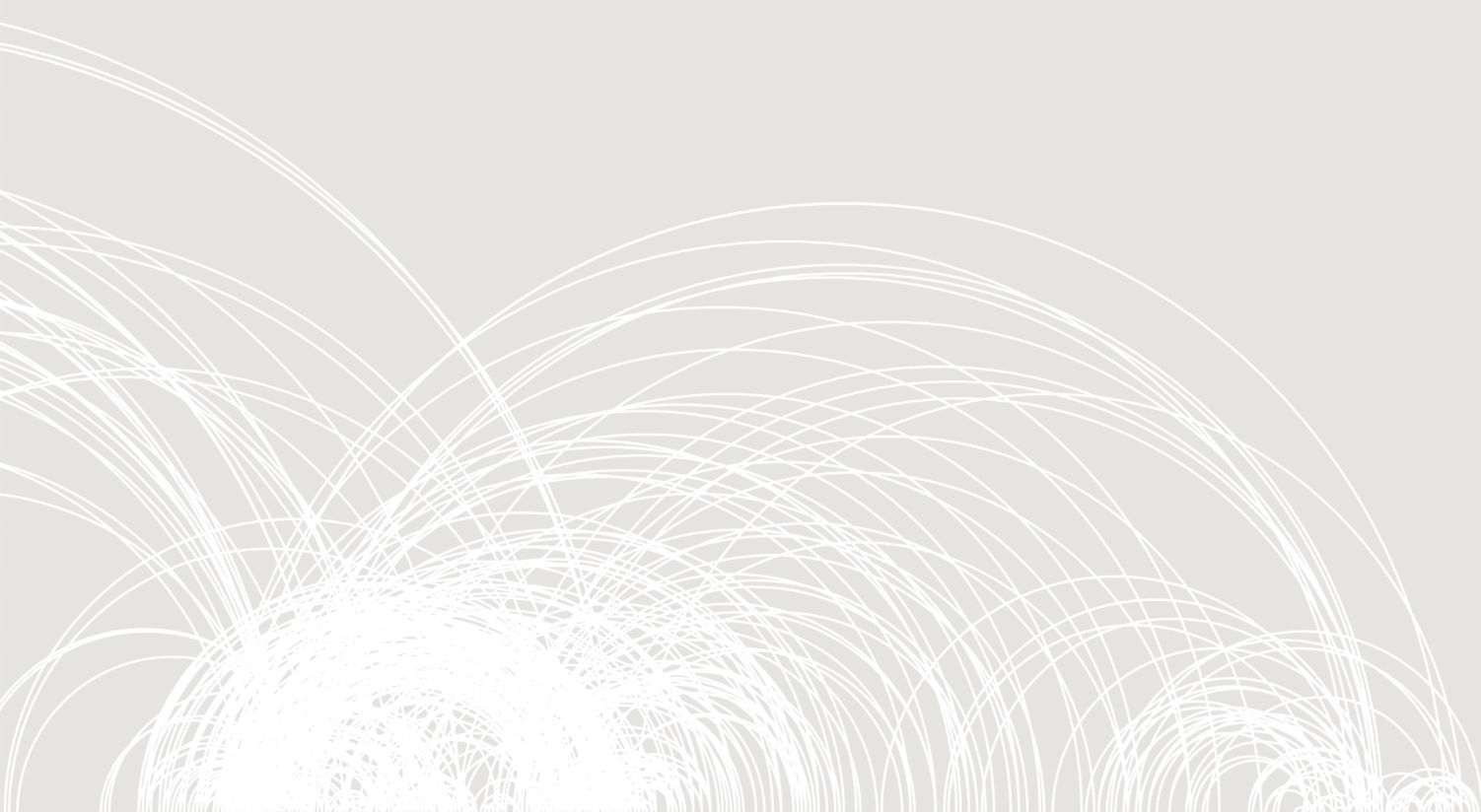# NORC
at the University of Chicago

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Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes:
Peru Report

Presented by:
NORC at the University of Chicago

Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Peru Report

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Acronyms

HDBScan   Hierarchical Density-Based Clustering

LAPOP   Latin American Public Opinion Project

MINSA   Ministry of Health of Peru (Ministerio de Salud)

PPK   Pedro Pablo Kuczynski

V-DEM   Varieties of Democracy

Presentation

In recent years, governance, political crises, insecurity, and longstanding issues of corruption, inequality, and lackluster economic performance have eroded democratic legitimacy and trust in government in Latin America. Indeed, the 2019 Pulse of Democracy report from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) states that "the region has settled into a malaise with respect to public views of democracy."[1] Support for and satisfaction with democracy declined sharply in 2016-2017 compared to prior survey rounds and remained low in 2018-2019. While support for democracy remained steady between 2018-2019 and 2021, support for centralizing power in the executive increased in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.[2]

In a context of global and regional democratic backsliding, in which domestic and foreign actors are actively working to undermine democracy, a citizenry that remains committed to democratic principles and values—even if dissatisfied with politics and governance—can be critical to staving off democratic decline. A citizenry with highly democratic attitudes is more likely to discourage those in power from undermining democracy from within. Perhaps more importantly, citizens with highly democratic attitudes are less likely to support authoritarian candidates at the ballot box in the first place, and more likely to mobilize against elite actions that undermine democracy.

To respond to the challenge of eroding democratic attitudes in cooperating countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) conducted a study that examines how democratic attitudes have evolved in the recent past. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- Can the citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean be classified into groups with distinct patterns of democratic attitudes?

- What are the most salient attitudinal, economic, and other characteristics of the citizens in each group, and especially those groups that hold worrisome democratic attitudes?

- How have the groups and democratic attitudes evolved in the past ten years? What system-level, contextual factors have contributed to changes over time in patterns of democratic attitudes?

To answer the first two questions, NORC identified trends in democratic attitudes between 2012 and 2021 using cluster analysis, a classification technique described in greater detail below, to group citizens into "clusters" with distinct democratic attitudes. The team then identified the demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics differentiating the citizens in each cluster from the rest of the population using data from the last five waves of the

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[1] Castorena, Oscar, and Sarah L. Graves. 2019. "Support for Electoral Democracy." In Zechmeister, Elizabeth J., and Noam Lupu (Eds.). Pulse of Democracy. Nashville, TN: LAPOP, p. 23.

[2] Lupu, Noam and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2021. "The Pulse of Democracy in 2021." In Lupu, Noam, Mariana Rodríguez, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (Eds.). Pulse of Democracy. Nashville, TN: LAPOP, p. 2-5.

AmericasBarometer[3] (2012, 2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2021) for each country. To address the third question, NORC recruited experts in the politics of each country to make sense of the cluster analysis results and examine the relationship between democratic attitudes and political, economic, and social developments over time.[4]

This report presents the analysis for Peru. It was authored by Julio F. Carrión (Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Delaware) and Patricia Zárate (Principal Researcher, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos). Study coordinators Luis A. Camacho, Mollie Cohen (Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs, University of Georgia), and Ingrid Rojas (Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago) revised the report to ensure alignment with the study objectives.

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[3] The AmericasBarometer by the LAPOP Lab, www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop.

[4] NORC recruited experts through an open call for contributors issued in December 2021. The call targeted academics and researchers with advanced degrees in political science or other social science at institutions in LAC and beyond. Subsequent targeted recruiting efforts relied on NORC's academic and professional networks. NORC ultimately recruited experts for 12 of 16 countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.

Introduction

Democracy returned to Peru in 2000, when President Alberto Fujimori resigned via fax from Japan. Popular pressure forced his two Vice Presidents to resign and Valentín Paniagua, President of Congress, assumed the presidency on an interim basis. The first round of new elections was held in April 2001 and the runoff in June. Alejandro Toledo won the presidency by defeating Alan García. Since then, presidential elections have regularly been held every five years. The record of five democratically elected presidents in a row is historic; never in Peru's 200-year history has such a succession of democratic elections occurred.[5]

However, Peru's democracy is not well, as it persists amid severe political dysfunction.[6] The 2016 election produced a divided government. The combination of a minority President with an overreaching Congress controlled by an obstructionist majority marked the beginning of institutional instability. President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (PPK) resigned in 2018 when Congress impeached him for the second time and his Vice President, Martín Vizcarra, was removed in 2020. Manuel Merino, President of Congress, assumed the interim presidency, but mass demonstrations forced him to quit less than a week later. Francisco Sagasti, the new President of Congress, then assumed the presidency. Freedom House downgraded Peru to a "partial democracy" in its 2021 report, pointing to political instability as the reason.[7]

The 2021 general elections brought Peru to a perilous point. As in 2016, the runoff polarized voters. Keiko Fujimori, Alberto's daughter, claimed her father's legacy and offered a right-wing alternative to the "communist threat." Pedro Castillo represented the informal coalition of those rejecting the *fujimorista* legacy and those embracing radical left-wing politics. Observers expected a narrow election but did not anticipate that the loser would reject the result. Keiko Fujimori refused to acknowledge defeat on the false premise that there was fraud in the vote count. Her many legal challenges to the vote count were accompanied by a series of street rallies, some of which were attended by retired military officers who demanded the elimination of thousands of ballots. Other politicians went as far as to call for new elections and insist that the military intervene.

