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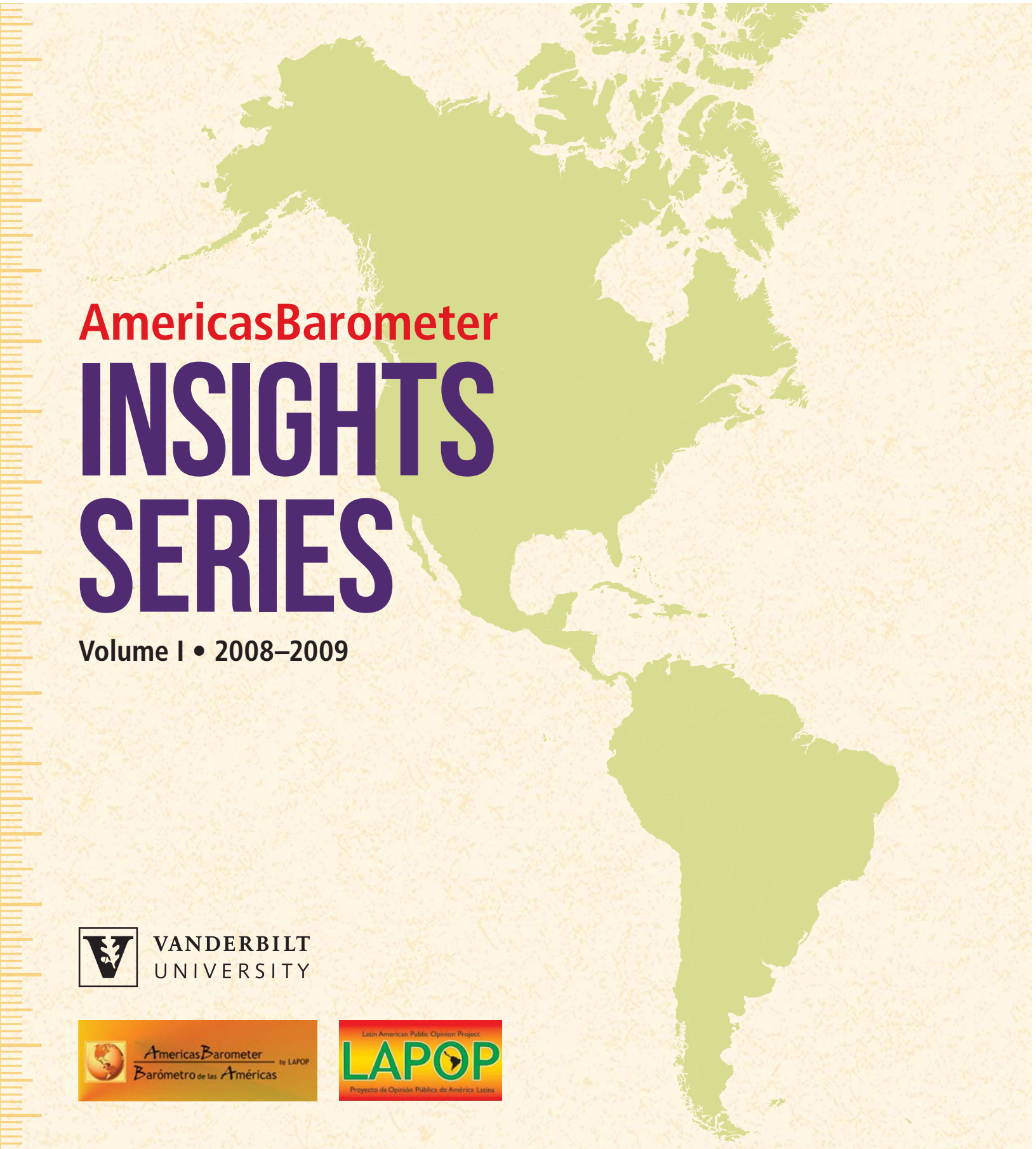


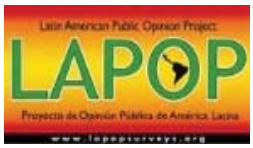
AmericasBarometer
INSIGHTS SERIES

Volume I • 2008–2009

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Barómetro de las Américas

Latin American Public Opinion Project
LAPOP
Proyecto de Opinión Pública de América Latina



LAPOP- AMERICASBAROMETER

Insights Series

Compilation

Volume I

Insights Reports 1-30

2008-2009

Funding for significant portions of the AmericasBarometer project has come from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support for the AmericasBarometer also include the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Tinker Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, and Vanderbilt University. Insights reports are solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of USAID or any other funding institution.

Foreword

The LAPOP *Insights* series was developed in 2008 as a means to disseminate short reports on key findings from the AmericasBarometer to audiences across the Americas and beyond.

The series publishes original research by LAPOP team members and affiliates on various topics such as crime, corruption, civic engagement, gender violence, and tolerance.

The series also serves as a capacity-building platform: while working with LAPOP faculty and senior staff through the report production process, contributors hone skills related to the application of rigorous approaches to the analysis of survey data and to writing reports that are accessible to non-experts in the methods used or subjects covered.

The *Insights* series contains two main types of reports: "standard" reports (2008-present), which act as policy and/or issue briefs on a particular topic, and "topical" reports (2013-present), which are short analyses that dialogue with a current event or development in the region. Each report is published in Spanish and English, and when appropriate, Portuguese.

LAPOP distributes e-versions of the *Insights* reports via Twitter, Facebook, its website, and an opt-in subscriber email listserv. The opt-in *Insights* listserv distribution list consists of over 2,000 individuals; LAPOP's Twitter account is followed by over 3,000 individuals, and LAPOP's *Insights* webpages are viewed approximately 10,000 times per year. The reports are frequently cited in the news and are used as a resource by scholars, analysts, practitioners, and policymakers throughout the hemisphere.

In this volume we offer a compilation of the LAPOP *Insights* reports that were published from 2008 to 2009.

Liz Zechmeister, Ph.D.
Director of LAPOP
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN
March, 2016.

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AmericasBarometer Insights, 2008 (No. 1)

The Role of the Government in Job Creation

By Mitchell A. Seligson, Centennial Professor of Political Science and Director, LAPOP
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Predictions of the imminent "end of ideology"(Bell 1960) and the "end of history" (Fukuyama 2006) repeatedly have been made by respected social commentators, yet while the Cold War itself ended nearly two decades ago, the underlying issue of the proper role of the government remains a central one in the Americas and beyond. This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* looks at one of the four questions on the role of the government included in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[1] This survey round included national probability samples of 22 nations in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean, in which 36,501 respondents[i] were asked the same question[2]:

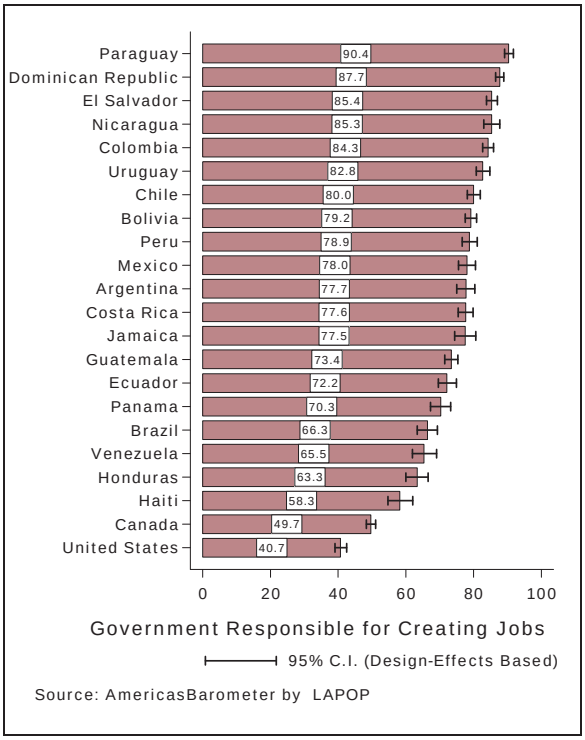
ROS3. The Mexican (substitute appropriate country name) government, more than the private sector, should be primarily responsible for creating jobs. To what extent to do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Responses were made based on a 1-7 scale, where '1' meant "strongly disagree" and '7' meant "strongly agree."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Doesn't know

These responses were then recalibrated on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[3] Figure 1, which displays national averages, demonstrates that while ideology may have lost salience, disagreement about the proper role of the government clearly has not.

Figure 1.
Average Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs in the Americas, 2008



[1] In 2008, the major source of support was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) but important support also came from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA) and Vanderbilt University.

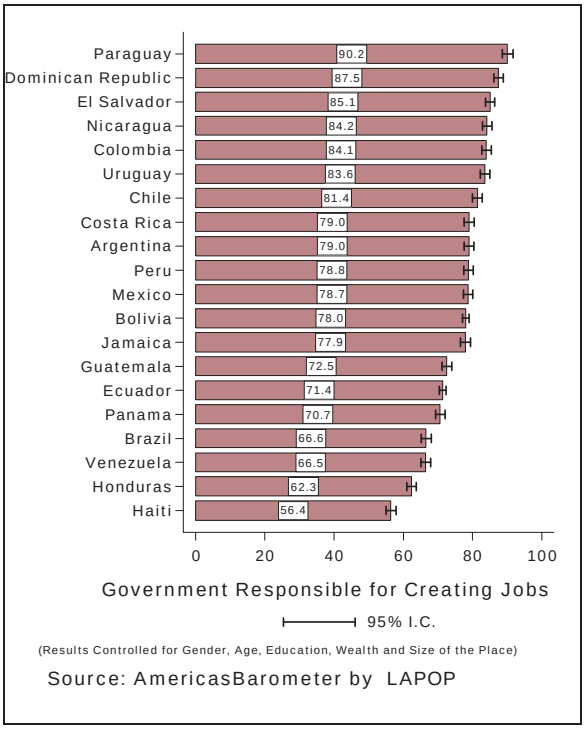
[2] The questionnaire was administered in many languages, primarily in Spanish in most of Latin America, but in Portuguese in Brazil, Creole in Haiti, and in several native American languages as appropriate in Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay.

[3] Non-response was 3.4% for the sample as a whole.

In some countries of the Americas, especially Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia and Uruguay, there is near unanimity that the government[4] rather than the private sector should play a primary role in job creation, while in sharp contrast, in the U.S. and Canada, support is dramatically lower.

How much of this variation across countries emerges from the variation in the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries? After all, some of the countries in the sample were quite wealthy and developed, while others were quite poor. To respond to that question, we eliminate the Canadian and U.S. responses, in part because these countries have such extremely high levels of development compared to the others, that any statistical analysis would be driven by these "outliers," and in part because the LAPOP project is focused on policy relevant questions for the Latin American and Caribbean region rather than North America. When the data are controlled for gender, age, educational achievement and household wealth, as they are in Figure 2, the results remain remarkably consistent with Figure 1, with averages varying only by a few points up or down.[5] With support levels of 56.4 and above, in every country in Latin America or the Caribbean, of those included in the AmericasBarometer survey, the "average" citizen favors the government over the private sector as the primary actor job creation.

Figure 2.
Average Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Do Contextual Factors Matter?

If most socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents to the AmericasBarometer 2008 survey do not have a large impact on variation across countries in their views on the role of the government in job creation, perhaps key characteristics of the nation might. In Figure 3, both the individual characteristics of respondents and the wealth of the nation, measured by GDP per capita, are studied.[6] Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on attitudes toward the role of government in job creation is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right

[4] In the Spanish-language version of the questionnaire, the word "el estado" (the state) is used since the term "el gobierno" (the government) refers to the incumbent administration rather than the government apparatus.

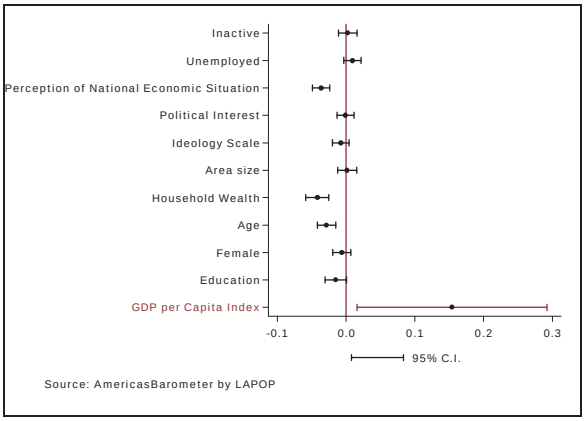
[5] An analysis of variance model was employed, with the socio-economic and demographic variables used as covariates. Table 1 in the appendix shows, by country, the mean values of the individual level variables that were taken into account.

[6] This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Raudenbush, *et al.* 2004), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive contribution, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative contribution. Statistically significant contributors are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot; only when the confidence intervals do not overlap the vertical "0" line is the factor significant (at .05 or better). The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights"). In Figure 3, it is worth noting that the traditional ideology scale employed in most surveys world-wide, which tap the "left" and "right" ideology dimensions, is not significantly associated with support for a primary role of the government in job creation, suggesting that the latter is a better measure of ideological orientations than is the classic ideology scale.[7]

As shown in Figure 3, among the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents, only individual household wealth (measured by the survey data gathered from each respondent) and age have an impact; individuals who live in poorer households and those who are younger both support a larger role for the government in job creation. Perceptions of the national economic situation also make a difference, with those seeing the economy as doing worse more likely to favor a strong role for the government in job creation. Among the national-level characteristics, national per capita wealth (as reported by the United Nations Development Program in its Human Development Report 2007/2008 for each nation as a whole) makes a difference, but, interestingly, in the opposite direction of household wealth.[8] Individuals from wealthier households significantly oppose a primary role of the government in job creation, presumably because of the well-known association between personal wealth and fiscal conservatism. On the other hand, and in seeming contradiction, the wealthier the country in per capita terms, the larger the role envisioned for the government in job creation;[9] within the Latin American and Caribbean regions, *ceteris paribus,* the average citizens of poorer countries are less sanguine about the efficacy of the public sector's ability to create jobs.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Average Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



That national context matters is highlighted in specific terms in Figure 4; the higher the GDP per capita, the higher the average citizen support for the role of the government in employment creation. For example, if a Bolivian with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to migrate from Bolivia to Argentina, all other things being equal, and none of her individual characteristics such as education, household wealth, ideology, etc. were to change, that person's support for an active role of the government in job creation would increase by nearly 15 points on the 0-100 scale. Note carefully, however, that even in the country in Latin America and the Caribbean included in the AmericasBarometer series with the lowest support for the employment creation role of the state, Haiti, the average score is over

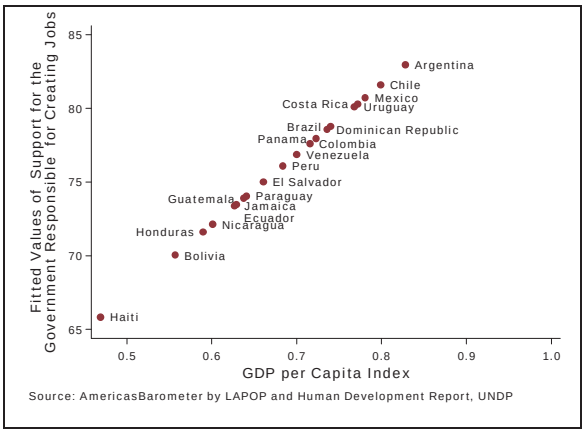
[7] The scale used is the classic 1-10 measurement, in which the poles of "left" and "right" are placed on a continuum, and the respondent self-locates on this scale.

[8] "Household wealth" is based on the survey data gathered from each respondent, whereas national wealth is a single number for each country.

[9] National wealth is measuring using the UNDP's GDP index. This index is based on gross domestic product per capita in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars. The index can take values between 0 and 1. For details on how this index was constructed see UNDP's Human Development Report 2007/2008.

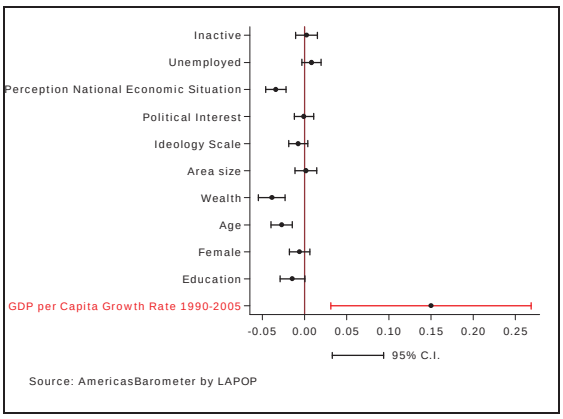
65 on the 0-100 scale, a level far higher than in North America, as was shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Economic Development on Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Other contextual factors matter as well. Figure 5 shows that not only the *level* of GDP increases support for the role of the government in job creation, but the rate of *growth* in the GDP (in this case, in the period 1990-2005). Citizens who live in states that have grown more rapidly tend, on average, to support a stronger role of the government in employment generation.[10]

Figure 5.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Performance, 2008



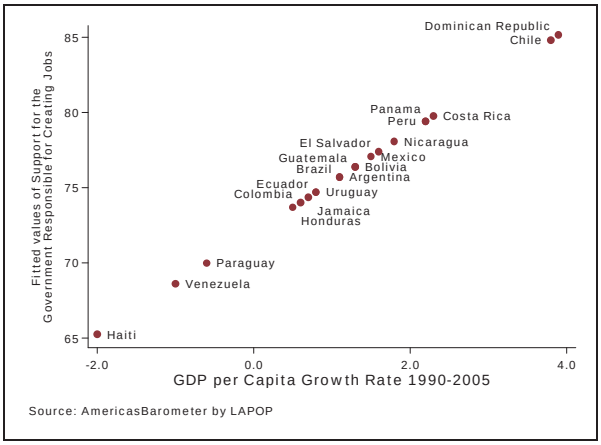
[10] Average national unemployment rate (measured 1996-2005) does not have a significant impact.

This finding is shown graphically in Figure 6, where we see a strong relationship between the rate of growth and support for the role of the government in job creation. A Haitian who migrates from Haiti to the Dominican Republic would, *ceteris paribus*, increase her support for a primary role of the government in job creation by nearly 20 points on the 0-100 scale.

Between 1990 and 2005 the average growth rate for the region as a whole was 1.2%. Countries such as the Dominican Republic and Chile that had growth rates in that period in the 4% range, a rate that far exceeds the rest of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, express exceptionally high support for the role of the government in job creation, while Haiti, the true laggard in this region exhibits far lower support.

These findings are strongly suggestive that citizen opinion on the role of the government in job creation is directly conditioned by their personal observations of the efficacy of the government in handling the economy. Countries with solid growth and those that have achieved higher levels of economic development as a result of protracted periods of growth are the ones most likely to have citizens who support an active role of the state. Where states have failed to deliver on growth, citizens are skeptical about the ability of the government to perform well in job creation.

Figure 6.
The Impact of Economic Performance on Support for the Primary Role of the Government in Creating Jobs in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Policy Implications?

Among many advanced industrial countries in North America and Europe there still may be a "Washington consensus" involving widespread (but far from universal) support for a neo-liberal agenda of shrinking the role of the state, and allowing the laissez faire forces of the private sector to "do their thing." As the AmericasBarometer data show, however, this consensus is limited to north of Rio Grande, for large majorities in Latin America support a strong role of the government in job creation. Moreover, the more success the Latin American and Caribbean economies have had in terms of both their level and *rate* of economic growth, the more they support the role of the government in job creation. Only among individuals from wealthier households in these countries does such support wane. Other *Insight* reports in this series will examine other roles of the government in the economy, but based on this one component alone, it is clear that while the Cold War is certainly over, the underlying debate over the role of government is far from being resolved.

The findings here also help explain the electoral shift to the left in Latin American elections in recent years, as various LAPOP studies have reported (Seligson 2007; Seligson 2008). Leftist candidates are typically defined by their vision of the government as playing an active role in many areas of the economy and society. The AmericasBarometer survey data clearly show the appeals of that vision, at least insofar as government employment generation is concerned. Moreover, it has been shown in this study that poorer individuals, who comprise the great majority of most countries in the region, are more supportive of an active role of the government in job creation. Moreover, the youth of the region, who make up large majorities of the populations in most of these countries, is more supportive of an active role of the state. No wonder candidates who advocate those kinds of policies are getting elected. Even in countries where support for the role of the government is low by Latin American and Caribbean standards (e.g., Honduras), candidates who openly refute the role of the government in employment generation will have a hard time getting elected unless there are other powerful messages and campaign issues that override this one. In other AmericasBarometer *Insight* reports, we look at some of those messages.

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[i] In each country approximately 1,500 respondents were interviewed face-to-face, except in Bolivia and Ecuador, where the samples were approximately 3,000, Canada where it was 2,000 and Paraguay where it was 1,200. In Canada phone surveys were used, while in the U.S. internet surveys were applied. Full details can be found at www.AmericasBarometer.org

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2008 (No.2)

(Mis)Trust in Political Parties in Latin America

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One of the main concerns about democratization is the apparently growing dissatisfaction with political parties. These institutions are essential to any stable liberal democracy since they perform critical functions such as aggregating and channeling citizens' interests and demands, and organizing competition for public office (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). However, in some contexts like Latin America, these mediating structures are failing to fulfill their main roles (UNDP 2004), which may help to explain the lack of trust in them.

This new paper in *the AmericasBarometer Insight Series* analyzes the extent to which people in the Americas trust political parties and what are the main determinants of these levels of trust. To answer these questions we query the 2008 database provided by the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 22 nations in the Western hemisphere.[1] In this survey 36,501 respondents were asked the following question:

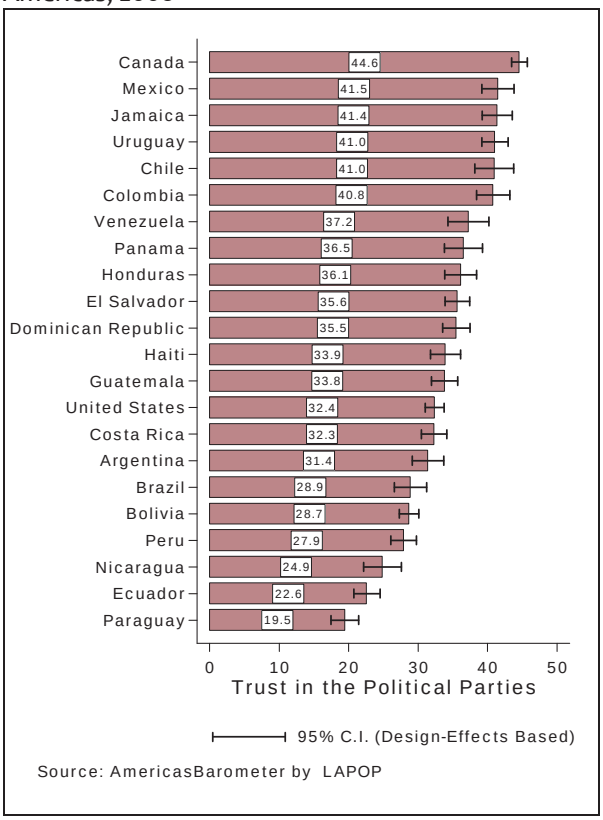
B21. To what extent do you trust the political parties?

Respondents placed their trust on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant 'not at all' and 7 meant 'a lot'.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not at all						A lot	Doesn't know

To make comparisons across questions and survey waves easier, these responses where recoded on a 0-100 scale.[2] Figure 1 shows national averages for the 22 countries in the sample.

Figure 1.
Average Trust in the Political Parties in the Americas, 2008



[1] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[2] Non-response was 2.8% for the whole sample.

It is striking to note, first, that the average level of trust in political parties falls in the lower end of 0-100 in *every* country. Second, in this context of low confidence, significant variations among countries are evident. Citizens of Canada, Mexico, Jamaica, Uruguay, Chile, and Colombia express the highest averages, between 40.8 and 44.6 points, while at the other extreme, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Paraguay display dramatically lower scores; in none of these countries does average trust in parties exceed 25 points out of 100.

Predicting Trust in Political Parties

What explains variation in trust in parties? We believe that long-term historical/contextual factors probably best explain national-level variation, which goes beyond the scope of this short paper, so we concentrate here on individual level factors and we first consider the following socio-economic and demographic characteristics: education, gender, age, wealth, and city/town size.[3] To assess their influence on trust in parties, we employ a linear regression model.[4] Since citizens in Canada and the United States hold sharply higher levels on these characteristics, we exclude these cases from the analysis.[5]

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Trust in the Political Parties in Latin America, 2008

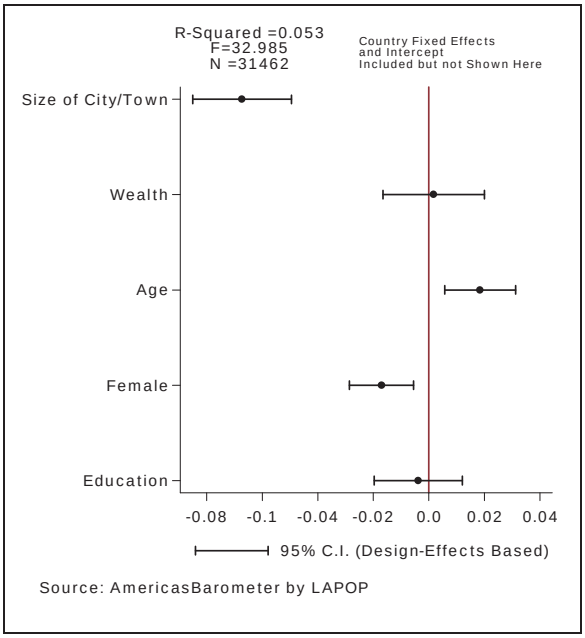


Figure 2 shows how individual-level socio-economic and demographic characteristics are related to trust in Latin America; that is, Figure 2 shows the influence of these variables on trust in political parties. It can be observed that three out of the five variables displayed in Figure 2 are statistically significant. This significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 when it falls to the left it indicates a negative contribution. In this model, area size, age, and gender are statistically significant contributors. Holding constant the rest of variables, males in Latin America show higher levels of trust in political parties than women. We also see that older people trust more in parties than those who are younger. Finally, people living in rural areas or small towns tend to trust more in political parties than people living in large cities, *ceteris paribus*. It should be noted that the size of the effects of

[3] Despite the cross-national variation displayed in Figure 1, multilevel analyses predicting trust in parties with the "usual suspects," such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not yield significant results. It is possible that other national-level data might explain the cross-national variation LAPOP has uncovered, but we leave that for future analyses.

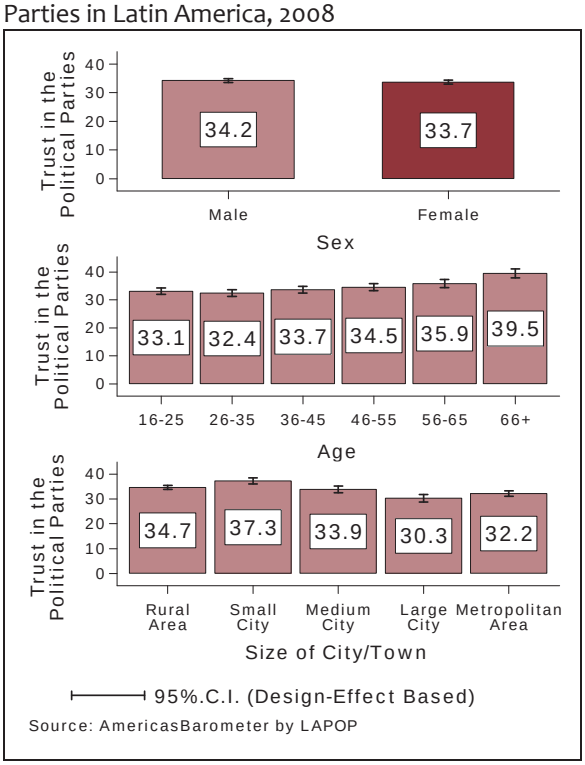
[4] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10 and results were adjusted for the complex sample designs employed.

[5] Given that levels of trust in political parties vary across countries, dummy variables for each country were also included in the model, using Uruguay as the base or reference country.

these socioeconomic and demographic variables is relatively small.

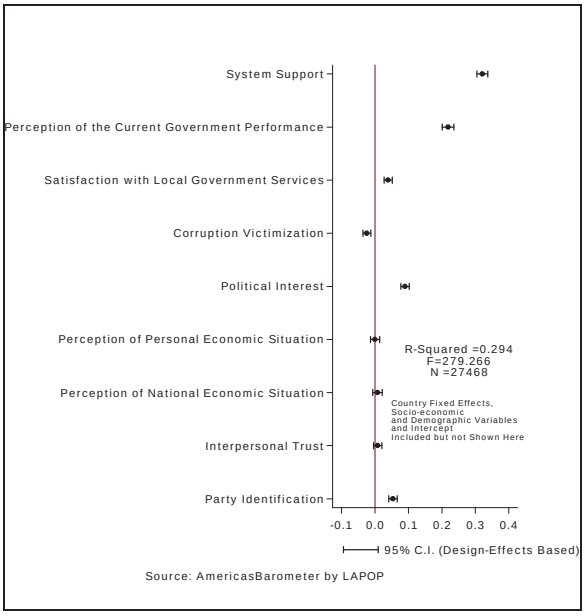
The general relationship among these three variables and confidence in parties is shown in Figure 3, which depicts mean levels of trust by categories of these independent variables.

Figure 3.
Gender, Age, Area Size, and Trust in the Political Parties in Latin America, 2008



The influence of socio-economic and demographic characteristics, in short, while statistically significant is fairly inconsequential in substantive terms, but we would be amiss in concluding that these are the only individual-level variables that matter. Rather, one would suspect that political attitudes, behaviors and evaluations also play an important role in trust in parties. As we indicated at the outset of this analysis, existing research suggests that citizens of Latin America may perceive that traditional political institutions, such as parties, fall short of meeting their needs. Figure 4 displays the results of an analysis using selected political variables to help explain the low levels of confidence in parties in Latin America.[6]

Figure 4.
An Analysis of the Determinants of Average Trust in the Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The results indicate that one factor that has a relatively high impact on trust in political parties is the general phenomenon of "system support," or a belief in the legitimacy of the system of government.[7] Although the casual arrow may go in both directions, it can still be said that the belief in the legitimacy of the political system as a whole is strongly related to trust in political parties.

[6] This analysis was carried out using a linear regression that also included the socioeconomic and demographic variables and the country dummies employed earlier. Figure 4 displays only the political variables. All the regressions performed can be found in Table 1 in the appendix. It is worth noting that age and gender lose significance once attitudes are included, suggesting that the effects of these socio-demographic variables is indirect.

[7] System Support Index is measured through the following questions: B1. To what extent do you believe the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial? B.2 To what extent do you respect the political institutions in (country)? B3. To what degree do you believe that the citizen's basic rights are safeguarded by the political system in (country)? B4. To what degree do you feel proud of living in the political system in (country)? B6. To what degree do you think the political system in (country) should be supported)?

As some other studies of Latin American politics have pointed out (Hagopian 2005), perceptions of government *performance* are also important in explaining citizen's political confidence. In fact, this is precisely what we find: the higher the levels of satisfaction with government performance[8], the higher the trust in political parties.

The effects of system support and perception of performance are particularly notable when contrasted with those explored earlier for socio-economic and demographic variables. In both cases, the effects of the attitudinal variables are substantively much greater than those we found for gender, age, and city/town size.

Not only is performance at the national level important. The analysis finds that performance at the local level is also relevant. Satisfaction with the services provided by local governments is a statistically significant factor explaining trust in political parties. Holding constant the other variables, the higher the satisfaction with local services, the higher the confidence in parties.

Apart from political perceptions and evaluations, personal experiences with some of the problems Latin America is facing have significant effects on trust in political parties as well[9]. Citizens who have been victims of corruption are likely to trust less in political parties, and the more times they have been victims the lower is their trust.

Political interest is also statistically significant. People interested in politics tend to trust parties more, and the same goes for those citizens who identified with any political party. Although this latter relationship could seem redundant, it is noteworthy, especially in a context like this where levels of party identification are so low. The percentage of people in the region as a whole who report having a party identification is only 33.9%.

Finally, although one might speculate that economic perceptions matter in determining trust in parties, once we include this overall measure of government efficacy in the equation, these variables become statistically insignificant.

Policy Implications

Given the widespread agreement among scholars and practitioners on the importance of political parties for democracy, and the low levels of confidence that they arouse among Latin America citizens, it is reasonable to ask how trust in parties could be improved.

The AmericasBarometer data suggest that citizens are holding, not just particular politicians or administrations, but rather political parties responsible for what they deliver. This finding is captured by the strong relationship we find between the system support and performance variables, on the one hand, and trust in parties on the other. Therefore, in order to increase trust in political parties it would seem imperative to increase the belief among citizens that both the democratic system in general and specific incumbent regimes accomplish their objectives and satisfy people's demands at the national level (in terms of general performance), at the local level (in terms of service), and at the personal level (in terms of corruption victimization). That performance matters, after all, is what the eminent sociologist and political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset told us many decades ago (Lipset 1961). In this sense, we see as fruitful any efforts made on enhancing the rule of law; on delivering services; on fighting corruption, crime, and poverty; and, on promoting and protecting basic rights.

[8] The Perception of the Government Performance Index was constructed from five items that asked to what extent people thought the current administration fights poverty, combats government corruption, promotes and protects democratic principles, improves the security of citizens, and combats unemployment

[9] We also considered that having been a victim of crime could affect trust in political parties. However, the inclusion of this variable in the regression analysis did not yield significant results.

The analyses also suggest it could be helpful to work on achieving higher levels of political interest among citizens and stronger ties with parties.

In conclusion much of the confidence in political parties in the Americas we find is driven by political attitudes and evaluations that are related to issues of system effectiveness, at both national and local levels. The hard, often slow work of improving performance may be the most consequential way to improve trust in parties.

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Appendix: Determinants of Trust in Political Parties				
	Regression I		Regression II	
	Coef.	Err. est.	Coef.	Err. est.
Education	-0.003	(0.008)	-0.023*	(0.007)
Female	-0.017*	(0.005)	0.002	(0.005)
Age	0.018*	(0.006)	-0.003	(0.006)
Wealth	0.001	(0.009)	-0.004	(0.008)
Size of City/Town	-0.067*	(0.009)	-0.024*	(0.007)
System Support			0.321*	(0.008)
Political Interest			0.089*	(0.006)
Perception of National Economic Situation			0.007	(0.007)
Perception of Personal Economic Situation			0.0001	(0.006)
Interpersonal Trust			0.008	(0.006)
Efficacy of the Current Government			0.218*	(0.008)
Party Identification			0.053*	(0.006)
Corruption Victimization			-0.024*	(0.006)
Satisfaction with local government services			0.039*	(0.006)
Mexico	-0.001	(0.011)	0.033*	(0.008)
Guatemala	-0.062*	(0.010)	0.004	(0.008)
El Salvador	-0.044*	(0.009)	0.017*	(0.008)
Honduras	-0.047*	(0.009)	0.055*	(0.008)
Nicaragua	-0.126*	(0.012)	-0.031*	(0.009)
Costa Rica	-0.071*	(0.009)	-0.056*	(0.008)
Panama	-0.037*	(0.012)	0.049*	(0.009)
Colombia	-0.005	(0.010)	0.004	(0.008)
Ecuador	-0.186*	(0.013)	-0.073*	(0.011)
Bolivia	-0.127*	(0.012)	-0.055*	(0.011)
Peru	-0.096*	(0.009)	0.011	(0.007)
Paraguay	-0.145*	(0.009)	0.003	(0.007)
Chile	0.0008	(0.012)	0.050*	(0.010)
Brazil	-0.089*	(0.010)	-0.008	(0.008)
Venezuela	-0.027*	(0.013)	0.046*	(0.009)
Argentina	-0.067*	(0.010)	0.015	(0.009)
Dominican Republic	-0.043*	(0.009)	-0.034*	(0.008)
Haiti	-0.064*	(0.011)	0.058*	(0.010)
Jamaica	-0.011	(0.010)	0.036*	(0.008)
Constant	-0.005	(0.008)	-0.0001	(0.007)
R-squared	0.053		0.294	
N.	31,462		27,468	
* p<0.05				

AmericasBarometer Insights, 2008 (No. 3)

Corruption Victimization by the Police

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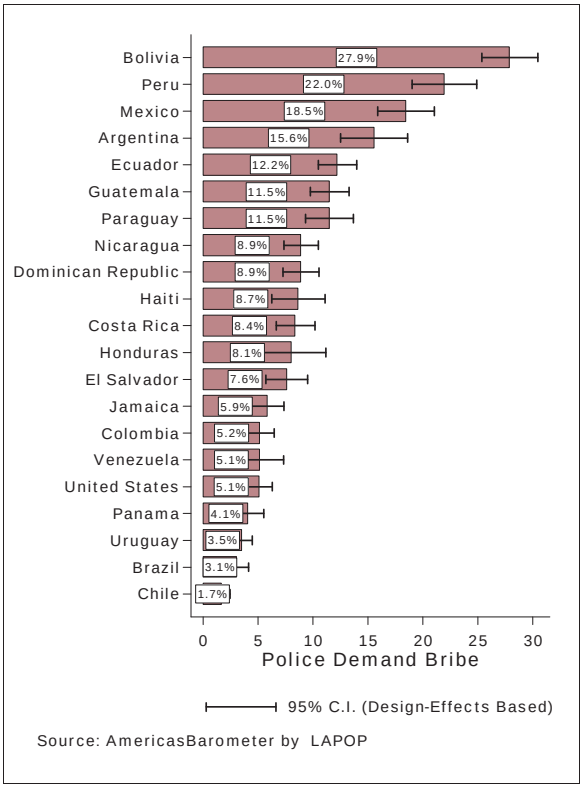
Corruption has become one of the main policy issues in emerging democracies around the globe. Corruption has many definitions, but one well-known is "the provision of material benefits to politicians and public officials in exchange for illicit influence over their decisions" (Weyland 1998: 109). Corruption has become a salient problem not only because of its demonstrated significant negative effects on the economy (Elliot 1997) but also because corruption generates economic inefficiencies and inequality that can lead to ineffective government (Rose-Ackerman 1999), which in turn erodes the belief in the legitimacy of the political system (Burbano de Lara 2005; Canache & Allison 2005; Seligson 2002).

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* looks at one of eleven questions on corruption victimization asked in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project survey (others will be examined in future *Insights* studies)[1]. This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in most of Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States, totaling national probability samples of 21 nations[2]. A total of 34,469 respondents were asked the same question:

EXC2. Has a police officer asked you for a bribe during the past year?

Figure 1, which exhibits percentages of the population that were asked a bribe by the police, indicates a wide range of corruption victimization across countries.[3]

Figure 1.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Corruption by the Police at least once in the past year in the Americas, 2008



[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] This question was not asked in Canada and the Belize data are not available as of this writing.

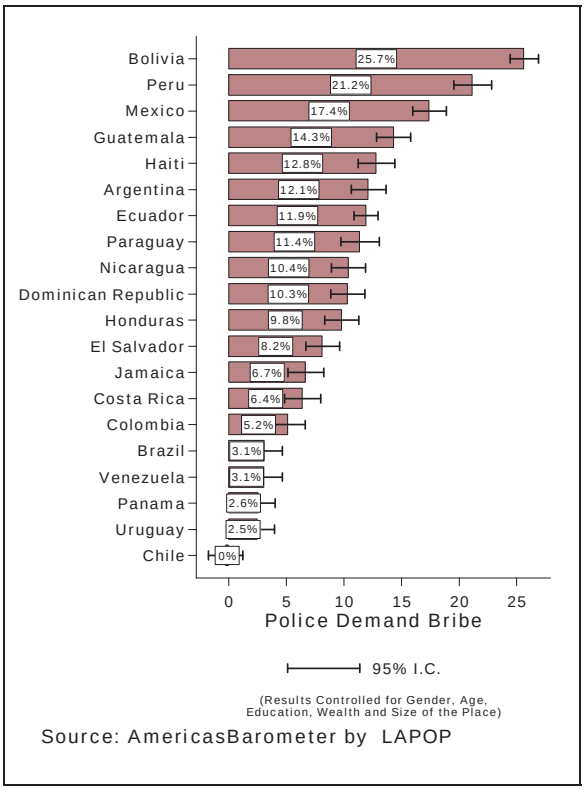
[3] Non-response was 7.5% for the sample as a whole.

Bolivia shows a significantly higher percentage of its population being victimized by the police (27.9%), while at the other end of the continuum Chile reveals the lowest percentage in the sample of corruption victimization (1.7%). Similarly, over 15 percent of the population in Peru, Mexico, and Argentina was demanded a bribe by the police.

It is noteworthy that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between trust in the police and corruption victimization by the police in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since people's experience with corruption by the police may negatively affect how they view this institution overall, mainly decreasing their levels of trust, this in turn may have a negative effect on the legitimacy of the political system. Consequently, it is important to know who are those most likely to be victims of corruption.

More specifically, how much the variation of corruption victimization by the police across countries is explained by the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries? To simplify the answer to this question, the United States was removed from the sample in order to avoid any statistical biases given that this case has an extremely high level of socio-economic development compared to the other countries, possibly driving the results of the analysis. After controlling for traditional socio-economic variables, such as gender, age, education and wealth, the results shown in Figure 2 remain similar to those shown in the previous figure, with variation of only a few percentages higher or lower. Countries such as Bolivia, Peru, and Mexico continue to demonstrate the highest percentages of corruption victimization by the police even after controlling for individual characteristics.

Figure 2.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Corruption by the Police at least once in the past year after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in the Americas, 2008.



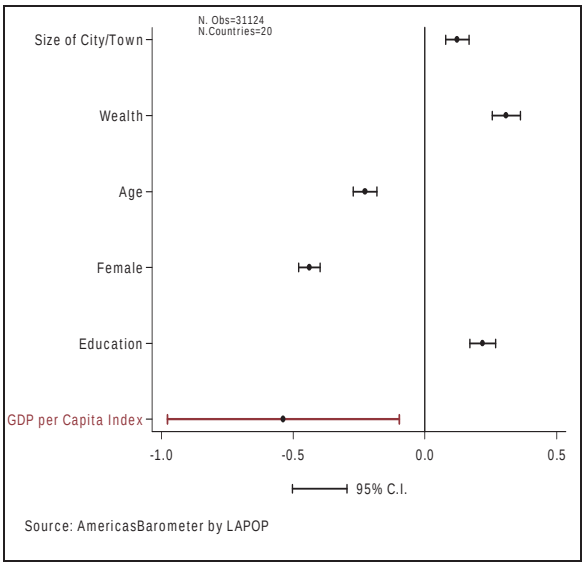
Do Contextual Factors Matter?

We find that not only do the characteristics of individuals matter for corruption, but richer nations are better able to control corruption. Figure 3 illustrates the effects of both individual level characteristics as well as GDP per capita on the probability of being asked a bribe by the police. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on experience with corruption victimization by the police is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are

statistically insignificant. The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients.

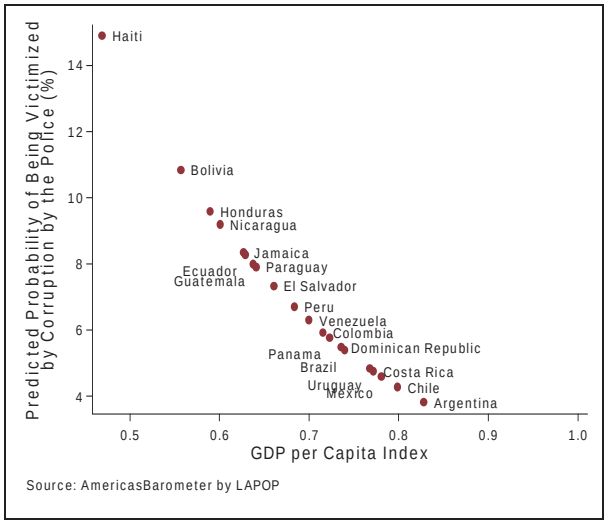
Figure 3 demonstrates that all individual characteristics as well as the national-level variable, GDP per capita, matter in determining the likelihood of people being victimized by police corruption. Individuals, who are wealthier, highly educated, and living in bigger cities, are more likely to be asked bribes by the police. On the other hand, females and older individuals are less likely to be victims of corruption. National per capita wealth has an important impact on the likelihood of being asked a bribe by the police. More specifically, the wealthier the country in per capita terms, the less likely individuals in these countries are to be victimized by corruption, whereas average citizens of poorer countries are more likely to be victimized.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Corruption Victimization by the Police in the Americas: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



The significance of the national context is underscored in detail in Figure 4; the higher the GDP per capita, the less likely the average citizen is to become a victim of corruption. For instance, Haiti is the country that shows the highest probability of corruption victimization by the police and is the country with the lowest economic development. At the other extreme, Argentina demonstrates the lowest probability of corruption victimization by the police and the highest level of economic development. Taking all these results together, if a citizen from Haiti with a given set of socio-economic characteristics moves to Argentina, all other things being equal, and none of his/her individual characteristics change, the probability of this person being asked a bribe by the police is at least 10 percentage points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti. Another country that shows a high probability of being victimized by corruption by the police is Bolivia, not surprisingly, a country with a low level of economic development.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Economic Development on Corruption Victimization by the Police in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008[4]



Policy Implications

With the end of authoritarian rule in many Latin American countries, a critical question facing scholars of democratization is the

[4] The differences between countries in Figure 2 and 4 are explained partly by the fact that Figure 2 controls for individual level characteristics while Figure 4 takes into account GDP per capita.

durability and quality of democracy in the region. Yet with corruption being one of the most prevalent problems in the region, it is not only important to know how corruption may erode the sustainability and quality of these democracies, but also who are those most likely to be victims of corruption. This paper has found that some individual level characteristics are as important as at least one national level characteristic in explaining corruption victimization. In this case, we looked specifically at corruption by the police. The results demonstrate that individuals living in wealthier countries are less likely to be victims of corruption, whereas the probability is notably higher for the average citizen in poor countries. It is worth mentioning that the majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries demonstrate a negative statistically significant correlation between corruption victimization by the police and trust in the police, rendering some support to the notion that at the individual level, the experience with corruption victimization has a negative effect on people's levels of trust in this institution. Yet it is also important to note that at the country level, this relationship may not hold as those who have not being asked a bribe by the police may also show low levels of trust in this institution. It is often the case that in many poor countries the police are involved in superior levels of corruption or crime and not necessarily minor corruption, which in turn may affect negatively people's views of this institution as a whole, regardless if they experience direct corruption victimization or not. We conclude, therefore, that anti-corruption programs are likely to be most successful when they combine localized action, such as working to professionalize police forces, with broader attempts to increase economic development in poor countries in order to lower corruption victimization by the police while increasing trust in this institution.

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*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2008 (No.4)**

Citizen Participation in Municipal Meetings[1]

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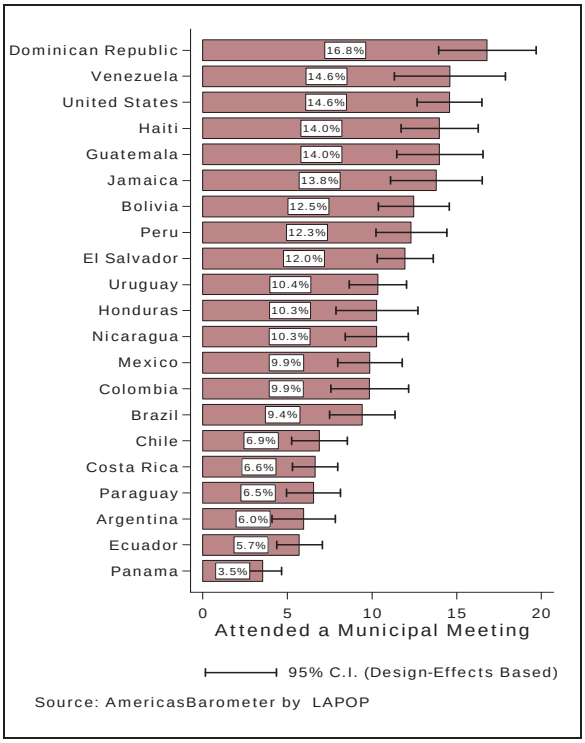
Former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Thomas Phillip "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. is well known for his aphorism that "All Politics is Local"; public opinion emerges from what citizens experience and see at their local levels of government, not in remote, national governments. This maxim is not surprising (especially in the U.S. context) since it is common for individuals to be more closely connected with their local authorities relative to their national governments. In turn, citizens tend to participate more actively in local meetings to solve their collective problems while participation in public institutions at the national level is usually far more limited.

Citizen participation in municipal meetings has been widely advocated by many scholars as a means to strengthen democracy (see Almond and Verba 1963 ; Putnam 1993). Citizen participation in municipal meetings remains, however, rather low especially in the Latin American context (see Seligson 1976, 2002, 2004). These low levels of citizen participation may be undermining the active civic engagement that a strong democracy requires from its citizens to endure (see Putnam 2000).

Figure 1.
Average Participation in Municipal Meetings in the Americas, 2008[2]



What percentage of the population in the Americas participates in municipal meetings? What are the characteristics of these "publicly engaged" citizens? What are the implications of attending municipal meetings? This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* attempts to answer these questions by querying the 2008 data base provided by the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 22 nations in the Western hemisphere[3]. In this survey 34,469 respondents were asked the following question:

[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[2] The non-response rate for this question was 1.17 percent.

[3] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations

NP1. Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting convened by the mayor in the past 12 months?

Figure 1 shows national averages for 21 countries in the sample.[4] It is striking to note, first, that on average, only 10.5 per cent of the total adult (voting age) population has attended a municipal meeting in the past 12 months in the Americas. Second, in this context of low participation, significant variation among countries is evident. Between 14.6 and 16.8 percent of the citizens of the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and the United States have participated; while at the other extreme, only between 3.5 and 6.0 percent of the citizens of Argentina, Ecuador and Panama have attended a municipal meeting during the 12 months prior to the survey.

Predicting Citizen Participation in Municipal Meetings

What explains variation in citizen participation in municipal meetings? Historical/contextual may be explaining some of the variation across countries, however, in this paper we concentrate on the variance that is explained by individual-level factors.[5] We first consider socio-economic and demographic characteristics included in the AmericasBarometer survey: education, gender, age, wealth, and area size. To assess their influence on citizen participation in municipal meetings, we employ a binomial logit regression.[6] Since citizens in the United States possess sharply higher levels of socio-economic characteristics, we exclude this country from the analysis.[7] In order to best determine the effects of education and area size, we divided the former into four cohorts (None, Primary, Secondary and Higher) and the latter into five sizes (Rural Areas, Small City, Medium City, Large City and Capital City).[8] Results of the regression are displayed in figure 2.

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Citizen Participation in Municipal Meetings in Latin America, 2008

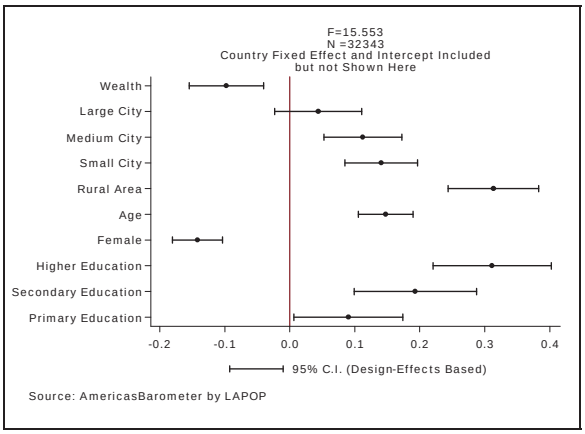


Figure 2 shows the effects of socio-economic and demographic characteristic on the levels of participation in municipal meeting attendance in Latin America. It can be observed that all five factors accounted for in Figure 2 are statistically relevant. Statistical significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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. In this model, the individual's level of wealth (measured as capital goods ownership),[9] the size of the city where the individual resides, the level of education, gender and age are statistically significant contributors. Holding constant all other of variables, poorer

Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[4] The AmericasBarometer originally collected information in 22 countries. However, this question was not asked in Canada; therefore, the number of countries was reduced to 21.

[5] We found no statistically significant relationship between a series of level-2 variables, such as per capita GDP, the Human Development Index, GINI coefficient, level of Democracy, etc. and citizen participation in municipal meetings.

[6] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10 and they are adjusted to consider the effects of the complex sample design.

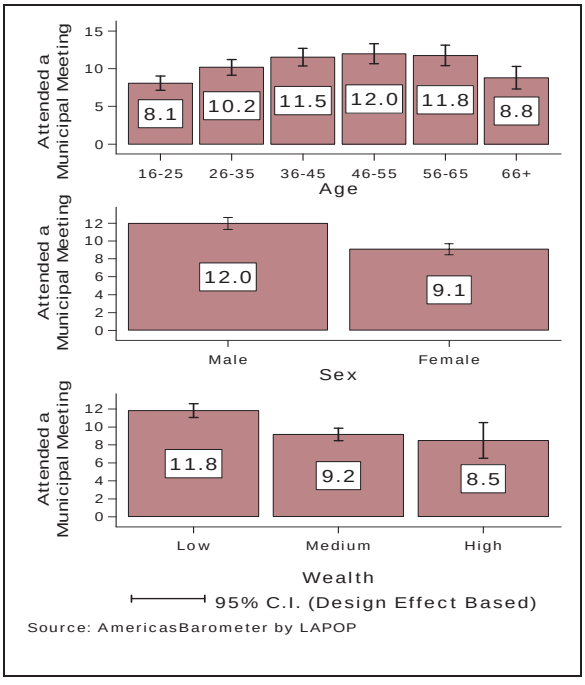
[7] Given that levels of citizen participation in municipal meetings vary across countries, dummy variables for each country were also included in the model, using Uruguay as the base or reference country.

[8] We use "None" as the base category for the "Education" cohorts, and "Capital City" for the "Area Size."

[9] For more information on how this index is constructed, please see Seligson (2006).

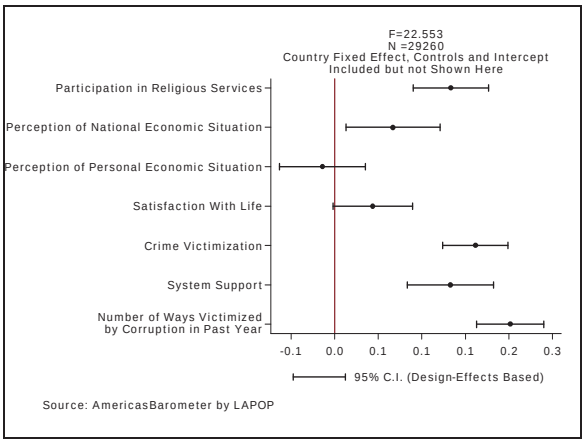
individuals in Latin America show a higher probability of attendance at municipal meetings. Additionally, people living in medium and small cities, as well as those living in rural areas have a higher probability of participating in municipal meetings than individuals residing in large cities or the nations' capitals. People with primary, secondary and higher education tend to have a higher probability to assist to a municipal meeting than those who have no education. Finally, we also see that, holding everything else constant, men are more likely to participate than women and so are older individuals. These results have important policy implications that will be analyzed in the final section of this paper. The relationship between age, sex and wealth on the one hand, and participation in municipal meetings on the other hand is shown in Figure 3, which shows average values for the sample.[10]

Figure 3.
Age, Education, Gender, Area Size, Wealth and Citizen Participation in Municipal Meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The impact of socio-economic and demographic variables on the likelihood of municipal participation is statistically significant and substantively robust, as shown in both Figures 2 and 3. However, there are also several political tendencies and evaluations that drive individuals to participate in municipal reunions. In order to determine some of the political characteristics of the citizens who participate in local meetings, we added several variables to our analysis. Results from this new regression are depicted in Figure 4. It is worth noting that even though we included all the socio-economic and demographic control variables reported above, we display only the political evaluation variables in the Figure below (see the Appendix for the complete set of statistics).

