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2026



POWER FOR THE FEW, INEQUALITY FOR THE MANY

ENADES 2026: Concentration of power, tolerance for inequality, and democracy in Peru

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Research Report

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INDEX

INTRODUCTION 5

1. Tolerance of inequality: The same inequalities, less indignation 6
   1.1 Inequality is not disappearing, it is stagnating 7
   1.2 Intolerance of inequality is not longer the majority view 9

2. Why do we accept inequality? 10
   2.1 Inequality is high, but people feel they have enough money 11
   2.2 Depoliticized inequality: tolerance as an expression of *hortelanismo* 12
   2.3 The myth of the entrepreneur: the discourse triumphed in one-third of the populationón 14
   2.4 The capacityto transform inequality —and who has it 16

3. Economic inequality, a matter of political inequality 18
   3.1 Characterization of political inequality 21
   3.2 Political inequality and economic inequality: evolution and trends 25

4. Final reflections: restoring democratic vitality 28

BIBLIOGRAPHY 34

APPENDIX 37

INTRODUCTION

WHO HAS DECISION-MAKING POWER IN PERU? WHO CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT EVERYONE ELSE'S LIVES? AND WHO IS LEFT OUT OF THESE DECISIONS?

Addressing inequality in Peru means looking beyond how much people have. It also means asking who concentrates power, who can influence public decisions and who has the greatest possibility of making their demands heard. Because economic gaps, differences in access to opportunities and concentration of power are not isolated phenomena: they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

The third edition of the National Survey on Perceptions of Inequalities (in Spanish, ***Encuesta Nacional de Percepción de Desigualdades,* ENADES 2026**), conducted by the Institute of Peruvian Studies (in Spanish, *Instituto de Estudios Peruanos*, IEP) and Oxfam in Peru, helps us understand how people perceive these inequalities in Peru and, especially, how unjust, or even acceptable, they consider them.

Since its first edition, in 2022, **ENADES** has gathered information about how people understand and experience inequalities in Peru. During these years, it has listened to a country that has experienced profound economic changes, an unprecedented pandemic, and years of political instability and social upheaval that revealed deep social and territorial fractures.

Four years later, the question is no longer how unequal the country is, but who has the power to change the situation. This third edition of ENADES was conducted months before the 2026 general elections. It captures the mood of a country under stress that went to the polls[1] after a decade of crisis and uncertainty.

In this edition, ENADES 2026 broadens its approach to inequality by focusing on a key dimension: power. It introduces new questions to explore the relationship between economic and political inequality and, for the first time, examines which groups are perceived to have the greatest influence on Peruvians' everyday lives. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to the debate on the relationship between inequalities and power, and what this means for understanding Peru's democracy.

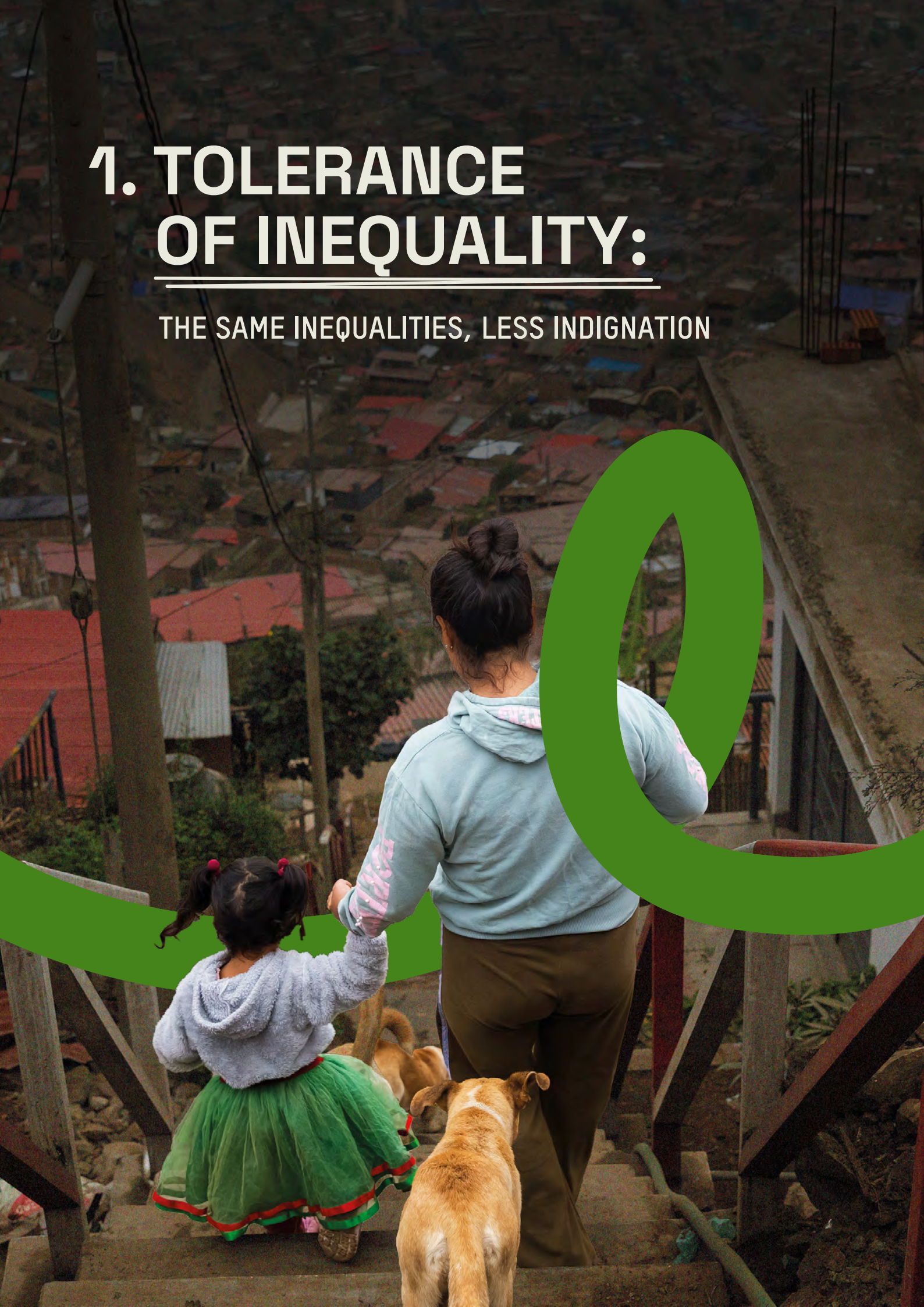
Drawing on the results of ENADES 2026, this report examines inequalities through the lens of power: how it is distributed and how people perceive it.

Economic inequality is also political. It is reproduced through political processes, decisions and mechanisms in which not everyone has the same opportunity to participate, or the same influence. Ensuring that all people can participate in these decisions is part of the democratic promise — a promise that, in Peru today, appears to be broken.

[1] The survey fieldwork was conducted between 28 January and 2 March 2026.

1. TOLERANCE OF INEQUALITY:

THE SAME INEQUALITIES, LESS INDIGNATION

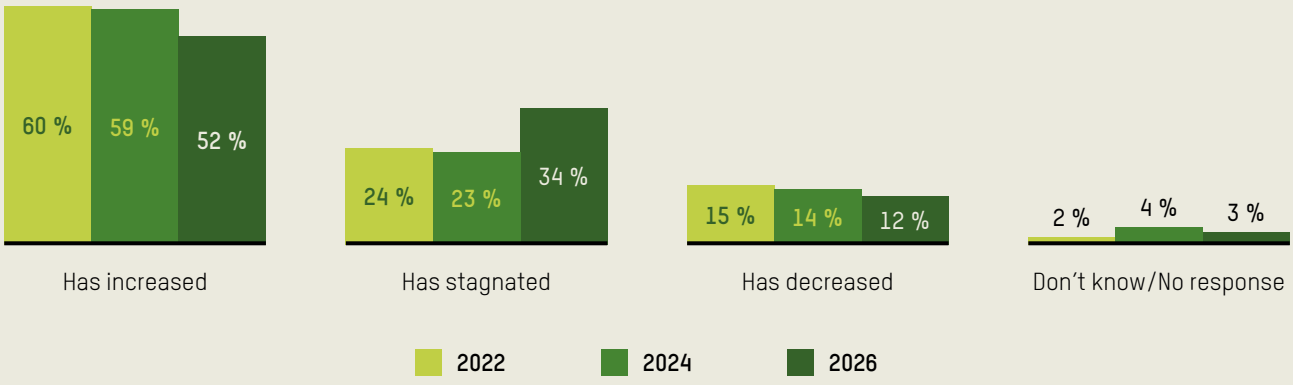


1.1 INEQUALITY IS NOT DISAPPEARING, IT IS STAGNATING

ENADES shows that, in 2026, 72 % of respondents consider Peru to be very or somewhat unequal in economic terms. However, fewer people believe economic inequality has increased over the past two years than in previous editions (51.5 % in 2026 compared to 60 % in 2022). Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who say inequality has remained unchanged rose by 10 points (33.5 % compared to 23.5 % in 2024). Only 12% believe inequality has decreased. **Since 2022, public perceptions suggest that economic inequality is not decreasing: people see it as either increasing or remaining unchanged. The most notable shift has been the growing perception that inequality is stagnating**.

FIGURE 1 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR (2022-2026)

In the past two years, do you believe that the difference between rich and poor in Peru ...? [Read options]



According to Peru's National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (in Spanish, *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática*, INEI), the Gini coefficient[2] has followed a steady downward trend over the past two decades. However, this measure has limitations in capturing the incomes of the country's richest (see Box 1). When estimates are adjusted to account for this, a different picture emerges: rather than a steady decline, inequality between 2004 and 2025 appears to have **stagnated at high levels, alongside a strong concentration of income in the hands of a rich few** (see Figure 2). These findings align with the people's perceptions captured by ENADES .

