

## **Conceptions of Democracy in the Arab World**

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**ABSTRACT:** What do people in the Arab world have in mind when they voice support for “democracy” and what shapes these conceptions of democracy? While some in this region prioritize rules and procedures like elections and free speech in their conceptions of democracy, many see the substantive outcomes democracy might produce as more essential. We find that individual-level characteristics associated with the likelihood that a person is exposed to procedural conceptions of democracy, as well as factors that may lead individuals to see reduction in poverty and inequality as particularly desirable explain variation in how people in this region think about democracy. We also find that the individual-level correlates of how people conceive of democracy are largely consistent across the populations we examine. Our findings contribute to our understanding of the prospects for lasting democratic institutions in this region and the policies that may encourage citizen commitment to democratic institutions.

Although the concept of democracy is multifaceted, most formal definitions focus on characteristics of government institutions and procedures. Democracies are typically thought of, first and foremost, as nations where citizens have regular opportunities to shape policy by replacing their leaders through free, competitive elections. In order for elections to be truly free and fair democracies must also ensure that basic civil rights and liberties, like the right to publically criticize leaders, are protected. The widespread uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa—the “Arab Spring”— are frequently explained in the media as driven by demands that authoritarian regimes be replaced with representative democratic governments. However, scholarly accounts indicate that dissatisfaction with domestic economic inequality, increasing prices of basic necessities and high levels of unemployment fueled many of the popular movements in the region (Malik and Awadallah 2011). In order to understand the meaning of demands for democratic reforms and the likelihood that such reforms will endure in this region, it is important to examine what people have in mind when they demand democracy. In other words, what standards are people likely to use when assessing whether the benefits of democratic governance have been realized?

Research indicates that even in countries like the United States, where there is a long history of democratic governance, many people lack an understanding of the basic contours of democratic political institutions and the policy-making process (e.g., Delli-Carpini and Keeter 1997) and voice support for political processes that are strikingly at odds with scholarly notions of democratic governance (e.g., Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). In a political context with a long tradition of democratic governance these lacunae in people’s appreciation of democratic procedures may have few consequences because established political institutions are stable and resistant to change. In contrast, in emerging democracies or situations where undemocratic

governments are being threatened, public understanding of and commitment to structural elements of a democracy may be essential to the prospects for lasting democratic institutions. If calls for democracy are, first and foremost, calls for improved economic conditions, support for democratic regimes may falter if economic conditions do not improve rapidly enough.

In this paper we examine how individuals in the Arab world conceive of democracy, as well as the individual-level factors that may explain variation in these conceptions of democracy. We use data from a survey conducted in four populations—Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. The survey asked respondents in these populations to indicate what they saw as the most and second most important characteristics of a democracy.<sup>1</sup> Two response options focused on the procedural aspects of a democracy (the opportunity to replace leaders through a voting process and freedom to criticize those in power) and two focused on substantive economic outcomes people may associate with democratic regimes (low income inequality and provision of basic necessities). Over half of the respondents in our sample indicated that one of the substantive outcomes was the most essential characteristic of democracy, with 31 percent prioritizing both of the substantive outcomes over the two procedural characteristics. Thus, for many people in this region, assessments of the quality of a new democratic regime may rest primarily on the substantive outcomes the government produces, rather than whether the regime adheres to democratic procedures.

In our analysis we make two contributions to our understanding of the factors that shape conceptions of democracy in the Arab world. First, some existing work has examined Arabs' understanding of democracy. However, this work typically assesses public ideas about democracy at the aggregate level and makes comparisons across national units (Dalton, Shin, and

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<sup>1</sup> The survey also included samples from Morocco, Kuwait and Yemen, however respondents in these populations were not asked the questions at the core of our analysis.

Jou 2007; Braizat 2010; de Regt 2013). One study that we are aware of assesses bivariate relationships between several individual level characteristics and perceived importance of particular characteristics of democracy—e.g., the relationship between gender and viewing gender equality as an essential characteristic of democracy (de Regt 2013). We build on this existing work by leveraging a multivariate regression framework to systematically examine the individual level characteristics that are independently associated with a tendency to conceive of democracy in procedural, rather than substantive terms. Our evidence suggests that two classes of factors shape which characteristics people see as essential to a democracy. The first includes individual level characteristics like education and interest in politics which are likely to be associated with direct exposure to procedural definitions of democracy. The second includes characteristics like low household income which could be associated with a tendency to project substantively desirable outcomes—e.g., assurances that people’s basic needs will be met and that income inequality will be reduced—onto the term “democracy.”

Second, we assess whether the correlates of how people conceive of democracy vary across the four populations we examine. While we do find some differences in how people across the four populations conceive of democracy on average, the correlates of how individuals conceive of democracy are, for the most part, consistent across these populations. This suggests that although variation across these populations in terms of their cultures, demographic compositions, and political pasts is associated with variation in the overall prevalence of procedural understandings of democracy, these differences do not lead to substantial heterogeneity in the individual-level factors that shape people’s understanding of democracy.

In the next section of the paper we discuss the concept of democracy and review previous research that has examined attitudes about democracy in the Arab world. Then we present our

theoretical expectations regarding how individual-level characteristics may shape people's understanding of democracy. Next we describe our data and present our findings. In the final section of the paper we discuss the implications of our findings and the limitations of our analysis.

### **Attitudes about Democracy in the Arab World**

Survey research in the Arab world consistently finds “overwhelming support for democracy in the region” and that levels of support for democracy in Arab populations match those found in other countries (Jamal et al. 2008; Braizat 2010; Tessler 2002, 2010; Tessler et al. 2012, 89). Much of the existing research on public attitudes about democracy in the Arab world focuses on the correlates of diffuse support for democracy or the factors associated with support for specific concepts often associated with democracy (e.g., free speech, tolerance, etc.). For example, support for democracy has been linked to basic socioeconomic and demographic characteristics like education, age, and income (e.g., Casanova 2005; Fattah 2006; Shafiq 2008; Ciftci 2010; Tezcur et al. 2011). Partly stemming from concerns that Islam may be incompatible with liberal democracy (e.g., Huntington 1996), a great deal of research has also examined the role of religion in shaping support for democracy in the Arab World. Overall, findings regarding the relationship between religious observance, attitudes about the role of religion in society, and support for democracy and democratic ideals have been mixed (Fattah 2006; Ciftci 2010; Fish 2010; Pepinsky and Welbourne 2011; Sarkissian 2011; Tezcur et al. 2011).

This work has provided important insight into the correlates of stated support for democracy. Here we build on this existing research by examining how people conceive of democracy and the individual-level correlates that shape these ideas about what characteristics

are essential to democracies. Scholarly conceptions of democracy typically focus on structural aspects of a political system such as free, fair and frequent elections, access to alternative sources of information, and freedom of expression (e.g., Schumpeter 1942; Franck 1992; Sorensen 1993; Dahl 1998). At the very least, under Schumpeter's narrow definition in a democracy people must have "the ability to choose between leaders at election time" (Sorensen 1993, 10).<sup>2</sup> The notion that particular procedural arrangements are at the core of the idea of democracy is also reflected in scholarly attempts to quantify democracy, such as the Polity IV project. These coding systems typically focus on procedural criteria such as the presence of institutions and procedures for the expression of public preference and constraints on government institutions and officials (Polity IV Global Report 2011, 6).

In contrast, individual citizens may vary greatly in how they conceive of democracy (Miller, Hesli and Reisinger 1997; King et al. 2003; Schedler and Sarsfield 2007; Canache 2012). Inconsistencies and conflicts in how people understand the idea of democracy are highlighted by evidence from the U.S. (e.g., Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002) and comparative literature (e.g., Tezcur et al. 2011) demonstrating that stated support for democracy can and does coexist with stated readiness to accept undemocratic procedures (e.g., handing policy-making power over to unelected experts or the military) in a variety of contexts. Ultimately, reported support for democracy does not necessarily imply support for a system of governance that meets the standards scholars typically emphasize when characterizing a democracy.

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<sup>2</sup> Some scholars (Sartori, 1987; Sorensen, 1993) note that substantive concerns may affect the viability of an effective democratic system, pointing out that sustaining democratic procedures in contexts of extreme poverty may be difficult (Held, 1997). However, these substantive elements are typically conceived of as helpful preconditions for the establishment and stability of democracy, not as essential characteristics of a democratic regime.

## Variation in Public Conceptions of Democracy in the Arab World

In the analysis presented below, we examine variations in conceptions of democracy along a dimension ranging from “substantive” to “procedural.” Respondents on the substantive end of the scale prioritize substantively desirable economic outcomes in their conceptions of democracy; those on the procedural end instead tend to see formal rules and institutions (e.g., regular elections and protection of civil liberties) as the essential hallmarks of democracy.<sup>3</sup> It is important to emphasize that this dimension does not capture all of the ways in which ideas about what democracy means might vary, nor should it be thought of as measuring how “correct” people are in their understanding of democracy. Rather it captures variation in how people think about democracy that is likely to have important implications for the prospects for establishing enduring democratic regimes in this region. Individuals who prioritize procedural characteristics in their conceptions of democracy may be more likely to maintain a commitment to these procedures during inevitable periods of economic hardship; those who prioritize substantive characteristics may be more likely to backslide in their support for democracy in the face of these substantive challenges.

