

AFRO BAROMETER

Working Paper No. 97

**LOOKING BEHIND THE WINDOW:
MEASURING INSTRUMENTAL AND
NORMATIVE REASONING IN
SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY**

by Rodolfo Sarsfield and Fabián Echegaray

**A comparative series of national public
attitude surveys on democracy, markets
and civil society in Africa.**



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**Looking Behind the Window:
Measuring Instrumental and Normative Reasoning in Support for Democracy**

Abstract

This paper explores the types of rationality that underlie popular choices of political regime in societies that recently completed a transition towards democracy. We discuss the nature of the rational bases used for preference formation by focusing on urban Brazilians. Our attention is centered on the balance between survey respondents' evaluation of democratic performance and their views of the efficacy of democracy to solve their country's problems. We also examine the joint impact of these attitudes on molding citizens' preferences for a particular type of government in Brazil. Results endorse the hypothesis that an instrumental rationality prevails alongside axiological rationality. Additionally, there is strong evidence of the "universality" of these findings given limited socio-demographic effects in the way individuals construct political support.¹

¹ We wish to thank Michael Bratton and an anonymous reviewer for most helpful comments. The usual disclaimers apply. Comments are highly welcome: Rodolfo Sarsfield (rodolfo.sarsfield@cide.edu) and Fabián Echegaray (fabian@marketanalysis.com.br)

Introduction

Standard arguments of rationality applied to individual political decisions take for granted that preferences are formed as a result of some intrinsic principle of utility present among individuals (*i.e.* Kramer 1971; Tufte 1978; Fiorina 1981; Lewis-Beck 1988; Mackuen, Ericson y Stimson 1992; Nannestad y Paldam 1994; Przeworski and Maravall 2001; Stokes 2001). Accordingly, an ordered set of preferences are usually interpreted as the consequence of just one mechanism, that is, the maximization of personal utility. The argument does not admit a plurality of forms of political reasoning in the process of preference formation. Preferences are explained, according to this point of view, with the assumption of utility. Relying on an economic model of preferences formation, scholars typically characterize the underlying psychological basis of preferences formation as utilitarian. As consequence, principles of normative or expressive rationalities have been excluded in this kind of explanation.

Most discussions of support for democracy among citizens have followed this path (*i.e.* Lewis 2003; Chu, Diamond and Shin 2001; Dalton 1999; Klingeman 1999; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer, 1998; Fuchs, Guidorossi and Svensson 1995).² As evidence of the weight of this supposition in the literature, the “assumption of utility” is present in the study of other important mass attitudes, such as the satisfaction with democracy (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Canache, Mondak and Seligson 2001). In this way, the discussion has assumed that an individual’s choices are molded by the perceived costs and benefits associated with various options, in this case, democracy or authoritarianism. This kind of explanation assumes that a developed interest for (or against) democracy precedes the declaration of support for (or the adoption of adversarial opinions against) democracy. A first (and popular) step in understanding support for democracy consisted in interpreting an individual’s postures to regime type as a simple translation of a cost-benefit calculus. As consequence of the assumption of utility, scholars who analyze support for democracy in Latin America have tried to explain support for democracy through a contingent explanation of support “by default” (Lagos 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Zovatto 2002).³ This assumption has affected the discussion about the determinants of support for democracy in the region.

Following a cognitive approach, and departing from most scholars, we claim that endogenous reasons that lie behind personal choices of political regime are an empirical problem that we need to explore. Our approach tries to look at what takes place “behind the window” in terms of disclosing the reasoning process.⁴ Thus, this paper reviews empirically the reasoning behind the formation of preferences for political regimes as measured by a standard question,⁵ and in doing so we cover three classical types of rationality : utilitarian rationality, instrumental rationality, and axiological rationality (Boudon 1996, 1998; Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin 2000, Weber 1944). In doing so, we use data collected in 2004 through the Brazilian Omnibus Survey (hereafter BOS), using a set of validated questions covering the above topics⁶.

² An important and seminal exception is Bratton and Mattes (2001).

³ For a critical review, see Sarsfield and Echegaray (2006), and Sarsfield and Carrión (2006).

⁴ Among scholars that have defended this approach see Williams (1979 and 1988); Lupia, McCubbins and Popkin (2000); Kahneman and A. Tversky (2000); Kuklinski and Quirk (2000); Lodge and Taber (2000); Popkin and Demock (2000); Tversky and Kahneman (1999); Quattrone and Tversky (1987).

