

**Winners' Consent?**  
**Citizen Commitment to Democracy when Illiberal Candidates Win Elections \***

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**Abstract:** Democracy is in decline worldwide, primarily because voters elect candidates harboring anti-democratic aspirations. Scholars argue that elections animate the democratic spirits of winners and deflate those of losers, but what about contests ending in the victory of authoritarian candidates? To answer this question, we consider the dynamics of commitment to democracy in Brazil's 2018 presidential campaign. Drawing on AmericasBarometer data and an original five-wave panel survey, we confirm that Jair Bolsonaro's campaign attracted skeptics of democracy. While his election and inauguration boosted his supporters' allegiance to the political system, it also *exacerbated* their tolerance for institutional ruptures such as executive-led coups. Meanwhile, election losers retained their democratic commitments. As a result, the authoritarian victory narrowed preexisting winner-loser gaps in support for the political system, but widened gaps in tolerance for certain anti-democratic maneuvers. Thus, authoritarian electoral victories can foster short term satisfaction among democracy's critics, while abetting future instability.

**Replication Materials:** The data, code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available on the American Journal of Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: <http://dx.doi.org/XXX>.

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Democracy is under siege across the world. In 2020, Freedom House recorded the fifteenth consecutive year of global democratic erosion, meaning the number of countries experiencing declines in political rights and civil liberties exceeded those boasting gains. The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute describes this trend as the “third wave of autocratization” (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019; Puddington 2015). In contrast to past decades, when military coups, armed insurgencies, or foreign interventions toppled regimes, today democratic backsliding typically involves citizens themselves electing aspiring autocrats (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Schedler 2002; Svoboda 2019; Ulfelder 2010). Four indicators reveal a candidate’s authoritarian tendencies: weak commitment to democratic rules of the game; denial of opponents’ legitimacy; toleration of violence; and willingness to violate opponents’ civil liberties (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, pp. 23-24). From Belarus to Venezuela, voters have chosen such candidates, who in turn leverage popular support to chip away at checks on their authority. Citizens are not necessarily naïve victims; surveys show that popular commitment to democracy is wavering globally, particularly in Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America (Claassen 2019). While numerous studies posit that flagging support for democracy contributes to backsliding (Booth and Seligson 2009; Claassen 2020a; Easton 1965; Lipset 1959; Mattes and Bratton 2007; Singer 2018), the dynamics of democratic support during campaigns featuring “electoral authoritarians” remain largely unexplored.

How do citizen attitudes toward democracy respond to the election of openly illiberal candidates? To answer this question, we draw on two prominent perspectives: “losers’ consent” (Anderson, Blais, Bowler, Donovan, and Listhaug 2005) and “thermostatic democratic support” (Claassen 2020b; see also Soroka and Wlezien 2010). The set of arguments known by the moniker “losers’ consent” theorizes how election outcomes differentially affect the democratic

commitments of winners and losers—and, crucially, the gap between them. For democracy to survive, losers must accept loss and commit to playing again next time (Anderson et al. 2005). However, defeat is bitter and victory is sweet; democratic elections tend to boost support for democracy among winners but cause stagnation or erosion among losers, producing a “winner-loser” gap (e.g., Anderson et al. 2005; Blais, Morin-Chassé, and Singh 2017; Conroy-Krutz and Kerr 2015; Singh, Karakoç, and Blais 2012).

Yet the losers’ consent scholarship makes an implicit assumption: that viable candidates share a commitment to democracy. How do trends in democratic support change in elections featuring viable authoritarian candidates?<sup>1</sup> We expect that authoritarian candidates attract voters who *begin* election cycles more weakly committed to—or perhaps even antagonistic towards—democracy than their opponents, contradicting a second implicit assumption in the losers’ consent scholarship: similar baseline normative democratic preferences among eventual winners and losers. When authoritarians win—the universe of cases we consider here—a hitherto underexplored implication of the losers’ consent thesis is that victory might not cause gaps, but rather *narrow* or *invert* preexisting ones by inspiring newfound democratic commitments among victors.

By contrast, the “thermostatic democratic support” argument posits that “changes in democracy are associated with immediate and opposite public reactions: increases in democracy dampen public mood, while decreases cheer it” (Claassen 2020, 36). According to this perspective, citizens rally to support democracy after authoritarians win—implicitly including losers, who

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<sup>1</sup> While authoritarian candidates and parties compete in Western European countries that are the focus of much losers’ consent scholarship, these options usually win a small proportion of the vote, so their supporters account for a small portion of losers.

would redouble their commitment to democracy.<sup>2</sup> Does authoritarian triumph buoy democratic commitment among former skeptics and leave it stagnant or eroding among former democrats, consistent with the losers' consent literature? Or do losers instead rally to support endangered institutions, consistent with a thermostatic dynamic?

While both arguments have merit, we argue that neither fully explains the attitudinal consequences of elections in which democracy itself is on the ballot. Authoritarian victories might boost some democratic commitments while depressing others. We define *commitment to democracy* as citizens' consistent support for the democratic regime. It encompasses abstract support for democracy and the political system. However, such attitudes are insufficient to defend democracy against attacks; commitment to democracy also requires rejecting ruptures of representative institutions, such as military coups, executive self-coups (*autogolpes*), and the closure of the judiciary. Abstract support for democracy is of little use if citizens nonetheless condone dismissal of the legislature or the supreme court.

Authoritarian victories, we argue, boost support for the democratic system while fostering acceptance of institutional ruptures; however, we also expect that effects differ for winners and losers. Our "winners' consent" perspective posits that authoritarian victories paradoxically stimulate winners' support for the democratic system—yet that newfound support is contingent on victory, and countenances institutional ruptures benefiting the leader. Among losers, by contrast, we are agnostic between the predictions of the "losers' consent" and "thermostatic" perspectives, and hypothesize constant or rising democratic commitment following an authoritarian victory. Ultimately, our approach implies that these intersecting trends produce distinct winner-loser dynamics not contemplated in previous work.

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<sup>2</sup> The thermostatic model argues that the *average* democratic mood declines when "minoritarian" democracy (e.g., checks and balances) increases. This average presumably includes both winners and losers.

In interrogating the assumption that election winners will consent to be governed by the regime that put them in power, we invert the concerns of the losers' consent literature. Because elected authoritarians can drive democratic erosion, democratic survival requires that winners consent to institutional checks on their favored party or candidate. Whereas Anderson et al. (2005, 4) feared that election *losers* would fail "to accept the decision of the election" and "play again next time," we argue that there is no guarantee of authoritarian *victors*' continued support for the democratic game. Thus, we also question a third assumption implicit in the previous literature: that the euphoria of victory will induce winners to abide by rules that empower them.

To illuminate the dynamics of democratic commitment when authoritarian candidates run and win, we study Brazil's 2018 election of Jair Bolsonaro. A far-right populist who had served as a low-ranking officer during Brazil's military regime, Bolsonaro represented an abrupt departure from the leftist governments of the Worker's Party (PT) between 2003 and 2016.<sup>3</sup> Breaking from accepted patterns of political discourse, Bolsonaro espoused views incompatible with liberal democracy, readily fulfilling Levitsky and Ziblatt's four indicators of electoral authoritarianism. How did the victory of this explicitly illiberal candidate affect democratic commitments among his supporters and detractors?

Analyzing AmericasBarometer data and an original five-wave panel study, we find sizeable pre-campaign attitudinal gaps between Bolsonaro's eventual voters and opponents; Bolsonaro attracted democracy's discontented. His campaign, victory, and inauguration also *produced* shifts in attitudes. Consistent with the thermostatic model, abstract support for democracy and the political system ticked up among both winners and losers. However, consistent with the losers' consent literature, growth was larger among previously disenchanting winners.

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<sup>3</sup> Workers' Party president Dilma Rousseff was impeached in 2016, and center-rightist Michel Temer (Rousseff's former vice-president) held the presidency from 2016 through 2018.

Nonetheless, other results defy both prior perspectives: support for institutional ruptures remained high among Bolsonaro voters following his inauguration, and winner-loser gaps in some anti-system attitudes *grew*. Authoritarian supporters expressed superficial commitment to the system that empowered their candidate, but remained skeptical of its core principles.

As one of the first studies to explore the effects of winning and losing on authoritarian candidates' supporters and opponents, our analysis contributes to a growing conversation about global democratic backsliding.<sup>4</sup> Against the backdrop of a decade-long decline in support for democracy across Latin America (Zechmeister and Lupu 2019) and elsewhere (Armingeon and Guthmann 2013), the implications are clear: increasingly tenuous commitment to core democratic norms and processes empowers electoral authoritarians. Although electing authoritarians temporarily appeases democracy's skeptics, it also feeds—to invert a quote from Easton (1975)—a “reservoir of support” for future violations of the democratic order. Yet, authoritarians' detractors can remain committed to democracy even when facing the extreme test of losing to an authoritarian candidate, providing a potential bulwark against further backsliding. Still, questions remain about how long their support for core regime principles will last, and whether they would compromise their principles to defeat an incumbent authoritarian.

### **How Voters Affect Democratic Backsliding**

In the reverse third wave, elected leaders have often been the authors of democracy's demise. Moderate leaders who were committed democrats stabilized third wave democracies (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2014). However, as norms of compromise erode, incumbents become willing, in Levitsky and Ziblatt's (2018) terms, to play “constitutional hardball”—violating the spirit if not

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<sup>4</sup> Exceptions studied the 2016 United States and 2017 German elections (Jasko, Grzymala-Moszczyńska, Maj, Szastok, and Kruglanski 2020; Reinl and Schäffer 2020).

the letter of the law. Aiming to weaken horizontal accountability, executives have packed courts (e.g., Poland, Venezuela) and eliminated term limits (e.g., Bolivia) (Chaisty, Cheeseman, and Power 2018; Pérez-Liñán 2007). To limit dissent, incumbents have stifled press freedom (e.g., Nicaragua, Turkey, Czech Republic) and invalidated opposition candidacies (e.g., Russia, El Salvador) (Bermeo 2016). The ostensible legality of constitutional hardball makes it difficult to stop, yet it is pernicious for democracy; ultimately, it can lead to institutional ruptures, from coups to the accrual of power that Bermeo (2016) calls “executive aggrandizement,” typified in Orbán’s Hungary.

Although elites are evidently central in democratic backsliding, citizens’ role is disputed. Scholars long argued that ordinary people’s attitudes—including support for democracy in the abstract and for key regime institutions—stabilize democracy (Booth and Seligson 2009; Dalton 2004; Lipset 1959; Powell 1982). Easton (1975) posited that “specific” support for politicians ebbs and flows in healthy democracies, but “diffuse” support for core institutions provides a “reservoir of favorable attitudes and good will” (124) allowing democracies to weather poor performance. If so, democracy is at risk from long-term declines in trust in government and support for democracy in the U.S. (Hetherington 2005; Keele 2007), Western Europe (Dalton 2004; Pharr and Putnam 2000), and Latin America (Booth and Seligson 2009; Zechmeister and Lupu 2019).

Still, revisionist scholarship questions whether citizen disillusionment affects democratic survival. Citizens can support democracy in the abstract despite declining trust in institutions or political actors; “critical citizens” can make systems more responsive (Cleary and Stokes 2006; Norris 1999). Weakening support for regime institutions could reflect heightened *demand* for democracy in response to insufficient *supply* (Mattes and Bratton 2007). Consistent with this argument, Booth and Seligson (2009) observe that declining system support has not triggered

democratic collapse in Latin America, as critical citizens find avenues to voice displeasure—ranging from street protests (Boulding 2014; Moseley 2018) to spoiling their ballots (Cohen 2018; Driscoll and Nelson 2014)—without taking up arms against the state.

Nonetheless, the new wave of autocratization should give us pause. Revisionist scholars did not focus on “diffuse” support for democracy or institutional ruptures. While citizens rarely directly cause democratic breakdown, public support enables authoritarians’ undemocratic machinations (Graham and Svobik 2020; Rose, Mishler, and Munro 2011). Globally, a substantial share of citizens remains amenable to institutional ruptures under conditions of rampant corruption or crime (e.g., Zechmeister and Lupu 2019). Democracy’s skeptics can signal such preferences to leaders (Casper and Tyson 2014). In one extreme example, weak democratic commitment arguably abetted Honduras’ 2009 coup (Seligson and Booth 2009). Evidence from over 1,300 nationally representative surveys finds that citizen support for democracy is crucial to democracy’s *survival*, if not its emergence (Claassen 2020a).

In our view, ordinary citizens most often enable democratic decline by voting for leaders who undermine democracy bit by bit. While some voters might be unaware of the likely consequences of their choices, citizens are not always naïve victims. Democracy’s skeptics and voters with authoritarian values elected Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez (Canache 2002; Kutiyanski and Krouwel 2014) and populist authoritarians from Russia to Europe to Latin America (Cohen and Smith 2016; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Reinl and Schäffer 2020; A. Seligson and Tucker 2005). Authoritarian candidates often openly signal plans to centralize power and repress dissent; their victory suggests a critical mass of amenable voters. We argue that electoral authoritarians will attract supporters who share their disregard for democratic rules, and repel those who disagree. That is:



H1: At the outset of a campaign featuring an electoral authoritarian, the authoritarian's eventual voters will express (a) lower support for democracy and the political system, but (b) higher support for institutional ruptures, than supporters of other candidates.

### **Reversing the Causal Arrow: Voter Response When Authoritarians Triumph**

Not only do citizens' attitudes potentially enable authoritarians to win, but authoritarian candidacies can shape democratic attitudes. Under normal circumstances, free and fair elections reaffirm democratic legitimacy (Anderson et al. 2005). Victors claim legitimacy based on winning "fair and square," and losers know they will compete again soon. Free and fair elections also reinforce allegiance to the political system by enabling voters to participate directly in politics, express their preferences, and develop linkages with representatives.

Yet observers worry that elections may sow the seeds of democracy's demise, as losing can erode support for the political system (e.g., Anderson et al. 2005). When a voter's preferred party loses time and again, she may lose faith in democracy, engaging in behaviors that destabilize the political system (Anderson and Mendes 2006). Consistently, the body of "losers' consent" scholarship shows that winning buoys democratic spirits. Losing, by contrast, does not always capsizes them. Nonetheless, elections tend to produce attitudinal *gaps* between winners and losers.<sup>5</sup> Whereas initial studies were cross-sectional, recent panel studies confirm that election outcomes trigger those gaps (Blais et al. 2017; Dahlberg and Linde 2016b; Esaiasson 2011; Hooghe and Stiers 2016; Meer and Steenvoorden 2018; Singh et al. 2012).

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<sup>5</sup> Several processes could produce those gaps: both groups could start with similar attitudes, which diverge post-election; losers could start out with *more* democratic attitudes (implying steep declines among losers and increases among winners); or pre-existing gaps could remain stable over time.

Context also shapes democratic attitudes (Daoust and Nadeau 2020; Nadeau, Arel-Bundock, and Daoust 2019). Losers react more negatively to loss, and winner-loser gaps are larger, when institutions maximize the benefits accrued to winners, in countries with weak rule of law and electoral institutions, and in young democracies, where the consequences of losing are uncertain (Anderson et al. 2005; Anderson and Guillory 1997; Blais and Gélinau 2007; Blais et al. 2017; Dahlberg and Linde 2016a; Monsiváis-Carrillo 2020).<sup>6</sup> Gaps are smaller in consensual democracies and when voters feel their views are represented fairly (Martini and Quaranta 2019; Merkley, Quirk, and Nyblade 2019). Although most scholarship has focused on advanced democracies, one panel study in Uganda documented winner-loser gaps in satisfaction with democracy (Conroy-Krutz and Kerr 2015), uncovering scant evidence that losers rejected democracy outright, even in this weakly institutionalized context.

Previous studies implicitly assume that most viable candidates have similar stances vis-à-vis the political system. That is, scholars largely focus on elections in which elites and voters apparently share an unspoken assumption that democracy is the only game in town. Few prior studies explicitly consider how authoritarian candidates affect attitudes. What happens when a viable candidate adopts a platform at odds with liberal democracy? In the paragraphs that follow, we discuss our expectations first for winners, then for losers, and finally for winner-loser gaps.

The attitudinal impacts of elections in which democracy is on the ballot likely vary by which candidate wins. We have argued that illiberal candidates attract illiberal voters, sorting the electorate by democratic attitudes. If the authoritarian candidate loses, losers might express extreme democratic disgruntlement, exaggerating initial gaps in regime commitment. However, we focus on the opposite scenario: illiberal victory. The universe of cases where electoral

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<sup>6</sup> But Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler (2017) find larger gaps when elections are transparent, not fraudulent.

authoritarians win is growing in the reverse third wave. Indeed, one study shows that “68% of all contemporary autocratization episodes starting in democracies are led by incumbents who came to power legally and typically by democratic elections” (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1108).

