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Ethnic Composition and Democratic Values: A Global Investigation of Citizens' Desire for Democracy, 1995–2014

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ABSTRACT

There is a rich literature on public support for democracy. However, few have investigated the link between ethnic composition and citizens' desire for democracy. In this study we investigate the relationship between ethnic fractionalization and democratic attitudes in 91 countries in the period 1995–2014. We test this on a measure of public desire for democracy. The main independent variables are a time-variant ethnic fractionalization index and an index of ethnic polarization, based on time-series data from the Composition of Religious Ethnic Groups project. We make use of hierarchical modeling combining country- and individual-level data in order to approach this gap in the research. The main finding is that homogeneous societies show the largest degree of desire for a democratic society within established democracies while increased fractionalization and especially increased polarization is associated with a smaller desire for democracy.

Introduction

A strong desire for democracy is an important component in the formation of a democratic government, and for the long-term maintenance of such a political system. This is true not only when it comes to democratization in non-democracies, but also for additional democratization in already established democratic states.¹ In both cases, citizens' democratic attitudes play an important role with regard to the potential for democratic mobilization. In this article we investigate the relationship between ethnic fractionalization and polarization, and citizens' desire for democracy in the period 1995–2014.

Previous theoretical and empirical research has shed light on the question of which factors influence citizens' view of democracy. However, there is a gap in the research when it comes to the potential influence of ethnic composition within a country. In this article we offer a novel theoretical account of the interplay between ethnicity and democratic values by combining literature dealing with ethnic composition and democratic values as well as a large-*N* analysis of a global sample consisting of more than 90 countries. The last decades have seen an increase in globalization and migration, and politically we have witnessed the rise of populist parties and politicians in both Europe, the United States, and in Latin America. As such, it is of both academic and broader societal interest to investigate the relationship between ethnic composition and people's desire for democracy, which constitute one of the conditions that needs to be in place for a country do democratize.

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Previous research has shown that public desire for democracy can be considerable in states which are not characterized as democracies.² According to Lindberg et al.,³ democracy is a multifaceted concept which can be interpreted beyond the strictly political and liberal. Public desire for democracy says little about how citizens understand the concept, and if it is not interpreted through its political and liberal meaning, it could very well be that citizens' support is driven by other causes than the freedom and rights associated with Western democracy. Desire for democracy does not necessarily mean the rejection of authoritarian rule, for example in Eastern former communist societies.⁴ Similar results have been found in Asian countries. Citizens support democracy as an ideal, yet its content is flexible and culturally determined.⁵ According to Kirsch and Welzel⁶ one finds widespread support for democracy in countries that can be characterized as non-democracies. They attribute this to their finding that people understand the concept of democracy in different ways. There exist "authoritarian" notions of the meaning of democracy, which can either mix with or even be negative toward the classical liberal notions of democracy.

Public support or desire for democracy in transitional regimes should be viewed as backing for a political system that performs well rather than support for the democratic ideal. To sum up, public support for democratic government enjoys widespread support globally;⁷ yet its content can have different interpretations from state to state or region to region.⁸ Welzel and Alvarez⁹ charted people's values along different dimensions: the exclusive-liberal understanding of democracy, the exclusive-liberal desire for democracy, and the critical evaluation of democratic quality. The authors argue that it is necessary with a liberal understanding of democracy, a desire for such a system of government, and to perform a critical evaluation of the democratic quality in one's own country in order to produce incentives to improve democratic quality.

We investigate the exclusive-liberal desire for democracy, looking at the dependent variable *desire for democracy*, which is an important component of democratic mobilization. The items included in our measure are close to measures employed by Kirsch and Welzel,¹⁰ as well as Akaliyski, Welzel and Hien,¹¹ which the latter label as "liberal democracy values." The items used to compose this variable are taken from the World Values Survey and the European Values Study. Our main explanatory measures are an index of fractionalization where high values mean that a given country in a given year had a high degree of ethnic diversity, and another index of ethnic polarization in a given country-year. These are superior measures compared to many others as it considers annual variation within countries. Our research design enables us to test a previously under-explored topic within the literature on democratic values. We also run separate models for democracies and non-democracies. Briefly, our findings show that for democracies, the desire for democracy is at its lowest where the majority group is small.

