



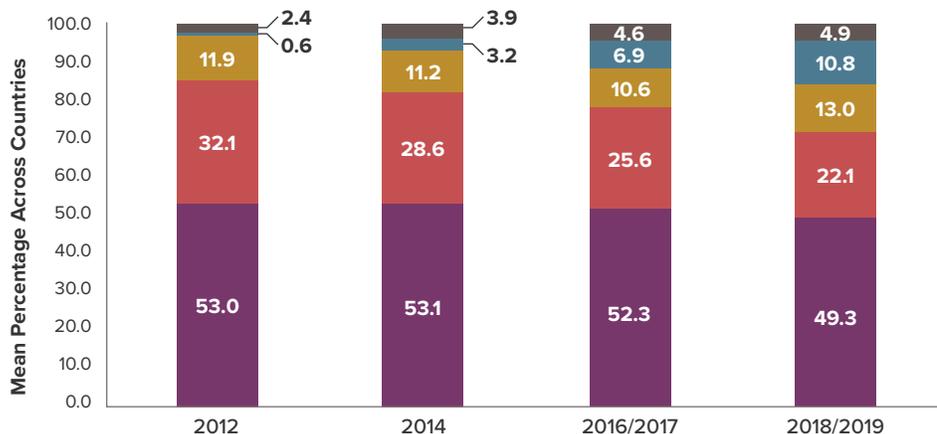
Analysis of Trends In Democratic Norms and Attitudes: Summary of Findings from a Regional Study

NORC employed cluster analysis techniques to examine how groups of citizens with distinct democratic attitudes evolved from 2012 to 2021 in Latin America. This analysis reveals that pro-democratic attitudes have been resilient, but pro-authoritarian attitudes supportive of executive aggrandizement are on the rise.

Findings

- 1** Institutionalists, who express the most consistent support for democratic institutions and processes, make up the largest share of the population across Latin America.
- 2** The share of the population classified as Presidentialists grew significantly during the period under study.
- 3** Crime exposure and presidential approval are associated with the Authoritarian and Presidentialist clusters, respectively.
- 4** Socio-economic factors and other attitudinal variables, including support for democracy, do not consistently differentiate between the cluster families.

Evolution of Cluster Families, 2012-2018/19



- INSTITUTIONALISTS:** Full opposition to military coups and executive aggrandizement.
- MILITARY INTERVENTIONISTS:** Full opposition to executive aggrandizement but less-than full opposition to military coups.
- AUTHORITARIANS:** Less-than-full opposition to both military coups and executive aggrandizement.
- PRESIDENTIALISTS:** Full opposition to military coups but less-than-full opposition to executive aggrandizement.
- UNCLUSTERED:** Dissimilar from each other and from those included in other clusters.

Explanatory Factors

POLARIZATION: Where incumbents are polarizing (often authoritarian), views of the incumbent shape support for executive aggrandizement and military coups.

CORRUPTION: Pervasive corruption by incumbents can undermine support for democracy and lead voters to support anti-establishment, often authoritarian, outsider candidates.

GOVERNANCE CRISIS: The inability of elected officials to govern due to partisan gridlock can lead to citizens' increased support for authoritarian alternatives.

ECONOMIC CRISIS: Poor economic performance, growing poverty, and persistent inequality undermine public faith that democracy can solve a country's most pressing issues.

Conclusions



Stated support for democracy in many Latin American countries has become decoupled from opposition to anti-democracy actions, like military or self-coups.



Citizens' support for the political regime is closely linked to the regime's performance.

Recommendations



DEVELOP CONSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AROUND THE WORD "DEMOCRACY." Defend the concept of democracy against elite efforts to claim that erosion of its core institutions and processes are necessary in the name of advancing "democratic" goals.



FUTURE PROGRAMMING SHOULD ADDRESS THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT IN FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES. Support free and independent media, along with efforts to counter mis-, dis-, and malinformation (MDM) in the Latin America region.



CONDUCT FURTHER RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY THE TYPES OF MESSAGING THAT CAN BEST DECOUPLE CORRUPTION BY POLITICAL ACTORS FROM THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN CITIZENS' MINDS. Increase accountability and emphasize that *individuals* are guilty of corruption to enable anti-corruption reforms while not undermining citizens' support for the political system.



INCREASE CITIZEN COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY THROUGH:

- tracking democratic attitudes and values;
- building commitment to the specific principles that underlie liberal democracy, and linking these principles to voting decisions; and
- conducting additional research into the best ways to design and target messages to enhance democratic attitudes.

Methodology

RESEARCH QUESTION

METHODS

Can the citizens of Latin American countries be classified into groups with distinct patterns of democratic attitudes?



NORC used cluster analysis methods with LAPOP's AmericasBarometer data to group citizens into "clusters" with distinct attitudinal profiles.

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



NORC identified demographic, socioeconomic, geographic, and other characteristics differentiating the citizens in each cluster from the rest of the population.

How have groups and democratic attitudes evolved from 2012 to 2021? What system-level, contextual factors have contributed to changing patterns of democratic attitudes?



NORC engaged experts to develop case studies relating our cluster analysis results to trends in democratic attitudes and political, economic, and social developments in each country.