

Global Corruption Report 2008

Corruption in the Water Sector



The Americas Barometer 2006: report on corruption

Mitchell A. Seligson and Dominique Zéphyr¹

The Americas Barometer (*El Barómetro de las Américas*), the survey effort of the Latin America Public Opinion Project, focuses on street-level corruption as experienced in the daily lives of citizens. In 2006 a total of 31,477 people were included in the sample, generally around 1,500 per country, in face-to-face interviews lasting an average of forty-five minutes. Interviews were conducted in the local languages; numerous indigenous languages were included in the Andes and Guatemala, while Creole was used in Haiti and French among the French-speakers of Canada. The 2006 study was expanded to include twenty countries, with representation of North America and the Caribbean now included.²

The focus on direct experience with corruption rather than on the perception of corruption has been the hallmark of the LAPOP studies published in past *Global Corruption Reports*. The wisdom of that decision is reinforced by the latest findings. For the twenty countries as a whole, the correlation between individual perception of corruption and individual reports of having been solicited for a bribe are extremely low, not rising above an r of 0.06. Indeed, Bolivia and Haiti, both in the group of countries with the highest recorded levels of actual corruption, have perceptions of corruption that are lower than any other country except Canada, a nation that scores at or near the very low end of corruption experience in the Americas.

While the study asks an entire battery of questions on corruption experience, direct comparisons of the signature item in the series are revealing. We asked: 'Have you been asked to pay a bribe by a public official in the last year?' The results are shown in figure 7. The chart includes an 'I' at the end of each bar to show the range of the confidence intervals of the samples. The yawning gap between the United States and Canada, on the one hand, and the high-level corruption countries on the other is striking; a person from Bolivia is fifty times more likely to be asked for a bribe by a public official than a person from the United States. Even in countries that are moderate in their levels of corruption, such as Costa Rica, where only 6.1 per cent of the sample reported being asked by a public official to pay a bribe in the last year, the rate is twenty times higher than in the United States.

1 Mitchell A. Seligson is Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University and director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). Dominique Zéphyr is research coordinator and data analyst at LAPOP.

2 Because of the high costs of face-to-face interviews, in the United States and Canada alone surveys were conducted via random-digit-dialling phone calls, and samples there were around 600. All other samples were based on national sample frames, stratified by region and sub-stratified by urban/rural residence. Full details can be found at www.AmericasBarometer.org.