Ethnic heterogeneity and democratic attitudes

In brief, a country's ethnic composition can be viewed along a scale ranging from homogeneity, through polarization, to fractionalized. Ethnic homogeneity characterizes a society where one ethnic or racial group constitutes the majority of the population, an

ethnically polarized country has groups approximately equal in size while a fractionalized country has several smaller groups within its borders. There is an academic history to the argument that a uniform and homogeneous political society is a necessary condition for democracy. One and a half centuries ago, the liberal philosopher, John Stuart Mill, wrote the following:

Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the workings of representative government, cannot be.¹²

Following this belief, common nationality is a presumption for representative democracy. This fellow-feeling makes it easier for citizens to interact and creates a desire to unite under the same authority, with political representatives who share the citizens' national feeling and value base. A representative democracy which includes different people will, according to Mill, create friction both within parliament and in the greater society, something that can create conflict. A century later, Acton¹³ responded to Mill. He disagreed with Mill's ideal of a nation state, as he argued that such societies did not have a counterweight to the power of the state and its potential infringement in peoples' lives. Further, he claimed that multinational states could create a basis for more cooperation within a country while, at the same time, protecting individual liberties and enriching society through new ideas and solutions.

Following Lord Acton's argument, Putnam¹⁴ presented his contact hypothesis. In brief, the argument proposed is that more heterogeneous societies may be an advantage with regard to democratic premises, as citizens then to a larger degree have to organize in order to secure that their interests are taken care of. Also, the increased contact between different ethnic groups will contribute to removing prejudice, as well as increasing tolerance and solidarity between the different groups. This, again, strengthens intergroup trust, and citizens will have a greater incentive to be in contact with each other as well as with the political sphere. To sum up, a heterogeneous society will have more groups competing for government attention as well as for resources, and will thus have a greater incentive for organizing in groups where political interests can be expressed collectively.

Anderson and Paskeviciute¹⁵ follow Lord Acton's line of thinking when they claim that heterogeneous societies provide greater stimulation for increased political participation than homogeneous societies. Weingast,¹⁶ on the other hand, is more supportive of Mill when claiming that fractionalized societies have more trouble with cooperating and agreeing on political solutions. Citizens in such countries have different values and attitudes which again creates different preferences for all aspects of state organization, politics, as well as the role of the state. The different group's loyalty lies first and foremost with their respective groups rather than to the state, which again increases the risk of violent conflict.¹⁷ Dahl¹⁸ also follows this strain when stating that:

It is reasonable to suppose, then, that the prospects for polyarchy are greatly reduced if the fundamental beliefs and identities are compatible and therefore not a source of conflict. Thus, as the strength and distinctiveness of a country's subcultures increase, the chances for polyarchy should decline.

Dahl argues that subcultures are established through shared ethnicity, language, regional belonging, and cultural. The stronger and the more distinct these subcultures

are, the more the members will identify with the groups rather than those belonging to other groups. Even though Dahl argues that polyarchy is less likely to be achieved in fractionalized countries, he makes a point that homogeneity is not necessary a requirement. We have examples such as Belgium and Switzerland, two countries with a polarized ethnic structure, that still are established democracies where differences and conflicts of interest have been handled by allowing the different groups to participate in the democratic process. However, Horowitz¹⁹ is critical toward such a strategy in fractionalized and conflict-ridden states in Africa and Asia since their ethnic divisions are deeper, the conflicts are more pronounced, and the number of ethnic groups is greater than in the above-mentioned European countries.

In countries consisting of a clear majority group (45–90% of the population), there is a tendency toward oppression of the minority population.²⁰ As such, the minority will not always accept the elected government as legitimate. When it comes to polarized societies, the literature is divided. Some studies show that such a distribution is advantageous in a democratic system of government where both groups are well represented in parliament, so-called *consociationalism*,²¹ while others argue that this increases the likelihood of the polarization of politics.²² In societies scoring high on ethnic fractionalization there is a greater willingness to compromise and to establish coalitions that can reach political agreement.²³ Reilly²⁴ supports this argument. In his own study he argues that there is a curvilinear relationship between ethnic fractionalization and democratic prospects where he is most pessimistic when it comes to the middle category (ethnically polarized societies). Reilly claims that fractionalization actually can stimulate democratization since the different groups do not view it as likely to achieve and keep power on their own. Montalvo and Reynal-Querol criticizes argue that one should use a measure of polarization rather than the index of fractionalization to capture potential conflict, and that any index of ethnic heterogeneity should be theoretically oriented.²⁵ In his study of divided societies in Eastern Europe, Rovny argues that the presence of ethnic minorities will affect party competition depending on a country's history.²⁶ In those instances where leftist parties cater to minorities, then rightist parties will promote nationalistic positions, and vice versa. In an empirical study of minorities in European countries, Hänni highlights that the political preference of ethnic minorities often differ from those of the majority.²⁷ When it comes to actions of the regime, it is proposed that countries where the largest group is relatively small, might be less likely to have a high democratic rating. Shoup argues that ethnic polarization is decisive for whether a state institutionalizes undemocratic procedures.²⁸

