

What Democracy Means to Citizens – and Why It Matters¹

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What do citizens think of when they hear the word ‘democracy’? Recent studies have focused on precisely this question and its implications for survey research. In particular, several scholars have critiqued traditional survey measures of citizens’ support for democracy, arguing that these measures are ambiguous and lead respondents to evaluate democracy according to very different criteria (Canache, Mondak and Seligson 2001; Norris 1999; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1998). For example, people from different social, economic, or cultural strata may rate ‘satisfaction with the working of democracy’ (SWD) as satisfaction with economic performance, with the protection of civil liberties, with public service provision, or with the maintenance of law and order. Such criticism has serious practical ramifications, as studies of citizens’ support for democracy are frequently used in constructing policies and rating the viability of democratic regimes.²

While recent work indicates that individuals conceptualize democracy in a variety of ways (Canache *et al.* 2001; Seligson 2001), to date scholars have not fully explained *why* citizens think of democracy in different terms, and if these multiple conceptualizations *matter*. Using data gathered from field research in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala, we examine what factors influence citizens’ conceptualizations of democracy. We aim to demonstrate that within a diverse group of respondents, conceptualizations and evaluations of democracy are based upon several factors, and that the evaluative criteria (or the interpretations of ‘democracy’) have important implications for regime stability.

Our data are uniquely suited to examine these issues. From May through August 2001, we administered written questionnaires to several samples in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala. The core of these questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions, asking respondents to list the things they liked and did not like about democracy in their countries. As these countries vary dramatically in their levels of income, education, urbanization, and ethnic composition, the resulting sample provides a diverse cross-section of citizens in Latin America.³ In each of these countries, the samples consisted of participants from different educational, occupational, economic, and ethnic sectors.⁴ Although we did not use a probability sample, we took great care to ensure that our samples were diverse, reflecting as much as possible the demographic composition of each country.⁵ Our survey questionnaire is useful for examining citizens’ attitudes in greater depth, particularly since it included open-ended questions that gave respondents the opportunity to discuss democracy in their own words. While our data do not allow us to make inferences to the respective populations of each country, they do permit an in-depth examination of how various people think about the functioning of democracy in their countries. Such an examination sheds light on the ways in which people conceive of democracy, and can greatly improve the future construction and implementation of representative, national probability surveys of Latin America in the future.

Our analysis has three main parts. First, we identify the various attributes citi-

zens associate with democracy. We argue that these attributes can be grouped into two broad categories: ‘means’ and ‘ends’. The *means category* includes responses that focus on the minimal procedural requirements for democracy, such as elections. In contrast, responses in the *ends category* focus on the desired outputs of democracy (for example, greater prosperity, and universal education and health-care). Following this classification of responses, we then turn to examine *why* citizens think of democracy in different ways. Why do some citizens think of democracy in terms of means, others in terms of ends, while still others hold a more expansive view, conceptualizing democracy in terms of both means and ends? Finally, we turn to examine the *implications* of these multiple conceptualizations of democracy. We demonstrate that citizens’ interpretations of democracy matter a great deal for regime stability. We believe our findings provide a strong justification for replicating these results in national probability samples.

Conceptualizing democracy

‘Democracy’ is one of the most used and contested concepts in social science. This theoretical diversity is amply reflected in the empirical realm.⁶ While definitions and operationalizations of democracy vary quite a bit, we can make a broad distinction between ‘minimal’ and ‘maximal’ definitions of democracy.⁷ The former focus on the importance of ‘means’, that is, procedures such as fair elections, respect for human rights, and universal suffrage. In contrast, maximal definitions include not only democratic procedures but also ‘ends’, or outputs (such as economic equality and social services).

When discussing democracy, frequently scholars rely upon definitions that emphasize means. Collier and Levitsky (1997) point out that the most widely employed definitions of democracy centre on procedures rather than substantive policies or other outcomes that might be viewed as democratic.⁸ This emphasis on democratic procedures follows the seminal works of Schumpeter (1947) and Dahl (1971). Schumpeter defines democracy as the ‘institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote’ (1976 [1942], 269). He goes on to note that personal freedom, such as freedom of discussion, is an essential prerequisite for this method to function properly (1976 [1942], 271-2). Writing almost 25 years later, Dahl listed eight criteria for democracy: the right to vote; the right to be elected; the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes; elections that are free and fair; freedom of association; freedom of expression; alternative sources of information; and institutions that depend on votes and other expressions of preference (1971, 3).

Both Schumpeter and Dahl define democracy in ‘minimal’ terms. That is, they deliberately focus on the smallest possible number of characteristics necessary for a viable standard of democracy. Collier and Levitsky (1997) point out that this approach is quite common in democratization studies. Indeed, most scholars differentiate the specifically political features of a regime from societal or economic characteristics on the grounds that the latter are more appropriately analyzed as potential causes or consequences of democracy, rather than as features of democracy itself. Minimal definitions lend themselves more readily to empirical studies of democracy, and hence are widely employed by empirically oriented scholars of democracy (Lijphart 1999) and by institutions that carry out democracy audits such

as Freedom House, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.

Collier and Levitsky (1997) note that while there is no consensus on the definition of democracy, democracy as defined by a 'procedural minimum' usually presumes fully contested elections with full suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, combined with effective guarantees of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and association (1997, 433-4). This minimalist view focuses on 'means': democracy is a set of procedures to ensure that outcomes are fairly reached, but it does not guarantee the achievement of specific outcomes.

While some researchers have added other elements to their definitions of democracy, such as the capacity for effective governance by the elected government, and some level of social equality (Karl 1990; O'Donnell 1988, 1996; Weffort 1992a, 1992b), most view democracy in minimal terms. This emphasis on the procedural minimum is at odds with a growing body of public opinion research that shows that many people view democracy in far broader terms. Studies of public opinion have found that individuals take the label 'democracy' to refer to a wide range of dimensions, not only political but also socio-economic. For example, some individuals do not think of democracy solely in terms of political parties, voting, and civil and political rights (elements corresponding to a 'minimalist' definition). They also equate it with a life of less poverty and crime, more equality, and with access to health and education. To the 'minimalist' scholar, democracy is consolidated in Argentina, for example, but to the 'maximal' citizen it is barely present.

