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Support for the Democratic Process in Europe

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This paper presents an analysis on one of the main indicators for the study of political support, which is Satisfaction with Democracy. It also offers a revision on the actual levels of this indicator in different European societies. It's observable that these levels of satisfaction with Democracy vary visibly among European countries, so it would become a very interesting task to further explore the factors which underlie these levels of satisfaction. At the same time, the effect of intervening explanatory factors and their relevance are susceptible to vary depending on the society. This paper, therefore, deepens and presents data on the levels and nature of support for the democratic process, measured by the indicator of satisfaction for democracy. In this work, I'll present evidence that levels of support in European Societies rely on aspects of political stability. On the other hand, contextual factors play a role on how political support is shaped. Patterns of support in different European societies tend to rely on different aspects. Therefore, correlates of political support, classified in two main explanations, have different intensity depending on the levels of democratic stability of societies.

Democracies cannot survive without the generalized support of their citizenry (Klingemann 1999, Hoffebert and Klingemann 1990, Miller 1974), therefore the study of this phenomenon is of crucial relevance for studies in political science. For a democracy to be considered consolidated it would be required, as Linde and Ekman (2003: 392) mentioned, a majority of its citizens to share that belief. The reason for this is that the analysis of the mechanisms through which individuals establish their supportive attitudes towards their political systems is a key element for understanding the way citizens and political systems relate with each other. In this paper, I suggest that European societies establish their supportive attitudes differently, taking in this case support towards democratic process as the main indicator, and I also provide data on how levels of this support vary consistently across societies. At the same time, the effect of different explanatory factors, or the correlates of support (Dalton 2004) vary within countries too. According to this approach, I take satisfaction with democracy as a typical indicator of political support (Easton 1965, 1975) and apply the analyses to European Societies with data from 2005.

The structure of this paper proceeds as follows. First, I'll present the concept of satisfaction with democracy as an indicator for political support. In a second part I will classify different correlates for support into two main explanations, cultural and performance evaluation.

Thirdly, data from the European social Survey 2005 for 25 countries will be analysed. The data will be used to measure, on the one hand, the levels of satisfaction for democracy in European countries; and on the other hand, to understand which factors are sources of political support in Europe. Differences, not only in the levels of satisfaction for democracy, but also on the effects of the different "correlates" for support, are expected to be observed and are relevant for the study of political support.

Satisfaction with Democracy as an Indicator of Political Support

The concept of satisfaction with democracy has frequently been used as an indicator of political support, more specifically in relation with support for the political process (Fuchs,

Guidorossi and Svenson 1995, Dalton 2003, 2002, Linde y Eckman 2002). This indicator appears in most European surveys (Eurobarometer, ISSP, ESS), and measures the degree to which individuals support the way democracy is working in a specific society in a concrete moment in time. In democratic political systems, the concept of political support (Easton 1965, 1975) takes shape in several political objects, support for the democratic process is one of them (Dalton 2003).

Satisfaction with democracy is considered by many to be *the* indicator of support for the democratic process which is included as an indicator of support for the Regime, together with support for the principles of democracy and support for institutions (Norris 1999, Dalton 1999, 2003). Satisfaction with democracy is one of the most widely shared indicators of political support and will be, therefore, my dependent variable and my central indicator to study.

The use of this concrete indicator is very useful in understanding the nature and mechanisms on which political support in Europe is settled. Between 70% and 99% of the European Citizenry strongly supports their political communities, with very little variation in this indicator (EVS 1999); and between 70% and 82% of the Europeans show clear support for the principles of democracy or its ideal. Nevertheless, in moving from diffuse to specific support, variations start to manifest themselves, and levels of this support tend to decline in some societies. This fact constitutes a very interesting starting point to investigate the nature and mechanisms of political support, and Satisfaction with democracy is a very useful indicator of this, since it presents expansive variations between countries and constitutes a central point in the diffuse-specific continuum, to use Easton's terms.

Table 1: Support of the democratic process in Europe 2003 and 2005; means

Country	2003	2005	Country	2003	2005
Germany	5,01	5,06	Ireland	4,99	5,78
Austria	5,63	6,03	Iceland	-	5,86
Belgium	5,52	5,56	Israel	4,88	-
Denmark	7,26	7,31	Italy	4,93	-
Slovakia	-	3,84	Luxembourg	6,83	6,64
Slovenia	4,39	4,54	Norway	6,14	6,23
Spain	5,68	6,05	Poland	4,07	3,71
Estonia	-	4,56	Portugal	4,55	3,39
Finland	6,35	6,70	Czech Republic	4,79	4,61
France	4,85	4,85	Sweden	6,12	5,91
Great Britain	5,07	5,09	Switzerland	6,57	6,36
Greece	5,79	6,24	Turkey	-	4,98
Netherlands	5,83	5,65	Ukraine	-	4,04
Hungary	4,85	4,05			

Source: European Social Survey (2003 and 2005).

