Democracy that Excludes: Persistent Inequalities and the Future of Democratic Governance

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Abstract

Democracy is often reduced to the presence of a particular set of institutional rules and practices. We argue that democracy also implies a promise of more just outcomes, and define systems that are institutionally democratic but fail to fully incorporate all citizens as *exclusionary democracies*. We argue here that the practice of exclusionary democracy may produce broad and mostly negative implications for the future of democratic governance. In particular, we explore how variation in political and economic exclusion in institutionally democratic states may shape a variety of political attitudes and behavior, including political participation, democratic values, tolerance, and trust in government.

Democratic systems create expectations about equality. The core idea of democracy is that it opens societal decisions to a broader group. Power is to be spread more evenly than in monarchies and oligarchies of old. And with expansion of power comes the promise of social equality. Privilege should no longer be reserved for the few, social hierarchies of a variety of types should be undermined, those formerly excluded from political decisions should be incorporated into governance, economic prosperity should be more broadly shared, and a variety of injustices should be mitigated.

  While the goals of democracy include, at least implicitly, various dimensions of social equality, the practice of democracy routinely falls short of its promise. Even as democratic rules like free and fair elections have spread, established hierarchies based upon race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, and socioeconomic status remain intact. Notable progress toward social equality within democratic systems cannot be dismissed—legally sanctioned slavery is largely a thing of the past, nearly universal suffrage is now the norm, requirements for inclusion of women and racial minorities

in government are found in some systems, and marriage equality has become increasingly common. But such progress has only infrequently launched a fundamental challenge to deeply rooted power structures and has often created the appearance, rather than the reality, of equality. Thus, formal democratic institutions have frequently been put in place without the corresponding dismantling of extant hierarchies. Indeed the formal institutions of democracy have at times been effectively used to perpetuate and even deepen power differentials. As a result, dominant economic and social sectors continue to monopolize levers of political influence, and entrenched patterns of exclusion persist in many formal democracies around the world.

  Examples abound. In Latin America, democratic transitions swept across the hemisphere in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Free and fair elections are held regularly, peaceful transfers of power are the norm, and legal codes feature constitutional rights and institutional procedures central to democracy. However, black and indigenous Latin Americans face institutionalized systems of racism as well as highly personal forms of discrimination. Women across the region suffer a seemingly insurmountable wage gap and often lack autonomy over their own well-being. Gay Latin Americans face rising violence, despite recent extensions of legal protections for same-sex couples in several countries. And though economic inequality declined during the first decade of the twenty-first century, poverty and inequality continue to plague historically marginalized populations. More-over, systems of political representation in many Latin American countries fail to articulate the interests of marginalized groups. Parties rely heavily on appeals that emphasize personalism or particularism and minimize collec-tive demands that require effective public policies to address fundamental problems. And when parties do make programmatic appeals or pursue substantive policy goals, these efforts largely ignore concerns that are central for those located at the periphery of society.

  Similar patterns can be seen in richer, more established democracies as well. In the United States and Europe, racial animosity and anti-immigrant sentiment have not receded but seem to be on the rise. Public and pri-vate institutions from welfare offices, courtrooms, and schools to civic associations, small businesses, and large firms often preserve rather than challenge economic and social hierarchies that are raced, classed, and gendered. Policies rarely address lower class problems and instead cater to the interests of powerful economic elites. People, who are doubly or triply marginalized along multiple dimensions of exclusion encounter particularly steep barriers to opportunity-enhancing human and financial capital, have few advocates within government bureaucracy and lack effective political representation. Hence, the persistence of highly stratified economic, social,

and political structures alongside institutions and processes of democratic order pose a challenge to the logic and ideals of democracy not only in relatively recent democratizers but also in well-established democratic regimes.