Surveys conducted in different parts of the world support this view. An open-ended question in a 1970s Dutch survey revealed that most people (39 per cent of the 890 valid responses) associated democracy with liberty (freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom, being free, free country), while 9.9 per cent mentioned some sort of equality (equality, equal rights and duties) (Thomassen 1995, 384-5). A similar open-ended question⁹ in a cross-national survey of Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico elicited responses that could be grouped into as many as six broad categories: respect/legality, welfare/progress, type of government, voting/elections, equality and liberty (Seligson 2001, 94). Canache *et al.* (2001) report similar findings in their analysis of open-ended survey responses in a 1999 Romanian poll. Asked to name the one thing with which they were satisfied or dissatisfied under democracy, respondents gave a series of answers, including: economic issues (low wages), political institutional issues (the inefficiency of the judicial system), democratic freedoms (freedom of speech), and social issues (protection of social welfare) (Canache *et al.* 2001, 518).¹⁰ In a survey conducted in Uganda, respondents' beliefs about democracy ranged from the idea of popular participation in government (40 per cent of the responses) to peace, unity, equality and development (22 per cent) (Ottemoeller 1998, 104-6).¹¹

The results of closed-ended questions also serve to highlight the varying minimal-maximal emphasis of definitions of democracy across respondents. When respondents were asked to choose the most important characteristics of democracy from a list of possible attributes in a 1978 West Germany survey, a large proportion chose freedom of the press and of opinion (85 per cent), the possibility of choosing between different political parties (79 per cent), and participation in the decision-making of the state (51 per cent) (Thomassen 1995, 384-5). Meanwhile, a survey of Canada indicated that Canadians viewed democracy primarily as a means, but in terms of ends as well (Kornberg and Clarke 1992, 65). Furthermore,

in 1996, the Latinbarometer survey of seventeen Latin American nations included the following item: *Of the following aspects, which one do you think is the most important for democracy?*¹² Answers to this question revealed that while 72 per cent of the respondents chose some aspects of democratic means (freedom of expression, respect for minorities, voting or political parties), 28 per cent viewed democracy in terms of ends, that democracy meant that people should be able to satisfy their economic needs.

Without access to the raw data of these studies it is difficult to make precise comparisons; however, there seem to be some broad commonalities. First, there is a wide range of meanings attributed to democracy in mass publics.¹³ Second, within this wide range of meanings, some characteristics are mentioned more than others (different types of freedom, procedural and institutional aspects such as voting and political parties, and different types of desirable outcomes such as equality, welfare and progress). Third, mass beliefs about democracy often encompass much more than the minimal definitions of democracy used by most scholars, as they emphasize both means and ends.

We turn now to our data to examine citizens' conceptualizations of democracy in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala. Once again, our objective is three-fold. We begin by examining whether citizens in our samples conceptualize democracy in the same diverse terms as in the studies reviewed above. We then group these conceptualizations in terms of means and ends. Next, we test a series of hypotheses to explain why citizens think of democracy in terms of means and/or ends. We conclude by assessing the impact of these conceptualizations of democracy on regime stability.

What democracy means to citizens

In our study, we first aim to identify the elements respondents attributed to their democracies. In order to determine how individuals conceptualize democracy, we included two open-ended items in our questionnaire, both of which refer unambiguously to the functioning of democracy in the country. We began by asking respondents:

First, we'd like you to think about your democratic government – about the democracy in [country]. What do you *like* about it? In the space below, please list some things that you think are *good* about the democracy in [country]. These can be things that you think the democratic government does well, services the government provides, things that you're glad the democratic government doesn't do – anything at all that comes to mind that's good about democracy in [country]. Feel free to list as many or as few *good* things as you want.

We followed this item with a similar question, which asked respondents to enumerate the things they did not like about democracy. The exact survey item reads as follows:

Now, what are some of the *problems* with the democratic government in this country? Different people, even people who like the government overall, have told us that there are some problems with the government here. In the space below, please list some things that you *don't like* about democracy in [country].

These can be things that you think the democratic government does poorly, or that the government doesn't do at all, but should. Anything at all that comes to mind that the government does too little of, does too much of, or just doesn't do right. Again, feel free to list as many or as few *problems* as you want.

The first question asks the respondent to list all the things that he or she likes about the working of the democratic government in that country, and the second, all the things the respondent dislikes. These questions provoked not only a flood of wide-ranging responses, but also, in a number of cases, considerable emotion. For the 832 respondents in our sample, we classified roughly 2,500 responses to each question (around 3 answers for each of our 832 respondents). The wide range of raw responses also reflected the diversity of the criteria upon which the respondents chose to evaluate democracy in the four countries surveyed.

Given the diverse and detailed answers to these two questions, imposing some sort of order on them required considerable effort and, as is often the case with open-ended questions, subjective judgments. We classified all the responses into as many as eleven fairly distinct categories, based largely on the methodology utilized to construct the widely used Freedom House indicators of political and civil rights, and on an examination of the literature (Camp 2001; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Seligson 2001; Simon 1996; Thomassen 1995).¹⁴ The resulting classification was as follows:

- (1) Civil liberties
- (2) Political rights
- (3) Equality of opportunity and outcome (including economic equality)
- (4) Social rights and welfare issues
- (5) Government policies
- (6) Government responsiveness
- (7) Government accountability
- (8) Public safety and security
- (9) Corruption and abuse of power
- (10) Citizens' place in democracy (civic values)
- (11) There is no democracy

The last category was created to identify the proportion of respondents in the pooled sample – as many as 15 per cent – who declared that there was no democracy, or that democracy was a myth in their respective country. Respondents were coded as mentioning a category if one of their open-ended statements fit the criteria listed in the appendix. It is important to note that each category was recorded only once for each individual case, regardless of the number of open-ended responses given that actually fit a category. For example, if a person mentioned 'low pension' and 'poor health services', both responses would fall under the Social Rights and Welfare Issues category. Such a respondent was recorded as simply mentioning the category once rather than twice. By adopting this criterion we sought to avoid a bias in favour of more articulate individuals. Table 1 lists the three most frequently mentioned categories by country for each of the open-ended questions.