Figure 4.
An Analysis of the Determinants of Average Citizen Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The results indicate that there are quite a few individual factors (in addition to socio-economic and demographic variables) that determine individual participation in municipal meetings. First, those individuals who have been victimized by corruption at least once in the last 12 months are more likely to participate in municipal meetings than those that have not been victimized.[11] Similarly, the probability of participating in municipal meetings increases when respondents have been victimized by

[10] It is important to note that variables "Age" and "Wealth" are grouped into categories with the purpose of illustration. Both variables were inserted as continuous in the logit models.

[11] The direction of this relationship could go the other way around as well. For this reason, it is necessary to conduct further research to try to determine the proper direction of causality.

crime in last the 12 months previous to the survey. These fundamental findings suggest that citizens may increase their participation in municipal meetings when they perceive that the government is failing to provide security and transparency. By exercising their right to voice, victimized citizens may be demanding better protection from their local government, but we would need to know more about the specific motivations of their participation to be able to support this claim. Additionally, our analysis shows that individuals who participate more often in religious services are also more likely to attend municipal meetings. This finding suggests that for these citizens, the solution to collective problems may be achieved through spiritual as well as political means, or that in the context of religious meetings in addition to formal government meetings they seek collective solutions to problems.

Second, the likelihood that citizens attend municipal meetings increases when they report a higher level of "system support," that is, a higher belief in the legitimacy of the system of government[12]. Concomitantly, as individuals' positive perception of the national economic situation increases, the probability of attending a municipal meeting increases as well. Finally, some studies of the relationship between values and politics have pointed out that satisfaction with one's own life is also important in explaining citizen's engagement (Inglehart 2000). We found initial support for this theory, but as we added other theoretically important variables to the model, the effect of satisfaction with one's own life on participation at the municipal level tended to fade away.

Policy Implications

This report has shown that in the Latin American context, citizen participation in local governments is rather low. If Putnam (1993) is right, then these low levels of participation may be contributing to the endurance of "immature," "incomplete," or "illiberal" democracies in the region. As we have shown, those individuals that have been victimized by either corruption or crime in the past, report higher probabilities of participating in municipal meetings than those who have not been victimized. This crucial finding suggests that what may be encouraging individuals to participate in municipal meetings is their desire to change municipal policies in order to increase security and transparency. Additional analysis of this hypothesis will emerge when the *Insight* series study is released on the factors that determine demand-making on municipal government. The problem that decision-makers face is to determine how to prevent crime and corruption victimization and, at the same time, encourage citizens to exercise their right to voice their needs and complaints. Only by becoming responsive to citizens' claims can municipal authorities improve the provision of services that can in turn help consolidate Latin American democracies.

Finally, studying particularly the socio-demographic characteristics of the individuals who are more likely to participate in municipal meetings, we found at least two strong, positive and substantive relationships that are policy-relevant. On the one hand, individuals living in rural areas are much more likely to participate in municipal meetings than people living in large cities or at the national capital. This finding suggests that governmental decentralization may have a more pronounced impact in rural municipalities relative to municipalities in larger cities. Taking into account that poorer individuals tend to live in rural areas,[13] relative deprivation of private goods may foster participation in formal, local governmental institutions in order to gain access to public goods. On the other hand, higher levels of education increase the likelihood of participation in municipal meetings. Hence, it may be important for municipalities to carry-out

[12] System Support Index is measured by the following questions (question numbers from original survey): B1. To what extent do you believe the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial? B2 To what extent do you respect the political institutions in (country)? B3. To what degree do you believe that the citizen's basic rights are safeguarded by the political system in (country)? B4. To what degree do you feel proud of living in the political system in (country)? B6. To what degree do you think the political system in (country) should be supported?

[13] The correlation coefficient for "Wealth" and "Size of City" is .43.

programs to encourage civic participation by individuals with lower levels of education. Only by knowing the necessities of the lower-educated cohort can municipal governments improve the allocation of public goods and services among all of society.

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Appendix: Results from the logit model
Dependent Variable: Attended a Municipal Meeting

Variables	Coefficients	(t)
Corruption Victimization	0.193*	(10.10)
System Support	0.157*	(6.54)
Crime Victimization	0.168*	(8.92)
Satisfaction With Life	0.061*	(2.59)
Perception of Personal Economic Situation	-0.027	(-1.08)
Perception of National Economic Situation	0.064*	(2.31)
Attendance to religious services	-0.121*	(-5.55)
Education	0.166*	(6.19)
Sex	-0.138*	(-6.30)
Age	0.177*	(7.86)
Size of City/Town	0.245*	(8.31)
Wealth Measured by Capital Goods Ownership	-0.181*	(-6.27)
Constant	-2.234*	(-81.77)
F	38.64	
N. of Cases	29260	

*** p<0.05**

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2008 (No. 5)*

Social Capital in the Americas: Community Problem-Solving Participation

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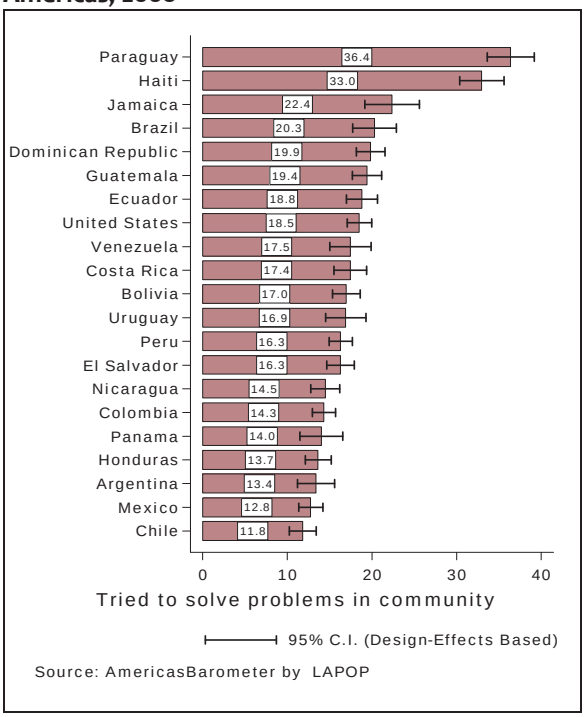
Social capital has become an important tool in the study of democratization. James Coleman defined social capital as all those relationships between people that allow them to cooperate for the purpose of achieving common goals (2000). When studying how democracy has worked in Italy, Robert Putnam demonstrated that some features of social organization, especially interpersonal trust, and social networks, can improve democracy's efficacy by facilitating coordinated action (1993). Social capital explains, according to Putnam, why some regions have more efficient political institutions than others within a country.

This *Insights* bulletin is the first in a series of reports devoted to study social capital in the Americas using the 2008 Democracy Survey of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)[1]. This survey was carried out in twenty-two countries in the Americas, of which twenty-one countries, with a total of 34,469 respondents, are analyzed in this edition.[2] The survey included several questions that can be used as indicators of social capital, such as the one we address in this *Insights* paper: The wording of the item is as follows: **CP5.**"Over the last 12 months, have you helped solve a problem of your community or of the neighbors in your neighborhood?"[3]

Figure 1
Community Problem-Solving Participation in the Americas, 2008



This question taps into citizen behavior working collectively to solve community problems. Thus, the item is helpful to measure collective action which is aimed at addressing community issues.

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

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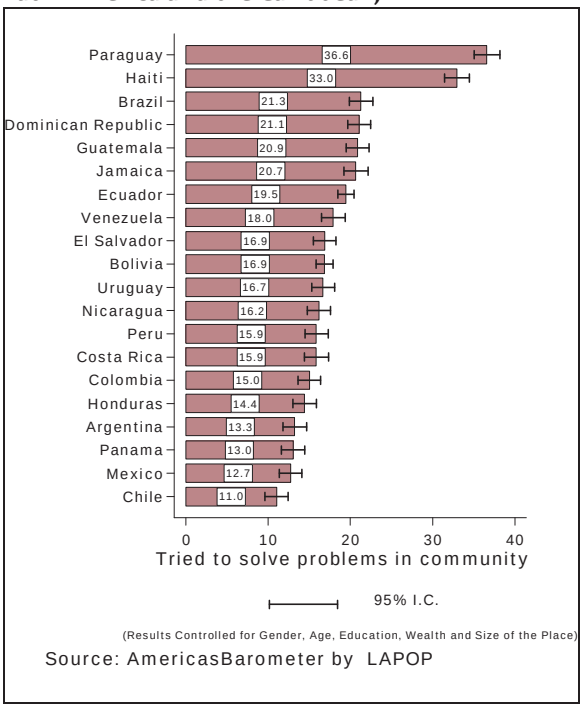
[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Significant sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

[3] The non-response rate for this question was 8.3 percent.

Figure 1 shows the results of this question, after converting the responses to a 0-to-100 scale, where 100 represents the highest level of community problem solving and 0 the lowest.

In Paraguay and Haiti, citizens tried to solve community problems more frequently than in the rest of the surveyed countries in the Americas. Most of the countries, from Brazil to El Salvador, share basically the same level of disposition to solve community problems.[4] The lowest frequency of problem-solving engagement is found in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. Yet, it is important to note that problem-solving participation is rather low across the region. The top-ranking countries (Paraguay and Haiti) only scored in the 30s on the overall 0-to-100 scale. In other terms, of the 92.1% who responded to this question, 63.9% of the residents of the Americas did not report participation in any community problem-solving in the year prior to the survey.

Figure 2
Community Problem-Solving Participation after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



What might explain the variation found across countries? The standard model is to look to socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. In order to control for these possible effects, the results shown in Figure 1 were examined net of variables like age, gender, education, and wealth; and the United States was removed from the analysis.[5] The results are shown in Figure 2.

As in Figure 1, Paraguay and Haiti remain as the countries where people are most likely to have tried to solve community problems, while Mexico and Chile remain at the bottom. In other words, the impact of controlling socio-demographic variables does not change substantively the social capital ranking of the countries as measured here. However, this does not mean that these factors and others do not have an impact.

The Determinants of Social Capital

There are a number of factors that influence citizen involvement in solving community problems. A regression analysis performed on the AmericasBarometer 2008 data show that the significant predictors of this form of social capital are: a) perception of personal economic situation: citizens concerned about their personal economic situation tend to participate more in solving community problems; b) political interest: the more people are interested in politics, the more participation in community problem solving; c) ideology: people on the left tend to be more involved in solving problems in the community; c) size of city: the smaller the city in which people live, the more they are involved in solving community problems; d) age: older people tend to be more involved than younger people; e) gender: women tend to be less involved; and f) education: the more years of education, the greater the involvement in community solving.

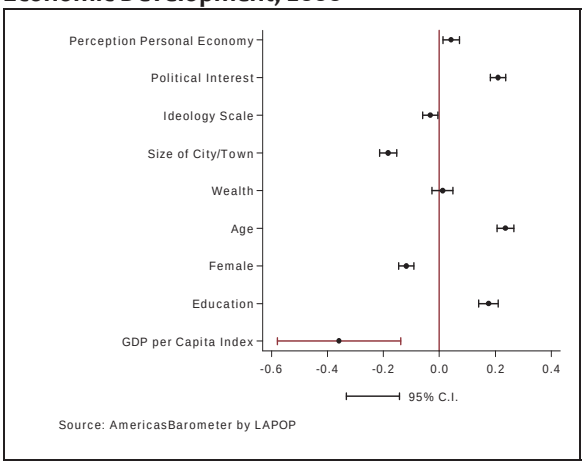
The analysis, which was carried out using a Hierarchical Linear Model, also shows that in

[4] Canada did not have the full social capital series and the data from Belize are not yet available.

[5] The high levels of socioeconomic development in the U.S. make this country an outlier.

addition to individual variables, national context matters in explaining variation in social capital.[6] Citizen involvement in community problems is greater in poorer countries than in richer countries. Specifically, the wealthier the countries in per capita terms, the *less* likely citizen are in trying to help solving problems in their communities.

Figure 3
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Community Problem Solving-Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



This can be clearly seen in Figure 4. This graph shows the predicted scores of community problem solving-participation in each country according to GDP per capita. The poorest countries in the Americas (Haiti, Bolivia, Honduras, and Nicaragua) exhibit the highest scores on the scale of citizen involvement. Conversely, the richest countries in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay) tend to score low on citizen involvement in community problem solving.

Similar results are obtained when regressing citizen involvement in solving problems on the community on average national growth rate from 1990 to 2005. As shown in Figure 5, a country's economic performance, measured by the GDP per capita growth rate, is negatively related to citizen disposition to solve problems in the community. In other words, in those countries that have had a poor economic performance between 1990 and 2005, people have tried to help their community more frequently than in those countries with better economic performance.

Figure 4
The Impact of Economic Development on the Community Problem Solving Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

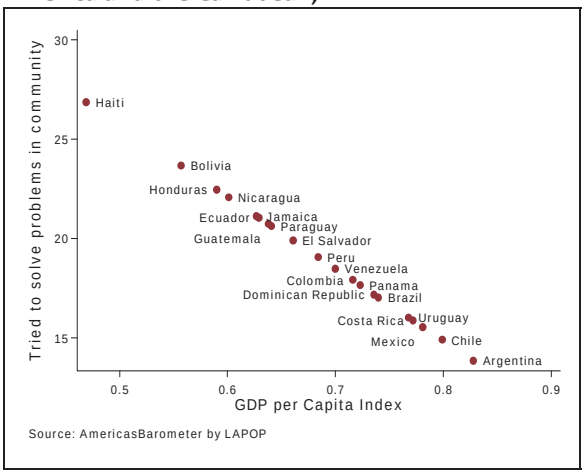
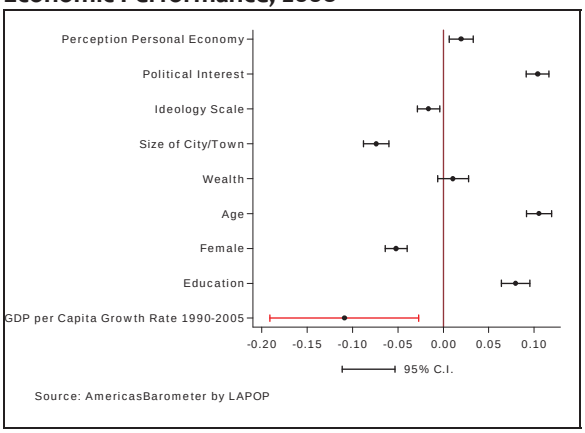


Figure 5
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Community Problem-Solving Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Performance, 2008

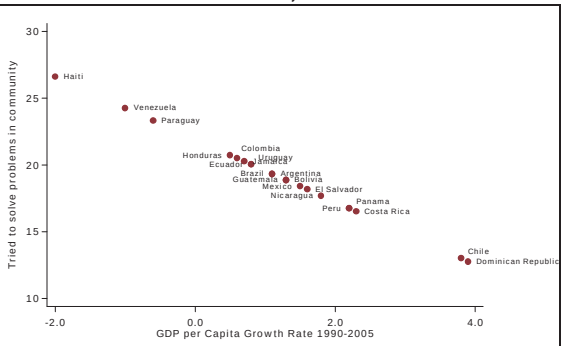


Hence, in countries like Haiti and Venezuela, with low rates of economic growth, the involvement of citizens helping to solve

[6] Analyses in this paper were conducted using Stata v10, and they have been adjusted to consider the effects of complex sample designs.

problems is higher than in countries such as Chile and the Dominican Republic, that have been growing in the last decade (see Figure 6).

Figure 6
The Impact of Economic Performance on Community Problem-Solving Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



In sum, the results of the Americas Barometer 2008, carried out in twenty-one countries in the region, show that social capital, measured as citizen participation in community problem solving, is rather low across the Americas, especially among citizens who live in richer countries. Such findings suggest than in the poorest countries, people tend to provide more support for their own communities as a means to overcome their lack of resources. Social capital, then, becomes a resource that helps people to deal with the shortages imposed by poverty and lack of development.

Policy Implications

Does this mean that countries should be poor in order to bolster social capital? The answer is clearly no. But these results are helpful to direct the search for participation models in those communities that have used social capital to overcome the lack of resources.

Democracy not only depends upon electoral participation. It also depends upon collective action aimed to solve daily problems within communities. The results shown in this paper have pointed out that education impacts the likelihood of citizen participation at the community level. Communities and neighborhoods with higher levels of education generate more social capital and are better suited for collective action that leads to local development. Thus, the formation of *human* capital seems to be a sound basis for the development of *social* capital, which in turn, many studies have found, enhances democratic political culture and development.

These results have also shown an interesting relationship between wealth and citizen involvement in problem solving. Citizen engagement at the community level is higher in poorest countries and is higher among people concerned about their own personal economy. Collective action becomes, then, an important tool to tackle the obvious lack of resources. Hence, despite their vulnerability, deprived communities with successful strategies of collective action can also turn into models for programs and policies seeking to enhance social capital elsewhere.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2008 (No.6)[*]

Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators

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The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) research program relies heavily on basic measures of individual economic status. For some time we have been attempting to refine those measures, and in this *Insights* study,[1] we focus on measuring relative wealth. In doing so, we focus on a critical issue in the social sciences, namely how to obtain valid and reliable measures of personal economic well-being. Our ultimate goal is to develop solid measures of individual economic status to assess the consequences of poverty and economic inequality for democratic political culture in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Research has shown that expenditure-based economic status indicators have been found to be more reliable than indices that are income-based (Deaton 1997). A major reason for this is the relatively high non-response rate for income-based measures as well as under or over reporting typically found in income items utilized in standard of living household surveys. In public opinion research, to estimate reliable indicators of individual economic status is even more challenging since often neither income nor consumption data are collected in this type of survey.

The LAPOP questionnaires have always included an income item (Q10) that takes into account the decile distribution of income in each country. Specifically, the LAPOP surveys ask respondents to indicate (by privately picking a number from a card) the income bracket in which their total household income falls, rather than asking them to state a precise monetary amount. By using that procedure, we have been able to minimize non-response and, hopefully, under or over reporting. Unfortunately, without a validation survey, which privacy considerations and ethical norms would prevent us from carrying out, validation of the incomes reported to our interviewers cannot take place.

Nonetheless, the income variable in the LAPOP surveys still shows a relatively high proportion of missing values due to non-response (around 17 percent in the 2008 round of surveys for all 23 countries included in that round),[2] substantially reducing the number of valid cases in multivariate statistical analyses that include the income variable. Such a loss on a key predictor variable is serious as it means that all substantive analysis is deprived of many cases that would otherwise be available for analysis since few (if any) of the other survey items in the questionnaire produce such a high level of non-response.

As a result, the LAPOP surveys have also always collected information on household assets with the aim of obtaining more precise measures of economic well-being on the largest possible proportion of respondents. Indeed, the

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non-response rate associated with the household asset items in the LAPOP questionnaires is much lower than the one for the income variable (less than one per cent in the 2008 pooled dataset). However, the underreporting or overreporting problem might still be present when household assets are employed, as the study by Martinelli and Parker (2008) suggests, although that evidence came from a special purpose survey, and it is impossible to know how broadly this problem exists in other kinds of surveys and in other settings. Notwithstanding these limitations and concerns, as will be demonstrated in this methodological note, a reliable economic status indicator can be obtained using the household asset items included in the LAPOP surveys. A relative wealth index was computed using the methodology described below based on the following items in the LAPOP surveys:

Could you tell me if you have the following in your house:		
Television	(0) No	(1) Yes
Refrigerator	(0) No	(1) Yes
Conventional telephone	(0) No	(1) Yes
Cellular telephone	(0) No	(1) Yes
Vehicle	(0) No	(1) One (2) Two (3) Three
Washing machine	(0) No	(1) Yes
Microwave oven	(0) No	(1) Yes
Indoor plumbing	(0) No	(1) Yes
Indoor bathroom	(0) No	(1) Yes
Computer	(0) No	(1) Yes

Once this data is obtained in raw form, the key question is how to compute a wealth index based on household assets that enjoys internal validity; in other words, a wealth indicator that is able to effectively discriminate between economically well-off and worse-off individuals. One common choice, frequently used in the analysis of LAPOP surveys in the past, is to create an index based on the "count" of household assets. The rationale has been that since there is no *a priori* way of weighting the various assets, assuming an equal weight of each was a reasonable way to proceed. This approach, however, can lead to inaccurate results since two individuals with very different economic resources and therefore standards of living can be assigned the same wealth score. For example, an individual who has indoor plumbing and who owns a television would be assigned the same score as one with indoor plumbing and who owns a car; obviously, using this methodology could result in large measurement error by underestimating the wealth of the individual with the car. Instead, in this paper we propose a more appropriate methodology as the new LAPOP standard, one in which the distribution of household assets weights more heavily luxury assets. In order to make those weights non-arbitrary and replicable, we calculate them systematically, based on the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method described below.

Before getting into the PCA details, we wish to note that a further issue is how to compute a wealth index that will work across space. That is, we want to be able to compare individuals who live in rural vs. urban areas, but we know that in many rural areas in Latin America and the Caribbean, public services such as potable water and electricity are not widely available, whereas in cities they are. We do not want to call an individual "poor" if she lives in a rural area, without water or electricity, yet owns a car, a cell phone etc. Thus, our index must be sensitive to contextual variation both in terms of urban/rural differences and in terms of variation across countries since in the AmericasBarometer we include countries as wealthy as Argentina and as poor as Haiti.

Constructing the Wealth Index

In the 2010 country reports, LAPOP will implement a weighting system for constructing wealth indexes based on assets that relies on Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Filmer and Pritchett (2001) popularized the use of PCA for estimating wealth levels using asset indicators to replace income or consumption data. Based on their analysis of household assets for India and the validation of their results using both household assets and consumption data for Indonesia, Pakistan, and Nepal, they concluded that PCA "provides plausible and defensible

weights for an index of assets to serve as a proxy for wealth" (Filmer and Pritchett 2001 128).

Filmer and Pritchett (2001) note that asset-based measures depict an individual or a household's long-run economic status and therefore do not necessarily account for short-term fluctuations in economic well-being or economic shocks. Thus, although we expect the income variable to be correlated with the wealth measure here estimated, we are aware that the two might tap different dimensions of economic well-being, as previous studies have found (Gasparini et al, 2008; Lora 2008).

Following Filmer and Pritchett, many other studies, especially in the fields of economics and public policy, have implemented and recommend the use of PCA for estimating wealth effects (Minujin and Hee Bang 2002; McKenzie 2005; Vyass and Kumaranayake 2006; Labonne, Biller and Chase 2007).

The estimation of relative wealth using PCA is based on the first principal component. Formally, the wealth index for household i is the linear combination,

$$y_i = \alpha_1(\frac{x_1 - \bar{x}_1}{s_1}) + \alpha_2(\frac{x_2 - \bar{x}_2}{s_2}) + ... + \alpha_k(\frac{x_k - \bar{x}_k}{s_k})$$

Where, $\bar{x}_k$ and s_k are the mean and standard deviation of asset x_k, and α represents the weight for each variable x_k for the first principal component.

By definition the first principal component variable across households or individuals has a mean of zero and a variance of λ, which corresponds to the largest eigenvalue of the correlation matrix of x. The first principal component y yields a wealth index that assigns a larger weight to assets that vary the most across households so that an asset found in all households is given a weight of zero (McKenzie 2005). The first principal component or wealth index can take positive as well as negative values.

The wealth index here estimated for twenty one Latin American and Caribbean countries is based on the ten items listed above in the AmericasBarometer 2008 round of surveys carried out by LAPOP. As suggested in the literature, all variables were first dichotomized (1=Yes, 0=No) to indicate the ownership of each household asset (Vyass and Kumaranayake 2006). Weights (effectively defined by factor scores) for each asset were computed separately for urban and rural areas for each country. Then, a "relative wealth" variable was created in the pooled dataset. Thus, the wealth index takes into account the distribution of assets in urban and rural areas within a given country in order to reflect each country's economic conditions across urban and rural areas. As an example, Table 1 summarizes the results of the PCA for urban and rural areas in two countries, Peru and Costa Rica.

From Table 1 it can be observed that even though Peru and Costa Rica show dissimilar levels of economic development, at first glance the application of PCA seems to provide appropriate factor scores or weights using a common list of assets from the LAPOP surveys in both urban and rural areas in these two countries.

In urban areas in both countries, for example, since almost all households have a television set, this asset receives a very low weight. This means that having a TV does little to increase one's wealth index score compared to a respondent who does not have a TV in the household. In sharp contrast, having a microwave, a washing machine, or a computer is weighted more heavily. It is also noteworthy that very few individuals have more than one vehicle in these two countries, and therefore the indicator variables for two and three vehicles are assigned a low weight since these variables correlate weakly with other assets. Also, it can be observed that the factor score for "no vehicle," as expected, has a negative sign, indicating that an individual in a household without a car ranks lower in terms of economic status than one with a vehicle.

Table 1. Results from Principal Components Analysis												
	Peru Urban			Peru Rural			Costa Rica Urban			Costa Rica Rural		
Variable description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Score	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Score
Housing Characteristics												
Indoor plumbing (drinkable water)	89.2%	0.009	0.245	71.2%	0.023	0.157	98.5%	0.004	0.194	94.7%	0.010	0.235
Indoor bathroom	87.8%	0.010	0.275	58.7%	0.025	0.186	97.5%	0.005	0.228	93.0%	0.011	0.277
Durable Assets												
Television	96.8%	0.005	0.162	73.3%	0.023	0.256	98.5%	0.004	0.157	97.1%	0.007	0.288
Refrigerator	69.7%	0.014	0.337	24.3%	0.022	0.340	96.6%	0.006	0.283	92.7%	0.011	0.322
Conventional telephone	62.2%	0.014	0.331	9.3%	0.015	0.338	76.4%	0.014	0.318	65.4%	0.020	0.308
Cellular Phone	71.7%	0.013	0.218	32.8%	0.024	0.293	60.2%	0.016	0.287	46.5%	0.021	0.260
No vehicle	86.4%	0.010	-0.301	93.6%	0.013	-0.370	67.3%	0.016	-0.398	70.3%	0.020	-0.337
One vehicle	11.9%	0.010	0.258	6.1%	0.012	0.348	27.6%	0.015	0.348	25.3%	0.019	0.284
Two vehicles	1.2%	0.003	0.125	0.3%	0.003	0.137	4.7%	0.007	0.131	3.8%	0.008	0.139
Three vehicles	0.04%	0.002	0.084	0.0%	0.000	0.000	0.4%	0.002	0.050	0.5%	0.003	0.055
Washing Machine	27.6%	0.013	0.359	2.1%	0.007	0.278	95.0%	0.007	0.301	90.1%	0.013	0.336
Microwave	25.5%	0.013	0.369	4.0%	0.010	0.340	76.3%	0.014	0.366	60.3%	0.021	0.332
Computer	32.8%	0.014	0.350	8.8%	0.015	0.299	38.3%	0.016	0.314	21.8%	0.018	0.282
Largest Eigenvalue, λ	3.414			3.272			3.052			3.426		
Proportion of Variance Explained	0.263			0.273			0.235			0.264		
Source: AmericasBarometer 2008 by LAPOP												

Table 2. Internal Validity of Wealth Index: Results based on the First Principal Component (21 Latin American countries)					
Quintiles of Wealth	1	2	3	4	5
Housing Characteristics					
Indoor plumbing (drinkable water)	49.54%	70.85%	84.95%	88.39%	93.18%
Indoor bathroom	36.02%	61.20%	79.06%	84.70%	92.40%
Durable Assets					
Television	68.93%	88.30%	97.89%	98.29%	99.08%
Refrigerator	40.90%	68.71%	85.98%	91.13%	96.07%
Conventional telephone	8.55%	28.52%	51.22%	62.02%	77.09%
Cellular telephone	42.34%	66.58%	78.51%	82.76%	92.73%
No vehicle	99.48%	98.41%	93.33%	66.92%	18.23%
One vehicle	0.46%	1.50%	6.29%	29.82%	66.13%
Two vehicles	0.04%	0.08%	0.32%	2.93%	12.60%
Three vehicles	0.01%	0.01%	0.06%	0.32%	3.04%
Washing machine	14.08%	33.99%	51.06%	57.92%	74.39%
Microwave oven	1.83%	12.05%	34.10%	42.56%	72.50%
Computer	0.98%	4.18%	20.72%	37.78%	67.77%
Average Wealth (Mean Scores for First Principal Component)	-2.275	-.972	-.053	.996	2.833
Source: AmericasBarometer 2008 by LAPOP					

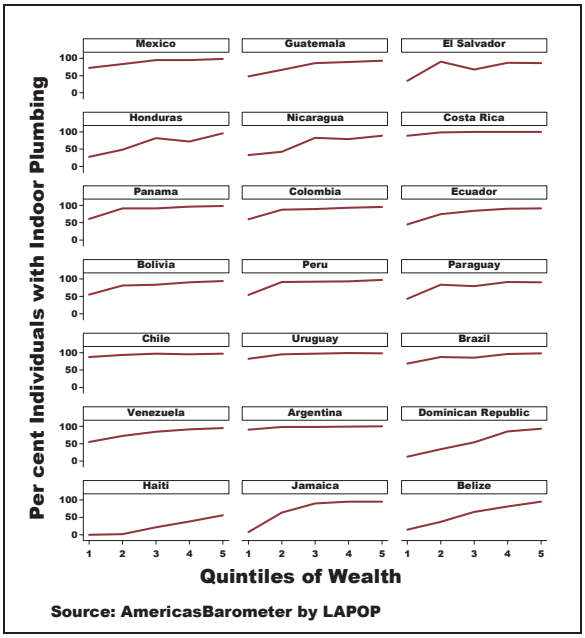
Internal Validity of the Wealth Index

In order to assess the internal validity of the wealth index proposed here, quintiles of wealth were computed based on the index to assess the characteristics of the poor and rich. Table 2 shows the percentage of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean that has access to each asset and the average wealth level across quintiles. Appendix 1 and 2 show the results for urban and rural areas, respectively. As can be observed, the first Principal Component Analysis methodology discriminates well between the rich and poor. Individuals in the fifth quintile unambiguously show much higher levels of wealth than the rest of the population in both urban and rural areas.

Inequality across and within countries

How much inequality is there within and across countries? In order to explore this point, Figure 1 shows the distribution of a single item, indoor plumbing, by country and quintiles of wealth. As expected, there are sharp differences in access to clean water within and across countries. The degree of inequality in access to clean water within countries can be seen by the steepness of the slope in each line graph. For example, the graph for Dominican Republic shows huge inequalities in access to clean water in this country. While only 12.45 percent of those in the first quintile have indoor plumbing, about 93 per cent of individuals in the fifth quintile do. In contrast, the figure below shows that in countries with higher standards of living, like Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Argentina, not only does a much higher proportion of the population have access to clean water, but also this asset is more evenly distributed between the rich and poor (as depicted by the flatter lines).

Figure 1
Inequality in Access to Clean Water across and within Countries



Correlation between the Wealth Index and Other Variables

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, economic status as measured here is correlated in the expected direction with other variables in the AmericasBarometer dataset. Individuals in Latin American and Caribbean countries belonging to higher quintiles of wealth show higher levels of income and education. Moreover, as the literature suggests, the poor show lower interest in politics and more limited knowledge of political issues.[3]

[3] The exact wording of the interest in politics item in the LAPOP surveys is the following: How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none? The original scale was recoded into a 1-100 scale. The political knowledge index was computed based on five items in the surveys (GI1-GI5); it consists of a count of correct answers to each of the five items.

Figure 2
Correlation between Relative Wealth and Income Level and Years of Schooling

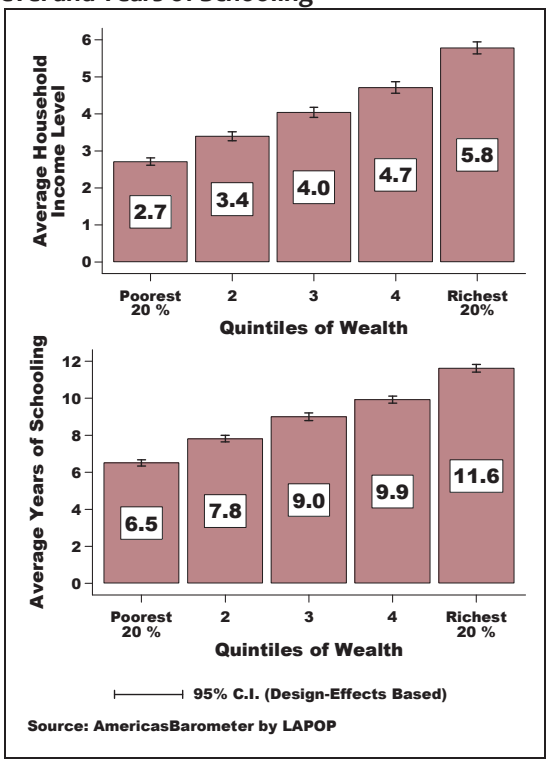
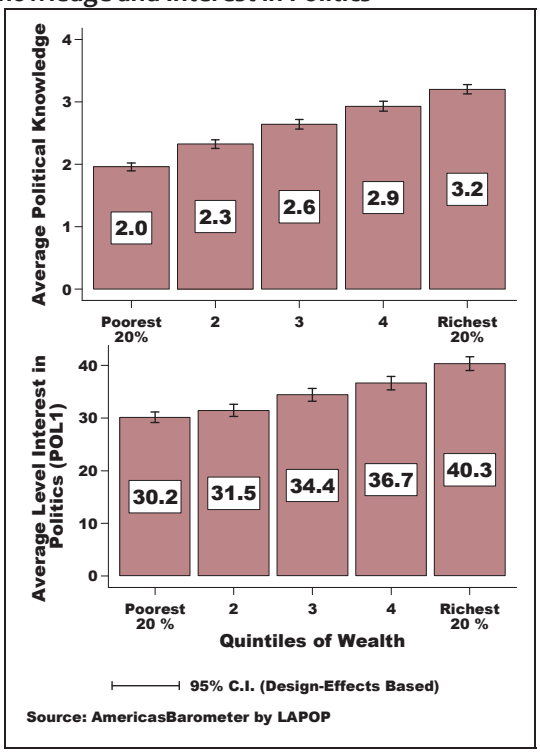
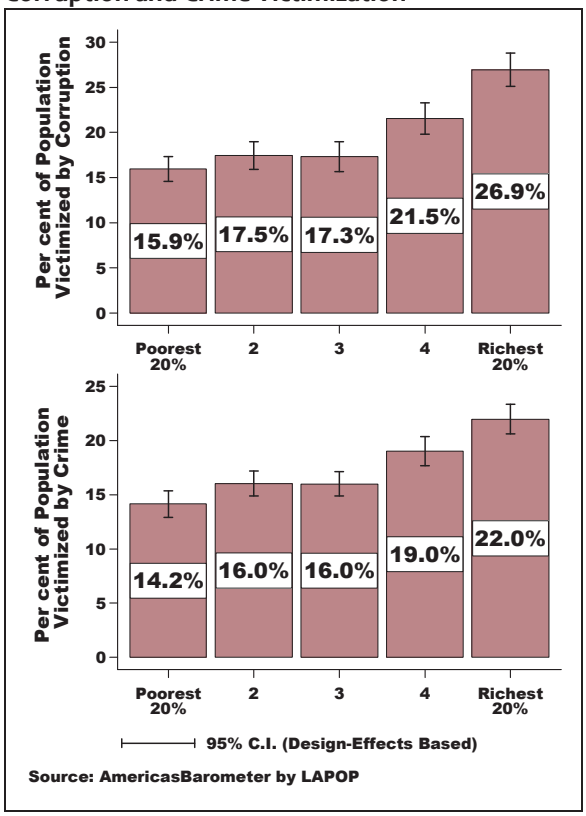


Figure 3
Correlation between Relative Wealth and Political Knowledge and Interest in Politics



As a final validation of the utility of the PCA wealth index, we show in Figure 4 that in terms of corruption and crime victimization, as found in previous research and studies by LAPOP and other studies, the rich are more likely to be victims.

Figure 4
Correlation between Relative Wealth and Corruption and Crime Victimization



Conclusion

We conclude by noting that for the 2010 round of surveys, in which the issue of wealth and poverty will be central, we will utilize this context specific Relative Wealth Index, hereafter RWI, rather than the count-based index used by LAPOP in the past.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Internal Validity of Wealth Index: Results based on the First Principal Component (Urban Areas; 21 Latin American countries)					
Quintiles of Wealth	1 Poorest 20%	2	3	4	5 Richest 20%
Housing Characteristics					
Indoor plumbing (drinkable water)	66.64%	87.79%	90.53%	95.53%	98.14%
Indoor bathroom	51.45%	81.79%	90.67%	94.45%	98.14%
Durable Assets					
Television	84.43%	98.34%	99.22%	99.55%	99.93%
Refrigerator	53.32%	86.68%	94.64%	96.90%	99.20%
Conventional telephone	12.49%	40.53%	67.91%	75.85%	90.62%
Cellular telephone	51.51%	72.23%	84.19%	86.45%	95.37%
No vehicle	99.36%	98.21%	91.63%	56.66%	8.54%
One vehicle	0.58%	1.66%	7.92%	38.95%	72.79%
Two vehicles	0.06%	0.11%	0.39%	4.00%	14.93%
Three vehicles	0.00%	0.02%	0.07%	0.40%	3.74%
Washing machine	19.12%	43.94%	62.73%	70.20%	86.16%
Microwave oven	2.64%	17.02%	43.91%	54.96%	83.72%
Computer	1.45%	6.00%	29.68%	51.34%	82.71%
Average Wealth (Mean Scores for First Principal Component)	-2.41	-0.96	-0.002	1.13	2.73
Source: AmericasBarometer 2008 by LAPOP					

Appendix 2. Internal Validity of Wealth Index: Results based on the First Principal Component (Rural Areas; 21 Latin American countries)					
Quintiles of Wealth	1 Poorest 20%	2	3	4	5 Richest 20%
Housing Characteristics					
Indoor plumbing (drinkable water)	19.0%	39.9%	73.8%	74.8%	84.1%
Indoor bathroom	8.4%	23.6%	55.9%	66.1%	81.9%
Durable Assets					
Television	41.2%	70.0%	95.2%	95.9%	97.5%
Refrigerator	18.7%	35.9%	68.7%	80.2%	90.3%
Conventional telephone	1.5%	6.6%	18.0%	35.7%	52.3%
Cellular telephone	26.0%	56.3%	67.2%	75.7%	87.9%
No vehicle	99.7%	98.8%	96.7%	86.5%	36.0%
One vehicle	0.3%	1.2%	3.0%	12.4%	53.9%
Two vehicles	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	8.3%
Three vehicles	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.8%
Washing machine	5.1%	15.8%	27.8%	34.5%	52.8%
Microwave oven	0.4%	3.0%	14.5%	18.9%	51.9%
Computer	0.1%	0.9%	2.9%	12.0%	40.4%
Average Wealth (Mean Scores for First Principal Component)	-2.04	-1.003	-0.16	0.73	3.03
Source: AmericasBarometer 2008 by LAPOP					

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2008 (No.7) *

The Political Culture of Belize: Preliminary Evidence

By Mitchell A. Seligson
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Belize is a mystery to many social scientists. While squarely located geographically in Central America, most experts on Central America do not consider it to be part of the traditional region (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica). There are many good reasons for this. Whereas the traditional five-country Central American countries were all colonies of Spain, Belize was a British colony up until its formal independence in 1981 and remains a member of the Commonwealth. Politically, unlike all of the other countries in the region, who are led by a president, Belize is led by a prime minister. While Spanish predominates as the national language in Central America, English predominates in Belize. Many other differences abound, and yet, increasing migration from Mexico and Guatemala, along with growing contact and trade with Central America has led to greater links with that region, even though formally Belize retains its membership in the Caribbean trading community (CARICOM) rather than the Central American community with its ties to the U.S. under the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). It is therefore appropriate to take a look at political values and behaviors in Belize and to see how those fit, or do not fit, into the larger patterns of Central America, and the Latin American and Caribbean region beyond.

The opportunity to do this was presented by a generous grant to LAPOP by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that enabled us to add Belize as the 23rd country in our 2008 round of surveys. As far as we know, this is the first national sample of political culture ever conducted in Belize.[1] This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series*[2] looks at a small number of key questions in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project survey, which involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 23 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States[3]. A full analysis of the Belize survey data remains to be conducted. The survey was conducted between October and November by a team of interviewers trained by the second author of this paper. In total, 1552 respondents (half male, half female) were interviewed, in a stratified probability sample (with quotas for respondent selection within the home). The country was stratified into six districts: Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize City, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo, with the number of interviews per stratum proportional to the census data adult population distributions and further sub-stratified by urban and rural divisions (51.8% rural, 48.2% urban). Results are shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1

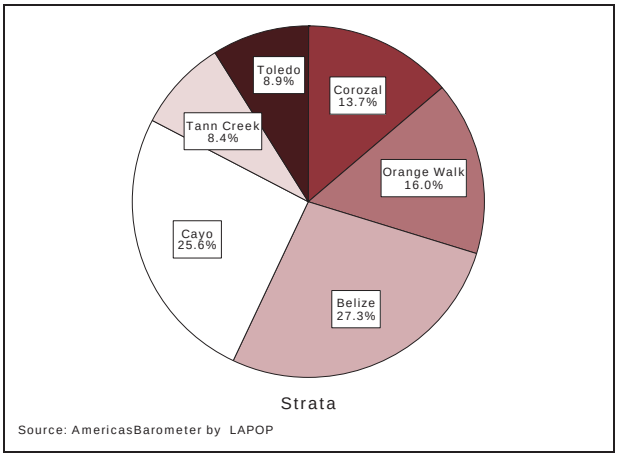
* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] For background see Fernández, 1989.

[2] Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at: www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets.

[3] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Significant sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

Distribution of the Sample by Districts

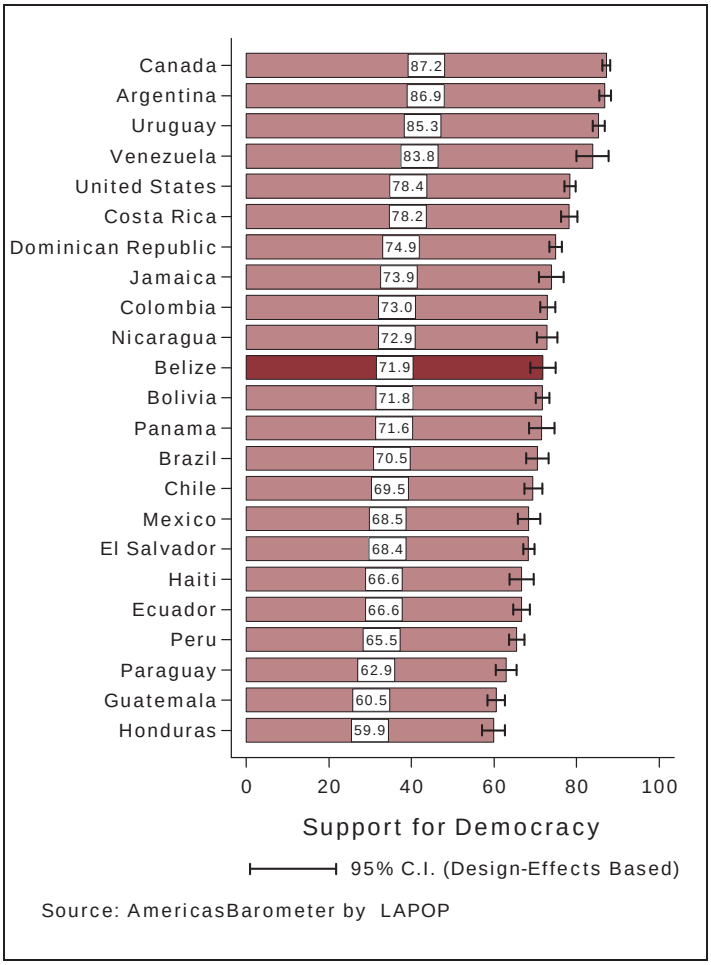


The full description of the sample design is available at http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/files/dQ5t9C/Belize_sample_design_v1.pdf. . All interviews were carried out using handheld computers (PDAs), with programming provided by Advitek of Toronto, Canada. The questionnaire was prepared and tested in both English and Spanish; interviewers with a single click on their PDAs were able to immediately switch from one language to the other if a respondent indicated difficulty in replying to the question in the other language. Many Belizeans are bi-lingual, but are dominant in one of the two main languages (Spanish or English). While there is a substantial Mayan Indian and Garifuna population, the former are almost all bi-lingual or monolingual Spanish speakers, while the latter are almost all fluent in English. The survey data found, for example, that when asked what language the respondent spoke growing up at home, 55.9% reported that it was Spanish, 35.9% that it was Creole or English, 1.7% Garifuna, and 4.7% Mayan (Maya Kechi, Mopan, or Yucatec). In the survey itself, however, respondents were more likely to have used English (63.9%) than Spanish (36.1%).

Support for Democracy

How much support is there for democracy in Belize? In the AmericasBarometer 2008 we included several items to try to measure this issue. One basic question is the one derived from Churchill's classic statement: "Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government." We asked respondents how much they agreed with this point of view, and converted the responses (as we do for most items in LAPOP studies) to a 0-100 scale. The results are shown in Figure 2; in every country in the Americas, the average response is to agree with Churchill, with the mean score in Belize reaching 71.9 (out of a possible 100), placing the country in about the middle of the pack, slightly below Nicaragua, higher than all of the other countries in the region except Costa Rica.

Figure 2
Support for Democracy in the Americas



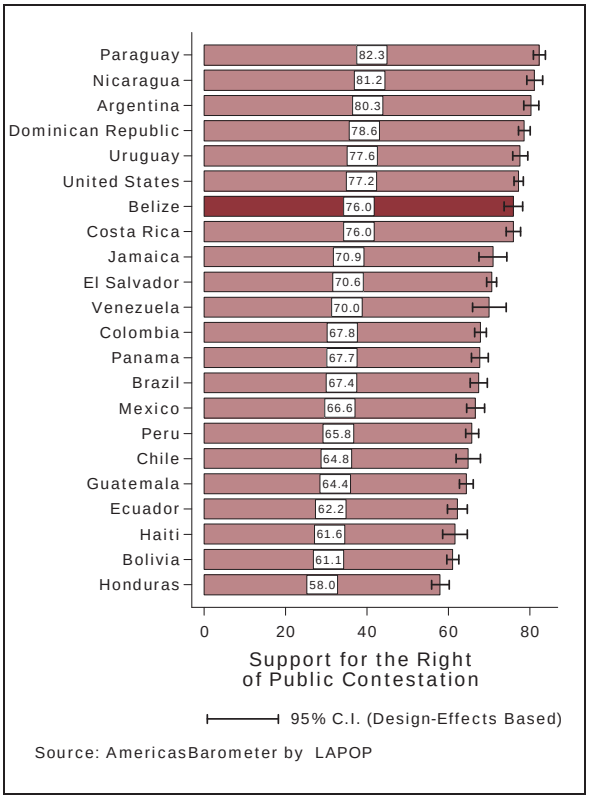
The Churchill item, valuable though it is, does not get at the specific operational aspects of democracy. So, we include additional batteries of items to deepen our understanding of popular support for democracy. One key

element is support for the right of public contestation, as Robert Dahl (Dahl 1971) put it. We asked three questions, and formed a scale (0-100) based on the responses. Asked how much people approve/disapprove of:

1. People participating in legal demonstrations.
2. People participating in an organization or group to try to solve community problems.
3. People working for campaigns for a political party or candidate.

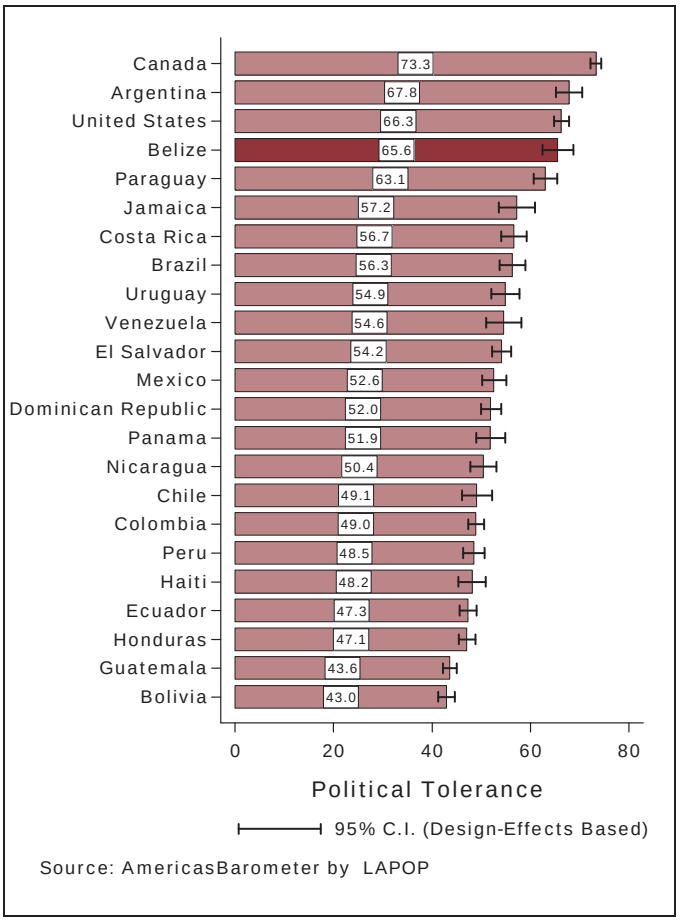
The results are shown in Figure 3. Once again, all nations in the Americas score on the "agree" end of the 0-100 continuum, but this time Belize is among the top third of countries. Interestingly, this places Belize higher than any of the other countries in the region, although there is no significant difference with Costa Rica (note the confidence intervals in the graph).

Figure 3
Support for the Right of Public Contestation in the Americas



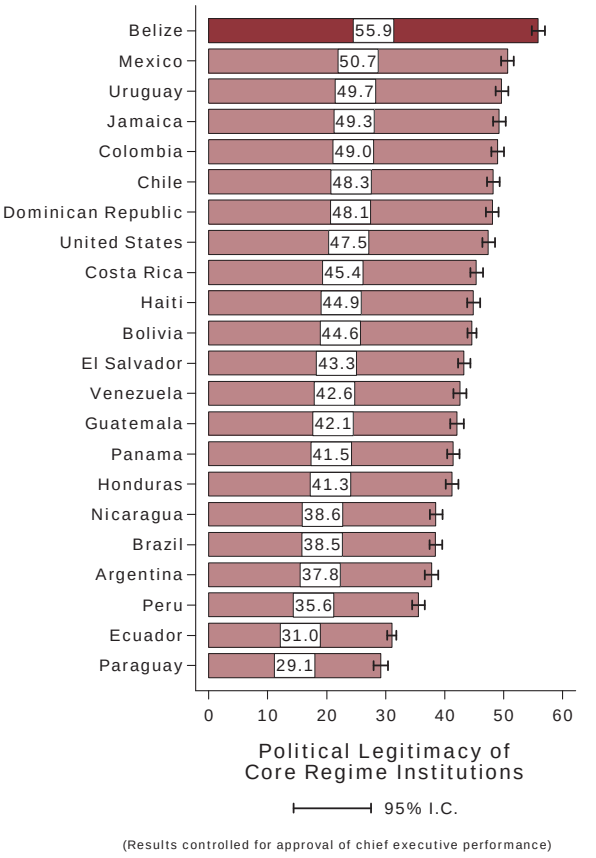
In many LAPOP studies, political tolerance has been explored. We have relied on a four-item scale in which respondents are asked the extent to which they would be willing to allow people "who only say bad things about our system of government" to have the right to vote, run for office, make speeches and engage in peaceful demonstrations. As can be seen in Figure 4, the Belizean population is especially tolerant when compared to other countries in the Americas. Belizeans are more tolerant, on average, than the citizens of any country in Central America.

Figure 4
Political Tolerance in The Americas



Finally, another key value is political legitimacy of the core institutions of government. A multi-item index, discussed in detail in the country reports already on line at www.AmericasBarometer.org, and explored in detail in a new book (Booth and Seligson forthcoming) was created. Figure 5 shows that Belize scores the highest of any country in the Americas, indicating very solid support for these institutions.

Figure 5
Political Legitimacy of Core Regime Institutions in the Americas



Conclusions

How to explain these results? Perhaps the British colonial tradition can explain why several aspects of Belizean political culture are so highly democratic. Of course, there are other former British colonies in the region, one of them, Jamaica, is also included in our sample. Jamaican values are quite close to those found in Belize, indicating that there may be some substance to the theory that colonial heritage marks countries over the long term, a thesis that has been explored for Jamaica and Costa Rica in one early study (Seligson 1987), and that is a major element of recent theories (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Fukuyama 2008). Further exploration of the Belize data set awaits our analysis.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009(No.8)[*]

Should Government Own Big Businesses and Industries? Views from the Americas

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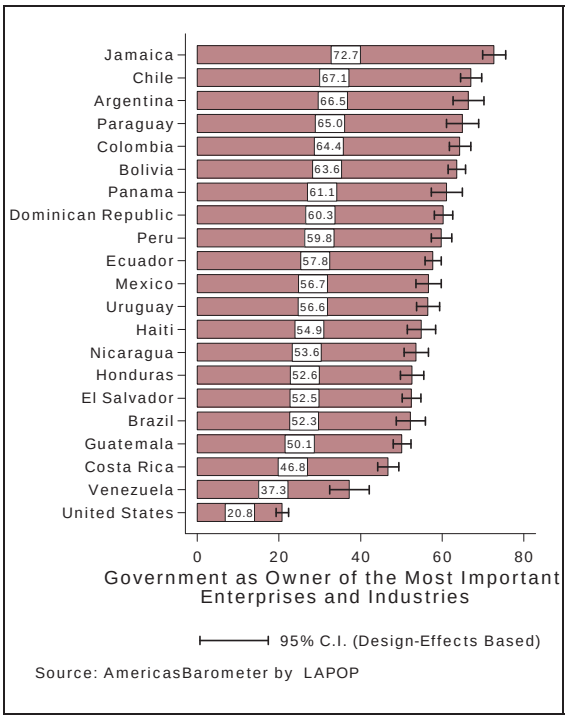
Privatization of state enterprises was a core recommendation of the so-called "Washington consensus" that emerged over a decade ago. While governments world-wide followed the recommendations, and countless state enterprises were privatized, the debate over the proper role of the government in the economy remains open (Franko 2007). This *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* report looks at citizens' preferences on this subject. A previous report (No. I0801) examined opinions on the role of the government in job creation. This paper focuses on government ownership of key enterprises.[1] We again query the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 34,469 respondents from 21 nations in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean were asked the same question[3]:

ROS1. The (nationality) government, instead of the private sector, should own the most important businesses and industries of the country. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Responses were given based on a 1-7 scale, where '1' meant "strongly disagree" and '7' meant "strongly agree."

