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Citizen Support for Democratic and Autocratic Regimes

Marlene Mauk

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MARLENE MAUK

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To my mother, Christa.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1
Introduction

1.1. Why study citizen support for democratic and autocratic regimes?

After the downfall of the Soviet Union had ended the Cold War and ensued the collapse of most of the world's communist one-party regimes, political scientists and practitioners alike heralded the triumph of liberal democracy, expecting the demise of autocratic rule and proclaiming the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992). A quarter of a century later, however, little is left of this initial optimism. Not only have we witnessed the emergence of *new* forms of authoritarianism (see, e.g., Diamond 2002; Hale 2011; Levitsky and Way 2002; 2010a; Schedler 2002; 2015) but also have *all* forms of non-democratic political rule proven to be surprisingly resilient. What is more, autocratic political systems have assumed an increasingly influential role and have mounted a new "challenge to democracy" (Diamond, Plattner, and Walker 2016): regional hegemons like China, Russia, Iran, or Saudi Arabia are nowadays competing with Western liberal democracies not only for economic, but also political and military supremacy (Cooley 2015; Gat 2007; Kagan 2015; Nathan 2015; Plattner 2015; Walker 2016). This has led to a resurgence of scholarly interest in autocratic regimes, analyzing the conditions for their stability and success. Yet, while contemporary research has examined institutional and structural explanations and the impact of economic performance and natural resource availability on repression and co-optation mechanisms (e.g., Bak and Moon 2016; Boix and Svolik 2013; Escribà-Folch 2017; Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017; Kokkonen and Sundell 2014; Schedler 2015; Tang, Huhe, and Zhou 2017; Tansey, Koehler, and Schmotz 2017), we still know little about the backing that autocratic regimes receive from their own populations. How do ordinary citizens see these regimes? Do they hold generally positive attitudes towards their respective political systems or do they disapprove of their autocratic rulers and regimes? Are autocratic forms of political rule actually supported by majorities in these countries?

Not only the stability and resilience of autocratic forms of political rule have received scholarly attention lately. Following the end of the Cold War, many third-wave democracies have been marked by democratic deficits and political turmoil, leading to concerns about their long-term stability and their ability to address the challenges ahead of them (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Lührmann et al. 2019; Luna and Vergara 2016; O'Donnell 2007; Rose, Mishler,

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and Haerpfer 1998; Weßels 2015). With recent authoritarian backlashes in Hungary, Poland, the Philippines, and most eminently Turkey, these concerns have taken a new and perhaps unprecedented urgency. At the same time, even the established liberal democracies of the West have come under pressure. For one, as has been repeatedly pointed out by the scholarship on "critical citizens" or "dissatisfied democrats", publics in these countries have become increasingly critical of their incumbent governments and at least some of their political systems' institutions (Dalton 2004; 2014; Dalton and Shin 2014; Norris 1999a; 2011; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Beyond that, recent phenomena like the rise of populist or even anti-democratic parties and politicians in much of Western Europe and the USA, widespread anti-government protests from Spain to Greece, or the new-found strength of separatist movements in Scotland, Catalonia, or the Basque Country have lent renewed impetus to the question and an academic debate of how firm citizens' support for their democratic regimes—both new and old—really is (Alexander and Welzel 2017; Foa and Mounk 2016; 2017a; 2017b; Inglehart 2016; Norris 2017a; Voeten 2017). Are we really facing a "crisis of democracy" (Ercan and Gagnon 2014) from a political-culture perspective? Are these developments indicative of a drop in popular support for democratic regimes, or can the world's democracies (still) rely on a broad base of political support among their citizens?

This book wants to address these questions by investigating the *levels as well as sources of political support in contemporary democracies and autocracies* worldwide.

Scholars have examined the *relevance* of a broad base of political support for the stability of political regimes primarily in the context of democratic consolidation and efficiency. Initially, this research emphasized institutional and economic factors (e.g., Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela 1992; Power and Gasiorowski 1997). Yet, political culture soon became a central topic in the discussion about the causes and conditions for successful democratic consolidation, with most scholars regarding widespread popular support for the democratic regime as a necessary condition for consolidation (Alexander 2002; Diamond 1999; 2008; Fukuyama 1995b; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Linz and Stepan 1996; for a very recent empirical substantiation, see Claassen 2019). In addition, scholars have long regarded a solid base of citizen support as essential in providing the basis for the smooth functioning of democratic political systems (Dalton 2004; Hetherington 1998; Letki 2006; Marien and Hooghe 2011; Scholz and Lubell 1998; Tyler 2011). Based on the seminal contributions by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) and David Easton (1965) as well as Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) and Harry Eckstein (1961; 1969), we can regard such popular support as indispensable for the persistence of *any* political system. Going beyond the research on democratic consolidation, recent conceptual contributions have rediscovered the role of political support in autocracies, suggesting that—next to repression and co-optation strategies—upholding at least a minimum of legitimacy beliefs among the population is essential also

for the long-term stability of autocratic regimes (Gerschewski 2013; also: Brooker 2009; Dimitrov 2013; Gilley 2009).

Gauging the level of political support can therefore help answer the fundamental question of how stable both democratic as well as autocratic regimes around the world are today and what direction they are likely to take. Hence, the first aim of this analysis is to assess *how much support democratic and autocratic regimes receive from their respective populations*.

From a normative perspective, democracies are considered to be inherently superior to autocracies (Barry 1991; Dahl 1971; 1989; 1998; Kolodny 2014; Rawls 1972; Sartori 1987; Shapiro 1999; 2003). Democracy is also empirically linked with greater liberty (Bova 1997; Møller and Skaaning 2013), greater efficiency and transparency (Stockemer 2012), less corruption (Kolstad and Wiig 2016), and fewer violent conflicts (Halperin, Siegle, and Weinstein 2005; Hegre 2014; Oneal and Ray 1997).

Do we find this apparent superiority reflected in levels of political support? Are there systematic differences in popular support between democratic and autocratic regimes? Are democracies indeed superior to autocratic forms of rule in the eyes of their citizens? Can the former rest on an ample base of popular endorsement grounded in an appreciation of their democratic legitimation, or are they susceptible to destabilization fueled by widespread citizen discontent grounded in, for example, meager economic performance? And are autocracies actually affected negatively by their lack of democratic legitimation? In order to shed light on these questions, the present analysis will not only assess the levels of popular support in democracies and autocracies, but also *compare them systematically between the two types of political regimes*.

Such a systematic comparison of levels of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes allows assessing how much support either type of political regime receives from its citizens. In doing so, it helps draw conclusions about how much backing both democracies and autocracies have amongst their respective populations and can serve as a basis for predicting whether one type of political regime is likely to be more stable than the other. It thereby contributes to answering the question of whether "the authoritarian challenge to democracy" (Puddington 2011) also exists at the citizen level and whether "the age of democracy" is truly "over" (Fukuyama 2010) from a political-culture perspective. While there are a large number of analyses on political support in democracies (e.g., Fuchs and Klingemann 2006; Gilley 2006b; Klingemann 1999; Marien 2011) and at least some evidence on political support in certain autocracies, especially for China (e.g., Chen and Dickson 2008; Wang and Tan 2013; Zhong and Chen 2013), only little is known about how the two types of regimes compare to each other in the eyes of their citizens. The present analysis seeks to fill this gap and contribute new insights to the wider debate on the (future) stability of both democratic and autocratic political regimes.

A systematic comparison of *levels of political support*, however, can only be a *first step* in the study of popular support for democratic and autocratic political regimes. So far, we know that levels of political support vary greatly between individual countries (e.g., Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Norris 2011; van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017). Some democracies are much more strongly supported by their citizens than others, and the same is true for autocracies. But what makes the Danish view their political regime so much more favorably than the British? What distinguishes the overwhelmingly supportive Vietnamese from the much more critical Cambodians? In order to answer these questions, we need to identify the *sources of political support* for both democratic and autocratic political regimes.

Beyond their analytical interest, these questions are of practical relevance for policymakers and agents of democracy promotion. By exploring on what grounds citizens support their current political regime, the study and comparison of sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes provides information on the factors that make citizens view their political regime more favorably. Such insights can serve as a background for developing policy recommendations and programs aimed at strengthening support for the existing democratic political regime in countries where the survival of democracy might be at stake. At the same time, they can serve as a blueprint for measures aimed at discrediting existing autocratic political regimes in the eyes of their citizens in order to facilitate (peaceful) democratic transitions. In light of recent developments, both of these objectives appear more in demand today than maybe ever before. On the one hand, the stability of many democracies, both young and established, across the globe has come into question. The most apparent examples are the rise of (right-wing) populist parties, which claim to offer a "more democratic" alternative to representative, liberal democracy, and which have advanced into parliaments across Europe; the open rejection of a pluralistic media system and the rule of law by the president of the United States of America; or the dismantling of an independent judiciary and opposition rights by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. A better understanding of the sources of citizens' support for democratic political regimes can help substantiate efforts to inoculate existing democracies against anti-democratic threats by strengthening citizen support for the democratic political regime and make citizenries more immune to populist promises. On the other hand, with autocratic rulers not only in Russia and China but also in many parts of Africa and Asia strengthening their grip on power rather than loosening it, the third wave of democratization seems to have come to a halt in the first half of the twenty-first century. Identifying the determinants of popular support for autocratic regimes, then, can help democracy promoters develop programs aimed at weakening public support for existing autocratic regimes in order to create conditions that facilitate the breakdown of the autocratic regime.

As far as the *potential sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes* are concerned, we can distinguish two general types of sources: individual-level characteristics such as citizens' personal value orientations, and system-level features such as a country's macroeconomic performance.

Prior research has so far focused mainly on the *individual-level sources of political support*, with two principal traditions emerging: the "culturalist" tradition, which concentrates on citizens' value orientations as sources of political support; and the "institutionalist" tradition, which concentrates on citizens' evaluations of the political regime's performance as sources of political support. For instance, researchers have examined how self-expressive value orientations relate to political support (e.g., Ma and Yang 2014; Nevitte and Kanji 2002), whether pro-democratic value orientations enhance or reduce political support (e.g., Nathan 2007; Singh 2018), what kind of effect positive evaluations of the national economy exert on political support (e.g., Cordero and Simón 2016; Wang 2005), whether the perception that government officials are corrupt dampens political support (e.g., Chang 2013; Wang 2016), or whether citizens satisfied with the current government express more political support than those who are not (e.g., Citrin and Green 1986; Grönlund and Setälä 2012).

Yet, despite prior research largely focusing on the individual-level sources of political support, a number of academic as well as practical debates also consider *system-level determinants of political support*. For one, following the famous claim of Singapore's former prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, that "Asian societies are unlike Western ones" (Zakaria 1994, p. 113), scholars have long debated whether or not an Asian or Confucian culture is incompatible with democratic ideas (e.g., Bell 2006; Bell and Hahm 2003; Fukuyama 1995a; Li 1997; Pye 1985; Sen 1997). East Asia and its citizens, as well as Islamic or Arab societies, are therefore often characterized as particularly hostile to the establishment of democratic rule, while Western societies are seen as providing fertile ground for the development and sustainment of democracy (most prominently: Huntington 1991a; 1991b; 1996). Others, conversely, do not share this view and purport that other forces, for example socioeconomic modernization, take precedence over cultural imprints in determining how likely democracy is to develop in a certain country (e.g., Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Lipset 1959; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003). Building on this latter line of argument, Larry Diamond (2012) has even proclaimed East Asia as the nucleus of a coming fourth wave of democratization, contradicting the pessimistic assessments of Huntington and others. The central question underlying these opposing claims is whether the macro-cultural context, or "cultural zone", pre-determines citizens' attitudes towards their political regime, i.e. whether the macro-cultural context actually makes a difference to how strongly citizens support their democratic or autocratic regime. Finding an answer to this question can, subsequently, help us assess the prospects for democratization and democratic consolidation in different cultural zones, contributing

to evaluate, for example, how likely it is that a new wave of democratization originates from Confucian East Asia. Determining how amenable or adverse certain societies are towards democratic or autocratic rule can further provide valuable indications on *where* democracy assistance might be both most successful and most crucial in establishing and sustaining democratic rule.

Another question pertaining to the system-level determinants of political support concerns the spread of political regimes that are neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian (see, e.g., Bogaards and Elischer 2016; Carothers 2002; Hale 2011). In recent years, many autocratic regimes across the globe have embarked on a process of "controlled political liberalization" in which they opened up politically, granted their citizens more political rights and civil liberties, and allowed for opposition parties to compete in—nevertheless unfair—elections (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Levitsky and Way 2010a; Schedler 2015). Many of these regimes now classify as "hybrid" or "electoral authoritarian" regimes and combine formally democratic structures with authoritarian practices. How does this controlled political liberalization resonate with citizens? Do these partially liberalized regimes actually receive more citizen support than their unliberalized counterparts, and can controlled political liberalization therefore constitute a viable strategy for autocratic rulers to secure their grip on power? In general, how strongly is citizens' political support affected by the characteristics of the political regime they live in? These questions not only shed light on future developments in liberalizing autocracies, but also tie in with the long-standing debate about the (lacking) quality of real-world democracies (see, e.g., Coman and Tomini 2014; Diamond and Morlino 2005; Foweraker and Trevizo 2016; Hutcheson and Korosteleva 2006; Levine and Molina 2011; Morlino 2011; O'Donnell, Vargas Cullell, and Iazzetta 2004; see also the post-democracy debate, e.g. Crouch 2016; Mair 2013; Pabst 2016). Do various "democratic deficits" actually make a difference with regard to how much popular support democratic regimes receive? What are the likely effects of recent democratic rollbacks in countries like Hungary, Poland, the Philippines, or Turkey on citizens' views of their political regimes? Assessing how relevant the democratic quality of a political regime is for citizens' attitudes towards this regime can thus help determine whether a deepening of democracy, i.e. an increase in democratic quality, would be an effective strategy to secure citizen support for the existing democratic political regimes. At the same time, it can tell us whether a curtailing of core democratic principles is likely to be met with a backlash from citizens, or whether these measures aimed at securing a particular party's or incumbent's grip on power will probably remain without consequences for citizens' political support.

A third area of academic and public debate in which system-level determinants of political support play an important role concerns the effects of economic performance. On the one hand, autocracies like the modernizing regimes in East Asia, most prominently Singapore, or the oil-rich rentier states of the Arab

Peninsula seem to suggest that the provision of economic well-being and other public goods (like high-quality public administration or medical treatment) can outweigh even a severe lack of political rights and civil liberties, and generate popular support for autocratic rule. On the other hand, modernization theory predicts that a high level of socioeconomic modernization, which inevitably results from continued economic growth, gives way to demands for exactly these political rights and civil liberties, threatening the legitimacy of autocratic rule and, eventually, inducing democratization (classically: Lipset 1959). Autocratic rulers would then face a dilemma: if they do not provide citizens with economic and other public goods, support for their rule will plummet; yet if they do so for a longer period of time, rising levels of socioeconomic modernization will lead to the emergence of democratic demands and, eventually, the demise of autocratic rule (e.g., Diamond 2012). Is there really such a thing as a "modernization dilemma"? How do current economic performance and the level of socioeconomic modernization affect citizens' attitudes towards their political regime? Answering these questions can add not only to the literature on political support as well as to the literature on democratization, but also contribute to assess how stable or unstable political regimes are likely to be in times of crisis. For instance, knowing how important it is for a political system to provide its citizens with certain public goods can help us predict how detrimental economic crises like the one in 2007/2008 may prove for the legitimacy of both democratic and autocratic regimes, or whether economic sanctions like the ones currently imposed upon Russia or Iran actually are viable tools for destabilizing autocratic rule.

Going beyond the existing literature on sources of political support, this contribution consequently not only wants to examine *which individual-level sources affect political support in democratic and autocratic regimes* but also addresses *what role system-level factors play in the formation of political support in democratic as well as autocratic regimes* and *how individual- and system-level sources interact in shaping political support*. Determining what kind of effect different individual- and system-level sources have on political support allows making more substantiated predictions about future developments in political support and, thereby, about the stability of democratic and autocratic regimes. It also gives way to implications for policymakers on how to strengthen citizen support for democratic and weaken citizen support for autocratic regimes.

Moreover, we must ask whether these individual- and system-level sources have the same effects on political support in both types of political regimes. As some of the questions raised in this introduction already indicate, democratic and autocratic regimes are based on fundamentally different structural conditions—the most obvious and defining one being the existence or lack of democratic legitimation and institutionalized mechanisms ensuring the responsiveness and accountability of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled. Do these differences in structural conditions make a difference not only for the level of political support but also for

the foundations of this political support? Do the same individual- and system-level characteristics shape political support in democratic and autocratic regimes and are these characteristics equally important across both types of regimes? For example, do citizens attribute a higher relevance to democratic quality in democratic regimes than they do in autocracies? Do autocracies in exchange rely more heavily on upholding a strong economic performance? Determining whether some sources of support are more important in one type of political regime than the other improves our understanding of the processes forming political support. Furthermore, it provides valuable advice to policymakers and democracy promoters on what measures to focus their resources in each type of political regime. So far, research comparing the sources of political support between democratic and autocratic regimes is still nascent. Only a handful of studies have taken on this task (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Huhe and Tang 2017; Mishler and Rose 2001a; Park 2013; Park and Chang 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006) and these neither offer a coherent theoretical argument as to why and how the effects of different sources of political support should (or should not) vary between democratic and autocratic regimes, nor conclusive or generalizable empirical results (cf. section 1.2). In order to answer these open questions, this book not only tries to *identify the individual- and system-level sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes* but also asks *whether and how the effects of these individual- and system-level sources vary between the two types of regimes*.

Coming from the initial vantage point of asking how stable democratic and autocratic political regimes are based on their citizens' political attitudes, three core research questions hence lie at the heart of this study. The *first* research question aims to gauge the *level of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes* worldwide, asking:

> How widespread is popular support for the respective regime among the populations of democracies and autocracies around the globe, and are there systematic differences in the levels of political support between democratic and autocratic regimes?

The *second* research question addresses the *individual-level sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes*. It asks:

> What individual-level sources is political support based upon in democracies and autocracies, which individual-level sources are relevant in which type of political regime, and how does the effect of these individual-level sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes?

The *third* research question goes beyond the individual level to inquire about the *system-level sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes*, asking:

> What system-level sources is political support based upon in democracies and autocracies, which system-level sources are relevant in which type of political regime, how do system- and individual-level sources interact in shaping regime support, and how does the effect of the system-level sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes?

These research questions relate the present study to several ongoing discussions and contribute to the field of political-culture research in important ways. By analyzing and systematically comparing levels of political support between democratic and autocratic regimes across the world, it enhances our knowledge about how political support is distributed on a global scale. It gives us key insights into how citizens view their political regimes and whether the type of political regime actually matters for the amount of support citizens extend to it. Taking into account both individual- and system-level factors as sources of political support and in examining the linkages between these individual- and system-level sources, it further contributes to the development of a more comprehensive view on political support and its sources. By investigating what role different individual- and system-level sources play in the formation of political support, it enables us to draw general conclusions about the future development of political support for both democratic and autocratic regimes, and allows making predictions regarding the stability of either type of political regime. In line with the central research questions, this contribution will place particular emphasis on the *differences between democratic and autocratic regimes* in both the theoretical considerations and the empirical analysis.

Conceptually, this study draws on three main strands of research: one, the conceptualizations of political support developed by David Easton (1965; 1975) and Dieter Fuchs (2002; 2009); two, the "culturalist" and "institutionalist" literature on (mainly individual-level) sources of political support (e.g., Barry 1970; Eckstein 1988; Kornberg and Clarke 1992); and three, theories of attitude formation borrowed from social psychology (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Anderson 1971; 1981; Fishbein 1963; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; 2010; Zaller 1992). The first job is to join these three strands of literature and develop an integrated, comprehensive theoretical framework that uses the conceptualizations of political support and theories of attitude formation to spell out the mechanisms linking different individual- and system-level determinants deduced from the culturalist and institutionalist traditions to political support. Furthermore, the present work integrates insights on the institutional structures and functional logics of democratic and autocratic political systems into this theoretical framework. It thereby presents the first systematic effort to build, on the one hand, *an explanatory model of political support applicable to either type of political regime* and, on the other hand, to specify *how and why particular determinants may affect political support in different ways in democratic and autocratic regimes*.

This explanatory model expects *five individual-level sources* to affect political support for democratic and autocratic regimes alike: *societal value orientations,*

political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and *systemic performance evaluations*. Societal value orientations comprise citizens' beliefs about how society should be organized, for example whether the collective interest should be put before individual interests, while political value orientations encompass citizens' beliefs about how the political system should be organized, for instance whether political leaders should be elected by universal suffrage or chosen by birthright. Incumbent support captures citizens' views of the incumbent political leaders, especially how satisfied they are with the current government. Democratic performance evaluations consist of citizens' assessments of how well their country provides political rights and freedoms, such as the extent to which parties can organize freely, while systemic performance evaluations include citizens' assessments of how well their country provides more generic public goods like protection from violent crime or economic well-being. On the s*ystem level*, it identifies *four sources* of political support: *macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance*, and *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Macro-cultural context captures a country's cultural tradition, for example a Confucian or a Protestant heritage, while macro-political context incorporates a country's level of democracy, i.e. to what extent it grants political rights and freedoms such as associational rights or freedom of speech. Actual systemic performance encompasses the extent to which a political system provides more generic public goods like economic well-being, protection from crime, or high-quality public administration. Finally, the level of socioeconomic modernization distinguishes between countries based on how socioeconomically developed they are, for example how educated their population is. Again, all of these system-level sources should play a role in shaping political support in either type of political regime. However, the explanatory model does not expect all of these individual- and system-level sources to affect political support in the same way in democratic and autocratic regimes; for some of the sources, it predicts that their effect varies depending on the type of political regime. This study hence proposes a universal explanatory model in the sense that the *same sets of sources* should affect citizen support for both democratic and autocratic regimes but specifies differences in *how* these sources affect political support.

Methodologically, the present work faces several challenges to which it presents innovative solutions that significantly enhance previous studies of political support. First, it compiles a unique dataset of both survey and aggregate data collected between 2010 and 2014 that covers an unprecedented geographical scope and permits the analysis of citizens' political attitudes and their individual- and system-level sources on a global scale. Second, it develops an original research strategy that allows for a comprehensive analysis of political support and its sources. This research strategy combines a global maximum-scope analysis aiming to cover the largest possible geographical scope with several supplementary analyses aiming to secure the highest possible precision. Third, it finds a measure

of regime support applicable in both democratic and autocratic regimes and demonstrates that we can actually analyze democracies and autocracies in the same way. Finally, it employs sophisticated statistical techniques—most importantly, multi-level structural equation modeling—and, thereby, presents the first study to explicitly model the complex causal mechanisms and pathways through which individual- and system-level sources determine political support.

Empirically, this study makes three central contributions. One, it offers the first truly global and contemporary comparison of levels of citizen support for democratic and autocratic political regimes, covering political systems from Western and Eastern Europe, North America, Latin America, Central, South, and East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Arab World as well as a broad range of political, economic, and cultural contexts. Two, it examines a comprehensive set of individual-level explanatory variables of political support and compares how the effects of these determinants vary in both direction and strength between democratic and autocratic regimes. Three, next to the individual-level sources of political support, it also analyzes how system-level context factors impact political support and, thereby, provides insights into what role different political, cultural, and economic contexts play for citizens' attitudes towards their political regime.

The empirical analysis shows that both democratic and autocratic regimes, on average, receive a medium amount of support from their citizens. It also finds that the same set of individual- and system-level sources—with the exception of actual systemic performance—affect this support in both types of regimes and, thereby, corroborates the notion of a generalizable explanatory model of political support. On the individual level, we can further observe not only that the same sources are relevant in forming political support, but also that the directions and strengths of their effects are largely the same in democratic and autocratic regimes. On the system level, in contrast, more pronounced differences between democratic and autocratic regimes emerge, with some sources exerting a positive effect in one type of political regime and a negative effect in the other. This study hence establishes that a universal explanatory model can be applied to both democratic and autocratic regimes and that the same sets of individual- and system-level sources are relevant in either type of political regime, but that how these sources affect political support is only universal on the individual level.

Before developing the integrated theoretical model of political support and its individual- and system-level sources in democratic and autocratic regimes (chapters 2 and 3) and conducting the respective empirical analyses (chapters 4 and 5), the remainder of this introductory chapter briefly reviews the literature on political support in democracies and autocracies (section 1.2), outlines the theoretical model proposed in the following chapters (section 1.3), and provides a short overview of the data, research strategy, and methods applied in the empirical analyses (section 1.4). The final section of this chapter describes the general organization of this book (section 1.5).

1.2. What we know so far about political support in democracies and autocracies . . . and what we don't

People's attitudes towards their political system and the sources of these attitudes have been the subject of scientific inquiry for more than half a century, with Almond and Verba (1963) laying the groundwork for a research tradition so vast it could never be discussed here in its entirety. Yet, despite the impressive volume of prior research on political support, only a handful of studies have aimed to *compare* how much and on what grounds citizens support their political regime *between democracies and autocracies*. Given that such a comparison will be the centerpiece of this book, I will discuss these studies in more detail. The following literature review will begin with studies comparing the levels of political support[1] before it turns to studies comparing its sources. It focuses on whether and how different expectations are formulated and motivated theoretically about the effects of different sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes and whether these expectations are substantiated empirically. It will not cover prior research that does not explicitly compare citizen support between democracies and autocracies; insofar as the results of this research are relevant for the theoretical framework proposed in this book, they will be discussed in conjunction with the development of the explanatory model of regime support in chapter 3.

With regard to the *levels of political support*, the majority of studies have found citizens' attitudes towards their political regime to be more positive in autocracies than in democracies (Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Norris 2011; Park and Chang 2013; Shin 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006). Most of these studies are, however, limited to a single world region: East Asia. Only Wang, Dalton, and Shin (2006), who compare levels of political support in Western liberal democracies with those in East Asian democracies and autocracies, and Norris (2011), who samples older liberal democracies, younger liberal democracies, electoral democracies, and autocracies worldwide, somewhat expand this narrow scope. Yet, both studies can only draw on a limited number of autocratic regimes—two for Wang, Dalton, and Shin (2006), five for Norris (2011)—which are primarily located in East Asia as well. Mishler and Rose (2001a) take into account a broader geographical scope than the other studies. However, of the five countries they classify as "stable non-democracies," only two (Mexico and Taiwan) were actually not rated as electoral democracies by Freedom House for the period under analysis. This severely limits the comparability of their results to those of other studies that classified electoral democracies as "democratic". Coincidentally, their results

[1] Following the predominant usage of the term as well as the focus of this book, "political support" is understood as support for the political regime of the respective country. A more elaborate conceptualization of political support follows in chapter 2.

deviate from what the other researchers have found. Here, "stable non-democracies" receive the lowest levels of political support from their citizens, while every other comparative study has found levels of political support to be higher in autocracies.

Prior research comparing the *sources of political support* between democracies and autocracies is similarly scarce. The first comparison of sources of political support between democratic and autocratic regimes only came about as a by-product of a more methodologically-focused contribution by Mishler and Rose (2001a). Set out to test the validity of their new, "realist" measure of political support, they find that their "lifetime learning model" (see, e.g., Mishler and Rose 2002) "consistently explains substantially greater variance in support for stable democratic regimes than in…undemocratic regimes." Yet, the same individual-level sources are still relevant in explaining political support for all types of regimes: current economic and political performance, the legacy of the past regime, and future expectations.

In another early, more dedicated attempt at exploring the individual-level sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes, Wang, Dalton, and Shin (2006) contrast four Western liberal democracies, five East Asian democracies, and two East Asian autocracies. Theoretically, they make two conjectures: one, that performance evaluations increase political support in both democracies and autocracies but that these effects are stronger in autocracies; and two, that self-expressive value orientations decrease political support in both democracies and autocracies but that these effects are stronger in democracies. While they do not offer any rationale for the first conjecture, they ground their second conjecture in two propositions. First, the autocracies in their sample have not reached the same levels of development as the democracies; and two, democracies nurture critical citizens because of their contentious character. Empirically, however, they find no differences for the effects of performance evaluations across regime types and only limited differences for the effects of self-expressive value orientations.

All recent contributions focus solely on East Asia. Among these, Chang, Chu, and Welsh (2013) examine sources of political support in seven Southeast Asian countries. Theoretically, they differentiate between four different groups of individual-level sources of political support: government performance, good governance, democratic development, and values and ideology. While they do not make specific arguments for how these determinants should affect political support in democracies and autocracies, they nevertheless arrive at varying expectations for two of them. They hypothesize that government performance exerts a greater influence in autocracies than it does in democracies, and that democratic development is most important in young democracies. Empirically, they find no confirmation for these hypotheses. Instead, government performance, good governance, and values and ideology are important factors in shaping political

support in democracies and autocracies alike, with values and ideology appearing particularly important in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Singapore, the least democratic regimes in their sample (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013).

A very similar research question and theoretical framework are applied by Chu, Welsh, and Chang (2013), who examine the effects of government performance, governance, political values, and citizen politics. Like Chang, Chu, and Welsh (2013), they do not offer any theoretical arguments on how and why these individual-level sources should affect political support differently in democracies and autocracies; moreover, they do not formulate any expectations regarding these variations. Empirically, their study covers a broader range of countries, including not only Southeast but also Northeast Asian political systems. Empirically, they find both "congruence and variation" (Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013, p. 236) in sources of regime support. While government performance and governance appear to be important factors in generating political support for all types of regimes, the authors conclude that political values like nationalism and social traditionalism are more important bases of political support in autocracies than in democracies.[2]

In his study of ten East Asian political systems, Park (2013) suggests three types of individual-level sources of political support: normative commitment to democratic principles and institutions, evaluations of democratic quality, and evaluations of policy performance. Park does not formulate any expectations with respect to variations in the effects of these determinants between democracies and autocracies, either. Empirically, he finds that evaluations of democratic quality and evaluations of policy performance have consistently positive effects regardless of regime type, and that normative commitment to democratic principles and institutions has mixed effects in either type of regime. Based on a nearly identical theoretical framework, case selection, and model specification, these findings are replicated by Park and Chang (2013).

The most elaborate analysis of sources of political support in democratic and autocratic regimes to date has been conducted by Huhe and Tang (2017). The first to motivate explicitly their differing expectations, Huhe and Tang suggest two mechanisms through which the effects of different individual-level sources may vary according to regime context. One, economic performance evaluations should exert a weaker effect on political support in democracies because citizens will attribute this economic performance to the incumbent authorities rather than to the political regime itself; conversely, they expect citizens in autocratic regimes to attribute economic performance directly to the political regime due to the "natural fusion of the ruling elites and the regime," amplifying the effect of economic performance evaluations on political support (Huhe and Tang 2017, p. 166). Two,

[2] Yet the data reported by Chu, Welsh, and Chang (2013, p. 233) do not firmly substantiate the latter claim.

they expect pro-democratic value orientations to exert a stronger (negative) effect on political support in autocracies than in democracies because autocracies fall farther short of democratic ideals than democracies. Empirically, they test their hypotheses in thirteen political systems in East Asia and find confirmation for both of their conjectures: economic performance evaluations as well as pro-democratic value orientations are more important predictors of political support in autocracies than in democracies.

Summing up, the state of research on both levels and sources of political support in democracies and autocracies is still nascent. While some pioneering studies have begun to comparatively analyze political support in democratic and autocratic regimes, this research suffers from important limitations. For one, previous comparisons between democracies and autocracies are almost exclusively concentrated on East Asia, raising doubts about the generalizability of their results. Second, prior comparisons examine only the individual-level sources of political support, ignoring entirely the system-level sources of political support. Consequently, this literature lacks any discussion regarding the role of system-level factors in the formation of political support and how individual- and system-level sources interact in shaping political support. Finally, prior research is surprisingly oblivious to differences in regime context. Few studies even discuss the implications the fundamental differences between democracies and autocracies may have for political support, and they barely offer any coherent and theoretically grounded arguments as to why and how the effects of different sources of political support should (or should not) vary between democratic and autocratic regimes.

Overall, then, we still know very little about the central research questions posed at the beginning of this book: Are there systematic differences in the levels of political support between democratic and autocratic regimes? What sources is political support based upon in democracies and autocracies? Does the effect of these sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes? How does system-level context exert an influence on individual-level political support? What is the relationship between system-level factors and individual-level sources in shaping political support? The following two sections will introduce how this book can contribute to answering these questions. To this end, section 1.3 briefly outlines the explanatory model of regime support that will be developed in the following chapters and section 1.4 provides a short overview of the analytical strategy, case selection, data, and statistical methods applied in the empirical part of this contribution.

1.3. Outline of the explanatory model of regime support

The explanatory model of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes aims not only to distinguish relevant individual- and system-level sources of

regime support, but also to clearly specify the causal mechanisms through which these sources exert their influence on regime support. Starting with a *generalized conceptualization of political support*, regime support as the central dependent variable is defined as citizens' positive or negative attitudes towards the actual institutional structure of their political system and identified as the most consequential attitude with regard to the stability of both democratic and autocratic regimes.

On the individual level, two causal mechanisms through which regime support can be affected are derived from the generalized conception of political support: an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences. For the *overflow of values*, the general idea is that certain broader attitudes, "value orientations", can act as reference points for what citizens expect from and how they evaluate their political regime. Taking into account the various individual-level determinants discussed within the culturalist strand of research on sources of regime support, the explanatory model proposes two overarching variables that may affect regime support through such an overflow of values: *societal value orientations* and *political value orientations*. On the other hand, the mechanism of a *generalization of experiences* posits that citizens continuously make experiences with their political regime and its performance, leading them to form positive or negative evaluations of this performance, which then serve as the basis for developing attitudes towards the regime itself. Tying in with the institutionalist strand of research on sources of regime support, the explanatory model proposes three overarching variables that may affect regime support through such a generalization of experiences: *incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations*, and *systemic performance evaluations*. By focusing on these five overarching individual-level determinants of regime support and explicitly relating them to two distinct causal mechanisms, the theoretical model organizes the wealth of possible determinants cited in previous empirical studies and presents a straightforward and coherent explanation of how regime support is formed on the individual level.

On the system level, the explanatory model conceptualizes system-level factors as not having a direct influence on regime support but rather as *indirectly affecting regime support* by pre-determining some of its individual-level sources. The causal mechanisms relaying any contextual factor to these individual-level sources of regime support are borrowed from theories of attitude formation in (social) psychology. The basic chain of causal mechanisms relates the relevant environment—the respective context factor—to the information the individual receives about this environment, which then results in beliefs about this environment that serve as the basis for the formation of individual-level attitudes. In specifying how the environment may affect different individual-level attitudes, the explanatory model distinguishes between four central system-level contexts: the *macro-cultural context*, the *macro-political context*, the *actual systemic performance*, and the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Each of these

contexts is linked to regime support through one or more of the aforementioned individual-level sources of regime support. With regard to these linkages, the explanatory model distinguishes two *causal pathways*: one in which citizens' *value orientations* relay the effect of system-level context factors onto regime support, and one in which citizens' *performance evaluations* relay the effect of system-level context factors onto regime support.

With regard to the *comparison between democracies and autocracies* that lies at the heart of the present study, the theoretical model expects the *same sets of individual- and system-level sources* to affect regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. On the *individual level*, it proposes both of the causal mechanisms, the overflow of values and the generalization of experiences, to be universal, that is to work in the same way in democracies and autocracies. Citizens' political and societal value orientations should, consequently, always act as reference points for what citizens expect from the political regime and citizens' democratic, and systemic performance evaluations as well as support for the incumbent authorities should always, in the long run, shape their views of the political regime itself. The explanatory model thus not only expects the same set of individual-level sources to affect citizen support for democratic and autocratic regimes but also *the effects of these individual-level sources to be largely similar across regime types*. Based on the different institutional structures and functional logics of politics in democracies and autocracies, the theoretical model suggests only one qualification: the effect of incumbent support on regime support should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies. On the *system level*, in contrast, the theoretical model expects both the causal pathway via citizens' value orientations and the causal pathway via citizens' performance evaluations to be distorted in autocracies. Due to their different institutional structures and functional logic, autocratic political regimes cannot create and maintain citizen support in the same way democracies can. They therefore have strong incentives to make use of *indoctrination* and *propaganda* as alternative means of legitimation. As indoctrination aims to change citizens' societal and political value orientations and propaganda aims to change citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations, indoctrination and propaganda eventually distort both causal pathways linking system-level context factors with regime support. The theoretical model consequently proposes that *the effects of system-level sources on regime support vary systematically between democracies and autocracies*.

Overall, the explanatory model presented here not only combines culturalist and institutionalist perspectives on sources of regime support but also integrates them with the generalized conception of political support, (social) psychological attitude-formation theories, and insights into the institutional structures and functional logics of democratic and autocratic political systems. It is unique in that it specifies the causal mechanisms and pathways that link both individual- and system-level determinants with regime support and takes into account the

different contextual characteristics of democratic and autocratic regimes to derive predictions on how regime type affects the way political support is generated. It thereby constitutes the first comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing regime support and its sources in democratic and autocratic regimes.

1.4. Research strategy, case selection, data, and methods

In order to test this comprehensive theoretical framework and to answer the research questions outlined above, this book features a broad cross-sectional empirical analysis of political support in democratic and autocratic political regimes around the globe. With the aim of providing a general and contemporary account of regime support and its sources in democracies and autocracies, it tries to use as recent data and include as many political systems as possible. This means that a priori only those political systems are excluded where the reference object of regime support (the political regime itself) cannot be identified unambiguously, i.e. countries that are in a transitional state, undergoing a civil war, or lack state monopoly. Based on the availability of the latest survey data (see below), these selection criteria lead to the inclusion of 102 political systems during a period from 2010 to 2014. As some political systems were surveyed more than once during this period of investigation, the overall number of country-years that are analyzed here is 137; eighty-five of which are democratic and fifty-two of which are autocratic, according to Freedom House's (2017) List of Electoral Democracies. In line with the central research questions, this contribution focuses solely on the differences between these democratic and autocratic regimes, while differences within these basic regime types, for example between liberal and electoral variants of democracy, are not the object of the empirical analysis. This empirical analysis proceeds in three steps, draws on a multitude of both micro- and macro-level data from different sources, and uses both uni- and multivariate statistical techniques.

A *first* step analyzes and compares *levels of regime support* in democracies and autocracies. This descriptive analysis makes use of the most recent survey data from six cross-national comparative survey projects: the World Values Survey, the Afrobarometer, the AmericasBarometer, the Arab Barometer, the Asian Barometer, and the Latinobarómetro, all fielded in the period from 2010 to 2014. It provides an up-to-date account of regime support for 102 political systems and more than 220,000 individuals from all world regions. To counteract potential questionnaire effects (caused by, for example, question wording or question sequence) as well as potential regional effects (caused by, for example, culturally-induced acquiescence tendencies), the analysis compares levels of regime support not only within the pooled sample, but also supplements this global analysis with analyses of individual surveys and individual regions. Overall, this univariate

analysis will provide a comprehensive picture of how strongly ordinary citizens support their democratic and autocratic regimes.

In a *second* step, the empirical analysis investigates the *individual-level sources of regime support* for democratic and autocratic regimes. This multivariate analysis initially relies on the same survey data as the descriptive analysis of levels of regime support, covering 102 political systems and more than 220,000 respondents from around the world. As it relies on the combination of six different survey projects (World Values Survey, Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro), however, such a global analysis is limited in the variables it can incorporate as well as their operationalizations. To compensate for these limitations, two regional analyses supplement the global analysis: one relying on the Afrobarometer and one relying on the Asian Barometer. These regional analyses allow for the use of more sophisticated operationalizations of the independent variables and can include all theoretically relevant variables. Taken together, the global and the supplementary regional analyses will provide an answer to the question, "which individual-level characteristics shape citizen support for democratic and autocratic regimes?"

A *third* and final step addresses the *system-level sources of regime support*. The analysis first assesses the overall effects of different system-level contexts before employing multi-level mediated structural equation models to adequately test for the proposed causal pathways linking system-level context factors with individual-level regime support. In addition to the familiar survey data, these multi-level analyses also employ data from various aggregate data sources (among others, Freedom House, Varieties of Democracies Project, World Development Indicators, Quality of Government Expert Survey, Standardized World Income Inequality Database, Political Terror Scale Project). In merging not only six cross-national survey projects but also linking these micro-level data with macro-level data from a considerable array of sources for more than one hundred political systems worldwide, this contribution relies on a uniquely rich data base and constitutes the first truly comprehensive endeavor for studying the individual- and system-level sources of regime support.

1.5. Organization of this book

The present work consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, *chapter 2* sets the basis for comparing political support between democratic and autocratic regimes. It first distinguishes between democracy and autocracy and highlights the fundamental differences between the two types of regimes. Drawing upon Robert Dahl's (1971; 1989; 1998; 2006) work, it defines democracy as a political regime that secures the accountability and responsiveness of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled through the six institutions of polyarchy. Consequently, it

defines autocracy as any political regime that does not meet all six of these institutions and illustrates how these differences in institutional characteristics determine the functional logics of politics in democracies and autocracies. The chapter then turns to the concept of political support and its consequences. It defines political support as citizens' evaluative attitudes towards their political system and distinguishes three levels of such attitudes: political value orientations on the values level, regime support on the structure level, and incumbent support on the process level. Joining the insights from the conceptualization of democracy and autocracy with the works of David Easton (1965; 1975) and Dieter Fuchs (2002; 2009), the chapter establishes the generalizability of this conception for any type of political regime, and explicates how the three levels of political support relate to each other. As regards these linkages, it identifies two causal mechanisms: an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences. Deducing different consequences of political support in democracies and autocracies, the chapter identifies the structure level, i.e. regime support, as the central level of political support.

Chapter 3 consequently focuses on only the structure level of political support and develops an explanatory model of regime support. Following a comprehensive approach, it incorporates both individual- and system-level determinants of regime support. On the individual level, the explanatory model takes the two causal mechanisms linking different levels of political support as a starting point and identifies five central determinants that affect regime support, either through an overflow of values or a generalization of experiences. First, with regard to the overflow of values, it assumes that societal as well as political value orientations act as reference points for what citizens expect from their political regime, thereby pre-determining their attitudes towards this regime. Second, with regard to the generalization of experiences, it assumes that incumbent support as well as democratic and systemic performance evaluations form a basis of experiences that citizens accumulate and eventually generalize onto the political regime. On the system level, the explanatory model draws on (social) psychological theories of attitude formation and outlines a general causal chain that links the system-level environment to individual-level attitudes. It then joins this general model of attitude formation with the considerations on individual-level sources of regime support to specify two causal pathways through which system-level contexts can influence regime support: one pathway via citizens' value orientations and one pathway via citizens' performance evaluations. As regards the pathway via citizens' value orientations, the explanatory model identifies three system-level contexts that can shape regime support: the macro-cultural context, the macro-political context, and the level of socioeconomic modernization. The macro-political context and the level of socioeconomic modernization can also shape regime support through the pathway via citizens' performance evaluations; in addition, the actual systemic performance of the political regime constitutes a

third system-level context that can have an effect through this causal pathway. The integrated explanatory model therefore contains both individual- and system-level determinants of regime support and explicates how these interact in shaping regime support. Recurring to the differences in institutional structures and functional logics of democracies and autocracies identified in chapter 2, chapter 3 formulates expectations on whether and how the effects of these individual- and system-level determinants vary between the two types of regimes. It suggests that the same set of individual- and system-level sources should affect regime support in democracies and autocracies but that the effects of the system-level sources—other than those of the individual-level sources—should vary considerably between regime types.

Chapter 4 prepares the empirical analysis of levels and sources of regime support. It introduces the case selection and data used in the empirical analysis and outlines a research strategy aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the current state of regime support and its individual- and system-level sources in democracies and autocracies. It briefly presents the operationalization of the main variables and discusses the challenges arising with using survey data from autocratic regimes.

Chapter 5 starts with a univariate analysis of levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies. Drawing on micro-level data from six cross-national survey projects, it compares the amount of support citizens extend to their political regime in democracies and in autocracies, allowing conclusions regarding the stability of each type of political regime. It shows that levels of citizen support are roughly equal between democratic and autocratic regimes; while neither type of regime receives overwhelming support from their citizens, they do not appear to be under imminent danger from popular revolution. The univariate analysis further finds that regime support varies considerably from country to country within both the group of democratic and the group of autocratic regimes, indicating that regime type in itself does not entirely control the level of regime support and that other factors must play a role in determining how strongly citizens support their political regime. The subsequent sections of chapter 5 then examine these factors and their impact on regime support in multi-level structural equation models. They begin with the analysis of individual-level sources of regime support. Based on the same survey data as the univariate analysis, the multivariate analysis finds three sources that universally influence regime support positively in both democratic and autocratic regimes: incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. The effects of political value orientations and societal value orientations, in contrast, are mostly conditional on citizens' democratic performance evaluations. Nevertheless, the analysis provides evidence that both of the individual-level causal mechanisms, an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences, are at work in either type of political regime. Moreover, as the effects of all individual-level determinants mostly point

in the same direction regardless of the type of political regime and as there are only minor differences in the sizes of these effects, the empirical analysis suggests that citizens apply very similar criteria when forming their views of the political regime they live in, even when these regimes differ fundamentally. The final section of chapter 5 examines the system-level sources of regime support. Combining the micro-level survey data with macro-level data from various sources, it observes effects of three of the four system-level determinants—macro-cultural context, macro-political context, and level of socioeconomic modernization—in both types of regimes. Yet, the causal pathways through which these system-level contexts affect regime support as well as the direction of these effects vary in some cases. Nonetheless, the analysis provides at least some evidence for both pathways linking system-level context factors to individual-level regime support, the one via citizens' value orientations and the one via citizens' performance evaluations. Both the direction and strength with which system-level context factors shape citizens' political value orientations and citizens' performance evaluations, however, vary considerably between democracies and autocracies. Other than in the case of individual-level sources, then, the analysis of system-level sources of regime support does not find the processes linking system-level context factors and individual-level regime support to be universal.

The concluding *chapter 6* summarizes the analysis and points out how it contributes to the literature on regime support and its sources. It revisits the initial question of how stable the world's democratic and autocratic regimes are likely to be. It further derives recommendations for policymakers and advocates of democracy on how to strengthen support for democratic and weaken support for autocratic regimes. Finally, it suggests what directions future research building on the present work could take.

2

Conceptualizing political support in democracies and autocracies

Establishing a framework for comparing political support in democratic and autocratic regimes, this chapter first conceptualizes both democracy and autocracy and highlights the fundamental differences between the two types of regimes (section 2.1). Based on this distinction, it outlines a generalized concept of political support for democratic and autocratic regimes and discusses the consequences of political support, leading to the identification of regime support as the most central level of political support in either type of regime (section 2.2). Building on the generalized conception of political support and the mechanisms introduced therein, chapter 3 will then develop an explanatory model of regime support in democracies and autocracies and discuss how the fundamentally different regime contexts shape the way in which different individual- and system-level sources affect regime support.

2.1. Democracies and autocracies: two fundamentally different regimes

Democracies and autocracies are fundamentally different political regimes. Outlining their key differences, this section conceptualizes democracy and autocracy and illustrates how the institutional structures and functional logics of politics vary between the two types of regime.

Defining and conceptualizing *democracy* has been one of the central endeavors in political science. As a result, definitions of democracy abound (e.g., Alvarez et al. 1996; Beetham 1992; Bollen 1990; Huntington 1991b; Linz and Stepan 1996; O'Donnell 1996; Przeworski 1991; Sartori 1987; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Schumpeter 1950). Despite their variability, most of these definitions revolve around a common core that emphasizes the *accountability* and/or *responsiveness* of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled or the mode through which this accountability and responsiveness are secured: contested elections/the electoral process. Perhaps the most seminal and influential contribution in this field was made by Robert Dahl (1971; 1989; 1998; 2006), who developed a normative conception of ideal democracy and formulated several criteria for classifying real-world political

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systems as so-called "polyarchies".[1] In an ideal democracy, five democratic standards need to be fulfilled: effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and full inclusion of adults. Taken together, these standards serve to guarantee the political equality of all members of the political community, which Dahl regards as crucial for realizing democracy.

For a real-world political regime, Dahl identifies two general dimensions that characterize a polyarchy: public contestation or political competition and inclusiveness or the right to participate. Only political regimes that are "extensively open to public contestation," i.e. provide ample opportunities to oppose the current rulers, and are "highly inclusive," i.e. grant these opportunities almost universally to the adult population, are considered as polyarchies (Dahl 1971; 1989). More specifically, Dahl lists six concrete institutions that are essential for a political regime to be classified as a polyarchy: elected officials; free, fair, and frequent elections; freedom of expression; access to alternative sources of information; associational autonomy; and inclusive citizenship (Dahl 1998; 2006). Taken together, these institutions of polyarchy guarantee the accountability and responsiveness of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled. In doing so, they form the decisive boundary for distinguishing democratic from autocratic forms of political rule. Consequently, for the purpose of this analysis, the six institutions deemed necessary for polyarchy define democratic political regimes.

We can thus define democracy as a political system in which a sizeable portion of the adult population is given equal political rights and which features the institutional mechanisms—centered around free, fair, and competitive elections—that are necessary for the realization of effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and full inclusion of adults. Democracies provide ample opportunities for their citizens to oppose the current rulers, rendering the latter accountable to the former. This vertical accountability determines the basic *functional logic of politics in democracies*. It entails that, in order to stay in office, democratic rulers need to be responsive to citizen demands and, as a consequence, democratic rulers will seek to formulate and implement policies that benefit sufficiently large parts of the general population.

In contrast, *autocracy* is typically defined as "the absence of democracy" (e.g., Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014; Svolik 2012), i.e. the violation of at least one of the criteria set to define a democracy. As a consequence, the accountability and responsiveness of autocratic rulers vis-à-vis the ruled is *not* secured through institutional mechanisms but rather lies at the rulers' own discretion, providing few incentives to formulate policies aimed at the general population. To illustrate how the institutional structures and functional logics of politics in autocracies differ from the ones in democracies, the following

[1] Dahl uses the term "polyarchy" instead of "democracy" to refer to real-world political systems since, in his view, no real-world political system does fully meet the democratic ideals (Dahl 1971, p. 8).

paragraphs introduce and briefly describe some of the most commonly distinguished subtypes of autocratic rule: electoral authoritarian regimes, military regimes, personalist regimes, single-party regimes, and monarchies.[2]

As a first way of organizing the diverse universe of autocratic rule, we can distinguish so-called closed authoritarian regimes—encompassing military regimes, personalist regimes, single-party regimes, and monarchies—from electoral authoritarian regimes. The central criterion that characterizes and discriminates electoral from all subtypes of closed authoritarian regimes is that *electoral authoritarian regimes* hold at least minimally competitive multiparty elections in which actual opposition parties may legally compete for political power. Yet, other than in democracies, these multiparty elections are *not* free and fair, with autocratic rulers employing "coercive and unfair means" (Howard and Roessler 2006, p. 365) to disadvantage the opposition (Diamond 2002; Levitsky and Way 2010b; Schedler 2002; 2010). Such authoritarian practices clearly demarcate electoral authoritarian regimes from any kind of democracy. The fact that political opposition is legal and can actually compete for power, on the other hand, distinguishes electoral authoritarian regimes from closed authoritarian regimes, which hold no minimally competitive multiparty elections. Electoral authoritarian regimes are thus characterized by combining formally democratic institutions—first and foremost multiparty elections—with autocratic practices—coercive and unfair means to disadvantage the opposition.