Table 1: Summary statistics of open-ended questions by country

	Most Frequently Mentioned 'Good' Aspects of Democracy			Most Frequently Mentioned 'Bad' Aspects of Democracy		
Argentina (N=191)	Civil Liberties 74%	Political Rights 29%	Govt. Policies 15%	Govt. Responsiveness 56%	Govt. Policies 66%	Corruption 63%
Brazil (N=98)	Civil Liberties 78%	Political Rights 55.1%	Govt. Responsiveness 11.3% & Accountability 11.3%	Social Rights 49%	Govt. Policies 43%	Corruption 58%
Chile (N=108)	Civil Liberties 70%	Social Rights 30%	Govt. Policies 33%	Govt. Responsiveness 64%	Govt. Policies 43%	Political Rights 43%
Guatemala (N=433)	Civil Liberties 55.3%	Political Rights 28%	Govt. Policies 25%	Govt. Responsiveness 62%	Govt. Policies 57%	Corruption 54%

Percentages are valid percentages of respondents that mentioned each category in each country. As respondents were free to list as many items as they would like, these percentages do not total to 100%.

Our data indicate that for some respondents, democracy was limited to personal and political freedoms such as freedom of expression and free and honest elections. However, other respondents evaluated democracy along performance criteria, such as the impact of government economic policy and the provision of basic social services to citizens. A third group mentioned both procedural aspects and outputs. While some citizens thought of democracy in minimalist terms, focusing only on means, most viewed it in maximalist terms, combining both means and ends.¹⁵ While citizens' conceptualizations of democracy were multidimensional, they were more so in negative than in positive terms. That is, respondents covered more categories in indicating what they disliked about the working of democracy than what they liked about its working.

Lastly, in every country there were respondents who rejected the very existence of democracy through declarations such as 'Democracy is a myth', and 'There is no democracy here'. The highest proportion of such respondents was in Guatemala (22 per cent), and the lowest was in Brazil (9 per cent). Argentina and Chile fell midway between these points, with 14 per cent and 18 per cent of respondents stating that democracy did not exist respectively.¹⁶ While these percentages are relatively small, they do stand in marked contrast to scholars' views of democracy in the region. Most scholars, analysts and policy-makers consider these countries (with the possible exception of Guatemala) as fully consolidated democracies, yet substantial minorities of the respondents we sampled thought democracy was completely absent from their country. For example, in 2000-2001 the widely used Freedom House rankings rated democracy in Argentina with the same score as democracies in Western Europe, such as France, Germany, and Italy. Given this high ranking, it is surprising that 14 per cent of Argentines in our sample stated that democracy did not exist in the country.

Determinants of citizens' conceptualizations of democracy

While the previous section demonstrates that citizens think of democracy in myriad ways, it raises a much larger question: *Why* do citizens think of democracy in dif-

ferent ways? Why do some citizens perceive democracy more in terms of means, while others stress the importance of ends? To address these questions, we explored the correlations between various socioeconomic and demographic variables and conceptualizations of democracy. These variables are commonly incorporated into public opinion analyses, as they tend to influence citizens' political attitudes. For example, evidence from a Brazilian political culture study indicates that women were less interested in politics than men, felt less politically efficacious, and opted more weakly for democracy than did men (Moises 1993, 596, 601, 603). Due to a variety of structural causes, women are generally less politically active than men. Further, they are often the backbone of the family unit in Latin America, and may be expected to assign greater importance to their own and their family's welfare and security than they do to things such as elections and political and civil liberties. Thus, they might be more likely to emphasize democratic ends over means.

Age could also potentially influence conceptualizations of democracy, as older respondents who have greater first-hand experience with the human rights abuses of authoritarian regimes might be more inclined to emphasize the importance of democracy's respect for human rights. Income could play a role in explaining views of democracy, as poorer respondents might favor democratic ends such as social services with the hope that such measures would lift them out of poverty; richer respondents may be in a position to value basic democratic norms more precisely because their need for material and personal security has been better satisfied. Ottemoeller (1998, 104) has noted the importance of education in affecting people's grasp of the concept 'democracy'. In his survey of Uganda, respondents' familiarity with the concept 'democracy' was strongly correlated to their years of formal schooling, specifically, exposure to secondary education. As education is a key vehicle for civic instruction and socialization, it seems likely that formal schooling would be closely tied to respondents' views of democracy. Specifically, more educated respondents would have a greater appreciation for basic democratic norms such as respect for human rights.

Means vs. ends: measuring the dependent variable

To determine what factors influence citizens' views of democracy, we used our open-ended questions to construct a new variable: *Means Emphasis*. This variable measures respondents' proclivities to think of democracy more in terms of means than ends. To create the Means Emphasis variable, we first collapsed our original open-ended categories into two groups: means and ends. Based upon our previous discussion of conceptualizations of democracy, we identified three categories that fall under means (*civil liberties, political rights, and accountability*), and six categories under ends (*equality of opportunity and outcome, social rights, policy, responsiveness, public safety and corruption*).¹⁷ The means category includes responses that adhere to the minimal definition of democracy. For example, *civil liberties* (freedom of speech) and *political rights* (universal fair and free elections) are the primary features of minimalist definitions of democracy. *Accountability* is also important for minimal definitions of democracy, as it safeguards against government abuses of power through a system of checks and balances. For example, in the case of Argentina the judiciary attempted to hold the former president, Carlos

Menem, accountable for rampant corruption and illegal arms deals. Through this mechanism of horizontal accountability, each branch of government attempts to compel the others to respect the rule of law.

The remaining six categories lie in the realm of maximal definitions of democracy. Most empirical scholars of democracy consider elements such as *social rights, government policy, responsiveness, equality of opportunity and outcome, public safety, and corruption* to be the *consequences* of democracy, and not democracy itself. For example, according to the minimalist school, democracy would promote responsiveness indirectly, as officials would cater to their constituents' needs in hopes of furthering their electoral prospects and political careers. However, responsiveness is not necessarily unique to democratic regimes, as an authoritarian regime could also be responsive. Indeed, despite Fujimori's 1992 *autogolpe*, he was re-elected by citizens campaigning on a platform of responsiveness to the needs of the poorest constituents. Similarly, some research suggests that there is little difference between authoritarian regimes and democratic regimes in terms of economic performance (Muller 1988; Przeworski and Limongi 1993; Weede 1996).

