

SAME SAME... BUT DIFFERENT? SUPPORT FOR THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY VS. SOLID DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT

Lo mismo... ¿pero diferente? Apoyo al ideal de democracia vs. apoyo sólido a la democracia

O mesmo... mas diferente? Apoio ao ideal da democracia vs. apoio sólido à democracia

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Abstract

Measurement of citizen support for democracy has been problematic, as most research on the topic has focused on assessing support for an abstract concept: the “ideal” of democracy. This article proposes a different conception of democratic support, labeled “solid democratic support,” which combines multiple items that tap attitudes toward various essential attributes of democratic government. Using data from the AmericasBarometer surveys, the “solid support” measure is compared to a traditional measure of support for the ideal of democracy in Chile and Venezuela. Important differences are found in the levels of the two indicators and in their correlates, demonstrating that they are in fact different concepts. As well, substantial differences are found between the two countries, suggesting that analyses of democratic support that do not consider the country-specific political context may be flawed.

Palabras clave:
apoyo a la
democracia;
cultura
democrática;
actitudes
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Venezuela

Resumen

La medición del apoyo ciudadano a la democracia ha sido problemática, ya que la mayoría de investigación sobre el tema se ha centrado en evaluar apoyo a un concepto abstracto: el "ideal" de democracia. Este artículo propone una concepción diferente del apoyo democrático, denominada "apoyo sólido a la democracia", que combina múltiples ítems que miden actitudes hacia varios atributos esenciales del gobierno democrático. Utilizando datos de encuesta del Barómetro de las Américas, la medida de "apoyo sólido" se compara a una medida tradicional de apoyo al ideal de democracia en Chile y Venezuela. Se observan diferencias importantes en los niveles de ambos indicadores y en sus correlatos, lo que demuestra que son en realidad conceptos diferentes. Además, se observan diferencias sustanciales entre los dos países, lo que sugiere que los análisis de apoyo democrático que no tienen en cuenta el contexto político específico de cada país pueden ser defectuosos.

Palavras-chave:
apoio à
democracia;
cultura
democrática;
atitudes
políticas; Chile;
Venezuela

Resumo

A medição do apoio dos cidadãos à democracia tem sido problemática, uma vez que a maior parte das investigações sobre o tema tem se centrado na avaliação do apoio a um conceito abstrato, ou "ideal" de democracia. Este artigo propõe uma concepção diferente de apoio democrático, denominada "apoio democrático sólido", que combina vários itens que avaliam as atitudes em relação a vários atributos essenciais do governo democrático. Usando dados de pesquisas do AmericasBarometer, a medida de "apoio sólido" é comparada a uma medida tradicional de apoio ao ideal de democracia no Chile e na Venezuela. São encontradas diferenças importantes nos níveis dos dois indicadores e nos seus correlatos, demonstrando que se trata, de facto, de conceitos diferentes. Além disso, são encontradas diferenças substanciais entre os dois países, o que sugere que as análises de apoio democrático que não consideram o contexto político específico do país podem estar incorretas.

INTRODUCTION

There is wide consensus among political scientists that democratic support is a necessary condition for the consolidation and stability of democracy (Dalton, 2004; Easton, 1975; Inglehart, 2003; Linz, 1978; Lipset, 1959; Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Norris, 1999; Rose *et al.*, 1998). Not only do democratic regimes depend on the public's willing acquiescence and support for their survival and effective functioning (Easton, 1975; Mishler & Rose, 2001), but a democracy can only be considered as consolidated when democratic procedures and institutions become "the only game in town" (Linz & Stepan, 1996b, p. 15). In this line, a strong current of literature has granted great importance to understanding the conditions under which citizens develop and maintain positive attitudes towards democratic rule.

Still, support for democracy has proven to be a difficult concept to study. Discussions regarding which indicators are better suited for its empirical assessment date back to the 1970s (Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1974). Almost two decades later, the literature on democratic support was still being described as “ambiguous, confusing and noncumulative” (Kaase, 1988, p. 117). Today, the debate is far from closed, as the indicators used to measure democratic support are still severely and recurrently criticized. There is no scholarly agreement on exactly how the concept of support for democracy should be interpreted or empirically assessed.

Building on an idea initially proposed by Mishler and Rose (2001), this article argues that most research on support for democracy has been misconceived, as it has adopted an “idealist approach (which) assesses popular support by measuring citizens’ commitment to democracy as an abstract ideal” (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 305). The main problem with this approach is that support for democracy in the abstract does not necessarily imply support for democracy’s essential attributes. For example, in certain contexts it is not hard to find people answering that “democracy is always preferable to any other type of government” to a survey question, while at the same time being in favor of restrictions on freedom of press or on the right to vote of certain individuals. Because there is strong evidence that citizens have different understandings and expectations of what democracy is and what it should deliver (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Bratton & Mattes, 2001; Kriesi *et al.*, 2016; Linde & Ekman, 2003; Schedler & Sarsfield, 2007), it seems clear that not all citizens who express democratic support through the traditional support for democracy survey items necessarily refer to the same concept. In this sense, it is important to differentiate those citizens who only express support for democracy in the abstract from those who have actual, consistent democratic attitudes.

This paper offers three main contributions to the scholarly literature on democratic culture and political attitudes. First, an alternative measure of support for democracy is proposed, which we have labeled “solid democratic support”. The solid support measure is novel because it combines multiple indicators that tap support for the essential attributes of a democratic system into a non-compensatory composite score, which permits distinguishing those citizens who have consistent positive attitudes towards democratic rule from the rest. Second, by means of logistic regression analysis, we show that there are important differences between the correlates of support for the ideal of democracy and those of solid democratic support. Third, we demonstrate that when studying support for democracy, context matters: the recent political history of the country and the ideological position of the incumbent play a role in determining the sources of democratic support in nations.

TRADITIONAL MEASUREMENT OF SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY

In the political attitudes literature, support for democracy has been traditionally related to David Easton's seminal concept of "diffuse" political support: a durable, generalized attachment that is normally "independent of outputs and performance in the short run" (Easton, 1975, pp. 444-445). Also interpreted as a measure of the legitimacy of a political system, diffuse support has been described as "a deep-seated set of attitudes towards politics and the operation of the political system that is relatively impervious to change" (Dalton, 2004, p. 23). As well, this type of support has been related to the "affective" orientations citizens have towards political systems (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999). It is that "reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effects of which they see as damaging to their wants" (Easton, 1965, p. 273).