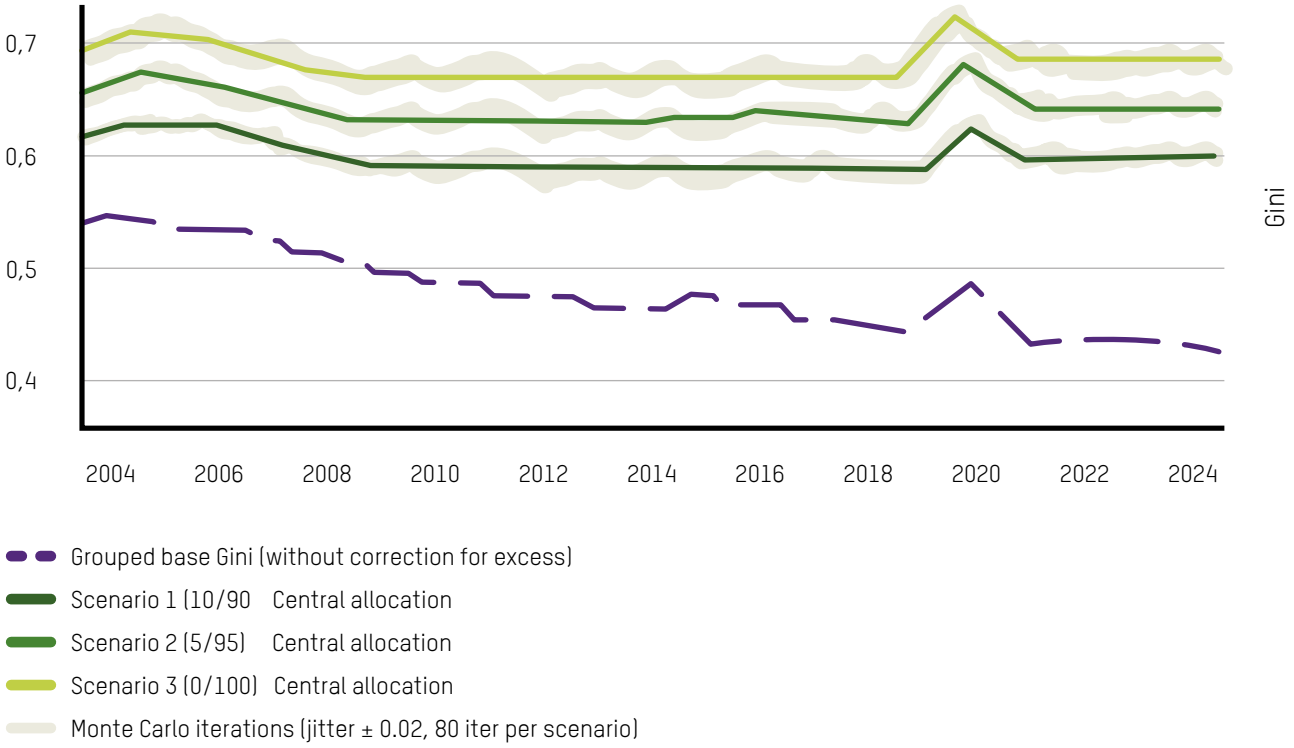
[2] Calculates economic inequality by measuring the degree of income concentration within a territory or population group, where zero (0) represents perfect equality and one (1), complete inequality. In Peru, the INEI uses data from the National Household Survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Hogares*, ENAHO).

The concentration of wealth and income illustrates the scale of inequality in Peru. According to the *World Inequality Lab* (2026), Peru has the second-highest concentration of income in the hands of the richest 0.1 percent[3]. The richest 1 % of Peruvians captured 42 % of all new wealth created between 2019 and 2025, while the poorest 50 % got barely 1.4 %[4]. The distance between extremes is even more striking when comparing average wealth: USD 6,201 for a person in the bottom 50 %, compared to USD 29,768,536 for someone in the richest 0.1 %. On average, a person in the richest 0.1 % holds 4,800 times more wealth than someone in the poorest 50 %.

BOX 1. THE REVISED GINI

Alarco et al. (2019) argue that the official Gini suffers from an underestimate of income in the upper deciles and fails to capture income from property. They therefore propose correcting the official Gini, grouped by deciles, by accounting for the difference between gross household disposable income (INEI, 2025a) and the total captured by ENAHO. Oxfam replicated this methodology using three scenarios (see annex). Even under the most conservative scenario (Scenario 1), this measurement — far from showing the steady decline reported by the official calculation — shows persistently high inequality, with a critical spike during the pandemic and a slow recovery afterward.

FIGURE 2. CORRECTED GINI USING METHOD OF ALARCO ET AL. 2004-2025



Source: ENAHO and INEI National Accounts. Lines: Monte Carlo iterations (80 per scenario, jitter ±0.02) for allocating the remainder. The baseline Gini is calculated from monetary income grouped by decile, before adding the remainder.

[3] World Inequality Lab. (2026). World Inequality Database. Retrieved 16 September 2026. https://wid.world/country/peru

[4] World Inequality Lab. (2026). World Inequality Database 2019-2025. Retrieved 16 September.

1.2 INTOLERANCE OF INEQUALITY IS NOT LONGER THE MAJORITY VIEW



Inequality is stagnating, while public tolerance of it is increasing. In 2026, 52% of respondents considered economic inequality[5] to be very serious, down from 58 % in 2024. The shift is even more pronounced when people are asked whether inequality is acceptable. **In 2024, 50.8 % considered it unacceptable; today, that figure has fallen to 37.6 %. Those who consider inequality abusive and unacceptable are no longer in the majority**. One-third of respondents consider inequality acceptable, suggesting that it is increasingly seen as a normal or expected feature of society rather than an exception.

Fewer people expressing indignation about inequality does not necessarily mean they accept it without question. But it does suggest that fewer now consider it unacceptable. This shift comes despite widespread recognition of the problem: in 2026, more than half of respondents (57 %) said the gap between rich and poor is too large; while 46 % said that not everyone has the same opportunities to escape poverty. **In short, people recognize that inequality is substantial, but are increasingly tolerating it**.

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

- Since 2024, around half the population has considered inequality between men and women to be very or somewhat serious, while the other half has considered it slightly serious or not serious.
- Since 2024, 53 % of respondents have consistently described inequality between white and non-white people as slightly serious or not serious. The share of people who consider this inequality very serious has also broadly remained unchanged .
- Economic and territorial inequalities are seen as more serious. Since 2024, more than 50% of respondents have said that where a person grows up is very important in determining their chances of accessing better opportunities in life.

[5] The question was: How serious is inequality between rich and poor?



2. WHY DO WE ACCEPT INEQUALITY?

2.1 INEQUALITY IS HIGH, BUT PEOPLE FEEL THEY HAVE ENOUGH MONEY



The perception that inequalities are less serious coincides with a more positive outlook on the present and future economic situation. In 2026, **more people said** their income was sufficient (53 %, up from 44 % in 2024)[6], and more felt they were better off economically than their parents had been at the same age (66 %, up from 60 % in 2024). This optimism extends to the next generation: **eight in 10 people believe their children will be better off economically by the time they reach their parents' current age**[7]. Perceptions of inequality in access to employment have also declined, from 52% in 2024 to 47% in 2026.

This sense of economic progress comes amid a partial recovery in incomes, but persistent economic vulnerability. Monetary poverty fell from 27.6 % in 2024 to 25.7 % in 2025[8]: a modest improvement, but still well above the 20.2 % recorded in 2019[9]. Meanwhile, 32.8 % of the population is in a situation of monetary vulnerability, meaning that an adverse event —such as an illness, fine, or emergency — could push them into poverty[10]. Monetary vulnerability increased by one percentage point compared with 2024[11], leaving approximately 11.4 million people at risk of falling into poverty. Overall, nearly 60 % of Peruvians are in a situation of poverty or vulnerability. The economic improvement does not mean that precarious structural conditions are a thing of the past.

[6] This figure increased even in rural areas: in 2024, 75 % said their household income was insufficient; in 2026, 58 % said it was insufficient.

[7] In the 2022 ENADES and the ENADES 2024, the following question was asked: "How do you think the economic situation will be for your minor children when they are adults?" In 2024, 11 % indicated their situation would be worse; in 2026, that figure dropped to 5 %. Overall, there is less pessimism with regard to children's future situation.

[8] See INEI, 2025b.

[9] The poverty rate reaches 23.4 % in the urban area and rises to 35.5 % in the rural area. In both areas, however, the poverty rate is lower than in 2024: by 1.4 percentage points in the urban area and 3.8 in the rural area.

[10] This monetary vulnerability reaches 47.2 % in the rural area and 29.4 % in the urban area.

[11] In the rural area, economic vulnerability rose by 2.6 percentage points compared to the 2024 figure.

2.2 DEPOLITICIZED INEQUALITY:
TOLERANCE AS AN EXPRESSION OF *HORTELANISMO*



According to ENADES 2026, a majority of Peruvians no longer consider inequality unacceptable. When something is no longer seen as a problem, it is less likely to be perceived as unjust; it loses its power to mobilize public opinion. Inequalities become politically relevant when they are perceived as unjust[12] —that is, when they are no longer attributed to individual circumstances, but recognized as the result of political decisions, institutions and power relations. Only then do they become a matter of public debate.

As Alberto Vergara explains, drawing on an opinion piece by a former Peruvian president[13], "*hortelanismo*" involves exploiting a country's resources to attract large-scale capital investment, while subordinating the State and its institutions to the economy. This perspective prioritizes economic growth at the expense of a shared public agenda[14], and frames the country's main problem not as institutional weakness, the nature of its civic bonds or incomplete national integration, but as the existence of "idle assets" that have yet to be turned into wealth. *Hortelanismo* therefore promotes the illusion that the economy and politics can (or even should) operate independently, as though neither affects the other. From this standpoint, economic inequality is stripped of its political significance.

This discourse has taken root in a sector of Peru's political class[15] that points to the country's macroeconomic achievements over the past 20 years: average annual growth of more than 4 % between 2006 and 2024[16], low public debt[17] and rising international reserves[18], among others. Yet this narrative has clear limitations . First, despite a commodity price supercycle[19], macroeconomic performance fell short of its potential[20] (efficiency limitations). Second, macroeconomic gains **did not translate into significant economic improvements for the population as a whole** (structural limitations). Finally, while the economy appeared to follow an upward trajectory, Peru has experienced almost constant political crisis since 2016, with eight presidents in ten years (institutional limitations).

