

Which kind of democracy for whom?

Explaining citizens' expectations from democracy

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Abstract

What does democracy mean? This question is difficult to answer - theoretically, we find different ideas of a “good” democracy, and also empirically, democracy is a multidimensional concept: Across countries, democracy varies both in its quality and in the way it is realized. Yet, when researchers for example analyze if citizens are satisfied with “the way democracy works” in their country, they suppose that democracy means the same for individuals all over the world. I argue that in order to be able to analyze support for democracy in a more nuanced way, we need to take a step back and ask what democracy actually means to citizens and how such expectations are formed. Based on the theoretical and empirical literature on varieties of democracy, I suppose that individual expectations from democracy differ across countries, and that they are influenced by three factors: The democratic quality, the prevalent democratic model and the democratic culture. Hence, the specific democratic context in which a citizen lives matters - due to socialization and democratic learning, individuals acquire democratic preferences and value those dimensions more which they experience in their own democracy. Using individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 6 as well as country-level data from the Democracy Barometer, I test how the national democratic context in 27 European democracies influences these individual democratic ideals. Indeed, I find evidence for both socialization and participation effects of the democratic context on citizens' democratic ideals.

Keywords: Democratic ideals, political support, varieties of democracy

1. Introduction & state of research¹

According to Campbell (2013: 1), "few claims of 20th-century political science have proved as enduringly relevant as the notion that stable democracy depends upon a concordant wellspring of supportive citizen attitudes". At least since Almond & Verba (1963) and David Easton (1957; 1965) have introduced the notions of *civic culture* and *political support*, the question of citizens' support for and satisfaction with democracy has been an important topic for social scientists. When researchers analyze if citizens are satisfied with "the way democracy works" in their country, or whether they support specific democratic institutions, they implicitly suppose that democracy means the same for individuals all over the world. This is, however, a problematic assumption, given that democracy is a multidimensional concept, and that citizens might differ concerning the criteria they expect a democracy to fulfill. In this paper, I argue that in order to be able to analyze support for democracy in a more nuanced way, we need to take a step back and ask what democracy actually means to citizens, what they expect from a democracy, and how such expectations are formed.

Following the typology proposed by David Easton and revised by Pippa Norris (1999; 2011), political support can be measured on different levels, ranging from specific support for political actors to diffuse support for the political community and political regime. Satisfaction with democracy as a regime can be located on a medium level of this typology. In the respective literature, two main approaches to explain country-level differences in citizens' attitudes towards democracy can be distinguished: A democratic history and political culture approach (Almond & Verba 1963: 473ff.; Anderson 1998; Mishler & Rose 1996; Oskarsson 2010; Anderson & Guillory 1997) focusing on the ways in which different democratic (or authoritarian) experiences and concomitant political values affect support for the political system, and a system performance approach claiming that political and economic performance as well as institutional quality affects whether citizens are satisfied with their democracy (Finkel et al. 1989; Clarke et al. 1993; Aarts & Thomassen 2008; Bernauer & Vatter 2012). Both approaches showed to have some empirical leverage, but the results differ considerably on the data and methods used (Wells & Krieckhaus 2006), and the best explanatory power seems to be reached with models that combine both factors (Wagner et al. 2009). Further, several studies have also focused on the effects of individual-level factors such as support for the incumbent government (Anderson & Tverdova 2001; Curini et al. 2012) or the economic situation (Schäfer 2012) on democratic support. Empirical results suggest that personal characteristics like being part of the

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political majority and a favorable individual economic situation lead to higher degrees of satisfaction with democracy.

Yet, little evidence is available that could answer the question whether ordinary citizens agree with political scientists on what democracy is and what it should be about. Indeed, several studies imply that most people, even in authoritarian countries, identify democracy in terms of political rights such as freedom and civil liberties (Dalton et al. 2007; Huang et al. 2008; Canache 2012). But apart from that, no systematic analysis of citizens' expectations from democracy is available. Hence, although there is a large body of research on the political cultures of Western democracies, "little is known about what democracy actually means to average citizens [...] or the relevance of these beliefs for understanding how satisfied people are with the operation of democracy in their country" (Kornberg & Clarke 1994: 557). In the light of this theoretical and empirical gap, research about citizens' support for democracy is potentially misleading, given that it is based on the assumption that democracy is a clearly defined and thus internationally comparable notion. According to Canache (2012: 1150), researchers in the area of political support are "well advised to step back and ask more fundamental questions regarding what citizens think democracy is and how democracy is defined [...]". Hence, if we want to know more about the factors that explain individual satisfaction with democracy, we need to consider citizens' definitions of and expectations from democracy first. Democracy is a highly complex concept, and it might well be that we measure different things across countries and across individuals when we try to capture support for democracy.

In this paper, I want to contribute to the theory-building and the empirical knowledge in this under-researched area by exploring what citizens expect from a democracy, and why. Using individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 6 as well as country-level data from the Democracy Barometer, I test if and how citizens' expectations are influenced by the democratic context in their respective country. *Expectations from democracy* are defined as the normative ideal of how a democracy in general should work. I suppose that every citizen - in a more or less precise way - has a picture of how an ideal democracy should be in mind. In other words, citizens expect a democracy to fulfill specific criteria, and these criteria differ across citizens. The *democratic context*, on the other hand, consists of three factors: First, the *democratic quality* of a country's institutions. Second, the *democratic model*, designating the way democracy is realized in a specific country - referring to the literature on "varieties" or "models" of democracy, I suppose that each country implements democratic principles in a different way by emphasizing some dimensions more than others. And third, the *democratic culture*, referring to the question whether the country has a communist past.

This paper is structured as follows: In the next section, I discuss the notion of varieties of democracy both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. Then, I explain my theoretical

model and my hypotheses concerning the impact of this democratic context on individual expectations. Further, I introduce the data and methodology I use to test these hypotheses empirically. Subsequently, I present and discuss the results, to then finish with a general conclusion.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Varieties of democracy in theory and practice

From a normative point of view, the fact that “democracy” can mean different things has long been established - democratic theory offers plenty of different and often opposed conceptions of what “government by the people” is supposed to mean and how it is to function. For proponents of the minimalist perspective, democracy is merely a means of protecting citizens against arbitrary rule. The main aim of this type of democracy is to elect skilled representative elites capable of making public decisions, and protecting individual liberties, and elections serve to express and aggregate people’s interest. Having its roots in classical republicanism and the liberal model of democracy established by Mill or Tocqueville, modern versions of a minimalist democracy can for instance be found in Schumpeter’s economic model of democracy (Schumpeter 1943: 269) and in pluralist models, i.e. from Dahl (1971: 2ff.). In a participatory conception of democracy, to the contrary, participation is valued for its own sake and is considered the core of a democracy. Involvement in politics is assumed to foster political efficacy and democratic skills and to generate concern with collective problems, and citizens are thus supposed to have opportunities to deal more profoundly with political issues in deliberative ways. Based on the classical Athenian democracy, this type of democracy was brought forward by Rousseau, and later on picked up by modern proponents of participatory and deliberative democracy such as Barber (1984: 99ff.). Further, a social democratic approach to democracy also considers political outcomes like social equality as essential for fair and meaningful democratic participation. A government thus has the duty to guarantee the resources that are necessary for the use of these rights as well as an equal allocation amongst the citizens (cf. Held 1987: 274ff). According to scholars such as Fuchs (1999: 125ff.), the distinction between liberal and social(ist) democracy is the most important one when it comes to normative models of democracy. He sees the main difference between the two models in the emphasis of the organization principle of relationships between individuals: While in the liberal model this principle is competition, in the socialist model it is solidarity (*ibid.*: 128).