We expect two classes of factors to affect where people fall on this continuum. The first are *knowledge* based factors—factors that may affect the likelihood that the individual has been exposed to and learned scholarly, procedural definitions of democracy. We refer to the second set of factors as being associated with *projection*. We expect these individual-level characteristics to increase the likelihood that individuals project substantively desirable outcomes (e.g., more favorable economic conditions) onto the positively valenced term “democracy.”

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<sup>3</sup> Tessler et al. (2012) refer to substantive and procedural conceptions of democracy as “economic” and “political,” respectively; Norris (2011) draws a similar distinction between “procedural” and “instrumental” democracy; Bratton and Mattes (2001) contrast intrinsic support for democracy and democratic institutions with instrumental support for democracy as a means to substantive ends.

### *Knowledge Based Factors*

We examine three knowledge-based factors that we expect to be associated with conceiving of democracy in procedural terms: education, age, and interest in politics. Education has been linked to development of democratic attitudes by multiple scholars (Ekehammar, Nilsson & Sidanius, 1987; Inkeles & Smith, 1974). We also posit that those with higher levels of education are more likely to have been exposed to scholarly, procedural conceptions of democracy. Thus, we expect better educated individuals to be more likely to conceive of democracy in these terms.

Because *ceteris paribus*, they may be expected to have been exposed to more information in their lifetimes, older individuals may be more likely to be familiar with procedural conceptions of democracy and to conceive of democracy in this way. On the other hand, younger individuals' thinking about democracy may be more likely to have been shaped by exposure to recent democracy promotion trends that emphasize procedural elements—particularly free elections. If this were the case we would expect younger individuals to be more likely to think of democracy in procedural terms. We also consider the possibility that the relationship between age and conceptions of democracy is curvilinear due to historical factors such as failed democratic movements that may have strongly affected how one generation of individuals thinks about democracy.

Individuals with higher levels of political interest are also more likely to spend time learning about and engaging with information about political matters, and to simply think about the topic more frequently (Judd & Krosnick 1989). Furthermore, research on political cognition suggests that higher levels of interest in politics are associated with greater political



sophistication (Luskin 1987). Thus, we expect those who are more interested in politics to be more likely to conceive of democracy in procedural terms.

### *Projection Based Factors*

Over 80 percent of respondents in each of the four populations surveyed agreed with the statement: “Democracy may have its problems but is better than any other form of government.” As Schedler and Sarsfield (2007) argue, “[d]emocracy’s almost universal acceptance as an abstract value may lead people to... profess rhetorical ‘preferences for democracy’ that are devoid of any concrete content” and that in many cases, democracy may be a “concept[] that designate[s] something valuable without naming its substance” (639). The survey question we use in our analysis provides two response options—low income inequality and provision of basic necessities—which few scholars would argue are more essential characteristics of democratic governance than regular election or protection of individual liberties. We expect that people who are particularly concerned with remedying substantive economic problems will tend to find substantive improvements in society to be particularly salient. Consequently, we expect them to project these personal substantive priorities onto the idea of democracy. We examine four individual level characteristics that may lead people to project substantively desirable economic outcomes onto the concept of democracy: household income, subjective assessments of economic conditions, engagement with religious texts (the Quran), and gender.

Because they are less likely to be directly affected by concerns like social inequality or lack of basic goods and services, individuals who have greater economic resources may view these substantive concerns as less salient and, thus, be likely to project remedying these problems onto the idea of democracy. In addition, people who do not have to worry constantly about feeding their family may have greater psychological freedom to prioritize procedural concerns

over substantive concerns in thinking about the potential benefits of an alternative political regime (Maslow 1943). In her work, de Regt (2013) finds evidence in some Arab countries included on the World Values Survey that lower social class is associated with a tendency to rate redistributive policies as particularly important to a democracy. We expect that, after controlling for potential confounds (e.g., level of education), higher income individuals will be more likely to identify procedural elements as the hallmarks of democracy, whereas lower income individuals will tend to project their instrumental needs onto their beliefs about the core elements of democracies.

We also consider the possibility that negative *subjective* assessments of both personal and national economic conditions lead people to project their desire for improved economic conditions onto the concept of democracy. For example, those who view the economy as the most important issue facing the country or say that their personal or national economic conditions are poor, may be more likely to conceive of democracy in substantive terms. We note that there is an important difference between objective economic circumstances and subjective assessments of economic conditions. Although these concepts are related, objective economic conditions are a better measure of the extent to which economic concerns are salient in an individual's day-to-day life. In contrast, assessments of national economic conditions—and even an individual's subjective assessment of their own economic circumstances—may be shaped by satisfaction with existing governing institutions, media exposure, or a variety of other factors.

The third projection related possibility that we examine is that those who regularly engage with religious texts are more likely to prioritize substantive outcomes in their conceptions of democracy. For example, Davis and Robinson (2006) argue that structural and scriptural elements unique to Islam encourage Muslims to support redistributive government policies (see

also Wilson 1997; see Pepinsky and Welbourne 2011 for mixed evidence regarding the association between piety and support for redistributive policies).<sup>4</sup> Thus, we expect that individuals who report reading the Quran more frequently will be more likely to project their normative preferences regarding wealth distribution and provision of basic necessities onto the idea of democracy.

Finally, we assess whether gender affects how people conceive of democracy. There is a great deal of debate regarding whether women tend to be more nurturing, more sympathetic to the needs of the poor, and broadly more affected by, and concerned with, ensuring that basic needs within the family and surrounding society are met (e.g., Goldberg and Kremen 1990; Popova 2002; Elmelech and Lu 2004). If women are systematically more concerned with these matters than men, we would expect them to be more likely to project their preference for more equitable distribution of wealth and assurances that people's basic needs are met onto the concept of democracy.

### **Assessing Conceptualizations of Democracy in the Arab World**

Our analysis uses public opinion data collected during the first wave of the Arab Barometer Survey (2006-2008). The analysis that follows is based on respondents who provided usable responses to the two questions about the meaning of democracy, as well as responses to all of the correlate measures we use in our analysis. Our total sample size is 4,027, with 1,078 respondents from Jordan, 1,130 from Palestine, 792 from Algeria, and 1,027 from Lebanon. We

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<sup>4</sup> In Jordan and Palestine all respondents identified as Muslim. The religious identification question was not asked in Algeria. In Lebanon approximately half of respondents identified as Christian. We include an indicator for "Christian" in our models to account for these individuals. Unfortunately the survey did not include a measure of frequency of reading the Bible, precluding us from assessing whether engagement with that religious text is associated with variation in conceptions of democracy.

provide summary statistics for our full sample, as well as broken down by the four political units in Appendix Table 1.

### *Measuring Procedural Conceptions of Democracy*

Our outcome variable is based on responses to two questions: “People often differ in their views on the characteristics that are essential to democracy. If you have to choose only one thing, what would you choose as the most important characteristic?” A follow-up question asked respondents what they would choose as the second most important. In each case respondents were presented with four characteristics (labels we use below presented in parentheses): 1) Opportunity to change the government through elections (*elections*); 2) Freedom to criticize the government/those in power (*free speech*); 3) A small income gap between rich and poor (*income equality*); and 4) Basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter for everyone (*basic necessities*). Like questions about democracy used in other large scale surveys (e.g., the World Values Survey), these questions do not explicitly ask respondents to define the term “democracy.” Instead they ask respondents what they see as the essential characteristics of democracy. Some respondents may have interpreted these questions as asking about what democracy *should do* rather than what democracy *is*. In either case, the questions allow us to distinguish respondents who see policy outcomes as central to the concept of democracy from those who see procedures as more important.

The structure of these questions has an important advantage over other approaches to measuring conceptions of democracy in that it forces respondents to make tradeoffs. Other surveys, including the World Values Survey (WVS), ask respondents to independently rate how essential a variety of characteristics are to a democracy. Although that approach has advantages, it provides respondents with an opportunity to rate many characteristics as extremely important—an opportunity many respondents take. For example, among Jordanian respondents to the WVS in 2007, 58 percent rated “people choosing their leaders in free elections” and

“governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor” as equally essential characteristics of democracy on a 10 point scale. Over 43 percent rated the four characteristics most similar to those described in our data—“governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor,” “people choose their leaders in free elections,” “civil rights protect people’s liberty against oppression,” and “the economy is prospering”—as equally important. In contrast, the items we use force individuals to rank these characteristics, yielding a measure that better captures underlying variation in which characteristics individuals see as most essential to the idea of democracy. We present a cross-tabulation of responses to the items asking respondents to identify the most (rows) and second most important (columns) characteristics of democracy in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The first two response options (*elections* and *free speech*) refer to procedural characteristics of a democracy—two of the characteristics often cited as core defining features of a democracy (e.g., Schedler and Sarsfield 2007, 639). Approximately 29 percent of respondents identified *elections* as the most important characteristic of a democracy and about 20 percent indicated that *free speech* is the most important characteristic. The latter two characteristics (*income equality* and *basic necessities*) refer to substantive outcomes that some may expect democracy to produce, but that few scholars would argue are the most fundamental characteristics of a democracy. Twenty-three percent of respondents indicated that reducing *income inequality* was the most important characteristic of a democracy and 28 percent said that providing *basic necessities* was the most important characteristic.