What accounts for these variations? Which factors make citizens be satisfied with the democratic process? The main hypotheses that I will test are the following:

1.- Democratic stability measured in terms of age of democracy, recent authoritarian heritage and lower economic welfare are strong intervening factors accounting differences in terms of levels of political support.

2.- Societies with more democratic stability will shape their support of the democratic process from long term cultural aspects settled over time and transmitted through socialisation. On the other hand, societies with weaker stability will establish their supportive attitudes from short term evaluations, such economic evaluations and their personal positions in the electoral process.

How Do We Measure Stability?

In this paper, stability will be measured as specified in the first hypothesis, in terms of economic welfare, age of democracy and value orientations. In order to establish observable differences in terms of levels of support, I have classified European Societies in Ex-communist and non ex-communist. According to this classification, and in order to prove that there are differences in the levels of Stability, an anova has been run with aggregate data of economic welfare, in this case Inflation, age of democracy and self expression Values. The output of this analysis can be found in table 2.

The anova shown above presents the differences of means in those three variables and confirms that there are significant differences in terms of economic, democratic and value dimensions between these two groups of Countries.

The next step is the specification of the model measuring the effects of both main explanations –cultural and evaluation of performance- and to observe if there are significant variations in terms of how European societies shape supportive attitudes, given their specific context.

In order to test the hypothesis, I first present two main explanations for support of the democratic process –measured in terms of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy-. On the other hand, I also present data to classify European societies in terms of democratic stability –explained above-, in order to compare levels of support and the effects of both explanations.

Testing Two General Explanations for Support of the Democratic Process

There is a wide amount of literature on explanations or correlates of political support (Easton 1965, 1975, Almond and Verba 1980; Berggren et al. 2004, Dalton 2003, Norris 1999, Klingemann 1999, Anderson and Guillory 1995, Anderson and Tverdova 2001, Mishler and Rose, Fuchs, Listhaug 1995, Weil 1989, Rohrschneider 1998, 2002). Literature on this topic shows how important culture is as a source of regime legitimacy. In addition, they also reflect on the relevance of other variables which have an effect on support, such as policy performance, evaluation of economy. Therefore I present two main explanations of satisfaction with democracy, which can also be extended as explanations of all objects of political support.

Table 2: Anova; inflation, age of democracy and self expression values by ex-communist heritage

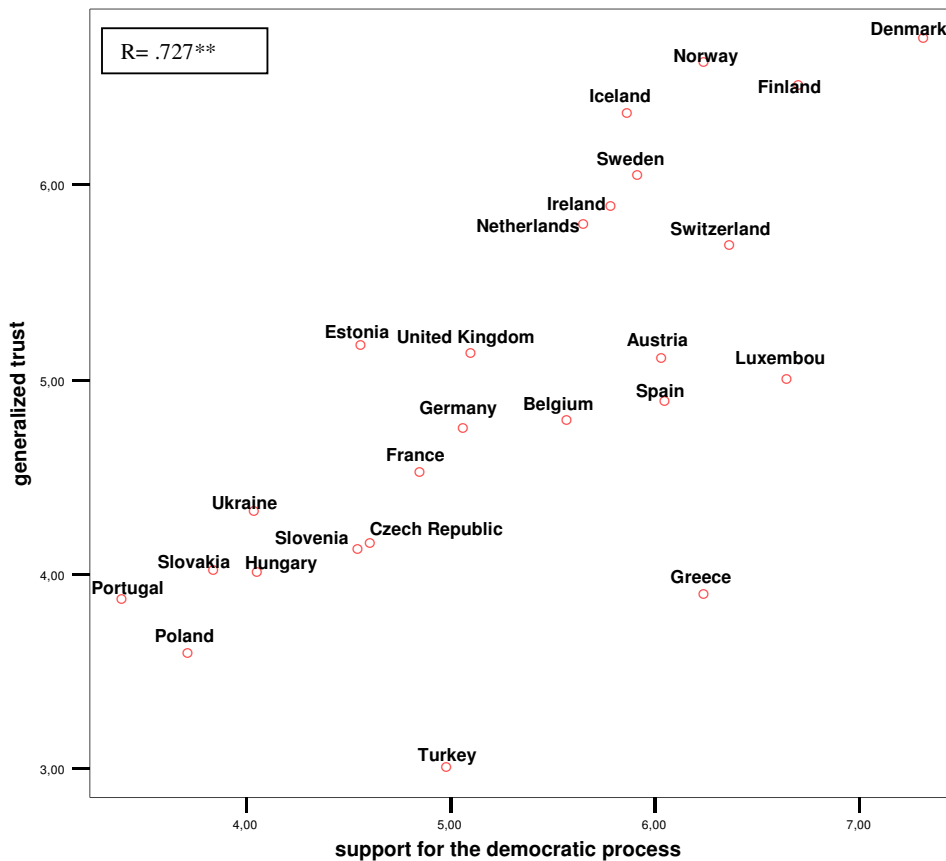
ANOVA							
			Quadratic sum	Degrees of Freedom	Quadratic Mean	F	Sig.
inflation * excommct	Inter-gr.	(combined)	34,01	1	34,006	5,772	0,025
	Intra-gr.		135,51	23	5,892		
	Total		169,51	24			
AGE-demo * excommct	Inter-gr.	(combined)	7612,89	1	7612,892	66,819	0,000
	Intra-gr.		2620,47	23	113,933		
	Total		10233,36	24			
self-expr * excommct	Inter-gr.	(combined)	0,168	1	0,168	18,068	0,000
	Intra-gr.		0,214	23	0,009		
	Total		0,382	24			