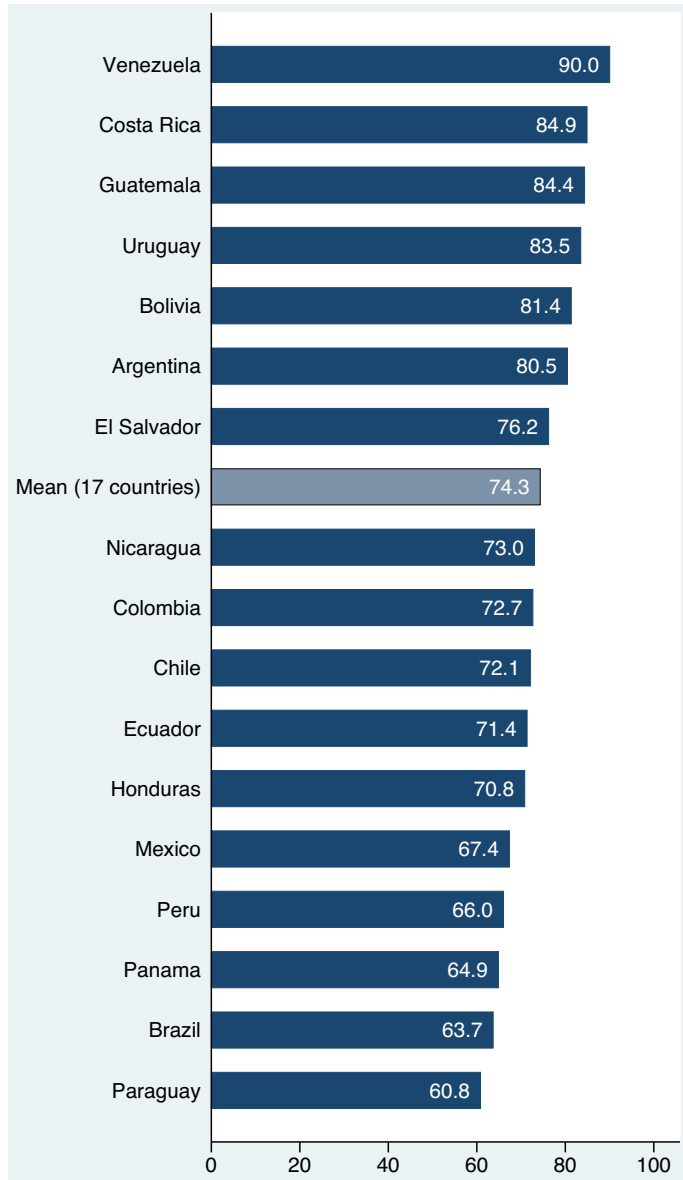
When assessing support for democracy through surveys, most researchers have relied on items that capture citizens' attitudes towards an abstract concept: that of the "ideal" of democracy (Bratton, 2002; Fuchs *et al.*, 1995; Lagos, 2003, 2008; Linz, 1978; Linz & Stepan, 1996a; Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Rose & Mishler, 1996; Sarsfield & Echegaray, 2006). The AmericasBarometer Survey's version of the *Linzián* indicator asks "With which of the following statements do you agree with the most?" and offers respondents three possible answers: "(a) For people like me it doesn't matter whether a government is democratic or non-democratic," "(b) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government," or "(c) Under some circumstances an authoritarian government may be preferable to a democratic one."

Figure 1 reports the levels of support for the ideal of democracy found in seventeen countries of North, Central and South America in 2014 through the use of the aforementioned *Linzián* indicator by the AmericasBarometer Surveys.¹ Although the range between the countries with the highest and lowest levels of support is large, majorities of the population express support for democratic rule in all countries. When considering democracy in abstract terms –as an ideal– there seems to be little doubt that citizens in the Americas agree that it is preferable to any other form of government.

The *Linzián* indicator, widely used in studies of democratization, can provide a first impression of levels of citizen support for democracy across nations. This may, however, be a *naïve* impression, because of two reasons. First, because there is no certainty about what the actual meaning of this support in fact is. Figure 1 shows countries with very different democratic histories having similar levels of

1. For producing this figure, we used the 2014 AmericasBarometers because it is the most recent wave where the *Linzián* indicator was asked to the majority of the countries in the region (including Chile and Venezuela, the cases analyzed in this article).

**Figure 1. Support for the ideal of democracy
(% of people who believe democracy is preferable)**



Source: 2014 AmericasBarometer (Latin American Public Opinion Project)

democratic support. Costa Rica, a nation that has enjoyed one of the longest democratic traditions in the Americas -as well as the highest ratings from the Freedom House organization throughout the last decades- has virtually the same level of democratic support as Guatemala, a country that experienced a remarkably unstable democratic trajectory in the twentieth century and that has consistently obtained very poor ratings from Freedom House since the late 1970s (Freedom House, 2015b; McClintock & Lebovic, 2006, p. 34).² The figure suggests the uncertainty analysts face regarding what citizens in different countries have in mind when thinking about an abstract construct such as democracy: it seems plausible that a nation's democratic trajectory determines the general conceptual framework under which its citizens understand democracy (Linde & Ekman, 2003; Rose *et al.*, 1998). In this sense, it would not be correct to make cross-country comparisons of levels of democratic support found through an indicator of this kind, as it is likely that we would be comparing different things, and even run the risk of not knowing what we are comparing at all.

Second, is the fact that traditional measures of democratic support³ such as the Linzian indicator have been assessing support for an abstract concept: the ideal of democracy. One may question if simply expressing "lip service" to an ideal is enough for a person to be considered as having support for it. If the object to be measured is that "deep-seated set of attitudes towards politics" Russell Dalton talks about (2004, p. 23), there are enough grounds to question this. It seems safe to argue that it is not the same to answer that "democracy is preferable to any other form of government" in a survey than to actually have positive attitudes towards the fundamental aspects of democratic rule.

In fact, several scholars have expressed doubts on the validity of the traditional indicators used to measure support for democracy (Carlin & Singer, 2011; Ferrin, 2012; Inglehart, 2003; Schedler & Sarsfield, 2007). There is an emerging consensus that democratic support is a multidimensional concept. Hence, an improved approach to its measurement would imply using several indicators that captured support towards specific core principles and institutions of a democratic system.

There have been few efforts to analyze the multidimensional nature of democratic support through empirical research. One of the first steps in this direction

2. For producing its well-known classification of "free", "partly free" and "not free" countries, Freedom House gives numerical scores -from 1 to 7- to two categories in each country: political rights and civil liberties. It is to these ratings I refer to. For detailed information on Freedom House's methodological procedures and the individual country ratings throughout the years see Freedom House (2015a, 2015b) and McClintock and Lebovic (2006).

3. Another example of a commonly used indicator measuring support for the ideal of democracy is the "Churchillian" indicator, developed by Rose and Mishler (1996). The indicator asks respondents to agree or disagree with the statement: "Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government."

was taken by Michael Bratton and colleagues, developers of the Afrobarometer surveys in the late 1990s. Bratton and Mattes differentiated the rationalities undergirding support for democracy in African citizens as either “intrinsic” or “instrumental” types of rationalities: while some citizens will support democracy based on intrinsic reasons, or what they describe as “an appreciation of the political freedoms and equal rights that democracy embodies when valued as an end in itself” (2001, p. 448), others will support democracy based on instrumental calculations, such as the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of living standards. In later works, the authors developed an “index of commitment to democracy” which included a direct question measuring support for democracy in the abstract, plus other indicators asking for opinions on rejection of military, one-party and one-man rule (Bratton, 2002; Mattes & Bratton, 2007). They found that almost a third of the respondents said they preferred democracy, but failed to consistently reject all other forms of authoritarianism.

In a similar line, but aiming to achieve a detailed understanding of citizens’ conceptions of democracy, Schedler and Sarsfield developed a classification of what they called “democrats with adjectives”: people who support the ideal of democracy in the abstract while rejecting one or more core principles of liberal democracy (2007). Through their index of support for democracy, these authors classified citizens into six different groups, based on their different ideological profiles towards democracy: “liberal democrats,” “intolerant democrats,” “paternalistic democrats,” “homophobic democrats,” “exclusionary democrats,” and “ambivalent non-democrats.”

Carlin and Singer (2011), performed an examination of citizens’ support for the core values of “polyarchy,” Robert Dahl’s concept for real world approximations of true democracy (Dahl, 1971). They identified five profiles of citizens: “polyarchs,” “hyper-presidentialists,” “pluralist autocrats,” “hedging autocrats,” and “autocrats”. They found that most Latin American respondents were not pure “polyarchs” or “autocrats,” but showed mixed attitudes towards democracy. In an attempt to draw a clearer picture of the different groups of citizens they identified, they examined the socioeconomic, attitudinal and ideological correlates of the profiles and found that support for polyarchy is highest among the most educated, politically engaged, wealthy, and those who dislike the president (2011).