The pattern of responses across columns shows that only 37 percent of respondents identified either procedural consideration as the second most important characteristic of democracy, with the remaining 62 percent instead pointing to substantive characteristics. Finally,

considering the pattern of responses to the two items in combination, we find that only 18 percent of respondents (11.3 + 6.6) cited the two procedural options as the first and second most important characteristics of democracy. In contrast, over 31 percent (14.8 + 16.6) cited the two substantive outcome responses as the most and second most important characteristics. Thus, almost one-third of respondents in our sample appear to conceive of democracy primarily in terms of the substantive outcomes they imagine it produces.

For our analysis, we combined these responses into an index of “procedural conceptions of democracy” ranging from 0 to 3. Respondents who chose both substantive criteria as the most important characteristics of democracy are scored as 0. Those who chose a substantive criterion as the most important characteristic of democracy and a procedural criterion as the second most important were scored as 1. Respondents who chose a procedural criterion as the most important and a substantive characteristic as the second most important are placed at 2 on the scale. Finally, respondents who cited the two procedural criteria (in any order) are scored as 3. This measure takes full advantage of all of the information the survey gathered about how respondents conceived of democracy.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Correlates of Individuals’ Understanding of Democracy*

We present our analysis of the correlates of procedural understandings of democracy in Table 2. The ordered logit model presented in column (1) focuses on demographic factors including: gender, age, age-squared (to account for the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between age and understandings of democracy), frequency of reading the Quran, education, income, and an indicator for respondents who did not provide their income (these respondents

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<sup>5</sup> Alternative analysis specifying a dichotomous outcome where respondents who identified a procedural characteristics as the most important set to 1 and those who did not set to 0 yields substantively similar conclusions (see Supplementary Analysis Document Table S3).

were set to the sample mean on the income scale; full question wording and coding details are presented in the Appendix).

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Overall, the findings in Table 2, column (1) conform to our expectations. The analysis supports our expectation that individuals who are particularly likely to be concerned with ensuring that basic economic needs are met and reducing disparities between the wealthy and the poor project these concerns onto the broadly supported abstract notion of “democracy”: Women were more likely to see substantive outcomes as the hallmarks of democracy than men. Specifically, after controlling for the other characteristics in the model, women were approximately five percentage points less likely than men to cite both procedural criteria as the most important hallmarks of a democracy ( $p < .01$ ).<sup>6</sup> This represents a proportional decrease of approximately 29 percent from the baseline likelihood of providing these responses (17.5 percent).

Similarly, we find support for our expectation that those who are more regularly engaged with religious texts are more likely to project an ideal of social equality and relief for the economically disadvantaged onto the idea of democracy. Compared with respondents who report not reading the Quran, those who report reading the Quran every day or nearly every day are approximately four percentage points less likely to cite the two procedural characteristics as the most important characteristics of democracy ( $p < .05$ ).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Estimated differences reported in the text are for a 40-year old male, non-Christian respondent living in Lebanon. Values for Quran Reading, Education, and Household Income set to sample means.

<sup>7</sup> In additional analysis we examined the robustness of this relationship by estimating alternative model specifications that account for a variety of other attitudes associated with religiosity (including religious fundamentalism). We find that the relationship between frequency of reading the Quran and how people conceive of democracy is essentially unchanged in these models. We also find that while frequency of reading the Quran is not associated with either diffuse or specific support for democracy in our sample, measures of religious fundamentalism are strong predictors of these attitudes. See the Supplementary Analysis Document (particularly Table S1) for details.

We also find that more economically advantaged individuals are more likely to conceive of democracy in procedural terms while those who are disadvantaged tend to conceive of democracy in terms of the substantive outcomes it may provide. Specifically, those in the highest income decile were 6.5 percentage points more likely to provide the most procedural description of democracy than those in the lowest decile.<sup>8</sup>

The analysis presented in Table 2 also supports our expectation that a procedural understanding of democracy can be acquired through informational or knowledge-based channels like formal education and engagement with political information. For example, in the column (1) specification, individuals with a graduate degree are 13.5 percentage points more likely to cite both procedural characteristics as the hallmarks of democracy than those with the lowest education level—a proportional increase of almost 80 percent. The fact that this relationship persists after controlling for a variety of other demographic variables—most notably family income—suggests that formal education affects how individuals conceive of democracy independent of the relationship between education and an individuals' material interest in the redistribution of wealth and provision of basic needs.

In column (2) we extend our baseline demographic model by adding a measure of interest in politics. This measure is the average of a two-item political knowledge index (whether respondents could correctly identify the foreign minister and speaker/leader of Parliament) and items measuring self-reported interest in politics and attentiveness to news about politics.<sup>9</sup> This measure is significantly and strongly associated with procedural conceptions of democracy. After controlling for other variables in the model, the most politically interested individuals are

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<sup>8</sup> In supplementary analysis (available from the authors) we find that this relationship is not materially changed when education is modeled more flexibly as a series of indicators for each level of education. These indicators did not significantly improve the fit of the model beyond that provided by the linear education measure.

<sup>9</sup> Each of these three items was rescaled to range from 0-1 before averaging (Cronbach's alpha = .682).



predicted to be 10 percentage points more likely than their least interested counterparts to identify the two procedural characteristics as most essential to democracy. We note that inclusion of this measure does not substantially affect the magnitude of the coefficients on the other variables in the model. This is important in that it suggests that the relationship between formal education and conceiving of democracy in procedural terms is not simply a byproduct of those who are more educated or wealthier being more likely to engage with political matters.

In column (3) we consider the possibility that subjective assessments of economic conditions affect individuals' understanding of democracy beyond their personal objective financial circumstances. We include measures of 1) whether the respondent identified the economy as the most important problem facing the country, 2) respondents' subjective assessments of their family's current economic situation, and 3) assessments of the overall economic conditions in the country. None of these variables reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. These null findings do not change in models where only one of the three measures is included or in models where the political interest index is excluded (see Supplementary Analysis Document, Table S2). Thus, our evidence suggests that objective economic circumstances, rather than subjective assessments of "pocketbook" or "sociotropic" conditions shape understandings of democracy in this region.<sup>10</sup>

Next we estimate a multinomial logit model predicting which characteristic respondents identified as the most important characteristic of democracy using the same independent variables used in the specification presented in Table 2, column (3). In Figure 1 we present the estimated effects of a change from the lowest to the highest value for the five individual-level independent variables that we found to be significant predictors in Table 2 (we discuss

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<sup>10</sup> We also estimated a series of bivariate and, where appropriate, trivariate regression models predicting our outcome variable with individual covariates (see Supplementary Analysis Document, Table S2, column [8]). All of the statistically significant relationships we discuss here are also statistically significant in bivariate specifications.

differences across countries in the next section; see Appendix Table A2 for the full multinomial logit model estimates). In each case the coefficients on the variable was jointly significant across the three models that comprise the multinomial estimates ( $p < .05$ ).<sup>11</sup>

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The findings suggest two conclusions. First, they suggest that the knowledge based factors we examine are particularly strongly associated with an increased likelihood of identifying *elections*, rather than the provision of *basic needs* as the most important hallmark of democracy. The reverse is true for the projection based factors. Second, they provide support for our theoretically-driven claims that some individual-level characteristics would be associated with more direct knowledge about the meaning of democracy (and therefore associated with a higher likelihood of identifying criteria like *elections* and *free speech* as the most important characteristics of democracy) while others would be associated with a tendency to project substantively desired outcomes onto the concept of democracy. In each case the relationship between the predictor variable and the likelihood of identifying each of the procedural criteria (*elections* or *free speech*) as the most important characteristic of democracy is in the opposite direction as is the relationship between each variable and the likelihood of identifying each of the substantive criteria (*income equality* and *basic needs*) as the most important. For example, an increase in education is associated with an increase in the likelihood of identifying *elections* as the most important characteristic of democracy as well as an increase in the probability of identifying *free speech* as the most important characteristic; it is also associated with a lower likelihood of citing *income equality* and *basic needs* as the most important characteristic of

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<sup>11</sup> The indicator for Christian was also a statistically significant predictor in the multinomial model. Christian respondents (Lebanon only) were approximately 8 percentage points more likely than non-Christians to identify reduction of income inequality as the most important characteristic of democracy and approximately 10 percentage points less likely to cite provision of basic needs as the most important characteristic. Because we did not have clear theoretical expectations regarding the relationship between Christianity and how people conceive of democracy we are reluctant to interpret this finding.

democracy (though the relationship between education and the likelihood of identifying *income inequality* as the most important characteristic falls short of conventional levels of statistical significance).