Association means		
	Eta	CuadraticEta
inflation * excommct	0,448	0,201
AGE-demo * excommct	0,863	0,744
self-expr * excommct	0,663	0,440

Cultural Explanation

The cultural explanation relies on long-term aspects which persist in a society, such as religious tradition, history, and values on which the State and Political system have been settled. These factors determine a set of values and attitudes shared by the citizenry, which are manifest in the way citizens establish their views of political community, regime and authorities. Generalized trust is a very important factor in this explanation (Delhey and Newton 2002, 203) These shared characteristics settle in society over time and are transmitted through socialisation process. Different cultural elements of the political systems, not only formal but also informal ones, are part of this explanation, since all these factors create the establishment of culture and values in a country's Constitution, or which has been called "Constitution in Operation" (Easton, 1965). Indicators of the cultural explanation are, in this work, political efficacy, life satisfaction and social trusting components, social capital etc. Figure 1 shows the relation between interpersonal trust and support for the democratic process, as an indicator of cultural explanation

Figure 1: Scatterplot, generalized trust and support for the democratic process.



It can be observed in the scatterplot how levels of interpersonal trust are, in general, accompanied by similar levels of support ($r=.727$). This provides evidence that trust is a very strong correlate of support. This data are interesting in terms of observing how groups are established, and also show in a very visible way the size of the variations in terms of levels of support and trust. It seems, therefore, that trust and cultural variables have a strong explanatory capacity. (mencionar offe, delhey and Newton, Sztompka)

Performance Evaluation Explanation

This explanation doesn't rely on cultural elements or characteristics within a society, but on short term experiences and evaluations. Typically, the explanation of performance evaluation tends to be more significant in those countries where the conditions for a stable democracy have not been fulfilled completely, or where these conditions have not existed long enough to

settle in society. This way, individuals articulate their attitudes towards political objects only from evaluating their personal situation, especially economic. Therefore, cultural aspects learnt through socialisation, democratic values etc., in some countries, would not be shaping supportive attitudes, or at least, not as strongly as evaluation of performance. A very important indicator related to the explanation of performance evaluation is satisfaction with the way an economy works in a specific country, as a way to measure how individuals perceive themselves as benefited or not from their immediate environment. An additional indicator measures whether or not the respondent sees themselves as winners or losers in the electoral process. This is measured by whether or not the respondent had voted in the last election for the candidate who had won (Anderson and Guillory 1998)

According to this, and depending on the specific situation of each society, attitudes and orientations towards political objects, that is, political community, regime and authorities will be articulated from one or the other explanation, or from one more than from the other. In some societies, the perception of welfare is fundamental in order to establish support of the democratic process, depending on the recent history, in relation with the scarcity hypothesis (Inglehart 1973). Other societies, where basic economic and safety needs are covered, and there is a stable democracy, tend to establish supportive attitudes on the way democratic and trusting values are extended in the citizenry. This way, the equilibrium or the combination of both explanations and the specific situation of each society would define and shape political support in general, and support of the democratic process in particular. It is not my expectation to find clear trends towards one explanation or to the other, but to find different equilibria with different impact of both explanations, depending on the society.

Figure 2 presents a scatterplot with the relation between evaluation of the economic situation and support for the democratic process. The same way as it was observed Figure 1 with the relation between generalized trust and support, it is observable here how evaluation of performance is a strong predictor of support ($r = 0.842$). Therefore, variations in the levels of support seem to be strongly related to variations in the correlates indicated in these pages.

