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# LAPOP

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# AmericasBarometer Brief: Venezuela 2016/17

## Extreme Conditions Open Troubling Fault Lines in Democratic Public Opinion in an Unstable System

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May 2017



# AmericasBarometer Brief: Venezuela 2016/17

## Extreme Conditions Open Troubling Fault Lines in Democratic Public Opinion in an Unstable System

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### Presentation Structure:

- ❑ Background on LAPOP's AmericasBarometer and the Venezuela survey
- ❑ Part I: Wide-ranging economic, security, and political grievances
- ❑ Part II. Instability, flagging system support, and (un)democratic opinion

# Understanding the Figures

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- Each point estimate (mean or percentage) is based on a 95% confidence interval, expressed in terms of a range surrounding that point. These estimations take into account the stratified and clustered sample design.
  - When two estimated points have confidence intervals that overlap to a large degree, the difference between the two values is typically not statistically significant.
- It should be noted that the results presented and analyzed in this report are based on a preliminary version of the data set for the 2016/17 Venezuela survey.

# LAPOP's AmericasBarometer Surveys

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**2016/17:  
29 countries  
~42,500  
interviews**

- The only public opinion study that includes North, Central, and South America, plus broad coverage in the Caribbean
- Minimum 1,500 interviews per country
- Representative at national level and regional (i.e., stratum) levels, both urban and rural
- Face-to-face interviews in 8+ languages
- 100% electronic questionnaire
- Multiple pretests

# Our Partners

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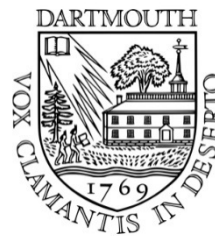
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# Challenges to Fieldwork in Venezuela

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- State failings led to delays and substitutions – e.g., cash crisis in Dec/Jan meant the team could not cover transportation costs; diphtheria outbreak in a region that was then sealed off meant a work area was substituted
- Despite significant security precautions, robberies and one assault occurred during the course of fieldwork
- Some originally drawn areas had to be substituted due to security concerns
- Extremely high levels of insecurity brought about unprecedented challenges with respect to data quality..., however, fortunately:
  - LAPOP's FALCON © system effectively identified enumerators who rushed surveys and enumerators who falsified interviews, and these problems were corrected in real time



# Venezuela National Survey, 2016/17

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- 1,558 face-to-face interviews
- Pretest: August 2016
- Fieldwork: October 3, 2016 – January 28, 2017
- Data collected using electronic devices



Our team during pretesting in  
Caracas



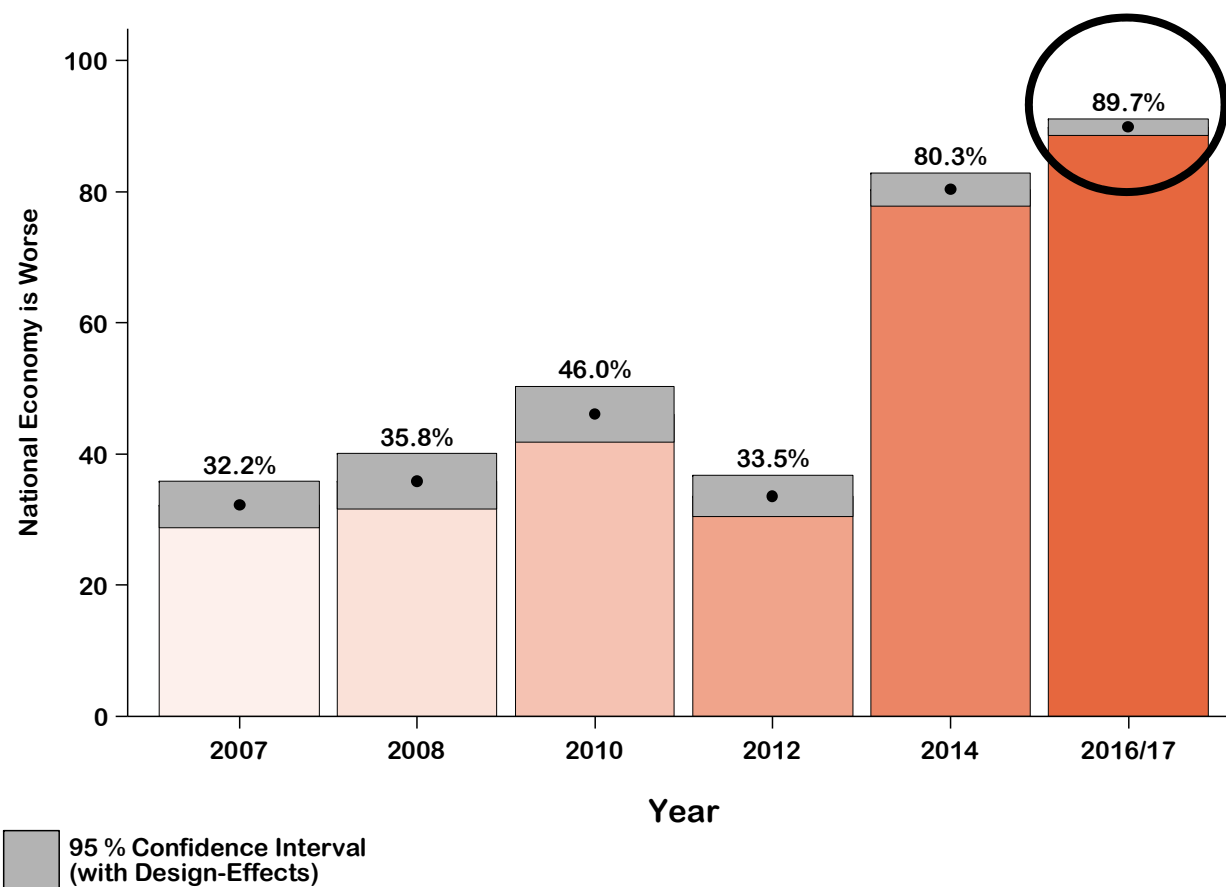


# Part I. Wide-Ranging Economic, Security, and Political Grievances in 2016/17

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## IA. *Economy*: Acute Concerns Reflect the Worrisome Realities Venezuelans Face in 2016/17

## Perceptions of the national economic situation are *by far* the most negative in the last 10 years



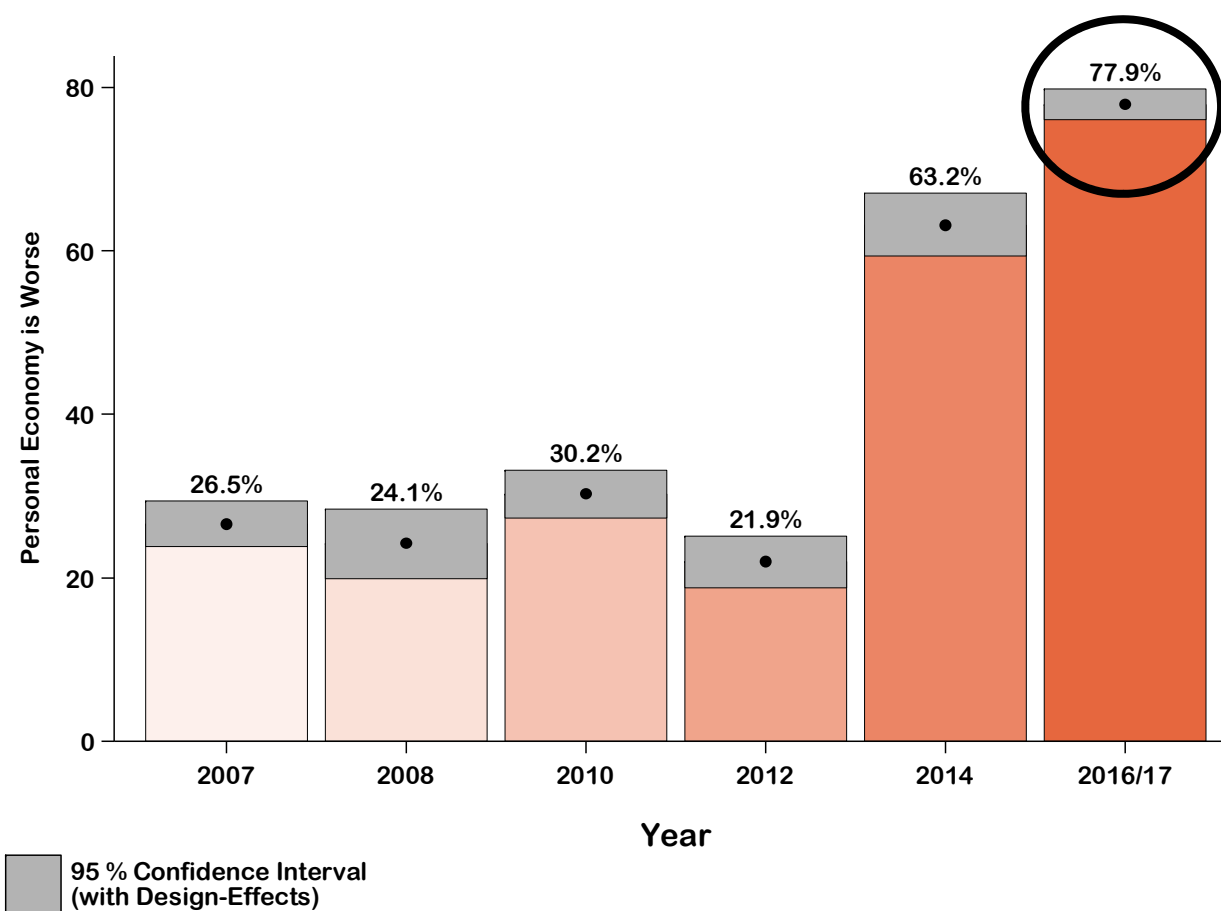
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

In the 2014 AmericasBarometer, the mean percent of individuals in LAC who reported the economy had worsened was 47%

**SOCT2.** Do you think that the country's current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago?

# Perceptions of personal economic situations are *by far* the most negative in the last 10 years



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

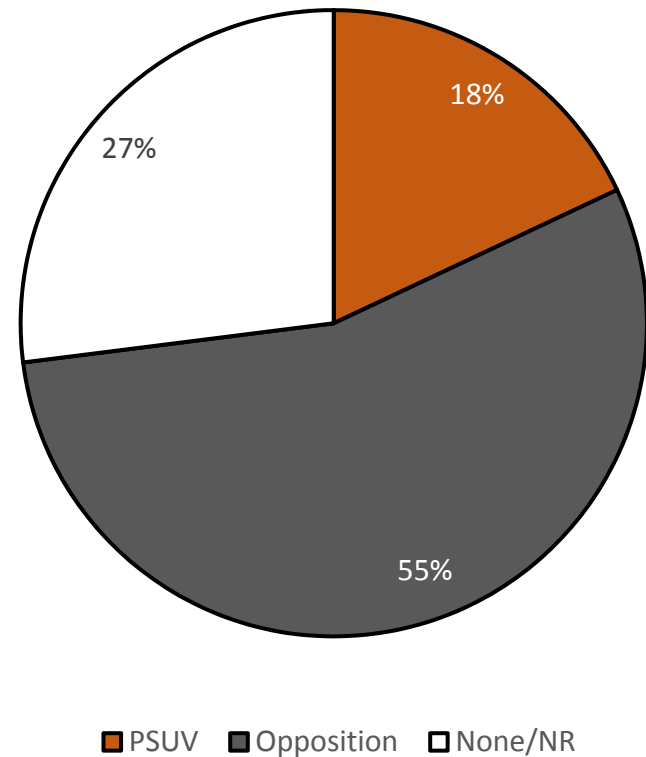
In the 2014 AmericasBarometer, the mean percent of individuals in LAC who reported their economy had worsened was 35%

**IDIO2.** Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago?

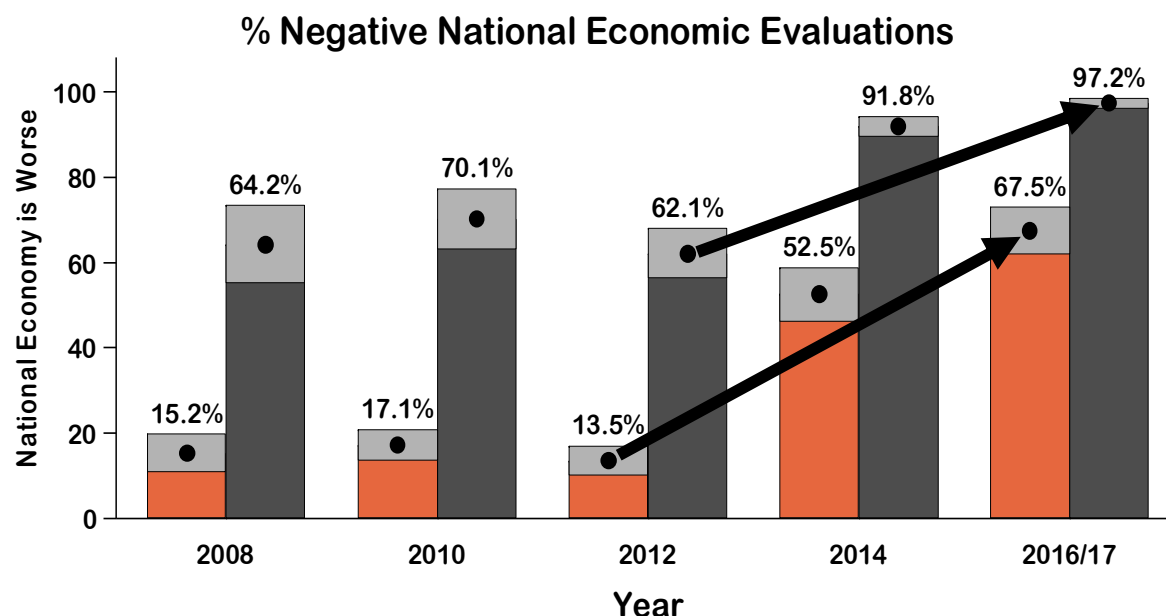
## How do perceptions vary by political preference?

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- Respondents were asked who they would vote for if an election were “held this week”: the PSUV, the opposition, or none.
- In the 2016/17 survey, 18% said they would vote for a PSUV (Chavista) candidate, 55% for the opposition.
- Those responding that they would not vote for either are not included in analyses by vote intention.



