The Cultural and Institutional Dynamics of Global Democratization
A Synthesis of Mass Experience and Congruence Theory

Doh Chull Shin
and
Rollin F. Tusalem

Abstract

This essay offers a comprehensive account of the current wave of global democratization by examining the democratic changes that have taken place in both the political institutions and mass citizenries of new democracies in Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and New Europe. After reviewing previous research findings on the breadth and depth of institutional and cultural democratization, the essay analyzes their relationships with factual data and public opinion surveys. Analyses of four regional barometer surveys reveal that new democracies in three of the four regions confront the problem of low popular demand for democracy. On the basis of this finding, the essay concludes that the embrace of democracy as “the only game in town” is a first step, not a last step, toward the democratization of mass citizenries.

In newly democratic or democratizing countries, where peoples are just learning the arts of self-government, the question of citizen competence possesses an obvious urgency.


Genuine democracy is not simply a machine that, once set up, will function effectively by itself. It depends on the people.

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy

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We live in a monumental era for the advancement of democracy. Invented so long ago in ancient Greece, democracy has spread around the globe for the first time ever during the past three decades. In all regions of the globe, democracy has emerged as the political system most preferred by the mass citizenry.\textsuperscript{1} Even economically poor and culturally traditional societies, once viewed as inhospitable to democratic development, now demand that free elections and other democratic institutions supplant undemocratic or personal forms of rule.\textsuperscript{2} Growing demands from ordinary citizens along with increased pressures and inducements from international communities have made democratization a truly global phenomenon.\textsuperscript{3}

This phenomenon has given scholars and policymakers new insights into what constitutes a functional democracy. A political system can become institutionally democratic with the installation of competitive elections and multiple political parties. These institutions alone, however, do not make a fully functioning democratic political system. As Rose and his associates aptly point out, these institutions constitute nothing more than the “hardware” of representative democracy.\textsuperscript{4} To operate the institutional hardware, a democratic political system requires the “software” that is congruent with the various hardware components.\textsuperscript{5} Both the scholarly community and policy circles widely recognize that what ordinary citizens think about democracy and its institutions is a key component of such software. Many experts, therefore, regard the mass citizenry’s unconditional embrace of democracy as “the only game in town” as the hallmark of democratic consolidation.\textsuperscript{6}

How do the hardware and software of democracy interact with each other in emerging democracies? To address this question, this essay examines the breadth and depth of cultural and institutional democratization and their interactions from the perspectives of ordinary citizens. To this end, the essay reviews previous studies of cultural and institutional democratization and

\textsuperscript{2} Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, “How Freedom is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy,” www.freedomhouse.org (2006).
synthesizes key findings of these studies. In addition, it reanalyzes factual and public opinion data and unravels the interaction between the two processes of democratization. Key sources are Freedom House and four regional barometer projects monitoring democratization in Africa, East Asia, Latin America, and New Europe. Our analysis highlights regional differences in institutional and cultural dynamics by comparing citizens’ reactions to democratic change across these regions.

First, this essay explicates the notion of democratization and clarifies a number of key conceptual issues. Next, it examines the evolution of the current wave of global democratization, which Huntington popularized as the third wave. Thirdly, it examines how citizen involvement in democratic regime change has affected the survival and growth of new democracies. Next, comes the large part of the essay, which compares, interregionally, the breadth, strength, and depth of popular commitment to democracy by considering both prodemocratic and antiauthoritarian orientations among mass citizenries. Finally, the essay compares the levels of popular demand for and institutional supplies of democracy, and explores the problems of and prospects for the democratic consolidation of countries currently in transition.

The Notion of Democratization

What constitutes democratization? The existing literature on third-wave democracies generally agrees that democratization is a highly complex transformation in which an authoritarian political system becomes a democracy and a limited democracy grows into a full democracy.

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phenomenon, therefore, has multiple dimensions as democracy competes with its alternatives. The process of democratization has many stages with several analytically distinct steps that are empirically overlapping. The process also has multidirections, because one step of democratic development does not necessarily lead to a particular higher stage.

In the logic of causal sequence, the stages of democratization may run from the decay and disintegration of an old authoritarian regime and the emergence of a new democratic system, through the consolidation of that democratic regime, to its maturity. In reality, however, the process of democratization has often failed to advance sequentially from the first to the last stage. As Puddington and Piano and Marshall and Gurr have documented, some new democracies disappear soon after they emerge, while others erode as much as they consolidate. As a result, many new democracies remain less than fully democratic, even decades after the establishment of democratic institutions. For this reason, they are variously described as “electoral,” “incomplete,” “illiberal,” “defective,” “broken-back,” or “delegative” democracies or the mixed or hybrid regimes of “competitive authoritarianism,” “feckless pluralism,” or “dominant power politics.”

