

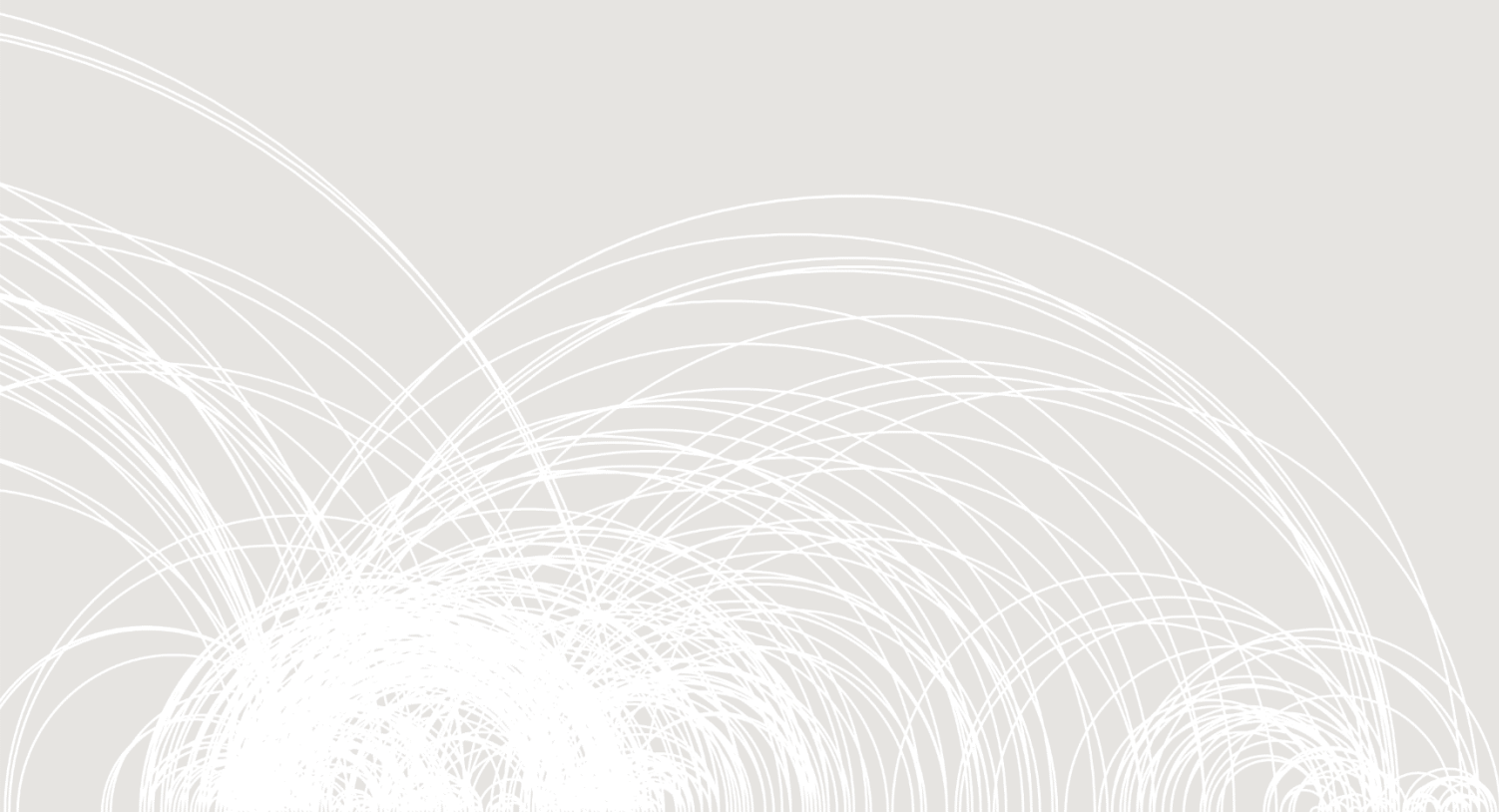
FINAL REPORT

APRIL 2023

Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Paraguay Report

Presented by:

NORC at the University of Chicago



Analysis of Trends in Democratic Attitudes: Paraguay Report

Authors:

Andrés Carrizosa, Professor and Researcher, Instituto Desarrollo

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
Trends in Democratic Attitudes	3
Party Factions, Public Opinion, and Democratic Resilience	7
1989-2008: Transition to Democracy and Colorado Party Dominance	8
2008-2018: A Fractured Left-wing Alliance and the Return of the Colorado Party	9
Conclusion	14
References	16
Annex 1. Methodology	17
Annex 2. 2012–2021 Cluster Analysis Results	20

List of Exhibits

Figure 1. Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2019	5
Figure 2. Support for Democracy, 2012-2019	11
Figure 3. Opposition and Support for Executive Aggrandizement, 2012-2019	12
Figure 4. Opposition and Support for Military Coups, 2012-2019	13
Figure A2.1. 2012 Cluster Results	21
Figure A2.2. 2014 Cluster Results	22
Figure A2.3. 2016 Cluster Results	23
Figure A2.4. 2019 Cluster Results	24
Figure A2.5. 2021 Cluster Results	25

List of Tables

Table 1. Mean Values for Key Variables, 2019 Survey	6
Table A1.1. AmericasBarometer Items and Underlying Democratic Attitudes	17

Acronyms

CLPR	Closed-List Proportional Representation
HDBScan	Hierarchical Density-Based Clustering
LAPOP	Latin American Public Opinion Project
OLPR	Open-List Proportional Representation
UNACE	Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos

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 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 Paraguay. It was authored by Andrés Carrizosa (Professor and Researcher, Instituto Desarrollo). 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

This report analyzes the evolution of citizens' democratic attitudes in Paraguay and assesses how attitudes might contribute to democratic stability. The report first discusses the results of NORC's cluster analysis of AmericasBarometer survey data between 2012 and 2021, which aims to group citizens into "clusters" with distinct democratic attitudes. Three main findings emerge from the cluster analysis. First, institutionalists who oppose both executive aggrandizement (actions taken by presidents to undermine checks on their authority) and military coups make up the largest cluster family in most survey years, which is a positive finding for democratic resilience. Second, the share of institutionalists increased substantially between 2012 and 2019, strengthening support for democratic processes and institutions. Third, citizens with less-democratic attitudes are divided into several distinct clusters, which may contribute to the durability of democracy in Paraguay.

The report provides historical information to contextualize the cluster analysis results. The analysis highlights a central feature of modern political competition in Paraguay: factionalization, or the struggles of factions within the leading parties. The report documents factional competition from the period surrounding the transition to democracy in the late-1980s through more recent decades and suggests that internal party competition has helped sustain democracy at critical moments. These historical trends are then linked to the cluster analysis by suggesting that factionalization may help to explain why non-democrats are distributed across major parties, rather than concentrated in one political party. This feature of Paraguayan politics may foster democratic resilience.

This report is organized as follows. First, it introduces the cluster analysis methodology and presents the key findings. In addition to tracking the relative size of cluster families over time, the report shows that while clusters are distinct in terms of their attitudes toward executive aggrandizement and military coups, they are similar when it comes to political tolerance, democratic inclusion, and support for democracy. Next, the report examines historical trends that shed light on the findings from the cluster analysis, focusing specifically on how party factionalization may contribute to divisions among respondents in the less democratic clusters. The conclusion provides a summary of the findings and reflects on the future of democracy in Paraguay.