MEASURING “SOLID DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT”

This section presents the definition of democracy we use as a basis for assessing “solid democratic support.” Following Munck and Verkuilen’s (2002) advice, the section is divided into three parts: the first part addresses the issue of conceptualization, laying out the necessary conditions for a political system to be

considered a democracy. The second part tackles the measurement challenge, describing what data and indicators are used to operationalize solid democratic support. The third part explains the aggregation procedure chosen for constructing the solid support indicator, as well as the arguments behind that choice.

Conceptualization

One of the main arguments driving this article is that a measure of solid democratic support should consider citizen support for all essential attributes of democracy. What, then, are the essential features of a democratic system? In other words, what are the minimum necessary conditions for a political system to qualify as a democracy?

Multiple definitions of democracy have been offered throughout the last decades (see among others, Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Diamond & Morlino, 2004; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002; Schmitter & Karl, 1991; Tilly, 2007). In fact, it has been repeatedly described as an “essentially contested” concept (Gallie, 1956), in the sense that its definition is the focus of endless disputes that “although not resolvable by argument of any kind, are nevertheless sustained by perfectly respectable arguments and evidence” (Gallie, 1956, p. 169). In recent years, however, a procedural minimum definition based on Robert Dahl’s concept of “polyarchy” (1971) has gained acceptance as a reference point for operationalizations of the concept (Altman & Pérez-Liñán, 2002; Alvarez *et al.*, 1996; Baker & Koesel, 2001; Carlin & Singer, 2011; Schneider, 2008; Vanhanen, 2003).

According to Dahl, the minimum requirements for “polyarchy” to exist are: (1) the right to vote; (2) freedom of organization; (3) freedom of expression; (4) equal eligibility for public office; (5) the right to compete for votes; (6) availability of diverse sources of information about politics; (7) free and fair elections; and (8) the dependence of public policies on citizens’ preferences. These eight guarantees, Dahl argued, correspond to two separate underlying dimensions, contestation and inclusiveness, at both the conceptual and empirical levels. Contestation refers to the extent to which citizens have equal opportunities to express their views and form organizations. Inclusiveness refers to the variation in “the proportion of the population entitled to participate on a more or less equal plane in controlling and contesting the conduct of the government...” (1971, p. 4). Dahl claimed that these two dimensions vary somewhat independently and that they are generally fundamental, in the sense that they are not artifacts of time or geography.

Various empirical studies of quality of democracy and democratization have adapted Dahl’s ideas to construct indices of democracy. In fact, most of the best known indices of democracy (Alvarez *et al.*, 1996; Coppedge & Reinicke, 1990; Freedom House, 2015b; Gastil, 1991; Marshall & Jaggers, 2002) have been

measuring variations of Dahl's two dimensions (Coppedge *et al.*, 2008). The majority of these indices have primarily focused on the contestation dimension, while only a few have included the inclusiveness dimension (Coppedge *et al.*, 2008).

This article follows Dahl's concept of polyarchy and its two dimensions to specify the definition of democracy used for assessing solid democratic support. In addition to polyarchy's dimensions of contestation and inclusiveness, one more dimension is included in our definition. The additional dimension deals with support for a key aspect of democratic institutionalism: an appropriate system of checks and balances. In their examination of citizen support for democratic ideals and institutions in the Americas, Carlin and Singer note that besides including support towards contestation and inclusiveness, measures of democratic support should also capture "citizens' orientations to the basic institutions that undergird these twin dimensions" (2011, p. 1505). In this line, they introduce a dimension labeled "institutions and processes" which measures respect for the institutions charged with exercising the checks and balances necessary to ensure the correct functioning of a democratic system.

In sum, the definition of democracy used in this article to assess solid democratic support consists of three dimensions: "contestation," "inclusiveness," and "checks and balances". All three dimensions are considered necessary conditions for a political system to be deemed a democracy and consequently, support towards all three is necessary for a person to be considered to have solid democratic support.⁴

Measurement

Data for constructing the solid support indicator is taken from the 2006/2007 round of the AmericasBarometers, a series of national representative surveys conducted by Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).⁵ The 2006/2007 round of the AmericasBarometers included a series of questions that asked citizens about their attitudes towards different democratic principles and institutions, which have not been asked again in their entirety up to the date of publication of this article. A total of seven items were selected to operationalize the three dimensions outlined in the previous section —three in the

4. While this article argues that the three dimensions specified are necessary conditions for a political system to be considered a democracy, no claims are made that the three of them taken together is sufficient for a system to be considered democratic. There may be other attributes that political systems are required to have to be considered democratic.

5. The authors thank the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and its major supporters (the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Program, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Vanderbilt University) for making the data available.

case of “contestation” and two in the cases of “inclusiveness” and “checks and balances.” By no means are the selected items considered to be perfect measures of the concepts they aim to assess: it is evident that some are better measures than others; but they all are –to our judgment– the best indicators the database offered for each concept’s particular case. All indicators included in each dimension are considered to be formative indicators: that is, support towards every one of them is considered as necessary for their corresponding dimension to be fulfilled. In this line, support towards all seven indicators used is seen as a necessary condition for a person to be considered to have solid democratic support.

a) Contestation

Several scholars have interpreted the dimension of democratic contestation as focusing solely on the electoral process: “democracy, for us, is thus a regime in which some governmental offices are filled as a consequence of contested elections” (Alvarez *et al.*, 1996, p. 4). There are other authors, however, that include subcomponents such as freedom of organization, freedom of expression and pluralism in the media (Coppedge & Reinicke, 1990). In Dahl’s original terms, contestation refers to “the extent of permissible opposition, public contestation, or political competition” (1971, p. 4). While there is no doubt that free and fair elections are of utmost relevance for any democratic system, we argue that the existence of contestation should not be exclusive to the electoral process, but be extended to daily political practices. For this reason, we advocate a broad understanding of contestation and use three indicators for measuring support towards the distinct subcomponents of freedom of organization, freedom of press, and freedom of opposition.⁶

b) Inclusiveness

The dimension of inclusiveness has been neglected from various indices of democracy, for diverse reasons (Munck & Verkuilen, 2002). For example, Alvarez *et. al.* (1996) and Coppedge & Reinicke (1990) argue that their research is concerned with the post-World War II era and that universal suffrage can be taken for granted in this period. However, while it could be argued that universal suffrage is an attribute of democracy that could be taken for granted today, the same is not necessarily true with citizen attitudes towards it. As the aim of this article is

6. The survey questions used to assess these and all following indicators are presented in the online appendix.

assessing citizens' attitudes towards the fundamental attributes of democracy, it is necessary to also include the dimension of inclusiveness in our analysis. In this line, we use two indicators to assess support towards inclusiveness, conceived here as the extent to which every citizen has the right to participate in political life. The first one concentrates on the most common conception of the inclusiveness dimension, that is, the universal right to vote. But participation in the political process should not be solely interpreted as having the right to vote: it also implies citizens having equal eligibility for public office (Dahl, 1971). Therefore, we include a second item in our assessment of inclusiveness that taps opinions towards the universal right of running for public office.

c) Checks and balances

Finally, the dimension of checks and balances aims to tap citizen respect for the institutions responsible of exercising these controls in a democratic system. Here, we borrow the conceptualization of this dimension from Carlin and Singer (2011) and operationalize it, as they did, through two items that tap respect for the legislative, and respect for the judiciary.