The same literature views democratization as a multifaceted phenomenon. Institutionally, it involves a transition from authoritarian rule to a political system that allows ordinary citizens to participate on a regular basis and compete in the election of political leaders. Substantively, it involves a process in which electoral and other institutions consolidate and become increasingly responsive to the preferences of the citizenry. Culturally, it is a process in which ordinary citizens dissociate themselves from the values and practices of authoritarian politics and embrace democracy as “the only game in town.”

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As Dahl, Karl, and Linz and Stepan note, the process of democratizing a political system involves much more than the installation of representative institutions and promulgation of a democratic constitution.

Democratization is a multilevel phenomenon; on one level, the transformation must take place in individual citizens, and, on another level, it must take place in the political regime that rules them. At the regime level, democratization refers to the extent to which authoritarian structures and procedures transform into democratic ones, and, in the process, become responsive and accountable to the preferences of the mass citizenry. At the citizenry level, the extent to which average citizens detach themselves from the virtues of authoritarianism and become convinced of democracy’s superiority constitutes democratic change.

Finally, we shall view democratization as a dynamic process of ongoing interactions between individual citizens and institutions of their democratic regime. Congruence theory suggests that the more the current institutional supply of democracy exceeds what citizens demand, the less likely democracy will expand. Conversely, the more cultural demand for democracy exceeds what institutions supply, the more likely democracy will advance. When the institutional supply meets cultural demand, further democratization is unlikely.

Institutional Democratization

Scholars dubbed the surge in democracy that occurred over the last three decades of the twentieth century the “third wave” of democratization. Powerful forces of the democracy movement spread from one region to another like a rushing wave. They emerged in Southern Europe and have spread, in sequence, to other regions around the globe.

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**Diffusion**

In the mid-1970s, the third wave of democratization first broke out in Portugal and Spain, where right-wing dictatorships had held power for decades; democratic transition occurred in Greece in 1974.\(^{21}\) From 1979 to 1985, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay successively underwent democratic transition from military rule. In Chile, democratic transition proceeded more slowly and emerged in 1989 after years of peaceful civic resistance movements against authoritarian rule. In June 2000, Vincente Fox’s presidential victory in Mexico, the most populous Spanish speaking country in the world, marked the end of seven decades of single-party rule and a new era of democracy in the region.\(^{22}\)

In the mid-1980s, when most military dictatorships in Latin America were overthrown, the third wave of democratization reached the shores of East Asia.\(^{23}\) It first toppled the civilian dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in February 1986; massive “people power” movements forced him to flee to Hawaii. Nearly three decades of military rule ended, and, in December 1987, the direct popular election of a president fully restored civilian rule in South Korea. In the same year, after nearly four decades of one-party dictatorship, Taiwan began to gradually democratize. It lifted martial law and established institutional democracy by holding its first direct presidential election in 1996. In 1990, Mongolia, one of the poorest and remotest countries in the world, abandoned its sixty-year-old communist one-party system and held competitive multiparty elections to choose a president. And in 1992, Thailand reemerged as a democracy when it rid itself of military rule. During this time, three very poor countries in Asia—Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan—became democracies.

By the end of the 1980s, the electoral and other democratic institutions were operative in all or much of three regions of the world—Southern Europe, Latin America, and Asia. The other three regions of Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East still remained resistant to the winds of democratization. In Eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of one-party communist dictatorships and the rapid transitions to democratic rule based on competitive multiparty systems followed. In less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, competitive and free elections took place to install democratic political systems in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania,

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\(^{21}\) The existing literature is not in agreement over the inception of the third-wave democratization. According to Inglehart and Welzel (Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy, 177) and Marshall and Gurr (“Peace and Conflict,” 16), a global shift from autocratic regimes to democracy began in the late 1980s, not in the mid-1970s as Huntington postulated.

\(^{22}\) Frances Hagopian and Scott Mainwaring, eds., The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks (London: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

and Slovakia. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 created fifteen states in the Baltic region and Central Asia. Seven of them emerged as democracies.  

In the early 1990s, when the long history of communist dictatorships was ending in Eastern Europe, the third wave of democratization began to roll in Africa, a vast region where only three countries were known as democratic states. In February 1990, the apartheid regime of South Africa released Nelson Mandela from prison and launched the slow process of ending racial oligarchy in response to years of economic sanctions from the democratic world. The March 1991 election in Benin marked the first example of peaceful transition of power in mainland Africa. In 1994, South Africa adopted one of the most democratic constitutions in the world and held competitive elections to create the most vigorous democracy in the region. In ensuing years, other countries allowed opposition forces to organize and compete in the electoral process under intense pressures from international aid agencies. By the standards of Western democracies, electoral competitions in many countries were highly limited. Nonetheless, by 2001, fourteen countries had met the minimum conditions of democracy.