Further, we can distinguish between two empirical approaches to classify democracies. The first one is to simply look at the overall level of democratic quality - the realization of democracy as a principle. Clearly, some countries are more democratic than others, because they offer more

political rights, more civil liberties, or a better rule of law. Even amongst established democracies, such qualitative differences can be found, as for instance the Democracy Barometer (Bühlmann et al. 2012) has showed. Using this approach, existing democracies can be ranked based on their performance: Some of them fulfill democratic principles better than others. The second approach refers to the idea that democracies can also differ from each other without being qualitatively different: The literature on varieties of democracy assumes that established democracies diverge in the way they realize democratic principles. Although they are all democratic, they have implemented different principles through formal institutional arrangements and informal practices and procedures. As Bochsler and Kriesi have put it, “they are all variations on a general theme” (2013: 69). Democracy, thus, consists of several dimensions, and existing democracies emphasize these dimensions differently. They approach the ‘general theme’, democracy, in different ways. For instance, as Lijphart (1984; 1999) has famously stated, some democracies rely more on majoritarian decision-making, whereas others emphasize consensus-oriented forms of power-sharing. According to him, the distinction between majoritarian and consensual decision-making (measured on a vertical dimension between executive and legislative as well as on a horizontal dimension in form of federalism or unitarism) accounts for most of the variance among established democracies. This distinction also seems to play a role for citizens’ attitudes: As Anderson & Guillory (1997) have found, living in a consensual democratic system increases satisfaction with democracy, especially amongst election losers. Vatter (2009) has added another dimension to this approach by claiming that democracies also vary between representation and direct participation. The impact of this dimension on citizens has been analyzed as well: Stadelmann-Steffen & Vatter (2012) find a positive effect of using direct democratic institutions on satisfaction with democracy in general, and Bernauer & Vatter (2012) identify a negative effect on the difference in satisfaction between election winners and losers.

2.2. Explaining citizens’ expectations from democracy

Both from a theoretical and from an empirical point of view, democracy is thus not a unidimensional concept simply ranging from democratic to non-democratic. Hence, it seems consequential to suppose that citizens also conceive of democracy in variable terms, and that they have different democratic ideals. Several authors have analyzed individual attitudes towards democracy and mapped different “types of democrats” among citizens (Schedler & Sarsfield 2007; Kriesi 2013). Their findings indeed suggest that citizens’ beliefs which model of democracy is desirable differ - some emphasize liberal notions more, others have a social democratic perspective or find direct participation important (Ferrín Pereira 2013; Wessels 2013). But if individuals vary in their normative conception of what a democracy should be, then

where do such individual preferences come from? Expectations from democracy, as defined above, refer to the *normative ideal* of how a democracy in general should be like and which criteria it should fulfill. Generally, they could be inspired by both theoretical and empirical notions. In this paper, I want to focus on the way how these notions differ across countries. In other words, I assume that there is a relationship between the national democratic context - the way in which democracy is realized a specific country - and citizens' expectations from democracy. My hypothesis concerns three factors: First, the *democratic quality* of a country's institutions. Second, the *democratic culture*, referring to the question whether a country has a communist past, and third, the *democratic model*, designating the way democracy is realized in a specific country. Concretely, I assume that democratic quality and democratic culture have an impact on citizens' preferences concerning liberal and socialist democratic norms, while democratic models affect citizens' expectations towards majoritarian (vs. consociational) and direct (vs. representative) democracy.

This implies that the way democratic principles are implemented in a specific country has an impact on individual expectations from democracy in general. Such a macro-micro-effect could be caused by two mechanisms: One way for citizens to "learn" democracy is through socialization - that is, living under a democratic regime and adapting its values due to "passive" exposure to the regime principles. Following the literature on democratic learning and political socialization, we can assume that individuals acquire political attitudes and values through processes of socialization (Mishler & Rose 2002). More generally, social constructivist approaches in sociology assume that individual norms and values are generated in a process of social experiences and interactions (Berger & Luckmann 1966). Such processes can occur in micro-contexts such as families, schools or peer-groups as well as in macro-contexts - in a society or culture as a whole. As Fuchs (1999: 125) puts it, "ideas about what a democracy is and how it should look [...] are instilled by primary and secondary socialization processes." Whereas micro-level socialization can lead to differing values among individuals of the same society, depending for example on their gender, class and education (Almond & Verba 1963: 377ff.), macro-level socialization should have similar effects on all the members of a society or cultural sphere: "Everyone socialized into a culture is exposed to the same set of values supporting the regime and its basic rules of the game" (Mishler & Rose 2002: 7). Hence, democratic values are, at least partly, created through regime-specific socialization.

From the literature on the democratic culture in post-communist countries (Fuchs & Roller 2006; Mishler & Rose 1996), we know that exposure to a democratic regime has an impact on individual attitudes towards democracy: The longer citizens have lived in a (functioning) democracy, the higher their support for liberal democratic principles tends to be. Further, evidence from Germany shows that citizens in the former Eastern Germany, contrary to

Western Germans, prefer socialist ideas of democracy over liberal principles (Sack 2014: 12ff.): While in the West an understanding of democracy near to the liberal model of democracy dominates, in the East the dominating understanding of democracy is one that corresponds to the socialist model of democracy. Such differences in democratic values are attributed to the varying socialization in the former West and the former East. Other authors could confirm this result for other post-communist states (Fuchs & Roller 2006; Pop-Eleches & Tucker 2014). Hence, differences in democratic norms between the western and the former socialist states in a great part can be explained by diverging socialization experiences in these states (Fuchs 1999). Similarly, Bochsler & Hänni (2015) can show that citizens in younger and especially in post-communist democracies tend towards a performance-based view of their regimes' legitimacy, whereas established democracies dispose of a more procedural legitimacy.

If we refer these argument to the quality of democracy in a country, we can assume that the higher the democratic quality in a country, the higher the support for procedural, liberal, democratic principles. On the other hand, when it comes to the democratic culture of a country, we can expect citizens of post-communist democracies to have rather performance-based expectations from democracy – hence, that they prefer a social model of democracy over a liberal one.

H1: Citizens tend to value social democratic principles less and liberal democratic principles more when the democratic quality in their home country is higher.

H2: Citizens tend to value social democratic principles more and liberal democratic principles less when they live in a post-communist democratic culture.

These arguments are based on the democratic quality and culture of a regime. Yet, as described before, democracies also differ in the way they realize democratic principles, independent of the age and the quality of democracy. Based on Lijphart (1999) and Vatter (2007), I use the two main dimensions of democracy, which are majoritarian vs. consensual and direct vs. representative democracies. I assume that growing up in a specific democratic model also leads to favorable attitudes towards these aspects of democracy. Be it via the media, through formal education or in interaction with other citizens, the way democracy is realized in a specific country will very likely have an impact on individual conceptions of democracy. Such a macro-micro effect can also be caused by the mere definition of the term democracy: In a country with strong direct democratic institutions, speaking about “democracy” will often imply direct democracy. Hence, a citizen of such a country might immediately think of direct participation when hearing the word democracy. This leads to the third and fourth hypothesis:

H3: Citizens tend to value consensual (majoritarian) democratic principles more when they live in a consensual (majoritarian) democracy.

H4: Citizens tend to value direct (representative) democratic principles more when they live in a direct (representative) democracy.