While most electoral authoritarian regimes are fairly homogeneous in their institutional structures since they mirror formally democratic institutions, *closed authoritarian regimes* often vary greatly from one another. Barbara Geddes (1999; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014) distinguishes between military, personalist, and single-party regimes as well as monarchies based on the criterion of who controls access to power. In *military regimes*, a "group of officers determines who will lead the country and has some influence on policy" (Geddes 1999, p. 123). Their institutional structures are often similar to those of the military itself, exhibiting firm hierarchies in which high-ranking officers make decisions over policy, select and control an official leader, and exercise command over the security forces (cf. Brooker 2009; Geddes, Frantz, and Wright 2014; Nordlinger 1977). In *personalist regimes*, in contrast, a single person controls access to political office, makes pivotal policy decisions, and exercises control over the security forces (Geddes 1999). These personalist rulers may be backed by either the military or a regime party, but neither of these organizations has an actual grip on power (Ezrow and Frantz 2011; Geddes 2003). Instead, factual political power resides solely in the personalist ruler and is often distributed through elite

[2] Apart from these subtypes of *authoritarian* rule, *totalitarian* regimes constitute another form of autocratic rule. Yet, with the exception of North Korea, real-world totalitarianism has nowadays become extinct.

patronage networks (cf. Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Brooker 2009; Chehabi and Linz 1998). In *single-party regimes*, political power is concentrated within a formal party organization which regulates access to political office and policy decisions as well as retaining control over the security forces (Geddes 1999). Regime parties in single-party regimes are typically very well organized and "dominate most aspects of the political sphere, such as local government, civil society, and the media" (Ezrow and Frantz 2011, p. 192). This tendency of the regime party to be all-encompassing often results in the party factually becoming the only political institution, subordinating or even dissolving the institutional structure of the regime to that of the party (cf. Brooker 1995; 2009; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). In *monarchies*, access to power is controlled by a royal family (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). Key political offices are typically held and policy decisions are made by members of the ruling family, who also exercise control over the security forces (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010; Ezrow and Frantz 2011). Similar to personalist regimes, power is hence mainly vested in individual persons—in this case the royal family—rather than in formal institutions (cf. Brooker 2009; Herb 1999).

Other than electoral authoritarian regimes, then, closed authoritarian regimes do not always have an institutional structure that resembles that of a democracy. In addition, institutional structures are often disregarded to a much greater extent than in electoral authoritarian regimes (cf. Gandhi 2008; Svolik 2012). Nonetheless, despite their diversity, *all* autocratic regimes share some *common characteristics* that set them apart from democratic regimes. In autocracies, rulers are not subject to removal from office by popular vote and hence vertical accountability of the rulers vis-à-vis the ruled does not exist. The lack of vertical accountability entails that rulers have little incentive to act in a way that is responsive to citizens' preferences. It also results in significantly less rotation among leading political personnel than in democratic political regimes. Autocratic rulers typically serve much longer tenures than their democratic counterparts due to the former being accountable only to their allies, not to the general population (Ezrow and Frantz 2011). With no institutional mechanisms to secure the responsiveness and accountability of the rulers, the *functional logic of politics in autocracies* differs starkly from that in democracies: instead of responding to citizen demands like democratically elected rulers, autocratic rulers strive to secure the approval of the relevant elites who control access to power, e.g. the military leaders or the royal family. Consequently, autocratic policies are much more likely formulated to benefit members of the ruling elites rather than aimed at the general population. This does not mean that policies in autocracies can never benefit the general population. Of course, autocratic policies can coincidentally benefit both the relevant elites and the population as a whole. In addition, autocratic rulers may, from time to time, also intentionally decide to put into effect a policy that benefits the population as a whole rather than the relevant elites. However, in

order to secure their grip on power, autocratic rulers must primarily pursue policies which benefit those who control access to power, i.e. the relevant elites.

In sum, we can note several fundamental differences between democratic and autocratic regimes. *Democracies*, on the one hand, guarantee the political equality of all members of the political community and feature institutional mechanisms—centered on free, fair, and competitive elections—that are necessary for the realization of effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and full inclusion of adults. Hence, democracies provide ample opportunities for their citizens to oppose the current rulers, rendering the latter accountable to the former. In order to stay in office, democratic rulers thus have strong incentives to be responsive to citizen demands and formulate policies that benefit sufficiently large parts of the general population. *Autocracies*, on the other hand, do *not* feature (all of) these fundamental democratic institutional mechanisms. Despite the fact that some autocratic regimes display formal institutional structures that mimic those in democratic political regimes, the basic institutional mechanisms necessary for the realization of democratic standards are always severely flawed. Autocracies hence neither guarantee the political equality of their citizens nor provide sufficient opportunities for their citizens to oppose incumbent rulers. This lack of opportunity to oppose the current rulers entails a substantial lack of vertical accountability of autocratic rulers vis-à-vis their citizens. Without institutional mechanisms to hold them accountable to the ruled, autocratic rulers have little incentive to be responsive to citizens' preferences. Instead, autocratic rulers require the support of a sufficiently large part of the ruling elite to stay in power and, consequently, have strong incentives to formulate policies that benefit these elites rather than the general population.[3] The remainder of this chapter and the next will discuss how these fundamental differences in the institutional structures and functional logics of democracies and autocracies affect the structure of political support as well as its consequences (section 2.2), and, most importantly, the way it can be generated (chapter 3).

2.2. A generalized conception of political support and its consequences

In line with the classical works of David Easton (1965; 1975), we can define support broadly as "an attitude by which a person orients himself to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively" (Easton 1975, p. 436). *Political support*, then, refers to *citizens' attitudes towards their political system*. Following Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1975, p. 6), these attitudes can be defined as "a

[3] For a more formal treatment of this functional logic of politics, see selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; 2002; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005).

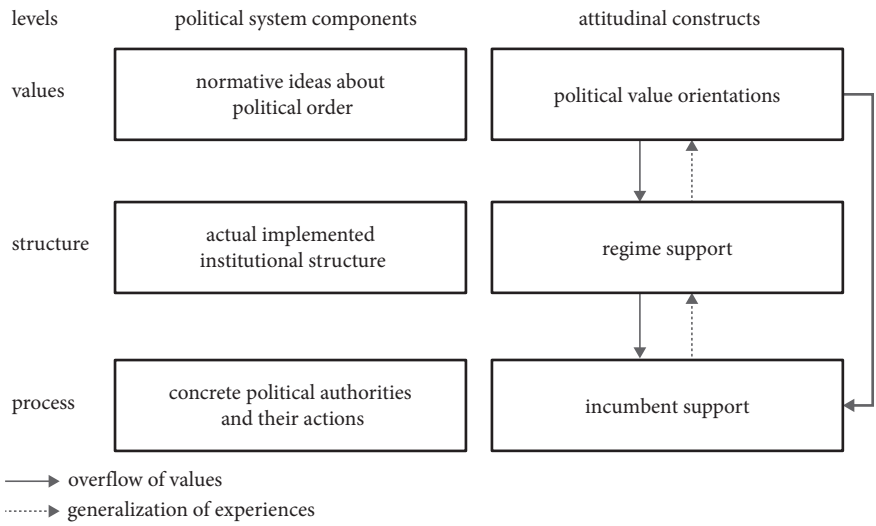

Figure 2.1. A general conception of political support
Modified from Fuchs 2002, 2009.

learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object." We can therefore characterize attitudes by five central features: first, they are latent variables which cannot be directly observed from behavior; second, they guide but do not fully determine human behavior; third, they are learned, i.e. generated from a range of beliefs acquired in the past; fourth, they are evaluative in nature; and fifth, they are directed at certain objects.

Building on Dieter Fuchs's (2002; 2009) model of democratic[4] political support, the object of these attitudes, the political system, is conceptualized as comprising three hierarchically structured levels (Figure 2.1): values, structure, and process. The first level, the *values level*, encompasses the normative ideas a political regime may be built upon—or, as Kluckhohn (1951, p. 395) famously put it, the "conception[s] … of the desirable" with regard to, in this case, a political order. These normative ideas include basic political values such as liberty, political equality, or omnipotence, but also more specific political principles such as the rule of law, horizontal accountability, or a centralization of power. Since these normative ideas are not manifest objects but rather abstract reference points, *all* political values and principles may always be present in any kind of political system—they might just not be incorporated in its actual institutional structure.

[4] Fuchs himself explicitly limits the scope of his model to democratic political systems only. Nevertheless, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent paragraphs, vital parts of his conception can be generalized to apply to any kind of political context.

This is different for the content of the *structure level*. This second level of the political system comprises the actual institutional structure implemented in a given country. Consequentially, it contains a clearly defined manifest object specific to the particular political system at hand rather than an abstract reference point common to all political systems. The same is true for the third level of the political system, the *process level*: here, concrete political authorities and their actions are the central objects.

In conceptualizing the values level as an independent theoretical dimension separate from the actual institutional structure of the political regime, Fuchs's model of the political system provides a decisive advantage over Easton's more classical distinction between the political community, the political regime, and the political authorities. Unlike Easton (1965; 1976), Fuchs does not include the values and principles the political regime is built upon in his conceptualization of the political system's structure level. This entails that the structure level is defined solely by the *institutional structure* of the political regime, aligning it with the procedural definitions of democratic and autocratic regimes established above (section 2.1).

In accordance with the definition of political support as citizens' attitudes towards the political system and reflecting the evaluative nature of attitudes, specific attitudes can be related to the three levels of the political system (Figure 2.1). On the values level, citizens are committed to certain political values and principles which may or may not be reflected in their political regime's institutional structure ("*political value orientations*"); on the structure level, citizens' attitudes towards this actual implemented institutional structure are expressed as "*regime support*"; and on the process level, "*incumbent support*" reflects citizens' views of the incumbent political authorities and their actions. Political support is thus comprised of attitudes on three different levels: political value orientations, regime support, and incumbent support.

As has been theorized implicitly by Easton (1965; 1975) and later explicitly by Fuchs (2002; 2009), these different levels of political support are not independent but influence each other (Figure 2.1). On the one hand, we can expect an "overflow of values" from the upper to the hierarchically lower levels. People will more likely support the actual political regime if its institutional structure conforms to their personal value orientations; likewise, if the normative ideas about political order held by the population are not reflected in the institutional structure of the regime, support for it should dwindle. This conforms to the general notion of value orientations as central attitudes (see Converse 1964) that shape and structure more concrete attitudes by acting as a benchmark against which other objects are evaluated. Similarly, the political structure of the political regime as well as the dominant value orientations determines what citizens expect from the political authorities, and incumbents acting against the norms set by these expectations

will rarely find the support of citizens committed to them.[5] On the other hand, the opposite effect, a "generalization of experiences" from the lower to the upper levels, can also occur. As people accumulate experiences with the political authorities and their actions, support for the political regime these authorities represent can be inferred; and sustained positive experiences with the regime itself will ultimately lead to the adoption of the political values this regime is built upon.[6]

We can apply this basic analytical conceptualization of political support *to both democratic and autocratic contexts*. In line with the logic of political systems theory, Fuchs's hierarchical model of the political system and, consequently, the related attitudes (political value orientations, regime support, and incumbent support) are applicable to all political systems. Regardless of the type of political system they live in, people have certain political value orientations, which we can separate from their attitudes towards the specific institutional structure of the actual political regime and the political authorities filling its roles. Equally, we can expect the causal mechanisms linking the different levels of political support (overflow of values, generalization of experiences) to operate identically in both democratic and autocratic contexts. Firstly, regardless of the particular institutional structure of a regime (for example, whether structures are democratic or not), support for it should be affected by the extent to which it does or does not reflect citizens' political value orientations. Likewise, the expectations citizens have towards the political authorities will always be shaped by their dominant political value orientations and the rules established by the regime's institutional structure, be it democratic or autocratic in nature (overflow of values). Secondly, we can also anticipate a generalization of experiences in all types of political systems. Citizens' long-term satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the incumbent political personnel should be consequential for their views of the political regime that brought these people to power and that the incumbents represent, no matter whether they live in democratic or autocratic contexts. The same assumption holds for the relationship between regime support and political value orientations—citizens should eventually adopt the values embodied by the political regime they have perpetually supported, regardless of whether these values are democratic or autocratic in nature.

Still, there is one important qualification that we need to take into account when applying the conception of political support to autocracies. This qualification is rooted in the fundamentally different institutional structures and functional

[5] Easton implicitly described this top-down relation as "legitimation" which, in his model, acts as a dimension of political support and is based on the members of society "in some vague or explicit way [seeing] these objects as conforming to [their] own moral principles, [their] own sense of what is right and proper in the political sphere" (Easton 1965, p. 278).

[6] Again, Easton implicitly described this bottom-up relation as a dimension of political support he calls "trust" and which is generated from "the experiences that members [of the society] have of the authorities over time" (Easton 1975, p. 448).

logics of politics in democracies and autocracies (cf. section 2.1). Two differences are of particular relevance here. One, while incumbent political authorities are frequently subject to removal from office via elections in democratic political systems and can thus clearly be separated from the institutional structure of the regime in the eyes of the citizens, no such clear separation may exist in autocratic contexts where concrete political authorities often remain unchallenged for prolonged periods of time. Prominent examples of such extended incumbent tenures are Alexander Lukashenko, who has been serving as the Belarussian president for more than 25 years; Cambodian prime minister Hun Sen, who has been in office since 1985; and Cameroon's Paul Biya, who has ruled over his country even longer, since 1975. Two, while autocratic institutional structures are defined by constitutions just as those of democracies, how much factual power these institutions have is often largely dependent on the rulers' discretion (Gandhi 2008; Ginsburg and Simpser 2014; Svolik 2012). For example, while Vietnam may have a formally independent parliament with autonomous decision-making powers, the ruling CPV's (Communist Party of Vietnam) grip on power is so tight that the National Assembly "generally follows CPV dictates" (Freedom House 2016d). Another example for this phenomenon is Qatar: although a constitutional amendment from 2004 stipulates for two thirds of the country's members of parliament to be elected, the ruling emir has postponed these elections repeatedly. As a result, until today, all members of the Qatari parliament remain appointed by—and hence dependent on—the emir, again reducing parliament to a mere rubber-stamp institution (Freedom House 2016c). Both of these autocratic phenomena—extended tenures and a personalization of power—may result in an amalgamation of the political authorities and the political regime, and limit the capacity of citizens to distinguish clearly between the process and structure levels of political support (similarly, Breustedt and Stark 2015). Depending on how far this amalgamation of the incumbent political authorities with the political regime has progressed, these two analytically separate levels of political support may, in fact, become merged entirely in the eyes of the citizens. Such a confusion of incumbent political authorities and the political regime itself appears particularly likely in closed authoritarian regimes where political authorities regularly disregard formal institutional structures and where power tends to be vested in individual persons rather than in formal institutions. Whether citizens in closed authoritarian regimes are, in fact, unable to distinguish between political authorities and the political regime is, however, an empirical question and will be tested later on (section 4.2). Analytically, the two levels of the political system and consequentially of political support remain separate, even in closed authoritarian regimes. Nonetheless, following from the potential amalgamation of political authorities and political regime in autocracies, we can expect that the relationship between incumbent support and regime support is considerably stronger in autocratic political systems than it is in democratic political systems.

Summing up, we can apply the general conception of political support—its distinction into three separate levels and the interrelations between these levels—to both democratic and autocratic contexts. The only qualification that we need to make for autocratic political systems is that the relationship between incumbent support and regime support is likely to be stronger than in democratic political systems.

Based on this generalized conception of political support, we can turn now to the *consequences of political support for regime stability*. Starting from the general proposition that attitudes guide human behavior, we can expect political support to be consequential for the stability of the political system at which it is directed. Building again on the work of Dieter Fuchs (2002), we can identify support on the structure level—*regime support*—as the most consequential attitude in this regard.

Regime support, i.e. citizens' attitudes towards the actual implemented institutional structure of the political system, can have profound consequences for the political system. In both democracies and autocracies, high regime support entails conformist behavior and thereby helps stabilize the political regime. Low regime support, on the other hand, leads to dissident behavior and demands for institutional reform.[7] In democracies, with their institutionalized responsiveness mechanisms, these grievances will eventually result in changes in the political regime's institutional structure. In autocracies, however, with their lack of institutionalized responsiveness mechanisms, changes in the regime's institutional structure will only occur if regime elites choose to concede to public demand. Nonetheless, abiding discontent on the structure level does still have destabilizing effects by undermining the legitimacy of the autocratic regime and raising the need for and costs of alternative stabilization measures (Gerschewski 2013). Two of the most commonly used stabilization measures in autocratic regimes are repression and co-optation. Repression is aimed at suppressing opposition movements among the general population and makes use of more coercive and sometimes even violent means (cf., e.g., Davenport 2007; Escribà-Folch 2013). Co-optation focuses on securing the support of actors "whose resources the regime leadership deems crucial for exercising and maintaining power" (Tanneberg, Stefes, and Merkel 2013, p. 118) and is usually attained by distributing spoils or by contracting power-sharing arrangements (cf., e.g., Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Magaloni 2008). Although both of these stabilization measures

[7] Empirically, low support for the political regime is associated with the rise of unconventional and elite-challenging actions (Farah, Barnes, and Heunks 1979; Hooghe and Marien 2013; Kaase 1999; Muller 1977; Weldon and Dalton 2014), demands for institutional reforms (Dalton 2004; Dalton, Bürklin, and Drummond 2001), and a lower willingness to comply with the law (Dalton 2004; Letki 2006; Marien and Hooghe 2011; Scholz and Lubell 1998; Tyler 2006).

are likely to prove effective in the short run, in the long run, they may (further) destabilize the autocratic regime (e.g., Bove and Rivera 2015; Levitsky and Way 2012). At the same time, regime elites may choose to react to citizen demands for change in order to mitigate dissatisfaction and avoid destabilization. This strategy may result in only minor changes in the regime's institutional structure; or it may lead to further erosions and constitute the first step on the path towards substantial regime change (cf. Brownlee 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Howard and Roessler 2006; Schedler 2010). Therefore, (the lack of) regime support can have profound consequences for the stability of autocracies as well as democracies.

Conversely, support on the process level, i.e. support for the incumbent political authorities, is consequential only for the staying-in-office of these particular authorities. In democracies, high or low support for the incumbent authorities directly results in their re-election or voting out of office. In autocracies, with their lack of a fair electoral mechanism, the electoral consequences of incumbent support are greatly reduced or barred altogether. Thus, whereas high support for the incumbents should—just like in democracies—result in their staying in office (be it through tampered electoral processes or elite selection), low support for incumbents—unlike in democracies—will remain without direct consequences. Of course, depending on the responsiveness of the political elite, changes in personnel may occur after all in reaction to public demands. For instance, Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf was forced to resign in 2008 after his popularity had dropped dramatically. Yet, unlike in democracies, the final decision hereupon remains in the hands of the regime elite, not the public—it was his own party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, that threatened to impeach Musharraf if he did not step down voluntarily.[8] In the majority of cases, then, low support for the incumbent authorities will have no direct systemic consequences in autocratic political systems. Nonetheless, low support for the political authorities is not without *any* consequences, even in autocracies. By denying citizens the ability to translate their political attitudes into political action (i.e. the removal of the disliked authorities from office), stress caused by low levels of support for the incumbent authorities cannot be relieved. Instead, it accumulates and, through the process of generalization, can be transformed into negative attitudes towards the political regime itself.[9]

[8] Since even authoritarian elections involve *some* uncertainty (Brownlee 2009; Howard and Roessler 2006), it is not entirely impossible that low satisfaction with the political authorities *does* result in an unintended change in government. Empirically, however, this is a rare phenomenon (Bunce and Wolchik 2010; Levitsky and Way 2010b; Lueders and Croissant 2014).

[9] While this process of generalization should also exist in democratic systems, the effects will probably be more immediate in autocratic systems where other mechanisms of coping with this discontent—removing the disliked authorities from office—are unavailable. The effect should be particularly pronounced in those autocratic regimes where the political authorities and political regime have become amalgamated in the eyes of their citizens: low support for the incumbents can then be directly equated with low support for the political regime itself.

Similarly, support on the values level, i.e. political value orientations, are only relevant for the question of the direction a regime change will eventually take. In democracies, as long as citizens remain committed to democratic political values, any regime change will always occur within the limits of a generally democratic political framework. If there is sufficient support for democracy on the values level, citizens will only tolerate institutional structures grounded in democratic principles; vice versa, if citizens' political value orientations are fundamentally autocratic in nature, no democratic regime can be sustained in the long run. The same is true for autocracies: as long as citizens remain committed to autocratic political values, regime change to democracy is highly unlikely; as soon as they overwhelmingly support democratic political values, regime change is likely to result in democratization.

Summing up, we can identify support on the structure level, i.e. regime support, as central with regard to the stability of both democracies and autocracies. Support for the incumbent political authorities (process level) is consequential only for the staying-in-office of these particular authorities. Political value orientations (values level) are only relevant for the question of the direction a regime change will eventually take. Regime support, however, is essential for the question of *whether there is any potential for regime change* in general or not. As long as support for the actual political regime remains high, therefore, low levels of support for the authorities representing this regime or the political values it is based upon will merely lead to internal attitudinal incoherence. This incoherence may eventually cause a drop in regime support, but not have system-threatening systemic consequences by itself. For the initial question of regime stability, regime support is hence the most consequential attitudinal construct and democracies and autocracies alike should be interested in maintaining a sufficiently high level of regime support. Accordingly, the following chapter will focus on *sources of regime support* rather than the other levels of political support.

3

Sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies

Having outlined the concept of political support and having demonstrated that a sufficiently high level of regime support is essential for the long-term stability of any given regime, i.e. both democracies and autocracies, this chapter develops an integrated *explanatory model of regime support* for democratic and autocratic regimes. This explanatory model identifies not only the relevant sources at the *individual and system levels* but also specifies the *causal mechanisms* linking individual-level sources to regime support as well as the *causal pathways* relaying the effects of system-level sources onto regime support, and discusses how the effects of both individual- and system-level sources *may differ between democracies and autocracies*. The following sections will explicate and specify the causal mechanisms and pathways linking the individual-and system-level sources with regime support and explore how the differences between democracies and autocracies affect these linkages. First, however, the following paragraphs give a brief overview of the general structure of the explanatory model and introduce the different explanatory variables included as individual- and system-level sources of regime support.

At the most general level, the explanatory model differentiates between individual-level and system-level sources of regime support. At the *individual level*, it distinguishes five overarching central sources of regime support (lower half of Figure 3.2): *societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations*, and *systemic performance evaluations*. Societal value orientations comprise citizens' beliefs about how society should be organized, political value orientations encompass citizens' beliefs about how the political system should be organized, incumbent support captures citizens' views of the incumbent political leaders, democratic performance evaluations consist of citizens' assessments of how well their country provides political rights and freedoms, and systemic performance evaluations include citizens' assessments of how well their country provides more generic public goods. Many of the explanatory variables studied in the culturalist and institutionalist literature on regime support can be subsumed under these five overarching concepts; this is, for example, the case for pro-democratic attitudes (e.g., Ma and Yang 2014; Singh 2018), postmaterialist value orientations (e.g., Dalton 2000; Nevitte and Kanji 2002), or economic performance evaluations (e.g., Cordero and Simón 2016;

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Wang 2005). Other explanatory variables cited in the literature are conceptualized as mere antecedents or covariates of the five *direct* determinants of regime support and, therefore, excluded from the core model. This is the case, for example, for the status as election winner/loser (e.g., Rich 2015) or social capital (e.g., Evans and Letki 2006). In concentrating on the direct individual-level determinants of regime support, this contribution organizes the wealth of explanatory variables cited in previous studies in a systematic way and presents a straightforward individual-level explanatory model of regime support based on just *five central sources*—societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Drawing on the generalized model of political support developed in the previous chapter, it relates these sources to *two basic causal mechanisms* that generate regime support: an *overflow of values* for societal and political value orientations and a *generalization of experiences* for incumbent support and democratic and systemic performance evaluations.

With regard to the *differences between democracies and autocracies*, we can expect both of these causal mechanisms to work in the same way in democracies and autocracies as the overflow of values and the generalization of experiences were introduced above as universal causal mechanisms that operate identically, regardless of the type of political system (section 2.2). Citizens' value orientations should always act as reference points for what citizens expect from the political regime (overflow of values) and citizens' evaluations of the regime's performance and its incumbents should always, in the long run, shape their views of the political regime itself (generalization of experiences). The explanatory model of regime support consequently expects not only the same set of individual-level sources to affect regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes but also the effects of these individual-level sources *not to vary systematically between democracies and autocracies*.

At the *system level*, the theoretical model distinguishes *four* central sources of regime support (upper half of Figure 3.2): the *macro-cultural context*, the *macro-political context*, the *actual systemic performance*, and the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Macro-cultural context captures a country's cultural tradition, while macro-political context incorporates to what extent a political system grants political rights and freedoms, actual systemic performance encompasses the extent to which a political system provides more generic public goods, and level of socioeconomic modernization distinguishes countries based on how socioeconomically developed they are. These four central system-level contexts encompass most of the explanatory variables prominently featured in prior research on sources of regime support such as macroeconomic performance (e.g., Morlino and Quaranta 2016; Quaranta and Martini 2017; van Erkel and van der Meer 2016) or political performance (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014; van der Meer and Dekker 2011; van der Meer and

Hakhverdian 2017). Unlike previous endeavors at explaining regime support through system-level factors (e.g., Quaranta and Martini 2016; Wagner, Schneider, and Halla 2009), the explanatory model presented here does not conceptualize these system-level contexts as having a *direct* effect on regime support. Instead, building on a *general psychological model of attitude formation,* it specifies how each of these four contexts affects one or more of the aforementioned individual-level sources of regime support. It thus suggests that macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization do not exert a direct effect on regime support but rather that they only relate to regime support indirectly and that their effect is mediated through the respective individual-level attitudes they shape. As regards these mediations, the explanatory model distinguishes between *two general causal pathways that link system-level contexts with regime support*: one *pathway via citizens' value orientations* and one *pathway via citizens' performance evaluations*. As far as the first pathway is concerned, the explanatory model links the macro-cultural context to regime support through citizens' societal value orientation, identifies citizens' political value orientations as mediating the effect of macro-political context on regime support, and proposes that both citizens' societal and political value orientations relay the effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support. As far as the second pathway is concerned, the explanatory model links the macro-political context to regime support through citizens' democratic performance evaluations, identifies citizens' systemic performance evaluations as mediating the effect of actual systemic performance on regime support, and proposes that both citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations relay the effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support.

With regard to the *differences between democracies and autocracies*, the explanatory model expects that both of these causal pathways are distorted in autocracies. Since autocracies cannot rely on their institutional structures and policies to create and maintain citizen support as much as democracies can, autocracies need to make use of alternative means of legitimation. The two primary means through which autocracies can achieve this goal are *indoctrination* and *propaganda*. While indoctrination aims to change citizens' societal and political value orientations, propaganda aims to change citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations. In doing so, indoctrination and propaganda ultimately distort both causal pathways that link system-level context factors with regime support. The explanatory model consequently expects the effects of system-level sources of regime support *to vary systematically between democracies and autocracies*.

Having outlined the basic explanatory model of regime support and having introduced the central sources of regime support on both the individual and the system level, the remainder of this chapter explicates and specifies the causal

mechanisms and pathways underlying the effects of each of these variables and discusses whether and how these effects might vary between regime types. It is organized as follows. The first section (section 3.1) is dedicated to the individual-level sources of regime support: societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. These variables are organized into two subsections according to the primary causal mechanism through which they exert their influence on regime support. This distinction at the same time roughly reflects the "culturalist" and "institutionalist" traditions of the literature on sources of regime support. While the sources usually attributed to the culturalist approach, societal value orientations and political value orientations, are expected to affect regime support through an overflow of values (subsection 3.1.1), the sources usually attributed to the institutionalist approach, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations, are conceptualized as influencing regime support through a generalization of experiences (subsection 3.1.2). The second section (section 3.2) turns to the system-level sources of regime support: macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization. Reflecting the individual-level distinction between culturalist sources that influence regime support through an overflow of values and institutionalist sources that influence regime support through a generalization of experiences, individual subsections are dedicated to the causal pathway via citizens' value orientations (subsection 3.2.1) and to the causal pathway via citizens' performance evaluations (subsection 3.2.2). The chapter closes with a concise presentation of the full theoretical model of sources of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes and a discussion of the implications this explanatory model has for the levels of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes (section 3.3).

3.1. Sources of regime support on the individual level: overflow of values and generalization of experiences

Unlike most previous attempts at explaining regime support, this book does not formulate partial claims with regard to the effects of each individual explanatory variable at the individual level. Rather, it identifies two basic and universal mechanisms that influence regime support and to which we can relate all previous individual-level explanations: an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences. These two mechanisms have already been introduced and their universality has been demonstrated when discussing the relationships between different levels of political support within the framework of the generalized conception of political support. On the one hand, an *overflow of values* was expected to lead to top-down effects, i.e. from higher levels of political support to lower

levels of political support. This causal mechanism connected political value orientations on the values level to regime support on the structure level and incumbent support on the process level; likewise, it connected regime support on the structure level to incumbent support on the process level. On the other hand, a *generalization of experiences* was expected to result in bottom-up effects, i.e. from lower levels of political support to higher levels of political support. This causal mechanism connected incumbent support on the process level to regime support on the structure level and regime support on the structure level to political value orientations on the values level (cf. section 2.2). Focusing now only on regime support as the dependent variable, we can identify two effects from the generalized conception of political support: one, an overflow of values from political value orientations onto regime support, and two, a generalization of experiences from incumbent support onto regime support. This logic entails not only that regime support can be affected through *both* causal mechanisms (an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences) but also that political value orientations as well as incumbent support can be identified as two of the *sources* of regime support.

Still, political value orientations and incumbent support are not the *only* sources of regime support. Prior research in the culturalist and institutionalist traditions has suggested a vast variety of additional determinants such as postmaterialist value orientations, economic performance evaluations, perceptions of public sector corruption, having voted for a government party, or social trust (for a very cursory overview, see Gilley 2006a). Yet all of these sources, as well as the two dominant research traditions, can be linked to regime support via one of the two basic causal mechanisms of either the overflow of values or the generalization of experiences. Scholars advocating the "culturalist" approach and focusing on value orientations and socialization-related variables as individual-level determinants of regime support implicitly or explicitly assume an overflow of values; scholars following the "institutionalist" approach and focusing on performance evaluations or the individual's position within the political system or society implicitly or explicitly assume a generalization of experiences. Building on these two causal mechanisms and integrating the majority of determinants discussed in the culturalist and institutionalist literature, the explanatory model proposed here contains *five central individual-level sources of regime support*: societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations.

Each of the following subsections first presents the potential individual-level sources of regime support and the general causal mechanism linking the respective sources to regime support. A second step specifies the effect of each individual-level determinant on regime support taking into account the contextual characteristics of democracies and autocracies. At the most general level, the theoretical model proposes the individual-level mechanisms forming regime

support (overflow of values, generalization of experiences) to be universal. It therefore expects barely any variations between democracies and autocracies with regard to the effects of the individual-level sources of regime support. This proposition is in line with the (scarce) prior research comparing sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies. The majority of studies find few differences between the two types of regimes, both with regard to which sources are relevant and with regard to how these sources affect regime support (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Mishler and Rose 2001a; Park 2013; Park and Chang 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006).

3.1.1. How value orientations shape regime support

Culturalists argue that regime support is mainly shaped by enduring value orientations which are formed during the socialization process (Eckstein 1988). Value orientations can be defined as "enduring belief[s] that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach 1973, p. 5). According to the generalized model of political support outlined in chapter 2, these value orientations pre-determine more specific attitudes towards the actual political regime (regime support) by setting the reference points for the values that should be realized within and through a political regime ("overflow of values"). This echoes the classical Eastonian idea of "diffuse" support that builds on the perceived agreement between an individual's political value orientations and the political system's institutional structure (Easton 1965). The generalized model of political support specifies this mechanism for the relationship between political value orientations and regime support. In addition to these *political* values introduced in the generalized model of political support, *societal* values such as individualism can also act as reference points for expectations directed at the regime. As long as the institutional structure of the political regime is congruent with these political or societal value orientations, a positive effect of these value orientations on regime support should prevail; if the institutional structure of the political regime is incongruent with the political or societal value orientations held by the individual, a negative effect should be present. This should be true regardless of what the institutional structure of the regime in question looks like, i.e. whether the political regime is democratic or autocratic.

Which societal and political values are relevant as standards by which citizens may judge a political regime? For *political values*, the answer seems quite straightforward. As has been explicated in section 2.2, political systems entail a values level comprised of the normative ideas, i.e. basic political values and principles, that a political regime may be built upon. For instance, democracies may be built upon the ideas of political equality, political pluralism, or the separation of

powers; while autocracies may be built upon political inequality, single-party supremacy, or the centralization of power. Even though a specific political regime will always embody only a subset of these values and principles (not least because some are mutually exclusive, such as the separation of powers and the centralization of power in the executive), the entire set of values and principles can act as reference points against which the regime is evaluated. While there is a vast number of potentially relevant political values and principles, we can nevertheless arrange all of them along a single dimension: they are grounded in either fundamentally democratic or fundamentally autocratic ideas.

Following the basic Eastonian idea of congruence, we would expect support for any political regime to be high as long as its institutional structure corresponds to the political values and principles held by its population. We would thus expect democratic political value orientations to be conducive to support for democratic political regimes and autocratic political value orientations to enhance support for autocratic political regimes. Prior research lends some, albeit not particularly strong, support to this conjecture. Citizens who hold more pro-democratic value orientations tend to express more support for their democratic political regimes (Catterberg and Moreno 2005; Singh 2018) and less for their autocratic political regimes (Chen 2017; Chen and Dickson 2008; Chu 2011; Zhong and Chen 2013). However, we can also theorize political value orientations to act as reference points for the values that should be realized within and through a political regime and thus shape the expectations citizens have of their political regime. Under these conditions, democratic political value orientations could also decrease regime support in democracies. Since no actual political regime is ever capable of meeting ideal democratic standards (cf. Dahl 1971; 1989; 1998), even the most democratic regime may fall short of the standards derived from citizens' value orientations and, hence, evoke more critical evaluations and consequently a drop in regime support. This line of argument is prominent in the critical-citizens literature which claims that the spread of democratic values in established democracies has led to an increasing dissatisfaction of citizens with their political institutions (see, e.g., Dalton 2000; 2004; Norris 1999b; 2011; for a recent overview and empirical substantiation, see Hooghe, Marien, and Oser 2017).

Taking into account these discrepancies between real-world political institutions and citizens' democratic ideals, Huhe and Tang (2017) suggest that democratic political value orientations have a stronger negative effect on regime support in autocracies than in democracies due to the former falling farther short of democratic ideals than the latter. While the empirical evidence seems to support this proposition (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Huhe and Tang 2017; but see Park 2013; Park and Chang 2013), I argue that this literature neglects an important caveat. As prior research has shown, citizens' evaluations of their political regime's democratic quality can vary greatly even within

the same country: despite the political regime's democratic quality being objectively the same for all citizens, not every citizen *judges* it in the same way (e.g., Pietsch 2014). Especially in autocracies, these perceptions are often heavily skewed and, in fact, rarely reflect the objective level of democracy (Kruse, Ravlik, and Welzel 2019; Mauk 2017; Park 2017; Shi and Lu 2010).[1] This means that even within the same country, some citizens may view their political regime as adhering to democratic standards more than others. Such variation in citizens' evaluations leads to an important qualification regarding the effect of political value orientations on regime support. If people judge the quality of democracy their political regime supplies differently, the effect of democratic political value orientations on regime support should vary accordingly: it should be more positive for citizens who view their political regime as more democratic and less positive for those who view it as less democratic. This should be the case regardless of how democratic the political regime actually is. I therefore expect the effect of political value orientations to be universally contingent on the individual's *democratic performance evaluations* (on democratic performance evaluations, see subsection 3.1.2).

For *societal values*, a direct identification of central values akin to the one for political values is not possible. However, certain values appear more closely connected to the political system than others. Two societal values that have been considered as particularly conducive to, and pivotal for, democracy are *tolerance* and *equality* (Fish 2009; Gibson 1992; Griffith, Plamenatz, and Pennock 1956; Leite Viegas 2007; Schwartz 2004; Tocqueville 1862). Both of these societal values have direct representations in the realm of political values: political tolerance and political equality. These political values are essential to democracy as defined above: political equality is directly connected to inclusiveness and political tolerance is a precondition for public contestation, making the two values inherently related to the two basic dimensions of polyarchy (cf. section 2.1). On a societal level, it is assumed that both (societal) tolerance and (societal) equality are prerequisites for the acceptance of the corresponding political principles. As M. Steven Fish (2009, p. 60) puts it, "[w]ithout tolerance, there can be no perpetual process of open, peaceful competition .... Without equality, there can be no decision rule that is consistent with rule by the demos." Tolerance, defined as the willingness to accept other people's ideas, activities, and life choices even though one might not agree with them (Gibson 2009, p. 324), is thus expected to

[1] There are multiple reasons for *why* some citizens evaluate their political regime's democratic performance differently than others. For instance, some citizens may understand democracy in a different way and apply different criteria for evaluating their political regime (e.g., Shi and Lu 2010). Another possible factor, especially in autocratic regimes, is regime propaganda. As democracy has emerged as the only legitimate form of rule across the globe, autocratic political regimes routinely portray themselves as being democratic not only to the international community but also to their own citizens. If some citizens buy into this propaganda while others do not, evaluations of democratic performance may also vary greatly within one and the same political regime.

be closely related to the acceptance of the democratic principle of pluralism. Equality, defined as the belief that no individual or group is inherently superior or inferior to other individuals or groups (Schwartz 1995, p. 395), is seen as tightly linked to the democratic principle of universal political rights.

Another cluster of societal values that has often been connected to democracy is *individualism* (e.g., Gorodnichenko and Roland 2015; Griffith, Plamenatz, and Pennock 1956; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Schwartz 2004; Tocqueville 1862). Individualism is based on the assumption that individuals are independent of one another, and several core values are thus typically associated with individualism: independence, uniqueness, and autonomy (Hofstede 2001; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier 2002; Triandis 1996). This characterization is normally contrasted with collectivism, which is based on the assumption that individuals are dependent on each other and bound by group memberships. The values typically associated with collectivism are thus interdependence, conformity, and harmonious relationships (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier 2002; Schwartz 1990; Triandis 1994; 1996). The individualism-collectivism dichotomy is thought to be especially important because it focuses on the relationship between the individual and the collectivity, and this relationship is "intimately linked with societal norms" (Hofstede 2001, p. 210) in human society. While individualism is expected to foster an emphasis on individual rights, freedom of choice, and mutually agreed-upon principles and regulations governing human interaction, collectivism is said to promote a societal order that puts group interests before individual rights and is governed by ascribed roles and hierarchical relationships (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Kim 1994; Schwartz 1990; Triandis 1996).

More empirically orientated studies often use postmaterialist or self-expressive values as determinants of regime support in democracies (Catterberg and Moreno 2005; Dalton 2000; Klingemann 2014; Nevitte and Kanji 2002), while research on popular support for autocratic regimes has predominantly focused on traditional, mostly "Asian" values (Shi 2001; Wang and Tan 2013; Yang and Tang 2010). Postmaterialist or self-expressive values, however, are very closely related to individualism as well as tolerance and, to a lesser extent, also equality (e.g., Inglehart and Welzel 2005); traditional, "Asian" values are mainly conceptualized as emphasizing collectivist and, somewhat alleviated, intolerant and unequal ideas (e.g., Park and Shin 2006). Therefore, we can still identify *individualism, tolerance*, and *equality* as the most central societal values with regard to regime support. As these values are often associated with "modernity" (Inkeles and Smith 1974), they will hereafter be referred to as "modern" societal values, while intolerance, inequality, and collectivism will be referred to as "traditional" societal values.

As far as the effect of these societal value orientations on regime support is concerned, we may expect similar dynamics as in the case of political value

orientations. On the one hand, we might assume modern societal value orientations to be positively related to regime support in democratic political contexts and negatively in autocratic political contexts, based on a basic idea of congruence. On the other hand, we may expect the same "values-as-an-ideal-benchmark" logic to apply as for democratic political value orientations, proposing a negative effect of modern societal value orientations on regime support even in democracies (see also Inglehart 1977; 1997; 1999). Yet eventually, based on the argument outlined with respect to political value orientations, we also need to qualify the effect of societal value orientations: it should be more positive for individuals who judge their political regime to be more democratic and more negative for those who judge it to be less democratic. While previous research finds modern societal value orientations to exert a more negative effect in autocracies than in democracies (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013), it has not yet taken into account the moderating effect of democratic performance evaluations proposed here. These findings may therefore simply be artifacts of citizens in autocracies (rightfully) judging their regimes' democratic quality as lower than citizens in democracies do. Just like for the contingent effect of political value orientations, I therefore argue that the contingent effect of societal value orientations is universal across regime types.

Apart from political and societal value orientations, the culturalist literature has examined the role of social capital or social trust and of education in shaping regime support. For *social trust or social capital*, empirical studies find positive, albeit rather small effects on regime support in both democracies and autocracies (e.g., Brehm and Rahn 1997; Evans and Letki 2006; Kaase 1999; Newton 1999b; Oskarsson 2010; Yang and Tang 2010; Zmerli and Newton 2008). Nonetheless, I do not conceptualize social trust or social capital as direct determinants of regime support: while social capital and social trust surely foster (or are themselves fostered by) societal values like tolerance and equality (Uslaner 2002), they are not societal values in themselves and, at best, exert an indirect effect on regime support that is mediated through these societal value orientations. Consequently, the explanatory model will not contain social trust or social capital as individual-level sources of regime support.

This is also the case for the other variable often discussed in the culturalist literature on sources of regime support: *education*. Empirically, prior research has frequently included education as a determinant of regime support, albeit with inconclusive results. While some studies find a positive effect of education on regime support (Chen, Zhong, and Hillard 1997; Huang, Chang, and Chu 2008; van der Meer 2010; van Erkel and van der Meer 2016), others report a negative influence (Lewis-Beck, Tang, and Martini 2014; Nevitte and Kanji 2002; Seligson 2002; Yang and Tang 2010; Zhong and Chen 2013). On the theoretical level, however, scholars in this tradition seldom conceptualize education as affecting regime support directly. Instead, they usually follow Lipset's (1959) modernization

theory and argue that education affects citizens' value orientations, which then in turn shape regime support (Dalton 2004; Huang, Chang, and Chu 2008; Nevitte and Kanji 2002). This means that education does not have a direct, but only an indirect effect on regime support that is mediated through societal and political value orientations. Consequently, this book's explanatory model does not treat education as an individual-level source of regime support.

In addition, one might also hypothesize *religion or religiosity* to influence support for political regimes. Yet, while some societal values may be derived from religious ideas (or the other way around), religion is not a societal value in itself but rather emphasizes certain societal values such as collectivist ideas. Religion and religiosity are, therefore, not direct determinants of regime support, either. The explanatory model hence only includes two individual-level sources that influence regime support through an overflow of values: societal value orientations and political value orientations.

3.1.2. How incumbent support and performance evaluations shape regime support

In contrast to these long-term value orientations, institutionalists argue that short-to-medium term evaluations of a political system's performance are the decisive factors in generating regime support. In this view, citizens continuously form positive or negative evaluations of the political regime's performance based on their experiences with the regime's output. These evaluations accumulate over time and serve as the basis for the formation of attitudes towards the political regime itself (Barry 1970; Kornberg and Clarke 1992). This process has been introduced in the generalized concept of political support as a "generalization of experiences" linking support for the incumbent authorities on the process level with regime support on the structure level (section 2.2). It echoes the classical Eastonian idea of "specific" support drawing on satisfaction with a political system's outputs (Easton 1965) and ties in with the rational-choice perspective that citizens will grant or withdraw support to a political regime based on the benefits they expect to receive from this regime (Rogowski 1974).

Drawing on the generalized conception of political support, the first determinant that we can identify as affecting regime support through a generalization of experiences is support for the incumbent authorities (cf. section 2.2). Those individuals that have a more positive image of the incumbent authorities are expected to generalize this image to the political regime which these authorities represent. Consequently, they should support the regime more than individuals who are negatively inclined towards the incumbent authorities. Prior research supports this proposition at least proximately: citizens who voted for the winning party express more regime support than those who voted for the opposition

(Anderson et al. 2005; Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Conroy-Krutz and Kerr 2015; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Han and Chang 2016; Rich 2015; Singh, Lago, and Blais 2011). As incumbent authorities can be seen as representing the political regime in both democratic and autocratic regimes, we would expect this relationship between incumbent support and regime support to be universal across regime types.

However, there may be differences with regard to the *strength* of this effect between democratic and autocratic regimes based on the fundamentally different institutional structures and logics of politics in democratic and autocratic political systems (cf. section 2.1). For one, in autocracies, incumbents often remain in office for a prolonged period of time; furthermore, de facto political power in these regimes is often personalized rather than vested in formal institutions. This may result in a perceived amalgamation of the political authorities and the political regime. The closer the association of the incumbent authorities with the political regime, the more strongly support for the incumbent authorities should affect regime support (cf. section 2.2). Moreover, the strength of the effect of incumbent support on regime support may be contingent on the systemic consequences of said incumbent support. In democracies, there are direct systemic consequences of support for the incumbent authorities: low support may lead to the voting out of office of the incumbents, mitigating the subsequent effect on regime support. In autocratic political systems, in contrast, low support for incumbents usually remains without direct systemic consequences, denying citizens the possibility to vent their dissatisfaction. Instead, it may accumulate and be conveyed into negative attitudes towards the political regime itself through the process of generalization (cf. section 2.2). In line with these propositions, we can expect the strength of the effect of incumbent support on regime support to be greater in autocratic political systems than in democratic political systems.

Following the institutionalist approach, incumbent support is not the only relevant determinant of regime support. Instead, this literature frequently emphasizes the role of *performance evaluations* in shaping regime support (e.g., Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Miller 1974; Rogowski 1974; Weatherford 1984). Which performance evaluations are relevant in this respect? Previous studies usually distinguish between evaluations of economic and political performance and show that both consistently increase regime support in democracies as well as in autocracies (Chen 2017; Chen and Dickson 2008; Cordero and Simón 2016; Linde 2012; Magalhães 2016; Mishler and Rose 1997; 2001b; Seligson 2002; Waldron-Moore 1999; Wang 2005; Wang 2016; Wang and Tan 2013; Zhong and Chen 2013).

This contribution, however, follows Dieter Fuchs (1998) and differentiates between "democratic" and "systemic" performance. While systemic performance refers to a type of performance that every kind of political system has to provide for its citizens, democratic performance refers to a type of performance that is

specific to (liberal) democracies. *Democratic performance* is high if a political system manages to provide political rights and freedoms, and to institutionally secure the responsiveness and accountability of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled (Fuchs 1998; Weaver and Rockman 1993). Concrete elements of democratic performance include the provision of civil liberties and participation rights, political competition, vertical accountability through elections, horizontal accountability through the separation of powers, or the rule of law. In this respect, democratic political regimes are inherently superior to autocratic political regimes. Nonetheless, there may also be different degrees of "democratic" performance across autocratic regimes. Even if the regime falls short of minimal democratic standards, it can still grant or restrain political rights, freedom, responsiveness, and accountability to variable degrees. For example, to the extent that they allow for at least limited multiparty competition and grant extended civil liberties, the electoral authoritarian regimes of Mozambique and Malaysia boast a higher democratic performance than the politically closed authoritarian regimes of China and Sudan. *Systemic performance*, in contrast, focuses on the provision of more generic public goods that are not inherently connected to the level of democracy and can thus be supplied by any political system, i.e. democratic and autocratic regimes alike (Fuchs 1998; Rothstein 2009). These generic public goods are mainly of a material or substantive nature such as physical security, economic well-being, social security benefits, infrastructure, or the protection of the environment; furthermore, they may include immaterial and procedural goods like public order, efficient administrative services, a money and banking system, and decisional efficacy (on the distinction between substantive and procedural goods, cf. Roller 2005). While this distinction between democratic and systemic performance resembles the one between economic and political performance, they are not interchangeable. Economic performance clearly constitutes an aspect of systemic performance. Political performance, in contrast, encompasses not only democratic performance but also aspects of systemic performance, for example, public safety or high-quality public services, thereby confounding two types of performance that democratic and autocratic systems cannot deliver equally. To honor its central theme—the differences between democratic and autocratic regimes—this book hence distinguishes between democratic performance, which is always higher in democracies, and systemic performance, which both democracies and autocracies alike can deliver. In line with the generalized model of political support and the institutionalist approach, we can expect favorable *evaluations of both democratic and systemic performance* to foster regime support in any type of political system, a proposition strongly supported by previous literature (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Mishler and Rose 2001a; Park 2013; Park and Chang 2013).

However, one qualification is necessary with regard to the effect of democratic performance evaluations. We cannot assume that everyone views democratic

performance as desirable and, thus, that there is always a positive relationship between democratic performance evaluations and regime support. Rather, this relationship is contingent on the value placed on democracy, i.e. the individual's political value orientations: democratic performance is likely to be more important for citizens who place a higher value on democracy. Consequently, democratic performance evaluations should have a stronger effect on regime support for individuals who hold more democratic political value orientations.

Citizens' evaluations of both democratic and systemic regime performance thus directly affect regime support. However, while democratic performance is mainly dependent on the institutional structure of a regime, systemic performance is, to a substantial extent, influenced by day-to-day policies and thus at least partially dependent on and attributable to the incumbent political authorities (Duch and Stevenson 2008; McAllister 1999). Citizens satisfied with the regime's systemic performance may, therefore, not only extend more support to the political regime itself but also to its incumbent government. Systemic performance evaluations hence not only affect regime support but also one of its other individual-level determinants: incumbent support. As incumbent support in turn affects regime support, the explanatory model conceptualizes systemic performance evaluations to have both a direct effect on regime support and an indirect effect that is mediated through incumbent support (see Figure 3.2).[2]

This entails that at least parts of the effect of systemic performance evaluations may also be absorbed via the systemic consequences of incumbent support on the process level (cf. section 2.2). Yet, as already discussed above in conjunction with the strength of the effect that incumbent support has on regime support, low support for the authorities often has no direct systemic consequences in autocratic regimes where incumbents cannot simply be voted out of office. Consequently, the relationship between incumbent support and regime support was expected to be stronger in autocratic than in democratic political regimes. With the effect of systemic performance evaluations being mediated at least in part through support for the incumbent authorities, it can be assumed that a larger proportion of the effect of systemic performance evaluations is transmitted through to the structure level and into regime support in autocratic systems than in democratic

[2] That the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support is partially mediated through incumbent support furthermore entails that incumbent support is at least partially determined by systemic performance evaluations. In fact, prior research suggests that systemic performance evaluations are the most decisive determinant of incumbent support (e.g., Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington and Rudolph 2008; Katz and Levin 2016; Seyd 2015; Weatherford 1987; see also the vast literature on economic voting (for an overview: Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2008)). Hence, while the two are still distinct attitudinal constructs, we can conceptualize incumbent support as being mostly pre-determined by systemic performance evaluations.

ones. Hence, the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support should be larger in autocratic than in democratic systems. Moreover, the potential amalgamation of the incumbent political authorities with the political regime (cf. section 2.2) may also increase the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support: the closer the political authorities are associated with the political regime itself, the stronger the link between these two levels of political support; by extension, the association between systemic performance evaluations and regime support should also be stronger (similarly, Brancati 2014; Huhe and Tang 2017; Thomassen and van der Kolk 2009; see also Criado and Herreros 2007). Comparing thirteen East Asian democracies and autocracies, Huhe and Tang (2017) find that economic performance evaluations indeed increase regime support more strongly in autocracies than in democracies. I therefore suggest that the strength of the overall effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support is greater in autocratic political systems than in democratic ones.

Apart from incumbent support and performance evaluations, the institutionalist literature has examined more proximate determinants, like the individual's position within the political system and within society, as sources of regime support. Scholars in this tradition argue that citizens will extend more support to the political regime if they see themselves as profiting from it more. Empirically, citizens who feel they are *well-represented within the political system*, for instance because they perceive to have a high ideological congruence with the incumbent government, express more regime support (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Ferland 2017; Mayne and Hakhverdian 2017; Stecker and Tausendpfund 2016). The same is true for citizens who hold a higher *position within society*, for instance have a higher household income (e.g., Listhaug and Wiberg 1995; Mishler and Rose 1997; 2001b; Newton and Norris 2000; Zmerli and Newton 2011). Unlike this literature, however, I do not conceptualize citizens' position within the political system and within society as direct determinants of regime support. Instead, I propose that they affect citizens' evaluations of the regime's democratic and systemic performance as well as support for the incumbent authorities: those who feel they are better represented by the political system and/or feel they have personally benefited from it should be more content with this system's performance and its authorities. As outlined above, these performance evaluations and incumbent support in turn affect regime support, mediating the effects of the more proximate determinants. Citizens' position within the political system and within society thus only exert an indirect effect on regime support and are, consequently, excluded from this study's explanatory model.