By the end of the last millennium, the Middle East was the only region hardly touched by the global wave of democratization. After the collapse of consociational democracy in Lebanon in 1975, Israel remained the sole democracy in the region. Although contested legislative elections occasionally were held in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Morocco during the past decade, the heads of the governments in these and other Middle Eastern countries remained unelected until early 2005. On January 9, 2005, Mahmoud Abbas was elected as the president of the Palestinian Authority, having defeated five other candidates. Two months later, millions of Lebanese people took to the streets to protest against Syria’s military presence in their country in what became known as “the Cedar Revolution.” Their protests drove the occupying Syrian troops out of Lebanon and disbanded the pro-Syrian government. In September 2005, a multicandidate presidential election was held in Egypt for the first time in the country’s history. These developments indicate that, even in the Middle East, the region known as the last bastion of autocratic rule, systemic changes have occurred that could welcome, strengthen, or encourage further political reforms toward gradual democratization.


In policy circles, democracy is too often equated with the holding of free and competitive multiparty elections. The electoral conception of democracy, however, does not provide a full account of the process that transforms age-old authoritarian institutions into democratically functioning ones. This conception provides only a minimalist account because it deals merely with the process of elections and overlooks additional important institutions of democracy. It is formalistic or superficial because it fails to consider how democratically or undemocratically these institutions actually perform. It also provides a static account of institutional democratization because it ignores interactions between various democratic institutions between each round of elections.

To overcome these limitations of the formal and minimalist conceptions of electoral democracy, scholars have proposed a number of alternative conceptions, using terms such as “complete democracy,” “liberal democracy,” and “full democracy.” All such alternative notions extend beyond the elements of electoral democracy to matters of accountability, constitutionalism, pluralism, and the separation of powers. Electoral democracy advances to liberal democracy when the law constrains political authority, while protecting individual citizens so that they can exercise political rights and civil liberties. Incomplete democracy becomes complete when the institutions of elections, accountability, civil society, and the rule of law all have a firm hold.

Freedom House annually monitors the electoral and liberal domains of institutional democratization. The 2005 Freedom House survey rated 119 of 192 independent countries (62 percent) as electoral democracies, because their last major national elections met the international standard for being free, fair, competitive, regular, and open to all segments of the mass citizenry, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. However, not all these electoral democracies are liberal countries (free countries), because some have elected leaders with serious problems regarding the rule of law, corruption, and human rights. Of the 119 electoral democracies, 89 (75 percent) are rated as free, liberal democracies and 30 (25 percent) as partly free, illiberal democracies. Note that liberal democracies outnumber illiberal democracies by nearly three to one. Nonetheless, liberal democracies govern fewer than

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half (46 percent) the population of independent states in today’s world, after more than three decades of rapid democratization.

According to the data compiled by Freedom House in 2006, twenty of forty-eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa meet the minimum criteria of democracy, and eleven of these twenty countries meet the definition of liberal democracy. Of thirty-nine countries in East Asia and the Pacific, six are electoral democracies and seventeen are liberal democracies. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, five of twenty-seven countries are electoral democracies and twelve are liberal democracies. In Western and Central Europe, twenty-four of twenty-five countries are liberal democracies; the only country rated as an electoral democracy is Turkey. In America and the Caribbean, nine of thirty-five countries are electoral democracies and twenty-four are liberal democracies. Of eighteen countries in North Africa and the Middle East, only one country—Israel—is a liberal democracy.

To characterize democratization in regional terms, Western and Central Europe rank first with 100 percent of countries earning a rating of at least an electoral democracy, followed by America and the Caribbean (94 percent), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (63 percent), East Asia and the Pacific (59 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (48 percent), and North Africa and the Middle

Figure 1. Regional Differences in Democratization


31 Freedom House annually rates every country on a 7-point scale that measures the extent to which the mass citizenry is guaranteed political rights and civil liberties. The mean score of 2.5 or lower on the 7-point scale is considered indicative of being advanced to liberal democracy.
East (6 percent). In achieving liberal democracies, Western and Central Europe ranks, once again, first, with 96 percent and America and the Caribbean is a distant second with 69 percent. They are followed by Eastern Europe and Central Asia with 48 percent and East Asia and the Pacific with 41 percent. At the bottom of regional ranking are sub-Saharan Africa (23 percent) and the Middle East and North Africa (6 percent).

**Trends**

Democracy, even in its minimal, electoral form, was highly unpopular among world governments when the third wave of democratization began three decades ago. A count by Freedom House in 2005 revealed only 41 democracies among 150 independent states in 1974. Democracies, heavily concentrated in the regions of Western Europe and North America, accounted for 27 percent of the states. In 2005, 122 of 192 independent countries (64 percent) were democracies.

Notably, the percentage of democratic states more than doubled from 27 percent to 62 percent during the three decades of the third wave. Most

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**Figure 2. Trends in Democratization**

![Trends in Democratization](image)

advances in democratization came during the first two decades (1975-1995), when the percentage of democratic states rose sharply from 27 to 61 percent. During the last ten years, the percentage changed only slightly from 61 to 64 percent. During the same period, however, the percentage of liberal democratic states has risen modestly from 40 to 46 percent. These findings suggest that the first two decades of the third wave were, by and large, the period of electoral democratization, and the last decade was a period of advancement to liberal democratization.

