

# Political System Justification in Argentina: Ideology, System Performance, and the Legitimization of Democracy

## Justificación del Sistema Político en Argentina: Ideología, Desempeño y la Legitimación de la Democracia

Daniela Alonso and Silvina Brussino

Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba y Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas

The main objective of this study was to analyze democracy legitimacy in a non-WEIRD country from a political psychology perspective. More specifically, two dimensions of democracy legitimacy were empirically isolated: diffuse and specific support. We tested a system justification model of democracy legitimacy, while also assessing the role of sociodemographic and context evaluation variables. We applied a questionnaire with closed-ended response choices to a non-probabilistic quota sample of adults from Córdoba, Argentina ( $n = 450$ ). Besides descriptively analyzing democracy legitimacy, two hierarchical multiple regression analyzes were performed, one for each criterion variable. The results evidenced that diffuse support for democracy remains relatively high, while specific support for Argentine political system is markedly low. Different variables explained each dimension of political legitimacy: those regarding ideological system justification—right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and political conservatism—explained an important amount of the variance of diffuse support but had only a marginal role in explaining specific support. The latter was better predicted by context evaluation variables, suggesting that system performance is more relevant than ideology when it comes to specific support. Thus, although democracy legitimacy could be based on a relatively developed civic culture, a poor system performance is not innocuous. The authors discuss how the theoretical explanations developed and framed in Western democracies may be not adequate to comprehend Latin American political culture.

*Keywords:* democracy legitimacy, Latin America, political system justification, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation

El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar la legitimidad de la democracia en un país no WEIRD desde la psicología política. Se diferenciaron 2 dimensiones de la legitimidad democrática: apoyo difuso y apoyo específico. Se probó un modelo de justificación del sistema de la legitimidad de la democracia, y se evaluó el papel de variables sociodemográficas y de evaluación del contexto. Se aplicó un cuestionario cerrado en una muestra no probabilística por cuotas de adultos de la Ciudad de Córdoba, Argentina ( $n = 450$ ). Además de analizar descriptivamente la legitimidad de la democracia, se realizaron 2 modelos de regresión múltiple jerárquica, uno para cada variable de criterio. Los resultados evidenciaron que el apoyo difuso a la democracia sigue siendo relativamente alto, mientras que el apoyo específico al sistema político argentino es marcadamente bajo. Ambas dimensiones fueron explicadas por diferentes variables: las relativas a la justificación del sistema ideológico —autoritarismo de derecha, orientación de dominación social y conservadurismo político— explicaron una parte importante de la varianza del apoyo difuso, pero tuvieron un papel marginal en la explicación del apoyo específico. Este último fue mejor predicho por variables de evaluación del contexto, lo que sugiere que el desempeño del sistema es más relevante que la ideología cuando se trata de un apoyo específico. Así, aunque la legitimidad democrática podría basarse en una cultura cívica relativamente desarrollada, un mal desempeño del sistema no es inocuo. Se discute cómo las explicaciones teóricas desarrolladas para democracias occidentales pueden no adecuarse para la cultura política latinoamericana.

*Palabras clave:* legitimidad democrática, Latinoamérica, justificación del sistema político, autoritarismo de derecha, orientación de dominación social

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Daniela Alonso  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2080-9571>

Silvina Brussino  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1087-644X>

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Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Daniela Alonso, Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas, Facultad de Psicología, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Bvd. de la Reforma esq. Enfermera Gordillo, CP 5000, Córdoba, Argentina. Email: [dalonso@unc.edu.ar](mailto:dalonso@unc.edu.ar)

Although democracy is the most appreciated political regime worldwide, it is not equally consolidated around the world. In Latin America, for instance, it has only been generalized in recent decades (Alister Sanhueza et al., 2015). The political history of the region has been signed by an alternation between authoritarian regimes and democracies and only recently, the latter became so widespread that it has turned—to some extent, at least—into a normative feature of the political culture. This process has taken place together with the crisis of the liberal State and the implementation of neoliberal economic models, which led to a reduction in social welfare policies (Monedero, 2018). Consequently, regional governments have failed to fulfill the aspirations of the democratic ideal and citizen expectations have been systematically frustrated (Zovatto, 2018).

At the moment of data collection for our study, Argentina was governed by a democratically elected conservative party for the first time since the return of democracy. This is particularly relevant, because rightist political parties have been historically weak in Argentina and the political right has influenced the political process, mainly through non-partisan channels, especially by appointing officials in non-democratic military governments (Vommaro, 2019). Thus, in contrast to most of so-called WEIRD countries (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic), conservative segments of Argentine politics have not always expressed a democratic commitment. Furthermore, conservative governments had begun to gain ground in the region and seemed to put an end to the so-called "Latin American turn to the left" (Carpio Cervantes, 2018).

In this setting, although 65% of Latin Americans still consider that democracy is the best form of government, levels of democracy support have fallen for the seventh consecutive year and more than 70% of the citizens are dissatisfied with democracy performance (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2018). Although Argentina is one of the five Latin American countries where levels of democracy support are highest, it is also among the countries where the public identify more problems in democratic performance. This scenario evidences the challenges faced by regional democracies and their differences in respect to WEIRD countries, from which most of the analytical frameworks for the study of legitimacy and democracy development come from.

Despite the relatively high level of diffuse support remaining in Latin America, the increasing dissatisfaction with democracy performance raises interrogations about the potential long-term consequences of poor performance. If democracies fail to provide the results that citizens expect of them, what are the foundations for widespread explicit support for a political system that does not comply with its basic principles? As Forgas et al. (2015) posit, democratic institutions are hollow shells without their psychological prerequisites. In this frame, Easton's (1975) classic differentiation of diffuse and specific support remains relevant for addressing the complexity of political legitimacy. Diffuse support refers to an enduring and basic commitment to the political system and a general support for its basic aspects. Meanwhile, specific support refers directly to what the authorities do and how they do it. As we will explain later, the evidence suggests that these two types of political support might be rooted in different sources and have differential consequences.

Consequently, our research objective was to assess citizenry attitudes toward the political system in a Latin American country. We tested the role of system justification motives (right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and conservative ideology) and context evaluation (political trust, procedural justice, corruption perception, and socio-emotional climate) to explain both preference for democracy in general (diffuse support) and support for Argentine democracy (specific support).

### **Ideological Orientations and System Justification**

The system justification theory proposes that people are motivated to defend, promote, and justify political, economic, and social systems, even against their individual or group interests (Jost, 2019). These motivations are manifested through conservative ideologies that contribute to intellectually or morally legitimize the established order (e.g., meritocracy, Protestant work ethic, belief in a just world; Cichocka & Jost, 2014). From this perspective, we can understand right-wing authoritarianism (henceforth, RWA), social dominance orientation (henceforth, SDO), and political conservatism as motivational basis of justification of the status quo in different scenarios (e.g., Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Jeding & Burger, 2019).

