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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AMONG MPs AND CITIZENS IN OLD AND YOUNG DEMOCRACIES

Ursula Hoffmann-Lange

## ABSTRACT

*The contribution starts out from the question whether the political legitimacy of the Third Wave democracies has suffered in the wake of the Great Recession. The expectation of a damaging effect of an economic or political crisis on legitimacy is based on Lipset's assumption that established democracies with a high degree of political legitimacy are better capable of coping with such crises than young democracies. The database includes two surveys of members of parliament conducted in 2007 and 2013 in Sweden, Germany and five Third Wave democracies located in different world regions (Chile, South Korea, Poland, South Africa and Turkey). Waves 5 and 6 of the World Values Survey that were conducted at about the same time were used for comparing the legitimacy beliefs among MPs and citizens. The data show that the scores for all indicators of political legitimacy are higher among MPs than among citizens and that the differences between the two groups of respondents are considerably larger in the five young democracies. Confidence in political parties is fairly low, especially among citizens, while the evaluation of the quality of democracy in the respondents' country is much higher. Both evaluations have been rather stable over time. In the two established democracies, support for democracy among citizens is nearly as high as among MPs. In the five young democracies, the MP-citizen differential is larger and support for democracy in the population shows a steady increase only in Chile, while it has remained low in Poland and Turkey and even decreased in Korea and South Africa. This indicates that democracy has not taken deep roots in four of the five new democracies included in the study. In Korea and South Africa, the decline in support for democracy*

*started already before the onset of the economic crisis and therefore cannot be attributed to the recession. This is confirmed by the lack of a statistical relationship between political legitimacy on one side and economic evaluations on the other side. A multiple regression analysis shows strong country-specific effects, while individual-level variables have only minor effects.*

**Keywords:** Political legitimacy; support for democracy; confidence in political parties; elite-mass differences; consolidation of democracy; political effects of the Great Recession

## INTRODUCTION

Concerns about the damaging effects of a deep economic crisis on the viability of democracy are particularly pertinent in the light of the European experience during the *Great Depression* of the early 1930s when democracy collapsed in several European countries and was replaced by authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. It is, therefore, not surprising that the global economic and financial crisis that started in 2008, the *Great Recession*, revived those memories, especially as some of the repercussions of the current crisis are similar: Rising levels of unemployment, widespread public protests, increasing voter volatility, dwindling support for traditional parties and a rise of populist and extremist parties. The comparative analysis of democratic stability and breakdown in inter-war Europe by Berg-Schlosser and colleagues ([Berg-Schlosser & Mitchell, 2002](#)) confirms these similarities.

However, although all 15 European democracies included in Berg-Schlosser's study suffered from economic distress and political conflicts, democracy survived in 8 of the 15. In six of the seven breakdowns of democracy, the economic problems caused by the Great Depression played a major role.

The situation in today's democracies differs in many important respects however. First, and most importantly, the Great Recession was less severe and could be overcome much faster than the Great Depression. This was primarily owing to the fact that the available economic policy tools for dealing with economic crises have become more elaborate. Moreover, since World War II, global institutions have been created that allow for swift international responses to such crises. Most democracies also have established welfare policies that contribute to alleviating the economic hardships associated with unemployment, inflation or other crisis-related consequences for the livelihood of the less well-to-do.

Moreover, support for democracy is more deeply rooted in the political culture of most European democracies than it was in the 1930s. Last but not least, most of their political elites are convinced that democratic institutions are the only acceptable way of governing. These factors have not only contributed to easing the economic downturn associated with the recession and bringing most European countries quickly back onto the path of economic recovery, but also prevented economic dissatisfaction from evolving into anti-democratic mass movements, the success of populist parties in the last decade notwithstanding. The latter is

caused primarily by genuinely political problems such as public resistance against mass immigration, pervasive corruption and the inability of governments in dealing with the rapid changes in labour markets owing to globalisation. At the same time, all populist parties and leaders try to capitalise on economic dissatisfaction by denouncing governments' lack of willingness to address the economic woes of the 'victims of globalisation' and of 'neoliberalism'.

The following analysis will primarily focus on the legitimacy of democracy among citizens and members of parliament (MPs) in five young and two established democracies to determine whether democratic legitimacy suffered in the wake of the economic and financial crisis. The analysis is based on data collected in the context of a larger comparative project on the development of political culture after democratisation.

## **ELITES, CITIZENS, ECONOMIC CRISES AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN YOUNG DEMOCRACIES**

### *The Role of Elites in Democratic Transition and Consolidation*

Many studies on democratisation have emphasised the importance of elites for democratic transitions and the consolidation of democracy (Albertus & Menaldo, 2018; Haggard & Kaufman, 2016; Higley & Burton, 2006). Transitions to democracy usually are the result of an agreement among both elites of the non-democratic regime and the leaders of dissident movements to end long and inconclusive conflicts over the character of the previous authoritarian regime. They involve the implementation of a new constitution defining a set of institutions for political decision-making, electoral laws, as well as rules for government-formation and legislation. During the stage of democratic consolidation, it is crucial that the elites learn to trust each other and to develop informal rules of managing emerging conflicts. This involves the formation of a functioning party system with a limited number of major players. At this stage, the new elites have to convince citizens that democracy is capable of producing political stability and of delivering successful policies.

It is obvious that young democracies are more vulnerable than consolidated democracies to experience challenges to their democratic institutions, especially as most of them have to grapple with the legacies of their authoritarian past such as economic problems and corruption (Haggard & Kaufman, 2016). Their party systems tend to be more volatile, while citizens are inclined to accept the new democracy only if it is able of producing stable and decisive governments and economic development. In such a situation, an economic recession may severely impair the consolidation process and lead to an increase in political dissatisfaction that can be exploited by populist movements.

### *Economic Crises and Political Legitimacy*

The question of how much the legitimacy of political regimes depends on economic success has for long been a central concern of political philosophers and

social scientists. [Lipset's \(1959\)](#) analysis of effectiveness and legitimacy as preconditions of democratic stability is still an authoritative statement on this matter. [Lipset \(1959\)](#) defined effectiveness as the extent to which a political system

satisfies the basic functions of government as defined by the expectation of most members of a society, and the expectations of powerful groups within it which might threaten the system.  
(p. 86)

He assumed that 'such effectiveness means primarily constant economic development' ([Lipset](#), p. 91) and also claimed that the presence of a high level of legitimacy constitutes a safety valve, stabilising democracy even in times of poor economic performance or other crises.

While gaining legitimacy presupposes a long period of political and economic stability, a decline in political effectiveness may happen quickly during an economic or political crisis, although it does not necessarily lead to a fast breakdown of democracy and may drag on for quite some time. Even where democratisation was originally supported by a majority of both citizens and elites, new democracies usually do not only lack the broad legitimacy of consolidated democracies, but also frequently suffer from dismal economic conditions that had often been a major cause for the demise of the previous authoritarian regime. Inevitable conflicts over basic provisions of the new constitution, a lack of informal norms for conflict regulation and an insufficiently institutionalised party system may impair the effectivity of governments of new democracies.