Similarly, we can also conceptualize *media consumption* and *political interest* as determinants of democratic and systemic performance evaluations as well as support for the incumbent authorities. For autocratic regimes, prior research has pointed out that mass media coverage is primarily controlled and regulated by the political regime, resulting in unduly favorable depictions of the political system

which citizens are then likely to adapt. Based on this conjecture, the literature expects that citizens that are more frequently exposed to such biased messages—because they consume more media and/or have a higher interest in politics—express more support for the political regime (Chen and Shi 2001; Geddes and Zaller 1989; Wang 2005; on the supposedly more ambiguous influence of the internet, see Huhe, Tang, and Chen 2018; Tang and Huhe 2014; Xiang and Hmielowski 2017). While prior research finds at least some effect of media consumption and political interest on regime support (Chen, Zhong, and Hillard 1997; Kennedy 2009; Lü 2014; Yang and Tang 2010), I argue that both media consumption and political interest do not affect regime support directly but rather exert indirect effects that are fully mediated through support for the incumbent authorities, and through democratic and/or systemic performance evaluations. The explanatory model proposed here hence only includes three individual-level sources that influence regime support through a generalization of experiences: incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations.

The explanatory model presented here thus deviates from and adds to the literature on individual-level sources of regime support in a number of ways. Most generally, it does not formulate partial claims with regard to the effect of each individual explanatory variable but, rather, identifies two basic causal mechanisms derived directly from the conception of political support. It thereby provides a more universal link between regime support and its individual-level determinants as well as organizes the wealth of explanatory variables cited in previous studies. Deviating from these studies, this book's explanatory model does not conceptualize social trust or social capital, education, religion or religiosity, position within the political system, position within society, media consumption, and political interest as direct sources of regime support. It further advances to distinguish between evaluations of democratic and systemic performance instead of between evaluations of political and economic performance. Finally, it introduces a mediation mechanism where parts of the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support are exerted only indirectly through incumbent support. In addition, this explanatory model for the first time takes into account systematically the differences between democracies and autocracies, and discusses whether and how the institutional structures and functional logics of the two regimes affect the generation of regime support. Refining previous contributions, it argues that it is not level of democracy itself but rather citizens' perceptions of democratic performance that moderate how political and societal value orientations affect regime support, and arrives at the conclusion that the individual-level mechanisms shaping regime support are universal across political regimes.

Summing up, on the individual level, the theoretical framework identifies five main variables directly affecting regime support for both democratic as well as

autocratic political contexts: societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Figure 3.2 displays these individual-level sources on the right-hand side of the model. In line with the idea that the individual-level mechanisms shaping regime support (overflow of values, generalization of experiences) are universal, I expect *all five individual-level sources to affect regime support in democracies and autocracies and the effects of these individual-level sources to be largely independent of regime type*. There is only one exception: due to the different institutional structures and functional logics of politics in democracies and autocracies, the effect of incumbent support on regime support should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies.

3.2. Sources of regime support on the system level: the role of context

In much of the prior research, the macro-analytical problem of whether and how system-level context factors exert an influence on regime support is either ignored or, if it does get addressed at all, the theoretical arguments brought forward focus almost exclusively on the macro level. Specifications of the causal pathways connecting system-level contexts and citizens' individual-level regime support are practically non-existent and the entire field remains undertheorized. The majority of studies, at best, implicitly assume that the effect of system-level context factors is somehow mediated through individual-level perceptions or evaluations of this context (e.g., Kumlin 2011; Quaranta and Martini 2016).[3] Empirically, prior research has almost exclusively analyzed the *direct* effects of system-level context factors on regime support, ignoring the causal pathways connecting these system-level context factors with individual-level regime support (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Armingeon and Guthmann 2014; Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014; Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler 2017; Hutchison and Xu 2017; Kumlin 2011; Lühiste 2014; McAllister 1999; van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017; van Erkel and van der Meer 2016; Wagner, Schneider, and Halla 2009).[4] This contribution, in contrast, will spell out and

[3] The only exceptions are Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler (2017) and van der Meer and Dekker (2011), who explicitly propose that the influence of system-level factors on regime support is mediated via individual-level attitudes.

[4] Depending on the exact specification of the empirical models, the results of these analyses vary considerably. While many find positive effects of macroeconomic as well as political performance on regime support (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Armingeon and Guthmann 2014; Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014; Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler 2017; Hutchison and Xu 2017; Kumlin 2011; Quaranta and Martini 2016; Wagner, Schneider, and Halla 2009), others find no (Dahlberg and Holmberg 2014; Lühiste 2014; van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017) or even negative effects

model empirically the pathways through which system-level context can have an effect on individual-level regime support. The main argument made here is that system-level context factors exert their influence on regime support by shaping the individual-level *determinants* of regime support through a general chain of causal mechanisms that is based on attitude-formation theory. The previous section introduced societal and political value orientations as well as incumbent support and democratic and systemic performance evaluations as the central individual-level sources of regime support. The remainder of this chapter focuses on how these individual-level attitudes are shaped by the system-level context in which the individual is embedded. Following the distinction between "culturalist" sources that influence regime support through an overflow of values (cf. subsection 3.1.1) and "institutionalist" sources that influence regime support through a generalization of experiences (cf. subsection 3.1.2), I distinguish between two causal pathways: one in which system-level context factors shape citizens' *value orientations* (3.2.1) and one in which system-level context factors shape citizens' *performance evaluations* (3.2.2). Since support for the incumbent authorities was conceptualized as being causally preceded and, in fact, largely determined by systemic performance evaluations, it is assumed that system-level context mainly affects incumbent support indirectly through systemic performance evaluations. Consequently, no effects of system-level context on incumbent support will be discussed here.[5]

Overall, four different system-level contexts are distinguished and identified as relevant system-level sources of regime support: the *macro-cultural context*, the *macro-political context*, the *actual systemic performance*, and the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. While the macro-cultural context affects individual-level societal value orientations, the macro-political context exerts an influence on individual-level political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations; the actual systemic performance has an impact on individual-level systemic performance evaluations; and the level of socioeconomic modernization is related to individual-level societal value orientations, political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Before the following two subsections specify the linkages between each of these system-level contexts and the respective individual-level sources of

(McAllister 1999). In addition, as soon as evaluations of these performances are controlled for, the effects of system-level macroeconomic and political performance typically vanish altogether (Listhaug, Aardal, and Ellis 2009; Oskarsson 2010; Pennings 2017; Wells and Krieckhaus 2006).

[5] There are, of course, some contextual characteristics that may affect incumbent support directly. The most important of these are the actual qualities of the incumbent authorities in question, for example their personal qualifications or party affiliations. These characteristics are, however, specific to each single politician and can therefore not be considered a system-level context.

regime support, the following paragraphs introduce the general chain of causal mechanisms linking system-level contexts and individual-level attitudes.

The *causal chains linking system-level context and individual-level attitudes* have, so far, received only little attention in political-culture research. Instead, the processes underlying the formation of attitudes have mainly been discussed in the field of (social) psychology, spawning a vast body of literature that features a variety of attitude-formation models (for an overview, see Eagly and Chaiken 1993, pp. 219–498). While these models differ in their particular focus and details, most of them share the proposition that attitudes are learned, i.e. generated from beliefs, and implicitly or explicitly identify four fundamental elements of the attitude-formation process: environment, information, beliefs, and attitudes (e.g., Anderson's Information Integration Theory (Anderson 1971; 1981), Fishbein and Ajzen's Expectancy-Value Model (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein 1963; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; 2010), or Zaller's Receive-Accept-Sample Model (Zaller 1992)). We can, therefore, describe the *general model of attitude formation* and its underlying causal mechanisms as follows. *Information* about the *environment* is conveyed to the individual through either direct experience or through communications. The individual then receives and interprets this information through various physiological and cognitive processes, resulting in *beliefs* about the environment. These beliefs are subsequently compared to and integrated with other beliefs and prior evaluations, resulting in *attitudes* about the environment. Figure 3.1 graphically depicts these linkages between environment, information, beliefs, and attitudes.

Based on this general model of attitude formation, the specific attitudes acting as individual-level sources of regime support—societal and political value orientations, democratic and systemic performance evaluations—can now be linked to the relevant environment, in this case different system-level contexts: the macro-cultural context, the macro-political context, the actual systemic performance, and the level of socioeconomic modernization, as will be demonstrated below.

While the general causal chain linking these system-level context factors with the individual-level attitudes should be universal across regime types, there is one important *difference between democracies and autocracies*. The proper functioning of this causal chain rests on the condition that citizens receive reasonably

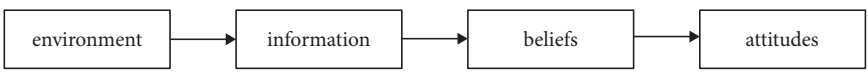

Figure 3.1. Basic causal chain linking environment and attitudes
Based on Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 2010.

accurate information about the environment. Citizens can gather such information about the environment through two basic channels: they can either make direct experiences with the environment or they can draw upon communications about the environment (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Wyer and Albarracín 2005). While direct experiences and communications should both convey reasonably accurate information to the individual in democracies, communications are likely to be less accurate representations of the environment in autocracies. This is because autocracies have strong incentives to make use of *indoctrination* and *propaganda*, both of which distort the communications citizens are likely to receive about the environment.

Autocracies may want to use indoctrination and propaganda since their fundamentally different institutional structures and functional logics of politics entail that they cannot create and maintain citizen support in the same way that democracies can. In democracies, free and fair elections hold incumbents accountable to the population as a whole. In autocracies, only a small ruling elite decides whether an incumbent stays in power or not. Democratic rulers hence have strong incentives to implement policies that benefit substantial parts of the population, while autocratic rulers first and foremost need to implement policies that benefit the members of the relevant ruling elite rather than the population as a whole. Even though autocracies have long discovered social policies as a tool for pacifying citizens—think, for example, the perpetual increases in Russian pensions—they are, by design, still considerably less responsive to citizen demands than democracies and should always place the interest of the ruling elite before the interest of the general population (Knutsen and Rasmussen 2018; Sokhey 2018; see also the literature on the "(socialist) social contract," e.g. Cook 1993; Cook and Dimitrov 2017; Haggard and Kaufman 2008). In addition, certain policy areas are bound to be exempt from conceding to public demands. This concerns not only policies that would harm the ruling elite's economic or other personal interests but also any measures that would loosen their grip on power, i.e. any serious steps towards democratization. Consequently, autocratic rulers can hardly be responsive to citizen demands to the same extent that democratic rulers can (and have to) be. Autocratic policies, therefore, cannot serve to create and maintain citizen support in the same way that democratic policies can, leaving autocracies with a substantial legitimation deficit. In addition, autocratic political regimes cannot rely on their institutional structures to generate citizen support, either: with their inherent lack of accountability, they are normatively inferior to democratic political regimes, widening the autocratic legitimation deficit. Even though modern autocracies often try to conceal their lack of democratic accountability by installing formally democratic structures like multiparty elections (electoral authoritarian regimes, cf. section 2.1), the authoritarian practices governing these structures render them inapt for generating citizen support. In sum, then, autocracies suffer

from an inherent legitimation deficit compared to democracies. To nevertheless secure a sufficient amount of citizen support, autocratic regimes hence may want to make use of *alternative means of legitimation*: indoctrination and propaganda.

Indoctrination and propaganda both ultimately aim to enhance regime support. They do so through two different pathways: indoctrination works through citizens' value orientations and propaganda works through citizens' performance evaluations. First, *indoctrination* describes the process through which autocracies inculcate their citizens with certain ideas that they see as conducive to their own autocratic rule, typically through the education system (cf. Coleman 1965). For example, indoctrination may involve teaching school children that the collective interest is more important than individual rights in an effort to make them more tolerant of violations of their political liberties. Indoctrination thus serves the goal of producing more regime-conducive *societal and political value orientations*. *Propaganda,* on the other hand, entails the spread of biased information about the political regime's performance, typically through the mass media (cf. Jowett and O'Donnell 2012).[6] For example, propaganda may involve supplying citizens with media coverage portraying the national economy as more prosperous than it really is in an effort of making them believe the regime is doing well on the economic front. Propaganda thus serves the goal of producing more positive *democratic and systemic performance evaluations*. In the end, both indoctrination and propaganda should then increase citizen support for the autocratic regime.

Returning to the causal chain outlined above (Figure 3.1), both indoctrination and propaganda target the link between environment and information, manipulating the information citizens are likely to receive about the environment. Since direct experiences with the environment can only be influenced to a certain extent, indoctrination and propaganda mainly work by controlling the *communications* citizens receive about the environment. The following subsections will spell out in more detail how and in what way indoctrination and propaganda change these communications and how this affects the causal chain linking system-level contexts to individual-level attitudes. In sum, we can expect these autocratic means of legitimation—indoctrination and propaganda—to distort the link between any of the four system-level context factors and the respective individual-level attitudes they shape. The explanatory model thus proposes the effects of all four system-level context factors to vary systematically between democracies and autocracies.

[6] Many authors define "propaganda" very broadly as any communication that "attempts to move a recipient to a predetermined point of view" (Pratkanis and Turner 1996, p. 190) or that has "the single-minded purpose of bringing some target audience to adopt attitudes and beliefs chosen in advance by the sponsors of the communications" (Carey 1997, p. 20; for an overview of definitions, see Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, pp. 2–6), thereby including what I call "indoctrination" here. For semantic clarity, I nevertheless use the two as distinct terms, restricting propaganda to mean the spread of biased information about the political regime's performance and using the term "indoctrination" whenever referring to attempts of changing citizens' value orientations.

The remainder of this section is organized into two subsections, each of which explores one causal pathway through which system-level contexts affect regime support either via individual-level value orientations (subsection 3.2.1) or via individual-level performance evaluations (subsection 3.2.2). Each subsection first specifies the general causal chains relaying the impact of the respective context on each individual-level attitude and the effects of these contexts on value orientations and performance evaluations, respectively. In a second step, it discusses how the fundamental differences between democracies and autocracies, i.e. indoctrination and propaganda, moderate these effects.

3.2.1. The role of context in shaping citizens' value orientations

As mentioned earlier (subsection 3.1.1), *societal and political value orientations* are expected to be primarily formed via socialization processes. Therefore, they are predominantly affected by the particular circumstances surrounding these socialization processes, more specifically the information about societal and political value systems available to the individual. Such information is mainly provided by the relevant socialization agents,[7] who communicate and convey their personal societal and political value orientations to the individual (cf. Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Elkin and Handel 1972; Hyman 1959). In addition, information about societal and political value systems can also be obtained through direct experience with these value systems, i.e. by living and participating in society (in a similar vein, Easton and Dennis 1969). Based on this information, the individual develops beliefs about which values are endorsed by which socialization agents as well as about the societal and political values dominant in their society. The individual then cognitively processes these perceptions of the societal and political value systems to arrive at societal and political value orientations. Taken together, we can therefore expect the societal and political value orientations of any individual to be shaped by the societal and political values promoted by their relevant socialization agents as well as direct experiences with society's dominant societal and political value systems.

What are the relevant societal and political value systems (the environment) determining citizens' societal and political value orientations? The *societal* values that can be directly experienced by the individual, and which are held and subsequently communicated by the relevant socialization agents, are shaped by the value and belief system dominant within a given society: the so-called

[7] The family is usually identified as the central socialization agent (e.g., Hyman 1959); however, other social institutions and environments such as schools, peer groups, or the workplace can also act as socialization agents (e.g., Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Elkin and Handel 1972).

macro-cultural context (Eckstein 1988; Hofstede 2001; Kluckhohn 1951a; Triandis 1996; Wildavsky 1987). This macro-cultural context is often conceptualized as being predominantly defined by religious traditions that still permeate the societal value systems today (e.g., Huntington 1996; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2011; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003). Most scholars therefore agree on a broad distinction between Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic, ex-Communist as well as "Asian" and "African" cultural "zones" (Huntington 1996; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2011; Schwartz 2004; Welzel 2002). While Communism does not constitute a religion, it still represents a value system that had a dominant influence on the respective societies. Most authors specify the "Asian" category as Confucian, sometimes introducing a second category for Hindu societies, while Welzel (2002) argues that all of (Central and East) Asia should be subsumed under a single category as the continent's dominant religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Shintoism—are all non-monotheistic, non-missionary, and non-dogmatic, thus forming a relatively homogeneous religious tradition. For the "African" cultural zone, the literature assumes that the Sub-Saharan African countries—despite their religious heterogeneity today—all rest on tribal traditions and earth religions that form a common denominator and take precedence over later Christian or Islamic influences (Etounga-Manguelle 2000; Huntington 1996; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003).

The findings of empirical research on aggregated value orientation distributions across the world mostly reproduce these cultural zones and, thus, substantiate the claim that the macro-cultural context exerts an influence on individual-level societal values. For example, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) observe substantial overlap between eight cultural zones (Catholic Europe, Protestant Europe, English-speaking, ex-Communist, Latin America, Confucian, South Asia, and Africa) and the distribution of traditional vs. secular-rational and survival vs. self-expression values. Schwartz (2004) inductively arrives at seven culturally distinct world regions in his cross-country analysis of three value dimensions (autonomy vs. embeddedness, egalitarianism vs. hierarchy, harmony vs. mastery): West Europe, English-speaking, Confucian, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Europe, and Latin America.

As far as the key societal values for regime support identified earlier (subsection 3.1.1) are concerned—individualism, tolerance, and equality—, the most common assumptions are that "Western," i.e. Protestant and, to a lesser extent, Catholic, cultural traditions place greater emphasis on individualism than any other cultural tradition. Furthermore, the opposite of individualism, collectivism, is particularly prominent in the Chinese or Confucian, i.e. Asian cultural traditions (Hofstede 2001; Huntington 1991b; Jager and Jager 2019; Kim 1994; Shin 2012; Tusalem 2009). No such rank order is proposed with regard to tolerance and equality; and neither can the remaining cultural

traditions of Orthodox, Islamic, ex-Communist, and African societies be arranged on the individualism-collectivism continuum. With regard to the effect of macro-cultural context, I therefore expect that societal value orientations are more modern in historically Protestant and Catholic countries and less modern in historically Confucian societies.

The *political* values held and subsequently communicated by the relevant socialization agents, in contrast, are mainly affected by the *macro-political context* (Pye 1965; Verba 1965). The macro-political context comprises the institutional structure of the political regime as well as the political values implemented in this institutional structure. In this respect, the macro-political context encompasses both the structure and the values level of the political system (cf. section 2.2). However, for the values level, only those political values and principles actually implemented in the regime's institutional structure are part of the macro-political context. The most basic and fundamental distinction in macro-political contexts is the one between democratic and autocratic political systems discussed in detail in section 2.1. Nonetheless, a more fine-grained distinction is possible based on the *level* of democracy or democratic quality the political system exhibits. For instance, a liberal democracy entails a more democratic macro-political context than a mere polyarchy, and an electoral authoritarian regime entails a more democratic macro-political context than a closed authoritarian regime.

In addition to influencing the values held by the relevant socialization agents, this macro-political context also affects the information about political value systems directly available to the individual by granting the opportunity for first-hand experience with the political system and its values and principles. For example, through exposure to open political competition and debate, individuals can gather information about competition and pluralism as widely accepted political principles; vice versa, by experiencing the realities of a one-party regime and government censorship, individuals can learn about political hegemony and uniformity of opinion as accepted political principles (this perspective is sometimes referred to as "institutional learning"; cf. Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003; Rohrschneider 1999). The idea that direct experiences with the political regime affect individuals' political value orientations also ties in with prior research that identifies experiences with the political system, i.e. living and participating in a specific type of political system, as sources of regime support (e.g., Nadeau and Blais 1993; Neundorf 2010). In contrast to this literature, however, I conceptualize such socialization and learning effects as affecting citizens' political value orientations, not their attitudes towards the political regime. Both channels—communications about political values by the relevant socialization agents and direct experiences with the political system—should thus relay the character of the macro-political context to the individual's political value orientations in both democratic and autocratic regimes. Hence, the more democratic a political system, the more democratic its citizens' political value orientations should be.

With regard to the *differences between democracies and autocracies*, we can expect both the linkage between macro-cultural context and citizens' societal value orientations and the linkage between macro-political context and citizens' political value orientations to be distorted in autocracies. As was outlined above, autocracies may want to use *indoctrination* to manipulate the information citizens receive about the dominant societal and political value systems (the macro-cultural and macro-political contexts) in order to instill them with values conducive to autocratic rule. Since direct experiences with the macro-cultural and macro-political contexts can be controlled only to a limited extent, autocratic indoctrination aims primarily at the communications citizens receive about these contexts. In democracies and autocracies alike, the primary source of such communications are the relevant socialization agents (Beck 1977). Yet, while socialization agents in democracies are usually free to convey the values embodied in the macro-cultural and macro-political contexts, autocratic regimes often strive to control which values socialization agents can promote (Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Hollander 1972; Lott 1999).[8] While the family as the primary socialization agent usually is out of reach for the autocratic regime, autocratic regimes can closely regulate other socializing institutions such as schools, youth groups, or the workplace (cf. Dawson and Prewitt 1969; Hoffmann 2003). This enables autocratic regimes to advance only those values conducive to autocratic rule, i.e. traditional societal and autocratic political values. Regardless of the actual societal and political value systems in place (the macro-cultural and macro-political contexts), autocratic socialization agents should then always emphasize traditional and autocratic elements of these value systems and marginalize modern and democratic ones. For example, Vietnamese curricula from preschool to postgraduate education comprise so-called "moral education" which propagates traditional values such as interdependence, obedience, and harmonious relationships (Doan 2005) and history classes in Russia specifically aim to promote the importance of strong leadership amongst students (Liñán 2010). As I expected a Protestant or Catholic cultural tradition to lead to more modern societal value orientations and a higher level of democracy to more democratic political value orientations, the effects of these system-level contexts should be mitigated in autocracies. In contrast, the effect of a Confucian cultural tradition should be reinforced: citizens' societal value orientations should be even more traditional in Confucian autocracies than in Confucian democracies.

[8] This is not to say that democracies are entirely free from attempts of intentional socialization: most democratic countries feature some sort of "civic education" in their school curricula. Unlike indoctrination, however, civic education concentrates mainly on disseminating knowledge about political structures and citizens' rights and duties, rather than trying to instill a certain set of values (Frazer 1999; Parker 2002; Sears and Hughes 2006; Simon 1976).

A third system-level context that may affect the information about societal and political value systems available to the individual is the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Socioeconomic modernization refers to a process by which societies develop economically, inducing not only an increase in economic wealth but also a shift from agriculture to industrialization, advancing urbanization, and the spread of education (Lipset 1959). On the individual level, a process of socioeconomic modernization may lead to changes in the socioeconomic status of the individual: their income, education, occupation, and/or place of residence. Such changes will alter the immediate social environment an individual is embedded in—which may, in turn, also lead to changes in the relevant socialization agents who convey their values to the individual; likewise, changes in the social environment may change what kind of opportunities for direct experiences with society the individual has. Socioeconomic modernization hence indirectly affects the information about the societal and political value systems available to the individual.

Following classical modernization theory, an increase in socioeconomic status, especially in education, should result in changes in the individual's value orientations (classically: Lipset 1959; 1983; more recently: Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003). As people are better educated, they are better able to appreciate and more prone to accept democratic norms as well as societal values such as tolerance. A similar mechanism is proposed for an increase in income or personal wealth. As economic scarcity and distributional conflicts are extenuated, radical and undemocratic views are alleviated and people develop more tolerant and pro-democratic outlooks. More generally, as Lipset argues, a higher socioeconomic status—a higher educational level, higher income, less "isolated" occupation, and a more urban place of residence—puts individuals in contact with new or divergent opinions and perspectives. These "cross-pressures" foster a more complex view of politics and society, which leads to the development of more modern and democratic value orientations. A higher socioeconomic status is, therefore, expected to make individuals more prone to hold modern societal as well as democratic political value orientations. This proposition receives strong empirical support (e.g., Ciftci 2010; Huang, Chang, and Chu 2008; Scarbrough 1995; Waldron-Moore 1999; Wang 2007; Welzel 2011) but has not yet been related to a general theoretical framework of attitude formation. It can, however, readily be integrated into the general attitude-formation model proposed above. In the logic of the model, the link between changes in the socioeconomic status and personal value orientations is relayed through the aforementioned change in the individual's immediate social environment. The expectation is that increased prosperity, higher education, living in a more urban environment, and working in the industrial or service sectors instead of isolated agricultural occupations puts

the individual into a more tolerant, egalitarian, individualistic, and pro-democratic social environment. This social environment not only offers the individual socialization agents that convey more modern societal and more democratic political value orientations, but also provides the individual with the opportunity to directly experience for example diversity of ideas or life choices (Lipset 1959; 1983; in a similar vein, Inkeles and Smith 1974). Both of these processes change the information available to the individual about societal and political value systems, making the individual perceive them as more modern and more democratic. Through its direct influence on individual-level socioeconomic status, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization should then, ultimately, lead to more modern societal and more democratic political value orientations.

Within autocratic regimes, however, we must make an important qualification with regard to the effect of education as a central component of socioeconomic modernization. The conjecture that education broadens citizens' horizons and enables them to recognize the necessity of democratic norms rests strongly on the assumption that the education system actually conveys such norms and thus serves this purpose. Yet this assumption is questionable in autocratic political systems where the regime may use education to indoctrinate citizens with regime-supportive, i.e. traditional societal and authoritarian political values (e.g., Han 2007). This engenders the possibility that a higher level of education results in citizens holding *less* modern societal and *less* democratic political value orientations instead of more modern and democratic ones as predicted by classical modernization theory, overall mitigating or even reversing the positive effect socioeconomic modernization has on modern societal and democratic political value orientations.

Summing up, *three relevant system-level contexts mainly shape citizens' value orientations in both democratic and autocratic political regimes* by determining the values citizens learn from their socialization agents and through direct experience: the macro-cultural context, the macro-political context, and the level of socioeconomic modernization. Protestant and Catholic cultural traditions are conjectured to result in more modern societal value orientations, while Confucian cultural traditions are expected to lead to less modern societal value orientations; a higher democratic quality is hypothesized to be connected with more democratic political value orientations; and a higher level of socioeconomic modernization is anticipated to be related to both more modern societal and more democratic political value orientations. Due to the indoctrination efforts of autocratic regimes, we can expect almost all of these linkages to be weaker in autocracies than in democracies; the only linkage that should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies is the one between a Confucian macro-cultural context and societal value orientations.

3.2.2. The role of context in shaping citizens' performance evaluations

While the macro-cultural context is expected to affect the formation of societal and political value orientations, it does not constitute a relevant environment for how citizens form *democratic and systemic performance evaluations*. Instead, it is the actual performance of the political regime about which information needs to be received and processed by the individual in order to form beliefs and, subsequently, attitudes. This actual performance is located on the system level and, therefore, constitutes the main contextual influence on individual-level performance evaluations (similarly, Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler 2017; McAllister 1999; van der Meer and Dekker 2011). As has already been discussed when distinguishing between democratic and systemic performance evaluations (subsection 3.1.2), there are two main types of performance a political system can supply: *actual democratic performance* on the one hand and *actual systemic performance* on the other hand (Fuchs 1998). To recall briefly, democratic performance is high if a political system manages to provide political rights and freedoms and to institutionally secure the responsiveness and accountability of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled. We can, therefore, largely equate it with the macro-political context or democratic quality. Since it is inherently connected to the type of political regime, democratic performance is always higher in democracies than in autocracies. Systemic performance is high if a political system manages to provide more generic public goods such as security or welfare that are not inherently connected to the level of democracy (Fuchs 1998). It can, therefore, be provided equally well by democracies and autocracies. Naturally, actual democratic performance constitutes the relevant environment in shaping individual-level democratic performance evaluations, and actual systemic performance constitutes the relevant environment in shaping individual-level systemic performance evaluations.

For both democratic as well as systemic performance, individuals need to obtain and process the information available on the actual performance of the regime. Information on the regime's actual performance is typically provided through communications, especially media coverage, but can also be acquired through direct experience (Hudson 2006; Rosenfeld 2018). For example, becoming the victim of a crime can provide information about the level of security and thus systemic performance provided by the political system; likewise, being able to cast one's vote freely gives an indication of the regime's democratic performance. Based on this information, the individual develops beliefs about the amount of democratic and systemic performance provided by the regime. These individual-level perceptions of democratic and systemic performance are then processed and judged against prior beliefs and existing standards, such as expectations regarding the goods that should be delivered by the political regime to arrive at

the democratic and systemic performance evaluations identified as individual-level sources of regime support above.

Like for the effects of context on individuals' value orientations, the effects of system-level context on individual-level attitudes should be present in both democratic and autocratic political regimes. With regard to the directions of these effects, democratic performance evaluations should always be more favorable if the political system provides a higher democratic performance, i.e. is more democratic, and systemic performance evaluations should always be more favorable if the political system provides a higher systemic performance, i.e. provides more generic public goods.

With regard to the *differences between democracies and autocracies*, we can expect the linkage between actual democratic and systemic performance and citizens' performance evaluations to be distorted in autocracies. As was outlined above, autocracies may want to make use of *propaganda* to bias the information citizens receive about the political regime's performance. Since, again, direct experiences with the political regime's democratic and systemic performances can hardly be changed, autocratic propaganda aims primarily at the communications citizens receive about these performances. In democracies and autocracies alike, the primary source of such communications are the mass media (McQuail 2010; Mughan and Gunther 2000). Yet, while the pluralist media system in democracies ensures that media coverage on the regime's performance is reasonably balanced and accurate, autocratic media systems rarely serve this purpose. Instead, the mass media in most autocracies follow a so-called "dominant media" model (McQuail 2010, p. 87; cf. the "Authoritarian Theory of the Press," Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm 1956), where the government exerts tight control over the mass media (on media capture in autocracies, cf. Djankov et al. 2003; Petrova 2015). This enables autocratic regimes to advance overly positive coverage as well as to prevent negative coverage about their democratic and systemic performances (or, more intricately, frame coverage in a specific way, see Rozenas and Stukal 2019). For example, Chinese reports have exaggerated the country's economic growth rates for many years (Wallace 2016) and Egyptian media outlets were banned from reporting on allegations of election fraud in 2018 (Michaelson 2018). Such propaganda efforts can result in the spread of grossly inaccurate or even entirely false information about the system's actual democratic and/or systemic performance. As discussed earlier (subsection 3.1.2), if citizens accept this (biased) information and use it to base their evaluations of the system's democratic and/or systemic performance on, this may directly affect their democratic and/or systemic performance evaluations. There is, however, yet another effect of media bias in autocratic regimes. If reporting on the political regime's democratic or systemic performance is biased and therefore inaccurate, the relationship between actual democratic or systemic performance and citizens' democratic or systemic

performance evaluations may be fairly loose (see also Magee and Doces 2015). We can, therefore, expect that the effects of both types of performance on citizens' performance evaluations are weaker in autocratic than in democratic regimes.

Besides the actual democratic and systemic performances of the regime, the *level of socioeconomic modernization* also affects individual-level democratic and systemic performance evaluations. As introduced above (subsection 3.2.1), socioeconomic modernization leads to increases in economic prosperity, education, industrialization, and urbanization (Lipset 1959). In this respect, the level of socioeconomic modernization is partially related to, yet not identical with, systemic performance. Systemic performance, despite also tapping into the field of economic prosperity, does not comprise education, industrialization, or urbanization. Furthermore, within the economic realm, the level of socioeconomic modernization is defined by the level of economic prosperity that has already been achieved; for example, GDP per capita. Systemic performance, on the other hand, is identified by more dynamic macroeconomic indicators such as annual economic growth or the unemployment rate. In addition, systemic performance encompasses public goods such as security or efficient administrative services not captured by the level of socioeconomic modernization.

With regard to the effect of socioeconomic modernization, on the individual level, we can again expect processes of socioeconomic modernization to result in changes of the socioeconomic status of the individual. These changes may affect the individual's performance evaluations through two different mechanisms. *First*, changes in socioeconomic status may alter the information available to the individual about the political regime's actual performance, both its democratic as well as its systemic one. For example, when an individual moves into a larger city, additional media outlets may become available to them, exposing them to different communications about the regime's democratic and/or systemic performance. Additionally, a change in socioeconomic status may also affect what kind of direct experiences the individual makes with the regime's democratic and/or systemic performance, for instance by witnessing a government crackdown on political protests. The level of socioeconomic modernization hence exerts an indirect influence on the information available to the individual about both types of the regime's actual performance, the democratic as well as the systemic one. In doing so, the level of socioeconomic modernization can be conceptualized as ultimately affecting not only societal and political value orientations but also democratic and systemic performance evaluations. Yet, with regard to the direction of this indirect effect of socioeconomic modernization on democratic and systemic performance evaluations, we can make no definitive prediction on purely theoretical grounds. On the one hand, it is conceivable that a higher socioeconomic status leads to the individual receiving more positive information about the regime's actual democratic or systemic performance, for example by having greater access to democratic participation channels or by being provided with better public

services. This may be the case in both democratic and autocratic regimes as, for instance, cities may offer better healthcare facilities than rural areas in either type of political regime. On the other hand, it is also entirely possible that a higher socioeconomic status leads to the individual receiving more negative information about the regime's democratic or systemic performance, for example by exposing them to more critical media outlets reporting on democratic deficits or failing macroeconomic performance.

At the same time, the literature has discussed a *second* effect of socioeconomic modernization. Drawing loosely on the idea of a hierarchy of needs (cf. Maslow 1987), scholars in the tradition of (post-)modernization theory argue that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization gives rise to higher expectations on the side of the citizens. In this line of thought, the satisfaction of basic needs facilitates the emergence of more complex needs which cannot be satisfied by the political regime as easily (Dalton and Welzel 2014a; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel 2013). Since expectations about the regime's democratic as well as systemic performance may act as standards by which beliefs about this democratic and systemic performance are compared, the resulting evaluations of performance should become more negative if expectations increase. This effect should be at work regardless of the type of political regime the individual lives in, as both the rise of expectations and the functioning of expectations as evaluative standards refer to universal processes that are independent of the regime context. Combining both perspectives, the level of socioeconomic modernization can, therefore, have both a positive and a negative effect on citizens' democratic as well as systemic performance evaluations.

As far as the *differences between democracies and autocracies* are concerned, we also cannot make an a priori prediction since socioeconomic modernization can affect both the direct experiences citizens make with and the communications they receive about the regime's democratic and systemic performances. On the one hand, the effects could be stronger because more socioeconomically modernized citizens may have more means of and opportunities for gathering accurate first-hand information through direct experiences. On the other hand, the effects could also be weaker because more socioeconomically modernized citizens may be more likely to be exposed to inaccurate, government-controlled information in the form of media or other communications. The effects of the level of socioeconomic modernization on citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations may, therefore, be both stronger and weaker in autocracies than in democracies.

Summing up, *three relevant system-level contexts mainly shape citizens' performance evaluations in both democratic and autocratic political regimes* by determining what information about the regime's performance citizens receive through media communications and through direct experience: the macro-political context or actual democratic performance, the actual systemic performance, and the

level of socioeconomic modernization. Higher democratic as well as better systemic performance are conjectured to result in more favorable democratic performance evaluations and systemic performance evaluations, respectively. As far as the strengths of these effects are concerned, we can expect the effects of system-level actual democratic and systemic performance on citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations to be weaker in autocracies than in democracies. This proposition is based on the assumption that information about these two system-level contexts is primarily conveyed through media communications and, therefore, susceptible to propagandistic manipulations by the political regime. With regard to the third system-level context affecting individual-level performance evaluations, the level of socioeconomic modernization, we can make no definitive statement regarding the direction of the effects. Depending on the theoretical perspective, we can deduce either a positive or a negative effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization on democratic and systemic performance evaluations. These positive or negative effects may also be both stronger or weaker in autocracies than in democracies.

In total, the system-level explanatory model of regime support (left-hand side of Figure 3.2) expects four system-level contexts to shape regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes: the *macro-cultural context*, the *macro-political context or actual democratic performance*, the *actual systemic performance*, and the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Departing from the reasoning in some of the prior research (e.g., Quaranta and Martini 2016; Wagner, Schneider, and Halla 2009), none of these contexts is conceptualized as having a direct effect on regime support. Rather, they all exert their influence indirectly via different individual-level attitudes that have been identified as the central individual-level sources of regime support (section 3.1). Adding to the literature by relating the system-level sources to regime support through a general theoretical framework of attitude formation, we can distinguish two general causal pathways: one via societal and political value orientations and one via democratic and systemic performance evaluations. As regards the first causal pathway, the macro-cultural context pre-determines the individual-level societal value orientations, the macro-political context shapes the individual-level political value orientations, and the level of socioeconomic modernization is related to individual-level societal and political value orientations. Turning to the second causal pathway, the macro-political context affects the individual-level democratic performance evaluations, the actual systemic performance has an impact on individual-level systemic performance evaluations, and the level of socioeconomic modernization influences individual-level democratic and systemic performance evaluations. Introducing indoctrination and propaganda to the study of political support, the model proposes several qualifications of these effects. One, the positive effects of a Protestant or Catholic macro-cultural context on societal value orientations should be weaker in autocracies than in democracies, while the negative effect of

a Confucian macro-cultural context should be stronger. Two, the positive effect of a democratic macro-political context on political value orientations should be weaker in autocracies than in democracies. Three, the positive effects of socioeconomic modernization on both societal and political value orientations should also be weaker (or even reversed) in autocracies. Four, the positive effects of both actual democratic and systemic performance on democratic and systemic performance evaluations should be weaker in autocracies than in democracies. This means that all linkages between system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes are likely to be distorted in autocracies. Overall, then, *the links between these system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes should generally be looser in autocracies than in democracies*. Consequently, while I expect *all four system-level contexts to affect regime support in democracies and autocracies, the effects of these system-level context factors on regime support should mostly be weaker in autocracies than in democracies*.

3.3. An integrated explanatory model of regime support and its implications

Combining all of these arguments on potential sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies leads to an integrated explanatory model that describes which individual- and system-level factors influence regime support, and how the impact of these different sources differs between democratic and autocratic political systems. Figure 3.2 graphically depicts this integrated explanatory model of regime support. Reading from left to right, we can start with the causally preceding contextual factors located on the system level: the *macro-cultural context*, the *macro-political context*, the *actual systemic performance*, and the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. All four of these system-level contexts shape different individual-level attitudes through different causal chains as outlined above (section 3.2). Macro-cultural context is relevant in shaping individual-level societal value orientations; macro-political context pre-determines individual-level political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations; actual systemic performance affects individual-level systemic performance evaluations; and the level of socioeconomic modernization influences individual-level societal value orientations, political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Regime type moderates all of these linkages. First, the effect of macro-cultural context on societal value orientations is predicted to be weaker in autocracies for Protestant and Catholic contexts and stronger for Confucian ones. Second, the effect of macro-political context on political value orientations as well as on democratic performance evaluations is expected to be weaker in autocracies. Third, the model suggests the effect of actual systemic performance on systemic performance evaluations to also be

weaker in autocracies than in democracies. Fourth, the effects of socioeconomic modernization on political as well as societal value orientations should be weaker, or even reversed, in autocracies. Fifth, the effect of socioeconomic modernization on democratic as well as systemic performance evaluations may be either weaker or stronger in autocracies than in democracies.

The individual-level attitudes that are shaped by these various system-level contexts—*societal value orientations, political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations*, and *systemic performance evaluations*—each exert a direct influence on regime support (section 3.1). Macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization hence all have an indirect effect on regime support. In addition to societal value orientations, political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations, *incumbent support* is identified as a fifth individual-level determinant that directly affects regime support. As far as the individual-level effects are concerned, the integrated explanatory model makes three qualifications. One, the effects of both societal and political value orientations are contingent on how the individual evaluates the regime's democratic performance and, hence, moderated by their democratic performance evaluations. Two, the effect of democratic performance evaluations is contingent on the political values held by the individual and, hence, moderated by their political value orientations. Three, systemic performance evaluations exercise part of their overall effect on regime support indirectly and mediated through support for the incumbent authorities. The integrated explanatory model, furthermore, expects the type of political regime present in the respective country to moderate the effect incumbent support has on regime support: it should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies. By extension, the model also expects the overall effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support to be stronger in autocracies.

Figure 3.2 graphically depicts the integrated explanatory model of regime support and provides an overview over the individual- and system-level sources influencing regime support. It demonstrates how the type of political regime changes the way regime support is generated. While the individual-level processes through which citizens form their attitudes towards the political regime should be largely universal, even if they live in fundamentally different regimes, the way in which system-level context factors affect citizens' individual-level attitudes is proposed to differ systematically between democracies and autocracies, due to the indoctrination and propaganda efforts undertaken by autocratic regimes.

Now, what inferences can we draw from this explanatory model regarding the *levels of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes*? Starting with the causally preceding context factors, only one system-level explanatory variable should *systematically* differ between democratic and autocratic political regimes:

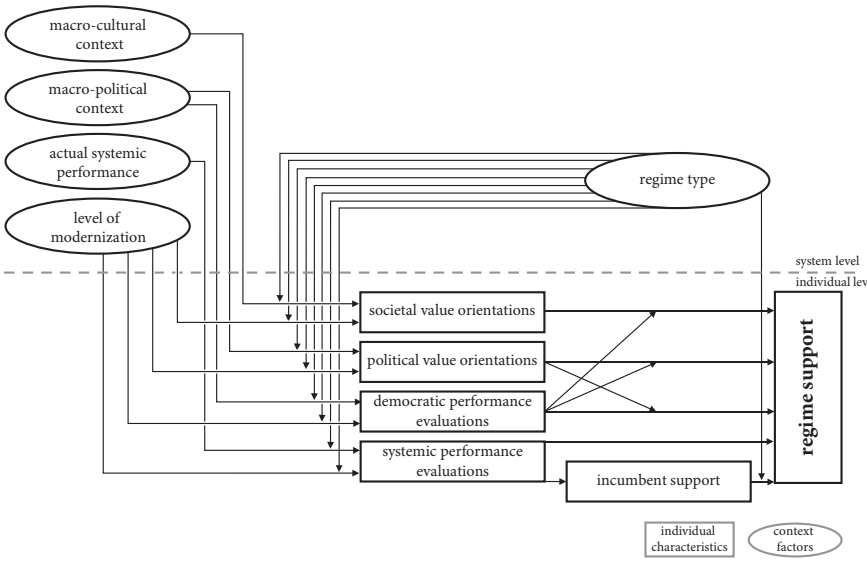

Figure 3.2. An integrated explanatory model of regime support

macro-political context. By definition, the macro-political context is more democratic in democracies than it is in autocracies. This information, however, does not allow for any definitive statement regarding levels of regime support in democracies as compared to autocracies. As the macro-political context can influence regime support through both political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, we need to take into account different effects. On the one hand, the causal pathway via democratic performance evaluations predicts an unambiguously positive effect of macro-political context (or actual democratic performance) on regime support. Hence, the level of regime support should be higher in democracies than it is in autocracies because the former are more democratic than the latter. On the other hand, the pathway via political value orientations does not allow for such clear-cut predictions. As the effect of political value orientations on regime support varies with citizens' democratic performance evaluations, a higher level of democracy may lead to both higher *and* lower regime support. We can therefore infer no definitive statement regarding the relative levels of regime support in democratic as compared to autocratic regimes.

Despite the other context factors not differing systematically between democratic and autocratic regimes, there still are considerable real-world differences in at least two of them: the macro-cultural context and the level of socioeconomic modernization. As far as the *macro-cultural context* is concerned, democratic regimes are much more prevalent in the Protestant and Catholic cultural zones than in the Confucian one (Huntington 1991a; 1991b). This entails that democracies are more likely to be located in the Protestant or Catholic cultural zones than

in the Confucian cultural zone, whereas autocracies are more likely to be located in the Confucian cultural zone than in the Protestant or Catholic cultural zones. However, since macro-cultural context affects regime support through societal value orientations, we can again not make a definitive statement with regard to the direction of its effect. As societal value orientations may—depending on citizens' democratic performance evaluations—have either a positive or negative effect on regime support, both a Protestant or Catholic and a Confucian cultural tradition may result in both higher *and* lower regime support in either type of regime. Therefore, even with democratic regimes being more likely located in the Protestant and Catholic cultural zones, citizen support for them may be either higher or lower than for autocratic regimes. A similar phenomenon occurs when we consider the effect of the *level of socioeconomic modernization*. Despite democratic regimes being ceteris paribus more developed (Acemoglu et al. 2014; Cheibub and Vreeland 2011), no clear-cut prediction can be made. The level of socioeconomic modernization may have either a positive or a negative effect on regime support in either type of political regime, through both value orientations and performance evaluations. Therefore, we cannot draw definite conclusions regarding the expected relative levels of regime support in democracies compared to autocracies.

For the last system-level context factor, *actual systemic performance*, in contrast, we would indeed expect an unambiguously positive effect in both regime types. However, unlike in the case of macro-political context, macro-cultural context, and level of socioeconomic modernization, there is no conclusive evidence that either type of regime outperforms the other in the provision of generic public goods (e.g., Doucouliagos and Ulubaşoğlu 2008; Gerring, Thacker, and Alfaro 2012; Knutsen 2013; Krieckhaus 2004; McGuire 2013; Miller 2015; Wurster 2013). Consequently, it is impossible to make predictions regarding the relative levels of regime support in the two types of political regimes based on this context factor.

Focusing on the effects of individual-level sources of regime support, the problems encountered with regard to the system-level sources are repeated. For one, even though there is some evidence that *democratic political* as well as *modern societal value orientations* are more widely spread in democracies than in autocracies (Inglehart and Welzel 2010; Norris 2011; Park and Chang 2013; Shin 2015; Welzel 2013), this allows for no definitive statement regarding the resulting levels of regime support: the effects of both democratic political and modern societal value orientations on regime support may be either positive or negative in democracies, depending on how citizens evaluate their regime's democratic performance. As a consequence, democracies may hence receive either more or less regime support than autocracies. Second, for those individual-level explanatory variables that are expected to have an unambiguously positive effect on regime support—democratic and systemic performance evaluations as well as incumbent

support—the distribution of the respective variables' values across democratic and autocratic regimes either remains largely unknown or does not systematically vary between the two types of regimes. For *democratic performance evaluations*, evidence presented by Bratton (2007) and Norris (2011) suggests that democratic performance evaluations are relatively closely linked to the actual level of democracy and are, hence, indeed more positive within democratic than within autocratic political regimes. However, this assessment has been challenged repeatedly (Kruse, Ravlik, and Welzel 2019; Logan and Mattes 2012; Mauk 2017; Park 2013; 2017; Pietsch 2014; Shi and Lu 2010), leaving serious doubts about its generalizability. For *systemic performance evaluations*, akin to the situation for system-level actual systemic performance, no systematic differences between democratic and autocratic regimes can be found in the—sparse—evidence available to date (see Footman et al. 2013; Wang 2010; Wong, Wan, and Hsiao 2011). Finally, for *incumbent support*, the critical-citizens literature suggests that citizens in established liberal democracies have become increasingly critical of their incumbent governments (Dalton 1999; 2004; 2014; Putnam, Pharr, and Dalton 2000). Yet, there is virtually no research on incumbent support in autocratic regimes (the only exception is Rose, Mishler, and Munro (2011), who show that Russian citizens' support for Vladimir Putin has remained relatively high between 2000 and 2008), so a comparison of the two types of regimes is impossible. In sum, we cannot derive predictions regarding the relative levels of regime support in the two types of political regimes from the individual-level part of the integrated explanatory model, either.

Summing up, we can infer no definitive predictions regarding the levels of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes from the explanatory model developed above. Nevertheless, as was outlined in the introduction (section 1.1), democratic political regimes are clearly superior to autocratic political regimes from a *normative point of view*. We therefore might still expect regime support to be higher among citizens of democracies than among those in autocracies. Yet, *prior research* has shown that citizens' attitudes towards their political regime may not always reflect this normative superiority. The majority of studies comparing levels of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes have found citizens' attitudes towards their political regime to be more positive in autocracies than in democracies (Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Norris 2011; Park and Chang 2013; Shin 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006). Although these empirical observations are far from definitive (see, for example, the more diverse results in Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Carlson and Turner 2008) and, in addition, mostly limited to East Asian political systems, they do hint at the possibility that autocratic regimes may actually receive more public support than their democratic counterparts. This perspective would tie in with the scholarship on so-called "critical citizens" or "dissatisfied democrats" (e.g., Dalton 2004; Dalton and Welzel 2014b; Norris 1999a; 2011; Pharr and Putnam 2000) which asserts

that citizens in established—as well as in some new—democracies have become increasingly critical of their political regimes. Based on these findings, it might not be surprising if regime support was in fact higher in autocracies than in democracies.

Overall, a priori predictions about the levels of regime support in democratic as compared to autocratic regimes are difficult to make: there are too many variables influencing the level of regime support and too many competing hypotheses about the directions of these variables' effects to draw any substantiated inferences from the theoretical model. At the same time, prior research is too inconclusive and too limited in scope to make generalized predictions based on previous empirical findings. The later empirical analysis (chapter 5) therefore aims to shed light not only on the individual- and system-level sources (sections 5.2, 5.3) but also on the level (section 5.1) of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. Prior to these empirical analyses, the following chapter 4 discusses the data and methods used in the analyses.

4
Data and methods

This chapter deals with the key methodological issues associated with a global comparison of regime support and its individual- and system-level sources in democracies and autocracies. It first introduces the case selection, regime classification, data, and research strategy employed in the empirical analysis (section 4.1), then briefly presents the operationalization of the main variables (section 4.2), before finally discussing the validity of survey data from autocracies (section 4.3).

4.1. Case selection, regime classification, data, and research strategy

In order to test the comprehensive theoretical framework and to answer the research questions outlined above, this study features a broad cross-sectional empirical analysis of political support in democratic and autocratic political regimes around the globe. In the aim of providing a *global and contemporary* account of regime support and its sources in democracies and autocracies, it tries to use as recent data and include as many political systems as possible. It therefore combines six of the largest cross-national survey projects in political science: the World Values Survey (World Values Survey 2015), the Afrobarometer (Afrobarometer 2015a), the AmericasBarometer (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2014), the Arab Barometer (Arab Barometer 2015), the Asian Barometer (Asian Barometer 2013), and the Latinobarómetro (Corporacion Latinobarómetro 2014). Using the most recent available waves of these survey projects, the analysis encompasses a period between 2010 and 2014. While the World Values Survey covers political systems around the globe, the various Barometer surveys focus on their particular broader regions, e.g. Africa (Afrobarometer) or East Asia (Asian Barometer). Taken together, these data span all major world regions, with coverage being particularly excellent for Africa, the Americas, and Asia.

Living up to its global claim, the analysis a priori only excludes those political systems where regime support can hardly be measured in a meaningful way. On the one hand, this concerns political systems where citizens cannot unambiguously identify the reference object of regime support, i.e. the political regime. This is the case for political systems that were either in a transitional state (Egypt 2013, Libya 2014), a state of civil war (Mali 2012, Yemen 2014), or had lost their state

Citizen Support for Democratic and Autocratic Regimes. Marlene Mauk, Oxford University Press (2020).
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198854852.001.0001

monopoly (Palestine 2012, 2013). On the other hand, this concerns political systems where the survey questions available here are unsuitable for gauging support for the key political institutions, i.e. where the true seat of power lies outside of the four institutions all of the above surveys query respondents about: the government, the parliament, the police force, or the army. This is the case for the so-called "linchpin" monarchies of Jordan and Swaziland. Unlike in so-called "dynastic" monarchies, like Bahrain, Kuwait, or Qatar, members of the ruling royal family are not part of the official government in these linchpin monarchies (on the distinction between linchpin and dynastic monarchies, see Bank, Richter, and Sunik 2014; 2015). Survey questions about "the government" are, therefore, inapt of measuring support for the key political institution (royal family), making it impossible to measure support for the actual political regime. After excluding these cases, the analysis includes 102 unique political systems and 222,136 individual respondents in 137 country-years.[1] Table 4.1 provides an overview of the country-years included in the analysis.

To distinguish between democratic and autocratic political systems, this contribution uses Freedom House's (2017) List of Electoral Democracies. This measure is conceptually well suited to distinguish between democracies and autocracies as it employs criteria that closely mirror Dahl's (1998; 2006) institutions of polyarchy that this contribution uses as the decisive boundary between democracy and autocracy (cf. section 2.1). Dahl lists elected officials, free, fair, and frequent elections, freedom of expression, access to alternative sources of information, associational autonomy, and inclusive citizenship as necessary institutions for classifying a regime as a polyarchy. By comparison, Freedom House (2011) demands (a) a competitive, multiparty system, (b) universal adult suffrage for all citizens, (c) regularly contested elections securing ballot secrecy and security and without "massive voter fraud" that yield results representative of the public will, and (d) significant media access for political parties and "generally open political campaigning."[2] The only institution not encompassed in Freedom House's conceptualization of electoral democracy is freedom of expression (cf. Table A.1 in Appendix A). According to Freedom House's List of Electoral Democracies, eighty-five of the 137 country-years are democratic and fifty-two are autocratic (see Table 4.1). Cross-validating this classification with V Dem's newly available Regimes in the World (RoW) measure (Lührmann, Tannenberg, and Lindberg 2018) results in only minor deviations (five out of 137 country-years). As Freedom

[1] If a political system was surveyed by two different survey projects within the same year, respondents from both surveys were collapsed into a single country-year case; if it was surveyed during different years, each survey enters as a separate country-year case.