# Even among supporters of the PSUV, national and personal economic evaluations have become increasingly negative



Opposition evaluations have grown more negative

PSUV supporter evaluations have grown sharply more negative

Vote Intention in Next Presidential Election

- Would vote for PSUV
- Would vote for Opposition

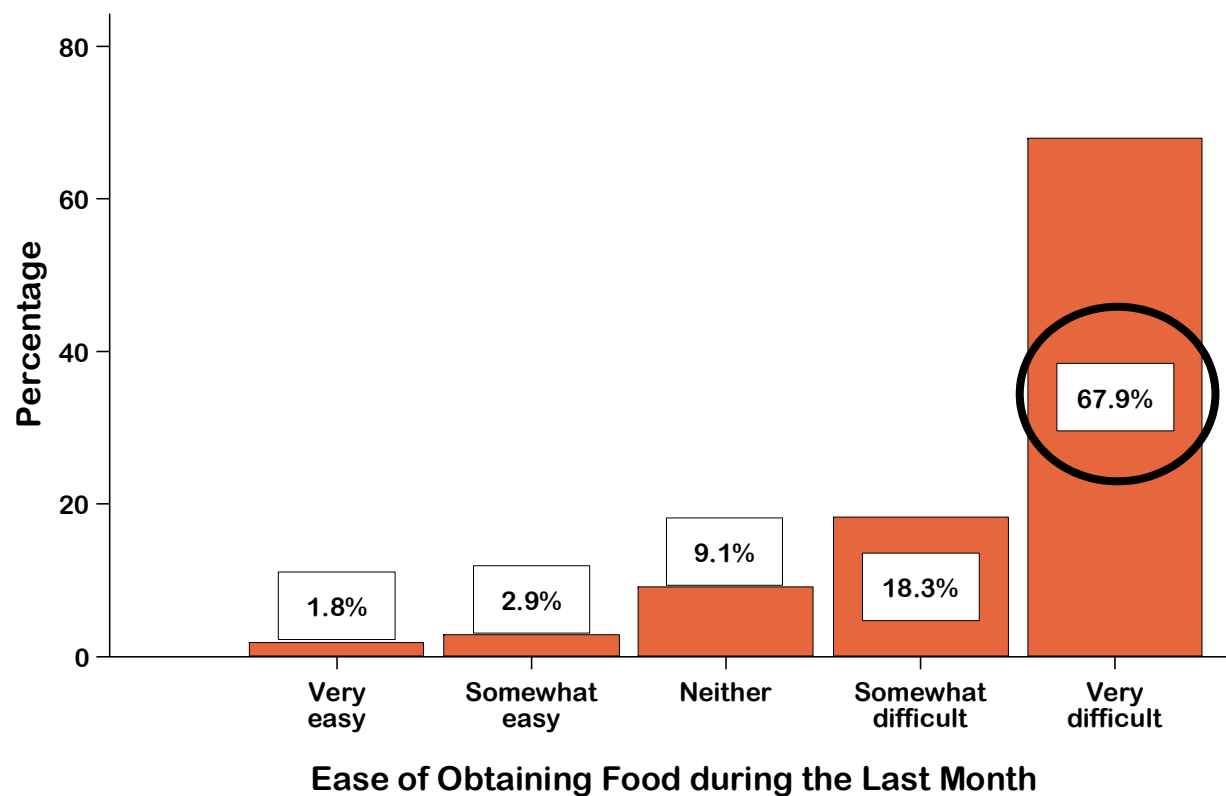
95 % Confidence Interval  
(with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

# ~2 out of 3 Venezuelans report finding food and basic products in the last month “very difficult”

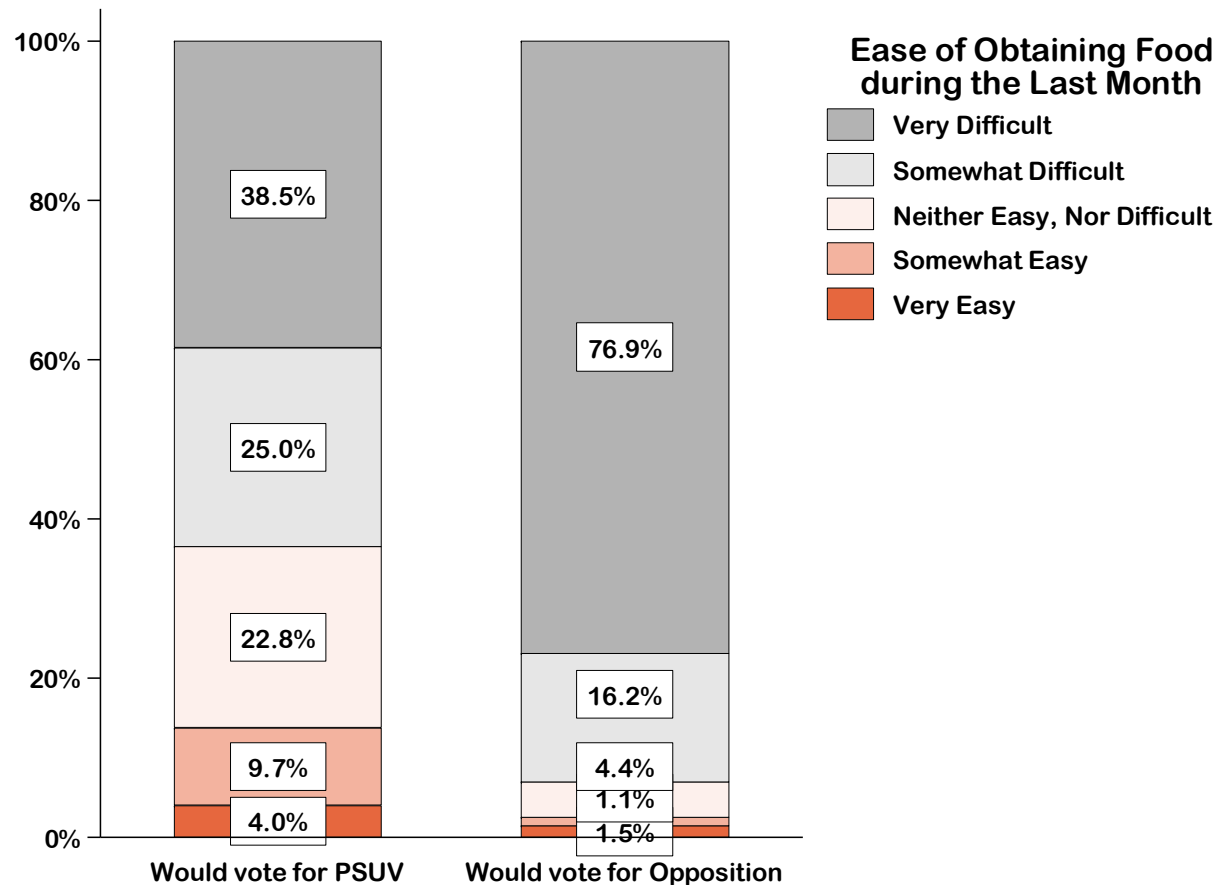
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Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

**VENESC2B.** ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil ha sido para usted en el último mes conseguir los alimentos y productos básicos que usted más consume en su hogar? (1) Muy fácil (2) Algo fácil (3) Ni fácil, ni difícil (4) Algo difícil (5) Muy difícil

# Although a majority of PSUV supporters indicate difficulties in finding food, they report more positive experiences than do opposition supporters

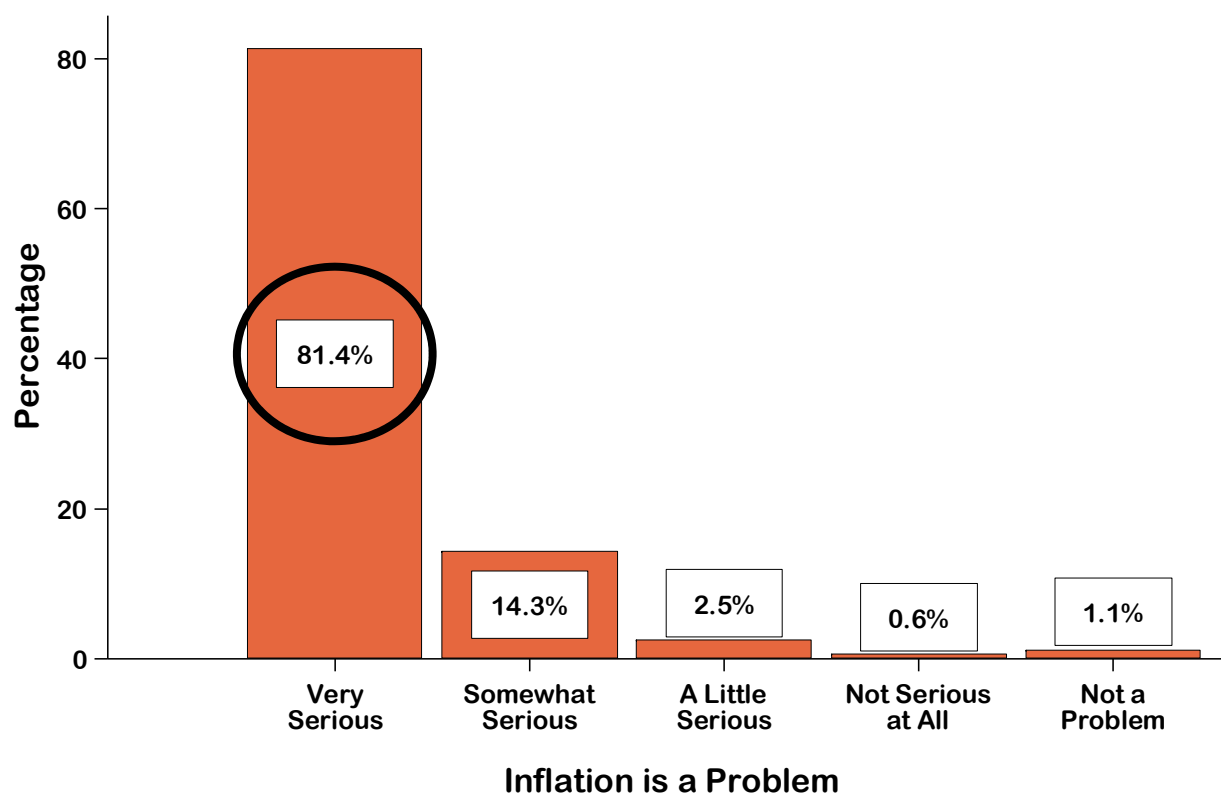


Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.



## 4 out of 5 report inflation as a “very serious” problem



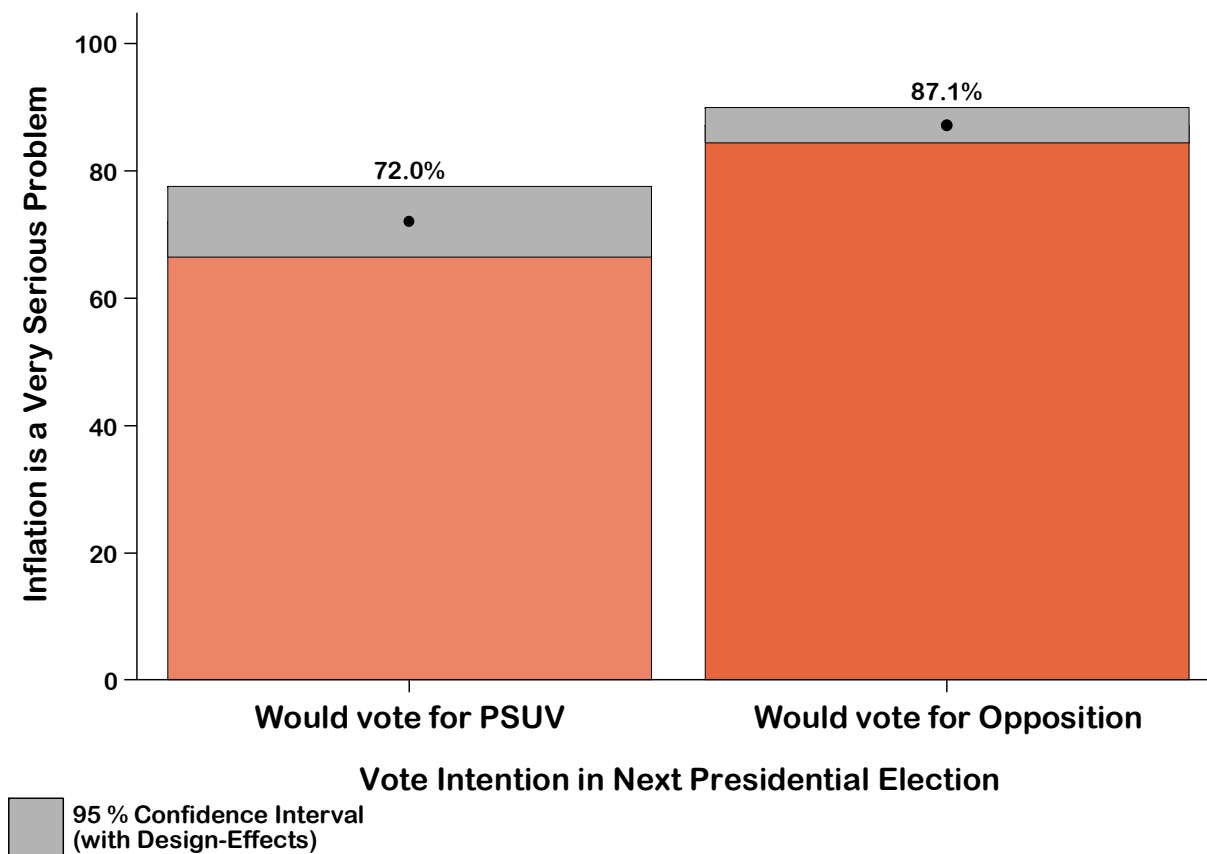
In comparison:

In 2014, a similar percent - 78 - indicated inflation is a very serious problem

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

**VENESC3.** También se habla de la inflación o precios altos. En su opinión, ¿la inflación es un problema muy serio, algo serio, poco serio, nada serio, o no es un problema? (1) Muy serio (2) Algo serio (3) Poco serio (4) Nada serio (5) No es un problema

Although opposition supporters report more negative views about inflation, perceptions of inflation as a “very serious” problem are widespread even among PSUV supporters



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

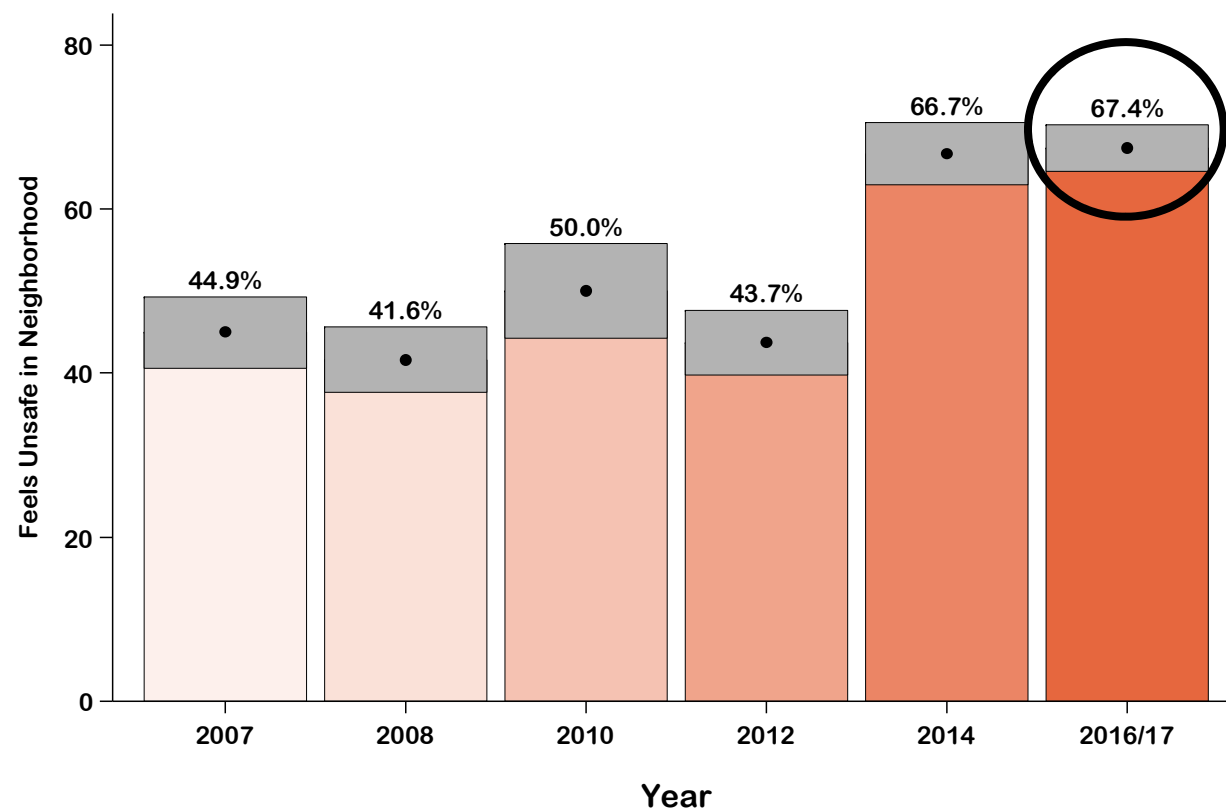
\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