These responses were then recalibrated on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[4] Figure 1, which displays national averages, shows no consensus in the Americas about the proper role of the government as owner of the most important enterprises and industries of the country.

Figure 1.
Average Support for Government Ownership of Key Enterprises in the Americas, 2008



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[3] This question was not asked in Canada.

[4] Non-response was 5.67% for the sample as a whole.

Countries such as Jamaica, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Colombia display the highest levels of support for government[5] ownership of key enterprises. In all these countries the average response rises above 60 points on our 0-100 scale. At the other extreme, in sharp contrast, we find Costa Rica, Venezuela and the United States, where the average score falls below 50 points. Support is especially low in the U.S., a country long noted for its preference for a limited role for the state.

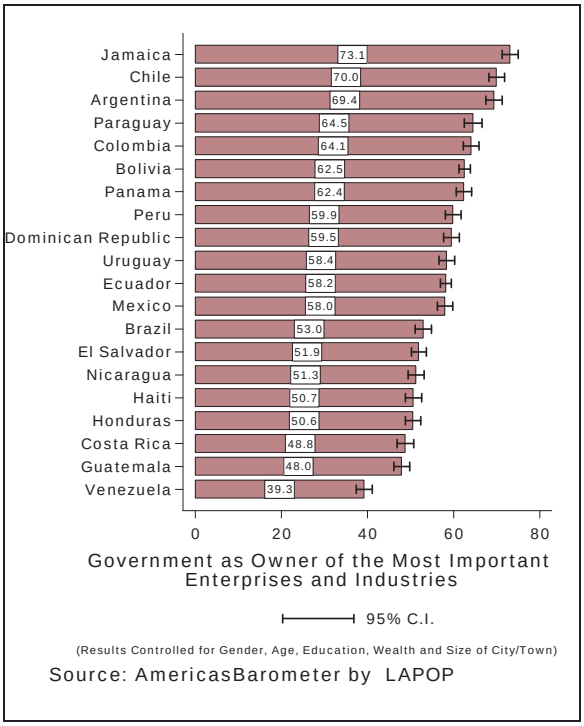
How much of this variation across countries emerges from the variation in socio-economic and demographic individual characteristics? In order to assess the effect of these characteristics we control for education gender, age, wealth, and city/town size. Given that citizens in the United States hold sharply higher levels on socioeconomic characteristics we exclude this country from the analysis.

Figure 2 shows how the results remain quite consistent with Figure 1, with averages varying by only few points higher or lower[6]. Therefore, there must be some other variables that help to explain variation across countries.

Do Contextual Factors Matter?

We speculate that the processes of privatization that took place in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1990s could have had an impact on citizens' perceptions of the proper role of the government as owner of enterprises and industries. Our speculation is motivated by the apparent paradox, shown in both Figures 1 and 2; countries that experienced high levels of privatization tend to be among those with the highest popular support for a major role of government. In contrast, the countries with the lowest support for government ownership of business and industry are those that retain large state sectors. Our guess is that citizens in the Americas "want what they do not have"[7].

Figure 2.
Average Support for Government Ownership of Key Enterprises after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



In order test this speculation, I deploy a measure of the privatizations that countries carried out in Latin America called the Privatization Index developed by Brune, Garrett and Kogul (2004). This index[8] computes the average revenues from the sale of state-owned assets from 1985-1999 as a percentage of the GDP of 1985[9]. Figure 3 displays the effects of this contextual factor as well as the effects of some other individual-level variables. The impact of each variable is shown

[5] In the Spanish-language version of the questionnaire, the word "el estado" (the state) is used since the term "el gobierno" (the government) refers to the incumbent administration rather than the state apparatus.

[6] An analysis of variance model was employed, with the socio-economic and demographic variables used as covariates.

[7] I thank Professor Juan Pablo Luna for his suggestions regarding this interpretation.

[8] It ranges from 0.2 percent in Uruguay to 37.6 percent of Bolivia.

[9] This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush, *et al*. 2004), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

graphically by a dot, which if falls to the right of the vertical "0" line implies a positive contribution and if to the left of the "0" line a negative impact. Only when the confidence intervals (the horizontal lines) do not overlap the vertical "0" line is the variable statistically significant (at .05 or better). The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Support for Government Ownership of Key Enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008: The Impact of Levels of Privatization

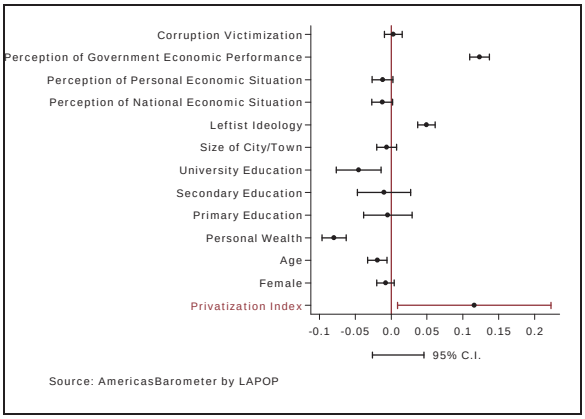


Figure 3 shows how the level of privatization in the 1990s has a strong statistically significant impact on individual support for government ownership in our contemporary survey. In countries where the sale of state-owned assets was relatively great, all other factors being equal, citizens today prefer a more active role of the government in owning the most important businesses and industries of the country. On the other hand, where privatization was carried out on a more limited scale (or not at all) citizens in those countries seem to long for the process to take place in their countries. In other words, it seems that governments in the Americas are "damned if they do, and damned if they don't."

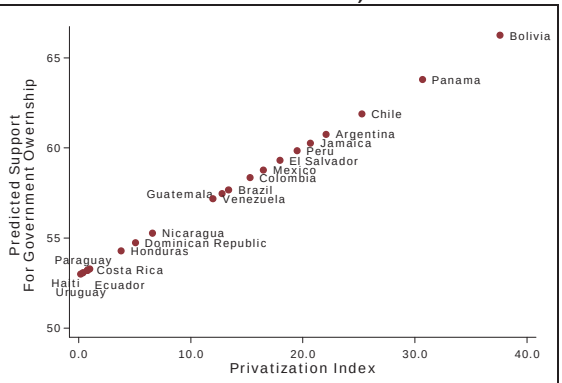
In order to have a more accurate and comprehensive picture of the determinants of support for the role of the government as owner of key enterprises, as Figure 3 shows, we included additional potential explanatory variables. Among those, it seems obvious to theorize that the more leftist an individual's ideology, the greater would be his/her support for state ownership. Inspection of Figure 3 confirms this expectation quite clearly[10]. Another potential factor influencing views on the proper role of the state ought to be perceptions of the government's performance in the areas of control of corruption and economic performance. At the same time, the prevailing economic conditions in a country may matter, though *a priori* it is difficult to guess whether poor conditions will induce individuals to call for greater or lesser state involvement, or have no effect at all.

The statistical analysis shows that the perception of economic performance of the government has an important impact on citizen attitudes toward the role of the state[11]. The more favorable this perception, the higher is support for the role of the government as owner of key industries and enterprises within the country. Perhaps not surprisingly, citizens who think that the government is failing to successfully fight poverty and unemployment likewise consider that it would be an inefficient owner of key enterprises. The belief among citizens that government is effective would presumably give it the credibility and legitimacy to run key enterprises, which may explain this relationship. Perceptions of the national and personal economic situation, however, do not have a statistically significant effect, and nor does corruption victimization.

Furthermore, holding constant the rest of variables, citizens with university level of education, older individuals, and wealthier citizens are less supportive of state-owned enterprises. Of these socioeconomic variables, personal wealth has the greatest impact, as Figure 3 depicts.

[10] The scale used here is the classic 1-10 measurement, in which the poles of "left" (1) and "right" (10) are placed on a continuum, and the respondent self-locates on this scale.
[11] The Perception of the Government Economic Performance Index was constructed from two items that asked to what extent people thought that the current administration fights poverty and unemployment.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Levels of Privatization on Support for Government Ownership of Key Enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



That national context matters is highlighted in Figure 4. This figure shows the fitted line from the multi-level regression analysis. The predicted line fits the countries' predicted support for government ownership according to the privatization index. The higher the levels of privatization in the 1990s, the higher the support for precisely the reversal of that policy (i.e., for the government to play a strong role as owner of the most important enterprises and industries in the county).

Policy Implications

As we saw in our previous *Insights* report, countries in the Americas are far from a consensus on the role that the state should play in the economy. With this report, we deepen our understanding of citizen views on this topic, finding that citizens' preferences on government intervention in the economy vary depending on the specific role that is examined. Citizens tend to be more supportive of a strong state in the realm of job creation (*Insights* I0801) compared to a strong state as owner of the key industries and enterprises. The mean support score, on a 0-100 basis, for a strong role for the state in job creation was 73.78, whereas it was 56.25 for the role of the state as owner of the productive sector.

The findings of this report suggest rather clearly dissatisfaction with the role that both private enterprises and the government are playing in the economy. Citizens in countries that carried out major privatizations during the 1990s seem to be disappointed; they would now like to see a greater presence of the state. In sharp contrast, where the government has retained control over more enterprises, citizens would support greater levels of privatization. These results suggest that for many citizens of the Americas "the grass is greener on the other side". A more empirically grounded explanation than that of a "fickle public" is dissatisfaction with government implementation of economic policy, whether that policy entails reducing or advancing state involvement in the economy.

This latter interpretation is supported by the findings with respect to perceptions of government performance. Where governments are perceived to have failed to deliver on fighting poverty and unemployment, citizens are skeptical about the ability of the state to perform well as owner of the most important industries and enterprises. If citizens see that the government is effective dealing with the main economic problems then the results here suggest they give it more space to determine how the economy should be managed.

The results also suggest, consistent with other analyses (Coleman 2001), that poor citizens, less well educated people, and those who consider themselves on the ideological left tend to favor a more expansive state.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive sense of the role of the state, in upcoming AmericasBarometer *Insights* reports we will look at additional issues regarding the role of the state in the economy.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009(No.9)[*]

Popular Support for Executive Limits on Opposition Parties

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One of the deepening concerns about democratization in Latin America is the apparently growing support for government executives who try to limit those who oppose "the people's will" (Hawkins 2003; Seligson 2007; Weyland 2001). Consequently, it is important to understand the extent to which citizens are willing to support executive limits on the opposition, given that the protection of such rights is central to the sustainability of liberal democracy (Gibson 2006). After all, when opposition parties are muzzled, competitive democracy no longer is possible.

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insights Series* looks at one of a series of questions on citizen support for the concentration of executive power asked in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project survey (others will be examined in future *Insights* studies) [1]. This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 23 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States[2]. Data from 21 of those national surveys are analyzed here.[3] A total of 34,469 respondents were asked the following question:

POP101. It is necessary for the progress of this country that our president [prime minister] limits the voice and vote of opposition parties. How much do you agree or disagree with that view?

Responses were based on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 7 meant "strongly agree."[4]

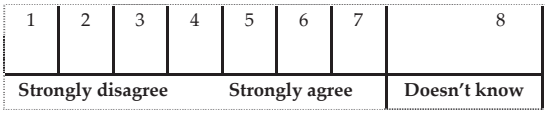
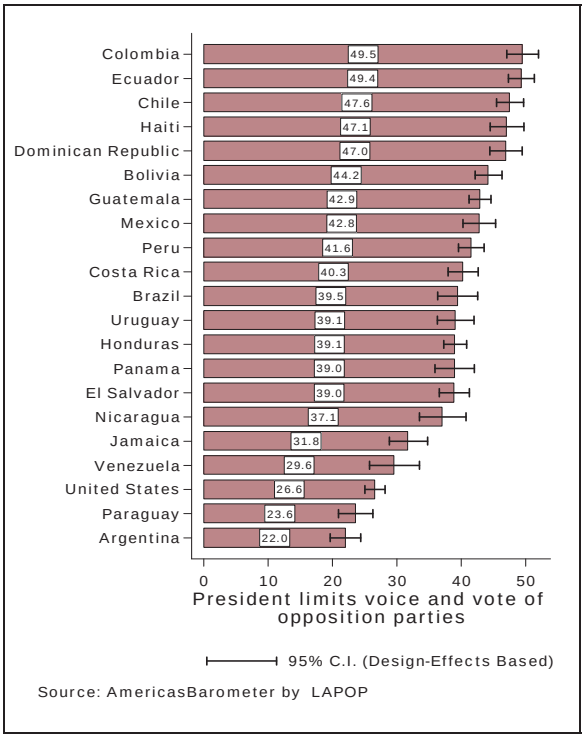


Figure 1.
Average Support for the President Limiting the Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties in the Americas, 2008



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[3] This question was not asked in Canada and the Belize data are not available as of this writing.

[4] In order to make comparisons across questions and survey waves simpler, these responses were recoded on a 0-100 scale.

Figure 1 exhibits national averages for the 21 countries in the sample. [5] We first note that in no country in the Americas does average support for limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties exceed 50 on a 0-100 scale. Yet, some countries come close, especially Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, and Haiti, which show the highest levels of support for concentration of executive power, having averages above 47 points in a scale 0-100. At the other extreme, the citizens of United States, Paraguay and Argentina express the lowest levels of such support in the Americas with 27, 24 and 22 points, respectively. It is worthy of note that Venezuela, a country where the executive concentration of power has increased noticeably in recent years (Hawkins 2003), and in which there is currently no opposition member in the national legislature, citizen support for the president in limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties is quite low (29.6) in comparison to the rest of the countries in the sample. This finding might well reflect citizen concern over the exclusion of opposition parties.

Predicting Support for the Executive Power in Limiting the Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties

What explains these differences across countries? We first examined contextual factors that might explain some of the national-level variation we found. However, multilevel analyses predicting support for the president in limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties with conventional national characteristics such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy did not reach statistical significance. It may be the case that other national-level characteristics (especially historical factors) explain the cross-national variation we found here, but such analyses are beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, to explain variation in attitudes toward executive dominance we focus here on individual-level factors, beginning with traditional socio-economic and demographic variables: age, levels of education, gender, wealth, and size of the city/town.[6]

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Support for Presidential Limits on the Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties in the Americas, 2008

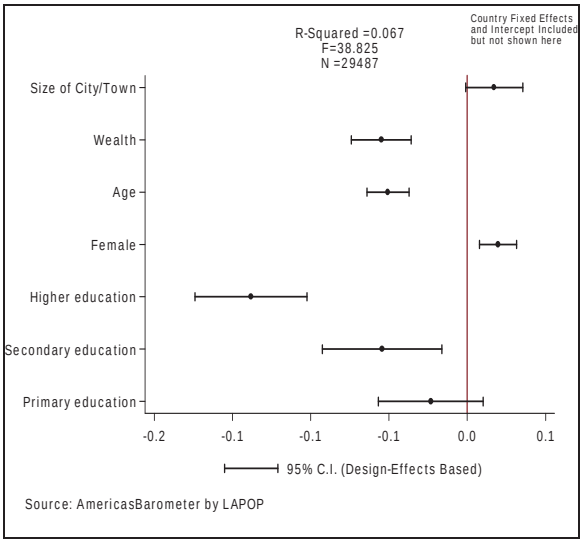


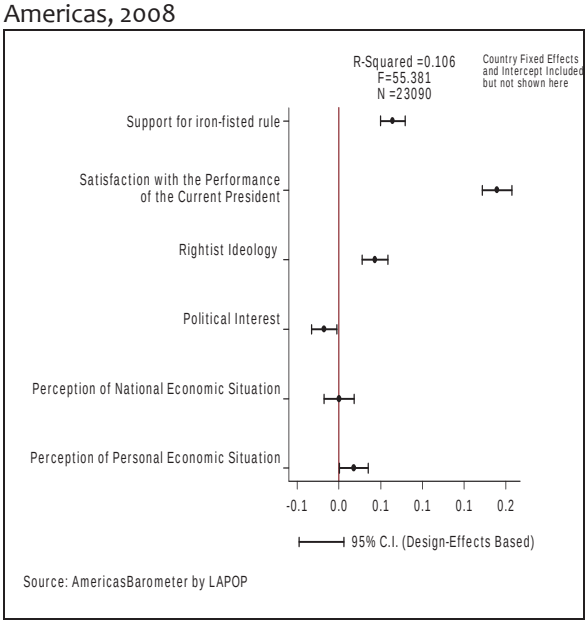
Figure 2 demonstrates the importance of socio-economic and demographic variables in explaining support for concentration of the executive power when related to limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant. For instance, females show higher levels of support for executive limits on the voice and vote of opposition parties. In contrast, *ceteris paribus*, wealthier, more educated, and older citizens show significantly lower levels of support for this undemocratic belief.

[5] Non-response was 13% for the sample as a whole.

[6] Because the average citizen in the United States scores very high on socio-economic characteristics compared to those in the rest of the countries in the sample, we exclude this case from the analysis.

It is noteworthy that those with higher (i.e., university) education demonstrate much lower support for limiting opposition parties compared to the other levels of education. The effect of all these socio-economic and demographic factors, however, is not large, as is shown in the figure. For that reason, we expect that political attitudes and behaviors also play a central role in support for concentration of executive power.

Figure 3.
Determinants of Average Support for Executive Limits on Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties in the Americas, 2008



It is possible that with the rise of governments with higher executive concentration of power in Latin America, there are some individuals who are "more likely to support strong leaders who offer weak support or even hostility to the checks, balances, and procedures that mark liberal democracy" (Seligson 2007: 93), because citizens may have been influenced by their leaders' public rhetoric, and thus supporting violations of liberal democracy. In this paper, we look at some of these issues. Specifically, we expect that those who have a higher support for government to rule with an "iron fist" and/or are especially satisfied with the performance of the current president will express greater support for executive concentration of power. Other variables included in this analysis are ideology,[7] political interest, and perception by the respondent of personal and national economic situation.

Figure 3 displays the influence of political attitudes on support for concentration of executive power. Not surprisingly, these results indicate that those who support a government with an "iron fist"[8] are those who also express higher support for the president in limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties, rendering support for the notion that those with "authoritarian personalities" are more willing to sustain undemocratic practices (Altemeyer 1996). Similarly, those who are more satisfied with the performance of the current president and who perceive more positively their personal economic situation tend to show higher support for the concentration of executive power.

Furthermore, those who place themselves on the right of the political spectrum are those who have a higher support for the president in limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties, but it could be that this relationship is dependent on the country (Seligson 2007). Yet a deeper evaluation of this relationship is beyond the scope of this paper. Finally, we look at the role of interest in politics. Those who show high interest in politics exhibit lower levels of support for the concentration of executive power. This is an encouraging finding since it suggests that the more politically attentive are not happy with restricting liberal democracy. It is noteworthy that all of these attitudinal variables are statistically significant even after controlling for country effects and the traditional socio-economic

[7] Ideology was measured by: **L1**. (Left-Right Scale) On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale?

[8] This attitude was measured by: "Do you think that our country needs a government with an iron fist, or that problems can be resolved with everyone's participation?" The item was recoded into (1) indicating support for a government with an iron fist and (0) indicating otherwise.

and demographic variables analyzed previously in this paper.[9]

Policy Implications

With the recent rise of governments increasing executive concentration of power in Latin America, it is important to know the extent to which citizens are willing to support the concentration of executive power. In this paper I found that countries vary sharply on this dimension, but in no country does the average citizen support these limitations. The analysis shows that females express higher levels of support for the concentration of executive power, while more educated, wealthier, and older people express lower levels of support.

The AmericasBarometer data further suggest that citizens, when satisfied with the incumbent government's performance in general and when perceiving more favorably their personal economic situation, are more willing to support limits on the voice and vote of the opposition. In other words, it appears that when people feel that their needs have been met, they are more willing to allow their national leaders to muzzle the opposition by imposing restrains on opposition parties. However, as the old saying goes, "you may get what you wish for," so that we find that in those countries in which civil rights and freedoms of expression have already been limited and there exists strong concentration of executive power, people express reduced support for illiberal democracy. This finding is well illustrated by the very low support for the president in limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties in Venezuela, quite possibly as a result of the dramatic political changes experienced there during the last decade in this country (Hawkins 2003).

In conclusion, higher support for executive power concentration seems to be driven by the satisfaction with incumbent government performance as well as high support for authoritarian values. However, once the concentration of executive power is furthered and freedoms and rights of minorities are hindered, people's support for these limits decline, as revealed by the Venezuelan case.[10]

The results in this paper also demonstrate that higher levels of education lower citizen's support for limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties, highlighting the dominant role that education plays in reducing intolerant attitudes (Golebiowska 1995; Orces 2008; Seligson, Cordova, and Moreno 2007). Therefore, it is important that democracy promotion programs in the region aim to increase levels of education that in turn will allow for a more democratic political culture in the region.

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[9] Refer to the Appendix for a detailed display of those effects.

[10] An example of Venezuelans' decline of support for Chavez is illustrated by the results of the recent regional and municipal elections taken place on Nov 23, 2008. The opposition won 5 states, where the majority of the population resides, compared to 2 states in 2004. See http://www.infolatam.com/entrada/venezuela_oposicion_se_atribuye_un_triun-11367.html

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Appendix

Table 1. Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Support for Presidential Limits on the Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Primary education	-0.023	(-1.37)
Secondary education	-0.054*	(-2.79)
Higher education	-0.138*	(-7.59)
Female	0.020*	(3.26)
Age	-0.051*	(-7.43)
Wealth	-0.055*	(-5.63)
Size of City/Town	0.017	(1.85)
Guatemala	-0.014	(-1.47)
El Salvador	-0.030*	(-2.85)
Honduras	-0.038*	(-3.79)
Nicaragua	-0.049*	(-3.57)
Costa Rica	-0.010	(-0.96)
Panama	-0.022	(-1.73)
Colombia	0.038*	(3.38)
Ecuador	0.057*	(4.02)
Bolivia	0.007	(0.51)
Peru	-0.003	(-0.26)
Paraguay	-0.108*	(-10.26)
Chile	0.038*	(3.64)
Uruguay	-0.018	(-1.63)
Brazil	-0.026*	(-2.04)
Venezuela	-0.074*	(-5.14)
Argentina	-0.119*	(-11.02)
Dominican Republic	0.019	(1.70)
Haiti	0.002	(0.14)
Jamaica	-0.070*	(-5.64)
Constant	0.013	(1.31)
R-Squared	0.067	
Number of Obs.	29487	
* p<0.05 Education level of Reference: None		Country of Reference: Mexico

Table 2. Determinants of Average Support for Presidential Limits on the Voice and Vote of Opposition Parties in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Perception of Personal Economic Situation	0.018*	(2.05)
Perception of National Economic Situation	0.000	(0.01)
Political Interest	-0.018*	(-2.27)
Rightist Ideology	0.043*	(5.54)
Satisfaction with the Performance of the Current President	0.190*	(21.11)
Support for iron-fisted rule	0.064*	(8.57)
Age	-0.070*	(-9.46)
Wealth	-0.056*	(-5.53)
Female	0.025*	(3.74)
Education	-0.100*	(-10.73)
Size of City/Town	0.011	(1.16)
Guatemala	-0.016	(-1.52)
El Salvador	-0.023*	(-2.26)
Honduras	-0.028*	(-2.78)
Nicaragua	-0.021	(-1.32)
Costa Rica	-0.014	(-1.15)
Panama	-0.004	(-0.27)
Colombia	0.011	(0.93)
Ecuador	0.047*	(3.21)
Bolivia	0.015	(1.04)
Peru	0.007	(0.63)
Paraguay	-0.075*	(-6.67)
Chile	0.037*	(3.47)
Uruguay	-0.020	(-1.72)
Brazil	-0.027*	(-2.15)
Venezuela	-0.061*	(-4.19)
Argentina	-0.117*	(-10.13)
Dominican Republic	0.005	(0.39)
Haiti	0.057*	(4.36)
Jamaica	-0.051*	(-4.01)
Constant	0.041*	(4.14)
R-Squared	0.106	

Number of Obs.	23090	
* p<0.05 Country of Reference: Mexico		

*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.10)**

Demand-Making on Local Governments[1]

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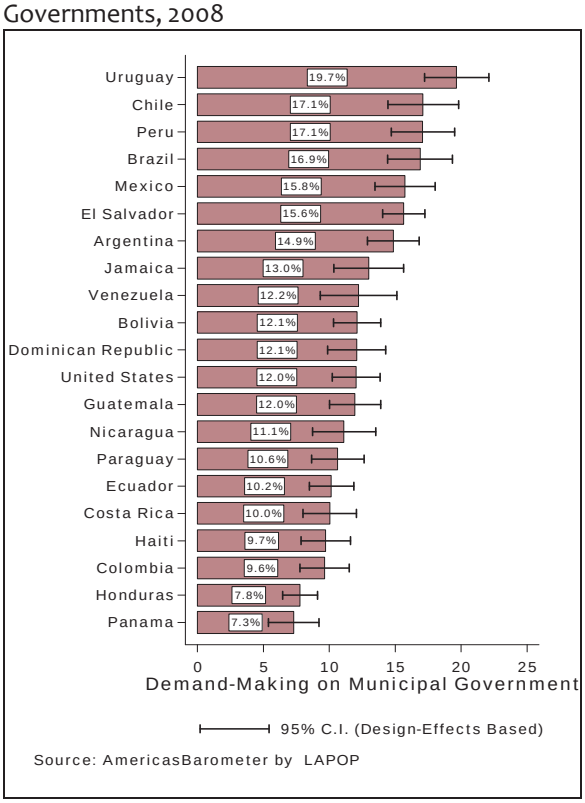
One of the most important benefits of the decentralization of the state is, arguably, increased effectiveness in the provision of public goods and services to satisfy citizens' demands. By "bringing the government closer to the people," it is expected that subnational officials will more precisely identify the specific needs of culturally and geographically diverse groups of individuals (see Oates 1972; USAID 2000; UNDP 2002). For this increased effectiveness to occur, at a minimum citizens must exercise their right to voice at the subnational level, and subnational governments need to be able to allocate fiscal resources to best satisfy citizens' needs and demands. Only then can local governments be considered to be accountable to citizens.

If the above statements are correct, we should anticipate higher levels of citizen demand-making on municipal governments in those countries with higher levels of fiscal decentralization. This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* attempts to test this hypothesis by using the 2008 data base made possible by the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 22 nations in the Western hemisphere.[2] Here we explore the responses given by 34,469 participants in the 21 nations where the following question was asked:[3]

NP2. Have you sought help from or made a request of any office, official or municipal councilor of the municipal government within the past 12 months?

Figure 1.
Percentage of the Population who Sought Help From or Made a Request of Municipal Governments, 2008



[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This question was not asked in Canada.

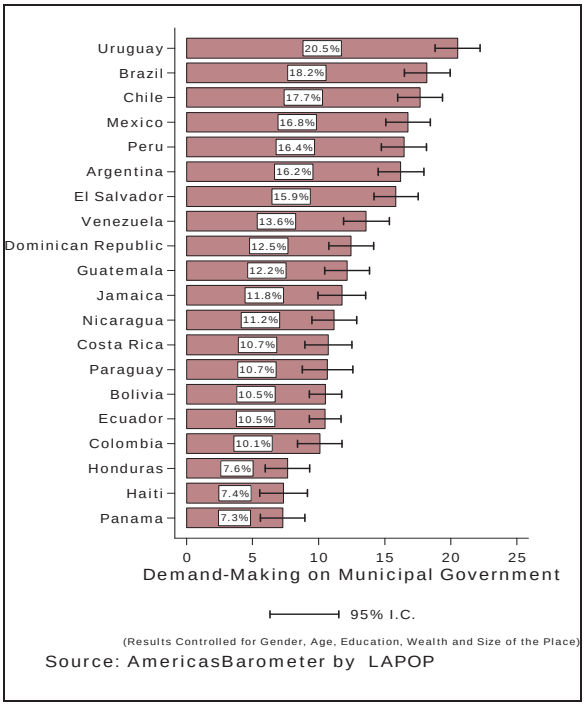
National averages are depicted in Figure 1. Answers were initially coded as '1' if the respondent answered "Yes" and '2' if the responded answered "No." The results were then recoded on a 0-100 basis to compute the percentage of individuals who sought help or made a request in the 12 months prior to the survey.[4]

It is striking to note, first, that on average, only 12.7 percent of the total adult (voting age) population has requested help from their municipalities in the past 12 months in the Americas. This rate is, however, two points higher than the percentage of individuals who have participated in municipal meetings in the same period.[5] Second, in this context of low demand-making, there is significant variation across countries. At one extreme, the countries with the highest percentage of municipal demand-making are Uruguay, Chile and Peru, with 19.7, 17.1 and 17.1 percent respectively. At the other extreme, the countries with the lowest percentage of municipal demand-making are Colombia, Honduras and Panama, with 9.6, 7.8 and 7.3 percent respectively.

Do these national averages of levels of demand-making on municipal governments hold after controlling for socio-economic and demographic individual characteristics? To respond to this question, we control for sex, age, education, wealth and size of town as control variables, and we eliminate the U.S. case in part because this country has such high levels of socio-economic development compared to the others, that any statistical analysis would be affected by this "outlier," and in part because the LAPOP project predominantly focuses on policy relevant questions for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Figure 2 shows that after controlling for socio-economic and demographic individual characteristics, the country ranking somewhat varies relative to the ranking displayed in Figure 1. What other factors might matter in explaining this variation across countries? To answer that question we fit a multi-level model in order to determine not only the impact of individual socio-economic and demographic characteristics, but also the effect of variation in the levels of fiscal decentralization across countries.[6] If the expectations set up at the beginning of this paper are true, we would expect to see higher citizen demand-making precisely in the local governments of those countries that are relatively more decentralized in fiscal terms.

Figure 2.
Percentage of Demand-Making on Municipal Governments after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



[4] The non-response rate to this question was less than one percent.

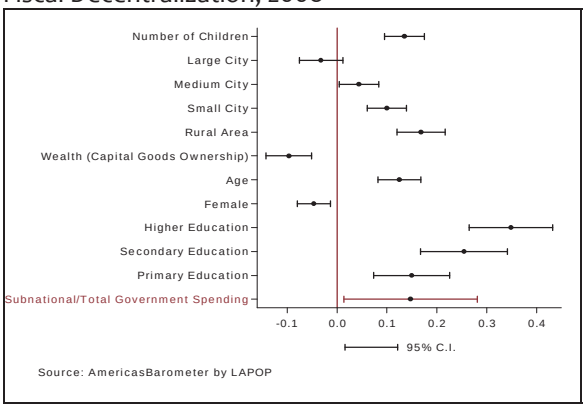
[5] See the report titled "Citizen Participation in Municipal Meetings" in this series.

[6] This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

Fiscal Decentralization and Demand-Making on Municipal Governments

Finding the most appropriate measure of fiscal decentralization has not been uncontroversial (see Montero and Samuels 2004). Some scholars define fiscal decentralization as the capacity of subnational governments to generate their own revenues through taxes in addition to monetary transfers from the national government. Others study the level of subnational expenditures. In this study, we follow Daniel Treisman's (2007) approach that uses arguably the most popular measure of fiscal decentralization, which is the oft-cited share of subnational governments in total government expenditure.[7] Thus, we employ both the Inter-American Development Bank Surveys (Daughters and Harper 2007) and the IMF's Government Finance Statistics (Edwards 2007).[8] We then fit a multi-level model with the socio-economic and demographic characteristics as individual-level factors and our measure of fiscal decentralization (or decentralization of expenditure) as the country-level factor. Among the socio-demographic characteristics we now include the respondent's number of children, given that we expect that individuals with more children will more often request goods or services from their municipalities.[9] Results from the regression are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Demand-Making on Municipal Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Fiscal Decentralization, 2008



In the figure above, each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on demand-making on municipal governments is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive contribution, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative contribution. Statistically significant contributors are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot; only when the confidence intervals do not overlap the vertical "0" line is the factor significant (at .05 or better). The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

The results displayed in Figure 3 show that as the number of children increases, the likelihood of demand-making on municipal governments augments as well. Holding all other factors constant, this pattern is also reflected as individuals grow older and also when they achieve higher levels of education. Moreover, men are more likely to make demands on their municipalities in comparison to women, but wealthier individuals are *less* likely to seek help from municipal officials. Finally, residents in rural areas, small and medium cities are more likely to be active in requesting public goods and services from municipalities than people who live in larger towns or the capital city.

The most important finding for this paper is, perhaps, the significant and positive effect of

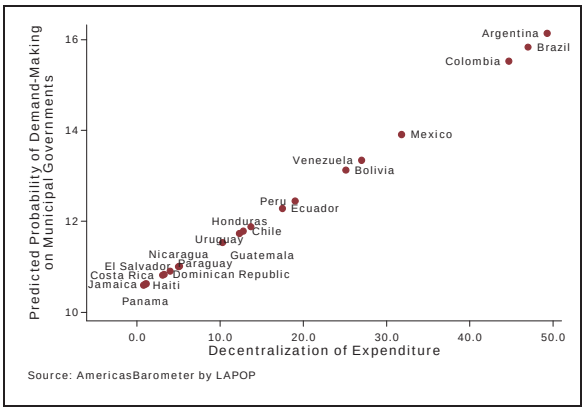
[7] This index is controversial, but we use it in part to be consistent with the literature and also because we could not find other suitable measures of fiscal decentralization.

[8] Measures of decentralization of expenditure were not available for Haiti in either source. For this reason we use an indicator of decentralization of revenue as a proxy (see Smucker 2000). Excluding Haiti from the analysis did not change the results.

[9] Depending on the level of decentralization, municipalities may be in charge of giving birth certificates, education, health care, etc. This relationship, however, is not tested in the model.

fiscal decentralization on the level of demand-making on municipal governments. The contribution of this finding to the existing literature is two-fold. First, countries with higher levels of fiscal decentralization experience a higher level of demand-making. It is important to recognize, of course, that this connection does not immediately imply an improvement in the provision of public goods and services by local governments. To determine whether fiscal decentralization increases satisfaction with the provision of municipal public goods, a future paper in the *Insight Series* will conduct an additional multi-level analysis to explore this hypothesis. Second, while it seems at least possible that citizens' requests on their local governments increase as a result of decentralization, the converse may also be true. Hence, the question becomes: does demand-making increase decentralization, does decentralization increase demand-making, or both? This question needs to be explored further, but it is beyond the scope of this report. Whatever the direction of causality may be, this study finds a strong and positive correlation between citizens' demands on local governments and fiscal decentralization. Based on this analysis, Figure 4 displays predicted values per country of demand-making at varying levels of fiscal decentralization, all else being equal.

Figure 4.
Fiscal Decentralization and Demand-Making on Municipal Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The figure above shows the fitted line from the multi-level logit regression. It is important to note that the predicted line above fits the countries that were outliers in a regular scatter plot. This is the reason why the placement of Colombia and Uruguay, for example, appear to be inconsistent with the rankings presented in Figures 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the placement of most countries (the non-outliers) is consistent with what we observed in the national averages depicted earlier, stressing the robustness of our findings.

Policy Implications

The impact of decentralization on local government responsiveness remains largely unknown in the social sciences literature. In this paper, we argue that fiscal decentralization is likely to increase the effectiveness of the link between governmental offices and individual needs. Specifically, decentralization of public expenditure seems to increase demand-making to democratic local governments. On the other hand, citizen demands at local offices may also play a fundamental role in increasing the fiscal decentralization needed by municipalities to best operate.

At the individual level, educational achievement is the variable that showed the most substantive effect on demand-making at the local level of government –a finding that is consistent with the effects of education on citizen participation in municipal meetings. This may be in part due to the greater ability of educated citizens to recognize their rights, and possibly in part to a greater amount of needs. Local policy-makers may want to promote greater participation of individuals with lower levels of education in order to better serve their needs. The challenge, however, is that limited resources often are incapable of meeting the demand, leading to frustration and lack of satisfaction, a topic that will be studied in a future *Insight* report.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.11)[*]

Police Abuse in Latin America

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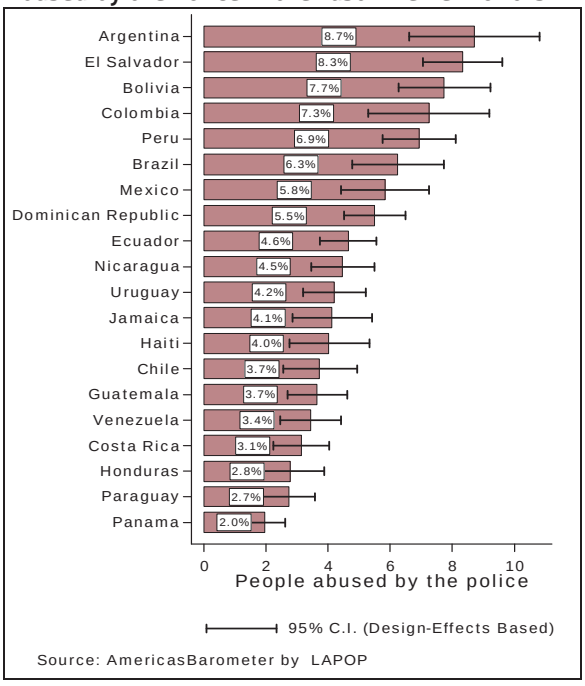
The last great wave of democratization in Latin America not only brought change in electoral institutions, parties, legislatures, and presidential offices, but it also resulted in significant reforms in the states' security apparatuses. Policing institutions play a fundamental role in any kind of regime; in both democratic and authoritarian contexts, the police carry the burden of keeping order and internal security under control (Marenin 1996). The transitions to democracy in several Latin American countries entailed the reform of policing institutions in order to help guarantee and promote the rule of law under democratic rules (see Fruhling and Tulchin 2003). As Bailey and Godson (2000) assert, the police play a fundamental role in democratization as new regimes need at least minimal levels of security and order, but need to achieve that within the context of protecting human rights (Marenin 1996; Cruz 2006).

Much of police reform in the Americas has been aimed at changing the ways in which the police interact with citizens (Bailey and Dammert 2005). As the police were one of the protagonists of political repression during the period of authoritarian regimes, one of the objectives of the reforms has been to reduce police brutality and thereby to increase public trust in the police. To what extent has this objective been accomplished? To what extent do police institutions mistreat or abuse their citizens in the pursuit of security and order?

The AmericasBarometer survey provides an opportunity to assess police behavior in the Americas from the perspective of voting age citizens[1]. This report in the AmericasBarometer *Insights* series seeks to answer these questions based in the 2008 database. The wording of the question used to measure police abuse is as follows: **VIC27**. In the past 12 months has any police officer abused you verbally, physically or assaulted you?[If "yes"] How many times?

Figure 1.
Percentage of People Reporting Having Been Abused by the Police in the Last Twelve Months



[*] The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found in http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/AmericasBarometerInsightsSeries. The data on which they are based can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets.

The survey containing the question about police mistreatment was carried out in twenty Latin American and Caribbean countries[2], and it was answered by 32,853 respondents.[3]

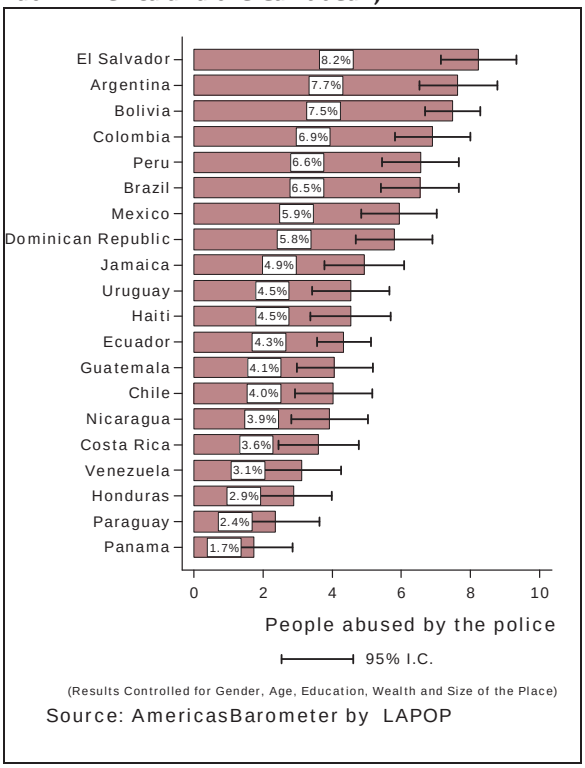
Figure 1 shows the percentage of people who have been victim of police mistreatment at least once in the last twelve months. As can be seen, there are important differences in the percentage of population abused by the police across the region. Argentina, El Salvador, Bolivia, and Colombia report the highest levels of police abuse. In these countries more than 7 percent of the population reported having been a victim of police mistreatment. In most of the countries police misconduct varies between 3 and 7 percent. However, in Honduras, Paraguay, and Panama, respondents reported less than 3 percent of abuse from police agents. Of course, these data need to be placed in the perspective of the presence of the police force. In countries with very low per capita number of police officers, for example, the opportunity for police abuse, ceterius paribus, is lower than when the police forces are denser. This is also a factor that varies within nations, with police forces usually concentrated more in urban than rural areas.

Police abuse is measured broadly here and the differences in the results account for the frequency of such behavior in a twelve-month period. The differences we find across countries, however, might be the result of demographic patterns that influence the outcome per country. In order to control for those characteristics, the results were examined net of variables like age, gender, education, and wealth. A new ranking is showed in Figure 2.

As can be seen, the results do not change substantively except for the fact that El Salvador now has the dubious distinction of topping the list.

Examined more closely, these results raise important questions about the scope of police reforms in some countries. In El Salvador, as well as in Argentina, efforts were made to carry out police reforms after the transitions to democracy. The Salvadoran reforms have been praised as one of the most comprehensive and ambitious sets in the region (Call 2003), whereas some authors point to the Argentinean efforts as clearly unsuccessful (Hinton 2006). In any case, these results suggest that in both countries, as well as in several other Latin American countries, there is still a long way to go in order to reduce police misconduct against citizens.

Figure 2.
Percentage of People Who Report Having Been Abused by the Police in the Last Twelve Months, Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



[2] Funding for the 2008 series mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

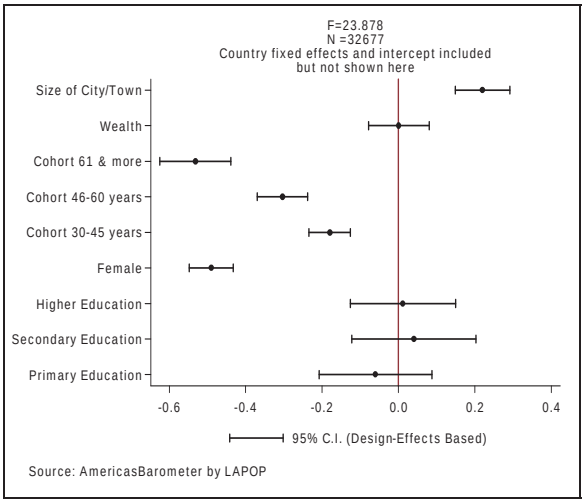
[3] The non-response rate for this question was 2.6%.

Factors Associated with Police Abuse

Which factors are associated with victimization perpetrated by the police in Latin America? Research in different parts of the world has shown that police abuse is more frequent against some segments of the population. Young urban males are, for example, the most frequent victims of police action in countries as different as Brazil, Chile, Nigeria, and Russia (Ramos 2006; Gerber and Mendelson 2008). Also, police misconduct is usually more common against political opponents of the regime (Marenin 1996).

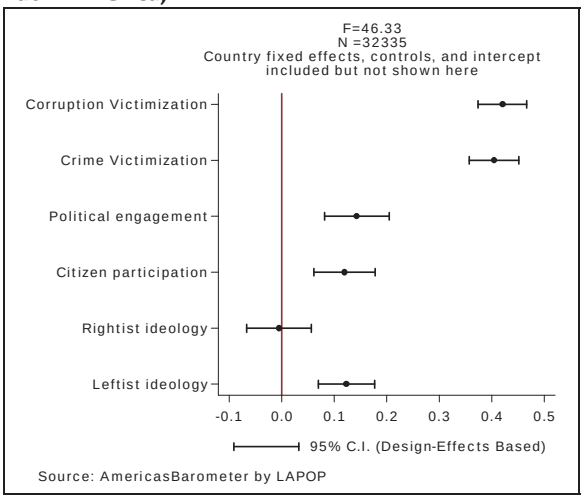
A logistic regression performed on the Americas Barometer 2008 database[4] shows that gender, age, and the size of city, are all socio-demographic variables associated with police abuse (see Figure 3).[5] Furthermore, we find that corruption, crime victimization, citizen participation, and political engagement[6] were also associated with misconduct perpetrated by the police (see Figure 4). In the case of citizen participation and political engagement, the results show that those respondents who were more active in civic participation and more engaged politically turn out also to be more likely to be victims of police abuse, suggesting that there may be a political motive to the abuse (these results are already controlled for socio-economic and demographic factors).

Figure 3.
Demographic and Socioeconomic Determinants of Victimization by Police Abuse in Latin America, 2008



In fact, the results also show that political ideology plays a role in police abuse. People that identified themselves as leaning toward the political left reported to be more likely to have been victimized by the police, than those of centrist and rightist ideology (centrist ideology is the base group and not showed in the regression). This finding also suggests that police behavior is still motivated by political and ideological stances in Latin America, long after the days of right-wing military regimes have passed.

Figure 4.
Determinants of Victimization by Police Abuse in Latin America, 2008



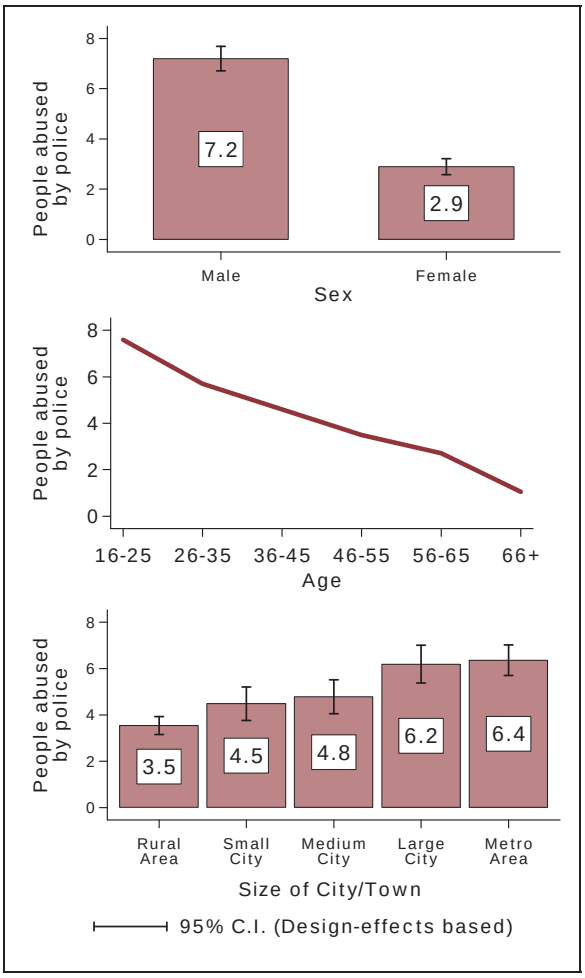
[4] All statistical analyses reported in this article were conducted using Stata v10, and they are adjusted to consider the effects of complex sample design.

[5] Dummy variables for each country were included, using Uruguay as base-category.

[6] Political engagement is a composite variable created using two items included in the AmericasBarometer. These items are: **POL1**. How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?, and **POL2**. How often do you discuss politics with other people: Daily; A few times a week; A few times a month; Rarely or Never? The responses were recoded in a 0-to-100 scale, and then averaged out. A 100 score represents the higher level of political engagement.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the nature of the relationships between some significant variables and the variable of abuse by the police. As shown in Figure 5, females are substantially less likely to victimized by the police than males: 7.2% of males have been victims of police misconduct, whereas only 2.9% of females have been victims. Also, as expected, young people are more frequently abused than older people. In this case, it is important to note that people under 25 years of age tend to be victimized by the police nearly four times more than people older than 66 years.

Figure 5.
Percentage of People Abused by Police according to Sex, Age, and Size of Town, in Latin America, 2008



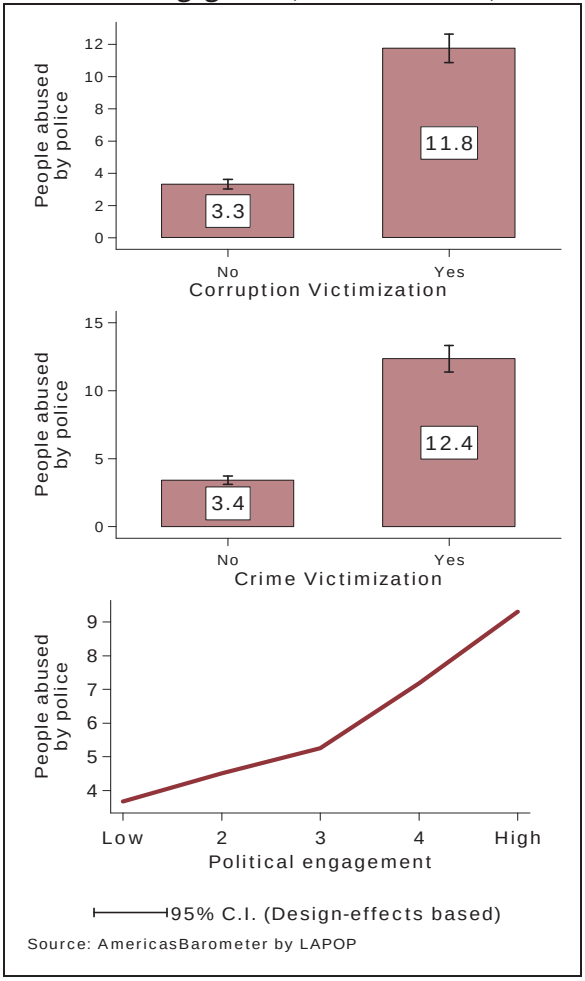
The size of city where the respondent lives also increases the likelihood of mistreatment by the police: the results show that, holding other variables constant, police misconduct against citizen increases in larger cities; in the raw data, 6.4% of the people who live in metropolitan areas have been victimized by the police, against 3.5% of people who live in rural areas.

All of these results confirm what other studies have suggested concerning police behavior in the streets. Police tend to victimize males and young people in urban areas more than any other demographic group. This is because most of the crime fighting effort is directed against what is usually considered the typical delinquent profile.

But more interesting is the relationship between other types of victimization and being victim of police misconduct. The graphs in Figure 6 show that people victimized by corruption and by crime are more likely to be also victimized by the police. There are two ways of explaining this relationship. One is that people victimized by crime or corruption tend to get in contact with police more frequently than the rest of citizens; this relationship exposes them to more mistreatment than the average citizen. The other explanation—which does not necessarily rule out the former— points to the fact that some of the reported corruption and crime victimization might be actually perpetrated by the police. Police mistreatment can also be a bribe or an assault perpetrated by a police officer.

In any case, the likelihood of being victim of police mistreatment not only rests on other kinds of victimization. It also seems to be associated to the political activity of citizens. As pointed out before, people with higher levels of political involvement tend to be more frequently abused by the police than the citizen who is not involved in politics. Such results suggest that police behavior is still influenced by political considerations in some countries in Latin America.

Figure 6.
Percentage of People Abused by Police according to Corruption Victimization, Crime Victimization, and Political Engagement, in Latin America, 2008



Policy and Program Implications

These findings point to two important policy implications. First, they show the value of using an instrument of academic research to assess programs of institutional strengthening. Police reforms have taken place in several countries in the region, and scientific surveys like the AmericasBarometer 2008 can serve as a tool to evaluate, from the perspective of citizens, the impact of such reforms. In other words, surveys can be useful to evaluate and restructure policies regarding security institutions. Secondly, the results show that further work is needed with the police forces in Latin America. Despite several reforms in the security sector, some countries still need reform in their security apparatuses. In some countries, police forces are still attached to partisan politics and to unprofessional practices in the fight against crime. Police reforms should be deepened and extended across the region in order to advance democracy.

