



THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN EL SALVADOR AND IN THE AMERICAS, 2016/17

A Comparative Study of
Democracy and Governance

Executive Summary

Ricardo Córdova Macías, Ph.D.
FUNDAUNGO

Mariana Rodríguez, Ph.D.
LAPOP Regional Coordinator and Report Editor
Vanderbilt University

Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Ph.D.
LAPOP Director and Series Editor
Vanderbilt University



USAID
DEL PUEBLO DE LOS ESTADOS
UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA

LAPOP





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

V VANDERBILT®

LAPOP

AmericasBarometer
Barómetro de las Américas



The Political Culture of Democracy in El Salvador and in the Americas, 2016/17: A Comparative Study of Democracy and Governance

Executive Summary

By

Ricardo Córdova Macías, Ph.D.
FUNDAUNGO

Mariana Rodríguez, Ph.D.
LAPOP Program Coordinator and Report Editor
Vanderbilt University

Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Ph.D.
LAPOP Director and Series Editor
Vanderbilt University

November 2017

This study is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the authors and LAPOP and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter 1. Support for Electoral Democracy in the Americas	6
Chapter 2. The Supply of Basic Liberties in the Americas	9
Chapter 3. Citizen Security and Violence Prevention at the Local Level.....	15
Chapter 4. Economic Evaluations, Institutional Trust, Electoral Behavior and Political Parties	24
Chapter 5. Civil Society, Citizen Participation, and Corruption	29
Chapter 6. Democratic Orientations in the Americas	35

Introduction

Democracy is on the defensive in the Americas and around the world. In a number of places across the Americas, countries have been coping with security and economic crises, and scandals emanating from governments and parties. Among the public, skepticism is developing over the extent to which democracy can succeed in delivering on citizens' expectations and improving the quality of their daily lives. The 2016/17 AmericasBarometer taps into this growing frustration and permits it to be studied in comparative perspective across population subgroups, countries, and time. The survey also documents some notable signs of resilience. In this same vein, the survey reveals important nuances in the challenges to democratic governance across a heterogeneous region. In this way, the AmericasBarometer provides a refined tool with which to make the types of diagnoses and distinctions that are so important to designing and implementing effective policy.

A core focus of the AmericasBarometer is citizens' evaluations of "democratic governance." This refers to a system of politics and policy in which citizens' direct, indirect, and representative participation is privileged and enabled via basic freedoms, with the goal of ensuring that states are held accountable for their actions. As the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2013) has defined it, "Democratic governance is governance that takes place in the context of a democratic political system, which is representative of the will and interests of the people and is infused with the principles of participation, inclusion, and accountability" (p. 37). The appeal of democratic governance is derived from its potential to improve the quality of citizens' lives by facilitating efforts to decrease corruption, increase economic development (and decrease poverty), and build strong communities. The legitimacy of democratic governance hinges, at least in part, on how well it delivers on these expectations (Booth and Seligson 2009). For this reason, taking stock of its successes and shortcomings requires assessing citizens' varied experiences and evaluations under democratic governance.

This report summarizes the main findings of the 2016/17 AmericasBarometer survey in El Salvador. LAPOP has carried out the AmericasBarometer in El Salvador since 2004. The 2016/17 survey was conducted by Fundaungo between October and December 2016, and 1,512 people were interviewed as part of the nationally representative survey.

Chapter 1. Support for Electoral Democracy in the Americas

This chapter considers support for the abstract concept of democracy and two of its most fundamental components: elections and parties. There is a significant decline in the extent to which the public agrees that democracy, despite its flaws, is better than any other form of government. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, support for democracy decreased by almost 9 percentage points between 2014 and 2016/17. As shown in Figure 1, although most citizens in El Salvador have supported democracy since 2004, the percentage that supports democracy has declined to its lowest level in 2016 (54.6%). A little more than half of the citizens (54.6%) support democracy as the best form of government in 2016, which places El Salvador in the middle range of support for democracy compared to the rest of the countries in the region.

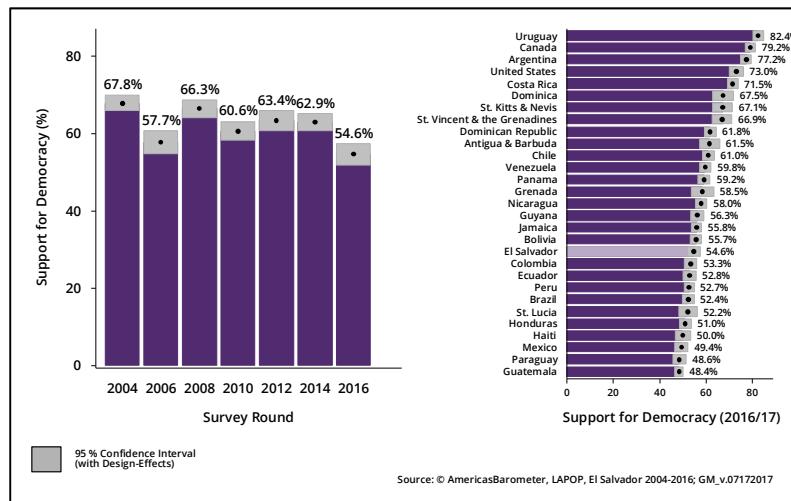


Figure 1. Support for Democracy in El Salvador and in the Americas

In addition to support for democracy in theory, acceptance of democracy as “the only game in town” is key to the stability and persistence of democratic governance. This means, in short, that citizens in democratic societies should not support the shutdown of legislative bodies by the executive branch. Support for executive coups

in El Salvador is lower than support for military coups. However, as shown in Figure 2, the levels of support for an executive closure of Congress increased in the AmericasBarometer 2016 for El Salvador by 2.6 percentage points. Nevertheless, there is a pattern of relative stability since 2010. El Salvador ranks among the countries with lowest support for executive coups (16.1%) in 2016/17.

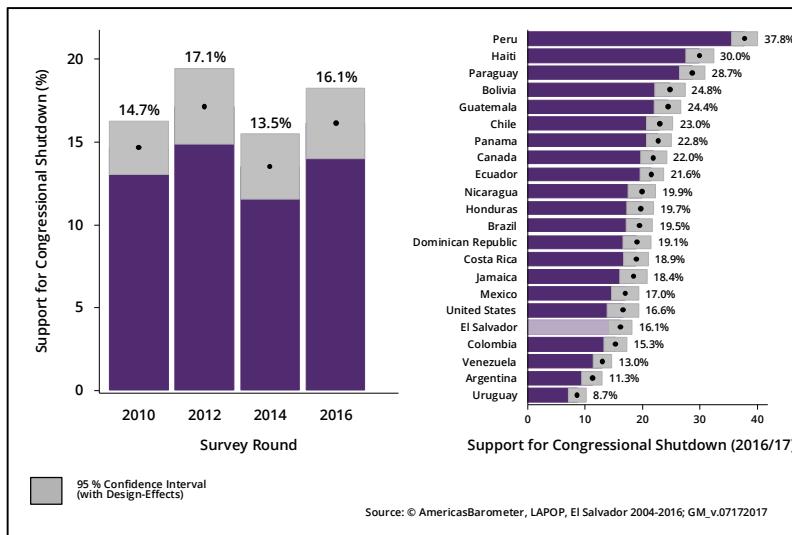


Figure 2. Support for Executive Coup in El Salvador and in the Americas

Electoral democracy relies on citizen participation through elections: voters select their representatives and voice their preferences at the ballot box. Public trust and participation in these institutions are therefore important for understanding citizen support for democracy as it functions in the real world, while also serving as a signal of citizens' commitment to democracy (a foundational part of democratic consolidation).

Citizens legitimize electoral democracy by participating in elections and by trusting that elections serve as a mechanism to select leaders. On average, trust in elections is low in the Americas. As shown in Figure 3, El Salvador is in an intermediate range compared to other countries in the region, with about one-third of respondents reporting trust in elections, a significant drop of more than 10 percentage points compared to the 2014 survey round.

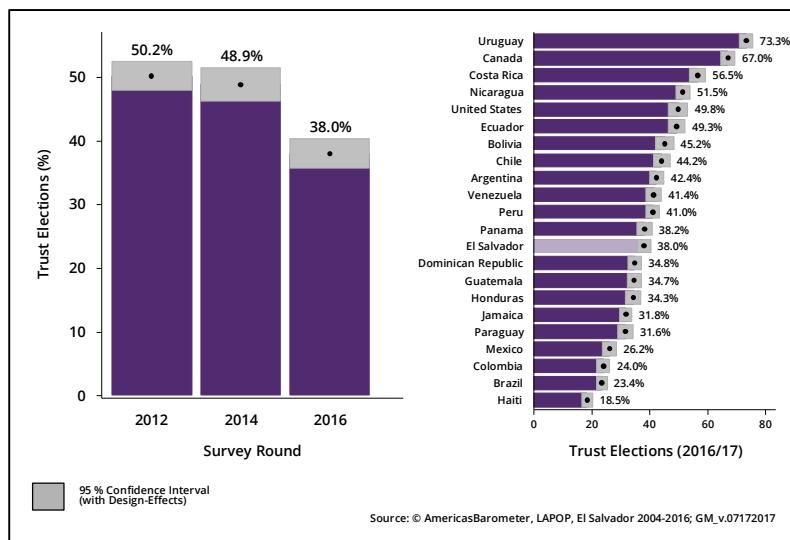
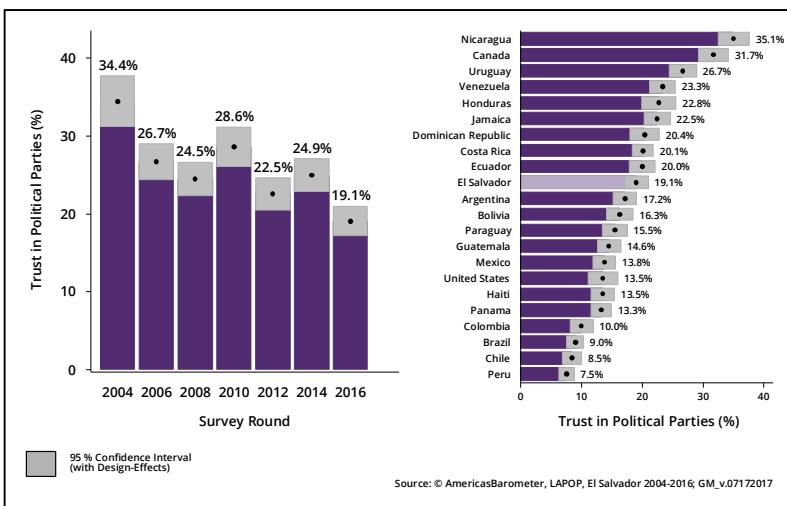


Figure 3. Trust in Elections in El Salvador and in the Americas

Parties also serve an important role for citizens. By organizing politics on policy lines, parties enable voters to identify a “team” that aligns with their preferences. At their best, parties facilitate citizen participation in the democratic process and ensure high quality representation. El Salvador has an intermediate level of confidence in political parties (19.1%) compared to other countries in the region. Figure 4 shows that confidence in political parties has declined sharply in El Salvador since 2004: while 34.4% trusted parties in 2004, only 19.1% report trusting parties in 2016. Indeed, the levels of trust in political parties in 2016 are the lowest that have been recorded since the study began in El Salvador. Between 2014 and 2016, confidence in political parties in El Salvador declined significantly, with a drop of nearly six percentage points. On average, trust in elections did not decline for the LAC region as a whole between 2014 and 2016/17, but trust in parties did. Thus, on this latter measure (parties), the decrease in trust in El Salvador mirrors a regional trend, while on the former (elections), El Salvador stands out from the region’s cross-time trend.