These conditions can be thought of as *exclusionary democracy*. Exclusionary democracies meet the basic procedural conditions of democracy and would thus qualify as democratic regimes using conventional definitions within empirical political science. At the same time, however, these regimes tolerate and perhaps facilitate concentration of power and privilege. While proclaiming formal equality, exclusionary democracies allow for the persistence of economic, social, and political structures that contradict the underlying logic of democracy and uphold deep inequalities. While the basis upon which exclusion occurs and the precise mechanisms employed to create (dis)advantage vary across time and space, hierarchies within exclusionary democracies frequently reflect entrenched axes of marginalization based upon race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and religion. Ideally, democracy should provide all citizens the opportunity to exercise fundamental human rights on a level playing field. But exclusionary democracies fail to deliver on this promise and instead relegate certain predictable segments of society to continued marginalization.[1]

Our primary goal here is to consider some of the possible consequences of exclusionary democracy. Persistent structural inequalities within a formal democratic framework have the potential to contribute to dysfunction across a variety of political processes and institutions, challenging the exercise and protection of equal rights, disrupting the implementation of effective policies, and undermining political stability. But at the most foundational level, exclusionary democracies carry implications for their citizens because these systems advance inconsistent narratives concerning how people should conceive of their place within the political system and what they might expect from a democratic state. Thus, we think it vital to focus on how citizenship is constructed under the contradictions of exclusionary democracy. What are the features of state-society interactions in these contexts? How does exclusionary democracy shape citizens' expectations about political processes and outcomes? How do reinforcing patterns of exclusion influence the ways people interact with and evaluate state institutions and political actors? To what extent do citizens sustain support for democratic rule and maintain democratic values despite economic, social and even political structures that fail to embody democratic goals?

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1. Noting a parallel paradox between racial inequality and Cuban revolutionary rhetoric, Mark Sawyer (2006) identified a pattern of "inclusionary discrimination" which "allows for the idea of racial and ethnic inclusion to exist alongside discriminatory practices" (p. 19). Similarly, we are interested in contexts where the idea of democracy coexists with practices of racial and ethnic exclusion.

Most importantly, how do experiences of marginalization impact those relegated to the bottom of entrenched intersectional hierarchies? In essence, how do citizens understand and experience politics in systems that promise democracy but leave many inequalities intact?

THE TENSIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE

The promise of democracy is justice. But reality often falls far short. This tension has long been acknowledged by scholars of the theory and practice of democracy (Dahl, 1971; Phillips, 1995; Schumpeter, 1942; Walsh, 2011; Young, 1990). The most common response has been to isolate the analysis of democracy and justice to largely separate spheres. Empirically focused scholars operate within a near consensus that democracy is and should be defined and measured based on procedural facets of governing systems like rule by the people, equal participation, and civil liberties. Cross-national measures of democracy most commonly feature procedural conceptualizations.[2] Justice, on the other hand, is typically defined by the distribution of resources and power along with the structures and institutions that produce these distributional patterns (Nielsen, 1979; Shapiro, 1999; Young, 1990). Reasonable arguments can be made to separate the ideas of democracy and justice based on ontological incongruity. Indeed, many scholarly accounts view democracy and justice as "different values that can operate at loggerheads with one another" (Shapiro, 1999, p. 18). According to this view, norms of justice should articulate principles to be applied in evaluating institutions and their outcomes, but should not be viewed as coterminous with particular political procedures. Thus, scholars suppose democracy to involve identifiable, measurable political processes, while justice emphasizes equitable outcomes. While much empirical research implicitly assesses specific facets of justice when analyzing political systems' performance on outcomes like economic inequality, racial discrimination, and descriptive representation for marginalized groups, evaluations of democratic politics against theoretical conceptualizations of justice are rare.

One of the potential limitations of isolating democracy and justice is that it ignores many of the aspirations held by citizens, reformers, activists, and scholars concerning democratic practice. "People find democracy appealing partly because its universalist ethic holds out the possibility of undoing,

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2. One measure—V-DEM—reflects some acknowledgment that procedural definitions do not capture many facets of what people frequently expect from democracy by offering a measure called "egalitarian democracy," which gives some attention to the distribution of resources and power within society. However, the justification and conceptualization of this measure views equality through the lens of promoting political participation, is not concerned with just processes or outcomes for their own sake, and retains a procedural component as elemental (Sigman & Lindberg, 2018). Thus, this measure retains the core concern with procedural components, even while pointing to the value in interrogating the implications that stem from such a focus.

or at least mitigating, many of the evils they see around them" (Shapiro & Hacker-Cordón, 1999, p. 18). Reformers and revolutionaries do not fight for democracy simply because they like voting. Rather, they put their lives and livelihoods on the line because they believe democracy may end oppression, deconstruct hierarchy, and replace tyranny with liberty.

