

Popular Support for Democracy in Autocratic Regimes:

A Micro-Level Analysis of Preferences

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Understanding who wants democracy, and why, is critical to explaining democratization. Regardless of the regime or the process, in order for democratization to take place, a sufficient subset of the population must prefer democracy to the status quo. While a voluminous literature on regime transition has made assumptions about the democratic preferences of citizens in autocratic regimes, very few studies have actually investigated these preferences cross-nationally. In the twenty-first century, are citizens of autocratic regimes ideologically committed to autocracy? Do they prefer peace and stability to democratization? Or do citizens prefer democracy to the status quo? And, if so, do some groups, such as the poor or the wealthy, prefer democracy more?

This article draws on the assumptions of existing theories of regime transition to propose a unified theory of democratic preferences in autocratic regimes. Some scholars contend that citizens with high levels of socioeconomic status (SES) are most likely to prefer democracy because they are better educated, possess longer time horizons, and are more likely to desire political enfranchisement to avoid appropriation.¹ The same theories argue that citizens with low SES should prefer authoritarianism for its stability and nationalist appeal, or at best, the poor should be ambivalent toward democracy. In direct contrast, other scholars rely on the assumption that citizens of low SES should be more likely to prefer democracy because collectively they would possess more power under democracy to vote for redistributive policies.² In these theories, citizens with high levels of SES should be averse to democracy because they fear redistribution.

We argue that both theories are only partially correct. Citizens from low SES groups should prefer democracy because of its redistributive purposes, while citizens from high SES groups should prefer democracy because of its ability to provide more political freedoms and voice. Inversely, however, neither group should be more or less likely to prefer democracy. Consequently, because different socioeconomic groups have

different reasons to value democracy, we argue that all citizens in autocratic regimes equally prefer democracy to the status quo in the twenty-first century regardless of socioeconomic status.³

This argument has two important implications. First, if citizens of all socioeconomic backgrounds in autocratic regimes already prefer democracy to authoritarianism, then theories of democratization should not rely on changing preferences of citizens as the impetus for regime change. Economic factors, such as inequality and development, should have little long-term impact on micro-level preferences for democracy. Though these structural factors may impact the likelihood of democratization, they are unlikely to do so through the proposed mechanism of preference transformation. Second, if different types of citizens have different reasons for preferring democracy, then different motivations should affect their political behavior. Economic factors should be more likely to bring low SES citizens to the streets to protest, while political factors should be more likely to mobilize citizens from higher SES groups. Consequently, we contend that if all types of people have reasons to prefer democracy, then studies of regime change through protest should focus on what makes people act on these preferences rather than on what changes their baseline opinions.

This theory of democratic preferences in autocratic regimes contributes to our understanding of autocratic politics in a number of important ways. First, while countless studies have been conducted on public opinion in democratic regimes across the world, the literature on public opinion in autocratic regimes is only just beginning to develop. Most empirical investigations of preferences for democracy have only been conducted in democratic regimes.⁴ Second, we find a striking absence of empirical support for the mechanisms proposed by the two most renowned theories of democratization: modernization theory and redistributive theories. Despite the fact that the macro-level implications of both sets of theories have been tested dozens of times, very few studies have investigated the individual-level mechanisms embedded within them.⁵ Finally, we test our theory of democratic preferences using several different question formats within two separate survey frameworks, covering thirty-three different countries around the world, and find surprisingly robust evidence that the poor and the rich alike are committed to democratic rule and practice. This finding has important implications for the way we think about democratization, political participation in autocratic regimes, and how socioeconomic status effects preference formation.

Who Wants Democracy and Why?

Existing Assumptions about Democratic Preferences in Autocratic Regimes When Lipset first proposed that economic development leads to democratization, his argument rested on the premise that mass support for democracy was essential for both its birth and its consolidation.⁶ Without support for a democratic system, its viability is circumspect from the beginning, making the overthrow of democratic regimes inevitable. Whereas a

dictator may cling coercively to power against the wishes of his people, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people must be by definition supported by the people. At the time of Lipset's writing, this was a viable contention—authoritarianism was the model regime type in the world, with the Cold War giving legitimacy to authoritarianism under the aegis of communism and developmentalism.

Lipset argued that citizens with low levels of socioeconomic status were more likely to prefer autocratic forms of government and that citizens with high levels of socioeconomic status, who received more education and possessed longer time horizons, should prefer democracy. Thus, democracy would only be possible in developed countries with a large middle and upper class. Barrington Moore's famous "no bourgeoisie, no democracy" builds on a similar logic: the middle class will demand democratic representation in exchange for complying with the tax demands of the elite.⁷ Though a large literature has tested the macro-level implications of modernization theory, there is only a thin empirical record on the underlying assumption of iconic arguments like Lipset's.⁸ Further, much of the work on support for democracy has been conducted in democratic regimes. For example, a 2008 edited volume looks cross-nationally and finds that the poor are just as committed to democracy as the rich, but the studies look almost exclusively at democratic regimes.⁹ Others have investigated support for democracy in autocratic regimes without considering the importance of socioeconomic status.¹⁰

Modernization theory gave way to a large subsection of comparative political science on the economic causes of democratization. One recent branch of this work turns the assumption of modernization theory on its head by arguing that the poor—not the rich—should prefer democracy more, an idea revitalized by Meltzer and Richard, who theorized that in a democracy, policy is pulled towards the preferences of the median voter.¹¹ Because the median voter is likely to have relatively lower SES, this engenders more redistribution.¹² As Acemoglu and Robinson put it, "Typically, there is political conflict between the elites and the citizens, and democracies look after the interests of the citizens more than non-democracies. It is, therefore, natural to think that the citizens have a stronger preference for democracy than the elites."¹³ These redistributive theories have argued that economic inequality increases the poor's preference for democracy because democratic systems grant them the electoral power to vote for more redistribution, while the rich prefer authoritarianism out of fear that democracy will cede too much power to the low SES masses.¹⁴ When everyone is relatively equal, the poor have no need for democracy because they only value democracy for its redistributive purposes.

Thus, these two dominant models of democratization—modernization and redistributive theories—provide a puzzle in regard to public opinion: in autocratic regimes, which types of citizens are most likely to prefer democracy? Are citizens from higher SES groups more likely to push for democracy because of their desire for political rights and representation? Or, are citizens from lower SES groups more likely to prefer democracy for its promise of redistribution and economic equality?

Differentiating Support for Democracy: Theory and Hypotheses We argue that both sets of theories get the story partially correct. Citizens with high SES prefer democracy to autocratic rule because of the freedom of expression and opportunities for participation that it provides. Citizens with low SES are equally likely to prefer democracy, but because they expect it to bring economic benefits. At the same time, both sets of theories are incorrect to argue that particular socioeconomic groups are averse to democratization, at least in the twenty-first century. We argue that most citizens living under unpredictable autocratic regimes marked by a weak rule of law would prefer a democratic regime.¹⁵ Thus both theories offer only partial accounts of the relationship between mass preferences and the prospects for democratization.

There are many reasons to like democracy, especially in countries that have little experience with it. People may instill all sorts of aspirational desires into the meaning of democracy. It is precisely this definitional ambiguity that allows almost everyone in an authoritarian regime to prefer democracy.¹⁶ As Boix and Acemoglu and Robinson argue, the poor are likely to prefer democracy because it offers the opportunity to affect economic policy in their favor.¹⁷ Our first hypothesis proposes these theories are correct to assume that citizens with low SES prefer democracy because of its economic benefits:

H₁: Citizens with low SES are more likely to prefer democracy for the economic advantages it provides.

On the other hand, having attained some relative wealth and privilege, citizens with high SES can already meet their basic needs and are more likely to focus on the political freedoms and stability promised by democracy. Though the size of an autocrat's elite coalition varies across regimes and time periods, the ruling class will always only be comprised by a subset of the larger economic elite.¹⁸ The excluded upper and middle classes therefore gain voice and procedural certainty under democratic rule. For Ansell and Samuels, this serves as a way for upwardly mobile groups to secure their economic assets against expropriation from the ruling elite.¹⁹ It is such intra-elite competition that makes the procedural certainty of democracy attractive, far outweighing any perceived threat from the poor. Thus, our second hypothesis proposes that the rich should prefer democracy for its political benefits:

H₂: Citizens with higher SES are more likely to prefer democracy for the political advantages it provides.

Of course, even if different social classes understand democratic rule as delivering different advantages, this does not mean that they hold equal preferences to be ruled by a democratically elected government. Citizens with lower SES could report pro-democratic attitudes for instrumental reasons, perceiving democratic rule as being more likely to deliver on economic issues than their current governments, but ultimately remaining indifferent to democracy itself. If we think the poor simply want rapid economic growth and job creation, for example, they may prefer democracy to the status quo, but prefer a model like China's, which has delivered high growth in recent decades, over democracy. Yet, when asked in the most recent round of the Afrobarometer (Wave

6) which country provides the best model for their country's development, socioeconomic status does not affect the likelihood of a respondent choosing China. Similarly, WVS data indicate that lower SES citizens are not more likely to prioritize economic growth over increasing citizen voice in government.²⁰ Lower SES citizens think that democracy has enviable economic attributes, but this appears to be intimately linked to democracy's redistributive nature rather than any relative ability to deliver economic growth or ensure good governance.

In addition, recent work on authoritarianism has highlighted the substantial variation in types of authoritarianism, raising the interesting question of whether preferences for democracy vary by the type of authoritarian regime.²¹ For example, we might expect that regimes that rely on broader bases of support, such as hegemonic party systems, are better able to incorporate a larger share of higher SES citizens, effectively making the poor more favorable towards democracy, relative to their high SES counterparts.²² However, we find little evidence that preferences in different autocratic regime types differ significantly, although military regimes deviate slightly.²³ Consequently, we conclude that the majority of citizens in autocratic regimes should prefer democracy to authoritarianism in the twenty-first century, regardless of autocratic regime type, because they foresee different, though not incompatible, benefits to a democratic system. Our third hypothesis thus builds on Hypotheses 1 and 2, arguing that if both the rich and the poor have reasons for preferring democracy, one group should not be more or less likely than the other to prefer democracy:

H₃: There is no relationship between socioeconomic status and overall preference for democracy.

If citizens of all socioeconomic groups prefer democracy to status quo authoritarianism, two important implications emerge. First, if support for democracy is evenly distributed, then macro-level economic factors, such as levels of development or inequality, should not impact preferences for democracy, either amongst the aggregate or within subsets of the population. If citizens from all socioeconomic groups prefer democracy, then their relative position or power vis-à-vis one another should have relatively little impact on their overall preferences.

H₄: Neither national-level economic development nor economic inequality should predict preferences for democracy.

Hypothesis 4 has important consequences for economic theories of democratization. Importantly, it does not test the macro-level predictions of these theories: understanding preferences in autocratic regimes does not give us analytical leverage on the overall effect of development or inequality on democratization. Instead, Hypothesis 4 tests the mechanisms for change proposed by these theories of democratization. Modernization theory and redistributive theories argue that macro-level economic factors lead to democratization through their impact on individual preferences for democracy. For example, if economic inequality changes poor peoples' preferences for democracy, then poor people in highly unequal autocratic regimes will be more likely to

prefer democracy than the poor in more economically equal autocracies. However, if the poor are just as likely to prefer democracy as the rich (Hypothesis 3), and if level of inequality or development has no relationship to these preferences, then it is difficult to conclude that these economic factors are causing democratization through their effect on people's preferences for democracy.

The second implication of our theory is that if different types of citizens have different logics for valuing democracy, then we should expect them to act on these preferences for different reasons. If high SES citizens prefer democracy for its political benefits, then citizens with higher SES should be more likely to take to the streets to demand democracy during political crises, such as unfair elections or periods of heightened political repression. Conversely, citizens with lower SES, who prefer democracy primarily for its redistributive benefits, should be more likely to protest for democracy after economic shocks, such as sharp increases in food prices or the removal of subsidies. Indeed, Brancati shows that pro-democracy protests often follow periods of economic downturn, providing some evidence for the link between economic perceptions of democracy and protest, though she does not look at the effect of socioeconomic status.²⁴

Going further, several recent scholars have described how different socioeconomic groups have reacted to different (economic or political) messages within Africa's latest wave of protest. Ongoing protests led by opposition parties in Uganda in 2011, for example, became significant when they were able to rally citizens from lower SES groups. As Branch and Mampilly write, this only became possible when the opposition switched its message from one of political grievance to economic issues: "That was the stroke of genius: to put food prices and increasing poverty at the centre of the agenda . . . instead of the tired message of election rigging centred around polarizing opposition politicians."²⁵ Thus, if different groups of citizens prefer democracy for different reasons, we would expect them to be motivated to protest by different factors.