Ethnic fractionalization and desire for democracy

Previous research has shown that public support for democracy is well established in both democracies and less democratic states.²⁹ It is nevertheless possible that ethnic fractionalization has a moderating effect on this support. Fractionalized states often lack a national sentiment based on history, values, and interest juxtaposed with homogenous states. This again can give a poor prerequisite for cooperation and, at worst, lead to conflict between the different groups. In an ethnically fractionalized society democratic values and attitudes will differ from group to group, and the power-balance between the

different ethnicities may lead to different preferences when it comes to government. Of course, the idea of consociationalism provides a possible solution for majority rule in divided states, since this implies cooperation between groups and simultaneously imposes restraints such that none of the groups can dominate. However, this notion has received criticism as it has been shown to have limited explanatory power in developing countries. Spears³⁰ and Horowitz³¹ argue that the ethnic divisions and histories of conflict in Africa and Asia are so deep that it is not possible to generalize about the success of European states when it comes to consociationalism. A basic desire for cooperation also needs to exist for such a social process to commence. Some groups have enriched themselves through conflict, which again has led to additional political power. The groups which are in power have an inherent interest in preserving their political and economic resources, and thus have less incentive to start a democratic process in which they can potentially lose power.³²

Dahl's³³ description of heterogeneity is best suited for developing countries marked by either conflict, lack of dialogue, or presence of historical divides which contribute to further escalate an already problematic situation. Yet ethnic heterogeneity can also lead to consequences for established democratic societies. It is expected to reduce willingness to mobilize and reach a compromise when it comes to societal questions atwart ethnic boundaries. These problems are attributed to a lack of trust between different ethnic groups in a society.³⁴

Both social and political trust play an important role in establishing democratic values, also in democracies. Generalized trust denotes the degree of trust we have toward persons we do not know nor have first-hand knowledge about. In a modern plural society, most citizens are strangers to us, which implies that we cannot base our trust on personal credibility. To achieve generalized trust, we must attribute strangers with a common moral fundament.³⁵ In a study of the Unites States, Putnam³⁶ shows that increasing ethnic heterogeneity reduces both trust toward ethnic others and toward people belonging to one's own ethnic group. In addition, in areas hallmarked by heterogeneity there is generally lower trust in local authorities, media, and belief in citizen influence over politics as well as fewer registered voters. Similar findings have been made by Alesina and La Ferrara³⁷ who performed a global study of 60 countries, and Anderson and Paskeviciute.³⁸ In addition, Alesina and La Ferrara point out that heterogeneity also reduces membership in political and social organizations. If ethnic heterogeneity reduces social trust, it is also likely that it becomes more difficult to establish democratic values. Reduced trust is associated with lower levels of citizen activity in social and political arena which are important in the development of democratic attitudes. However, Putnam's³⁹ argument that political knowledge is greater in divided societies could potentially counter some of the negative effects resulting from ethnic heterogeneity.

In today's modern society generalized trust is more important than ever, as it is a driving force for contact in pluralist societies and generates acceptance for differentness.⁴⁰ Or as formulated by Newton⁴¹: "As the size and impersonality of our societies grows, theories of generalized trust are of increasing significance." In the liberal version of democracy, acceptance for minorities (including unpopular ones) is an important element. Further, Putnam⁴² argues that participation in civil organizations and a high

degree of social trust creates a social foundation where democratization and the establishment of democratic attitudes can be established and developed.⁴³

Political trust can be described as the trust citizens have toward the political system, its actors, values, and societal institutions.⁴⁴ It is essential for democracy as “high trust levels signify that institutions are working effectively, thus reducing the chance that non-democratic forms of government will receive support,”⁴⁵ or as Weber defines it, “legitimacy arises out of the confidence of the ruled.”⁴⁶ A decrease in political trust can potentially reduce the belief in democracy as it is a sign that political institutions are not able to deal with the challenges of society.⁴⁷ Ferrera⁴⁸ views national identity as an important ingredient for further democratic development, political trust, and the development of the welfare state in European countries. Similar arguments have been made by Dahl⁴⁹ who argue that a common national identity that binds the citizens together is necessary for people to accept political decisions based on the desires of the majority and stimulate trust and support for democratic institutions. If political trust stimulates the internalization of democratic attitudes, as argued by Mishler and Rose,⁵⁰ then an increase in ethnic fractionalization could potentially reduce support for democracy. Both minority and majority citizens have expectations toward the government, and when these are met then support for the political system increases.⁵¹

