

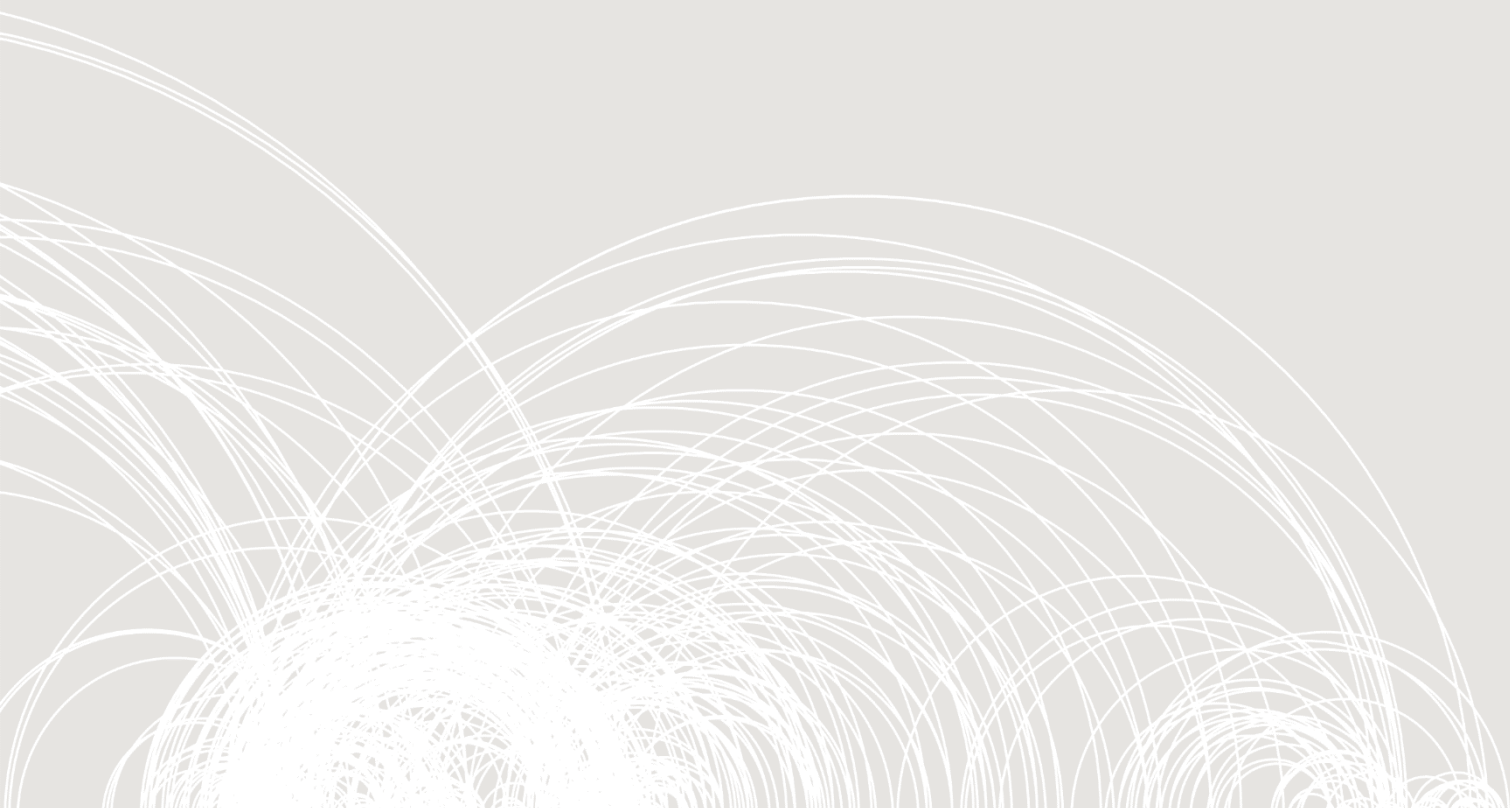
FINAL REPORT

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Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Guatemala Report

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Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Guatemala Report

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Acronyms

HDBScan	Hierarchical Density-Based Clustering
LAPOP	Latin American Public Opinion Project
CICIG	International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala)

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

¹ Castorena, O., and S. L. Graves. 2019. “Support for Electoral Democracy.” In Zechmeister, E. J., and N. Lupu (Eds.). *Pulse of Democracy*. Nashville, TN: LAPOP, p. 23.

² Lupu, N., and E. J. Zechmeister. 2021. “The Pulse of Democracy in 2021.” In Lupu, N., M. Rodríguez, and E. J. Zechmeister (Eds.). *Pulse of Democracy*. Nashville, TN: LAPOP, p. 2-5.

each cluster from the rest of the population using data from the last five waves of the AmericasBarometer³ (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 Guatemala. It was authored by Carlos Meléndez (Associate Professor, Universidad Diego Portales). 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), with the support of Jeremy Horowitz (Senior Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago), revised the report to ensure alignment with the study objectives.

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

⁴NORC 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

Guatemala's political culture has been shaped by the legacies of authoritarian rule, with assassinations against opposition leaders and those in exile.⁵ Leftist political organizations were banned for long periods until the 1996 peace agreement and the political parties that have competed under democratic rules represent elite interests.⁶ To mobilize the electorate, political parties hire political entrepreneurs—brokers who use vote buying and intimidation to secure electoral support.⁷ Not surprisingly, international organizations have referred to Guatemala as a “corporate mafia state” built on a coalition of traditional oligarchs, police and military officials, and common criminals.⁸

When it comes to the political system, Guatemala can be characterized as a “democracy without parties” where informal political institutions trump formal institutions and allow corrupt powers to dominate, civil society is fragmented, and the state is generally weak. Guatemala's party system exhibits high levels of electoral volatility, highly personalized parties, and declining legitimacy of political parties and elections.⁹ The generalized disillusionment with political institutions has left Guatemala as a potential case for the rise of extreme populism.¹⁰

Under these structural and institutional conditions, sustaining democratic values has been difficult. However, the increasing judicialization of Guatemalan politics, with trials of corrupt high-ranking politicians, temporarily bolstered Guatemala's democracy. The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (Comisión Internacional contra la Impunidad en Guatemala, CICIG) was created in 2007 at the request of the Guatemalan government and with the support of the United Nations. CICIG helped launch over 200 investigations into hundreds of government officials and more than 30 criminal organizations. Its greatest impact was perhaps the corruption charges against then-president Otto Pérez-Molina in 2015, who subsequently resigned and is under arrest.

One of the major consequences of the anti-corruption drive was an unprecedented civic mobilization of Guatemalans demanding accountability and justice. In 2015, hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans took to the streets to protest impunity and violence. These demonstrations took place simultaneously with similar civic movements in El Salvador and Honduras and were framed as a “democratic spring” in Central America. Although then-president Jimmy Morales unilaterally shuttered the CICIG in 2019, its work was an

⁵ Sánchez, O. 2008. “Guatemala's party universe: a case study in underinstitutionalization.” *Latin American Politics and Society*, 50 (1), 123-151.

⁶ Gálvez, V. 2000. “Guatemala: una democracia sinuosa.” *Nueva Sociedad*, 167, 26-36.

⁷ Gonzalez-Ocantos, E., C. K. de Jonge, C. Meléndez, D. Nickerson, and J. Osorio. 2020. “Carrots and sticks: Experimental evidence of vote-buying and voter intimidation in Guatemala.” *Journal of Peace Research*, 57 (1), 46-61

⁸ Amnesty International. 2002. *Guatemala's Lethal Legacy. Past Impunity and Renewed Human Rights Violations*. London: International Secretariat.

⁹ Sánchez, O. 2008.