*Do the Correlates of Conceptions of Democracy Vary Across Countries?*

The results presented in Table 2 also indicate that mean scores on our procedural conception of democracy outcome measure vary across countries after controlling for the other variables in our models. On average, respondents from Palestine were significantly more likely to cite procedural criteria as the hallmarks of democracy than respondents from Algeria and Lebanon (excluded category). Respondents from Jordan were the least likely to cite procedural criteria as the most important.<sup>12</sup> Similar differences across countries are also apparent in the multinomial model discussed in the previous section. For example, respondents in Jordan were particularly unlikely to identify *elections* as the most important characteristic of democracy (see Figure S1 of the Supplementary Analysis Document for details).

The structure of our data—specifically the fact that we only have four populations to compare—only allows us to speculate regarding why average conceptions of democracy vary across these populations. Some potential explanations pertain to cultural and historical differences across these units. For example, just before the survey was fielded in Palestine in 2006, Palestinians experienced elections after which the winning party was inhibited from carrying out its electoral mandate. Our finding that Palestinians are particularly likely to conceive of democracy in procedural terms could stem, in part, from the salience of questions about the functioning of democratic institutions and procedures in the minds of this population when this survey was conducted. However, the tendency for Palestinians to conceive of

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<sup>12</sup> Tests based on the Table 2, column (1) specification indicate that all country differences are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ), except for the difference between Algeria and Lebanon ( $p = .412$ ).

democracy in procedural terms may also stem from Palestinians' experiences observing the functioning of a neighboring democracy, or their extended efforts to establish recognized political institutions that are equal to, and distinct from Israeli institutions.

In contrast, although Jordan has a functioning legislative body, political and personal ties to the monarchy still dominate power within all branches of the political system. A perception that democratic procedures like elections may be little more than fig leaves for autocratic regimes may explain why Jordanians are the least likely in our sample to conceive of democracy primarily in procedural terms.<sup>13</sup> However, just as our data do not permit us to determine the mechanisms that drive Palestinians' tendency to conceive of democracy in procedural terms, Jordanians' tendency to conceive of democracy primarily in terms of the substantive outcomes it may produce could be explained by a variety of economic, cultural, or other historical factors.

An additional possibility is that the relationships between individual-level characteristics and conceptions of democracy vary across these populations. For example, although there do not appear to be substantial differences in gender equality across the populations we examine (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi 2012), the relationship between being female and conceiving of democracy in substantive terms may be particularly strong in populations where cultural norms feature strictly bifurcated gender roles. As with differences in average conceptions of democracy across populations, if we find differences in the correlates of conceptions of democracy across the four populations, our ability to explain the mechanisms behind these differences is limited by the structure of our data. Nonetheless, such findings could help guide future research. On the other hand, if the correlates of conceptions of democracy are similar across these populations this

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<sup>13</sup> Algerian and Lebanese respondents' experience with democratic procedures have been mixed. Algerians' experience with democracy in the early 1990s was cut short by a military coup when a newly formed Islamist party was poised to win a majority in the second round of parliamentary elections. Since the official withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005 the country has experienced some democratic processes and is considered to be a non-consolidated democracy by Polity IV, and partly free by Freedom House.

would suggest that the factors that shape how people in this region conceive of democracy are largely independent of cultural, historical, and political contexts.

We examine the possibility that the correlates of conceptions of democracy vary across populations in Table 3. We estimate the column (1) and (3) specifications presented in Table 2 separately for each of the four geographical regions in our sample. Additionally we present tests of the equality of coefficients across models.<sup>14</sup> For the most part, the pattern of relationships between individual level characteristics and understanding of democracy are consistent across geographic units. In the cases where we find statistically significant differences in the coefficients across geographic units, these differences are driven primarily by the Algerian sample. When we restrict our analysis to Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon, we find only one case where the coefficient on a predictor varies significantly ( $p > .05$ ) across units. Specifically, although the coefficient on the Interest in Politics Index is positive and statistically significant across these three units, it is significantly smaller in the Jordan sample.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

More broadly, the Algeria sample appears to constitute a unique case. While the joint significance of the covariates used in each of the two model specifications we examine is clearly statistically significant for Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon ( $p < .001$  in all cases), these variables are not statistically significant predictors of conceptions of democracy among Algerian respondents ( $p = .439$  and  $.707$  for the demographic and extended models, respectively). For example, in each of the three other areas the relationship between education and procedural understanding of democracy is positive and statistically significant. In contrast, among Algerian respondents the coefficient on education not only falls short of conventional levels of statistical

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<sup>14</sup> These tests are based on models pooling geographic units and including interactions between indicators for each unit and each of the individual-level characteristics we examine. The p-values reported in Table 3 are from F-tests of the joint significance of the *characteristic x geographic unit* indicator interactions for each characteristic.

significance, but is negative ( $p=.367$  and  $.364$  in the baseline and extended models, respectively). Similarly, although the coefficient on the Interest in Politics Index is positive and substantial in the Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon models, it is essentially zero in the Algeria model.

### **Conceptions of Democracy in the Arab World**

Public support for the procedural elements of democracy is crucial to democratic institutions' legitimacy and stability. In order for a democratic system of governance to survive, citizens must see the democratic regime as legitimate so long as procedural standards are met, even when they are personally dissatisfied with the substantive outcomes that the regime produces. If support for democracy rests on expectations of substantial changes in redistributive policies or economic conditions—particularly if citizens view economic improvements as more central to the concept of democracy than democratic procedures—this support for a young democratic regime may falter if expectations are not met.

Although some research finds evidence that democracy tends to reduce income inequality (e.g., Reuveny and Li 2003), there is little evidence of rapid reductions in income inequality or dramatically increased provision of basic services in new democratic regimes (e.g. Bollen and Jackman 1985; Deininger and Squire 1996; Simpson 1990). Additionally, research finds that global trends in economic trade appear to be increasing inequality (e.g., Dreher and Gaston 2008). Thus, to the extent that a new democracy is able to address economic problems like income inequality and lack of access to basic resources, these effects may be dampened by factors beyond the new regime's control. Even if a new democratic regime succeeds in addressing the economic concerns of the public, democracy may prove fragile if people fail to

object when leaders credited with improving conditions backslide in their commitment to democratic procedures.

In this paper we reported findings from a survey conducted in four populations in the Arab world that asked respondents to rank the importance of appealing characteristics of a democracy. Thus, responses to these items offer insight into how individuals may respond in situations where they are presented with trade-offs between committing to nascent democratic procedures and elite promises of economic growth in exchange for sacrificing those procedures. Consistent with evidence from other areas, our evidence indicates that many individuals in the region conceive of democracy in terms that are poorly aligned with dominant scholarly definitions of democracy. This failure to prioritize democratic rules and procedures over substantively desirable outcomes may need to be addressed if fledgling democracies are to be sustained through periods of substantive difficulties—economic or otherwise.

Differences in conceptualizations of democracy appear to be associated with important outcomes like tolerance and patterns of participation in other regions (Canache 2012). The significance of individuals thinking about democracy in procedural terms can be further illustrated by examining the correlation between our measure of procedural conceptions of democracy and several measures of support for non-democratic government behavior included on the Arab Barometer. Those who identify procedural criteria as the most important characteristics of democracy are significantly less likely to agree that “violation of human rights in [their country] is justifiable in the name of promoting security and stability.” They are also more likely to say that it is a bad idea for their country to be governed by a “strong non-democratic leader that does not bother with parliament and elections” or to have “experts rather than government make decisions according to what is best for the country” ( $p < .01$  for all

correlations). These relationships suggest that individuals who prioritize procedural considerations in their concept of democracy are less likely to be willing to acquiesce to non-democratic means that may lead to desirable substantive ends like security or more “expert” decisions.

We also found evidence consistent with our expectations that both knowledge and projection based factors can affect how people conceive of democracy. Individual-level characteristics likely to affect levels of formal knowledge about political processes and structures lead people to conceive of democracy in procedural terms: measures of education and political engagement were both strong predictors of procedural conceptions of democracy. Similarly, we found that individuals who were more likely to see addressing poverty and income inequality as priorities were more likely to project a desire for redistributive economic outcomes onto the concept of democracy. Thus, encouraging the public in emerging democracies to think about democracy, first and foremost, in terms of democratic procedures and commit to these procedures, may require a combination of attempts to educate the public about the value of these procedures and efforts to alleviate economic problems to allow the breathing room necessary for people to prioritize democratic procedures over their immediate substantive, material concerns.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, we examined whether the relationships between individual-level characteristics and how people conceive of democracy vary across these political units. These units differ in their histories and cultures, as well as along a variety of other dimensions. However, while these contextual differences do appear to lead to aggregate-level differences in how people in each country conceive of democracy, the individual-level factors associated with how people conceived of democracy are mostly consistent across three of these four political units. Algeria is

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<sup>15</sup> This claim is consistent with the finding that democracies with more affluent populations tend to be more stable (e.g., Przeworski et al. 1996).



a clear exception to this pattern and, unfortunately, the structure of our data do not allow us to determine why this is the case (we note one potential technical explanation below). Nonetheless, our findings suggest that enhancing formal knowledge about democratic governance and alleviating acute economic issues are likely to play an important role in the development of long-term public commitment to democratic institutions across different contexts.