As we have seen in the above section, a large part of the literature argues that ethnic heterogeneity has a negative effect on social and political trust. Political trust is often operationalized through trust in institutions such as the parliament, political party, and politicians, and these factors which can be viewed as the manifestation of democracy and democratic conceptions. If this is correct, it can be deduced that ethnic fractionalization leads to a lower score on indicators of democratic values, also in democracies. The above discussion leads us to hypothesize a negative relationship between ethnic fractionalization and the desire for democracy in both sub-samples:

H1: A high degree of ethnic fractionalization leads to a reduced desire for a democratic government.

In peace studies there is a strong argument for a curvilinear relationship between ethnic fractionalization and conflict.⁵² Similarly, this relationship can be drawn to the study of democratic values where it is argued that the possibilities for cooperation are more favorable in homogenous and heterogeneous juxtaposed with polarized societies.⁵³ In the latter category, positive attitudes toward a democratic government could be argued to be less pronounced because there is greater likelihood that one ethnic group dominates politics. As a result, increased polarization of politics is more likely,⁵⁴ and that polarization can be associated with authoritarian-like practices by the rulers.⁵⁵ A fractionalized society on the other hand, increases the incentive for broader alliances (since each group is aware that they cannot govern alone).

H2: A high degree of ethnic polarization leads to a reduced desire for a democratic government.

Dahl's⁵⁶ description of ethnic heterogeneity may best suit developing countries. However, ethnic heterogeneity can also have consequences for established democratic societies. In such situations we could expect ethnic heterogeneity to reduce the willingness to mobilize

and achieve compromises in societal questions, the reason being divisions along ethnic borderlines. These problems are often ascribed to a lack of trust between ethnic groups in the society. Even though the relationships are expected to be the same for both sets of countries, the rationale behind is somewhat nuanced.⁵⁷ Thus, we find it expedient to separate between these two on our models (in addition to the full-sample models).

Data and methods

Our sources of individual level data are three waves of the *World Values Survey* (WVS) and two waves of the *European Values Survey* (EVS) covering the period 1995–2014.⁵⁸ The data used for our analysis are nested into more than 90 countries, more than 200 country-survey-years, and more than 200,000 respondents (see [Appendix A1](#) for list of countries). We present one table including six models. Since we are dealing with hierarchical data, we employ multilevel modeling; to be more precise, three-level random intercept models. This enables us to account for variance in a dependent variable measured at the lowest level by investigating information from all levels of analysis. It also deals with the breach of assumptions regarding independent standard errors. The standard errors for the different explanatory variables are calculated based on the *N* of their respective levels.⁵⁹ The large number of countries and country-survey-years in our analysis enables us to include several control variables at level 2.

Our dependent variable is *Desire for democracy* (1–13) where high values indicate that the respondent has preferences for a democratic government. In the literature there is a consensus that support for democracy often means a rejection of alternative forms of government. However, this is not necessarily the case in non-democracies where several countries have experienced different political systems and sometimes have little or no experience with democracy. When including non-democracies in the study, it is recommended that *Desire for democracy* is measured along two dimensions: first, how positive the respondent is toward democracy, and second, how negative the respondent is toward other forms of government.⁶⁰ This variable measures the respondent's attitudes to four different governing form's ability to govern the respondent's own country. These are: *A strong leader*, *Experts* (non-governmental), *The army*, *Democratic political system*.⁶¹ These variables were collapsed to create an index which forms our first dependent variable. The reason we refer to this as an index and not a scale is because the autocratic variables loaded much greater on the underlying factor than did the democratic one (which showed greater uniqueness). As argued earlier, it is advisable to create such an index as we want to control for authoritarian inclinations (see [Appendix A2](#) for correlation matrix of the included variables). As citizens may harbor ambivalent attitudes, authors within the field have recommended that democratic attitudes should be measured along two dimensions, where we on the one side measure positive attitudes toward democracy, and at the same time measure positive attitudes toward alternative ways of ruling a country (the later has a reverse coding in our analysis). To measure desire for democracy in this way is regarded as conventional within the literature.⁶²