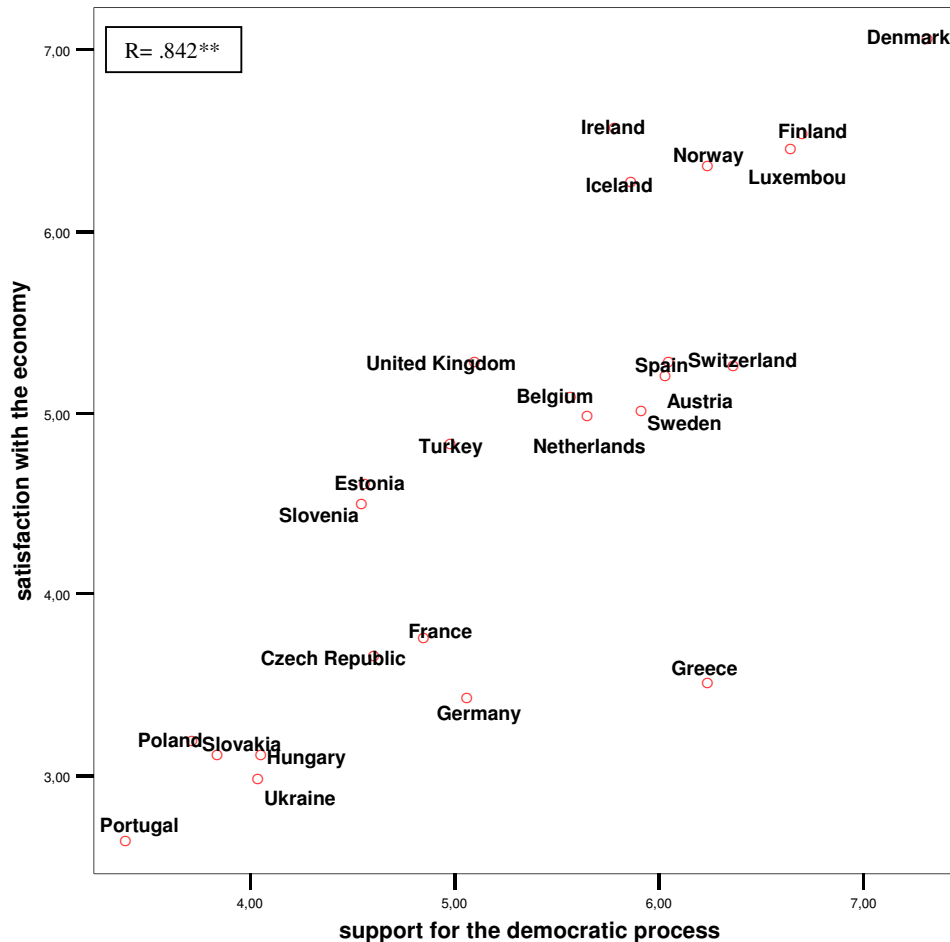
The Model

Both explanations considered and presented above have been operationalised by a set of variables which will be presented next. The cultural explanation, in terms of the empirical test, will be composed by several variables. First, generalized trust, as literature has often argued (Putnam, 1993; Offe, 1999; Fukuyama, 1995; Levi, 1998; Hardin, 1999; Warren, 1999), is a relevant variable to observe and measure value orientations in a society. It is important in the sense in which it measures the capability of a society to extend the trusting ties to individuals beyond familiar relations. When extending the trusting ties to others, this fact enables individuals to trust impersonal actors such as institutions, parties etc. When this happens, citizens become able to trust the State or the political system, strengthening the role of the State, which may act as an “umbrella” that protects the trusting relations in society (Offe, 1999; Fukuyama, 1995).

Second, political efficacy is also taken into account within the cultural explanation. In this case, the indicator used in the analysis will be interest in politics. It is considered that individuals more likely develop competence and interest in politics in a favourable cultural environment which establishes the mechanisms or outputs for individuals to generate and practice their capability. According with the literature (Almond and Verba, 1963; Gabriel 1995: 358, 1999) interest in politics acts as a relevant element in individuals’ personal self image as capable of influencing in the political process. In this sense, more sophisticated individuals, perceiving themselves to be politically efficacious tend to exhibit a high level of

of diffuse support. At the same time, they are more critical with political decisions and with system performance, acting as “dissatisfied democrats” (Klingemann, 1999) or “critical citizens” (Norris, 1999).

Figure 2: Scatterplot, satisfaction with the economy and support for the democratic process.



The third element is satisfaction with life. This factor, as Inglehart and Welzel present, (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005), although it is measured at the individual level, it varied consistently over countries, and it's considered as a culturally learnt way to relate with the social environment. Satisfaction with life is also related with the perception of safety and liberties and how people feel about their society and social environment. Therefore, it is assumed that the way in which individuals manifest their satisfaction with life is more based on cultural patterns than on specific evaluation of their life circumstances.

The explanation of performance evaluation argues that levels of political support would be explained by the judgements citizens make about the short term functioning of specific aspects, such as economy or election results. This explanation will be composed mainly by two indicators. First, and more importantly, evaluation with the economic situation

will be an important variable for analysis of support. According with this point of view, individuals can establish their attitudes towards the democratic process in terms of the evaluation they make on their personal economic situation. Therefore, if the perception of their own situation is favourable, their evaluation of the democratic process will also be favourable. In the case of central-eastern Europe, democratic values may not be sufficiently settled in these societies, since they have suffered a recent transition from a non democratic regime. Attitudes, then, might be relying on other factors, such as short-term evaluations of their welfare.