So far, I assume an indirect socialization effect. A more specific way of socialization is the adaptation of democratic attitudes through active participation in democratic processes: Participatory approaches to democracy (Barber 1984; Mansbridge 1999) presume that political participation has an educational component. In other words, participation in democratic processes serves to "form" the democratic citizens. Individual political interests are thus seen as something that is not endogenous to a person, but develops in the course of democratic processes. As Quintelier & van Deth (2014) have found, political behavior affects political attitudes, and not (just) vice versa. Their findings indicate that it is much more likely that political participation strengthens political attitudes than that attitudes trigger participation. Institutionalized social contacts are thus seen as a 'school of democracy' where people learn and internalize political attitudes (ibid.: 4). If we confer these arguments to democratic structures, the type of democratic participation might also affect individual preferences from democracy. In addition to the passive socialization effect, there could thus also be a form of active socialization. From a social psychology perspective, this means that people change their attitudes and emotions based on what they infer from their own (political) behavior (Quintelier & Hooghe 2012). In other words, the democratic structures citizens experience in their political participation will have an effect on the democratic values and thus the normative ideal of democracy they hold. In this context, we could speak of a procedural effect of democratic structures. Hence, Citizens who actively participate in democratic processes should be more likely to orient their expectations from democracy towards the democratic context they experience. Yet, other than the regime socialization hypothesis, this theory only applies to those citizens that are actually participating in democratic processes, and not to all citizens: Someone who abstains from elections, referenda or other ways of democratic decision-making is not subjected to a procedural effect of democratic participation. For the effect of democratic quality, this means that the more citizens participate in democratic procedures, the more likely they are to adapt their principles to the liberal democracy they experience – hence to value less social democratic principles. For the democratic culture, however, I expect this effect to be reversed, given that post-communist democracies now have implemented liberal democratic structures. Hence, participating in these democratic processes should make citizens less likely to prefer social democracy over liberal democracy:

H1b: *Active participation in democratic decision-making reinforces the effects of democratic quality on citizens' support for social and liberal democratic principles.*

H2b: *Active participation in democratic decision-making reduces the effect of a post-communist democratic culture on the support for social and liberal democratic principles.*

When it comes to democratic models, the most obvious example would again be direct democracy - a citizen who experiences direct participation in referenda himself might also develop positive attitudes towards this form of democracy, more than someone used to representative democratic elections. The same also applies for majoritarian and representative democratic systems:

H3b: *Active participation in democratic decision-making reinforces the positive effect of valuing consensual (majoritarian) democratic principles more when living in a consensual (majoritarian) democracy.*

H4b: *Active participation in democratic decision-making reinforces the positive effect of valuing direct (representative) democratic principles more when living in a direct (representative) democracy.*

Of course there are several forms of participation in democratic processes. Most importantly, we can distinguish between electoral participation and non-electoral (or alternative) forms of participation. Whereas electoral participation consists of voting for national, regional or communal elections as well as referenda, non-electoral participation includes participating in demonstrations, signing petitions, contacting politicians etc. The second set of hypotheses thus consists of two sub-parts, both referring to cross-level interaction effects between individual participation behavior and country-level democratic context. In the following, I will test the both the direct and the interaction effect of the democratic context on citizens' expectations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data & operationalization

In order to analyze the effects of macro-level democratic structures on individual attitudes towards democracy, data on two levels is needed. On the individual level, the 6th wave of the European Social Survey contains a set of questions about citizens' expectations from democracy

in general, and covers 53.000 respondents in 27 European democracies². Some examples for these items are:

“And now thinking about democracy in general rather than about democracy in [country]: How important do you think it is for a democracy in general...

...that the courts are able to stop the government acting beyond its authorities?

...that the rights of minority groups are protected?”

Each question can be answered on an 11-point scale from 0 (not important at all) to 10 (very important). All in all, the ESS offers 19 items on different democratic characteristics, ranging from input criteria such as the voting system to output criteria such as social policies. These items are used to capture citizens’ democratic ideals. The second data source, covering country-level data, is the Democracy Barometer (Bochsler & Merkel et al. 2014). This dataset offers a large set of more than 100 variables, measuring the fulfillment of different institutional characteristics in 70 democracies, which I use to measure the democratic context in a country.

3.2. Dependent variables

To capture citizens’ expectations from democracy, I use the ESS items.³ Liberal and social democracy are each measured by several variables: The liberal dimension by preferences for free and fair elections, freedom of opposition, media freedom, transparency, minority rights, and equality before the law. The social dimension is measured by citizens’ expectations concerning the protection against poverty and redistribution.⁴ For the two dimensions distinguishing democratic models, I use the item on direct participation (“How important do you think it is for a democracy that citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums?”) for the direct-representative dimension, and the item asking for government preferences (“The government in some countries is formed by a single party; in other countries by two or more parties in coalition. Which is better?”) to capture the majoritarian – consensual dimension.

3.3. Explanatory variables

For the 27 democracies in my sample, I measure the democratic quality, the democratic culture and the democratic model on the country level. *Democratic quality*, first, is measured with the

² Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

³ For a list of all items and the operationalization, see table B and C in the appendix.

⁴ Indeed, an exploratory factor analysis amongst all expectations items confirmed that these two dimensions are the most important ones structuring citizens preferences.

overall score of the Democracy Barometer, with values ranging from 0 to 100⁵. The *democratic culture* is measured by the country's communist past – former communist countries are coded as 1, no-communist countries as 0.⁶ For the different *models of democracy*, I use two sets of variables from the Democracy Barometer: To capture the majoritarian – consensual dimension I use the share of coalition governments over the past 23 years, where 0 indicates only single-party governments, and 1 indicates only coalition governments). To measure the direct – representative dimension, I use the component “constitutional provisions for direct democracy”, consisting of two indicators for direct democratic institutions as well as for participation quora, again ranging from 0 to 100.

3.4. Analysis

I use cross-sectional hierarchical models where level-one units are citizens and level-two units are countries. As most of my dependent variables - citizens' expectations from democracy - are continuous on a scale from 0 to 10, the models are linear⁷. After excluding non-citizens and respondents below 18 years (not able to participate in national elections), I have a sample of 47.000 respondents⁸ from 27 countries.

The standard random-intercept model takes the following form: $Y_{ij} = \alpha_{ij} + \beta_1 X_{ij} + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_i$, where $i=1, \dots$ (for N individuals) and for $j=1, \dots$ (for J countries). Intercepts (α) vary across countries, whereas the slopes (β) remain constant. In my specific models, for each dimension of democracy the equation takes the form:

$$\text{expectation}_{ij} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{context}_j + \beta_2 \text{context}_j * \text{voting}_i + \beta_3 \text{context}_j * \text{participation}_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

The outcome Y is the individual-level variable expectations from democracy for a person i in a country j, which is explained by the country-level structure of this dimension ($\beta_1 \cdot \text{structure}_j$), as well as by the interaction between individual voting behavior and the democratic structure ($\beta_2 \cdot \text{context}_j \cdot \text{voting}_i$), and the interaction between non-electoral participation and the democratic

⁵ For each country, I take the mean of each variable over the time period covered by the Democracy Barometer (1990-2012). I use this approach because I want to measure stable institutional structures, as I assume that the perceptions and ideas citizens have about democracy are influenced by the experiences they make over a longer time period.

