

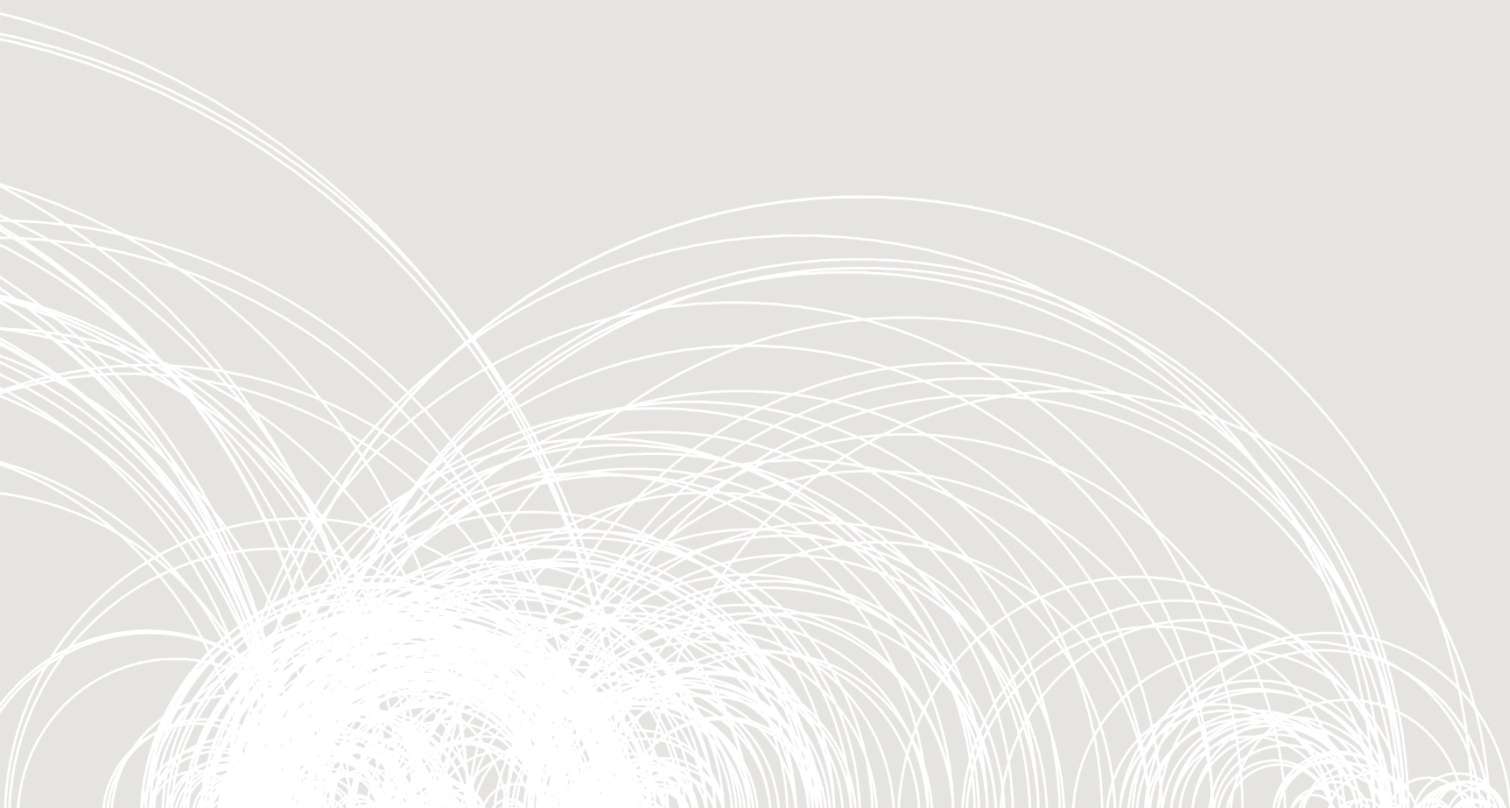
FINAL REPORT

APRIL 2023

Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Mexico Report

Presented by:

NORC at the University of Chicago



Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Mexico Report

Authors:

Rodrigo Castro Cornejo, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas

Joy Langston, Professor of Political Science, El Colegio de México

Technical Coordination Team:

Luis A. Camacho

Mollie Cohen, Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs, University of Georgia

Ingrid Rojas, Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago

Analysis and Support Team:

Angelo Cozzubo, Senior Research Associate II, NORC at the University of Chicago

Katrina Kamara, Senior Research Associate II, NORC at the University of Chicago

Paige Pepitone, Research Associate II, NORC at the University of Chicago

Table of Contents

Presentation	1
Introduction	3
Democratic Attitudes in Mexico, 2012-2021	4
Cluster Analysis	4
Increasing Partisan Polarization	7
Explaining Attitudes Towards Democracy in Mexico	13
Elite Attacks on Democratic Institutions	13
Poor Governance in Mexico	16
Public Insecurity and Violence	16
The Lack of Economic Development and Labor Informality	18
Political Corruption and Impunity	19
Conclusion	20
References	21
Annex 1. Methodology	24
Annex 2. 2012–2021 Cluster Analysis Results	27
Annex 3. Supplementary Tables and Figures	33

List of Exhibits

Figure 1. Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2019	6
Figure 2. Support for Democracy by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	8
Figure 3. Satisfaction with Democracy by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	9
Figure 4. Executive Aggrandizement - Support for Closing Congress by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	10
Figure 5. Support for a Coup When Crime is High by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	11
Figure 6. Support for a Coup When Corruption is Widespread by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	12
Figure 7. Evaluations of Main Parties in Mexico (2000–2018)	15
Figure 8. Homicide Rate (2000-2018)	17
Figure 9. Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate Per Capita, 2000-2020	18
Figure A2.1. 2012 Cluster Results	28

Figure A2.2. 2014 Cluster Results	29
Figure A2.3. 2017 Cluster Results	30
Figure A2.4. 2019 Cluster Results	31
Figure A2.5. 2021 Cluster Results	32
Figure A3.1. Support for Homosexuals Right to Run for Office by Partisan Group, 2008–2019	35
Figure A3.2. Tolerance of Protest and Regime Critics, 2008–2019	36
Figure A3.3. Percentage of the Economically Active Population That Works in the Informal Sector in Mexico, 2005–19	38

List of Tables

Table A1.1. AmericasBarometer Items and Underlying Democratic Attitudes	24
Table A3.1. Cluster Average Characteristics, 2019	33

Acronyms

AMLO	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
EPN	Enrique Peña Nieto;
FCH	Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
LAPOP	Latin American Public Opinion Project
MORENA	National Regeneration Movement (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional)
PAN	National Action Party
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party

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

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.

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 Mexico. It was authored by Rodrigo Castro Cornejo (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas) and Joy Langston (Professor of Political Science, El Colegio de México). 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.

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

Weak support for democratic norms and institutions poses a significant challenge for the consolidation of democracy. A key assumption in studies of democratic public opinion is that citizens hold politicians accountable for respecting democratic norms.⁵ Public disapproval and punishment of incumbents' authoritarian behavior are important checks on incumbents' actions.⁶ If voters do not punish politicians who violate democratic norms, politicians may feel emboldened to continue their attacks, leading to democratic decline.

This report examines citizens' attitudes toward democracy in Mexico. In the first part of the report, we use NORC's cluster analysis to show that institutionalists, who express consistent support for democratic institutions and processes, make up the largest cluster in surveys from 2012 to 2019. However, more than half of the respondents in each survey support executive aggrandizement or military intervention under some conditions. Substantial segments of the electorate also express weak support for the political inclusion of marginalized groups and tolerance for regime critics. Finally, we observe considerable polarization on several measures between incumbent and opposition voters, particularly in the 2019 survey wave.

In the second part of this report, we analyze why one-half of Mexicans express dissatisfaction with their democracy and why one-third of the public is willing to support a coup or executive aggrandizement. We identify both political and structural explanations. First, elite attacks on democratic institutions undermine trust in democracy in Mexico. Second, slow economic growth and longstanding issues of violence and corruption erode democratic legitimacy and public trust in parties and institutions.

Throughout the report, we focus on the 2018 election, which was a critical juncture when Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) became president. The election upended Mexico's party system, which three major parties had dominated since the transition to democracy in 2000: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN), and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).⁷ As president, as different studies argue,⁸ he has concentrated

⁵ Lippman, W. 1925. *The Phantom Public*. Transaction Publishers; Levitsky, S., and D. Ziblatt. 2018. *How democracies die*. New York: Broadway Books.

⁶ Helmke, G. and S. Levitsky. 2006. *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁷ Although Mexico has only been considered a democracy since 2000, its political parties have existed for decades. The authoritarian successor party (PRI), and the center-right PAN and the center-left PRD opposition parties were key actors during Mexico's democratic transition from 1988 through 2000. After democratization, the PRI, PAN, and PRD continued as key actors in governing, negotiating electoral reforms, and channeling social demands. Further, these established parties had clear programmatic identities and they differed on important policy issues. Mexico's party system was highly institutionalized during the democratic transition. Magaloni, B. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Langston, J. K. 2017. *Democratization and Authoritarian Party Survival: Mexico's PRI*. Oxford University Press; Flores-Macías, G. A. 2018. "Mexico's PRI: The Resilience of an Authoritarian Successor Party and Its Consequences for Democracy." In Loxton, J., and S. Mainwaring (Eds.). *Life After Dictatorship: Authoritarian Successor Parties Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 257-283. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108560566.010>; Greene, K.F. and M. Sánchez-Talanquer. 2018. "Authoritarian legacies and party system stability in Mexico." In *Party Systems in Latin America: Institutionalization, Decay and Collapse*: 201-226.

⁸ Sánchez-Talanquer, M. 2020. "Mexico 2019: Personalistic Politics and Neoliberalism from the Left." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 40 (2); Sánchez-Talanquer, M., and K.F. Greene. 2021. "Is Mexico Falling into the Authoritarian Trap?" *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4): 56-71; Aguilar Rivera, J. A. 2022. "Dinámicas de la autocratización: México 2021". *Revista de ciencia política*, 42(2): 355-382;

power in the executive; attacked the courts, bureaucracy, and electoral authorities; weakened autonomous government institutions; and undermined institutional checks and balances.⁹ His party, the National Regeneration Movement (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional, MORENA), used its super-majority in the lower house of the legislature to appoint loyalists to the Supreme Court, forced the resignation of a Supreme Court justice with ties to past administrations and, more recently, sought to extend the Supreme Court Chief Justice's term, as he was perceived as loyal to President Lopez Obrador. Moreover, by demonizing the opposition, attacking independent journalists and civil society organizations, and failing to recognize the legitimacy of dissenting views, AMLO's government has eroded political pluralism.¹⁰ In this context, it is important to understand how the Mexican public views violations of democratic norms.

We examine the effects of the 2018 electoral realignment on patterns of support for democracy and other democratic attitudes. The report highlights the public's divided views on democracy and how partisan alignments shape those views. Across time, voters who supported the party in power offered more positive evaluations of democracy than electoral losers. We also examine how AMLO's election may have weakened support for democratic norms. While President Lopez Obrador's supporters reported increasing satisfaction with democracy after the 2018 presidential election, they were also more likely than other partisan groups to support anti-democratic interventions (e.g. support for a coup when crime is high or when corruption is widespread).

This report is structured as follows. The next section describes the cluster analysis methodology and presents its results. We complement the cluster analysis with additional discussion of other indicators related to democratic support. The second section relates key public opinion findings to Mexico's recent political history, focusing on two key factors: elite attacks against government institutions and government failure to address chronic challenges related to economic development, violence, and corruption. The final section concludes.

Democratic Attitudes in Mexico, 2012-2021

Cluster Analysis

NORC's cluster analysis classified respondents into clusters with distinct attitudinal profiles using their responses to the AmericasBarometer surveys. 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 inductive, meaning that it lets

Petersen, G., and Somuano, F. 2021. "¿Desdemocratización mexicana? Pandemia, hiperpresidencialismo e intentos por reconstruir un sistema de partido dominante." *Revista de ciencia política*, 41(2): 353-376.

⁹ Albertus, M., and G. Grossman. 2021. "The Americas: When Do Voters Support Power Grabs?" *Journal of Democracy* 32 (2): 116-131.

¹⁰ Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021.

respondents speak for themselves without making assumptions about how to group them.¹¹ 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 the political rights of regime critics.
- *Support for democratic inclusion*: The extent to which respondents support the political inclusion of homosexuals.

Questions related to all five concepts were included in the first four AmericasBarometer survey waves analyzed here (2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019). Only two measures were available for analysis in 2021: support for democracy and opposition to executive aggrandizement. The 2021 cluster analysis results should therefore be interpreted with caution, particularly when making comparisons to results from previous years, and are not discussed here. Annex 2 presents the main cluster analysis results for all waves.

