GLOBAL BAROMETER SURVEYS

Exploring Support for Democracy Across the Globe

REPORT ON KEY FINDINGS

June 2018
Global Barometer Surveys

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Foreword

Exploring Support for Democracy across the Globe

From Brexit to the election of President Trump and the rising rightist parties in Europe, Western liberal democracies are under distress. At the same time, the process of democratization is also facing an uphill battle in the developing world. New democracies are stagnating in Latin America and South Asia, and democratization has been aborted in the Arab region and reversed in Africa and Eurasia. In East Asia, democracies are challenged by rising authoritarian regimes, especially China. Given the uncertain future of democracy, it is time to investigate why support for democracy varies across countries and regions.

Rich and Reliable Data for Democratization Research

The Global Barometer Surveys (GBS) generates a worldwide base of scientifically reliable and comparable data on public opinion about democracy, prosperity, and human security. This public opinion data can be used for different purposes, including theory building, theory testing, policymaking, and education. GBS results cast light on the reasons underlying changes in popular orientations. We gather this information by means of face-to-face interviews with randomly selected samples of respondents that represent the adult population in each country. The GBS is made up of a diverse set of organizations, including university research institutes, private sector research teams, and non-governmental think tanks. Each of these partners has distinctive skills, for example in the conceptualization of applied social science research problems, the organization of survey fieldwork, the management of large data sets, and the cultural interpretation of the survey results. The GBS fosters exchange of expertise by bringing partners together for planning and analysis at the national, regional, and global levels. The GBS also aims to disseminate survey results to popular and policy audiences. GBS reports take various forms and are targeted to a wide range of users, including decision makers in legislative and executive branches of government, policy advocates and civic educators, journalists in the mass media, and researchers doing evaluations of programs of good governance and socioeconomic development. In addition, as a reflection of “the voice of the people,” the survey aims to help ordinary people become better informed and more active citizens.

Global Perspectives, Local Concerns

The GBS data are not only useful for cross-regional and cross-country comparisons, they also provide insights into opinion differences within subgroups. Although the GBS data allow generalizations about the populations of whole regions and countries, we find it much more useful to contrast the differential responses of various individuals and groups. Analysts can disaggregate GBS findings by gender, age, economic status, and a host of other demographic and attitudinal factors. As such, researchers can distinguish precisely how different groups understand and pursue democracy, prosperity and human security. In addition, we can measure whether different people, including ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups, think they have attained these goals.

Moreover, GBS results cast light on the reasons underlying changes in popular orientations. At first glance, for example, attitudes to democracy or development might seem to be a function of a gender gap. But closer examination will likely reveal that there are few innate distinctions between men and
women that cannot be explained by girls’ lack of access to formal education. Probing further, we may discover that these educational disadvantages can be partially overcome if an individual has a sense of responsibility for her own welfare or the will to become actively engaged in the wider world of public affairs. It is possible to arrive at such penetrating explanations (and thereby at more reliable policy recommendations) only via multivariate analysis of the sort of individual-level data generated by GBS surveys.

**The Voice of the People**

This report is our first comprehensive analysis on the state of support for democracy across the globe using data from the Global Barometer Surveys. Based on regional surveys carried out between 2010 and 2013, a data set was compiled to include questions available for cross-regional comparison. We focus on support for democracy both because democracy is at the core of the GBS surveys, and because, as a political system, it is currently facing an uphill battle to defend its legitimacy. By exploring the state of support for democracy across regions and the potential factors that lead to the variations in levels of support for democracy, we hope to provide a wide-ranging picture that is able to inform scholars and policymakers about the challenges faced by political institutions and possible solutions that could help restore citizens’ confidence in democracy.

We would like to thank the Jain University Press for having printed this report in such an excellent and professional manner.

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Global Barometer Surveys (GBS) is a collaborative research project consisting of six regional barometers. It is the first comprehensive effort to measure, at a mass level, the current social, political, and economic climate around the world. It provides an independent, non-partisan, scientific and multidisciplinary view of public opinion on a range of policy-relevant issues. Currently, the GBS network covers 70% of the world’s population and is still expanding.

The GBS represents an indigenous initiative to develop a global intellectual community for the study of democracy by surveying ordinary citizens. The project’s agenda is built on the premises that public attitudes and orientations toward democracy are crucial to the process of political legitimacy and that political culture operates autonomously as a key factor mediating the impact of socio-economic modernization on the evolution of the political regime, particularly in democracies. Originally inspired by the Eurobarometer, which was funded in the 1970s to track mass attitudes in what was then the European Community, new regional barometers emerged, developing innovative approaches that are adapted to regions around the world undergoing rapid political and economic change. The GBS now covers six regions, including Africa (Afrobarometer), East and Southeast Asia (Asian Barometer), South Asia (South Asia Barometer), Central and South America (Latinobarómetro), the Middle East (Arab Barometer), and countries of the former Soviet Union (Eurasia Barometer). As more regions join the GBS network, a standard approach is being established to ensure that data is comparable and reliable. Before the launch of the GBS in 2004, the survey instruments adopted by the different barometer surveys, while sharing the common research agenda of exploring citizens’ attitudes toward democracy, governance and political reform, were not strictly comparable due to differences in format and wording. Over the years, the GBS has established standardized questionnaire modules across regions, while also allowing regional barometers to retain their own region-specific items that reflected particular local concerns.

The organizational structure of the GBS network is based on two principles: multilateral coordination and self-governance. On the one hand, each regional barometer directs and coordinates its own member institutions and country teams in 93 countries where surveys have been conducted. For example, the Afrobarometer is headquartered at the Ghana Center for Democratic Development. It commissions data collection, for example, in Nigeria through Practical Sampling International and in South Africa through Citizens Surveys. The headquarters of Asian Barometer is co-hosted by the Center for East Asia Democratic Studies at National Taiwan University and the Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica. It implements its survey in the Philippines through Social Weather Station and in Malaysia through Merdeka Centre. At the same time, three bodies have been established to coordinate the regional barometers to achieve common research standards, generate merged data and pooled resources, produce joint research output, and organize joint out-reach activities.

The GBS network is currently managed through three bodies:

- **Executive Board** - comprised of representatives from member regional barometers. The Executive Board provides intellectual leadership, makes collective decisions, develops proposals for research and funding, plans and coordinates surveys according to a common schedule, and authorizes other actions, including delegating tasks to working groups.
• Secretariat - The GBS Secretariat is currently hosted by the Asian Barometer. The Secretariat is responsible for coordinating data-collection activities among six regional barometers, maintaining GBS website and data archive, and supporting collaborative research activities under the auspices of GBS.

• Advisory Board - consisting of respected senior analysts and practitioners.

The Advisory Board is currently chaired by Larry Diamond of Stanford University, co-editor of The Journal of Democracy. The Board provides general advice, technical expertise, and academic networking on as-needed basis.

By providing a bottom-up assessment of democratic legitimacy, political trust, and quality of governance, the GBS adds insights and interpretations to complement indicators compiled by international organizations or official statistics published by national governments. Our surveys focus on people, especially their subjective opinions. Since the opinions that individuals express do not always reflect their objective material circumstances, we therefore delve deeper than, for example, official poverty data, by reporting on people's experiences in obtaining basic human needs and their own perceptions of whether or not they feel poor or economically secure. Similarly, our comparative surveys complement official electoral statistics with data on self-reported voting patterns, partisan preferences, and how voters participate in the political process. The GBS is dedicated to meaningful and in-depth dialogues with multiple stakeholders such as donor organizations, transnational NGOs, international organizations, international mass media, think tanks, civic organizations, government officials and opinion leaders.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores how and why citizens support democracy. The first part of the report shows the current state of democracy across different regions. We are especially concerned with asking whether citizens prefer a democratic form of government, how satisfied they are with democracy, and how much they resist alternative political systems. We, therefore, distinguish between regime-based and performance-based support for democracy, and explore variations in support for democracy on these two dimensions. Accordingly, citizens’ support for democracy might be strongly influenced by preference for democratic political systems or rejection of nondemocratic alternatives. Yet, citizens might evaluate democracy according to its performance, seeing democracy as a means to achieve well-being, and not an end in itself. We found that the level of democracy in a country was positively associated with regime-based support for democracy in some regions, and economic growth had a positive effect in others. The key findings include:

- In Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America, support for democracy is tied to the level of democracy.
- In Eurasia, support for democracy is affected by economic performance.
- In East Asia, there are two types of countries. Citizens in democratic countries in the region tend to have a high level of regime-based support, but are dissatisfied with democracy in practice. Citizens in authoritarian countries tend to support the regime based on economic performance but have a low level of support for democracy as an ideal.
- In South Asia, neither level of democracy nor economic performance affects support for democracy.

In the second part, we look at the association between political attitudes and support for democracy. We first analyze whether support for democracy is affected by different understandings of democracy. Democracy in its academic meaning is often very different from people’s conceptions of the term, and it is these conceptions that are the basis for popular support for democracy. We analyze different understandings of democracy across regions and investigate whether subgroups with similar socioeconomic characteristics tend to understand democracy in a similar way, and how these differences help us understand the state of support for democracy across regions. We found:

- Overall, understanding democracy as procedures and norms has a positive effect on people’s support for democracy as an ideal, and education plays a key role in boosting the relationship.
- In Africa and Latin America, citizens who understand democracy in procedural terms have a high level of support for democracy as an ideal but citizens in Latin America are more critical about the performance of democracy.
- Procedural understandings of democracy do not affect either type of support for democracy in the Arab world.
- In East and South Asia, procedural understandings of democracy are negatively related to support for democracy due to the serious challenges democratic countries in the region are facing.

Next, we discuss the effects of political culture and political engagement. Political culture provides the value system that may trigger different political behaviors among citizens. We compare democratic
values across regions and explore the effects of value orientation towards democracy for both support for democracy and rejection of authoritarian alternatives. Important findings include:

- Countries with high levels of democratic values are more likely to have high levels of regime-based support of democracy but low levels of performance-based support.
- In some countries, citizens who have high levels of democratic values also tend to be critical about democracy in practice.

Next, we probe whether citizens who are psychologically involved in politics and participate in politics actively are more or less likely to support democracy. These two aspects are the input side of a political system, meaning that citizens who have value systems compatible with democracy and who actively engage in politics should tend to support democracy as an ideal political system. We found

- There are positive associations between psychological involvement in politics and both political participation and support for democracy.
- In Eurasia, however, engaged and participating citizens have negative views toward democracy in practice.

Yet some citizens might be more likely to judge a political system from its output side. We, therefore, analyze how trust in political institutions and perceptions of corruption affect support for democracy. Here, we expect that citizens who have higher levels of institutional trust tend to support democracy as an ideal political system. However, trust is an ambiguous concept; it can be generated from confidence in the ability of political institutions to protect citizens’ rights or it may be generated from the habitual dependence on political institutions for citizens’ wellbeing. In the latter case, trust does not reflect the actual performance of institutions, but rather a blind faith in how institutions work for the benefit of ordinary people. The key findings include:

- Trust in political institutions has a positive effect on support for democracy.
- In autocracies and semi-democracies, trust in political institutions increases support for democracy through satisfaction.
- In democracies, the positive relationship is mediated through preference for democracy and resistance to authoritarianism.

Finally, we explore how the actual performance of the government, focusing on the level of corruption, affects support for democracy. Citizens who judge democracy from the output side are more likely to support democracy only if certain outputs are delivered. We found:

- Corruption is negatively correlated with both types of support for democracy across all regions.
- We conclude that citizens in the developing world tend to support democracy when it delivers tangible results.
**SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY**

Following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, four decades of democratic growth appeared to have marked a historical triumph for democracy (Fukuyama 1992). However, in the last decade several democracies have experienced breakdown, deterioration and decay, indicating a global democratic recession. In Asia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Mongolia face problems such as the ignoring of human rights, the lack of rule of law, military intervention, and electoral fraud. Latin American democracies: Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Guatemala are governed either by families, populist leaders or lack of balance of powers, weak institutions and no equality before the law although they hold elections. In other countries such as Bolivia, rules change as often as necessary to keep one leader in power, corruption in countries like Brazil and Mexico coopt the state. Latin America suffers from semi sovereign democracies. In Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe find themselves trapped in political deadlock and electoral polarization. Hope was rising after the Arab Spring, yet optimism toward the region’s future receded soon as autocrats retook power. In Eurasia, ethnic conflict and political tension in Ukraine and Georgia are entangled with foreign relations and security concerns with Russia, while in Russia itself as well as Azerbaijan, Belarus and Central Asian states the well-established systems of autocratic rule show no signs of liberalization.

In addition to internal problems of each country, two additional factors are reinforcing this democratic recession. The first is the loss of the consensus in the European Union and the United States that liberal democracy is the only game in town produced by the re-birth and birth of the extreme right and populist movements that have diminished their moral high ground to defend and promote democratization abroad. An increasing proportion of citizens in Western democracies think that democracy is a “bad way to run this country” (Foa and Mounk 2016). The second trend is authoritarian resurgence, led by China which has embarked on a path of “modernization without democratization” and has offered a formula for the survival of authoritarian regimes. Democracy seems to be threatened by a new wave of illiberalism.

Is democracy “the only game in town” in the minds of citizens? In this chapter, we start by examining support for democracy, one of the most important pillars for democratic consolidation (Diamond 1999, Linz and Stepan 1996). Without people’s consensus in this regard, the functioning of democracy is exposed to various risks, including backsliding towards authoritarian rule. Therefore, public support for democracy is important for the sustainability of democratic regimes.

Previous studies have used multi-dimensional measurements for capturing indicators of democratic support. Usually support for democracy is measured in a general and comparative sense. For example, the World Values Survey asks people whether they are supportive of the democratic system in general, whether they believe that democracy is a superior system, or whether they prefer democracy to authoritarian alternatives (Klingemann 1999). On the other hand, several studies have measured if democratic support is conditional. Following Easton’s (1979) inputs and outputs of political systems, Dalton (1999) and Bratton and Mattes (2001) treat democracy as a political system and test if people conditionally support democracy on the input side (for example, elections and democratic procedures) or on the output side (because democracy delivers certain results). Built on previous studies, we measure support for democracy from both input and outsiders and explain how the two dimensions are constructed in the box below.
Measuring Support for Democracy

We divide support for democracy into two dimensions. One is called the regime-based support for democracy and the other is performance of democracy. These two dimensions are constructed from six items in the GBS: (1) preference for democracy, (2) detachment from one-party rule, (3) detachment from military rule, (4) detachment from expert rule, (5) detachment from strong man rule, and (6) satisfaction with democracy. The dimensions are measured as below.