Empirical studies have confirmed that a deep and prolonged economic crisis is apt to produce a destabilisation or even a breakdown of democracy and young democracies are especially prone to democratic breakdown ([Møller, Schmotz, & Skaaning, 2015](#); [Morlino & Quaranta, 2016](#)). They also show that reducing regime effectiveness to purely economic success is unsatisfactory. This assumption is supported by the study of [Haggard and Kaufman \(2016\)](#), who found that in the democratic reversals of the last decades a *weak democracy syndrome* played a more important role than economic failures. In these countries 'adherence to rules is less valued, more contingent, and therefore more uncertain' ([Haggard & Kaufman](#), p. 227), and citizens assume that governments use their electoral majority 'to strengthen executive authority at the expense of institutions of horizontal accountability such as legislatures, judiciaries, opposition parties, NGO's and the media' ([Haggard & Kaufman](#), p. 228). Under these conditions an economic crisis may further aggravate the situation by triggering elite defections and a general disaffection among the public ([Haggard & Kaufman](#), p. 229).

The political repercussions of the recent financial and economic crisis, which was the worst recession in Europe since the Great Depression and the first global financial crisis ([Tooze, 2018](#)), have been extensively analysed. Many studies have confirmed that satisfaction with democracy, confidence in political institutions and support for democracy, but also electoral support for the incumbent parties suffered during the crisis (e.g. [Armingeon & Guthmann, 2013](#); [Cordero & Simón, 2015](#); [Gangl & Giustozzi, 2018](#); [Hernández & Kriesi, 2016](#); [Polavieja, 2013](#); [Wroe, 2016](#)). Different authors identified a number of causally relevant factors. Studies relying exclusively on macro-data found a direct impact of the

depth of the recession on the quality of democracy, especially a detachment from the institutional channels of representation and an increase in political protest that only subsided after economic recovery (Morlino & Quaranta, 2016). Some macro-factors such as bailout measures and the type of welfare regime were also shown to have had some influence. Berg-Schlosser (2015) additionally emphasised that developments in the party system may impair the functioning of party competition and the quality of democracy.

## OBJECTS AND TYPES OF POLITICAL SUPPORT

Legitimacy theories distinguish between different objects of legitimacy. The distinction between support for authorities, support for the democratic performance of the political system and support for democracy involves a hierarchy of objects from political actors to value orientations, which at the same time constitutes a hierarchy from specific to diffuse support (Fuchs, 2007; Klingemann, 2018; Norris, 1999). At the lowest level, the electoral mechanism allows voters to withdraw electoral support if they are dissatisfied with the performance of the political actors. This mechanism is designed to shield democracies from a loss of legitimacy in situations of perceived deficits in government performance. The intermediate level involves the perception of deficits in the institutional structure and in the performance of the political system. The highest level finally is a belief in the value of democracy as the best type of regime. It is easy to imagine that it takes time for a young democracy to gain legitimacy at higher levels. This requires experience with different democratically elected governments and is a precondition for grasping the analytical distinction between the performance of the current government, the performance of the political system and the appreciation of democratic principles.

Economic crises that cause a decline in standards of living can be expected to impair political support, especially if the crisis persists and government policies to cope with it turn out to be ineffective. While such dissatisfaction will primarily affect specific support for the current government, after a while it may spill over to higher levels of support. This raises the question whether the third-wave democracies have already achieved a sufficiently broad support for their democratic institutions to prevent anti-democratic movements from successfully mobilising against the democratic institutions.

### *Theoretical Assumptions*

The following analysis will study political beliefs and value orientations among MPs and the general population in two established and five Third Wave democracies that democratised in the late 1980s or early 1990s. The MP surveys were conducted in 2007 and 2013, the citizen surveys between 2005 and 2007 and from 2010 to 2013. The first wave of surveys took place before the onset of the global economic crisis, the second wave after the crisis had crested. This is a quasi-experimental design, although it will of course not be possible to claim that observed declines in political legitimacy have been caused by the crisis.

Herbert McClosky's (1964) classic study was the first to demonstrate a considerable gap in support for democratic principles between politicians and ordinary citizens. While he found broad support for general principles in both groups, support for more specific principles, especially political tolerance was much lower in the population, McClosky concluded that elites have to be considered as the main *carriers of the democratic creed*. His basic results have been confirmed by a host of later studies (Hoffmann-Lange, 2008; McClosky & Brill, 1983). Therefore, the inclusion of elites in the analysis will provide a more differentiated account of democratic legitimacy.

The first theoretical assumption regards differences between MPs and citizens. Because of the division of labour between the two groups, MPs can be expected to accept the rules for political decision-making and to be more familiar with the limits of what can be achieved by politics. Therefore, they also should be more satisfied with the performance of the political system than citizens who are outside observers of the legislative process.

The second assumption is about differences between old and young democracies. The MP–citizen differential should be larger in young democracies as their citizens are less well acquainted with the political implications of democratic institutions that have not existed long enough to instil confidence in their proper functioning.

A third assumption regards the impact of the economic crisis. Dissatisfaction with performance of the economy should have the largest effect on confidence in political actors (Diamond, 2016, chapter 5). In the established democracies, it should have less influence on satisfaction with the democratic performance of the political system and even less on support for democracy, however. In young democracies, it is more likely to impair legitimacy also on the two higher levels of support.

The fourth and last assumption looks at differences within the party systems. It can be expected that elite dissensus about the legitimacy of the existing democratic institutions and rules may impair the effectiveness of democracy. This assumption is based on a study of Sniderman et al. (1991), which demonstrated that a simple elite-citizen comparison may conceal considerable differences within the party system. Even if populist or anti-democratic parties are small, they can have a disruptive influence (Sartori, 1976, p. 123). Therefore, a breakdown of the data by political party affiliation promises to provide additional insights.

## DATABASE

### *The Two MP Surveys and the World Values Survey*

The two MP surveys were conducted within the context of an on-going comparative project on the consolidation of new democracies that started in the mid-1990s. The five new democracies, Chile, South Korea, Poland, South Africa and Turkey, were selected according to a most-different systems design to study the impact of different historical and cultural backgrounds on the process of democratisation and consolidation of democracy. These countries democratised

between the late 1980s and the early 1990s and were chosen because they were the front-runners among the Third Wave democracies in their respective regions. Sweden and Germany were included as benchmark cases of consolidated democracy.<sup>1</sup> Another reason for the inclusion of Germany was the country's peculiar historical experience as a divided country from 1945 to 1990.<sup>2</sup>

The first MP survey had been conducted in 2007 with the intention to broaden the focus of the project by studying the role of elites and political representation in democratic consolidation (Van Beek, 2010). The economic recession that started shortly after that survey had been completed, offered a welcome opportunity to conduct a follow-up survey in 2013 that was supposed to provide information on the MPs' perceptions of the crisis and the impact of the crisis on their political beliefs and value orientations (Klingemann & Hoffmann-Lange, 2018).<sup>3</sup> For both waves, roughly 100 interviews based on random samples of all MPs were conducted in each of the participating countries.

Most of the questions included in the MP surveys are directly comparable to questions asked in the fifth and sixth waves of the World Values Survey (WVS; Inglehart et al., 2014) that were conducted in the seven countries at about the same time (2005–2007 and 2010–2013). Table 1 provides the respondent numbers for all four surveys.

