Which Characteristics of Civil Society Organizations Support What Aspects of Democracy? Evidence from Post-communist Latvia

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Abstract. This article reconsiders the argument that civil society promotes democracy. Both the independent variable of civil society and the dependent variable of democracy are disentangled. Several hypotheses on what characteristics of civil society organizations (CSOs) promote what aspects of democracy are tested using survey data including 500 CSOs in post-communist Latvia. The regression analysis shows that organizational characteristics (such as the field of activity, extent of political activities, and number of members) have a stronger effect on democracy than have relational characteristics (such as the degree of open recruitment and autonomy). Certain characteristics of CSOs can be supportive of some democratic functions but constitute obstacles to other aspects of democracy. It is possible to distinguish between an advocacy civil society, which is vital for the institutional aspects of democracy through performing the functions of interest articulation and checking state power, and a recreational civil society, which may strengthen democracy through the fostering of support for democratic values and increasing individual capacity for political participation.

Keywords: • Civil society • Democracy • Latvia

Introduction

The relationship between civil society and democracy is a recurring theme in the democratization literature. There are many theoretical arguments for the supposed positive relationship between civil society and democratic institutions (see Diamond, 1994, 1999; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Putnam, 1993, 2001; Tusalem, 2007). Civil society organizations (CSOs)[1] in consolidated democracies are assumed to have an effect on the democratic quality of the political system, for instance through

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the aggregation and representation of interests and by controlling state power. They are also assumed to have an effect on individuals by shaping their values and increasing their capacity for political participation. The argument that civil society is good for democracy is repeated over and over again. Questioning the dominant positive view of civil society's democracy-strengthening qualities, a new literature on "uncivil society" has demonstrated how civil society actors have worked against democracy and undermined democratic regimes. However, the interesting question is not whether civil society is good or bad for democracy. There is a need to disentangle the independent variable of civil society as well as the dependent variable of democracy and examine the effect of different characteristics of CSOs on different aspects of democracy. Hence, the point of departure for this study is the conviction that "empirical research on civil society should study the nature of the relationship between CSOs and democracy/democratization, rather than assume it" (Kopecký and Mudde, 2003: 11).

This relationship is particularly interesting in a post-communist context to which CSOs are relatively new. Unlike many CSOs in older established democracies, such groups in Latvia (and other parts of post-communist Europe) have typically been in place for under two decades, are not infrequently heavily dependent on foreign funding, and (given a pressing socioeconomic situation) are often important for earning an income rather than being an arena for voluntary, idealistic activism. Such organizations also have to struggle with a historical legacy that generates widespread suspicion about all forms of public organizations and activities. Considering these problems of post-communist civil society, it is reasonable to assume that any democracy-supporting effects of the comparatively weak CSOs found in this context are also valid for stronger CSOs in Western democracies. In this sense post-communist Latvia is a hard test for theoretical arguments about the democratic effects of CSOs.

In attempting to answer the overarching question of which civil society organizations support what aspects of democracy, this article aims at contributing empirically to our knowledge of post-communist civil society in Latvia as well as theoretically to the better understanding of the relationship between civil society and democracy. Reviewing previous research, I arrive at several hypotheses about the relationship between different characteristics of CSOs and various aspects of democracy. Those hypotheses are then tested using unique survey material, including 500 representatives of a wide spectrum of CSOs in post-communist Latvia. I proceed by defining and contextualizing civil society in the post-communist Latvian context. Then I specify what aspects of democracy can be influenced by civil society and outline what characteristics of CSOs are likely to promote democracy. Following this review of previous research and formulation of hypotheses, I present the survey data used in this study. Regression analyses are then performed and the empirical results analyzed. Finally, I summarize the results and discuss the theoretical implications of the findings.

Defining and Contextualizing Civil Society in Post-communist Latvia

A definition of civil society that captures most of what are generally considered to be its essential characteristics is offered by Waisman (2006: 22): "Civil society is a slice of society, whose core is the web of voluntary associations that articulate interests and values, and their system of interaction, as long as these units are not under the control of the state." Similarly, Linz and Stepan (1996: 7) in a

much cited work conceptualize civil society as self-organizing groups relatively autonomous from the state which "attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests."

However, as White (2004: 11) points out, it is important to distinguish between civil society as an ideal type (which embodies qualities of separation, autonomy, and voluntary association in their pure form) and empirical civil society (which embodies these principles to various degrees). Actually existing civil society groups are hardly completely autonomous from the state, and the separation between civil society and the state or economic society might not be clear-cut. A separation between the state, the economy, and civil society as different spheres where people interact based on different logics might be valid as a heuristic device, but in reality civil society is not isolated from the other "spheres" (Chandhoke, 2004: 150). Rather, the spheres are mutually constitutive of each other.

In the rather broad conceptualization of civil society that I find useful for this study, not only politically oriented associations, on which most of the democratization literature tends to focus, but also apolitical recreational groups should be included. This makes it possible to compare the theoretical arguments of democratization scholars who, like Diamond (1994: 5), exclude recreational groups because of their inward-looking and private nature and researchers primarily interested in social capital who, like Putnam (1993, 2001), tend to focus on exactly such apolitical associations in their analyses of civil society.

It should also be noted that civil society comprises much more than NGOs (Whitehead, 2002: 68). "Civic engagement" may be associated not only with NGOs but also with more diffuse and less organized activities within a public sphere, as well as the phenomenon of social capital (Armony, 2004: 24). Even when focusing on NGOs and other more organized and institutionalized expressions of civil society activities, there is a wide variety of actors, ranging from those organizations that are independent from the state and also in opposition to the state, to organizations that are deeply embedded in state structures and engaged in close cooperation with state authorities. Research on civil society has often ignored the latter. As argued by Haddad (2006), there is a need for a more inclusive conceptualization of civil society. Hence, the autonomy of civil society should not be assumed a priori. Rather, the degree of autonomy should be treated as an open question for empirical research.

I also avoid the concept "voluntary organization" as I think it would be a mistake to conceive of civil society as a sphere of unrestricted freedom of association (see Warren, 2001: 97). Activities in some CSOs might in fact be governed by nonvoluntary forces. There might be structural factors and different kinds of social pressure that make people join different CSOs. One's ethnic identity, religious belief, or social position may, for instance, make it very hard not to join certain organizations. Hence, just like the question of autonomy, the degree of voluntariness of CSOs should be treated as an open question for empirical research. Furthermore, it is important to avoid a conceptualization of civil society that excludes normatively "bad" organizations. Such normative judgments are very difficult to make in empirical analyses, and a focus on only those types of organizations that the researcher finds sympathetic would result in an unfruitful limitation of the empirical study of civil society.