We expect authoritarian victory to lift winners’ democratic spirits. The German AfD’s surprising 2017 success boosted its voters’ satisfaction with democracy (Reinl and Schäffer 2020), and Latin American winners remain satisfied with democracy even when it is in rapid decline (Singer Forthcoming). However, we suspect that authoritarian victories might not raise all democratic commitments equally; illiberal victories could boost winners’ support for *both* the democratic system *and* some institutional ruptures. For instance, when Latin American presidents perform well, citizens simultaneously express greater support for democracy in the abstract and lower support for opposition civil rights (Singer 2018). Though Singer (2018) sees this dynamic as more pronounced in young, polarized democracies, the temptation to sacrifice democratic principles for partisan gain appears in democracies of all stripes. Voters in the United States, for instance, are unwilling to check behavior they recognize as undemocratic by in-party incumbents (Bartels 2020; Graham and Svobik 2020). For instrumental reasons, authoritarians’ voters may become more supportive of hypothetical ruptures that would centralize power in the executive office (“executive-enhancing” ruptures, like *autogolpes*), and less supportive of ruptures that would harm their leader (“executive-limiting” ruptures, like military coups displacing the president). This hypothesized pattern highlights the contingent nature of authoritarian winners’ commitment to democracy, which depends on accrual of power. This discussion leads to the following predictions for attitudinal changes among winners:

H2: After an authoritarian victory, winners will exhibit: (a) increased support for the democratic system, (b) increased support for institutional ruptures consolidating the authoritarian's power, and (c) decreased support for ruptures reducing that power.

Parts (a) and (c) are consistent with both the "losers' consent" and "thermostatic support" approaches. The hypothesis diverges from those arguments in predicting growing support for institutional ruptures that consolidate the authoritarian's power.

We expect a different pattern for losers. Research on losers' consent finds that context shapes their attitudinal trajectories. In Brazil, prior elections produced small winner-loser gaps in satisfaction with democracy, and none in democratic commitment (Braga and Casalecchi 2016); in this context, we might expect stable attitudes among losers.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, the thermostatic model predicts that an illiberal victory would trigger a negative feedback loop of attitudinal change, raising democratic commitment among losers *and* winners (Claassen 2020b). We are agnostic between the predictions of stable or rising democratic commitment:

H3: After an authoritarian victory, losers will exhibit: (a) stable or increased support for the democratic system, and (b) stable or declining support for institutional ruptures.

Finally, we develop hypotheses for winner-loser gaps. The classic losers' consent argument predicts growing post-election attitudinal gaps, as winners become more supportive of democracy than losers. By contrast, given pre-election attitudinal gaps (H1) and growing democratic commitment among winners (H2a and H2c), we expect gaps in support for the democratic system and for executive-limiting coups to *narrow* after an authoritarian win. Although the magnitude of the final gaps will depend on the relative trajectories among winners and losers, our expectation for increased democratic support among winners and stable or rising support among losers would

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<sup>7</sup> Brazil's transparent, two-round absolute majority presidential elections should reduce the negative impact of loss.

result in smaller gaps. However, winner-loser gaps in support for executive-enhancing coups should grow, as winners' support increases and losers' support remains stable. We hypothesize:

H4: After an authoritarian victory, (a) gaps in support for the democratic system will narrow, (b) gaps in support for coups that help the authoritarian (executive-enhancing coups) will widen, and (c) gaps in support for coups that hurt the authoritarian (executive-limiting coups) will narrow.

### **Case Selection: Brazil's 2018 Presidential Election**

Brazil's October 2018 presidential election offers an opportune context to study the dynamics of democratic commitment in an election with an illiberal candidate. The thirteen-year period prior to Jair Bolsonaro's election encompassed substantial shifts in democratic representation and quality. By many accounts, Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva's second presidential term (from 2007 to 2010) marked the high point for Brazil's third wave democratic performance. Lula's 2002 election was a breakthrough moment for his leftist Workers' Party but a cause for concern among traditional elites. Despite early policy missteps and a vote buying scandal, Lula was reelected and rode a wave of economic prosperity to achieve broad-based support. So high was Lula's popularity that his chosen successor, Dilma Rousseff, won the presidency in 2010 despite never holding elected office. Rousseff, however, struggled to maintain Lula's coalition. A series of crises began in 2013: first, nationwide street protests leading up to the 2014 World Cup, followed by a deep economic recession and massive corruption scandals linked to the Brazilian conglomerate Odebrecht.<sup>8</sup> Vice President Michel Temer orchestrated Rousseff's impeachment in 2016. As

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<sup>8</sup> In a vast web of corruption, Odebrecht bribed politicians in thirteen countries for public contracts. The scandal broke publicly through Operation *Lava-Jato* ("Car Wash"), a criminal investigation named after money laundering sites.

interim President, Temer deepened the crisis by deploying vast patronage to lawmakers to prevent his own impeachment.

Quantitative indices reflect the impact of the consecutive crises. While Brazil's score on the V-Dem project's Liberal Democracy Index was .76 (on a 0 to 1 scale, where 1 means "most democratic") during Lula's second term, following Dilma's impeachment, it dropped substantially, to .60 in 2017, .58 in 2018, and .51 in 2019.

The 2018 presidential election thus represented an inflection point. After years of tumult, Brazilian voters were charting a new path forward. Two options emerged from the first-round election. Worker's Party (PT) candidate Fernando Haddad faced voter fatigue following consecutive PT presidencies and continuous corruption scandals (Samuels and Zucco 2018). Bolsonaro, an insurgent far-right populist, espoused openly anti-democratic views, voicing nostalgia for Brazil's 1964–1985 military regime and support for torture and extra-judicial executions. Media prominently discussed his degrading comments about women, Afro-Brazilians, indigenous groups, and the LGBT community. Nonetheless, Bolsonaro won the runoff with 55 percent of the vote, in a triumph for Latin America's far-right.

Widespread frustration with "politics as usual" drove vote choices: a sagging economy, political polarization, ongoing corruption scandals, and high crime rates (Hunter and Power 2019; Layton, Smith, Moseley, and Cohen 2021). In the 2017 AmericasBarometer, Brazilians ranked last in the region in trust in institutions like the judiciary (Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017). Bolsonaro's anti-system predilections were widely discussed in the campaign (Anderson 2019;

Darlington 2018). Consequently, many Bolsonaro supporters consciously cast an anti-system vote, while detractors saw a grave threat to democratic progress.<sup>9</sup>

## **Data and Methods**

### *Study Design*

Our analytical approach examines voters' responses to the 2018 Brazilian presidential campaign and election. We ask how Bolsonaro's victory and inauguration shaped the democratic dispositions of his voters ("winners") and opponents ("losers"). We begin by examining the association between voting for Bolsonaro and democratic commitments shortly after Bolsonaro's inauguration, using the AmericasBarometer survey, which was conducted between January and March, 2019. This face-to-face, nationally representative survey enables a first look at the extent to which winners and losers differed once Bolsonaro took office.

However, the cross-sectional AmericasBarometer cannot answer whether Bolsonaro attracted voters who already held anti-democratic attitudes, or if the campaign instead triggered his supporters' anti-democratic sentiment. We have strong reason to believe Bolsonaro voters differed in their initial democratic commitments; observing only the correlation between winning/losing and post-election attitudes leaves important questions about selection versus treatment effects. We seek to assess both the impact of pre-campaign attitudes on support for Bolsonaro, and the impact of Bolsonaro's victory and inauguration on subsequent attitudes.

To address causal and temporal questions, we analyze an original, five-wave online panel study of Brazil's 2018 presidential elections. The study includes three pre-election waves: the first

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<sup>9</sup> Bolsonaro is *right-wing*, *populist*, and *authoritarian*. Although we cannot empirically distinguish the relative impacts of the three traits, we emphasize his authoritarianism; we expect our arguments to hold for left-wing authoritarians, but not rightist non-authoritarians.

in July 2018, at the start of the campaign, with a second wave in mid-September, and a third in late September/early October, ending immediately prior to the first-round election on October 7, 2018. Additionally, the study includes two post-election waves: in late October/early November, following Bolsonaro's victory in the October 28 runoff election; and in January 2019, shortly after Bolsonaro's inauguration. Thus, our final wave took place shortly before the AmericasBarometer began. Tracking the same participants over the study allows us to assess the evolution of attitudes from the early campaign through the post-election transfer of political power.

We contracted NetQuest, an international survey provider, to recruit subjects for our online panel study, conducted via the Qualtrics platform. Similar online studies undergird many findings on losers' consent (e.g., Blais et al. 2017; Dahlberg and Linde 2017; Singh et al. 2012; Meer and Steenvoorden 2018). The first wave included 2,018 respondents; with attrition, the final wave sample was 817 (see Section 2 of the Supplemental Information, or SI). We analyze responses from the 804 respondents who reported a first-round vote choice for a candidate in either the fourth or fifth waves. Thus, we exclude respondents who did not respond to either Wave 4 or 5, as well as those who voted blank or null, or abstained.

Our sampling strategy has inherent limitations. Internet-based studies in middle-income countries are necessarily unrepresentative in terms of socioeconomic status, given uneven Internet and smartphone access.<sup>10</sup> Although our first wave sample is representative by gender and region due to the use of quotas, it is substantially wealthier and more highly educated than the Brazilian population. This initial unrepresentativeness is compounded by panel attrition of respondents of lower socioeconomic status, as well as women, Black and Indigenous respondents (see SI Section 3; first wave responses to our dependent variables do not predict attrition, nor does candidate

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<sup>10</sup> However, Brazil has one of the largest mobile and broadband markets in Latin America, with near universal market saturation for cell phones.



support). The compounded demographic biases could affect our key results if socioeconomic status correlates with democratic attitudes and vote choice. Indeed, recent work shows that non-probability, Internet-based samples can bias inferences (MacInnis, Krosnick, Ho, and Cho 2018).

Nonetheless, further examination of our panel study and the 2019 AmericasBarometer, which was conducted face-to-face using a high quality, nationally representative sample, suggests that these limitations may not gravely impede inferences. First, socioeconomic status is almost entirely uncorrelated with democratic commitment in the AmericasBarometer. Second, the fact that the final wave of the online survey was in the field just weeks prior to the AmericasBarometer allows us to validate our results across data sets. We find that support for democracy and coups are both higher in the panel than in the AmericasBarometer, yet system support is very similar across the two datasets. Reassuringly, all post-inauguration winner-loser gaps are of similar magnitude across the two datasets, though the January 2019 gap in support for democracy only achieves statistical significance in the panel study (and inconsistently across analyses from that study). Further analyses related to possible attrition biases are discussed in the robustness checks section.

### *Variables and Measurement*

The panel study deliberately adopted many AmericasBarometer items, facilitating comparison of results (see SI Section 1 for additional information). Our dependent variables fit into two categories: support for the democratic system and for institutional ruptures, corresponding to variables used in past tests of the *losers' consent* and *thermostatic democratic support* arguments (see SI). Both datasets include two measures of support for the democratic system. First is abstract support for democracy: “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?” We recoded the 1-7 response scale to run from 0 to 1; higher values indicate greater support for democracy. Second, both studies included five items on a 1-7 scale tapping support for the political system, which combines Easton’s (1965) concepts of “diffuse” and “specific” support for regime institutions (Seligson 2002). Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed that the courts guarantee a fair trial; that they respected Brazil’s political institutions; that citizens’ basic rights are well-protected by the Brazilian political system; that they felt pride to live in the political system; and that one should support the Brazilian political system. Our index averages those items and is rescaled from 0 to 1.<sup>11</sup> Both variables are modeled using OLS.

Questions on institutional rupture consist of binary-choice variables about whether particular scenarios would be justifiable. Both the AmericasBarometer and our study included items tapping support for executive-limiting ruptures that begin: “Some people say that under certain circumstances, it’s justifiable for the military to take power through a coup. In your opinion, would a coup be justified...”. Two items asked: “...when there is a lot of crime” and “...when facing a lot of corruption.” In the 2019 AmericasBarometer, these were randomized so each respondent received one; as the two variables function identically in analysis of our online data, we treat them as a single variable. Our online panel study also included an original item about a coup “...given the current conditions.” Two additional questions consider executive-enhancing violations of horizontal accountability. Both begin: “Do you think that when the country is facing difficulties, it’s justifiable for the President...” In both studies, an item on executive removal of the legislature (i.e., self-coups) concludes “...to close Congress and govern without Congress?” A

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<sup>11</sup> Coincidentally, these five items have an identical alpha coefficient in the two surveys: .78.

second AmericasBarometer item concludes “...to dissolve the Supreme Federal Tribunal and govern without the Supreme Federal Tribunal.”

Our key independent variable in both datasets is winner/loser status, based on self-reported first round vote choice; in the panel study, this is from the post-election Wave 4 (late October/early November) or, if missing, Wave 5. In our panel analysis, we predict change in democratic commitment across waves using the interaction between this variable and two society-wide electoral “interventions”: Bolsonaro’s electoral victory (i.e., the transition to the post-campaign Wave 4) and inauguration (i.e., the transition to Wave 5). Both the AmericasBarometer and panel analyses control for sociodemographics that could shape Bolsonaro support and our dependent variables: gender, socioeconomic status (household income in the panel and household wealth in the AmericasBarometer), and categorical variables for educational level, age cohort, religious affiliation, and ethnicity.<sup>12</sup>

## **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 assesses the relationship between vote choice for Bolsonaro and democratic commitment in the first months of the new presidency, using AmericasBarometer data (full results in SI Section 4). The results are stark: controlling for demographic factors, Brazilians who voted for Bolsonaro in October 2018—winners—expressed more positive attitudes than his opponents on just one of the five dependent variables: system support ( $p < .01$ ). Bolsonaro’s supporters reported lower abstract support for democracy than election losers, even after their candidate assumed office, though the gap does not meet conventional levels of statistical significance. Winners were also more likely to express support for all institutional ruptures, including coups that would presumably

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<sup>12</sup> In our panel data, we use demographics reported in the first wave.

remove Bolsonaro from office, than were election losers. Holding other variables at their observed values, voting for Bolsonaro (as opposed to another candidate) raised the probabilities of support for military coups by .18 (.46 versus .28), of support for executive-led coups by .12 (.29 versus .17), and of support for closing the supreme court by .13 (.45 versus .32). These results hint that standard models of losers' consent and thermostatic response do not apply; Bolsonaro's victory neither consistently generated winner-loser gaps in the traditional direction, nor universally increased the democratic mood.

*Table 1 about here*

These results leave questions related to temporal ordering. Did Bolsonaro attract voters who already held anti-democratic attitudes? Or did his supporters' attitudes shift over the course of the campaign? The cross-sectional results cannot address questions of selection versus influence. We turn to the online panel study to examine these questions.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 1 depicts the evolution of attitudes across the waves of the panel among those reporting a first-round vote choice for Bolsonaro versus a different candidate (see models in SI Section 5).<sup>14</sup> The top row shows the evolution of support for the democratic system and the bottom row support for institutional ruptures. The bottom left depicts support for executive takeovers of congress (an executive-enhancing institutional rupture), and the bottom right support for military coups "given the current situation," which we term "specific support for coups" (an executive-limiting rupture). Our measure of winning/losing is time-invariant within respondents, based on

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<sup>13</sup> Although Bolsonaro was not officially nominated until July 22, 2018, following our first-wave survey (July 6-21), he was a known entity; attitudes toward Bolsonaro might have affected some respondents' Wave 1 attitudes. Nonetheless, most eventual Bolsonaro voters did not start the campaign supportive of his candidacy. National polls show Bolsonaro support rose from about 20% support in late July to about 40% by October. However, even if all eventual Bolsonaro voters began the campaign with artificially weak commitment to democracy, this would not explain subsequent change.

<sup>14</sup> Results for each wave include all respondents for whom we have measures of the dependent variable and first-round vote choice. Hence, the N varies from wave to wave.

first-round vote choice reported in November or, if missing, in January. In the first three waves, respondents did not know whether they would become winners or losers; these labels are post-hoc. The pre-election results therefore show the relationship between pre-electoral attitudes and subsequent vote choice, while the post-election results depict the relationship between vote choice and subsequent attitudes. Gaps appear in some time series because not all questions were asked in all waves. All models control for a standard battery of demographics. Due to space constraints, we present results for the abstract military coup items in the SI.

*Figure 1 about here*

First, we discuss pre-campaign attitudes. Consistent with H1, at the outset of the campaign, Bolsonaro's eventual voters expressed weaker democratic commitment than did his eventual opponents. Not only did Bolsonaro supporters express lower abstract support for democracy (by 0.09 points on the 0 to 1 scale), but they were much more likely to endorse specific military coups than eventual losers (a probability of .62 versus .31, respectively). Winners were no more likely to support executive-led coups at the outset of the campaign than were losers, nor did they express lower levels of system support.

Though Bolsonaro supporters began the campaign with distinctive democratic attitudes, these attitudes subsequently changed. Intuition suggests some democratic attitudes would shift immediately following an election, and others after power formally changes hands. Even losers' faith in democratic institutions may increase immediately after a clean, orderly, and uncontested election. Following an alternation in power, winners may become less supportive of institutional ruptures, and losers more so. Consistent with H2a, Figure 1 shows that winners' support for democracy and the political system increased dramatically following Bolsonaro's election, although they dipped slightly by the post-inauguration wave. Also consistent with H2b and H2c,

winners' support for institutional ruptures changed: support for executive coups increased, but support for military coups *at present* declined. Turning to losers, we find results generally compatible with the less precise predictions of H3. In line with the *thermostatic model*, Bolsonaro's victory is associated with a rise in support for democracy and the political system, with a small drop observed between the post-election and post-inauguration waves. However, support for coups (H3b) was effectively flat, in line with the *loser's consent* model.