The second element taken into account in the explanation of performance evaluation is individuals' position on elections. Having voted or not for the candidate in Government is a relevant correlate of support. This aspect is very weak and changeable, so individuals can withdraw their support for the democratic process if the candidate they voted for is not elected. Political distance is a factor which might be underlying this phenomenon. Having a strict political view, and supporting a candidate with whom one agrees, can have a positive effect in case the candidate is elected, or a very negative effect, in terms of support, in case that candidate is not elected.

Table 3: Anova, support for the democratic process by having voted or not for the Party in Government

Descriptives										
How satisfied with the way democracy works in country										
				Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard error	Confidence intervals		Minimum	Maximum
Didn't vote party in Govmt				5,142	2,473	0,021	5,100	5,183	0	10
Voted party in Gvmt				5,941	2,321	0,020	5,902	5,981	0	10
Total				5,535	2,432	0015	5,506	5,564	0	10
ANOVA										
How satisfied with the way democracy works in country										
				Quadratic sum	Degrees of Freedom	Quadratic Mean	F		Sig.	
Inter-group				4311,863	1	4311,863	748,921		.000	
Intra-group				155502,557	27009	5,757				
Total				159814,419	27010					

Table 3 shows an anova in which Anderson and Guillory's idea of "winners and losers" is tested. The anova shows how "winners", that is, those who voted for the party which is in

Government, tend to support the democratic process more strongly than those who didn't vote for a party which is not in Government.

Therefore, if people feel that their political views are far from the elected candidate's political views, this can have a strong effect on support for the democratic process. When a Government changes, -which can happen in short term basis- and policies changes too, political support can be redefined too (Anderson and Guillory, 1997, Listhaug, 1995:265).

Mapping Satisfaction with Democracy in Europe

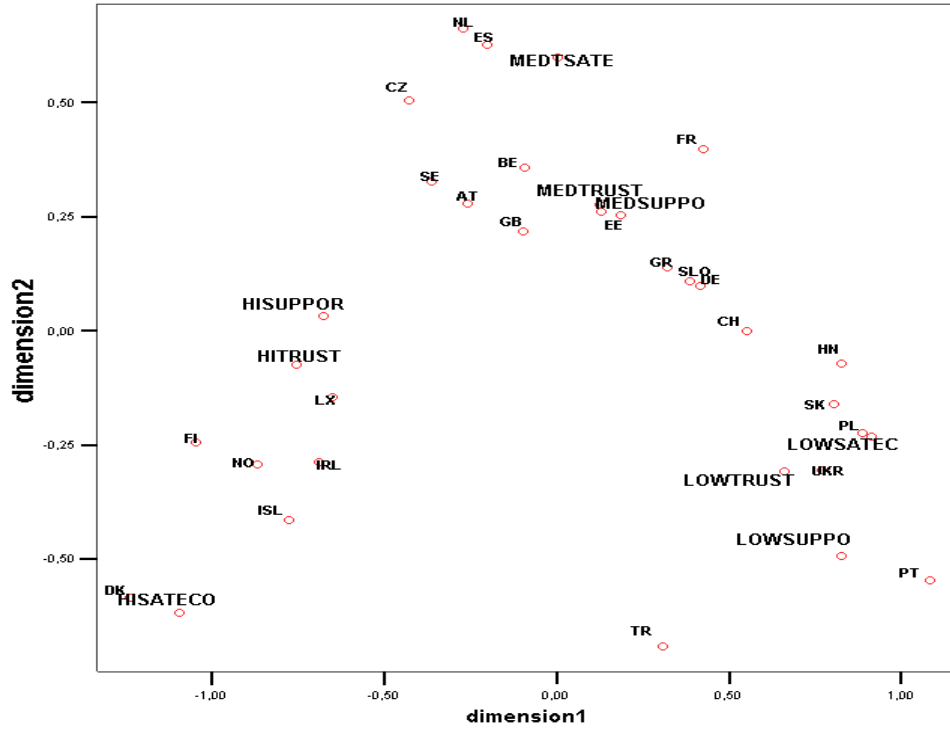
As argued previously, satisfaction with democracy has been considered the most adequate indicator of support for the democratic process (Fuchs, Guidorossi and Svensson, 1995; Linde and Ekman, 2003; Breggreen et al. 2004. Anderson 2002) although there is not much consensus about its accuracy in terms of its capability to properly mirror the concept (Canache, Mondak and Seligson, 2001). Though there is some dispute regarding overall validity, satisfaction on democracy is still regarded as the most adequate indicator of support for the democratic process.