Chapter 2. The Supply of Basic Liberties in the Americas

Basic liberties, such as freedom of the media, expression, and fundamental human rights, are critical to public engagement and inclusion in the democratic political system. Restrictions on basic liberties may undermine motivations to participate and erode individuals' support for the incumbent administration and the democratic system more generally.

El Salvador is among the countries with the highest percentage of citizens who perceive restrictions on freedom of the press. As seen in Figure 5, 53% of Salvadorans believe that there is very little press freedom, 20% believe that there is too much, and 27% believe that the level of freedom of the press is sufficient.

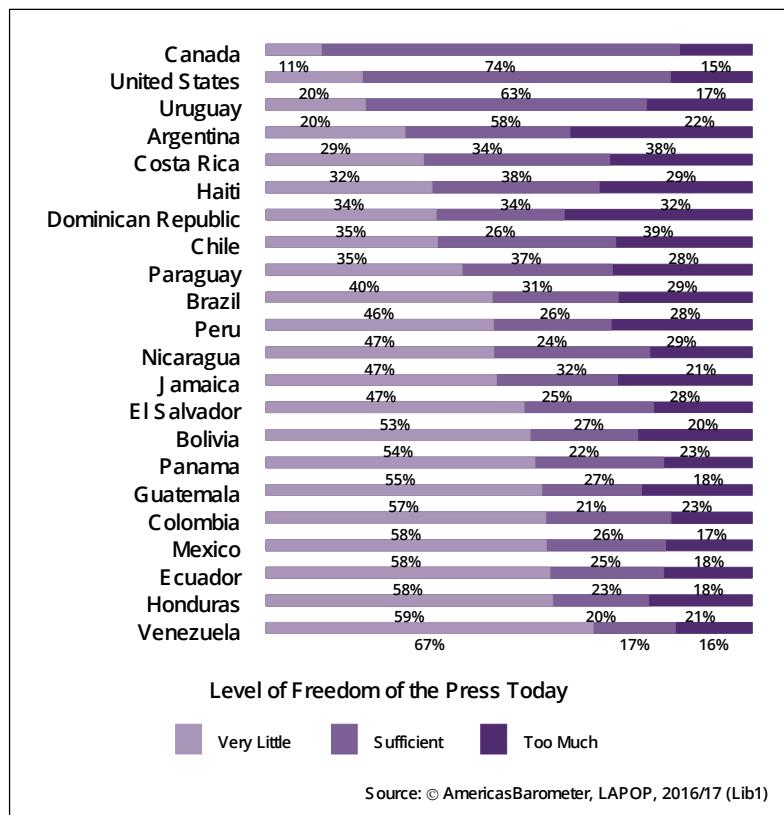
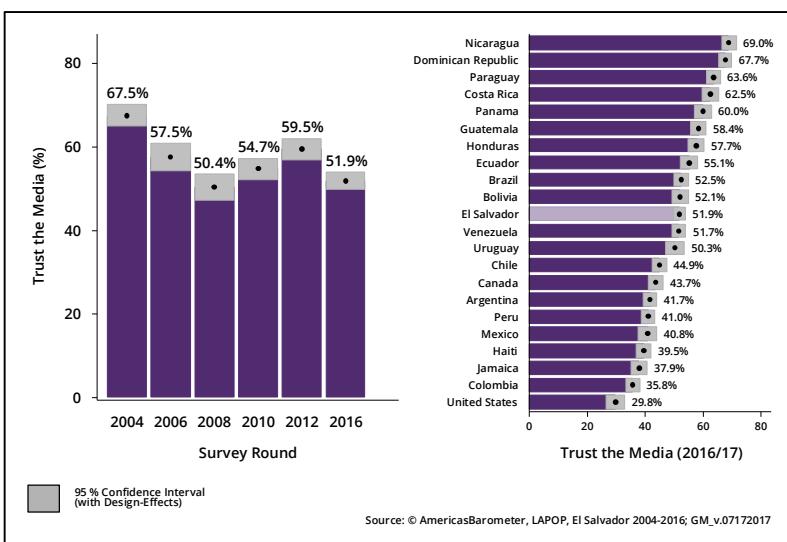


Figure 5. Assessments of Freedom of the Press, 2016/17

Trust in the media has decreased in the Americas over time; in the average country in 2016/17, only about 1 in 2 individuals trusts the media. El Salvador is in an intermediate range compared to other countries in the region, with more than half of the citizens expressing confidence in the media (see Figure 6). The percentage of Salvadorans that trusts the media returned to its lowest level in 2016. While in 2004, more than 2 out of 3 people (67.5%) expressed trust in the media, only 51.9% expressed trust the media in El Salvador in 2016.



Freedom to express political opinions is particularly important in a democracy. In 2016, two-thirds of Salvadorans feel that there is little freedom to express political views without fear (see Figure 7). Only a quarter of the population thinks that there is enough freedom to express political opinions. El Salvador is among the countries with the greatest percentage of citizens perceiving very little freedom of political expression.

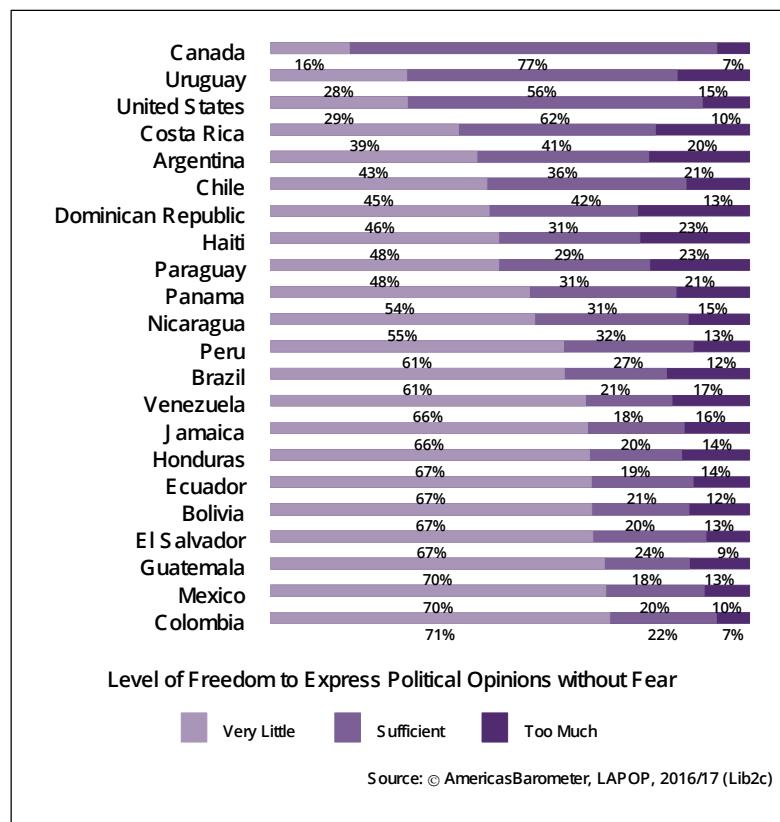


Figure 7. Assessments of Freedom of Political Expression, 2016/17

While concerns about deficiencies in levels of freedom of the press and of expression are elevated in the Americas, data from the 2016/17 AmericasBarometer reveal that concerns about human rights are even more pronounced. As shown in Figure 8, El Salvador is among the countries with the lowest percentage of citizens who believe there is sufficient protection of human rights in the country, with 72% saying that there is very little protection for this type of right in 2016.

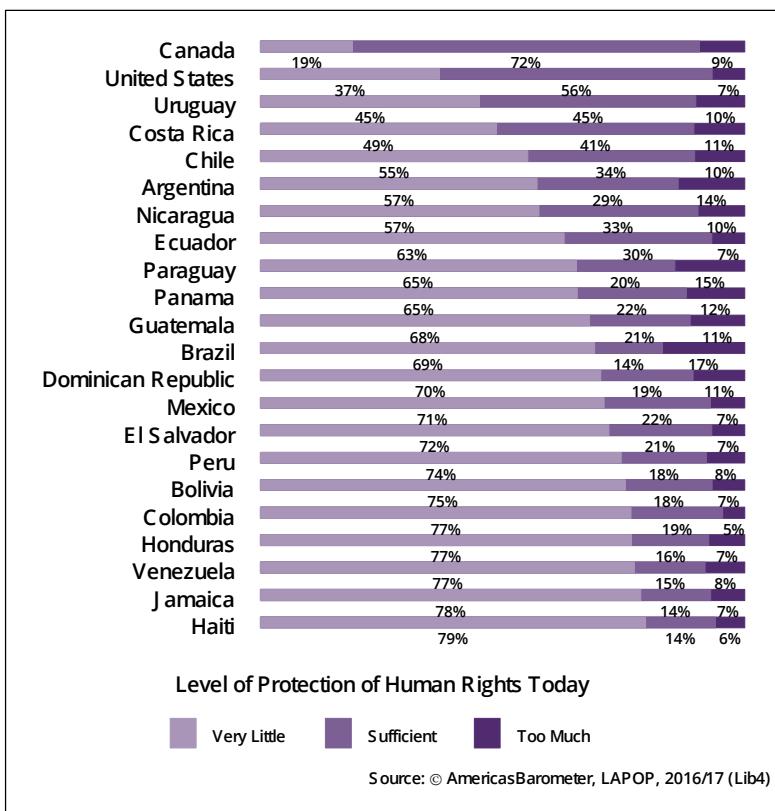


Figure 8. Assessments of Protection of Human Rights, 2016/17

The public's assessments regarding the supply of liberties are condensed into a summary "basic liberties deficit" index.¹ In the majority of countries – Nicaragua, Panama, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Jamaica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, and Venezuela – the mean degree of perceived inadequacy in the supply of basic liberties is above the mid-point (>50) on the 0 to 100 scale (see Figure 9).