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Appendices

Table 1.
Socio-Demographic Determinants of Police Mistreatment in the Americas, 2008

	Has police abused you?	
	Coefficients	(t)
Primary Education	-0.060	(-0.79)
Secondary Education	0.041	(0.49)
Higher Education	0.012	(0.17)
Female	-0.490*	(-16.74)
Cohort 30-45	-0.180*	(-6.47)
Cohort 46-60	-0.303*	(-9.02)
Cohort 61 and more	-0.532*	(-11.23)
Wealth	0.001	(0.03)
Size of City/Town	0.220*	(6.06)
Mexico	0.061	(1.69)
Guatemala	-0.020	(-0.51)
El Salvador	0.136*	(4.41)
Honduras	-0.091*	(-2.00)
Nicaragua	-0.020	(-0.52)
Costa Rica	-0.045	(-1.16)
Panama	-0.183*	(-4.17)
Colombia	0.094*	(2.45)
Ecuador	-0.010	(-0.22)
Bolivia	0.137*	(2.97)
Peru	0.078*	(2.43)
Paraguay	-0.100*	(-2.83)
Chile	-0.032	(-0.73)
Brazil	0.082*	(2.24)
Venezuela	-0.069	(-1.75)
Argentina	0.107*	(2.87)
Dominican Republic	0.061	(1.87)
Haiti	-0.007	(-0.16)
Jamaica	0.017	(0.40)
Constant	-3.245*	(-84.11)
F	23.88	
Number of observations	32677	
* p<0.05		

Table 2.
Determinants of Police Mistreatment in the Americas, 2008

	Has police abused you?	
	Coefficients	(t)
Leftist ideology	0.116*	(4.27)
Rightist ideology	-0.006	(-0.18)
Citizen participation	0.113*	(3.82)
Political engagement	0.135*	(4.35)
Crime Victimization	0.405*	(16.97)
Corruption Victimization	0.421*	(17.77)
Primary Education	-0.074	(-0.95)
Secondary Education	-0.034	(-0.40)
higher Education	-0.133	(-1.84)
Female	-0.424*	(-13.87)
Cohort 30-45	-0.229*	(-7.92)
Cohort 46-60	-0.330*	(-9.42)
Cohort 61 and more	-0.485*	(-10.09)
Wealth	-0.061	(-1.52)
Size of City/Town	0.148*	(4.02)
Mexico	0.018	(0.50)
Guatemala	-0.058	(-1.43)
El Salvador	0.106*	(3.16)
Honduras	-0.092*	(-2.17)
Nicaragua	-0.036	(-0.91)
Costa Rica	-0.035	(-0.89)
Panama	-0.111*	(-2.65)
Colombia	0.114*	(2.94)
Ecuador	-0.066	(-1.39)
Bolivia	0.042	(0.82)
Peru	0.031	(0.88)
Paraguay	-0.128*	(-3.54)
Chile	0.010	(0.24)
Brazil	0.096*	(2.48)
Venezuela	-0.059	(-1.50)
Argentina	0.074	(1.86)
Dominican Republic	0.027	(0.78)
Haiti	-0.105*	(-2.23)
Jamaica	0.016	(0.38)
Constant	-3.466*	(-82.26)
F	46.33	
Number of Obs.	32335	
* p<0.05		

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.12)[*]

Do Parties Listen to the People? Views from the Americas

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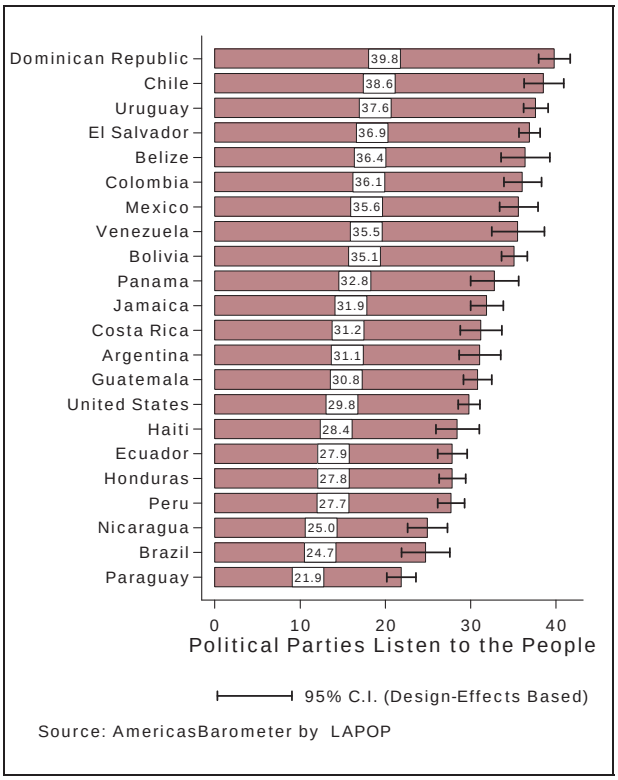
Both old and new democracies are facing growing political dissatisfaction characterized by a lack of confidence in political institutions (UNDP 2004, Dalton 2004, Torcal and Montero 2006). This distrust is especially evident in the case of political parties. In order to better understand this type of dissatisfaction, the *AmericasBarometer Insighst Series* reports have analyzed several facets of citizens' perceptions of political parties. Here we look at citizens' opinions concerning whether or not political parties listen to the people.[1] We again query the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 36,021 respondents from 22 nations in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean were asked the same question[3]:

EPP3. How often do political parties listen to the average person?

Responses were given based on a 1-7 scale, where '1' meant "not at all" and '7' meant "a lot."

These responses were then recoded on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[4] Figure 1, which displays national averages, shows a strikingly negative perception of political parties as institutions that listen to the people. The average level falls below 40 points in every country.

Figure 1.
Average Belief that Political Parties Listen to the People in the Americas, 2008



Countries such as the Dominican Republic, Chile, Uruguay, El Salvador Belize, and Colombia display the highest mean beliefs that parties listen to the people. In all these countries the average response falls between 35 and 40 points on our 0-100 scale. At the other extreme, we find Nicaragua, Brazil, and Paraguay, where the average score falls below 25 points. It is quite evident that citizens in the Americas do not believe that political parties are listening to the people.

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[*] The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This question was not asked in Canada.

[4] Non-response was 4.51% for the sample as a whole.

Explaining Belief that Parties Listen to the People

What explains variation in the belief that political parties listen to the average person? We will focus on the individual characteristics of respondents in our surveys to answer this question.[5] As a first step we take into account the following socio-economic and demographic characteristics: education, gender, age, wealth, and city/town size. In order to assess their influence on our dependent variable, we employ an OLS linear regression model.[6] Given that citizens in the United States have sharply higher levels on socio-economic characteristics, we exclude this country from the analysis.[7]

Figure 2. Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Support for the Belief that Political Parties Listen to the People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

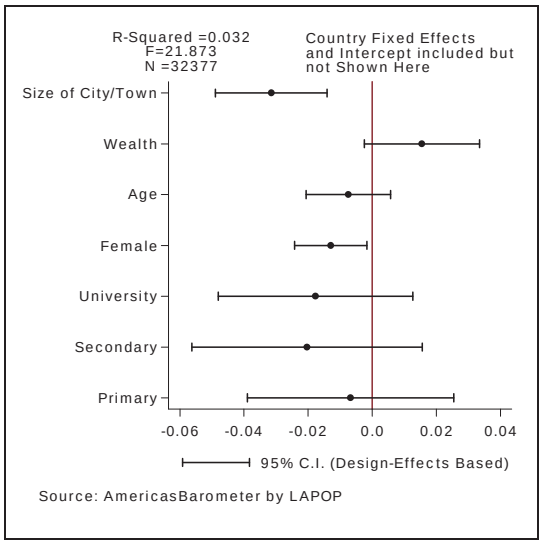


Figure 2 shows the influence of these individual-level socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the belief that political parties listen to the average person in Latin America and the Caribbean. Only two of the variables considered here are statistically significant, and the size of their effects is relatively small. This significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 when it falls to the left it indicates a negative contribution. In this model, size of the city and gender are statistically significant contributors. In this sense, people living in rural areas or small towns tend to agree more that political parties listen to the people than people living in large cities, *ceteris paribus*. Females, also holding constant the rest of variables, are more skeptical than men about this belief. Levels of wealth, education or age do not make a difference.

Given that socioeconomic characteristics seem to have a small impact on the belief that parties listen to the people, we need to add more variables in order to have a more reasonable and accurate idea of the determinants of support for this belief. We therefore turn to an assessment of select political evaluations and attitudes. In previous *Insights Series* reports, we assessed the expectation that citizens' trust in political parties is related to government performance. Drawing on this same basic argument, Figure 3 displays the results of a new model intended to explain citizens' evaluations of parties as incorporating citizen input.[8]

The effects of these new variables in the model are particularly notable when contrasted with those we found for education, age, and city/town size.

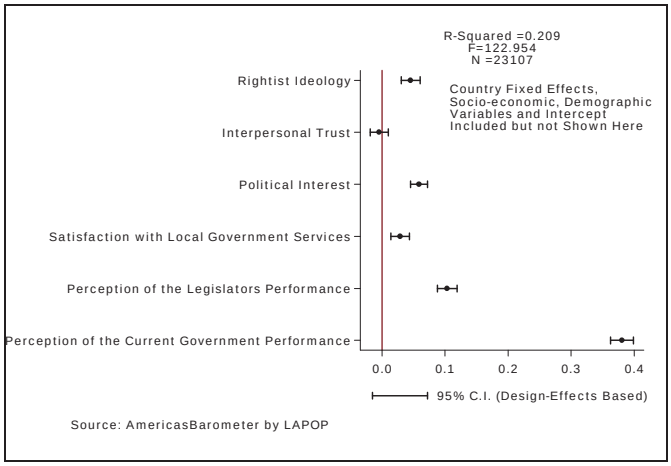
[5] Multilevel analyses predicting to what extent people agree that political parties listen to the people with variables such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not yield significant results. It is possible that the variation across countries displayed in Figure 1 is explained by some other national-level political factors, analysis that will be left for future research.

[6] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10 and results were adjusted for the complex sample designs employed.

[7] To capture the variation across countries the model included dummy variables for each country, using Uruguay as the reference country.

[8] This analysis was carried out using a linear regression that also included the socioeconomic and demographic variables and the country dummies employed earlier. Figure 3 displays only the political variables. All the regressions performed can be found in Table 1 in the appendix..

Figure 3.
An Analysis of the Determinants of Average Support for the Belief that Political Parties Listen to the People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



As we found in previous reports, citizens' perceptions of political parties depend on outputs, that is to say, on the way citizens consider that representatives satisfy their demands and perform their duties. We see that the higher the perception of current government performance[9], the higher the support for the belief that political parties are listening to the people. Furthermore, the higher the perception that the members of parliament are performing a good job in the legislature, the higher the support for the idea that parties listen to the people.

Apart from performance at the national level, satisfaction with outputs at local level is also found to be important, as Figure 3 shows. The higher the satisfaction with the services provided by local governments the higher the support for the idea that parties listen to the people, *ceteris paribus*. This impact is, however, smaller than what we find for national-level performance.

Political interest is also a statistically significant predictor, as is ideology. The latter is measured by the classic 1-10 scale of left-right self-identification. The results show that people who self-identify with the right tend to support the idea that parties listen to the people more than those who identify with the left.

Policy and Program Implications

This new *Insights* series report again shows how citizens in Latin America are dissatisfied with political parties. Citizens show low levels of trust in parties (I0802). And, further, they do not consider that parties are listening to the people. How might these overwhelmingly negative perceptions of parties be improved?

As we have seen in previous reports, the AmericasBarometer data suggest again that perceptions about parties depend on the extent to which government does or does not satisfy their basic needs. In this sense, in order to increase support for the idea that parties listen to the people, the belief that governments and representatives in congress fulfill their functions needs to be increased.

Therefore, according to our analysis, there should be more efforts to fight corruption, crime, and poverty, and promoting and protecting basic rights and the rule of law, in any policy making agenda. Achieving higher levels of political interest among citizens would be also useful.

In conclusion, our analysis here suggests that perceptions about the extent to which political parties listen to the people, and perceptions about parties in general, would be more positive if political systems achieve higher levels of government performance across a range of policy areas, at the levels of the executive and legislative and at the national and local levels.

[9] The Perception of the Government Performance Index was constructed from five items that asked to what extent people thought the current administration fights poverty, combats government corruption, promotes and protects democratic principles, improves the security of citizens, and combats unemployment.

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Appendix: Determinants of the Belief that Parties Listen to the People				
	Regression I		Regression II	
	Coef.	Err. est.	Coef.	Err. est.
Primary	0.007	(0.41)	-0.000	(-0.00)
Secondary	0.020	(1.11)	-0.023	(-1.16)
University	0.018	(1.14)	-0.021	(-1.26)
Female	-0.013*	(-2.24)	0.000	(0.07)
Age	-0.007	(-1.11)	-0.014	(-1.94)
Wealth	0.015	(1.69)	0.016	(1.71)
Size of City/Town	-0.031*	(-3.54)	-0.006	(-0.66)
Political Interest			0.059*	(8.48)
Rightist Ideology			0.045*	(5.91)
Efficacy of the Current Government			0.381*	(40.67)
Satisfaction with Local Government Services			0.029*	(3.87)
Performance of Legislators			0.103*	(13.03)
Interpersonal Trust			-0.004	(-0.60)
Mexico	-0.019	(-1.83)	0.017	(1.90)
Guatemala	-0.056*	(-6.59)	-0.016	(-1.78)
El Salvador	-0.008	(-1.11)	0.057*	(7.20)
Honduras	-0.080*	(-9.82)	0.019*	(2.10)
Nicaragua	-0.099*	(-9.32)	-0.013	(-1.41)
Costa Rica	-0.055*	(-5.02)	-0.024*	(-2.27)
Panama	-0.040*	(-3.31)	0.042*	(4.09)
Colombia	-0.014	(-1.39)	-0.009	(-0.98)
Ecuador	-0.101*	(-8.70)	-0.026*	(-2.04)
Bolivia	-0.028*	(-2.50)	0.011	(0.90)
Peru	-0.072*	(-8.91)	0.012	(1.53)
Paraguay	-0.107*	(-14.08)	0.012	(1.60)
Chile	0.007	(0.64)	0.037*	(3.40)
Brazil	-0.096*	(-8.10)	-0.038*	(-3.44)
Venezuela	-0.017	(-1.29)	0.051*	(3.92)
Argentina	-0.050*	(-4.69)	0.024*	(2.07)
Dominican Republic	0.014	(1.64)	0.023*	(2.50)
Haiti	-0.071*	(-6.11)	0.013	(1.07)
Jamaica	-0.047*	(-4.92)	-0.001	(-0.07)
Belize	-0.016	(-1.33)	0.034*	(2.65)
Constant	-0.005	(-0.59)	0.013	(1.52)
R-squared	0.032		0.209	
N.	32377		23107	
* p<0.05				

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No. 13)*

Corruption Victimization by Public Employees[1]

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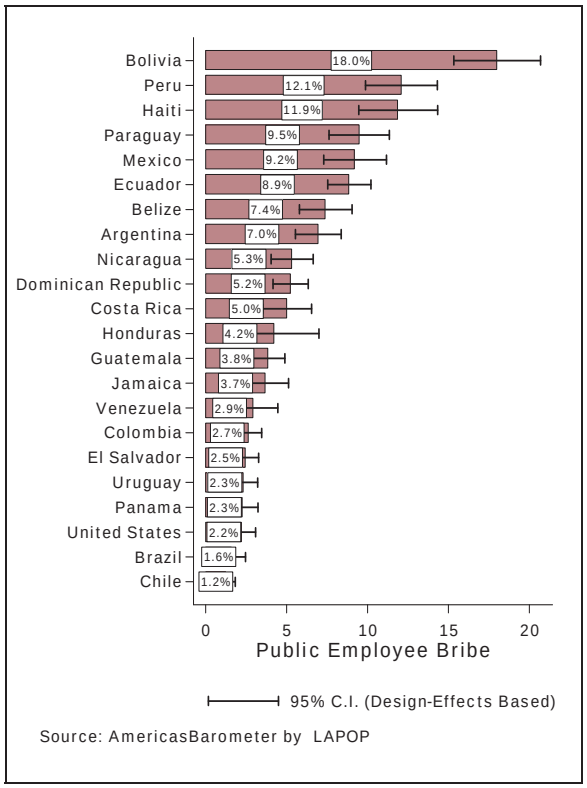
Corruption has become one of the major policy issues in emerging democracies around the world because of its demonstrated significant negative effects on the economy (Elliot 1997; Seyf 2001). That in turn, erodes the belief in the legitimacy of the political system (Seligson 2002), while weakening democracy more generally (Warren 2004) thus, making the consolidation of emerging democracies even more difficult. For example, one recent study argues that "when people lose confidence that public decisions are taken for reasons that are publicly available and justifiable, they often become cynical about public speech and deliberation" (Warren 2004: 328), two fundamental determinants of democracy. This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insights Series* is the second one to examine the impact of corruption, concentrating on another question on corruption victimization included in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey (additional questions in this series will be examined in future *Insights* studies).[2] This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in most of Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States, involving national probability samples of 22 nations (this question was not asked in Canada).

Figure 1.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Corruption by a Public Employee at least once in the past year in the Americas, 2008



LAPOP studies have usually employed the corruption victimization index.[3] However, in this study, we focus on the analysis of one of the components of that index, more specifically corruption victimization by a public official. A total of 34,469 respondents were asked the following question:

* The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insight*s series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

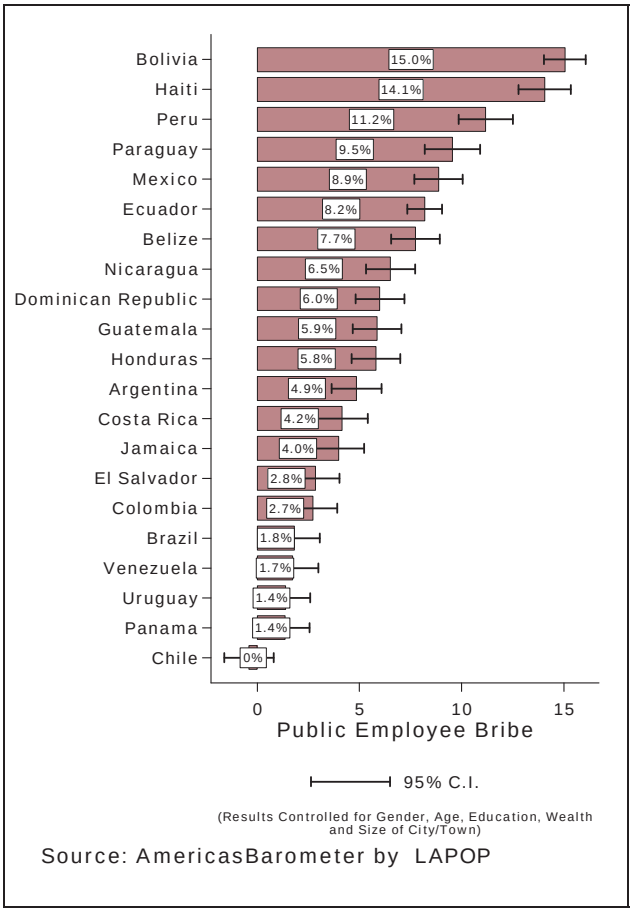
[3] This index has been constantly improved since its first administration in 1996. For a more detailed discussion of this index see Seligson (2006).

EXC6. During the past year did any government employee ask you for a bribe?

Figure 1, which displays percentages of the population that were asked a bribe by a public employee, indicates a wide range of corruption victimization across countries. [4] Bolivia emerges as the country with a significantly higher percentage (18%) of its population being victimized by corruption by public employees. These results are consistent with those demonstrated in the earlier report in this series (I0803) where more than a quarter of the Bolivian population (27.9%) was asked to pay a bribe by the police, rendering further evidence of the high levels of corruption victimization in that country. Similarly, over 10 percent of the population in Haiti and Peru were asked to pay a bribe to a public employee. At the other extreme, Chile has the lowest percentage in the sample victimized by corruption (1.2%).

How much of the variation of corruption victimization by a public employee across countries is explained by the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries?[5] Results shown in Figure 2 remain similar to Figure 1 after controlling for gender, age, education, wealth, and size of city/town; with variation of only a few percentages higher or lower from the uncontrolled results. Countries such as Bolivia, Haiti, and Peru continue to demonstrate the highest percentages of corruption victimization by a public employee with 15, 14, and 11 percent respectively.

Figure 2.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Corruption by a Public Employee at least once in the past year after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in the Americas, 2008



Do Contextual Factors Matter?

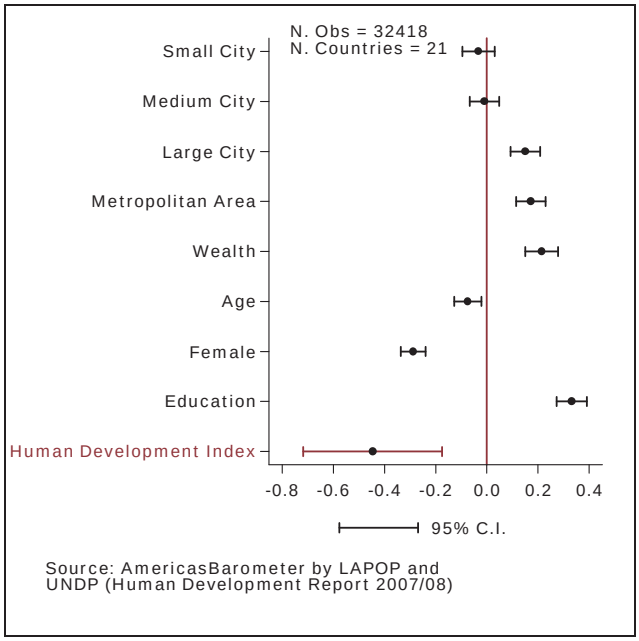
We find that not only do individual-level characteristics matter for corruption, but more developed nations in the Americas are better able to control corruption. Figure 3 shows the effects of both individual-level characteristics and national-level socio-economic development, measured by the human development index,[6] on the probability of being asked a bribe by a public employee.

[4] Non-response was 8% for the sample as a whole.

[5] To simplify the answer to this question, the United States was removed from the sample in order to avoid any statistical biases given that this case has an extremely high level of socio-economic development compared to the other countries, possibly driving the results of the analysis.

[6] The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure of the level of socioeconomic development of a nation. It includes three measures of socioeconomic well-being: an index of education, a health indicator measured by life expectancy at birth, and economic resources (GDP per capita—purchasing power

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Corruption Victimization by a Public Employee in the Americas: The Impact of Human Development Index, 2008



Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on experience with corruption victimization by a public employee is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant. The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients.

Figure 3 shows that several individual characteristics as well as socio-economic development matter in determining the likelihood of citizens being victimized by public employee corruption. Individuals who are wealthier, more highly educated, and living in larger cities, are more likely to be asked bribes by a public employee. These findings make sense, as there is a greater density of public officials in urban areas than in rural, and those with higher incomes and education have many more occasions to be in contact with public officials than do the poor. Moreover, the wealthier segments of the population are perceived as having "deeper pockets" and hence are more attractive targets of venal public officials. On the other hand, females are less likely to be victims of corruption, a finding that is not surprising because on average, females are less likely than males to play a role in the workplace and in public life in the Americas, and thus less likely to be exposed to corruption. When comparing these results to those of a prior report (I0803) related to corruption victimization by the police, citizens with similar characteristics have similar levels of corruption victimization.

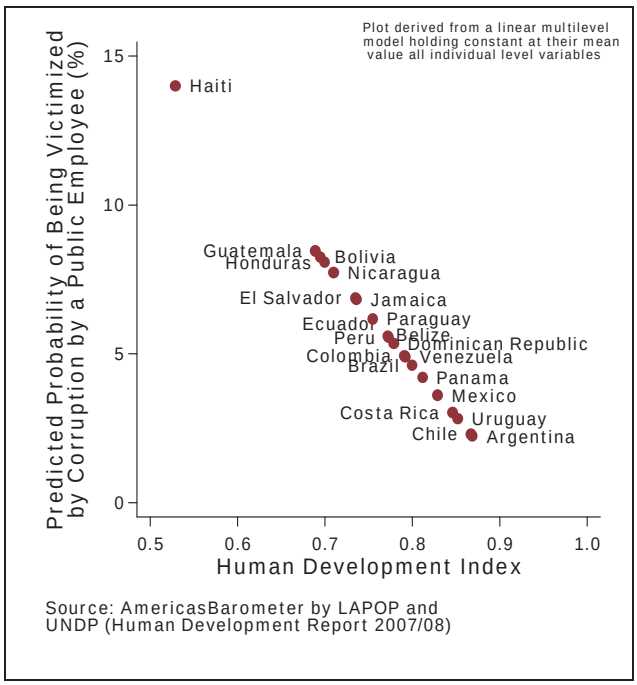
Socio-economic development, measured by the Human Development Index, plays a central role as a mitigating factor of corruption victimization. More specifically, individuals who live in more developed countries are far less likely to be victimized by corruption compared to those who live in less developed countries, after controlling for all of the above individual characteristics. The significance of the national context is highlighted in more detail in Figure 4; the higher the socio-economic development, the less likely the average citizen is to become a victim of corruption. For instance, Haiti is the country that shows the highest probability of corruption victimization by a public employee and is the country with by far the lowest socio-economic development.[7] At the other extreme, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina experience the lowest probability of corruption victimization by a public employee and the highest level of socio-economic development. Taking all these results together, if a citizen from Haiti with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to move to Uruguay, Chile or Argentina, *ceteris paribus*, and none of his/her individual characteristics were to change, the probability of this person being asked a bribe by a

parity). This index goes from zero to one, with higher values indicating a higher level of development.

[7] Haiti has a Human Development Index of .529 in scale from 0 to 1, the lowest level in the sample.

public employee would be at about 14 percentage points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Human Development on Corruption Victimization by a Public Employee in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008[8]



Other countries that show a high probability of being victimized by corruption by a public employee are Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, not surprisingly, countries with low levels of socio-economic development. For example, when examining one of the indicators of the Human Development Index, life expectancy at birth, in none of these countries does life expectancy surpasses 70 years, compared to Uruguay, Chile or Argentina in which life expectancy is 75 years or higher, according to the World Bank (2006).[9]

Program and Policy Implications

Corruption is one of the most rampant problems in emerging democracies, making it difficult for these democracies to achieve consolidation. As mentioned at the beginning of this short report, corruption not only erodes the belief in the legitimacy of the political system (Seligson 2002; Seligson 2006), but also weakens democracy, turning people more cynical toward its virtues (Warren 2004). Consequently, it is essential to know who are those most likely to be victims of corruption. This paper has found that some individual level characteristics and at least one national level characteristic are important in explaining corruption victimization by a public employee. The results demonstrate that individuals living in more socio-economically developed countries are less likely to be victims of corruption, whereas the probability is notably higher for the average citizen in less developed countries. For instance, when examining carefully each of the indicators of the Human Development Index: education, health, and wealth, more developed countries score consistently higher on these indicators compared to less developed countries, as illustrated by the cases of Haiti and Bolivia at the lower end, and Argentina and Chile at the upper end.

Our results corroborate other scholarship in which higher levels of socioeconomic development are essential for the mitigation of corruption practices. Absent the ability to rapidly increase those levels, we conclude, therefore, that one way that corruption can be reduced in poorer countries in the region such as Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, and Bolivia could be the diffusion of anti-corruption campaigns, so that citizens in these countries will gain a better understanding of the sources of corruption as well as the detrimental effects that corruption has on their societies, making even more difficult the consolidation of these democracies.

[8] The point estimate differences between countries in Figure 2 and 4 are explained partly by the fact that Figure 2 controls for individual level characteristics while Figure 4 takes into account the Human Development Index, a national level characteristic.

[9] http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/lac_wdi.pdf

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*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009(No.14)**

Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services[1]

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One of the most emphasized benefits of decentralization is the alleged improvement in public administration. By "bringing the government closer to the people," public officials are expected to have a greater ability to recognize, interpret and satisfy more precisely citizens' needs and demands for public goods and services (Evans 1997; Tendler 1997; Montero and Samuels 2004). Due to their proximity, citizens can also discern more effectively whether or not their local governments are fulfilling their expectations. If individuals are satisfied with their local officials' performance, they may express greater support for the system. However, if local institutions are unable to satisfy their demands, citizens will not only express their discontent with local governments, but they can also be increasingly dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the entire nation (Hiskey and Seligson 2003; Weitz-Shapiro 2008).

Thus, it becomes most important to ask: Who is more satisfied with the services provided by local governments, and why? This new paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* attempts to answer these questions by querying the 2008 data base provided by the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 23 nations in the Western hemisphere[2]. In this survey 33,809 respondents were asked the following question:

SGL1. Would you say that the services the municipality is providing are: (1) Very good; (2) Good (3); Neither good nor poor (fair); (4) Poor; or (5) Very poor?

Figure 1.
Average Satisfaction with Municipal Services in the Americas, 2008[3]

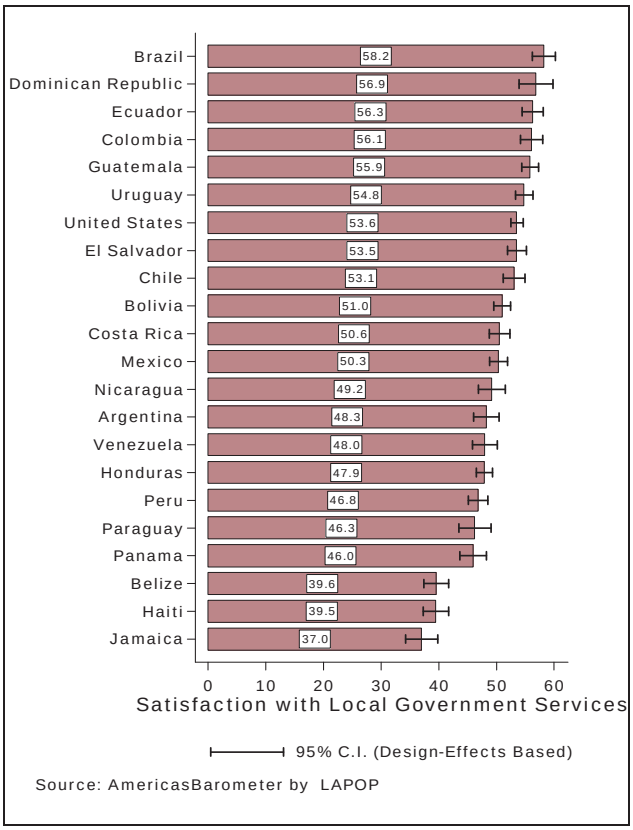


Figure 1 shows national averages for 22 countries in the sample.[4] The scale to measure the degree of

[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] The non-response rate for this question was 6.08 percent.

satisfaction with municipal services was recoded onto a new continuous scale, where "0" means very poor and "100" means very good. Thus, the average satisfaction with municipal services in the region is 50.13 out of 100 possible points. Figure 1 also shows some variation among countries. At one end, citizens of Brazil, Dominican Republic and Ecuador manifest the highest degree of satisfaction with municipal services in the region, with levels of 58.2, 56.9 and 52.3 points respectively. At the other end, citizens of Belize, Haiti and Jamaica express the lowest degree of satisfaction, with levels of 39.6, 39.5 and 37.0 points respectively.

Predicting Citizen Satisfaction with Local Government Services

What explains variation in citizen satisfaction with municipal services? Historical/contextual factors may be causing some of the variation across countries, however, in this paper we concentrate on the variance that is explained by individual-level factors.[5] For this reason, we first consider socio-economic and demographic characteristics included in the AmericasBarometer survey: education, gender, age, geographic zone, and wealth. To assess their influence on citizen satisfaction with municipal services, we employ multinomial ordinary-least-squares regression.[6] Since citizens in the United States possess sharply higher levels of socio-economic characteristics, we exclude this country from the analysis.[7] Results of the multivariate regression are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services in Latin America, 2008

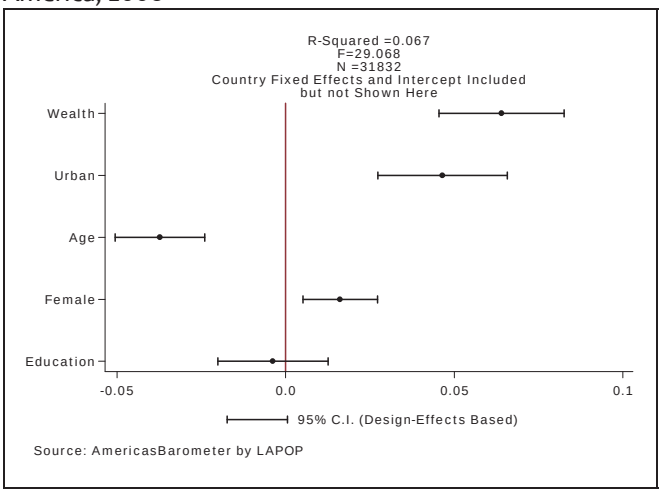


Figure 2 shows the effects of socio-economic and demographic characteristics on levels of satisfaction with municipal services in Latin America. It can be observed that four out of the five factors accounted for in Figure 2 are statistically relevant. Statistical significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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. In this model, the individual's level of wealth (measured as capital goods ownership),[8] the geographic zone where the individual resides, age and gender are statistically significant contributors. Holding constant all other of variables, richer individuals in Latin America show a higher satisfaction with municipal services. Additionally, people living in urban areas, as opposed to people living in rural areas, manifest greater satisfaction with local government services. Finally, we also see that, holding everything else constant, women are slightly more satisfied with municipal services than men. These results have important policy implications that will be analyzed in the final section of this paper. The relationship between sex, geographical area and wealth on the one hand, and citizen satisfaction with municipal

[4] The AmericasBarometer originally collected information in 23 countries. However, this question was not asked in Canada; therefore, the number of countries was reduced to 22.

[5] We found no statistically significant relationship between a series of level-2 variables, such as level of fiscal decentralization, per capita GDP, the Human Development Index, GINI coefficient, level of Democracy, etc. and citizen satisfaction with municipal services.

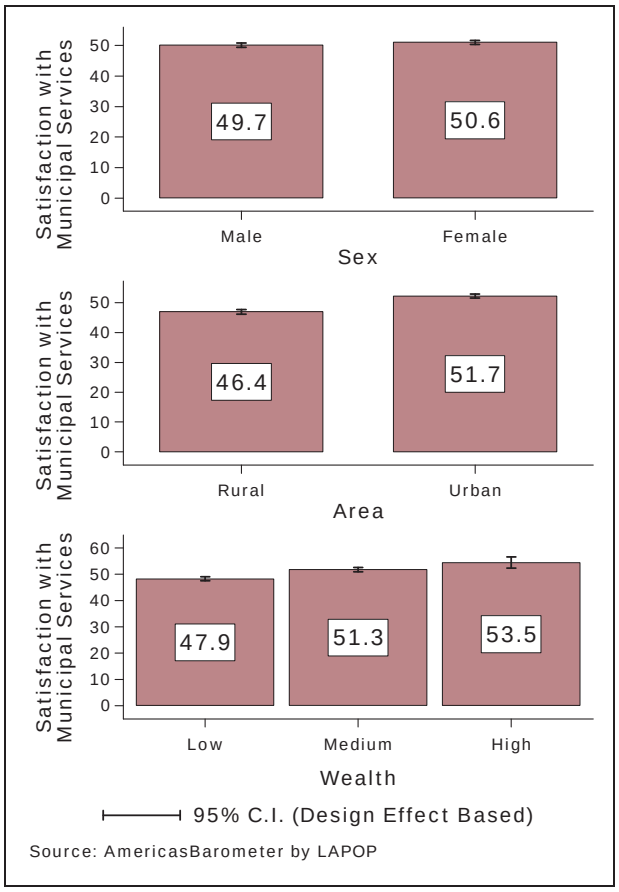
[6] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10 and they are adjusted to consider the effects of the complex sample design.

[7] Given that levels of citizen satisfaction with local government services vary across countries, dummy variables for each country were also included in the model, using Jamaica as the base or reference country.

[8] For more information on how this index is constructed, please see Seligson (2008).

services on the other hand is shown in Figure 3, which shows average values for the sample.[9]

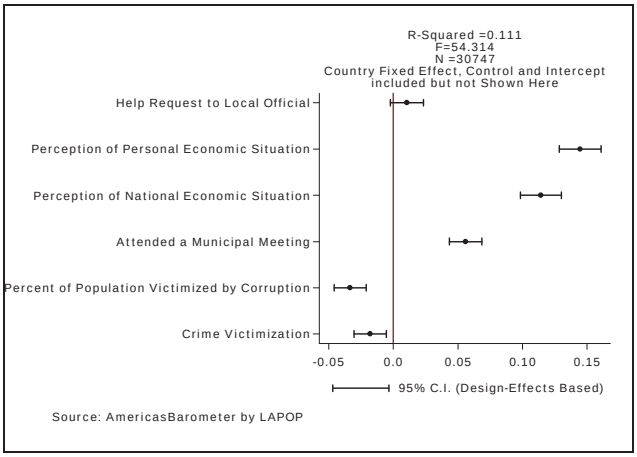
Figure 3.
Age, Education, Gender, Area Size, Wealth and Satisfaction with Municipal Services in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The impact of socio-economic and demographic variables on citizen satisfaction with municipal services is statistically significant and substantively robust, as shown in both Figures 2 and 3. However, there are also several political tendencies and evaluations that theoretically should drive individuals to be either satisfied or dissatisfied with municipal services. In particular, we expect individuals to engage in normal retrospective evaluative processes in which, to assess local services, they ask "what have you done for me lately?" Thus, we hypothesize that measures of individuals' experiences with crime and corruption and their evaluations of the economy will influence their satisfaction with the provision of municipal services. We further expect that those who are more engaged in local government might have different evaluations compared to those who are not.

In order to assess these expectations, we added several theoretically-relevant variables to our analysis. Results from this new regression are depicted in Figure 4. It is worth noting that while we included all the socio-economic, demographic and control variables reported above, we display only the political evaluation variables in the Figure below (see the Appendix for the complete set of statistics).

Figure 4.
An Analysis of the Determinants of Average Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The results above indicate that there are quite a few individual factors (in addition to socio-economic and demographic variables) that are significantly related to citizen satisfaction with local government services. First, we find support for the expectation that citizens are more content with municipal services to the degree that they have relatively better experiences and economic evaluations. Thus, those individuals who have been victimized by crime in last the 12 months manifested less satisfaction with municipal services than those individuals who were not victimized. Likewise, those individuals who have been victimized by corruption at least once in the last 12 months are more dissatisfied with municipal services than those that have not been

[9] It is important to note that the variable "Wealth" is grouped into categories with the purpose of illustration. This variable was inserted as continuous in the multivariate regression.

victimized.[10] These findings clearly suggest that citizens' dissatisfaction with municipal services increases as they perceive that the government is failing to provide for their security and/or failing to uphold the rule of law.

Next, both assessments of personal and national economic situation are positively related to satisfaction with municipal services. As individuals perceive that their personal economic situation improves, their satisfaction with the services provided by the local government increases as well. Likewise, holding all other factors constant, individuals who evaluate more positively the national economic situation are more satisfied with municipal services. Of course we cannot rule out the fact that satisfaction with services positively affects economic evaluations and, in fact, we suspect that the causal arrow does point in both directions.

Additionally, our analysis shows that individuals who participate more often in municipal meetings are more satisfied with local government services. Once again, more research would be required in order to determine with more precision the direction of this relationship. Such research would help to answer the question of whether citizen participation in municipal meetings increases the levels of satisfaction with local government services, or is it the case that more satisfied individuals are those who participate more often in municipal meetings?

Finally, we found initial statistical evidence for a relationship between demand-making on municipal government and satisfaction with local government services (in reduced models not presented here). However, as we added other theoretically important variables to the model, the effect of local demand-making on satisfaction with municipal services tended to fade away. In Figure 4, the relationship is so close to statistically significance that we are unable to reach a firm conclusion regarding this relationship.

[10] The direction of this relationship could go the other way around as well. For this reason, it is necessary to conduct further research to try to determine the proper direction of causality.

Program and Policy Implications

This report has shown that in the Latin American context, citizen satisfaction with local government services is neither good nor poor. If Hiskey and Seligson (2003) and Weitz-Shapiro (2008) are right, at least part of citizens' dissatisfaction with the way democracies work in some countries can be due to the poor performance of some local governments. As we have shown, those individuals that have been victimized by either corruption or crime in the past, report lower levels of satisfaction with municipal services than those who have not been victimized. This crucial finding suggests that individuals attribute problems of crime and corruption, at least in part to the poor performance of municipal responsibilities. Presumably, crime and corruption occur with greatest frequency in one's own town or city; it is not surprising, then, that local officials are held accountable for such experiences. Interestingly, in a previous issue of the *Insights* series, we found that crime and corruption victimization were also significantly, and positively, related to citizen participation in municipal meetings.[11] This suggests an interesting relationship among all these variables: victimization appears to directly reduce satisfaction; however, to the degree that it increases participation, it may ultimately increase satisfaction through this linkage. It is beyond the scope of this short paper to fully untangle this set of relationships, which clearly warrant more study.

Lastly, studying particularly the socio-demographic characteristics of the individuals who are more likely to participate in municipal meetings, we found at least two strong, positive and substantive relationships that are policy-relevant. On the one hand, individuals living in rural areas are *less* satisfied with municipal services than those living in urban areas. This finding is two-fold. First, it suggests that governmental decentralization may be more appropriate in rural municipalities in order to improve their capacity to recognize, interpret and satisfy citizens' needs and demands. Second, if rural municipalities are already decentralized, they may not be fulfilling citizen expectations, and a thus need a review of their activities in order to improve performance. Finally, taking into account that

[11] Please refer to the series number I0804 at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications.

poorer individuals tend to live in rural areas,[12] relative deprivation of private goods may also be a reason for their dissatisfaction with municipal services, as shown in our model.

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[12] The correlation coefficient for "Wealth" and "Size of City" is .43.

Appendix:
Results from the multivariate model

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Municipal Services

	Regression 1		Regression 2	
	Coefficient	t	Coefficient	T
Crime Victimization			-0.018*	(-2.82)
Percent of Population Victimized by Corruption			-0.034*	(-5.32)
Attended a Municipal Meeting			0.056*	(8.74)
Perception of National Economic Situation			0.114*	(14.14)
Perception of Personal Economic Situation			0.145*	(17.56)
Help Request to Local Official			0.010	(1.60)
Education	-0.004	(-0.46)	-0.021*	(-2.47)
Female	0.016*	(2.86)	0.027*	(4.68)
Age	-0.037*	(-5.51)	-0.024*	(-3.61)
Urban	0.047*	(4.76)	0.061*	(6.31)
Wealth	0.064*	(6.76)	0.032*	(3.40)
Mexico	-0.050*	(-5.05)	-0.043*	(-4.62)
Guatemala	0.013	(1.35)	0.022*	(2.26)
El Salvador	-0.013	(-1.27)	0.008	(0.75)
Honduras	-0.056*	(-5.62)	-0.048*	(-4.80)
Nicaragua	-0.046*	(-3.70)	-0.016	(-1.26)
Costa Rica	-0.049*	(-4.55)	-0.047*	(-4.40)
Panama	-0.083*	(-6.56)	-0.071*	(-5.88)
Colombia	0.005	(0.47)	-0.007	(-0.68)
Ecuador	0.008	(0.55)	0.006	(0.43)
Bolivia	-0.045*	(-3.40)	-0.049*	(-3.62)
Peru	-0.071*	(-6.83)	-0.065*	(-6.31)
Paraguay	-0.068*	(-5.45)	-0.054*	(-4.49)
Chile	-0.028*	(-2.71)	-0.031*	(-2.92)
Brazil	0.018	(1.56)	0.008	(0.70)
Venezuela	-0.074*	(-6.36)	-0.086*	(-7.70)
Argentina	-0.073*	(-6.25)	-0.076*	(-6.43)
Haiti	-0.113*	(-9.21)	-0.064*	(-5.15)
Jamaica	-0.146*	(-10.49)	-0.128*	(-9.99)
Belize	-0.136*	(-11.33)	-0.124*	(-10.47)
Constant	0.006	(0.55)	0.002	(0.18)
R-Squared	0.067		0.111	
Number of Obs.	31832		30747	

* **p<0.05**

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.15)[*]

Social Capital in the Americas: Participation in Religious Groups

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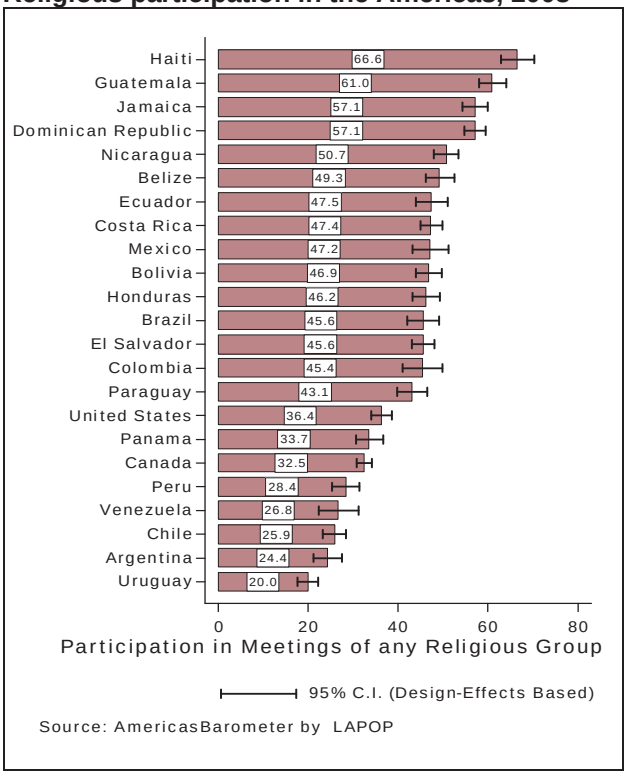
Religious organizations are considered by some as important tools for the generation of civic engagement. Drawing on James Coleman's work on social capital, Greeley (1997) has argued that participation in religious structures not only affects religious institutions but also non-religious life as well. Several authors have found a strong link between religious participation and civic engagement (Lockhart 2005; Smidt 1999). However, Putnam (1992) was skeptical about the contribution of some types of religious participation to social capital and civic engagement, and some authors have found that certain types of religious affiliations contribute to social problems such as discrimination and residential segregation (Blanchard 2007).

In any case, while the nature and magnitude of the relationship may be debated, few doubt that religious participation has some impact on social life. This new edition of *Insights* assesses the levels of religious participation in the Americas as a form of social capital, whether positive or not, and is based in the 2008 AmericasBarometer of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)[1]. This survey was carried out in twenty-three countries in the Americas with a total of 38,053 respondents.[2] Religious participation was one of several types of groups and organizations about which respondents were first prompted with the type of group and then asked a question as follows:

CP6. Meetings of any religious organization? Do you attend them at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never?[3]

Figure 1
Religious participation in the Americas, 2008



The item measures involvement in social events that have a religious profile. It is important to note,

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[1] Prior issues in the Insights series can be found in: www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data in which they are based can be found at: www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets.

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Significant sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Develop-ment Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

[3] The non-response rate for this question was 1 percent.

however, that such participation can involve from attendance to religious services to participation in community-church initiatives. Figure 1 shows results based on this question, after converting the responses to a 0-to-100 scale, where 100 represents the highest level of religious participation (at least once a week) and 0 the lowest (none).

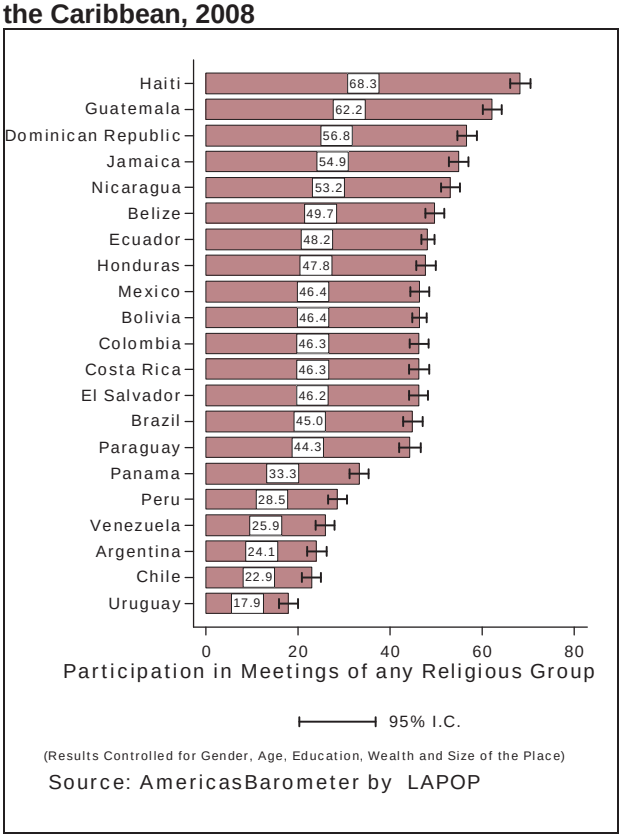
According to Figure 1, Caribbean countries (Haiti, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic), in addition to Guatemala, show the highest levels of religious participation, whereas three of the countries in the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay) are found at the bottom of the ranking in religious participation. Most of the countries fall in the intermediate levels with respect to religious participation, whereas the U.S., Panama, Canada, Peru, and Venezuela rank near the bottom.

But since Haiti and Guatemala are some of the poorest countries in the Americas, and the South Cone countries are usually identified as the more developed in Latin America, these results suggest that religious participation might be related with the levels of development.

Therefore, a new look at the results of religious participation controlling for socio-economic and demographic characteristics is necessary, and so an analysis including variables such as gender, age, education, and personal wealth was performed. This analysis removed the U.S. and Canada because the high levels of socioeconomic development in those countries make them outliers.[4] As can be seen in Figure 2, the results only change slightly, with the same countries making the top and the bottom of the ranking.

The former means that individual variables are not enough to explain the variations of religious participation across Latin America, and that it may be necessary to analyze the data taking into consideration contextual variables. The next section explores the determinants of religious participation using individual and country-level variables.

Figure 2
Religious Participation after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The Determinants of Religious Participation

Religious participation may be influenced by several factors. In this report we explore not only individual characteristics but also personal experiences, such as crime and corruption victimization, and political engagement. The hypothesis in the cases of victimization is that people who have been victims of crime and corruption may turn to higher levels of religious participation as a way to cope with the insecurity produced by the victimization events. We do not expect reverse causality with, for example, criminals or bribe-seekers selecting their victims from among those who are more involved with religious organizations. In the case of political involvement, people interested in politics might be also more involved in religious activities given the close link between political and religious participation. However, most of the studies on this issue have focused in the impact of religious

[4] Analyses in this paper were conducted using Stata v10, and they have been adjusted to consider the effects of complex sample designs.

involvement on political engagement (see, for example, Camp 1994 and Patterson 2005).

In addition, we also explore whether contextual variables, specifically country wealth and development, also affect religious participation. Hence, the analysis was carried out using a Hierarchical Linear Model, which combines individual and contextual (national) variables in predicting religious participation.

Figure 3
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Religious Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008

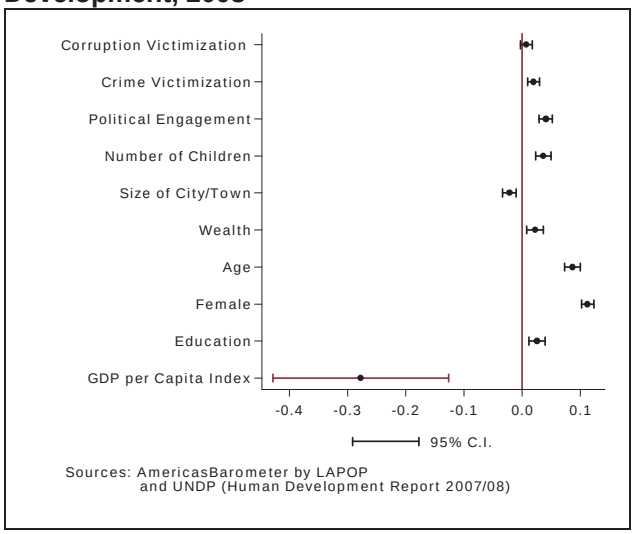
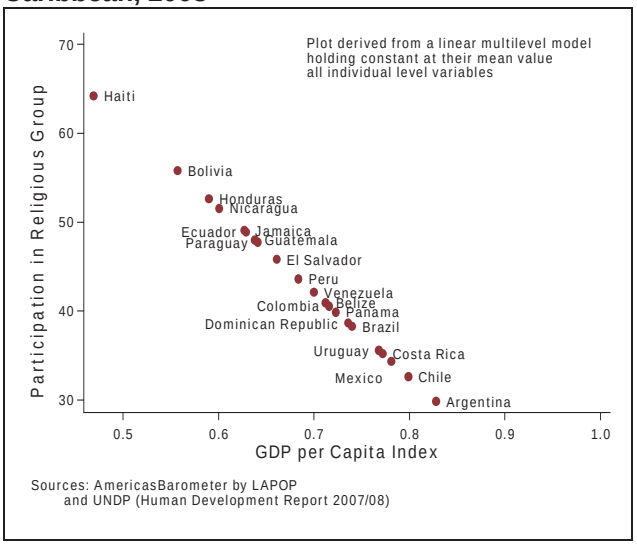


Figure 3 shows the results of this statistical analysis. Religious participation is higher among the well-educated, women, the older population and the better-off. It also increases among those who live in small towns and rural areas and among those who have many children. Crime victimization and political engagement also bolster participation in religious meetings.[5] The most interesting finding, though, comes when examining the effect of country wealth, measured through country GDP per capita index. According to the results, attendance at religious meetings decreases in richer countries. In other words, the richer the country is, the less religious participation it has, all other variables being held constant.

This result can be clearly seen in Figure 4. This graph shows the predicted scores of religious participation in each country according to GDP per capita. The poorest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Haiti, Bolivia, Honduras, and Nicaragua) exhibit the highest scores on the scale of participation in religious meetings. Conversely, the richest per capita countries in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Costa Rica) tend to score low on religious participation. To put it in other way, if a citizen from Haiti with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to move to Mexico, Chile or Argentina, *ceteris paribus*, and none of his/her individual characteristics were to change, the probability of this person participating in religious groups would be at least 30 points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti.

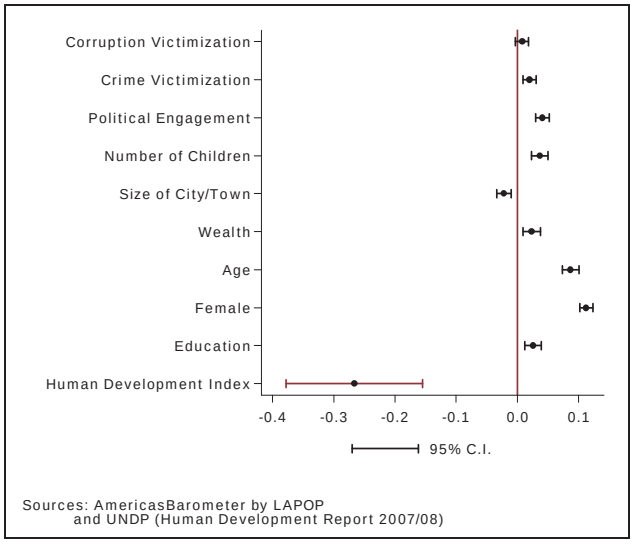
Figure 4
The Impact of Economic Development on the Religious Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Similar results are obtained when citizen participation in religious meetings is regressed on the Human Development Index 2005. As shown in figures 5 and 6, human development, measured using the UNDP country-level index, is negatively related to citizen participation in religious meetings. In other words, participation in religious activities is negatively related to the country levels of social and economic development.

[5] However, it is important to consider that the latter relationship may operate the other way around: religious participation may lead to political engagement.

Figure 5
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Religious Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Human Development, 2008

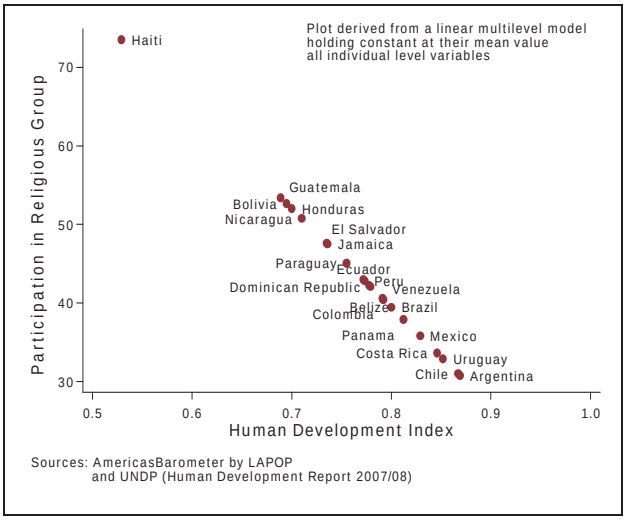


Such findings indicate that, in this case, contextual conditions operate in an opposite direction compared to similar individual-level variables. Despite the positive effect of *personal* wealth on religious participation, *country-level* social development and well-being tend to depress religious involvement in the Americas. In other words, better-off people may participate more in religious activities, but churches and religious centers seem to attract fewer people in richer and developed societies than in poorer countries.