## Part I. Wide-Ranging Economic, Security, and Political Grievances in 2016/17

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### IB. *Security*: Persistent Insecurity and Rising Crime Victimization in 2016/17

# Perceptions of insecurity remain stable relative to 2014, but still high in comparison



95 % Confidence Interval  
(with Design-Effects)

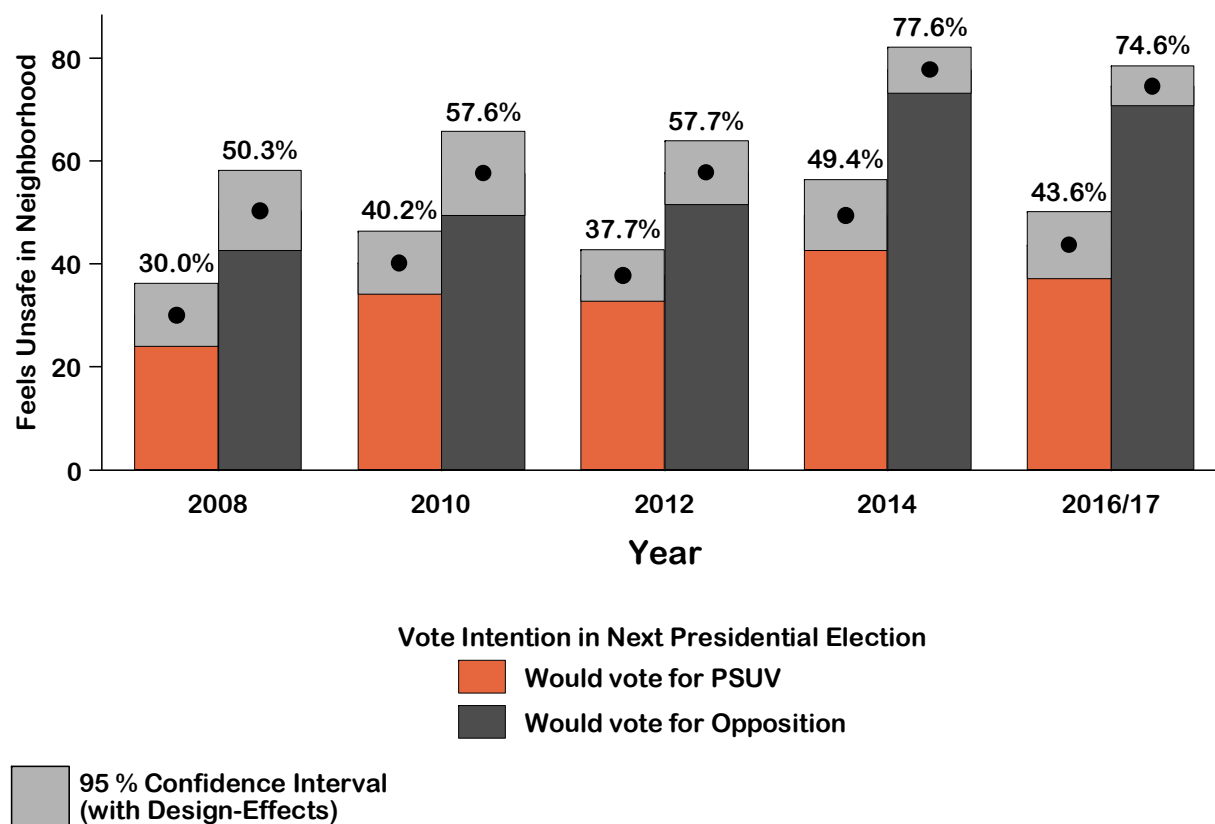
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

Venezuela ranked #1 in insecurity in the 2014 AmericasBarometer. Peru ranked #2, with 60% responding that they feel unsafe or very unsafe.

***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? [Graph shows % who feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe”]*

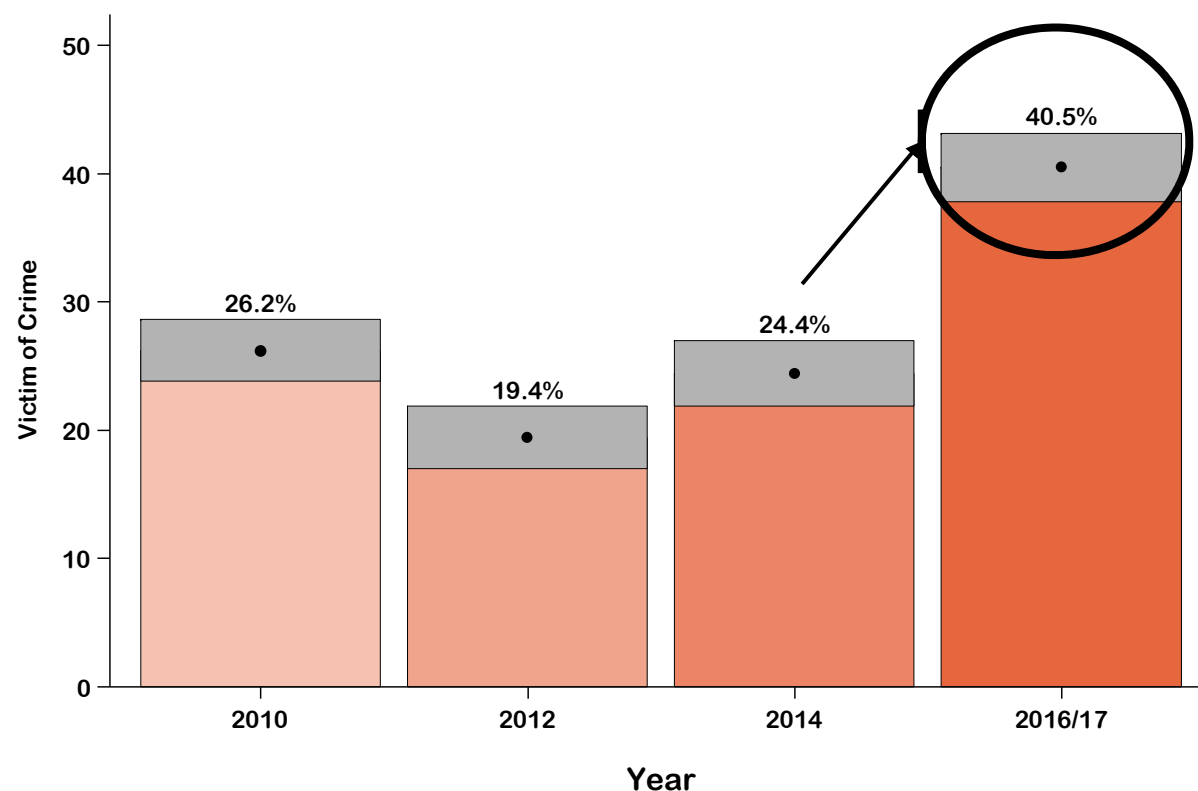
# 3 out of 4 opposition supporters feel unsafe, in contrast to fewer than 1 of 2 PSUV supporters



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

# Crime victimization nearly doubled in 2016/17



95 % Confidence Interval  
(with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

This is 10 percentage points higher than the #1 ranked country in terms of crime victimization in the 2014 AmericasBarometer

**VIC1EXT.** Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?

## Part I. Wide-Ranging Economic, Security, and Political Grievances in 2016/17

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### IC. *Corruption*: Bribe Solicitation and Perceptions of Corruption Remain High



# LAPOP's Corruption Victimization Measure

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**EXC2.** *Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last twelve months?*

**EXC6.** *In the last twelve months, did any government employee ask you for a bribe?*

**EXC11.** *In the last twelve months, to process any kind of document in your municipal government, like a permit for example, did you have to pay any money above that required by law?*

**EXC13.** *In your work, have you been asked to pay a bribe in the last twelve months?*

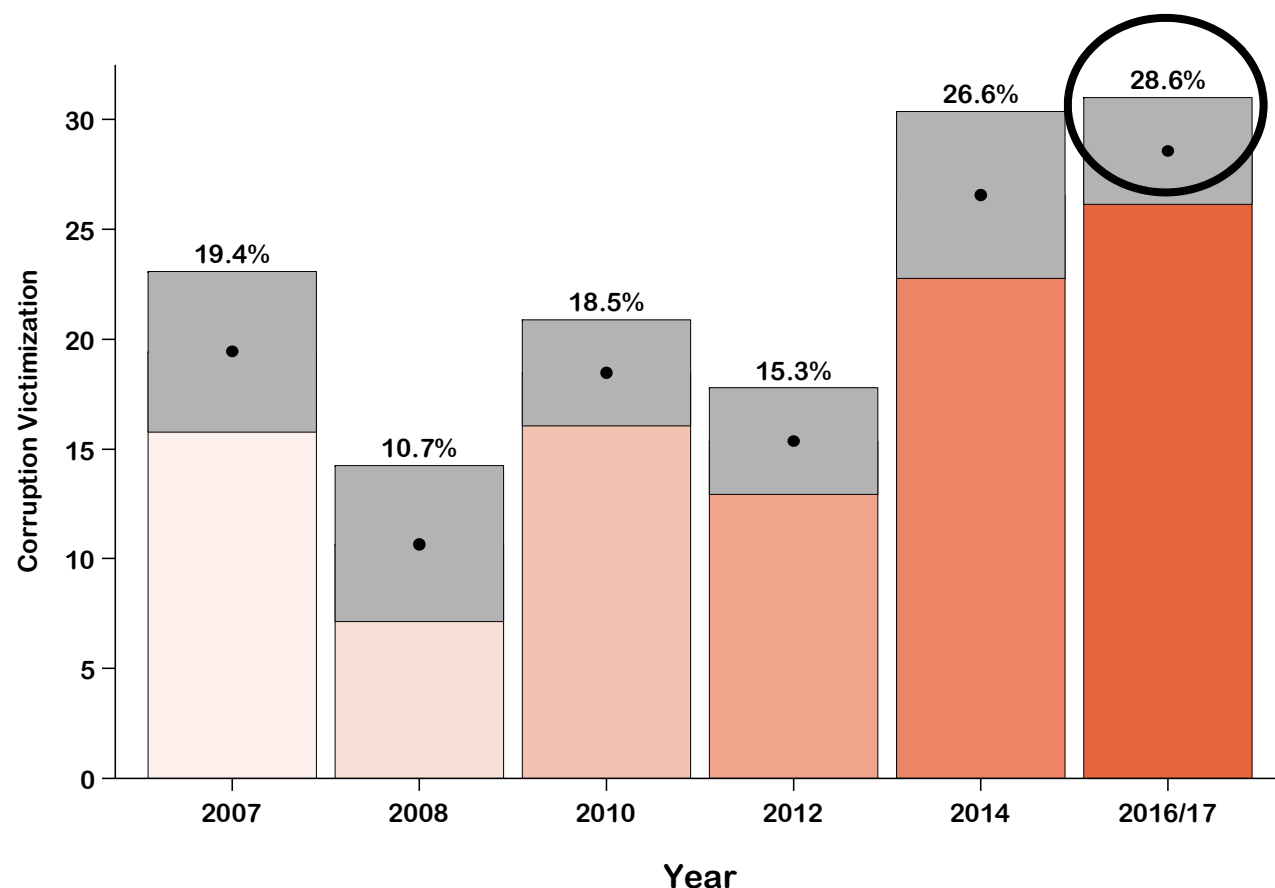
**EXC14.** *Did you have to pay a bribe to the courts in the last twelve months?*

**EXC15.** *In order to be seen in a hospital or a clinic in the last twelve months, did you have to pay a bribe?*

**EXC16.** *Have you had to pay a bribe at school in the last twelve months?*

*\*The LAPOP corruption victimization measure codes anyone who answers “yes” to one or more of these questions to 1, else 0.*

# Rates of corruption victimization remain stable relative to 2014, but still high in comparison



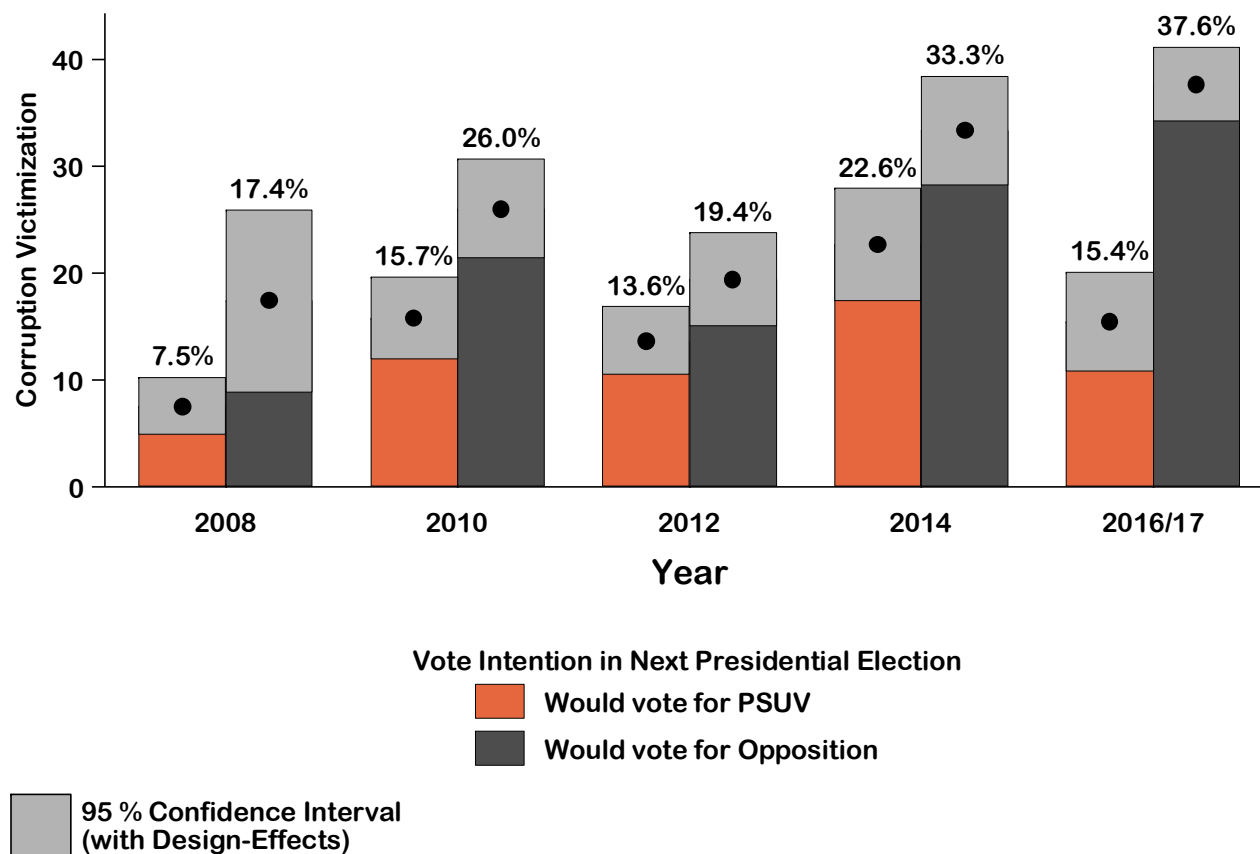
In comparison:

In the 2014 AmericasBarometer, only 4 LAC countries had corruption victimization rates  $\geq 28\%$  (Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Haiti)

95 % Confidence Interval  
(with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

