



Civic Education, Civil Society, and Political Mistrust in a Developing Democracy: The Case of the Dominican Republic

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Summary. — The paper explores the effect of donor-supported civic education programs on levels of citizen trust in institutions in the Dominican Republic. Using attitudinal surveys of control and treatment groups the paper demonstrates that civic education had a direct, negative effect on participants' levels of institutional trust, with the greatest negative effects on trust in governmental bodies such as the army and the judicial system. The paper argues that this stems from the type of groups that conduct civic education in democratizing countries, many of which are not politically or socially neutral. The paper concludes with a discussion of these findings for theories of democracy and civil society and for donor-supported civic education programs. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the past several decades, the United States and many European countries have devoted considerable resources to promoting democratic assistance and strengthening civil society in emerging democracies around the world (Carothers, 1997; Diamond, 1995; Quigley 1997). Many of these activities are directed explicitly at promoting support for democratic norms and values among ordinary citizens. These efforts often referred to as civic education programs range from the adoption of new curricula in primary and secondary schools to teach young people about democracy, to programs that provide instruction about the social and political rights of women, to voter education programs, and to neighborhood problem-solving programs that bring individuals in contact with local authorities for promp-

ses of promoting collective action to benefit local communities. In 1994, the US Agency for International Development alone spent over 23 million dollars on civic education.

As the amount of civic education has increased, so too has interest in the effects of these programs on individuals in developing democracies. Several evaluations of adult-based civic education have been conducted in recent

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years (Bratton, Alderfer, Bowser, & Tamba, 1999; Sabatini, Finkel, & Bevis, 1998) working from a definition of "civic education" as the "development of citizenship or civic competence [through] conveying the unique meaning, obligation, and virtue of citizenship in a particular society or the acquisition of values, dispositions, and skills appropriate to that society" (*International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd ed., Vol. 7, p. 767), these researchers have sought to determine whether civic education leads to increases in a series of well-known political attitudes, dispositions, and values. The assumption that guides these assessments (and the programs) is that individuals in democratic societies should have relatively high levels of "civic competence," including knowledge about the political system and its leaders, civic skills, and perceptions of political influence or efficacy (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Delli Carpini, & Keeter, 1996; Verba & Nie, 1972; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Individuals should also endorse values such as political tolerance, support for political liberty, and interpersonal trust, all of which have been hypothesized to sustain democratic governance (Gibson, Duch, & Tedin, 1992; Putnam, 1993, 1995; Almond & Verba, 1963). In addition, democratic individuals should be relatively participatory, voting in national and local elections and otherwise making their demands known to political elites through appropriate (i.e. nonviolent and legally sanctioned) channels. With some interesting crossnational and programmatic variations, the studies have found that civic education can have significant, though not overwhelmingly large, effects on most democratic orientations, and on voting and other forms of political participation.

The goals of civic education both in theory and practice, however, are less clear for another important orientation, the individual's trust or confidence in existing political institutions. In contrast to the consensual view that more efficacy, more tolerance, and more interpersonal trust are unequivocally good for democratic development, it is by no means evident that more institutional trust is necessarily a desirable democratic outcome. Some scholars bemoan the increasingly low levels of institutional trust seen in the United States over the past several decades (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995; Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997; Lipset & Schneider, 1983), arguing that the withdrawal of public trust hampers the ability of the government to enact necessary public policies

and respond to public demands. Others note that institutional trust has a direct and positive effect on support for democracy as a form of government, and hence that high levels of trust will promote the stability of democratic regimes (Rose, Mishler, & Haerpfer, 1998). Given the shaky levels of popular legitimacy in many developing democracies, and the relatively low levels of policy responsiveness of previous regimes, it may be argued that the role of civic education should be to increase institutional trust in order to promote more effective democratic governance.

At the same time, it is commonplace to argue that democracy requires some degree of *distrust* or skepticism on the part of the citizenry. Gibson *et al.* (1992, p. 232), for example, define the democratic citizen in part as one who "holds a certain amount of distrust of political authority...who is obedient but nonetheless willing to assert rights against the state." Mishler and Rose (1997, pp. 418-419) agree, stating that "[n]o government enjoys the absolute trust of its citizens; arguably, none should," and that "excessive trust cultivates political apathy and encourages a loss of citizen vigilance and control of government, both of which undermine democracy." On this view, the problem in democratizing systems is to create a healthy skepticism about institutions *so that* political elites are held accountable and civil society is strengthened *vis-à-vis* the state. Thus we may wish that civic education, in promoting a more democratic political culture, should *negatively* influence the citizenry's institutional trust. This may be particularly important in the case of institutions that in developing democracies have been linked to democratic overthrow, such as the armed forces.

Similarly, in donor-supported civic education programs the question of citizen trust in government is often ambiguous. While the explicit goal of any civic education program is to promote the legitimacy of democratic forms of government, it is unclear whether civic education should or does promote increased trust of the government and extant nominally democratic institutions, such as the parliament or the judiciary, or increased levels of skepticism of the state, including existing democratic institutions.

We explore the relationship between civic education and institutional trust by examining four adult-based civic education programs that were conducted in the Dominican Republic

during 1994–97. We first describe the alternative mechanisms which may lead to either positive or negative effects of civic education on institutional trust, showing that each of the proposed effects corresponds to a particular view of the role of civil society in a democratic political system. We then discuss the political and economic situation in the Dominican Republic at the time of the surveys, arguing that the objective performance of the fledgling democratic regime was extremely poor and unlikely to generate widespread citizen confidence. We then demonstrate that the effect of civic education on institutional trust was overwhelmingly negative: individuals who were exposed to civic education programs had, on average, confidence in up to one fewer political institution out of seven than individuals in the control group. These effects remained after demographic and other attitudinal controls were introduced in the analysis, suggesting that civic education has a moderately strong, direct, negative effect on institutional trust. Further, we find that civic education affects *the way* that individuals structure their attitudes about institutions, with civic education respondents being more likely to differentiate governmental bodies such as parliament and the judiciary from nongovernmental institutions such as the church or the educational system. We argue that civic education in the Dominican Republic appears to result from—and to promote—what recently has been termed “Civil Society II” (Foley and Edwards, 1996), a view of civil society as an independent and necessary counterweight to the potential abuses of the state. We discuss the implications of these findings for theories of trust and democratic consolidation, and for more practical considerations in the implementation of future civic education programs.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIC EDUCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST: ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Political scientists have long been interested in the levels and sources of institutional trust in democratic political systems (e.g., Easton, 1965; Eckstein, 1966; Gamson, 1968). In recent years, however, the topic has generated even greater interest. Some of this increased concern has been the result of political scientists’ attempts to understand the consequences of the “third wave” of democratization that swept Latin America and the former Soviet bloc in the

1980s and early 1990s, and to understand the sources of public confidence in these new regimes (Mishler & Rose, 1997; Rose *et al.*, 1998; Finifter & Mickiewicz, 1992; Seligson & Booth, 1993). In addition, some of the increased concern has been in response to the influential arguments of Robert Putnam who, in a series of works in the mid-1990s, argued forcefully for the importance of “social capital”—interpersonal trust rooted in “dense networks” of civic engagement—in understanding the successful functioning and stability of democratic governments (Putnam 1993, 1995). Some of the concern has been the result of attempts to understand the causes and consequences of the precipitous drop in institutional trust seen in the United States and several other industrialized democracies since the 1970s (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995; Listhaug & Wiberg, 1995; Nye *et al.*, 1997; Hetherington, 1998).

As a result of this resurgence of research, the sources of institutional trust in democratic systems have become increasingly, though still imperfectly, understood. By far the most important variables influencing levels of trust are the economic and political performance of the institutions themselves. As regimes deliver (and individuals perceive that they deliver) superior economic outputs and provide increased democratic freedoms, reduced corruption and peaceful alterations of power within a democratic electoral framework, the level of public trust in the institutions of government increases dramatically (Evans & Whitefield, 1995; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Rose *et al.*, 1998; Weil, 1989, 1993). Also important are individuals’ comparisons of the current democratic regime to previous authoritarian or communist systems—the more individuals reject the philosophical underpinnings and the actual practice of previous regimes, the more likely they are to embrace democratic alternatives (Rose & Mishler, 1994; Dalton, 1994; Weil, 1996).

In contrast to the effects of these performance-oriented variables, factors relating to political culture and social-structural location appear to be weaker and inconsistent predictors of trust. Following Putnam, as well as earlier arguments by Almond and Verba (1963), some scholars have found that interpersonal trust has positive effects on institutional confidence (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Martin & Claibourn, 1998). Others show that efficacious individuals are likely to be more trusting of institutions as well (Abramson, 1983; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse,

1995; Listhaug & Wiberg, 1995). The effect of associational memberships on institutional trust is inconsistent, with most studies finding either weak or no effects (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Martin & Claibourn, 1998). Similarly, some studies have found positive effects of education and income on trust (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995; Abramson, 1983) while others have found negative (Döring, 1992) or nonexistent relationships. Similar weak and sometimes inconsistent effects are found in analyses of other demographic factors such as age, gender, and church attendance. Clearly, the dominant influences on trust are the regime's political and economic performance, with smaller effects from individuals' rejection of the legacy of previous regimes and their adherence to supportive values and norms such as interpersonal trust and political efficacy.