Post-communist civil societies have special features that distinguish them from civil societies in older established democracies. There is a communist heritage which must be taken into account. Some CSOs have a history as hierarchical

mass organizations controlled by the party-state. Others emerged from popular movements against communist rule and, in the case of Latvia and several other countries, for national independence. The vast majority of post-communist CSOs, however, are recently established[2] issue-specific organizations with a Western orientation which are often heavily dependent on foreign funding (see Uhlin, 2006).

Another heritage from the communist regime is a general lack of trust in public organizations, which makes it difficult for CSOs to gain public support and mobilize new members. As in many parts of the developing world, socioeconomic problems following the transition from communist rule make many post-communist CSOs an option for earning an income rather than being primarily perceived as associations for voluntary idealistic activities. Hence, civil societies in the post-communist world are typically viewed as weak compared with civil societies in established democracies and even post-authoritarian civil societies in Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa (Salamon et al., 2004: 52). Membership numbers in CSOs are substantially lower in post-communist countries, and even within this group of countries Latvia is below average for most types of CSOs (Howard, 2003: 65–6). However, compared to Russia and the other Baltic states, organizational membership in general is somewhat higher in Latvia, according to data from the World Values Survey (Howard, 2003: 69).

Latvia, like the other Baltic states, had a relatively strong civil society in the interwar period. Under communist rule civil society was totally crushed, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a tremendous level of activism in the popular movements for independence. Previous research (e.g. Ostrowska, 1997; Zepa, 1999) indicates that there was a marked decrease in civil society activity during the first years of independence. While the membership of CSOs drastically decreased, many new issue-specific organizations were set up. During the last half of the 1990s individual membership also seemed to increase slightly (Karklins and Zepa, 2001: 337). According to a survey conducted in 2002, about 40 percent of the inhabitants of Latvia were members of some "organization or informal group." The types of CSOs with the largest memberships were trade unions, sports clubs, congregations, and recreational organizations (Vilka and Strupiss, 2004: 7).

There are no legal barriers to establishing CSOs in post-communist Latvia, but bureaucratic hindrances and lack of information and education can still constitute obstacles (Vilka and Strupiss, 2004: 24). Whereas Latvia has made considerable progress in consolidating democracy and joined the European Union in May 2004, the country is still struggling with severe political problems. The question of ethnicity and citizenship status has been a major political issue since Latvian independence (Jubulis, 2001; Pabriks, 2003). Frequent changes of government and election campaigns plagued by political scandals and charges of corruption (Ikstens, 2007) have led to very low trust in political parties (Ehin, 2007). Civil society in Latvia must be understood in the context of ethnic politics and a general weakness of political society.

In sum, this study views civil society as one social sphere, analytically separated from but in practice often overlapping with other social spheres like economic society, political society, and the state. It consists of a web of largely voluntary associations that are relatively autonomous from the state and which attempt to articulate values and interests and create solidarities. While the focus in this study is on more institutionalized expressions of civil society, in the form of CSOs, the concept is quite inclusive, covering apolitical recreational clubs as well as explicitly

political associations, and including organizations with limited autonomy, limited voluntariness, and normatively questionable orientations.

This conceptualization of civil society is, I argue, appropriate for the post-communist Latvian context and avoids a too strong Western bias. Having elaborated somewhat on the concept of civil society and its application to post-communist Latvia, it is now time to differentiate between aspects of democracy which can potentially be influenced by civil society.

What Aspects of Democracy Can Be Promoted by Civil Society?

On a general level I define democracy as "a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control" (Beetham, 1993: 55). Popular control should be based on political equality. The most common form of popular control in modern democracies is the election of representatives who are held accountable. Hence there is an important institutional dimension to democracy, focusing on the institutions of government. However, individuals are also important. Broader popular political participation is a democratic value, and individuals should ideally have a capacity for political participation. Furthermore, a functioning democracy requires some degree of support for democratic values. These aspects of democracy on the institutional as well as individual levels should be kept in mind as the analysis proceeds.

What are the specific aspects of democracy to which civil society may contribute? In a major theoretical work, Warren (2001) usefully identifies different potential democratic effects of associational life: 1) developmental effects on individuals (in the form of increased capacities to participate in collective decision-making and develop autonomous judgments); 2) public sphere effects (i.e. formation of public opinion); and 3) effects on democratic institutions (by providing political representation or resistance). Similarly, Armony (2004), in an extensive empirical study, argues that CSOs can have democratic effects on participants, political institutions, and the public sphere. According to White (2004: 13–15), CSOs may foster democratization in four ways: 1) altering the balance between state and society; 2) disciplining the state, hence improving state accountability; 3) being an intermediary between state and society; and 4) redefining the rules of the political game along democratic lines. For Diamond (1999: 239), the basic function of civil society is to control and limit state power. Among the other democracy-strengthening functions of civil society he lists interest articulation as well as complementing political parties in stimulating political participation and the generation of the values of a democratic political culture (Diamond, 1999: 242–3).

Drawing on and developing these arguments and distinctions, I suggest four aspects of democracy on which civil society is likely to have an effect. First, on the institutional level CSOs may link citizens to the formal political system through the representation of members and the articulation of their interests. In this interest articulation function, CSOs serve as intermediaries between state and society. A second institutional aspect is to act as a check on state power or a countervailing force, hence improving state accountability. Third, an important aspect of the consolidation of democracy is public support for democratic values. While this is typically measured on the individual level, support for democratic values can be considered a public sphere effect, as referred to by Warren (2001) and Armony (2004). It is reasonable to assume that attitudes to democracy to

some extent are formed within civil society. Fourth, developmental effects on individuals and, more specifically, individual capacity for political participation should be considered. Following de Tocqueville, membership in CSOs is often said to increase political participation (Paxton, 2002: 258), and from a participatory democratic perspective this is considered positive for democracy.

In sum, civil society may promote democracy in the following respects: through the articulation and representation of interests, checking state power, nurturing support for democratic values, and increasing individual capacity for political participation. Having outlined these dependent variables of the study, it is now time to disentangle the civil society concept.

What Characteristics of CSOs May Promote Democracy?

In a recent major work on the relationship between civil society and democracy, Armony (2004) finds no universal link between the two. Civic associations are not inherently and universally positive for democracy, as claimed by neo-Tocquevillians. The socioeconomic context determines when and how civil society influences democracy. In a cross-national study of 28 established and new democracies, Armony finds that participation in CSOs does not even have an indirect effect, through the creation of social capital, on the quality of institutions. The basic determinant for the quality of both civil society and democracy is the degree of socioeconomic equality, he argues. While this argument seems plausible on a general level and the empirical evidence is convincing, it does not differentiate between different types of CSOs. Treating civil society on an aggregate level, Armony does not offer any explanation as to why some civil society groups are pro-democratic and some anti-democratic in the same socioeconomic and institutional context.