Thus, despite pragmatic and ontological arguments to the contrary, democracy and justice are discursively and theoretically interconnected. Citizens, reformers, and many scholars expect the two go together and reinforce each other. Some theorists argue that true democracy is not possible without justice or that justice is best accomplished via democracy. In his *Democratic Justice*, Shapiro (1999) makes the case that democratic government is the "most attractive political basis for ordering social relations justly" (p. 5), arguing that theoretical conceptualizations of justice and democracy should reflect the common logic that "democracy and justice are intimately linked" (p. 62). Likewise Young (1990), whose work on justice emphasizes the processes and structures in which distributive decisions are embedded, argues that democratic decision-making is "an element and condition of social justice" (p. 23). Indeed, the mutual dependence between formal democratic procedures and just structures, practices, and outcomes has emerged as a recurrent theme within a diverse body of theoretical work (Connolly, 1995; Honig, 2009; Myers, 2013). The underlying logic of democracy, thus, runs counter to the sort of domination and oppression that characterize injustice. And democracy's justice-promoting attributes lend the regime legitimacy, often making democratization the goal for those seeking to escape entrenched hierarchies rooted in exploitation, marginalization, violence, and other forms of injustice.

Of course, the empirical reality is that formal democratic rules frequently fail to end informal exclusions that sustain entrenched power structures, and sometimes democracy actually reinforces dominant group control at the expense of the marginalized (Hooker, 2017; Walsh, 2011, p. 35). Moreover, as neoliberalism has hollowed out the state, the legal rights granted to citizens under democracy have become increasingly distant from a reality that is disempowering, devitalizing, and exclusionary (Aslam, 2017; Berlant, 2011; Brown, 2015). As Aslam diagnoses, citizens of the liberal democratic state experience a "narrowing of freedom to juridical terms that has exposed a large gap between the promise and actual experience of freedom for many" (Aslam, 2017, p. 13). What's more, certain sectors of society have been unevenly subjected to unjust practices of domination and oppression, so that the costs of maintaining order, prosperity and even procedural democracy are distributed unevenly according to raced, classed, and gendered hierarchies (Mills, 1997; Pateman, 1988).

In this reality, it is not fully possible to separate the procedures of democracy from the goals of justice. Popular intuition and theoretical arguments concerning the connections between justice and democracy should not be ignored. The view of democracy and justice as compatible, even reinforcing, goals has normative substance, and the idea that democracy should promote just outcomes and processes has discursive power (Shapiro, 1999). Indeed, theoretical and empirical studies of politics have increasingly emphasized that the ways we think and talk about ideas and their meaning produce observable implications for politics and policy (Moy, Tewksbury, & Rinke, 2016). At the same time, the dominant international discourse among scholars and practitioners prioritizes democracy's procedural foundations and often considers the implementation of free and fair elections or citizen participation to be of intrinsic value, with less concern for the outcomes of these processes (Odugbemi, 2013; Organization of American States, 2003). But the hope that democracy might upend inequitable power relations and the unjust practices that produce them not only remains unfulfilled but also seems unattainable. Thus, the ongoing juxtaposition between the idea that democracy should be justice-promoting and the reality that many procedural democracies fall far short of this goal is not simply a conceptual annoyance or theoretical complication. Rather this contradiction is likely to carry consequences for how citizenship is constructed, shaping how individuals think and engage with politics in exclusionary democracies.

CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES: A STRUCTURAL-BEHAVIORAL FRAMEWORK

People expect democracy to promote justice, that is, to combat "institutionalized domination and oppression" (Young, 1990, p. 15).[3] Such a view conceives of justice as a fundamental condition of democratic citizenship, which allows people to engage the public realm freely, to pursue their goals and interests collectively, and to expect and extend reciprocity (Young, 1990, pp. 33–34). Where democracy exists alongside domination and oppression, patterns of citizenship are unlikely to reflect this ideal.

We need to grapple more with the implications of labeling systems that meet basic procedural requirements of "democracy" while real conditions of domination and oppression remain. We want to be crystal clear that we are not advocating an abandonment of the procedural requirements

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3. Here, we embrace Iris Young's definition of justice which moves beyond conventional distributive notions of justice focused on the allocation of material goods or power resources and emphasizes the structural bases of power, oppression, and domination, which limit self-realization, self-expression, and self-determination (Young, 1990, p. 37).

of minimalist definitions of democracy. It is obvious that no society is likely to achieve the full elimination of domination and oppression. But what happens when societies with such persistent and pervasive unjust conditions receive the stamp of approval as democratic?