⁶ In my sample, 10 out of 27 countries have a communist legacy: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

⁷ The measure for government size however is a binary outcome variable, for which I thus fitted a logistic regression model. It takes the form:

$$\text{logit}\{\text{Pr}(\text{Exp}_{ij} = 1 | x_{ij}, \alpha_i)\} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{context}_j + \beta_2 \text{context}_j * \text{voting}_i + \beta_3 \text{context}_j * \text{participation}_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

⁸ After excluding all missings, the number of individuals is further reduced to just under 40.000.

structure ($\beta_3 \cdot \text{context}_j \cdot \text{participation}_i$). The country-level explanatory variable (democratic context) takes values from 0 to 100.

On the individual level, voting is a dummy (1 = voted last election), whereas non-electoral participation is a scale ranging from 0 (no non-electoral participation at all) to 7 (participation in seven different forms). Further, I control for individual-level factors, namely gender, age, education, unemployment, being born in another country and left-right self-placement on an 11-point-scale. (For descriptive statistics and coding of all variables see table A in the appendix). In addition, political sophistication is an important factor in determining individual patterns of support. The literature on sophistication suggest that factual knowledge about politics is the best single indicator of sophistication (cf. Zaller 2006). However, the ESS does not offer such knowledge measures. Authors such as Gabriel & Keil (2013: 167-169ff) have argued that political interest (as measured in the ESS) differs considerably across European countries and can be seen as an adequate proxy for political sophistication. Therefore, I also use political interest to measure sophistication at the individual level. The individuals are assigned to two groups: Low political sophistication = no/little interest in politics and high political sophistication = high/very high interest in politics. As a robustness check, I test my models in both groups to see whether sophistication changes the outcomes.

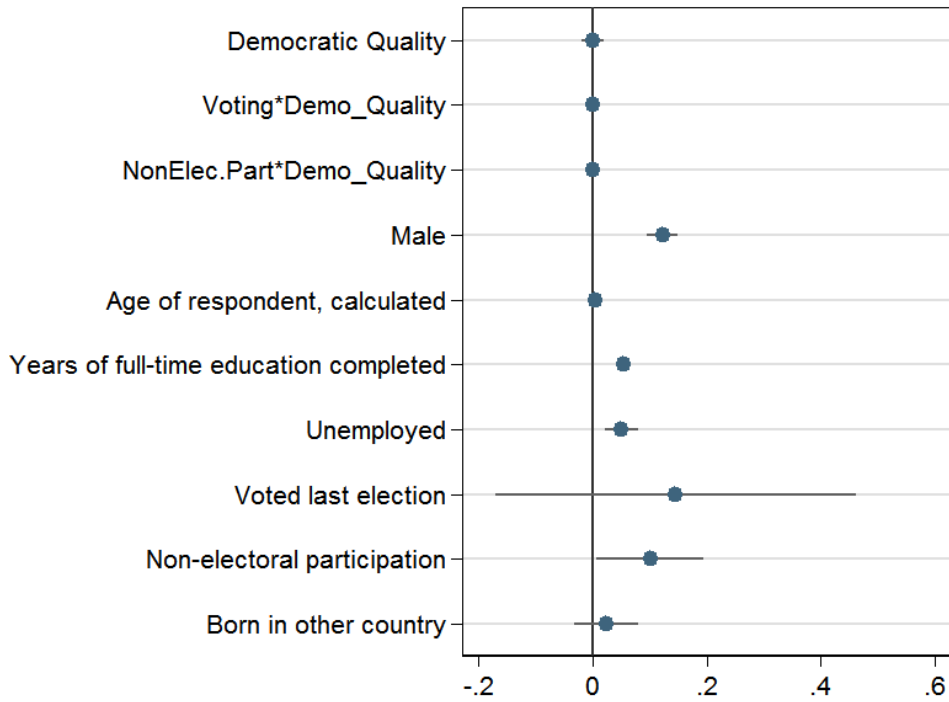
4. Results

4.1. Democratic quality and democratic culture

In a first step, I test my hypotheses 1 and 2, who deal with the effect of democratic quality and democratic culture on citizens expectations. To do so, I test the impact of the country-level context on two dependent variables: Liberal and social expectations from democracy. Figure 1 and table 1 show the effects of democratic quality. As for the expectations towards liberal democracy (Model 1), there seem to be no direct socialization effects of living in a country with high democratic quality on the importance citizens attribute to this dimension for a democracy in general. Participation in democratic processes in interaction with democratic quality does not have significant effects either. Yet, looking at model 2, we can see that there are significant socialization and participation effects of democratic quality on citizens *social expectations*: As theoretically expected, living in a country with higher democratic quality makes citizens less likely to value social democracy strongly, confirming hypothesis 1a. Further, there is a significant interaction effects for voting: Participating in elections seems to reinforce the negative effect of democratic quality on social expectations. This confirms hypothesis 1b – apparently, the more citizens participate in democratic procedures, the more likely they are to adapt their principles to the liberal democracy they experience.

Figure 1: The effects of democratic quality (coefficient plots)

Model 1: DV Expectations liberal democracy



Model 2: DV Expectations social democracy

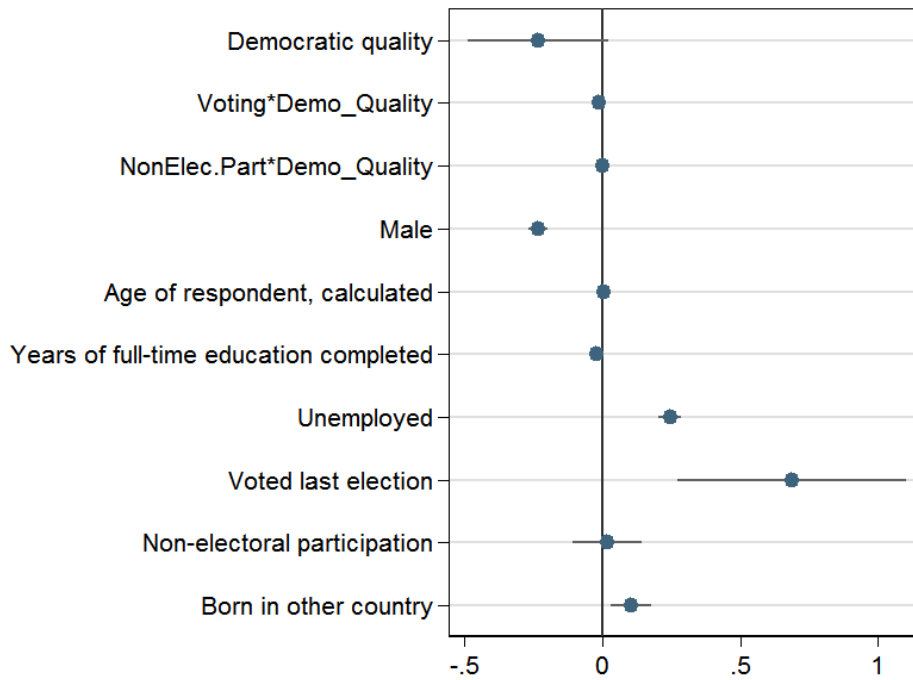


Table 1: The effects of democratic quality (full table)

	Model 1: Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2: Expectations social b/se
Democratic Quality in country	0.000741 (0.00993)	-0.0234+ (0.0130)
Voting*Democratic Quality	0.000729 (0.00282)	-0.0121** (0.00371)
NonElec.Part*Democratic Quality	0.000274 (0.000792)	0.000620 (0.00106)
Male	0.122*** (0.0136)	-0.233*** (0.0181)
Age of respondent, calculated	0.00365*** (0.000429)	0.00622*** (0.000568)
Years of full-time education completed	0.0546*** (0.00187)	-0.0230*** (0.00249)
Unemployed	0.0505*** (0.0153)	0.245*** (0.0203)
Voted last election	0.145 (0.161)	0.688** (0.212)
Non-electoral participation	0.100* (0.0478)	0.0156 (0.0642)
Born in other country	0.0227 (0.0287)	0.103* (0.0381)
Constant	7.534*** (0.589)	9.823*** (0.770)
Var (Constant)	-1.118*** (0.146)	-0.851*** (0.146)
Var (Residual)	0.268*** (0.00365)	0.569*** (0.00360)
N Level 1	37494	38640
N Level 2	24	24
AIC	126653.8	153723.6
BIC	126764.8	153834.9
Chi2	2030.6	631.8
ICC	0.05880	0.05523

Notes: Linear Hierarchical Random-Intercept Regression. Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: ESS 2012, Democracy Barometer.