Germany will be treated as a special case in the analysis because the experience of the political and economic transition deeply affected the personal lives of most East Germans, and persistent economic disparities between the two regions have left their mark in the political culture. While a considerable convergence in value orientations has taken place over the years (Holtmann et al., 2015), political dissatisfaction is still higher in the eastern part of the country and manifests itself for instance in a considerably higher electoral support for

**Table 1.** Number of Respondents in the Surveys.

Country	MP Surveys		WVS			
	TRI Survey 2007	CMP Survey 2013	Wave 5, 2005–2007		Wave 6, 2010–2013	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>N</i>	Year	<i>n</i>	Year
Chile	99	105	1,000	2006	1,000	2012
Germany	101	112	2,064	2006	2,044	2013
Western Germany			988	2006	1,032	2013
Eastern Germany			1,076	2006	1,012	2013
Korea	100	105	1,200	2005	1,200	2010
Poland	99	150	1,000	2005	966	2012
South Africa	100	142	2,821	2006	3,443	2013
Sweden	101	107	1,003	2006	1,206	2011
Turkey	148	152	1,346	2007	1,605	2012
Total	748	873	10,434		11,464	

*Source:* MP surveys 2007 and 2013; WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 (2005–2007) and 6 (2010–2013).

*Note:* Western Germany: territory of the former Federal Republic of Germany plus West Berlin; Eastern Germany territory of the former German Democratic Republic (including East Berlin).

the Left party and the right-wing *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD). Therefore, the residents of the two German regions will be treated separately for those indicators that show substantial divergences. The same is not possible, however, for the MPs because of two reasons. First, the political attitudes and value orientations of the MPs are primarily determined by their party affiliation while their regional identity is much less relevant. The second reason is that the small number of MPs from the eastern German states does not permit to treat them as a separate group.

As the selection of the five new democracies in the study was based on their performance during the democratisation process, it could not be expected that these countries were at the same time the best choice for studying the impact the economic crisis on the legitimacy of democracy. In fact, Poland did not experience any economic recession at all, and the impact of the crisis in the other four young democracies was less severe than in other countries with similar socio-economic backgrounds. This does not seriously diminish the validity of the results, though. The results of the 2013 MP survey show that these retrospective evaluations of the impact of the economic crisis did not mirror the macro-economic severity of the recession (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). This supports the conclusion that such perceptions take on a reality of their own and influence the attitudes of people regardless of the actual impact of the crisis on their own country. Moreover, the crisis has been widely perceived as revealing fundamental flaws of the global financial markets and as endangering countries around the globe. Thereby, it contributed to a rise in political dissatisfaction with governments regardless of the actual economic impact of the crisis on individual countries (Tooze, 2018).

### *Indicators*

Confidence in government, parliament and political parties was measured by offering respondents four answering categories: ‘a great deal’, ‘quite a lot’, ‘not very much’ and ‘none at all’. Following Klingemann’s (2018) suggestion, confidence in political parties was chosen as an indicator of trust in political actors out of two reasons. First, political parties usually receive the lowest score for political confidence because many people assume that parties pursue their own particularistic interests and do not really care about the needs and wishes of their voters. Therefore, they are most likely to be blamed when voters are dissatisfied with government performance. At the same time, confidence in government is usually much higher among voters of the parties in government, which makes that indicator less suitable for studying changes in political legitimacy.

Two questions measure the perceived democratic performance (the ‘democraticness’) of the political system. The first is ‘And how democratically is this country being governed today?’ with an answering scale from 1 ‘not at all’ to 10 ‘completely’.

Support for democracy at the value level, finally, was measured by asking the respondents to evaluate three regime types on a four-point scale as very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad:

- ‘having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections’;
- ‘having the army rule’; and
- ‘having a democratic political system’.

Diamond (2008, pp. 31–34) questioned the validity of the simple score assigned to democracy and argued that the stimulus ‘democracy’ evokes mostly positive associations even among respondents who do not understand its institutional implications. Therefore, a more demanding index of *support for democracy* was constructed by subtracting the higher score for either an autocratic or a military regime from the score for democracy.

To increase the comparability of questions using different ranges of scale values, all variables were rescaled to a range between 0 and 1. The only exception is the index support for democracy that has a range from  $-1$  to  $+1$ . Weight variables have been applied. In the WVS data they correct for unequal sampling probabilities, in particular for the deliberate overrepresentation of East German respondents in the German sample documented in Table 1, and for biased response rates (redressment weight). In the MP surveys, the weight ensures the correct representation of the party–political composition of the legislatures.

## MACRO-INDICATORS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

Data on the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita show that the seven countries vary considerably with respect to their level of economic development. Sweden, Germany and Korea are highly developed OECD countries, while the other four countries belong to the so-called emerging markets, with Turkey and South Africa being the poorest in the group. Compared to the overall median of 38 developed countries and emerging markets (5.9%), the impact of the recession was above the median in Germany, Sweden and Turkey. The output gap compared to the long-term GDP growth before the recession was fairly large in Korea, followed by Sweden, while it was below the overall median ( $-8.5\%$ ) in the other five countries. By 2016, Sweden’s and South Africa’s GDP were still below their 2007 level, while especially Korea and Chile had made remarkable gains (Du Plessis, Freytag, & Boshoff, 2015, pp. 21–26).

Fig. 1 informs about the development of democracy in the seven countries from 1980 to 2018. The two indicators of quality of democracy are taken from the V-Dem data (Lindberg et al., 2014).<sup>4</sup> The *electoral democracy index* measures the existence of basic democratic rights, especially free and fair elections, and the *liberal democracy index* additionally includes the degree to which individual liberty rights and the rule of law are effectively protected in the country. Therefore, the second index is more demanding and its scores are mostly somewhat lower.

Sweden and Germany show the typical pattern of consolidated democracies. Both curves are flat with scores above 0.80 and only slight differences between the two indices. The curves for four of the five new democracies show that