How might exposure to civic education training activate—or supplement—these influences on institutional trust? We hypothesize that certain causal processes should lead individuals exposed to civic education to become more trusting of democratic institutions, while other processes may lead to decreased levels of trust. These alternative processes, moreover, correspond well to the two normative views of the goals of civic education: the positive effects may result from greater acceptance of democracy and supportive democratic values, while the negative effects may result from heightened awareness of current economic and political performance, and a felt need for civil society groups and individuals to hold elites accountable and prevent abuses of political power.

There are several reasons to expect positive effects of civic education on institutional trust. First, to the extent that civic education is designed to expose participants to the contrasts between democratic and authoritarian or communist political systems—and to preach the advantages of democracy—, we may expect that such programs will intensify the individual's rejection of the previous political regime and thus enhance support for current democratic institutions. Following similar logic, civic education may sharpen the distinctions between more democratic and more authoritarian institutions *within* a country at a given time, resulting in increased trust in those institutions that embody more democratic principles. Second, to the extent that civic education has positive effects on certain democratic norms and values, these may spill over onto more general evaluations of existing democratic

institutions. In particular, civic education may serve as a partial counterweight to the political culture of personal mistrust that is endemic to authoritarian and communist societies, and as social trust increases, increased levels of institutional trust may follow. Similarly, as civic education has been found to enhance the individual's sense of efficacy or influence in the political system (Finkel *et al.*, 1998), this should lead to positive indirect effects on institutional trust as well.

There are equally compelling reasons, however, to expect that exposure to civic education may decrease trust in democratic institutions. As noted above, the most powerful effects on individuals' institutional evaluations are perceptions of economic and political performance. Most developing democracies are, at least for a significant period after the regime change, beset with serious economic and political problems, among them rising prices, inability to meet citizen demands, ongoing corruption, and the like (Haggard & Kaufman, 1992; Diamond & Linz, 1989). Civic education may heighten performance-based dissatisfaction with the political system in several ways. First, to the extent that civic education increases the individual's general political awareness, people who are exposed to civic education will be more likely to *know* about a country's current economic and political problems. Second, many civic education programs are designed specifically to bring participants into contact with governmental officials and to devise ways for ordinary citizens and leaders to work together to solve community and national problems. Yet exposure to these programs may easily invite increased cynicism, as individuals may be brought into contact with unresponsive local officials or otherwise may become aware of the intransigent nature of many social and political problems. Third, in contrast to the positive "spill-over" effect of efficacy and democratic norms on trust discussed above, it is altogether possible that increases in efficacy and democratic values may be associated with *lower* levels of institutional trust, as individuals come to realize through civic education that the system is not living up to the ideals of democratic governance. If this hypothesis is true, then civic education's success in inculcating other democratic values may—at least in the short-term—produce less positive by-products in terms of institutional evaluations.

To summarize: if civic education has positive effects on institutional trust, we expect those

effects to operate through the individual's rejection of previous anti-democratic regimes and through a positive spill-over effect from increased efficacy, interpersonal trust, and other supportive democratic values. If civic education has negative effects on trust, we expect the effects to operate through increased awareness of poor system performance, through an increased sense of the unresponsiveness of local political elites, and through a heightened perception of the gaps between democratic ideals and current political practices. It is also possible that some effects in both directions will take place, in which case the net effect of civic education on institutional trust may be negligible. Finally, some of the effects may be spurious, in that individuals who are exposed to civic education training may also differ in important ways from the general population. Controlling for prior involvement in civil society, education, income and other potentially relevant demographic and political factors will be essential in order to ascertain the independent effect of civic education in the analysis to follow.

3. THE RESEARCH SETTING: THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN THE MID TO LATE 1990S

The study examines the effects of four US Agency for International Development (USAID) civic education programs conducted in the Dominican Republic in the mid- to late 1990s. The Dominican Republic was selected for several reasons, notably the scope of its civic education efforts since the early 1990s and the relative ease of data collection due to the small size of the country. Equally important, the country was coming out of period of semi-authoritarianism and afforded an excellent opportunity to assess the effects of civic education during a particular kind of political transition. We describe briefly the political context in which the four civic education programs operated, highlighting in particular those aspects of the political and economic situation that had the most relevance for assessments of institutional trust.

The Dominican Republic has operated formally under democratic institutions and processes since the late 1970s (elections, elected governments, and *de jure* separation of powers). Despite the trappings of democratic government, however, the Dominican state has

been better characterized by a combination of arbitrary, personalistic, corrupt rule that Hartlyn (1998) has termed "neo-sultanism." Real power during 1978–96 was concentrated in a personalized presidency under Joaquín Balaguer, with key political and economic decisions often made without the input of the Congress or checks by the judiciary (Espinal, 1996). Moreover, Balaguer's party, the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC), controlled a majority of seats in the Congress, enabling Balaguer to fill the courts with political cronies. Packing of the courts was combined with woefully inadequate funding for the judicial system, the poor preparation for judicial officials and well-acknowledged corruption of the court system, making the justice system politicized and inefficient (Espinal, 1996, pp. 128–129).

Since 1978 elections had been highly disputed in the Dominican Republic, and it was in the midst of one of the most charged moments of electoral controversy that the four civic education programs that we examined were initiated. Balaguer won the presidential elections in 1994 with a slim 0.7% of the vote. Immediately after the elections, the opposing political parties charged electoral fraud, pointing, in particular, to the irregularities in the electoral registries that had prevented a significant number of voters (allegedly supporters of the opposition) from casting their ballots on election day. International election observation teams from the Organization of American States, the National Democratic Institute, and the International Foundation for Election Systems also cited cases of electoral fraud and questioned the legitimacy of the elections. The charges prompted an internal investigation by the Dominican electoral commission (JCE) which concluded that discrepancies did indeed exist, but did not assess the extent to which they had taken place or if they had been sufficient to influence the outcome of the elections. In spite of its own report, the JCE sanctioned the results of the elections, and Balaguer was inaugurated president on August 2, 1994.

The general sentiment of Dominican citizens was that the election had been stolen, and public disgust provoked a backlash within civil society against the election. International and domestic forces pressured for a resolution to what appeared to be a mounting crisis. After a series of negotiations between opposition parties, civil society (most prominently the Catholic Church) and the government,

President Balaguer signed the Pact for Democracy on August 10, 1994. In the pact, among other constitutional reforms, Balaguer agreed to shorten his term to two years, at which time a new presidential election would be held in which he would be banned from competing.

In the two years between the 1994 and 1996 elections, a number of political and economic scandals surfaced that reinforced the public's negative perception of the corruption of the Dominican government. In reaction to the heightened popular opposition, the government initially responded with repression, harassing political opponents, tapping phone lines and tightening state security. Government repression was coupled with increased revelations of state corruption and economic failures. The Dominican media alleged the corruption of a number of Balaguer's inner circle of advisors. During this time, the extent of economic losses and the deterioration of several prominent state economic holdings also became public. In 1995, 10 of the 23 companies in the state holding company CORDE were closed, and it was revealed that the state sugar company and state electrical company were operating at a loss. The revelations served as a sharp and costly reminder of the inefficiency and corruption from Balaguer's term in office and increased the public's perception of civil society as an unsoiled alternative to the crisis of government (Hartlyn, 1998, pp. 211–212).

As the 1996 elections approached, rumors persisted that President Balaguer would fail to honor the promises in the pact. Stories circulated that the aging president planned to use an excuse to foreclose the elections or overturn the results in order to hold on to power. The rumors proved false, and in 1996 opposition politician Leonel Fernandez of the Democratic Liberation Party (PLD), with the support of Balaguer and the PRSC, won the run-off elections. For many observers, the inauguration of Fernandez raised hopes of a new democratic transition in the Dominican Republic and the institutionalization of a democratic regime.

4. PROGRAMS STUDIED

It was in this environment that the four groups in our study conducted their civic education programs: economic disarray, doubts about whether a transition of power would actually take place, public revelations of widespread corruption and cronyism, and fragile

hopes for the emergence of a more democratic political system. The study examined four programs that conducted civic education programs during 1994–97. They were selected because of the variation of their methods, subject matters, and target populations. All of the programs were directed to adults (for recent studies on student civic education, see Niemi & Junn, 1998; Slomczynski & Shabad, 1998; Remy & Strzemieczny, 1996).