⁵ The variable was measured according to the following question wording: “Which of the following statements would you agree the most? 1. Democracy is always preferable to any other type of government; 2. Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferred to a democratic government; 3. For people like myself it is about the same whether a government is democratic or non democratic.”

⁶ The Brazilian Omnibus Survey is conducted about every 3 months in 5 of the top 8 larger urban areas of Brazil, namely: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife and Porto Alegre. Sampling follows a proportionate to population size distribution, with stratified clustering of census districts and sectors within each city, and random selection of districts, clusters, and household. The sampling frame includes all adults 18-69 years old from general population, and quotas of gender, age and socio-economic level are followed to ensure representativeness. Socio-economic level follows the standard Brazilian criterion classification – therefore, some different demographic

We organize our discussion as follows: the first section will examine whether support for democracy – a normative preference - is related to citizens’ evaluations of the performance of democracy - a positive belief (Boudon 1998).⁷ Accordingly, we depart from the understanding that a positive belief is a perception about the “real world” and that a normative preference is a belief about a *desirable* condition of the world. It is our understanding that a positive response would indicate that normative preferences interact with (therefore, can be “tamed” by) contingent information from actual experience, whereas a negative response would indicate that normative preferences are rigid and blind to new information. The main goal here is to observe the linkage between performance evaluations of democracy and regime type preferences, thus revealing the political reasoning process behind manifested preferences.⁸ Second, we examine the relative weight of the socio-demographic variables in profiling the prevalence of different types of rationality. Variables include gender, age group, education and social class. This is an important test of whether individual rationality prevails over social bases in the process of preference formation. Such a test will reveal how universalistic or segmented is this process and the ubiquity of the type of rationality identified as dominant. Table 1 summarizes the key concepts for our analysis.

Table 1
Preferences for type of regime, evaluation of democracy and beliefs about democracy

Dimensions of political reasoning	<i>Normative Preferences</i>	<i>Positive Beliefs</i>
Dimension of political reasoning about democracy	Preference for democracy or authoritarianism	Satisfaction with democracy Democracy solves problems

What Rationality, Which Rationality?

Our argument is that competing explanations feed the individual-level preference-formation process behind alignment with democracy. This means that each type of rationality competes with regards to a subject arriving at a conclusion to endorse democracy or adopt a non-democratic posture. These competing rationalities can be labeled as: *utility rationality* (that follows a standard cost-benefit calculus of divergent options or courses of actions), a means-to-ends *instrumental rationality* (that focus on the evaluation of democracy efficacy to accomplish certain goals that are desired), and an *axiological rationality* (that explains the preference for democracy because it is perceived as good, desirable or legitimate, regardless of consequences or goals (Boudon 1996, 1998; Weber 1944).

Let’s start with the utility rationale. According to this perspective, support for democracy, a normative preference, derives from a cost-benefit assessment with the actual outcomes of democracy, a positive belief. The rationale behind preference formation involves a satisfactory assessment of prior expectations. On the other hand, if democracy falls short from meeting expected utility, no support for democracy shall

questions may be included to match your request. Interviewing method is face-to-face, door-to-door. In each wave 500 cases are interviewed, involving between 35-40 interviewers. Final sample usually follows this distribution: São Paulo: 46%; Rio de Janeiro: 26% Belo Horizonte 11%; Recife: 10%; and Porto Alegre: 7%

⁷ We measure evaluation through the following question: “Overall, would you say you re extremely satisfied with the way democracy works in Brazil, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied?”

⁸ Among the core questions to address here are: what type of political rationality underlies those who are dissatisfied with democracy and, yet, keep providing support for it? And, why do people who are content with the way democracy works and believe democracy can solve problems will still endorse non-democratic government options?

be found⁹. The BOS study permits us to capture this utility assessment by asking the level of satisfaction about democracy.

The second argument, one that emphasizes a “means-to-ends” rationale behind political choices, would propose that support for democracy depends on the evaluation of democracy efficacy to accomplish certain goals that are either desired or positively valued, that is, a second positive belief about democracy. Thus, the extent to which the political regime is perceived as efficacious (or, to the contrary, inefficacious) to the attainment of critical assets will form the individual’s regime preference. According to this form of rationality, support for democracy, the *normative belief* of this study, should derive from the evaluation of democracy’s efficacy, a *positive belief*. The BOS study permits us to capture instrumental rationality by probing the perception of democracy as a problem-solving regime.

The third argument of preference formation goes beyond assessing the subjective or immediate consequences of the referred political regime. It is called axiological rationality (Boudon 1996, 1998). Such a preference does not depend upon outcome evaluations (positive beliefs) but relies on a preexisting normative preference. In other words, the regime’s legitimacy goes beyond good or poor results. This form of reasoning will be associated with positions resistant to utilitarian and instrumental rationalities.