Trends in Democratic Attitudes

NORC used data from the AmericasBarometer surveys and cluster analysis to classify Paraguayans 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 them. Annex 1 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 protest 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, 2016, and 2019). Only three attitudes were available in 2021: support for democracy, opposition to military coups, and opposition to executive aggrandizement. The 2021 cluster analysis results are therefore not comparable to those of prior waves and not discussed in the report. Annex 2 presents the main cluster analysis results for all waves.

The analysis identified three clusters in 2012 and four clusters in 2014, 2016, and 2019. In all waves, a small share of respondents were not classified into any cluster. To facilitate comparisons across survey waves, we have grouped respondents into four families that share a set of defining characteristics:

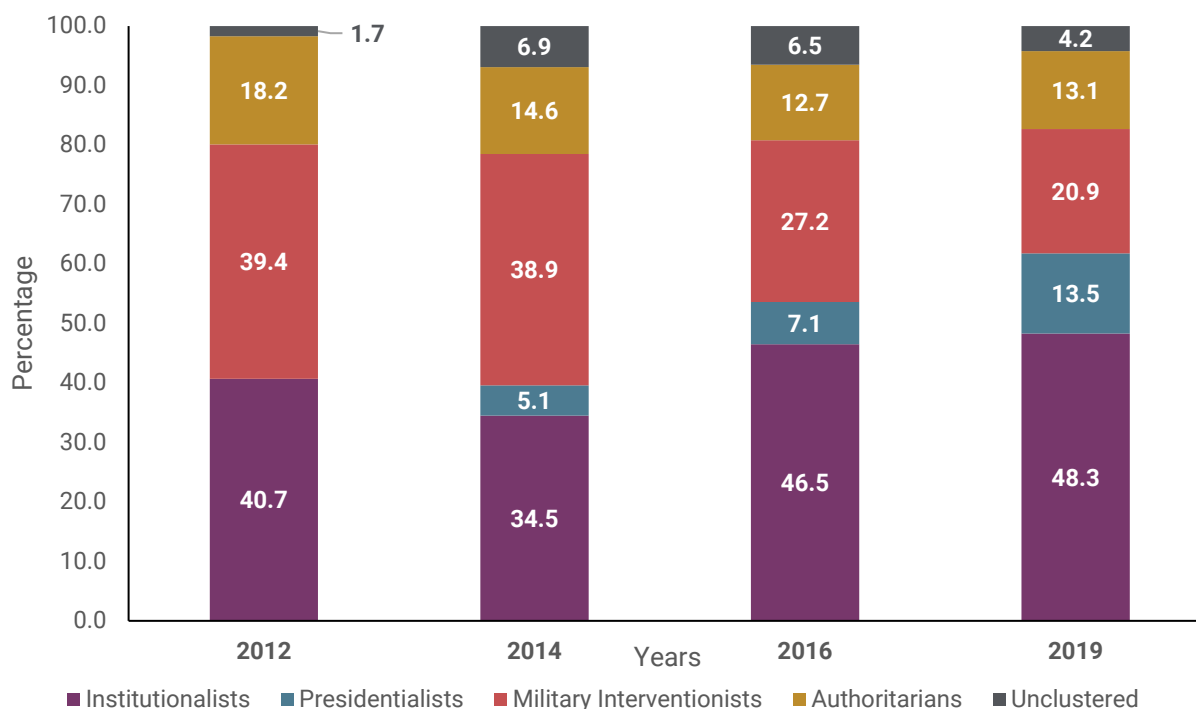
Institutionalists: Individuals in this cluster family are characterized by full opposition to coups and executive aggrandizement. In this sense, they represent “ideal” democratic citizens compared to the other cluster families.

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

Figure 1 shows the relative size of these cluster families over time. Four noteworthy trends emerge. First, institutionalists made up the largest share of classified respondents, except in 2014, when authoritarians made up a slightly larger share. Second, the share of institutionalists increased over time, from 40.7 percent in 2012 to 48.3 percent in 2019. Third, the share of presidentialists grew substantially over time. This group first appeared as a distinct cluster in 2014, representing 5.1 percent of respondents, and increased to 13.5 percent by 2019. Fourth,

there was a substantial decline in military interventionists, from 39.4 percent of respondents in 2012 to 20.9 percent in 2019, and a more modest decline in authoritarians, from 18.2 percent in 2012 to 13.1 percent in 2019.

Figure 1: Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2019



These results suggest strong attitudinal foundations of democracy in Paraguay. The increase in institutionalists represents an encouraging trend; it is also positive that in the most recent survey year (2019), the share of institutionalists (48.3 percent) is roughly equal to the combined share of the other three clusters (45.3 percent). Lastly, it is also noteworthy that non-institutionalist respondents are split across three clusters: military interventionists, authoritarians, and presidentialists. This result suggests that, although a relatively large share of the population is willing to support anti-democratic measures, the overall threat to democracy may be lower since respondents in these clusters diverge in their support for military-led and executive-led pathways of democratic breakdown.

While the clusters are distinct in their views of military coups and executive aggrandizement, they held similar opinions regarding support for democracy, tolerance of protest and regime critics, and support for democratic inclusion. As an illustration, Table 1 shows average values of these three attitudes for the four clusters identified in 2019. There were no substantively important differences in these attitudes, and similar patterns are observed in prior survey years.

Table 1: Mean Values for Key Variables, 2019 Survey

Attitudes	Institutionalists	Military Interventionists	Presidentialists	Authoritarians
Support for democracy	0.608 [0.581,0.635]	0.584 [0.555,0.612]	0.580 [0.541,0.618]	0.590 [0.560,0.620]
Tolerance of protest and regime critics	0.528 [0.510,0.547]	0.545 [0.528,0.562]	0.506 [0.541,0.618]	0.540 [0.512,0.568]
Support for democratic inclusion	0.319 [0.291,0.347]	0.303 [0.265,0.342]	0.300 [0.253,0.347]	0.280 [0.243,0.317]

Notes: Table shows mean values with estimated 95 percent confidence intervals in brackets.

NORC's cluster analysis also identified the demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics that differentiate 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 one's vote matters), and political participation. While respondents in all clusters are statistically significantly different from the others in a few variables in each wave, the differences are quite small, which suggest that demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics examined do not structure attitudes toward democracy in a meaningful way. These caveats aside, we do find some recurrent statistically significant differences across all waves that are worth highlighting.

First, institutionalists tend to be older than other respondents. Across all waves, the percentage of respondents in the 18-29 age bracket was lower among institutionalists than among the rest of the sample, while the percentage of respondents in the 60 and over age bracket was higher. Second, military interventionists tend to be younger than other respondents. Across all waves, the percentage of respondents in the 18-29 age bracket was higher among military interventionists than among the rest of the sample. In addition, females were slightly overrepresented among military interventionists. Across all waves, the percentage of female respondents was higher among military interventionists than among the rest of the sample.

Next, we focus on the demographic factors that differentiate institutionalists from other respondents in 2019. First, female respondents were underrepresented among institutionalists compared to other respondents (46.5 vs. 53.6 percent). In addition to being older, institutionalists were wealthier and more educated than other respondents. The percentage of respondents in the top wealth quintile was higher among institutionalists than among the rest of the sample (23.5 vs. 16.3 percent), and mean educational attainment for institutionalists was higher than for the rest of the sample (9.9 vs. 9.4 years of education).