The first of the programs studied was conducted by a national elections-oriented nongovernmental organization, *Participación Ciudadana* (PC). For the 1996 presidential elections, PC created another group, called *La Red de los Observadores Electorales*, to organize and train youth and adults to serve as election observers in 1996 and to conduct a quick count of the vote. The program ran from 1995 to mid-1996, although PC activities continued into 1997, still focused on elections. (Of those in the sample 14% of the respondents were exposed to PC and Red training sessions but did not eventually work as election observers.)

The second program was conducted by a newly formed nongovernmental organization, *Grupo Accion por la Democracia* (GAD). The program was conducted in two phases, with the first phase dedicated to a general educational program concerning basic political rights and obligations in a democracy, primarily through a lecture format. The second phase brought these people together to hold a series of national and local issues fora to discuss problems and solutions in specific policy areas, such as justice, health, and education. Local government authorities attended these fora as well. The two phases were intended to create a national nongovernmental organization (NGO) with a network of local branches outside of Santo Domingo and to mobilize citizens to participate in these new structures. The program ran from November 1995 to October 1996.

The third program was part of a larger community finance and small business development program for women conducted through a women's small business NGO, *Asociación Dominicana para el Desarrollo de la Mujer* (ADOPEM). The program trained women community leaders in women's rights, democratic values, democracy in the family, and self-esteem, using a classroom/workshop format, and ran from January 1996 to January 1997.

The fourth program studied was conducted by a local NGO affiliated with a local radio

station in La Vega, Radio Santa María (RSM). The project trained intermediaries (typically leaders of rural towns) who then conducted civic education in their local communities. The subject matter focused on civic knowledge and values, such as rights and duties in a democracy, the importance of participation, and democracy in the family. For the direct participants (trainers) the program used materials distribution, lectures, forums and dramatizations; for indirect participants the program relied on lectures and materials distribution. RSM ran two consecutive projects, over 1994–95 and from 1995 to December 1996.

5. DATA AND MEASUREMENT ¹

We administered a questionnaire to a representative sample of individuals who had participated in each of the civic education programs under study (a treatment group) and a representative sample of individuals who had not participated (a control group). In all of the programs except Radio Santa Maria, treatment samples were drawn from lists of participants provided by the implementing organizations. For the Radio Santa Maria program, only lists of the “leaders” or first-stage participants were maintained, and we obtained names of ordinary participants through “snowball” sampling methods from interviews with the first-stage participants.

Our strategy for obtaining appropriate control samples was to select nonparticipants at random in each of the regions where the programs were conducted. We began with a national stratified random sample of 50 municipalities, as the PC program operated nationwide, and GAD operated in all areas except for Santo Domingo, the country’s capital. Individuals were selected for inclusion in the sample in proportion to the population of the selected municipality. We then supplemented this sample with an oversample of individuals in La Vega, where the Radio Santa Maria program operated, and women in the four areas where ADOPEM conducted its training. Table 1 summarizes the participant and control samples for each of the four programs.

The in-country survey was conducted by the *Instituto de Estudios de Población y Desarrollo* (IEPD), the statistical office affiliated with PROFAMILIA. Response rate for the survey was an excellent 90.5%, with 98% response for the participant sample and 83.7% response for the control group. Due to the lack of appropriate census-type data, it is impossible to assess definitively the representativeness of the sample, but the age, educational level, and marital status of our control sample closely resemble the levels seen in the 1993 DEMOS survey conducted on behalf of USAID, which at the time represented the last official survey of political values of the Dominican Republic population before the current study.

Table 1. *Treatment and control samples for the four civic education programs*

Treatment			
Project name	Location	Size	How sampled
Participación Ciudadana GAD ADOPEM	National	250	Random, from lists
	National(except Santo Domingo)	247	Random, from lists
	La Vega, San Pedro de Macoris, San Cristobal, Herrera, Sabana Perdida	201	Random, from lists
Radio Santa Maria (direct)	La Vega	152	Random, from lists
Radio Santa Maria (indirect)	La Vega	153	Snowball from RSM- Direct participants
Control			
	Location	Size	How sampled
	National	695	Random stratified
	La Vega	189	Random
	San Pedro de Macoris	50	Random
	San Cristobal	50	Random
	Herrera	50	Random
	Sabana Perdida	50	Random

6. MEASUREMENT

(a) *Institutional trust*

We measured institutional trust and a variety of demographic and political orientations using standard items used in past survey-based democratic values research. We measured trust by asking people to rate whether they had “much,” “little,” or “no” trust (*confía* in Spanish) in the following institutions: Judiciary, Mass Media, Church, Armed Forces, Parliament, Local Officials, Police, Political System, Educational System, and the Business Community. In the results section below, we discuss how we combined these items into a single scale for subsequent regression analyses.

(b) *Political orientations*

We measured a series of political orientations based on our hypotheses above regarding the potentially intervening mechanisms between civic education and institutional trust. They are: Political Knowledge; Rights Knowledge; Civic Skills; General Efficacy; Local Official Responsiveness; Support for Democratic Liberty; Paternalism; and Social Trust. A description of questions and scale construction is included in Appendix A.

(c) *Demographic and other control variables*

We controlled for a variety of demographic influences on democratic values and political participation, including education, income, age, gender, place of residence, and time lived in the community. Aside from adding to the explanatory power of the equations, including these factors begins to control for the fact that the civic education programs we analyzed tended to train certain kinds of individuals who may already have been higher or lower on institutional trust than individuals in the control groups. As will be seen below, participants tended to be younger and have relatively higher levels of education and income than the control groups, immediately raising the possibility that the observed effects of civic education would be spurious without taking these factors into account.

In addition, in its early field research the team discovered that many of the adult programs in the Dominican Republic used existing networks in civil society to recruit participants into civic education activities. This

again raised potential problems of selection bias. For that reason, we needed to be able to control for people’s previous participation in civil society, to be sure that the effects found were the result of civic education and not of participation in civil society before the program. To address this, we also controlled for membership in a wide variety of voluntary associations, such as peasant associations, community groups, unions, church groups and the like.

Yet even after taking demographic factors and organizational memberships into account, we may still not have eliminated all of the potential biases due to self-selection. Indeed, it may have been the case that individuals within all of these demographic groups who found their way into the treatment groups were also those who—for some unknown or unmeasured reason—possessed higher or lower levels of trust. As a partial corrective to this problem, we included two additional variables as controls, the individual’s reported interest in politics and attention to the mass media, reasoning that these factors are good measures of an individual’s overall political awareness and sophistication, and hence may serve as a proxy for the individual’s prior attachment to democratic norms. One possible drawback to this strategy is that our estimates of treatment effects may be attenuated if civic education has a *causal* effect on interest and media use; in that case we would be controlling for a variable that actually represents a potentially intervening variable between the treatment and institutional trust. We think the problem of selection bias is likely to be more serious in this instance, and for that reason believe that our analytic strategy is the most appropriate, given the empirical and measurement constraints that we faced.

7. RESULTS

(a) *Levels and structure of institutional trust*

We begin by noting the absolute levels of institutional trust in the Dominican Republic, regardless of whether individuals were exposed to civic education or not. Figure 1 shows the proportion of Dominicans who register “much trust” in each of the 10 political and civil institutions. As can be seen, only two institutions, the Church and the Educational System, register a majority of “much trust” responses, while the Mass Media and the Army hover

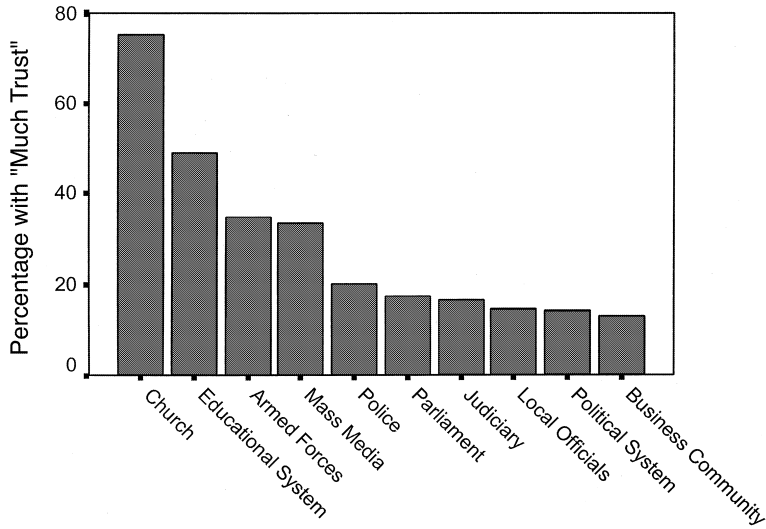


Figure 1. Trust in 10 Dominican institutions.

between the 35–40% mark. All other institutions register “much trust” responses of only approximately 20%, indicating that only a relatively small minority of Dominicans have a significant amount of trust in these institutions—including the judicial system, the political system, the parliament, local officials, and the business community.

