The Pulse of Democracy in the Americas: Results from the 2019 AmericasBarometer Study

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Americas Barometer
Barómetro de las Américas

- Representative samples (national & subnational)
- Standardized methods
- Common core content
- 100% interviews audited (location, integrity, & quality)
- 100% e-devices
- Transparency & full dissemination of data and reports

2018/19 Round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Sep-Dec, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Sep-Oct, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Oct-Nov, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Oct-Dec, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Nov-Dec, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Jan-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Jan-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Jan-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Jan-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Feb-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Feb-Apr, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Jan-Mar, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Feb-Apr, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Feb-Apr, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Mar-May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Mar-May, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Apr-May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Rep</td>
<td>Apr-May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Jun-Jul, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>July, 2019</td>
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</table>
Presentation Outline

- **Part I:** Declines in Support for Democracy
- **Part II:** Contributing Factors to the Democratic Deficit
- **Part III:** What Predicts Democratic Support?
Part I.
Declines in Support for Democracy
“Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.” To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Democracy
Support for democracy is at an all-time low in the LAC region

Note: On average, the young are less supportive.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)

ING4. Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? 5, 6, 7 coded as “support”.
Support for democracy is low: Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Honduras

ING4. Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? 5, 6, 7 coded as “support.”

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Support for democracy has declined in a number of countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Support for Democracy (%) 2018/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In LAC region since 2016/17, support has:

**Increased:**
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- El Salvador
- Mexico
- Paraguay

**Decreased:**
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Jamaica
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Uruguay

**Question:** ING4. Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? 5, 6, 7 coded as “support”.

**Source:** © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Satisfaction with democracy has decreased since 2010

In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)? Graph shows % very satisfied or satisfied (vs. not).

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
A minority of the public is satisfied with how democracy works

**PN4:** In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)?

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
A minority of the public is satisfied with how democracy works

In LAC region since 2016/17, satisfaction has:

**Increased:**
- Brazil
- Chile
- Mexico
- Paraguay

**Decreased:**
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Uruguay

Survey Question: PN4. In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)?
Trust in elections continues to slip

To what extent do you trust elections in this country? 5, 6, 7 coded as “trust”.

Trust in Elections (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Trust in elections is highest in Uruguay, lowest in Honduras

95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019); b47a

B47A. To what extent do you trust elections in this country? 5, 6, 7 coded as “trust”.

[Bar chart showing trust in elections by country]
Trust in elections is highest in Uruguay, lowest in Honduras

In LAC region since 2016/17, trust in elections has:

**Increased:**
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Mexico

**Decreased:**
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Rep.
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Peru
- Uruguay

847A. To what extent do you trust elections in this country? 5, 6, 7 coded as “trust”.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019); b47a
Tolerance for dissolving Congress (in times of crisis) is rising

Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Congress and govern without Congress?

Source: AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019); jc15a
Tolerance for dissolving Congress has increased five countries

In LAC region since 2016/17, tolerance has:

- Dominican Rep.
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Peru

JC15A. Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Congress and govern without Congress?
Spotlight on Tolerance for Dissolving Congress in Peru

- 3 in 5 Peruvians agree it can be justifiable to close congress
- + 21.1 percentage points since 2017
- Wealthier and middle-aged cohorts are more tolerant
- Related: only 8% of Peruvians trust Congress

JC15A. Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the president of the country to close the Congress and govern without Congress?
Part II.
Contributing to the Democratic Deficit: Insecurity, Corruption, Economic Vulnerability
1 in 4 are crime victims

VIC1EXT. Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months? LAC-18 countries only.

Crime Victim (%) 2018/19

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; GM Oct 2019
Crime victimization is most widespread in Peru.

VIC1EXT. Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Crime victimization is most widespread in Peru

In LAC region since 2016/17, victimization has:

**Decreased:**
- Brazil

**Increased:**
- Argentina
- Panama
- Uruguay

VIC1EXT. Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?
Insecurity continues to rise

Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel ... very unsafe?

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Insecurity has increased in most countries in the region.

In LAC region since 2016/17, insecurity has:

**Decreased:**
- Brazil

**Increased:**
- Bolivia
- Chile
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Peru

**AOJ11.** Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? Insecurity is coded as those individuals who said they feel very unsafe.
Corruption Victimization (bribe solicitation)

**EXC2.** Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last twelve months?

**EXC6.** In the last twelve months, did any government employee ask you for a bribe?

**EXC11.** In the last twelve months, to process any kind of document in your local government, like a permit for example, did you have to pay any money above that required by law?

**EXC13.** In your work, have you been asked to pay a bribe in the last twelve months?

**EXC14.** Did you have to pay a bribe to the courts in the last twelve months?

**EXC15.** In order to be seen in a hospital or a clinic in the last twelve months, did you have to pay a bribe?

**EXC16.** Have you had to pay a bribe at school in the last twelve months?

*This series of corruption victimization is converted to an index and then the percentage of respondents who were victims is calculated.*
Bribe solicitation dropped slightly

Survey Wave

Corruption Victimization

20.3% 18.7% 18.0% 19.8% 18.3% 19.8% 18.7%

95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; (GM August 2019)
Bribe victimization is most widespread in Bolivia and Mexico
Bribe victimization is most widespread in Bolivia and Mexico

In LAC region since 2016/17, bribery has:

- Decreased:
  - Chile
  - Guatemala
  - Nicaragua

Bribe victimization is most widespread in Bolivia and Mexico.
Perceptions of corruption are elevated

EXC7NEW. Thinking of politicians in [country], how many do you believe are involved in corruption?