A recent analysis of the Polity IV data by Marshall and Gurr\(^\text{32}\) confirms Freedom House’s finding that democracy has expanded more in a single generation than it had since its invention in Greece more than two and a half millenniums ago.\(^\text{33}\) Unlike the data compiled by Freedom House, the Polity data deal with the extent of both democracy and autocracy in the governance of independent states. According to that analysis, a dramatic global shift from autocratic regimes to democracy began by the late 1980s and continued through the 1990s. By 1977, there were thirty-five democracies, sixteen mixed regimes, and eighty-nine autocracies. In early 2005, there were eighty-eight democracies, forty-four mixed regimes, and only twenty-nine autocracies. Over the last two and a half decades, the number of democracies has more than doubled, while autocracies have dwindled to one-third their number. Evidently, we live in the historically unprecedented period of global shifts toward democracy.

**Ordinary Citizens as Democratizers**

Transitions from authoritarian rule have not always brought about democracies. According to the Polity IV data, as many as twenty-one countries experienced a return to authoritarianism between 1977 and 2003.\(^\text{34}\) Why have some transitions from autocratic rule reverted to nondemocracies while others have remained democracies? Why have some new democracies turned into liberal democracies while others have not? Has the participation of the mass citizenry in the democratization process shaped the dynamics and trajectories of the process? Previously, answers to these questions have been hard to find because, although there is a large body of empirical literature examining the role of civil society in democratic transitions,\(^\text{35}\) very little of this literature

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\(^\text{34}\) These countries are: Armenia, Belarus, Dominican Republic, Fuji, Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, and Zambia.

\(^\text{35}\) Muthia Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Francis Fukuyama, “The
has examined the role that civil society plays in advancing electoral or formal democracies into liberal democracies.\textsuperscript{36} A recent study by Freedom House was the first systematic research endeavor to link the success or failure of liberal democratization to nonviolent civic activism.\textsuperscript{37}

To determine the importance of citizens’ involvement in democratic reform, this Freedom House study analyzed the political dynamics of sixty-seven countries that had undergone transitions from authoritarian rule over the last three decades. Specifically, it analyzed the relationships between the mode of civic involvement in democratic regime change and the post-transition state of freedom (i.e., the extent of political rights and civil liberties citizens of these transition countries experienced in 2005, many years after the democratic transition).

The analysis reveals that transitions from authoritarian rule do not always lead to greater freedom. Of the sixty-seven countries categorized, 52 percent are now Free, while 34 percent are Partly Free and 14 percent are Not Free. In 91 percent of the countries that became Free, their transitions were driven by civic forces alone, or in combination with power holders. The corresponding figures for the groups of Partly Free and Not Free countries are, respectively, 60 percent and 44 percent. While 64 percent of transitions driven by civic forces became Free, only 14 percent of transitions driven solely by ruling elites became Free. The incidence of becoming Free post-transition was five times higher for the former than the latter.

To examine the impact of civic activism on liberal democratization, we reanalyzed the same data compiled by the Freedom House staff. Among the fifty countries whose transitions were driven by nonviolent civic forces, 64 percent have turned into liberal democracies and 18 percent into nondemocracies. Among the fourteen countries where ruling elites drove the transition from authoritarian rule, only 4 percent have become liberal democracies and 50 percent have returned to nondemocracies. When the transitions were driven by strong civic coalitions, not just civic coalitions, 75 percent of them became liberal democracies and only 6 percent emerged as nondemocracies. When the transitions to democracy were made without the active and peaceful involvement of civic coalitions, 59 percent of them turned into nondemocracies and 18 percent into liberal democracies (see figure 3).

\begin{itemize}
\item Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, “How Freedom is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy,” www.freedomhouse.org (2006).
\end{itemize}
To put it differently, the likelihood that a transition from authoritarian rule would lead to liberal democracy was over four times higher for transitions supported by strong and nonviolent civic coalitions than for those unsupported by any civic organizations at all. Conversely, the incidence of change to nondemocracy was nearly ten times higher for the latter than the former. These findings suggest that the success or failure of liberal democratization can depend largely on the role the mass citizenry plays during the transition. The more vigorous, cohesive, and peaceful civil society is, the greater the potential that progress can be made toward full democracy; the less vigorous and cohesive and more violent civil society is, the greater the potential for reversal to nondemocratic rule.