In all four countries, the positive aspects of democracy were concentrated in the means category; in contrast, respondents' negative evaluations were much more evenly distributed, covering both means and ends. Respondents' positive evaluations of democratic government most frequently included civil liberties (freedom of expression), with political rights (the right to vote) a distant second. Guatemala differed from the other three countries in the sample; while respondents mentioned freedom in their positive evaluations, a much lower proportion of the Guatemalan sample referred to these compared to the other three countries.

After we grouped responses as falling under means or ends, we then turned to see which aspect was emphasized by each respondent. Our measure of Means Emphasis computes the percentage of open-ended responses that relate to democratic means for each respondent.¹⁸ Respondents with high values on this variable evaluated democracy more in terms of means, while low values indicate an emphasis on ends. Comparing across countries, in Argentina and Guatemala most respondents laid greater emphasis on ends compared to means when they evaluated democracy, while in Brazil and Chile, the emphasis was reversed. In Guatemala, as many as 20 per cent of the respondents evaluated democracy only in terms of ends while in Brazil only 8 per cent of the respondents did so.¹⁹ Again, while the nature of our data collection does not allow us to make inferences from our sample to the respective populations in each country, these differences among countries are illuminating, and call attention to possible macro-level differences in citizens' conceptualizations of democracy.

Analysis: predicting citizens' views of democracy

We examine the relationships between each of the four SES and demographic variables mentioned earlier (sex, age, income, and education) and Means Emphasis in a series of figures and an accompanying table. Since the nature of our data collection precludes the use of more sophisticated statistical analyses, we conduct simpler bivariate tests, which allow for a preliminary examination of the impact of socio-economic indicators on citizens' conceptualizations of democracy. We use the accompanying significance tests as an additional indicator of the strength of the

relationship (Mohr 1990, 73-4).²⁰ We aim to examine whether there is a linkage between socio-economic indicators and citizens' views within our sample.

Figures 1 through 4 depict the bivariate relationship between Means Emphasis and each of the four SES and demographic variables. Figure 1 shows that across all four countries, men on the whole tend to emphasize democratic means more than women do. However, while the direction of the relationship is negative across all four countries as hypothesized, the relationship is not statistically significant (see Table 2).

Figure 2 depicts the relationship between education and Means Emphasis. It indicates that, overall, across our four country samples, increasing levels of education are associated with a shift in the conceptualization of democracy, from one that emphasizes ends to one that emphasizes means. This substantive finding is also statistically significant in two of our samples, Brazil and Chile.

Figure 3 shows that, in three of the four country samples, Argentina, Brazil and Guatemala (Chile is the exception), there is a clear, albeit weak, difference in the degree of emphasis on democratic means across income groups: high income group respondents laid greater emphasis on means compared to their low income counterparts. This relationship is statistically significant and strong in the Brazil sample.

