**Social Capital and Deliberative Theory:**

**A Synthesis and Empirical Test**

Peter Muhlberger

Institute for the Study of Information Technology and Society (InSites)

Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Please send correspondences to:

peterm@andrew.cmu.edu

ABSTRACT:   This paper draws on deliberative democratic theory to clarify the mechanisms by which social trust, a key component of social capital, exercises political effects.  This theoretical elaboration suggests a number of factors that should mediate the political effects of social trust, and it thereby points to improvements that can be made in measuring politically-relevant social trust.  Hypotheses regarding mediating factors are tested with data from a small sample of Pittsburgh residents.  Several key hypotheses are confirmed.  In particular, it is found that social trust is significantly and negatively correlated with two rationalizations of political apathy—the view that only manifestly efficacious individual political action is worthwhile (instrumentalism) and the view that political discussion cannot be rational.  These apathy rationalizations and social trust itself have expected effects on norms of political discussion, political behavior, and other outcomes.

One of the chief operationalizations of the concept of social capital in political science is the degree to which people believe they can trust others.  Much research on this instantiation of social capital indicates that it correlates with beneficial social consequences (Knack and Kropf 1998; Putnam 1995; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993; Smith 1999).  These correlations, however, do not always prove strong and stable (Shah 1998).  Such difficulties may in part arise from the many other factors that mediate or moderate the relationship between generalized social trust and its consequences. Much progress remains to be made to clarify how generalized trust affects politics.

This paper seeks to identify some key avenues by which trust affects political behavior.  These avenues are implied in deliberative theorists' views on what conditions would make democratic talk effective.  Once specified, the paper presents an empirical test of the hypothesis that these factors mediate the relationship between social trust and political speech.  Thus, I seek to elaborate social capital theory by introducing insights from deliberative democratic theory.  In part because of slow data collection, I am unable to present results from a mail survey of Pittsburgh residents.  Instead, data from the pilot of this survey will be presented.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Adler, in his synthesis of the literature on social capital, defines social capital as, "...the sum of resources available to an individual or group by virtue of their location in the structure of their more or less durable social relations." (Adler and Kwon 2000, p. 7) Adler notes that it is not any kind of social relations that count toward social capital, but ones of social exchange.  Social exchange:  a) is distinct from market exchange and exchanges involving authority, b) involves favors and gifts, c) does not involve specific

or explicit terms of exchange (the gift-giver does not contract to receive a specific gift at some future date), and d) is symmetric (actors expect to not come out better or worse off than others in the long run). Adler believes a key feature of social capital is its "appropriability"—namely, the relative ease with which relations of social exchange can be used for other purposes, such as political or economic purposes.

Relations of social exchange give rise to social capital through three general avenues—opportunity, motivation, and ability (Adler and Kwon 2000). For example, social exchanges result in more durable social relations that constitute social networks. Such networks provide actors with opportunities to draw on the resources of others when these resources are needed. Social exchange can also motivate actors to aid one another by instilling or creating opportunities for the development of trust, social norms, generalized reciprocity, and solidarity (Portes 1998; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). Finally, the abilities of actors in the social network, including skills and ownership of property, give rise to the resources that are the outcome of social capital.

Adler's general conceptualization of social capital is more broad than the notion of social capital used by political scientists, though consideration of Adler's concept helps situate the political science notion. Social capital as defined by Adler could include, for example, social relations that help people find jobs or be more successful managers. In contrast, Brehm and Rahn define social capital as, "...the web of cooperative relationships between citizens that facilitate resolution of collective action problems." (Brehm and Rahn 1997) Political scientists focus on those aspects of social capital that facilitate citizen cooperation, particularly anything that addresses the collective action dilemma. In

brief, political scientists are interested in those aspects of Adler's more inclusive notion of social capital that are politically relevant.

Putnam helps identify the features of social relations that contribute to this politically-specific form of social capital by defining social capital as: "...features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." (Putnam 1995, p. 67) Dissected into Adler's framework, networks structure opportunities and, in another sense, constitute the social exchanges that serve as the medium of social capital. Norms constitute a motivational mechanism, and Adler considers trust a contributor to motivation.

## GENERALIZED SOCIAL TRUST

Generalized social trust proves to be an important part of political research into social capital (Cook 2001; Rahn and Transue 1998; Shah 1998; Stolle 1998), and indeed is the focus of this paper. What is it, how does it function, and what are its limits as an explanation? Generalized social trust is an expectation that other people in a society will generally abide by commonly held social norms, roles, and ethical dictates. People who have generalized social trust expect their society to function as it "should."

This definition implies some limitations of the explanatory power of the concept. A society that to outsiders seems quite dysfunctional may appear to be working as it should to many of its members because their standards of proper functioning are lower. Second, while people may possess some general notion of the trustworthiness of others, their behavior will be guided by more particular forms of trust. More particular forms of trust specify what standards are expected to be followed, by whom, under what conditions. Generalized social trust probably summarizes these more contextualized

notions of trust. This gives general social trust some explanatory power, but it is unlikely to be a powerful explanation of a wide variety of social behavior or outcomes.

Generalized social trust might prove somewhat more helpful, though still limited, in explaining collective political action. General social trust can exercise an effect on political behavior by a number of avenues. It may alter expected outcomes. If, for example, a person believes the police will respond brutally to protest, that person may be less likely to protest. Similarly, a person who expects politicians to be receptive to widespread protest may be more likely to protest. This second example, however, begins to depart from rational choice explanation—the person appears to be paying attention to effects of collective action, not the effects of individual action. This implies a second avenue by which general social trust may influence behavior—by operating on notions of what is fair or ethical. Believing others are acting in a fair or ethical way encourages the believer to act in kind (Chong 1991; Hardin 1982; Ostrom 2000).