The cluster analysis identified three clusters in 2012, 2014, and 2017, and four clusters in 2019. In all waves, a small share of respondents was 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:

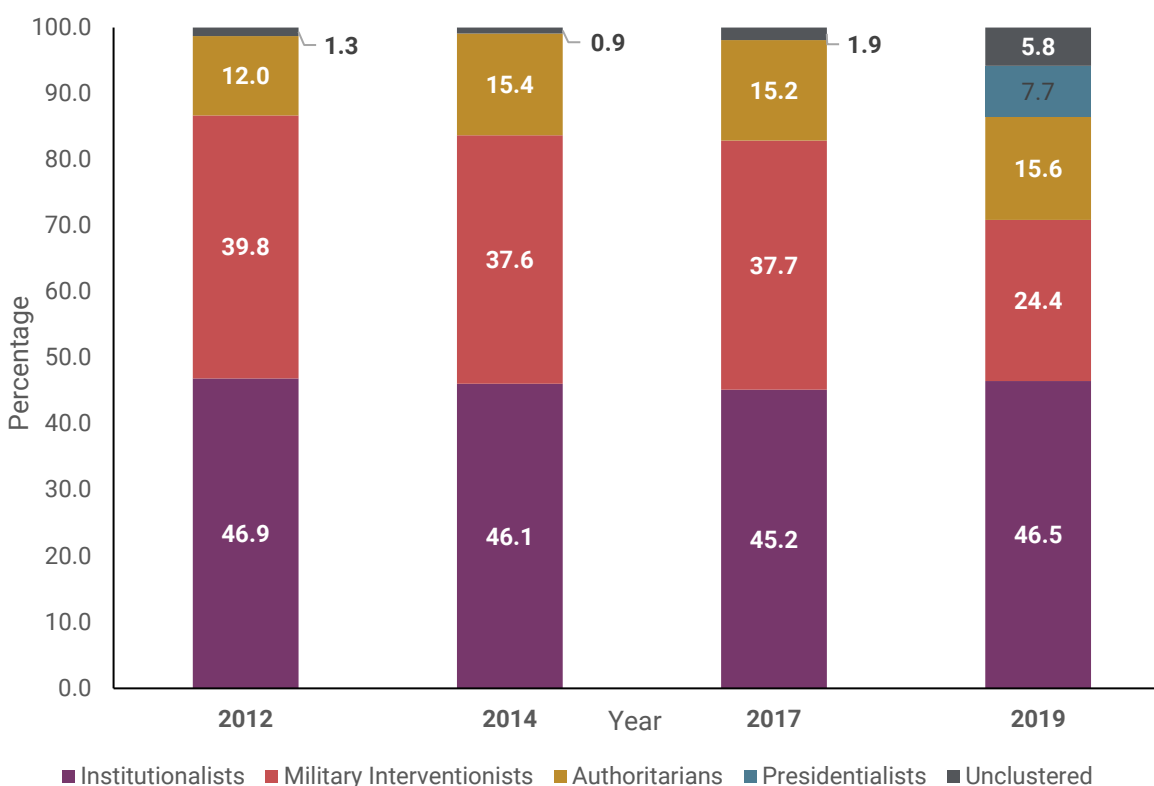
- *Institutionalists (including institutionalists and democratic institutionalists)*: Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by opposition to coups and executive aggrandizement. In this sense, they represent “ideal” democratic citizens compared to the other cluster families.
- *Presidentialists*: Individuals in this cluster family exhibit opposition to coups but less-than-high opposition to executive aggrandizement.
- *Military interventionists*: Individuals in this cluster family exhibit opposition to executive aggrandizement but less-than-high opposition to coups.
- *Authoritarians*: Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by less-than-high opposition to both coups and executive aggrandizement.

Figure 1 reports the share of respondents in each cluster family over time. Institutionalists make up a plurality of Mexicans in all survey years, accounting for 45 to 47 percent of respondents across survey waves. Institutionalists have moderate to high support for democracy. However,

¹¹For a discussion of limitations of the cluster analysis technique—particularly when applied to the AmericasBarometer data—see the relevant discussion in the introductory chapter to these country studies.

institutionalists exhibited only low-to-moderate levels of tolerance of regime critics and moderate support for democratic inclusion.

Figure 1: Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2019



Military interventionists made up the second largest cluster in all survey years. During the period under study, between 24 and 40 percent of respondents were classified in this group. Military interventionists have moderate-to-high levels of support for democracy, low tolerance of regime critics, and moderate-to-low support for democratic inclusion. This group's proportion of the overall size decreased from 38 to 24 percent between 2017 and 2019, probably due to the outcome of the 2018 presidential election.

Around 15 percent of Mexicans across survey years are part of the authoritarian cluster. Authoritarians have low levels of tolerance of regime critics and moderate-to-low levels of support for democratic inclusion. Nonetheless, authoritarians have moderate-to-high support for democracy as a form of government. Finally, presidentialists appeared as a distinct cluster in 2019 when they comprised 7.7 percent of respondents. Presidentialists have moderate-to-high support for democracy, moderate tolerance of regime critics, and moderate support for democratic inclusion.

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. While respondents in all clusters are statistically significantly different from others in a few variables in each wave, there are few stable patterns across all waves and the differences are substantially small. Below we focus on the results for 2019.

Table A3.1 in Annex 3 shows the characteristics associated with the four cluster families in 2019. While most differences across groups were minor, we observe some notable differences between institutionalists, who express the most consistent support for democratic institutions, and others. Institutionalists were slightly older, with 22.0 percent of respondents in this cluster in the 60+ age category, relative to 16.9 percent of other respondents. They are also less likely to be very poor, with only 17.7 percent of these respondents in the lowest wealth quintile, relative to the 25.5 percent of other respondents. Institutionalists are also slightly more educated, with 10.4 average years of education, relative to the 9.4 years for other respondents. With respect to ethnicity, the share of mestizos among institutionalists is higher than among other respondents (55.4 vs. 45.9 percent). While the differences are small, these findings are consistent with literature showing that education, wealth, and age are often associated with support for democracy.

In addition to these demographic factors, we observe that personal experiences are also associated with cluster groupings. Those who report direct experience with corruption in the prior year make up a smaller share of the institutionalist cluster, which suggests that corruption can weaken support for democratic institutions. We also observed that the share of those who approve of the president is smaller among institutionalists than among other respondents (66.4 percent vs. 73.7 percent of others). This result is contrary to our expectations since presidential approval is often associated with support for a country's political institutions. We explore this relationship below and argue that AMLO's attacks on Mexico's government structures likely account for this abnormal finding.

Increasing Partisan Polarization

This section shows that support for democratic principles has become increasingly polarized along partisan lines over time.¹² While most Mexicans support democracy in the abstract, there is a growing constituency that is willing to violate democratic norms. Even though they are the winners of the last presidential election, President Lopez Obrador's supporters tend to support more these illiberal actions than other partisan groups.

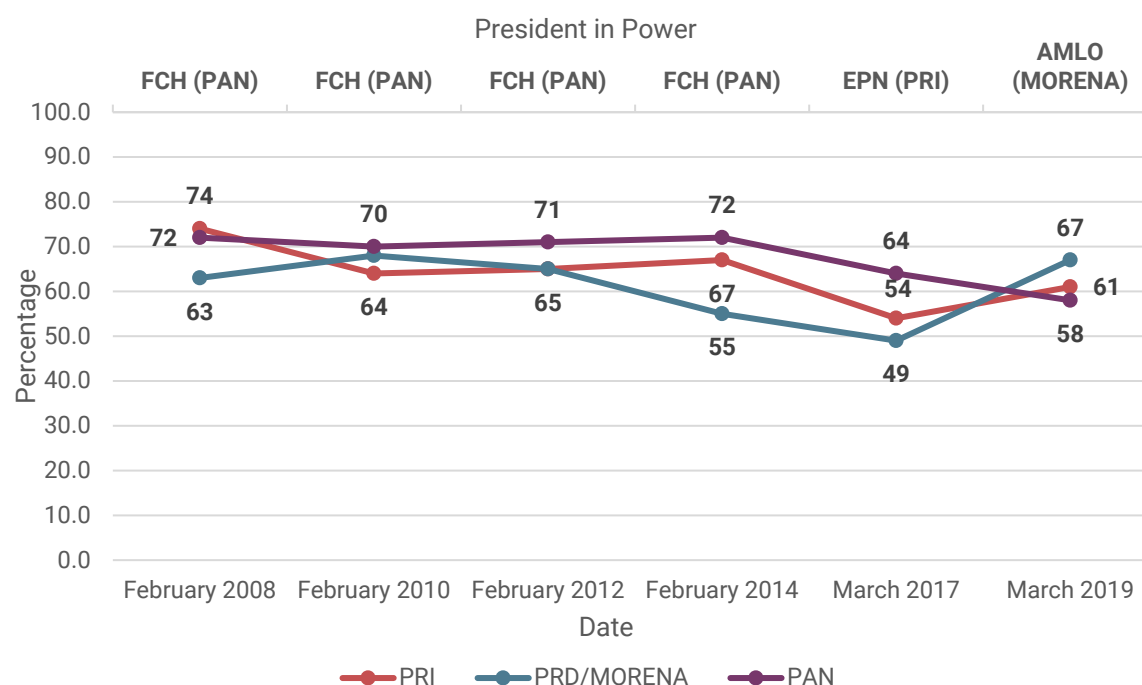
Many studies suggest that citizens who support election winners evaluate democracy more positively than those who support election losers. Winners are more satisfied with democracy and express greater confidence in democratic institutions.¹³ We observe similar dynamics in Mexico, comparing measures of democratic support among PAN voters, PRI voters, and AMLO's supporters (PRD voters in 2006 and 2012 and MORENA voters in 2018).

¹² Castro Cornejo, R., 2019. "Partisanship and question-wording effects: experimental evidence from Latin America," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 83(1), pp.26-45.

¹³ Anderson, C. J., A. Blais, S. Bowler, T. Donovan, and O. Listhaug. 2005. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. Oxford University Press.

Figure 2 shows levels of support for democracy (agreement with “democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government”) by partisan groups over time. Following their loss in the 2014 presidential election, AMLO voters reported the lowest support for democracy: 55 percent, compared to 67 percent among PRI voters and 72 percent among PAN voters. Support for democracy declined across all groups in 2017. That year, only 49 percent of previous AMLO voters agreed that democracy is better than any other form of government, compared to 64 and 54 percent for PAN and PRI voters, respectively. This year also saw a widening gap in democratic support between AMLO voters and PRI and PAN supporters, of 15 and 25 percentage points, respectively. However, following AMLO’s 2018 victory, his supporters became winners, and their support for democracy increased substantially to 67 percent, a gain of 18 percentage points from 2017. Indeed, in 2019, AMLO supporters expressed significantly *higher* support for democracy than PRI (61 percent) and PAN (58 percent) voters.

Figure 2: Support for Democracy by Partisan Group, 2008–2019



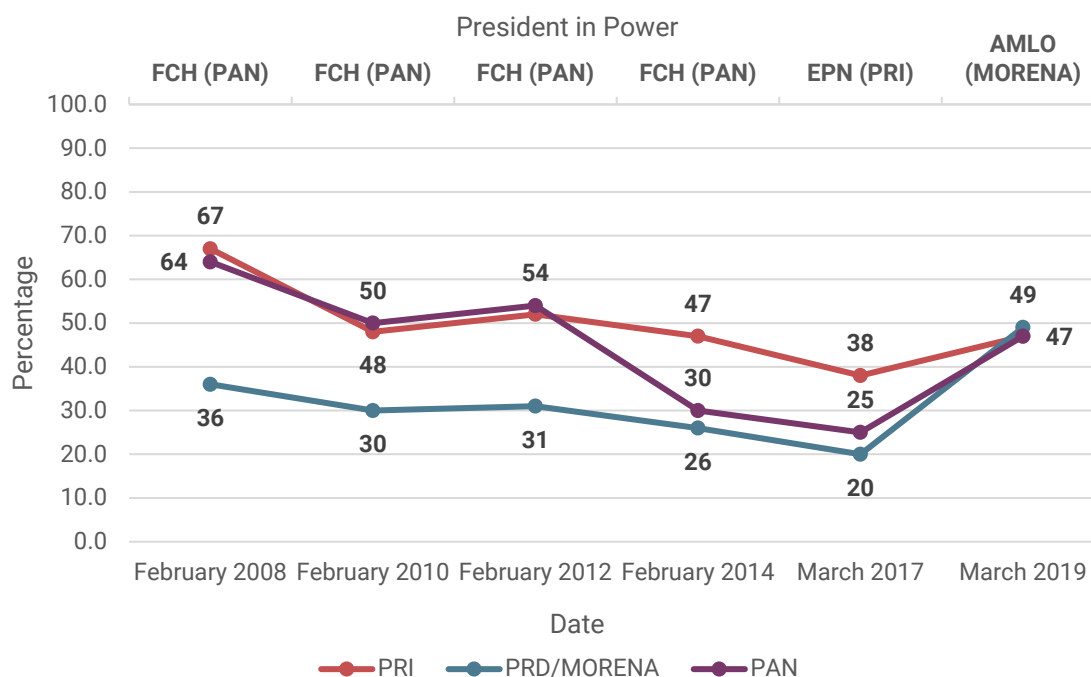
Note: Support calculated by summing the percentages of “Somewhat Agree,” “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses. FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Source: AmericasBarometer.

Figure 3 plots satisfaction with democracy by partisan groups over time. Among President Lopez Obrador’s voters, satisfaction with democracy was low in comparison to other partisan groups from 2008 to 2017, averaging only 29 percent across surveys. However, we observed a large jump from 20 to 49 percent in the 2019 survey, conducted after AMLO’s election. Thus, consistent with prior literature, support and satisfaction with democracy are linked to the results of the past election: attitudes about democracy are more positive when one’s party wins. However, interestingly, we do not see a decline in satisfaction with democracy among PAN and

PRI voters. In 2019, similar proportions of voters from all parties reported being satisfied with Mexican democracy.