¹⁰ Fernández Luiña, E., R. M. Argueta Velásquez, M. A. Maldonado, K. M. Panamá, A. M. Méndez Marín, , and S. S. Montenegro Mejía. 2016. “Consolidación democrática y circulación de élites en el sistema político guatemalteco.” *Península*, 11 (1), 65-84.

accountability shock to a political system characterized by rampant corruption and abuse of power.

This study describes the evolution of democratic attitudes in Guatemala between 2012 and 2021¹¹ and identifies the system-level, contextual factors that have contributed to changes in attitudes over time. To describe the evolution of democratic attitudes, we draw on NORC's cluster analysis, which identifies groups of citizens with distinct patterns of democratic attitudes in each of five waves of AmericasBarometer data. To enrich the analysis, we also examine the evolution of public opinion on specific issues. To identify the contextual factors that have contributed to changes in attitudes, we trace the linkages between recent political, economic, and social developments and public opinion.

Three main findings emerge from the cluster analysis and additional examination of survey data. First, institutionalists, who express consistent support for democratic institutions, comprise the largest share of respondents in all years, with a decline in more recent surveys. Second, support for democracy is moderate and stable among all clusters during the period under study, while support for inclusion and tolerance are lower. Third, these data show that as the level of democracy declined in Guatemala, support for democracy also waned. We argue that the evolution of support for democracy in Guatemala in the period under analysis is largely explained by the emergence, activities, and disappearance of the CICIG. Democratic values proved to be resilient in Guatemala, mainly because of this "anti-corruption shock." In turn, the dissolution of CICIG in 2019 led to pessimism about democracy.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. First, we analyze the evolution of support for democracy and other democratic attitudes using NORC's cluster analysis. In addition to describing the relative size of clusters over time, we examine the evolution of specific democratic attitudes across clusters as well as the clusters' salient socioeconomic characteristics. In the second section, we examine additional public opinion data on support for and satisfaction with democracy to further document and explain the recent deterioration of the political institutions in the country. The final section summarizes the main findings and describes some consequences of recent events on trust in political institutions.

Cluster Analysis: Methodology and Results

NORC used data from the AmericasBarometer and cluster analysis to classify Guatemalans into groups or "clusters" with distinct attitudinal profiles. The aim 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 respondents speak for themselves without making assumptions in advance about how to group

¹¹ Unfortunately, starting in 2022, Guatemala has experienced significant setbacks regarding the development of its democratic institutions.

them. Annex I provides detailed information regarding the study's methodology. NORC used five democratic attitudes to generate clusters:

- *Support for democracy*: The extent to which respondents agree or disagree that “democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.”
- *Opposition to military coups*: Whether respondents believe it would be justified for the military to take power in a military coup in certain circumstances.
- *Opposition to executive aggrandizement*: Whether respondents 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 respondents support the right to demonstration and other political rights of regime critics.
- *Support for democratic inclusion*: The extent to which respondents support the political inclusion of homosexuals.

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

The analysis identified three clusters in 2012 and 2014 and four clusters in 2017 and 2019. 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 across survey waves, NORC grouped respondents into four families that share a set of defining characteristics:

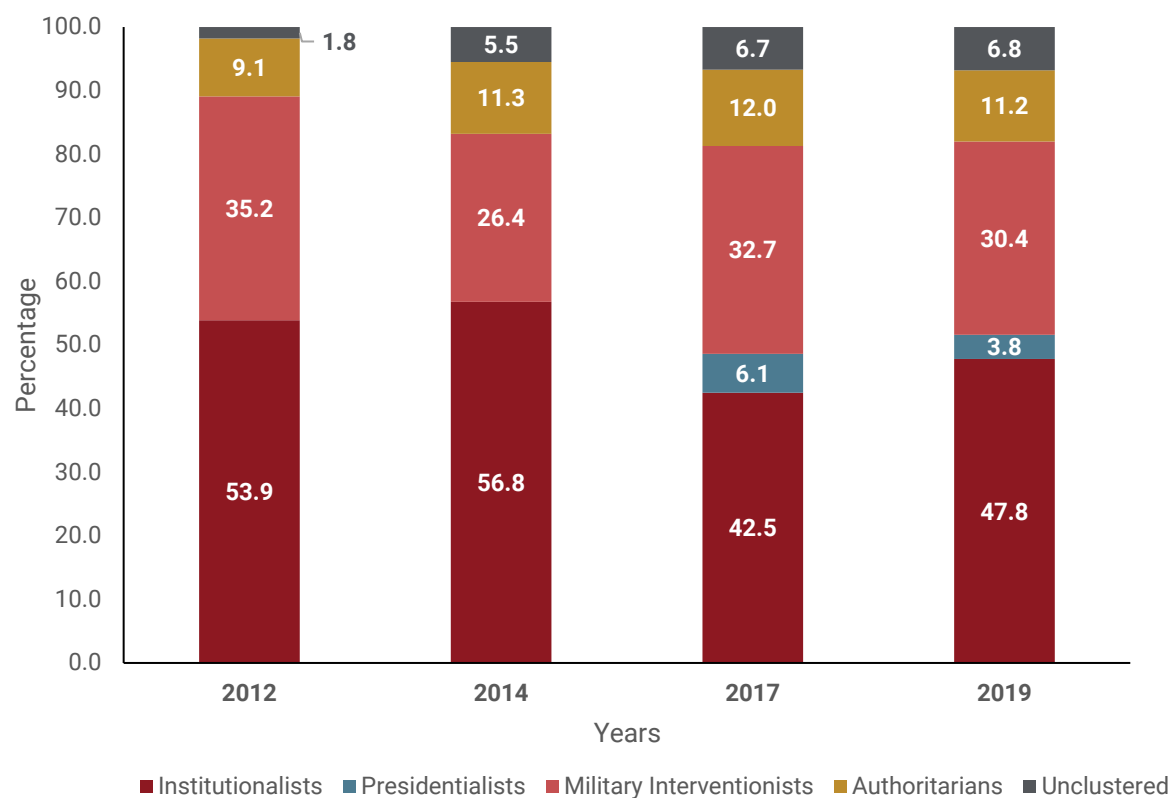
- *Institutionalists (including institutionalists and inclusionary institutionalists)*: Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by opposition to coups and executive aggrandizement. In this sense, they represent “ideal” democratic citizens compared to individuals in other cluster families.
- *Military Interventionists*: Individuals in this cluster family exhibit less than full opposition to military coups but full opposition to executive aggrandizement.
- *Presidentialists*: Individuals in this cluster family exhibit less full opposition to executive aggrandizement but full opposition to military coups. This group first emerged in 2017.
- *Authoritarians*: Individuals in this cluster family exhibit less than full opposition to both military coups and executive aggrandizement.

Cluster Shares Over Time

Figure 1 shows the relative size of these cluster families from 2012 to 2019. Institutionalists make up the largest group during the period under study (53.9 percent in 2012, 56.8 percent in 2014, 42.5 percent in 2017, and 47.8 percent in 2019). The institutionalist cluster's predominance is one of the central features of contemporary Guatemalan politics and may be related to the citizen anti-corruption mobilization triggered by CICIG's investigations. According

to observers, this wave of citizen protests was interpreted as a new era of citizen accountability and an important sign of progress in a country taken over by corruption rings.¹² Disappointment with the impunity backlash and the subsequent dissolution of CICIG may have contributed to a deterioration in support for democratic institutions and to the decline of the share of the institutionalist cluster below 50 percent of the population between 2014 and 2017.

Figure 1: Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2019



Military interventionists made up around one-third of the population in the 2012-2019 period. In 2012, 35.2 percent of the sample was grouped into this category. Although this percentage fell to 26.4 two years later, it reached 32.7 in 2017 and 30.4 in 2019. Corruption crimes revealed by CICIG, especially in 2015, led to intense criticism of the establishment, which may have weakened support for democratic institutions and increased support for non-democratic alternatives. Major corruption scandals involving dozens of public officials might have activated “mano dura” reflexes in the population, building support for the return of the military to power.¹³ This reaction might have helped increase the share of military interventionists among Guatemalans between 2014 and 2017.