Rational choice theory notwithstanding, generalized social trust probably exercises its effect on collective political action more through notions of fairness than through changing a person's expected outcomes from individual actions. Chong (1998) offers a rational choice explanation of collective political action that stipulates people at some point in their development become ethical persons because the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. Once committed to being ethical, a person cannot readily change. This rational choice theory nevertheless leads to the conclusion that people can decide to contribute to collective political action primarily on the basis of ethical notions.

The public goods and collective rationality models (Finkel, Muller, and Opp 1989; Muller, Dietz, and Finkel 1991; Opp 1986), indicate that the expected outcome of

group or collective action plays a central role in protest decisions. People probably focus on payoffs of group or collective action because of ethical or fairness considerations. Similarly, I (Muhlberger 1995; Muhlberger 1996; Muhlberger 2000b; Muhlberger 2001a) find evidence that specifically ethical cognitions are the dominant factors in political participation choice. The public goods and collective rationality models also indicate outcomes of individual behavior play a role as well, but this can be questioned. When people report that their individual actions have huge impacts on the likelihood of political change, either they are making wildly irrational assessments of their own efficacy, or they are answering a different question than the researchers believe they are asking.

## SOCIAL TRUST IN CONTEXT

Generalized social trust has been operationalized in a multitude of ways. One prevalent operationalization is the General Social Survey's question about whether "Most people are honest." This question and another highly correlated question are used in this paper. The meaning of the question can be clarified by considering what standards it implicates, who are supposed to follow these standards, and under what conditions. The question implicates the standard of honesty—that what people say (or imply) is intended to be true. This truth no doubt both applies to statements made about empirical facts as well as statements about intentions. Honest people should do what they say they will do. The GSS question asks about "most people." Respondents will probably take "most people" to be made up primarily of the many acquaintances and strangers they encounter daily. The conditions under which most people will be honest are, possibly, the conditions under which strangers and acquaintances are encountered typically. Those conditions usually involve public roles (for example, work roles) and social norms and

ethical expectations governing interactions with strangers or acquaintances, such as basic reciprocity.

Obviously, generalized social trust thus measured does not bear directly on particular political actions. Having decided whether to trust or distrust the honesty of others, people must make a number of additional inferences in order to draw conclusions about how their trust or distrust should affect their political actions.

I will focus here on the inferences needed to connect generalized trust to decisions regarding whether to participate in political discussions. Trust in the honesty of others should be particularly relevant to whether a person wants to engage them in discussion. Moreover, political discussion is important. Political discussion has been little studied, but nevertheless it seems evident that people and organizations seek to mobilize citizens to collective action in part through political discussion. Such discussion offers one of the few vehicles through which difficult social issues and disagreements can be resolved (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Political discussion helps citizens become better informed and sophisticated (Barabas 2000; Gastil and Dillard 1999; Leighley 1991). Also, deliberative theorists would like political discussion to become the centerpiece of democratic process (Barber 1984; Chambers 1996; Gutmann and Thompson 1996).

## CONNECTING SOCIAL TRUST WITH DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION

In considering the effects of social trust on political discussion, it is first necessary to clarify what such discussion is. Political discussion can be many things, but a consideration of it in ideal form may be helpful. Deliberative theorists have written extensively about the ideal form of political discussion, which they call democratic deliberation. Elsewhere (Muhlberger 2000a; Muhlberger 2001b), I have at length

analyzed several theorists' conceptions of deliberation (Barber 1984; Bohman 1996; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Habermas 1984), so I will present only highlights here.

The notion of deliberation stems from its function, which is to address the common human need to coordinate action and resolve conflict between individuals. While this can at times be achieved through coercion, deliberative theorists and people more generally believe that conflict or lack of coordination can be resolved through mere discussion. Deliberative theory begins with the assumption that individuals are inherently social in construction (Warren 1995) (Mead 1962). From this perspective, the coordination of action between individuals is not altogether different than the coordination of action within individuals. Just as people can shape their own identities and preferences with internal speech, they can negotiate the preferences and identities of others in discussion with them (Warren 1992).

In part, such negotiation can proceed because participants can offer reasons that are generally persuasive—including even to those who disagree. This does not necessarily require a commitment to the view that universally valid reasons can be given, only that people can agree on grounds that are generally viewed as reasonable (Barber 1984; Gutmann and Thompson 1996). By making the claim that their positions should be accepted because they are generally defensible, discussants imply that anyone has equal standing to question their positions. Also, they imply their sincerity in seeking to resolve the conflict purely by force of the better argument. Deliberation, then, is an attempt to address conflict or build coordination by participants sincere in their desire to find the most generally defensible basis for accommodation, under conditions of equal standing.

The idea of sincerity in this definition is intimately connected with social trust, so it is important to understand its nature. A rational actor might understand such sincerity as a *quid pro quo*. Two combatants agree to resolve their differences by resorting to reason. That is, it is agreed that whoever provides the better reasons wins. To make this agreement plausible, each combatants must convince the other that they really do intend to resolve the conflict if they lose the argument. Thus, they must at least feign sincerity.

Deliberative theorists would not be happy with a *quid pro quo* understanding of deliberative sincerity. They point to a deeper connection between such sincerity and resolution of conflict. In agreeing to deliberate, participants commit themselves to the possibility of genuine persuasion through reason—if this were not the case, there would be no point to deliberating. They will do their best to defend their positions. If they find the opposing view has a better rationale, they can ignore this outcome of deliberation only at a grave risk—the conclusion that their actions have no coherent rationale. This conclusion not only challenges their intellectual integrity but undermines the meaning and intelligibility of actions that are often fundamental to their sense of identity. People go to great lengths to protect their sense of self (Steele 1988). Habermas (Cooke 1994; Habermas 1991) emphasizes the implications of sincerity for the meaning and intelligibility of speech and action. Mead (1962) underscores the implications for a coherent construction of self.