Figure 3: Satisfaction with Democracy by Partisan Group, 2008–2019

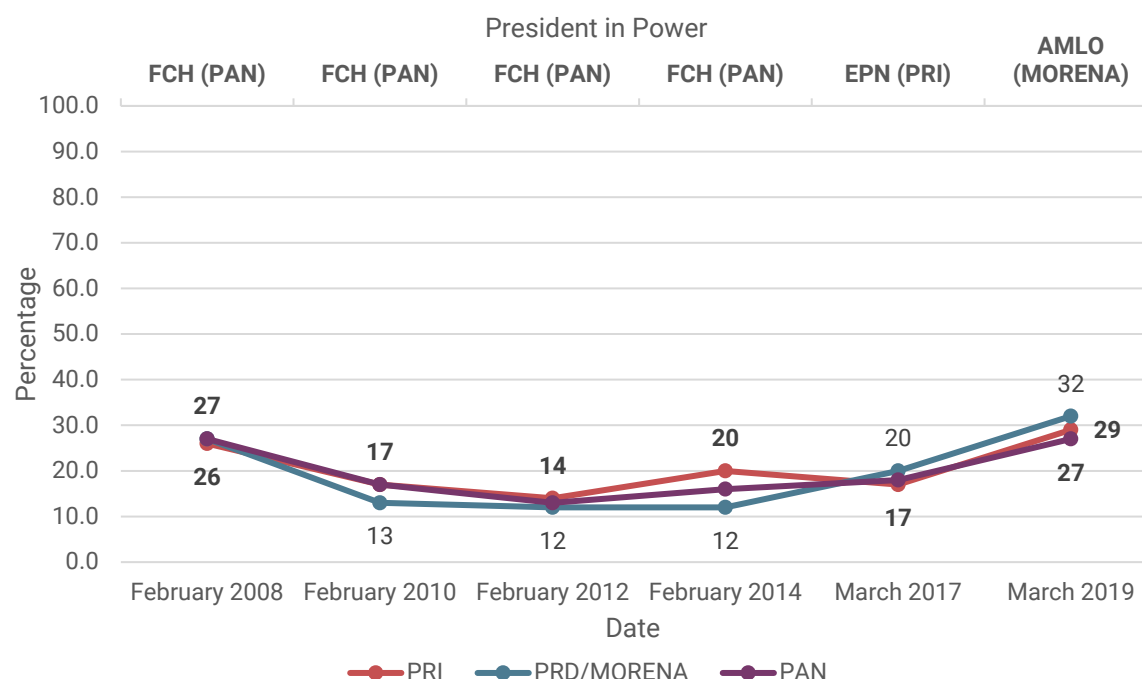


Note: Satisfaction calculated by summing the percentages of “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied” responses. FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Source: AmericasBarometer.

Overall, support of and satisfaction with democracy improved after the 2018 presidential election: in 2019, 63 percent of the Mexican public agreed that democracy is better than any other form of government. While satisfaction with democracy also improved after the 2018 presidential election, only about 49 percent expressed satisfaction in the 2019 survey, demonstrating that many Mexicans are not happy with the workings of their political system.

Next, we examine support for anti-democratic actions, executive aggrandizement, and military coups. Figure 4 shows responses to the following question: “Do you believe that when a nation is facing difficult moments, that the president of the country can justifiably shut down Congress and govern without the legislature?” In the 2019 survey, President Lopez Obrador’s supporters were the most likely to express support for shutting down Congress under some conditions. In many studies, election losers, not their winners, exhibit weaker support for democratic institutions. AMLO supporters might support this kind of executive aggrandizement to strengthen their president’s hold on power and remove the legislature as a check. However, it is also notable that, from 2017 to 2019, support for executive aggrandizement grew among supporters of all parties, even PRI and PAN voters, who would not benefit if the current president shuttered the legislature and governed alone.

Figure 4: Executive Aggrandizement - Support for Closing Congress by Partisan Group, 2008–2019

Note: FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.
Source: AmericasBarometer.

The increasing support for executive aggrandizement, particularly among incumbent voters in 2019, is likely related to the strong personal—as opposed to partisan or programmatic—attachment to Lopez Obrador among his voters. Support for executive aggrandizement is also likely related to AMLO's attacks on formal institutions, described in the next section. Because Lopez Obrador has consistently criticized government institutions, even after winning elections, his voters have likely been responsive to such messages.¹⁴ As such, his supporters do not behave like winners; instead, they continue to report low levels of institutional trust, as reported by other surveys.¹⁵ Given all of this, we should not be surprised that AMLO voters are more likely to support actions that violate democratic norms.

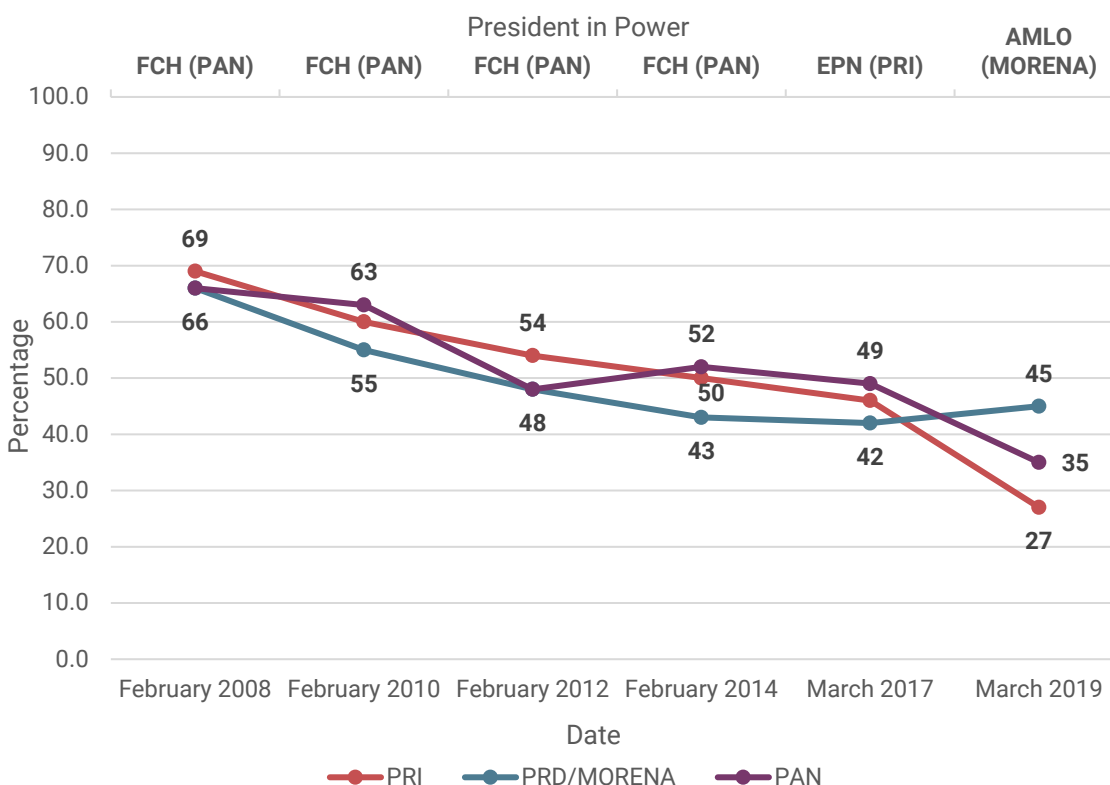
Figure 5 shows support for a military coup when crime is high. We observe substantial declines from 2008, when roughly two-thirds of each partisan group expressed support for this type of action. We also observe important partisan divergence in more recent surveys. After the 2018 presidential election, PAN and PRI supporters were less likely to favor a coup (at 35 percent and 27 percent, respectively), relative to AMLO voters, who continued to support a coup in the face of high crime (45 percent) after their candidate won the presidential election. These patterns are inconsistent with prior literature. One possible explanation as to why supporters of

¹⁴ Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene 2021.

¹⁵ Monsiváis-Carrillo, A. 2023. Happy Winners, Sore Partisans? Political Trust, Partisanship, and the Populist Assault on Electoral Integrity in Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 15(1), 72-95. National Institute of Statistics and Geography. n.d. "National Survey of Civic Culture (ENCUCI) 2020." <http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/encuci/2020/>.

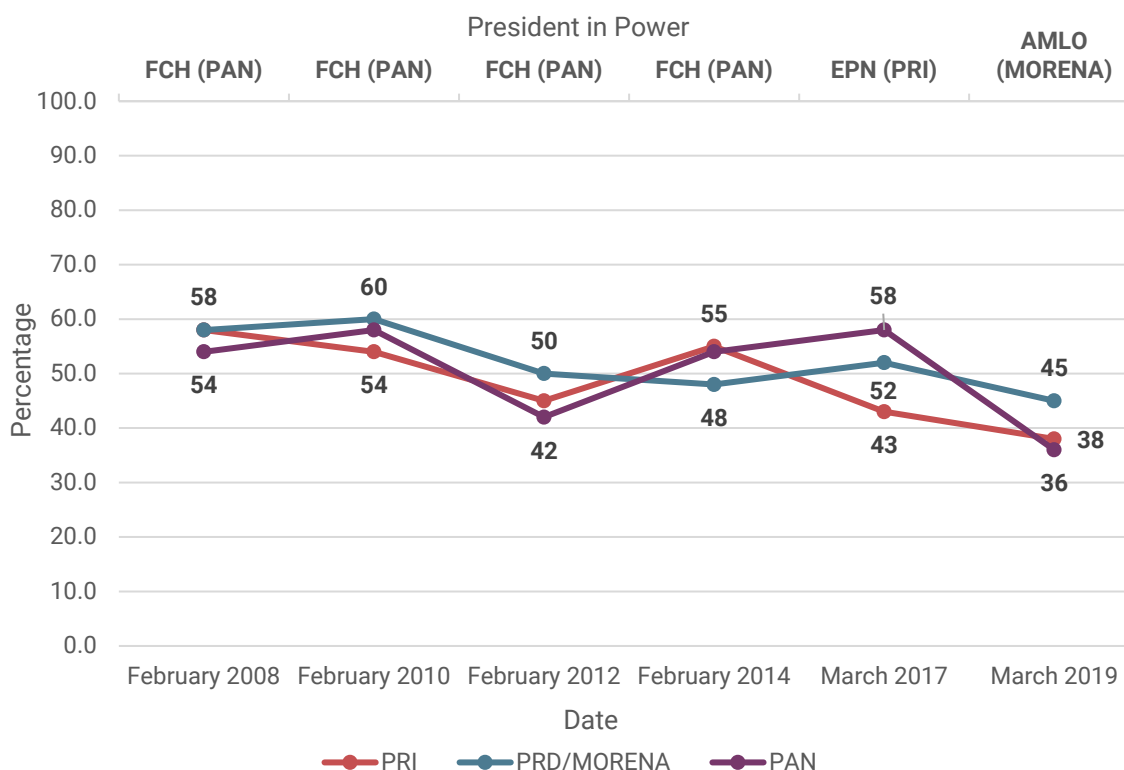
the president would express support for a coup under some circumstances is that AMLO as president has been a strong advocate of military involvement in civilian activities, such as building infrastructure, policing the country's southern border to stop immigration surges, and playing a prominent role in domestic security. This alliance with the military, uncommon in recent Mexican history, may lead MORENA voters to understand military interventions as aligned with their preferences. Alternatively, the increased involvement of the military in public life may make Mexican citizens, and especially MORENA voters, more likely to view the military as a legitimate political actor that would be able to respond effectively to high crime levels, particularly to those individuals that democracy has failed to improve their livelihoods.

Figure 5: Support for a Coup When Crime is High by Partisan Group, 2008–2019



Note: FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.
Source: AmericasBarometer.

Figure 6 shows support for a coup by the military when corruption is widespread. We again observed a downward trend between 2008 and 2019. From 2017 to 2019, there was a decrease of the percentage of PAN voters (58 percent to 36 percent) and PRI voters (43 percent to 38 percent) who supported this anti-democratic intervention. However, among MORENA voters, we saw a less pronounced decline between 2017 and 2019 (52 percent to 45 percent). In other words, about half of the incumbent President's supporters approved of the military seizing control when corruption is widespread.

Figure 6: Support for a Coup When Corruption is Widespread by Partisan Group, 2008–2019

Note: Satisfaction calculated by summing the percentages of “Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied” responses. FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.
Source: AmericasBarometer.

Finally, we examined trends in inclusion and tolerance. We observed an upward trend in support for homosexuals running for office and less evidence of winner-loser polarization (Figure A3.1 in Annex 3). With respect to tolerance of regime critics, we observe winner-loser differences in the approval of government critics’ rights to vote, demonstrate peacefully, run for office, and make speeches (see Panel A, Panel B, Panel C, and Panel D in Figure A3.2, respectively). While PAN and PRI voters tended to give similar responses from 2008 to 2019, AMLO voters did not. Immediately before the 2018 presidential election, when AMLO was the main opposition leader, his voters were the most likely to support government critics’ rights. However, once Lopez Obrador won the presidency, AMLO voters’ support for government critics declined and became more like PAN and PRI voters.