¹ For more information see the AmericasBarometer 2016/17 regional comparative report: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/ab2016/AB2016-17_Comparative_Report_English_V2_FINAL_090117_W.pdf

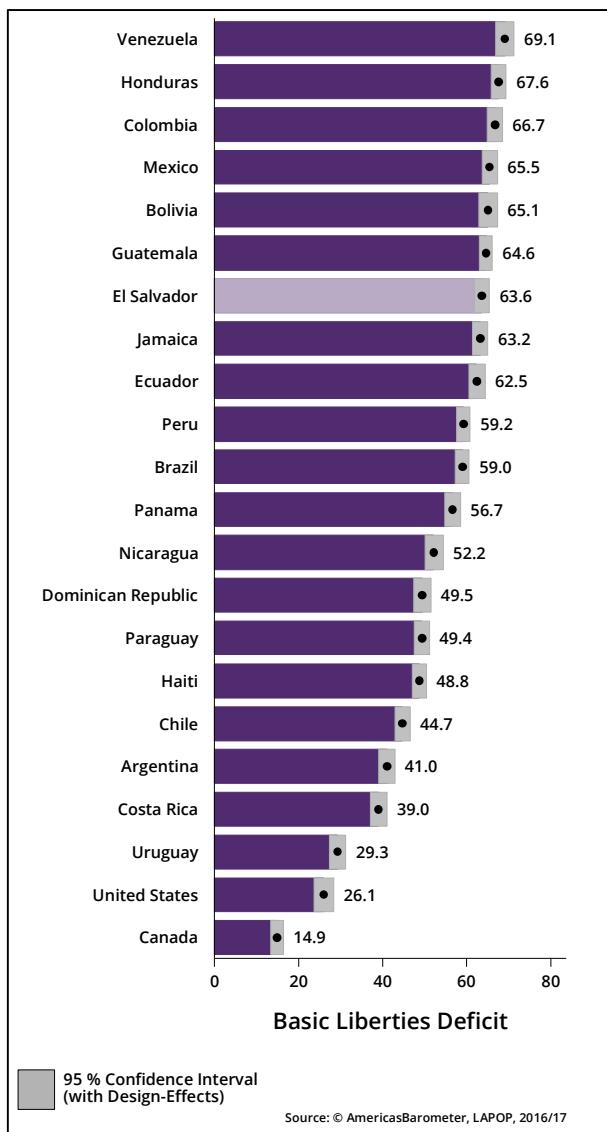


Figure 9. Basic Liberties Deficit Score, 2016/17

Chapter 3. Citizen Security and Violence Prevention at the Local Level

This chapter explores opinions related to the issue of insecurity and crime at the local level in El Salvador. Particular attention is paid to the opinions regarding the violence prevention initiatives that have been implemented in recent years. These prevention initiatives appear to be fostering an increased interaction among police and citizens.

Nevertheless, Salvadorans continue to perceive violence, crime, and insecurity as the main problem facing their country. As seen in Figure 10, approximately 7 out of 10 Salvadorans (68.2%) believe that security is the most serious problem facing the country.

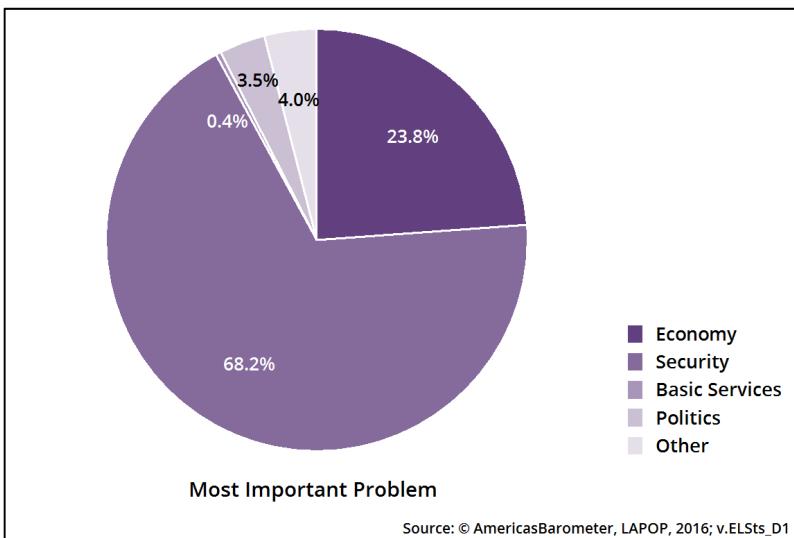


Figure 10. The Most Pressing Problem Facing the Country, El Salvador 2016

Young people loitering in the streets and their involvement with gangs play an important role in the perception of insecurity by community members. Occurrences of these two types of situations are the most serious problems identified by the population at the local level, and as shown in Figure 11, concerns about these issues have increased between 2014 and 2016.

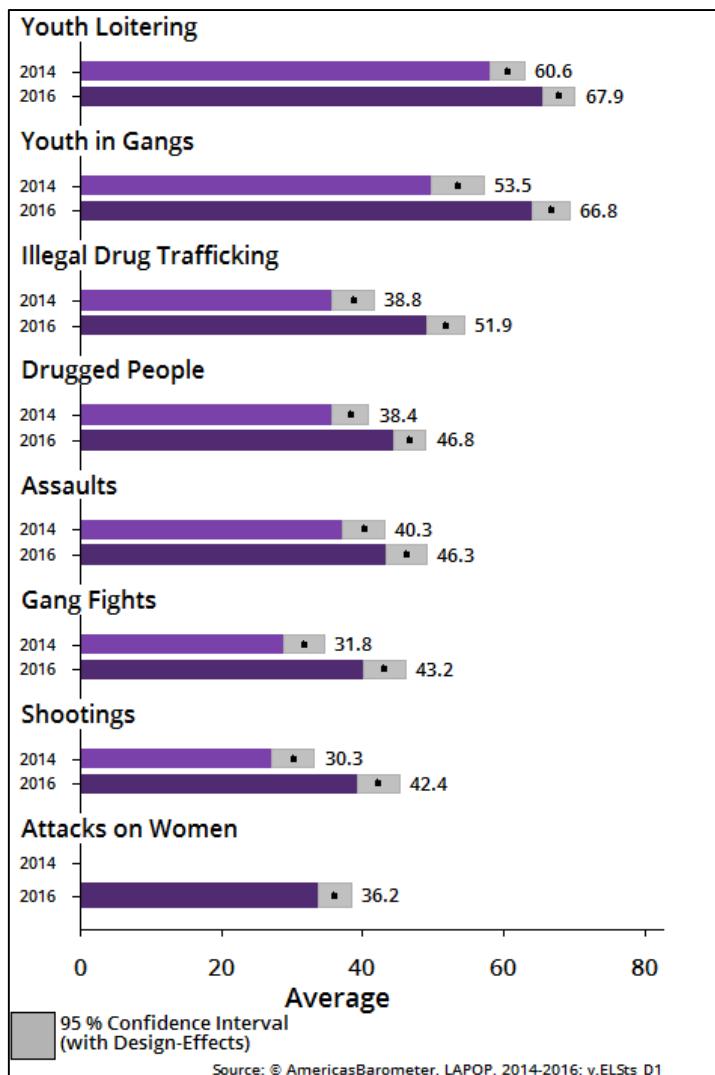


Figure 11. Opinions on Community Problems, El Salvador 2014-2016

Despite the security problems facing the country, 7 out of 10 Salvadorans (71%) believe that the levels of violence in their community are lower than other communities; and approximately 5 out of 10 people (47%) report that levels of violence in the community are lower than the previous year (see Figures 12 and 13).

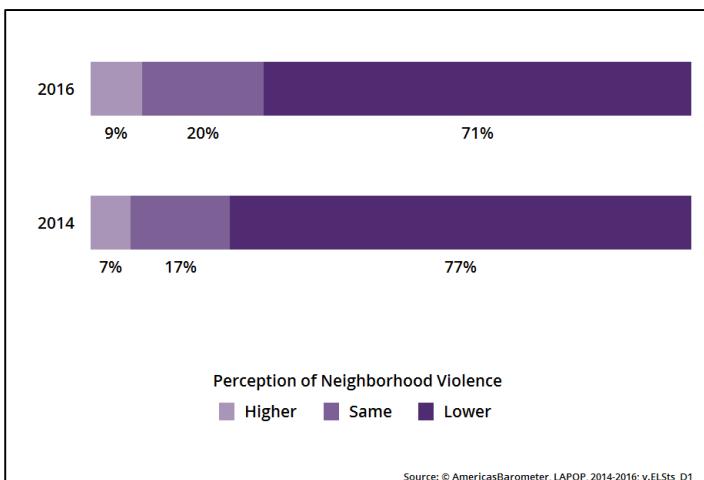


Figure 12. Opinions on Levels of Violence in the Community as Compared to other Communities, El Salvador 2014- 2016

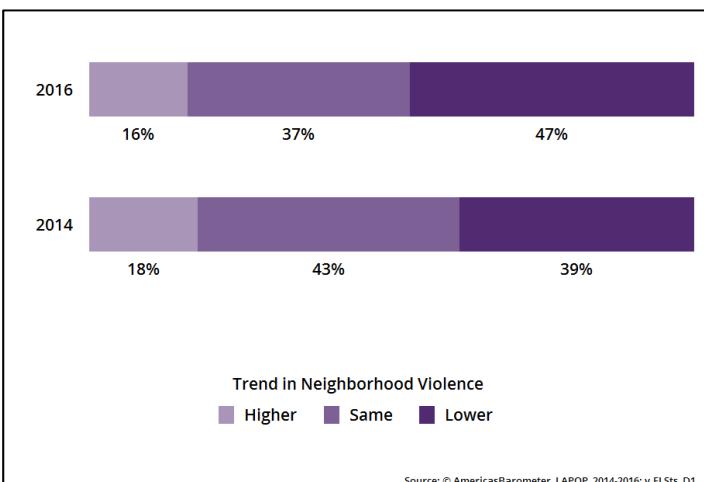


Figure 13. Opinions on Changes of Levels of Violence in the Community in Comparison to the Previous Year, El Salvador 2014- 2016

The 2016 round shows an increase in crime victimization: approximately 1 in 4 Salvadorans (23.1%) have been victims of crime in the 12 months prior to the survey, a statistically significant increase

from the 2014 round (18.6%). El Salvador is located in an intermediate position among the continent's countries. Of the Central American countries, only Guatemala has a higher rate of crime victimization (see Figure 14).