Cultural Democratization

Clearly, in the current wave of global democratization, civil society does sustain change toward full democracy. Active and cohesive civil society forces do successfully transform authoritarian regimes into electoral democracies, and electoral democracies into liberal democracies. Absent these forces, many democratizing countries remain mixed regimes or revert to nondemocratic rule. An important question, then, is why do some of these countries fail to develop a civil society that advances democratization on a continuing basis? In the literature on third-wave democracies, the answer consistently lies in the country’s political culture.38
Support for Democracy

Political culture refers to a variety of political attitudes, beliefs, and values, such as efficacy, tolerance, and trust. These attitudes, beliefs, and values all affect citizens’ conceptions of and involvement in civic and political life. Yet, one is clearly more fundamental than the rest: the attitude that democracy is more preferable than any of its alternatives.\(^{39}\)

There are several specific reasons why democratization can advance when ordinary citizens embrace democracy as “the only game in town.” Democracy, unlike other forms of government, is government by demos (the people) and, thus, cannot be foisted upon an unwilling people for any extended period of time; nor can it be installed by military intervention from abroad. As government by the people, democracy depends principally on their support for its survival and effective performance.\(^{40}\) Only those committed to democracy as the best form of government are likely to reject antidemocratic movements to overthrow the new democratic regime, especially during a serious crisis.\(^{41}\) Moreover, when citizens confer legitimacy on a newly installed democratic regime, it can govern, make decisions, and commit resources without resort to coercion. Therefore, there is a growing consensus in the literature on third-wave democracies that democratization is incomplete until an overwhelming majority of the mass citizenry offers unqualified and unconditional support for democracy.\(^{42}\)

Conceptualization

What constitutes support for democracy? In the literature on democratic political culture, there is a general agreement that popular support for democracy, especially in new democracies, is a highly complex and dynamic


phenomenon with multiple dimensions and layers. Democratic support is a multilayered or multileveled phenomenon because citizens simultaneously comprehend democracy as both an ideal political system and a political system-in-practice. It is a multidimensional phenomenon because it involves the acceptance of democratic decisionmaking as well as the rejection of democracy’s alternatives.

To ordinary citizens who have lived most of their lives under authoritarian rule, democracy, at one level, represents the political ideals or values to which they aspire. At another level, democracy refers to a political regime-in-practice and the actual workings of its institutions, which govern their daily lives. Popular support for democracy, therefore, needs to be differentiated into two broad categories: normative and practical. The normative or idealist level is concerned with democracy-in-principle as an abstract ideal. The practical or realist level is concerned with the various aspects of democracy-in-practice, including regime structure, political institutions, and political processes.

At the first level, support for democracy refers largely to a psychologically loose attachment that citizens have to the positive symbols of democracy. At the second level, democratic support refers to favorable evaluations of the structure and behavior of the existing regime. As empirical research has recently revealed, there is a significant gulf between these two levels of democratic support. To offer a comprehensive and balanced account of democratic support, therefore, we must consider both levels of support, normative and practical.

Moreover, democratic support, especially among citizens of new democracies, involves more than favorable orientations toward democratic ideals and practices. Citizens with little experience and limited sophistication about democratic politics may be uncertain whether democracy or dictatorship offers satisfying solutions to the many problems facing their societies. Under such uncertainty, citizens who are democratic novices often embrace both democratic and authoritarian political propensities concurrently.


Consequently, the acceptance of democracy does not necessarily cause rejection of authoritarianism or vice versa.

Measurement

For two decades, many scholars and research institutes have conducted public opinion surveys in democratizing countries. Gallup-International Voice of the People Project, the Pew Global Attitudes Project, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Democracy and Citizenship, the World Values Survey, and many other national and international surveys have monitored and sought to unravel the dynamics of citizen reactions to democratic change. They have compared the patterns and sources of those reactions cross-nationally, cross-regionally, and even globally.48

Among the most systematic endeavors to unravel the dynamics of mass reactions to democratic change are four regional democracy barometers: the East Asia Barometer, the New Europe Barometer, the Latinobarometer, and the Afrobarometer. These barometer surveys ask a variety of structured and unstructured questions to ascertain—covertly and overtly—how the citizens of democratizing countries conceive, perceive, and evaluate democracy as a political system.49 We selected a subset of items from their latest surveys, described below, to compare the levels and patterns of citizen support for democracy across East Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Africa.50


Normative Support: Democracy as an Ideal Political System
Numerous survey-based studies document that democracy as an ideal political system has achieved overwhelming mass approval throughout the world and become “virtually the only political model with global appeal.” In the last two waves of the World Values Surveys, for example, “a clear majority of the population in virtually every society endorses a democratic political system.” Even in the Islamic Middle East, Confucian East Asia, and the former Soviet Union, large majorities are favorably oriented to democracy-in-principle. According to the 2005 Voice of the People surveys conducted in sixty-five countries by Gallup-International between May and July 2005, “8 out of 10 global citizens believe that in spite of its limitations, democracy is the best form of government, almost 10 percent more than in 2004.” Undoubtedly, the ideals of democracy attract an ever-increasing number of ordinary citizens.

Yet, knowing that ordinary citizens view democracy-in-principle favorably does not tell us just how democratic they would like their own political system to be. To address this never previously studied question, the East Asia and New European Barometers asked respondents to express their desire on a 0-point scale for which 1 means complete dictatorship and 10 means complete democracy. Scores of 6 and above on this scale indicate general support for democracy as a normative phenomenon, and scores of 9 and 10 indicate full support for it. On this scale, the five East Asian and the thirteen New European countries average, respectively, 8.3 and 8.0, scores that indicate that, although the citizens generally support democracy, they do not want to live in a complete or nearly complete democracy.