In the following sections, all three arguments will be tested and discussed as alternatives. Table 2 summarizes our conceptualization and measurement of these three types of rationalities, as well as the hypothesized links between positive and normative beliefs.

⁹ Verbalized as either siding with the option for authoritarianism or adopting the indifferent option of “doesn’t matter”.

Table 2
Types of Rationality

Preferences rationality	General statements	Specific statements
Instrumental Rationality	<p><i>X</i> (means) is preferred <i>if and only if Y</i> is accomplished (goal)</p> <p><i>X</i> is preferred <i>if Y</i> is accomplished</p> <p><i>X</i> is not preferred <i>if Y</i> is not accomplished</p>	<p>Democracy (means) is preferred <i>if and only if</i> it is efficacious in solving the country's problems (goal)</p> <p>Democracy is preferred <i>if</i> democracy is efficacious in solving problems</p> <p>Democracy is not preferred <i>if</i> democracy is not efficacious in solving problems</p>
Utilitarian Rationality	<p><i>X</i> (means) is preferred <i>if and only if Y</i> supplies expected utility</p> <p><i>X</i> (means) is preferred <i>if X</i> supplies expected utility</p> <p><i>X</i> (means) is not preferred <i>if X</i> does not supply expected utility</p>	<p>Democracy is preferred <i>if and only if</i> it has supplied expected satisfaction</p> <p>Democracy is preferred <i>if</i> it has supplied expected satisfaction</p> <p>Democracy is not preferred <i>if</i> it has not supplied expected satisfaction</p>
Axiological Rationality	<p><i>X</i> is preferred regardless if <i>Y</i> is accomplished (intrinsic preference per se)</p> <p><i>X</i> is preferred because it is perceived as good, desirable, legitimate, despite of consequences or goals</p>	<p>Democracy is preferred regardless if <i>Y</i> is accomplished (intrinsic preference per se)</p> <p>Democracy is preferred because it is perceived as good, desirable, legitimate, despite consequences or goals (such as achieving satisfaction or solving the country's problems)</p>

Looking Behind The Window: Three Rationalities In Brazil

Contrary to any assumption that opinion formation requires a complex cognitive background, we discuss modes of reasoning that require minimal thinking by ordinary voters. Different reasoning processes are readily available to the average Brazilian because these are based on perceptible results (captured by his/her degree of satisfaction) or evaluations of regime performance (problem-solving capabilities related of the system). By way of paying attention to the interactions between both reasoning processes – the opportunity to either side with democracy or not – one can derive a simple and pragmatic rule about how individuals form their preferences.¹⁰

The 2004 BOS data for Brazil allow us to validate the prevailing rationalities previously proposed for the entire region of Latin America, during the mid-1990s (Sarsfield and Echegaray 2006). This earlier study suggested a prevalence of utilitarian and instrumental reasoning while axiological rationality remained scarcely present. For the majority of Latin Americans, democracy was embraced not just as a result of belief in its intrinsic legitimacy or because of any ideological value but mainly because of an ability to deliver expected results, or generate expectations about its superior delivery capabilities. Indicators used for the dependent variable and the independent variable are summarized in Table 3.

¹⁰ We are aware that a different level of data is being explored here but the purpose of illustration actually makes a cross-level leap a useful tool to understand why public opinion responses to democracy can be better understood by an argument centered on types of rationality.

Table 3
Explanatory and dependent variables (or *reasons* for regime type preference)

Dependent Variable (normative preference)	Indicator: Questions in Brazilian Omnibus Survey
<i>Preference or normative belief about type of government</i>	“Preference for democracy or authoritarianism” (BOS, 2004)
Explanatory Variables (Positive beliefs)	Indicators: Questions in Brazilian Omnibus Survey
<i>Empirical evaluations of existent democracy</i>	“Satisfaction with democracy” (BOS, 2004)
<i>Beliefs about causal linkages between political regime and outcomes</i>	“Democracy solves problems” (BOS, 2004) ¹¹