H₅: Citizens with low SES should be more likely to protest for democracy for economic reasons while citizens with high SES should be more likely to protest for democracy for political reasons.

While universal theories of democratization speak to demands for democracy over the past two centuries, this article does not speak to demands for democratization in the nineteenth century.²⁶ At least since the third wave of democratization, we argue that socioeconomic status should not explain wide divergences in support for democratic rule, thereby narrowing our argument to a probe of the general logics of their mechanisms. It is possible that macro-level economic factors affect the likelihood for democratization, but it is unlikely to do so through the mechanism of preference formation.

Although the macro-level implications of theories about economic determinants of democratization have been tested dozens of times,²⁷ very little attention has been paid to the underlying mechanism of preference formation in autocratic regimes. To our knowledge, only two studies have tested the effect of SES on preference for democracy in authoritarian regimes.²⁸ Of these, we build most directly on Ansell and Samuels'

analysis of WVS respondent attitudes towards redistribution and democracy.²⁹ Ansell and Samuels counter redistributive arguments by showing that it is the upwardly mobile, non-enfranchised economic elite who have historically led the call for democratization because it offered procedural safeguards against expropriation.³⁰ Yet, Ansell and Samuels themselves work from the assumption that either the non-enfranchised elite or the poor will prefer democracy more than the other. We build on their analysis of attitudes towards democracy under authoritarianism, but take a step back for our point of departure, arguing that there has been a more universal shift in attitudes towards democracy in past decades.³¹

Data Measurement and Model Specification

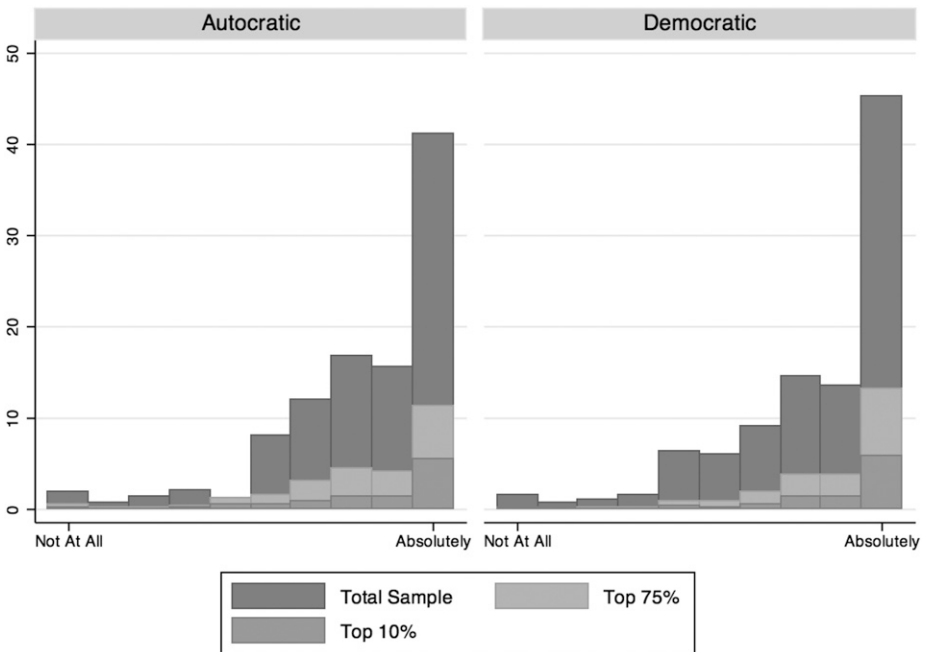
Data Measurement In order to test our hypotheses, we employ data from public opinion surveys conducted in autocratic regimes. We follow the Polity IV classification of regime type, whereby any country receiving a Polity IV score of five or lower is scored as an autocracy.³² We use the results of the sixth round of the World Values Survey (WVS), conducted between 2010 and 2013, which surveyed 30,891 respondents in twenty-one autocracies about their opinions on a number of different political and social issues.³³ While the WVS allows us to test Hypotheses 3 and 4 (overall preference for democracy), we also turn to the Round Five Afrobarometer survey (2011–2013) to test Hypotheses 1 and 2 (what drives preferences for democracy), as well as to validate the robustness of our findings across survey instruments.³⁴ Both surveys are nationally representative of adults and interviewed between 1,000 and 2,400 respondents per country. A full list of countries included in each survey can be found in Table A1 in Appendix A.³⁵

Dependent Variables The following quantitative analysis features two dependent variables. In order to test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 concerning why people want democracy, we turn to a series of questions from the Afrobarometer about the essential characteristics of democracy. Four separate questions ask the respondent to identify which of four options is the most essential characteristic of democracy. For example, in the first question, the survey asks respondents to choose one of four options as to what they think the most essential characteristic of democracy is: economic equality, free and fair elections, reduction in waste of public money, or freedom of speech. Each question includes both economic and political characteristics of democracy. Questions two through four ask respondents to choose between: 2) rule of law, freedom of the press, provision of jobs, or multipartyism; 3) legislative oversight, government provision of basic economic needs, freedom of assembly, or public goods; and, finally, 4) freedom to protest, lack of corruption, judicial independence, or a robust public welfare system. By examining who chooses which option, we can estimate the relationship between socioeconomic status and why different types of people prefer democracy.³⁶

The second dependent variable, which is used to test Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4, is a respondent’s overall preference for democracy. The WVS asks how important it is for the respondent himself to live in a democracy, ranging from one (not at all important) to ten (absolutely important). The distribution of responses to this question in Wave 6 are presented in Figure One. Overall, 79.3 percent of all respondents rated the importance of living in a democracy a seven or higher. We find similar results looking at a comparable question in the Afrobarometer (results are reported in the Appendix), where 73.2 percent of respondents in autocratic regimes reported a preference for democracy.

There is some concern that social sensitivity bias (SSB) may affect the measurement of the dependent variables. Respondents may feel obliged to say that they prefer democracy because it is the “correct” response. Although there is little to be done to minimize SSB for these questions about democracy given the available data, the data we do have do not provide much support for the contention that SSB is any different in autocratic regimes than it is in democratic regimes. As Figure 1 shows, the distributions for preferences for democracy are nearly identical between democratic and autocratic regimes, indicating that if SSB is a factor, it does not appear to affect citizens of

Figure 1 How Important Is It for You to Live In a Democracy? % Response, WVS Round 6



autocracies any more or less than it does citizens of democracies. More importantly, there does not appear to be bias across socioeconomic groups. For the top twenty-five percent of SES respondents in autocracies, 85.2 percent report that it is important for them to live in a democracy (seven or higher). This is quite similar to the 89.9 percent reporting pro-democratic attitudes among their democratic counterparts. We take this as reassurance that social sensitivity is unlikely to bias our estimates specifically in regard to socioeconomic status.

Independent Variables The primary independent variable is the respondent's socioeconomic status. While "socioeconomic status" as a broad concept has been used across the different economic theories of democratization, each one has a slightly different conceptualization. Lipset's modernization theory relies most clearly on a broad interpretation of class, as he argues that wealth as well as education are crucial to support for democracy.³⁷ Acemoglu and Robinson focus more narrowly on income: socialization and education are not important factors for preference formation in their theory.³⁸ Boix complicates socioeconomic status by introducing the concept of capital mobility,³⁹ but his most basic models focus on the same divide as Acemoglu and Robinson: the rich versus the poor. Because each theory conceptualizes socioeconomic status slightly differently, we focus on a catch all operationalization that incorporates many aspects of socioeconomic status. At the same time, the measure allows us to estimate an individual's relative socio-economic status in countries where income data are largely non-existent.

Consequently, we created a factor variable, *Socioeconomic Status*, from five survey measures, four of which are highly comparable (or identical) between the World Values Survey and the Afrobarometer. We argue that the combination of these variables, similar to many other "baskets" of individual characteristics used to measure SES, captures an individual's relative socioeconomic standing.⁴⁰ The common measures include: 1) a respondent's level of education, 2) their employment status (full- or part-time), 3) an assessment of their own personal finances or living conditions ("Are your present living conditions very good/bad?"), and 4) a measure of lived poverty (how often the respondent's family has gone without food, medicine, or a cash income).⁴¹ In addition to these four variables, we add a fifth, more direct measure of wealth. For the World Values Survey, this is a respondent's subjective estimate of where their income falls on a scale of one (poorest) to ten (richest) for their country. For the Afrobarometer, we employ the commonly used assets index, an additive index of possessions that includes: access to clean water in their compound (1) or house (2), a toilet inside their compound (1) or house (2), and one unit each for a radio, a television, and a car.

Creating a factor variable via principal components analysis in this way captures the largest amount of shared variance in the component variables into a single index. In both datasets, the five variables load onto one dimension: the five component variables for the WVS take an eigenvalue of 1.81, while the five variables for the Afrobarometer take an eigenvalue of 1.98.

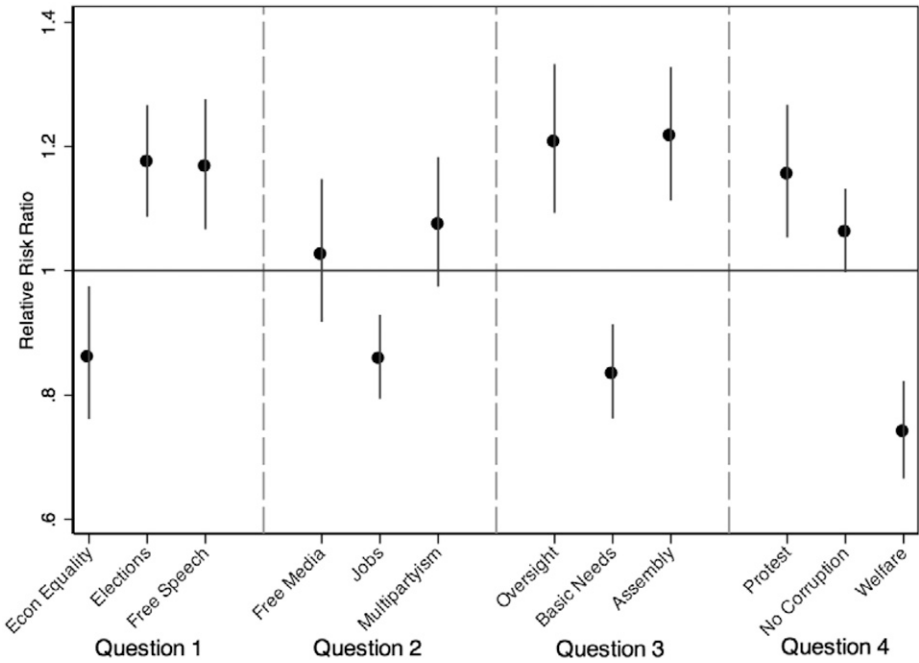
Other Measures In order to test Hypothesis 4 about the impact of macro-level economic factors on preferences, we use a one-year lagged measure of the log of gross domestic product per capita to capture level of economic development as well as Gini data taken from the World Bank.⁴² All models include five individual-level controls: the respondent's *Age*, a dummy variable that takes a one if they live in an *Urban* area, and, likewise, a one if they are *Male*. In light of findings that religiosity can dampen the effect of support for democracy, we include an individual's self-reported *Religiosity*.⁴³ Finally, we include each individual's *Assessment of Democracy*, measuring how democratically they think their own government governs at the time of the survey from zero, "not at all," to ten, "completely." All models include fixed effects at the country level to account for unobserved country-level variation and survey weights at the sub- and cross-national level.

Empirical Tests

Hypotheses #1 and 2: Different Reasons for Preferring Democracy In order to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, the first test discerns what respondents think are the most essential characteristics of democracy and whether these differ across income groups. Figure 2 below presents the results of multinomial logit models run for each Afrobarometer question asking respondents to choose what they view as the most essential characteristic of democracy. By modeling the discrete choice inherent in the Afrobarometer's questions, multinomial logit allows us to estimate the probability that an individual chooses a given characteristic as a function of their level of SES as well as covariates, while taking into account the lack of natural ordering in the dependent variable. We take the option that is the least representative of our theorized preferences—democratic processes or economic redistribution—as the reference category for each question. The reference categories are: *No Waste*, *Rule of Law*, *Public Goods*, and *Justice*. In all cases, with the exception of *Rule of Law*, this is also the least frequent choice.⁴⁴ Negative relative risk ratios on the independent variable *Socioeconomic Status* indicate that respondents with lower SES scores favor the characteristic relative to the baseline category, while positive risk ratios indicate that those with higher SES consider the characteristic a more essential aspect of democracy. Full question wording and model results are reported in Tables C1 and C2 in the Appendix.