In sum, the results of the Americas Barometer 2008 show that to the degree to which citizens participate in religious meetings depends on a variety of individual-level characteristics. Women, the elderly, the more educated, and wealthy people tend to attend religious activities more frequently; victims of crime and corruption also seem to seek out more opportunities for religious involvement. However, an interesting finding is that religious participation is significantly higher in those poor and developing societies. Does this mean that religious involvement helps to overcome the strains imposed by harsh living conditions in poor societies? It might not be that simple, since the data also show that the better-off people are more active in religious participation than deprived citizens, precisely in those developing countries.

Rather, these results might be signaling complex social processes, where —in the vein of Inglehart and Norris (2004)— social and economic development create conditions for different attitudes toward religious participation despite the particular characteristics of citizens.

Figure 6
The Impact of Human Development on Religious Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Discussion

Instead of policy implications in the short term, these results call for a discussion over the research agenda on religious participation and its impact on social capital. We therefore need to ask questions regarding how religious activities can be made most beneficial for development and civic engagement. Given that participation rates tend to be higher in poorer countries, religious organizations may be one feasible resource for improving economic, and political, conditions in those same places. The fact that religious participation in Latin America is higher among better-off citizens living in deprived and developing societies also calls for more scholarly attention. We need to understand better these seemingly opposing relationships, and then we can proceed to determine their implications for future development and democracy.

Religious participation is one of the most common forms of citizen participation in the region, and attitudes and social behaviors toward religion have

been changing significantly in the last three decades. The diffusion of evangelical Pentecostalism along with the retreat of Catholicism in many Latin America countries has produced new forms of religious participation. These fresh types of religious activism are probably changing the way social capital is constructed in the region. Thus, a final avenue for future research would concern attempts to understand better the consequences of such transformations and the influence they might have on current and future development policies.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.16)[*]

To What Extent Should Government Ensure Citizen Well-Being?

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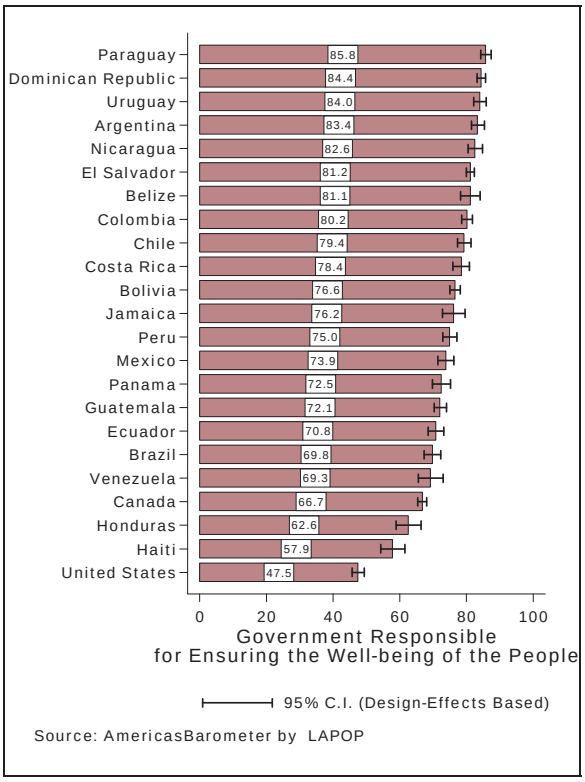
The extent to which government should be involved in the provision of goods and services that promote citizen well-being is a perennial debate in public policies world-wide. While the academic literature on the welfare state has concentrated significantly on Europe, recently attention has been placed on Latin America (Segura-Urbiergo 2007). This *AmericasBarometer Insights Series* report looks at citizens' preferences regarding the role of government in welfare provision. In prior *Insights* reports (I0801 and I0808) we examined opinion over the role of the government in creating jobs and over government ownership of key businesses.[1] In this new paper we again query the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 38,053 respondents from 23 nations in North, Central, South America, and the Caribbean were asked the same question:

ROS2. The (nationality) government, more than individuals, is the most responsible for ensuring the well-being of the people. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Responses were given based on a 1-7 scale, where '1' meant "strongly disagree" and '7' meant "strongly agree."

These responses were then recalibrated on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[3] Figure 1 displays national averages and shows that, despite some cross-national variance, there is overall very high support in the Americas for the notion that the government ensure citizen well-being.

Figure 1.
Average Support for Government Ensuring Well-Being of the People in the Americas, 2008



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* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

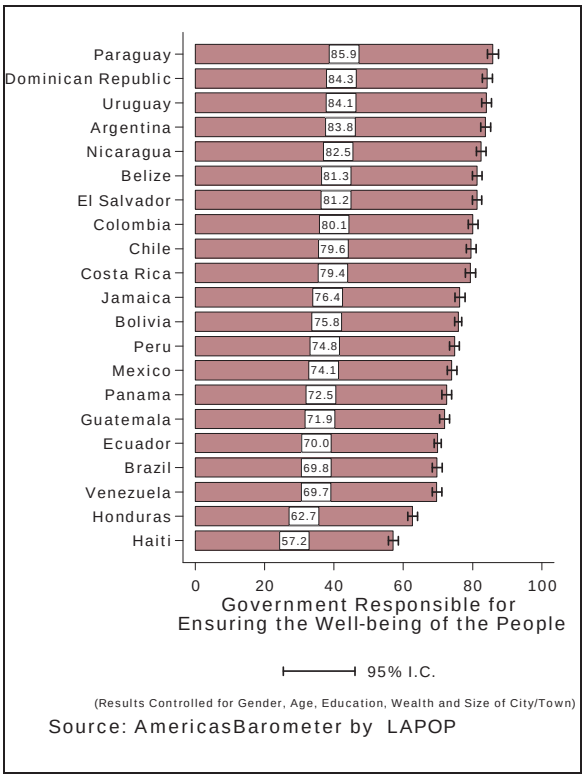
[3] Non-response was 3.86% for the sample as a whole.

In eight countries the average response rises above 80 points on our 0-100 scale. At the top of this group we find Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Argentina, countries in which individuals display the highest levels of support for notion that government[4] is principally responsible for ensuring individuals' well-being. At the other extreme, we find Honduras, Haiti, and the United States, countries where the average score falls below 50 points. Comparatively speaking, support is especially low in the U.S. (47.5 points), a country long noted for its preference for a limited role for government and its emphasis, instead, on the individual as primarily responsible for ensuring his/her own well-being.

How much of this variation across countries emerges from differences in individuals' socio-economic and demographic characteristics? In order to assess the effect of these characteristics we control for education gender, age, wealth, and city/town size. Given that the United States and Canada hold sharply higher levels on socioeconomic characteristics we exclude these countries from the analysis.

Figure 2 shows how the results remain remarkably consistent with Figure 1: the averages remain almost the same[5]. Support levels are 57.2 and above in every country in Latin America or the Caribbean and, as well, the same cross-national differences remain evident. Therefore, there must be other factors that help to explain variation across countries.

Figure 2.
Average Support for Government Ensuring Well-Being of the People after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Do Contextual Factors Matter?

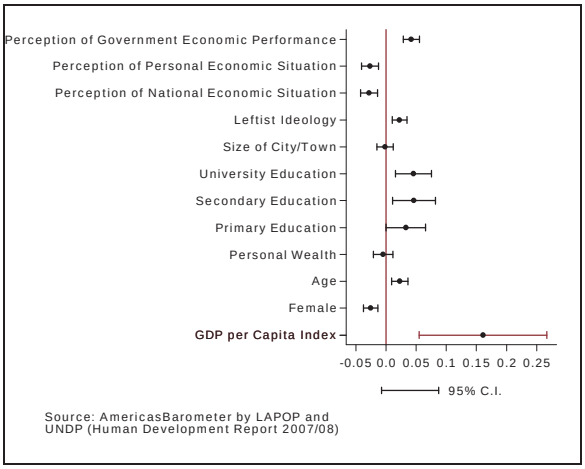
While, for the most part, citizens' socio-economic and demographic characteristics do not have a large impact on variation across countries in views on the government's role in ensuring well-being, perhaps key characteristics of the nation do. Some studies in industrialized nations have shown that public attitudes toward welfare state policies depend on both individual and national level variables (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003). In Figure 3, both the individual characteristics of respondents and the wealth of the nation, measured by GDP per capita, are analyzed.[6]

[4] In the Spanish-language version of the questionnaire, the word "el estado" (the state) is used since the term "el gobierno" (the government) refers to the incumbent administration rather than the state apparatus.

[5] An analysis of variance model was employed, with the socio-economic and demographic variables used as covariates.

6 This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush, et al. 2004), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Average Support for the Primary Role of the Government Ensuring the Well-being of the People in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



The impact of each variable is shown graphically by a dot, which if to the right of the vertical "0" line implies a positive contribution and if to the left of the "0" line a negative impact. Only when the confidence intervals (the horizontal lines) do not overlap the vertical "0" line is the variable statistically significant (at .05 or better). The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

Figure 3 shows that national per capita wealth (as reported by the United Nations Development Program in its Human Development Report 2007/2008 for each nation as a whole) has a strong statistically significant impact on individual support for the notion that government is principally responsible for ensuring citizens' well-being. The wealthier the country in per capita terms[7], the stronger the desire for government to take on this role.

Apart from national-level characteristics we included individual-level variables regarding views on the economy and politics as well as socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Specifically, we included a measure of ideology with the expectation that the more left-leaning an individual, the greater would be his or her preference for government involvement. Figure 3 confirms this expectation[8]. We further considered whether perceptions of the government's economic performance would have a positive effect, as a belief that the government is effective presumably gives it credibility and legitimacy in a broad sphere of policy areas, including welfare. Again, we see in Figure 3 that this variable is significant and positive[9].

At the same time, we suspected that perceptions of the prevailing economic conditions in a country may matter, though here our *a priori* expectations were less clear given that need could drive a preference for government-provided welfare while need may also signal poor government performance, simultaneously reducing confidence in government and demand for it to assume an expanded role in welfare. Contrary to the national level of wealth, perceptions of the national and personal economic situation have a negative statistically significant effect. *Ceteris paribus,* the greater the perception of the personal and national economic situation, the lower the support for the government ensuring citizen well-being.

Regarding socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, holding constant the rest of variables, citizens with university and secondary levels of education, older individuals, and males are more supportive of the proper role of the government ensuring their well-being. Interestingly, while perceptions of the economic situation matter, personal wealth does

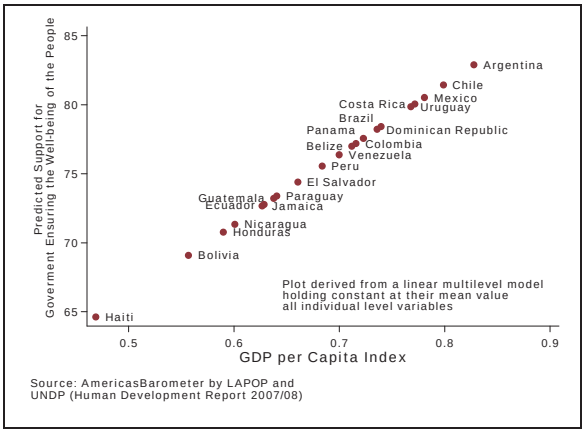
[7] National wealth is measuring using the UNDP's GDP index. This index is based on gross domestic product per capita in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars. The index can take values between 0 and 1. For details on how this index was constructed see UNDP's Human Development Report 2007/2008.

[8] The scale used here is the classic 1-10 measurement, in which the poles of "left" (1) and "right" (10) are placed on a continuum, and the respondent self-locates on this scale.

[9] The Perception of the Government Economic Performance Index was constructed from two items that asked to what extent people thought that the current administration fights poverty and unemployment.

not have a statistically significant impact, as Figure 3 depicts.[10]

Figure 4.
The Impact of Economic Development on Support for the Primary Role of the Government Ensuring the Well-being of the People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



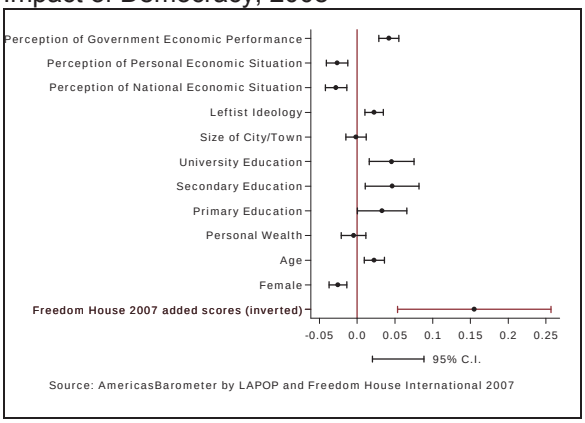
That national context matters is highlighted in Figure 4. This figure shows the fitted line from the multi-level regression analysis. The predicted line fits the countries' predicted support for government ensuring the well-being of the people according to the level of national wealth measured by GDP per capita. The higher the levels of wealth, the higher the support for government playing a strong role to ensure well-being.

While the analyses so far focus significantly on economic factors, we also examined and found evidence for an effect of regime type. Specifically, figure 5 shows that not only does the *level* of GDP increase support for the role of the state in welfare provision, but the level of democracy does as well[11]. Citizens who live in countries with higher levels of democracy tend to be more supportive on average of the notion that government should play a strong role in ensuring citizen well-being.

[10] This null finding holds even if economic perceptions are removed from the model.

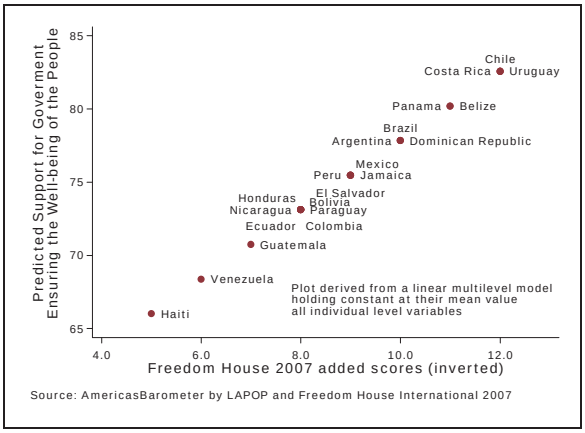
[11] Level of democracy is measured using Freedom House scores for 2007. The original scale is inverted, so that higher values indicate higher levels of democracy.

Figure 5.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Average Support for the Primary Role of the Government Ensuring the Well-being of the People in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Democracy, 2008



This finding is shown graphically in Figure 6, where we see the relationship between levels of democracy measured by Freedom House scores and support for government ensuring well-being. The higher the levels of democracy, the higher the support for an active government role in this regard.

Figure 6.
The Impact of Democracy on Support for the Primary Role of the Government Ensuring the Well-being of the People in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Policy and Program Implications

The findings of this report suggest that citizens in the region, on average, believe that government should actively promote individuals' well-being. However, this opinion is directly conditioned by personal evaluations of the efficacy of the state in handling the economy, as well as by levels of education, age, gender, and ideology. Furthermore, this opinion is also affected by contextual factors such as the level of national wealth and democracy.

If citizens live in contexts where the economy and democracy have achieved relatively high *levels*, they tend to prefer that governments play a strong role in the provision of social welfare.

Consistent with the above and with previous *Insights* reports, citizens who have positive perceptions of government performance prefer that it play a stronger role in the economy (in this case, social welfare provision). In short, where supply is perceived in a good light, demand is higher. Where governments have failed to deliver on the principal problems of the day, citizens are skeptical about the ability of the state to perform well providing welfare to its people.

Apart from confidence in the economic performance of governments, higher levels of education also seem to be important. Well-educated people tend to be more supportive of a strong role for government in ensuring citizen well-being.

In upcoming AmericasBarometer *Insights* reports we will look at additional issues regarding the role of the government, a role that seems to depend on different circumstances.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.17)[*]

World Views: 'Political Monism' or the Battle between Good and Evil[1]

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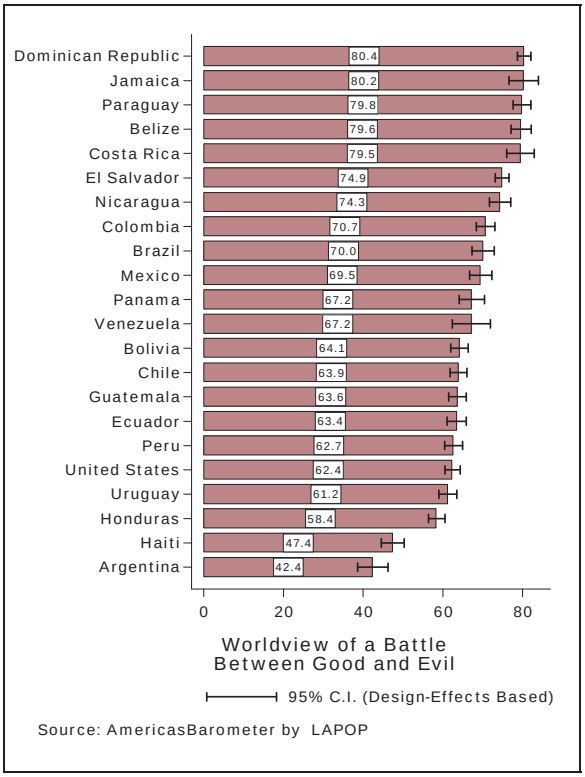
The debate as to how to define populism is long and in some ways tortured (Laclau 2005; Laclau 2006; Panizza 2005; Taggart 2000; Zizek 2006). Some scholars apply economic definitions, others political definitions (Weyland 2001), while still others link populism to authoritarianism (Munro-Kua 1996). In this paper we focus in one attitude that has been associated with populist belief systems, namely what has been called the belief in *political monism:* "the belief that the oneness of God and his heaven can be achieved on earth, if only the forces of satanic darkness can be rooted out" (Knopff 1998: 698). Stated more simply, this perspective on populism holds that adherents believe the world is defined by a battle between good and evil.

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* is the second to analyze the predictors of populist attitudes and/or predispositions in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey (others will be examined in future *Insights* studies).[2] However, in contrast to previous studies, in here, we will proceed in a more exploratory manner without making any policy recommendations, but rather open a discussion for further studies on the sources of populist attitudes.

Figure 1.
Average Belief in the Americas that the World is a Battle Between Good and Evil, 2008[3]



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[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] Non-response was 11. 3% for the sample as a whole.

This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 23 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States. Data from 22 of those national surveys are analyzed here (this question was not asked in Canada). A total of 33,738 respondents were asked the following question:

POP109. In today's world there is a battle between good and evil, and people must choose between one of the two. How much do you agree or disagree that such a battle between good and evil exits?

Responses were based on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 7 meant "strongly agree."[4]

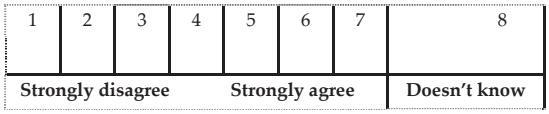


Figure 1 displays national averages for the 22 countries in the sample. We first note that in the majority of the countries in the Americas, *political monism*[5] or citizens' worldview of a battle between good and evil exceeds 50 on a 0-100 scale. In particular, the Dominican Republic (80.4) is the country with the highest belief in political monism, followed by Jamaica (80.2), Paraguay (79.8), Belize (79.6) and Costa Rica (79.5). At the other extreme of the scale, Haiti and Argentina reveal the lowest levels of political monism, lower than 50 points on a 0-100 scale, but come very close with 47.4 and 42.2 points, respectively.

Supporters of *political monism,* according to Rainer Knopff are "those who believe faction to be unnecessary" and who "see their political foes not as legitimate opponents but as the embodiment of evil, to be rooted out or overcome through some form of ultimate political salvation" (698). Such political salvation is often viewed in the embodiment of a leader who will solve all problems and meet all needs. In this case, a populist and charismatic leader will have a strong appeal among this segment of the population. Consequently, political monism at the very least might be considered an attitude that leaves some susceptible to embracing populism. For that reason, it is important to understand what are the determinants of high levels of political monism.

Predicting Support for Political Monism

What explains these different levels of support for political monism in the Americas? We examined contextual factors that might explain some of the national-level variation we found. Nonetheless, multilevel analyses predicting people's levels of political monism with the conventional national characteristics, such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not achieve statistical significance, even though a larger sample of countries, including nations from other parts of the world, might have. Alas, our data are confined to the Americas, and therefore, we decided to focus on individual-level characteristics that may impact citizens' worldviews concerning a battle between good an evil. We begin by examining a traditional set of socio-economic and demographic variables: levels of education, gender, wealth, and size of the city/town. [6] In addition, a variable that taps into citizens' religious devotion, and thus perhaps religious conservatism, was included.[7] We expect that

[4] In order to make comparisons across questions and survey waves simpler; these responses where recoded on a 0-100 scale, where 0 indicates "strongly disagree" and 100 "strongly agree."

[5] Measured by the question we discuss here, which is labeled pop109 in the AmericasBarometer questionnaire.

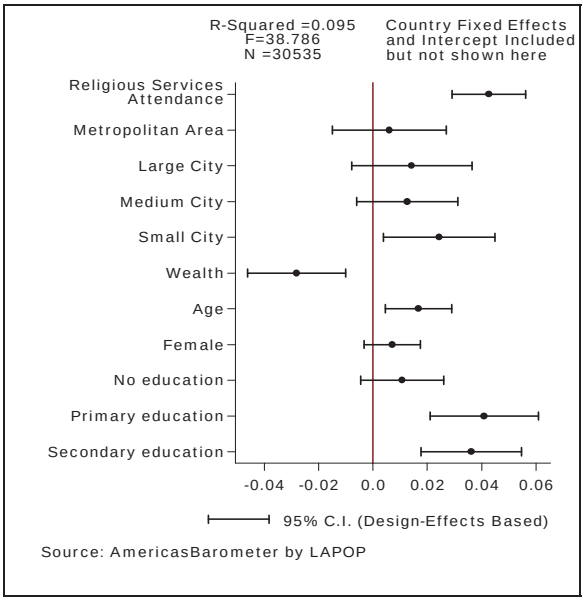
[6] Because the average citizen in the United States and Canada scores very high on socio-economic characteristics compared to those in the rest of the countries in the sample, and because of our interest in Latin America and the Caribbean, we exclude those two cases from the analysis.

[7] How often do you attend religious services? (1) More than once per week (2) Once per week (3)Once a month (4) Once or twice a year (5)Never. This question was recoded into a scale from 0 to a 100 where 0 meant "never" and 100 meant "more than once per week".

those who are more religious are more likely to view the world as a battle between good and evil.

Figure 2 shows the role of these variables in explaining citizens' *political monism*. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant. The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients.

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of the Average Belief in the Americas that the World is a Battle Between Good and Evil, 2008[8]

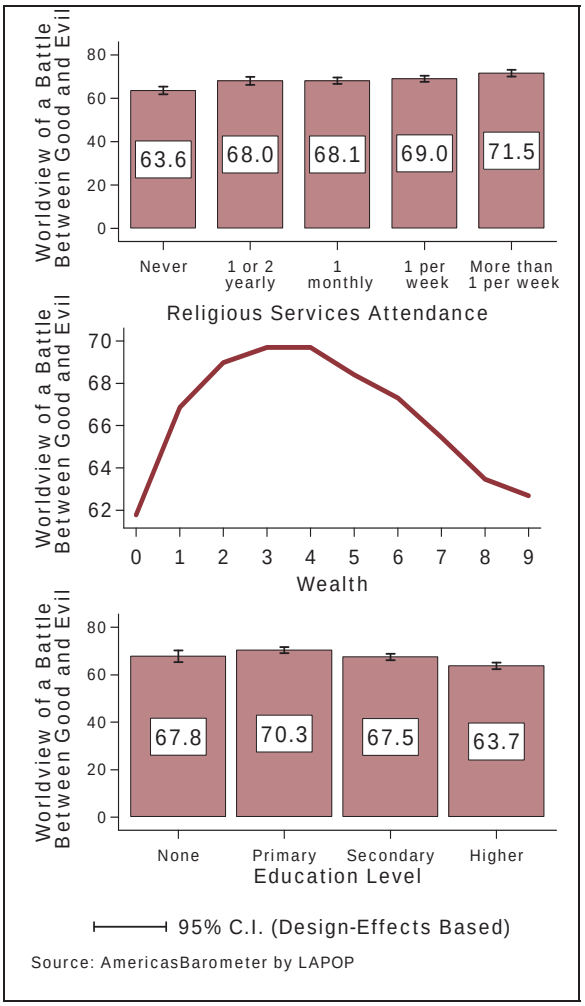


What we find in Figure 2 is that those who attend religious services more regularly are those who show higher levels of a worldview of a battle between good and evil. This result is not unexpected as people who are more religiously conservative may be exactly those who are most likely to perceive the world as a sort of biblical struggle between good and evil. In addition, those living in smaller cities show higher levels of *political monism* compared to those who live in rural areas, while there are no statistically significant differences among those who live in metropolitan areas, larger, and medium cities compared to those who live in rural areas. Similarly, the wealthy show significantly lower levels of support for *political monism*. To the extent that this variable measures populist tendencies, it is worth noting that these findings relate to those of previous reports in this *Insight Series* focused on support for presidential limits on the voice and vote of opposition parties (I0809) and support for a government without Congress; in short, previous reports show that citizens with the same characteristics, such as wealth, show lower levels of support for executive concentration of power.

An interesting finding and in contrast to what we have seen in prior studies in the populism series (where older people show significantly lower levels of support for executive concentration of power) is that the older the respondent, the higher his/her tendency to view the world as a battle between good and evil. Furthermore, there is no clear effect of education on *political monism*. While those with primary and secondary education have higher levels of political monism than those with higher education, there are no statistically significant differences between those who have no education and those who have higher education. Therefore, as happens with the effects of wealth, it also seems that there is a curvilinear effect of education on citizens' view of the world as a battle between good and evil. Specifically, as education or wealth increases, citizens' political monism increases, but once education or wealth reaches a certain point, the levels of political monism decrease. A better display of these effects can be seen in Figure 3, illustrated by sample means.

[8] Reference groups are rural areas and higher education

Figure 3.
Size of City/Town, Wealth, Education, and Support for Political Monism or a View of the World as a Battle Between Good and Evil in Latin America, 2008



In order to have a comprehensive understanding of what factors influence citizens' views of the world as a battle between good and evil, we also examine the impact of some political attitudes and behaviors that may play a central role in explaining this view. It is noteworthy that one of the purposes of this *Insights Series* is to analyze individual variables as an alternative to indices, a usual practice in academic writings. Thus, we take this opportunity to explore the determinants of this single belief, thought to be related to populism, independently from other variables that collectively might be considered to tap into populist predispositions. When considered as a standalone attitude, a worldview of a battle between good and evil may be tapping political predispositions, such as populist attitudes, religious practices, or both. As we have already seen, there is evidence that political monism is related to religious devotion; we now assess whether it is also related to political attitudes.

Figure 4.
Determinants of Average Belief in the Americas that the World is a Battle Between Good and Evil, 2008

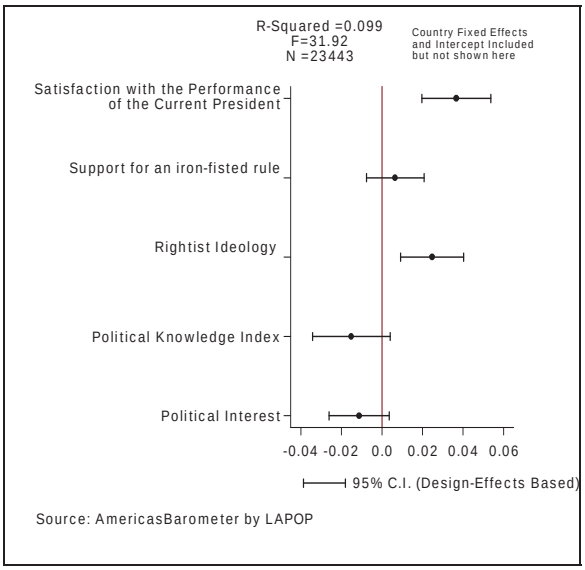


Figure 4 shows the impact of selected political attitudes on *political monism*. For instance, those who are more satisfied with the performance of the incumbent president have a higher tendency to view the world as a battle between good and evil. By the same token, those who place themselves in the right[9] of the ideology scale are

[9] Rightist Ideology was measured by: (Left-Right Scale) Now, to change the subject.... On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you

those who have higher levels of political monism. As with the same demographic and socio-economic characteristics, these results also echo those of the previous reports in this series where citizens with similar characteristics tend to have higher support for the president limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties (I0809) and tend to have higher support for a government without Congress. Yet, in contrast to these prior reports, here we do not find support for the effects of support for an iron-fisted government nor for political knowledge[10] or political interest[11] on support for a worldview of a battle between good and evil. Consequently, it is somewhat difficult to arrive at overall conclusions on support for populism based on the evidence found here. It may be the case that the question analyzed in this short paper is rather tapping into both political predispositions and religious attitudes and not necessarily populists attitudes alone per say. It is worth noting that all these variables have been controlled for country effects and the traditional socio-economic and demographic variables. [12]

Conclusion

As we examined in our previous reports in this *Insight Series*, there is an increasing number of executives whose tendency is toward a further concentration of their power in Latin America (Hawkins 2003; Seligson 2007). Thus, it becomes essential to understand what the nature and sources of citizens' populist attitudes are as continued high levels of support for executive concentration of power remain present in the region. At the same time, it is important that future work focuses on a more abstract analysis of people's worldview and how they may affect their policy choices. In this paper, we analyzed a belief that has been connected by some scholars to populist attitudes, *political monism,* which particularly relates to citizens' view of the world as a battle between good and evil.

We found here that those who attend religious services more regularly are those who show higher levels of a worldview of a battle between good and evil. Similarly, those who are more satisfied with the performance of the incumbent president and those who place themselves in the right of the ideology scale are those who have a higher tendency to view the world as a battle between good and evil. In relation to the socio-economic and demographic determinants of political monism, we found that poor individuals and those living in smaller cities show higher levels of *political monism* than those who live in rural areas. Because this question appears to be related to both social (religious) and political factors, we are hesitant to provide strong program recommendations on the basis of this question alone. Rather we suggest that this short paper provides insight into the possible determinants of an attitude that theoretically may place individuals at greater risk of embracing a populist leader, but we also conclude that there is more work to be done to fully understand the attitudinal bases of populism.

place yourself on this scale? Indicate the box that comes closest to your own position.

[10] The Political Knowledge Index is measured through the following questions: GI1. What is the name of the current president of the (country)? GI2. What is the name of the President of (Congress) in (country)? GI3. How many (provinces) does the (country) have? GI4. How long is the (presidential/prime ministerial) term of office in country? GI5. What is the name of the current president of Brazil?
It is worthy of note that the question related to Congress was not asked in Bolivia.

[11] This variable was measured by: how much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?

[12] Refer to the Appendix for a detailed display of those effects.

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Appendix

Table 1. Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Support for Political Monism in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Secondary education	0.036*	(3.84)
Primary education	0.041*	(4.03)
No education	0.011	(1.39)
Female	0.007	(1.35)
Age	0.017*	(2.70)
Wealth	-0.028*	(-3.06)
Small City	0.024*	(2.33)
Medium City	0.013	(1.33)
Large City	0.014	(1.26)
Metropolitan Area	0.006	(0.57)
Religious Services Attendance	0.043*	(6.20)
Mexico	0.043*	(3.85)
Guatemala	0.002	(0.25)
El Salvador	0.073*	(8.25)
Honduras	-0.027*	(-2.87)
Nicaragua	0.069*	(6.22)
Costa Rica	0.109*	(8.56)
Panama	0.031*	(2.46)
Colombia	0.045*	(4.47)
Ecuador	0.010	(0.68)
Bolivia	0.012	(0.89)
Peru	0.004	(0.43)
Paraguay	0.094*	(10.86)
Chile	0.016	(1.75)
Brazil	0.043*	(3.77)
Venezuela	0.034*	(2.20)
Argentina	-0.098*	(-7.23)
Dominican Republic	0.107*	(12.59)
Haiti	-0.102*	(-8.44)
Jamaica	0.112*	(8.47)
Belize	0.102*	(9.80)
Constant	-0.006	(-0.60)
R-Squared	0.095	
Number of Obs.	30535	

* $p<0.05$
Education level of Reference: Higher education
Size of City/Town Reference: Rural area
Country of Reference: Uruguay

Table 2. Determinants of Average Support for Political Monism in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Political Interest	-0.009	(-1.14)
Political Knowledge Index	-0.015	(-1.59)
Ideology Scale	0.021*	(2.70)
Support for an iron-fisted rule	0.006	(0.83)
Satisfaction with the Performance of the Current President	0.031*	(3.57)
Secondary education	0.025*	(2.43)
Primary education	0.021	(1.77)
No education	0.001	(0.08)
Female	-0.005	(-0.75)
Age	0.015*	(2.10)
Wealth	-0.025*	(-2.37)
Small City	0.019	(1.68)
Medium City	0.011	(1.09)
Large City	0.011	(0.89)
Metropolitan Area	0.005	(0.42)
Religious Services Attendance	0.042*	(5.42)
Mexico	0.038*	(3.17)
Guatemala	-0.014	(-1.17)
El Salvador	0.073*	(7.75)
Honduras	-0.039*	(-4.13)
Nicaragua	0.074*	(6.15)
Costa Rica	0.104*	(7.59)
Panama	0.025	(1.83)
Colombia	0.036*	(3.42)
Ecuador	-0.017	(-1.08)
Bolivia	0.022	(1.51)
Peru	0.005	(0.44)
Paraguay	0.090*	(9.51)
Chile	0.008	(0.83)
Brazil	0.029*	(2.35)
Venezuela	0.039*	(2.34)
Argentina	-0.109*	(-6.98)
Dominican Republic	0.102*	(11.18)
Haiti	-0.102*	(-7.48)
Jamaica	0.112*	(8.42)
Belize	0.090*	(7.79)
Constant	-0.027*	(-2.41)
R-Squared	0.099	
Number of Obs.	23443	
* p<0.05 Country of Reference: Uruguay		

NOTE: There is not a Report No 18. The next report in the series is Report No. 19

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.19)[*]

Should Authorities Respect the Law When Fighting Crime?

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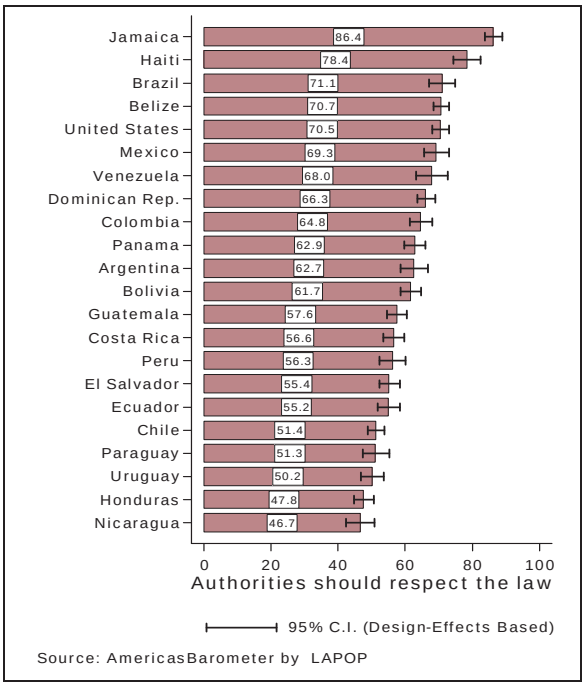
The wave of criminal violence that has spread throughout Latin American countries in the last two decades has spurred intense debates about the best ways to fight crime. Paradoxically, this wave emerged and grew after transitions from authoritarian rule took place in Latin America; hence much of the debate has focused on the challenge of building the rule of law and tackling crime without resorting to the old repressive institutions that were so characteristic of former authoritarian regimes (see Bailey and Dammert 2006; Fruhling et al. 2005). Overcoming residues of authoritarian practices in the fight against crime depends importantly, in our view on the extent to which citizen attitudes favor the rule of law, the observance of due process, and the respect of human rights, even when it comes to those suspected of committing crimes. Public support for the respect for the rule of law not only provides legitimacy to the institutions of the regime, but also may ultimately translate into reduced abuses in the fight against crime.

This *AmericasBarometer Insights Series* report examines public support for the authorities' respect for the law when fighting criminal violence.[1] Using the 2008 round of the AmericasBarometer, we asked 36,021 respondents from twenty-two countries in the Americas whether authorities should always obey the law or, instead, if they can disregard the law in order to catch criminals.[2] The question was formulated as follows: **AOJ8**. "In order to apprehend criminals do you think that the authorities should always respect the law or that occasionally they can operate at the margin of the law? (1) They should always respect the law; (2) Can operate at the margin of the law occasionally."

Figure 1.
Percentage of People in the Americas Saying That the Authorities Should Always Respect the Law, 2008



* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insight* series can be found at http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/AmericasBarometerInsightsSeries. The data on which they are based can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets.

[2] Funding for the 2008 series mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the IADB, the UNDP, the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

In this report, for brevity's sake we will use the term "support for the rule of law" to refer to the opinion that authorities should always respect the law in their efforts to catch criminals.[3] Figure 1 shows the percentage of people in each country that support the rule of law in the fight against crime.[4] Four points are worth-noting. First, in sixteen countries in the Americas, a majority (55% or more) said that authorities should always respect the law. Second, despite the apparent overwhelming support for the rule of law in many countries of the region the region, there are important variations across countries: in Jamaica and Haiti, support for the law is higher than 75%, whereas in countries such as Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay, the citizen's call for respect the law is only slightly higher than the appeal to ignore the law by the authorities. Third, in the Central American countries of Honduras and Nicaragua, the averages tip the balance in favor of disrespecting the law. And fourth, it is interesting to note that the countries that make the top five percentages in favor of the rule of law (Jamaica, Haiti, Brazil, Belize, and the U.S.) do not have a history of predominant colonization by Spain. These findings suggest the possible powerful influence of long-term cultural origins.

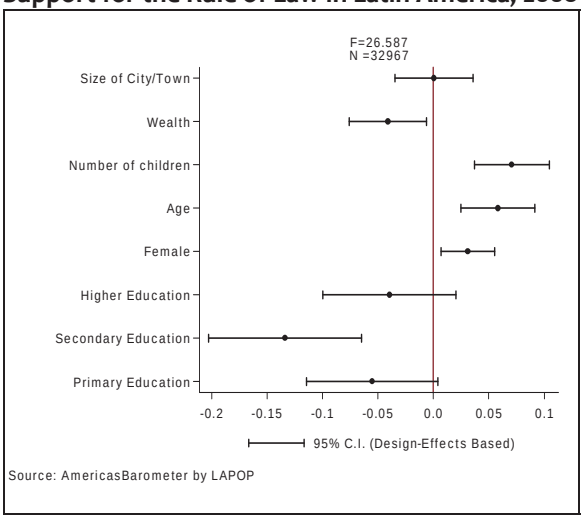
The differences we find across countries, however, might be the result of demographic and socioeconomic patterns that influence the outcome per country, but an examination of the results controlling by age, gender, education, and wealth did not return significantly different results.

Factors Associated with the Support for the Rule of Law

Which factors are associated with support for the respect of the law in Latin America? More important, which factors erode people's willingness to support the rule of law in authorities' behavior? The recent literature on violence in Latin America has pointed out that the prevalence of skyrocketing levels of crime and public insecurity may erode not only police and judicial systems legitimacy, but also citizens' readiness to comply with the rules of the system (Koonings 2001; Méndez 1999; Whitehead 2002).

In this report we test whether crime and insecurity affect attitudes of support for the rule of law. But before that, we examine the socio-economic and demographic factors that lie behind the support for the rule of law. A logistic regression performed on the Americas Barometer 2008 database[5] reveals that gender, age, wealth and education are variables related to support for the rule of law (see Figure 2). [6]

Figure 2.
Demographic and Socioeconomic Determinants of Support for the Rule of Law in Latin America, 2008



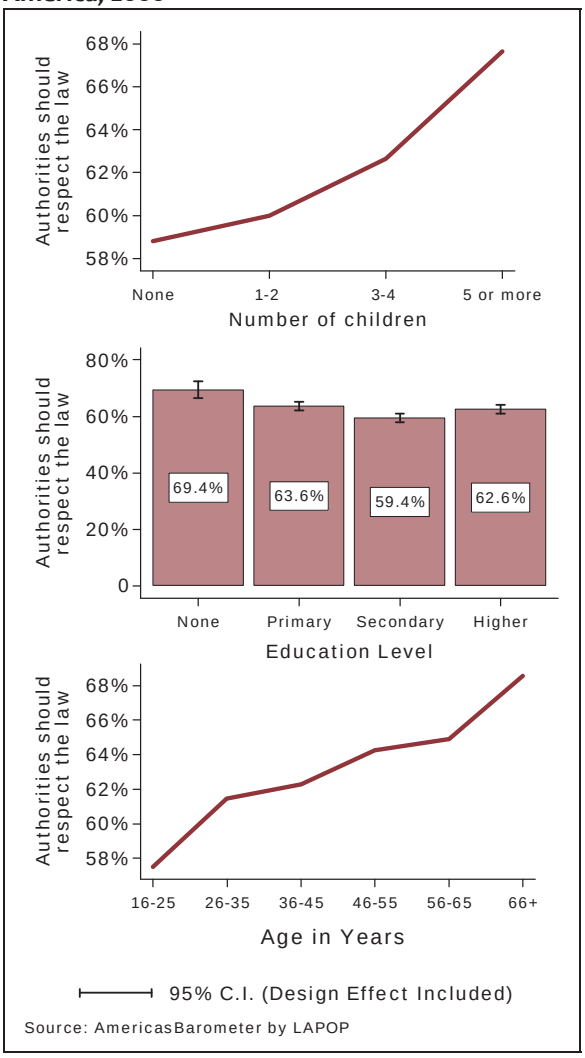
In Figure 2, we show graphically the standardized coefficient of each variable using a dot around the vertical "0" line (in red). If the dot

[3] We are aware that the term "rule of law" entails more than authorities observance of the law. Nevertheless, since this behavior is an important component of the rule of law, we will use here the term to abridge the text.
[4] Non-response was 9.7% for this question for the sample as a whole.

[5] All statistical analyses reported in this article were conducted using Stata v10, and they are adjusted to consider the effects of complex sample design.
[6] The analysis includes "dummy" variables for each country included in the overall sample, using Uruguay as the base category.

falls to the right of the "0" line, it implies a positive impact, as in the cases of "Female", "Age", and the "Number of children." If the dot falls into the left zone of the "0" axis, as in "Wealth" and "Secondary education", it means a negative impact on the dependent variable (support for the rule of law). The horizontal lines crossing each dot represent the confidence intervals: only when the confidence intervals do not overlap the "0" axis we can say the variable is statistically significant (p< .05).

Figure 3.
Percentage of People Who Think Authorities Should Respect the Law According to Number of Children, Education Level, and Age, in Latin America, 2008



In other words, women—more frequently than men—tend to respond that authorities should respect the law when fighting crime. Older people and parents with children are more likely to support the idea that authorities should always respect the law than younger people or persons with no children. And people with secondary education significantly tend to more frequently state that authorities should disregard the rule of law in order to tackle crime.[7]

Yet, the most interesting relationships are found when regressing citizens' opinion that authorities should respect the law on variables such as support for the system, political tolerance, interpersonal trust, ideology, crime victimization, perception of insecurity, and corruption victimization.

Figure 4.
Determinants of Support for the Rule of Law in Latin America, 2008

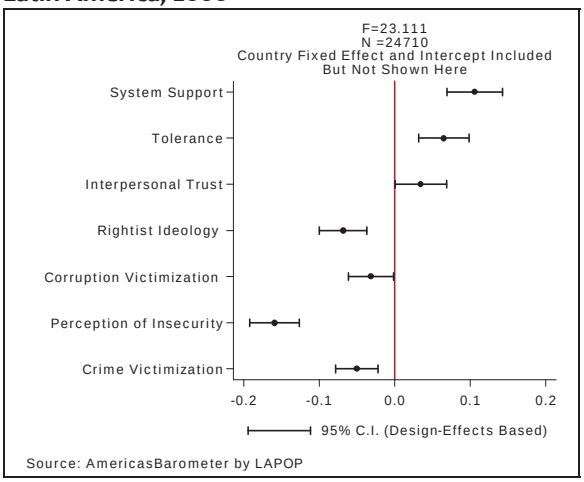


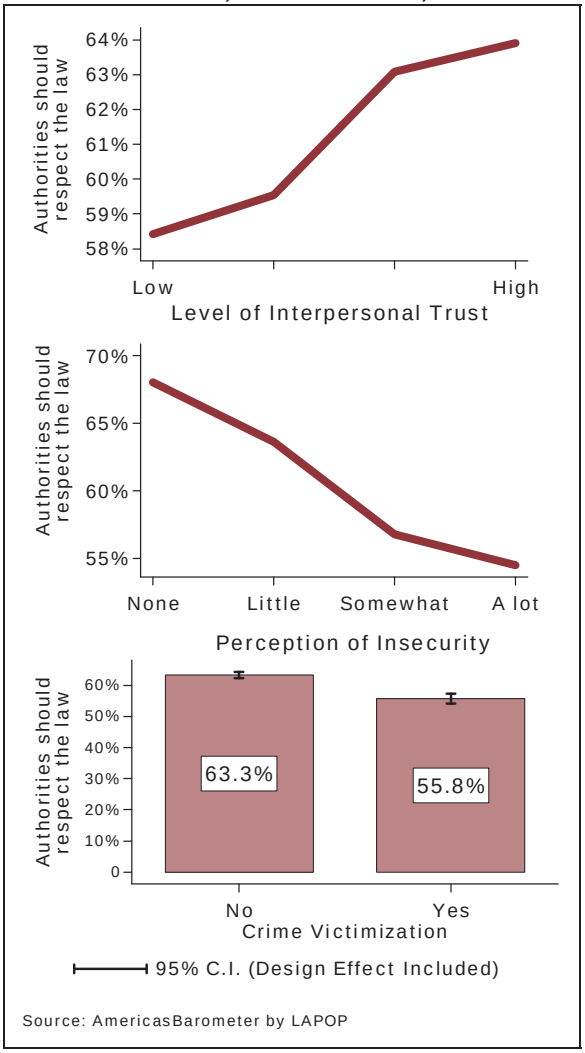
Figure 4 shows that, holding other variables constant, support for the rule of law increases along with support for the system, political tolerance, and interpersonal trust; while it decreases among people who hold rightist ideology[8], who have been victims of crime and

[7] Results in figures 3 and 5 show only bivariate relationships. The graphs in these figures do not control by other variables included in the regression models.

[8] It is important to note, however, that when including the variable about ideology, the number of cases in the regression decreases significantly because of the high rate of

corruption, and who perceive high levels of insecurity.

Figure 5.
Percentage of People Who Think Authorities Should Respect the Law According to Interpersonal Trust, Perception of Insecurity, and Crime Victimization, in Latin America, 2008



In other words, the more people support the system as a whole, the more likely they will demand authorities to observe the law in the fight against delinquency. Likewise, the more tolerant people are the more support for the rule of law they will show. Data also show (see figures 4 and 5) that interpersonal trust boosts the responses in favor of support for the rule of law. Such a finding suggests that trust among the population not only helps to strengthen community bonds fundamental for social capital but also provides support for the rule of law.

There are, on the other hand, a number of variables that impact negatively support for the rule of law. First, rightist political ideology seems to reduce support for the observance of law. People who lean to the right in ideological preferences tended to agree that authorities can act at the margins of legality in order to capture criminals, more than those in the center or left of the ideological spectrum. Second, victims—whether of corruption or of crime— also tended to disregard the respect of law by authorities. AmericasBarometer 2008 shows that crime victimization and corruption victimization erode support for the rule of law in the Americas. In the case of crime victimization the idea of authorities respecting the rule of law drops from 63.3% among no-victims to 55.8% among victims. These results suggest that countries with high levels of violence and corruption may also face citizen's cynicism toward laws, and their authorities may feel unbound by legal restraints in fighting criminal violence.

But the most significant factor undermining support for the rule of law across the Americas is citizens' perceptions of insecurity. As shown in Figure 5, insofar as people feel insecure in their neighborhood, support for the rule of law plummets in the Americas. Insecurity destroys confidence in the legal procedures and boosts attitudes that support extralegal activities in the security institutions.

Policy and Program Implications

How do we reduce support for extralegal activities in the institutions that provide public security and supervise order? How do we ensure that policemen and the military observe

"no response" in the ideology question (24.7%). Yet, we decided to keep this variable in the regression to show the importance of political ideology on weighing the importance of the rule of law.

the law in the fight against crime? This report of the AmericasBarometer *Insights* series provides some hints for policy-makers and democratization program managers interested in reducing public support attitudes for extralegal actions in the public sphere.

First, it is important to deal with perceptions of insecurity. Insecurity not only erodes public trust, it also erodes support for the rule of law. Although the control of perceptions of insecurity is always a complex task, the results shown here suggest that controlling feelings of insecurity and—what criminologists have termed—"moral panic" is an important goal in the construction of the rule of law. Of course, it is difficult to reduce insecurity when crime is rife, but the literature has also shown that perceptions of insecurity do not always run parallel to real crime trends. Often, panic is sown by the media, which build viewers and readers by following the maximum: "if it bleeds it leads." Policy-makers could significantly advance their agendas in the strengthening of democratic security institutions by finding ways to communicate important facts about crime, and crime prevention, while also being vigilant with respect to the sensationalization of crime in the media in order to provide a more balanced perspective that might then counter such sensationalized stories. In so doing, they can contribute to institutional building by educating the public, and especially the media, about the real situation of crime and violence in the country, both the bad and good sides of the issue. A trusted system of information that feeds responsible measures is far better than alarming calls to crusades.

Scholarship across several social science fields suggests that, while individuals may have a tendency to express intolerance when responding to threat and fear, the encouragement of thoughtful reflection and/or reminders of core democratic values can counter such tendencies (see e.g., Merolla and Zechmeister 2008). So, when presenting information about rampant crime, it is beneficial to a climate of tolerance that elites not only present a balanced perspective, but also remind the public about the core democratic values that undergird democratic political systems.

Second, the results shown here have also suggested the importance of interpersonal trust in the commitment to legal procedures. A community that trusts itself, that establishes strong bonds of constructive cooperation, is a strong promoter of legality and an effective deterrent of extralegal activities by the authorities. As we have seen in previous *Insights* reports, problems such as police abuse and corruption by public officials are still problems that pervade some Latin American countries; the promotion of interpersonal trust at the community level could play an unexpected but constructive role in advancing the rule of law in the Americas. Much of the programming effort, beyond that directed at the media, needs to focus on communities and the way local trust and aversion to panic can be established.

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Appendices

Table 1.
Socio-Demographic Determinants of
Support for the Rule of Law in Latin America, 2008

	Authorities should respect the law	
	Coefficients	(t)
Primary Education	-0.055	(-1.82)
Secondary Education	-0.134*	(-3.81)
Higher Education	-0.040	(-1.30)
Female	0.031*	(2.51)
Age	0.058*	(3.42)
How many children do you have?	0.071*	(4.11)
Wealth	-0.041*	(-2.30)
Size of City/Town	0.000	(0.02)
Mexico	0.162*	(7.14)
Guatemala	0.042*	(2.24)
El Salvador	0.034	(1.81)
Honduras	-0.026	(-1.31)
Nicaragua	-0.037	(-1.68)
Costa Rica	0.052*	(2.67)
Panama	0.105*	(5.33)
Colombia	0.119*	(5.95)
Ecuador	0.054*	(2.01)
Bolivia	0.118*	(4.42)
Peru	0.044*	(2.07)
Paraguay	0.006	(0.32)
Chile	0.011	(0.65)
Brazil	0.172*	(7.29)
Venezuela	0.152*	(6.01)
Argentina	0.111*	(5.00)
Dominican Republic	0.115*	(6.28)
Haiti	0.238*	(8.21)
Jamaica	0.354*	(13.36)
Belize	0.170*	(9.13)
Constant	0.455*	(24.53)
F	26.59	
Number of Obs.	32967	
* p<0.05		

Table 2.
Determinants of Support for the Rule of Law in Latin America, 2008

	Authorities should respect the law	
	Coefficients	(t)
Crime Victimization	-0.050*	(-3.50)
Perception of Insecurity	-0.159*	(-9.55)
Percent of Population Victimized by Corruption	-0.032*	(-2.08)
Ideology Scale	-0.069*	(-4.26)
Interpersonal Trust	0.035*	(2.00)
Tolerance	0.065*	(3.83)
System Support	0.106*	(5.63)
Primary Education	-0.057	(-1.51)
Secondary Education	-0.145*	(-3.33)
Higher Education	-0.049	(-1.34)
Female	0.047*	(3.18)
Age	0.066*	(3.30)
How many children do you have?	0.059*	(2.82)
Wealth	-0.036	(-1.79)
Size of City/Town	0.059*	(2.98)
Mexico	0.165*	(7.10)
Guatemala	0.050*	(2.48)
El Salvador	0.054*	(2.81)
Honduras	0.002	(0.07)
Nicaragua	-0.029	(-1.32)
Costa Rica	0.073*	(3.38)
Panama	0.111*	(5.29)
Colombia	0.124*	(6.07)
Ecuador	0.136*	(5.02)
Bolivia	0.134*	(4.76)
Peru	0.083*	(3.64)
Paraguay	0.029	(1.44)
Chile	0.031	(1.69)
Brazil	0.211*	(8.47)
Venezuela	0.187*	(6.64)
Argentina	0.160*	(7.05)
Dominican Republic	0.127*	(6.47)
Haiti	0.311*	(10.93)
Jamaica	0.371*	(13.35)
Belize	0.171*	(7.62)
Constant	0.462*	(23.28)
F	23.11	
Number of Obs.	24710	
* p<0.05		

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No. 20)[*]

Participation in Meetings of Political Parties

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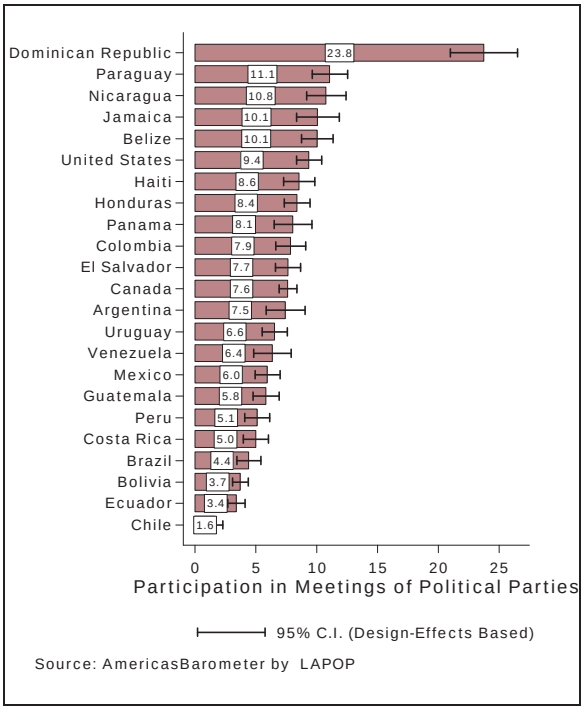
Participation in civil society organizations is considered as a key ingredient for a "healthy" democracy. It fosters bonds of solidarity and cooperation among members and therefore it influences variables relevant to the functioning of democracy such as trust and tolerance (Putnam 1993, 2000). Although political parties are not civil society organizations *per se*, they are core components of any political system. Participation demonstrates citizens' engagement in and commitment to the democratic "game." As well, these institutions theoretically could generate positive effects for democracy in the same vein as civil society participation more generally. As we saw in previous *Insights* reports[1], citizens in Latin America are generally dissatisfied with political parties: they show low levels of trust (I0802), and do not consider that parties are listening to the people (I0812). In this context of dissatisfaction, to what degree do individuals participate in these institutions? This report will address this question as well as the determinants of this kind of participation. We again query the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 38,053 respondents from 23 nations in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean were asked the same question:

CP13. Meetings of a political party or political movement? Do you attend them at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never?