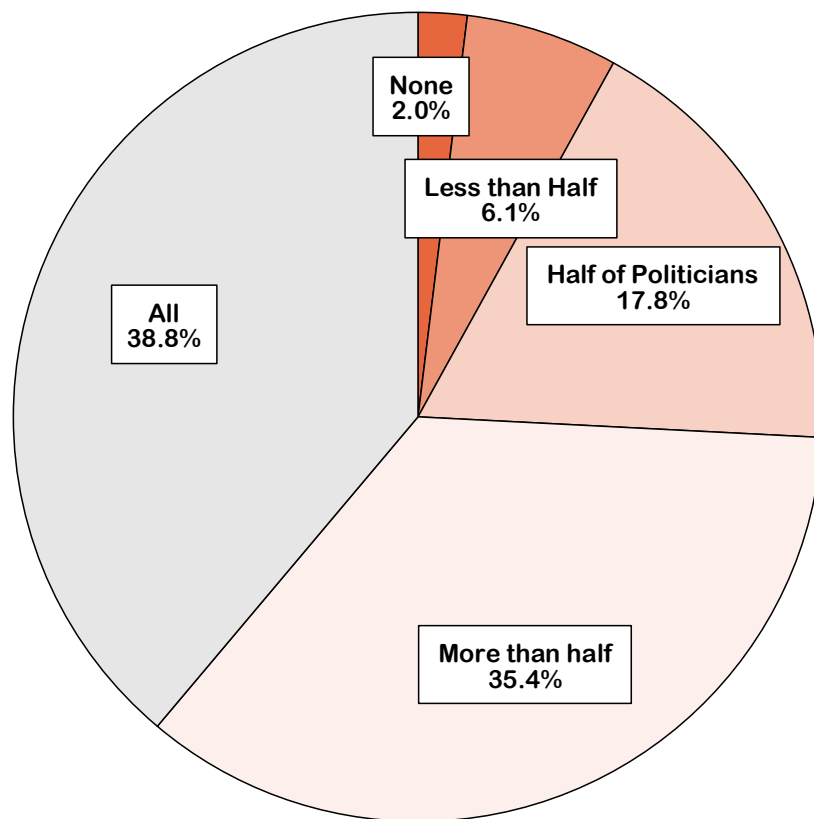
# Opposition supporters report higher corruption victimization rates than PSUV supporters



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

## 74% believe more than half of politicians are corrupt



Amount of Corruption among Politicians

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

In the 2016/17 AmericasBarometer Ecuador survey, 24% report all politicians are corrupt and 32% report more than half are corrupt

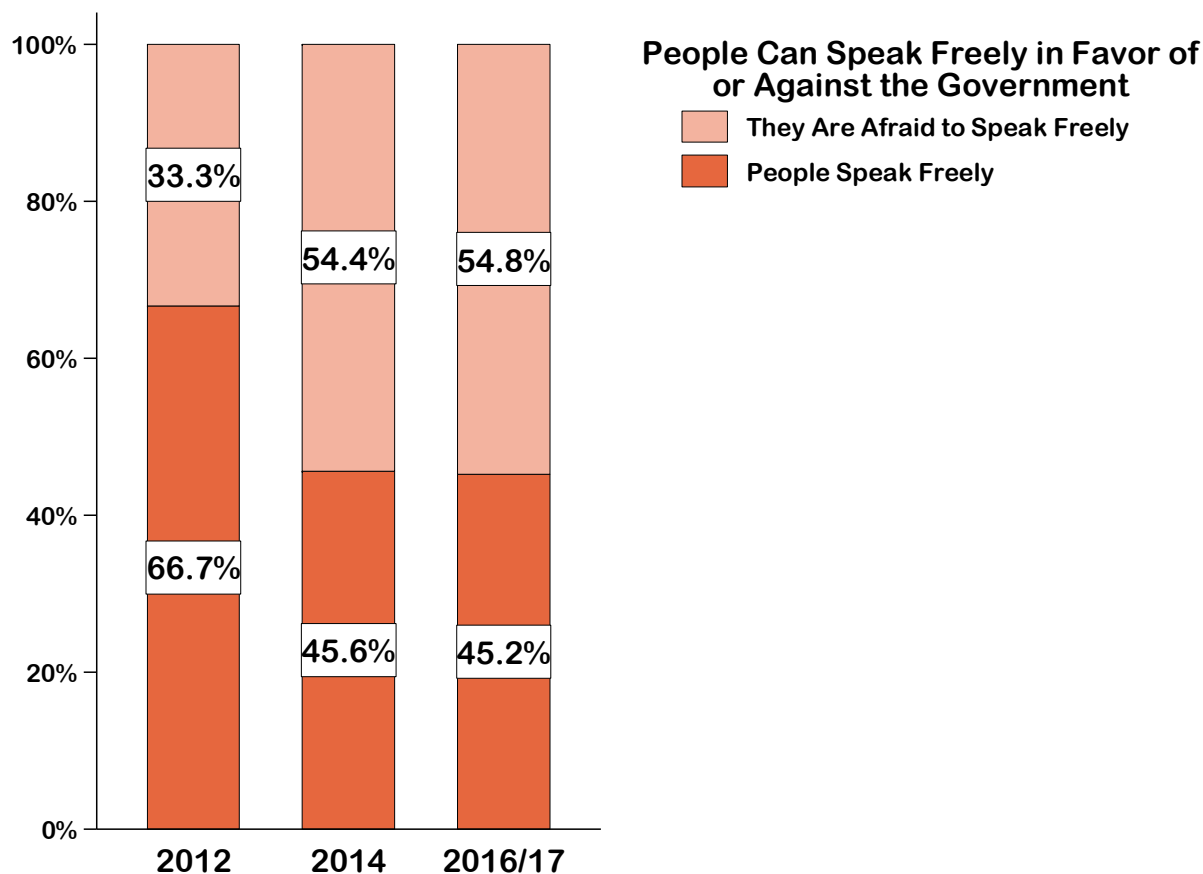
*EXC7NEW. Thinking of the politicians of Venezuela... how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption? (1) None (2) Less than half of them (3) Half of them (4) More than half of them (5) All*

## Part II. Instability, Flagging System Support, and (Un)Democratic Public Opinion

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IIA. *Uncertain Times*: Heightened Concerns about Freedom of Expression and Socio-Political Conflict Persist in 2016/17, and Protest Participation Rises

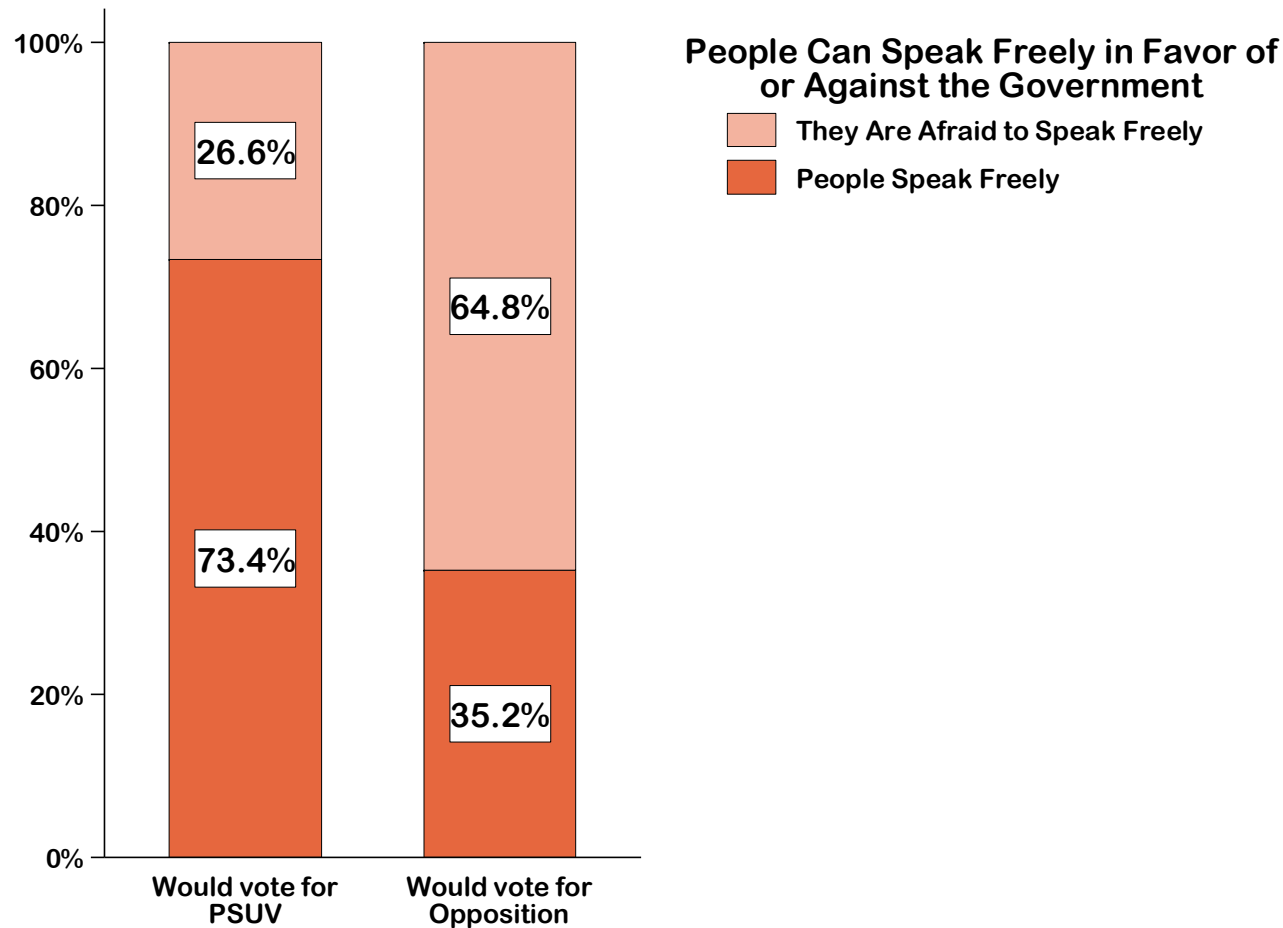
# Over half of Venezuelans report that people are afraid to speak freely about their political opinions



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

**FEX2.** Cree Ud. que en Venezuela, ¿las personas hablan libremente con sus vecinos sin temor sobre hechos políticos a favor o en contra del gobierno, o que tienen miedo de hablar libremente?  
(1) Las personas hablan libremente (2) Tienen miedo de hablar libremente

# Large differences exist in perceptions about freedom of speech between PSUV and opposition supporters

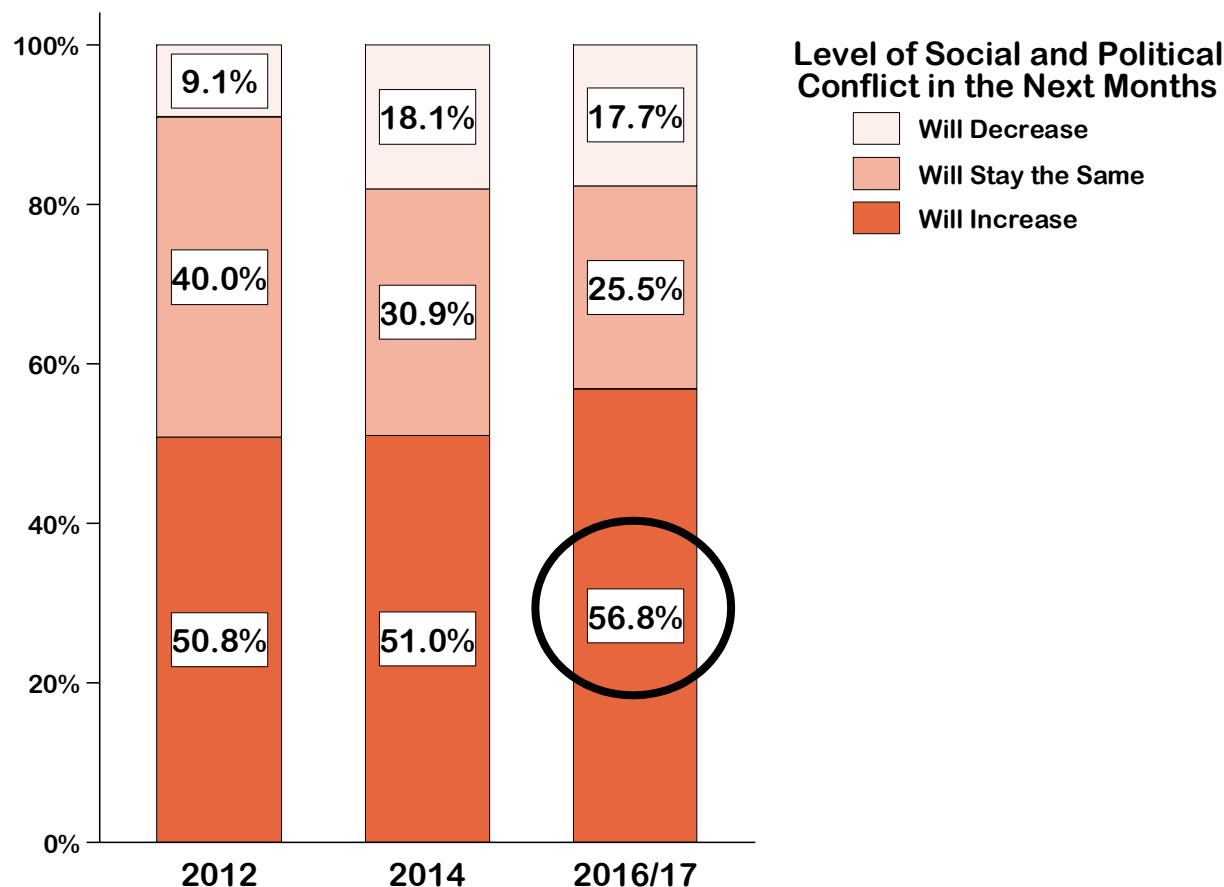


Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.



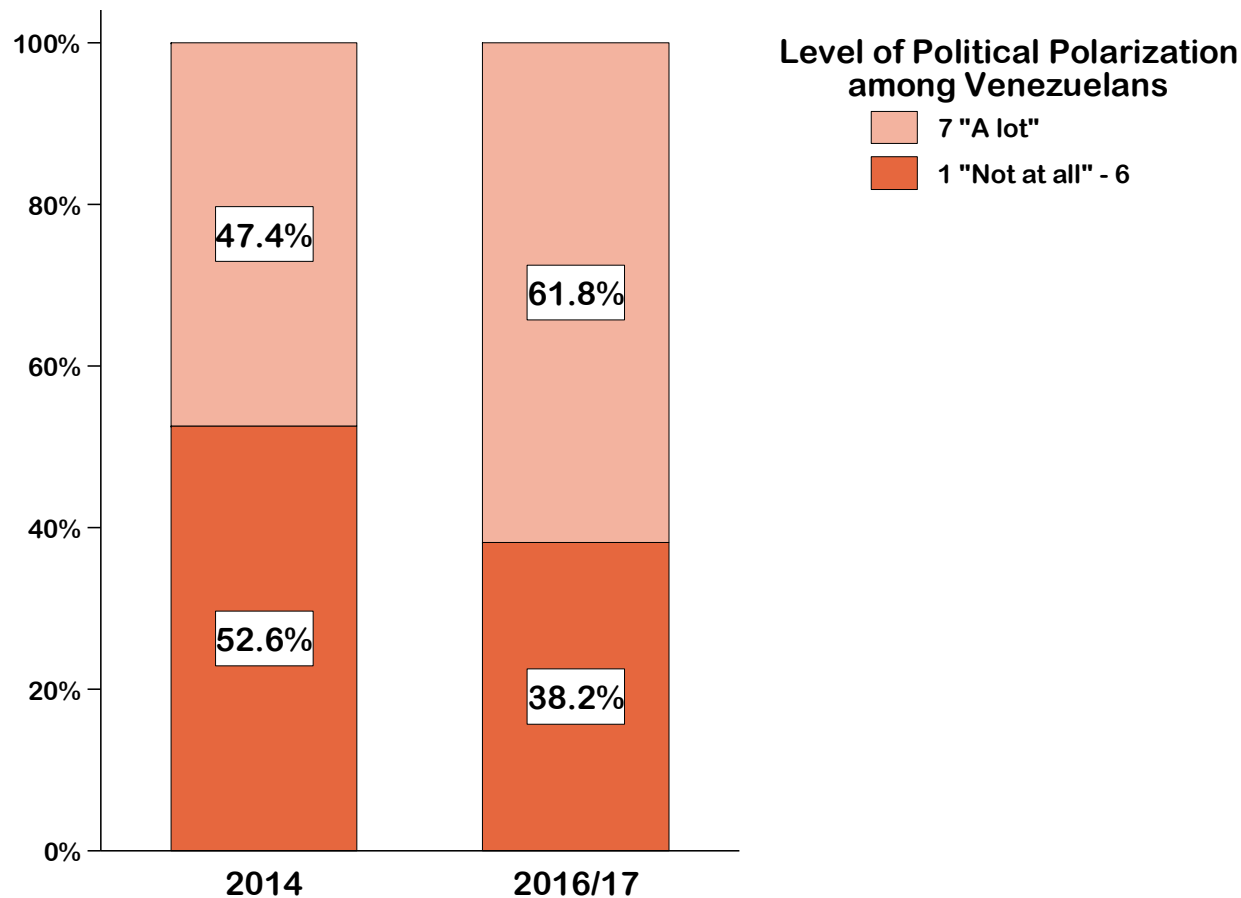
# The public outlook on socio-political conflict is pessimistic: over half of Venezuelans believe conflict will continue to increase



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

**VENPROT11.** ¿A usted le parece que en los próximos meses el conflicto social y político en Venezuela aumentará, se mantendrá igual, o disminuirá?