The results indicate broad support for our hypotheses. The poor in autocratic regimes are more likely to choose redistributive features of democracy among the given choice set relative to the baseline category, such as democracy's ability to narrow the gap between the rich and poor (question one), ensure job opportunities (question two), provide basic necessities for everyone (question three), and deliver aid or welfare (question four). The relative odds that an individual chooses welfare as the most essential characteristic of democracy among the choice set, for example, is reduced by

Figure 2 Relationship between SES and Understandings of Democracy: Afrobarometer Data



26 percent with a one-unit reduction in SES. The relative odds are reduced by 17 percent for the option of “basic needs” in question three.

Conversely, citizens with higher SES are more likely to identify democracy’s most essential characteristics (relative to the reference category) as being the use of elections in choosing leaders or the right to free speech (question one), where a one-unit increase in SES increases the relative odds that an individual chose this option by 17 percent. For question three, high SES respondents are more likely to choose the presence of checks and balances via legislative oversight and the freedom of assembly, and for question four, the right to protest. The latter two options are associated with an increase in the relative odds by 15 to 17 percent as SES increases by one-unit. These findings support Hypotheses 1 and 2: the poor are more likely to think economic factors are most essential to democracy, while the rich are more inclined to think institutional and political factors are essential. Importantly, the results are consistent across different Barometers.⁴⁵

Hypotheses #3 and 4: Determinants of Overall Preference for Democracy Using WVS data from autocratic regimes around the world, Table 1 presents the results of

ordinary least square models estimating the relationship between socioeconomic status and preference for democracy. Using a respondent’s reported preference for living in a democracy as the dependent variable, models 1–3 provide no evidence that the poor prefer democracy any more or less than the rich. This appears to be true even when testing whether higher levels of economic inequality (Gini) increase the preference of the poor for democracy relative to those with higher SES.⁴⁶ Nor does economic development (logged GDP per capita) appear to interact with SES to influence individual preferences. This finding is robust to a number of alternative specifications, including running the estimates via multilevel models, using alternative measures of inequality, and adjusting the polity threshold upwards and downwards one point to test how sensitive the effect is to the cutoff point. Given the active discussion on the different types of sociopolitical arrangements supporting autocratic regimes, we further disaggregate the results by authoritarian regime type, again with consistent findings.⁴⁷ These results can be found in Appendix D and E. This is counter to the mechanisms of both modernization theory and redistributive theories, which expect that either the poor or the rich will prefer to live in democracies.⁴⁸ Rather, Table 1 indicates support for Hypothesis 3: citizens with both high and low SES are equally likely to support democracy in autocratic regimes.

Turning to Hypothesis 4, there is little evidence that level of economic development or economic inequality moderates attitudes towards democracy. Level of development is never statistically significant in any of the models, indicating that in wealthier autocracies (such as Qatar) citizens are just as likely to prefer democracy as citizens in very poor autocracies (such as Zimbabwe). As seen in Model 2, there also does not

Table 1 Attitudes Towards Democracy, World Values Survey

	Preference for Democratic Rule		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Socioeconomic Status	0.117 (0.075)	-0.662 (0.446)	-0.172 (0.356)
Income Factor x GDP (Logged)		0.095 (0.058)	
Income Factor x Gini			0.006 (0.009)
GDP (Logged)		-0.420* (0.038)	
Gini			0.176* (0.027)
Age	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.004)
Urban	-0.060 (0.102)	-0.056 (0.100)	-0.069 (0.128)
Male	0.029 (0.067)	0.035 (0.063)	0.079† (0.042)
Assessment of Democracy	0.114* (0.034)	0.116* (0.033)	0.134* (0.042)
Religiosity	-0.158* (0.068)	-0.158* (0.068)	-0.137† (0.068)
Constant	7.735 (0.247)	11.333 (0.313)	1.849 (1.093)
N	19,915	19,915	15,556
R ²	0.066	0.068	0.074

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05. Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of OLS models with fixed effects at the country level.

appear to be an interactive relationship between level of development and socioeconomic status. The rich in underdeveloped autocracies are not any more or less likely to prefer democracy than the rich in developed autocracies.

Inequality also does not appear to have a relationship with differential class preferences for democracy. Redistributive theories of democratization argue that inequality will make the poor prefer democracy more and the rich prefer it less, yet the relationship is statistically insignificant in Model 3. The poor in highly unequal regimes (such as Rwanda) are not any more likely to prefer democracy than the poor in very equal regimes (like Belarus). Overall, the findings of Table 1 challenge key components of the economic theories of democratization. The poor do not prefer democracy any more than the rich do, and these preferences are not moderated by level of development or inequality.

The Transformation of Preferences into Action

Two Illustrative Case Studies To probe the plausibility of the logic behind Hypothesis 5 regarding the reasons why different types of citizens might demand democracy, we turn to two case studies of pro-democracy protests in autocratic regimes. Drawing on two “most likely” cases, the case studies illustrate two alternative routes toward national democracy protests in autocratic regimes. While we are limited in our ability to formally test Hypothesis 5 of our theory given the available public opinion data, these brief cases demonstrate the different processes outlined in Hypothesis 5. First, Tunisia in 2010–2011 illustrates a case where citizens with low SES took to the streets after economic conditions precipitated protest. Eventually, as protests snowballed and began to incorporate political grievances, citizens with higher levels of SES joined in. Inversely, in Burkina Faso, a political shock in 2014—the attempted extension of term limits—brought predominantly urban, higher-SES citizens to the streets to protest pro-democratic reform, while marginalized youth mobilized around the populist legacy of Thomas Sankara. Though in both cases protests brought both rich and poor citizens onto the streets, they did so at different times and in the inverse order. Overall, we argue that the poor are much more likely to protest for economic reasons, while citizens with higher levels of socioeconomic status are more likely to protest for political reasons.

Tunisia The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, which inspired protests across the Middle East and North Africa, was sparked by the self-immolation of a street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, in the provincial town of Sidi Bouzid. Not for the first time, police confiscated Bouazizi’s unlicensed cart on December 17, 2010. Protesting this state harassment in the face of long-term unemployment and few economic prospects, Bouazizi lit himself on fire outside of the provincial headquarters, reflecting widespread frustration at the economic opportunities facing most Tunisians.⁴⁹ Bouazizi’s singular

act of protest sparked demonstrations fueled by years of economic stagnation and frustration.

Throughout December, protests mounted across Tunisia's interior, as youth and labor activists took to the streets to protest unemployment, corruption, and economic inequality. In the early days, protests received little attention from the country's middle and upper classes.⁵⁰ In the two weeks following Bouazizi's self-immolation, these economic protests did not appear to be particularly unusual; similar protests had taken place (and been successfully isolated) in the adjacent governorate of Gafsa in 2008.⁵¹ However, over the second week of escalating protests, the movement spread to Tunis and the wealthier cities of the north, as unemployed youths were joined in the streets by professionals and the middle-class:

By the time Bouazizi died in hospital from his injuries on January fourth, what had begun as a local, socio-economically motivated protest had turned into a nationwide anti-regime movement with tens of thousands of Tunisians from all levels of society demanding Ben Ali's fall.⁵²

What accounts for this sudden shift? Ben Ali's security forces reacted brutally to the protests in the interior of the country—detaining, beating, and killing protesters—while for the first time cell phone cameras documented this abuse and disseminated it across the country via social networking sites like Facebook.⁵³ Traditional media outlets such as Al-Jazeera began picking up these videos and playing them nationally and internationally, successfully reaching the urban middle classes. As one Tunisia blogger, Haythem El Mekki, explained of these videos of police brutality,

You could see people had been killed, their heads blown up. [...] Videos like this are shocking, but that's what is good about them. Because many Tunisians did not have a problem with Ben Ali. They said: "We're ok, we are not poor we have food, we have hotels, we have beaches . . . it's ok. Where is the problem!?" But when you show them stuff like this they radically change their point of view about the system.⁵⁴

While citizens of low socioeconomic status were brought to the streets to protest economic conditions in the interior, citizens of high socioeconomic status were only catalyzed into action after the regime politicized the protests through (well-documented) excessive repression. There appears to be no "overarching motive" across socioeconomic groups; political messages were largely absent in early protests in the working-class interior while the middle- and upper-middle classes did not appear to be motivated by the economic deprivation of their countrymen.⁵⁵ Indeed, it was exactly this flexibility in mobilization messages that made mass protest across class lines possible in Tunisia.

In a recent analysis of Arab Barometer survey data conducted just months after these protests, Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur find that, indeed, a diverse set of Tunisians from all socioeconomic backgrounds reported protesting in 2011.⁵⁶ They also find differing reasons for protest: while 58 percent of respondents reported that they thought the most important reasons for the protests were economic concerns, 21 percent felt that they were spurred by demands for political freedoms. The authors do not look directly at the relationship between socioeconomic status and reasons for protesting, but a cursory

glance at the data provides some evidence that different types of citizens protest for different reasons. Citizens with low levels of SES are approximately 10 percent more likely than citizens with high levels of SES to report that the primary reason for the protests was economic. Inversely, citizens with high SES are more likely to say that the protests were about political freedoms.⁵⁷ Overall, the protests in Tunisia provide preliminary evidence that during pro-democracy protests, low SES citizens are more easily mobilized by economic messages, while high SES citizens are more likely to respond to political issues.

Burkina Faso In contrast to Tunisia, where protests began over economic issues, the October 2014 protests in Burkina Faso were sparked by a political crisis following President Blaise Compaoré's efforts to remove constitutional term limits in order to be eligible to run in the 2015 elections. After obtaining the necessary coalition, Compaoré, who had ruled for twenty-seven years, announced on October 21, 2014 that the National Assembly would vote in nine days on a proposed amendment to Article 37 of the constitution, which limited presidents to two terms.⁵⁸ The days that followed witnessed remarkable levels of political mobilization. Crying "*Blaise degage!*" ("Blaise, clear out!"), directly adopted from Tunisia, and carrying signs indicating their democratic preferences (for example, "Blaise Compaoré = Ebola for Burkina's Democracy"), protestors poured onto the streets.⁵⁹ On October 30, protestors burned down the National Assembly. With the military signaling that they would no longer support him, Compaoré stepped down the next day.

Though frequently described in the press as a populist youth protest, a deeper look at the 2014 protests reveals a distinct bifurcation among participants. Burkina Faso's civil society has historically been dominated by an urban, Francophone middle class with a long tradition of protesting. Civil society actors had taken note of their failures to efficiently organize against the regime following the February 2011 death in police detention of student Justin Zongo and had organized new networks and alliances, notably the *Collectif Anti-Réferendum*, formed explicitly around pro-democracy/anti-referendum messages in the interim.⁶⁰ Civil society was thus well-positioned to mobilize against Compaoré's proposed constitutional amendment and, much like in the past, could count on the support of opposition elites, sympathetic merchants, and businessmen, who all helped coordinated and provide financial support.⁶¹

What made the 2014 protests remarkable, however, was the number of marginalized youth who joined civil society in the streets. Organized most notably under recently formed movements like *Balai Citoyen* (Citizen's Broom), groups like Balai coordinated directly with opposition parties and civil society groups to mobilize the country's substantial pool of unemployed and disenfranchised youth for subsequent protests.⁶² In contrast to the specifically procedural demands of civil society, however, youth protestors were motivated by populist appeals to the legacy of Thomas Sankara, "Africa's Che Guevara" and the country's former revolutionary president (1983–1987). Balai's neighborhood "clubs," set up around the country, were motivated extensively by Sankara's legacy of economic populism; Sankara-era reforms had brought

the country food self-sufficiency and popular rural health programs, among other accomplishments.⁶³ In its present manifestation, *Sankarisme* draws on the frustrated economic ambitions of youth, who grew up in a corrupt economy dominated by Compaoré's family and allies, and who faced few opportunities for economic advancement.⁶⁴

In contrast to Tunisia, where the middle and upper classes joined protests later, Burkina's 2014 protests resemble Mueller's description of the two faces of recent African social movements: upper- and middle-class activists serve as "generals of the revolution," coordinating protests with an eye to democratic reform, and bring in lower-class citizens, motivated by economic messages, as "foot-soldiers."⁶⁵ Burkina Faso thus presents a case of protest that pursued institutional democratic reform, an objective established by civil society actors and urban elite, but whose success remained inextricably linked to their ability to partner with groups like *Balai Citoyen*. Such groups successfully mobilized poor, urban youths around the populist message that Compaoré had to go for the state to act in the economic interests of all citizens, much as Sankara was portrayed as having done thirty years ago. Removing Compaoré from office therefore became a focal point for both objectives: the introduction of meaningful democratic alternation and a state that would be more responsive to the "concrete needs" of all Burkinabé.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The findings of this study support the theory that in the twenty-first century, citizens of all types are equally likely to prefer democracy to authoritarianism. We find evidence that citizens of lower socioeconomic classes in authoritarian regimes prefer democracy to autocracy and that they value democracy for its economic promises. We also find that citizens with high levels of SES are equally likely to express pro-democratic attitudes. Unlike their low SES counterparts, citizens with higher levels of SES prefer democracy because of its procedural properties. A number of theories argue that macro-level economic factors drive democratization through what is often conceived of as a linear impact on individual preferences. However, if development has little relationship to these preferences, and preferences are similar in both highly equal and highly unequal societies, then it is hard to conclude that these macro-level factors are causing democratization through their effect on public opinion.