In table 1, general numbers on support in Europe were provided. The next step will be to present data on how satisfaction with democracy interacts with other variables, and how societies cluster in relation to those variables. A correspondence analysis is presented below with data on satisfaction with democracy, generalized trust and satisfaction with the economy, as a way to combine both explanations with the dependent variable and observe how categories and societies are grouping.

Correspondence analysis calculates and plots the relations among variables' categories, and provides information about how different categories relate to each other. In this case, the variables introduced in the analysis are country, on the one hand, and then our dependent variable, satisfaction with democracy. This analysis offers the ability to introduce more variables, which in this case will be generalized trust and satisfaction with economy. This way it is possible to cluster the levels of support in societies and how categories of support, trust and satisfaction with the economy are gathering between themselves and with societies. In order to do that, the position or score of variables and their categories are calculated and plotted in relation with two dimensions.

From the correspondence analysis plot presented below, several observations can be made. Three main groups are formed in this analysis, and dimension one is the strongest articulator of this. In addition to this, dimension 2 is also defining a slight difference between groups, but this only completes the clear classification defined in dimension 1. Group 1 is formed in the low-left part of the plot, with the "high" categories- high support, high satisfaction with economy, high generalized trust, and those societies which show high levels of these variables –Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland and Luxembourg. In the low-right part of the plot, the "low" categories- low support, low satisfaction with economy and low generalized trust-, together with those countries which present low levels of this variables –Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Portugal and Turkey. Finally, in the upper middle part, the "middle" categories of these variables are found, together with those countries which present middle levels of trust, support and satisfaction with the economy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Slovenia, Greece, Switzerland, Estonia, Germany and Belgium.

Figure 3: Correspondence analysis; Support for the democratic process, generalized trust and satisfaction with the economy by countries.



In a descriptive way, the plot provides a strong evidence of correspondence between support for the democratic process and similar levels of satisfaction with the economy and estimates of generalized trust.

But, are there significant differences in the way European societies articulate their patterns of support for the democratic process? The hypotheses presented in this paper assume such differences exist, and also in which direction those variations go. The next step is, therefore, to observe the impact of both explanations on the dependent variable and measure the variations among societies. Table 3 presents the model of satisfaction with democracy. This multilevel model includes two kind of variables; individual level variables, and aggregate variables, in which the country is the unit. The table is presented in two parts. The upper part presents the fixed effects, presented and interpreted in the same way as unstandardized OLS regression coefficients. The lower part is composed by the random effects, which measure if there are significant variations among units (countries), in relation to the variables specified. This second part is also called variance components.

The main model, specified below, is composed of individual and aggregate variables. The individual level model includes variables related to both explanations, such as generalized trust, interest with politics, satisfaction with life, as part of the cultural explanation, or satisfaction with the economy, voting for the candidate in Government and also voting for the candidate in opposition, as part of the explanation of evaluation of performance. The high non-response in the voting variable is the reason for computing two variables which could gather a higher amount of information.

Some control variables have been also included, such as ideology, gender, age, coded in three cohorts, being the youngest cohort the reference category, and years of education. Two aggregate level variables have been included in the model, a dummy for ex-communist country, and the gini index. The coefficients of the aggregate level variables are also interpreted as an unstandardized OLS coefficient and present the impact of contextual variables on support for the democratic process. The fact that these contextual variables are significant may also suggest why significant variations among countries occur.

Table 4: Multilevel analysis; explanatory model of support for the democratic process

Dependent variable: SAT with democracy			
Final estimation of fixed effects:			
Fixed effects	Coefficient	gl	P
INTRCPT1, B0			
INTRCPT2, G00	3.374635	22	0.000
EXCOMMCT, G01	-0.303992	22	0.011
GINIINDE, G02	-0.038799	22	0.002
PPLTRST B1	0.104770	24	0.000
POLINTR B2	-0.143871	24	0.000
LRSCALE B3	0.065026	24	0.000
STFLIFE B4	0.104327	24	0.000
SATECO B5	0.419495	24	0.000
EDUYRS B6	-0.000461	24	0.931
oldercohort B7	-0.064644	24	0.325
Midcohort B8	-0.123340	24	0.022
Gender B9	0.020850	24	0.395
votegov B10	0.306774	24	0.000
votedoppos B11	-0.046095	24	0.184
Final estimation of random effects:			

Random effect	Standard deviation	Gl	Chi-Square	P
INTRCPT1, U0	0.92947	22	153.09862	0.000
PPLTRST U1	0.03140	24	66.60486	0.000
POLINTR U2	0.13824	24	138.68820	0.000
LRSCALE U3	0.06570	24	189.26027	0.000
STFLIFE U4	0.04580	24	98.18219	0.000
STFECO U5	0.06649	24	175.59510	0.000
EDUYRS U6	0.02318	24	80.58223	0.000
Oldercohort U7	0.29408	24	92.03367	0.000
midcohort U8	0.23257	24	102.78942	0.000
gender U9	0.09632	24	34.02994	0.084
votegov U10	0.18541	24	70.83281	0.000
votedopp, U11	0.12269	24	40.88160	0.017
Level -1, R	1.88076			