¹² Beltrán, A. 2016. “A New Era of Accountability in Guatemala?” *Current History*, 115 (778): 63-67.

¹³ Batz, G. 2022. “State Violence and Democratic Deficiencies 25 Years After Guatemala’s Peace Accords.” In: Chamorro, L., and K. Thaler (eds). *Democracy and Autocracy* 20 (2): 30-35.

Authoritarians remained stable at between 9 and 12 percent of the population during the 2012-2019 period. While institutionalists and military interventionists have fluctuated more due to Guatemala's corruption scandals, support for more extensive authoritarian erosion appears untouched by these events. Finally, presidentialists were first identified as a distinct group in 2017 when they comprised 6.1 percent of the sample and fell to 3.8 percent in 2019.

Trends in Democratic Attitudes Across Clusters

This section describes the evolution of each cluster's average democratic attitudes scores. It focuses on support for democracy, tolerance of protest and regime critics, and support for democratic inclusion. Scores range from zero to one, with higher values indicating more democratic attitudes. Opposition to military coups and opposition to executive aggrandizement are not discussed because their averages do not vary within clusters.¹⁴

Figure 2 plots the evolution of average support for democracy across clusters. It shows that levels of support for democracy among institutionalists were medium-to-high and similar to those in other clusters. Military interventionists and presidentialists displayed considerable support for democracy despite their respective support of military coups and executive aggrandizement. Changes in average scores for these clusters followed the general trend. Authoritarians also exhibited relatively high levels of support for democracy, but their evolution was different. Average support for democracy fluctuated in accordance with national trends from 2012 to 2017 but deviated in 2019. While support for democracy among the rest of the clusters dropped from 2017 to 2019, it increased from 0.52 to 0.63 among authoritarians.

¹⁴ As discussed above, scores for opposition to military coups and opposition to executive aggrandizement are the defining characteristics of the various clusters. Institutionalists have full opposition to coups and full opposition to executive aggrandizement, and corresponding values of one for both attitudes. Military interventionists have no opposition to coups and full opposition to executive aggrandizement, and corresponding values of zero and one. Presidentialists have full opposition to coups and no opposition to executive aggrandizement, and corresponding values of one and zero. Authoritarians have no opposition to coups and no opposition to executive aggrandizement, and corresponding values of zero for both attitudes.

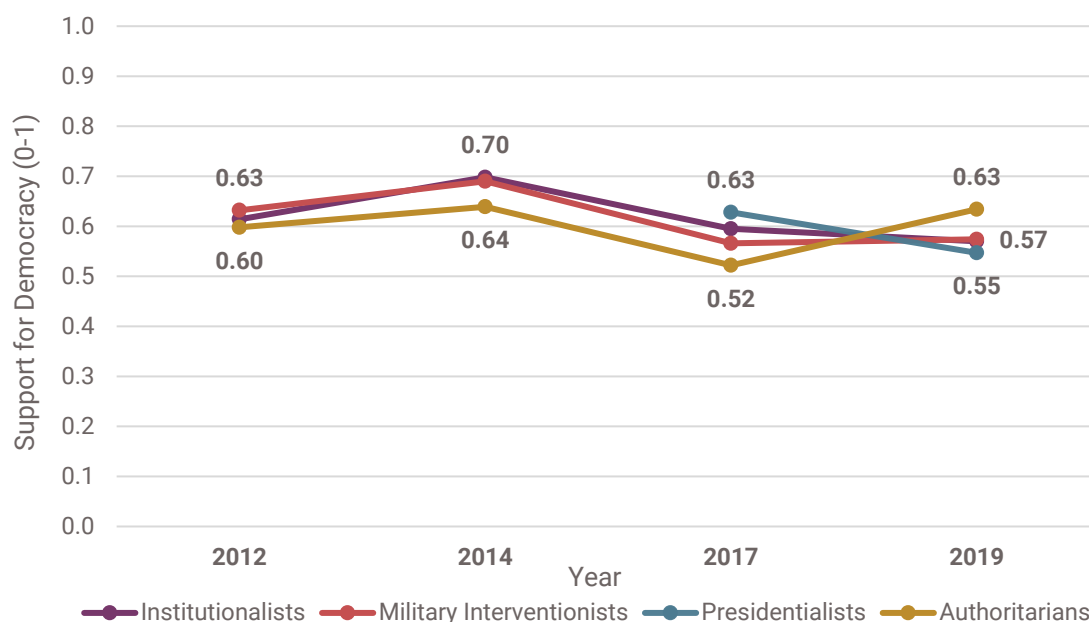
Figure 2: Evolution of Support for Democracy by Cluster Family

Figure 3 shows that average support for inclusion is rather similar across clusters between 2012 and 2019, with the exception of 2014's drop¹⁵. Presidentialists show lower levels of support for inclusion in the two years in which they appeared as a distinct cluster. Authoritarians follow the general trend, except between 2017 and 2019, when support dropped from 0.30 to 0.26, while support increased in the other three clusters. A potential explanation for this trend is that presidentialists' and authoritarians' support for executive aggrandizement might have affected their assessment of citizen mobilization. Social protests targeted presidents and former presidents involved in corruption. Since authoritarians and presidentialists value presidential leadership, which was contested by protests, their evaluation of the promotion of involvement of social minorities in public issues might not be as positive as among other clusters. This may explain their comparatively lower support for democratic inclusion among the members of these groups after Guatemala's 2015 democratic spring.

¹⁵ Pérez Molina is a retired general accused of human right abuses against indigenous groups and his administration might be associated with the decline in support for inclusion.