Peruvian democracy survived because: 1) electoral institutions refused to buckle to the antidemocratic pressure and 2) the international community acknowledged that no serious irregularities had occurred. In its 2022 report, Freedom House acknowledged the successful elections and restored Peru's "free" status. Still, problems remain, and one year into the new government, Peruvian democracy continues to be fragile and under stress.[8]

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[5] Carrión, Julio F. 2022. "Peru. Will Democracy Outlast Political Dysfunction." In *Latin American Politics and Development, 10th edition*, edited by Harvey F. Kline and Christine J Wade. New York: Routledge.

[6] We define political dysfunction simply as political instability, i.e., the unscheduled but not necessarily unconstitutional change in the leadership of the executive branch and/or the dissolution of the existing legislature.

[7] Freedom House. 2021. "Freedom in the World 2021. Peru." https://freedomhouse.org/country/peru/freedom-world/2021.

[8] Freedom House. 2022. "Freedom in the World 2022. Peru." https://freedomhouse.org/country/peru/freedom-world/2022. The congressional opposition seeks any opportunity to remove the president, and President Castillo has demonstrated little regard for transparency and has been involved in a string of corruption accusations. For the first time in Peru's recent history, the President is being investigated by the Attorney General and faces a formal constitutional accusation by a congressional committee.

Two decades after Peru's democratic transition, nondemocratic attitudes have increased because of the failure of successive governments to deliver on their promises and the lack of an active governing agenda due to gridlock. Before examining political attitudes, it is important to stress that Peru is a disconnected country. In our formulation, "disconnected country" refers to two distinct but related shortcomings of the Peruvian state. First, the state lacks communication with society through its institutions and mechanisms of political representation.[9] Second, the state is weak and fragmented and has difficulty maintaining effective social and territorial control.[10] Citizens thus experience politics quite differently based on where they reside and the cultural milieu closest to them. Those who live in the capital and are closer to the state and national debate focus on different political issues and have distinct needs compared to those who live outside Lima and have greater exposure to problems associated with the state absence, such as illegal economies and unmet social needs.

In this report, we discuss how the recent evolution of people's democratic attitudes reflects governmental and institutional failure to address the issues behind our notion of the disconnected country. In the first section, we discuss the results of NORC's cluster analysis of democratic attitudes using the 2012–2021 waves of the AmericasBarometer survey. In the second section, we disaggregate some of these variables and contrast their evolution in Peru with the averages for Latin America. These two sections show a trend of increasingly nondemocratic attitudes. In the third section, we explain this trend by tracing citizen dissatisfaction with the way democracy is working in Peru. We then discuss two reasons for this dissatisfaction: the failures of the presidents elected after the 2000 transition and political immobilism—i.e., the lack of an active governing agenda due to institutional gridlock. We end with a short summary of our findings.

Clusters of Distinct Democratic Attitudes

NORC used data from the AmericasBarometer and cluster analysis to classify Peruvians into groups with specific profiles regarding democratic attitudes.[11] The aim of this analysis is to maximize similarity *within* each cluster while maximizing dissimilarity *between* clusters. One advantage of cluster analysis compared to other classification schemes is that it is highly inductive, meaning that it lets surveyed Peruvians speak for themselves without making assumptions in advance about how to group them. Annex 1 provides detailed information regarding the study's methodology. NORC used five democratic attitudes in the analysis:

[9] Crabtree, John, and Francisco Durand. 2017. *Peru. Elite Power and Political Capture*. London: Zed Books, p. 152-153.

[10] Muñoz, Paula, and Yamilé Guibert. 2016. "Perú: el fin del optimismo." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 36 (1): 313-338; Eduardo Dargent. 2012. *El Estado en el Perú*. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

[11] The AmericasBarometer by the LAPOP Lab, www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop.

- *Support for democracy:* The extent to which Peruvians agree or disagree that "democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government."

- *Opposition to military coups:* Whether Peruvians believe it would be justified for the military to take power in a military coup in certain circumstances.

- *Opposition to executive aggrandizement:* Whether Peruvians believe it would be justified for the president to close Congress and the Supreme Court and govern without them.

- *Tolerance of protest and regime critics:* The extent to which Peruvians support the right to protest and other political rights of regime critics.

- *Support for democratic inclusion:* The extent to which Peruvians support the political inclusion of homosexuals.

Questions to measure all five attitudes were available in the first four survey waves (2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019). Only three attitudes were available in 2021: support for democracy, opposition to military coups, and opposition to executive aggrandizement. The 2021 cluster analysis results are therefore not directly comparable to those of prior waves and not discussed in this report. Annex 2 presents the main cluster analysis results for all waves.

The cluster analysis identified three clusters in 2012 and four clusters each in 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2021. In all waves, a small share of respondents were not classified into any cluster. Unclustered individuals are dissimilar from each other and from those included in other clusters. To facilitate comparisons over survey waves, the resulting clusters can be grouped into four families that share a set of defining characteristics:

- *Institutionalists (including both institutionalists and democratic institutionalists):* Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by full opposition to military coups and executive aggrandizement. They represent "ideal" democratic citizens compared to the other cluster families.

- *Military Interventionists:* Individuals in this cluster family exhibit full opposition to executive aggrandizement but less-than-full opposition to coups.

- *Presidentialists:* Individuals in this cluster family exhibit full opposition to coups but less-than-full opposition to executive aggrandizement.

- *Authoritarians:* Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by less-than-full opposition to both coups and executive aggrandizement.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of these families between 2012 and 2019. The first clear trend is the growth of the authoritarian cluster family. While this cluster comprised only 16.2 percent of respondents in 2012, they make up 34.8 percent of respondents in 2019. This a cluster exhibits low support for democracy as a political regime, has very little or no opposition to both military coups and executive aggrandizement, and professes low support for democratic inclusion.[12]

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[12] The attitudinal profile of each cluster in each year of the surveys can be found in Annex 2.

The other noticeable change is the growth of the presidentialists cluster, which increased from 6.5 percent of respondents in 2017 to 18.3 percent in 2019. This cluster is characterized by a relatively high support for the idea of democracy, a very high opposition to military coups, average support for democratic inclusion and the right to protest, but no opposition to the expansion of presidential power.

Figure 1: Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012–2019
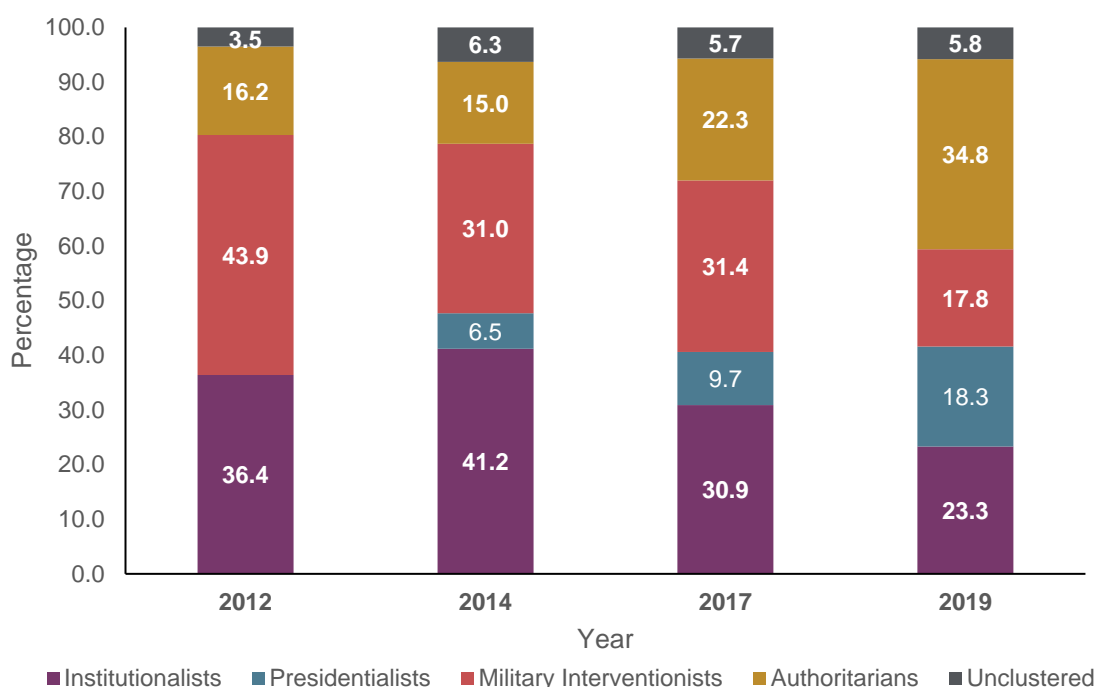
A third finding is the substantial reduction in the proportion of military interventionists. This cluster comprised about 43.9 percent of the sample in 2012 but only 17.8 percent in 2019. This cluster is primarily characterized by a strong endorsement of military coups but a strong opposition to executive aggrandizement. This group has a moderate-to-high level of support for democracy and middling levels of support for the right to protest and the democratic inclusion of historically-marginalized groups. We also note the reduction of institutionalists over time. This grouping comprised 36.4 percent of respondents in 2012 and 23.3 percent in 2019, with some fluctuations in between. This cluster aggregates respondents who exhibit high support for democracy and the rejection of both military coups and executive aggrandizement. Institutionalists also tend to score higher than other clusters in tolerance of protest and regime critics and support for democratic inclusion.