The differences in wealth and education observed in 2019 are consistent with a large body of scholarship showing that these factors are correlated with support for democracy across many

countries and contexts. However, in Paraguay, these correlations are quite modest. These weak relationships may arise because executive aggrandizement and military coups are often not understood as contrary to democracy in Paraguay. In some cases, citizens may view these objectively anti-democratic actions as enhancing “social” democracy by removing institutional roadblocks or actors that inhibit government from effectively responding to popular demands. The concentration of older citizens in the institutionalist cluster may be due to memories of prior non-democratic periods in Paraguay among these respondents that temper enthusiasm for anti-democratic alternatives.

Institutionalists expressed greater approval of the president than the rest of the sample in 2019, at 51.8 vs 46.8 percent. They were more likely to believe that they understand the country’s most important political issues (41.6 percent of institutionalists, compared to 32.7 of other respondents) and more likely to participate in politics (77.2 percent of institutionalists report having voted in the last election, compared to 69.0 percent of other respondents). Participation may increase citizens’ support for democratic institutions, or those who believe in democratic institutions may simply be more likely to participate.

To sum up, three main findings emerge from the cluster analysis. Institutionalists who oppose both executive aggrandizement and military coups make up the largest cluster family in most survey years, which is a positive finding for democratic resilience. The share of institutionalists increased substantially between 2012 and 2019, an indication of strengthening support for democratic processes and institutions. Third, and perhaps most importantly, citizens holding non-democratic attitudes are divided across three cluster families with differing views over who should hold power: military interventionists, presidentialists, and authoritarians.

Party Factions, Public Opinion, and Democratic Resilience

The division of Paraguayans holding non-democratic attitudes is likely linked to the dynamic and fragmented nature of Paraguay’s relatively stable party system. The Liberal Party and the National Republican Association, popularly known as the Colorado Party, are the two dominant parties and have competed since 1887, bringing stability to the party system. These parties have vibrant intra-party democracy and strong intra-party factions that compete for party control, making parties dynamic. Strong intra-party competition translates into high levels of intra-party fractionalization and explains why parties are not ideologically cohesive.⁵ Political parties must appease their competing factions by accommodating their diverse preferences.

⁵ Paul Lewis. 2016. *Partidos políticos y generaciones en Paraguay 1869-1940*. Editorial Tiempo de Historia; Chamorro, Fabián. 2016. *El nacimiento de los partidos políticos en el Paraguay*. El Lector; Sebastian Saiegh. 2009. “Recovering a Basic Space from Elite Surveys: Evidence from Latin America.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2009): 117-145.

The next sections provide a historical overview of party system development in Paraguay since the transition to democracy in 1989 and argue that party system fractionalization, combined with divisions among non-democratic Paraguayans, may contribute to democratic resilience.

1989-2008: Transition to Democracy and Colorado Party Dominance

During the transition to democracy in the late-1980s, major splits emerged within the Colorado Party, which had historically supported Alfredo Stroessner, Paraguay's dictator since 1954.⁶ Two factions emerged: a militant pro-Stroessner faction and a traditionalist faction that was less supportive of the dictator. Ultimately, General Andrés Rodríguez overthrew Stroessner in February 1989 with the support of the traditionalist faction. However, this transition did not result in the expulsion of militants from the party; Stroessner's supporters who had been ejected from the party with his ouster were soon reintegrated into the party.

In the following years, the militant and traditionalist factions continued to compete for control of the Colorado Party. The militant faction, with help of the Liberal Party, succeeded in barring Rodríguez from running for President in 1993 and nominated former Supreme Court judge Luis María Argaña for president. Rodríguez backed Juan Carlos Wasmosy, an outsider businessman, who went on to win. During the primaries for the 1998 presidential election, the Colorado Party split again, between Lino Oviedo, the Chief of the Army, and Argaña. Shortly before the primaries, Oviedo was sentenced to prison for alleged insubordination and was barred from seeking the nomination. In the end, the party reached a compromise: Raúl Cubas Grau, Oviedo's vice-presidential running mate became the presidential nominee and Argaña became the vice-presidential candidate. The Colorado Party won the presidency that year.

Tensions between factions did not only emerge during elections. In 2003, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, a former Minister of Education, won the presidency as the leader of a relatively unified Colorado Party. However, intra-party divisions emerged toward the end of his term, when the president and his allies within the party unsuccessfully attempted to modify the constitution to allow him to run for reelection.

While no data are available to examine the attitudes of Colorado Party supporters at the time, it is plausible that intra-party divisions regarding military coups and executive aggrandizement may have contributed to democratic resilience. Consider the struggle between Argaña and Oviedo before the 1998 election. Opposition to coups within the Colorado Party could have weakened popular support for Oviedo, who had threatened a coup prior to the election. At the same time, opposition to executive aggrandizement could have limited Argaña's appeal, given his questionable democratic credentials—in 1993, for example, he ran under the slogan “Argaña to the Presidency, (former dictator) Stroessner to Power.”⁷ Similarly, opposition to executive aggrandizement within the Colorado Party could have helped thwart Duarte Frutos' plans to

⁶ Farina, Bernardo Neri. 2019. *El último supremo: la crónica de Alfredo Stroessner*. El Lector; Rivarola, Milda, and Alfredo Boccia Paz. 2013. *Historia general del Paraguay: Tomo III*. Fausto Ediciones.

⁷ Flecha, Víctor-Jacinto and Carlos Martini. 2019. *A treinta años del golpe: autoritarismo y democracia en el Paraguay: comprender el presente obliga a rastrear su origen*. Servi Libro.

seek reelection in 2008. The inability of any faction to emerge as a clear leader of the party forced compromise, keeping more radical, antidemocratic forces out of power and contributing to the survival of democracy.

2008-2018: A Fractured Left-wing Alliance and the Return of the Colorado Party

The 2008 presidential election brought Fernando Lugo to power. A former Catholic Bishop, Lugo headed the Patriotic Alliance for Change, a broad coalition of left-leaning parties. Lugo's victory brought a non-Colorado candidate to power for the first time since the transition to democracy. Three factors contributed to Lugo's victory. First, Lugo forged an opposition alliance between the Liberal Party and other left-wing movements. Second, Oviedo had formed a splinter party, the National Union of Ethical Citizens (Unión Nacional de Ciudadanos Éticos, UNACE), which siphoned off support for the Colorado Party. Third, the recent, unsuccessful attempt to amend the constitution to allow President Duarte Frutos' reelection alienated voters from the Colorado Party.⁸

Lugo's presidency was unstable. During his time in office, the legislature was highly fragmented. His movement had very few seats in the Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies, and while he had run in alliance with the Liberal Party, the party's legislators did not all back his agenda. At the same time, Paraguay's constitution made Lugo vulnerable to impeachment. In response to Stroessner's dictatorship, the framers of the 1992 constitution made it relatively easy for the legislature to remove the executive. Paraguayan presidents can be impeached for the "poor performance of their duties"—effectively, for whatever reason—with a two-thirds majority vote in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.⁹

In 2012, the legislature impeached Lugo over the "Curuguaty Massacre," where police forces violently clashed with landless peasants facing eviction.¹⁰ Lugo's lack of support in the legislature was evident, as 76 of 80 Deputies supported the impeachment, while one Deputy abstained and the other three were absent. The impeachment was confirmed in the Senate, with 39 of 45 legislators voting in favor and four voting against (the two remaining Senators were absent). While weak presidents had existed previously in Paraguay, such as Wasmosy and interim leader Macchi, they were able to leverage intra-party conflicts to hold on to power. As a political outsider not affiliated with the Colorado or Liberal parties, Lugo could not count on a strong party or intra-party faction to defend him.