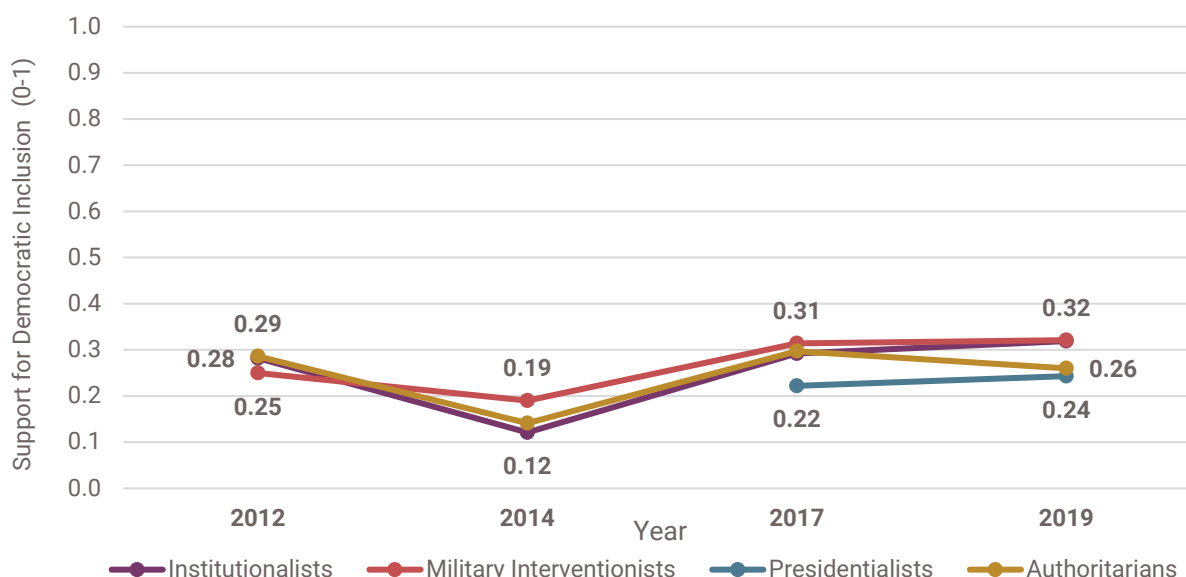
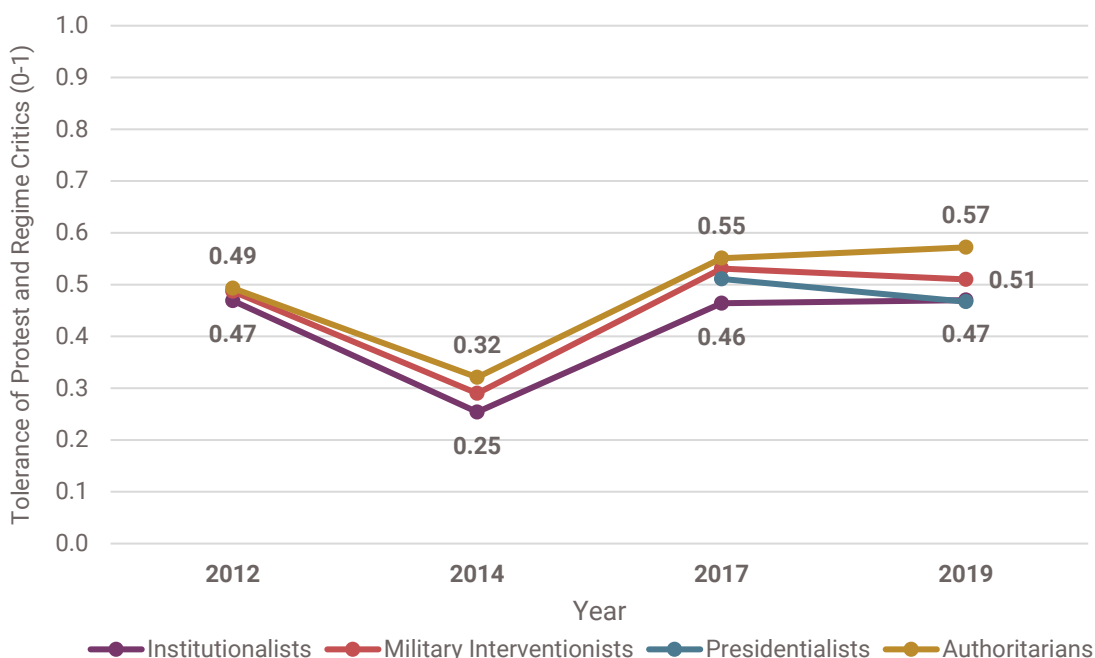
Figure 3: Evolution of Support for Democratic Inclusion by Cluster Family

Figure 4 shows the evolution of average scores for tolerance of protests and regime critics across clusters. We observe a dramatic increase between 2014 and 2017 across clusters and relative stability thereafter. As noted earlier, Guatemala's democratic spring occurred when CICIG's investigations gained public notoriety. Thousands of Guatemalans participated in demonstrations against the political establishment, not only criticizing the Pérez-Molina government but demanding accountability and justice. These events likely shaped the tolerance of protests and regime critics across all clusters. By 2014, the Public Prosecutor's office and CICIG had brought charges against judges that issued "illegal judicial decisions" to protect criminal networks and corrupt officials.¹⁶ By then, the initial manifestations of the Guatemalan democratic spring were gaining public attention, which was reflected in the attitudinal changes of individuals.

¹⁶ Batz, G. 2022.

Figure 4: Evolution of Tolerance of Protest and Regime Critics by Cluster Family

Cluster Characteristics

NORC's cluster analysis identified the demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics that significantly distinguish respondents in each cluster from the rest of the sample for each survey wave. The study examined several variables, including age, gender, wealth, race, education, crime victimization, corruption victimization, political efficacy (the belief that politicians respond to citizens' preferences), and political participation. There are few stable patterns across clusters in all waves, and the differences among clusters are substantially small. These caveats aside, there are some interesting differences.

Differences among clusters are not merely a matter of democratic values; structural factors might have an impact on the configuration of these clusters. Accordingly, it is necessary to analyze income and education as proxies of the clusters' socioeconomic status. Regarding income, Figure 5 shows the evolution of the percentage of respondents in the bottom, poorest wealth quintile (Panel A) and the top, richest wealth quintile (Panel B) across clusters. The percentage of institutionalists in the poorest quintile declined from 25.0 to 20.3 between 2012 and 2019, while the percentage of institutionalists in the richest quintile increased from 10.3 to 22.3. In contrast, the percentage of authoritarians in the poorest quintile increased from 12.5 to 23.0 and the percentage of authoritarians in the richest quintile declined from 27.5 to 10.7. The economic patterns are less clear for military interventionists and presidentialists.