From a psychopolitical perspective, RWA is defined as the covariation of three attitudinal conglomerates: (a) authoritarian submission, submission to established and legitimized authorities; (b) authoritarian aggression, aggressiveness toward people who do not comply with norms and conventions, and (c) conventionalism, a high value placed on traditions and social conventions that support the authorities (Altemeyer, 1996). Although RWA has been largely studied as a personality trait or a dispositional feature,

it is also an ideological orientation expressing the motivation for the establishment and maintenance of social order, cohesion, and security (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007). Thus, the literature has found a correlation between RWA levels and a wide range of attitudes and behaviors related to social, political, and economic conservatism, such as affiliation to right-wing parties, ethnic prejudice, homophobia, and orthodox religiosity, among others (Jost et al., 2003).

On the other hand, SDO also entails an ideological orientation toward the conservation of the status quo, but specifically referring to relations between social groups. Thus, SDO expresses a preference for hierarchical relationships, in which some groups can rightfully exert power over others (Sibley & Duckitt, 2010). SDO comprises two basic components: (a) group dominance orientation (GDO), which implies the promotion of the ingroup and the derogation of the outgroup, serving a social identity motivation (ingroup favoritism) and (b) opposition to equality (OE), a generalized preference for unequal social relationships, even when they do not favor the ingroup, serving as a justification for the system (Jost & Thompson, 2000). Empirical evidence suggests that these two dimensions attend to different motivations: while GDO is more related to variables such as RWA, ethnic prejudice, hostile competition and the need for cognitive closure, OE is more associated with negative attitudes toward disadvantaged groups, rejection of universalism, humanism and social compassion, and political conservatism (Ho et al., 2012).

Although these ideological dimensions serve different motivations, research suggests that they are part of a conservative ideological cluster (i.e., Azevedo et al., 2017; Rottenbacher & Schmitz, 2012). For example, in a study conducted in Sweden (a developed democracy) and Latvia (a post-socialist democracy) Dimdins et al. (2016) found that RWA and SDO were both related to ideological conservatism, the former being closer to social conservatism and the latter to economic conservatism and system justification. In the same vein, when assessing democratic political legitimacy with a Finnish sample, Miklikowska (2012) found that RWA negatively predicted democratic values support. In addition, a normative identity style (i.e., the preference to behave according to social expectations) predicted democratic values in the same direction as RWA did.

### **System Justification in Non-WEIRD Countries**

Even though there is an important body of research that has been able to empirically demonstrate the relevance of the system justification perspective for the analysis of political legitimacy, the overwhelming majority of it comes from WEIRD countries, where the levels of legitimation of the economic, social, and political system are generally higher. Some evidence from post-socialist democracies brings an alternative perspective. In this regard, Forgaš et al. (2015) accounted for what they called *system derogation motivation* (as opposed to system justification), considering the social and political system as inherently unjust, corrupt, and illegitimate. This perspective posits that it is more difficult to sustain favorable beliefs toward the system in sociopolitical contexts perceived as arbitrary, whose legal and political institutions function poorly and blatantly discriminate against different groups.

Nevertheless, although Latin American societies share some features with post-socialist democracies—mainly regarding a shorter democratic experience, the perception of injustice, corruption, and social anomie—, their democratic trajectories are markedly different. Indeed, whereas results from post-socialist societies show some level of disenchantment with democracy itself, in Latin America, the assessment of democracy as an ideal type is still highly positive (Andersen, 2012).

Although, ecologically valid evidence on the system justification perspective in Latin America is largely missing, two research programs are an exception. On the one hand, a study conducted by Henry and Saul (2006), with a Bolivian sample, found that the most disadvantaged children were those who expressed a more favorable evaluation, less cynicism, and more confidence toward the government (exercised by a high conservative status party) and were more supportive of social protest censorship. This evidenced a motivation to justify the status quo among members of disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, Rottenbacher and his collaborators in Peru (Molina Guzmán & Rottenbacher de Rojas, 2015; Rottenbacher & Córdova Cáceres, 2014; Rottenbacher & Schmitz, 2012; Rottenbacher de Rojas & Schmitz, 2013) analyzed the role of system justification on political attitudes and behaviors. They found that SDO negatively predicted support for democracy, while RWA and ideological conservatism were associated with higher support for a neoliberal economic model (Rottenbacher & Schmitz, 2012). In addition, in a students' sample in Lima, they reported that RWA and SDO negatively predicted support for democracy (Rottenbacher de Rojas & Schmitz, 2013). Thus, both studies evidenced a negative association between dimensions of conservative ideology (mainly

SDO) and democratic political legitimacy, and positive relations between the former and support for unequal economic programs (neoliberal economic system), intolerance, and anti-democratic practices (criminalization of social protest). In summary, the reviewed literature suggests that the pattern of relations between conservatism and system justification is actually negative when it comes to the justification of democracy: conservative ideologies predict lower motivation to endorse democracy. This is also true for developed democracies (e.g., Miklikowska, 2012) and it is probably due to the fact that democracy represents values of equality and inclusion that are opposed to the content of those conservative ideologies (Rottenbacher & Schmitz, 2012).

### **Evaluations of System Performance and Political Legitimacy**

As we stated before, Easton's (1975) classical theoretical model of political support posits that citizen attitudes may be different when the political object is not democracy as an abstract concept (diffuse support), but the real political system (specific support). This distinction is not always clear in the literature and warns about the relevance of clearly defining which dimension of legitimacy one wants to address. For example, Brandt and Reyna (2017)—using data from 27 countries and three rounds of the European Election Studies—found that, while ideological orientations that serve to reject social change were always positively associated with political legitimacy, those referring to opposition to equality did so differently, depending on whether they were egalitarian or unequal political systems. Thus, while opposition to equality was positively related to political legitimacy in unequal systems, the sign of that association was negative in more egalitarian democracies.

However, another theoretical approach suggests that specific support for the political system might be less rooted in ideological dimensions (such as those we have been analyzing) and more in the characteristics of the political system (such as political design, the role of parliament, and decision-making procedures) and the perception of its functioning (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Furthermore, this would be particularly true for new democracies or those where development conditions are less favorable: citizens might base their support for the political system more on the state of affairs than on an underdeveloped civic culture (Katz & Levin, 2018; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Nevertheless, literature has provided solid evidence that poor performance or unfavorable economic conditions are sufficient to undermine the psychological underpinnings of democracy (Magalhães, 2016). For example, in their analysis with data from Latinobarómetro, Chu et al. (2008) found weak correlations between democracy performance indicators and systemic support for democracy, and those relations were not stronger in less developed democracies, compared to long-standing developed ones. Thus, it is relevant to control for the role that these systemic evaluations play, especially while assessing different levels of political support.

In our study, we considered a set of variables regarding citizens' perception of political system performance and outcomes. The first dimension is political trust, a core empirical indicator of citizens' link to the political system. It refers to evaluative orientations toward different political objects based on the correspondence between institutional performance and citizen expectations (Mishler & Rose, 2001). Thus, political trust is thought to increase the legitimacy, efficiency, and stability of governments by connecting citizens with the institutions that represent them (Godefroidt et al., 2017). In this regard, evaluations of institutional confidence tend to overlap with performance perceptions and attitudes toward government representatives (Levi & Stoker, 2000).