Figure 1: Conceptualizations of democracy and gender

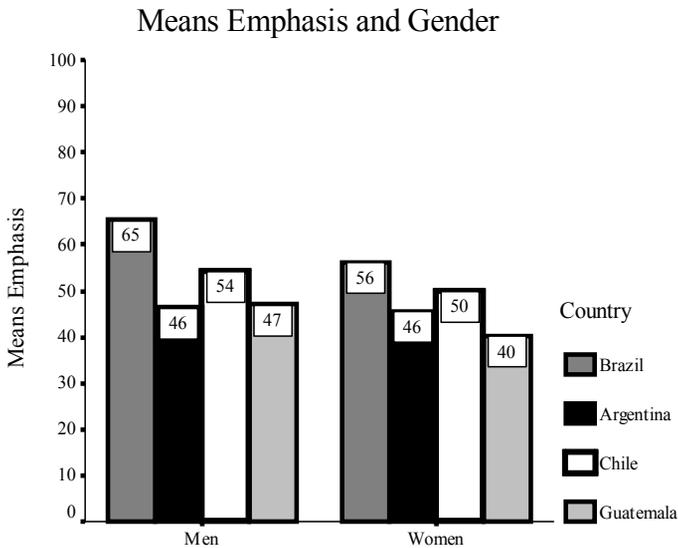


Figure 2: *Conceptualizations of democracy and education*

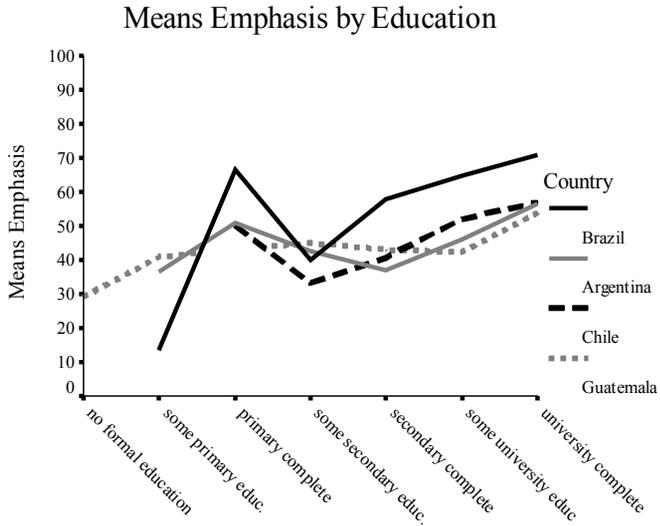


Figure 3: *Conceptualizations of democracy and income*

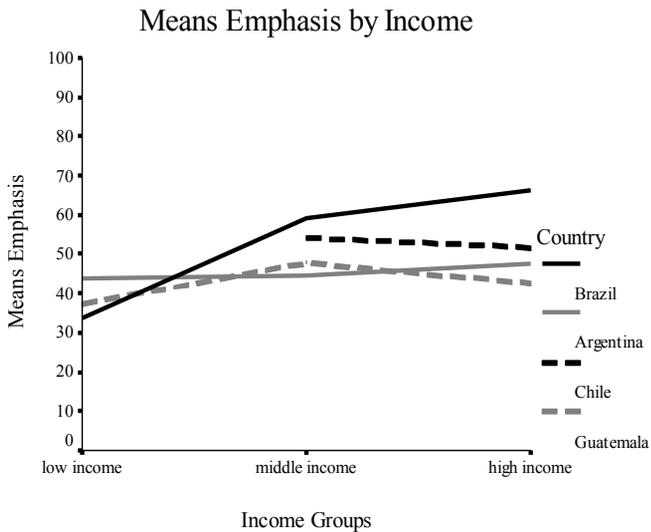


Figure 4: Conceptualizations of democracy and age

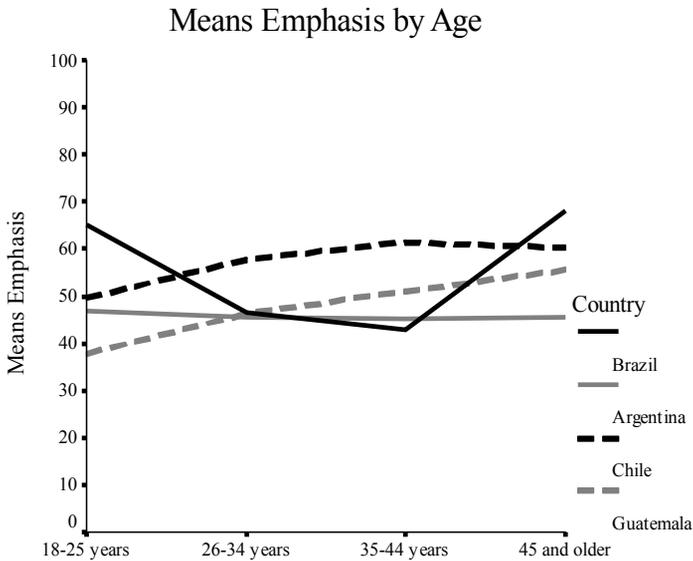


Figure 4 offers a mixed picture: In Chile and Guatemala, as hypothesized, older respondents on the whole tend to lay greater emphasis on democratic means (with the relationship attaining statistical significance in the latter sample), while in Argentina and Brazil the relationship between age and Means Emphasis is negative overall, but also weaker than it is in the Chile and Guatemala samples. Support for the hypothesis is found only in Guatemala, implying that evaluation of democracy among younger people is more on the basis of what democracy can deliver, and less on its core values.

Does it matter?

Thus far we have demonstrated that citizens have diverging views of democracy, and that these differences appear to be related mostly strongly to education. However, do these varying conceptualizations matter? Anderson (2002) argues that such differences have little substantive import. He does not find it problematic that different people bring different thoughts to bear on what the label ‘democracy’ includes, and argues that people associate different things with virtually all survey items of political support – and other items, too. He likens the different criteria citizens use to evaluate their democracies to the diverse standards individuals might use, for example, to evaluate former President Clinton’s job performance. While citizens might base such evaluations upon a wide range of Clinton’s duties, this does not mean that presidential approval is a bad item for measuring specific support (Anderson 2002, 2-3). These different meanings do not pose a serious problem as long as some aspect of political support is being measured.

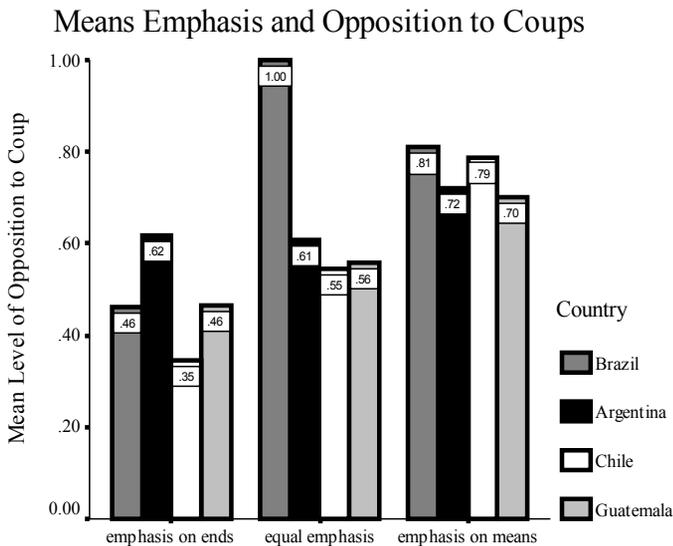
Anderson’s view contrasts with that of Fuchs (1999). Fuchs (1999) highlights the importance of citizens’ conceptualizations of democracy, distinguishing be-

tween ‘minimalist’ and ‘supplemental’ definitions and their implications for political support. In Fuchs’s view, minimalist versions of democracy include liberal rights, the rule of law, and universal free and fair elections. In contrast, supplemental aspects of democracy encompass not only these minimalist elements, but also constitutional guarantees of social rights, direct citizen participation, and the political realization of social rights (Fuchs 1999, 125). Fuchs applies this theoretical framework to explain differences between the political attitudes of citizens in former East Germany and West Germany. In his view, the ideal democracy of East Germans places equal emphasis on the minimalist and supplemental elements of democracy. This ideal contrasts starkly with the reality of democratic governance in a unified Germany, which follows the liberal model (Fuchs 1999). Fuchs finds that East Germans support democracy in the abstract, but this support is for a supplemental democracy, which includes social rights, not the minimalist democracy under which they live.²¹

These diverging views of democracy, Fuchs found, had consequences for political stability since they translated into more or less support for the democratic regime. In particular, since East Germans view democracy in terms of means *and* ends, when social rights are not protected, they penalize the democratic regime for this fault. In contrast West Germans, who see democracy in minimalist terms, do not fault democratic governance for failures to provide social rights – they register lower levels of support for the incumbent authorities. Thus, in the case of Germany, it appears that distinct conceptualizations of democracy translate into lower support for the incumbent government or for the democratic regime.

We aimed to take this line of argument further, and explore whether citizens’ conceptualizations of democracy have an impact on their support for democratic governance. That is, do citizens who think of democracy more in terms of means

Figure 5: Means Emphasis and opposition to coups



(those who lean toward the minimalist definition) register more support for democratic governance? To answer this question, we examined the relationship between respondents' conceptualizations of democracy and two widely used measures of support for democracy: satisfaction with democracy (SWD)²² and opposition to military coups.²³ We would expect that those who evaluate democracy more on means criteria will tend to be more satisfied with its functioning and more likely to oppose the overthrow of the democratic regime by a coup.