There are several implications for this finding. To clarify, we are not arguing that because most people prefer democracy, democratization should occur everywhere and always consolidate peacefully. Unfortunately, the preferences of the public are not determining factors for either democratization or democratic consolidation. Although public support for democracy is most likely a necessary condition for consolidation (at least), it is certainly not a sufficient one.⁶⁷ Autocratic elites have overwhelming power over political trajectories, and it is rarely in their best interest to reform these trajectories towards democratization. We argue simply that in the cases where preferences do make

a difference—such as revolutions and uprisings—slow-moving structural factors do not appear to be a critical condition for shaping public opinion towards democracy.

Given the findings of this study, it is more likely that the primary causes of democratization are far more varied and particularistic across different countries. In many cases, democratization comes from above through military intervention, the death or retirement of a powerful dictator, foreign occupation, or long-term institutional changes. Yet, when democratization is swept in through popular uprisings, there are many potential factors that may account for a seemingly sudden shift in public opinion. Since in general, preferences in autocracies are favorable towards democracy, the unifying driver of democratization may be the emergence of a shock that creates instability as a uniting tipping point or cause.⁶⁸ Public scandals over inequality might create such a tipping point, but a myriad of other potential (economic and political) factors, such as economic or external shocks, overly repressive regime tactics, or domestic legitimacy crises could also open a window of opportunity.⁶⁹ Given different socioeconomic groups' varying beliefs about democracy, we expect to see that when political repression is especially high, the middle and upper classes are likely to organize protests. But when economic times are particularly tough, popular uprisings should occur amongst the poor.

Overall, it is clear that while different class actors have different reasons to prefer democracy, in most authoritarian regimes today, it is unrealistic to believe that large groups of people believe that authoritarianism is the best form of government. To understand democratization in the modern era, it is critical to understand what it is about democracy that different people value, and under what circumstances they are likely to act on these preferences and demand democracy.

NOTES

The authors would like to thank Nicolas van de Walle, Holger Kern, Manny Teitlebaum, the participants of the Graduate Colloquium at Cornell University, and two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

1. Ben Ansell and David Samuels, *Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Seymour Lipset, "Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism," *American Sociological Review*, 24 (August 1959a), 482–501; Seymour Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review*, 53 (March 1959b), 69–105.

2. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

3. It is important to note that democratization through protests is just one pathway to democracy. Democratization can also occur through top-down approaches, such as institutional change, death of a leader, or external intervention. We are focused here on the mechanisms of popular support for democracy privileged by economic theories of democratization.

4. Lawrence Bobo and Frederick Licari, "Education and Political Tolerance: Testing the Effects of Cognitive Sophistication and Target Group Affect," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53 (Autumn, 1989), 285–308; Michael Bratton, Philip Alderfer, Georgia Bowser, and Joseph Temba, "The Effects of Civic Education on

Political Culture: Evidence from Zambia,” *World Development*, 27 (May 1999), 807–24; Geoffrey Evans and Pauline Rose, “Support for Democracy in Malawi: Does Schooling Matter?,” *World Development*, 35 (May 2007), 904–19; Steven Finkel, “Can Democracy Be Taught?,” *Journal of Democracy*, 14 (October 2003), 137–51.

5. Christian Houle, “Inequality and Democracy: Why Inequality Harms Consolidation but Does Not Affect Democratization,” *World Politics*, 61 (October 2009), 589–622; James Robinson, “Economic Development and Democracy,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9 (June 2006), 503–27.

6. Lipset, 1959b.

7. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

8. Robinson, 2006.

9. Anirudh Krishna, ed. *Poverty, Participation, and Democracy: A Global Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

10. Juliet Pietsch, “Authoritarian Durability: Public Opinion towards Democracy in Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 25 (July 2015), 31–46; Doh Chull Shin, “Cultural Hybridization in East Asia: Exploring an Alternative to the Global Democratization Thesis,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 25 (July 2015), 10–30.

11. Allan H. Meltzer and Scott F. Richard, “A Rational Theory of the Size of Government,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 89 (October 1981), 914–27.

12. Acemoglu and Robinson.

13. Acemoglu and Robinson, p. 22.

14. Boix.

15. This is an important scope condition for our argument. Autocratic regimes that efficiently deliver rule of law reduce the perceived benefits of democratization; see, for example, Acemoglu and Robinson’s (p. 8) discussion of Singapore as an exceptional case. Because we do not expect cases where the regime has institutionalized the rule of law to generate the same mass preference for democracy, we exclude Singapore, Bahrain, and Qatar, which meet this criterion, as elaborated in Appendix B (the Appendix is available in the online version of this article, at www.ingentaconnect.com/cuny/cp).

16. Indeed, this parallels confusion over how best to conceptualize the term in political science, for example, see debate in Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 35 (February 2002), 5–34.

17. Boix.

18. Carles Boix and Milan Svolik, “The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships,” *Journal of Politics*, 75 (April 2013), 300–16; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Cambridge: University Press Cambridge, 2008); Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Milan Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

19. Ansell and Samuels.

20. See Tables C1 and C2 in the Appendix.

21. E.g. Geddes, 2003. Of course, a second implication would be that the type of authoritarian regime may change *why* different groups prefer democracy, though the literature offers no clear theoretical direction on this question.

22. For example, Ellen Lust, “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East,” *Journal of Democracy*, 20 (July 2009), 122–35.

23. We subset our analyses of Hypotheses 1–3 in Tables D5 and E5 of the Appendix to explore this possibility, but find no consistent effect of regime type with the exception of military regimes. See discussion in appendix.

24. Dawn Brancati, “Pocketbook Protests Explaining the Emergence of Pro-Democracy Protests Worldwide,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 47 (September 2014), 1503–30.

25. Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly, *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 129.

26. Most of the empirical work for these foundational arguments uses data before the 1990s. Most of Boix’s data end in the early 1990s, while Ansell and Samuels, publishing over a decade later, extend their data to the early 2000s for a few analyses, though most of their data likewise end in the early 1990s.

27. For example: Christian Houle, p. 589; James Robinson, “Economic Development and Democracy,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9 (2006), 503–27.

28. The other (Lindsay Benstead, “Why Do Some Arab citizens See Democracy as Unsuitable for Their Country?,” *Democratization*, 22 (Septembers 2015), 1183–208), analyzes Arab Barometer data, arguing that respondents may prefer democracy in the abstract, but not find it suitable for their own countries, fearing the instability of regime change. Still, three-quarters of Benstead’s respondents report believing that democracy is suitable for their countries. Consistent with this article, this variation is not well explained by socioeconomic status.
29. Acemoglu and Robinson.
30. Ansell and Samuels.
31. A replication of Ansell and Samuels findings and a more detailed discussion of these differences can be found in Appendix E6.
32. Thereby combining Polity’s anocracy and autocracy categories.
33. World Values Survey Association, “World Values Survey: Wave 6,” (Madrid, Spain, 2015). The full sample covers 85,070 respondents in fifty-seven countries.
34. Afrobarometer, “Afrobarometer Data: Round Five” (www.afrobarometer.org: Round 5, 2015).
35. Due to space constraints, the Appendix is not in the print version of this article. It can be viewed in the online version, at www.ingentaconnect.com/cuny/cp.
36. The WVS asks a series of questions about the most essential characteristics of democracy, but the questions do not ask respondents to prioritize among them and have weak coverage of procedural attributes.
37. Seymour Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *The American Political Science Review*, 53 (March 1959), 69–105.
38. Acemoglu and Robinson.
39. Boix.
40. Nic Cheeseman, “Does the African Middle Class Defend Democracy? Evidence from Kenya,” Afrobarometer Working Paper n. 150 (2014).
41. Given notable gender gaps in employment in many regions of the world, it is possible that our use of a respondent’s own reported employment underestimates their true socioeconomic status. For example, 50 percent of male respondents report being employed compared to 36 percent of females, while 74 and 75 percent respectively report employment for themselves or for the head of household. Including head of household employment does not change the results presented in Table 2 (see Table E2 in the Appendix).
42. World Bank, “World Development Indicators: Round 6” (Washington D.C., 2013).
43. For example, Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom and Gizem Arıkan, “Religion and Support for Democracy: A Cross-National Test of the Mediating Mechanisms,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 43 (April 2013), 375–97.
44. Results are consistent when using other options as the baseline.
45. Both the Arab and Asianbarometers, which ask similar questions, produce comparable results for Hypotheses 1 and 2. These can be found in Tables D3 and D4 in the Appendix. We do not use these datasets in the primary analysis as a) the Arab Barometer asks an abbreviated question list, and b) the Asianbarometer only covers five autocracies.
46. However, this expected relationship is found in models limited to democracies. In democratic regimes, the poor do prefer democracy more than the rich and are more likely to do so at high levels of inequality. Results are robust to specifications with alternative measures of inequality (see Tables E3 in Appendix).
47. Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 12 (June 2014), 313–31.
48. Of course, the country-level N is quite small, averaging around fifteen.
49. Lin Noueihed, *The Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution and the Making of a New Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 74.
50. Farhad Khosrokhavar, *The New Arab Revolutions that Shook the World* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 34.
51. Michael Willis, “Revolt for Dignity: Tunisia’s Revolution and Civil Resistance,” in Adam Roberts, Michael Willis, Rory McCarthy, and Timothy Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance in the Arab Spring: Triumphs and Disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 30–52.
52. Anita Breuer, Todd Landman, and Dorothea Farquhar, “Social Media and Protest Mobilization: Evidence from the Tunisian Revolution,” *Democratization*, 22 (April 2015), 773.
53. International Crisis Group, “Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (IV): Tunisia’s Way” (Tunis, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2011).
54. Quoted in Breuer et al., 2015, 775.

55. Willis, p. 49.

56. Mark Beissinger, Amaney Jamal, and Kevin Mazur, "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions: Regime Strategies and the Structuring of Participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions," *Comparative Politics*, 48 (October 2015), 1–24.

57. Arab Barometer, "The Arab Barometer: Wave 3," Center for Strategic Studies (Amman, Jordan, 2012).

58. Marie-Soleil Frère and Pierre Englebert, "Briefing: Burkina Faso—the Fall of Blaise Compaoré," *African Affairs*, 114 (April 2015), 295–307; Sten Hagberg, Ludovic Kibora, Fatoumata Ouattara, and Adjara Konkobo, "Au coeur de la révolution burkinabè," *Anthropologie et développement*, 42 (September 2015), 199–224.

59. Ernest Harsch, "Urban Protest in Burkina Faso," *African Affairs*, 108 (April 2009), 263–88.

60. Ernest Harsch, "Citizens' Revolt in Burkina Faso," *African Futures* (December 9, 2014), <http://forums.ssrc.org/african-futures/2014/12/09/citizens-revolt-in-burkina-faso/>; Bettina Engels, "Different Means of Protest, Same Causes: Popular Struggles in Burkina Faso," *Review of African Political Economy*, 42 (February 2015), 92–106.