The 2013 election brought the Colorado Party back to power under the leadership of Horacio Cartes, who began his presidency leading a unified party. This unity stemmed in large part from Oviedo's unexpected death in a helicopter accident in 2012 and the subsequent return of UNACE to the Colorado Party. However, divisions within the ruling party once again emerged

⁸ Abente-Brun, Diego. "Paraguay: The Unravelling of One-Party Rule." *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 1 (2009): 143-156.

⁹ Framers sought to limit executive power throughout, creating one of the weakest executives in Latin America. Scartascini, Carlos, Ernesto Stein, and Mariano Tommasi, eds. 2010. *How Democracy Works: Political Institutions, Actors, and Arenas in Latin American Policymaking*. Inter-American Development Bank.

¹⁰ The clash resulted in the death of 11 peasants and six policemen.

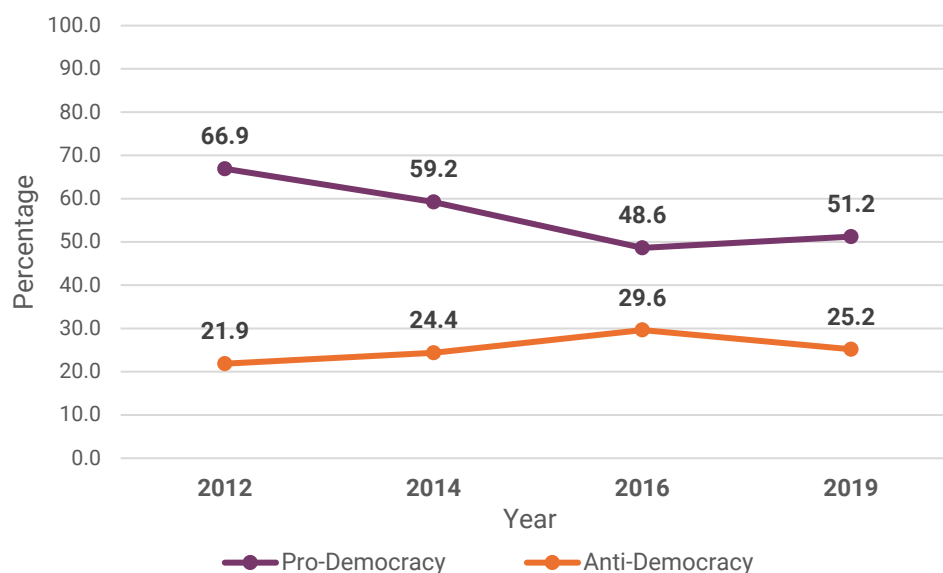
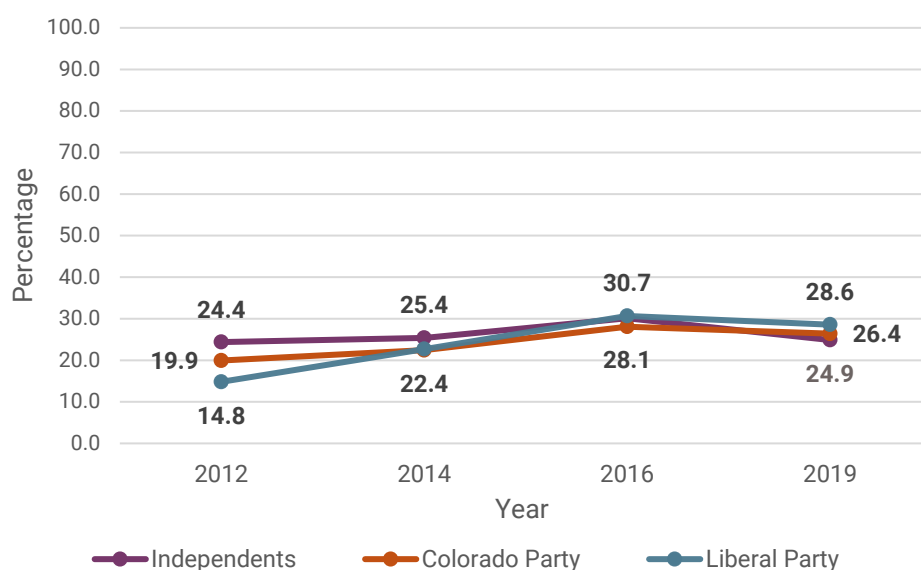
when Cartes attempted to modify the constitution to run for reelection. Strong resistance from factions of his own party, as well as the opposition, combined with mass mobilization by citizens, triggered a political crisis that put an end to his efforts.¹¹ Despite the political crisis, the Colorado Party's candidate, Mario Abdo Benítez, won the 2018 presidential race, narrowly defeating a broad coalition of opposition parties. Importantly, Abdo Benítez represented the "Añeteté" faction within the Colorado Party, which defeated the primary candidate from President Cartes' "Honor Colorado" faction.

The intra-party factionalism observed between 1989 and 2008 has persisted in recent years. As in the previous period, intra-party divisions regarding military coups and especially executive aggrandizement may have contributed to democratic resilience. Opposition to executive aggrandizement within the Colorado Party, combined with opposition to aggrandizement in opposition parties and the general population, likely played a role in preventing Cartes from seeking reelection and hurt his faction's candidate in the 2018 primary contest.

AmericasBarometer data is available to explore the distribution of democratic attitudes across parties from 2012 to 2019. Similarities in the distribution of democratic attitudes within both the Liberal and Colorado parties support the claim that these attitudes contribute to keeping more radical, undemocratic factions at bay within each party. Figure 2 shows views about democracy in the abstract across the four surveys conducted between 2012 and 2019. Panel A shows the percentage of democrats, or respondents who agree with the statement that "democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government." Panel B shows the percentage of anti-democrats, or respondents who disagree with the statement. The panels show the percentages for those who identify with the two major parties and as independents.¹² In any given year, the percentage of democrats and anti-democrats is similar across the three groups, with most citizens preferring democracy to its alternatives.

¹¹ Carrizosa, Andrés. "Paraguay 2017: competencia política en las cámaras, en las calles y en las urnas." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 38, no. 2 (2019): 335–60.

¹² Across the four waves, an average of about 25 percent of respondents identified with the Colorado Party, 10 percent identified with the Liberal Party, and about 63 percent identified as independents.