The state—together with the policies, social structures, and economic institutions it builds and governs—plays a central role not only in defining citizens but also in shaping how they think, behave, and organize politically (Mettler and SoRelle (2014) for a useful review). The same is true of parties and other forms of political organizations (Dalton, Farrell, & McAllister, 2011). Institutions, structures, and patterns of contestation have the capacity to fundamentally alter citizens' conceptions of themselves and their relation to the political. In this sense, "[c]itizens are not born, they are made" (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 3), and how they are made matters.

People's experiences, practices, and perspectives as citizens are contingent on the overt or subtle dynamics of power or agency in which they are embedded. For instance, in analyzing the impact of the US carceral state, Lerman and Weaver (2014) theorize that institutions and processes "that send the message to individuals that they are valued and respected provide citizens with a symbolic civic resource of political standing. Conversely, institutions [and processes] that fail to reflect democratic values may inhibit civic skills, transmit ideas about government that demobilize, and inform citizens that they are not worthy" (p. 13). Similarly, Soss, Fording, and Schram (2011) argue that some poverty governance policies reduce "citizenship to a market role and 'de-democratiz[e]' the citizenry" (p. 16). Furthermore, these dynamics frequently reflect underlying ideologies such as mestizaje in Mexico, racial democracy in Brazil, and "color-blind" policies in the United States which tout equality while simultaneously perpetuating raced or gendered hierarchies (Douglass, 1955; Holston, 2008; Telles, 2014).

This calls for an account that connects political attitudes and behaviors to the structural, hierarchical social contexts in which they occur—a "structural-behavioral" approach. The *practice* of democracy is an important structural component of the social context. All states feature an array of citizenship experiences, as each individual encounters the state and society through a variety of institutions and personal realities that shape their identity within, engagement with, and perspectives of the political realm (Cruikshank, 1999). When an exclusionary form of democracy is practiced, these differential citizenship-building experiences are *patterned* in ways that secure the "vitality of democratic citizenship [for some] through devitalizing possibilities for others" (Aslam, 2017, p. 12). Thus, citizenship experiences in exclusionary democracies are not simply individually differentiated, they are the result of distinct complexes of factors that empower some groups while relegating others to subordinate positions within the political, social,

and economic institutions that construct citizenship (Hooker, 2017, p. 35). These patterns of persistent and ubiquitous group-based marginalization pit the realities of exclusion against the ideals of democracy, sending a forceful message that being a "good" citizen means different things for different classes of people. That brings us around to behavior. When the differential construction of citizenship aligns with and potentially reinforces group-based hierarchies, this can shape how people across society and within marginalized groups (i) conceive of and practice citizenship and (ii) engage with and evaluate the democratic state.

Studies of political behavior, of course, have long emphasized how socialization experiences, psychological processes, or economic interests operate at the individual level. Such work, however, often assumes that cognitive processes function independently of their setting. Some scholars have begun to consider how the broader social, economic, or political environment might influence individuals' political perceptions and practices, but these efforts have often been isolated in their application to specific research questions and have given little attention to building a larger theoretical framework that considers how context might interact with or shape individuals' attitudes and experiences. Although important bodies of work on priming, framing, and cueing (Moy *et al.*, 2016), on policy feedback (Mettler, 2011), and on the political psychology of group dynamics (Huddy, 2004) provide partial exceptions to this characterization, these literatures generally do not concern themselves with the *structural* underpinnings of society and politics which define the foundations from which cues are transmitted, frames are generated, and public policies take shape.

Work in the priming and framing tradition, for example, focuses largely on the cognitive processes that the political or media environment evoke without consideration for the structural origins of that environment. This focus has produced empirical scholarship built around experimental methods, which assess immediate, or occasionally medium-term, responses to stimuli that are often artificial and almost always concentrated on narrow issues.[4] Similarly, the policy feedback literature is most often concerned with delineating the behavioral or attitudinal consequences stemming from changes in individual policies or within narrow policy domains. Accordingly, this body of work displays a tendency to bracket the ways in which policies emerge out of power struggles rooted in differential economic, social, and political resources and often does not acknowledge that many "unintended" consequences are, in fact, quite intentional.[5]

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4. Exceptions exist in which the structural context that generates particular frames/primes is taken seriously (Pérez, 2016) and in which broader sets of issues or longer time horizons are considered.