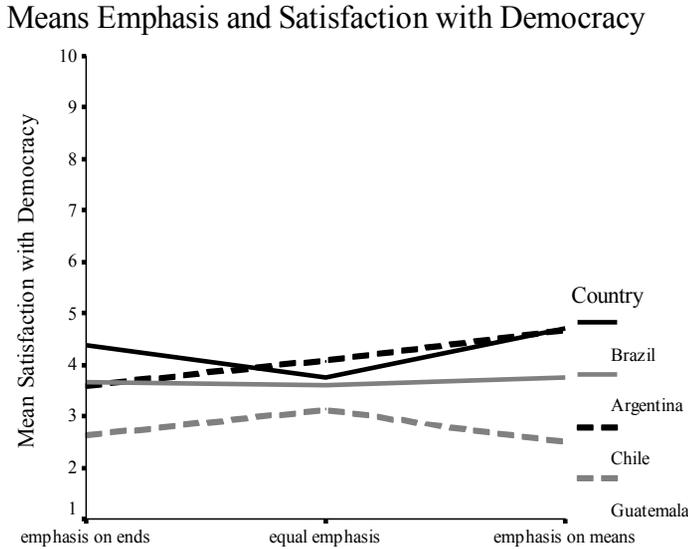
We find that in our samples opposition to coups is strongly related, both substantively and statistically, to Means Emphasis, with statistically significant correlations in three of the four countries, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala (see Table 2 for more details). Overall, as the emphasis on means in individuals' evaluations of democracy rises, so does their likelihood of opposing military coups. The correlation between satisfaction with democracy (SWD) and Means Emphasis is also positive but relatively weak across all the samples, except in Chile where it also attains statistical significance. This suggests, albeit less strongly than in the case of the first indicator, that those who emphasize means when evaluating democracy also are likely to be more satisfied with its working. The relative strength and clarity of these bivariate relationships is depicted in Figures 5 and 6.

While our results are not as strong as we would like, we do think that they provide some support for our main argument: the ways in which citizens conceptualize democracy matter. If respondents think of democracy more in terms of elections, human rights, and the rule of law, they are more likely to support democracy, despite its shortcomings in their countries. In contrast, citizens who hold more expansive views of democracy, stressing the importance of both democratic procedures and outputs, tend to be less tolerant of democracy's shortcomings. According to our analysis, such citizens are more willing to consider authoritarian solutions to the nation's problems. Given our findings, it appears that citizens' views of democracy could have important implications for regime stability. Our results provide strong justification for replicating this type of analysis in national probability samples, to confirm that the results we find here hold for respective country populations.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation between Means Emphasis and 1) SES and demographic variables and 2) two indicators of regime support

	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Guatemala
Gender	-.016 (.837, 161)	-.207 (.065, 80)	-.089 (.409, 88)	-.126 (.057, 229)
Age	-.019 (.810, 162)	-.144 (.204, 80)	.174 (.103, 89)	.227** (.001, 230)
Education	.090 (.257, 161)	.494** (.0001, 80)	.237* (.025, 89)	.047 (.475, 230)
Income	.064 (.416, 162)	.407** (.0001, 80)	-.045 (.675, 89)	.035 (.594, 229)
Opposition to Coups	0.149 (.060, 160)	.309** (.005, 80)	.433** (.0001, 89)	.221** (.001, 229)
Satisfaction with Democracy	.128 (.104, 162)	.092 (.420, 79)	.282** (.008, 88)	.023 (.723, 233)

*p<.05, **p<.01; two-tailed tests; standard errors and number of observations are within parentheses.

Figure 6: Means Emphasis and satisfaction with democracy

Conclusion

In this analysis, we aimed to address three points. First, do citizens think of democracy in different ways? We find that they do. We then classified these views into means and ends, following one line of scholarly thinking. Next, we sought to explain why these means-ends conceptualizations varied across individuals. To this end, we assessed the strength of the relationship between SES and demographic indicators and conceptualizations of democracy. We found, overall, that education and, to a lesser extent, income played a key role in determining citizens' views of democracy. In general, citizens with higher levels of education and income are more likely to conceive of democracy in terms of means, not ends. Finally, we aimed to demonstrate that these different conceptualizations were related to citizens' support for democracy, as measured by two indicators, and found some evidence to support such a link. We believe that these results need to be tested further using national probability samples. Different understandings of what democracy is can lead to different levels of expectations; such differences, in turn, can affect both the nature and level of support extended to democratic governance. Furthermore, following Fuchs's line of argument, the conceptualization of democracy may determine how citizens target blame in times of crisis – towards the incumbent authorities or the regime.

If scholars aim to explain citizens' support for democracy, it appears that more nuanced measures of this support are in order. It is imperative to assess not only citizens' support for democracy, but also to examine what exactly they are supporting when they answer questions containing the word 'democracy'. Without knowing what exactly is being evaluated, scholars will not have reliable measures of citizens' support and less accurate policy responses to a perceived lack of support.

This study raises several questions for future research. First, while we demonstrate that citizens view democracy in different ways, and that these ways are linked to their levels of education, the causal mechanism of this link needs to be more closely examined. How exactly does education lead citizens to think of democracy in terms of means rather than ends? Is the causal mechanism related to increases in political knowledge or awareness, or to democratic socialization processes occurring in schools? It is very plausible that individuals' conceptualizations of democracy are related to what they are taught about it. Indeed, that is one of the assumptions underlying the efforts of U.S. democracy promoters pushing for civic education on democracy in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Carothers 1999, 232). The role of education in determining how citizens are socialized into democratic norms and expectations appears to be a very promising venue for future research.

Further, given the importance of expectations in shaping citizens' evaluations of and support for democracy, greater attention could be paid to how democracy was 'marketed' to citizens. How was democracy presented to citizens during the initial stages of democratization? Did leaders promise that democracy would bring a better standard of living and less inequality, and to what extent did they emphasize these ends? To understand why citizens think of democracy in different ways, it is also important to examine how democracy was initially portrayed.