Regarding the perception of system's performance, we addressed two theoretically related—but empirically distinguishable—variables: procedural justice and political corruption perception. Procedural justice refers to the perceptions of the procedures followed by authorities and institutions: "to be considered fair, the public administration must treat individuals impartially in the allocation of goods and services" (Linde, 2012, p. 413). Instead, political corruption refers to the use of a position or public resources for private benefit, thus violating procedural justice principles (Linde, 2012). The inclusion this variable is relevant for several reasons. First, in Latin America, corruption is among the main concerns of citizens, along with issues related to crime and the economy (Cohen et al., 2017). Second, the literature has widely documented the correlations between political corruption perception and victimization, and trust in political authorities and institutions, as well as satisfaction with democracy (e.g., Donovan & Karp, 2017; van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). Moreover, perceptions of fairness and the extent of political corruption seem to affect not only public approval of the performance of the political system, but also the support for regime principles and values (Linde, 2012).

Finally, we considered a variable relative to social and political well-being, the socio-emotional climate, which refers to the predominant collective emotions and feelings at a given moment and context (Páez et al., 1997). Socio-emotional climate can respond to social, political, or economic events and, therefore somehow fluctuate in relatively short periods. However, it is also rooted in underlying social (and political) structures responding to dominant social interaction patterns (de Rivera & Páez, 2007). Consequently, socio-emotional climate is at the crossroads between macrosocial and individual explanations: on the one hand, governments and political authorities have some responsibility for the constitution of a dominant socio-emotional climate. On the other hand, the way in which the social climate is perceived may be conditioned by individual needs and characteristics (such as ideology and political attitudes) and by microsocial processes of participation and communication (de Rivera & Páez, 2007; Páez et al., 2013). Thus, socio-emotional climate perceptions can result from both political trust and system performance evaluations and ideological motivations to legitimize a government or political program (Alonso & Brussino, 2020; Cichočka & Jost, 2014).

To sum up, our research goal was to assess the psychological underpinnings of democracy, evaluating both diffuse and specific support, providing evidence on the applicability of system justification perspectives on legitimacy in Argentina, a non-WEIRD country. In line with regional data (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2018), we expected to account for higher levels of diffuse support for democracy, compared to levels of specific support for the Argentine democracy (H1). Also, we expected that the ideological and context evaluation variables would show a different relation pattern when it comes to one or other dimension of political legitimacy (H2): a conservative ideological orientation negatively predicts diffuse support for democracy, while positively explains specific support for Argentine democracy. Meanwhile, theory suggests that context evaluation variables better explain more specific attitudes toward the political system, compared to normative adherence to democracy (Alister Sanhueza et al., 2015; Murillo & Visconti, 2017).

## Method

### Participants

Four hundred and fifty citizens from Córdoba, Argentina, aged 18-70 years old ( $M = 37.3$ ,  $SD = 14.1$ ) responded to our questionnaire. We selected the participants through an accidental non-probabilistic sampling method, following sex, age, and socioeconomic status quotas, obtaining a sample with a socio-demographic profile similar to that of the general population. These quotas followed the data provided by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos through its permanent household survey (Muraro, 2012). Participants were contacted by trained interviewers in public places (mainly at squares and parks, but also at public offices, university campus, and health services waiting rooms, among others) and in different areas (city center and residential neighborhoods). We show the sample composition and its comparison with the general population distribution in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Composition of the Study Sample Compared to General Population Composition (%)*

Quota	Study sample	General population
Sex		
Men	47.4	48.51
Women	52.6	51.49
Socioeconomic status		
ABC1	7.3	5.2
C2	18.7	18.6
C3	28.8	28.2
D1	31.6	33.4
D2E	13.6	14.5
Age		
18-24	21.5	20.29
25-29	15.4	13.39
30-39	23.7	22.86
40-49	17.1	16.65
50-59	18.5	14.58
60-70	3.7	12.23

*Note.* ABC1 is a high socioeconomic level, C2 is upper-middle, C3 is typical middle class, D1 is a lower-middle socioeconomic level, and D2E includes lower and marginal levels.

## Measures

The questionnaire is available in Appendix A (in Spanish and English). The variables we included were:

### ***Democracy-Autocracy Preference (DAP)***

The 3-item DAP index (Magalhães, 2014) was used to assess diffuse support for democracy. Participants had to indicate how good or bad (1: *very good* to 6: *very bad*) was the way of governing the country in each of three non-democratic systems (autocracy, technocracy, and military government). We coded the answers so that a higher score indicates a higher preference for democracy. As Magalhães (2014) proposes, this measure intentionally avoids mentioning democracy, which usually elicits a socially desirable answer.

### ***Argentine Democracy Justification (ADJ)***

A Spanish version of the Rutto et al.' (2014) Democratic System Justification index was used to assess specific support for Argentine democracy. It comprises eight items regarding attitudes toward the national government (e.g., "In general, the Argentine democracy operates as it should"). It is answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*) coded in such a way that a higher score indicates higher level of specific support.

### ***Ideological Variables***

**Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA).** We used the brief Argentine version of the RWA scale (Etchezahar et al. 2011). It is a one-dimension index, comprising six items (e.g., "Our country needs a powerful leader who can face the extremists and immoral people who currently prevail in our society"), answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Higher scores indicate higher levels of RWA.

**Social Dominance Orientation (SDO).** We used the Argentine adapted version (Etchezahar et al., 2014) of a SDO scale. It comprises 10 items, answered on a 5point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*) and arranged on a bidimensional structure. *Group Dominance Orientation* contains five items measuring desirability of the existence of superior and inferior groups (e.g., "In order to get ahead in life, sometimes it is necessary to pass over other groups of people"). On its part, *Opposition to Equality* includes five items that refer to the desirability of equality between people (e.g., "It would be desirable that all groups be equal"). We reverse-coded answers to items comprising the latter dimension, so that higher scores always indicate higher SDO.

**Political Conservatism.** We assessed it by a single item that asked participants to place themselves on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *totally left* (more liberal) to 7 = *totally right* (more conservative).

### **Context Evaluation Variables**

**Corruption Perception.** Following Linde and Erlingsson (2013), we used a 2-item index measuring the perceived prevalence of corruption among politicians and public officials in general in Argentina. Response options go from 1= *almost none* to 5 = *most of them*.

**Procedural Justice Perception.** Is a 2-item index addressing the perceived fairness of public officials' treatment of citizens (Linde & Erlingsson, 2013). Response options go from 1 to 5 (see Appendix A).

**Socioemotional Climate Perception.** Positive sub-dimension of the Páez et al. (1997) Social-Emotional Climate Index. It comprises five items listing emotions such as trust, hope, joy, and two more regarding general social-economic climate. Participants had to indicate to what extent they believed that each one is present in Argentine society on a 1= *nothing* to 5 = *a lot* scale.

**Political Trust.** We measured trust levels in judicial, legislative, and executive branches, and in political parties. Participants had to indicate the level of honesty and good performance they attributed to each actor or institution on a 5-point scale (1 = *almost nothing* to 5 = *a lot*). We chose the two dimensions, because they have been previously identified as core elements of trust perceptions (Segovia et al., 2008). Following exploratory factor analysis, we obtained two independent trust indexes, one for political branches and one for political parties.

In all cases, the scale score is the result of the sum of all the items divided by the number of items on the scale.

