Nearly everyone thinks of democracy in positive terms

Those who describe ‘democracy’ in negative terms (% of those who answered)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to open-ended question: ‘What, if anything, does democracy mean to you?’ Figures here are for the per cent of respondents who offered a negative description either as their first or second response.

Democracy is preferred over dictatorship everywhere except Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>S Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy is preferable</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes dictatorship is better</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t matter to me</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which one of the following three statements do you agree with most? 1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government 2. In certain situations, a dictatorial government can be preferable to a democratic one 3. It doesn’t matter to people like me whether we have democratic or non-democratic governance
Overwhelming support for the rule of popularly elected representatives

% of those responded to the responses to open-ended question 'What, if anything, does democracy mean to you?'. Figures here are for the percent of respondents who offered a negative description either as their first or second response.

Very few doubt the suitability of democracy for their country

How suitable is democracy for our country: very suitable, suitable, not suitable or not at all suitable?
South Asia compares well with other regions in support for democracy

[detailed note on sources needed. New Europe data not adjusted for DK. Need to find data on ratio of support for demos in new Europe. Latinobarometro 2005]

Funnel of support for democracy in South Asia

Different stages:
- **STAGE 1**: Include all those who support government by elected leaders
- **STAGE 2**: Exclude those who prefer dictatorship sometimes or are indifferent between democracy and dictatorship
- **STAGE 3**: Exclude those who want an army rule
- **STAGE 4**: Exclude those who want rule by king
- **STAGE 5**: Exclude those who want strong leader without any democratic restraint
- **STAGE 6**: Exclude those who want the rule of the experts rather than politicians

Note: All figures in percentages of the respondents in the unit specified in each column head. The figure for South Asia is from merged data set with equal weights for each country.
The higher the education, the lower the support for army rule

Support for army rule

Majority support for army rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh

Dramatic reversal in the acceptance of executive monarchy in Nepal

Note: All figures in percentages of those from the relevant groups who agree or strongly agree with the idea that “All major decisions in the country should be taken by religious leaders rather than by politicians”.
Support for Democracy by countries

Subheadline to come

South Asia

Bangladesh

India

Nepal

Pakistan

Sri Lanka

Note: All figures in the first three rows are in percentages of the respondents in the unit specified in each column head. The figure for South Asia is from merged data set with equal weights for each country. Ratio of support for democracy is the proportion of strong supporters divided by the proportion of sceptics. Don't know (including those who could not understand the questions) have been treated as missing value.
‘Weak democrats’ are closer to democrats than to non-democrats

**Definition:** ‘Strong Democrats’ are those who prefer democracy AND strongly disagree or disagree with Army rule AND Monarchy AND strongly agree or Agree to ‘Rule by elected representatives’. ‘Non-Democrats’ are those who prefer dictatorship OR for whom democracy or dictatorship doesn’t matter AND who Strongly agree or agree to Army rule OR Monarchy OR Strongly disagree or disagree to ‘Rule by elected representatives’. ‘Weak Democrats’ are those who don’t fit in either of the above-mentioned categories.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>S Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-democracy but not anti-authoritarian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradictory or ambivalent</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-authoritarian but not anti-democratic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Figures are in percentages of ‘weak democrats’ for each column head. First category includes all those who support the rule of elected representatives and prefer democracy over authoritarianism, but who negate one of its alternatives or offer no opinion on army rule or king’s rule. Second category includes those who support rule by elected representatives and/or prefer democracy but extend support to army and/or king’s rule, or those who support neither or are unsure of their response. The third category includes those who support army rule or king’s rule (or strongly support king’s rule outside Nepal) but are unsure or indifferent about support for democracy.
Income level makes very little difference for people of equal education

The greater the experience of democracy, the higher the support for it

The higher the education, the higher the support for democracy

A big gender gap, largely due to differences in education and media exposure
Combined effect of education and experience of democracy

Combined effect of media exposure and experience of democracy

Proportion of adult life spent under a democratic regime.

Minorities are more supportive of democracy

Majority-minority does not make a difference in India and Nepal

Ethnic minorities more supportive of democracy than the majority in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh

* Including Hindus and Saraiki speakers
Those who find democracy suitable are more likely to support democracy

Those satisfied with the working of democracy are more likely to support democracy

Greater participation related to support for democracy

Note: Ratio of support for democracy is as in Table 10.

Note: All figures in the first three rows are in percentages of the respondents in the unit specified in each column head. The figures are for South Asian merged data set with equal weights for each country. Ratio of support for democracy is as in Table 10.

Note: Level of participation of respondents I: Voted once II: Regular voter III: Active in elections or protest IV: Active in political organisation

Note: Ratio of support for democracy is as in Table 10.