61. Benjamin Roger, "Burkina: le récit de la chute de Compaoré," *JeuneAfrique*, Nov. 18, 2014 .

62. Ryan Cummings, Burkina Faso and the Harnessing of a Revolution, IPI Global Observatory, 2014; Hagberg et al.

63. Cyril Bensimon, "Burkina : la revanche des enfants de Sankara," *Le Monde*, Nov. 8, 2014; Ernest Harsch, *Thomas Sankara : An African Revolutionary* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

64. Richard Banégas, "Mobilisations citoyennes, répression et contre-révolution en Afrique," *Revue Projet*, 2016.

65. Lisa Mueller, "The Puzzle of Africa's Third Wave of Protests," Paper presented at the American Political Science Association, September 2016. Economic messages also appear to have resonated strongly in rural areas, home to Burkina Faso's poorest citizens, with smaller protests emerging at mining sites and in small towns (Lila Chouli, "The Popular Uprising in Burkina Faso and the Transition," *Review of African Political Economy*, 42 (April 2015), 325–33).

66. Maria Malagardis, "Thomas Sankara, l'âme de fond de la révolution au Burkina Faso," *Libération*, Nov. 14, 2014.

67. Houle.

68. Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics*, 44 (October 1991), 7–48; this is similar to Boix's relative underspecification of an exogenous shock that leads the poor and/or rich to update their beliefs about the likelihood of revolutionary success.

69. Lisa Mueller, "Democratic Revolutionaries or Pocketbook Protesters? The Roots of the 2009–2010 Uprisings in Niger," *African Affairs*, 112 (July 2013), 398–420; Sabine Carey, "The Dynamic Relationship Between Protest and Repression," *Political Research Quarterly*, 59 (March 2006), 1–11; Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

APPENDIX

Appendix A Countries Sampled

Table A1 Complete Country Sample

World Values Survey (Round 6)	Afrobarometer (Round 5)
Algeria (2014)	Algeria (2013)
Armenia (2011)	Burkina Faso (2012)
Azerbaijan (2011)	Cameroon (2013)
Bahrain (2014) ¹	Cote d'Ivoire (2013)
Belarus (2011)	Egypt (2013)
China (2012)	Guinea (2013)
Ecuador (2013)	Madagascar (2013)
Iraq (2013)	Morocco (2013)
Kazakhstan (2011)	Mozambique (2012)
Jordan (2014)	Nigeria (2013)
Kuwait (2013)	Sudan (2013)
Libya (2013)	Swaziland (2013)
Morocco (2011)	Tanzania (2012)
Nigeria (2011)	Togo (2012)
Qatar (2010) ¹	Uganda (2012)
Russia (2011)	Zimbabwe (2012)
Rwanda (2012)	
Singapore (2012) ¹	
Uzbekistan (2011)	
Yemen (2013)	
Zimbabwe (2011)	

Appendix B Scope Conditions regarding Predictability under Autocracy

Central to theories of regime transition is the recognition that autocratic regimes are often capricious policymakers. As direct evidence for this, Ansell and Samuels' central contribution stems from their explicit recognition of authoritarians' tendencies towards expropriation and Boix devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of why and when autocratic regimes are more likely to expropriate.² Moore embeds this idea in his very definition of democratization:

a long and certainly incomplete struggle to do three closely related things: 1) to check arbitrary rulers, 2) to replace arbitrary rules with just and rational ones, and 3) to obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of laws.³

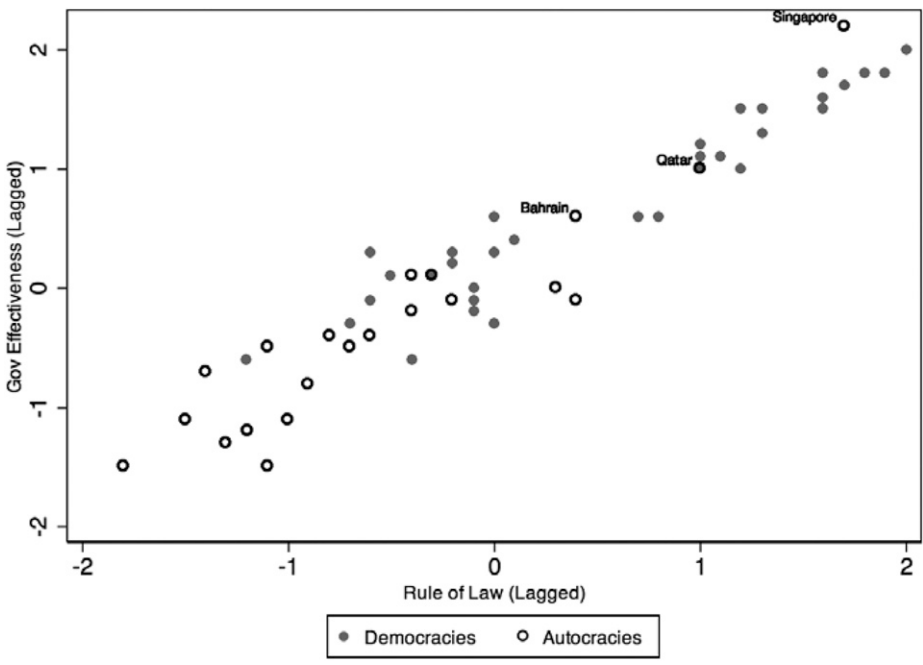
We likewise assume that authoritarian regimes are, for various reasons, unable or unwilling to produce stable political and economic environments. As a consequence, we

limit the scope of our theory to regimes that exhibit weak rule of law and low government effectiveness. We restrict our sample by removing high-performing outliers, like Singapore, accordingly.

We delineate the basis for exclusion by mapping measures of government effectiveness and rule of law (lagged to the year prior to survey implementation). Both measures are coded from the World Bank’s World Governance Indicators and, as can be seen in Figures B1 and B2, are highly correlated.⁴ The World Governance Indicators are built on perception-based measures. *Rule of law* is constructed by aggregating measures of the quality of contract and property rights information, crime rates and perceived confidence in government rules and *government effectiveness* is constructed on perceptions of the quality of public services, policy development and implementation as well as the civil service’s quality and political independence.

The World Governance Indicators are standardized around a mean point of zero, ranging from -2.5 to 2.5. Figure B1 displays the scores of the rule of law and government effectiveness measures for all countries surveyed by the WVS in Round 5; there is notable clustering of democracies in the center and upper right quadrant with autocracies centered in the bottom left. Still, three autocratic outliers are clear, notably

Figure B1 Scope Conditions and Exclusion Criteria: Assessing Government Arbitrariness



Singapore and, to a lesser extent Qatar and Bahrain (the average scores for autocracies are -0.52 and -0.34 respectively).

Figure B2 Scope Conditions and Exclusion Criteria: Assessing Government Arbitrariness HERE

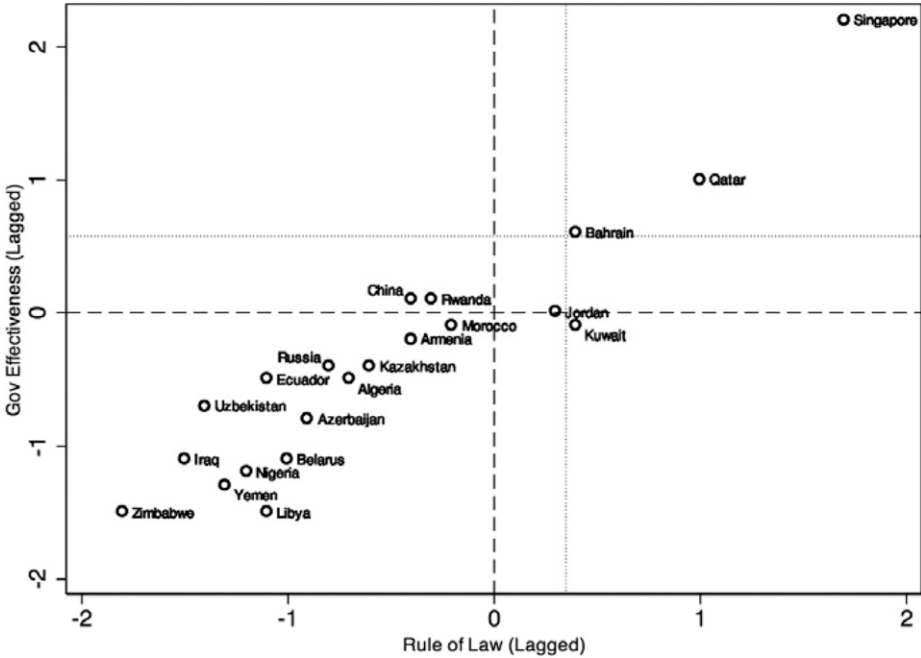


Figure B2 shows the same scatter plot, restricted to regimes scoring a six or below on the Polity scale, and highlights two criteria for exclusion. First, we could exclude above the zero point (indicated by the dashed lines, with zero representing the mean for each construct variable) or, alternatively, we could exclude countries that fall more than one standard deviation above the mean (represented by the dotted line). Either case identifies the same three cases. In addition to knowledge of these cases, this visual analysis leads us to conclude that these regimes do not fall within our theory’s scope conditions and we drop them accordingly.⁵ No cases from the Afro or Arab Barometer samples score high on either measure so data is not presented for that sample. In the Asianbarometer, only Singapore is an outlier and is excluded from the analysis.

Cases like Singapore, Bahrain and Qatar – which can deliver economic and political stability while reducing inequality –demand separate theoretical attention. In all three cases, the regime has legitimated itself through strong economic performance, in Singapore and Bahrain by becoming key financial centers and in Qatar by managing and redistributing the country’s enormous oil wealth. A brief analysis of these cases, found

in Table B1, suggests that socioeconomic status may play a more important role in these contexts in determining preference for democracy, with a weakly positive effect of SES on preference of democratic rule.

This is not entirely out of line with Acemoglu and Robinson’s discussion of Singapore, which they cite as a case where we should expect weak demand for democratization because the regime is able to finance extensive welfare policies, thereby reducing inequality and lowering the cost of repression by appeasing the poor.⁶ Conversely, Ansell and Samuels’ logic would predict that such a regime would mitigate demands for democracy by higher SES citizens because the risk of expropriation is low. The results in B1 are far too tentative to adjudicate between these competing predictions, but exploring citizen preference for democracy under high-performing autocratic regimes is an interesting line for future research.

Table B1 Table 1 Replication; High-Performing Autocracies

	Preference for Democratic Rule	
	Model 1	Model 2
Socioeconomic Status	0.317† (0.107)	3.709 (1.505)
Income Factor x GDP (Logged)		-0.318 (0.144)
GDP (Logged)		0.606* (0.039)
Age	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Urban	-0.824* (0.071)	-0.719* (0.039)
Male	0.039 (0.141)	0.040 (0.140)
Religiosity	-0.072 (0.086)	-0.064 (0.079)
Constant	8.024 (0.291)	1.762 (0.222)
N	3,849	3,849
R ²	0.061	0.063

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of OLS models with fixed effects at the country level.

Appendix C Measuring Preference for Democracy

It is plausible that although respondents from all socioeconomic groups report a preference for democratic rule, only higher SES members, who value democracy for its procedural elements, have a preferred outcome that is dependent on democracy itself. If the poor perceive democracy as better for their economic interests, then in principle their preferences could be realized by autocracies. This raises an important question for our argument: if the poor simply want regimes that will maximize economic growth or redistribution, then despite the fact that they may believe that a democratic regime would be better equipped to do so than their current government, they may be as likely to support high-performing autocratic models as well. If this were true, however, we would expect lower SES citizens to aspire to development models that are known to have delivered high economic growth, for example China.

To our knowledge, only one survey asks citizens in autocratic regimes to evaluate China as a development model for their country: Round 6 of the Afrobarometer which, at the time of submission, is not available in a merged file. We hand-merge the data from all sampled autocratic regimes (with the exception of Morocco and Gabon, whose country-level results are not yet available) to evaluate this question. The results, presented in Table C1, do not indicate that SES shapes preferences over which country offers the best development model.

We similarly attempt to evaluate this question by looking to questions that ask respondents to prioritize between government efficiency and democratic process. In the WVS data used in this paper, this takes the form of a question asking respondents to choose the most important priority for their governments, including ensuring high economic growth, a strong defense or that citizens have a say. If the poor simply prefer economic growth rather than the redistributive properties of democracy, we would expect them to select high economic growth over defense or improving democratic voice, yet there is no meaningful difference across socioeconomic status (see Table C2). We conduct a similar test using the Afrobarometer's question asking respondents whether it is better for a government to be efficient and able to get things done or, alternatively, to have a democratic regime that may be less efficient but gives room for citizen input. Again, there is no difference across socioeconomic classes. Together, these questions suggest that lower SES citizens do not simply desire high economic growth or government efficiency, but something specific to democracy's ability to redistribute. This is further supported by Table D2 and Figure 2 in the main text, where lower SES citizens identify democracy's most essential characteristic as its ability to minimize the gap between rich and poor, ensure citizens' basic needs are met, provide welfare and ensure everyone has job opportunities. Only the latter is explicitly tied to economic growth while the others have distinct redistributive attributes.