We have also included control variables at the individual level. First and foremost, it is relevant to include a control for whether the respondent belongs to the majority group or not. It is a challenging task to construct this from the WVS/EVS data, as there

is no single measure for this throughout the different country-survey-years. It is based on measures, including questions about nationality/ethnicity, language, whether the respondent or his/her parents were immigrants or born in country, ethnic group, citizenship, and region. We have named this measure *Majority* (0–1).⁶³ It is argued that emancipatory values play an important formative role regarding citizens' democratic attitudes.⁶⁴ We have included a scale called *Tolerance* (1–28) composed of three questions that measure the respondent's level of tolerance regarding abortion, divorce, and homosexuality. High values on the scale indicate high degree of tolerance. According to Mattes and Bratton there is a learning curve where political interest stimulates involvement and participation in different societal arenas where one can acquire democratic values.⁶⁵ To control for this, we have included the variable *Political interest* (1–4) where high values indicate that the respondent is highly interested in politics. *Religiosity* (1–4) is coded likewise and where respondents were asked to state their subjective degree of religiosity. This measure is included as religiosity that can stimulate an uncritical acceptance of authorities, which again can have a negative effect on democratic attitude.⁶⁶ We have also included the demographic measures *Woman* (0–1), *Age*, and *Higher education* (0–1). It must be stressed that we have chosen to exclude possible individual level variables that drastically reduced *N* (for example, *Household income*), as our focus is on the relationship between a level-2 variable and our dependent variables.⁶⁷

Our main independent variables are at the country-year-level. The first one is referred to as *Fractionalization*. This is a scale ranging from 0–1 and is calculated based on annual data from the *Composition of Religious Ethnic Groups project* (CREG).⁶⁸ This is a better measure of ethnic fractionalization juxtaposed with, for example, Fearon and Laitin's ELF-index,⁶⁹ as it is up-to-date regarding recent changes in ethnic composition and immigration, especially into Western countries in recent decades. Our measure is calculated in the same way as the ELF-measure, by taking 1-Herfindahl index. This gives the likelihood that two randomly drawn individuals from the population (of a given country in a given year) belong to different ethnic groups. This ranges from 0 (homogeneity) to 1 (maximum heterogeneity). Our second main independent variable is also from the CREG-project, and is named *Polarization*. It is a recalculation of the previous measure, so that values of 0.5 on Fractionalization equals 0.5 on Polarization, 0.4 and 0.6 equals 0.4 on the new measure and so on. The CREG-project based their data on the *CIA Factbook*, *Britannica Book of the Year*, and *World Almanac Book of Facts*.⁷⁰ The most homogenous country in our sample is South Korea (1996) with a fractionalization value of 0.01 and the largest group comprises 99.496% of the population, while Tanzania (2001) is the most heterogenous with a fractionalization score of 0.93 and the largest group is only 11.575% of the total population. The original categorization is based on the size of ethnic and religious groups in a country from year to year.⁷¹ Venezuela (1996) is the high scorer on *Polarization*.

We control for the effect of having an actual liberal democracy as this is assumed to have a positive effect on a citizen's democratic attitude.⁷² We include *Liberal democracy* which is obtained from the *V-Dem Institute*, scaled 0–1, and which measures the degree to which liberal democratic principles are complied with when it comes to civilian and political rights.⁷³ Democratic history is seen as an important factor for shaping democratic attitudes.⁷⁴ In our analysis we operationalize *Democratic history* as the number of

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Desire for democracy	233,070	8.807	2.319	1	13
Majority	233,070	0.752	0.432	0	1
Age	233,070	41,706	16,562	15	108
Woman	233,070	0.505	0.500	0	1
Higher education	233,070	0.258	0.437	0	1
Religious	233,070	2.913	1.077	1	4
Political interest	233,070	2.434	0.945	1	4
Tolerance	233,070	10.421	7.955	1	28
Population	223	16.717	1.567	12.671	21.024
GDP growth	223	3.263	4.497	-12.461	35.390
GDPpc	223	9.047	1.346	5.526	11.425
Liberal democracy	223	0.562	0.267	0.038	0.889
Democratic history	223	17.072	37.467	0	114
Fractionalization	223	0.385	0.239	0.010	0.930
Polarization	223	0.273	0.137	0.010	0.500
Majoritarian	91	0.264	0.443	0	1
West (ref.)	91	0.242	0.431	0	1
East Bloc	91	0.209	0.409	0	1
Asia	91	0.187	0.392	0	1
Sub Africa	91	0.121	0.328	0	1
Mena	91	0.088	0.285	0	1
Latin America	91	0.143	0.352	0	1

Desire for democracy.