Explaining Attitudes Towards Democracy in Mexico

In this section, we offer one political explanation and one instrumental explanation as to why one-half of Mexicans are dissatisfied with how democracy works and why one-third of the public is willing to justify anti-democratic actions. First, we argue that the President Lopez Obrador's attacks on democratic institutions, especially political parties and electoral authorities, undermine trust in democracy. Second, the PAN and PRI governments' failure to deliver on the economy, public security, and corruption have also eroded trust in democracy and Mexico's major political parties.

Elite Attacks on Democratic Institutions

Recent political leaders have discovered they can earn short-term political capital by attacking democratic institutions, especially Mexico's other political parties and its electoral authorities. Despite regular alternations of power by the three main traditional parties before 2018, and the ability of a new party to take the presidency in 2018, the democratic credentials of the National Electoral Institute and the Federal Electoral Tribunal are under constant attack from the current president, which has affected the public's approval for these institutions.

When political representation is effective, citizens are likely to channel their demands via political parties, accept elections as the legitimate path to accessing power, and adhere to election outcomes, whether their party won or lost. The 2006 presidential election, the first after Mexico's transition to democracy in 2000, was the first representation crisis in Mexico's young democracy, which exposed the lack of consolidation of Mexican democracy. After Lopez Obrador, then-candidate of the PRD, lost the election, he denounced the results as fraudulent,¹⁶ organized massive protests, and refused to accept the outcome of the election. The rules of democratic competition were not yet universally accepted, adhered to, nor defended by all actors.

As commitment to democratic principles eroded at the elite level, satisfaction with parties and the party system declined at the mass level. The 2006 post-election crisis provided a compelling narrative that AMLO would use during his next two attempts to win the presidency in 2012 and 2018. He continually claimed that Mexico had been kidnapped by a corrupt elite, a "political mafia" (*mafia del poder*) formed by the PAN, the PRI (the "PRIAN" as he colloquially refers to both parties), and the business sector, which together had allegedly impoverished Mexico through neoliberalism and rampant corruption.

¹⁶ Bruhn, K. 2012. "To hell with your corrupt institutions!": AMLO and populism in Mexico." *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy*: 88-112.

¹⁷ Aparicio-Castillo, F. J. "Análisis estadístico de la elección presidencial de 2006: ¿fraude o errores aleatorios?" *Política y Gobierno*, volumen temático, número 2, 2009, pp. 225-243 (2009).

In the 2012 presidential election, Lopez Obrador was again the PRD's candidate and alleged massive electoral fraud favoring the PRI's candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto. This time, leaders of the PRD did not join him in mobilizing against the elected government. Instead, this more pragmatic faction conceded and helped forge a political agreement with the PRI and PAN, known as the Pact for Mexico, to approve economic reforms after a decade of congressional gridlock. Subsequently, the three major parties created a single legislative alliance that passed structural reforms designed to strengthen economic competition, improve education, and open the energy sector to foreign investment.

While the Pact for Mexico was successful in passing a raft of constitutional changes and enabling legislation, it created two interrelated problems: the increasing ideological convergence of the three major parties in Mexico, and a perception of shared governance, fueled by interparty agreements, that weakened programmatic linkages between citizens and the party system.¹⁸ AMLO condemned the PRD's collaboration with the PRI government and denounced his party for "betraying the people" by approving neoliberal reforms with the PAN and PRD in Congress. He eventually resigned from the party and founded his own political movement, MORENA, in 2014. This political decision was pivotal since AMLO now enjoyed autonomy from party institutions and could run as an anti-establishment candidate.¹⁹

General discontent with political parties as channels of representation drove citizens away from the traditional three-party system.²⁰ As a result, data from the Mexican Election Study²¹ show that voters' evaluations of the PRI and the PAN, based on a zero to ten scale, showed the most negative results since the democratic transition.²² As shown in Figure 7 (Panel A), while PRI supporters maintained a favorable view of their party, other voters' evaluations declined from a high of 6.5 in 2009, when the PAN held the presidency, to a low of 2.0 by the 2018 presidential election. A similar trend emerges for PAN party supporters. Panel B of Figure 7 shows that PAN supporters reported high levels of support for their party (around 8.5) over time, but the party's appeal to other voters fell over the course of the decade to approximately 3.0 by 2018. According to the same study, evaluations about the state of the national economy, corruption, and public security were the most negative since the beginning the democratic transition in Mexico. Many citizens rejected these parties as a part of a corrupt and inept democracy.

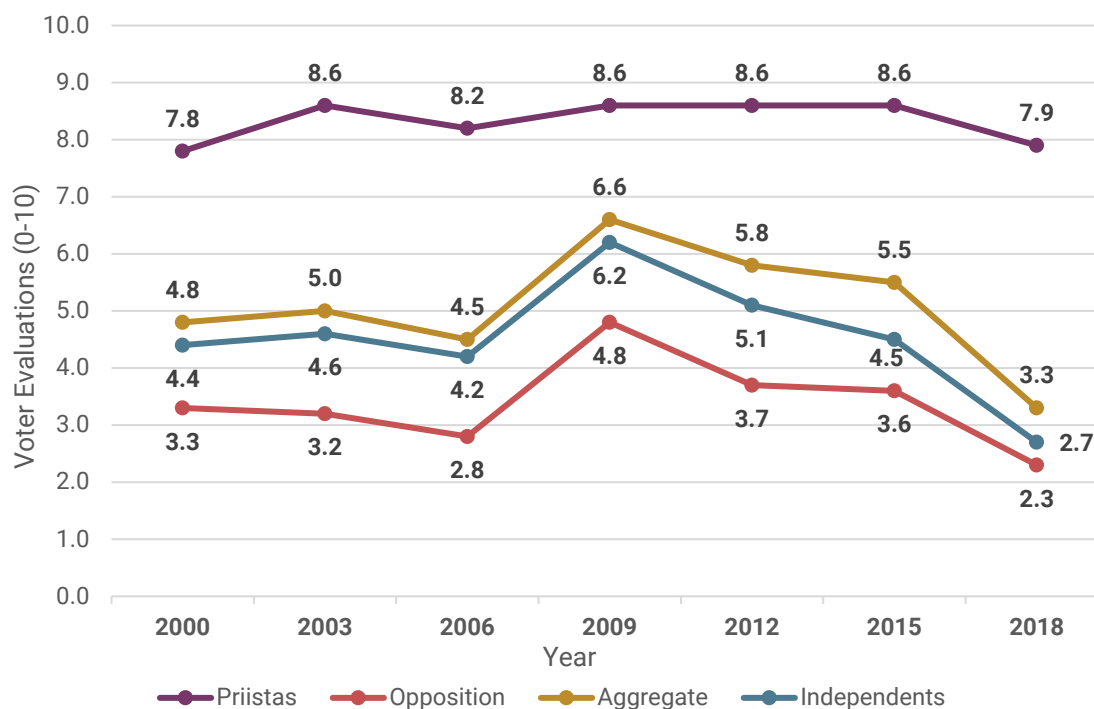
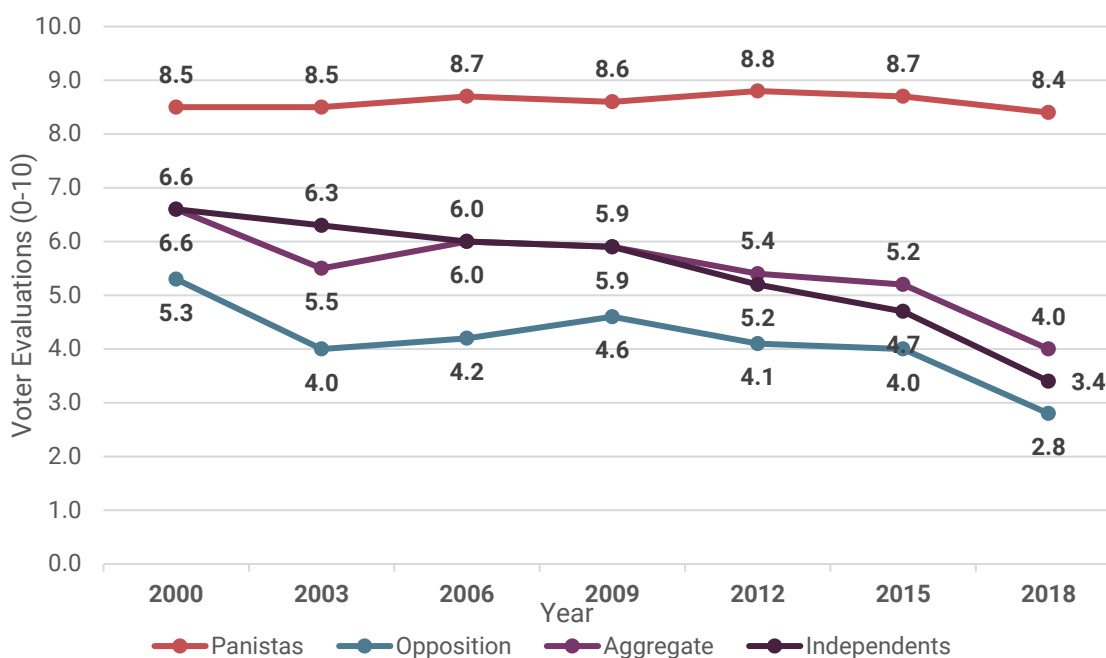
¹⁸ Kitschelt, H., and S. I. Wilkinson, eds. 2007. *Patrons, clients and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. Cambridge University Press; Luna, J. P. 2014. *Segmented representation: Political party strategies in unequal democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Morgan, J. 2011. *Bankrupt Representation and Party System Collapse*. Penn State University Press.

¹⁹ Castro Cornejo, R., S. Ley, and U. Beltrán. 2020. "Anger, Partisanship, and the Activation of Populist Attitudes in Mexico." *Política y Gobierno*, 27 (2). https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S1665-20372020000200006&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en.

²⁰ Aparicio, F. J., and R. Castro Cornejo. 2020. 2018 Elections: A Historical Political Juncture in Mexico. *Política y Gobierno*, 27(2).

²¹ Beltrán, U., Ley, S. and Cornejo, R.C., 2020. Estudio Nacional Electoral (CIDE-CSES) 2018. Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas.

²² Castro Cornejo, R., 2022. The AMLO Voter: Affective Polarization and the Rise of the Left in Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, p.1866802X221147067.

Figure 7: Evaluations of Main Parties in Mexico, 2000–2018**Panel A. Voter Evaluations of the PRI Party****Panel B. Voter Evaluations of the PAN Party**

Source: Mexican Election Study (Beltrán et al. 2020)

Poor Governance in Mexico

The second major explanation that this report advances is an instrumental perspective about democratic dissatisfaction: support for democracy depends on the performance of political, economic, and social institutions.²³ If there is widespread corruption, weak rule of law, and a lack of economic opportunities, the country's political institutions lose public support.²⁴ In other words, if democracy lacks the capacity to improve citizens' well-being, citizens may become disappointed with political institutions, electoral processes, and even with democracy itself. In this context, citizens will disengage from the political system because it does not offer effective representation, it ignores their policy demands, and does not meet public expectations. Given the perception of shared governance by the PRI and PAN between 2000 and 2018, persistent violence and corruption, combined with a lack of economic growth, eroded public trust in such parties, and the broader political system in Mexico. As such, during the 2018 presidential election, the Mexican electorate was ready to be mobilized against the traditional party system.²⁵

Public Insecurity and Violence

One of the greatest failures of the Mexican state in the 21st century has been successive governments' inability to reduce the violence associated with organized crime or to decrease impunity for major crimes, such as kidnapping, extortion, and murder. The problem is not simply that the Mexican police are unable to meet the challenges of fighting organized crime groups. Rather, the state lacks the capacity to even attempt to find the bodies of those who have been kidnapped and presumably murdered.²⁶ Investigating individual homicides is out of reach and limiting the flow of drugs to the United States is an unattainable goal at present. Indeed, in many states and municipalities, political officials are involved in protecting criminals. Mexican government officials have not been willing or able to spend the resources to create necessary infrastructure to combat crime. As a result, there is insufficient support for prosecutors, police officers are undertrained and underpaid, and many local police forces lack a dedicated detective class.

An open war against drug cartels was launched in 2007 when the newly elected President Felipe Calderón dispatched several thousands of soldiers to different Mexican states to try and end drug violence. Since then, the country has experienced an enormous increase in the homicide rate, as shown in Figure 8. Peña Nieto's term (2012-2018) was the most violent in Mexico's recent history, although it appears that these figures will be surpassed during the AMLO administration. During the second part of Peña Nieto's six-year term, his administration

²³ Kitschelt, H. 1992. "The formation of party systems in East Central Europe." *Politics & Society* 20 (1): 7–50. Przeworski, A. 1991. *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁴ Evans, G., and S. Whitefield. 1995. "The politics and economics of democratic commitment: Support for democracy in transition societies." *British Journal of Political Science* 25 (4): 485–515.

²⁵ Castro Cornejo, R., 2022. The AMLO Voter: Affective Polarization and the Rise of the Left in Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, p.1866802X221147067

²⁶ As of May 2022, roughly 100,000 people are currently missing and presumed dead. Martínez, C. 2022. "Van 100 mil desaparecidos; 'paren este dolor, claman.'" *Reforma*, May 17, 2022. <https://www.reforma.com/van-100-mil-desaparecidos-paren-este-dolor-claman/ar2403914>.

faced major security scandals, including the disappearance and presumed murder of 43 students from a rural teachers' college in the town of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, which shook the public's views about the state of public insecurity.