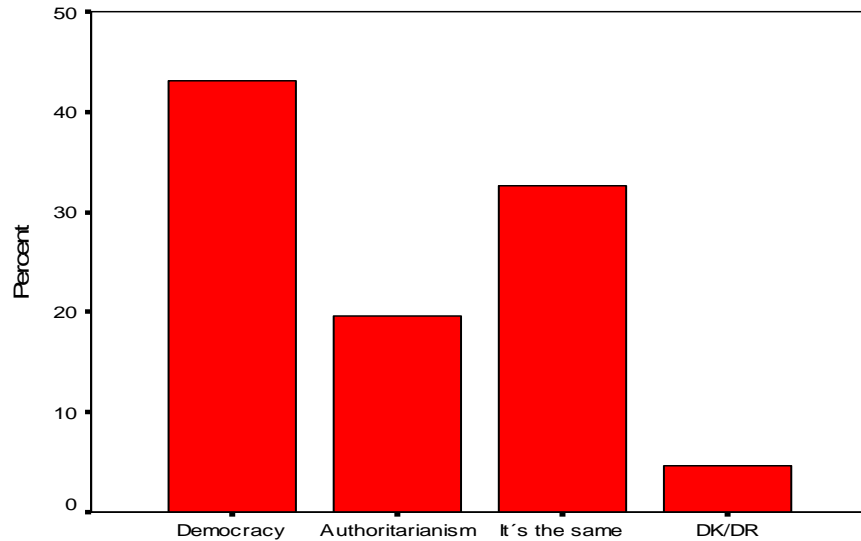
Data Discussion

A first look at results indicates a half-hearted identification with democracy. Less than half of the urban Brazilians (43.1 %) privilege democracy, whereas 19.6 % favor an authoritarian government, and 32.6 % remain indifferent (*see Figure 1*). These findings fall in line with earlier data for Brazil using a wider urban sample, which grants robustness to these findings.¹²

¹¹ This question taps the causal connection between democracy and a collective goal (the solution of problems). Question wording is: “Some people say democracy allows to solve this country’s problems; some other say it does not. What position is closer to your point of view? 1. Democracy solves problems; 2. Democracy does not solve problems”

¹² See press-release section for 2003 (last available) at www.latinobarometer.org. Despite differences in sample coverage and size, our data and Latinobarometer data (practically) exactly point to a 52.2% and 55% of Brazilians who do not prefer democracy.

Figure 1
Preference for type of government



Concomitantly with evidence of a minority of democrats there are clear signs of majority dissatisfaction with the performance of democracy: 73.1 % declared little or no satisfaction with the work of the current regime in Brazil. On the other hand, only a mere 3.9% reveal high contentment with democracy, whereas 20.2 % manifested a fair level of satisfaction (*see Figure 2*). Furthermore, efficacy is not an exclusive asset of democracy in the perception of many Brazilians: over a third of them (36.2 %) believe democracy is less efficacious than authoritarianism, against 53.7% that believe otherwise. This indicates that there exists an important level of skepticism about the potential of democracy to cope with problems (*see Figure 3*).

Figure 2
Satisfaction with democracy, Brazil, 2004

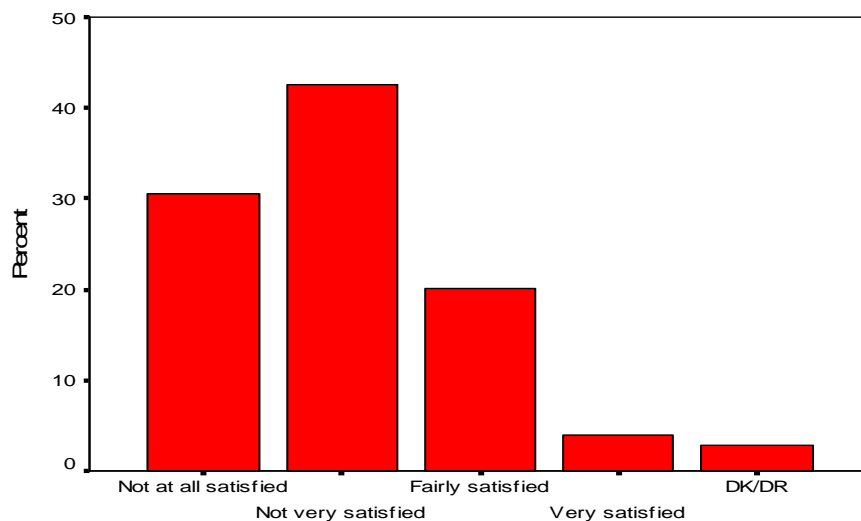
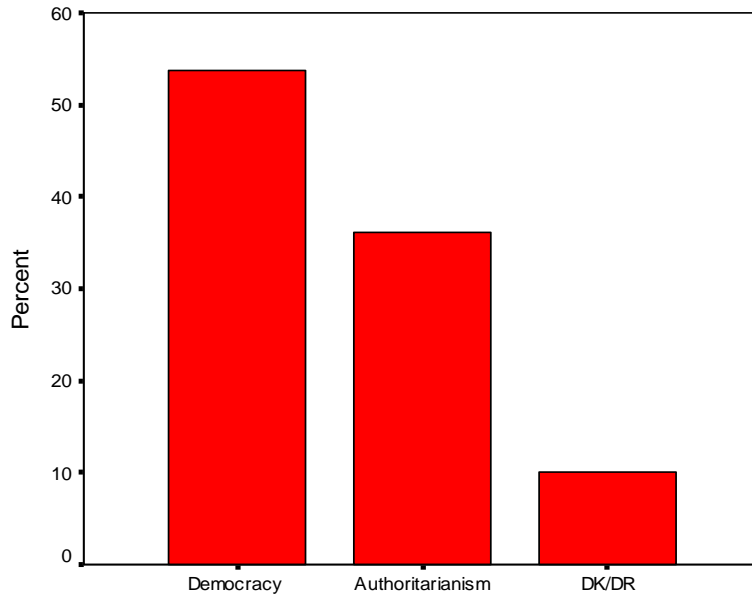