years since the country was last recorded as being democratic. Our definition of what constitutes a democracy follows the *Center of Systematic Peace*' evaluation in their publication *Polity IV*.⁷⁵ For a given year, each country has been given a polity score ranging from -10 to +10 where countries within the range 6-10 are recorded as democracies. We also include *Per capita GDP* and *GDP growth*.⁷⁶ According to modernization theory, socioeconomic development has a positive effect on attitudes toward democracy.⁷⁷ Both variables are lagged one year, and *Per capita GDP* is log-transformed. Lijphart⁷⁸ and Anckar⁷⁹ state that countries with a large population size experience worse conditions for democratization and development of democratic attitudes than smaller countries. To control for this, we include *Population*, which is log-transformed.⁸⁰ We have also included a variable called *Majoritarian*, denoting whether it is a majoritarian democracy. Last, we include a dummy set for world regions, using Western countries as the reference group. These include, *East bloc*, *Asia*, *Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Mena* (Middle East and North Africa), and *Latin America*, to control for geographical/cultural differences. This is an argument put forward by Huntington among others.⁸¹ Our three-level hierarchical models can be formally described as:

$$y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1ijk} + \beta_2 X_{2jk} + \beta_3 X_{3k} + e_{ijk} + u_{0jk} + v_{0k} \quad (1)$$

Descriptive statistics for the models are found in [Table 1](#).

Results

In this section we present [Table 2](#) where we investigate the relationship between our ethnic measures and *Desire for democracy*. We see from Model 1 that there is a negative and significant effect of fractionalization when we investigate the full sample of

Table 2. *Desire for democracy (1–13), 1995–2014.*

	(1) Full	(2) Full w/polar.	(3) Dem.	(4) Dem. w/polar.	(5) Non-dem.	(6) Non-dem. w/polar.
Intercept	8.916*** (1.317)	8.989*** (1.340)	9.211*** (1.589)	9.328*** (1.583)	9.409*** (1.713)	9.325*** (1.650)
Majority	0.126** (0.052)	0.126** (0.052)	0.152** (0.061)	0.153** (0.061)	0.038 (0.085)	0.038 (0.085)
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)
Woman	0.050*** (0.015)	-0.050*** (0.015)	-0.054*** (0.018)	-0.054*** (0.018)	-0.053** (0.024)	-0.053** (0.024)
High. education	0.475*** (0.028)	0.475*** (0.028)	0.508*** (0.030)	0.508*** (0.030)	0.344*** (0.057)	0.344*** (0.057)
Religious	-0.017 (0.015)	-0.017 (0.015)	-0.017 (0.017)	-0.016 (0.017)	-0.012 (0.029)	-0.011 (0.029)
Political interest	0.133*** (0.026)	0.133*** (0.026)	0.181*** (0.030)	0.181*** (0.030)	-0.028 (0.023)	-0.028 (0.023)
Tolerance	0.026*** (0.004)	0.026*** (0.004)	0.030*** (0.005)	0.030*** (0.005)	0.004 (0.008)	0.004 (0.008)
Population†	-0.090** (0.043)	-0.091** (0.041)	-0.109* (0.057)	-0.106** (0.050)	-0.084 (0.069)	-0.059 (0.067)
GDP growth	0.010 (0.010)	0.010 (0.011)	0.002 (0.013)	0.000 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.012)	0.003 (0.011)
GDPpc.†	0.111 (0.091)	0.128 (0.090)	0.081 (0.099)	0.076 (0.103)	0.032 (0.169)	0.009 (0.188)
Lib. dem.	0.406 (0.367)	0.293 (0.372)	0.649 (0.436)	0.500 (0.466)	-1.857* (1.082)	-1.259* (1.097)
Dem. history	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	—	—	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.003)
Fractionali-zation	-0.741** (0.299)	—	-1.309*** (0.374)	—	0.734 (0.608)	—
Polarization	—	-1.237*** (0.465)	—	-1.944*** (0.642)	—	0.247 (0.968)
Majoritarian	0.221 (0.164)	0.208 (0.157)	0.505** (0.214)	0.525** (0.222)	-0.183 (0.289)	-0.089 (0.259)
East bloc	-1.165*** (0.256)	-1.128*** (0.256)	-1.007*** (0.290)	-0.943*** (0.284)	-0.293 (0.267)	-0.393 (0.286)
Asia	-0.924*** (0.263)	-0.997*** (0.276)	-0.782** (0.336)	-1.106** (0.376)	0.123 (0.377)	0.019 (0.396)
Sub. Africa	0.404 (0.400)	0.030 (0.455)	0.321 (0.476)	0.503 (0.595)	0.936** (0.446)	1.014** (0.462)
Mena	-1.083*** (0.333)	-1.138*** (0.355)	-1.409*** (0.505)	-1.370*** (0.553)	0.112 (0.413)	0.015 (0.467)
Latin America	-0.699** (0.273)	-0.665** (0.270)	-0.541* (0.292)	-0.545* (0.287)	—	—
Level-1 variance	4.073 (0.144)	4.073 (0.144)	4.042 (0.181)	4.042 (0.181)	4.118 (0.194)	4.119 (0.194)
Level-2 variance	0.396 (0.145)	0.389 (0.141)	0.172 (0.055)	0.166 (0.054)	0.736 (0.323)	0.753 (0.334)
Level-3 variance	0.138 (0.085)	0.138 (0.088)	0.257 (0.079)	0.288 (0.006)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Level-1 <i>N</i>	233,070	233,070	176,396	176,396	56,674	56,674
Level-2 <i>N</i>	223	223	169	169	54	54
Level-3 <i>N</i>	91	91	68	68	31	31
LL (pseudo)	-493,619	-493,619	-372,469	-372,470	-120,751	-120,752