**Regime-based Support:** we use preference for democracy and detachment from authoritarianism to construct this dimension. Respondents who gave all of the five items positive answers are coded as having ideal-based support for democracy. When some questions are not asked in a certain region or country, we omit that question from calculation. For instance, preference for democracy was not asked in the Arab region and Eurasia and thus this question is excluded during the construction process.

**Performance-based Support:** we use satisfaction with democracy to represent performance of democracy: how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in [Country]? Respondents are provided with four options: “very satisfied”, “fairly satisfied”, “not very satisfied”, and “not at all satisfied”. The responses “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied” indicate support for regime performance.

**Regional Comparisons**

Figure 1 presents a general picture of democratic support. Data suggests that people in the developing world generally take a pragmatic and practical view when evaluating democracy. We find in all six regions performance of democracy to be more important for citizens than their support for the ideal type of regime democracy represents. In other words, inasmuch as democracy can deliver, evaluation is positive suggesting an instrumental concept of democracy. The percentage of respondents who are satisfied with show performance-based democratic support surpassed those showing regime-type support across all six regions.

Nevertheless, there are large variations in the different regions between the two measures. In fact, in all six regions less than half of the respondents are supportive of democratic regime type, with ratios ranging from 46% (Africa) to 9% (Latin America). Despite its longer history of democratization when compared to other regions, citizens in Latin America surprisingly are less supportive and have more reservations about their support for democratic ideals. On the other hand, in four out of six regions, more than 50% of the population showed satisfaction with democracy. The exceptions are Latin America (41%) and the Arab countries (34%). While an overwhelming majority of citizens in East Asian (70%) express performance-based support for democracy, in the Arab countries this support is expressed by only around one-third of citizens. Furthermore, regional variations between the two measures are large. With narrow gaps between the two types of democratic support, regime-type support and performance of democracy are valued equally in Africa (9% difference), Arab countries (2% difference) and Eurasia (7% difference). However, in East Asia (42% difference), South Asia (38% difference) and

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1 This comparison is made on the assumption that “satisfaction” is a comparable concept in all cultures, no consideration has been made to differences in the concept of satisfaction by region and culture.
Latin America (32% difference), citizens are much more likely to have a performance-based view of democratic support than to support the regime type. Notably, in Latin America, the combination of both measures is a good indicator of the low level of consolidation of democratic regimes in the region, and the existence of low semi sovereign democracies.

In short, for people in these six regions of the developing world, we find that support for democracy is based largely on the satisfaction of performance rather than the support for the regime type. This is a fragile base for liberal democracies and no doubt that developing countries are more vulnerable to populism and other non-democratic development than western democracies where support for democratic regime is higher than satisfaction with its performance.

Cross-Country Comparisons

After a general overview of democratic sustainability support at the regional level, we move on to elaborating the differences found at the country level within each of the regions shown in Figure 2. First of all, in Africa we find large variations at the country level between the two measures of support for democracy. For regime-based support, Zambia has the highest rate of popular support for democracy (78%) and Madagascar has the lowest (19%). Meanwhile, satisfaction with democracy ranges from 76% in Tanzania to 23% in Togo.

Comparing within regions we find the following African countries are more regime-driven, such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Cote d’Ivoire, while others are more performance-driven, including Madagascar, Niger, Lesotho, Namibia, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and South Africa. Yet, most African countries maintain a balance between the two measures. Regarding gaps in the mean between the two types, the highest is found in Ethiopia (50%) and the lowest is found in Liberia (1%).
Latin America Exceptionalism

Never before has the Latin American population been so prosperous as today, when one out of two families can reach the end of the month without difficulties. At the same time Latin America has been unable to dismantle inequality, since the other half of the population that does not profit from growth still suffers discrimination for the color of their skin, inequality before the law, and unequal access to opportunities. The region is split in two halves, an incipient middle class yet to be strong, and a large low class and poor population (20%) subject to inequality and discrimination. In the same period, elites have altered, all old elites have been replaced with new elites, with new parties and leaders. This new wave of democratic elites in some countries have stayed in power beyond democratic rules, either changing or bypassing rules. Corruption has penetrated even more, with the increasing growth and new economic powers. The case of Brazil is the most salient one, followed by Peru with four presidents either already convicted in prison or being persecuted by justice for corruption scandals. Popular demand for plurality has also produced an atomization of the political party system, a weakness in representation, producing representation crisis in several countries, and a weakening of trust in democratic institutions.

No less important is the resilience of authoritarian attitudes and the increase in indifference toward regime type. Latin America is based in a hierarchical culture based on the hierarchy of the catholic church, there is always someone in “charge” and always someone is right in knowing what is correct. Obedience is an important part of the culture, so that people demand a “hard hand” no matter if in the right or in the left. Obeying someone who “knows better” is part of the cultural inequality installed through centuries that has not changed much in these three democratic decades. The incongruence between the speedy economic success that brought simultaneous growth in all countries of the region after the Asian Crisis around 2002/2003 and lasted until the 2008 economic crisis, shows a growing support for regime/ideal type of democracy, that started to decline around 2010. Growing education levels showing the success of educational reforms, growing middle yet fragile classes, produced empowered citizens that suddenly rejected government region wide. Between 2009 and 2011 approval rates for presidents declined between 20 to 30 percentage points on average. Today’s average government approval is yesterday’s minimum (Latinobarometro Report 2017).

The indicators of support for democracy show these problems. On the one hand, the authoritarian culture that is not only politically oriented towards the regime, but penetrates all aspects of societal interpersonal and collective interaction. Latin America should be “controlled” for cultural authoritarianism because its approach to authority and conflict are basically different from other cultures. If Latinobarómetro already has 23 years of measurement of preference for authoritarian regime, not diminishing to be insignificant in any country of the region, it means that all these features impact both support for democracy as a regime type as well as satisfaction with regime performance.
Next, in the Arab world, no country has a majority of respondents who support democracy as an ideal regime type; while Kuwait and Jordan are the only two countries with over half of the population in support of democracy based on performance. The range of the mean between the different countries is higher for regime-based support. Lebanon (45%) and Sudan (23%), respectively, have the highest and the lowest ratios of regime-based support; while Kuwait (69%) and Egypt (15%), respectively,
have the highest and the lowest ratios of performance-based support. People in Kuwait are generally performance-orientated in their support for democracy, and respondents in Egypt are more idealistic.

Third, most Asian countries show a majority of respondents who are supportive of democracy based on performance. The two exceptions are Indonesia (48%) and Cambodia (45%). However, Korea and Japan are the only two countries where a majority of the people show regime-based support. Taiwan is the only democracy where less than half of respondents are supportive of democracy as an ideal regime type. The gap between the two types of democratic support is highest in the Philippines (61%) and lowest in Japan (5%). Geography, though, also plays a role — in Southeast Asian countries citizens are more likely to support democracy based on performance than Northeast Asian countries.

Fourth, South Asian countries systematically hinge their democratic support on the basis of performance rather than regime type. For example, Sri Lanka shows that only 27% support democracy as an ideal regime type, compared to 68% for performance-based democracy.

Fifth, in Eurasia, only the countries of Kyrgyzstan (55%) and Belarus (54%) have more than 50% of the population supportive of democracy as an ideal regime type. In contrast, Ukraine has the lowest levels of regime-based support (30%). For performance-based support, the ratio is highest for Kazakhstan (74%) and lowest for Moldova (25%).

Lastly, none of the 18 Latin American countries surveyed had a majority of people in support of democracy as an ideal regime type. For performance-based support, only Uruguay (86%), Argentina (52%), Nicaragua (54%), and Ecuador (61%) registered majority satisfaction. Compared with other regions, the percentage of regime-based supporters is particularly low in Latin America.

By looking at Figure 2, we can see that regime-based support does not seem to be related to performance-based support for democracy since the shapes of the two dimensions look different. Yet when we plot the relationship, Figure 3 shows that at the country level, there is a positive relationship between regime-based and performance-based support for democracy. This indicates that countries that have strong support for democracy as an ideal regime type are also more likely to have a high satisfaction with democracy and vice versa. However, there exists regional differences. Only in Africa, South Asia and Latin America is the relationship positive. In Eurasia, East Asia and the Arab countries, the relationship becomes negative. These three regions have a large number of authoritarian regimes and some of these regimes have outstanding economic records even though they keep a repressive political environment.
Fig. 3 Relationship between Regime-based and Performance-based Support for Democracy
Support for Democracy and Political and Economic Development

In this section, we move to examine how political and economic development can explain cross-national variations. We hypothesize that citizens’ support for democracy should be positively correlated to a country’s democratic level. Life experiences under high quality democracy can possibly result in greater support for democracy. Likewise, non-democracies or unstable democracies may give people reservations about supporting the regime. Similarly, a country that can deliver economic growth should be more likely to secure support for democracy, especially for performance-based support.

As shown in Figure 4, the level of political development is consequential to the support for democracy. The Freedom House Index (Freedom House 2017) measures the level of democracy on a spectrum from 7 (lowest) to 1 (highest). We reverse the scale so that a higher rating refers to a higher level of democracy. Aggregately speaking, the level of democracy has a slight positive correlation with performance-based support, but has no correlation with regime-based support. Yet, when we look at each region, we find that the level of democracy is positively correlated with both types of support for democracy, though in different degrees. Only in South Asia and Eurasia is such a relationship negative. In other words, citizens in democratic countries within the two regions have critical viewpoints and political liberalization does not seem to boost their support for democracy as an ideal regime type. The result indicates that having both democratic institutions and political liberalization is not enough for citizens in some countries to support democracy. One possible explanation is that democracy also needs economic development to make it workable.
A body of literature on modernization theory debates about whether or not economic development increases the chances for democracy to arrive and survive (Lipset 1959, Przeworski and Limongi 1997). Extending from research on modernization theory, scholars discuss whether or not economic development gives rise to a middle class under property rights protections via the rule of law in liberal democracy (Clague, et al. 1996), or towards support of redistribution via voting (Acemoglu, Johnson, et al. 2008, Boix 2010, Acemoglu and Robinson 2005). Yet no matter what mechanisms lead to the arrival of democracy, it cannot survive under poor economic performance (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). In other words, we would expect to see that poor economic performance leads people to either lower their regime-based or performance-based support for democracy.

We use GDP growth rate to represent economic performance since citizens’ attitude is more likely to be affected by short-term economic performance. The theoretical prediction goes that better economic performance produces more democratic support. However, we do not find such a relationship aggregately: economic growth does not affect preference for regime types nor satisfaction with democracy (Figure 5). This occurs in Africa, Arab countries, and Latin America, where levels of democracy have stronger prediction powers. In East Asia, the GDP growth rate has only a slight positive correlation with performance-based support for democracy, but is negatively correlated with regime-based support. This result indicates that support for democracy as an ideal regime type is not affected by economic downturns. Together, with the findings in other regions, this should give us some confidence that as long as political liberalization is promised and practiced, citizens’ support for democracy as an ideal regime type should not decrease due to short-term economic mishaps. Yet as shown in Figure 4, such confidence is not solid in South Asia or Eurasia. We can see that both types of support for democracy are positively correlated with GDP growth in Eurasia, indicating that citizens there tend to judge regimes by economic performance. The only region in which its levels of support for democracy cannot be explained by either levels of democracy or economic performance is South Asia. These results are
related to the social structure of the region, where religious conflicts and ethnic diversity complicate the supposed relationships between political and economic developments and support for democracy.
The specifics of Eurasian region are that declared “support for democracy” or the satisfaction with democracy in the respondents’ perceptions are closely mixed with their general evaluation of the performance of the current political regime and the economic system and the outcomes they bring to the population. If these outcomes are unsatisfactory, this results in lower support for regime-based democracy – in the form as it is now. If the political system delivers certain level of social and economic well-being to the population, it obtains higher level of support, even if democratic institutions and procedures are weak in the country. In particular, we observe high correlation rates between the “satisfaction with the way how democracy works” and such other questions asked in Eurasian Barometer like “satisfaction with the economy” and “satisfaction with the government performance”. Post-Soviet countries with the lowest actual level of democracy development (Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan) have the most stable social and economic situation while regimes involved into active pro-democratic transformations (Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine) face significant social and economic decline. For example, in Moldova, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan only around a half of the country population do support democracy while in autocratic states such as Azerbaijan and Belarus this indicator reaches 80%. The only country in Eurasia that follows the expected predicted line and where the higher support for democracy is positively correlated with the actual high level of democracy is Georgia. Other possible explanation could be that in Ukraine, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan the civil society and democratic political culture of the populations are more advanced, and lower levels of support for democracy are the result of critical evaluation of the democratic regime performance (the phenomenon of “critical democrats”). At the same time, in pro-autocratic states higher levels of support for democracy could indicate stronger regime support, but not necessarily actual aspirations for democracy.

**Conclusion**

The GBS dataset provides a bird’s eye view of democratic support in six global regions, which comprehensively covers the developing world. Based on empirical evidence, three trends can be observed. First, the general public shows a substantial level of satisfaction on how democracy performs in the regions covered by the GBS dataset. The majority of the population demonstrates their satisfaction with democracy and preference for democracy but fewer population tend to resist authoritarian alternatives. Yet the regions have great variation in their orientation towards regime-based and performance-based support. In Africa, a significant portion of people express their appreciation for regime-based as well as performance-based support. Latin America, by contrast, seems to be the weakest in showing both types of support for democracy.
Moreover, each region has unique reasons to account for its orientation towards ideal or practical grounds of democratic support. Yet overall, we found that the democratic level outperformed the economic growth rate when explaining the variations between both types of democratic support. With higher levels of democracy, democratic support is more likely to be valued, with the exception of Eurasia, where democratic support is closely associated with economic performance. However, observed correlation needs to be treated and explained carefully: in post-Soviet Eurasia, due to the distribution of natural resources (oil, natural gas etc.) and other factors, the level of income and economic development is significantly higher in politically pro-autocratic Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan and much lower in pro-democratic Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova. Hence, while we can conclude that higher level of economic growth does correlate with the higher level of the declared support for democracy by population, this does not always result in the actual democratization. Apparently, simple declared support for democracy can have different connotations and in certain cultural contexts adjustment by other indicators is necessary. In particular, when speaking about support for democracy, it is essential to consider how the population of the country understands democracy. Understanding of democracy will be discussed in the next chapter.