### **Socio-Demographic Variables**

We used close-ended questions to address age, educational level and socio-economic status. We registered the age in numbers. Educational Level ranges from 1= No formal education to 7=Complete college education (see More in Appendix A). On its part, socioeconomic level was operationalized based on the ratio between the number of people that contribute money and the total number of household members, and educational level, occupation, and healthcare coverage of the household's main breadwinner, as well as indicators of indigence (Institutional Link Commission, AAM-SAIMO-CEIM, 2015). Regarding socioeconomic level categorization, ABC1=High, C2=Upper-middle, C3= Typical middle class, D1= Lower-middle and D2E= lower and marginal.

### **Procedure**

Data were collected through individual face-to-face application of a paper questionnaire. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the general goals of the study were explained to each participant. The interviewers also emphasized that participation was voluntary and that answers were anonymous, confidential, and would only be used for research purposes. We followed the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2017). The interviewers answered all participants' concerns, asked participants for their verbal informed consent before participation, ensured their anonymity and data protection. We follow the guidelines of the National Law on the Protection of Personal Data of (law n° 25326, 2000).

## Data Analysis

First, we evaluated internal consistency of the scales by estimating Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. In the case Corruption perception, Procedural justice perception, and Trust in political parties -composed by only two items- we estimated Pearson's bivariate correlation. Next, we conducted a descriptive analysis of the variables under analysis. In order to compare the sample mean with the theoretical mean of the DAP and ADJ scales, we conducted one sample t-tests.

Before proceeding to estimate the multivariate regression models for specific support toward Argentine political system and diffuse support toward democracy, we checked for missing cases, outliers, and underlying assumptions for multivariate statistics (Tabachnick et al., 2007). Due to a stringent quality control of data during data collection process, missing data was below 3% of the sample for all the items and we replaced missing scores with item median score. We checked for multivariate outliers calculating Mahalanobis distance and we excluded six extreme cases ( $p < 0.001$ ). We estimated Pearson's correlation coefficient among the variables under study, providing evidence of no collinearity ( $r$  below 0.70). We also checked the variance inflation factor (VIF) for all the variables. VIF for all the variables ranged from  $VIF = 1.01$  to  $VIF = 1.73$ , which indicates no problems of collinearity ( $VIF < 10$ ). Diagnosis of independence, normality, and homoscedasticity were estimated through analysis of residuals. We did not apply normality tests like Shapiro-Wilks, because they are not recommended for small samples (Barker & Shaw, 2015). A Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.89 and 1.98 indicated independence of residuals in ADJ and DAP, respectively. See Figures 1, 2, 4, and 5 in Appendix B to visualize the normality of residual distributions. There was, also, evidence of homoscedasticity (see Figures 3 and 6 in Appendix B).

To test H2, we conducted two hierarchical multiple regression analysis—one for each criterion variable—introducing the predictors in three steps: sociodemographic, context evaluation, and ideological variables. We calculated the adjusted determination coefficient for each model, as well as confidence intervals, in order to estimate the effect size. We also present beta coefficients, signification level, and 95% confidence intervals at each step for each variable in the model.

## Results

### Descriptive Results

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and internal consistency values (Cronbach's Alphas and Pearson's Correlations) for all the scales we included in the study. As we expected (H1), people were more positively democracy orientated in general, than to Argentine democracy. Moreover, while DAP mean was significantly higher than the scale's theoretical midpoint,  $t(444) = 18.63$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI= .87/1.07, ADJ mean was significantly below the scale's theoretical midpoint,  $t(446) = -10.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI=-.45/-.31. Table 1 also shows Pearson's bivariate correlation coefficients among all variables. There was no significant correlation between the two criterion variables: DAP accounting for diffuse support for democracy and ADJ accounting for specific support in Argentina. Also, DAP evidenced negative and statistically significant correlations with ideological variables (except for opposition to equality dimension of SDO), with the correlation between DAP and context evaluation variables being relatively weaker. In respect to ADJ, it was weakly correlated (or not at all) with ideological variables, but it showed moderate statistically significant correlations with context evaluation measures: a more positive evaluation of the sociopolitical scenario generally correlates with higher ADJ, providing preliminary evidence supporting H2.



**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables Under Study (n = 454)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. DAP	1	0.08	-0.54***	-0.40***	-0.09	-0.40***	-0.23***	0.20***	-0.22***	-0.06	0.21***
2. ADJ		1	0.08	0.11*	-0.06	0.15**	-0.28***	0.28**	0.20***	0.32***	0.35***
3. RWA			1	0.48***	0.06	0.47***	0.21***	-0.18***	0.34***	0.20***	-0.06
4. Group dominance - SDO				1	0.39***	0.39***	0.15**	-0.05	0.32***	0.15**	-0.02
5. Opposition to equality - SDO					1	0.21***	0.16***	-0.03	0.05	0.07	-0.03
6. Political conservatism						1	0.23***	-0.09	0.37***	0.38***	-0.17***
7. Corruption perception							1	-0.40***	0.04	-0.10*	-0.30***
8. Procedural justice perception								1	0.08	0.23***	0.21***
9. Socioemotional climate perception									1	0.47***	0.08
10. Trust in political branches										1	0.30***
11. Trust in political parties											1
<i>M</i>	4.70	2.18	2.71	1.97	1.63	3.60	3.37	2.22	2.37	2.23	2.04
<i>SD</i>	1.1	0.66	1.18	0.83	0.67	1.28	0.53	0.80	0.77	0.76	0.85
Internal consistency <sup>a</sup>	0.52	0.71	0.87	0.75	0.75	-	0.65	0.41	0.80	0.83	0.70

Note. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

<sup>a</sup> Internal consistency indexes are Cronbach's alpha, except for Corruption perception, Procedural justice perception, and Trust in political parties, which are composed by only two items. In those cases, Pearson's bivariate correlation index is reported. Political conservatism was evaluated through a single item.

DAP = Democracy-autocracy preference, ADJ = Argentine political system justification, RWA = Right-wing authoritarianism, SDO = Social dominance orientation.

## Regression Analysis

Table 3 presents the regression model for ADJ as the criterion variable. Sociodemographic variables (step 1) made no significant contribution to the explanation of ADJ in any of the three steps. Comparatively, context evaluation dimensions significantly increased the amount of explained variance. More specifically, trust in political parties, trust in political branches, and corruption perception were the main predictors: those who were more trusting and perceived less corruption expressed more specific support to the Argentine democracy. Finally, including ideological orientations (step 3) made only a small contribution to the regression model, resulting in a worse fit compared to model at step 2. As we expected, and taking into account that the ruling party at the moment of our study had a conservative ideological orientation, more conservative people showed higher levels of ADJ. On the other hand, opposition to equality made a small yet statistically significant contribution, but in a direction other than we expected. Accordingly to H2, specific attitudes toward the political system seem to be more sensitive to less stable dimensions of citizen attitudes than to more deeply rooted political culture dimensions. Altogether, the regression model explained 25% of the variance of ADJ, with the effect size of the model being medium (Dominguez-Lara, 2017).