While it is difficult to make exact comparisons with other countries because of differences in question wording and response categories across different surveys, it is nevertheless instructive to compare the Dominican responses to levels reported in other countries in recent published work. Mishler and Rose (1997, p. 428), for example, report that nearly one-third of East European respondents in 1994 had either “quite a lot” or “a great deal” of confidence in the judicial system and in the police. According to public opinion surveys conducted in Latin America in 1996, an average of 31% and 25% had either “some trust” or a “great deal of trust” in the judiciary and police, respectively. (Countries included in the survey were: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. The research was conducted by Latinobarometro.) By contrast, only 20% of Dominican respondents report “much” trust in their judiciary or their police. On other dimensions, notably Parliament and the Political System, the levels of trust in the East European, Latin American and Dominican contexts are equally

low, and for some institutions (Church, Army, Media), they appear to be equally high.

It should also be noted that the levels of absolute *distrust* also appear to be relatively low in the Dominican Republic, and perhaps somewhat lower than in Eastern European countries. Only one institution, the Business Community, registers more than one-quarter “no trust” responses, with most institutions showing between 5% and 20%. This contrasts to Mishler and Rose’s data, where an average of one-third of respondents registered high levels of distrust. As in Eastern Europe, the plurality response in the Dominican Republic appears to be one of “little trust,” or what Mishler and Rose call “skepticism” about institutions; about 50–60% of Dominicans fall in neither the extreme “much trust” or “no trust” categories. Thus, Dominican respondents are generally skeptical, with more trusting than distrusting responses about some civil institutions (Media, Church, Army, Educational System), and equal amounts of trusting and distrusting responses on most purely governmental institutions.

We turn next to the basic differences in trust for each of the 10 institutions between individuals who were trained in any of the four civic education programs ($N=1017$) and the control sample ($N=1018$). The results are shown in Figure 2, and indicate that civic education participants have significantly *less* trust in each of the institutions than individuals

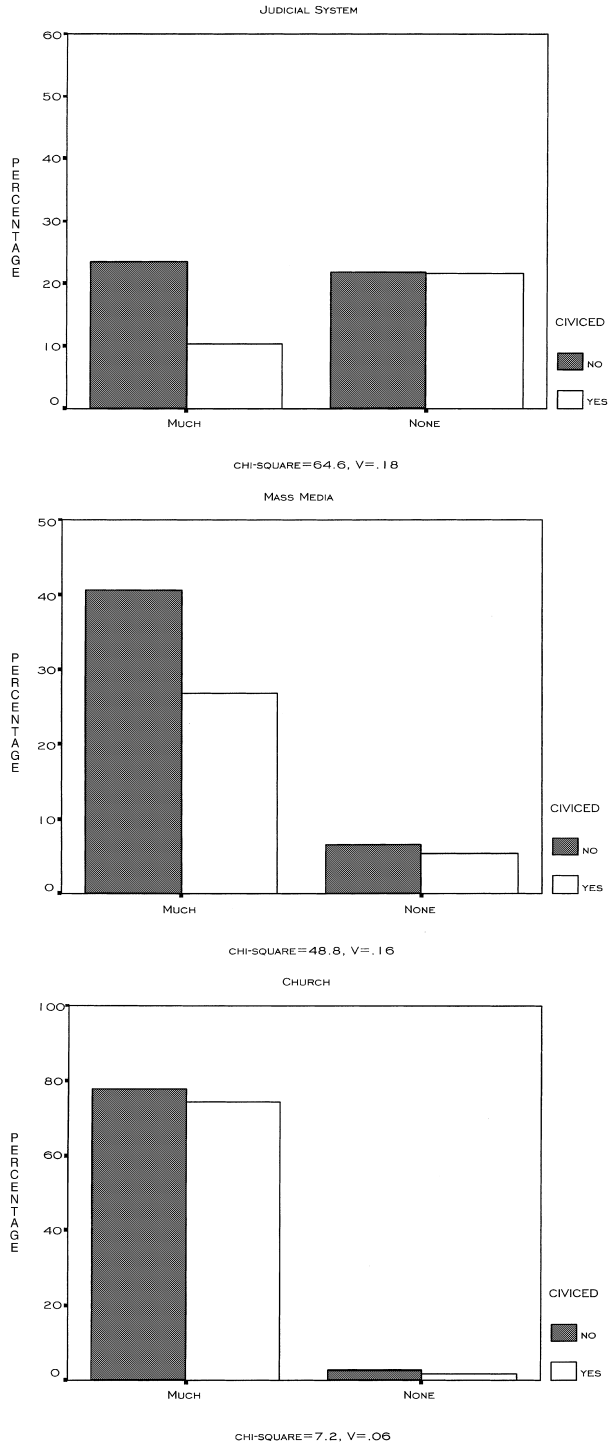


Figure 2. Institutional trust by civic education participation.

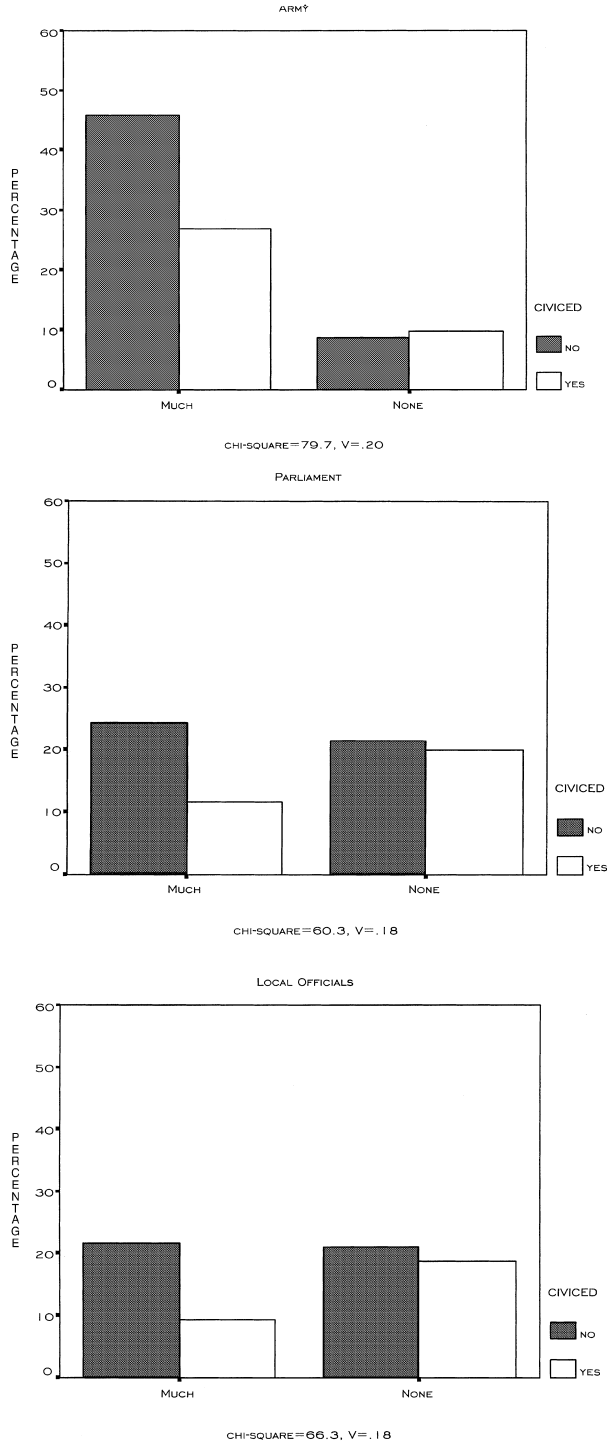


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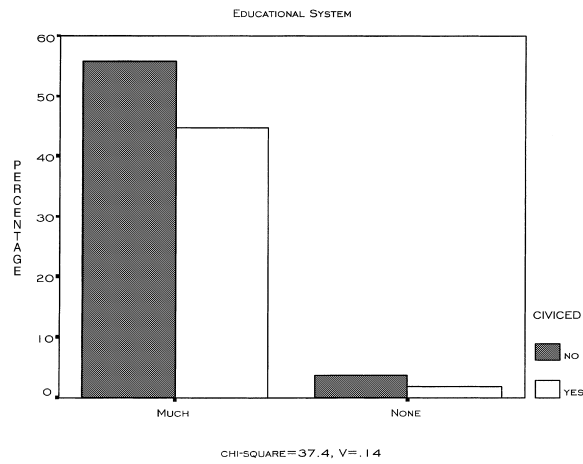
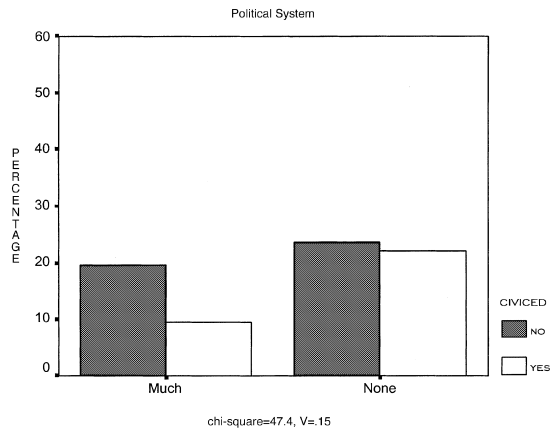
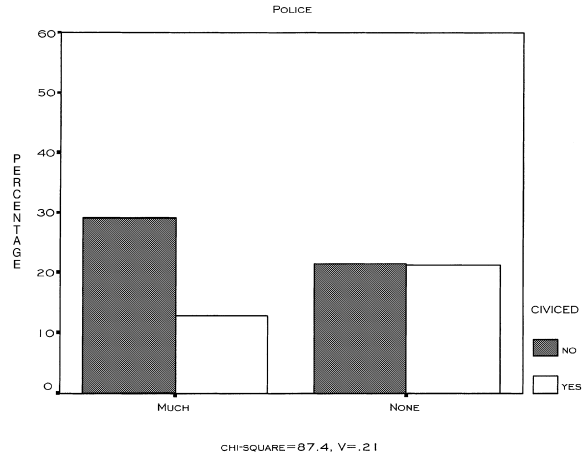