Finally, this paper points to the need to examine citizens' expectations of democratic governance in much greater detail. Recent work has begun to focus on the role expectations play in determining citizens' support for democracy and incumbents (Malone, Baviskar, and Manel 2002; Malone and Lies 2000; Norris 1999; Powers 2001). Expectations have been found to exert a strong influence on citizens' evaluations, yet we still do not fully understand the causal mechanism by which expectations influence evaluations. Nor do we know if these expectations are resistant to change, or quite malleable in light of government performance. While these questions are beyond the scope of this paper, they clearly point to promising avenues for future research.

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Appendix

We used our contacts in each of the four countries – scholars, students, employees of international organizations, social workers, church authorities – to obtain access to different groups of people to whom we could administer our questionnaires. We attended meetings of various organizations (in universities, soup kitchens, parent-teacher associations, local business organizations, religious organizations, and non-governmental organizations) and asked if people would like to volunteer to complete our written questionnaires. Respondents were given as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaire, and most finished in 20-40 minutes.

Geographical Distribution of Sample and Number of Observations:

Argentina		Guatemala	
Gran Buenos Aires	51	Guatemala City	279
Córdoba (and surrounding area)	66	Quetzaltenango	41
Rosario (and surrounding area)	74	Zacapa	15
Brazil (pretest)		Chiquimula	57
São Luis (and surrounding area)	98	Coban	11
Chile		Antigua	30
Santiago	108		

Socio-economic distribution of sample by country

Country	Age Distribution		Gender Distribution		Education Distribution		Income Distribution*	
Argentina	18-25	30%	Men	31%	Primary School	13%	Low	13%
	26-40	32%	Women	69%	Secondary School	33%	Middle	41%
	40+	38%			University	54%	High	46%
Brazil	18-25	62%	Men	54%	No education	2%	Low	16%
	26-40	22%	Women	46%	Primary School	9%	Middle	31%
	40+	16%			Secondary School	19%	High	53%
					University	70%		
Chile	18-25	70%	Men	47%	Primary School	2%	Low	2%
	26-40	24%	Women	53%	Secondary School	21%	Middle	25%
	40+	6%			University	77%	High	73%
Guatemala	18-25	50%	Men	45%	No education	1%	Low	17%
	26-40	36%	Women	55%	Primary School	3%	Middle	36%
	40+	14%			Secondary School	21%	High	47%
					University	75%		

*Income is measured through a battery of items asking respondents if they owned a series of material goods. If respondents owned 0-33 per cent of these goods, they were considered to be low income. Respondents who owned 34-67 per cent were middle income, and those that owned more than 67 per cent were high income.

Coding of responses for open-ended questions

We coded responses according to the following eleven categories, which we created on the basis of Freedom House definitions and the scholarly literature. Two coders read the open-ended statements, and placed these statements into one of the eleven categories. Inter-coder reliability was .991. The following table gives examples of responses falling into each of the eleven categories. Please contact the

authors for further details regarding classification, which have been omitted here for lack of space.

Categories	Examples of Responses From Survey
1. Civil and Political Freedoms	Freedom to worship. There is no repression of opinions.
2. Political rights	Lack of representation. To be able to freely elect candidates.
3. Equality of opportunity and outcome, including economic equality	Poor distribution of income. Inequality in education.
4. Social rights/Welfare issues, excluding economic equality	Low pensions. Government does not guarantee education and health.
5. Govt. policies (economic, judicial, etc.)	High taxes. Economic instability.
6. Govt. responsiveness, including aspects of efficiency in any governmental body	[Government's] Lack of commitment. They don't remember their electoral promises.
7. Govt. accountability, vertical and horizontal	Lack of transparency. The state does not adequately punish politicians who steal.
8. Public safety and security	Too much crime. Government does not ensure security.
9. Corruption and abuse of power	A lot of corruption. Politicians make themselves rich.
10. Citizens' place in democracy (Civic values)	There is no education in democratic values. People learn to solve problems democratically.
11. There is no democracy/ Democracy is a myth	There is no democracy. Democracy is a myth.

Construction of the Means Emphasis variable:

The *Means Emphasis* variable was constructed in the following manner: first, dummy variables were created for positive and negative responses in each of the 11 categories into which the raw responses to questions 1 and 2 were classified. For example, if a respondent gave one or more answers referring to civil liberties in positive terms, the respondent received a '1' for the dummy variable GFREEDOM. If he did not give even one answer in this category but his answers referred to another category, he received a '0' against the dummy variable. If he gave one or more answers referring to civil liberties in negative terms, he received a '1' for the dummy variable BFREEDOM. We did this for each of the 11 categories, thereby creating 22 dummy variables (1 positive and 1 negative variable for each category: 2 x 11 = 22).

To calculate the index of means responses we summed all the dummy variables thus created in both positive and negative categories of the three 'means' variables (civil liberties, political rights and government accountability), and divided the sum by the number of variables. The resulting variable ranged from 0 to 0.83.

To calculate the index of ends responses we summed all the dummy variables in both positive and negative categories of the six 'ends' variables (equal opportunities, social rights, government policies, government responsiveness, public safety and security, and corruption), and divided the sum by the number of variables. The resulting variable ranged from 0 to 0.67.

Finally, we computed the *Means Emphasis* (M.E.) score for each respondent in the following manner: M.E. = [Means Index/Means Index + Ends Index] x 100.