[2] In addition to fulfilling these qualitative criteria, political systems also need to achieve two numerical benchmarks. First, they have to obtain a score of seven points or higher (out of twelve possible points) for Subcategory A (concerning the electoral process) and an overall score of twenty points or higher (out of forty possible points) for Political Rights (Freedom House 2011).

Table 4.1. Democracies and autocracies included in analysis

democracies
Argentina 2012, Argentina 2013, Australia 2012, Belize 2012, Benin 2011, Bolivia 2012, Bolivia 2013, Botswana 2012, Brazil 2012, Brazil 2013, Brazil 2014, Canada 2012, Cape Verde 2011, Chile 2011, Chile 2012, Chile 2013, Colombia 2012, Colombia 2013, Costa Rica 2012, Costa Rica 2013, Cyprus 2011, Dominican Republic 2012, Dominican Republic 2013, Ecuador 2012, Ecuador 2013, El Salvador 2012, El Salvador 2013, Estonia 2011, Georgia 2014, Germany 2013, Ghana 2012, Guatemala 2012, Guatemala 2013, Guyana 2012, India 2014, Indonesia 2012, Jamaica 2012, Japan 2010, Japan 2011, Kenya 2011, Lesotho 2012, Liberia 2012, Malawi 2012, Mauritius 2012, Mexico 2012, Mexico 2013, Mongolia 2010, Namibia 2012, Netherlands 2012, New Zealand 2010, Niger 2013, Panama 2012, Panama 2013, Paraguay 2012, Paraguay 2013, Peru 2012, Peru 2013, Philippines 2010, Philippines 2012, Poland 2012, Romania 2012, Senegal 2013, Sierra Leone 2012, Slovenia 2011, South Africa 2011, South Africa 2013, South Korea 2010, South Korea 2011, Spain 2011, Suriname 2012, Sweden 2011, Taiwan 2010, Taiwan 2012, Tanzania 2012, Thailand 2013, Trinidad & Tobago 2011, Trinidad & Tobago 2012, Tunisia 2013, Turkey 2011, Ukraine 2011, Uruguay 2011, Uruguay 2012, Uruguay 2013, USA 2011, USA 2012, Zambia 2013
autocracies
Algeria 2013, Armenia 2011, Azerbaijan 2011, Bahrain 2014, Belarus 2011, Burkina Faso 2012, Burundi 2012, Cambodia 2012, Cameroon 2013, China 2011, China 2012, Côte d'Ivoire 2013, Guinea 2013, Haiti 2012, Honduras 2012, Honduras 2013, Hong Kong 2012, Hong Kong 2013, Iraq 2012, Iraq 2013, Kazakhstan 2011, Kuwait 2014, Kyrgyzstan 2011, Lebanon 2013, Madagascar 2013, Malaysia 2011, Malaysia 2012, Morocco 2011, Morocco 2013, Morocco 2014, Mozambique 2012, Nicaragua 2012, Nicaragua 2013, Nigeria 2011, Nigeria 2013, Pakistan 2012, Qatar 2010, Russia 2011, Rwanda 2012, Singapore 2010, Singapore 2012, Sudan 2013, Thailand 2010, Togo 2012, Uganda 2012, Uzbekistan 2011, Venezuela 2012, Venezuela 2013, Vietnam 2010, Yemen 2013, Zimbabwe 2012

Notes: Regime type based on Freedom House's (2017) List of Electoral Democracies.

House turns out to be the more conservative measure (classifying fewer political systems as democratic), it is preferred here.[3]

Figure 4.1 provides an overview of how these democratic and autocratic regimes are distributed across the globe. The remainder of this section will outline the research strategy that is employed for analyzing these cases in the empirical analysis and briefly introduce the data that each step of the analysis relies on.

A first step analyzes *levels of regime support* separately for democratic and autocratic regimes and subsequently compares them between the two regime types. The descriptive analysis makes use of the most recent available survey data from the World Values Survey (2010–2014), the Afrobarometer (2011–2013), the

[3] Robustness checks using the RoW measure instead do not yield substantially different results for any of the analyses (cf. online appendix, section B).

Figure 4.1. Global distribution of democracies and autocracies in sample

Notes: Classification based on Freedom House (2017). *Thailand classifies as an autocratic regime in 2010 and as a democratic regime in 2013. Figure created with mapchart.net.

AmericasBarometer (2012), the Arab Barometer (2012–2014), the Asian Barometer (2010–2012), and the Latinobarómetro (2013). In doing so, it is capable of providing an up-to-date account of regime support that covers a total of 102 political systems (in 137 country-years) and more than 220,000 individuals and encompasses democracies and autocracies from all world regions: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, South America, Central America and the Caribbean, North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Southern Asia, East Asia, and Oceania. In order to avoid potential questionnaire effects (caused by, e.g., question wording or question sequence) as well as potential regional effects (caused by, e.g., culturally-induced acquiescence tendencies), the analysis compares levels of regime support between democracies and autocracies not only within the pooled sample but also, additionally, within each particular survey and within each broader world region.[4] Overall, this univariate analysis will provide a comprehensive picture of how strongly ordinary citizens support their democratic and autocratic regimes.

In a second step, the empirical analysis investigates the *individual-level sources of regime support* for democratic and autocratic regimes and examines how the effects of these individual-level sources vary between regime types. This multivariate analysis initially relies on the same survey data as the descriptive analysis of levels of regime support, again merging the World Values Survey with five regional Barometer surveys and thereby covering 137 country-years and more than 220,000 individual respondents from around the world. Combining data from six cross-national survey projects does, however, come at the cost of limiting the number of available indicators. This means that such a global analysis cannot examine all theoretically relevant individual-level determinants of regime support, and that it can operationalize some of them only rather crudely. To counteract this issue, two regional analyses relying on individual Barometer surveys, the Afrobarometer and the Asian Barometer, supplement the global, maximum-scope analysis. Covering 31 African and 13 Asian political systems, respectively, these supplementary regional analyses allow for the use of more sophisticated operationalizations of the independent variables and can provide models that are fully specified.[5] Both the global and the regional analyses are conducted separately for democratic and autocratic regimes in order to compare the

[4] See Figure A.1 in Appendix A for country-region allocation.

[5] The Afrobarometer covers Algeria 2013, Benin 2011, Botswana 2012, Burkina Faso 2012, Burundi 2012, Cameroon 2013, Cape Verde 2011, Cote d'Ivoire 2013, Ghana 2012, Guinea 2013, Kenya 2011, Lesotho 2012, Liberia 2012, Madagascar 2013, Malawi 2012, Mauritius 2012, Morocco 2013, Mozambique 2012, Namibia 2012, Niger 2013, Nigeria 2013, Senegal 2013, Sierra Leone 2012, South Africa 2011, Sudan 2013, Tanzania 2012, Togo 2012, Tunisia 2013, Uganda 2012, Zambia 2013, Zimbabwe 2012. The Asian Barometer covers Cambodia 2012, China 2011, Hong Kong 2012, Indonesia 2011, Japan 2011, Malaysia 2011, Mongolia 2010, Philippines 2010, Singapore 2010, South Korea 2011, Taiwan 2010, Thailand 2010, Vietnam 2010.

effect directions and sizes of the individual-level determinants between the two types of political regimes.

In a third and final step, multi-level multivariate analyses address the *system-level sources of regime support*: these analyses employ mediated structural equation models to adequately translate the complex theoretical model statistically. The analysis first assesses the overall effects of different system-level contexts before testing for the proposed multi-level mediation mechanisms. Akin to the analysis for the individual-level sources of regime support, the moderating effects of regime type are also investigated for the effects of system-level sources of regime support. In addition to the familiar survey data (Afrobarometer, Americas Barometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey), these multi-level analyses also employ data from various aggregate data sources. Among others, these include Freedom House (2016a; 2016b), the Varieties of Democracies Project (Coppedge et al. 2016), the World Development Indicators (World Bank 2018), the Political Terror Scale Project (Gibney et al. 2016), the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2016), and the Quality of Government Expert Survey (Dahlström et al. 2015). In merging not only six cross-national survey projects but also linking these micro-level data with macro-level data from a considerable array of aggregate data sources for more than one hundred political systems worldwide, this contribution relies on a uniquely rich data base. It therefore offers the first truly comprehensive endeavor for studying the individual- and system-level sources of regime support on a global scale.

4.2. Operationalization

This section presents the operationalization of the variables used in the empirical analyses. It starts with the operationalization of the variable of interest in this study, regime support, before discussing how the central individual-level and system-level determinants of regime support can be measured with the data at hand.

Operationalizing regime support

Regime support was defined as citizens' attitudes towards the actual implemented institutional structure of the political regime. It is, therefore, measured as a latent construct composed of trust in four of the key institutions of the political regime: government, parliament, the police, and the army. Table 4.2 lists the exact question wordings and response scales for all surveys.

Conceptually, we can clearly locate such confidence in different regime institutions on the structure level of political support as it refers neither to any concrete

Table 4.2. Question wordings and response scales for institutional confidence

Afrobarometer		
How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?	…the President/Prime Minister…Parliament…the Police…the Army	not at all (0)—just a little (1)—somewhat (2)—a lot (3)
AmericasBarometer		
To what extent do you trust…	…the President/Prime Minister?…the National Legislature?…the National Police?…the Armed Forces?	not at all (1)—a lot (7)
Arab Barometer		
I will name a number of institutions, and I would like you to tell me to what extent you trust each of them:	…the Government…the Elected Council of Representatives (Parliament)…Public Security (the Police)…the Armed Forces (the Army)	to a great extent (1)—to a medium extent (2)—to a limited extent (3)—absolutely not (4)
Asian Barometer		
I'm going to name a number of institutions. For each one, please tell me how much trust do you have in them?	…the National Government…Parliament…the Police…the Military (Armed Forces)	a great deal (1)—quite a lot (2)—not very much (3)—none at all (4)
Latinobarómetro		
Please look at this card and tell me how much trust you have in each of the following groups/institutions.	…the National Government…National Congress/ Parliament…Police…Armed Forces	a lot (1)—some (2)—a little (3)—none (4)
World Values Survey		
I'm going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them:	…the Government [in capital]…Parliament…the Police…the Armed Forces	a great deal (1)—quite a lot (2)—not very much (3)—none at all (4)

Sources: Afrobarometer 2015b; Arab Barometer 2014; Asian Barometer 2012; Corporacion Latinobarómetro 2013; Latin American Public Opinion Project 2012; World Values Survey 2012.

political authorities or their actions (process level of political support), nor to any normative ideas about political order (values level of political support; cf. section 2.2). Within the spectrum of measures of regime support, however, institutional confidence constitutes one of the more concrete measures as it references specific institutions rather than the more abstract structure of the political regime in its entirety. If we tie this back to the hierarchical model of political support (cf. section 2.2), this means that institutional confidence is located more closely to incumbent support than it is to political value orientations (see also, for example, Norris 2017b). It may, therefore, be more closely linked to the experiences citizens make with specific institutions than other, more generalized and abstract measures of regime support asking about, for example, the political regime in its

entirety. We might thus a priori expect the sources associated with a generalization of experiences to have a stronger effect than the sources associated with an overflow of values, and have to keep this caveat in mind when interpreting the results of the empirical analysis. To mitigate this issue, robustness checks using the Asian Barometer data will feature an alternative measure of regime support that alludes less to specific institutions.[6]

Gauging confidence in government, parliament, the police, and the army covers two of the main branches of government: the executive (government, police, army) and the legislative (parliament). Unfortunately, as not all surveys contain an item tapping into respondents' confidence in the courts, the judicial branch is not represented. Especially within autocratic regime contexts, however, an emphasis on the executive branch does appear justified: with limited or no separation of powers, it is usually the executive that dominates politics (e.g., Brooker 2009; Gandhi 2008; Svolik 2012). At the same time, measuring trust in a number of different institutions rather than just trust in government as the main executive institution should mitigate preference falsification caused by political fear (cf. section 4.3; Robinson and Tannenberg 2019).

The most significant drawback of operationalizing regime support as institutional confidence traces back to the initial focus of cross-national survey research on democratic political systems. Survey questions about institutional confidence still focus on classically democratic institutional structures, neglecting some of the institutions that may be central in autocratic regimes, for example the monarch. This issue is greatly reduced for electoral authoritarian regimes as compared to closed authoritarian regimes since, by design, the former attempt to mirror democratic institutional structures (cf. section 2.1). Measuring regime support through questions about confidence in government, parliament, the police, and the army should hence yield meaningful and comparable results in both democratic and electoral authoritarian regimes. For closed authoritarian regimes, we need to be more cautious in assuming that trust in government, parliament, the police, and the army are suitable indicators of regime support. Yet, all closed authoritarian regimes included in this study *do* feature the above institutions and the case selection deliberately excluded those regimes where the true seat of power is not located within either of these institutions (so-called "linchpin monarchies," cf. section 4.1). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that questions about institutional confidence can meaningfully measure regime support even in the closed authoritarian regimes.

Confirmatory factor analyses corroborate both the unidimensionality of this construct as well as its being distinct from incumbent support, even within closed authoritarian regimes. Citizens in both democracies and autocracies are,

[6] The alternative measure asks for citizen attitudes towards the "system of government" (for question wordings and measurement models, see online appendix, Table OC.1, Table OC.2).

therefore, capable of distinguishing between the political regime and the incumbent authorities. Multi-group confirmatory factor analyses establish at least partial scalar invariance of the measurement between democracies and autocracies (details are documented in Mauk 2018).[7] This gives us some indication that, despite the problems associated with survey research in autocratic regimes (see below), citizens in autocracies at least react to questions on institutional trust in a way that is comparable to citizens in democracies and that we can measure regime support in a comparative and meaningful way in both democracies and autocracies.

Operationalizing the individual-level determinants of regime support

As outlined in the previous section, the empirical analysis of individual-level sources of regime support will include both a global model that combines data from all six survey projects, and two supplementary analyses based on only the Afrobarometer and the Asian Barometer. Due to limitations in indicator availability, the *global model* using the combined dataset can only test three of the five individual-level determinants of regime support: political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. In addition, only a single indicator is available for each of these individual-level determinants. Support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections, i.e. support for the clearly autocratic idea of personalist rule, measures citizens' *political value orientations*. A question asking respondents about how democratic they think their political system is gauges citizens' *democratic performance evaluations*.[8] Finally, citizens' *systemic performance evaluations* are operationalized by how safe they feel in their neighborhood or city, approximating the provision of physical security as a substantive public good (for question wordings, see Table A.2 in Appendix A).

In contrast, the *supplementary analyses* making use of only one of the survey projects each can provide adequate measurements for all five theoretically relevant individual-level determinants of regime support: political value orientations, societal value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations.

[7] The final construct allows for the error terms between trust in the police and trust in the army to be correlated.

[8] While democratic performance evaluations and regime support are clearly distinguishable from a conceptual point of view, prior research has suggested that citizens may not always distinguish clearly between the two concepts (Kruse, Ravlik, and Welzel 2019). For the data used in this study, however, the two appear to be distinct concepts after all: the correlation between democratic performance evaluations and the dependent variable is only $r = 0.34$ for democracies and $r = 0.45$ for autocracies, indicating that citizens are capable of distinguishing between democratic performance evaluations and regime support.

For the Afrobarometer, seven items query respondents' commitment to democratic or autocratic *political values*. One group of three indicators probes into respondents' support not only of personalist rule but also of military rule and single-party rule. The other four indicators ask respondents about their support for four democratic principles: horizontal accountability, party pluralism, legal constraints for the executive, and electoral selection of leaders. The Asian Barometer, like the Afrobarometer, includes items on respondents' support of personalist rule, military rule, and single-party rule. It also inquires about respondents' commitment to specific political principles, two democratic ones (party pluralism and electoral selection of leaders) and two autocratic ones (executive supremacy over the judicial branch and executive independence from laws).

As far as *societal value orientations* are concerned, the theoretical model identified three societal values as central with regard to regime support: individualism, tolerance, and equality. The Afrobarometer features two questions about equality: one that probes into the idea that women should have equal rights and another that taps into respondents' views on educational equality between boys and girls. The Asian Barometer contains six items probing into the cluster of values associated with collectivism (as opposed to individualism): interdependence, conformity, and harmonious relationships. Two questions ask about whether individual interests should be sacrificed for the sake of the collective interest of the family or the nation (interdependence). Two more questions inquire about whether one should always obey their parents and teachers (conformity). A last set of two items question respondents whether open conflict should be avoided within a group and in the workplace (harmonious relationships).

Incumbent support was conceptualized as citizens' attitudes towards concrete incumbent authorities rather than the institutions these incumbents represent. The Afrobarometer asks respondents how much they approve of the way the incumbent president has performed in his or her job during the past year. The Asian Barometer features a similar question which asks respondents how satisfied they are with the incumbent government. In both surveys, the question explicitly mentions the name of the incumbent president or prime minister, making it clearly directed at support for the incumbent authorities and not the political regime itself.

The theoretical framework defined *democratic performance evaluations* as citizens' perceptions of how well a political system manages to provide political rights and freedoms and to institutionally secure the responsiveness and accountability of the ruling vis-à-vis the ruled. For the Afrobarometer, next to an overall assessment of the regime's democraticness, three more questions aim at evaluations of various aspects of democratic performance. One question asks about the perceived freeness and fairness of the last national election; another one queries respondents' perceptions of the freedom of speech; a third one assesses whether in the respondent's view the president ignores courts and laws. The Asian Barometer, just like the Afrobarometer, inquires about respondents' overall evaluation of the democraticness of the country, the perceived freedom

and fairness of the last national election, and about how freely people can speak what they think. For the rule of law, the Asian Barometer asks about whether government leaders can break the law without consequence.

The final individual-level determinant, *systemic performance evaluations*, were conceptualized as citizens' perceptions of how well the political system manages to provide more generic substantive and procedural public goods that are not inherently linked to the level of democracy, for example physical security, economic well-being, or equal treatment. As regards substantive public goods, in addition to the feeling of safety, the Afrobarometer taps into the provision of economic well-being by inquiring about respondents' evaluation of the national economic condition. As far as procedural public goods are concerned, one question assesses the provision of equal treatment by asking whether respondents think people are treated unequally under the law. Again, the Asian Barometer provides very similar items to the Afrobarometer: it also inquires about the substantive public goods of physical security and economic well-being. In addition, the Asian Barometer asks about equal treatment by inquiring whether the government treats citizens from different ethnic communities equally.

Table 4.3 gives an overview of the operationalization of the individual-level independent variables. Where several indicators are available for a variable, the

Table 4.3. Operationalization of individual-level determinants

	Combined dataset	**Afrobarometer**	**Asian Barometer**
political value orientations	support of personalist rule	support of personalist rule, military rule, single-party rule; commitment to horizontal accountability, party pluralism, legal constraints for executive, electoral selection of leaders	support of personalist rule, military rule, single-party rule; commitment to party pluralism, electoral selection of leaders, executive supremacy over judicial branch, executive independence from law
societal value orientations	n/a	equality: women's rights, equality: educational	interdependence: family, interdependence: nation; conformity: parents, conformity: teacher; harmony: group, harmony: workplace
incumbent support	n/a	approval of president	satisfaction with current government
democratic performance evaluations	extent of democracy	extent of democracy; elections free and fair; freedom of speech; rule of law	extent of democracy; elections free and fair; freedom of speech; rule of law
systemic performance evaluations	perceived safety	perceived safety; national economic situation; equal treatment under the law	perceived safety; national economic situation; equal treatment of ethnicities

construct is measured as a factor comprised of these indicators. Question wordings are detailed in Tables A.2, A.3, and A.4 in Appendix A.

Operationalizing the system-level determinants of regime support

On the system level, the theoretical framework identified four determinants of regime support: macro-cultural context, macro-political context or actual democratic performance, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization (section 3.2). Table 4.4 gives an overview of the data sources and indicators used to measure these system-level variables as well as the number of country-years for which each indicator is available. The following paragraphs describe in more detail the choice of indicators.

Macro-cultural context was defined above as the value and belief system dominant within a given society. This value and belief system is often conceptualized as being predominantly shaped by *religious traditions* and we can, therefore, operationalize macro-cultural context by the dominant religion within a country. Data comes from the dataset on (religious) fractionalization published by Alesina et al. (2003) and is—where possible—cross-checked with the classification by Norris and Inglehart (2011) and Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003). In general, countries are assigned to a macro-cultural context based on the dominant religious tradition (Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic) among their populations. However, some adaptations have to be made to match the theoretical considerations (cf. subsection 3.2.1). First, predominantly Atheist former Soviet Republics are classified as "ex-Communist" since Communism is assumed to have had a lasting impact on these societies.[9] Second, in order to be able to test for the influence of a Confucian culture, the "Asian" category is divided into historically Confucian countries ("Confucian") and historically non-Confucian countries ("Asian").[10] Third, following the assumption that all Sub-Saharan African countries rest on tribal traditions and earth religions that form a common denominator and take precedence over later Christian or Islamic influences (Etounga-Manguelle 2000), Sub-Saharan African countries are classified as "African."[11] Figure 4.2 gives an overview of the global distribution of macro-cultural contexts. Details on the classification are documented in Table A.8 in Appendix A.

[9] That most people in these countries today still have no religious affiliation is taken as evidence of such a lasting impact of Communism. Other former Soviet Republics in which majorities of people avow themselves to either Orthodox Christianity (Armenia, Georgia) or Islam (Azerbaijan) are hence not classified as ex-Communist but as Orthodox and Islamic, respectively.

[10] Historically Confucian countries are those in which Confucianism served as a state ideology (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam) or those whose population is predominantly of Chinese descent (Singapore, Taiwan).

[11] The only exceptions to this rule are Niger and Sudan, where Islam had been the dominant religion even in precolonial times and which are hence classified as "Islamic".

Table 4.4. Operationalization of system-level determinants

Construct	Primary data source[a]	Indicator	Country-years covered
macro-cultural context			
religious tradition	Alesina et al. 2003	dominant religion	137
macro-political context/actual democratic performance			
liberal democracy	Freedom House 2016a; 2016b	Combined Political Rights and Civil Liberties Score[b]	137
	Coppedge et al. 2016	Liberal Democracy Index	133
actual systemic performance			
substantive public goods			
physical security	Gibney et al. 2016	Societal Violence Scale (SVS)[b]	41 (137)
	World Bank 2018	homicide rate[b]	108 (137)
economic well-being	World Bank 2018	GDP growth	137 (137)
	World Bank 2018	inflation rate[b]	137 (137)
	World Bank 2018	unemployment rate[b]	137 (137)
	Solt 2016	income inequality (Gini)[b]	79 (118)
health and medical treatment	World Bank 2018	life expectancy infant	137 (137)
	World Bank 2018	mortality rate[b]	137 (137)
infrastructure	World Bank 2018	internet user rate	136 (137)
	World Bank 2018	access to improved water source (% of population)	132 (133)
protection of the environment	World Bank 2018	renewable energy (% of total consumption)	80 (131)
	CIA 2017	electricity from fossil fuels (% of total production)[b]	61 (137)
procedural public goods			
high-quality public administration	Dahlström et al. 2015	impartiality index	107[c]
	Dahlström et al. 2015	professionalism index	107[c]
equal treatment	Coppedge et al. 2016	educational equality	133 (133)
	Coppedge et al. 2016	health equality	133 (133)
level of socioeconomic modernization			
economic wealth	World Bank 2018	logged GDP/capita (PPP)	137 (137)
industrialization	UNCTAD 2014	agricultural labor force (%)[b]	137 (137)
urbanization	World Bank 2018	urban population (%)	136 (137)
education	UNDP 2016a	mean years of schooling	136 (137)

Notes: Numbers in parentheses indicate number of country-years for which approximate data (+/− 3 years; Gini: +/− 6 years) is available.[a] Data may be supplemented from additional sources (Central Intelligence Agency 2017; International Monetary Fund 2016; National Statistics Republic of China 2017; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2014).[b] Inverted.[c] All data collected 2014–2015.

With regard to *macro-political context or actual democratic performance*, this contribution applies Larry Diamond's (1999) conception of *liberal democracy* as the normative ideal against which actual democratic performance is measured. Liberal democracy goes beyond polyarchy by including liberal and republican characteristics: in addition to the six institutions essential to polyarchy, liberal

Figure 4.2. Global distribution of macro-cultural contexts in sample

Notes: Author's classification based on Alesina et al. (2003), Norris and Inglehart (2011), and Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003). Figure created with mapchart.net.

democracy demands the protection of individual liberties and civic pluralism, horizontal accountability, rule of law, and the absence of reserved domains of power for actors not accountable to the electorate. While all democracies, by definition, must meet the minimum standards of polyarchy, they may not meet the more demanding standards of liberal democracy. Using liberal democracy as the benchmark for actual democratic performance thus allows us to distinguish different degrees of actual democratic performance, not only within autocratic but also within democratic regimes. To gauge the degree to which a particular political system realizes the ideal of liberal democracy, this study uses two key aggregate measures. One, the (inverted) Freedom House score (combining the scores for Political Rights and Civil Liberties; Freedom House 2016a; 2016b); and two, V-Dem's Liberal Democracy index (Coppedge et al. 2016). Whereas Freedom House data have frequently been used to measure democratic performance (e.g., Ariely 2015; Norris 2011; Rose and Mishler 2011), V-Dem constitutes a very recent effort in measuring the quality of democracy and has hence not yet been applied widely in political-culture research. Nevertheless, both measures are conceptually well suited to measure liberal democracy. As they have slightly different emphases, this study combines them into a simple summative index to comprehensively gauge actual democratic performance.[12]

Actual systemic performance, unlike actual democratic performance, is not inherently linked to the democraticness of a political system. Instead, it focuses on the provision of more generic public goods that any kind of political system can supply. Most of these generic public goods are of a material or substantive nature, such as physical security or economic well-being. There are, however, also generic public goods of an immaterial or procedural nature, such as high-quality administrative services or equal treatment (on the distinction between substantive and procedural goods, cf. Roller 2005, pp. 19–24). For *substantive public goods, physical security* is operationalized using the Societal Violence Scale (Gibney et al. 2016) and the number of intentional homicides per 100,000 people. A number of macroeconomic indicators measure *economic well-being*: annual GDP growth, inflation rate based on the consumer price index, unemployment rate, and income inequality (Gini). As measures pertaining to the provision of *health and medical treatment*, we can use life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rate (per 1,000 life births). We can further gauge the provision of *infrastructure* by the number of internet users per one hundred inhabitants and the percentage of inhabitants having access to improved water sources. As a last component of substantive systemic performance, we can operationalize the *protection of the environment* using the share of consumed energy that is generated from renewable sources and the share of produced electricity that is generated from

[12] V-Dem data are not available for Bahrain, Belize, and Hong Kong. Consequently, for these three political systems, this study uses only the Freedom House data.

fossil fuels. For *procedural public goods*, a *high-quality public administration* is measured using both the Impartiality Index and the Professionalism Index from the Quality of Government Expert Survey dataset (Dahlström et al. 2015). As a second procedural public good, *equal treatment* is measured using two indicators from the V-Dem dataset: the extent to which basic education is guaranteed equally to all citizens and the extent to which basic healthcare is guaranteed equally to all citizens. Because I consider all public goods (physical security, economic well-being, health and medical treatment, infrastructure, protection of the environment, high-quality public administration, equal treatment) as equal components of actual systemic performance, all indicators are combined into a summative index that gives equal weight to each component, not each indicator. For example, since physical security is measured with only two indicators, each of these indicators is weighted twice as heavily as each of the four indicators measuring economic well-being.[13]

Socioeconomic modernization was defined earlier as the process by which societies develop economically, entailing the growth of economic wealth, a shift from agriculture to industrialization, an increase in urbanization, and the spread of education. The (logged) gross domestic product per capita (purchasing power parity) approximates *economic wealth*. The (inverted) share of the total labor force working in the agricultural sector gauges *industrialization*. The share of the population living in urban areas (as defined by national statistical offices) operationalizes *urbanization*. Finally, mean years of schooling measure *education*. Again, all four components of socioeconomic modernization (economic wealth, industrialization, urbanization, education) are weighted equally within a summative index.

For ease of interpretation, all continuous measures are linearly transformed so that they range from zero to one. Table A.9 in Appendix A gives an overview of each country-year's actual democratic performance, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization.

4.3. Working with survey data from autocracies

Apart from the challenges surrounding any attempt in using survey data to analyze people's attitudes (cf., e.g., Groves et al. 2009; Wolf et al. 2016), public

[13] Citizens may also evaluate their regime's systemic performance, at least in part, relative to their own regime's prior performance rather than (only) on absolute levels and it might, thus, be more appropriate to measure systemic performance in terms of changes in performance compared to the previous year. However, few of the data used to construct the measure of actual systemic performance are available on a yearly basis for all countries; some are available even only for a single year (e.g., the Quality of Government data). This means that, while comparisons to the previous year can be done on a per-item basis, an aggregate measure of changes in systemic performance will contain a different set of items for each country and should not be used for the main analysis. To nevertheless account for the possibility of citizens' assessments being determined by changes from the previous year rather than current performance, robustness checks will feature this limited measure of changes in systemic performance.

opinion research in autocratic contexts is confronted with the additional issue of *political fear* (Kuechler 1998; Kuran 1997). Political fear is likely to be particularly high in contexts where freedom of opinion is not upheld and critical statements about the political regime may result in severe punishment. As a consequence, respondents in autocracies may not be willing to reply to survey questions truthfully, especially about politically sensitive topics. Instead, respondents may engage in preference falsification, giving answers that do not so much reflect their own true attitudes but rather what they think is an acceptable answer to the regime (Zimbalist 2018). Surprisingly, both survey administrators and prior research studying political support in autocracies rarely discuss this issue. Even though high-quality survey projects like the Barometer surveys take great efforts to assure respondents of the anonymity of their replies and to substantiate their independence from the political regime, we have little way of telling whether these efforts were successful. The only quasi-objective measure we can use to actually assess the validity of respondents' replies are interviewer evaluations of the respondents' demeanor during the interview. For the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer, the only survey projects that include suitable items, these interviewer evaluations indeed provide some reassurance with respect to the validity of survey responses from autocratic political systems. Only a small minority of Afrobarometer respondents in African autocracies appeared suspicious (on average: 5.8 percent) or dishonest (on average: 2.5 percent) during the interviews; and no more than 2.3 percent of Asian Barometer respondents in East Asian autocracies seemed insincere in answering the interviewer's questions. In addition to being fairly low in absolute terms, these numbers are also relatively similar to the ones in democracies (for example, 6 percent of respondents in Tunisia appeared suspicious, 3 percent of respondents in Zambia appeared dishonest, and 8 percent of respondents in Mongolia appeared insincere).[14] This is the case even for those autocracies that are particularly repressive, such as Sudan or Uzbekistan.[15] Based on the interviewer record, respondents in these repressive regimes do in fact appear more suspicious (on average: 10.8 percent), more dishonest (on average: 5.1 percent),

[14] A recent study by Tannenberg (2017) uses another item included in the Afrobarometer: the perceived survey sponsor. He shows that respondents in democracies and autocracies alike often believe the survey to be sponsored by the government instead of an independent research institution. This belief seems to bias respondents' replies to politically sensitive questions more strongly in countries that are less democratic, suggesting an effect of political fear in autocratic regimes (similarly, Zimbalist 2018). This is, however, not the case for the dependent variable used here: believing that the government sponsored the survey increases regime support equally in democracies ($b = 0.07$; $SE = 0.02$) and in autocracies ($b = 0.06$; $SE = 0.02$). This suggests that responses in autocracies are not particularly biased.

[15] We can measure the repressiveness of a political system using Freedom House's Civil Liberties index. Countries that score 6.0 or higher on this index—countries with "very restricted civil liberties" that "strongly limit the rights of expression and association and frequently hold political prisoners" (Freedom House 2015, p. 4)—might be considered as too repressive for survey data to be a reasonably accurate representation of citizens' political attitudes. 13 country-years meet this criterion: Bahrain 2014, Belarus 2011, Cameroon 2013, China 2011 and 2012, Iraq 2012 and 2013, Libya 2014, Rwanda 2012, Sudan 2013, Uzbekistan 2011, Yemen 2013, and Zimbabwe 2012.

and more insincere (on average: 2.6 percent) than respondents in less repressive regimes. In absolute terms, however, these numbers still seem fairly low.

While surely not definitive—and of course omitting those refusing to be interviewed altogether—, these numbers provide some indication about the willingness of citizens in autocratic regimes to respond to survey questions and are interpreted as a sign that their answers can be deemed reasonably valid. Even though some studies point to the existence of preference falsification following a major political purge in Shanghai (Jiang and Yang 2016) or regarding electoral support for Vladimir Putin (Kalinin 2016), this does not appear to be a general, pervasive problem in autocracies. While Robinson and Tannenberg (2019) report evidence from list experiments pointing to self-censorship effects regarding confidence in the national government in China, other studies report not only that political fear is not particularly pronounced even in this repressive, closed authoritarian regime (Wu and Wilkes 2018) but also observe only weak correlations between measures of political fear and political support (Chen and Shi 2001; Shi 2001; Yang and Tang 2010). Similarly, a recent study on approval of Vladimir Putin concludes that Russians' responses to survey questions largely reflect their true attitudes (Frye et al. 2017). In addition, Guriev and Treisman (2016) find that government approval is not higher in more repressive political regimes.

Political fear may not only lead to preference falsification but also to item nonresponse: respondents afraid of repercussions may refuse to answer to politically sensitive questions or pretend to "don't know" or "can't choose" an answer. While item nonresponse plagues any kind of survey research, nonresponse rates being systematically higher in autocracies—especially in repressive ones—may point to respondents being cautious about answering politically sensitive questions out of political fear. To assess the extent of and detect potential patterns of item nonresponse, Table 4.5 lists the central dependent and individual-level independent variables and their respective percentages of missing values in the combined dataset as well as the five countries with the highest nonresponse rates for each question.

Some variables indeed register fairly high nonresponse rates for some country-years. Yet, there seem to be no systematic patterns of nonresponse (for similar results, see Benstead 2018; Kruse, Ravlik, and Welzel 2019). For one, while nonresponse is generally higher in autocratic regimes, some democracies like Lesotho or Japan also register high nonresponse rates. Second, there are no countries that display consistently high nonresponse rates for *all* questions. Third, while highly repressive regimes do appear more often among the top five nonresponse countries, some of the most repressive regimes do not even appear once (e.g., Sudan 2013 or Zimbabwe 2012). Four, while countries with low levels of socioeconomic development are generally more prominently represented, there are also very highly developed countries with high nonresponse rates (e.g., Japan 2010 or

Table 4.5. Missing values in combined dataset

Variable	Missing values	Countries with highest proportions of missing values
regime support		
trust in government	2.8%	Lesotho 2012 (14.7%), Madagascar 2013 (14.0%), Guyana 2012 (11.3%), Japan 2010 (11.3%), Malawi 2012 (11.1%)
trust in parliament	5.1%	Lesotho 2012 (16.3%), Hong Kong 2012 (13.7%), Thailand 2010 (13.5%), Japan 2010 (13.2%), Algeria 2013 (12.0%)
trust in police	1.9%	*China 2012 (9.8%)*, Madagascar 2013 (7.8%), Hong Kong 2012 (6.9%), Japan 2010 (5.9%), *Cameroon 2013 (5.8%)*
trust in army	6.9%	Hong Kong 2012 (21.5%), Madagascar 2013 (13.3%), Japan 2010 (11.7%), Mauritius 2012 (10.7%), Mozambique 2012 (10.2%)
political value orientations	7.8%	Morocco 2011 (27.6%), *Uzbekistan 2011 (27.3%), China 2012 (26.5%)*, Uruguay 2011 (21.3%), Madagascar 2013 (19.8%)
democratic performance evaluations	8.7%	Madagascar 2013 (28.6%), Lesotho 2012 (24.3%), China 2011 (22.9%), Mozambique 2012 (21.6%), Netherlands 2012 (18.9%)
systemic performance evaluations	1.6%	*Belarus 2011 (9.6%), China 2012 (9.4%)*, Kyrgyzstan 2011 (8.3%), Ukraine 2011 (7.2%), South Korea 2010 (6.3%)

Note: Countries printed in italics are highly repressive.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

Netherlands 2012). Five, while the majority of countries with high nonresponse rates are located in East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, nonresponse is not a phenomenon exclusive to these world regions (e.g., Uruguay 2011 in South America or Kyrgyzstan 2011 in Central Asia also exhibit high nonresponse rates). The most conspicuous finding, then, is the overall higher rate of nonresponse in highly repressive regimes, which might be an indication that respondents in these repressive regimes were afraid to answer some of the politically sensitive questions.

In sum, political fear does not seem to have a major effect on response behavior in autocratic regimes and the survey data used here appear reasonably trustworthy. However, survey data from autocracies will always remain problematic (as do, to a lesser extent, survey data from democracies; see, e.g., Blasius and Thiessen 2018; Kuriakose and Robbins 2016). Yet, if we want to study citizen attitudes on a global scale and across regime types, we currently have no other option than to rely on data from public opinion surveys. The best we can do is to stay aware of the problems associated with survey research in autocracies and to take

special care in interpreting our findings. In particular, conspicuously high levels of political support within a particular country may, indeed, indicate high levels of political fear and should not blindly be interpreted as being valid measurements of citizens' attitudes.[16] To counteract these problems and to enhance the robustness of its results, the present study features robustness checks that exclude countries that are very repressive as well as countries with conspicuously high levels of regime support and which will complement all empirical analyses.

[16] There are three countries in which levels of political support appear extraordinarily high (with average support levels exceeding 0.8 on a scale from zero to one): Qatar, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

5
Levels and sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies

Having developed the theoretical framework and outlined the operationalization and research strategy, this chapter presents the results of the empirical analysis of levels and sources of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. As indicated above, the analysis proceeds in three steps. *First*, a univariate analysis compares the *levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies*. The aim of the descriptive analysis is to assess whether these political regimes can rest on an ample base of popular support and whether democracies are actually superior to autocratic regimes in the eyes of their citizens (section 5.1). *Second*, a multivariate analysis investigates the *individual-level sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies*. This section focuses on identifying which individual-level characteristics play a role in determining citizens' regime support, whether the same set of sources is relevant in democracies and autocracies, and how the effects of these individual-level sources vary between the two types of regimes (section 5.2). *Third*, a multivariate analysis addresses the *system-level sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies*. It intends to ascertain which system-level context factors play a role in determining citizens' regime support, how different system-level contexts affect the individual-level sources of regime support, and whether and how the effects of these system-level sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes (section 5.3). Each step of the analysis contains a global analysis based on the combined dataset of all six cross-national survey projects (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey) and covering more than 220,000 individual respondents from 102 countries (sixty-one democracies, forty-one autocracies) in 137 country-years (eighty-five democratic, fifty-two autocratic). For the first and second step of the analysis, additional analyses based on subsets of these data supplement these global analyses, covering a varying number of respondents and democratic and autocratic regimes (for details, see below).

5.1. How much citizens support democratic and autocratic regimes

The first research question to be explored concerns the *levels of regime support* in democratic and autocratic regimes. *Can both types of political regimes rest on an*

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ample base of popular support? And are the normatively superior political regimes—democracies—superior also in the eyes of their citizens?

Looking at the maximum-scope analysis of *global means of regime support* in both democratic and autocratic regimes, the answer to the first question remains ambiguous.[1] Recall that regime support is measured as a composite of trust in government, trust in parliament, trust in the police, and trust in the army, and that a value of "0" indicates no regime support at all and that a value of "1" indicates very high regime support. As both democracies and autocracies reach mean values close to the scale midpoint of 0.5 (Figure 5.1), this means that either type of political regime receives a medium amount of support from its citizens. Tying these findings back to the generalized conception of political support and its systemic consequences sketched out above (chapter 2), this indicates that, *on average,* there is some potential for regime change in both democracies and autocracies; at the same time, neither form of political rule seems to be under imminent danger from popular revolution.

A closer look at the levels of regime support, however, reveals large variations across individual political systems (Figure 5.2; see also Table B.1 in Appendix B). For example, while popular support for the political regime drops as low as 0.27 in democracies (Slovenia 2011) and 0.33 in autocracies (Lebanon 2013), it also

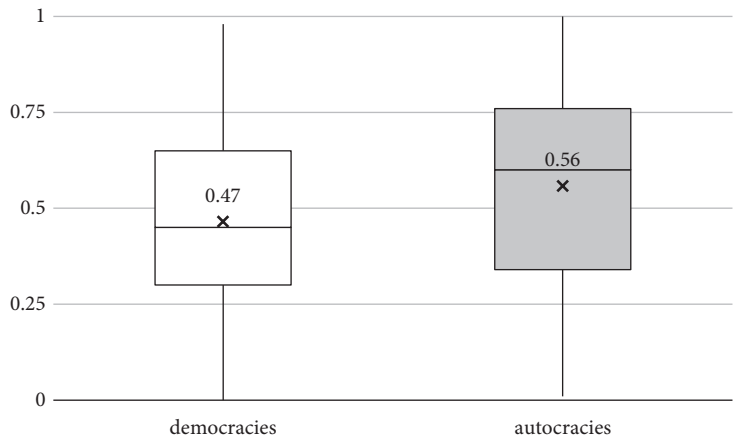


Figure 5.1. Average levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies, globally

Notes: Means (x) and boxplots of latent variable regime support for democratic and autocratic regimes. N = 136,699 (democracies)/N = 83,552 (autocracies). Weighted data. Difference in means significant with $p < 0.001$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

[1] All analyses in this section use a combination of within- and across-country weights to balance out the unequal sampling probabilities within countries and the unequal numbers of respondents across countries.

Figure 5.2. Global distribution of levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies

Notes: Means of latent variable regime support for each country. In political systems where more than one year was available, average of all country-years is used. Weighted data. Figure created with mapchart.net.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

reaches comfortably high levels of up to 0.73 in democracies (Niger 2013) and even 0.87 in autocracies (Uzbekistan 2011).[2]

These results corroborate previous research with more narrow geographical scopes (e.g., Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Norris 2011; van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017; Wang and Tan 2013), and demonstrate that neither type of political regime can *generally* rest on a broad base of popular support. Instead, *some* democracies as well as *some* autocracies are confronted with potentially destabilizingly low levels of regime support, while *others* can rely on abundant support from their citizens.

The results also show that the variation in mean levels of regime support between political systems is just as high within the group of autocracies as it is within the group of democracies (system-level standard deviation of regime support for democracies: 0.10; for autocracies: 0.13). This is the case on the individual level as well: the standard deviation of regime support is even slightly higher in autocratic regimes (0.29) than it is in democratic regimes (0.26; see also Figure 5.1). Both of these observations provide evidence for the basic assumption upon which the validity of this analysis rests: that citizens in autocracies are also willing to voice critical attitudes towards their political regime, at least in the context of public opinion surveys. This assumption is further backed by the frequency distributions of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes: even though respondents in autocratic regimes tend to give extremely favorable answers more often, they choose the lower end of the response spectrum just as often as citizens in democratic regimes (cf. Figure B.1 in Appendix B; see also Figure 5.1 above).

Turning to the *comparison between democratic and autocratic regimes*, the *second question* posed above has to be negated: with a mean value of 0.47, regime support is actually substantively *lower* in democratic regimes than it is in autocratic regimes (0.56; Figure 5.1). Autocracies are hence, on average, viewed more positively than democracies. Again, this finding confirms the results of previous studies, which found that within East Asia, autocracies receive more citizen support than democracies (Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Park and Chang 2013; Shin 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006) and remains robust even when excluding highly repressive regimes and countries with conspicuously high levels of regime support (cf. online appendix, Table OA.1).[3]

Overall, these results suggest that citizens' views of their autocratic political regime are not affected negatively by the latter's lack of democratic legitimation.

[2] Excluding both highly repressive regimes as well as those countries with conspicuously high levels of regime support (cf. section 4.3), we find the highest level of regime support in Burundi 2012 (0.76).

[3] Regime support is slightly lower in non-repressive autocracies than it is in highly repressive ones (0.55 as compared to 0.58), hinting at the possibility of political-fear effects in very repressive regimes. Notwithstanding, as indicated by the equally large standard deviations (0.29 in both non-repressive and repressive autocracies), citizens even in the most repressive regimes seem to be willing to report diverse attitudes towards their political regime to survey researchers.

Instead, these global results confirm prior research on East Asia that has asserted that autocracies receive more popular support than democracies (Chu, Welsh, and Chang 2013; Park and Chang 2013; Shin 2013; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006). They also corroborate the "critical-citizens" or "dissatisfied-democrats" perspective, which claims that citizens primarily in established democracies have become increasingly critical of their political regimes (Dalton 2004; Dalton and Welzel 2014b; Norris 1999a; 2011; Pharr and Putnam 2000). In light of this perspective, lower levels of regime support in democratic political systems may be indicative of a change in political value orientations and a resultant rise of expectations towards the political regime. Whether more democratic political value orientations actually have such a negative effect on regime support will be tested in the following section (section 5.2). Regardless of its sources, the basic finding remains the same: *citizens in democracies on average extend less support to their political regimes than citizens in autocracies*.

Yet, since democratic and autocratic regimes are distributed unevenly across both surveys and world regions—autocracies are particularly prominent in the Afrobarometer, Arab Barometer, and Asian Barometer as well as in Africa and Asia—the finding that democracies receive less popular support might just be an artifact of either questionnaire effects (such as question wording) or of regional effects (such as culturally-induced acquiescence tendencies). To account for these effects, the following supplementary analyses compare levels of regime support between democratic and autocratic regimes within individual surveys, as well as within broader geopolitical regions. This approach allows mitigating potential survey and regional effects.

Examining first the comparison between democracies and autocracies *within individual surveys*, the basic finding is replicated almost universally: autocracies on average receive more support from their citizens than democracies (Figure 5.3). The only exception is the Afrobarometer. Here, citizens' views of their respective political regimes are slightly more favorable in democracies than in autocracies. Whether this points to a questionnaire effect, a regional effect (naturally, the Afrobarometer covers only African countries), or a substantive difference in regime support based on individual- or system-level determinants remains an open question at this point. The multivariate analyses that follow in sections 5.2 and 5.3 will investigate further into this issue. While there seems to be more support for autocratic political regimes than for democratic ones in all other surveys, both the absolute level of this support as well as the gap between democracies and autocracies varies considerably across surveys (Figure 5.3). With regard to the former, absolute support for the political regime—regardless of whether it is democratic or autocratic—seems to be lowest in the Latinobarómetro (0.38 for democracies, 0.40 for autocracies) and the Arab Barometer (0.39 for democracies, 0.45 for autocracies). *Democracies* also receive comparatively little support in the Asian Barometer (0.42) and the World Values Survey (0.42). In contrast,

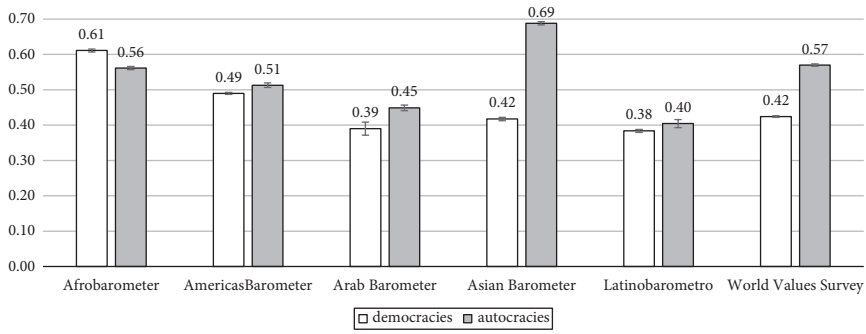


Figure 5.3. Levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies in different surveys

Notes: Means of latent variable regime support for democratic and autocratic regimes. 95% confidence intervals as indicated by error bars. N = 23,796 (democracies, Afrobarometer)/N = 23,678 (autocracies, Afrobarometer); N = 34,755 (democracies, AmericasBarometer)/N = 6,726 (autocracies, AmericasBarometer); N = 1,184 (democracies, Arab Barometer)/N = 8,119 (autocracies, Arab Barometer); N = 8,584 (democracies, Asian Barometer)/N = 10,648 (autocracies, Asian Barometer); N = 16,973 (democracies, Latinobarómetro)/N = 3,193 (autocracies, Latinobarómetro); N = 51,407 (democracies, World Values Survey)/N = 31,188 (autocracies, World Values Survey). Weighted data. All differences in means significant with $p < 0.001$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

support for democratic political regimes is exceptionally high in the Afrobarometer (0.61). For *autocracies*, the picture looks different. While popular support is again lowest in the Latinobarómetro (0.40) and Arab Barometer (0.45), it is of medium strength in the AmericasBarometer (0.51), Afrobarometer (0.56), and World Values Survey (0.57). Other than for democracies, the Asian Barometer registers by far the highest levels of regime support for autocracies (0.69). Again, at this stage it is impossible to determine whether this is due to survey and/or regional effects or actually indicative of substantive differences in regime support. It does, however, seem plausible that the lower levels of regime support in the Latinobarómetro and Arab Barometer are, at least in part, caused by the poor functioning of the political systems in the respective survey regions (South America and Northern Africa/Middle East). As far as the *differences between democratic and autocratic regimes* are concerned, the most striking finding is the enormous advantage autocracies have in the Asian Barometer (0.69 as compared to 0.42 for democracies). Against the backdrop of the theoretical model outlined in chapter 3, the most likely explanation for this observation is the Confucian cultural heritage that is widespread across the survey region and may predispose citizens towards autocratic forms of rule.[4] In contrast, differences in regime

[4] The exceptional systemic performance of some of the survey's autocracies (Singapore, Hong Kong) might also, in part, explain the high support for autocratic regimes in the Asian Barometer. Systemic performance does, however, fail to explain why the survey's democracies—which contain such high-performing countries as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan—fair so poorly in the eyes of their citizens.

support between democratic and autocratic regimes are almost nil in the AmericasBarometer and Latinobarómetro ($\Delta = 0.02$ in both cases). All of these results remain robust when excluding highly repressive regimes or countries with conspicuously high levels of regime support from the analysis (cf. online appendix, Table OA.2). Just as for the variations in absolute levels of regime support across surveys, this purely descriptive analysis cannot account for this variation in differences between democracies and autocracies across surveys. It must, therefore, be investigated in multivariate analyses that follow in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

The second supplementary analysis, the comparison of levels of regime support between democracies and autocracies *within broader geopolitical regions* (Western World, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, Central and South Asia; see Figure A.1 in Appendix A for country-region allocation), generally corroborates the picture that emerged from the analysis of individual surveys. Again, both absolute levels of regime support and the gaps between democracies and autocracies vary considerably, but autocracies almost universally receive more popular support than democracies (Figure 5.4). The only geopolitical region where average levels of regime support are higher in democratic than in autocratic regimes is Sub-Saharan Africa (0.61 as compared to 0.56). This finding indicates that it is not only among respondents of the Afrobarometer that democracies are viewed more positively than autocracies, but among Sub-Saharan Africans in

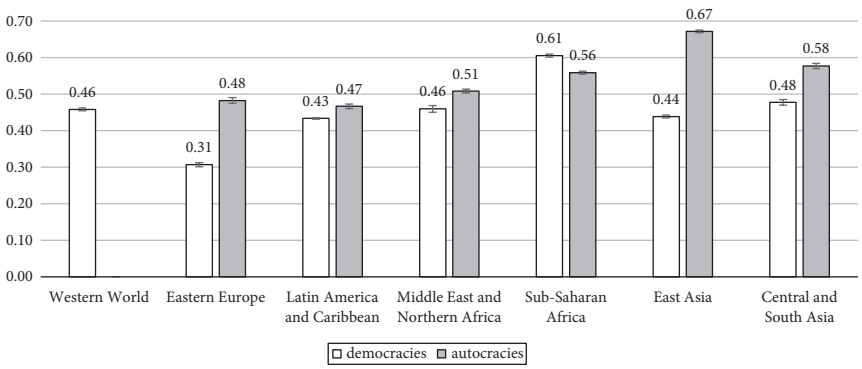


Figure 5.4. Levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies in different regions

Notes: Means of latent variable regime support for democratic and autocratic regimes. 95% confidence intervals as indicated by error bars. N = 16,278 (democracies, Western World); N = 5,014 (democracies, Eastern Europe)/N = 4,008 (autocracies, Eastern Europe); N = 60,147 (democracies, Latin America)/N = 9,919 (autocracies, Latin America); N = 5,083 (democracies, MENA)/N = 17,527 (autocracies, MENA); N = 27,691 (democracies, Sub-Saharan Africa)/N = 27,275 (autocracies, Sub-Saharan Africa); N = 15,718 (democracies, East Asia)/N = 17,038 (autocracies, East Asia); N = 6,768 (democracies, Central and South Asia)/N = 7,785 (autocracies, Central and South Asia). Weighted data. All differences in means significant with $p < 0.001$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

general, i.e. that there is probably a regional rather than a questionnaire effect at work here. Within all other geopolitical regions, citizens tend to express more support for their political regime when they live under autocratic rule.

