*** (0.039)	-0.162*** (0.029)	0.090** (0.039)	-0.158*** (0.030)	0.095** (0.039)	-0.146*** (0.029)
Welfare state 203	—	—	—	—	0.733*** (0.071)	0.142*** (0.041)	0.735*** (0.072)	0.137*** (0.041)	0.726*** (0.072)	0.116*** (0.041)
Democratic government 1998	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.008 (0.034)	0.008 (0.026)	-0.007 (0.034)	0.009 (0.026)
Majoritarian rule 1998	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.039 (0.169)	0.197 (0.134)	-0.035 (0.144)	0.185 (0.115)
Post-communist	—	—	—	—	—	—	*ref	*ref	*ref	*ref
Rapid social change	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.042 (0.076)	0.042 (0.058)	0.042 (0.076)	0.173*** (0.058)
Solidarity	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.023 (0.103)	-0.023 (0.079)	-0.023 (0.103)	0.297*** (0.079)
Socialist	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.279 (0.143)	0.279 (0.143)	0.279 (0.143)	0.508*** (0.108)
World War II	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.444 (0.220)	0.444 (0.220)	0.444 (0.220)	1.104*** (0.167)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.497	0.457	0.513	0.479	0.524	0.649	0.529	0.650	0.558	0.660

$tp < 0.10$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

majoritarian rule. Individuals with a negative evaluation of the socialist regime express stronger support for majoritarian rule, net of other effects. More positive views of the welfare state led to higher evaluations of majoritarian rule. Somewhat surprisingly, democratic values from five years prior (both democratic governance and belief in majoritarian rule) did not significantly influence views of democracy in 2003.

Model 5 of Table 17.2 includes the cohort explanation. In this model, a year's decline in age leads to a decrease of 0.009 units in latent levels of democratic governance. Individuals living in nonurban areas tend to be less supportive of aspects of democratic governance. An additional year of education produces a 0.191 unit decline in latent levels of democratic governance, net of other effects. A more positive view of the socialist system increases views of democratic governance by 0.095 units. More positive views of the welfare state in 2003 produce a 0.726 unit increase in latent levels of democratic governance, net of other effects. Finally, with regard to the cohort explanation, no significant differences can be discerned in views of democratic governance.

The situation with regard to belief in majoritarian rule, also shown in Model 5 of Table 17.2, provides a different explanation. In this model, a year's decline in age leads to a decrease of 0.035 units in latent levels of majoritarian rule. Individuals living in urban areas tend to be more supportive of belief in majoritarian rule. An additional year of education produces a 0.065 unit increase in latent levels of belief in majoritarian rule, net of other effects. A more negative view of the socialist system increases views of majoritarian rule by 0.146 units. More positive views of the welfare state in 2003 produce a 0.116 unit increase in majoritarian rule, net of other effects. With regard to the cohort explanation, significant differences are observed between each of the four age cohorts and the post-communist generation. Each cohort, compared with the post-communist generation, expressed higher values of belief in majoritarian rule, net of other effects. In terms of the amount of variation explained, across the models presented in Table 17.2, the adjusted *r*-squared coefficients range from 0.497 and 0.457 (in the model containing demographics and social learning theory predictors) to the final models of 0.558 and 0.660 in latent levels of democratic governance and majoritarian rule in 2003, respectively.

Results in this section offer some support for each of the research hypotheses. In support of the cleavage hypothesis, age, education, and urban residence are influential predictors of both democratic governance and majoritarian rule in 2003. As posited by the political context hypothesis, views of the previous regime and views of the role of the state influence democratic governance and majoritarian rule; interest in politics matters for majoritarian rule, but not

democratic governance. Interestingly, previous democratic values do not influence present views of democratic governance and majoritarian rule, net of the effects of other variables. Finally, some support for the generational hypothesis can be noted in the manner in which views of majoritarian rule, one facet of democratic values, are taking shape.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This research examined how democratic values are taking shape in the former state socialist context in Poland. Three hypotheses—cleavage, emerging political context, and generational—were explored in comparing the composition and sources of democratic values in 2003. Of particular interest was the extent to which democratic values as attitudes, comprised of democratic governance and majoritarian rule and beliefs, are developing in the former state socialist context in Poland. Results pointed to some support for each of the aforementioned hypotheses.

In support of the cleavage hypothesis, age, education, and urban residence were influential predictors of both democratic governance and majoritarian rule in 2003. As posited by the political context hypothesis, views of the previous regime and views of the role of the state influenced democratic governance and majoritarian rule. Interestingly, previous democratic values did not influence present views of democratic governance and majoritarian rule, net of the effects of other variables. With successive elections, regimes in power are often voted out, which suggests that democratic values may be linked to specific regimes, or to candidates and parties rather than longer-standing political institutions. Transfers of power are vital to the institutionalization of democracy, but in nascent democracies may be expressed in more mixed views of how democracy is developing. Thus, cross-time influences may be the exception rather than the rule within the former state socialist context. Finally, some support for the generational hypothesis was noted in the manner in which views of majoritarian rule were taking shape.