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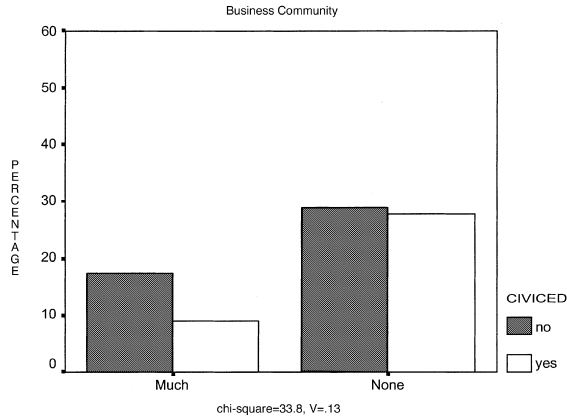


Figure 2. (continued)

in the control group. The figure shows the differences in “much trust” and “no trust” responses, with the “little trust” category removed for ease of presentation. It can be seen that for each of the 10 institutions, the differences are concentrated in the “much trust” category; there are essentially no differences between civic education and control group individuals in their likelihood of reporting “no trust” in the various institutions. Therefore any differences seen in the “much trust” responses are also seen (in the opposite direction) in the “little trust” responses. This finding is of interest in itself, as it shows that civic education does not increase the individuals’ level of absolute distrust, but rather increases their skepticism, a result which has different implications that we discuss below for the assessment of these programs in normative terms.

The results do suggest, however, that there is a modest, though uniform, tendency for individuals who have received civic education training to be less likely to report “much trust” in the various institutions. The percentage differences range from a high of 18.8 for the Army to a low of 3.3 for the Church, with most institutions showing differences of around 10–15 points (e.g., Judicial System, Local Officials, Parliament, Police, Mass Media). All chi-squares are statistically significant, with Cramer’s V, a suitable measure of association,² ranging from 0.21 for the Police, 0.20 for the Army, 0.18 for the Judicial System, Parliament and Local Officials, to lows of 0.13 for the Business Community and 0.06 for the Church. Clearly civic education trainees have less confidence in these political and civil institu-

tions than their counterparts in the control group.

It is interesting to note the pattern of effects of civic education on trust in the various institutions. The most significant effects of civic education were seen in the Police and the Army, two institutions which until recently were significant instruments of state repression and generally represent the epitome of non-democratic institutions. Many observers note with alarm continued levels of citizen trust and in some cases the apparent rise in popular sentiment toward the armed forces in many countries in Latin America (Payne, 1998). To this extent, civic education may be instilling a necessary check on these possibly authoritarian sympathies and developments. The next grouping of institutions affected by civic education are the purely governmental institutions—Judiciary, Parliament, Local Officials—all of which register measures of association of 0.18. Finally, the institutions where civic education had the least effect were on nonstate, or civil institutions such as the Mass Media, the Church, and the Business Community. These findings suggest that civic education efforts are concentrated on state-oriented institutions, with more critical effects being seen in precisely those institutions that have historically been least democratic. Again, such findings have interesting normative implications that shall be discussed below.

This distinction between the effects of civic education on state-oriented and nonstate-oriented institutions leads to a further hypothesis: that civic education, by focusing on state actors and their role in democratic politics, may

promote a distinction in people's minds between their evaluations of these different kinds of political and social institutions. That is, civic education may help individuals see the differences between purely state actors and other kinds of social institutions. This is exactly what is shown in a factor analysis, the results of which are presented in Table 2. Among individuals who did not experience civic education training, the 10 institutions load on a single dimension, with all factor loadings above 0.50 except for the Church (0.47). Thus all of these institutions reflect one underlying evaluative dimension for the average Dominican. Among civic education participants, however, two factors emerge: one focusing mainly on state institutions and the other on a more social dimension, encompassing the Media, the Church, the Educational System. The distinctions do not mirror perfectly the discussion above, as the Army loads on both dimensions and the Business Community on the first factor. The latter result may be explained by the traditional overlap between Dominican business groups and the government; a system that could be more appropriately called crony capitalism than a private market economy. Nevertheless, there appears to be the tendency of the civic education sample to make distinctions between state and society that elude individuals in the control group. Together with the results discussed above, these findings indicate that civic education makes people

aware of state-society institutional differences, and also promotes greater skepticism about institutions that embody the state as opposed to the wider society.

(b) *The effects of civic education on institutional trust: alternative explanations*

Based on the factor analysis just reported, we constructed a summary variable of trust in state institutions by counting the number of the following institutions in which the individual reports "much trust": Judicial System, Police, Army, Parliament, Local Officials, Political System, and the Business Community. Each of the institutions exhibited factor loadings of 0.5 or more (0.49 for the Army) on the first factor above. The reliability of the seven-item index is very high, at 0.85. The mean for the index is 1.33 with a standard deviation of 1.97.

In Table 3, we present three models that explore the effects of civic education on the seven-item institutional trust index. Model 1 shows the simple effect of participation in each of the four civic education programs. As can be seen, participation in each program is associated with a lower level of overall institutional trust, with all effects being statistically significant. The largest of the effects—for the PC election monitoring program—shows that civic education participants had "much trust" in almost one fewer institution than the control group ($b = -0.92$). Participants in two other programs—GAD and ADOPEM—registered unstandardized slope coefficients of -0.6 to -0.7 , and the weakest effect was seen for the rural-based program Radio Santa Maria (RSM), where participants nevertheless showed "much trust" in 0.45 fewer institutions than the control group.

The results in Model 2 suggest that some of the effects seen in the previous model were due to selection effects, in that individuals who were exposed to civic education training were also likely to possess certain demographic and political characteristics that relate to institutional trust. Civic Education participants were, on average, younger, more highly educated, and more interested in local politics than the typical Dominican respondent, and these characteristics were all associated with lower levels of institutional trust. The effect of education on trust is particularly strong, and indeed its beta coefficient of -0.21 is one of the largest effects—in either direction—reported for education in the literature (Hibbing &

Table 2. *Factor loadings of institutional confidence items for civic education and non-civic education groups*

	Noncivic education	Civic education	
	Factor 1	Factor 1	Factor 2
Judiciary	0.69	0.52	0.41
Media	0.59	0.27	0.60
Church	0.47	-0.01	0.83
Army	0.73	0.49	0.49
Parliament	0.77	0.66	0.34
Local officials	0.73	0.73	0.18
Police	0.76	0.64	0.39
Political system	0.68	0.76	0.05
Educational system	0.58	0.33	0.47
Business community	0.65	0.72	0.08
Variance explained	44.9	40.8	10.8

Table 3. *The effects of civic education on institutional trust: alternative models*

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
<i>Civic education programs</i>						
PC	-0.92**	-0.17	-0.47**	-0.09	-0.40**	-0.08
GAD	-0.61**	-0.11	-0.32**	-0.06	-0.18	-0.03
RSM	-0.45**	-0.09	-0.63**	-0.12	-0.52**	-0.10
ADOPEM	-0.72**	-0.12	-0.40**	-0.06	-0.38**	-0.06
<i>Demographics and prior pol. interest</i>						
Group memberships	-	-	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03
Education	-	-	-0.23**	-0.21	-0.13**	-0.12
Age	-	-	0.01**	0.06	0.01*	0.05
Santo Domingo	-	-	-0.29*	-0.06	-0.07	-0.01
Other urban	-	-	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.01
Gender	-	-	-0.27**	-0.07	-0.37**	-0.09
Time in community	-	-	-0.03	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01
Income	-	-	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.01
National political interest	-	-	0.01	0.04	0.11**	0.07
Local political interest	-	-	-0.11*	-0.05	-0.13**	-0.06
Media exposure	-	-	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.04
<i>Political knowledge and attitudes</i>						
Rights consciousness	-	-	-	-	-0.02	-0.01
Knowledge	-	-	-	-	-0.19**	-0.12
Rights knowledge	-	-	-	-	-0.16**	-0.07
Civic skills	-	-	-	-	0.37**	0.07
General efficacy	-	-	-	-	-0.24**	-0.09
Local officials responsive?	-	-	-	-	0.39**	0.18
Social trust	-	-	-	-	0.19**	0.14
Necessity of elections	-	-	-	-	-0.05	-0.03
Support for liberty	-	-	-	-	0.04	0.02
Low paternalism	-	-	-	-	-0.01	-0.02
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	0.05		0.10		0.18	
Number of cases	(1754)		(1754)		(1754)	