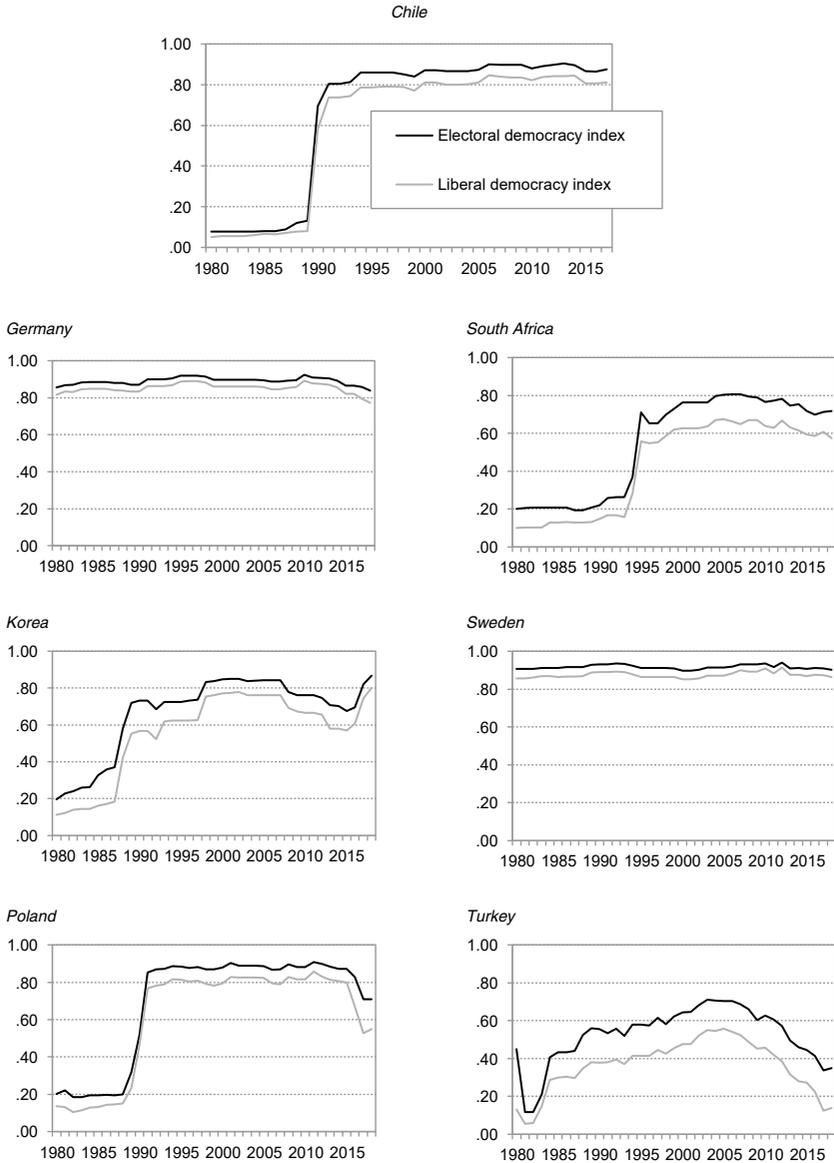


Fig. 1. The Development of Democratic Quality in the Seven Countries 1980–2017. Source: V-Dem, Release 9 (April 2019).

these started out from rather low levels in 1980. With the exception of Turkey, the quality of democracy steeply increased around 1990, beginning with Korea and ending with South Africa that achieved full democracy only in 1994. Chile’s democracy scores have meanwhile reached a level of 0.79 and caught up with the

two established democracies. The Korean, Polish and South African scores are somewhat lower and the scores of the latter two countries have slightly declined since the mid-2010s. The great exception among the seven countries is Turkey. After 1983, Turkey started to democratise in several small steps and reached a high of 0.71 for electoral democracy and of 0.55 for liberal democracy in 2004. Afterwards, a steady decline of both scores set in and meanwhile the country is back to its low level of 1980.

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

### *Effects of the Economic Perceptions of MPs on Political Legitimacy*

The second wave of the MP survey (2013) included a set of questions asking for the perceptions and evaluations of the national economy, the impact of the crisis on the country, causes of the crisis and the performance of different national (government and individual parties) and international (IMF, EU, etc.) actors. The correlation coefficients between the perceptions of the economic situation and of the impact of the economic crisis on one side and indicators of political legitimacy on the other side provide a first cue on whether assumed effects of the recession have played a role in the present crisis (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). It is not surprising that a positive perception of the economic situation is closely associated with a positive evaluation of the performance of the national government in coping with the crisis ( $r = 0.64$ ), with confidence in the government ( $r = 0.61$ ), with satisfaction with democracy ( $r = 0.58$ ) and with the evaluation of the democratic quality of the political system ( $r = 0.51$ ), but not with support for democracy ( $r = -0.01$ ). A positive evaluation of the economic situation is closely related to the participation of the respondents' party in government ( $r = 0.61$ ).

In contrast, the perceptions of the impact of the crisis show a fairly high negative correlation only with the perception of the economic situation ( $r = -0.39$ ), but close to zero correlations with the legitimacy indicators.

### *Confidence in Political Parties*

The development of confidence in political institutions has frequently been studied by political culture research. The empirical results indicate that several indicators of the citizens' confidence in democratic politics (trust in politicians, confidence in public and private institutions and satisfaction with democracy) have declined over the last decades, a trend that already started long before the onset of the economic recession in 2008. The magnitude of the decline varies considerably across countries, however (e.g. Dalton, 2006, 2015; Fuchs, Guidorossi, & Svensson, 1995; Holmberg, 1999; Listhaug & Wiberg, 1995).

Table 2 includes the mean scores for confidence in government, parliament and political parties. It confirms that the latter enjoy the lowest reputation among citizens. Fig. 2 shows that confidence in political parties is considerably higher among the MPs than among the citizens. The average difference is 0.21. The higher confidence ratings of the MPs are not really surprising as MPs are actively

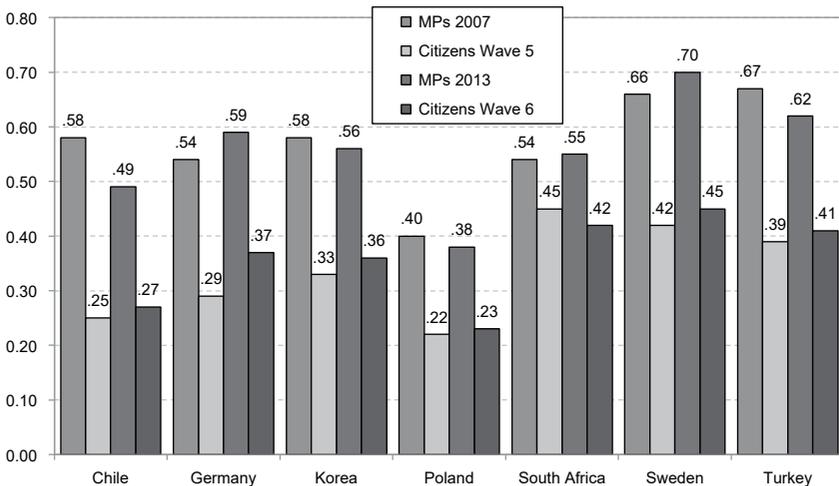
**Table 2.** Mean Citizen Confidence in Government, Parliament and Political Parties.

	Confidence in Government		Confidence in Parliament		Confidence in Political Parties	
	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 5	Wave 6
Chile	0.46	0.38	0.32	0.33	0.25	0.27
Germany	0.36	0.47	0.35	0.47	0.29	0.37
West Germany	0.37	0.47	0.36	0.47	0.30	0.38
East Germany	0.31	0.47	0.30	0.46	0.23	0.34
Korea	0.46	0.48	0.35	0.36	0.33	0.36
Poland	0.31	0.30	0.27	0.28	0.22	0.23
South Africa	0.64	0.47	0.60	0.46	0.45	0.42
Sweden	0.45	0.53	0.52	0.54	0.42	0.45
Turkey	0.59	0.57	0.56	0.53	0.39	0.41

Source: WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6.

Note: Scores on a four-point scale (none at all, not very much, quite a lot, and a great deal), rescaled to range 0–1.

involved in policymaking while most of the citizens are only bystanders. The results support the conclusion that confidence in political parties has not suffered in the wake of the economic recession. The lower scores of the citizens do not necessarily imply a lower level of democratic legitimacy, however. Instead, they should be interpreted as resulting from the division of labour between MPs and citizens. Because most citizens are not actively involved in policy-making, they evaluate the parties from a distance and tend to be more sceptical about their



**Fig. 2.** Mean Confidence in Political Parties among MPs and Citizens.

Source: MP surveys 2007 and 2013, WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6.