5. It is worth noting, however, that some policy feedback scholarship benefits from contextual or historical analyses, which help situate specific policies in the broader context, even if that context is not the primary empirical concern. For examples, see Cookson (2016); Mettler (2011); and Soss *et al.* (2011).

As a result, while these literatures offer many insights into ways that specific facets of the political or policy environment have the potential to shape individuals' cognitive processes or socialization experiences, the behavioral consequences of the fundamental structures from which these specific political stimuli emerge remain under-theorized and empirically overlooked.

We believe that a convincing structural-behavioral theory of exclusionary democracy must explicitly consider how variations in the hierarchies that underpin different societies shape how citizens formulate attitudes and behaviors concerning democratic values, institutions, and practices. Existing work clearly demonstrates that systems of inequality are widespread and that some forms of exclusion and oppression exist in even the most egalitarian societies (Fridkin, 1996; Jennings & Niemi, 1974; Lerman & Weaver, 2014). But the depth of hierarchy and the degree to which inequalities are reinforced across different facets of economic, social, and political life differ substantially between contexts and over time. There are important qualitative differences, for example, between the racialized socioeconomic hierarchy in the United States and the more egalitarian structural conditions that characterize Sweden. Likewise, we observe noteworthy contrasts in the way that ethnic hierarchies have been meaningfully challenged in Bolivian politics, while political representation in Peru offers little antidote to the ongoing economic and social marginalization of indigenous communities there. Or consider the Dominican Republic, where many black Dominico-Haitians have no standing as citizens in the eyes of the state, as opposed to Panama, where the black descendants of West Indian immigrants have attained considerable economic and social status. Rather than ignore this variation, we suggest leveraging it theoretically and empirically to develop a better understanding of the ways in which different patterns of hierarchy shape individuals' understanding and practice of democratic citizenship.

Thus, we build here on the basic intuition of earlier work on intergroup relations by emphasizing the importance of hierarchical structures in understanding attitude formation and considering the potential for asymmetric effects among different groups depending upon their placement within the hierarchy. But we elaborate how variations in the patterns of economic, social, and political inequality that characterize different societies may shape diverse facets of citizenship formation beyond intergroup relations.

In particular, exclusionary democracy may undermine a variety of attitudes and behaviors consistent with popular support for democracy. These behavioral implications of the structures associated with exclusionary democracy are likely to extend both to the marginalized and the advantaged, though

with some degree of variation in the effects depending on one's position within the hierarchy.

Where historical hierarchies persist, these hierarchies are indicative of various forms of social distance. The more deeply rooted and extreme these hierarchies are, the more distance is created between the groups around which the hierarchy is defined. At the core of democracy is an acceptance of the political inclusion of "others." Such acceptance is likely to be undermined when social distance between groups increases.

Systems of exclusion send messages about the value and meaning of democracy, and people are likely to be less attached to democratic norms when the social, economic, and political structures in which they are embedded fail to challenge entrenched patterns of marginalization. Divides between social groups may limit between-group solidarity and contribute to the "othering" of people who do not conform to the dominant social image. Patterns of exclusion may construct barriers to building understanding and empathy between groups, delegitimizing the claims and tactics of outsiders. These processes may promote acceptance of nondemocratic means of repressing difference and dealing with dissent. So the overall effect of exclusion and hierarchy within a democracy is likely to be an eroded commitment to democracy.

These effects may be particularly strong for marginalized groups. While the marginalized have the most to gain from the fully fulfilled promise of democracy, they may also be most sensitive to structural contexts of hierarchy and exclusion. If democracy fails to reach its full promise, the marginalized may see exclusionary democracy as just another political system designed by and for the dominant interests in society. If such perceptions become more prevalent where exclusionary democracy is practiced, those from marginalized groups will be less likely to embrace democratic values and other facets of the political attitudes and behavior may change as well.

We must also be cognizant, however, of potential backlash from dominant groups when formerly marginalized groups become politically incorporated. When dominant groups see their advantage falling away, it is understandable that they may become more hostile to marginalized groups that are gaining ground. If this hostility to marginalized groups undermines support for the democratic system, democratic systems could be in a bind. By failing to incorporate marginal groups, these marginal groups may lose faith in democracy. But by incorporating marginal groups more fully, the risk is losing support of historically powerful groups. It may be possible to see the new ascendancy of both right- and left-wing populism through the lens of exclusionary democracy.