Figure 3
Efficacy of democracy, Brazil 2004



So, how much does happiness with democracy contribute to a person's endorsement of a democratic form of government? And to what extent does acceptance of authoritarianism depend on an uneasy public mood with the way the system works? What about the perceived efficacy of democracy? To what extent do those views condition adherence to a democratic form of regime? Statistical examination of the linkage between satisfaction with democracy, perceived efficacy of democracy, and regime preference in Brazil renders the rejection of the null hypothesis. As illustrated in Table 4, there are signs rejecting independence between both variables.

Table 4
Satisfaction with democracy, perceived efficacy and regime type preference, Brazil 2004

	Regime type preference (a)	Degrees of freedom
Satisfaction with democracy	183.905 ***	4
Democracy solves problems	20.789 ***	4

(a) χ^2
*** $p < .001$

Further exploration of the data reveals that dissatisfied citizens are more likely to opt for authoritarianism (19.1 %) than are satisfied citizens (11.3 %). A similar pattern occurs for those declaring indifference about regime type (19.8 % versus 8.9 %). Such effects suggest that satisfaction feeds individuals' system choice. Accordingly, among Brazilians, satisfaction with democracy stands out as a critical reason for democratic preferences, while dissatisfaction mobilizes a choice away from democracy. As observed in Latin America during the mid-1990s, satisfaction rewards the regime with popular endorsement and dissatisfaction punishes the regime abandonment or indifference. In short, data for the region and for Brazil state one clear conclusion: without satisfaction, the value of democracy plummets (*see Table 5*).

Table 5
Regimen type preference and satisfaction with democracy, Brazil 2004 ¹³ (Cross Tabs)

Satisfaction with democracy	Democracy	Indifference	Authoritarianism
Satisfied	79.8 %	8.9 %	11.3 %
Not satisfied	61.0 %	19.8 %	19.1 %

On the other hand, our finding indicates that support for democracy declines from 60.1 % to 37.9 % when we switch from the group that attributes superior efficacy to democracy to the group that sees low capability (*see Table 6*). The belief that democracy is incapable to handle key problems seems to preclude individuals from embracing a democratic choice. In comparative perspective, Brazilians emerge as a judgmental public that is primed to rapidly disavow democracy if the latter proves unable to deliver solutions (or to persuade them about its efficacy in doing so). Concomitantly, the choice for authoritarianism increases substantially (from 16.5 % to 23.2 %) among those lacking confidence in democracy’s problem-solving capabilities. Therefore, the perception of efficacy works both ways with regards to the recruitment of democratic supporters or quitters.

Table 6
Regime type preference and democracy solves problems, Brazil 2004 (Cross Tabs)

Democracy solves problems	Democracy choice	Indifference	Authoritarianism choice
Yes	60.1 %	23.4 %	16.5 %
No	37.9 %	38.9 %	23.2 %

In turn, indifference to type of government is also boosted by the perception of poor efficacy of democracy, shifting from 23.4 % to 38.9 %. As we moved from a confident to a skeptical group, apathy goes up by over 15 percentage points. In sum, political choices (a normative belief) at the regime type level, in contemporary Brazil, are strongly affected by the perceived problem-solving capabilities attributed to democracy (a positive belief). Optimism about democracy’s potential to deliver public goods gives birth to democratic supporters; on the other hand, skepticism about democracy capabilities pushes supporters out (*see Table 6*).