Confirming prior research (e.g., Fuchs and Klingemann 2006; Gilley 2006b; Marien 2011), citizens' views of their *democratic* political regimes are especially negative within Eastern Europe (0.31), whereas citizens in Sub-Saharan Africa remain the most positively inclined towards their democratic regimes (0.61). For *autocracies*, levels of popular support never drop exceedingly low in any of the regions and are exceptionally high within East Asia (0.67). The latter observation suggests that what has been identified as a potential questionnaire effect in the previous analysis is more likely to be a regional effect (or still a substantive difference): it is not only Asian Barometer respondents but East Asians in general that are particularly fond of their autocratic regimes. The same appears to be the case with regard to the *difference between democracies and autocracies*. This gap is largest within East Asia in general (0.44 as compared to 0.67), not only amongst respondents of the Asian Barometer. These findings should sober us against optimistic hopes for a new wave of democratization taking root in East Asia. Another region where autocracies fare considerably better than democracies in the eyes of their citizens is Eastern Europe (0.48 as compared to 0.31). Mirroring the findings from the Latinobarómetro and the AmericasBarometer, the distance in popular support between democratic and autocratic regimes is smallest in Latin America and the Caribbean ($\Delta = 0.04$). All of these results remain robust even when excluding highly repressive regimes or countries with conspicuously high levels of regime support from the analysis (cf. online appendix, Table OA.3). Yet again, this univariate analysis cannot determine whether these findings are merely due to regional context effects or based on a substantive difference between democratic and autocratic regimes (system-level determinants) and/or their citizens (individual-level determinants) in these regions. For this purpose, the following multivariate analyses will include not only the theoretically relevant individual- and system-level determinants of regime support, but also region dummies to control for potential regional context effects.

Summing up, the univariate analysis of levels of regime support in democracies and autocracies has yielded three main findings. *One*, autocratic political regimes, on average, receive more popular support than democratic political regimes, but only slightly so. *Two*, the amplitude of this support varies greatly across the globe. For instance, while democratic political regimes in Eastern Europe face worryingly low levels of citizen support, their counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa can rest on a relatively broad base of popular support. *Three*, the relative distance between democracies and autocracies is distributed unequally. While autocracies have a great advantage over democracies in East Asia, they receive less support than democratic political regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the eyes of citizens, neither type of political regime hence appears unequivocally superior; rather, a

potentially diverse set of factors other than basic regime type must also affect how citizens judge the political regime they live in. The following multivariate analyses of individual- and system-level sources of regime support sets out to identify these factors.

5.2. Why citizens support democratic and autocratic regimes I: individual-level sources

The multivariate analyses of individual-level sources of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes in this section aim to answer the second set of research questions: *Which individual-level characteristics play a role in determining citizens' regime support? Are the same sets of individual-level factors relevant in democracies and autocracies? Does the effect of these individual-level sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes?* In order to provide a comprehensive answer to these questions, the empirical analysis again employs a two-fold strategy. On the one hand, it combines data from all available survey projects (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey) to provide a maximum-scope analysis that covers 102 countries (sixty-one democracies, forty-one autocracies) in 137 country-years (eighty-five democratic, fifty-two autocratic) across the entire globe (subsection 5.2.1). On the other hand, it supplements this global analysis with two supplementary regional analyses based on individual survey datasets—the Afrobarometer and the Asian Barometer—to provide a deeper insight into the individual-level sources of regime support (subsection 5.2.2). The Afrobarometer dataset covers thirty-one countries (sixteen democracies, fifteen autocracies) across Africa and the Asian Barometer dataset covers thirteen countries (six democracies, seven autocracies) in East Asia. Each of these analyses—the maximum-scope as well as the supplementary analyses—first examines democratic and autocratic regimes separately so that the relevance of each individual-level source of regime support can be determined. In a second step, the effects of these individual-level sources are compared across regime types.

The explanatory model of regime support (chapter 3) distinguished two types of individual-level sources: political and societal value orientations, which affect regime support through an *overflow of values* (subsection 3.1.1); and incumbent support as well as democratic and systemic performance evaluations, which affect regime support through a *generalization of experiences* (subsection 3.1.2). Due to the limitations in indicators that are available for all six surveys combined here (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey), the global analysis can only incorporate three of these five individual-level predictors of regime support: political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic

performance evaluations. The supplementary analyses based on the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer, in contrast, provide a more comprehensive picture of individual-level sources of regime support within their respective regional scope by including all five theoretically relevant individual-level determinants.

The following empirical models of individual-level sources of regime support are built in up to four steps. All models are numbered alphanumerically, with models for democratic political regimes being denoted by the letter "D" and models for autocratic political regimes being denoted by the letter "A". In a first step (Models D1, A1), the basic models include all theoretically relevant individual-level sources of regime support, as well as the individual-level control variables, but no interaction terms or mediated effects. The interaction term of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations is then included in a second step (Models D2, A2). For the supplementary analyses based on the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer, respectively, a third and fourth step ensue. The third step includes the interaction term of societal value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (Models D3, A3) and the fourth step includes the proposed mediation of systemic performance evaluations via incumbent support (Models D4, A4). Even though only individual-level sources are of interest at this point, all models are specified as multi-level models because of the data's hierarchical structure. In addition, to incorporate the latent measurement of regime support, all of the following analyses use structural equation modeling (SEM) instead of regular regression modeling (for a brief introduction to SEM, see Bollen, Rabe-Hesketh, and Skrondal 2010). All models are further estimated using full-information maximum-likelihood (FIML) estimation to deal with missing data (on the advantages of FIML, see Enders and Bandalos 2001) and using robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) to correct for the non-normality of some of the data (cf. Byrne 2012; Muthén and Muthén 2015).

5.2.1. Global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support

Starting with the *global analysis* based on the combined dataset, this subsection first explores individual-level sources of regime support in democratic political regimes before it turns to autocratic political regimes. The final segment then compares the effects between both types of political regimes to determine whether some sources have a different effect in one type of regime than in the other. Due to limitations in indicator availability, the global model can only test three of the five individual-level determinants of regime support that were derived from the theoretical model: political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections measures citizens' political value orientations, the perceived extent of democracy

gauges citizens' democratic performance evaluations, and citizens' systemic performance evaluations are operationalized by how safe they feel in their neighborhood or city. The empirical models also contain a number of individual-level control variables. Most of these control variables were analyzed in prior research as determinants of regime support but were disregarded in the theoretical framework because they were identified as being mere proxies or determinants of the actual independent variables. These control variables include political interest, social trust, socioeconomic status (personal economic situation, level of education, employment status), and religion[5] and religiosity. In addition, the analyses control for gender and age as standard sociodemographics. Table A.5 in Appendix A details the operationalization of these control variables.

Individual-level sources of regime support in democracies

Beginning with the base Model D1, Table 5.1 presents the results for the main effects of individual-level sources of regime support *in democratic political regimes*.

Table 5.1. Individual-level sources of regime support in global democracies

	D1: base model		D2: interaction pvo x dpe	
individual-level direct effects				
political value orientations (pvo)	−0.00	(0.01)	−0.06***	(0.02)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.33***	(0.02)	0.27***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations	0.08***	(0.01)	0.08***	(0.01)
individual-level interaction effect				
pvo x dpe			0.10***	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes	
variance components				
regime support (level 1)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.21		0.19	
AIC	822,836		867,035	
BIC	823,386		867,915	
N (individuals)	137,047		137,047	
N (country-years)	85		85	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

[5] Since the response categories for religious affiliation differ widely between surveys, these were collapsed into seven categories: no religious affiliation, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and other religions. Details on the original response categories and their recoding are documented in Table A.7 in Appendix A.

For *political value orientations*, a determinant typically associated with the culturalist tradition of research and linked to regime support through an *overflow of values* in the present study, we find no substantive main effect on regime support in the eighty-five democratic country-years analyzed here (Model D1, Table 5.1). This null finding may reflect the two theoretical perspectives outlined in subsection 3.1.1. On the one hand, citizens with more democratic political value orientations should be more likely to support their democratic political regime based on the general congruence of their own personal political value orientations with the regime's institutional structure. On the other hand, citizens with more democratic political value orientations might also develop higher expectations towards their political regime that even the most democratic political regimes may not be able to meet. In fact, both effects may be present in different kinds of countries: a positive effect seems more likely in democratic regimes with a very high democratic quality, while a negative effect seems more likely in democratic regimes that suffer from democratic deficits. As the sample contains both high-quality liberal democracies such as Australia or Uruguay and bare-minimum polyarchies such as Malawi or Guatemala, the effects within either of these countries may cancel out in the pooled sample. Model D2 contains an interaction term of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, and will provide further insight into the question of how citizens' evaluations of their regime's democratic performance condition the effect their political value orientations have on regime support. Additionally, in section 5.3, an analysis of the mediation mechanism of system-level macro-political context through democratic performance evaluations will shed light on the question of how a political regime's democratic quality affects its citizens' democratic performance evaluations.

The picture looks much more clear-cut for the two individual-level sources associated with the institutionalist tradition of research on regime support, which are linked to regime support through a *generalization of experiences*: democratic performance evaluations and systemic performance evaluations. Both *democratic performance evaluations* and s*ystemic performance evaluations* have a significant and substantial positive effect on regime support in democracies (Model D1, Table 5.1). Citizens who evaluate their political regime as very democratic are considerably more supportive of this political regime than citizens who find their political regime very undemocratic. This supports the theoretical model, which predicted a positive effect of democratic performance evaluations on regime support. The same is true for the predictions regarding the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support. Within the democracies covered by the combined analysis, citizens with more favorable evaluations of their political regime's systemic performance—those who feel safer in their neighborhood or city—express significantly more regime support than citizens who feel unsafe and evaluate the regime's systemic performance as poor.

Model D2 in Table 5.1 additionally includes the interaction term between political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations. On the one hand, this adds some insight into how citizens' evaluations of the regime's democratic quality condition the effect of their political value orientations on regime support. On the other hand, it provides a test of the prediction that the effect of democratic performance evaluations becomes larger for individuals who value democracy more, i.e. have more democratic political value orientations.

As Model D2 shows, the interaction term between political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (pvo x dpe) is indeed positive as well as statistically significant. This corroborates the theoretical conjecture which predicted the effect of democratic political value orientations to become more positive for individuals who evaluate their regime's democratic performance more favorably. Figure 5.5 (left panel) graphically displays the interaction effect: it plots the average marginal effects of political value orientations on regime support for different levels of democratic performance evaluations. The results demonstrate that political value orientations, in fact, exert a significant *negative* effect on regime support for those individuals who view their political regime as very undemocratic. In contrast, for those individuals who view their political regime as very democratic, more democratic political value orientations actually *increase* support for the political regime. As we can clearly see from the figure, democratic political value orientations only decrease regime support if citizens think their own political regime is undemocratic; as soon as citizens judge their own political regime to be on the democratic side of the spectrum (crossing the scale mean of 0.5), democratic political value orientations start to have a positive effect on regime support. More democratic political value orientations, then, do not automatically decrease support for the democratic regime-in-practice. The results demonstrate that it is rather the *concurrence* of democratic political value orientations and negative evaluations of the regime's democratic performance that leads to a drop in regime support.

Model D2 also confirms the conditionality of the effect of democratic performance evaluations: it increases considerably when citizens' political value orientations become more democratic. In fact, the effect of democratic performance evaluations is about 40 percent stronger for those who hold very democratic political value orientations than for those who hold very authoritarian political value orientations. Figure 5.5 (right panel) plots this interaction effect graphically. Unlike the effect of political value orientations on regime support (left panel), the direction of the effect of democratic performance evaluations does not change depending on how democratic citizens' political value orientations are. Instead, it remains strongly positive regardless of the level of political value orientations: even citizens who do not place any value on democracy itself hold more positive attitudes towards their own political regime if they evaluate it to be more democratic.

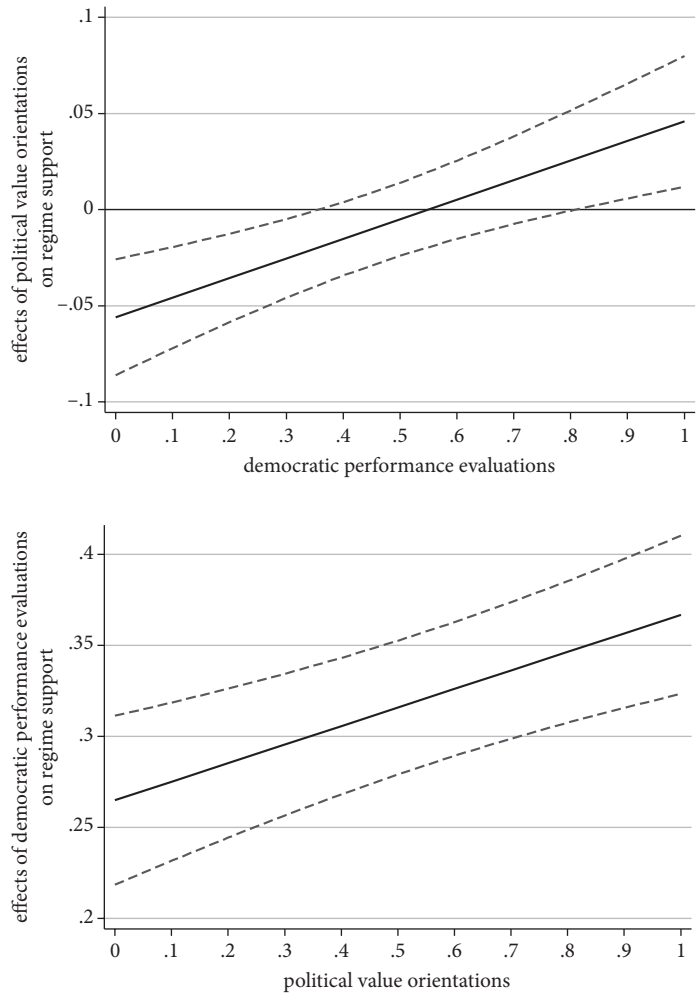


Figure 5.5. Conditional effects plots for political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations in global democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of political value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations and vice versa (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Model D2 in Table 5.1.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

In sum, three main findings emerge from the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support in democracies. *One*, democratic political value orientations only dampen regime support if they are accompanied by negative evaluations of the political regime's democratic performance. *Two*, more favorable democratic performance evaluations strongly increase regime support even if

citizens do not hold very democratic political value orientations. As a *third* main finding, systemic performance evaluations also emerged as a substantive predictor of regime support in democracies. Together with the significant impact of democratic performance evaluations, this strongly corroborates the institutionalist perspective that assumes that regime support is generated through a generalization of experiences with the political regime. The culturalist perspective, which sees regime support as being shaped through an overflow of values, in contrast, is not unequivocally supported by the empirical analysis. Instead, we had to add an important qualification to the assumption that political value orientations influence regime support: they only do so in conjunction with corresponding democratic performance evaluations. As outlined in section 4.2, measuring regime support as institutional confidence may bias the results towards the generalization of experiences and the institutionalist perspective, and robustness checks using an alternative measure of regime support yield somewhat weaker effects, especially for democratic performance evaluations (cf. online appendix, Table OC.3, Figure OC.1). We should thus not overinterpret the results as corroborating *only* the institutionalist perspective. Nevertheless, the conditionality of the effect of political value orientations remains as a substantive finding qualifying the simple culturalist perspective.

Individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies

For *autocratic political regimes*, the picture looks remarkably similar to the one in democracies. For *political value orientations*, the regression model, without the interaction term of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, does not show a strong or significant effect on regime support in the fifty-two autocratic country-years analyzed here (Model A1, Table 5.2). This runs counter to the simple culturalist perspective, which assumes an *overflow of values* directly from political value orientations onto regime support. Just like in democracies (see above), the sample of autocracies is very diverse with regard to the democratic performance these regimes deliver. It contains relatively open and competitive electoral authoritarian regimes such as Singapore or Nigeria, as well as closed and repressive single-party or personalist regimes such as China and Sudan. Unlike in democracies, however, all of these regimes very clearly fall short of democratic ideals and should, consequently, be supported less by citizens with strongly democratic political value orientations. That this is not the case may be an indication of the success of certain autocracies' propaganda efforts. If autocratic political regimes manage to make their citizens *believe* they actually live in a democracy, democratic political value orientations may indeed have no or even a positive effect on these citizens' attitudes towards their political regime. Model A2 below will investigate how such evaluations of democratic performance interact with citizens' political value orientations in the formation of regime support. Furthermore, how successful autocracies are in distorting their

Table 5.2. Individual-level sources of regime support in global autocracies

	A1: base model		A2: interaction pvo x dpe	
individual-level direct effects				
political value orientations (pvo)	–0.01	(0.01)	–0.05*	(0.02)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.37***	(0.03)	0.31***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations	0.12***	(0.01)	0.12***	(0.01)
individual-level interaction effect				
pvo x dpe			0.09**	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes	
variance components				
regime support (level 1)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.24		0.21	
AIC	457,424		474,701	
BIC	457,957		475,252	
N (individuals)	83,991		83,991	
N (country-years)	52		52	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

citizens' perceptions of the nature of their regimes, i.e. how closely or loosely the regime's actual democratic performance and citizens' democratic performance evaluations are linked, will be explored in the multi-level analysis of system-level sources of regime support in the following section 5.3.

Mirroring the results for democracies, the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies supports the expectations pertaining to the main effects of the institutionalist sources of regime support that were linked to regime support through a *generalization of experiences* (Model A1, Table 5.2). One, individuals with more favorable *democratic performance evaluations* are considerably more supportive of their political regime. Two, the results also corroborate the predicted positive effect of *systemic performance evaluations*: citizens who feel safer in their neighborhood or city also express more support for their political regime.

Model A2 in Table 5.2 introduces the interaction term between political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (pvo x dpe). The results provide clear evidence for the conjecture that the effect of democratic political value orientations is contingent on citizens' democratic performance evaluations: the interaction term between political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (pvo x dpe) is positive and significant, indicating that

democratic political value orientations have a significantly more positive effect for citizens who view their regime as very democratic compared to those who view it as very undemocratic. In addition, Model A2 demonstrates that a negative effect of democratic political value orientations on regime support in autocracies can indeed occur—but only among those individuals who evaluate their political regime as very undemocratic. Similar to the situation in democracies, this negative effect is reduced in size and eventually turns positive when citizens evaluate their political regime as more democratic (Figure 5.6, left panel). For those individuals who—incorrectly—view their political regime as very democratic, democratic political value orientations even exert a significant, albeit rather weak positive effect on regime support.

Second, the inclusion of the interaction term between political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations in Model A2 (Table 5.2) allows examining whether the effect of democratic performance evaluations is contingent on individuals' political value orientations. Indeed, the significant and positive interaction term indicates that the positive effect of democratic performance evaluations increases for citizens who place a higher value on democracy itself. More precisely, the positive effect of democratic performance evaluations is about thirty percent stronger for citizens with very democratic political value orientations than it is for citizens with very undemocratic political value orientations. Figure 5.6 (right panel) demonstrates that, just like in democracies, the effect of democratic performance evaluations on regime support remains consistently positive and statistically significant at all levels of political value orientations. Regardless of how much citizens in autocratic political regimes value democracy, they will always reward a (perceived) increase in democratic performance.

In summary, the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies yields three main findings. *One*, democratic political value orientations only have a negative effect on regime support for citizens who evaluate their autocratic regime's democratic performance negatively. This entails that democratic political value orientations will only threaten autocratic rule if citizens also realize that they are governed undemocratically, validating the propaganda efforts autocratic regimes put into making their citizens believe that their autocratic rule is actually democratic. *Two*, more favorable democratic performance evaluations strongly increase regime support regardless of whether citizens in autocracies hold democratic political value orientations or not. The *third* main finding of the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies suggests an alternative pathway to generating legitimacy for autocratic regimes. As systemic performance evaluations also affect regime support positively, keeping citizens content with the provision of generic public goods such as physical safety should help attenuate legitimacy problems in autocracies. All of these results remain robust when excluding highly repressive regimes (cf. online appendix, Table OA.4). In summary, it is the institutionalist perspective of regime support that receives

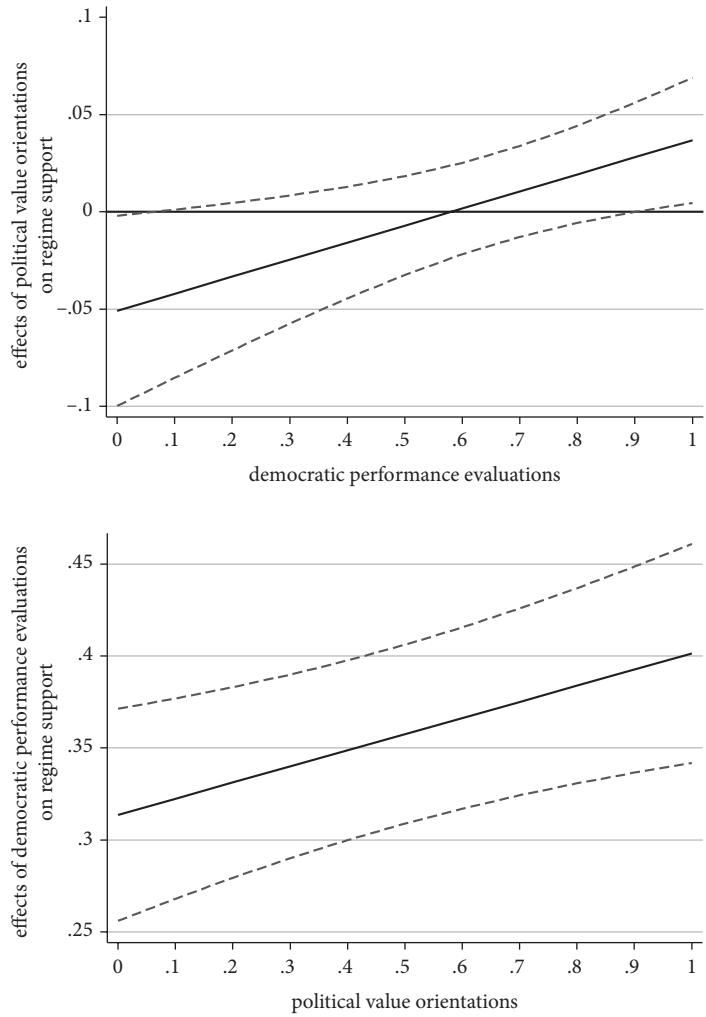


Figure 5.6. Conditional effects plots for political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations in global autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of political value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations and vice versa (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Model A2 in Table 5.2.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

more support from the empirical analysis: both institutionalist sources of regime support—democratic performance evaluations and systemic performance evaluations—are positively, and in substantially and statistically significant ways, related to regime support. The culturalist perspective, in contrast, must again be qualified: democratic political value orientations only affect regime support

negatively in autocracies if citizens hold unfavorable democratic performance evaluations. Again, the operationalization of the dependent variable regime support as institutional confidence may, at least in part, be responsible for the institutionalist perspective receiving stronger support and robustness checks using an alternative measure of regime support yield somewhat weaker effects, especially for democratic performance evaluations (cf. online appendix, Table OC.3, Figure OC.1). Notwithstanding, the qualification that the effect of political value orientations is conditional on citizens' democratic performance evaluations remains important.

Comparison of individual-level sources of regime support between democracies and autocracies

As we could already see from the analysis of democracies and autocracies above, it really is the *same set of individual-level sources* that affect regime support in any type of political regime: political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations all exerted an effect on regime support in both democracies and autocracies. The following segment takes a closer, comparative look at these effects to examine whether not only the same set of sources affects regime support, but also whether these effects are truly universal in the sense that both their direction and strength do not vary between democracies

Table 5.3. Comparison of individual-level effects in democracies and autocracies, global analysis

	D2: democracies		**A2: autocracies**	
individual-level direct effects				
political value orientations	−0.06***	[−0.09; −0.03]	−0.05*	[−0.10; −0.00]
democratic performance evaluations	0.27***	[0.22; 0.31]	0.31***	[0.26; 0.37]
systemic performance evaluations	**0.08*** **	**[0.07; 0.09]**	**0.12*** **	**[0.10; 0.14]**
individual-level interaction effect				
pvo x dpe	0.10***	[0.05; 0.15]	0.09***	[0.02; 0.15]
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes	
variance components				
regime support (level 1)	0.05	[0.04; 0.05]	0.05	[0.04; 0.05]
regime support (level 2)	0.01	[0.00; 0.01]	0.02	[0.01; 0.02]
R^2 (level 1)	0.19		0.21	
AIC	867,035		474,701	
BIC	867,915		475,252	
N (individuals)	137,047		83,991	
N (country-years)	85		52	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Full model specifications according to Model D2 in Table 5.1 and Model A2 in Table 5.2. 95% confidence intervals in square brackets. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Boldfaced parameters differ significantly between democratic and autocratic regimes ($p < 0.05$).

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

and autocracies. To facilitate comparison, Table 5.3 compiles the results of the previous analyses for democratic and autocratic regimes. It adds the ninety-five percent confidence intervals for the parameter estimates to allow drawing conclusions about the statistical significance of differences in the effect sizes between democratic and autocratic regimes.

As Table 5.3 demonstrates, the effect of political value orientations on regime support is contingent on democratic performance evaluations in both democracies and autocracies. What is more, both the main effect of political value orientations and the interaction term do not differ significantly in neither direction nor size between the two types of regimes. This indicates that, as expected, the *overflow of values* is a universal mechanism that is at work in both democracies and autocracies. In either type of regime, citizens become more favorably inclined towards their regime when they hold democratic political value orientations and, at the same time, perceive the regime to be delivering a high democratic performance. If, however, citizens view their regime as less democratic, the positive effect of democratic political value orientations diminishes and eventually becomes negative, meaning that citizens become more critical of their political regime in both democracies and autocracies.

This also largely the case for the *generalization of experiences*. Both democratic performance evaluations and systemic performance evaluations exert a significant and positive main effect on regime support in either type of political regime. For democratic performance evaluations, not only the direction of the effect is the same, but also its size is roughly equal across regime types. This indicates that citizens in both democracies and autocracies consider democratic performance a relevant criterion in forming their overall attitudes towards the political regime. In addition, the importance of democratic performance evaluations as a source of regime support uniformly increases in both types of regimes for citizens who hold more democratic political value orientations, i.e. place a higher value on democracy. For systemic performance evaluations, the comparison in contrast reveals a significant difference between democracies and autocracies: the effect of systemic performance evaluations is more than 1.5 times as strong in autocracies as in democracies. This observation conforms to the theoretical expectations and, despite being unable to model the effect of incumbent support in the global analysis, lends some support to the assumptions underlying these expectations: that, first, systemic performance evaluations are mediated, at least in part, through incumbent support and that, second, incumbent support is more closely related to regime support in autocracies because there are no direct systemic consequences of low incumbent support, and because the incumbent authorities become much more amalgamated with the regime itself than in democracies.

In sum, then, *the individual-level mechanisms that form regime support seem to be universal indeed*: we find evidence for both an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences in either type of political regime, and all individual-level

sources affect regime support in the same way in democracies and autocracies alike. The only difference between the two types of regimes lies in the size of the effect of systemic performance evaluations: systemic performance evaluations seem to be more important to citizens' attitudes towards their political regime in autocracies than they are in democracies. Before exploring the system-level sources of regime support, the remainder of this section looks more closely into the individual-level sources of regime support through supplementary regional analyses based on the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer data.

5.2.2. Regional analyses of individual-level sources of regime support

Unlike the global analysis based on the combined dataset of all six cross-national surveys, the supplementary regional analyses based on individual datasets from the Afrobarometer and the Asian Barometer, respectively, are not limited to only three individual-level determinants operationalized through single-item measurements. Instead, these datasets provide adequate measurements for all five theoretically relevant individual-level determinants of regime support: political value orientations, societal value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. The supplementary analyses are, therefore, capable of analyzing the full individual-level explanatory model of regime support. In addition to the control variables already included in the global analysis—political interest, social trust, socioeconomic status,[6] religion, religiosity, age, and gender—, the supplementary analyses control for understanding of democracy, media consumption, and national pride. Table A.6 in Appendix A contains details on the operationalization of these control variables.

The general structure of this subsection follows the one for the global analysis. A first segment identifies the relevant individual-level determinants of regime support in democracies; second, the analysis examines which individual-level determinants affect regime support in autocracies; and third, a comparison of the two regime types investigates whether the effects of any individual-level determinants vary between democracies and autocracies. The multi-level[7]

[6] Other than the maximum-scope analysis, the supplementary analyses can also control for place of residence as a component of socioeconomic status.

[7] Note that the number of level-2 units for the supplementary analyses is limited: there are sixteen democracies and fifteen autocracies in the Afrobarometer and only six democracies and seven autocracies in the Asian Barometer. Some authors advise against using multi-level modeling for such limited case numbers (Hoogland and Boomsma 1998; Kline 2011). Nevertheless, simulation studies have shown that individual-level parameter estimates as well as standard errors remain robust even for a small number of level-2 units (Bryan and Jenkins 2016; Hox and Maas 2001; Stegmueller 2013). To ensure the robustness of the results, all supplementary analyses are also conducted using individual-level structural equation modeling with country dummies. The results remain entirely robust (cf. online appendix, Table OD.1 and Table OD.2).

structural equation models are again built subsequently. Starting with only the main effects of all individual-level determinants (Models D1, A1), the interaction terms of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (Models D2, A2), and of societal value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (Models D3, A3) are added in turns; a final model examines the mediation effect of systemic performance evaluations through incumbent support (Models D4, A4).

Individual-level sources of regime support in democracies

Beginning with the supplementary analysis of *democratic political regimes*, Models D1 in Table 5.4 present the results for the main effects of all individual-level sources of regime support. For the two sources typically associated with the culturalist tradition of research and linked to regime support through an *overflow of values, political value orientations* and *societal value orientations*, we find negative effects on regime support. For the African democracies, these are miniscule and insignificant, resembling the results for political value orientations obtained from the maximum-scope analysis based on the combined dataset (subsection 5.2.1). Like for this global analysis, this null finding may come as a result of the two theoretical perspectives outlined in the theoretical framework (cf. subsection 3.1.1) and discussed in more detail in the previous subsection. For the Asian democracies, these effects reach statistical significance for the first time. Citizens who value democratic principles like judicial independence and pluralism more, and those who are more strongly committed to the ideas of equality or individualism hence express less support for their political regime than those citizens whose value orientations are located more on the authoritarian and traditional ends of the spectrum. This observation lends support to the conjecture that citizens' democratic and modern value orientations may be setting standards for the political regime that even democracies regularly fail to meet. Models D2 and D3, which include the interaction terms for political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, and for societal value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, will again provide more insight into the mechanisms guiding the overflow of values from citizens' value orientations onto regime support.

For the individual-level determinants associated with the institutionalist tradition and linked to regime support through a *generalization of experiences*, results from Models D1 are widely in line with the expected relationships (Table 5.4). Not only the two sources already examined in the global analysis, *democratic performance evaluations* and *systemic performance evaluations*, but also *incumbent support* exert a substantive and statistically significant positive effect on regime support in African as well as Asian democracies. Citizens who approve more of the president's performance over the last twelve months, or who are more satisfied with their current government, are significantly more supportive of the political regime which the incumbent president represents than citizens who are less satisfied with

Table 5.4. Individual-level sources of regime support in African and Asian democracies

African democracies

	D1: base model		D2: interaction pvo x dpe		D3: interaction svo x dpe		D4: including mediation	
individual-level direct effects								
political value orientations (pvo)	−0.01	(0.02)	−0.09	(0.05)	−0.01	(0.02)	−0.01	(0.02)
societal value orientations (svo)	0.00	(0.02)	0.00	(0.02)	−0.02	(0.05)	0.00	(0.02)
incumbent support	0.49***	(0.03)	0.49***	(0.03)	0.49***	(0.03)	0.49***	(0.03)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.39***	(0.02)	0.30***	(0.06)	0.38***	(0.04)	0.39***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)	0.14***	(0.01)	0.14***	(0.01)	0.14***	(0.01)	0.13***	(0.01)
individual-level interaction effects								
pvo x dpe			0.11	(0.07)				
svo x dpe					0.02	(0.06)		
individual-level indirect effect								
spe via incumbent support							0.18***	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
variance components								
regime support (level 1)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.36		0.35		0.36		0.38	
AIC	98,183		88,208		96,430		307,212	
BIC	98,756		88,806		97,028		307,793	
N (individuals)	23,825		23,825		23,825		23,825	
N (country-years)	16		16		16		16	

Continued

Table 5.4. *Continued*

Asian democracies

	D1: base model		D2: interaction pvo x dpe		D3: interaction svo x dpe		D4: including mediation	
individual-level direct effects								
political value orientations (pvo)	−0.06*	(0.03)	−0.02	(0.08)	−0.06*	(0.03)	−0.06*	(0.03)
societal value orientations (svo)	−0.05***	(0.01)	−0.05***	(0.01)	−0.02	(0.04)	−0.05***	(0.01)
incumbent support	0.25***	(0.04)	0.25***	(0.04)	0.25***	(0.04)	0.25***	(0.04)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.22***	(0.02)	0.27**	(0.09)	0.24***	(0.02)	0.22**	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)	0.23**	(0.03)	0.22***	(0.03)	0.22***	(0.03)	0.22***	(0.03)
individual-level interaction effects								
pvo x dpe			−0.07	(0.12)				
svo x dpe					−0.06	(0.06)		
individual-level indirect effect								
spe via incumbent support							0.14***	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
variance components								
regime support (level 1)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.31		0.33		0.32		0.35	
AIC	−1,350		−8,905		−15,365		−2,405	
BIC	−842		−8,375		−14,835		−1,889	
N (individuals)	8,637		8,637		8,637		8,637	
N (country-years)	6		6		6		6	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

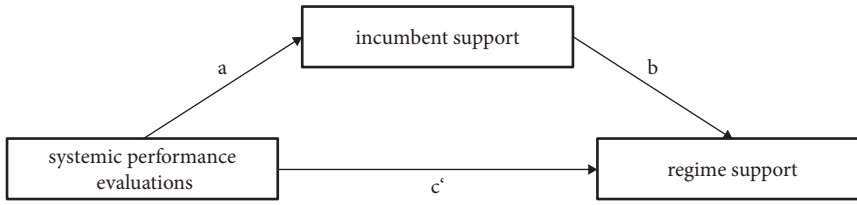
Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

the incumbent's performance or their current government. At the same time, citizens who evaluate their country's democratic quality more favorably express considerably more support for the political regime. In a similar fashion, more favorable evaluations of the regime's systemic performance with regard to physical security, economic well-being, and equal treatment also increase citizens' support for the political regime.

Models D2 in Table 5.4 additionally includes the interaction term of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (pvo x dpe). In contrast to the findings of the global analysis based on the combined dataset, however, this interaction term is not statistically significant on conventional levels. This contradicts the theoretical expectations and runs counter to what the global analysis has found. In African and Asian democracies, the effect of political value orientations does not vary significantly across individuals who evaluate their regime's democratic performance differently, and the effect of democratic performance evaluations does not vary significantly across individuals who hold different political value orientations. Mirroring the findings from the global analysis, the effect of democratic performance evaluations remains positive and statistically significant, even for those individuals who do not hold any democratic political value orientations (cf. Figure B.2 in Appendix B). Hence, even citizens who place no value on democracy itself hold more positive attitudes towards their own political regime if they evaluate it to be more democratic.

Models D3 (Table 5.4) add the interaction term between societal value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (svo x dpe). The theoretical model predicted the effect of modern societal value orientations to be more positive for individuals with more favorable democratic performance evaluations. This proposition receives little support from the empirical analyses of African and Asian democracies: the interaction term reaches statistical significance for neither analysis. The effect of societal value orientations barely changes with the level of democratic performance evaluations. Interestingly, while societal value orientations have barely any effect on regime support in African democracies, they exert a consistently negative effect in Asian democracies (cf. Figure B.3 in Appendix B).

As a final model, Models D4 provide a test for the proposition that incumbent support mediates at least parts of the effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support. Unlike Models D1 to D3, Models D4 include not only direct and moderated effects but explicitly models the indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support (on mediated effects, cf. MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz 2007). Generally, an indirect effect describes the effect of an independent variable (in this case: systemic performance evaluations) on a dependent variable (in this case: regime support) that is mediated through a mediator variable (in this case: incumbent support). Figure 5.7 displays this mechanism graphically: systemic performance evaluations affect incumbent support (path a) and incumbent support, in turn, affects regime support (path b).



indirect effect = a * b
direct effect = c'
total effect = (a * b) + c' = c

Figure 5.7. Indirect, direct, and total effects of systemic performance evaluations on regime support

The indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations that is mediated through incumbent support is thus the product of these two effects (a * b). In addition, systemic performance evaluations may have a direct effect on regime support (path c'). The total effect "c" of systemic performance evaluations on regime support is then the sum of the indirect and direct effects (c = a * b + c'). Reflecting the study's interest in whether there is any substantial mediation via incumbent support, the models presented in this study (Models D4, A4) only list the direct (c') and indirect effects (a * b) of systemic performance evaluations on regime support, not the partial effects a and b or the total effect c. This allows determining what proportion of the total effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support is mediated through incumbent support.

Looking at the results of Models D4 (Table 5.4), there is clear evidence for the proposed mediation of the effect of systemic performance evaluations through incumbent support: the indirect effect is sizeable and statistically significant in African as well as Asian democracies. In both cases, a substantive part of the total effect of systemic performance evaluations (in African democracies: about sixty percent; in Asian democracies: about forty percent) is mediated through incumbent support, indicating that citizens attribute a considerable portion of the regime's systemic performance to the incumbent government.

Summing up, the supplementary analyses of individual-level sources of regime support in democratic political regimes yield mixed findings with regard to the culturalist sources of regime support, while the findings concerning institutionalist sources of regime support are much more consistent.[8] As regards the *culturalist* sources of regime support, we can note three central points. *First*, both the Afrobarometer and, especially, the Asian Barometer analysis lend support to the

[8] This overall assessment is corroborated by the robustness checks using alternative measures of regime support: while the effects of institutionalist sources tend to decrease in size, they are still more consistent than the ones for culturalist sources (cf. online appendix, Table OC.4, Figures OC.2 and OC.3).

idea that democratic political value orientations negatively affect regime support, even in democracies, because no real-world political regime is ever capable of reaching ideal democratic standards. However, the findings of the two analyses, *second*, deviate from the global analysis with regard to the conditionality of this negative effect: they both do not find a significant moderating effect of democratic performance evaluations. The supplementary analyses diverge with regard to, *third*, the conditional effect of societal value orientations on regime support. In African democracies, modern societal value orientations have barely any effect on regime support; in Asian democracies, in contrast, modern societal value orientations always have a negative effect on regime support.

With respect to the *institutionalist* sources of regime support, we can state three more key findings. *First*, incumbent support has a strong positive effect in both African and Asian democracies. *Second*, democratic performance evaluations also exert a substantial positive effect on regime support in both supplementary analyses, and this effect remains positive even for those citizens who do not value democracy itself at all. *Third*, we can observe a clear and consistent positive effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support in African as well as Asian democracies. In addition to their direct effect on regime support, favorable systemic performance evaluations also increase regime support indirectly through their effect on incumbent support, resulting in a total effect of systemic performance evaluations that at least rivals the one of democratic performance evaluations. Both types of performance evaluations—democratic as well as systemic ones—hence appear essential for the generation of regime support. Using an alternative measure of regime support also corroborates this overall picture yet yields somewhat weaker effects for the institutionalist sources, in particular for incumbent support and systemic performance evaluations (cf. online appendix, Table OC.4).

Individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies

Having analyzed the individual-level sources of regime support in African and Asian democracies, this second segment focuses on the supplementary analyses of individual-level sources of regime support for *autocratic* political regimes.

Following the same model building structure as before, Models A1 in Table 5.5 present the results of the base model that only includes the main effects for all individual-level variables. As regards these effects of the sources associated with the culturalist tradition of research and which this study conceptualized as affecting regime support through an *overflow of values, political value orientations* and *societal value orientations*, Models D1 find significant and negative effects on regime support. Citizens who are more committed to political principles like accountability and pluralism, and the societal values of equality and individualism, are more critical of their autocratic political regimes. The results hence corroborate the perspective that democratic and modern value orientations are incongruent

Table 5.5. Individual-level sources of regime support in African and Asian autocracies

African autocracies

	A1: base model		A2: interaction pvo x dpe		A3: interaction svo x dpe		A4: including mediation	
individual-level direct effects								
political value orientations (pvo)	−0.04*	(0.02)	−0.06	(0.05)	−0.03*	(0.02)	−0.04*	(0.02)
societal value orientations (svo)	−0.02*	(0.01)	−0.02*	(0.01)	−0.02	(0.03)	−0.02*	(0.01)
incumbent support	0.47***	(0.02)	0.46***	(0.02)	0.46***	(0.02)	0.47***	(0.02)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.46***	(0.02)	0.44***	(0.06)	0.46***	(0.04)	0.46***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)	0.14***	(0.02)	0.14***	(0.02)	0.14***	(0.02)	0.13***	(0.02)
individual-level interaction effects								
pvo x dpe			0.03	(0.07)				
svo x dpe					−0.01	(0.04)		
individual-level indirect effect								
spe via incumbent support							0.21***	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
variance components								
regime support (level 1)	0.04	(0.00)	0.04	(0.00)	0.04	(0.00)	0.04	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.46		0.45		0.46		0.47	
AIC	97,031		86,587		92,366		95,160	
BIC	97,605		87,185		92,971		95,750	
N (individuals)	23,735		23,735		23,735		23,735	
N (country-years)	15		15		15		15	

individual-level direct effects								
political value orientations (pvo)	−0.06*	(0.02)	−0.18***	(0.05)	−0.06*	(0.02)	−0.06*	(0.02)
societal value orientations (svo)	−0.12***	(0.03)	−0.12***	(0.03)	−0.29***	(0.04)	−0.12***	(0.02)
incumbent support	0.25***	(0.05)	0.25***	(0.05)	0.25***	(0.05)	0.26***	(0.06)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)	0.23***	(0.02)	0.11*	(0.05)	0.14***	(0.02)	0.23***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)	0.28***	(0.03)	0.27***	(0.03)	0.28***	(0.03)	0.22***	(0.04)
individual-level interaction effects								
pvo x dpe			0.19**	(0.06)				
svo x dpe					0.25***	(0.04)		
individual-level indirect effect								
spe via incumbent support							0.17***	(0.03)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
variance components								
regime support (level 1)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)	0.02	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.33		0.34		0.36		0.35	
AIC	−15,062		−25,815		−32,279		−16,174	
BIC	−14,538		−25,270		−31,733		−15,642	
N (individuals)	10,686		10,686		10,686		10,686	
N (country-years)	7		7		7		7	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

with autocratic political structures and set standards that these structures cannot meet, leading to negative attitudes towards the political regime that embodies these structures (cf. subsection 3.1.1).

The same is the case for the individual-level sources associated with a *generalization of experiences* and the institutionalist tradition of research on regime support. *Incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations*, and *systemic performance evaluations* all positively affect regime support in African and Asian autocracies alike. This means that citizens who approve of the incumbent president's performance, or who are more satisfied with the current government, express higher support for the regime that these incumbents represent than those who disapprove of the incumbent president or government. In a similar fashion, citizens who judge their political regime to deliver a higher democratic quality have considerably more positive attitudes towards this regime than those who evaluate the regime's democratic quality as lacking. As the final institutionalist source of regime support, systemic performance evaluations also exert a positive effect on regime support. As citizens of African and Asian autocracies become more content with the provision of generic public goods such as physical security, economic well-being, and equal treatment, they extend more support to their respective political regimes.

Models A2 (Table 5.5) add the interaction effect of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations (pvo x dpe), thus providing a test for the conditionality of the effects of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations. The theoretical model predicted that the effect of democratic political value orientations is more negative for individuals who conceive their political regime as very undemocratic, and more positive for individuals who view their political regime as delivering satisfactory democratic performance. The positively signed interaction term pvo x dpe provides some evidence that this is indeed the case in both African and Asian autocracies, with the interaction term being particularly strong in Asian autocracies. This observation lends support to the proposition that an individual's democratic performance evaluations moderate the effect of political value orientations: it is more negative for those who see their political regime as falling far short of democratic ideals and less negative for those who see it as delivering a high democratic performance (cf. left panels, Figure B.4 in Appendix B). The results additionally substantiate that the positive effect of democratic performance evaluations increases for individuals who place a greater value on democracy itself: in Asian autocracies, the effect of democratic performance evaluations on regime support is almost three times as strong for individuals with very democratic political value orientations as it is for individuals with very undemocratic political value orientations. Nevertheless, and this once again mirrors the previous findings, the effect of democratic performance evaluations remains positive even for citizens who do not place any value on democracy at all (cf. right panels, Figure B.4 in Appendix B).

Models A3 in Table 5.5 show that the effect of societal value orientations on regime support is just as dependent on democratic performance evaluations as the effect of political value orientations in Asian autocracies. For African autocracies, in contrast, we see few differences between citizens with high or low democratic performance evaluations as regards the effect of societal value orientations (see also Figure B.5 in Appendix B).

Models A4 in Table 5.5 include the indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations on regime support that is mediated through incumbent support. Mirroring the findings from democracies in the previous segment, there is a substantial and significant positive indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations. Just like for the African and Asian democracies, a substantial part of the total effect of systemic performance evaluations (in African autocracies: about sixty percent; in Asian autocracies: about forty percent) is mediated through incumbent support. This not only supports the theoretical expectations but also indicates that citizens, to a considerable extent, attribute the provision of generic public goods to their incumbent governments.

Summing up, the supplementary analyses of autocratic political regimes based on the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer yield results very much in line with the theoretical expectations. For the individual-level sources associated with the *culturalist* tradition of research on regime support, both analyses, *first*, find a negative main effect political and societal value orientations on regime support in African and Asian autocracies. There is, *second*, support for the expectations regarding the conditionality of these effects. In the Asian autocracies, democratic political value orientations have a more detrimental effect on regime support if citizens see their political regime as delivering only meager democratic performance. We can further observe this tendency for the African autocracies, albeit to a lesser extent. The same is true for the effect of modern societal value orientations in the Asian autocracies; only the analysis of African autocracies did not show a similar moderating effect of democratic performance evaluations on the effect of societal value orientations. *Third*, regardless of how favorably citizens evaluate their autocratic political regime's democratic performance, both democratic political value orientations and modern societal value orientations decrease support for this regime, in Africa as well as in Asia.

With regard to the *institutionalist* sources of regime support, the findings from the supplementary analyses of autocratic regimes are almost identical to the ones from the supplementary analyses of democracies. *First*, incumbent support exerts a strong positive effect on regime support in both African and Asian autocracies. Democratic performance evaluations, *second*, also positively and consistently affect regime support, and tend to become more important for citizens who hold more democratic political value orientations. *Third*, favorable systemic performance evaluations considerably improve citizens' attitudes towards the political regime itself, both directly and indirectly through the mediator variable of incumbent

support. These results on individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies largely remain robust when excluding highly repressive regimes from the analysis (cf. online appendix, Table OA.5).[9] Using an alternative measure of regime support also corroborates this overall picture yet yields somewhat weaker effects for the institutionalist sources, in particular for incumbent support and systemic performance evaluations (cf. online appendix, Table OC.4).

In sum, then, there are largely the *same individual-level sources of regime support at work in both democratic and autocratic regimes*. Incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations all have positive effects on regime support in both types of political regimes and in both supplementary analyses. For the supplementary analyses based on the Asian Barometer data, moreover, democratic political value orientations and modern societal value orientations exert a negative influence on regime support in democracies as well as autocracies. It is only in the supplementary analysis based on the Afrobarometer data that we do not see a statistically significant effect of political value orientations and societal value orientations in democracies, whereas we do find such an effect in autocratic regimes. The remainder of this subsection will now examine *whether and how these individual-level effects vary between democratic and autocratic political regimes*, i.e. whether some sources are more important in shaping regime support in one type of regime than in the other.

Comparison of individual-level sources of regime support between democracies and autocracies

According to the theoretical framework, both the overflow of values and the generalization of experiences should be universal mechanisms that are at work in democracies and autocracies alike. Therefore, not only the same set of individual-level sources should affect regime support in both types of regimes, but also should they do so in largely similar ways. Based on the potential amalgamation of the political authorities with the political regime and the lack of direct systemic consequences of low incumbent support, only the direct effect of incumbent support and, by extension the indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations, should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies. To facilitate comparison, Table 5.6 presents a compilation of the preceding supplementary empirical analyses of both the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer datasets. It contains the contingent effects of political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and societal value orientations (based on Models D2/D3 and A2/A3, respectively) as well as the direct effects of incumbent support and systemic performance evaluations, along with the indirect effect of systemic

[9] The only noteworthy difference is that the negative effects of democratic political value orientations and modern societal value orientations fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance for the analyses of the Afrobarometer data that exclude highly repressive regimes.

Table 5.6. Comparison of individual-level effects in democracies and autocracies, supplementary analyses

	Afrobarometer				Asian Barometer			
	democracies		autocracies		democracies		autocracies	
individual-level direct effects								
political value orientations (D2, A2)	−0.09	[−0.19; 0.01]	−0.06	[−0.15; −0.04]	−0.02	[−0.18; 0.15]	−0.18***	[−0.27; −0.09]
societal value orientations (D3, A3)	−0.02	[−0.11; 0.07]	−0.02	[−0.07; 0.04]	**−0.02**	**[−0.10; 0.07]**	**−0.29*** **	**[−0.36; −0.21]**
incumbent support (D4, A4)	0.49***	[0.43; 0.54]	0.47***	[0.43; 0.50]	0.25***	[0.18; 0.33]	0.26***	[0.15; 0.36]
democratic performance evaluations (D2, A2)	0.30***	[0.19; 0.41]	0.44***	[0.33; 0.54]	0.27**	[0.09; 0.45]	0.11*	[0.01; 0.21]
systemic performance evaluations (D4, A4)	0.13***	[0.11; 0.16]	0.13***	[0.10; 0.16]	0.22***	[0.16; 0.29]	0.22***	[0.14; 0.30]
individual-level interaction effects								
pvo x dpe (D2, A2)	0.11	[−0.02; 0.24]	0.03	[−0.10; 0.17]	−0.07	[−0.31; 0.17]	0.19**	[0.07; 0.31]
svo x dpe (D3, A3)	0.02	[−0.09; 014]	−0.01	[−0.09; 0.08]	**−0.06**	**[−0.18; 0.07]**	**0.25*** **	**[0.18; 0.33]**
individual-level indirect effect								
spe via incumbent support (D4, A4)	0.18***	[0.13; 0.23]	0.21***	[0.14; 0.28]	0.14***	[0.09; 0.20]	0.17***	[0.10; 0.23]
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
[variance components and model fits omitted from table]								
N (individuals)	23,825		23,735		8,637		10,686	
N (country-years)	16		15		6		7	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Full model specifications according to the respective models in Table 5.4/Table 5.5. 95% confidence intervals in square brackets. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Boldfaced parameters differ significantly between democratic and autocratic regimes ($p < 0.05$).