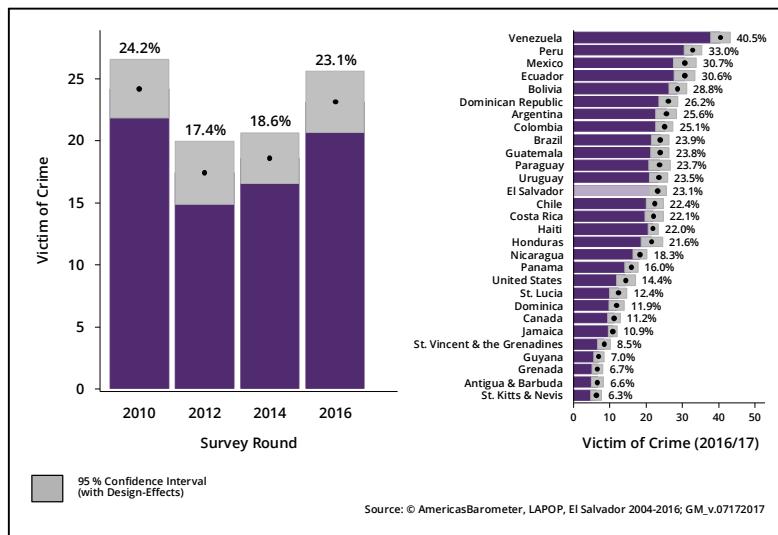


Figure 14. Crime Victimization in El Salvador and in the Americas

As shown in Figure 15, Salvadorans' perception of insecurity in their neighborhood or community, in relation to their perception of the possibility of being the victim of an assault or robbery, improved in 2016 (average of 41.7 degrees) when compared to 2014 (average of 47.2 degrees). The perception of insecurity is greater in those who believe that the police are involved in crime, perceive a greater presence of gangs in their community, have been victims of crime in the last 12 months, report occurrences of extortion, and believe that assaults in the community are a serious problem. El Salvador is, again, located in an intermediate position in comparison to other countries in the region. Of the Central American countries, only Honduras and Guatemala are above El Salvador's average level of insecurity.

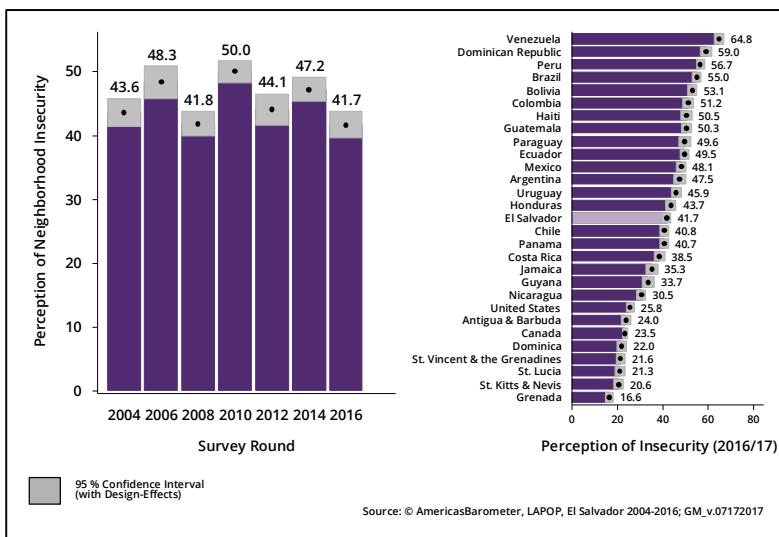


Figure 15. Perceptions of Insecurity in El Salvador and in the Americas

Due to fear of crime, 65.9% of Salvadorans have prevented children living in their home from playing in the street in the 12 months prior to the survey. Moreover, 59.9% have limited where they go for recreation, 59.6% have avoided leaving the house by themselves at night, 42.3% have avoided leaving their house itself alone at night, 42.2% have avoided using public transport, 21.1% have felt the need to change neighborhoods or community, and 9.4% have changed their job or place of study.

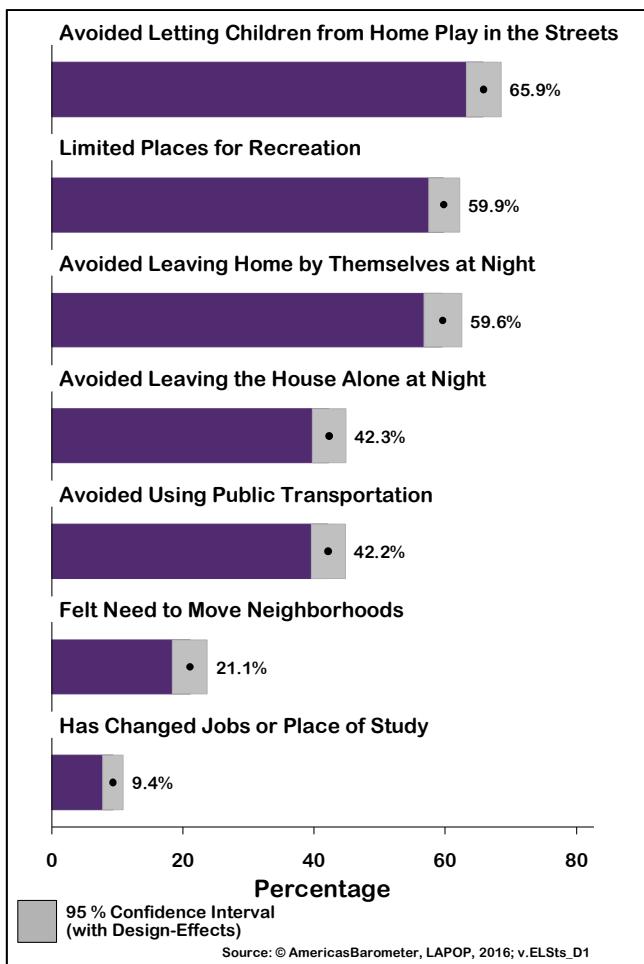
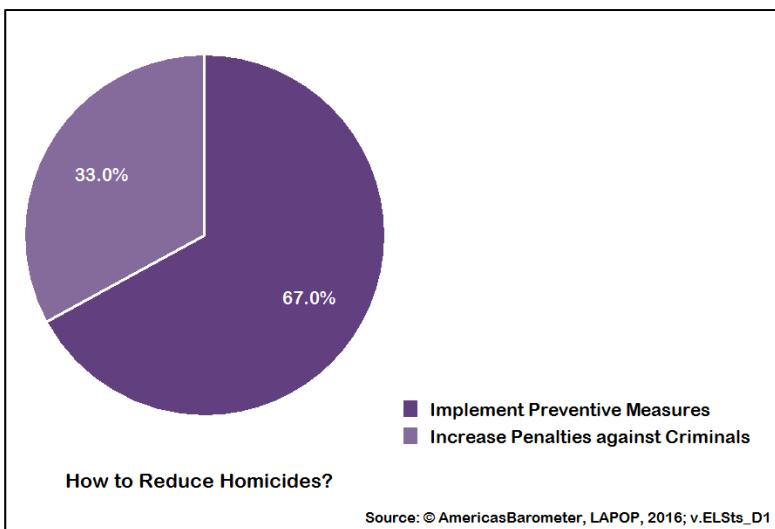


Figure 16. Change in Activities due to Fear of Crime, El Salvador 2016

Two out of three Salvadorans (67%) believe that in order to reduce homicides in the country (see Figure 16), the government should invest more in prevention measures rather than increase punishments against offenders (33%). Results also show that older people, those with a higher level of schooling, and those who experience fewer problems with insecurity are more likely to support prevention initiatives than the rest of the population.



**Figure 17. Opinions on Measures to Reduce Crime,
El Salvador 2016**

Between 2014 and 2016, public opinion on police performance has improved. As seen in Figure 18, nearly two thirds of Salvadorans are satisfied to some degree with the performance of the police in their neighborhoods. One of the variables that most affects people's evaluation of police performance is the frequency of patrols; that is, those who observe a greater frequency of police patrols in their neighborhoods report greater satisfaction with police performance.

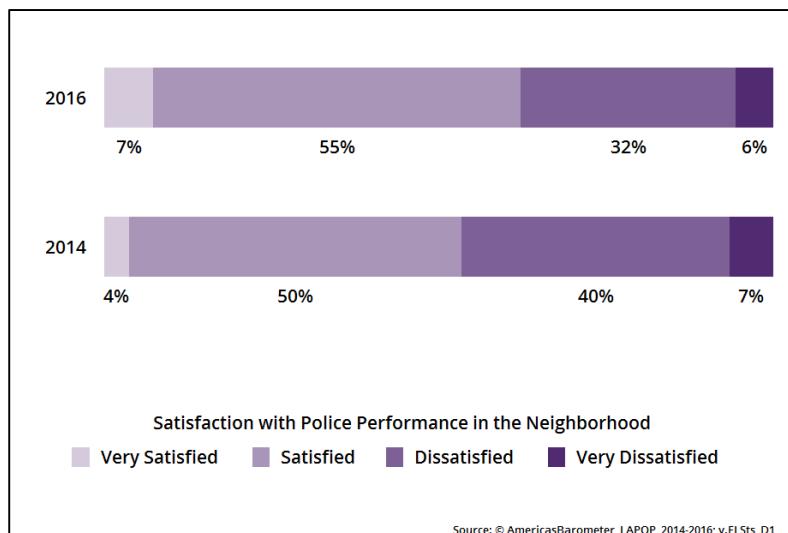


Figure 18. Satisfaction with Police Performance in the Community, El Salvador 2014-2016

In 2016, 43% of respondents have seen the police help in crime prevention activities, 40.1% have seen police officers engage with young people, 38.9% say that police officers talk to community residents, and 20% say that police attend neighborhood meetings (see Figure 19). Because the same questions were included in 2014, it is possible to compare the data between the two rounds. The only statistically significant change between 2014 and 2016 is the increase in police support in prevention activities, while the increases seen in the other three questions are not statistically significant. In both rounds, the lowest level of police interaction is seen in police attendance at neighborhood meetings.