The table shows coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are shown as *** $p < 0.01$. ** $p < 0.05$. * $p < 0.1$. † indicates that the variable is log-transformed. The level-1 observations are weighted. West is reference category for the regional dummies.

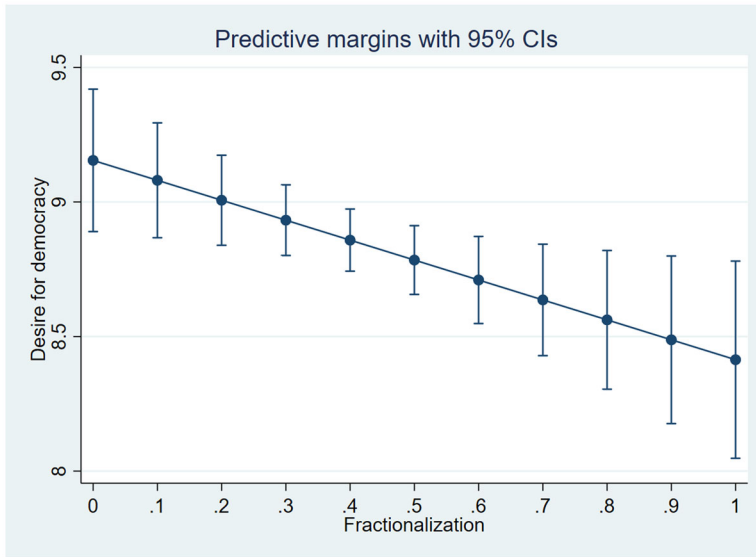


Figure 1. The relationship between *Fractionalization* and *Desire for Democracy* (full sample).

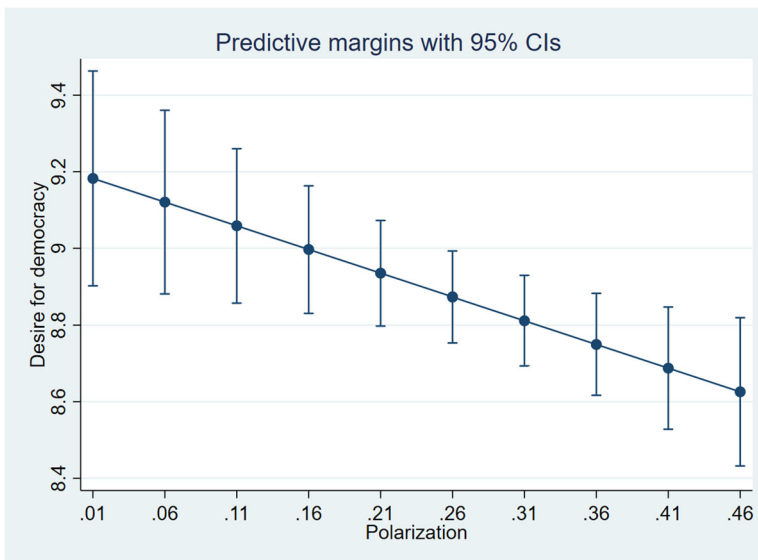


Figure 2. The relationship between *polarization* and *desire for democracy* (full sample).

countries. In Model 2 we see that there is also a negative and significant effect of *polarization*.