NORC's cluster analysis also identified the variables that significantly distinguish each cluster from all others. The variables examined include gender, income, race, education, experience with violence and corruption, political efficacy, and political participation. All clusters are statistically significantly different from the others on a few of these variables in each wave, but there are few patterns that hold across the 2012–2019 waves. Moreover, most statistically significant differences are substantially small, which suggests that the demographic and other characteristics examined do not structure attitudes toward democracy in a meaningful way.

With these limitations in mind, we found that military interventionists tended to be younger. The share of young people (18–29 years) among that cluster is higher than among the rest of the sample. Military interventionists also have fewer average years of education than the rest of the sample. Additionally, presidentialists tend to be wealthier: the share of people in the lowest wealth quintile among this cluster is lower than among the rest of the sample.

Support for Democratic Values Over Time

To provide a closer look at the evolution of democratic attitudes in Peru, we examined three variables: support for democracy as a regime type, support for military coups, and support for executive aggrandizement. We compared Peru's trajectories with other countries in Latin America to better understand the significance of these changes.[13]
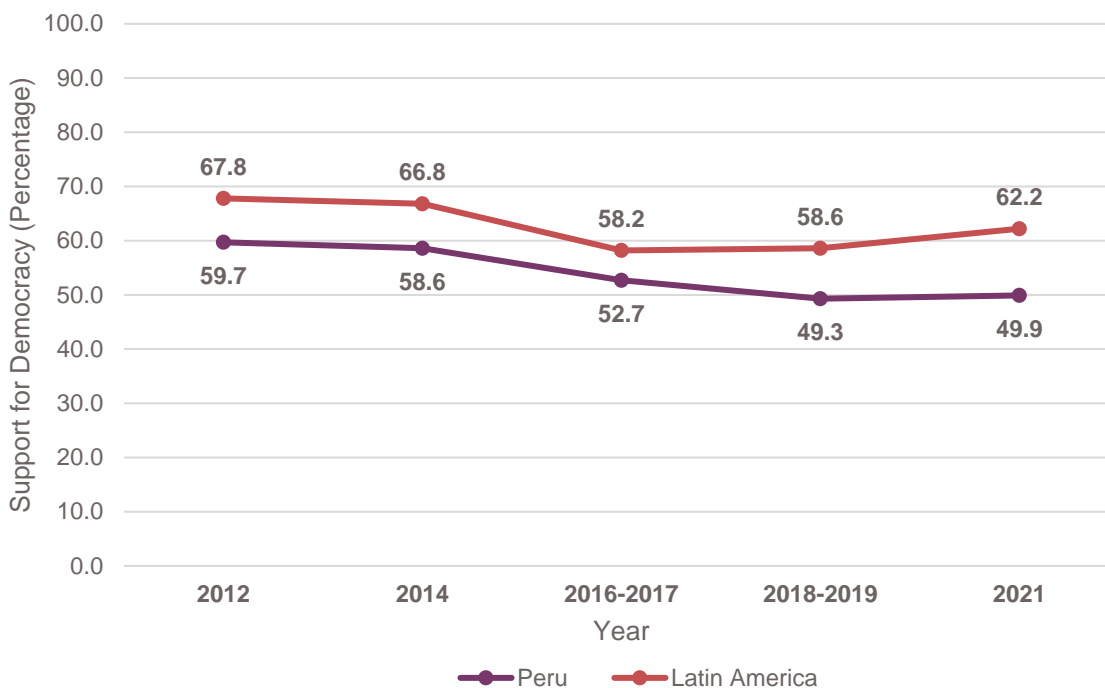
Support for Democracy

Every AmericasBarometer survey since 2012 shows that Peruvians exhibit lower support for democracy in the abstract than the regional average, with this gap increasing every year.[14] In 2012, the difference in support for democracy between Peru and the Latin American region was 8.1 percentage points. A decade later, the gap widened to 12.3 percentage points (Figure 2). Overall, support for democracy fell among Peruvians by almost 10 percentage points between 2012 and 2021.

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[13] In all figures, "Latin America" excludes Jamaica and Guyana. Peru is also excluded. Because surveys were not conducted in Venezuela in the 2018-2019 and 2021 rounds, we also exclude this country from the regional averages.

[14] The AmericasBarometer surveys use a seven-point Likert scale in this question, where one signifies strong disagreement and seven signifies strong agreement. In this paper, "support for democracy" is operationalized as the percentage of respondents who select values five, six, or seven in the scale. Values one to four are coded as "no support for democracy."

Figure 2: Peru and Latin America: Support for Democracy, 2012–2021
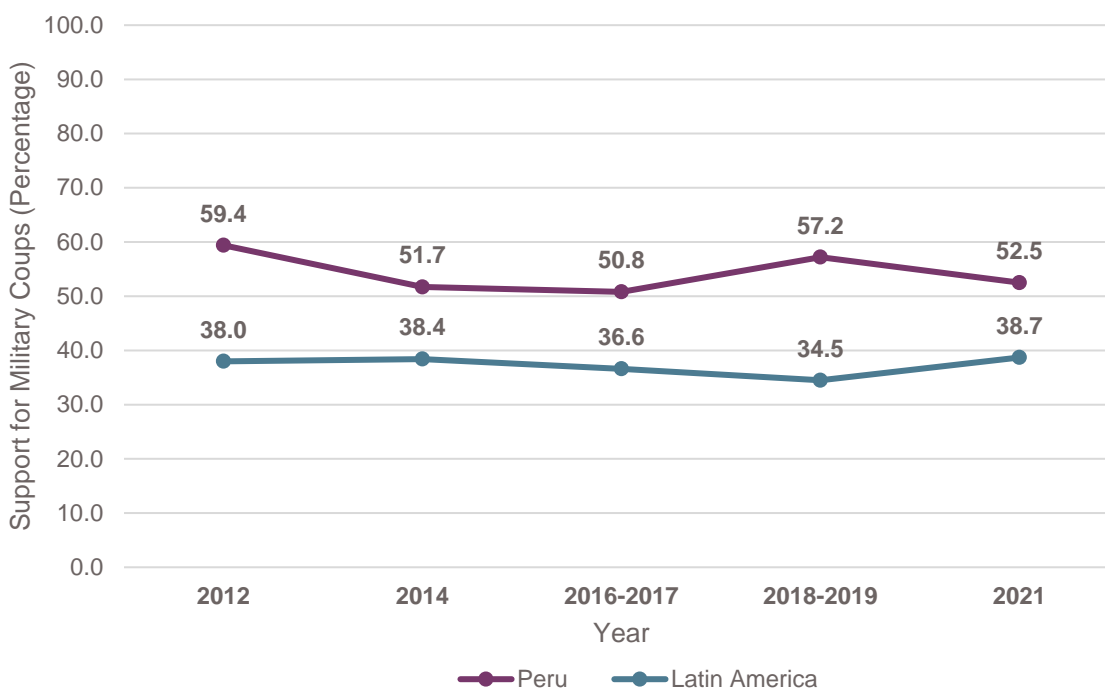

Source: AmericasBarometer.

Support for Military Coups

Another way to probe the strength of democratic convictions is to ask people about their willingness to support the democratic regime during difficult times. In this case, the question is whether military coups could be justified when there is high corruption.[15] Unfortunately, Figure 3 suggests that potential support for the interruption of democracy is high in Peru. As in the case of support for democracy, support for the democratic option is consistently lower in Peru than in the rest of the region: between 2012 and 2021, support for military coups when there is high corruption ranged from 50 to 60 percent in Peru, compared to the regional average of between 34 and 39 percent. We have argued elsewhere that this greater predisposition to support military intervention under these conditions is related to the larger concern Peruvians have about corruption as their country's most pressing problem and their widespread belief that an overwhelming majority of public officials and politicians are involved in it.[16]

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[15] The survey question asks: "Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified when there is a lot of corruption?" The options are "yes, it would be justified" and "no, it would not be justified."

[16] Carrión, Julio F., Patricia Zárate, Fernanda Boidi, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2020. *Cultura política de la democracia en Perú y en las Américas, 2018/19: Tomándole el pulso a la democracia*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos-Vanderbilt University.

Figure 3: Support for Military Coups When There Is Widespread Corruption in Peru and Latin America, 2012–2021

Source: AmericasBarometer.