50 The second round of the Afrobarometer surveys was conducted in sixteen countries between May 2002 and November 2003. The first wave of the East Asia Barometer surveys was conducted in five countries from May 2001 through December 2002. The 2004 annual Latinobarometer surveys were conducted in eighteen countries between May and June of the year. The seventh New Europe Barometer surveys were conducted in thirteen countries from October 2004 to February 2005. Further information about these surveys is available from their Web sites: www.afrobarometer.org; www.eastasiabarometer.org; www.latinobarometro.org; and www.cspp.abdn.ac.uk.

51 Inglehart, “How Solid Is Mass Support Democracy – And How Can We Measure It?”

52 Inglehart and Welzel, Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence, 264.


Table 1. Orientations toward Democracy and Its Alternatives

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<td>posi.</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>(mean)</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Venezuela (mean)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
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Sources: Afrobarometer II; East Asia Barometer I; Latinobarometer 2004; and New Europe Barometer VII.

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages of full supporters for democracy.

Keys: Auth. Dem. Sup.: authentic democratic support
Dem. Exp.: democratic experience
cong.: congruence
negi.: negative incongruence
posi.: positive incongruence

For each of the East Asian and New European countries, table 1 reports percentages expressing general and full support for democracy as an ideal political system. In all East Asian and New European countries, majorities up to 97 percent do generally support democracy as an ideal system (see figure 4). Full supporters, however, constitute majorities in three of five East Asian countries and six of thirteen New European countries. Only in one country in each region—Thailand in East Asia and Hungary in Europe—did more than two-thirds of the population fully support democracy-in-principle. In most countries in both regions, large majorities have yet to become fully attached to democracy, even as a normative phenomenon. As Inglehart points out, many citizens seem only to give “lip service to democracy.”

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Practical Support: Democracy as a Political System-in-Practice

To what extent do the mass publics in new democracies endorse democracy as the best form of government in their country? To date, numerous public opinion surveys have attempted to measure public support for democracy-in-practice by tapping either citizen satisfaction with the performance of the existing regime or the perceptions of its relative preferability to undemocratic alternatives. Because this satisfaction approach is based on the dubious assumption that all citizens recognize the current regime as a democracy, it does not necessarily tap support for democracy-in-practice. The professed preferences for democracy over its alternatives are generally considered a more valid measure of practical democratic support. Using this to measure the legitimacy of democracy, the

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Mishler and Rose, “Political Support for Incomplete Democracies,” 306.
levels of practical democratic support in consolidated democracies—including Spain and other Western European countries—varied between 70 percent and 92 percent in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.\textsuperscript{56}

To measure support for democracy-in-practice, all four regional barometers asked: “With which of the following statements do you agree most? (1) Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government; (2) Under certain situations, a dictatorship is preferable; and (3) For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic government or non-democratic government.” The respondents who rate democracy as always preferable to its undemocratic alternatives are deemed to endorse its legitimacy as democracy-in-practice.\textsuperscript{57}

Table 1 shows that majorities or near majorities of the adult population in all sixteen African countries embrace democracy as always preferable to its alternatives in their country. The table also shows similar levels of democratic support in four of five East Asian countries (80 percent), nine of thirteen New European countries (69 percent), and ten of eighteen Latin American countries (56 percent). In terms of regional mean ratings, Africa registers the highest level of support with 63 percent. This region is followed by East Asia (59 percent), Latin America (53 percent), and New Europe (51 percent). In terms of how widely the extent to which citizens support democracy varies within each region, Africa and Latin America score, respectively, the lowest (32 percentage points) and highest (43 percentage points) degrees of variation. With the highest percentage of practical democratic supporters and the least uneven distribution of these supporters within the region, Africa stands out from the rest of the democratizing world. Even in Africa, however, only six countries reached the two-thirds level, which Diamond characterizes as “a minimum threshold of mass support for democracy in a consolidated regime.”\textsuperscript{58}

\textit{Authentic Support: Committed Democrats}

Citizens of new democracies had life experience with undemocratic rule prior to democratic regime change. Doubtless, many of them remain attached to the age-old authoritarian mindset. In view of the importance of early life socialization,\textsuperscript{59} the professed preferences for democracy among these citizens cannot be equated with unconditional or unwavering support for it.\textsuperscript{60} To


\textsuperscript{57} Diamond, \textit{Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation, and Linz and Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation.}

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 179.

measure such authentic support, we take into account both prodemocratic and antiauthoritarian orientations, as done in previous research.\textsuperscript{61}

Table 1 reports percentages of respondents who reject the various forms of authoritarian rule, including military rule, strongman rule, and one-party dictatorship.\textsuperscript{62} Opponents of authoritarian rule constitute substantial majorities of the citizenry in Africa (63 percent) and New Europe (60 percent) and a bare majority in East Asia (52 percent). In Latin America, they constitute a small minority of less than one-quarter (23 percent). Evidently, more citizens of Africa and New Europe oppose a reversal to authoritarian rule than citizens in East Asia and Latin America.