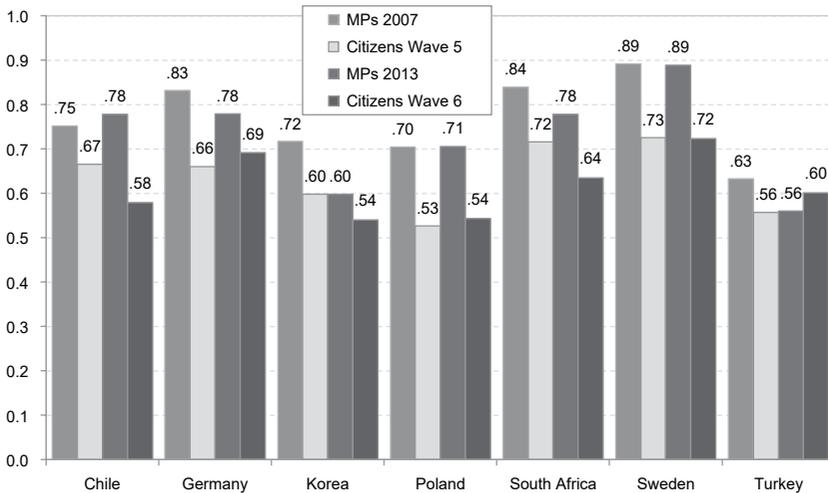
Note: Confidence ratings on a 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1.

dedication to promote the welfare of the nation and more inclined to assume that parties primarily pursue their own interests. This conclusion is supported by the fact that citizen confidence in political parties is only slightly higher in the two benchmark democracies Sweden and Germany.

The changes between the two survey waves are rather small and do not indicate any negative impact of the economic crisis on confidence in political parties. The differences between the supporters of different parties are not very pronounced either. Some individual results are remarkable though. In Germany, supporters of radical right parties (the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) and the AfD) express a considerably lower confidence in political parties. The same is true for voters in the eastern German states. A control for affiliation with parties in government or opposition parties finally shows that the confidence ratings are systematically lower among the voters of opposition parties among both MPs and citizens. Respondents who failed to express a vote intention showed even lower confidence in political parties than those who intended to vote for opposition parties. It seems that they feel even more distant to the party system. The main result, however, is the overall low level of confidence in political parties and its stability over time.

#### *Evaluation of the Political System's Democratic Performance*

Theoretically, the evaluation of the democratic quality of the political system ('democraticness') has an intermediate status between the evaluations of political actors and support for democracy. The results in Fig. 3 support this expectation. Among the MPs, the mean scores for this indicator are somewhat higher than



*Fig. 3.* Mean Evaluations of Political Regime as Democratic (Democraticity).

*Source:* MP surveys 2007 and 2013, WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6.

*Note:* Ratings of 'How democratically is this country governed today?' on a 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1.

those for confidence in political parties and they are even considerably higher among the citizens. The results are again relatively stable between the two survey waves in four of the seven countries and declined only in Chile, Korea and South Africa.

Among MPs, the difference between members of the parties in government and the opposition parties was more pronounced for the evaluation of democraticness than for confidence in political parties. Moreover, this difference even increased substantially in Korea (from  $-0.11$  to  $-0.30$ ) and Turkey (from  $-0.20$  to  $-0.58$ ). Among the party voters in the population, the differences slightly increased as well (Table 3). This shows that the evaluation of the political system's democratic quality are more controversial than confidence in political parties and casts doubt on the assumption that consensus increases at higher levels of political support. It confirms that it is essential to take into account the degree of polarisation within the party system.

### *Support for Democracy*

The mean scores for democracy in Table 4 are uniformly high for both MPs and citizens. All average MP ratings were above 0.80. Those of the citizens were only

**Table 3.** Mean Evaluation of Political Regime as Democratic by Affiliation with Parties in Government and Opposition Parties.

		MPs 2007	MPs 2013	Citizens' Wave 5	Citizens' Wave 6
Chile	Parties in government	0.85	0.88	0.71	0.73
	Opposition parties	0.66	0.69	0.64	0.56
	No party vote			0.64	0.55
Germany	Parties in government	0.86	0.84	0.66	0.73
	Opposition parties	0.75	0.71	0.54	0.67
	No party vote			0.58	0.66
Korea	Parties in government	0.77	0.73	0.64	0.62
	Opposition parties	0.66	0.43	0.59	0.51
	No party vote			0.63	0.55
Poland	Parties in government	0.89	0.89	0.55	0.63
	Opposition parties	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.51
	No party vote			0.49	0.52
South Africa	Parties in government	0.91	0.87	0.77	0.68
	Opposition parties	0.62	0.56	0.58	0.59
	No party vote			0.65	0.57
Sweden	Parties in government	0.92	0.94	0.70	0.82
	Opposition parties	0.86	0.84	0.75	0.69
	No party vote			0.69	0.70
Turkey	Parties in government	0.70	0.80	0.61	0.66
	Opposition parties	0.50	0.22	0.48	0.52
	No party vote			0.54	0.59

Source: MP surveys 2007 and 2013, WVS cumulated file, Wave 6.

Notes: MP surveys: Party membership of MPs; WVS: Vote intention; respondents without vote intention coded as 'No party vote'.

Evaluation of democratic quality: mean scores on a 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1.

**Table 4.** Mean Evaluation of Autocratic Regime, Military Regime and Democracy.

		Chile	Germany	Korea	Poland	South Africa	Sweden	Turkey
MPs 2007	Autocratic leader	0.25	0.02	0.30	0.24	0.10	0.02	0.40
	Military regime	0.15	0.00	0.05	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.10
	Democracy	0.90	0.99	0.89	0.83	0.98	1.00	0.96
MPs 2013	Autocratic leader	0.27	0.02	0.20	0.16	0.07	0.05	0.22
	Military regime	0.14	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.01
	Democracy	0.98	0.99	0.87	0.86	0.95	1.00	0.93
Citizens wave 5	Autocratic leader	0.36	0.22	0.47	0.37	0.40	0.22	0.54
	Military regime	0.25	0.08	0.19	0.29	0.33	0.12	0.38
	Democracy	0.78	0.84	0.66	0.69	0.80	0.91	0.83
Citizens wave 6	Autocratic leader	0.39	0.23	0.49	0.30	0.56	0.27	0.53
	Military regime	0.23	0.08	0.18	0.29	0.48	0.17	0.33
	Democracy	0.83	0.87	0.64	0.67	0.67	0.89	0.80

Source: MP surveys 2007 and 2013, WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6.

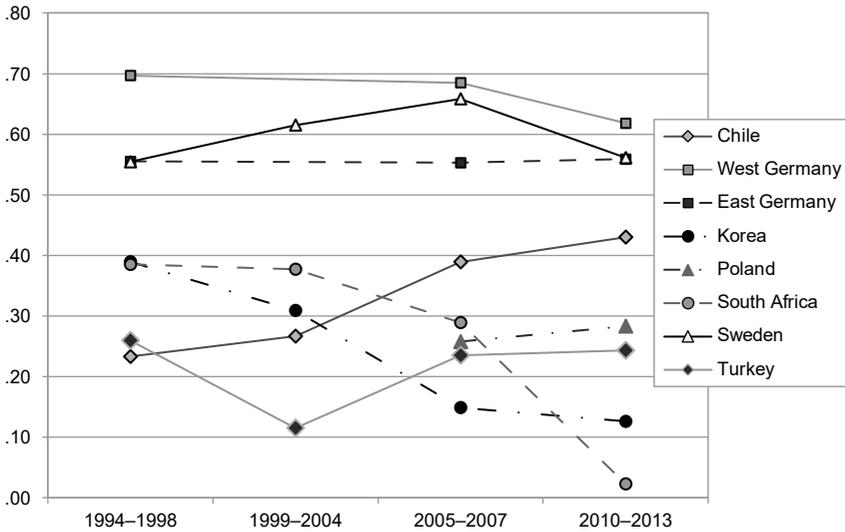
Note: Evaluation of regime types: mean scores on a 4-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1.

slightly lower in Chile, Germany, South Africa, Sweden and Turkey, and considerably lower only in Korea and Poland. The stability between the two survey waves is again high, with the exception of the South African citizens whose mean score dropped from 0.80 in 2006 to 0.67 in 2013.