Figure 2 and table 2 show the effects of democratic culture on the same two dimensions. Again, there is no direct socialization effect of living in a post-communist democratic culture on citizens' expectations towards liberal democracy (Model 1). Yet, as Model 2 shows, there is a direct effect on social expectations: Living in a post-democratic country makes citizens more likely to value social democracy high, supporting hypothesis H2a. Interestingly, the participation

effect works differently than expected: Citizens who participate in elections are even more likely to value social democracy high when they live in a post-communist country, rejecting H2b. Further, engaging in non-electoral forms of participation apparently leads to lower expectations in both dimensions of democracy when living in a post-communist democracy, pointing to the fact that citizens in these countries who choose such forms of participation have lower democratic ideals.

Figure 2: The effects of democratic culture (coefficient plots)

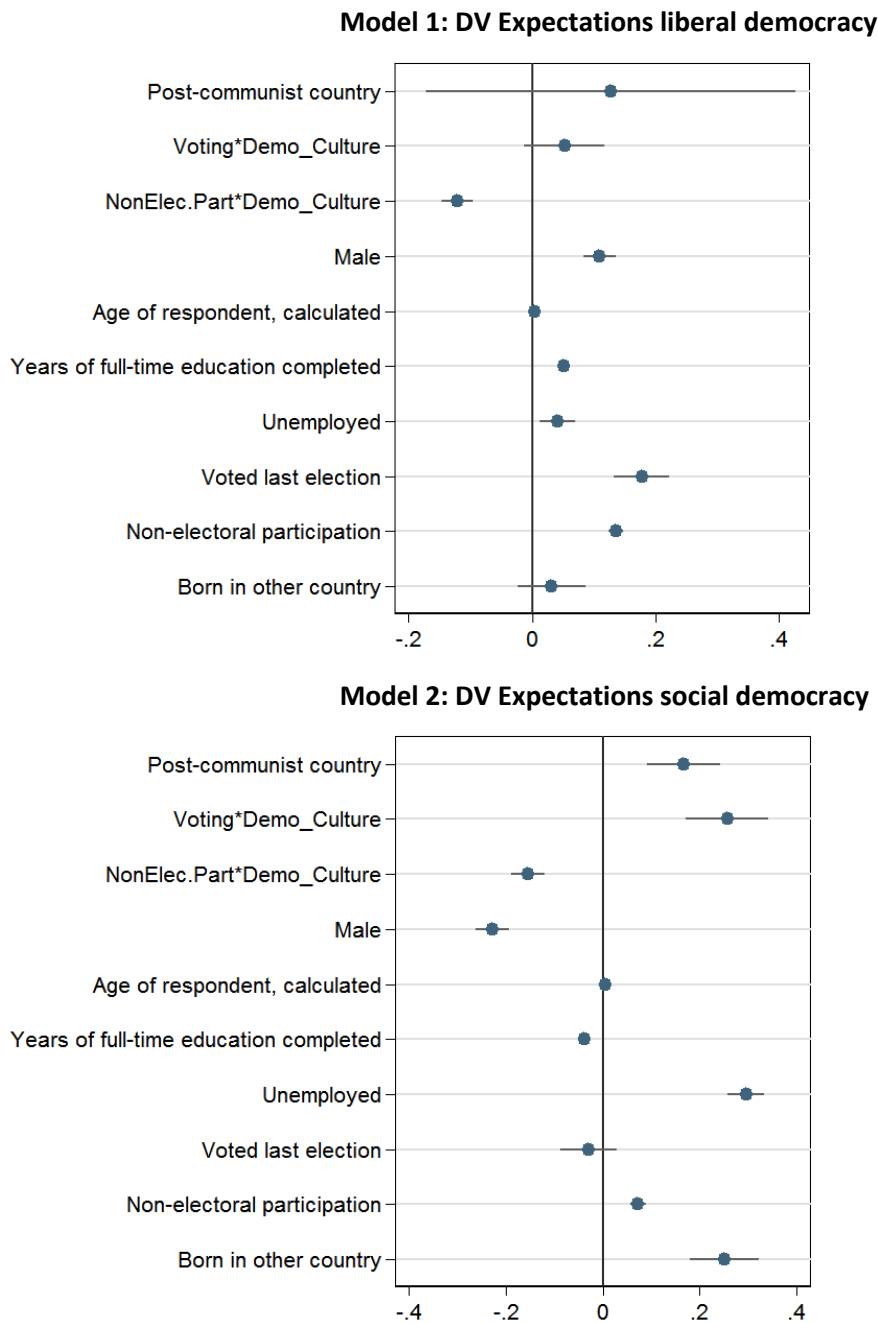


Table 2: The effects of democratic culture (full table)

	Model 1 Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2 Expectations social b/se
Post-communist country	0.127 (0.153)	0.166*** (0.0387)
Voting*Democratic Culture	0.0528 (0.0331)	0.256*** (0.0438)
NonElec.Part*Demos_Culture	-0.121*** (0.0133)	-0.156*** (0.0178)
Male	0.110*** (0.0130)	-0.227*** (0.0176)
Age of respondent, calculated	0.00346*** (0.000412)	0.00400*** (0.000550)
Years of full-time education completed	0.0512*** (0.00181)	-0.0389*** (0.00235)
Unemployed	0.0419** (0.0145)	0.295*** (0.0194)
Voted last election	0.178*** (0.0227)	-0.0294 (0.0301)
Non-electoral participation	0.136*** (0.00626)	0.0725*** (0.00826)
Born in other country	0.0315 (0.0280)	0.251*** (0.0366)
Constant	7.519*** (0.0997)	8.615*** (0.0520)
Var (Constant)	0.279*** (0.00346)	0.598*** (0.00340)
Var (Residual)	-0.976*** (0.137)	-0.569*** (0.00360)
N Level 1	41700	43126
N Level 2	27	27
AIC	141747.5	174008.1
BIC	141859.8	174112.1
Chi2	2007.5	1213.5
ICC	0.07518	0.08118

Notes: Linear Hierarchical Random-Intercept Regression. Standard errors in parentheses.
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: ESS 2012, Democracy Barometer.