For each region, we now compare the distribution of democratic supporters and authoritarian opponents and ascertain its particular pathway to cultural democratization among the mass citizenry. In African countries as a whole, democratic supporters and authoritarian opponents are equally numerous (63 percent versus 63 percent). In East Asia, democratic supporters outnumber authoritarian opponents by 7 percentage points (59 percent versus 52 percent). In Latin America, the former outnumber the latter by a larger margin of thirty percentage points (53 percent versus 23 percent). In New Europe, by striking contrast, the latter outnumber the former by nine percentage points (60 percent versus 51 percent).

These contrasting patterns of attitudinal distribution suggest three distinct pathways to cultural democratization: (1) embracing democracy and rejecting authoritarian rule simultaneously; (2) embracing democracy before rejecting authoritarianism, and (3) rejecting authoritarianism before embracing democracy. Apparently, Africa falls into the first pattern of simultaneous democratization, East Asia and Latin America fall into the second pattern of embracing democracy first, and New Europe fits the third pattern of first rejecting authoritarianism.

To distinguish authentic support for democracy from other types of regime support, we now consider both practical support for democracy and opposition to authoritarian rule. We consider support for democracy authentic when


\textsuperscript{62} The Latinobarometer asked a pair of questions about military rule and strongman rule to tap antiauthoritarianism.
ordinary citizens show they view democracy as the only political game by endorsing it always and rejecting its undemocratic alternatives fully. We can differentiate this type of democratic support from nonauthentic, or prototype, democratic regime support that is mixed with authoritarian orientations.

Considering all the countries in each region together reveals that no region has yet reached the 50-percent level of authentic support. Yet, mean levels of authentic support vary considerably; 14 percent in Latin America, 35 percent in East Asia, 38 percent in New Europe, and 44 percent in Africa. In no country in Latin America and East Asia does half the population or more respond as authentic democrats who are likely to support greater democracy. In Africa and New Europe, on the other hand, there are three countries that already have reached this level of authentic support for democracy.

While large majorities of four-fifths of East Asians and New Europeans are favorably attached to democracy as an ideal political system, small minorities of less than two-fifths are fully committed to it as a political enterprise. These findings confirm earlier research: popular support for democracy in third-wave democracies is broad in scope but shallow in depth. They also accord

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with Inglehart’s claim that “overt lip service to democracy is almost universal today.”

Citizen Demand versus Institutional Supply

An incomplete democracy will likely become complete only if people demand that their political leaders supply the essentials of democracy. Accordingly, democratic progress in all four regions requires significant increases in the current levels of authentic support for democratic rule. Without increasing support or demand, these countries are likely to remain incomplete democracies.

The movement toward more or less democracy, however, does not depend on the level of democratic demand from the citizenry alone; it also depends on the relationship between citizen demand and institutional supply. According to Inglehart and Welzel, “shifts toward more or less democracy follow the logic of reducing the incongruence between citizen demand and institutional supply of democracy.” The more citizen demand for democracy outstrips what institutions supply, the more likely political systems will move toward more democracy. When citizens demand less democracy than institutions supply, political systems are likely to stagnate or move toward less democracy. When popular demand exceeds institutional supply, positive incongruence occurs for further democratic development. When the latter exceeds the former, negative incongruence occurs for democratic decay.

Citizen Demand

During the current wave of democratization, we found in all four regions that many citizens do not view democracy as the best political system for their country. Even among those who prefer it to its alternatives, a minority embraces democracy unconditionally, while a majority is committed to it only “superficially” or “expediently.” Between these two types of authentic and nonauthentic supporters, we assume that it is the former who are leaders in cultural democratization. It is also reasonable to assume that leaders, not laggards, demand more democracy to complete the process of democratization.

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68 Inglehart and Welzel, Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy, 187.
Authentic mass support for democracy takes expression as cultural or popular demand for democracy.⁶⁹

**Institutional Supply**

People demand more democracy when what their institutions supply falls short of meeting their desires. It is likely that the experienced level of democracy, not the actual level of democracy, shapes popular demand for greater democracy. To measure the experienced level of democracy supplied by institutions, we chose a pair of questions from regional barometers. The East Asia and New Europe Barometers asked respondents to place their current political system on a scale for which 1 means complete dictatorship and 10 means complete democracy. Scores of 8 and higher on this scale are considered indicative of experiencing an adequate level of democracy.

All five East Asian countries received ratings above the scale’s midpoint of 5.5 and are rated as democracies. In New Europe, only six of thirteen countries are rated as democracies. In two of five East Asian countries, majorities of the citizenry rate the current level of institutional supply as adequate. On the other hand, in none of the thirteen countries in New Europe does a majority judge the current system in an equally positive light. Obviously, Europeans perceive less democratic progress than East Asians do. Despite this difference, however, there is a general agreement that their political systems are far less than complete democracies.