Figure 8: Homicide Rate (2000-2018)



Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography.

Crime victimization and perceptions of insecurity are associated with decreased support for democracy and democratic institutions.²⁷ Research shows that citizens who live in fear are less likely to participate in politics.²⁸ This is because low confidence in institutions makes voters feel disenchanting with the political system, which can make voters more cynical and decrease their faith in their ability to make a difference through their vote.²⁹ Moreover, this lack of trust in the state to provide basic protection depresses support for democratic institutions, civic space, political parties, and the election process.³⁰ Rising crime and insecurity can also make the public more likely to approve of increased military involvement in public security operations and increase demand for iron-fist policies.³¹ Moreover, violence can legitimize an authoritarian takeover of government, particularly when political parties are viewed as illegitimate.

²⁷ Carreras, M. 2013. "The Impact of Criminal Violence on Regime Legitimacy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 48 (3): 85–107.

²⁸ Ley, S. 2017. "To Vote or Not to Vote: How Criminal Violence Shapes Electoral Participation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62 (9): 1963–1990. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002717708600>.

²⁹ Ezrow, L., and G. Xezonakis. 2016. "Satisfaction with democracy and voter turnout: A temporal perspective." *Party Politics* 22 (1): 3–14; Karp, J. A., and S. A. Banducci. 2008. "Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour." *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (2): 311–334.

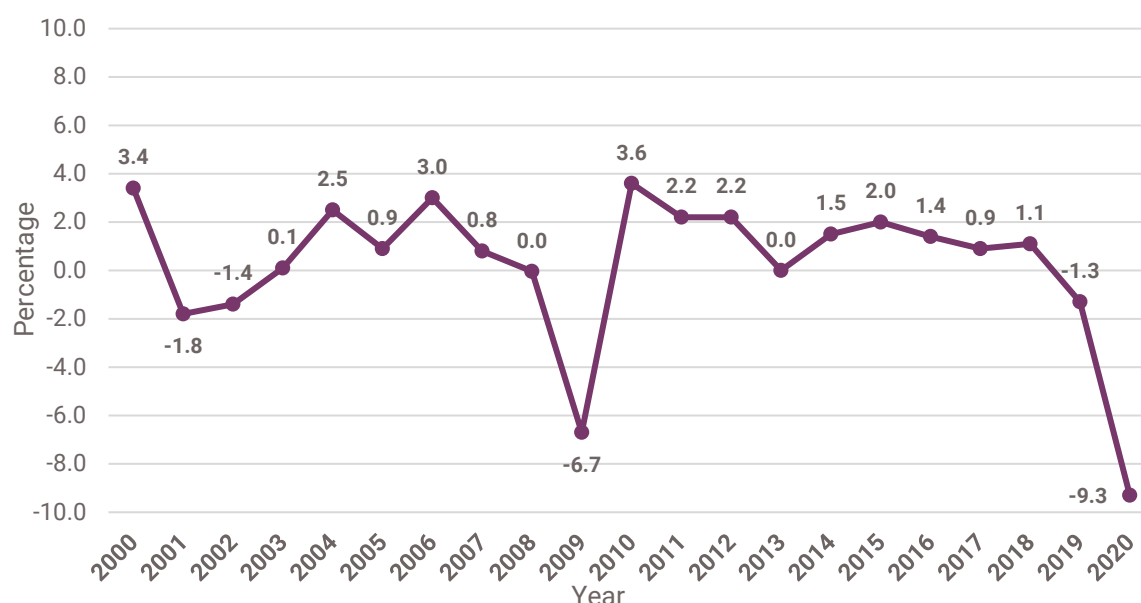
³⁰ National Institute of Statistics and Geography 2021. "National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE) 2021." <http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/envipe/2021/>.

³¹ Flores-Macías, G.A., and J. Zarkin 2021. "The Militarization of Law Enforcement: Evidence from Latin America." *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (2): 519–538; Visconti, G. 2020. "Policy Preferences after Crime Victimization: Panel and Survey Evidence from Latin America." *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (4): 1481–1495.

The Lack of Economic Development and Labor Informality

The second unsolvable issue for Mexico's young democracy is providing greater employment opportunities and accelerating wage growth. While one of Mexico's comparative advantages in the global economy is its lower wage structure, the nation has experienced low economic growth since at least 2000 (Figure 9). Mexico is among the worst performers in improving wages. Since a large percentage of Mexicans earn only slightly more than the minimum wage, the connection between a healthy democracy and strong economic growth that promotes individual prosperity is broken.

Figure 9: Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate Per Capita, 2000-2020



Source: World Development Indicators.

Informality is another unsolved economic challenge. Informality, defined as employment that is not officially registered in which the worker does not pay taxes or receive state benefits, has been a challenge across Latin America since the 1980s. In Mexico, this problem has continued without significant change, despite the growth of the country's manufacturing and service sectors. Because the Mexican state stopped nationalizing companies that were faltering to protect employment, the percentage of formal sector workers fell in the 1980s and has not returned to prior levels. In fact, about half of the economically-active population does not enjoy formal employment (Figure A3.3 in Annex 3).

Having such a large proportion of the working population in informal jobs has complex political consequences. First, this situation presents challenges for workers, especially street vendors, who are coerced into paying unofficial fees by both informal leaders and municipal government officials to ply their trade in public spaces.³² The informal sector also harms the nation's tax

³² Langston, J. and Castro Cornejo, R., "Why Do Clientelist Brokers Go Rogue? Parties, Politicians, and Intermediaries in Mexico," *Perspectives on Politics*, pp.1-16.

base, which results in lower government spending on infrastructure and social services, which in turn leads to lower formal employment and fewer government services. Formal employees who are registered on payroll automatically contribute to a pension fund, can use public funds to buy a home, and enjoy protection against losing their jobs. Informal workers enjoy none of these benefits, and when the economy falters, they are among the first to lose their jobs. This uncertainty leads many to support political leaders who offer small, short-term benefits, such as packages of food,³³ instead of political parties that propose policies that promote longer-term growth. The lack of responsiveness to these issues weakens citizens' ties to political parties and the democratic system.

When governments are unable to improve economic well-being, people are less likely to engage in politics and more likely to distrust major political institutions.³⁴ Thus, public disillusionment in Mexico due to the lack of economic growth, a livable wage, and well-paid employment is likely to have important implications for democratic attitudes and behaviors.

Political Corruption and Impunity

Mexico has long been known for corruption in government procurement, licensing, and construction projects. Bribes are a normal part of doing business: citizens bribe the bureaucracy to speed up paperwork and police expect small payoffs to ignore violations. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Mexico 124 out of 180 nations. Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon and efforts to reduce its prevalence in Mexico's government have been made since at least the 1980s. Despite these efforts, petty corruption continues to be an important concern in Mexico.

Political corruption is also widespread. Politicians who engage in corrupt practices rarely face prosecution. From 2015 to 2018, Peña Nieto's administration made efforts to improve the prosecution of corruption. During that time, accusations of corruption dogged PRI governors and other government officials. An unprecedented number of PRI governors were prosecuted or incarcerated for corruption, despite sharing a party with the president. These prosecutions affected not only Peña Nieto and the individual governors, but also the PRI's party brand because individual scandals were seen as evidence of a larger network of corruption that enabled malfeasance.³⁵ Peña Nieto himself was also involved in several scandals. His wife purchased a dramatically underpriced house, the "Casa Blanca," built by a construction company that had received contracts when Peña Nieto was the governor of Mexico State. Although Peña Nieto's government initiated an investigation and concluded that no laws had been violated, this scandal was widely covered by the media and is considered a central explanation for declines in Peña Nieto's presidential approval.³⁶

³³ Castro Cornejo, R. and Beltrán, U., 2022. "Who receives electoral gifts? It depends on question wording: experimental evidence from Mexico," *Political Behavior*, 44(1), pp.227-255.

³⁴ Gibson, J. L. 1996. "Political and economic markets: Changes in the connections between attitudes toward political democracy and a market economy within the mass culture of Russia and Ukraine." *The Journal of Politics* 58 (4): 954–984.

³⁵ Ang, M. 2020. "Criminal contagion: How governor detentions weakened the PRI." *Política y gobierno* 27 (2).

³⁶ Buendía, J., and J. Marquez. 2019. "¿Por qué el tsunami? Un relato analítico de la elección presidencial de 2018 a través de agregación de encuestas." Paper presented in the Política y Gobierno Workshop.

Research has shown that corruption depresses trust in political institutions and makes voters feel disenchanting with the political system, which can decrease voters' beliefs that their votes matter.³⁷ If voters do not trust their government, are dissatisfied with its performance, and do not believe they can make a difference through their vote, this can undermine support for democracy more broadly.³⁸

Conclusion

This report examined public attitudes toward democracy in Mexico. While normative support and satisfaction with democracy remain relatively high, a substantial proportion of citizens expressed support for executive aggrandizement and military interventions under some conditions. We also found weak support for political tolerance and inclusion among a significant share of respondents. The report traced these attitudes to a mix of elite attacks on democratic institutions and the failure of the government to address persistent challenges related to economic development, violence, and corruption.

Mexicans have shown gradually lower satisfaction with their governments, parties, and institutions from 2000 through today, and this lack of support stems in large part from the failure of party politics to address major problems. Dwindling citizen support, combined with the willingness of the current president to disparage democratic institutions, does not bode well for democratic support in the short term.

³⁷ Anderson, C. J., and Y. V. Tverdova. 2003. "Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 91-109; Ezrow, L., and G. Xezonakis. 2016. "Satisfaction with democracy and voter turnout: A temporal perspective." *Party Politics* 22 (1): 3-14.

³⁸ Chong, A., A. De La O, D. Karlan, and L. Wantchekon. 2015. "Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope?" *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 55-71.

References

- Aguilar Rivera, J. A. 2022. "Dinámicas de la autocratización: México 2021". *Revista de ciencia política*, 42(2): 355-382.
- Albertus, M., and G. Grossman. 2021. "The Americas: When Do Voters Support Power Grabs?" *Journal of Democracy* 32 (2): 116-131.
- Anderson, C. J., & Tverdova, Y. V. 2003. "Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 91-109.
- Anderson, C. J., A. Blais, S. Bowler, T. Donovan, and O. Listhaug. 2005. *Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy*. Oxford University Press.
- Ang, M. 2020. "Criminal contagion: How governor detentions weakened the PRI." *Política y gobierno* 27 (2).
- Aparicio, F. J., and R. Castro Cornejo. 2020. 2018 Elections: A Historical Political Juncture in Mexico. *Política y Gobierno*, 27(2).
- Aparicio-Castillo, F. J. 2009. "Análisis estadístico de la elección presidencial de 2006: ¿fraude o errores aleatorios?" *Política y Gobierno* 2: 225-243.
- Beltrán, U., Ley, S. and Cornejo, R.C., 2020. Estudio Nacional Electoral (CIDE-CSES) 2018. Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas.
- Bruhn, K. 2012. "'To hell with your corrupt institutions!': AMLO and populism in Mexico." *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy*: 88-112.
- Buendía, J., and J. Marquez. 2019. "¿Por qué el tsunami? Un relato analítico de la elección presidencial de 2018 a través de agregación de encuestas." Paper presented in the Política y Gobierno Workshop.
- 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.
- Carreras, M. 2013. "The Impact of Criminal Violence on Regime Legitimacy in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review* 48 (3): 85–107.
- 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.
- Castro Cornejo, R., 2019. "Partisanship and question-wording effects: experimental evidence from Latin America," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 83(1), pp.26-45.
- Castro Cornejo, R., 2022. "The AMLO Voter: Affective Polarization and the Rise of the Left in Mexico," *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, p.1866802X221147067.

Castro Cornejo, R. and Beltrán, U., 2022. "Who receives electoral gifts? It depends on question wording: experimental evidence from Mexico," *Political Behavior*, 44(1), pp.227-255.

Castro Cornejo, R., S. Ley, and U. Beltrán. 2020. "Anger, Partisanship, and the Activation of Populist Attitudes in Mexico." *Política y Gobierno*, 27 (2).
https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S1665-20372020000200006&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en.

Chong, A., A. De La O, D. Karlan and L. Wantchekon. 2015. "Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope?" *Journal of Politics* 77 (1):55–71.

Evans, G., and S. Whitefield. 1995. "The politics and economics of democratic commitment: Support for democracy in transition societies." *British Journal of Political Science* 25 (4): 485–515.

Ezrow, L., and G. Xezonakis. 2016. "Satisfaction with democracy and voter turnout: A temporal perspective." *Party Politics* 22 (1): 3-14.

Flores-Macías, G. A. 2018. "Mexico's PRI: The Resilience of an Authoritarian Successor Party and Its Consequences for Democracy." In Loxton, J., and S. Mainwaring (Eds.). *Life After Dictatorship: Authoritarian Successor Parties Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 257-283. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108560566.010>.

Gibson, J. L. 1996. "Political and economic markets: Changes in the connections between attitudes toward political democracy and a market economy within the mass culture of Russia and Ukraine." *The Journal of Politics* 58 (4): 954–984.

Helmke, G. and S. Levitsky. 2006. *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Karp, J. A., and S. A. Banducci. 2008. "Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour." *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (2): 311-334.

Kitschelt, H. 1992. "The formation of party systems in East Central Europe." *Politics & Society* 20 (1): 7–50.