Three Rationalities Explored

Key findings also emerge when exploring the interplay between satisfaction with democracy, beliefs about regime efficacy, and regime preferences (*see Figure 4*). A simpler way to illustrate this interplay is to plot political responses in a two-dimensional correspondence analysis. This technique measures the distance between any two points, where points are the values of the discrete variables. The main purpose

¹³ As it was done in an earlier study using Latinobarometro data for 1995 (Sarsfield and Echegaray 2006) we collapsed categories to standardize and turn analysis easier, thus better capturing system differences across levels of satisfaction.

of the technique is to graphically portray spatial proximity of variables as an alternative to the calculation of the statistical significance of relationships.

Figure 4
Symmetrical normalization of the interplay between regimen type preference, satisfaction with democracy, and efficacy attributed to democracy (Correspondence Analysis)

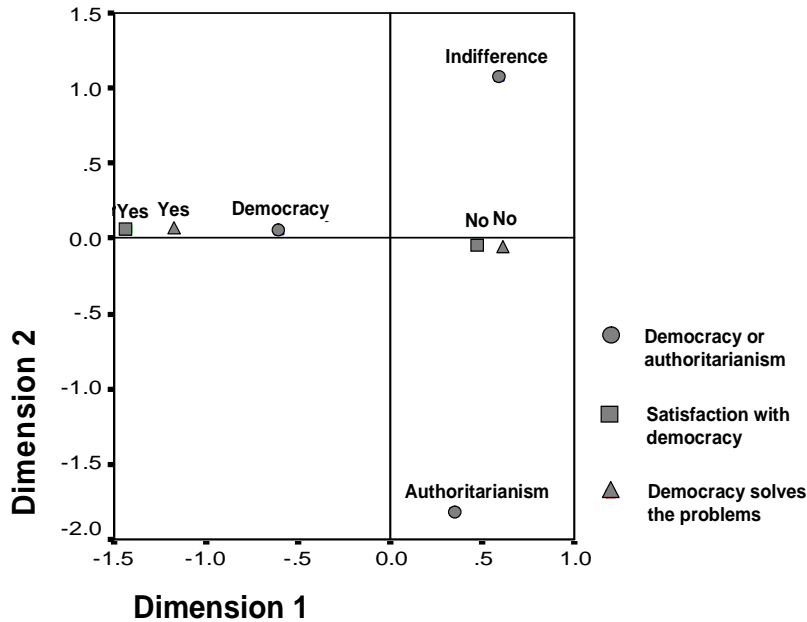


Figure 4 illustrates how, in Brazil, endorsement of a democratic regime clusters along the same dimension with optimism and contentment with the workings of democracy. A first cluster shows that a normative preference for democracy is closely proximate to perceptions of democracy as a competent and satisfying form of government. In sum, this cluster of attitudes suggests that democratic sentiments in Brazil are backed up by reason, not blind faith. A second cluster gathers the skeptical and unhappy with democracy (the “No/No” group) thus mutually feed-backing a negative consensus on democracy’s performance. This cluster seems to indicate that no matter how democracy performs it cannot be good or it won’t meet expectations. On the other hand, Brazilians in 2004 who opted for apathy or an authoritarian choice remain isolated from causal explanations based on technical beliefs or judgments about objective outcomes. Accordingly, their non-democratic regime preferences remain unconstrained by any type of rationality, thus suggesting possible gaps or instability in the structure of their opinions. In other words, Brazilian democrats are more capable of structuring their regime support based on rational criteria than are their non-democratic counterparts¹⁴.

A Model of Regime Preference

Looking for a model of the determinants of preference for democracy, the first task is to identify the relative weight of the alternative reasoning processes. Accordingly, we depart test the following assumptions: first, that allegiance with democracy is instrumentally conditional on the belief that

¹⁴ Ad hoc interpretations for the non-rational premise of non-democratic preferences are likely to abound: it can be suggested the existence of axiological operations by the individuals (Weber 1944; Boudon 1996), but also the exposition to specific socialization experiences (Boudon 1998).

democracy is efficacious in solving the country’s main problems (whatever their nature); and second, that individuals prefer democracy *if and only if* democracy has delivered the expected utility of meaningful outcomes. Last but not least, an axiological rationale is observed whenever individuals’ preference for democracy occurs regardless of whatever adverse results may happen in the field of problem-solving efficacy or outcome satisfaction.