Figure 2: Support for Democracy, 2012-2019**Panel A: Democrats by Party Identification****Panel B: Anti-Democrats by Party Identification**

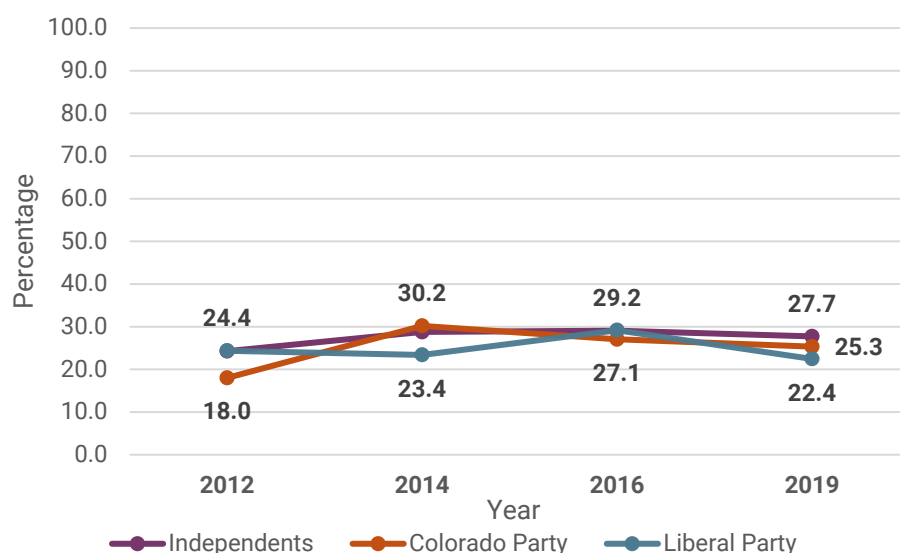
Source: AmericasBarometer.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 examine views about executive aggrandizement and military coups, respectively. In Figure 3, Panel A shows the percentage of aggrandizers, or respondents who agree that “when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the President [...] to close Congress and govern without Congress” and Panel B shows the percentage of anti-aggrandizers, or respondents who disagree with this statement. In Figure 4, Panel A shows the percentage of coup supporters, or respondents who believe that “it would be justified for the

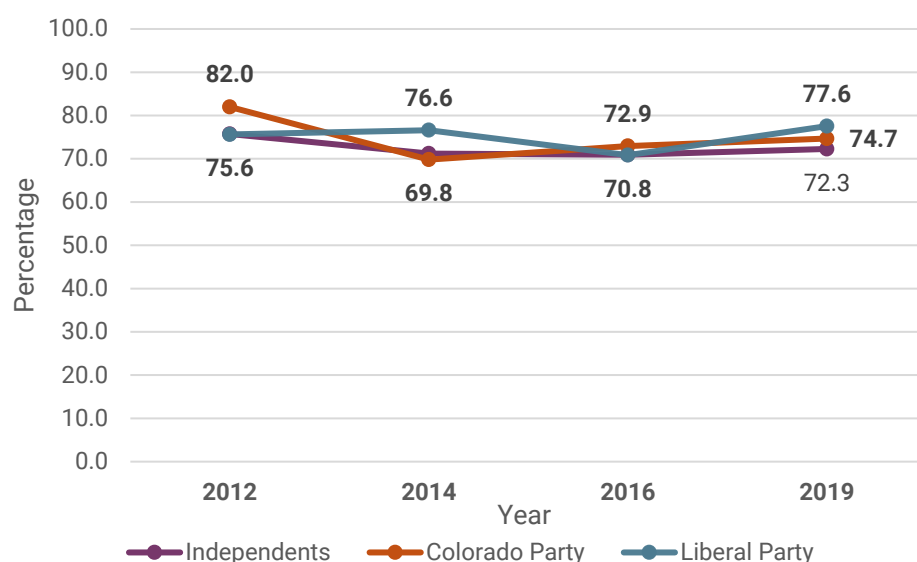
military of this country to take power by a military coup when there is a lot of corruption” and Panel B shows the percentage of coup opposers, or respondents who do not believe this. The panels show the percentages for those who identify with the two major parties and as independents.

Figure 3: Opposition and Support for Executive Aggrandizement, 2012-2019

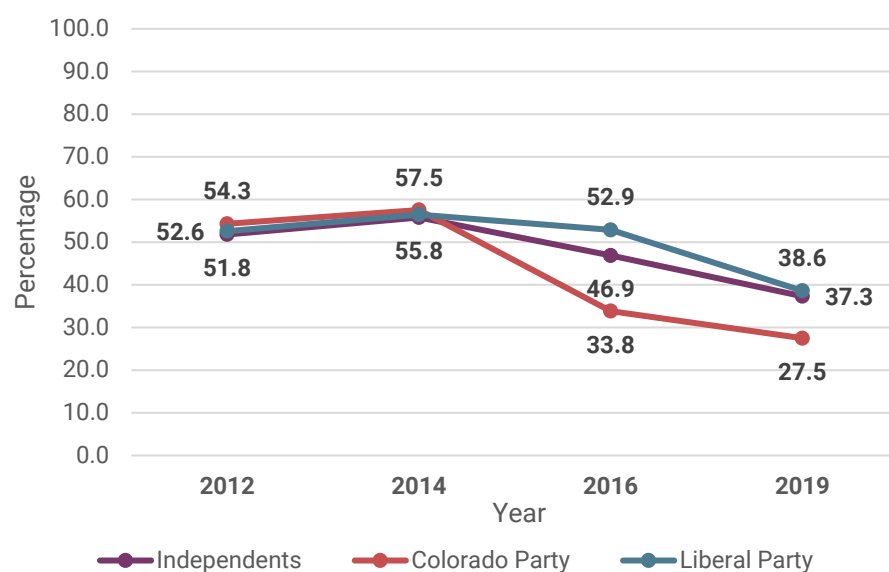
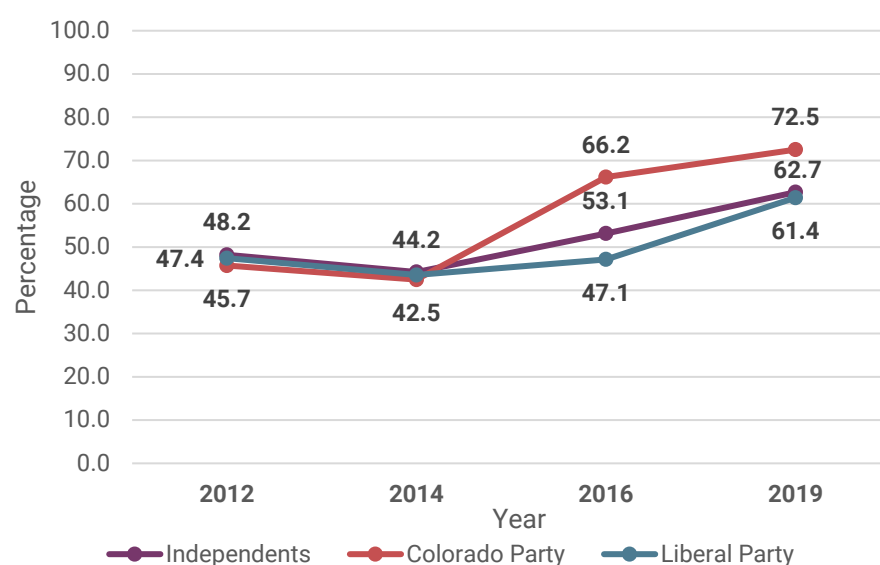
Panel A: Aggrandizers by Party Identification



Panel B: Anti-aggrandizers by Party Identification



Source: AmericasBarometer.