These responses were then recoded on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[3] On this new scale 100 represents the highest level of participation (at least once a week) and 0 the lowest (never). Figure 1 shows a strikingly low participation in meetings of political parties. The level of participation falls below 25 points in every country.

Figure 1.
Participation in Meetings of Political Parties in the Americas, 2008



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* The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] Non-response was 1.66% for the sample as a whole.

The Dominican Republic is the country that displays the highest level of participation in meetings of political parties, with a score above 20 points on our 0-100 scale. The difference between this country and the rest is statistically significant. Paraguay, Nicaragua, Jamaica and Belize show levels around 10. At the other extreme we find Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile, where the average scores do not reach 5 points. One might suppose that participation levels are highest in countries that held elections in 2008, such as the Dominican Republic; however, when we check levels of participation in 2006, we find they are quite similar. Overall, it is quite evident that citizens in the Americas do not participate in meetings of political parties to the same degree that they participate in other civic groups.

Explaining Participation in Meetings of Political Parties

What explains variation in participation in meetings of political parties? We will focus on the individual characteristics of respondents in our surveys to answer this question.[4] As a first step we take into account the following socio-economic and demographic characteristics: education, gender, age, wealth, and city/town size. In order to assess their influence on our dependent variable, we employ linear regression model.[5] Given that citizens in the United States and Canada have sharply higher levels on socio-economic characteristics and given our primary interest in Latin America and the Caribbean, we exclude these countries from the analysis.[6]

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Participation in Meetings of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

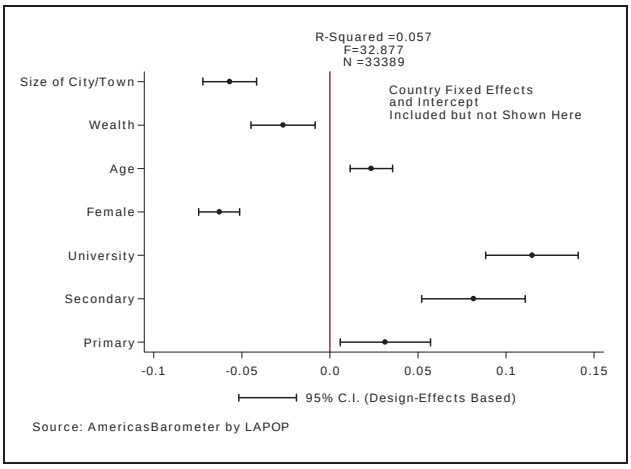


Figure 2 shows the influence of these individual-level socio-economic and demographic characteristics on participation in meetings of political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean. All five variables considered here are statistically significant. This significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 when it falls to the left it indicates a negative contribution. In this sense, we see that people living in rural areas or small towns tend to participate more than people living in large cities, *ceteris paribus*. Men, also holding constant the rest of variables, are more participative. Participation is also higher among the older and among people with fewer economic resources. Education level is one of the variables with the largest effects, having a university education increases the frequency of attending meetings of political parties.

Although socioeconomic characteristics have a statistically significant impact on this kind of participation, we need to add more variables in order to have a more reasonable and accurate idea of the determinants of participation in political parties. Theoretically, it is reasonable to expect that citizens are more likely to participate

[4] Multilevel analyses predicting levels of participation with variables such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not yield significant results. It is possible that the variation across countries displayed in Figure 1 is explained by some other national-level political factors, analysis that will be left for future research.

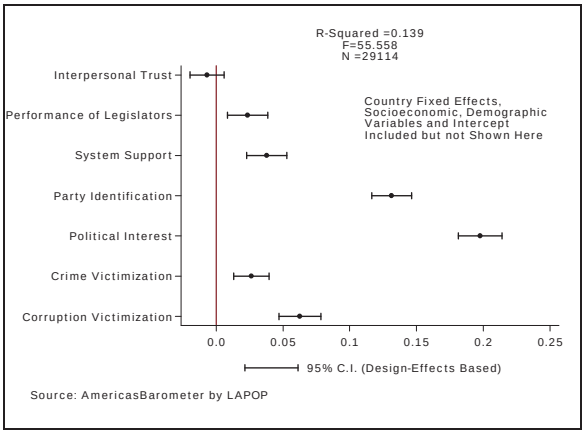
[5] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10 and results were adjusted for the complex sample designs employed.

[6] To capture the variation across countries the model included dummy variables for each country, using Uruguay as the reference country.

in political party meetings the more they approve of the political system, are otherwise engaged in the political system, and/or have grievances that the system might address. We therefore run an analysis that contains variables tapping these three types of motivating factors. Figure 3 displays the results the new model[7].

The effects of some of these new variables, such as political interest and party identification, in the model are larger when contrasted with those we found for socioeconomic and demographic variables. Furthermore, once we include these variables, gender and size of town lose significance.

Figure 3.
An Analysis of the Determinants of Participation in Meetings of Political Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Some scholarly literature has linked interpersonal trust to civic participation as two elements that reinforce each other (Putnam 1993). However, Figure 3 shows that interpersonal trust has no statistically significant impact on participation in meetings of political parties. This is in line with previous studies that find a weak link between social trust and civic participation in Latin America (Córdova 2008).

As we found in previous reports, citizens' participation in different civic organizations, such as participation in municipal meetings, is related to crime and corruption victimization. Those individuals who have been victimized by corruption at least once in the last year are more likely to participate in political party meetings. In the same way, those who have been victims of any crime are more likely to participate in these meetings. One explanation for this relationship is that those who have been victimized search for solutions to these problems through their participation in parties. Theoretically, they may see these organizations as places where they have the opportunity to voice important concerns.

Interestingly, we find that political interest is the variable with the largest effect. As we could suppose, the probability of participating in meetings of political parties increases as political interest is greater. In the same line, people identified with any political party tend to participate more.

Furthermore, diffuse support for the political system also has a statistically significant impact on participation[8]. People who see the political system as legitimate tend to participate more in one of its basic organizations, political parties. Finally, we included one variable related to the performance of legislators. When citizens consider that representatives satisfy their demands and perform their duties well they are more likely to participate in political party meetings.

[7] This analysis was carried out using a linear regression that also included the socioeconomic and demographic variables and the country dummies employed earlier. Figure 3 displays only the political variables. All the regressions performed can be found in Table 1 in the appendix.

[8] System Support Index is measured through the following questions: B1. To what extent do you believe the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial? B.2 To what extent do you respect the political institutions in (country)? B3. To what degree do you believe that the citizen's basic rights are safeguarded by the political system in (country)? B4. To what degree do you feel proud of living in the political system in (country)? B6. To what degree do you think the political system in (country) should be supported)?

Policy and Program Implications

This new *Insights* series report shows how citizen participation in political party meetings in Latin America is rather low. These low levels of involvement are even lower than levels of participation in other civic organizations such as municipal meetings as we saw in previous reports. Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that these low levels of participation are a consequence of general dissatisfaction with political parties in the region. As we saw in a previous *Insights report,* citizens in Latin America show low levels of trust in parties (I0802) and, further, they do not consider that parties are listening to the people (I0812) .

How might participation in political party meetings be improved? The AmericasBarometer data suggest again that participation in political parties depends on the extent to which citizens are interested in politics, identify with political parties, as well as the extent to which representatives fulfill their functions and perform their duties. While we have not examined the link here specifically, we might anticipate that increasing trust in political parties and representatives could lead to an increase in participation in these organizations. The more citizens perceive the party system as legitimate and efficacious with respect to satisfying their needs, the more likely they may be to participate in this form of civic activity. As Seligson and Booth (2005) found for the case of Costa Rica, political legitimacy leads to involvement in political parties activities.

We also see that participation in political organizations is related to having been a victim of crime or corruption. These findings could be suggesting that individuals participate as a desire to be heard and to find a response to these problems. While the circumstances compelling them to participate is negative, there may be a silver lining if victimization is motivating participation, which is that individuals retain some level of belief that political parties can provide positive solutions to important problems in their lives. This would imply a baseline level of respect for political parties and their functions exists that can be built upon.

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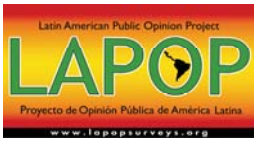
Appendix: Determinants of Participation in Meetings of Political Parties				
	Regression I		Regression II	
	Coefficient.	t	Coefficient.	t
Primary Education	0.032*	(2.41)	0.022	(1.39)
Secondary Education	0.082*	(5.44)	0.046*	(2.93)
University Education	0.115*	(8.59)	-0.031*	(-5.05)
Female	-0.063*	(-10.61)	0.003	(0.37)
Age	0.024*	(3.84)	-0.044*	(-4.57)
Wealth	-0.026*	(-2.85)	-0.056*	(-7.09)
Size of City/Town	-0.057*	(-7.32)	0.022	(1.39)
Corruption Victimization			0.063*	(7.81)
Crime Victimization			0.026*	(3.87)
Political Interest			0.198*	(23.76)
Party Identification			0.131*	(17.35)
System Support			0.038*	(4.92)
Performance of Legislators			0.024*	(3.06)
Interpersonal Trust			-0.007	(-1.05)
Mexico	-0.007	(-0.94)	0.005	(0.74)
Guatemala	-0.010	(-1.33)	0.021*	(2.87)
El Salvador	0.006	(0.79)	0.016*	(2.22)
Honduras	0.012	(1.49)	0.022*	(2.63)
Nicaragua	0.035*	(3.32)	0.058*	(5.74)
Costa Rica	-0.020*	(-2.61)	0.010	(1.31)
Panama	0.007	(0.69)	0.037*	(4.37)
Colombia	0.006	(0.66)	0.021*	(2.71)
Ecuador	-0.056*	(-6.04)	-0.002	(-0.30)
Bolivia	-0.057*	(-6.30)	-0.036*	(-4.48)
Peru	-0.029*	(-3.88)	0.004	(0.55)
Paraguay	0.035*	(4.20)	0.045*	(5.96)
Chile	-0.052*	(-8.05)	-0.008	(-1.37)
Brazil	-0.021*	(-3.01)	0.008	(1.16)
Venezuela	-0.004	(-0.43)	0.016	(1.72)
Argentina	0.007	(0.73)	0.021*	(2.54)
Dominican Republic	0.176*	(11.55)	0.164*	(11.90)
Haiti	0.006	(0.62)	0.022*	(2.45)
Jamaica	0.019	(1.74)	0.011	(1.19)
Belize	0.033*	(3.55)	0.054*	(5.64)
Constant	-0.004	(-0.58)	-0.008	(-1.06)
R-Squared	0.057		0.139	
Number of Obs.	33389		29114	
* p<0.05				



AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009
(No. 21) Special Report on Honduras*

Predicting Coups? Democratic Vulnerabilities, The AmericasBarometer and The 2009 Honduran Crisis

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Long range weather forecasting is probably little more accurate today than it was in the heyday of the *Farmer's Almanac*. Meteorologists today can certainly tell farmers with a high degree of certainty whether it will rain tomorrow, but they are far less confident about the prospects for rain next week, and have almost no ability to predict next month, let alone next year. Weather forecasters can tell very well whether the conditions are ripe for thunderstorms or tornadoes, but they cannot specify which towns or areas will get rain or suffer tornadic winds, or what hour the storms will come. Social scientists are in the same boat; hardly anyone predicted the fall of the Berlin wall or the breakup of the Soviet Union, and Wall Street "experts" are infamous for their ability to "predict" two out of the last five downturns. Indeed, expert predictions are more often wrong than right, as a recent comprehensive study on the subject reveals (Tetlock 2005).

While successful predictions of specific events in the distant future (e.g., rain a year from now, a riot) are most likely beyond our scientific abilities for the foreseeable future, there is some hope that political scientists may well be able to detect weaknesses, or vulnerabilities of countries to system-challenging forces. In this special *Insights* paper, we look for signs of such vulnerabilities, drawing on the LAPOP AmericasBarometer data for Honduras.

The events, which are still unfolding as this paper is being written, are punctuated by the ousting and exile of elected President Manuel Zelaya Rosales by the Honduran military. A non-binding plebiscite, or poll, had been called by Zelaya to determine popular support for a national constituent assembly to reform the constitution. Opponents suspected that the plebiscite would somehow be used to eventually override the constitutional prohibition against presidential succession, thus paving the way for an eventual reelection of Zelaya. Formal opposition to this poll was rendered by the Honduran Attorney General, the Honduran Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Honduran Supreme Court, and the National Congress, the latter having passed a law prohibiting such plebiscites within 180 days prior to national elections, which had already been scheduled for November 29, 2009. Zelaya rejected each of these barriers to the plebiscite and pushed the military to carry it out. When the military refused, Zelaya fired the head of the military, who was subsequently reinstated by the Supreme Court. The Attorney General and later the Supreme Court issued a warrant for Zelaya's arrest. Soldiers detained him in the early morning hours of June 28, 2009 and unconstitutionally

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt. The opinions expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of USAID. We thank Susan Berk-Seligson for her comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

exiled him to Costa Rica. International actors widely criticized the arrest and exiling of Zelaya. As conflict between the his supporters and opponents spread into the streets, mediation efforts began under the auspices of Nobel Peace laureate President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica.

Prediction of such events, and the ability to accurately guess their eventual outcome is certainly beyond our social scientific abilities. Yet, there is strong evidence in the AmericasBarometer surveys carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) that Honduras has been unusually vulnerable to political instability.[1]

Long-Term Views of Symptoms of Instability: the 2004 AmericasBarometer Survey

A look back at the first of the AmericasBarometer surveys, carried out in 2004, is instructive. In a recent Cambridge University Press book, published only months *before* the June events, the authors of this *Insights* study found serious warning signs of political instability (Booth and Seligson 2009). In the book, Booth and Seligson pursued the recent growth in interest in the empirical examination of the concept of political legitimacy (see, for example, Gilley 2009), a concept widely used in political science since its "invention" by Max Weber's classic 1919 lecture (Weber 1965). They argued that democratic political stability depends heavily on political legitimacy as perceived by citizens. Only on rare occasions does the mass public engage itself in the overthrow of democracies. Most such events are carried out by elites (Bermeo 2003). Yet elites are aware of the climate of political attitudes held by masses and thus elites can often perceive the degrees of freedom within which they can act. Thus, while it is inconceivable that the Canadian military would detain and exile the prime minister of his country, such an action in Honduras was carried out in a far more permissive atmosphere.

Booth and Seligson, using the 2004 AmericasBarometer data, found that political legitimacy in Honduras was very thin. Specifically, they created an index based on the ratio of citizens who were, in Booth and Seligson's terms, "triply dissatisfied" as a percent of all voting aged citizens versus those who were "triply satisfied." In essence, they isolated citizens who were either above mean on all three dimensions or below the scale means on all of three key dimensions of legitimacy: support for democracy, support for national institutions, and evaluation of the government's economic performance. What they found is that while that ratio was only .08 in Costa Rica, the most democratically stable country in the series, it was 1.57 in Honduras, over 19 times the level of Costa Rica (see Table 1). They concluded that Honduras was a case that demonstrated "greater risk for unrest, political turmoil, and support for antidemocratic regimes than [did] the other countries based on this indicator" (Booth and Seligson 2009 148). The study also found that the preference for electoral democracy over unelected strongmen was lower in Honduras than in any of the other countries in the sample (Booth and Seligson 2009 204). In addition, support for "confrontational tactics" was higher in Honduras than in any of the other countries (Booth and Seligson 2009 190).

The final piece of evidence from the 2004 AmericasBarometer is especially relevant. Booth and Seligson (2009 186) found that justification for a military coup in Honduras in 2004 was higher than in any other country studied; 56.2% of the voting aged population would have justified a coup.

[1] Funding for the AmericasBarometer has mainly come from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of additional support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University.

Table 1. Ratio of Triply Dissatisfied to Triply Satisfied Citizens, Eight Latin American Countries		
	2004*	**2008****
Honduras	**1.57**	**6.17**
Guatemala	1.37	3.23
Nicaragua	.53	1.12
Mexico	.38	.59
Colombia	.26	.22
El Salvador	.21	1.39
Panama	.11	1.67
Costa Rica	.08	.18
* Calculated from Booth and Seligson (2009), Table 8.2 (ordered by 2004 results). **Calculated from LAPOP 2008 survey.		

Recent Evidence from the AmericasBarometer

In 2008, the AmericasBarometer covered 24 countries and included over 40,000 interviews. To assess the potential for political instability, the ratio of triply dissatisfied to triply satisfied citizens was calculated as was done for 2004. Table 1 shows that in 2008, the ratio of triply dissatisfied to triply satisfied citizens had increased in seven of the eight nations covered in the Booth and Seligson study (Colombia was the exception). In the case of Honduras, however, the increase was huge; over four years between 2004 and 2008, the triply dissatisfied to triply satisfied ratio rose very sharply and to a very high level, from 1.57 to 6.17. Following the logic of this index, the results clearly indicate a substantially increased risk of instability.[2] Again, the index does not predict the specific events that occurred in June 2009 in Honduras, but it does suggest a climate vulnerable to democratic breakdown.

[2] Other countries in which in 2008 the ratio increased into the +1.00 range, indicating many more triply dissatisfied than triply satisfied citizens, were Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama. The latter three in 2004 had more triply satisfied than triply dissatisfied citizens (i.e. ratios below 1.00). This 2004 to 2008 shift suggests an increased potential for unrest in several countries.

Booth, Wade and Walker (2010 forthcoming), in their forthcoming fifth edition of *Understanding Central America*, compare the attitudes of Central Americans in 2008 and find Hondurans to have the highest level of support for a military coup (48%), and the highest level of agreement that the country needs "a strong leader who does not need to be elected" (39% -- more than double the support for this proposition among citizens of the four other Central American countries). Hondurans also by far expressed the highest support both for confrontational political methods, such as demonstrations and occupying buildings, and for violent rebellion against an elected government (Booth, Wade and Walker (2010 forthcoming Table 9.2). Honduras in 2008 had a very large proportion (30.1%) of citizens who simultaneously were antidemocratic and dissatisfied with institutions and who were also dissatisfied with the government's economic performance. This contrasted with only 4.9% who were triply satisfied on those same grounds.

Honduras in a Latin American and Caribbean-wide Comparative Context

In order to place these results in the broader context of Latin America and the Caribbean, we have calculated the mean score of each country on a scale of triple dis/satisfaction (0=triply satisfied, 1=mixed values, 2=triply dissatisfied). This measure is constructed by assigning a performance score of 2, to all of those simultaneously scoring below or of zero to all those at the same time scoring above the scale midpoint on all three measures: support for democratic principles, institutional support, and evaluation of government economic performance. Those with mixed views receive a score of 1. Figure 1 presents the mean score by country. There we see that Honduras has the highest triple dissatisfaction mean of any country, confirming what we have already demonstrated in a narrower regional context.

Our triple dis/satisfaction measure allows us to identify countries with larger proportions of antidemocratic, institutionally disloyal, and economic performance-frustrated populations. Assuming that these attitudes affect the potential for political stability, we may extrapolate from the evidence in Figure 1 to identify other countries that may be at greater risk for political instability. Haiti is close to Honduras in the high proportion of triply dissatisfied citizens. Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador also have relatively high triple dissatisfaction scores in the 2008 AmericasBarometer survey. In contrast, based on their high ratios of triply satisfied to triply dissatisfied citizens, the countries that appear to be the least at risk are Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic.

Conclusions

We do not claim that our public opinion data can predict coups d' etat. Coups in democracies are attacks on the institutional order mounted by small groups, usually involving conspiracies among tiny numbers of antidemocratic elites. Nonetheless, as we have noted and argued elsewhere (Booth and Seligson 2009, Booth Wade and Walker 2010 forthcoming), having large populations of disgruntled citizens may encourage elites to risk antidemocratic adventures.

How might this come about? Opinion polls throughout Latin America regularly report levels of public dis/satisfaction with the performance of government and the economy. Elites by virtue of their social positions at the top of key political and economic institutions have other, informal channels of information as well. Thus extensive public dissatisfaction may allow elites who are weakly committed to democratic rules of the game in the first place to estimate how much public resistance or support they might face should they violate the institutional order. Against a public opinion background of multiple disgruntlements and low consolidation of democratic norms, specific catalytic events – unknowable to public opinion researchers but more evident to close observers of individual polities — could provide a trigger and an excuse for antidemocratic actions by elites. For example, Manuel Zelaya insisted on conducting a plebiscite to gauge popular support for a prospective constituent assembly, despite legislative efforts and rulings from other parts of the Honduran government. Confronting these obstacles, Zelaya tried to force the vote and then to cashier the head of the military. The action was ruled illegal. Aware of divided public support for Zelaya and absent any formal mechanism for impeachment and removal of the president in the Honduran constitution, Zelaya's elite critics and enemies in key government positions (Congress, the Supreme Court, the Armed Forces leadership) moved to oust him and justified their own unconstitutional actions by claiming that the crisis had been provoked by his unconstitutional actions.

Our public opinion data did not predict the Honduran democratic breakdown of 2009. They did, however, identify Honduras as the single case in Latin America with the highest level of triply dissatisfied citizens, with relatively low support for democracy and with high support for coups, confrontational political methods, and rebellion. Against this context of vulnerability — low consolidation of democratic norms and high dissatisfaction with government performance and institutions — local actors supplied the specific catalytic events that precipitated the breakdown. We believe that we have developed an interesting tool for predicting where such instability has a greater (or lesser) likelihood of occurring. That, we think, is an improvement in social science predictive capacity. Like the weather forecaster, we still cannot say with certainty whether there will be a tornado or precisely when the tornado will hit a particular barn, but we can say something about when the conditions are ripe for a tornado to drop out of the sky.

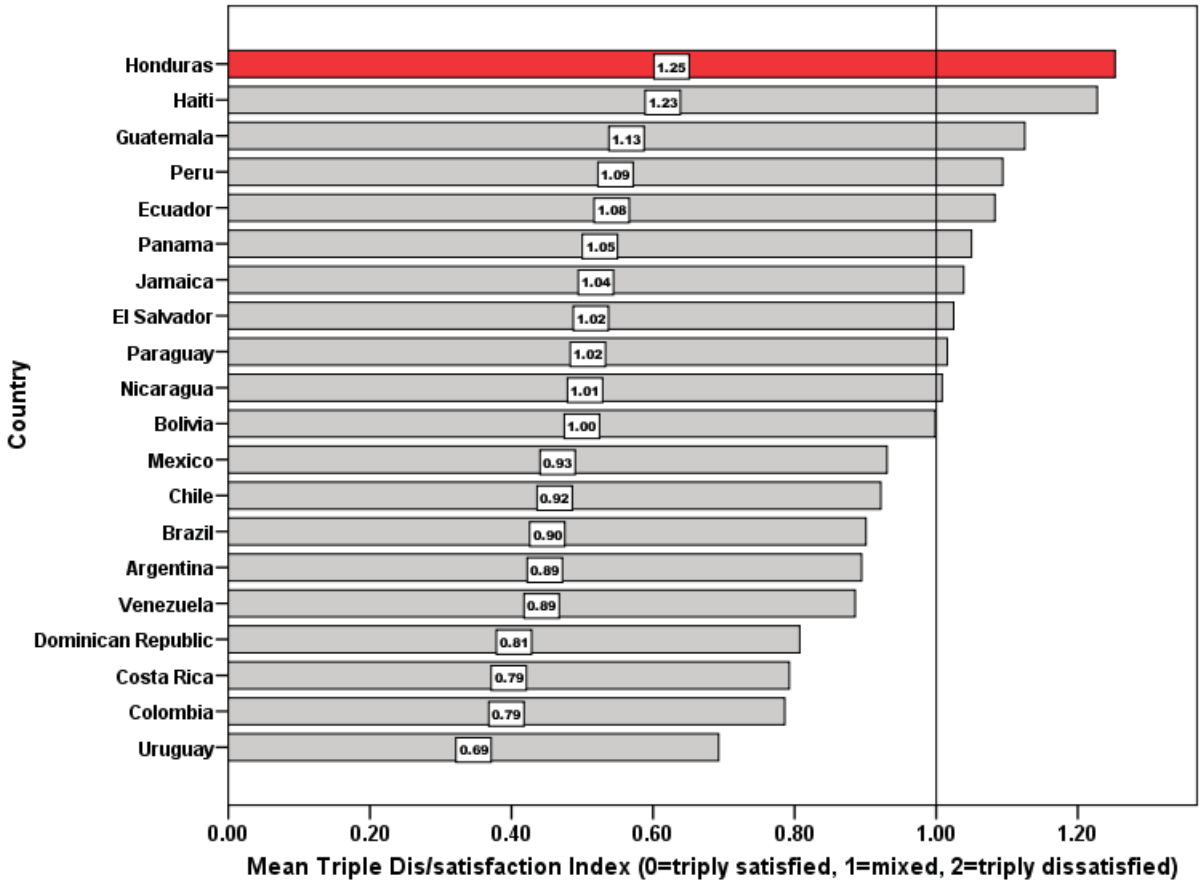

Figure 1. Mean levels of triple dis/satisfaction, 2008.

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*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009(No.22)**

Municipal Corruption Victimization[1]

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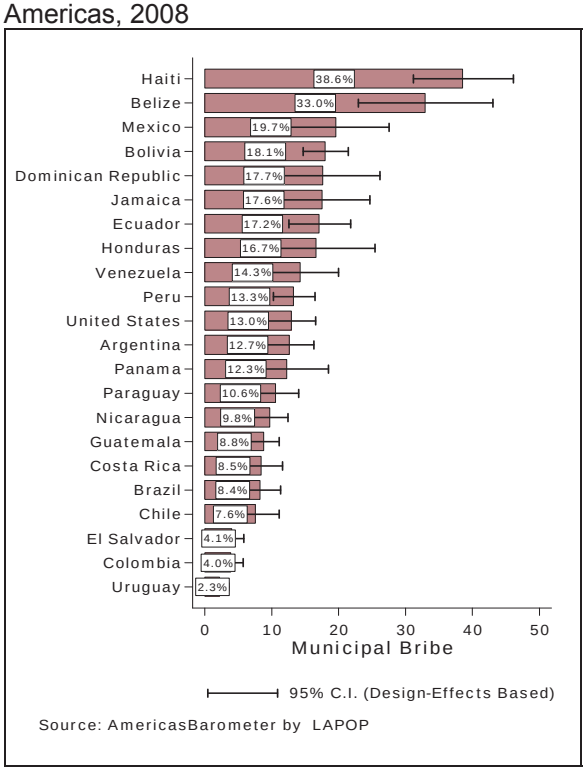
Corruption experts have reached a consensus: first, corruption has a considerably harmful impact on economic growth, and secondly, democracy is essential for combating this corruption (Doig & Theobald 2000). Democracy is important because it inherently reduces corruption practices as the "freedom of information and association characteristic of democracies helps monitoring of public officials, thereby limiting their opportunities for corrupt behavior"(Montinola & Jackman 2002: 151). In addition, because of the government turnover attribute, politicians in democracies are unable to make promises that will continue for the indefinite future, minimizing bribing incentives and credibility (Rose-Ackerman 1999).

This is the third paper (I0803, I0813) in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* to analyze the sources of corruption victimization, focusing on another question included in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey (additional questions in this series will be examined in future *Insights* studies).[2]

Figure 1.
Percentage of the People Victimized by Municipal Corruption during the past year in the Americas, 2008



LAPOP studies have usually employed the corruption victimization index.[3] In this paper, conversely, we analyze one of the components of that index, namely municipal corruption victimization. In addition, scholars have shown that both democracy and high levels of

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[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This index has been constantly improved since its first administration in 1996. For a more detailed discussion of this index see Seligson (2006).

development matter for corruption mitigation as both are theoretically and empirically intertwined. In order to keep this report brief and gain a deeper understanding of what is the impact of some national level characteristics on this type of corruption, in here, we examine specifically the effect of democracy.

This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 22 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States (this question was not asked in Canada). A total of 36,021 probabilistically selected respondents were asked the following question:

EXC11. During the past year did you have any official dealings in the municipality/local government? [If "yes"], during the past year, to process any kind of document (like a license, for example), did you have to pay any money above that which is required by law?

Due to the fact that this question asks first if the respondent did any official dealings in the local government during the last year, the sample was reduced to 8928. Only if the response was affirmative did the interviewer continue with the following section of this question. For that reason, the analysis carried out in this paper focuses mainly on the subset of individuals who responded "yes" to this question and percentages reported here represent that subset of individuals, not the sample as a whole.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of people asked to pay a bribe to process documents of any kind by the local government. More specifically, a wide range of municipal corruption victimization occurs across countries. Haiti and Belize are countries that emerge with significantly higher percentages, 38.6% and 33% respectively, of people having been victimized by the local government. At the other extreme, Uruguay (2.3%), Colombia (4%), and El Salvador (4.1%) demonstrate a very low percentage of people having been victimized by local corruption.

How much of the variation of municipal corruption victimization is explained by the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries? To simplify the answer to this question, the United States was removed from the sample in order to avoid any statistical biases given that this case has an exceedingly high level of socio-economic development compared to the other countries and may drive the results of the analysis.

Figure 2.
Percentage of People Victimized by Municipal Corruption during the past year Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in the Americas, 2008.

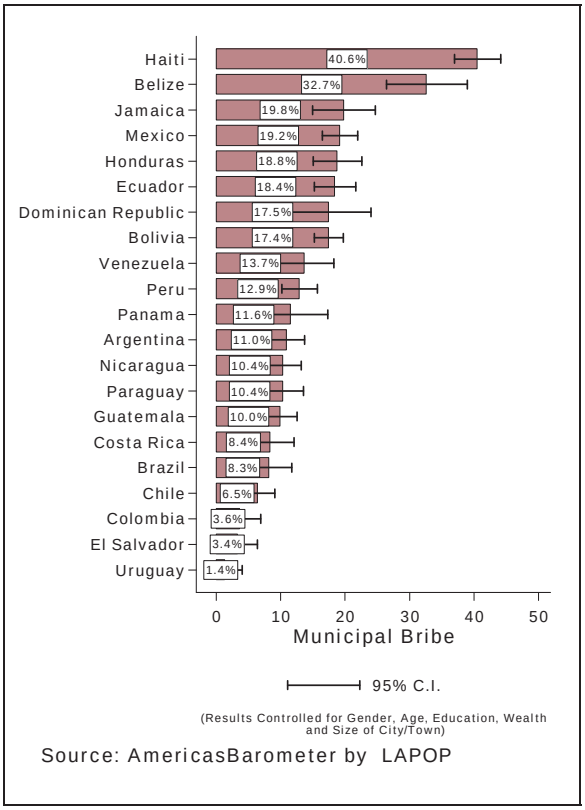


Figure 2 shows similar results as the previous figure after controlling for gender, age, education, wealth, and size of city/town. The percentages of people being victimized by municipal corruption across the Americas vary only by a few percentages higher or lower from

the uncontrolled results. Haiti (40.6%) and Belize (32.7%) continue to experience the highest percentages of corruption victimization by local governments, whereas Colombia, El Salvador and Uruguay show the lowest percentages with 3.6, 3.4, and 1.4 percent respectively.

Do Contextual Factors Matter?

Given the previously stated theoretical connection between democracy and corruption, we test whether the level of democracy in the country is related to our municipal corruption victimization question. In a multi-level analysis we find that in addition to individual-level characteristics, the level of democracy indeed matters for municipal corruption across the Americas. Figure 3 shows the effects of both individual-level characteristics and the level of democracy, measured by the freedom house index 2007[4], on the probability of being asked a bribe by the municipality or local government (among the subset of respondents who indicated that they had official dealings with that government). Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on experience with local government corruption is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant. The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients.

[4] Freedom House Index 2007 is a composite measure of a country's level of democracy. It includes two measures of democracy: *political rights* and *civil liberties.* Both measures contain numerical ratings between 1 and 7 for each country with 1 indicating the "most free" and 7 the "least free." In this short report, both measures were inverted and combined into an index with lower values indicating "less free" and higher "more free."

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Municipal Corruption Victimization in the Americas: The Impact of Freedom House Index, 2008

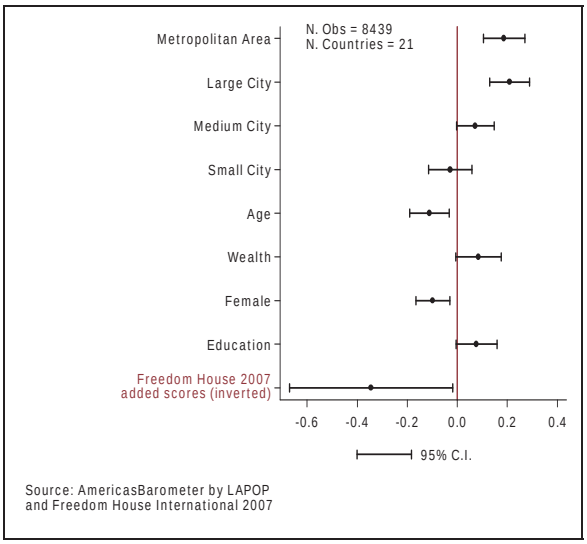
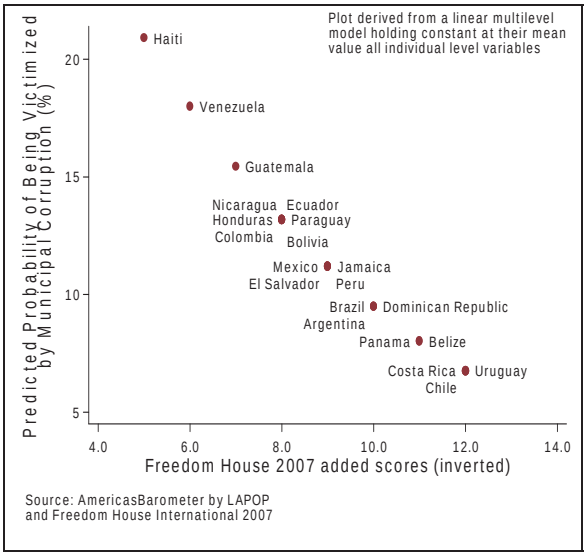


Figure 3 shows that individual characteristics as well as the level of democracy matter in determining the likelihood of citizens being victimized by the municipality or local government. Individuals who live in metropolitan areas and larger cities are more likely to be victims of municipal corruption. This finding is not surprising as people in urban areas are more likely to process documents and carry out transactions than those in rural areas, consequently increasing their chances of becoming victims of corruption. On the other hand, females and older people are less likely to be victims of municipal corruption. When comparing these results to those of previous reports in this series related to corruption victimization by the police and public officials, citizens with these similar characteristics are more likely to be victims. One difference, however, is that older individuals are less likely to be victims of corruption by the police and by the local government, whereas in the case of corruption by a public employee, age has no clear relationship.

Returning now to national-level characteristics, we find that the level of democracy, measured by the Freedom House Index 2007 (scored so that a higher number indicated greater democracy), decreases the probability of corruption victimization by the municipality or local government. In other words, individuals who live in democracies that are more consolidated are significantly less likely to be victimized by corruption compared to those who live in less free societies. The significance of the national context is underscored in more detail in Figure 4. The lower the level of democracy, the more likely our analysis predicts that the average citizen is to become a victim of municipal corruption. For instance, Haiti is the country that shows by far the highest probability of corruption victimization by a municipality or local government and is the country with the lowest level of democracy.[5] Interestingly enough, Haiti, a country where corruption is endemic and continues to harm Haiti's political and economic development, scores similarly low on other national level characteristics, such as economic development measured by GDP and socio-economic development measured by the Human Development Index. In previous reports on corruption in this series, Haiti persistently suffered from the highest corruption victimization by the police and by a public employee, factors that were associated with lower economic and socio-economic development compared to the other countries in the sample. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Haiti was ranked 177 out of 180 countries in terms of that organizations corruption perception index.[6] At the other extreme, Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica exhibit the lowest probability of municipal corruption victimization and are also the most consolidated democracies in the region.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Democracy on Municipal Corruption Victimization in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008[7]



For instance, Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica are considered "free" by the Freedom House organization with scores of 1 in both political rights and civil liberties, indicating the highest level on these indicators. As previously indicated, in this report these values were recoded, combined, and inverted so that higher values indicate higher levels of democracy. Taking all these results together, our analyses suggest that if a citizen from Haiti or Venezuela with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to move to Uruguay, Chile, or Costa Rica, *ceteris paribus*, and none of his/her individual characteristics were to change, the probability of this person being asked a bribe by

[5] According to Freedom House, Haiti, a country of around 9 million inhabitants is considered *partly free* with a score of 4 in political rights and 5 in civil liberties, which denotes less political rights and civil liberties. It is worth noting that in this report we recoded these values, combined them, and inverted them, so that lower values indicate "less free" and higher values "more free." For more information, see www.freedoomhouse.org

[6] www.transparency.org

[7] The point estimate differences between countries in Figure 2 and 4 are explained partly by the fact that Figure 2 controls for individual level characteristics while Figure 4 takes into account the level of democracy measured by the Freedom House Index (inverted), a national level characteristic.

a municipality or local government would be at least 15 percentage points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti or Venezuela.

Programs and Policy Implications

Corruption is one of the most serious and ubiquitous problems in emerging democracies, not only because of its recognized harmful effects on economic growth, but also because it erodes belief in the legitimacy of the political system (Seligson 2002). However, scholars have reached a consensus that democracy is essential for combating corruption (Doig & Theobald 2000). In this short paper, we indeed found just that; democracy is an important factor that explains lower municipal corruption.

Individuals living in more consolidated democracies are less likely to be victims of corruption, whereas the probability is remarkably higher for the average citizen in less free countries. For instance, when examining carefully each of the indicators of Freedom House Index: political rights and civil liberties, more consolidated democracies, such as Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica score continually higher on these indicators compared to less free countries, such as Haiti and Venezuela. In addition, we found that individuals' characteristics explain their propensity to be victims of municipal corruption. Those who are younger, residing in urban areas and males, are more likely to be victims of municipal corruption; perhaps as such individuals are more likely to require municipal services than do older people, those residing in rural areas and females, being more exposed to instances of municipal corruption.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this report, democracy is important for corruption mitigation as democracy's attributes of freedom of information and association facilitates the monitoring of public officials by the public, by advocacy and interest groups, and by other political elites. In this case, a greater level of freedom of information likely increases monitoring of public officials at the local level. Similarly, democracy's government turnover characteristics reduce the credibility with which politicians can make promises that will continue in the future. Municipalities' authorities in democracies are also constrained in their ability to carry out acts of corruption as they know that they can and probably will be removed from power. Therefore, we conclude that political competition at different levels of government is essential for combating corruption (Hiskey 1999).

In that sense, anti-corruption programs are likely to be most successful when governments in collaboration with the international community aim at encouraging political competition through participation and freedom of information within democratic contexts that are otherwise weak and lacking such qualities. Conceivably, one example of such efforts would be to increase support for "Transparency International's public education and information role in publicizing individual countries' track records on corruption" (Kaufmann 1997: 130). In addition, democracy programs should focus on educating the citizenry as to deepen their understanding of democracy's virtues, one of which is its significant negative effect on corruption. Presumably such knowledge will motivate and train individuals to monitor public officials in this regard. In conclusion, anti-corruption and democracy programs need to address more effectively freedom of information and ensure the protection of political rights and civil liberties to reduce corruption activity.

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*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No. 23)**

Trust in Electoral Commissions[1]

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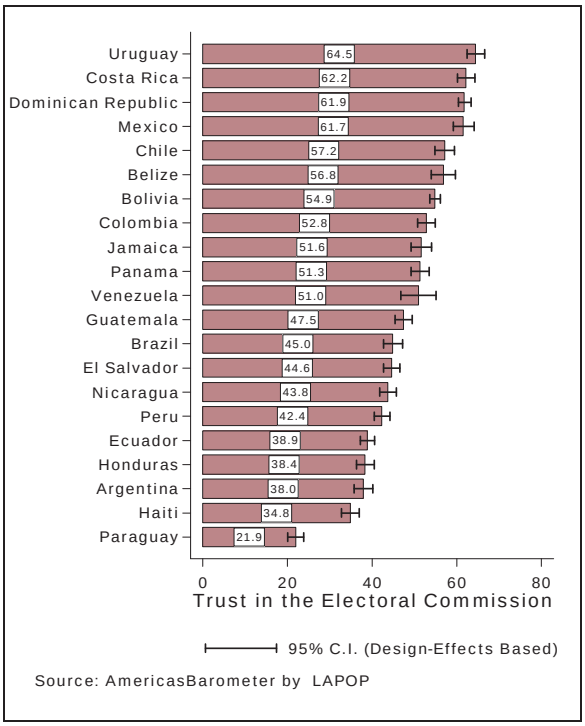
The "minimalist," Schumpeterian conception of democracy suggests that for a system to be democratic "rulers must be selected by free and fair elections" (see: Schumpeter 1943; Przeworski et al. 1999; Diamond 1999). To understand the seriousness of these "stretch" requirements, Pastor (1999) argues that the conduct of free and fair elections requires significant organization, training, administration, and oversight. Who, then, is charged of the electoral responsibilities that are at least partly needed to ensure free and fair elections in liberal democracies? In various developed countries, such as the U.S. and the U.K., elections are administered by local institutions dependent of government offices (Pastor 1999). Citizens in these countries usually take for granted that the electoral process is honest and impartial. In developing countries, however, the administration of elections resides in normatively independent *Electoral Commissions.* This independence from government offices is, perhaps, a mechanism intended to avoid any possible bureaucratic manipulation of elections that may hurt the credibility of the electoral system.

This *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* report examines the extent to which people in Latin America and the Caribbean trust these electoral commissions and explores the main determinants of the levels of trust. We query the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 34,521 respondents from 21 nations were asked the next question:[3]

B11. To what extent do you trust the Electoral Commission?[4]

Figure 1.
Average Trust in Electoral Commissions in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

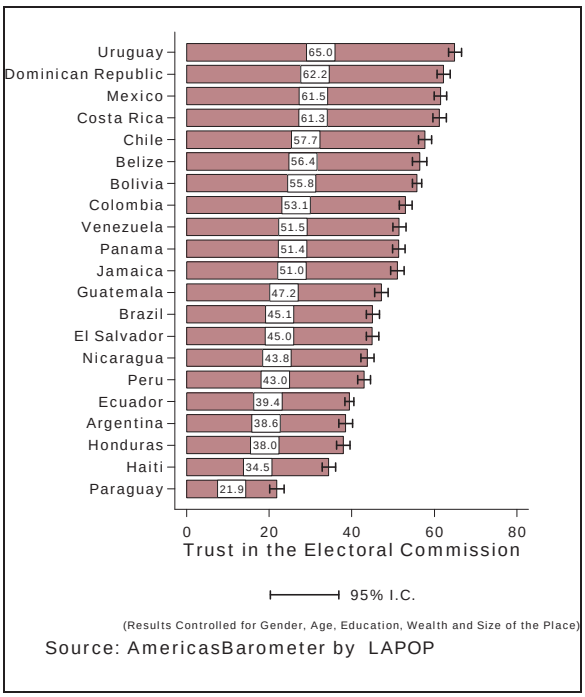
[3] This question was neither asked in Canada nor in the U.S.

[4] The proper name of the Electoral Commission was used in each country (i.e. Supreme Electoral Tribunal in Ecuador).

Respondents placed their trust on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant 'not at all' and 7 meant 'a lot'. These responses were recalibrated on a 0-100 scale in order to make comparisons across questions and survey waves easier.[5] Figure 1 shows national averages for the 21 countries in the sample.[6]

It is striking to note that there is a range of variation of at least 40 out of 100 possible points in trust in the Latin American and Caribbean countries. At the highest extreme, countries like Uruguay, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic fall between 61.9 and 64.5, well above the regional mean of 48.56 points. At the lowest extreme, countries like Argentina, Haiti and Paraguay fall between 21.9 and 38.0 well below the regional mean.

Figure 2.
Average Trust in Electoral Commissions after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



How much of this variation across countries emerges from the variation in the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries? When the data are controlled for gender, age, educational achievement and household wealth, as they are in Figure 2, the results somewhat vary relative to the ranking displayed in Figure 1.

This variation may be due to possible confounding effects of the socio-economic and demographic individual characteristics on trust, as well as any other confounding factors at the country-level. For this reason, it is imperative to conduct a more rigorous statistical analysis. In this paper, we fit a multi-level model in order to determine not only the impact of individual socio-economic and demographic factors, but also the effects of variation in the country-levels of democracy across countries.

Do Contextual Factors matter?

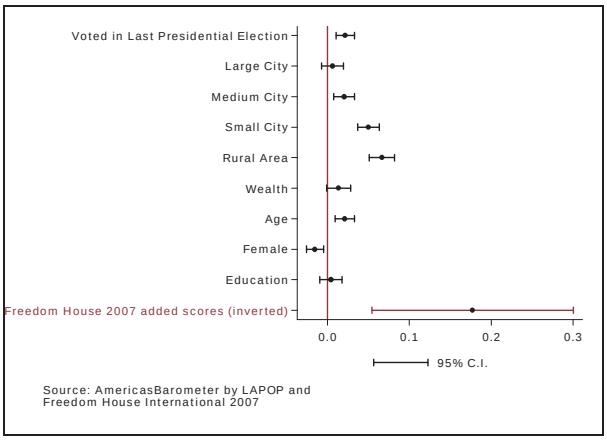
What explains variation in trust in electoral commissions? In addition to socio-economic and demographic factors at the individual level, we believe that the level of democracy, as measured by Freedom House, affects the levels of trust in electoral commissions. Political systems that score high in the inverted Freedom House Index "enable people to participate freely in the political process through the right to vote, compete for public office and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate" (Freedom House 2009).[7] Thus, an institutional design of this sort should increase the levels of trust citizens have on their electoral commissions (Hetherington, 1998; Miller et al. 1999 and Norris, 1999).

In Figure 3, both the individual characteristics of respondents and the level of democracy, measured by the Freedom House 2007 added scores (inverted) are studied.[8]

[5] Non-response for this question was 5.78%.
[6] In a previous report (IO801) we examined trust in political parties.

[7] For more information, visit www.freedomhouse.org
[8] This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Raudenbush, et al. 2004), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Trust in Electoral Commissions in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Democracy, 2008

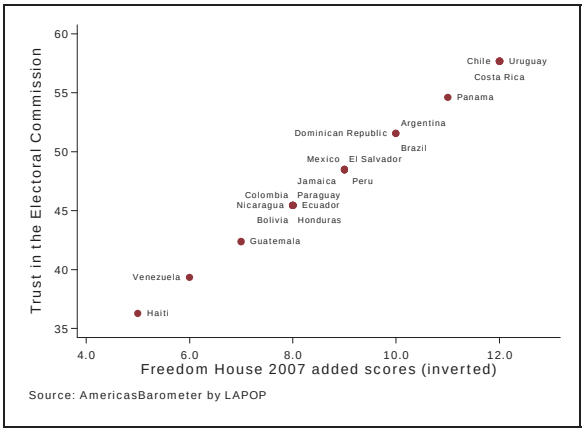


It can be observed in Figure 2 that sex, age, size of city, and electoral turnout at the individual-level; and democracy, as measured by Freedom House at the country-level are statistically significant. This significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

Among the individual-characteristics, sex, age, size of city, and electoral turnout, have a positive impact on trust in electoral commissions. Specifically, men's trust is higher than women's trust, and older individuals also report higher confidence in electoral commissions. However, the demographic variable "size of city" has a more substantive effect than the socio-economic variables. For this reason, we divided the demographic variable into five groups: Rural Area, Small City, Medium City, Large City and National Capital. We found that individuals residing in rural areas trust much more the electoral commission than those living in large cities or at the national capital.[9] Finally, those individuals who voted in the last presidential election expressed higher levels of trust than those who did not vote. Even though we admit that this is an important correlation, we must recognize that this relationship is highly endogenous and it needs a separate study in order to determine the most proper direction of causality.

In this model, we find that the level of democracy (as reported by Freedom House in 2007) is a statistically relevant country-level factor that explains some of the variation of trust in electoral commissions across countries. The Freedom House Index is a measure of freedom that is widely used as a proxy for the level of democracy in the scholarly literature. According to Freedom House, it measures two broad categories: civil liberties and political rights.[10] Thus, it becomes evident from Figure 3 that citizens' trust in electoral commissions is higher precisely in those countries that are able to guaranty political rights and civil liberties to their citizenry. The specific effects of national contexts are highlighted in Figure 4.

Figure 4.
Democracy and Trust in Electoral Commissions in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



For example, if a Haitian with a given set of socio-economic and demographic characteristics were to migrate from Haiti to Uruguay or Chile, all other things being equal, and none of her individual characteristics such as education, household wealth, turnout, etc. were to change, that person's trust in the electoral commission

[9] "National capital" is used as the base category in the model.

[10] This information was obtained at www.freedomhouse.org

would increase, on average, by nearly 25 points on a 0-100 scale.

Note, however, that the predicted line above fits the countries that would have been outliers in a regular scatter plot. This is the reason why the placement of Paraguay and Argentina, for example, appear to be inconsistent with the rakings presented in Figures 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the placement of most countries (the non-outliers) is consistent with what we observed in the national averages depicted earlier, stressing the robustness of our findings.

Policy Implications

Since trust in the results provided by electoral commissions in emerging democracies, at the extreme, can make the difference between a peaceful governmental transition and a violent coup d'état, it may be natural to ask how trust in these institutions can be improved. Our analysis shows that political rights and civil liberties play a preponderant role in the legitimacy of elections. On the political rights side, enlarging the enfranchisement of people and allowing them to freely choose from different alternatives in competitive elections and join political parties and organizations, may increase political trust. On the civil liberties side, securing individuals' right to voice and association, strengthening the rule of law, individual rights and individuality, may increase institutional legitimacy. At the individual level, focusing efforts to increase trust among individuals residing in large cities and at the national capital seems to be also relevant to increase institutional legitimacy.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No. 24)[*]

Social Capital in the Americas: Participation in Parents' Associations

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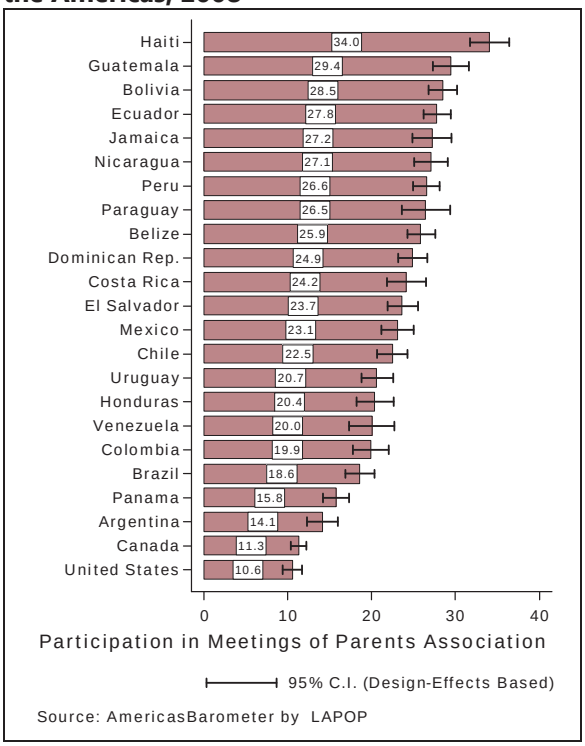
Participation in school-based parents' associations is considered an essential form of social capital. In fact, Robert Putnam believes that the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), the distinctive setting for parents' participation in school issues in the United States, is an important formal form of civic engagement because "parental involvement in the educational process represents a particularly productive form of social capital" (1995: 69; see also Putnam, no date). The Office for National Statistics of Great Britain, for example, uses participation of parents in school associations as one of multiple indicators of social capital at the national level (Harper and Kelly 2003).

In this issue of the AmericasBarometer *Insights* series[1], we continue exploring the different forms of civic participation that constitute social capital as understood by Putnam (1995). Specifically, we explore the levels of parents' participation in their children's schools in the Americas. This exploration is based in the 2008 AmericasBarometer of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). This survey was carried out in twenty-three countries in the Americas with a total of 38,053 respondents. Among the survey items related to civic participation, parent participation in associations was one of the first organizations about which respondents were prompted with the following question:

CP6. Meetings of a parents association at school? Do you attend them at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never?[2]

Figure 1
Participation of Parents in School Meetings in the Americas, 2008



[*] The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

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[2] The non-response rate for this question was 1.5 percent for the sample as a whole

This item measures the frequency with which people attend meetings of parents associations. Figure 1 shows the results based on this question after converting the responses to a 0-to-100 scale in which 100 represents the highest rate of participation (at least once a week) and 0 the lowest (none). [3]

Although the levels of participation in parents association meetings are rather low in comparison with the levels of religious participation (see previous *Insights*), there are significant variations between countries regarding the involvement of parents in school associations. Haiti is at the top of the list with a score of 34 points (on the 0-to-100 scale). Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Jamaica, and Nicaragua also have important levels of parent participation. In contrast, more developed countries, such as the United States and Canada are at the bottom of the list.

Indeed, these differences may be influenced by some characteristics of the populations, namely, the number of school-age children in the household where the question is asked, whether people live in rural areas or not, and their level of wealth. However, when we examined the data controlling for age, gender, education, size of city, wealth and number of school-age children, the analysis did not return significantly different results.[4] The distribution of countries basically remained the same. In other words, basic demographic characteristics are not enough to explain the variations of participation in parents associations across the Americas. Therefore we analyzed the data taking contextual variables into consideration.

In fact, Figure 1 suggests that participation in parents associations might be related to the levels of development in each country.

The Determinants of Participation in Parents' Associations

As in every social phenomenon, parent participation is influenced by several factors at different levels. In this report we now explore personal attitudes, such as interpersonal trust. We also examine whether feelings of insecurity and political engagement[5]lead to increased participation. As can be seen in the literature (Khan 2006), we expect that well-educated parents and women would be more inclined to attend meetings of school-based organizations of parents than non-educated people and men. Regarding their attitudes, we also expect that interpersonal trust as well as political engagement will be conducive to parent participation. In contrast, we anticipate that feelings of insecurity due to crime will depress parental participation based on the assumption that crime keeps people away from public spheres.