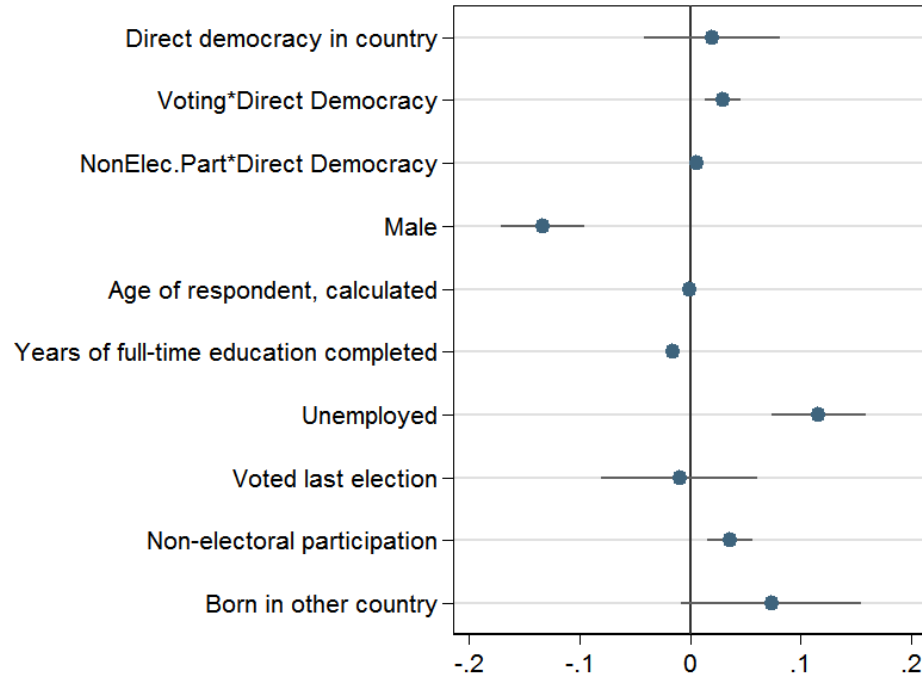
4.2. Democratic models

In a next step, I test hypotheses 3 and 4, who refer to different models of democracy. Generally, I find support for the hypotheses regarding socialization and participation for direct participation and the type of government. Table 3 shows the results for these two dimensions. As for the question of referenda (Model 1), there seem to be no direct socialization effects of living in a country with direct democratic institutions on the importance citizens attribute to this dimension for a democracy in general, rejecting hypothesis H3. Yet, there are significant interaction effects both for voting and for non-electoral participation. Participating in democratic processes thus seems to have a positive effect on the likelihood of citizens living in a country with direct democratic institutions to value this dimension more for a democracy in general, supporting hypothesis 3b. When it comes to the preferred form of government (Model 2), we see a significant direct effect of the national democratic structure on citizens' preferences for a coalition government in comparison to a single-party government. Citizens living in a country with high shares of coalition governments are thus overall more likely to find a coalition government better for democracy in general. Additionally, there is also a significant interaction effect for voting and the type of government. As with direct democracy, participating in democratic structures through electoral means seems to increase the likelihood of valuing coalition governments higher than single party governments if someone lives in a coalition-led country. However, this only applies for electoral participation, non-electoral participation does not seem to increase the likelihood of individuals to favor the type of government they experience. This supports hypotheses H4 and H4b.⁹

⁹ As a robustness check, tables D, E, F and G in the appendix show separate models for all respondents with high and low sophistication. Generally, effects are stronger and more significant in the group with high sophistication: Table D shows that the direct effect of democratic quality on social democratic expectation is only significant in the group with high sophistication. In table F, we can see that the procedural effects of direct democracy only take place for sophisticated respondents, as the interaction effects are not significant in the low sophistication group. This result is confirmed in the second dimension, the type of government. As table G shows, the interaction effect of voting and government type is also only significant in the group of sophisticated respondents, while the direct effect remains in both groups. These findings are in line with theoretical expectations on the effects of political sophistication, and confirm the validity of the results. An interesting finding, however, are the effects of democratic culture (table E), which seems to get stronger for less sophisticated citizens, especially the interaction effects with voting. Apparently, a post-communist culture has stronger (and more long-standing) effects on less politically interested citizens.

Figure 3: The effects of democratic models (coefficient plots)

Model 1: DV Expectations direct democracy



Model 2: DV Expectations coalition government

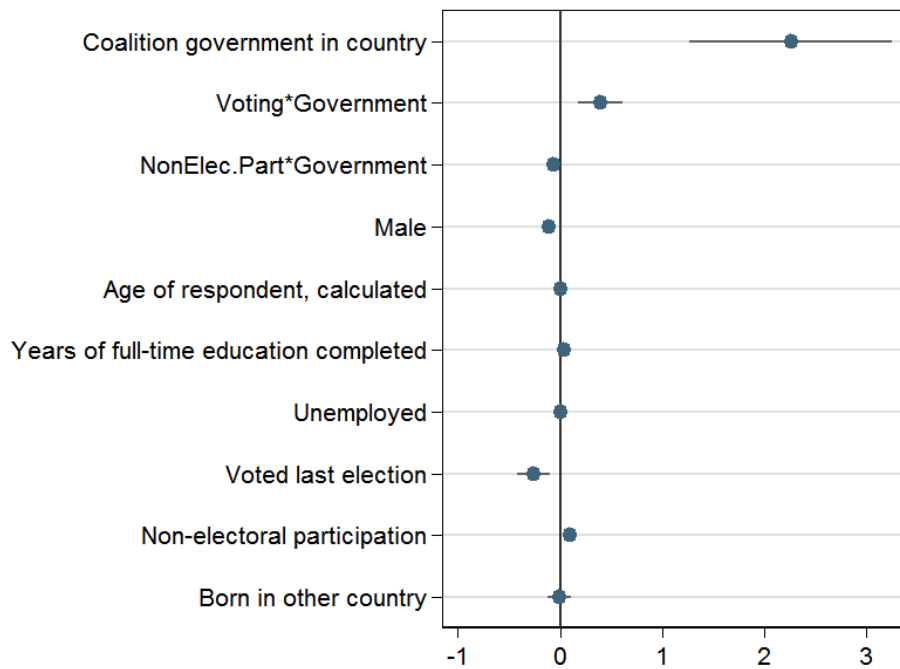


Table 3: The effects of democratic models (full table)

	Model 1: Expectations direct democracy b/se		Model 1: Expectations coalition government b/se
Direct democracy in country	0.000297 (0.00305)	Coalition gov. in country	2.290 ^{***} (0.485)
Voting*Direct democracy	0.00293 ^{***} (0.000874)	Voting*Government	0.341 ^{**} (0.121)
Non-elec. part*Direct democracy	0.000614 [*] (0.000260)	Non-elec. part*Government	-0.0639 (0.0343)
Gender (male)	-0.131 ^{***} (0.0206)	Gender (male)	-0.116 ^{***} (0.0283)
Age	-0.00228 ^{**} (0.000726)	Age	0.00307 ^{**} (0.00102)
Education (years)	-0.0166 ^{***} (0.00285)	Education	0.0397 ^{***} (0.00400)
Experience unemployment	0.119 ^{***} (0.0231)	Experienced unemployment	0.00958 (0.0316)
Voted last election	0.0259 (0.0388)	Voted last election	-0.229 [*] (0.0902)
Non-electoral participation	0.0296 [*] (0.0108)	Non-electoral participation	0.0916 ^{***} (0.0249)
Placement on left right scale	-0.0122 [*] (0.00447)	Placement on left right scale	-0.0230 ^{***} (0.00599)
Born in other country	0.0759 (0.0447)	Born in other country	-0.0259 (0.0620)
Constant	8.957 ^{***} (0.299)	Constant	-1.668 ^{**} (0.534)
Var (Constant)	-0.799 ^{***} (0.147)	Var (Constant)	-0.380 [*] (0.141)
Var (Residual)	0.691 ^{***} (0.00363)		
N Level 1	38053	N Level 1	34086
N Level 2	27	N Level 2	27
AIC	160856.9	AIC	31370.7
BIC	160993.6	BIC	31497.2
Chi2	189.4	Chi2	230.6
ICC	0.0483	ICC	0.1245

Notes: Linear Hierarchical Random-Intercept Regression (Model 1), Logistic Hierarchical Random-Intercept model (Model 2). Standard errors in parentheses. ^{*} $p < 0.05$, ^{**} $p < 0.01$, ^{***} $p < 0.001$. Source: ESS 2012, Democracy Barometer.