Figure 4: Opposition and Support for Military Coups, 2012-2019**Panel A: Coup Supporters by Party Identification****Panel B: Coup Opposers by Party Identification**

Source: AmericasBarometer.

The percentages of aggrandizers and anti-aggrandizers were relatively similar across the three groups (Figure 3). In turn, the percentages of coup supporters and coup opposers across parties were similar in 2012 and 2014, although gaps began to emerge in 2016 and 2019 (Figure 4). In more recent years, support for coups was lower and opposition to coups was higher among those who identified with the Colorado Party. This gap likely reflects a “winners’ effect.” Both President Cartes (2016) and President Abdo Benítez (2019) represented the

Colorado Party, and a hypothetical military coup would therefore undercut the Colorado Party's interest. These differences notwithstanding, the most important takeaway from these figures is that support for democracy, support for executive aggrandizement, and to a lesser extent military coups was spread out across groups rather than concentrated within a single party. This is consistent with the claim that democratically-minded citizens within both parties contribute to democratic resilience by keeping more radical, undemocratic factions at bay within each party.

Conclusion

NORC's cluster analysis indicates that institutionalists who oppose both executive aggrandizement and military coups comprise a plurality of Paraguayan and that the share of institutionalists increased between 2012 and 2019. Perhaps more importantly, the analysis revealed that citizens with less democratic attitudes are divided into three distinct clusters: military interventionists, presidentialists, and authoritarians. This report argued that divisions among non-democrats, coupled with party fractionalization, may be beneficial for democratic resilience in Paraguay.

There were moments where intra-party competition among non-democrats led them to prefer democracy rather than the consolidation of power in the hands of their opponents. The clearest example of this may be the power struggles between Argaña and Oviedo in the years following the transition to democracy. There were other moments where democratic party factions within the Colorado Party, often working with the opposition, successfully defended democracy from authoritarian incumbents, such as when the opposition worked with a faction of the Colorado Party to resist the modification of the constitution to allow for the reelection of President Cartes in 2017. Finally, at the mass attitudes level, the report showed that democratic attitudes are not concentrated in any single party. Paraguayans with anti-democratic inclinations represent a minority in both traditional political parties, as well as among independents.

Looking forward, the main threat to Paraguayan democracy may come from recent changes to the electoral code, specifically the adoption of open-list proportional representation (OLPR) for party primaries and general elections. OLPR replaces the closed-list proportional representation (CLPR) system that was in place since the transition to democracy. Under CLPR, voters choose party lists with a static, predetermined order for legislative candidates. By contrast, under OLPR, voters can support specific legislative candidates within a party to boost their position in their party list. Whereas CLPR encourages factions within parties to compete during the primary stage and to cooperate in the general election, OLPR might encourage intra-party division in both general and primary elections.¹³

¹³ In the years after the transition to democracy, CLPR encouraged competition between the traditionalist and militant factions within the Colorado Party during primaries and cooperation between these factions against the Liberal Party during the general election. Carrizosa, Andrés. 2021. *Legislative Instability and Party Power in Paraguay*. Dissertation, Rice University. <https://doi.org/https://hdl.handle.net/1911/110501>.

It is difficult to predict how much things will change under the new electoral system. In the best-case scenario, the Colorado and Liberal parties will be able to continue to hold together despite the movement to OLPR. In the worst-case scenario, the added intra-party tensions that OLPR promotes could lead to the dissolution of both traditional political parties, as has happened elsewhere in the region. Furthermore, OLPR might encourage voter sorting where non-democrats gradually consolidate into a single political party. This essay suggests that Paraguayan democracy would suffer if the worst-case scenario were to happen.

References

Abente-Brun, Diego. "Paraguay: The Unravelling of One-Party Rule." *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 1 (2009): 143-156.

Campello, Ricardo, Davoud Moulavi, and Jörg Sander. 2013. "Density-based clustering based on hierarchical density estimates." *Pacific-Asia conference on knowledge discovery and data mining*. Springer: 60-172.

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.

Carrizosa, Andrés. 2021 *Legislative Instability and Party Power in Paraguay*. Dissertation, Rice University. <https://doi.org/https://hdl.handle.net/1911/110501>.

Carrizosa, Andrés. 2018. "Paraguay 2017: Competencia política en las cámaras, en las calles y en las urnas." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 38, no. 2: 335–60.

Chamorro, Fabián. 2016. *El nacimiento de los partidos políticos en el Paraguay*. El Lector.

Farina, Bernardo Neri. 2019. *El último supremo: la crónica de Alfredo Stroessner*. El Lector.

Flecha, Víctor-Jacinto, and Carlos Martini. 2019. *A treinta años del golpe: autoritarismo y democracia en el Paraguay: comprender el presente obliga a rastrear su origen*. Servi Libro.

Lewis, Paul. 2016. *Partidos políticos y generaciones en Paraguay 1869-1940*. Editorial Tiempo de Historia.

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.

Rivarola, Milda, and Alfredo Boccia Paz. 2013. *Historia General Del Paraguay: Tomo III*. Fausto Ediciones.

Saiegh, Sebastian. "Recovering a Basic Space from Elite Surveys: Evidence from Latin America." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2009): 117-145.

Scartascini, Carlos, Ernesto Stein, and Mariano Tommasi, eds. 2010. *How Democracy Works: Political Institutions, Actors, and Arenas in Latin American Policymaking*. Inter-American Development Bank.

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.¹⁴ HDBScan identifies groups of observations that are closely packed together in space and leaves outliers unclassified. HDBScan only requires one parameter—the minimum size of a cluster—and chooses the number of clusters endogenously through a hierarchical process that retains the most stable clusters. We employed Mahalanobis distances as the criteria for computing the distance metric used by HDBScan.

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

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

Table A1.1: AmericasBarometer Items and Underlying Democratic Attitudes

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

¹⁴ Campello, Ricardo, Davoud Moulavi, and Jörg Sander. 2013. "Density-based clustering based on hierarchical density estimates." Pacific-Asia conference on knowledge discovery and data mining. Springer. p. 160-172.

DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES ¹	QUESTIONS
Opposition to military coups²	Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified... JC10. When there is a lot of crime <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>
	Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified... JC13. When there is a lot of corruption <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>
Opposition to executive aggrandizement²	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? <i>Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.</i>
	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? <i>Response options: (1) Yes, it is justified; (2) No, it is not justified.</i>
Tolerance of protest and regime critics	D1. There are people who only say bad things about the form of government of Paraguay, 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. <i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i>
	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. <i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i>
	D3. Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the form of government of Paraguay, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office? <i>Response options: Ten-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly disapprove to (10) Strongly approve.</i>

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

¹ In the 2021 round of the AmericasBarometer, only questions ING4, JC13, and JC15A were included in the survey. Item JC13 was administered to one-quarter of the sample and JC15A to one-half of the sample. About 27 percent of the sample was asked the two questions. We use this portion of the sample to conduct cluster analysis.