The intersecting attitudinal shifts also resulted in changing winner-loser gaps, consistent with H4a. In contrast to *losers' consent* perspectives anticipating widening post-election gaps in abstract democratic support, these gaps *shrink* following Bolsonaro's victory, as winners catch up to losers. While gaps disappeared post-election, Figure 1 shows a small, renewed gap in January, such that *losers* expressed stronger democratic support than winners; however, that January gap does not appear in some model specifications discussed below, nor in the AmericasBarometer analysis. Notably, the winner-loser gap in system support inverts. Winners began the campaign slightly *less* supportive of the system than losers, but by Bolsonaro's inauguration, they reported significantly *higher* support. Patterns in support for coups also match our expectations. The winner-loser gap in support for executive-affirming coups *grows* after Bolsonaro's win (H4b), as victors become more supportive of ruptures that would consolidate his power. Bolsonaro's winners are also significantly more supportive of executive-limiting coups post-election than losers, as in the AmericasBarometer. However, the panel data reveal that the size of the gap contracted substantially, from .31 to .13, over the course of the campaign, consistent with H4c.

Difference-in-differences models more precisely elucidate the relationship between changes in democratic commitment and support for Bolsonaro, while accounting for voters' different baseline democratic attitudes. In Table 2, the coefficients for the variable *Winner<sub>July</sub>*

represent the baseline gap between eventual winners and losers in July 2018. Coefficients for the variable *Time* represent the change in attitudes among losers, and the interaction represents the difference in changes in attitudes over the course of the campaign among winners (the difference-in-differences).<sup>15</sup> The top panel assesses changes between July and the November (post-election) wave, and the bottom panel between July and January (post-inauguration) (results are presented graphically in SI Section 6).

*Table 2 about here*

Consistent with H1, the baseline coefficients for *Winner<sub>July</sub>* confirm that at the outset of the campaign, eventual winners were more weakly committed to democracy than eventual losers on three dimensions: abstract support for democracy and support for abstract and specific military coups. Consistent with H2a, the coefficients for the interaction term (the difference-in-differences) indicate that winners grew more supportive of democracy in the abstract between July and November and of the political system between July and January. However, winners did not come to reject institutional ruptures consistently. Instead, they became substantially more supportive of executive-enhancing coups (consistent with H2b), and, in the July–January model, marginally less likely to support executive-limiting military coups under present circumstances (H2c); their support for military coups in the abstract remained unchanged.

Coefficients for *Time* represent changes in attitudes among losers, and provide mixed support for H3. Consistent with the thermostatic model (H3a), losers became substantially more supportive of democracy in the abstract and the political system following Bolsonaro’s election and inauguration. Intriguingly—and contrary to H3b and H3c—they also became less supportive

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<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the parallel trends assumption, see the SI.

of coups in several models. In short, there is strong evidence that—consistent with the *thermostatic model*—losers rallied to support the threatened democratic regime.

Finally, the sum of the coefficient for *Winner<sub>July</sub>* and the difference-in-differences estimator yields the post-election attitudinal gap between winners and losers. Winner-loser gaps in abstract support for democracy and the political system generally narrowed post-election, consistent with H4a, but the January gap in abstract system support actually switched signs and grew in magnitude. Pre-election gaps in support for institutional ruptures did not disappear after the election; rather, some narrowed and others widened. Consistent with H4b, the winner-loser gap in support for coups shoring up the authoritarian leader’s power grew dramatically post-election; only gaps in support for executive-limiting coups under the present circumstances shrank post-inauguration.

#### *Additional Analyses and Robustness Checks*

The Supplemental Information presents four analyses supplementing our panel data results. Above, Figure 1 analyzes “specific” support for coups given current circumstances. SI Section 7 analyzes two items on abstract coup support from our panel; it shows first wave gaps of more than 30 percentage points, which grow slightly by Wave 5. Second, to address concerns about whether our system support results relate to specific or diffuse institutional support, SI Section 8 demonstrates that the statistically significant Wave 5 gap is driven by the three more abstract items in the index, not institutional performance. Third, SI Section 9 finds that the attitudinal trajectories of abstainers and invalid voters resemble those of election losers, for all dependent variables. Fourth, we analyze results by second-round vote. Above, we analyzed first-round vote choice to facilitate comparison to the AmericasBarometer, which does not measure second-round vote



choice, and because first-round vote choice is more likely to be sincere, as opposed to strategic. Nonetheless, results in SI Section 10 are actually stronger than those for the first-round.

We also present additional evidence that democratic attitudes at the campaign's outset predicted later votes for Bolsonaro (H1). SI Section 11 presents models of vote choice, using trichotomous dependent variables capturing votes for Bolsonaro, for another candidate, or null/blank in the first and second rounds. Net of demographics, democratic attitudes measured in July strongly predicted support for Bolsonaro in October, as expected. The impact persists (but attenuates considerably) even after controlling for downstream attitudes toward issues such as race, homosexuality, gender, gun ownership, and human rights.

To assess whether our AmericasBarometer results may be driven by excluded attitudinal variables predicting Bolsonaro support, SI Section 12 presents models including additional attitudinal controls, such as attitudes toward the military, crime, and corruption. Results are consistent with those presented here.

We conduct two final statistical tests of the robustness of results. As an alternative to the difference-in-differences models, SI Section 13 presents models predicting fourth- and fifth-wave dependent variables, controlling for lagged first-wave dependent variables. The lagged dependent variable models largely confirm the difference-in-differences results, with the exception that winning is not associated with abstract democratic support in Wave 5. SI Section 14 addresses potential concerns about attrition conditional on first-wave democratic attitudes. Attributing attitudinal stability to attriters does not change our results. Moreover, results from a Heckman model accounting for attrition, conditional on democratic attitudes and demographics, remain

unchanged, except that winning does not significantly predict abstract democratic support.<sup>16</sup> This last result is consistent with the AmericasBarometer and lagged dependent variable models.

### **Discussion: What if Bolsonaro Lost, or Never Ran?**

We focus on a case in which an authoritarian candidate prevailed in a democratic election. But what if Bolsonaro had lost, or never run? Two alternative scenarios (Fearon 1991) might produce distinct dynamics in winners' and losers' support for the democratic system and support for institutional ruptures: 1) an election in which neither candidate is authoritarian, and 2) an election where the authoritarian candidate loses. Based solely on our analysis, we cannot know whether the attitudinal patterns we uncover result from the authoritarian's victory or some other cause. We expect that the contingent nature of "winners' consent" is a phenomenon specific to cases where authoritarian candidates prevail. Where no authoritarian candidate is on the ballot, we would expect winner-loser dynamics consistent with the traditional losers' consent model. Where authoritarian candidates lose, we expect their voters to express significantly higher support for institutional ruptures than non-authoritarian voters, as in our winners' consent formulation; however, we would expect significantly *lower* support for the democratic system among authoritarian losers.<sup>17</sup>

In the SI, we present analysis of two data sources that provide useful leverage. AmericasBarometer data from Brazil span the elections of 2006, 2010, and 2014; no authoritarian competed in these elections. AmericasBarometer data collected after Peru's 2016 presidential race give insight into an election in which a viable authoritarian candidate lost. In Brazil, we observe

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<sup>16</sup> Models for abstract democratic support were unstable; we were unable to use survey weights.

<sup>17</sup> Because these scenarios do not affect the provision of democracy, the thermostatic model does not apply (Claassen 2020b p. 37).

no significant winner-loser gaps in abstract support for democracy prior to the 2018 election; however, winners reported significantly higher system support than losers following three of four elections, including that of Bolsonaro. Prior to 2018, we see no significant winner-loser gaps in support for military or executive coups, but observe a substantial gap following Bolsonaro's victory. In Peru, where authoritarian candidate Keiko Fujimori competed and lost in 2016, we observe large winner-loser gaps in democratic attitudes. Authoritarian losers—those who voted for Fujimori in 2016—reported significantly lower support for democracy and the political system than winners, and higher abstract support for military coups. Indeed, gaps in support for the democratic system and institutional ruptures were larger in 2017 than in prior survey years.

## **Conclusion**

Can the victory of an electoral authoritarian build commitment to the democratic game among previously disaffected citizens? An optimistic reading of our results is that Bolsonaro's victory did so, paradoxically stabilizing Brazil's democracy over the long term. We do not share this view, however. While Bolsonaro's supporters expressed newfound enthusiasm for democracy and the political system, victory made them even more strongly supportive of institutional ruptures that would benefit their newly-elected president. Indeed, in the time since his election, Bolsonaro has taken apparently anti-democratic actions, including repeatedly siding with pro-dictatorship and pro-coup protestors (Smith 2020). There is no guarantee that Bolsonaro would be able to capitalize on his supporters' ambivalence toward foundational regime principles to orchestrate a complete break from the liberal democratic order, but extant research suggests that wavering public support for democratic norms and institutions makes backsliding more likely (Claassen 2020a).

If there is a silver lining to be salvaged, it is that pro-democracy citizens can retain loyalty to the regime in the face of authoritarian victories. Consistent with the thermostatic model of democratic support, we show that Bolsonaro's opponents are *even more* committed to democratic norms in the wake of a bitter election defeat, at least through the early weeks of Bolsonaro's government in January 2019. Unlike Bolsonaro's voters, his detractors' support for the democratic system was not conditioned by particular electoral outcomes; they did not turn against the regime that gave a platform to an anti-democratic candidate and, ultimately, to a president they opposed. The willingness to accept such an election result represents a difficult test of democrats' support for fundamental regime principles.

Thus, our results do not reflect a traditional losers' consent dynamic. Winning elections is supposed to be easy and losing hard. The core takeaway from the losers' consent argument is that losers pose a greater risk to democracy than winners. Yet our results suggest that authoritarian winners' support for the political system is at best contingent. If an authoritarian incumbent who retains popular support refuses to adhere to democratic norms in subsequent contests, this contingent support may dwindle, with authoritarian winners increasingly favoring anti-democratic machinations. And if opposition actors begin to see themselves as permanent political losers, the literature is clear: the consequences for political stability could be dire.

Our results suggest that it is essential to consider the democratic orientation of political candidates, as well as a broader array of voters' democratic commitments, to fully understand the role elections play in sustaining democratic legitimacy. For example, a narrower focus on abstract regime support would lead us to overlook troubling trends regarding authoritarian winners' tolerance for anti-democratic maneuvers. And without examining an election in which the winning

candidate openly flouts democratic norms and processes, we would not uncover the nuanced winner-loser dynamics that emerge when the democratic stakes are at their highest.

More broadly, our results suggest a need for further empirical and theoretical work studying how voters' commitment to democracy responds to elections. Future research should seek to replicate and extend these results in higher-quality, probability-based panel studies, ideally face-to-face ones. It should also expand this work to other contexts where candidates do not share normative commitments to democratic governance, while analyzing an array of measures of citizen commitment to democratic institutions and processes. In the context of a global democratic recession, it appears that in new and old democracies alike, democracy itself is on the ballot. It is vital for scholars to deepen their understanding of the dynamics of these potentially regime-defining elections to better understand the risks of democratic breakdown and to explore alternative pathways forward throughout the world.

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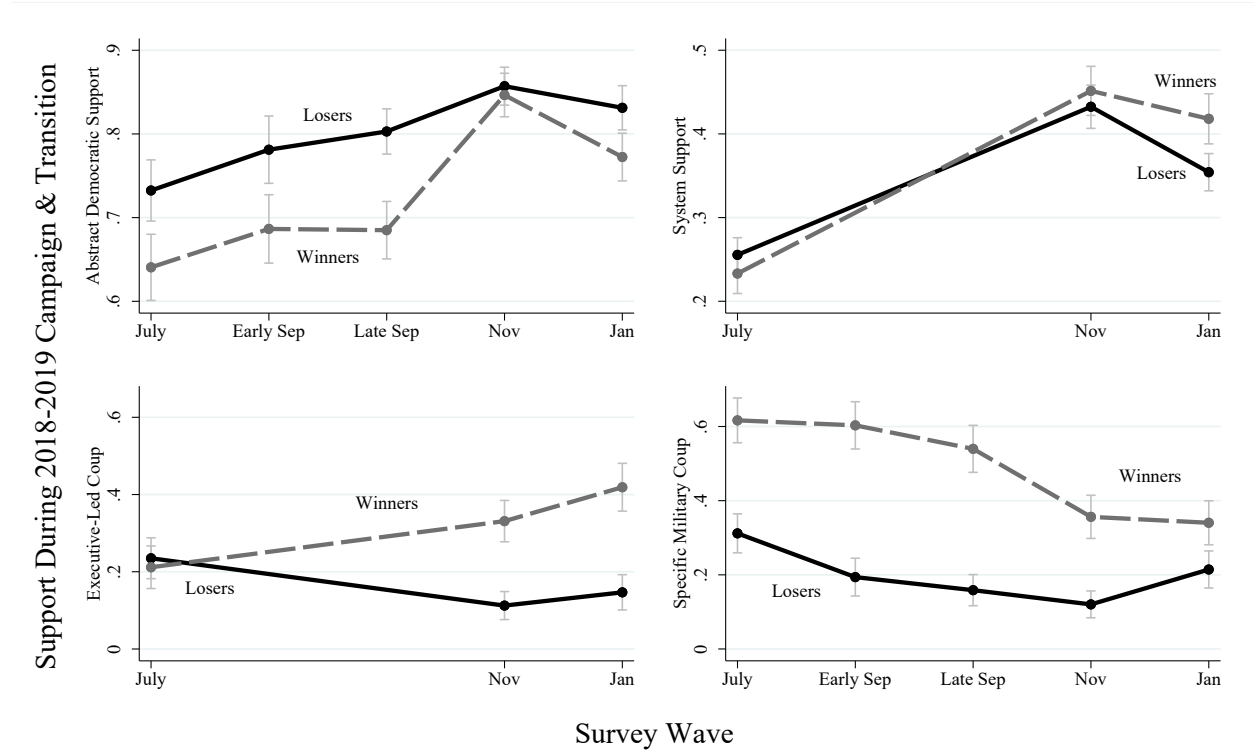
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Table 1. Democratic Attitudes and Bolsonaro Support, AmericasBarometer, Jan-Mar 2019

|  | Abstract<br>Democratic<br>Support | System<br>Support | Military<br>Coups | Executive-<br>Led Coups | Closing<br>Supreme<br>Court |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bolsonaro Voter                          | -0.035<br>(0.021)                 | 0.052<br>(0.016)  | 0.782<br>(0.185)  | 0.728<br>(0.305)        | 0.640<br>(0.292)            |
| Abstained/Blank or Null<br>Voter         | -0.048<br>(0.023)                 | 0.010<br>(0.018)  | 0.168<br>(0.193)  | 0.100<br>(0.310)        | 0.048<br>(0.297)            |
| Controls for Demographics                | YES                               | YES               | YES               | YES                     | YES                         |
| Region Fixed Effects &<br>Municipal Size | YES                               | YES               | YES               | YES                     | YES                         |
| <i>Observations</i>                      | <i>1272</i>                       | <i>1293</i>       | <i>1212</i>       | <i>616</i>              | <i>620</i>                  |

Notes: Models of abstract democratic support and system support are estimated using OLS. Models of support for military and executive-led coups and for closing the supreme court are estimated using logistic regression. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Figure 1. Changes in Democratic Attitudes of Bolsonaro's Winners and Losers, 2018–2019



Notes: The top row presents predicted values from OLS models using survey weights; the bottom row presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. All analyses control for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013).

Table 2. Difference-in-Differences Models of Democratic Attitudes and Winner Status

| Period                           | Support for:                |                   |                         |                   |                         |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
|                                  | Abstract Democratic Support | System Support    | Abstract Military Coups | Executive Coups   | Specific Military Coups |
| <i>July to Post-Election</i>     |                             |                   |                         |                   |                         |
| Winner July                      | -0.105<br>(0.038)           | -0.024<br>(0.021) |                         | -0.047<br>(0.352) | 1.371<br>(0.283)        |
| Time                             | 0.123<br>(0.029)            | 0.178<br>(0.022)  |                         | -0.923<br>(0.345) | -1.247<br>(0.312)       |
| Winner X Time                    | 0.087<br>(0.044)            | 0.038<br>(0.034)  |                         | 1.737<br>(0.465)  | 0.117<br>(0.417)        |
| <i>N (July)</i>                  | 784                         | 799               |                         | 697               | 701                     |
| <i>July to Post-Inauguration</i> |                             |                   |                         |                   |                         |
| Winner July                      | -0.099<br>(0.039)           | -0.019<br>(0.021) | 1.334<br>(0.288)        | -0.011<br>(0.330) | 1.381<br>(0.299)        |
| Time                             | 0.101<br>(0.030)            | 0.101<br>(0.020)  | 0.153<br>(0.272)        | -0.545<br>(0.358) | -0.564<br>(0.289)       |
| Winner X Time                    | 0.020<br>(0.046)            | 0.079<br>(0.033)  | 0.338<br>(0.382)        | 1.594<br>(0.471)  | -0.709<br>(0.416)       |
| <i>N (July)</i>                  | 784                         | 799               | 710                     | 697               | 701                     |

Notes: Models of abstract democratic support and system support are estimated using OLS, with survey weights. Models of support for coups are estimated using logistic regression. All the models control for demographics. The July to Post-Election model of support for abstract coups is missing because the measure was not asked in Wave 4. Standard errors are in parentheses.