5. Conclusion

Public support has long been known to be highly relevant for the legitimacy of a political system – as Max Weber (1968: 213) has claimed, “every system of domination attempts to instill in its subordinates the belief in its legitimacy”. Especially in a democracy, popular support is a vital resource, and finding out why citizens are satisfied or dissatisfied is thus all the more important. But what do citizens expect from a democracy, and how are these expectations formed? Answering these questions is crucial for the analysis of individual support for democracy. In this paper, I tried to make a first step in explaining citizens’ expectations from democracy. Based on the notion that democracy is not a unidimensional concept, but can take different forms, I suppose that citizens also conceive of democracy in variable terms, and expect it to fulfill different criteria. Further, I assumed the democratic context in their home country to have an impact on the expectations they have towards democracy. Indeed, my results support the hypothesis that national democratic structures affect citizens’ perceptions of how a democracy is supposed to be: Citizens are less likely to value social democracy when they live in a country with high democratic quality, while being a citizen of a post-communist democratic culture makes them more prone to supporting social democracy. Individual preferences for liberal democracy, however, are not affected by the democratic quality and culture of a country – apparently, citizens’ standards on liberal democratic institutions do not vary significantly across countries.¹⁰ Similarly, when it comes to democratic models such as direct participation and the type of government, citizens are more likely to expect from a democracy what they know and experience in their own country. In the case of direct democracy, only those citizens who participate (in electoral as well as non-electoral forms) actively in democratic processes have a higher likelihood to find referenda important for a democracy in general. As for the type of government, there are also direct socialization effects on all citizens of a country.

How can these results be interpreted? First of all, they show that differences in citizens’ expectations from democracy - that is, their conception of how an ideal democracy is supposed to be like - are not only determined by individual-level factors, they also seem to systematically differ between countries. Citizens’ views on democracy as a general concept are apparently influenced by the real-world democracy they experience. Both regime-specific socialization and participation in democratic processes shapes what citizens demand from a democracy, supporting the idea that learning effects of participation also apply to individual democracy perceptions. Hence, these findings imply that on the one hand, the democratic ideals citizens hold are influenced by the quality of democratic institutions in their home country, as well as by

¹⁰ From a measuring perspective, this effect could be due to a rather small variance in most of these dimensions (see descriptive statistics in the appendix), where a large part of respondents finds them highly important for a democracy. Accordingly, differences across countries might simply be too small to matter.

the democratic culture: In line with the theoretical expectations from the literature on democratic learning, citizens of younger and less developed democracies have a more performance-based view of legitimacy and tend to conceive of democracy more in social(ist) terms. On the other hand, empirical varieties of democracy also matter for citizens, as they provide them with a 'blueprint' of how a democracy is supposed to function. Hence, citizens' ideas of how democratic principles should be implemented are shaped by the democratic setting one experiences: The dimensions of direct participation vs. representation (Vatter 2009), and majoritarian vs. consensual decision-making (Lijphart 1999) are in fact the most fundamental dimensions that distinguish established democracies. It is thus not surprising that they are also the most salient ones for citizens.

What does this imply for research on democratic support? Researchers should keep in mind that when we are asking citizens about "democracy", if they support and how they evaluate it, their conception of democracy might differ systematically across countries. Given that also democracy researchers rarely agree on what a democracy is supposed to be like, these results are hardly surprising. Accordingly, including citizens' ideas of democratic quality as well as the country-level democratic context in analyses of cross-sectional analyses of support for democracy is important to avoid unequal measurements. Of course, as it is usually the case when investigating values and attitudes, theoretical models are rarely complex enough to perfectly capture the reality. This does however not mean that we should not try to analyze them - only that results need to be interpreted with a certain caution. Clearly, further research needs to be done in order to determine which other factors influence individual expectations from democracy, and how these expectations affect patterns of support for democratic institutions. Finally, my analysis assumes that expectations from democracy are causally prior to (or even independent of) feelings of satisfaction with democracy. The question of how exactly expectations and satisfaction are linked is a very interesting one, but answering it would have been beyond the scope of my analysis.

Appendix

Table A: Summary statistics of all variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Expectations from democracy (individual- level)</i>					
Representative-direct	45697	8.257807	2.058109	0	10
Consensus-majoritarian	39901	.7694293	.4212034	0	1
Liberal	44345	8.666806	1.410708	0	10
Social	45934	8.458669	1.852573	0	10
<i>Democratic context (country-level)</i>					
Representative-direct	27	28.33003	29.42688	0	100
Consensus-majoritarian	27	.7453324	.2852961	0	1
Democratic quality	27	58.3816	6.905862	48.76	73.04
Democratic culture (1= post-communist)	27	.3834305	.4862269	0	1
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender (1=male)	47311	.457251	.4981744	0	1
Age	47203	49.87367	18.00908	18	103
Unemployment (1=yes)	47036	.3014712	.4589017	0	1
Political sophistication (1=high)	47138	.4578047	.4982217	0	1
Voted last election (1=yes)	45599	.7822759	.4127033	0	1
Non-electoral participation ¹¹	46648	.8198208	1.273318	0	7
Left-Right scale (0 = left, 10=right)	41151	5.211975	2.341998	0	10
Born in other country (1=yes)	47302	.063676	.2441774	0	1

¹¹ Consists of the following variables: "During the last 12 month, have you (1) contacted a politician, (2) worked in a political party or group, (3) worked in another organization, (4) worn a campaign badge/sticker, (5) signed a petition, (6) taken part in a lawful demonstration, (7) boycotted certain products?"

Table B: Operationalization of democratic expectations

Variable	Items (ESS)
<i>Representative-direct</i>	...that citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums?
<i>Majoritarian-consensus</i>	The government in some countries is formed by a single party; in other countries by two or more parties in coalition. (Which is best?)
<i>Social</i>	...that the government protects all citizens against poverty? ...that the government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels?
<i>Liberal</i>	...that national elections are free and fair? ...that opposition parties are free to criticize the government? ...that the media are free to criticize the government? ...that the media provide citizens with reliable information to judge the government? ...that the rights of minority groups are protected? ...that the courts treat everyone the same?