**Table 3**  
*Hierarchical Regression Analysis With Argentine Democracy Justification as Criterion Variable*

	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Constant	2.15 (0.20)			[1.76, 2.55]	1.77 (0.34)			[1.10, 2.44]	1.62 (0.34)			[0.95, 2.30]
Socio-demographic												
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.04	0.488	[-0.00, 0.01]	0.00 (0.00)	0.02	0.691	[-0.00, 0.00]	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01	0.892	[-0.00, 0.00]
Educational level	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.06	0.293	[-0.11, 0.03]	0.00 (0.00)	0.00	0.974	[-0.06, 0.06]	0.02 (0.03)	0.03	0.543	[-0.04, 0.08]
Socio-economic status	0.05 (0.04)	0.09	0.147	[-0.02, 0.12]	0.00 (0.03)	0.01	0.909	[-0.06, 0.07]	0.01 (0.03)	0.02	0.663	[-0.05, 0.08]
Context evaluation												
Corruption perception					-0.22 (0.06)	-0.18	0.001	[-0.35, -0.10]	-0.26 (0.06)	-0.20	< 0.001	[-0.38, -0.13]
Procedural justice perception					0.08 (0.04)	0.10	0.046	[0.00, 0.17]	0.09 (0.04)	0.11	0.024	[0.01, 0.18]
Socioemotional climate					0.11 (0.05)	0.13	0.021	[0.02, 0.20]	0.06 (0.05)	0.08	0.178	[-0.03, 0.16]
Trust in political branches					0.15 (0.05)	0.17	0.002	[0.05, 0.24]	0.10 (0.05)	0.11	0.058	[-0.00, 0.20]
Trust in political parties					0.17 (0.04)	0.22	< 0.001	[0.09, 0.24]	0.19 (0.04)	0.25	< 0.001	[0.12, 0.27]
Ideological dimensions												
RWA									0.01 (0.03)	0.01	0.866	[-0.06, 0.07]
Group dominance - SDO									0.07 (0.05)	0.08	0.162	[-0.03, 0.16]
Opposition to equality - SDO									-0.10 (0.05)	-0.10	0.048	[-0.21, -0.00]
Political conservatism									0.09 (0.03)	0.18	0.002	[0.03, 0.15]
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		0.00				0.22				0.25		
95% CI				[-0.01, 0.02]				[0.17, 0.31]				[0.18, 0.32]
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> change				-				0.23				0.03
<i>F</i> ( <i>p</i> )				0.91 (0.437)				14.31 (< 0.001)				11.22 (< 0.001)

Note. RWA: Right-wing authoritarianism and SDO: Social dominance orientation.

Next, we tested the regression model with DAP, accounting for diffuse support for democracy as criterion variable (Table 4). Sociodemographic variables showed a small contribution (4% of explained variance at step 1). When we added context evaluation dimensions at step 2, slightly increased the total amount of explained variance up to a 17%. Nevertheless, one of the main predictive dimensions at this step, socioemotional climate, lost most of its explanatory power when we included ideological variables at step 3 (from  $\beta = -.22$  to  $\beta = -.06$ ). In fact, as we expected (H2), ideological orientations (RWA and SDO) were the main explanatory dimensions for democracy support. This suggests that diffuse attitudes toward democracy may be rooted in more stable dispositions (i.e., ideological orientations) and be less sensitive to short-term changes (i.e., system performance perception). In this case, less conservative people sustained higher diffuse support for democracy. In addition, older people and people that are more trustful showed higher support. The final model explained 37% of the total variance of DAP, accounting for a large effect size (Dominguez-Lara, 2017). Comparing the two models, the variables we analyzed were more suitable to predict diffuse support than specific support.

**Table 4**  
*Hierarchical Regression Analysis With Democracy-Autocracy Preference as Criterion Variable*

	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i> (SE)	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Constant	30.26 (0.32)			[20.63, 30.89]	40.33 (0.57)			[30.20, 50.46]	50.42 (0.51)			[40.41, 60.42]
Socio-demographic												
Age	0.00 (0.00)	0.05	0.344	[-0.00, 0.01]	0.01 (0.00)	0.10	0.030	[0.00, 0.01]	0.01 (0.00)	0.16	< 0.001	[0.01, 0.02]
Educational level	0.11 (0.06)	0.12	0.045	[0.00, 0.22]	0.07 (0.05)	0.07	0.214	[-0.04, 0.17]	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.04	0.411	[-0.13, 0.05]
Socio-economic status	0.13 (0.05)	0.14	0.024	[0.02, 0.24]	0.10 (0.05)	0.10	0.071	[-0.01, 0.21]	0.05 (0.05)	0.05	0.330	[-0.05, 0.14]
Context evaluation												
Corruption perception					-0.21 (0.11)	-0.10	0.052	[-0.43, 0.00]	-0.03 (0.10)	-0.01	0.787	[-0.22, 0.16]
Procedural justice perception					0.13 (0.07)	0.10	0.067	[-0.01, 0.27]	0.07 (0.06)	0.05	0.271	[-0.05, 0.19]
Socioemotional climate					-0.30 (0.08)	-0.22	< 0.001	[-0.45, -0.15]	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.06	0.243	[-0.22, 0.06]
Trust in political branches					-0.12 (0.08)	-0.09	0.126	[-0.28, 0.03]	0.04 (0.07)	0.03	0.548	[-0.10, 0.19]
Trust in political parties					0.27 (0.06)	0.21	< 0.001	[0.14, 0.40]	0.22 (0.06)	0.17	< 0.001	[0.10, 0.33]
Ideological dimensions												
RWA									-0.34 (0.05)	-0.38	< 0.001	[-0.44, -0.25]
Group dominance - SDO									-0.25 (0.07)	-0.19	< 0.001	[-0.39, -0.11]
Opposition to equality - SDO									0.03 (0.08)	0.02	0.712	[-0.12, 0.18]
Political conservatism									-0.11 (0.04)	-0.13	0.014	[-0.20, -0.02]
Adjusted $R^2$			0.04				0.17				0.37	
95% CI			[0.01, 0.08]				[0.10, 0.23]				[0.30, 0.43]	
$R^2$ change			-				0.13				0.21	
$F(p)$			6.83 (< 0.001)				10.59 (< 0.001)				19.71 (< 0.001)	

Note. RWA: Right-wing authoritarianism and SDO: Social dominance orientation.

## Discussion

Our study examined the complexity of citizen's orientations toward the political system in a non-WEIRD country from a system justification perspective. In this regard, Cichocka and Jost (2014) questioned the applicability of a system justification perspective to sociopolitical scenarios where system inequalities and injustices are more prevalent, democracies are less consolidated, and political systems might be "less justifiable". While some evidence from post-socialist countries is available, this perspective is less extended in Latin America. Argentina, being an economically unequal society which has gone through cyclical economic and political crises (Zovatto, 2018), is a relevant case study in this regard.

Our results accounted for two different—and weakly related—sets of attitudes toward the political system: diffuse support for democracy (through the DAP index) and specific support for Argentine democracy (through the ADJ index). Diffuse support for democracy was strong in our sample, well higher willingness to support the Argentine political system (H1). To some extent, these dimensions can be an expression of normative and empirical political legitimacy attributions, respectively (Schmelzle & Stollenwerk, 2018). Thus, we accounted for a citizenry that values democracy highly, but recognizes the distance between the democratic ideal and its real functioning. These societies tend to show high levels of cynicism and political alienation (Alonso et al., 2018), which coexist with little questioning of the legitimacy of the regime itself. Our results are only partially consistent with previous studies conducted in post-socialist democracies, where political legitimacy is generally low and differ from patterns found in WEIRD countries, where system justification is generally stronger (Cichocka & Jost, 2014). This evidences the relevance of conducting ecologically pertinent research.