**Winners' Consent  
Supplementary Information**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Variable Coding.....   | 1  |
| 2. Sample Characteristics.....  | 5  |
| 3. Analysis of Attrition from the Panel Study.....  | 7  |
| 4. Democratic Attitudes and Bolsonaro Support in the 2018 AmericasBarometer, Complete Results.....  | 8  |
| 5. Democratic Attitudes and “Winner Status” in the Panel Data, Complete Results .....   | 9  |
| 6. Graphical Representation of Predicted Values from Difference-in-Differences Models .....   | 11 |
| 7. Analysis of Support for Abstract Military Coups in the Panel Study.....  | 13 |
| 8. Disaggregated Trends in System Support, by Each Component Variable .....   | 14 |
| 9. Disaggregated Results by Type of Vote .....  | 15 |
| 10. Do Second-Round Election Winners React Similarly to First-Round Winners? .....  | 17 |
| 11. Further Tests of H1: Democratic Attitudes in July Predict October Vote Choice.....  | 18 |
| 12. Do Attitudes Toward the Military, Crime, or Corruption Explain the Effect of Bolsonaro Support on Democratic Attitudes in the AmericasBarometer?..... | 21 |
| 13. Lagged Dependent Variable Models of Democratic Commitment .....   | 21 |
| 14. Analyses Accounting for Panel Study Attrition.....  | 22 |
| 15. Assessing Counterfactual Scenarios .....  | 25 |
| References.....   | 29 |

## 1. Variable Coding

Table A1. Variable Names and Coding in the Two Datasets

| Variable                              | AmericasBarometer   | Panel Study  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Abstract Democratic Support           | <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>Originally coded 1-7; rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i></p>   | <p>ING4: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.”</p> <p><i>Originally coded 1-7; rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i></p>  |
| System Support                        | <p><i>Mean of responses to five items:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B1: “To what extent do you think the courts in Brazil guarantee a fair trial?”</li> <li>• B2: “To what extent do you respect the political institutions of Brazil?”</li> <li>• B3: “To what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of Brazil?”</li> <li>• B4: “To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of Brazil?”</li> <li>• B6: “To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of Brazil?”</li> </ul> <p><i>Originally coded 1-7; rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i></p> | <p><i>Mean of responses to five items:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INSTITUTIONS1_1: “To what extent do you think the courts in Brazil guarantee a fair trial?”</li> <li>• INSTITUTIONS1_2: “To what extent do you respect the political institutions of Brazil?”</li> <li>• INSTITUTIONS1_3: “To what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of Brazil?”</li> <li>• INSTITUTIONS1_4: “To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of Brazil?”</li> <li>• INSTITUTIONS1_5: “To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of Brazil?”</li> </ul> <p><i>Originally coded 1-7; rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i></p> |
| Support for (Abstract) Military Coups | <p><i>Response to either JC10 or JC13 (each was administered to a split sample):</i></p> <p>“Now, changing the subject. 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JC10: “When there is a lot of crime.”</li> <li>• JC13: “When there is a lot of corruption.”</li> </ul> <p><i>Coded as a dichotomous variable, where ‘1’ indicates that a coup would be justified and ‘0’ that a coup would not.</i></p>  | <p><i>Analysis relies on two separate variables:</i></p> <p>“Now, changing the subject. 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JC10: “When there is a lot of crime.”</li> <li>• JC13: “When there is a lot of corruption.”</li> </ul> <p><i>Each variable is coded dichotomously, where ‘1’ indicates that a coup would be justified and ‘0’ that a coup would not.</i></p>  |

| Variable                              | AmericasBarometer  | Panel Study   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Support for Specific Military Coups   |  | Continuing the JC battery:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JC99: “Under the current conditions.” Coded as a dichotomous variable, where ‘1’ indicates that a coup would be justified and ‘0’ that a coup would not.</li> </ul>  |
| Support for Executive-Led Coups       | 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 Congress and govern without Congress?”<br><i>Administered to half of respondents. Coded as a dichotomous variable, where ‘1’ indicates that a coup would be justified and ‘0’ that a coup would not.</i>               | JC1C5A. “Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Congress and govern without Congress?”<br><i>Coded as a dichotomous variable, where ‘1’ indicates that a coup would be justified and ‘0’ that a coup would not.</i>  |
| Support for Closing the Supreme Court | 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?”<br><i>Administered to half of respondents. Coded as a dichotomous variable, where ‘1’ indicates that closure would be justified and ‘0’ that it would not.</i> |   |
| Bolsonaro Voter                       | <i>Based on spontaneous responses to:</i><br>VB3N. “Who did you vote for in the last presidential election of 2018?”<br><i>Coded ‘1’ for those who said they voted for Bolsonaro; ‘0’ for those who said they voted for some other candidate; and ‘2’ for those who said they voted null or blank or abstained.</i>  |   |
| First-Round Winner                    |  | <i>Based on self-coded responses to the following questions:</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAND_VOTE: “Here is a list of candidates in the presidential election of 2018. Which candidate do you plan to vote for?” (Waves 2 &amp; 3)</li> <li>CAND_VOTE: “Here is a list of candidates from the first round of the presidential election of 2018. Which candidate did you vote for in the first round?” (Waves 4 &amp; 5)</li> </ul> <i>Coded ‘1’ for those who said they voted for Bolsonaro; ‘0’ for those who said they voted for some other candidate; and</i> |

| Variable                 | AmericasBarometer   | Panel Study  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
|                          |   | <i>missing for those who said they voted null or blank or abstained.</i>   |
| Second-Round Winner      |   | <i>Based on self-coded responses to: CAND_VOTE_2NDROUND: “Which candidate did you vote for in the second round?” (Waves 4 &amp; 5)<br/>Coded ‘1’ for those who said they voted for Bolsonaro; ‘0’ for those who said they voted for Haddad; and missing for those who said they voted null or blank or abstained.</i>  |
| Support for Armed Forces | B12. “To what extent do you trust the Armed Forces?”<br><i>Originally coded 1-7; rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i>   |  |
| Concern about Security   | AOJ11. “Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe?”<br>(1) Very safe<br>(2) Somewhat safe<br>(3) Somewhat unsafe<br>(4) Very unsafe<br><i>Originally coded 1-4; Rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i> |  |
| Gender (Female)          | Coded by interviewer; takes the value of 1 for women and 0 otherwise.   | Reported by respondent; takes the value of “1” for women, “0” otherwise  |
| Household Wealth         | <i>An index based on a principal components analysis of a series of household possessions: R1, R3 R4, R4A, R5, R6, R7, R12, R14, R15.<br/>Rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i>  |  |
| Household Income         |   | <i>Based on two items:<br/>Q10NEW: “In which of the following categories is your household’s monthly income located, including remittances from abroad and the income from all the adults and children who work?” (Coded in 16 categories, rescaled to run 0 to 1.)<br/>For respondents who did not report income, we substitute a 0-1 measure of social class, reported by the survey firm.</i> |
| Level of Education       | ED. “What is the highest level of education you completed?”   | ED2_1. “What is the highest level of education you completed?” We include a  |

| <b>Variable</b>            | <b>AmericasBarometer</b>   | <b>Panel Study</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|---|
|                            | <i>Responses are recoded as a categorical variable for No Education; Primary Education; Secondary Education; Secondary Education; and Higher Education.</i>  | series of dummy variables ranging from no education to complete post-graduate education.  |
| Age                        | Q2. “How old are you?”<br><i>Responses were reported in years and recoded into age brackets.</i>   | Q2. “How old are you?”<br><i>Responses were reported in years and recoded into age brackets.</i>  |
| Religion                   | Q3C. “What is your religion, if any?”<br><i>A categorical variable for Catholic; Evangelical/Pentecostal; No religion; and Other Religion is coded based on spontaneous response.</i>  | Q3C. “What is your religion, if any?”<br><i>A categorical variable for Catholic; Evangelical/Pentecostal; No religion; and Other Religion is coded based on self-coded responses.</i>   |
| Church Attendance          | Q5A. “How often do you attend religious services? [Read alternatives]”<br>(1) More than once per week<br>(2) Once per week<br>(3) Once a month<br>(4) Once or twice a year<br>(5) Never or almost never<br><i>Reverse-coded and rescaled to run from 0 to 1.</i> | <i>(Not included as a control in the analysis due to high levels of missing data.)</i>  |
| Ethnicity                  | ETID. “Do you consider yourself white, black, brown, indigenous, or yellow [i.e., Asian]?”<br><i>Recoded as a categorical variable for White; Indigenous; Afro-Brazilian; and Other.</i>   | ETID. “Do you consider yourself white, black, brown, indigenous, or yellow [i.e., Asian]?” The response option rendered for “Black” reads in Portuguese “Negra (Preta, Afro-Brasileira).” We include dummy variables for each category in our analyses; “White” is the excluded category. |
| Size of Place of Residence | TAMANO. “Size of place”:<br>(1) National Capital (Metropolitan area)<br>(2) Large City<br>(3) Medium City<br>(4) Small City<br>(5) Rural Area<br><i>Coded by interviewer.</i>  |   |
| Region                     | Categorical variable for Brazil’s five regions.  |   |

Table A2. Correspondence Between Our Variables and Variables from Losers’ Consent and Claassen’s “In the Mood for Democracy?”

| <b><i>Losers’ Consent Variables</i></b>  | <b>Thermostatic Model Variables</b>  | <b>Our Corresponding Variables</b>    |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Churchill question: “Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government...” (Chapters 3, 6)   | Churchill question: “Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government...” | Abstract Democratic Support           |
| Respondents’ evaluations of political system performance; satisfaction with democracy; trust in government; confidence in parliament, national government; fairness of the electoral process. (Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) | N/A  | System Support                        |
| Evaluations of political system where “the army rule(s) the country.” (Chapters 3, 6)  | “Military Rule” items drawn from 8 regional surveys.   | Support for Military Coups            |
|  |  | Support for Abstract Coups            |
|  |  | Support for Specific Coups            |
| Evaluations of political system with “...strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.” (Chapters 3, 6)   | “Strong Leader” items drawn from 12 regional surveys.  | Support for Executive-Led Coups       |
|  |  | Support for Closing the Supreme Court |

## 2. Sample Characteristics

In a middle-income country like Brazil, Internet-based studies fail to represent poor citizens lacking quality Internet access. In Table A3, we therefore provide information about our sample characteristics and compare our sample to the AmericasBarometer, a face-to-face, nationally representative study of 1,498 respondents conducted in January-March, 2019. While the AmericasBarometer has better coverage of lower-income respondents, the study is a cross-sectional (i.e., non-panel) survey conducted three months after the election. Because demographics, vote choice, and political attitudes are measured simultaneously, analysis of the AmericasBarometer presents threats to causal inference.

We further compare both samples to results from the 2010 census, as well as the 2018 Synthesis of Social Indicators (SIS, for its acronym in Portuguese). Please note that Brazil’s 2010 census is highly out-of-date, and the census due in 2020 has not yet been conducted, owing in part to pandemic-related delays. However, the SIS is based on a high-quality national household survey by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, the federal census bureau). In addition, please note that education data from both IBGE data series are limited to citizens ages 25 and older, while age distribution is for citizens ages 16 and over. Given rapid changes in the educational system in Brazil since 2000, these data limitations also likely skew the reported distribution of educational attainment slightly downwards.

Table A3. Demographics of the Samples

|                             | Our panel survey |                    | Americas<br>Barometer | 2010<br>Census | 2018<br>SIS |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|
|                             | Wave 1<br>sample | Waves 1,<br>3, & 4 |                       |                |             |
| Number of Observations      | 2,018            | 949                | 1,498                 |                |             |
| Bolsonaro % of 2nd Round    | N/A              | 65.8               | 58.3                  | N/A            | N/A         |
| % Female                    | 49.5             | 43.9               | 50.1                  | 51.0           | N/A         |
| Race                        |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % White                     | 43.8             | 52.0               | 29.1                  | 47.7           | N/A         |
| % Brown                     | 40.0             | 35.7               | 42.0                  | 43.1           | N/A         |
| % Black                     | 11.0             | 8.3                | 20.6                  | 7.6            | N/A         |
| Religion                    |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % Catholic                  | 42.2             | 44.8               | 50.1                  | 64.6           | N/A         |
| % Evangelical               | 29.1             | 26.2               | 29.8                  | 22.1           | N/A         |
| % No Religion               | 13.1             | 14.2               | 12.7                  | 8.0            | N/A         |
| % Other Religion            | 15.6             | 15.8               | 7.4                   | 3.4            | N/A         |
| Education                   |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % No/Primary Education      | 7.2              | 3.9                | 25.6                  | 76.1           | 48.1        |
| % Secondary Education       | 45.8             | 41.7               | 63.4                  | 16.3           | 31.4        |
| % Higher Education          | 47.0             | 54.4               | 11.1                  | 6.8            | 20.5        |
| Income                      |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % <R\$950 / <= R\$ 954      | 15.8             | 11.7               | N/A                   | N/A            | N/A         |
| % R\$951-1950 / R\$955-1908 | 35.3             | 29.1               | N/A                   | N/A            | N/A         |
| % R\$1951-4950/R\$1909-4770 | 32.7             | 36.4               | N/A                   | N/A            | N/A         |
| % R\$4951+ / R\$4771+       | 16.2             | 22.9               | N/A                   | N/A            | N/A         |
| Age                         |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % 16-24                     | 22.0             | 15.9               | 22.4                  | 23.6           | N/A         |
| % 25-34                     | 24.7             | 20.1               | 22.7                  | 22.0           | N/A         |
| % 35-44                     | 20.8             | 20.2               | 21.7                  | 18.8           | N/A         |
| % 45-59                     | 24.2             | 32.2               | 19.8                  | 21.3           | N/A         |
| % >= 60                     | 8.3              | 11.5               | 13.4                  | 14.2           | N/A         |
| Region                      |                  |                    |                       |                |             |
| % North                     | 11.0             | 9.4                | 6.8                   | 8.3            | N/A         |
| % Northeast                 | 26.0             | 24.8               | 25.8                  | 27.8           | N/A         |
| % Center-West               | 16.9             | 18.6               | 7.2                   | 7.4            | N/A         |
| % Southeast                 | 29.2             | 29.2               | 45.2                  | 42.1           | N/A         |
| % South                     | 17.0             | 18.1               | 15.0                  | 14.4           | N/A         |

Notes: 2010 census and 2018 SIS data for education are for adults aged 25 and over (census tables are not available for ages 16+). Census data for age are residents aged 15 and over.

### 3. Analysis of Attrition from the Panel Study

To assess the extent to which the panel data may be subject to attrition biases, Table A4 presents the results of a logistic regression model regressing an indicator variable for those who were not present in any wave after the first wave on a vector of attitudinal and demographic variables. Perhaps the most important result from the analysis is that Wave 1 values of our dependent variables do not predict attrition, nor does Wave 1 support for Jair Bolsonaro.

The table does, however, indicate some demographic biases in attrition. The most pronounced finding is that all our measures of socioeconomic status (including education, self-reported social class, and household income) predict attrition, such that higher SES individuals were more likely to remain in the sample. Such a finding is common in panel studies in Brazil. Relatedly, those identifying as Black or Indigenous were also less likely to remain in the sample. In addition, women were slightly more likely to drop out, while those approximately middle-aged (36-65 years old) were less likely to drop out than our youngest and oldest respondents. However, religion and region of residence did not predict attrition.

Table A4. Logistic Regression Model of Attrition from the Wave 1 Sample

|  | Coefficient | Standard Error | p-value |
|--|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Abstract Democratic Support (Wave 1)     | -0.236      | 0.196          | 0.229   |
| System Support (Wave 1)                  | 0.024       | 0.328          | 0.941   |
| Support for Abstract Coups (Wave 1)      | 0.015       | 0.162          | 0.927   |
| Support for Specific Coups (Wave 1)      | 0.065       | 0.161          | 0.688   |
| Support for Executive-Led Coups (Wave 1) | 0.026       | 0.151          | 0.862   |
| Support for Jair Bolsonaro (Wave 1)      | -0.032      | 0.028          | 0.255   |
| Female                                   | 0.305       | 0.130          | 0.019   |
| Race Brown                               | 0.144       | 0.143          | 0.314   |
| Race Black                               | 0.616       | 0.223          | 0.006   |
| Indigenous                               | 1.021       | 0.541          | 0.059   |
| Asian/Other                              | 0.581       | 0.370          | 0.116   |
| Secondary Education                      | -0.833      | 0.360          | 0.021   |
| Higher Education                         | -0.973      | 0.369          | 0.008   |
| Age 26-35                                | -0.011      | 0.186          | 0.952   |
| Age 36-45                                | -0.247      | 0.198          | 0.211   |
| Age 46-55                                | -0.390      | 0.217          | 0.073   |
| Age 56-65                                | -0.429      | 0.232          | 0.064   |
| Age 66/100                               | -0.101      | 0.368          | 0.784   |
| Evangelical                              | 0.063       | 0.153          | 0.681   |
| No Religion                              | -0.117      | 0.189          | 0.535   |
| Other Religion                           | 0.267       | 0.178          | 0.133   |
| Northeast Region                         | -0.151      | 0.198          | 0.446   |
| North Region                             | 0.278       | 0.238          | 0.243   |



|                         | Coefficient  | Standard Error | p-value      |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Southeast Region        | -0.058       | 0.185          | 0.753        |
| South Region            | -0.030       | 0.211          | 0.887        |
| Social Class B1         | 0.192        | 0.301          | 0.523        |
| Social Class B2         | 0.229        | 0.284          | 0.421        |
| Social Class C1         | 0.486        | 0.294          | 0.098        |
| Social Class C2         | 0.645        | 0.329          | 0.050        |
| Social Class D-E        | 1.129        | 0.375          | 0.003        |
| Household Income        | -0.583       | 0.267          | 0.029        |
| <i>Constant</i>         | <i>1.005</i> | <i>0.570</i>   | <i>0.078</i> |
| <i>Pseudo R-Squared</i> | <i>0.094</i> |                |              |

Note: The indicator variable for “attrition” is coded 1 for respondents who were not present in any wave after the first wave, and is coded 0 for respondents who were present in any subsequent wave.