Table C: Operationalization of the democratic context

Variable	Items (Democracy Barometer)
<i>Representative-direct</i>	Constitutional provisions for direct democracy (institutions and quora)
<i>Majoritarian-consensus</i>	Type of government (% of coalition governments)
<i>Democratic quality</i>	Democratic quality (Aggregated value)
<i>Democratic culture</i>	Post-communist country (own coding)

Tables D - G: Robustness tests with high and low sophistication separately

Table D: Democratic quality

	Sophistication: High		Sophistication: Low	
	Model 1: Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2: Expectations social b/se	Model 1: Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2: Expectations social b/se
Democratic Quality in country	0.00120 (0.00849)	-0.0368* (0.0133)	-0.00255 (0.0122)	-0.0200 (0.0140)
Voting*Democratic Quality	0.00186 (0.00428)	-0.00605 (0.00650)	-0.00777 (0.00397)	-0.00885 (0.00480)
NonElec.Part*Democratic Quality	0.000233 (0.000831)	0.00253* (0.00128)	0.00119 (0.00167)	0.00137 (0.00205)
Male	0.0807*** (0.0167)	-0.284*** (0.0256)	0.0848*** (0.0214)	-0.198*** (0.0260)
Age of respondent, calculated	0.00124* (0.000534)	0.00864*** (0.000816)	0.00279*** (0.000679)	0.00413*** (0.000818)
Years of full-time education completed	0.0438*** (0.00218)	-0.0350*** (0.00335)	0.0512*** (0.00318)	-0.0142*** (0.00385)
Unemployed	0.0623** (0.0192)	0.266*** (0.0294)	0.0473* (0.0231)	0.227*** (0.0281)
Voted last election	0.0167 (0.248)	0.256 (0.376)	0.547* (0.225)	0.506+ (0.272)
Non-electoral participation	0.0610 (0.0506)	-0.113 (0.0776)	0.0475 (0.0998)	-0.00539 (0.122)
Born in other country	-0.0232 (0.0344)	0.111* (0.0524)	0.0754+ (0.0454)	0.0917+ (0.0551)
Constant	7.964*** (0.503)	10.79*** (0.789)	7.652*** (0.727)	9.582*** (0.831)
Var (Constant)	-1.378*** (0.149)	-0.919*** (0.150)	-0.918*** (0.147)	-0.789*** (0.147)
Var (Residual)	0.121*** (0.00521)	0.551*** (0.00518)	0.363*** (0.00514)	0.580*** (0.00501)
N Level 1	18449	18630	18964	19918
N Level 2	24	24	24	24
AIC	56914.5	73517.2	67722.3	79759.2
BIC	57016.2	73619.0	67824.4	79861.9
Chi2	783.9	530.8	508.2	206.1
ICC	0.05880	0.05523	0.05880	0.05523

Table E: Democratic culture

	Sophistication high		Sophistication low	
	Model 1 Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2 Expectations social b/se	Model 1 Expectations liberal b/se	Model 2 Expectations social b/se
Post-communist country	0.0407 (0.139)	0.407*** (0.0811)	0.193 (0.176)	0.146** (0.0453)
Voting*Democratic Culture	0.0287 (0.0561)	0.152+ (0.0854)	0.148*** (0.0441)	0.182*** (0.0536)
NonElec.Part*Demo_Culture	-0.0940*** (0.0148)	-0.163*** (0.0225)	-0.140*** (0.0249)	-0.223*** (0.0304)
Male	0.0771*** (0.0163)	-0.285*** (0.0252)	0.0693*** (0.0202)	-0.190*** (0.0251)
Age of respondent, calculated	0.00158** (0.000524)	0.00666*** (0.000800)	0.00225*** (0.000639)	0.00120 (0.000782)
Years of full-time education completed	0.0425*** (0.00215)	-0.0430*** (0.00325)	0.0455*** (0.00302)	-0.0375*** (0.00353)
Unemployed	0.0644*** (0.0186)	0.317*** (0.0285)	0.0267 (0.0217)	0.271*** (0.0266)
Voted last election	0.122*** (0.0346)	-0.139* (0.0529)	0.0608+ (0.0311)	0.0410 (0.0378)
Non-electoral participation	0.0882*** (0.00657)	0.0658*** (0.00987)	0.148*** (0.0134)	0.112*** (0.0160)
Born in other country	-0.0163 (0.0341)	0.277*** (0.0506)	0.0862* (0.0438)	0.217*** (0.0527)
Constant	8.019*** (0.0953)	8.648*** (0.0833)	7.553*** (0.121)	8.671*** (0.0731)
Var (Constant)	0.136*** (0.00501)	0.580*** (0.00497)	0.369*** (0.00481)	0.612*** (0.00469)
Var (Residual)	-1.137*** (0.139)	-0.569*** (0.00360)	-0.843*** (0.139)	-0.569*** (0.00360)
N Level 1	19982	20246	21599	22745
N Level 2	27	27	27	27
AIC	62262.9	80948.8	77354.3	92401.0
BIC	62365.6	81043.8	77458.0	92497.4
Chi2	777.7	925.4	510.0	441.6
ICC	0.07518	0.08118	0.07518	0.08118

Table F: Democratic models (direct-representative)

	Model 1: High sophistication only b/se	Model 2: Low sophistication only b/se
Direct democracy in country	-0.00367 (0.00361)	0.00207 (0.00299)
Voting*Direct democracy	0.00557*** (0.00153)	0.00171 (0.00110)
Non-elec. part*Direct democracy	0.000875* (0.000319)	-0.0000736 (0.000500)
Gender (male)	-0.217*** (0.0294)	-0.0584* (0.0291)
Age	-0.00124 (0.00101)	-0.00271* (0.00106)
Education (years)	-0.0432*** (0.00387)	0.0129** (0.00436)
Experience unemployment	0.170*** (0.0337)	0.0797* (0.0315)
Voted last election	-0.218** (0.0699)	0.0906 (0.0475)
Non-electoral participation	0.00114 (0.0135)	0.0878*** (0.0198)
Placement on left right scale	-0.0209*** (0.00606)	-0.00296 (0.00666)
Born in other country	-0.0985 (0.0619)	-0.0376 (0.0643)
Constant	9.709*** (0.352)	8.514*** (0.304)
Var (Constant)	-0.690*** (0.149)	-0.839*** (0.150)
Var (Residual)	0.705*** (0.00510)	0.667*** (0.00517)
N Level 1	19244	18716
N Level 2	27	27
AIC	81996.4	78324.6
BIC	82122.2	78450.0
Chi2	273.0	109.2
ICC	0.0579	0.0468

Table F: Democratic models (majoritarian - consensus)

	Model 1: High sophistication only	Model 2: Low sophistication only
	b/se	b/se
Coalition gov. in country	2.234 ^{***} (0.549)	2.278 ^{***} (0.456)
Voting*Government	0.483 [*] (0.217)	0.258 (0.150)
Non-elec. part*Government	-0.0412 (0.0437)	-0.121 (0.0628)
Gender (male)	-0.200 ^{***} (0.0411)	-0.0191 (0.0402)
Age	0.00402 [*] (0.00144)	0.00237 (0.00148)
Education	0.0301 ^{***} (0.00548)	0.0498 ^{***} (0.00610)
Experienced unemployment	0.0365 (0.0464)	-0.0290 (0.0435)
Voted last election	-0.348 [*] (0.163)	-0.152 (0.112)
Non-electoral participation	0.0789 [*] (0.0320)	0.142 ^{**} (0.0446)
Placement on left right scale	-0.0280 ^{***} (0.00813)	-0.0189 [*] (0.00902)
Born in other country	0.131 (0.0853)	-0.113 (0.0911)
Constant	-1.685 [*] (0.603)	-1.625 ^{**} (0.517)
Var (Constant)	-0.310 [*] (0.143)	-0.462 ^{**} (0.148)
N Level 1	17669	16349
N Level 2	27	27
AIC	15379.3	15924.5
BIC	15495.9	16040.0
Chi2	138.1	143.1
ICC	0.1406	0.1077

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