The findings not only account for democratic recessions, but also carry implications for competition between regime types. Given mounting evidence for the draining of democratic support in Western democracies (Foa and Mounk 2016), democracy is likely to be undermined as the “only game in town”. Therefore, to unearth the sources of democratic recession is also to uncover the potential challengers to democracy. Scholars have highlighted the sources of democratic decay, including the damaging effects of economic stagnation/decline via shrinking middle classes (Chen and Lu 2011, Easterly 2001), growing economic inequality within and across nations (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000, Ansell and Samuels 2010, Piketty 1995), cultural clashes induced by rapid globalization (Eichengreen and Leblang 2008, Martin and Schumann 1997), a retreating US in the promotion of democracy. The current challengers appear to be either Russia under a hybrid regime or China’s system of one-party authoritarian rule. Yet, our findings indicate that political liberalization is still much appreciated by the majority of citizens around the globe, and this has become the most important source of democratic support. Though this gives us some optimism about democracy’s future in the developing world, low levels of democratic support in Latin America still rings alarm bells. This chapter presents the preliminary results of democratic support in the developing world and hopefully to encourage further research to scrutinize and trace changes in democratic support and contribute to studies of democratization by identifying future challenges and opportunities.
UNDERSTANDINGS OF DEMOCRACY

Since the third wave of democratization began in the 1970s, democracy has been spread to many developing countries. According to Freedom House, as of 2006, the number of electoral democracies increased from 41% of the surveyed countries in 1990 to 64% of the surveyed countries in 2005 (Freedom House 2017). However, over the last decade, the growth of democracy has stalled and prominent scholars of democracy, including Larry Diamond (2015), have warned of a “democratic recession”. In recent years, a number of emerging democracies have faced political crisis or even democratic reversal. Democracy has failed in a number of countries including Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela, while many other democratic countries are facing crises related to political performance and democratic backsliding.

Some scholars have linked the problem of “democratic recession” to divergent understandings of what democracy means. The key claim of this argument is that people understand “democracy” in very different ways from the Western textbook definition of liberal democracy (Chu and Huang 2010). Citizens do not only perceive democracy in terms of freedom and liberty, or competitive elections (Schumpeter’s minimalist definition of democracy), but also according to whether democracy can deliver certain important outputs, such as good governance or social justice. Faced with the massive political and economic challenges of globalization, Western liberal democracy is viewed as something impotent for meeting the expectations of ordinary people. As a result, citizens may emphasize “outputs” rather than “processes” when thinking about “democracy” and may be willing to “trade off” certain aspects of the democratic process for more efficient delivery of public goods (Chu, Huang and Lu 2013).

Studies on understandings of democracy have used both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions test the first reactions that citizens of a country have when they encounter the word “democracy”. However, this measurement has its limitations since democracy has multiple meanings in the minds of different citizens. Although they may provide their first intuition when responding, this may not be the aspect of democracy that is most valued by the respondents. This is because people may lack sophisticated conceptual and linguistic skills, meaning they may reach for the more straightforward answer in order to avoid potential embarrassment for failure to answer the question. Therefore, in the GBS, we adopted four closed-ended questions. Each question asks respondents to choose one out of the four definitions of democracy that most closely corresponds to their own understanding of democracy (see boxed text below).
Measuring Popular Understanding of Democracy

In the GBS, respondents are presented with four questions designed to measure their understanding of democracy. For each question, respondents are asked to choose which of the four response items describing different definitions of democracy (freedom and liberty, norms and procedures, good governance, and social equality) most closely corresponds to their own understanding of democracy. “Norms and procedures” and “freedom and liberty” are procedural understandings of democracy, while “social equality” and “good governance” are substantive understandings of democracy.

Q1. (1) Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor. (social equality)
    (2) People choose the government leaders in free and fair election. (norms and procedures)
    (3) Government does not waste any public money. (good governance)
    (4) People are free to express their political views openly. (freedom and liberty)

Q2. (1) The legislature has oversight over the government. (norms and procedures)
    (2) Basic necessities, like food, clothes and shelter are provided for all. (social equality)
    (3) People are free to organize political groups. (freedom and liberty)
    (4) Government provides people with quality public services. (good governance)

Q3. (1) Government ensures law and order. (good governance)
    (2) Media is free to criticize the things government does. (freedom and liberty)
    (3) Government ensures job opportunities for all. (social equality)
    (4) Multiple parties compete fairly in the election. (norms and procedures)

Q4. (1) People have the freedom to take part in protests and demonstrations. (freedom and liberty)
    (2) Politics is clean and free of corruption. (good governance)
    (3) The court protects the ordinary people from the abuse of government power. norms and procedures)
    (4) People receive state aid if they are unemployed. (social equality)

Regional Comparisons

Figure 6 shows the understandings of democracy across five regional barometers: Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer, Arab Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and South Asia Barometer. We find that of the four dimensions — freedom and liberty, norms and procedures, good governance, and social equality — citizens in Latin America tend to perceive democracy in terms of freedom and liberty, with a total of 47% giving freedom and liberty responses, nearly as much as the other three dimensions put together. Norms and procedures and social equality each accounted for 20%, which is slightly less than in the other barometer surveys. Finally, good governance was the least frequently chosen dimension, accounting for only 13% of responses. Overall, respondents in Latin America are much more likely to understand democracy in procedural rather than substantive terms. In Africa and South Asia, there was a more even distribution between the four dimensions. Aside from the ratio for social equality of around 30%, the ratios for the remaining three dimensions were all in the range of between 20% and 25%. This finding shows that a plurality of respondents in Africa and South Asia define democracy in terms of social equality, while freedom and liberty, norms and procedures, and good governance
account for a roughly equal percentage of responses. Finally, we find similar patterns in the Asian Barometer and the Arab Barometer, with good governance accounting for the most responses (32% for both barometers), followed by social equality (30% and 27% respectively), norms and procedures (22% and 23% respectively), and finally freedom and liberty (17% and 18% respectively). These findings contrast with the results from Latin America, with respondents having a much lower identification with freedom and liberty, and around twice as many (measured by country averages) choosing good governance. This demonstrates that there is a clear tendency for citizens in Arab and Asian countries to favor substantive interpretations of democracy.

Table 1 Understandings of Democracy by Country Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Procedural Oriented (FL+NP Larger than 55%)</th>
<th>Neutral (FL+NP Between 45% and 55%)</th>
<th>Substantive Oriented (FL+NP Smaller than 45%)</th>
<th>Total Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this set of questions was not surveyed in post-Soviet Eurasia, findings from similar surveys (for example, the World Values Survey) suggest that in all countries in the region -alongside with the existing understanding of democracy in terms of freedom, liberty and democratic procedures- there are high economic and social expectations from democracy. In other words, democratic political system in the mind of populations in post-Soviet Eurasia is associated with a certain set of goods (social justice, good governance, equality) which this system is expected to deliver. When the goods are not delivered, citizens reveal high level of dissatisfaction with the regime performance and low levels of support for democracy. Moreover, when the set of goods is delivered by an alternative, non-democratic political regime, it receives population’s support.
Next, we consider different understandings of democracy in individual countries within each region. We look at whether respondents in each country are procedural orientated (meaning that more than 55% of respondents choose procedural definitions of democracy), whether they are equally divided between procedural and substantive orientations (meaning between 45% and 55% of respondents choose procedural definitions of democracy), or whether they are substantive orientated (meaning less than 45% of respondents choose procedural definitions of democracy). The results in Table 1 show that in East Asia, Arab countries, and South Asia, we can classify more than two-thirds of the countries as procedure orientated (10/13, 8/12, and 4/5 respectively), while most countries in Africa are evenly divided between procedural and substantive orientations (17/30 countries). Of the remaining countries in Africa, the number of countries with substantive orientations is higher than those with procedural orientations (9/30 vs. 4/30). Finally, in Latin America, all of the 18 surveyed countries show procedural orientations.

Cross-Country Comparisons

Figure 7 shows orientations toward procedural understandings of democracy by country. Among the Arab nations, only Sudan shows a clear orientation towards procedural understandings of democracy. In Africa, only Cameroon (60%) and Tanzania (63%) show clear preferences for procedural understandings of democracy, while in Swaziland (30%), Mali (30%), Niger (31%) and Senegal (39%) less than 40% show preference for procedural understandings of democracy. In East Asia, except for the Philippines, all of the surveyed countries show a clear preference for substantive understandings of democracy. Similarly, in South Asia, except for India, we find a clear preference for substantive understandings of democracy across all surveyed countries. However, in Latin America, respondents across all surveyed countries consistently preferred procedural over substantive definitions of democracy. These results show that democracy is understood in very different ways in developing countries across different regions of the world.

Age Cohort, Gender, and Education Effects

In different countries, the understandings of democracy can take on different characteristics among different subgroups of the population. The following is a discussion of the different understandings of democracy found among different age cohorts, genders, and levels of education.

Age Cohort

There were two main findings with regards to how different age cohorts understand democracy in different regions. Looking at the percentage of the population oriented towards a procedural understanding of democracy, we can see that within some Arab countries (Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine), South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, and Nepal), and East Asian countries (Hong Kong, China, Mongolia, and Taiwan), the younger the age cohort, the higher the proportion oriented towards a procedural understanding. Within these countries, the gaps of understanding between the younger generation, the adult generation, and the senior generation all stand at over 10%. This finding is in accordance with our expectation that young people are more idealistic than older people. In Africa, we found that in half of the countries seniors were more likely to have substantive orientations towards democracy when compared with the adult and youth generations. This finding may be related to the modernization of African societies – older people who were socialized at an earlier stage in the modernization of their society are more likely to understand democracy in substantive terms than young and middle-aged people whose socialization took place under different social and economic conditions.
Fig. 7 Procedural Understanding of Democracy by Country
Fig. 8 Younger Generations Lean toward Stronger Procedural Understanding of Democracy in Arab, South Asian and East Asian Countries

Fig. 9 Senior Generations Lean toward Much Weaker Procedural Understanding of Democracy in Africa
**Gender**

Overall, we did not find a large difference between male and female respondents with regards to their understanding of democracy. However, there was a notable finding in Africa, where in many countries women were more likely to understand democracy in terms of social equality. For example, in Burkina Faso, female respondents’ social equality understanding of democracy stood at 46%, while for males it stood at 33%; similar results were found in Madagascar (34% vs. 24%), Mali (34% vs. 24%), Senegal (42% vs. 30%), Togo (33% vs. 22%), Guinea (37% vs. 25%), and Ethiopia (37% vs. 27%). This gender gap may be due to a lack of gender rights in these countries, meaning that women focus more on the problem of equality when they think about democracy. According to the Global Database on Violence against Women, with the exception of Madagascar which is in 60th place, all of these countries rank near the bottom of the Gender Inequality Index. The rankings are: Burkina Faso (146), Mali (138), Senegal (120), Togo (134), Guinea (122), and Ethiopia (116) (UN Women 2016).

![Fig. 10 African Women Lean toward Social Equality in their Understanding of Democracy](image)

**Education**

Of the three demographic variables, education has the most consistent effect on understandings of democracy. When we divide the level of education into three sub-categories (primary, secondary, tertiary), we consistently find that those with tertiary education have the greatest tendency towards a procedural understanding of democracy, while those with only primary education are the most likely to understand democracy in substantive terms. This finding is consistent with our expectation that more educated people are more likely to be socialized into an understanding of democracy that is consistent with the Western definition of liberal democracy. This finding may also be related to the different economic opportunities available to the different groups, since the less educated are also more likely to be economically disadvantaged, and therefore pay more attention to the substantive dimensions of democracy such as social equality. Figure 11 shows the countries where there is more than 15% difference...
in orientation toward procedural understandings of democracy between the least educated and most educated groups.

![Graph showing the relationship between higher education and procedural orientation around the globe.](image)

**Fig. 11 Higher Education Increases Procedural Orientation around the Globe (Ranked by Margin of Difference above 15% Difference)**

**Relationship with Support for Democracy**

Political scientists have found a positive correlation between procedural understandings of democracy and overall support for democracy (Welzel and Moreno Alvarez 2015). In this section, we explore the relationship between procedural understandings of democracy and two measures of support for democracy – “regime-based” support and “performance-based” support for democracy.

Figure 12 shows the relationship. Contrary to our expectations, we find that at the global level, procedural understandings of democracy are negatively correlated with both measures of support for democracy, although the effect is stronger for “regime-based” support. In other words, in countries where citizens are more oriented toward procedural understandings of democracy, we find that they are not only less satisfied with how democracy works in practice, but are also less attached to democracy as a political ideal.

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*Please see the chapter on “Support for Democracy” for details on how these two measures are constructed*
Fig. 12 Relationship between Support for Democracy and Procedural Understanding of Democracy
However, we also find significant variations between different regions. In Africa and Latin America, we find stronger “regime-based” support for democracy in countries where citizens are more oriented towards procedural understandings of democracy; while also in Latin America, orientation towards procedural-based understandings of democracy is associated with lower “performance-based” support for democracy. The result in Latin America can be explained with the effect of “critical citizens”, in which there are procedural oriented citizens who are not content with the practice of democracy in the region. In the Arab region, the understanding of democracy has no effect on explaining support for democracy. However, in the East Asia and South Asia regions, orientation towards procedural understandings of democracy is associated with lower levels of “regime-based” support for democracy, but higher levels of “performance-based” support for democracy.

Intuitively, the findings in Africa and Latin America are easy to understand – people who understand democracy in procedural terms should also have more support for democratic ideals. The findings in the three remaining regions are less easy to understand. In particular, why do citizens who understand democracy in terms of procedures show less support for democratic ideals in the East Asia and South Asia regions? We probed further and looked at the individual countries. The lines of both types of support in East Asia are mainly pulled down by two countries: Mongolian and the Philippines. These two countries have encountered serious problems in their political systems and their inability to improve the quality of democratic governance probably daunts their citizens’ support for democracy. In South Asia, the country that pulls down the line of ideal-based support is India, and this is probably due to its inability to solve social inequality, communal conflicts and corruption which led to this low level of support for ideals. As these findings indicate, when democratic institutions fail to function, even those holding a correct understanding of democracy might abandon democracy as an ideal regime.

Understanding of Democracy and Support for Democracy in the Arab Region

In the years after independence, rates of economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were among the highest of any region in the developing world. The rapid economic growth was accompanied by a dramatic expansion of the state. Many countries guaranteed employment in the public sector to any citizen with a secondary degree or above. Similarly, subsidies on many commodities such as bread provided another state guarantee for the basic necessities of citizens. In effect, Arab publics accepted a social contract based on limited political rights in exchange for state provision of economic rights.

Over time, the burgeoning costs of this social contract began to break down with the state remaining unable to provide the employment guarantee and subsidies being reduced. Relatively low rates of inequality disappeared as crony capitalism and corruption predominated across the region.