Conversely, support for the two authoritarian regime types is low among the MPs in all seven countries as well as among Swedish and German citizens. The same is not true for the citizens in the five young democracies, however, where the two authoritarian regime types reach much higher scores. This result confirms Diamond's plea for a more demanding index of support for democracy.

As explained above, the index *support for democracy* was calculated by determining the differential between the scores for democracy and those for either an autocratic leader or a military regime.<sup>5</sup> As the WVS has included these questions since the mid-1990s, Fig. 4 shows the development of the index over the last four surveys.<sup>6</sup> The scores for Germany and Sweden show consistently high levels, albeit the East German scores are slightly lower than the West German ones. The curves for Korea and South Africa point downward. They fell from 0.39 to 0.13 in Korea and from 0.39 to 0.02 in South Africa.<sup>7</sup> This indicates that democratic consolidation has suffered a considerable setback in these two countries and that the stability of their democracy depends primarily on the presence of a strong elite consensus. It remains to be seen whether support for democracy will start increasing again after the changes in the presidency from Geun-hye Park to Jae-in Moon in 2017 and from Jacob Zuma to Cyril Ramaphosa in early 2018.

Chile's curve points upward and confirms that the country has considerably diminished the gap to the two established democracies, while support in the other four young democracies remained considerably lower. The figures indicate that many citizens in these countries do not really care whether they live in a democracy or under authoritarian rule.



*Fig. 4.* Mean Support for Democracy among the Citizens.

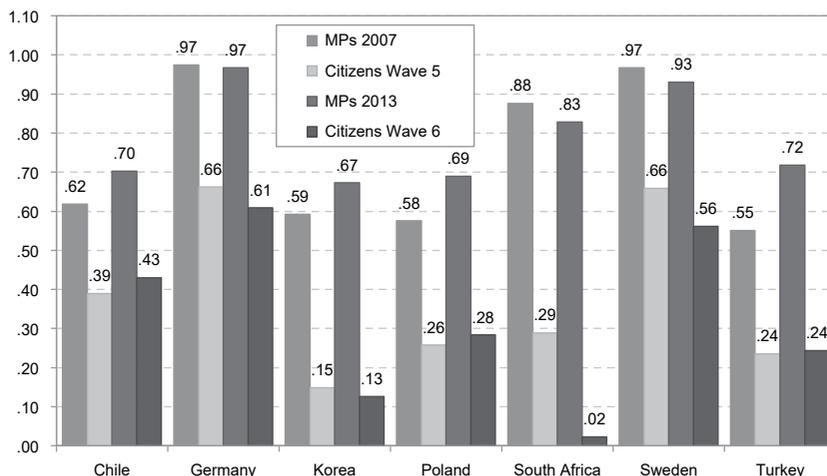
*Source:* WVS cumulated file, Waves 3–6. *Note:* Support for democracy: score for democracy minus higher score for either autocratic or military regime; original scores measured on a 4-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1; range of difference –1 to +1.

Support for democracy either remained stable or even increased among the MPs in all seven countries (Fig. 5). The differences between MPs and the population are more pronounced than for the evaluation of democraticness. They are especially large in South Africa (0.59 in 2006 and even 0.81 in 2013), Korea (0.44 and 0.54) and Poland (0.32 and 0.41). The MP-citizen differences increased in Korea and Poland owing to an increase in support for democracy among the MPs, while support remained stable among the voters. The increase in South Africa is entirely owing to a conspicuous decline among the citizens.

A breakdown by party affiliation provides additional information on the level of consensus about the democratic political order in the five new democracies. Theoretically, support for democracy should not be associated with party affiliation in consolidated democracies because it is supposed to be a personal value orientation acquired during political socialisation and reinforced by living in a long-standing and well-functioning democracy. In countries that democratised only recently, however, democracy may be contested by populist or anti-democratic parties harbouring sympathies for authoritarian regime types.

The descriptive results in Table 5 are instructive. In Sweden and Germany, the scores of the MPs of all parties are similarly high and above 0.85. At the same time, the voters of these parties have consistently lower scores, mostly ranging between 0.57 and 0.74. Only the voters of the AfD in Germany and those of the Sweden Democrats have considerably lower scores of 0.42 and 0.30.

In the five young democracies, the mean scores of the different parties' MPs are about as high as those in the two established democracies, although the



*Fig. 5.* Mean Support for Democracy among MPs and Citizens.

*Source:* MP surveys 2007 and 2013, WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6. *Note:* Support for democracy: score for democracy minus higher score for either autocratic or military regime; original scores measured on a 4-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1; range of difference –1 to +1.

MPs of the RN and the PPD in Chile, of the Saenuri Party in Korea, of the PiS in Poland and of the AKP in Turkey show some authoritarian proclivities. Even though none of these parties openly advocates replacing democracy by an authoritarian regime, the results indicate that support for democracy is more ambiguous among the representatives of these parties than one should expect in a consolidated democracy. At the same time, the citizens of all five young democracies lag those of Sweden and Germany by a wide margin, a few exceptions such as the voters of the BDP in Turkey and of the two right-wing parties in Sweden and Germany notwithstanding.

In South Africa finally, the MPs of the two major parties express an exceptionally high commitment to democracy, while the voters of both parties seem to have lost their confidence in democracy.

## PRELIMINARY SUMMARY AND MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

In this section, the central results of the data analysis will be summarised, followed by a multiple regression analysis to determine whether important individual-level determinants that were disregarded in the previous analysis exert an additional influence on the political legitimacy beliefs.

The results confirm the first theoretical assumption regarding considerable differences between MPs and citizens for all indicators and all seven countries.

**Table 5.** Mean Support for Democracy<sup>b</sup> among MPs and Citizens by Party Affiliation in the 2010s.

Party Affiliation <sup>a</sup>	MPs 2013	Citizens Wave 6	Difference
<i>Chile</i>			
UDI – Union Demócrata Independiente	0.70	0.33	0.37
RN – Renovación Nacional	0.65	0.47	0.18
PDC – Partido Demócrata Cristiano	0.76	0.42	0.34
PPD – Partido por la Democracia	0.62	0.37	0.25
PSC – Partido Socialista	0.70	0.52	0.18
Total	0.70	0.43	0.27
<i>Germany</i>			
CDU/CSU – Christlich Demokratische Union	0.95	0.63	0.32
SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	1.00	0.57	0.43
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	0.98	0.65	0.33
FDP – Freie Demokratische Partei	0.94	0.74	0.20
Die Linke	0.98	0.58	0.40
AfD – Alternative für Deutschland <sup>c</sup>		0.42	
Total	0.97	0.61	0.36
<i>Korea</i>			
NFP – Saenuri dang	0.59	0.14	0.45
DP – United Democratic Party – Minju ang	0.78	0.17	0.61
Total	0.67	0.13	0.54
<i>Poland</i>			
PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	0.59	0.21	0.38
PO – Platforma Obywatelska	0.77	0.35	0.42
SLD – Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej	0.75	0.34	0.41
Total	0.69	0.28	0.41
<i>South Africa</i>			
ANC – African National Congress	0.84	0.03	0.81
DA – Democratic Alliance	0.84	0.02	0.82
Total	0.83	0.02	0.81
<i>Sweden</i>			
V – Vänsterpartiet	0.89	0.73	0.16
S – Arbetarepartiet	0.94	0.57	0.37
M – Moderata Samlingspartiet	0.89	0.58	0.31
MP – Miljöpartiet de Groena	1.00	0.72	0.28
Other centrist parties combined (FL + KD + C)	0.96	0.69	0.27
Sverigedemokraterna	0.93	0.30	0.63
Total	0.93	0.56	0.37
<i>Turkey</i>			
AKP – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi	0.62	0.22	0.40
CHP – Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi	0.92	0.22	0.70
MHP – Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	0.76	0.30	0.46
BDP – Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi	0.75	0.53	0.22
Total	0.72	0.24	0.48

Source: MP survey 2013, WVS cumulated file, Wave 6.