Statistics:

Deviation = 153517.906936
Number of estimated parameters = 79

In this model, both aggregate variables, being an excommunist country and the Gini index are significant. The excommunist variable is a dummy coded 1 for former communist country, so the sign of the coefficient indicates that a lower effect for excommunist countries on support for democracy than for the non excommunist. The lower the gini index, the higher the redistribution, the more satisfaction with democracy, so in those countries where the redistribution levels are higher the support for the democratic process would be higher too. As mentioned above, these contextual variables might be explaining to some extent the differences among countries.

At the individual level, both explanations are highly significant. Interpersonal trust has a positive and significant impact on satisfaction with democracy, and so does political efficacy, measured by interest with politics¹. Satisfaction with life has also a positive and strong effect. On the other hand, satisfaction with the economy has a very strong impact (0.45***) and voting for the party in government has a strong positive relation too. The second voting variable, voting for the party in opposition, has no significant impact. Ideology is also significant, showing a slight more supportive attitude for those who move to the right.

Sociodemographic variables don't appear as highly significant; gender and the age cohorts are not very significant as effects. Not even education has a significant effect on satisfaction with democracy, which may contradict some theories about the relation between education and political efficacy as predictor of support.

The random components measure if the effects explained in the fixed effects shown above are significantly different by country. This would justify that the contextual reality of a

¹ Note that the coding for interest in politics is from 1, highly interested to 4, not interested at all, therefore the negative coefficient means a positive relation between independent and dependent variable.

country is at least conditioning the patterns of support for the democratic process in Europe. As presented in the lower part of table 3, all variables present significantly different effects by country, except the effect of gender, which is not substantively significant. This confirms that there are variations in the way the dependent variable is explained, and, focusing on both explanations of support, trust, interest in politics, satisfaction with life, satisfaction with the economy and voting variables present significantly different effects by country.

In order to simplify and offer a more visual explanation, I have summarized the 25 level 2 units into two level 2 units, excommunist countries and communist countries, and I have run two bivariate multilevel regression analyses, one with generalized trust as independent variable, and the second with satisfaction with the economy as independent variable. Next, I have plotted the regression lines for both levels in both analyses.

Figure 4: multilevel regression lines of generalized trust explaining support for the democratic process in ex-communist and non ex-communist countries

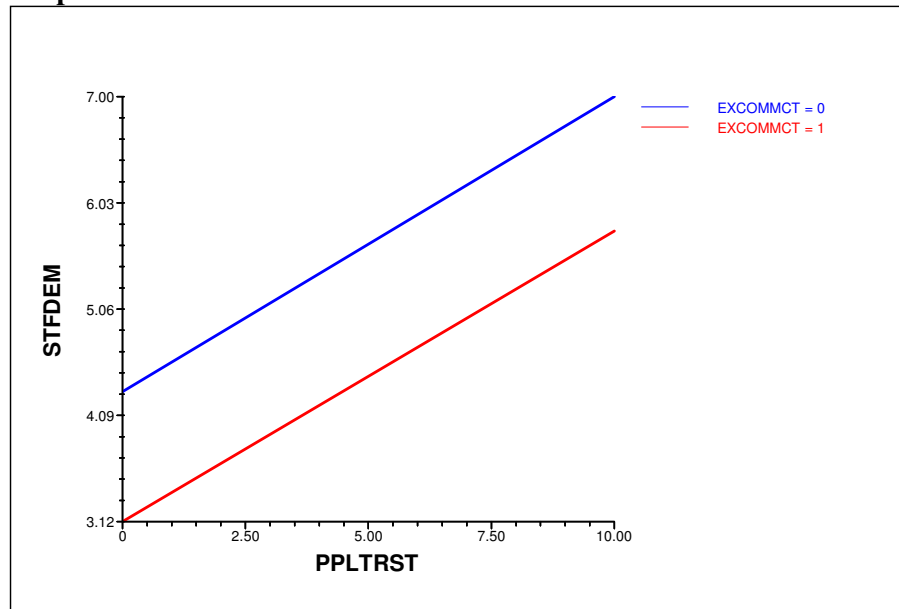
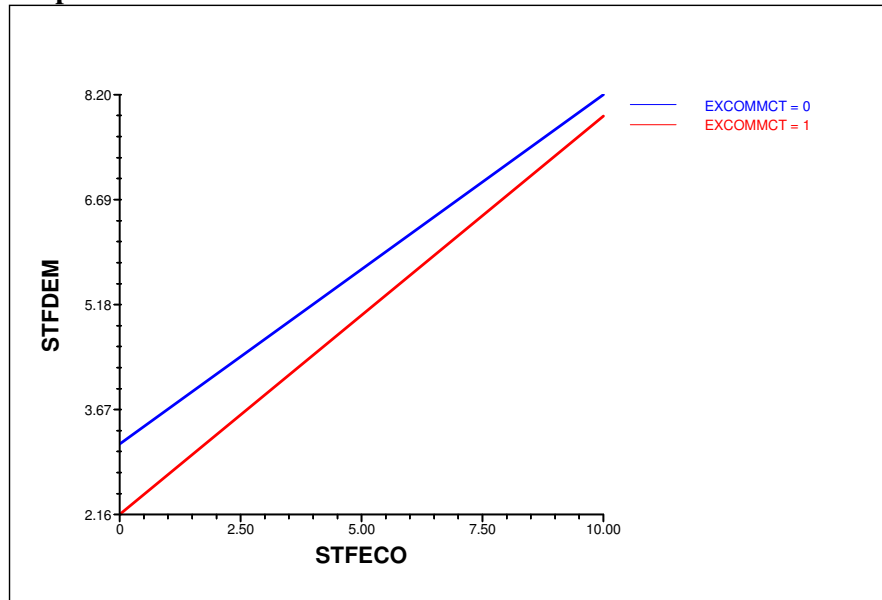