Substantially, the results show that citizens in those countries that are the most ethnically homogenous and less polarized, have a greater desire for democratic rule than those residing in more fractionalized societies (see Figures 1 and 2, calculated from Models 1 and 2 respectively). These effects are driven by democracies (Models 3 and 4), as they are reverse and not significant when investigating non-democracies separately (Models 5 and 6). It can be noted that the effect of polarization is stronger than that of

fractionalization, and there are also fewer countries that fall above 0.5 than below on fractionalization.

Regarding our controls, *Majority* has a positive effect in all models, but is not significant in the non-democracy sample. *Age* shows a weak, yet positive significant effect in the full sample as well as for democracies but becomes not significant and close to zero with non-democracies. *Woman* is significant and negative throughout all models on *Desire for democracy*, while *Higher education* is positive and significant (this is the strongest indicator of *desire for democracy*). There is no significant effect of *Religiosity* in any of the models. Both *Political interest* and *Tolerance* are positive and significant in the full sample and democracies models, but not significant in the non-democratic models.

Of the upper-level controls, *population* is negative and significant in the global and the democratic samples, while *liberal democracy* is positive and significant at the 10%-level in one of the two democratic sample models, and negative and significant at the 10%-level in both models for non-democracies. The variable *majoritarian* is positive and significant at the 5%-level for the democratic sub-sample. Regarding the regional controls, we find that sub-Saharan African countries score highest on the dependent, followed by Western countries (though, the difference between these two groups are not significant), which again is followed by Latin America, Asia, Middle East and North Africa, before the lowest score is found with former East bloc countries (all of which score significantly lower than the reference category, *West*).

Discussion

Our two hypotheses were confirmed for the democratic subsample as well as for the global sample (which, of course, is largely driven by the democratic subsample). For democracies, the effect of fractionalization is negative on the dependent *Desire for democracy*, and also, the higher a country's score on *Polarization*, the lower the average value of the dependent becomes. Fractionalization in democracies has been shown to reduce social and political trust in addition to reducing support for welfare policies. J. S. Mill argued that if a representative democracy should be established and survive, a common nationality was essential.⁸² A representative democracy including members of different ethnic or religious groups could create friction both within parliament and in the society as a whole. As such, the individual preferences of the different groups will not be fulfilled without other groups feeling neglected. There is less support for Lord Acton's Argument that the multinational state is better equipped to balance power and opinion formation.⁸³

There is no effect of our main explanatory variables in the non-democratic sample, but it can be noted that the signs were reversed juxtaposed with the democratic sample. One explanation for this could be that increased diversity contributes to spreading new ideas and values, and thus makes democratic conceptions more available to the ordinary citizen. Increasing fractionalization thus contributes to greater plurality in political opinion formation.⁸⁴ It could also be that citizens in non-democratic societies marked by a greater degree of heterogeneity feel the need to organize and participate in order to secure their own and societal interests. As such, there is a counter effect for non-democratic regimes which makes the sum a non-finding.

We have also tested whether the effect of our ethnic measures differ depending on whether you belong to the minority or majority of the population, or if it differs depending on whether your country is a majoritarian democracy or not. The former interaction proved to be not significant, and the latter also showed no effect in the global sample and in the democratic sub-sample. In non-democratic countries there was a greater desire for democracy in non-majoritarian countries than in majoritarian ones when the society is highly fractionalized/polarized.⁸⁵

Conclusion

As democratic attitudes are considered an important component in democratization, we have investigated a dimension that is important in this respect. To achieve democratic mobilization, it is necessary that citizens have a desire for a democratic system. Our results show that there is an effect of ethnic fractionalization and the size of the largest group on our dependent variable. The wish for democratic governance is more pronounced in homogenous democracies and in democracies where the largest group constitute a large share of the total population. However, these effects are not present in non-democracies. For this category of countries, it is evident that ethnic fractionalization constitutes a more democratic force, and we find no significant effect of our ethnic measures for this sub-category.

The study of ethnic fractionalization on democratic attitudes is an underdeveloped topic in the literature, and we have contributed to filling this gap in the present study. We also chose to test democracies and non-democracies in different models since the causal effects could be different in these societies. As there is scant previous research on this topic, a challenge with this study has been to integrate research on democratic attitudes with studies pertaining to the effect of ethnicity on related fields, for example conflict studies. Future research would be well advised to further investigate this proposed link, also using other measures of democratic attitudes as well as objective indicators of actual democratic level.

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Appendix A1. List of countries included in analysis

Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Appendix A2. Correlation matrix for variables included in desire for democracy

	Strong leader	Experts	The army	Democratic
Strong leader	1.000	—	—	—
Experts	0.302	1.000	—	—
The army	0.344	0.209	1.000	—
Democratic	0.192	0.014	0.136	1.000