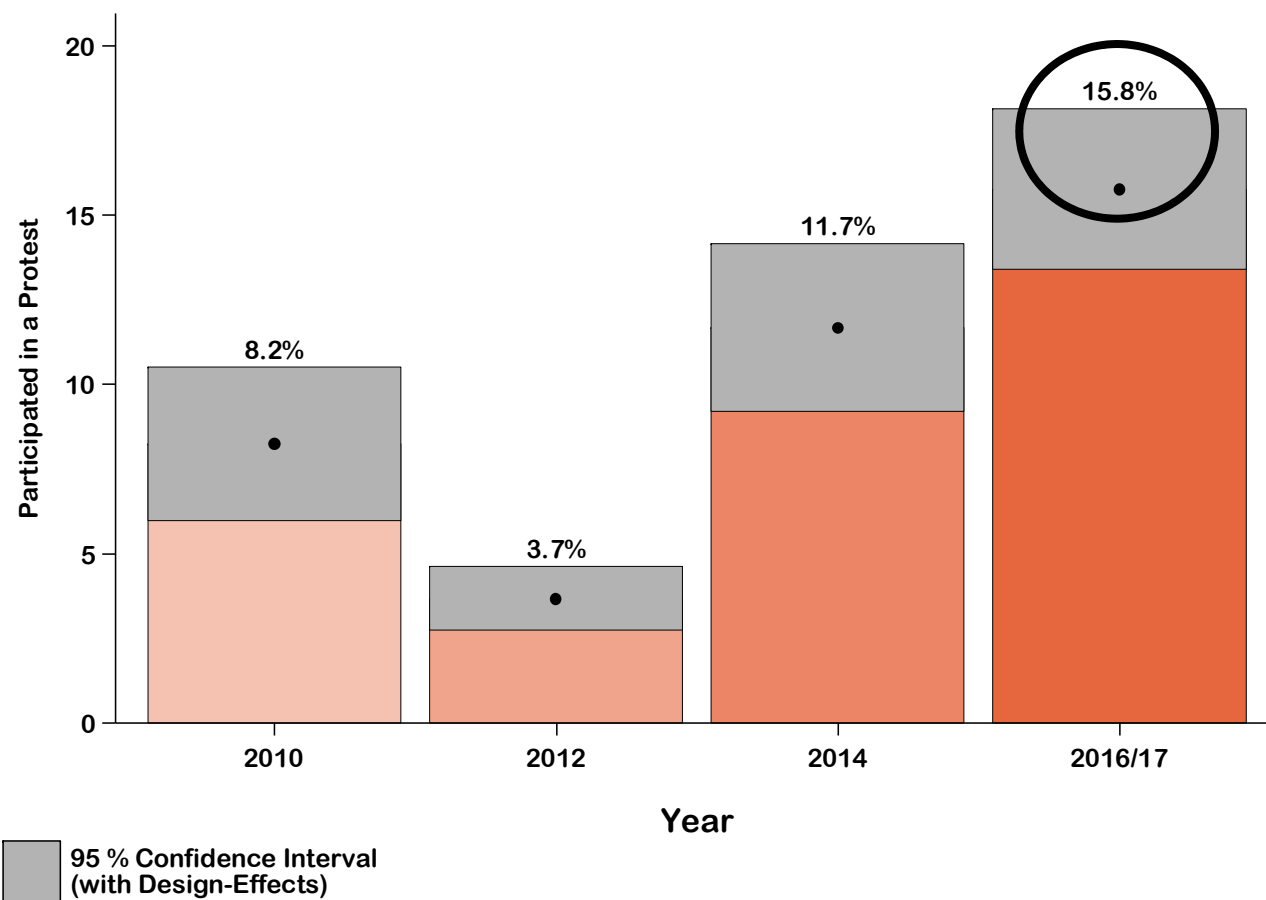
# The percentage of Venezuelans who perceive “a lot” of political polarization among citizens has increased



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

**POLZ1.** Hoy en día se habla mucho de que los venezolanos están divididos. En su opinión, ¿cuánta división política hay hoy entre los venezolanos? 1 “nada”- 7 “mucho”

# Protest participation continues to rise



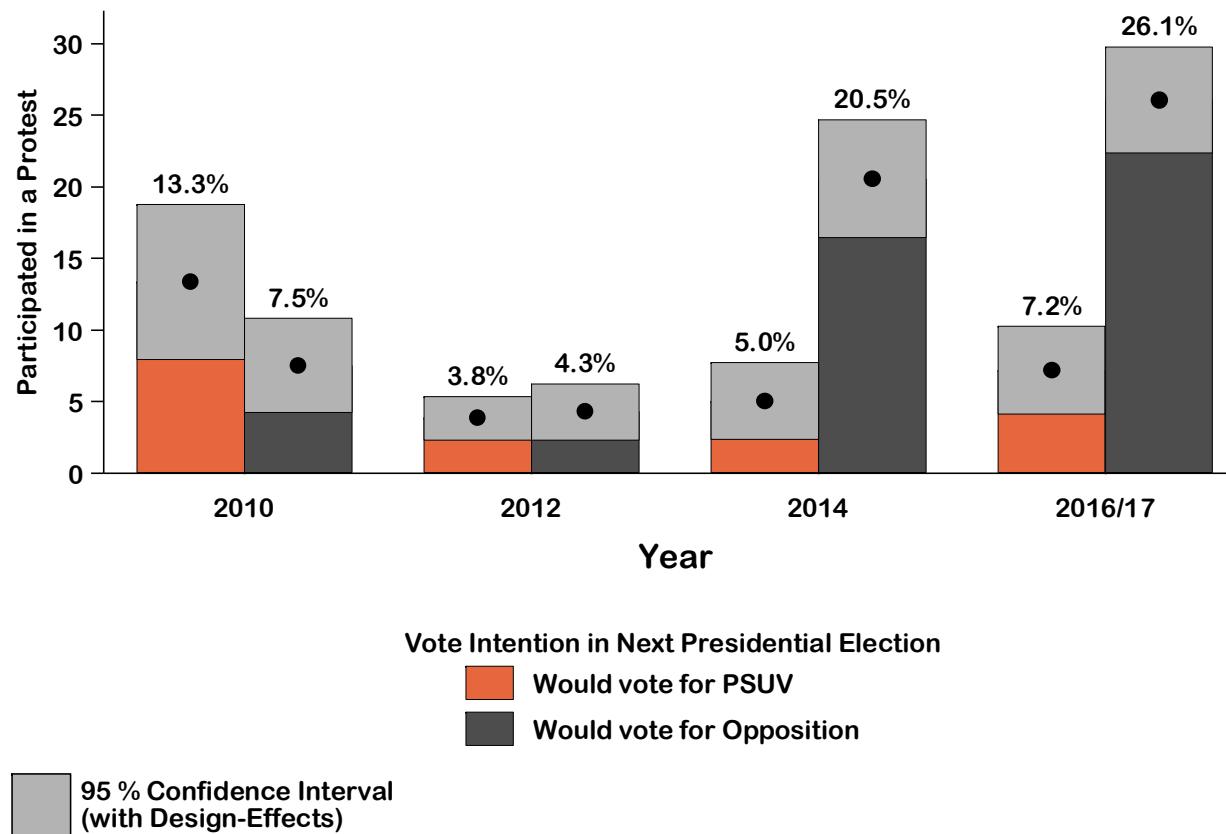
In comparison:

In the 2014 AmericasBarometer wave, the top-ranked country in protest, Bolivia, also had a rate of 16% (Venezuela was ranked #3 in that wave)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

**PROT3.** In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march? (1) Yes (2) No

# As expected, protest is greater among opposition supporters than PSUV supporters



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

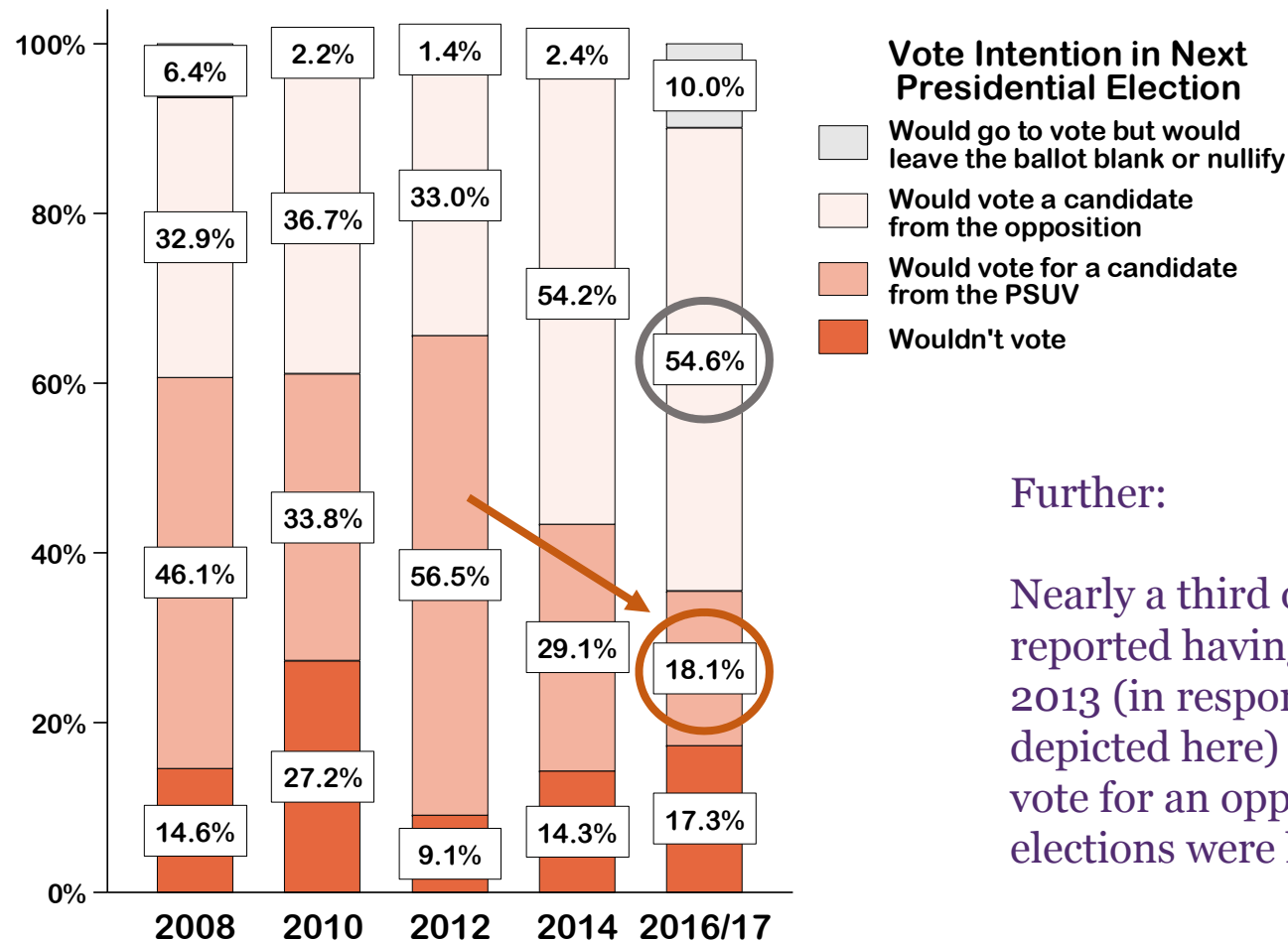
\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

## Part II. Instability, Flagging System Support, and (Un)Democratic Public Opinion

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IIB. *Flagging System Support*: Widespread discontent with the political system and attitudes conducive to instability

## Electoral support for the PSUV has experienced a dramatic decline since the death of Chávez and the election of Maduro



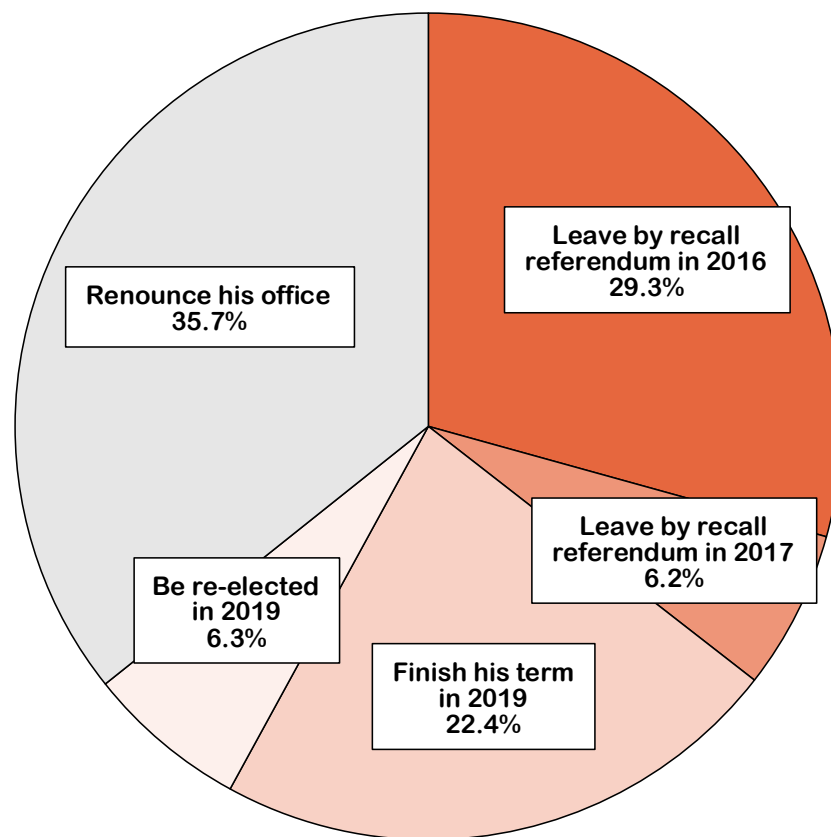
Further:

Nearly a third of respondents who reported having voted for Maduro in 2013 (in response to a question not depicted here) indicate they would vote for an opposition candidate if elections were held this week.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

# Two thirds of Venezuelans believe President Maduro should have left office by recall referendum in 2016 or by resignation

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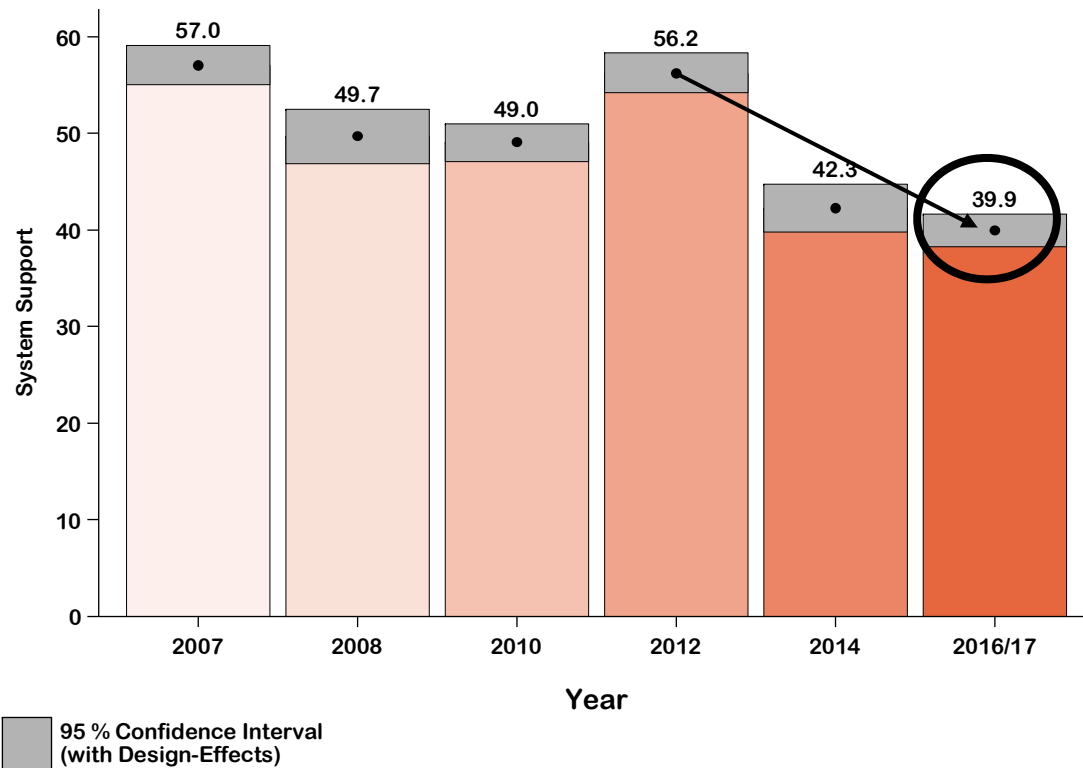


**President should be recalled, finish his term, be reelected or resign**

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1



# Political system support remains at its lowest in 10 years: 40 degrees of support



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

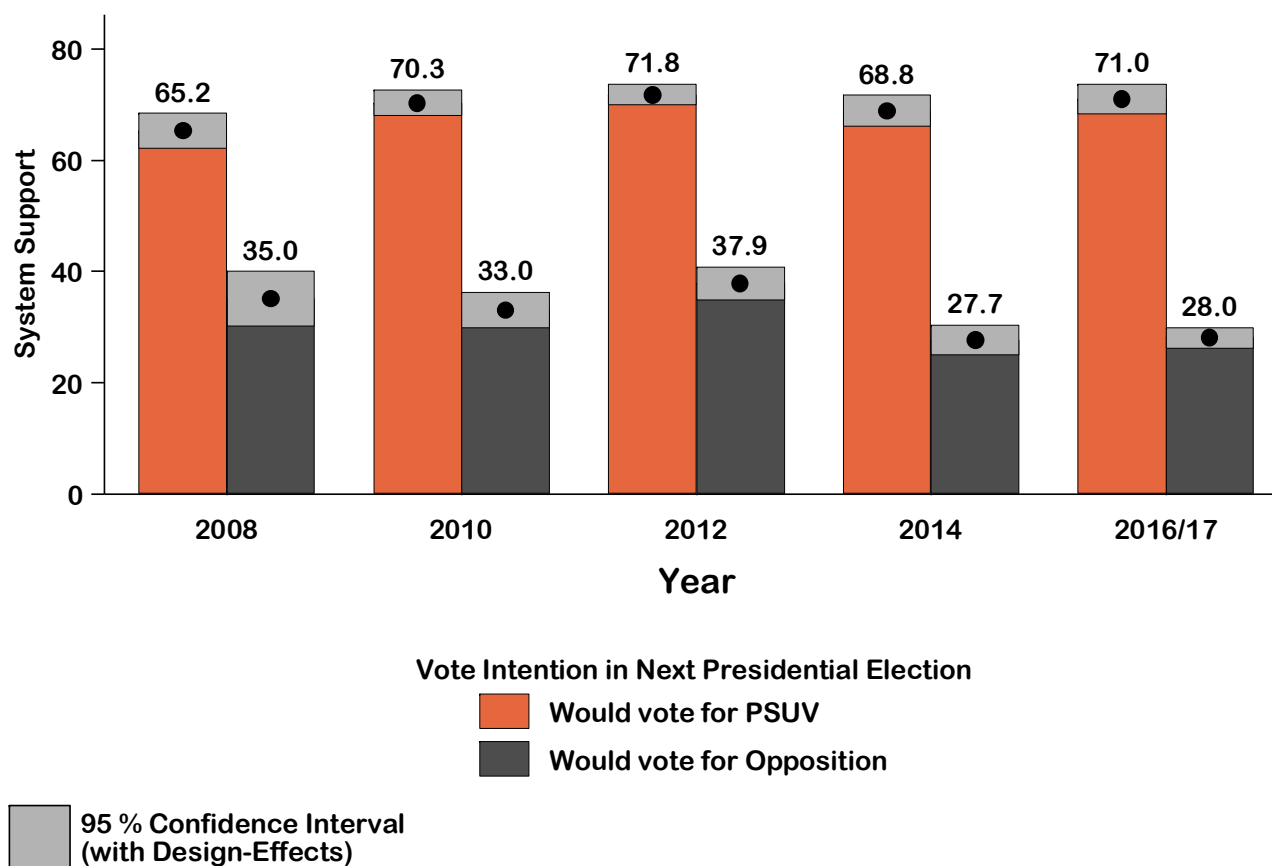
In comparison:

In the 2016/17 AmericasBarometer Ecuador survey, the public expresses an average of 55 degrees of system support

0-100 Index  
based on:

- B1. To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?
- B2. To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)?
- B3. To what extent do you think that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?
- B4. To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)?
- B6. To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)?

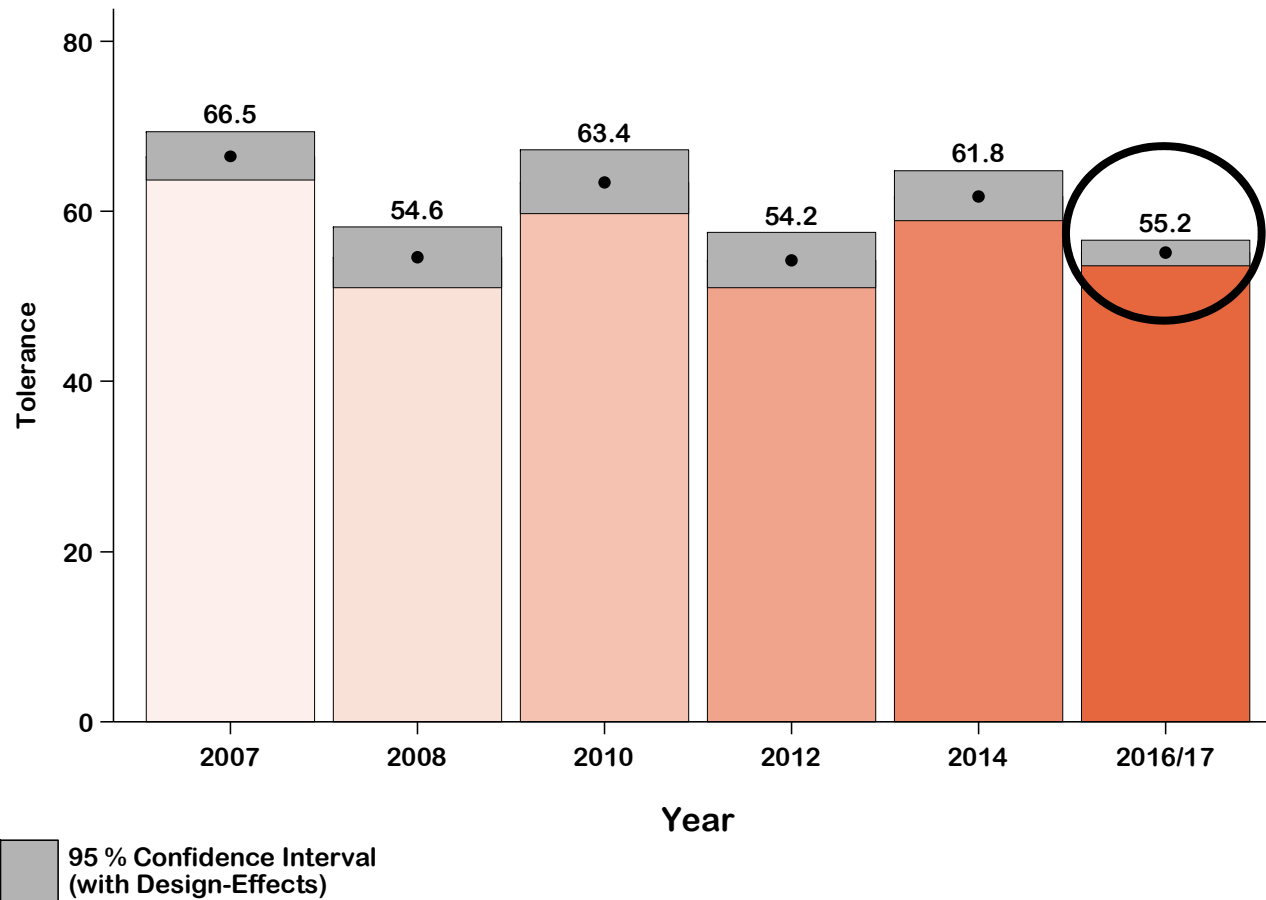
# Support for the political system remains at its lowest point in 10 years; gap between opposition and incumbent supporters stable since 2014



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

# Tolerance of the rights of anti-system critics fluctuates at mid-range levels



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

## 0-100 Index based on:

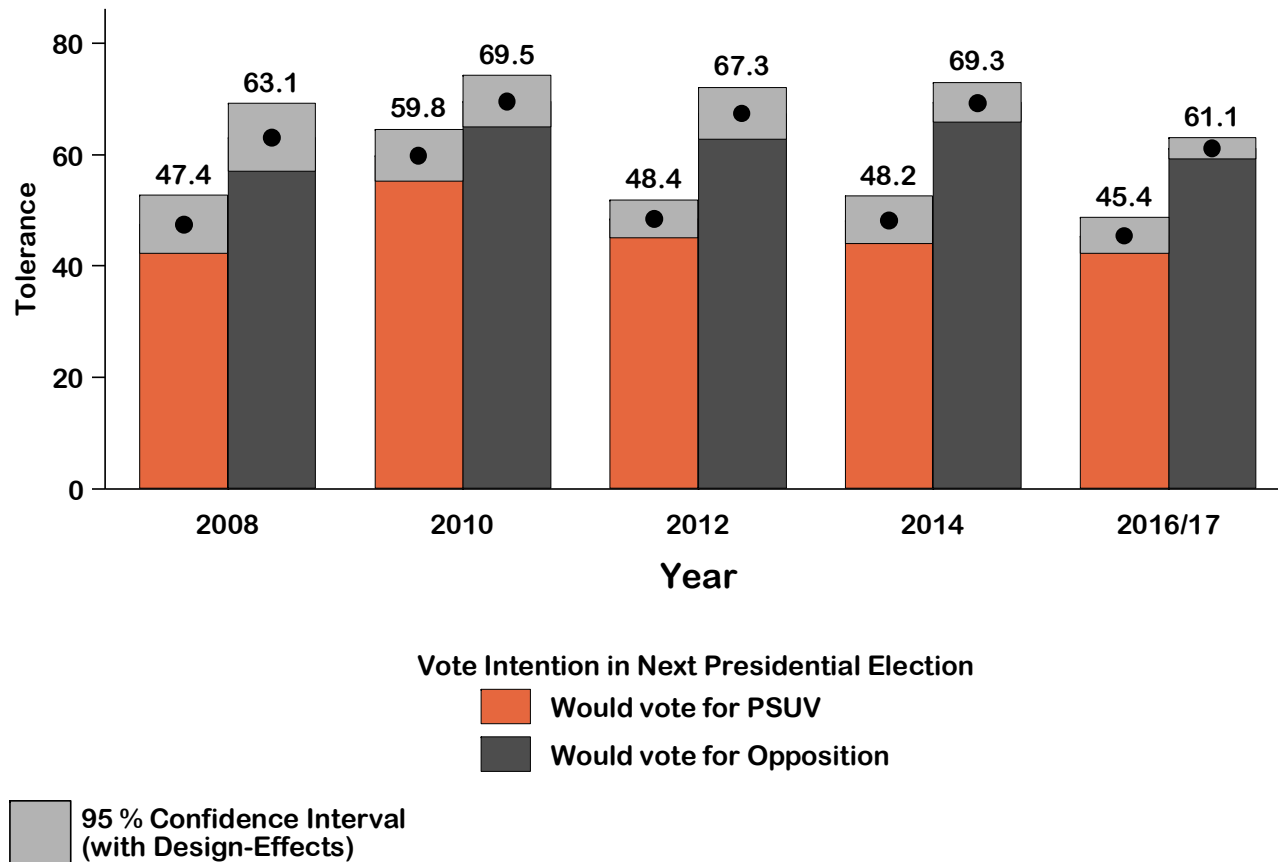
**D1.** There are people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote?

**D2.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views?

**D3.** Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?

**D4.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches?

# Tolerance of the rights of system opponents decreased among the *opposition* in 2016/17



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

# Assessing Prospects for Stable Democracy in Venezuela

Variables used to create a political tolerance index [all are on a 0 (Strongly disapprove) to 100 (Strongly approve) scale]:

**D1.** There are people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's **right to vote**?

**D2.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct **peaceful demonstrations** in order to express their views?