Figure 4 presents the data for generalized trust. The upper line is the regression line for non ex-communist countries and the lower for ex-communist. The intercepts in this case are clearly different in both variables. Ex-communist countries have clearly a different starting point in satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 5 shows a very different pattern. The Intercepts are not dramatically different for both groups, but the effect of the economic evaluation seems to be crucial for the support for the democratic process, since the slope for excommunist countries is clearly steeper than the slope for the non excommunist countries in Europe. This means that if the evaluation of the economy increases, support for the democratic process increases much more strongly in excommunist countries, than in non excommunist societies. This indicates that support for the democratic process in Europe relies on different elements depending on the society we are observing. In this sense, being an excommunist country -with what this implies in terms of economic welfare, self-expression values and age of democracy-, might be clearly making a difference.

Figure 5: Regression lines of satisfaction with the economy explaining support for the democratic process in ex-communist and non ex-communist countries



Differences appear very clearly in terms of levels of political support for both explanations, indeed, the differences in the intercepts are very significant. In the case of the evaluation of performance, especially when observing satisfaction with the economy, the differences are very strong and visible, and indicate that different societies, depending on their specific situations, may articulate their supportive attitudes based on different factors.

Conclusion

After running the analyses presented above, we obtain some concluding remarks in relation with the previous hypotheses. This paper provided some expectations on how patterns of support for the democratic process are established in European Societies. The first hypothesis suggests that different levels of democratic stability are accompanied by different levels of support. This hypothesis has been confirmed by the data presented in this paper. First, the correspondence analysis presented three groups of societies in which there were different levels of support associated with different groups of societies. The scatterplots showed the same phenomenon in terms of clustering societies with different levels of support.

Levels of support for the democratic process, and the corresponding levels of trust, satisfaction with life, interest in politics, evaluation of economy etc. show that there are two different kinds of societies in terms of support, and in terms of how this support can be explained. In an exploratory way, scatterplots and more interestingly, the correspondence analysis shows there three groups of societies which suggests a new conceptual classification of European societies. However, in the hypotheses I specified two main groups, classified in terms of political stability. In the multilevel analysis, the ex-communist variable was tested and was highly significant, and the graphics shown afterwards present a clear difference in terms of levels of support. This suggests that in terms of levels of support there might be more than two groups of European societies. Nevertheless, in terms of how supportive attitudes are shaped, the two groups are clearly identified, as shown in figures 4 and 5.

The second hypothesis suggests that In those societies with lower democratic stability, support for the democratic process tend to rely on short term evaluations, especially economic performance, whereas in societies with more democratic stability, support relies more on cultural aspects. The data obtained by the multilevel analyses show different patterns in the way support is shaped in different types of societies. This hypothesis is demonstrated by looking at the figures 7 and 8. The effect of Trust shows clear differences in the levels of support, the intercepts for ex-communist and communist countries vary significantly. In the case of the effect of satisfaction with the economy, the intercepts present clear differences too, showing that the starting levels for excommunist and non-excommunist countries differ significantly. But more interestingly, the relationship between democratic and satisfaction with the economy support is especially strong in excommunist countries. According to that, the hypothesis is clearly confirmed.

Therefore, not only do levels of support vary depending on the specific context of societies, but also the main correlates for support vary in terms of the intensity in which they explain those supportive attitudes. A very clear proof of this is the effect of trust and satisfaction with the economy on support for the democratic process. In the clear case of the satisfaction with the economy and its explanatory capacity on support, it was observed that supportive patterns in ex-communist countries rely more strongly on economic results and performance than in non-excommunist countries.

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