The main question should therefore be what type of civil society promotes democracy (see Chambers and Kopstein, 2001: 838; Li, 1999). We must look into the specific characteristics and actual activities of CSOs in order to understand to what extent they contribute to or oppose the development of democracy. The characteristics of CSOs that might be supportive of democracy most commonly mentioned in the literature are related to internal democracy and autonomy from the state. The former has to do with processes within CSOs, whereas the latter is concerned with relations between CSOs and their environment (here the state). I suggest distinguishing between a number of organizational and relational characteristics of CSOs that might have an impact on the different aspects of democracy outlined in the previous section.

Organizational Characteristics of CSOs

The purpose of the CSO is likely to be decisive for its effect on democracy. Broadly speaking, three main types of CSOs can be identified, focusing on politics, social or charity activities, and recreation. Research on the role of civil society in processes of democratization has mainly focused on the more politically oriented sections of civil society. It is reasonable to assume that political groups are most relevant for institutional aspects of democracy, having positive as well as negative effects. But from a neo-Tocquevillian perspective, activities in apolitical, recreational organizations may also contribute to the creation of social capital

and other democratic "goods," focusing more on individual aspects of democracy. For Putnam (1993, 2001), bird-watching societies and bowling leagues are actually of greater interest than are the kind of politically oriented groups emphasized in most democratization studies (see Encarnación, 2001: 59). Social or charity organizations fall somewhere in between political and recreational organizations, being less explicitly political than the former but not as apolitical as the latter.

Hence, the first hypotheses can be formulated in the following way: CSOs oriented toward political activities have a stronger effect on institutional aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or recreational activities (H1), and CSOs oriented toward recreational activities have a stronger effect on individual aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or political activities (H2). A distinction could also be made between more specific fields of activity, ranging from highly political issue areas like human rights, national identity, and environmental problems to nonpolitical recreational activities. Again, I expect organizations within the more politically oriented fields to have the strongest effect on institutional aspects of democracy (H3).

The size of the organization is another factor worth considering. CSOs included in this study range from nonmembership-based human rights groups consisting of a handful of committed activists to nationwide trade unions with tens of thousands of members and more than a hundred salaried staff. However, the size of a CSO is typically not considered important for its democracy-strengthening functions (see Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1624). Hence, I assume that there is no relationship between the size of the organization and its effects on institutional and individual aspects of democracy (H4).

Another interesting aspect is the potential for "voice" within an organization. One theoretical argument worth testing with empirical data is related to the degree of voluntariness of CSOs. Drawing on Hirchman's famous analysis of exit, voice, and loyalty, Warren (2001: 96) argues that the exit option makes internal democracy less important in voluntary organizations. In nonvoluntary associations, voice (and democracy) become important as exit is not an option. Associations subject to nonvoluntary forces may be more likely to provide democratic experiences if voice is possible (Warren, 2001: 106). Contrary to this argument, it is often claimed that closed organizations where exit is not a realistic option tend to produce thick trust within them, but distrust of the wider society (Newton, 1997). Therefore nonexit organizations could not be expected to contribute democracy-strengthening social capital. Based on these arguments, I expect activists in CSOs where voice is an option to have more support for democratic values and feel a higher capacity for political participation compared with those active in organizations characterized by exit or loyalty (H5).

Finally, and related to the voice aspect, internal democracy (including having a democratic structure and being accountable to their constituencies) is a characteristic of CSOs considered to be likely to have an important pro-democratic impact (Hydén, 1997: 31–2). CSOs may suffer from democratic deficits in the form of poor representation and lack of accountability (see Brysk, 2000). Horizontal organizations have a better potential for supporting democracy than have vertical organizations of a patron–client nature (Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1623). Internal democracy is likely to be important for the individual aspects

of democracy. It is reasonable to assume that, in order to foster democratic values and increase individual capacity for political participation, CSOs need to have a democratic structure internally. Pronouncedly undemocratic organizations are not likely to have such effects on their members. Hence, I assume that a low level of internal democracy has a negative impact on individual aspects of democracy (H6). By contrast, there is no reason to assume that CSOs with a low level of internal democracy should necessarily be less inclined to perform the functions of interest articulation and checking state power than are more democratic organizations (see Diamond, 1999: 228; Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1623). The independent variables and hypotheses related to organizational characteristics can now be summarized in Table 1.

Relational Characteristics of CSOs

Turning to the characteristics of the relationship between CSOs and their environment, the question of how exclusive or inclusive they are should be of interest. Open recruitment is considered an important characteristic for CSOs in order for them to have democracy-supporting effects (Hydén, 1997: 31–2). Associations with closed and exclusive recruitment are likely to cause more conflict and polarization in society (Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1623). Hence, I assume that CSOs with open recruitment play a more democracy-strengthening role than do closed organizations (H7).

A related issue is the extent of ethnic pluralism. This is of special relevance in a society characterized by ethnic divisions and ethno-nationalist politics, such

TABLE 1. *Independent Variables and Hypotheses: Organizational Characteristics*

Independent variables	Hypotheses
Extent of political, social, and recreational activities	H1: CSOs oriented toward political activities have a stronger effect on institutional aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or recreational activities.
	H2: CSOs oriented toward recreational activities have a stronger effect on individual aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or political activities.
Field of activity	H3: CSOs within more politically oriented fields have the strongest effect on institutional aspects of democracy.
Size of organization: membership	H4: There is no relationship between the size of the organization and its effects on institutional and individual aspects of democracy.
Exit, voice, and loyalty	H5: Activists in CSOs where voice is an option have more support for democratic values and feel a higher capacity for political participation compared with those active in organizations characterized by exit or loyalty.
Internal democracy	H6: A low level of internal democracy has a negative impact on individual aspects of democracy.

as Latvia's. The treatment of the large Russian-speaking population has been a source of ethnic tensions between Latvians and Russians. In this situation one might hope that civil society groups could help overcome those problems by providing inter-ethnic meeting places. In general, noncitizens, of whom the overwhelming majority are ethnic Russians, are underrepresented in Latvian CSOs (Pabriks, 2003: 141). The degree of ethnic pluralism of CSOs is therefore important. It seems reasonable to assume that, in this context, CSOs which include different ethnic groups play a more democracy-strengthening role than do ethnic homogeneous organizations (H8).