* $P < 0.10$ (two-tailed).** $P < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

Theiss-Morse 1995; Döring 1992; Hetherington 1998).³

Another demographic variable, residency in the capital city of Santo Domingo, is also negatively related to trust, and this variable serves to *increase* the negative effect of participation in the Radio Santa Maria program over its effect in Model 1. As the RSM program was conducted mostly in rural areas, participants were predisposed to be *more* trusting of institutions, and controlling for these prior dispositions means that the “pure” effect of the program is more negative on trust than seen before. Women are more likely to be distrustful than men, but as there are equal numbers of men and women in the participant and control samples, gender is irrelevant in accounting for the effects of civic education on trust. Taken together, the inclusion of the demographic and political involvement variables diminishes the

civic education effects by approximately 50% for PC, GAD and ADOPEM, and increases the civic education effects by approximately the same amount for Radio Santa Maria. Equally important, though, all of the civic education coefficients remain statistically significant, indicating that exposure to these programs decreases institutional trust over and above the dispositions that civic education participants may hold prior to their training.

In Model 3, we enter the political attitudes that, according to our hypotheses above, may intervene between civic education and institutional trust. The most noteworthy finding from the model is how little including potentially intervening attitudes such as knowledge, social trust and efficacy reduces the effects of civic education. Only for the GAD program did the political variables wipe out the civic education–institutional trust relationship; for all other

programs the unstandardized coefficients for the programs in Model 3 were reduced by only approximately 15%. Clearly, the dominant effect in the model is a significant negative direct effect of civic education participation on institutional trust.⁴

Nevertheless, many of the processes hypothesized earlier to explain the civic education effects do in fact occur. We speculated that the negative effect on trust would operate through increased awareness of system performance, through an increased sense of the unresponsiveness of local political elites, and through a heightened perception of the gaps between democratic ideals and current political practices. Model 3 shows that each of these variables—political knowledge, perceived unresponsiveness of local officials, knowledge of democratic rights and “rights consciousness”—is negatively related to institutional trust, with all but the latter effect achieving statistical significance. Dominican individuals who know more about politics in general, and who know more about democracy and democratic values in particular, are less likely to have trust in governmental institutions. Further, civic education has weak positive effects on each of these variables; that is, exposure to civic education increased people’s storehouse of political knowledge, increased their knowledge about democratic rights (though this effect falls just short of statistical significance), and increased their sense that local officials are not responsive to public demands. These effects are summarized in path diagram form in Figure 3, with the effects aggregated across all civic education groups for ease of presentation.⁵

Thus the causal mechanisms that were hypothesized to produce a negative relationship between civic education and institutional trust were almost all borne out in the Dominican experience. Civic education led to increased levels of general knowledge, democratic knowledge, and critical perspectives on local officials, each of which was associated with decreased levels of trust.

On the other hand, almost none of the causal processes hypothesized to produce a *positive* civic education/trust relationship appears to have taken place. We expected such effects to operate through the individual’s rejection of previous anti-democratic regimes and through a positive spill-over effect from increased efficacy, interpersonal trust, and other supportive democratic values. We do not have a direct measure of support for the previous authori-

tarian regime, but we did measure two variables that could be viewed as reasonable proxies for the values inherent in that regime, the notion that social order is more important than individual liberty, and support for a strong, paternalistic leader. Neither of these variables affects institutional trust in Table 3, Model C one way or the other. The model shows further that political efficacy has a *negative* effect on institutional trust, in contrast to the findings of previous research in the United States and Western Europe. So the positive effect of civic education on political efficacy shown in Figure 3 actually lowers overall levels of trust, in contrast to the expectations of the spill-over hypothesis. The only variable that appears to produce a positive civic education-trust relationship is social trust, which has a moderately large positive effect on institutional trust and is affected in turn positively through participation in civic education programs. Thus civic education does appear to build attitudes of social trust, efficacy, knowledge and the like, but almost all of these variables have negative effects on trust in institutions. Moreover, the one causal process which produced a positive civic education-trust relationship was decisively outweighed by the many processes that produced a negative association. In short, civic education marginally increased the “democraticness” of the Dominican respondents, but the more “democratic” individuals became, the less likely they were to trust the institutions of their political system.

8. DISCUSSION

We have shown a negative relationship between participation in four civic education programs and an individual’s trust in governmental institutions in the Dominican Republic. Coupled with Bratton *et al.*’s (1999) similar finding in Zambia, it appears that democracy training sponsored by USAID, while increasing individual knowledge, efficacy, and other supportive democratic values, decreases the sense that governmental institutions are worthy of citizen trust. We attempted to explain this finding through several intervening mechanisms and found some support for these causal processes: as individuals learn more about the political system, they become more attuned to the actual political and economic performance of the government, which in the Dominican case in the mid-1990s (and presumably the

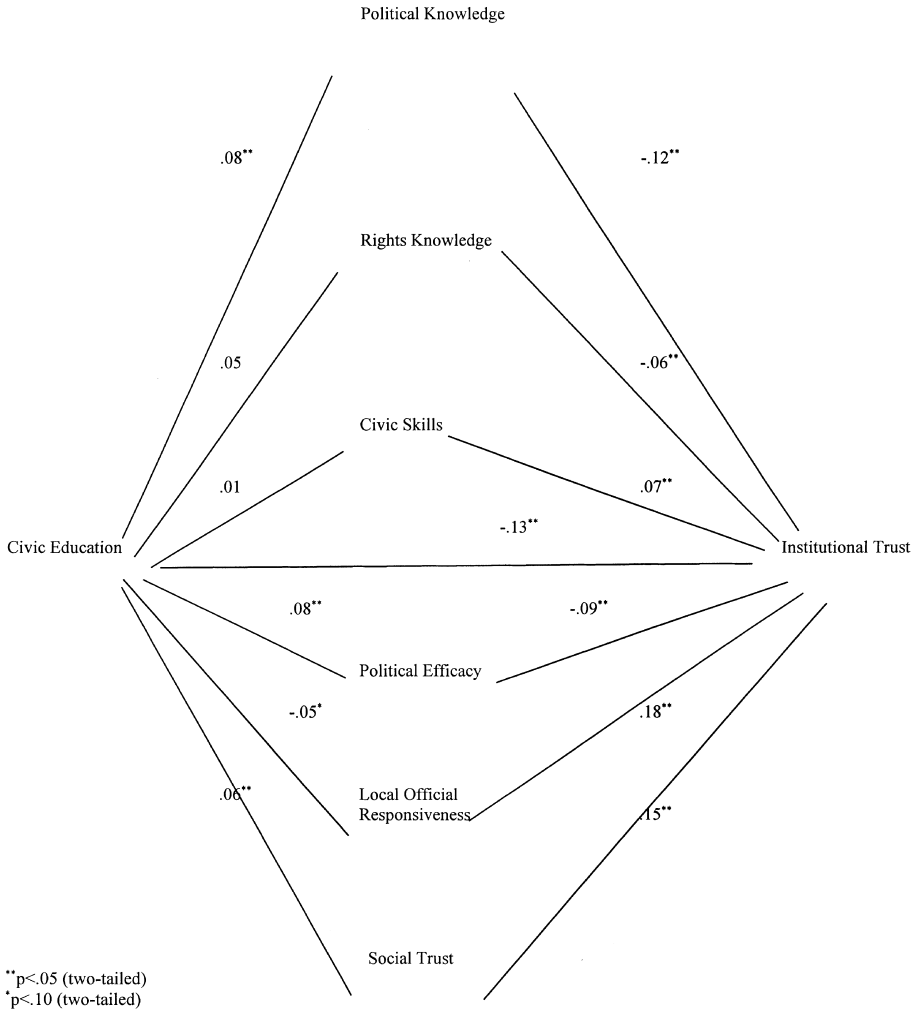


Figure 3. Direct and indirect influences of civic education on institutional trust. (Note: Demographic and prior political involvement variables from Table 2 included; coefficients not known.)

Zambian case as well) was extremely poor. In addition, as individuals become more attached to democratic rights and values, they tend to see the existing political system as falling short of these ideals. And as they come to believe that entrenched local political elites are unresponsive to popular concerns, they deem government institutions as less trustworthy as well.