#### 4. Democratic Attitudes and Bolsonaro Support in the 2018 AmericasBarometer, Complete Results

Table A5 presents models corresponding to Table 1 presented in the main text.

Table A5. Democratic Attitudes and Bolsonaro Support, AmericasBarometer, Jan-Mar 2019

|                               | Abstract Democratic Support | System Support    | Military Coups    | Executive-Led Coups | Closing Supreme Court |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Bolsonaro Voter               | -0.035<br>(0.021)           | 0.052<br>(0.016)  | 0.782<br>(0.185)  | 0.728<br>(0.305)    | 0.640<br>(0.292)      |
| Abstained/Blank or Null Voter | -0.048<br>(0.023)           | 0.010<br>(0.018)  | 0.168<br>(0.193)  | 0.100<br>(0.310)    | 0.048<br>(0.297)      |
| Female                        | -0.048<br>(0.018)           | 0.012<br>(0.013)  | -0.051<br>(0.112) | 0.087<br>(0.216)    | -0.215<br>(0.175)     |
| Household Wealth              | 0.079<br>(0.072)            | -0.071<br>(0.057) | 0.304<br>(0.528)  | -0.340<br>(0.870)   | -1.502<br>(0.758)     |
| Primary Education             | 0.051<br>(0.088)            | -0.039<br>(0.055) | -0.266<br>(0.576) | -0.346<br>(0.931)   | 1.011<br>(0.597)      |
| Secondary Education           | 0.082<br>(0.088)            | -0.077<br>(0.057) | -0.361<br>(0.593) | -0.450<br>(0.992)   | 0.163<br>(0.560)      |
| Higher Education              | 0.210<br>(0.094)            | -0.083<br>(0.059) | -0.804<br>(0.602) | -0.525<br>(1.052)   | 0.053<br>(0.623)      |
| Age 26-35                     | 0.022<br>(0.024)            | -0.050<br>(0.020) | 0.198<br>(0.208)  | -0.933<br>(0.382)   | 0.048<br>(0.312)      |
| Age 36-45                     | 0.047                       | -0.097            | -0.01             | -0.556              | -0.498                |

|   | Abstract Democratic Support | System Support    | Military Coups    | Executive-Led Coups | Closing Supreme Court |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Age 46-55                               | (0.024)<br>0.058            | (0.017)<br>-0.078 | (0.187)<br>0.189  | (0.370)<br>-0.195   | (0.283)<br>0.01       |
| Age 56-65                               | (0.031)<br>0.089            | (0.024)<br>-0.032 | (0.230)<br>0.442  | (0.455)<br>-0.839   | (0.352)<br>0.479      |
| Age 66+                                 | (0.033)<br>0.117            | (0.028)<br>0.055  | (0.250)<br>0.364  | (0.500)<br>-0.204   | (0.331)<br>-0.146     |
| Protestant/Pentecostal                  | (0.047)<br>0.058            | (0.034)<br>0.017  | (0.340)<br>0.290  | (0.557)<br>-0.038   | (0.422)<br>0.301      |
| No Religion                             | (0.022)<br>0.004            | (0.018)<br>-0.010 | (0.164)<br>-0.004 | (0.264)<br>0.158    | (0.198)<br>0.057      |
| Other Religion                          | (0.030)<br>0.074            | (0.023)<br>-0.034 | (0.221)<br>0.297  | (0.382)<br>0.439    | (0.311)<br>0.523      |
| Church Attendance                       | (0.041)<br>0.003            | (0.028)<br>0.074  | (0.251)<br>-0.392 | (0.428)<br>-0.351   | (0.399)<br>-0.175     |
|   | (0.031)<br>0.003            | (0.023)<br>0.074  | (0.220)<br>-0.392 | (0.354)<br>-0.351   | (0.307)<br>-0.175     |
| Controls for Ethnicity & Municipal Size | YES                         | YES               | YES               | YES                 | YES                   |
| Region Fixed Effects                    | YES                         | YES               | YES               | YES                 | YES                   |
| <i>Observations</i>                     | <i>1272</i>                 | <i>1293</i>       | <i>1212</i>       | <i>616</i>          | <i>620</i>            |

Notes: Models of abstract democratic support and system support are estimated using OLS. Models of support for military and executive-led coups and for closing the supreme court are estimated using logistic regression. Standard errors are in parentheses.

## 5. Democratic Attitudes and “Winner Status” in the Panel Data, Complete Results

Figure 1 in the main text depicts trajectories in four of our attitudinal dependent variables. This section presents additional supporting analysis. Table A6 presents the full, multivariate results corresponding to the figure.

Of note, the coefficients for the interaction terms in the pre-election waves (Wave 2 X Winner and Wave 3 X Winner) are largely statistically insignificant, though we lack pre-election trend data for abstract system support and support for executive-led coups. Nonetheless, what data we have suggests that the assumption of parallel trends (a key assumption in the difference-in-differences models to come) largely holds in our data.

Table A6. Democratic Attitudes and “Winner” Status, July 2018–January 2019

|                          | Abstract Democratic Support | System Support | Support Abstract Military Coups | Support Executive-Led Coups | Support Specific Military Coups |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Winner (Wave 1 Baseline) | -0.092                      | -0.022         | 1.309                           | -0.149                      | 1.411                           |

|                     | Abstract<br>Democratic<br>Support | System<br>Support | Support<br>Abstract<br>Military<br>Coups | Support<br>Executive-<br>Led<br>Coups | Support<br>Specific<br>Military<br>Coups |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Wave 2              | (0.039)<br>0.049                  | (0.023)           | (0.288)<br>0.001                         | (0.356)                               | (0.284)<br>-0.703                        |
| Wave 3              | (0.038)<br>0.071                  |                   | (0.286)<br>0.104                         |                                       | (0.315)<br>-0.969                        |
| Wave 4              | (0.032)<br>0.125                  | 0.177             | (0.275)                                  | -0.969                                | (0.307)<br>-1.318                        |
| Wave 5              | (0.030)<br>0.099                  | (0.023)<br>0.099  |  | (0.344)                               | (0.318)<br>-0.564                        |
| Wave 2 x Winner     | (0.032)<br>-0.003                 | (0.021)           | (0.284)<br>0.110                         | (0.356)                               | (0.299)<br>0.641                         |
| Wave 3 x Winner     | (0.055)<br>-0.026                 |                   | (0.406)<br>0.227                         |                                       | (0.428)<br>0.620                         |
| Wave 4 x Winner     | (0.049)<br>0.081                  |                   | (0.393)                                  | 1.650                                 | (0.418)<br>0.131                         |
| Wave 5 x Winner     | (0.045)<br>0.033                  | (0.035)<br>0.086  |  | (0.472)                               | (0.425)<br>-0.703                        |
| Female              | (0.047)<br>-0.003                 | (0.035)<br>-0.010 | (0.398)<br>0.302                         | (0.482)<br>-0.170                     | (0.416)<br>-0.010                        |
| Race Brown          | (0.014)<br>0.028                  | (0.014)<br>0.046  | (0.142)<br>-0.067                        | (0.190)<br>-0.609                     | (0.138)<br>-0.304                        |
| Race Black          | (0.017)<br>0.027                  | (0.018)<br>0.025  | (0.159)<br>-0.221                        | (0.211)<br>-0.406                     | (0.158)<br>-0.267                        |
| Indigenous          | (0.025)<br>0.075                  | (0.026)<br>0.094  | (0.244)<br>-0.914                        | (0.357)<br>-0.200                     | (0.284)<br>-0.575                        |
| Other               | (0.049)<br>-0.023                 | (0.055)<br>0.033  | (0.619)<br>-0.197                        | (0.763)<br>0.329                      | (0.470)<br>-0.682                        |
| Secondary Education | (0.048)<br>0.038                  | (0.031)<br>0.039  | (0.330)<br>-0.333                        | (0.610)<br>-0.946                     | (0.421)<br>-1.000                        |
| Higher Education    | (0.035)<br>0.108                  | (0.032)<br>0.018  | (0.311)<br>-0.780                        | (0.355)<br>-1.674                     | (0.267)<br>-1.460                        |
| Household Income    | (0.036)<br>0.171                  | (0.034)<br>0.054  | (0.318)<br>-0.510                        | (0.374)<br>-0.212                     | (0.278)<br>-0.361                        |
| Age 26-35           | (0.026)<br>0.011                  | (0.027)<br>-0.062 | (0.266)<br>-0.320                        | (0.345)<br>-0.043                     | (0.264)<br>0.265                         |
| Age 36-45           | (0.022)<br>0.001                  | (0.021)<br>-0.041 | (0.195)<br>-0.199                        | (0.278)<br>-0.433                     | (0.201)<br>0.338                         |
| Age 46-55           | (0.023)<br>0.072                  | (0.022)<br>-0.065 | (0.214)<br>-0.677                        | (0.306)<br>-0.371                     | (0.229)<br>0.167                         |

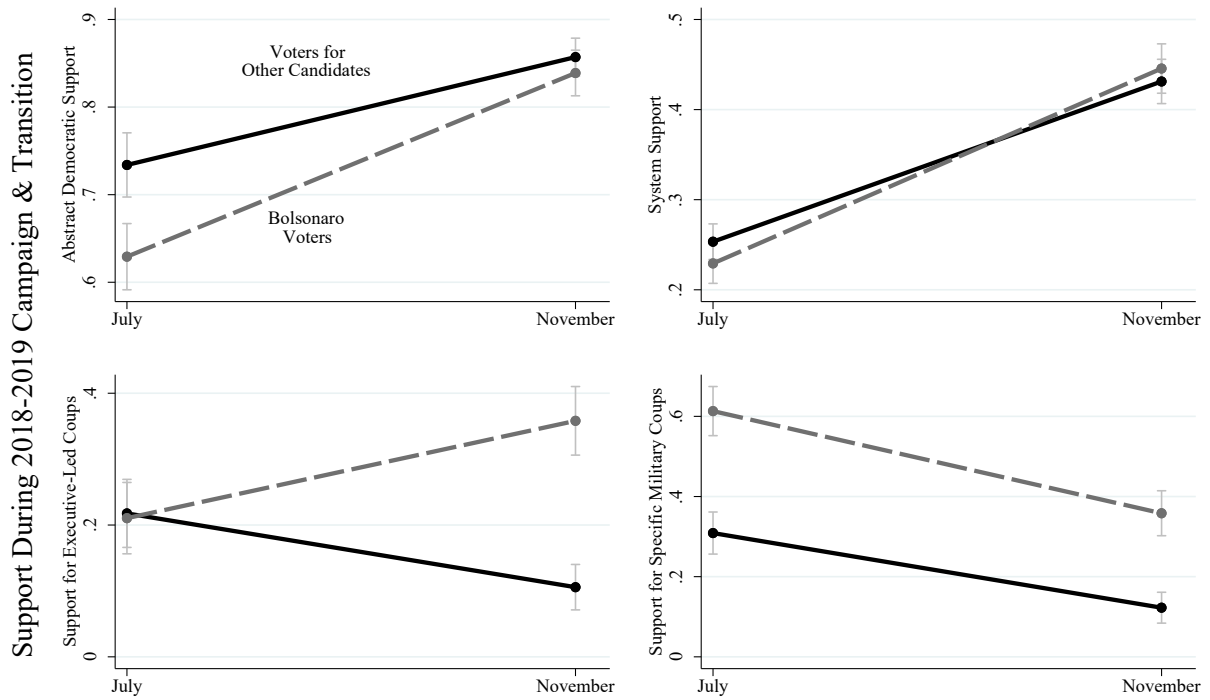
|                                    | Abstract<br>Democratic<br>Support | System<br>Support        | Support<br>Abstract<br>Military<br>Coups | Support<br>Executive-<br>Led<br>Coups | Support<br>Specific<br>Military<br>Coups |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Age 56-65                          | <i>(0.023)</i><br>0.129           | <i>(0.023)</i><br>-0.005 | <i>(0.203)</i><br>-1.476                 | <i>(0.291)</i><br>-0.613              | <i>(0.213)</i><br>-0.475                 |
| Age 66+                            | <i>(0.029)</i><br>0.081           | <i>(0.030)</i><br>0.051  | <i>(0.331)</i><br>-0.525                 | <i>(0.392)</i><br>-0.532              | <i>(0.314)</i><br>-0.160                 |
| Protestant/Pentecostal             | <i>(0.030)</i><br>0.040           | <i>(0.036)</i><br>-0.009 | <i>(0.326)</i><br>0.002                  | <i>(0.427)</i><br>0.442               | <i>(0.302)</i><br>-0.323                 |
| No Religion                        | <i>(0.020)</i><br>0.070           | <i>(0.018)</i><br>-0.014 | <i>(0.186)</i><br>-0.746                 | <i>(0.235)</i><br>0.083               | <i>(0.175)</i><br>-0.613                 |
| Other Religion                     | <i>(0.020)</i><br>0.039           | <i>(0.023)</i><br>0.027  | <i>(0.209)</i><br>-0.439                 | <i>(0.278)</i><br>-0.197              | <i>(0.204)</i><br>-0.774                 |
| Constant                           | <i>(0.020)</i><br>0.489           | <i>(0.021)</i><br>0.213  | <i>(0.207)</i><br>0.190                  | <i>(0.297)</i><br>0.567               | <i>(0.206)</i><br>0.809                  |
| Number of observations (Wave<br>1) | <i>(0.050)</i><br>744             | <i>(0.041)</i><br>758    | <i>(0.412)</i><br>677                    | <i>(0.471)</i><br>664                 | <i>(0.370)</i><br>669                    |

Notes: Models of abstract democratic support and system support are estimated using OLS. Models of support for coups are estimated using logistic regression. Given space constraints, we use the “high crime” indicator of support for abstract military coups. Analysis is limited to “winners” and “losers.” Standard errors are in parentheses.

## 6. Graphical Representation of Predicted Values from Difference-in-Differences Models

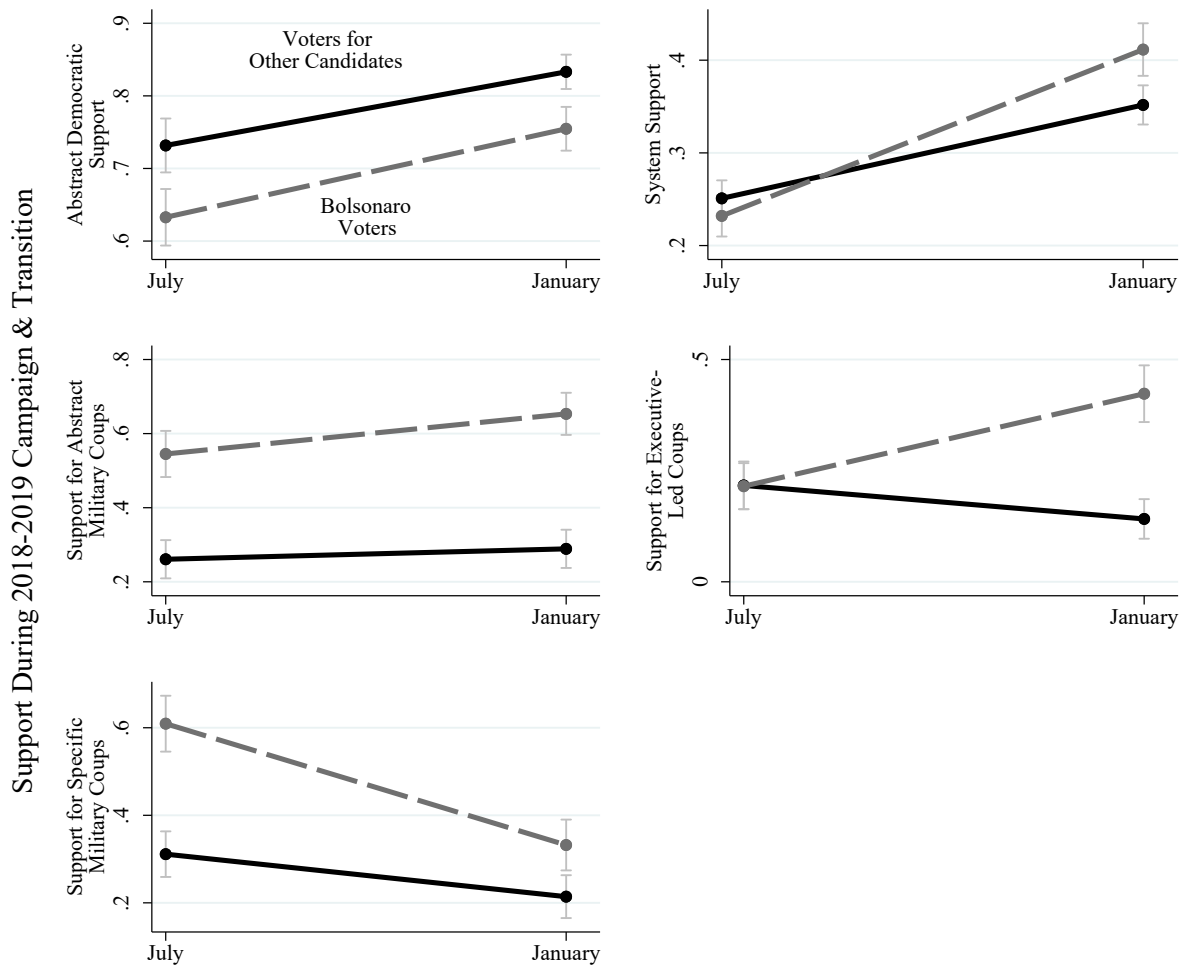
In Figure A1 and Figure A2, we present predicted values from the difference-in-differences models presented in Table 2 in the text. These models confirm the results described in the main text. Eventual winners were more weakly committed to democracy at the outset of the campaign. The difference in democratic attitudes across winners and losers changed in ways that affirmed the legitimacy of the system while also, paradoxically, affirming support for institutional ruptures that would benefit the authoritarian winner.