Graph shows % “more than half” or “all” are corrupt.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Perceptions of corruption are elevated

In LAC region since 2016/17, perceptions of corruption have:

**Decreased:**
- Brazil
- Chile
- Mexico
- Paraguay

**Increased:**
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Rep.
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Uruguay

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
More than 1-in-2 adults report the national economy has gotten worse over the prior twelve months. The graph shows the percentage of respondents who believe the economy has worsened over the past year, with data from 2006 to 2018/19. The confidence interval for each year is also indicated. The source of the data is the AmericasBarometer, LAPOP (GM August 2019).

**Question:** Do you think that the country's current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago? Graphs shows % who respond “worse”
National economic evaluations vary dramatically across countries

SOCT2. Do you think that the country’s current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago? Graph shows % who respond “worse”.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
National economic evaluations vary dramatically across countries

Since 2016/17, poor evaluations have:

- **Decreased:**
  - Bolivia
  - Brazil
  - Chile
  - El Salvador
  - Jamaica
  - Mexico
  - Paraguay

- **Increased:**
  - Argentina
  - Costa Rica
  - Dominican Rep.
  - El Salvador
  - Nicaragua
  - Panama
  - Uruguay

"Increased" means that more people say the national economy is worse off compared to 2016/17. "Decreased" means that fewer people think the economy is worse off in 2018/19 than they did in 2016/17.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; (GM August 2019)
Perceptions of a poor personal economic situation have been increasing since 2012

ID102. Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago? Graphs shows % who respond “worse”.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; GM Oct 2019
Pessimism about personal economic evaluations varies across countries

IDIO2. Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago? Graphs shows % who respond “worse”.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, GM Oct 2019
Pessimism about personal economic evaluations varies across countries

Since 2016/17, poor evaluations have:

**Decreased:**
- Brazil
- El Salvador
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Paraguay

**Increased:**
- Argentina
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Panama

IDIO2. Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago? Graphs shows % who respond “worse”.

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; GM Oct 2019
Food insecurity a challenge in many places, esp. Jamaica and Honduras

Since 2012, food insecurity has:

- Ecuador
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Mexico

This question was only asked in a subset of countries, and had not been asked since 2012.

FS2. In the past three months, because of a lack of money or other resources, did your household ever run out of food? Yes / No
Spotlight on Food Insecurity in Honduras

- Food insecurity affects 2 in 5 in Honduras
- Increased by 171% between 2012 and 2018
- Older individuals, those who are poorer, and those with children under 13 at home are more likely to experience food insecurity
- 45.6% who have experienced food insecurity express intentions to emigrate, compared to 33.5% who have not run out of food in the last three months

**FS2.** In the past three months, because of a lack of money or other resources, did your household ever run out of food? Yes / No
Part III.
What Predicts Support for Democracy? Security, Rule of Law, Prosperity, Social Media, and Elections
IIIA. Lower levels of democratic attitudes are connected to security, corruption, and economic vulnerability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democratic attitudes are lower among those who:</th>
<th>(Lower) Support for Democracy</th>
<th>(Lower) Satisfaction with Democracy</th>
<th>(Lower) Trust in Elections</th>
<th>(Lower) Intolerance of Dissolving Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are victims of a crime</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel very insecure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were asked for bribe(s)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think most/all politicians are corrupt</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceive worse national economy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report a worse household economy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Checkmarks indicate a statistically significant negative relationships. Results of regression analysis of 2018/19 data, controlling for SES/demographic factors and including country fixed effects.
IIIB: Democratic Attitudes Vary by Social Media Use

In the LAC region, the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer finds:

- Social media use is widespread, especially WhatsApp and Facebook
- Frequent social media users are more supportive of democracy
- Frequent social media users are less satisfied with democracy and less trusting in elections (and other institutions)
Social media use is prevalent among adults in the LAC region

- 64.4% WhatsApp User
- 7.9% Twitter User
- 56.2% Facebook User

Non-users: 30%
Support for democracy is highest among frequent social media users in the LAC region

Support for democracy = % agreeing that “democracy...better than any other form of gov’t.”

High users: Access social media on Facebook, Whatsapp and/or Twitter daily or weekly.

Low users: Access monthly or yearly.

Non-users do not access social media.
Satisfaction and trust in elections are lower among frequent social media users in the LAC region.
IIIC: Elections are Democracy-Promoting

In the LAC region, the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer finds:

- The more proximate a national election was to the 2018/19 fieldwork, the more positive the shifts in public support for democracy

- Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia in particular benefitted from recent elections

- Honduras demonstrates that not all elections have positive consequences
The recency of elections is associated with increasing support for democracy

ING4. Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? 5, 6, 7 coded as “support”.
The recency of elections is associated with increasing satisfaction with democracy

PN4. In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in (country)? Graph shows % very satisfied or satisfied (vs. not).
The recency of elections is associated with increasing trust in elections

B47A. To what extent do you trust elections in this country? 5, 6, 7 coded as “trust”.
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