Like all research, the analysis we report here has several shortcomings. Although we are inclined to interpret our results as suggesting that factors like education and income cause changes in how people think about democracy, rather than vice versa, in some cases reverse causality is a possibility. It is also important to be conscious of the practical complications involved in fielding surveys in the populations examined. The data we use are the product of high quality, expert attempts to survey a random sample of the adult public in each of the countries we examine. Even so, in order to address the practical difficulties in each country different sampling methods were employed. Thus, apparent differences across countries—e.g., the failure of our models to predict conceptions of democracy in Algeria—may reflect variation in this methodology rather than meaningful differences in attitude and behaviors across populations. Additionally, as noted above, because the outcome measure we use was only available for four countries we are unable to directly examine the contextual factors that explain variation in conceptions of democracy across countries. In the future, researchers could address this by collecting data from a broader range of countries and estimating multilevel models to assess how country-level economic conditions and historical factors shape people's understanding of democracy.

These shortcomings aside, the findings enhance our understanding of what popular support for democracy means in populations where democratic institutions are fragile or mixed

with authoritarian institutions and practices. At the most basic level, they show that many people in the Arab world see democracy primarily as a means to substantive economic ends rather than seeing democracy as defined by a set of procedural arrangements. Publics that lack a developed, understanding of democracy are hardly confined to this region. However, the implications of the public's lack of a robust appreciation of democratic procedures may depend heavily on the stability of existing political institutions. In countries where revolution is either a reality or a very real possibility, citizens' understanding of the procedural elements of democracy and willingness to prioritize these procedures over substantively desirable outcomes may substantially affect the prospects of ongoing democratic development.

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## Appendix

### *Question Wording for Covariates*

Gender (1=female) and Age (in years): solicited as part of within-household sampling routine.

Quran Reading (rescaled to range from 0=none to 1=every day/almost): How often do you read the Quran?  
1. Every day or almost every day; 2. Several times a week; 3. Sometimes; 4. Rarely; 5. I don't read [the Quran]; Can't choose (missing); Decline to answer (missing)

Education (rescaled from 0=illiterate to 1=MA or higher): Respondents were asked what level of education they had attained. 0. Illiterate; 1. Elementary; 2. Primary; 3. Secondary; 4. College Diploma – two years; 5. BA; 6. MA or higher.

Family Income (rescaled deciles to range from 0-1): Monthly income of family in [local currency].

Income Missing: (0= not missing, 1= missing/declined)

Interest in Politics Scale (three items each rescaled to range from 0 to 1 and then averaged; DK and Declined coded missing):

- Political knowledge index: correctly identify foreign minister and Speaker/Leader of Parliament (0=both incorrect, .5=one correct, 1=both correct)
- Generally speaking, how interested would you say you are in politics? 0. Not interested; 1. Little interested; 2. Interested; 3. Very interested; 4. Can't choose; 8. [Do not read] Can't choose; 9. [Do not read] Decline to answer
- How often do you follow news about politics and government in [country name]? 1. Very often; 2. Often; 3. Sometimes/ rarely; 4. Never; 8. [Do not read] Can't choose; 9. [Do not read] Decline to answer

Economy Most Important Problem (rescaled to range from 0 = any other problem mentioned other than the economic situation to 1 = mention of the economic situation; DK and Declined coded missing). In your opinion, which of the following is the most important problem facing [country name] today? 1. Economic situation (poverty, unemployment, inflation); 2. Corruption; 3. Authoritarianism; 4. Ending the US occupation of Iraq; 5. The Arab-Israeli conflict; 6. I don't know; 7. Decline to answer.

Pocketbook Evaluation (rescaled to range from 0=very bad 1=very good; DK and Declined coded missing). How would you rate the economic situation of your family today? 1. Very good; 2. Good; 3. Bad; 4. Very bad; 5. Don't know; 6. Decline to answer.

Sociotropic Evaluation (rescaled to range from 0=very bad 1=very good; DK and Declined coded missing). How would you rate the current overall economic condition of [country name] today? 1. Very good; 2. Good; 3. Bad; 4. Very bad; 5. Don't know; 6. Decline to answer.

**Table A1. Summary Statistics**

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	All	Jordan	Palestine	Algeria	Lebanon
Procedural Conception of Democracy (0=neither procedural; 3=both procedural)	1.354 [1.1009]	1.008 [1.0889]	1.628 [1.0539]	1.424 [.9773]	1.361 [1.1576]
Gender (1=female)	0.482 [.4997]	0.509 [.5001]	0.520 [.4998]	0.457 [.4985]	0.432 [.4956]
Age (in years)	36.691 [13.5959]	36.368 [13.6588]	36.744 [13.4234]	34.263 [13.4269]	38.845 [13.5251]
Age-Squared/100	15.311 [11.8318]	15.090 [11.7568]	15.302 [11.4144]	13.540 [12.3212]	16.917 [11.78]
Christian (1=yes)	0.124 [.3298]	- -	- -	- -	0.487 [.5001]
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	0.600 [.3045]	0.650 [.2982]	0.667 [.2834]	0.568 [.2881]	0.496 [.3146]
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.510 [.2574]	0.461 [.2441]	0.441 [.2248]	0.627 [.2835]	0.547 [.2451]
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.528 [.259]	0.528 [.2903]	0.518 [.2651]	0.538 [.2326]	0.533 [.2355]
Income Missing	0.193 [.3945]	0.015 [.121]	0.097 [.2966]	0.362 [.481]	0.354 [.4783]
Interest in Politics Index (0-1)	0.530 [.2944]	0.405 [.2731]	0.589 [.2871]	0.437 [.2808]	0.669 [.2531]
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)	0.579 [.4283]	0.760 [.3729]	0.238 [.3445]	0.653 [.3911]	0.709 [.3759]
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.476 [.2582]	0.542 [.255]	0.450 [.2718]	0.512 [.222]	0.407 [.2508]
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.313 [.2913]	0.494 [.2799]	0.229 [.2476]	0.466 [.2417]	0.098 [.1782]
Country (1=Jordan)	0.268 [.4428]				
Country (1=Palestine)	0.281 [.4494]				
Country (1=Algeria)	0.197 [.3975]				
Country (1=Lebanon)	0.255 [.4359]				
Observations	4027	1078	1130	792	1027

Note: Cell entries are means. Standard deviations in brackets.



**Table A2. Multinomial Logit Model**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Free Speech	Income Equality	Basic Necessities	p-value
Gender (1=female)	0.294** [0.0980]	0.413** [0.0951]	0.432** [0.0906]	0.000
Age (in years)	0.0291 [0.0166]	0.00732 [0.0154]	0.0278 [0.0172]	0.330
Age-Squared/100	-0.0305 [0.0188]	-0.011 [0.0173]	-0.0338 [0.0201]	
Christian (1=yes)	-0.0372 [0.195]	0.303 [0.178]	-0.427** [0.165]	0.001
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.373* [0.161]	0.155 [0.159]	0.272 [0.151]	0.001
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.119 [0.220]	-0.600** [0.210]	-1.042** [0.203]	0.000
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.277 [0.195]	-0.191 [0.186]	-0.285 [0.182]	0.031
Income Missing	0.124 [0.126]	-0.126 [0.124]	0.146 [0.118]	0.135
Interest in Politics Index (0-1)	-0.142 [0.181]	-0.778** [0.177]	-0.912** [0.167]	0.000
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)	-0.079 [0.126]	0.133 [0.126]	-0.0668 [0.117]	0.324
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.11 [0.207]	0.0431 [0.202]	-0.0816 [0.188]	0.821
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.258 [0.213]	0.148 [0.202]	-0.0592 [0.198]	0.432
Country (1=Jordan)	0.739** [0.194]	0.681** [0.185]	0.227 [0.166]	0.000
Country (1=Palestine)	0.449* [0.182]	-0.590** [0.185]	-0.473** [0.152]	0.000
Country (1=Algeria)	0.487* [0.190]	0.541** [0.181]	-0.485** [0.175]	0.000
Constant	-1.540** [0.421]	-0.104 [0.400]	0.55 [0.405]	0.000
Observations	4027	4027	4027	-

Cell entries are coefficients from a multinomial regression model predicting responses to the "most important characteristic of democracy" item. "Elections" is the base category. Robust standard errors in brackets. \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%. Column (4) reports joint significance of the coefficients on a given covariate across the three models.