But again, personal characteristics might not be sufficient to explain changes in social capital across countries; hence, we also explore whether contextual variables, specifically country wealth and literacy, affect parent participation. This analysis was carried out using a Hierarchical Linear Model, which combines individual and contextual (national) variables in predicting parents' participation in school meetings. We concentrate the analysis on the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

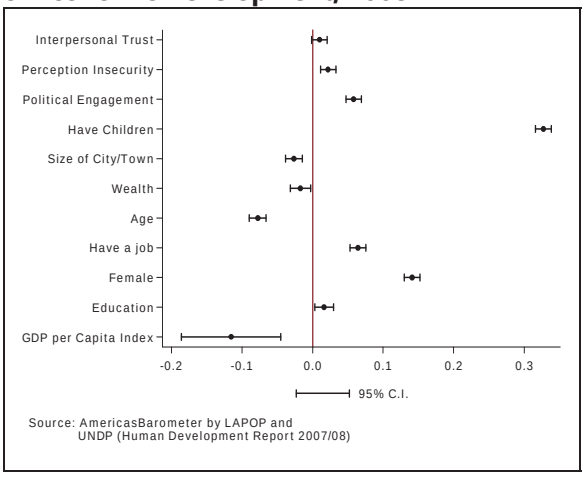
[3] Much of the funding for the 2008 round came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Significant sources of support were also the IADB, the UNDP, the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

[4] Analyses in this paper were conducted using Stata v10, and have been adjusted to accommodate the effects of complex sample designs.

[5] Political engagement is a composite variable created using two items included in the AmericasBarometer. These items are: **POL1**. How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?, and **POL2**. How often do you discuss politics with other people: Daily; A few times a week; A few times a month; Rarely or Never? The responses were recoded to a 0-to-100 scale, and then averaged. A 100 score represents the highest level of political engagement.

Figure 2 shows that parents' participation in school gatherings is higher among the well-educated, women, the younger population, and the inhabitants of small cities and rural areas. As expected, parent participation increases with the number of children: the more children in the household the higher parent participation (actually, this variable was included as a control), even though, as noted above, it does not change the rank order we observed in Figure 1. Age is also strongly relevant, as older people participate less. We also find that parents' participation is more frequent among those who are more politically engaged, this is, people more interested and who participate more in politics. An interesting finding is that employed people tend to be more responsive to school meetings than those who are not, suggesting that involvement in school activities is not constrained by whether parents are employed or not.

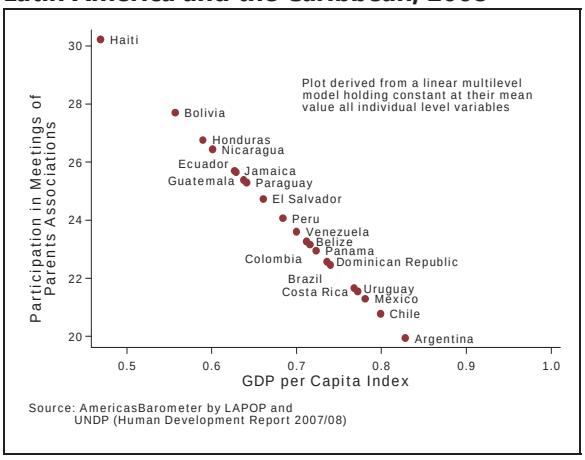
Figure 2
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Parents' Participation in School Meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



Another interesting finding shows that perceptions of insecurity *increase* parents' participation in school meetings. This result contradicts our expectation that insecurity would deter participation; rather, it reveals that feelings of insecurity produced by a hazardous environment motivate parents to become more involved in school meetings, no doubt as an expression of their concern for the safety of their children.

As we have seen in previous *Insights* bulletins, an interesting result emerges when examining the effect of national wealth measured through country GDP per capita indexes. According to the results shown in Figure 2, attendance at school meetings is lower in wealthier countries. That is, the richer the country is, the less parents' participate, all other variables being held constant. This is clearly seen in Figure 3. The graph shows the **predicted** scores of parent participation in each country according to GDP per capita. Respondents living in Haiti, Bolivia, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the poorest countries in the region, exhibit the highest scores on the scale of participation in parents' meetings. Conversely, as in the case of religious participation (see previous *Insights*), people living in the richest countries in Latin America--Argentina, Chile, and Mexico--tend to score lowest on participation at school meetings.

Figure 3
The Impact of Economic Development on Parents' Participation in School Meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

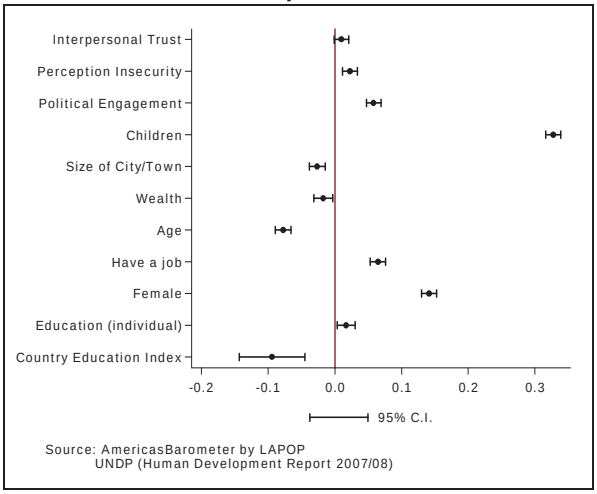


Another way to interpret this graph is that if a citizen from Haiti, for example, with a given set of socioeconomic characteristics were to move to Argentina or Chile, *ceteris paribus,* and none of

her individual characteristics were to change, the probability of this person participating in parents associations would be approximately ten percentage points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti.

Parents' participation was also regressed on the national education index with the same individual variables. The results are strikingly similar. As shown in Figures 4 and 5, education, measured using the UNDP country-level index, is negatively related to parents' participation in school meetings: the higher the level of education among the population, the lower the participation of parents in school meetings. To put it differently, countries with high levels of literacy yield low levels of parents' participation in school activities, even after controlling for number of children.

Figure 4
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Parents' Participation in School Meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Impact of the Education Index, 2008



These results suggest that contextual factors matter. High economic and social development, measured as country wealth and literacy, depress parents' participation at their children's schools, whereas low development seems to increase parents' attendance at school meetings.[6] The position of Haiti and Guatemala, two countries with very low levels of literacy is telling (see Figure 5). Such findings suggest that people in underdeveloped societies tend to make use of social networks more than those in wealthier societies in an effort to overcome their lack of resources. As we have seen in the case of religious participation (see previous *Insights)*, people seek out civic engagement in churches and schools as a way to increase their own social opportunities.

It is interesting to note, however, that this is a particular effect of the development context. The personal economic situation does not seem to boost participation; rather, personal wealth depresses parents' participation at school. On the other hand, only individual level of education seems to improve civic engagement in schools.

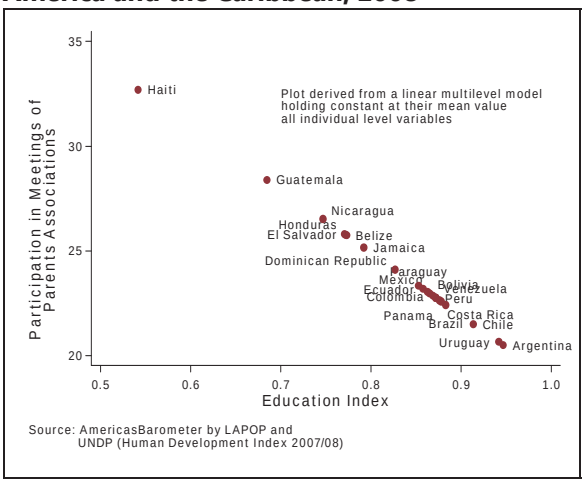
While at the national level, education reduces parental participation; at the individual level it boosts it. There are two related issues that should be raised regarding the puzzling result of education. The first issue points to the fact that the sum of individual characteristics does not necessarily produce the same effect as when we consider the individual characteristics alone. A larger number of more literate people, *per se*, does not create an environment of participation. Contextual characteristics differ from individual characteristics, and their effects on social phenomena may vary, even when contextual characteristics and individual characteristics are one and the same.

This issue leads to our second point regarding this result. Problems in interpretation arise when using data that involve different levels of analysis. More specifically, a sort of ecological fallacy is created. When interpreting data of surveys such as the AmericasBarometer, we

[6] We also tested the effect of the Human Development Index and the other individual variables on parents' participation with similar results.

cannot assume that a pattern found from macro-level variables will be the same as the pattern resulting from the aggregation of individual characteristics (see Seligson 2002 for a comprehensive discussion about this). The results shown here have made it clear in this case that there are divergent effects for the same variable at two different levels. Had we analyzed national data using only the average of individual schooling, we may have erroneously concluded that national education increases personal participation. However, since we have incorporated national indexes in our measurements, which belong to a macro-level domain of analysis, we now know that the opposite is true. Our findings, thus, are that national levels of literacy, along with development, actually depress parent involvement in school meetings. In order to understand why low-literacy countries such as Haiti and Guatemala show high levels of parental participation, then, we must distinguish the complex effects of the same type of variable acting at two differing levels and yielding two different sets of conditions.

Figure 5
The Impact of Education on Parents' Participation in School Meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



In sum, the results of the Americas Barometer 2008, carried out in twenty-one countries in the region, show that the degree to which citizens participate in parents' meetings depends on a variety of individual-level characteristics but are also particularly determined by the levels of national development. Parents engage more in their children's school in poor societies; women, the young, the educated, the employed, and rural parents are more involved in schools meeting than any other demographic group. If these citizens are active in their communities, interested in political issues, but concerned about the levels of public insecurity, their engagement in participation at schools is even greater.

Program and Policy Implications

How do we increase parents' participation? How do we boost social capital? This report has pointed to different variables related to parents' participation at their children's schools. However, only some of them could be incorporated into programs designed to increase social capital. This report has shown that apart from contextual factors, individual level of education, employment, and political engagement can make a difference in parent participation and engagement.

Thus, any program aimed at stimulating civic engagement through the participation of parents at school should consider the importance of education. In other words, it would seem that the best way to motivate parents to attend meetings at their children's schools and contribute to the networks of social goods is strengthening universal education. Yet, our findings here clearly show that as the citizenry becomes more educated and wealthier, parent participation in schools declines. This is a worrisome finding, but perhaps an inevitable consequence of the complex lives led by those in developed countries. Thus, *within* countries, the better educated participate more, whereas across countries, it is in the less well educated nations that participation is highest. As we have pointed out before, education has a different effect on participation at the national level than at the individual level.

We also found that overall political engagement also plays an important role in bolstering parental involvement at schools. Interest in politics is usually linked to community participation. In fact, community participation programs should also look at the schools as key nodes for expansion of social capital. Schools have always played a substantive role in enhancing human and social capital; they can serve as the launch pad of networks of mutual cooperation and social development.

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.25)[*]

Popular Support for a Government without Legislatures[1]

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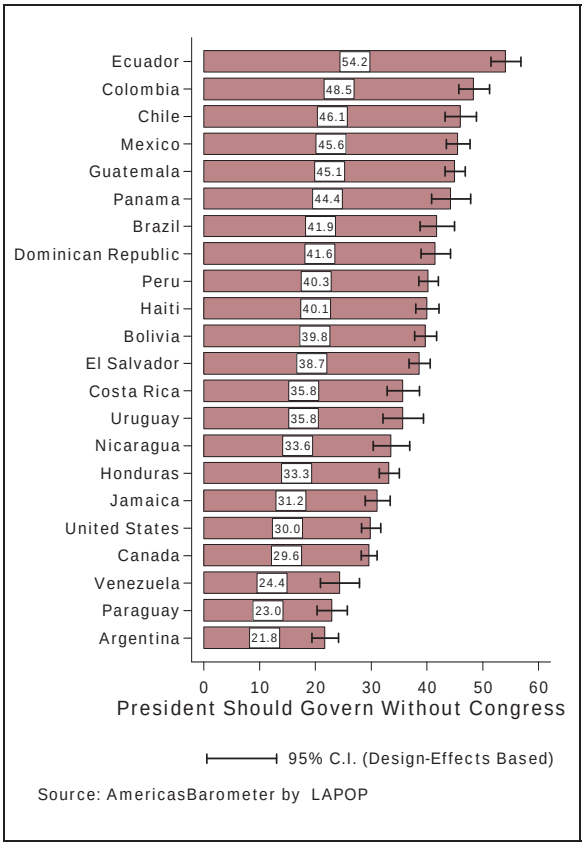
With the recent rise of populist governments that are increasingly executive dominant, one deepening concern in emerging democracies across Latin America is to what extent citizens are willing to support these governments (Hawkins 2003; Seligson 2007; Weyland 2001). This support may result in the undermining of liberal democracy by carrying out undemocratic practices, such as a possible removal of Congress by the executive.

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* is the second article to examine citizens' support for the concentration of executive power, focusing on an item regarding support for government without legislatures included in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey (others will be examined in future *Insights* studies).[2]

Figure 1.
Average Support for the Executive to Govern Without the Legislature IF the Legislature Hinders the Work of the Government in the Americas, 2008



This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 23 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean and a web survey in the United States (this question was not asked in Canada). Data from 22 of those national surveys are analyzed here.[3] A total of 36,501 respondents were asked the following question:

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] Belize data are not available as of this writing.

POP102. When the legislature hinders the work of our government, our president/prime ministers should govern without the legislature, how much do you agree or disagree with that view?

Responses were rated on a 1-7 scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 means "strongly agree."[4]

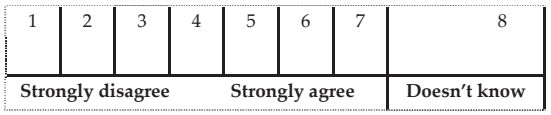


Figure 1 exhibits national averages for the 22 countries in the sample. [5] We first note that in only one country in the Americas, Ecuador, does average support exceed 50 on a 0-100 scale with 54.2 points. These high levels of support for executive concentration of power echo current presidential approvals in Latin America. For example, in Ecuador, President Rafael Correa attained the presidency running under the political platform for social and political *change*, and in September of 2008, more than 60% of Ecuadorians voted for a new constitution that would sharply expand the power of the President (Partlow and Kuffner 2008). Other countries, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Guatemala, also show high levels of support for concentration of power of the executive to govern without Congress, having averages above 45 points in a scale 0-100. At the other extreme, Paraguay and Argentina show the lowest averages in support for neutering the legislature in the Americas with 23 and 22 points, respectively.

It is worth mentioning that in Venezuela, as demonstrated in a previous report of this *Insight Series*, the average of citizen support for the executive to govern without a legislature remains fairly low (24) in comparison to the rest of the countries in the sample. Since legislative power in Venezuela has all but disappeared under President Chávez, it is interesting to note that citizens seem to be dissatisfied with this outcome.

Predicting Support for the Executive to Govern Without Legislatures

What explains these sharp differences across countries in the Americas?[6] We focus first on the impact of variation in attitudes toward executive dominance by analyzing the effect of traditional socio-economic and demographic variables, such as levels of education, gender, wealth, and size of the city/town of residence.[7]

Figure 2 reveals the importance of socio-economic and demographic variables in explaining support for executive government without the legislature. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant.

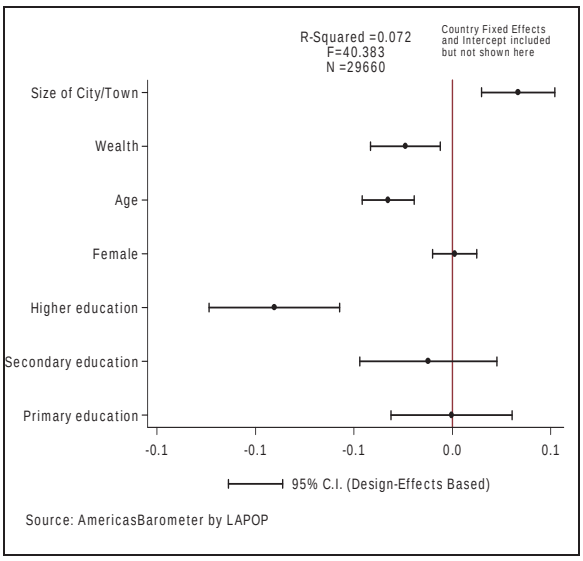
[4] In order to make comparisons across questions and survey waves simpler; these responses where recoded on a 0-100 scale, where 0 indicates "strongly disagree" and 100 "strongly agree."

[5] Non-response was 8% for the sample as a whole.

[6] We examined contextual factors that might explain some of the national-level variation we found. However, multilevel analyses predicting support for the president in governing without the legislature with the conventional national characteristics, such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not achieve statistical significance.

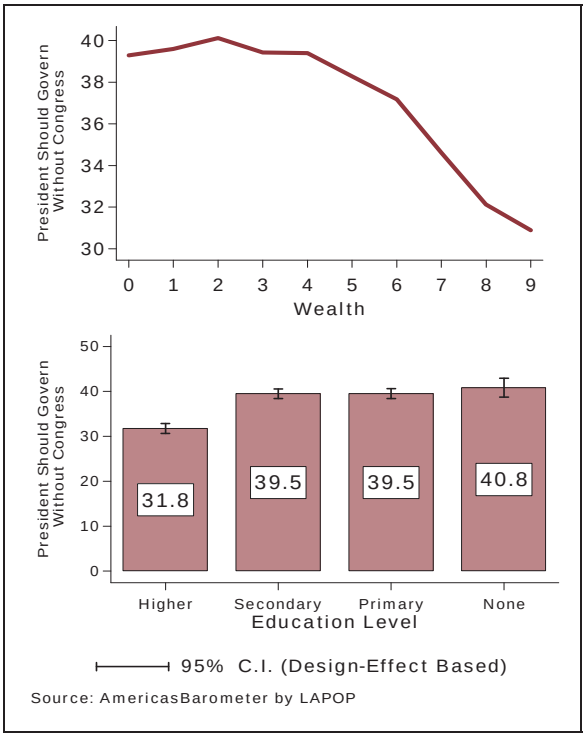
[7] Because the average citizen in the United States and Canada score very high on socio-economic characteristics compared to those in the rest of the countries in the sample, we exclude these cases from the analysis.

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Support for the Executive to Govern Without the Legislature IF the Legislature Hinders the Work of the Government in Latin America, 2008



What is found in Figure 2 is that citizens living in bigger cities show higher levels of support for the concentration of executive power, after controlling for other individual level characteristics. In contrast, other things being equal, citizens who are more educated, wealthier, and older show significantly lower levels of support for this undemocratic belief. This finding mirrors a previous report in this series which focused on support for presidential limits on the voice and vote of opposition parties; citizens with the same characteristics show lower levels of support for executive concentration of power. Only gender did not reach statistical significance among the key demographic variables. But by far, the most important factor in explaining opposition to this undemocratic expansion of presidential power is education; the higher an individual's education, the more strongly s/he would resist bypassing this key institution of democracy. The effects of education and wealth are better illustrated in Figure 3, shown by its sample means.

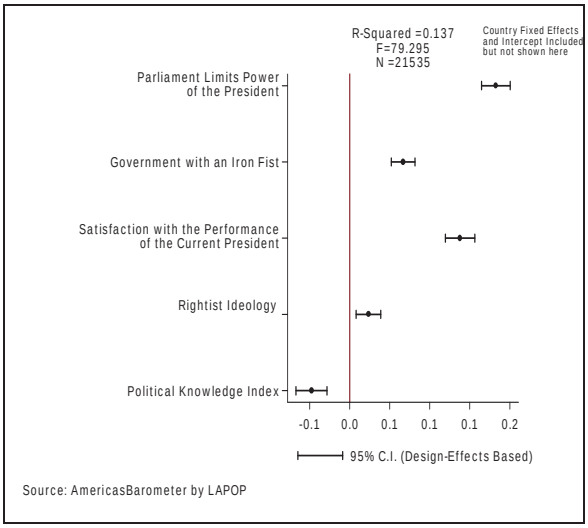
Figure 3.
Wealth, Education, and Support for the Executive to Govern Without the Legislature IF the Legislature Hinders the Work of the Government in Latin America, 2008



In order to have a better understanding of the factors that influence support for executive dominance, we also examine the impact of some political attitudes and behaviors that may also play a central role in explaining this support. Figure 4 displays the impact of political attitudes on support for concentration of executive power. For instance, citizens who demonstrate more authoritarian attitudes, as expressed by support for an "iron fisted" government, express higher support for the executive to govern without a legislature. As with the same demographic and socio-economic characteristics, these results also mirror those of a previous report in this series in which citizens with similar characteristics tend to show higher support for the president limiting the voice and vote of opposition parties. By the same token, citizens who are more satisfied with the

performance of the incumbent president show higher support for the concentration of executive power when related to government without a legislature.

Figure 4.
Determinants of Average Support for the Executive to Govern Without Congress in the Americas, 2008



In other words, the more popular the president, the less support there is for the legislature, all other socio-economic and attitudinal variables analyzed thus far being held constant. Another interesting finding is the positive effect of those who believe that the parliament hinders the job of the president.[8] Specifically, the higher the perception that the parliament is an obstacle to executive power, the higher the support for the president to govern without the legislature.[9]

Figure 4 also indicates the importance of ideology and political knowledge[10] in explaining support for the executive concentration of power. As demonstrated in a previous report in this series (I0809), those who self-identify on the right show higher support for government without a legislature. In contrast, those who score high in the index of political knowledge reveal lower levels of this support. This finding suggests that a deeper understanding of the political world will make citizens more aware of the importance that the balance of power among democratic institutions represents for the persistence of democracy as a form of government. It is worth mentioning that all these variables are statistically significant after controlling for the perception of national and economic well being, political interest, as well as country effects and traditional socio-economic and demographic variables.[11]

Program and Policy Implications

Because of Latin America's growing number of chief executives who have been trying to limit those who oppose "the people's will" (Seligson 2007), it is important to know the extent to which citizens are willing to support the concentration of executive power and how this support might weaken democracy. In this paper we found that citizens living in larger cities

[8] This variable was measured by the question: To what extent does the legislature hinder the power of the president?

[9] Given that the dependent variable asks about the extent to which citizens support government without Congress if the Congress is operating as an obstacle for the president; it is important to note that it is not a *normative* question about the importance of Congress, but about the *effectiveness* of political institutions (i.e. performance of the legislature vs. the executive). Consequently, trust or mistrust in the legislature may not be the best predictor for the dependent variable. For example, a citizen can be a convinced democrat and trust this institution but still think that when the institution's performance presents an obstacle to the president or prime minister, the country would be better off without this institution. For this reason, the belief that the parliament limits the power of the president is a better predictor of support for the executive concentration of power than trust in the legislature (not shown in Figure 3). This idea is developed in:
Boidi, Maria Fernanda. 2009. Trust in Legislatures in Latin America: Ph.D. Dissertation. Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University.

[10] The Political Knowledge Index is measured through the following questions: GI1. What is the name of the current president of the (country)? GI2. What is the name of the President of (Congress) in (country)? GI3. How many (provinces) does the (country) have? GI4. How long is the (presidential/prime ministerial) term of office in (country)? GI5. What is the name of the current president of Brazil?
It is worthy of note that the question related to Congress was not asked in Bolivia.

[11] Refer to the Appendix for a detailed display of those effects.

show higher levels of support for the concentration of executive power, while wealthier and older citizens express lower levels of support. Most importantly, education shows the strongest negative effect on citizen's support for government without a legislature, highlighting the value of education as a catalyst of tolerant attitudes (Golebiowska 1995; Orcés 2008; Seligson, Cordova, and Moreno 2007). Consequently, it is imperative for democratic programs in Latin America to combine efforts to increase wealth and educational levels which in turn will allow for a stronger democratic political culture.

Similarly, the AmericasBarometer data in this short report suggest that citizens, when satisfied with the incumbent government's performance in general and who believe that the legislature hinders the power of the president, are more willing to support government without a legislature. Thus, another implication of this paper is that elected representatives need to aim at decreasing the negative perception that people have toward their legislature and increase political knowledge so that citizens better understand that a functioning democracy is possible only through a balance of power of all its institutions. For democracy to work and endure, legislatures need to persist as an institution, and for that to happen, they need citizen support.

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Appendix

Table 1. Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of Average Support for the President To Govern Without Congress in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Primary education	-0.000	(-0.02)
Secondary education	-0.012	(-0.69)
Higher education	-0.090*	(-5.36)
Female	0.001	(0.21)
Age	-0.033*	(-4.85)
Wealth	-0.024*	(-2.64)
Size of City/Town	0.033*	(3.53)
Mexico	0.060*	(4.76)
Guatemala	0.051*	(4.17)
El Salvador	0.017	(1.39)
Honduras	-0.021	(-1.75)
Nicaragua	-0.019	(-1.32)
Costa Rica	0.002	(0.13)
Panama	0.055*	(3.58)
Colombia	0.076*	(5.66)
Ecuador	0.156*	(8.39)
Bolivia	0.035*	(2.06)
Peru	0.032*	(2.71)
Paraguay	-0.070*	(-5.72)
Chile	0.066*	(4.86)
Brazil	0.033*	(2.32)
Venezuela	-0.067*	(-4.46)
Argentina	-0.082*	(-6.45)
Dominican Republic	0.031*	(2.31)
Haiti	0.018	(1.39)
Jamaica	-0.028*	(-2.23)
Constant	0.004	(0.32)
R-Squared	0.072	
Number of Obs.	29660	

* $p<0.05$
Education level of Reference: None
Country of Reference: Uruguay

Table 2. Determinants of Average Support for the President to Govern Without Congress in the Americas, 2008

	Coefficient.	t
Political Knowledge Index	-0.048*	(-4.82)
Ideology Scale	0.023*	(2.97)
Satisfaction with the Performance of the Current President	0.138*	(14.71)
Government with an Iron Fist	0.067*	(8.91)
Parliament Limits Power of the President	0.183*	(20.05)
Political Interest	-0.010	(-1.20)
Perception of National Economic Situation	0.013	(1.47)
Perception of Personal Economic Situation	0.001	(0.17)
Wealth	-0.014	(-1.40)
Age	-0.049*	(-6.72)
Female	0.008	(1.12)
Education	-0.059*	(-6.29)
Size of City/Town	0.031*	(3.25)
Mexico	0.054*	(4.32)
Guatemala	0.039*	(3.11)
El Salvador	0.021	(1.74)
Honduras	0.011	(0.88)
Nicaragua	0.004	(0.22)
Costa Rica	-0.010	(-0.69)
Panama	0.072*	(5.16)
Colombia	0.053*	(4.08)
Ecuador	0.138*	(7.70)
Bolivia	0.039*	(2.35)
Peru	0.039*	(3.23)
Paraguay	-0.040*	(-3.16)
Chile	0.054*	(3.97)
Brazil	0.017	(1.16)
Venezuela	-0.043*	(-2.73)
Argentina	-0.068*	(-5.29)
Dominican Republic	0.015	(1.26)
Haiti	0.071*	(5.42)
Jamaica	0.001	(0.04)
Constant	0.036*	(3.25)
R-Squared	0.137	
Number of Obs.	21535	
* p<0.05 Country of Reference: Uruguay		

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No. 26)[*]

Not Happy? Blame your Legislature

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The proper role of the legislature in presidential systems has sparked endless debates among scholars and policy makers. The debate is not merely theoretical in the Latin American and Caribbean region, where there have been numerous attempts by executives to solve the "problem" of intrusive legislatures by attempting to govern without them, on the grounds that congress is "obstructionist, corrupt, or ineffective" (Morgenstern and Nacif 2002:1). Nonetheless, given the central role of legislatures in liberal democracies (Close 1995), it is not an institution that is likely to disappear any time soon. In that context, it is important to know how citizens view the relationship between the legislature and the president. This new *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* report[1] will address this question utilizing the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys.[2] In this survey 33,021 respondents from 20 nations in North, Central, South America and the Caribbean were asked the same question[3]:

EC1. And now thinking of the Parliament. To what extent does the National Legislature obstruct the power of the President?

Responses were given based on a 1-7 scale, where '1' meant "not at all" and '7' meant "a lot." These responses were then recoded on a 0-100 basis to conform to the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.[4]

Figure 1.
Average Agreement that Parliament Obstructs the Power of the President in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

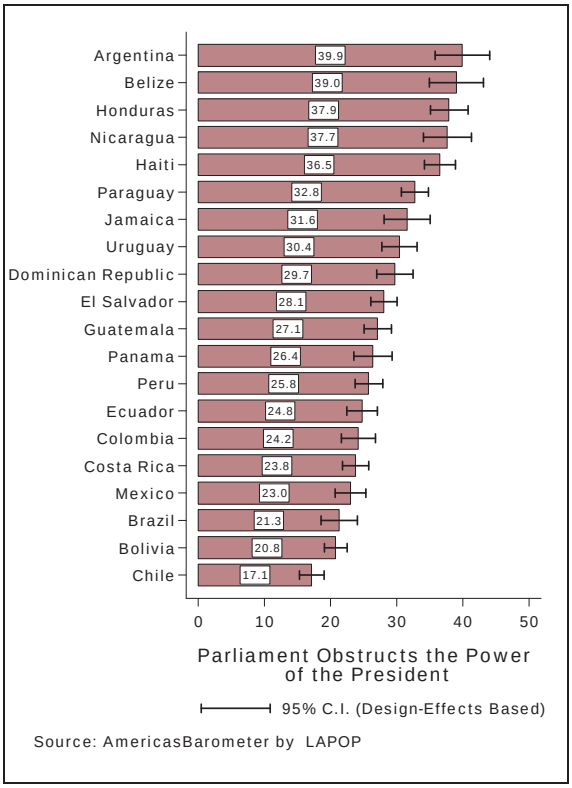

Figure 1 depicts national averages for the 20 countries in the sample and shows that, in

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[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This question was not asked in Canada or in the United States. Further, given that in Venezuela there is no opposition to the president in the National Congress, we excluded this country from the analysis.

[4] Non-response was 14.77% for the sample as a whole.

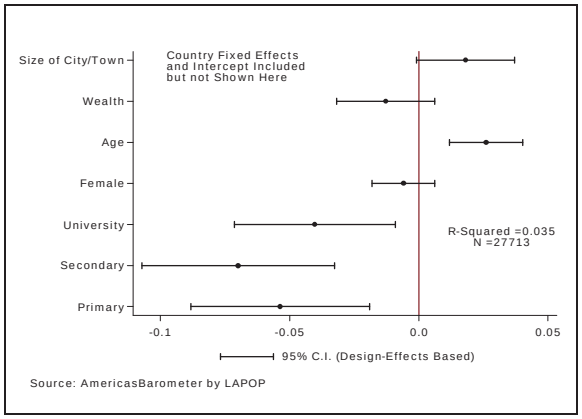
general terms, there is low support for the idea that parliament obstructs the power of the president. Averages fall below 40 points in every country. Argentina is the country that displays the highest level, with a score of 39.9 points on our 0-100 scale. Below Argentina, with levels between 35 and 40 we find countries such as Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti. At the other extreme, we find Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile, where national averages fall around 20 points on our 0-100 scale. Overall, it is quite evident that on average citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean do not consider that legislators obstruct their president's work.

Explaining the Belief that Parliament Obstructs the Power of the President

What explains variation in the belief that parliament obstructs the power of the president? We will focus on the individual characteristics of respondents in our surveys to answer this question.[5] First, we take into account the following socio-economic and demographic characteristics: education, gender, age, wealth, and city/town size. In order to assess the influence of these on our dependent variable, we employ a linear regression model.[6]

Figure 2 shows the influence of these individual-level socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the belief that parliament limits the executive in Latin America and the Caribbean.[7]

Figure 2.
Socio-economic and Demographic Determinants of the Belief that Parliament Obstructs the Power of the President in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



Only two - of the five variables considered here are statistically significant: education and age. This significance is graphically represented by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 when it falls to the left it indicates a negative contribution. In this sense, we see that older people tend to agree more with the idea that the parliament limits the powers of the president compared to young people, *ceteris paribus*. Education also has a statistically significant impact; having primary, secondary or university education compared to no education decreases support for that idea that congress hinders the executive. The rest of variables-- size of the place, personal wealth, and gender-- do not make any difference in explaining why some individuals are more likely to believe that their legislature is an obstacle to presidential action.

Given that socioeconomic and demographic characteristics overall are not strong predictors, we need to add more variables to our analysis in order to have a more reasonable and accurate idea of the determinants of the belief that parliament limits the power of the president.

Theoretically, it is reasonable to expect that perceptions of the balance of power depend to

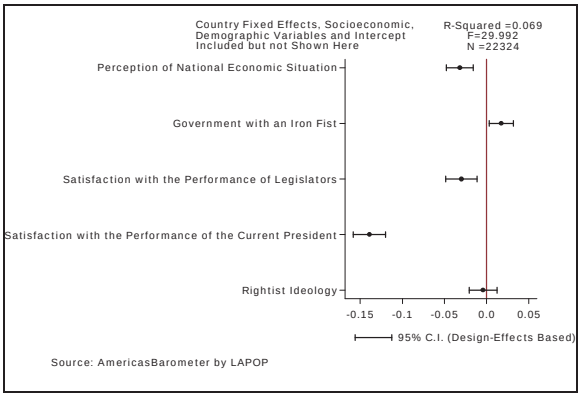
[5] Multilevel analyses predicting support for the idea that legislatures limit the power of the president with variables such as GDP, economic growth, and level of democracy, did not yield significant results. It is possible that the variation across countries displayed in Figure 1 is explained by some other national-level political factors, analysis that will be left for future research.

[6] All statistical analyses in this paper were conducted using STATA v10, and results were adjusted for the complex sample designs employed.

[7] To capture the variation across countries the model included dummy variables for each country, using Uruguay as the reference country.

some extent on opinions about the performance of both branches. If citizens perceive that government, and the executive and congressional branches, are doing a good job, they may determine that the two powers do not interfere with each other. Furthermore, we could consider that the belief that the legislature obstructs the executive may be a product of ideological or authoritarian attitudes. For instance, people who express their support for an "iron fisted" government may be those who express a higher level of support for the executive to govern without the limits of the legislature. We therefore ran an analysis that contains variables tapping these types of motivating factors. Figure 3 displays the results the new model[8].

Figure 3.
An Analysis of the Determinants of the Belief that Parliament obstructs the Power of the President in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



As we can see in Figure 3 all the independent variables considered here except for ideology are statistically significant. We find that the perception of interference by the parliament with the power of the president is strongly related to perceptions of the executive's performance. That is, the greater the satisfaction with the performance of the current president, the lower the belief that the legislature hinders his/her power. In the same vein, as satisfaction with the performance of legislators increases, agreement with the idea that they hinder the president decreases. Perception of national economic performance has the same effect. People who consider that the economy is doing well tend to disagree with the idea that the parliament hinders the president's work. On the other hand, citizens with authoritarian attitudes, for example, that the country should be governed with an "iron fist", tend to agree more with the idea that parliament obstructs the power of the president. These people may see the parliament as a barrier preventing a president from gaining more power and governing with that "iron fist".

Policy and Program Implications

This new *Insights* series report shows how citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean see the balance of power between the president and the parliament. This analysis is especially relevant in the context of a growing number of chief executives who have been trying to limit those who oppose "the people's will", legislatures among others (Seligson 2007). In general terms, the majority do not consider that parliament is hindering the power of the president.

The results suggest that perceptions of the balance of powers depend to some extent on citizen assessment of performance, at both the national economic level and the institutional level. The extent to which representatives and the president fulfill their functions and perform their duties affects citizens' views on the relationship between both political powers. When they do well, there is no reason to think that any power, in this case the parliament, is hindering the power of the other.

We have found that parliament is seen as an obstacle for those who tend to agree with the idea that in the country the country needs a government with an iron fist rather than believing that problems can be resolved with everyone's participation.

[8] This analysis was carried out using a linear regression that also included the socioeconomic and demographic variables and the country dummies employed earlier. Figure 3 displays only the political variables. All the regressions performed can be found in Table 1 in the appendix.

Optimistically, we could interpret these results as reflecting a new period in Latin American politics, where parliaments are seen as necessary to democracy and not as obstructionist and inefficient institutions as they were viewed in the past. Pessimistically, our analysis suggests that if authoritarian attitudes were to increase and/or performance to decline substantially, such attitudes supporting the legislature's role could likewise decline. In short, the data in this case highlight the strength of citizen assessment of democratic politics within Latin America; however, our analysis also reminds us of potential vulnerabilities.

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Appendix: Determinants of the Belief that the Parliament obstructs the Power of the President				
	Regression I		Regression II	
	Coefficient.	t	Coefficient	T
Primary Education	-0.057*	(-3.29)	-0.060*	(-3.01)
Secondary Education	-0.073*	(-3.92)	-0.061*	(-2.84)
University Education	-0.040*	(-2.49)	-0.030	(-1.64)
Female	-0.005	(-0.77)	-0.008	(-1.21)
Age	0.022*	(3.05)	0.027*	(3.33)
Wealth	-0.009	(-1.00)	-0.003	(-0.29)
Size of City/Town	0.019	(1.89)	0.028*	(2.75)
Rightist Ideology			-0.004	(-0.49)
Satisfaction with the Performance of the Current President			-0.139*	(-14.20)
Performance of Legislators			-0.030*	(-3.17)
Government with an iron fist			0.018*	(2.42)
Perception of National Economic Situation			-0.032*	(-3.86)
Mexico	-0.041*	(-3.93)	-0.044*	(-4.10)
Guatemala	-0.020	(-1.94)	-0.024*	(-2.20)
El Salvador	-0.014	(-1.38)	-0.032*	(-3.19)
Honduras	0.047*	(3.96)	0.021	(1.87)
Nicaragua	0.045*	(3.43)	0.002	(0.16)
Costa Rica	-0.033*	(-3.30)	-0.027*	(-2.53)
Panama	-0.020	(-1.68)	-0.048*	(-4.26)
Colombia	-0.032*	(-2.97)	-0.024*	(-2.07)
Ecuador	-0.042*	(-2.95)	-0.036*	(-2.24)
Bolivia	-0.075*	(-5.65)	-0.087*	(-6.37)
Peru	-0.027*	(-2.64)	-0.049*	(-4.61)
Paraguay	0.016	(1.85)	-0.035*	(-3.61)
Chile	-0.076*	(-8.02)	-0.085*	(-8.76)
Brazil	-0.051*	(-4.67)	-0.052*	(-4.41)
Argentina	0.057*	(4.00)	0.048*	(3.10)
Dominican Republic	-0.003	(-0.27)	-0.000	(-0.02)
Haiti	0.037*	(3.28)	-0.007	(-0.60)
Jamaica	0.013	(0.98)	-0.005	(-0.38)
Belize	0.053*	(3.61)	0.048*	(3.32)
Constant	0.010	(1.15)	-0.001	(-0.14)
R-Squared	0.044		0.069	
Number of Obs.	27113		22324	
* p<0.05				

*AmericasBarometer Insights: 2009 (No.27)**

Do you trust your Armed Forces?[1]

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Historically, Latin American countries experienced a variety of regime types prior to entering the most recent wave of democratization. Particularly important forms of nondemocratic governments were the *military regimes* that existed in a large number of countries throughout the region. These regimes were usually created through coups d'état that replaced civilian and democratic governments (Diamond and Linz 1989; Huntington 1991; Mainwaring 1999).

Most of these military regimes, such as Rafael Videla's in Argentina, Augusto Pinochet's in Chile, and Alfredo Stroessner's in Paraguay, were very repressive; others, such as Guillermo Rodríguez-Lara's in Ecuador, were less repressive. In spite of the large number of systematic human rights violations in some of these regimes, empirical evidence shows that the Armed Forces in Latin America continue to be an institution with relatively high levels of trust.

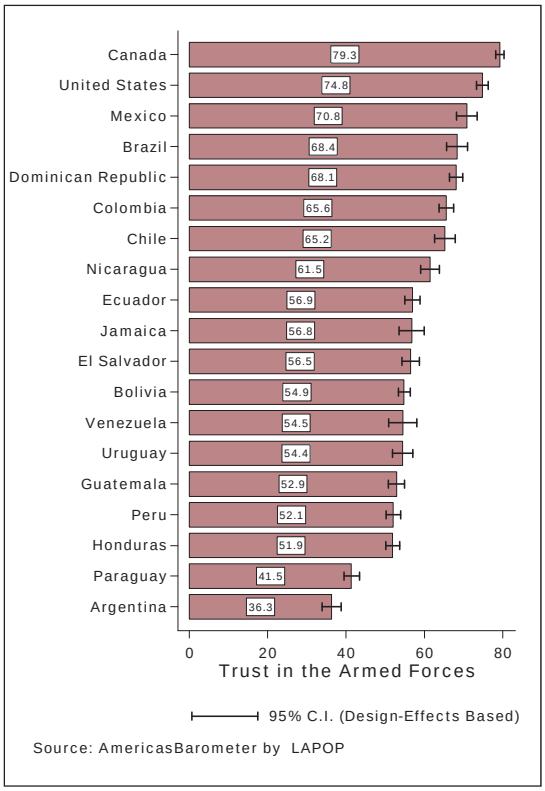
What are the factors that explain levels of trust in Latin America's Armed Forces?

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* attempts to answer this question by using the 2008 database made possible by the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 22 nations in the Western hemisphere.[2]

Here we explore the responses given by 30,824 participants in the 20 nations where the following question was asked:[3]

NP2. To what extent do you trust the Armed Forces?

Figure 1.
Levels of Trust in the Armed Forces, 2008



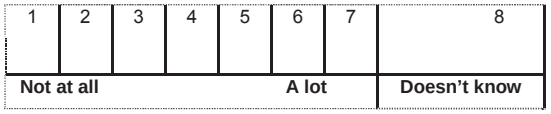
[1] Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

* The Insights Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This question was not asked in Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti.

Respondents expressed their trust on a 1-7 scale, where 1 meant 'not at all' and 7 meant 'a lot'.

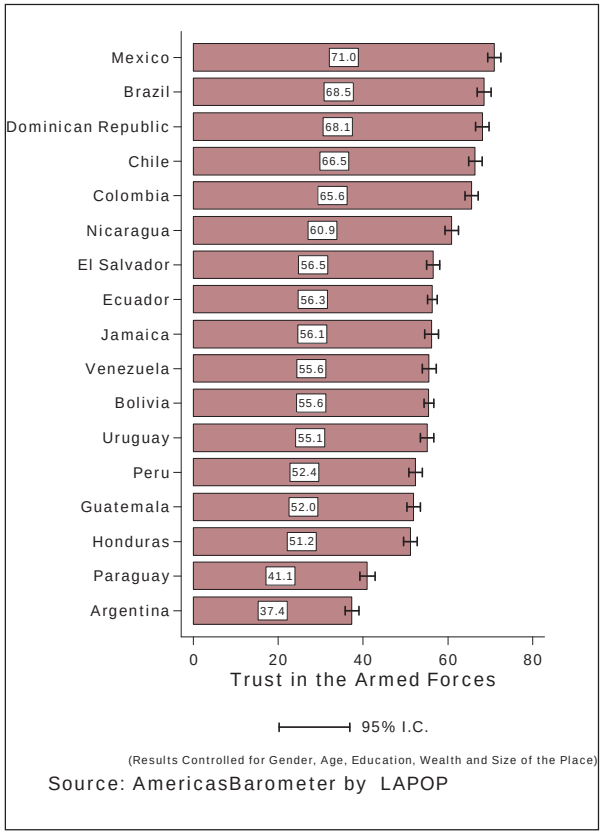


These responses were recalibrated to a 0-100 scale, in order to make comparisons across questions and survey waves easier.[4] Figure 1 shows national averages for the 20 countries in the sample. It is striking to note, first, that on average, the degree of citizen trust in the Armed Forces is 59.2 out of 100 possible points. This value is well above levels of trust in institutions of representation, such as political parties or the congress, in the same region.[5]

Second, in this context of relatively high levels of trust, there is significant variation across countries. At one extreme, the countries with the highest levels of trust are Canada, the United States and Mexico, with 79.3, 74.8 and 70.8 points respectively. At the other extreme, the countries with the lowest levels of trust are Honduras, Paraguay, and Argentina, with 51.9, 41.5 and 36.3 points respectively.

Do these national trust averages in the Armed Forces hold after controlling for socio-economic and demographic individual characteristics? To respond to this question, we insert sex, age, education, wealth, and size of town as control variables, and we eliminate both the U.S. and Canada cases in part because these countries have such high levels of socio-economic development compared to the others, that any statistical analysis would be affected by these "outliers," and in part because the LAPOP project's predominant focus is on policy-relevant questions for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Figure 2 shows that after controlling for standard SES variables, the country ranking remains remarkably similar in comparison to the ranking displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 2.
Levels of Trust in the Armed Forces after Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008



The statistical analyses show that the variation in levels of trust is not only significant across individuals but also among countries. Even though most of the variation in levels of trust can be explained by the differences among individuals, 11 percent of the total variation is due to the effect of country factors.[6] What factors might matter in explaining this variation across countries? To answer that question we fit a multi-level model to determine not only the impact of individual socio-economic and demographic characteristics, but also the effects of contextual factors across countries on the levels of trust in the Armed Forces.[7]

[4] Non-response for this question was 3.12% for the whole sample.

[5] For more information about levels of trust in various institutions, see previous issues of this *Insights* series.

[6] The intra-class correlation is 11.22

[7] This analysis is carried out using multi-level regression techniques (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002), as implemented by LAPOP on STATA 10. The model simultaneously takes into account both individual and country-level (i.e., contextual) factors, and produces correct regression estimates that are impossible with standard OLS regression.

Predictors of Trust in the Armed Forces

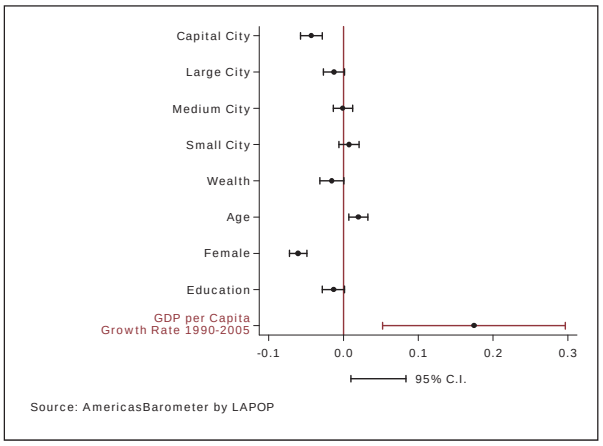
As noted in the scholarly literature, the 1970s and 1980s displayed a wide wave of politically repressive governments in Latin America. As a result, one evident factor that may affect the levels of trust in the Armed Forces is the degree of political repression experienced by citizens during dictatorial regimes. Specifically, we would expect that, *ceteris paribus*, people from countries that have experienced relatively higher degrees of political and military terror have lower levels of trust in the Armed Forces. To verify this hypothesis, we modeled the effects of the average "Political Terror Scale, 1976-2005" on trust in military institutions.[8]

The results of this analysis did not yield any statistical evidence supporting the hypothesis that military repression is statistically correlated with levels of trust in Latin America's Armed Forces.[9] In fact, Figures 1 and 2 show that high levels of trust appear not to be related to repression alone (as evidenced by Chile and Brazil, but not Argentina) but perhaps to whether the military, repressive or not, "succeeded" in achieving other goals.

What national-level goals might explain the levels of trust in the Armed Forces? One possibility that emerges is performance. Government output has been found to increase levels of trust in other public institutions (see, for example, previous *Insights* reports focused on political parties) and, moreover, some literature also shows that in many countries the Armed Forces are now playing an actual role in development.

To verify this new hypothesis, we modeled economic growth as a national-level predictor of trust in the Armed Forces at the individual-level. In this case, results from the regression analysis shows that the GDP per capita growth rate, computed as the yearly average growth per country from 1990 to 2005, is positively related to trust in the Armed Forces. In other words, as the average annual growth rate increases, individuals tend to report more trust in the military in Latin America and the Caribbean. Presumably, this relationship may be due to a higher level of general trust in national institutions as a result of economic progress. It is possible that individuals associate the growth of the economy with a positive role of the Armed Forces. Of course, more research is needed to determine with more precision the causes of this relationship. Results from the regression are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Trust in the Armed Forces: The Impact of Economic Growth, 2008



In the figure above, each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on trust in the Armed Forces is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive contribution, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative contribution. Statistically significant contributors are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot; only when the confidence intervals do not overlap the vertical "0" line is the factor significant (at .05 or better). The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients (i.e., "beta weights").

[8] This scale is continuously updated by Prof. Mark Gibney, and the data are available at:
http://www.politicalterrorscale.org/

[9] The p-value for this relationship is greater than one half.

The results displayed in Figure 3 show that the variable with the most important impact is sex. Women trust the Armed Forces *less* in comparison to men. Next, as individuals grow older, they tend to express more trust in the army. Finally, individuals residing at national capitals trust the Armed Forces *less* than individuals residing in small, medium and large cities, as well as those living in rural areas. The effects of education and wealth (measured as capital goods ownership) are not statistically significant at the .05 level; however, they are significant at .1. For this reason we do not conclude that these variables and trust in the Armed Forces are unrelated in order to avoid a potential type II error.

As mentioned before, national context matters, and its importance is highlighted in specific terms in Figure 4; the higher the GDP per capita growth, the higher the average citizen's trust in the Armed Forces. For example, if a Venezuelan individual with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to migrate from Venezuela to Chile, all other things being equal, and none of her individual characteristics such as sex, age, area size, etc. were to change, that person's trust in the Armed Forces would increase by nearly 20 points on the 0-100 scale.

Figure 4.
Economic growth and Trust in the Armed Forces in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008

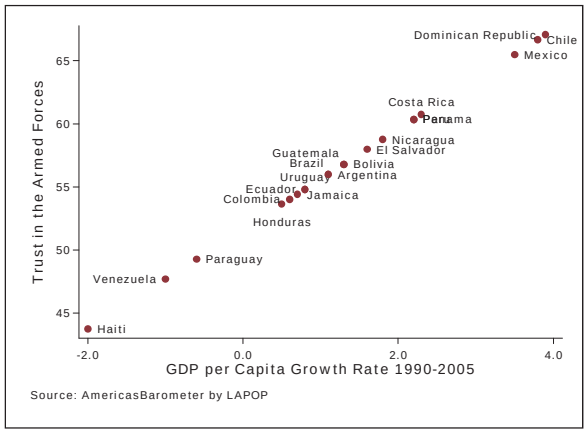


Figure 4 above shows the fitted line from the multi-level model. It is important to note that the predicted line above also fits the countries that were outliers on a regular scatter plot. This is the reason why the placement of Brazil and Argentina, for example, appear to be inconsistent with the rankings presented in Figures 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the placement of most countries (the non-outliers) is consistent with what we observed in the national averages depicted earlier, stressing the robustness of our findings.

Policy Implications

In this study we found a very important relationship that we think needs to be further explored in the social sciences literature: as the average annual economic growth increases, citizen's trust in the Armed Forces becomes higher. This finding suggests that despite the military authoritarian wave nearly three decades ago, citizens' confidence in the Armed Forces depends more of economic growth than past excessive use of force. It also suggests a comprehensive effect of government performance on political trust variables. Combined with earlier findings in the *Insights* series, the results begin to establish a pattern in which better performance positively affects trust in political institutions of all types.

It is also important to know that trust in the Armed Forces remains relatively high in the region in comparison to other institutions. At the individual level, men and older individuals expressed higher levels of trust in the Armed Forces. Finally, citizens residing in the national capital city show lower levels of trust than individuals residing in other places. These relationships will be studied in future *Insight* reports, in order to test whether they are a general pattern of institutional trust.

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AmericasBarometer Insights[*]: 2009 (No.28)

Public Insecurity in Central America and Mexico

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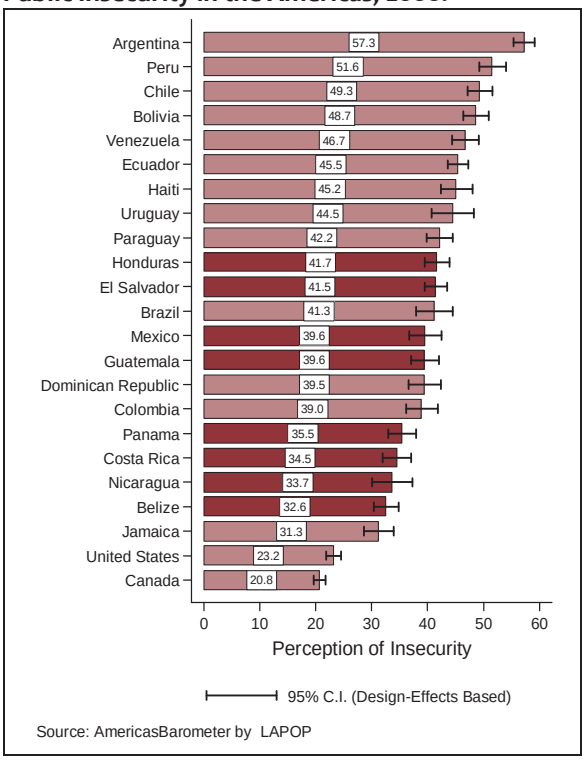
Criminal violence and insecurity have grown to become some of the main challenges for governance and democratization in Latin America. A recent report released by the UNDP places Central America as the most violent subregion in the world, higher than the Latin American region as a whole, which itself is the most criminally violent of all world regions. According to the data, Central America has a homicide rate of 30 deaths per one hundred thousand people (PNUD 2009). This is three times the overall rate for the world, and places Central America above the Latin American average. The impact of crime on development seems hard to overstate but as violence spreads out and becomes a frequent phenomenon in Latin American societies, public insecurity grows to be a normal feature in social interactions (Bailey and Dammert 2006).

Fear of crime can be generated by different variables, not only by crime and violence. Economic security, institutional performance, ecological conditions and individual characteristics may affect levels of public insecurity. All these conditions interact with crime and violence to generate more uncertainty and, in some cases, social unrest.

This report in the AmericasBarometer *Insights* series seeks to explore the conditions that boost feelings of insecurity among the population in Central America and Mexico.[1] We have chosen to focus on these countries because they provide good grounds for comparison regarding different levels of violence. While El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have the highest crime rates in the hemisphere, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama report some of the lowest rates in the Americas. A further reason for focusing on this region is that the surveys carried out in these countries incorporated some questions that were not included in other countries in the 2008 series.

Figure 1.
Public Insecurity in the Americas, 2008.



[*] The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insight* series can be found in http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/AmericasBarometerInsightsSeries. The data on which they are based can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets.

The question used to measure insecurity is this: "**AOJ11**. Speaking of the place or neighborhood where you live, and thinking of the possibility of becoming victimized by an assault or a robbery, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe?" Figure 1 presents the results for all the countries included in the 2008 round.