Table C1 Best Model for Country's Development, Afrobarometer Wave 6

	Model 1 United States	Model 2 China	Model 3 Former Colonizer	Model 4 India	Model 5 South Africa	Model 6 Ourselves
Socioeconomic Status	1.042 (0.133)	1.155 (0.138)	0.883 (0.073)	1.006 (0.116)	0.995 (0.131)	0.915 (0.089)
Age	0.989 (0.003)	0.994† (0.003)	0.991* (0.004)	0.991† (0.004)	0.994† (0.004)	1.006 (0.004)
Urban	1.057 (0.125)	1.040 (0.184)	0.897 (0.177)	0.751 (0.151)	0.870 (0.135)	0.956 (0.148)
Male	1.121 (0.141)	1.293† (0.176)	1.045 (0.141)	1.234 (0.169)	1.009 (0.119)	1.024 (0.140)
Assessment of Democracy	0.985 (0.096)	1.089 (0.087)	1.099 (0.131)	0.971 (0.110)	0.931 (0.069)	1.041 (0.076)
Religiosity	0.951 (0.038)	0.956 (0.036)	0.982 (0.026)	1.051 (0.066)	0.985 (0.027)	1.004 (0.049)
N			16,144			
R ²			0.075			

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Coefficients are Relative Risk Ratios. Robust standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of multinomial logit models with fixed effects at the country level. Baseline category is "none of these."

Table C2 Preferences for Democracy v. Economic Efficiency

	WVS, Rd 6			Afrobarometer, Rd 5
	Model 1			Model 2
	High Economic Growth	Ensuring Strong Defense	Seeing People Have Say	Gov. Efficiency v. Citizen Influence
Socioeconomic Status	0.978 (0.058)	1.005 (0.054)	0.897 (0.068)	0.026 (0.026)
Age	1.000 (0.003)	1.007† (0.003)	0.997 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)
Urban	1.045 (0.117)	1.007 (0.152)	0.915 (0.089)	0.001 (0.077)
Male	1.243* (0.097)	1.268* (0.110)	1.074 (0.078)	0.126* (0.038)
Assessment of Democracy	0.975 (0.022)	0.999 (0.019)	0.938* (0.020)	-0.047* (0.019)
Religiosity	0.921 (.054)	0.921 (0.057)	0.876† (0.059)	0.081* (0.033)
Constant	4.985 (0.998)	1.709 (0.313)	3.495 (0.650)	
N		20,958		14,843
R ²		0.069		0.014

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05.

Robust standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Model 1 coefficients are Relative Risk Ratios, the result of multinomial logit models with fixed effects at the country level. The baseline category is *making cities and countryside beautiful*, the least frequent category. Model 2 presents results of ordered logit with country fixed effects.

Appendix D Attributes of Democracy Tables and Extensions

To establish the robustness of the results reported in Table D2, Table D3 re-estimates equivalent models using the Asianbarometer, which asks a near-identical question set as the Afrobarometer. Table D4 estimates models for the Arab Barometer which does not ask respondents to prioritize among options, but does ask them about essential features of democracy.⁷

Table D1 What is the Most Essential Characteristic of Democracy?

Question	Measure	Response Option	Percent
#1	<i>Economic Equality</i>	A democratic government narrows the gap between rich and poor.	25.9
	<i>Elections</i>	In a democracy people choose leaders in free and fair elections.	35.8
	<i>No Waste</i>	A democratic government does not waste public money.	14.4
	<i>Freedom of Speech</i>	Under a democratic government people are free to express their political views openly.	23.9
#2	<i>Rule of Law</i>	Government ensures law and order.	24.7
	<i>Free Media</i>	Media is free to criticize the things government does.	18.5
	<i>Jobs</i>	Government ensures job opportunities for all.	37.2
	<i>Multipartyism</i>	Multiple parties compete fairly in elections.	19.6
#3	<i>Oversight</i>	The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President.	24.1
	<i>Basic Needs</i>	Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter for everyone.	35.5
	<i>Freedom of Assembly</i>	People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs.	25.8
	<i>Public Goods</i>	Public services, such as roads, water or sewerage work well and do not break down.	14.5
#4	<i>Freedom to Protest</i>	People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests.	19.2
	<i>No Corruption</i>	Politics is clean and free of corruption.	38.6
	<i>Justice</i>	The court protects ordinary people if the government mistreats them.	16.6
	<i>Welfare</i>	People receive aid from the government when they are in need, such as food parcels.	25.6

Table D2 Understandings of Democracy in Autocratic Regimes, Afrobarometer

	<i>Model 1: Question #1</i>			<i>Model 2: Question #2</i>			<i>Model 3: Question #3</i>			<i>Model 4: Question #4</i>		
	Economic Equality	Elections	Free Expression	Free Media	Jobs	Multi-partyism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.861* (0.054)	1.173* (0.046)	1.167* (0.053)	1.026 (0.059)	0.859* (0.034)	1.073 (0.053)	1.207* (0.061)	0.834* (0.038)	1.215* (0.055)	1.154* (0.054)	1.062† (0.034)	0.739* (0.040)
Age	1.004 (0.002)	1.002 (0.002)	1.000 (0.002)	0.997 (0.002)	0.992* (0.002)	0.997 (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)	0.998 (0.002)	0.997† (0.002)	0.998 (0.001)	1.002 (0.002)
Urban	1.006 (0.094)	0.963 (0.064)	0.895† (0.058)	1.059 (0.125)	1.122 (0.103)	1.062 (0.136)	0.817† (0.087)	0.940 (0.117)	0.890 (0.065)	0.883† (0.061)	0.915 (0.083)	1.124 (0.094)
Male	0.817* (0.041)	1.056 (0.057)	1.104 (0.073)	1.112† (0.061)	0.921† (0.041)	1.111† (0.064)	1.335* (0.054)	0.964 (0.080)	1.245* (0.071)	1.107* (0.049)	1.049 (0.054)	0.776* (0.039)
Assessment of Democracy	0.999 (0.015)	0.972 (0.018)	0.941* (0.024)	0.936* (0.021)	0.986 (0.014)	0.926* (0.029)	0.954† (0.024)	1.007 (0.013)	0.8961† (0.021)	0.945* (0.015)	0.977† (0.012)	1.048† (0.025)
Religiosity	1.035 (0.065)	0.999 (0.057)	1.076 (0.071)	0.878† (0.068)	1.023 (0.057)	0.979 (0.069)	0.987 (0.068)	0.976 (0.073)	0.955 (0.071)	0.905 (0.064)	0.989 (0.061)	1.014 (0.052)
N		20,488			20,404						20,296	
R ²		0.050			0.054						0.064	

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Coefficients are relative risk ratios. Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of multinomial logit models with fixed effects at the country level. Baseline categories specified in Table C1.

Table D3 Understandings of Democracy in Autocratic Regimes, Asianbarometer

	Model 1: Question #1			Model 2: Question #2			Model 3: Question #3			Model 4: Question #4		
	Economic Equality	Elections	Freedom of Speech	Free Media	Jobs	Multiparty-ism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.908† (0.048)	1.145 (0.108)	1.035 (0.060)	0.932 (0.099)	0.824 (0.112)	0.835 (0.127)	1.178* (0.069)	0.845* (0.027)	1.107 (0.219)	1.164* (0.055)	1.041 (0.026)	0.779* (0.094)
Age	0.999 (0.004)	1.004 (0.004)	0.998 (0.003)	1.02 (0.003)	0.998 (0.004)	1.002 (0.005)	1.003 (0.004)	0.998 (0.003)	1.006 (0.005)	0.999 (0.005)	1.002 (0.007)	0.996 (0.005)
Urban	1.627* (0.181)	1.245* (0.138)	1.051 (0.289)	1.163 (0.220)	0.999 (0.086)	0.923 (0.235)	1.007 (0.248)	1.305 (0.356)	1.310 (0.453)	1.904† (0.718)	1.354 (0.412)	1.079 (0.288)
Male	0.742* (0.036)	0.866* (0.028)	0.892* (0.039)	1.084 (0.104)	0.720* (0.073)	0.895 (0.117)	1.462* (0.072)	0.819* (0.062)	1.169 (0.302)	0.883 (0.092)	0.749 (0.135)	0.619* (0.112)
Assessment of Democracy	1.025 (0.027)	1.039* (0.011)	1.002 (0.033)	0.880* (0.022)	0.958 (0.031)	0.900* (0.021)	0.973 (0.034)	1.007 (0.042)	0.939† (0.033)	0.982 (0.060)	1.021 (0.044)	1.040 (0.048)
Religiosity	1.049† (0.026)	1.048† (0.026)	1.089* (0.029)	0.988 (0.037)	1.014 (0.023)	1.024 (0.038)	1.023 (0.042)	1.026 (0.023)	1.000 (0.018)	0.936* (0.027)	1.019 (0.021)	0.982 (0.029)
N	2,857											
R ²	0.078											
	0.063											

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Coefficients are relative risk ratios. Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of multinomial logit models with fixed effects at the country level. Baseline categories specified in Table C1.

Table D4 Understandings of Democracy in Autocratic Regimes, Arab Barometer

	Model 1 Electons	Model 2 Speech	Model 3 Economic Equality	Model 4 Welfare	Model 5 Political Equality	Model 6 No Corruption
Socioeconomic	0.085 (0.059)	-0.027 (0.080)	-0.287* (0.078)	-0.095 (0.069)	0.313* (0.083)	0.136† (0.079)
Status						
Age	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.005* (0.003)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.004)
Urban	-0.130 (0.100)	-0.130 (0.125)	0.089 (0.071)	0.129 (0.119)	0.057 (0.108)	0.034 (0.0118)
Male	0.197* (0.064)	0.094 (0.064)	0.022 (0.044)	-0.138* (0.054)	-0.151 (0.094)	-0.134* (0.055)
Assessment of Democracy	-0.024 (0.028)	-0.003 (0.031)	0.023 (0.029)	0.015 (0.021)	-0.002 (0.019)	0.002 (0.034)
Constant	-1.013 (0.246)	-2.237 (0.236)	-1.488 (0.0286)	-1.514 (0.159)	-2.083 (0.169)	-1.868 (0.267)
N	7,774	7,774	7,774	7,774	7,774	7,774
R ²	0.056	0.010	0.045	0.027	0.023	0.073

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05.

Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of logit models with fixed effects at the country level.

D5 Controlling for Authoritarian Regime Type

Tables D5 and E5 both address the possibility discussed in the main text that democratic preferences may be shaped by the nature of the autocratic regime respondents live under. Despite numerous classifications of authoritarian regime types, there is little work on how these typologies may generate distinct political preferences between socioeconomic groups. Though several authors have discussed the importance of the size of the ruling coalition, this tells us little about the preferences of low socioeconomic citizens, who are presumably excluded from all elite coalitions. Still, we can speculate that regimes like hegemonic party systems, which are able to expand state patronage networks to include more elites, effectively makes the poor more favorable towards democracy (since higher SES citizens are more likely to be satiated). Alternatively, regimes built around a smaller elite, such as militaries or monarchies, may leave the vast majority of citizens preferring democratic rule.

Table D5 subsets the models in Table D1 by the type of authoritarian regime they are classified in by Geddes et al. (2014).⁸ Given the small number of countries in most categories, models are restricted to individual level characteristics. The models reveal patterns consistent with those of the entire sample, though results do change slightly across regime types, likely reflecting country specific dynamics given the small number of cases in each category.

While Table E6 further disaggregates between electoral autocracies and those without electoral institutions, this distinction is identical to comparing between monarchies and non-monarchies in the Afrobarometer sample since all surveyed countries except Morocco and Swaziland hold some form of electoral competition at the level of the executive.