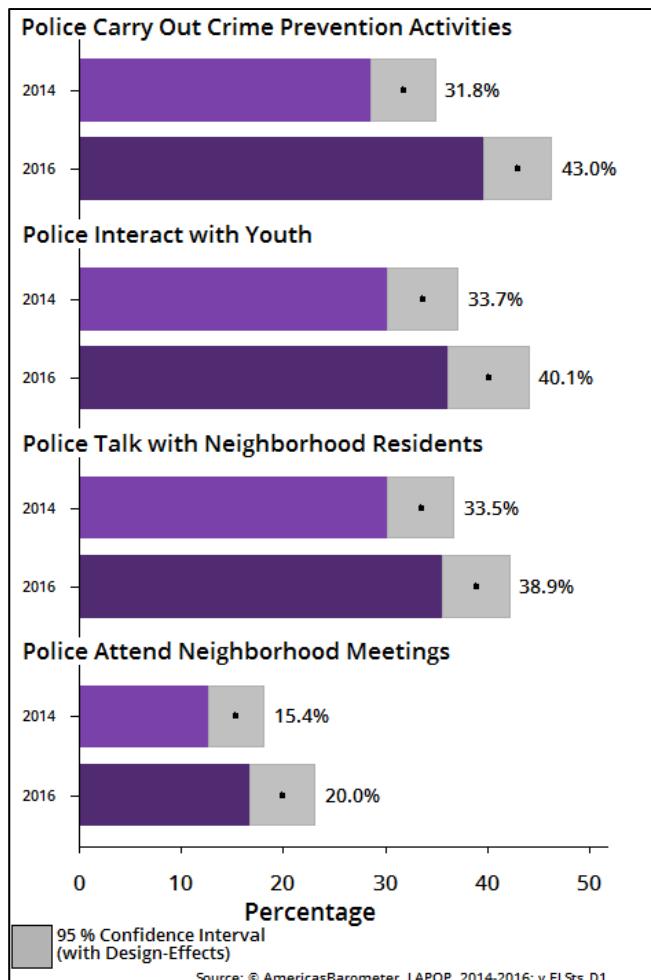


Figure 19. Percentage of Respondents Who Report Police Engagement with the Community, El Salvador 2014-2016

Chapter 4. Economic Evaluations, Institutional Trust, Electoral Behavior and Political Parties

This chapter explores electoral behavior in El Salvador, focusing on contextual aspects, as well as Salvadorans' assessments of parties, politics, and democracy. As shown in Figure 20, Salvadorans have a negative perception of their country's current economic state. The results of the 2016 survey show that 7 out of 10 Salvadorans (69.6%) believe that the country's economic situation is worse than the 12 months prior to the survey. This percentage is the highest reported in the 2010-2016 period.

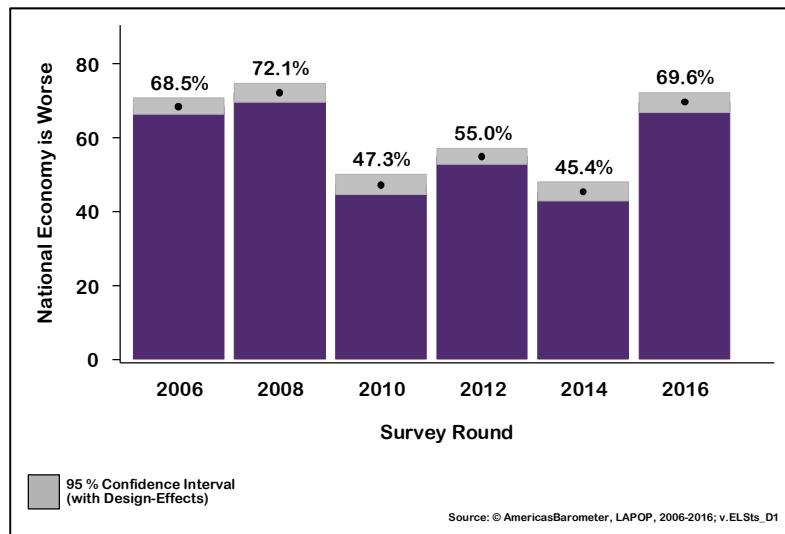


Figure 20. Percentage of Respondents Who Believe the National Economy is Worse, El Salvador 2006-2016

The results of the 2016 survey show that a significant percentage of the population (58.9%) is dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in El Salvador (see Figure 21). In the 2016 round, the percentage of citizens that express satisfaction with democracy in El Salvador is 41.1%, the lowest since 2010.

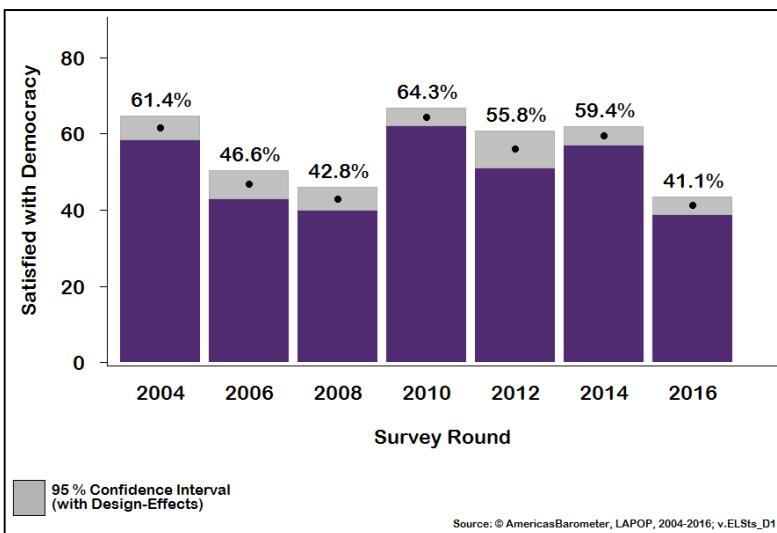


Figure 21. Percentage of Respondents Satisfied with how Democracy Functions, El Salvador 2004-2016

Another approach to assessing the country's political state is through the trust that Salvadorans have in their democratic institutions. As seen in Figure 22, the group of institutions with the highest level of trust in 2016 includes the Armed Forces (66.2) and the Catholic Church (61.2). The second group includes the municipality (57.2), the media (57.1), the National Civil Police (55.4), the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (51.3) and the Institute for Access to Public Information (50.7). The Government Ethics Tribunal (47.2), the Constitutional Chamber (47), elections (46.8) and the Legislative Assembly (43.9) form a third group. The fourth group includes the President (36.8) and political parties (31.3), which receive the lowest levels of institutional trust. The lowest levels of citizen trust occur among institutions related to elections and the exercise of political power.

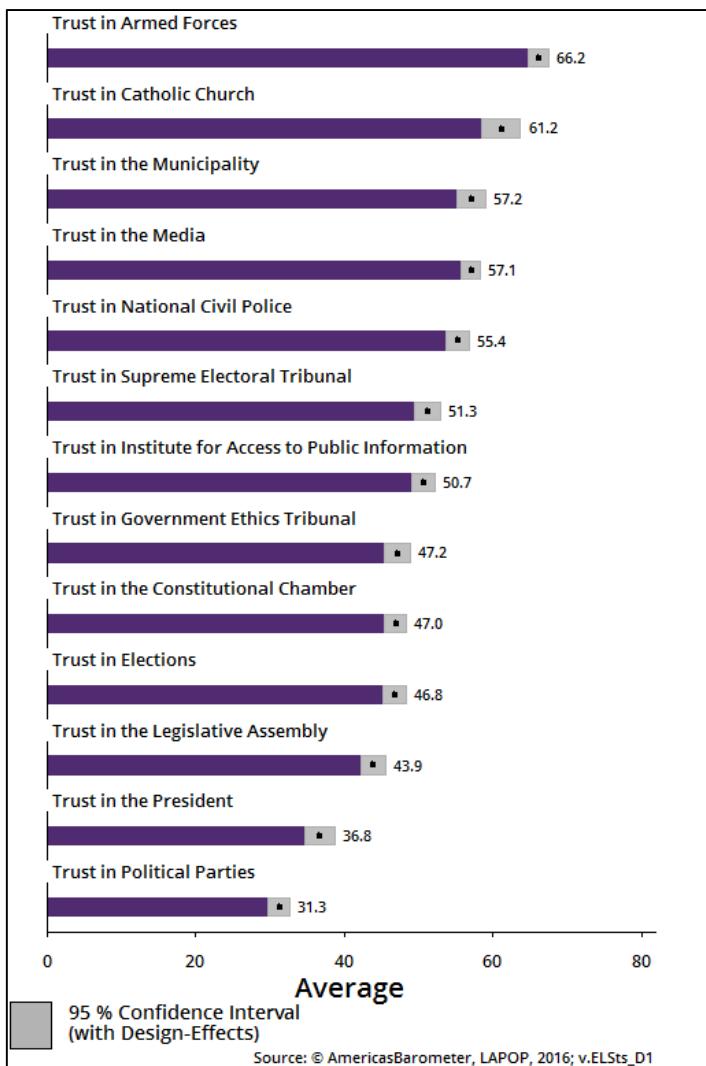


Figure 22. Trust in Institutions, El Salvador 2016

Next, Figure 23 analyzes electoral behavior with respect to the 2014 presidential elections. Those who support a political party report having voted more frequently than those who do not support a political party. Likewise, those who show greater interest in politics also report higher turnout rates. On the other hand, the first-round reported vote rate was higher for those with post-secondary education than those

with a secondary education, primary education, or no formal education. Finally, the 18-25 age group reports the lowest turnout rate, and the reported turnout rate increases until 56-65 years of age, before decreasing for those 66 years of age and older. Although the graph does not include the following in the bivariate analysis, those who feel their personal economic situation has improved, reported lower turnout rates, while those who believe that the country's economic situation has improved turned out at higher rates.