Despite the loss of economic rights, multiparty elections remained largely absent from the region. Elections that did take place normally included a single candidate or party who would secure close to 100 percent of all votes. In fact, except for partial exceptions of Lebanon and Iraq (post-2003), no Arab country experienced a competitive election for real power until after the Arab uprisings of 2011. Electoral democracy remained a concept that was foreign to the region.

At the time of the surveys, democracy was not firmly established in the MENA while the basic terms of the state’s social contract with its citizens had failed in many countries. This environment...
meant that regardless of a citizens’ definition of democracy, they were likely to be frustrated by state performance in both political and economic terms. In effect, support for democracy remained hopeful, as a potential solution to political and economic systems under strain. In other words, rather than being critical democrats, those supportive of democracy in the Arab world remain aspirational democrats regardless of how they define democracy, making them no more or less likely to support democracy regardless of how they define it.

Conclusion

Some broad conclusions on how citizens around the world understand democracy can be drawn from the GBS data. Generally speaking, citizens in Latin America tend to understand democracy in terms of freedom and liberty, citizens in Asian and Arab countries are more likely to understand democracy in terms of good governance, and citizens in Africa and South Asia lean towards the social equality definition. In short, only Latin America is oriented towards a procedural understanding of democracy, while the other four regions are more oriented towards a substantive understanding. With regards to intra-regional variations, other than the five countries of South Asia, where procedural understandings of democracy were in the range of 40%-50%, the remaining regions showed quite large differences between countries.

With regards to demographic variables, education seems to be the most important factor influencing how citizens understand democracy. In most countries, more educated citizens are more likely to understand democracy in procedural terms, indicating that higher levels of education cause citizens to be more likely to understand democracy in ways that are similar to the classic Western definition of the term. In addition, the GBS shows that older people may be more likely to have substantive understandings of democracy. This suggests that as people become older, they also become less idealistic, and more concerned about what democracy can deliver than the rules or processes of democracy. Also, with the exception of a few countries in Africa, we did not find any significant gender differences in how citizens understand democracy.

Finally, we explored the relationship between understandings of democracy and support for democracy. Contrary to our expectation that procedural understandings of democracy should produce greater “regime-based” support for democracy, in two of the five surveyed regions (the East Asia and South Asia regions), we find the reverse to be the case, while only Africa and Latin America show results consistent with our expectations.
Explaining the Silences in South Asia

How does one explain the obvious hesitancy among the citizens of South Asia to elaborate on their understanding of democracy? A range of factors may explain this reticence. It may be linked to the fact that people of the region still face a challenge in accessing education and information through the media. The inability of people to come up with their definition of democracy may be a reflection of the word not resonating in their ‘daily life’ experience. If South Asia witnesses a string evidence of the welfare and rights vision of democracy, limited access to education and exposure to the media inhibits, for a large segment of society, a clear articulation of what constituted democracy. One notices, that this inability to verbalize once perspective of democracy does not reflect an absence of a commitment to democracy and its attendant values.
DEMOCRATIC VALUES

In a sharp reversal of the steady growth of democracy over the past thirty years, democracies now find themselves under pressure around the world. In the period between 2000 and 2014, Larry Diamond (2015) identified twenty-five cases of democratic breakdown for reasons ranging from electoral fraud to military coups. Freedom House data also shows that the growth of democracy has stagnated, and even started to retreat, since the beginning of the new millennium. The democratic malaise has even spread to apparently stable democracies, including European Union member states such as Hungary and Poland, where the rapid deterioration of democratic institutions has alarmed observers. Authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia are increasingly self-confident on the global stage, while at the same time the traditional leader of the democratic world, the United States, is losing prestige and influence under the presidency of Donald Trump.

The recent troubles faced by democracies across the globe serve as a timely reminder that the survival and consolidation of democracy is only possible with the support of both political elites and ordinary citizens. Democracy cannot survive if elites do not accept the basic rules of democracy, such as respecting electoral outcomes and abiding by the rule of law. At the same time, democracies cannot flourish if they do not receive the support of their citizens. As Diamond (Diamond 1999, 65) has put it, democratic consolidation requires that “all significant actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine.” When democracy is consolidated, both elites and ordinary citizens continue to reject extra-constitutional or nondemocratic alternatives to the regime, even when it is faced with a severe economic or political crisis. In other words, for democracy to become consolidated, it must become, in the minds of political elites and ordinary citizens, “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan 1996).

Democratic consolidation, therefore, requires both political elites and ordinary citizens to support the democratic order and reject authoritarian alternatives, even during times of political or economic stress. In the literature, support for democracy may come from instrumental considerations, such as a belief in the ability of democracy to solve problems or deliver certain public goods. However, instrumental support for democracy may be withdrawn if citizens become frustrated with the performance of democratic regimes, particularly when non-democratic alternatives promise quick solutions to poorly performing democratic regimes. Therefore, for democracy to become consolidated and capable of surviving crises, people must also support democracy for intrinsic reasons. This intrinsic support of democracy comes from the extent to which the values of ordinary citizens fit with those of the regime. In this chapter, we use three question items from the Global Barometer Surveys designed to probe democratic values.

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3 For a discussion on the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic support for democracy, see Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 268-270).
Measuring Democratic Values

Three questions items are used to measure democratic values (DV). The first item (DV1) asks respondents whether they believe that “government leaders should implement what voters want” or “government leaders should do what they think is best for the people.” The second item (DV2) asks respondents whether they believe that “government is our employee, the people should tell the government what to do” or “the government is like parent, it should decide what is good for the people.” These two items both tap into whether respondents support the concept of popular sovereignty, described by Benjamin Franklin as when “the rulers are the servants and the people their superiors and sovereigns,” or whether respondents view the role of government in paternalistic terms in the tradition of enlightened absolutism that emerged in the 18th century Europe or in non-Western traditions such as the benevolent ruler in Confucianist thought. The third item (DV3) asks respondents whether they believe that “the media should have the right to publish news” or that “the government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it considers harmful to society.” This item taps into whether respondents value the role of the free media in democracies to hold political leaders to account, or whether they believe that a free media environment may undermine social and political stability. We construct a composite indicator by averaging the percentages of respondents agreeing with the statements conforming to democratic values.

Regional Comparisons

Figure 13 presents a comparison of democratic values in the Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and South Asia Barometer. Of the four regions surveyed, Latin America has the lowest percentage of respondents (52%) upholding democratic values. However, support for democratic values in the other regions was only marginally higher – with 57%, 55%, and 56% upholding democratic values in Africa, East Asia, and South Asia respectively. Based on our composite indicator of democratic values, on average barely one out of two citizens across the four regional barometers upholds democratic values.

Of course, citizens may support democratic values inconsistently. Our analysis shows that support for a free media is somewhat higher than the belief that the government should implement what voters want, or the belief that the government is an “employee” of ordinary people, in each of the four regional barometers. The difference is largest in Latin America, where around 15% more of the respondents support a free media when compared to the other two items. However, despite some variation in support for different types of democratic values at the regional level, our analysis does not show consistent differences in patterns of support for democratic values between the different regions. Of course, this regional-level comparison may hide significant variation in support for democratic values at the country level, since the surveyed regions are characterized by varying degrees of historical, political, linguistic, and cultural diversity. On this basis, we might expect to find greater variation between countries in regions such as Asia, due to the wide differences in culture, language, economic development, and political systems, when compared to a region such as Latin America, which has more cross-national similarities, including the dominance of the Spanish language and Catholicism in most of the region. We explore these cross-national variations in the next section.

* These items were not included in the Eurasia Barometer and the Arab Barometer.
Cross-Country Comparisons

Figure 14 shows the country breakdowns for each region. The results show significant variation within the regions. In Africa, levels of support for democratic values range from 33% in Ethiopia to 72% in Egypt. In East Asia, the range is from 34% in Cambodia and Malaysia to 69% in Hong Kong. In Latin America, the range is from 44% in the Dominican Republic to 68% in Brazil. In South Asia, the range is from 47% in Pakistan to 60% in India.
Fig. 14 Democratic Values by Country
What factors might account for the significant variation in support for democratic values between different countries within the same region? In Africa, we find strong support for democratic values in the “Arab Spring” countries of North Africa. For instance, support for democratic values was above 65% in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Support for democratic values was also relatively high in a number of the full democracies in the region, including Botswana and South Africa. However, the achievements of democracy is no guarantee of widespread support for democratic values – Benin and Senegal both have lower levels of support for democratic values than the regional average despite their ranking as full democracies by Freedom House. In East Asia, Hong Kong has the strongest support for democratic values (69%), perhaps as a result of the challenges that authoritarian China presents to its political system. However, support for democratic values in Taiwan, which has achieved a fully democratic system of government, but is claimed by authoritarian China to be a part of its national territory, is low (53%), barely higher than in China itself (50%). In Latin America, four out of the top five countries with support for democratic values (Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Costa Rica) are relatively stable democracies, but the remaining country in the top five, Honduras, achieved this ranking despite its failure to consolidate democracy after a tumultuous recent past. At the same time, many of the lower ranked countries have failed to consolidate democracy (including Columbia and Bolivia) or suffered democratic reversal (Venezuela). Finally, India and Sri Lanka show the highest levels of support for democratic values in South Asia. India is the region’s only democracy, while Sri Lanka has seen some improvement in its Freedom House rating in recent years. Support for democratic values is lowest in Pakistan, reflecting the country’s failure to successfully consolidate democracy.

Overall, the picture at the country level is somewhat inconsistent. While some countries show higher democratic values as their citizens challenge existing authoritarian regimes (including Arab Spring countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt), in the established democracies, support for democratic values is generally comparable to those in autocratic regimes. Furthermore, we cannot find a consistent pattern pointing to deepening democratic values as countries modernize. For example, of the economically advanced countries in East Asia, support for democratic values in Singapore is significantly below the regional average, while in Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, support for democratic values is roughly the same as the regional average. In short, the achievement of democracy and economic modernization is no guarantee of the deepening of democratic values among the citizenry.

**Age Cohort, Gender, and Education Effects**

Support for democratic values may also vary substantially between different demographic groups within individual countries. In this section, we look at whether age cohorts, gender, and education are associated with different levels of support for democratic values.

**Age Cohort**

In each of the barometer surveys, we found no difference in support for democratic values among the youth (aged 18-29) and adults (aged 30-59) in the four regional barometers. However, there was a slight decline in support for democratic values among senior respondents in each of the four barometer surveys – support for democratic values among seniors is 3%, 2%, 4%, and 1% lower than for adults in Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and South Asia, respectively. This pattern at the regional level was generally replicated at the country level, although there was some variation in the strength of the age-related effect. Cambodia, however, is an interesting outlier – it was the only country surveyed to
show a much greater support for democracy among the older generations when compared to younger respondents. This finding is likely due to the complex legacy that the Khmer Rouge period had on the political orientations of different generations in the country, and highlights the importance of historical and institutional contexts when understanding patterns of support for democratic values.

![Graph: Democratic Values by Age Cohort](image)

*Fig. 15 Democratic Values by Age Cohort*

**Case Study: Cambodia**

While most countries show lower levels of support for democratic values among seniors, in Cambodia we find a dramatically different picture, with 46% of senior respondents expressing support for democratic values, compared to only 34% of adult respondents and 29% of youth respondents.

The legacy of Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979), which was responsible for the deaths of millions of Cambodians through forced labor and genocide, continues to cast a dark shadow over the country. The historical memory of this period has produced much stronger support for democratic values among seniors in Cambodia, who personally experienced the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime as young adults.

In contrast, young people in Cambodia, who were born after the Khmer Rouge, forced from power or were too young to remember the horrors of the period, are much less likely to express support for democratic values. Worryingly for the future of democracy in the country, this generation, which grew up in a period of relative stability and prosperity under the autocratic rule of Hun Sen, are less democratic in their orientations that their parents’ or grandparents’ generations.
Gender

In each of the regional barometer surveys, men had somewhat higher levels of support for democratic values than women (Figure 17). The largest gender gap was in Africa, where democratic values among male respondents were 5% higher than among female respondents, followed by East Asia (gender gap of 4%) and Latin America and South Asia (gender gap of 2%). There was also some variation between countries regarding gender differences in support for democratic values, with relatively large gender gaps in countries such as Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Swaziland, and Uganda. In contrast, in some Muslim countries, such as Indonesia and Egypt, we found that female respondents were actually more likely to express support for democratic values than their male counterparts (see boxed text).
Unlike age cohorts and gender, education is more consistently correlated with stronger support for democratic values in the four regional surveys (Figure 19). This finding suggests that civic education may play some role in strengthening democratic values – although we found higher levels of identification with democratic values in both democratic and non-democratic countries. The gap in support for democratic values between respondents with only primary education and those with tertiary education was 10%, 6%, 8%, and 8% in Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and South Asia, respectively. The higher level of support for democratic values among the more educated is consistent with the theory that civic education promotes democratic values. However, a few places did not follow this pattern – for instance in Togo and Guinea, support for democratic values was actually much lower among respondents with tertiary education.

**Case Study: Religion, Gender, and Democratic Values**

In both Africa and East Asia, our results show that men are more likely to support democratic values than women. Indonesia and Egypt are two exceptions to this pattern. Both are majority Muslim countries that have embarked on a process of democratic transition in recent years. While this transition was successful in Indonesia but aborted in Egypt, in both countries, women were instrumental in the pro-democracy movements that challenged the autocratic regime. Individual women with prominent roles in the protests included Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia (who later served as president) and Asmaa Mahfouz in Egypt (a recipient of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for her role in the 2011 Egyptian revolution).
Relationship with Support for Democracy

In order to further explore the relationship between democratic values and support for democracy, we distinguish between two different measures. The first measure is “regime-based” support for democracy, which measures preference for democracy as a regime type as well as rejection of authoritarian alternatives to democracy. The second measure is “performance-based,” and looks at the satisfaction that citizens have with the actual performance of democracy in their country.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Please see the chapter on “Support for Democracy” for details on how these two measures are constructed.
First, by looking at the trend lines for all of the countries included in the GBS (Figure 20), we find that “regime-based” support for democracy tends to be higher in countries that have higher levels of democratic values. However, “performance-based” support for democracy is actually lower in the countries with higher democratic values. Of the regional surveys, in Africa, East Asia, and America, we also find that countries with higher levels of democratic values have lower levels of “performance-based” support for democracy, while the trend line for the relationship between democratic values and “regime-based” support is positive in different degrees (in Africa, the line is almost flat). In South Asia, democratic values are positively correlated to both types of support. While the relationship between democratic values and regime-based support is consistent with that found in the other regions, countries with higher democratic values also have high levels of satisfaction with democracy.