Table D5 Understandings of Democracy in Autocratic Regimes, Afrobarometer, By Authoritarian Regime Type

	Personalistic Regimes (n=7)											
	Model 1: Question #1		Model 2: Question #2		Model 3: Question #3		Model 4: Question #4					
	Economic Equality	Elections	Free Expression	Free Media	Jobs	Multi-partyism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.891† (0.057)	1.236* (0.065)	1.285* (0.100)	1.117 (0.134)	0.924 (0.062)	1.112 (0.096)	1.184† (0.112)	0.773* (0.049)	1.156* (0.081)	1.239* (0.093)	1.014 (0.052)	0.628* (0.025)
Age	0.999 (0.003)	0.999 (0.002)	0.996 (0.003)	0.997 (0.003)	0.988* (0.004)	0.996 (0.005)	1.004 (0.003)	0.999 (0.002)	1.002 (0.002)	0.996 (0.004)	0.999 (0.004)	0.993† (0.004)
Urban	1.210† (0.137)	1.065 (0.114)	1.089 (0.105)	0.988 (0.146)	1.155 (0.125)	1.179 (0.218)	0.871 (0.087)	0.871 (0.142)	0.794† (0.104)	0.779* (0.069)	0.717* (0.086)	0.968 (0.085)
Male	0.809* (0.067)	1.190* (0.079)	1.301* (0.102)	1.229* (0.089)	0.962 (0.050)	2.09* (0.109)	1.378* (0.079)	0.838 (0.132)	1.217† (0.123)	1.129† (0.077)	1.110 (0.086)	0.873† (0.071)
Assessment of Democracy	0.995 (0.026)	0.981 (0.018)	0.950* (0.013)	0.925* (0.023)	0.996 (0.022)	0.954* (0.022)	0.937† (0.037)	0.999 (0.025)	0.957† (0.022)	0.957† (0.022)	0.986 (0.021)	1.046* (0.023)
Religiosity	0.985 (0.121)	0.999 (0.101)	1.092 (0.155)	0.888† (0.056)	0.939 (0.065)	1.001 (0.097)	0.981 (0.068)	0.843* (0.027)	0.937 (0.071)	0.967 (0.121)	0.967 (0.107)	0.982 (0.108)
N	7,429	7,382	7,382	7,382	7,382	7,382	7,203	7,203	7,203	7,343	7,343	7,343
R ²	0.028	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.053	0.053	0.053	0.047	0.047	0.047

	Military Regimes (n=1)											
	Model 5: Question #1		Model 6: Question #2		Model 7: Question #3		Model 8: Question #4					
	Economic Equality	Elections	Free Expression	Free Media	Jobs	Multi-partyism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.549* (0.100)	0.962 (0.131)	0.856 (0.206)	0.561* (0.132)	0.581* (0.078)	0.666* (0.125)	1.981 (0.993)	1.182 (0.596)	1.997 (1.063)	1.470 (0.386)	1.566* (0.263)	0.477* (0.146)
Age	1.012 (0.008)	1.001 (0.006)	1.015† (0.009)	1.007 (0.008)	0.994 (0.006)	0.985† (0.008)	0.998 (0.016)	1.008 (0.016)	1.024 (0.017)	1.005 (0.010)	0.999 (0.006)	1.006 (0.011)
Urban	0.843 (0.180)	0.699* (0.124)	0.571* (0.158)	0.947 (0.218)	0.647* (0.112)	0.238* (0.074)	0.695 (0.312)	0.643 (0.288)	0.504 (0.248)	0.831 (0.258)	0.978 (0.188)	0.672 (0.223)
Male	1.009 (0.211)	1.377† (0.235)	1.256 (0.329)	2.99 (0.309)	0.871 (0.142)	1.081 (0.253)	1.128 (0.543)	0.991 (0.478)	1.146 (0.589)	1.225 (0.377)	1.072 (0.199)	0.806 (0.233)
Assessment of Democracy	1.062 (0.065)	1.127* (0.049)	0.835* (0.047)	0.756* (0.036)	0.749* (0.041)	0.737* (0.125)	1.119 (0.119)	1.047 (0.119)	9.834 (0.096)	0.861* (0.062)	1.086 (0.055)	1.262* (0.118)
Religiosity	0.744 (0.174)	0.856 (0.153)	0.496* (0.119)	0.407* (0.096)	0.999 (0.219)	0.303* (0.063)	1.537 (0.529)	2.221* (0.806)	1.022 (0.367)	0.380* (0.091)	1.223 (0.247)	0.995 (0.364)
N	1,061	1,061	1,061	1,061	1,061	1,061	1,017	1,017	1,017	1,054	1,054	1,054
R ²	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.047	0.047	0.047

Monarchies (n=2)												
	<i>Model 9: Question #1</i>			<i>Model 10: Question #2</i>			<i>Model 11: Question #3</i>			<i>Model 12: Question #4</i>		
	Economic Equality	Electons	Free Expression	Free Media	Jobs	Multi-partyism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.867 (0.079)	1.286 (0.249)	1.068 (0.056)	1.017 (0.178)	0.813* (0.081)	1.285 (0.367)	1.476* (0.009)	0.944 (0.094)	1.534* (0.086)	1.103* (0.003)	0.859* (0.053)	0.649* (0.018)
Age	1.004 (0.004)	0.999* (0.006)	0.999 (0.006)	1.002* (0.000)	0.995 (0.004)	0.995 (0.008)	0.992 (0.010)	1.004 (0.005)	0.996 (0.006)	0.976* (0.004)	0.992* (0.001)	1.006* (0.000)
Urban	1.07* (0.000)	1.095 (0.214)	0.912 (0.069)	0.954 (0.253)	1.861* (0.059)	1.381* (0.021)	1.121 (0.213)	1.372* (0.054)	0.886* (0.015)	1.056 (0.233)	1.094 (0.460)	1.629* (0.296)
Male	0.726* (0.071)	0.980 (0.272)	0.883 (0.095)	1.461* (0.122)	0.803 (0.215)	1.124 (0.489)	1.285 (0.249)	0.989 (0.056)	1.384* (0.127)	1.545 (0.475)	1.346 (0.384)	0.943 (0.079)
Assessment of Democracy	0.993 (0.008)	0.975 (0.071)	0.853* (0.046)	0.899 (0.071)	1.102 (0.013)	0.912 (0.119)	0.991* (0.012)	1.069† (0.043)	0.936* (0.006)	0.933 (0.040)	0.965 (0.022)	1.069* (0.014)
Religiosity	0.873 (0.145)	0.905* (0.039)	1.039 (0.183)	1.147 (0.371)	0.956 (0.039)	0.826 (0.102)	2.239* (0.042)	0.926 (0.081)	1.011 (0.101)	0.809* (0.087)	0.890* (0.015)	0.903* (0.005)
N	1,854				1,842			1,840			1,850	
R ²	0.061				0.037			0.086			0.064	

Party Regimes (n=3)												
	<i>Model 13: Question #1</i>			<i>Model 14: Question #2</i>			<i>Model 15: Question #3</i>			<i>Model 16: Question #4</i>		
	Economic Equality	Electons	Free Expression	Free Media	Jobs	Multi-partyism	Oversight	Basic Needs	Freedom of Assembly	Freedom to Protest	No Corruption	Welfare
Socioeconomic Status	0.779* (0.064)	1.076 (0.083)	1.073 (0.056)	1.112* (0.052)	0.916 (0.070)	1.112* (0.031)	1.119 (0.104)	0.848* (0.032)	1.228* (0.103)	1.041* (0.012)	1.095 (0.065)	0.801* (0.057)
Age	1.013* (0.002)	1.009* (0.002)	1.007† (0.004)	0.999 (0.003)	0.994* (0.001)	0.999 (0.003)	0.995 (0.006)	0.996 (0.008)	0.999 (0.006)	0.999 (0.004)	.011 (0.002)	1.008* (0.002)
Urban	1.026 (0.024)	1.031 (0.077)	0.897* (0.024)	1.223 (0.457)	1.198 (0.199)	1.048 (0.266)	1.012 (0.314)	1.347 (0.259)	1.046 (0.159)	1.013 (0.167)	1.164 (0.278)	1.149 (0.273)
Male	0.815† (0.086)	0.988 (0.125)	0.901 (0.098)	0.993 (0.128)	0.899 (0.097)	1.026 (0.022)	1.169* (0.056)	0.859 (0.090)	1.060* (0.016)	1.011 (0.127)	0.908 (0.057)	0.676* (0.056)
Assessment of Democracy	1.028 (0.039)	0.975 (0.049)	0.969 (0.067)	0.959 (0.067)	1.008 (0.033)	0.927 (0.086)	0.912 (0.063)	0.989 (0.013)	0.936 (0.058)	0.903* (0.008)	0.944* (0.016)	1.018 (0.075)
Religiosity	1.180 (0.135)	1.146 (0.123)	1.215* (0.094)	1.084 (0.129)	1.097 (0.148)	1.087* (0.039)	1.149 (0.204)	1.123 (0.165)	1.034 (0.190)	0.973 (0.105)	1.005 (0.125)	1.117 (0.091)
N	5,917				5,934			5,817			5,843	
R ²	0.017				0.055			0.051			0.079	

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$. Coefficients are relative risk ratios.

Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of multinomial logit models with country fixed effects. Baseline categories specified in Table C1.

Appendix E Table 2 Replications and Extensions

Appendix E1 Preference for Democracy in the Afrobarometer Sample

The closest approximation to *preference for democracy*, taken from the WVS, in the Afrobarometer is question Q46D, which asks respondents to report on a scale of zero (completely undemocratic) to ten (completely democratic) where they would like their country to be in the future. Higher scores thus indicate a greater preference for living in a democracy. This is the dependent variable in Table E1 Results are consistent with Table 1 in the main text.

Table E1 Preferences for Democratic Rule, Afrobarometer

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Socioeconomic Status	0.021 (0.045)	0.244 (0.380)	-0.008 (0.408)
Income Factor x GDP (Logged)		-0.032 (0.052)	
Income Factor x Gini			0.001 (0.009)
GDP (Logged)		-0.059 (0.044)	
Gini			-0.108* (0.009)
Age	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
Urban	-0.048 (0.041)	-0.046 (0.042)	-0.066 (0.046)
Male	0.006 (0.026)	0.007 (0.026)	0.005 (0.041)
Assessment of Democracy	0.167* (0.022)	0.167* (0.022)	0.169* (0.025)
Religiosity	0.129† (0.064)	0.128† (0.063)	0.162† (0.079)
Constant	7.839 (0.329)	8.405 (0.444)	11.737 (0.458)
N	20,513	20,513	17,242
R ²	0.089	0.089	0.086

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05.

Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of OLS models with fixed effects at the country level.

Appendix E2: Measuring SES to Account for Household Employment

Table E2 Attitudes Towards Democracy Household Employment

	Preference for Democratic Rule		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Socioeconomic Status w/ Head of Household	0.115 (0.071)	-0.609 (0.494)	-0.197 (0.348)
Income Factor x GDP (Logged)		0.088 (0.063)	
Income Factor x Gini			0.007 (0.009)
GDP (Logged)		-0.420* (0.043)	
Gini			0.179* (0.023)
Age	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
Urban	-0.051 (0.102)	-0.048 (0.003)	-0.059 (0.127)
Male	0.019 (0.067)	0.023 (0.063)	0.072† (0.039)
Assessment of Democracy	0.121* (0.033)	0.122* (0.032)	0.140* (0.039)
Religiosity	-0.159* (0.067)	-0.159* (0.068)	-0.138† (0.067)
Constant	7.698 (0.237)	11.304 (0.321)	1.710 (1.036)
N	20,993	20,993	16,657
R ²	0.066	0.067	0.074

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of OLS models with fixed effects at the country level. SES with Head of Household is created via factor analysis by retaining the first component (eigenvalue 1.79).

Appendix E3 Alternative Measures of Inequality

The results of Table 1 Model 3 are robust to alternative measures of economic inequality, including inequality in land holdings to account for Boix's distinction between fixed versus mobile assets as driving elite preferences for democracy.⁹ Data on inequality in land holdings comes from Vanhanen 2003.¹⁰ Alternative Gini estimates from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID), calculated via multiple imputation, are also included to provide broader geographic coverage given missing values in the World Bank Gini data used in the main analyses. The SWIID data was created by imputing missing-data from a number of existing datasets to maximize data coverage across countries over time; models are estimated one-hundred times to account for the uncertainty of the imputed data.¹¹ Model results are reported below in Table E3.