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

performance evaluations that is mediated through incumbent support (based on Models D4 and A4, respectively) along with their ninety-five percent confidence intervals.

The empirical results *predominantly confirm the universality of both individual-level causal mechanisms* (Table 5.6). As regards the *overflow of values*, we find some indication that both the effects of political value orientations and of societal value orientations are somewhat contingent on how citizens evaluate their regime's democratic performance in either type of regime, and the effect sizes differ significantly only in one of four cases: for societal value orientations in the Asian subsample. Here, modern societal value orientations have a considerably stronger negative main effect on regime support in autocracies than they do in democracies and, at the same time, this effect appears to be much more strongly influenced by citizens' democratic performance evaluations in autocracies than it is in democracies.

Turning to the institutionalist sources of regime support, the results are even more clear-cut. All individual-level sources linked to regime support through the *generalization of experiences* consistently exert a positive and statistically significant effect on regime support in both democracies and autocracies. In either type of regime, citizens express more support when they are satisfied with the incumbent government, when they view the regime as delivering a higher democratic quality, and when they are more content with the provision of generic public goods such as safety or economic well-being. Furthermore, the sizes of these effects never differ in a statistically significant way. While running counter to the expectations formulated with regard to the direct effect of incumbent support and the indirect effect of systemic performance evaluations, these results strongly corroborate the universality of the generalization of experiences.

In sum, then, the supplementary analyses complement the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support. On the one hand, they corroborate the main findings of the global analysis. This validates that the results of this maximum-scope analysis, despite having to rely on rather crude measurements of political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations, are indeed trustworthy and, thereby, gives us some indication that the findings on the individual-level sources of regime support are generalizable. The agreement between the global and supplementary analyses is further encouraging with regard to the analysis of system-level sources of regime support that will follow in section 5.3. In this analysis of system-level sources of regime support, the individual-level sources of regime support are incorporated as mediating variables relaying the effects of different system-level sources onto regime support. Since this analysis has to concentrate on the global, maximum-scope approach to cover a sufficiently large number of level-2 cases, it can make use only of the single-item measurements for political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. Knowing that,

on the individual level, the supplementary analyses based on more sophisticated measures largely confirm the results of the global analysis based on the single-item measures can, thus, mitigate some of the concerns associated with using these single-item measures for the mediating variables in the analysis of system-level sources of regime support.

On the other hand, the supplementary analyses of individual-level sources of regime support also add to the findings of the global analysis. As only the supplementary analyses contained measures for societal value orientations and incumbent support, they provided the first test of the full individual-level explanatory model of regime support. The supplementary analyses showed that modern societal value orientations have a main effect on regime support similar to the one of democratic political value orientations but that this effect is not as unequivocally conditional on citizens' democratic performance evaluations as the effect of political value orientations. They also demonstrated that incumbent support has a strong and positive effect on regime support and that incumbent support, indeed, mediates parts of the effects of systemic performance evaluations.

5.2.3. Summary of findings on individual-level sources of regime support

The present section set out to investigate the individual-level sources of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. It pursued two main research objectives. One, to determine which individual-level characteristics play a role in determining citizens' support for their political regime and, two, to compare whether and how the effects of these individual-level characteristics vary between democratic and autocratic regimes. To answer these questions, the empirical analysis examined the individual-level sources of regime support separately for democratic and autocratic political regimes, based on three different datasets. First, a global analysis based on a combination of six cross-national survey projects (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey) and, subsequently, two supplementary regional analyses based on data from the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer, respectively. Table 5.7 gives an overview of the results of these empirical analyses.

Beginning with *the individual-level sources affecting regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes*, we find three sources that universally influence regime support in both democratic and autocratic regimes: incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. This corroborates previous literature on these institutionalist sources of regime support (e.g., Chen 2017; Cordero and Simón 2016; Linde 2012; Magalhães 2016; Mishler and Rose 2001a; Wang and Tan 2013). The effects of political value orientations and societal value orientations, in contrast, are mostly conditional on citizens'

Table 5.7. Overview of results for individual-level sources of regime support

	global analysis	**regional analysis Afrobarometer**	**regional analysis Asian Barometer**
relevant sources in democracies			
political value orientations[a]	✓	✗	✗
societal value orientations[a]	n/a	✗	✓
incumbent support	n/a	✓	✓
democratic performance evaluations	✓	✓	✓
systemic performance evaluations[b]	✓	✓	✓
relevant sources in autocracies			
political value orientations[a]	✓	✗	✓
societal value orientations[a]	n/a	✗	✓
incumbent support	n/a	✓	✓
democratic performance evaluations	✓	✓	✓
systemic performance evaluations[b]	✓	✓	✓
comparison of effects between democracies and autocracies			
political value orientations	≈	≈	≈
societal value orientations	n/a	≈	A>D
incumbent support	n/a	≈	≈
democratic performance evaluations	≈	≈	≈
systemic performance evaluations	A>D	≈	≈

Notes: [a] conditional on democratic performance evaluations.

[b] mediated in part through incumbent support.

✓ = source has a significant effect on regime support; ✗ = source has no significant effect on regime support; ≈ = effect sizes equal in democracies and autocracies; A>D = effect significantly larger in autocracies than in democracies; n/a = effect could not be tested in analysis.

democratic performance evaluations. We can observe that, in either regime type, democratic political as well as modern societal value orientations tend to decrease regime support more among citizens who evaluate the regime's democratic performance less favorably, even though this is not supported unanimously by all of the analyses, particularly in the case of societal value orientations. These results refute and enhance previous findings on culturalist sources of regime support (e.g., Catterberg and Moreno 2005; Chen 2017; Chen and Dickson 2008; Singh 2018; Zhong and Chen 2013) and refine the scholarship on critical citizens (e.g., Dalton 2004; Hooghe, Marien, and Oser 2017; Norris 1999b) by demonstrating that democratic political value orientations alone do not dampen regime support. In addition, democratic performance evaluations become more important in forming regime support for citizens who place a higher value on democracy itself in all but one of the analyses. Finally, we find that incumbent support clearly mediates parts of the total effect of systemic performance evaluations in both democratic and autocratic regimes.

Overall, the empirical results thus provide some evidence for both of the individual-level causal mechanisms that the theoretical framework proposed as

ways of shaping regime support: an *overflow of values* and a *generalization of experiences*. To recall briefly, an *overflow of values* posits that citizens' personal value orientations pre-determine citizens' attitudes towards the actual political regime by setting the reference points for the values that should be realized within and through this political regime. It thereby suggests that citizens' political as well as societal value orientations act as individual-level determinants of regime support. A *generalization of experiences* posits that citizens form their attitudes towards the political regime by accumulating experiences and, subsequently, positive or negative evaluations of the regime's performance. It suggests that citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations, as well as incumbent support, act as individual-level determinants of regime support. As we could see above, we found all of these five potential determinants of regime support to exert some influence on regime support in at least some of the analyses. However, the empirical evidence was more conclusive with regard to incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations than it was with regard to political value orientations and societal value orientations. This is not surprising as we could a priori expect the effects of the sources associated with a generalization of experiences to be stronger than the effects of the sources associated with an overflow of values, given the operationalization of regime support as institutional confidence.[10]

Turning to *whether and how the effects of individual-level characteristics vary between democratic and autocratic regimes*, the empirical analyses add to the nascent state of research and overwhelmingly confirm the expectation that both an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences are universal individual-level mechanisms that are at work regardless of the regime context. For one, the same set of sources affect regime support in both democratic and autocratic political regimes. Second, the effects of all individual-level sources of regime support mostly point in the same direction, regardless of whether the political regime in question is democratic or autocratic. Third, there are only minor differences in the sizes of these effects, the strongest and most consistent ones concerning the effect of systemic performance evaluations. These results contradict previous literature comparing democracies and autocracies that mostly expected—although rarely found empirically—starker differences in individual-level sources of regime support between the two types of regimes (Chang, Chu, and Welsh 2013; Huhe and Tang 2017; Wang, Dalton, and Shin 2006). In particular, they refine the work of Huhe and Tang (2017) with respect to the effect of political value orientations: other than conjectured by these scholars, it is not the actual level of democracy but rather citizens' democratic performance evaluations that condition the effect

[10] Robustness checks using an alternative measure of regime support did result in somewhat smaller effect sizes for the institutionalist sources. Nevertheless, the results for institutionalist sources remain more consistent than the results for culturalist sources.

of political value orientations on regime support, making the (conditional) effect of political value orientations universal across regime types. Overall, these findings suggest that *the individual-level processes that form citizens' attitudes towards the political regime indeed work in very similar ways even within fundamentally different political contexts,* and that citizens in democratic and autocratic regimes apply very similar criteria when forming their views on the political regime they live in.

The empirical results thus corroborate the main innovations of the (individual-level) theoretical model presented in chapter 3. Not only can we integrate the culturalist and institutionalist traditions of research but we can also relate all individual-level sources to regime support through only two basic causal mechanisms, derived directly from the conception of political support: an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences. The results further lend strong support to this explanatory model's novel proposition that these individual-level mechanisms forming regime support are universal across regime types.

Having examined the individual-level sources of regime support, we must now turn to the analysis of system-level sources of regime support and examine *how system-level context factors are related to individual-level attitudes*. This allows for more accurate predictions of how citizens' political and societal value orientations, as well as democratic and systemic performance evaluations, may change in reaction to, for example, an economic crisis. The following section attends to this analysis of system-level sources of regime support.

5.3. Why citizens support democratic and autocratic regimes II: system-level sources

The multivariate analysis of system-level sources of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes in this section aims to answer the third set of research questions: *Which system-level context factors play a role in determining citizens' regime support in democracies, and which are important in autocracies? How do different system-level contexts affect the individual-level sources of regime support? Does the effect of these system-level sources vary between democratic and autocratic regimes?* Because the analysis of system-level sources of regime support requires data on a large number of political systems, the empirical analysis cannot follow the familiar two-fold strategy. Instead, it focuses on a global analysis based on the combination of six cross-national survey datasets (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey). This analysis covers 102 countries (sixty-one democracies, forty-one autocracies) in 137 country-years (eighty-five democratic, fifty-two autocratic) worldwide. The analysis first examines democratic and autocratic regimes separately so that we can determine the relevance of each system-level source in each type of political regime. Following these

separate analyses, a comparison of democratic and autocratic regimes allows us to investigate whether the system-level sources' effects vary across regime types.

The explanatory model of regime support (chapter 3) distinguished four system-level sources of regime support: macro-cultural context, macro-political context or actual democratic performance, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization. Drawing on a general social psychological model of attitude formation, I have proposed that each of these system-level context factors affects regime support indirectly through its effect(s) on different individual-level determinants of regime support (section 3.2). The theoretical framework distinguished two causal pathways for these indirect effects: one in which system-level context factors shape citizens' value orientations (subsection 3.2.1) and one in which system-level context factors shape citizens' performance evaluations (subsection 3.2.2). The expectation was that three of the system-level sources affect regime support through the first causal pathway: macro-cultural context should form citizens' societal value orientations, macro-political context should pre-determine citizens' political value orientations, and the level of socioeconomic modernization should influence both citizens' societal and political value orientations. The second causal pathway should also be relevant for three system-level context factors: macro-political context should form citizens' democratic performance evaluations, actual systemic performance should pre-determine citizens' systemic performance evaluations, and the level of socioeconomic modernization should influence both citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations. In general, the theoretical model expected most of these effects to be weaker in autocracies than in democracies due to the formers' indoctrination and propaganda efforts. Only the (negative) effect of a Confucian macro-cultural context on societal value orientations should be stronger in autocracies than in democracies, and the effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization on democratic and systemic performance evaluations may be both stronger and weaker in autocracies than in democracies.

Due to the limitations in indicator availability for the combined dataset of all six surveys, the present analysis does not include individual-level societal value orientations. Consequently, it cannot examine the proposed multi-level mediation mechanisms of macro-cultural context and level of socioeconomic modernization via these societal value orientations. Nevertheless, it can provide evidence on all other theoretically relevant linkages. The analysis of system-level sources of regime support can, therefore, test an explanatory model that lacks only one theoretically relevant variable: the mediating societal value orientations. Using the combined dataset of all six surveys also entails that we once more have to rely on the single-item measurements for the other mediating individual-level attitudes: political value orientations are measured by citizens' support for a strong leader, the perceived extent of democracy gauges democratic performance evaluations, and citizens' systemic performance evaluations are

operationalized by how safe respondents feel in their neighborhood or city (cf. section 4.2).

Methodologically, as we are interested in how different system-level factors affect individual-level attitudes, *multi-level* structural equation models are required. These models are built in two steps. Their numbering follows the alphanumeric pattern introduced in the previous section, with models for democratic political regimes being denoted by the letter "D" and models for autocratic political regimes being denoted by the letter "A." In a first step (Models D5, A5), the models include all individual-level control variables and the theoretically relevant system-level context factors. In addition, these as well as all further models include dummy variables for geopolitical regions to control for potential regional effects (cf. section 5.1). The analyses contain one more system-level control variable: oil wealth (operationalized through OPEC membership[11]). This is because oil-rich rentier states can provide their citizens with many social and economic benefits such as access to free education or generous social benefit programs. For example, during the height of the Arab Spring in 2011, Kuwait "offered each of its citizens a cash gift of 1,000 dinars (about $3,600) and free food staples for 14 months" (Ross 2011, p. 4). With such extraordinary means available to them, so-called "rentier states" have very different opportunities to generate popular support than non-rentier states. Models D5 and A5 allow testing whether system-level contexts have any *overall effect* on regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. To examine the proposed *causal pathways via different individual-level sources* of regime support (political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, systemic performance evaluations), the second step explicitly models these *mediation mechanisms* (Models D6, A6).[12]

In general, all models include all theoretically relevant variables. For the categorical variable of macro-cultural context, this means including dummy variables for each relevant macro-cultural context. Since I only expect three cultural traditions to have a distinct effect on regime support—Protestant, Catholic, and Confucian cultural traditions—the models include dummy variables only for these three macro-cultural contexts. All other macro-cultural contexts (Orthodox, Islamic, ex-Communist, Asian, and African) are collapsed and used as the reference category. This approach has two advantages. One, it is closer to the theoretical expectations which predict Protestant, Catholic, and Confucian

[11] Of the countries analyzed here, the following are members of OPEC: Algeria, Ecuador, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Qatar, and Venezuela. Of these, Ecuador is excluded from the list of oil-rich countries because its oil production and revenues are comparatively limited (Ross 2012, pp. 20–22, 31–32). Instead, Bahrain is also *included* as an oil-rich country: despite not being an OPEC member, oil exports make up more than four fifths of the country's government revenue (Central Intelligence Agency 2017) and it is routinely characterized as a rentier state (e.g., Abulof 2017; Bank, Richter, and Sunik 2014; Losman 2010).

[12] To obtain unbiased estimates for these 2-1-1 mediations, both paths of the mediation effect are modeled on the system level (cf. Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang 2010).

cultural traditions to have an effect compared to *all other* cultural traditions. Two, it solves most of the multicollinearity problems that arise from the overlap between some macro-cultural contexts and some geopolitical regions. The only problematic overlap that is left is, then, the one between the geopolitical region Latin America and the Caribbean and the Catholic macro-political context: for autocratic regimes, these are exactly the same since there are no Catholic autocracies outside of Latin America and no Latin American autocracies that have a cultural tradition other than a Catholic one. This means that for the analyses of autocracies, a Catholic macro-cultural context completely predicts a Latin American geopolitical region and vice versa, i.e. the two dummy variables are perfectly collinear. All models for autocracies therefore omit the dummy variable for the geopolitical region Latin America and the Caribbean. The models for autocracies do not include dummy variables for a Protestant macro-cultural context and the Western World, either. This is because there are no Protestant autocracies and no autocracies in the Western World.[13]

Due to the limitations in indicator availability discussed above, this global, maximum-scope empirical analysis cannot test all of the proposed mediations. Since the combined dataset lacks a measure of societal value orientations, it cannot explicitly model the indirect effect of macro-cultural context on regime support that societal value orientations mediate, nor the indirect effect of level of socioeconomic modernization that societal value orientations mediate. This means that Models D6 and A6, which model the indirect effects of all system-level context factors, do not contain the mediations via societal value orientations. Moreover, to keep the models as parsimonious as possible, they exclude all individual-level qualifications such as the moderating effects of political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations. Figure 5.8 graphically displays the reduced empirical model analyzed in the following analysis of system-level sources of regime support. Since it lacks the indirect effects of macro-cultural context and level of socioeconomic modernization that are mediated through societal value orientations, Figure 5.8 contains the direct effects of these variables on regime support to reflect the theoretically grounded interest in these effects. Technically, the statistical models include the direct effects of *all* system-level context factors; based on the theoretical model, however, we would not expect the direct effects of macro-political context and of actual systemic performance to be meaningful.

The empirical analysis of system-level sources of regime support in the remainder of this section first explores system-level sources of regime support in democratic political regimes, before it turns to autocratic political regimes. A third segment compares the effects of system-level context factors between both types of regimes

[13] The resulting variance inflation factors (VIF) are well below the threshold of 10 (see online appendix, Table OE.1; for a discussion on VIF and its threshold values, see O'Brien 2007).

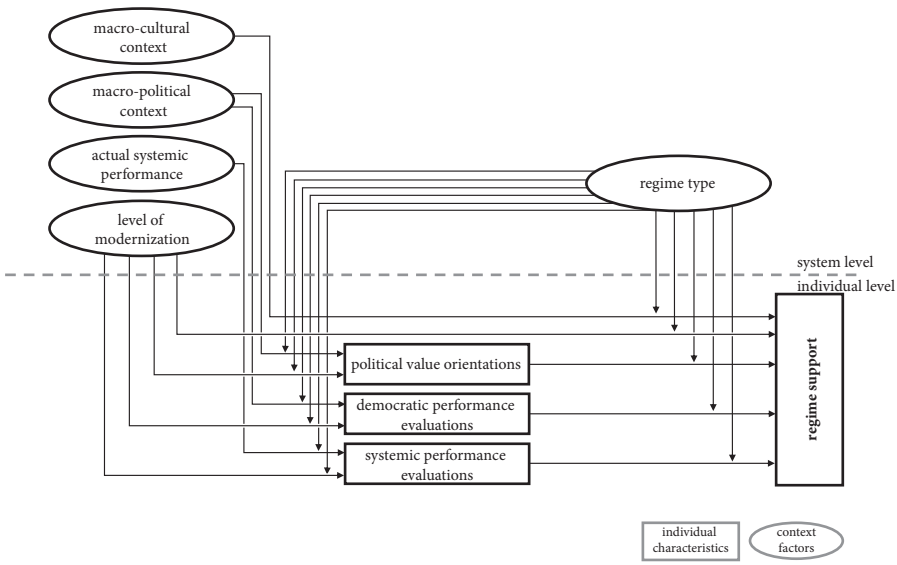


Figure 5.8. The empirical model for the global analysis of system-level sources of regime support

to determine whether these system-level contexts have a different effect in democracies than in autocracies. The final segment summarizes the results of the analysis of system-level sources of regime support.

System-level sources of regime support in democracies

Table 5.8 presents the results for the effects of system-level sources of regime support *in democratic political regimes*. It begins with Model D5, which allows examining the *overall effects* of macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization. By including the individual-level control variables, Model D5 controls for composition differences between the political systems; by excluding the individual-level sources of regime support, it avoids masking any effects of system-level context factors that are mediated by these individual-level determinants.

Beginning with the *overall effect of macro-cultural context*, the results show significant negative effects of both Protestant and Catholic macro-cultural contexts as well as of a Confucian macro-cultural context (Model D5, Table 5.8). This finding indicates that citizens have more negative attitudes towards their democratic political regime if they live in a country with a Protestant, Catholic, or Confucian cultural tradition compared to other countries with other cultural traditions. That both Protestant/Catholic and Confucian cultural traditions are associated with lower regime support may seem contradictory at first: we expected Protestant and Catholic cultural traditions to be linked with more modern societal value

Table 5.8. System-level sources of regime support in democracies

	D5: overall effects		D6: indirect effects	
individual-level direct effects				
political value orientations (pvo)			−0.00	(0.01)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)			0.33***	(0.02)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)			0.08***	(0.01)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes	
system-level direct effects				
macro-cultural context (ref.: others)				
Protestant	−0.06*	(0.03)	−0.11***	(0.02)
Catholic	−0.05*	(0.02)	−0.06***	(0.02)
Confucian	−0.13**	(0.04)	−0.07*	(0.04)
macro-political context (actual democratic performance)	0.03	(0.08)	0.03	(0.07)
actual systemic performance	0.21	(0.12)	−0.07	(0.11)
level of socioeconomic modernization	−0.13*	(0.06)	−0.12*	(0.05)
system-level indirect effects				
macro-political context via pvo			0.07*	(0.03)
macro-political context via dpe			0.10**	(0.04)
actual systemic performance via spe			0.08	(0.06)
level of socioeconomic modernization via pvo			−0.06*	(0.03)
level of socioeconomic modernization via dpe			−0.05*	(0.02)
level of socioeconomic modernization via spe			−0.05	(0.04)
system-level control variables				
geopolitical regions (ref.: East Asia)				
Western World	−0.03	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)
Eastern Europe	−0.15***	(0.04)	−0.05	(0.04)
Latin America and the Caribbean	−0.03	(0.03)	0.02	(0.03)
Middle East and Northern Africa	−0.12	(0.09)	−0.06	(0.07)
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.06*	(0.03)	0.00	(0.03)
Central and South Asia	−0.01	(0.05)	0.05	(0.04)
oil wealth	–	–	–	–
variance components				
regime support (level 1)	0.05	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.09		0.20	
R^2 (level 2)	0.62		0.78	
AIC	641,781		735,723	
BIC	642,360		736,568	
N (individuals)	137,047		137,047	
N (country-years)	85		85	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Individual-level control variables are political interest, social trust, own economic situation, education, employment status, religion, religiosity, gender, and age.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

orientations and a Confucian cultural tradition to be linked with less modern societal value orientations. We would thus predict the overall effects of Protestant/Catholic macro-cultural contexts to point in the opposite direction of the effect of a Confucian macro-cultural context. This is not the case here. The results may still, however, be compatible with the theoretical argument: the negative effects of Protestant and Catholic macro-cultural contexts are considerably smaller than the one of a Confucian macro-cultural context. This suggests that, compared to a Confucian macro-cultural context, Protestant and Catholic macro-cultural contexts in fact have a positive effect on regime support in democracies. Yet, based on Model D5, we cannot determine whether this is due to Protestant and Catholic cultural traditions promoting more modern or more traditional societal value orientations. As the combined dataset lacks a measure of societal value orientations, it is unfortunately impossible to model the presumed mediation mechanism to investigate this question any further.

As regards the *overall effect of macro-political context*, Model D5 in Table 5.8 does not show any significant effect of macro-political context on regime support. The democratic quality of a country appears to make no difference to how strongly citizens support their democratic political regime. This null finding may reflect the conditionality of the effect of the supposedly mediating political value orientations: while a more democratic macro-political context should always result in citizens holding more democratic political value orientations, these democratic political value orientations may result in either more positive or more negative attitudes towards the political regime in democracies. Supporting this view, the global analysis of individual-level sources of regime support has already found that political value orientations do not have a substantive main effect on regime support in democracies (subsection 5.2.1). In contrast, the causal pathway via democratic performance evaluations would unambiguously suggest a positive effect of democratic quality on regime support, as democratic performance evaluations should always be positively related to regime support. While the analysis of individual-level sources of regime support has shown that democratic performance evaluations indeed have a significant positive main effect on regime support in democracies, we still do not know whether these democratic performance evaluations actually reflect the regime's system-level democratic performance (i.e. the macro-political context). The lack of an overall effect of macro-political context on regime support may indicate that this is not the case. Model D6, which explicitly models the mediation mechanisms, will shed more light on this question (see below).

For actual systemic performance, we would expect an unambiguously positive effect on regime support since a higher actual systemic performance should increase citizens' systemic performance evaluations and these in turn should increase regime support. Still, for the eighty-five democratic country-years under analysis here, we do not find a statistically significant *overall effect of actual systemic performance* (Model D5, Table 5.8). This means that citizens of democracies

that provide more physical security, higher economic well-being, better health and medical treatment, better infrastructure, better protection of the environment, higher quality public administration, and more equal treatment do not extend significantly more support to their political regimes than citizens in democracies which do not deliver the same amount of systemic performance. A potential reason for this may be that citizens do not compare their regime's actual systemic performance with those of other countries but, rather, base their evaluations on their own regime's prior performance. Political regimes which have continuously delivered a high systemic performance may then fare less favorably in the eyes of their citizens than regimes which have recently improved their public-goods provision, for instance by cracking down on crime, while still remaining on a rather low level of systemic performance compared to other democracies. Robustness checks using a measure that captures changes in systemic performance compared to the previous year do, in fact, yield a significant and positive overall effect of systemic performance (cf. online appendix, Table OE.2). Model D6 below will provide further insight into how citizens' systemic performance evaluations are linked to the regime's current actual systemic performance.

As the final system-level source of regime support, we would expect the *level of socioeconomic modernization* to exert either a positive or a negative *overall effect* on regime support in democracies based on various theoretical perspectives and different mediation pathways. The analysis shows that, overall, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization relates to lower citizen support for the democratic political regime (Model D5, Table 5.8). More socioeconomically developed democracies hence receive less citizen support than less socioeconomically developed democracies. This may indicate several causal mechanisms. One, citizens living in more modernized democracies may hold more modern societal and more democratic political value orientations, making them more critical of their real-world democratic political regimes. Two, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization may lead to less favorable citizen evaluations of the regime's democratic and systemic performances as citizens may be exposed to more critical information about the regime and/or develop higher expectations of which the regime then falls short. Model D6 below investigates which one of these pathways dominates.

As proposed in the theoretical framework (section 3.2), system-level context factors, such as macro-political context, may be linked with individual-level regime support through different individual-level sources of regime support. The theoretical framework distinguished two types of causal pathways linking system-level context factors with regime support: one through citizens' value orientations and one through citizens' performance evaluations. The remainder of this segment investigates these pathways. For ease of interpretation, the resulting indirect effects of each system-level context factor on regime support are disaggregated and displayed graphically below.

Starting with the mediation mechanisms linking *macro-political context* with individual-level regime support, the theoretical framework proposed two different causal pathways: one, macro-political context should shape citizens' political value orientations and subsequently regime support, and two, macro-political context should shape citizens' democratic performance evaluations and, subsequently, regime support. Figure 5.9 displays both of these mediation mechanisms. For the *indirect effect of macro-political context via political value orientations*, the theoretical framework predicted that a higher democratic quality should lead to more democratic political value orientations on the side of the citizens. The empirical results clearly support this proposition: the effect of macro-political context on citizens' political value orientations is positive and statistically significant (path a_1 in Figure 5.9). In addition, the entire indirect effect of macro-political context via political value orientations (a_1* b_1) is also significant and positive. Contrary to the findings of Model D5 (see above), the inclusion of the mediation via political value orientations thus reveals that democracies which deliver a higher democratic quality do, in fact, receive more support from their citizens than democracies which provide comparatively lower democratic quality.[14]

The second *indirect effect of macro-political context* that we can deduce from the explanatory model is *mediated through democratic performance evaluations*. The idea behind this indirect effect is that a higher democratic quality should lead to more favorable democratic performance evaluations on the side of the citizens and that these favorable democratic performance evaluations should, in turn,

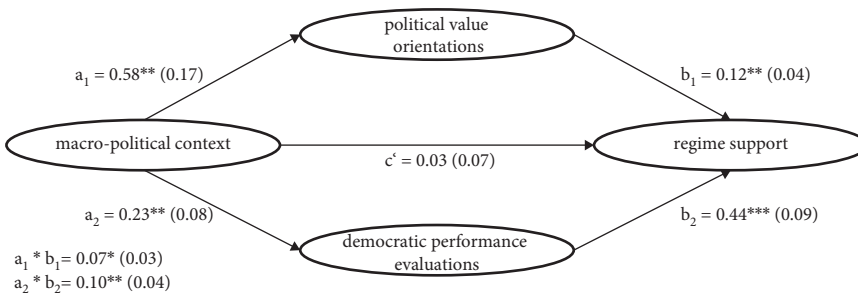


Figure 5.9. Indirect and direct effects of macro-political context on regime support in democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of macro-political context on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model D6 in Table 5.8.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

[14] One could argue that, as it is related to socialization and long-term learning, the effect of macro-political context on citizens' political value orientations should be contingent on the age of the political regime. Robustness checks, however, give no indication of any such interaction between macro-political context and age of the regime.

increase citizens' support for the political regime. The empirical analysis confirms this conjecture: macro-political context exerts a significant and positive effect on democratic performance evaluations (path a_2 in Figure 5.9) and democratic performance evaluations exert a significant and positive effect on regime support (path b_2). The resulting indirect effect of macro-political context on regime support is significant and positive as well. Again, these findings demonstrate that democratic political regimes that manage to guarantee a higher democratic quality receive more support from their citizens than democracies plagued by democratic deficits.

For *actual systemic performance*, the theoretical model predicted a positive effect on regime support that is *mediated through systemic performance evaluations*. However, Model D6 in Table 5.8 does not present any evidence for this pathway: the indirect effect of actual systemic performance via systemic performance evaluations, despite pointing in the right direction, is not statistically significant in democracies. As Figure 5.10 shows, while the actual systemic performance of the political regime indeed shapes citizens' systemic performance evaluations (path a), these systemic performance evaluations do not significantly increase regime support on the system level (path b). This means that democratic regimes in which citizens hold more favorable systemic performance evaluations do not receive more citizen support than democratic regimes in which citizens view their regime's systemic performance negatively. Despite the entire indirect effect (a * b) being insignificant, the significant effect of actual systemic performance on systemic performance evaluations (path a) gives some indication that citizens do, in fact, base their systemic performance evaluations on how well their regime provides generic public goods relative to other countries, not (only) relative to how well their own regime has provided these goods in the past.[15]

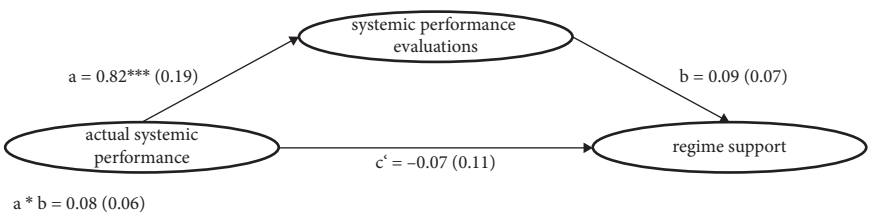


Figure 5.10. Indirect and direct effects of actual systemic performance on regime support in democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of actual systemic performance on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model D6 in Table 5.8.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

[15] These results remain substantially the same when using a measure of changes in systemic performance instead (cf. online appendix, Table OE.2, Figure OE.1).

As the final system-level determinant of regime support, the effect of the *level of socioeconomic modernization* on regime support may follow the pathway through societal and political value orientations as well as the pathway through democratic and systemic performance evaluations. While we cannot test the mediation through societal value orientations because the combined dataset contains no measure for this individual-level attitude, Model D6 in Table 5.8 presents the estimates for the other three indirect effects. Two of these indirect effects turn out to be significant and negative for the eighty-five democratic country-years analyzed here: the one mediated through political value orientations and the one mediated through democratic performance evaluations.

Again, multi-level structural equation modeling provides additional insights into the individual mechanisms that drive these indirect effects. For, first, the *mediation via political value orientations*, we can see that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization results in citizens holding *less* democratic political value orientations (path a_1 in Figure 5.11). As regards the second path of the mediation mechanism, Figure 5.11 again shows that democracies in which citizens hold more democratic political value orientations receive more support from their citizens (path b_1). Taken together, these two linkages result in a negative indirect effect of socioeconomic modernization on regime support. That citizens' political value orientations are less democratic in more modernized countries (path a_1) runs counter to the predictions of modernization theory: according to modernization scholars, citizens' political value orientations should become *more* democratic with rising levels of socioeconomic modernization (Inglehart and Welzel 2005;

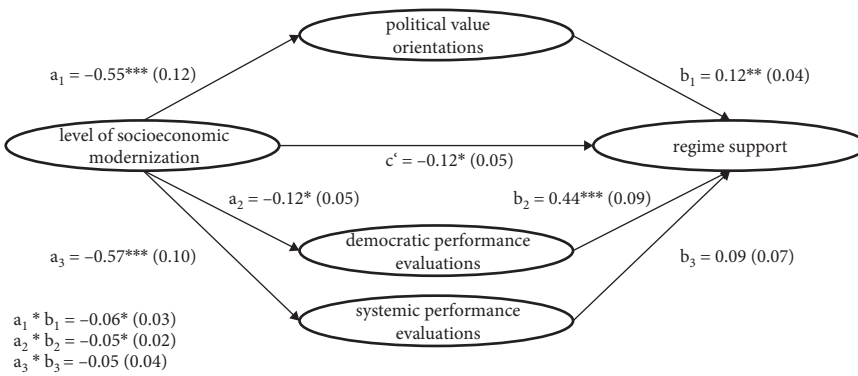


Figure 5.11. Indirect and direct effects of level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support in democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model D6 in Table 5.8.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

Lipset 1959; 1983; Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003). While we have no decisive evidence, one reason for this counter-theoretical effect may lie in the composition of the sample of democratic regimes. Many of the democracies with very low levels of socioeconomic modernization only became democratic rather recently, often transitioning from violent strongman rule (e.g., Liberia or Malawi). This may mean that citizens' memories of their country's autocratic past are still relatively fresh and vivid, potentially prompting a strong negative response to the survey question used here to measure political value orientations—the one asking whether they would support a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections. In contrast, many of the democracies with very high levels of socioeconomic modernization have been democratic for a long time (e.g., Australia or New Zealand), potentially reducing their aversion against personalist rule.[16] It thus seems plausible that the negative effect of socioeconomic modernization on citizens' political value orientations found here is caused by a combination of sampling and measurement limitations. Without further analyses based on more sophisticated measures of political value orientations, we must therefore be careful to rescind modernization theory.

For the *mediation via democratic performance evaluations*, the analysis demonstrates that the level of socioeconomic modernization relates negatively to citizens' democratic performance evaluations (path a_2 in Figure 5.11). This finding supports the ideas that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization may result in citizens receiving more negative information on the regime's democratic performance and/or that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization may give rise to higher expectations on the side of the citizens, both of which result in less favorable democratic performance evaluations. These democratic performance evaluations are then related positively to regime support (path b_2), meaning that an increase in the level of socioeconomic modernization eventually leads to a decrease in regime support.

For the *mediation via systemic performance evaluations*, Figure 5.11 evidences that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization is related to less favorable evaluations of the regime's systemic performance (path a_3). Just like for democratic performance evaluations, this lends support to the idea that a higher level of socioeconomic modernization either provides citizens with more critical information on the regime's systemic performance or gives rise to higher expectations regarding this systemic performance. Other than on the individual level, however, these systemic performance evaluations do not exert a significant effect on regime support on the system level (path b_3).

Interestingly, even after including the mediations via political value orientations, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations in

[16] In fact, the means for political value orientations (i.e. the rejection of strongman rule) are considerably higher in Liberia (0.84) and Malawi (0.85) than they are in Australia (0.70) and New Zealand (0.77).

the model, the level of socioeconomic modernization continues to exert a significant *direct effect* on regime support (path c' in Figure 5.11). This may point to the relevance of the fourth mediation mechanism which was explicated in the theoretical framework but which we were unable to model here: the one via societal value orientations.

Turning finally to the system-level *control variables*, we can see that neither of the dummy variables for geopolitical regions exerts a significant effect on regime support in democratic political regimes. This indicates that the regional differences found in the analysis of levels of regime support (section 5.1) are not due to regional context effects but rather relate to substantive differences in, for example, macro-cultural contexts, between the regions.

In sum, five main findings emerge from the global analysis of system-level sources of regime support in democracies. *One*, the macro-cultural context seems to affect support for democratic regimes: regime support is lowest in Confucian societies, followed by Protestant and Catholic societies. Other cultural traditions are associated with higher support for the democratic political regime. This may indicate a socializing effect of macro-cultural context and implies that democracy may, indeed, be harder to establish in Confucian societies than in other parts of the world. Similarly, *two*, there is evidence for a socializing effect of macro-political context: the more democratic the macro-political context is, the more democratic are citizens' political value orientations and the higher is citizen support for the political regime itself. *Three*, the macro-political context also affects regime support by shaping citizens' democratic performance evaluations. Both of these findings suggest that democratic deepening may, indeed, help democracies secure citizen support. Providing generic public goods, conversely, seems to be a less promising legitimation strategy: the actual systemic performance of a political regime, *four*, does not affect citizen support, even though it does result in more favorable systemic performance evaluations among citizens. *Five*, the level of socioeconomic modernization negatively affects regime support through its negative effects on citizens' political value orientations and citizens' democratic performance evaluations. This means that continued modernization may even dampen support for democratic regimes.

Overall, then, the empirical evidence is mixed with regard to the effects of system-level context factors on regime support in democracies. Not all system-level context factors have an effect on regime support. While only macro-cultural context and the level of socioeconomic modernization exert an overall effect on regime support, we find an indirect effect of both macro-political context and the level of socioeconomic modernization. With respect to the *causal pathways* through which system-level context factors may influence regime support, the empirical evidence points to both pathways being meaningful in democracies. As regards the pathway through *value orientations*, both the macro-political context and the level of socioeconomic modernization appear to have an effect on

citizens' political value orientations. The effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization, however, points in the opposite direction of what we would have expected from the theoretical considerations. Whether and how macro-cultural context and level of socioeconomic modernization determine citizens' societal value orientations could not be tested here. As regards the pathway through *performance evaluations*, all theoretically relevant system-level context factors influence citizens' democratic or systemic performance evaluations. While a higher level of democracy relates to more favorable evaluations of the regime's democratic performance, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization is linked with less favorable democratic performance evaluations. Similarly, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization is connected with less favorable evaluations of the regime's systemic performance. The actual systemic performance of the political regime, in contrast, positively affects these systemic performance evaluations.

System-level sources of regime support in autocracies

For *autocracies*, the results look remarkably different from what we found in democracies: Model A5 in Table 5.9 reports statistically significant *overall effects* for *all* system-level context factors. In particular, a Catholic *macro-cultural context* relates to lower regime support in autocracies, while a Confucian cultural tradition relates to higher regime support compared to other macro-cultural contexts. Autocracies with a Catholic cultural tradition hence receive less support than other autocracies, and autocracies with a Confucian cultural tradition receive more support than other autocracies. This finding might explain why levels of support for autocratic regimes are particularly high in East Asia (section 5.1).

As regards the *overall effect of macro-political context* in autocracies, Model A5 in Table 5.9 shows a strong and significant negative effect. More liberalized autocratic regimes which provide more political rights and civil liberties thus receive less support from their citizens than more authoritarian autocracies. One possible explanation for this observation is that citizens in more repressive autocracies may be afraid to voice negative opinions about their political regime (see also section 4.3). Yet, even when excluding very repressive regimes, the negative effect of macro-political context persists. Such a negative effect lends support to the conjecture that a more democratic macro-political context would foster democratic political value orientations which could, in turn, decrease support for the autocratic regime. In contrast, it contradicts the expectation that a higher level of democracy should result in more favorable democratic performance evaluations that would, in turn, increase support for the autocratic regime. Model A6, which is analyzed below, will provide further insight into the linkages between macro-political context and regime support in autocracies.

Turning to *actual systemic performance* as a system-level source of regime support, we find a strong and significant positive *overall effect* in autocracies (Model A5, Table 5.9). This indicates that citizens living in autocracies which deliver

Table 5.9. System-level sources of regime support in autocracies

	A5: overall effects		A6: mediations	
individual-level direct effects				
political value orientations (pvo)			−0.01	(0.01)
democratic performance evaluations (dpe)			0.37***	(0.03)
systemic performance evaluations (spe)			0.12***	(0.01)
individual-level control variables	Yes		Yes	
system-level direct effects				
macro-cultural context (ref.: others)				
Protestant	–	–	–	–
Catholic	−0.08*	(0.03)	−0.04	(0.03)
Confucian	0.05*	(0.02)	0.05*	(0.02)
macro-political context (actual democratic performance)	−0.45**	(0.13)	−0.34**	(0.12)
actual systemic performance	0.95***	(0.18)	0.44	(0.24)
level of socioeconomic modernization	−0.28**	(0.10)	−0.10	(0.08)
system-level indirect effects				
macro-political context via pvo			0.01	(0.01)
macro-political context via dpe			−0.08	(0.07)
actual systemic performance via spe			0.18	(0.13)
level of socioeconomic modernization via pvo			−0.02	(0.02)
level of socioeconomic modernization via dpe			0.03	(0.04)
level of socioeconomic modernization via spe			−0.07	(0.04)
system-level control variables				
geopolitical regions (ref.: East Asia)				
Western World	–	–	–	–
Eastern Europe	−0.13*	(0.05)	−0.02	(0.06)
Latin America and the Caribbean	–	–	–	–
Middle East and Northern Africa	−0.17***	(0.03)	−0.09*	(0.04)
Sub-Saharan Africa	−0.05	(0.04)	−0.01	(0.04)
Central and South Asia	−0.05	(0.05)	−0.03	(0.05)
oil wealth	0.08	(0.04)	0.01	(0.04)
variance components				
regime support (level 1)	0.06	(0.00)	0.05	(0.00)
regime support (level 2)	0.01	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
R^2 (level 1)	0.09		0.22	
R^2 (level 2)	0.72		0.80	
AIC	363,078		408,257	
BIC	363,610		409,042	
N (individuals)	83,991		83,991	
N (country-years)	52		52	

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analysis for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Robust standard errors (sandwich estimator) in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Individual-level control variables are political interest, social trust, own economic situation, education, employment status, religion, religiosity, gender, and age.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

more physical security, higher economic well-being, better health and medical treatment, better infrastructure, better protection of the environment, higher quality public administration, and more equal treatment extend considerably more support to their political regime than citizens in autocracies with a lower actual systemic performance.[17] Whether this overall effect of actual systemic performance is truly mediated through systemic performance evaluations is investigated in Model A6 below.

As the last system-level context factor, the *level of socioeconomic modernization* exerts a significant negative *overall effect* on regime support in autocracies (Model A5, Table 5.9). This result indicates that more socioeconomically modernized autocracies receive less citizen support than autocracies that are less modernized. Several causal mechanisms may underlie this negative overall effect. One, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization may result in citizens holding more modern societal and more democratic political value orientations, which reduce their support for their autocratic regime. Two, a higher level of socioeconomic modernization may result in citizens evaluating their regime's democratic and systemic performances less favorably as they may be exposed to more critical information and/or develop higher expectations of which the regime then more easily falls short. By explicitly modeling the indirect effects of the level of socioeconomic modernization, Model A6 below will provide a more in-depth analysis of these pathways.

Turning to the *mediating mechanisms* underlying the overall effects of system-level sources on regime support, Model A6 in Table 5.9 first investigates how *macro-political context* is linked to regime support. Based on the theoretical framework, two causal pathways may form this link. The first one predicts that political value orientations mediate the effect of macro-political context on regime support, while the second one expects that this effect is mediated through democratic performance evaluations. Nonetheless, Model A6 does not report significant indirect effects for either pathway; instead, it still shows a significant negative direct effect of macro-political context on regime support. Figure 5.12 provides some insight on why there is no significant *indirect effect of macro-political context that is mediated through political value orientations*: neither citizens' political value orientations significantly more democratic if the autocratic regime is more liberalized (path a_1)[18] nor are autocratic regimes supported less when their citizens hold more democratic political value orientations (path b_1). That citizens' political value orientations do not become more democratic in more liberalized autocracies may well be the result of the indoctrination efforts autocracies are

[17] Curiously, this overall effect disappears when using a measure of changes in systemic performance instead (cf. online appendix, Table OE.3). As this measure is severely limited in comparability across countries due to constraints in data availability, however, we should not overinterpret this finding.

[18] Just like for democracies, the effect of macro-political context on citizens' political value orientations does not increase (or decrease) with the age of the regime.

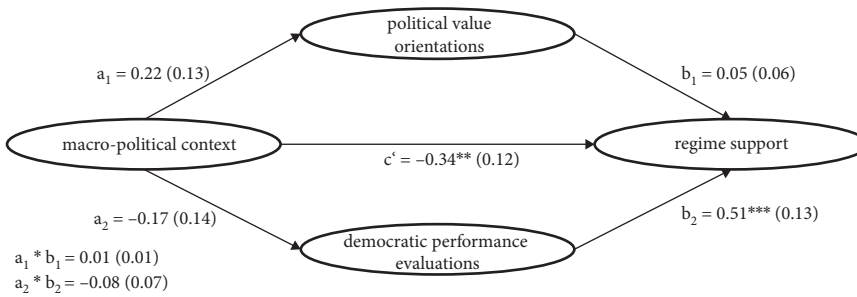


Figure 5.12. Indirect and direct effects of macro-political context on regime support in autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of macro-political context on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model A6 in Table 5.9.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

likely to undertake: if the state-sponsored education system actively promotes regime-conducive autocratic political values, any potential learning effects of political liberalization may be cancelled out.

Figure 5.12 also shows that, while more favorable democratic performance evaluations increase citizen support for the autocratic regime (path b_2), citizens do not hold more favorable democratic performance evaluations if they live in autocratic regimes that are comparatively more democratic (path a_2). Citizens' democratic performance evaluations hence do not reflect their regimes' actual level of democracy very well. This finding may point to the success of certain autocracies' propaganda efforts: apparently, citizens in closed authoritarian autocracies do not view their regimes' democratic performance more negatively than citizens in the more open electoral authoritarian regimes. *Macro-political context* hence exerts no *indirect effect on regime support that is mediated via democratic performance evaluations*.

Again, we may attribute the remaining direct negative effect of macro-political context to political fear: the higher regime support we observe in less democratic autocracies may be the result of respondents in more repressive macro-political contexts being afraid to openly report critical attitudes towards the political regime. However, the direct effect of macro-political context remains negative, significant, and even increases in size if we exclude very repressive regimes from the analysis. This makes political fear seem less likely to be the explanation as political fear should not vary much between the remaining less repressive autocracies. In addition, the results of the analysis of levels of regime support (section 5.1) provide evidence that, even in repressive autocracies, citizens are willing to report critical attitudes towards the political regime in surveys, thus further discouraging the idea that political fear causes this effect. Another

mechanism may be at play here: as autocracies that are more liberalized typically allow more media freedom (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009; Popescu 2011; Stier 2015), citizens may become exposed to more critical media coverage on the political regime, leading to more critical attitudes towards this political regime. As a result, autocracies that are comparatively more democratic may receive less citizen support than autocracies that are less democratic. In fact, as soon as we include the level of media freedom as a control variable, the direct effect of macro-political context vanishes entirely, corroborating the idea that this direct effect was an artefact rather than a substantial finding (cf. online appendix, Table OE.5, Figure OE.4).

For *actual systemic performance*, Model A6 (Table 5.9) does not find a significant *indirect effect that is mediated through systemic performance evaluations* in autocracies. As demonstrated by Figure 5.13, the first path of this indirect effect is nevertheless strong and statistically significant: citizens' systemic performance evaluations are considerably more favorable in countries that actually deliver more generic public goods (path a). Nonetheless, regime support is not significantly higher in countries where citizens' systemic performance evaluations are more positive (path b).[19] Other than for the link between macro-political context and democratic performance evaluations, we thus do find a connection between actual systemic performance and citizens' systemic performance evaluations in autocracies. This may indicate that autocratic propaganda efforts are either less successful with regard to the provision of public goods like economic well-being, security, or infrastructure or that autocratic propaganda mainly focusses on making citizens believe they live in a more democratic country.

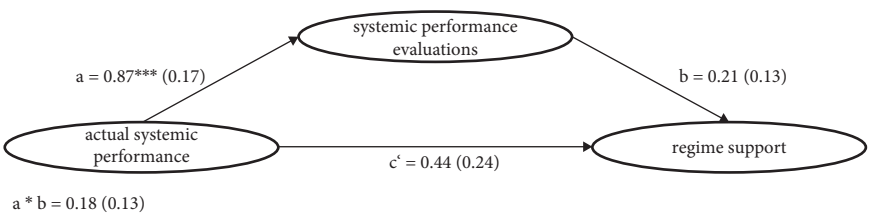


Figure 5.13. Indirect and direct effects of actual systemic performance on regime support in autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of actual systemic performance on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model A6 in Table 5.9.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

[19] This path b of the indirect effect as well as the total indirect effect turn statistically significant when using a measure of changes in systemic performance instead (cf. online appendix, Table OE.3, Figure OE.2).

For the *level of socioeconomic modernization*, we can test three of the four theoretically relevant mediation mechanisms: the one via political value orientations, the one via democratic performance evaluations, and the one via systemic performance evaluations. As Model A6 in Table 5.9 shows, none of these indirect effects reaches statistical significance. Nevertheless, including the indirect effects into the model substantively reduces the direct effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization, corroborating the idea that this system-level context only affects regime support indirectly. Taking a closer look at the individual paths for the indirect effects (Figure 5.14), we can see that for the *indirect effect that is mediated via political value orientations* only the first path of the mediation is meaningful: citizens' political value orientations are significantly *less* democratic in autocracies that are more socioeconomically developed (path a_1). This mirrors the results from the analysis of democracies in the previous segment and again contradicts the classical assumption of modernization theory. Yet, as outlined in subsection 3.2.1, indoctrination may lead to citizens in more modernized autocracies holding less democratic political value orientations. Taking into account the possibility that autocratic regimes try to indoctrinate their citizens with regime-supporting values through, for example, the education system, it seems plausible that a spread of education as part of socioeconomic modernization results in citizens having less democratic political value orientations.

Let us now turn to the indirect effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization that is *mediated via democratic performance evaluations*. Figure 5.14 provides no evidence of a link between citizens' democratic performance evaluations and

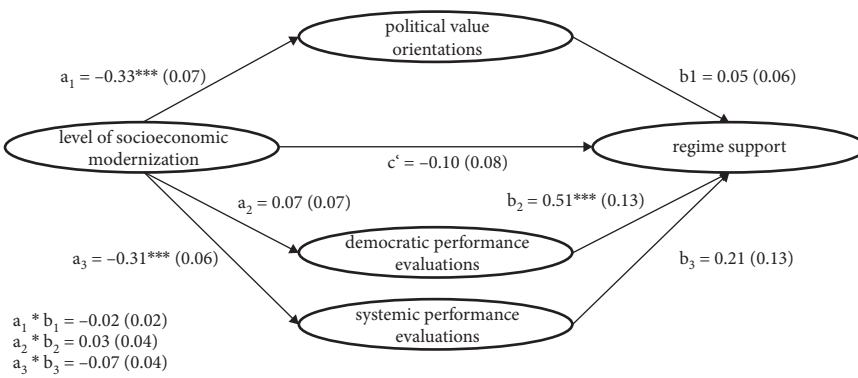


Figure 5.14. Indirect and direct effects of level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support in autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and robust standard errors for indirect and direct effects of level of socioeconomic modernization on regime support. Model specifications and Ns according to Model A6 in Table 5.9.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

their regime's level of socioeconomic modernization (path a_2). This may reflect the different theoretical perspectives put forward in the theoretical framework: citizens may either receive more favorable or more critical information on their regime's democratic performance when the level of socioeconomic modernization increases, and an increased level of socioeconomic modernization may give rise to higher expectations of which the regime then falls short more easily. Just like in democracies, autocracies in which citizens are more content with the regime's democratic performance then receive significantly more public support (path b_2). Overall, nonetheless, the indirect effect of socioeconomic modernization on regime support remains insignificant.

As regards the indirect effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization that is *mediated via systemic performance evaluations*, the results for autocracies resemble those for democracies: citizens evaluate their political regime's systemic performance more negatively if the country is more socioeconomically developed (path a_3). The analysis thus, again, lends support to the idea that socioeconomic modernization leads to citizens receiving more critical information on their regime's systemic performance and/or gives rise to higher expectations with regard to the regime's systemic performance. Yet, at least when political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations are controlled for, autocracies in which citizens view their regime's systemic performance more favorably do not receive any more support than autocracies in which citizens hold less favorable systemic performance evaluations (path b_3). Socioeconomic modernization thus does not have an indirect effect on regime support that is mediated through systemic performance evaluations, either.