Nevertheless, the strongest effect in the study was the direct negative influence of civic education exposure on institutional trust. This effect is somewhat of a puzzle. What explains it? That is, why is there still a direct effect once the theoretically-relevant intervening variables

have been included in the models? Why should exposure to civic education *per se* lead to decreased institutional trust, over and above its indirect effects through knowledge, responsiveness, rights knowledge, and the like?

We do not have a definitive answer, but we believe that at least part of the solution to this puzzle lies in the group context in which civic education—in the Dominican Republic and probably elsewhere—takes place. Civic education does not take place in neutral social settings. It is undertaken not by hobby groups, sports clubs, or the other nonpolitical associations idealized in the recent literature on “social

capital,” but rather by nongovernmental political organizations and civic groups which are often antagonistic toward governments that are perceived to be insufficiently democratic, insufficiently responsive to ordinary individuals, and hostile to democratic reforms. In this sense, civic education may take place within what Foley and Edwards (1996, pp. 38–39) label “Civil Society II,” a perspective which emphasizes “civil society as a sphere of action that is independent of the state that is capable—precisely for this reason—of emerging resistance to a tyrannical regime.” If this is the case, then it would be expected that civic education would promote mistrust of current political institutions precisely because the groups that conduct civic education see themselves as a vital counterweight to potentially non-democratic state power.

A close examination of the recent relationship between NGOs and the Dominican state, as well as the specific civic education programs analyzed in this paper, supports this contention. As noted above, organized civil society groups played a critical role in forcing the concessions from President Balaguer that, in the wake of widespread corruption and possible theft of the 1994 presidential elections, led to the Pact for Democracy and the 1996 elections. These experiences solidified the long-standing oppositional posture of civic groups and other civil society organizations *vis-à-vis* the state. As Hartlyn writes: “The crisis helped mobilize efforts to strengthen civil society and further convinced many groups of the futility of working with the state as long as it was controlled by Balaguer” (Hartlyn, 1998, pp. 211–212). The dominant stance of civil society at the time of the civic education training analyzed here was undeniably antagonistic—and justifiably so—toward the Dominican government.

This oppositional posture can also be seen clearly in the training materials used by the civic education programs assessed in this study. Two basic themes run throughout the project materials that the groups used. First, all of the materials used as their basis a normative conception of what democracy ought to be, and either directly or indirectly attempted to contrast that with the deficiencies of the existing regime. Second, all of the programs, in seeking to mobilize citizens to assume their responsibilities to participate politically, presented civil society and citizen initiative as the path for a new democratic era in the

Dominican Republic. The overwhelming message was that the sins of past governments, lack of accountability, unresponsiveness and corruption, could only be overcome through the participation of civil society.

For example, according to the *GAD* group’s own description of its activities, the explicit conceptual goal was to create a new democratic “institutionality” that inevitably would involve greater involvement of the civil society with government. Much of this turned on getting citizens involved through the workshops with a diagnosis of the problems of the country and the development of proposals for the institutional, economic and social development of the country. While the project recognized the importance of citizen confidence in the state, it posited that the channels for political participation must be reformed before citizen trust could increase. Project materials and activities implored people to assume their responsibility of participating in civil society; government failure of the past was the fault of citizens for not becoming involved. One of the project implementors stated that the spirit of the project, by seeking to mobilize citizens to participate, meant challenging the old order.

Radio Santa Maria had a long history as a voice of the opposition and the rural poor in central Dominican Republic. In its materials, *RSM* typically defined a specific goal or task that a government should conduct, and then contrasted it with the behavior of the current government. Thus, one training book teaches participants:

Those that govern have this task: to organize the resources of a community in a way that best responds to their needs... [but in the Dominican Republic]...many times it appears that those that govern only look for power because of the benefits that it will give them, their families and their friends....Many times they become the worse problems (10 Pasos hacia la participación política, Manuel Maza M., S.J., text used by *RSM*, pp. 6–8).

Similarly, in a section on how to control those who govern, the books inveighs directly against the government, citing in particular the overwhelming power of the executive and the weakness of the competing branches of government that have created an unaccountable state. In setting out the argument, the textbook begins by asserting that a constitution should serve as the framework to limit and control a government. The textbook then goes

on to argue that in the Dominican Republic the constitution has failed to serve that purpose. As a result, there has been no way to control government between elections:

Congressmen, senators, representatives depend on the executive power to get the funds necessary to serve the voters in the provinces and districts....The judicial power is not truly independent...externally our country gives the impression that there exist three independent powers, but in reality the executive power doesn't have to account to anyone, neither the congress nor the judicial branches have the power (10 Pasos hacia la participación política, p. 26).

While less an explicitly opposition group, the *Asociación Dominicana para el Desarrollo de la Mujer* (ADOPEM) sought to mobilize women to assume a greater role in Dominican politics and society and improve women's rights in the Dominican Republic. The ADOPEM materials highlighted and asked participants to reflect on the existing difficulties women face in the Dominican Republic despite the existence of international agreements concerning women's rights and a list of rights inscribed in the Dominican constitution. This gap, the project materials stated, could only be closed if women would assume the responsibility of participating and advocate change.

Finally, *Participación Ciudadana* (PC) was devoted less to teaching and more toward organizing citizens to observe and monitor the 1996 elections. It was commonly understood, however, that PC was organized and filled with leaders and volunteers openly sympathetic to the opposition Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), which may have in fact won the elections in 1994 against President Balaguer, but then lost the 1996 elections to the Fernandez in a runoff election after the latter received the support of the ex-President. The PC materials did not devote as much attention to broad theoretical references to the state and normative conceptions of democracy, but the group was by its nature seeking to build societal checks on the state. The training materials focused on the elections, and echoed the themes present in the other programs. The materials quizzed participants on their views of the integrity of the Dominican electoral commission (JCE), asking if they believed that it was independent and honest, the implicit assumption being that the JCE was not to be trusted. The materials attempt to demonstrate the failures of the past elections and the need for citizens to take matters in their own hands to

guarantee the freeness and fairness of elections. But here the electoral question also spills over to other matters of the state. By questioning the means through which past government positions had been filled, either directly, through elections (the executive and the congress) or indirectly, through the appointment of elected officials, (the judiciary) the program brought into question the legitimacy of the Dominican Republic's nominally democratic institutions.

Though we hesitate to make too much out of the relatively minor differences between the programs, it is worth noting in Model 3/Table 3 the different effects on the participants of each program. After controlling for demographics and political knowledge and attitudes, the greatest negative effect on trust was among participants in the Radio Santa María programs and the weakest was among the participants in the GAD programs. We can only speculate as to the causes but, arguably, the materials of the RSM programs were the most critical of the Dominican state, inveighing directly against specific institutions—the congress, the judiciary, and the constitution. Moreover, the RSM courses often remained at an abstract level. The informal workshops and the materials were used to teach community leaders about the government, but there was no specific attempt to bring government officials into the discussions. In contrast, the GAD program, which registered the least negative effects, was aimed explicitly at developing a series of civil society proposals to address specific, concrete problems of governance in the education system, the justice system, and in local government, for example. Unlike the RSM project, the GAD program was designed to include party and state representatives who were presented these proposals and debated them with participants.

Our point is not to suggest that these groups somehow distorted political reality in their training programs, nor that they were not justified in presenting democratic training materials in a manner appropriate to current societal conditions. Rather, we are speculating that the oppositional philosophy of the civil society groups that conducted civic education may go a long way toward explaining the negative association seen here between exposure to civic education and institutional trust. This suggests a hypothesis to be explored in future research: that the relationship between civic education and institution trust may depend crucially on the overall relationship

between government and political associations within civil society. When these relationships are antagonistic, it may be expected that training conducted by these associations will lead to decreased institutional trust, even in indirect ways. In short, the effects of civic education on public trust in government will be a function of the nature of a country's civil society, and the extent to which civil society groups view their role as promoting political change by serving as a necessary counterweight to the state.

9. CONCLUSION: NORMATIVE AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results presented here raise the inevitable question of whether negative institutional trust is a desirable outcome of civic education. Is it good for a democratizing political system for its citizens to lose confidence in core institutions as a result of participating in democracy training programs? From the perspective of international donors such as USAID, should this effect be an indication of a program's "success," or should funding agencies attempt to influence the implementation of civic education programs to produce more positive views of a country's political institutions?

We view the results in the Dominican Republic as unequivocally positive for democratic development, although we can imagine other political circumstances where these effects could be viewed as less constructive. First, we note that civic education served to delineate evaluations of government from non-governmental societal institutions. In and of itself, this is an important step in democratic development. As the "government" becomes more clearly focused in the public's mind, the possibilities of effective communication between citizens and elites increases, as do the possibilities of elite responsiveness to public demands. Second, the strongest negative effects from civic education were seen for the Armed Forces and the Police, the least democratic state institutions and historically the instruments of state repression and authoritarian rule. To this extent, civic education may be encouraging citizens to judge state institutions according to more democratic standards.