Autonomy is another major relational characteristic. A certain degree of autonomy from the state is typically viewed as a defining characteristic of civil society. Scholars interested in the relationship between civil society and democracy tend to stress that CSOs, in order to make a positive contribution to democratic development, should be independent of the state in terms of decision-making, recruitment of leaders, and control of important economic and personal resources (see Diamond, 1999: 250; Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1622; Hydén 1997: 31–2). Such autonomy from the state should be particularly significant for the democratic functions of interest articulation and controlling state power. Concerning individual aspects of democracy, organizational characteristics of CSOs are likely to be more significant than autonomy (see Hadenius and Uggla, 1996: 1622). Hence, I assume that autonomy from the state is positively related to institutional aspects of democracy (H9). The independent variables and hypotheses associated with relational characteristics can now be summarized in Table 2, before the survey data is presented.

Survey Data

For the empirical analysis I rely on survey material gathered specifically for this study. Some 500 respondents representing 500 different CSOs in Latvia responded to a questionnaire constructed for the purpose of this and a related project (see Lindén 2008). The selection of CSOs was made through a random-sample procedure from a list of 4000 CSOs, available at an NGO-center in Riga.[3] Representing each organization, a "core activist,"[4] not necessarily the chairperson, was selected for interviews. The fact that the description of each organization relies on the evaluation of one single person might be considered a problem. However, the intention of the study is not to describe specific organizations. Rather, the aim is to create aggregate data on the characteristics of CSOs based on how

TABLE 2. *Independent Variables and Hypotheses: Relational Characteristics*

Independent variables	Hypotheses
Degree of open recruitment	H7: CSOs with open recruitment play a more democracy-strengthening role than do closed organizations.
Degree of ethnic pluralism	H8: CSOs which include different ethnic groups play a more democracy-strengthening role than do ethnic homogeneous organizations.
Autonomy from the state	H9: Autonomy from the state is positively related to institutional aspects of democracy.

civil society activists perceive their organizations. For this purpose I considered it more valuable to include as many CSOs as possible than to interview several people representing the same organization.

All interviews were conducted by interviewers from Latvian Facts, a Riga-based company with extensive experience in conducting public opinion polls and survey research. A first version of the questionnaire was tested on a sample of 25 respondents in January/February 2004. Face-to-face interviews using questionnaires translated into both Latvian and Russian were carried out from March 10 to May 20 2004.[5] Reflecting the actual distribution of CSOs in Latvia, 72 percent of the completed interviews were conducted in the Riga region, 11 percent in Vidzeme, 7 percent in Latgale, 6 percent in Zemgale, and 4 percent in Kurzeme.[6] The results from the survey were entered into an SPSS data file. Details about how dependent and independent variables were operationalized into specific questions in the questionnaire and summary statistics can be found in the Appendix.

Analyzing the Effects of CSO Characteristics on Aspects of Democracy

The next step is to test the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in regression analyses. The possible correlation between independent variables must be considered first. If an independent variable is highly correlated with another independent variable (or a linear combination of other independent variables), serious estimation problems arise. In order to assess multicollinearity I regressed each independent variable on all the other independent variables. An R^2 near 1.0 indicates multicollinearity (Lewis-Beck, 1993: 50–2), but the highest R^2 I found was .613, and for the great majority of independent variables the multicollinearity test resulted in an R^2 well below .5. Hence I conclude that the independent variables are sufficiently uncorrelated.

I begin the empirical analysis with an examination of the effect of organizational characteristics on institutional and individual aspects of democracy (Table 3). The political or apolitical character of a CSO is a relatively strong predictor of different aspects of democracy. The effect, however, is both positive and negative, depending on what aspects of democracy we examine. The strongest positive effect is on being a check on state power. All the variables tapping the degree of political work in the CSO are significant and the pattern is clear: the greater the number of representatives of the organization who view their work as political, the more they perform the function of being a countervailing force against state power. This institutional aspect of democracy is highly political, so this is exactly what could be expected. Interest articulation and representation is also a political activity, but here the pattern is much less clear, with positive but low coefficients for the variables indicating a higher degree of political work and only one significant variable ("very much politics"). Interestingly, political organizations seem to have a significant negative effect on individual support for democratic values and individual capacity for political participation. Concerning support for democratic values, the negative coefficients are only significant for the variables "very little politics" and "some politics," but when it comes to individual capacity for political participation the coefficients are consistently negative and significant. A possible reason might be that nonpolitical activities increase the individual's self-confidence and communications skills more than explicitly political

TABLE 3. *The Effect of Different Organizational Characteristics on Institutional and Individual Aspects of Democracy*

	Interest articulation and representation	Check on state power	Support for democratic values	Individual capacity for political participation
Constant	.659***	–.074	.535***	.559***
Not at all political				
Very little politics	–.010	.088**	–.066***	–.036
Some politics	.022	.201***	–.030**	–.139***
Very much politics	.087**	.400***	.007	–.234***
Completely political	.015	.557***	–.026	–146**
Not at all social				
Very little social	.050	.050	–.045*	.065
Some social	.048	.101***	–.016	–.025
Very much social	.103***	.071*	.003	.003
Completely social	.108***	.119***	–.002	–.098**
Not at all recreational				
Very little recreational	–.033	.005	.055***	.024
Some recreational	.070**	.046	.046**	–.078*
Very much recreational	.018	.023	.056**	–.088*
Completely recreational	.040	–.087	.042	–.065
No membership				
21–100 members	.052**	.021	.015	–.095***
101–1000 members	.080***	.046	.015	–.062*
1001–10,000 members	.184***	.165***	Error	–.047
> 10,000 members	.148*	.099	.030	–.200*
Exit	.000	.013	.050***	–.002
Voice	–.010	–.030	.049***	.054
Loyalty				
Internal democracy	–.086*	.065	.038	–.015
R^2	.151	.341	.095	.149
R^2adj	.117	.314	.059	.115
N	499	498	499	494

OLS regression. Unstandardized beta coefficients are given.
Two tailed significance tests, *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
Source: Author's survey among civil society activists in Latvia, 2004.

activities. In sum, the regression analysis indicates that political CSOs are good for institutional aspects of democracy such as checking state power and (to a lesser extent) interest articulation. However, activity in less political organizations tends to be better for promoting support for democratic values and enhancing the individual's capacity for political participation.