**Table 1. Distribution of Perceived Essential Characteristics of Democracy**

First Choice		Second Choice				Total
		Elections	Free Speech	Income Equality	Basic Necessities	
First Choice	Opportunity to change the government through elections	-	11.3% (453)	8.1% (327)	9.7% (389)	29.0% (1169)
	Freedom to criticize the government/ those in power	6.6% (265)	-	6.4% (258)	6.9% (277)	19.9% (800)
	A small income gap between rich and poor	4.3% (172)	4.1% (164)	-	14.8% (594)	23.1% (930)
	Basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter for everyone	5.9% (237)	5.6% (224)	16.6% (667)	-	28.0% (1128)
		16.7% (674)	20.9% (841)	31.1% (1252)	31.3% (1260)	100.0% (4027)

Note: "People often differ in their views on the characteristics that are essential to democracy. If you have to choose only one thing, what would you choose as the most important characteristic, and what would be the second most important?" Cell entries are percentages of respondents providing each combination of responses. Number of cases reported in parentheses.

**Table 2. Correlates of Conceptions of Democracy**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Procedural conception of democracy (0=neither procedural; 3=both procedural)		
Gender (1=female)	-0.394 [0.060]**	-0.309 [0.061]**	-0.311 [0.061]**
Age (in years)	-0.011 [0.012]	-0.017 [0.012]	-0.016 [0.012]
Age-Squared/100	0.019 [0.015]	0.023 [0.014]	0.023 [0.014]
Christian (1=yes)	0.082 [0.130]	0.110 [0.130]	0.106 [0.130]
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.266 [0.101]**	-0.321 [0.101]**	-0.321 [0.102]**
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.937 [0.138]**	0.762 [0.140]**	0.758 [0.140]**
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.444 [0.121]**	0.359 [0.122]**	0.327 [0.124]**
Income Missing	0.002 [0.077]	0.004 [0.077]	0.006 [0.077]
Interest in Politics Scale (0-1)		0.818 [0.112]**	0.811 [0.112]**
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)			-0.097 [0.074]
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)			0.117 [0.126]
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)			0.030 [0.128]
Country (1=Jordan)	-0.446 [0.110]**	-0.242 [0.113]*	-0.268 [0.122]*
Country (1=Palestine)	0.665 [0.104]**	0.726 [0.104]**	0.671 [0.109]**
Country (1=Algeria)	0.086 [0.105]	0.301 [0.109]**	0.271 [0.118]*
Observations	4027	4027	4027

Note: Results from ordered logistic regression models. Robust standard errors in brackets.

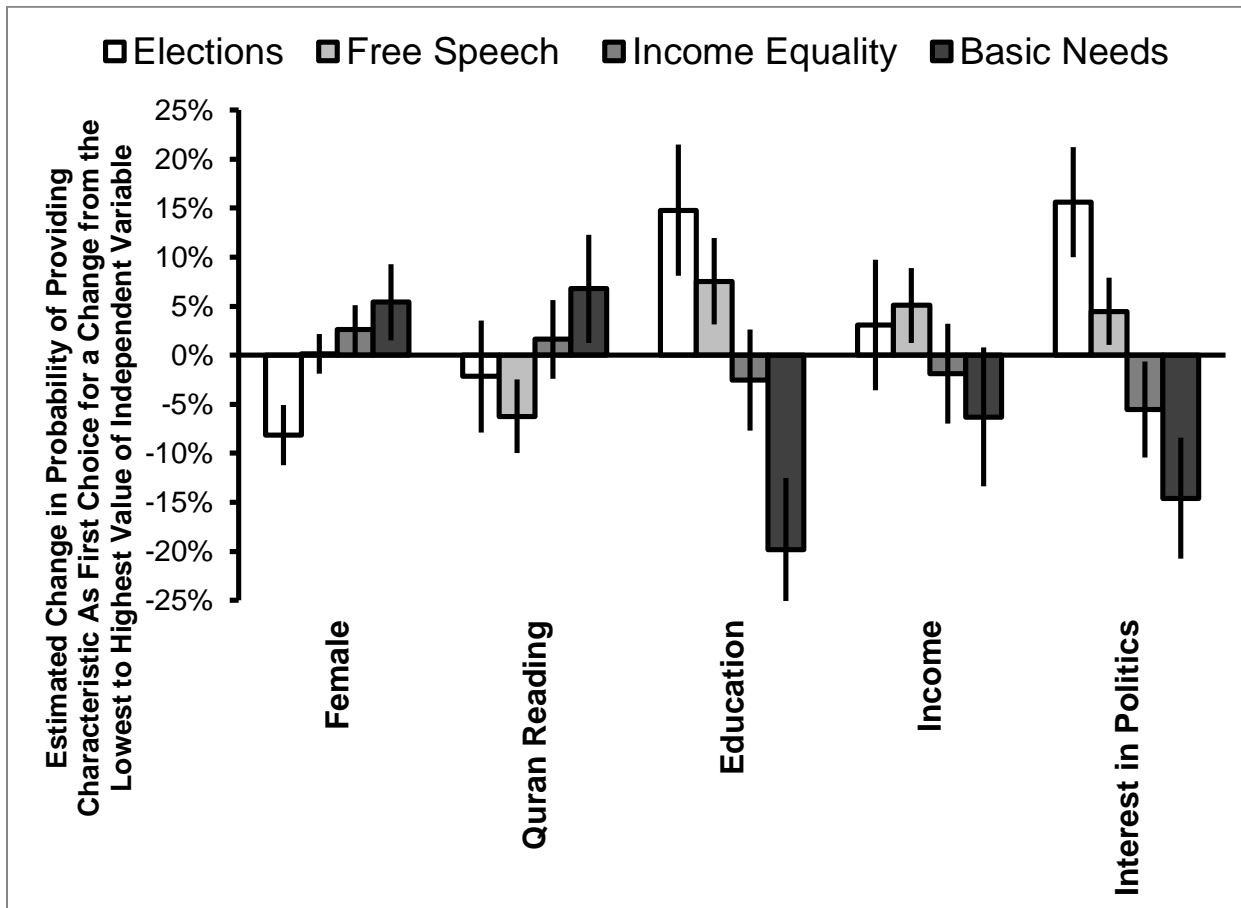
\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%.

**Table 3. Correlates of Conceptions of Democracy: Differences Across Populations**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Procedural conception of democracy (0=neither procedural; 3=both procedural)								Test of equality of coefficients across models (p-value)	
	Jordan		Palestine		Algeria		Lebanon		Demographics Only	Extended Model
Gender (1=female)	-0.494 [0.122]**	-0.425 [0.127]**	-0.638 [0.113]**	-0.510 [0.118]**	-0.222 [0.132]	-0.226 [0.136]	-0.218 [0.130]	-0.058 [0.134]	0.027	0.070
Age (in years)	-0.038 [0.024]	-0.041 [0.025]	-0.019 [0.021]	-0.024 [0.021]	0.018 [0.021]	0.020 [0.021]	0.011 [0.024]	0.001 [0.024]	0.274	0.239
Age-Squared/100	0.045 [0.030]	0.047 [0.030]	0.036 [0.025]	0.040 [0.025]	-0.024 [0.023]	-0.026 [0.024]	0.001 [0.027]	0.008 [0.027]	0.201	0.160
Christian (1=yes)							0.026 [0.118]	0.006 [0.120]	-	-
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.643 [0.194]**	-0.682 [0.197]**	-0.055 [0.213]	-0.193 [0.216]	0.015 [0.244]	0.001 [0.246]	-0.196 [0.185]	-0.237 [0.186]	0.060	0.072
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.887 [0.300]**	0.693 [0.311]*	1.827 [0.282]**	1.460 [0.295]**	-0.261 [0.289]	-0.264 [0.291]	1.209 [0.271]**	1.080 [0.271]**	0.000	0.000
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.581 [0.230]*	0.505 [0.236]*	0.541 [0.230]*	0.389 [0.240]	0.425 [0.280]	0.424 [0.287]	-0.190 [0.271]	-0.222 [0.278]	0.161	0.242
Income Missing	-1.318 [0.581]*	-1.324 [0.561]*	-0.284 [0.172]	-0.318 [0.173]	0.150 [0.137]	0.147 [0.138]	0.133 [0.126]	0.108 [0.127]	0.017	0.013
Interest in Politics Scale (0-1)		0.537 [0.241]*		1.019 [0.211]**		-0.029 [0.244]		1.391 [0.247]**	-	0.000
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)		-0.205 [0.147]		0.137 [0.147]		0.180 [0.162]		-0.343 [0.147]*	-	0.027
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)		0.207 [0.265]		0.152 [0.219]		0.195 [0.324]		-0.106 [0.241]	-	0.826
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)		0.139 [0.225]		0.180 [0.238]		-0.118 [0.317]		-0.528 [0.329]	-	0.314
Observations	1078	1078	1130	1130	792	792	1027	1027		

Note: Results from OLS regression models. Robust standard errors in brackets. \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%. Columns (9) and (10) are based on OLS models including interactions between each covariate and country indicators. P-values test the joint significance of coefficients on country interactions associated with the covariate.