Table 1 presents the percentages of respondents who support each of the seven components discussed above, both for Chile and Venezuela. Interesting findings can be highlighted. First, it is relevant to note that the components that have to do with what we have called "checks and balances" (or respect for institutions) are the ones that -by far- receive the most support in both countries: more than 80% of citizens express respect for the judiciary and for the legislative, both in Chile and in Venezuela. On the other hand, the two items tapping attitudes towards inclusiveness are the ones that suffer from the least support, again in both countries: while in Venezuela the universal right to vote and to run for public office are supported by close to 60% of the respondents, in Chile these components of democracy receive the astonishingly low levels of approximately 40% each. The items tapping the "contestation" dimension of democracy lie somewhere in between the "checks and balances" and the "inclusiveness" dimensions in both countries.

Table 1. Support for each of the components of democracy (%)

	Chile	Venezuela
Freedom of organization	68.4	68.1
Freedom of press	80.6	69.7
Freedom of opposition	74.8	61.9

	Chile	Venezuela
Universal right to vote	43.7	58.3
Universal right to run for public office	40.3	56.7
Respect for legislative	88.3	82.7
Respect for judiciary	89.0	82.9

Source: AmericasBarometer 2006/2007

Aggregation

Solid democratic support is defined as having consistent positive attitudes towards all of democracy's essential components. Because all seven indicators described above tap distinct essential features of democratic rule, they are all considered necessary conditions for a complete understanding of solid support. In this line, we argue that only those citizens who show positive attitudes towards each and every one of the seven indicators are considered to have this type of support.

A common mistake made by theorists of democracy is that "almost everyone, which is a large number of people, conceptualizes democracy in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, but at the same time almost no quantitative measures use the mathematics of logic appropriate to the concept. Instead the inappropriate mathematics of addition, average, and correlation are almost universally adopted" (Goertz, 2006, p. 11). In fact, by relying on aggregation rules based on addition or correlation, such as factor analysis, the empirical measurement of democracy usually falls prey to what he calls the most common form of measurement-concept inconsistency: "a necessary and sufficient concept with an additive (or averaging) measure" (Goertz, 2006, p. 98).

To avoid this mistake, we construct a binary non-compensatory composite score as the measure of solid democratic support. The construction process itself was made up of three steps. In the first step, answers to all seven indicators measuring support for democracy's essential attributes were recoded in binary fashion, where positive answers were given a score of 1 and all other answers a score of 0. In the second step, the scores of all seven binary items were added to create an aggregated variable with scores ranging from 0 to 7. Finally, the binary non-compensatory composite indicator of "solid support for democracy" was constructed, where only scores of 7 in the aggregated variable were recoded as "solid support".⁷

7. For complete details on the three steps followed to construct the "solid democratic support" indicator, refer to the online appendix.

The use of a non-compensatory composite indicator as the measure of solid democratic support is the most appropriate, as the primary interest of this article is differentiating those citizens who have consistent positive attitudes towards *all* of democracy's essential features from those who show inconsistent (or even negative) attitudes. This argument is similar to the one proposed by Alvarez et al. (1996) for developing their dichotomous classification of political regimes. These authors justify their use of a nominal classification to differentiate between "democracies" and "dictatorships" with the argument that "the analogy with the proverbial pregnancy is thus that while democracy can be more or less advanced, one cannot be half-democratic: there is a natural zero point" (Alvarez *et al.*, 1996, p. 21). In this article, that natural zero point is having solid democratic support: here, we are not interested in finding the degree of democratic support an individual has, but in differentiating those who have consistent democratic attitudes from all others. The advantage of using a non-compensatory composite indicator is that, unlike factor scores, it does not allow for negative answers to one or more questions to be compensated by positive answers to the other questions included in the index, that way avoiding possible conceptualization-measurement inconsistencies.⁸

CASE SELECTION: CHILE AND VENEZUELA

We have argued that expressing support for the ideal of democracy in the abstract does not necessarily imply supporting democracy's essential principles; and that because of this, democratic support should be studied by looking at support for the fundamental attributes of a democratic system. As well, we argue that supporting democracy in one place does not necessarily mean the same as supporting it in a different one. Both the meaning and the nature of support for democracy may vary depending on the context. In this sense, it is illustrative to perform a comparative examination of countries where the democratic support debate has been constructed on different terms. We have selected Chile and Venezuela as this article's cases of study because they are two countries with transcendental differences in their democratic trajectories that make them appropriate for comparative analysis.

Prior to its dramatic democratic breakdown in 1973, Chile enjoyed a relatively long history of democracy, with a party system and institutions similar to those

8. Also, the use of a non-compensatory composite indicator implies all indicators used in the analysis are given the same importance for the final measure. Thus, it makes no sense in applying different weights to the indicators if they are all considered necessary for a complete understanding of solid support.

found in Western Europe (Valenzuela, 1977). The *coup d'état* of September 11, 1973 resulted in the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, which lasted until 1990. This regime, despite facing intense internal problems and widespread international rejection, managed to maintain a great deal of support among important sectors of the Chilean population throughout its entire period. Even after the re-establishment of democracy, support to Pinochet's regime has been substantial, to the extent that the authoritarian-democratic conflict was a defining cleavage in the formation of the Chilean party system (Torcal & Mainwaring, 2003). In fact, both sides were represented in the post-dictatorship party system: in broad terms, the authoritarian side through the right-wing "*Renovación Nacional*" and "*Unión Democrática Independiente*" parties and the democratic side through the leftist "*Concertación*" coalition.

There is little doubt that Pinochet's regime has been very influential in shaping Chileans' political attitudes in the last decades. It is on these grounds that debates about democracy in Chile have been held upon: Chilean citizens have been permanently exposed to discussions held by elites who strongly promoted democracy and its values versus those who were, to call it somehow, more "sympathetic" to authoritarian regimes, personified by Pinochet. This is particularly the case for older citizens who experienced the dictatorship firsthand and are able to compare it to the democratic regimes that came after 1990. But even for the younger generations, the authoritarian-democratic conflict has been a defining issue, as it has been the basis of the competition between the Chilean political parties. This has been exemplified in the 2019 and 2020 protests, where demonstrations composed mostly of young university students focused on showing rejection of alleged features of the Pinochet regime that were still present within the constitution and the economic model.

Some preliminary hypotheses can be proposed from the nature of the debate on democratic support in Chile. First, that individuals' self-placement in the left-right scale should have an influence on their attitudes towards democracy: because Pinochet's regime can be considered a "right-wing dictatorship" it would be expected that those who locate themselves on the left side of the scale would be more supportive of democracy. This should occur for both measures of support: Chilean left-wingers should show a greater tendency to both support democracy as an ideal and to have solid democratic support.

One might also expect a positive effect of age on support for democracy. It can be argued that those who experienced Pinochet's dictatorship firsthand will appreciate the virtues of democratic governance more than their fellow citizens who were politically socialized after the dictatorship had ended. However, this might not necessarily be the case as a good percentage of Chile's older population supported Pinochet during his regime and afterwards, making it also possible that the effect of age on support for democracy is null.

In Venezuela, the debate on democratic support in the last decades has been built on very different grounds. Unlike Chile, Venezuela did not have an authoritarian regime since democracy was reestablished in 1959 until very recently, which makes it one of the longer lasting representative democracies in the region, despite its clear deficiencies (Coppedge, 2005; Roberts, 2003). The political elites in Venezuela have not constructed the regime debate in terms of preferences for authoritarianism versus preferences for democracy, as in Chile, but in terms of how democracy's functioning could be improved (Canache, 2002). This conflict has been exacerbated in the last decades since the arrival of Hugo Chávez to the presidency of the republic and the subsequent continuation of his regime and discourse by the current president Nicolás Maduro.