Like political CSOs, social or charity groups are supportive of institutional aspects of democracy, but not so good at promoting democratic values. Coefficients for the variables indicating a larger degree of social activities show a positive and

significant effect on checking state power, although the pattern is not as strong as for political activities. However, concerning interest articulation, CSOs with a high degree of social activities have a stronger effect than have highly political CSOs (as demonstrated by the statistically significant positive coefficients for the variables "very much social" and "completely social"). This finding demonstrates that social organizations tend not only to care for the welfare of their constituencies through different kinds of charity activities, but also to articulate the interests of the socially disadvantaged groups they claim to represent. This is an indication that social welfare organizations focusing on the disabled, orphans, poor pensioners, and other marginalized groups, at least in the Latvian context, play an important democracy-strengthening role in lobbying political decision-makers, despite the fact that they seldom consider themselves to be political organizations. This finding is potentially important for the consolidation of democracy in Latvia as social activities are more common than recreational and political activities in Latvian civil society.[7]

The extent of recreational activities in CSOs does not have any significant impact on interest articulation or on the capacity to check state power. But unlike political and social civil society activities, recreational activities seem to foster support for democratic values. Coefficients for the variables indicating the extent of recreational activities are significant and consistently positive (as opposed to the variable "not at all recreational" included in the constant). This finding partly supports the neo-Tocquevillian argument about the democratic benefit of a wide range of, often apolitical, civil society activities. The interpretation must be that nonpolitical recreational CSOs often function better as "schools of democracy" than many more explicitly political organizations, which are perhaps more elitist. Politically oriented CSOs are naturally more effective in the interest articulation and state control functions, but this effectiveness might come at the cost of generating support for democratic values. Recreational CSOs, which do not engage in political activities directed toward state institutions, can perhaps be more open for the participation of individual members and more fostering of democratic values.

Hence, hypothesis H1 – CSOs oriented toward political activities have a stronger effect on institutional aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or recreational activities – is confirmed, with the reservation that social CSOs tend to be even more active in interest articulation. Hypothesis H2 – CSOs oriented toward recreational activities have a stronger effect on individual aspects of democracy than have organizations mainly involved in social or political activities – is also confirmed, but only concerning support for democratic values. The findings clearly demonstrate that political and social as well as recreational civil society activities may promote democracy, but they are supportive of different aspects of democracy. Political and social organizations are needed for the democratic functions of interest articulation and controlling state power, whereas recreational activities seem to be better at promoting support for democratic values.

In order to further examine the role of the purpose of the organization, a second model of organizational characteristics which includes various fields of activity instead of the extent of political, social, and recreational activities respectively is analyzed (Table 4). Human rights organizations appear to be particularly good at performing the democratic functions of interest articulation and checking state

power (positive and significant coefficients), but are less effective in fostering activists' individual capacity for political participation (negative and significant coefficient). Exactly the same pattern is found for political CSOs. In addition to CSOs dealing with politics and human rights, organizations for women and youth as well as social welfare organizations tend to perform the function of interest articulation, but in those cases the coefficients are only significant on a less demanding level. Environmental and social welfare CSOs join political and human rights groups in checking state power (but these coefficients are also only significant on a less demanding level). Recreational groups, by contrast, are less commonly involved in interest articulation and checking state power compared with organizations in almost all other fields of activity. (Recreational organizations constitute a reference group and are hence included in the constant.)

TABLE 4. *The Effect of Different Organizational Characteristics – Including Fields of Activity – on Institutional and Individual Aspects of Democracy*

	Interest articulation and representation	Check on state power	Support for democratic values	Individual capacity for political participation
Constant	.700***	.108*	.536***	.435***
Politics	.095**	.392***	.010	–.185***
Human rights	.120***	.275***	.029	–.163***
Women	.082*	.009	.047*	–.037
Labor	.030	.016	–.069**	.025
Nationalism	.077	.026	.003	–.184***
Environment	–.007	.164**	–.047	–.004
Youth	.093**	.035	.000	.019
Education	.062	–.020	–.020	.065
Other	.127**	.220***	.049	–.061
Social welfare	.056*	.088*	.003	–.029
Recreation				
No membership				
21–100 members	.048**	.021	.017	–.084**
101–1000 members	.087***	.047	.009	–.061*
1001–10,000 members	.205***	.272***	.006	–.115*
> 10,000 members	.170**	.298***	.016	–.258**
Exit	–.002	.038	.048**	.012
Voice	–.006	–.025	.046***	.061*
Loyalty				
Internal democracy	–.085*	–.006	.049*	.006
R^2	.098	.212	.079	.103
R^2adj	.066	.184	.047	.071
N	499	498	499	494

OLS regression. Unstandardized beta coefficients are given.
Two tailed significance tests, *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
Source: Author's survey among civil society activists in Latvia, 2004.

No field of interest has a strong effect on support for democratic values. The only significant results are that there seems to be somewhat more support for democratic values in women's organizations and less in labor unions. Three kinds of CSOs have a statistically significant negative effect on individual capacity for political participation: organizations focusing on politics, nationalism, and human rights. This might be an indication that these organizations are more elitist. Lobbying political decision-makers requires competencies that may limit activities to a professional elite of activists and restrict the participation of ordinary members.

In sum, there is support for hypothesis H3: CSOs within more politically oriented fields have the strongest effect on institutional aspects of democracy. CSOs focusing on politics and human rights do indeed have a stronger effect than have less political CSOs such as those focusing on, for instance, education and youth issues.

The next hypothesis, H4, stating that there is no relationship between the size of the organization and its effects on institutional and individual aspects of democracy, is not supported by the findings. The size of the organization, measured by the number of members, has a positive effect on interest articulation and (less clearly) the ability to serve as a check against state power. Coefficients for the variables indicating more than 1000 members are positive and significant, as opposed to the variable "no membership" (included in the constant; see Table 4). Generally, larger membership means more of these institutional aspects of democracy. Small nonmembership-based organizations tend to be better at enhancing the individual activists' capacity for political participation. In nonmembership-based organizations there can be no interest articulation and representation of interests (unless the CSO claims to represent the interests of a constituency that is not part of the organization). Small organizations may also find it difficult to act as a check against state power. To perform this function, resources are required that very small organizations usually do not possess. However, the advantage of small organizations is that they tend to be less anonymous, allowing individual activists to play a more important role and hence enhancing these activists' capacity for political participation. Size, thus, seems to be a more important variable than has generally been acknowledged in previous research.

Turning to the next hypothesis, the data provides some support for H5: activists in CSOs where voice is an option have more support for democratic values and feel a higher capacity for political participation compared to those active in organizations characterized by exit or loyalty. Organizations providing exit and voice options tend to promote democratic values to a greater extent than loyalty-dominated organizations. Both exit and voice have positive coefficients that are significant. Warren's theoretical argument about nonvoluntary associations providing better opportunities for voice and hence more democratic experiences is only partly supported. Loyalty is less supportive of democracy, as assumed, but exit – and not only voice – seems to promote support for democratic values. However, this finding makes sense as both exit and voice can be associated with open democratic organizations, whereas loyalty may indicate a closed organization. Voice also has a rather weak positive impact on individual capacity for political participation. Apart from this, the exit, voice, and loyalty variables have no significant effect on any of the other aspects of democracy.