Regarding the psychological underpinnings of the two sets of attitudes toward the political system, a system justification perspective was only partially suitable to predict a basic commitment to democracy (diffuse support), but not pertinent to understand the basis of system justification at the local level. As for the specific support for Argentine democracy, a model mainly based on system performance perception prevailed (consistent with H2). Thus, within a widely delegitimized political scenario, an orientation favorable to sustain the status quo was explained more by a benevolent perception of the social and political context (i.e., more political trust, less corruption perception) than by the ideological dimensions of system justification (RWA, SDO, and political conservatism). In this line, we provided some evidence that supports the hypothesis that political performance is more relevant when democracy has a shorter trajectory or less legitimacy among citizens, whereas in more established democracies, dimensions such as congruence between citizens and political elites ideological orientations evidenced to be more relevant (Dahlberg et al., 2015). More specifically, ideological variables expressing the motivation to maintain the status quo—whose relevance has been well documented on established democracies—had only a marginal role in explaining support for the local political system (specific support).

When it comes to the normative dimensions of democracy's legitimacy, ideological orientations seemed to play a more important role. We described some regional empirical evidence that supports an inverse relationship between RWA and SDO and democracy support in Peru (Rottenbacher & Schmitz, 2012; Rottenbacher de Rojas & Schmitz, 2013). Our results followed the same pattern: ideological variables (i.e., RWA and SDO) were strong predictors of diffuse support for democracy, and did so in a negative direction. Thus, the most democratic people expressed less conservative ideologies. This is to be expected, since the very concept of democracy expresses values such as equality, inclusion, and respect for differences, which are not entirely compatible with those implied in RWA or SDO (Rottenbacher de Rojas & Schmitz, 2013). Moreover, the Argentine political culture might intervene, reinforcing the association between conservative ideology and relatively less support for democracy: although this may be gradually changing, right-wing parties have not always democratically disputed political power in Argentina and have historically exerted political influence through non-democratic intervention (Vommaro, 2019).

In addition, it is noteworthy that the evaluation of the actual democratic system functioning played a little role in predicting basic democracy support. This could be understood as evidence of a strong commitment to democratic values, relatively independent of the actual political system performance. Our findings suggest a difference between Latin American and post-socialist democracies, since in the latter the commitment to democratic values did not predominate in the political culture of citizenry. Moreover, as

suggested by Forgas et al. (2015), this kind of commitment to democracy could be essential for its survival and development, especially when its performance is poor. Nevertheless, if we want to assess the long-term effects of a poor political performance on democracy legitimation, we will need to conduct longitudinal studies.

Our correlational study does not permit us to account for causal relations between the variables. Consequently, both our results and hypothesis about the potential long-term effects of poor political performance on democracy development should be submitted to further testing through longitudinal or experimental complementary approaches. Also, even though we have established quotas for sex, age, and socioeconomic status in our sample, it is relevant to extend this research to probabilistic samples in order to increase external validity.

## Conclusion

Altogether, our prior-discussed results are theoretically and empirically relevant for several reasons. On the one hand, they provided evidence on the political system justification, which has received less attention compared to other dimensions, such as economic and social system legitimation (e.g., Rutto et al., 2014). On the other hand, we were able to offer an original perspective on the political system justification in a non-WEIRD country. Specifically, we differentiated two dimensions of attitudes toward the political system and found that ideological system justification motives had a differential role in the explanation of each of them. We presented empirical evidence that partially contradicts findings from WEIRD countries and suggests that the sociopolitical scenario could have an effective role in system justification. For this reason, we believe that future research framed in circumstances of high political conflict and low political legitimacy—such as Argentina—should address not only the role of political culture (a relatively stable dimension), but also of more unstable system performance evaluations. Although research in the area recognizes the potential influence of the history and quality of democracies on the levels of system justification (e.g., Kelemen et al., 2014), until now theory have postulated that the motivations for the legitimation of the status quo would show a similar pattern in different scenarios (Cichočka & Jost, 2014). Both longitudinal and experimental further studies could improve our understanding of the bond between citizenry and the political system, and its potential effects on other political attitudes and behaviors.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

#### Socio-Demographic Variables

Gender: Male / Female / Other \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_

Educational Level:

1. No formal education
2. Incomplete Primary Education
3. Complete Primary Education
4. Incomplete Secondary Education
5. Complete Secondary Education
6. Incomplete College Education
7. Complete College Education

Amount of people living at your house \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of people that provide income to your house \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational status of the primary breadwinner:

1. Unemployed
2. Occupied
3. Retired
4. Homemaker
5. Landlord
6. Student
7. Other

(Only for occupied people) Type of employment of the primary breadwinner:

1. Employer
2. Employee
3. Self-employed

Brief description of the primary breadwinner's job: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary breadwinner's educational level:

1. No formal education
2. Complete Primary Education
3. Complete Secondary Education
4. Complete College Education

Does the primary breadwinner has health insurance? Yes / No / Don't Know.

#### Criterion Variables

##### *Argentine Democracy Justification (ADJ)*

- a. En general, creo que nuestro sistema democrático es justo [In general, I believe that our democratic system is fair].
- b. En general, el sistema político argentino funciona como debería funcionar [In general, the Argentine political system operates as it should].
- c. El sistema político argentino necesita ser profundamente reformado (r) [The Argentine political system needs to be radically restructured].
- d. Nuestro sistema democrático es el mejor posible [Our democratic system is the best possible]



- e. La mayoría de las políticas públicas contribuye al bien común [Most political policies serve the collective good].
- f. El funcionamiento de la política está establecido de manera que las cosas puedan mejorar [Politics is set up so that things can get better].
- g. Los partidos políticos representan los diferentes espíritus de la sociedad [Political parties represent the different souls of society].
- h. Los políticos en la actualidad actúan más en favor de los lobbies (y presiones) que de los ciudadanos (r) [Politicians today act more in favor of lobbies (and pressures) than of the citizens].

### ***Democracy-Autocracy Preference (DAP)***

Le voy a describir varios tipos de sistemas políticos y le voy a preguntar acerca de cada uno como forma de gobernar el país. Por favor, escoja la opción que mejor represente su opinión desde [1] muy bueno, a [6] muy malo [I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask you about each one as a way of governing the country. Please choose the option that best represents your opinion from [1] very good to [6] very bad].

- a. Tener un líder fuerte que no tenga que preocuparse por el congreso y las elecciones (r) [Having a strong leader who does not have to worry about parliament and elections].
- b. Tener expertos, no gobernantes, que tomen decisiones acerca de lo que piensan que es lo mejor para el país (r) [Having experts, not rulers, to make decisions according to what they think is best for the country].
- c. Tener un régimen militar (r) [Having a military regime].