Looking at the system-level *control variables*, we can observe that only the dummy variable for the geopolitical region Middle East and Northern Africa exerts a significant effect on regime support in autocracies. This means that citizens in Middle Eastern and Northern African autocracies are more critical of their political regimes than citizens in East Asia, the reference category, even after controlling for differences in macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, level of socioeconomic modernization, and aggregated citizen attitudes concerning political values as well as democratic and systemic performance. All other regional dummy variables, in contrast, seem to play no independent role in forming citizen support for autocratic regimes. We can, therefore, conclude that most of the differences we found in the analysis of levels of regime support (section 5.1) are again due to substantive differences rather than regional context effects.

Summing up, six main findings emerge from the global analysis of system-level sources of regime support in autocracies. *One*, the macro-cultural context seems to have a socializing effect on regime support: citizen support for the autocratic regime is highest in Confucian societies and lowest in Catholic societies. This finding lends support to the "Asian-values" thesis that Confucian societies are

more amenable to autocratic rule than other, particularly Western, societies and may explain why levels of support for autocratic regimes are particularly high in East Asia. *Two*, the macro-political context has no significant effect on citizens' political value orientations, discouraging the idea that the macro-political context socializes citizens into upholding the regime's political values and, instead, suggesting that autocratic indoctrination efforts may indeed be successful. *Three*, the macro-political context does not affect citizens' view of their regime's democratic performance. Citizens' evaluations of their regime's democratic performance hence hardly reflect the actual democratic performance of the regime; this may point to the success of regime propaganda portraying the regime as more democratic than it really is. It also indicates that controlled political liberalization may not be a very effective legitimation strategy for autocratic regimes. *Four*, actual systemic performance has a strong and positive overall effect on regime support. However, this effect is not entirely mediated through systemic performance evaluations. Nevertheless, this suggests that autocracies can generate legitimacy by providing generic public goods to their citizens. At the same time, it provides some evidence that economic sanctions might actually serve to hurt an autocracy's legitimacy. Yet, *five*, higher levels of socioeconomic modernization are associated with lower levels of regime support in autocracies. Continued socioeconomic modernization is, therefore, likely to present autocratic regimes with problems of legitimacy. *Six*, the analysis showed that more liberalized autocracies actually receive less support from their citizens than more restrictive regimes. As the empirical evidence does not point to this being a result of political fear, it seems probable that the extent of media freedom in an autocracy substantively affects regime support: the more media pluralism is granted and the more critical the media's coverage on the political regime can consequently be, the less public support does the political regime receive. Exerting tight control over the media may, therefore, prove to be a more viable strategy for autocratic rulers who wish to secure the support of their citizens. Most of these results remain robust when excluding highly repressive regimes. The only deviation concerns the overall effect of the level of socioeconomic modernization: it just turns insignificant when excluding the highly repressive regimes (cf. online appendix, Table OA.6).

Overall, then, all four system-level contexts have an effect on regime support in autocracies: macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization. Their influence follows different *causal pathways*. While we could not examine how the effect of macro-cultural context is relayed onto regime support, the results showed that macro-political context plays no role in shaping citizens' *value orientations*. The level of socioeconomic modernization, in contrast, does play such a role: it negatively affects citizens' political value orientations. Both of these findings potentially point to the success of autocracies' indoctrination efforts. As far as citizens' *performance evaluations* are concerned, the actual systemic performance and the

level of socioeconomic modernization exert an effect: if autocracies deliver more generic public goods, their citizens evaluate their systemic performance more favorably; yet, with rising levels of socioeconomic modernization, citizens' systemic performance evaluations decline. Citizens' democratic performance evaluations, contrariwise, remain unaffected by any of the relevant system-level context factors, possibly due to autocratic propaganda distorting the information citizens receive about the regime's level of democracy.

Comparison of system-level sources of regime support between democracies and autocracies

Having identified which system-level context factors influence regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes, and how these system-level context factors are linked to individual-level regime support through different causal pathways, this segment investigates *how the effects of different system-level contexts vary between democratic and autocratic regimes*. The theoretical framework expected almost all linkages between system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes to be looser in autocracies than in democracies due to the formers' indoctrination and propaganda efforts. To test this proposition, we need to look at how each system-level context factor affects the respective individual-level determinants of regime support. Table 5.10 gives an overview of the sizes of these effects in democratic and autocratic regimes as well as their ninety-five percent confidence intervals.

In general, the results confirm the theoretical proposition. Five out of six effects of various system-level context factors are weaker in autocracies than in democracies, even though the differences in effect sizes barely reach statistical significance. The most pronounced differences emerge with regard to the effects of *macro-political context*. For one, while citizens in more democratic democracies hold considerably more democratic political value orientations, we do not observe significantly more democratic political value orientations among citizens of more liberalized autocracies. As explicated above, this may be an indication that autocracies successfully indoctrinate their citizens into an autocratic value system. Second, while a democracy's democratic quality affects citizens' democratic performance evaluations, actual democratic performance and citizens' evaluations of this performance are almost entirely disconnected from one another in autocracies. Apparently, autocratic regime propaganda portraying the political regime as more democratic than it really is can be quite effective. For the *level of socioeconomic modernization*, the theoretical model could not deduce a priori predictions with regard to its effects on citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations. Table 5.10 shows that both effects are slightly stronger in democracies than in autocracies, supporting the perspective that citizens in more socioeconomically modernized societies are more likely to be exposed to biased, government-controlled information about the regime's democratic and systemic performances, while citizens in less modernized societies might rely more on direct experiences. For the

Table 5.10. Comparison of effects of system-level context factors on individual-level sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies

	D6: democracies		A6: autocracies	
effects on citizens' value orientations				
macro-political context on political value orientations	0.58**	[0.25; 0.90]	0.22	[−0.03; 0.46]
socioeconomic modernization on political value orientations	−0.55***	[−0.78; −0.32]	−0.33***	[−0.48; −0.19]
effects on citizens' performance evaluations				
macro-political context on democratic performance evaluations	0.23**	[0.08; 0.39]	−0.17	[−0.44; 0.11]
socioeconomic modernization on democratic performance evaluations	−0.12*	[−0.22; −0.02]	0.07	[−0.07; 0.20]
actual systemic performance on systemic performance evaluations	0.82***	[0.46; 1.19]	0.87***	[0.55; 1.19]
socioeconomic modernization on systemic performance evaluations	−0.57***	[−0.77; −0.36]	−0.31***	[−0.43; −0.19]

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analyses for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Full model specifications and Ns according to Model D6 in Table 5.8 and Model A6 in Table 5.9. 95% confidence intervals in square brackets. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Boldfaced parameters differ significantly between democratic and autocratic regimes ($p < 0.05$).

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

effect of socioeconomic modernization on citizens' political value orientations, the analysis of democracies has already yielded a surprising finding: contrary to the predictions of modernization theory, citizens' political value orientations are not more, but *less* democratic in more socioeconomically modernized countries. As this might be an artifact caused by a combination of sampling and measurement limitations, we should be careful in interpreting the effect and, consequently, cannot compare it to the effect in autocracies in a meaningful way.

The only comparison defying the theoretical predictions concerns the effect of *actual systemic performance*. Instead of being weaker in autocracies than in democracies, the link between actual systemic performance and citizens' systemic performance evaluations is of practically equal strength in both types of regimes.[20] While unexpected, this finding may be an indication that autocratic propaganda efforts focus mainly on distorting citizens' perceptions of how democratic the regime is, and less so on distorting their perceptions of how well the regime provides them with generic public goods like economic well-being or health and medical treatment. In sum, then, the results mostly confirm the theoretical

[20] This is also the case when using a measure of changes in systemic performance instead (cf. online appendix, Figures OE.1, OE.2).

conjecture: *system-level context factors are more loosely related to individual-level attitudes in autocracies than they are in democracies.*

Moreover, the comparison between democratic and autocratic regimes (see also the compilation in Table 5.11) yields several additional interesting findings. For a start, the overall effect of actual systemic performance is much stronger in autocracies than in democracies. This may be an indication that autocracies depend more strongly on delivering generic public goods like economic well-being or physical security and, consequently, these regimes may be more vulnerable to, for example, economic crises or civil unrests. For autocracies, a failure to deliver a sufficient amount of generic public goods to their citizens could hence result in a severe legitimacy crisis. Democracies, in contrast, do not appear equally susceptible to sudden declines in citizen support. Both democracies and autocracies, conversely,

Table 5.11. Comparison of system-level effects in democracies and autocracies

	Democracies		**Autocracies**	
overall effects (Models D5, A5)				
macro-cultural context (ref.: others)				
Protestant	−0.06*	[−0.11; −0.01]	–	–
Catholic	−0.05*	[−0.10; −0.01]	−0.08*	[−0.15;−0.01]
Confucian	**−0.13****	**[−0.20; −0.05]**	**0.05***	**[0.01; 0.10]**
macro-political context	**0.03**	**[−0.14; 0.19]**	**−0.45****	**[−0.70; −0.19]**
actual systemic performance	**0.21**	**[−0.02; 0.43]**	**0.95*****	**[0.59; 1.31]**
level of socioeconomic modernization	−0.13*	[−0.25; −0.01]	−0.28**	[−0.48; −0.08]
indirect effects (Models D6, A6)				
macro-political context via political value orientations	0.07*	[0.01; 0.13]	0.01	[−0.02; 0.04]
macro-political context via democratic performance evaluations	**0.10****	**[0.02; 0.18]**	**−0.08**	**[−0.23; 0.06]**
actual systemic performance via systemic performance evaluations	0.08	[−0.04; 0.19]	0.18	[−0.06; 0.43]
level of socioeconomic modernization via political value orientations	−0.06*	[−0.12; −0.01]	−0.02	[−0.06; 0.02]
level of socioeconomic modernization via democratic performance evaluations	−0.05*	[−0.10; −0.01]	0.03	[−0.03; 0.10]
level of socioeconomic modernization via systemic performance evaluations	−0.05	[−0.13; 0.03]	−0.07	[−0.15; 0.02]

Notes: Results of multi-level SEM analyses for dependent variable regime support. Full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Unstandardized regression coefficients. Full model specifications and Ns according to Table 5.8 and Table 5.9. 95% confidence intervals in square brackets. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Boldfaced parameters differ significantly between democratic and autocratic regimes ($p < 0.05$).

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

seem equally likely to fall victim to continued socioeconomic modernization: the level of socioeconomic modernization has a substantive negative effect on regime support in both types of political regimes.

Autocracies starkly differ from democracies in another respect. While delivering a higher democratic quality serves to (indirectly) increase support for democratic regimes, the opposite is the case in autocracies: here, a comparatively higher level of democracy is (directly) associated with lower rather than with higher support for the autocratic regime. This not only contradicts the theoretical model, which expected no direct effect of macro-political context on regime support, but also implies that controlled political liberalization, the process through which autocracies open up politically without actually democratizing, is not a very promising legitimation strategy. The findings of the empirical analysis instead suggest that autocratic rulers are better advised to exert tight control over the media and prevent citizens from receiving critical information about the regime. Democracies, in contrast, should indeed benefit from improving their democratic quality.

Summary of findings on system-level sources of regime support

The present section set out to investigate the system-level sources of regime support in democracies and autocracies. It pursued three main research objectives. One, to determine which system-level context factors play a role in determining citizens' support for their political regime; two, to analyze how different system-level contexts affect the individual-level sources of regime support; and three, to compare whether and how the effects of these system-level context factors vary between democratic and autocratic regimes. To answer these questions, the empirical analysis examined the system-level sources of regime support separately for democratic and autocratic political regimes, based on a combined dataset of six cross-national survey projects (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey). Table 5.12 gives an overview of the results of this empirical analysis.

Beginning with *the system-level sources affecting regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes*, we find two sources that have an overall effect on regime support in both democracies and autocracies: macro-cultural context and the level of socioeconomic modernization. For the macro-cultural context, a Protestant and Catholic cultural tradition are universally related to lower support for the political regime, regardless of regime type; a Confucian cultural tradition, conversely, connects to lower regime support in democracies but higher regime support in autocracies. The level of socioeconomic modernization also affects regime support in the same way in both types of political regimes: the more socioeconomically modernized the country, the lower is citizens' support for the political regime. This lends support to the literature suggesting that socioeconomic modernization gives way to rising expectations that will be hard for any political regime to live up to (Dalton and Welzel 2014a; Inglehart and Welzel 2005;

Table 5.12. Overview of results for system-level sources of regime support

	Democracy	Autocracy
relevant sources of regime support		
macro-cultural context	✓	✓
macro-political context	✓	✓
actual systemic performance	✗	✓
level of socioeconomic modernization	✓	✓
effects of system-level sources on citizens' value orientations		
macro-cultural context on societal value orientations	n/a	n/a
macro-political context on political value orientations	✓	✗
level of socioeconomic modernization on societal value orientations	n/a	n/a
level of socioeconomic modernization on political value orientations	✓	✓
effects of system-level sources on citizens' performance evaluations		
macro-political context on democratic performance evaluations	✓	✗
actual systemic performance on systemic performance evaluations	✓	✓
level of socioeconomic modernization on democratic performance evaluations	✓	✗
level of socioeconomic modernization on systemic performance evaluations	✓	✓
comparison of effects between democracies and autocracies		
macro-political context on political value orientations	D > A	
macro-political context on democratic performance evaluations	D > A	
actual systemic performance on systemic performance evaluations	≈	
level of socioeconomic modernization on political value orientations	D > A	
level of socioeconomic modernization on democratic performance evaluations	D > A	
level of socioeconomic modernization on systemic performance evaluations	D > A	

Notes: ✓ = source has a significant effect; ✗ = source has no significant effect; ≈ = effect sizes equal in democracies and autocracies; D > A = effect significantly larger in democracies than in autocracies; n/a = effect could not be tested in analysis.

Welzel 2013). The macro-political context and the actual systemic performance, in contrast, only exert a consistent overall effect on regime support in autocracies. While a higher level of democracy reduces regime support in autocracies (at least as long as the level of media freedom is not controlled for), a higher actual systemic performance increases it. Nevertheless, macro-political context also has an effect on regime support in democracies: mediated through both political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations, democratic quality indirectly increases popular support in democratic political regimes. These findings add to previous studies on the effect of macro-political context on regime support (Nadeau and Blais 1993; Neundorf 2010) by substantiating that the level of democracy has a predominantly indirect effect rather than affecting regime support directly.

Turning to the mechanisms relaying the effects of system-level context factors onto individual-level regime support, i.e. the question of *how different system-level contexts affect the individual-level sources of regime support*, we observe such effects for all system-level determinants. Three of them appear to be universal across regime types. One, the actual systemic performance of a democratic as well as an autocratic regime positively affects citizens' evaluations of this performance; two, the level of socioeconomic modernization leads to more negative systemic performance evaluations in both types of regimes; and three, citizens' political value orientations are less democratic in more socioeconomically modernized democracies and autocracies. Three more effects, in contrast, appear to be present only in democratic political regimes. As far as the macro-political context is concerned, we can observe that it positively affects both, one, citizens' political value orientations and, two, their democratic performance evaluations in democracies, but fails to affect either of these individual-level sources of regime support in autocracies. Three, for the level of socioeconomic modernization, other than for its effects on citizens' political value orientations and systemic performance evaluations, we only find a negative effect on citizens' democratic performance evaluations in democracies. These results substantively enhance prior research, which has mostly conceptualized these system-level context factors to have a direct effect on regime support (e.g., Anderson and Tverdova 2003; Quaranta and Martini 2016; Wagner, Schneider, and Halla 2009), and ties in with findings of this direct effect vanishing as soon as the individual-level evaluations of the regime's performance are controlled for (Listhaug, Aardal, and Ellis 2009; Oskarsson 2010; Pennings 2017; Wells and Krieckhaus 2006).

Overall, the empirical results thus provide some evidence for both of the *causal pathways* that the theoretical framework proposed as linking system-level context factors to individual-level regime support: one *via citizens' value orientations* and one *via citizens' performance evaluations*. To recall briefly, the *pathway via citizens' value orientations* posits that different system-level contexts determine which values citizens may learn from their socializing agents and from direct experience and thereby affect citizens' societal and political value orientations. It suggests

that macro-cultural context, macro-political context, and the level of socioeconomic modernization act as system-level determinants of these value orientations and, subsequently, of regime support. The *pathway via citizens' performance evaluations* posits that different system-level contexts determine the kind of information on the regime's performance citizens receive from communications and from direct experience and thereby affect citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations. It suggests that macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and the level of socioeconomic modernization act as system-level determinants of these performance evaluations and, subsequently, of regime support. As we could see above, we found three of these four potential determinants of regime support (macro-cultural context, macro-political context, and level of socioeconomic modernization) to exert some influence on regime support either directly or indirectly in both types of regimes. In addition, actual systemic performance affected regime support in autocratic regimes. The empirical analysis also provided evidence for both causal pathways as it showed that at least one of the system-level contexts shapes citizens' value orientations and citizens' performance evaluations in both democratic and autocratic regimes.

Finally, looking at *whether and how the effects of system-level context factors vary between democratic and autocratic regimes*, the empirical analysis has yielded novel and mixed findings. For one, virtually the same set of system-level sources affect regime support in both democratic and autocratic regimes. Some of them do so, however, through different pathways and in different directions (see above). With regard to the main theoretical expectation, we found confirmation for the conjecture that the links between system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes are generally looser in autocracies than in democracies. This was the case especially for the effects of macro-political context on both citizens' political value orientations and citizens' democratic performance evaluations, suggesting that autocratic indoctrination and propaganda efforts can distort citizens' value orientations and performance evaluations. Therefore, other than on the individual level, *the processes linking system-level context factors and citizens' individual-level attitudes do not appear to be universal.*

The empirical analysis thus supports the key innovations of the theoretical model developed in this book. We can link system-level context factors to regime support through the individual-level sources of regime support, validating the model's approach of combining individual- and system-level sources in the explanation of regime support. They also substantiate that linking social-psychological attitude-formation theory with political-culture research can contribute to conceptualizing and clarifying the processes through which system-level context factors shape regime support. Despite not being able to test for them directly, the empirical results further corroborate the introduction of indoctrination and propaganda as mechanisms distorting the attitude-formation process in autocracies.

6
Conclusion

This final chapter returns to the core research questions of how strongly citizens support their democratic and autocratic regimes and upon which individual- and system-level sources they base this support. It reviews the findings of the present study and discusses which conclusions we can draw from these findings. To this end, it first summarizes the theoretical argument and core empirical findings of this book (section 6.1) and points out how these contribute to the literature on regime support and its sources in democracies and autocracies (section 6.2). Subsequently, it reviews the implications that the findings of this study have for the stability of the existing democratic and autocratic regimes (section 6.3) and formulates recommendations for policymakers and advocates of democracy aiming to strengthen support for democratic and weaken support for autocratic rule (section 6.4). A final section suggests avenues for future research (section 6.5).

6.1. Analyzing popular support for democratic and autocratic regimes

At the *theoretical level*, this contribution followed Dieter Fuchs (2002; 2009) and conceptualized political support into three hierarchically structured levels: political value orientations, regime support, and incumbent support. It identified regime support as the level of political support that has the most immediate consequences for the stability of both a democratic and an autocratic political regime and, thus, as the central attitude of interest in this study. It proceeded to answer the question why citizens support their democratic or autocratic regime by developing an *integrated explanatory model of regime support* that takes into account the fundamentally different institutional structures and functional logics of democracies and autocracies. Distinguishing between individual- and system-level sources of regime support, the explanatory model specified two basic causal mechanisms through which regime support can be formed on the individual level as well as two mediation pathways through which system-level context factors can shape regime support.

On the individual level, it drew on the works of David Easton (1965; 1975) and Dieter Fuchs (2002; 2009) to identify two causal mechanisms that shape regime support: an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences. First, the *overflow of values* assumed that citizens judge their political regime based on whether

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the regime's institutional structure conforms to their own conceptions of what the societal and political system should look like. Second, the *generalization of experiences* assumed that citizens judge their political regime based on whether they accumulate positive or negative experiences with the political actors and policies that represent the political regime. The theoretical framework linked these two causal mechanisms back to the culturalist and institutionalist traditions of research on political support and identified *five individual-level determinants of regime support*: societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations. It related societal value orientations and political value orientations to regime support through the overflow of values, theorizing that citizens' societal as well as political value orientations act as reference points for the values citizens expect their political regimes to realize. It related the other three individual-level determinants to regime support through the generalization of experiences, theorizing that citizens form their views of the political regime based on their evaluations of the incumbent authorities that represent this regime and on their evaluations of the democratic and systemic performances it delivers. Moreover, the theoretical model introduced four qualifications of these individual-level effects. One, it proposed citizens' political value orientations to have a more positive effect for citizens who evaluate their regime's democratic performance more positively. Two, it hypothesized the same type of interaction between citizens' societal value orientations and their democratic performance evaluations. Three, it conjectured that citizens' democratic performance evaluations have a more positive effect for citizens who place a higher value on democracy, i.e. who hold more democratic political value orientations. Four, it suggested that the effect of systemic performance evaluations is at least partially mediated through incumbent support.

On the system level, the explanatory model of regime support drew on theories of attitude formation borrowed from (social) psychology (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Anderson 1971; 1981; Fishbein 1963; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; 2010; Zaller 1992) to identify a general causal chain that links system-level context factors to individual-level attitudes. Building on these insights and integrating the culturalist and institutionalist traditions of research on political support, it distinguished two causal pathways through which system-level context factors may affect individual-level regime support: a first pathway that runs via citizens' value orientations and a second pathway that runs via citizens' performance evaluations. First, the *pathway via citizens' value orientations* assumed that system-level context factors pre-determine citizens' societal and political value orientations through processes of socialization. Second, the *pathway via citizens' performance evaluations* assumed that system-level context factors affect citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations by regulating to which kind of information citizens have access and can base these evaluations on. Both citizens' value orientations and citizens' performance evaluations then affect regime support in the way that was

outlined in the individual-level part of the model, meaning that system-level context factors should only exert an indirect effect on regime support. The theoretical framework identified *four system-level determinants of regime support*: macro-cultural context, macro-political context, actual systemic performance, and level of socioeconomic modernization. It related macro-cultural context, macro-political context, and level of socioeconomic modernization to regime support via citizens' value orientations, theorizing that these system-level contexts determine what societal and political values citizens may learn from their socializing agents and from direct experience and, thereby, shape citizens' societal and political value orientations. It also related macro-political context and level of socioeconomic modernization as well as actual systemic performance to regime support via citizens' performance evaluations, theorizing that these system-level contexts determine what information on the regime's democratic and systemic performances citizens receive from communications and from direct experience and, thereby, shape citizens' democratic and systemic performance evaluations.

The theoretical part of the book further discussed the *implications of the fundamentally different functional logics of democratic and autocratic political systems* and how these individual- and system-level sources affect regime support. Arguing that both the overflow of values and the generalization are universal causal mechanisms, the explanatory model posited that the individual-level processes forming regime support work in the same way in democracies and autocracies. It therefore expected the same set of individual-level sources to affect regime support in both types of regimes and to do so in largely the same ways. The theoretical model only predicted one difference between democracies and autocracies on the individual level: based on the potential amalgamation of the political authorities with the political regime and the lack of direct systemic consequences of low incumbent support, it expected the effect of incumbent support and, by extension, the mediated effect of systemic performance evaluations, to be stronger in autocracies than in democracies.

As regards the system-level determinants, the theoretical framework assumed autocratic regimes' indoctrination and propaganda efforts to distort the links between system-level context factors and the respective individual-level attitudes. For one, autocratic indoctrination should weaken the link between macro-cultural context and citizens' societal value orientations and the link between macro-political context and citizens' political value orientations, as well as the links between socioeconomic modernization and both citizens' societal and political value orientations, since state-controlled socializing institutions like schools are likely to emphasize only specific, regime-conducive values. Second, autocratic propaganda should weaken the link between actual democratic performance and citizens' democratic performance evaluations, as well as the link between actual systemic performance and citizens' systemic performance evaluations, since state-controlled mass media are likely to present biased and inaccurate information

about the political regime. Overall, the theoretical model, therefore, expected the linkages between system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes to be generally looser in autocracies than in democracies.

Empirically, the present study combined the most recent waves of six cross-national survey projects (Afrobarometer, AmericasBarometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Latinobarómetro, and World Values Survey), conducted between 2010 and 2014. The analysis covered more than one hundred political systems and over 200,000 individuals across the entire globe, providing the first comprehensive assessment of regime support and its sources in democratic and autocratic political systems. To present the most complete picture possible, this study designed and employed an original research strategy that combined a global analysis of the entire dataset with several supplementary analyses based on subsets of the data to deal with the inevitable trade-off between geographical scope and measurement precision as well as with context effects to which any global analysis is susceptible.

Beginning with the *levels of regime support*, the analysis found that both democratic and autocratic regimes receive a medium amount of support from their citizens, with autocracies on average faring slightly better than democracies. Examining levels of regime support in individual countries, however, revealed great diversity both within the group of democratic political regimes and within the group of autocratic political regimes: neither type of political regime could *generally* rest on a broad base of citizen support. Rather, *some* democracies as well as *some* autocracies appeared very popular, while *other* democracies as well as *other* autocracies seemed confronted with worryingly low levels of citizen support. We can, therefore, not give a *general* answer to the initial questions of whether the world's democracies can still rely on a broad base of popular support and of whether there is any citizen-based potential for political change among the world's autocracies. Despite the substantial variation across individual political systems, some broader trends emerged from the analysis. First and foremost, autocracies receive more popular support than democracies. The supplementary analyses, which disaggregated the data to compare democratic and autocratic regimes within individual surveys or within individual geopolitical regions, showed that this is an almost universal phenomenon and not an artifact of questionnaire or regional effects. Support for the existing democratic political regimes is particularly high in Sub-Saharan Africa, where citizens generally hold mainly positive attitudes towards their political regimes. In contrast, citizens in Eastern Europe are least content with their democratic political regimes, with none of the democracies under analysis reaching even close to an intermediate amount of popular support. For autocracies, levels of citizen support never drop exceedingly low in any world region despite some individual regimes like Lebanon, Honduras, or Nigeria being supported by only small minorities of citizens. While most regions register similar levels of support for autocratic regimes, East Asia stands

out as an apparent stronghold of authoritarianism: apart from Thailand, all of its autocratic regimes register above-average levels of popular support. East Asia is also the region where autocratic regimes have by far the largest advantage over democratic political regimes in terms of citizen support. In the rest of the world, gaps between the two types of regimes are mostly much smaller; besides East Asia, only Eastern Europe exhibits a substantial difference between democratic and autocratic regimes. Yet, unlike in East Asia, in Eastern Europe, this difference is not driven by exceptionally high support for the region's autocratic regimes but rather by the aforementioned devastating record of the region's democracies. Overall, then, the empirical analysis of levels of regime support does not find clear indications for the superiority of either type of political regime but rather implies that factors other than basic regime type (also) affect how citizens view the political regime in which they live.

The second part of the empirical analysis turned to identifying *which factors can explain support for democratic and autocratic regimes on the individual level*. It provided evidence on the individual-level characteristics that play a role in forming regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes. It was particularly interested in determining whether the same set of individual-level factors are important in democracies and in autocracies and whether and how the effects of these factors vary between the two types of regimes.

On the individual level, the analysis found *regime support to depend mostly on the same set of sources in democratic and autocratic regimes*. The supplementary analyses, which made use of more sophisticated operationalizations of the independent variables, corroborated the results of the global analysis, which had to rely on single-item measurements. They also added important findings on the theoretically relevant sources that the global analysis could not analyze: societal value orientations and incumbent support. Overall, the analyses found all five individual-level determinants of regime support—societal value orientations, political value orientations, incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations—to exert some influence on regime support in at least some of the empirical analyses. The results were, however, more compelling with regard to the three determinants associated with a *generalization of experiences*: incumbent support, democratic performance evaluations, and systemic performance evaluations consistently had substantial positive effects on regime support. The two determinants linked to regime support through an *overflow of values*, societal value orientations and political value orientations, in contrast, had smaller and less consistent effects on regime support. This suggests that attitudes towards the political regime, at least as they were measured here, are primarily formed through a generalization of experiences. Nevertheless, the analysis still provided some evidence for an overflow of values to be present in both democratic and autocratic regimes as well, especially when taking into account the proposed *conditionality* of this overflow of values. Most analyses showed that

in either type of political regime, modern societal and democratic political value orientations decrease regime support more strongly when they are paired with unfavorable evaluations of the regime's democratic performance. As regards the conditionality of the effect of democratic performance evaluations, the analyses found that citizens will always view their political regime more positively if they think it provides an adequate democratic performance but that this positive effect does indeed become even larger for individuals who place a greater value on democracy itself. Finally, the empirical analysis found strong evidence for the conjecture that citizens partially attribute the regime's systemic performance to the incumbent authorities: in all analyses, substantive portions of the effect of systemic performance evaluations were mediated through incumbent support.

With regard to the comparison between democratic and autocratic regimes, *no pronounced differences emerged from the empirical analysis*. Not only does the same set of sources affect regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes; they also do so largely in the same direction and with approximately the same strength. Only one individual-level determinant had a substantially stronger effect in autocratic than in democratic regimes: systemic performance evaluations. These results strongly suggested not only that the individual-level processes forming regime support—the overflow of values and generalization of experiences—work in very similar ways in either type of regime, but also that citizens in democracies and autocracies ground their attitudes towards the political regime in very similar criteria, even though the political systems in which they live rest on fundamentally different functional logics. On the individual level at least, then, regime support *can* be based on the same factors regardless of the type of political regime.

In a final step, the empirical analysis set out to identify *which system-level factors contribute to explaining support for democratic and autocratic regimes*. To do so, it drew on aggregate data from various sources (among others, Freedom House, Human Development Database, Political Terror Scale Project, Quality of Government Expert Survey, Standardized Income Inequality Database, Varieties of Democracy Project, and World Development Indicators) and combined these with the survey data used in the previous analyses. It integrated these data and used mediated multi-level structural equation modeling to analyze them. This step of the analysis provided evidence on which system-level context factors play a role in forming regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes and via which particular causal pathways these effects are transmitted. Just like the analysis of individual-level sources of regime support, it was particularly interested in determining whether the same set of system-level factors are important in democratic and in autocratic regimes, and whether and how the effects of these factors vary between the two types of regimes.

On the system level, the analysis found effects of three of the four determinants—macro-cultural context, macro-political context, and level of socioeconomic

modernization—on regime support in both democracies and autocracies. Yet, unlike in the case of the individual-level determinants, *neither the pathways through which these system-level context factors affect regime support nor the directions of these effects turned out to be universal across regime types*. As regards the *directions of the effects*, only the level of socioeconomic modernization has a consistent effect on regime support in both types of regimes: the more socioeconomically modernized the country is, the lower is citizens' support for the political regime. With regard to the macro-cultural context, results are more ambiguous. While a Protestant and Catholic cultural tradition are in fact related to lower support for both democratic and autocratic regimes, a Confucian cultural tradition decreases support for democracies but increases it for autocracies. For the macro-political context, effects clearly point in opposite directions in the two types of regimes: whereas more democratic democracies receive more support from their citizens, more democratic autocracies are supported less strongly. What's more, regime support appears to be dependent on the fourth system-level context factor, actual systemic performance, only in autocracies but not in democracies. While autocratic regimes which provide their citizens with more generic public goods like economic well-being or high-quality public administration are rewarded with higher levels of popular support, citizens in democracies do not repay their regimes in the same way.

Investigating the *causal pathways* through which system-level context factors influence regime support, the empirical analysis found evidence for both the pathway via citizens' value orientations and the pathway via citizens' performance evaluations to be meaningful in democracies and autocracies. The results showed that three of the mechanisms proposed in the theoretical framework were present in both types of political regimes: one, citizens living in regimes that provide more generic public goods hold more favorable systemic performance evaluations; two, citizens living in more socioeconomically developed countries hold less favorable systemic performance evaluations and, three, further express less democratic political value orientations. While the first two results are in line with the theoretical predictions, the last one is surprising at least for democratic political regimes: it stands in stark contrast to modernization theory, which predicts citizens to develop more democratic political value orientations when living in a more modernized environment. A possible explanation for this counter-theoretical effect was found in the combination of sampling—many democracies with low levels of socioeconomic modernization have only recently transitioned from often violent personalist rule—and measurement limitations—the measure of political value orientations only asks about respondents' support for personalist rule. Three more effects were only observed in democratic political regimes: one, citizens living in more democratic democracies hold more democratic political value orientations and, two, evaluate their regime's democratic performance more positively; and three, citizens living in more socioeconomically developed democracies evaluate their regime's democratic performance more negatively.

With regard to the differences between democracies and autocracies, the empirical analysis generally confirmed the theoretical proposition: the majority of the effects of system-level context factors turned out to be weaker in autocracies than in democracies. This was especially the case for the effects of macro-political context. For one, while citizens in more democratic democracies hold considerably more democratic political value orientations, a similar effect is absent in autocracies. Second, while citizens' democratic performance evaluations are closely linked to their regime's actual democratic quality in democracies, actual democratic performance and citizens' evaluations of this performance are almost entirely disconnected from one another in autocracies. While the former finding substantiates the assumption that autocratic regimes may try to indoctrinate their citizens with particular, autocratic values, the latter finding points to the success of autocratic propaganda portraying the political regime as more democratic than it really is. Only one effect defied the theoretical expectations: the link between actual systemic performance and citizens' systemic performance evaluations is equally strong in autocracies as it is in democracies. Despite being unexpected, this finding may indicate that autocratic propaganda primarily focusses on citizens' perceptions of democratic quality and less on citizens' perceptions of the provision of generic public goods like economic well-being or physical security. As a final result not foreseen by the theoretical model, the empirical analysis further found a significant direct effect of macro-political context in autocracies: the more political rights and civil liberties an autocratic regime grants, the less support does it receive from its citizens. This seems counterintuitive at first, as we would have expected citizens to reward such liberalizing tendencies, resulting in more positive attitudes towards the political regime. Even though this at first looked like an effect of political fear, the wide distribution of answers even in repressive regimes and the persistence of the effect in less repressive autocracies made it seem more likely to be an effect of media freedom. As more liberalized autocracies usually exert less tight control over the news media, citizens have more chances to receive critical coverage on the political regime, potentially degrading their view of this regime. On the system level, then, regime support apparently *cannot* be based on exactly the same factors in democratic and autocratic regimes.

Having summarized its theoretical argument as well as its core empirical findings, the following section will discuss which implications this study has for the research on regime support and its sources in democratic and autocratic regimes.

6.2. Contributions to the literature on regime support

The aim of the present study was to develop an *integrated theoretical framework* suitable for explaining citizen support in democratic and autocratic regimes, and

to provide a *comprehensive empirical account of regime support and its sources* in democracies and autocracies.

On the *theoretical level*, it designed an explanatory model of regime support that is applicable in both democracies and autocracies. This explanatory model covers not only individual- and system-level sources of regime support but also explicates how these system- and individual-level sources interact in forming regime support. It further specifies the causal mechanisms and pathways that link both individual- and system-level sources with regime support. To do so, this study joined three strands of research: the conceptualizations of political support established by David Easton (1965; 1975) and Dieter Fuchs (2002; 2009), the culturalist and institutionalist literatures on sources of political support (e.g., Barry 1970; Eckstein 1988; Kornberg and Clarke 1992), and social psychological theories of attitude formation (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Anderson 1971; 1981; Fishbein 1963; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; 2010; Zaller 1992). In addition, it integrated insights on the institutional structures and functional logics of democratic and autocratic political systems into this explanatory model to derive predictions on how and why particular determinants may affect citizen support in different ways in the two types of regimes, introducing indoctrination and propaganda as autocratic mechanisms that may distort the linkages between system-level context factors and individual-level attitudes. Going beyond previous works on sources of regime support, it thereby not only integrated the culturalist and institutionalist traditions of research and covered both individual- and system-level sources as well as their interactions, but also presented the first systematic discussion of how the fundamentally different political contexts of democratic and autocratic political systems may change how citizens form their attitudes towards the political regime they live in.

Empirically, the present work enhanced the literature on regime support by offering a comprehensive and contemporary assessment of regime support and its sources in democratic and autocratic regimes. It is the first study to base its analysis on a truly global sample of democracies and autocracies, providing general rather than region-specific findings. Thanks to its expansive geographical scope as well as its innovative research strategy, it could show that autocratic regimes receive at least equal amounts of support from their citizens as democratic regimes all around the world, not only in East Asia. As regards the explanatory model of regime support, this contribution was the first to adequately represent its complex theoretical model empirically by employing multi-level structural equation modeling. The empirical evidence confirmed that regime support is formed through both an overflow of values and a generalization of experiences, corroborating the notion that culturalist and institutionalist approaches should be combined to arrive at a comprehensive explanation of regime support. It also demonstrated that both the overflow of values and the generalization of experiences work in the same way in democratic and autocratic regimes and, thereby,

established that the individual-level mechanisms shaping regime support are indeed universal. The empirical results further strongly support the idea that system-level context factors affect individual-level regime support not directly but rather indirectly, through the individual-level sources of regime support. This book hence adds to the literature on system-level sources of regime support: it not only clarifies theoretically the causal chains that link these system-level sources to individual-level regime support but also substantiates empirically that the causal pathways run through citizens' value orientations *and* through citizens' performance evaluations. Regarding the differences between democracies and autocracies, the empirical analysis revealed that, other than on the individual level, not all system-level context factors affect popular support in the same way in democratic and in autocratic regimes. Being the first work to uncover these differences and to link them to autocratic indoctrination and propaganda efforts, it contributes to our understanding of the processes forming regime support in different types of political systems and can serve as a vantage point for further theory building.

As a final contribution, this study not only made a theoretical argument about the comparability of citizen support in democratic and autocratic regimes but also verified empirically that regime support can be measured in a meaningful and comparable way in both democracies and autocracies. It thereby lays important groundwork for future studies interested in analyzing popular support for diverse types of political regimes and underlines that we can, in fact, use public opinion data to draw conclusions about citizens' political attitudes, even in autocratic regimes.

6.3. The stability of democratic and autocratic regimes

Apart from its contribution to the literature on regime support and its sources, the present analysis also allows drawing wider *conclusions with regard to the stability of the existing democratic and autocratic political regimes*. We can therefore now address the questions raised at the beginning of this book, which asked whether democracies around the globe could still rely on a broad base of citizen support and whether there was any citizen-based potential for regime change among the world's autocracies.

As pointed out before, both democracies and autocracies on average receive medium amounts of political support. This means that, *generally*, neither type of political regime should be in imminent danger of collapse. Yet, as the empirical analysis showed clearly, *some* democracies as well as *some* autocracies are facing worryingly low levels of citizen support, indicating that they might indeed fall victim to popular revolution. We can, therefore, conclude that there is citizen-based potential for political change in some of the world's autocracies; we can,

however, not predict which direction this political change is going to take. To do so, we would need to also know about citizens' political value orientations: only if citizens hold mostly democratic political value orientations do we have reason to expect any political change to result in democratization.[1] The same is true when making predictions about the future of the world's democracies. While we have stark indications that some of these democratic regimes are in fact unstable, we do not know whether citizens actually want to live under autocratic rule or whether they rather want a different, perhaps even a more democratic, form of democracy. While the present study cannot decide whether the "optimistic" or "pessimistic" view of citizen dissatisfaction with democracy (see, e.g., Abdelzadeh, Özdemir, and van Zalk 2015; Chu et al. 2010; Doorenspleet 2012) is closer to the truth, it can help answering the questions whether—from a political-culture perspective—"the age of democracy [is] over" (Fukuyama 2010) and how strong "the authoritarian challenge to democracy" (Puddington 2011) is. Based on the relatively equal levels of support citizens, on average, extend to both democratic and autocratic regimes, we can conclude that, on the one hand, autocratic regimes are indeed capable of challenging democratic ones, in the eyes of their citizens, as many of them manage to generate a sufficient amount of legitimacy despite their lack of democratic legitimation, releasing them of the need to rely entirely on repression and co-optation. On the other hand, however, these results also indicate that the age of democracy is far from over, with most democratic regimes also receiving ample amounts of citizen support. Contrary to the dire predictions made recently (Foa and Mounk 2016; 2017a; 2017b), the present analysis finds little evidence for a *sweeping* "danger of deconsolidation" (Foa and Mounk 2016). It nevertheless just as much cautions us against relying too much on the resilience of *all* of the world's democracies.

Taking into account the findings on sources of regime support, we can arrive at three more predictions regarding the prospective stability of democratic and autocratic regimes. *One*, should autocracies continue on their course of controlled political liberalization, this may well bring about their eventual demise as a political opening seems to bring along more media pluralism and eventually comes with more critical attitudes towards the autocratic regime, not more positive ones. *Two*, as the analysis has found autocracies to rely more heavily on actual systemic performance than democracies, we can expect the former to be more vulnerable to economic and other performance crises than the latter. If such crises are to occur in the future, they will primarily threaten the stability of autocratic regimes; democratic regimes, in contrast, should prove to be fairly resilient in times of crisis. *Third*, both types of regimes will probably lose some citizen support in the long run due to ongoing socioeconomic modernization, ultimately resulting in

[1] Ignoring, of course, other factors affecting the success of democratization processes such as the preferences of the political elites, the behavior of the military, or the intervention of external actors.

further destabilization. Especially for autocracies this presents a "modernization dilemma": if they do not manage to provide their citizens with an ample amount of generic public goods, they must face meager popular support based on the population's dissatisfaction with the regime's systemic performance; yet, if they manage to uphold a high systemic performance for a longer period of time, they will equally face a drop in regime support based on citizens' growing expectations and/or their access to more critical information. In sum, while autocracies appear to be hit harder by these potential developments, this study's findings cannot lead us to expect citizen support for, and thereby the stability of, *either* type of political regime to increase in the future. Consequently, the stability of both democratic and autocratic regimes appears far from secure in the medium to long run.

Overall, then, if current trends continue and policymakers make no efforts to counteract these developments, the world's democratic *and* autocratic regimes may sooner or later be confronted with severe drops in citizen support and face increasing political instability. The following section will, therefore, propose some measures policymakers may take to strengthen citizen support for democratic political regimes as well as offer some suggestions for advocates of democracy interested in weakening citizen support in autocratic political regimes.

6.4. Implications for policymakers and advocates of democracy

Apart from advancing our knowledge about how different individual- and system-level factors contribute to shaping regime support in democracies and autocracies and providing implications regarding the current as well as future stability of both types of political regimes, the present study can also serve as a *basis for deriving policy recommendations*. It can give guidelines both for policymakers interested in strengthening citizen support for democratic political regimes and for advocates of democracy interested in weakening citizen support for autocratic political regimes, including recommendations not only on what, but also on where, i.e. on which regions or groups of countries, to focus their resources.

As regards the aim of *strengthening citizen support for democratic political regimes*, the findings of this book mainly suggest two strategies. One, we consistently observed that high support for the incumbent authorities increases support for the political regime these incumbent authorities represent. Democratic regimes would therefore benefit from finding ways of recruiting political personnel that can gather support from all social strata and political camps. Further, politicians should try to appeal not only to followers of their own political parties but to *all* members of society. This would likely mean to steer clear of extreme policy positions which are aimed only at their own core electorate and rather advocate a position of compromise, which large portions of society can agree upon to at least some extent. Two, the analysis found an increase in democratic

quality to increase support for the democratic political regime, indicating that a deepening of democracy can indeed be a viable strategy to boost citizen support. Democratic decision makers are, therefore, well advised to improve the quality of their democracy and to implement programs like the South African National Anti-Corruption Strategy (Government of South Africa 2016) or the UNDP's Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights (United Nations Development Programme 2016b) aimed at expanding the rule of law, strengthening an independent judiciary, or combatting corruption. Other measures like promoting democratic and modern values through the educational system or trying to provide citizens with economic well-being, an efficient public infrastructure, or other generic public goods, in contrast, may only be of limited effect in the effort to generate popular support for the democratic regime.

As regards the aim of *weakening citizen support for autocratic political regimes*, a combination of strategies appears particularly feasible. The analysis found that democratic and modern value orientations decrease support for the autocratic regime, especially when they are accompanied by negative evaluations of the regime's democratic performance. This implies that advocates of democracy should not only try to promote the spread of modern and democratic values across the globe through cultural-diplomacy measures like exchange programs (e.g., Alliance for International Exchange 2015; Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs 2017) or through social media campaigns (e.g., Hughes 2015) but also complement this strategy with measures suited to help citizens become aware of the democratic shortfalls of their autocratic regimes. Some of the most efficient measures in this respect are probably programs aimed at fostering media pluralism or supporting independent media outlets within the respective autocracy, for example the Council of Europe's (2015) "Promoting Freedom of Expression in Morocco" program that supports capacity building for journalists, the Reporters without Borders' (2017) wefightcensorship.org initiative that publishes censored content, or the UNESCO's (2017) International Programme for the Development of Communication that engages in the training of journalists and provides equipment to independent media outlets. Furthermore, as the empirical analysis showed that autocracies can generate a considerable amount of citizen support by upholding a high actual systemic performance as well as by appointing popular incumbents, such efforts are likely to be most effective if they are accompanied by painful economic sanctions or naturally occurring crises such as economic downturns or political scandals involving the incumbent rulers.

Turning, finally, to the question of *where democracy promoters should focus their resources*, the present analysis has implications for both those interested in the consolidation of democracy and those interested in its establishment. On the one hand, those looking to aid the *consolidation of democracy* are most likely to be successful in Sub-Saharan Africa, where levels of citizen support for the existing democratic regimes are higher than in other parts of the world. In contrast, such

assistance appears most crucial in Eastern Europe, where citizens express the least amount of support for their democratic political regimes, with recent events in Hungary and Poland underlining the urgency of such assistance. Democratic consolidation also seems particularly at risk in Confucian societies and in countries marred by democratic deficits, providing additional focal points for agents of democracy assistance. On the other hand, those looking to facilitate the *establishment of democracy* have the best prospects of success in Catholic societies, in more liberalized autocracies, and in countries undergoing an economic or other kind of performance crisis. Along with countries located in the Middle East and Northern Africa, these autocracies should already receive the lowest amount of support from their citizens, making them more prone to citizen-based destabilization. Contrastingly, outside assistance in weakening citizen support for, and thus helping, the downfall of the ruling autocratic regimes might be most crucial in the Confucian societies of East Asia and in repressive regimes where rulers exert tight control over the media, as these autocracies should register the highest levels of citizen support, contributing to their stability.

6.5. Avenues for future research

After reviewing the implications of this book for the research on regime support, the stability of existing democratic and autocratic regimes, and for policymakers and advocates of democracy, this final section turns to the question of what directions future research on regime support in democracies and autocracies could take. Based on the findings of this book, three main avenues may warrant further investigation. One, future research could *enhance the explanatory model* of regime support. Two, upcoming contributions could *expand and refine the empirical analysis* of levels and sources of regime support. Three, researchers could also *venture beyond the analysis of regime support in democratic and autocratic regimes*.

One, how could future research *enhance the explanatory model of regime support*? While this book has established an important starting point by developing an integrated explanatory model of regime support that can be applied to and specified for both democratic and autocratic regimes, the empirical findings have raised one question that goes beyond this initial explanatory model. This question concerns the *role of media freedom* and stems from the observation that macro-political context has a direct and negative effect on regime support in autocratic regimes. The explanatory model proposed in this book cannot explain such a direct effect: it expects macro-political context to affect regime support only indirectly through citizens' political value orientations and their democratic performance evaluations. After discarding political fear as a potential cause, I have speculated that the root of this effect lies not in the macro-political context itself but rather in media freedom, which is a specific subdimension of macro-political

context. Adding freedom of expression as a control variable does indeed void the negative direct effect of macro-political context in autocratic regimes. Macro-political context on the whole would then act as a proxy for media freedom, which has not been included explicitly and as an independent determinant in the theoretical and empirical models. Instead, the present study only implicitly included media freedom into the explanatory framework when it discussed the effects of autocratic propaganda and assumed the information citizens receive on macro-political context and actual systemic performance to be less accurate in autocratic regimes than in democratic ones. This assumption was grounded in the idea that autocratic rulers have little interest in citizens having accurate perceptions of the political regime's performance and therefore restrict the media's freedom to report on, for example, violations of civil rights. Similar to prior contributions (Coffé 2017; Kerr and Lührmann 2017), it hence only viewed media freedom as a moderating factor that conditions how closely certain individual-level sources of regime support (democratic performance evaluations, systemic performance evaluations) are linked to certain system-level context factors (macro-political context, actual systemic performance). Future contributions should, additionally, introduce media freedom as a system-level *determinant* of regime support and review whether and how media freedom can have an independent and direct effect on citizens' attitudes towards the political regime, and how this effect can be disentangled from the effect of macro-political context. Drawing on the explanatory model proposed in this book, researchers could tie this effect in with the social psychological theories of attitude formation, as the amount of media freedom may directly determine what kind of information individuals receive about their political regime. As media freedom can be conceptualized as the "ability of outlets and individual journalists to gather and publicize information… without constraint" (Bairett 2015, p. 1263), restrictions of media freedom are bound to limit the diversity of information citizens will receive. The more tightly the regime controls the media landscape, the more positive the media's coverage on, and subsequently citizens' attitudes towards, this regime are likely to be. More independent media outlets, in contrast, are more likely to report more critically on the political regime, providing citizens with more negative information and thus leading to more negative beliefs and, eventually, attitudes about the regime (see also Kerr and Lührmann 2017).

Moreover, researchers should also take into account the role of individual-level media consumption and how media freedom and media consumption interact in forming regime support. From a theoretical point of view, we can expect the effects of media freedom to be stronger for those individuals who consume more news media. Vice versa, we can expect media consumption to have a more positive effect on regime support in countries that grant less media freedom. Empirically, prior research has already shown that individuals who consume more of the state-controlled news media in China tend to be more supportive of

their autocratic political regime (Kennedy 2009; Wu and Wilkes 2018; Xiang and Hmielowski 2017; Yang and Tang 2010), whereas media consumption in countries with high levels of media freedom has a more ambiguous effect on political support (e.g., Aarts, Fladmoe, and Strömbäck 2012; Avery 2009; Dalton 2004; Newton 1999a). Explicitly linking the system-level amount of media freedom with individual-level media consumption could add to this literature and improve our understanding of how regime support is formed under different contextual conditions.

As another refinement of the explanatory model, future research could also elaborate more on different *strategies of indoctrination and propaganda*. As a first attempt, the explanatory model presented in this book has included indoctrination and propaganda as means of legitimation employed by autocracies, and suggested that these tactics distort the linkages between system-level context factors and citizens' value orientations as well as performance evaluations. The empirical findings, however, have brought to light that different linkages are affected to different extents; specifically, the analysis showed that citizens in autocracies have rather inaccurate perceptions of their regimes' actual democratic performance but fairly clear views of how well their regimes fare in terms of actual systemic performance. I have speculated that this might be due to autocratic propaganda focusing more on making citizens believe the political regime is more democratic than it really is and less on pretending it provides more generic public goods than it really does. At the very least, these findings demonstrate that we should not treat autocratic propaganda—as well as indoctrination—as monolithic and assume that every autocracy in the world employs these tools in the same way and to the same extent. For one, regime propaganda may differ substantially from autocracy to autocracy in both content and effectiveness. While Russia may focus more on painting an unduly rosy picture of the country's economic situation, Singapore may be more concerned with conveying the false impression of a free and fair election process. Second, indoctrination strategies may also be more refined in one autocracy than in another. For instance, while China puts great efforts into developing strategies for creating the "perfect" citizen, indoctrination strategies may not be particularly high up on the political agenda in countries like Sudan. The explanatory model of regime support would, therefore, benefit from distinguishing between different strategies of autocratic indoctrination and propaganda. Conceptually, these contributions could draw on the emerging literature on legitimation strategies in autocratic regimes (Brusis, Ahrens, and Schulze Wessel 2016; Dukalskis and Gerschewski 2017; Mazepus et al. 2016; Polese, Ó Beacháin, and Horák 2017), which may serve as a vantage point for theorizing how indoctrination and propaganda strategies may vary across autocracies.

Two, future research could take on the task of *expanding and refining the empirical analysis*. Despite building on a uniquely rich dataset of both survey and

aggregate data, the present analysis still could not cover all democratic and autocratic political systems in the world and, for some analyses, had to rely on rather crude measurements of central concepts.