**Figure 1. Relationship between Covariates and Reported Most Important Characteristics of Democracy**



Estimated associations between a change from 0 to 1 on each covariate and the probability of providing a given response to the “Most important characteristic of democracy” question. Estimates were calculated using CLARIFY and are based on the multinomial logit model reported in Appendix Table A2. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals.

## **The Meaning of Democracy in the Arab World: Supplementary Analysis Document**

### *Religion and Conceptions of Democracy*

Questions about religious dispositions and identities play a central role in much of the existing literature on attitude about democracy in the Arab world. Thus, in Table S1 we revisit the relationship we identified between frequency of Quran reading and substantive (rather than procedural) understandings of democracy. Specifically we consider the possibility that factors related to Islamist Conservatism—e.g., attitudes regarding the extent to which religion should play a role in politics or the appropriate role of women in society— rather than the tendency to actively practice a religion that views responsibility to others (including the poor) as a key article of faith, can explain the finding we reported in Table 2.<sup>1</sup>

In Table S1, column (1) we re-estimate the model presented in column (3) of Table 2, restricting our sample to individuals who provided responses to 22 additional items measuring religiosity. With the exception of the coefficient on the indicator for Christian (Lebanon only) which is positive and statistically significant in Table S1, the sample restriction does not affect the substance of the findings discussed above. In column (2) we add a measure of Islamist conservatism. This measure is based on 22 items including levels of agreement with statements about the appropriate role of religion in politics (e.g. “Men of religion should not influence how people vote in elections”), the importance of a potential spouse being devout, and the role of women in society (e.g., “A married woman can work outside the home if she wishes”). In each case, responses were provided using a four point scale. Items were rescaled to range from 0 to 1 with higher values corresponding to higher levels of conservatism. These items were then combined into a mean index (Cronbach’s alpha for 22 item scale = .852).

Two important findings emerge from the results in Table S1, column (2). First, the coefficient on the conservatism variable falls short of conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p=.112$ ). Second, including the conservatism variable does not affect the coefficient on frequency of reading the Quran

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<sup>1</sup> We note that the lowest education category is “illiterate.” Respondents in this category may not be capable of reading the Quran or any other text. However, in supplementary analysis we found that including an indicator for the “illiterate” category of the education variable does not substantively alter our findings.

variable. This suggests that although frequency of reading the Quran is significantly and positively correlated with the fundamentalism measure ( $r = .250$ ;  $p < .01$ ), the relationship between reading the Quran and substance-focused conceptions of democracy cannot be accounted for by this correlation. In column (3) we adopt a more flexible approach and enter all 22 religious items individually (coefficients are suppressed in the table to save space). Again, including these variables does not notably affect the estimates of the other coefficients in the model. Most notably, the coefficient on the measure of frequency of reading the Quran remains negative and statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

Because the relationship between religiosity and beliefs and attitudes about democracy is an important area of inquiry in the areas we examine here, we also compare the models presented in columns (1)-(3) of Table S1 with identical models predicting both specific and diffuse support for democracy in columns (4)-(9).<sup>2</sup> In those models, frequency of reading the Quran does not significantly predict either type of support for democracy. However, we find a strong negative, statistically significant relationship between fundamentalism and both diffuse and specific support for democracy.

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<sup>2</sup> Our measures of diffuse and specific support for democracy are based on those described by Ciftci (2010). The diffuse support for democracy measure is based on responses to one question that asked respondents about their level of agreement with the following statement: “Democracy may have its problems but is better than any other form of government” (“strongly disagree” [0] to “strongly agree” [3]) and evaluations of whether a democratic system of government is a good way of running the country (“very bad” [0] to “very good” [3]). The specific support measure is a mean index of three similar items where respondents indicated their level of agreement on a four point scale with three statements (reverse coded): 1) “In a democracy, the economy runs badly”; 2) “Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling”; and 3) “Democracies are not good at maintaining order.”

**Table S1**

**Table S1. Religion Measures, Conceptions of Democracy and Specific and Diffuse Support for Democracy**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Procedural (0=neither procedural; 3=both procedural)			Specific Support for Democracy (0-3)			Diffuse Support for Democracy (0-3)		
Gender (1=female)	-0.185 [0.045]**	-0.175 [0.046]**	-0.153 [0.047]**	-0.018 [0.029]	-0.057 [0.029]	-0.041 [0.030]	0.037 [0.023]	0.002 [0.023]	-0.024 [0.024]
Age (in years)	-0.005 [0.008]	-0.005 [0.008]	-0.006 [0.008]	-0.005 [0.005]	-0.005 [0.005]	-0.005 [0.005]	-0.003 [0.004]	-0.003 [0.004]	-0.003 [0.004]
Age-Squared/100	0.008 [0.010]	0.008 [0.010]	0.009 [0.010]	0.006 [0.006]	0.006 [0.006]	0.007 [0.006]	0.002 [0.005]	0.002 [0.005]	0.002 [0.005]
Christian (1=yes)	0.183 [0.095]	0.202 [0.097]*	0.198 [0.101]*	0.229 [0.061]**	0.152 [0.062]*	0.201 [0.063]**	0.276 [0.041]**	0.206 [0.042]**	0.268 [0.044]**
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.230 [0.075]**	-0.243 [0.076]**	-0.256 [0.077]**	-0.061 [0.048]	-0.011 [0.049]	-0.078 [0.048]	-0.040 [0.040]	0.005 [0.040]	-0.035 [0.039]
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.589 [0.099]**	0.597 [0.100]**	0.569 [0.101]**	0.104 [0.066]	0.071 [0.066]	0.033 [0.064]	0.070 [0.051]	0.040 [0.051]	0.012 [0.050]
Family Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.187 [0.087]*	0.193 [0.088]*	0.189 [0.088]*	0.028 [0.055]	0.004 [0.055]	-0.017 [0.054]	0.176 [0.043]**	0.154 [0.043]**	0.155 [0.042]**
Income Missing	0.020 [0.060]	0.018 [0.060]	-0.001 [0.060]	0.079 [0.040]*	0.089 [0.039]*	0.081 [0.039]*	0.056 [0.033]	0.065 [0.032]*	0.075 [0.031]*
Interest and Participation Index (0-1)	0.518 [0.098]**	0.520 [0.098]**	0.518 [0.099]**	0.196 [0.066]**	0.189 [0.066]**	0.123 [0.064]	0.342 [0.050]**	0.336 [0.050]**	0.309 [0.049]**
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)	-0.054 [0.055]	-0.056 [0.055]	-0.042 [0.055]	-0.031 [0.038]	-0.023 [0.038]	-0.033 [0.037]	0.006 [0.030]	0.014 [0.029]	0.005 [0.029]
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.073 [0.088]	0.075 [0.088]	0.075 [0.087]	-0.072 [0.059]	-0.081 [0.059]	-0.092 [0.058]	0.001 [0.047]	-0.007 [0.047]	-0.012 [0.046]
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)	0.043 [0.091]	0.040 [0.091]	0.040 [0.092]	0.200 [0.061]**	0.212 [0.061]**	0.215 [0.058]**	-0.066 [0.049]	-0.056 [0.049]	-0.044 [0.048]
Islamist Conservatism Scale (0-1)		0.162 [0.173]			-0.649 [0.115]**			-0.590 [0.096]**	
Country (1=Jordan)	-0.032 [0.083]	-0.058 [0.088]	0.019 [0.097]	-0.084 [0.050]	0.021 [0.053]	0.012 [0.055]	-0.036 [0.041]	0.060 [0.044]	-0.033 [0.049]
Country (1=Palestine)	0.456 [0.075]**	0.426 [0.080]**	0.483 [0.087]**	-0.137 [0.047]**	-0.019 [0.050]	-0.067 [0.054]	-0.174 [0.040]**	-0.067 [0.043]	-0.180 [0.046]**
Country (1=Algeria)	0.034 [0.086]	0.002 [0.093]	0.085 [0.102]	-0.136 [0.056]*	-0.008 [0.059]	-0.052 [0.064]	-0.148 [0.047]**	-0.031 [0.049]	-0.133 [0.056]*
Constant	0.862 [0.191]**	0.796 [0.202]**	0.689 [0.255]**	1.623 [0.124]**	1.885 [0.131]**	2.305 [0.167]**	2.587 [0.102]**	2.825 [0.107]**	2.970 [0.133]**
Includes 22 separate measures of religious attitudes?	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Observations	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540
R-squared	0.097	0.097	0.110	0.040	0.053	0.128	0.102	0.118	0.176

Note: Results from OLS regression models. Robust standard errors in brackets. \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01.