It is because of deliberative theorists' emphasis on the social construction of the self that they believe the self can become involved in motivating deliberative sincerity. Liberal democratic theory, in its pure form, does not consider preferences up for discussion—people have fixed or at least apolitically-rooted preferences that cannot be

negotiated (Warren 1992; Warren 1995). In contrast, deliberative theory and certain approaches to psychology (Blasi 1990; Loevinger 1966; Mead 1962) believe preferences are at leas partially constructed along with identity and therefore can be modified.

In entering political deliberation, then, participants imply a sincere desire to find and abide by the most generally defensible basis for accommodation. Sincerity implies a willingness to listen to others, a willingness to give reasons, and a willingness to shift positions in response to good reasons. From the point of view of a given participant, other participants also are committed to sincerity and all it implies.

Generalized social distrust raises concern about the sincerity of others in discussion. If strangers and acquaintances cannot be expected to tell the truth, their spoken indications of sincerity in discussing political issues cannot be taken at face value. This undermines the possibility of achieving agreement through deliberation and raises questions about their motives in pursuing such discussion. Insincere discussants have no intention of being swayed by the better argument, thus undermining the possibility that they could agree to anything but their own position.

Put in Habermas's (Braaten 1991; Habermas 1984) words, insincere discussants make communicative rationality impossible—agreement cannot be reached with such persons through rational communication. According to Habermas, the only other vehicle for bringing about agreement is strategic rationality. That is, people can bring about agreement by manipulating others' rewards and punishments. This leads to an interesting hypothesis regarding those who are deeply distrustful—they may see no possibility of influencing politics other than by the concrete consequences of their actions. They may not believe in the value of making a symbolic statement or offering moral persuasion.

Thus, the distrustful may become instrumental in their view of political action—either their concrete actions have concrete consequences, or they have failed. But, the collective action dilemma insures that most individuals cannot visibly influence political outcomes. Not surprisingly, people who approach politics instrumentally are less likely to participate (Abelson 1995).

People who are generally distrustful must also question the motives of potential political discussion partners. If these people are insincere about discussion their real motives must be hidden. Perhaps they wish to manipulate others or find some personal catharsis by forcibly expressing their positions. Discussions with either manipulators or people seeking catharsis cannot be rational. People seeking catharsis are usually uninterested in the rational content of discussion. Manipulators will use whatever devices they can to achieve persuasion, perhaps including reason. But they must hide their true beliefs, which means they intentionally leave out information needed for rational conclusions. Thus, those who are generally distrustful may not even believe in the possibility of rational discussion. Also, to the extent that they believe the chief motive of their discussion partners is manipulation rather than catharsis, they may fear that such discussion opens them to manipulation.

People who believe they inhabit a world of insincere discussion partners will likely adopt one or more adaptive strategies. One adaptive strategy may be to put political discussion beyond the reach of strangers and acquaintances by declaring personally held political views private. Odd though it may seem, many Americans consider their political views private matters about which people outside their personal circle have no right to inquire. Untrusting persons may also adapt by not reciprocating

the norms of deliberative discussion. The most pertinent target for non-reciprocation is the norm of sincerity, which untrustworthy discussion partners are assumed to disregard. And, untrusting persons can insulate themselves best by not reciprocating the component of sincerity that holds people should change their point of view in the face of convincing arguments to do so.

## DELIBERATIVE NORMS

The above theoretical discussion makes reference to such deliberative norms as willingness to change positions in the face of good arguments. Elsewhere (Muhlberger 2001b), I have at length analyzed a number of deliberative norms in the same data that inform this paper. The following norms were extracted and will be examined in this paper for relationships with generalized trust:

- Talking: Willingness to talk about political issues with those who disagree with self

- Engaging: Willingness to reveal and justify own position in discussion.

- Listening: Willingness to listen to someone defend contrary views.

- Accommodating: Willingness to find common ground and understand the positions of others.

- Convincing: Interest in convincing others own position is best.

- Changeable: Willingness to change own position in the face of good arguments.

- Values Talk: Wanting to bring personal values into political discussion.

- Community Responsibilities Talk: Wanting to discuss self's community responsibilities in political discussion.

**APATHY RATIONALIZATIONS**

In addition to deliberative norms, the earlier theoretical discussion mentions a number of considerations that can be used to justify non-participation in political discussion. Again, these were analyzed and explained elsewhere (Muhlberger 2001b). These rationalizations of political apathy include:

- Instrumentalism: The extent to which a respondent believes that political action is justified only if their individual contributions are likely to bring about success.

- Privacy: The belief that political views are private matters.

- Irrationality: The belief that it is impossible to have a rational discussion about politics.

- Fear of Manipulation: Some people may believe that others' knowledge of their political beliefs will be used to manipulate them.

- Take Personally: Some people view their political positions in such a way that a disagreement on their political views is perceived as an attack on them personally.

- Embarrassment: Some people may feel they ought to have political opinions but, knowing they do not, avoid political discussion to avoid embarrassment.

**HYPOTHESES**

The preceding analysis suggests a number of hypotheses. These are:

1. People who distrust the willingness of power holders or the wider population to be swayed by the force of the better argument will focus

on the concrete instrumental effectiveness of their political actions. They are likely to subscribe to the instrumentalism apathy rationalization. Instrumentalism should reduce the likelihood of political involvement.

2. Those who question the sincerity of their discussion partners' commitment to the norms of discussion should question the possibility of rational discussion. They should embrace the irrationality apathy rationalization. Questioning the possibility of rational discussion should have wide effects on subscription to discussion norms and behavioral adherence to these norms.

3. To the extent that distrustful people believe the chief motive of their discussion partners is manipulation rather than catharsis, they may be fearful that such discussion opens them to manipulation.

4. Those who question the sincerity of their discussion partners' commitment to the norms of discussion may put political discussion beyond the reach of strangers and acquaintances by declaring personally held political views private—embracing the privacy apathy rationalization.

5. Those who question the sincerity of their discussion partners' commitment to the norms of discussion may not reciprocate the sincerity norm. In particular, they can most protect themselves by ignoring the norm requiring them to modify their positions in light of convincing arguments—the "changeable" deliberative norm.

The above hypotheses are about people who distrust the deliberative sincerity of their discussion partners or, in one case, their wider society. The data do not contain measures of trust in deliberative sincerity but instead a measure of general social trust asking whether "most people are honest." This measure at best indirectly influences deliberative trust. It is less specific than deliberative trust with respect to who is being trusted, to uphold what standards, in which contexts. Someone might distrust most people yet trust political activists because they are pursuing a collective good with little or no personal rewards. The reverse could also be the case: someone who generally trusts others may not trust the politically active because these persons may seem driven by irrational impulses. Moreover, the type of honesty involved in general roles or acquaintance relationships may not be the same as needed for open discussion. The latter case requires people to be willing to concede that the other side has made a good argument—something quite difficult for most people.

On the whole, though, Putnam's (1993) thesis is that general social trust spills over into a wide variety of other contexts. People who distrust most people to fulfill their roles and normative obligations should be more likely to distrust the deliberative sincerity of their discussion partners. The linkage, however, may be weak. Fortunately, the current paper is exploratory, and results should help clarify how social distrust poisons the possibility of meaningful political discussion and thereby undermines collective action.

## METHOD

### Participants

The survey targeted Carnegie Mellon University staff members who were not directly involved in research or teaching. These staff members were selected out of the

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| High School or Less: | 10% | 45% |
| Some College: | 20% | 26% |
| College: | 34% | 15% |
| Some Graduate: | 31% | 14% |
| Ph.D.: | 5% | -- |

Political Interest

| | Pilot | 1996 NES |
|---|---|---|
| Very Interested | 22% | 30% |
| Somewhat Interested | 40% | 54% |
| Slightly Interested | 27% | |
| Not Interested | 10% | 15% |

The pilot sample is more educated than the 1996 NES sample, though it does exhibit educational diversity with 30% of the sample having no college degree. In terms of political interest, it does not appear that the pilot sample is more politically interested than was the 1996 NES sample. Direct comparison is somewhat obscured because the 1996 NES did not use the "slightly interested" category. Still, only 22% of the pilot and 30% of the 1996 NES respondents indicated that they were very interested in politics. The degree to which the pilot respondents are representative of the population as a whole will depend heavily on whether political interest or education are the chief drives of their deliberative involvement. Statistical analyses in an earlier paper (Muhlberger 2001b) indicate education has little impact on conclusions.

**Materials**

Respondents were asked to reply to an Internet-based survey that would take them approximately one hour to complete. The survey contained many other questions besides

the deliberative participation and norms questions that are the focus here.  Many responses were made on a computer-generated scale on which respondents could indicate degree of agreement or disagreement by clicking any point on the scale (there were 49 distinguishable points).  Other responses were made on a similar scale with three labels, 0%, 50% and 100%, to indicate percent of time a respondent engaged in a particular activity.  Respondents took the survey on any computer they had available to themselves, either at home or in the office.

## Procedures

Respondents were contacted through an electronic mail message inviting them to participate in a social science survey in return for a $10 gift certificate to a local restaurant and entry into a lottery for two $100 prizes.  The message provided a URL for the survey.  The URL activated the survey software.  Respondents received a very general explanation of the purpose of the study and were asked to provide their login and campus mail address if they were interested in taking the survey.  To reduce social desirability bias, respondents were assured that their personal identity would be kept in a separate data table and that no one would have any way to link their identity with their responses, a claim which was correct (though complicated to implement).  Because of the anonymity of the respondents and the absence of deception, a signature on a human subjects form was not required.  After completing the survey, a letter was sent to the respondent containing the gift certificate, and an electronic mail message was sent providing a more detailed explanation of the goals of the study.

**Measures**

The Appendix presents the entire deliberative participation and norms questionnaire that was part of the pilot study.  The measure has since been refined based on the analyses here and elsewhere.

In addition, people were asked the following dichotomous choice questions:

Website:  As mentioned earlier, there are plans for a web site in which Pittsburghers can talk about politics and matters of community concern.  If you like, we can email you to let you know when the site is running and to remind you to visit the site.  Would you like us to email you?  (Your answer below will be stored in a separate file with your email address, so as not to compromise the confidentiality of your other survey replies.)

Deliberation 1:  We are also planning a project in which we will bring small groups of Pittsburghers together for six hours on a weekend or evening to discuss politics and matters of community concern.  This would be a one-time commitment.  If you would like to learn more about this project, we can have someone call you.  Would you like to learn more about this project?

Deliberation 2:  We will be giving people $100 to participate in one of these six hour discussion meetings.  Given this, would you be willing to learn more about this project?

The above questions constitute what might be called quasi-behavioral questions. People who say "yes" to such questions act quite differently when subsequently contacted than those who say "no."  They are making a behavioral commitment.

In addition to these behavioral measures, I included a number of additional measures of outcomes.  First, I included Delli Carpini & Keeter's (1996) "Political Knowledge Scale."  The items were slightly modified so they were politically up-to-date and would all fit a multiple-choice format with, in most cases, five possible response

options. This is a test of specific political knowledge, such as what party has the most members in the Senate.

Finally, here are some examples of agree / disagree apathy questions. For simplicity, I am including generalized social trust in the category of apathy rationalizations. Generalized Social Trust: Most people are honest. Instrumentalism: Political actions with no chance of success are meaningless. Privacy: My political views are my business. Irrationality: People with different political views cannot rationally discuss politics. Personal Nature of Political Views: I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views. Fear of Manipulation: People who know my political views might use this knowledge to manipulate me. Embarrassment: It is embarrassing when I do not know about a political issue.

## RESULTS

### Validity

Elsewhere (Muhlberger 2001b), I present results of confirmatory factor analyses of the 34 apathy rationalization questions and the 16 deliberative norm questions. These questions were presented in random order to respondents, with each respondent getting a different random order. Respondents could not review any of their prior responses. Consequently, unless respondents really possess pre-existing deliberative norms or apathy rationalizations or are able to reliably construct such attitudes from the contents of their long-term memory, it seems unlikely that distinct factors would emerge from a confirmatory factor analysis. Yet, they do—providing evidence that people possess the proposed rationalizations and norms.

In the earlier paper, it was found that both the apathy rationalizations and deliberative norms described in the Measures section form conceptually distinct factors and the proposed factor models explain the variance and covariance of the data well. Table 1 shows several basic confirmatory factor statistics for the two models. In all cases, the results in Table 2 indicate that the proposed models fit well. A Bollen-Stine bootstrapped p-value above .05 indicates that the hypothesis that the data fit the model cannot be rejected. The models prove themselves in a number of additional statistical tests (Muhlberger 2001b). The earlier paper also presents a broad set of findings confirming the validity of reported behavior and additional evidence of the convergent validity of deliberative norms.

**Table 1—Confirmatory Factor Model Fit**

| Model | Bollen-Stine Bootstrapped P-value (N=2000) | Comparative Fit Index | $\chi^2$/d.f. | RMSEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apathy Rationaliz. | .115 | .902 | 1.43 | .050 |
| Delib. Partic. | .085 | .922 | 1.75 | .068 |
| "Good" Values | >.05 | >.900 | <2.00 | <.080 |

*Note*: The results in Table 1 do not include the community responsibilities or values talk variables because these variables were collected for only 69 observations. Separate analyses including these variables work out well.

**Bivariate Effects of Generalized Social Trust on Apathy Rationalizations, Deliberative**

**Norms, and Political Outcomes**

Table 2 shows the bivariate relationship between generalized social trust and six apathy rationalizations.  The first four hypotheses in the Hypotheses section have to do with the relationship between social trust and the apathy rationalizations instrumentalism, irrationality, privacy, and fear of manipulation.  The second column of the table shows bivariate correlations of social trust with the various apathy rationalizations, p-values in parentheses.  The remaining two columns are intended to show that the p-values are quite robust.  P-values in these remaining two columns are bias-corrected bootstrapped p-values.  Bootstrapping makes these p-values robust to the distribution of the variables—they no longer need to be normally distributed.  It also makes the p-values robust to heteroskedasticity.  The final column shows p-values for the correlation of the underlying factors—that is, the estimated correlations for the variables if they could be measured without error.

**Table 2—Bivariate Relations Of Generalized Social Trust With Apathy**

**Rationalizations**

| Apathy Rationalization | Bivariate Correlation with Trust (p-value) | UnStd. Regression Coefficient (Bootstrapped p-value) | Confirmatory Factor Correlation (Bootstrapped p-value) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Instrumentalism | -.17 (.01) | -.11 (.01) | -.21 (.02) |
| Irrationality | -.20 (.00) | -.17 (.02) | -.23 (.01) |
| Privacy | -.11 (.07) | -.10 (.09) | -.13 (.11) |
| Fear Manipulat. | -.03 (.34) | -.03 (.32) | -.04 (.35) |
| Take Personally | .02 (.76) | .02 (.72) | .03 (.68) |
| Embarrassment | .08 (.31) | .07 (.33) | .10 (.34) |

*Notes*:  N=174 throughout.  One-sided p-values for the first four rows, in which there are

theoretical expectations; two-sided p-values otherwise.  Regression coefficients are

unstandardized.  N=2000 for all bootstraps.  All bootstraps are bias corrected.  The confirmatory

factor correlations are correlations of the factors, not the variables themselves.  Probability values

have not been adjusted for multiple tests.

The first two rows of Table 2 confirm the hypotheses that social trust is

significantly correlated with two apathy rationalizations.  One of these, instrumentalism,

indicates the belief that there is no point to individual political actions that have no

chance of success.  The other, irrationality, indicates the belief that people with different

views cannot rationally discuss their differences.  As anticipated, the correlations are

weak, but the bootstrapped p-values suggest the correlations are robustly significant.  A

third hypothesis, that social trust will correlate with the belief that political views are

private matters, shows a trend toward significance at the .07 level (for the bivariate

correlation). The fourth hypothesis, that social trust would correlate significantly with fear of manipulation, proves to be incorrect. The hypothesis, however, was quite tentative. The remaining two rows of the table demonstrate that social trust does not significantly correlate with two apathy rationalizations for which there is no theoretical expectation of a correlation.

Table 3 shows bivariate relationships between social trust and deliberative norms. The first three deliberative norms listed are the most relevant to deliberative sincerity. Hypothesis 5 suggests that trusting people should be the most likely to reciprocate norms related to sincerity, particularly the norm of changing positions in the face of good arguments—the "changeable" norm. As it turns out, social trust has a non-significant relationship with the changeable norm. On the other hand, it has the anticipated significant positive relationship with accommodating —understanding, finding common ground with—those who hold opposing views. And, social trust shows a solid trend towards a positive relationship with listening to those who hold opposing views. Wanting to talk about personal values and community responsibilities during political discussion also prove significant, though not quite significant under bootstrapping.

**Table 3—Bivariate Relations Of Generalized Social Trust With Deliberative**

**Norms**

| Deliberative Norms | Bivariate Correlation with Trust (p-value) | UnStd. Regression Coefficient (Bootstrapped p-value) |
|---|---|---|
| Changeable | -.08 (.29[†]) | -.06 (.29[†]) |
| Accommodating | .13 (.05) | .11 (.05) |
| Listening | .11 (.08) | .16 (.07) |
| Values Talk | .21 (.04) | .29 (.06) |
| Community Resp. Talk | .20 (.05) | .24 (.10) |
| Talking | -.04 (.61[†]) | -.04 (.55[†]) |
| Engaging | .01 (.45) | .01 (.46) |
| Convincing | .02 (.42) | -.02 (.38) |

*Notes*: N=165, except for values talk and community responsibilities talk, for which N=69

(questions were added in mid-study). Regression coefficients are unstandardized. N=2000 for all

bootstraps. All bootstraps are bias corrected. Probability values have not been adjusted for

multiple tests.

[†]=two-sided (coefficient is in wrong direction; if trust affects any of these variables, it should

affect them positively)

Finally, Table 4 shows the relationship between social trust and a number of

outcome variables. All coefficients are in expected directions, and there are many

significant or nearly significant coefficients. Willingness to come to a deliberative

meeting in the absence of financial incentives (Deliberation 1) proves robustly significant

at the .03 level. Political knowledge, measured by an objective test, also proves robustly

significant. It makes sense that a factor such as generalized social distrust, which should

result in a general withdrawal from political engagement, would result in lower levels of political knowledge. Similarly, the distrustful should be less interested in politics, which turns out to be the case. Consistent with the earlier findings that trust leads to a greater intent to talk about personal values and community responsibility, Table 4 suggests a relationship between social trust and the reported proportion of actual conversation time spent discussing values and responsibilities. Here, trust proves robustly significant for percent of time spent discussing responsibilities and shows a trend for percent of time spent discussing values.

**Table 4—Bivariate Relations Of Generalized Social Trust With Outcomes**

| Deliberative Norms | Bivariate Correlation or Probit Coefficient (p-value) | UnStd. Regression Coefficient (Bootstrapped p-value) |
|---|---|---|
| Website (Probit) | .01 (.13) | .01 (.15) |
| Deliberation 1 (Probit) | .02 (.03) | .02 (.03) |
| Deliberation 2 (Probit) | .01 (.13) | .01 (.13) |
| Political Knowledge | .17 (.01) | .14 (.02) |
| Political Interest | .12 (.07) | .17 (.05) |
| % Discuss Values | .19 (.07) | .59 (.12) |
| % Discuss Comm. Resp | .31 (.01) | 1.06 (.02) |
| % Want Talk | .11 (.08) | .29 (.09) |
| Ln(Discussion Time+1) | .03 (.35) | .03 (.36) |

*Notes*: 156<=N<=174 depending on question, except N=69 for Discussing Values and Community Responsibilities. All p-values are one-sided because coefficients are in expected directions. Regression coefficients are unstandardized. N=2000 for all bootstraps. All

bootstraps are bias corrected. Probability values have not been adjusted for multiple tests. All variables adjusted so they fall on a 0 to 48 scale.

## MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES: TRACING THE INDIRECT EFFECTS OF SOCIAL TRUST

The bivariate analyses imply a number of small effects of generalized social trust on apathy rationalizations and outcomes, plus an effect or two on deliberative norms. Social trust might also have significant effects in multivariate analyses that are not evident. Unfortunately, this turns out to be not the case, for the most part. Social trust proves significant in one case and shows a trend in another. Even so, social trust may have indirect effects mediated through the variables with which it is significantly related. To obtain a better understanding of the indirect effects of social trust on norms and behavior, this section will present several multivariate analyses. These analyses assume a certain causal order to the variables. Social trust is assumed to most directly influence apathy rationalizations. Apathy rationalizations are assumed to be logically and inferentially prior to deliberative norms, and rationalizations and norms are assumed to be prior to behavior.

Table 5 displays the influence of apathy rationalizations on deliberative norms. All coefficients with p-values below .30 are not displayed to make the table easier to read. All p-values are two-sided, so it may be necessary to halve p-values when they occur with a coefficient in the theoretically expected direction. Irrationality—the view that political discussions cannot be rational—proves to have the most powerful and highly significant effects in the table. Recall that social trust has a robustly significant relationship with irrationality. It also has a trend relationship with privacy, which is the second largest influence on deliberative norms. Later in this section, the deliberative

norms regarding convincing  and talking with opponents will prove to have the most

powerful effects on predicting quasi-behavior.  Irrationality and privacy both contribute

appreciably to these norms.

**TABLE 5:  Effects of Apathy Rationalizations on Deliberative Norms**

| Depen-dent Variable | Talking w/ Disagree | Engage | Convincing | Change-able | Listening | Accom-modating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indep. Variable | Coefficient (**reported only if p-val<.30**) p-value (two-sided) | | | | | |
| Instrum. | | | | | | |
| Trust | -.12 .091 | | | -.06 .260 | .11 .260 | .07 .260 |
| Privacy | -.28 .001 | -.28 .000 | -.13 .044 | -.14 .030 | | -.16 .024 |
| Irratinl | -.42 .000 | -.33 .000 | -.34 .001 | -.14 .076 | -.40 .013 | -.29 .008 |
| Personal | -.23 .019 | -.27 .000 | | | -.55 .001 | |
| Fear of Manipul | | -.17 .012 | | | -.15 .215 | |
| Embarra. | .19 .025 | .16 .027 | .12 .080 | | | |
| Age | | | | | | |
| Education | | | .43 .20 | | 1.29 .032 | |
| African | | | | -6.46 .000 | | |
| Male | 5.33 .003 | 2.42 .088 | | 2.19 .092 | | 1.92 .187 |
| Homeownr | | | | | -2.9 .213 | |
| R^2 | .31 | .35 | .22 | .16 | .29 | .18 |
| MSE | 9.17 | 7.90 | 7.54 | 6.75 | 13.19 | 8.10 |
| p(Fstat) | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |

For want of space, the deliberative norms value talk and community responsibility

talk are not displayed in Table 5.  Trust does significantly (p=.03) and positively

influence values talk.  Trust and irrationality have the largest two coefficients in predicting values talk.  As for community responsibility talk, trust shows a trend (p=.15, one-sided, positive coefficient).

Table 6 shows how well the deliberative norm factors and the apathy rationalizations predict reported deliberative behavior.  As in Table 5, Table 6 reports only those coefficients with p-values better than .30.  A number of the deliberative norms prove quite important.  As indicated by Table 5 and the discussion, social trust exercises significant indirect influence on all deliberative norms except for community responsibility talk, with which it has a trend relationship.  Also of importance, instrumentalism proves to have a powerful and significant effect on total discussion time and percent of actual discussion time a respondent wants to be having the discussion.  Instrumentalism, with which social trust is robustly correlated, reduces the likelihood of political activity.

**TABLE 6: Effects of Deliberative Norms, Apathy Rationalizations, and**

**Demographics on Reported Discussion Behavior**

| Dependent Variable | ln(Total Discuss Time) | % Want Current Discussion | % Talk About Own Values | % Talk About Commun. Respons. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indep. Variable | Coefficient (reported only if p-val<.30) p-value (two-sided) | | | | | |
| Talking | .055 .000 | .500 .040 | | | | |
| Engaging | X | .716 .012 | | | | |
| Convincing | .028 .070 | | | | | |
| Changeable | -.034 .045 | M | M | | | |
| Value Tk | N/U | N/U | 1.09 .000 | | | |
| Commun. Tk | N/U | N/U | | 1.51 .000 | | |
| Instrum. | -.039 .013 | -.698 .007 | | | | |
| Trust | X | M | .541 .152 | M | | |
| Privacy | -.020 .086 | X | | M | | |
| Irratinl | X | M | 1.32 .008 | | | |
| Personal | X | .412 .037 | | | | |
| Fear of Manipul | .028 .013 | X | -.630 .045 | | | |
| Know Enough | -.033 .000 | X | | | | |
| Embarra. | X | X | .947 .015 | | | |
| Age, Educ. African Male, etc. | Effects not depicted | | | | | |
| R^2 | .42 | .36 | .47 | .38 | | |
| MSE | 1.28 | 21.90 | 20.49 | 24.33 | | |
| p(Fstat) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | |

N/U=Not Used:  Variable has few observations, so not used for this dependent variable.  Used only on dependent variables that themselves have few observations.

X:  Variable omitted in final model due to multicollinearity that would obscure other variables.

M:  Maybe.  Showed some relationship to the dependent variable, but was eliminated from regression so effects of stronger variables would not be obscured.

Finally, Table 7 below shows relationships between the quasi-behavioral variables and deliberative norms and apathy rationalizations.  Only p-values below .30 are reported, and p-values are all two-sided.  The convincing and talking norms prove to have the largest and most significant effects.  The p-value of .076 for talking in the last column should be halved because it is in the theoretically expected direction.  As noted earlier, social trust indirectly influences both the convincing and talking norms.

**TABLE 7: Effects of Deliberative Norms, Apathy Rationalizations, and**

**Demographics on Quasi-Behavioral Measures (Probit Regression)**

| Dependent Variable | Wants to be Emailed Regarding Web Site | Wants to be Called Regarding Deliberative Meeting, No $ | Wants to be Called Regarding Deliberative Meeting, $100 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indep. Variable | Coefficient (**reported only if p-val<.30**) p-value (two-sided) | | |
| Talking | | .031 .024 | .023 .076 |
| Engaging | | | |
| Convincing | .045 .008 | .021 .166 | .047 .006 |
| Cngable | | | .035 .047 |
| Equality | | -.013 .238 | |
| Instrum. | | | |
| No Trust | -.011 .332 | | |
| Privacy | | -.021 .068 | -.016 .178 |
| Irratinl | | | .017 .261 |
| Personal | .021 .086 | | .017 .236 |
| Manipul | | | |
| Embarra. | | .026 .039 | .009 .466 |
| | Demographic effects not displayed | | |
| PseudoR2 | .118 | .159 | .170 |
| p(Chi) | .023 | .005 | .000 |

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This paper has sought to specify some of the missing inferences that lie between generalized social distrust and the quality and level of political discussion. It has proposed and to an extent confirmed a number of relationships between social trust and cognitions that might mediate the political effects of social trust. I found particularly

good evidence that social trust affects discussion quality and quantity through two apathy rationalizations, whose effects are furthermore mediated by deliberative norms.

Social capital, measured as generalized social trust, measures the expectation that strangers and acquaintances will abide by commonly-held normative and ethical standards regarding their more or less public roles. Such social trust is likely to spill over into assessments of others as potential cooperators in political endeavors. Social trust, measured as adherence to norms of honesty, should be especially relevant in the realm of everyday discussion about politics. According to deliberative theory, such discussion necessarily invokes expectations of sincerity, which are related to norms of honesty. Deliberative sincerity involves a willingness to listen and to adopt argumentatively superior positions. People who do not expect their political discussion partners to be sincere may conclude that rational political discussion between people of opposing views is impossible. Those who question the sincerity of discussion partners may also attempt to shield themselves by classifying their political positions as private. Also, people who anticipate that power holders and members of the wider society are not sincere in political dialog may conclude that symbolic political action is pointless and that only manifestly efficacious individual action is worthwhile. Such an instrumentalist position should reduce the likelihood of political involvement. Finally, people who distrust others should themselves be less likely to subscribe to norms of deliberative sincerity.