Figure A1. Predicted Values from Waves 1–4 Difference-in-Differences Models



Notes: The figure presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

Figure A2. Predicted Values from Waves 1–5 Difference-in-Differences Models

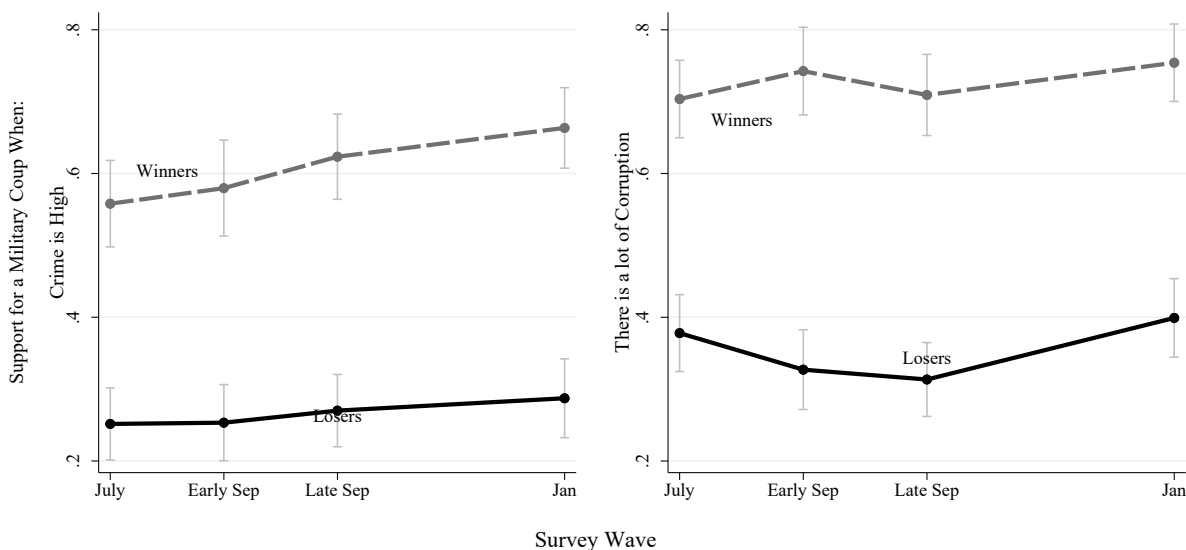


Notes: The figure presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

## 7. Analysis of Support for Abstract Military Coups in the Panel Study

Figure A3 depicts the trajectory in what we call support for “abstract” military coups, using two dichotomous indicators: support for military coups when there is high crime, and when there is lots of corruption. The figure shows large pre-election gaps in support for abstract coups, which remain about the same size or grow slightly over the course of the election.

Figure A3. Support for Abstract Military Coups and “Winner” Status



Notes: The figure presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

## 8. Disaggregated Trends in System Support, by Each Component Variable

Our index measuring “system support” is tightly connected to perceptions of regime performance. We borrow this measure from Booth and Seligson (2009, 49), who propose that legitimacy is a multidimensional concept, spanning from “diffuse” to “specific” (Easton 1965) and consisting of the following components: 1) existence of a political community, 2) support for regime principles, 3) support for regime institutions, 4) evaluation of regime performance, 5) support for local government, and 6) support for political actors or authorities. Our five-item measure of system support taps the third dimension, support for regime institutions.

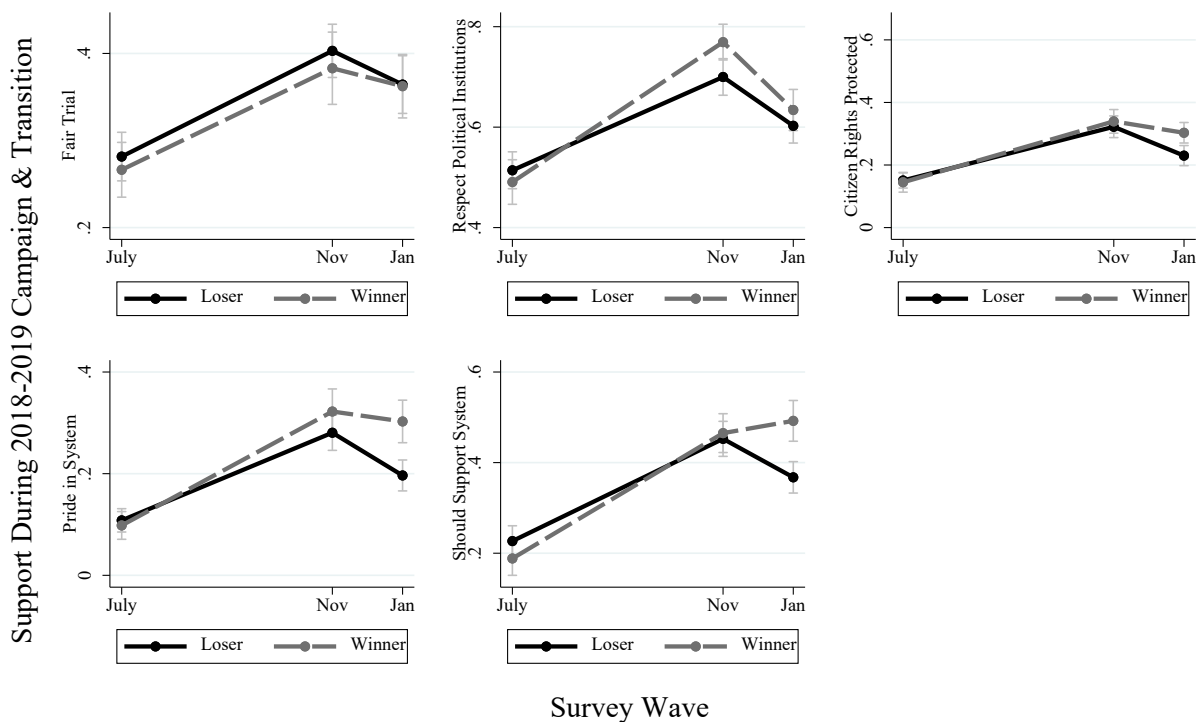
In their analysis of survey data from Honduras, Guatemala, and Panama, Booth and Seligson note that this dimension actually has two distinct but correlated components, which correspond to Easton’s (1965) conceptualization of diffuse and specific support. The diffuse component of support for regime institutions (our measure) captures “support for national institutions in general” whereas the specific component (absent from our study) taps “support for specific institutions” (Booth and Seligson 2009, 62). This variable thus measures regime legitimacy, and is a direct descendent of Easton’s concept of diffuse support—according to Seligson (2002, 165), system support “tap(s) Easton’s generalized notion of ‘diffuse support’ and Lipset’s notion of ‘legitimacy’ rather than specific support for any given administration.”

However, the index includes items assessing the performance of specific regime institutions, for example, whether the courts guarantee a fair trial. Readers might be concerned that our results are driven by responses to these more specific measures of system support, in a broader national

context experiencing protracted political crisis and trending towards authoritarianism. Figure A4 therefore presents disaggregated results for each component of the system support measure. As in the paper body, results are estimated using survey weighted data, and controlling for sociodemographic features of respondents.

Two main results stand out. First, the cross-time trends look very similar for each measure: in the first wave, eventual winners express lower levels of trust, *all* respondents report increased trust shortly after the election, and this trust declines among election losers in the post-inauguration wave. Second, these differences are not statistically significant for all components of the measure: trust in the courts to provide a fair trial and respect for political institutions – the most “specific” items in the index – do not differ significantly across winners and losers at any point in the panel. However, the difference in perceptions that citizens’ rights are protected is significantly higher among winners (with  $p < 0.05$ ) in the post-inauguration wave. And differences in system pride and the belief that one should support the political system – arguably the most “diffuse” items in the index – are significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) among winners in the post-inauguration wave.

Figure A4. Trends in Components of System Support



Notes: The figure presents results from OLS regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p = .05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

## 9. Disaggregated Results by Type of Vote



Our main models combine abstainers and those who invalidate their ballots into a single group and do not report results for those voters. However, some scholarship argues that those who abstain, especially under mandatory vote laws, and those who cast blank or spoiled ballots are less satisfied with politics in their country, and perhaps less satisfied with the political system itself, compared to those who win and lose (e.g., Kostelka and Blais 2018, Plescia et al. 2020, Singh 2017, but see Cohen 2018). We therefore disaggregate our main results for second round Bolsonaro voters, Haddad voters, abstainers, and those who invalidated their ballot. We find some support for the notion that those who eventually abstained or spoiled their ballots held more anti-democratic attitudes than those who cast a second-round vote for Haddad. However, with the exception of abstract democratic support, these differences disappeared following the election, and anti-democratic attitudes are significantly lower among abstainers and invalid voters than among Bolsonaro voters.

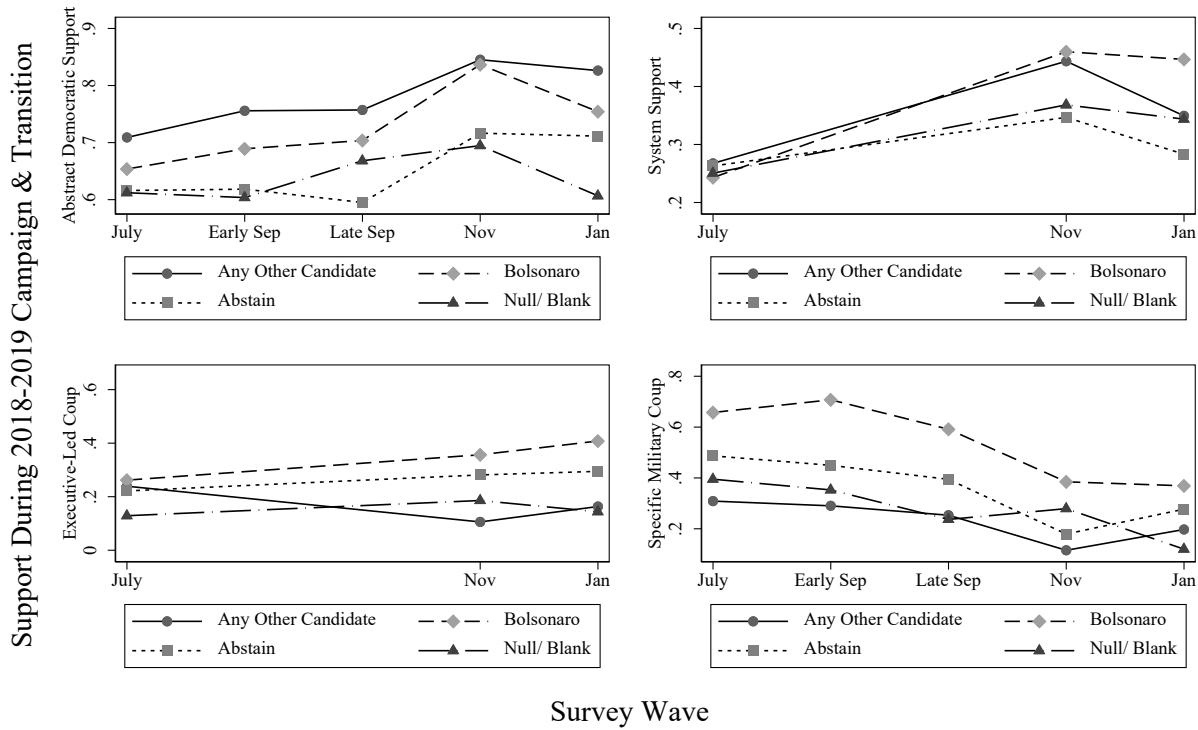
Invalid voters and abstainers also tend to resemble Haddad voters in their support for coups. While Bolsonaro voters are more supportive of self-coups than Haddad voters for the entire time series, abstainers are indistinguishable from Haddad voters except in the November wave (in that wave, abstainers are significantly more supportive of self-coups than Haddad voters, but significantly *less* supportive of self-coups than Bolsonaro voters). Invalid voters, in contrast, express low support for self-coups; levels of support are never statistically different for these voters compared to Haddad voters. Turning to support for specific military coups, we see that support is significantly lower among eventual abstainers and invalid voters compared to Bolsonaro voters across the time series, although support for these coups is somewhat higher among these individuals compared to Haddad voters for the July-Late September waves. However, in the post-election waves, we observe declining support for specific military coups among these groups, to levels that are no longer distinguishable from those among Haddad supporters.

Figure A5 presents predicted effects from models equivalent to Figure 1 in the main text; for ease of readership, we do not show the confidence intervals (many of which overlap), but we discuss statistical significance in this section. We find that levels of abstract support for democracy are similar among abstainers, null voters, and Bolsonaro voters, but significantly higher among Haddad voters. However, for the remaining variables, abstainers and invalid voters more closely resemble *Haddad* voters. In July and November, system support is not statistically distinguishable across abstainers, invalid voters, and Haddad voters (although levels are slightly lower among abstainers and invalid voters in the November wave).

Invalid voters and abstainers also tend to resemble Haddad voters in their support for coups. While Bolsonaro voters are more supportive of self-coups than Haddad voters for the entire time series, abstainers are indistinguishable from Haddad voters except in the November wave (in that wave, abstainers are significantly more supportive of self-coups than Haddad voters, but significantly *less* supportive of self-coups than Bolsonaro voters). Invalid voters, in contrast, express low support for self-coups; levels of support are never statistically different for these voters compared to Haddad voters. Turning to support for specific military coups, we see that support is significantly lower among eventual abstainers and invalid voters compared to Bolsonaro voters across the time series, although support for these coups is somewhat higher among these individuals compared to Haddad voters for the July-Late September waves.

However, in the post-election waves, we observe declining support for specific military coups among these groups, to levels that are no longer distinguishable from those among Haddad supporters.

Figure A5. Disaggregating Cross-Time Attitudinal Shifts by Vote Type Disaggregated Results by Type of Vote

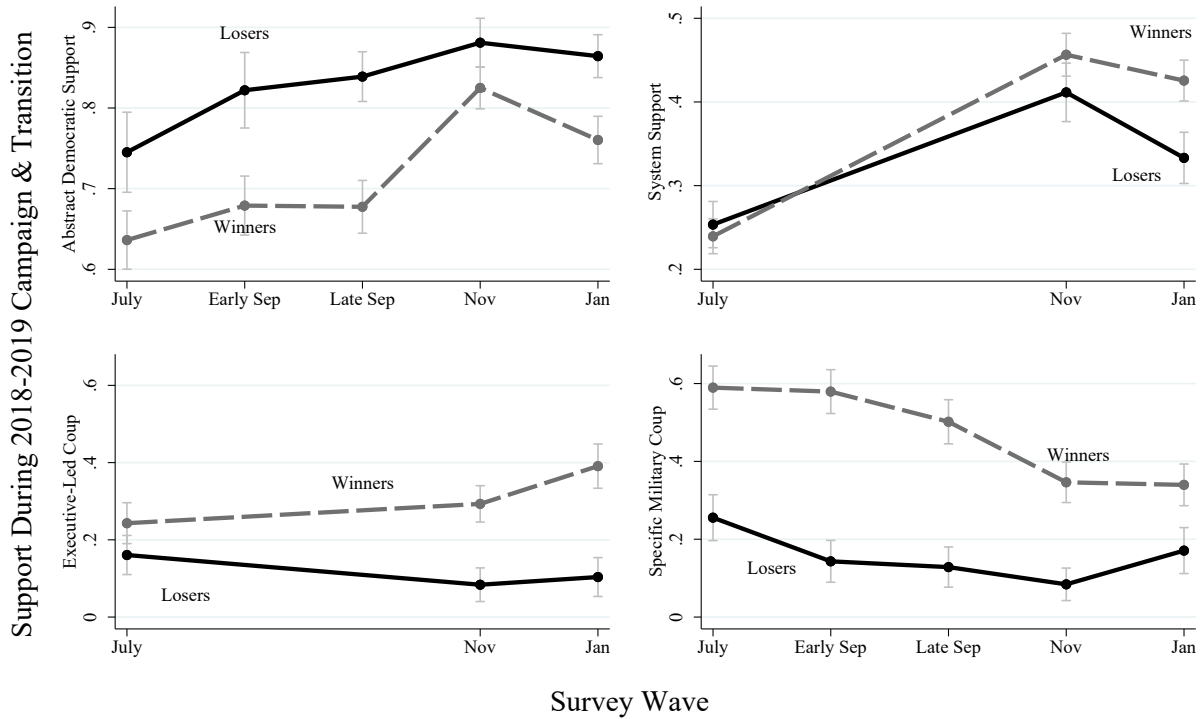


Notes: All analyses control for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

### 10. Do Second-Round Election Winners React Similarly to First-Round Winners?

In Figure A6, we assess whether the results change when we analyze winners and losers of the second round, rather than the first. Strikingly, the results in Figure A6 are similar to but somewhat larger than those presented in Figure 1 in the main text—despite the fact that Bolsonaro’s support base was much larger in the second than in the first round.