The overall findings lend support to the theory that while citizens with higher levels of democratic values may support democracy as an “ideal” regime type, they are also more sharply critical of how democracy performs in practice. Conversely, citizens with lower levels of democratic values are less attached to democracy as an “ideal,” but conversely are also more tolerant of the failures of democratic systems. This finding is consistent with the theory of “critical citizens” – committed democrats who are frustrated with the actual performance of democracy. However, this finding is not repeated in every one of the individual regional barometers. In South Asia, there seems to be fewer critical citizens. Of course, we cannot draw any firm conclusions from this preliminary analysis. Further, individual level analysis and understanding of contextual effects at the country and regional levels can help us better understand the relationship between democratic values and different types of support for democracy, and help us begin to address the puzzle of why strong democrats may not always be supportive of democracy in practice.
Conclusion

The data from the GBS on democratic values paints a sobering picture. The survival and consolidation of democratic regimes are dependent on the support of both political elites and ordinary citizens. However, the findings from each of the regional barometers under the GBS show that barely one out of two citizens expresses support for the three democratic values included in the GBS. Furthermore, there is no consistent evidence that higher levels of democracy produce higher levels of support for democratic values. In fact, in some of the countries that have been praised for their democratic progress, such as Chile, Indonesia, and Senegal, adherence to democratic values remains alarmingly low. Young people are only slightly more likely to support democratic values than their older counterparts. Therefore, from our initial analysis of the GBS data, we cannot find any evidence of a meaningful shift towards democratic values among young people or people living in democracies. What is encouraging, however, is that higher levels of education are more consistently correlated with higher levels of support for democratic values.

What are the implications of democratic values for orienting towards the democratic system? The short answer is that citizens in countries which have stronger support for democratic values may actually have lower levels of support for democracy, particularly when we apply a “performance-based” measure of democratic support. In particular, consistent with the “critical citizens” thesis, countries with stronger democrats tend to have more widespread dissatisfaction with the way that democracy works in practice. This finding also lends support to instrumental theories of support for democracy – citizens’ support for democracy as a system of government may depend more on how democracy performs in practice than whether citizens support democratic values. Yet, the positive side is that the stronger democrats are in
a country, the more the citizens as a whole are likely to have regime-based support. However, further individual level analysis and understandings of contextual factors at both the national and regional level are needed to better understand what factors might produce stronger support for democratic values among ordinary citizens, and how orientations towards democratic values affect support for democracy as a system of government.
Political engagement is one of the central concepts in the study of mass politics. By engaging in politics, citizens can voice their needs and concerns to their government, help improve the transparency and accountability of public policies, promote citizens’ trust in political institutions, strengthen connections between representatives and the people, and even build public support for the political community. Civic engagement and political participation are crucial indicators of the functioning of political systems. Over the past few decades, however, we have witnessed a rising trend of disengagement of the public from politics in Western democracies, including growing skepticism and cynicism towards politics, low electoral turnouts, and a lack of trust in politicians and political parties (R. Dalton 2006, Norris 1999). Although the implications of declining civic engagement are still under debate, a healthy democracy at least requires politically engaged citizens who are involved in politics to ensure that the government is being held accountable and ultimately to facilitate good governance.

Given the significance of its impact on political systems, it is necessary for the comparative study of political engagement to go beyond the context of the established Western democracies. Therefore, in this chapter we not only examine the extent to which citizens are engaged in politics in a global perspective, but also investigate possible factors that produce differences in engagement between regions and countries. More specifically, the purpose of this chapter is to answer the following questions: to what extent do citizens’ political engagements vary across the globe? What are the micro and macro factors that explain variations in individuals’ propensity to engage in politics? And finally, what are the consequences of political engagement toward public support for democracy?

Measuring Political Engagement

Engagement in politics can take many different forms, from general interest in politics to attending demonstrations. To cover this concept more thoroughly, we define political engagement either as psychological interest in politics or as actions through which people attempt to influence politics (Brady 1993). Accordingly, six survey items are used to probe political engagement. The first item taps the respondents’ general interest in politics by asking “how interested would you say you are in politics?” The second item measures how frequently people talk about politics by asking “When you get together with your family members or friends, how often do you discuss political matters?” The third item deals with the ability to understand politics by asking respondents whether they agree with the statement that “politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what is going on.” These three indicators are closely related to psychological involvement in politics. The fourth item asks respondents whether they “voted in the last election.” The fifth item asks respondents whether they “have got together with others to raise an issue or try to resolve problems.” The last item asks respondents whether they have “attended a demonstration or protest march.” Together, these three items measure political engagement in terms of behaviors instead of attitudes. Because attitudinal and behavioral engagement are conceptually different from each other, our empirical analysis distinguishes between them.
Regional Comparisons

Figure 21 presents a comparison of the average levels of political engagement – psychological involvement and political participation – across the six regional barometers. The bar graphs on the left-hand side of the columns represent the mean percentages of psychological involvement; the bars on the right-hand side of the columns show the average percentages of political activism. For the levels of psychological involvement, on average, less than 50% of GBS respondents reported psychological engagement in politics, suggesting a similar pattern to the dwindling political engagement that has been observed in Western industrial democracies. On the other hand, we also notice that the levels of political engagement vary significantly across different regions. For instance, among the six regions, Eurasia exhibits the highest level of political involvement (48%), followed by Africa (35%), Latin America (33%), Arab countries (33%), East Asia (30%), and South Asia (25%). When looking in more detail at the different types of involvement, we found that citizens in Eurasia talk about political matters with their family or friends more frequently than do the citizens in other regions. Also, compared to other regions, citizens in Africa are more interested in politics. When it comes to self-evaluation of their ability to understand politics, slightly above one-quarter agree that politics is not complicated and can be understood. The only exception is Latin America, where almost half of the respondents think that they are able to understand what is going on in politics.

The average levels of political participation for each region are displayed in the bars in the right-hand column of Figure 21. Of the six regions included in the GBS, citizens in Africa, Eurasia, Latin America, and South Asia are more likely to participate in politics, while people in the Arab world, East Asia, and South Asia are less likely to participate in political activities. When looking in more detail at the distribution of different types of participation, the results show that in East Asia, Eurasia, and Latin America, respondents reported a high percentage (over 80%) for voting in the last election, while the reported turnout is significantly lower in Arab countries (58%). Besides voting, our measure of political participation also includes items regarding taking part in collective actions or protests. We found that engaging in a collaborative action to resolve problems is quite common in African countries, with more than 54% replying that they have done this once or more in the past three years. However, the average levels for attending a demonstration are low in the Afro, Asian, and Eurasian barometers (less than 10%), while citizens from Arab, South Asian, and Latin American countries show a higher level of participation in demonstrations.
These results indicate that our respondents do not always actively engage in politics – less than half are interested in politics, discuss political matters frequently, or have participated in political actions other than voting over the last three years. However, within regions, levels of political engagement may also vary between different societies. In the following section we break down the results of political engagement in individual countries.

**Cross-Country Comparisons**

Figure 22 displays the country breakdowns for psychological involvement and political participation. The results show remarkable variation within different regions. For example, in East Asia, the level of psychological involvement ranges from 20% in China to 45% in Vietnam. In Africa, the average level of psychological engagement is low in Madagascar (19%), but is high at 46% in Lesotho. In Eurasia, more than 60% of Kyrgyzstani citizens are psychologically engaged in politics, while in Azerbaijan this percentage dropped to 32%.

Although a composite index of psychological involvement can provide a general picture of the variations within different regions, individual indicators, such as citizens’ interest in politics, frequency of political discussions, and ability to understand politics, are still notable. In East Asia, for example, we found that Korean and Taiwanese respondents are not very interested in politics, suggesting that in East Asia the level of democracy is not associated with ordinary citizens’ interest in politics. Regarding political discussion, which is another important indicator of engagement, we found a significant within-region variance in all of the regions except East Asia. In East Asia, people are usually taught to avoid open conflict with others. Perhaps this is the reason why they are less likely to talk about political matters with their family or friends.

The levels of political participation, which is a composite percentage of electoral participation, volunteer participation and attending a demonstration are presented in the right-hand bar for each country in Figure 22. Again, we observed some country-level variation. For instance, in Africa the highest level of political participation occurred in Malawi with more than 65% reporting involvement in at least one kind of political activity. However, in Mali the level of political participation was only 24%. In East Asia, citizens of Thailand showed a high level of political participation, which may be the result of mass mobilization during the 2010 protests in the country.

We also find some interesting results when we break down the composite measure of political participation into different types of activism. For example, in Africa, although voting participation is high in general, respondents in three North African countries—Algeria, Morocco, and Sudan—reported a relatively low level of electoral participation. Regarding volunteer participation, our findings show that the reported rate of gathering with others is especially high in East African countries (Kenya: 66%, Burundi: 70%, Tanzania: 72%, Mozambique: 75%, Malawi: 95%). In Asia, the results show that people in Southeast Asian countries are more likely to gather together with others to solve problems than citizens in East Asian countries. Finally, in most countries, citizens rarely attend demonstrations. However, in a few countries, such as Pakistan, Brazil, and Yemen, the percentage who report attendance in a demonstration is high, revealing an unstable political situation.
Fig. 22 Political Engagement by Country
In post-Soviet Eurasia populations in all countries reveal quite a high level of political involvement (from 40% to 60%) which might be partly explained by the fact that all these countries have been established as independent states relatively recently and are still under the process of state-building which attracts significant interest from the side of their populations. All countries surveyed in the region reveal more or less same levels of participation with around 80% of citizens who voted in the last elections. High level of participation in elections is observed both in politically active “democracies in transition” such as Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Georgia (85-89%) as well as in pro-autocratic states such as Belarus (84%) where participation in elections is more a civic duty and cultural tradition and strongly encouraged by the state authorities. Levels of participation in demonstrations do not vary significantly across the countries either; this is an expected finding, given a series of civil unrests which occurred in more or less all post-Soviet countries in the 1990s.

Age Cohort, Gender, and Education Effects

As argued by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman’s resource model (1995), the extent to which individuals are involved in politics is affected by time, money, and skills, which in turn vary between groups with different socioeconomic statuses. Therefore, this section examines the sociodemographic basis of political engagement with a special focus on age cohorts, gender, and educational levels. We hypothesize that males, older citizens, and highly-educated citizens tend to be more engaged in politics.

Age Cohort

Figure 23 shows psychological involvement by region and age cohort (youth < 30; adult 30~59; seniors >=60). In Arab countries and Eurasia, we found some evidence showing that middle-aged citizens are more psychologically engaged in political matters, including interests in politics or discussing politics with friends. In other regions, however, the levels of psychological involvement do not vary across different age cohorts.

In contrast, when it comes to political participation, we found evidence showing that the levels of political participation differ notably by age across all regions. In Africa, the Arab world, Latin America, and South Asia, the propensity to participate in political actions is low in early adulthood, peaks during the middle-age range, then drops in older age. The inverted U-shaped relationship between age and political participation indicates that middle-aged citizens are the most politically active, because people at this stage of life are more likely than young people to have resources to participate in politics. In East Asia and Eurasia, the levels of political participation also increase with age, suggesting a positive relationship between the age cohort and political activism.
Case Study: Political Participation in Ukraine

Ukrainian society experienced a number of important political events in 2004–2012 before the survey took place which included the “Orange revolution,” 2006 parliamentary elections, early elections in 2007, and presidential elections in 2010. In this period, the political struggle in Ukraine occurred between the 2 main political forces which in terms of political and ideological orientations divided Ukraine into Western and Eastern parts. Numerous demonstrations and actions of civil unrest occurred in this period in Ukraine. This caused involvement of all age groups of the population into different forms of political participation; voter turnout and demonstrations attendance increased across all population sections in this time.
Gender

Do levels of political engagement differ between men and women? In Figure 25, we further investigate gender differences in psychological engagement. Our results show that the levels of political psychological engagement among male respondents are about 10% higher than the levels for women in almost every region. In other words, men are more likely than women to be interested in politics, to discuss politics with family or friends, as well as to have higher level of understanding about political matters.

As for political participation, again, we find a clear gender gap in the average level of political participation, with men being more politically active than women in voting participation, in gathering together to solve problems, as well as in attending political demonstrations. Despite more or less equal levels of political participation in Latin America, East Asia and Eurasia, survey results in the Arab world, South Asia and Africa show a greater gender difference in political participation. The results seem to suggest that the gender gap in political engagement, either psychological or behavioral, is a universal phenomenon with only a few exceptions. The unequal participation between men and women is rooted in formal and informal institutions that marginalize women's role in political processes (Burns, Scholzman and Verba 2001).
If engaging in politics requires certain skills, we should find a positive association between civic skills and the level of political involvement. Because there is no direct measure related to an individual's civic skills in the GBS dataset, the respondents' educational level is employed to investigate our hypothesis. Figure 26 reports the levels of psychological involvement and political participation across different levels of education levels. The result shows a positive relationship between psychological engagement and educational level across all regions, meaning that higher levels of education are associated with more engagement in politics. In Eurasia and Latin America, the participatory level of the highly educated are about 20% higher than those who are poorly educated.

However, this relationship is not found for participation in certain political activities. For instance, the levels of political participation are distributed equally among people who have different levels of education in East Asia and South Asia. Surprisingly, political participation is inversely related to levels of education in Africa, suggesting well-educated citizens are less likely to be involved in political activities. The mixed findings regarding the role of education in political engagement suggest that knowledge and skills are prerequisite for psychological involvement but not for political participation.
Finally, we examine the relationship between political engagement and support for democracy. The concept of support for democracy is divided into two dimensions—ideal-based and performance-based support for democracy. To simplify our analysis, we also calculate an average percentage of psychological involvement using interest in politics, discussing politics, and understanding politics. Figure 27 depicts the scatter plot of psychological involvement and two types of support for democracy at the country level. We find that the level of psychological involvement is positively associated with the level of democratic support, either regime-based (colored in pink) or performance-based (colored in green) support for democracy. Despite a lack of causality, the positive correlation between psychological involvement and support for democracy suggests that democracy itself may produce a virtuous circle of engaged citizens as well as an increased institutional support. In the lower panel of Figure 27, however, we find this pattern of positive relationship between psychological involvement and democratic support is not consistent across different regions. In Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, the citizens’ involvement is positively correlated with performance-based support for democracy but has different relationships with regime-based support—in Latin America the relationship is positive, negative in South Asia and no relationship in Africa. The results suggest that the more people are psychologically engaged in politics, the more they are likely to be satisfied with democracy, though engagement does not necessarily increase citizens’ preference for democracy as an ideal regime type. Moreover, in East Asia and Eurasia, a negative correlation between psychological involvement and performance-based support is observed.  