Analyses in this paper supports some of these theoretical expectations. Social trust proves to have a number of robustly significant relationships with apathy rationalizations, deliberative norms, political behavior, and other outcomes. Trusting persons subscribe significantly less to two apathy rationalizations (Table 2)—the view

that only manifestly efficacious individual action is worthwhile (instrumentalism) and the belief that people with different views cannot rationally discuss their differences (irrationality). They also show a trend relationship with the belief that political views are private. Belief in the irrationality and privacy of political discussion has broad negative effects on adherence to deliberative norms (Table 5), which in turn affect political behavior (Tables 6 and 7). Instrumentalism appreciably reduces the amount and desirability of political discussion (Table 6). Social distrust also has a directly negative impact on willingness to discuss personal values in political conversations, and suppresses the desire to understand and to find common ground with those possessing opposing views (Table 3). In general, social distrust is negatively related to a variety of political behaviors, level of political knowledge, and quality of political discussions (Table4).

One need pointed to in this paper is the development of measures of social trust more specific to political and deliberative settings. Although robustly significant in many instances, trust proves to be only weakly correlated with other factors. Questions about the deliberative sincerity of discussion partners, the general public, and politicians could readily be constructed to fill the gap. Such questions could better clarify exactly how social distrust builds apathy rationalizations and breaks down deliberative norms.

Though this paper focuses on such outcomes as quantity and quality of everyday political discussion, its implications may be much wider. Even in the absence of interaction, people may expect political leaders to act in accord with deliberative norms. A leader's actions cannot long be considered legitimate if people cannot imagine them being justified in an open forum. Similarly, people are unlikely to remain attracted to

leaders who they believe show no deliberative sincerity—a willingness to listen, to provide reasons, and to shift to superior positions. If the absence of social trust undermines faith that leaders are deliberatively sincere, it undermines the legitimate exercise of power. If the absence of social trust undermines citizen's adherence to deliberative norms, a society will become ungovernable. As Habermas (1984) maintains, the implicit norms of deliberation are the glue that holds societies together.

**Appendix**: Pilot Measure of Deliberative Participation and Norms

INTRODUCTION:

In the 1960s, America was divided by issues such as civil rights for minorities and women's liberation. Today, conflicts continue on such issues as abortion, the environment, who should be president, and whether the country should be run by liberals or conservatives.

Below, please list one or more political issues that are important to you. Mention issues over which you know people disagree. Where possible, mention issues that you've talked about with people--either informally or in a more formal setting like a group meeting. Be sure to list any issues over which you have had a disagreement with someone you know or have come across. Please take your time.

Discussion Time     Think back on discussions you have had about the issues you just mentioned. Try to remember both discussions in which you talked with people you agreed with and with people you disagreed with. On average, how many hours a month do you talk with people about these issues? (You can use fractions. Put a zero down if you never talk with anyone. Put a fraction like .5 or .1 down if you rarely talk with anyone.)

wnttk        Think about all the time you spend in your discussions about the issues you mentioned. What percent of this time do you actually want to be in the discussion?

pcval        When you discuss politics with others, what percent of the time do you and they discuss your values?

pccomm    When you discuss politics with others, what percent of the time do you and they discuss your responsibilities to the community?

pctk    Think about all the time you spend in your discussions about the issues you mentioned.  What percent of the time do you do the speaking (as opposed to other people speaking)?

pcagr    Think about all the time you spend in discussions about the issues you mentioned.  What percent of all the time you spend in these discussions do you speak with people who agree with you?

pctkd    When you talk with people who disagree with you about these issues, what percent of the time do you do the talking (as opposed to the other person talking)?

disTtmi    Sometimes people do not talk much about political issues because they do not have good opportunities to do so.  In other cases, people simply do not want to talk about political issues.  Suppose you had many good opportunities to talk about the issues you mentioned.  On average, how many hours a month would you <U>want to</U> talk with people about these issues?  You can use fractions.

pcwtk    Imagine you <U>had to</U> talk with someone about the issues you mentioned, but you could decide how much to talk.  What percent of the time would you <U>want to</U> do the speaking (as opposed to the other person speaking)?

pcwagr Now imagine you <U>had to</U> talk with a number of people about the issues you mentioned, but you could decide which people you talk with.  What percent of

your total discussion time would you <U>want to</U> spend talking with people who agreed with you?

pcwtkd Next, imagine you <U>had to</U> talk with someone you disagree with about the issues you mentioned.  What percent of the time would you <U>want to</U> do the speaking?

pcwlnd Finally, think about the time during which you do not talk during a political discussion.  When you are talking with people who disagree with you about these issues, what percent of this time would you actually listen to what they are saying?

Whether or not you talk with people about the political issues you mentioned, you no doubt have views about such discussions.  The next few questions are about these views.  (Agree / Disagree questions)

**Talking (With Those Who Disagree):**

talkd          I want to talk with people who disagree with me about political issues.

(See also:  Percent question about willingness to talk with those who disagree.)

**Engaging (Revealing and Defending):**

reveal          I would rather not reveal my political beliefs to someone who would disagree with me.

justif          I would rather not justify my political beliefs to someone who disagrees with me.

**Listening:**

noln      I do not want to listen to someone defend political beliefs I disagree with.

(See also: pcwlnd above.)

**Accommodating:**

common   I am motivated to find common ground with people who disagree with me about political issues.

undstd I want to do my best to understand other people's reasons for taking political views different than mine.

**Convincing:**

help      I want to do my best to help other people understand my reasons for my political views.

convnc It is not my job to figure out what reasons would convince someone my political views are right.

**Changeable:**

nocng     I do not want to change my political positions, regardless of the reasons I hear for the other side.

shdcng When I hear good arguments for an opposing political view, I should either come up with a good response or change my views.

**Values Talk (Personal Development):**

value      It is important to bring up my values when I discuss politics.

valuen I would rather not bring up my values when I discuss politics.

**Community Responsibilities (Personal Development):**

commuIt's important for me to bring up my community responsibilities when I

discuss politics.

commun        I would rather not bring up my community responsibilities when I

discuss politics.

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