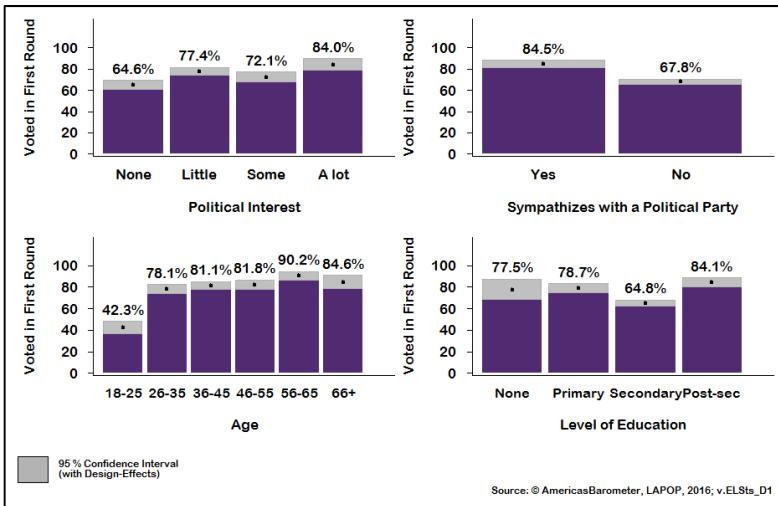


Figure 23. Predictors of Participation in the First Round of the 2014 Presidential Elections, El Salvador 2016

The percentage of citizens that sympathize with a political party has decreased in El Salvador. In the 2016 survey, only 1 in 4 Salvadorans (26.4%) expressed sympathy with a political party (see Figure 24). This is the lowest level of sympathy reported by respondents in the 2006-2016 period. Similarly, citizen trust in political parties experienced a statistically significant reduction, going from an average (on a 0-100 scale) of 36.7 in 2014 to 31.3 in 2016.

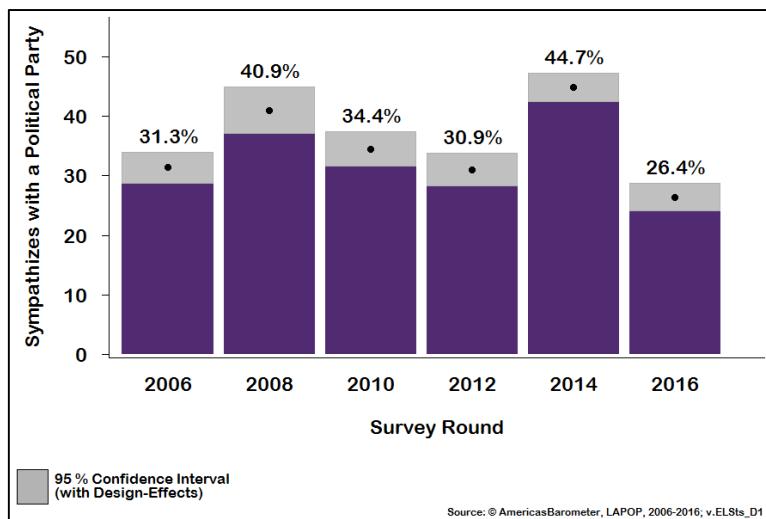


Figure 24. Percentage of Respondents Who Sympathize with a Political Party, El Salvador 2006-2016

Citizens' interest in politics also dropped significantly, from an average of 38.7 in 2014 (on a 0-100 scale) to 34.3 in 2016. The 2016 survey data show that 7 out of 10 Salvadorans report little or no interest in politics (see Figure 25).

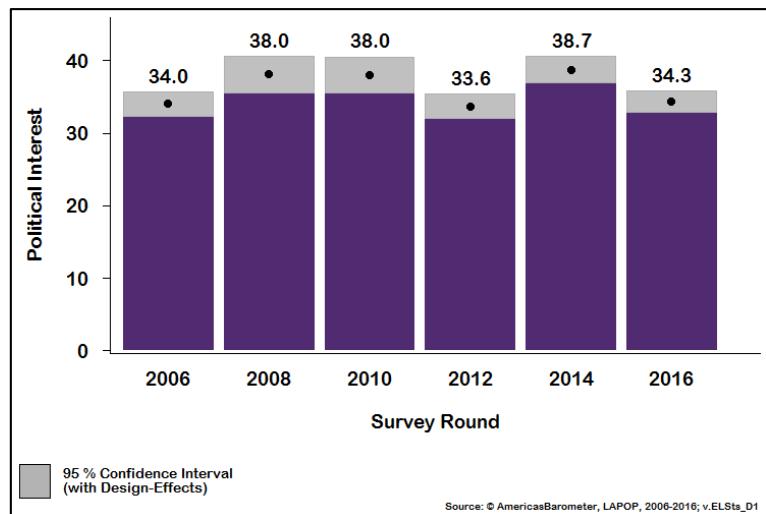


Figure 25. Interest in Politics in El Salvador, 2006-2016

Support for electoral democracy in El Salvador remains strong in the 2004-2016 period. As Figure 26 shows, approximately 7 out of 10 Salvadorans (73%) express a preference for an electoral democracy; although there is a worrying increase over time, from 6% in 2004 to 27% in 2016, in the percentage of respondents who favor a strong leader who does not have to be elected.

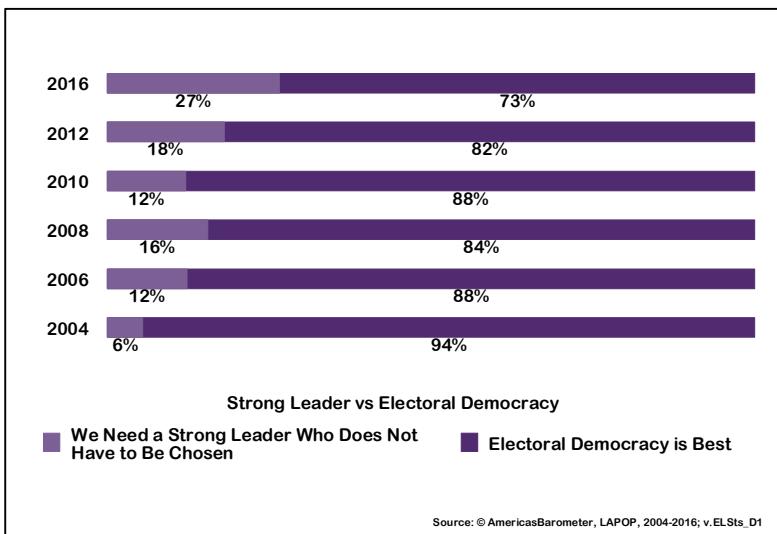


Figure 26. Preference for Democracy as a Political Regime, El Salvador 2016

Chapter 5. Civil Society, Citizen Participation, and Corruption

This chapter explores some aspects of the relationship between Salvadoran citizens and civic participation, including participation in civic organizations, participation in protest, interpersonal trust, and citizens' assessment of the representation of their interests by the national government, local government and legislators. This chapter also examines Salvadorans' experiences with and perceptions of corruption.

Salvadorans report little involvement in civic organizations. With the exception of participation in religious organizations, Figure 27 shows that more than half of the population reports having never participated

in parent associations (55.5%), community improvement committees (75.1%), political parties (85.4%), or in women's groups (90.2%).

	Once a week	One or two times a month	One or two times a year	Never
Religious Organizations	52.7	14.0	9.0	24.3
Parent Associations	2.5	25.8	16.2	55.5
Community Improvement Groups	2.6	9.4	12.9	75.1
Political Parties	1.0	2.9	10.8	85.4
Women's Groups*	2.8	3.9	3.1	90.2

Figure 27. Level of Participation in Various Groups and Organizations, El Salvador 2016 (percentages)

*Data only includes the female population.

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2016; v.ELSts_D1

Another dimension of citizen participation explored in the 2016 round is participation in demonstrations or public protests. As shown in Figure 28, the involvement of Salvadorans in these type of events has been very low throughout the 2010-2016 period: only 3 out of 100 Salvadorans reported participating in a protest or demonstration in the year prior to the survey. El Salvador continues to occupy one of the lowest positions in terms of citizen participation in protests. The data indicate that only Saint Lucia and Grenada have lower percentages of participation in public protests in the 2016/17 round of the AmericasBarometer.

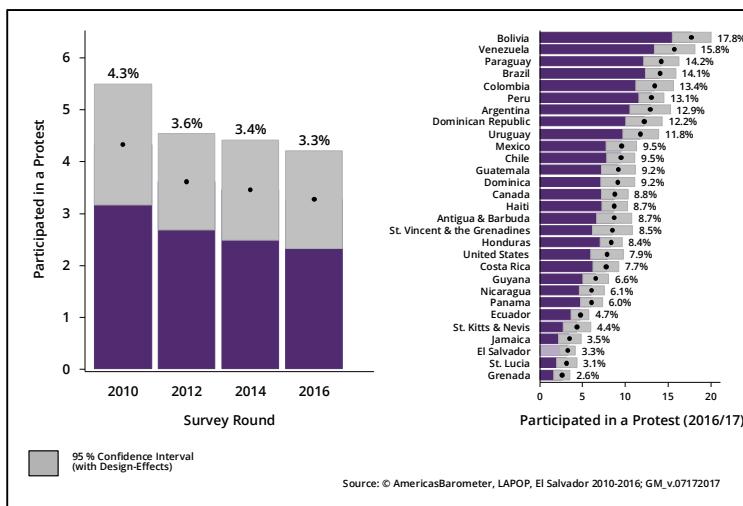


Figure 28. Protest Participation in El Salvador and the Americas

Salvadorans report intermediate levels of trust in their neighbors. As seen in Figure 29, this level of interpersonal trust among Salvadorans has remained stable through all rounds of the AmericasBarometer, averaging around 60 degrees on a 0-100 scale. At the regional level, the country ranks within the regional average for the 2016/17 round.