Notes

1. A previous version of this paper was presented at the 2002 meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston, MA. We would like to thank the many organizations that provided funding for this project: the Center for Latin American Studies, the Department of Political Science, the University Center for International Studies, and the Office of the Provost at the University of Pittsburgh, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Tinker Foundation, Inc. We are indebted to Stephanie Muraca for designing the questionnaire and William Lies for his assistance in coding. Christopher Carman, Michael Goodhart, Gregory O'Hayon, and Mitchell Seligson provided valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper. We are also very grateful to the numerous people who helped us in gathering data.
2. For example, Canache *et al.* (2001) point out that recent reports of the Inter-American Development Bank rely upon the SWD survey item to measure the impact of policy outputs on citizens' support for democratic governance. Linz and Stepan (1996, 214-22) use the responses to survey questions measuring regime performance and legitimacy to assess the progress of democracy in post-authoritarian Chile.
3. The Appendix provides details of the survey, and compares the national socioeconomic characteristics of each country with those of our sample.
4. Sample sizes varied per country: 98 respondents in Brazil, where we conducted a pretest of our questionnaire; Chile (108), Argentina (191), and Guatemala (433).
5. While we did attempt to collect data from a diverse group of respondents, our sample is biased in some respects. Most importantly, our sample includes more highly educated people than one would find in their respective populations.
6. Canache, Mondak and Seligson (2001) provide a thorough review of political scientists' use of the word 'democracy' in survey research. They document that the label 'democracy' can refer to objects as diverse as: the incumbent authorities (Dalton 1999; Merkl 1988; Schmitt 1983); the political system (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Fuchs 1999; Klingemann 1999; Lockerbie 1993; Morlino and Tarchi 1996), and a combination of both incumbents and the overall system (Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 1993). For a comprehensive review of use of the term 'democracy' in qualitative research, see Collier and Levitsky (1997).
7. Fuchs (1999) employs a similar classificatory scheme.
8. While this is an overall trend, there are of course important exceptions. For example, Pateman (1970) and Held (1987, cited in Sorensen 1993) have argued against defining democracy in minimal terms.
9. The exact survey item read, *In one word, could you tell me what democracy means to you?*
10. In this study, the researchers coded 108 open-ended responses into 22 initial groups, which were then reduced to the four categories listed here.
11. In this survey, respondents were first asked, *Have you heard of the idea of bringing government to the people, or democracy?* A follow-up question was then included, which asked, *Could you please explain to me what democracy means to you?* The order and wording of the questions was chosen to overcome the difficulties of framing survey questions around a concept that has no direct semantic equivalent in any of Uganda's indigenous languages.
12. Answers were based on the following options: the possibility of voting to elect representatives; that everyone should be able to satisfy their economic needs; the right to say what one thinks; respect for minorities, and the existence of different parties. The Inter-American Development Bank provided these data, which were originally collected by the Latinobarómetro Corporation in Santiago, Chile (www.latinobarometro.org).
13. As Canache *et al.* (2001) acknowledge, scholars have increasingly noted these problems. Norris (1999) and Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer (1998) contend that Satisfaction with Democracy (SWD) means different things to different individuals, and accordingly, respondents employ different criteria to determine their levels of satisfaction. In addition, Kuechler (1991) cautions that a great deal of cross-national variation in interpreting the SWD item is possible, thus hindering cross-national comparisons of citizens' support for democracy.

14. The inter-coder reliability for the coding of these items was .991. Two coders examined each of the responses to these questions, and placed them into one of the eleven categories. See the appendix for a detailed description of the kinds of responses falling into each category.
15. These are similar to what Fuchs (1999) refers to as 'supplemental' definitions of democracy.
16. It is important to stress that these numbers represent the percentage of respondents in our sample. Due to the nature of our data collection, we do not mean to imply that the same percentages will necessarily exist in the respective country populations.
17. We excluded two categories from this portion of the analysis: 'Citizens' place in democracy' and 'There is no democracy'. We excluded the former as it referred more to citizens' duties in a democracy, rather than the working of democracy per se. The latter category was excluded as such respondents did not evaluate democracy in terms of means or ends, but rather completely rejected the existence of democracy in their countries.
18. Thus, Means Emphasis (M.E.) = [Number of means categories mentioned / Total number of means + ends categories mentioned] x 100. Note that the denominator does not include two categories, 'civic values' and 'there is no democracy', which are not included in the means-ends classification, as mentioned earlier. The means emphasis variable ranges from 0 to 100. So, for example, if a respondent mentioned 2 means categories and 2 ends categories in her responses, her score on ME would be $[2/(2+2)] \times 100 = 50$ per cent, suggesting that she gave equal importance to means and ends. See the appendix for a more detailed explanation of the construction of this variable.
19. We computed and compared the mean values of the Means Emphasis variable for each country: Argentina (46 per cent), Brazil (61 per cent), Chile (52 per cent), and Guatemala (44 per cent). As is evident, only in two of the countries did the mean come even close to the 50 per cent mark (which indicates an overall balance in means and ends categories in the individual responses). In Guatemala, 20 per cent of the respondents scored a 0 on M.E.; in Brazil it was much lower, 8 per cent.
20. As Mohr points out, 'No matter what design or non-design has been employed, the results of the [significance] test give the probability that one would have obtained a statistic in a certain range of magnitude if one had actually implemented a randomization or random sampling procedure (given the sample size and the variance estimates that were obtained). Any non-significant result means that the relationship tested is so small (no matter what its raw magnitude happens to be) that it could fairly easily occur through the vagaries of a randomization or a random sampling process' (1990, 73).
21. Fuchs also distinguishes between citizens' support for democratic values and their support for democratic governance. East Germans uphold democratic values, but register lower levels of support for the current democratic regime than West Germans. Fuchs attributes these lower levels of support to higher expectations of a democracy in the former East. In the East, social rights are considered to be part and parcel of the democratic package. If social rights are not upheld, the democratic regime is not functioning properly. In contrast, in West Germany social rights are viewed as the domain of the incumbent government (Fuchs 1999, 143-44).
22. The exact item reads, *Overall, how do you feel about the democratic government in [country]? On the scale below, please circle the number that best reflects how dissatisfied or satisfied you are with the functioning of the democratic government in [country]. (1) Extremely dissatisfied – (10) Extremely satisfied.*
23. *Some people say that in some situations the military might be justified in taking over power through a coup. In your opinion, in what circumstances would a military coup be justified? Please circle the number of the ONE alternative that BEST reflects your opinion. (1) Very high unemployment; (2) economic instability; (3) many social protests and public disorder; (4) victory of leftist parties in the national elections; (5) high crime; (6) victory of extreme-right parties in the national elections; (7) the military should never take over the government.* Responses were recoded so that a value of zero indicated support for a coup under any of the conditions listed, and a one unequivocal opposition to a coup. See Canache, Mondak and Seligson (2001) for a comprehensive review of items measuring support for democracy.

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