As a supplementary test of the robustness of our model, we also examine the relative weight of the socio-demographic variables in order to establish whether the model’s applicability is universal or particular. Do all citizens share the same underlying process in their political regime preference formation? Or do specific subpopulations adopt different rationales for assessing democracy? It would be important to know, for example whether, whether women exhibit alternative reasoning process than men, the old differ from the young (particularly given the importance of the authoritarian past), more educated persons differ from less educated persons, and the well-to-do differ from poor.

As Table 7 shows, regime preferences are the product of joint and mutually reinforcing rationalities. In fact, 47.3 percent of respondents’ regime choices were correctly predicted by considering both types of underlying reasons (Goodness of fit: $X^2 = 28.322$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$). Using cell probabilities from multinomial logistic regression, we find that that seven in ten individuals who are satisfied with democracy and believe that it is effective will endorse democracy (Table 7, Line A).¹⁵ Interestingly, the model shows that support for democracy decreases to five in ten individuals when they are not satisfied with the achievements of the elected regime (Table 7, Line G). This result constitutes an argument in favor of a utilitarian and instrumental reasoning process in the support for democracy.

Table 7
Regime Preference and its Determinants: Observed and Predicted Frequencies
 (Percentages are based on total observed frequencies in each subpopulation)

Satisfaction with democracy	Democracy solves the problems	Democracy or authoritarianism	Frequency			Percentage	
			Observed	Predicted	Pearson Residual	Observed	Predicted
Yes	Yes	Democracy	59.58	58.341	.282	68.4%	67.0% (A)
		Indifference	15.52	16.565	-.285	17.8%	19.0% (B)
		Authoritarianism	12.03	12.223	-.060	13.8%	14.0% (C)
	No	Democracy	15.04	16.279	-.433	46.0%	49.7% (D)
		Indifference	10.45	9.405	.404	31.9%	28.7% (E)
		Authoritarianism	7.24	7.047	.082	22.1%	21.5% (F)
No	Yes	Democracy	40.29	41.529	-.283	52.3%	53.9% (G)
		Indifference	23.28	22.235	.263	30.2%	28.8% (H)
		Authoritarianism	13.51	13.317	.058	17.5%	17.3% (I)
	No	Democracy	99.47	98.231	.157	36.8%	36.3% (J)
		Indifference	105.97	107.015	-.130	39.2%	39.6% (K)
		Authoritarianism	64.89	65.083	-.027	24.0%	24.1% (L)

¹⁵ This entails assuming that our dependent variable (regime preference) is nominal –dissenting from part of literature on support for democracy. From our point of view, the differences between these three attitudes are

The data also indicates that utilitarian and instrumental rationalities are less effective in mobilizing support for overt anti-democratic propositions: poor results and weak capabilities engender more indifference than authoritarianism (Table 7, Lines K and L). The results speak favorably of the surprising resiliency of democracy as a political option even under the most adverse scenario: 36.3 percent will still endorse it even under desperate conditions (Table 7, Line J). Having said that, instrumental and utilitarian reasons are joint persuasive preference molders because they multiply by a factor of two the natural number of individuals who embrace authoritarianism and indifference (to authoritarianism, see Table 7, Lines C and L; to indifference, see Table 7, Lines B and K).

How universal is this model among Brazilians? In order to check whether specific subgroups react differently or not we use logistic regression including key demographics into the model. On the other hand, what matters to us is whether regime preference crystallizes in a democratic or non-democratic way, thus we collapse options for authoritarianism or regime type indifference as the reference category. Table 8 summarizes the findings.

Results indicate that the probability of preference for a democratic government increases substantially as citizens are convinced of the effectiveness of democracy. Moreover, this rule applies universally, with only a very modest effect by age (i.e., younger people – 18-24 years - being less likely to prefer democracy compared to older people, thus signaling a minor generational effect). As a result, our main hypothesis is sustained. Rationality of individual is what matters, not his or her social background.

nominal. It is difficult to justify that the distance between a democratic citizen, an authoritarian citizen, and an indifferent one, can be measures with an ordinal or interval scale