² For the 2012-2019 waves, opposition to military coups and opposition to executive aggrandizement included up to two questions each (JC10 and JC13, and JC15A and JC16A, respectively). In 2012, respondents were asked all four questions. In 2014, respondents were asked JC10, JC13, and JC15A (JC16A was missing). In 2016, 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 Analysis Results

The bar graphs below present the main results of the cluster analysis. There is one bar graph per wave studied: 2012, 2014, 2016, 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

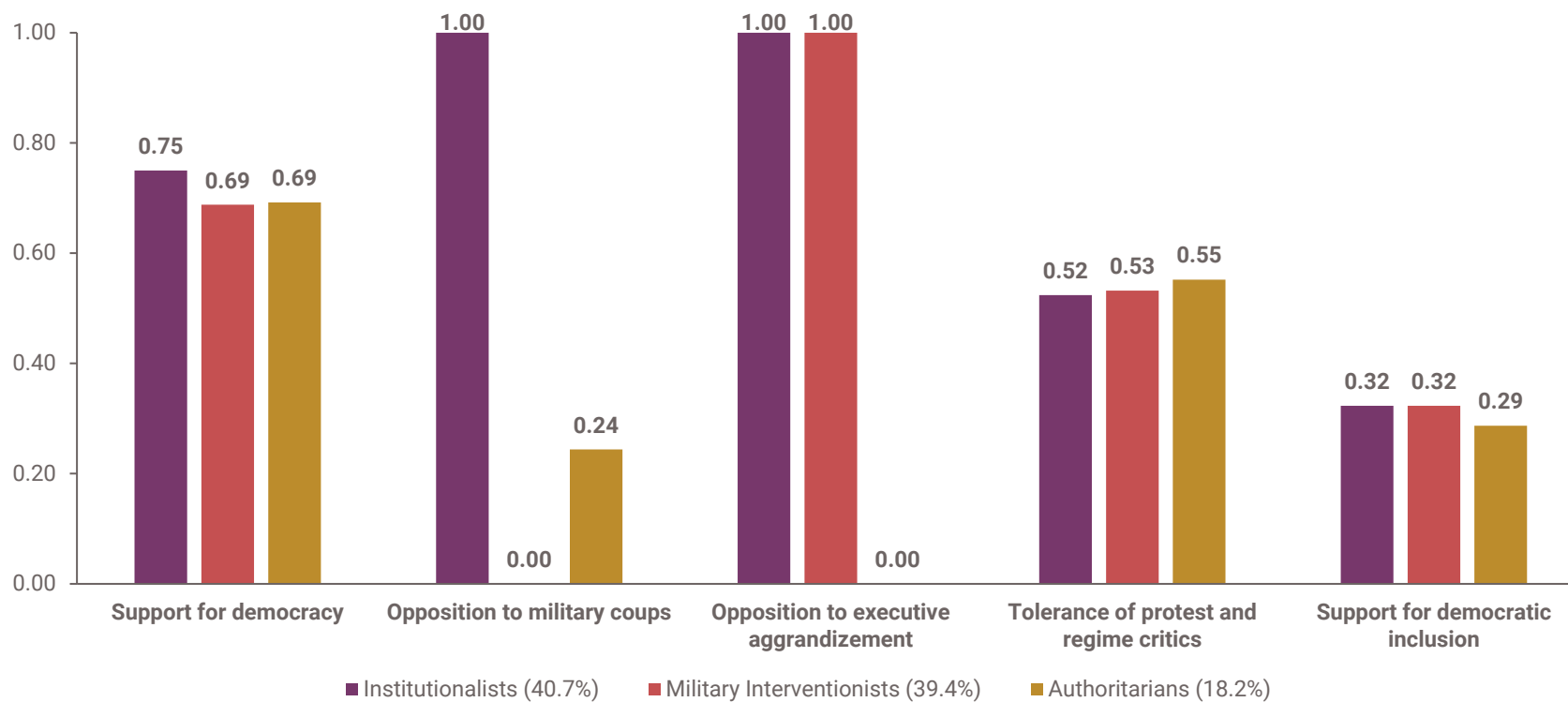


Figure A2.2. 2014 Cluster Results

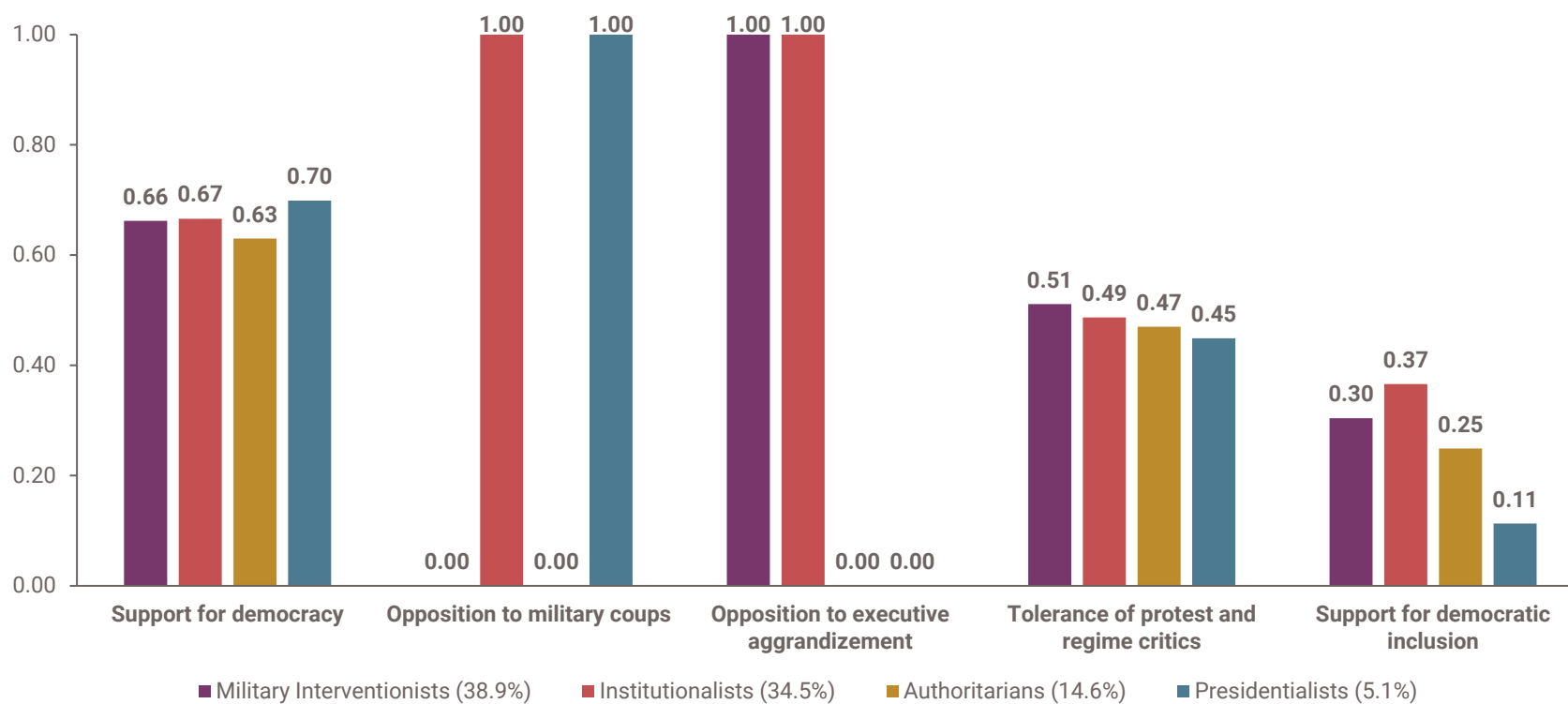


Figure A2.3. 2016 Cluster Results

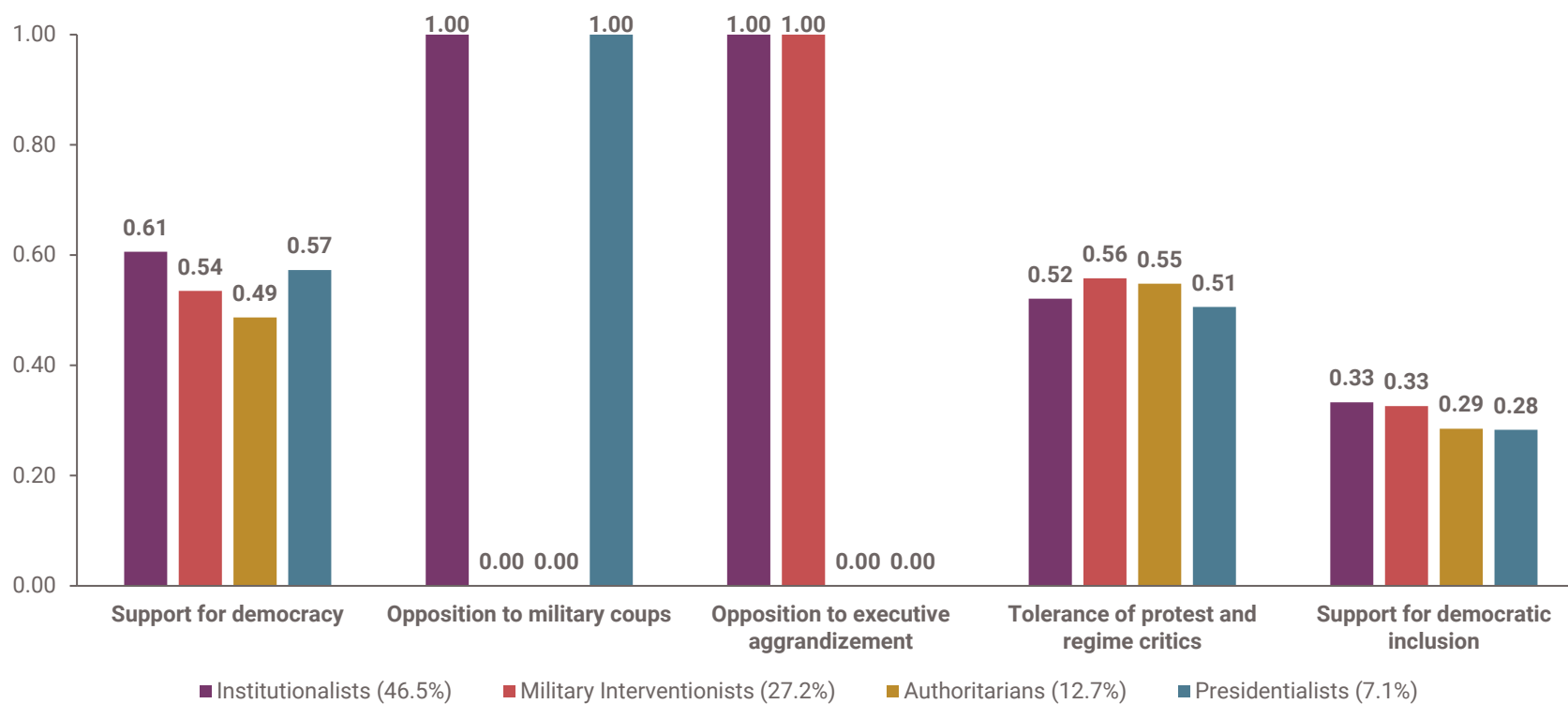


Figure A2.4. 2019 Cluster Results

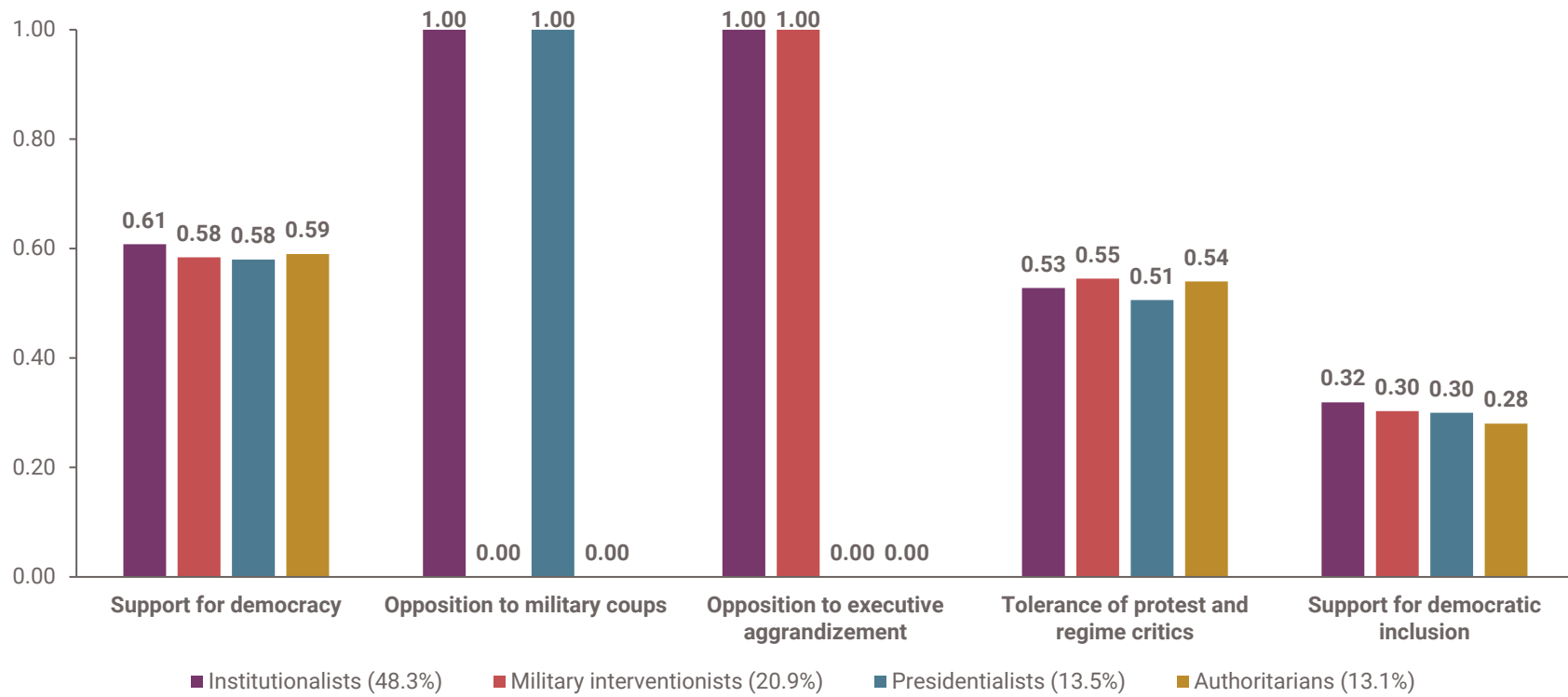


Figure A2.5. 2021 Cluster Results