Venezuelan democracy since Chávez's arrival has undergone important transformations. The increasing concentration of power on the executive branch has resulted in an almost inexistent horizontal accountability (Frank, 2010). Freedoms of expression and organization have been substantially weakened, and several concerns about the validity of the electoral processes held in the past decade have been voiced in the media. This led opposition parties and media to continuously refer to Chávez's regime as a dictatorship. Chávez himself, on the other hand, heavily promoted his regime as the *Revolución Bolivariana*, a true democracy that is deeply transforming Venezuela. This resulted in the polarization of the Venezuelan electorate around the figure of Chávez, and ultimately, around two different conceptions of democracy (Moncagatta, 2013). On one side, stand the citizens who sympathize with Chávez and believe that "democracy" is the type of regime that his and Maduro's government have established. On the other side, stand Chávez's opponents, who believe "democracy" is something else, a regime different from the one the incumbent government has been promoting throughout the last decade.

The influence of Chávez in Venezuelan politics makes it safe to argue that Venezuelans' political attitudes in the last decades have been shaped by citizens' alignments in respect to him and with the different understandings of democracy that arise from these alignments. The debate over democracy in Venezuela has not revolved around the question of whether people prefer democracy over authoritarian regimes, as in Chile, but if they prefer a certain kind of democracy over another. In other words, if they are "Chavist" democrats or not.

At least two conceptions of democracy are present in Venezuela's political scenario, and it is important to identify what specific attitudes are related to each conception. Because the conception of democracy Chávez and Maduro have promoted is one that has allowed concentration of power in the executive, limits on freedom of expression and organization, and other non-democratic practices, it could be expected that citizens who align themselves with this conception of democracy will, in general, possess weaker democratic attitudes, at least in the measurement of solid

democratic support. In this sense, citizens who evaluate Chávez's mandate in positive terms should tend to show lower levels of solid democratic support than their counterparts who evaluate his performance in poor terms. If ideology is to have any effect on Venezuelans' support for democracy, it should be in the opposite direction than in Chile: because Chávez's regime is considered by his opponents as a "left-wing populism" (and even dictatorship), it should be expected that right-wingers in Venezuela show stronger democratic attitudes.

However, it is likely that there is no relationship between support for the ideal of democracy and alignment with Chávez. It is impossible to know what type of regime people are supporting in Venezuela when they agree with the statement that "democracy is always preferable" in a survey question. The support expressed might be support towards Chávez's *democracia bolivariana* or it might be support towards a completely different -and utterly opposed- model of democracy. What citizens' conceptions of democracy are should not make a difference, at least in principle, in the levels and explanations of support for democracy as an ideal.

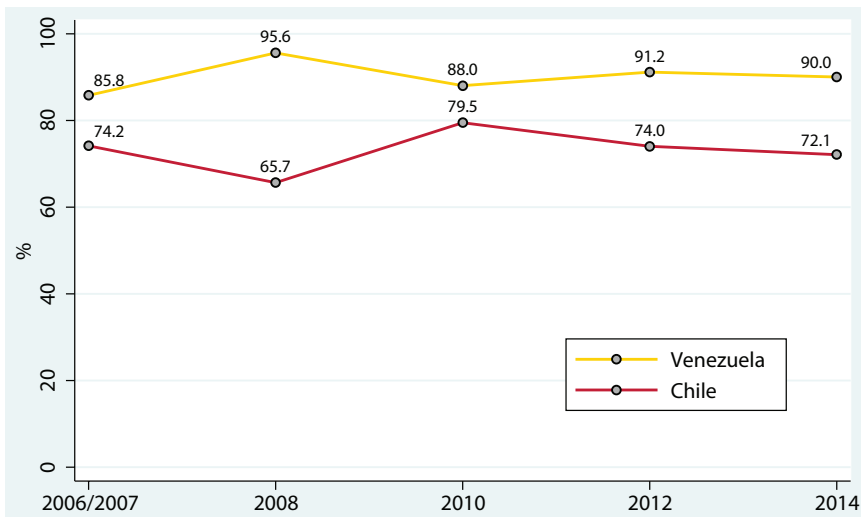
SUPPORT FOR THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY VS. SOLID DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT

Democracy is a concept which in general has positive connotations, and it can be expected that most people express support for it, whether that expressed support is based on real attitudes or not. In this line, there are reasons to be suspicious about the levels of support for a concept with such positive connotations, as they might be inflated by the presence of vacuous conceptions of democracy, social desirability and a number of other biases (Baviskar & Malone, 2004; Carlin & Singer, 2011; Carrión, 2008).

Figure 2 illustrates how both Venezuela and Chile appear to enjoy high levels of support for the ideal of democracy when assessed through the Linzian indicator. Venezuela displays outstanding and quite stable levels of around ninety percent of the people who answer that "democracy is preferable to any other type of regime" between 2006 and 2014. These levels of support are among the highest recorded in the Americas throughout the whole period, and as high as the levels found in the last decade in some of the most advanced Western European democracies (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Diamond & Plattner, 2008; Klingemann, 1999; Lagos, 2003). Chile also shows stable levels of support for the ideal of democracy in the same period, although somewhat lower than the ones found in Venezuela. While a strong majority of the Chilean population still supports democracy as an ideal, there is a history of sympathy for authoritarian regimes, a legacy of Pinochet's rule. It is no surprise to find that throughout the whole period (2006-2014),

there is roughly a quarter of the Chilean samples who stated to be either open to the possibility of having an authoritarian regime or indifferent to the type of regime.

**Figure 2. Support for the ideal of democracy through time
(% of people who believe democracy is preferable)**

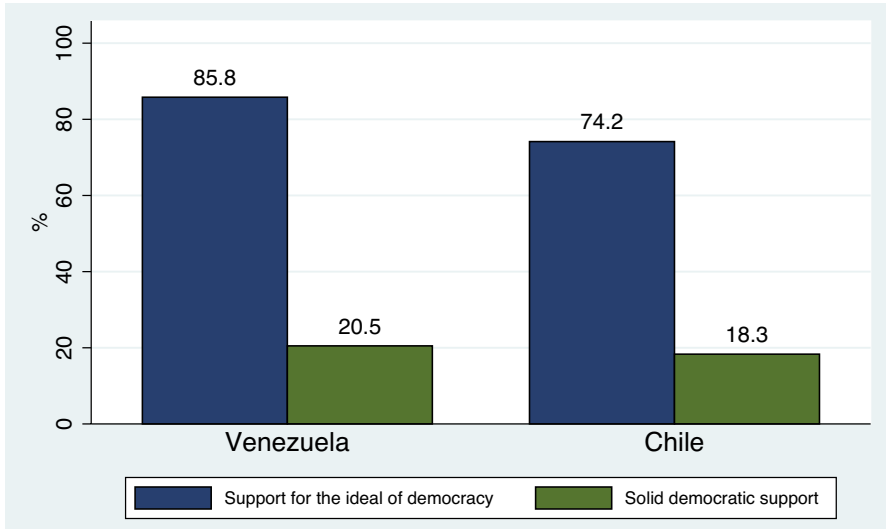


Source: AmericasBarometers Surveys (Latin American Public Opinion Project)

Figure 3 compares the levels of support for the ideal of democracy and the constructed measure of solid democratic support found in Chile and Venezuela in the 2006/2007 wave of the AmericasBarometer survey. There is a large difference between the percentages of citizens who express support for the ideal of democracy and those who have consistent democratic attitudes and can be considered to have solid democratic support: only around a fifth of the samples in both countries can be considered to have solid democratic support. While Venezuela presents a higher percentage of citizens who have solid democratic support than Chile, the difference in this measure is substantially smaller than the one found between both countries on support for the ideal of democracy. As well, it seems clear that these indicators are not measuring the same, as they are only weakly correlated, with $r = 0,195$ in Venezuela and $r = 0,150$ in Chile.⁹

9. The numbers refer to Pearson's r correlation coefficients, and both were significant at the 0.01 level. The correlations were calculated between the binary measure of solid democratic support and a recoded version of the Linzian indicator, where 1 = "support for the ideal" and 0 = "all other answers".