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[12] Rosanvallon, P. (2011). *La société des égaux*.

[13] Alan García governed Peru between 1985 and 1990, and for a second time between 2006 and 2011. During his second term, he wrote an opinion piece, "El síndrome del perro del hortelano" ("Dog in the manger syndrome"), in which he argued that there are resources that are idle because of the law of the dog in the manger ("if I don't use it, no one can use it"), and which the market should leverage, because with major investment in the long run they could create jobs. He died by suicide in 2019 when police arrived at his home to arrest him as preventive detention by court order in the Odebrecht corruption case (see https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-47967534)

[14] According to Vergara (2023), the republican agenda that must be reactivated to move beyond our "half-hearted republics" implies repoliticizing inequality, effective participation in the public sphere, solid institutions and an egalitarian political community.

[15] Vergara, A. (2023). *Repúblicas defraudadas: ¿Puede América Latina escapar de su atasco?*

[16] Banco Central de Reserva del Perú . (s. f.). BCRPData.

[17] Salazar Castellanos, D. (2026). Brecha de la deuda pública se amplía: estos países de América Latina están entre los más endeudados del mundo, *Bloomberg Línea*.

[18] BCRP. (2026). *Resumen Informativo Semanal. 09 July 2026*, p. xviii.

[19] In 2025, mining exports reached "a record US$ 61.849 billion" and represented 66 % of total Peruvian exports, according to information from the National Society of Mining, Petroleum and Energy (*Sociedad Nacional de Minería, Petróleo y Energía*, SNMPE), (Alarcón, L., 2026). Meanwhile, the National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration (*Superintendencia Nacional de Aduanas y de Administración Tributaria*) (Sunat, 2026) registered definitive exports totaling USD 87.556 billion n 2025.

[20] De Echave, J., & Huamán, A. (2025). Tributación, cosas del Orinoco.

In its pursuit of extractivism-led growth, foreign investment and deregulation, *hortelanismo* justifies subordinating political and civic concerns that are essential to sustainable and inclusive development. Within this logic, protest and opposition are treated as obstacles to be confronted. The human cost of challenging this model has been high: between 2006 and 2020, Peru's Ombudsman's Office (in Spanish, *Defensoría del Pueblo*) recorded 289 deaths in social conflicts, the vast majority in regions with high levels of mining activity[21]. Yet ***hortelanismo* is sustained not only through direct confrontation with those who resist it, but also by becoming normalized — learned, inherited and defended**.

"BAGUAZO": WHEN *HORTELANISMO* IS CONFRONTED

In 2009, 33 people died at the so-called "Devil's Curve" ("Curva del Diablo") in Amazonas because of a confrontation between police and the Indigenous and mestizo population. The government was promoting series of legislative decrees that favored the investment of extractive capital in Indigenous territories. The Awajún and Wampis population rejected them on the grounds that there had been no guarantee of their right to prior consiultation and because the decrees could affect various rights, including the right to land and territory. For 50 days, Indigenous leaders maintained a long dialogue process with the State, with no solution. Congress rescheduled the vote on the decrees and the government ordered the removal of protesters from the highway that the people had blocked, which provoked the fatal confrontation.

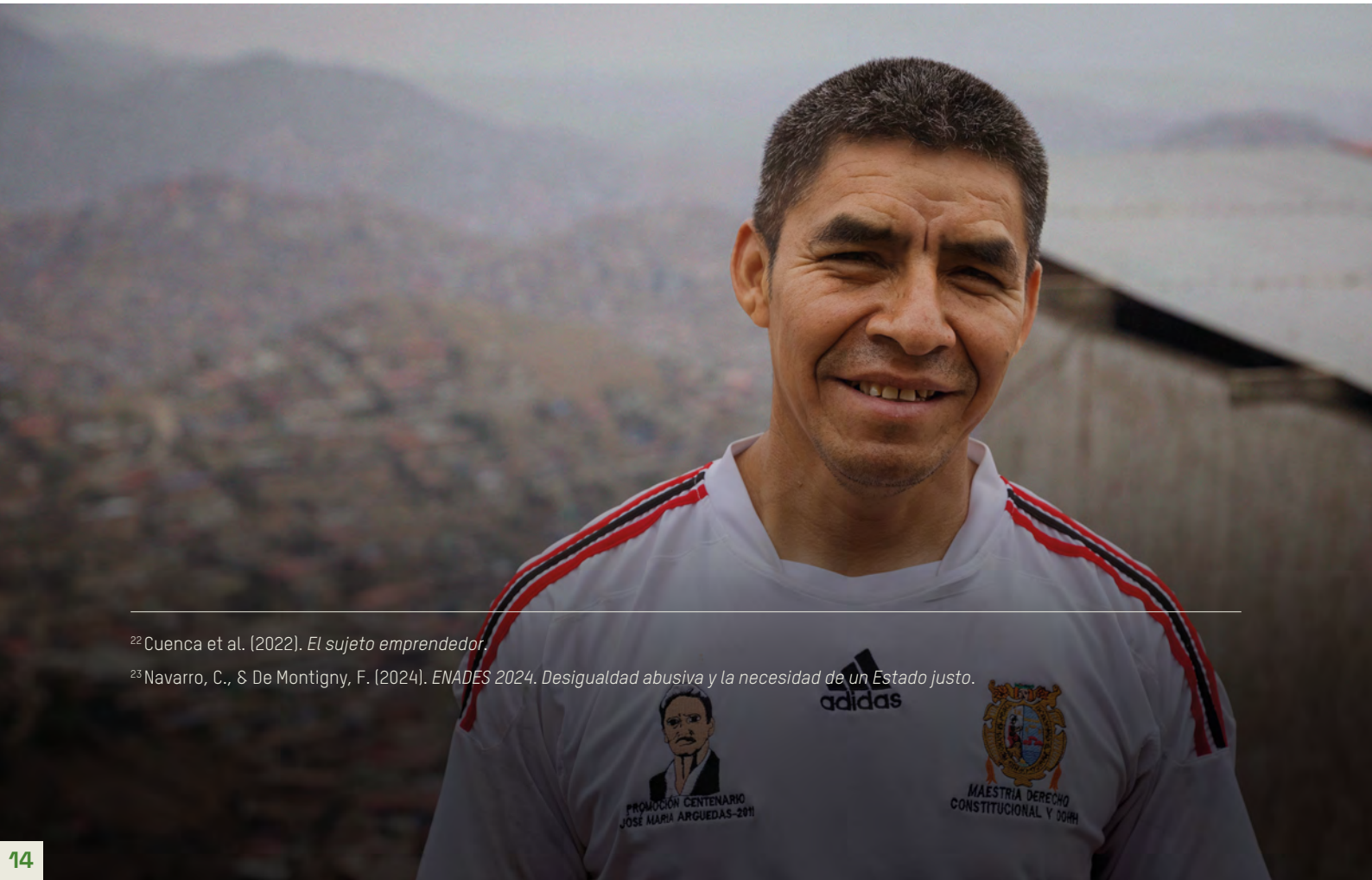
[21] Flores, C. (2020). Sostenibilidad minera y los muertos y heridos por conflictos sociales frente al bicentenario.

2.3 THE MYTH OF THE ENTREPRENEUR:
A DISCOURSE EMBRACED BY ONE-THIRD OF THE POPULATION

Hortelanismo depends on weakened public institutions and civil society. When people understand inequalities as a political issue, rather than something to be endured, they challenge its foundations. *Hortelanismo* relies on people who are not collectively organized and on inequality stripped of its political meaning. It also benefits from weakened public institutions, whose loss of credibility undermines the social contract and drives individuals to seek solutions on their own.

The entrepreneur emerges as someone who can overcome adversity through individual effort and "get ahead" in a society where opportunities are unequally distributed[22]. Rather than denying inequalities, this approach may reflect the need to find individual solutions when collective action or public institutions lose credibility. The problem arises when this capacity to adapt shifts attention away from the structural conditions that produce inequalities —and from the question of who is responsible for changing them.

Individual effort has become a way of making sense of inequalities, and the means by which people are expected to overcome it. As ENADES 2024[23] noted, the "myth of the entrepreneur" frames escaping poverty and accumulating wealth as matters of individual responsibility, pushing structural barriers and the role of the State into the background. **In 2026, 37 % of respondents believe that anyone who works hard will become rich**, and **38 % believe that people are poor because they squander opportunities**. Moreover, **34 % believe that everyone in Peru has the same opportunities to escape poverty**. These findings suggest that the myth of the entrepreneur has taken root in one-third of the population.

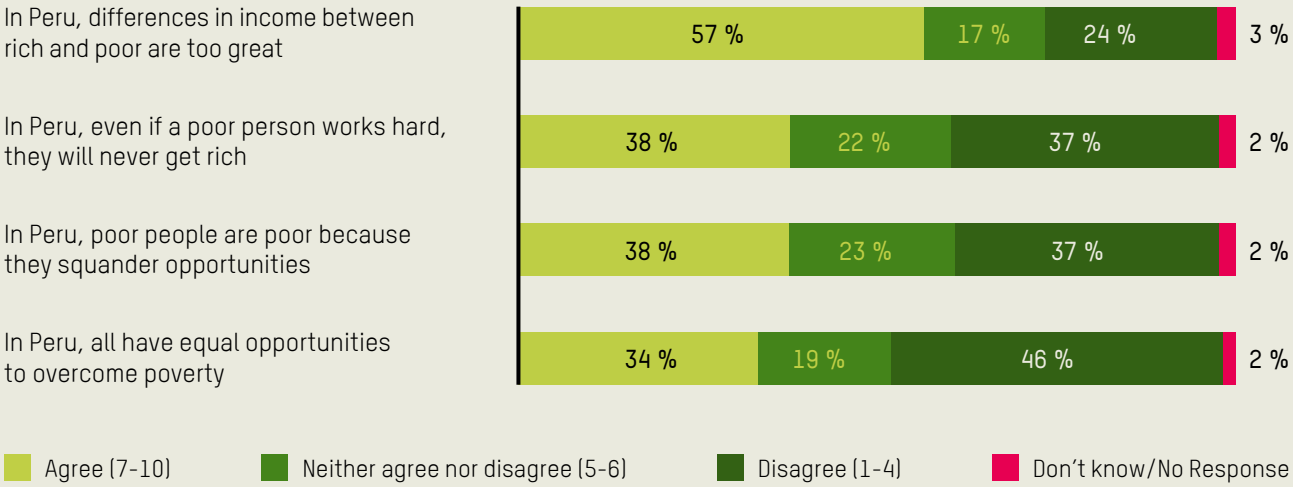


[22] Cuenca et al. (2022). *El sujeto emprendedor.*

[23] Navarro, C., & De Montigny, F. (2024). *ENADES 2024. Desigualdad abusiva y la necesidad de un Estado justo.*

FIGURE 3. STATEMENTS ABOUT INEQUALITY 2026

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "Strongly disagree" and 10 means "Strongly agree," how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Amid successive crises, precarious economic conditions and declining trust in public institutions[24], people have learned to survive and adapt pragmatically. When institutional responses fall short, people rely on their own resources, family networks, and forms of organization to navigate everyday uncertainty[25]. Fundraising barbecues known as *polladas*, community food centers and communal kitchens (in Spanish, *ollas comunes*) are examples of community care initiatives[26] that help people cope in times of need. In this context, **greater tolerance of inequality does not necessarily mean that people consider it just. It may rather reflect declining expectations that politics can change the situation**. Inequality ceases to be seen as an exceptional condition requiring a response from the State and becomes another reality people must learn to live with —particularly when it persists without significant change.

[24] According to LAPOP Lab and the Institute of Peruvian Studies (2026), in 2025, only 7 % of the population said it trusted Congress, and 42 % believed that the country's politicians receive money from criminal groups

[25] Martuccelli, D. (2015). *Lima y sus arenas. Poderes sociales y jerarquías culturales*.

[26] Community-level care is work distributed through different forms of local organization to respond to the needs of populations and territories in a context-specific manner. In Martelotte, L., Mascheroni, P., & Rulli, M. (2023). *Una mirada crítica a las experiencias comunitarias de cuidados*.

2.4 THE CAPACITYTO TRANSFORM INEQUALITY —AND WHO HAS IT



Adapting to inequality is not the same as legitimizing it, but is a matter of learning to live with it. It is therefore crucial to understand not only why tolerance for inequality increases, but also **what resources exist for transforming it and how unequally they are distributed**. If the possibilities for transforming social conditions also depend on the ability to influence public decisions, understanding inequality means asking ourselves who has more power to change the rules that organize the country's economic, social and political life.

PERCEIVED POWER

A large majority of Peruvians do not believe they can influence decisions in their country. Only 27% think people have the power to do so. This perception **is consistent** with the fairly widespread view that power is concentrated in the hands of a few. Barely 6% believe Peru is governed for the benefit of the country as a whole, while **84 % believe that a few powerful groups govern for their own benefit**.

Who are those powerful groups? **Half of respondents identify political actors, while one-third point to economic actors**. Government and State authorities rank well behind, at 21 %. People thus associate power less with public institutions than with specific political and economic actors who concentrate decision-making power and influence —and whom people perceive as using that influence for their own benefit.

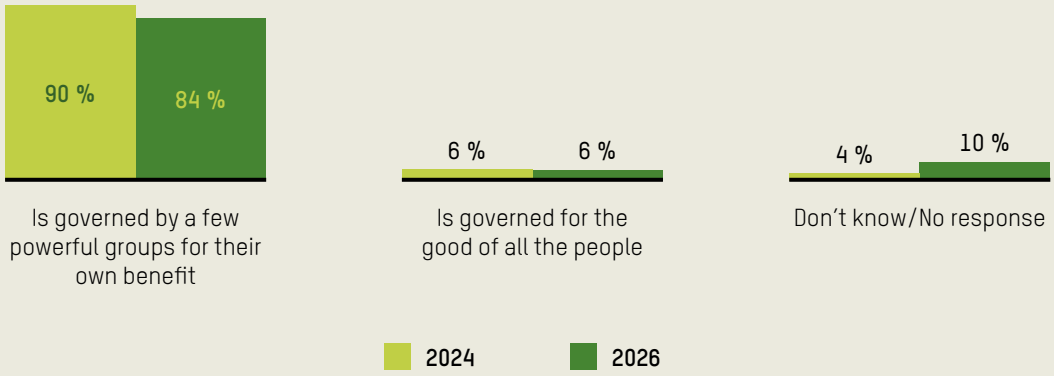
Taxes are the backbone of the relationship between people and the State: they finance the protection of rights through public policies and the provision of services. Through the fiscal pact, citizens pay taxes and the State channels public spending toward collectively defined priorities[27]. Nevertheless, **77 % and 76 % of the population believe that the wealthiest persons and large corporations, respectively, find a way to pay less than they should**. If there is also a perception that these actors are among those who govern, the sensation of impunity becomes generalized. The social pact breaks down, undermined by those who govern or those who influence them. Political power is captured[28].

[27] For more information, see Grupo de Justicia Fiscal (2026).

[28] Systematic processes of the capture of institutions have been widely theorized and documented: when certain economic groups develop systematic mechanisms for influencing key areas of the State and maintaining their hegemony. See Durand (2017); Crabtree & Durand (2017).

FIGURE 4. THE COUNTRY IS GOVERNED BY POWERFUL GROUPS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT

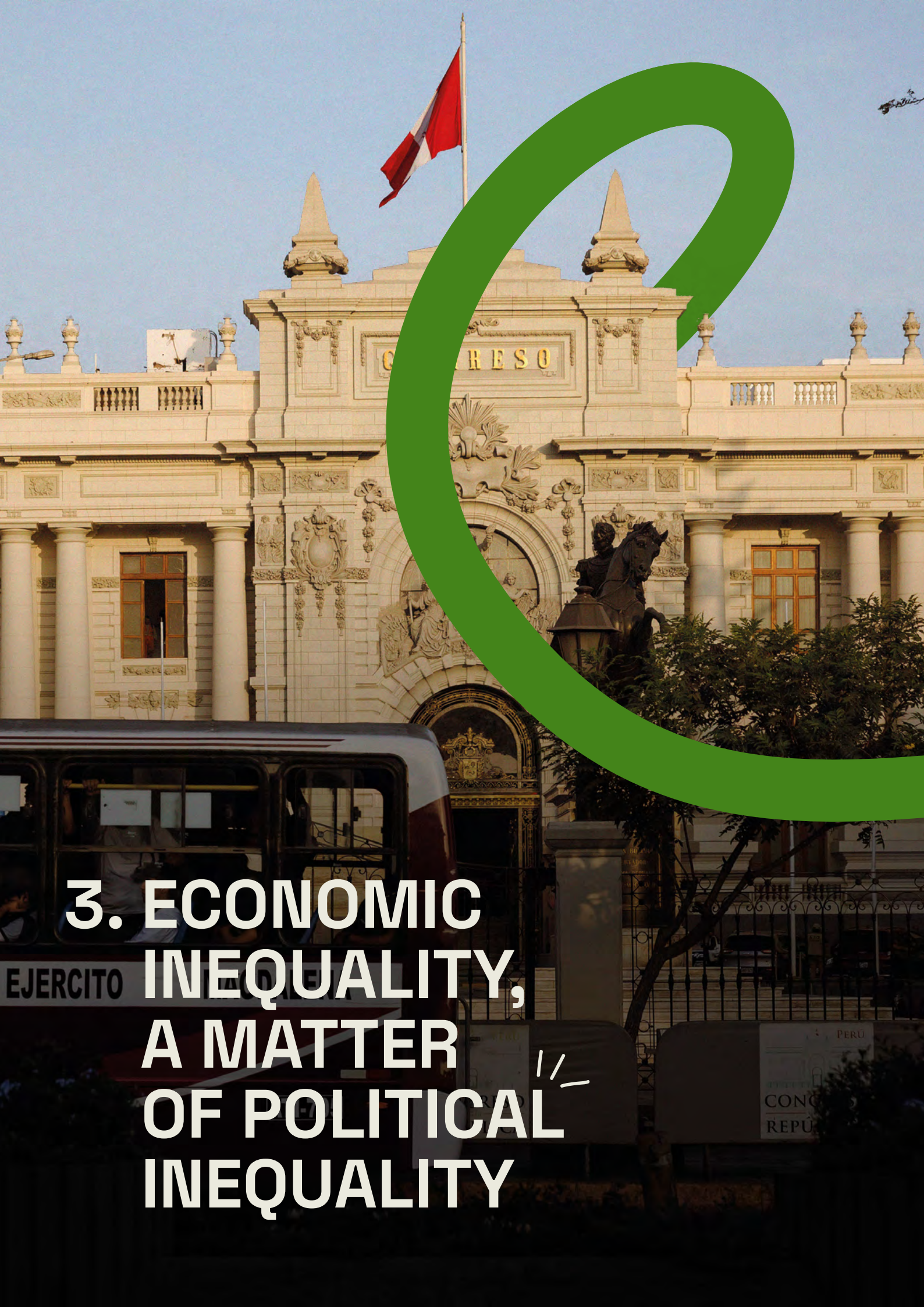
In general terms, would you say that Peru...? [Read options]



TAX BREAKS: AN EXPRESSION OF CONCENTRATED ECONOMIC POWER

In 2022, the Peruvian Congress extended the period of validity of tax breaks for companies with exploratory mining projects that had been benefiting from tax exemptions since 2003. The wealth of Peru's only billionaire, who is associated with the mining sector, has increased by 75 % in real terms in the past year, and by 285 % over the past five years[29].

[29] World Inequality Lab. (2026). World Inequality Database. Retrieved 16 September 2026.



3. ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, A MATTER OF POLITICAL INEQUALITY

Citizens recognize that economic inequality is high, yet still tolerate it, most likely because they feel they have little power to transform it. **The high level of political inequality, characterized by unequal distribution of the power to influence decisions of public interest, limits expectations for reversing the inequalities that citizens confront**. This unequal distribution of power reproduces more social and economic exclusion:

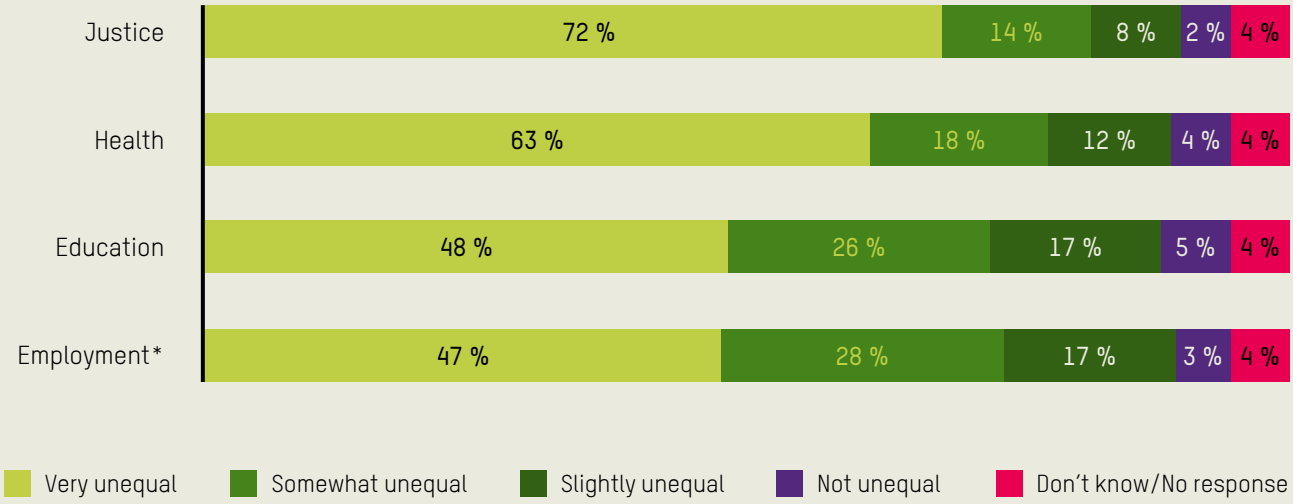
> More than economic inequality, we suffer from an inequitable social, political and economic order, in which citizens do not relate to one another on the equal footing that the law of the republic should ensure, nor do they enjoy comparable degrees of freedom, but they operate within hierarchical structures established by different traditions and practices. As a result, my professional standing is worth less than that of those who have a party membership card, and my vote is discarded by some patronage machine, and public school will not help me out of poverty, and doctors are concentrated in clinics that I only see on television, and turning to the courts is an exercise in futility (...) and the pharmaceutical lobby hampers the expansion of generic medicines (...)[30].

Inequality is manifested in all areas of social life. With figures similar to those of 2024, without significant statistical changes, the population considers access to justice (72 %), health (63 %) and education (48 %) to be highly unequal.

[30] Vergara (2023), p. 27.

FIGURE 5. INEQUALITY IN ACCESS TO JUSTICE, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

How unequal is Peruvians' access to...? [Read options]



*In the 2024 ENADES, the question was: "How unequal is access to work?" In 2026, "work" was changed to "employment".

Based on these results, Oxfam explores the relationship between economic inequality and political inequality in an effort to understand the increase in tolerance for inequality in the country. What does political inequality look like in Peru? How are economic inequality and political inequality related? What role does democracy play in shaping their relationship? To respond, the statistical analysis in this document covers the period 2000-2025 — that is, since the country returned to a democratic political system.

3.1 CHARACTERIZATION OF POLITICAL INEQUALITY



Political inequality, understood as the unequal distribution of the capacity to influence decisions of public interest, has two components: inequality of voice and inequality of response. The former refers to degrees of political participation and representation. The latter refers to the symbolic response (recognition, formal rights) and those expressed through formal or informal policies[31]. The literature offers several approaches to measuring these dimensions[32].

In this document, we use indicators related to **civic voice and equality**[33], which measure the degree of and trends in effective engagement and use of voice in the public sphere: openness of civic space and capacity for collective organization, at the aggregate level. These indicators are grouped in two dimensions. First, ***openness of civic space***, which is measured through three sub-attributes of the "participation" dimension in the Global State of Democracy Index (GSoD)[34]: participaction, local democracy and civic engagement; and through the CIVICUS Monitor's categorization of civic space[35]. And second, ***effective participation***, which is measured by means of five indicators used by the V-Dem Institute[36]: Participatory component, Civil society engagement, Core civil society, Engaged society and Civil society organizations participatory environment. Taken together, these indicators[37] show a pronounced drop in political equality in Peru since 2020.

In the ***openness of civic space*** dimension, the indicators regress in the 2020-2024 period: participation falls by 12 %; civic commitment by 14.4%; and most seriously, local democracy by 20.1 %. This latter drop is concentrated almost entirely between 2023 and 2024 (-21.3 %), the greatest annual decrease in this indicator since 1975 (see Figure 6). Moreover, according to CIVICUS Monitor, Peru's civic space shifted from obstructed in 2018 to repressed in 2024[38], the second-lowest category on its scale.

[31] See Kjerulf Dubrow, J. (2014), pp.1-2, 18.

[32] There are various conceptual approaches to political inequality. For example, the tradition of equality as access to power according to attributes of the person (Han & Mukherjee, 2021) or the tradition of "unequal democracy," focused on capture of the political response by income (Bartels, 2023; Gilens & Page, 2014). Each tradition provides an approach to one or more of the manifestations of political inequality, and they are more complementary than competitive.

[33] Verba et al. (1995) y Kjerulf Dubrow, J. (2014).

[34] From the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). For more information about the *Global State of Democracy* indices, see Skaaning and Hudson (2026).

[35] This is a digital tool that provides information about the state of civic space and civil liberties in 196 countries.

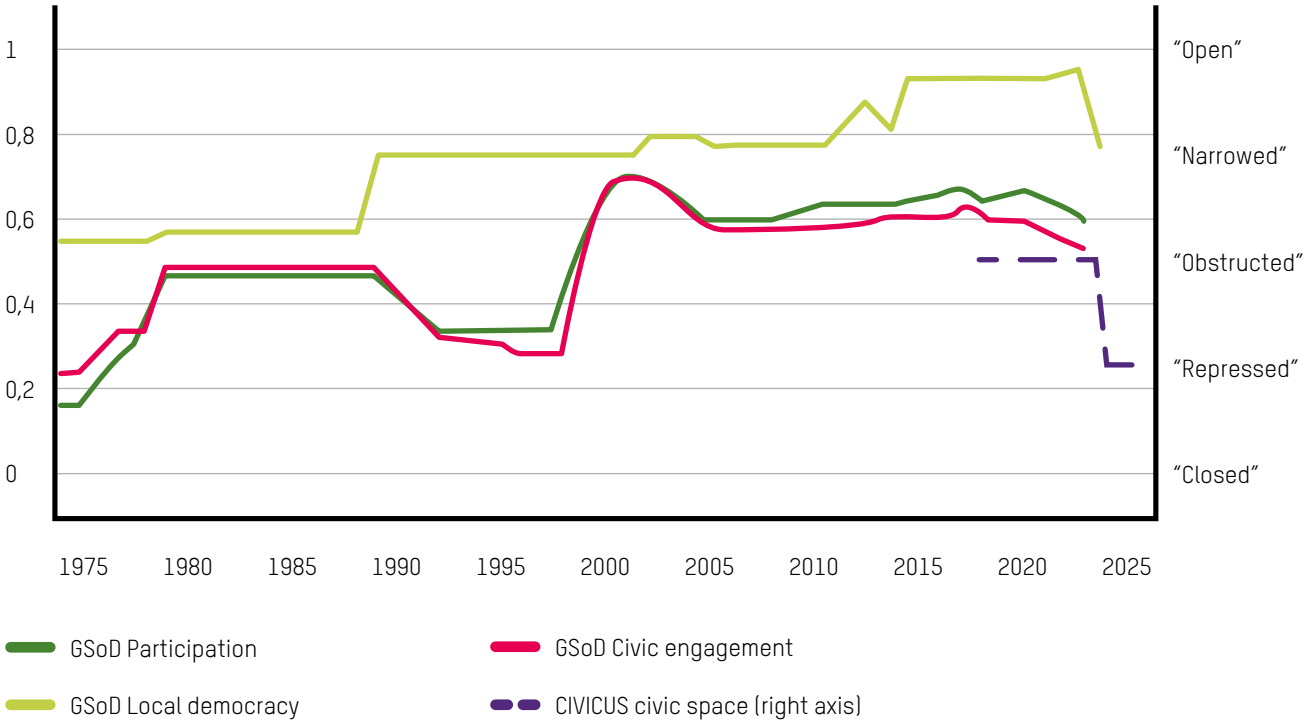
[36] The V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) is an independent research center based at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden). It measures the quality of democracy in the world through a global network of experts.

[37] Although these indicators capture openness or repression of civic space and aggregate participation, they do not manage to measure the distribution of voice by class, ethnic cultural group or territory.

[38] According to CIVICUS Monitor (n. d.), this means that the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly are significantly restricted or at risk of being attacked.

FIGURE 6. OPENNESS OF CIVIC SPACE 1975-2025

Left axis: IDEA GSoD (0-1). Right axis: CIVICUS Monitor (category inverted: Open at the top, Closed at the bottom).



Source: IDEA GSoD 1975 - 2024 and CIVICUS Monitor 2018 - 2025.





The indicators of ***effective participation*** show a similar pattern[39] (see Figure 7). Following a significant increase in all indicators after 2000, there has been been a long period of ups and downs, with a steady decrease from 2018 onwards. The *Core civil society*[40] indicator has declined since 2021. Only the Civil society organizations participatory environment indicator holds steady until 2023, reaching its historical high in 2024. This indicator, however, measures the effective engagement of people in civil society organizations, considering, for example, the emergence of or greater activity by community organizations, such as soup kitchens and neighborhood health committees, which occurred with the COVID-19 crisis and the massive protests of 2020, 2022-2023[41] and 2024[42]. This demonstrates that the population is capable of facing critical circumstances through greater levels of organization. Despite narrowed civic space and institutional weakening, the population finds a way to respond to a context of restriction of its rights.

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[39] The five indicators shown in Figure 7 are parallel measurements of the participation/civil society family. *Participatory component* is an aggregate V-Dem index whose inputs are *Civil society participation, Direct popular vote and Local or regional elections* (whichever of the two is greater). Of the other four indicators shown in this graphic, only *Civil society participation* is a formal input of the index. For more information about the V-Dem indicators and indices, see Coppedge et al. (2026).

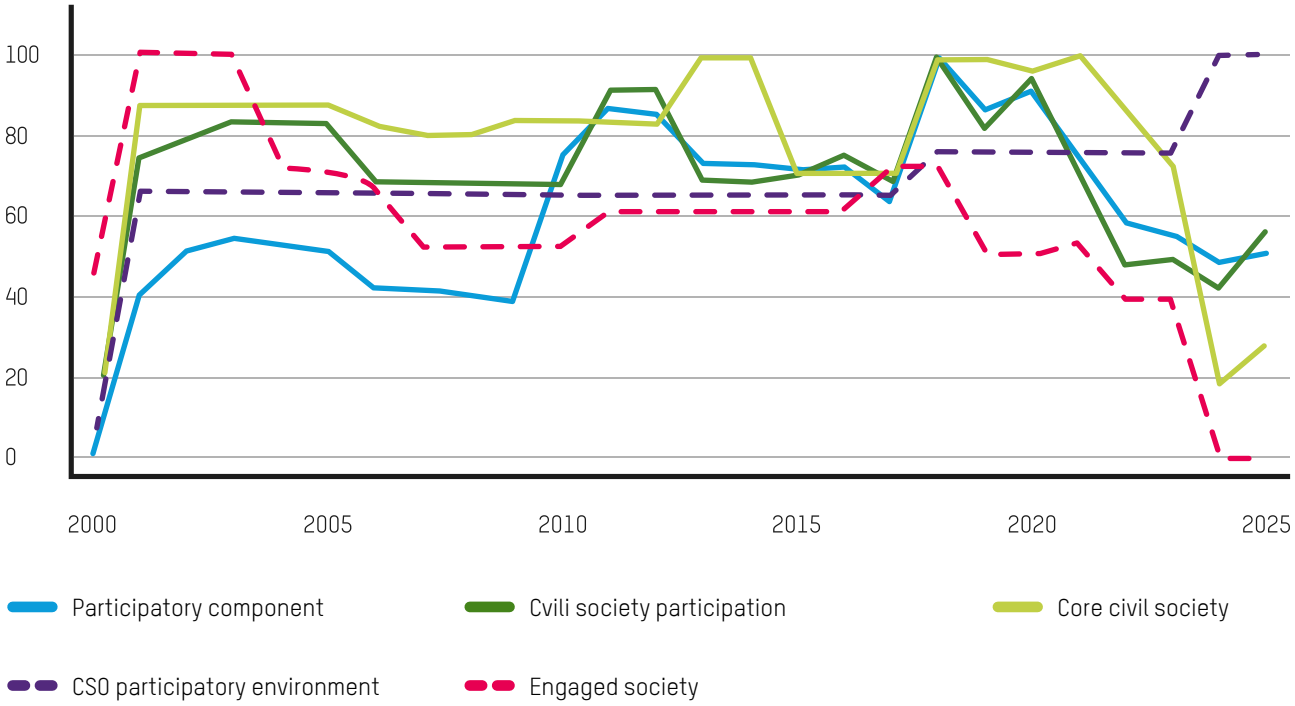
[40] The indicator *Core civil society* refers to nuclear and structural elements that determine the robustness and autonomy of civil society organizations in the face of state control or repression. See Coppedge et al. (2026).

[41] The protests of 2022 and 2023 in Peru began after the removal of former President Pedro Castillo and his replacememt by Dina Boluarte. Fifty people died (Amnesty International, 2024) and 80 % of these deaths occurred in regions with a population of Indigenous or original peoples (Amnesty International, 2023). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR, 2023) has stated that serious human rights violations occurred.

[42] The most important protest that year was the national strike by transportation workers and various unions to demand action by the government and national Congress in the face of a growing rate of extortions, murders for hire and public insecurity.

FIGURE 7. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION V-DEM 2000-2025

Normalized index 0-100 (min-max over the period)



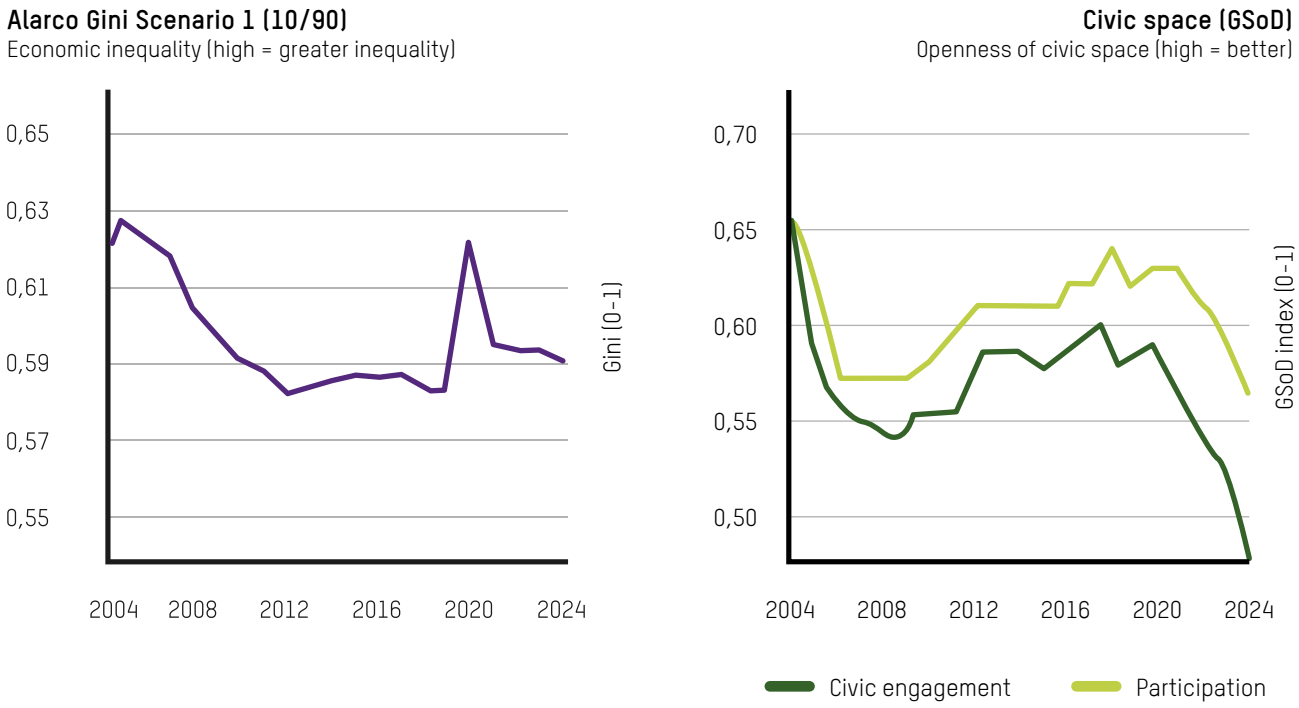
Source: V-Dem v16 (Coppedge et al., 2026). The five indicators are min-max normalized to 0-100 over 2000-2025.

The review of these indicators reveals two interrelated processes. First, a real and widespread deterioration. Since 2018, the majority of indicators of civic space and effective participation through institutional channels drop, some to levels they showed prior to the return to democracy in 2000, and CIVICUS Monitor reclassifies Peru as "repressed". In that area, political inequality increased. Second, and as a response to that narrowing, grassroots organization was activated: involvement in community organizations reached its historical maximum in 2024. With institutional channels for representation and participation blocked, citizens turned to self-organization and collective action to sustain their demands. **A deepening political inequality and citizen response to it are two sides of the same process**.

3.2 POLITICAL INEQUALITY AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY: EVOLUTION AND TRENDS

Economic and political inequalities show a complex relationship during the period analyzed from 2004 to 2025, which cannot be reduced to a shared movement (see Figures 8 and 9[43]). Closure of economic gaps does not automatically translate into a more egalitarian distribution of power or vice versa. Because they are two complex phenomena, with diverse and sometimes contradictory causes, manifestations and effects, they do not respond to each other in an immediate or synchronized manner. Nevertheless, they coexist at alarming levels: economic inequality has stagnated at high levels after a cycle of improvement that petered out around 2013, while political inequality deepened markedly in the past decade, with a visible turning point around 2018.

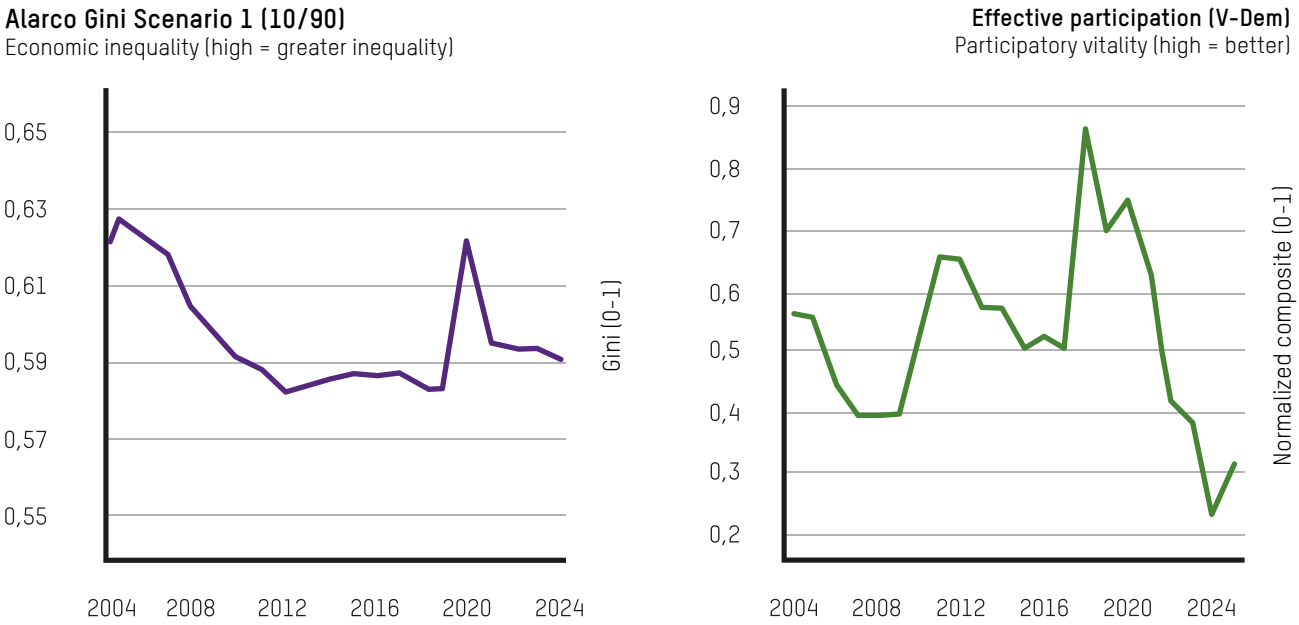
FIGURE 8. CIVIC SPACE (GSOD) AND ALARCO GINI, 2004-2024



Source: Alarco et al. (2019) and IDEA Global State of Democracy (GSoD).
Panels with independent scales; the indicators are not metrically comparable with each other.

[43] Figures 8 and 9 show indicators of civic space and effective participation with the corrected Gini (Alarco et al., 2019) under the most conservative scenario (10/90).

FIGURE 9. EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION (V-DEM) AND ALARCO GINI, 2004-2025



Source: Alarco et al. (2019) and V-Dem v16.
V-Dem composite: average of v2x_partip, v2x_cspart, v2xcs_ccsi, v2csprtcpt and v2dlengage min-max normalized over the period.
Panels with independent scales; the indicators are not metrically comparable with each other.

According to these figures, economic inequality is structurally high and persistent, while indicators of civic space and effective participation show greater variation over time and marked deterioration in recent years. Although the series do not show synchronized movement, it is important to note that high economic inequality coexists with a weakening of channels for participation, representation and exercise of civic voice.

This is a descriptive approach. The figures show trends during the same period, but do not establish causality — that is, that one dimension directly explains the other. They also demonstrate the need for deeper discussion of this relationship, incorporating other factors, such as class, ethnic cultural group and territory,[44] which are fundamental for understanding political inequality in Peru. Nevertheless, the way in which the two phenomena coexist opens discussion about the implications of having high economic inequality and high political inequality simultaneously, as well as about the institutional and democratic conditions under which citizens can influence public decisions that affect the distribution of resources and opportunities.

[44] The measurement of political inequality in this document does not capture distribution of voice by class, ethnic cultural group or territory.





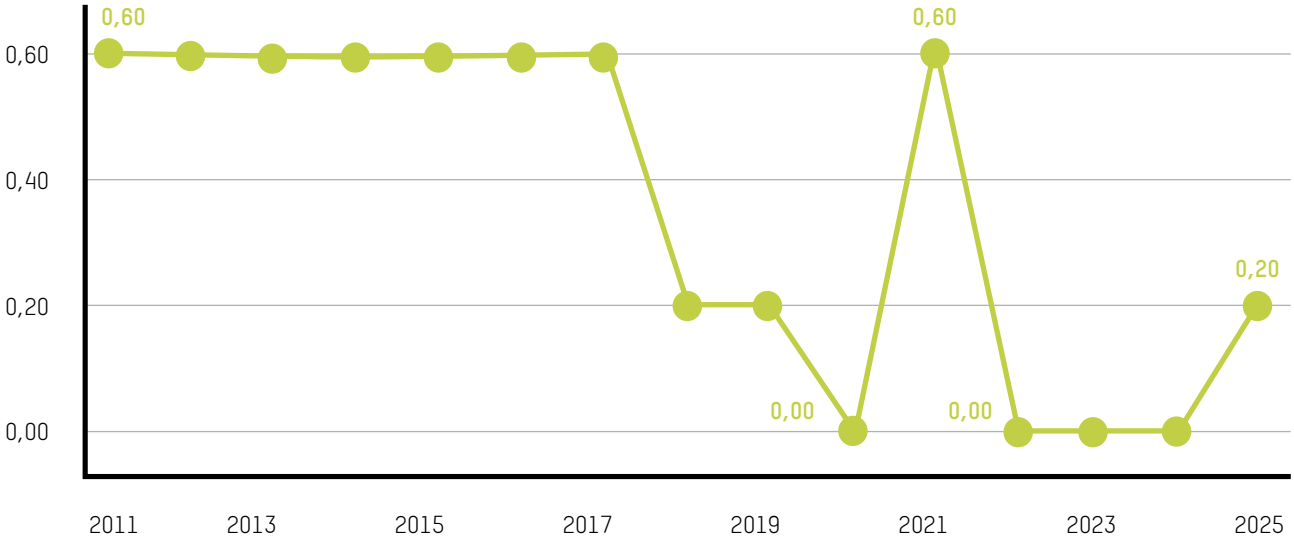
4. FINAL REFLECTIONS:

RESTORING DEMOCRATIC VITALITY

According to the Democracy Index[45], Peru has a hybrid political regime, which combines democratic and authoritarian characteristics with a weakened rule of law, institutions and civic engagement. The Tax Justice Group (*Grupo de Justicia Fiscal*) also identifies a downward trend in democratic vitality[46] between 2011 and 2025, with pronounced deterioration as of 2018 and a new drop since 2021 (see Figure 10). Similarly, the five high-level V-Dem indicators[47] show a sharp deterioration of democracy between 2020 and 2025, with drops of between 18 % and 39 % (See Figure 11). Peru's classification in The Economist's index reflects a longer-term deterioration that has become entrenched in recent years.

These findings coincide with levels of people's satisfaction with democracy. Since 2012, the degree of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Peru has fallen steadily, reaching its lowest levels between 2021 and 2025[48], well below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean.

FIGURE 10. DEMOCRATIC VITALITY INDEX, 2011-2025



Source: Grupo de Justicia Fiscal (2026).

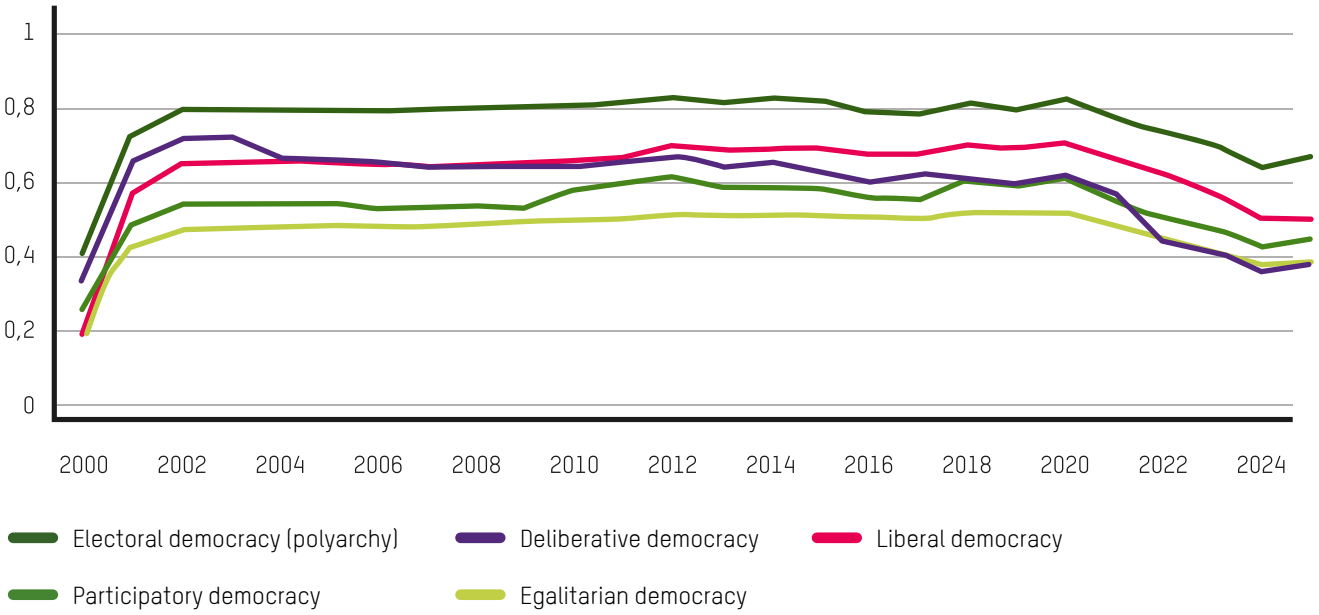
[45] Developed by *The Economist* Intelligence Unit. It is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. In Peru, in the 2024 version of the index, the two categories scoring lowest on a scale of 0 to 10 were political participation and political culture. The former category refers to a system that, among other things, facilitates civic engagement in public debate. Peru ranks above only Cuba, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, and ties with Jamaica, Guatemala and Venezuela. The latter category ranks public support for democracy and political consensus with regard to authoritarian alternatives: in this, the country has one of the lowest scores, ranking higher only than Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay, and tying with Honduras. The 2024 version of the index can be found at https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/

[46] Defined as the variable "*that reflects the effective functioning of democracy through dimensions such as political representation and balance of powers.*" The deterioration of this vitality is expressed in the "*loss of representation, weakness of the Rule of Law, reduction of citizen engagement and occurrence of critical conditions such as presidential vacancies, confrontation between powers of the State and violence in contexts of protest*" (Grupo de Justicia Fiscal, 2026).

[47] The high-level V-Dem indicators are the five main ones that measure the degree of democracy in a country according to five fundamental theoretical principles, reflecting the multiple dimensions of democracy. See Coppedge et al. (2026).

[48] See LAPOP Lab, & Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (2026).

FIGURE 11. HIGH-LEVEL INDICATORS, V-DEM, 2000-2025



Source: V-Dem v16 (Coppedge et al., 2026).



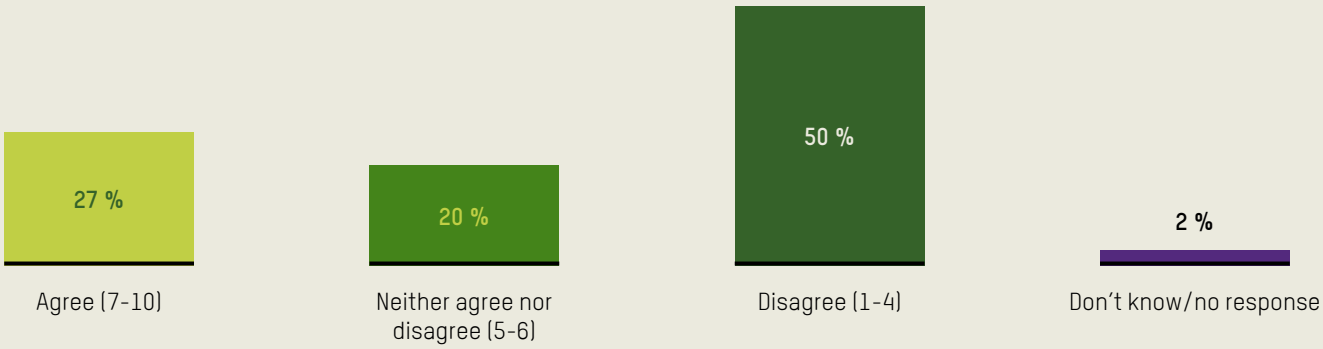
When economic inequality stagnates and political inequality increases, democracy becomes weaker. If democracy is what expands people's ability to exercise power and influence decisions about the common good, its deterioration in recent years does not bode well for the future. For that reason, discussing political and economic inequalities also means discussing democratic vitality.

Democracy assumes a society of equals, with *agents* — that is, citizens capable of exercising rights and liberties and meeting their corresponding obligations[49]. Its functioning rests on fulfillment of this premise. It is an institutionalized commitment[50]: there is no discretionality, citizens accept this condition and the State acts to ensure its fulfillment. The functioning of democracy therefore depends on the relationship between the State and citizens, as well as among the citizens themselves[51]. In democracy, power belongs to the people, the social order rests on the collective will, and pluralism guides the exercise of power[52]. A democratic government responds to the preferences of all its citizens, without political distinctions among them[53].

Both the perceptions and the statistical indicators in this document demonstrate a convergence between objectivity and subjectivity. Economic inequality increases or stagnates, but does not decrease, and highly unequal access to fundamental rights reveals a formal equality that is not real, and a State that fails to fulfill the democratic promise. Meanwhile, there is a profound weakening of the ability to influence public decisions, which reduces the possibility that demands will find a voice, representation and response from the State.

FIGURE 12: "CITIZENS LIKE YOU HAVE POWER OVER DECISIONS MADE IN THE COUNTRY"

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "Strongly disagree" and 10 means "Strongly agree," how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Peru?
Citizens like you have power over decisions made in the country.



[49] O'Donnell, G. (2010). *Democracia, agencia y Estado. Teoría con intención comparativa*.

[50] O'Donnell, G. (2010). *Op. cit*.

[51] O'Donnell, G. (2002). *Las poliarquías y la (in)efectividad de la ley en América Latina*.

[52] Todorov, T. (2022). *Les ennemis intimes de la démocratie*.

[53] Dahl, R. (1989). *Polyarchy: participation and opposition*.

That 84 % of the population believes that Peru is governed by just a few, for their own benefit, reveals a political representation that has lost its basic democratic function[54] and a captured State[55], where just a few expand their rights and freedoms at the expense of the majority. According to **ENADES 2026, respondents attribute more political power to political actors (51 %) and economic actors (36 %) than to the State across its three levels of government (25.5 %)**.

Since the 2016 general elections, nine presidents have governed the country. During each five-year term, there were four presidents. None of the elected presidents completed their term. During each term, power passed to the hands of the presidents of the leadership boards of the national Congress through the mechanism of constitutional succession.

This instability has been accompanied by decisions that modified mechanisms for citizen participation. In 2018, 90 % of the population voted against a bicameral Congress in a referendum[56]. In 2024, Congress reversed that decision and approved a bicameral legislature as the new parliamentary system. Two years earlier, in 2022, it had limited the scope of citizen referendum: all citizen initiatives for constitutional reform must be approved by Congress[57].

In recent years, Congress, the institution entrusted with representing citizens, has accumulated power with few effective checks and balances to ensure specific interests. As of the time of the survey, **for 20.9 % of the population, Congress was a powerful group that governs for its own benefit**. Through the laws it passed, it secured its political control and limited the other branches of government and citizens themselves. **This excess of power affects not only institutional stability[58], but also the people's ability to organize**. For example, changes to the Law of the Peruvian International Cooperation Agency (in Spanish, Agencia Peruana de Cooperación Internacional, APCI), have prompted concern from the UN rapporteur, who warned that the measures affect freedom of association and "create risks of undue interference in the structure and internal operations of non-governmental institutions[59]". **When the institutions charged with representing citizens concentrate power and restrict spaces for participation, organized society's ability to influence public decisions is also weakened**.

[54] Barrenechea, R., & Vergara, A. (2024). *Democracia asaltada. El colapso de la política peruana (y una advertencia para América Latina)*.

[55] A form of influence and control exerted by economic actors with power over public decisions, such that public decisions end up favoring special interests over the general interest (Durand, 2019).

[56] More than 13 million people (valid votes) rejected a bicameral Congress in a referendum on 9 December 2018. See results in Resolution N° 0002-2019-JNE (Jurado Nacional de Elecciones, 2019).

[57] Law 31399, Law that modifies Articles 40 and 44 of Law 26300, the Law of Rights of Citizen Participation and Oversight. This establishes that all constitutional reform that is part of a citizen initiative must be authorized by Congress. The law was promulgated by insistence — that is, it was promulgated despite having been questioned by the Executive Branch.

[58] As of 2024, Congress had approved at least 26 laws affecting institutional stability. See Loyola, D. (2024).

[59] See Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2025).

This scenario raises two questions: does the State have the ability to reverse this democratic decline? Are the relationships among citizens solid enough to protect democratic commitment? The weakening of democracy is also the result of the erosion of these relationships. In a country where a person's future depends on where they grew up[60], the fact that the government operates from the capital and ignores other regions[61], that there is a very serious difference between cities and rural areas[62], that the wealthiest people and large corporations evade taxes[63], or that the richest person in the country increased their wealth by 285 % during the past five years, reveals a social relationship that is segregated, hierarchical, centralized and abusive.

Citizens have shown themselves capable of adapting and confronting adverse conditions (see Figure 7). Nevertheless, the idea of resilience can become a way of shifting the responsibility for constantly adapting to crisis and uncertainty to individuals and communities, instead of transforming the conditions that produce them[64]. This capacity for response cannot be the main means of dealing with inequality; a process of profound transformation is needed that can return meaning and content to the democracy that was restored in Peru in 2000.

It is therefore crucial to politicize economic inequality, revealing its dimensions of power, its mechanisms of reproduction and its consequences for everyday life and the country's future. Indignation in the face of inequality is essential because it can mobilize people to demand change. But indignation alone is not enough: sustaining that momentum requires urgent political responses.

It is necessary to expand citizens' ability to influence, strengthen the social fabric and solidarity among citizens, recompose the mechanisms of political representation, and strengthen the capacity of the State, with robust and inclusive democratic institutions[65]. To accomplish this, the new political cycle in Peru must open a horizon of recovery of democratic vitality and, with it, the conditions necessary for disputing inequalities and for citizens' voices to be heard and to translate into concrete political responses. A country marked by persistent structural economic inequality must exercise political equality under democratic conditions so that economic power does not become political power, and so its future is not controlled by a handful of powerful groups that govern for their own benefit.

[60] According to 55 % of the population, the place where a person lives as a child is very important for having better opportunities.

[61] According to 55 % of the population, Peru is governed only for Lima, the capital, while other regions are ignored.

[62] 48 % of the population considers inequality between cities and rural areas to be very serious.

[63] 77 % and 76 % of the population believe that most of the wealthiest persons and large corporations, respectively, try to avoid paying taxes.

[64] Evans, B., & Reid, J. (2016). *Resilient Life: The Art of Living Dangerously*.

[65] See Acemoğlu, D., & Robinson, J. (2012) and (2019).

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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE OF FIGURE 1. REVISED GINI

Oxfam replicated the methodology of Alarco et al. (2019) using three scenarios for fixed allocation of the surplus. The X/Y notation X/ indicates the fraction of the surplus allocated to decile 1 (X%, low income) and the fraction allocated to decile 10 (Y%, high income): Scenario 1 (10/90) assigns 10% to decile 1 and 90% to decile 10, and is the most conservative, because it mitigates the inferred concentration by attributing a portion of the surplus to the bottom of the distribution; Scenario 2 (5/95) tightens this assumption; Scenario 3 (0/100) allocates the entire surplus to the top decile, and is the most aggressive, as it assumes that all income not captured by the survey belongs to the wealthiest decile. For 2004–2006, household personal income is extrapolated using the BCRP's nominal GDP anchored to 2007; for 2025, the same technique is used for extrapolation, anchored to 2024.

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