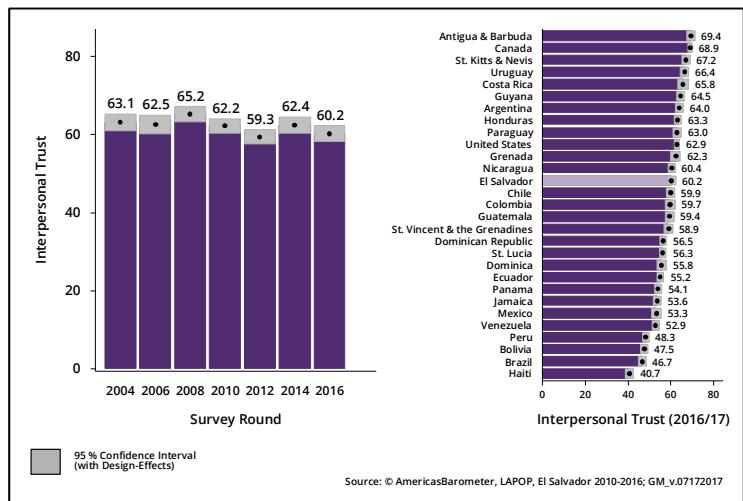
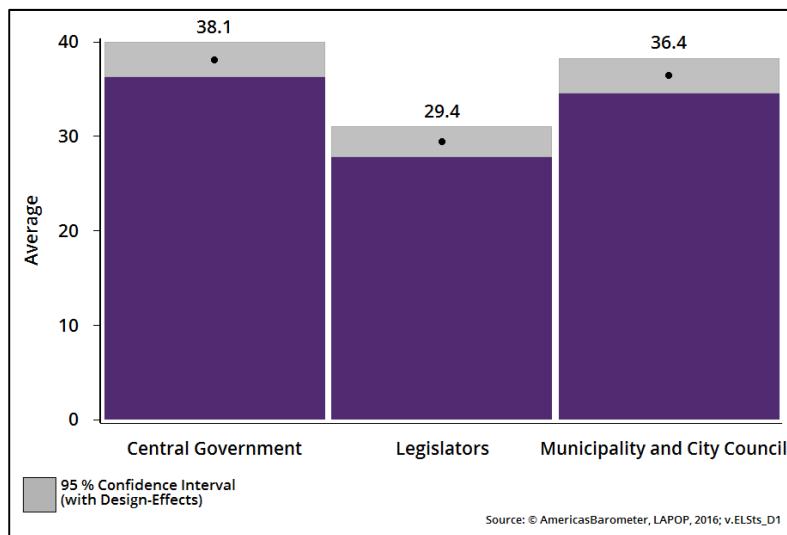


Figure 29. Interpersonal Trust in El Salvador and the Americas

Citizens perceive low levels of representation of their interests by institutions linked to the exercise of State power. According to Figure 30, on a scale of 0-100, the best evaluated institution is the Central Government (38.1), followed by local governments (36.4), and with the Legislative Assembly receiving the poorest evaluation (29.4). However, citizens' perceptions of all three institutions has worsened from 2010 to 2016 (see Figure 31).



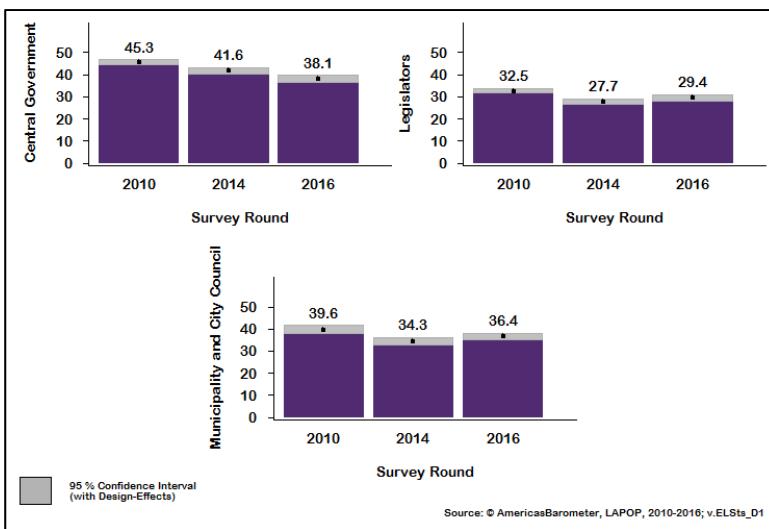


Figure 31. Evaluation of Institutional Representation over Time, El Salvador 2010-2016

Citizen perceptions of corruption among public officials has improved between 2014 and 2016, from an average of 68 (2014) to 64.1 (2016), on a 0-100 scale (see Figure 32). However, this perception continues to be high: approximately 6 out of 10 people consider corruption of the country's public officials to be at least somewhat generalized. According to a new question in the AmericasBarometer, 8 out of 10 Salvadorans perceive that at least half of politicians are involved in corruption (see Figure 33).

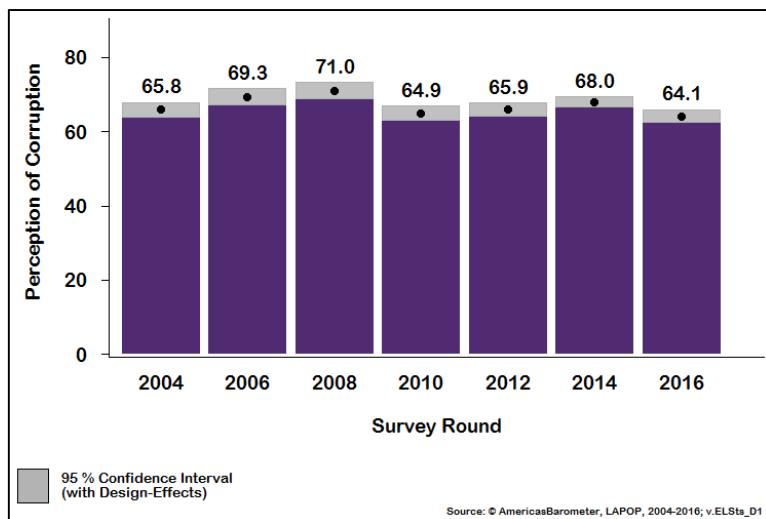


Figure 32. Perception of Corruption of Public Officials, El Salvador 2004-2016

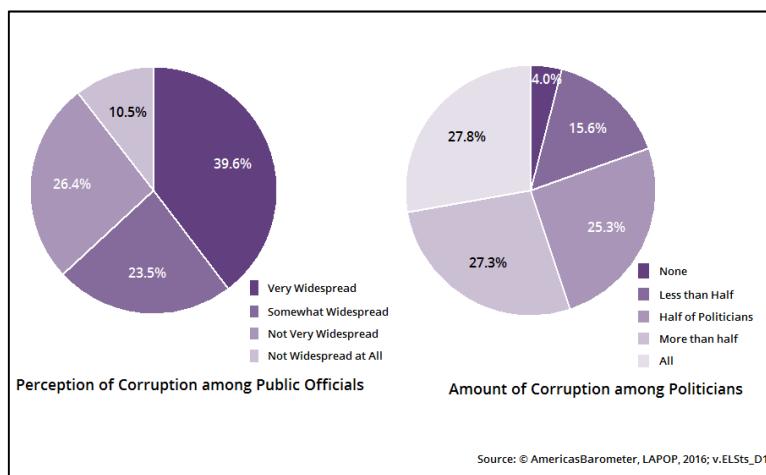


Figure 33. Perception of Corruption of Public Officials, El Salvador 2016

As shown in Figure 34, corruption victimization in El Salvador remains stable between 2014 and 2016 (9.8%). Identifying as male, living in large cities, being younger in age, and having more children increase the probability of being a victim of corruption.

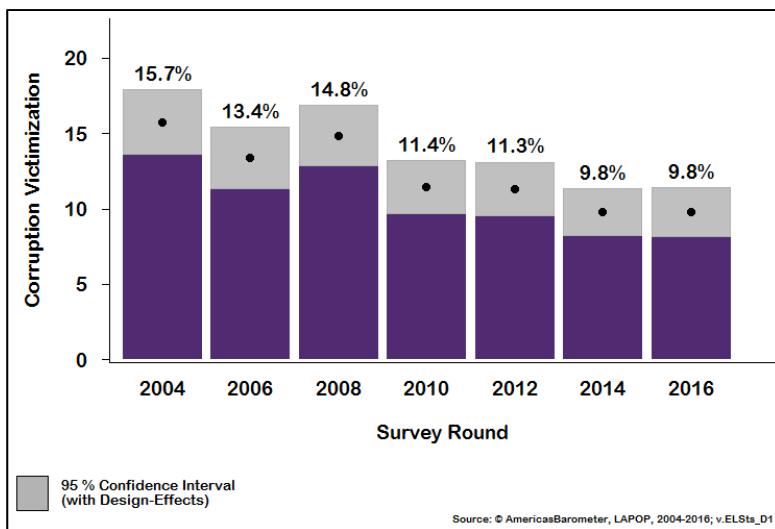


Figure 34. Victimization by Corruption in El Salvador, 2004-2016

Chapter 6. Democratic Orientations in the Americas

Over the years, LAPOP has hypothesized and found that democracy rests on firmer grounds to the extent that the following joint conditions are met: the public perceives the political system to be legitimate and it supports the right to participate of those who may hold diverging political views. Legitimacy and tolerance are, therefore, core elements of democratic culture. These attitudes combine to make unique profiles of democratic orientations.

Figure 35 compares levels of the system support index and its five components in El Salvador since 2004. The index and individual component variables are scores that range from 0 to 100, where higher values indicate more positive attitudes toward the system. Support for the political system has reached its lowest level in El Salvador in 2016 (51.2). This is due to a decline in several components of this system support index in 2016: respect for institutions, level of normative support for the system, confidence that basic rights are protected, and pride in the political system of El Salvador.