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6 Please see the chapter on “Support for Democracy” for details on how these two measures are constructed.
Performance-based support for democracy has nothing to do with psychological involvement in politics. Lastly, in the Arab region, there is no relationship between psychological involvement and support for democracy, indicating that public support for democracy has nothing to do with psychological involvement in politics.

**Fig. 27 Relationship between Psychological Involvement and Support for Democracy**
In Figure 28, the analysis turns to the relationship between behavioral involvement (voting, resolving problems together, and attending a demonstration) and the two types of support for democracy. Again, we found a slightly positive association between political participation and support for democracy at the global level, but this pattern varied significantly due to different regional contexts. In most regions, e.g. Africa, Arab, East Asia, and Latin America, citizens’ levels of political participation are almost uncorrelated with democratic support, regardless of the types of support for democracy. However, Eurasia stands out as a deviation from the global pattern showing a negative association between political participation and performance-based support for democracy, suggesting higher levels of political participation are accompanied with lower level of satisfaction with democratic performance.

Taken together, our findings indicate that political engagement has a more direct effect on performance-based support for democracy than on regime-based support. Yet such engagement and participation in politics creates two kinds of impacts. While in some regions, political engagement increases the satisfaction level of democracy, in some regions it fuels frustration with the state. We think the key difference lies on whether citizens’ demands and concerns have been addressed. Nevertheless, individual-level analysis can further sort out the real reason behind these phenomena.
Eurasia Exceptionalism

The negative relationship between political engagement and support for democracy in Eurasia is not consistent with the global pattern. This brings us back to the issue of “critical democrats” and mixed perceptions of support for democracy with the support for the political system as a whole. From the obtained distributions, we can see that countries with the highest level of population's political psychological involvement (interest to political life) are those identified by Freedom House as most democratic in the region: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan. These countries have gone through active political transformations since the last two decades, and the activities and events in political life naturally cause significant interest from their populations. Lower levels of support for performance-based democracy revealed by citizens of these countries show their dissatisfaction with the current system established and their wish for the improvement of the state of democracy. At the same time, in less democratic Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia the level of population's support for democracy closely correlates with satisfaction with system’s performance – as these countries are more stable socially and more advanced economically. At the same time, as we can see, the state of political culture of populations in these countries is different, and people reveal lower interest to the political life. Also, absence of significant political incidents in these societies leads to lower political interest among the population. Hence, when analyzing the level of political involvement or interest in post-Soviet Eurasia, apart from the level of democracy, it would be important to take into account the type of political system: pro-autocratic regimes in the region are well-established and more stable while pro-democratic regime go through a series of transformations; the speed and periodicity of changes have their influence on the way how citizens perceive democracy and politics in the country.
Conclusion

As Inglehart’s (1999) argues that political culture is essential to the stability of democracy, we believe the citizens’ engagement in politics can ensure that democracy is sustainable in the long-term by providing trust and support. Our findings from the GBS show significant regional variation in political engagement. Consistent with the existing literature, we also find a clear gender gap in political engagement, revealing that men are more likely to engage in political matters than women. In addition, people with a higher level of education tend to be involved more in politics. Although we found a positive association between political engagement and support for democracy at the country level, we also find remarkable regional variations in this pattern. In some regions, political engagement increases with higher levels of democratic support, suggesting a virtuous circle of ideal democracy. However, an opposite relationship was also found, implying that extra-institutional political engagement and participation might lead to frustration when the regime does not respond to the demands.

After almost 45 years of democratic upsurge since the beginning of the third wave of democratization in 1974, democracy is now under threat from populism, growing inequality, and refugee and immigration issues. The solution to these challenges lies in improving democratic institutions so people can voice their needs, be truly represented in the parliament, and be empowered to participate in the policy-making processes. We end this chapter by concluding that civic involvement is essential for the long-term survival of democracy.
What explains weak civic engagement in South Asia?

Deeper civic engagement pre-supposes a robust political community as also the availability of certain skills and social status. Half the women in South Asia do not engage themselves in any major forms of civic activity. While the youth tend to take a more active part in civic activities, as one gains greater access to education and has higher media exposure, the participation in civic activities correspondingly increases. It appears clear that in the countries of South Asia, contacting people in governmental and non governmental agencies is linked to access. The more educated, those with better economic means and great media exposure tend to contact officials/leaders more frequently largely on account of access and influence. Limited civic engagement in South Asia could also be linked to the multi-track challenges faced in the process of deepening democratization. They also alert us to the historical specificities of the journey of democratization in this region.
Scholars have focused on explaining the relationship between political trust and other variables that either affect or explain it using cross-sectional or longitudinal analysis. Although the study of political trust has received considerable attention, these studies have not yielded conclusive results (Weber and Saris 2016). Norris (1999) argues that this confusion arises from neglecting to specify the object of political trust, and therefore distinguishes between five dimensions of political support: political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors. Newton (2006) on the other hand argues that there are terms that are similar or closely associated with political trust, including “confidence in political institutions”. Trust in political institutions has been widely used as an indicator of political support for a regime at the institutional level. To function effectively, democracies rely on a myriad of political institutions (Chang, Weatherall and Wu 2015).

Based on the idea of political accountability, a government can be divided into two parts: elected and non-elected branches. Elected institutions, such as parliament and the national government, have fixed-terms and their survival and continuation depend on public opinion and electoral success. Conversely, the terms of non-elected branches are independent of electoral competition and they are expected to be politically neutral. Important non-elected institutions include courts and civil services. In theory, citizens’ trust towards elected institutions reflects regime popularity whereas trust towards non-elected institutions functions more like an evaluation of state capacity and governance. In the first part, we examine trust towards elected/non-elected political institutions at the regional/country level. In the second part, we examine the effects of individual and contextual level factors. Finally, we show how trust in political institutions affects democratic support.

Measuring Trust in Political Institutions

There are six institutions included in the analysis. They are trust in the president/prime minister, the parliament, the national government, the courts, the civil service, and the police. Some of the institutions are popularly elected but some are not. We categorize the president/prime minister, the parliament and the national government as elected institutions and the rest as non-elected institutions. We want to know whether being elected and non-elected institutions would affect how citizens evaluate their institutions. Respondents who said they had a great deal and quite a lot of trust are coded as having trust in institutions.

Regional Comparisons

Figure 29 shows that of the five surveyed regions, institutional trust in Eurasia and Latin America is remarkably low and mostly below 50%. Conversely, the highest levels of institutional trust can be found in South Asia, where over half of citizens express trust in all the institutions surveyed. In addition, citizens’ trust in elected institutions is higher than trust in non-elected institutions in most surveyed regions, with the exception of East Asia. This feature shows that people tend to trust institutions which provide for popular accountability. By contrast, the relatively effective state capacity but rising democratic deficit in East Asian countries undermines citizens’ trust in elected institutions in the region.
Turning to individual indicators of trust, with the exception of Latin America and the Arab world, trust in the prime minister or president is higher than 50% in all regions. Another elected institution, the national government showed same levels of citizen trust. In comparison, trust in the parliament is much lower than for the prime minister/president and national government – e.g. trust levels in parliament were only 30% in Latin America, 56% in Africa, 55% in East Asia, and 48% in Eurasia, with South Asia the highest at 60%.

Of the non-elected institutions, citizens tend to have more trust in the police in Latin America (44%), Eurasia (47%), and East Asia (69%). Also, people voice trust levels over courts of over 60% in East Asia, Africa and South Asia. In Eurasia and Latin America, court’s trust levels are 45% and 30%. With the exception of Eurasia, the remaining four regions exhibit more trust in the courts than in the parliament. In East Asia, trust in the courts is even higher than trust in the prime minister or president (62% vs. 60%), showing relatively high levels of confidence in the fairness of the judicial process.

On the contrary, Latin America’s relatively low levels of trust in the courts and civil service reveals long-term failure to deliver the rule of law and effective governance. Furthermore, trust in these institutions is undermined by extreme levels of inequality.

The above results show that citizens’ trust in elected institutions such as the prime minister/president and national governments is higher than trust in non-elected ones. Also, different levels of institutional trust may reflect political realities in different regions of the world. In the section below, we analyze differences at the country level.
Cross-Country Comparisons

In Figure 30, we show average levels of institutional trust for all surveyed countries. The results show that, regardless of whether we compare countries from the same region or countries from different regions, the level of elected/non-elected institutional trust differs considerably. Take East Asia for example, in China, trust in the “elected” institutions is as high as 96%, but in Japan, trust in these in these institutions is only 11%. Hence, even within regions levels of political trust differ considerably. This greatly reduces how much regional averages can tell us, meaning that country comparisons are crucial.

In general, the trust in elected and non-elected institutions are highly correlated except in Arab countries and in Africa. In addition, we find considerable within region variance in East Asia and Eurasia. In East Asia, we find considerable variations in trust level in institutions by regime type, with democracies (Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Philippines, and Mongolia) performing much worse than autocracies (China, Vietnam, Singapore, and Cambod) in trust in both types of institutions. As we mentioned above, this result serves as a warning about the dangers of a democratic deficit in East Asia democracies, and it also reveals that the economic success of this area’s mighty autocracies enables them to win popular support. In Eurasia, the anemic level of trust in Moldova, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan can be attributed to endless corruption scandals, lackluster economic performance, and political instability. Ukraine, had the lowest level of non-elected institutional trust (19%), reflecting a crisis in regime legitimacy that contributed to the subsequent civil war in the country.

In the Arab countries, the within region variance also represents the political stability and economic vitality in specific countries. For instance, Kuwait stands out as the wealthiest and most politically stable states in the region, with the highest levels of institutional trust. On the contrary, in Egypt the overall trust hit rock bottom bring it to the brink of revolution and long period of political unrest.

With regard to trust in elected institutions, the highest levels of trust can be found in South Asia, followed by Africa, East Asia, and Eurasia. Trust in elected institutional in Latin America is well below global average, with Honduras the lowest (19%) and Ecuador the highest (62%) in this region. And in South Asia, in all countries except Pakistan the trust levels are around 70%. Even in Pakistan, citizens’ trust in the elected branches of government is still over 50%.

Turning our focus to non-elected institutions, Latin America still lags behind the global average, with no country producing levels trust greater than 50%. In South Asia, Pakistan (49%) and Bangladesh (46%) have lower levels of trust than their neighbors. In Africa, the more striking phenomenon is the higher levels of trust in non-elected institutions when compared with elected institutions. The gap is greater than 15% in Madagascar, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Niger, and Namibia revealing a gap between ongoing state capacity construction and democratic accountability.

Other than general analysis, some cases particularly stand out. For example, in Libya and Egypt, two countries where the Arab Spring took place, trust in elected institutions is only 16% and 20%, respectively. However, trust in the non-elected institutions exceeds 30%. This underscores the lack of trust people have in “politics,” a critical factor in the outbreak of revolutions in both countries. In addition, trust levels in Peru are among the lowest in the region, illustrating widespread distrust in institutions and even the danger of deteriorating into a “failed state”. Also belonging to the group of countries surveyed by the GBS showing low levels of trust in political institutions are the up-and-coming democracies of Taiwan and South Korea in East Asia. These results should make us concerned not only about the performance of these countries but also about the consolidation of democracy in general.
Fig. 30 Institutional Trust by Country
Another set of countries that can be placed side by side for comparison are China, Vietnam, and Azerbaijan. These countries not only perform similarly across all measurements of political trust; they also show some of the highest levels of institutional trust found anywhere in the world. One the one hand, this phenomenon could demonstrate the superiority of the political performance in these countries, which then produces high levels of trust in their political systems. On the other hand, it could also be a reflection of the political climate in these countries. In Eurasia, the highest levels of trust are detected in the pro-autocratic states such as Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The new “emerging democracies” such as in Ukraine, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan show much lower levels of institutional trust. This distribution suggests that confidence in the institution is linked with its consistency and sustainability; stable and efficiently functioning political institutions in non-democratic states do have a high level of the population’s confidence. The only democracy with the high level of institutional trust in the region is Georgia. Therefore, such high amounts of trust could also be the result of adherence to political correctness, and hence not entirely constitute an honest judgment of the country’s capabilities.

Age Cohort, Gender, and Education Effects

In this section, we display differences in perception of institutional trust between different age, gender, and education levels. This is done in order to investigate whether these population variables are associated with differences between regions and countries.

First of all, we found that the influence of gender on institutional trust is small. Almost no variation in non-elected institutional trust can be perceived in any of the five regions and there are few differences in trust in elected institutions. However, age and education level are associated with variations in institutional trust in a meaningful way.

Age Cohort

With regard to age, in general, we discovered that people with higher ages have higher levels of institutional trust. This trend implies people become more conservative when they get older. This phenomenon is most visible in South Asia and Africa. In Africa, institutional trust levels of older people are up to 10% higher than those of younger people in both elected and non-elected institutions. Also, in South Asia, the generation gaps in trust in elected and non-elected institutions are 6% and 9%, respectively. In Arab countries and Latin America, citizens tend not to trust elected institutions regardless of their age. However, consistent with our expectations, there is a generational gap in trust in non-elected institutions, with older people showing higher levels of trust. However, generational differences in trust in East Asia’s elected and Eurasia’s non-elected institutions are not consistent with our initial expectations. In East Asia, the possible explanation is that strong economic performance benefits the younger generation most and boosts support for political institutions. However, this explanation is not applicable to the Eurasia case.

Also, after thoroughly analyzing the data of each country, we list three special cases for deeper discussion. The first case is, not surprisingly, Hong Kong. Since the Umbrella Movement of 2014, high levels of disagreement have emerged in Hong Kong’s generational politics, in particular with regard to identification with China. This is reflected in divergent levels of political trust in political institutions. The other two cases we show here are Philippines and Peru. In both countries, younger people have higher levels of institutional trust. Those two countries also have had faced systemic problems of corruption and regime instability. However, both countries have strengthened their anti-corruption...
efforts and enhanced their economic stability in recent years. These changes have produced different patterns of institutional trust between generations when compared to the findings in other countries.