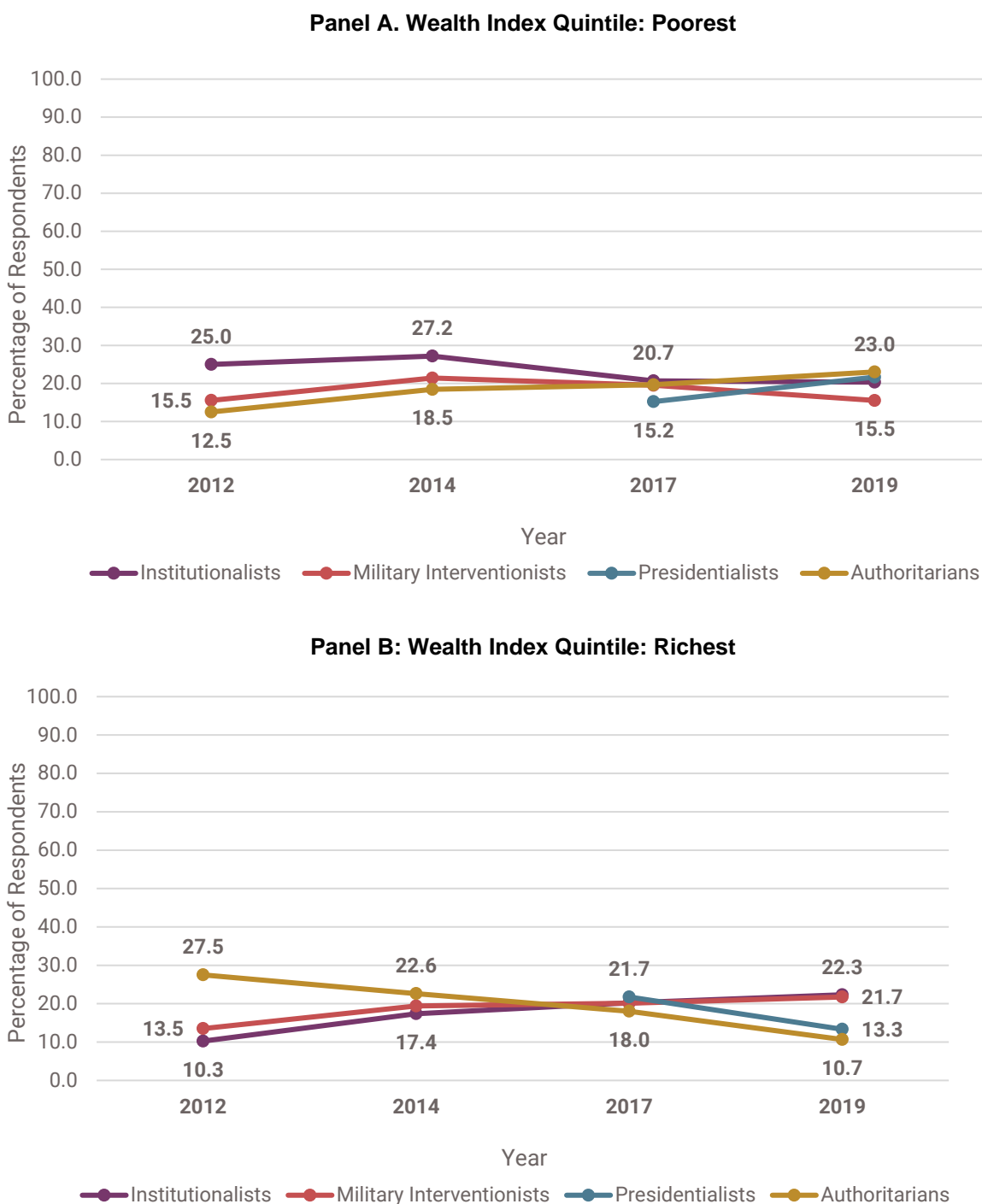
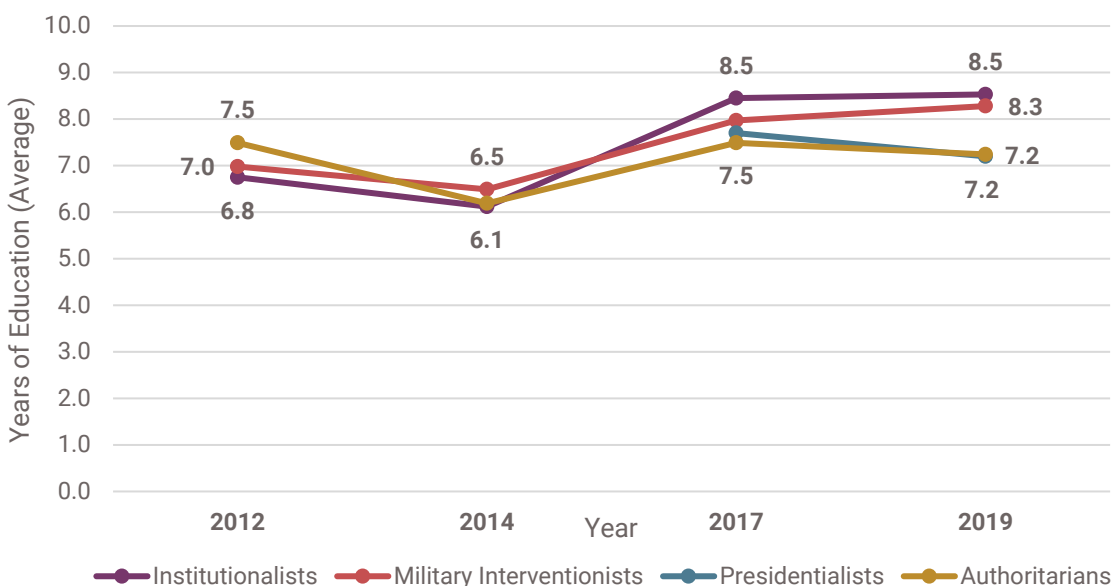
Figure 5: Evolution of Percentage of Clusters in Poorest and Wealthiest Quintiles

Figure 6 shows the evolution of the average years of schooling across clusters, which reflects a slight upward trend. There are clear, noteworthy trends for institutionalists and military interventionists, with Guatemalans in both clusters becoming more educated over time. Among institutionalists, the average number of school years increased from 6.8 in 2012 and 6.1 in 2014

to 8.5 in 2017 and 8.5 in 2019. Among military interventionists, the average number of school years increased from 7.0 in 2012 and 6.5 in 2014 to 8.0 in 2017 and 8.3 in 2019. Since 2014, Authoritarians remain the least educated cluster.

Figure 6: Evolution of Averages of Years of Education by Clusters



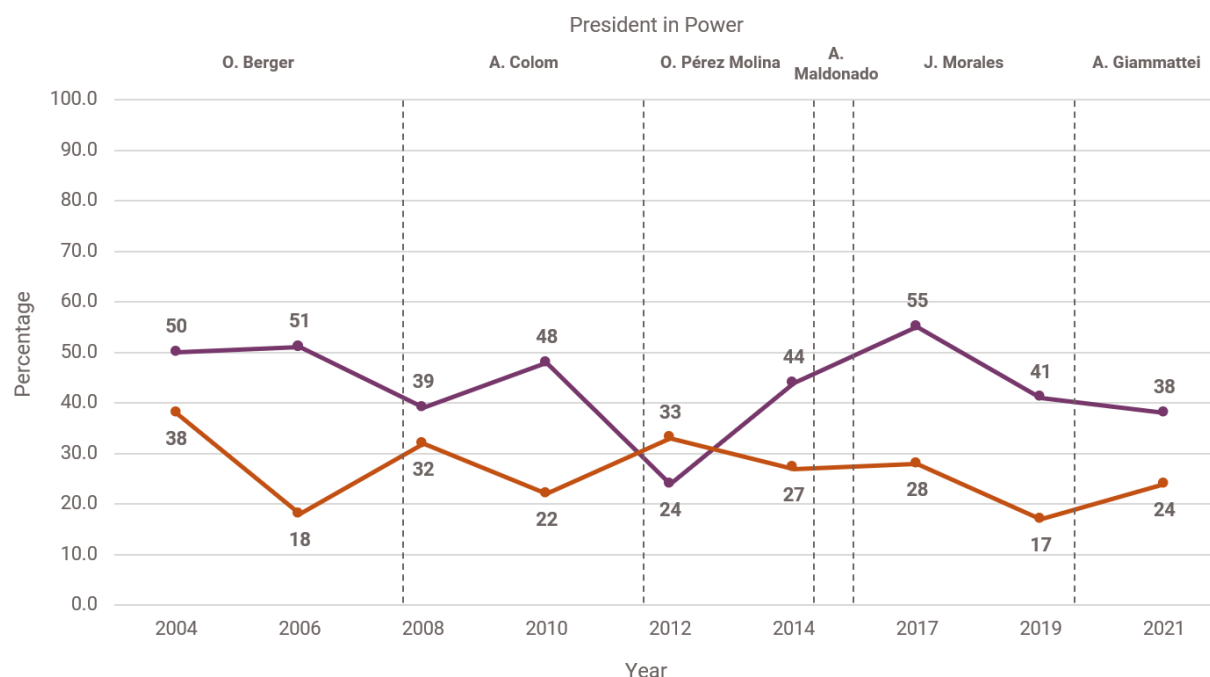
Understanding Change in Satisfaction with Democracy

In this section we examine changes over time in satisfaction with democracy between 2004 and 2021. While the cluster analysis sheds light on changes in democratic attitudes in Guatemala, additional analysis of satisfaction with democracy allows for a clearer understanding of the factors shaping Guatemalan's views about democracy. Satisfaction with democracy reached its highest levels in the period under analysis following the electoral defeat of former dictator Rios Montt in 2003 and the citizen mobilization related to the anti-corruption investigations of CICIG during the 2015 democratic spring. Periods of low satisfaction are related to the mediocre performance of incumbents and to corruption during specific administrations. Overall, evidence shows that satisfaction with democracy is very sensitive to political dynamics in Guatemala.

To assess levels of satisfaction with democracy, the AmericasBarometer asks: "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?" In Figure 7, we plot the percentage of respondents who say they are either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the functioning of democracy in Guatemala. We also plot the percentage of Guatemalans who approve of the executive because the incumbent's performance (especially in terms of a salient issue like corruption) tends to affect

satisfaction with democracy. We also show the incumbent in power at the time of each survey wave.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy and Executive Approval, 2004–2021



Note: "Satisfied with Democracy" is defined as summing the percentages of "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied" responses.