Support for Executive Aggrandizement

Democratic backsliding, or the weakening of democracy "from within" as chief executives abuse their formal and informal prerogatives to aggrandize their power, is a contemporary global trend.[17] Peru unfortunately has a long history of backsliding. On April 5, 1992, President Alberto Fujimori, with support of the armed forces, shut down Congress, dismissed the Supreme Court, and informed the nation that he would rule by decree.[18] Figure 4 shows that Peruvians have a strong disposition to support the aggrandizement of executive power.[19] In 2012, about one in five respondents (22 percent) said that the President shutting down the legislative and judicial branches would be justified when the country is facing "very difficult times." In 2019, support for the extraconstitutional increase in executive power reached its highest point (59 percent) at a time when a popular president was confronting an overreaching congress. This statistic was

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[17] Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27 (1): 5-19; Lührmann, Anna, and Staffan Lindberg. 2019. "A Third Wave of Autocratization Is Here: What Is New About It?" *Democratization* 26 (7): 1095-113.; Levitsky, Steve, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown; Carrión, Julio F. 2022. *A Dynamic Theory of Populism in Power: The Andes in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[18] Conaghan, Catherine M. 2005. *Fujimori's Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press; Carrión, Julio F., ed. 2006. *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

[19] The specific question measuring this attitude is "Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Congress/Parliament and govern without Congress/Parliament?" The options were "yes, it is justified" and "no, it is not justified."

more than 30 percentage points higher than the regional average. In 2021, with a new congress in place and an interim president in charge, that level of support fell, but was still 15.6 percentage points higher than the regional average.

Figure 4: Support for Executive Aggrandizement in Peru and Latin America, 2012–2021
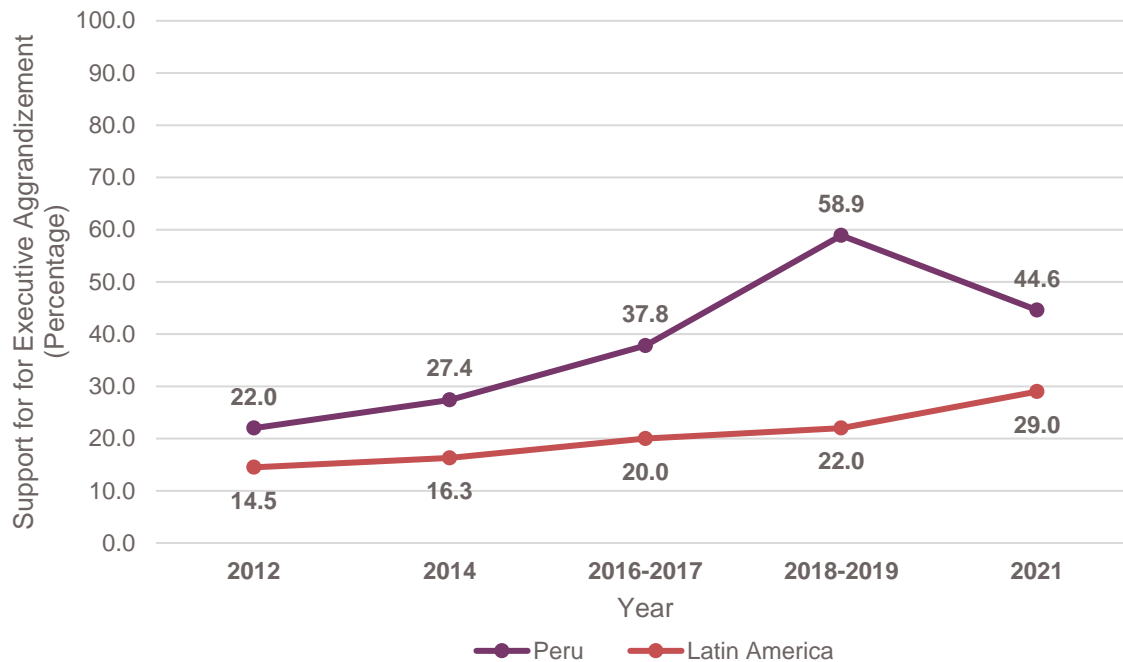
Source: AmericasBarometer.

Why Are Nondemocratic Values Growing?

In the preceding sections we showed that the percentage of institutionalists has decreased in the last decade, while the percentage of Peruvians in less-democratically-inclined clusters has increased. We also documented a general decrease in support for democracy in the abstract and an increase in support for executive aggrandizement. While support for military coups remained relatively stable in this period, it is quite high: about half of Peruvians would justify a military coup when corruption is high. Why has the total proportion of people holding non-democratic attitudes increased between 2012 and 2021?

The short answer is that there is growing disappointment with the way the political system is performing. We see this when we ask respondents if they are satisfied "with the way democracy

works in Peru."[20] Figure 5 shows that satisfaction with democracy in Peru has plummeted when compared with the regional average. In 2012, slightly over 50 percent of respondents felt satisfied with the way democracy was working in Peru. A decade later, that satisfaction more than halved, dropping to 20 percent. Although we also see a downward trend in Latin America overall, the regional decline stabilized between 2016 and 2021. That was not the case in Peru, where the drop in levels of satisfaction with democracy, which had already fallen quite dramatically since 2012, dropped by an additional 10 percentage points between 2017 and 2021. We argue that growing political discontent with the regime that emerged from the 2000 democratic transition explains the growth in nondemocratic values.

Figure 5: Satisfaction with Democracy in Peru and Latin America, 2012–2021
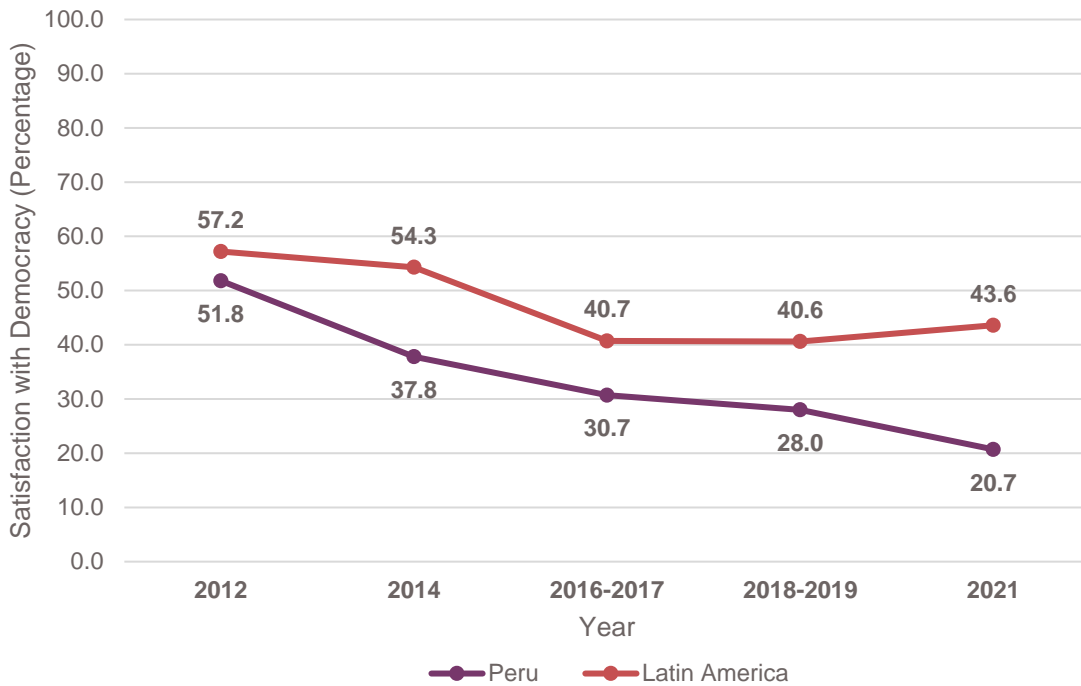
Source: AmericasBarometer.

The rest of this section examines the factors driving this political discontent, specifically 1) the failure of elected presidents and congresses to deliver on their promises of institutional reform and social inclusion, and 2) the political dysfunction caused by the politics of obstruction adopted by the *fujimorista* party after its 2016 defeat.

[20] The specific question measuring this attitude is "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Peru?" The response options were "very satisfied," "satisfied," "dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied." Figure 5 plots the percentage of respondents who choose "very satisfied" or "satisfied."

Presidential Failures

As mentioned in the introduction, Alberto Fujimori's fall in 2000 marked the transition to a new era of competitive elections.[21] Valentín Paniagua, the interim president, successfully managed the political transition, but he did not alter Fujimori's economic policies, which influenced the trajectory of post-transition governments.[22]

Alejandro Toledo, who had led the opposition to Fujimori in the 2000 elections, won the 2001 presidential election. Toledo's win was received with great expectations for he not only exhibited solid democratic credentials but also attracted the support of poor voters and voters in regions with large indigenous populations. However, many view his administration as a lost opportunity because it failed to implement the institutional reforms the country needed after the *fujimorista* decade and could not deliver on the promise of reducing social and economic inequalities.[23]

Peruvians elected Alan García in 2006, given the fears that his opponent, Ollanta Humala, leader of the Partido Nacionalista, would take Peru in a similar direction to Venezuela's Hugo Chávez. Unlike Toledo, García won the runoff because of his decisive victories in Metropolitan Lima and northern Peru, two of Peru's most economically developed areas. García fully embraced economic policies that rest on the exploitation and export of natural resources. Like Toledo, García paid little attention to economic redistribution and institutional reform.