**D3.** Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?

**D4.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television **to make speeches**?

Variables used to create a legitimacy (system support) index [all are on a 0 (None) to 100 (A lot) scale]:

**B1.** To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?

**B2.** To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)?

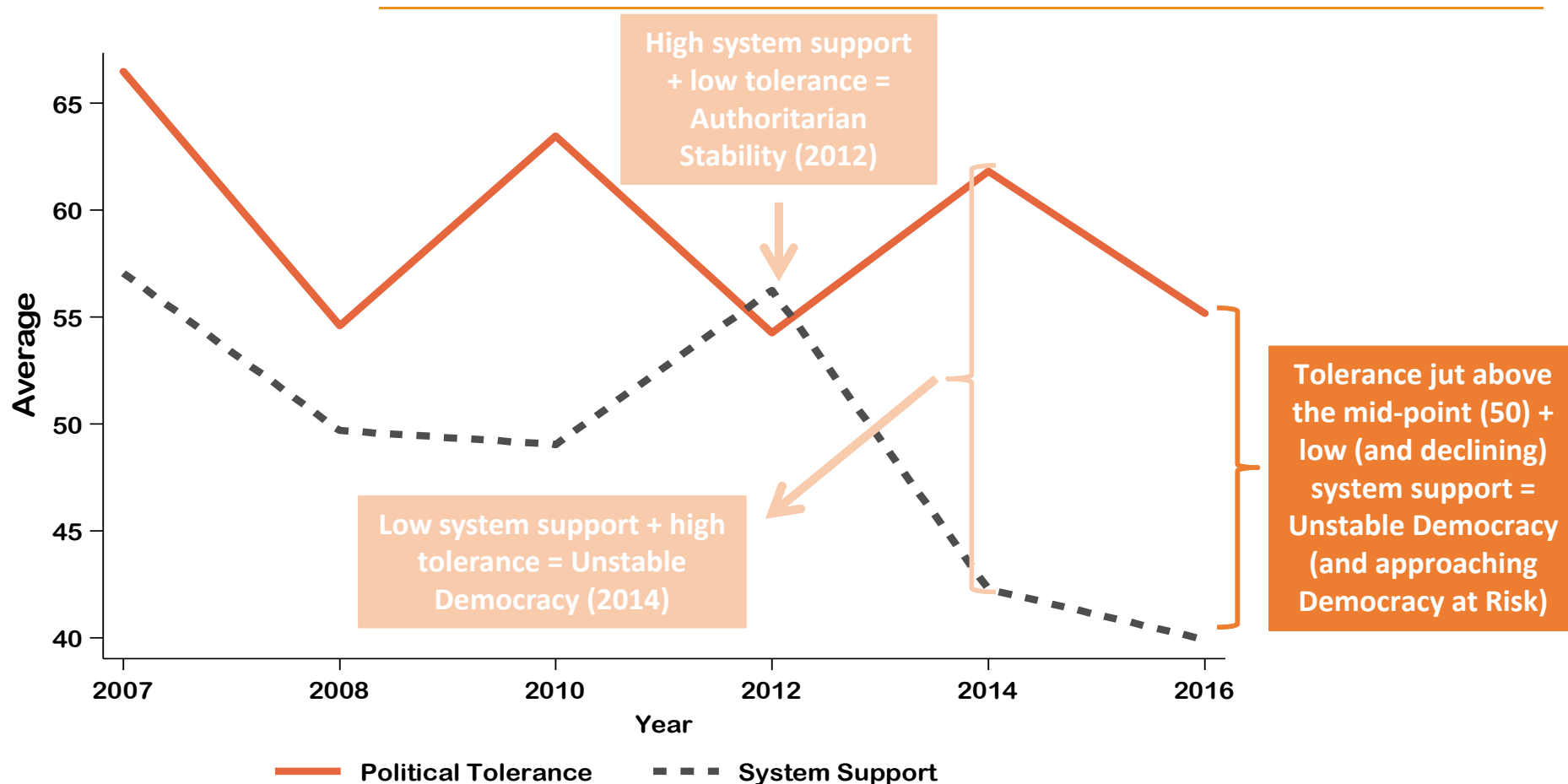
**B3.** To what extent do you think that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?

**B4.** To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)?

**B6.** To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)?

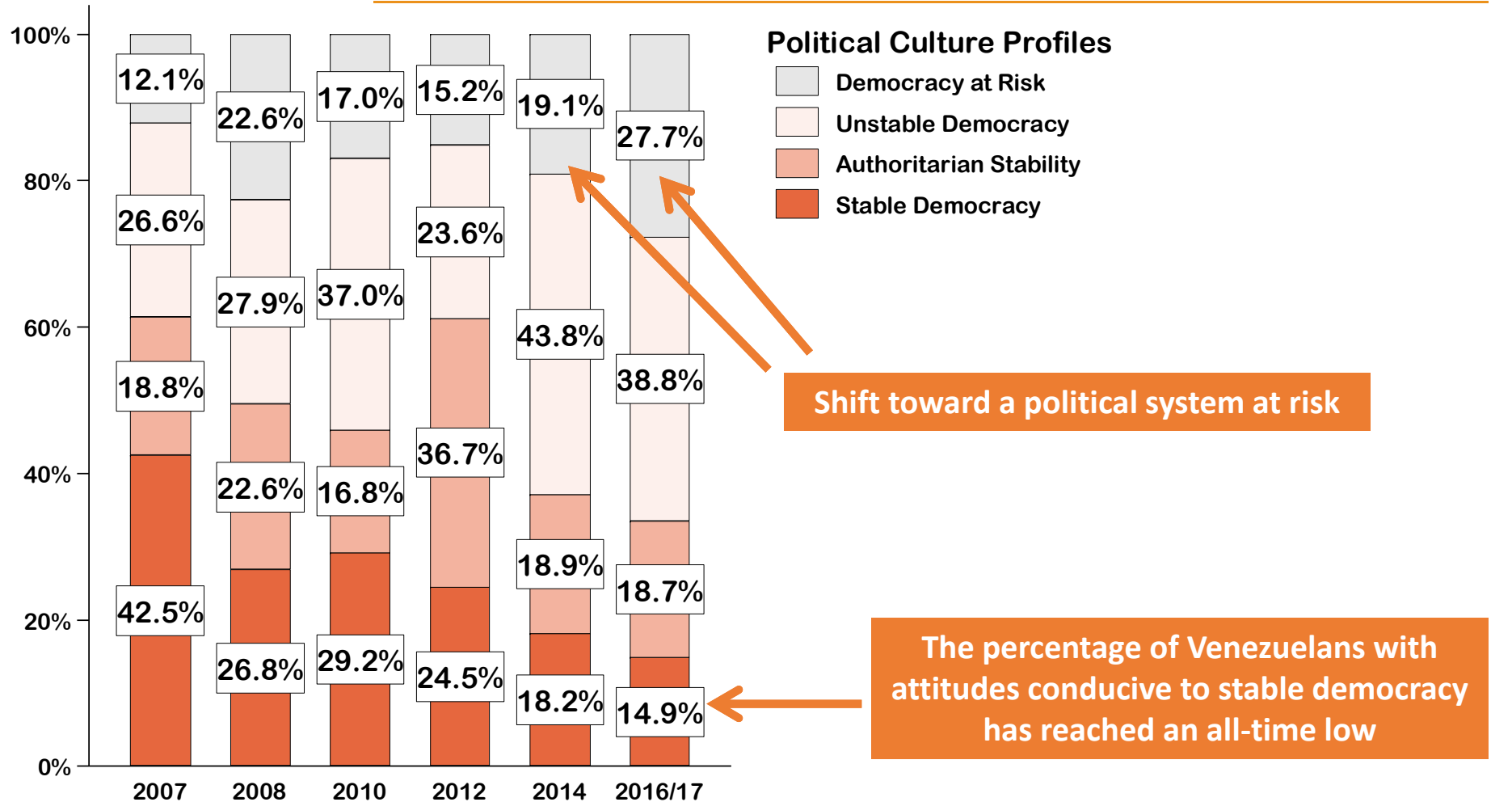
Political Tolerance		
Legitimacy (System Support)	High	Low
	High	Authoritarian Stability
	Low	Unstable Democracy
		Democracy at Risk

# Venezuela's public opinion profile in 2016/17: waning tolerance + lower system support



Source: © AmericasBarometer LAPOP, VEN 2016/17; D1.1

# Venezuela's 2016/17 public opinion profile: high tolerance + low system support, portends democratic instability while moving toward a system at risk



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

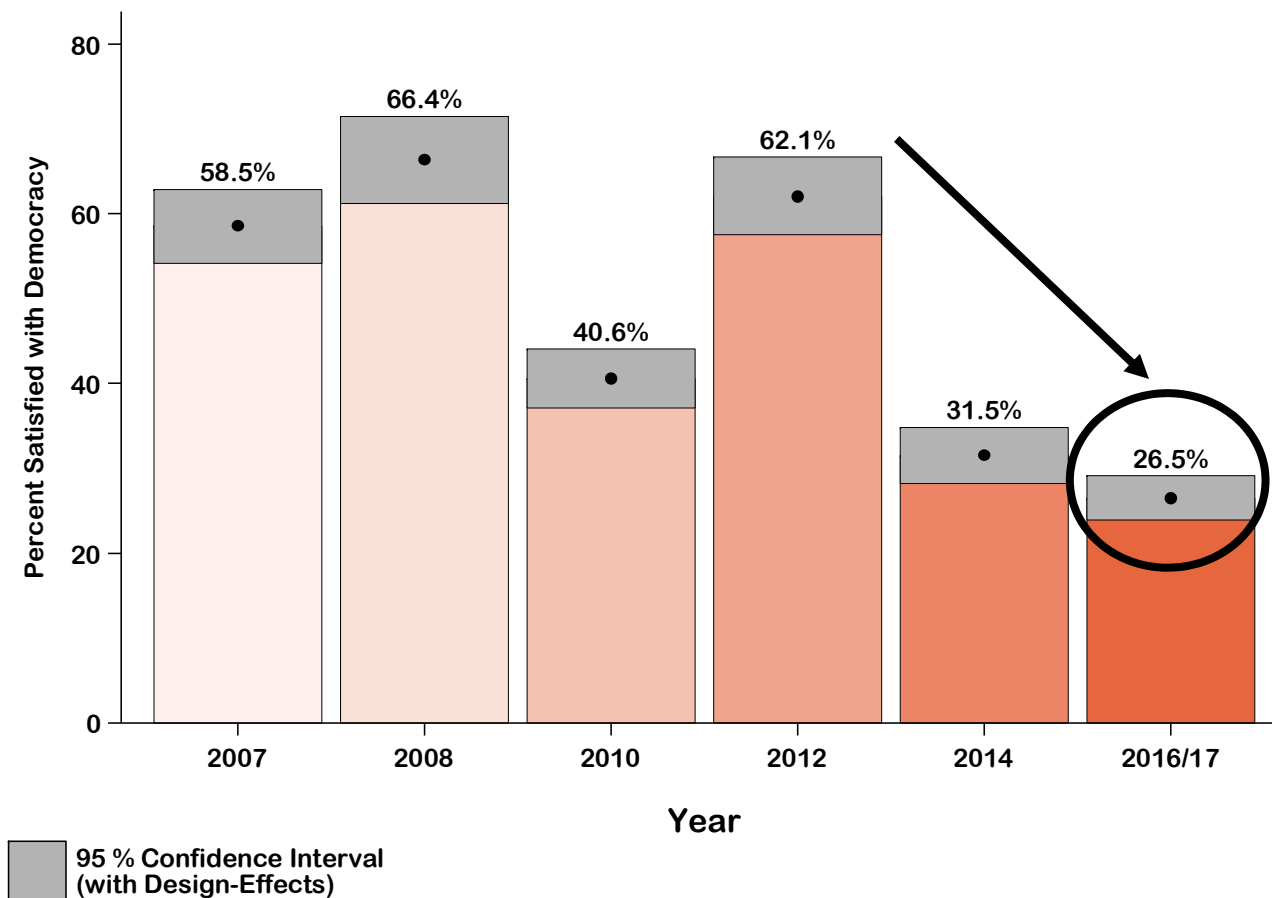
## Part II. Instability, Flagging System Support, and (Un)Democratic Public Opinion

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### IIC. *Waning Support for Democracy: New Fault Lines in Some, but not all, Democratic Values*



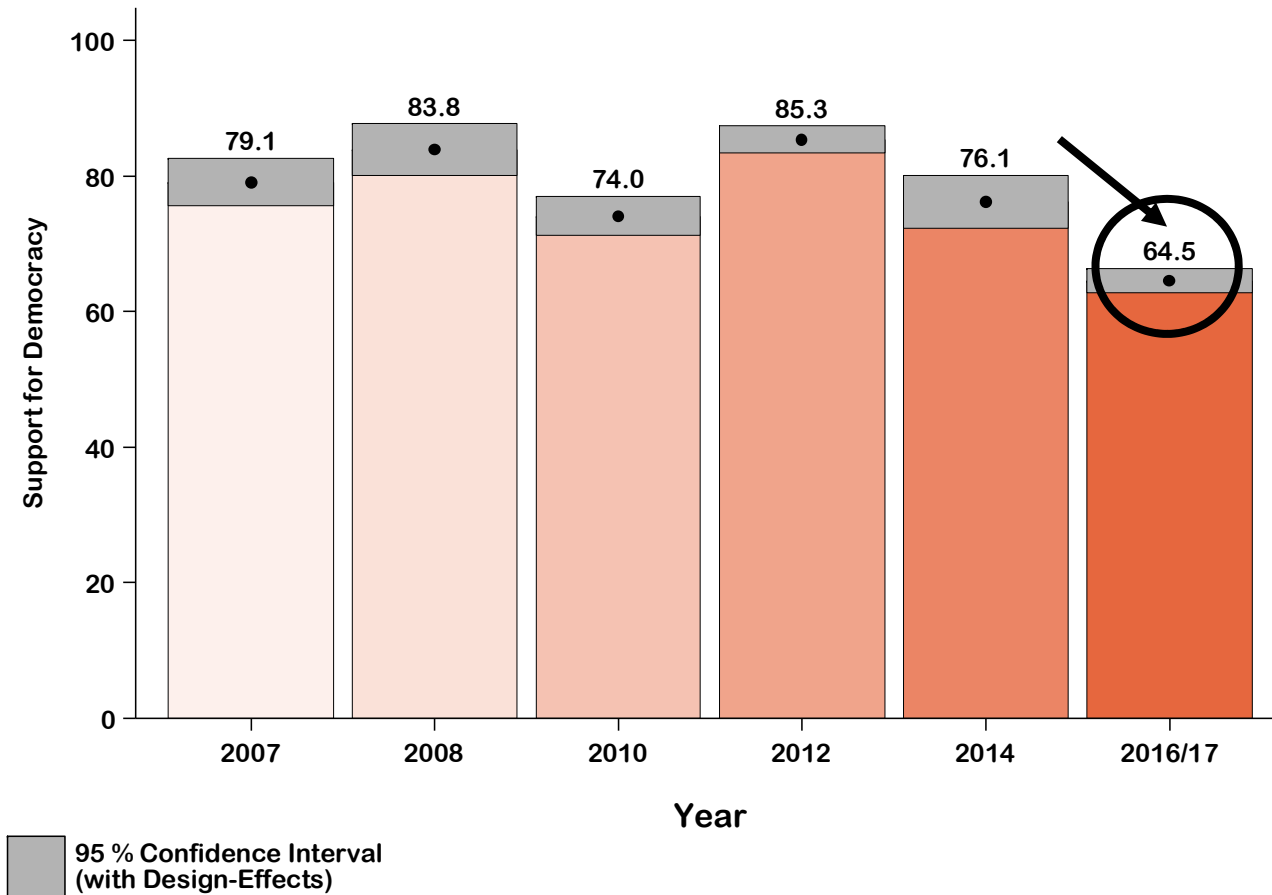
# Satisfaction with democracy declined to its lowest point, even lower than 2014



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

**PN4.** In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Venezuela? (100) Very satisfied/Satisfied  
(o) Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied

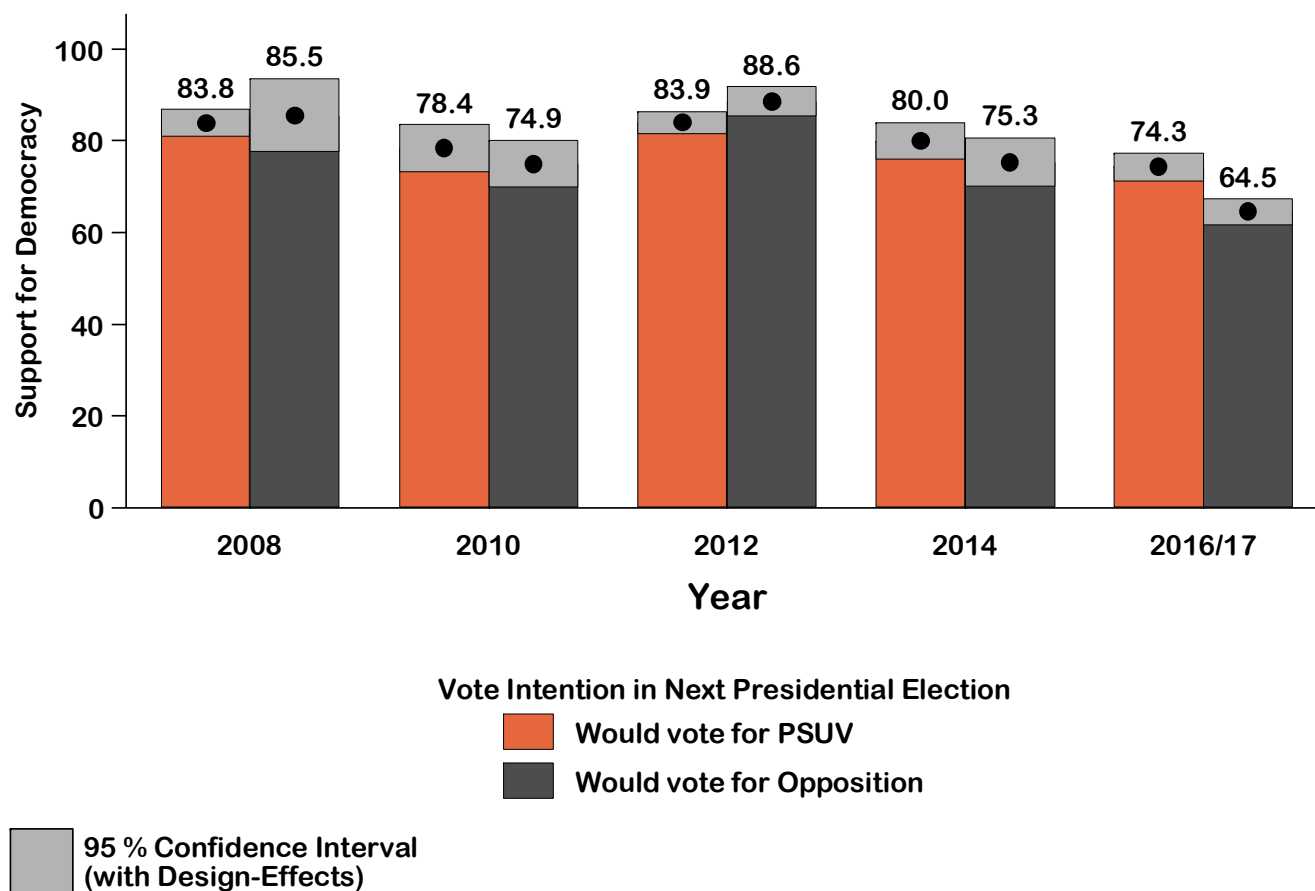
# Support for democracy dropped 10 degrees in '16/17



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

*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? (0-100 scale)*

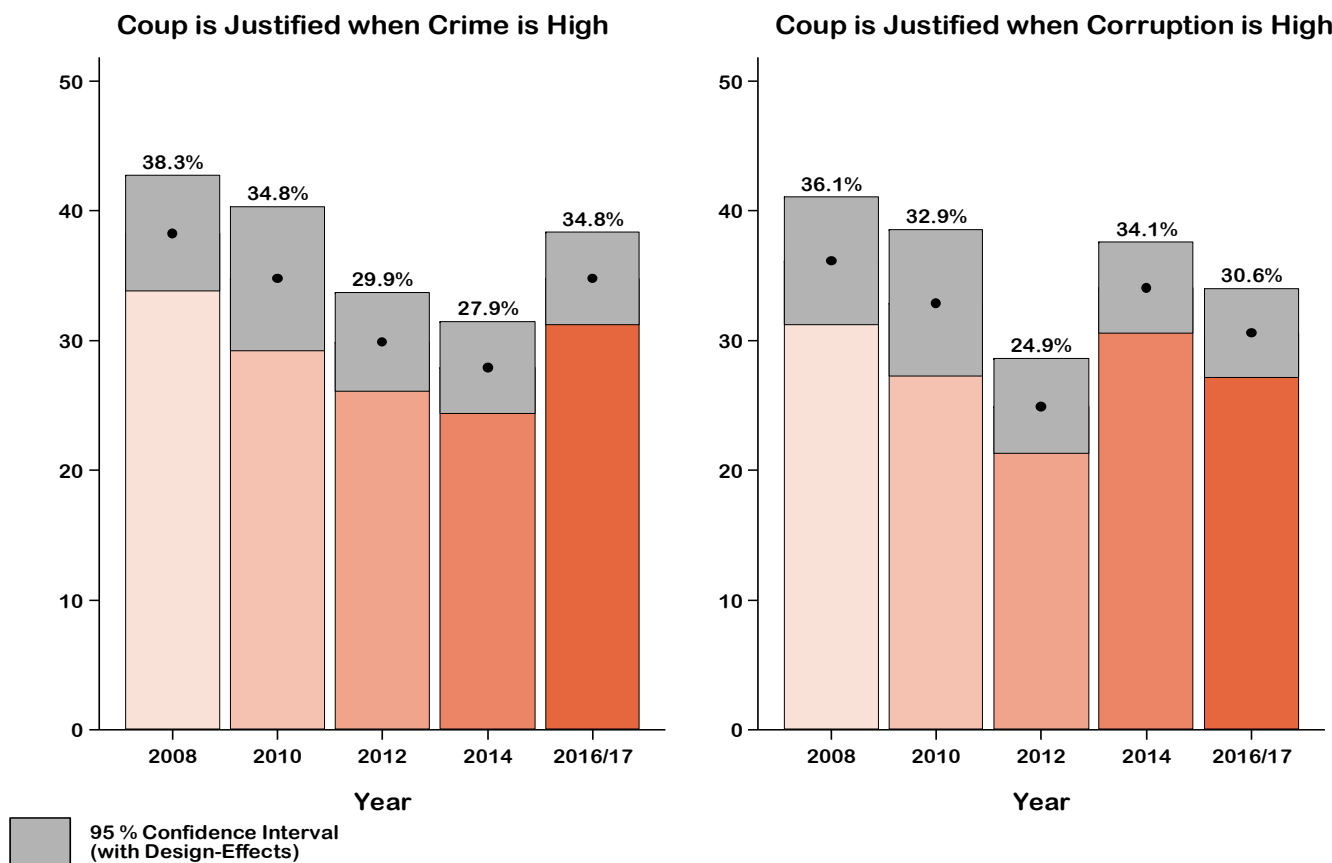
# Belief that democracy is the best government has declined among both PSUV and opposition supporters



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

\*Analysis includes those who report an intention to vote in a future election for the PSUV or the opposition. Those responding that they would not select either option are not analyzed here.

# Support for coups among Venezuelans remains at or below regional averages for the region in 2014



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

In comparison:

In the 2014 AmericasBarometer, the mean percent of individuals in LAC who supported a coup in the face of crime was 34% and, in the face of high corruption, 37%

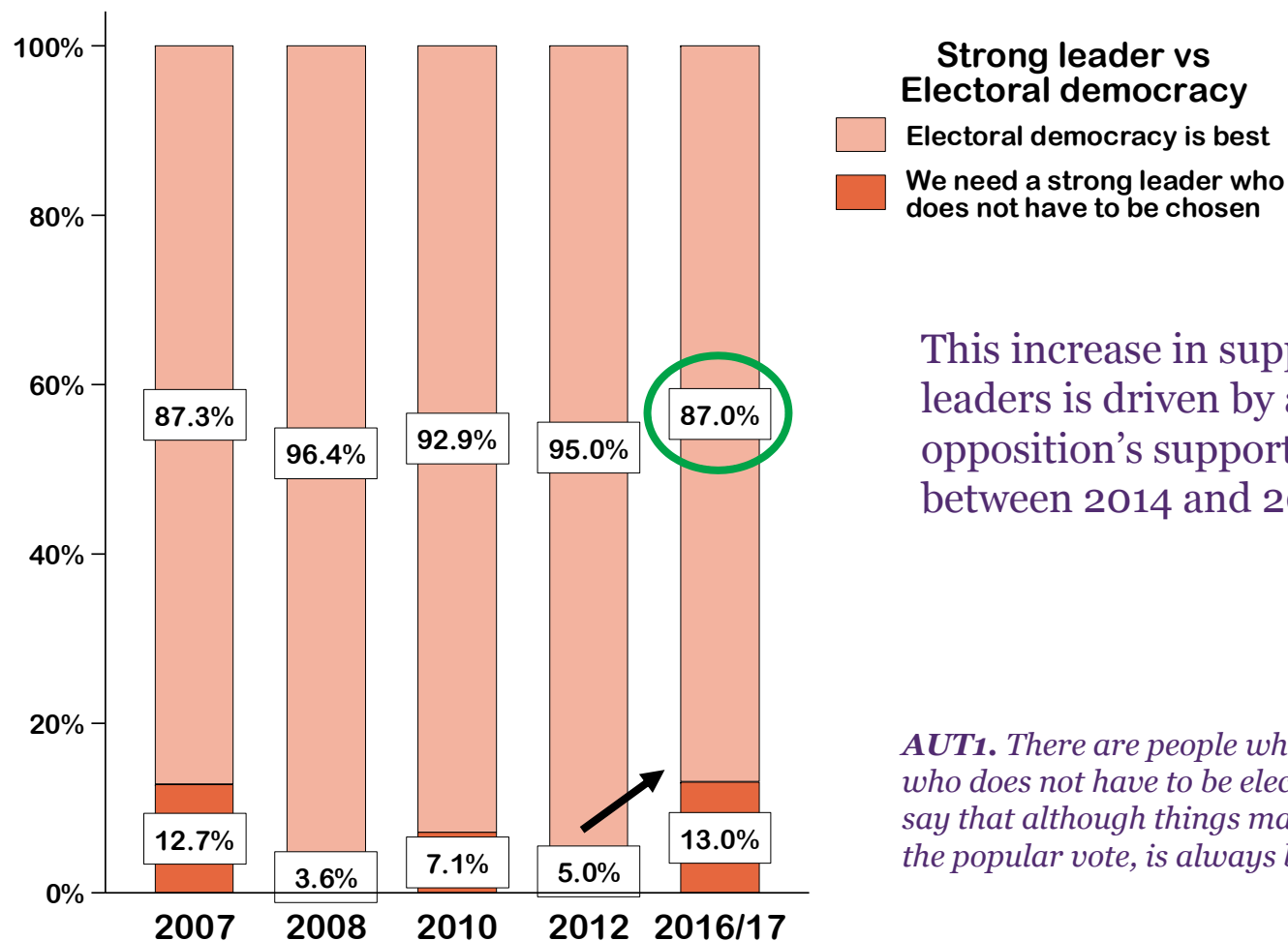
Support for coups is higher among opposition supporters in 2016/17

*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 under the following circumstances?*

**JC10.** When there is a lot of crime.

**JC13.** When there is a lot of corruption.

# Although the vast majority of Venezuelans prefer an electoral democracy, support for an unelected strong leader more than doubled between 2012 and 2016/17

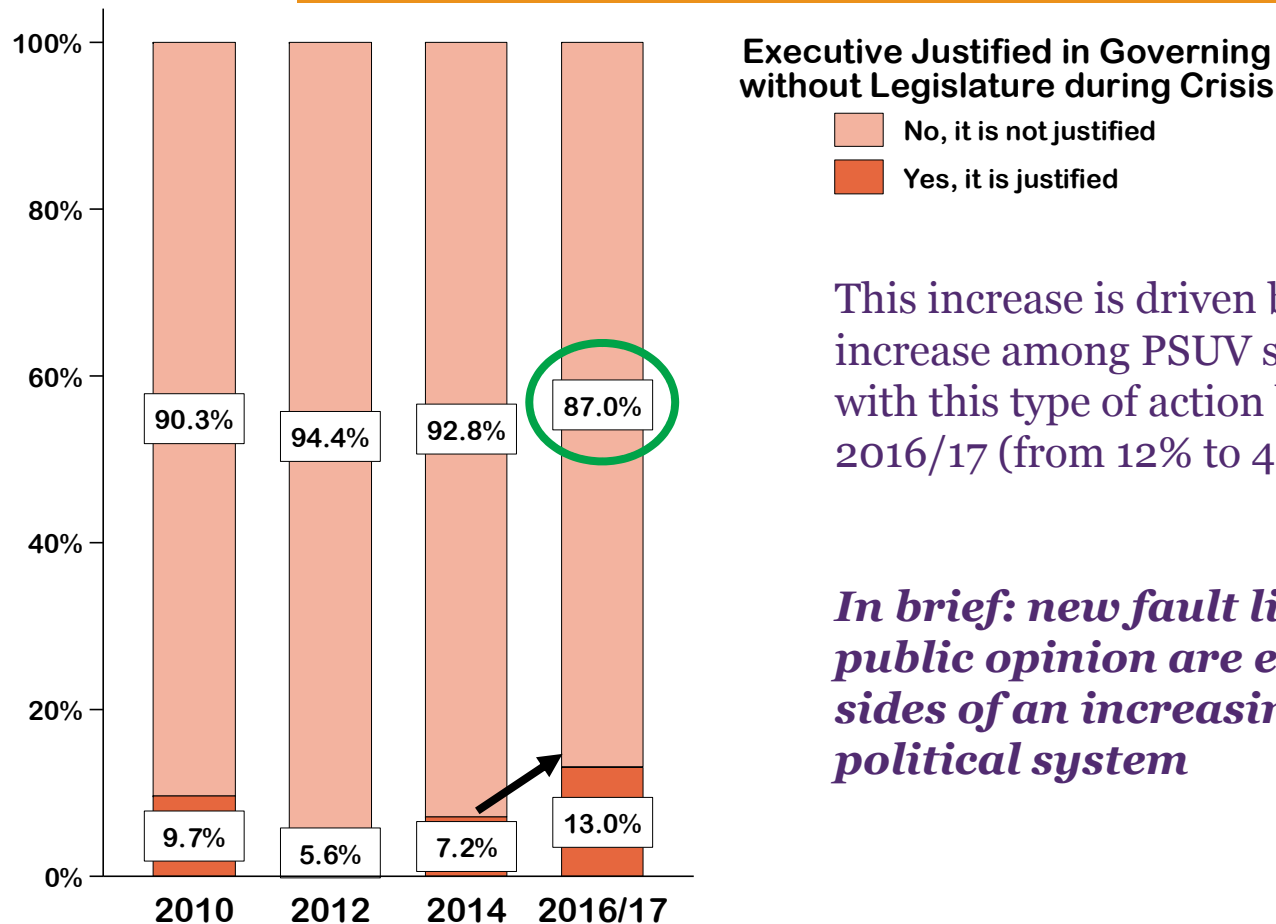


This increase in support for an unelected leaders is driven by a significant decline in the opposition's support of electoral democracy between 2014 and 2016/17 (from 98% to 88%).

*AUT1. There are people who say that we need a strong leader who does not have to be elected by the vote of the people. Others say that although things may not work, electoral democracy, or the popular vote, is always best. What do you think?*

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

Although the vast majority of Venezuelans do not think it is justified to close the National Assembly in times of crisis, the percent that do justify this action has increased in 2016/17



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, VEN 2007-2016/17; D1.1

This increase is driven by a significant increase among PSUV supporters who agree with this type of action between 2014 and 2016/17 (from 12% to 41%).

*In brief: new fault lines in democratic public opinion are emerging on both sides of an increasingly unstable political system*

**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 National Assembly and govern without the National Assembly?

# Report Credits

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