In Africa and Latin America, citizens rated their new political systems with one of four verbal categories: (1) full democracy; (2) a democracy with minor problems; (3) a democracy with major problems; and (4) not a democracy. Responses in the first two categories indicate an adequate supply of democracy.⁷⁰ In as many as half the African countries, majorities rate their democracy as either a full democracy or a democracy only with minor problems. In striking contrast, the majority in no Latin American country rated its democracy as either a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems. In the eyes of citizens, more democratic advances appear to have been achieved in Africa than in Latin America.

When all the countries in each region are considered together, Africa is the only region in which a majority (52 percent) reports experiencing an adequate level of democracy. It is followed by East Asia (44 percent), Latin America (25 percent), and New Europe (18 percent). Why do Africans and East Asians rate their democracies much more positively than their peers in Latin America and New Europe? Do they do so because they are not capable enough to distinguish incomplete democratization from complete democratization? To explore these

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⁷⁰ Ibid.
questions, figure 6 compares across the regions the percentages reporting the experience of complete or full democracy. As expected, those who mistake the existing limited democratic rule for a full democracy and prematurely recognize the completion of democratization in their country are from three to over five times more numerous in Africa and East Asia than in Latin America and New Europe. Evidently, Africans and East Asians are far less cognitively sophisticated in knowledge about democratic politics than their peers in Latin America and New Europe.

We next compare the levels of citizen demand and institutional supply of democracy across regions to determine whether democratic supply and demand are congruent or incongruent. To measure the extent of congruence in cultural and institutional democratization, we calculate a percentage differential index (PDI) by subtracting the percentage experiencing democracy adequately—democratic supply—from the percentage of those who are unconditionally committed to democratic rule—democratic demand. Scores of this PDI can range from -100 to +100. Negative scores indicate the incidence of negative incongruence in which democracy is perceived as oversupplied (overdemocratization). Positive scores indicate the incidence of positive incongruence in which democracy is perceived as undersupplied (underdemocratization). Because PDI scores of plus or minus 5 points indicate little gap between supply and demand, we

Figure 6. Regional Differences in Experiencing Complete or Full Democracy

Sources: Afrobarometer II; East Asia Barometer I; Latinobarometer 2004; and New Europe Barometer VII.
interpret these as evidence of congruence rather than incongruence in the levels of institutional and cultural democratization.

The last column of table 1 shows nine of sixteen countries in Africa in negative incongruence, four countries in positive incongruence, and three countries in congruence. In East Asia, four of five countries are in negative congruence, while one country is in positive incongruence. In Latin America, eleven of eighteen countries are in negative congruence and seven countries in congruence. In New Europe, twelve of thirteen countries are in positive incongruence and only one country, Russia, is in negative incongruence. Figure 7 shows that negative congruence prevails in three of the four regions—Africa, East Asia, and Latin America, while positive congruence prevails in only one region, post-communist Europe.

According to the congruence theory of democratization, new democracies in Africa, East Asia, and Latin America confront the problem of low popular demand for democracy, as their demos perceive institutions as supplying an adequate level of democracy. Countries in New Europe, on the other hand,
tend to face the problem of low institutional supply, as their demos perceive institutions as failing to supply an adequate level of democracy. Between these two problems of democratization, the one featuring a lack of popular demand for more democracy poses a greater obstacle to successful democratization because this problem likely will stall the process prematurely and discourage elites from supplying any more necessary reform. To prevent a premature end to democratization or escape from “a low-level equilibrium trap,” citizens of new democracies have to do more than embrace “democracy as the only game in town.” They have to be sophisticated in knowledge about the limited nature of the current democratic regime.

Conclusion

The current wave of democratization began in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s. This essay has sought to make a comprehensive and dynamic account of this wave by examining its institutional and cultural dynamics from the perspective of global citizenries. We found that civic activism plays a crucial role in transforming electoral democracies into liberal democracies. We also found that democratic commitment and competence among the citizenry shape the direction and pace of institutional democratization. On the basis of these findings, we argue that mass citizenries hold the key to shaping the congruent or incongruent interaction between the institutional hardware and cultural software of democratic politics.

Contrary to what is widely known in the literature on democratic consolidation, moreover, we argue that the embrace of democracy as “the only game in town” is a first step, not a last step, toward the democratization of mass citizenries. In every region of new democracies, only small minorities are unconditionally committed to democratic politics. Even these committed democrats are not always cognitively capable of distinguishing limited democratic rule from complete or full democracy. As a result, many new democracies are trapped in a low-level congruence or negative incongruence between citizen demand and institutional supply of democracy.

To escape from this trap, new democracies need an increasing number of authentic democrats who not only embrace democracy but also reject its alternatives. To advance toward full democracy, moreover, they need to multiply the number of authentic democrats who are cognitively sophisticated about the practices of democratic politics. Without substantially increasing the existing level of democratic citizenship among the mass citizenry, these nascent democracies are likely to persist as incomplete or broken-back democracies.

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