Figure 3. Support for the ideal of democracy vs. Solid democratic support



Source: 2006/2007 AmericasBarometer (Latin American Public Opinion Project)

EXPLANATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT

The assessment of the sources of citizens' support for democratic rule has been an important and recurrent issue in the political attitudes literature. Despite the considerable efforts deployed in identifying the variables that influence support for democracy, no clear consensus has been achieved among scholars. Common explanations have stressed the roles of early socialization processes (Easton & Dennis, 1967; Inglehart, 2003), interpersonal trust and social capital (Putnam, 1993), institutional arrangements (Mattes & Bratton, 2007; Norris, 1999), citizens' previous electoral experiences (Anderson *et al.*, 2005; Anderson & Tverdova, 2001; Singh *et al.*, 2011), or the performance of democratic institutions and leaders (Evans & Whitefield, 1995; Whitefield & Evans, 1999). While all of these factors have been shown to play a role, the variation of their influence across contexts has been significant and few sound conclusions have been reached.

This section examines the correlates of support for the ideal of democracy and solid democratic support in both Chile and Venezuela. The aim is twofold: first, to demonstrate that explanations of supporting the ideal of democracy may differ from explanations of solid democratic support. Second, to distinguish

the different effects variables show in different contexts. With these objectives in mind, two logistic regression models were specified for each country: the first, for support for the ideal of democracy, and the second, for solid democratic support.

The independent variables used in the regression models include some of the usual predictors found in theoretical explanations of support for democracy. A first set includes six relevant modernization and demographic variables: age, gender, education, wealth, urban/rural residence, and religion. A second set of variables deals with psychological engagement in politics, and includes measures of political interest and political knowledge. A third set is composed of political variables and includes ideology -through the use of left-right self-placement- and a variable that distinguishes citizens who voted for a losing candidate in the last presidential election. Finally, three variables assessing short-term outputs of the political system were included: the first is an evaluation of the president's performance while the other two are current evaluations of the country's economy and of personal finances.¹⁰

Table 2 presents the results of the four logistic regression models, expressed in odds ratios. The dependent variable used in the models of support for the ideal of democracy is again the Linzian indicator, recoded in binary fashion: answers stating that "democracy is preferable to any other form of government" were given a value of "1" (supporters) and those who chose either of the two other answer possibilities (non-supporters/indifferent) were given a value of "0". The dependent variable used in the models of solid democratic support is the binary indicator constructed previously with "1" equating to solid support.

Table 2. Logistic regression estimates for support for democracy (odds ratios)

	Venezuela (ideal)	Venezuela (solid)	Chile (ideal)	Chile (solid)
Age	1.010 (0.008)	0.999 (0.007)	1.016** (0.005)	1.001 (0.006)
Gender (female)	1.097 (0.208)	0.836 (0.152)	1.019 (0.153)	0.756 (0.128)
Education (years)	1.087** (0.028)	1.002 (0.024)	1.015 (0.026)	1.014 (0.030)

10. For details on the wordings of the original questions and any recodings performed, refer to the online appendix. To facilitate the interpretation of the regression coefficients, all independent variables were recoded from negative (left) to positive (right) when necessary.

	Venezuela (ideal)	Venezuela (solid)	Chile (ideal)	Chile (solid)
Wealth (quintiles)	1.013 (0.066)	1.110 (0.068)	1.039 (0.067)	1.073 (0.080)
Residence (urban)	1.250 (0.512)	0.837 (0.399)	0.984 (0.216)	1.421 (0.417)
Religion (catholic)	0.806 (0.201)	1.096 (0.275)	1.166 (0.181)	0.831 (0.143)
Political interest	0.945 (0.090)	0.850 (0.080)	1.025 (0.084)	1.130 (0.098)
Political knowledge	0.987 (0.067)	1.217** (0.083)	1.202** (0.072)	1.152* (0.082)
Left-right self-orientation	1.024 (0.032)	1.051 (0.034)	0.851*** (0.028)	0.937 (0.034)
Voted for losing candidate	0.741 (0.240)	1.385 (0.339)	0.640* (0.112)	0.950 (0.197)
Evaluation of president	0.711** (0.081)	0.807* (0.082)	1.170 (0.116)	0.920 (0.101)
Evaluation of country's economy	0.818 (0.102)	0.778* (0.088)	1.293* (0.129)	1.330* (0.152)
Evaluation of personal economy	1.150 (0.142)	1.054 (0.125)	0.856 (0.093)	0.846 (0.101)
Observations	920	920	1141	1141
Pseudo R ²	0.050	0.081	0.073	0.044

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: AmericasBarometer 2006/2007

DISCUSSION

There are clear differences in the variables that show significant relationships to the two conceptions of democratic support. This is evidence that it is not the same to express support for the ideal of democracy as an abstract concept as to expressing support for an indicator that incorporates the essential attributes of

democracy. In Venezuela, only the evaluation of the president has a significant effect in both the models for support for the ideal and solid support. This effect is negative, implying that those citizens who evaluate the president the best tend to show less support for democracy, both as an ideal and as solid democratic attitudes. In Chile, there are two variables that show significant effects for both conceptions of support: political knowledge and the evaluation of the country's economy all have similar effects in both of the models.

The table also shows that the reasons behind support for the ideal of democracy and solid support are not the same in Venezuela as in Chile. In the case of solid support, there is only one variable –political knowledge– that has a similar significant effect in both countries: people who know more about politics tend to show more solid support for democracy in both Chile and Venezuela. An interesting variable is the evaluation of the country's economy, which has significant effects in the solid support models in both countries, but while in Venezuela it shows a negative effect, in Chile it has a positive effect. This is a relevant finding that reinforces the argument that the political context should be taken into account when studying support for democracy. While Carlin and Singer, in their region-wide analysis of the Americas, found that “citizens who judge the national economy as strong or report an improved personal situation are significantly less supportive of polyarchy” (2011, p. 1518), in Chile we find the exact opposite: as evaluations of the national economy improve, there is a higher tendency to have solid democratic support (and support for the ideal of democracy, as well). This suggests that performing analysis of political attitudes without considering the political context may obscure important relationships and lead to erroneous generalizations.

In the case of support for the ideal of democracy, there are no variables that have significant effects across both countries. In Venezuela, only education and evaluation of the president show significant effects in this model. This implies that the more educated and those who give worse evaluations of Chávez tend to show more support for democracy as an ideal, as was proposed in the preliminary hypotheses offered for Venezuela. Having only two variables that show significant coefficients in this model could be related to the fact that the regime debate in Venezuela revolves around different conceptions of democracy, and it is more difficult to discern which conception citizens have in mind when expressing support for democracy in the abstract. While a good proportion of the citizens (85.8%) expressed support for democracy through this indicator, it is likely that many of them expressed support for different conceptions of democracy. In this context, it makes little sense to try to find explanations for support for a unitary conception of democracy. When, in the abstract, there are at least two conceptions of the ideal of democracy competing, any explanatory model will face difficulties, as it will be in fact explaining two concepts instead of one. This seems to be the case for support for the ideal of democracy in Venezuela.