Figure A6. Changes in Gaps in Democratic Attitudes of Second-Round Winners and Losers, 2018–2019



Notes: The top row presents results from OLS regression models, and the bottom row presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

### 11. Further Tests of H1: Democratic Attitudes in July Predict October Vote Choice

Table A7 presents the results from two multinomial logistic regression models assessing the impact of democratic attitudes measured at the beginning of the panel study in July on subsequent first- and second-round vote choice for Bolsonaro, for another candidate, or null/blank. So that both columns of coefficients from each model represent a comparison against Bolsonaro supporters, voting for Bolsonaro is the omitted category. Positive (negative) coefficients in the first column of each model indicate that the variable increases (decreases) the probability of voting for another candidate, rather than Bolsonaro. Positive (negative) coefficients in the second columns indicate that the variable increases (decreases) the probability of voting null or blank, versus voting for Bolsonaro. For the sake of space, we do not present results for our full battery of demographic controls. (For the impact of demographics in full vote choice models, see Layton et al. 2020.) To aid in interpretation of the results, Table A8 presents predicted probabilities from Table A7 at different levels of democratic attitudes.

Table A7. Determinants of Vote Choice for Bolsonaro

|  | (1) First Round Vote Choice<br>(October) |  | (2) Second Round Vote<br>Choice (October) |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
|  | Other<br>Candidate (v.<br>Bolsonaro)     | Abstain/Null/<br>Blank (v.<br>Bolsonaro) | Haddad (v.<br>Bolsonaro)                  | Abstain/Null/<br>Blank (v.<br>Bolsonaro) |
| Abstract Support for<br>Democracy (July) | 0.908<br>(0.498)                         | -0.645<br>(0.553)                        | 1.110<br>(0.583)                          | -0.261<br>(0.473)                        |
| System Support (July)                    | -0.077<br>(0.805)                        | -0.312<br>(1.448)                        | -0.103<br>(0.929)                         | -0.071<br>(1.066)                        |
| Abstract Support for Coups<br>(July)     | -0.957<br>(0.339)                        | -0.989<br>(0.476)                        | -1.099<br>(0.387)                         | -0.500<br>(0.395)                        |
| Specific Support for Coups<br>(July)     | -0.993<br>(0.381)                        | -0.674<br>(0.461)                        | -1.234<br>(0.387)                         | -0.800<br>(0.427)                        |
| Demographic Controls                     | YES                                      | YES                                      | YES                                       | YES                                      |
| <i>Observations</i>                      | 723                                      |  | 723                                       |  |

Notes: The multinomial logistic regression models control for gender, ethnicity, education, socioeconomic status, religion, and age. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table A8. Predicted probabilities of each vote choice, at different levels of democratic attitudes

|   | Most democratic | Least democratic |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| First-round vote for Bolsonaro          | 0.28            | 0.67             |
| First-round vote for another candidate  | 0.59            | 0.14             |
| First-round abstain/null/blank          | 0.13            | 0.18             |
| Second-round vote for Bolsonaro         | 0.36            | 0.74             |
| Second-round vote for another candidate | 0.44            | 0.06             |
| Second-round abstain/null/blank         | 0.21            | 0.20             |

Note: All other variables are held at their observed values in estimating probabilities.

Table A7 and Table A8 confirm that, net of demographics, our full battery of democratic attitudes measured in July strongly predicted first- and second-round support for Bolsonaro months later, in October. Holding all other variables at their observed levels, going from the lowest to highest levels of democratic attitudes (that is, from minimum to maximum abstract democratic support and system support, and from 1 to 0 on the two coup measures) dropped the predicted probability of a first-round vote for Bolsonaro from .67 to .28. It was also associated with a drop in the predicted probability of a second-round vote for Bolsonaro from .74 to .36.

For the sake of space, we have omitted results from four individual models regressing vote choice on each attitude individually (without the other controls). System support in July was not a significant predictor of voting for Bolsonaro versus another candidate in the combined model controlling for all four attitudes. However, in the individual models, system support is indeed a

significant and substantively important predictor of voting for Bolsonaro in the first round (but not the second).

One might wonder whether democratic attitudes matter primarily because they shape downstream, more electorally proximate policy views. Table A9 shows that the four democratic attitudes still independently impact vote choice months later, even after we control for a wide range of other related attitudes measured closer to the election, in late September. In this multivariate analysis, attitudes toward “homosexuals,” as well as gender and racial attitudes, support for loosening restrictions on guns, and agreement that “a good criminal is a dead criminal” (a common refrain justifying police violence) are all strongly related to a choice for Bolsonaro versus his opponents in either the first or second round elections. However, even after controlling for those attitudes, people who expressed greater support for democracy and lower support for coups in July were more likely to report supporting candidates other than Bolsonaro in the first-round months later.

Table A9. Determinants of Vote Choice for Bolsonaro, Controlling for Downstream Attitudes

|   | (1) First Round Vote Choice<br>(October) |  | (2) Second Round Vote<br>Choice (October) |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
|   | Other<br>Candidate (v.<br>Bolsonaro)     | Abstain/Null/<br>Blank (v.<br>Bolsonaro) | Haddad (v.<br>Bolsonaro)                  | Abstain/Null/<br>Blank (v.<br>Bolsonaro) |
| Abstract Support for Democracy<br>(July)          | 0.276<br>(0.597)                         | -0.200<br>(0.619)                        | 0.538<br>(0.771)                          | 0.074<br>(0.543)                         |
| System Support (July)                             | 0.208<br>(0.813)                         | 0.037<br>(1.277)                         | 0.340<br>(0.939)                          | 0.150<br>(1.011)                         |
| Abstract Support for Coups (July)                 | -0.696<br>(0.390)                        | -0.898<br>(0.518)                        | -0.462<br>(0.435)                         | -0.185<br>(0.452)                        |
| Specific Support for Coups (July)                 | -0.252<br>(0.457)                        | -0.312<br>(0.536)                        | -0.173<br>(0.485)                         | -0.306<br>(0.467)                        |
| Attitudes toward homosexuals<br>(September)       | 0.397<br>(0.097)                         | 0.061<br>(0.133)                         | 0.581<br>(0.110)                          | 0.005<br>(0.124)                         |
| Racial resentment (September)                     | -0.014<br>(0.091)                        | 0.061<br>(0.103)                         | -0.345<br>(0.098)                         | -0.013<br>(0.088)                        |
| Gender attitudes (September)                      | 0.044<br>(0.113)                         | 0.132<br>(0.146)                         | 0.102<br>(0.156)                          | 0.085<br>(0.128)                         |
| Gun attitudes (September)                         | -0.478<br>(0.086)                        | -0.275<br>(0.111)                        | -0.477<br>(0.087)                         | -0.274<br>(0.084)                        |
| A good criminal is a dead criminal<br>(September) | -0.944<br>(0.424)                        | -0.794<br>(0.424)                        | -1.142<br>(0.416)                         | -1.046<br>(0.373)                        |
| Demographic Controls                              | YES                                      | YES                                      | YES                                       | YES                                      |
| <i>Observations</i>                               | 648                                      |  | 648                                       |  |

Notes: The multinomial logistic regression models control for gender, ethnicity, education, socioeconomic status, religion, and age. Standard errors are in parentheses.

## 12. Do Attitudes Toward the Military, Crime, or Corruption Explain the Effect of Bolsonaro Support on Democratic Attitudes in the AmericasBarometer?

Table A10 presents results from models of democratic attitudes by Bolsonaro support, controlling for political attitudes that might confound this relationship: support for the armed forces and security concerns. Two of the dependent variables, support for executive-led coups and for closing the Supreme Federal Tribunal, were each asked of split samples in 2019, resulting in a smaller number of observations. Coding of *support for the armed forces* and *concern about security* is described above in Table A1. We omit concern for corruption from the models because it was also asked of a split sample, which reduces the sample size in the last two models to just over 300. Concern for corruption significantly (negatively) predicts only system support.

Table A10. Democratic Attitudes and Bolsonaro Support in the AmericasBarometer, Controlling for Related Attitudes

|                            | Abstract Democratic Support | System Support    | Support Military Coups | Support Executive-Led Coups | Support Closing Supreme Court |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bolsonaro Voter            | -0.060<br>(0.022)           | 0.000<br>(0.016)  | 0.591<br>(0.200)       | 0.626<br>(0.321)            | 0.551<br>(0.301)              |
| Abstained/Blank/Null Voter | -0.056<br>(0.024)           | -0.010<br>(0.016) | 0.063<br>(0.205)       | 0.038<br>(0.322)            | -0.034<br>(0.297)             |
| Support for Armed Forces   | 0.129<br>(0.032)            | 0.297<br>(0.022)  | 1.224<br>(0.241)       | 0.488<br>(0.437)            | 0.650<br>(0.269)              |
| Concern about Security     | -0.013<br>(0.026)           | -0.036<br>(0.019) | 0.219<br>(0.187)       | 0.072<br>(0.337)            | 0.317<br>(0.270)              |
| Demographic Controls       | YES                         | YES               | YES                    | YES                         | YES                           |
| Region Fixed Effects       | YES                         | YES               | YES                    | YES                         | YES                           |
| <i>Observations</i>        | <i>1253</i>                 | <i>1269</i>       | <i>1193</i>            | <i>606</i>                  | <i>614</i>                    |

Notes: Models of abstract democratic and system support are estimated using OLS. Models of support for military and executive-led coups and for closing the supreme court are estimated using logistic regression. Standard errors are in parentheses.

After controlling for their levels of support for the armed forces, winners and losers express identical levels of abstract system support, and Bolsonaro supporters are *less* supportive of democracy. The inclusion of these controls slightly reduces the size of winner-loser gaps, as discussed in the main text. However, winners in 2018 remain substantially more supportive of all forms of institutional ruptures compared to election losers.

## 13. Lagged Dependent Variable Models of Democratic Commitment

While we believe the difference-in-differences models presented in the main text are most appropriate for estimating the initial gaps and independent trajectories of democratic commitment

among winners and losers, as a robustness check Table A11 presents lagged dependent variable models. These models regress Wave 4 or Wave 5 measures of democratic commitment on the indicator for winner status, as well as the Wave 1 value of the dependent variable and a vector of demographics measured in Wave 1. Note that these models correspond more directly to the Heckman selection models presented in Table A12 earlier in the text than do the models in the text.

The lagged dependent variable models largely confirm the results from the difference-in-differences models presented in the main text, with one exception. Unlike in the results presented in the text, here winning is not associated with abstract democratic support in Wave 5. These results do, however, match those from the AmericasBarometer analysis, as well as the results from the Heckman selection models presented in Table A12.

Table A11. Lagged Dependent Variable Models of Democratic Commitment

| Period                           | Abstract<br>Democratic<br>Support | System<br>Support | Support for<br>Abstract<br>Military<br>Coups | Support for<br>Executive<br>Coups | Support for<br>Specific<br>Military<br>Coups |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>July to Post-Election</i>     |                                   |                   |  |                                   |  |
| Winner                           | 0.009<br>(0.024)                  | 0.013<br>(0.022)  |  | 1.783<br>(0.378)                  | 1.208<br>(0.390)                             |
| Lagged DV                        | 0.276<br>(0.044)                  | 0.621<br>(0.055)  |  | 2.531<br>(0.362)                  | 2.292<br>(0.387)                             |
| <i>Number of observations</i>    | 775                               | 787               |  | 652                               | 670  |
| <i>July to Post-Inauguration</i> |                                   |                   |  |                                   |  |
| Winner                           | -0.041<br>(0.026)                 | 0.086<br>(0.020)  | 1.310<br>(0.356)                             | 1.419<br>(0.371)                  | 0.295<br>(0.376)                             |
| Lagged DV                        | 0.331<br>(0.047)                  | 0.685<br>(0.052)  | 2.337<br>(0.306)                             | 2.747<br>(0.389)                  | 2.414<br>(0.400)                             |
| <i>Number of observations</i>    | 671                               | 691               | 566  | 559                               | 541  |

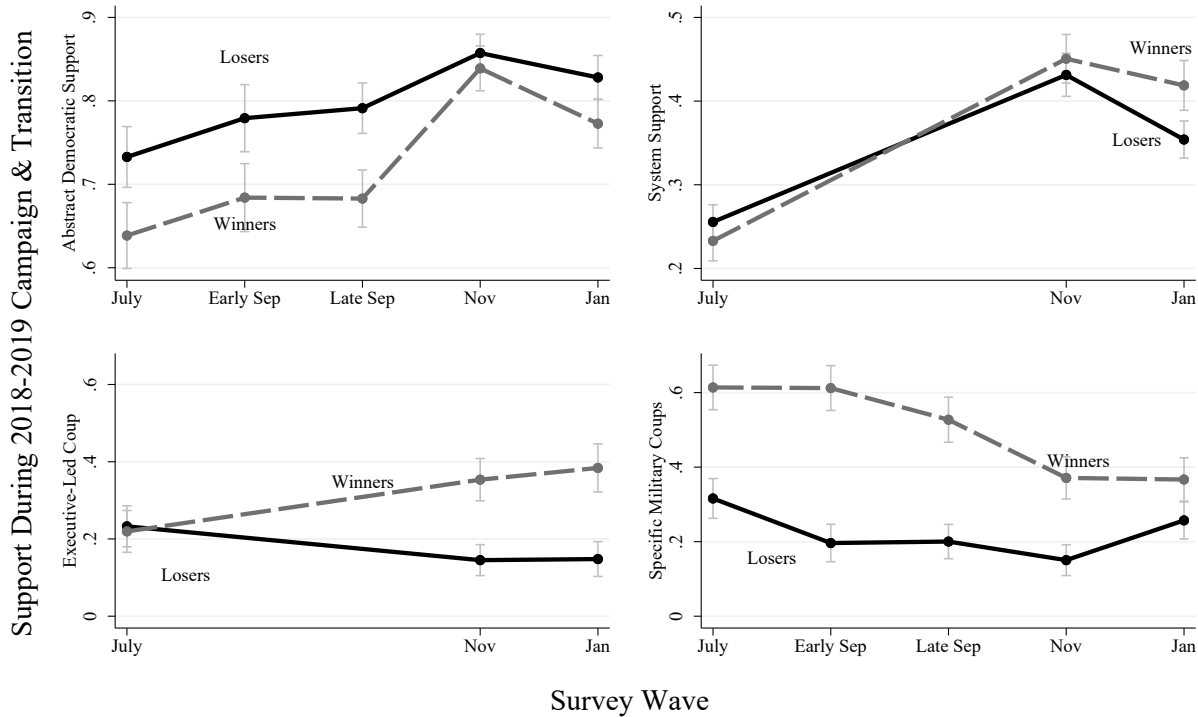
Notes: Models of abstract democratic support and system support are estimated using OLS. Models of support for coups are estimated using logistic regression. All the models control for demographics. The July to Post-Election model of support for abstract coups is missing because the measure was not asked in Wave 4. Standard errors are in parentheses.

#### 14. Analyses Accounting for Panel Study Attrition

To assess whether attrition affects our results, in Figure A7, we rerun the analysis from Figure 1 in the main text, imputing attitudinal stability to all the respondents who were absent in Waves 2, 3, or 5. Since our Winner variable is calculated based on Wave 4 vote choice, the figure still relies only on people who responded in both Waves 1 and 4. The results are consistent with those shown in Figure 1 in the main text, presenting effectively the same patterns. (We did not impute stability

in system support and support for executive coups in Waves 2 and 3, since the questions were missing in those waves.)

Figure A7. Changes in Democratic Attitudes of Winners and Losers, Attributing Attitudinal Stability to People Who Dropped out of the Sample in Waves 2, 3, or 5



Notes: The top row presents predicted values from OLS models; the bottom row presents predicted probabilities from logistic regression models. Figures present 84% confidence intervals; comparison of two 84% confidence intervals is equivalent to a  $p=.05$  test of statistical significance (MacGregor-Fors and Payton 2013). Analysis controls for gender, ethnicity, education, religion, social class, and age.