Hypothesis H6 – a low level of internal democracy has a negative impact on individual aspects of democracy – does not find much support in the data

analyzed here. There is a small positive effect of internal democracy on support for democratic values, but this coefficient is significant only at the $p < .1$ level (Table 4). The relative lack of effect of this variable might depend on the way internal democracy is measured and the questionable validity, as it is based on the judgments of (often leading) representatives of the organizations. Nevertheless, it is an indication that there is no straightforward relationship between internal democracy within CSOs and the democratic impact on individual members as well as the democratic functions of these organizations in society at large.

As a whole, the model of organizational characteristics is a relatively strong predictor of the democratic function of serving as a check on state power (R^2adj .314 in Table 3). The explanatory power of these organizational variables is less for the other aspects of democracy.

Turning to the relational characteristics of CSOs (Table 5), we find far less explanatory power than in the models of organizational characteristics (R^2adj is only .015 or less for the four dependent variables). Only one variable – ethnic pluralism when measuring the effect on interest articulation and representation – is significant at the $p < .01$ level. The variable open vs. closed recruitment also has some effect. Organizations with open recruitment of members tend to be less involved in interest articulation and controlling state power, but they are better at promoting individual support for democratic values than are organizations which are more selective in their recruitment of members. It makes sense that CSOs which are in principle open to everybody should be more supportive of democratic values. Interest articulation, however, may be more complicated in CSOs with a heterogeneous membership. Organizations which are open only to a specific group of people should be expected to more easily articulate and represent their members' interests, as these interests are likely to be rather homogeneous. It is also possible that CSOs with closed recruitment, being more homogeneous, are more effective in general and hence also better at performing the function

TABLE 5. *The Effect of Different Relational Characteristics of CSOs on Institutional and Individual Aspects of Democracy*

	Interest articulation and representation	Check on state power	Support for democratic values	Individual capacity for political participation
Constant	.755***	.299***	.602***	.401***
Open recruitment	–.040**	–.068**	.027**	–.025
Ethnic pluralism	.051***	.014	.003	–.001
State autonomous				
State funded	–.012	–.048	–.011	–.050
State dependent	.013	–.045	–.019	–.016
R^2	.023	.017	.012	.005
R^2adj	.015	.010	.004	–.003
N	499	498	499	494

OLS regression. Unstandardized beta coefficients are given.
Two tailed significance tests, *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
Source: Author's survey among civil society activists in Latvia, 2004.

of controlling state power. Hypothesis H7 – CSOs with open recruitment play a more democracy-strengthening role than do closed organizations – certainly requires a qualification. Open recruitment has a positive effect only on support for democratic values. Contrary to the hypothesis, the effect is negative on institutional aspects of democracy.

Similarly, hypothesis H8 – CSOs which include different ethnic groups play a more democracy-strengthening role than do ethnic homogeneous organizations – also receives only limited support. Ethnic pluralism is positively associated with the interest articulation function, but has no significant effect on any of the other dependent variables.

Interestingly, the autonomy variable shows no clear pattern at all. Contrary to hypothesis H9 – autonomy from the state is positively related to institutional aspects of democracy – autonomy does not seem to be essential for any of the democratic aspects analyzed here. While the results from this limited study should not be overstated, this indicates that the argument that a high degree of autonomy is essential for CSOs might be questioned. Also organizations embedded in state structures may play democracy-strengthening roles despite their lack of autonomy. At least this is a reasonable argument concerning individual aspects of democracy. The institutional aspects of democracy are likely to require a higher degree of autonomy, despite the lack of support for the hypothesis here.

Concluding Remarks

This study has demonstrated the importance of disentangling the concepts of both civil society and democracy when analyzing the relationship between the two. Unlike much previous research in this field, I have not focused on the civil society–democracy relationship on an aggregate level. Instead I have distinguished different aspects of democracy and specified different characteristics of CSOs. Summarizing the findings (see Table 6), it is possible to conclude that the extent of the political, social, and recreational activities respectively of CSOs has significant effects on democracy, but the effect differs depending on the aspect of democracy examined. More political and social activities are positively related to interest articulation and controlling state power, whereas more recreational (and less political) activities seem to foster support for democratic values and individual capacity for political participation. CSOs dealing with human rights and politics, in particular, tend to be important for the institutional aspects of democracy. Contradicting the hypothesis based on previous research, the size of the CSO matters for its impact on democracy. Large organizations with many members are more likely to be involved in interest articulation and checking state power, whereas small, nonmembership-based CSOs tend to be better at strengthening the individual's capacity for political participation. Only in relation to support for democratic values does the size of the organization have no clear effect. The variables of exit and voice as well as internal democracy do not have any significant effect on institutional aspects of democracy, but support for democratic values tends to be stronger in a CSO providing the exit or voice option for its members, as opposed to loyalty-oriented CSOs. Voice-organizations are also better at increasing the individual's capacity for political participation.

What I have called organizational characteristics seem to be far more important for civil society's democracy-promoting functions than are what I termed relational characteristics. Contradicting the hypothesis, CSOs with closed recruitment tend to

TABLE 6. *Variables Having a Statistically Significant Positive Effect on Different Aspects of Democracy*

	Interest articulation and representation	Check on state power	Support for democratic values	Individual capacity for political participation
Organizational characteristics	**Social activities** Political activities **Human rights** Politics Social welfare Women Youth **Many members**	**Political activities** Social activities **Politics** **Human rights** Environment Social welfare **Many members**	**At least some recreational activities** Women **Exit** **Voice** Internal democracy	Non-political activities Small, non-membership-based organizations Voice
Relational characteristics	**Ethnic pluralism** Closed recruitment	Closed recruitment	Open recruitment	

Note: Variables significant at the $p < .01$ level are shown in bold.

be more likely to perform the functions of interest articulation and checking state power, but support for democratic values is stronger in organizations with open recruitment. The degree of ethnic homogeneity does not have any strong effect on democracy, although CSOs characterized by ethnic pluralism are more likely to perform the function of interest articulation. The autonomy of CSOs, emphasized as important for democracy in much of the literature on civil society, does not stand out as significant in this study. The theoretical importance of these relational characteristics of CSOs is not matched by empirical evidence. While additional studies using other forms of operationalization of the key variables obviously are needed, I think it safe to say that the findings indicate that it would be fruitful to pay more attention to the less theorized organizational characteristics. Relational characteristics are perhaps not as important as is claimed in the literature.