In Chile, a different scenario can be seen regarding support for the ideal of democracy: five variables have significant relationships to this measure. These are: age, political knowledge, left-right self-placement, evaluation of the country's economy and having voted for a losing candidate. One could argue that Pinochet's dictatorship serves as a clear reference point that grounds Chileans' attitudes towards the concept of democracy. In this sense, the regime debate is primarily framed in terms of democracy versus authoritarianism and because the dichotomy is held in these terms, it could be proposed that Chileans have a more unitary conception of democracy than Venezuelans. In general terms, support for democracy in Chile means one thing: opposition to authoritarianism. This could be a reason why possible explanations gain weight, and we find more independent variables that show statistically significant coefficients in Chile than in Venezuela.

The finding that older Chilean citizens tend to show more support for democracy as an ideal (but not as solid democratic attitudes) confirms the hypothesis that those who experienced Pinochet's regime first-hand would show more democratic support, at least as an abstract concept. But for Chile the most interesting findings regarding support for the ideal of democracy probably have to do with political variables: both left-right self-placement and having voted for a losing candidate in the last presidential election show negative effects to support for the ideal. As expected, Chilean left-wingers are more likely to support the ideal of democracy: after all, they are the ones that have fought for democracy in Chile since the transition period of the eighties and nineties. In that same line, it is not surprising to find that voting for a losing presidential candidate (the right wingers Sebastián Piñera and Joaquín Lavín, in this case) decreases the probabilities of expressing democratic support. Finally, the evaluation of the country's economy shows a positive, significant effect to both support for the ideal of democracy and solid democratic support in Chile: it is not surprising that well-evaluated short-term outputs have a positive relationship to democratic attitudes, in general.

Differences in Venezuela can be found regarding the variables that have effect on solid democratic support. As stated previously, those who give worse evaluations of Chávez have a higher probability of showing solid democratic support. In the same line we find those who evaluate the country's economy the worse and the wealthier citizens, who are, most likely, Chávez's opposers. What is interesting is to see that a variable like the evaluation of the personal economy has no significant effect (in any of the models, as a matter of fact). In conclusion, those in opposition to Chávez appear to possess more democratic attitudes than the president's supporters. As to the positive effect of political knowledge (also found in Chile), it is not surprising to find that those most knowledgeable in politics have a stronger tendency to support democracy's core principles and institutions (Carlin & Singer, 2011).

Only few relevant explanations for solid democratic support in Chile are found. The only variables that show significant coefficients are political knowledge,

left-right self-placement and evaluation of the country's economy. In line to what was previously proposed, left-wingers have a higher tendency of showing solid democratic attitudes: it is seen that in Chile those citizens who locate themselves towards the left side of the ideological scale do not only have higher esteem for democracy as an ideal, but also higher support for the specific principles of democracy. Finally, it is seen that good evaluations of the country's economy are positively related to this type of support as well.

However, it is worth looking at recent political events, like the Chilean protests of 2019-2020 and the 2021 elections. The profile of most of the protesters, being young people sympathetic to the left, would give as a preliminary conclusion that their actions should be grounded in political attitudes with considerable levels of ideal and solid support for democracy. Nevertheless, there is another factor to consider: they also tended to be dissatisfied with the economic system, to which we attribute a negative effect on both types of support. It would appear that this discontent was building for years, and the result was an abysmal disconnect between the political elite and the citizenry (Luna, 2020). Despite systematically pursuing strategies that could be considered formal, the government of Piñera was unable to act in accordance with the increasingly pressing circumstances of inequality and insecurity in several areas of the country. For these reasons, it would seem coherent to argue that the activities that emerged from the demonstrations are the union of two perspectives that clashed with each other. The violent acts, contrary to the legitimate forms of protest in a democracy, and the demands aimed at detaching the regime from any remaining characteristics of the Pinochet dictatorship, make evident the conformation of a political culture composed of ideas with contrary effects on democratic support, demonstrating once again its relevance and complexity.

As for the 2021 electoral results in Chile, the inclination towards non-traditional parties seems to indicate that although the country's authoritarian past is still relevant, the most striking options for voters no longer follow this cleavage. While one of the main demands was constitutional change –which was approved by a large majority in a referendum in 2020– so was general dissatisfaction with the elites. In addition, concerns about political inequality and the lack of social mobility benefited candidates who politicized this discourse. This demonstrates the permanent relevance of economic perceptions in both ideal and solid democratic support: the hegemonic parties since the return to democracy focused their success on a narrative of development, which, when it lost credibility, led to a political, representative and systemic crisis. The result was the beginning of a cleavage that pitted the elites against the citizenry, although the latter was characterized by its heterogeneity. This heterogeneity resulted in the fact that, once the traditional parties lost ground, the ballot was inclined towards new faces, concentrating on the support for the current president Gabriel Boric and his opponent in the

second round, José Antonio Kast; but also in a great absenteeism: more than half of the population did not turn out to vote.

In summary, in both Chile and Venezuela the variables that focus on attitudes towards the political system and its outputs are the ones that seem to have relationships to citizens' support for democracy. While showing different patterns in the two countries, political knowledge, ideology, and evaluation of the president and of the country's economy demonstrate statistical significance, be it for support for the ideal of democracy or solid democratic support. Few other variables seem to play a role in influencing support for democracy, as modernization and demographic variables do not have any significant relationship to solid support, except for wealth in Venezuela, while only age in Chile and education in Venezuela have significant coefficients in the models of support for the ideal of democracy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Almost fifty years after the "third wave of democratization" (Huntington, 1991) began, democracy is far from being consolidated in many nations throughout the world. The severe problems numerous countries in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, and Asia are currently facing are examples of why it is still important today to understand the conditions that lead to stronger democratic cultures. This study offers useful insights that can contribute to a better comprehension of citizen support for democratic rule.

Conclusions at various levels are obtained. First, the most evident: assessing support for democracy through the use of an only indicator is a limited approach. As Mishler and Rose (2001) have argued, asking citizens about support for an abstract concept such as democracy will lead to unclear conclusions, as people have different things in mind when thinking about this issue. It is unwise to perform comparative analyses of support for democracy by using only one indicator, as it is necessary to probe deeper into the specific meanings democratic support holds for different citizens to obtain any useful substantive insights on the concept. Multidimensional perspectives for the analysis of citizens' attitudes towards democratic rule will certainly yield more informative conclusions than unidimensional analyses.

Second, the specific meaning that support for democracy adopts can vary depending on the political context. In some places, ideology will play a stronger role, in others, economic evaluations, and so on. In order to understand support for democracy in a particular context, it is necessary to take into account the political history of the country, and the grounds upon which the regime debate has been constructed on. It was seen, for example, that evaluations of the economy had a positive relationship to democratic support in Chile, while having a negative relationship in Venezuela. Performing aggregated region-wide analyses of democratic

support can very likely obscure important substantive findings such as this. Supporting democracy in one place may mean something very different than in another, and only by considering the specificities of the particular context can one achieve a clear understanding of the issue.