![Fig. 31 Institutional Trust by Age Cohort](image)

**Gender**

In terms of gender differences in institutional trust, we found that women tend to trust political institutions more, especially non-elected institutions (Figure 32). By contrast, men have more trust in elected institutions than women in Latin America and South Asia. Although the largest gender gap in institutional trust was found in Arab countries, overall there was little difference in institutional trust between genders in the surveyed regions.
In Figure 33, we find that levels of institutional trust in East Asia and Eurasia for both elected and non-elected institutions decrease dramatically as educational levels increase, consistent with Norris’s (1999) concept of “critical citizens”. With the gradual expansion of education, young people’s educational levels continue to improve, increasing the gap between the groups of young people with higher educational levels and older people with lower educational levels. However, the logic is quite different in Latin America, South Asia, and Eurasia where more educated people tend to trust institutions more than less educated people. To explain the situation in Latin America, we might imagine that educated people there might have more resources to get things done, for example by bribing officials. On the other hand, less educated people may have fewer resources to give bribes, making it difficult for them to get things done. The difference in the abilities of more educated and less educated respondents to get what they want from the political system may explain the gap in institutional trust. The same logic could also apply to countries in Eurasia and South Asia.
The above analysis shows that demographic variables can be helpful tools for explaining differences in institutional trust both between countries and within individual countries. In the next section, look at the effect of an important contextual variable – regime type – on institutional trust.

**Regime Type and Trust in Political Institutions**

Democratic regimes should provide checks and balances and proper channels for the representation of people’s preferences. Therefore, in theory citizens in democratic regimes should have more trust in political institutions than people living under authoritarian regimes. However, we found this was not the case. In Figure 34, we find a negative correlation between the level of democracy (measured using a reversed Freedom House score) and institutional trust. To put it simply, we found that citizens of non-democratic regimes had more trust in their institutions (both elected and non-elected) than citizens of democratic regimes. How can we explain this?
First, the high levels of institutional trust in non-democratic countries may occur for the following two reasons. One, people may conceal their true feelings for reasons of political correctness or due to the political atmosphere in the country. This would cause people to tend to choose “trust” rather than “don't trust” when answering sensitive questions. Another possibility could be that the political performance of partly-democratic or non-democratic countries actually is better than those of democratic countries. Take for example China and Vietnam, where impressive economic growth has demonstrated the strong capability of the state to increase the living standards of their people. Therefore, we cannot simply exclude this second possibility.

Second, what could be the reason for the low institutional trust in democratic countries? We also identify two possible explanations. The first is the existence of a democratic deficit and critical citizens in democracies, which causes citizens to have lower levels of trust in institutions. However, the existence of these two factors does not cause citizens to lose their faith in democracy as “the only game in town” (for a comparison of institutional trust and support for democracy, see the following section). In fact, quite the contrary is true; the prospect of democratic consolidation may even be strengthened. The other possibility, however, is more pessimistic. Democracies could be going through a process of “political decay.” This “decay” could be the result of political unrest caused by political competition, which has not only decreased the level of trust people have in political organizations, but may produce political deadlock or even crisis, further eroding trust in political organizations.

Relationship with Support for Democracy

In the previous section, we showed that demographic indicators and regime type are major contributors to the variance in institutional trust between countries. In this section, we explore the relationship between trust in political institutions and support for the democratic regime. Will it be the case that low levels of institutional trust in democratic countries will problematize the consolidation of democracy? Does trust in elected or non-elected institutions matter more for support for democracy? Does institutional trust affect ideal-based and performance-based support for democracy differently?
As we show in Figure 35 and Figure 36, there is a strong positive relationship between trust in institutions and support for democracy at the country level. Moreover, trust in non-elected institutions has a stronger effect on performance-based trust. This preliminary result shows that when people trust institutions more, they are also more supportive of democracy. However, this is far from the full picture. The results for the regional level in Figure 35 and Figure 36 show plenty of variation.
First, higher levels of trust in elected institutions produce greater regime-based and performance-based support for democracy at the global level. However, this pattern is not found for regime-based support in Arab countries, East Asia, and Eurasia. This finding may be related to the fact that most of the countries in these regions are not democratic, and therefore people who have low institutional trust look to democracy as an alternative to the status-quo. The results also indicate that high quality of political institutions can dramatically affect how citizens feel about their political systems.

Similar patterns are also found in Figure 36. In most regions, trust in non-elected institutions affect performance-based support but not regime-based support. The results are reasonable since citizens do not directly elect these institutions but the performance of non-elected institutions is the indicator of quality of governance and state capacity. Thus, even though citizens might be dissatisfied with non-elected institutions, their desire for democracy is not affected by it. In Post-Soviet Eurasia, there is a strong positive correlation between institutional trust and performance-based support for democracy. At the same time, we need to remember that the highest levels of both institutional trust and declared support for democracy are identified in the country following the pro-autocratic vector of political development such as Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan and others.
In sum, the direction of the relationship between institutional trust and democratic support may be influenced by regime type. From the results above, we find that higher trust may be associated with higher levels of support for democracy in free and partly-free countries. In authoritarian states, however, higher trust tends to be associated with lower regime-based support for democracy. In other words, institutional trust in non-democratic countries actually generates regime support rather than support for democracy.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter we find significant variation in institutional trust at the regional and country levels. We believe that these variations are related to the level of democracy level in a country. In particular, we found higher levels of institutional trust in less democratic societies. The reasons behind this deserve further investigation.

In addition, the influence and effects of institutional trust on the two measures of support for democracy vary considerably between different countries and regime types. We discovered a positive correlation between overall institutional trust and performance-based support for democracy across all surveyed regions. In contrast, higher levels of institutional trust may decrease regime-based support for democracy in non-democracies.
In a nutshell, in democratic countries, a lack of trust in political institutions may undermine support for democracy. Similarly, in authoritarian regimes, high levels of institutional trust may represent satisfaction with the status quo over democratic alternatives. Our results remind us that when discussing the relationship between institutional trust and democratic consolidation or transition, we first need to understand the influence of the political system on institutional trust. At the same time, when discussing institutional trust in partly-democratic or non-democratic countries, we also need to re-examine whether high institutional trust will bring about democratic transition or, alternatively, will consolidate the authoritarian system.
Explaining the ‘Trust Paradox’ in South Asia

South Asia presents multiple paradoxes on citizen trust in institutions. At the most simple level, the lukewarm trust in institutions represents the weakness of democracy, in terms of running institutions. At a more nuanced level, the trust related findings also announces the arrival of the ‘critical citizen’. Citizens do not seem to be in awe of institutions. The relationship appears firmly in the domain of democratic questioning and a healthy scepticism of institutions that exercise power. This hints at a possible third paradox. Democratic systems in South Asia confront an expectation overload. Citizens have a high level of expectation from the political establishment. An average or below average performance leads to a trust deficit. Finally, institutions insulated from public interface enjoy a higher level of trust as compared to those that people interact with on a regular basis. Those institutions which are aimed at delivering democracy to the citizens evoke the least trust. The stress on the overall assessment of democracy is patently visible.
CORRUPTION

Good governance is an essential prerequisite for democratic support. Good governance can include many different perspectives, such as voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi 2007, Pan and Wu 2016). Citizens all over the world are becoming more critical of government and political leaders. In other words, they are losing trust in government and political leaders. Corruption can account for one of the reasons for citizens’ losing trust (Pharr and Putnam 2000, della Porta 2000, Seligson 2002, Anderson and Tverdova 2003). In this regard, the GBS tries to unravel the following questions: Are there any variations in perception of corruption (both local/municipal and national levels) in different regions? Can socio-economic factors (gender, age, and education level) explain the distinctions across different regions? Does perception of corruption affect support for democracy?

Measuring Corruption and Governance

The measurement of corruption asks respondents how serious they think corruption/bribe-taking is in local/municipal and national government. The percentages of answering “some of them” and “all of them” in the perception of corruption in local/municipal government and in national government are used for analysis.

Regional Comparisons

Figure 37 shows the percentages of perceived corruption in local/municipal and national government. Overall, the average percentage of those who think corruption happens in all or some of local/municipal governments is 43%. Compared with Africa and East Asia where the percentages are below the global average, perceived corruption in local/municipal government is much higher in Latin America, where an average of almost two-thirds of people think corruption is prevalent in local/municipal government.

For the perception of corruption in national government, an average of over half of the respondents (59%) globally think officials in national government are corrupt. In Africa and East Asia, an average of fewer than 50% of people think corruption is common in the national government. In Latin America, an average of almost 70% of the respondents think officials in national government are corrupt. In the Arab world, the percentage is even higher. In general, citizens are more likely to think that corruption in the national government is more pervasive than in the local/municipal government.
Note: Arab Barometer did not ask the corruption level at the local government. South Asia Barometer did not ask both questions.

**Cross-Country Comparisons**

Figure 38 demonstrates that there is between-country variance within regions. In the perception of corruption in the local/municipal government, the percentage ranges from Vietnam (7%) to Mexico (82%). The differences in perceived prevalence of corruption in the local/municipal government within each region is large as well. In Africa, the lowest is Madagascar (15%) and the highest is Nigeria (62%). In East Asia, the highest is Taiwan (66%). One of the important characteristics of local politics in Taiwan is the access to pork and money (Cox, 1997). This probably can account for why two-thirds of people in Taiwan think corruption in the local/municipal government is prevalent. In Latin America, the lowest is Uruguay (36%) and the highest is Mexico (82%). The perception of corruption in national government shows similar trends; the percentages vary significantly (from 2% in Singapore to 97% in Lebanon). In Africa, the lowest percentage is Mauritius (23%) and the highest is Nigeria (72%). The perception of corruption in Arab countries is higher than other regions, as is evident in Figure 38; the lowest percentage is Kuwait (69%) and the highest is Lebanon (97%). In East Asia, the lowest percentage is Singapore (2%) and the highest is Mongolia (84%). In Latin America, the lowest is Uruguay (34%) and the highest is Peru (84%).
Age Cohort, Gender, and Education Effects

Are regional and country variations associated with socioeconomic factors such as age, gender, and education? In this section, we further explore the factors that account for the distinctions and the socioeconomic factors that would explain the differences.
Age Cohort

We find some differences between different age groups across surveyed regions. In the perception of corruption in local/municipal government, the figures for youth and adults in Africa and Latin America are pretty close to the regional average. In East Asia, the figures for adults are the closest to the regional average. In particular, the differences between seniors and younger cohorts in East Asia are larger than Africa and Latin America. Only 33% of seniors think corruption is pervasive in the local/municipal government, while 42% of adults and 46% of the youth think that the local/municipal government is corrupt. Compared with Africa and Latin America, this finding demonstrates that the youth and adults in East Asia are somewhat more critical than their older cohorts.

The distribution of perception of corruption in the national government is quite similar to the perception of corruption in the local/municipal government. The percentages of the youth and adults in Africa, Arab countries, and Latin America who believe that local/municipal government is corrupt are approximate to their region averages. There is no significant divergence among different ages about the perception of corruption in the national government in Arab countries. In East Asia, only the percentage of adults is about the same as the regional average. Compared with the other three regions, the difference (19%) in East Asia between the youth and the elderly is the largest. This reflects the fact that the youth is more critical of the national government than older cohorts.

Except for the Arab world, where there are no differences between different age cohorts, the youth are more likely to think corruption is pervasive in both the local/municipal and national governments than seniors. In Africa, perceptions of corruption among the youth are close to that of adults. In particular, the differences between the senior and younger cohorts in East Asia is larger than in Africa and Latin America. Compared with Africa and Latin America, this finding shows that the youth and the adults in East Asia are somewhat more critical than seniors. In other words, the elderly is the least critical of both levels of governments.
Fig. 39 Perception of Corruption in Local and National Government by Age Cohort

Gender

There is little difference between the genders within each region in both perception of corruption in local and national governments. As with perception of corruption, gender does not explain much variation at the global level. However, gender can explain some variation in perceived corruption in a number of countries. For example, women are more likely to think that corruption is widespread in China, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Africa, and El Salvador. Conversely, in Thailand, Cambodia, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, Ethiopia, Swaziland, and Chile, men are more likely to think that corruption is prevalent in government.

Education

Education level can also explain variations in perception of corruption across regions. Figure 40 shows that, with the exception of Latin America, people with primary education are the least critical and those with tertiary education are the most critical. In contrast, in Latin America, those with primary education are the most critical of corruption in the local/municipal government, and those with tertiary education are the least critical. In all of the regions, perceptions of corruption among those with secondary education are in between those with primary education and those with tertiary education, and close to the regional average.

The pattern of the perception of corruption in national government is similar to that of local/municipal government. With the exception of Latin America, those with tertiary education are the most critical of corruption in the national government and those with primary education are the least critical.
There is not much variation between respondents with different education levels in the Arab world. In Latin America, the pattern is reversed. Those with primary education are more likely to think national government is corrupt than higher-educated people.

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**Fig. 40 Perception of Corruption in Local and National Government by Education**

Overall, age and education explain some variation in the perception of corruption across regions. The youth and those with tertiary education are more critical than other age cohorts and those with primary and secondary education. In contrast to other regions, people with primary education are more likely to think corruption is prevalent in both local/municipal and national governments in Latin America. Clientelism and patronage are prevalent in many Latin America countries and this probably explains the finding. Clientelism and patronage are reciprocal exchanges between individuals of different status and power. For example, in Brazil, politicians can provide citizens with some material incentives such as jobs and public-sector resources in order to get political support (Mainwaring 1999). People with primary education may have difficulties getting job offers and also have few accesses to public-sector resources, and many need to bribe local officials for getting those benefits. This may account for the phenomenon whereby people with primary education are more likely to think government is corrupt than better educated people.

**Relationship with Support for Democracy**

In the beginning of this chapter, we raised a question “does corruption affect support for democracy?” We surmise that a greater prevalence of corruption is associated with less support for democracy, while a lower prevalence of corruption is associated with more support for democracy. Figure 41 and Figure 42 show that the perception of corruption and support for democracy are highly and negatively
correlated. Furthermore, this pattern is consistent for both regime-based and performance-based support for democracy\(^7\). The top charts in both figures are the findings at global level, showing that greater perceptions of corruption at both the local and national level undermine both measures of support for democracy. The other four small charts are the findings in each region. The downward sloping line in Latin America is the steepest for corruption at both levels of government, suggesting a strong correlation between perceived corruption and support for democracy in the region. Although the findings are somewhat different in each region, they all show that greater perceived corruption undermines support for democracy.

In the perception of corruption in the local/municipal government and support for democracy in Figure 41, the finding for ideal-based support for democracy is somewhat different from the performance-based support. In the top figure, the regime-based line is steeper than the performance-based support, indicating that the regime-based support is more negatively related to the perception of corruption in the local/municipal government than performance-based support. However, the trends for individual regions are not necessarily the same as the global level. In Africa, performance-based support is negatively associated with the perception of corruption while the regime-based support shows no relationship with perception of corruption. In East Asia, there is a slightly negative relationship between perceived corruption and the local/municipal level and support for democracy. The trend in Latin America is the most similar to the global trend.