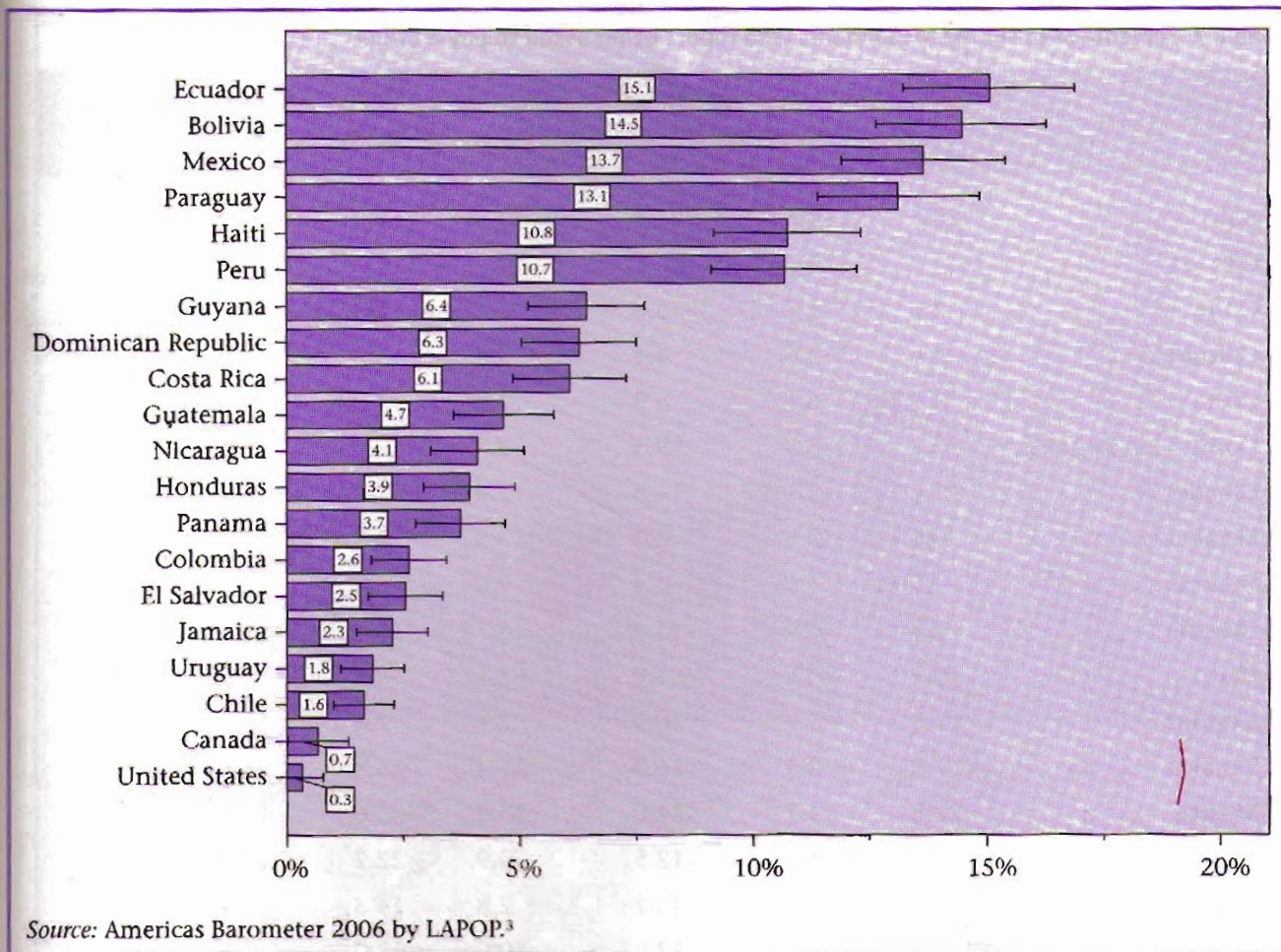


Figure 7 Percentage of population who were solicited

For all countries in the sample apart from the United States and Canada, where the full series of questions was not asked, an overall index of corruption victimisation was constructed, based on the number of different ways in which a person was requested to pay a bribe in the twelve months preceding the survey. In total, seven different possible venues of corruption were measured, including bribe requests by police, in the courts, in local government, in the public health service, in the public school system, at work and by public officials. In Uruguay, which represents the best case, fewer than 1 per cent of the population were asked to pay a bribe in the twelve months preceding the interview. Haiti emerges as an extreme case, with one out of every two adults reporting being victimised. The average for the region was 22.5 per cent of a country's population being asked to pay a bribe. The results for the

³ The error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals.

Table 7 Percentage of survey respondents who report being asked to pay a bribe^a

	Police bribery	Public employee bribery	Municipal bribery	Bribery work	Court bribery	Health service bribery	School bribery
Bolivia	20.5	14.5	24.1	12.5	19.0	10.2	10.2
Canada		0.7					
Chile	2.3	1.7	5.6	6.5	5.3	3.0	3.5
Colombia	4.5	2.6	4.4	3.6	3.3	3.7	1.8
Costa Rica	8.7	6.1	5.9	4.9	3.0	4.5	4.4
Dominican Republic	10.7	6.3	19.5	3.2	12.5	5.1	3.6
Ecuador	11.6	15.1	14.8	7.4	22.9	8.7	13.2
El Salvador	6.6	2.5	6.0	3.3	2.8	6.7	3.5
Guatemala	11.0	4.6	6.4	9.0	6.3	7.6	7.4
Guyana	11.8	6.4	13.4	16.7	10.1	13.6	
Haiti	10.2	10.8	61.9	51.1	50.2	57.7	59.6
Honduras	11.0	3.9	10.4	2.7	7.8	3.7	3.9
Jamaica	7.0	2.3	16.0	35.4	16.8	35.7	30.1
Mexico	22.8	13.7	24.0	13.4	25.0	13.7	12.7
Nicaragua	7.3	4.1	12.5	9.9	22.7	10.2	9.3
Panama	6.6	3.7	16.2	2.8	14.3	3.9	4.1
Paraguay	11.6	13.1	13.0	10.0	17.0	3.9	3.1
Peru	18.8	10.7	14.9	9.2	11.6	3.9	8.2
United States		0.3					
Uruguay	2.3	1.9	1.8	4.0	0.0	1.4	1.6

^a Among those who used the public service described, except for 'public employees', which was a generic category without the 'filter' for users. Pre-tests revealed extremely low levels of corruption in the United States and Canada, and thus, to economise on precious interview time, for these countries the rest of the series was eliminated.

individual items in the series are shown in table 7, above, and the summary graph is shown in figure 8.

As in prior studies, the 'hot spots' of corruption are the cities, where more public officials are present to extract bribes from their victims. The data also reveal that males are far more likely to be victims than females, no doubt because of their greater dealings with public life than females in the Latin American and Caribbean environment. Finally, even though the poor may pay a higher percentage of their incomes in bribes, it is the wealthier who have the 'deep pockets' and are more likely to be seen as good targets for those who have bribery in mind.