Kitschelt, H., and S. I. Wilkinson, eds. 2007. *Patrons, clients and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. Cambridge University Press.

Langston, J. and Castro Cornejo, R., "Why Do Clientelist Brokers Go Rogue? Parties, Politicians, and Intermediaries in Mexico," *Perspectives on Politics*, pp.1-16.

Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How democracies die*. New York: Broadway Books.

Ley, S. 2017. "To Vote or Not to Vote: How Criminal Violence Shapes Electoral Participation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62 (9): 1963-1990.

Lippman, W. 1925. *The Phantom Public*. Transaction Publishers.

Luna, J. P. 2014. *Segmented representation: Political party strategies in unequal democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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.

Martínez, C. 2022. "Van 100 mil desaparecidos; 'paren este dolor, claman.'" *Reforma*, May 17, 2022. <https://www.reforma.com/van-100-mil-desaparecidos-paren-este-dolor-claman/ar2403914>.

Monsiváis-Carrillo, A. 2023. Happy Winners, Sore Partisans? Political Trust, Partisanship, and the Populist Assault on Electoral Integrity in Mexico. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 15(1), 72-95

Morgan, J. 2011. *Bankrupt Representation and Party System Collapse*. Penn State University Press.

National Institute of Statistics and Geography. n.d. "National Survey of Civic Culture (ENCUCI) 2020." <http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/encuci/2020/>.

National Institute of Statistics and Geography 2021. "National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE) 2021." <http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/envipe/2021/>.

Petersen, G., and Somuano, F. 2021. "¿Desdemocratización mexicana? Pandemia, hiperpresidencialismo e intentos por reconstruir un sistema de partido dominante." *Revista de ciencia política*, 41(2): 353-376.

Przeworski, A. 1991. *Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.

Sánchez Talanquer, M. 2020. "Mexico 2019: Personalistic Politics and Neoliberalism from the Left." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 40 (2).

Sánchez-Talanquer, M., and K. F. Greene. 2021. "Is Mexico Falling into the Authoritarian Trap?" *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4): 56-71.

Visconti, G. 2020. "Policy Preferences after Crime Victimization: Panel and Survey Evidence from Latin America." *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (4): 1481–1495.

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.³⁹ 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>

³⁹ 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 Mexico, 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 Mexico, 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 and JC15A were included in the survey. Item JC15A was administered to a quarter of the sample. 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 y 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 Analysis 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