Third, we note that the negative effects of civic education on institutional trust were accompanied by *positive* effects on virtually all

other orientations related to democracy. Civic education did not make Dominicans generally more negative about democratic norms and values, but rather more negative only about governmental institutions. Individuals exposed to civic education became more efficacious, more knowledgeable about politics, more knowledgeable about democratic liberties, and more trusting of fellow citizens, all characteristics that comprise the prototypical democratic citizen. If these newly "democratic" individuals come to view their governing institutions less favorably, that seems more a reflection on the institutions themselves than on deficiencies of the individuals or the training they received. Moreover, the effects from civic education appeared to move individuals towards increased skepticism, not outright distrust of any of the institutions examined.

More generally, it is undoubtedly true that, as the civic education groups themselves argued, rolling back decades of an insulated, overbearing state requires a more mobilized civil society. In the Dominican Republic (indeed much of Latin America) citizen participation and civil society hold the key to building more transparent, responsive governments. Politicians and institutions are unlikely to reform themselves; the engine of reform will most likely come from an active society. To accomplish this citizens must begin with a conception of how the regime can be improved and then mobilized to those ends. It demands skeptical citizens, citizens who are both aware of the need for change and feel empowered to affect it. Inevitably this involves a certain sense of citizens versus the state, of civil society as the protector of citizens against the state.

At the same time, it is true that too much skepticism can also be dangerous for a political system, and can result from unrealistic expectations regarding the capacity and speed with which state institutions can reform. On the opposite side, too much skepticism can breed apathy—a prevailing sense that institutions simply cannot be changed and there is little value in participating to reform them. In the Dominican Republic, as in many other countries after democratic transitions, state institutions have little experience and are poorly equipped to deal democratically and effectively with the demands of its citizens. Declining levels of trust can certainly exacerbate these difficulties. The question then becomes, to what

extent does lack of confidence of state institutions serve the goal of promoting positive political change and at what point does it hamper democratic governance and ultimately undermine popular support for democracy itself?

We do not think that this point has been reached in the Dominican case. But we do believe it is a valid concern, and one that civic educators and funding agencies ought to be aware of. Our analysis suggests three general recommendations for donors and implementors of civic education.

First, civic education programs should be careful not simply to present an idealized version of democratic institutions. Few governments could stand up fully to the portraits of democratic institutions presented in some of the materials used in the Dominican Republic. To be sure, failures and shortcomings of existing regimes need to be demonstrated, but there is also a risk of setting the standards too high, of creating unrealistic expectations about what democracy and a state already handicapped by corruption and inefficiency can and should deliver. The issue in these cases is how programs can couple genuine and warranted frustration with a realistic support for democracy.

One way to do this is to attempt to recognize the limits of social mobilization in achieving what is ultimately a long-term phenomenon: institutional change. As Putnam (1993, p. 60) argues, "Those who build new institutions and those who would evaluate them need patience." The effort to mobilize citizens against an unaccountable state may breed citizen resentment, but it is necessary to draw a distinction between short-term change and long-term change. To this end programs, in addition to focusing on larger issues of democratic failings, need to focus on specific short-term results.

Second, civic education should attempt to draw clear distinctions between institutions of the regime in their materials and pedagogy so as not to tar all of the state in one broad brush stroke. The programs studied in the Dominican Republic produced laudable results in helping citizens distinguish between different state institutions, in particular producing greater degrees of skepticism toward the armed forces and the police. Similarly, regarding democratic institutions, civic education can also serve to provide participants with a finer grained understanding of the functions and operation

of democratic institutions. These can assist not only in the evaluation of those institutions but also in focusing on specific areas in which they should be reformed within democratic institutions.

Third, along these same lines, greater attention needs to be paid to how civic education can be used to promote greater collaboration between civil society and the state. Exclusively oppositional civic education has its limits and over the long term may be counterproductive. Civic education needs to explore ways to build bridges with the state, when there is political will, to reform specific functions. There exist a growing number of groups that combine civic education with state activities, helping local governments establish justices of the peace to ensure that local disputes can be mediated, creating legal assistance services, working with local governments in community projects and improving administration, and sharing information and assisting legislators carry out their duties. These activities promise results, both in the completion of state functions and in the services they provide to citizens. Moreover, by motivating citizens to cooperate toward specific ends, such activities also help to promote bonds of intersocial trust, a desirable goal in itself but one that also, as our results demonstrate, increases trust in institutions.

Of course, these measures can work only where there is political will in the state and among public functionaries, and achieving that may require the sort of oppositional civic education that may link to political reform agendas and force politicians to listen. This points to what may be a necessary distinction in civic education programming between programs that seek to mobilize popular opinion and participation against undemocratic or corrupt institutions and leaders, and those programs that seek to collaborate in that reform once the transition occurs or once they have gained the ear of political leaders. Once this political opening occurs, donors and civil society groups should consistently explore ways in which they can assist in this process to bring genuine results. Even in these cases the task is a difficult one. The process of institutional reform will never be a smooth, and it is one that, as we have shown, is likely in the short term to produce greater frustration than results. Only pursuing a strictly oppositional route, however, may also bring longer-term risks.

NOTES

1. As this is publicly funded research, interested readers may obtain the data through USAID's Center for Democracy and Governance.
2. For a two by three crosstabulation table, Cramer's V is calculated as the square root of chi-square (χ^2) divided by the number of cases. Thus Cramer's V for the trust in the Judicial System item is 0.18, or the square root of 64.6 divided by 1993, the number of valid cases for that item. Cramer's V is a suitable measure of association because it corrects for the tendency of chi-square to be artificially inflated with large sample sizes (see Healey, 1999, pp. 334–337). The measure runs from 0 to 1, with higher numbers indicating a stronger association between civic education treatment and (negative) trust.
3. The "beta coefficient" here refers to the standardized regression coefficient; that is, the unstandardized coefficient multiplied by the standard deviation of X divided by the standard deviation of Y . This provides a scale-free measure that indicates how much of a standard deviation change in the dependent variable (trust) is produced by a standard deviation change in the independent variable (see Healey, 1999, pp. 451–453).
4. We note that the adjusted R -squared of the final model, 0.18, indicates that there is much unexplained variance in the institutional trust measure. But, the 0.18 value is nearly identical to the .19 value that Mishler and Rose (1997) found with many of these same variables (Blocks A, B, C and D in their Table 4). It is also the case R -squared values in the 0.15–0.35 range are commonplace in many survey-based studies of democratic values in emerging as well as established democracies (e.g., Gibson *et al.*, 1992; Evans and Whitefield, 1995).
5. The coefficients in Figure 3 represent path coefficients, or standardized regression coefficients from models predicting each of the intervening variables (knowledge, rights knowledge, civic skills, political efficacy, local official responsiveness, social trust) with civic education and the control variables from the model report in Table 3. For example, the 0.08 coefficient from civic education to political knowledge is the standardized effect of civic education on political knowledge, controlling for the other variables in Table 3. The -0.13 coefficient from civic education to institutional trust is the standardized effect of civic education on trust, controlling for the effects of the other variables in the figure, as well as the control variables from the model report in Table 3.

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APPENDIX A

Political knowledge	The questionnaire contains four questions about knowledge of incumbents and the electoral process. We created a knowledge scale simply by adding the correct answers for each set of questions.
Rights knowledge	The questionnaire contains four questions about whether the Dominican Constitution guarantees the right to criticize the government (yes), the right to form groups and associations (yes); the right to practice any religion (yes); and the right to elect provincial governors (no)
Civic skills	The questionnaire contains six questions asking the respondent to compare him or herself to others he or she knows in doing things such as solving problems, and communicating ideas. We scored an answer of "better than" as two; an answer of "same as" as one; and "worse than others" as zero. We then added up these scores and divided by six to create a scale from 0 to 2. The reliability of the scale, as measured by its Cronbach's alpha score, was 0.77
General efficacy	The questionnaire asks three questions on efficacy, all asking the respondent to agree or disagree on a four-point scale to a series of questions concerning their views of their influence on the political system. The more efficacious answers were counted as one and the scores for all three questions were added to create a scale from 1 to 4. The reliability of the scale is 0.68
Local official responsiveness	The questionnaire asked whether the respondent strongly agreed to strongly disagree with the following statement: "If I had some complaint about a local government activity and told it to a local official, he or she would pay a lot of attention to what I had to say"
Support for democratic liberty	We asked a single question concerning the respondent's support for the value of liberty versus social order on a four-point agree/disagree scale: "It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can be disruptive"
Paternalism	Two questions with four point agree-disagree scale: "A good president should be like a father—someone to whom you should look to solve your problems," and "A president needs to maintain order and stability, even if it means ignoring or breaking some laws"
Social trust	Respondents were asked if they would depend on any of the following in times of crisis: family, neighbors, friends, local associations, local government officials, priests. We created a scale of social trust by adding up the number of times the respondent said yes. The scale goes from 0 to 6, with the scale reliability being 0.71