We trace the evolution of these views across Guatemala's successive political regimes, starting with Oscar Berger, who was elected in 2003 through a broad political platform (the Great National Alliance) created to challenge Montt's political legacy, the Christian right-wing conservative Guatemalan Republican Front. During the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996), previous administrations committed human rights abuses, massacres, and other crimes. Therefore, Berger's administration was expected to develop transitional justice mechanisms, reform the army, and recognize the state's responsibility for war crimes. His government attempted to develop a national reconciliation process. In this context, he agreed to the creation of CICIG. Overall, the expectations for peacebuilding contributed to high levels of satisfaction with democracy. During Berger's tenure in office (2004-2008), around 50 percent of Guatemalans were satisfied with democracy, even as his approval ratings fell from 38 percent in 2004 to 18 percent in 2006.

Alvaro Colom's administration (2008-2012) was disappointing to the leftist camp that had elected him as the first left-wing president in 53 years. Originally elected with 53 percent of valid votes in 2007, his approval ratings dropped from 32 to 22 percent from 2008 to 2010. Although the government of Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza (Colom's party) did not challenge the democratic political regime, the then-president was involved in apparent crimes of embezzlement of public funds and fraud for the purchase and subsidy of buses for a

transportation system implemented during his term, which were investigated by the Prosecutor's Office and CICIG.¹⁷ However, levels of satisfaction with democracy remained high (48 percent in 2010) due to intensive social programs implemented with clientelistic criteria. These policies did not sustain high levels of popularity for Colom nor for Sandra Torres, the First Lady, who had intentions to follow her husband in the presidency. The Constitutional Court ultimately banned her from running.

Former general Pérez-Molina and his personalistic party (Patriotic Party) won the 2011 general elections, but he did not finish his tenure due to corruption scandals. International prosecutors sponsored by the United Nations through CICIG investigated Pérez-Molina's participation in a corruption ring called "La Línea." He and his vice-president (Roxana Baldetti) were found guilty. As a result, he had to resign from the Presidency in 2015 amid intense social protests. His approval ratings remained around 30 percent during most of his tenure (33 percent in 2012 and 27 percent in 2014), but levels of satisfaction with democracy fell to their lowest point during the period of analysis, dropping to 24 percent in 2012. Satisfaction with democracy recovered to 44 percent in 2014, when the anti-corruption inquiries gained public attention and were backed by citizen mobilization.

After the interim tenure of Alejandro Maldonado (September 2015-January 2016), and because of the Guatemalan democratic spring provoked by CICIG's investigations and corruption trials, satisfaction with democracy reached a peak of 55 percent in 2017. Incumbents' approval ratings remained moderate (27 percent in 2014 and 28 percent in 2017), but citizen confidence in democracy increased. When the democratic spring was vibrant and promised anti-corruption measures against political elites, satisfaction with democracy stayed high (53 percent in 2019). However, when the CICIG was dissolved in 2019, satisfaction with democracy dropped again, to 41 percent in 2019 and 38 percent in 2021.

The recent governments of President Morales (2016-2020), a former comedian and political outsider, and Alejandro Giammattei (2020), a perennial presidential candidate who was elected after his fourth try, have been evaluated poorly by citizens (17.3 percent approval in 2019 and 24.1 percent in 2021, respectively). Morales was investigated for irregularities during his electoral campaign and was involved in corruption scandals. He dissolved CICIG to stop investigations against him and his circle.¹⁸ Giammattei has also been investigated for irregular campaign financing, among other charges.¹⁹ An aura of corruption has covered the last two administrations, which is reflected in the declining trend seen in their approval ratings, and the fading satisfaction with democracy.

Other variables that potentially might have an impact on presidential approval ratings and satisfaction with the functioning of democracy, like inflation or crime rates, appear not to exert much influence. Inflation peaks in 2008 and in 2011 did not translate into incumbent disapproval or dissatisfaction with democracy. Insecurity has remained high throughout the period under analysis, which suggests that it cannot explain trends over time in democratic satisfaction.

¹⁷ BBC Mundo 2018. "El expresidente de Guatemala Álvaro Colom será enjuiciado por cargos de corrupción en el plan de modernización del transporte público." <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-43254025>.

¹⁸ Batz, G. 2022.

¹⁹ Kitroeff, N. (2021). "Biden Faces a Trade-Off: Stop Corruption or Migration?" *The New York Times*, August 24, 2021.

Among the variables considered, political corruption appears to be the most-likely driving factor behind satisfaction with democracy and presidential approval in Guatemala.

Conclusion

This report uses cluster analysis and additional survey results to examine trends in democratic attitudes in Guatemala. It shows that while institutionalists, who oppose both executive aggrandizement and military intervention in politics, make up the largest group throughout the period under study, the size of this cluster has declined in recent years. The data also shows that support for democracy has similarly declined. The report relates these trends to domestic political events, focusing on Guatemala's anti-corruption efforts. Citizen mobilization against corrupt politicians temporarily bolstered democratic values. However, when impunity prevailed, disappointment with democracy grew. Most Guatemalans have fluctuated between institutionalists and military interventionists, reflecting the country's uneven progress toward democracy. In this context, conservative and "mano dura" values contribute to support for military intervention as a valid alternative. Structural factors, such as economic and social inequality, have hindered the growth of more liberal values and democratic beliefs.

We conclude by briefly noting the implications of recent political events on support for domestic political institutions. CICIG's investigations triggered citizen protests that positively affected democratic values: the institutionalist cluster grew because of this process, and tolerance of protest and regime critics increased, even among authoritarians and military interventionists. However, the demand for accountability has also had negative consequences for institutional legitimacy. The level of distrust toward elections and political parties has increased in recent years, most recently as a reaction to the corruption revealed by CICIG's investigations. Distrust of political parties reached 71 percent in 2019 and distrust of elections reached 53 percent in 2021. Distrust toward the three branches of government are correlated, suggesting that the public views political institutions as lacking credibility in general, rather than limiting these perceptions to parties and elections. Distrust of the legislature tended to be higher than distrust of the other two branches from 2004 until 2017. However, political scandals involving Presidents Morales and Giammattei have affected the executive's credibility as well. In the last two surveys analyzed, distrust of the executive reached its highest level in the time span analyzed (63 percent in 2019 and 62 percent in 2021). In sum, the Guatemalan democratic spring had a positive short-term impact on democratic attitudes but in the long run, it contributed to the increase of distrust in political institutions, parties, and elections. The lack of citizen support for these critical institutions poses a threat for liberal democracy.

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Annex I. 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.²⁰ 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	<p>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?</p> <p><i>Response options: Seven-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree.</i></p>

²⁰ Campello, R., D. Moulavi, and J. 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 coups²	<p>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...</p> <p>JC10. When there is a lot of crime</p> <p><i>Response options: (1) A military take-over of the state would be justified; (2) A military takeover of the state would not be justified.</i></p>
	<p>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...</p> <p>JC13. When there is a lot of corruption</p> <p><i>Response options: (1) A military take-over of the state would be justified; (2) A military takeover of the state would not be justified.</i></p>
Opposition to executive aggrandizement²	<p>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?</p> <p><i>Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.</i></p>
	<p>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?</p> <p><i>Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.</i></p>
Tolerance of protest and regime critics	<p>D1. There are people who only say bad things about the form of government of Guatemala, 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.</p> <p><i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i></p>
	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i></p>
	<p>D3. Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the form of government of Guatemala, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?</p> <p><i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i></p>
	<p>D4. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches?</p> <p><i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i></p>

DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES ¹	QUESTIONS
Support for democratic inclusion	<p>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?</p> <p><i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i></p>

¹ In the 2021 round of the AmericasBarometer, only questions ING4, JC13, and JC15A were included in the survey. Items JC13 and JC15A were administered in a split sample so that 24 percent of respondents were only asked question JC13, and another 25 percent of respondents were only asked question JC15A, while 51 percent of respondents were not asked either of these questions. We decided to use JC15A for cluster analysis as we believe that executive aggrandizement currently represents a greater threat to democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean than military coups.