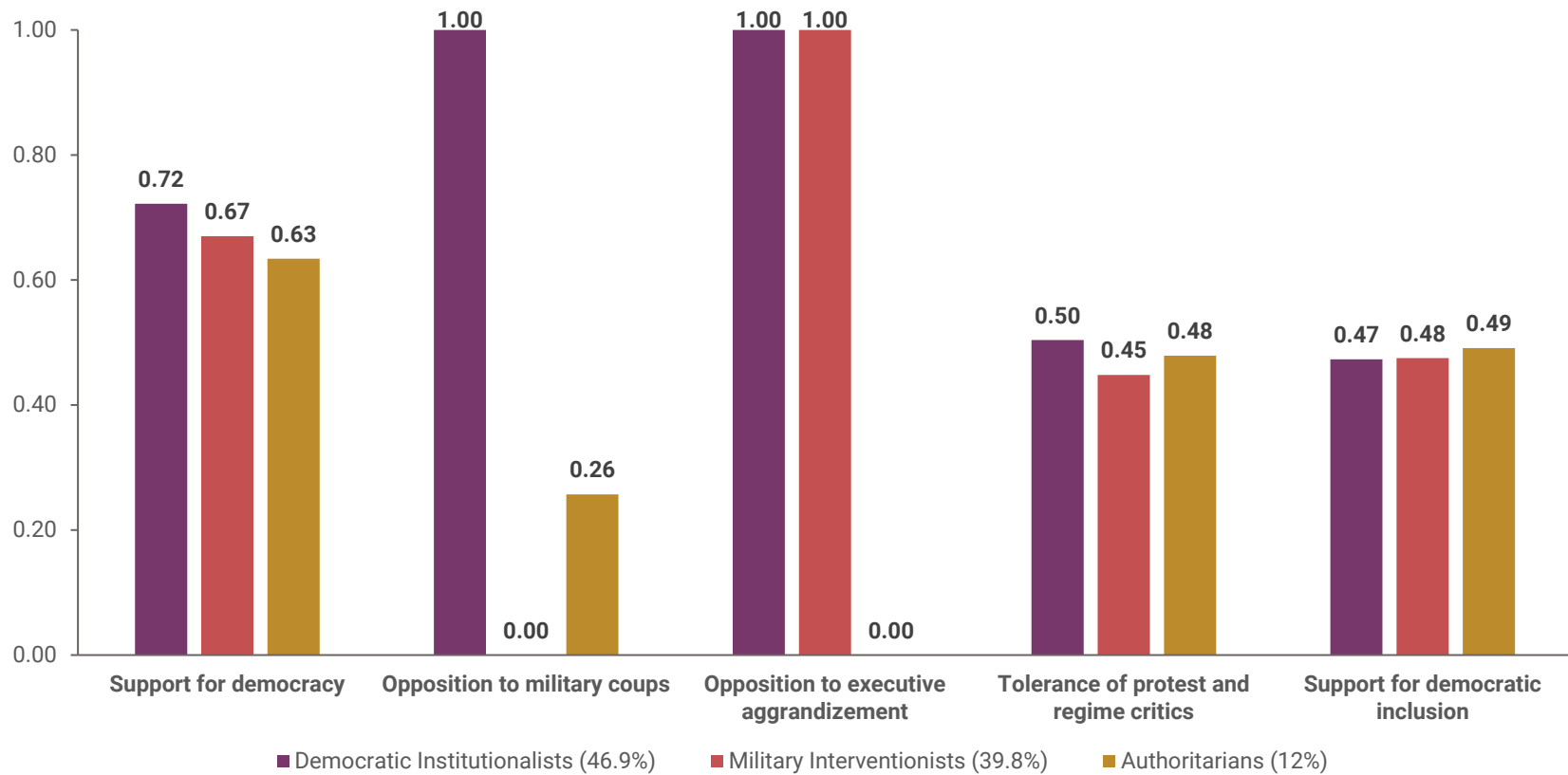


Figure A2.2: 2014 Cluster Results

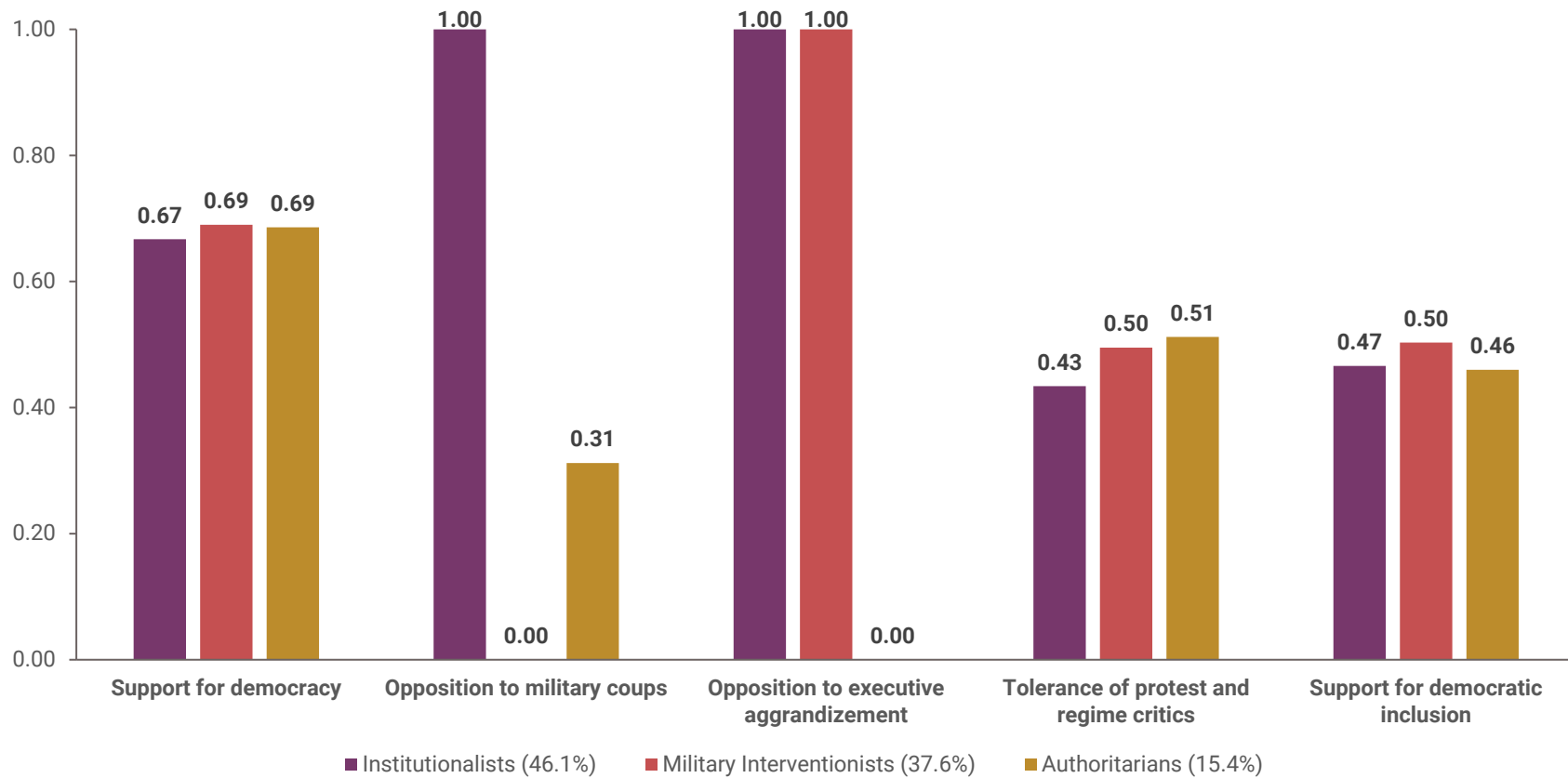


Figure A2.3: 2017 Cluster Results

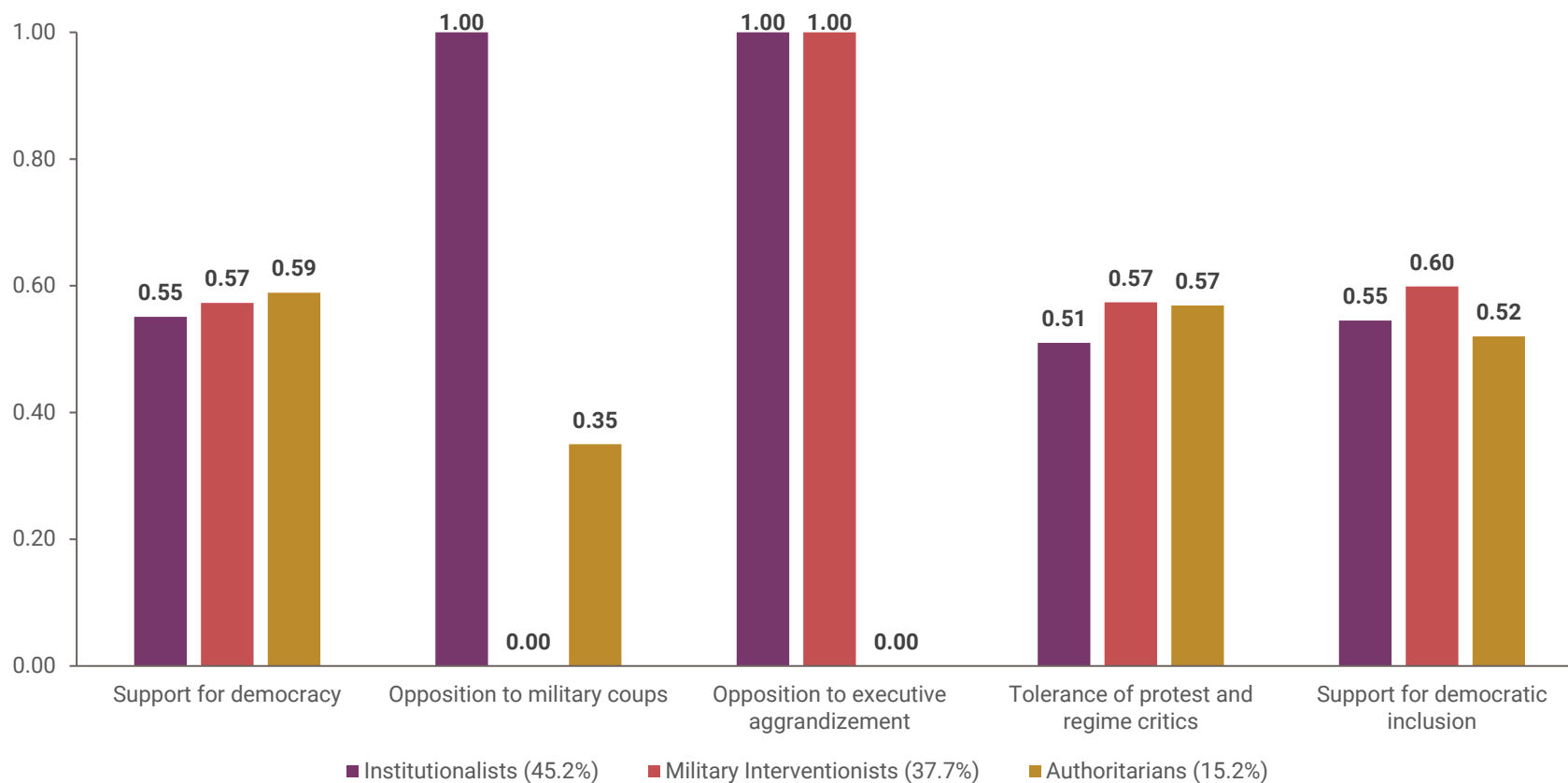


Figure A2.4: 2019 Cluster Results

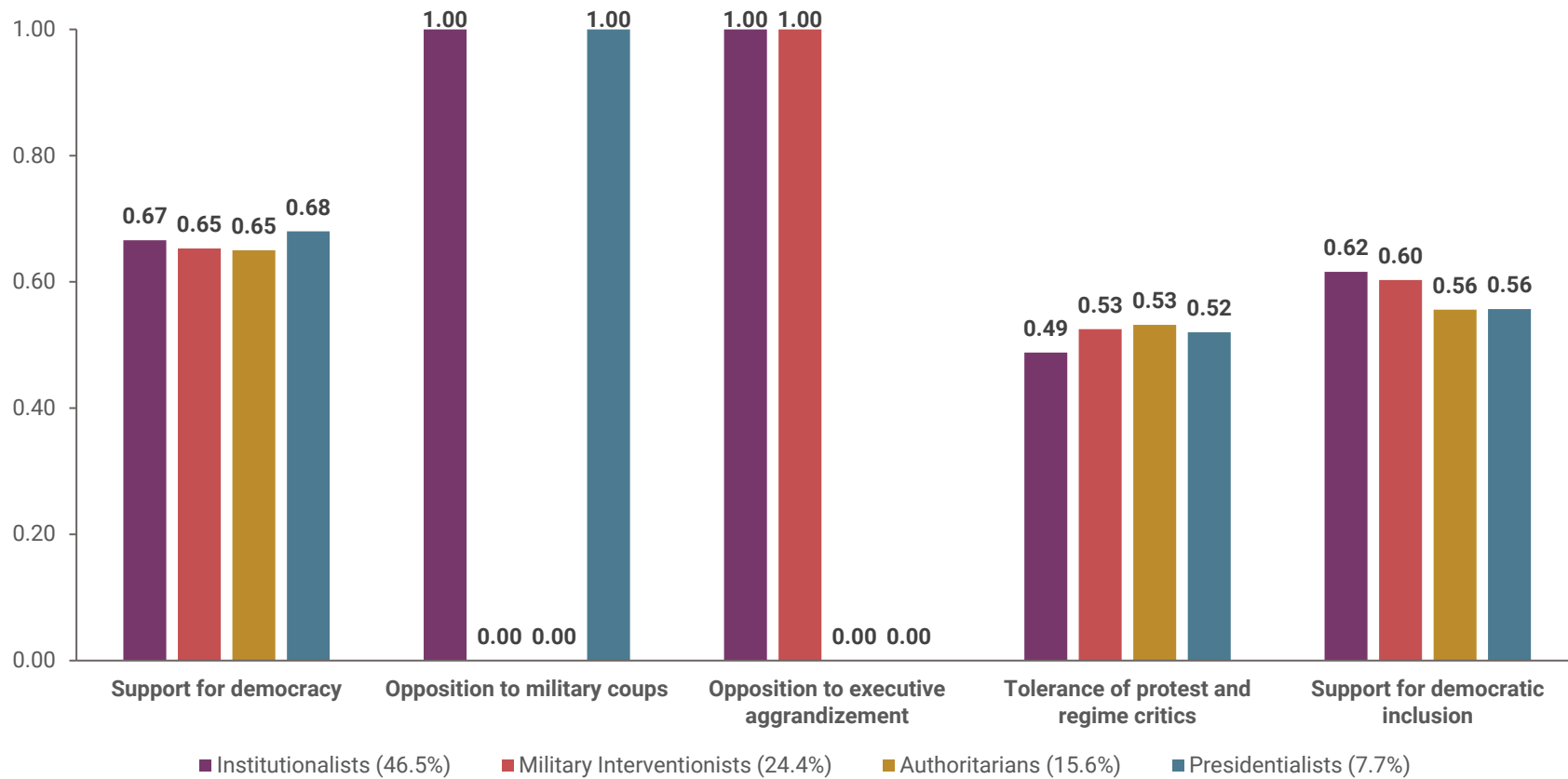
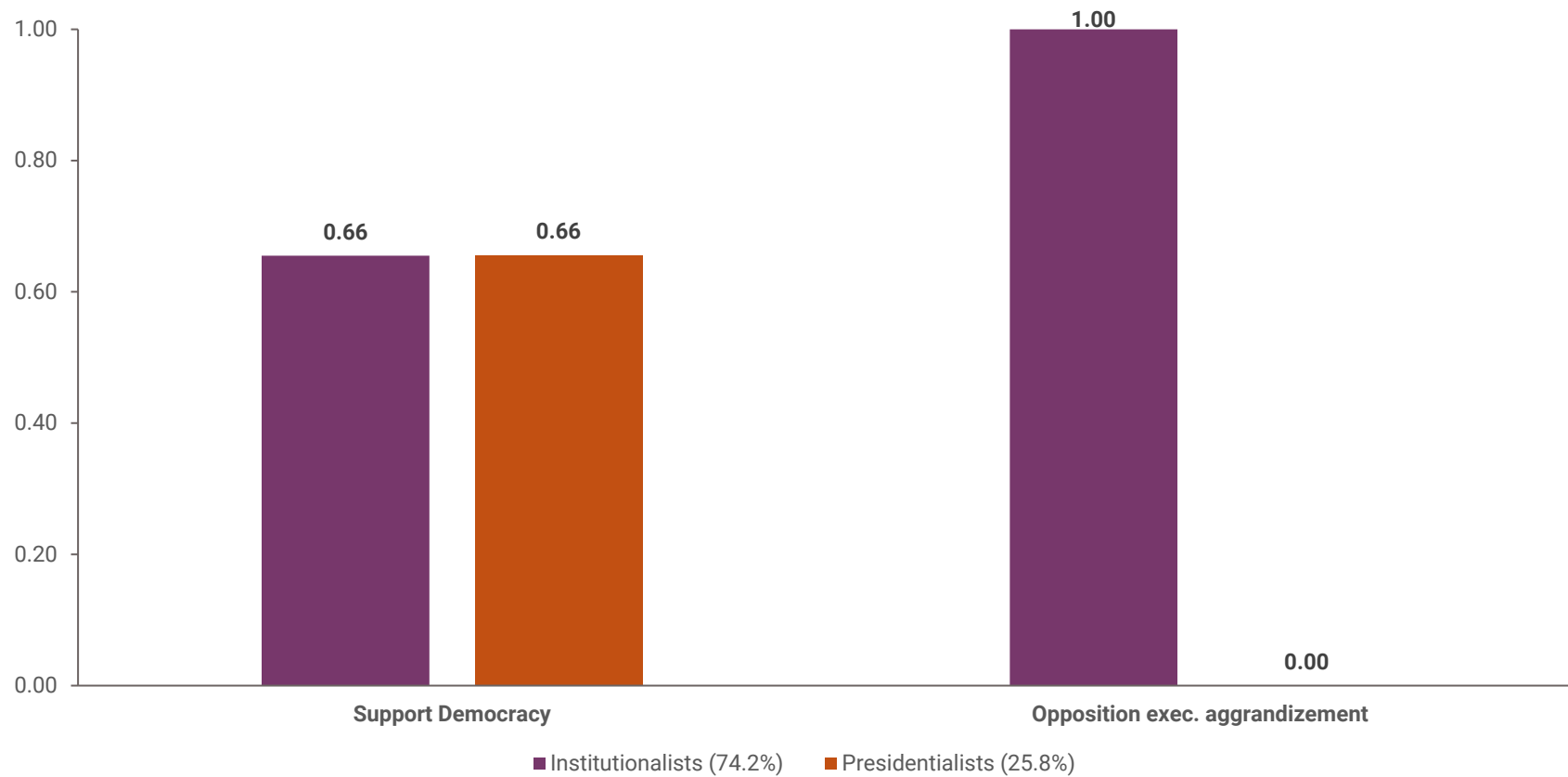


Figure A2.5: 2021 Cluster Results



Annex 3. Supplementary Tables and Figures

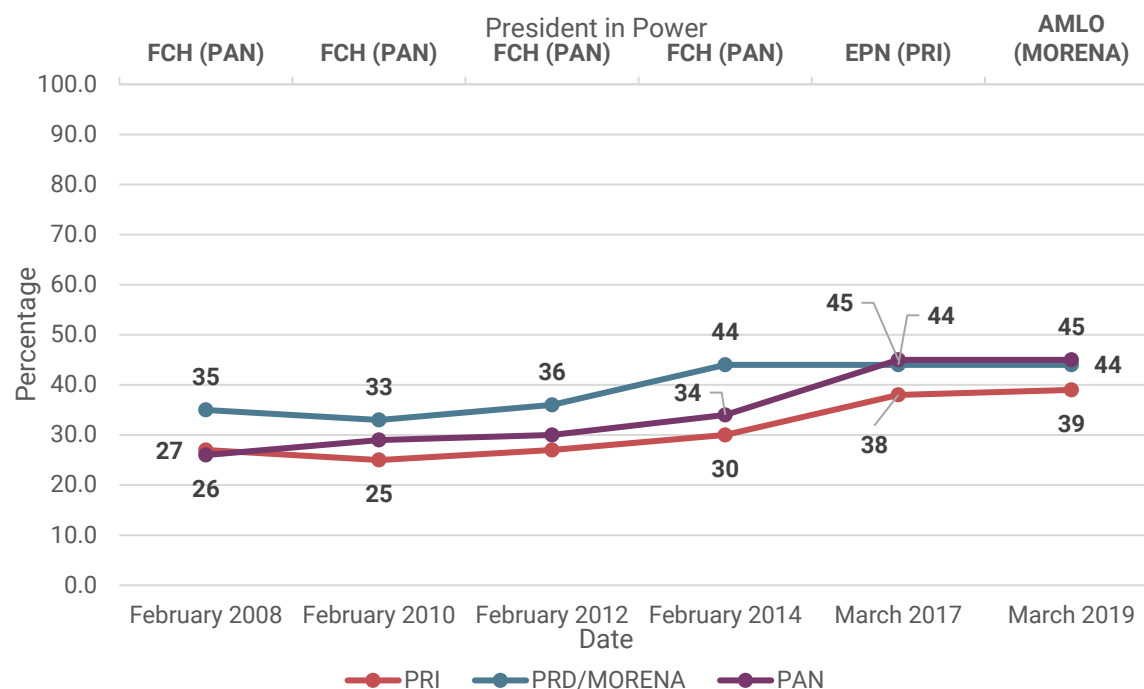
Table A3.1: Cluster Average Characteristics, 2019

CHARACTERISTIC	INSTITUTIONALISTS	MILITARY INTERVENTIONISTS	AUTHORITARIANS	PRESIDENTIALISTS
Female	49.52%	55.96%**	50.81%	42.98%*
Age: 18-29	29.93%	39.9%***	30.49%	19.83%***
Age: 30-59	48.03%	47.15%	52.85%	58.68%**
Age: 60+	22.04%***	12.95%***	16.67%	21.49%
Race: White	13.33%*	17.88%	15.45%	19.01%
Race: Mestizo	55.37%***	49.74%	43.09%**	46.28%
Race: Indigenous	8.03%**	10.10%	12.20%	10.74%
Race: Black	4.49%	3.89%	5.28%	2.48%
Race: Others	18.78%*	18.39%	23.98%	21.49%
Rural Area	20.27%	19.69%	23.17%	19.01%
Wealth Index Quintile - Poorest	17.79%***	22.37%	29.34%***	27.12%
Wealth Index Quintile - 2	18.76%	17.63%	20.25%	21.19%
Wealth Index Quintile - 3	20.14%	18.42%	21.90%	13.56%*
Wealth Index Quintile - 4	22.90%	22.63%	15.7%**	18.64%

CHARACTERISTIC	INSTITUTIONALISTS	MILITARY INTERVENTIONISTS	AUTHORITARIANS	PRESIDENTIALISTS
Wealth Index Quintile - Richest	20.41%	18.95%	12.81%***	19.49%
Years of Education	10.39***	9.99	8.62***	9.44
Victim of a crime in the past 12 months	32.24%	33.94%	33.33%	31.40%
Percentage of people in neighborhood who was a victim of a crime	33.84%*	32.54%	31.58%	30.41%**
Number of corruption instances	52.65%**	71.5%**	62.60%	57.02%
Percentage of people in neighborhood who was a victim of a corruption instance	31.60%**	33.86%***	32.65%	30.46%**
Approve the performance of the executive	66.43%***	69.92%	77.78%***	78.15%**
Understand important political issues	46.44%	44.56%	53.11%*	55.56%*
Believe that those who govern are interested in what people think	48.39%**	47.62%	60.17%***	63.03%***
Voted in the last presidential election	79.73%	77.98%	77.64%	85.12%
Participated in a demonstration or protest march in the past 12 months	5.58%**	6.22%	8.54%	12.4%*
Attended a city council meeting in the past 12 months	11.16%	12.69%	10.98%	10.74%
Attends meetings of a community improvement association	27.76%*	30.83%	33.33%	34.71%
Voted authoritarian candidate	58.19%***	64.12%	76.96%***	74.76%**

