

Latin American Public Opinion Project

LAPOP

The letter 'O' in the acronym 'LAPOP' is a large green circle with a black outline. Inside the circle is a map of Latin America, showing the continents of North and South America, colored in a light green shade.

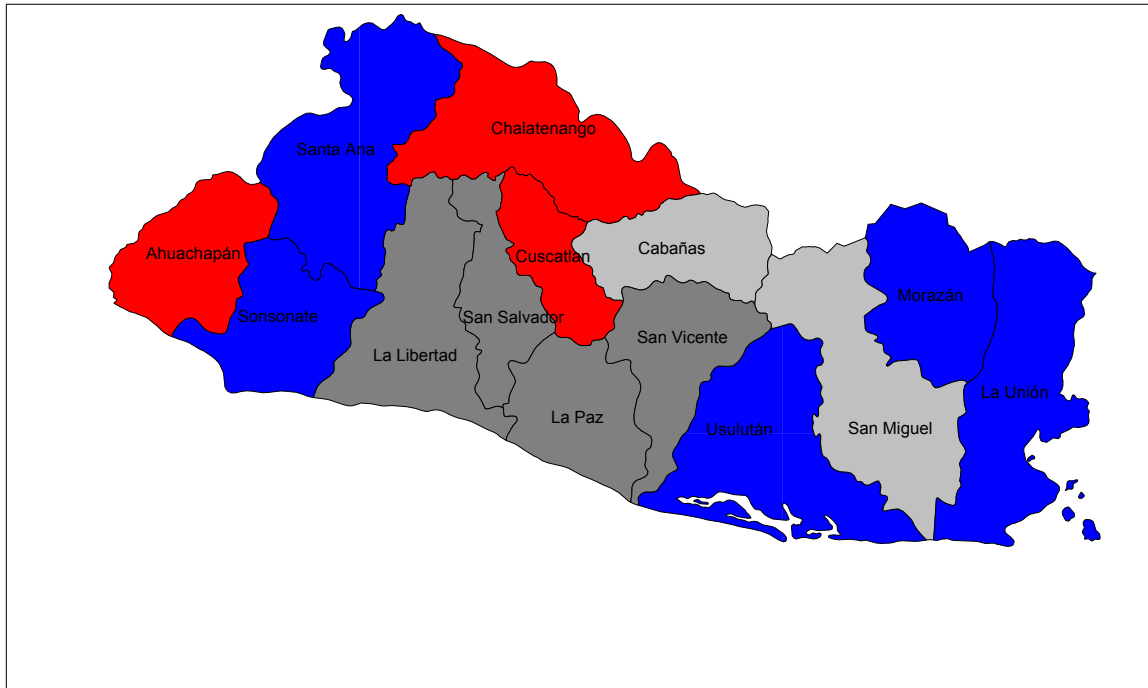
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Democracy Audit: El Salvador, 1999

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Percent Participating in Local Government

40-58%	36-39%	30-35%	23-29%

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Executive Summary

Democracy requires a supportive culture, the acceptance by the citizenry and political elites of the principles underlying freedom of speech, media, and assembly; rights of political parties, rule of law, human rights, and the like. Such norms do not evolve overnight.¹

Many political scientists believe that one key factor that enable democracies to survive is having a democratic political culture. This study explores the political culture of democracy in El Salvador, by undertaking an audit of the views of its citizens. It does so by allowing Salvadorans, nearly 3,000 of them, to speak for themselves in personal, face-to-face interviews that were conducted in the fall of 1999. In this introduction and executive summary, some of the main findings are reported upon, the details of which are contained in the chapters that follow.

- The sample was designed to represent the entire country, and as such interviews were conducted in each of the country's 14 departments. The selection of respondents was based probability criteria, based upon the 1992 national census, as updated by population projections for 1999.
- The field work was carried out by the Universidad Centroamericana Simeón Cañas, and the analysis was undertaken jointly by that institution, as well as the FundaUngo in El Salvador and the Latin American Public Opinion Project of the University of Pittsburgh. The entire effort was coordinated by MSI, Inc. of Washington, D.C.
- In terms of local government participation, Salvadorans are quite active. There has been a large and statistically significant increase in demand-making since 1995; it increased by 50% over the four-year period. Thought of in other terms, at the level of the nation, nearly one-in-five Salvadorans had made a demand on their local government in the twelve months prior to the survey. The increases in demand-making were not concentrated in one or two areas, but emerged in almost every department. This is certainly an impressive increase, and one that emerges on a variable that is especially important for purposes of increasing accountability.
- The main determinants of demand-making are education, age and wealth. In contrast, gender, population density of the municipality, and urbanization have no significant impact on demand-making.
- The main perceived problems at the local level are: lack of security, street paving, trash collection and water service.
- Satisfaction with municipal services has increased significantly since 1995.
- A question in the survey asked respondents which level of government better solves community problems. The survey found a strong increase in the percentage of Salvadorans selecting municipal government over other levels of government (or of no level).
- Even stronger evidence of a positive change in views toward local government emerges from a question that asked if more responsibility should be transferred to the

¹Seymour Martin Lipset, "Conditions for Democracy," *Extensions* Spring (1998), 3_13.

municipality, or should more be assumed by the central government. There is a large increase in respondents who would prefer the municipality in the 1999 survey.

- The percentage of those willing to pay more municipal taxes in order to receive better service rose significantly between 1995 and 1999.
- Between 1995 and 1999 there was a significant increase in the perception of the responsiveness of local government.
- In 1999 the Legislature of El Salvador approved an increase in fiscal support for local government, by agreeing to transfer 6% of the national budget to municipalities. Over three quarters of respondents in the 1999 survey favor this transfer.
- The stability of a political system, and its ability to weather crises without succumbing to breakdown has been directly linked to legitimacy. In El Salvador, system support has risen strongly and significantly since 1991. This increase was nation-wide, occurring in almost all departments in the country.
- System support is lower among the better educated and wealthier, and is also lower in urban areas.
- System support was also significantly lower among those who had been crime victims and among those who have a fear of crime.
- Those who feel that they were treated better by their local government were also higher on system support.
- Political parties and the legislature are lowest in system support, but the legislature alone has declined since 1991.
- Systems may be politically stable for long periods of time, undergirded by high levels of system support. But such systems are not necessarily democratic. In order for a political system to be both stable and democratic, its citizens ought not only believe in the legitimacy of the regime, but also be tolerant of the political rights of others, especially those with whom they disagree. In that context, it is important that our survey found that political tolerance has increased steadily in El Salvador since 1991.
- By 1995, three of the four variables measuring tolerance were in the positive range, and by 1999 all four had increased into the positive range. Moreover, there has been a steady increase for all four measures of political tolerance over the period 1991-1999.
- Age, urbanization rate, crime rate, etc., make no difference in terms of tolerance. We did find, however, that women are less tolerant than men, even after controlling for education (and other factors), and that those who are better educated and better off financially, are more tolerant. In addition, we found that those who are more satisfied with municipal services are more tolerant, a potentially important finding supporting the role of local government in democracy.
- In the combined relationship of system support and tolerance we found a steady increase in the proportion of citizens in the “stable democracy” cell, those who have both high system support and high tolerance.

- By 1999 more than one-in-three Salvadorans are both supportive of their political system and express political tolerance. This is the largest cell in the table. Only about one-sixth of the respondents fell into the “breakdown” cell. Finally, about a quarter of El Salvadoran fall into either the “unstable democracy” or “authoritarian stability” cells.
- In terms of support for stable democracy, El Salvador has moved up substantially from where it stood at its low-point in 1995, now only falling behind Costa Rica, Central America’s most stable democracy. Comparisons with Bolivia and Peru show much greater support for stable democracy in El Salvador than in those two countries.
- With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new democracies in most regions of the developing world, corruption has surfaced as one of the leading policy issues in the international political agenda, as well as in the national agendas of many countries. There is growing appreciation of the corrosive effects of corruption on economic development and how it undermines the consolidation of democratic governance.
- The level of corruption in El Salvador is dramatically lower than it is in the other countries for which we have directly comparable data. Fewer than one-in-ten Salvadorans have directly experienced corruption, compared with levels two and three times as high in other countries in the University of Pittsburgh data base. The overall index of corruption experience averaged 4.6%.
- Education played no role in being a corruption victim. But other variables, especially gender, age and income did. Corruption victimization is highest among the young, especially among the 21-30 group, and then declines.
- Salvadorans with higher levels of income are more likely to have been victimized by corruption.
- Those who live in urban areas are more likely to be subjected to corruption than those in rural areas. This finding is independent of personal socio-economic status.
- Those Salvadorans who have been victimized by corruption are less supportive of the political system. As earlier findings demonstrate, system support is vital for democratic stability. We also know that the causal path runs from victimization to democratization; corrupt officials could not possibly pick their victims based on the latter’s level of system support. Therefore, the low levels of corruption in El Salvador at the level of the individual bode well for democratic stability.
- A curious, and to a certain extent ironic, point has been that while the Central American region has made enormous progress in terms of conducting competitive elections and peacefully transferring political power, this process has been accompanied by a relatively low level of electoral participation. The most dramatic case is that of Guatemala, with a 84.1% rate of abstentionism in the popular referendum on the electoral reforms of 1994. Nevertheless, this problem has not even escaped Costa Rica, which in the elections of 1986, 1990 and 1994 had an abstentionism rate of around 18%. In the elections of 1998, this number increased to a worrisome 30%.
- Despite the importance of the subject of abstentionism in Central America, abstentionism has not been treated with the importance it deserves. One of the methodological problems that investigators encounter is the difficulty in accessing information, mainly due to the problems that exist with registries or electoral registers. A second problem is the difficulty in obtaining reliable information on the estimates of the

voting age population for each year that there have been elections. In addition, there is a lack of comparative studies of the Central American region.

- Voting abstention is a problem in much of Central America. In El Salvador, three-fifths of registered voters have failed to cast their ballots in recent elections.
- In the case of El Salvador, a review of the data on electoral abstentionism reveals that in the elections held in the last decade, there is a growing tendency towards a rise in abstentionism: in the presidential elections of 1989 the rate was 54.9%, in the legislative elections in 1991, it was 55.1%. In the first round of presidential elections in 1994 this rate dropped to 47.2%, rising in the second round of the presidential elections of that year to 54.5%, and continuing to rise to 60.8% in the legislative elections in 1997 and to 61.4% in the presidential elections of 1999.
- The electoral register from March 7, 1999 counted 3,171,224 inscribed citizens, and in the presidential elections a total of 1,223,215 votes was emitted, of which 1,182,248 corresponded to valid votes. Thus, only 38.6% of those registered in the electoral register voted. Alternatively stated, the absentee rate was 61.4%, the highest of all the elections held in the last decade.
- The survey found that many reasons were given by our respondents for non-voting, but among those difficulty in registering to vote and illness were the most frequently mentioned reasons.
- When we asked respondents why others do not vote, overwhelmingly they said it was because of lack of confidence or interest in the elections.
- Demographic and socio-economic patterns partially explain abstention. Younger Salvadorans are not likely to vote at all, and women are far less likely to vote than men. Only those with university education are overwhelmingly likely to vote. The gender gap remains even when controlled for education difference between men and women. Wealthier Salvadorans are more likely to vote than the poor.
- More important than demographic and socio-economic factors, is that of the level of political knowledge of the potential voter. Those who are well informed are almost certain to vote, whereas those who have little political information are almost certain not to vote. This pattern is found among both men and women, but is more important among men.
- Interest in politics is another key factor. As citizens' interest in politics declines, the intention to vote diminishes.
- Another crucial factor is confidence in the political system, especially political parties. In addition, those who believe in democracy are more likely to vote than those who would prefer an authoritarian regime.
- Those who perceive elections as fair are more inclined to vote, as are those who perceive electoral outcomes as representing the interests of the Salvadoran people. Those who are inactive in political campaigns, or who do not engage in efforts to persuade others to vote for a given party, are not likely to vote.
- Those who believe that the economy of the country has not done well are less likely to vote than those who feel that it has improved. Similarly, those respondents who expect

things to improve in the future express a greater intention to vote. Those that think that things will be worse or the same express lower levels of an intention to vote.

- According to the World Bank, the annual homicide rate for the region of Latin American and the Caribbean is around 20 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. This rate makes this region the most violent in the world. The available data indicate that this small Central American nation already had a problem with violence long before the civil war of the eighties; El Salvador already had homicide rates greater than 30 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in the seventies. According to a recent study, the current rates of homicide and general violence in El Salvador have been declining; however they are still among the highest in the region, at a rate of approximately 77 per 100,000 inhabitants.
- According to our survey a little less than a quarter of the adult population, 22.1%, has suffered from some type of crime in the last year.
- Men appear to have experienced slightly higher levels of victimization than women, and people between the ages of 18 and 30 reach a level of victimization of 27%, which does not contradict the results of surveys of victimization and violence conducted in the country. Nevertheless, our attention was called to the results that point to the importance of socio-demographic factors in determining percentages of victimization by crime. Victimization varies according to the educational level of the individual, monthly family income, and the size of the municipality in which the respondent lives.
- For uneducated or illiterate respondents, the percentage of victimization is about 10%, while among the most educated respondents (those with university education) our survey measured victimization levels of 40%.
- For those with incomes of greater than 6,000 colones, the percentage of victimization by crime reaches 40%, while those respondents with very low family incomes have a victimization rate of only 10%.
- The largest percentages of victimization due to crime are found in larger, urban municipalities or cities. Those who live in smaller cities are less likely to be victims of crime. For example, in the metropolitan areas such as San Salvador, Santa Ana, and San Miguel, the percentage of victimization by crime is almost three times as high as that of the smaller and more rural municipalities.
- Victimization is more frequently due to robbery without aggression or physical threat, as almost 50% of victimizations fall into this category. However, a little more than a third of the population (35.7%) has suffered from physical aggression while being assaulted, and more than 7% of those interviewed had experienced property damage. Five percent of Salvadorans faced aggression that was not driven by robbery or assault. Overall, the majority of victimizations reported by citizens were due to robbery – either with or without physical aggression.
- Perhaps one of the most striking findings on victimization concerns the high percentage of victims of violence that did not report the crime to some public authority. Our survey indicates that only 35.1% of victims reported the crime to an institution, generally the National Civil Police. The remainder of individuals, two thirds of all victims, did not report the incident.
- Why do citizens victimized by crime neglect to report these crimes to the authorities? The majority of responses in our survey indicate that citizens do not have much

confidence in the abilities of the authorities. Effectively, more than half of the victims that did not report the act stated that “it would not help” (57%); the rest of the respondents stated that they did not have proof to present (14.2%), that they feared reprisals from the criminal (14%) or that the incident was not serious enough to report (11.8%) among other reasons.

- People who have personally experienced violent events exhibit on average higher feelings of crime-induced insecurity compared to those who have not been victimized. Nevertheless, despite this clear difference between those who have been victims and those who have not, feelings of insecurity do not appear to depend upon the intensity of victimization as much as they do upon simply the experience of being a victim. Those that have suffered from more severe, violent crimes do not express a greater sense of insecurity than those who have experienced less traumatic events.
- With the exception of the variables of sex and size of resident locality, our results do not reveal significant differences in the levels of crime-induced insecurity for the majority of the remaining variables. Women and those that live in municipalities of a larger size (around 80,000 inhabitants) express higher levels of fear of crime, however the other variables appear to be unrelated to fear of crime. For example, citizens, regardless of age, education, or income usually feel the same level of insecurity due to crime.
- This insecurity also seems to affect citizens’ levels of confidence in the functioning of the judicial system. People who feel more insecure usually have less confidence that the system will succeed in punishing those guilty of criminal assault.
- Given that violence and crime have become fundamental problems of the country, some scholars argue that this type of problem can constitute a risk for the processes of political governance.
- Under conditions of high crime, more than half of Salvadorans justify a military coup, far more than the number that would support a coup under any of the other circumstances, including unemployment, which in the past was the condition that most stimulated justifications for military coups. These data suggest that violent crime in and of itself – without being combined with other items – could have a substantial impact on the political attitudes of Salvadorans.
- Women, those with lower levels of education and income, and those who live in municipalities with populations between 20,000 and 40,000 are those who express the highest percentages of support for a coup under conditions of high crime that have between 20,000 and 40,000 inhabitants are those who express higher percentages of support for a coup under conditions of high crime.
- As was expected, those with lower levels of system support favor a coup with greater frequency, compared to those that manifested higher levels of support for the Salvadoran political system and lower measures of support for a return to the military to power.
- Women, the young, the least educated, those of lower income, those of rightist ideology, those victimized by crime, and those that do not have confidence that the judicial system will punish the guilty are those that have greater probabilities of supporting a military coup as a response to the high levels of violence.

- The majority of Salvadorans, almost two thirds of the respondents, stated that they preferred democracy, while only 12% preferred an authoritarian form of government. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that a quarter of the population stated that it did not matter which regime was in power, and did not differentiate between the advantages of democracy and authoritarianism.
- The data show that 38.4% of respondents thought that the country lacked a government of an iron hand, while the rest, 61.6%, thought that the problems could be solved with the participation of all.
- Of the respondents in our survey, 26.5% maintained that El Salvador needs a strong and decisive leader to establish order, while the rest thought that the country needed someone that knew how to negotiate.
- Almost 40% of respondents agreed with the idea that the only way to move the country forward was to eliminate with an iron hand those that cause problems.
- Who are those that are more inclined to display high levels of support on this scale for authoritarianism? The results reveal that on this scale, women usually support authoritarianism more than men, which signifies that they are more inclined to support a regime that applies an iron hand over citizens' rights.
- Support for authoritarianism is relatively equal for all age groups until respondents reach the age of 50, with a gradual diminution of this type of attitude with age. Nevertheless, among those aged 50 years and older, there is a clear rise in attitudes in favor of authoritarianism. This suggests that people of this older age group, who have lived the majority of their lives under this type of regime in the past, are more supportive of authoritarianism.
- Respondents that did not have educational socialization or that had very low levels of education displayed a mean attitude in favor of authoritarian regimes that was much higher than those that had a certain educational level, especially those that had university level education.
- The people who have income levels of above 6,000 colons exhibit a smaller level of support for authoritarian figures in power. In contrast, those with lower income levels and those that have incomes between 4,000 and 6,000 colons display higher levels of support for authoritarianism.
- Support for authoritarianism is tied to the ideological position of the respondent. Respondents with a rightist ideology tend to demonstrate a greater preference for an authoritarian regime of an iron hand, in contrast to those of the left that demonstrate a lower level of authoritarianism according to the scale.
- People that would justify a coup due to high crime rates present levels of support for an authoritarian regime that are much higher than those that would not justify a coup.
- Moreover, an analysis with all the items measuring justification for a coup under various circumstances reveals that support for an authoritarian regime would be tied to practically any opinion that privileges a coup. Thus, in any circumstance, people that support a coup usually score much higher on the scale of authoritarianism, indicating that behind this favorable attitude towards coups is a tendency towards authoritarian regimes.

- There is a significant relationship between the homicide rate of a respondent's department and authoritarian attitudes. This signifies that authoritarian attitudes depend upon the perception of the magnitude of violence in the environment.
- There are sectors of the population that would support an authoritarian regime under certain circumstances. These sectors do not constitute the majority of Salvadorans, however they comprise up to 30% of the total population. Education appears to be a fundamental variable explaining the appearance of these types of attitudes. This suggests in and of itself the importance of increasing efforts to ensure that the Salvadoran population has more access to education. This would serve as an indirect but real way to assure the democratic stability of the country.
- This is not all, however. The perception of insecurity, more than direct victimization, seems to play an important role in stimulating attitudes that disparage respect for human rights by privileging order and security. This same perception of insecurity leads more citizens to call for a leadership less compromised by negotiation, dialogue, and democratic participation, and more dedicated to assuring order above all other things.
- Inter-personal trust matters for democracy, but is independent of civil society participation. More trusting individuals are more likely to prefer democracy to authoritarian rule.

In the following chapters we present the results of our survey in detail. Our study provides evidence of positive advances in the development of a democratic political culture in El Salvador. These positive advances are most apparent in the evaluations of local governments, levels of support for the political system, tolerance and democratic stability, among others. However, our study also identifies key problems, such as electoral abstentionism and crime. These problems constitute factors that must be addressed and overcome in order to ensure the continued development of a political culture in favor of democratic consolidation.

Chapter I. Introduction and Methodology

In 1987 the government of Sweden, long recognized as one of the world's most democratic regimes, initiated a "democracy audit." Presumably nobody in Sweden was seriously worried about the stability of democracy in that country, but some Swedes wanted to know if citizens saw problems that needed to be addressed. Democracy audits have continued in Sweden to this day, and have spread to other countries around the world. In the developing world, where democracies are new and traditions of political stability largely absent, the need for regular auditing of the efficacy of democracy is evident.

This study presents a democracy audit for El Salvador, a consolidating democracy in Central America. El Salvador's entrance into the league of democratic nations is recent. While El Salvador has held many elections, and had periods under which some democratic liberties have been respected, only with the signing of the peace accords and the ending of the civil war in 1992 has there developed a national consensus on the centrality of democratic rule. Much has been written about the civil war, the peace accords, and the efforts to fulfill them. Our intention in this study is not to review that material, but instead to have a look at democracy from below, from the point of view of the citizen.

In undertaking this study we are greatly assisted by the presence of a data base that covers the period 1991 through 1999. In 1991 the University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project undertook a study of public opinion on democracy in each of the six Spanish speaking countries of Central America. The study in El Salvador covered the greater metropolitan region of the national capital, San Salvador. In 1995 a second study was undertaken in cooperation with the FundaUngo and IDELA, and supported by USAID.² In 1999 USAID approached the University of Pittsburgh, the FundaUngo and the Universidad Centroamericana Simeón Cañas to carry out an expanded version of the 1995 study. The project was organized by MSI, Inc. of Washington, D. C. In this publication we present the results of the 1999 survey, but do so in the context of the earlier surveys.

This 1999 Democracy Audit of El Salvador covers many themes related to democracy. It begins with a discussion of Local Government (Chapter II). It then focuses on key attitudes for democratic stability including system support (Chapter III) and tolerance (Chapter IV). It then moves into new territory by looking at the impact of corruption on democracy (Chapter V), the impact of abstensionism on democracy (Chapter VI), the impact of crime on democracy (Chapter VII) and , and authoritarian values and democracy (Chapter VIII). It concludes by looking at trust and democracy (Chapter IX). The report also includes two appendixes, one summarizing the sample design and the other providing the full text of the survey instrument.

Methodology

A detailed, technical description of the sample is contained in Appendix A. In this discussion, we explain in less technical detail what our sample design plan was and why we chose that design. The objective of the survey was to represent the views of all Salvadorans, rich and poor, urban and rural. To do this, we constructed a national probability sample in which the overall sample faithfully represents the distribution of the population. In this study, however, we had another objective, and that was to be able to say something about democratic values

²Mitchell A. Seligson and Ricardo Córdova M., *El Salvador: De la Guerra a la Paz, una Cultura Política en Transición* (San Salvador: IDELA y FUNDAUNGO, 1995).

and behaviors at the level of the department. Departments have real political significance in El Salvador, as it is this unit that serves as the electoral district for the representatives who are sent to the legislature. We would also have wished to represent municipalities, but with a total of 262 such units, the sample size needed to represent them all would have been too large and therefore too expensive.

Our budget provided for a total sample of 2,900 interviews, which gives us an overall confidence interval of $\pm 1.82\%$. This means that in theory, for the sample as a whole, results we report here are no more or less than 1.82% different from the results that would have been obtained if we had interviewed the entire voting-age population of the country. We decided to base the 1999 sample on the design used in 1995, so as to maximize comparability of the two samples. The design used then was explained in great detail in the publication based on that study.³ In 1995 we stratified the country by dividing the 262 municipios into four groups based on population size: A) > 80,000; B) 40-79,999; C) 20,000-39,999; and D: <20,000.⁴ By doing so, we were able to guarantee that the sample would be distributed across the full population size range of municipalities. If we had not done this, and merely selected municipalities at random, it is possible that our sample could have been concentrated in the large municipalities or the small. This way, we know that all size groups are included in our sample.

In order to avoid, by random chance, excluding El Salvador's major cities, we decided that they would be automatically selected in the sample. This means that San Salvador, Santa Ana and San Miguel were selected, which together contain about one-third of the national population. In 1995 we were working with a smaller sample, whereas in 1999 we were able to distribute it so that no department had fewer than 145 respondents. This provided us with a sample of each department that was large enough so that our confidence intervals from the sample were not excessively large. As noted in the appendix, the confidence intervals at the level of the department ranges from a low of 4.7% to a high of 8%.

Once we had determined the basic distribution of the sample by department, we then decided how to distribute the sample within each one. For cost reasons, it would have been impossible to carry out interviews in each municipio of each department, so instead we settled on a total of 69 municipios, thus widely disbursing the sample, but providing sufficient concentration to make it feasible for our field teams to reduce travel time to an acceptable level. We then used census maps to divide the sample into primary sampling units (PSUs) of approximately 300 households each, with the intention of interviewing approximately 10 respondents per segment. In total, we included 308 PSUs in the study. Within the segment, households were selected on a random basis, and the individuals within the households selected based on a quota system of age and gender so as to assure us that the overall sample would reflect the population parameters. Absent such a system, samples can over represent those who happen to be at home, which frequently means obtaining samples with more women and more older people than present in the population.⁵

³See pp. 8-16 of Mitchell A. Seligson and Ricardo Córdova M., *El Salvador: De la Guerra a la Paz, una Cultura Política en Transición* (San Salvador: IDELA y FUNDAUNGO, 1995).

⁴In the 1995 study we included an over sample of certain municipalities about which we had a special interest at that time. We excluded that over sample in this analysis so that both the 1995 and 1999 samples faithfully represent the nation.

⁵In strict probability sampling, call-backs are made to each home until the selected person has been interviewed. But given the large geographic area to be covered in this survey, the field teams had to move on and call-backs were not feasible. We used this same system in 1995 and 1991.

Since we had as an objective producing a sample that would represent each department, we had to weight the final sample so that those departments in which we conducted more interviews than the population size of that department would have called for, were weighted down. Similarly, we had to weight up those samples in which the population of the department called for a larger sample than we were able to carry out. The weights are shown in the appendix. The overall weighted sample thus faithfully represents the distribution of the sample for the nation as a whole and for each department. Moreover, the total weighted sample has the same number of respondents as the unweighted sample, so that our estimate of statistical significance is not affected by the weighting. The total 1999 sample, weighted or unweighted, came to 2,914 respondents.

In Table 1 below we show the distribution of the 1999 sample by Department:

Table 1. Population and Sample Distributions

Department	Population, 1999	% of population	Actual Sample	Weighted Sample
Ahuachapán	166,927	4.70149%	206	137
Santa Ana	319,150	8.98885%	225	262
Sonsonate	240,588	6.77615%	242	197
Chalatenango	98,910	2.78580%	150	81
La Libertad	380,525	10.71747%	184	312
San Salvador	1,212,911	34.16159%	430	995
Cabañas	75,459	2.12530%	145	62
Cuscatlán	107,746	3.03466%	205	88
San Vicente	86,328	2.43142%	151	71
La Paz	153,192	4.31465%	168	126
Usulután	190,018	5.35185%	298	156
San Miguel	273,009	7.68929%	174	224
Morazán	89,785	2.52879%	187	74
La Unión	155,963	4.39269%	149	128
Totals	3,550,511	100%	2914	2,914

Population data are 1999 projections of the adult population from the 1992 census.

Characteristics of the 1999 Sample

The 1999 sample mirrors the basic socio-economic and demographic characteristics of El Salvador. In El Salvador there are more females than males, and this distribution emerges in our sample, as shown in Figure 1.

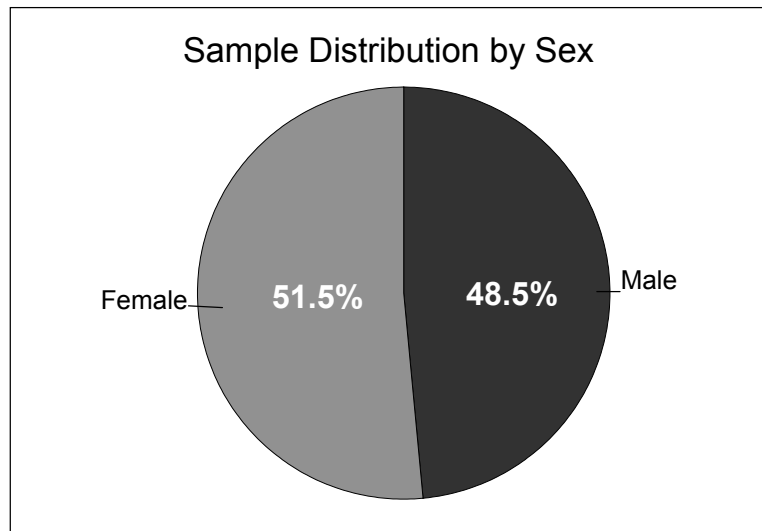


Figure 1. Sample Distribution by Sex

In the survey we obtained data on the years of education each respondent had received. In Figure 2 we group these into the main levels of education in order to provide a summary look.

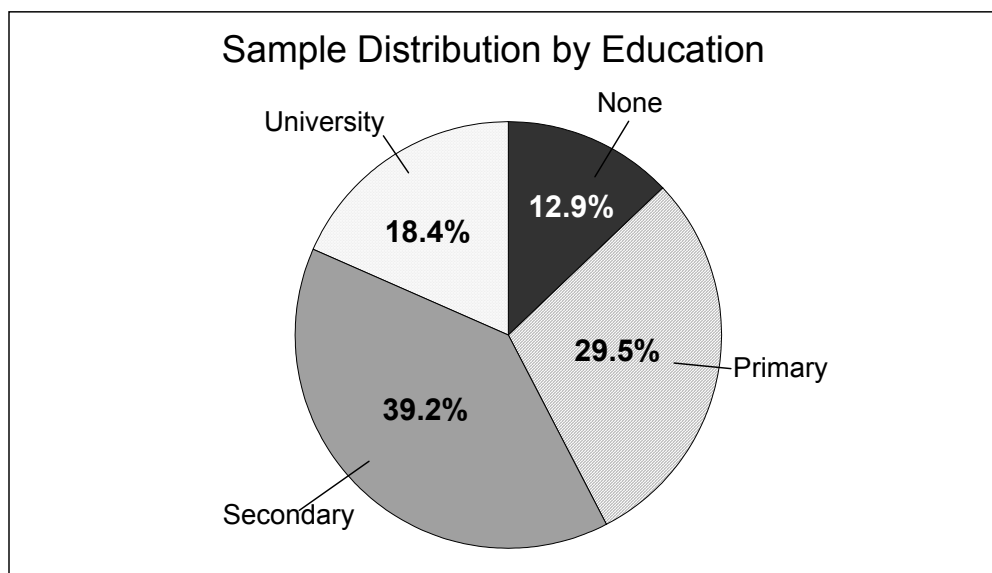


Figure 2. Sample Distribution by Education

The remainder of the report will present information on the democratic values and behaviors of Salvadorans in 1999. The interested analyst can consult the raw data set at any time at the FundaUngo or the UCA.

Chapter II. Local Government and Democracy

Latin America has a long history of governmental centralization, and as a result, local governments have been largely ignored. Most local governments in Latin America suffer from a severe scarcity of income, as well as authority to deal with local problems.⁶ Recently, however, many efforts have been made to strengthen local government in Latin America.⁷ In El Salvador, the situation was similar to the traditional regional trend, up until the 1980s. During the Civil War the government of El Salvador began using local governments as a means to channel reconstruction assistance to communities. It was widely agreed then that such aid was highly effective, and gave new life and meaning to local government. One of the requirements of such aid was the involvement of the population through the resurrected institution of the “cabildo abierto,” or open town meeting.

More recently, two important changes have occurred in El Salvador to strengthen local government. First, the legislature has modified the FODES law that regulates the transfer of funds from the central government to local government in order to provide 6% of the national budget to that level. To date, while this full transfer has not been effectuated, it is a very positive step that has increased local resources. Moreover, the law now requires that 80% of the transfer be used for investment, and only 20% for administration, meaning that local development projects are getting higher priority than ever before. Second, before social development funds (e.g., FISDL) can be used, municipalities must now develop and present participative plans made with the involvement of the community. By 1999, nearly half of all municipalities in El Salvador had developed such participatory plans.

In this chapter, citizen participation in and evaluation of local government will be explored. The questionnaire contains a rich series of items with which to do this. The analysis will examine the 1999 data and compare it to the 1995 survey (the 1991 study did not include questions on local government). The 1999 results will be further analyzed by looking at the USAID target municipalities and comparing them to the rest of the country.

Participation in Local Government

Level of Participation

In the 1995 survey, respondents were asked the following question:

NP1. ¿Ha tenido usted la oportunidad de asistir a un cabildo abierto, una sesión municipal u otra reunión convocada por la Alcaldía durante los últimos 12 meses?

1. Sí 2. No. 3. No sabe/ no recuerda

This item is problematical, however, since it incorporates several kinds of meetings rather than breaking them out into separate questions that can later be aggregated. In 1995 it was found that 17% of the respondents to the national sample survey had participated in such

⁶For a detailed overview of the subject see R. Andrew Nickson, *Local Government in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995).

⁷Shaid Javed Burki, Guillermo Perry and William Dillinger, *Beyond the Center: Decentralizing the State* (Washington: The World Bank, 1999).

meetings. This contrasted with levels of 8-12% in the rest of Central America.⁸ In the 1999 survey, three separate questions were asked to obtain greater specificity.

En cuál de las siguientes actividades realizadas por el alcalde ha participado Ud.?

MUNI12 (NP1). Cabildo abierto.

MUNI13. Una invitación a la comunidad para asistir a reuniones.

MUNI14. Visitas a su comunidad para conocer los problemas y/o servicios.

We look first at the results of the MUNI12 question. This question comes closest to replicating the 1995 item, but limits itself exclusively to the cabildo abierto. Figure 3 shows the results. As can be seen, 15% of Salvadoran say that they have participated in these open town meetings, slightly less, but not significantly less than was found in the 1995 survey.

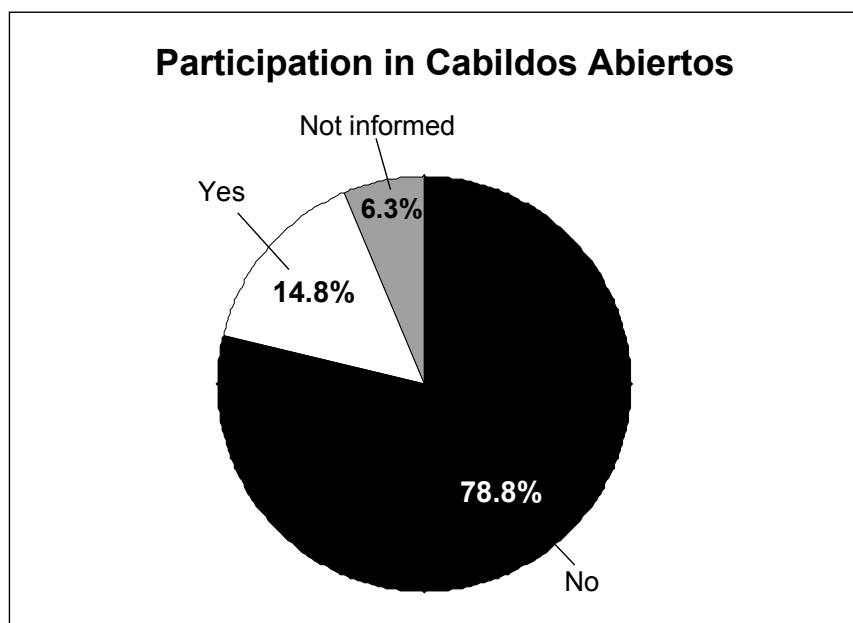


Figure 3. Participation in Cabildos Abiertos

In order to examine the full range of citizen participation in municipal meetings, we looked at the three items contained in the questionnaire as shown above (i.e., Muni12, Muni13 and Muni14). We also recoded the items so that those who answered "I was not informed of the meeting" are scored as not attending. Figure 4 shows the results. As can be seen, the overall picture shows much more participation. Indeed, the lowest figure is given by participation in the open town meetings alone. Invitations to the community by the mayor resulted in 23% of the respondents participating, while 18% participated in visits by the mayor to the community. In order to obtain an overall picture of participation incorporating each of these different aspects, an index was created, and is shown as the last bar in the chart. This index shows the percent of the sample that participated in any one of the three individual forms of contact with the local

⁸This information is reported in Seligson and Córdova, 1995, p. 94.

government shown in the prior three bars.⁹ As can be seen, nearly one-third have had such contact.

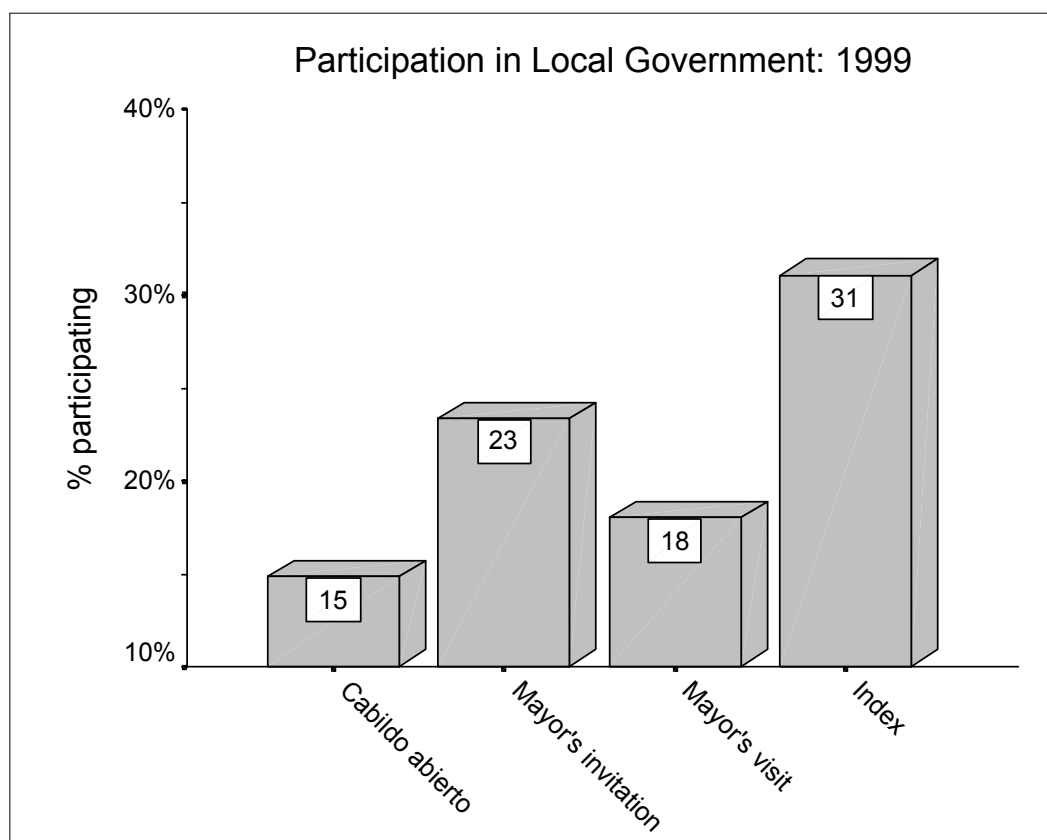


Figure 4. Participation in Local Government: 1999

Participation and Gender

The high level of overall participation in local government was not a function of education; the survey did not uncover any significant correlation between education and local participation. Similarly, the relationship was independent of age. Thus, old and young, educated and uneducated, participated with equal frequency in local government.

⁹Since some respondents participated in more than one, the index is not a sum.

Where differences did emerge was on gender. Figure 5 shows that women participate at levels significantly below those of men. Since we already know that education is not a predictor of municipal participation, differences in education levels between men and women could not explain this difference.

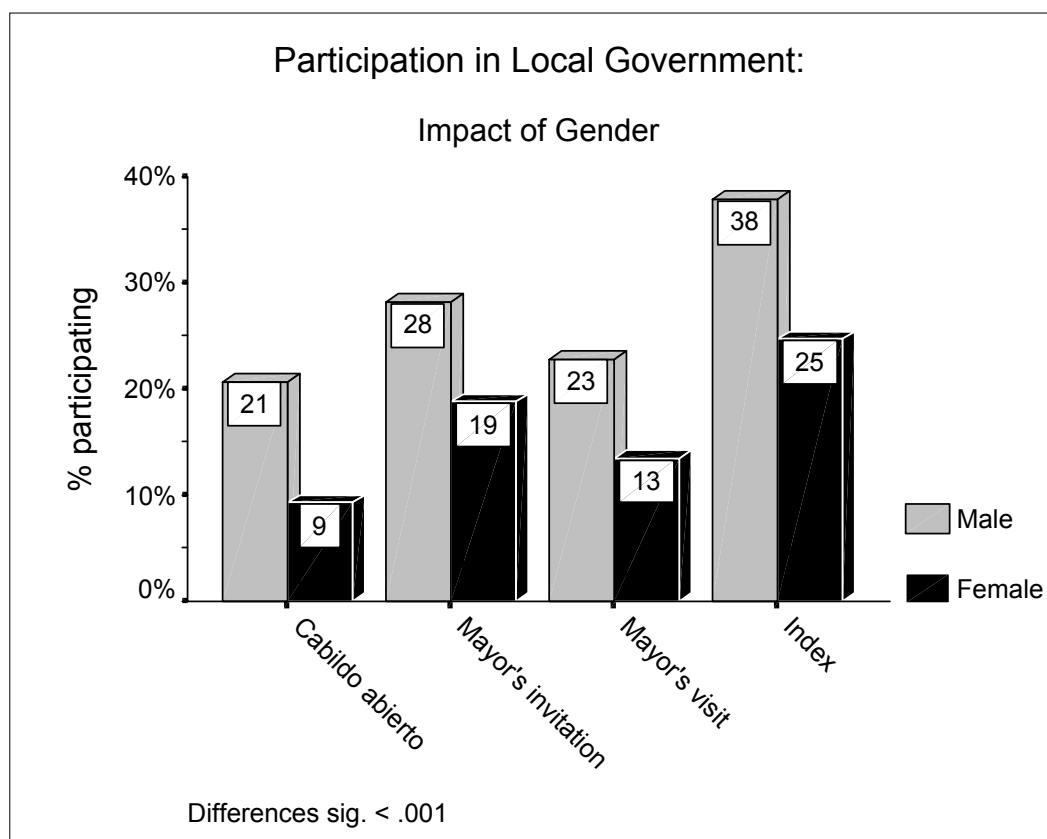


Figure 5. Participation in Local Government – Impact of Gender

Municipal Participation and Urbanization

In addition to gender, the population size of the municipality makes an important difference in participation levels. Figure 6 shows the results. The smaller the population the higher the level of participation. The major difference, however, emerges between municipalities with less than 20,000 people versus the respondents living in more populous municipalities. In municipalities with fewer than 20,000 people, 46% report some form of municipal government participation. These findings suggest that participation increases when the size of the area makes it possible for local governments to be more personal, and involve face-to-face contact with citizens. In big cities like San Salvador, such contact is very difficult, and not surprisingly, participation is lowest there.

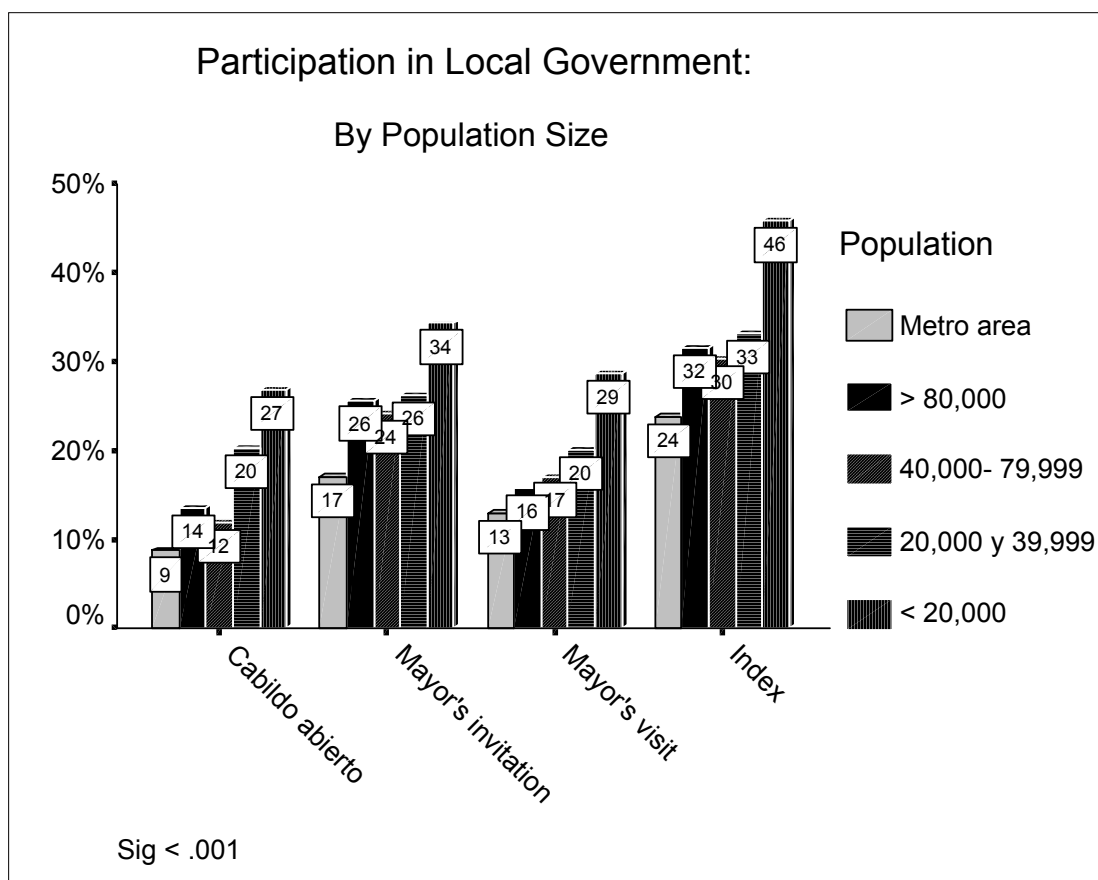


Figure 6. Participation in Local Government – By Population Size

The above findings relate only to population size, not population density or urbanization levels. That is, one might suspect that the findings of low population being equated with high participation might be spurious once the physical size of the area is taken into consideration. In physically large municipalities, large populations can produce relatively low population densities, while in physically small municipalities, small populations can produce high densities. To test for this possibility, we ran a multiple regression analysis on the overall index of municipal participation. The results are shown in Table 2. The last column shows which predictors are significant (i.e., have a significance level of .05 or lower). This analysis shows that when we try to see what population factors increase municipal participation, only one, the urbanization level, does so. Density of the population and the absolute size of the population are not significant predictors, once urbanization is taken into account. In sum, the findings above are a reflection of the impact of urbanization, with highly urban municipalities showing significantly lower participation in local government than less urbanized areas.

Table 2. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Index of Municipal Participation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	42.807	2.639		16.223	.000
DPTDEN Densidad poblacional por departamento	-.004	.010	-.067	-.447	.655
MUNDEN Densidad poblacional por municipio	0	.001	.001	.017	.986
DPTPOP Población del departamento	0	.000	.024	.165	.869
MUNPOP Población del municipio	0	.000	-.036	-1.219	.223
URATEMUN Tasa de urbanización por municipio	-14.577	4.465	-.099	-3.264	.001

Dependent Variable: MUNPPT Muni12, 13, 14

It is easier to see the impact of urbanization participation in local government by showing the average participation scores for each department in El Salvador. In Figure 7, these results are shown. Note the low level of participation in the region around San Salvador.

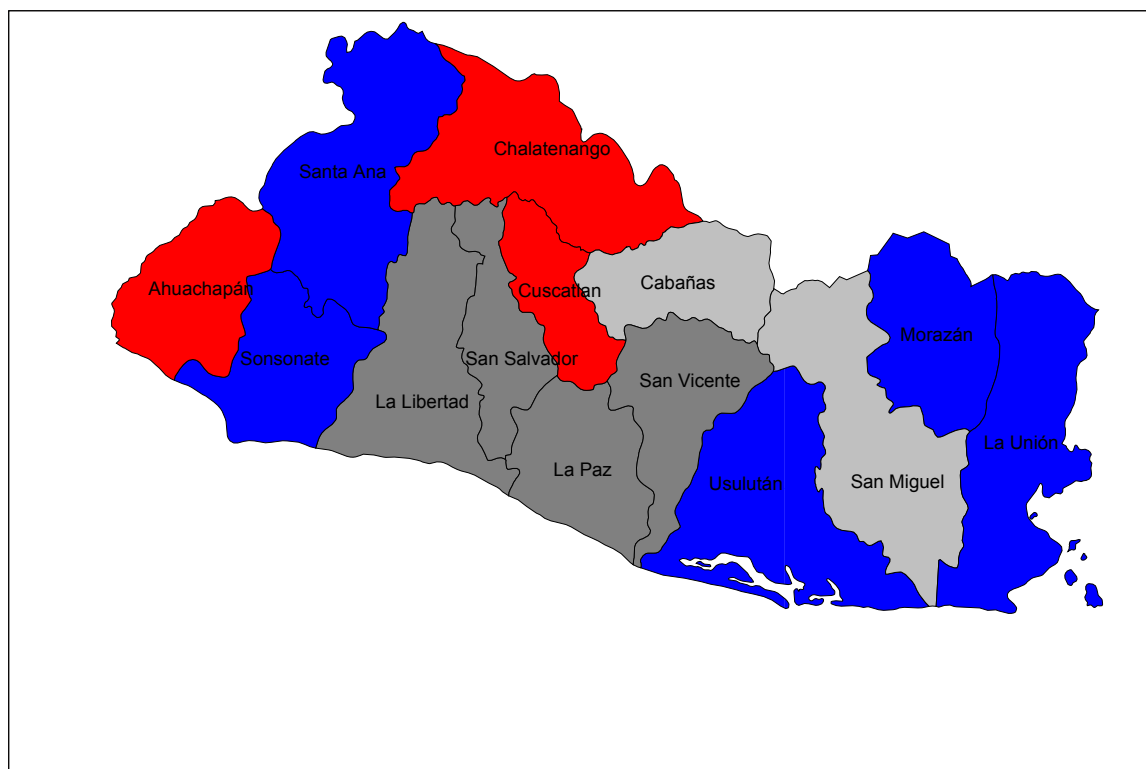


Figure 7. Participation in Local Government: Averages by Department

40-58%	36-39%	30-35%	23-29%
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Municipal Participation and Victimization

Elsewhere in this study, we explore in depth the issue of crime and victimization in El Salvador. Here we only wish to note that individuals who have been victims of serious crimes are significantly more likely to participate in municipal meetings than those who have not. We found that while 30% of non-victims participated in municipal meetings, 38% of victims of serious crime did so, a relationship that is statistically significant (sig. < .05). In a regression analysis, this relationship holds true, even after controlling for the degree of urbanization. Figure 8 shows the relationship of both gender and victimization to municipal participation. As can be seen, for both men and women this relationship is found. It is interesting to speculate as to the reason for this relationship with victimization. Our hypothesis is that crime victims are aggrieved, and take their grievances to local government. We will examine this hypothesis further when we look at municipal demand-making.

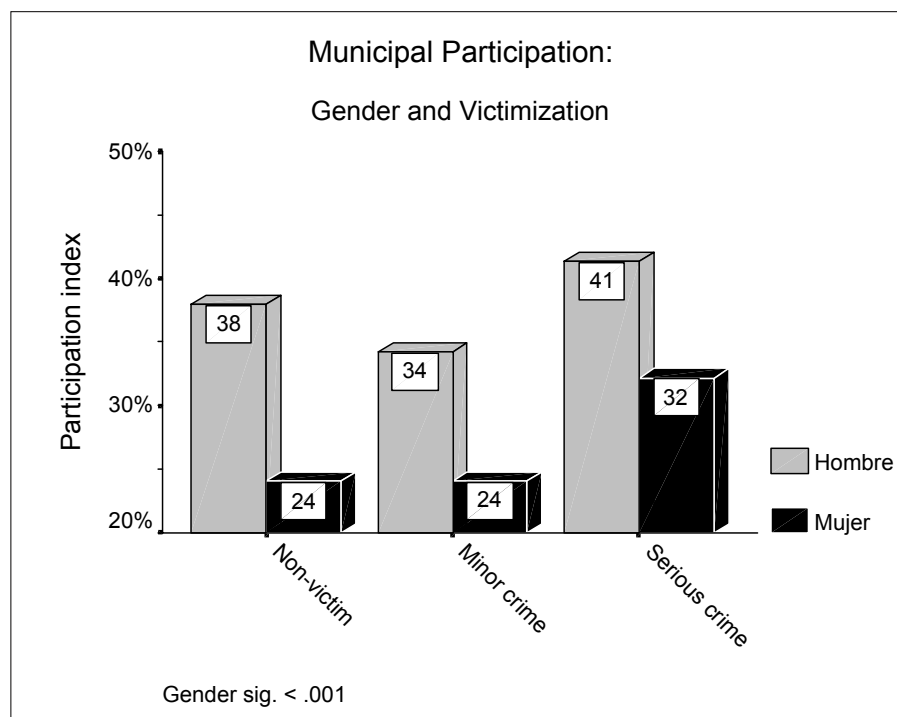


Figure 8. Municipal Participation – Gender and Victimization

Municipal Participation and Family Size

Participation in meetings of local government is also found to be higher among those with larger families. We suspected at first that this finding was an artifact of urbanization, with smaller families being found in cities, where participation is lower. But in the regression analysis shown in Table 3, family size remains a significant predictor of municipal participation even when urbanization and crime victimization are controlled for. No doubt, Salvadorans with large families have numerous reasons to attend municipal meetings in order to deal with issues related to their children. We checked to see if this relationship was really a function of wealth/poverty, but even when controlling for our index of wealth (based on ownership of household artifacts), family size remains a significant predictor of municipal participation.

Table 3. Municipal Participation, Urbanization, Family Size and Victimization

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	40.864	2.080		19.649	.000
URATEMUN Tasa de urbanizacion por municipio	-23.169	2.748	-.157	-8.431	.000
Q12 Número de hijos de la persona entrevistada	.860	.338	.047	2.547	.011
VICTIM Victimización directa por delincuencia	4.507	1.344	.062	3.352	.001

Dependent Variable: MUNPPT Muni12, 13, 14

Demand-Making

Attending meetings is often a passive form of political participation. Those who attend municipal meetings might be there merely to listen. In the case of the cabildos abiertos in El Salvador, many meetings include entertainment (singing and dancing from the local schools), so that it is not clear from looking at the participation data alone if the findings indicate active involvement or little more than participation in a “spectator sport.”

A far more direct mechanism of political participation is demand-making. In this activity, citizens petition their public officials. In the survey, item NP2 measured this activity. The item read as follows:

NP2. ¿Ha solicitado ayuda o presentado una petición a alguna oficina, funcionario, regidor o síndico de la Alcaldía durante los últimos 12 meses?

(1) Sí

(2) No

(8) No sabe/ no recuerda

This same question was included in the 1995 survey. Figure 9 shows the comparison of the two surveys, nation-wide. As can be seen, there has been a large and statistically significant increase since 1995; demand-making increased by 50% over the four-year period. This is certainly an impressive increase, and one that emerges on a variable that is especially important for purposes of increasing accountability. If citizens merely attend meetings but do not make demands, then public officials can rightfully believe that the public is not going to hold them accountable. But when citizens make demands, public officials can ignore those demands only at their own peril. Thought of in other terms, at the level of the nation, nearly one-in-five Salvadorans had made a demand on their local government in the twelve months prior to the survey.

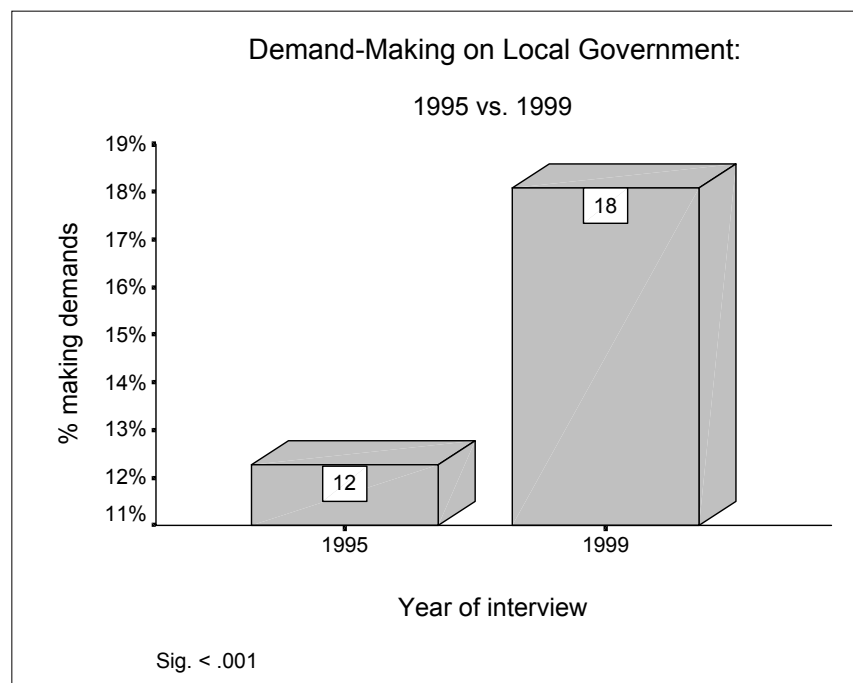


Figure 9. Demand-Making on Local Government – 1995 vs. 1999

The increases in demand-making were not concentrated in one or two areas, but emerged in almost every department. Figure 10 shows the comparison of 1995 with 1999 by department. As noted in the first chapter of this study, the sample size by department is smaller than the national sample size, and thus the margin of error (the “confidence interval”) is greater for each department. Therefore, small changes within a department are not significant. As can be seen, in each department except Chalatenango, San Miguel and Morazán the 1999 levels are higher than the 1995 levels.

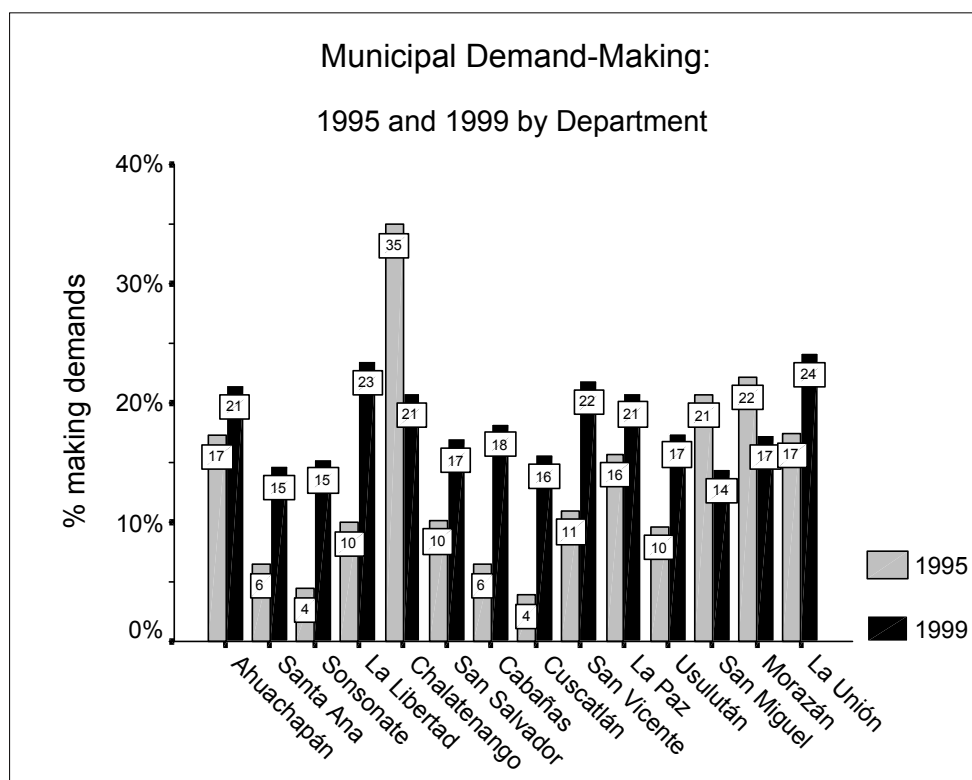


Figure 10. Municipal Demand-Making: 1995 and 1999 by Department

Factors the Influence Demand-Making

A multiple logistic analysis finds that the main determinants of demand-making are education, age and wealth. In contrast, gender, population density of the municipality, and urbanization have no impact on demand-making. This means that such demands are made independent of the nature of the urban environment, but they are made more so by more highly educated, older and wealthier Salvadorans. The logistic regression is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Logistic Regression of Predictors of Municipal Demand-Making

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
ESTRATO	.061	.052	1.372	1	.241	1.062
Q1,GENDER	.022	.098	.053	1	.819	1.023
AGE	.158	.040	15.546	1	.000	1.171
ED, EDUCATION	.036	.012	8.384	1	.004	1.036
ARTIFAC, WEALTH	.007	.003	5.235	1	.022	1.007
MUNDEN, POPULATION DENDISTY	.000	.000	.005	1	.943	1.000
URATEMUN, % URBAN	-.445	.297	2.247	1	.134	.641
Constant	-2.551	.334	58.457	1	.000	.078

Let us examine more carefully the impact of age on demand-making at the municipal level. Figure 11 shows the results. The chart shows a number of things. First, it shows that demand-making follows virtually an identical pattern for men and women. While gender is often a great divide in Central America, and prior studies have shown that females participate at much lower levels than males in Guatemala and elsewhere, gender is not an issue when it comes to municipal demand-making. Second, demand-making is especially low among the young, and rises steeply until it reaches its highest point in the age range of 31-40. The drop-off in the 41-50 age category is difficult to explain, but the continued rise after age 50 shows that even the older population is active in demand-making. The fact that the young do not make many demands is understandable; they do not yet have families and probably live in their parents' homes. Further analysis (via logistic regression not shown) did find that having children is not a factor that increases demand-making.

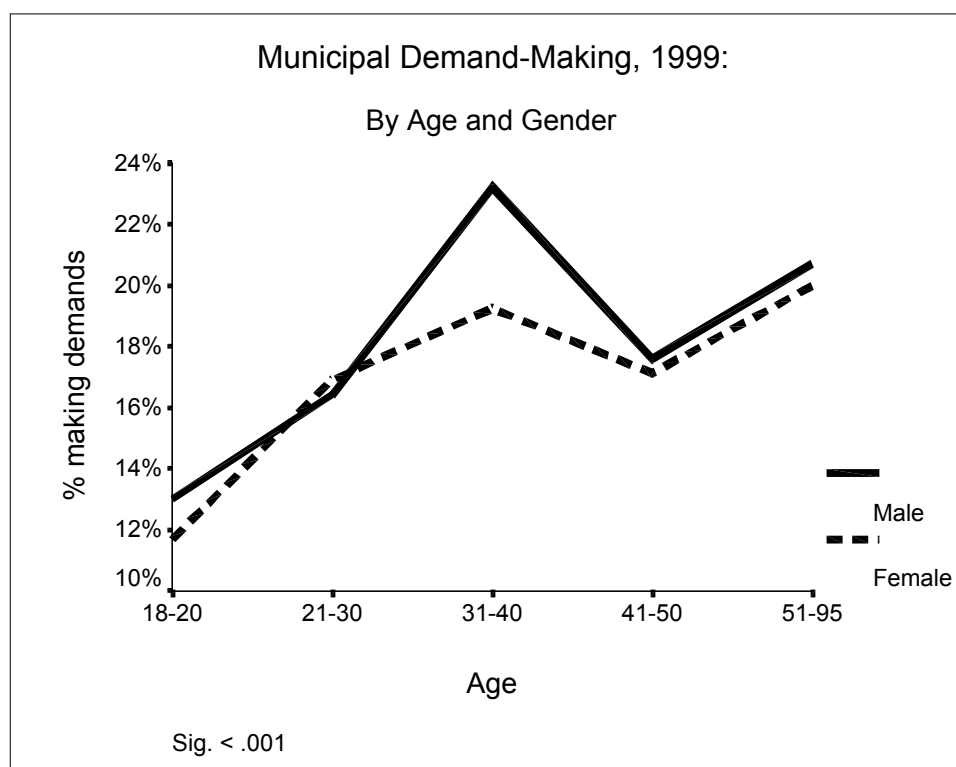


Figure 11. Municipal Demand-Making, 1999 – By Age and Gender

Municipal demand-making is lowest among the poor, as shown in Figure 12. It increases for each level of wealth and then declines again somewhat among the wealthiest Salvadorans.

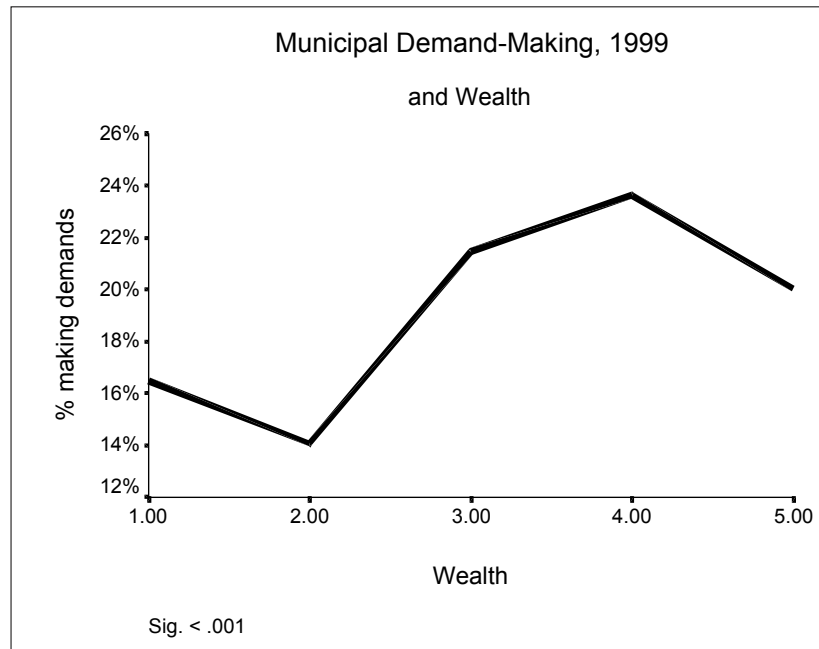


Figure 12. Municipal Demand-Making, 1999 and Wealth

Education, as noted plays a strong role in demand-making. Figure 13 shows the relationship. As can be seen, the higher the level of education, the more demand-making there is.

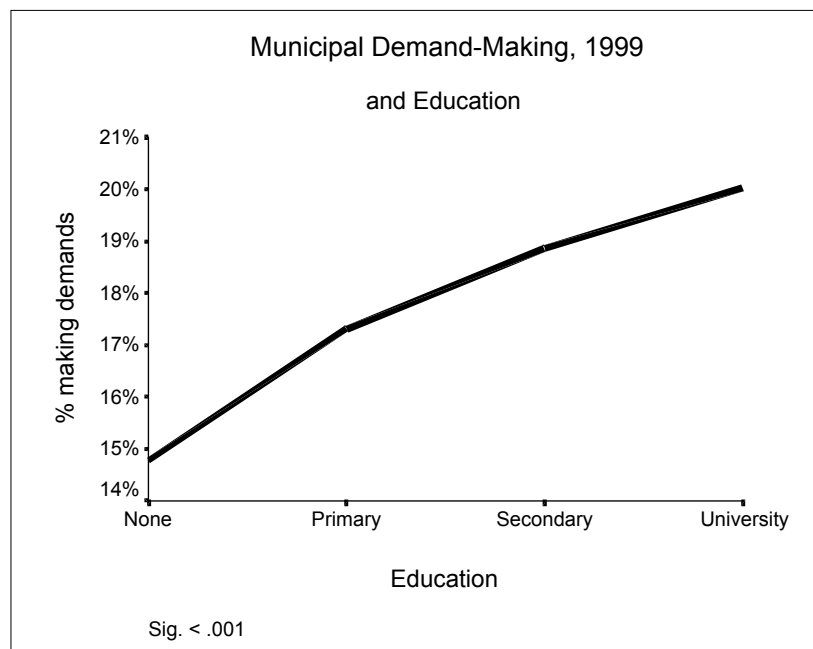


Figure 13. Municipal Demand-Making, 1999 and Education

In sum, demand-making at the municipal level has increased substantially in El Salvador since 1995. We have also found that demand-making is widespread, going on in about equal degrees in both urban and rural areas, but that those who are older, wealthier and more highly educated do more of it. This suggests that while the young and the poor are not being left out entirely, they are significantly behind their older better-off neighbors in making demands on local government.

Problems Perceived in the Municipality

The 1999 survey included a new series of questions, one of which directly asked respondents to state what they saw as the most important problem of their municipal government. The question read as follows:

MUNI2. En su opinión, ¿cuál es el problema que tiene este municipio en la actualidad?

Table 5 gives the results. As can be seen, over two-thirds of all responses are grouped among the top three: lack of security, street paving, trash collection and water. In other words, people are concerned with inadequate municipal services, beginning with the police (and the related crime problem), and moving on to public works and trash collection.

Table 5. Most Serious Problem in the Municipality, 1999

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Falta de seguridad, delincuencia	730	25.0	25.8	25.8
Arreglo de calles	550	18.9	19.5	45.3
Tren de aseo, basura	341	11.7	12.1	57.4
Falta de agua	280	9.6	9.9	67.3
Ninguno	224	7.7	7.9	75.2
Falta de servicios	131	4.5	4.6	79.8
Otras respuestas	123	4.2	4.4	84.2
La situación económica	86	3.0	3.0	87.2
Mala administración	69	2.4	2.5	89.7
Desempleo	56	1.9	2.0	91.7
Alumbrado público	53	1.8	1.9	93.6
Falta de fondos, ayuda	44	1.5	1.6	95.1
Falta de mercado, ventas callejeras	44	1.5	1.5	96.7
Aguas negras	32	1.1	1.1	97.8
Problemas ecológicos	22	.8	.8	98.6
Reordenamiento vial	19	.6	.7	99.2
Centros recreativos	14	.5	.5	99.7
No escuchar a la población	7	.3	.3	100.0
Total	2826	97.0	100.0	
No sabe/no responde	88	3.0		
	2914	100.0		

This question was followed up by one that asked how much the mayor has done to resolve this problem. The item read as follows:

MUNI3. ¿Cuánto ha hecho el alcalde por resolver ese problema?

(3) Mucho

(2) Algo

(1) Poco

(0) Nada

Figure 14 shows the results. As can be seen, most Salvadorans respond quite negatively.

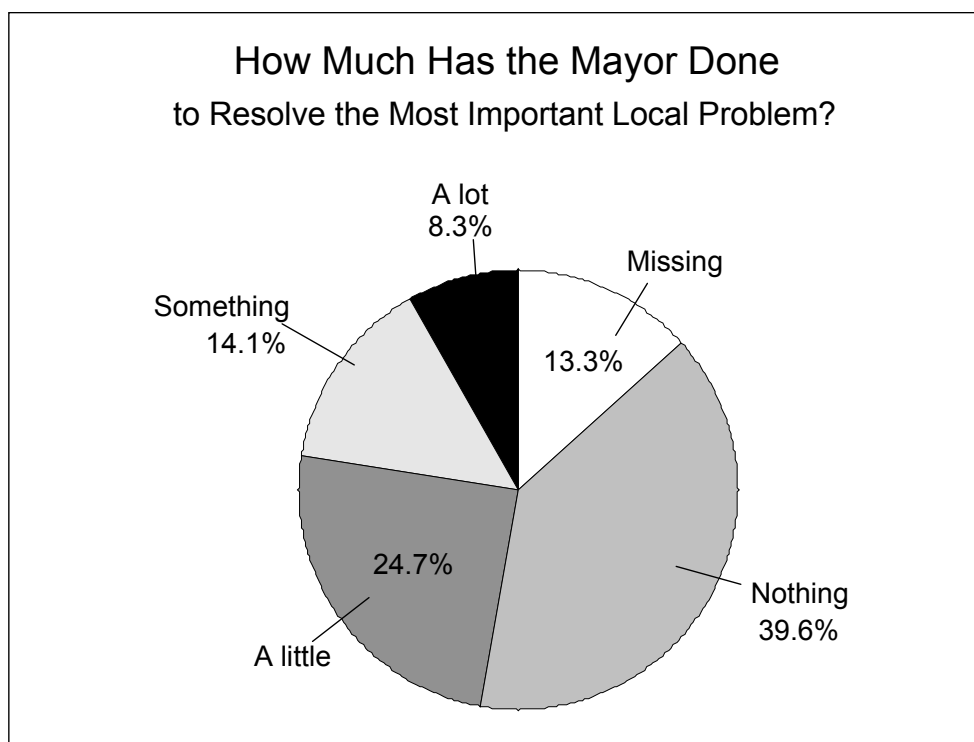


Figure 14. How Much Has the Mayor Done to Resolve the Most Important Local Problem?

In spite of this negative evaluation, a majority of Salvadorans view municipal projects positively. The question asked was:

MUN17. En su opinión, ¿los proyectos que ejecuta su alcaldía benefician a personas como Ud. o a su familia?

(1) Sí benefician

(0) No benefician

As can be seen in Figure 15, a minority believes that such projects are not beneficial.

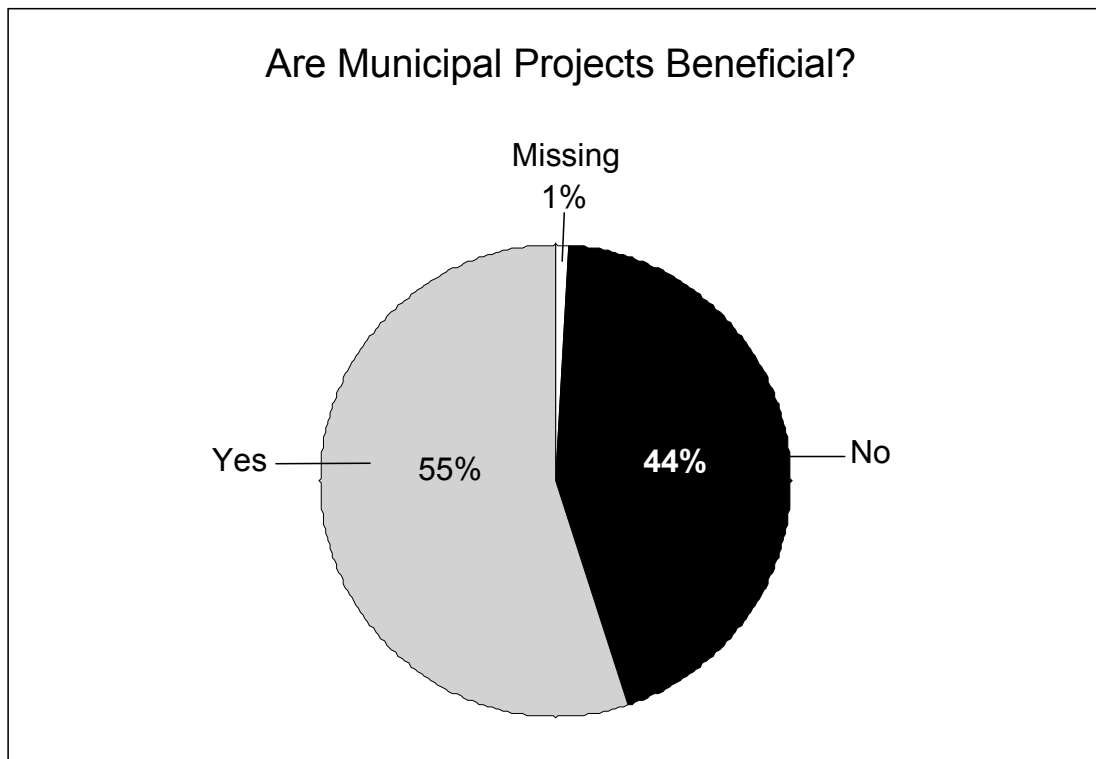


Figure 15. Are Municipal Projects Beneficial?

Satisfaction with Municipal Services

It has already been shown that demand-making on municipal government has increased sharply since 1995. Why has this happened? It may be that services have gotten worse, so citizens are making more demands, or that services have improved, stimulating further demands for greater improvements. As can be seen from Figure 16, satisfaction with municipal services has increased significantly since 1995. While the absolute increase is not high, it should be kept in mind that this question is one based on perceptions, and that these are highly subjective. The question asked was:

SGL1. ¿Diría usted que los servicios que la Alcaldía está dando a la gente son ... ?
(1) Excelentes (2) Buenos (3) Regulares (4) Malos (5) Pésimos
(8) No sabe

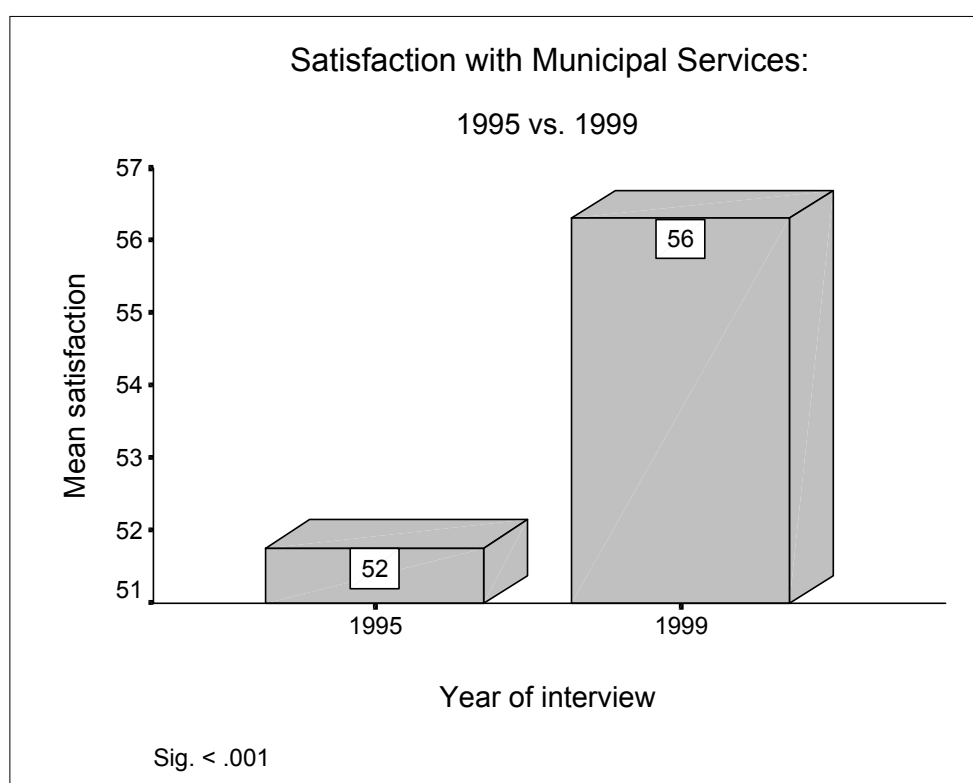


Figure 16. Satisfaction with Municipal Services: 1995 vs. 1999

Satisfaction varied somewhat by department. When comparing satisfaction in 1995 with satisfaction in 1999, it increased in most departments, but in some it stayed about the same or declined. Once again, we must be cautious here because of the relatively small sample sizes in each department. Figure 17 shows the results. It is of note that while we earlier saw that demand-making in Chalatenango had gone down since 1995, satisfaction has gone up.

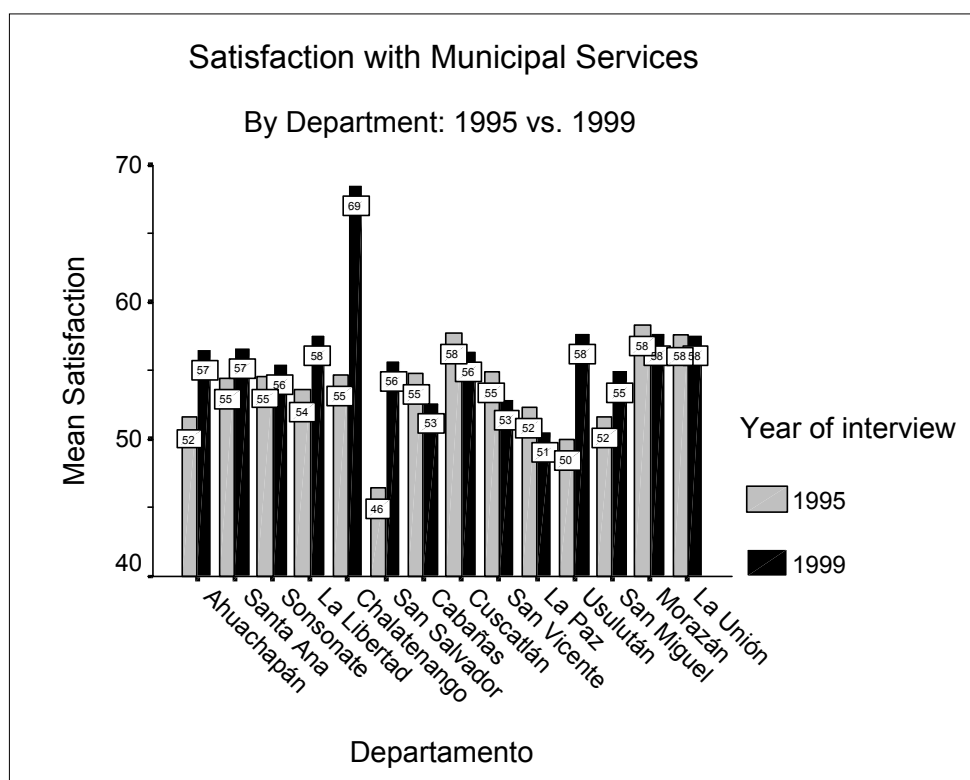


Figure 17. Satisfaction with Municipal Services By Department: 1995 vs. 1999

An analysis of the factors that predict satisfaction is shown in Table 6 below. As can be seen, education, age, wealth and population density of the municipality are irrelevant to satisfaction with municipal services. Females, however, are significantly more satisfied than males, while satisfaction declines somewhat in more highly urbanized municipios. Since both density and urbanization are included in this regression analysis, it is clear that some notion of urbanization, measured either by that of the census bureau or of population density contributes to a decline in satisfaction. A further analysis was conducted to see if crime rates, measured by homicides per department made a difference in satisfaction, but they did not.

Table 6. Predictors of Municipal Satisfaction

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	54.855	2.344		23.403	.000
Q1 Sexo de la persona entrevistada	2.838	.898	.060	3.162	.002
ED Educación de la persona entrevistada	3.309E-02	.117	.007	.284	.777
Q2 Edad	-8.946E-03	.031	-.006	-.288	.773
ARTIFAC Wealth	-1.464E-02	.029	-.012	-.510	.610
MUNDEN Densidad poblacional por municipio	3.906E-04	.000	.049	1.868	.062
URATEMUN Tasa de urbanizacion por municipio	-5.001	2.086	-.067	-2.398	.017

Dependent Variable: SGL1R Satisfaction with Municipal Services

A second question was asked regarding satisfaction, this one on dealing with bureaucratic matters. The question was:

SGL2. ¿Cómo considera que le han tratado a usted o a sus vecinos cuando han ido a la Alcaldía para hacer trámites? ¿Le han tratado muy bien, bien, regular, mal o muy mal?

(1) Muy bien (2) Bien (3) Regular (4) Mal (5) Muy mal (8) No sabe

The findings are virtually identical from those uncovered for variable SGL1. That is, in 1999, satisfaction was significantly above the level in 1995. Factors associated with satisfaction were also similar. The results will not be repeated here.

Which Level of Government Responds Better?

The survey data contains further strong evidence that Salvadorans had a higher regard for local government in 1999 than they did in 1995. A question in the survey asked them which level of government better solves community problems. As can be seen in Figure 18, there has been a strong increase in the percentage of Salvadorans selecting municipal government over other levels (or of no level). In 1995, 42% selected the municipality, while in 1999, this rose to 58%.

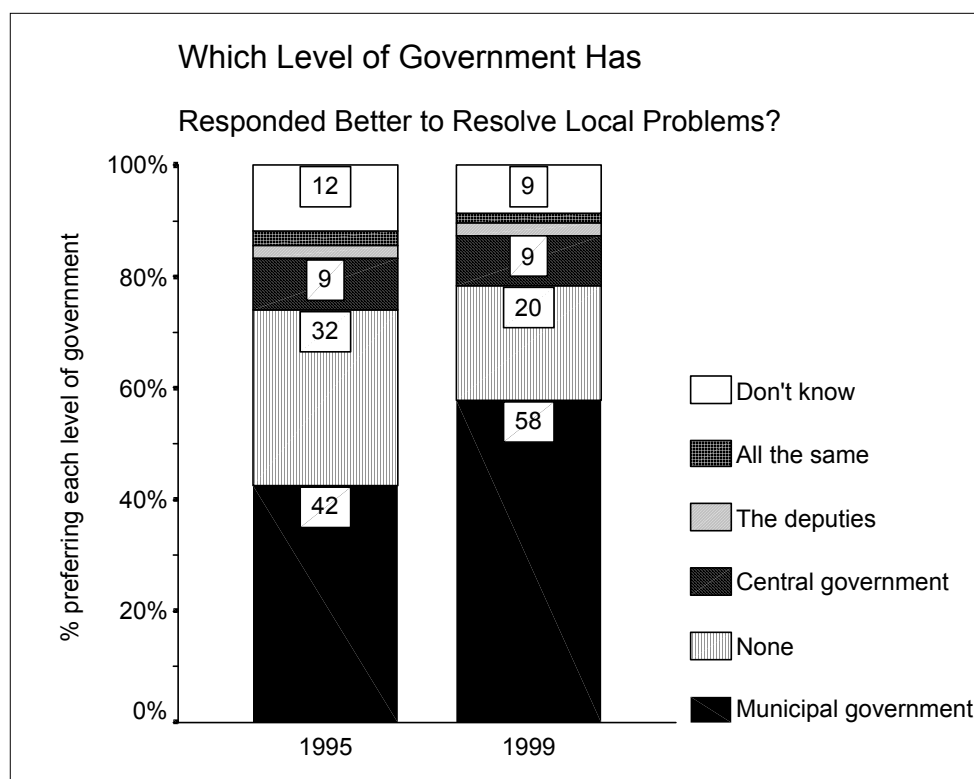


Figure 18. Which Level of Government Has Responded Better to Resolve Local Problems?

But even stronger evidence of a positive change in views toward local government emerges from a question that asked if more responsibility should be transferred to the municipality, or should more be assumed by the central government. The question read as follows:

LGL2. En su opinión ¿se le debe de dar más obligaciones y más dinero a la Alcaldía, o debemos dejar que el gobierno central asuma más asuntos y servicios municipales?

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Más a la alcaldía | (2) Que el gobierno central asuma | [(3) No cambiar nada] |
| (4) Más a la alcaldía si dan mejores servicios] | | (8) No sabe |

Figure 19 shows the results for 1995 vs. 1999. As can be seen, there is a large increase in respondents who would prefer the municipality. Even when the qualified category of response, “more responsibility and funding to municipal government if it gives better service,” is added (summing the first two bars, which in 1995 totaled 41.5%, and in 1999 totaled 49.3%), the 1999 data still show stronger support for local government in 1999 than in 1995.

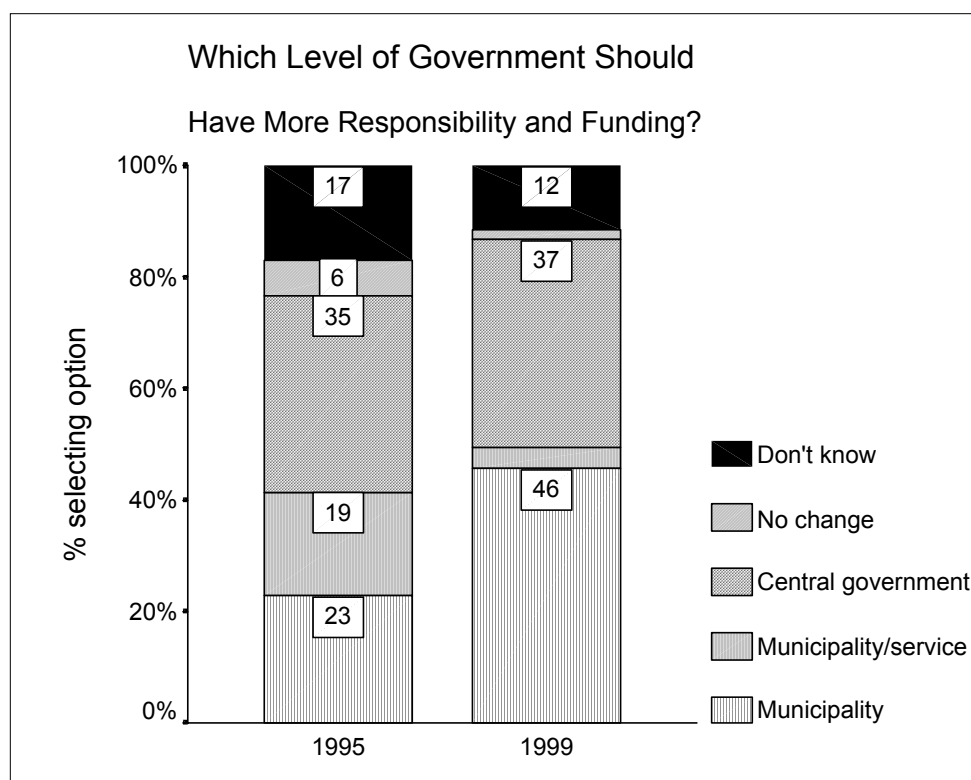


Figure 19. Which Level of Government Should Have More Responsibility and Funding?

Few of us want to pay more taxes, so it is understandable that when asked if they would be willing to do for better municipal service, most Salvadorans said “no.” The question read:

LGL3. ¿Estaría usted dispuesto a pagar más impuestos a la Alcaldía para que ésta pueda prestar mejores servicios municipales o cree usted que no vale la pena pagar más?

(1) Más impuestos (2) No vale la pena pagar más (8) No sabe.

Nonetheless, the percentage of those willing to do so rose significantly between 1995 and 1999, as is shown in Figure 20.

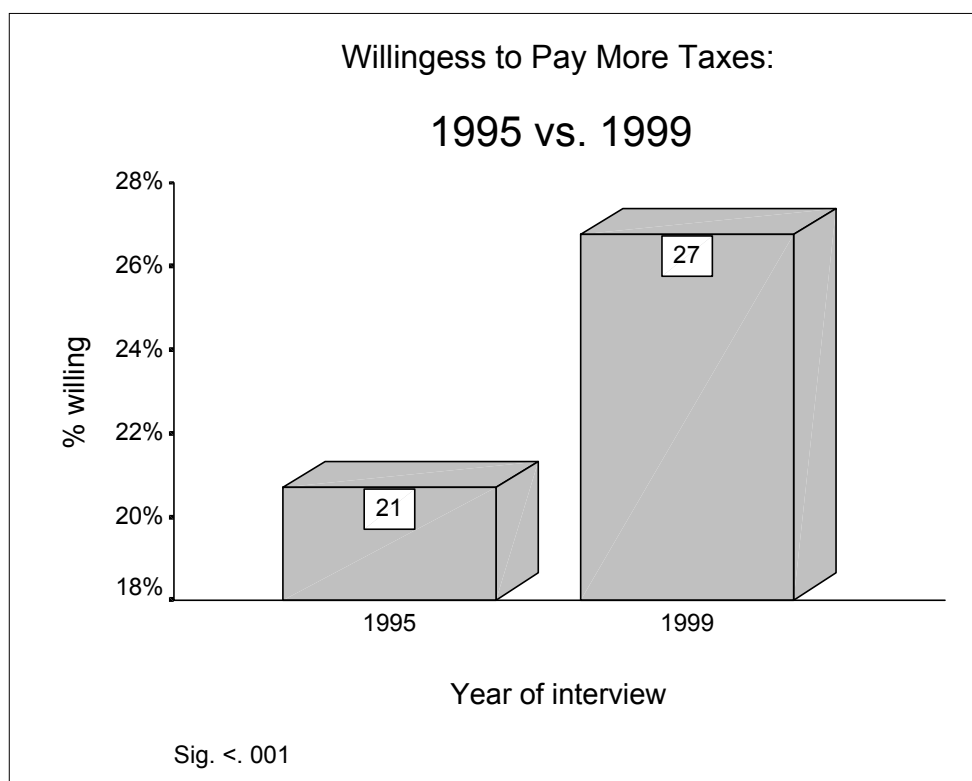


Figure 20. Willingness to Pay More Taxes: 1995 vs. 1999

Responsiveness of Municipality

The survey attempted to determine how responsive Salvadorans feel that their local government is. The question asked was:

LGL4. ¿Cree usted que el Alcalde y el concejo municipal responden a lo que el pueblo quiere ... ?

- (1) Siempre (2) La mayoría de veces (3) De vez en cuando
 (4) Casi nunca (5) Nunca (8) No sabe.

Figure 21 shows that between 1995 and 1999 there was a significant increase in the perception of the responsiveness of local government. These findings closely parallel the ones we have seen before, with the 1999 survey showing greater support for local government than did the 1995 survey.

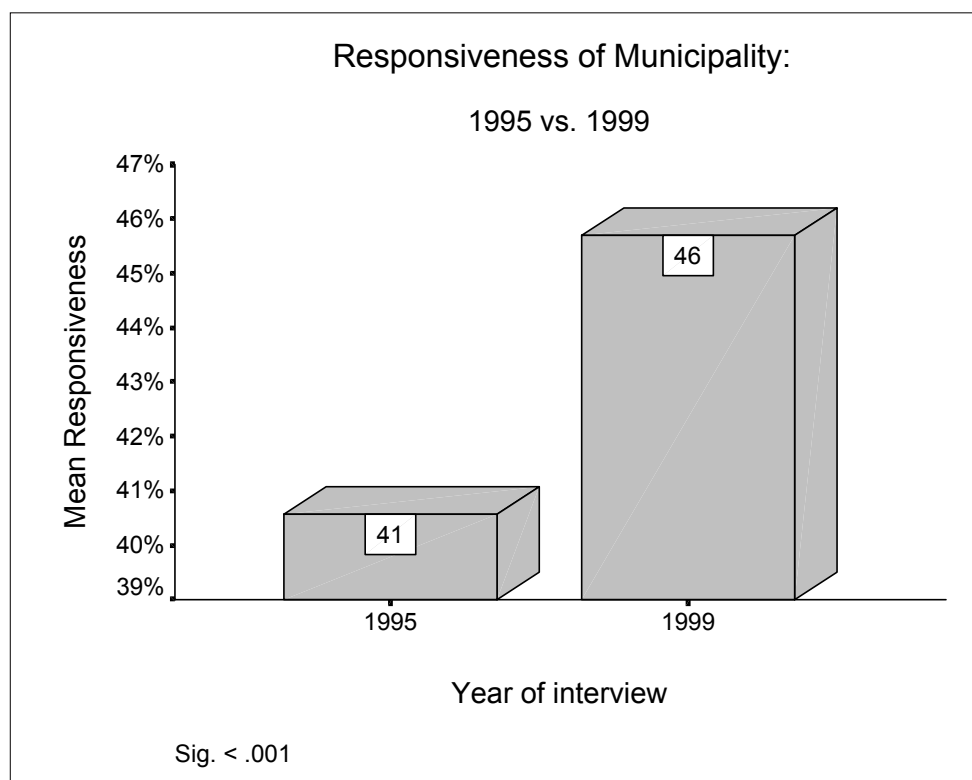


Figure 21. Responsiveness of Municipality: 1995 vs. 1999

Support for 6% Transfer Tax

In 1997 the government of El Salvador approved an increase in fiscal support for local government, by agreeing to transfer 6% of the general national budget to municipalities. Such a transference has been difficult, however, as many other pressing fiscal needs compete at the national level. It is clear from the survey, however, that Salvadorans are overwhelmingly in favor of this transfer. The question asked was:

DES11. ¿Cree Ud. que el gobierno debería transferir el 6% del presupuesto a las municipalidades o cree que las municipalidades no deberían recibir el 6%?

(1) Sí, deberían (2) No deberían (8) NS/NR

Figure 22 shows that over three quarters of respondents in the 1999 survey favor this transfer. Indeed, only about one-in-ten are opposed, with the remainder indicating that they did not know.

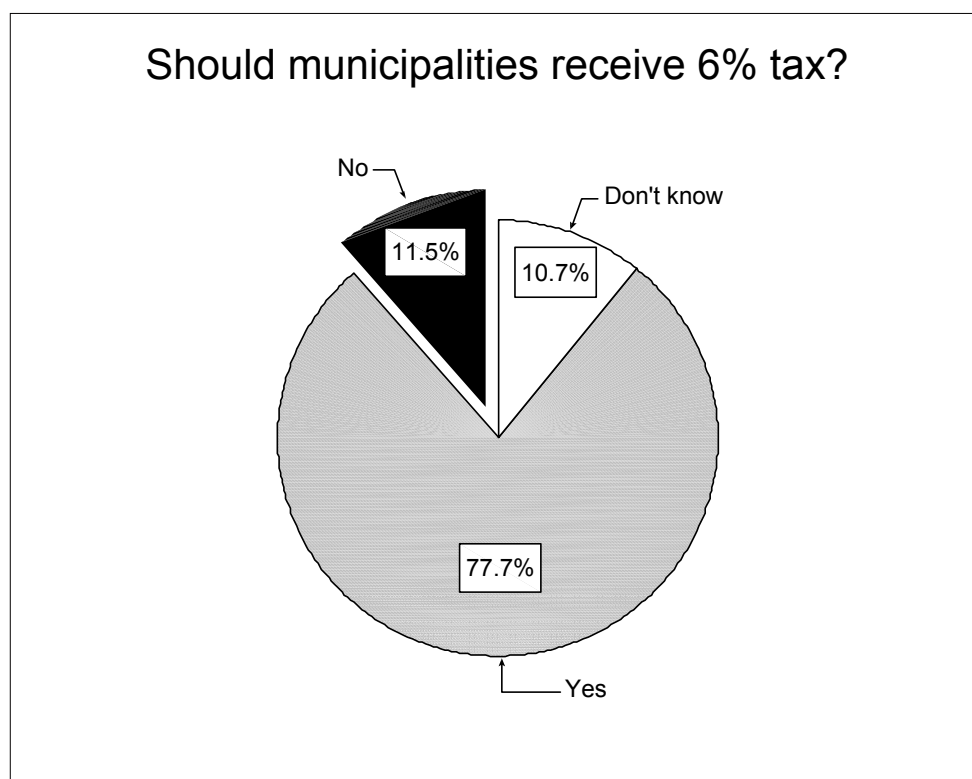


Figure 22. Should Municipalities Receive 6% Tax

While these data are very positive, much less knowledge is held by the public on the plans for the use of these funds. The question asked was:

MUNI4. El año pasado el gobierno aprobó el 6% del presupuesto nacional para los municipios. Parte de esos fondos se tienen que usar para hacer mejoras en las comunidades, ¿sabe Ud. qué planes tiene el municipio para usar estos fondos?

(1) Sí, conoce los planes [siga]

(0) No conoce los planes

Figure 23 shows that only one out of ten respondents says that he/she has knowledge of the plans.

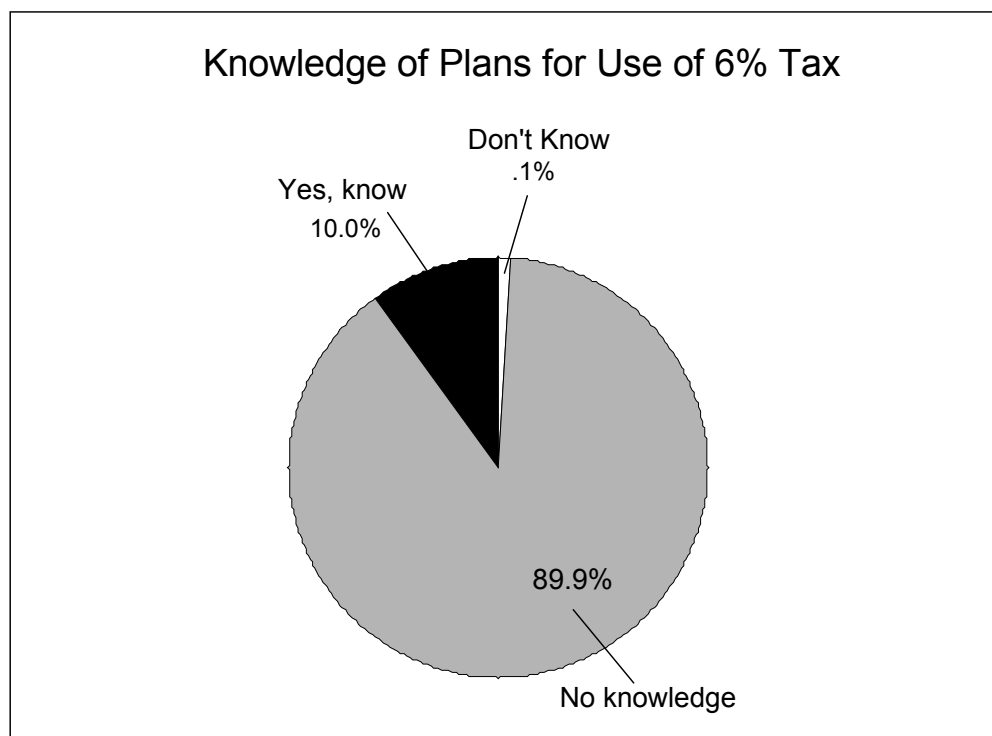


Figure 23. Knowledge of Plans for Use of 6% Tax

Conclusions

This chapter has presented very strong evidence of the increasing importance of local government in El Salvador. Citizens in 1999 were more positive toward local government and more likely to want it to take care of local problems than were citizens in 1995. Not only is there more support, but citizens are more willing to pay for improved local services. These results suggest that the various programs that have been implemented to strengthen local government are having a positive effect in El Salvador.

Chapter III. System Support

System Support: Theory

The stability of a political system, and its ability to weather crises without succumbing to breakdown has been directly linked to legitimacy.¹⁰ Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the leading theorists in the area of democratic stability defined legitimacy as “the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society”.¹¹ Lipset hypothesized, based primarily upon his observation of the impact of the Great Depression on Europe, that systems viewed by their citizens as being legitimate would survive a crisis of effectiveness (e.g. when the economy takes a nosedive), but those that were seen as illegitimate would tend to collapse under the stress of economic crisis. Lipset refers specifically to Germany, Austria and Spain as examples of fundamentally illegitimate systems that experienced breakdowns of democracy when buffeted by a crisis of effectiveness. The United States and Great Britain, however, survived the Great Depression without political breakdown, because of the legitimacy of these systems.¹²

Lipset recognized that once a system achieved a high degree of legitimacy there was no guarantee that it would not eventually lose it. Just as political systems can undergo a crisis of effectiveness, so too could they undergo crises of legitimacy. Indeed, Lipset (1959:78) explicitly pointed out that long-term crises of effectiveness could erode legitimacy because legitimacy itself depended upon the ability of the system to “sustain the expectations of major groups.” Consequently, “a breakdown of effectiveness, repeatedly or for a long period will endanger even a legitimate's system stability.”¹³ And Juan Linz (1978:16) makes much the same point in his treatise on the causes of the breakdown of democracies: “Obviously no government is accorded legitimacy in this sense by all its citizens, but no government can survive without that belief on the part of a substantial number of citizens....”¹⁴

The effectiveness of the Salvadoran political system in terms of delivering increased welfare to its citizens has been limited and therefore the ability of the democratic system to engender legitimacy significantly constrained. During the period 1965-1990, annual growth averaged -.4%.¹⁵ This record contrasted with an average annual growth rate of 1.5% for the

¹⁰This discussion draws upon several papers, including Mitchell A. Seligson, “Toward A Model of Democratic Stability: Political Culture in Central America,” *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 11, no. 2 (2000, forthcoming).

¹¹Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Basis of Politics*. Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, expanded ed., originally published 1961, p. 77. Seymour Martin Lipset, Kyoung_Ryung Seong, and John Charles Torres. “A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy.” *International Social Science Journal* 136 (May 1993): 155_75. See also, Seymour Martin Lipset. “The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited.” *American Sociological Review* 59 (February 1994): 1_22.

¹²For more recent statements on this subject see Seymour Martin Lipset, Kyoung_Ryung Seong, and John Charles Torres, “A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy,” *International Social Science Journal* 136 (May 1993), 155_75; and Seymour Martin Lipset, “The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited,” *American Sociological Review* 59 (February 1994), 1_22; and Seymour Martin Lipset, “Excerpts from Three Lectures on Democracy,” *Extensions*, (Spring) 1998, 3_13.

¹³Lipset, 1981, p. 80.

¹⁴Linz, Juan J, and Alfred Stepan, editors. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. Baltimore, MD., 1978, p. 16.

¹⁵World Bank. *World Development Report, 1992*. Washington, D. C.: Oxford University Press, 1992,

lower middle-income group of countries of which El Salvador then formed a part according to the World Bank. This period incorporates the effect of the Civil War, which seriously affected the economy of the country. The combined effect of poor economic performance and an extremely violent and prolonged civil war, had its impact on the political attitudes of Salvadorans. It would not at all be surprising if Salvadoran citizens had reservations about the legitimacy of governments that were in power during this period of poor economic performance and high violence. More recently, however, El Salvador's picture has improved. For example, the World Bank reports that in the period 1997-98, the average per capita growth rate increased to 3.7%.¹⁶ CEPAL reports a growth rate of 3.2% for 1998 with an estimate of 2.3% for 1999 and a projection of 3.5% for 2000.¹⁷ One would hope that over time, steady improvements in the economy and the welfare of its citizens would result in a slow, but steady, building of the legitimacy of the system.

In this chapter, belief in the legitimacy of the Salvadoran system of government will be described. As a result of a long-term research project at the University of Pittsburgh, a scale of legitimacy called "Political Support/Alienation" (PSA) has been developed, based initially on studies in Germany, the United States, but later expanded to all of Central America, Peru, Paraguay, Venezuela and, Bolivia.¹⁸ The scale attempts to tap the level of support citizens have for their system of government, without focusing on the incumbent regime itself. Political scientists call this "diffuse support" or "system support."¹⁹ The core of this scale rests on five items, and each item has utilized a seven-point response format, ranging from "not at all" to "a great deal." The full Spanish text of the items are given in the questionnaire that can be found as an appendix to this study. The numbering system used in the questionnaire as well as in the data base is reproduced here to enable the interested reader to further explore the data. The questions were as follows:

- B1. To what extent do you believe that the courts in El Salvador guarantee a fair trial?
- B2. To what extent do you have respect for the political institutions of El Salvador?
- B3. To what extent do you think that the basic rights of citizens are well protected by the El Salvadoran political system?
- B4. To what extent do you feel proud to live under the political system of El Salvador?

p. 218. This overall record includes the pre-civil war period, in which growth was strong, and the civil war period when it was not. For example, in the period 1965-69, growth averaged 6.0%, while in 1980-84 it averaged -3.9%.

¹⁶World Bank, 1999/200, p. 230.

¹⁷CEPAL News, Vol XX, January 2000, No. 1, p. 1

¹⁸Mitchell A. Seligson, "On the Measurement of Diffuse Support: Some Evidence from Mexico." *Social Indicators Research* 12 (January 1983b): 1_24; Mitchell A. Seligson, and Edward N. Muller, "Democratic Stability and Economic Crisis: Costa Rica 1978_1983," 301_26, September, *International Studies Quarterly*, 1987; in translation as: Mitchell A., Seligson, and Edward N. Muller, "Estabilidad Democrática y Crisis Económica: Costa Rica, 1978_1983." *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* 16_17, no. 2 (1990): 71_92, 2.; Edward N. Muller, Thomas O. Jukam, and Mitchell A. Seligson. "Diffuse Political Support and Antisystem Political Behavior: A Comparative Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* 26 (May 1982): 240_64.; Mitchell A. Seligson, *Political Culture in Paraguay: 1996 Baseline Study of Democratic Values*. Asunción, Paraguay: CIRD, 1997. Mitchell A. Seligson, *Democratic Values in Nicaragua: 1991_1997*. Report to USAID/Nicaragua. Pittsburgh, PA., 1997.

¹⁹David Easton, "A Re_Assessment of the Concept of Political Support," *British Journal of Political Science* 5 (1975): 435_57.

B6²⁰. To what extent do you feel that one ought to support the political system of El Salvador?

The system of coding of these variables was originally based on a 1-7 scale, but in order to make these results compatible with the metric used throughout this study, they have been transformed into a 0-100 range here.²¹

Levels of System Support, 1991-1999

The survey data allow us to examine the dynamics of system support from 1991 through 1999. As noted earlier, the 1991 survey is limited to the greater San Salvador area. Figure 24 shows that in this area of the country, three of the five measures of support increased significantly over this time period.

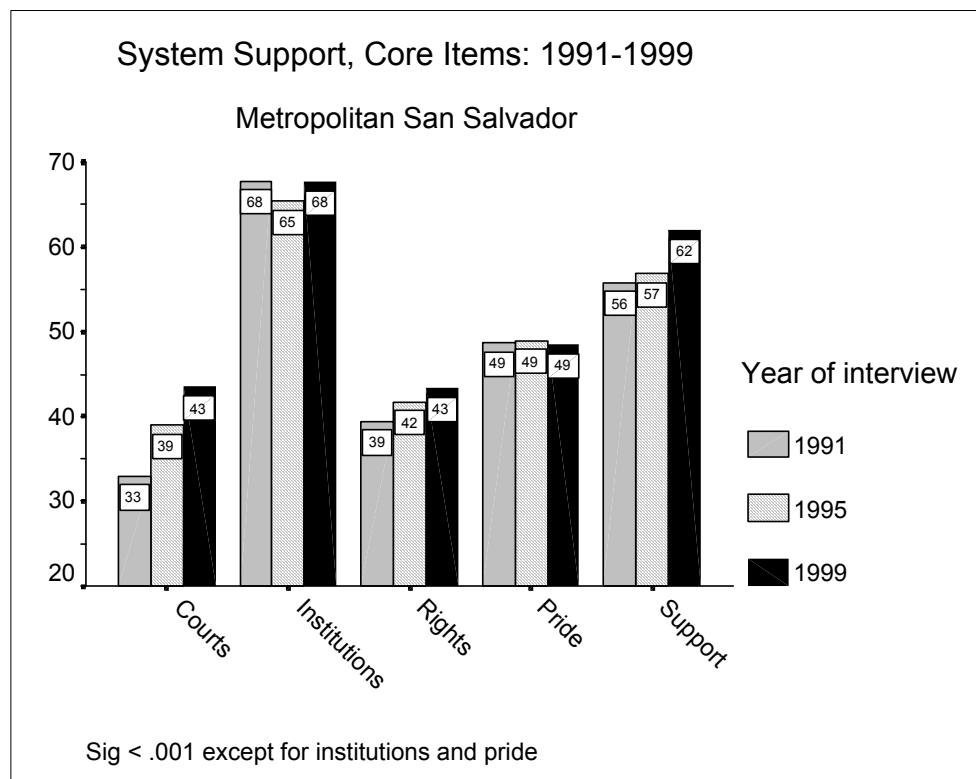


Figure 24. System Support, Core Items: 1991-1999 – Metropolitan San Salvador

²⁰There is no question 'B5' in this study. Earlier versions of the PSA series included additional items, including B5, but that item (and others) were dropped as they were shown to be less essential to measuring the basic concept. In order to retain consistency of comparisons with prior work, the original numbering system retained in this study for this series and all others presented in these pages.

²¹A score of 1 point was subtracted from each variable to give them all a 0-6 range, and then the resulting number was divided by 6, to give the scale a 0-1 range, and then multiplied by 100, to give it a 0-100 range.

These results are certainly promising, but what about the country as a whole? Do we find similar increases? Figure 25 shows the national pattern, in which for 1991 we use the greater metropolitan San Salvador data as a surrogate for the national results. These results show an even stronger, more consistent pattern of increases, with system support rising significantly for each of the variables in this core group of questions. These results give us strong evidence that the legitimacy of the political system has been increasing in El Salvador ever since the conclusion of the Civil War.

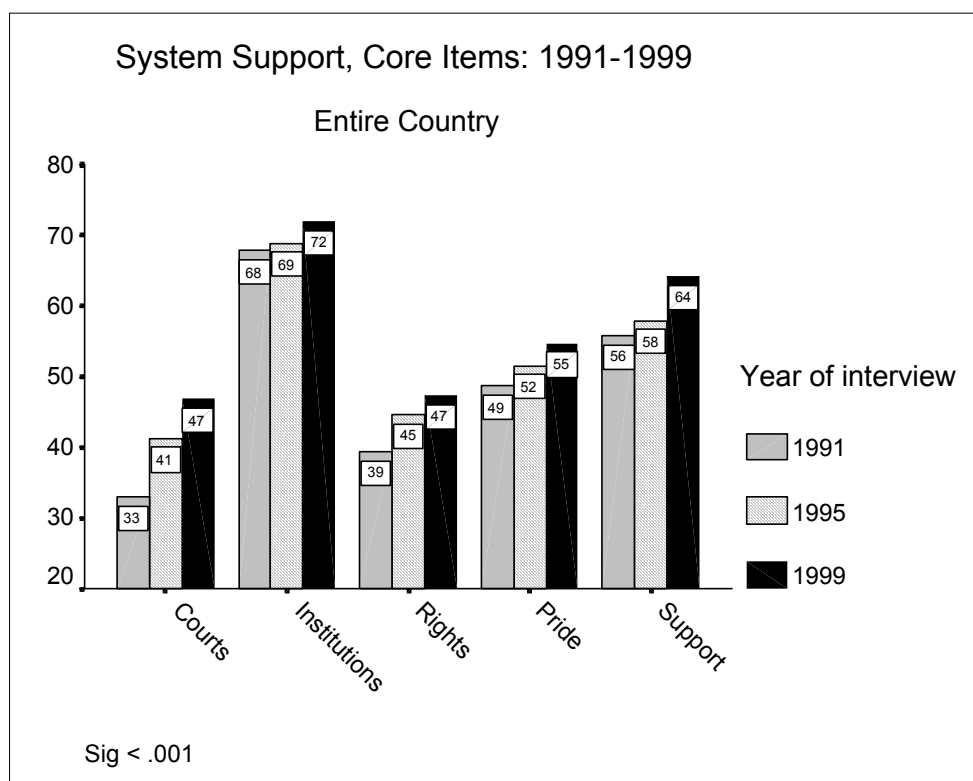


Figure 25. System Support, Core Items: 1991-1999 – Entire Country

In many places in this study we refer to the overall dimension of system support, and do so by utilizing an overall index of such support. The index is an average of the on the five items shown above.²² Figure 26 shows the results. As can be seen, system support, which was below the mid-point of 50 in 1991 (for San Salvador only) increased to well above that point between 1995 and 1999 (national results).

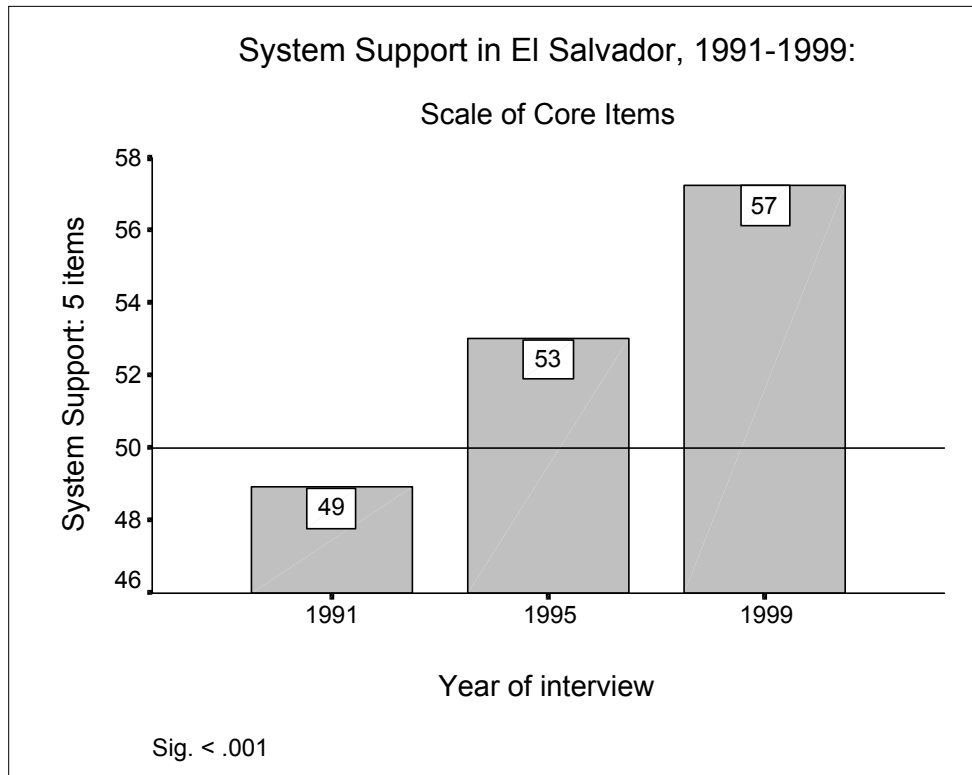


Figure 26. System Support in El Salvador, 1991-1999: Scale of Core Items

²²In previous reports on this scale a somewhat different system of scaling was used. In those reports, if any one item in the five-item scale was missing, the entire respondent was coded as missing. In order not to lose a large number of cases, in the current system, if three or more of the five are answered, the average is based on those three or more. If fewer than three items are answered, then the result is coded as missing. For this reason, comparisons with prior reports, such as the Seligson and Córdova 1995 study will show somewhat different results.

The national results may be obscuring differences at the subnational level. The overall average, for example, could be a product of sharp increases in some areas, and sharp declines in other. In fact, while system support has varied, as Figure 27 shows, in most departments it has increased. Indeed, in only one department, that of Ahuachapán, did system support decline, but the decline is not statistically significant.²³

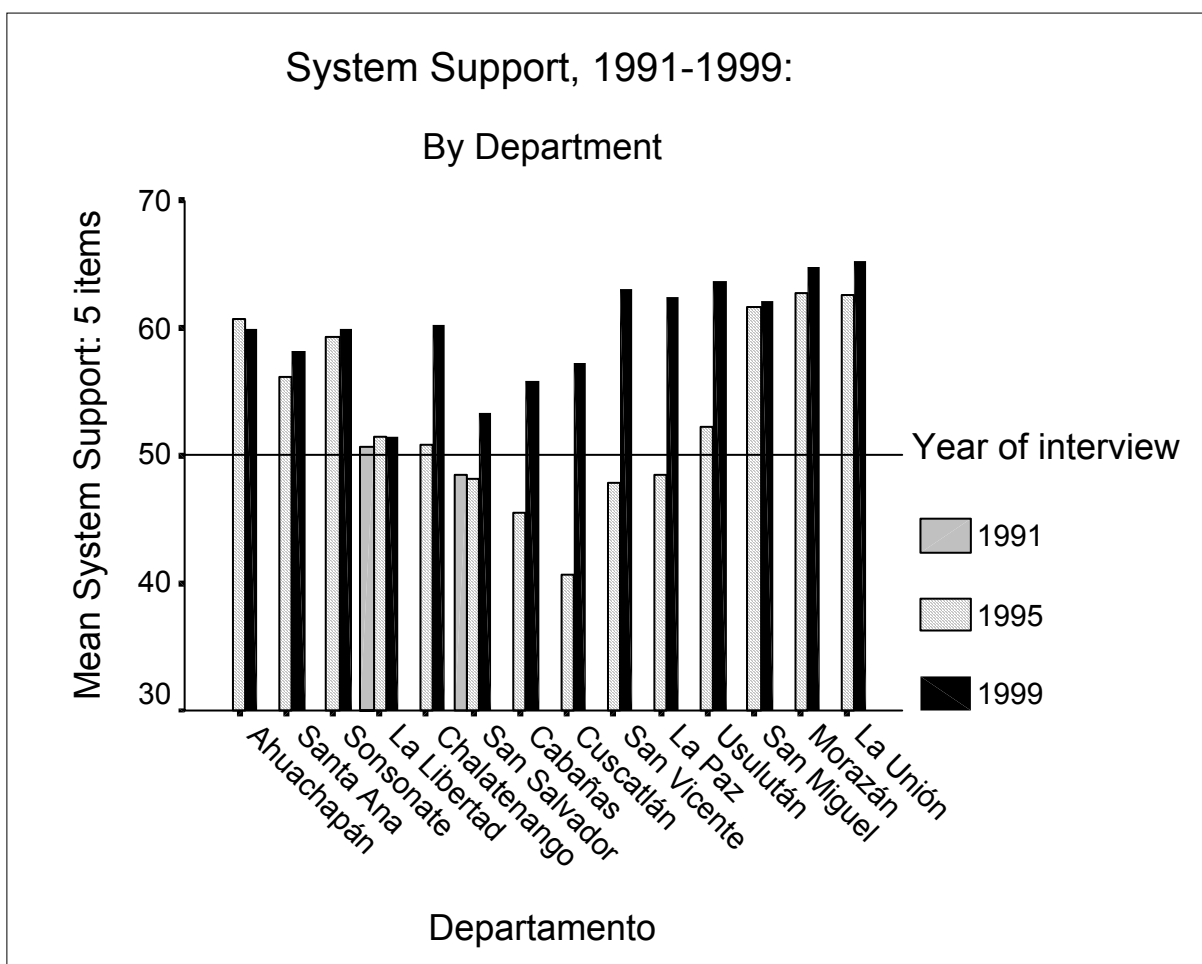


Figure 27. System Support, 1991-1999: By Department

²³The reader needs to keep in mind that the sample size for each department is much smaller than the national sample. Therefore, the confidence intervals are wider at the departmental level than at the national level. As a result, it takes rather large changes at the departmental level for the findings to be statistically significant.

System Support in Comparative Perspective

It is revealing to take a look at El Salvador in comparative perspective. The University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project has asked the identical questions measuring system support in a number of countries in recent years. Some of them are shown in Figure 28 below. Two findings emerge from these data. First, by 1999 El Salvador had higher system support than any of the other countries in the series except Costa Rica, Latin America's oldest, most stable democracy. Second, unlike Peru, in which system support was low and remained low for the two years in the series, El Salvador and Nicaragua are increasing in their levels of support.

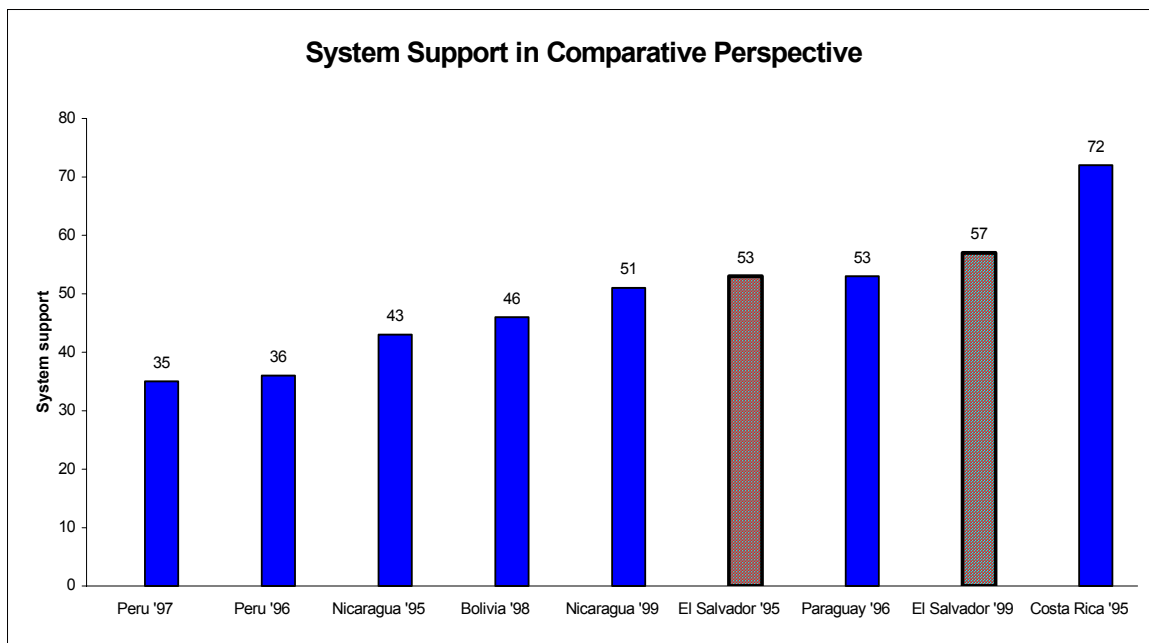


Figure 28. System Support in Comparative Perspective

What Explains System Support in El Salvador?

Although we have seen that system support is increasing in El Salvador, not all respondents gave a positive response. Some are much more supportive of the system of government than others. What explains these differences of opinion? We probed the data using a multivariate analysis (OLS regression), first examining demographic factors. Specifically, we looked at gender and age. Neither of these two variables makes any difference in system support, with males and females, young and old, having about the same levels of support.

Education and System Support

We next looked at socio-economic factors, specifically education and wealth. Education turned out to be significantly associated with system support, with the more highly educated having *lower* support than the less well educated. Figure 29 shows the results. As can be seen, among those with no education, system support exceeds the national average shown in prior figures. The sharpest drop-off is among those with some university education. It should be noted that while the results shown in this figure are for the simple (i.e., bivariate) relationship between education and system support, this relationship holds even when all other factors influencing system support are held constant, as will be shown in the multiple regression analysis below.

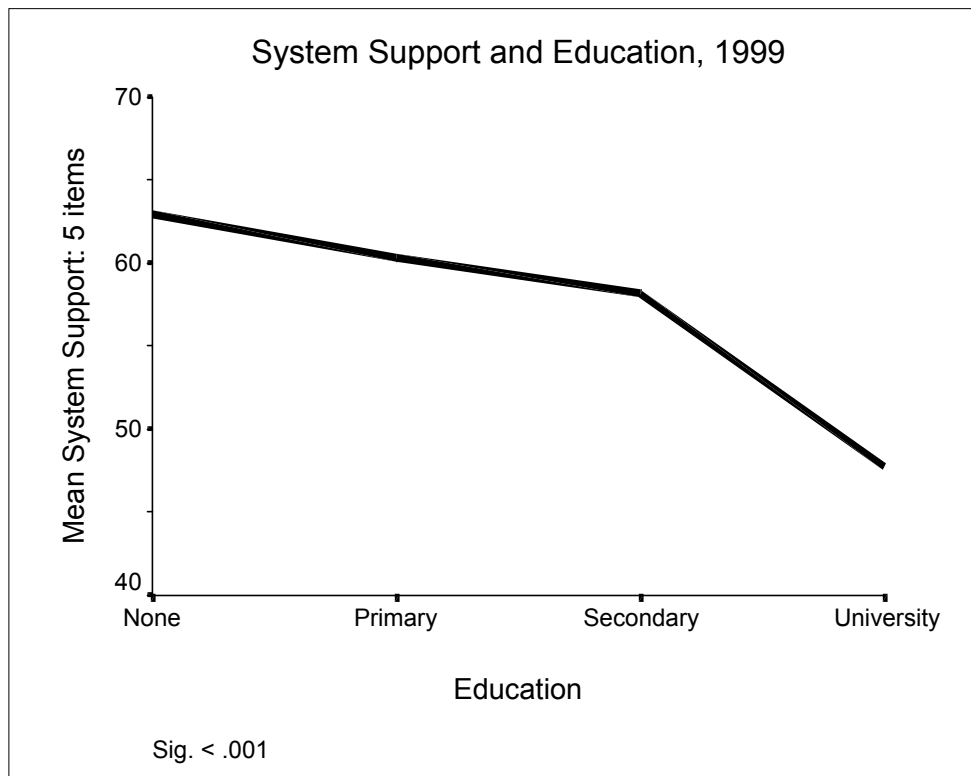


Figure 29. System Support and Education, 1999

Wealth and System Support

Income and wealth are also significant predictors of system support, once again, with higher levels being associated with lower system support. In this study we have measured wealth using monthly income and also by a composite measure of household artifacts (the “R” series in the questionnaire). Both have the same impact on system support. Figure 30 shows the results for monthly income.

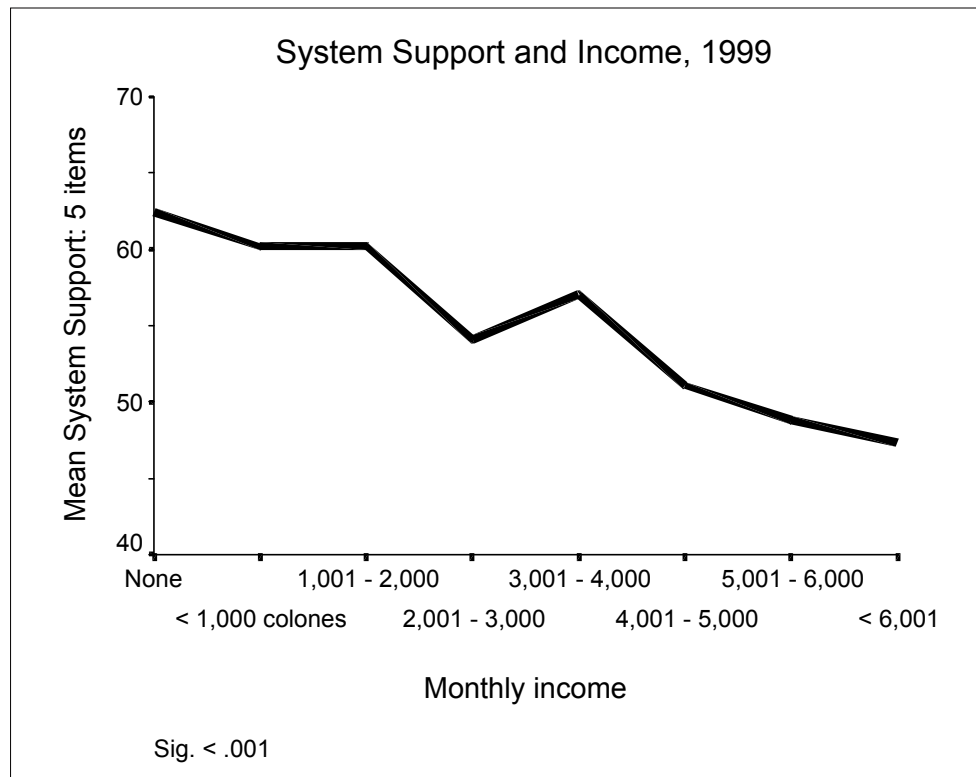


Figure 30. System Support and Income, 1999

Population Size and System Support

Another factor that influences system support is size of the community. The results are shown in Figure 31. As can be seen, system support increases as the population size of the municipality declines. Since education is also lower in smaller municipalities (generally the more remote, rural areas), it is important to note that this increase in system support in less populous municipalities is independent of education, which has been controlled for in the multivariate analysis.

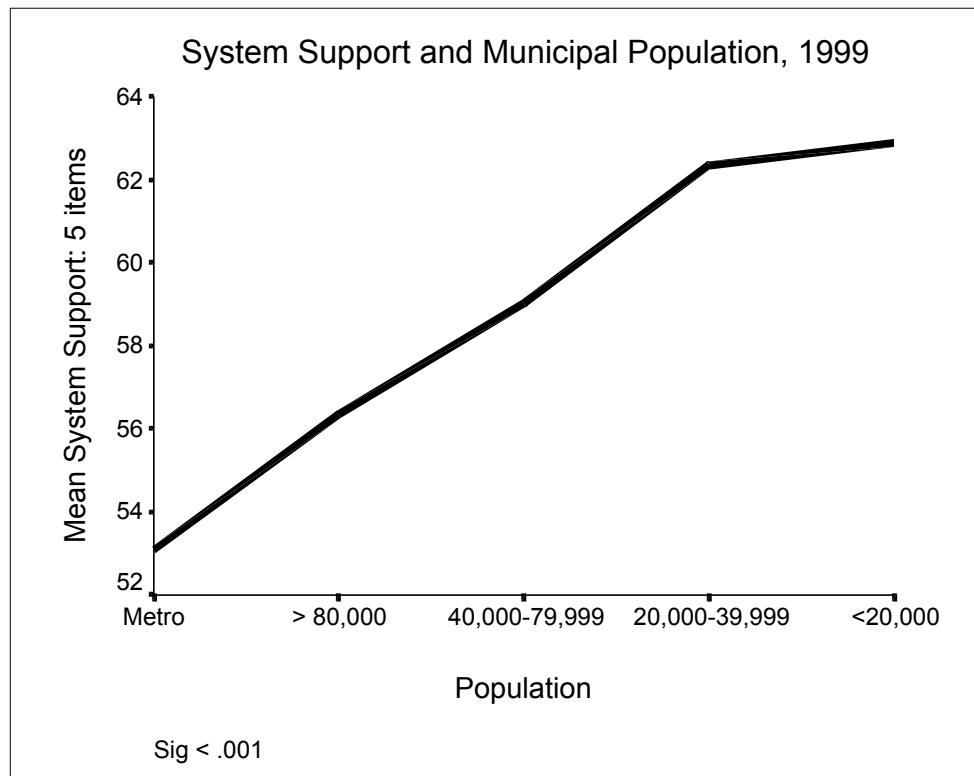


Figure 31. System Support and Municipal Population, 1999

Crime and System Support

We now move beyond these demographic and socio-economic factors related to system support to political factors. First among these is the impact of crime. We looked at victimization itself, and the fear of crime, and found both to be significant predictors of lower levels of system support, even when all other variables are held constant. Figure 32 shows the impact of crime on system support. The results show that it does not make much of a difference if the crime was serious or minor; either way system support drops among victims. This suggests that they have lower confidence in the state's ability to protect them.

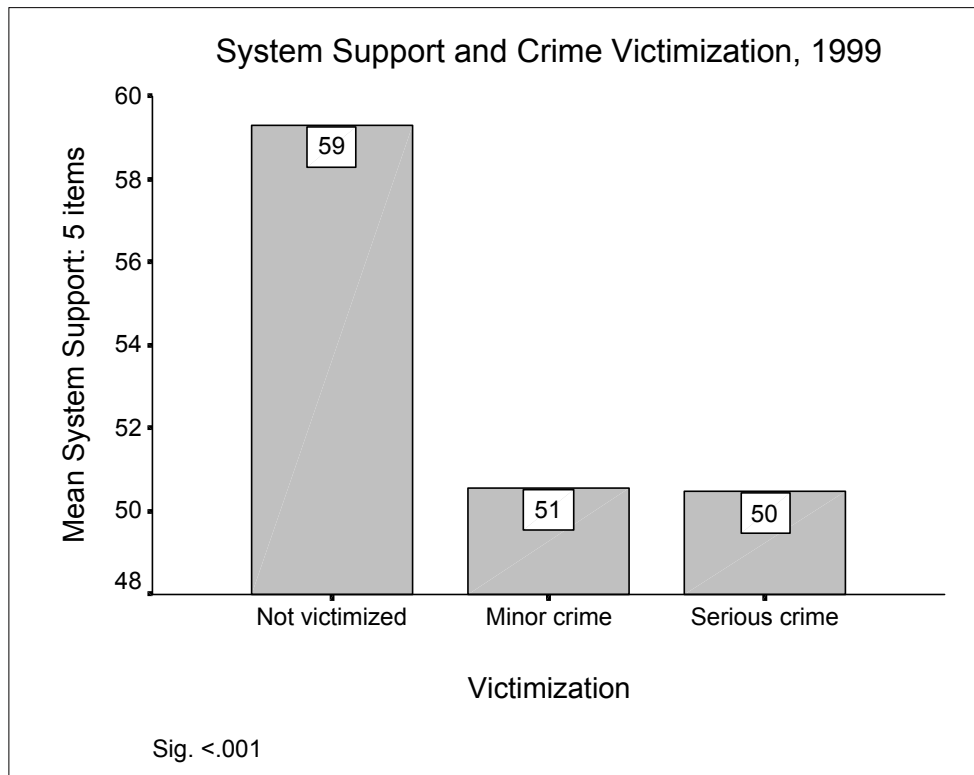


Figure 32. System Support and Crime Victimization, 1999

Not only does the fact of being a victim cause system support to decline, but fear of being a victim does as well, independent of victimization itself. Figure 33 shows the results to our question about fear of crime, which read as follows:

AOJ11. Hablando del lugar o barrio donde Ud. vive, y pensando en la posibilidad de ser víctima de un asalto o robo, ¿Se siente Ud. muy seguro, más o menos seguro, algo inseguro o muy inseguro?

- (1) Muy seguro (2) Más o menos seguro (3) Algo inseguro
(4) Muy Inseguro (8) NS

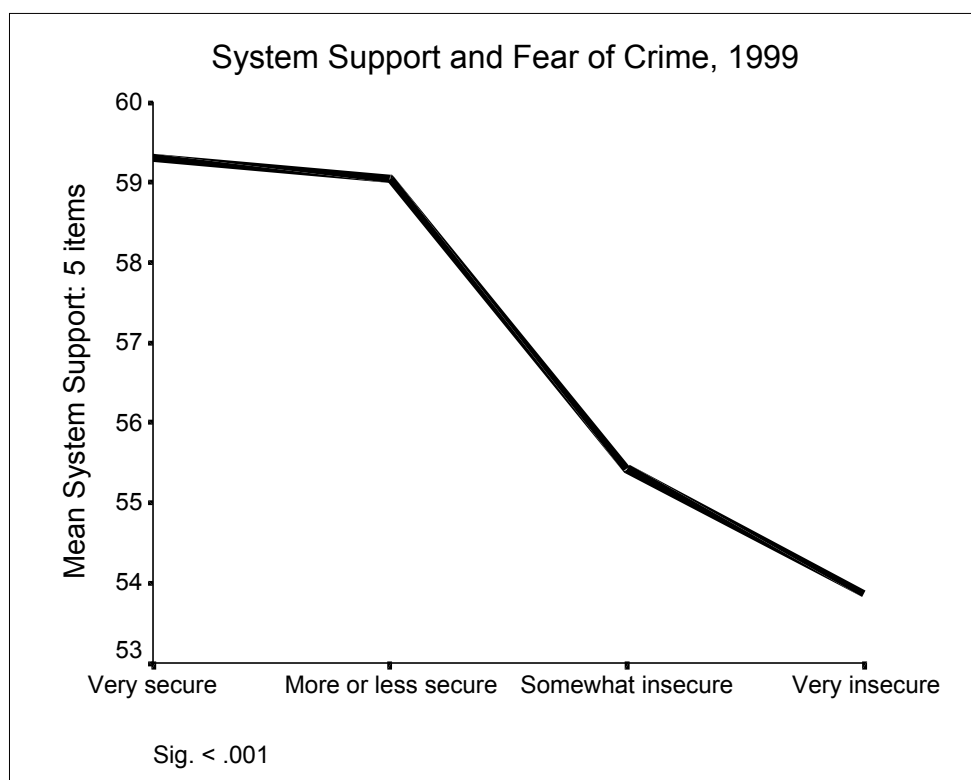


Figure 33. System Support and Fear of Crime, 1999

The Civil War and System Support

Another factor related to security and the role of the state dates back to the war period. We asked a series of three questions (WC1, WC2, and WC3) to determine if the respondent had lost a relative in the war, or had a relative who became a refugee (domestically or internationally). We created a variable that summed up the answer to these three questions.²⁴ Figure 34 shows the results. It is relevant to note that in the 1999 survey we also asked if the respondent had been a combatant in the war. Those who stated that they had been a combatant on the FMLN side expressed lower support for the system than those who had fought with the army or who had not fought at all. But, because the sample size is small for those who state that they had fought in the war, the results are not statistically significant and are not shown here.

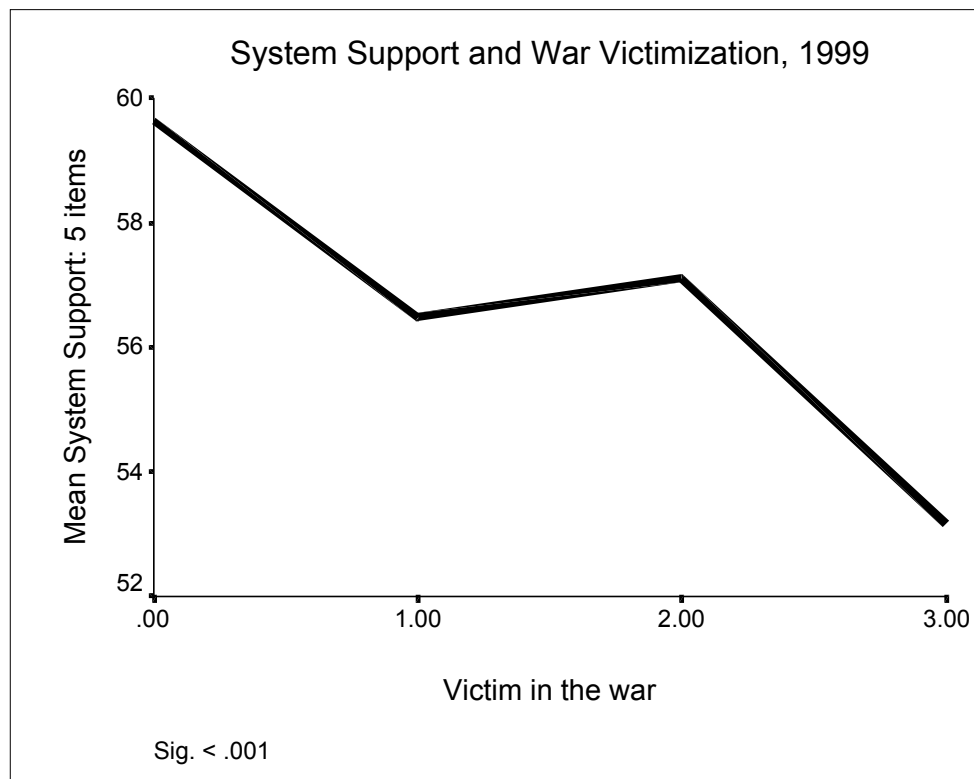


Figure 34. System Support and War Victimization, 1999

²⁴The variable was a “count” variable, with a score of 1 point given each time the respondent answered “yes” to the war victim questions.

Ideology and System Support

Political ideology is often a very powerful force. In El Salvador, left and right have been in contention for many years. It is no surprise, therefore, that ideology is significant factor in determining system support. Figure 35 shows the relationship, using a 10-point ideology scale (question L1).

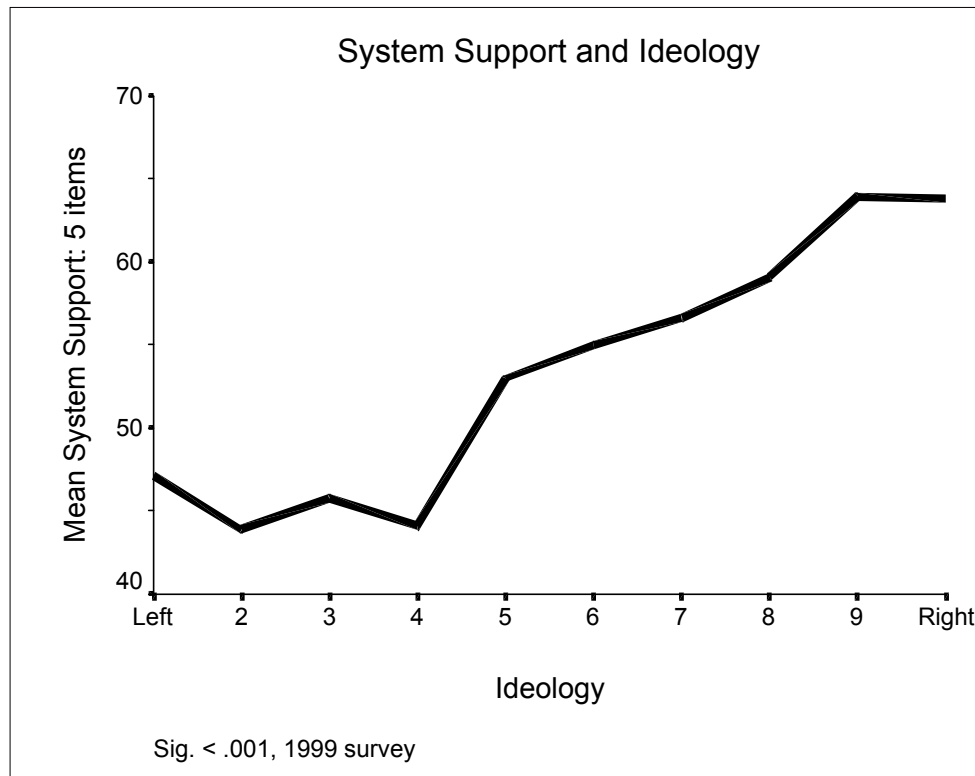


Figure 35. System Support and Ideology

Satisfaction with Local Government and System Support

In the study we conducted on the 1995 survey we found a clear linkage between satisfaction with municipal government and system support at the national level. This suggested that one way of boosting the stability of democracy is to increase the satisfaction of citizens with their local governments. In the chapter on local government we saw that satisfaction has increased significantly since 1995. We have also shown here that support for the system of government has increased. This suggests that the increased confidence in local government is “spilling over” into increased system support at the national level. The linkage between the two is shown in Figure 36.

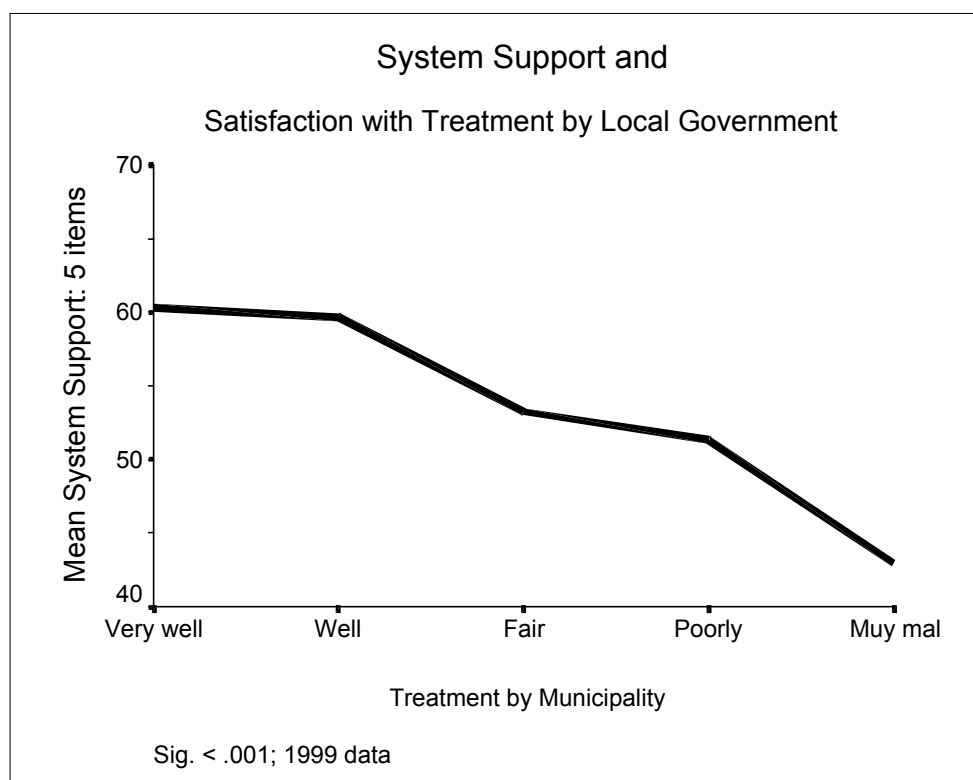


Figure 36. System Support and Satisfaction with Treatment by Local Government

Overall Model of System Support

The overall model for the analysis of the factors associated with system support is contained in Table 7. As can be seen, each of the variables discussed above are statistically significant predictors of system support when each of the other variables is held constant.

Table 7. Predictors of System Support, 1999

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	50.835	2.784		18.262	.000
ED Educa	-.261	.118	-.059	-2.207	.027
Q10 Monthly family income	-1.170	.309	-.100	-3.786	.000
ESTRATO Municipal population	1.720	.314	.125	5.474	.000
AOJ11 Fear of crime	-2.016	.481	-.091	-4.195	.000
VICTIM Crime victimization	-1.881	.760	-.055	-2.477	.013
WARVIC Victim in the war	-.931	.453	-.045	-2.056	.040
SGL2R Treatment by Municipality	.087	.022	.088	4.052	.000
L1 Ideology	1.529	.182	.184	8.400	.000

Dependent Variable: PSA System Support: 5 items

Extended Series of System Support Items

A number of additional items were included as part of an extended series of system support items. Figure 37 shows the results for the 1999 data alone. First, it should be noted that we include the Catholic Church among the institutions, even though this is not one of the components of a democratic political system. We do so to provide an upper-level anchor, since the Church is frequently the institution in Latin America with the highest level of citizen confidence. Since the scores range in the high 60s, this is the highest possible score to which any of the democratic institutions could reasonably aspire. Second, we note that both the municipality and the human rights prosecutor come close to the level of the Catholic Church. The Human Rights Prosecutor does not surprise us with its high score, since who could oppose human rights, but the high score of the municipality does indicate the high esteem in which local government is held in El Salvador. Since we did not include the municipality in our prior surveys among the system support items, we cannot compare it with earlier years. Third, the police and the army are also quite high in 1999, nearly equal to the municipality.

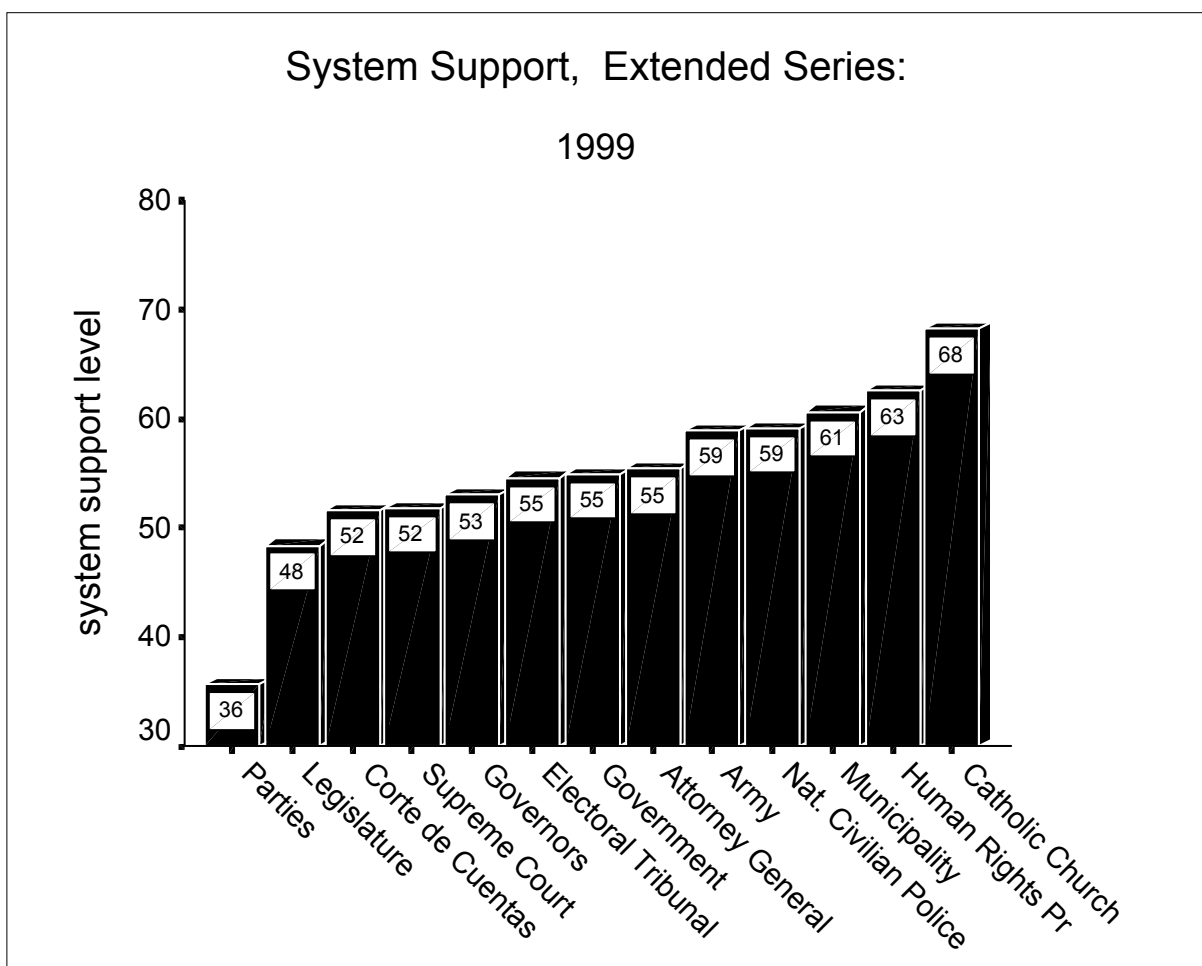


Figure 37. System Support, Extended Series: 1999

We can also compare the results for the 1991 and 1995 series of system support items with those from 1999. Figure 38 shows the results. Of note is the sharp increase in confidence in the army between 1995 and 1999. Each of the other items in the series with one very important exception, have increased. That exception is the legislature, which has experienced a slight decline in the 1991-1999 period. Finally, the institution with the lowest level of confidence are the political parties, far lower than any other institution.

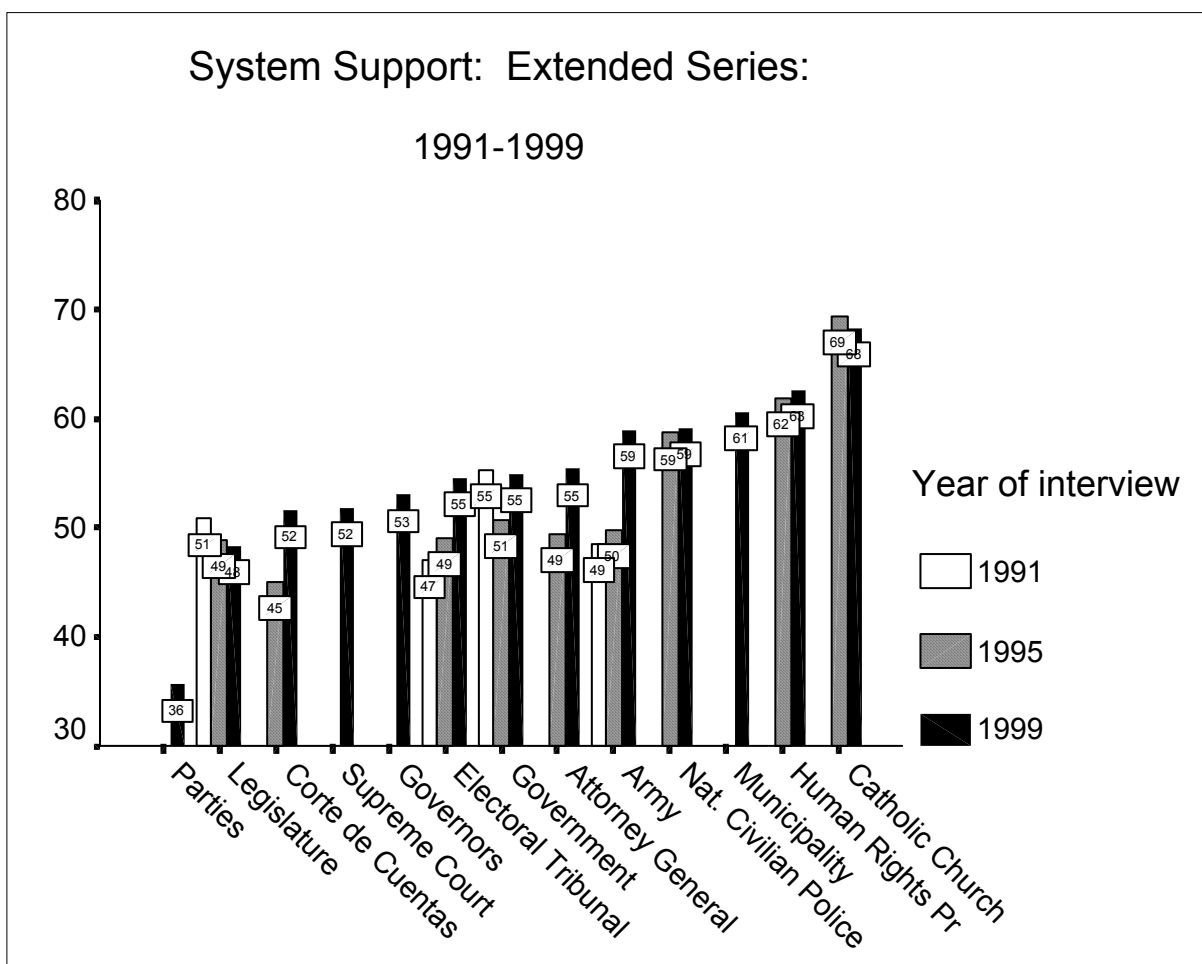


Figure 38. System Support: Extended Series: 1991-1999

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that system support, a vital component of political culture linked to political stability, has increased steadily in El Salvador since 1991. Moreover, this increase is nearly nation-wide, affecting most departments, and affecting men and women, young and old alike. It has also shown that crime victimization and fear of crime lowers system support, but there will be a fuller discussion of crime in another chapter of this study. Finally, the study has found that increasing satisfaction with municipal government is linked directly to increased system support at the national level.

Chapter IV. Tolerance and Democratic Stability

The Theory

Systems may be politically stable for long periods of time, undergirded by high levels of system support, as discussed in the previous chapter.²⁵ But such systems are not necessarily democratic. In order for a political system to be both stable and democratic, its citizens ought not only believe in the legitimacy of the regime, but also be tolerant of the political rights of others, especially those with whom they disagree. When majorities of citizens are intolerant of the rights of others, the prospects for minority rights are dim, indeed. As Przeworski has argued, in democracies, citizens must agree to “subject their values and interest to the interplay of democratic institutions and comply with [as yet unknown] outcomes of the democratic process.”²⁶ For this reason it is important to measure the tolerance of Salvadoran citizens and to examine the levels encountered within various demographic, geographic and political subsets of the population.

The political science literature on political tolerance is vast, and while it was initially concentrated on the United States the studies have now been broadened to include many democratizing countries around the world. Two basic approaches to the measurement of political tolerance have been used in these studies. One of these is called the “least-liked-group” approach.²⁷ It was utilized by USAID Nicaragua in 1994 as part of its effort to measure democracy in that country. In this method, respondents are given a list of groups, normally including extremist groups of the left and right, as well as other potentially unpopular groups such as homosexuals. The respondent selects the group that he/she likes the least, and then is asked a series of questions about his/her willingness to extend a variety of political rights and civil liberties to members of that group.²⁸ The primary limitation of this approach, however, is that in many countries significant portions of the respondents refuse to select any group. This occurs for many reasons, but the net result is that for those respondents, no tolerance information is obtained. For example, in a recent study of South Africa, only 59% of the respondents were willing to name a group.²⁹ The same problem occurred in Nicaragua when USAID used the method in a survey conducted by C.I.D. Gallup (Costa Rica). About half the respondents did not mention any group.³⁰ There is another important limitation to this approach

²⁵The section of the theory of political tolerance and its link to stable democracy is drawn from earlier discussion of this topic in prior reports on El Salvador and other countries in the University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project.

²⁶Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 51.

²⁷John L. Sullivan, James E. Pierson, and George E. Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1982).

²⁸For an application of this methodology to minorities in Israel and Costa Rica see: Mitchell A. Seligson, and Dan Caspi, “Arabs in Israel: Political Tolerance and Ethnic Conflict,” *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 19 (February 1983), 55_66; Mitchell A. Seligson, and Dan Caspi, “Toward and Empirical Theory of Tolerance: Radical Groups in Israel and Costa Rica,” *Comparative Political Studies* 15 (1983), 385_404; and Mitchell A. Seligson, and Dan Caspi, “Threat, Ethnicity and Education: Tolerance Toward the Civil Liberties of the Arab Minority in Israel (in Hebrew),” *Megamot* 15 (May 1982), 37_53.

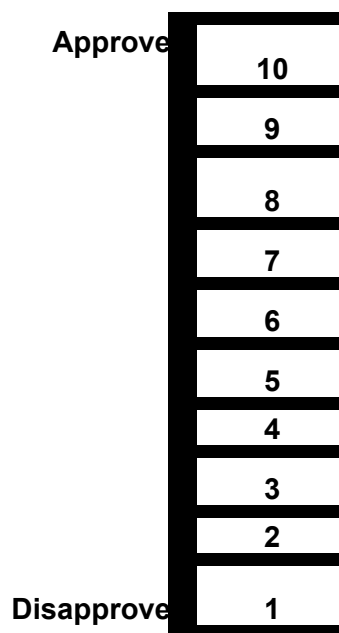
²⁹James L. Gibson, and Amanda Gouws, “Social Identity Theory and Political Intolerance in South Africa,” Draft, Department of Political Science, University of Houston (1998).

³⁰See Mitchell A. Seligson, *Political Culture in Nicaragua: Transitions, 1991_1995*. (Managua, Nicaragua: United States Agency for International Development, 1996).

and that is since each respondent can select a different group, it is difficult to compare intolerance levels across individuals. For example, in a country like Germany, where fascist parties have been outlawed since Germany redemocratized after World War II, it would be difficult to compare intolerance responses to those who selected the Nazi Party, for example, with those who selected a feminist organization. That is, we would tend to accept a high level of intolerance for the civil liberties of a banned political group, than for a reformist, completely legal social organization. A further complication with this methodology is that it is difficult to compare intolerance levels across countries since the groups that are salient in one country would likely be different in another. For example, asking about tolerating members of the FMLN would make considerable sense in El Salvador, but make no sense in Bolivia.

The other main method of measuring tolerance is to ask a set of questions that refer to the same group or groups. This method was pioneered many years ago in the United States, where the focus was on tolerance towards communism.³¹ This approach worked well, so long as communists were perceived as a threat in the United States, but once the threat of communism receded, it was impossible to assume that lowered levels of intolerance toward communists were an indication of a general decline of intolerance. It became evident that a more general approach was needed so that comparisons could be made across time and across countries. That is the approach taken by the University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project.³² The four-item series on tolerance that we developed reads as follows:

This card has a scale from 1 to 10 steps, with 1 indicating that you disapprove a lot and 10 indicating that you approve a lot. Card "B"



³¹Samuel C. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (New York: Doubleday, 1955).

³²Even though different measures have been utilized in the study of tolerance, it turns out that they all seem to capture the same underlying dimension. For evidence of this, see James L. Gibson, "Alternative Measures of Political Tolerance: Must Tolerance Be 'Least Liked?'," *American Journal of Political Science* 36 May (1992): 560_77.

The questions that follow are to learn your opinion about different ideas that people have who live in El Salvador.

D1. There are people who only say bad things about the governments of El Salvador. How strongly (on the scale of 1-10), would you approve or disapprove the right to vote of these people? Please read me the number.

D2. Thinking still of those people who only say bad things about the Salvadoran system of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove that those people can carry out peaceful demonstrations with the purpose of expressing their points of view?

D3. How strongly do you approve or disapprove that the people who only say bad things about the Salvadoran system of government be allowed to run for public office?

D4. Thinking still about those people who only say bad things about the Salvadoran system of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of them appearing on television to make a speech?

In the discussion that follows, these items will be analyzed. Since the question avoided the filter of the least-liked-group, all respondents were asked each item, and most gave an answer.

Levels of Tolerance in El Salvador

Political tolerance has increased steadily in El Salvador since 1991. Figure 39 shows the results. In 1991, all four of the variables scored 50 or below on the 0-100 scale. By 1995, three of the four variables were in the positive range, and by 1999 all four had increased into the positive range. Moreover, there has been a steady increase for all four measures of political tolerance. The only item that is on the low-end is support for the right to run for office. It is likely that some Salvadorans still worry about the impact of participation of the left, but this is an issue that will be explored more in depth below. Right now, suffice it to say, that by 1999 Salvadorans clearly approved basic civil liberties, but hesitate to grant all aspirants the right to run for (and presumably hold) public office.

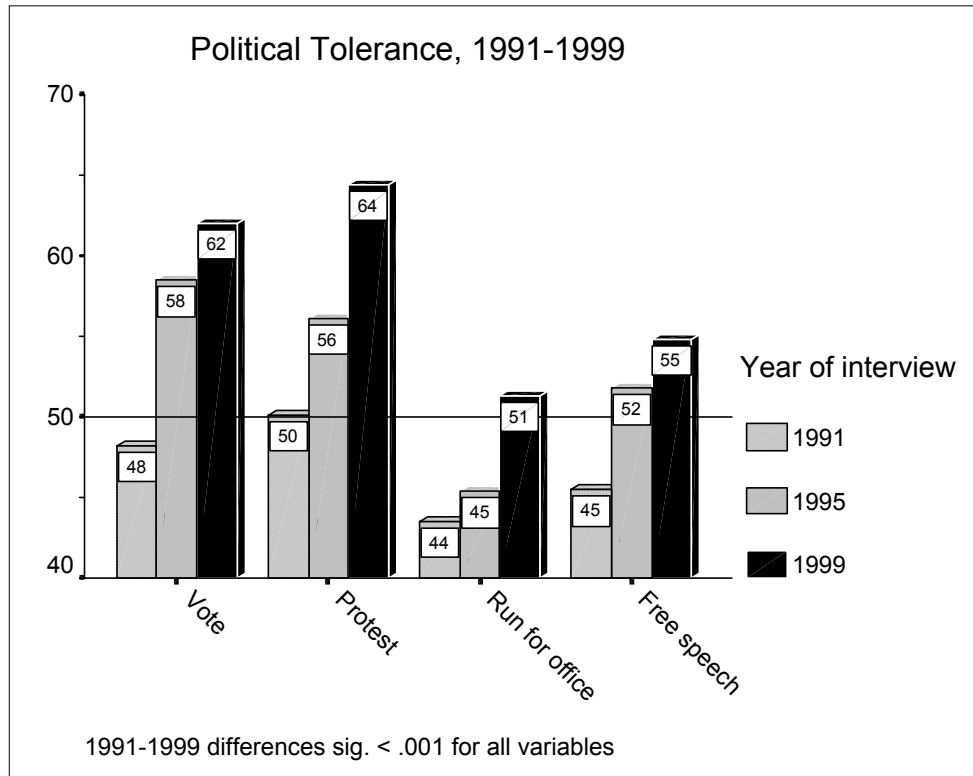


Figure 39. Political Tolerance, 1991-1999

In order to make these findings easier to understand, and also to be able to utilize a single measure in the rest of this chapter that encompasses political tolerance, an overall scale was formed.³³ Figure 40 shows the results. As can be seen, while political tolerance was in the negative end of the continuum in 1991, it is now firmly in the positive end.

³³Once again we follow our procedure of summing the four items and calculating an average. When missing data are encountered, our algorithm takes the average of the remaining valid values for a given respondent, so long as two of the four questions were answered. If not, then the case was coded as missing.

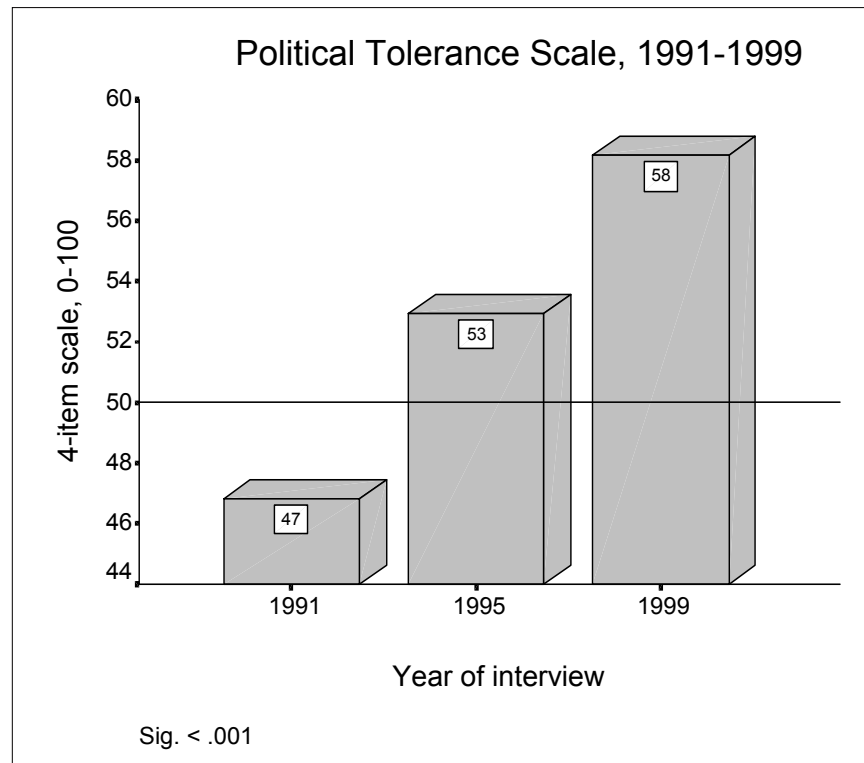


Figure 40. Political Tolerance Scale, 1991-1999

Factors that Explain Tolerance

In an effort to see which factors determine political tolerance in El Salvador, we ran a multiple regression analysis. The results are contained in Table 8.

Table 8. Predictors of Tolerance in El Salvador, 1999 Data

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	63.976	2.906		22.012	.000
Q1 Sex	-6.797	1.176	-.128	-5.780	.000
ED Education	.353	.141	.068	2.512	.012
Q10 Monthly family income	1.178	.364	.087	3.238	.001
SGL1R Satisfaction with municipal services	.070	.025	.063	2.842	.005
L1 Ideology, L-R	-.993	.218	-.102	-4.555	.000

Dependent Variable: TOL

There are few surprises in this model. We did examine other factors, but found that age, urbanization rate, crime rate, etc., made no difference in terms of tolerance. We did find, as shown above, that women are less tolerant than men, even after controlling for education (and other factors), and that those who are better educated and better off financially, are more

tolerant. In addition, we found that those who are more satisfied with municipal services are tolerant, a potentially important finding supporting the role of local government in democracy. Finally, we found that those on the political left are more tolerant than those on the right. We examine each of these factors below.

Gender and Tolerance

In many of the University of Pittsburgh studies on Latin America, women emerged as less tolerant than men. As we have already shown in the regression analysis above, even when controlled for education, women are less tolerant than men in El Salvador. Indeed, gender is the single strongest predictor we have. This suggests that efforts to increase tolerance in El Salvador might be especially targeted at females. Figure 41 shows the results.

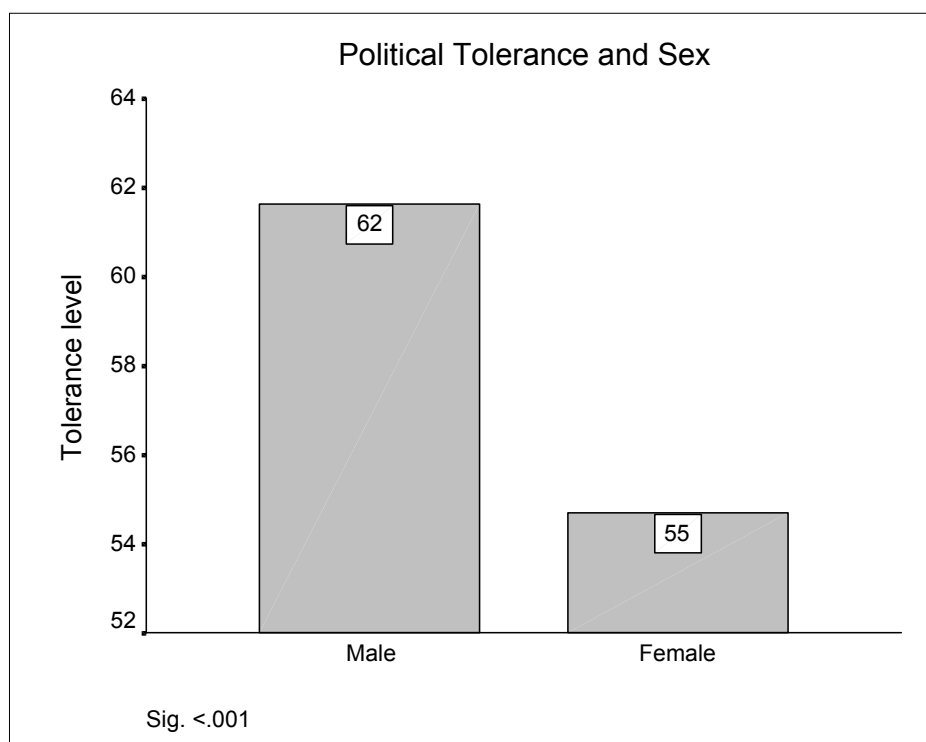


Figure 41. Political Tolerance and Sex

Tolerance and Education

Education traditionally plays a strong role in increasing tolerance. Through the process of education, citizens can come to understand those who hold different points of view, and respect their right to those views. Figure 42 shows the results. Education has a positive impact on tolerance for both men and women, but university education has an especially strong impact on men, as noted by the steep slope of the line representing university educated males in the figure.

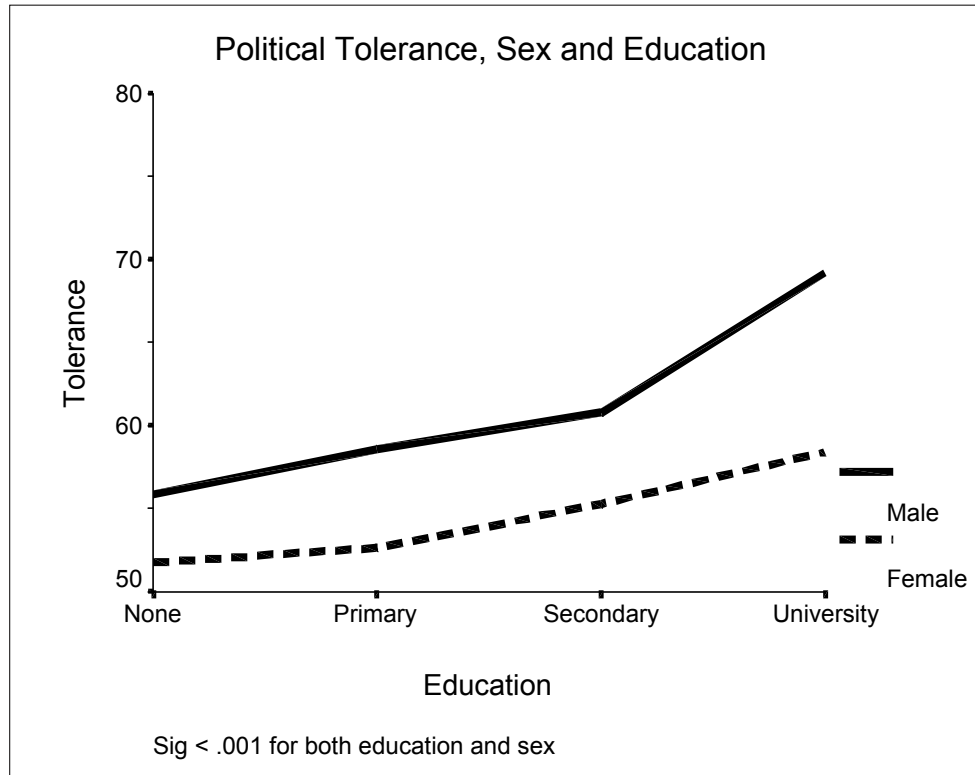


Figure 42. Political Tolerance, Sex and Education

Tolerance and Income

Income and education are usually associated with each other. If both income and education are found to be associated with higher levels of tolerance, we can know that both factors are significant in explaining tolerance from an examination of the multiple regression shown above. In Figure 43 income and gender are both shown as contributing to increased tolerance. But, what is evident, is that among females it is only those with the highest levels of education who are more tolerant, while among males, each increase in income produces greater tolerance.

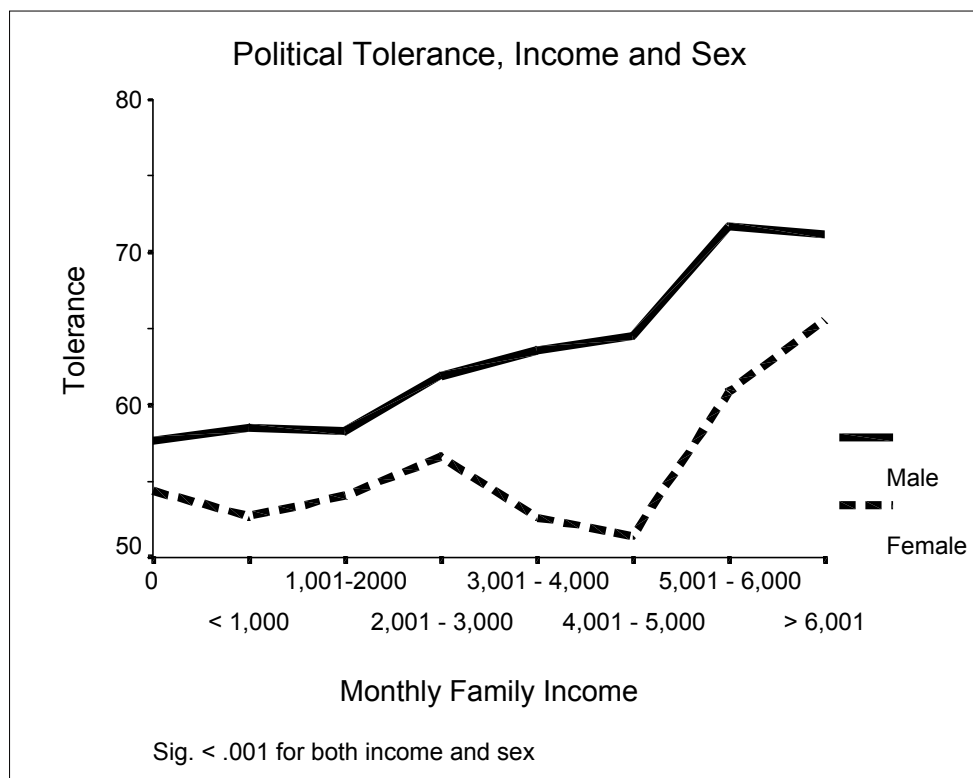


Figure 43. Political Tolerance, Income and Sex

Tolerance and Satisfaction with Municipal Services

A more complex question than the impact of demographic and socio-economic factors is that of experience. In particular, are those who experience a better functioning municipality likely to be more tolerant? In El Salvador, the answer is “yes,” although the effect is not especially strong. Figure 44 shows the results.

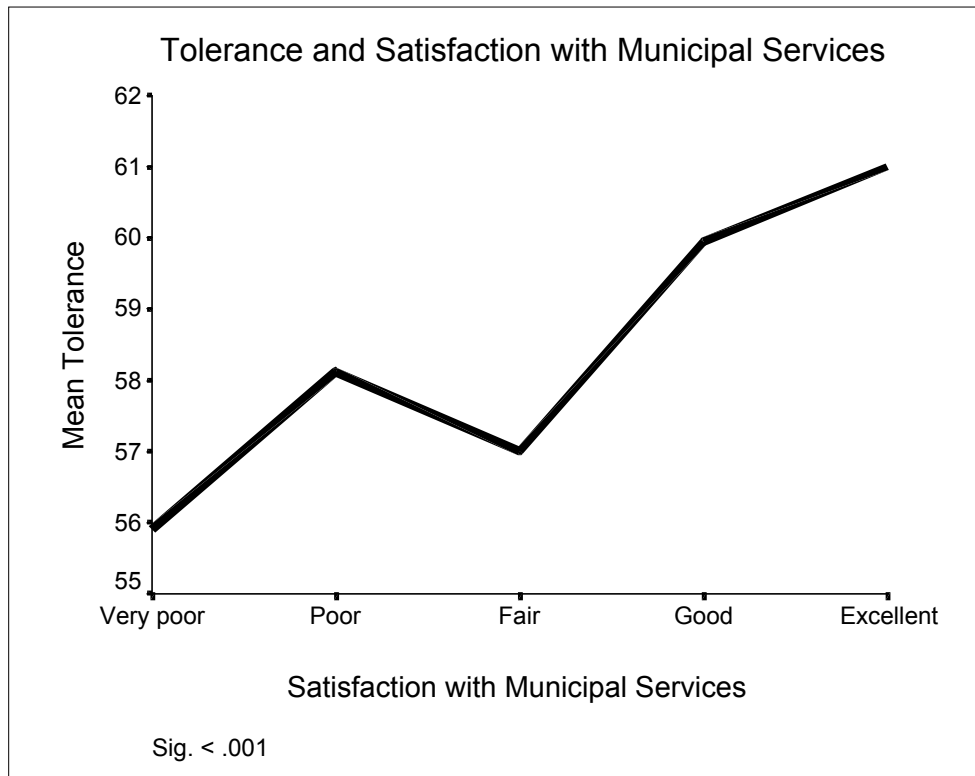


Figure 44. Tolerance and Satisfaction with Municipal Services

Political Tolerance and Ideology

One of the strongest predictors of tolerance is ideology. Those on the political left, as shown in Figure 45, are more tolerant than those on the right. The only exception is those on the extreme right, whose level of tolerance increases somewhat. This turns out to be a large group in the sample (393 respondents), and further research into this group is called for.

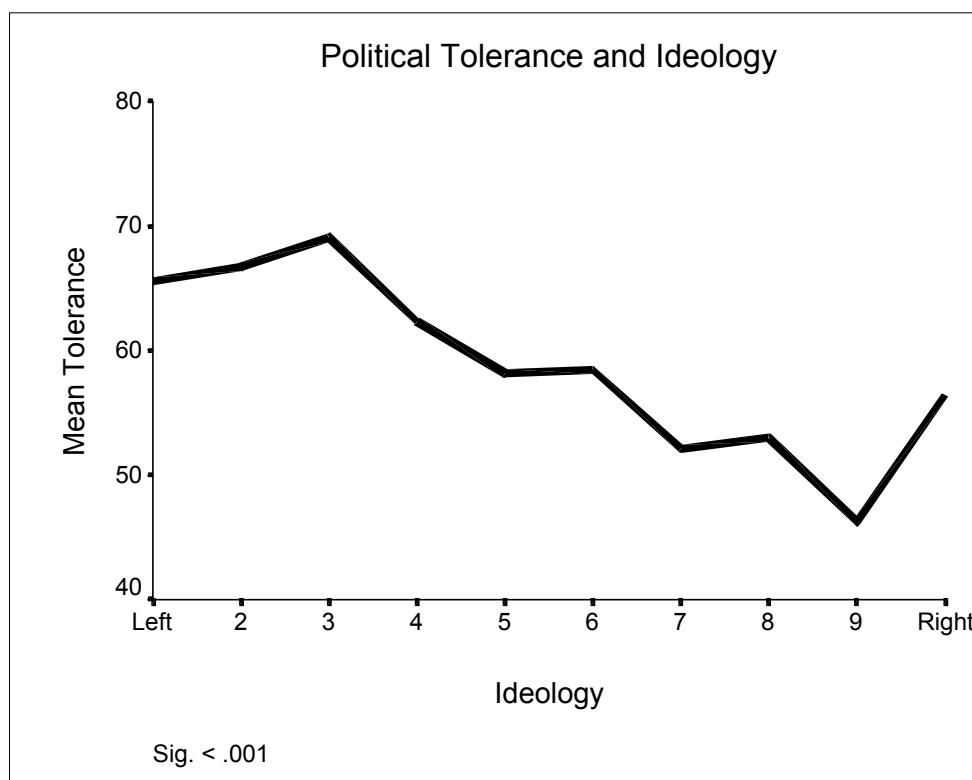


Figure 45. Political Tolerance and Ideology

System Support and Tolerance: Leading Indicators of Democratic Stability³⁴

The theory behind this study of system support and political tolerance is that both attitudes are needed for long-term democratic stability. Citizens must both believe in the legitimacy of their political institutions and also be willing to tolerate the political rights of others. In such a system, there can be majority rule accompanying minority rights, a combination of attributes often viewed a quintessential definition of democracy.

In prior studies emerging from the University of Pittsburgh project, the relationship between system support and tolerance has been explored in an effort to develop a predictive model of democratic stability. In this study, we draw on that earlier discussion in order to remind the reader (or to present for the first time to those who have not seen those studies) what these relationships are.³⁵ Table 9 represents all of the theoretically possible combinations of system support and tolerance when the two variables are divided between high and low.³⁶

³⁵This framework was first presented in Mitchell A. Seligson and Ricardo Córdova Macías, *Perspectivas para una democracia estable en El Salvador* (San Salvador: IDELA, 1993). See also Mitchell A. Seligson and Ricardo Córdova M., *El Salvador: De la Guerra a la Paz, una Cultura Política en Transición* (San Salvador: IDELA y FUNDAUNGO, 1995). The Nicaragua study, based on the 1991 and 1995 data sets is found in Mitchell A. Seligson, *Political Culture in Nicaragua: Transitions, 1991_1995*. (Managua, Nicaragua: United States Agency for International Development, 1996). The discussion in this report draws directly on the explanatory material contained in the 1996 study. For a recent statement of this thesis see Mitchell A. Seligson, "Toward A Model of Democratic Stability: Political Culture in Central America," *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 11, no. 2 (2000, forthcoming). See

Table 9. Theoretical Relationship Between Tolerance and System Support in Institutionally Democratic Polities

	Tolerance	
System support	High	Low
High	Stable Democracy	Authoritarian Stability
Low	Unstable Democracy	Democratic Breakdown

Let us review each cell, one-by-one. Political systems populated largely by citizens who have high system support and high political tolerance are those political systems that would be predicted to be the most stable. This prediction is based on the logic that high support is needed in non-coercive environments for the system to be stable. If citizens do not support their political system, and they have the freedom to act, system change would appear to be the eventual inevitable outcome. Systems that are stable, however, will not necessarily be democratic unless minority rights are assured. Such assurance could, of course, come from constitutional guarantees, but unless citizens are willing to tolerate the civil liberties of minorities, there will be little opportunity for those minorities to run for and win elected office. Under those conditions, of course, majorities can always suppress the rights of minorities. Systems that are both politically legitimate, as demonstrated by positive system support and that have citizens who are reasonably tolerant of minority rights, are likely to enjoy stable democracy.³⁷

When system support remains high, but tolerance is low, then the system should remain stable (because of the high support), but democratic rule ultimately might be placed in jeopardy. Such systems would tend to move toward authoritarian (oligarchical) rule in which democratic rights would be restricted.

Low system support is the situation characterized by the lower two cells in the table, and should be directly linked to unstable situations. Instability, however, does not necessarily translate into the ultimate reduction of civil liberties, since the instability could serve to force the system to deepen its democracy, especially when the values tend toward political tolerance. Hence, in the situation of low support and high tolerance, it is difficult to predict if the instability will result in greater democratization or a protracted period of instability characterized perhaps by considerable violence. On the other hand, in situations of low support and low tolerance, democratic breakdown seems to be the direction of the eventual outcome. One cannot, of course, on the basis of public opinion data alone, predict a breakdown, since so many other factors, including the role of elites, the position of the military and the support/opposition of international players, are crucial to this process. But, systems in which the mass public neither

also Mitchell A. Seligson and Ricardo Córdova Macías, "Nicaragua 1991_1995: Una Cultura Política en Transición," in *Cultura Política y Transición Democrática en Nicaragua*, ed. Ricardo Córdova Macías and Gunther Maihold (Managua, Nicaragua: Fundación Ebert, Fundación Guillermo Ungo, Instituto de Estudios Nicaragüenses y Centro de Análisis Socio_Cultural, 1996).

³⁶The scale ranges from 0-100, so the most natural cut-point is 50. In actuality, since the zero also counts as a valid value in the scale, there are 101 points to the scale, and the arithmetic division would be 50.5. In this and other studies we have used 50 because it is more intuitive.

³⁷Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

support the basic institutions of the nation, nor support the rights of minorities, are vulnerable to democratic breakdown.

It is important to keep in mind two caveats that apply to this scheme. First, note that the relationships discussed here only apply to systems that are already institutionally democratic. That is, they are systems in which competitive, regular elections are held and widespread participation is allowed. These same attitudes in authoritarian systems would have entirely different implications. For example, low system support and high tolerance might produce the breakdown of an authoritarian regime and its replacement by a democracy. Second, the assumption being made is that over the long run, attitudes of both elites and the mass public make a difference in regime type. Attitudes and system type may remain incongruent for many years. Indeed, as Seligson and Booth have shown for the case of Nicaragua, that incongruence might have eventually helped to bring about the overthrow of the Somoza government. But the Nicaraguan case was one in which the extant system was authoritarian and repression had long been used to maintain an authoritarian regime, perhaps in spite of the tolerant attitudes of its citizens.³⁸

Empirical Relationship Between Tolerance and System Support in El Salvador

It is now time to put together the two variables that have been the focus of this chapter by examining the joint distribution of the two variables. First, it should be noted that system support and tolerance are positively associated with each other (for 1999, $r = .06$, sig. $< .01$). This means that those who are more tolerant are more supportive of the system. This is certainly an encouraging sign since it suggests that, at least in this case, all good things can go together. But the more profound question is to examine in detail how the two variables interrelate. To do this, both variables are dichotomized into "high" and "low."³⁹ The overall index of tolerance was utilized, but the scale was divided into high and low at the 50-point. System support is scaled in a similar way, and split at the 50-point to distinguish between high and low.⁴⁰

³⁸Mitchell A. Seligson and John A. Booth, "Political Culture and Regime Type: Evidence from Nicaragua and Costa Rica," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 3, August, 1993, pp. 777-792. A different version appears as "Cultura política y democratización: vías alternas en Nicaragua y Costa Rica." In Carlos Barba Solano, José Luis Barros Horcasitas y Javier Hurtado, *Transiciones a la democracia en Europa y América Latina*. México: FLACSO y Universidad de Guadalajara, 1991, pp. 628-681. Also appears as "Paths to Democracy and the Political Culture of Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua," Larry Diamond, ed., *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, pp. 99-130.

³⁹If the variables were left in their original 0-100 format, the table would potentially have 100 cells in each direction, making it impossible to read and interpret.

⁴⁰It is important to note that the results presented here differ from those in some earlier presentations of the University of Pittsburgh Public Opinion Project. In many of those presentations the expanded scale of items was utilized, whereas here the focus is on the core list. In addition, in this study an algorithm is used for missing data (i.e., non-response) so as to minimize the number of missing cases in the overall scale. In the tolerance scale, when two or more of the four items are answered, the overall scale score is based on the valid responses. If fewer than two are answered, the case is scored as missing. For the system support measure, a valid score is accepted when at least three of the five questions are answered. As a result of these changes, the percentages reported in the following tables vary somewhat from some earlier reports and publications.

The results for the El Salvador 1999 survey are shown in Table 10.⁴¹ As can be seen, more than one-in-three Salvadoran are both supportive of their political system and express political tolerance. This is the largest cell in the table. Only about one-sixth of the respondents fell into the “breakdown” cell. Finally, about a quarter of El Salvadoran fall into either the “unstable democracy” or “authoritarian stability” cells.

Table 10. Empirical Relationship Between Tolerance and System Support in El Salvador, 1999

System support	Tolerance	
	High	Low
High	Stable Democracy 36%	Authoritarian Stability 25%
Low	Unstable Democracy 23%	Democratic Breakdown 16%

We can place these data in comparative perspective to just how impressive El Salvador’s gains have been. In Figure 46, selected data from the University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project are shown. El Salvador has moved up substantially from where it stood at its low-point in 1995, now only falling behind Costa Rica, Central America’s most stable democracy. Comparisons with Bolivia show and Peru show much greater support for stable democracy in El Salvador than in those two countries.

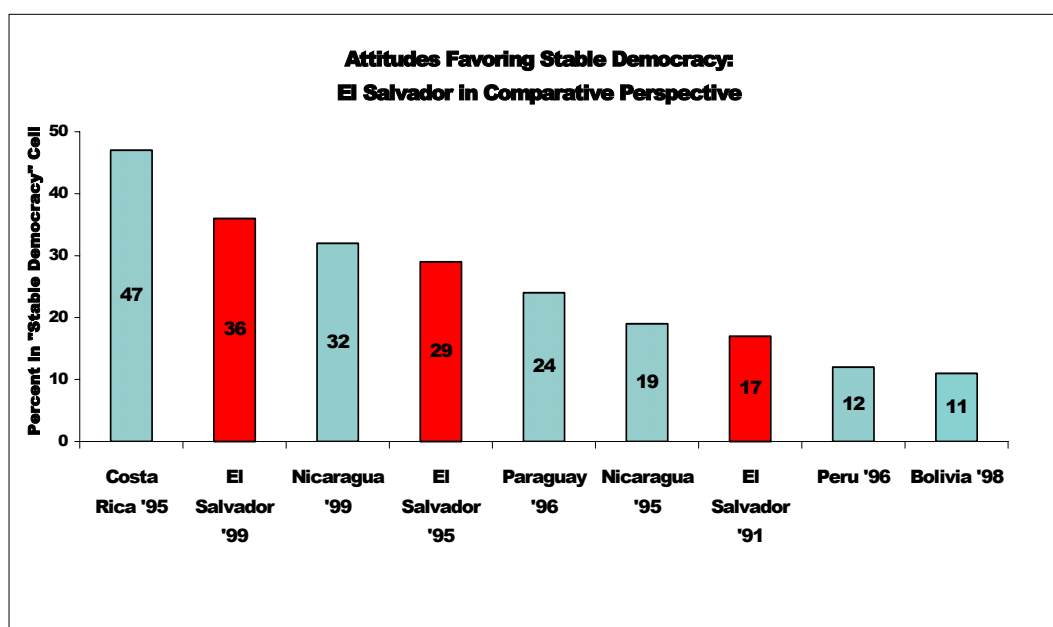


Figure 46. Attitudes Favoring Stable Democracy: El Salvador in Comparative Perspective

⁴¹The total sample size for the table is 2,914 (weighted).

An overall view of the evolution of democratic values is presented in Table 11. There it can be seen that the combination of values that seem conducive to stable democracy has increased steadily since 1995. It can also be seen that the authoritarianism cell has been declining. Finally, the breakdown cell has declined sharply. Taken together, these are highly encouraging findings.

Table 11. Empirical Relationship in El Salvador Between Tolerance and System Support 1991-1999^a

System support	Tolerance					
	High			Low		
High	Stable Democracy			Authoritarianism		
	1991: 17%	1995: 29%	1999: 36%	1991: 31%	1995: 27%	1999: 25%
Low	Unstable Democracy			Democratic Breakdown		
	1991: 24%	1995: 23%	1999: 23%	1991: 29%	1995: 21%	1999: 16%

^aThese percentages are based on the five core items(B1, B2, B3, B4, B6) of the system support scale rather than the nine- and eleven-item series reported on elsewhere. Also note that in this table, missing data are handled differently from the way they were in earlier presentations. The 1991 data refer to greater San Salvador only, whereas 1995 and 1999 refer to the entire country. The 1995 publication of Seligson and Córdova reported on the San Salvador data alone for these variables using the prior coding scheme.

Conclusions

Political tolerance is a fundamental requisite for democratic stability. In El Salvador, this chapter has shown, tolerance has been increasing steadily since 1991. We also found that higher levels of education and income are associated with higher tolerance, as is satisfaction with municipal services and leftist ideology. However, we found that women are significantly more intolerant than men, even when controlling for other factors.

The combination of high tolerance and high system support is seen as being important for democracy. In El Salvador, this combination of attitudes has been increasing steadily since 1991. Based on this “leading indicator” of democratic stability, the future of El Salvador looks quite promising.

Chapter V. Corruption and Democracy⁴²

With the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new democracies in most regions of the developing world, corruption has surfaced as one of the leading policy issues in the international political agenda, as well as in the national agendas of many countries.⁴³ There is growing appreciation of the corrosive effects of corruption on economic development and how it undermines the consolidation of democratic governance.⁴⁴ In the 1996 annual meeting of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund, the President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, pledged the resources of the Bank to fight the “cancer of corruption.” In June 1997, the Organization of American States approved the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, and in December of that year, the OECD plus representatives from emerging democracies signed the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. In November 1998 the Council of Europe including Central and Eastern European countries adopted the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption. Then, in February 1999 the Global Coalition for Africa adopted “Principles to Combat Corruption in African Countries.”⁴⁵

The situation today stands in sharp contrast with that of only a few years ago when corrupt practices drew little attention from the governments of Western democracies, and multinational corporations from many industrialized countries viewed bribes as the norm in the conduct of international business. Within this general context, grand and petty corruption flourished in many developing nations.

It is widely understood, as noted in a recent U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) handbook, that specific national anti-corruption strategies must be tailored to fit “the nature of the corruption problem as well as the opportunities and constraints for addressing it.” This same handbook recommends a series of initiatives to address official corruption based on the institutional premise that “corruption arises where public officials have wide authority, little accountability, and perverse incentives.”⁴⁶ Thus, effective initiatives should rely on “reducing the role of government in economic activities (to limit authority); strengthening transparency, oversight, and sanction (to improve accountability); and redesigning terms of employment in public service (to improve incentives).” Institutional reforms should be complemented with societal reforms to “change attitudes and mobilize political will for sustained anti-corruption interventions.”

A veritable laundry list of interventions flows from the model’s tacit neoliberal economic framework. These include institutional reforms designed to:

⁴³For an extended discussion of this topic see the papers on corruption control in Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

⁴⁴See Alan Doig and Robin Theobald, *Corruption and Democratisation* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

⁴⁵A review of these and other efforts is found in USAID. 1999. *Democracy Dialogue*, June, Washington, DC.

⁴⁶ USAID. 1999. A Handbook on Fighting Corruption. Washington, DC: Center for Democracy and Governance (www.usia.gov/topical/econ/integrity/usaidd/indexpg.html) February.

- limit government authority (privatization, liberalization, competitive procurement, competition in public service);
- improve accountability (freedom of information legislation, financial disclosure, open budget processes, financial management systems and audit offices, creation of offices of an inspector general, ombudsmen or other anti-corruption agency, implementation of legislative oversight, hot lines and whistle blower protection, imposition of sanctions, and judicial reform); and
- realign incentives (to promote ethical behavior in public service); and societal reforms to change attitudes and mobilize political will (surveys, public relations campaigns, investigative journalism, civic advocacy organizations, workshops, international pressure). These are the general approaches also recommended in the international policy⁴⁷ as well as in the academic⁴⁸ literature.

Before any efforts can be taken to reduce corruption, it is important to first understand its nature and magnitude. We cannot assume that levels of corruption are the same everywhere. Indeed, the well-publicized work of Transparency International has ranked countries all over the world in terms of their level of corruption. By that standard, in 1999 El Salvador ranked 49th in their list of 99 countries.⁴⁹ The other countries in Central America generally ranked worse than El Salvador, except for Costa Rica, which ranked 32. Guatemala ranked 68th, Nicaragua 70th and Honduras 94th.

Levels of Corruption in El Salvador in Comparative Perspective

How serious is the corruption problem in El Salvador? We can find out using the 1999 democracy survey. The survey cannot tell us much about high-level corruption, such as bribery at the level of senior public officials. But it can tell us a great deal about everyday corruption that is experienced by the average Salvadoran. And it is at that level that corruption is most irksome. Moreover, since the questions asked in El Salvador have been asked before in other countries in the University of Pittsburgh Public Opinion Project, we can compare the responses in El Salvador to those countries and in so doing determine the relative levels of corruption in those countries.⁵⁰ In this data base we have four countries: El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Bolivia. The El Salvador results are from the 1999 survey, whereas the other data sets come from 1998. In each case, however, these are all national probability samples, including urban and rural populations in proportion to their distribution nation-wide.

Figure 47 shows the results. As can be seen, the level of corruption in El Salvador is dramatically lower than it is in the other countries for which we have directly comparable data. The first set of bars deals with question EXC1, asking if the respondent had been falsely

⁴⁷ See, for example, United Nations Development Programme/OECD Development Centre. 1998. *Corruption & Integrity Improvement Initiatives in Developing Countries*. New York: United Nations.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the relevant chapters in Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, Editors. 1999. *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers (1999) and Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁹ See Transparency International. 1999. *The Corruption Perceptions Index*. <http://www.transparency.de/documents/cpi/index.html#cpi>.

⁵⁰ The Nicaragua component of the corruption study was designed and executed with Casals & Associates, led by Dr. Sergio Diaz-Briquets.

accused of an infraction in the last two years. As can be seen, in El Salvador, only 7% of the respondents suffered this indignity, compared to twice as many in Nicaragua. The second set of bars show again that bribery is twice as high in Nicaragua as in El Salvador. In this question, EXC2, we asked if a police officer requested a bribe.

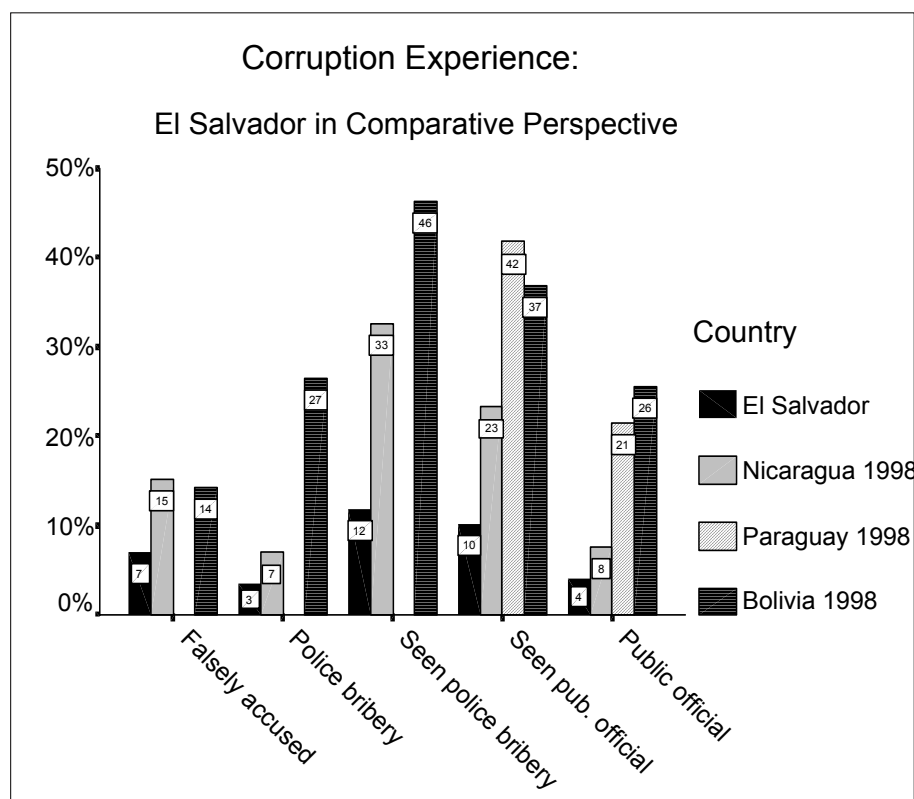


Figure 47. Corruption Experience: El Salvador in Comparative Perspective

The third question in this series, EXC4, asks if the respondent has seen someone paying a bribe to the police in the last two years. Here the responses of Salvadorans is higher than it was for direct, personal experience with bribery; this is the same pattern found in the other countries, but to an even more extreme degree. In El Salvador, 12% of the respondents had seen a bribe being paid to the police, compared to 33% in Nicaragua and an astounding 46% in Bolivia.

The fourth question, EXC5, asks if the respondent had seen someone paying a bribe to a public official in the last two years. In El Salvador 10% had witnessed this form of corruption, compared to 23% in Nicaragua, 42% in Paraguay and 37% in Bolivia.

Finally, the last item in the series for which we have directly comparable data asks if the respondent had been asked to pay a bribe to a public official. In El Salvador, only 4% had suffered this form of corruption, compared to double that in Nicaragua, 21% in Paraguay and 26% in Bolivia. Overall, it is clear that El Salvador has a much lower incidence of these forms of corruption than the other countries in the sample.

The El Salvador survey included three other items measuring corruption. One of these (EXC6), dealing with corruption in the workplace rather than corruption in government, was also asked in Nicaragua and Bolivia. Figure 48 shows the results. As can be seen, El Salvador is the lowest of the three countries, although the difference is not great between El Salvador and Nicaragua. Bolivian levels of workplace corruption, however, are three times that of El Salvador.

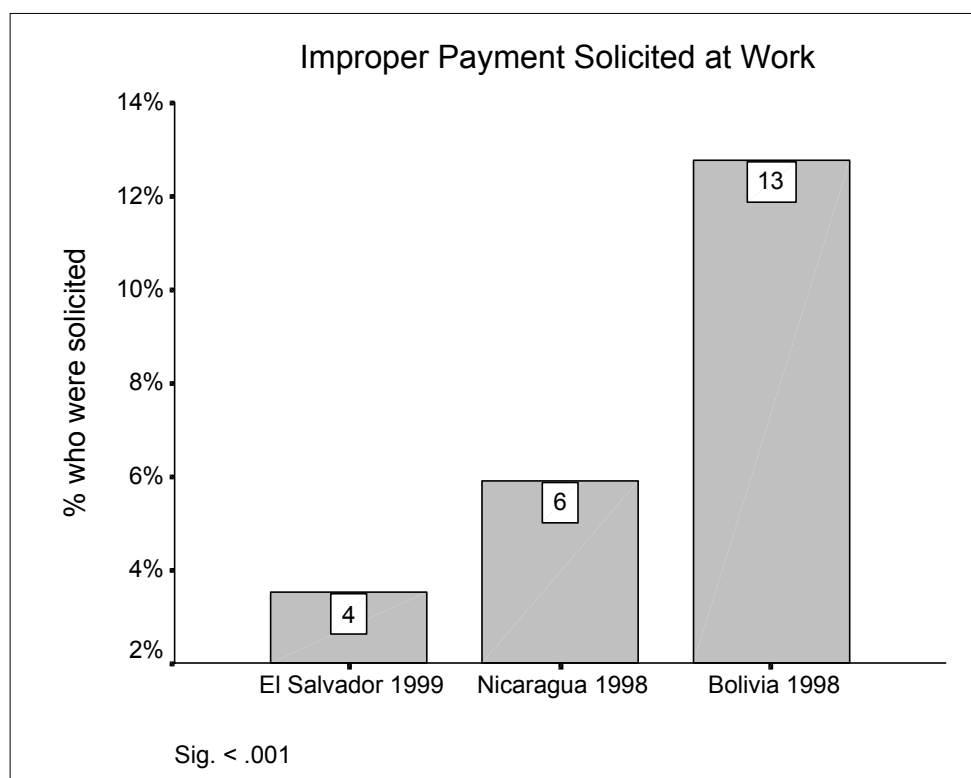


Figure 48. Improper Payment Solicited at Work

Of the remaining two items, one offers little information. The item was designed to ask about corruption in the courts, but as a result of an error in questionnaire design, the item focused exclusively on the Supreme Court, an institution with which very few Salvadorans would have any direct contact. The remaining item asked about corruption at the level of municipal government (EXC11). Figure 49 shows the results. As can be seen, 95% of the respondents said that they had not paid a bribe in order to carry process paper work at the municipality.

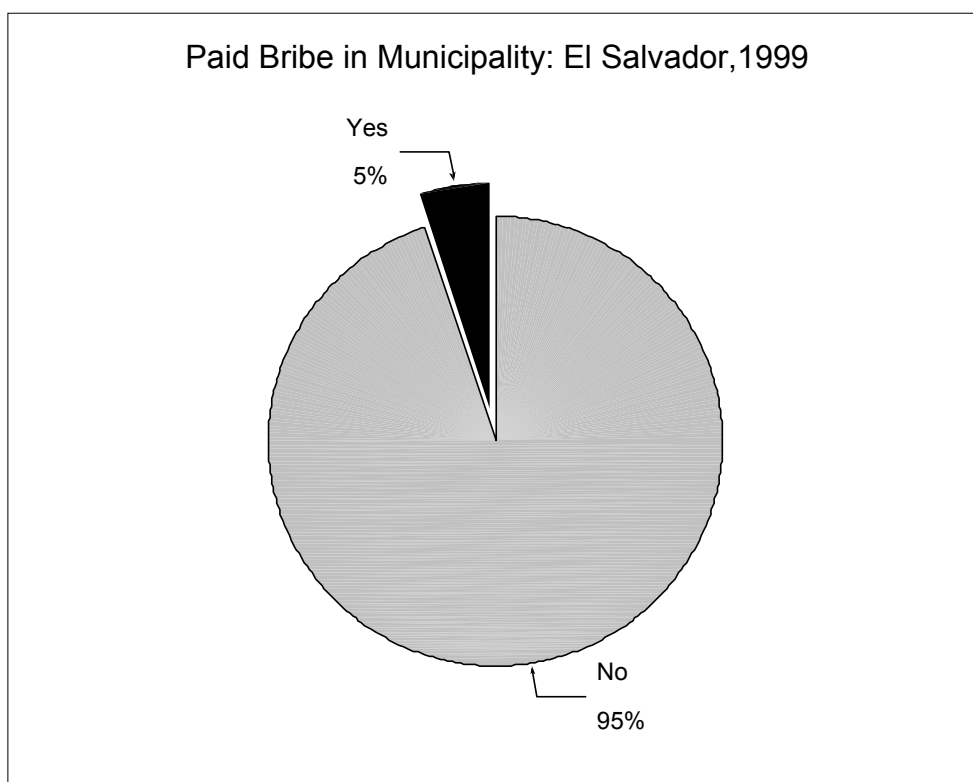


Figure 49. Paid Bribe in Municipality: El Salvador, 1999

Who Are Bribery Victims in El Salvador?

We wanted to determine the characteristics of Salvadoran citizens that make them more likely to be bribe victims. In order to do this, we need to look exclusively at the bribery questions that focus directly on the individual rather than those that ask about vicarious experience with bribery. These are items EXC1, 2, 6, 11 and 12. In order to simplify the presentation, an overall scale of direct corruption experience was created.⁵¹ The overall level of corruption with this index was an average of 4.6%.

Multiple regression analysis found that education played no role in being a corruption victim. But other variables, especially gender, age and income did. Figure 50 shows the impact of gender on corruption. The figure includes a horizontal line shown in the national average. As can be seen, men are almost twice the national average, while women are far below it. Men in El Salvador are far more likely to be the ones dealing with public officials, and this, no doubt, helps explain their greater level of victimization.

⁵¹As in the other scales used in this study, the range is 0-100, and with a total of five questions, we assigned a valid score to all respondents who answered three or more of the questions.

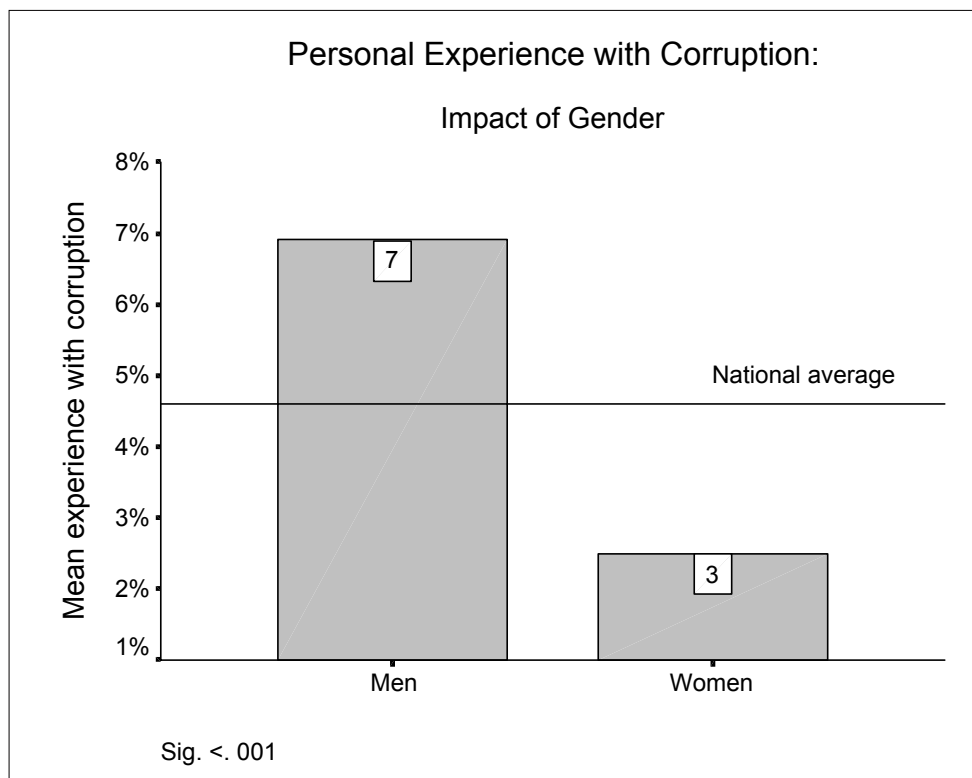


Figure 50. Personal Experience with Corruption: Impact of Gender

Age also influences corruption victimization rates. Figure 51 shows the results. As can be seen, corruption victimization is highest among the young, especially among the 21-30 group, and then declines.

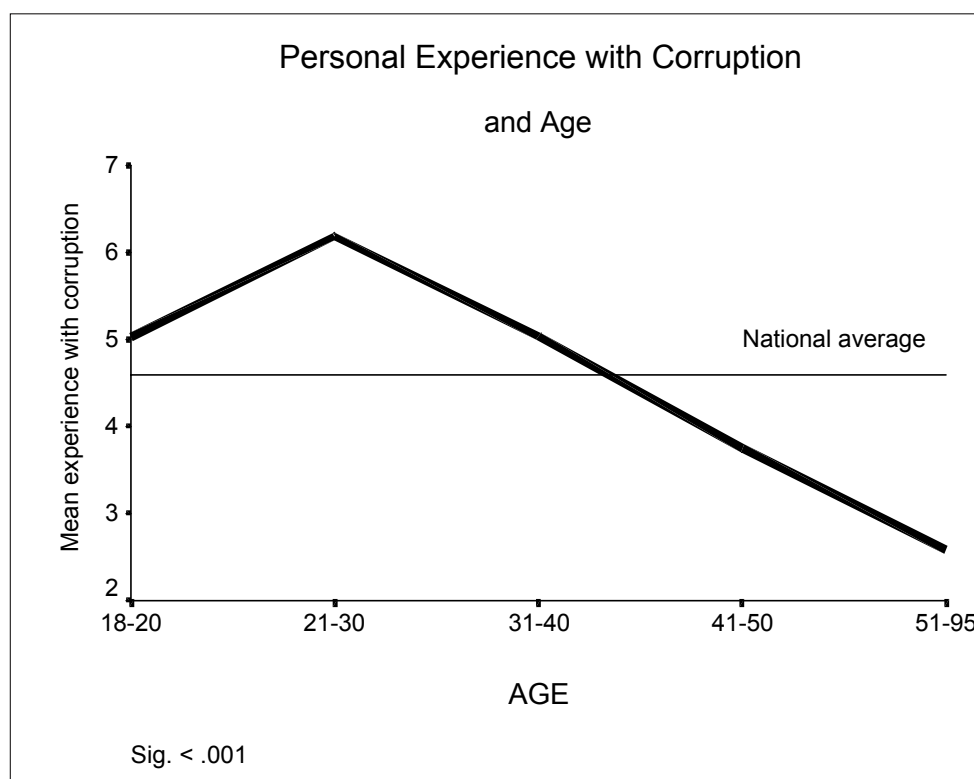


Figure 51. Personal Experience with Corruption and Age

Salvadorans with higher levels of income are more likely to have been victimized by corruption. These results are shown in Figure 52. A similar pattern is found with the wealth variable, but these results are not shown here. The probable explanation for this pattern is that corrupt public officials are more likely to find the wealthy more attractive targets than the poor. Moreover, wealthier individuals are more likely to own automobiles, which subjects them to the dishonesty of traffic police, and to own property, which subjects them to mistreatment by numerous public officials.

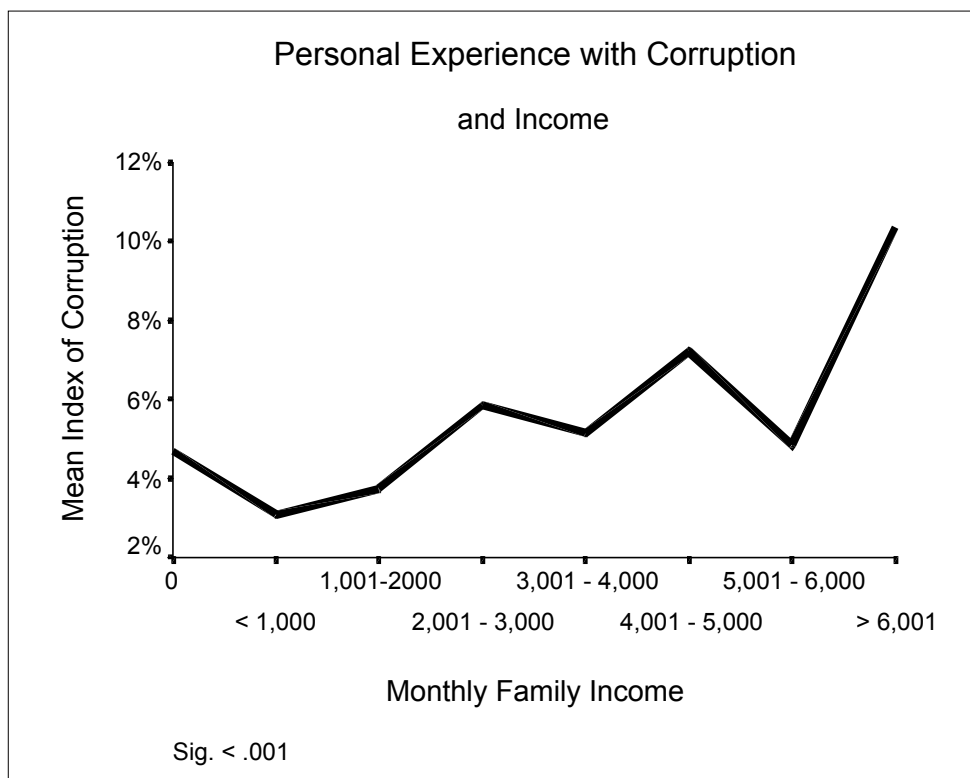


Figure 52. Personal Experience with Corruption and Income

Finally, those who live in urban areas are more likely to be subjected to corruption than those in rural areas. This finding is independent of personal socio-economic status. The probable explanation for this result is that the presence of the government is much greater in urban areas than in rural areas. Figure 53 shows the results.

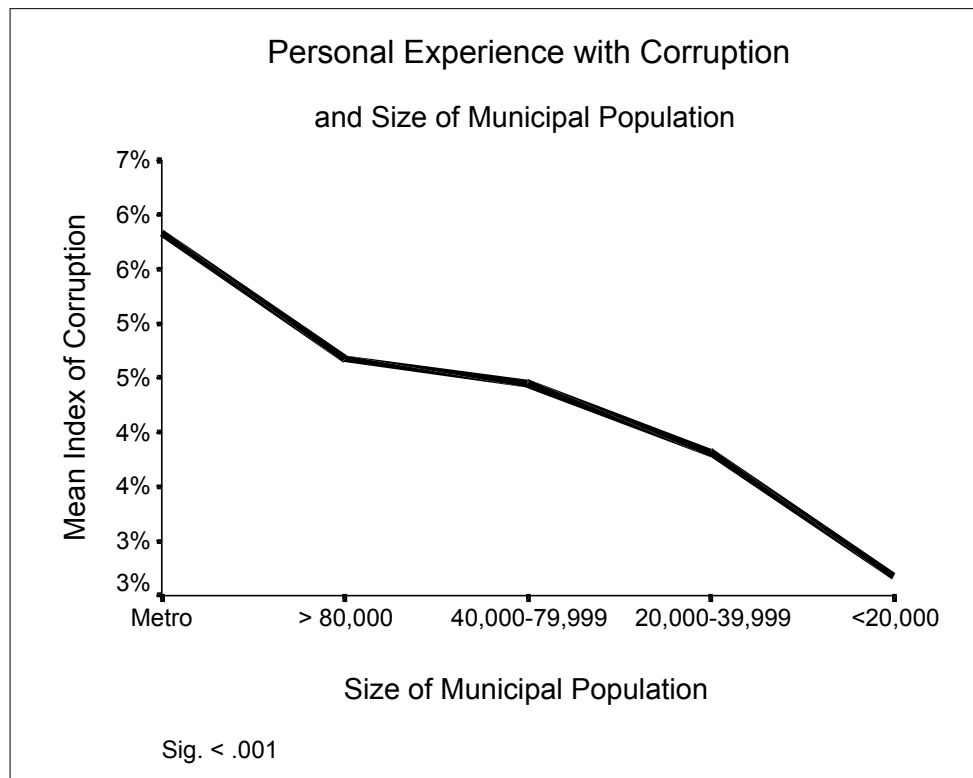


Figure 53. Personal Experience with Corruption and Size of Municipal Population

Corruption and Democratization

We conclude this chapter by showing that corruption has a strong, negative impact on democracy. As noted in the introduction, much of the effort of the World Bank has been to show that corruption slows growth. But, in the findings shown below, we can demonstrate that it also puts democracy at risk. Figure 54 shows that those Salvadorans who have been victimized by corruption are less supportive of the political system. As we have argued before, system support is vital for democratic stability. We also know that the causal path runs from victimization to democratization; corrupt officials could not possibly pick their victims based on the latter's level of system support.

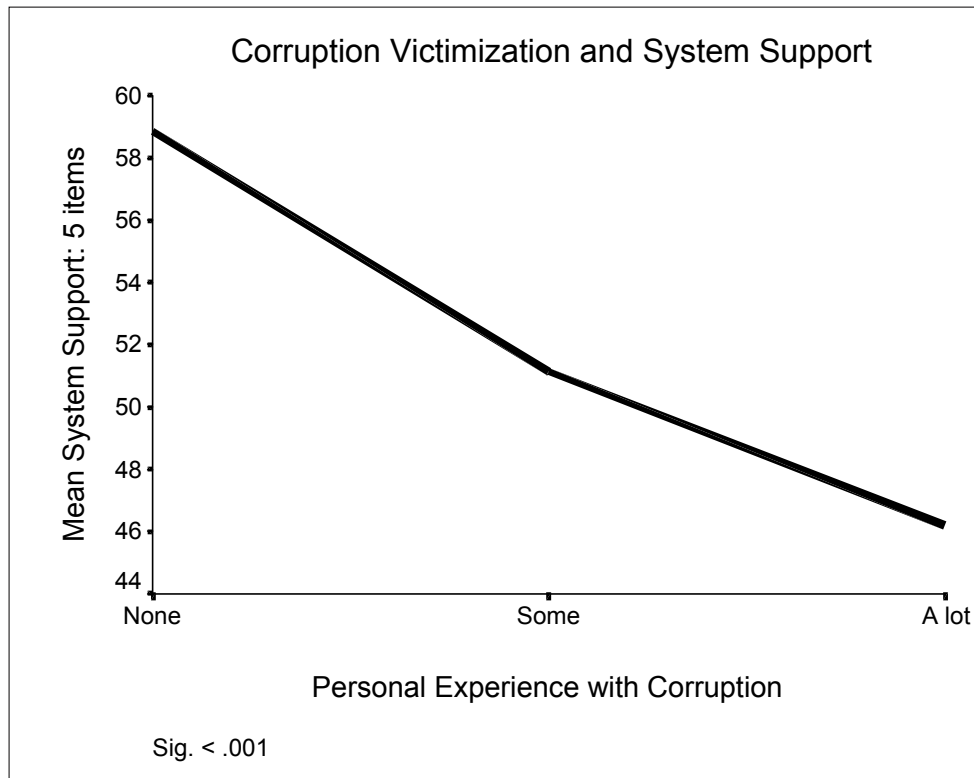


Figure 54. Corruption Victimization and System Support

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that corruption experienced by citizens in their daily lives is far less common in El Salvador than it is in other countries in Latin America. Men, the better-off and the more urban are more significantly more likely to be victimized than women, the poor and the rural. Finally, corruption matters; those who have been victimized by it are less likely to be supportive of the political system.

Chapter VI. The Problem of Abstentionism

Electoral abstentionism

As a result of the political transition that the Central American region has experienced in the last two decades, in four of the five countries, the old political systems have been totally redefined. Elections have been held to elect constitutional assemblies to write new constitutions. Such events have initiated a gradual process of democratic restoration by means of the ballot box.

In the beginning of the nineties, all of the countries of the region had elected civilian governments. By the mid nineties, all of the countries had experienced a peaceful transfer of government, in which incumbents were electorally defeated by opposition parties. Without a doubt, the most dramatic case is that of Nicaragua in 1990, when the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) faced 14 opposition parties organized under the National Opposition Union (UNO). In the opinion of some analysts, this peaceful transfer of power “did not signify simply a reelection or change of government in Nicaragua, but or the end of revolutionary transformations initiated with the fall of the Somoza dictatorship”.⁵² The decision of the Sandinista Front to recognize their loss in the ballot boxes and convert themselves into a party that accepted the electoral game as the only means of access to power, allowed for the continuity of the democratic process. Above all, it created conditions for political stability by rejecting violence as a method to access power.

As has been show by various academics, more and more the principal political participants in Central America consider the electoral method to be the acceptable process, “the instrument for deciding who is authorized by the community to direct the power of the state.” In other words, the electoral method is “the only game in the town” that has come to impose a “vision of politics oriented towards peace” and not “a belligerent vision politics.”⁵³

In addition to this impressive democratic advance, these nations have also improved the technical aspects of the organization of elections, as well as the context in which they have been held, so that they are considered to be competitive elections. According to Ozbudun, competitive elections should comply with three requirements:

Universal adult suffrage; fairness of voting, as guaranteed by such procedures as the secret ballot and open counting, as well as by the absence of a significant degree of electoral fraud, violence or intimidation; and the right to organize political parties and to put up candidates, which gives voters a choice among different groups of contenders, if not necessarily among clearly distinguishable public policy programs.⁵⁴

⁵²Ortega Hegg, Manuel (1996), “Gobierno Local y participación ciudadana en Nicaragua,” in: Ricardo Córdova Macías and Manuel Ortega Hegg, *Centroamérica: Gobierno Local y participación ciudadana*. San Salvador, FLACSO Programa El Salvador.

⁵³Jorge Rovira Mas, “Elecciones y democracia en Centroamérica 1992-1996. Un análisis introductorio.” In: Juan Rial y Daniel Zovatto (editors). *Elecciones y Democracia en América Latina 1992-1996*. San José, Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 1998, p. 26.

⁵⁴Ozbudun, Ergun (1989). “Studies on Comparative Elections”. *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 21, No.2 (January), p. 238.

To these requirements another condition should be added: regularity. That is, elections should be held regularly on the pre-established legal dates.

Viewed from this perspective, the elections held in the Central American region have evolved to be considered free, open, and competitive elections, in accordance with the requirements posited previously. In addition, to date no one has characterized these elections as fraudulent, and the losers have accepted their defeat. It is important to note, however, that some technical problems still persist, and must be overcome.

A curious, and to a certain extent ironic, point has been that while the Central American region has made enormous progress in terms of conducting competitive elections and peacefully transferring political power, this process has been accompanied by a relatively low level of electoral participation. The most dramatic case is that of Guatemala, with a 84.1% rate of abstentionism in the popular referendum on the electoral reforms of 1994. Even Costa Rica has not totally avoided this problem, which in the elections of 1986, 1990 and 1994 had an abstentionism rate of around 18%. In the elections of 1998, however, this number increased to a worrisome 30%.

A recent study commented on the implications of low levels of voting for democracy:

Voting is an important element of citizenship, and its absence (or complete inauthenticity) invariably says something about the broader political life of those who cannot or do not vote (or cannot vote freely), and has repercussions for the breadth and quality of party competition and public debate. Institutionalization of suffrage, and of meaningful citizenship, among the poor and “popular sectors” is an essential part of the struggle to construct an inclusive national citizenry. Thus the level of turnout in “foundational” elections, as opposed to routine elections in consolidated democracies, is more significant: it says something more fundamental about the status of democratization, particularly where abstentionism is concentrated among the poor. At stake is the original institutionalization, and the basic credibility, of the principles of mass suffrage and mass citizenship. (...) Where a “transition to democracy” occurs without any signs of such mass involvement, that would seem to indicate that the construction of a national citizenry, of universal equal citizenship, is lagging.⁵⁵

Despite the importance of the subject of abstentionism in Central America, abstentionism has not been treated with the importance it deserves. One of the methodological problems that investigators encounter is the difficulty in accessing information, mainly due to the problems that exist with electoral registries. A second problem is the difficulty in obtaining reliable information on the estimates of the voting age population for each year that there have been elections. In addition, there is a lack of comparative studies of the Central American region.

In a recent study on the prospects for democracy in Central America, an analysis of 23 presidential elections held in the period between 1981 and 1999 identified four findings related to abstentionism, measured in terms of the relation between valid votes and the number of people registered in the electoral registry.

⁵⁵William Barnes, “Incomplete Democracy in Central America: Polarization and Voter Turnout in Nicaragua and El Salvador.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 40:3, p. 69.

In the first place, in the region one observes a tendency towards increasing levels of abstentionism. For example, in Guatemala the abstentionism rate rose from 30.7% in 1985 to 63.1% in 1996; in El Salvador it increased from 54.9% in 1989 to 61.4% in 1999; while in Honduras the abstentionism rate rose from 22% (1981) to 35% in 1993 and then fell to 27.7% for 1997. In Costa Rica the rate increased from 21.4% in 1982 to 30% in 1998. Only in the cases of Nicaragua and Panama have relatively stable rates been maintained. In the second place, the countries with a low level of abstentionism in the analyzed period fluctuate around 20-25%: Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica. In the third place, in an intermediate position we have Honduras that fluctuates around 30%. In fourth place, we have the countries with a high level of abstentionism: Guatemala and El Salvador, that oscillate between 55-60%.⁵⁶

The phenomenon of abstentionism in El Salvador

In the case of El Salvador, a review of the data on electoral abstentionism reveals that in the elections held in the last decade, there is a growing tendency towards a rise in abstentionism: in the presidential elections of 1989 the rate was 54.9%, in the legislative elections in 1991, it was 55.1%. In the first round of presidential elections in 1994 this rate dropped to 47.2%, rising in the second round of the presidential elections of that year to 54.5%, and continuing to rise to 60.8% in the legislative elections in 1997 and to 61.4% in the presidential elections of 1999.⁵⁷

In the past decade, abstentionism was lowest in the general elections of March of 1994, called the “elections of the century” due to the expectations generated by these first elections following the signing of the Peace Accords. On this occasion, abstentionism in the first presidential round was 47.2%, and 46.4% in the legislative round. Nevertheless, considering the fact that these were the first elections after the signing of the peace treaty, held without the threat of violence, including actors that had not participated in the past, and were general elections (presidential, legislative, and municipal), one would have hoped that more citizens would have participated. Most surprising were the low levels of concurrence at the polls: 52.8%.⁵⁸

The electoral registry from March 7, 1999 included 3,171,224 inscribed citizens, and in the presidential elections a total of 1,223,215 votes were emitted, of which 1,182,248 corresponded to valid votes.⁵⁹ Thus, only 38.6% of those registered in the electoral register voted. Alternatively stated, the absentee rate was 61.4%, the highest of all the elections held in the last decade.

⁵⁶Gunther Maihold y Ricardo Córdova Macías, Proyecto Centroamérica 2020. Study on “Participación y Democracia”. mimeo, September of 1999.

⁵⁷Electoral abstentionism was calculated based upon the number of registered voters. For more information on the data presented, see: Ricardo Córdova Macías. “Centroamérica: una aproximación al abstencionismo electoral.” Mimeo, San Salvador, July of 1999.

⁵⁸In a comparative study of the elections of Nicaragua and El Salvador, the elections of Nicaragua in 1990 and of El Salvador in 1994 have been described as “the elections of the century.” The low levels of voting in both electoral processes contradict this characterization: with turnout rates around 78% in Nicaragua and 53% in El Salvador. For those interested in an explanatory analysis of these differences, see: William A. Barnes, “Las elecciones en las democracias incompletas: el enigma de la asistencia de los votantes en Nicaragua y El Salvador”. In: Ricardo Córdova Macías (editor). *El Abstencionismo Electoral en Nicaragua y El Salvador*. San Salvador, FUNDAUNGO, 1998.

⁵⁹Tribunal Supremo Electoral. *Memoria especial de labores*. Elección 1999.

According to the data of our survey, conducted after the elections of March of 1999, we see that the vote was over-reported: 57.3% of the 2,914 respondents claimed to have voted in the presidential elections of March of 1999. This figure contrasts with the 38.6% that in effect exercised their rights of suffrage. Nevertheless, this phenomenon of over-reporting the intention to vote also has been encountered in similar studies conducted in the United States by the University of Michigan and in the Central American region.⁶⁰

The debate over abstentionism in El Salvador

In the studies conducted on elections in El Salvador during the last two decades, the problem of abstentionism has been recognized⁶¹, even though there are disagreements over the significance of the factors that explain abstentionism. There is a school of thought that focuses on the technical aspects of the electoral process. For example, this school points to the problems of obtaining an electoral card, the anomalies in the electoral registry, the difficulties of transportation, the long lines on voting day, and the irregularities that occur on the actual day of the electoral event, as the principal factors explaining abstentionism.

There exists another school of thought that argues that abstentionism is better conceptualized in relation to citizens' disenchantment with democracy. That is, abstentionism is related to the discrediting of political parties, politicians and politics in general. This disenchantment with democracy has led to a divorce between the political and daily lives of citizens, which explains the disinterest in elections. A recent work on electoral abstentionism in El Salvador states as its principal hypothesis "that the greater part of abstentionism of El Salvadorans is explained by citizens' apathy and indifference towards participating in the electoral process, and not so much the failings of the electoral system itself".⁶² In this sense, abstentionism "would be the product of a profound lack of confidence in the political system.... This disenchantment could be produced by the perception that despite repeated electoral events, and political events – such as the peace accords – and the performance of the government, since the economic situation of the country and in particular the life conditions of the majority of inhabitants have not improved substantially. Therefore, the most common electoral absentees would be those individuals at a social disadvantage: the poor and marginalized. ... The problem then is not the electoral system itself, but rather the political system, which according to the judgements of its citizens is not capable of offering political alternatives to resolve the principal problems of the country".⁶³

This study is focused in this second line of thought, analyzing abstentionism as a function of citizen disenchantment with politics. We believe that the use of public opinion surveys can be a useful analytic instrument to assess the perceptions and attitudes of citizens

⁶⁰See Mitchell A. Seligson, *et al.*, "Who Votes in Central America? A Comparative Analysis," in: Mitchell A. Seligson and John Booth, editors, *Elections and Democracy in Central America, Revisited*. University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

⁶¹See, for example: FLACSO Programa El Salvador. *El Proceso electoral 1994*. San Salvador, FLACSO, 1995. Héctor Dada Hirezi (coordinator). *Las elecciones de 1997: ¿un paso más en la transición democrática?*. San Salvador, FLACSO Programa El Salvador, 1998.

⁶²Cruz, Miguel. "Las razones del abstencionismo en El Salvador en 1997". In: Ricardo Córdova Macías (editor). *El abstencionismo electoral en Nicaragua y El Salvador*. San Salvador, Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, May of 1998, p.25

⁶³Cruz, Miguel (1998). "Las razones del abstencionismo en El Salvador en 1997." In: Ricardo Córdova Macías (editor). *El abstencionismo electoral en Nicaragua y El Salvador*. San Salvador, Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, May of 1998, pp 60-61.

regarding politics and political participation at a more specific level. With this study we do not aim to deny the persistence of technical problems that must be overcome; however, we strive to emphasize that addressing these technical problems of the electoral event and process alone will not reduce the high levels of abstentionism, as these technical issues do not address the social-psychological base of attitudes and valuations that citizens hold regarding politics.⁶⁴ This study examines these attitudes and valuations to contribute to a better comprehension of electoral abstentionism in El Salvador.

An approach to the explanations of those who do not vote

In the experience of the IUDOP in conducting surveys on electoral behavior, it has been found that “the majority of Salvadorans are reluctant to state publicly that they did not think to vote, this also applies when asking at the same time about a past event, in other words, when one asks whether they have voted or not”.⁶⁵ This raises challenges in terms of methodology and strategy of research when relying upon surveys to analyze these themes. For this reason we have designed the survey to include two questions: (a) one oriented towards the reasons as to why the respondent did not vote, and another (b) oriented to why others did not vote.

Regarding the reasons as to why the respondent did not vote, the survey question was formulated in a manner designed to elicit the most valid reply: “For one reason or another, many people did not vote in the past elections. Some for problems with the electoral registry, others due to personal problems and others because they do not like to be involved in politics. Could you tell me if for any of these reasons you did not vote in the last election in March?” For those that answered that they had not voted, we then asked: Why did you not vote in the last presidential election? In Table 12 one can observe the reasons for which the respondents stated that they did not vote. Respondents first emphasized two technical problems of the electoral event: registration (34%) and transportation (2%); following these were personal reasons: sickness (16.3%), work (4.6%), being outside of the country (3.4%) not old enough (7.1%); following these reasons were those driven by a lack of confidence or interest in the elections: 24%.

⁶⁴Regarding the elections of 1997, one study indicated that: “most of the people that did not vote supposedly had the necessary documentation and only 30.7% did not have the necessary card.” See: Cruz, *Opus Cit*, p 30.

⁶⁵Ver: Miguel Cruz. “Las razones del abstencionismo en El Salvador en 1997”. En: Ricardo Córdova Macías (compilador). *El abstencionismo electoral en Nicaragua y El Salvador*. San Salvador, Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, mayo de 1998, p. 31.

Table 12. El Salvador 1999. Reasons for which the Respondents Did Not Vote

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Sickness	199	6.8	16.3
Lack of Transportation	24	0.8	2
Violence/Lack of Security/Fear	4	0.1	0.3
Registration	415	14.2	34
Work	56	1.9	4.6
Lack of Confidence/Interest	292	10	24
Others	102	3.5	8.4
Outside of the Country	41	1.4	3.4
Not Old Enough	86	2.9	7.1
Sub total	1,218	41.8	100
Missing	1,696	58.2	
Total	2,914	100	

In Table 13 one can observe the reasons for which respondents stated that others did not vote. The first reasons emphasized are those driven by a lack of confidence or interest in the elections: 90.6%; the problems of registration drop to .3%, reasons of violence or lack of security to .6%; and other reasons fall to 8.5%.

Table 13. El Salvador 1999. Reasons for Which Others Do Not Vote

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Sickness			
Lack of Transportation			
Violence/Lack of Security/Fear	15	0.5	0.6
Registration	9	0.3	0.3
Work			
Lack of Confidence/Interest	2,519	86.4	90.6
Others	237	8.1	8.5
Outside the Country			
Not Old Enough			
Sub total	2,779	95.4	100
Missing	135	4.6	
Total	2,914	100	

Thus, upon asking a Salvadoran why she or he did not vote, the technical problems of the process or the electoral event (registration or transportation) are the primary reasons for abstentionism, followed by personal reasons, and then in third place a lack of confidence or interest in elections appears. In contrast, when one asks for what reasons others do not vote, lack of confidence or interest in the elections rises as the principal reason.

Socio-demographic explanations

According to numerous studies on electoral participation in the United States, education, gender, and age are the most important characteristics predicting voting behavior. This literature indicates that those who vote the least are the citizens that are youngest and oldest. The relationship between voting and age is represented by an inverted “U” curve: those who have recently reached voting age exhibit the lowest level of voting, voting then increases with age until citizens reach senior citizen levels, at which point their probability of voting decreases.⁶⁶ The data from our survey of El Salvador for the year 1999 conform to this pattern, as shown in Figure 55.

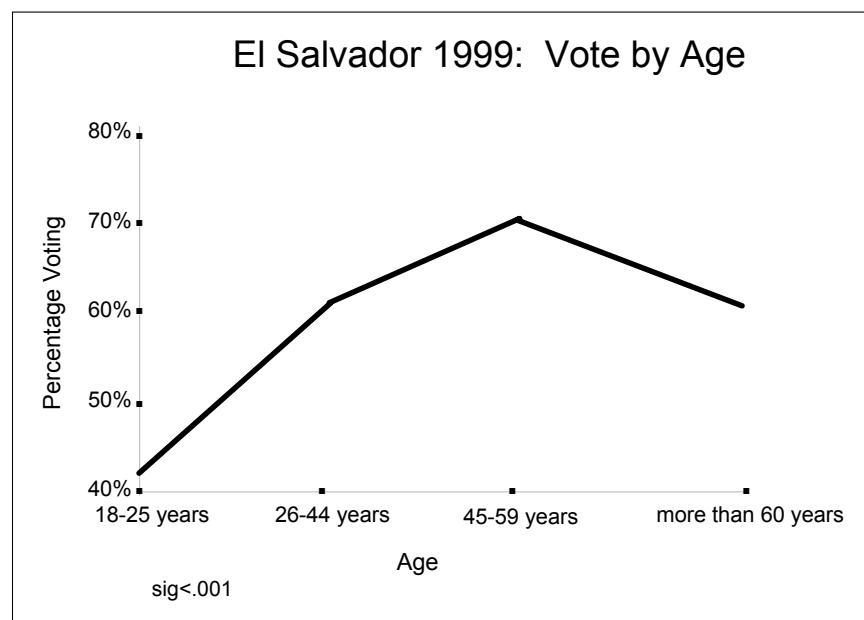


Figure 55. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Age

⁶⁶See: Mitchell A. Seligson, *et. al.*, “Who Votes in Central America? A Comparative Analysis”, in: Mitchell A. Seligson and John Booth, editors, *Elections and Democracy in Central America, Revisited*. University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Another socio-demographic finding relates to gender. Men vote more than women, (see Figure 56), and this difference is statistically significant.

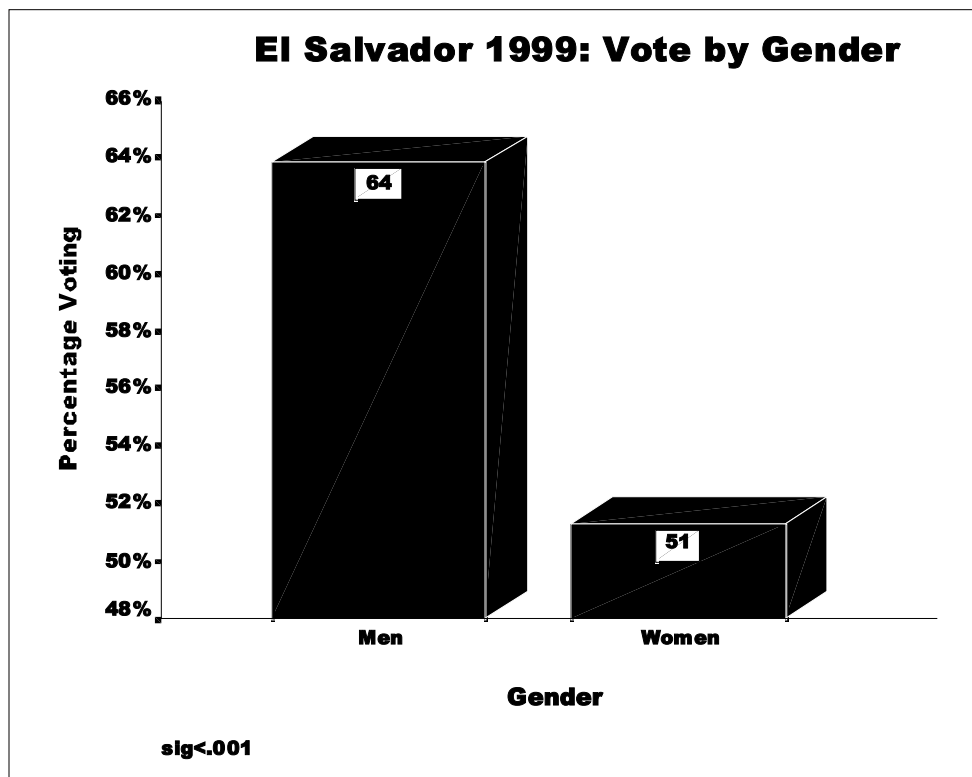


Figure 56. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Gender

In the case of education (see Figure 57), those who are not educated have lower levels of voting. Voting participation increases as education increases for those with primary education, and then diminishes for those with some secondary education. The relationship between voting and education then increases for those that have completed high school, and is greatest for those with university studies. In sum, starting from the level of secondary education, the intention to vote increases for those with the highest levels of education: baccalaureate and university studies.

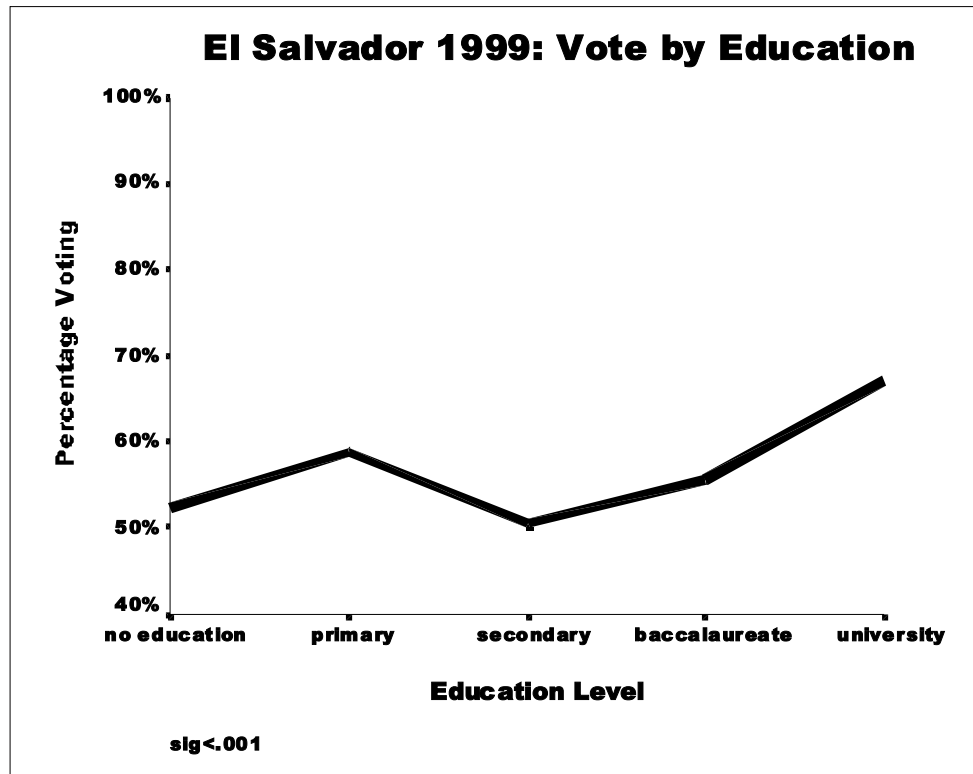


Figure 57. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Education

Upon controlling for the intention to vote by level of education and gender (Figure 58), one can observe that at all levels of education, men vote more than women. Nevertheless, for women the intention to vote increases as the level of education increases, whereas for men, there is a tendency to diminish the intention to vote upon reaching the first levels of education (primary and secondary). For men this tendency stabilizes at the baccalaureate level, then increases for those with a university level education.

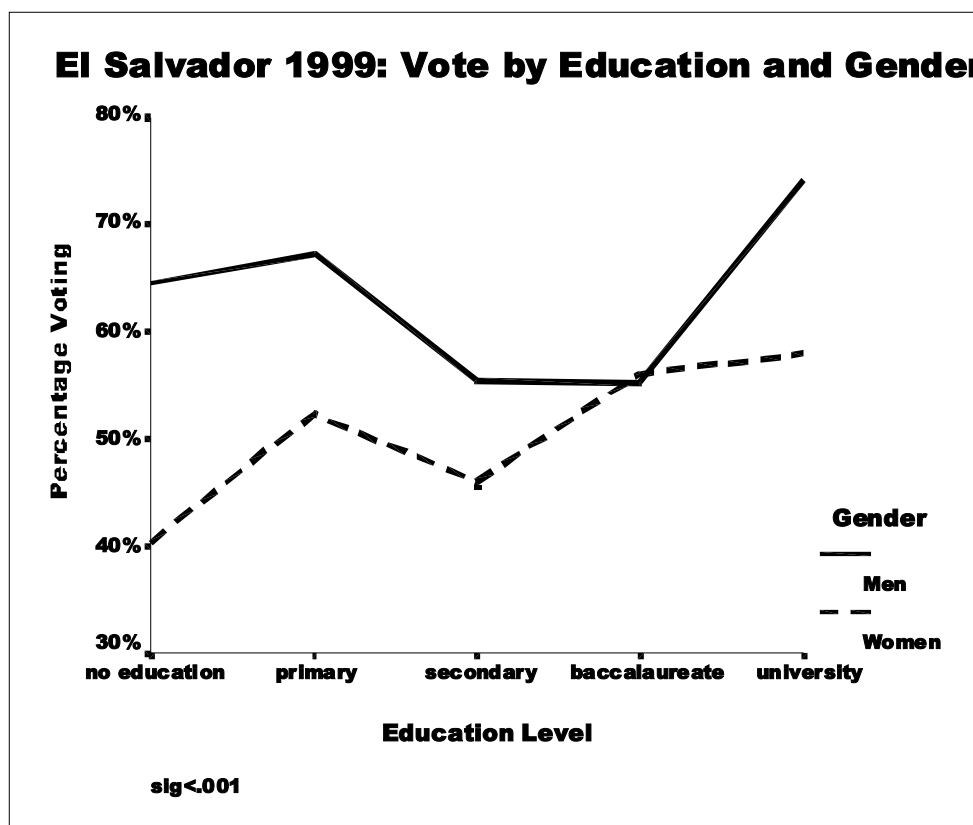


Figure 58. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Education and Gender

To this analysis of socio-demographic factors we decided to add a series of classic variables in social analysis: income and level of political knowledge. The variable of income proves to be important in explaining the intention to vote. In our survey we asked respondents: "In which of the following ranges would you place your monthly family income?" Respondents were shown a card with the following ranges: (0) no income, (1) less than 1,000 colones, (2) between 1,001 and 2,000 colones, (3) 2,001 - 3,000 colones, (4) 3,001 - 4,000 colones, (5) 4,001 - 5,000 colones, (6) 5,001 - 6,000 colones, (7) more than 6,001 colones.

In Figure 59 one observes a clear pattern: a higher level of income corresponds to a higher level of an intention to vote, until it reaches the range of 5,000 colones. There is a sharp drop in the intention to vote for the range of 5,001-6,000 colones, which subsequently returns to an increase for the range of more than 6,000 colones.

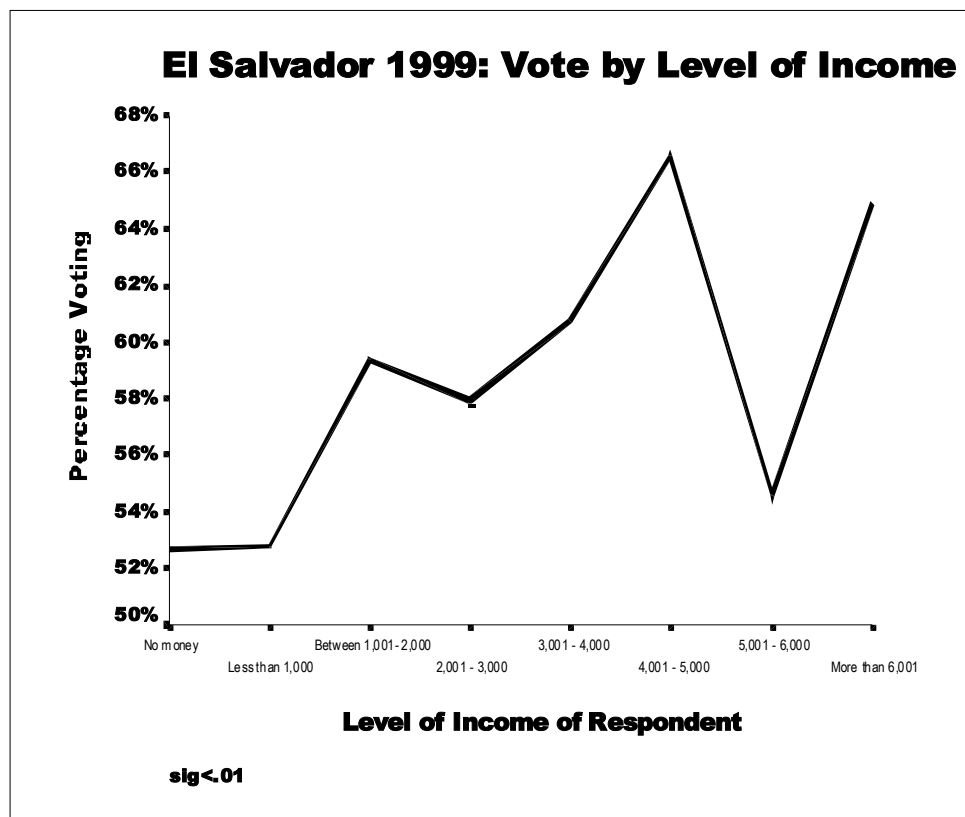


Figure 59. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Level of Income

The variable “level of knowledge” is based upon an index created by integrating the responses of five questions regarding levels of political knowledge: (a) knowledge of the name of the President of the United States, (b) knowledge of the name of the president of the Legislative Assembly, (c) knowledge of the party that was governing the country, (d) knowledge of the duration of the presidential term, (e) knowledge of the date on which the current Constitution was promulgated. This produced an index of “level of knowledge” that has the following range: 0% indicates that the respondent did not answer any of the questions correctly, 20% for one correct answer, 40%, 60%, 80% and a 100% indicates that the respondent answered all of the items correctly. In Figure 60 one observes a clear tendency: as the level of knowledge increases, so does the intention to vote.

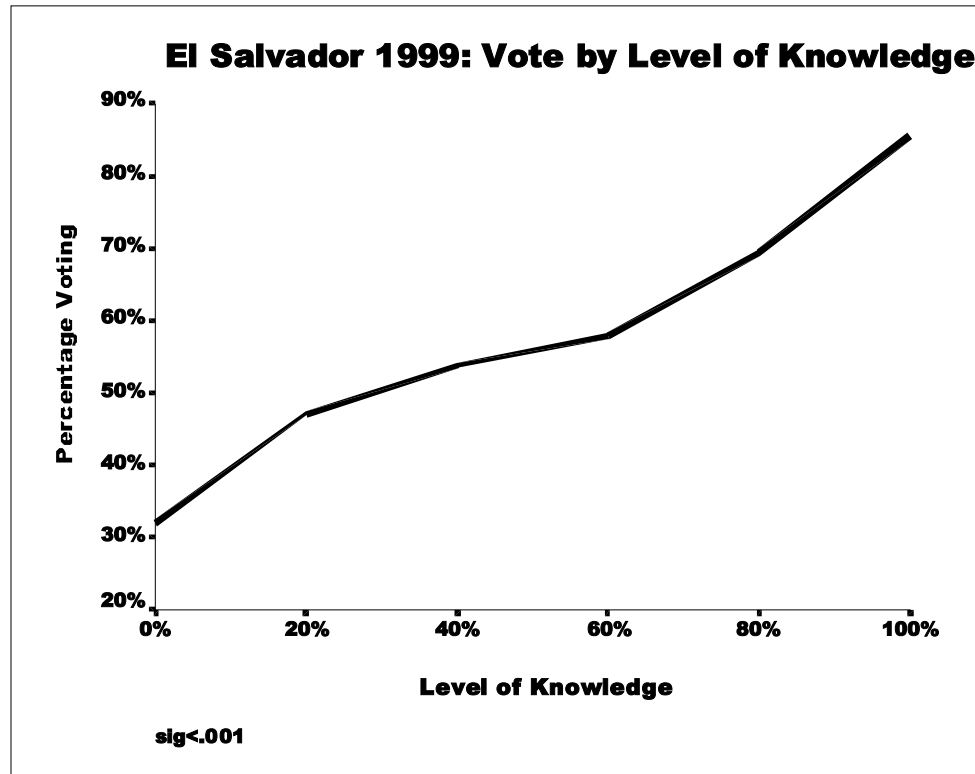


Figure 60. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Level of Knowledge

Upon controlling for the intention to vote by level of knowledge and gender (Figure 61) one observes that men have a greater intention to vote than women, independent of levels of knowledge. The tendency for women to vote increases with the first levels of knowledge and then stabilizes upon reaching the 40% level of knowledge. For men, the relationship is relatively stable at the first levels of knowledge, but then after the level of 40%, the intention to vote increases in conformity with the increases in the level of knowledge.

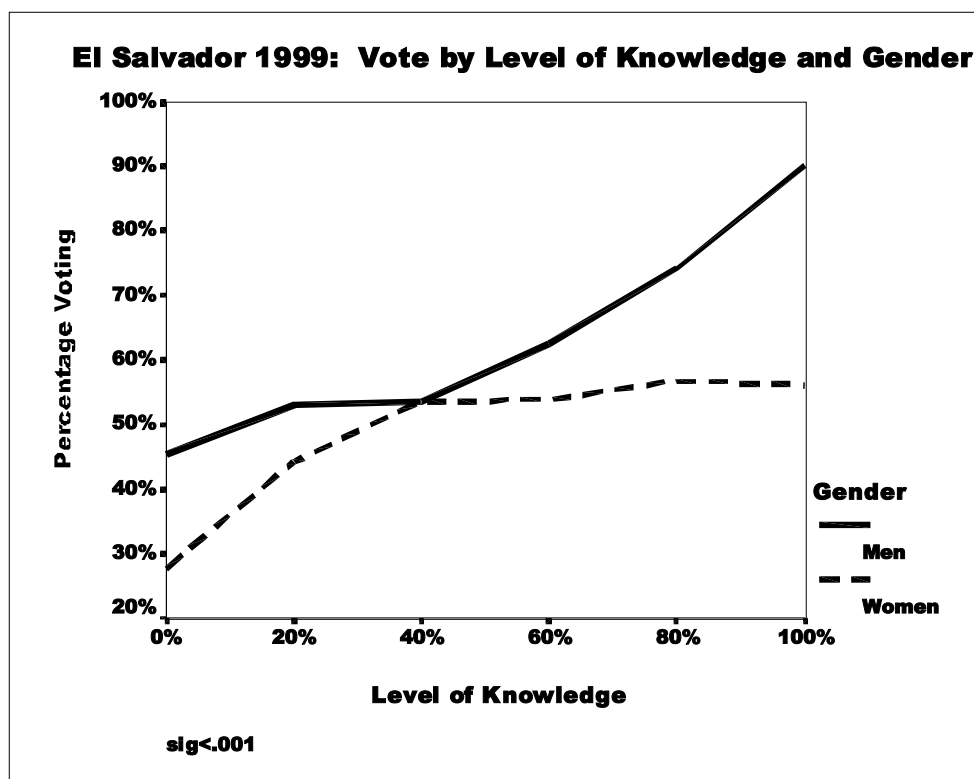


Figure 61. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Level of Knowledge and Gender

In the case of the variable “estrato” (i.e., stratum) , which groups the municipalities according to their population size, the relationship with this variable and the intention to vote did not result to be statistically significant. For this reason this result is not reported.

Confidence in politics

In this study we have explored the relationship between interest in politics in general and the intention to vote. In Figure 62 one can observe a decidedly clear pattern: the intention to vote diminishes as a function of a reduced interest in politics.

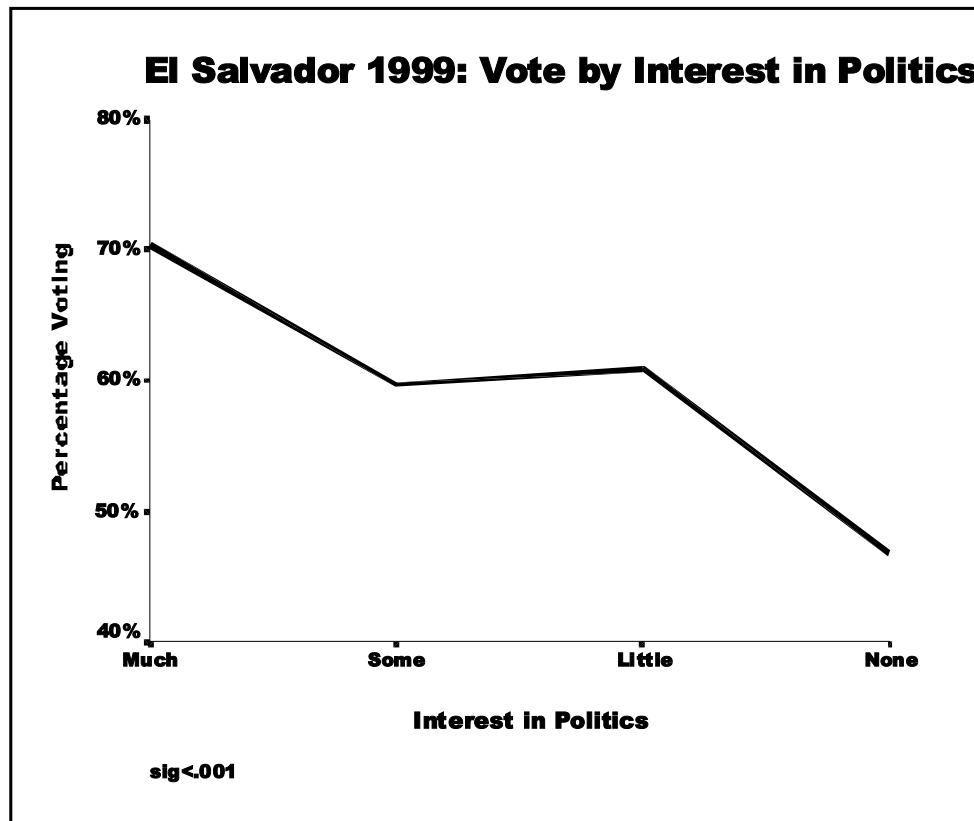


Figure 62. El Salvador 1999: Vote and Interest in Politics

Another important factor is the opinion that citizens have regarding political parties. In Figure 63 one can observe that the intention to vote rises as confidence in political parties increases. This pattern is clear in the first four levels of the scale of confidence in parties, however it diminishes in the following two levels, returning to increase in the last levels.

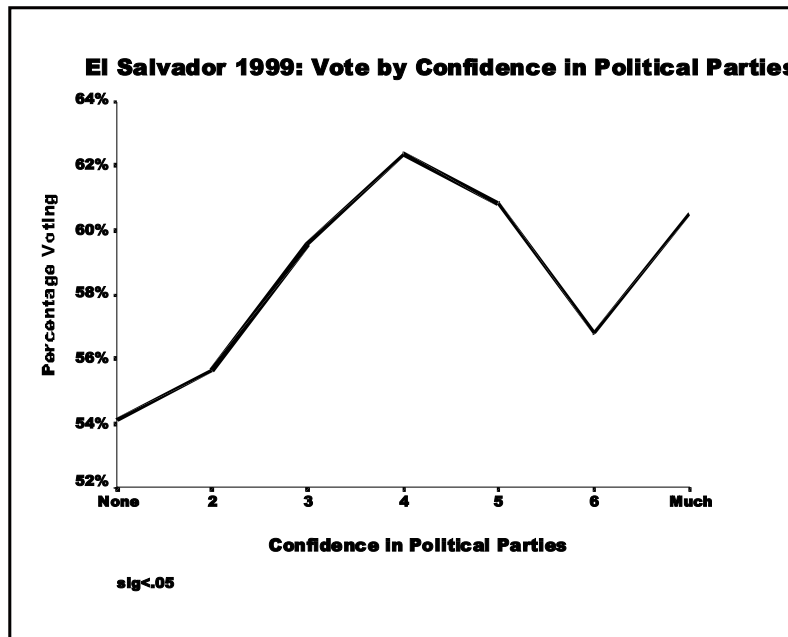


Figure 63. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Confidence in Political Parties

We have also included a question to measure perceptions of the benefits of the work conducted by political parties. More concretely, we asked: "To what extent do you feel that the work of a political party has benefitted you? " In Figure 64 one can observe that as respondents perceive themselves as benefitting less from the work of political parties, their intention to vote declines.

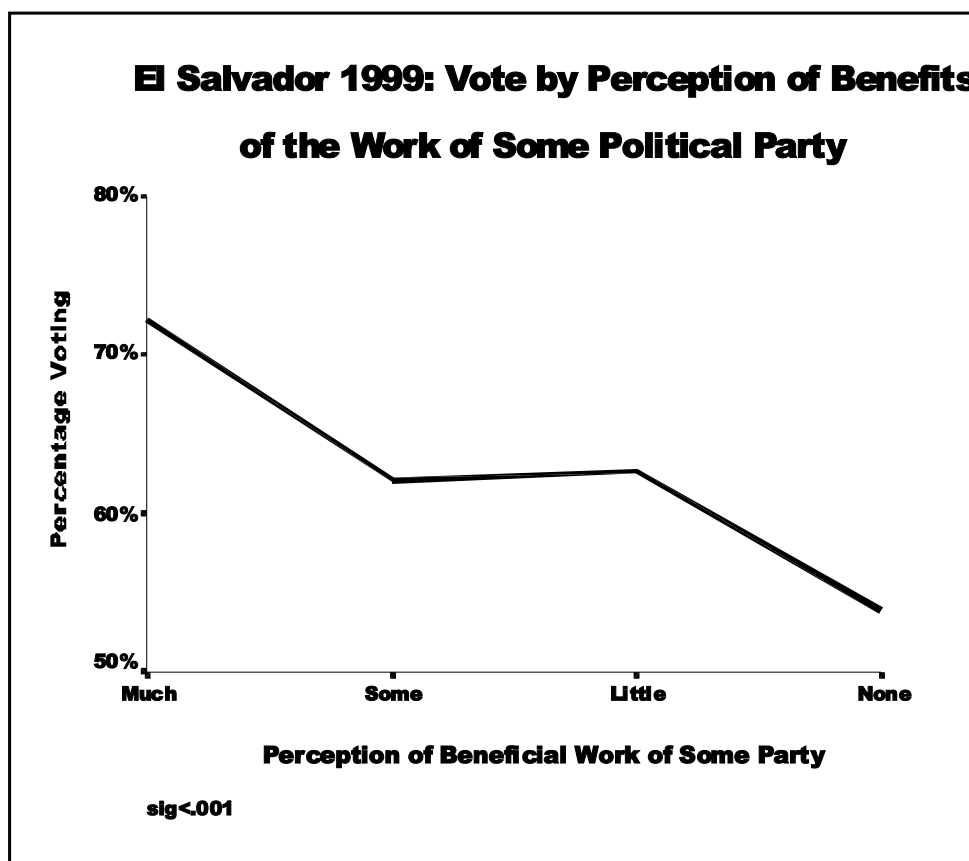


Figure 64. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Perceived Benefits of the Work of Some Political Party

One sentiment that we have encountered in distinct surveys conducted in the last few years in El Salvador is that an important sector of the citizenry does not see the utility of political work. In our study we asked: "Tell me please, with what phrase do you agree the most? (1) Politics serves only to deceive the people. (2) Politics serves to look out for the well-being of the people." In Figure 65 one can observe that those who think that politics serves to look out for the well-being of the people exhibit a higher intention to vote than the people who think that politics serves only to deceive the people.

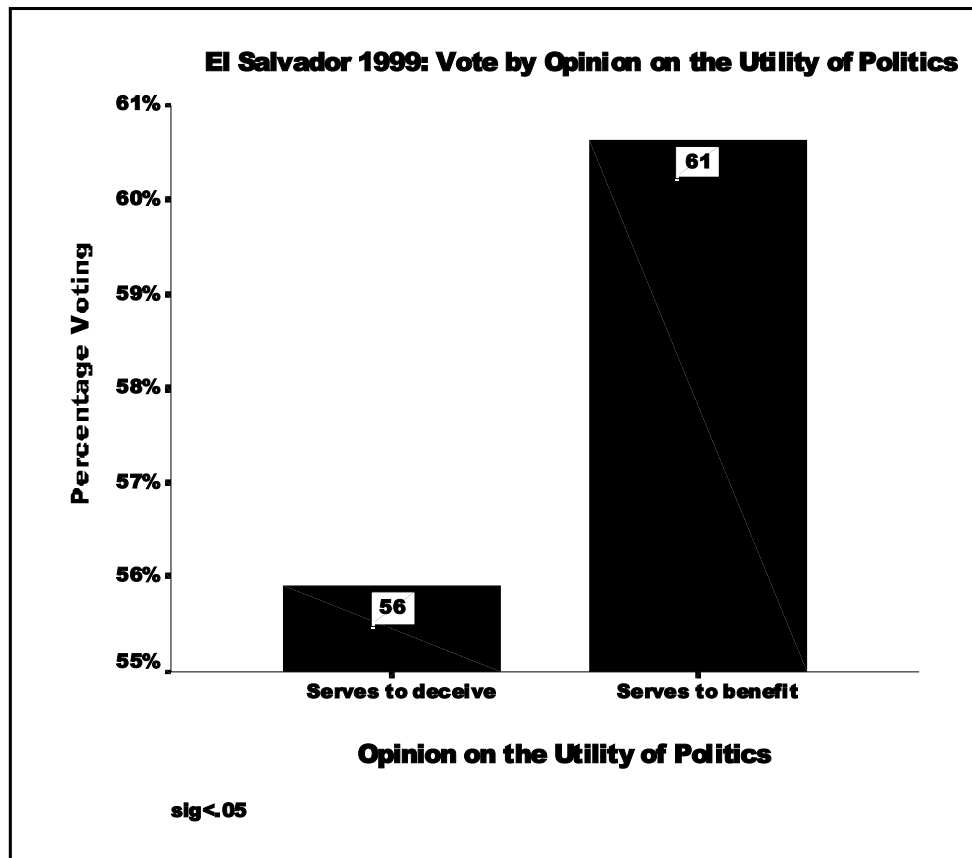


Figure 65. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Opinion on the Utility of Politics

The representation of interests is a subject of crucial importance for the legitimacy of any political system. A question included in our survey is: "To what extent are your interests represented by some political party?" This question permitted us to explore the relationship between the feeling that one's interests are represented and the intention to vote. In Figure 66 one can observe this distinct pattern clearly: the perception that one's interests are represented is correlated with an increase in the intention to vote. As respondents perceive that their interests are not represented, their intention to vote diminishes.

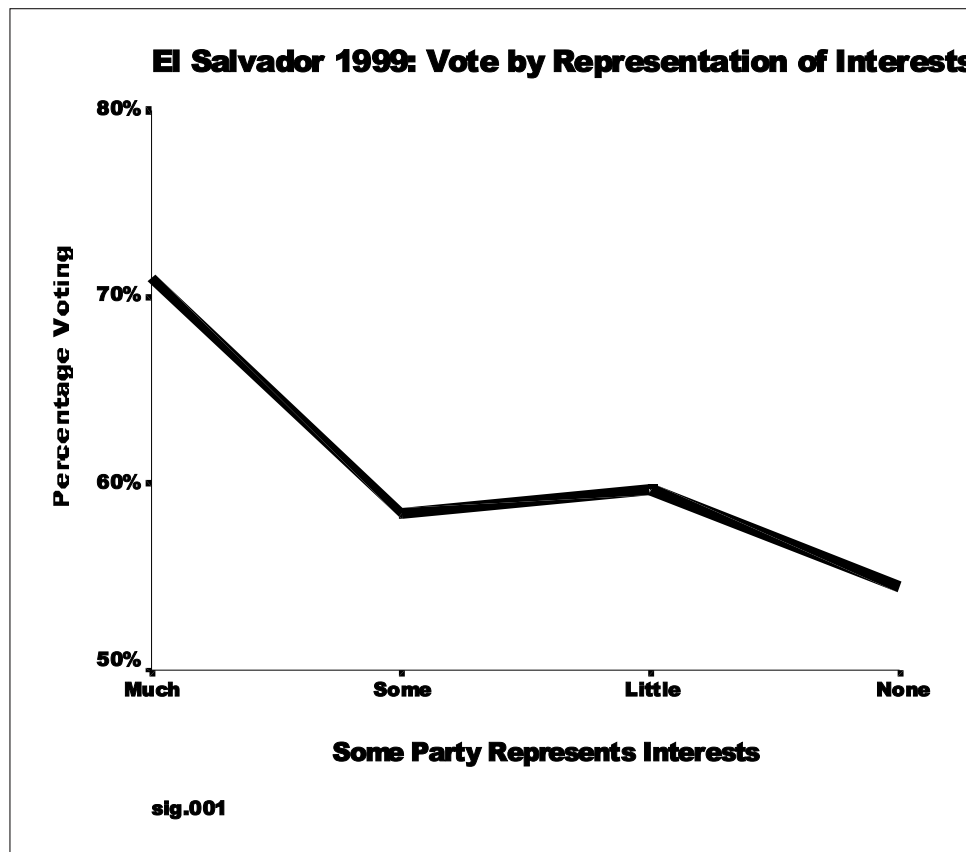


Figure 66. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Representation of Interests

Valuations on elections and democracy

One of the most curious findings in this study is the finding regarding the relationship between the intention to vote and the perception that the last elections were fair. In our survey we asked: "To what extent do you think that the last presidential elections (March 1999) were fair, that is, without fraud?" Respondents were given a card with seven steps, ranging from not fair to very fair. In Figure 67 one can observe that the intention to vote correlates with the perception that elections were fair. As one perceives the elections as fair, one's intention to vote increases.

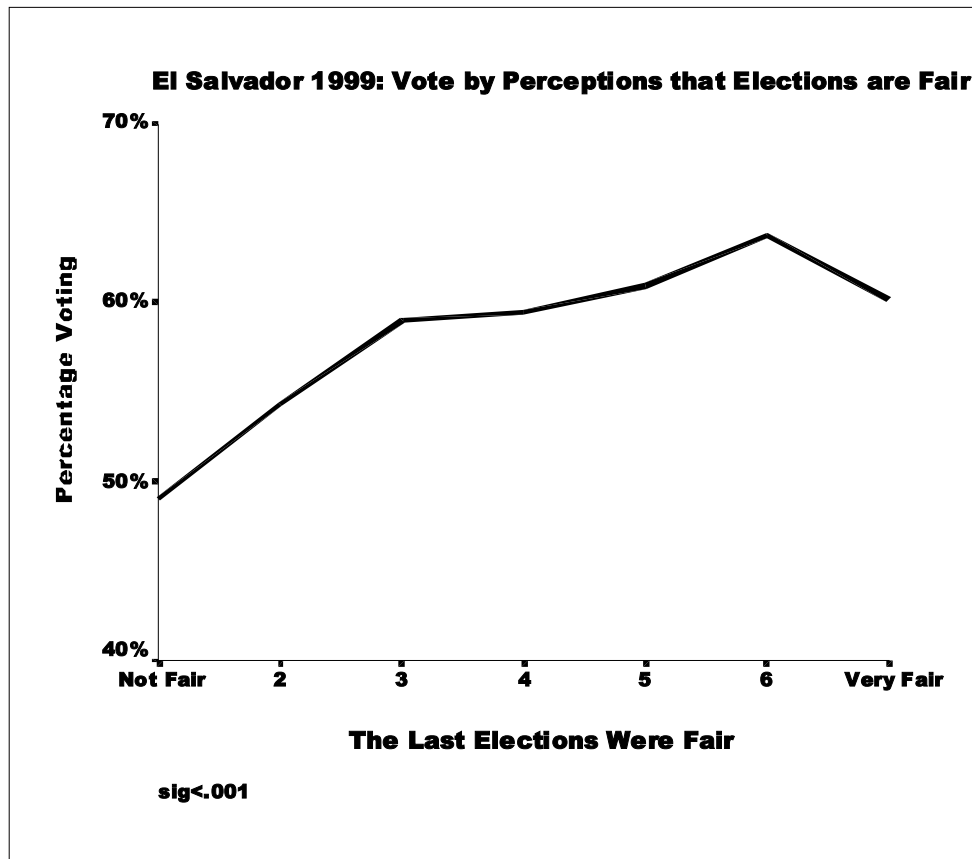


Figure 67. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Perception that Elections Are Fair

Studies of political culture have indicated the importance of citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of their political system. In our survey we included the following question: "To what extent would you consider the results of the past elections to represent the will of the Salvadoran people?" In Figure 68 one can observe that as the perception of electoral representativeness decreases, the intention to vote similarly declines as well.

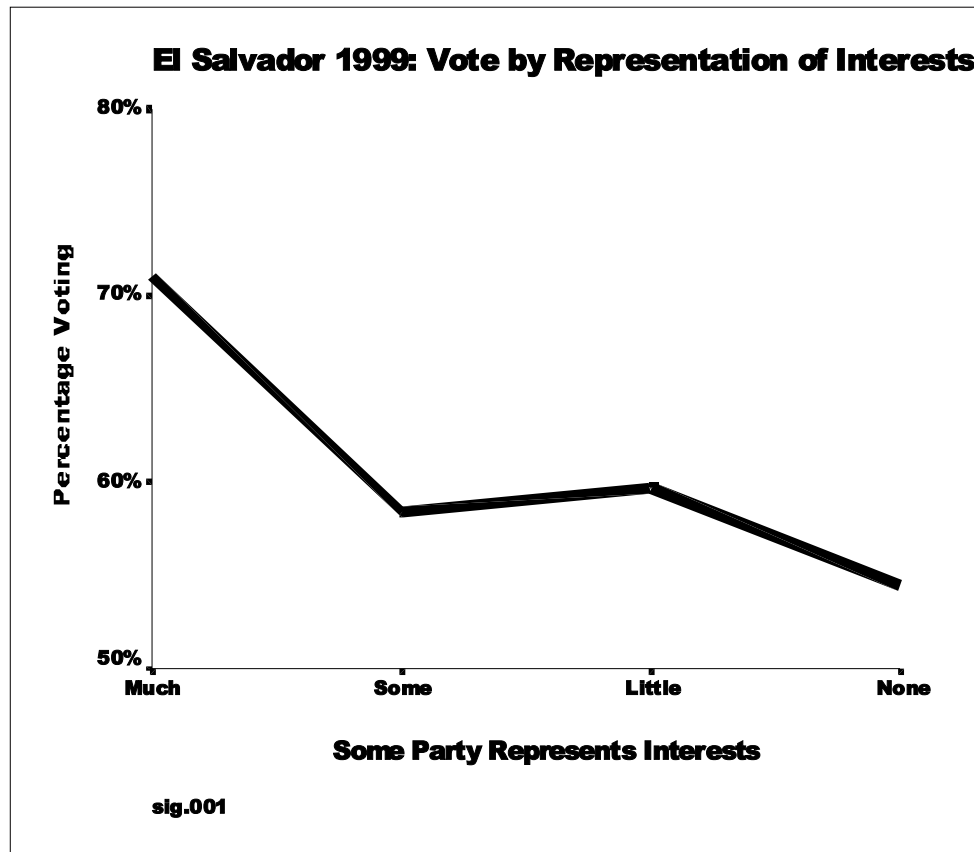


Figure 68. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Electoral Representativeness

The intention to vote was not found to have a statistically significant relationship with the question “How democratic is El Salvador?” Nevertheless, the exploration of additional valuations on other dimensions of democracy resulted in interesting findings. We asked: “Now I am going to read to you a series of phrases regarding democracy. Please, tell me which of the following phrases you agree with the most: (1) in general, despite a few problems, democracy is the best form of government, and (2) There are other forms of government that could be equal to or better than democracy.” In Figure 69 one can observe that those who think that democracy is the best form of government exhibit a greater intention to vote, compared to those that think that there are other forms of government that could be equal to or better than democracy.

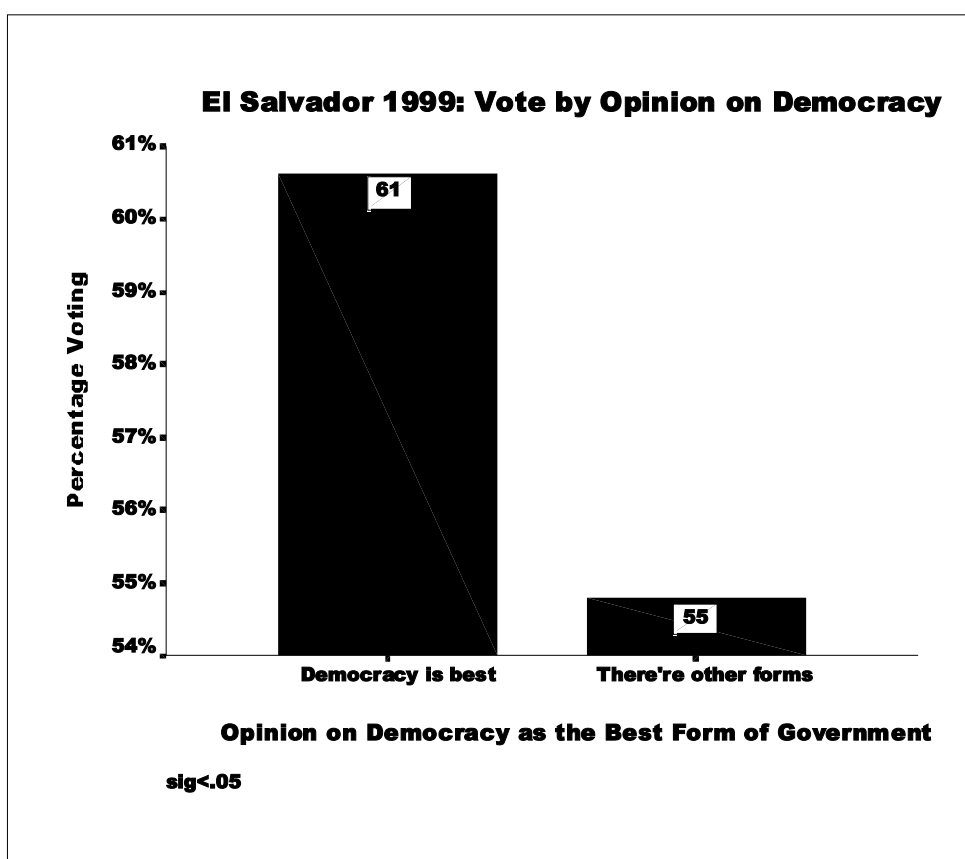


Figure 69. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Opinion of Democracy

The other question that we included in relation to this theme is: “On some occasions, democracy does not function. When this occurs, there are people who say that we need a strong leader who does not have to be elected by the popular vote. Others say that even though things are not functioning, democracy is always better. What do you think? (1) We need a strong leader that does not need to be elected. (2) Electoral democracy is always better.” In Figure 70 one can observe that those who support electoral democracy exhibit a greater intention to vote, compared with those who prefer a strong leader. Even though the difference is not large, it is statistically significant.

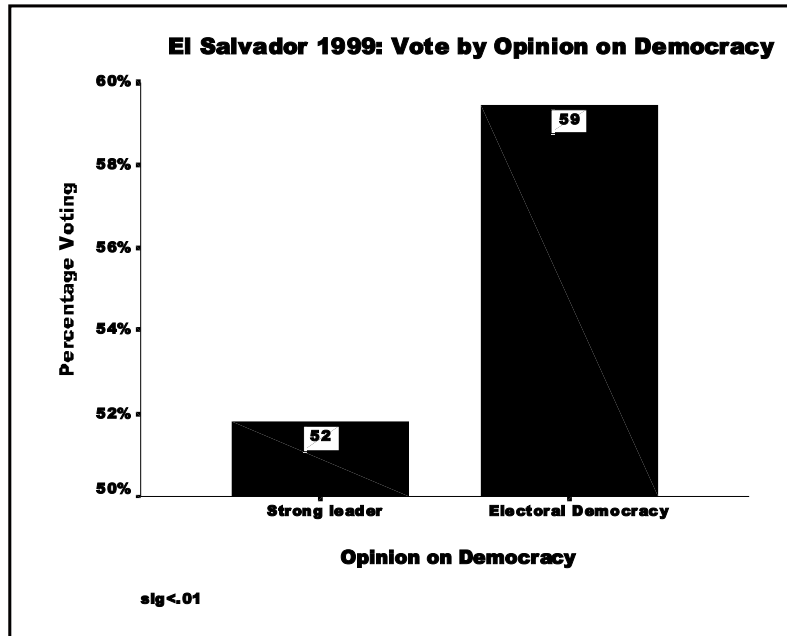


Figure 70. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Opinion of Democracy

Involvement in politics

Consistent with the negative valuation that one has towards politics, it is not a surprise that those that participate in political activities manifest a greater intention to vote. In our survey we included the following question: “There are some people who work for a political party or candidate during the electoral campaigns. Have you worked for a candidate or party in the past presidential elections of March of 1999? (1) Yes, has worked (2) No, has not worked.” In Figure 71 one can observe that those who have worked for a candidate or party exhibit an intention to vote that is much greater in comparison to those who have not engaged in such work.

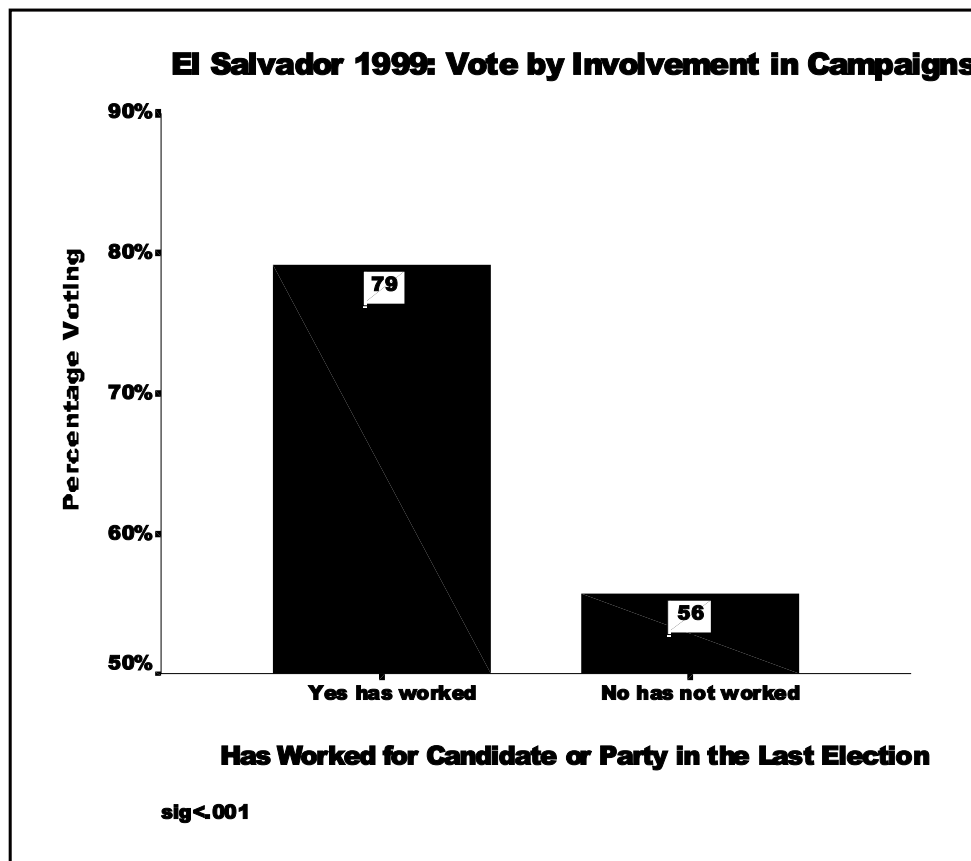


Figure 71. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Involvement in Campaigns

In Figure 72 we explore the relationship between persuasion and the intention to vote. In this case, persuasion was measured in the following manner: “During the elections, some people try to convince others to vote for a particular party or candidate. How frequently have you tried to convince others to vote for a particular party? (1) Frequently (2) Sometimes (3) Rarely (4) Never.” In this case, the principal finding is that those who have been involved in the political activity of persuading people to vote for a particular candidate or party, exhibit a higher intention to vote than others who have not done so. As the frequency of persuasion declines, the intention to vote also diminishes.

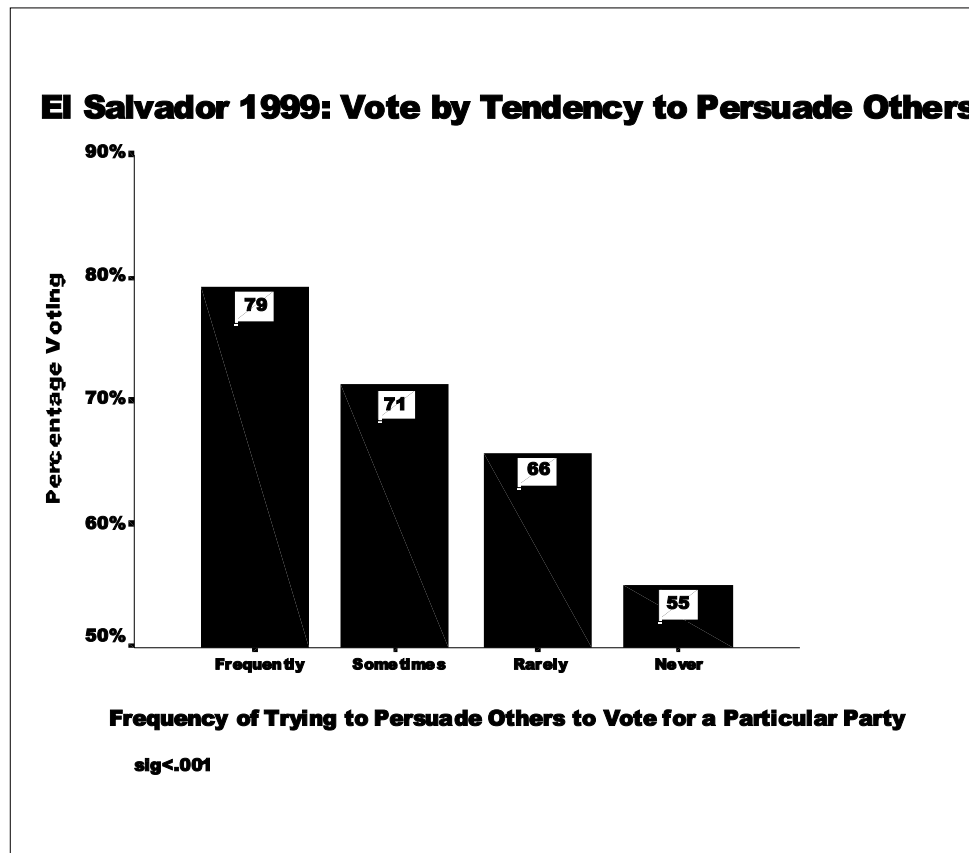


Figure 72. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Persuasion of Others

Another dimension of the problem of abstentionism is linked to the perception that citizens' votes are effective. In the survey we asked: "Do you believe that a vote can change future outcomes or do you think that it is not important how one votes, things will not improve? (1) The vote can change things (2) It is not important how one votes." In Figure 73 one can observe that those who think that their vote can change things have a distinctly greater tendency to vote compared to those that think that with their vote things will not change.

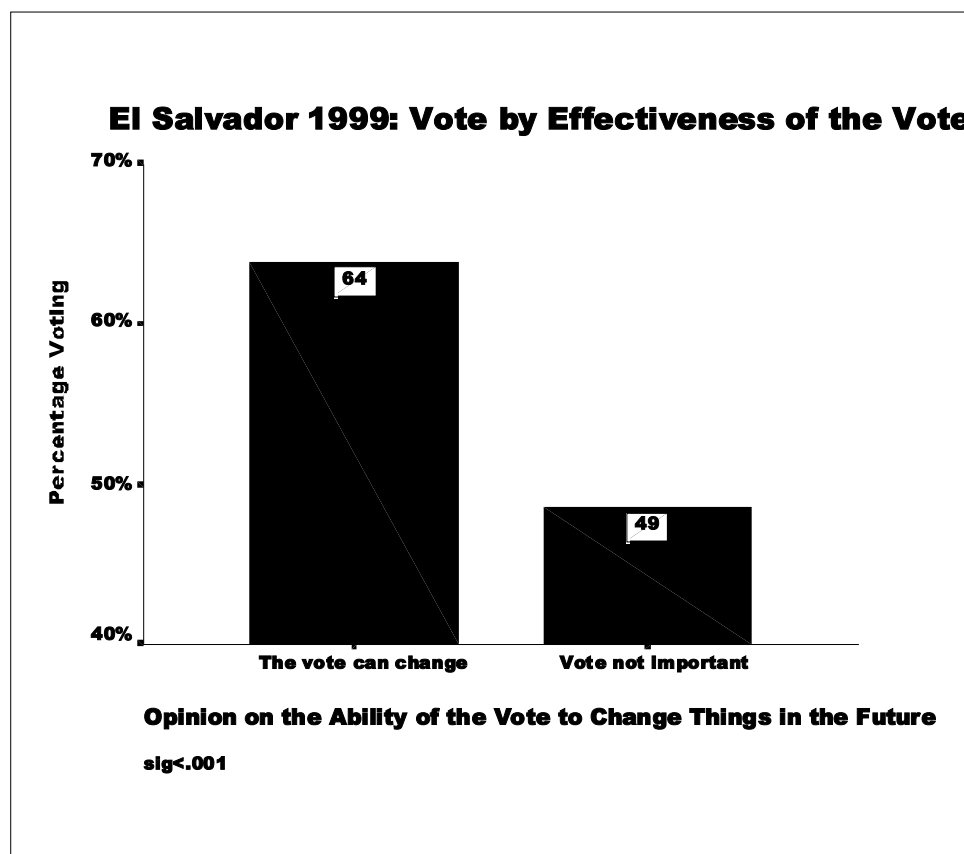


Figure 73. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Effectiveness of the Vote

To conclude this section, we explore the relationship between the intention to vote and the expectations regarding the future of the country. In the survey we included the following question: “How do you think the situation of the country will be in one year? (1) Worse than now (2) The same as now (3) Better than now.” In Figure 74 one can observe that those respondents who expect things to improve in the future manifest a greater intention to vote. Those who think that things will be worse or the same express lower levels of an intention to vote.

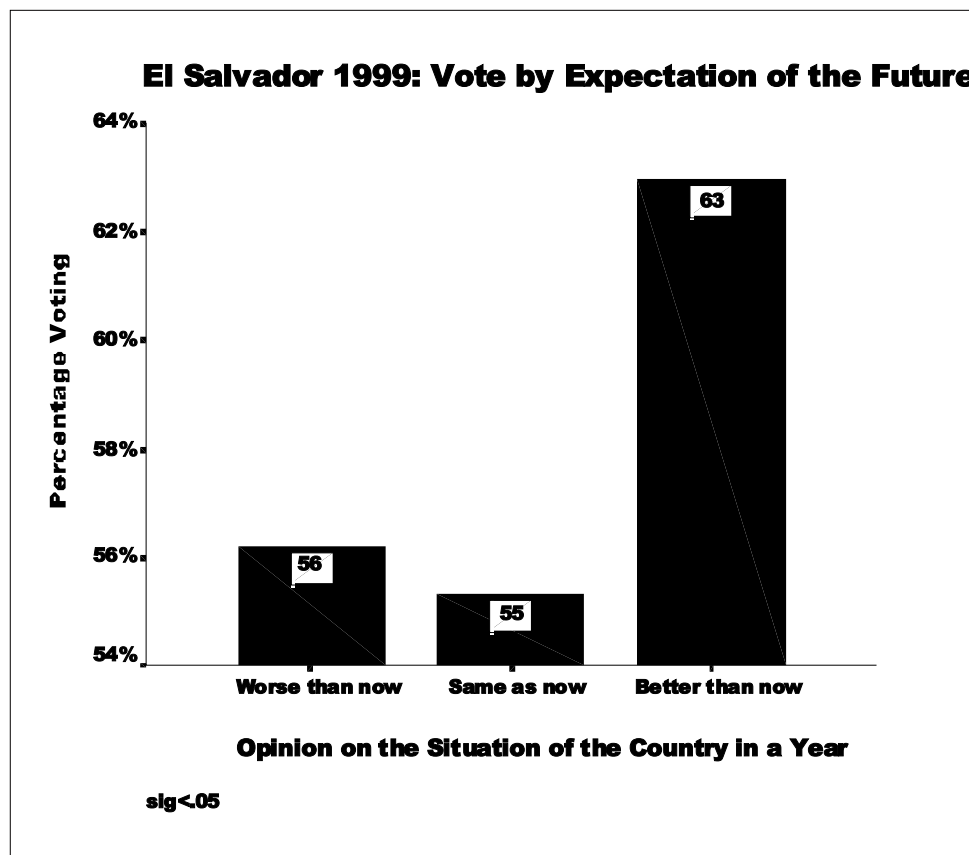


Figure 74. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Future Expectations

The impact of some technical themes

As indicated in the beginning of this chapter, there are those that identify technical problems as the principal factor explaining electoral abstentionism. We believe that through this study we have demonstrated that abstentionism is related to a disenchantment with democracy. Abstentionism is related to the discredit of political parties, politicians, and politics in general. There is a divorce between the political and daily life of citizens, which has led to a lack of interest in elections. Nevertheless, we also recognize that these technical problems have a direct impact on limiting the possibilities for some interested citizens to vote. For this reason, in this study we decided to explore the evaluations of citizens on three technical elements that are on the agenda of electoral reform. The first question asks: "Are you interested in participating in the selection of party candidates or is this something that only the parties should determine?" (1) Very interested (2) Only the parties should determine." In Figure 75 one observes that those citizens who are interested in participating in the selection of party candidates express a greater intention to vote, compared to those who indicate that the selection of candidates is only the domain of the political parties.

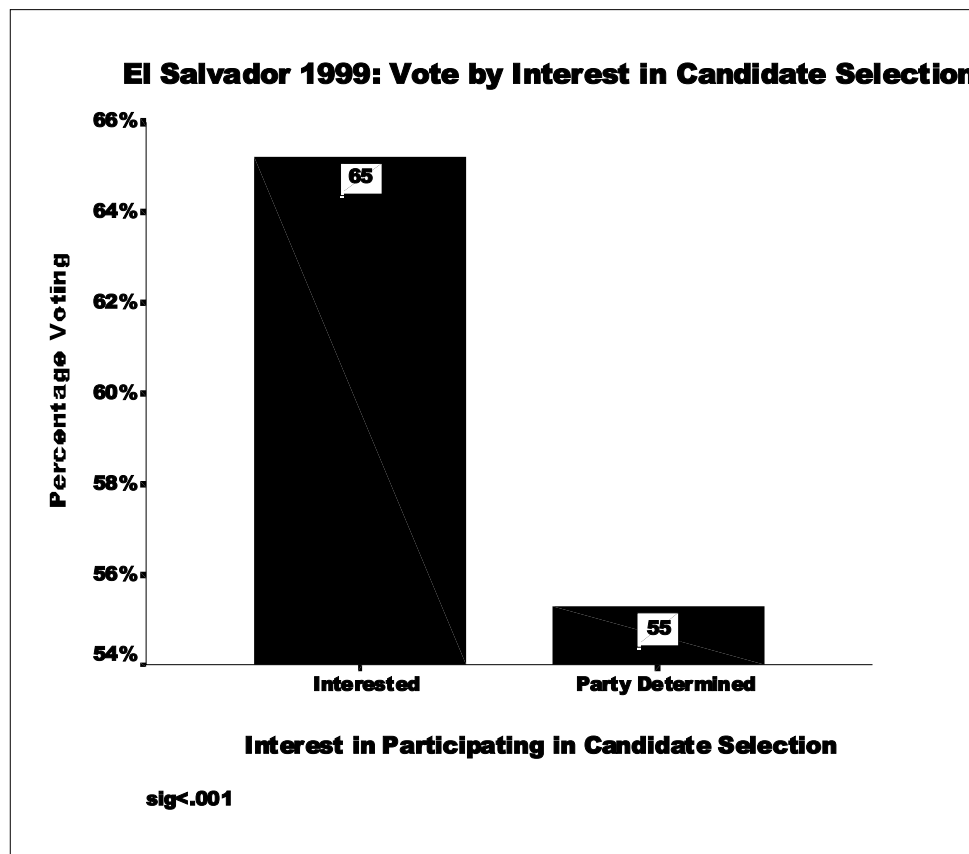


Figure 75. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Interest in Candidate Selection

The second question assesses opinions on the installation of voting centers. More concretely, we asked: “Should the Supreme Electoral Tribunal install voting centers close to where one lives, or . . . should the voting centers remain in their present locations? (1) install closer centers (2) leave the centers in their present locations.” In Figure 76 one observes that those who think that voting centers should remain in their present locations exhibit a higher intention to vote, compared to those that wish to have them much closer. The explication of this finding could be the following: citizens who vote presently are doing so under the current system, and consequently feel more comfortable with this system. This does not signify a rejection of the proposal to install closer voting centers, but rather that in actuality it is not the distance of the voting centers under the current system that is problematic; this distance does not explain the high levels of abstentionism.

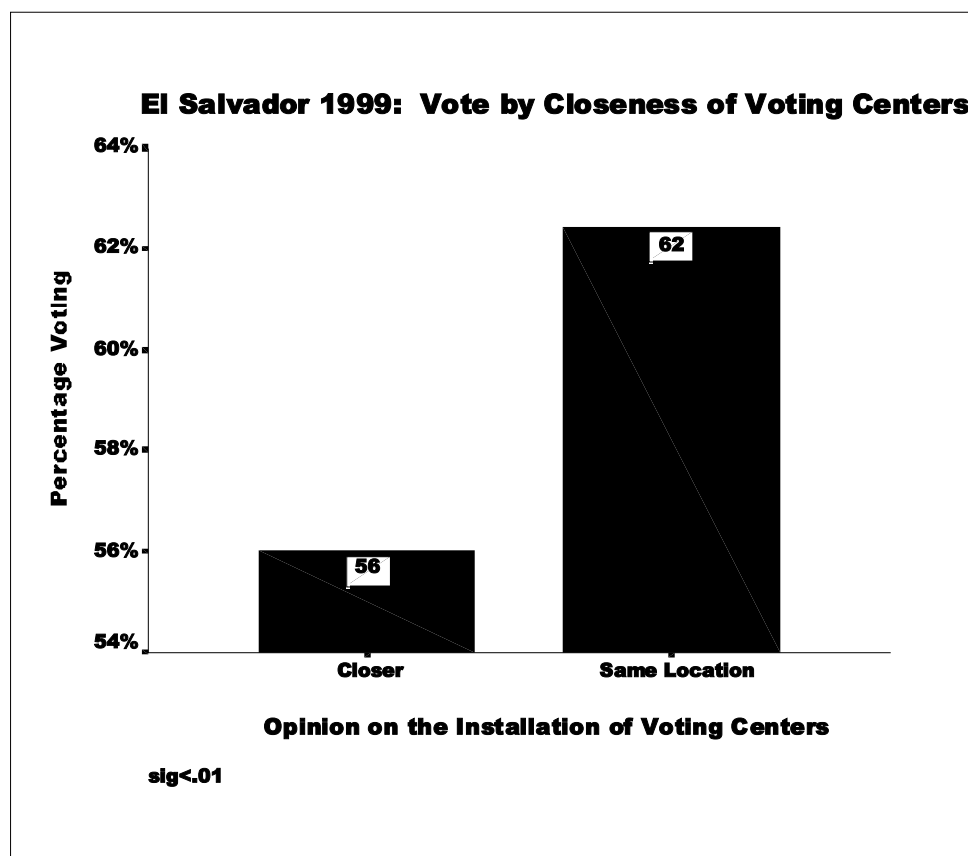


Figure 76. El Salvador 1999: Vote by Closeness of Voting Centers

The third question explores the theme of citizen participation in the voting precincts (JRV). We asked: “Should citizens that do not belong to political parties be poll workers ... should only citizens belonging to political parties be members of the JRV? (1) Citizens not belonging to political parties should be in JRV (2) JRV should only comprise of members of political parties.” In Figure 77 one observes that the respondents who thought that JRV should be comprised of citizens not belonging to political parties manifested a higher intention to vote, compared to those who thought that JRV should be composed only of members of political parties.

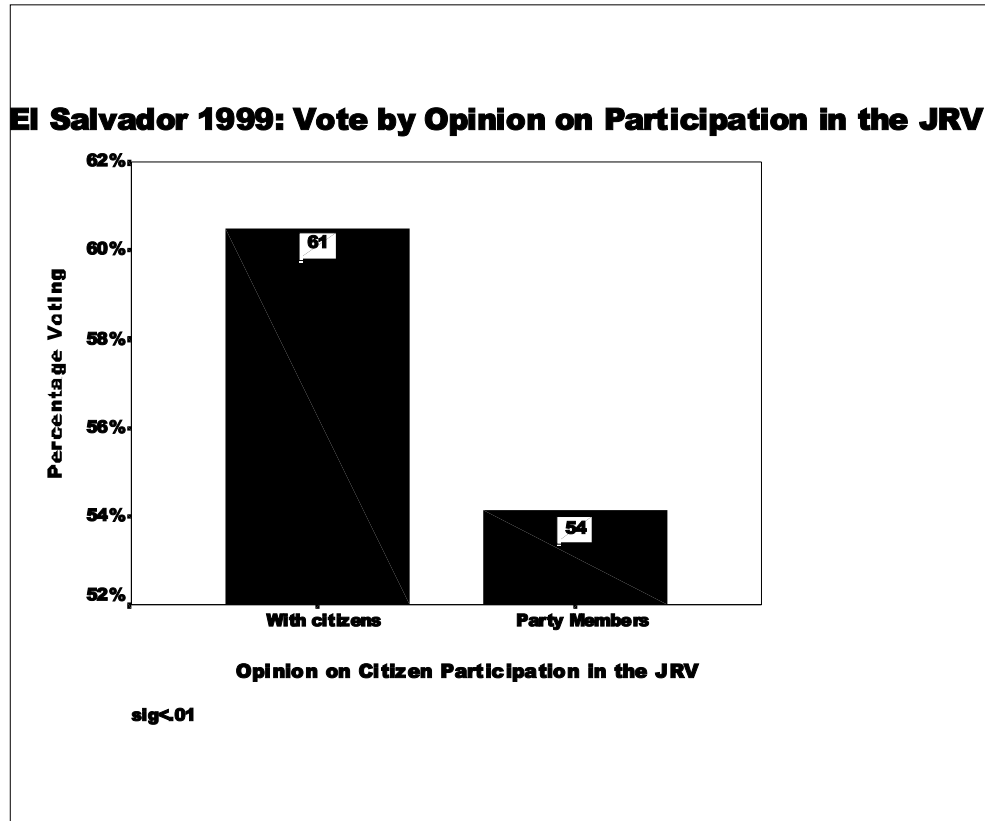


Figure 77. Opinion on Participation in the JRV

Conclusion

In the case of El Salvador, in the past presidential elections in March of 1999, the electoral abstentionism rate was 61.4%, the highest level of all the elections held in the last decade.

To explain the phenomenon of electoral abstentionism there is a debate between two schools of thought. On one side are those who would reduce the problems of abstentionism to technical problems of the electoral process or event. On the other side are those that argue that abstentionism is related to a disenchantment with democracy, that abstentionism is related to the discredit of political parties, politicians, and politics in general. This disenchantment with democracy has led to a divorce between the political and daily lives of citizens.

This study of public opinion, based upon the results of a survey conducted after the presidential elections of March of 1999, presents an abundance of relevant empirical data to explore the arguments rooted in the second school of thought. With this study we do not intend to deny that technical problems persist that must be resolved, however we strive to emphasize that an exclusive focus on the eradication of technical problems will not reduce the high levels of abstentionism. Efforts to reduce abstentionism must also address the psychological and social bases of citizens' attitudes and valuations of politics.

The principal findings of this chapter could be grouped into four conclusions. The first conclusion regards social demographic factors. The relationship between age and the intention to vote is an inverted “U” curve, with men voting more than women. The intention to vote also increases with levels of knowledge, as well as with education and income.

A second conclusion of this study is that abstentionism is clearly driven by a lack of confidence and interest in politics in general, and more specifically, with the discredit of political parties and with the opinion that citizens’ interests are not represented by political parties. In terms of evaluations of democracy and elections, positive evaluations are associated with a greater intention to vote, while the negative evaluations walk hand in hand with low levels of intention to vote. One curious aspect concerns ideology; ideology is not a predictor of the intention to vote. The relationship between ideology and the intention to vote is not statistically significant.

A third conclusion is that those involved in politics, through persuading others to vote or by working directly with a political party or candidate, exhibit a greater intention to vote. More important is the finding regarding the effectiveness of the vote. Those who think that with their vote things can change in the future tend to vote more.

A fourth conclusion illustrates that while the technical problems are important, and in some way have limited and continue to limit some citizens’ intention to vote, this is not necessarily the principal factor explaining abstentionism. One of the most important findings of our study is that a sector of the citizenry does not feel that their interests are represented by political parties, nor does this sector have an interest in participating in political parties as they presently exist. However, citizens could develop an interest in participating in politics, and this greater interest in politics is associated with higher levels of intentions to vote. For example, those who have a greater interest in participating in the selection of party candidates exhibit a greater intention to vote. A similar relationship is found among those that feel that citizens should participate in the JRV.

The following table presents the results of a multi-variate regression analysis. In this multi-variate analysis, we included the principal variables that were significant in our bivariate analyses. We have eliminated dichotomous variables from this multi-variate analysis.

Table 14. Determinants of the Vote in El Salvador

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	9.239	9.17		-1.008	.314
Q2 Age of the respondent in years	3.564	0.337	1.108	10.582	.000
AGESQ (age squared)	-.033	0.004	-.900	-8.695	.000
Q1 Sex of respondent	-5.395	1.98	-.055	-2.725	.006
ED Education of the respondent	.466	0.238	.049	1.961	.050
CONOCIM Level of Knowledge	.257	.055	.112	4.716	.000
IV6 Interest in politics	-4.895	1.037	-.104	-4.719	.000
B21 Confidence in political parties	1.175	.536	.046	2.194	.028
ABS19 Perception of benefits of the work of some political party	-3.698	1.171	-.067	-3.158	.002
B36 The last elections were fair	0.96	.479	.040	2.004	.045

a. Dependent Variable: Did you vote in the last elections?

R Square=.125

Adjusted R Square=.122; sig<.001

This multiple regression analysis reports only those variables that were statistically significant: age (in the case of the variable of age, since its relationship with the dependent variable is that of an inverted curve, we have also included the variable age squared); gender; education; level of knowledge; interest in politics; confidence in political parties; perception of the benefits of the work of some political party; and the perception that the last elections were fair.

Chapter VII. Crime and Democracy

According to the World Bank⁶⁷, the annual homicide rate for the region of Latin American and the Caribbean is around 20 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. This rate makes this region the most violent in the world. Nevertheless, not all of the countries in this region face the same magnitude and type of violence. In the nineties, Colombia, faced with epidemic problems of drug trafficking and guerilla violence, had one of the highest homicide rates of the region – around 90 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. In contrast, Chile, with a history of political conflict, and Costa Rica, with a history of stable democracy, displayed homicide rates no greater than five deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.⁶⁸

The problem of violence is not new in Latin America. For various reasons, the majority of countries in the region have faced violence in their histories. Due to political, ethnic, cultural, or ethnic reasons, violence has marked a large part of life in Latin American societies. El Salvador is not an exception. Moreover, the available data indicate that this small Central American nation already had a problem with violence long before the civil war of the eighties. According to the records of OPS, El Salvador already had homicide rates greater than 30 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in the seventies.

According to a recent study, the current rates of homicides and general violence in El Salvador have been declining; however they are still among the highest in the region. (see Table 15).

Table 15. Number of investigations initiated by homicides and national homicide rates per 100,000 inhabitants from 1994 to 1998 according to the records of the General Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Republic (FGR)

	Year				
	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997	1998 ^b
Number of Homicides	7,673	7,877	6,792	6,573	4,653
Rate per 100,000 inhabitants	138.2	138.9	117.4	111.2	77.1

^a In these years, the records of the FGR have been adjusted because they contained homicides caused by traffic accidents.

^b Does not include homicides committed in the months of May and June of 1998.

Source: Cruz, Trigueros and González (2000).

⁶⁷The World Bank. (1997). Crime and violence as development issues in Latin America and the Caribbean. Seminar on: The challenge of urban criminal violence. Rio de Janeiro: The state of Rio de Janeiro/ Interamerican Development Bank. Mimeograph.

⁶⁸Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS). 1996. "Actitudes y normas culturales sobre la violencia en ciudades seleccionadas de la región de las Américas. Proyecto ACTIVA." Washington, D.C.: Division of Health and Human Development. (Mimeograph Document).

Some authors have theorized on the relationship between aspects of public security and the processes of democratic consolidation and stability.⁶⁹ These authors have assessed the political impact of high crime rates on established democracies,⁷⁰ arguing that these high crime levels stimulate political attitudes that favor authoritarian and repressive leaders who would serve to confront the perceived social chaos created by crime.

This chapter presents the results of the section of our survey on victimization, and aims to assess the impact of victimization on democracy. In particular, we strive to determine the impact of victimization on attitudes regarding the justification of a military coup d'état as a means of confronting the problem of crime in El Salvador. These attitudes towards the military represent a true challenge for the survival of democracy. To explore these attitudes, we examine the relationship between crime and democracy in three parts. In the first section of this chapter, we present our data on victimization. In the second section we expand upon these results, and examine the impact of victimization on support for a military coup in a country with high crime rates. We conclude by presenting a logistic regression model to establish the predictors of support for a coup.

The victimization by crime in El Salvador

In our audit of democracy, we gauged the level of victimization of the citizens of El Salvador by acts of aggression or crime of any type. More concretely, we determined levels of victimization by asking citizens the following question:

VIC1. ¿Have you been a victim of physical aggression or some other crime in the last 12 months?

A little less than a quarter of the adult population, 22.1%, suffered from some type of crime in the past year. This does not suggest that people have not suffered from crime at some point in the past; data from other studies on violence indicate that more than 60% of the Salvadoran population has experienced problems with crime at some point in the last decade.⁷¹

The results of this study reveal that the level of victimization from crime is not the same for all people, and that crime rates vary according to specific variables or conditions of the respondent. For example, men appear to have experienced slightly higher levels of violence than women, and people between the ages of 18 and 30 reach a level of victimization of 27%. This does not contradict the results of surveys of victimization and violence conducted in the country.⁷² Nevertheless, our attention was called to the results that point to the importance of socio-demographic factors in determining percentages of victimization by crime. We found that victimization varies according to the educational level of the individual, monthly family income, and the size of the municipality in which the respondent lives (see Figure 78). First, our data

⁶⁹Holston, James and Caldeira, Teresa P.R. (1998). "Democracy, Law, and Violence. Disjunctures on Brazilian Citizenship". In: Felipe Agüero and Jeffrey Stark (eds.) *Fault Lines of democracy in Post-transition Latin America*. Miami: North-South Center Press.

⁷⁰Bermeo, Nancy. (1999). Getting mad or going mad? Citizens, scarcity and the breakdown of democracy in interwar Europe.

www.democ.uci.edu/democ/papers/bermeo.htm

⁷¹Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública. (IUDOP). 1998c. "Delincuencia y opinión pública". *Estudios Centroamericanos (ECA)*, 599: 785-802.

⁷²Cruz, José Miguel; Trigueros, Alvaro; González, Francisco. (2000). *El crimen violento en El Salvador. Factores sociales y económicos asociados*. San Salvador: IUDOP-UCA.

indicate that the proportion of victimization is greater for those with the highest levels of education. In fact, for uneducated or illiterate respondents, the percentage of victimization is about 10%, while among the most educated respondents (those with university education) our survey measured victimization levels of 40%.

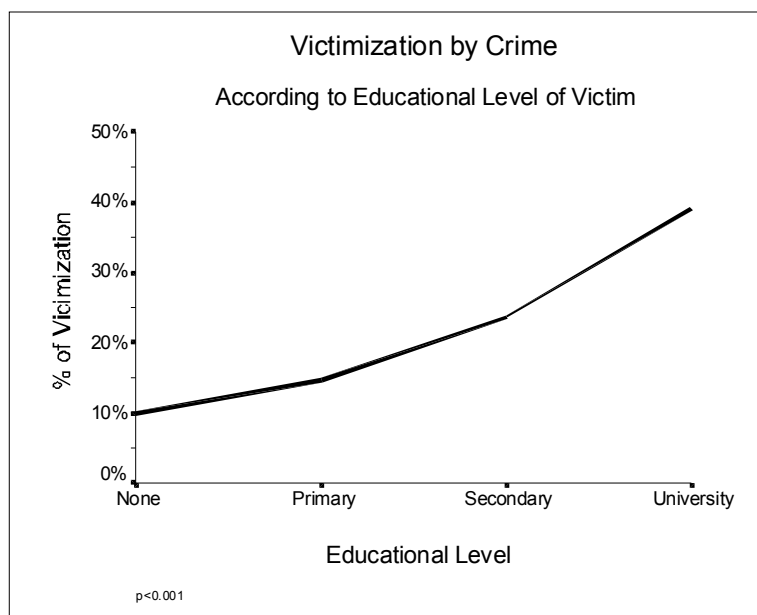


Figure 78. Victimization by Crime According to Educational Level of Victim

The same pattern occurs with the level of family income of the victim. The proportion of people victimized varies according to monthly family income, with rates of victimization rising in accordance to increases in reported income. For respondents with family incomes of greater than 6,000 colones, the percentage of victimization by crime reaches 40%, while those respondents with very low family incomes have a victimization rate of only 10% (see Figure 79). These results suggest a relationship between the economic situation of the respondent and the level of affectation by violent crime. It appears that in our survey, respondents from better economic conditions report more criminal activities.⁷³

⁷³In this respect it is fundamental to remember that certain types of crime are not measured by our survey, such as homicide, for example.

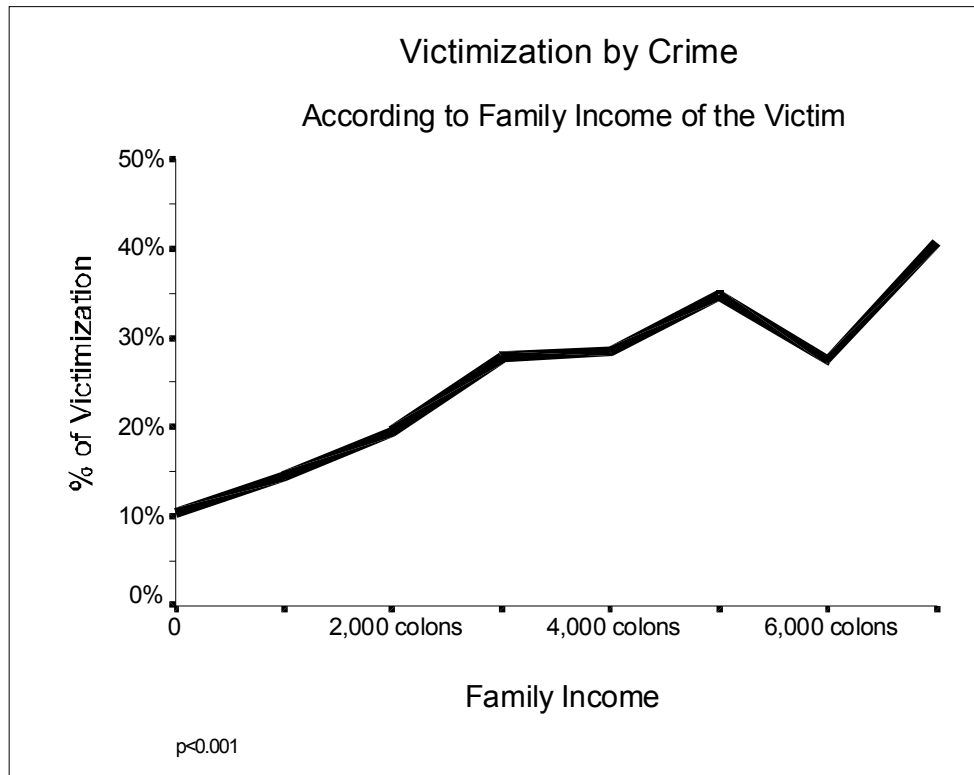


Figure 79. Victimization by Crime According to Family Income of the Victim

Finally, the last variable that appears to be related to levels of victimization by crime is the size of the municipality in which the victim lives. According to our results, the greatest percentages of victimization by crime occurred in larger municipalities or urban cities. According to our measures, for residents of smaller cities the probability of being a victim of crime would be less (see Figure 80). For example, in the metropolitan areas such as San Salvador, Santa Ana, and San Miguel, the percentage of victimization by crime is almost three times as high as that of the smaller and more rural municipalities.⁷⁴

⁷⁴One study on violent crime conducted by the IUDOP (Cruz, Trigueros and González, 2000) in El Salvador under the auspices of the World Bank revealed that in urban zones of the country, crime was most frequently driven by economic motivations, while in the rural zones of the country, especially in the Western zone, other factors were more frequently associated with violent crime.

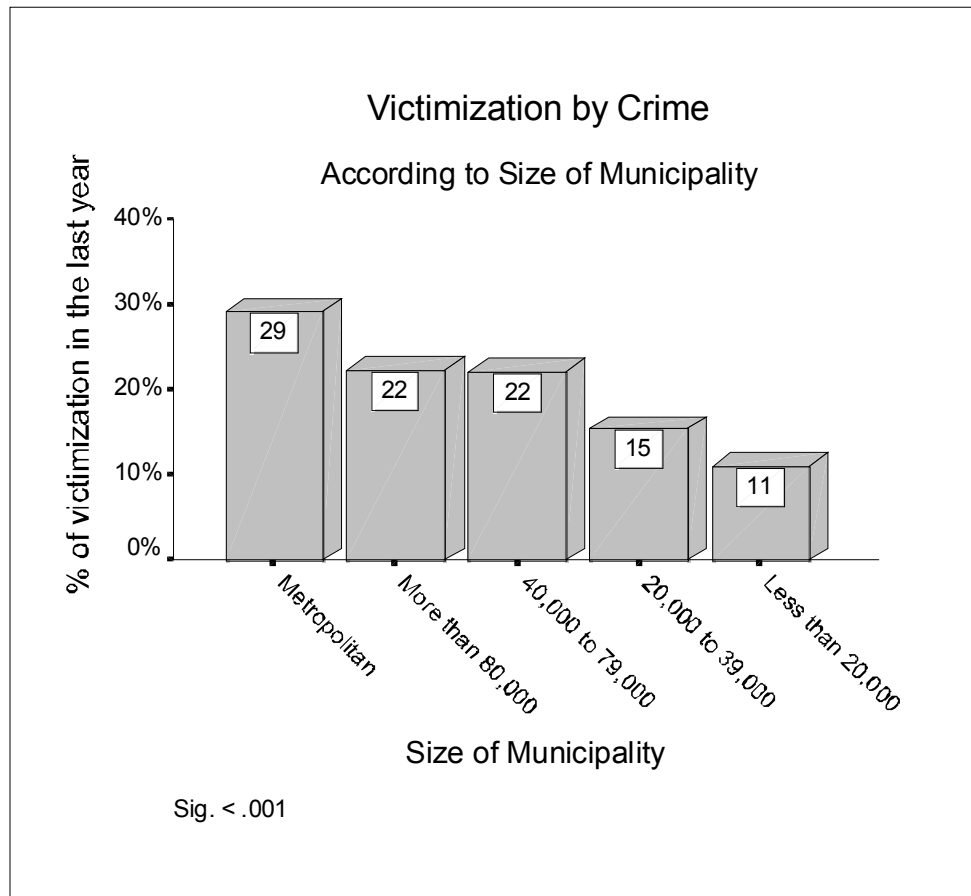


Figure 80. Victimization by Crime According to Size of Municipality

These results suggest that individuals of higher socio-economic status and urban residents are more affected by victimization than the rest of the population. These individuals are more likely to suffer from crime than people living in less favorable conditions.⁷⁵

The results of our study indicate that not all people confront the same types of criminal acts and that victimization is more frequently due to robbery without aggression or physical threat, as almost 50% of victimizations fall into this category. However, a little more than a third of the population (35.7%) has suffered from physical aggression while being assaulted, and more than 7% of those interviewed had experienced property damage. Five percent of Salvadorans faced aggression that was not driven by robbery or assault. Overall, the majority of victimizations reported by citizens were due to robbery – either with or without physical aggression. At the same time, these results explain why people from better social conditions report to have suffered from this type of crime, given that these people are probably the most attractive victims for this type of crime. The results also indicate that around 12% of individuals that have suffered victimization have faced two or more criminal acts within the last year; these criminal acts are predominantly robbery or assault.

⁷⁵The same study revealed that in communities with less economic inequality it is less probable that crime is motivated by economic considerations.

Given that victimization by crime is not all the same, that is, different types of crime have different impacts on victims, we reclassified the condition of the victim according to the gravity of the crime suffered.⁷⁶ In this way, the people who suffered from crime were classified into two groups: slight victimization, including those that suffered from some crime without major physical consequences (robbery without aggression or physical threat and property damage); and severe victimization, including those that suffered from crimes with physical consequences (robbery with aggression, rape or sexual assault, and kidnaping).⁷⁷ The results demonstrate that 12.5% of Salvadorans surveyed have suffered from slight victimization, while almost 10% have suffered from severe victimization.

Reporting crime

Perhaps one of the most striking data points of our study on victimization concerns the number of victims that did not report the crime to some public authority (see Figure 81). Our survey indicates that only 35.1% of victims reported the crime to an institution, generally the National Civil Police.⁷⁸ The remainder of individuals, two thirds of all victims, did not report the incident. Nevertheless, the rate of reporting crime varies according to the type of crime experienced. For example, robberies – with or without violence – are less reported. Given that robbery is the most frequent type of crime perpetrated, this lowers the average rate of reporting crime in general. In addition, more serious crimes such as those of physical aggression, rape, or kidnaping are not reported in their totality; the only crime that appears accurately reported is that of extortion, but this constitutes a minuscule percentage of the incidents of reported crimes by citizens. The accuracy of the rates of reporting extortion are probably due to its small percentage.

⁷⁶The variable created is called “victim.”

⁷⁷In this reclassification we included up to three victimizations experienced in the last year.

⁷⁸The percentage of denunciations reported to the PNC and not to other institutions is 89%.

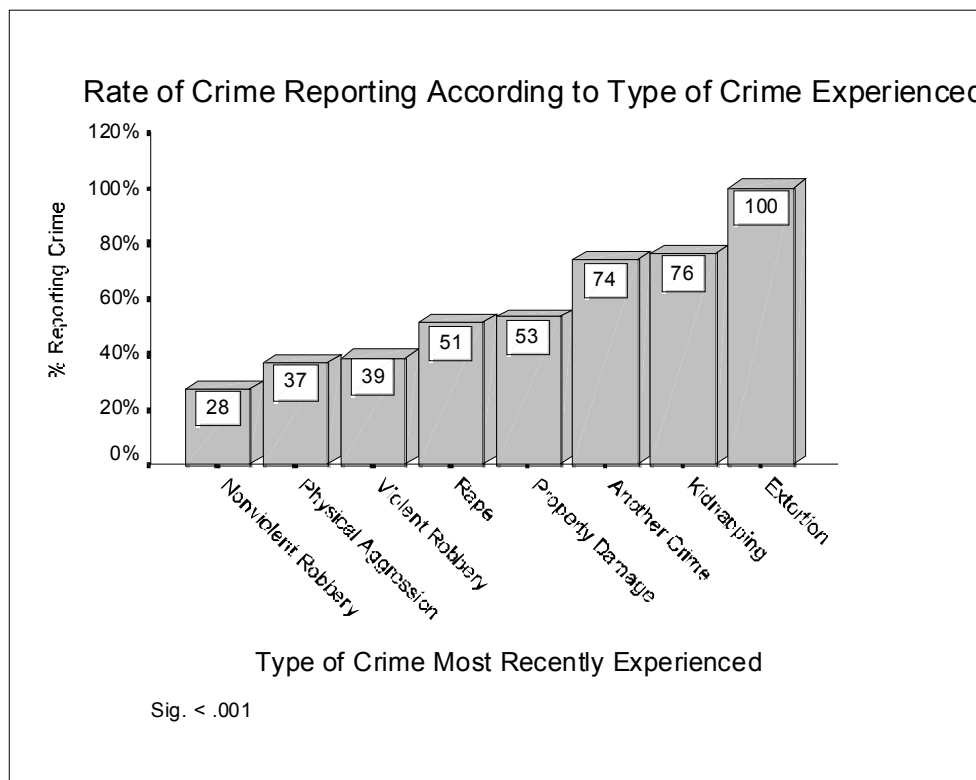


Figure 81. Rate of Crime Reporting According to Type of Crime Experienced

We are now faced with the following question: Why do citizens victimized by crime neglect to report these crimes to the authorities? The majority of responses in our survey indicate that citizens do not have much confidence in the abilities of the authorities. Effectively, more than half of the victims that did not report the act stated that “it would not help” (57%); the rest of the respondents stated that they did not have proof to present (14.2%), that they feared reprisals from the criminal (14%) or that the incident was not serious enough to report (11.8%) among other reasons.

These results coincide with an additional finding: around 64% of Salvadorans stated that they have little or no confidence that “the judicial system is capable of punishing the guilty;”⁷⁹ 17% have “some” confidence; 18% maintained that they have much confidence. The most surprising finding is that there does not appear to be an association between confidence in the judiciary and reporting crime. Victims who reported crime did not express higher levels of confidence in the abilities of the judicial system compared to those who did not report the crime. However, there is an association between having been victimized by crime and confidence in the judiciary. For example, only 12% of the people who were victims of crime expressed much confidence in the ability of the system to punish the guilty, in contrast to those who were not recently victimized by violent crime, 20% of whom expressed absolute confidence in the work of

⁷⁹The actual question read as follows: *If you were the victim of a crime of robbery or assault, to what extent would you trust the system of justice to punish the guilty party?*

the judicial system. This result is clearly shown in Figure 82. The same pattern holds for levels of confidence in the judicial system according to the type of victimization experienced by the person: those suffering more from crime have an average level of confidence in the ability of the system to punish the guilty that is significantly lower.⁸⁰ In total, these data indicate that victimization by crime can also have an effect on the confidence of the institutional systems.⁸¹

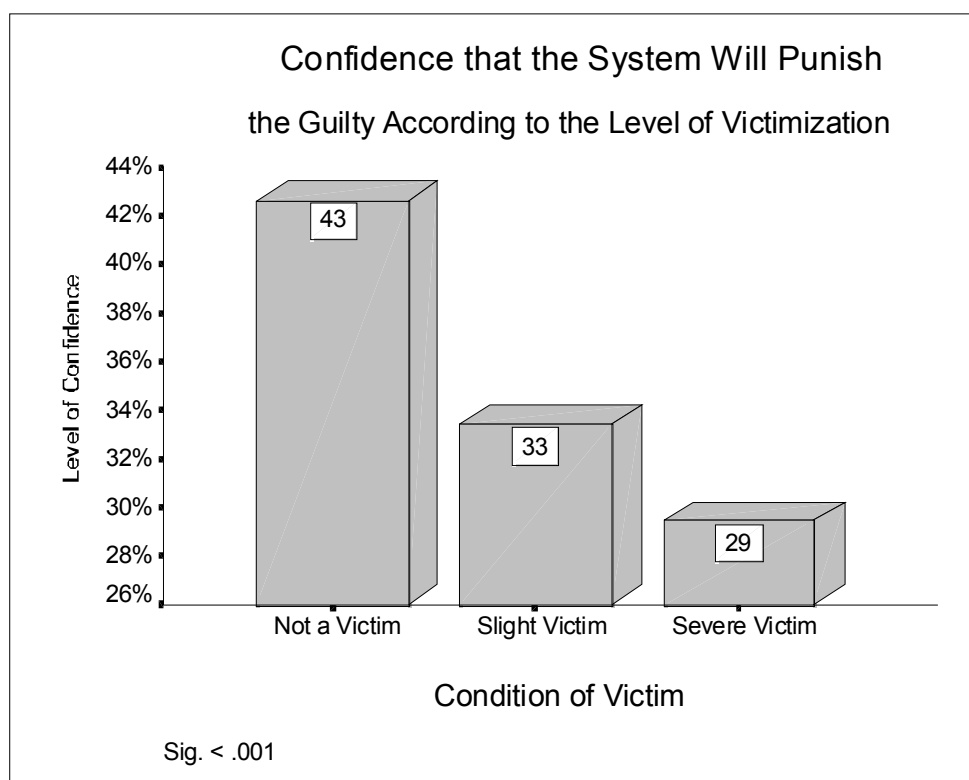


Figure 82. Confidence that the System Will Punish the Guilty According to the Level of Victimization

Sense of insecurity due to crime

Our survey also gathered information on citizens' sense of security, or rather, the feelings of insecurity citizens express as a result of crime or the possibility of being victimized by crime. To measure citizens' insecurity, we relied upon the following survey item:

AOJ11. Speaking of the place or neighborhood in which you live, and thinking of the possibility of being a victim of assault or robbery, do you feel very safe, more or less safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe?

⁸⁰In this case the measurement of confidence that the "system will punish the guilty" is expressed on a scale in which 0 represents the minimum value of confidence and 100 the maximum value.

⁸¹In fact, in chapter III one can see that levels of victimization are related to levels of support for the Salvadoran political system. People who have been victimized, exhibit lower levels of system support.

Our results show that 23.3% of those interviewed felt very safe, 34.5% felt more or less safe, 23.8 felt somewhat unsafe, and 18.5% felt very unsafe.

These data demonstrate an important relationship between crime-induced feelings of insecurity and the experience of victimization (see Figure 83). People who have personally experienced violent events exhibit on average higher feelings of crime-induced insecurity compared to those who have not been victimized. Nevertheless, despite this clear difference between those who have been victims and those who have not, feelings of insecurity do not appear to depend upon the intensity of victimization as much as they do upon simply the experience of being a victim. Those that have suffered from more severe, violent crimes do not express a greater sense of insecurity than those who have experienced less traumatic events. In some way, the mere experience of having been victimized is sufficient to feel insecure due to crime.

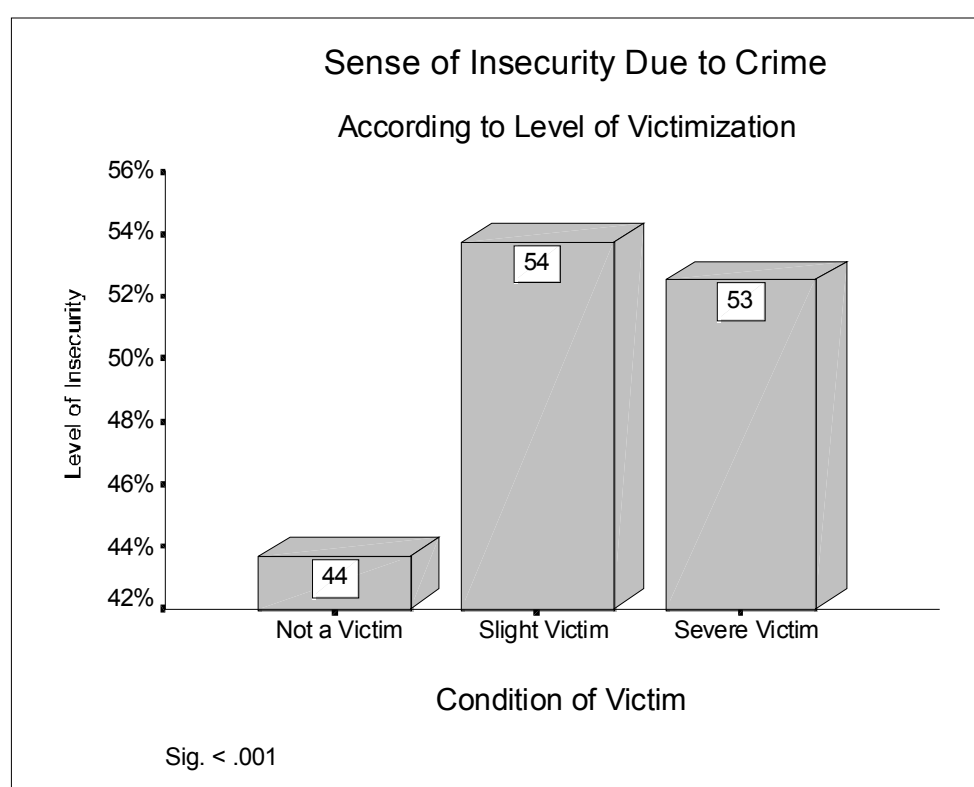


Figure 83. Sense of Insecurity Due to Crime According to Level of Victimization

With the exception of the variables of sex and size of resident locality, our results do not reveal significant differences in the levels of crime-induced insecurity for the majority of the remaining variables. Women and those that live in municipalities of a larger size (around 80,000 inhabitants) express higher levels of fear of crime, however the other variables appear to be unrelated to fear of crime. For example, citizens, regardless of age, education, or income usually feel the same level of insecurity due to crime. This insecurity also seems to affect citizens' levels of confidence in the functioning of the judicial system. People who feel more insecure usually have less confidence that the system will succeed in punishing those guilty of criminal assault (see Figure 84).

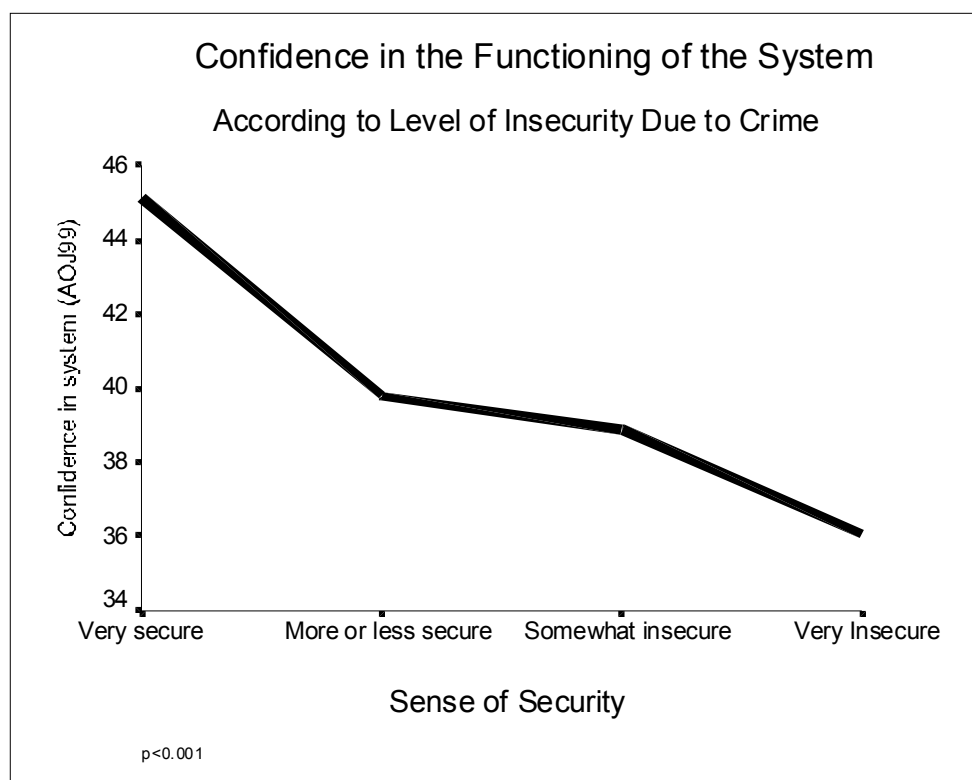


Figure 84. Confidence in the Functioning of the System According to Level of Insecurity Due to Crime

These results suggest that it is not solely the experience of direct victimization by crime that can affect confidence in the judicial system. Rather, citizens' sense of insecurity due to crime, in addition to the type of victimization experienced, can also affect confidence in the judiciary.

Support for a military coup

One of the ways to measure how disposed citizens are to defend the democracy of their country is to ask precisely the opposite. More concretely, in the case of El Salvador, with a history of military monopolization of the power of the state, we ask citizens to indicate under which conditions they would support, or to a lesser extent, justify the military returning to power by way of a coup, thus bypassing the institutional mechanisms of democratic election established under the new political regime reaffirmed by the Peace Accords of 1992. Nevertheless, if one were to ask this question without a concrete referent, it is very probable that due to social desirability effects, the majority of people would not be disposed to acknowledge publicly – at least in front of an interviewer – the necessity of a military coup. Thus, to measure to what extent citizens would positively view the return of the military to power through a coup, in previous studies of Salvadoran political culture conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project of the University of Pittsburgh, citizens were asked if they would justify a coup d'etat by the military under certain circumstances. These circumstances

are associated with the possibility of the electoral triumph of diverse political groups, with social instability caused by social protests, and with unemployment (see Figure 85).

The items utilized are stated in the following forms:

Some people think that in certain circumstances it is justifiable for the military to take power. In your opinion, under which of the following situations is military intervention justifiable?

JC1. Very high unemployment.

JC4. Many social protests.

JC7. The triumph of leftist parties in elections.

JC8. The triumph of extreme right parties in elections.

Given that violence and crime have become fundamental problems of the country, as we have already seen previously, and that some scholars argue that this type of problem can constitute a risk for the processes of political governance (Ayres, 1998), for the study of 1999, we added an additional item referring to crime:

JC10. High Crime.

The general results of each one of the items are very eloquent in this respect. The circumstance under which there exists the greatest level of justification for a coup is crime.. Under conditions of high crime, more than half of Salvadorans justify a military coup, far more than the number that would support a coup under any of the other circumstances, including unemployment, which in the past was the condition that most stimulated justifications for military coups. These data suggest that violent crime in and of itself – without being combined with other items – could have a substantial impact on the political attitudes of Salvadorans. This leads to the next question: Who are the people who are most inclined to express this attitude in favor of coups under conditions of high crime?

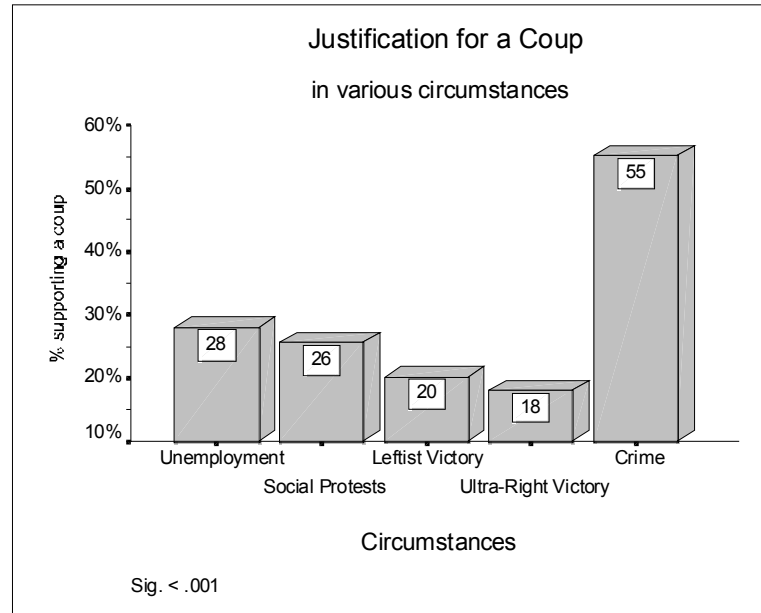


Figure 85. Justification for a Coup Under Various Circumstances

The results presented in Table 16 reveal that women, those with lower education, those with lower income, and those that live in municipalities with populations between 20,000 and 40,000 are those who manifest the highest percentages of support for a coup under conditions of high crime. Two findings are particularly interesting. First, levels of education have a very strong relationship with attitudinal support for a coup: higher levels of university education distinctly diminish sympathy for a coup under circumstances of high crime. Second, level of income has a strong, almost linear relationship with support for a coup: for those with higher levels of income, measures of support for a coup decline substantially.

Table 16. Percentage of people that would justify a coup d'état under conditions of high crime according to socio-demographic variables

Variables	Would Justify a Coup
Sex *	
Masculine	49.4
Feminine	61.1
Age	
18 to 20 years	56.8
21 to 30 years	56.1
31 to 40 years	55.5
41 to 50 years	51.4
51 to 95 years	55.1
Level of Education *	
None	65.4
Primary	62.3
Secondary	56.2
University	38.1
Level of Income	
None	68.1
Less than 1000 col.	63.3
1000 to 2000 col.	62.3
2000 to 3000 col.	49.5
3000 to 4000 col.	46.6
4000 to 5000 col.	43.7
5000 to 6000 col.	32.3
6000 col. and more	35.6
Size of municipality *	
Metropolitan City	52.2
80,000 inhabitants or more	55.4
Between 40,000 and 80,000	58.0
Between 20,000 and 40,000	61.3
Less than 20,000 inhabitants	56.7

* p<0.05

In Figure 86 one can see that women surpass men in their attitudinal support for a coup in conditions of high crime by a substantial percentage. This finding is especially notable in light of our previous results on victimization, which show that not women, but rather men, experience higher levels of victimization by crime.

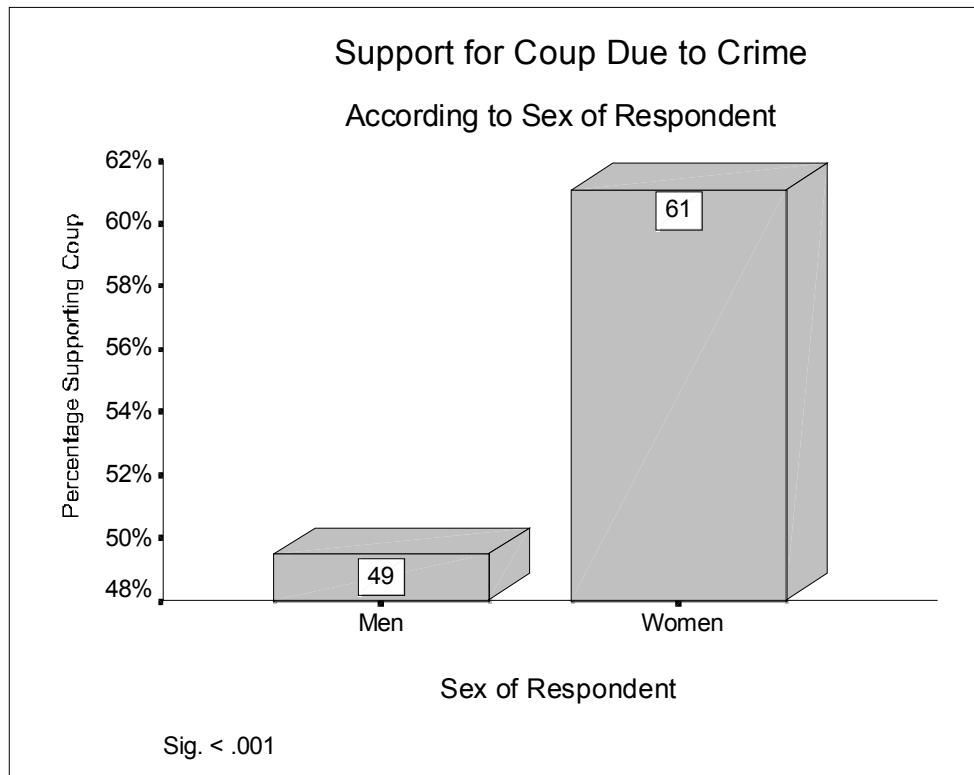


Figure 86. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Sex of Respondent

The educational level of respondents also appears to be a factor that is strongly associated with attitudinal support for a military coup. As Figure 87 indicates, support for a coup under conditions of high crime diminishes substantially among those with higher levels of education. According to our data, most of the support for a coup comes from people who do not have much educational formation, people who in reality constitute the majority of the Salvadoran population.

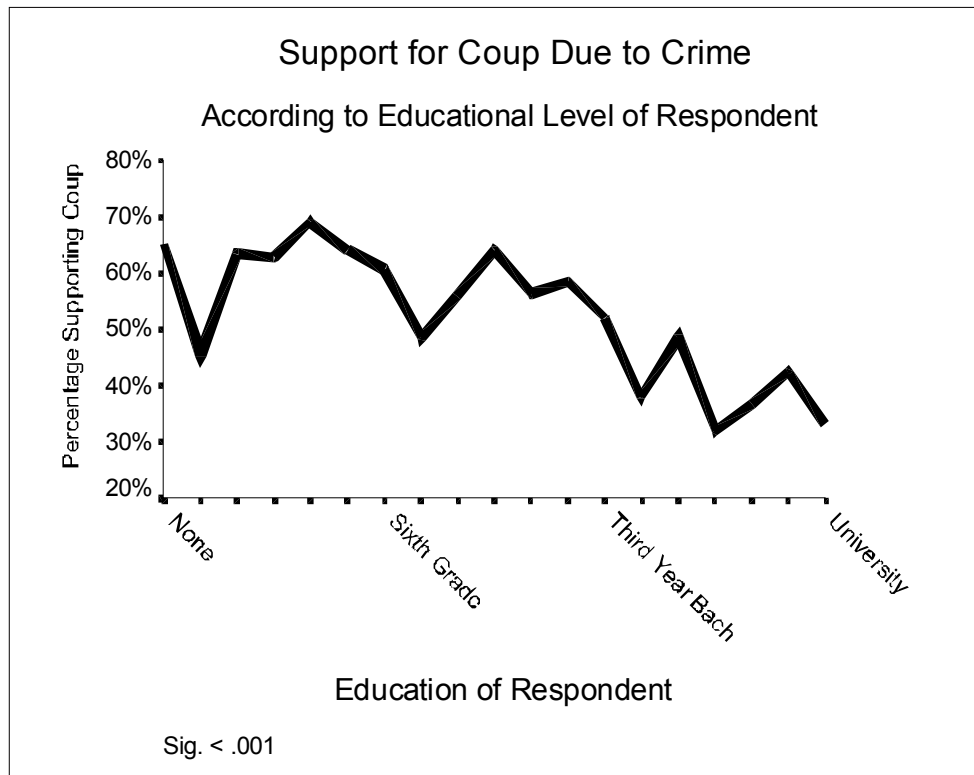


Figure 87. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Educational Level of Respondent

A similar pattern emerges when we examine attitudinal support for a coup by the level of income of respondents (see Figure 88). Respondents with higher levels of personal income expressed lower levels of support for a coup under conditions of high crime. Thus, support for a coup rises primarily from the disadvantaged sectors of the country's population, namely the poor and uneducated. Support for a coup comes from the portion of the population that experiences more difficult conditions, and perceives the political system as failing to fulfill their expectations, especially in terms of public security.

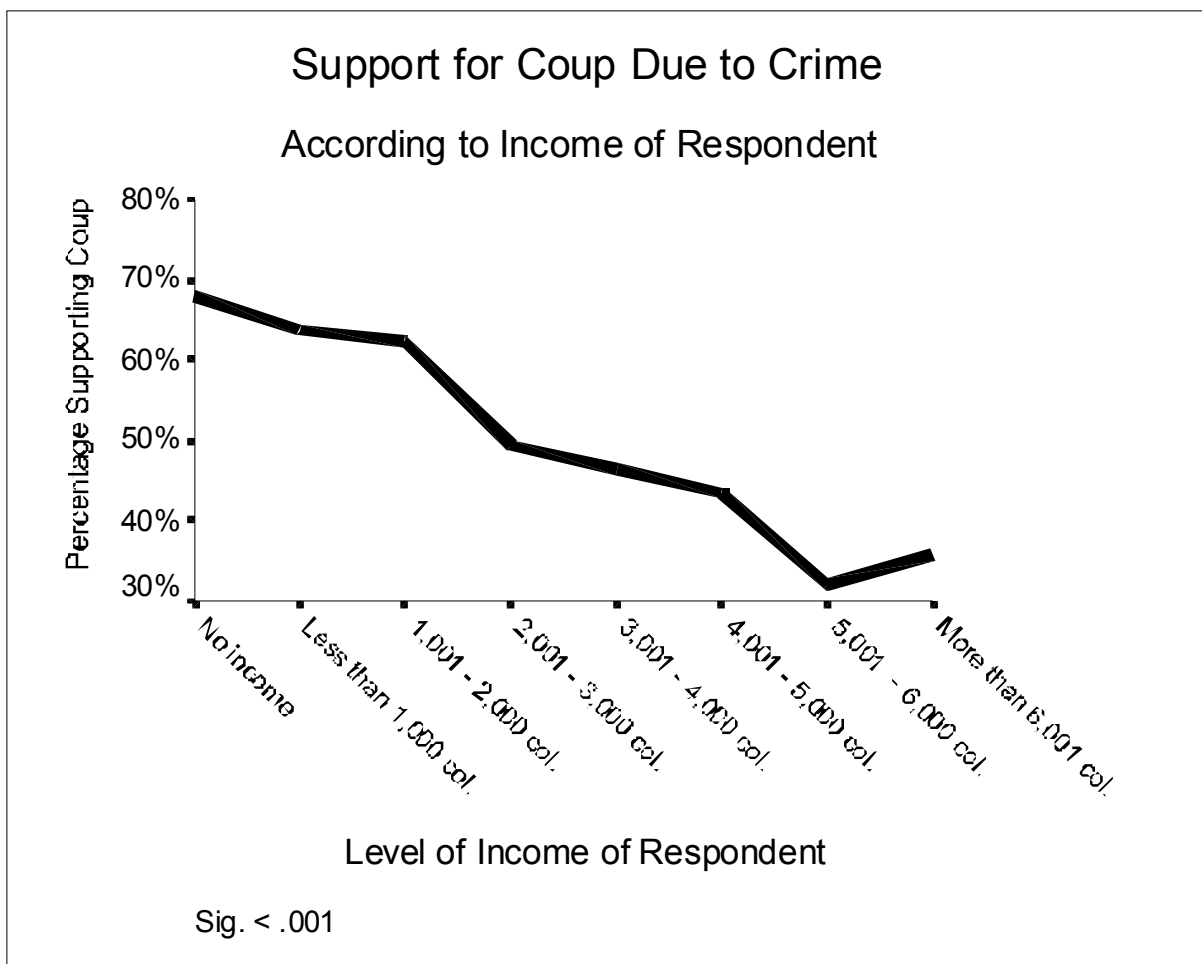


Figure 88. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Income of Respondent

Attitudinal support for military coups is not driven by socio-demographic variables alone, however. It is also driven by the ideological position of the person (see Figure 89). By crossing support for a coup with the variable in which respondents indicated their ideology to the interviewer (question L1), we demonstrate that those who identify with a rightist ideology are more inclined to justify the possibility that the military return to power to solve the problems caused by crime.

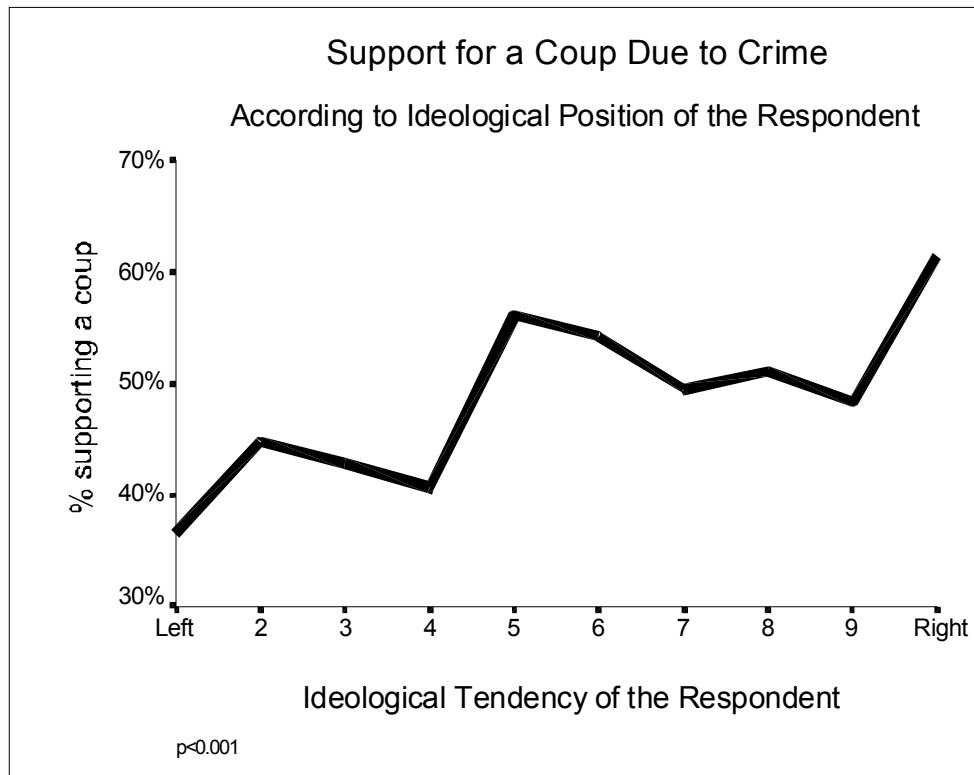


Figure 89. Support for a Coup Due to Crime According to Ideological Position of the Respondent

In terms of support for the political system, the results of our study demonstrate a significant relationship between support for a coup and support for the Salvadoran political system (measured by the five items appearing in Chapter III), however this relationship is not as strong as other relationships. As was expected, those with lower levels of system support favor a coup with greater frequency, compared to those that manifested higher levels of support for the Salvadoran political system and lower measures of support for a return to the military to power (see Figure 90).

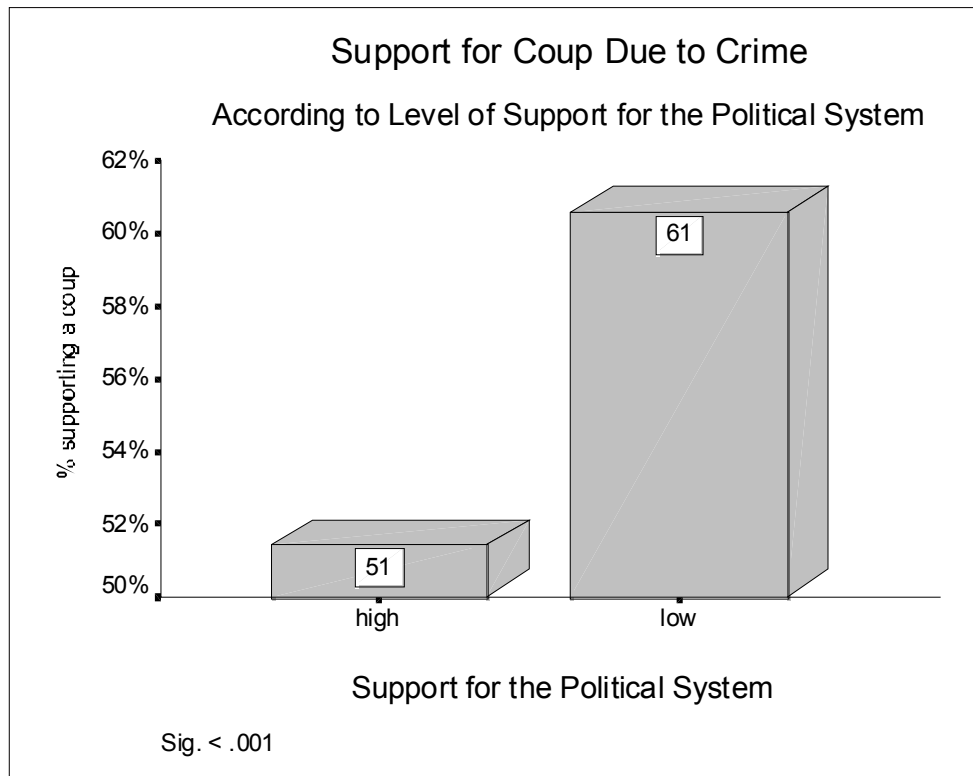


Figure 90. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Level of Support for the Political System

The fundamental question surrounding these results is the following: In reality, to what extent does attitudinal support for a coup due to problems of crime have an objective referent? That is, to what extent does this opinion correspond with objective crime rates? To measure this, we utilized two variables. First, we relied upon the variable of the reclassification of victimization according to the impact of the crime on the victim. Second, we used an ecological variable that reflects the homicide rates that each respondent faced according to the department in which the respondent lived. For example, the residents in the department of Santa Ana, which has the highest homicide rate, would encounter a rate of 112.7 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, while the residents of Morazán encounter a rate of only 31 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.⁸²

In the first case, the results demonstrate that the greatest difference is not between those who have been victims and those who have not suffered directly from victimization, but rather between those who suffered a slight victimization as opposed to those that suffered a severe victimization. Support for a coup is more determined by the intensity of the victimization rather than by the mere personal experience of victimization. This, in principle, suggests that

⁸²This variable was constructed based upon the data presented by Cruz, José Miguel; Trigueros, Álvaro and González, Francisco in the study *El crimen violento en El Salvador. Factores sociales y económicos asociados*. San Salvador: IUDOP-UCA, World Bank. 1999.

the effect of victimization on attitudinal support for a coup is not a simple relationship, and is probably confounded by other variables.

Something similar occurs when one crosstabulates attitudinal support for a coup under conditions of high crime with the homicide rate of respondents' departments. The results indicate a tendency for support of a coup to increase according to the homicide rate of the department in which the respondent lives (see Figure 91). Nevertheless, this tendency is not precisely linear and actually irregular. Support for a coup diminishes among residents of departments with average homicide rates, which leads us to reconsider the intervening role other variables could potentially play to explain this tendency.

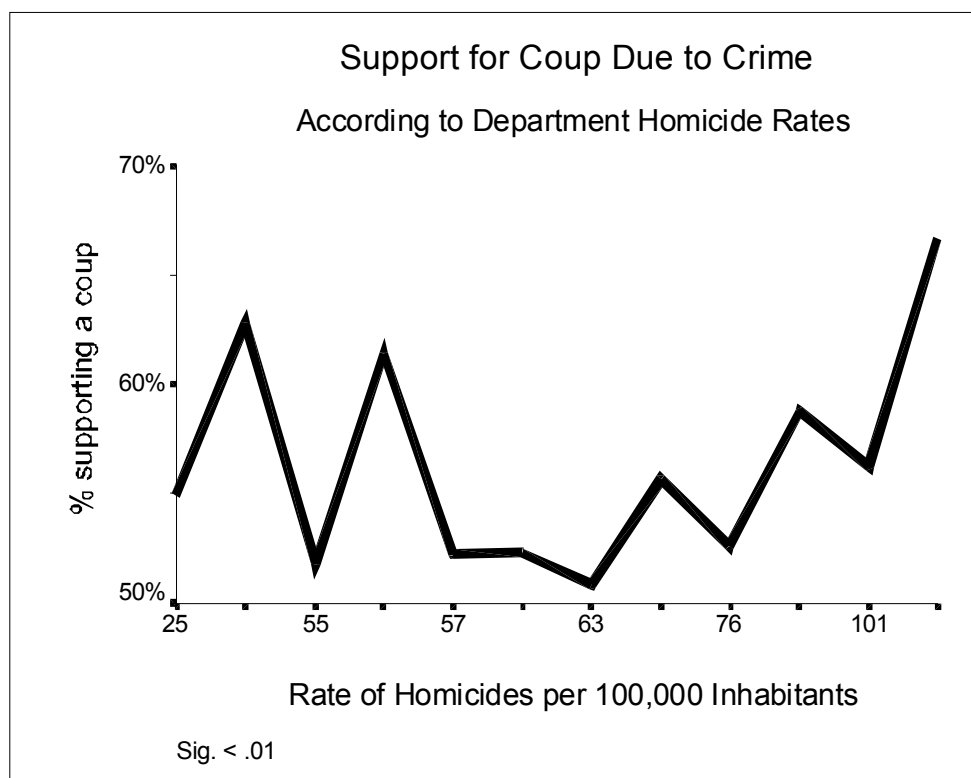


Figure 91. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Department Homicide Rates

The previous variables refer to objective acts of violence, but what happens when support for a coup under conditions of high crime is crosstabulated with subjective perceptions of insecurity due to crime? One finds a statistically significant relationship when support for a coup under high crime conditions is crossed with the variable of confidence in the functioning of the judicial system (see Figure 92). According to our results, those with less confidence in the system manifest higher levels of support for a military coup to solve the problem of crime. This would indicate that the support for anti-democratic actions would be linked to the perception that the present institutional system of fighting crime is not effective.

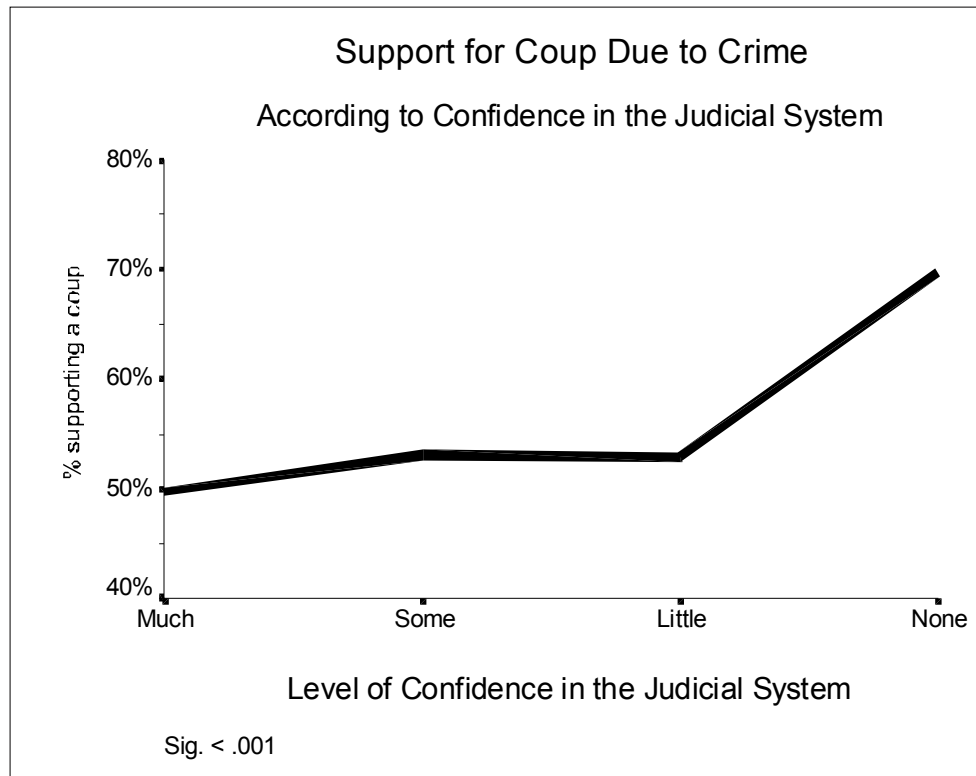


Figure 92. Support for Coup Due to Crime According to Confidence in the Judicial System

The multi-variate analysis

Now that we have identified some of the variables that can be related to greater or lesser support for a coup under high-crime conditions, it is necessary to generate a multi-variate model to establish which factors or variables predict the probability that an individual will be disposed to justify a military coup due to the problem of crime. Our model was constructed based upon binary logistic regression, as detailed in Table 17. The advantage of this exercise is that this model tests the predictive power of each variable while holding the other variables constant. By controlling for the effects of each of the variables, we can determine which variables are the most powerful predictors of support for a coup.

Our results indicate that women, the young, the least educated, those of lower income, those of rightist ideology, those victimized by crime, and those that do not have confidence that the judicial system will punish the guilty are those that have greater probability of supporting a military coup as a response to the high levels of violence. The variables that have more weight are: income, sex, confidence in the system, and ideology. However, one cannot ignore the finding that those that have been victims are more supportive of a coup than those who have not been victims. Also, even though this finding is not statistically significant, one cannot ignore the fact that those that live in areas with high crime rates tend to manifest higher support for coups as well, except that in this case it seems that this relationship is mediated by feelings of insecurity.

Table 17. Binary Logistic Regression: Predictors of support for a coup due to crime

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
Sex	0.4392	0.9780	20.1844	1	0.0000
Age	-0.0091	0.0034	6.9614	1	0.0083
Education	-0.0387	0.0125	9.5752	1	0.0020
Income	-0.1463	0.0307	22.6567	1	0.0000
Ideology	0.0650	0.0181	12.8543	1	0.0003
Victimization	0.2337	0.0758	9.5079	1	0.0020
Homicide Rate	0.0043	0.0025	2.9680	1	0.0849
Confidence in the System	0.0049	0.0014	12.6845	1	0.0004
Constant	-0.3519	0.3328	1.1180	1	0.2904

Prediction: 0.64

Conclusions

This chapter confirms the data of other sources, indicating the elevated magnitude of crime and violence in El Salvador. The most common form of criminal violence is that against property, and this was especially evident through assaults and robberies, but one cannot disregard the percentage of people who faced other types of even more violent crime. The data also indicate the impact victimization has on institutional systems, in that it erodes confidence in these systems, leading many victims to refrain from reporting crime. Even more important, this chapter has presented evidence that the high levels of victimization, along with their impact on citizens' sense of security, not only affects confidence in the judicial system and the political system, but also leads certain sectors of the population to justify military coups' seizing power to fight the problem of crime.

These results suggest that the high levels of crime maintained in El Salvador constitute one of the greatest risks for the process of democratic consolidation in the country.

Chapter VIII. Authoritarianism y Democracy

From the works of Almond and Verba on political culture, the importance of public perceptions and social sentiments during processes of political transition and democratic consolidation in contemporary societies has been widely recognized.⁸³ The importance of what we have come to call political culture is not only in the substance of people's opinions on public questions. Of equal importance is the effect that people's perceptions can have on these public questions when combined to form a body of attitudes and opinions that can endorse certain forms of political behavior.

The processes of democratic consolidation depend not only upon the functioning of institutions and the prescribed frameworks regulating this consolidation, but also upon the degree to which citizens endorse this order, which is often a new form of government for them. Citizens' endorsement of democracy is particularly crucial when discussing the development of a democratic regime.

The process of democratic consolidation in El Salvador was initiated with the Constitution of the 1980s and reoriented by the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992, which permitted the definitive distancing of the military from political control after more than a half century of governance. It also allowed for the creation of new institutions to protect the constitutional guarantees and rights of Salvadoran citizens. Among other things, the Constitution and Peace Accords allow any political force, independent of ideological orientation, to participate in politics and have the option of reaching power through institutional mechanisms.

Nevertheless, for various reasons, not all of the Salvadoran population has been satisfied with the new order or the new political situation of the country, despite the fact that they recognize that the country has changed in a positive direction. A survey conducted by the Central American University Institute of Public Opinion in 1997 revealed that 12% of the people think that a coup d'état could solve the problems that face El Salvador.⁸⁴ Another more recent survey, conducted in 1998, revealed that 13% of the people thought that "in certain circumstances a dictatorship is better" and 15% maintained that "there is no difference between living under a democratic or dictatorial regime;" the remainder of the people (66%) stated that they preferred democracy.⁸⁵ These results demonstrate that support for the democratic regime is not unanimous. Although the majority of Salvadorans indicate that they support democracy, there exists an important percentage of the population that does not endorse democracy.

In this chapter, we explore the opinions of Salvadorans, assessing not only the extent to which they support democracy and the political system, but also the degree to which they support the opposite regime type, namely, an authoritarian system. This support for authoritarian regimes is expressed by support for a regime of an "iron hand." Support for an iron hand regime is independent of the military's support for this type of government. To assess support for authoritarian regimes, we rely upon a series of items designed to measure

⁸³In Diamond, L. (1998). *Developing democracy. Toward consolidation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

⁸⁴Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública. (1997). "Encuesta sobre la gobernabilidad y expectativas hacia las nuevas autoridades municipales y legislativas." Report Series 64. San Salvador: IUDOP-UCA.

⁸⁵Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública. (1998). "Encuesta sobre cultura política. Report Series 71." San Salvador: IUDOP-UCA.

authoritarianism and conduct a multivariate analysis to identify which variables predict the probability that a person will support or not support a regime of an authoritarian nature.

Support for a democratic system

Our 1999 survey includes an item to assess how much support the Salvadorans have for a democratic regime. The item was stated in the following format:

DEM3. With which of the following phrases do you agree the most?

- Democracy is preferable to any other form of government.
- For people like myself, a democratic regime is the same as an authoritarian one.
- In some circumstances, an authoritarian government is preferable to a democratic one.

The results are illustrated in Figure 93 despite the fact that the previously cited IUDOP survey was based upon a sample totally distinct from the one used in this present study, the two studies present reassuringly similar results. The majority of Salvadorans, almost two thirds of the respondents, stated that they preferred democracy, while only 12% preferred an authoritarian form of government. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that a quarter of the population stated that it did not matter which regime was in power, and did not differentiate between the advantages of democracy and authoritarianism.

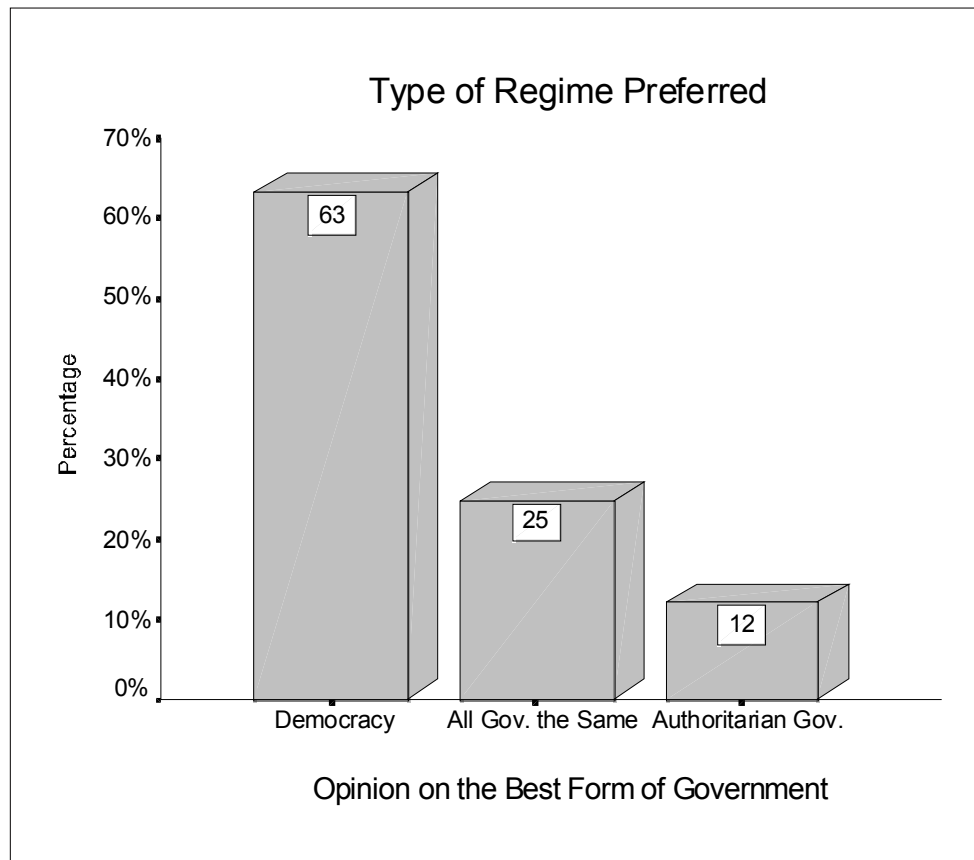


Figure 93. Type of Regime Preferred

Authoritarian attitudes and support for an authoritarian regime

In this study we aimed to measure the attitudes of the population that would favor an authoritarian type of regime. To this end, we created a series of items that measured diverse aspects of authoritarianism: support for regimes of an iron hand, preferences for order over human rights and respect for democracy.⁸⁶

The items of our survey consisted of the following questions:

DEM11. Do you believe that in our country we lack a government of an iron hand, or that the problems can be resolved with the participation of everyone? (1) Iron hand; (2) Participation of everyone; (8) No answer.

AUT1. On some occasions, democracy does not function. When this happens, there are some people that say that we need a strong leader, who does not have to be elected by the popular vote. Others say that even though things do not

⁸⁶The original concept of some of these items was taken from the works of Altemeyer on authoritarianism. See: Altemeyer, Bob (1996). *The Authoritarian Specter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

function, democracy is always the best form of government. What do you think?

(1) We need a strong leader that does not have to be popularly elected;

(2) Electoral democracy is always the best form of government.

AUT3. With which of the following views do you agree the most: (1) What El Salvador needs is a strong and decisive leader to establish order with an iron hand; (2) What the country needs is a strong leader that knows how to engage in dialogue and negotiate with all of the sectors of the population.

AUT4. With which of the following views do you agree the most: (1) The only way to move the country forward is to eliminate with an iron hand the causes of the problems; (2) For the country to move forward it is necessary to take into account all of the people, including those who cause problems.

AUT5. With which of the following views do you agree the most: (1) Human rights are more important than order and security; (2) In place of human rights what our country needs is more order and security.

AUT6. What type of government does this country need . . . ? (1) One that knows how to make quick or efficient decisions even though it does not take into account the preferences of all sectors; (2) One that takes into account the preferences of all sectors even though this delays decisions.

AOJ10. What do you think is better? (1) To live in an ordered society even though some liberties are limited; or (2) To respect all rights and liberties even if this causes some disorder.

Of all of these items, three were chosen to form a scale of authoritarianism:⁸⁷ DEM11, AUT3 y AUT4. The three refer in some way to the possibility of an iron hand as a predominant factor in a regime, as opposed to other alternatives that are more conciliatory and democratic. According to our results, 38.4% of respondents thought that the country lacked a government of an iron hand (DEM11), while the rest, 61.6%, thought that the problems could be solved with the participation of all. On the other hand, 26.5% maintained that El Salvador needs a strong and decisive leader to establish order (AUT3), while the rest thought that the country needed someone that knew how to negotiate. Finally, almost 40% of respondents agreed with the idea that the only way to move the country forward was to eliminate with an iron hand those that cause problems (AUT4).

The authoritarianism scale consists of a variable with four values that indicate the level of support for authoritarianism, as seen in Figure VIII.2. According to this graph, a little more than 30% of Salvadorans exhibit a more or less high level of support for an authoritarian regime, specifically one of an “iron hand.”

⁸⁷The three items combined to form a scale with a reliability of 0.68 (Cronbach's Alpha), the best that could be achieved of all the items designed to measure authoritarianism.

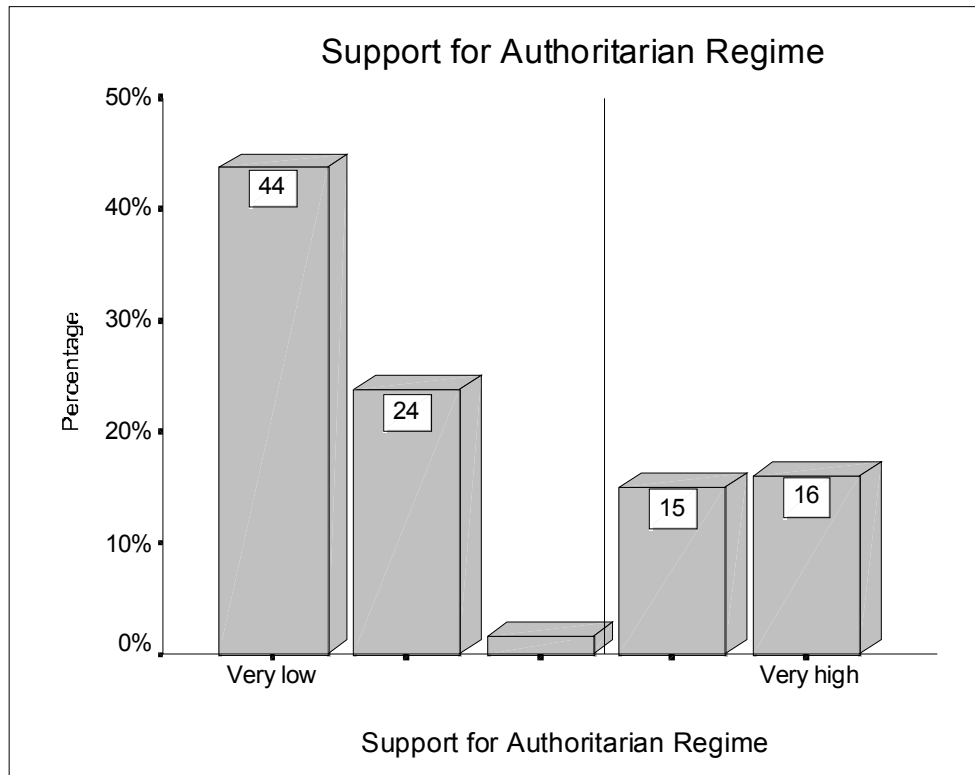


Figure 94. Support for Authoritarian Regime

Now we turn to the question: Who are those that are more inclined to display high levels of support on this scale for authoritarianism? The results reveal that on this scale, women usually support authoritarianism more than men, which signifies that they are more inclined to support a regime that applies an iron hand over citizens' rights. This is consistent with other results observed in this work that indicate that women usually tend to support more non-democratic options than men.

Age also appears as a variable associated with support for authoritarian options of an iron hand. According to the results that appear in Figure 95, support for authoritarianism is relatively equal for all age groups until respondents reach the age of 50, with a gradual diminution of this type of attitude with age. Nevertheless, among those aged 50 years and older, there is a clear rise in attitudes in favor of authoritarianism. This suggests that people of this older age group, who have lived the majority of their lives under this type of regime in the past, are more supportive of authoritarianism. This could indicate the effect of having grown up and been socialized under a political culture that privileged the "iron hand" and had little respect for the rights of citizens.

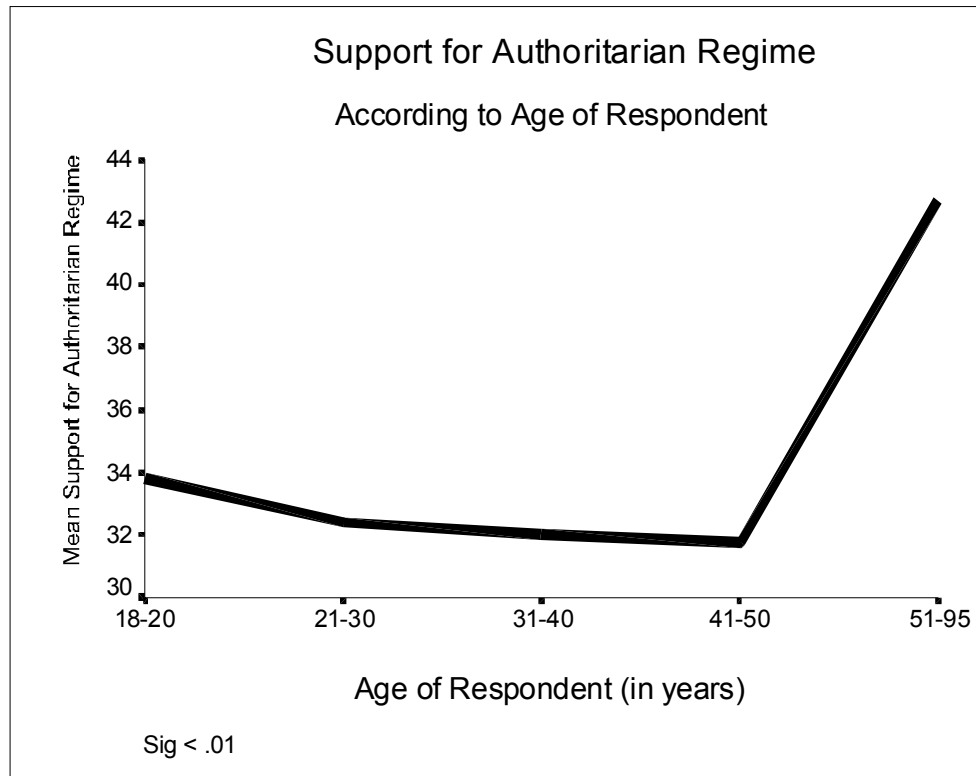


Figure 95. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Age of Respondent

Support for this type of regime also appears to be strongly associated with the educational level of respondents (see Figure 96). Respondents who did not have educational socialization or that had very low levels of education displayed a mean attitude in favor of authoritarian regimes that was much higher than those that had that had university level education. This indicates the effect that education has on democratic political culture. One must remember that access to education continues to be one of the principal social problems facing the country. Our measures indicate that for those disadvantaged by insufficient efforts to increase the scholarly preparation of Salvadorans, undemocratic options could be more acceptable.

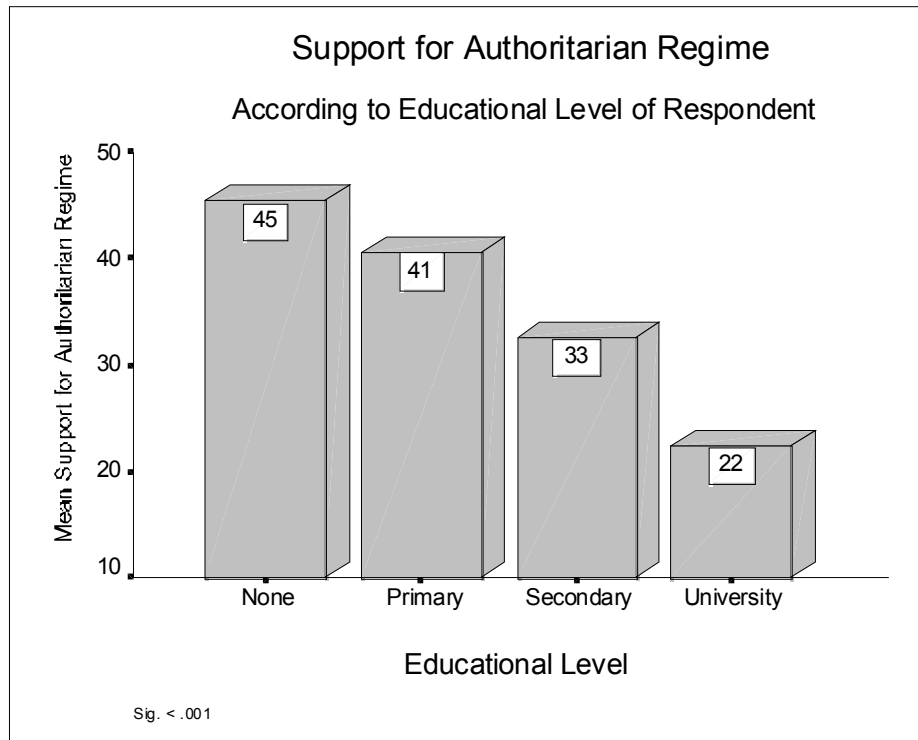


Figure 96. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Educational Level of Respondent

Similar findings result when we examine authoritarian attitudes by income levels, however the form of this relationship is more irregular (see Figure 97). The people that have income levels of above 6,000 colones exhibit a smaller level of support for authoritarian figures in power. In contrast, those with lower income levels and those that have incomes between 4,000 and 6,000 colones display higher levels of support for authoritarianism. These results, combined with the previous findings demonstrating that people with less education usually have more authoritarian attitudes, suggest that citizens who live in less favorable conditions usually are more sympathetic towards options that are not democratic. One interpretation of these findings is that people who do not perceive themselves to be benefitting under the present regime, which they understand to be democratic, are more likely to consider other regimes, particularly those of an iron hand, to be more effective in solving their problems.

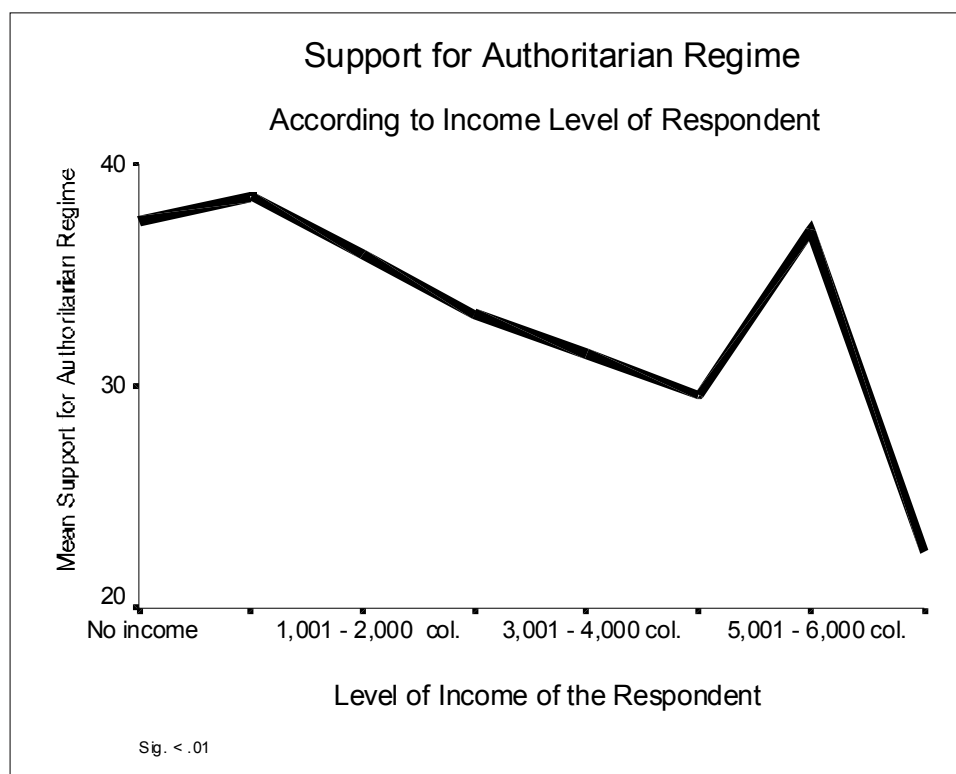


Figure 97. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Income Level of Respondent

Support for an authoritarian regime and political attitudes

These data establish a clear connection between authoritarianism and the political attitudes measured in our study. For example, people who believe that democracy is the best system manifest a lower level of support for authoritarian options than do the rest of the respondents, with a mean of 30 points on the authoritarianism scale. In contrast, those who believe that an authoritarian government is the best system, score up to 37 points on the scale, and those that feel both systems are the same score even higher (40). This indicates that these types of people in reality would be more disposed to support an anti-democratic government rather than a democratic one.

Support for authoritarianism is tied to the ideological position of the respondent (see Figure 98). Respondents with a rightist ideology tend to demonstrate a greater preference for an authoritarian regime of an iron hand, in contrast to those of the left who demonstrate a lower level of authoritarianism according to the scale.

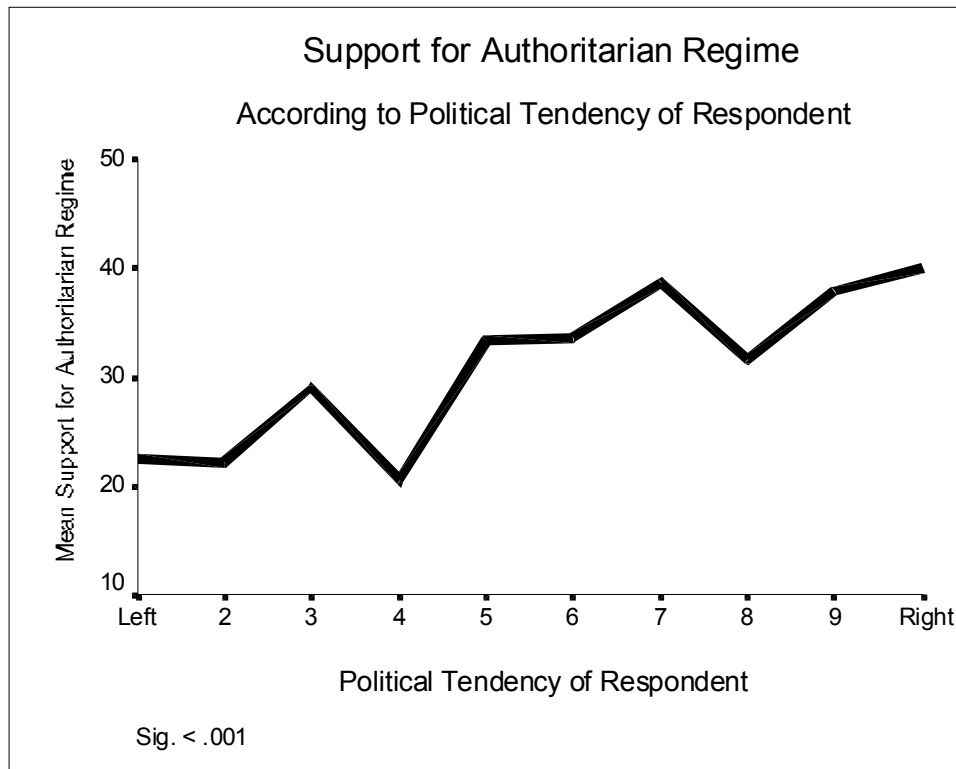


Figure 98. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Political Tendency of Respondent

Also, the endorsement of an authoritarian regime is not only tied to ideology, but more significantly, to the justification of a coup under conditions of high crime. People who would justify a coup due to high crime rates express levels of support for an authoritarian regime that are much higher than those that would not justify a coup (see Figure 99).

Moreover, an analysis with all the items measuring justification for a coup under various circumstances reveals that support for an authoritarian regime would be tied to practically any opinion that privileges a coup. Thus, under any circumstance, people who support a coup usually score much higher on the scale of authoritarianism, indicating that behind this favorable attitude towards coups is a tendency towards authoritarian regimes. In any case, the data indicate that the strongest statistical relationships appear with the justification of a coup for reasons of crime and also for unemployment.

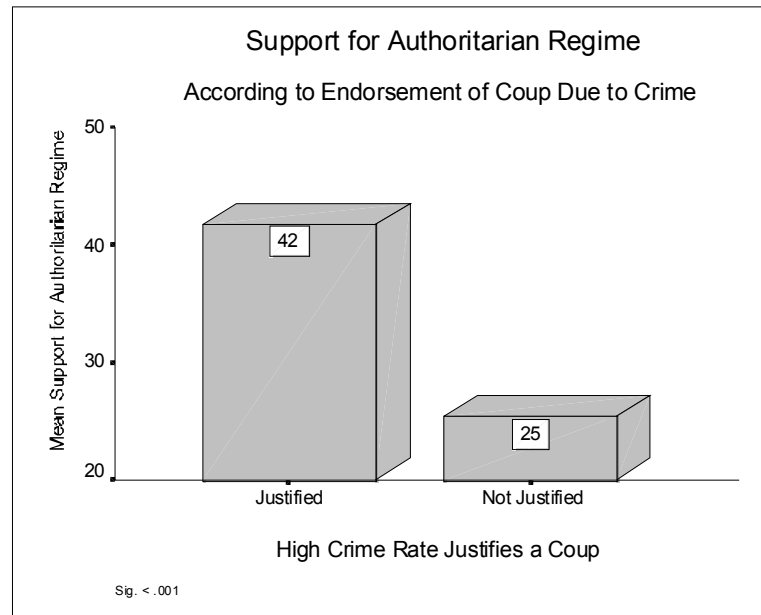


Figure 99. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Endorsement of Coup Due to Crime

Support for an Authoritarian Regime and Victimization

The previous results would lead one to think that a link exists between the preference for an authoritarian regime and one's own experience of victimization by crime. The data, nevertheless, do not support a statistically significant relationship between support for an authoritarian regime and victimization and/or the intensity of victimization reported in the study. In other words, independently of whether or not a person has suffered directly from crime, authoritarian attitudes do not undergo important modifications. However, what appears to be significant is the relationship between the homicide rate of a respondent's department and authoritarian attitudes. This signifies that authoritarian attitudes depend more upon the perception of the magnitude of violence in the environment rather than upon the direct experience of victimization (see Figure 100).

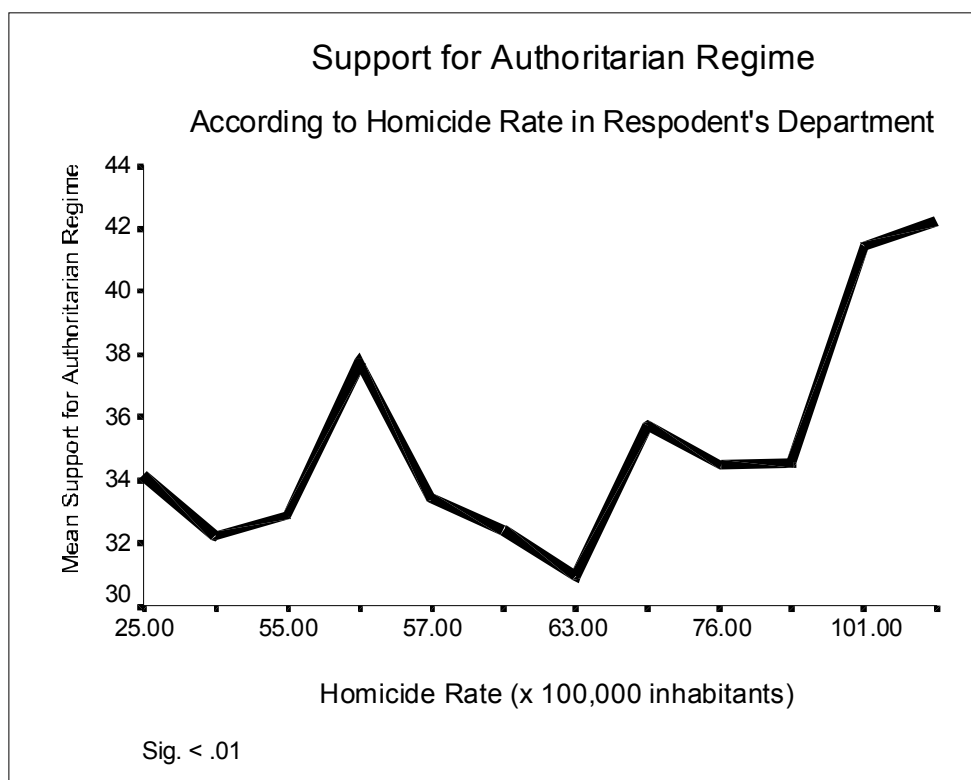


Figure 100. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Homicide Rate of Respodent's Department

This finding seems to be confirmed by the fact that people who exhibit a greater level of insecurity due to violent crime also exhibit higher levels of support for an authoritarian regime and for authoritarian attitudes, as indicated in Figure 101. In this case, the relationship is not measured by direct victimization. Instead, the data reflect the impact of perceptions and subjective evaluations of the phenomenon of crime on attitudes that support the undemocratic alternatives in the national government. We emphasize again, as we have done in previous chapters, that the data suggest the impact of the perception of the problem of violence on the political attitudes of Salvadorans.

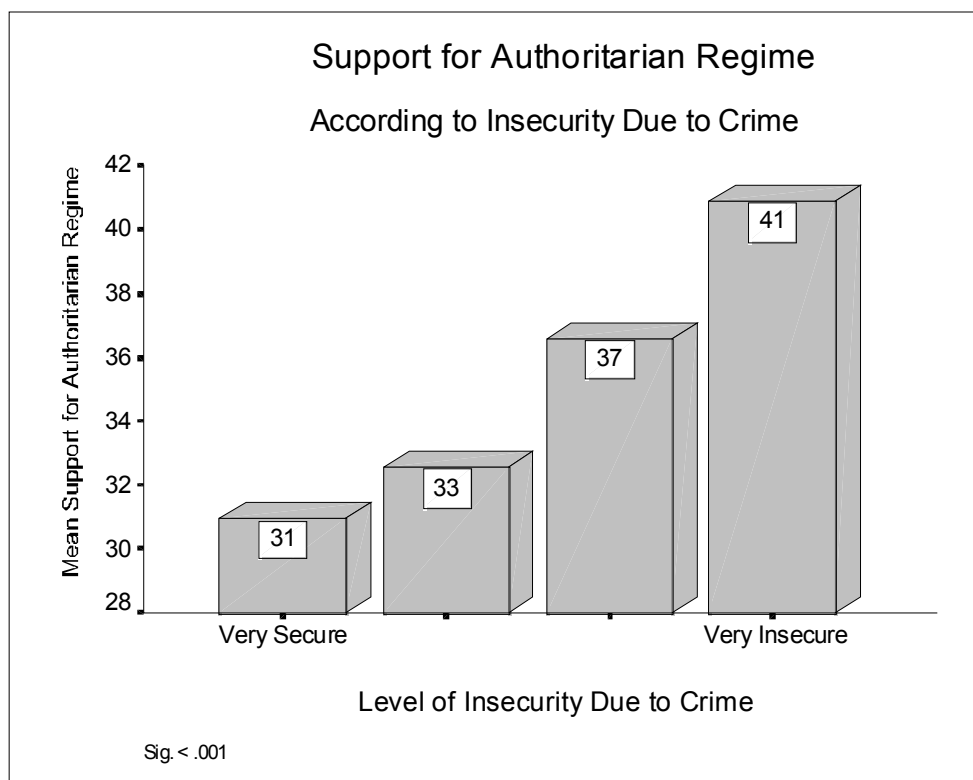


Figure 101. Support for Authoritarian Regime According to Insecurity Due to Crime

The Multivariate Analysis

In Table 18 we show the results of our multivariate model, relying upon the level of support for an authoritarian regime as our dependent variable. The variables that predict increased support for an authoritarian regime are: educational level, ideological tendency, homicide rate in respondents' department, sense of insecurity due to crime and support for coups under any circumstance. According to our measures, respondents who have less education, a rightist ideology, heightened perceptions of insecurity due to violence, and support for coups under any circumstance are more likely to support a government that is not democratic.

It is interesting to note that some variables that individually had significant relationships with authoritarian attitudes lost their significance in the general model. This indicates that probably the "real" relationship is due to some other variable, most likely, the level of education, which is highly correlated with sex, age, and level of income. In other words, the model suggests that respondents' educational levels constitute a fundamental variable that explains the tendencies to support an authoritarian regime. This is not all, however. The variables that are associated with the perception of insecurity seem to play a fundamental role in rendering people more or less disposed to support an authoritarian regime of an iron hand. This confirms the impact of subjectivity on political culture.

Table 18. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Support for an Authoritarian Regime

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	56.918	6.665		8.540	.000
Sex	.555	1.597	.008	.347	.728
Age	-.568	.637	-.021	-.891	.373
Educational Level	-1.195	.200	-.169	-5.964	.000
Ideological Political Tendency	1.108	.296	.084	3.750	.000
Level of Income	.622	.495	.034	1.255	.210
Homicide Rate	.118	.040	.064	2.909	.004
Sense of Insecurity	.116	.023	.109	5.012	.000
Support for Coup	-20.169	2.402	-.190	-8.397	.000

Adjusted R² = 0.107

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there are sectors of the population that would support an authoritarian regime under certain circumstances. These sectors do not constitute the majority of Salvadorans, however they comprise up to 30% of the total population. Education appears to be a fundamental variable explaining the appearance of these types of attitudes. This suggests in and of itself the importance of increasing efforts to ensure that the Salvadoran population has more access to education. This would serve as an indirect but real way to assure the democratic stability of the country.

This is not all, however. The perception of insecurity, more than direct victimization, seems to play an important role in stimulating attitudes that disparage respect for human rights by privileging order and security. This same perception of insecurity leads more citizens to call for a leadership less committed by negotiation, dialogue, and democratic participation, and more dedicated to assuring order above all other things.

Chapter IX. Trust and Democracy

[This chapter was co-authored with Lucio Renno, University of Pittsburgh]

In the 1995 study on democracy in El Salvador, one chapter was dedicated to the role of interpersonal trust, a variable that has been central to the recent explosion of research on the relationship between social capital and the functioning of democratic regimes.⁸⁸ There it was shown that trust had increased in El Salvador between 1991 and 1995, and therefore might be the harbinger of a more democratic society. In 1991, 1995 and again in 1999 we asked three questions to measure trust:

IT1. Ahora hablando de la gente de aquí, ¿diría que en general es ... ?

- (1) Muy confiable (2) Algo confiable (3) Poco confiable (4) Nada confiable
(8) NS

IT2. ¿Cree Ud. que la mayoría de las veces la gente se preocupa sólo por sí misma, o cree que la mayoría de las veces la gente trata de ayudar al prójimo?

- (1) Se preocupa por sí misma (2) Trata de ayudar al prójimo (8) NS

IT3. ¿Cree Ud. que la mayoría de la gente trataría de aprovecharse de Ud. si se les presentara la oportunidad, o cree que no se aprovecharían?

- (1) Sí, se aprovecharían (2) No se aprovecharían (8) NS

Results from the 1999 study show increases on the first question on trust for each year since 1991, but a leveling off on the other two items after 1995.⁸⁹ In order to be able to compare the three surveys, we will focus here only on San Salvador, recalling that the 1991 survey was largely limited to that department. The results of the comparison are shown in Figure 102.

⁸⁸Putnam, R. D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University. Putnam, 1995. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6:65-78; Coleman, J. S. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, Supplement 94:S95-S120.

⁸⁹To make the three items easily comparable, all three were coded on a 0-100 basis, which for items IT2 and IT3, can be interpreted as "percent trusting."

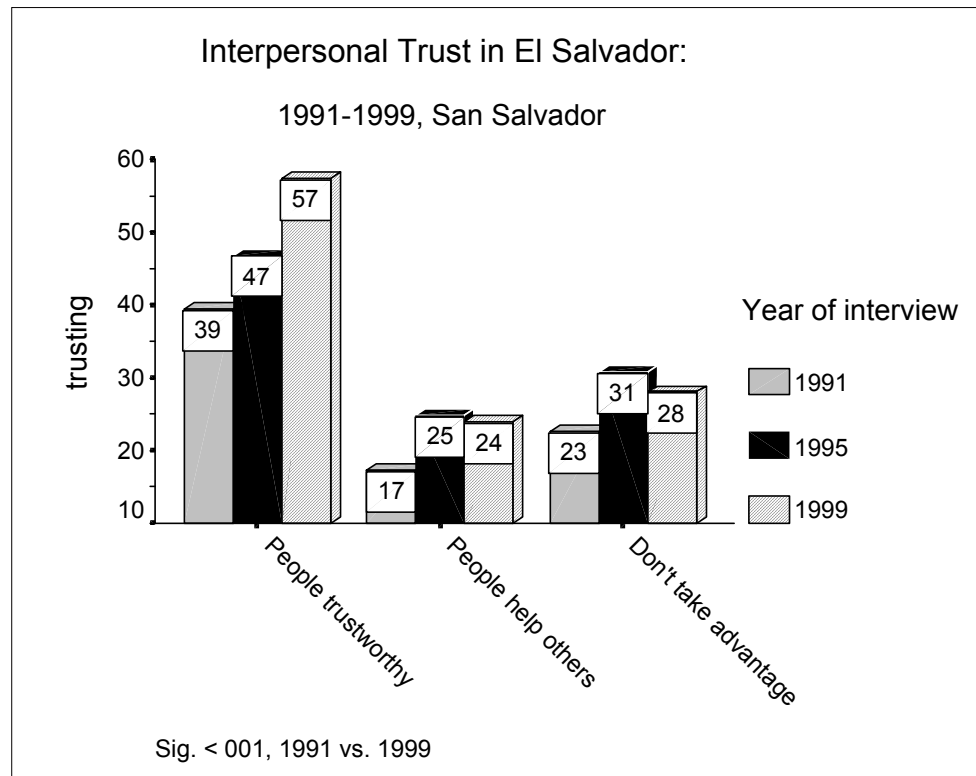


Figure 102. Interpersonal Trust in El Salvador: 1991-1999, San Salvador

Does Trust Produce Democracy?

Trust is seen as part of a cultural syndrome that stimulates individual political activism, and thus can serve to increase the overall accountability of a political system as well as its inclusiveness.⁹⁰ The more trustful one is, the more inclined one is to become involved in voluntary collective action, and consequently become more participant in the political system. This increase in participation should also lead to stronger support for the democratic regime.

Despite the coherence of this theoretical construction and the supportive empirical evidence found in developed countries, studies focusing elsewhere have produced results that often contradict theoretical expectations⁹¹. A consistent finding in all the studies that challenge the assumptions of political culture and social capital is the lack of any consistent relationship between interpersonal trust and other relevant variables. Although some of these studies in the

⁹⁰This case has been made most forcefully by Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

⁹¹About developed countries, see Inglehart, R., *Culture Shift* (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1990) and Brehm, J. and Rahn, W. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital", *American Journal of Political Science*, 41:3, July 1997, pp. 999-1023. In relation to findings elsewhere, especially Latin America, see Muller, E. and Seligson, M. "Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships", *American Political Science Review*, 88, 1994, pp. 635-652, Booth, J. and Richard, P. "Civil Society, Political Capital, and Democratization in Central America", *Journal of Politics*, 60:3, August 1998, pp. 780-800, Seligson, A. "Civic Association and Democratic Participation in Central America: A Test of the Putnam Thesis", *Comparative Political Studies*, 32:3, May 1999, pp. 342-362.)

social capital area have confirmed certain aspects of the theory, interpersonal trust, *the* core value, has been a constant disappointment.⁹²

Trust is thought to produce a level of behavior predictability and a sense of reciprocity that creates individual incentives to engage in public issues. The absence of trust among citizens, on the other hand, is a core component of a “subordinate political culture” and hinders the formation of social capital⁹³. This in turn leads to situations such as “amoral familism” described by Banfield in his classic work on southern Italy, where trust is restricted to the personal level, that of acquaintances, and does not extrapolate to individuals outside of the extended family⁹⁴. The aggregate consequence of this motivational pattern is a weak civil society, unable either to confront the state or to produce benefits for the community. The vicious cycle is complete with the enforcement of views that individuals are incapable of affecting the political system, that the state must be seen as the only provider of social welfare, and that this established order cannot and should not be challenged. In other words, lack of interpersonal trust is the cradle of an authoritarian political culture.

Does interpersonal trust help explain why some countries are more democratic than others? The evidence that Inglehart has presented suggests that it does, while an examination of data from the Latinbarometer raises serious doubts. Figure 103 shows the results of the question: “Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust the majority of people or that one can’t be too careful in dealing with others?” The first major surprise is that Costa Rica, widely regarded as the most stable and deeply consolidated democracy in Latin America, has the lowest level of trust in all of Latin America. We could leap to the conclusion that distrust is good for democracy, but Uruguay, also considered to be a consolidated democracy in the region, has the highest trust level. Perhaps even more puzzling is the high trust expressed in Guatemala, a country that on many other measures of democratic consolidation, does not rank highly.

⁹²An extended review of social capital theory is contained in *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective*, ed. Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Sarageldin (Washington: The World Bank, 2000).

⁹³About political culture, see Gabriel Almond’s and Sidney Verba’s classic, *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications).

⁹⁴Banfield, E. *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

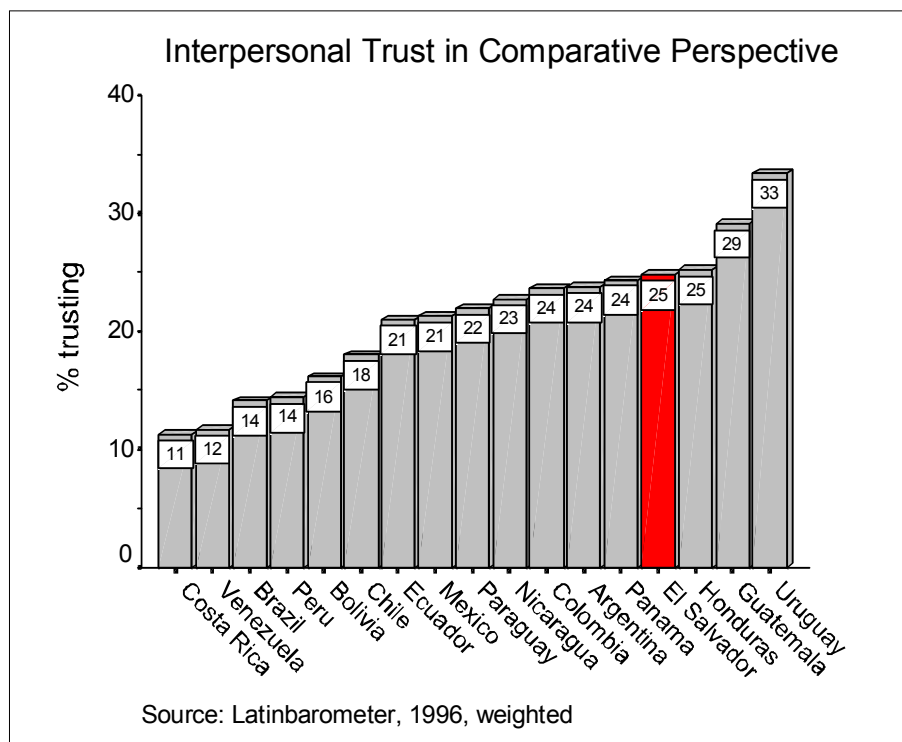


Figure 103. Interpersonal Trust in Comparative Perspective

The inconsistencies found in the above figure might not be due to poor theory construction, but to poor measurement of trust. The 1999 El Salvador survey gives us an excellent opportunity to help determine if the problem is with the theory or the measurement. In preparation for the 1999 study, given the importance that political scientists have placed on trust for the achievement of democracy, we decided to expand the trust items beyond the original three. We then used both the original and the new questions in the survey to search for the linkage between trust and democracy. We report on those results in this chapter.

The Problem of Measuring Trust

The cornerstone of democratization theory based on social capital is the variable interpersonal trust, as argued by Putnam (1993), Inglehart (1990, 1997), and Rose *et al.* (1997, 1998).⁹⁵ This theory follows a straightforward common logic: no trust, no secondary associations, no genuine political participation, and no democracy.

⁹⁵Rose, R., et al., 1998. *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post Communist Societies*. Oxford: Oxford; Rose, et al. 1997. *Social Capital in Civic and Stressful Societies. Studies in Comparative International Development*. 32 (Fall): 85-111; Inglehart, R. 1988. The Renaissance of Political Culture. *American Political Science Review* 82: 1203-1230; Inglehart, 1990. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Inglehart, 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Despite the centrality of the trust variable, surprisingly little research has been carried out to validate it.⁹⁶ Most studies use minor variations of the three-item scale developed in 1957 by Rosenberg as the “Faith in People Scale,” which was adopted by the University of Michigan in 1969 and became thereafter the standard for countless subsequent studies including the World Values and various “Barometer” surveys.⁹⁷

In recent years, studies of trust have narrowed their scope even further, and have measured it using a single dichotomous reply to the following question: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted?” This is especially true for both rounds of the World Values Survey, and the Latinbarometer, as noted above. When this indicator is present in Eurobarometer it also is measured in this way. The General Social Survey in the US includes other two related indicators: evaluations of fairness and helpfulness of others. The University of Pittsburgh Latin American Public Opinion Project also adopted this three-indicator based measure of trust, and it was used in the published findings from the 1995 El Salvador survey.

In the El Salvador 1999 survey we built upon these previous measures by adding a distinct dimension to the operationalization of trust. All of the studies that consider trust as an explanatory variable of support for democracy emphasize the distinction between generalized trust and personal trust. Stolle offers a good distinction between these two forms of trust: Generalized trust extends beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction⁹⁸. This form of trust supersedes private/personalized forms of trust because it involves relations with people who are not acquaintances. Participation in collective enterprises is defined by this higher-level feeling of trust in strangers.

Even though the personal/general distinction is central to understanding the impact of trust in engagement in civic associations, another dimension has been completely ignored by all the surveys mentioned above. Generalized trust can be differentiated into evaluations of how people in general are trustful of others, this being the usual manner of measuring this concept, and evaluation of how trustful of others the citizen himself/herself is. This key distinction was made in an all-but-forgotten series of social-psychological studies in the early 1970s.⁹⁹ In our preliminary studies for the 1999 El Salvador research, we experimented with this new dimension of trust in a series of focus groups and pilot studies. The El Salvador 1999 sample includes a series of 5 new items that focus on the individual’s self-evaluation of as to how trustful he/she is of others. The original and new measures add up to 8 distinct items that evaluate interpersonal trust, giving us a far broader and more refined measure of trust than has been used to date.

These items were first tested for their underlying dimensions. Factor analysis confirms our expectations, as can be seen in Table 19.

⁹⁶L.S. Wrightsman, “Interpersonal Trust and Attitudes Toward Human Nature,” in *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes*, ed. J.P. Robinson and P.R. Shaver and L.S. Wrightsman (San Diego: Academic Press, 1991).

⁹⁷The items are: 1. *Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?* 2. *Would you say that most the time, people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?* 3. *Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?*

⁹⁸Stolle, D. “Bowling Together, Bowling Alone: The Development of Generalized Trust in Voluntary Associations”, *Political Psychology*, 19:3, Sept. 1998, pp. 497-526.

⁹⁹MacDonald Jr., A.P., et al., 1972. Self-Disclosure and Two Kinds of Trust. *Psychological Reports*, 30: 143-48.

Table 19. Rotated Component Matrix of Trust

	Component	
	1: External Trust	2: Internal Trust
T7R When you know someone, do you trust them?	.697	.055
IT6R Do you tend to trust people at first?	.695	.078
IT4R Do you trust the promises of others?	.661	.141
IT9R Do you trust only your family?	.471	.058
IT5R Do you think most people are good?	.407	.415
IT3R People do not take advantage of you	.025	.735
IT2R People help others	.031	.716
IT1R People are trustworthy	.193	.637

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

As shown in the Table 19, the three original measures of trust fall along one dimension while the 5 new ones form the second one.¹⁰⁰ Based on this distinction, two indices were created. The first one, the second component in the factor analysis shown above, is the indicator of external form of trust (Extrust), which represents the traditional usage of the concept. The second, which is the first component in the factor, focuses on internal trust (Inttrust), individual manifestations about how trustful the interviewee is of others.

The previous measures did not allow for this dimensionalizing of the concept and the greater precision of measurement so as to be able to carefully study issues of reliability and validity.¹⁰¹ Researchers merely assumed that the measure had face validity and evaluated its external validity by verifying if the measure correlated with what it was supposed to correlate. But they were never able to assess the reliability of the measure. The new data from El Salvador allows us to identify the distinct dimensions in this set of items and to test the internal consistency of these two dimensions. The inter-item correlations of the items were always positive and the factors analysis indicated two clearly distinguishable dimensions. Based on these results, but aware of the limitations of these indices, we proceeded to evaluate the impact of trust on democracy.

Trust and Democracy: The Missing Link?

We evaluated the links between trust and support for democracy using both measures of trust, the traditional measure of external trust and our new measure of internal trust. Since trust is thought to be intimately tied to civil society participation, we also included an index of such participation in our model. Our dependent variable is support for democracy measured by the following item in the survey:

¹⁰⁰Item IT5 has the most non-response, and also loads on the two factors, but its loading on factor 2 is so much lower than on factor 1, we grouped it with factor 1.

¹⁰¹The fact that there seem to be two distinct dimensions is an indication that two separate indices should be constructed based on these items. Both indices were tested for internal consistency. The 3-item index reached a Cronbach's Alpha of .49, while the 5-item index obtained .57. This shows that even though there are two dimensions to these indicators of trust, they still don't reach desired levels of reliability. It seems that we still are not accurately measuring what we intend to measure. But at least reliability and validity can be evaluated with this more complex operationalization of the concept whereas most of the available measures of trust are dichotomies, hence preventing such assessments.

DEM2. Con cuál de las siguientes frases está usted más de acuerdo:
(1) La democracia es preferible a cualquier otra forma de gobierno.
(2) A la gente como uno, le da lo mismo un régimen democrático que uno no democrático.
(3) En algunas circunstancias el gobierno autoritario puede ser preferible a uno democrático.

The distribution of the responses to this question are shown in Figure 104. As can be seen, about half of the public prefers democracy to the alternatives, while only one-in-ten would prefer authoritarianism.

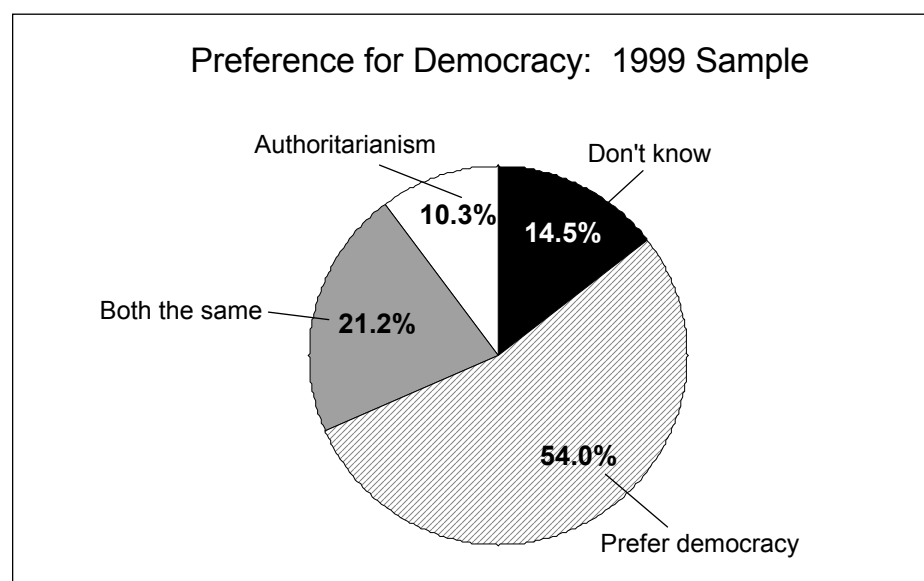


Figure 104. Preference for Democracy: 1999 Sample

The research challenge here is to determine why some Salvadorans did not pick democracy as their preferred system. Specifically, we want to know if trust makes a difference in preference for democracy. A first look at this question is given in Figure 105. As can be seen, trust does seem to make a difference, with those who prefer democracy having higher trust scores than those who do not. Also, it appears that the traditional measure of trust, external trust, does a better job of predicting a preference for democracy than internal trust.

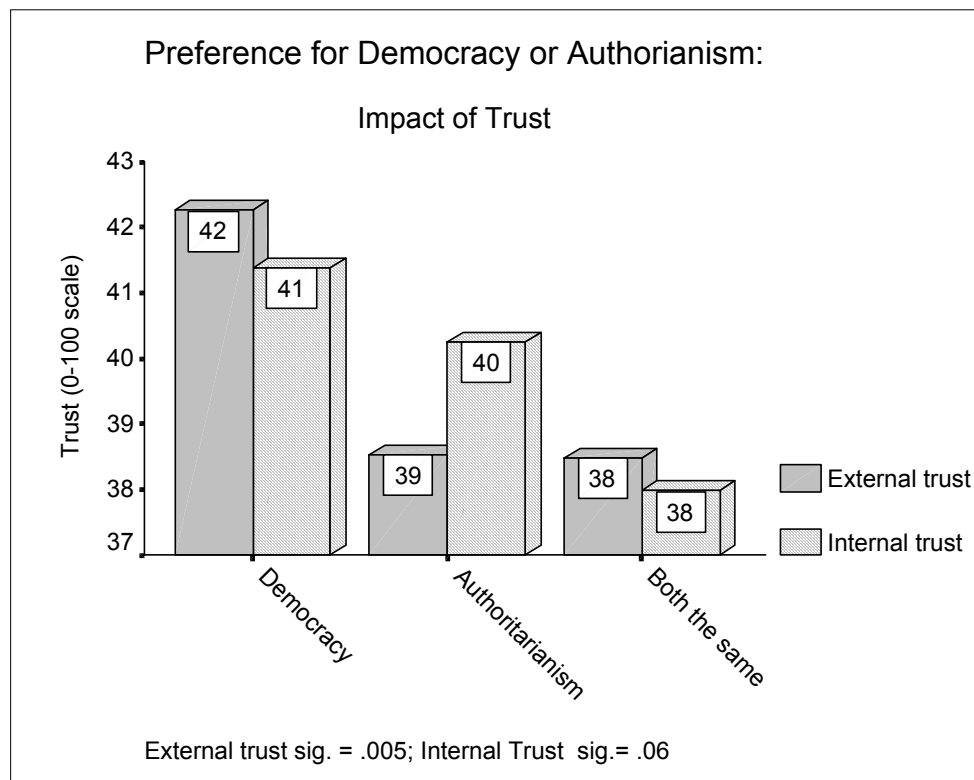


Figure 105. Preference for Democracy or Authoritarianism: Impact of Trust

We now propose to take a more detailed, multivariate look at the trust-democracy equation. We cannot, of course, say anything about the 14% who did not give an opinion. But we can contrast those who preferred authoritarianism to those who preferred democracy. Similarly, we can contrast those who viewed authoritarianism and democracy as about the same to those who preferred democracy. Since this item is a trichotomy, Multinomial Logistic Regression is the most appropriate estimation procedure compared to the Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) that we have been using until now in this study.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Similar to Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS), multinomial logistic assumes that the relation between the dependent and independent variables can be linear. But in order to allow for the possibility of linearity, the nominal variable used as dependent variable must be transformed. The distribution of the variable must be changed in order to allow for the calculation of the estimators. The first step is to change the dependent variable into odds. Odds are the indicators of the changes of occurrence of a category in contrast to another category. It is the ratio of occurrence of one category over the other. Once the odds are obtained, the natural logarithm of the odds is calculated. This increases the spread of the distribution of the dependent variable, increasing the possibilities of describing the relation in a linear form. Finally, the natural logarithm of the odds (logit) of the dependent variable is regressed by the independent variables.

However, since the distribution of the dependent variable is not identical to an interval level variable (normal distribution), the assumptions of OLS are not met. The best, linear, unbiased estimators cannot be calculated directly. MLE offers a distinct form of arriving at the best, most efficient coefficients. It is a family of techniques that uses diverse computational strategies to achieve the estimators with the maximum likelihood of being the best ones. In practical terms these estimators are achieved by going through a series of iterative procedures starting at a randomly selection value and moving towards the

The main results of this analysis are shown in Table 20, which contains the odds ratio for each independent variable and an indication of their statistical significance. Multinomial logistic regression contrasts the odds of occurrence of each category of the dependent variable with the reference category. The reference category, in this case a preference for democracy, is the base of comparison with the other categories of the dependent variable. In our analysis, the reference category is support for democracy. We compare groups that support democracy first with those that are indifferent and then those who support democracy with those who favor authoritarian solutions.

Table 20. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Support for Democracy

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
		Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Both the same	Independent Variables					
	External Trust	.750	.722*	.726	.699*	.640**
	Internal Trust	.652*	.694*	.698	0.851	0.793
	Civil Society 1		1.054	1.055	1.057	1.041
	Civil Society 2		.662**	.664*	0.822	0.849
	Civil Society x Trust			.995		
	Gender				1.262*	1.163
	Age				.847***	.858***
	Education				.962**	0.980
	Wealth				.724**	0.813
	Public Attentiveness					.359***
	Revolutionary Change					0.986
Prefer Authoritarianism	External Trust	.866	.866	.944	0.903	0.930
	Internal Trust	.620*	.650	.709	0.730	0.685
	Civil Society 1		.668	.696	0.968	0.994
	Civil Society 2		.902	.920	0.809	0.734
	Civil Society x Trust			.911		
	Gender				1.132	1.023
	Age				.679***	.705***
	Education				.962*	0.983
	Wealth				0.792	0.874
	Public Attentiveness					.314**
	Revolutionary Change					.589***
	Pseudo R ² (all Sig. < .001)	.008	.014	.014	.061	.08

*Sig. < .05

**Sig. < .01

***Sig. < .001

N= 2227

mean of the distribution. The set of estimators that most closely approximates the measure of central tendency of this distribution are considered to be the best, unbiased coefficients that describe the relation between dependent and independent variables.

The coefficients obtained by this iterative process are interpreted in a completely distinct form from those obtained through direct estimation. Since the dependent variable is not in its original units, it is a logarithm of the odds of occurrence of the dependent variable, no direct interpretation of the slope coefficients is possible. There is no substantive meaning in changes in the logit of the dependent variable. One more step is necessary to increase the substantive meaning of the estimators; the slope coefficients obtained referring to the logits must be transformed back into odds. In order to do this, they must be exponentiated, generating the odds ratio of occurrence of the dependent variable.

Again, the main question we seek to answer is: Does interpersonal trust affect the preferences about regime type? If does, is it positively related to support for democracy? If it does not, then what are the correlates of preferences of democracy?

Model 1 in Table 1 tests the basic hypothesis: does trust predict a preference for democracy? It does so without controlling for any other independent variable, but it does include the two forms of trust we are exploring here, the traditional measure of external trust (are others trustworthy?) and our new measure of internal trust (do you trust others?). Trust turns out to matter, but the only statistically significant odds ratios are the ones for the new measure of trust, not the old. These results suggest that, when taken together, the traditional measure of trust does not tap the component of interpersonal trust that is related to democracy in El Salvador. Recall that the reference category is support for democracy, so it assumes the value of 0 in the model, whereas indifference and authoritarianism are the other categories. Hence the expected effects of trust are a *decrease* in the odds of occurrence of either indifference or authoritarianism. An odds ratio below 1.0 is what we would expect, and that is what we find for both measures of trust. Put in other terms, increases in one unit in both external and internal trust decrease the likelihood of indifference and authoritarianism. In the case of external trust, when in the presence of internal trust, this decrease is not significant. On the other hand, the significant odds of internal trust represent a decrease of approximately 35% in the chances of a preference for authoritarianism, or a belief that democracy and authoritarianism are both preferable to about the same degree. The new measure fares well in a direct, one-on-one comparison with the traditionally used measure of trust.

But, as we well know from decades of research on the subject, trust is not the only factor that influences adhesion to democracy. An active civic society, represented by its networks of civic associations, has also been found to be an important indicator of social capital and of a participant political culture. But, what has been confusing is the linkage between democracy and civil society participation. According to Putnam, active civil society participation builds trust, which in turn, to use his term, “makes democracy work.” Yet, according to Stolle, trust is largely independent of civil society; those who have high trust are those who join organizations, while those with low trust do not¹⁰³.

In the El Salvador study, the strength of civic society participation is measured by frequency of involvement in associations. The questions are CP6 through CP13. There are basically two types of associations measured in the study, those that deal with local issues and are not directly involved with political matters, including church groups, parent-teacher-student associations, and neighborhood associations. Other associations tend to be related with distributional conflicts more directly and potentially play a more active role in directly affecting the political system. Among these are labor unions, professional associations, and, obviously, political parties. A factor analysis on the variable CP6-Cp13 confirmed the two dimensions of this concept and indicated that they are distributed exactly as expected. Based on this result, two indices of frequency of participation in associations were created. Membership to local associations is indicated by Civil Society 1 in Table IX.2 (variable CP6, CP7, and CP8), membership in distributional associations by Civil Society 2 (CP9, CP10, CP11, CP12 and CP13).

According to social capital theory, both types of associations should positively affect support for democracy because both stimulate citizenship activity and increase patterns of interaction

¹⁰³Stolle, D. “Bowling Together, Bowling Alone: The Development of Generalized Trust in Voluntary Associations”, *Political Psychology*, 19:3, Sept. 1998, pp. 497-526.

between citizens. Model 2, top panel, partially verifies this hypothesis and contrasts it to the impact of trust alone, shown in Model 1. In this model, both forms of trust are significant, as is Civil Society 2 (the one focused on professional associations). The only surprise is the lack of significance of Civil Society 1, membership in local level associations. Indeed, as will be shown in subsequent equations, civil society 1, the focus of much of the work surrounding Putnam's now classic study in Italy, has no impact on a preference for democracy.

When evaluating the impact of these variables in preferences for authoritarian solutions, none makes a difference (model 2, bottom panel). Activism of civic society has no effect in increasing this support when contrasted to preference for authoritarian solutions.

Perhaps the problem we are having in finding the expected impact of civil society on a preference for democracy is that we need to look at the interaction between trust and civil society. Model 3 incorporates the idea that it may be not just trust or association membership that independently affect levels of support for democracy. What may matter is the combination of these two factors. The argument supporting this reasoning is that trust alone and membership to associations alone have a weak influence over regime preference. There may be an interaction between both trust and civil society participation in order for the emergence of a cultural syndrome that supports democracy. This hypothesis is contradicted by the findings presented in model 3. Not only does the interaction not make a difference, but also it has a negative impact in each individual component. The odds that were significant before lose their explanatory power. This finding indicates that trust and civil society possibly have distinct effects on support for democracy. The combination of these two factors has no impact whatsoever. Stolle's (1998) conclusion that trust is not formed by participation in associations and in fact that levels of generalized trust might decrease over time in those individuals that participate in associations is strengthened by our findings. These variables seem to have distinct paths in affecting democracy.

It is now time to return to a more basic theory of democracy, one that Lipset has argued is a product of education and wealth.¹⁰⁴ Model 4 tests this theory by introducing education and income as predictors, while also introducing the basic demographic variables of sex and age. Model 4 turns out to be better specified than the previous ones. But, more importantly for the purposes of our study here, the effects of internal trust and the civic society measures, which had given some positive results, all vanish. Gender, age, education, and wealth wash away the effects of all social capital variables with the exception of external trust. In other words, we find that men, the more highly educated, the wealthier and the older, are more supportive of democracy. The finding that the young are less supportive of democracy is troubling in that it suggests that younger Salvadorans are less committed to the new system than are older Salvadorans. When these controls are incorporated, the commonly used indicator of trust (i.e., external trust) gains significance. This gives us evidence supporting the Putnam social capital thesis of the relevance of trust in increasing support for democracy.

Finally, Model 5, our last model, adds two other factors pointed out by social capital and political culture theories that should affect support for democracy. Public attentiveness, knowledge of relevant political information, and aversion to revolutionary changes should both decrease the likelihood of indifference and authoritarianism. We measure attentiveness by an index based on

¹⁰⁴Seymour Martin Lipset, Kyoung_Ryung Seong and John Charles Torres, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy," *International Social Science Journal* 136 May (1993): 155_75; Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited," *American Sociological Review* 59 February (1994): 1_22.

a series of questions taping respondent knowledge of public affairs. These are questionnaire items GI1a through GI10. The index is an additive total of the number of correct responses on the five items, and thus ranges from 0 to 5. With this variable included in the equation we attain an even better specified model (note the pseudo R^2 result). The results indicate that public attentiveness is pivotal for increasing the support for democracy. Those who are interested in politics and follow the news about politics are far more supportive of the democratic regime, independent of their level of income and education. Indeed, the influence of education and wealth, which has been constantly emphasized as central to the consolidation of democracy, vanishes in the presence of public attentiveness. This means that education and wealth are important as long as they are accompanied by an interest in public issues. Along with public attentiveness, only external trust and age have independent effects on support for democracy when contrasted to indifference. Finally, in relation to the contrast between democracy and authoritarianism, aversion for revolutionary change plays a significant role, whereas trust no longer has any effect. Aversion for revolutionary change is measured by a three-category (trichotomy) variable, ACR1 in the questionnaire. The available options are support for radical changes in the system, support for gradual reforms, and aversion to revolutionary movements. Basically, this is an indicator of how strongly motivated an individual is to maintain the current democratic status quo in El Salvador. The statistical significance of this variable, and lack of significance of trust, indicates that evaluations about the concrete political context seem to be more relevant than social values when it comes to choosing between democracy and authoritarianism. Note that an aversion for revolutionary change is only related to the difference between democracy and authoritarian options, indicating that opinions about the status quo are of no relevance to those who are indifferent to the political system. These people simply don't care about how the political system functions. For this group, what seems to make a difference are the long ingrained behavior patterns stimulated by social norms such as generalized trust and not the actual working of the system.

Conclusions

Some lessons can be learned from this study. First, external trust does seem to matter in explaining one type of regime preference. External trust is only significant, however, in explaining choices for democracy in contrast to indifference between regimes. External trust does not have any effect in increasing the likelihood of support for democracy when compared to authoritarianism. This indicates that trust does not have the expected theoretical influence over regime preference. Social capital theory argues that trust is intrinsically linked to democracy, no matter what the other option is and this is not what we found examining data from El Salvador.

Second, the form by which trust affects regime preference is also distinct from what theory predicts. The path of trust argued by Putnam and Inglehart is that civil society participation and trust interact to create incentives for preferring political regimes that make associations viable, that is democracies. However, this is not the case in El Salvador. Trust is related to democracy, but its path is more intricate than the theory predicts.

Finally, what really seems to affect preference for democracy, either when contrasted to indifference or authoritarianism, is public attentiveness. This variable has received very little consideration by most studies that focus on mass political behavior. In El Salvador, however, attention and knowledge about public issues seems to represent a distinct path to democracy. Actually it appears to be a stronger path, since it is able to explain democratic options in contrast to both indifference and authoritarianism.

In order to strengthen support for democracy, it is not just necessary to contrast distinct explanatory hypotheses, but it also is important to evaluate how these hypotheses fare when explaining the choice of democracy over both indifference and authoritarianism. The recipe to foster increased democratic support is not the same for those who are indifferent in comparison to those who admit favoring authoritarian solutions. In the first case there seems to be a cultural syndrome that perpetuates a dominant feeling of lack of interest about current political issues and indifference about the outcomes offered by the political system. Trust is central to explaining the distinction between those who don't care and those who favor democracy.

On the other hand, when distinguishing between supporters of democracy and those who favor authoritarian regimes, concrete evaluations of the political system represented by an aversion to drastic changes in the status quo in combination with public attentiveness, plays a more important role than trust values. Those who do have an opinion about regime type, either democrats or authoritarians, are more concerned about the functioning of the regime. This is completely distinct in the case of the indifferent group, to whom formal institutions do not make a difference.

Appendix A: Sample Design

Sample Design of the Audit of Democracy in El Salvador

Criteria for determining the sample design.

The following criteria were established to design the sample:

- To distribute 150 interviews throughout each one of the departments of the country in such a way so as to ensure that the data within each of the departments is internally valid.
- For the purposes of this analysis, the departmental samples are weighted according to the number of inhabitants with the objective of obtaining a nationally representative sample.
- The sample is composed of adults of 18 years of age and over, with equal numbers of women and men, as well as of urban and rural respondents, and takes into account the size of each city and the population distribution in each zone.
- This survey oversamples the metropolitan area of San Salvador with 300 additional interviews.
- This project will conduct an additional 500 interviews distributed equally throughout the municipalities pertaining to the USAID program.

Size and Quality of the Sample.

As a basis for this sample, we have utilized the *V Censo de Población y IV de Vivienda de El Salvador*, conducted in 1992 by the Ministry of the Economy, with the projections for 1999 based on the Latin American Center of Demographics (CELADE), *Proyección de la Población de El Salvador, 1999-2025* (San Salvador, Government of El Salvador, Ministry of Economy, 1996).

To complete the 150 interviews in the fourteen departments and a supplemental sample in San Salvador, we would need to conduct a total of 2,400 interviews across the fourteen departments of the country. The addition of the 500 interviews in the municipalities of the USAID program raises the number of the final sample to a total of 2,900 respondents. For logistic reasons, it resulted impossible to conduct interviews in the 262 municipalities of the country, so we proceeded to conduct a multi-stage stratified sample that combined the number of inhabitants and geographic attributes. As a predecessor of this audit of democracy in El Salvador, in 1995 a similar study was conducted: *From war to peace, a political culture in transition*¹⁰⁵. This past study served as a basis for our present sample, specifically in the selection of the municipalities for this study. We decided to rely upon the municipalities interviewed in 1995, given that the sample was representative of the nation and that the selection criteria previously utilized complied with the prerequisites of our new survey. In addition, we included 28 municipalities in which USAID maintained community development

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell A. Seligson, Ricardo Córdova Macías, 1995, established levels according to the population number of each municipality A) Cities with more than 80,000 inhabitants (N=13), B) 40 _ 80,000 inhabitants (N=15), C) 20 _ 39,999 (N=31) y D) less than 20,000 inhabitants (N=203).

programs. The final sample comprised of 69 municipalities distributed throughout the national territory.

This study completed 150 interviews in each department. The number of interviews conducted internally in each municipality was determined according to the proportion of inhabitants in the selected municipalities. In this sense those municipalities with a greater population are represented by a greater number of interviews. In addition, we conducted an additional 300 interviews in an over sampling of the metropolitan area of San Salvador and 500 in the municipalities in which AID is active; in the first case the distribution of each municipality was done in proportion to the population, while in the second case (municipalities of AID) the interviews were distributed equally, so that in each municipality of the program an additional 18 interviews were conducted.

The final distribution of the sample is presented in the following tables by municipality:

AHUACHAPÁN (194,819 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
1	Ahuachapán	85,460	66		66
2	San Francisco Menéndez	36,423	28	18	46
3	Atiquizaya	28,213	22		22
4	Tacuba	20,744	16		16
5	Guaymango	17,299	13	18	31
6	San Pedro Puxtla	6,680	5	18	23

SANTA ANA (322,145 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
7	Santa Ana	210,970	98		98
8	Chalchuapa	64,828	30	18	48
9	Candelaria de la Frontera	21,951	10	18	28
10	Texistepeque	18,143	8	18	26
11	El Porvenir	6,253	3	18	21

SONSONATE (166,398 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
12	Sonsonate	77,773	70	18	88
13	Acajutla	47,678	43	18	61
14	San Antonio del Monte	17,750	16	18	34
15	San Julián	13,721	12	18	30
16	Nahuilingo	9,476	9	18	27

CHALATENANGO (8,402 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
17	Nombre de Jesús	4,341	77		77
18	Azacualpa	1,540	27		27
19	Las Flores	1,490	27		27
20	San Antonio los Ranchos	1,031	18		18

LA LIBERTAD (240,057 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
21	Nueva San Salvador	113,698	71	27	98
22	Opico	51,701	32		32
23	La Libertad	33,590	21		21
24	Antiguo Cuscatlán	28,187	18	7	25
25	San Matías	7,358	5		5
26	Jicalapa	5,523	3		3

SAN SALVADOR (1,349,257 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
27	San Salvador	415,346	46	97	143
28	Soyapango	261,122	29	61	90
29	Mejicanos	144,855	16	34	50
30	Ciudad Delgado	109,863	12	26	38
31	Apopa	109,179	12		12
32	Ilopango	90,634	10	21	31
33	San Marcos	59,913	7	14	21
34	Cuscatancingo	57,485	6	13	19
35	San Martín	56,530	6		6
36	Nejapa	23,891	3	18	21
37	Aguilares	20,439	2		2

CUSCATLÁN (71,907 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
38	Cojutepeque	45,601	95	18	113
39	Suchitoto	13,850	29	18	47
40	El Carmen	12,456	26	18	44

LA PAZ (62,597 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
41	Santiago Nonualco	32,546	78		78
42	Olocuilta	15,992	38	18	56
43	San Pedro Nonualco	9,430	23		23
44	San Miguel Tepezontes	4,629	11		11

CABAÑAS (53,513 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
45	Ilobasco	53,513	150		150

SAN VICENTE (58,513 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
46	San Vicente	45,559	117		117
47	San Sebastián	12,988	33		33

USULUTÁN (194,026 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
48	Usulután	64,326	50	18	68
49	Jiquilisco	37,646	29	18	47
50	Berlín	17,952	14	18	32
51	Puerto el Triunfo	15,092	12	18	30
52	Santa Elena	14,801	11	18	29
53	Mercedes Umaña	13,328	10	18	28
54	Concepción Bártres	11,759	9	18	27
55	Jucuarán	11,196	9		9
56	Tecapán	7,927	6	18	24

SAN MIGUEL (249,386 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
57	San Miguel	191,116	115		115
58	Ciudad Barrios	24,803	15		15
59	El Tránsito	16,455	10	18	28
60	Chapeltique	10,445	6		6
61	Nueva Guadalupe	6,567	4		4

MORAZÁN (39,436 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
62	Corinto	16,402	62	18	80
63	Sociedad	10,504	40	18	58
64	Meanguera	7,781	30		30
65	Delicias de Concepción	4,749	18		18

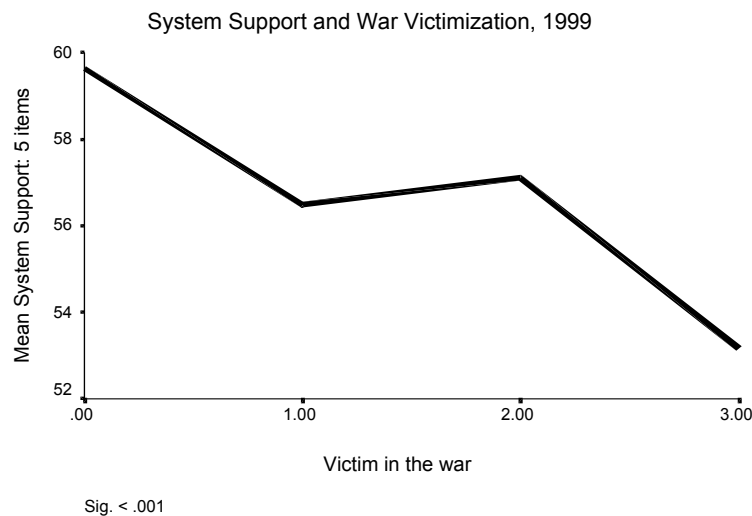
LA UNIÓN (63,503 inhabitants in the selected municipalities)

	Municipality	Population	Sample	Additional Sample	TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
66	Santa Rosa de Lima	24,719	58		58
67	Pasaquina	21,509	51		51
68	Nueva Esparta	13,300	31		31
69	San José	3,975	9		9

To distribute the interviews throughout each municipality we utilized maps that divided each municipality into segments of approximately 300 dwellings per segment. For this study each segment was designated as a primary sample unity (UPM). We proceeded to examine the number of interviews required in each segment so as to calculate the number of segments “k” that would be chosen in our sample. With the value of “k” we proceeded to the systematic selection of the segments, organized in a numbered list of UPM’s according to their geographic location, following a spiral technique. With this spiral technique, we aimed to achieve the greatest dispersion of our sample. The first segment was chosen at random “s1”, randomly choosing a number between 1 and k. We then proceeded to increase this value, so that the second segment “s2” would be located in the position $s1 + k$. We continued this process to account for all of the required segments in the departmental sample. Given that the census maps are not detailed in the areas far from the urban centers of the municipalities, the rural zones were listed in cantons, so that each canton equaled an urban segment of more or less the same population. The cantons were listed as continuations of the urban regions following the same method (spiral). For logistic reasons and cost considerations we strived to complete approximately 10 interviews in each segment. The total number of segments selected is 308.

To conduct these interviews, we placed the interviewers inside each segment with a limited number of questionnaires. Each questionnaire was marked with the demographic characteristics of the person needed for the survey, that is, we established quotas according to sex and age based on the last Census of Population and Living. In this way, each interviewer had to find the residents that complied with the required demographics within the segment. To disperse the sample amply, the surveys were limited to only one per dwelling. One field supervisor was designated to maintain quality control for five interviewers or less in each segment. The field supervisor was encharged with the responsibility of revising and corroborating the interviews, so that to complete the number of interviews in the segment, the questionnaires would have to be completed in their entirety (without lacking an answer for any item) and corroborated.

The sampling error of our study was derived according to the following statistical formula¹⁰⁶:



This equation is utilized when the population that is the object of study is large (greater than 10,000 inhabitants). For our study we established a confidence level “Z” of 95%, that is, we expect that for every 100 studies conducted, 95 would give the same results and only five could yield different results. In less favorable cases (when the population is divided 50-50 over a specific item) we expect a maximum variance in the answers “pq” of 0.5 and 0.5. The value of “Z” in the tables for the confidence level of 95% is 1.96. To obtain the sampling errors for our study we utilized the following equation:

$$E = \sqrt{\frac{Z^2 pq}{n}}$$

The following table lists the sampling errors in each department:

¹⁰⁶ Raúl Rojas Soriano, _Guía para realizar Investigaciones Sociales_, México, 1989

	Departament	Population	Sample	Expected Error
1	Ahuachapán	130,406	204	6.86 %
2	Santa Ana	253,714	221	6.59 %
3	Sonsonate	185,749	240	6.33 %
4	Chalatenango	86,286	149	8.03 %
5	La Libertad	277,969	184	7.22 %
6	San Salvador	893,877	433	4.71 %
7	Cuscatlán	92,599	204	6.86 %
8	La Paz	125,609	168	7.56 %
9	Cabañas	66,377	150	8.00 %
10	San Vicente	71,977	150	8.00 %
11	Usulután	162,682	294	5.72 %
12	San Miguel	213,056	168	7.56 %
13	Morazán	77,966	186	7.19 %
14	La Unión	127,523	149	8.03 %
	TOTAL	2,765,790	2900	1.82 %

In the case of the metropolitan area of San Salvador the sampling error is +/-4.40% and in the municipalities in which USAID program maintains development programs, +/-2.83%.

Weighting of cases

With the objective of maintaining the validity of the data for the interior of each department we conducted a minimum of 150 interviews in each one of these departments; nevertheless due to population differences in each region it is necessary to weight the results to render them closer to their corresponding departmental proportions. By weighting the results, the aggregated departmental samples are representative of the nation.

The first step to weight the sample consisted of calculating the weight value for each department, for which we constructed the following table:

Departament	Population 1999	% of population	Actual Sample	Weighted Sample	Value of Weight
Ahuachapán	166,927	4.70149%	206	137.0014846	0.66505575
Santa Ana	319,150	8.98885%	225	261.9350003	1.164155557
Sonsonate	240,588	6.77615%	242	197.4570511	0.815938228
Chalatenango	98,910	2.78580%	150	81.17810084	0.541187339
La Libertad	380,525	10.71747%	184	312.3071158	1.697321281
San Salvador	1,212,911	34.16159%	430	995.4687238	2.315043544
Cabañas	75,459	2.12530%	145	61.93123356	0.427111956
Cuscatlán	107,746	3.03466%	205	88.43004401	0.431366068
San Vicente	86,328	2.43142%	151	70.85171458	0.469216653
La Paz	153,192	4.31465%	168	125.7288002	0.748385715
Usulután	190,018	5.35185%	298	155.9528902	0.523331846
San Miguel	273,009	7.68929%	174	224.065839	1.287734707
Morazán	89,785	2.52879%	187	73.68896759	0.39405865
La Unión	155,963	4.39269%	149	128.0030345	0.859080768
TOTAL	3,550,511		2914	2914	

By means of the population projections for 1999 we calculated the number of inhabitants older than 18 years of age that comprised each department (the objective population of the study). Then, we calculated the relative proportion that the department's population represented to the interior of the country (percentage of the population). This proportion is multiplied by the total of interviews realized with the goal of obtaining a sample representative of each municipality, from this point on referred to as the weighted sample. To calculate this weight value that produced the number of surveys that should be conducted in each department we utilized the value between the weighted sample and the actual sample.

$$f = \frac{Mp}{Mr}$$

The value of the weight indicates the value that each interview possesses in relation to the interior of the national sample. We multiplied each interview by the corresponding value of the department in which it was conducted. In this way we obtained a sample proportionate to the number of inhabitants by department.