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 2019, 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

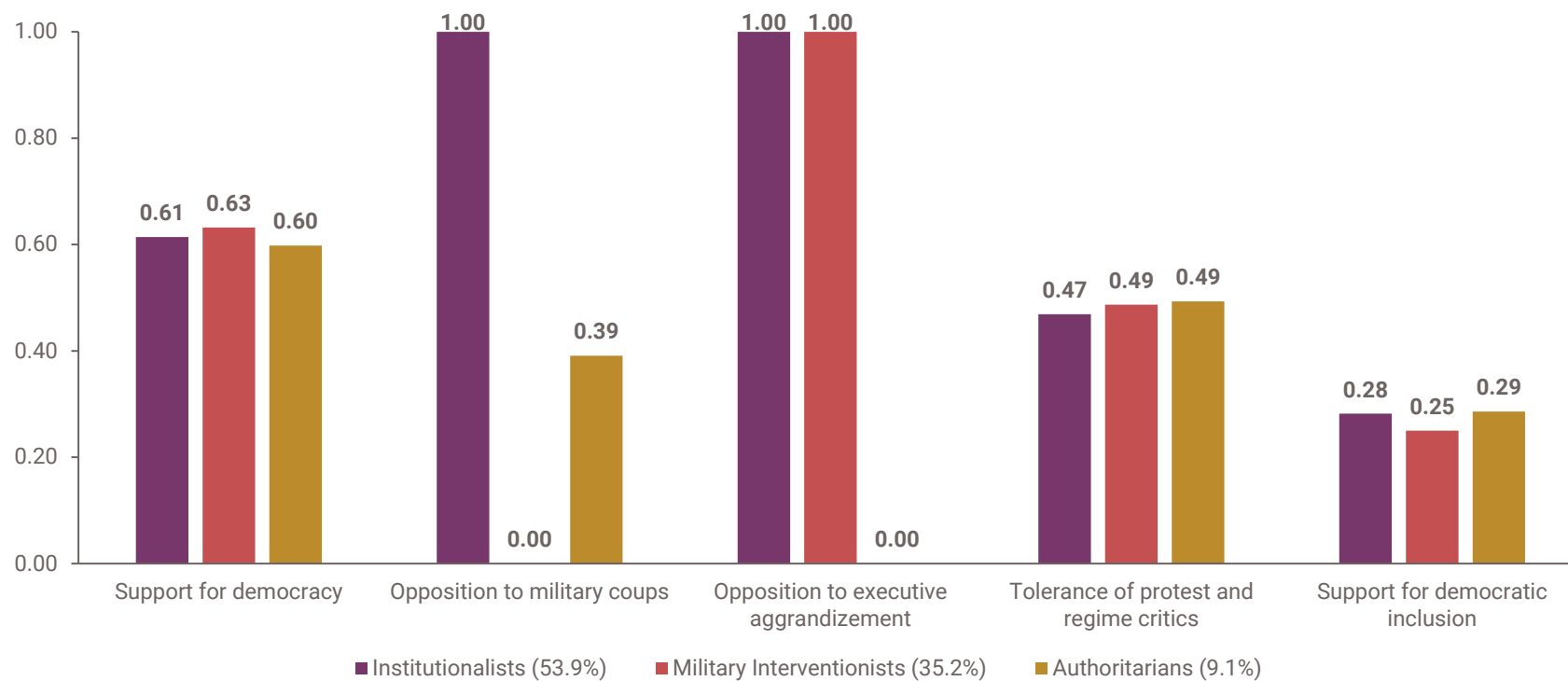


Figure A2.2: 2014 Cluster Results