In the introduction I argued that post-communist Latvia provides a hard test for arguments about the positive effects of CSOs on democracy. The relative weakness of post-communist civil society makes it likely that the positive democratic effects of CSOs found here are valid also in other contexts where CSOs are stronger and more well-established. Some peculiarities of the post-communist Latvian context, however, deserve more elaboration. Human rights groups stand out as the type of CSO having the strongest positive effect on institutional aspects of democracy. While this could be expected of human rights organizations anywhere, it must also be seen in the light of such organizations' historical roots in dissident groups during Soviet occupation and their important role in the popular movements for independence. These experiences have shaped an activist culture of "civil society against the state," which explains the highly political and state-controlling nature of human rights organizations in post-communist Latvia. The relative importance of apolitical recreational civil society activities for fostering support for democratic values could also be related to the historical experience of the Latvian democracy movement. Seemingly apolitical organizations such as the many choir groups turned political in the "singing revolution" of the struggle for independence in the Baltic states. These experiences may

help explain the relatively strong support for democratic values found among recreational CSOs in post-communist Latvia. Furthermore, the importance of social civil society activities for institutional aspects of democracy is promising for the consolidation of democracy in Latvia, as such activities are more common than both recreational and political activities. The dominance of social and charity organizations in post-communist Latvia is a consequence of what are perceived as inadequate state responses to social problems in the neoliberal restructuring of Latvian society. From a democratic perspective, it is encouraging to find that many of these organizations try not only to relieve social problems but also to perform more explicitly political democracy-strengthening functions.

Generalizing the findings further, I argue that two different versions of civil society having very different pro-democratic effects can be identified. First, there is an advocacy civil society made up of rather large membership-based organizations involved in political and/or social activities focusing on representing the interests of their members or constituencies and interacting with the state and political society. Such CSOs – including many human rights, environmental, social welfare, women's, and youth organizations as well as CSOs dealing with politics in general – are vital for the institutional aspects of democracy, as they perform the functions of interest articulation and checking state power, but have little effect on individual aspects of democracy. Second, there is a recreational civil society consisting of mainly small organizations focusing on apolitical, recreational activities that allow members to exercise voice and hence have a potential to serve as "schools of democracy" despite their nonpolitical character. This kind of civil society has no significant effect on institutional aspects of democracy, but on the individual level it may strengthen democracy through the fostering of support for democratic values and increasing individual capacity for political participation. Recreational civil society is closely related to neo-Tocquevillian civil society theory, whereas advocacy civil society can find a theoretical base in post-Marxist activism-oriented civil society theory, as well as liberal theory on interest organizations. Advocacy civil society is also in line with the views of East European dissident intellectuals who conceptualized civil society as a countervailing force against a totalitarian or post-totalitarian state.

The distinction between recreational civil society and advocacy civil society roughly corresponds to the distinction made by Foley and Edwards (1996, simply labeled civil society I and II). The present study not only develops and specifies their conceptualization of two versions of civil society but also provides some empirical support for the validity of the distinction. I contend that both versions of civil society may have democracy-strengthening qualities, but they promote different aspects of democracy and hence they are complementary. Both versions are needed in a consolidated democracy.

Appendix

Dependent Variables

Interest Articulation and Representation

The question measuring to what extent organizations are involved in interest articulation is: "How often is the organization/group involved in the following activities?: Articulating and representing the interests of members/constituencies."

Respondents chose one out of six alternatives coded as follows: never = 0, almost never = 0.2, seldom = 0.4, sometimes = 0.6, often = 0.8, and very often = 1. This is treated as an index ranging from 0 to 1.[8]

Check on State Power/Countervailing Force

To what extent organizations function as a countervailing force to state power is measured by the question "How often is the organization/group involved in the following activities? Investigating and criticizing abuse of state power." Respondents chose one out of six alternatives coded as follows: never = 0, almost never = 0.2, seldom = 0.4, sometimes = 0.6, often = 0.8, and very often = 1. This is treated as an index ranging from 0 to 1.

Support for Democratic Values

Support for democratic values is measured through a set of thermometer questions where respondents indicate where they stand on each of the issues. The thermometer runs from 0 through 100: 100 indicates complete agreement with the statement and 0 means complete disagreement. Support for political equality is tapped by the statement "Every citizen should have an equal chance to influence government policy." The statement "The government has the responsibility to see to it that rights of all minorities are protected" measures support for the protection of minorities. Support for the right to organize opposition is measured through the statement "Any individual or any organization has the right to organize opposition." Disagreement with the statement "Widespread participation in decision-making often leads to undesirable conflicts" is interpreted as support for political participation. Finally, a respondent's view on strong-man rule is tapped by the statement "It will always be necessary to have a few strong, able people actually running everything." The first three statements represent democratic values, whereas the last two statements indicate a lack of support for democracy. Hence, the results for the last two statements have been turned around. The five statements are combined into an index of support for democratic values by adding the five components and dividing by five: 0 would mean a complete lack of support for democratic values and 100 complete support for democratic values. In order to standardize the variables to make comparisons fruitful, all values have been divided by 100. Hence, we have an index of support for democratic values ranging from 0 to 1.

Individual Capacity for Political Participation

Individual capacity for political participation is tapped by the following question: "There are certain factors that may increase an individual's capacity to participate in political decision-making, e.g. self-confidence, access to information, capacity to express oneself in oral and written form, negotiation skills, capacity to develop autonomous judgments, etc. To what extent have your activities in this organization/group increased your personal capacity for political participation?" Respondents chose one out of five alternatives: not at all = 0, not much = 0.25, somewhat = 0.5, much = 0.75, very much = 1. This is treated as an index ranging from 0 to 1.

Independent Variables

Extent of Political Activities

The political or apolitical character of the organization (as described by a representative of the organization) is measured by the question "Politics may involve efforts at influencing formal political institutions as well as trying to change power structures in society outside of formal political institutions. To what extent does your organization/group deal with politics?" Answers were given on a five-point ordinal scale: 1) not at all, 2) very little, 3) to some extent, 4) very much, 5) completely. Dummy variables were created with "not at all" as a reference group.

Extent of Social Activities

The character of the organization as a social or charity entity is measured by the question "To what extent does your organization/group work to relieve different kinds of social problems?" Answers were given on a five-point ordinal scale: 1) not at all, 2) very little, 3) to some extent, 4) very much, 5) completely. Dummy variables were created with "not at all" as a reference group.

Extent of Recreational Activities

An organization's character as a recreational organization is measured by the question "To what extent does your organization/group organize different kinds of recreational activities?" Answers were given on a five-point ordinal scale: 1) not at all, 2) very little, 3) to some extent, 4) very much, 5) completely. Dummy variables were created with "not at all" as a reference group.

Field of Activity

Respondents were asked to specify in what field the organization/group is active. The alternatives given were: Human rights, Women, Labor, National identity/ethnic issues, Environment, Social welfare/Charity, Youth, Recreation, and Other. Dummy variables were created with "Recreation" as a reference group.