AN ANALYTICAL PATH FORWARD

Coming to grips with how the practice of exclusionary democracy shapes mass support for democracy is important if we are to understand how best to sustain the worldwide practice of democracy. Understanding how different groups respond to the maintenance of social hierarchies within *de jure* democratic systems can provide a useful road map for pro-democracy reformers. It might also help us to understand what appears to be a shift away from democracy around the world as we move toward the second quarter of the twenty-first century. But where and how should we look for the effects of exclusionary democracy? We conclude with some thoughts on this question.

First, studying exclusionary democracy must be a cross-national, cross-temporal enterprise. To understand how variation in exclusion and hierarchy in democratic systems affects the formation of democratic citizenship, society-level variation must be observed. This sort of variation is most likely to be found within states over time, across states cross-sectionally, or both. While there may be ways to innovatively apply experimental designs to tackle some of the specific questions related to the effects of exclusionary democracy, observational research designs are likely to be the most effective way toward valid inferences in this domain. As well, detailed studies of single states that allow for nuanced understanding of the practice of exclusionary democracy and citizen experiences within such systems are likely to be fruitful.

Second, a wide variety of hierarchies can and should be explored. That is to say, societies are divided into hierarchical groupings along a number of dimensions. Ethnoracial divisions are clearly important and have featured prominently in prior studies (Hutchings & Valentino, 2004; Morgan & Kelly, 2017). Hierarchies based on sex and gender identity are also prevalent and the extent of such hierarchies also varies across societies (Htun, 2016; Morgan, Espinal, & Hartlyn, 2008; Morgan & Kelly, 2013). Class-based hierarchies are also relevant and hierarchies based on geography may be in place in certain countries (Bartels, 2008; Kelly, 2009). All of these group-based hierarchies have the potential to be rolled into the theoretical framework supplied by the concept of exclusionary democracy with implications for the formation and practice of citizenship.

Third, at least two broad forms of exclusion can be incorporated. *Political exclusion* refers to the incomplete incorporation of subordinate groups in the political process. Limiting the franchise would be an extreme form of such exclusion. But we can also see such exclusion in various implicit and explicit limitations on the political incorporation of marginalized groups,

such as felon disenfranchisement in the United States and various, seemingly innocuous hurdles to participation. These *de jure* aspects of political exclusion are just the tip of the iceberg. *De facto* exclusion can also exist where groups are unequally represented in government and where participation of subordinate groups is discouraged through subtle and not so subtle repressive tactics. Alex Keyssar's (2009) excellent analysis of voting rights in the United States demonstrates clearly how political inclusion can wax and wane over time and be used as a tool of the powerful to minimize the influence of marginalized groups. *Economic exclusion* refers to the economic distance between dominant and subordinate groups. Where between-group inequality is high, which is driven by a variety of formal and informal economic arrangements, this type of exclusion is more likely to be present. Measuring each of these forms of exclusion, as well as others that we have not contemplated, will require developing multiple indicators both quantitative and qualitative.

Last, while there are a variety of possible arenas where distortions of citizenship may surface, we want to bring particular attention to three domains that encompass significant attitudinal or behavioral outcomes in their own right and that have broad implications for the practice and maintenance of democracy. Patterns of *engagement and disengagement* with the state, its agents, and other political actors, which are likely to prevail under different manifestations of exclusionary democracy. *Attitudes* toward government institutions and political or policy processes that might reflect the ways in which citizens encounter these facets of democratic procedure co-existing alongside dynamics of economic, social, and political power. And, finally, support of *democratic norms and legitimacy* of the system, which may become contaminated by experiences of formally democratic regimes that permit various forms of injustice to persist.

In the last half-century, there has been an explosion of democracy. While democratic institutions have become more common, however, progress toward more just outcomes has appeared to slow. The hierarchies that remain in place in institutionally democratic contexts have likely implications for the construction and practice of citizenship. And recent backsliding from democratic governance may be a partial result. Numerous strands of recent research point to various forms of stratification and group identity as drivers of political attitudes and behavior. However, to fully grapple with how the maintenance of unequal and unjust societies shapes democratic governance, theories of justice and democracy must be better integrated into an ongoing agenda that embeds micro-level political attitudes and behavior in social contexts with varying degrees of hierarchy and inequality across a range of dimensions.

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