To further assess the extent to which the non-random nature of attrition may bias the results presented in the main text, we developed Heckman selection models of each measure of democratic commitment. Whereas our main models incorporate only those who reported a vote choice in Wave 4 or Wave 5, the models presented in this section incorporate all Wave 1 respondents. To account for prior differences in attitudes between winners and losers, we estimate these models using lagged dependent variables rather than differences-in-differences, given the difficulty of specifying models that predict non-response based on prior waves' responses in a difference-in-differences framework. The selection equation of each Heckman model predicts whether a given Wave 1 respondent's Wave 4 or Wave 5 value of the dependent variable is observed, conditional on that respondent's demographic characteristics. The outcome equations, then, predict observed Wave 4 or 5 values for those respondents interviewed in the respective waves, controlling for demographics, the lagged (Wave 1) dependent variable, and a Wave 1



measure of winner status, while accounting for correlation in error terms between the selection and outcome equations and the inverse Mills ratio.

To estimate these models, we had to make a number of adjustments. Because Heckman selection models assume the dependent variable is continuous, we created an index of support for coups, which is the mean of the indicator variables for all four forms of support for coups in our panel data set. As a result, our Heckman models do not enable as nuanced a view of the relationship between winning and support for different forms of institutional ruptures that consolidate or restrict the incumbent’s power as in the rest of the paper. This index of support for coups is only available in Waves 1 and 5, since some of its component variables are missing in other waves.

In addition, we created an indicator variable estimating whether a respondent is a “latent winner” using responses to a Wave 1 question asking to what extent respondents approved or disapproved of Bolsonaro. We used this measure because vote intentions were not measured in Wave 1. Even if first wave vote intentions had been available, support for Bolsonaro rose substantially over the course of the panel study, so a Wave 1 measure would have missed many future winners. In the models presented in Table A12, we use a binary variable that codes all respondents who gave Bolsonaro a rating of 4 or higher on a 1 to 7 scale in Wave 1 as “latent winners”; 38.0% of Wave 1 respondents did so. Among respondents for whom we have both the Wave 1 feeling thermometer measure and Wave 4, first round vote choice, 74.6% subsequently reported voting for Bolsonaro. In alternative models not shown below, we calculate a more inclusive indicator that codes anyone who gave Bolsonaro a rating of 3 or higher on the 1 to 7 scale as a “latent winner”; 44.3% of respondents did so, and 54.9% of respondents who gave Bolsonaro a 3 in Wave 1 reported voting for him. Results using the more inclusive indicator are substantively quite similar to those presented below.

Table A12 presents results for the outcome equations of the Heckman selection models using the more stringent indicator of winner status. The outcome equations control for gender, ethnicity, education, age, and religion; the selection equations control for those characteristics as well as social class and region. The models of system support and support for coups are estimated using the same weights as in the main models. Unfortunately, using Stata v16’s “heckman” package, the maximum likelihood models of abstract support for democracy did not converge; instead, we estimated these models using Stata v16’s two-step consistent estimator, which does not allow the use of weights (Heckman 1979).

Table A12. Outcome Equation of Heckman Selection Model of Democratic Attitudes

|                 | Abstract Democratic Support |                  | System Support   |                  | Support for Coups Index |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
|                 | Wave 4                      | Wave 5           | Wave 4           | Wave 5           | Wave 5                  |
| “Latent” Winner | 0.021<br>(0.015)            | 0.009<br>(0.018) | 0.020<br>(0.022) | 0.069<br>(0.020) | 0.102<br>(0.035)        |
|                 | 0.332                       | 0.431            | 0.665            | 0.674            | 0.507                   |

|                    |         |         |         |         |         |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Wave 1 (Lagged)    |         |         |         |         |         |
| Dependent Variable | (0.022) | (0.026) | (0.046) | (0.046) | (0.058) |
| Demographics       | YES     | YES     | YES     | YES     | YES     |
| N (Wave 1)         | 1801    | 1812    | 1818    | 1819    | 1805    |

Regardless of which indicator of latent winner status we use, our Heckman selection models with lagged dependent variables demonstrate that winning is not associated with a significant change in abstract support for democracy, between either Waves 1 and 4 or Waves 1 and Wave 5. This runs counter to the Wave 1–5 difference-in-differences model presented in the main text, but is consistent with the statistically insignificant correlation between winning and support for democracy in the AmericasBarometer analysis, and with the results from the lagged dependent variable models presented in Table A11 of this document.

Our remaining results, however, once again confirm the results from difference-in-differences models presented in the main text. Winner status is not significantly associated with changing system support between Waves 1 and 4, but it is associated with changing system support between Waves 1 and 5. In addition, winning is associated with substantial growth in support for coups between Waves 1 and 5.

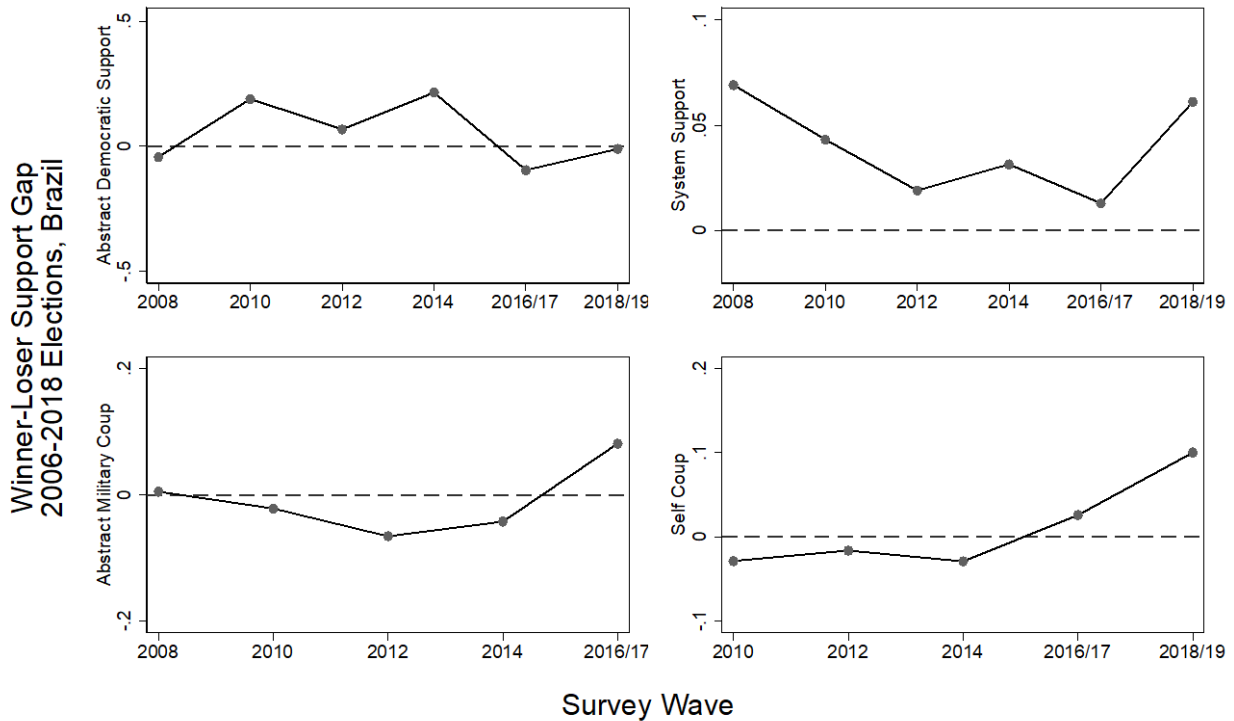
## 15. Assessing Counterfactual Scenarios

This paper focuses on the universe of cases in which authoritarian candidates prevail in democratic elections. But what if Bolsonaro had lost, or never run at all? Two counterfactual scenarios might produce distinct dynamics in winners’ and losers’ support for the democratic system and support for institutional ruptures: 1) an election in which neither candidate is authoritarian, and 2) an election where the authoritarian candidate loses. Based solely on our analysis, we cannot know whether the attitudinal patterns we uncover are a consequence of the authoritarian’s victory or some other cause. We expect that “winner’s consent” is a phenomenon specific to cases where authoritarian candidates prevail. Where no authoritarian candidate is on the ballot, we would expect to observe winner-loser dynamics consistent with the traditional loser’s consent thesis. Where authoritarian candidates lose, we expect their voters will express significantly higher support for institutional ruptures than non-authoritarian voters, as in our winners’ consent formulation; however, in contrast to our model, we expect to observe significantly *lower* abstract support for democracy among authoritarian losers.

In prior third-wave Brazilian presidential elections (i.e., those between 1985 and 2014), no authoritarian candidates advanced to runoff elections. These historical elections thus approximate what we might have observed in Brazil in 2018, had no authoritarian candidate competed.

Figure A8 compares the winner-loser gap following the 2018 election to previous years. The top row of the figure presents levels of support for the democratic system over time, and the bottom row presents support for institutional ruptures. These analyses all control for a battery of demographics, which likely also predict democratic attitudes.

Figure A8. Gaps in Democratic Attitudes Between Brazilian Winners and Losers, 2008–2019



Notes: All analyses control for gender, ethnicity, education, household wealth, religious affiliation, size of place of residence, and age. Figure presents 95% confidence intervals around the gap between winners and losers.

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.

While there are some winner-loser gaps in democratic attitudes when no authoritarian candidate competes, for the most part these gaps are smaller in previous Brazilian elections. With respect to abstract democratic support, we find no significant gaps over time. With respect to system support, we find that Lula’s winners in 2008 and 2010 report higher levels of democratic attitudes than did losers; in 2012, after Dilma’s election, we see no such relationship. Once Bolsonaro is elected in 2018, however, we see a significant winner-loser gap in system support emerge. With respect to support for institutional ruptures, we see no significant differences across either variable in election years, although voters who lost to Dilma were very slightly more supportive of abstract military coups in 2012. In 2019, however, we see the emergence of significant gaps between winners and losers on both measures, with Bolsonaro’s winners reporting higher support for coups, as we report in the paper body.

In short, these results provide some evidence for the *losers’ consent argument* – we find that, in Brazilian elections when no authoritarian candidate competes, winners are somewhat more supportive of the political system. However, these results do not extend to support for democratic ruptures, and are not consistent across all measures of democratic support.

A second counterfactual implicates situations where authoritarian candidates run but *lose*. We argue that gaps in democratic public opinion between authoritarian losers and non-authoritarian

winners will increase following the authoritarian's loss, with pre-existing gaps becoming exaggerated when the authoritarian fails to win through the rules of the game.

We examine this possibility using data from the AmericasBarometer studies in Peru from 2006-2016. In 2006 and 2016, candidates who were widely portrayed as authoritarians lost presidential elections. The 2006 runoff pitted newcomer Ollanta Humala against former president and eventual winner, Alan García. Humala was a leftist who, with his brother, had plotted a coup attempt against authoritarian president Alberto Fujimori in 2000,<sup>18</sup> while center-left candidate Alan García had held power in the 1980s, when Peru was plunged into political, security, and economic crises. Humala's opponents compared him unfavorably to Hugo Chávez, and much media coverage painted him as a danger to democracy, although he ran a relatively moderate campaign in 2011 and pursued a moderate center-left agenda after his 2011 election.

In 2016, Keiko Fujimori ran as the candidate for *Fuerza Popular*, a far-right populist party she founded, which scholars classify as an Authoritarian Successor Party (Loxton 2016). Keiko's father, former authoritarian president Alberto Fujimori, held the presidency in Peru from 1990-2000 and dissolved congress via self-coup in 1992.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, following mobilization efforts that framed Keiko as a likely authoritarian successor to her father, she lost the second-round election by less than a percentage point to conservative candidate Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (PPK). Despite losing the presidency, Keiko's *Fuerza Popular* won a solid legislative majority, leading many observers of Peruvian politics to speculate that congress would eventually attempt to remove PPK from office, which, ultimately, it did (Carey and Levitsky 2016).

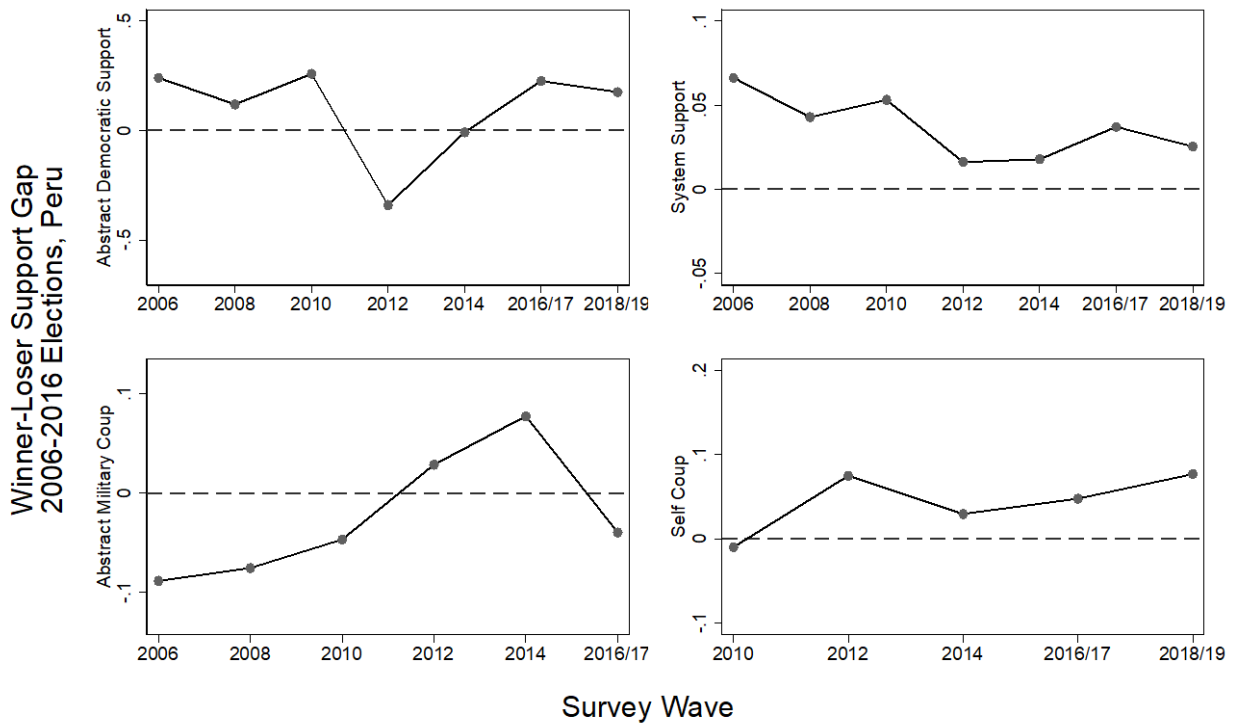
If electoral loss is doubly bitter for supporters of authoritarian candidates, we should observe substantial gaps in democratic attitudes among winners and losers in the months following the election. The 2006 AmericasBarometer survey went into the field in June, three weeks after the second-round election on June 3, 2006. The 2017 survey was conducted from February-April of 2017, seven months after PPK took office and shortly following an unsuccessful impeachment attempt by Fujimori and her co-partisans in Congress. Figure A9 below compares those who voted for the authoritarian candidate (Humala in 2006, Keiko in 2016) to those who voted for the eventual, non-authoritarian winner, excluding abstainers and those who cast invalid ballots.

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<sup>18</sup> Coverage of the coup attempt was used in an attempt to frame Humala as a potential authoritarian in both 2006 and 2011, by linking him to Alberto Fujimori's advisor Vladimiro Montesinos (e.g., *El Correo* 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Alberto Fujimori is currently serving a prison sentence for human rights abuses and murder. Keiko Fujimori was a teenager when her father seized power through a self-coup, and later served as his first lady. Although she was a congresswoman for several years prior to her 2016 presidential bid and displayed apparent commitment to the rules of the democratic game, there was considerable concern that she would commute her father's prison sentence and employ advisors who would commit criminal acts on her behalf – for example, during the 2016 campaign, the general secretary of Keiko's party, Joaquín Ramírez, was charged with money laundering and of having ties to drug trafficking organizations (*La República* 2019).

Figure A9. Gaps in Democratic Attitudes Between Peruvian Winners and Losers, 2006–2019



Notes: All analyses control for gender, education, household wealth, urban/ rural residence, and age. 2010 results are for second-round García voters, as first-round results are not available. Figure presents 95% confidence intervals around the gap between winners and losers.

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP.

Altogether, these results support our theoretical perspective. The winners’ consent thesis yields several clear observable implications with respect to the aftermath of elections. In the case of Humala in 2006, his supporters reported significantly lower levels of commitment to democracy: they were less supportive of democracy in the abstract and the political system, and also significantly more supportive of abstract military coups. While the gaps are somewhat smaller, we see similar trends following Keiko’s loss in 2016: winners express higher levels of abstract democratic support and system support, and Keiko’s losers are marginally more supportive of military coups in the abstract than PPK’s winners.

We do note that in 2017, PPK’s winners are marginally more supportive of self-coups than losers; we believe this reflects a peculiarity of the Peruvian political climate following the election. After PPK’s inauguration, Fujimori’s congressional party worked doggedly to undermine his political projects, impeached him twice, and in 2018 removed him from office. We suspect that the higher levels of support for self-coups among PPK voters in 2017 and 2019 are reflective of this game of congressional hardball; because PPK and his successor, Martín Vizcarra, were unable to engage with Congress in good faith, they had limited remaining recourse and both considered shuttering Congress and calling for new elections, which Vizcarra eventually did.

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