### **Ideological Variables**

#### ***Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA)***

- a. Nuestro país necesita un líder poderoso que pueda enfrentar a los extremistas e inmorales que actualmente prevalecen en nuestra sociedad [Our country needs a powerful leader who can face the extremists and immoral people who currently prevail in our society].
- b. Las leyes de Dios sobre el aborto, la pornografía y el matrimonio deben ser seguidas estrictamente antes de que sea demasiado tarde, sus transgresiones deben ser castigadas [God's laws on abortion, pornography and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, transgressions must be punished].
- c. Nuestros ancestros debieron ser más honrados por la forma en que construyeron esta sociedad, por ello, es necesario poner fin a las fuerzas que la están destruyendo [Our ancestors had to be more honest by the way they built this society, , therefore it is necessary to put an end to the forces that are currently destroying it].
- d. Hay muchas personas extremistas e inmorales tratando de arruinar las cosas; la sociedad debe detenerlos [There are many extremist and immoral people trying to ruin things; society must stop them].
- e. Los hechos muestran que debemos ser más duros con el crimen y la inmoralidad sexual con el fin de mantener la ley y el orden [The facts show that we must be tougher with crime and sexual immorality in order to maintain law and order].
- f. Si la sociedad así lo quiere, es deber de todo buen ciudadano ayudar a eliminar el mal que destruye nuestro país desde adentro [If society wants it, it is the duty of every good citizen to help eliminate the evil that destroys our country from within].

#### ***Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)***

- a. Para salir adelante en la vida, algunas veces es necesario pasar por encima de otros grupos de personas [In order to get ahead in life, sometimes it is necessary to pass over other groups of people].
- b. Habría menos problemas si tratáramos a los diferentes grupos de manera más igualitaria (r) [There would be fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally].
- c. Todos los grupos superiores deberían dominar a los grupos inferiores [All superior groups should dominate over inferior groups].
- d. La igualdad entre grupos de personas debería ser nuestro ideal (r) [Equality between groups of people should be our ideal].
- e. Es normal que haya grupos superiores y grupos inferiores [It is normal that there are superior groups and inferior groups].

- f. Se debe aumentar la igualdad social (r) [Social equality must be increased].
- g. Probablemente es bueno que ciertos grupos estén en una posición superior y otros en una posición inferior [It is probably good that certain groups are in a higher position and others in a lower position].
- h. Debemos luchar por conseguir ingresos más igualitarios para todos (r) [We must fight for more equal income for all].
- i. Los grupos inferiores deberían mantenerse en su posición [Lower status groups should remain in their position].
- j. Sería deseable que todos los grupos fueran iguales (r) [It would be desirable for all groups to be equal].

### ***Political Conservatism***

En política a veces se habla de "izquierda" y "derecha" para definir la orientación ideológica de una persona. Usando la siguiente escala, me gustaría que usted se posicione de acuerdo con su propia ideología [In politics, sometimes people use "left" and "right" to define a person's ideological orientation. Using the following scale, I would like you to position yourself according to your own ideology].

1. Totalmente de Izquierda [totally left]	2	3	4	5	6	7. Totalmente de Derecha [totally right]
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### **Context Evaluation Variables**

#### ***Corruption Perception***

- a. En tu opinión, ¿Cuántos políticos están involucrados en la corrupción? [In your opinion, how many politicians are involved in corruption?].
  - 1) Casi Ninguno [almost none], 2) pocos [a few], 3) muchos [many], 4) casi todos [most of them].
- b. En tu opinión, ¿Cuántos funcionarios públicos están involucrados en la corrupción? [In your opinion, how many public officers are involved in corruption?].
  - 1) Casi Ninguno [almost none], 2) pocos [a few], 3) muchos [many], 4) casi todos [most of them].

#### ***Procedural Justice Perception***

- a. ¿Con qué frecuencia crees que los funcionarios públicos tratan con justicia a las personas como vos? [How often do you think public officials treat people like you fairly?].
  - 1). Casi Nunca [almost never], 2). Raramente [rarely], 3). Ocasionalmente [occasionally], 4) Frecuentemente [frequently], 5) Casi Siempre [almost always].
- b. ¿Crees que el trato que recibe la gente por parte de los funcionarios públicos depende de a quién conocen? [Do you think that the treatment that people receive from public officials depends on who they know?].
  - 1) Definitivamente no [definitely not], 2) Probablemente no, [probably not], 3) en ocasiones sí y en ocasiones no [sometimes yes and sometimes no], 4) Probablemente sí [probably yes], 5) definitivamente sí [definitely yes].

#### ***Socioemotional Climate Perception***

¿Cómo evalúas el estado actual del país? En una escala de 5 puntos [How do you evaluate the current country situation?] On a 5-point scale:

- 1. La situación económica es muy buena [Economic situation is very good].
- 2. El clima o ambiente general afectivo de su país es muy bueno [The climate or general affective environment of your country is very good].
- 3. Desde 1 = nada a 5 = mucho, dirías que el clima social es... [From 1 = nothing to 5 = a lot, would you say that the social climate is...].
  - a. De esperanza, esperanzado [Of hope, hopeful].
  - b. Solidario, de ayuda mutua [Solidary, of mutual help].
  - c. De confianza en las instituciones [Of trust on institutions].
  - d. De alegría, confianza, contento [Of joy, trust, happiness].
  - e. De tranquilidad para hablar [Calm enough to talk].

***Political Trust***

Evaluación de desempeño y honestidad de las siguientes instituciones o grupos de personas en una escala de 1 (valoración negativa) hasta 5 (valoración óptima) [Evaluation of the performance and honesty of the following institutions or groups of people from 1 (negative evaluation) to 5 (optimal evaluation)].

- a. Poder ejecutivo nacional (presidencia y ministros/as) [National executive branch (presidency and ministers)].
- b. Poder legislativo nacional (diputados/as y senadores/as) [National legislative branch (deputies and senators)].
- c. Poder judicial nacional (corte suprema y jueces/as federales) [National judiciary (supreme court and federal judges)].
- d. Partidos políticos [Political parties].

ONLINE FIRST

## Appendix B

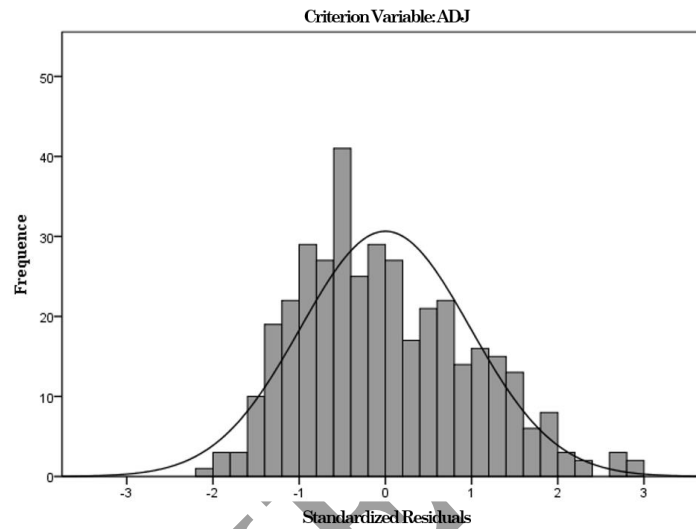
### Multivariate Statistics Assumption Checks

#### *Model 1. Argentine Political System Justification (ADJ) as Criterion Variable*

Figures 1 and 2 present evidence of normality of residuals distribution

**Figure 1**

*Histogram of Regression Standardized Residuals Distribution: Regression Model 1*