Neither Toledo nor García tackled institutional reform to democratize Fujimori's authoritarian legacy. The 1993 constitution, rewritten and promulgated under Fujimori, remained in place a decade after he left office. This constitution created a unicameral congress and an executive with outsized powers. None of the major institutions, such as the security apparatus and the judiciary, were significantly reformed.[24] Moreover, both the Toledo and the García administrations were unwilling to modify the economic policies that they inherited from Fujimori. In the midst of a region-wide commodity boom that generated solid economic growth, there was little incentive to change economic policies. However, despite economic progress, people were unhappy with the performance of both governments. Toledo's and García's presidential approval ratings fell steadily after their first year in office.[25] Moreover, the AmericasBarometer

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[21] The regime collapsed amidst a political crisis following the broadcast of a leaked video depicting corruption within the Fujimori regime. Cameron, Maxwell. 2006. "Endogenous Regime Breakdown: The Vladivideo and the Fall of Peru's Fujimori." In *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*, edited by Julio F. Carrión, 268-293. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

[22] As Vergara and Watanabe note, "[u]naccountable neoliberal technocrats remained at the controls of the economy." Vergara, Alberto, and Aaron Watanabe. 2016. "Peru Since Fujimori." *Journal of Democracy* 27 (3): 150.

[23] McClintock, Cynthia. 2006. "A 'Left Turn' in Latin America: An Unlikely Comeback in Peru*." Journal of Democracy* 17 (4): 95-109.

[24] Paradoxically, the only significant reform that was achieved ended up worsening one of the legacies of the Fujimori period. A constitutional reform was passed in March 2002 to create regional governments and assign them resources and spending responsibilities. In addition, the new electoral law allowed the participation of independent and local lists in regional competitions. The unintended consequence of these reforms was the weakening of already debilitated parties, which had been the subject of attack and harassment under Fujimori. The fragmentation of political representation and the crisis of parties led to what observers called "a democracy without parties." De Belaunde, Javier. 2011. "La Justicia: ¿Hay Esperanza?" In *Perú ante los desafíos del siglo XXI*, edited by Luis Pásara, 405-454. Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, p. 436; St. John, Ronald Bruce. 2010. *Toledo's Peru. Vision and Reality*. Gainesville, Fl: University Press of Florida, p. 88; Tanaka, Martín. 2005. *Democracia sin partidos. Perú 2000-2005: los problemas de representación y las propuestas de reforma política.* Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos; Levitsky, Steve, and Maxwell Cameron. 2003. "Democracy without Parties? Political Parties and Regime Change in Fujimori's Peru." *Latin American Politics and Society* 45 (3): 1-33.

[25] Torres, Alfredo. 2010. *Opinión pública 1921-2021*. Lima: Aguilar. p. 154-160.

surveys conducted in 2006 and 2008 registered a clear gap between macroeconomic indicators and Peruvian's views of their political institutions and government performance.[26] This "confidence gap" persisted because economic indicators closer to people's daily lives had not improved much.[27]

The 2011 elections pitted Keiko Fujimori against Ollanta Humala, who ran on a more moderate platform promising social inclusion within the existing democratic framework. Commentators assumed that the appeal for an outsider, left-leaning candidate had shrunk given Peru's strong economic performance. However, the electoral outcome showed that there was pent-up demand for a candidate offering to enact significant economic reform to reduce inequality.[28] Humala won 18 of Peru's 25, losing in areas with the highest indices of socioeconomic development.[29] He was the poor people's candidate. His election represented a rejection of the establishment and hope for more inclusive socioeconomic policies.[30]

Humala tried to deliver on his promises of greater social inclusion, but his government ultimately failed to satisfy voters' expectations.[31] When faced with an economic slowdown, Humala did not change pre-existing policies, despite his campaign promises. Furthermore, similar to the other post-transition presidents, he lacked a solid party to support his initiatives in Congress, endured regular confrontations with Congress, faced growing social conflicts, and was accused of corruption.[32] Humala's popularity hovered between 50 and 60 percent during his first year in office, but fell to the low 30s by the second year and settled at about 20 percent by the end of his presidency.[33]

In sum, Presidents Toledo, García, and Humala governed during years of significant economic growth. Modernization occurred and poverty declined, but their governments failed to address voters' demands for greater social inclusion. In fact, their administrations were so unpopular that each of their political parties nearly faded from the political arena at the end of their terms. President Humala's failure holds particular significance because he ran on a platform that promised greater equality for Peruvians residing in the poorest areas of the country. The subsequent lack of progress deepened cynicism and discontent among his supporters.

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[26] Carrión, Julio F., and Patricia Zárate. 2009. *Cultura política de la democracia en el Perú, 2008. El impacto de la gobernabilidad*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos-Vanderbilt University.

[27] Real income and employment indicators showed that much of the economic growth was not having a significant impact on people's living standards, or at least they were not benefiting all in equal measure. There were also serious concerns with corruption and citizen insecurity. Carrión, Julio F. 2009. "Peru's Confidence Gap." *Americas Quarterly* (Summer): 35-39.

[28] Levitsky, Steven. 2011. "Peru's 2011 Elections: A Surprising Left Turn." *Journal of Democracy* 22 (4): 84-94.

[29] Ollanta Humala won in districts located in the bottom three quintiles of the Human Development Index, whereas Keiko Fujimori prevailed in the top two quintiles. See Zacharias, Daniela, David Sulmont, and Gilda Garibotti, "Elecciones presidenciales Peru 2011: Análisis comparativo de la asociación entre los resultados de la primera y la segunda vuelta a nivel mesa de sufragio." *Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública* 5: 173-197.

[30] Dargent, Eduardo. 2011. "Lo que nos deja la elección (y lo que se viene." In *Post-candidatos*, edited by Carlos Meléndez, 339-358. Lima: Mitin, p. 350. Importantly, there was a high correlation between Humala's vote in 2006 and 2011, suggesting a real and sustained demand for change. Tanaka, Martín, Rodrigo Barrenechea, and Sofía Vera. 2011. "Cambios y continuidades en las elecciones presidenciales de 2011." *Revista Argumentos* 5 (2): 1-8.

[31] Some important initiatives, such as the creation of a ministry devoted to development and social inclusion, and the creation of social educational programs tried to address the issues of inequality and exclusion. But their implementation suffered from inefficiencies and the lack of an overarching vision. Carrión, "Will Democracy Outlast Political Dysfunction."

[32] Muñoz and Guibert, "Perú: El fin del optimismo."

[33] Muñoz and Guibert, "Perú: El fin del optimismo," p. 328

The list of failed presidencies also includes that of PPK, who was elected in 2016. In this case, the failure is not due to his inability to deliver on his promises of greater inclusion, as he never made such pledges. PPK's failure was mostly political, due to the confrontational dynamics created by the *fujimorista* party in Congress and the political dysfunction that it generated.

Fujimorista Obstruction and Political Dysfunction

In Peru, the presence of divided governments—different parties (or coalitions) in control of the executive and the legislature—has generally led to crisis of governance.[34] Divided governments led to Fujimori's self-coup in 1992 and opened a moment of acute dysfunction in 2016, which is still ongoing. In 2016, Keiko Fujimori lost the presidential election by a narrow margin against PPK, but her party secured a large congressional majority (73 of 130 seats in the unicameral legislature). Keiko Fujimori used that legislative majority to obstruct PPK's presidency. In fact, she announced that her party would use its majority to turn its party platform into laws, tacitly stating that she intended to govern from Congress.[35] Instead of seeking an alliance with a center-right president who was close to her own ideological leanings, she and her party decided to engage in open confrontation, hoping that a failed PPK presidency would enhance her electoral fortune in 2021.[36]

The confrontation escalated when the *fujimoristas* tried to impeach PKK over undisclosed ties with the Brazilian construction firm Odebrecht revealed in December 2017. This effort failed, but Congress tried again in March 2018, citing promises of public works that PPK and his ministers had made to some members of Congress in exchange for their votes against the first impeachment. Confronted with evidence of the dealings, PPK resigned after less than two years in office and without any significant achievements. PPK's Vice President, Martín Vizcarra, was a more seasoned politician and understood that the *fujimorista* opposition was not going to end with PPK's demise when he took control. Soon after being sworn as president, Vizcarra took the initiative and leveraged popular antipathy toward the *fujimorista*-dominated Congress to gain the upper hand. However, his confrontation the legislature continued until September 2019, when he dissolved Congress and called for new congressional elections.

The January 2020 congressional elections resulted in another highly fragmented Congress. Despite a dramatic shift in seat allocation, the conflict between the executive and the legislature did not end.[37] In November 2020, a majority of representatives from different ideological persuasions, led by the center right Acción Popular party, decided to impeach President Vizcarra over corruption allegations. As there was no replacement Vice President, Congress appointed its President, Manuel Merino, as interim president. Most Peruvians saw this as an open power grab and mobilized in the thousands, all over the country, to demand Merino's

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[34] Kenney, Charles. 2004. *Fujimori's Coup and the Breakdown of Democracy in Latin America*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

[35] El Comercio. 2016. "Keiko: Convertiremos propuestas del plan de gobierno en leyes" https://elcomercio.pe/politica/actualidad/keiko-convertiremos-propuestas-plan-gobierno-leyes-397999-noticia/?ref=ecr.