The potential uniqueness of the way democratic values are taking shape in Poland can be partially examined through cross-national comparisons. Table 17.3 presents descriptive statistics from a recent large, cross-national public opinion survey that includes established and nascent democracies (Inglehart et al. 2000). Some striking similarities across established and emerging democracies are apparent. Generally, majorities offer support for democracy in the abstract. Majorities in both established and newer democracies generally express dissatisfaction with the current government.

Moreover, evaluations of the current political system are relatively similar across the countries included in the table. Interestingly, however, Poles express mixed support for democracy in the abstract and dissatisfaction with the current government. These data suggest that democratic values may in some respects be more similar than different across countries with different democratic trajectories. Yet, they also suggest that researchers need to broaden how they conceptualize democracy in order to tease out and identify aspects of democratic governance and majoritarian rule that are not meeting expectations in the hearts and minds of citizens in democratic countries.

**Table 17.3.** Views of Democracy, Government Satisfaction, and Views of the Current and Previous Political System in Twenty-four Countries

Country	Democracy <sup>a</sup>	Squabbling <sup>a</sup>	Order <sup>a</sup>	Government satisfaction <sup>b</sup>	Political system today <sup>c</sup>	Political system ten years ago <sup>c</sup>
West Germany	94	69	88	33	4.98	6.58
Spain	93	58	71	21	4.67	3.68
United States	92	59	76	49	4.79	5.66
Australia	87	50	71	45	4.42	5.57
Sweden	94	38	73	45	4.49	6.17
Finland	85	39	66	39	4.71	6.49
East Germany	92	53	77	30	4.90	4.74
Switzerland	91	26	72	65	5.14	6.30
<i>East Central Europe</i>						
Poland	88	17	24	34	4.78	4.00
<i>Southeastern Europe</i>						
Slovenia	88	39	48	36	4.58	4.72
Bulgaria	81	40	55	28	4.82	4.75
Croatia	94	57	74	74	5.20	3.78
Bosnia	89	59	71	49	4.48	5.26
Serbia/Montenegro	89	54	66	32	3.91	5.93
Macedonia	75	52	60	26	3.64	5.48
<i>Former Soviet Union</i>						
Russia	59	22	29	4	2.77	5.83

Source: World Values Survey 1995–1997.

<sup>a</sup> Denotes percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing. The full text of question is shown below.

Democracy = “Democracy may have problems but it’s better than any other form of government.”

Squabbling = “Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling.”

Order = “Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order.”

Government satisfaction = “How satisfied are you with the way the people in national office are handling the country’s affairs?”

<sup>b</sup> Percent very and fairly satisfied.

<sup>c</sup> On a scale of 1 to 10: evaluate current or past political system.

Previous research has suggested that democratic values are undergoing a somewhat unique trajectory in former state socialist countries. This research complements and extends this scholarship. In support of previous research, Poles express support for some but not all aspects of democracy (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Michta 1997; Mishler and Rose 1999; Slomczynski and Shabad 2002). Poles are generally supportive of rule of law, the influence of mutual concessions for problem solving, the meaning of democratic elections, and the right to criticize decisions. Other aspects of democracy and democratization are arguably more contentious: the role of political parties, voting rights, and the role of elections.

There are at least two potential interpretations of these results. First, it is possible that the political context in Poland may be more similar to that of an established democratic system, where dissent or debate over the applicability of abstract democratic values to concrete, everyday practices is not viewed as a challenge to the democratic system, but is instead seen as a healthy, functioning democratic political culture (Klingemann 1999; Mishler and Rose 1999). The generational hypothesis provides some support for this view. Rather than illustrating a barrier to further consolidation of democracy, these divergent views may be indicative of a vibrant political culture, where dissent has a long-standing role in fostering dialogue and discussion about politics.

A second possible interpretation is that democratic politics and, by extension, democratic values will continue to be contentious in Poland due to the ongoing legacy of Solidarity, especially in terms of the manner in which the political context reciprocally influences civil society. In its inception, Solidarity sought to distance itself from the political structure, effectively building a nonpolitical civil society. In recent years, Solidarity has played an arguably more political role, including promoting candidates for political office and through actively recruiting political support of workers aligned with trade unions in general in Poland. Briefly, attempts were made to forge more explicit links between civil society and political institutions. For Ost (2005), this development underscores the difficulty of democratic consolidation in the Polish general public attitudinally and potentially behaviorally. While constitutional guarantees have been established in Poland, considerable barriers remain that are illustrated, ironically, by the emergence of conflicts over identity rather than over interests. Regardless of what the future may hold, public opinion regarding aspects of democracy and democratization provides an important foundation not only for the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions but also for their stability and effectiveness.