<sup>a</sup>Support for democracy: score for democracy minus higher score for either autocratic or military regime; original scores measured on a 4-point scale, rescaled to range 0–1; range of difference –1 to +1.

<sup>b</sup>Party affiliation: for MPs party membership; for citizens: vote intention.

<sup>c</sup>The AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*) was founded in 2013, but gained representation in the German Bundestag only in the elections of 2017.

The differential was least pronounced for confidence in political parties and largest for the value attributed to democracy, with a much broader rejection of authoritarian system types among the MPs.

The second assumption predicting considerably lower scores for the five young democracies is only partly supported by the data. Confidence in political parties is about as high and the evaluation of the democratic performance of the political regime is only slightly lower in the new democracies. The most dramatic differences between the old and new democracies in our study have been found with respect to support for democracy. This violates the assumption of a hierarchical order of the three objects of legitimacy that postulates a linear increase in the level and the stability of political support from specific to diffuse.

Taking the very high sympathy score attributed to democracy in [Table 5](#) alone rather than the scores for the combined index, the results would have preserved the hierarchy of legitimacy beliefs. However, the more demanding index of support for democracy is the more valid indicator because it requires an explicit rejection of non-democratic regimes. The results for this index reveal that many citizens in the five young democracies have ambivalent feelings about different regime types and therefore do not reject authoritarian systems as unequivocally as the Swedish and the German respondents.

The overall temporal stability found in the data does not support the third assumption that the economic crisis has diminished the legitimacy of democracy in the five young democracies. This interpretation is supported by the fact that economic policy attitudes such as support for a reduction of income differences, for an increase in government ownership of industry and for the evaluation of the financial situation of the respondents' household are not statistically related to the legitimacy indicators.

Therefore, the causes for the observed differences between the seven countries in the indicators of political legitimacy and support for democracy should be sought in political rather than economic factors. However, as the WVS includes no questions on satisfaction with the economic situation, it cannot be ruled out that the decline in support for democracy among South African citizens was at least partly caused by the economic conditions in the country. South Africa is the poorest country in our sample. While the economic recession was not as deep as in some of the other six countries, South Africa has still not been able to reach its pre-crisis GDP and its economy is still declining. The advent of democracy has not fulfilled the promise of improving the standard of living for the great majority of the people. On the other hand, it seems doubtful that the sharp decline in support for democracy can be explained by the economic situation alone. The dismal government performance under President Zuma certainly has to take part of the blame. In any case, the increase in support for non-democratic regime types indicates that democratic consolidation has suffered a considerable setback and that the stability of today's South African democracy continues to depend primarily on the presence of a strong elite consensus.

Regarding the fourth assumption about the relevance of political polarisation within the party systems, the MP surveys indicate that polarisation was most

pronounced with respect to the evaluation of the democratic quality of the country. In 2013, the differences between the MPs of the government and the opposition parties were below 0.15 in the two established democracies and Chile, but fairly high in South Africa (0.31), Poland (0.36), Korea (0.40) and a staggering 0.58 in Turkey. The differences between the two major parties are less pronounced with respect to support for democracy (0.18 in Poland, 0.19 in Korea and 0.30 in Turkey). Overall, the data point to a considerable polarisation over the regime institutions in these three countries.

To explore whether and to what extent individual-level determinants also affect political legitimacy beliefs, a multiple regression analysis follows. The small number of only seven countries precludes a systematic inclusion of macro-factors such as the level of corruption, persisting deficits in the rule of law or the degree of domestic unrest that frequently have been shown to have an impact on political trust and other aspects of political legitimacy (van der Meer, 2017). The data do allow, however, determining whether individual-level factors that are known to influence political legitimacy beliefs play a role as additional explanatory variables. These are the affiliation with a party in government and ideological orientation (left–right). Additionally, level of education and interest in politics are included as control variables for the population.<sup>8</sup>

The following regression analysis will take into account only one macro-factor, namely, the age of democracy (young vs established democracies). As the evaluation of the democratic quality of the political system showed a relatively high and consistent relationship with confidence in political parties and support for democracy, it was included as an additional independent variable in the regression models for the two other dependent variables.

Instead of a dummy variable for old and new democracies, dummies for the five new democracies were introduced. Their regression coefficients indicate the country-specific deviations from the two established benchmark democracies. The results for the two regression analyses for MPs and citizens are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6 for the MPs shows that the country effects are strongest for support for democracy and reflect the country means in Fig. 5. Membership in a party in government has a fairly strong effect on the MPs' evaluation of the democraticness of the political system which, in turn, has the largest influence on confidence in political parties but is not a significant predictor of support for democracy. The explanatory power of the independent variables is relatively weak with an  $r^2$  of only 19.2% for confidence in political parties and best with an  $r^2$  of 41.2% for the evaluation of the democraticness of the political system. Support for democracy ( $r^2 = 24.6\%$ ) depends significantly on country-specific factors in four of the new democracies with the exception of South Africa where support for democracy among MPs was nearly as high as in Sweden and Germany. A rightist ideological orientation is highly significant as well and negatively related to support for democracy.

The results in Table 7 for the citizens differ in important ways from those for the MPs. The explanatory power of the models for confidence in political parties and for the evaluation of the democraticness of the political system is rather low, while it is considerably higher for support for democracy. As before, the effects of

**Table 6.** MPs: Regression Analysis for the three Legitimacy Variables.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Confidence in Political Parties		Dependent Variable: Democratic Quality of the Regime		Dependent Variable: Support for Democracy	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>
Constant	0.421***	0.025	0.695***	0.013	1.052***	0.035
Government-opposition <sup>a</sup>	0.006n.s.	0.013	0.215***	0.010	-0.003n.s.	0.018
Ideological orientation <sup>b</sup>	0.024n.s.	0.022	0.071***	0.020	-0.200***	0.030
Democraticness of country <sup>c</sup>	0.223***	0.031			-0.003n.s.	0.042
Chile <sup>d</sup>	-0.068***	0.017	-0.065***	0.015	-0.291***	0.023
Korea <sup>d</sup>	-0.014n.s.	0.018	-0.186***	0.015	-0.325***	0.024
Poland <sup>d</sup>	-0.215***	0.019	-0.147***	0.017	-0.270***	0.026
South Africa <sup>d</sup>	-0.074***	0.017	-0.064***	0.016	-0.127***	0.024
Turkey <sup>d</sup>	0.078***	0.019	-0.273***	0.016	-0.317***	0.026
Explained variance	0.192		0.412		0.246	

Source: MP surveys 2007 and 2013, cumulated file.

Level of significance: n.s. = not significant, \* = 0.05, \*\* = 0.01, and \*\*\* = 0.001.