[36] The *fujimorista* majority flexed its congressional muscles to censure competent ministers, like Jaime Saavedra, the education minister. When Marilú Martens, also education minister, was impeached by the *fujimorista* majority, PPK made her censure a matter of confidence, which ultimately led to the censure of the cabinet headed by Fernando Zavala, in September 2017.

[37] The *fujimoristas* lost their majority and most of their seats (73 to 15). Congress was now under control of a group of center-right, personalistic, and clientelist parties. A religious millenarist party obtained 15 seats.

resignation.[38] In the face of this unprecedented popular rejection, Merino resigned less than a week after he was sworn in. The popular anger was such that Congress felt they had to choose the new interim President someone among the 19 members who had voted against Vizcarra's removal. Francisco Sagasti, from the small and centrist Partido Morado, was appointed to complete Vizcarra's term.

In downgrading Peru's political status from "free" to "partially free" in its 2021 report, Freedom House noted that the change was "due to extended political clashes between the presidency and Congress since 2017 that have heavily disrupted governance and anticorruption efforts, strained the country's constitutional order, and resulted in an irregular succession of four Presidents within three years."[39] Citizen discontent with the political system is thus driven not only by presidential failures but also by congressional dysfunction and political ambition.

A poll conducted after Vizcarra's dismissal documented Peruvians' lack of trust in their institutions: 65 percent of respondents said that no party represented them and 60 percent said that no political leader did so.[40] This political dysfunction was not only an institutional failure caused by the short-term calculations of political actors but also an obstacle for implementing an agenda that put the reduction of social inequalities and the development of the poorest regions at its center. This political immobilism is perhaps the most corrosive consequence of political dysfunction. This failure fostered political discontent and declining satisfaction with democracy.

In summary, two decades after the 2000 post-Fujimori political transition, no administration made significant inroads in addressing the demands for social inclusion and good governance that Peruvians were expecting from the return of competitive elections. Congress became a dysfunctional institution that many Peruvians came to despise. Worse yet, the return to democracy brought a new wave of corruption and a crisis of citizen security that affected people's support for the regime.[41] The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated this discontent.[42]

The 2021 presidential elections happened in this tumultuous context. Eighteen candidates split the vote in the first round with the candidates who made it to the runoff collectively receiving 38 percent of the. Over 60 percent of voters were to choose a candidate that was not their first choice for President. Pedro Castillo was the candidate of a radical left-wing party and Keiko Fujimori ran for the third time. Aware of her high negatives, she tried to polarize the election along ideological lines and asked Peruvians to choose her to block the "communist threat." Her intention was to underplay the Fujimori/anti-Fujimori cleavage that led her to defeat in 2011 and 2016. However, she failed in changing the nature of the debate; the election was polarized but

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[38] The street demonstrations were spontaneous, largely steered through social media. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. 2020. "[COLUMNA] Renovar la política, en serio, por Patricia Zárate." https://iep.org.pe/noticias/columna-renovar-la-politica-en-serio-por-patricia-zarate/.

[39] Freedom House. 2021. "Freedom in the World 2021. Peru."

[40] Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. 2020. IEP Informe de Opinión—Noviembre 2020. https://iep.org.pe/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Informe-Especial-IEP-OP-Noviembre-2020-v2.pdf.

[41] Carrión, Julio F., and Lauren Marie Balasco. 2016. "The Fearful Citizen: Crime and Support for Democracy in Latin America." In Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública (6): 13-50.

[42] COVID-19 hit Peru amid this political crisis and exposed its state failures. As of May 2022, the Economist's COVID-19 Tracker shows that Peru had 655 excess deaths per 100,000 people, which places it in the top eight countries in terms of per capita COVID-19 fatalities. In the Americas, Peru has the highest per capita death rate – Mexico ranks second, with 167 fewer deaths (480 per 100,000). The Economist. 2022. Tracking covid-19 excess deaths across countries. https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/coronavirus-excess-deaths-tracker.

largely along anti-establishment/establishment lines, with Castillo offering change and Fujimori portraying herself as the establishment alternative to communism. Castillo won an extremely narrow race, mostly because he attracted the vote from most of the regions that had voted for Humala in 2011. Despite his problematic association with a radical left-wing party, many moderate voters chose Castillo because they could not see themselves voting for Fujimori.

Fujimori rejected the voters' choice and questioned the integrity of the election.[43] The lengthy dispute prevented a speedy proclamation of the winner and delayed the transfer of power, although not the formal presidential succession timeline. Peruvians had already expressed declining trust in elections, and it is likely that the allegations will further erode that trust.[44] This episode shows that the political calculations of a major player can have deleterious consequences on the perceptions of the fairness and cleanliness of electoral processes, and therefore the legitimacy of the regime itself.

Conclusion

NORC's cluster analysis indicated that, between 2012 and 2021, the percentage of Peruvians who can be classified as institutionalists has decreased while the percentage of Peruvians in less-democratically-inclined clusters has increased. We also documented a general decrease in support for democracy in the abstract and an increase in support for executive aggrandizement. While support for military coups remained relatively stable, it is high: a whopping one in two Peruvians would justify a military coup when corruption is high.

We argued that the reason behind these trends is growing disappointment with the way the political system is performing. Peruvians have been successively disappointed by the inability or unwillingness of elected governments to tackle Peru's deep inequalities and state deficits. We argued that this government ineffectiveness was exacerbated by political immobilism and institutional gridlock. Presidents without the capacity to govern effectively, a *fujimorista* party willing to use its congressional power to block reform, and the short-term political calculations of parties in Congress that lead them to foster political instability have all fueled citizen discontent and lead many voters to approve of nondemocratic alternatives.

Peruvian democracy is navigating a perilous moment. Government ineffectiveness and institutional gridlock are now compounded by an inexperienced government with a penchant for cronyism and a tolerance for corruption. When elected, President Castillo represented the hopes for inclusion of those who identified with his rural origins, indigenous background, and populist message. Should he fail to deliver on these hopes, disappointment will be high. Weak

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[43] Since the return to electoral democracy in 2000, no electoral loser in the runoff had doubted the validity of the outcome. Fujimori and her allies not only challenged the results but called into question the impartiality of the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones and the Oficina Nacional de Procesos Electorales. Retired military officers took to the media and the streets to demand that the leaders of the armed forces intervene. So did some notable politicians, who until recently were considered defenders of the democratic order. Those trapped in the polarizing discourse of saving the country from communism saw it unproblematic to call for an end of democracy to do so.

[44] Carrión, Julio F., Patricia Zárate, and Mariana Rodríguez, eds. 2022. *Cultura política de la democracia en Perú y las Américas 2021: Tomándole el pulso a la democracia.* Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos-Vanderbilt University.

attachments to democracy and the growing attraction of authoritarian alternatives offer fertile ground for would-be saviors who offer quick-fix solutions if they are given full control of institutions. Should such a candidate become viable and win the next presidential election, Peruvians might have voted for the demise of their democracy.

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Annex 1. Methodology

NORC employed cluster analysis to classify citizens into clusters with distinct attitudinal profiles. Cluster analysis entails analyzing a collection of heterogeneous objects and grouping them in smaller, homogenous clusters according to two or more measurable attributes. The aim is to maximize similarity *within* each cluster while maximizing dissimilarity *between* clusters.

There are several variants of cluster analysis. NORC used Hierarchical Density-Based Clustering (HDBScan) as developed by Campello, Moulavi, and Sander.[45] HDBScan identifies groups of observations that are closely packed together in space and leaves outliers unclassified. HDBScan only requires one parameter—the minimum size of a cluster—and chooses the number of clusters endogenously through a hierarchical process that retains the most stable clusters. We employed Mahalanobis distances as the criteria for computing the distance metric used by HDBScan.

By using cluster analysis, we let survey respondents speak for themselves instead of making assumptions in advance about how to group them. We did not forcibly group observations that did not belong together by predefining acceptable combinations of attitudes or setting arbitrary cut-offs for scores to classify respondents into a given cluster. However, our analysis has one main limitation: the variables used are not continuous and do not share a common scale. Ideally, we would conduct cluster analysis with continuous variables that can be standardized to ensure comparability.

The democratic attitudes used for this analysis include support for democracy, opposition to military coups, opposition to executive aggrandizement, tolerance of protest and regime critics, and support for democratic inclusion. Table A1.1 presents the full wording of the AmericasBarometer questions we used to measure each democratic attitude. We use these questions to create attitudinal scores, ranging from zero (least democratic attitude) to one (most democratic attitude). When more than one question is available for a given democratic attitude, we calculate the attitudinal score by averaging responses.

Table A1.1: AmericasBarometer Items and Underlying Democratic Attitudes

DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES[1]	QUESTIONS
Support for democracy	ING4. Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? *Response options: Seven-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree.*

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[45] Campello, Ricardo, Davoud Moulavi, and Jörg Sander. 2013. "Density-based clustering based on hierarchical density estimates." Pacific-Asia conference on knowledge discovery and data mining. Springer. p. 160-172.

DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES[1]	QUESTIONS
Opposition to military coups[2]	Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified… JC10. When there is a lot of crime *Response options: (1) A military take-over of the state would be justified; (2) A military takeover of the state would not be justified.*
	Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified… JC13. When there is a lot of corruption *Response options: (1) A military take-over of the state would be justified; (2) A military takeover of the state would not be justified.*
Opposition to executive aggrandizement[2]	JC15A. Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Legislative Assembly and govern without the Legislative Assembly? *Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.*
	JC16A. Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to dissolve the Supreme Court and govern without the Supreme Court? *Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.*
Tolerance of protest and regime critics	D1. There are people who only say bad things about the form of government of Peru, not just the current government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote? Please read me the number from the scale. *Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.*
	D2. How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views? Please read me the number. *Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.*
	D3. Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the form of government of Peru, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office? *Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.*

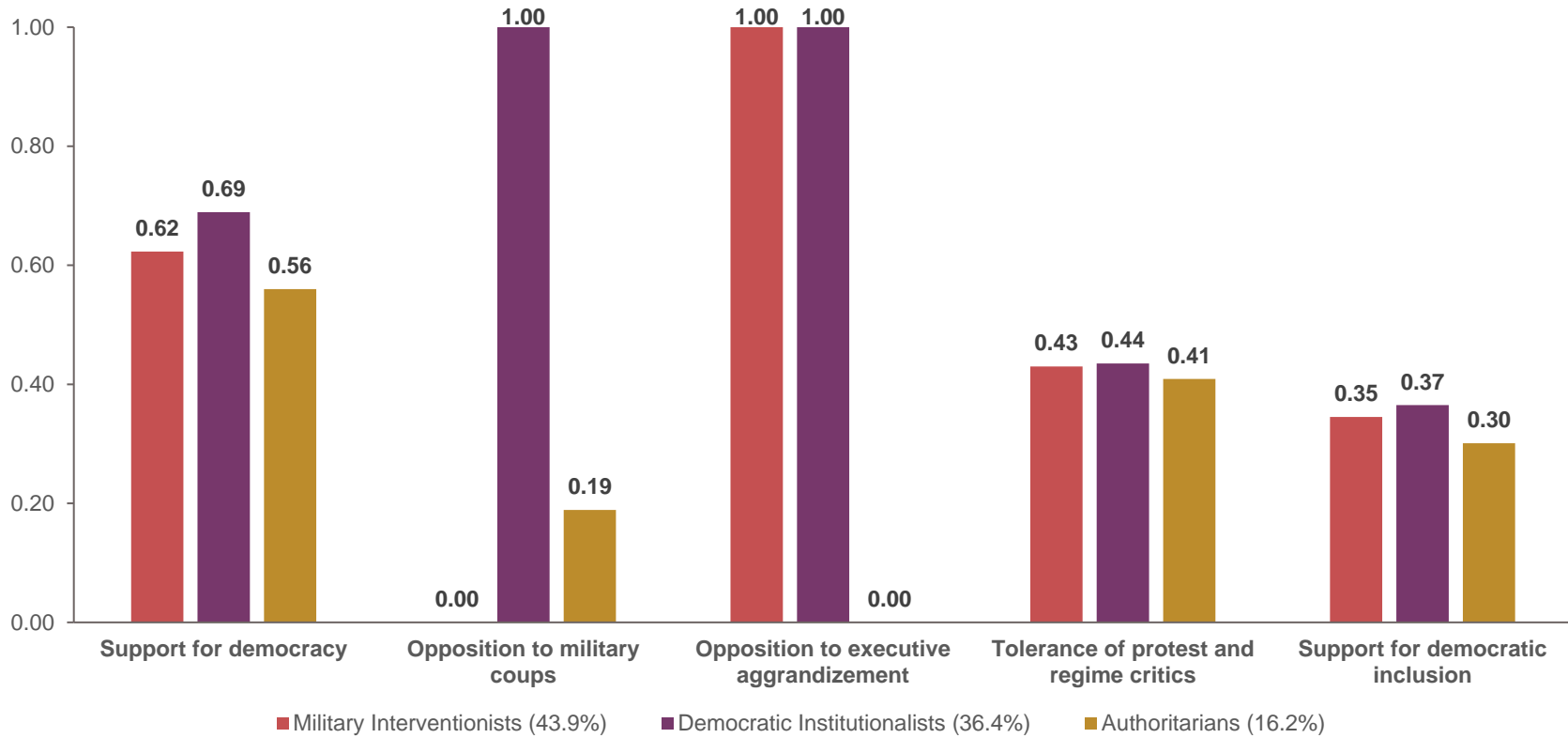| DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES[1]	QUESTIONS
	D4. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches? *Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.*
Support for democratic inclusion	D5. And now, changing the topic and thinking of homosexuals, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of homosexuals being permitted to run for public office? *Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.*

[1] In the 2021 round of the AmericasBarometer, only questions ING4, JC13, and JC15A were included in the survey. Item JC13 was administered to one-quarter of the sample and JC15A to one-half of the sample. About one-quarter of the sample received the two questions. We used this portion of the sample to conduct cluster analysis.

[2] For the 2012-2019 waves, opposition to military coups and opposition to executive aggrandizement included up to two questions each (JC10 and JC13, and JC15A and JC16A, respectively). In 2012, respondents were asked all four questions. In 2014, respondents were asked JC10, JC13, and JC15A (JC16A was missing). In 2017, respondents were asked either JC10 or JC13 (split sample) and JC15A (JC16A was missing). In 2018, respondents were asked either JC10 and JC15A or JC13 and JC16A. We verified that responses to JC10 and JC13 had similar distributions. To ensure consistency across years, we artificially created a split sample by randomly taking the value of one of the two questions for each respondent in 2012 and 2014.

Annex 2. 2012–2021 Cluster Results

The bar graphs below present the main results of the cluster analysis. There is one bar graph per wave studied: 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2021. The bars indicate the average scores for the attitudes for each cluster. All attitude scores range from zero (least democratic) to one (most democratic). The percentages next to each cluster label in the legend indicate the share of respondents that was classified into the cluster. Thus, the graphs allow for comparing the clusters in terms of their democratic attitudes and their relative size.