The survey containing the question about public insecurity due to crime was carried out in twenty-three American countries[2], and it was answered by 37,698 respondents.[3]

Figure 1 shows the level of insecurity expressed by respondents on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. As can be seen, there are important differences in the levels of insecurity and these levels do not seem to match the overall rates of violence reported across the Americas. Residents of Argentina, Peru, and Chile, for instance, express the greatest feelings of insecurity while Canada and the United States show the lowest. Although the countries that comprise the lowest tier of insecurity in the ranking are as expected, given that these countries (U.S. and Canada) have low levels of crime in comparison with many of their neighbors to the south, it is startling to note that two countries at the top of the list of insecurity (Argentina and Chile) have some of the lowest levels of violence in the Americas.[4] Such results underline the fact that perceptions of insecurity do not always correspond to the actual rates of crime. This is a well known phenomenon, labeled the "paradox of fear" in the criminology literature (see Covington and Taylor 1991).

In the case of Central America and Mexico, nonetheless, with the exception of Belize, perceptions of insecurity seem to follow the same patterns of the crime rates themselves. Hence, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala have higher levels of insecurity than Panama, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.

What conditions, in addition to crime and social violence, foster or impede the generation of public insecurity? This report will next explore some of the variables that explain perceptions of public insecurity in Central America.

Factors Associated with Public Insecurity

Fear of crime and feelings of insecurity have been extensively studied in social sciences. For some authors, public insecurity is a direct function of threats and vulnerabilities exposed by the risk of becoming a victim of crime (Lupton and Tulloch 1999). In this sense, past experiences of victimization, or being a person with socially constructed vulnerabilities (such as low economic status or living in a risky neighborhood) bolster feelings of insecurity. For other authors, fear of crime is a result not only of threats and vulnerabilities but also, and more important, of the representations people have about their social situation and their satisfaction with it. Mass media and processes of social communication, as well as perceptions of economic uncertainties, play an important role in boosting public insecurity (Elchardus, De Groof, and Smits 2008).

In this report, we concentrate on four different types of variables. First, we explore the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Following the literature, we hypothesize that women, older people, and people with low income will show higher levels of feelings of

[2] Funding for the 2008 series mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas, and Vanderbilt University.

[3] The non-response rate for this question was 0.9%.

[4] There is some discussion about the actual levels of crime in Argentina, especially since recent measures (included the AmericasBarometer 2008) have reported an increase in crime victimization due to robberies and deadly assaults in the last five years. Nevertheless, the overall homicide rate in Argentina is only a fifth of the average rate of Latin America (PNUD 2009), a rate lower even than that of the United States.

insecurity because of their social vulnerabilities. Second, we explore the impact of victimization events. Here we consider not only crime victimization measured by the survey but also corruption victimization and, in our initial analyses, we added countries' homicide rates to a multivariate model. Third, we test the impact of perceptions of the economic situation as we expect that people with perceptions of poor economic performance will feel more insecure than the rest of the population. Finally, we test some ecological variables as well; specifically, we examine whether perceptions of risk in the community, gangs, drug trafficking, and police involved in crime boost public insecurity.

Since we incorporated a country level variable (homicide rates per country for 2006) in the initial tests, we first ran a multilevel regression with the whole sample of countries.[5] However, the results did not return a significant coefficient for homicide rates nor were other country-level variables statistically significant, such as GDP per capita or human development index. Hence, we decided to perform single-level regressions for the rest of the analyses.[6]

The OLS regression performed for the countries of Central America and Mexico shows that size of city, wealth, age, and gender are all socio-demographic variables associated with feelings of insecurity (see Figure 2).[7] People living in metropolitan areas, with low levels of wealth, women, and younger people tend to show more feelings of insecurity than the rest of the population. These results actually reinforce the argument of vulnerability: poor women living in big cities are one of the most vulnerable groups, and their high level of insecurity may be an expression of that vulnerability.

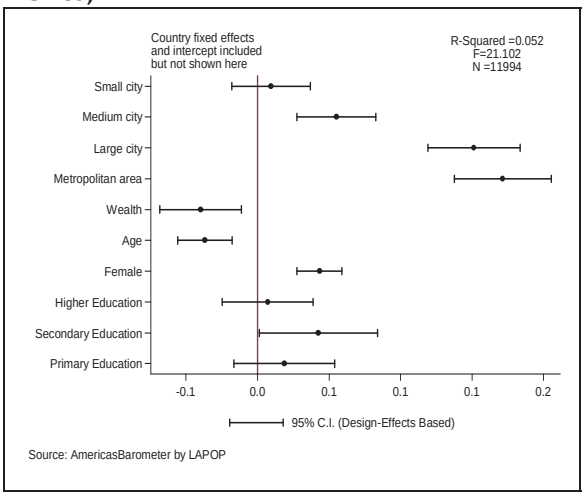
[5] We could not run a multilevel analysis only with the countries in Central America and Mexico because of the low N (just eight cases).

[6] All statistical analyses reported in this article were conducted using Stata v10, and they are adjusted to consider the effects of complex sample design.

[7] Dummy variables for each country were included, using Belize as the baseline (or reference) category.

What is also interesting to note from these data is that although older people tend to be considered as more vulnerable because they are more prone to be marginalized, they actually express less fear of crime than the younger population. The explanation might rest on the fact that young people tend to be more directly victimized by crime than any other age-group. Fear of crime among youngsters is, hence, a reflection of their heightened perception of risk.

Figure 2.
Demographic and Socioeconomic Determinants of Feelings of Insecurity in Central America and Mexico, 2008

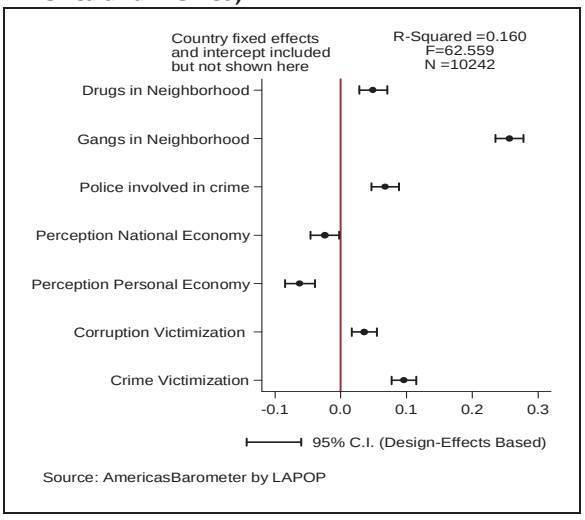


We also found that corruption and crime victimization (see Figure 3) increase perceptions of public insecurity. This reinforces the argument that actual crime plays an important role in public insecurity, but also highlights the importance of corruption of public officials as a generator of public insecurity.

Variables tapping media news consumption did not produce any significant result regarding the fear of crime, contradicting our expectations based on the literature (see for example: Gilliam and Iyengar 2000). That is, we had expected that greater media exposure would increase fear of crime, net of the other variables in our model, but it did not. On the other hand, negative perceptions of the economic situation, whether personal or national, turned out to play a part in

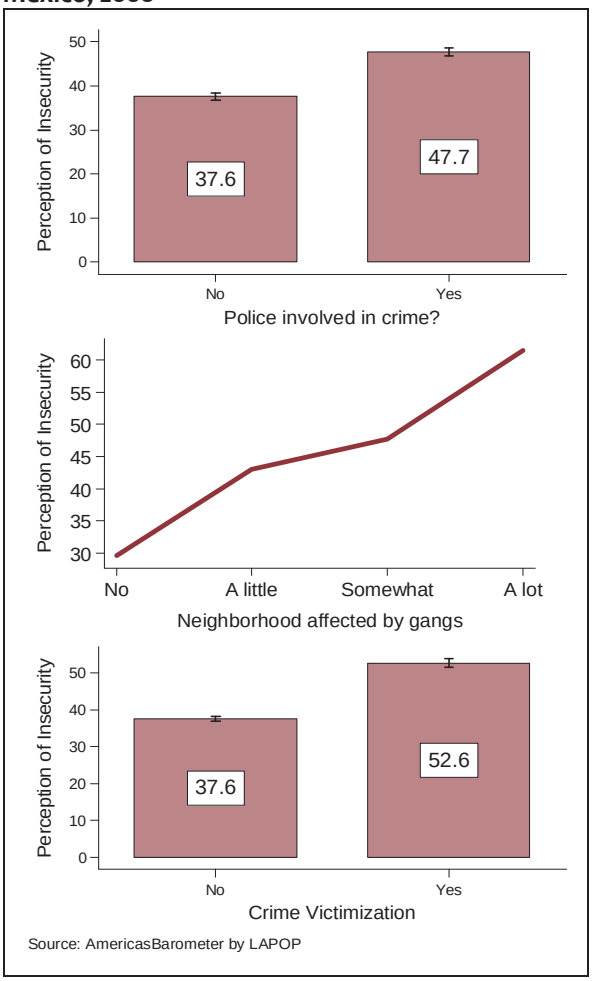
creating increased fear of crime in Central America and Mexico. In this sense, the results seem to support the argument that economic uncertainty contributes to overall public insecurity. In any case, this result might help to explain some of the differences between countries in terms of insecurity. For instance, it might help to explain why countries with lower rates of crime than the U.S. have higher levels of insecurity.

Figure 3.
Determinants of Feelings of Insecurity in Central America and Mexico, 2008



But perhaps the most important variables in this model in terms of policy implications are the ones that tap into the security conditions at the community of residence. According to the regression results, the perception that the local police are involved in crime and the presence of gangs and drug-trafficking in the neighborhood significantly increase feelings of insecurity among respondents in Central America and Mexico. This comes as no surprise in the light of recent events regarding the drug-cartel wars in Mexico and the expansion of *maras'* (i.e., gangs) activities in northern Central America. The presence of youth gangs, a problem that strongly affects Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras is particularly important as it seems to have a greater impact on the levels of insecurity than the rest of variables.

Figure 4.
Feelings of Insecurity according to perception about the police, gangs in the community, and crime victimization in Central America and Mexico, 2008



All of these results confirm what different studies have suggested in relation to the fear of crime (Ferraro 1995). Living in a community that is plagued by gangs, corrupt police, and drug trafficking generates high levels of insecurity, even if the community-dwellers have never been direct victims of crime. The presence of gangs, drugs, and a corrupted public security apparatus increases people's vulnerabilities and contributes to a climate of uncertainty that in the short run destroys the possibilities of building networks of reciprocal support, this is, social capital.

Policy and Program Implications

Among the many conclusions that can be drawn from these findings, we want to highlight three of them that have important policy implications for public security in Latin America, and Central America, in particular. First, economic certainties matter for the fear of crime and the consequences that the latter brings to social relationships in the region. In these days of economic downturn, greater components of the population are living at the edge of insecurity, not only as a result of an increase in crime and violence, but also because people feel more vulnerable about their own futures. As job opportunities dry up and remittances decline, it is important to develop programs that reduce the vulnerabilities created by unemployment and poverty.

Second, institutions also matter in the generation of security. The problem of public insecurity in Latin America is not only linked to murders, robberies, and assaults, but also to the performance of institutions bound to tackle those problems. Effectiveness is important here, but also transparency. Police officers linked to criminal organizations and corrupt public servants not only destroy public confidence in institutions, they also contribute to general insecurity in Central America and reduce the potential involvement of citizens against the control of crime. Any governmental policy designed to improve the effectiveness of law-enforcement institutions in the struggle against crime must include the development of mechanisms of internal control and institutional transparency.

Third, feelings of insecurity arise in communities infested by gangs and drugs. They put a substantial burden on community life and development, even in cases when their activities do not directly threaten the local population. Gangs and drugs are some of the main challenges to public security in Central America and Mexico. Hence, the implication is clear. The gang/drug problem has been long understood in the region as the last decade has witnessed an increasing effort to tackle both problems. However, past policies have been relatively ineffective, partly due to electoral agendas motivating a greater focus on suppression as compared to other tactics. It is time to revise the doctrines behind these old policies. More specifically, along with revised suppression strategies, it is time to turn greater attention to community prevention and institutional strengthening.

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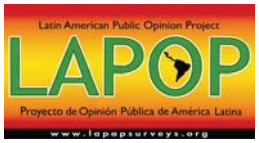
Appendices

Table 1
Determinants of Feelings of Insecurity in Central America and Mexico, 2008

	(1)		(2)	
	Coefficient.	t	Coefficient	t
Crime Victimization			0.096*	(9.99)
Percent of Population Victimized by Corruption			0.036*	(3.66)
Perception of Personal Economic Situation			-0.062*	(-5.31)
Perception of National Economic Situation			-0.024*	(-2.21)
Police involved in crime			0.067*	(6.34)
Neighborhood affected by gangs			0.257*	(23.52)
Have you seen anyone selling drugs?			0.049*	(4.56)
Primary Education	0.019	(1.04)	0.011	(0.59)
Secondary Education	0.043*	(2.03)	0.014	(0.63)
Higher Education	0.007	(0.44)	0.004	(0.22)
Female	0.043*	(5.42)	0.050*	(5.64)
Age	-0.037*	(-3.81)	-0.031*	(-3.11)
Wealth	-0.040*	(-2.73)	-0.035*	(-2.52)
Metropolitan area	0.171*	(9.93)	0.081*	(5.53)
Large city	0.151*	(9.24)	0.062*	(4.77)
Medium city	0.055*	(3.93)	0.024	(1.84)
Small city	0.009	(0.68)	-0.009	(-0.68)
Mexico	0.048*	(2.62)	0.024	(1.45)
Guatemala	0.057*	(2.99)	0.049*	(2.96)
El Salvador	0.067*	(4.01)	0.071*	(4.93)
Honduras	0.091*	(5.53)	0.066*	(4.52)
Nicaragua	-0.020	(-0.99)	-0.023	(-1.51)
Costa Rica	0.022	(1.22)	0.029	(1.74)
Panama	-0.011	(-0.58)	-0.003	(-0.18)
Constant	-0.003	(-0.25)	-0.013	(-1.10)
R-Squared	0.052		0.160	
Number of Obs.	11994		10242	
* p<0.05				



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Methodology Note: Measuring Religion in Surveys of the Americas

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The ability to distinguish among survey respondents' religious affiliations is a key prerequisite to studies of the effects of religious traditions on economic development, political preferences, and support for democracy. While the impact of religion on several spheres of human life has long been studied, the measurement of religious affiliation at the individual level remains problematical.

This paper presents some theoretical and empirical perspectives that have led to a new AmericasBarometer questionnaire item for classification of religious affiliations in the region. This classification will be used for the first time in the AmericasBarometer 2010.

The literature recognizes several main groups of religious traditions: Catholics (Herberg 1955; Turner 1971; Levine 1986); Mainline Protestants (Weber [1905/1958]; Herberg 1955; Layman 1997); Evangelicals (Martin 1990; Stoll 1993: Campbell 2006); and non-Christian religions (Herberg 1955; Lenski 1963). Unfortunately, those classifications do not offer clear answers about how to classify specific denominations. For example, it does not clearly indicate whether the American Baptist Church is part of the Mainline Protestant tradition (Layman 1997) or part of the Evangelical tradition (Campbell 2006). In the same vein, it is not always clear how to categorize Latin American Baptist Churches, and whether or not Latter-Day Saints should be considered as part of Protestant or Evangelical traditions.

If we take religion to be a multifaceted phenomenon that includes believing, behaving, and belonging (Layman 2001), then, measurements of religious affiliation capture the "belonging" component, which refers to an individual's religious membership and group identification. This paper argues that it is important to classify religious affiliations with as much precision as possible. Further, the paper indicates how these classifications can be related to economics and politics.

Theoretical Background

Considering the low number of articles published about religion and politics in the top political science journals over the past 30 years, one might be tempted to conclude that the topic is of little significance. However, some argue that a primary reason for this low number of publications is that specialists on religion have often failed to link their work to broader theories of political behavior and often do not work with data of the best possible quality (Wald and Wilcox 2006: 529). This paper addresses the latter problem related to data by discussing the importance of classifying religious denominations with greater precision,

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and the former theoretical situation by sketching the connection between religious traditions and economics and politics.

Beginning with economics, there is a longstanding view that considers as useful to distinguish between Catholics and Protestant denominations when evaluating the impact of religion on economic accumulation because those religious differences underlie different capacities for stimulating economic growth, as Weber [1905(1958)] argues in his classic work, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Several social scientists have attempted to identify the impact of religion on economic growth, with varying degrees of success. Findings from these studies include, for example, mixed effects of Catholicism on poverty (Banfield 1958: 87 and 123; Przeworski *et al* 1998; Barro and McCleary 2003); a positive relevance of Protestantism for economic growth (Inglehart 1997; Harrison 2000: 99); a relationship between successful economic policies and Confucianism (Swank 1996; Kahn 1979); tracing the origins of Japanese capitalism to Buddhist foundations (Collins 1997); linking a tradition of literacy among Jews of Eastern Europe to how they overcame a "subculture of poverty" (Lewis 1966: 24); and, Islam as a potential vehicle of economic growth (Nolan 2005).

With respect to the impact of religion on politics, conventional wisdom at times points to Marx's well-known statement defining religion as the opiate of the people [1843(1978)]. However, the political relevance of the largest religious affiliation was initially discussed in Marx's *On the Jewish Question*, where he argues that religious emancipation secularizes political relationships (this emancipation implies the equal co-existence of several religions and precludes the largest religion from becoming a political majority). It is relevant to note that Marx does not detail the specific role of any particular denomination. Nonetheless, it is arguably illustrative and important to identify the largest religion for political reasons.

In modern political analysis, religion has also been related to several political processes and outcomes. These include Catholics' political role in Latin American democratic transitions (Huntington 1989); competition in the religious market among Evangelical and Catholic Churches, where Catholic leaders pushed for democracy instead of authoritarianism in order to retain parishioners in Latin America (Gill 1998 and 2001; Lies 2006); and, finally, the collaborative pro-democratic efforts of Catholic clergy and congregants (Turner 1971; Mainwairing 1986; Camp 1997; Hagopian 2008).

Another perspective on politics, economics, and Catholicism is presented by Levine (1986), in his *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America.* Levine argues that rank-and-file Catholics, who are generally poor, demanded recognition from the Catholic hierarchy through class-based organizations, and Catholic Bishops therefore created democratic spaces inside and outside the Church. In sum, links between democratization, class, and religious affiliation suggest the necessity of capturing Catholicism not only because it represents the majoritarian religion in several Latin American countries, but also because Catholicism plays a relevant role in the political arena.

In two other works, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (Herberg 1955) and *The Religious Factor* (Lenski 1963), both of which study religion in the US, critical differences were shown among these three main affiliations. At the same time, in Latin America, *Tongues of Fire* (Martin 1990) and the incorporation of the study of Pentecostalism (see also Stoll 1993) have further motivated the debate about how to correctly classify religious denominations, especially because of their various theorized political implications.[1] Given

[1] For example, it may be relevant to distinguish among diverse types of Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals in terms of support for authoritarian rule, as in the case of Guatemala

both the recognition that different religious orientations and communities may differently affect economic and political processes, as well as the recent increase in the number of religious dominations present in Latin America, it is of real importance that data exist to capture these affiliations and memberships.

In sum, placing the study of religion and politics or economics in a theoretical perspective is an important step for understanding the different implications of the religious diversity in terms of the sense of religious belonging that diverse religious traditions represent.

The Empirical Challenge: Capturing emerging religious groups

Correctly classifying religious affiliations at the individual level presents two main challenges: a) to include the most common religious denominations; and b) to categorize correctly each religious denomination. The AmericasBarometer surveys[2], carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), have always striven toward these dual goals but a modified set of questions will increase the extent to which we can meet them.

Given that there are many denominations, LAPOP aims to include in its survey question on religion as many religious beliefs as possible within and across traditions, nations, and cultures. However, since classifying religion is only one of a wide variety of pieces of information that are gather in these hour-long surveys, trade-offs are necessary. Our goal, then, it is to obtain as much detailed data as possible, and do so as parsimoniously as we can.

The research for this paper was carried out in three stages. The first stage was to formulate a comprehensive list of religious denominations and potential variants of labels identifying non-religious persons in Latin America. The second stage was to identify the proportion of affiliates by denomination using a minimum threshold of 2% of affiliates within a given national population (Layman 1997). The final stage was to classify or categorize religious traditions for use in the AmericasBarometer 2010 survey.

The natural starting point in terms of sources is the national census, and I consulted all those instruments when the information was available.[3] Nevertheless, some national censuses do not include the question: "What is your religion?"[4]

The second best source of information on religious affiliation are national surveys designed to capture some degree of religious diversity, such as the 2008 round of the AmericasBarometer (Cruz 2009); the Central American Public Opinion Project (Stein 2000);[5] the World Values Survey (WVS) information in some Latin American samples (Gill 2002; Magaloni and Moreno 2003);[6] some

(Hallum 2002). However, this distinction is not always possible in practical terms because of the small numbers of cases (Sherman 1997) in any sample.

[2] Funding for the AmericasBarometer project is mainly provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Other important sources of support are the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] The most detailed examples were Bolivia (the 2001 and 2002 Censuses); Brazil (2000 *Religiao* Census); Mexico (2000 Census); and Nicaragua (2005 Census). However, as I will mention later, usually the aggregation of religious traditions prevents us from knowing the proportion of affiliates for specific denominations.

[4] Some examples are the national censuses of Colombia, Venezuela, and Argentina.

[5] In the case of Central America, the surveys consulted were the 1991, 1995 and 1999 Salvadorian samples; the 1992, 1993, 1995 and 1997 Guatemalan samples; the 1991 Honduran sample; and, the 1991 and 1995 Nicaraguan samples.

[6] In particular, the V144 question in the WVS questionnaire, using the 1995 and 1999 Argentinean samples; the 1997 Brazilian sample; the 1996 and 2000 Chilean samples; the 1997 and 1998 Colombian samples; the 1996 Dominican sample; the 1999 Salvadorian sample; the 1990, 1996, 2000 and 2005 Mexican samples; the 1996 and 2001 Peruvian samples; the 1996 Uruguayan sample; and finally, the 1996 and 2000 Venezuelan samples.

Latinobarómetro' surveys;[7] and specialized surveys at the national level.[8]

The second task is to identify religious denominations that have at least a minimum number of adherents, a level we set at 2%. This was possible using census data where this information was available[9] and survey data for Catholicism in almost all countries; specific Pentecostal Churches in Brazil, Guatemala, and Chile; and the proportion of secularists or non-believers in nearly all of Latin America.

In sum, identifying the proportion of religious affiliates at the national level was possible using census data[10] and surveys.[11] Nevertheless, a common denominator in those sources is that the religious information is grouped in very few categories. This fact also speaks to the fundamental need for data that classify religious denominations with greater precision, as this project proposes.

Affiliations in the Americas

In order to show the state of the religious diversity in the Americas, as it is currently known, we present results from the AmericasBarometer 2008 survey in Table 1 (see the appendix), sorted by religious category and alphabetically by country[12]. Those results show the importance of classifying with more detail native or traditional religions, which turn out to represent more than 2% of affiliates in Belize, Brazil, Haiti, and Jamaica, given that they reach our theoretical threshold of 2% of affiliates within a given national population.

There is also room for increased precision in the LDS/Jehovah's Witnesses category, for which Belize, Chile, Jamaica, and Peru exceeded the threshold of 2% as Table 1 shows. LDS and Jehovah's Witness are best considered as different types of religions (Gill 2002), and therefore it is important to create a special category for each.[13]

With respect to Judaism and eastern religions, the AmericasBarometer practice has been grouped them as non-Christian Eastern religions because of the limited number of cases,[14] but theoretically speaking Judaism is distinguishable from Eastern religions (Nolan 2005). For that reason, Judaism will be considered as a different category.

As noted above, among Catholics it is possible to distinguish among several types, such as "true Catholics" and those who are not observant. However, in order to retain the largest religion in Latin America as a single category for comparative reasons, this distinction should be made by means of another

[7] Specifically, I used the S2 open question in the Latinobarómetro (LB) questionnaire, and the list of affiliations contained in the variable S42 since 1995 until 2007.

[8] Specialized surveys consulted by country: 2008 CEIL/CONICET survey about beliefs and religious attitudes in Argentina; 2004 IBOPE survey about Creationism in Brazil; 2006 Pew Center survey of Pentecostals in Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala; and finally, 2003 Parametría Omnibus survey, and 2007 CONSULTA survey about religious practices in Mexico. In addition, Guatemalan and Costa Rican specific Protestant traditions were extracted from PROLADES (www.prolades.com). Non-religious labels were obtained from the 1990 Church-State Relations survey conducted in Mexico (Camp 1997). Finally, fundamentals about traditional religions such as voodoo were collected from Fontus (2001).

[9] For example, one useful distinction among Protestant affiliations based on census data was the Moravian Church in Nicaragua with 1.63% of affiliates.

[10] The aggregation is practically the rule and not the exception in surveys and Censuses. Perhaps, one remarkable exception is Brazil with its list of Evangelical churches, whereas Bolivia and Mexico Censuses are a good example of aggregation. In the last two cases, only the names of religions considered in each group was available.

[11] Essentially, surveys aggregate affiliations because the reduced number of cases (Gill 2002). However, the name of several religious denominations included in some categories was available.

[12] The specific non-response to Q3 question in the 2008 round was 0.9% for 21 Latin American countries.

[13] My theoretical distinction does not follow the label created by Bastian (1993) about LDS and Jehovah's Witness ("Para-Christians") given its negative connotation.

[14] According to the World Christian Database, in 21 Latin American countries covered by the AmericasBarometer, Judaism only accounts for 430,000 affiliates.

variable, i.e. the church attendance variable (Q5a in the AmericasBarometer questionnaire).

The main controversy among religious studies is how to classify Protestant or Evangelical denominations. Here we will follow Weber's original conceptualization (1905/1958) and Layman's classification for the US case (1997); this classification also took into account Gill's concerns about few cases (2002); and Sherman's (1997) and Hallum's (2002) debates about Pentecostals.[15]

The Current State of the Art

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, measuring religious affiliation captures the "belonging" component, which represents individuals' sense of membership and group identification. In order to justify empirically why it is important to classify religious affiliations correctly, I analyze six main religious categories in order to see whether or not those religious categories are related to politics, in particular, to support for democracy.

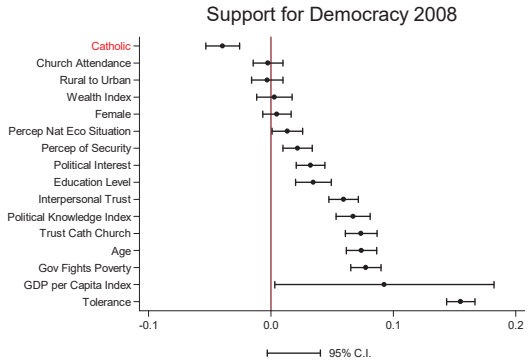
The conceptual operationalization of support for democracy in terms of political culture used by the AmericasBarometer explicitly measures whether or not Latin American citizens believe that democracy is better than any alternative form of government based on the question wording developed by Mishler and Rose (1999; see also Rose and Shin 2001). The specific question wording is "Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. On a scale from 1 to 7, to what degree do you agree or disagree with this statement?"

In order to test the relationship between religious affiliations and support for democracy in 21 Latin American countries, I use 14 control variables at the individual level and one control variable at the country level, and apply an analysis using a Hierarchical Linear Model. In the next five figures, I will show the effects obtained from adding additional religious categories to predict support for democracy.

The significance of the variables in the model is graphically represented in the next five figures. Statistical significance is captured by a confidence interval that does not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .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 when it falls to the left, it indicates a negative contribution.

Figure 1 shows that being Catholic decreases support for democracy. This analysis also suggests that being non-Catholic increases support for democracy. However, with this distinction alone, we do not know what types of non-Catholic citizens are more likely to support democracy.

Figure 1.
Support for Democracy in the Americas, 2008 (Catholics and Non-Catholics)



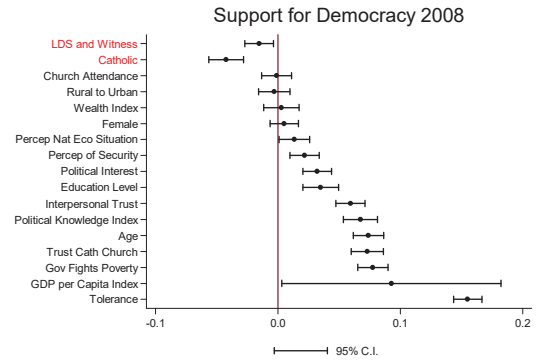
Source: 2008 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 21 countries, 27,546 respondents

In Figure 2, I consider two religious categories, Catholics as in the last model and, additionally, LDS and Jehovah's Witnesses combined. In this case, the rest of the denominations and non-religious people represent the reference

[15] I want to acknowledge the important observations on this subject about Evangelicals contributed by Luis E. Soto (USAID, Dominican Republic).

category. The results show that both religious categories reduce support for democracy compared to the remaining denominations and the non-religious.

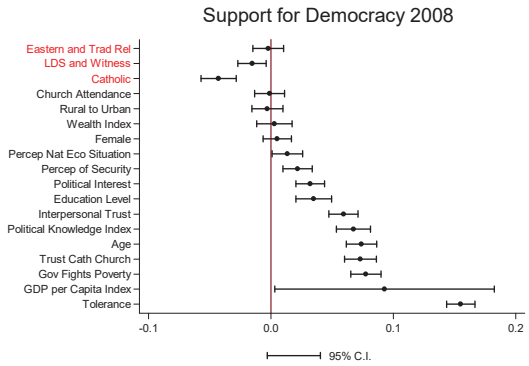
Figure 2.
Support for Democracy in the Americas, 2008
(Catholic, LDS and Non-Catholic/Non-LDS)



Source: 2008 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 21 countries, 27,546 respondents

Figure 3 shows the effect of three religious groups on support for democracy. In addition to Catholics and LDS and Jehovah Witnesses, I now include Eastern and Traditional or Native religions. In this case, the reference category is other Christian affiliations and people who do not profess any religion. The main conclusion from Figure 3 is that non-Christian affiliations are statistically unrelated to support for democracy.

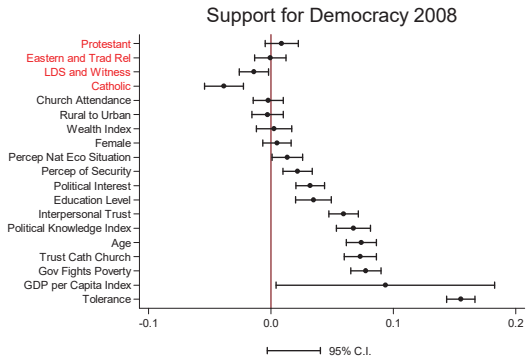
Figure 3.
Support for Democracy in the Americas, 2008
(Catholic, LDS and Non-Christian)



Source: 2008 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 21 countries, 27,546 respondents

Figure 4 includes one additional category, Mainline Protestants. In this case, Evangelicals and non- religious people represent the omitted category. In this model there is no statistically significant effect for the new grouping, though this gradual inclusion of religious categories reveals that control variables at the individual and country level remain stable in the model.

Figure 4.
Support for Democracy in the Americas, 2008
(Catholic, LDS, Non-Christian and Protestant)



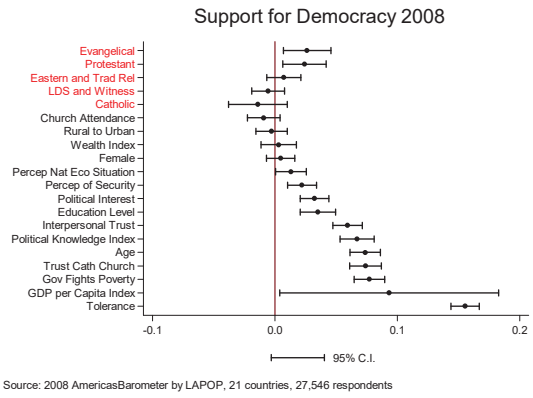
Source: 2008 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 21 countries, 27,546 respondents

Finally, Figure 5 shows the final model, which includes five religious groups, where citizens who report no religious identification represent the reference category. In this case, the Protestant variable is now statistically

significant, as is the newly added Evangelical variable.

A comparison between Figure 1 and the final model in Figure 5 permits us to conclude that the positive relationship between religious affiliations and support for democracy is driven by two specific non-Catholics groups: Mainline Protestants and Evangelicals (compared to the reference category, those without any affiliation).

Figure 5.
Support for Democracy in the Americas, 2008
(Religious Category Omitted: No Religion)



Source: 2008 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 21 countries, 27,546 respondents

It is clear from this evidence that it is important to classify religious affiliations accurately and precisely in the AmericasBarometer countries[16] as well as in other surveys because this distinction permits us to test specific hypotheses related to particular religious categories and sub-groups. Existing theory and evidence available at the country level (Camp 1997; Gill 2002; Hallum 2002) suggests that religious sub-groups other than these six main categories may be relevant politically or economically speaking. For that reason, in order to have any means of testing this type of hypotheses, it is important to categorize specifically religious affiliations in the Americas.[17]

A New Classification Scheme

Table 2 (see the appendix to this report) presents the denominations to be used in the 2010 AmericasBarometer and the current affiliations considered by the WVS and the *Latinobarómetro*, as points of comparison.

The new comprehensive list captures not only new and/or emerging religious groups, but also includes the general classifications presented by the other two multinational projects. This formulation represents a new effort to improve prior classifications by the AmericasBarometer.

Specifically, the answers for the religious denomination question (Q3 in the AmericasBarometer questionnaire) will include a comprehensive list of religious affiliations categorized as follows:

Q3. What is your religion, if any? [**Do not read options**]
(**1**) Catholic
(**2**) Mainline Protestant or Protestant non-Evangelical (Protestant; Christian; Calvinist; Lutheran; Methodist; Presbyterian; Disciple of Christ; Anglican; Episcopalian; Moravian)
(**3**) Non-Christian Eastern Religions (Islam; Buddhist; Hinduism; Taoist; Confucianism; Baha'i)
(**4**) None (None; believes in a Supreme Entity but does not belong to any religion)
(**5**) Evangelical and Pentecostal (Evangelical; Pentecostals; Church of God; Assemblies of God; Universal Church of the Kingdom of God; International Church of the Foursquare Gospel; Christ Pentecostal Church; Christian Congregation; Mennonite; Brethren; Christian Reformed Church; Charismatic non-Catholic; Light of World; Baptist; Nazarene; Salvation Army; Adventist; Seventh-Day Adventist; Sara Nossa Terra)
(**6**) LDS

[16] Those countries are México, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Perú, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Belize.

[17] I thank Prof. Elizabeth Zechmeister's observation about this distinction between religious categories and religious sub-groups.

(**7**) Traditional Religions or Native Religions (Candomblé, Voodoo, Rastafarian, Mayan Traditional Religion; Umbanda; Maria Lonza; Inti; Kardecista, Santo Daime, Esoterica)
(**10**) Does not believe in God (Agnostic; atheist)
(**11**) Jewish (Orthodox; Conservative; Reform)
(**12**) Jehovah's Witness
(**88**) DK/DR

The main advantage of this approach is that the AmericasBarometer will offer two variables in its 2010 dataset derived from the religious denomination question: a) the aforementioned categorization; and b) the detail of each religious affiliation.[18] For example, the dataset will contain the category Mainline Protestant and the database will detail whether or not the respondent belongs to the Moravian Church, or the Lutheran, Methodist or Presbyterian Church.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has attempted to provide an interpretation and critical understanding of religious affiliation's political and economic significance and also offer a new, more thorough classification that will allow a more complete picture of religious denominations in the region. The resulting data can be used by scholars to test specific hypotheses related to particular religious groups.

For example, the 2010 classification will allow analysis of the distinct relationship between LDS and Jehovah's Witnesses affiliates, on the one hand, and support for democracy, on the other, or support for specific public policies.[19] Furthermore, the data will allow the study of specific interactions among Catholics, Protestants and Evangelicals in terms of vote choice, as the "religious threat" in the US (Campbell 2006); the effect of Evangelicals on the Catholic Church leaders in relation to democracy (Gill 1998); and the capacity of the Catholic Church to mobilize citizens in politics (Hagopian 2008) among other topics. In sum, with the increased quality and precision of data concerning religious affiliations in the 2010 AmericasBarometer, we will gain a more detailed understanding of this aspect of the region in general and its relationships to critical variables related to democracy and other facets of economic and political change and development.[20]

[18] This by-product for the 2010 round will be possible thanks to the technological improvement based on handheld computers that will gather the information collected by the interviewers in many countries. I wish to thank Dominique Zephyr for calling my attention to this fact.
[19] I thank Matt Layton's observation about this point.

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Table 1.

Religious Affiliations (%) by Latin American country, AmericasBarometer, round 2008

Country	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Non Christian	No religion	Evangelical	LDS and JW	Trad Religions	Total of cases
Argentina	77.1%	0.9%	1.9%	15.9%	3.3%	0.6%	0.2%	1,486
Belize	46.6%	17.9%	0.2%	7.3%	7.2%	2.7%	18.1%	1,552
Bolivia	81.8%	2.6%	0.4%	3.3%	10.3%	1.7%	0.1%	3,003
Brazil	69.5%	8.0%	0.4%	6.4%	11.5%	1.1%	3.0%	1,497
Chile	68.3%	2.2%	0.3%	13.3%	13.6%	2.1%	0.2%	1,527
Colombia	82.7%	3.1%	0.4%	6.6%	6.6%	0.5%	0.0%	1,503
Costa Rica	69.0%	13.7%	1.1%	8.2%	7.1%	0.9%	0.1%	1,500
Dominican Republic	67.6%	8.1%	0.3%	10.2%	12.1%	1.6%	0.1%	1,507
Ecuador	83.8%	0.9%	0.2%	5.8%	7.4%	1.9%	0.0%	3,000
El Salvador	53.8%	9.6%	0.3%	12.4%	22.2%	1.6%	0.1%	1,549
Guatemala	56.5%	9.3%	0.3%	10.5%	22.0%	1.2%	0.2%	1,538
Haiti	55.5%	29.1%	0.2%	7.0%	3.2%	1.7%	3.2%	1,536
Honduras	68.5%	7.2%	1.3%	10.2%	12.3%	0.4%	0.0%	1,522
Jamaica	4.6%	32.5%	1.0%	7.8%	36.3%	13.3%	4.6%	1,499
Mexico	84.7%	1.2%	0.3%	7.7%	4.4%	1.6%	0.1%	1,560
Nicaragua	57.1%	7.6%	0.7%	12.5%	20.7%	1.2%	0.3%	1,540
Panama	79.3%	6.4%	1.1%	3.5%	8.5%	1.0%	0.1%	1,536
Paraguay	88.7%	2.4%	0.1%	1.8%	5.8%	1.2%	0.0%	1,166
Peru	80.0%	3.1%	0.3%	4.9%	9.4%	2.2%	0.1%	1,500
Uruguay	52.8%	1.1%	1.0%	34.6%	6.9%	1.9%	1.6%	1,500
Venezuela	82.5%	1.1%	0.6%	9.3%	4.7%	1.5%	0.3%	1,500
Total	68.4%	7.5%	0.6%	9.1%	11.1%	2.0%	1.4%	34,521

Mainline Protestant or Protestant non-Evangelical = Adventist, Baptist, Calvinist, The Salvation Army, Lutheran, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian.
Non-Christian Religions = Jewish, Muslims, Buddhists, Hinduisms, Taoists.
Evangelical and Pentecostal = Pentecostals, Charismatic non-Catholics, Light of World.
LDS and JW = Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Spiritualists and Seventh-Day Adventists.
Traditional Religions or Native Religions = Candomblé, Voodoo, Rastafarian, Mayan Traditional Religion.
None = secularist, atheist, do not believe in God.
Valid cases = 34,223 respondents. Missing cases = 298 (0.9%)

Table 2

Comprehensive list of Religious Affiliations in Latin America, by survey project

	AmericasBarometer 2010 (project)	WVS (1990-2005)	LB (1995-2007)
Catholic	Catholic	Roman Catholic Catholic (does not follow rules)	Catholic
Orthodox		Orthodox	
Christian	Christian		Christian (in general)
Mainline Protestant	Anglican Calvinist Disciple of Christ Episcopalian Lutheran Methodist Moravian Presbyterian Protestant	 Protestant (in general)	 Evangelical (Methodist) Protestant (in general)
Evangelical	Adventist Baptist Charismatic non-Catholic Assemblies of God Church of God Universal Church of the Kingdom of God International Church of the Foursquare Gospel Light of World Nazarene Pentecostals Salvation Army Brethren Christ Pentecostal Church Christian Congregation	 Pentecostal	Adventist Evangelical (Baptist) Evangelical (Pentecostal)

	AmericasBarometer 2010 (project)	WVS (1990-2005)	LB (1995-2007)
Evangelical (cont)	Mennonite		
	Christian Reformed Church		
	Seventh-Day Adventist	Seven-day Adventist	
	Evangelical	Evangelical (in general)	Evangelical (no specific denomination)
Jehovah's Witness	Jehovah's Witness	Jehovah Witnesses	Jehovah Witness
LDS	Latter-Day Saints (LDS)		LDS
Non-Christian	Buddhist	Buddhist	
Eastern Religions	Baha'i		
	Confucianism		
	Hinduism	Hindu	
	Islam	Islam	
	Taoist		
Judaism	Orthodox, Conservative, Reform	Jew	Jewish
Traditional	Candomblé	Candomblé	
Religions	Voodoo		
	Rastafarian		
	Mayan Traditional Religion		
	Maria Lonza		
	Inti		
	Kardecista	Spiritism/Esoterism/Occultism	Spiritism/Kardecism
	Umbanda	Umbanda	Umbanda
	Santo Daime		
	Esoterica		
None	None	None	None
	Believes in a Supreme Entity but does not belong to any religion		Believer (does not belong to any church)
Atheist	Atheist		Atheist
	Agnostic		Agnostic

Blank spaces = Not asked

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Corruption Victimization in the Public Health Sector[1]

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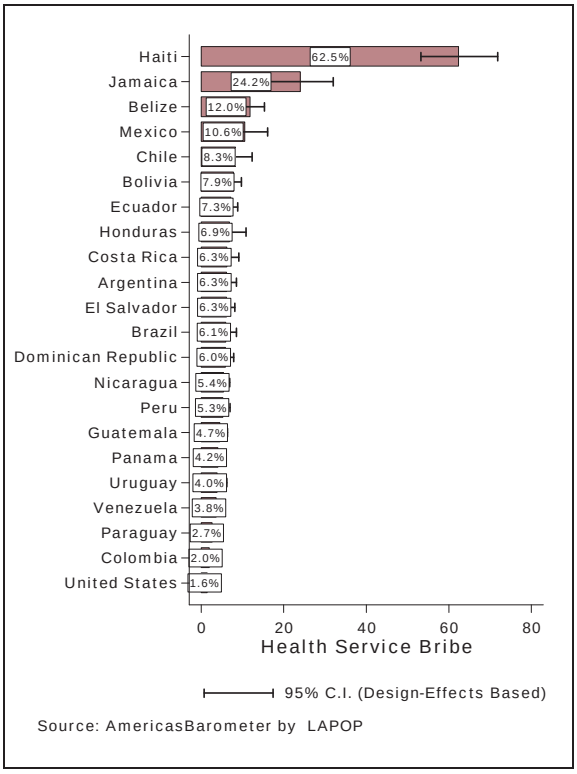
Several debates exist over what is the best course of action to combat public corruption. Some studies argue that to deter corruption, it is necessary to increase public officials' wages (Becker & Stigler 1974). Yet others do not find evidence to support this argument (Rauch & Evans 2000; Treisman 2000). A general agreement, nonetheless, has emerged that higher wages can deter corruption under certain conditions (Di Tella & Schargrodsky 2003), thus, increasing the efficiency of public officials, which in turn allows for high investment and growth. And usually a country that is better off economically has a greater capacity to increase public official's wages. That said, economic growth seems to be an important depressing factor of corruption levels (Mauro 1995).

This paper in the *AmericasBarometer Insight Series* is the fourth one to examine the sources of corruption victimization, focusing on corruption by public health service officials. This was part of a battery of items included in the 2008 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey (additional questions in this series will be examined in future *Insights* studies). [2]

Figure 1.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Public Health Service Officials When Using This Service during the past year in the Americas, 2008



This survey involved face-to-face interviews conducted in 22 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a web survey in the United States.[3] A total of 38,053 probabilistically

* The *Insights* Series is co-edited by Professors Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

[1] Prior issues in the *Insight*s series can be found at: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/studiesandpublications. The data on which they are based can be found at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/datasets

[2] Funding for the 2008 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Center for the Americas (CFA), and Vanderbilt University.

[3] This question was not asked in Canada.

selected respondents were asked the following question:[4]

EXC15. Have you use any public health services during the past year? [If "yes"]In order to receive attention in a hospital or a clinic during the past year, did you have to pay a bribe?

Figure 1 shows the percentages of the population that were asked to pay a bribe to receive medical attention. Haiti emerges as the only country in the sample with extremely high levels of corruption victimization. Nearly two of out of every three (62.5%)[5] Haitians who use public health services declare having been a victim of an act of corruption, meaning they paid a bribe to receive medical attention; this percentage more than quintuples the regional average of 11.6%. Jamaica (24.2%) also shows a significant percentage of its population being asked to pay a bribe to receive medical attention. Similarly, Belize (12%) and Mexico (10.6%) show levels of corruption victimization that exceed 10% while the rest of the countries in the sample have levels of corruption victimization below this value. Paraguay (2.7%), Colombia (2%), and the United States (1.6%) show percentages below 3%.

How much of the variation in corruption victimization by a public health service official is explained by the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the populations of these countries? To simplify the answer to this question, the United States was removed from the sample.[6]

Figure 2.
Percentage of the Population Victimized by Public Health Service Officials When Using This Service during the past year Taking into Account Individual Characteristics in the Americas, 2008.

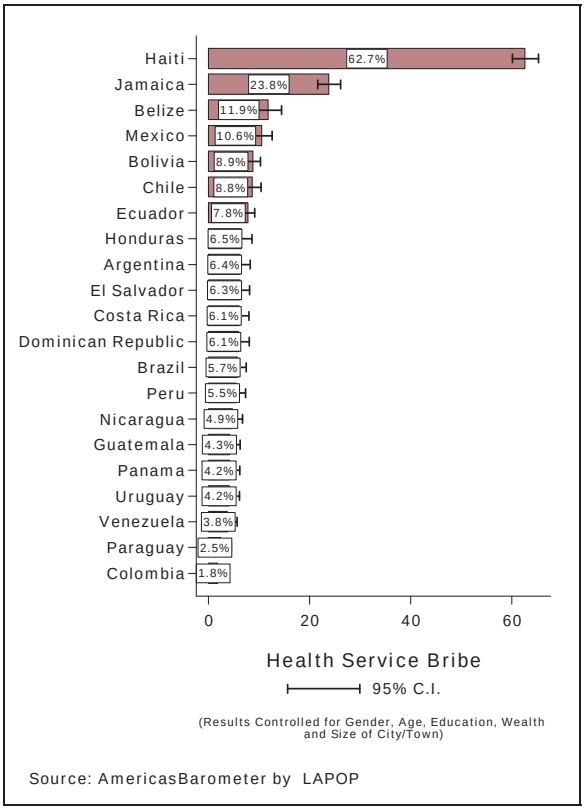


Figure 2 shows similar results as Figure 1 after holding constant gender, age, education, wealth, and size of city/town. The percentages of people being asked to pay a bribe to receive medical attention across the Americas vary only by a few percentages higher or lower from the uncontrolled results. Haiti (62.7%) and Jamaica (23.8%) continue to experience the highest percentages of corruption victimization by public health service officials, whereas Colombia (1.8%) and Paraguay (2.5%) show the lowest percentages of corruption victimization. When comparing these results to those of prior reports on corruption in the *Insight Series* Haiti continues to be one of the countries with the

[4] The sample was reduced to 17,126 given that this question asks first if the respondent used any public health services during the last year and only if the response is affirmative, then the interviewer continues with the following section of this question. For that reason, the analysis carried out in this paper focuses on the subset of individuals who responded "yes" to this question and percentages reported here represent that subset of individuals, not the sample as a whole.

[5] This figure represents those who use public health services

[6] The reason behind this decision is because this case has exceedingly high level of socio-economic development compared to the other countries and may drive the results of the analysis.

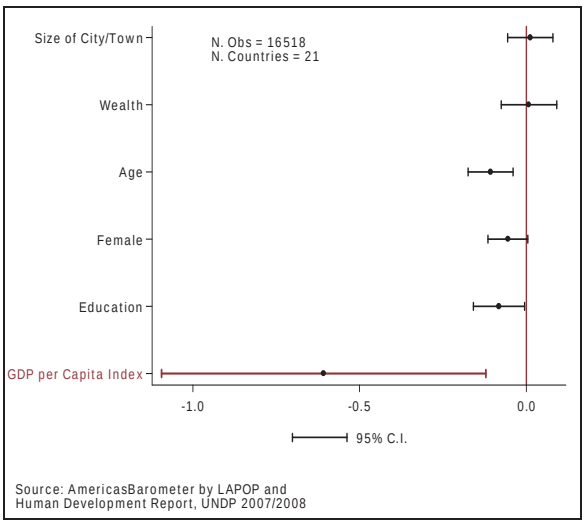
highest corruption victimization by the police (12.8%), by a public official (14.2%), and by the local government (40.6%).

Do Contextual Factors Matter?

In addition to individual-level characteristics, such as age and education, we also find that the level of economic development matters for corruption victimization by a public health service official across the Americas. Figure 3 shows these effects on the probability of being asked to pay a bribe to receive medical attention. Each variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The impact of each of those variables on experience with local government corruption is shown graphically by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical "0" line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left of the "0" line a negative effect. If the effects are statistically significant, they are shown by confidence interval lines stretching to the left and right of each dot that do not overlap the vertical "0" line (at .05 or better). If they overlap the vertical line, the effects are statistically insignificant. The relative strength of each variable is indicated by standardized coefficients.

Figure 3 shows that age and education, as well as the national level of economic development measured by GDP per capita,[7] matter in determining the likelihood of citizens being asked to pay a bribe for medical services. Individuals who are older and are more educated are less likely to be victims of corruption. These findings are not surprising as "education and human capital is [sic] needed for courts and other formal institutions to operate efficiently, and government abuses are more likely to go unnoticed and unchallenged when the electorate is not literate" (Svensson 2005: 25).

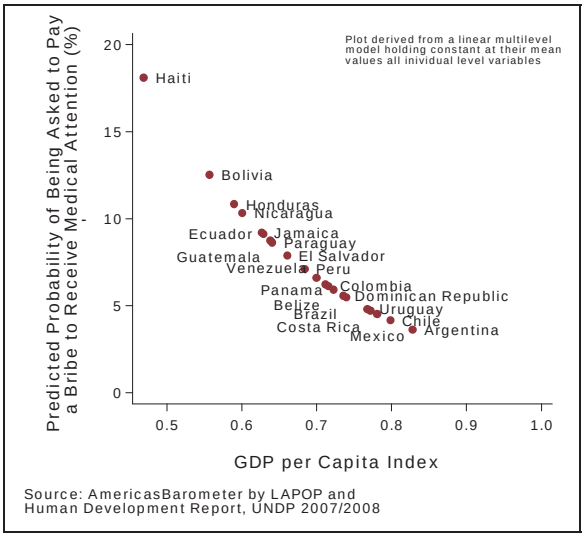
Figure 3.
A Multilevel Analysis of the Determinants of Corruption Victimization by Public Health Service Officials When Using This Service in the Americas: The Impact of Economic Development, 2008



Turning now to the national-level characteristic, GDP per capita, we find that the level of economic development decreases the probability of corruption victimization by public health service officials. This finding echoes that of a previous report in this *Insight Series* related to corruption victimization by the police (I0803) where economic development also reduced this type of corruption. In this short report, we find support for the significant role that economic development plays as a deterrent of corruption victimization. More specifically, those who live in richer countries are significantly less likely to be victimized by corruption when they make use of public health services compared to those who live in poorer nations. Figure 4 illustrates these findings in more detail.

[7] National wealth is measured using the UNDP's GDP index. This index is based on gross domestic product per capita in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars. The index can take values between 0 and 1. For details on how this index was constructed see UNDP's Human Development Report 2007/2008.

Figure 4.
The Impact of Economic Development on Public Health Service Official's Corruption Victimization in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008[8]



The lower the level of economic development, the more likely the average citizen is to become a victim of corruption by a public health service official. For instance, Haiti and Bolivia are the countries that show by far the highest probability of corruption victimization by a public health service official and are countries with the lowest level of economic development. At the other extreme, Argentina is the country with the lowest level of corruption victimization and not surprisingly, is one of the richest countries in the region. It is worth noting that Haiti is a country recognized for its widespread corruption, as further evidence presented in this *Insight Series* confirms.[9] Corruption continues to harm Haiti's political and economic development. Many legislators elected in 2006 have allegedly been involved in criminal activities and some argue that their reason for seeking parliament seats was mainly to obtain the immunity from prosecution.[10] It may not be unexpected therefore that Haiti was ranked 177 out of 180 countries, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2008), on which lower rankings are associated with higher levels of corruption.[11]

Policy Implications

Corruption is one of the most serious and rampant problems in emerging democracies, as exemplified by the case of Haiti. Corruption is not only recognized for its negative effects on trade, investment, development and economic growth (World Bank 1997), but it also affects negatively democratic stability (Zephyr 2008).

In this short paper, we found that economic development is a significant factor that explains lower corruption by public health service officials. This finding suggests that wealthier countries are better able to combat corruption than poorer countries. Indeed, if a citizen from Haiti with a given set of socio-economic characteristics were to move to Argentina, all other things being equal, the probability of this person being asked to pay a bribe to receive medical attention would be at least 14 percentage points lower than if this individual were to remain in Haiti. In other words, economic development deters corruption victimization. One way that policy-makers could address corruption in the public health sector is by increasing public officials' wages above their opportunity wage, so that these public servants would behave honestly (Becker & Stigler 1974). Nonetheless, some studies suggest that if a third-party enforcement is not present, higher salaries may lead instead to higher corruption (Mookherjee & Png 1995). Therefore, it is important that anti-corruption programs work at providing the conditions that will lead to "audit intensity" (Di Tella & Schargrodsky 2003) that in turn will allow for

[8] The point estimate differences between countries in Figure 2 and 4 are explained partly by the fact that Figure 2 controls for individual level characteristics while Figure 4 takes into account the level of economic development.

[9] For a more detailed treatment of corruption in Haiti, see http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/files/cAEWtO/Haiti1.pdf

[10] See www.freedomhouse.org

[11] See www.transparency.org

effective wage policies that will reduce corruption. Of course, higher public wages are made possible through the economic growth of nations.

In addition, anti-corruption programs in the region should pay particular attention to the case of Haiti as it is the country that systematically exhibits very high levels of corruption victimization in its various dimensions, making its democratic consolidation even harder. Reducing corruption in the public health sector would be one step toward broader efforts to fight organized corruption in that country.

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