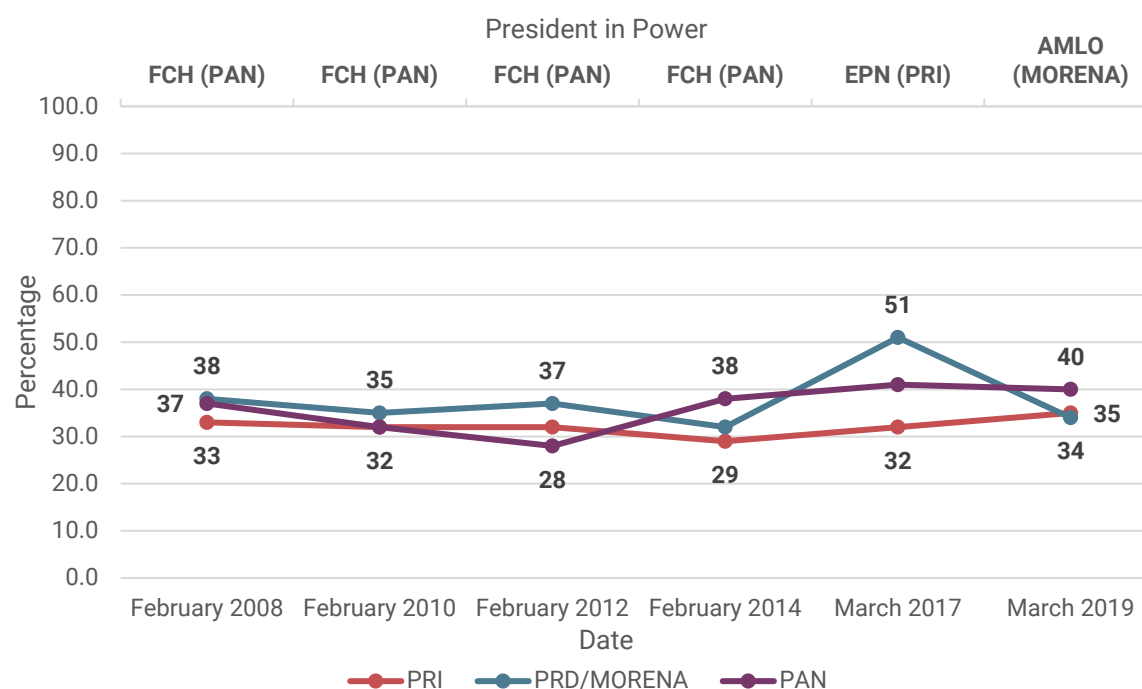
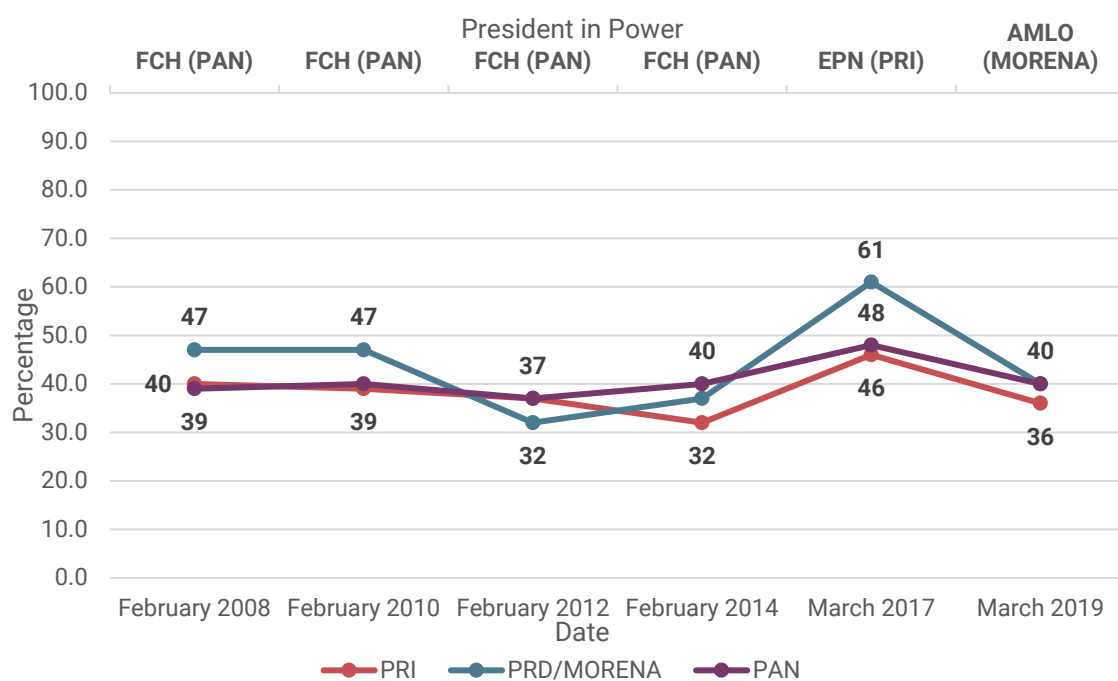
Note: Tests of statistical significance between individuals in each cluster versus all other individuals. Bootstrapped std. errors with 500 replications.

* = $p < 0.1$, ** = $p < 0.05$, *** = $p < 0.01$.

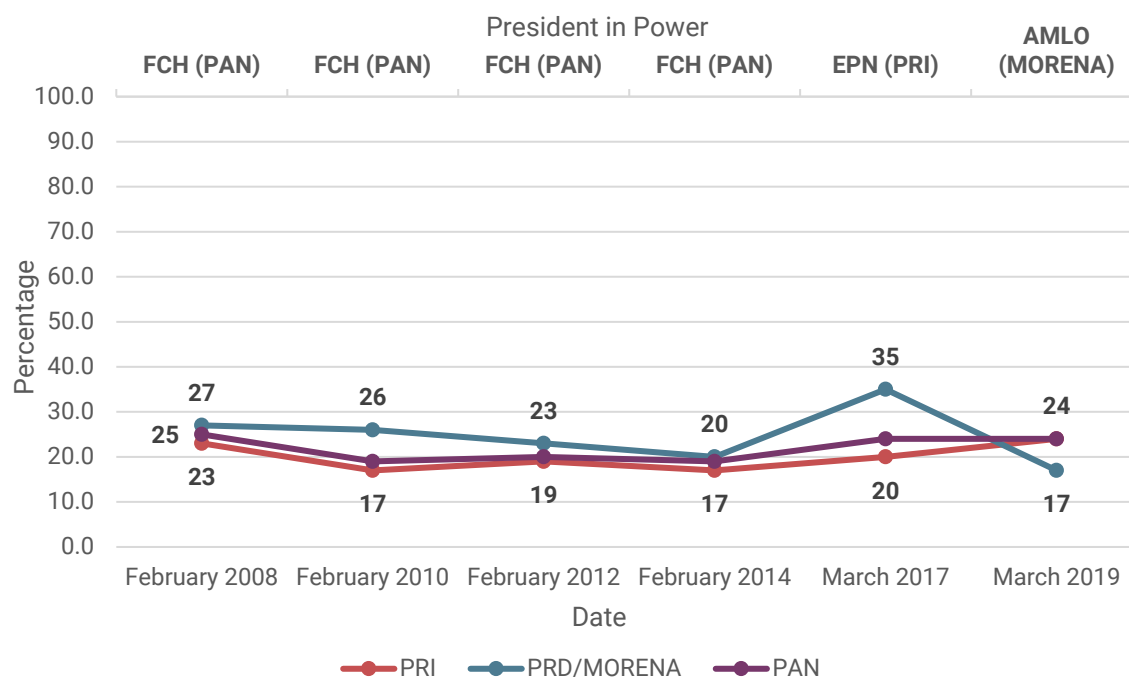
Figure A3.1: Support for Homosexuals Right to Run for Office by Partisan Group, 2008–2019

Note: Support calculated by summing the percentages of responses eight, nine, and ten. FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

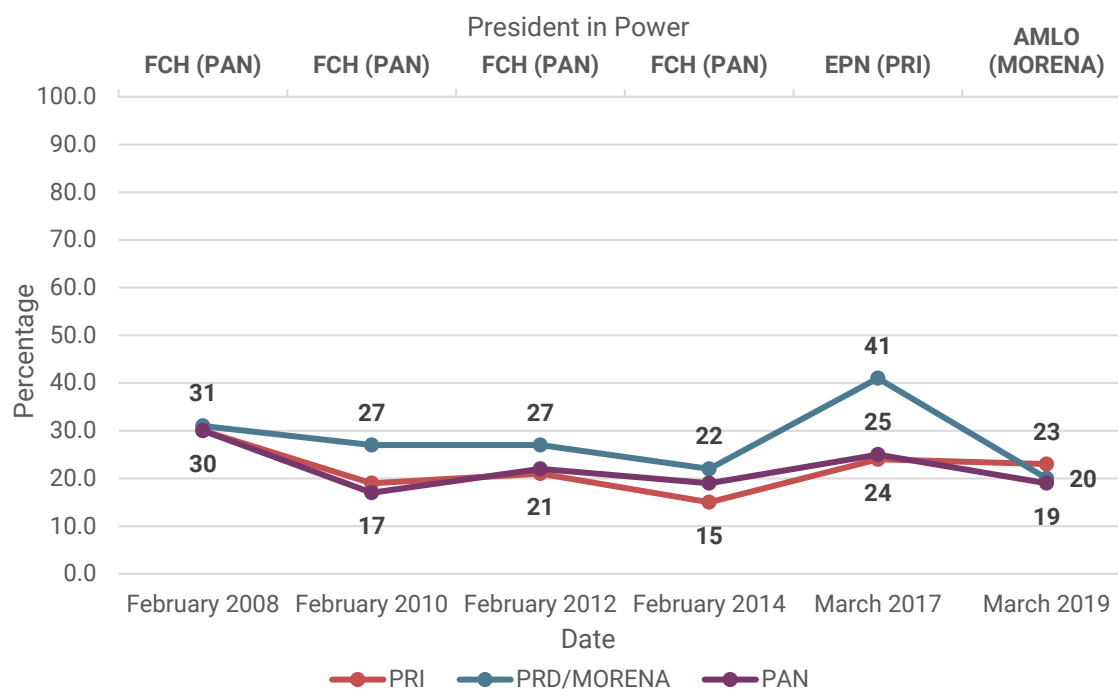
Source: AmericasBarometer.

Figure A3.2: Tolerance of Protest and Regime Critics, 2008–2019**Panel A. Right to Vote****Panel B. Right to Peaceful Demonstrations**

Panel C. Right to Run for Office



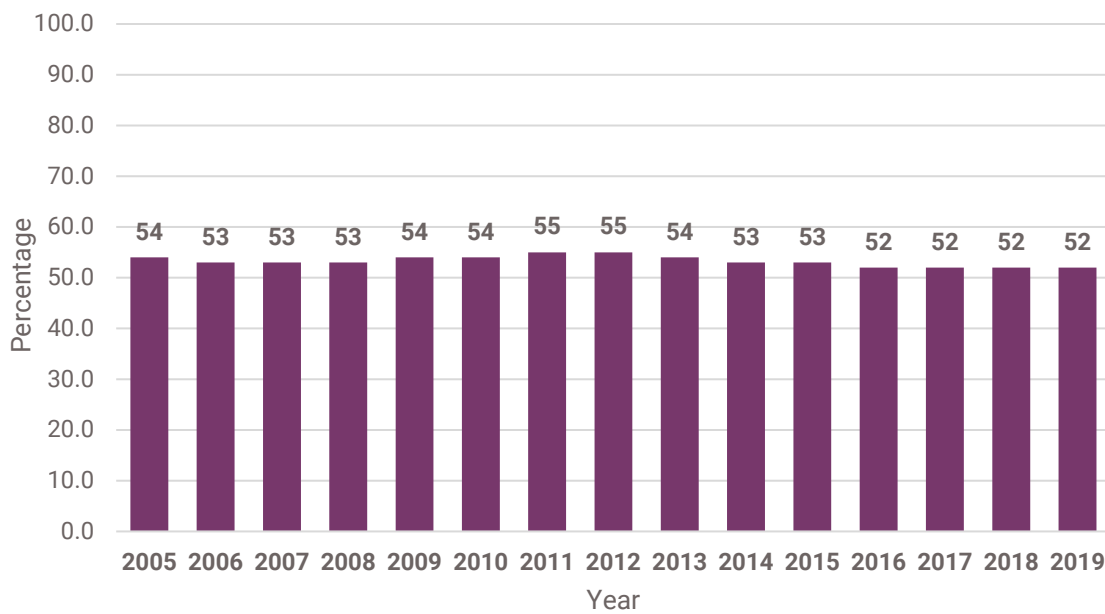
Panel D. Right to Make Speeches



Note: Support calculated by summing the percentages of responses eight, nine, and ten. FCH = Felipe Calderón Hinojosa; EPN = Enrique Peña Nieto; AMLO = Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Source: AmericasBarometer

Figure A3.3: Percentage of the Economically Active Population That Works in the Informal Sector in Mexico, 2005–2019



Source: National Institute of Statistics and Geography.