



Presidential Advisor, Gail Teixeira during an interview on Political Scope on the National Communications Network

Granger clearly debunked as LAPOP survey says fewer Guyanese thinking of leaving country - Teixeira

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The bold announcement from Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) is that fewer Guyanese are now looking to migrate. This is according to its survey last year.

LAPOP is run by US University Vanderbilt, and it conducts the Americas-Barometer survey every two years, in what is deemed as a scientifically rigorous comparative study, covering some two dozen countries including Guyana, all of the mainland independent countries in North, Central, and South America, as well as a significant number of countries in the Caribbean.

In Guyana's case, questions asked in the survey, focused on whether or not the individual intends to work or live abroad in the next three years. The firm response noted that, "We see that a smaller percentage of people responded yes to that question in 2014, than did in some of these earlier years," Director of LAPOP Dr. Elizabeth Zechmeister explained, adding that there has been a decrease in people's intentions to emigrate, even though that desire is still high in Guyana compared with other countries.

Results from the survey done in the middle of last year had indicated that Guyanese are more satisfied with their lives. "We see some indicators that people are a bit more satisfied, a little more content with their lives," Dr. Zechmeister said.

She noted that people are more satisfied in 2014 with their lives than they have been on average in previous years especially.

LAPOP is a large, cross-national regional research project, specialising in the development, implementation, and analysis of public opinion surveys. It was founded by Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson some two decades ago. LAPOP's principal focus is on governance and democracy in Latin America. It measures democratic values and behaviours in the Americas, using national probability samples of voting-age adults.

Its methodology employs practices that are transparent and ensures that data collected by are of the highest quality.

Authentic body

Against this backdrop, Advisor on Governance Gail Teixeira, amidst wild and glaring propaganda from many selected media houses, picked up on LAPOP's most recent meticulous survey, which asserted some huge positives for Guyana.

On "Political Scope" aired on the National Communications Network this evening

the Presidential Advisor rightly made much of this ponderous revelation. She informed that LAPOP is probably the most trusted barometer in the Latin American Caribbean (including Canadian and the United States) when it comes to tracing trends and development within the region, particularly to do with crime, security, democracy and government.

She reiterated that the group, at present, deals with 24 countries, of which Guyana started being surveyed just prior to the elections in 2006. Ms. Teixeira observed that, “it was a rather useful study-a very scholastic survey, done across the countries, in which the materials are tested long in advance and that persons are trained to carry out the surveys in the countries.”

She explained that “the individual respondents are interviewed face-face, unlike what obtains with Transparency International, which has maybe six people in Guyana, proffering opinions,” and so, she added this kind of work is a mere ‘perception indicator’ and cannot be taken as authentic.

LAPOP, she elaborated, has particular parameters and there may be some innuendos that are specific to a country. However, a general set of questions are asked across the 24 countries in the group, and with Guyana, the number of respondents was 1558.

It should be noted, Ms. Teixeira said, that most of the Caribbean countries, regardless of the size of the population, were in that range, as well as the United States. Overall this means that some 50,000 people were interviewed for the survey that is done in the 24 countries, and “so it’s quite a sizeable and significant indicator of people’s views, it is a trusted and respected process, because it is very careful in terms of testing material before, as well as looking at the selection of persons, who will be chosen to represent class, rural, urban, geography... and in cases like Guyana, looking at the ethnicity composition.”

Concerns

Ms. Teixeira pointed out that one of the concerns in this 2012-2014 survey is that of the region’s; it is that there has been a decline in a number of key indicators to do with satisfaction with police performance in Latin America. She singled out that “one in two individuals and one in three persons do not have confidence in the police performance, which is extremely high.”

She made specific reference that this survey, done 2012-2014, in the context of Guyana, with its first monitory government, “where the opposition was cutting the budget like mad, and putting us (Guyana) before financial bodies.”

For her, it is this context, that the United States has ‘police satisfaction’ that is higher than Guyana. She opined that the timing was before the police shootings in the US, and it would have been interesting to see the results afterwards.

Overall though, for the Presidential Advisor, Guyana comes out well in a number of other indicators, even when the police are at the bottom of the ranking of the institutions in Guyana. In this vein, she explained that Guyana does not give security that high ranking as the number one concern; it gives politics as the major concern, and this

again is within a time frame, when the people feel that the political realm is where problems are taking place.

Ms. Teixeira suggested that some negatives in the country redounded from “the parliament, the behaviours of the opposition, cutting budgets and so on.” She cited that for Guyana, 25% of the persons interviewed felt that the political situation was the most serious issue that confronts them.

Recent history

Ms. Teixeira recalled that in the 2006 World Bank study, which was the time when the crime wave was high in Guyana, and even though security was high, it was not the most serious concern. This led to the country, at that time, being ranked even lower than other countries, as again, in that period politics was the concern that people had generally.

In this vein, she showed that according to the survey, one finds some interesting things, namely that “the whole of Latin America, for example, the justice system, handling of citizens’ security, trusting courts, the incumbents’ administration performances all declined in the Latin American and the Caribbean.”

Ms. Teixeira made careful mention of the role of the media. She picked out that when it came to issues of insecurity, one of the points that the LAPOP makes for 2014 for the survey, is that where there are urban populations, who were surveyed and who paid a lot of attention to the media, that group seemed to have a heightened view of the level of insecurity they were facing in terms of crime versus persons who do not look at the media every day, and who are not urban, so they do not have access to information.

The other positive trend that took place in Guyana between 2012 and 2014, is that 49 percent of those who were interviewed felt that their household finances were relatively satisfactory, which is an indicator of the low cost of living.

Overall here, Guyana came out in the mid-range of the country and for her this is a reflection of the positive economic growth over these consecutive years.

Debunking Mr. Granger

Ms. Teixeira noted that according to the survey, 73.3% of the people said they were satisfied with their lives. She then pointed out that Mr. David Granger in particular should pay attention to this and the opposition overall. She elaborated that despite the decline in the whole region, on confidence in the armed forces, the police, the judicial system, political parties and government, “that’s a trend in this particular 2014 report, that Guyana has people who say they are satisfied with their lives,” and according to her “this profit-of- doom approach of Mr. Granger, that this is an unhappy nation, that we are all unhappy

people, is debunked by very hard core data coming out and saying that people's lives are quite satisfied.”

She noted that strengthening this discovery is the fact that those persons who are saying that they are satisfied are the new voters, going into the 2015 elections. The report indicated that the highest level of satisfaction is from two groups: those between 18 and 25; and the older group that are plus 40 going into their 60s.

Since 2012, the survey indicated that there was also a decline in political system support and decreased satisfaction with the way democracy works. Dr. Zechmeister noted that the 2012 survey was done in the early part of that year which was not that long after the 2011 elections, and so it seemed that there was a little bit of a honeymoon effect for the system in general. People were feeling a bit more supportive of the system, they were also a little more politically interested and a little bit more trusting of political parties, she said.

“The message coming from the survey data seems to be that the system is falling a bit short in meeting those expectations,” she added.

Dr. Zechmeister and Dr Mitchell Seligson, the founder and senior adviser to LAPOP, said that the survey reveals interesting as well as provocative trends and those interested can access the data on the project's website. “We identify problem areas, we identify successes and then we hope that others take that information and can act on it,” she said.

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