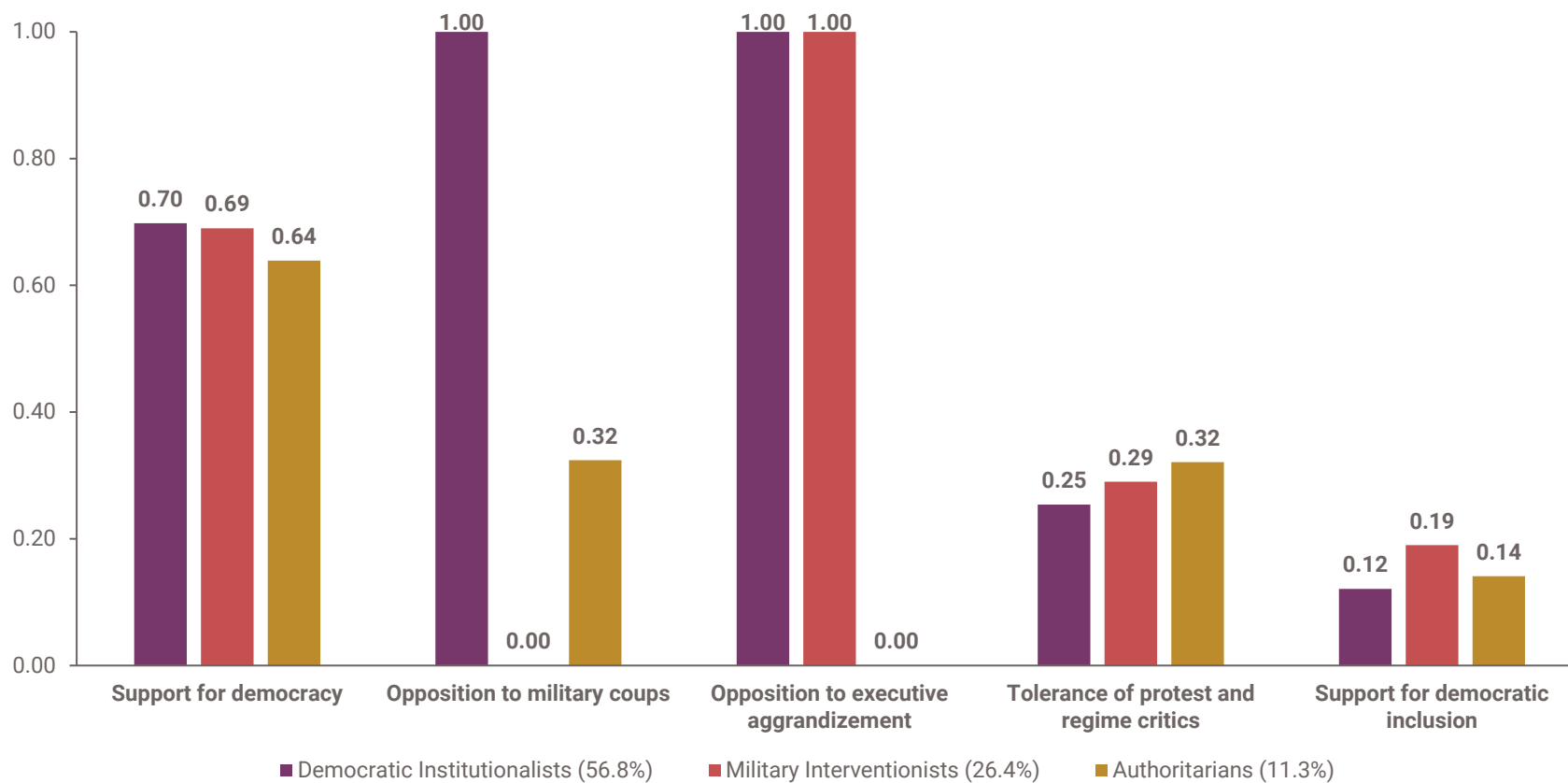


Figure A2.3: 2017 Cluster Results

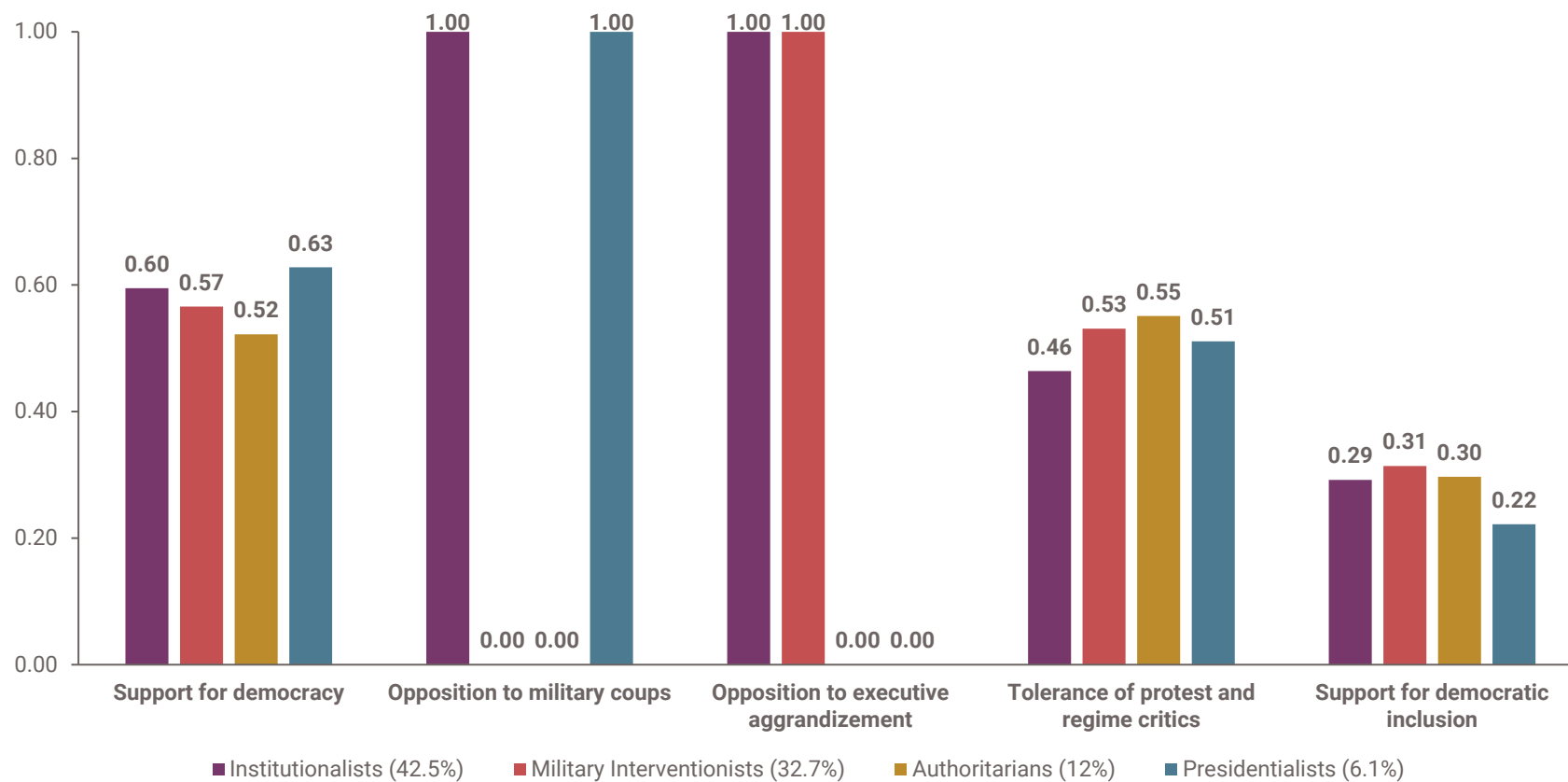


Figure A2.4: 2019 Cluster Results

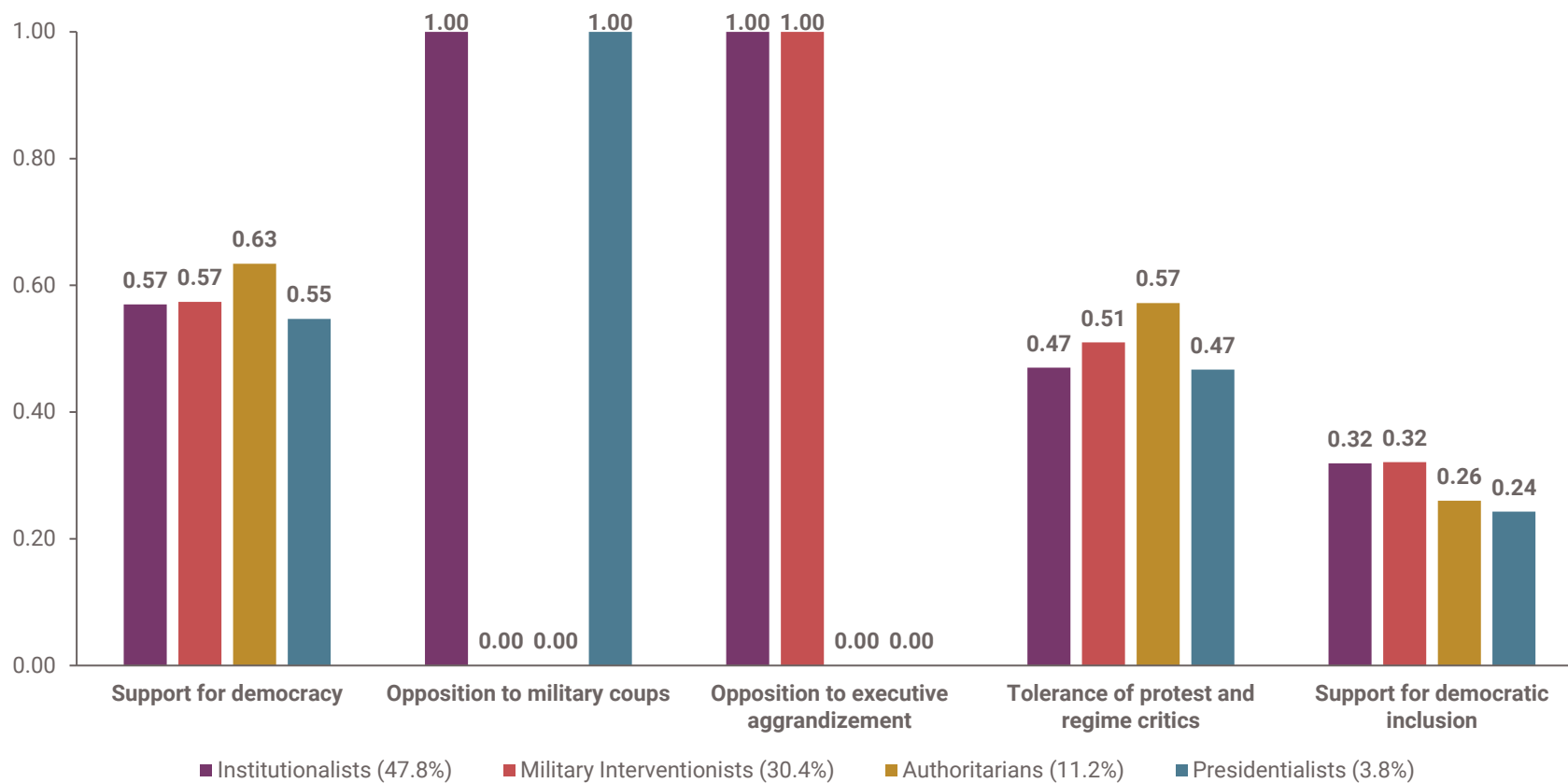


Figure A2.5: 2021 Cluster Results