\(^{7}\) Please see the chapter on “Support for Democracy” for details on how these two measures are constructed.
In the perception of corruption in the national government in Figure 42, perceived corruption at the national level is associated with lower levels of both measures of support for democracy. However, in Arab countries, the opposite pattern was found, with a negative correlation between perceived corruption and ideal-based support and a positive correlation between perceived corruption and performance-based support. Since most countries in this region are authoritarian regimes, pervasive corruption is likely to trigger the demand for democracy. For other regions, Latin America in particular, corruption hurts democratic regimes as well, as evident by a decreasing line for regime-based support.
Conclusion

The Global Barometer Survey substantiates that the perception of corruption in the local/municipal and national governments varies across regions and countries. In general, citizens perceive corruption to be more pervasive in the national government than that in the local/municipal government. We find that the youth and people with tertiary education tend to be more critical. Age does not account for much variation. However, in contrast to other regions, clientelism and patronage in Latin America makes people with primary education more critical of corruption at both levels of government than those with secondary and tertiary education. Finally, the perception of corruption is negatively associated with support for democracy, although we find substantial variation across regions. Overall, corruption hurts both authoritarian and democratic regimes by raising support for democracy in the former cases and decreasing support for the latter.
Corruption in South Asia: Perception or Reality?

There appears to be a visible concern across South Asia about corruption. For getting work done in government offices, there is a popular perception that the easiest way is by paying a bribe and/or skipping the official procedure/rules. A lot of this perception is based essentially on second-hand information. Very few replied in the affirmative when asked whether they or someone they personally knew had witnessed an act of corruption by a politician or a government official. Most of them had heard of it from a friend or relative.
CONCLUSION

This report explores support for democracy across the developing world and explains why people support the so-called “D-word.” For most people, the “D-word” has become a holy grail. As a result, regardless of whether they live under a democratic or authoritarian regime, citizens tend to support democracy as an ideal political system designed to protect individual rights through checks and balances. Yet, beyond this headline finding, our data show that the picture is much more complex. While, globally, the majority of citizens prefer democracy, they vary a great deal in their satisfaction with democracy and resistance to alternative authoritarian systems. That is, regions and countries differ in their regime-based and performance-based support of democracy. Although globally, the relationship between regime-based support and performance-based support is positive, such relationship is only evident in Africa and Latin America. In the Arab world, the relationship is a sharp, negative line, while in other regions the correlation line is almost flat. Probing further, we identify two types of regions. In Africa, the Arab world, and Latin America, both dimensions of support for democracy are tied to the level of democracy, meaning that when political liberalization is secured, citizens not only endorse democracy as an ideal regime type but also are satisfied with how democracy works in their countries. Results in the other group, however, are ambivalent. In Eurasia, both dimensions of support for democracy are affected by economic performance, implying that citizens tend to judge regimes by how much they can deliver tangible benefits. In East Asia, there are two types of countries. While citizens in democratic countries in the region tend to have a high level of regime-based support, they are dissatisfied with democracy in practice. On the other hand, citizens in authoritarian countries tend to support the regime due to economic performance but have a low level of supporting democracy as an ideal. Overall, we see strong support for democracy in democratic regimes but equally strong support for authoritarian regimes in the region. Yet given the low level of satisfaction with democracy in democratic regimes, this factor might undermine regime-based support to some extent. In South Asia, however, neither level of democracy nor economic performance affects support for democracy. We attribute this result to the peculiar social structure of the region.

At the individual level, many factors have been found to explain the variations in support for democracy, which we summarize below.

- Contrary to the theoretical expectation that citizens who understand democracy as procedures and norms are more likely to prefer democracy and reject authoritarian alternatives, we found such relationship to be negative. Moreover, a negative relationship was also found for performance-based support. These results, however, are mainly driven by the East Asia and South Asia regions. Citizens in democratic countries, such as Mongolia, the Philippines, and India, showed their reluctance to support democracy due to the serious challenges their political systems face. In Africa and Latin America, citizens who understand democracy in procedural terms also have a high level of support democracy as an ideal. Yet in Africa, citizens were also satisfied with democracy in practice, while those in Latin America were more critical about the performance of democracy, which pulled down their support level. In contrast, procedural understandings of democracy do not affect both types of support for democracy in the Arab world. Despite regional variations, overall, understanding democracy as procedures and norms has a positive effect on people’s support for democracy as an ideal and education plays a key role in boosting the relationship.

- Countries with high levels of democratic values are more likely to have high levels of regime-
based support of democracy but low levels of performance-based support. While the results confirm our expectations, regional variations are also profound. In most regions, in countries with high levels of democratic values, citizens tend to be critical about democracy in practice. The exceptional case is South Asia, where citizens holding democratic values are also satisfied with democracy in practice.

- Politically active citizens are essential to democracy, and we found positive associations between psychological involvement in politics and political participation and support for democracy. Specifically, political engagement mainly affects performance-based support of democracy, but has less effect for regime-based support. Although regional variations exist, overall, political engagement increases the level of satisfaction with democracy. In Eurasia, however, engaged and participating citizens have negative views towards democracy in practice, reflecting the increasingly repressed political environments in the region and rising critical attitudes among citizens living in more liberal countries.

- Trust in political institutions has a positive effect on support for democracy, including both regime-based and performance-based support. Yet, regime types also play a role. While in autocracies and semi-democracies, trust in political institutions increases support for democracy through satisfaction, in democracies the positive relationship is mediated through preference for democracy and resistance to authoritarianism. Therefore, when citizens in non-democratic countries trust political institutions, this trust further enhances support for authoritarian regimes. Likewise, citizens in democracies tend to endorse democratic regimes and reject alternatives when they trust political institutions. These findings echo what we found earlier: citizens tend to support democracy when it delivers tangible results.

- Corruption is negatively correlated with both types of support for democracy. These findings are not surprising, but what is striking is the consistent patterns found across regions. The findings provide further evidence that citizens in the developing world evaluate democracy mainly based on output side rather than input side.

The findings presented in this report have several policy implications. At the individual level, education has been found to have significant effects on enhancing both procedural understandings of democracy and democratic values, and educated citizens are also more likely to engage in politics. However, these citizens are critical about the performance of political institutions and government, which reduces their support for democracy. These phenomena are not new — indeed “critical citizens” have been argued to have a positive impact on democratic governance (Norris 1999). However, this report uncovers some warning signs that might lead us to question this optimism. Although critical citizens are more likely to understand democracy as liberal democracy, acquire democratic values, and engage in politics, their support for democracy is not unconditional. Their support level is affected by satisfaction with governing regimes. Furthermore, orientations towards democratic values do not lead them to view democracy as “the only game in town” by rejecting authoritarian alternatives. In other words, when a regime can meet their expectations, they will support it regardless of whether it is democratic or otherwise. Such instrumental views of regime may undermine democracy promotion programs since citizens come to embrace democracy because it delivers, not because it entails values or principles worth pursuing. Improving education is not enough, as effective governance is also essential to generate support for democracy.
Yet, the crisis of democracy will need solutions beyond national borders. In the past, democracy was seen as a regime type for countries in the developing world to aspire to. However, with political polarization and the rise of populism in Western countries, democracy as a regime type has gradually lost its aura. In regions where successful authoritarian regimes pose as a credible alternative, such as East Asia and Eurasia, the attractiveness of democracy has further diminished. In Latin America, despite strong orientations toward procedural understandings of democracy and democratic values, ineffective democratic regimes have weakened support for democracy. Furthermore, democracy is still struggling to gain a foothold in Arab counties. For democracy promotion programs, the urgent task is to regain people’s confidence in democracy, both in practice and on moral grounds.

References


Appendix

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in more than 35 countries in Africa. The first round of surveys was conducted in 1999 and the final results of the latest round (Round Six, 2016) were published in March 2017. Its executive director is Professor E. Gyimah-Boadi.

Afrobarometer uses national probability samples designed to meet the following criteria. Samples are designed to generate a sample that is a representative cross-section of all citizens of voting age in a given country. The goal is to give every adult citizen an equal and known chance of being selected for an interview.

Afrobarometer achieves this by:

- using random selection methods at every stage of sampling;
- sampling at all stages with probability proportionate to population size wherever possible to ensure that larger (i.e., more populated) geographic units have a proportionally greater probability of being chosen into the sample.

The sampling universe normally includes all citizens age 18 and older. As a standard practice, we exclude people living in institutionalized settings, such as students in dormitories, patients in hospitals, and persons in prisons or nursing homes. Occasionally, we must also exclude people living in areas determined to be inaccessible due to conflict or insecurity. Any such exclusion is noted in the technical information report (TIR) that accompanies each data set. For more details, see http://www.afrobarometer.org/surveys-and-methods/sampling-principles.

Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a regional public opinion survey established in 2005 and conducted in the twelve Middle Eastern countries Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. The first wave was conducted from 2006-2008 and the most recent one (Wave 3) from 2012-2014. Its director is Michael Robbins.

Surveys include nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys in 12 countries and territories. In most countries, the sample includes 1,200 citizens. All interviews are conducted in the respondent’s place of residence, which yields a higher response rate and more representative sample than other modes, especially phone or internet surveys. Face-to-face surveying also facilitates the development of a greater sense of trust between the respondent than the alternatives, meaning it is more likely that a respondent will provide a truthful answer in response to sensitive questions.

Universe: The surveys will provide national coverage of citizens of ages 18 and above in all counties. The universe is comprised of the population living in both urban and rural areas and the results will be representative at the national level and also, by design, the governorate level.
Population: The survey is designed to be nationally representative of non-institutionalized adults of ages 18 and above. By necessity, it does not include some citizens who are inaccessible, including those who are in hospitals, live at military bases, or are inmates in the country’s prisons.

Unit of Observation: The surveys are conducted face-to-face in the respondent’s place of residence. Only one respondent is eligible per household, meaning that although the unit of observation is the individual, technically the dwelling itself is the final unit of analysis. This strategy is employed, in part, because houses or places of dwelling are easily identifiable units in the field, which enables interviewers to more accurately identify the randomly selected unit, which in turn yields a more representative sample. For more details, see http://www.arabbarometer.org/instruments-and-data-files.

Asian Barometer and South Asia Barometer

The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) is a public opinion survey established in 2004 that is headquartered in Taipei, Taiwan. The ABS is conducted in 19 East Asian and South Asian countries and regions, covering 48 percent of the global population. The first wave of surveys was conducted in 2001 in East Asia and in 2005 in South Asia and the most recent wave (Wave Four) between 2014 and 2016. Its executive director is Professor Yun-han Chu.

The Asian Barometer Survey and South Asia Barometer Survey requires all country teams to comply with the research protocols below.

- National probability samples that give every citizen in each country an equal chance of being selected to participate in the survey. Whether using census household lists or a multistage area approach, the method for selecting sampling units is always randomized. The samples may be stratified – or weighted – to ensure adequate and correct coverage of rural areas and minority populations. As such, the samples selected for the Asian Barometer surveys represent the totality of the adult, voting-age population in each country surveyed.

- Face-to-face interviews in respondents’ homes or workplaces in the language of the respondent’s choice. In multilingual countries, considerable attention is given to the vexing challenge of questionnaire translation. Local language translations are prepared with the goal of accommodating every language group whose members constitute at least 5 percent of the population. To check for accuracy, the local language versions are screened through blind back-translation by a different translator and any discrepancies are corrected. Interviewers are required to record contextual information on the situations encountered during the interview.

- Maintenance of quality control by means of strict protocols for fieldwork supervision. To ensure data quality, we require that all interview teams travel together under the direction of a field supervisor. Interviewers are debriefed each evening and instructed to return to the sampled household to finish any incomplete returns. Supervisors undertake random back-checks with respondents to ensure that sampling and interviews were conducted correctly.

A model Asian Barometer Survey has a sample size of 1200 respondents, which allows a minimum confidence interval of plus or minus 3 percent at 95 percent probability. For more details, see http://www.asianbarometer.org/survey/survey-methods.
Eurasia Barometer

Eurasia Barometer is a non-commercial, non-governmental international social survey organization headquartered at the Institute for Comparative Survey Research “Eurasia Barometer” in Vienna, Austria. Its main aim is to monitor political, social, and economic transformations in the countries of post-communist Europe and post-Soviet Eurasia in the opinion of their populations. The target geographical coverage of Eurasia Barometer includes countries of Eastern Europe (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria), the Balkans, Russian Federation, and Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). Its executive director is Christian Haerpfer.

Eurasia Barometer is a network of research organizations and individual researchers operating in more than 25 countries and including over 50 social and political scientists and social survey researchers. Eurasia Barometer Consortium has been operating since 1989 and implemented its first social surveys in the countries of post-Communist Europe (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia) as well as Post-Soviet Eurasia (Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus) in early 1990s.

For survey method used for surveys which are part of Eurasia Barometer time series, traditionally the face-to-face interview is used. The surveys are conducted using a national representative sample in all countries between 1500 and 3500 respondents. For more details, see http://office.eurasiabarometer.org/new-page-7.

Latinobarómetro

Latinobarómetro is a non-profit annual public opinion survey initiated in 1995 that involves some 20,000 interviews in 18 Latin American countries, representing more than 600 million inhabitants. Up to date 19 survey rounds have been conducted, of which the latest was in 2016. Its executive director is Marta Lagos.

Latinobarómetro uses a national representative sample in all countries around 1,200 respondents. The main characteristics of the sample design of the different countries in which each Latinobarómetro survey was applied, with the specification of the method of selection of the interviewees and the sample size for each country can be found at http://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp.

DATA: GBS2

The GBS2 data set contains surveys conducted between 2010 and 2013 in 87 countries and territories. Five countries (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia) were covered by both Afrobarometer and Arab Barometer. In the analysis, if questions were not asked in the Arab Barometer, we used the answers from Afrobarometer for the five countries. Within each barometer, the surveyed countries and survey years are listed below. Topics in the data set include:

- Economic Evaluation
- Trust in Political Institutions
- Social Capital
- Participation in Elections
- Access to Public Service
- Psychological Involvement
- Partisanship
- Democratic Values
- Meaning of Democracy
- Satisfaction with Democracy
- Most Important Problem
- Governance
- Corruption
- Regime Preferences
- Regime Evaluation
- Internet
- Socioeconomic Indicators and Interview Record

There are 91 questions in total, excluding socioeconomic indicators and interview record. For more information and online data analysis and data downloading, visit http://globalbarometer.net/.
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Contributors and Contact Information

This report was edited by Kai-Ping Huang and Mark Weatherall of the National Taiwan University. For more information about this report, please contact Kai-Ping or Mark.

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