Size of Organization: Membership

Respondents were asked about the number of members in the organization. Estimations of membership range from 2 to 85,000, classified into five categories: no membership (0–20) [In those cases where respondents state the number of members to be 20 or less, this has been interpreted as a nonmembership-based organization], small (21–100), medium (101–1000), large (1001–10,000), very large (more than 10,000). From these categories dummy variables were created with "no membership" as a reference group.

Exit, Voice, and Loyalty

In order to get an indicator of the extent of exit, voice, and loyalty within an organization, respondents were asked what they would do if their organization/group decided to change its orientation in a way that went against their own opinions and interests. They could choose between the following alternatives: 1) Leave

the organization/group at once; 2) Try to change the decision, but leave if not successful; 3) Try to change the decision, but stay within the organization/group even if not successful; 4) Remain loyal to the organization/group and ignore the decision I did not like. The first answer indicates exit without any voice and the fourth is interpreted as loyalty without voice. Alternatives two and three indicate an organization where voice is an option. Dummy variables were created for exit (1) and voice (2 and 3), with loyalty (4) as a reference group.

Internal Democracy

The internal democracy of the organization/group is measured through a combination of two questions: 1) "How easy is it for an ordinary member of your organization/group to influence decisions within the organization/group?"; 2) "If members of your organization/group are not satisfied with the leadership of the organization/group, how easy is it to replace the leadership?" The alternatives given for both questions were: Impossible = 0, Very difficult = 0.25, Rather difficult = 0.5, Rather easy = 0.75, Very easy = 1. The two indicators were combined (by calculating the mean) into an index ranging from 0 = no internal democracy to 1 = high internal democracy.[9]

Degree of Open Recruitment

In order to estimate to what extent recruitment of members to the organization is open or closed, respondents were asked to what extent membership in their organization/group is open to all people who agree with the main purposes of the organization/group. Respondents were asked to select one of the following alternatives: 1) There are strict criteria for who can become a member; 2) There are some requirements for becoming a member; 3) There are some requirements for becoming a member, but those requirements are rather flexible; 4) Everyone is welcome as a member. A dummy variable for open recruitment was created by combining 3 and 4. Closed recruitment (1 and 2) constitutes the reference group.

Degree of Ethnic Pluralism

Respondents were asked to what extent their organization/group is multiethnic. One of the following alternatives was selected: 1) The organization/group only organizes one ethnic group; 2) The organization/group is oriented toward one ethnic group, but is in principle open to others as well; 3) Ethnicity is irrelevant for the organization/group, but most members belong to the same ethnic group; 4) Members (as well as leaders) of the organization/group belong to different ethnic groups; 5) A major principle of the organization/group is to be multiethnic. A dummy variable for ethnic pluralism was created by combining 4 and 5. Ethnic homogeneity (1–3) constitutes the reference group.

Autonomy from the State

Respondents were asked to assess their organization's/group's autonomy in relation to state authorities. They selected one of the following alternatives: 0) Highly dependent on state authorities for financial as well as political matters;

1) Dependent on some state subsidies and some political dependency; 2) Autonomous in most respects, but relies on some state subsidies; 3) Autonomous in most respects; 4) Completely autonomous. Dummy variables were created for "state dependent" (0 and 1) and "state funded" (2), with "state autonomous" (3 and 4) as a reference group.

TABLE 7. *Summary Statistics*

Variable name	Mean	Standard deviation
Interest articulation and representation	.752	.21675
Check on state power	.2473	.31407
Support for democratic values	.6160	.13193
Individual capacity for political participation	.3727	.30675
Very little politics	.19	.396
Some politics	.34	.473
Very much politics	.11	.311
Completely political	.07	.259
Very little social	.12	.323
Some social	.33	.472
Very much social	.23	.423
Completely social	.18	.386
Very little recreational	.19	.394
Some recreational	.43	.495
Very much recreational	.18	.381
Completely recreational	.06	.230
Politics	.08	.272
Human rights	.13	.341
Women	.06	.245
Labor	.08	.278
Nationalism	.05	.226
Environment	.04	.205
Youth	.07	.252
Education	.06	.238
Other	.05	.210
Social welfare	.25	.433
21–100 members	.34	.475
101–1000 members	.27	.444
1001–10,000 members	.05	.214
> 10,000 members	.02	.126
Exit	.21	.405
Voice	.61	.489
Internal democracy	.6583	.18940
Open recruitment	.65	.478
Ethnic pluralism	.56	.497
State funded	.17	.374
State dependent	.18	.383

Note: Minimum is 0 and maximum 1 for all variables.

Notes

1. I use the concept civil society organizations (CSOs) as it is somewhat more inclusive than nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). While most of the organizations included in this study could be labeled NGOs, there are also trade unions, sports clubs, etc. which are not usually seen as NGOs.
2. Some 89 percent of the Latvian organizations included in this study were established after independence.
3. On the problems of the data on registered NGOs in Latvia and details of the selection process, see Lindén (2008: 74–5).
4. To be a "core activist" meant that one had participated in any of the following activities of the organization on average not less than one to two times every second week during the last three months as a volunteer or employee: participated in decisions at meetings; planned or chaired a meeting; prepared or delivered a speech before a meeting; written texts other than private letters, such as letters/articles/press releases to newspapers, letters to politicians, etc.; had contacts with local or national authorities; organized projects, events, charity programs, etc.; carried out events within a project, charity program, etc. A recreational "core activist" should have organized recreational projects, events, programs, and activities etc. and/or taken part in recreational events within a project, program, activity, etc. (Lindén, 2008: 75).
5. Out of 653 contacts, 502 interviews were conducted. Some 48 contacted respondents were not active in the organization anymore and were therefore replaced by other respondents, and 103 contacted interviewees refused to participate (mainly because of lack of spare time). In order to test the reliability, 103 questionnaires (approximately 20 percent) were submitted to verification procedures, including verification of the fact that the interview took place, the date of interview, approximate duration, and a general evaluation of the interviewer by the respondent. All 103 interviews were affirmed in this quality control. The reliability of two of the 502 completed interviews was considered not entirely satisfactory by the interviewer and deleted from the data set.
6. The urban dominance is strong, with only 6 percent of the CSOs based in rural communities and an additional 15 percent in smaller towns.
7. Some 41 percent of the CSOs included in this study claim to be very much or completely social, compared with 24 percent for recreational and 18 percent for political. One fourth of the CSOs are defined as "social welfare organizations."
8. For the purpose of comparative analysis, all variables were recoded, ranging from 0 to 1.
9. This variable should be treated with special caution as there might be a problem of validity. Representatives of an organization – especially those in a leading position – are likely to exaggerate the democratic qualities of their organization. Nevertheless there is considerable variation in this variable, with more than 25 percent scoring 0.5 or less. Therefore, it is reasonable to include the variable despite potential problems of validity.

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