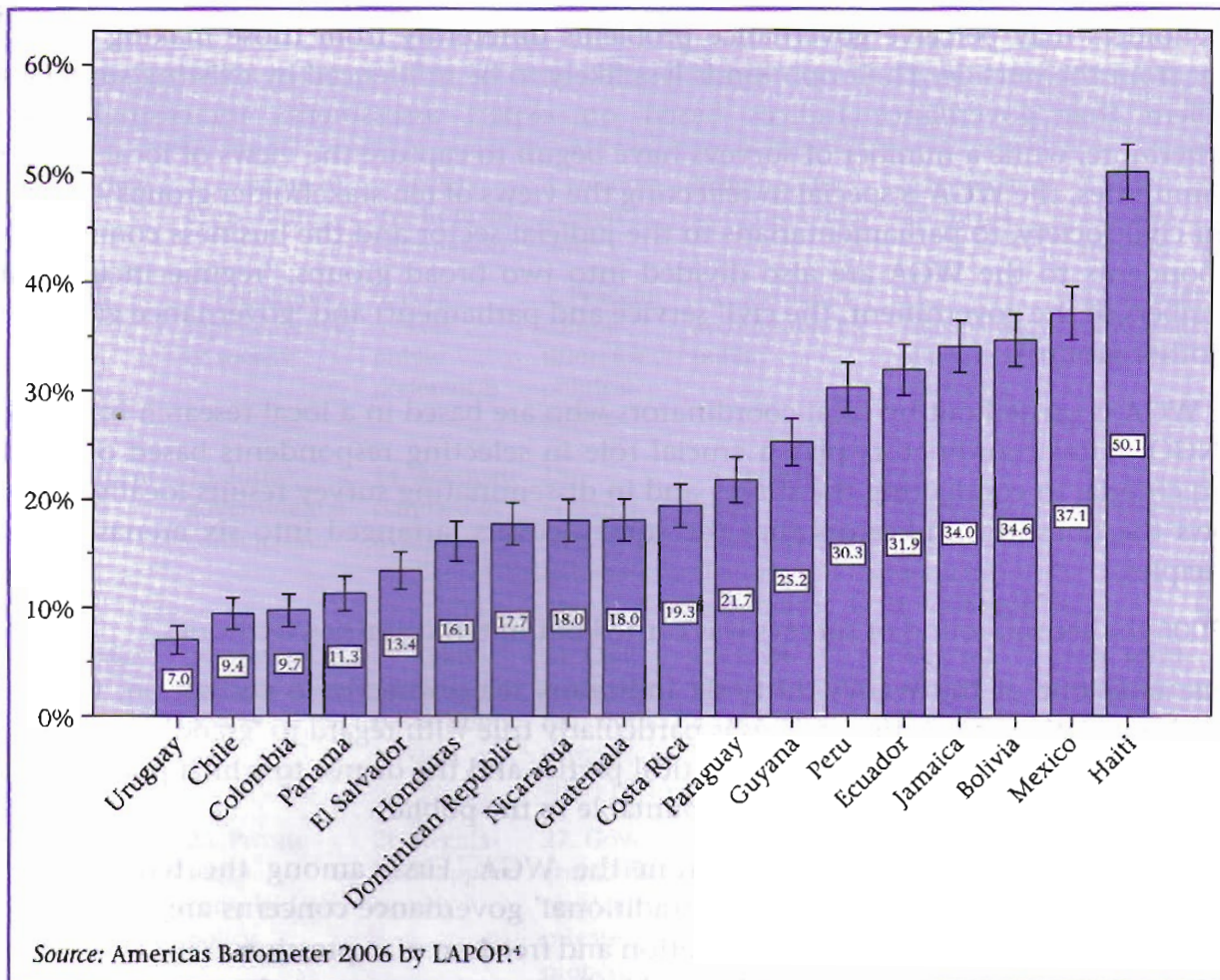


Figure 8 Percentage of population victimised by corruption at least once in past year

⁴ The error bars represent 95 per cent confidence intervals.

The World Governance Assessment: corruption and other dimensions of governance

Verena Fritz, Ken Mease, Marta Foresti and Goran Hyden¹

The fundamental idea of the World Governance Assessment (WGA), which was first developed in 2000, is to assess governance by capturing the views of local stakeholders. Local

¹ Verena Fritz and Marta Foresti are research fellows at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London. Goran Hyden is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida and Kenneth Mease is a member of the Department of Economics at the University of Florida.