Very low levels of solid democratic support were found in both countries. Is this something to be alarmed about? Questions concerning what is in fact important for a democratic regime can be raised. It has been repeatedly argued in the literature that support for democracy is a healthy characteristic for a democratic regime, if not essential to its survival. What, however, should we take as important for the strengthening of democratic cultures: the very high levels found of support for the ideal of democracy, or the much lower levels found of solid support? It is not implausible to hypothesize that a measure of solid support for democracy, such as the one proposed here, could be a stronger indicator of democratic stability than traditional measures of support for the ideal of democracy.

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APPENDIX I. DETAILS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE “SOLID DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT” INDICATOR

Step 1. Recoding of the original questions into binary variables of support for each democratic attribute.

a) ‘Contestation’ dimension

1) Freedom of organization: “To what extent do you approve or disapprove of a law prohibiting the meetings of any group that criticizes (the country’s) political system?” (10-point scale: 1 = strongly disapprove → 10 = strongly approve) scores 1 → 4 = “1” (support); scores 5 → 10 = “0” (non-support)

2) Freedom of press: “To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the government censoring any media that criticized it?” (10-point scale: 1 = strongly disapprove → 10 = strongly approve) scores 1 → 4 = “1” (support); scores 5 → 10 = “0” (non-support)

3) Freedom of opposition: “Taking into account the current situation of (the country), I would like you to tell me with which of the following statements do you agree with more? (a) It is necessary for the progress of the country that our presidents limit the voice and vote of the opposition parties, or (b) Our presidents have to permit that the opposition parties enjoy all the liberty to oppose to the president’s policies with their voice and vote, even if the opposition parties delay the progress of the country”.

Answer ‘b’ = “1” (support); answer ‘a’ = “0” (non-support)

b) ‘Inclusiveness’ dimension

1) Universal right to vote: “There are people who speak negatively of (the country’s) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the form of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people’s right to vote?” (10-point scale: 1 = strongly disapprove → 10 = strongly approve) scores 7 → 10 = “1” (support); scores 1 → 6 = “0” (non-support)

2) Universal right to run for public office: “There are people who speak negatively of (the country’s) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the form of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to seek public office?” (10-point scale: 1 = strongly disapprove → 10 = strongly approve) scores 7 → 10 = “1” (support); scores 1 → 6 = “0” (non-support)

c) 'Checks and balances' dimension

1) Respect for legislative: "Do you think that sometimes there can be sufficient grounds for the president to close down the Congress or do you think there can never be a sufficient reason to do so?" (yes / no). Answer 'no' = "1" (support); answer 'yes' = "0" (non-support)

2) Respect for judiciary: "Do you think that sometimes there can be sufficient grounds to dissolve the Supreme Court of Justice, or do you think that there can never be sufficient grounds to do so?" (yes / no). Answer 'no' = "1" (support); answer 'yes' = "0" (non-support)

Step 2. Aggregation of all the binary variables

All of the binary variables created in the first step were added together to create an aggregated variable of support for democracy's essential attributes, with scores ranging from zero to seven.

Step 3. Recoding of the aggregated variable into the 'solid democratic support' indicator.

The aggregated variable constructed in step two was recoded in the following way: **score 7 = "1" ('solid democratic support');** scores 0 -> 6 = "0" (non-support).

APPENDIX II. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES USED IN THE REGRESSION MODELS: ORIGINAL QUESTIONS, SCALES, RECODINGS

Age:

Original question: "What is your age in years?"

Gender (female):

Original question: "Sex (note down; do not ask): (1) Male (2) Female"
(Recoded as: Female = 1; Male = 0).

Education (years):

Original question: "What was the last year of education you passed?"
____ Year _____ (primary, secondary, university) = _____ total
number of years [Use the table below for the code]

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SAME SAME... BUT DIFFERENT?

(for CHILE)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
None	0							
Primary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Secondary	9	10	11	12				
University	13	14	15	16	17			
Superior (not University) / Technical	11	12	13					
DK / NA	88							

(for VENEZUELA)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
None	0					
Primary	1	2	3	4	5	6
Secondary ("basic")	7	8	9			
Secondary ("diversified")	10	11				
Superior (not University) / Technical	12	13	14	15		
University	12	13	14	15	16	17+
DK / NA	88					

Religion (catholic):

Original question: "What is your religion? [Don't read options] (1) Catholic (2) Non-Catholic Christian (including the Jehovah Witnesses) (3) Other non-Christian (4) Evangelical (5) None (8) doesn't know or doesn't want to say"

Recorded as: Catholic = 1; All others = 0.

Residence (urban):

Original question: "Code as 1. Urban 2. Rural"

Recorded as: Urban = 1; Rural = 0.

Wealth (quintiles):

The variable of "wealth (quintiles)" was developed based on an index of relative wealth, constructed by using indicators of ownership of the following assets:

Television set, refrigerator, cellular telephone, vehicle(s), washing machine, microwave oven, motorcycle, drinking water indoors, indoor bathroom, computer. To estimate weights of the different assets for the index of relative wealth, principal components analysis was used. For details on the procedure refer to Filmer & Pritchett (2001), Ghalib (2011) and Vyas & Kumaranayake (2006).

Political interest:

Original question: "How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none? 1) A lot 2) Some 3) Little 4) None 8) DK"

Recorded as: None = 1; Little = 2; Some = 3; A lot = 4.

Political knowledge:

Additive index constructed using correct answers to the following questions:

1. "What is the name of the current president of the United States?"
2. "What is the name of the President of Congress in (country)?"
3. "How many provinces does (country) have"
4. "How long is the presidential term in (country)?"
5. "What is the name of the president of Brazil?"

Left-right self-placement:

Original question: "On this sheet there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. Today, when we speak of political tendencies, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political tendency, where would you place yourself on this scale? Indicate the box that comes closest to your own position (1=Left; 10=Right).

Evaluation of president:

Original question: "Speaking in general of the incumbent government/administration, would you say that the work being done by President (NAME CURRENT PRESIDENT) is: [Read the options] (1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad (8) DK/NA".

Recorded as: Very bad = 1; Bad = 2; Neither good nor bad = 3; Good = 4; Very good = 5.

**Voted for losing candidate:
(for Chile)**

Original question 1: "For which candidate did you vote for President in the first round of the last presidential elections? [DON'T READ THE LIST] 0. No one (voted but left ballot blank or annulled their vote); 1. Michelle Bachellet; 2. Sebastián Piñera; 3. Joaquín Lavín; 4. Tomás Hirsch; 77. Other; 88. DK/NA; 99. Did not vote. Original question 2: "For which candidate did you vote for President in the second round of the last presidential elections? [DON'T READ THE LIST] 0. No one (voted but left ballot blank or annulled their vote) 1. Michelle Bachellet; 2. Sebastián Piñera; 88. DK/NA; 99. Did not vote.

Recorded as: Loser = 1 (voted for a losing candidate on the first round (codes '2', '3', '4' or '77')); all others = 0.

(for Venezuela)

Original question: "For which candidate did you vote for President in the last presidential elections? 0. No one (voted but left ballot blank or annulled their vote) 1. Hugo Chávez; 2. Manuel Rosales; 77. Other; 88. DK/NA; 99. Did not vote.

Recoded as: Loser = 1 (voted for a losing candidate (codes '2' or '77')); all others = 0.

Evaluation of country's economy:

Original question: "How would you describe the country's economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad or very bad? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad (8) Doesn't know".

Recoded as: Very bad = 1; Bad = 2; Neither good nor bad = 3; Good = 4; Very good = 5.

Evaluation of personal economy:

Original question: How would describe your economic situation overall? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad or very bad? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad (8) Doesn't know".

Recoded as: Very bad = 1; Bad = 2; Neither good nor bad = 3; Good = 4; Very good = 5.