**Figure 2**

*Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals: Regression Model 1*

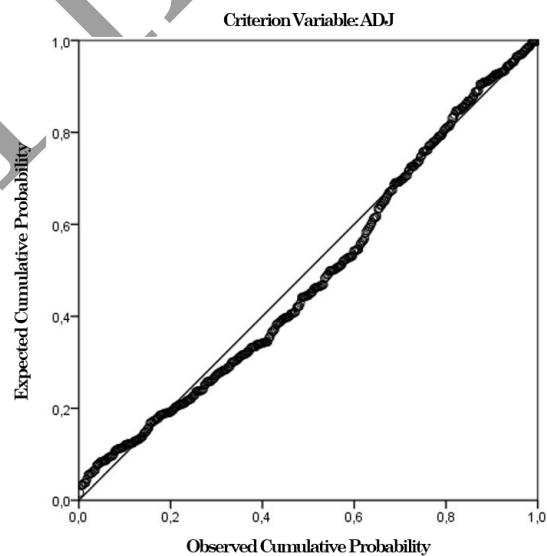
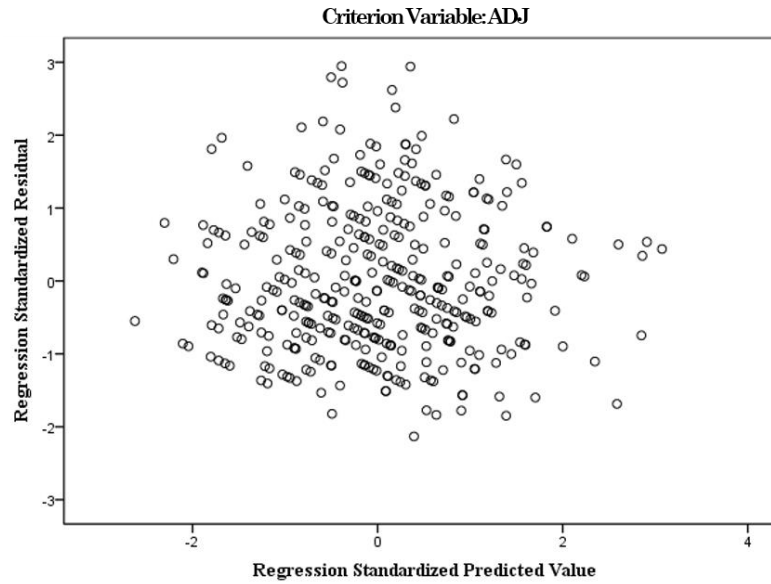


Figure 3 presents evidence of homoscedasticity.

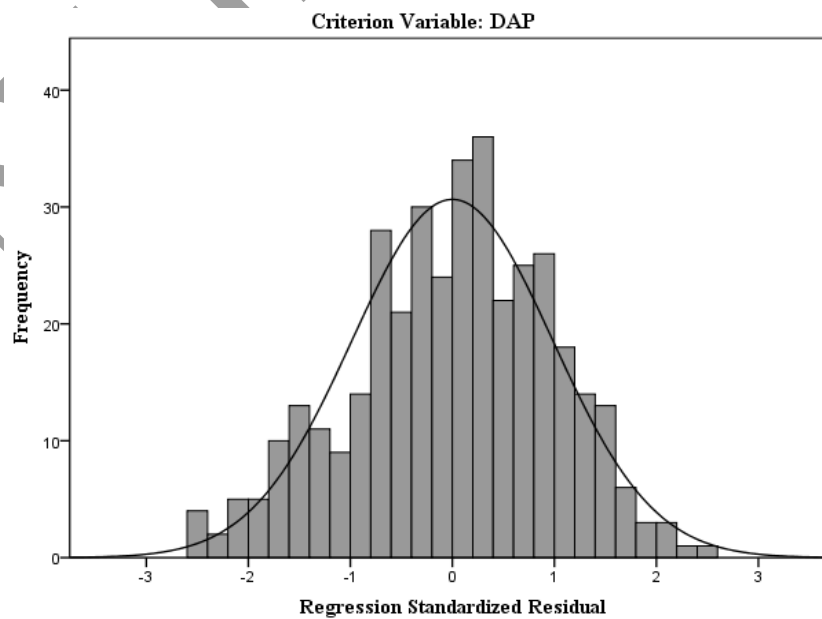
**Figure 3**  
*Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Predicted Value over Regression Standardized Residual: Model 1*



**Model 2. Democracy-Autocracy Preference (DAP) as Criterion Variable**

Figure 4 and 5 present evidence normality of residuals distribution.

**Figure 4**  
*Histogram of Regression Standardized Residuals Distribution: Regression Model 2*



**Figure 5**  
*Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals: Regression Model 2*

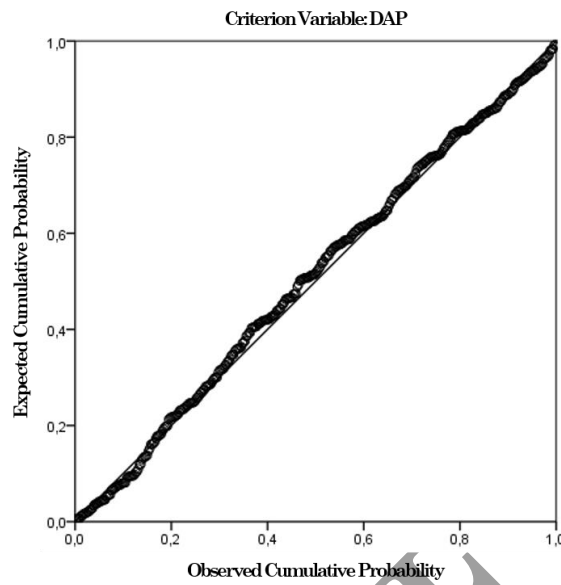
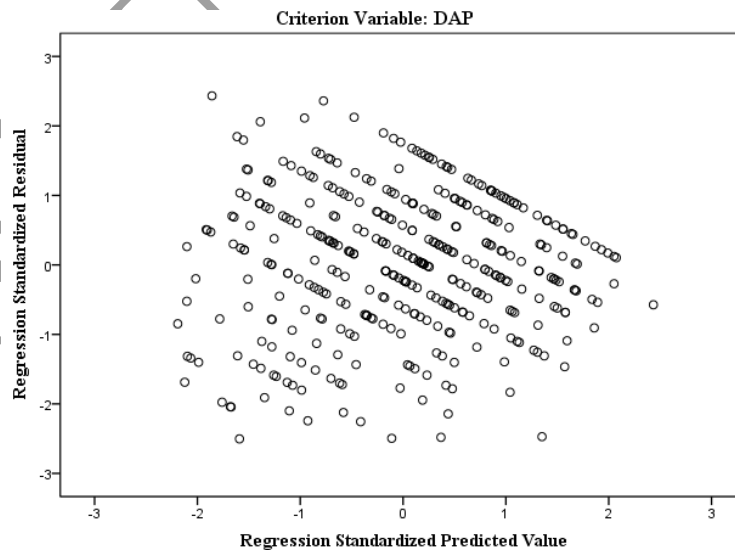


Figure 6 presents evidence of homoscedasticity.

**Figure 6**  
*Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Predicted Value over Regression Standardized Residual: Model 1*



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