Table 8
Testing Model Universality: Rationality and Demographic Effects

		Explanatory Variables	b	SE	Wald	Sig.	xp(B)
reference		City=P.Alegre			7,44	0,114	
		S.Paulo	-0,544	0,515	1,113	0,292	0,581
		Rio	-0,509	0,546	0,87	0,351	0,601
		B.Hzte	0,638	0,643	0,984	0,321	1,893
		Recife	0,653	0,64	1,043	0,307	0,52
reference	m3	Democracy solves main problems	0,171	0,327	2,75	0,6	1,187
reference	m4	Democracy is more efficacious	2,885	0,31	86,67	0	17,899
reference	m5	Satisfaction w/ democracy=Total Agree			5,414	0,144	
		Satisfaction w/ democracy=Total Disagree	0,21	0,683	0,094	0,759	1,233
		Satisfaction w/ democracy=Somewhat Disagree	0,839	0,656	1,637	0,201	2,314
		Satisfaction w/ democracy=Somewhat Agree	0,785	0,642	1,497	0,221	2,193
reference		Class= LowerClasses (D/E)			1,653	0,647	
		Class=Upper (A)	-0,407	0,673	0,365	0,546	0,666
		Class= Upper-Middle (B)	0,318	0,43	0,547	0,46	1,374
		Class= Lower Middle ©	0,102	0,335	0,092	0,761	1,107
reference		Age= Elderly (55-69)			3,674	0,452	
		Age= Younger (18-24)	-0,905	0,497	3,312	0,069	0,405
		Age= Young Adults (25-34)	-0,494	0,467	1,12	0,29	0,61
		Age= Adults (35-44)	-0,505	0,471	1,146	0,284	0,604
		Age= Mature (45-54)	-0,301	0,515	0,343	0,558	0,74
reference		Gender=male	-0,44	0,263	2,811	0,094	0,644
reference		Education=Graduate			12,212	0,057	
		Education=Primary complete	-1,2	1,264	0,901	0,342	0,301
		Education=Primary incomplete	-1,352	1,171	1,333	0,248	0,259
		Education=Lower Secondary incomplete	-1,439	1,161	1,535	0,215	0,237
		Education=Upper Secondary complete	-0,373	1,143	0,107	0,744	0,688
		Education=Technical	-0,777	1,293	0,361	0,548	0,46
		Education=Collage	0,313	1,204	0,068	0,795	1,367
		Constant	-0,689	1,498	0,212	0,645	0,502

Conclusions

Preference for democracy does not occur in a vacuum. But to concede this point is not to imply that exogenous influences are the only ones capable of providing a compelling story of the enculturation of democratic norms. Even in societies, Like Brazil, with an extensive authoritarian background and recent democratic transition, endogenous individual-level factors play an extraordinary and visible role in molding the odds to sustain adherence to democracy. Our data analysis for Brazil points that satisfaction with existing democratic performance and the belief of competence are lively shaping the preference for a democratic type of regime. This is sustained by both bivariate examinations as well as by the models tested. The role played by each of those two rationales indicate that regime preference builds upon dynamic beliefs and contingent backgrounds rather than being mostly pre-determined by social composition.

Naturally, these findings leave room for many other questions. For example, one can ask where beliefs about the efficacy of democracy spring from, and to what extent these derive from the pre-existence of a favorable or unfavorable political culture. As the 2004 BOS surveys took place when Brazilian

democracy had survived for more than a decade, it can be argued that whatever honeymoon effects from the post-dictatorship era already turned into established beliefs about the capabilities of democracy. In any case, as discussed, cultural inclinations are far from being single-minded in the way they connect the notion of efficacy and type of regime: in other words, competence it is almost equally attributed to both democracy and non-democracy.

Satisfaction with democracy predicts preference for democracy and, concomitantly, dissatisfaction helps to generate waves of public opinion away from democratic choice, but the latter is far from predicting a clear-cut leaning towards authoritarianism. Actually, it paves the way to two competing scenarios: the expected scenario of adherence to non-democracy and the unexpected scenario that we can call “long-term satisficing democracy”, that is, a scenario of political preferences shaped not by unmet needs and unmatched personal utilities but by the understanding of dissatisfaction as an inevitable phenomenon resulting from inherited problems or embodying short-term sacrifices likely to yield a brighter and satisfactory future (Stokes 2001).

Belief in the problem-solving capabilities of democracy structures, to a greater extent, the calculus of regime support. Our results on this subject showed a substantive share of the public siding with democracy based on the attribution of competence. Perceptions of regime efficacy and inefficacy were respectively associated to positions towards democracy, paving the road to crystallizing an instrumental rationality as a force that shapes preferences. Having said that, such instrumental rationality impacts asymmetrically upon the regime options available to individuals: it has the ability to connect more strongly perceptions of competence to support for democracy, than it does between perceptions of incompetence and adherence to non-democratic options.

The considerable presence of utility and instrumental reasoning indicates that axiological rationality was a rare phenomenon in the 2004s in Brazil. For most Brazilians, democracy restoration and continuity gets its value not from any intrinsic legitimacy or ideological leverage connected to it. The message this analysis contained is that individuals need to be convinced by means of satisfying records and sustainable evidence of efficacy to rally around democracy, not the opposite.

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