One avenue for future contributions would, therefore, lie in the *expansion of the geographical scope* by filling in the blank spots of the present study. These blank spots are located mainly in Western and Eastern Europe, Central and Western Asia, and Central Africa. Including more countries from these regions would allow a more thorough and comprehensive analysis of regional differences in levels of regime support. It would also add more variation on some of the independent variables, especially those on the system level. For instance, the present analysis comprised very few Catholic societies outside of Latin America and excluded many of the countries with the lowest levels of socioeconomic modernization. It could also open up the possibility of additional regional analyses scrutinizing the robustness of the results, not only with regard to the individual- but also to the system-level sources of regime support.

The other avenue would be to *refine the measurement of the central concepts* involved in the explanation of regime support. This concerns both the operationalization of the dependent variable regime support as well as of some of its individual-level sources. With regard to first, the measurement of regime support, the present analysis was limited to four indicators measuring respondents' trust in government, parliament, the army, and the police. While this measure clearly probes support toward the institutional structure of the political regime and thus indeed measures regime support, it does so in a relatively concrete way by referencing specific institutions rather than the more abstract structure of the political regime in its entirety. This entails that citizens' responses to the respective survey questions are likely to be linked closely to their experiences with these specific institutions, bringing about a potential bias of the measure towards the sources associated with a generalization of experiences and the institutionalist perspective. The empirical analysis, second, had to rely on rather crude measures of the individual-level sources of regime support whenever analyzing the combined dataset of all six survey projects. Two of these measures appeared particularly problematic. One, the analysis could make use of only a single indicator for measuring political value orientations: citizens' support for a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections. While this indicator clearly probes support for a form of rule rooted in autocratic ideas, it does not allow us to explicitly gauge citizens' commitment to democratic values and principles such as horizontal accountability or the rule of law. Two, instead of being able to measure the diverse set of components that the concept of systemic performance evaluations encompasses, the only indicator available for all surveys asked about respondents' feelings of safety, tapping solely into the component of physical security. Moreover, the theoretically relevant individual-level sources societal value orientations and incumbent support had to be excluded entirely from all

analyses based on the combined dataset, since no common indicators were available. These limitations in measurement not only might be the reason for some of the effects turning out fairly weak but also prohibited the analysis of some of the theoretically relevant causal pathways: the present analysis could not investigate how macro-cultural context and level of socioeconomic modernization shape societal value orientations. They might further explain one of the most striking counter-theoretical findings of the empirical analysis: the apparent negative effect the level of socioeconomic modernization has on citizens' political value orientations. As outlined above, a possible explanation for this finding lies in the combination of sampling and measurement limitations. Refining the measurement of central concepts thus not only helps gaining deeper insight into what individual- and system-level sources shape regime support through which causal pathways, but can also add to the question of how accurate the predictions of modernization theory really are.

As soon as suitable data become available, researchers should therefore replicate the present analyses, testing the full theoretical model and using more refined measures. With regard to regime support, it would be beneficial to combine questions about specific institutions with more abstract measures inquiring about citizens' attitudes towards the overall structure of the political regime. Such measures are currently included only in the Asian Barometer survey, which asks respondents whether they are proud of their system of government or whether they would rather live under their system of government than any other they can think of. For political value orientations, a more refined measure could additionally probe into respondents' support for various forms of autocratic rule, for instance military rule, single-party rule, or technocracy. More importantly, it should explicitly gauge respondents' commitment to specific democratic values and principles, for example by asking them whether they agree that the legislative and judiciary should control the executive branch, whether it is good to allow a plurality of opinions, or whether even a large majority should not be able to curtail the fundamental rights of minorities. For systemic performance evaluations, a more comprehensive measure should include questions about respondents' satisfaction with the national economic situation, the availability and quality of medical treatment, the condition of the roads and other public infrastructure, government measures to protect the environment or the air quality, the impartiality and professionalism of public administrative officials, and whether different ethnic or social groups have equal access to education or healthcare or are treated equally by the government.

With new waves of most of the large cross-national survey projects soon to be released, covering even more countries and, in parts, providing better indicators, both of these avenues might become accessible in the near future. In addition, large-scale data harmonization projects like the one currently underway at the University of Nottingham (cf. Research Councils UK 2016) could soon greatly facilitate the use of multiple cross-national survey datasets.

Three, if researchers want to *venture beyond the analysis of regime support and its sources in democratic and autocratic regimes*, they could carry the discussion forward by surpassing the comparison of democracies and autocracies and focusing on *differences within the groups of democratic and autocratic regimes*, i.e. between subtypes of democratic and autocratic regimes. For instance, do consensus democracies receive more citizen support than majoritarian democracies? Are democratic performance evaluations more important in polyarchies than they are in liberal democracies? Do personal dictatorships rely more heavily on the popularity of their incumbents than single-party regimes? 20 years ago, Anderson and Guillory (1997) set the precedent for this line of research by analyzing how the type of democracy—majoritarian versus consensus ones—moderates the effect of being an election winner or election loser on democratic satisfaction. Few, however, have followed in their path, and the existing theoretical conceptualizations as well as empirical analyses remain far from comprehensive (Criado and Herreros 2007; Ecevit and Karakoç 2017; Henderson 2008; Wagner, Dufour, and Schneider 2003; Wells and Krieckhaus 2006). Future research could, therefore, contribute both conceptual and empirical innovations and further our understanding of how institutional characteristics affect the formation of citizens' attitudes.

APPENDIX A

Additional tables and figures on operationalization

Table A.1. Dahl's institutions of polyarchy and Freedom House's criteria for electoral democracy

Dahl's institutions of polyarchy	*Freedom House's criteria for electoral democracy*
elected officials	regularly contested elections
free, fair, and frequent elections	universal adult suffrage in combination with regularly contested elections securing ballot secrecy and security without massive voter fraud yielding results representative of the public will
freedom of expression	[not covered]
access to alternative sources of information	significant media access for political parties and generally open political campaigning
associational autonomy	competitive, multiparty system
inclusive citizenship	[included implicitly]

Figure A.1. Allocation of countries to geopolitical regions

Note: Author's classification based on United Nations (2016). Figure created with mapchart.net.

Table A.2. Question wordings for individual-level independent variables, combined dataset

Construct	Afrobarometer	AmericasBarometer	Arab Barometer	Asian Barometer	Latinobarómetro	World Values Survey
political value orientations						
support of personalist rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives:—Elections and parliaments are abolished so that the president can decide everything. (5-point)	There are people who say that we need a strong leader who does not have to be elected by the vote of the people. Others say that although things may not work, electoral democracy, or the popular vote, is always best. What do you think? (dichotomous)	I will mention some of the political systems currently in place in various Middle Eastern and North African countries. I would like to know to what extent you think these systems would be appropriate for your country.—A political system governed by a strong authority which makes decisions without considering electoral results or the opinions of the opposition. (4-point)	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?—We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things. (4-point)	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?—We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things. (4-point)	I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?—Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. (4-point)
democratic performance evaluations						
extent of democracy	On a scale between 0 and 10, where 0 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic, where would you place each of the following, or haven't you heard enough to say?—Our country today. (11-point)	To what extent would you say the current administration promotes and protects democratic principles? (7-point)	In your opinion, to what extent is your country democratic? (11-point)	Here is a scale. 1 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic. Where would you place our country under the present government? (10-point)	Here is a scale: 1 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic. Where would you place our country under the present government? (10-point)	And how democratically is this country being governed today? Again using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "not at all democratic" and 10 means that it is "completely democratic", what position would you choose? (10-point)

Continued

Table A.2. *Continued*

Construct	Afrobarometer	AmericasBarometer	Arab Barometer	Asian Barometer	Latinobarómetro	World Values Survey
systemic performance evaluations						
safety	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family felt unsafe walking in your neighbourhood? (5-point)	Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? (4-point)	Do you currently feel that your own personal as well as your family's safety and security are ensured or not? (4-point)	Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/town/village—very safe, safe, unsafe or very unsafe? (4-point)	How would you rate the public safety in [country]? (5-point)	Could you please tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood? (4-point)

Table A.3. Question wordings for individual-level independent variables, Afrobarometer

political value orientations	
support of personalist rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives:—Elections and parliaments are abolished so that the president can decide everything. (5-point)
support of military rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives:—The army comes in to govern the country. (5-point)
support of single-party rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives:—Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office. (5-point)
horizontal accountability vs. executive omnipotence	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Members of Parliament represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the president does not agree OR Since the president represents all of us, she should pass laws without worrying about what Parliament thinks. (5-point)
party pluralism vs. party unity	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Political parties create division and confusion; it is therefore unnecessary to have many political parties in [country] OR Many political parties are needed to make sure that [countrymen] have real choices in who governs them. (5-point)
legal constraints for executive vs. executive omnipotence	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Since the president was elected to lead the country, she should not be bound by laws or court decisions that she thinks are wrong OR The president must always obey the laws and the courts, even if she thinks they are wrong. (5-point)
electoral selection of leaders vs. non-electoral selection of leaders	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections OR Since elections sometimes produce bad results, we should adopt other methods for choosing this country's leaders. (5-point)
societal value orientations	
equality: women's rights	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? In our country, women should have equal rights and receive the same treatment as men OR Women have always been subject to traditional laws and customs, and should remain so. (5-point)
equality: educational	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? If funds for schooling are limited, a boy should always receive an education in school before a girl OR If funds for schooling are limited, a family should send the child with the greatest ability to learn. (5-point)
incumbent support	
approval of current president	Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough to say?—President [name] (4-point)
democratic performance evaluations	
extent of democracy	On a scale between 0 and 10, where 0 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic, where would you place each of the following, or haven't you heard enough to say?—Our country today. (11-point)
elections free & fair	On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election, held in [year]? (4-point)

Continued

Table A.3. *Continued*

freedom of speech	In this country, how free are you to say what you think? (4-point)
rule of law	Does the President ignore the courts and laws of this country? (4-point)
systemic performance evaluations	
perceived safety	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family felt unsafe walking in your neighbourhood? (5-point)
national economic condition	In general, how would you describe: the present economic condition of this country? (5-point)
equal treatment under the law	In your opinion, how often, in this country, are people treated unequally under the law? (4-point)

Table A.4. Question wordings for individual-level independent variables, Asian Barometer

political value orientations	
support of personalist rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?—We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things. (4-point)
support of military rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?—The army should come in to govern the country. (4-point)
support of single-party rule	There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?—Only one political party should be allowed to stand for election and hold office. (4-point)
party pluralism vs. party unity	Let's talk for a moment about the kind of government you would like to have in this country, which of the following statements do you agree with most? Multiple parties compete to represent political interests OR One party represents the interest of all the people. (4-point)
electoral selection of rulers vs. non-electoral selection of rulers	Let's talk for a moment about the kind of government you would like to have in this country, which of the following statements do you agree with most? Political leaders are chosen by the people through open and competitive elections OR Political leaders are chosen on the basis of their virtue and capability even without election. (4-point)
executive supremacy over judicial branch	I have here other statements. For each statement, would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch. (4-point)
executive independence from law	I have here other statements. For each statement, would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation. (4-point)
societal value orientations	
interdependence: family	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? For the sake of the family, the individual should put his personal interests second. (4-point)

interdependence: nation	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? For the sake of national interest, individual interest could be sacrificed. (4-point)
conformity: parents	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? Even if parents' demands are unreasonable, children still should do what they ask. (4-point)
conformity: teacher	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? Being a student, one should not question the authority of their teacher. (4-point)
harmony: group	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? In a group, we should avoid open quarrel to preserve the harmony of the group. (4-point)
harmony: workplace	Please tell me how you feel about the following statements. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? A person should not insist on his own opinion if his co-workers disagree with him. (4-point)
incumbent support	
satisfaction with current government	How satisfied are you with the [name of president] government?
democratic performance evaluations	
extent of democracy	Here is a scale. 1 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic. Where would you place our country under the present government? (10-point)
elections free & fair	Overall, how free and fair would you say the last national election was? (4-point)
freedom of speech	Now I am going to read to you a list of statements that describe how people often feel about the state of affairs in [country name]. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of these statements. People are free to speak what they think without fear. (4-point)
rule of law	Now I am going to read to you a list of statements that describe how people often feel about the state of affairs in [country name]. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of these statements. When government leaders break the laws, there is nothing the court can do. (4-point)
systemic performance evaluations	
perceived safety	Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/town/village—very safe, safe, unsafe or very unsafe? (4-point)
national economic condition	How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today? (5-point)
equal treatment of ethnicities	Now I am going to read to you a list of statements that describe how people often feel about the state of affairs in [country name]. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of these statements. All citizens from different ethnic communities in [country] are treated equally by the government. (4-point)

Table A.5. Question wordings for individual-level control variables, combined dataset

	Afrobarometer	AmericasBarometer	Arab Barometer	Asian Barometer	Latinobarómetro	World Values Survey
political interest	How interested would you say you are in public affairs? (4-point)	How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none? (4-point)	In general, to what extent are you interested in politics? (4-point)	How interested would you say you are in politics? (4-point)	How interested would you say you are in politics? (4-point)	How interested would you say you are in politics? (4-point)
social trust	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people? (dichotomous)	And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy? (4-point)	Generally speaking, do you think most people are trustworthy or not? (dichotomous)	Generally speaking, would you say that 'most people can be trusted' or 'that you must be very careful in dealing with people'? (dichotomous)	Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust most people, or that you can never be too careful when dealing with others? (dichotomous)	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people? (dichotomous)
socioeconomic status						
personal economic situation	In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions? (5-point)	How would you describe your overall economic situation? (5-point)	Generally speaking, how would you compare your living conditions with the rest of your fellow citizens? (5-point)	As for your own family, how do you rate the economic situation of your family today? (5-point)	In general, how would you describe your present economic situation and that of your family? (5-point)	How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household? (10-point)
level of education	What is the highest level of education you have completed? (10-point)	How many years of schooling have you completed? (9 categories[a])	Level of education (6- to 8-point depending on country)	What is your highest level of education? (10-point)	What level of education do you have? What was the last year you completed? (17 categories[b])	What is the highest educational level you have attained? (8-point)

employment status	Do you have a job that pays a cash income? (4 categories, dichotomized)	How do you mainly spend your time? (7 categories, dichotomized)	Do you work? (dichotomous)	Are you currently employed? (dichotomous)	What is your current employment situation? (7 categories, dichotomized)	Are you employed or not? If yes, about how many hours a week? (8 categories, dichotomized)
religion	What is your religion, if any? (recoded into 7 categories)	What is your religion, if any? (recoded into 7 categories)	Religion (recoded into 7 categories)	What is your religion? (recoded into 7 categories)	What is your religion? (recoded into 7 categories)	Do you belong to a religion or religious denomination? If yes, which one? (recoded into 7 categories)
religiosity	How important is religion in your life? (4-point)	Please, could you tell me how important is religion in your life? (4-point)	Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as religious, somewhat religious or not religious? (3-point)	Would you describe yourself as very religious, moderately religious, lightly religious, not religious at all? (4-point)	How would you describe yourself? As very devout, devout, not very devout, or not devout at all? (4-point)	How important is God in your life? (10-point)
gender	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)
age	How old are you?	On what day, month and year were you born?[c]	Age	Birth year & actual age	What is your age?	Can you tell me your year of birth, please?[c]

[a] Years of schooling were categorized into educational levels by survey administrators.
[b] Mixture of years and educational levels, depending on country.
[c] Birth date was converted into actual age by interviewer.

Table A.6. Question wordings for individual-level control variables, Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer

	Afrobarometer	Asian Barometer
political interest	How interested would you say you are in public affairs? (4-point)	How interested would you say you are in politics? (4-point)
understanding of democracy		
	Which one would you choose as the most essential characteristic of democracy?	Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you have to choose only one from each four sets of statements that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristic of a democracy?
procedural understanding[a]	(1) Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor. (2) *People choose government leaders in free and fair elections. (3) Government does not waste any public money. (4) *People are free to express their political views openly.	(1) Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor. (2) *People choose government leaders in free and fair elections. (3) Government does not waste any public money. (4) *People are free to express their political views openly.
procedural understanding[a]	(1) Government ensures law and order. (2) *Media is free to criticize the things government does. (3) Government ensures job opportunities for all. (4) *Multiple parties compete fairly in elections.	(1) Government ensures law and order. (2) *Media is free to criticize the things government does. (3) Government ensures job opportunities for all. (4) *Multiple parties compete fairly in elections.
procedural understanding[a]	(1) *The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President. (2) Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter, for everyone. (3) *People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs. (4) Public services, such as roads, water or sewerage, work well and do not break down.	(1) *The legislature has oversight over the government. (2) Basic necessities, like food, clothes and shelter, are provided for all. (3) *People are free to organize political groups. (4) Government provides people with quality public services.
procedural understanding[a]	(1) *People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests. (2) Politics is clean and free of corruption. (3) *The court protects ordinary people if the government mistreats them. (4) People receive aid from government, such as food parcels, when they are in need.	(1) *People have the freedom to take part in protests and demonstrations. (2) Politics is clean and free of corruption. (3) *The court protects the ordinary people from the abuse of government power. (4) People receive state aid if they are unemployed.
media consumption		
radio[b]	How often do you get news from the following sources?—Radio (5-point)	
TV[b]	How often do you get news from the following sources?—Television (5-point)	

press[b]	How often do you get news from the following sources?—Newspapers (5-point)	
internet[b]	How often do you get news from the following sources?—Internet (5-point)	
news consumption		How often do you follow news about politics and government? (5-point)
national pride	It makes you proud to be called a [nationality]. (5-point)	How proud are you to be a citizen of [country]? (4-point)
social trust	Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with people? (dichotomous)	Generally speaking, would you say that 'most people can be trusted' or 'that you must be very careful in dealing with people'? (dichotomous)
socioeconomic status		
personal economic situation	In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions? (5-point)	As for your own family, how do you rate the economic situation of your family today? (5-point)
level of education	What is the highest level of education you have completed? (10-point)	What is your highest level of education? (10-point)
place of residence	[urban or rural primary sampling unit] (3-point, dichotomized)	[Which of the following levels within the country does the respondent live in?] (4-point, dichotomized)
employment status	Do you have a job that pays a cash income? (4 categories, dichotomized)	Are you currently employed? (dichotomous)
religion	What is your religion, if any? (recoded into 7 categories)	What is your religion? (recoded into 7 categories)
religiosity	How important is religion in your life? (4-point)	Would you describe yourself as very religious, moderately religious, lightly religious, not religious at all? (4-point)
gender	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)	[interviewer record] (dichotomous)
age	How old are you?	Birth year & actual age[c]

[a] Coded "1" if respondents choose a procedural characteristic (marked by *) and "0" if respondents choose a substantive characteristic. Scores for all four questions combined into a five-point composite measure of procedural understanding. [b] Answers to these four questions are combined into a simple summative index of overall media consumption. [c] Birth date was converted into actual age by interviewer.

Table A.7. Recoding of variable religious affiliation

Original category	Recoded category
Afrobarometer	
None, Agnostic, Atheist	no religious affiliation
Christian only, Roman Catholic	Catholic
Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Quaker, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, Dutch Reformed, Calvinist	Protestant
Muslim only, Sunni only, Ismaeli, Moridiya Brotherhood, Tijaniya Brotherhood, Qadiriya Brotherhood, Shia only, Confrerie de la Trabiya, Confrerie de le Hamadiya, Bashariya Mission, Hisbulah Mission	Muslim
Buddhist	Buddhist
Hindu	Hindu
Orthodox, Coptic, Mennonite, Independent, Jehova's Witness, Mormon, Traditional/Ethnic religion, Bahai, Church of Christ, Zionist Christian Church, Apostolic, Brethren in Christ, New Apostolic Church, Old Apostolic, UCCSA, St John Apostolic, Old Apostolic Church, Christian Rationalism, Rhema, Vahao ny Oloko, Toby Betela, Last Church, Utopia Church, Bible Believers, Covenant Church, Emmanuel, Nationality, Twelve Apostles, Nazaren, Topia, Izala, NG Kerk, Nazareth Church, Voice of Unity, CMML, Faith Apostolic, United Church of Zambia, Zaoga, Salvation Army, Johanne Masowe, African Apostolic Faith, United Church, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Assembly of God, Harriste, Christianisme Celeste, CMA, Ibadi, Other	other
AmericasBarometer	
Ninguna, Agnóstico o Ateo	no religious affiliation
Católico, Iglesia de los Santos de los Último	Catholic
Protestante, Evangélica y Pentecostal	Protestant
–	Muslim
–	Buddhist
–	Hindu
Religiones Orientales, Religiones Tradicionales, Judío, Testigos de Jehová	other
Arab Barometer	
–	no religious affiliation
Christian	Catholic
–	Protestant
Muslim	Muslim
–	Buddhist
–	Hindu
Other, Jewish	other
Asian Barometer	
None	no religious affiliation
Roman Catholic	Catholic
Protestant, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Episcopal, Methodist,	Protestant
Islam, Shia, Sunni	Muslim
Buddhist	Buddhist

Hindu	Hindu
Traditional folk religion, Jews, Other Asian religions, Tenrikyo, Cosmology, Seicho, Sikhism, Iglesia Ni Cristo, Agllpayan, Born Again, Grace Gospel of Church, Jesus Christle, Jesus Christ is lord, Shinto, Taoism, Taoism and Buddhist, I-Kuan Tao, Confucianism, Tiruray, Other, Jehovah Witness, Mormons, Dating Daan, Anglican, Baha'I, Animism, Soka association, Iglesia Filipina independente	other
Latinobarómetro	
Believer not belonging to any church, Agnostic, Atheist, None	no religious affiliation
Catholic, Christian	Catholic
Protestant, Evangelic without specification, Evangelic Baptist, Evangelic Methodist, Evangelic Pentecostal, Adventist	Protestant
Muslim	Muslim
Buddhist	Buddhist
–	Hindu
Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, Jewish, Afro-American Cult, Orthodox, Believer, Others	other
World Values Survey	
None	no religious affiliation
Aglipayan, Christian, Greek Catholic, Igelisa ni Cristo, Roman Catholic	Catholic
Anglican, Baptist, Christian Reform, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodists, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Protestant, Seven Day Adventist, The Church of Sweden, Dutch Reformed, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, ZA: Evangelical/Apostolic	Protestant
Muslim, Shia, Sunni, Al-Hadis	Muslim
Buddhist, Taoist	Buddhist
Hindu	Hindu
Ancestral worshiping, Armenian Apostolic Church, Church of Christ, Confucianism, Druse, Free church, Gregorian, Independent African Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jew, Mormon, Native religion, Orthodox, Other, Paganism, Salvation Army, Sikh, Spiritista, Spiritualists, Unitarian, Zionist, Zoroastrian, Ratana, New Apostolic Church, Yiguan Dao, Daoism, DZ: Christian, AU: Uniting Church, ZA: African Traditional Religions	other

Table A.8. Classification of political systems according to macro-cultural context

Country	Cultural context	Country	Cultural context	Country	Cultural context
Algeria	Islamic	Haiti	Catholic	Philippines	Catholic
Argentina	Catholic	Honduras	Catholic	Poland	Catholic
Armenia	Orthodox	Hong Kong	Confucian	Qatar	Islamic
Australia	Protestant	India	Asian	Romania	Orthodox
Azerbaijan	Islamic	Indonesia	Islamic	Russia	ex-Communist
Bahrain	Islamic	Iraq	Islamic	Rwanda	African
Belarus	ex-Communist	Jamaica	Protestant	Senegal	African
Belize	Catholic	Japan	Confucian	Sierra Leone	African
Benin	African	Kazakhstan	ex-Communist	Singapore	Confucian
Bolivia	Catholic	Kenya	African	Slovenia	Catholic
Botswana	African	Kuwait	Islamic	South Africa	African
Brazil	Catholic	Kyrgyzstan	ex-Communist	South Korea	Confucian
Burkina Faso	African	Lebanon	Islamic	Spain	Catholic
Burundi	African	Lesotho	African	Sudan	Islamic
Cambodia	Asian	Liberia	African	Suriname	African[d]
Cameroon	African	Madagascar	African	Sweden	Protestant
Canada	Catholic	Malawi	African	Taiwan	Confucian
Cape Verde	Catholic[a]	Malaysia	Islamic	Tanzania	African
Chile	Catholic	Mauritius	Asian[c]	Thailand	Asian
China	Confucian	Mexico	Catholic	Togo	African
Colombia	Catholic	Mongolia	Asian	Trinidad & Tobago	Catholic
Costa Rica	Catholic	Morocco	Islamic	Tunisia	Islamic
Côte d'Ivoire	African	Mozambique	African	Turkey	Islamic
Cyprus	Orthodox	Namibia	African	Uganda	African
Dominican Republic	Catholic	Netherlands	Protestant	Ukraine	ex-Communist
Ecuador	Catholic	New Zealand	Protestant	Uruguay	Catholic
El Salvador	Catholic	Nicaragua	Catholic	USA	Protestant
Estonia	ex-Communist	Niger	Islamic	Uzbekistan	ex-Communist
Georgia	Orthodox	Nigeria	African	Venezuela	Catholic
Germany	Protestant	Pakistan	Islamic	Vietnam	Confucian
Ghana	African	Panama	Catholic	Yemen	Islamic
Guatemala	Catholic	Paraguay	Catholic	Zambia	African
Guinea	African	Peru	Catholic	Zimbabwe	African
Guyana	Asian[b]				

Notes: Author's classification based on Alesina et al. (2003), Norris and Inglehart (2011), and Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann (2003). Since macro-cultural context is a stable concept that does not change from one year to another, table only lists each political system once instead of for each country-year covered. [a] Cape Verde was uninhabited before the Portuguese discovered it in the 15th century. Its culture is hence dominated by the Portuguese Catholicism, not by African tribal traditions. [b] Guyana is populated mainly by people of Indian descent. Its culture is hence predominantly Asian. [c] Mauritius is populated mainly by people of Indian descent. Its culture is hence predominantly Asian. [d] Suriname is populated mainly by people of African descent. Its culture is hence predominantly African.

Table A.9. Actual democratic performance, actual systemic performance, and levels of socioeconomic modernization for individual country-years

Country (year)	Dem. perf.	Syst. perf.	Level of mod.	Country (year)	Dem. perf.	Syst. perf.	Level of mod.
democracies	*0.70*	*0.57*	*0.63*	*autocracies*	*0.28*	*0.51*	*0.52*
Argentina (2012)	0.73	0.57	0.80	Algeria (2013)	0.22	0.44	0.62
Argentina (2013)	0.73	0.57	0.80	Armenia (2011)	0.27	0.59	0.68
Australia (2012)	0.94	0.74	0.91	Azerbaijan (2011)	0.16	0.49	0.67
Belize (2012)	0.92	0.60	0.60	Bahrain (2014)	0.08	0.69	0.87
Benin (2011)	0.66	0.44	0.30	Belarus (2011)	0.09	0.61	0.79
Bolivia (2012)	0.56	0.48	0.54	Burkina Faso (2012)	0.42	0.48	0.11
Bolivia (2013)	0.56	0.48	0.55	Burundi (2012)	0.27	0.57	0.03
Botswana (2012)	0.66	0.53	0.61	Cambodia (2012)	0.19	0.53	0.25
Brazil (2012)	0.82	0.59	0.70	Cameroon (2013)	0.17	0.52	0.42
Brazil (2013)	0.83	0.59	0.71	China (2011)	0.07	0.56	0.53
Brazil (2014)	0.82	0.59	0.72	China (2012)	0.08	0.56	0.54
Canada (2012)	0.92	0.83	0.89	Côte d'Ivoire (2013)	0.37	0.41	0.42
Cape Verde (2011)	0.87	0.57	0.53	Guinea (2013)	0.27	0.39	0.18
Chile (2011)	0.92	0.64	0.78	Haiti (2012)	0.34	0.39	0.35
Chile (2012)	0.92	0.65	0.78	Honduras (2012)	0.42	0.42	0.49
Chile (2013)	0.91	0.64	0.79	Honduras (2013)	0.41	0.42	0.50
Colombia (2012)	0.57	0.50	0.66	Hong Kong (2012)	0.58	0.74	0.91
Colombia (2013)	0.54	0.49	0.66	Hong Kong (2013)	0.58	0.75	0.92
Costa Rica (2012)	0.94	0.68	0.69	Iraq (2012)	0.24	0.44	0.61
Costa Rica (2013)	0.93	0.68	0.69	Iraq (2013)	0.26	0.41	0.61
Cyprus (2011)	0.85	0.66	0.80	Kazakhstan (2011)	0.19	0.54	0.72
Dom. Rep. (2012)	0.66	0.44	0.67	Kenya (2011)	0.46	0.44	0.23
Dom. Rep. (2013)	0.65	0.44	0.68	Kuwait (2014)	0.30	0.69	0.84
Ecuador (2012)	0.51	0.54	0.61	Kyrgyzstan (2011)	0.34	0.54	0.53
Ecuador (2013)	0.50	0.55	0.62	Lebanon (2013)	0.40	0.54	0.74
El Salvador (2012)	0.61	0.49	0.57	Madagascar (2013)	0.29	0.38	0.26
El Salvador (2013)	0.62	0.48	0.58	Malaysia (2011)	0.36	0.62	0.74
Estonia (2011)	0.94	0.71	0.80	Malaysia (2012)	0.36	0.63	0.74
Georgia (2014)	0.61	0.63	0.69	Morocco (2011)	0.33	0.52	0.50
Germany (2013)	0.87	0.77	0.87	Morocco (2013)	0.33	0.52	0.50
Ghana (2012)	0.78	0.51	0.42	Morocco (2014)	0.33	0.51	0.50
Guatemala (2012)	0.46	0.46	0.47	Mozambique (2012)	0.43	0.42	0.16
Guatemala (2013)	0.49	0.45	0.47	Nicaragua (2012)	0.34	0.50	0.53
Guyana (2012)	0.55	0.50	0.52	Nicaragua (2013)	0.30	0.51	0.54
India (2014)	0.65	0.48	0.36	Nigeria (2011)	0.40	0.38	0.47
Indonesia (2011)	0.61	0.49	0.51	Nigeria (2013)	0.45	0.40	0.49
Jamaica (2012)	0.66	0.50	0.63	Pakistan (2012)	0.39	0.41	0.38
Japan (2010)	0.86	0.80	0.87	Qatar (2010)	0.18	0.77	0.91
Japan (2011)	0.86	0.79	0.87	Russia (2011)	0.22	0.55	0.80
Lesotho (2012)	0.59	0.45	0.36	Rwanda (2012)	0.18	0.57	0.16
Liberia (2012)	0.55	0.39	0.25	Singapore (2010)	0.38	0.73	0.91
Malawi (2012)	0.48	0.50	0.16	Singapore (2012)	0.42	0.72	0.92
Mauritius (2012)	0.81	0.61	0.62	Sudan (2013)	0.04	0.38	0.33
Mexico (2012)	0.58	0.47	0.70	Thailand (2010)	0.39	0.54	0.49
Mexico (2013)	0.53	0.46	0.71	Togo (2012)	0.35	0.48	0.31
Mongolia (2010)	0.73	0.49	0.65	Uganda (2012)	0.34	0.49	0.18
Namibia (2012)	0.64	0.47	0.50	Uzbekistan (2011)	0.02	0.53	0.55

Continued

Table A.9. *Continued*

Netherlands (2012)	0.93	0.75	0.89	Venezuela (2012)	0.25	0.46	0.77
New Zealand (2011)	0.92	0.82	0.86	Venezuela (2013)	0.24	0.43	0.77
Niger (2013)	0.58	0.45	0.06	Vietnam (2010)	0.13	0.56	0.38
Panama (2012)	0.78	0.63	0.69	Yemen (2013)	0.16	0.27	0.35
Panama (2013)	0.75	0.61	0.70	Zimbabwe (2012)	0.17	0.46	0.36
Paraguay (2012)	0.56	0.55	0.57				
Paraguay (2013)	0.54	0.57	0.57				
Peru (2012)	0.67	0.52	0.67				
Peru (2013)	0.66	0.51	0.68				
Philippines (2010)	0.57	0.49	0.50				
Philippines (2012)	0.59	0.50	0.52				
Poland (2012)	0.91	0.67	0.74				
Romania (2012)	0.68	0.63	0.71				
Senegal (2013)	0.71	0.48	0.23				
Sierra Leone (2012)	0.57	0.43	0.26				
Slovenia (2011)	0.89	0.74	0.76				
South Africa (2011)	0.71	0.35	0.70				
South Africa (2013)	0.69	0.36	0.71				
South Korea (2010)	0.81	0.75	0.84				
South Korea (2011)	0.81	0.75	0.84				
Spain (2011)	0.91	0.70	0.79				
Suriname (2012)	0.77	0.61	0.65				
Sweden (2011)	0.95	0.86	0.88				
Taiwan (2010)	0.80	0.75	0.81				
Taiwan (2012)	0.81	0.73	0.81				
Tanzania (2012)	0.52	0.48	0.24				
Thailand (2013)	0.40	0.54	0.52				
Trin. & Tob. (2011)	0.72	0.62	0.62				
Trin. & Tob. (2012)	0.72	0.62	0.62				
Tunisia (2013)	0.49	0.58	0.60				
Turkey (2011)	0.54	0.59	0.63				
Ukraine (2011)	0.47	0.55	0.72				
Uruguay (2011)	0.93	0.70	0.76				
Uruguay (2012)	0.93	0.70	0.77				
Uruguay (2013)	0.91	0.70	0.77				
USA (2011)	0.94	0.69	0.90				
USA (2012)	0.95	0.68	0.89				
Zambia (2013)	0.49	0.52	0.37				

Notes: Means for each country-year on respective index. Dem. perf = actual democratic performance; Syst. perf. = actual systemic performance; Level of mod. = level of socioeconomic modernization.

APPENDIX B

Additional tables and figures on results of the empirical analysis

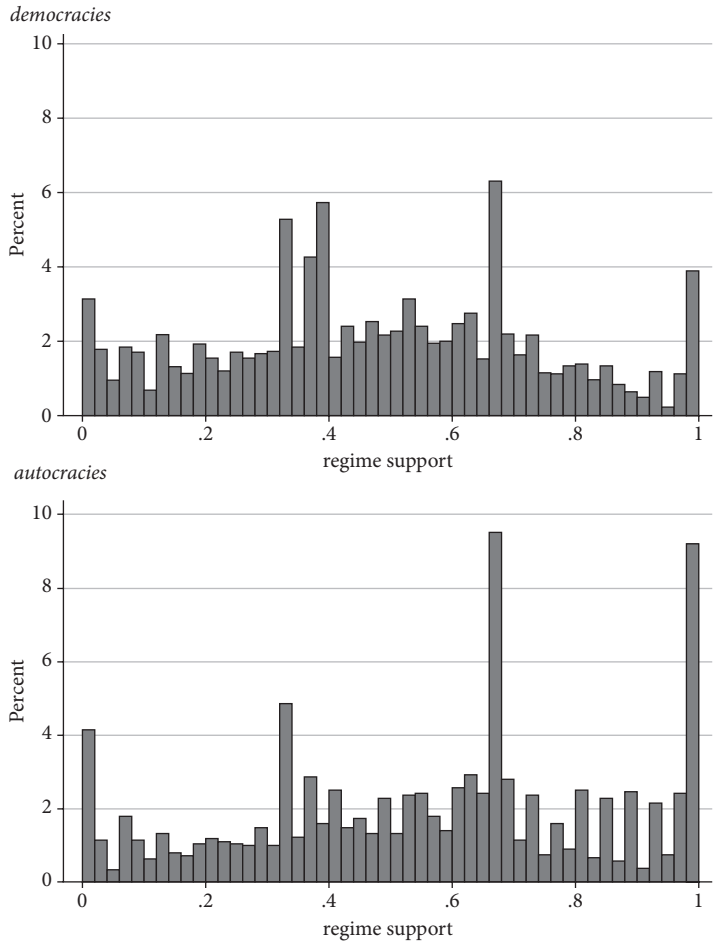

Figure B.1. Frequency distributions for regime support in democracies and autocracies

Notes: Frequency distributions of latent variable regime support for democratic and autocratic regimes. N = 136,699 (democracies)/N = 83,552 (autocracies).

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

Table B.1. Levels of regime support in individual countries

democracies		*democracies (cont.)*		*autocracies (cont.)*	
Argentina 2012	0.46	Namibia 2012	0.70	Burundi 2012	0.76
Argentina 2013	0.35	Netherlands 2012	0.43	Cambodia 2012	0.70
Australia 2012	0.44	New Zealand 2011	0.50	Cameroon 2013	0.52
Belize 2012	0.59	Niger 2013	0.73	China 2011	0.80
Benin 2011	0.62	Panama 2012	0.41	China 2012	0.74
Bolivia 2012	0.44	Panama 2013	0.38	Cote d'Ivoire 2013	0.53
Bolivia 2013	0.39	Paraguay 2012	0.42	Guinea 2013	0.58
Botswana 2012	0.61	Paraguay 2013	0.33	Haiti 2012	0.57
Brazil 2012	0.50	Peru 2012	0.36	Honduras 2012	0.36
Brazil 2013	0.40	Peru 2013	0.29	Honduras 2013	0.27
Brazil 2014	0.33	Philippines 2010	0.47	Hong Kong 2012	0.56
Canada 2012	0.50	Philippines 2012	0.55	Hong Kong 2013	0.55
Cape Verde 2011	0.58	Poland 2012	0.34	Iraq 2012	0.41
Chile 2011	0.39	Romania 2012	0.31	Iraq 2013	0.43
Chile 2012	0.51	Senegal 2013	0.67	Kazakhastan 2011	0.61
Chile 2013	0.37	Sierra Leone 2012	0.57	Kenya 2011	0.56
Colombia 2012	0.44	Slovenia 2011	0.27	Kuwait 2014	0.66
Colombia 2013	0.37	South Africa 2011	0.55	Kyrgyzstan 2011	0.53
Costa Rica 2012	0.42	South Africa 2013	0.46	Lebanon 2013	0.33
Costa Rica 2013	0.32	South Korea 2010	0.44	Madagascar 2013	0.52
Cyprus 2011	0.44	South Korea 2011	0.33	Malaysia 2011	0.67
Dom. Republic 2012	0.45	Spain 2011	0.38	Malaysia 2012	0.62
Dom. Republic 2013	0.44	Suriname 2012	0.60	Morocco 2011	0.51
Ecuador 2012	0.53	Sweden 2011	0.53	Morocco 2013	0.38
Ecuador 2013	0.49	Taiwan 2010	0.40	Morocco 2013–14	0.41
El Salvador 2012	0.53	Taiwan 2012	0.43	Mozambique 2012	0.71
El Salvador 2013	0.41	Tanzania 2012	0.68	Nicaragua 2012	0.59
Estonia 2011	0.48	Thailand 2013	0.49	Nicaragua 2013	0.48
Georgia 2014	0.41	Trinidad & Tobago 2011	0.40	Nigeria 2011	0.43
Germany 2013	0.49	Trinidad & Tobago 2012	0.42	Nigeria 2013	0.37
Ghana 2012	0.53	Tunisia 2013	0.35	Pakistan 2012	0.39
Guatemala 2012	0.46	Turkey 2011	0.57	Qatar 2010	0.81
Guatemala 2013	0.34	Ukraine 2011	0.32	Russia 2011	0.44
Guyana 2012	0.55	Uruguay 2011	0.46	Rwanda 2012	0.59
India 2014	0.55	Uruguay 2012	0.56	Singapore 2010	0.69
Indonesia 2011	0.53	Uruguay 2013	0.49	Singapore 2012	0.66
Jamaica 2012	0.51	USA 2011	0.42	Sudan 2013	0.49
Japan 2010	0.41	USA 2012	0.42	Thailand 2010	0.54
Japan 2011	0.36	Zambia 2013	0.60	Togo 2012	0.48
Lesotho 2012	0.59	*autocracies*		Uganda 2012	0.62
Liberia 2012	0.54	Algeria 2013	0.58	Uzbekistan 2011	0.87
Malawi 2012	0.67	Armenia 2011	0.42	Venezuela 2012	0.54
Mauritius 2012	0.59	Azerbaijan 2011	0.66	Venezuela 2013	0.46
Mexico 2012	0.44	Bahrain 2014	0.65	Vietnam 2010	0.85
Mexico 2013	0.37	Belarus 2011	0.52	Yemen 2013	0.42
Mongolia 2010	0.42	Burkina Faso 2012	0.68	Zimbabwe 2012	0.54

Notes: Means of latent variable regime support for individual countries. Weighted data.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013, AmericasBarometer 2012, Arab Barometer 2012–2014, Asian Barometer 2010–2012, Latinobarómetro 2013, World Values Survey 2010–2014.

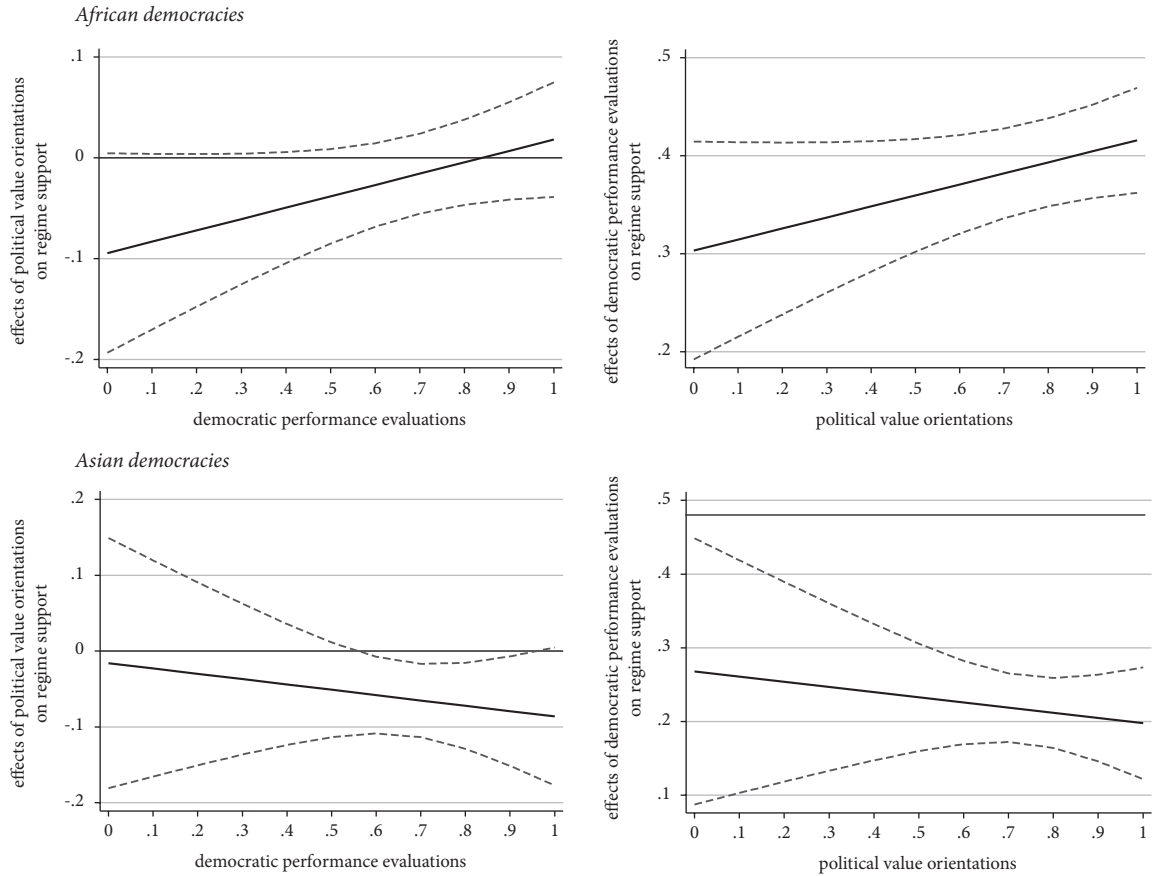

Figure B.2. Conditional effects plots for political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations in African and Asian democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of political value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations and vice versa (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Models D2 in Table 5.4.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

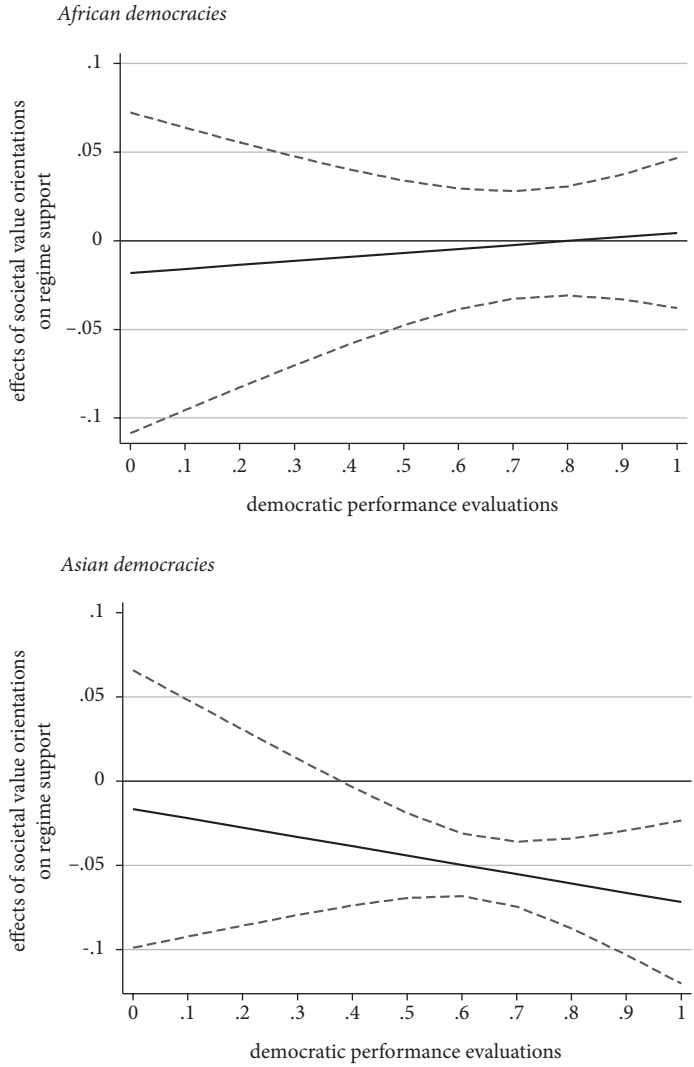

Figure B.3. Conditional effects plots for societal value orientations in African and Asian democracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of societal value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Models D3 in Table 5.4.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

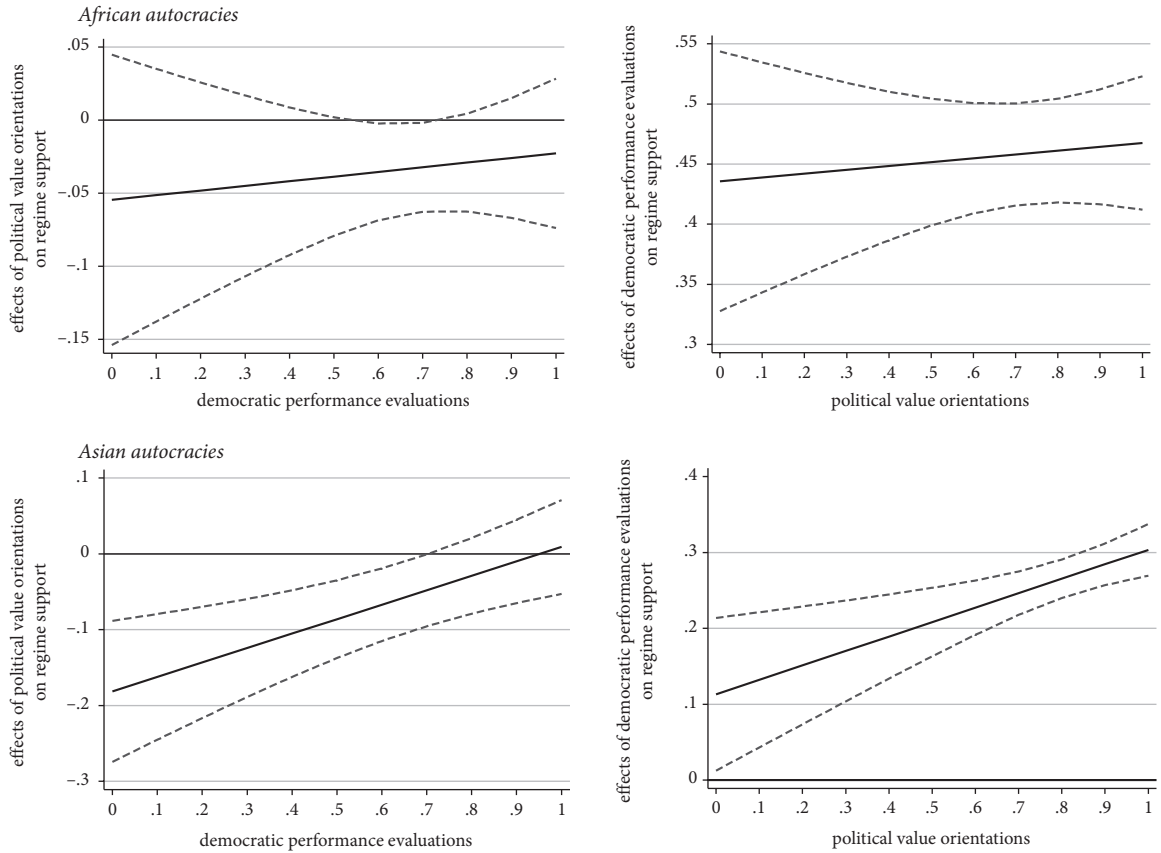

Figure B.4. Conditional effects plots for political value orientations and democratic performance evaluations in African and Asian autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of political value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations and vice versa (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Models A2 in Table 5.5.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

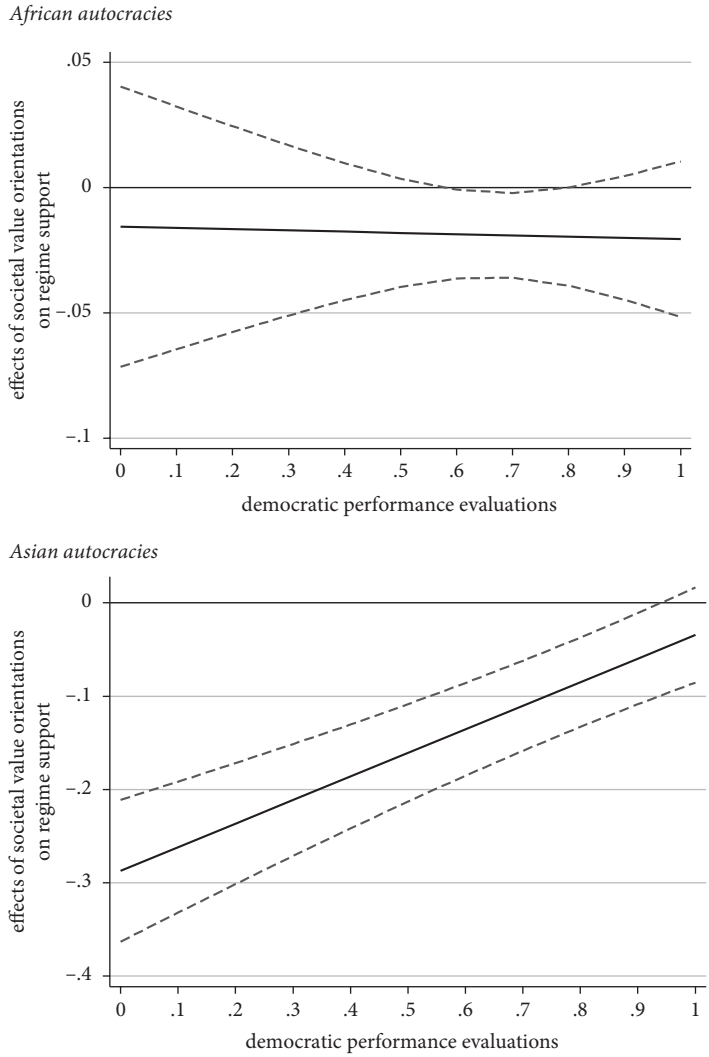

Figure B.5. Conditional effects plots for societal value orientations in African and Asian autocracies

Notes: Multi-level structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation. Unstandardized estimates and 95% confidence intervals of conditional effect of societal value orientations on regime support for varying degrees of democratic performance evaluations (0.1 scale-points intervals). Model specifications and Ns according to Models A3 in Table 5.5.

Sources: Afrobarometer 2011–2013; Asian Barometer 2010–2012.

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Index