Table E3 Preferences for Democratic Rule, WVS: Alt Gini Measures

	Model 1	Model 2
Socioeconomic Status	0.262 (0.192)	-0.226 (0.236)
Income Factor x Land Gini	-0.002 (0.002)	
Income Factor x SWIID Gini		-0.006 (0.006)
Land Gini	-0.019* (0.002)	
SWIID Gini		-0.057 (2.284)
Age	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Urban	-0.048 (0.104)	-0.064 (0.116)
Male	0.031 (0.061)	0.094* (0.038)
Assessment of Democracy	0.120* (0.033)	0.149* (0.035)
Religiosity	-0.160* (0.067)	-0.166* (0.069)
Constant	8.981 (0.249)	9.432 (0.913)
N	21,065	18,045
R2	0.066	

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Results of OLS regressions with fixed effects by country. Model 2 calculated via multiple imputation.

Appendix E4 Adjusting the Threshold for “Authoritarianism”

We use the standard polity cutoff score of five or lower to measure autocracy. To verify that the results are not sensitive to this threshold, we reproduce the results by moving the cutoff upwards to include regimes scoring six and downward to those four and below. The results are largely consistent, although socioeconomic status does become positively significant at the ten percent level in base models when weak democracies (scoring sixes) are included (see Model 1). This positive trend is found in all models including democracies, and that running models of democracies alone produce a similar, significant and positive effect of socioeconomic status. A similar change does not happen when the sample becomes more restrictive, however.

Table E4 Table 2 Replication, Adjusted Polity Threshold

	Preference for Democratic Rule					
	Polity < 7			Polity < 5		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Socioeconomic Status	0.126† (0.063)	-0.431 (0.475)	0.066 (0.276)	0.117 (0.077)	-0.611 (0.441)	-0.008 (0.409)
Income Factor x GDP (Logged)		0.068 (0.061)			0.088 (0.058)	
Income Factor x Gini		-0.433* (0.037)	0.000 (0.007)		-0.420* (0.040)	0.001 (0.010)
GDP (Logged)			0.165* (0.023)			0.175* (0.027)
Gini	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.004)
Age	-0.046 (0.089)	-0.044 (0.003)	-0.051 (0.107)	-0.053 (0.110)	-0.049 (0.108)	-0.064 (0.141)
Urban	0.069 (0.069)	0.073 (0.066)	0.119† (0.057)	0.002 (0.067)	0.008 (0.062)	0.046 (0.039)
Male	0.117* (0.029)	0.118* (0.029)	0.133* (0.034)	0.120* (0.036)	0.122* (0.036)	0.145* (0.045)
Assessment of Democracy						
Religiosity	-0.182* (0.062)	-0.182* (0.062)	-0.166* (0.063)	-0.163† (0.078)	-0.163† (0.078)	-0.138 (0.078)
Constant	7.749 (0.223)	11.460 (0.285)	2.299 (1.036)	7.779 (0.265)	11.374 (0.322)	1.938 (1.254)
N	23,635	23,635	19,276	18,868	18,868	14,509
R ²	0.064	0.065	0.068	0.065	0.067	0.071

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05.

Robust standard errors, clustered by country, in parentheses. Results of OLS models with fixed effects at the country level.

Appendix E5 Controlling for Authoritarian Regime Type

Table E5 presents the results of models that are subset by type of authoritarian regime as classified by Geddes et al. (2014) following the discussion in Appendix C.¹² Given the small number of countries in most categories, models are restricted to individual level characteristics. Results are generally consistent, although there is a positive effect of SES for military and party-military regimes. Both models are restricted to a single country, however, Algeria and Rwanda respectively. This may be the result of particular characteristics of these regimes or, alternatively, reflect something about authoritarian regimes where the military plays a strong role. Interestingly, respondents in military regimes and monarchies surveyed by the Afrobarometer did not dramatically differ in their evaluation of democracy's essential characteristics. This is an interesting question for future research. Note that respondents were not asked to assess the level of democracy in their country in Uzbekistan, the only party-personal regime sampled. Secondly, there appears to be no difference between regimes that hold elections at the level of the executive and those that do not using Hyde and Marinov's data (2015). Given the prominence of recent discussions of electoral authoritarianism, this suggests that the lack of effect is not driven by the presence or absence of electoral institutions in some autocratic regimes.

Table E5 Preferences for Democratic Rule, WVS: Subset by Authoritarian Regime Type

	Regime Type, Geddes et al. (2014)								Elections at Executive Level? (Hyde and Marinov, 2015)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Yes	No
Socio-economic Status	Personalistic	Party	Monarchy	Military	Party-Military	Party-Personal				
Age	0.100 (0.126)	0.000 (0.055)	0.076 (0.048)	0.286* (0.089)	0.123* (0.056)	-0.104 (0.086)			0.041 (0.056)	0.265 (0.138)
Urban	-0.001 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.001)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.007† (0.004)	-0.067* (0.003)			-0.002 (0.004)	0.001 (0.006)
Male	0.012 (0.144)	-0.115* (0.009)	0.088 (0.0138)	0.118 (0.143)	0.057 (0.076)	-0.107 (0.105)			-0.057 (0.115)	0.103 (0.054)
Assessment of Democracy	-0.053 (0.125)	0.196† (0.028)	-0.061 (0.091)	0.168 (0.139)	0.002 (0.076)	0.061 (0.097)			0.098* (0.042)	-0.145 (0.166)
Religiosity	0.097† (0.040)	0.107 (0.038)	0.056* (0.021)	0.224* (0.034)	0.518* (0.025)	-			0.147* (0.037)	0.059 (0.057)
Constant	-0.119 (0.095)	-0.036 (0.238)	-0.510* (0.152)	-0.771* (0.190)	-0.178* (0.045)	-0.195* (0.052)			-0.178* (0.072)	-0.014 (0.163)
N	7,848 (0.385)	8,007 (1.091)	8,795 (0.282)	7,797 (0.372)	4,549 (0.272)	9,448 (0.173)			7,574 (0.259)	8,015 (0.931)
R2	9,482	2,939	2,072	993	1,506	1,428			15,762	5,393
# Countries	0.063	0.033	0.017	0.099	0.321	0.015			0.083	0.027
	7	2	2	1	1	1			12	4

† $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$.

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Results of OLS regressions with fixed effects by country when more than one country is in the category. Note that Model 8 omits the control variable Assessment of Democracy as it is not included in the survey.

Appendix E6 Replication of Ansell and Samuels (2014)

As noted earlier, this paper contributes to a small literature on citizen preferences under authoritarianism. Most notably, it resembles the premise of Ansell and Samuels (2014), who evaluate citizen preferences towards redistribution among WVS respondents pooled from all authoritarian regimes sampled between Rounds 1 and 5.¹³ We reproduce a relevant selection of their models with Round 6 data below. Our results and modeling choices differ from Ansell and Samuels. We address both in turn.

First, we fail to find the robust, positive effect of income reported by Ansell and Samuels. This is likely due to a combination of factors. For starters, their key independent variable, an individual's estimation of their annual income, is not asked in the Round 6 data. We are interested in the effect of socio-economic status more broadly conceived, but even if we restrict our independent variable to exclude education and employment, we fail to find consistent results (see M4–6 and M10–12 in Table D7). Our replication only reports a positive coefficient on SES in the base model alone (Table E6). Secondly, Ansell and Samuels' data is pooled from as early as 1990, which may suggest that our focus on democratic attitudes in the twenty-first century is identifying a recent shift (it is unclear if Ansell and Samuels include round fixed effects).

We adopt our own modeling strategy in the main text for a number of reasons. We prefer to use question V140 as our dependent variable for example, which asks respondents to tell how important it is to themselves to live in a democracy. Ansell and Samuels, by contrast, use variable V130, which asks respondents to assess the appropriateness of democracy as a means to govern the country. We believe that variable V140 better captures individuals' preferences for their own livelihoods whereas V130 focuses on democracy as an abstract concept. Still, as illustrated in Table E6, we find no effect of income or SES on V130.

Lastly, we prefer to use fixed effects at the country level to absorb a host of unobserved country specific factors. We also differ in our choice of control variables. As discussed in the main text, we include measures of a respondent's age, but not aged squared (though results are consistent), whether or not they live in an urban center, their religiosity and, importantly, their assessment of their state's current level of democracy. Ansell and Samuels include measures of religiosity in some (i.e. Table 8.4 on p. 186) but not all models, while other control variables, for example *children*, fail to improve model fit in our data, are not theoretically motivated in their discussion or the broader literature and, when included, have no effect on the coefficients of interest. Lastly, Ansell and Samuels report clustering standard errors by country (p. 194). We do similarly, but run all models with robust standard errors to account for heteroscedasticity.

Table E6 Replication of Ansell and Samuels (2014)

	Whether Democracy is Desirable Binary (p. 195)						Whether Democracy is Desirable Ordered (p. 196)					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Socioeconomic Status	0.119* (0.056)	0.062 (0.072)	0.157 (0.384)				0.047 (0.051)	0.047 (0.051)	-0.181 (0.315)	0.067 (0.051)	0.072 (0.054)	-0.121 (0.246)
Income Factor				0.059 (0.064)	0.044 (0.074)	0.148 (0.361)				0.067 (0.051)	-0.062* (0.029)	-0.061* (0.028)
Education				0.131* (0.049)	0.099* (0.046)	0.118* (0.049)				0.067 (0.019)	-0.059* (0.029)	-0.061* (0.028)
Male	0.163* (0.079)	0.104* (0.051)	0.104* (0.049)	0.113 (0.072)	0.087† (0.049)	0.084† (0.050)	-0.086† (0.047)	-0.086† (0.047)	-0.087† (0.045)	-0.085 (0.059)	-0.074 (0.045)	-0.075† (0.045)
Children	-0.012 (0.110)	-0.175 (0.128)	-0.174 (0.127)	0.008 (0.109)	-0.146 (0.129)	-0.131 (0.129)	0.069 (0.097)	0.069 (0.097)	0.056 (0.097)	-0.067 (0.089)	0.072 (0.100)	0.0722 (0.101)
Age	0.019* (0.009)	0.026* (0.008)	0.025* (0.008)	0.011 (0.009)	0.022* (0.009)	0.020* (0.008)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.006)	0.005 (0.011)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.006)
Age sq.	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Gini	-0.028* (0.06)	-0.028* (0.007)	-0.028* (0.007)	-0.042* (0.003)	-0.042* (0.003)	-0.035* (0.005)	0.012† (0.006)	0.012† (0.006)	0.003 (0.005)	0.023* (0.004)	0.023* (0.004)	0.024* (0.004)
Log GDP p.c.	-0.342* (0.053)	-0.342* (0.053)	-0.341* (0.055)	-0.431* (0.033)	-0.431* (0.033)	-0.406* (0.054)	0.643* (0.074)	0.643* (0.074)	0.500* (0.044)	0.768* (0.057)	0.761* (0.057)	0.761* (0.062)
ELF	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Polity	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.012 (0.005)	-0.012* (0.005)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.021* (0.009)	-0.021* (0.009)	-0.009 (0.008)	-0.035* (0.006)	-0.035* (0.006)	-0.036* (0.007)
SES x Gini									0.006 (0.008)			
Income Factor x Gini						-0.003 (0.010)			0.006 (0.008)			0.005 (0.006)
Constant	1.360 (0.153)	5.056 (0.637)	5.059 (0.631)	0.947 (0.261)	5.809 (0.393)	5.298 (0.478)						
N	24,846	16,805	16,805	24,846	16,805	16,805						
Level-2	18	12	12	18	12	12	15,817	15,817	5,817	23,340	15,837	15,837
							12	12	12	18	12	12

† p < 0.1, * p < 0.05.

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Results of multi-level logit (M1-6) and ordered logit (M7-12) models.

NOTES

1. indicates countries surveyed by the WVS and included in Figure 1, but which are dropped from the main analyses in line with the discussion in Appendix B.
2. Ben Ansell and David Samuels, *Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 204.
3. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 414.
4. Daniel Kaufmann et al., “The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues,” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 3, no. 2 (2011).
5. Regardless, Bahrain drops from the sample as the WVS does not ask respondents to assess the level of democracy in the survey.
6. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10, 44.
7. Arab Barometer, “The Arab Barometer: Wave 3,” Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan, 2014); Asianbarometer, “AsianBarometer: Round Three,” Center for East Asia Democratic Studies (Taiwan, 2012).
8. Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 2 (2014), 313–331.
9. Boix, 2003; Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
10. Tatu Vanhanen, “Democratization and Power Resources 1850–2000,” (Tampere: Finnish Social Science Data Archive, 2003); Boix, 2003.
11. Frederick Solt, “The Standardized World Income Inequality Database,” (SWIID Version 5.0, 2014).
12. Geddes et al., 2014; Susan Hyde and Nikolay Marinov, “National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy Dataset (NELDA) 4.0” (2015).
13. Ansell and Samuels, 2014.