<sup>a</sup>Member of a party in government (1) or an opposition party (0).

<sup>b</sup>Left-right orientation, 10-point scale, rescaled to 0-1.

<sup>c</sup>Evaluation of the democratic quality of the country, 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0-1.

<sup>d</sup>Dummy variables for the five young democracies; Sweden and Germany as benchmark cases.

**Table 7.** Citizens: Regression Analysis for the three Legitimacy Variables.

	Dependent Variable: Confidence in Political Parties		Dependent Variable: Democratic Quality of the Regime		Dependent Variable: Support for Democracy	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std.error</i>
Constant	0.143***	0.010	0.618***	0.007	0.458***	0.016
Government-opposition <sup>a</sup>	0.037***	0.005	0.078***	0.005	0.013n.s.	0.008
Ideological orientation <sup>b</sup>	0.048***	0.010	0.088***	0.009	-0.139***	0.016
Democraticness of country <sup>c</sup>	0.202***	0.010			0.181***	0.017
Interest in politics <sup>d</sup>	0.117***	0.008	0.014*	0.007	0.128***	0.013
University education <sup>e</sup>	0.002n.s.	0.006	0.023***	0.005	0.112***	0.009
Chile <sup>f</sup>	-0.069***	0.008	-0.058***	0.007	-0.174***	0.013
Korea <sup>f</sup>	0.004***	0.007	-0.132***	0.006	-0.460***	0.012
Poland <sup>f</sup>	-0.107***	0.008	-0.160***	0.007	-0.292***	0.013
South Africa <sup>f</sup>	0.059***	0.008	-0.061***	0.007	-0.457***	0.013
Turkey <sup>f</sup>	0.043***	0.008	-0.132***	0.007	-0.332***	0.013
Explained variance	0.129		0.111		0.243	

Source: WVS cumulated file, Waves 5 and 6.

Level of significance: n.s. = not significant, \* = 0.05, \*\* = 0.01, and \*\*\* = 0.001.

<sup>a</sup>Vote intention for a party in government (1) versus vote intention for an opposition party or no vote intention (0).

<sup>b</sup>Left-right orientation, 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0-1.

<sup>c</sup>Evaluation of the democratic quality of the country, 10-point scale, rescaled to range 0-1.

<sup>d</sup>Interest in politics, 4-point scale, rescaled to range 0-1, low to high.

<sup>e</sup>Respondent attended a university (1) versus lower educational level (0).

<sup>f</sup>Dummy variables for the five young democracies; Sweden and Germany as benchmark cases.

country-specific factors are rather strong. Ideological orientation, the evaluation of the democraticness of the political system, interest in politics and a university education are other significant factors influencing support for democracy, while electoral support for the parties in government is insignificant.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main result of the foregoing analysis is certainly that the global economic crisis has had no or only a minor effect on the legitimacy of democracy in six of the seven countries. It cannot be ruled out that this is because of the fact that the recession was simply not severe and long enough to have any major effects.

The empirical results instead provide ample support for the assumption that political legitimacy, measured as confidence in political actors, a positive evaluation of the democratic performance of the political system and support for democracy, is higher among MPs – and in elites more generally – than among voters. This is already visible in looking at the country-specific means for the three indicators. The MP–citizen differential is considerably larger in the new democracies. This confirms that the elites' value orientations and actions are highly relevant for the consolidation of democracy.

The strong country-specific effects evident in the data confirm the importance of idiosyncratic factors reflecting the historical legacies and the cultural differences of the diverse set of countries in our study. While research on political legitimacy has mostly dealt with democratic countries sharing a common cultural legacy, the analysis suggests that the growing number of democracies in countries with different cultural backgrounds necessitates the inclusion of countries with different cultural backgrounds in comparative research to find out to what extent such legacies influence the chances for the consolidation of democracy. The fact that it shares a common cultural background with the European countries may explain why the consolidation of democracy has been more successful in Chile than in the other four young democracies of our study. Even though one should expect that the consolidation of democracy in Poland – as a European country – would progress very fast as well, the legitimacy of democracy is still lower there. This may be owing to the long period of communist rule in Poland, which is probably responsible for the very low confidence in political parties in that country. It may also dampen the enthusiasm of the Polish people to embrace democracy as the better system of government.

With respect to South Africa, it is plausible to assume that citizens displeased with the poor political and economic performance of the political system, rather than punishing the party in government for its failures by withdrawing their electoral support, have started questioning whether the democratic model is appropriate for their country. In South Korea, it is likely that the tradition of a strong state and the cultural aversion to social and political conflicts has prevented Koreans from accepting that conflict can be a productive social force.

Looking at the results for Turkey, finally, it is obvious why the consolidation of democracy has failed. The MPs of the AKP are not particularly committed to democracy and support for democracy is low among the voters of both major parties. At the same time, confidence in the parties is rather high, which has given the government wide latitude to change the balance of power in favour of the ruling party. It remains to be seen if the democratic forces in the CHP will be able to gain an electoral majority and to successfully challenge President Erdoğan who has concentrated all governmental power in the presidency.

Finally, given the negligible impact of economic policy attitudes on the indicators of the legitimacy of democracy, it seems insufficient to assume that economic success is the most important precondition for the consolidation of new democracies.

## NOTES

1. The project team includes members from all seven countries under the leadership of Ursula van Beek, head of the Transformation Research Unit at the University of Stellenbosch. So far, four monographs on the results of the project have been published. The first volume (Van Beek, 2005) analysed the transition to democracy in only five countries, including the former *German Democratic Republic*. The three ensuing volumes were devoted to monitoring the development of democracy in the seven countries (Van Beek, 2010, 2011, 2019).

2. After the breakdown of communism in the Soviet Union and the democratisation of its former satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, the *Federal Republic of Germany* (FRG) and the communist *German Democratic Republic* reunited in 1990. This involved the formal accession of the five eastern German states (Länder) and the eastern districts of Berlin by way of adopting the constitutional and legal framework of the Federal Republic. Yet, despite huge public subsidies and private investments over a period of nearly 30 years since German unification, the economic productivity and the salaries in the eastern states still trail those in the western part of the country.

3. The first MP survey was funded by the Daimler Foundation with additional funding by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung for the German survey. Funding for the second survey was provided by the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. The support of these foundations is gratefully acknowledged.

4. The V-Dem data (Release 9) are accessible on the website of the V-Dem project (<https://www.v-dem.net/en/>), the best and most comprehensive collection of data on the historical development of democracy worldwide.

5. The higher score for one of the two authoritarian regime types was deducted from the score for democracy.

6. Germany did not participate in Wave 4 of the WVS, and in Poland this question was only included in Waves 5 and 6.

7. It should be noted that Lekalage (2016) reports a much higher rejection rate for autocratic regime types in 2015 (80%). The Afrobarometer survey used a different question wording, however. It asked if respondents were in favour of abolishing elections and parliament and letting the president decide everything instead. The broad rejection of this statement was probably caused by the widespread dissatisfaction with President Zuma rather than measuring a general rejection of autocratic rule. Another Afrobarometer question asked if respondents were willing to forego elections in favour of a non-elected government that would guarantee basic services such as safety, rule of law, housing and jobs. The latter question was supported by 61% of the respondents. This confirms that the wording of survey questions is of utmost importance. The second question is probably a better

indicator of regime preference than the first question that primarily measures confidence in the sitting president.

8. These control variables were not included in the regression analysis for the MPs because social background is known to have a negligible effect on elite attitudes.

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