**Table S2. Correlates of Conceptions of Democracy: Robustness Checks**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Procedural (0=neither procedural; 3=both procedural)							
	Ordered Logit Models							Bivariate OLS
Gender (1=female)	-0.394 [0.060]**	-0.309 [0.061]**	-0.390 [0.060]**	-0.399 [0.060]**	-0.397 [0.060]**	-0.395 [0.060]**	-0.311 [0.061]**	-0.279 [0.034]**
Age (in years)	-0.011 [0.012]	-0.017 [0.012]	-0.012 [0.012]	-0.010 [0.012]	-0.011 [0.012]	-0.010 [0.012]	-0.016 [0.012]	-0.006 [0.006]
Age-Squared/100	0.019 [0.015]	0.023 [0.014]	0.020 [0.015]	0.018 [0.015]	0.019 [0.015]	0.018 [0.015]	0.023 [0.014]	0.007 [0.007]
Christian (1=yes)	0.082 [0.130]	0.110 [0.130]	0.071 [0.130]	0.087 [0.131]	0.084 [0.130]	0.077 [0.131]	0.106 [0.130]	0.057 [0.055]
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.266 [0.101]**	-0.321 [0.101]**	-0.261 [0.101]**	-0.270 [0.101]**	-0.265 [0.101]**	-0.265 [0.101]**	-0.321 [0.102]**	-0.124 [0.058]*
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	0.937 [0.138]**	0.762 [0.140]**	0.934 [0.138]**	0.930 [0.138]**	0.941 [0.138]**	0.930 [0.138]**	0.758 [0.140]**	0.515 [0.067]**
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.444 [0.121]**	0.359 [0.122]**	0.438 [0.121]**	0.413 [0.123]**	0.437 [0.121]**	0.407 [0.123]**	0.327 [0.124]**	0.424 [0.068]**
Income Missing	0.002 [0.077]	0.004 [0.077]	0.002 [0.077]	0.004 [0.077]	0.002 [0.077]	0.004 [0.077]	0.006 [0.077]	0.053 [0.043]
Interest in Politics Scale (0-1)		0.818 [0.112]**					0.811 [0.112]**	0.726 [0.057]**
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)					0.082 [0.119]	0.030 [0.127]	0.030 [0.128]	-0.306 [0.040]**
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)				0.140 [0.118]		0.129 [0.126]	0.117 [0.126]	0.034 [0.067]
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)			-0.117 [0.074]			-0.116 [0.074]	-0.097 [0.074]	-0.247 [0.059]**
Country (1=Jordan)	-0.446 [0.110]**	-0.242 [0.113]*	-0.446 [0.110]**	-0.460 [0.111]**	-0.476 [0.119]**	-0.471 [0.119]**	-0.268 [0.122]*	
Country (1=Palestine)	0.665 [0.104]**	0.726 [0.104]**	0.605 [0.109]**	0.663 [0.104]**	0.656 [0.105]**	0.600 [0.109]**	0.671 [0.109]**	
Country (1=Algeria)	0.086 [0.105]	0.301 [0.109]**	0.073 [0.105]	0.077 [0.105]	0.058 [0.112]	0.055 [0.113]	0.271 [0.118]*	
Observations	4027	4027	4027	4027	4027	4027	4027	4027

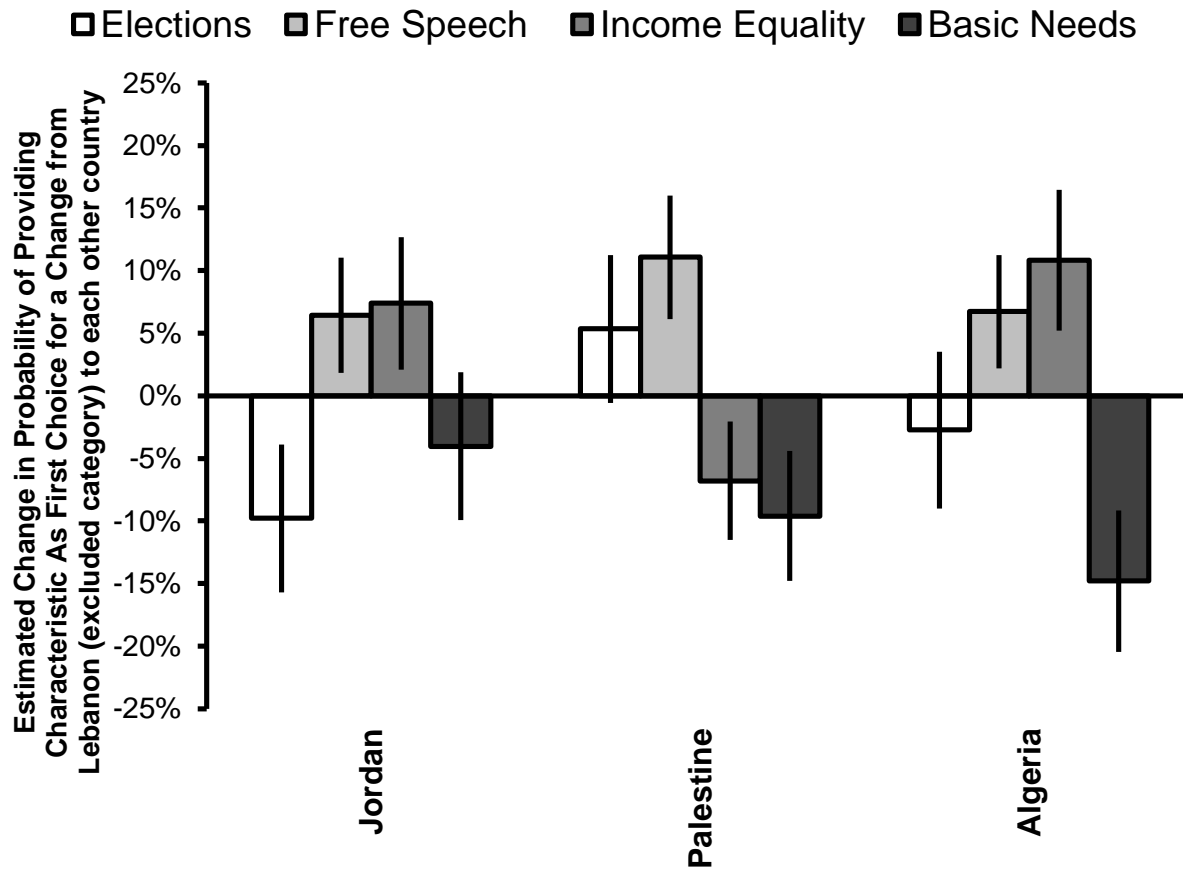
Note: Results from ordered logistic regression models. Column 8 reports coefficients from separate OLS regression models predicting the outcome with each predictor variable separately (gender; age and age-squared; Christian and Quran reading; education; income and income missing; interest and participation index; economy most important problem; pocketbook economic evaluation; sociotropic economic evaluation). Robust standard errors in brackets. \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%.

**Table S3. Correlates of Conceptions of Democracy: Dichotomous Outcome**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Procedural Criterion First (0=no; 1=yes)		
Gender (1=female)	-0.381 [0.067]**	-0.299 [0.068]**	-0.303 [0.069]**
Age (in years)	-0.003 [0.012]	-0.008 [0.012]	-0.007 [0.012]
Age-Squared/100	0.009 [0.014]	0.012 [0.014]	0.011 [0.014]
Christian (1=yes)	0.070 [0.130]	0.091 [0.129]	0.091 [0.130]
Quran Reading (0=none; 1=every day/almost)	-0.322 [0.112]**	-0.376 [0.113]**	-0.375 [0.113]**
Education (0=illiterate; 1=MA or higher)	1.052 [0.150]**	0.884 [0.153]**	0.883 [0.153]**
Household Income (deciles: 0-1)	0.465 [0.133]**	0.387 [0.134]**	0.360 [0.138]**
Income Missing	0.016 [0.089]	0.020 [0.090]	0.023 [0.090]
Interest in Politics Index (0-1)		0.798 [0.127]**	0.794 [0.127]**
Economy Most Important Problem (0-1)			-0.057 [0.088]
Pocketbook Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)			0.081 [0.146]
Sociotropic Evaluation (0=very bad 1=very good)			0.077 [0.149]
Country (1=Jordan)	-0.285 [0.115]*	-0.087 [0.119]	-0.125 [0.129]
Country (1=Palestine)	0.638 [0.113]**	0.697 [0.113]**	0.657 [0.123]**
Country (1=Algeria)	0.001 [0.117]	0.202 [0.121]	0.162 [0.130]
Constant	-0.601 [0.279]*	-0.880 [0.281]**	-0.884 [0.299]**
Observations	4027	4027	4027

Note: Results from Logit models. Robust standard errors in brackets. \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%.

**Figure S1. Relationship between Country of Residence and Reported Most Important Characteristics of Democracy**



Estimated relationship between being in indicated country (rather than Lebanon) on the probability of providing a given response to the “Most important characteristic of democracy” question. Estimates were calculated using CLARIFY and are based on the multinomial logit model reported in Appendix Table A2. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals.