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# Special Report:

## Predictors of Participation in Honduras

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By:

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## Civil Society Participation

This special report is written at the request of USAID-Honduras in order to analyze the factors that influence participation in civil society. The report is based on the 2010 round of the Americas Barometer.<sup>1</sup>

In Latin America, for instance, the concept of civil society has been identified in the past with the struggle against military dictatorships (e.g. Argentina's *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*) and as society in place of political parties (Fals Borda 1992; Garreton 1989). In the Latin American democracies of the present, civil society organizations more commonly play the role of organizing citizens in their articulation of demands (Seligson 1998). Thus, organizations such as human rights groups may have played a role in the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes, while other types of civil society organizations, such as community development groups or civic groups, may at present play a role in deepening and consolidating democracy. But, regardless the type of organization or the form of their contribution, the important point is the alleged connection between participation in organizations of the civil society and democratization. The more citizens participate in organizations of the civil society, the more democratic their country will be. It is widely believed that participation in organizations of the civil society increases social capital (Putnam 1993)<sup>2</sup> as well as political capital (Booth and Richard 1998), which in turn may lead to greater levels of democracy.

Perhaps the best way to measure the degree of participation in civil society organization is by determining the frequency with which citizens attend meeting of such organizations. With that purpose, our survey included the following questions:

<sup>1</sup> This survey was carried out between January and February of 2010, as part of the LAPOP AmericasBarometer 2010 wave of surveys. It is a follow up of the national surveys of 2004, 2006 and 2008 carried out by the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). The 2010 survey was conducted with field work being carried out by Borges y Asociados. Funding came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project used a national probability sample design of voting-age adults, with a total N of 1,596 people involving face-to-face interviews conducted in Spanish. The survey used a complex sample design, taking into account stratification and clustering. The sample was stratified by regions. Each stratum was further sub-stratified by urban and rural areas. Respondents were selected in clusters of 6-8 interviews in urban areas and 10-12 in rural areas. The sample consists of 93 primary sampling units and 163 final sampling units including 22 departments in Honduras. A total of 720 respondents were surveyed in urban areas and 876 in rural areas. The estimated margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.45$ . The complete report and questionnaire can be found at *Political Culture of Democracy in Honduras, 2010: Democratic Consolidation in the Americas during Hard Times*, written by Orlando J. Pérez, and José René Argueta. Readers can access the publication through a link on the LAPOP website: [www.AmericasBarometer.org](http://www.AmericasBarometer.org).

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the concept of "Social Capital" see Coleman, J. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120. Issue Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure.

<p>I am going to read a list of groups and organizations. Please tell me if you attend their meetings at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never. [Repeat for each question “once a week,” “once or twice a month,” “once or twice a year” or “never” to help the respondent]</p>							
	Once a week	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a year	Never	DK	DA	
<b>CP6.</b> Meetings of any religious organization? Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	98	
<b>CP7.</b> Meetings of a parents' association at school? Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	98	
<b>CP8.</b> Meetings of a community improvement committee or association? Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	98	
<b>CP9.</b> Meetings of an association of professionals, merchants, manufacturers or farmers? Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	98	
<b>CP13.</b> Meetings of a political party or political organization? Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	98	
<b>CP20.</b> [Women only] Meetings of associations or groups of women or home makers. Do you attend them...	1	2	3	4	88	DA 98	N/A 99

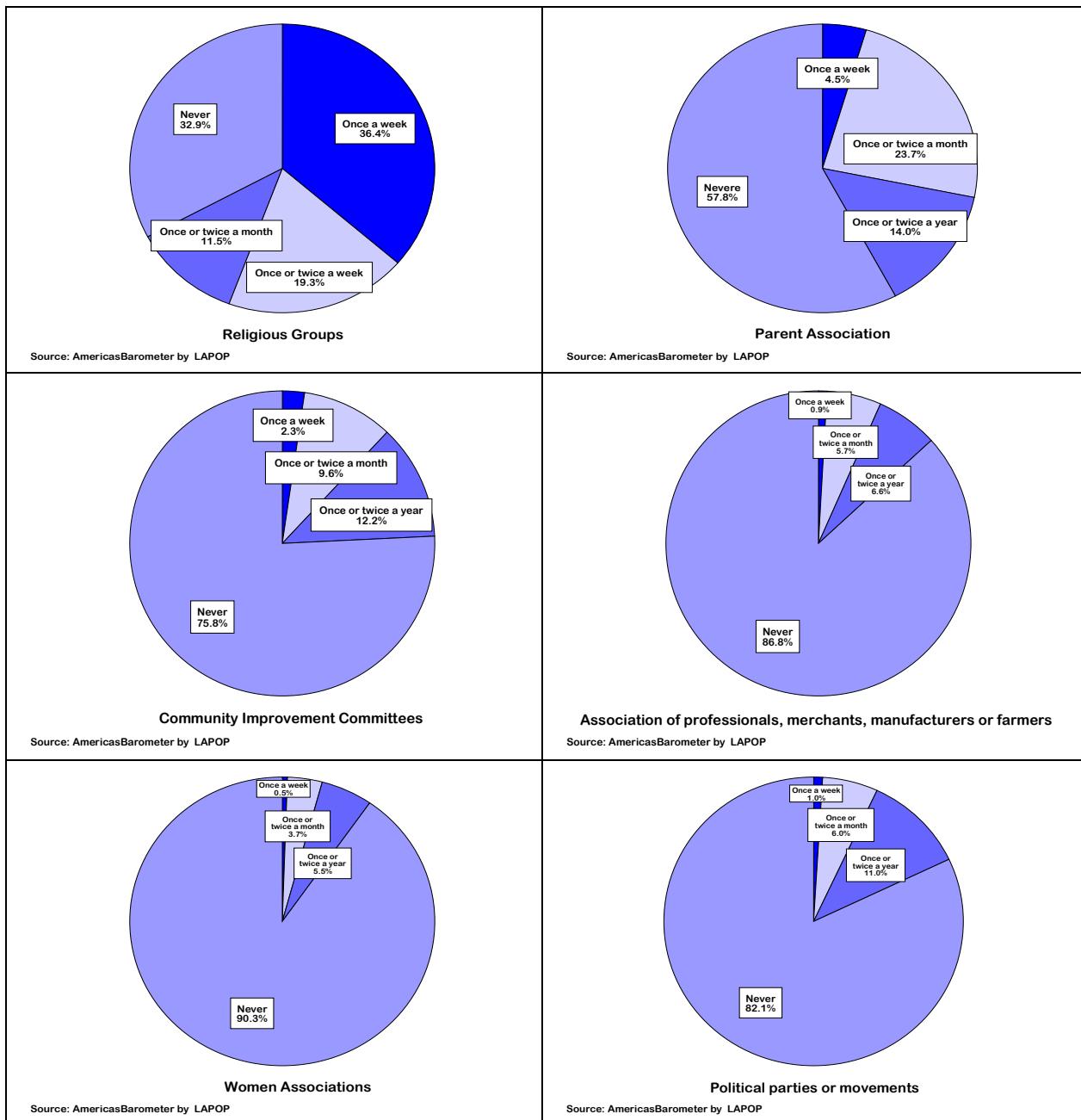


Figure 1. Levels of Participation in Various Groups

Figure 1 shows that participation is highest in religious groups, followed by parents associations and community improvement committees. Over 86% of Hondurans say they have not participated in associations of professionals, merchants, manufacturers or farmers. And over 80% say they have not participated in political parties.

Figure 2 shows the level of participation across the four rounds of *AmericasBarometer* surveys.<sup>3</sup> We find a steady decline in participation in religious, community improvement and parent association groups, and a slight or no increase in participation in the other groups.

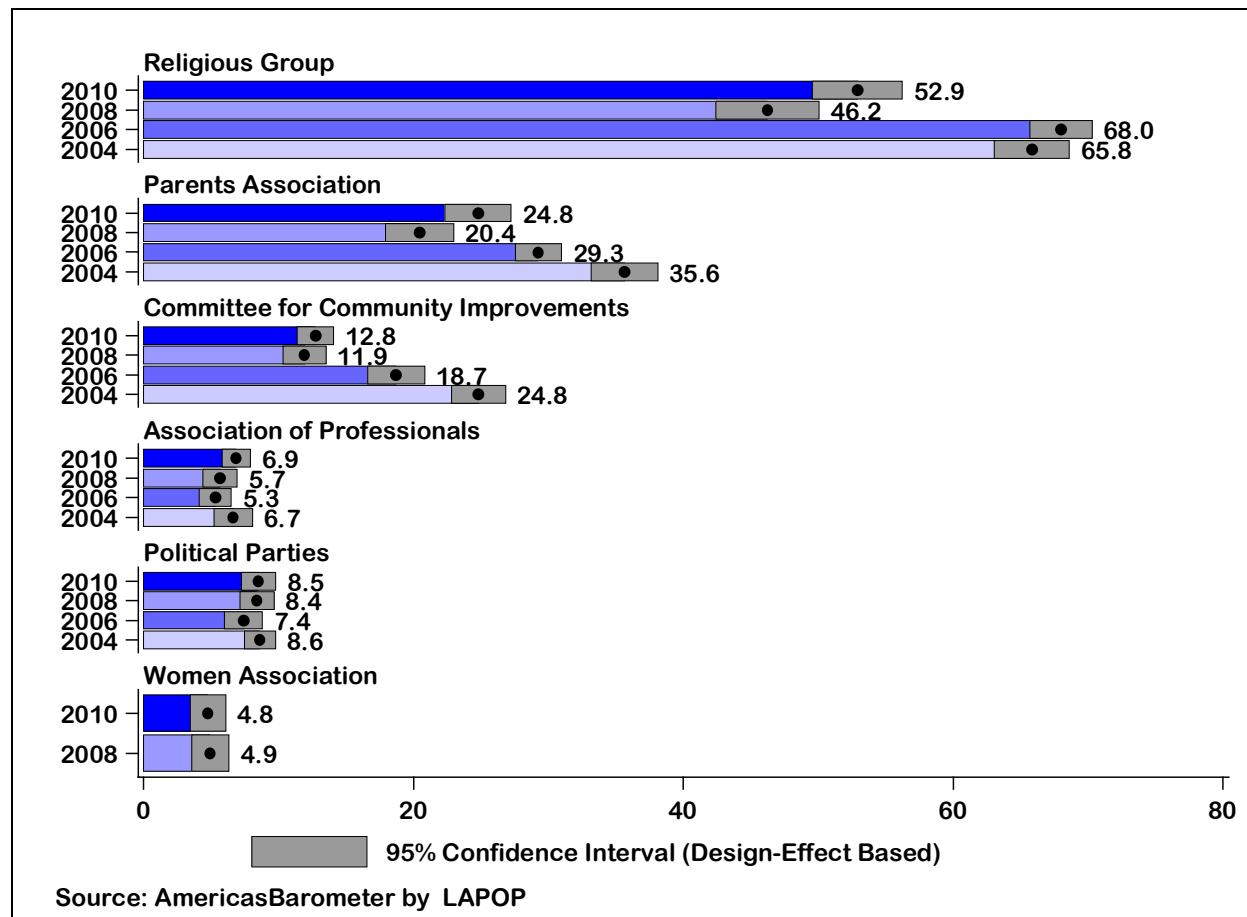


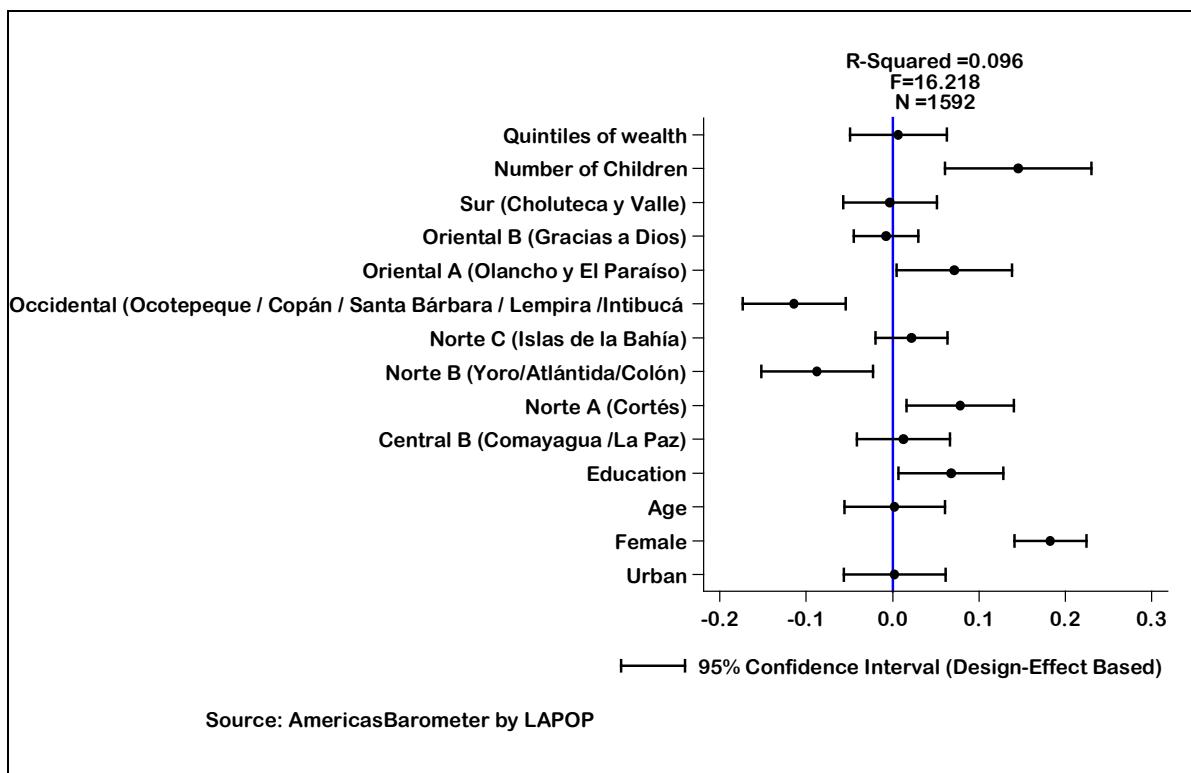
Figure 2. Participation in Meetings of Various Groups by Years

Next we examine the factors that influence participation in each type of group. For this analysis we use OLS regression which enables us to ascertain which independent variable is statistically significant. The regression analysis is presented in a chart in which statistical significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical “0” line (at  $p < .05$  or better). When the dot, which represents the predicted impact of that variable, falls to the right of the vertical “0” line it implies a positive relationship whereas if it falls to the left it indicates a negative contribution. The appendix shows the full results with regression coefficients. As independent variables we are using the basic socio-demographic variables, such as age, education, gender, wealth, number of children, urbanization, and region. While in prior LAPOP studies we used an indicator of wealth based on an additive index of

<sup>3</sup> Each question is recoded into a scale of 0-100 for ease of illustration and to perform multivariate analyses. Higher numbers represent greater participation. Zero indicates never attending and so on across intermediate values up to 100 for attending weekly.

ownership of household goods, in this study we implement a new indicator using the same variables, but based on relative wealth.<sup>4</sup> Region is measured by a series of dummy variables accounting for the effects of living in each region. For each respondent a variable is created measured as “1” if the person is from that region or “0” if they are not. When using this technique we must assign one set of dummy variables as reference, in this case it is Central A (Francisco Morazán). Therefore, each region coefficient measures the variance and statistical significance in relation to Central A (Francisco Morazán).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 3 shows the results for participation in religious groups.



**Figure 3. Predictors of Participation in Religious Groups**

The most significant predictors are gender and number of children. Women with children exhibit the greatest participation in religious groups. Education is slightly significant with individuals with higher levels of formal education more likely to participate in religious groups. There also are statistically significant regional variations. Respondents living in “occidente” (Western Region which includes the provinces of Ocotepeque, Copan, Santa Barbara, Lempira and Intibucá), and “Norte B” (Yoro, Atlántida and Colon) are *less* likely to participate in

<sup>4</sup> For more information on this indicator, see: Córdova, Abby B. 2009 “Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators.” In AmericasBarometer Insights Series. (<http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/AmericasBarometerInsightsSeries>).

<sup>5</sup> (401) Central A (Francisco Morazán); (402) Central B (Comayagua /La Paz); (403) Norte A (Cortés); (404) Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón); (405) Norte C (Islas de la Bahía); (406) Occidental (Ocotepeque/Copán/Santa Bárbara/ Lempira/ Intibucá); (407) Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso); (408) Oriental B (Gracias a Dios); (409) Sur (Choluteca y Valle).

religious groups than individuals in Francisco Morazán, which is the reference region. Conversely, those living in Norte A (Cortes) are *more* likely to participate in such groups than residents of Francisco Morazán.

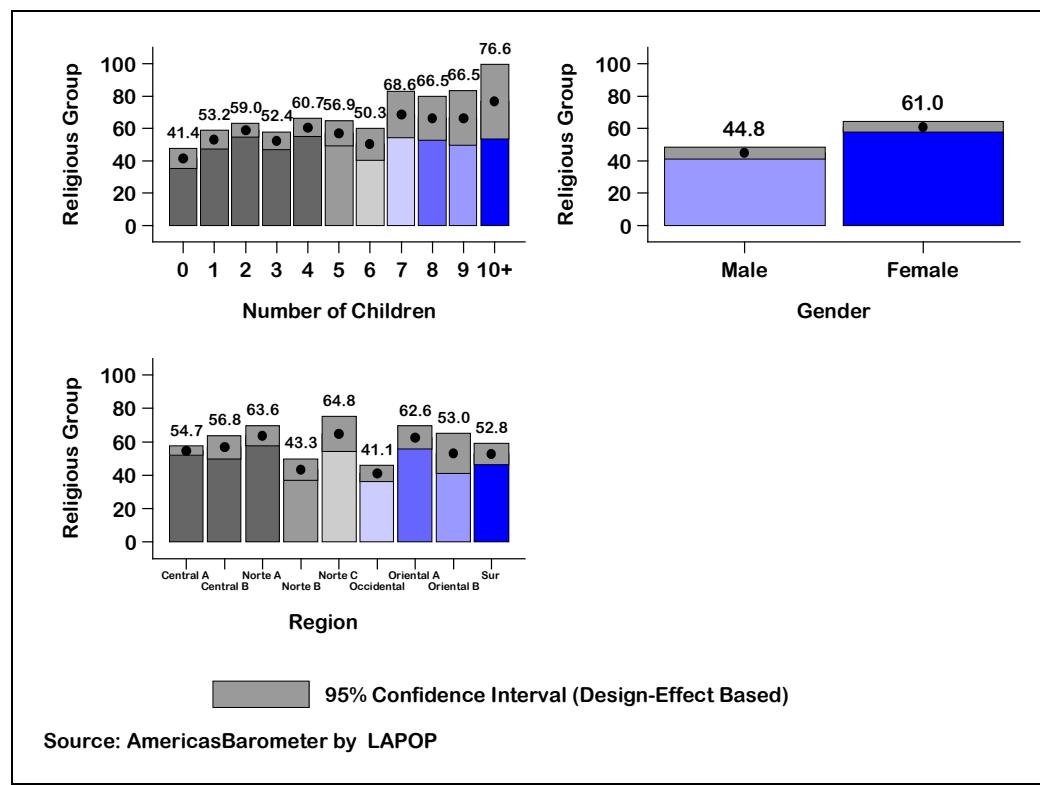
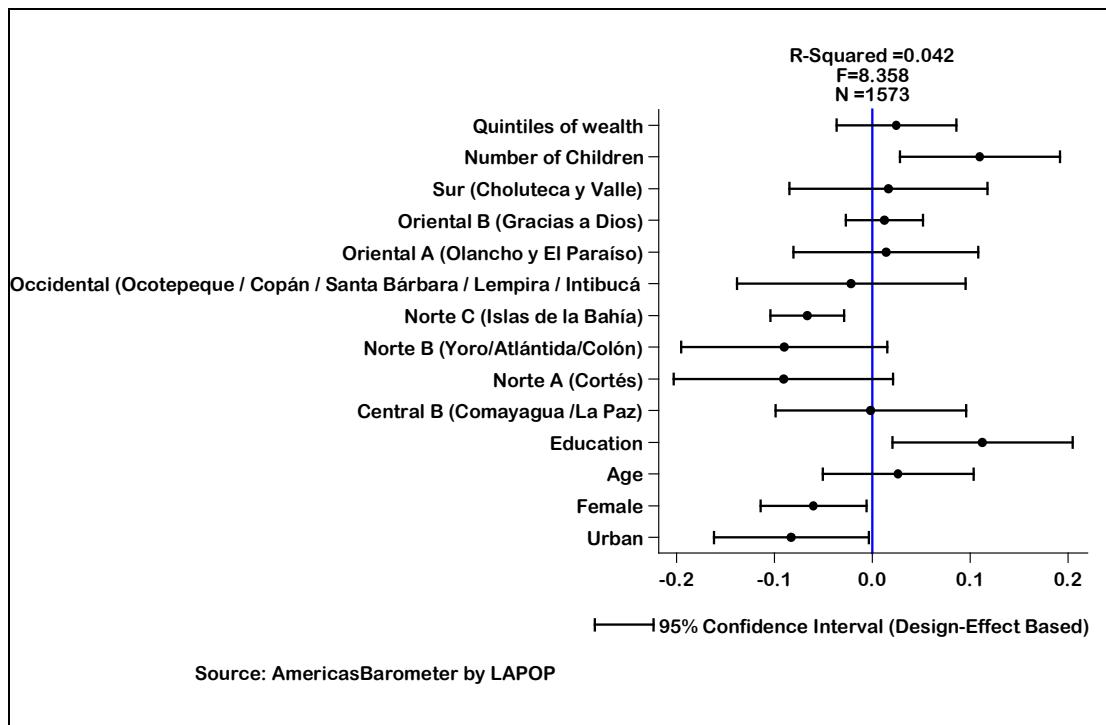


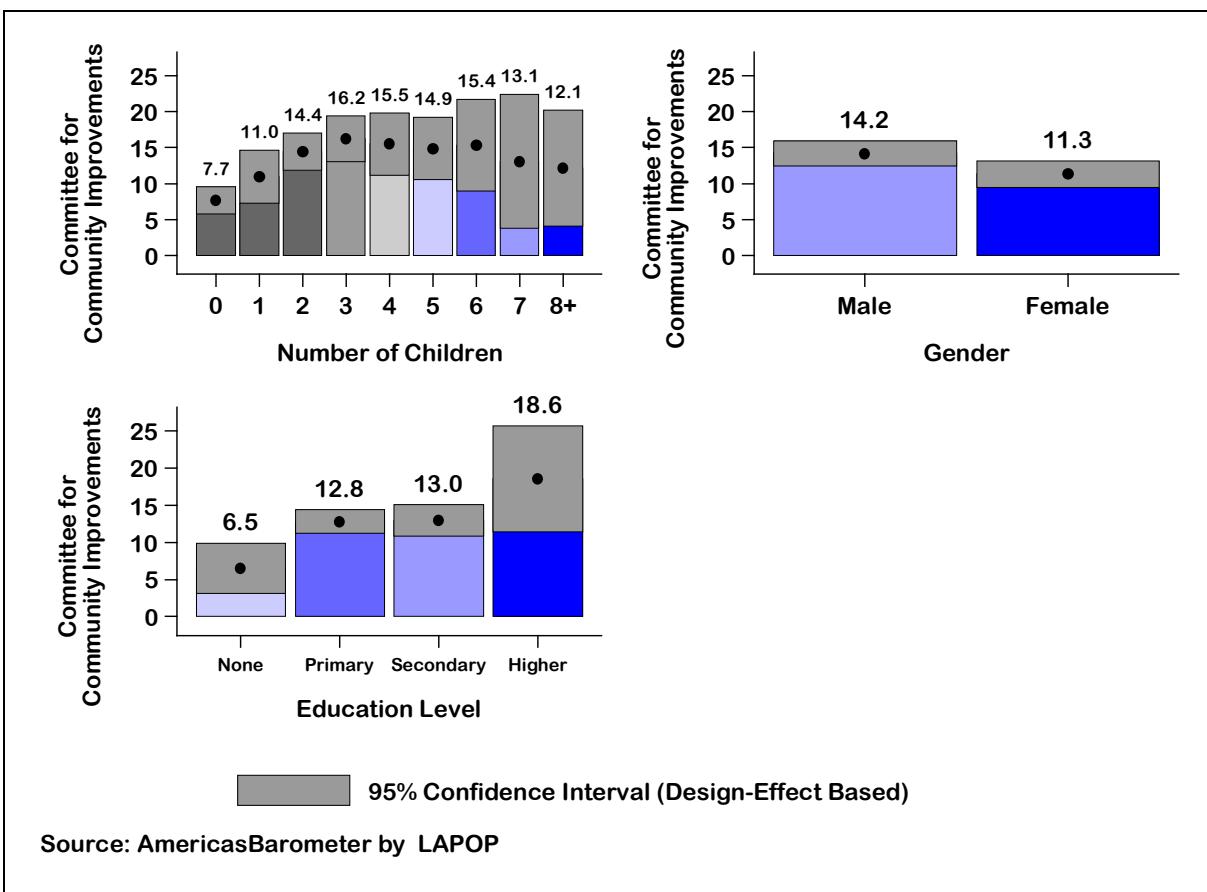
Figure 4. Participation in Religious Groups by Number of Children, Gender and Region

Figure 4 shows the bivariate relations between participation in religious groups and gender, number of children and region. Females with the largest number of children living in the Norte C (Isla de la Bahía) exhibit the greatest participation in religious groups. One caveat of these results is that the regression analysis indicates there is little statistical difference between residents of Norte C and Central A. The Norte C region has few respondents (N=20) compared to the rest and thus the confidence interval for this region is quite large, thus reducing the reliability of the results for the region. The graph does illustrate clearly the significant difference between participation in religious groups in Norte B and Occidente as suppose for Francisco Morazán.



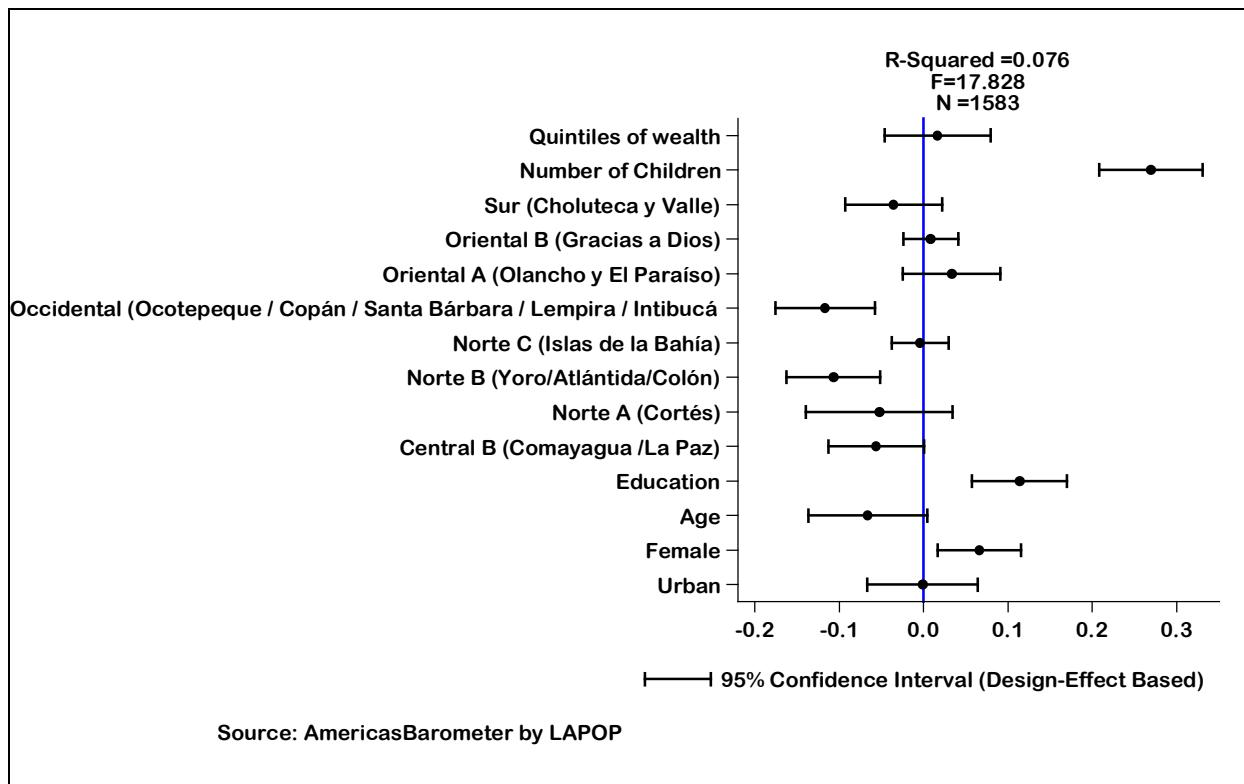
**Figure 5. Predictors of Participation in Community Improvement Committees**

Next we analyze participation in community improvement committees. Figure 5 shows the results of the regression analysis. Number of children and education are the most significant predictors of participation in community improvement committees. Individuals with greater levels of formal education and more children tend to participate in these groups more than others. Gender is slightly significant with men participating more than women. Regionally, only those living in Islas de la Bahia exhibit participation levels statistically different from those in Francisco Morazán (the reference region).



**Figure 6. Participation in Community Improvement Committees by Number of Children, Gender and Education**

Figure 6 shows that respondents with children tend to participate more in community improvement committees than those who have no children. Males participate more than women, and individuals with higher education express greater participation in groups to improve the community than those with less education.



**Figure 7. Predictors of Participation in Parents Associations**

The next analysis examines predictors of participation in parent associations. Figure 7 below shows that the number of children is the most important predictor of participation in parents associations. Education is also a statistically significant predictor. And females tend to participate more in these groups than men. Regional differences are only statistically significant for the Occidente and Norte B regions; each exhibits less participation in parent associations than Francisco Morazán.

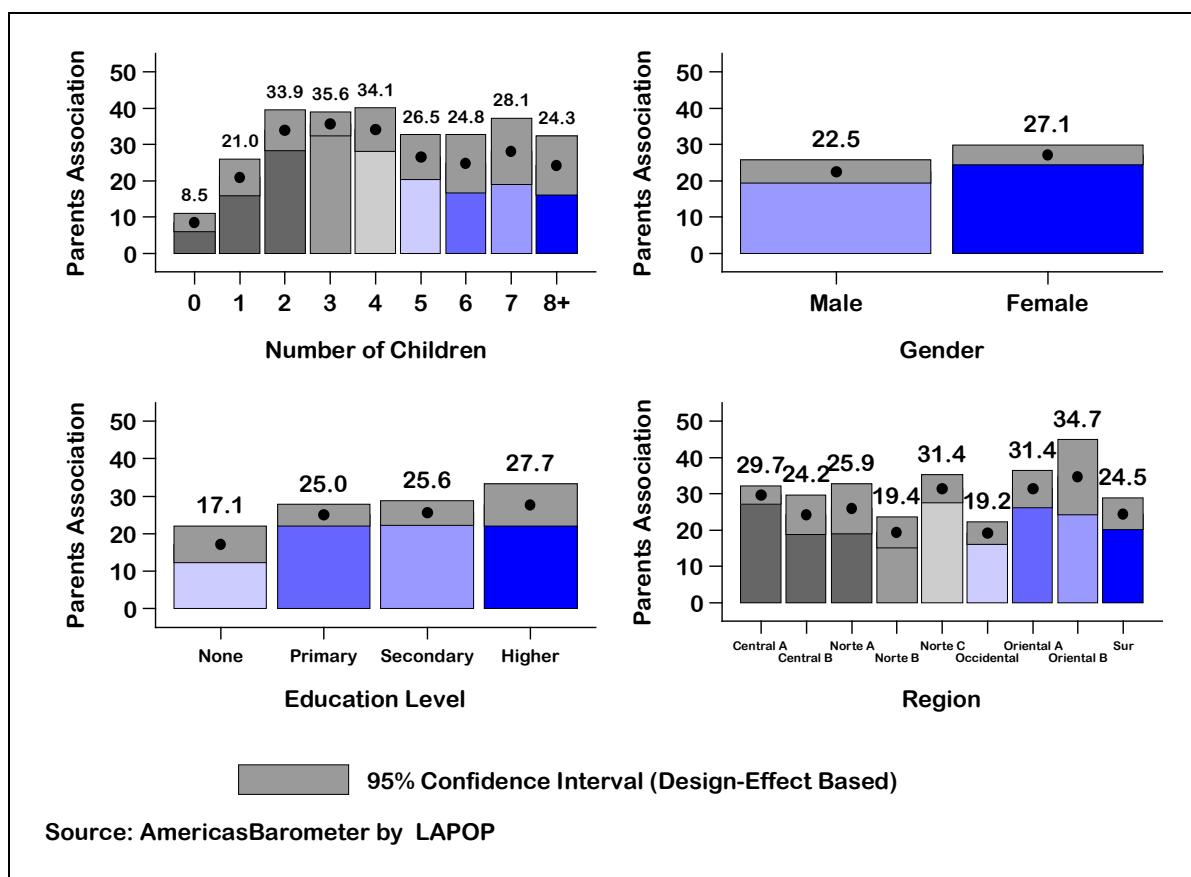
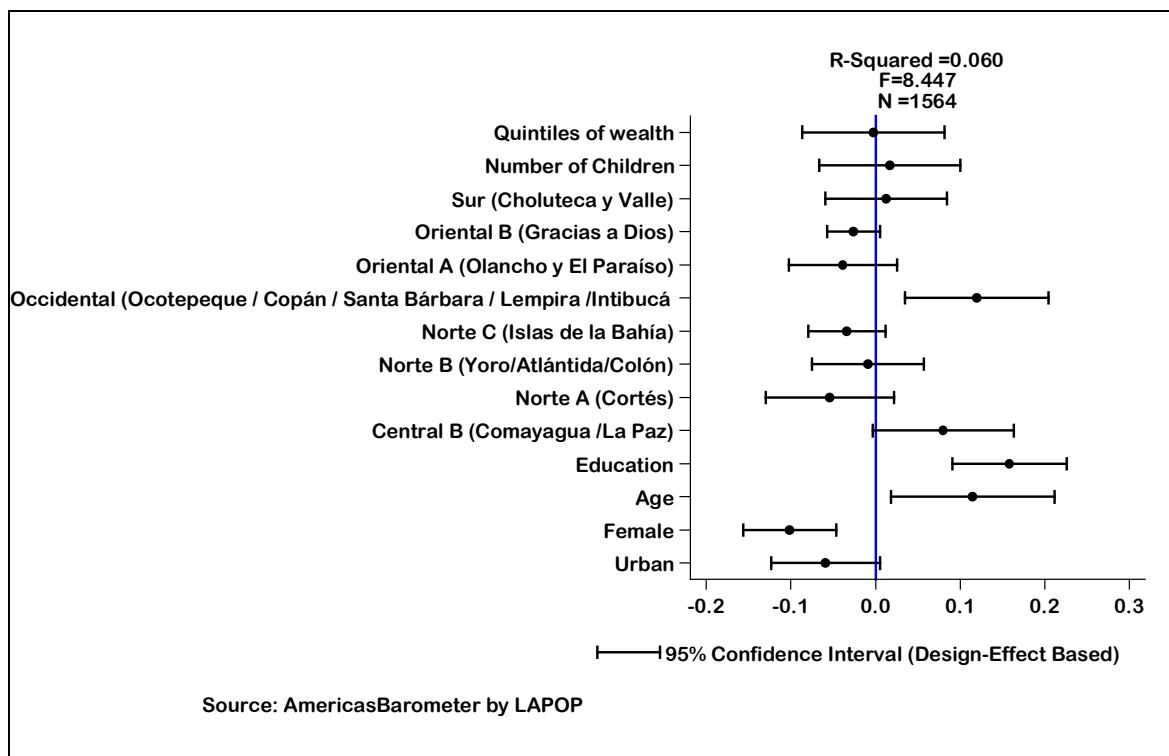


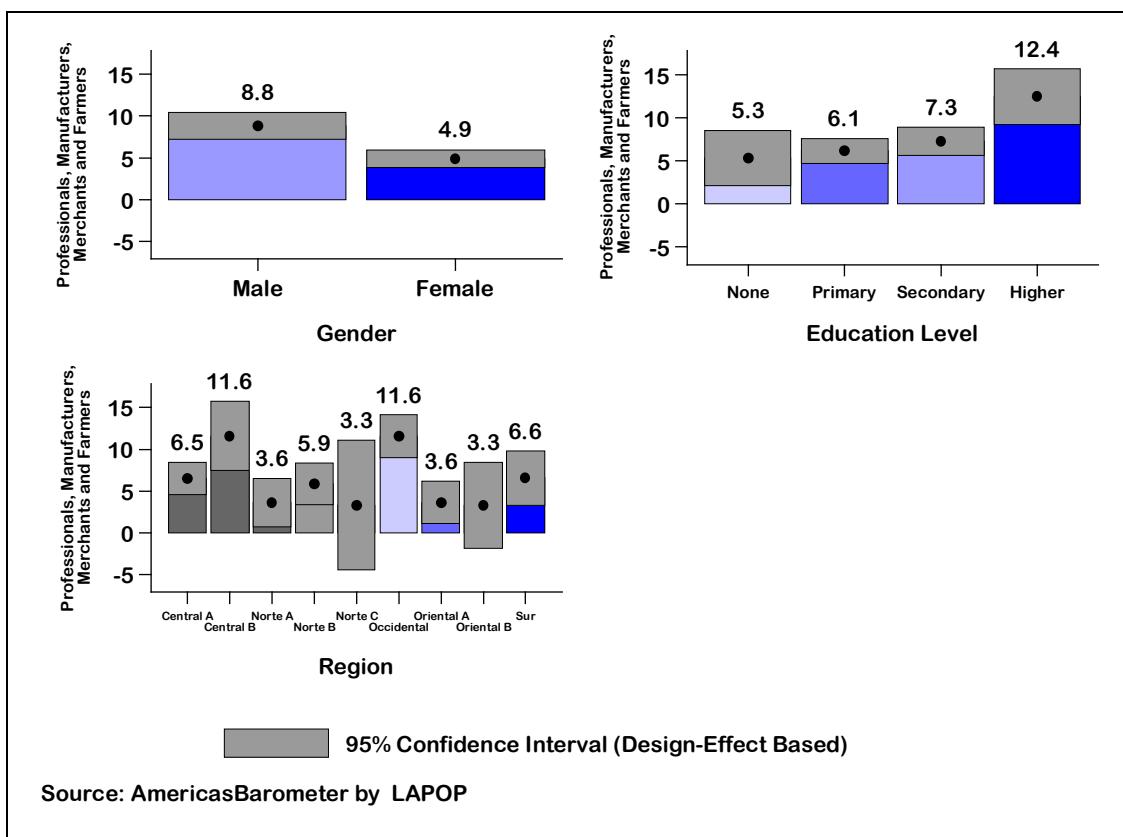
Figure 8. Participation in Parents Associations by Number of Children, Gender, Education and Region

Figure 8 illustrates that respondents with more than one child, higher levels of education and female are more likely to participate in parent associations. Regionally, Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón) and Occidente (Ocotepeque/Copán/Santa Bárbara/ Lempira/ Intibucá) generally exhibit statistically significant less participation in parent groups than the other regions.



**Figure 9. Predictors of Participation in Professional Associations**

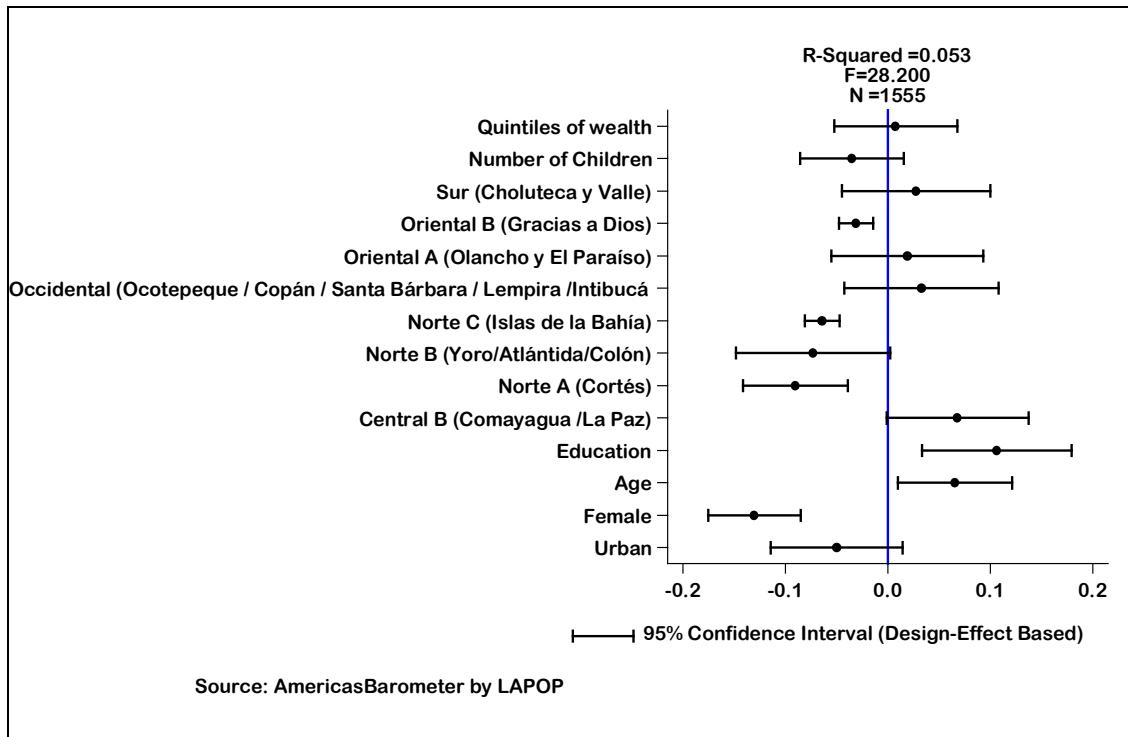
As shown in Figure 9 above, education and age are the key predictors of participation in professional associations. Respondents with higher levels of education and older tend to participate in these groups at higher rates than the rest of the population. Additionally, residents of the Western region also exhibit levels of participation in professional organizations at greater rates than those in Francisco Morazán (the reference region). Figure 10 below shows the relationship between the key predictors and participation in professional organizations.



**Figure 10. Participation in Associations of Professionals, Manufacturers, Merchants and Farmers by Gender, Education and Region**

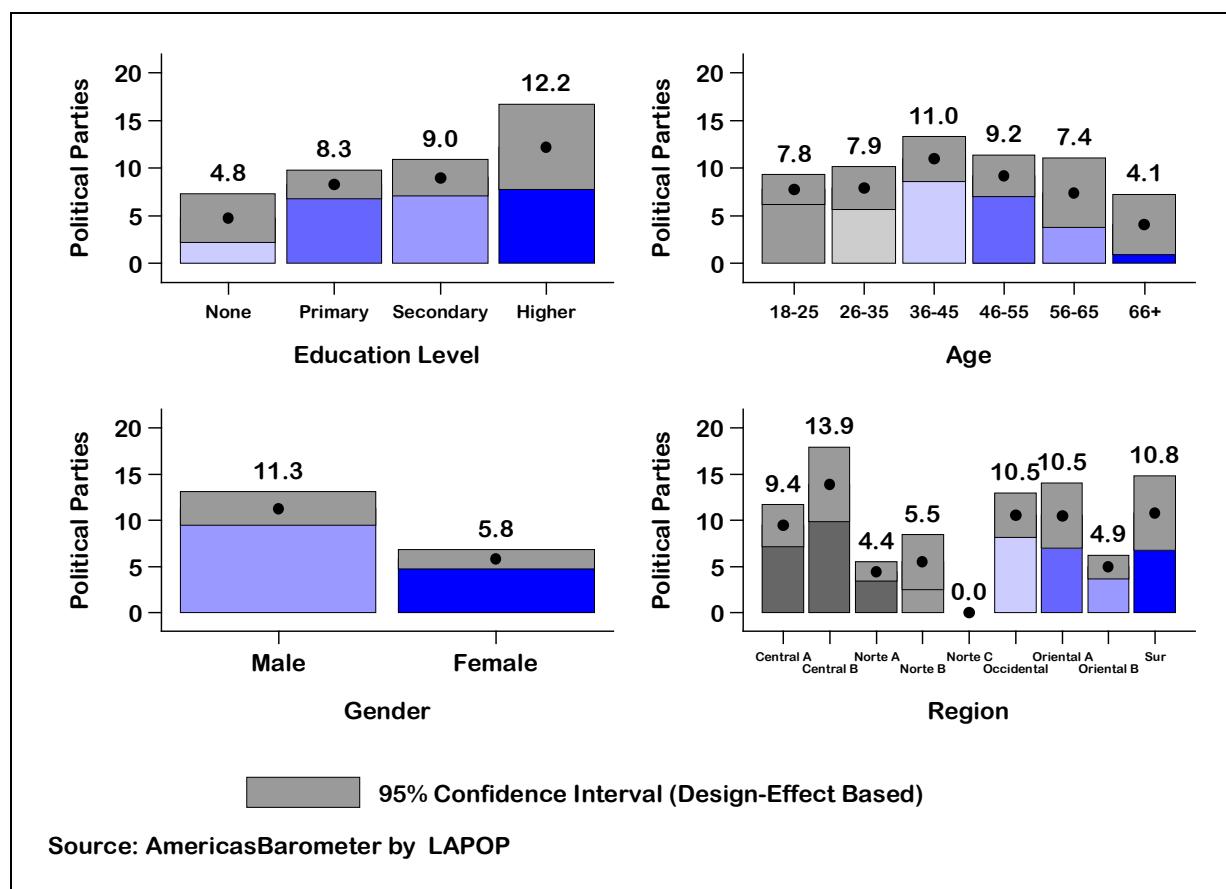
Men are nearly twice as likely to participate in professional or other producer associations as women, and respondents with a university education also are more than twice as likely to participate in these groups as those with less education. Regionally, individuals living in Central B (Comayagua /La Paz) and Occidente (Ocotepeque/Copán/Santa Bárbara/ Lempira/ Intibucá) regions are more likely to participate in professional organizations.

Figure 11 shows the predictors of participation in political parties.



**Figure 11. Predictors of Participation in Political Parties**

Education, age and gender are the key predictors of participation in political parties. Region is also significant with Oriente B (Gracias a Dios), Norte C (Isla de la Bahía) and Norte A (Cortés) exhibiting significantly less participation in political parties than the Francisco Morazán region.



**Figure 12. Participation in Political Parties by Education, Age, Gender and Region**

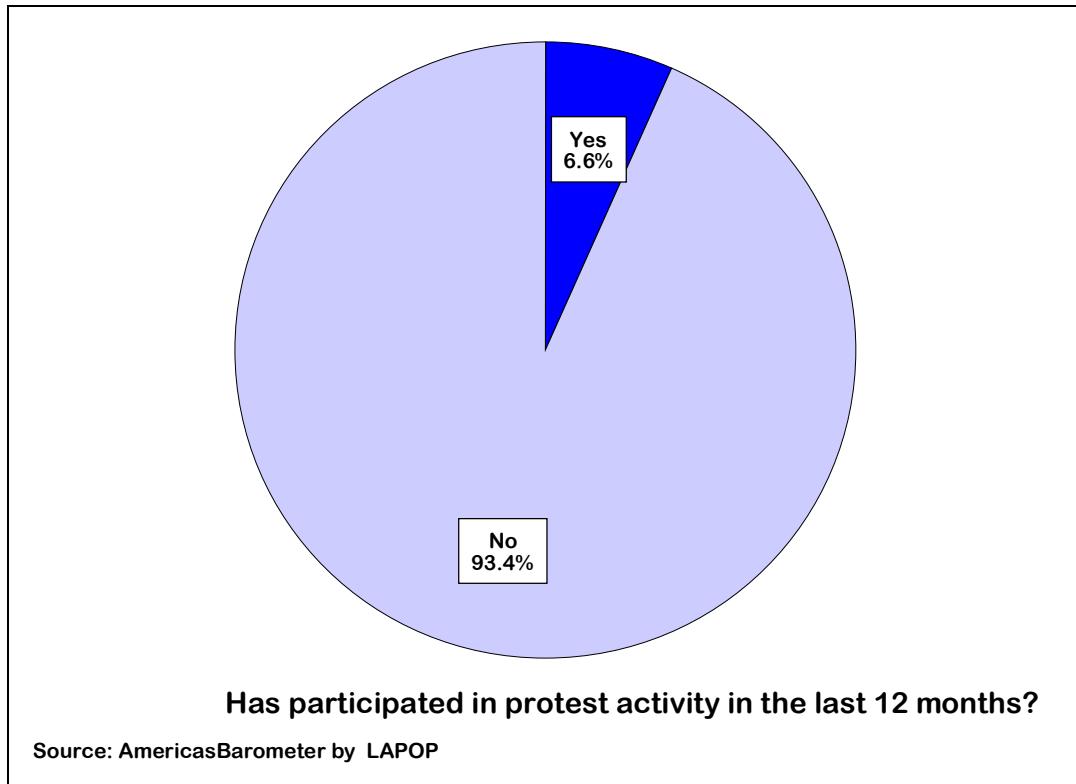
Figure 12 shows that respondents with university education participate significantly more in political parties than individuals with less educational achievement. Males are more than twice as likely to participate in political parties as females. The relationship between age and participation in political parties is curvilinear, with younger and older respondents participating less than middle-aged individuals. Regionally, Norte C (Isla de la Bahia) residents exhibit no participation in political parties, whereas Central B (Comayagua/La Paz) residents exhibit the highest levels.

## Political Protests

The AmericasBarometer asks respondents how active they have been in protest behavior. The following item is employed, and is recoded into a zero (did not protest) to 100 (protested) scale. In this case the value of the index is equivalent to the percent of the population reporting protesting. This type of participation seems to be particularly important during the political crisis that ensued during the second half of 2009. The question to consider is:

**PROT3.** In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?

(1) Yes [Continue] (2) No [Go to JC1] (88) DK[Go to JC1] (98) DA [Go to JC1]



**Figure 13. Percent Who Engaged in Protest Activity in Last 12 Months**

Figure 13 indicates that only 6.6 percent of Hondurans admitted participating in protest activity in the previous 12 months (mostly 2009 since the survey was conducted in early 2010).

For the analysis of the predictors of protest participation we used logistic regression because the dependent variable, participation in protest, is dichotomous. For this analysis we included additional independent variables measuring economic well-being, perception of support for government economic performance, job approval of the president, perception of insecurity, and support for President Zelaya's June 28 survey.<sup>6</sup> These additional variables attempt to

<sup>6</sup> This survey was the direct cause of the coup that toppled President Zelaya, and was intended to ask Honduran citizens whether they wanted the ability to call a constituent assembly to reform certain provisions of the

measure factors, such as economic deprivation or approval of the government, which theoretically could be expected to influence participation in protest activity.

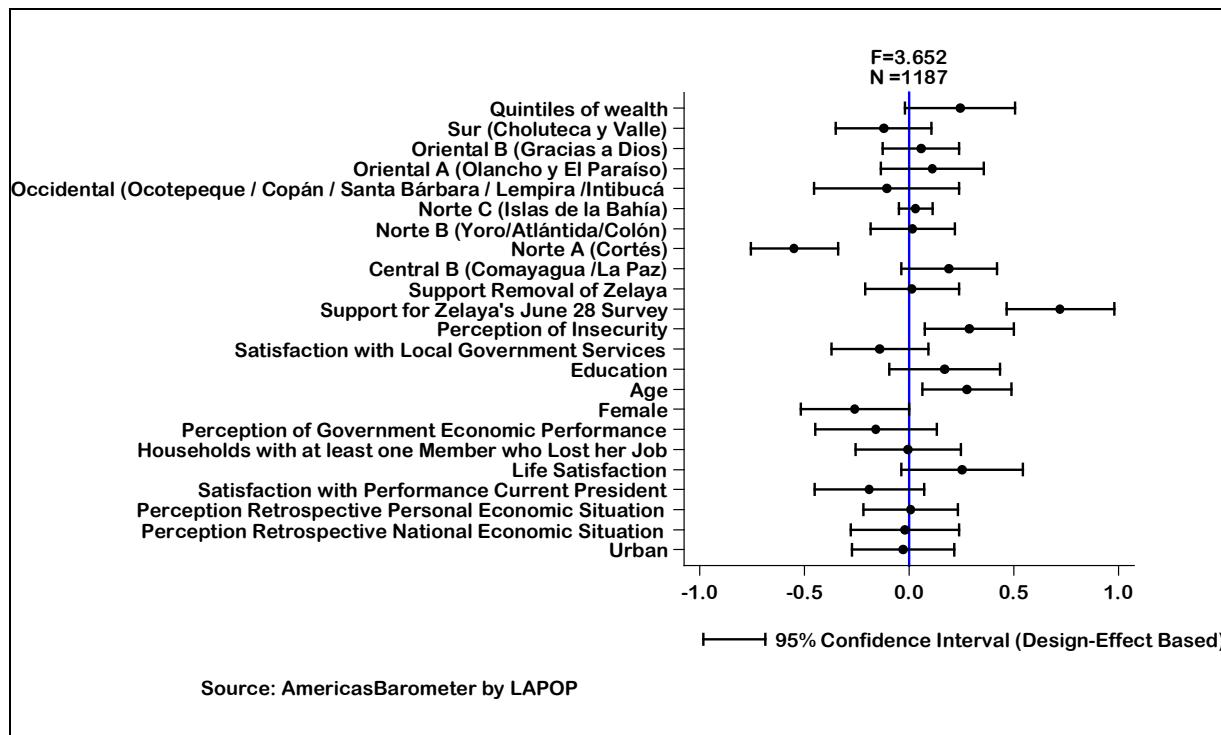
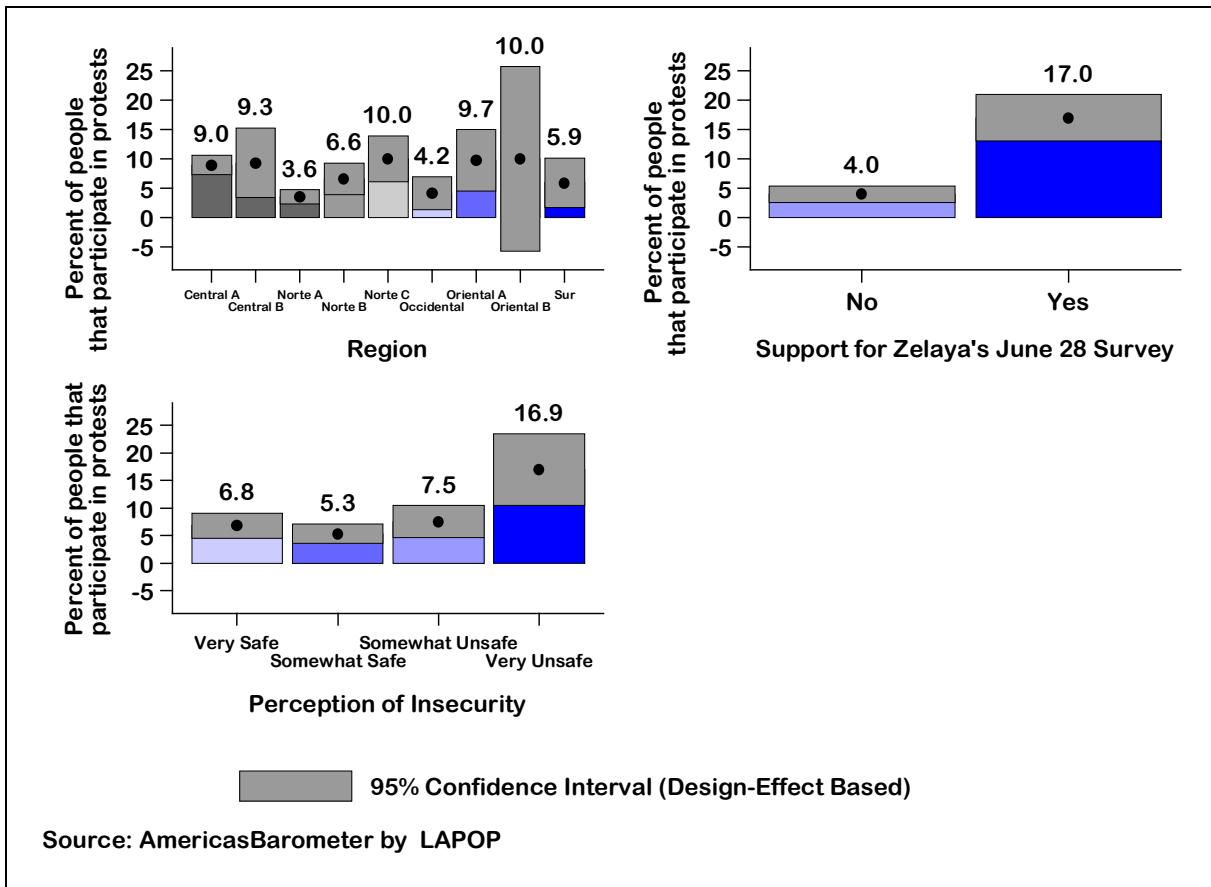


Figure 14. Predictors of Protest Activity

constitution. Analysis presented in the AmericasBarometer national Honduras report indicates that, while minorities of the national population, Zelaya's strongest supporters were those who favored the June 28<sup>th</sup> poll. Our assumption here is that these individuals would be the most likely to protest Zelaya's ouster.

Figure 14 shows that support for Zelaya's June 28<sup>th</sup> poll and residents of the Province of Cortés (Region North A) are the factors that influence protest participation the most. Respondents that supported President Zelaya's plans are more likely to engage in protest participation. Conversely, residents of Cortes are less likely to participate in protests than those in the reference region, Francisco Morazán. Additionally, perception of insecurity is slightly predictive, with those who perceive greater amount of insecurity protesting more.



**Figure 15. Protest Activity by Region, Insecurity and Support for Zelaya's June 28 Survey**

Figure 15 indicates that individuals who supported Zelaya's plans for a June 28, 2009 survey of popular sentiment for changes in the constitution are 4 ½ times more likely to participate in protests than those who did not support the former president. Individuals who perceive greater levels of insecurity in their neighborhood are also far more likely to participate in protest activity.

## Conclusion

This special report was commissioned by USAID-Honduras to examine the predictors of levels of participation in Honduras. The analysis focused on participation in civic organizations and political parties, as well as protest activity. Our findings indicate that participation is highest in religious groups, followed by association of parents and community improvement committees. Participation in other groups, including political parties lags significantly behind. Levels of participation have declined since 2004. Gender, number of children and education are the most significant predictors of participation in religious groups, parent associations and community improvement committees. While women are more likely to participate in religious groups and association of parents, men are more prone to participate in professional associations, political parties and community improvement committees. Education is a key variable in determining participation in political parties, parents associations, professional groups, and community improvement committees.

The determinants of protest participation vary from participation in civil society. Our results show that perception of insecurity and support for President Zelaya's June 28, 2009 poll, plus variation in regional levels, are the most important factors in explaining protest activity.

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## Appendix

### Regression Tables

**Table 1. Regression Coefficients: Religious Group**

<b>Religious Group</b>		
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficient.</b>	<b>t</b>
Urban	0.002	(0.08)
Female	0.183*	(8.75)
Age	0.003	(0.09)
Education	0.068*	(2.21)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	0.012	(0.46)
Norte A (Cortés)	0.079*	(2.52)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	-0.088*	(-2.68)
Norte C (Islas de la Bahía)	0.022	(1.05)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / Intibucá)	-0.114*	(-3.79)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	0.072*	(2.14)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	-0.007	(-0.39)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	-0.003	(-0.11)
Number of Children	0.146*	(3.41)
Quintiles of wealth	0.007	(0.24)
Constant	-0.002	(-0.06)
R-Squared = 0.096		
Number of Obs. = 1592		
* p<0.05		

**Table 2. Regression Coefficients: Parents Association**

Parents Association		
Variables	Coefficient.	t
Urban	-0.001	(-0.03)
Female	0.066*	(2.67)
Age	-0.066	(-1.87)
Education	0.114*	(4.03)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	-0.056	(-1.96)
Norte A (Cortés)	-0.053	(-1.21)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	-0.107*	(-3.83)
Norte C (Islas de la Bahía)	-0.004	(-0.23)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / Intibucá)	-0.117*	(-3.94)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	0.033	(1.14)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	0.008	(0.51)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	-0.036	(-1.23)
Number of Children	0.270*	(8.79)
Quintiles of wealth	0.017	(0.53)
Constant	0.001	(0.03)
R-Squared = 0.076		
Number of Obs. = 1583		
* p<0.05		

**Table 3. Regression Coefficients: Committee for Community Improvements**

Committee for Community Improvements		
Variables	Coefficient.	t
Urban	-0.083*	(-2.08)
Female	-0.060*	(-2.20)
Age	0.026	(0.68)
Education	0.112*	(2.43)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	-0.002	(-0.03)
Norte A (Cortés)	-0.091	(-1.61)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	-0.090	(-1.70)
Norte C (Islas de la Bahía)	-0.066*	(-3.50)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / Intibucá	-0.022	(-0.37)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	0.014	(0.29)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	0.012	(0.63)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	0.017	(0.33)
Number of Children	0.110*	(2.68)
Quintiles of wealth	0.025	(0.80)
Constant	-0.003	(-0.08)
R-Squared = 0.042		
Number of Obs. = 1573		
* p<0.05		

**Table 4. Regression Coefficients: Association of Professionals**

Association of Professionals		
Variables	Coefficient.	t
Urban	-0.059	(-1.82)
Female	-0.102*	(-3.68)
Age	0.115*	(2.37)
Education	0.158*	(4.67)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	0.080	(1.92)
Norte A (Cortés)	-0.054	(-1.41)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	-0.009	(-0.27)
Norte C (Islas de la Bahía)	-0.034	(-1.48)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / Intibucá)	0.120*	(2.80)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	-0.039	(-1.20)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	-0.026	(-1.65)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	0.013	(0.35)
Number of Children	0.017	(0.40)
Quintiles of wealth	-0.002	(-0.06)
Constant	-0.000	(-0.00)
R-Squared =0.060		
Number of Obs. = 1564		
* p<0.05		

**Table 5. Regression Coefficients: Political Parties**

Political Parties		
Variables	Coefficient.	t
Urban	-0.050	(-1.54)
Female	-0.130*	(-5.74)
Age	0.065*	(2.33)
Education	0.106*	(2.89)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	0.068	(1.95)
Norte A (Cortés)	-0.090*	(-3.50)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	-0.073	(-1.93)
Norte C (Isla de la Bahía)	-0.064*	(-7.47)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / Intibucá)	0.033	(0.87)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	0.019	(0.51)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	-0.031*	(-3.72)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	0.028	(0.76)
Number of Children	-0.035	(-1.37)
Quintiles of wealth	0.008	(0.26)
Constant	0.002	(0.08)
R-Squared = 0.053		
Number of Obs. = 1555		
* p<0.05		

**Table 6. Regression Coefficients: Percent of people that participate in protests**

Percent of people that participate in protests		
Variables	Coefficients	(t)
Percent of people that participate in protests		
Urban	-0.029	(-0.24)
Perception Retrospective National Economic Situation	-0.021	(-0.16)
Perception Retrospective Personal Economic Situation	0.007	(0.06)
Satisfaction with Performance Current President	-0.190	(-1.44)
Life Satisfaction	0.253	(1.73)
Households with at least one Member who Lost her Job	-0.004	(-0.04)
Perception of Government Economic Performance	-0.158	(-1.08)
Female	-0.259	(-1.98)
Age	0.276*	(2.57)
Education	0.169	(1.27)
Satisfaction with Local Government Services	-0.140	(-1.19)
Perception of Insecurity	0.287*	(2.67)
Support for Zelaya's June 28 Survey	0.723*	(5.58)
Support Removal of Zelaya	0.014	(0.13)
Central B (Comayagua /La Paz)	0.191	(1.67)
Norte A (Cortés)	-0.548*	(-5.23)
Norte B (Yoro/Atlántida/Colón)	0.018	(0.17)
Norte C (Islas de la Bahía)	0.031	(0.76)
Occidental (Ocotepeque / Copán / Santa Bárbara / Lempira / I	-0.108	(-0.62)
Oriental A (Olancho y El Paraíso)	0.111	(0.89)
Oriental B (Gracias a Dios)	0.057	(0.62)
Sur (Choluteca y Valle)	-0.122	(-1.06)
Quintiles of wealth	0.243	(1.83)
Constant	-3.094*	(-19.36)
F = 3.65		
Number of Obs. = 1187		
* p<0.05		