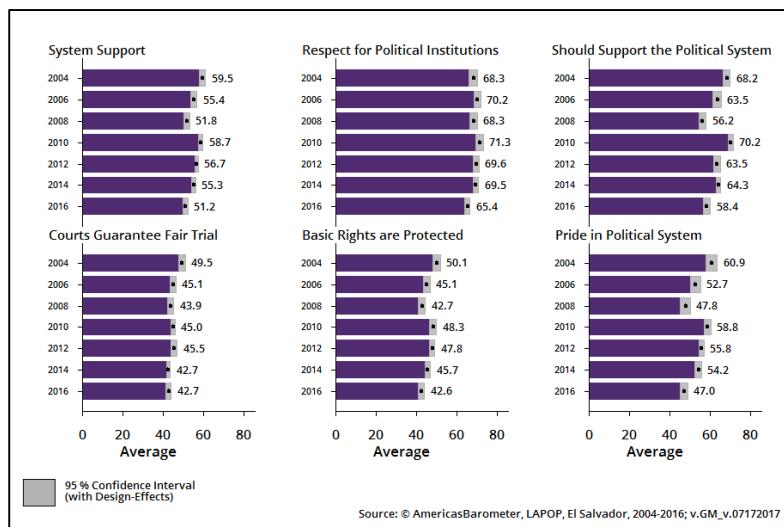


Figure 35. System Support and Its Components in El Salvador, 2004-2016

As shown in Figure 36, El Salvador ranks at an intermediate level in terms of its mean degrees of support for the political system, in comparison to the other countries in the region.

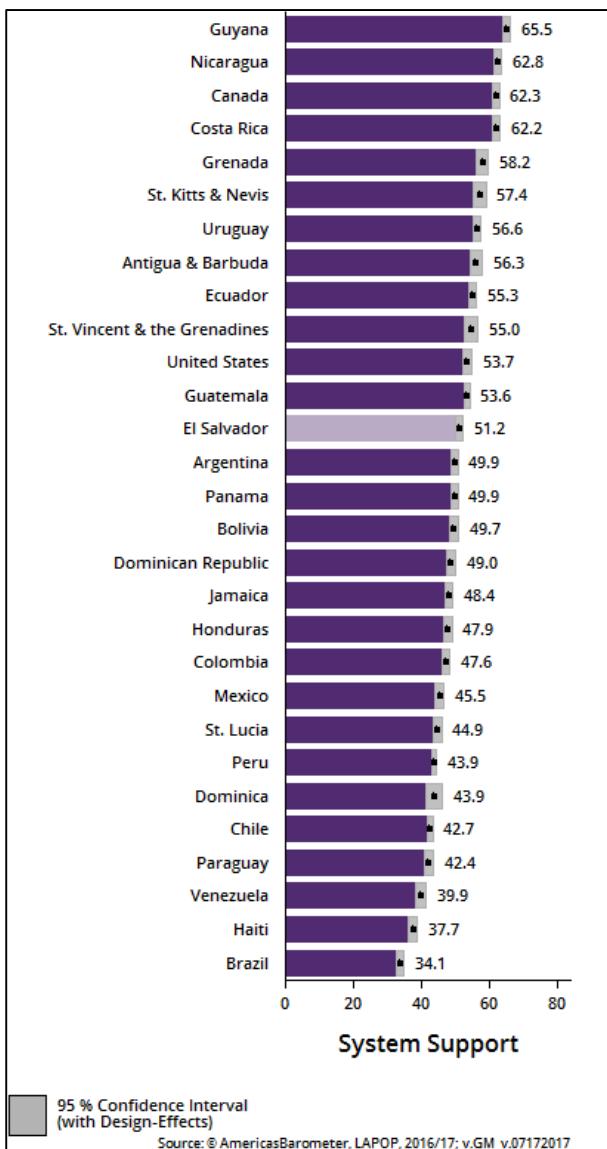


Figure 36. System Support in the Americas, 2016/17

High levels of support for the political system do not guarantee the quality and survival of liberal democratic institutions. Liberal democracy also requires citizens to accept the principles of open

democratic competition and tolerance of dissent. Political tolerance in El Salvador increased significantly to 47.7 degrees after a period of stability between 2010 and 2014 (see Figure 37). However, political tolerance in the country remains below the averages observed between 2004 and 2008. The increase in political tolerance among Salvadorans is due to significant increases in all components of this index, which constitute measures of approval of the right to protest, vote, give speeches, and be a political candidate.

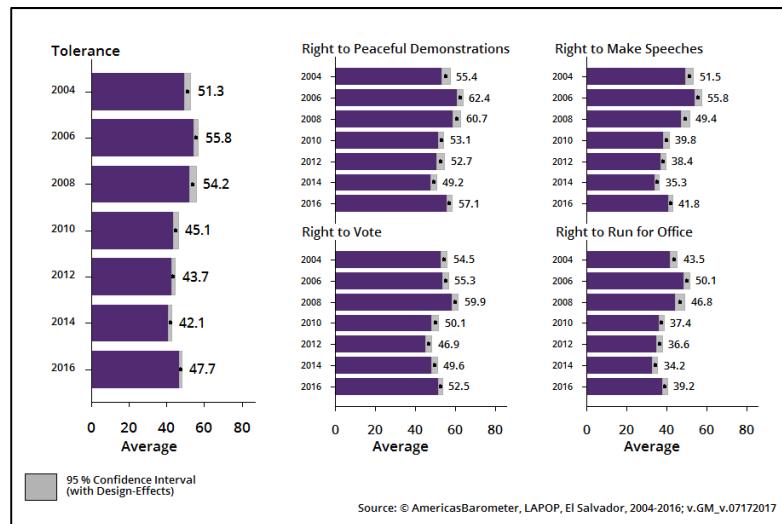


Figure 37. Political Tolerance and Its Components in El Salvador, 2004-2016

Although El Salvador experienced a significant increase in political tolerance between 2014 and 2016, the country is positioned among the countries in the region with the lowest levels of political tolerance. As shown in Figure 38, Salvadorans rank higher than only Peruvians and Colombians in average political tolerance.

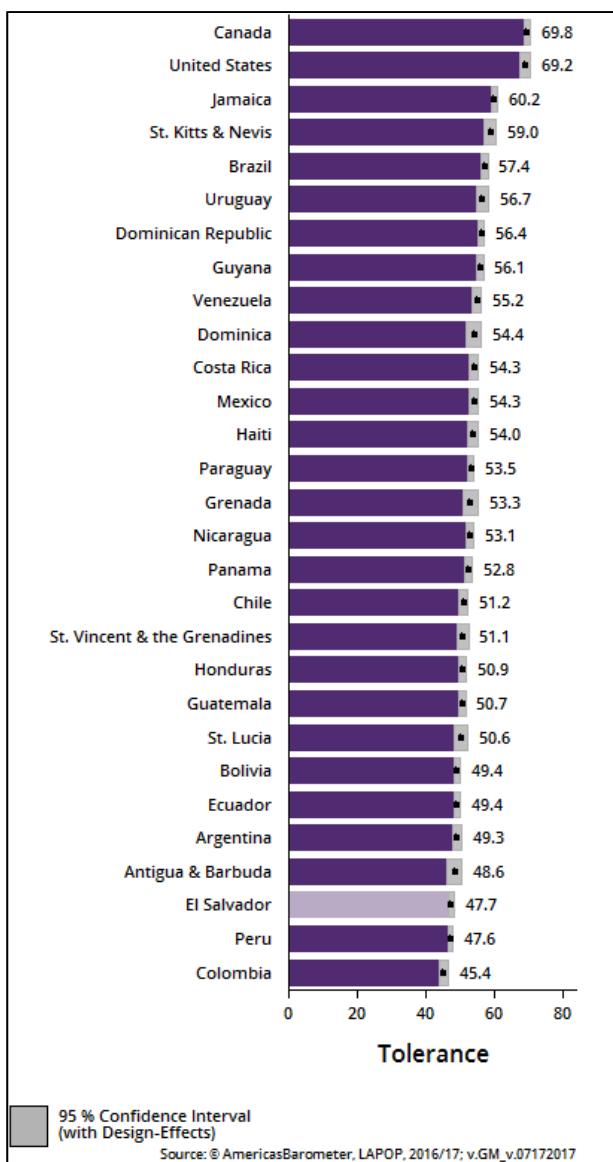


Figure 38. Political Tolerance in the Americas, 2016/17

The AmericasBarometer

The AmericasBarometer is a regional survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). LAPOP has deep roots in the Latin America and Caribbean region, via public opinion research that dates back over four decades. Its headquarters are at Vanderbilt University, in the United States. The AmericasBarometer is possible due to the activities and support of a consortium of institutions located across the Americas. To carry out each round of the survey, LAPOP partners with local individuals, firms, universities, development organizations, and others in 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere. These efforts have three core purposes: to produce objective, non-partisan, and scientifically sound studies of public opinion; to build capacity and strengthen international relations; and to disseminate important findings regarding citizens' experiences with, assessments of, and commitment to democratic forms of government.

Since 2004, the AmericasBarometer has received generous support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Vanderbilt University. Other institutions that have contributed to multiple rounds of the survey project include Ciudadanía, Environics, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Tinker Foundation, and the United Nations Development Programme. The project has also benefited from grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Center for Research in Brazil (CNPq), and the Open Society Foundation. Collaborations with university partners who sponsor items on the survey also sustain the project. In this most recent round, those contributors included Dartmouth, Florida International University, the University of Illinois, the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Venezuela, and several centers at Vanderbilt University.

The 2016/17 AmericasBarometer was carried out via face-to-face interviews in 27 countries across the Latin America and Caribbean region, and via the internet in Canada and the U.S. All samples are designed to be nationally representative of voting-age adults and electronic devices were used for data entry in all countries. In all, more than 43,000 individuals were interviewed in this latest round of the survey. The complete 2004-2016/17 AmericasBarometer dataset contains responses from over 250,000 individuals across the region. Common core modules, standardized techniques, and rigorous quality control procedures permit valid comparisons across individuals, subgroups, certain subnational areas, countries, supra-regions, and time.

AmericasBarometer data and reports are available for free download from the project website: www.LapopSurveys.org Datasets from the project can also be accessed via "data repositories" and subscribing institutions at universities across the Americas. Through such open access practices and these collaborations, LAPOP works to contribute to the pursuit of excellence in public opinion research and ongoing discussions over how programs and policies related to democratic governance can improve the quality of life for individuals in the Americas and beyond.

United States Agency for
International Development (USAID/El Salvador)

United States of America Embassy

Bulevar y urbanización Santa Elena

Antiguo Cuscatlán, La Libertad, El Salvador, C.A.

Tel.: (503) 2501-2999 / Fax: (503) 2501-3401