Figure A2.1: 2012 Cluster Results

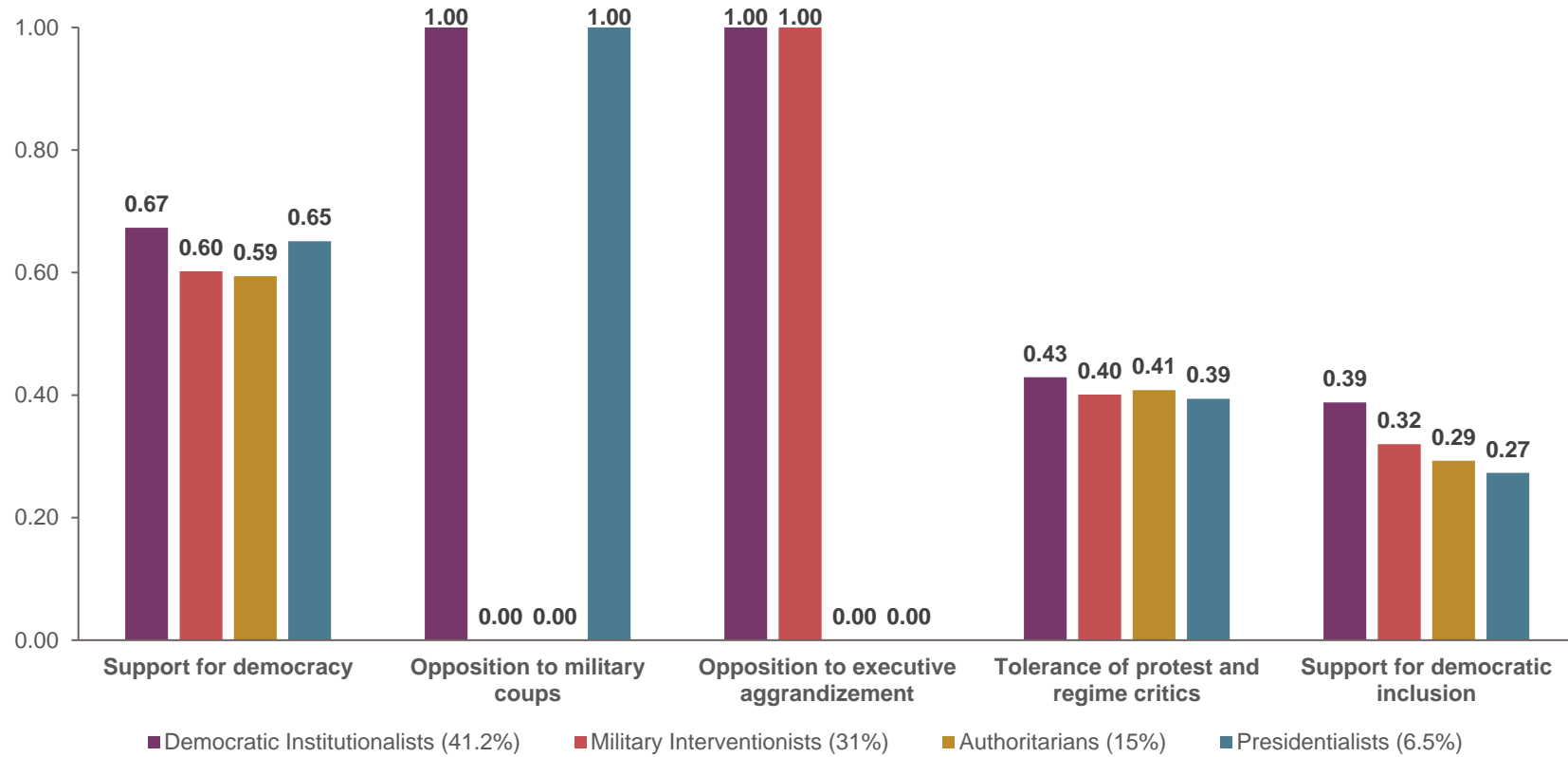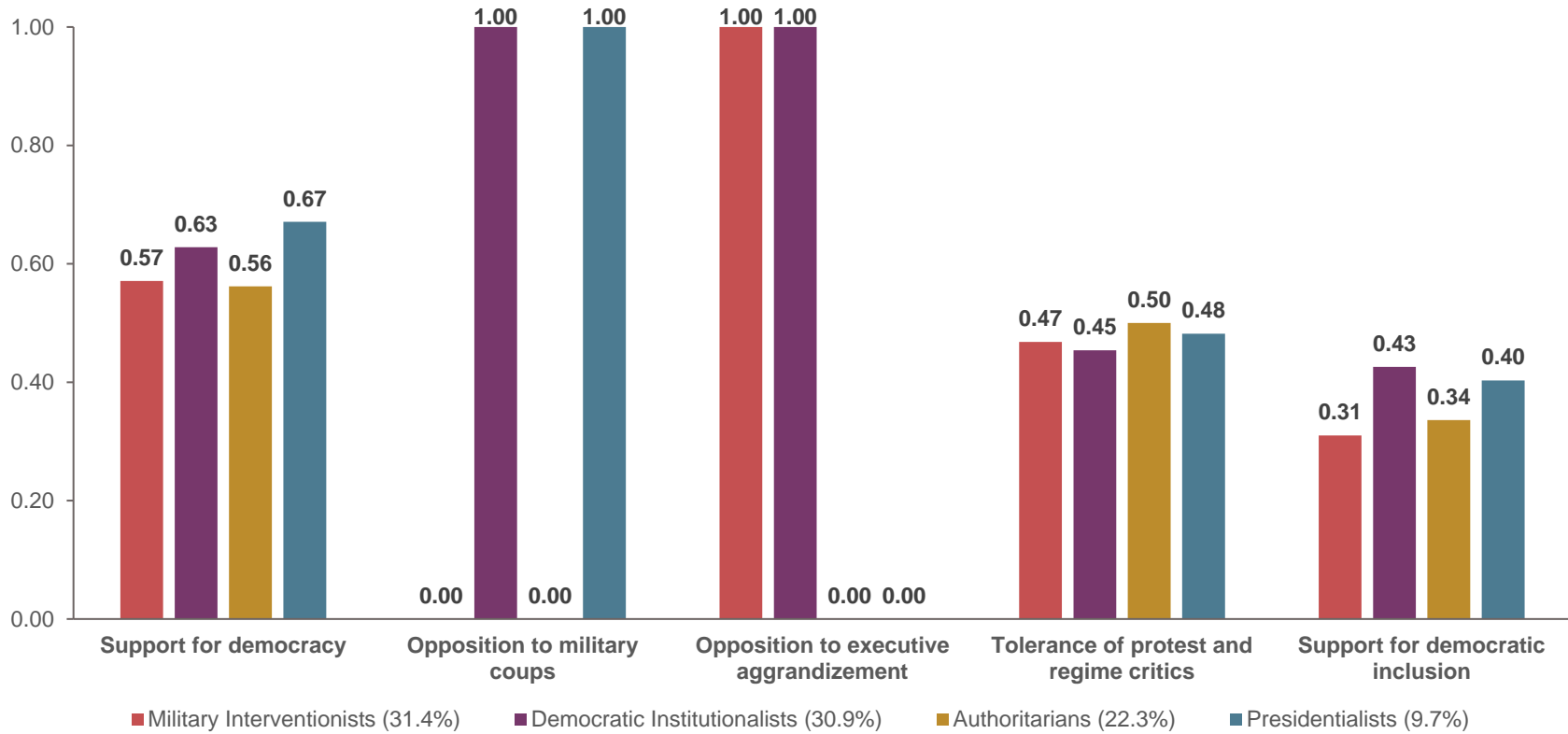**Figure A2.2. 2014 Cluster Results**

■ Democratic Institutionalists (41.2%)　■ Military Interventionists (31%)　■ Authoritarians (15%)　■ Presidentialists (6.5%)

Figure A2.3. 2017 Cluster Results

Figure A2.4. 2019 Cluster Results

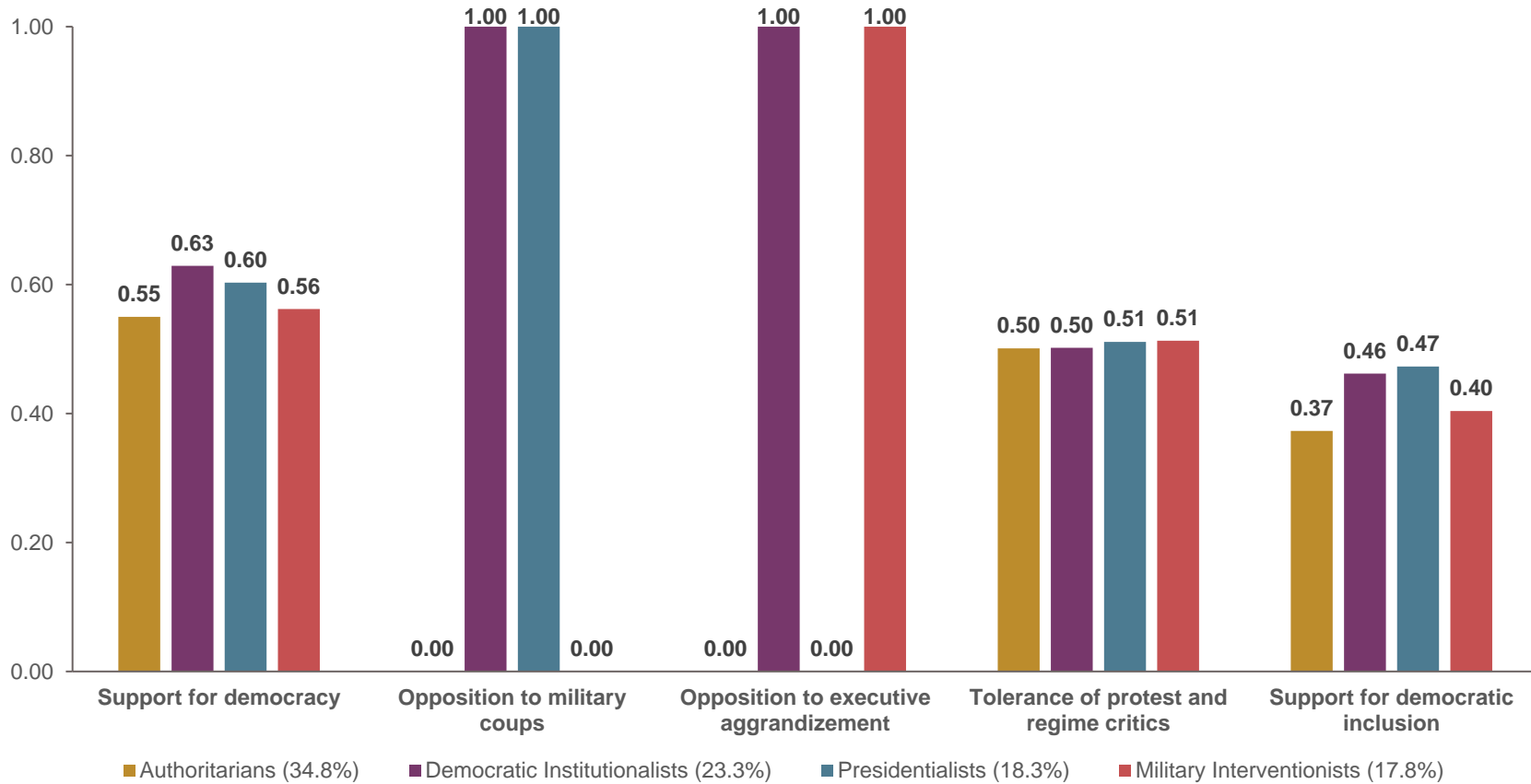■ Authoritarians (34.8%) ■ Democratic Institutionalists (23.3%) ■ Presidentialists (18.3%) ■ Military Interventionists (17.8%)

Figure A2.5. 2021 Cluster Results

Legend:
- Authoritarians (32.0%)
- Democratic Institutionalists (30.6%)
- Military Interventionists (19.8%)
- Presidentialists (17.6%)