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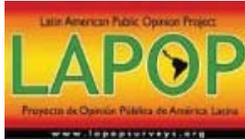


AmericasBarometer
Barómetro de las Américas
by LAPOP

Latin American Public Opinion Project

LAPOP

Proyecto de Opinión Pública de América Latina



LAPOP- AMERICASBAROMETER

Insights Series

Compilation

Volume III

Insights Reports 70-100
Insights Topical Briefs 1-12

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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 2012 to 2013.

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

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2011

Number 70

Who Consumes News Media in Latin America and the Caribbean?

By Arturo Maldonado
arturo.maldonado@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report addresses the question of who in the Americas consumes more news. Drawing on literature in political psychology, I suggest that there is an important role for economic and security threats in stimulating information-seeking, and therefore raising the consumption of news. I assess this framework using the most recent round of the AmericasBarometer surveys and find, as expected, that these threats, particularly ones related to crime, are associated with news consumption. The more people perceive crime and economic crisis as threats, the more they consume news in the media. Finally, this report also shows that certain socioeconomic groups—the less educated, the poorer, those living in rural areas, younger people and women—consume less news while people with a particular personality trait, openness to experience, are more likely to follow the news.

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

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Mass media is increasingly being studied by scholars of politics because “politics has increasingly become mediated” (Strömbäck and Shehata 2010). Researchers have examined the effect of news consumption on political outcomes, with some arguing that the media exerts a corrosive effect on people’s political interest and partisanship (Strömbäck and Shehata 2010, Pérez-Liñán 2002) and others arguing the media informs and empowers individuals (Newton 1999). But before we determine what impact the media are having on politics, it is important to know who consumes the news. In this *Insights* report, I answer this question by showing average levels of daily media consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ I then develop a model of media consumption that includes individual characteristics, attitudes, and perceptions as explanatory factors.

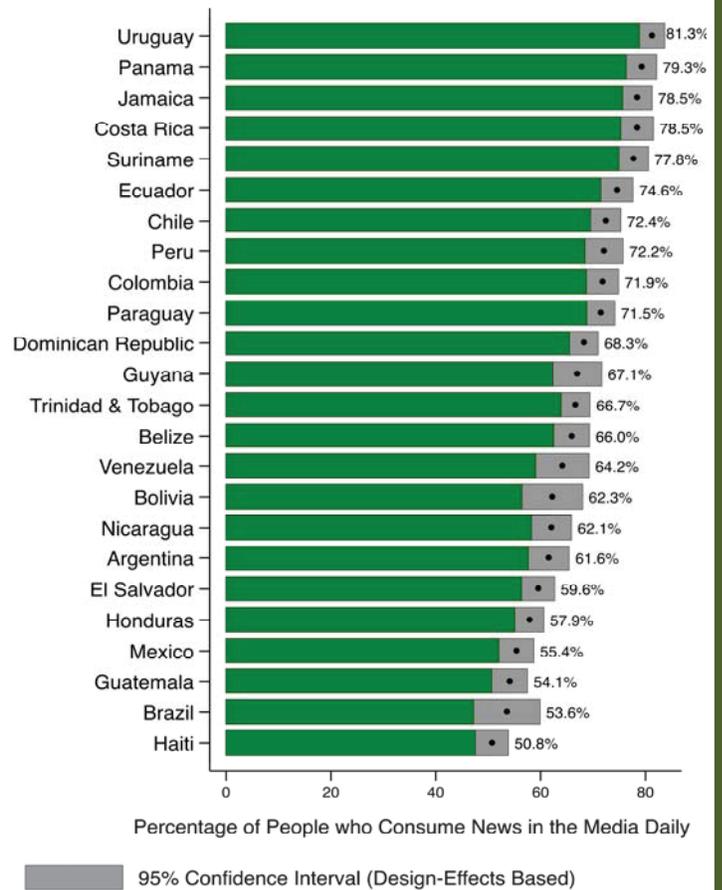
Two key findings emerge from this study. First, in accord with a growing body of research that connects threat to information-seeking behavior, I find a significant association between expressing concern about rates of crime in one’s neighborhood and levels of news consumption, controlling for other socio-demographic variables. Second, I find that certain sociodemographic groups consume less news, especially the poorer, the less well-educated, those living in rural areas, younger people and women.

This report focuses on the following question from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP:²

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>
The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

Figure 1. News Consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2010

G10. “About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers, or the internet?”³

Figure 1 shows the percentage of people who respond that they consume news in the media daily (with confidence intervals) by country. Responses to the original question ran from daily, “1,” to never, “5,” and they were recalibrated to capture this percentage.⁴

³ The non-response rate for this question was 6.5%. This report excludes the USA and Canada in order to focus on Latin America and the Caribbean.

⁴ All analyses were conducted with STATA v11 and results were adjusted for the complex sample design employed.

There is considerable variation in the percentage of people who consume news daily across Latin America and the Caribbean. The difference between the country at the top—Uruguay—and the country at the bottom—Haiti—is 30.5%. It is important to highlight that many countries in the bottom tier are Central American and Caribbean countries, such as Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize. Thus, we see evidence that these regions register lower levels of media consumption than South America.

In the next section, I assess individual characteristics that may help to explain the differing levels of news consumption. In the last section, I will present my conclusions and provide ideas for avenues for future research.

Crime and Economic Threats as Triggers of News Consumption

Following prior research (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Bucy 2003; Valentino et al. 2008), I propose that political threats boost citizens' anxiety, and in turn information seeking. Thus, people facing threats would be more likely to consume news media.

Here I test the association between media use and economic and security threats, arguably two main threats for Latin American citizens, while controlling for other factors that existing scholarship has associated with media consumption. To measure economic threat, I use perceptions of economic crisis.⁵ I expect that those who perceive a more serious economic crisis are more threatened, and consequently they are more likely to seek information in the media.

⁵ This variable is worded as: CRISIS1. Some say that our country is suffering a very serious economic crisis; others say that we are suffering a crisis but it is not very serious; while others say that there is not any economic crisis. What do you think? This variable was recalibrated to a 0-100 scale.

I use perceptions of crime to measure security threat.⁶ In this case the expectation is that those who perceive a higher level of threat from crime are more likely to feel anxiety, and therefore consume more news in the media.

I include as additional predictors age, gender, education level, and wealth because previous research shows that these variables explain different levels of newspaper reading (Elvestad and Blekesaune 2008; Salzman and Aloisi 2009). Strömbäck and Shehata (2010) find that political interest predicts levels of news consumption in Sweden.⁷ So, I expect that people who report being more interested in politics are likely to consume more news.

Salzman (2011) states that accessibility is a factor that explains media consumption. I include the size of the place of residence as an indicator of accessibility. I hypothesize that people living in urban areas are more able to consume news media than those living in rural areas because of the availability of news sources. Indeed, in a previous *Insights* report Batista Pereira (2011) finds that citizens living in rural areas tend to be less informed in part because of lack of access to media.

I also include trust in media as a control because, as Salzman (2011) affirms, people who have more trust in the media may perceive that media is achieving its societal role as a marketplace of ideas or as a 'watchdog,' and consequently may consume more news.⁸

⁶ This variable is worded as: AOJ11A. And speaking of the country in general, how much do you think that the level of crime that we have now represents a threat to our future well-being? It was original coded from, 1 'Very much' to 4 'None' and here was recalibrated from 0 to 100.

⁷ In this *Insights* this dimension is measured by POL1. How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none? This variable was recalibrated to a 0-100 scale.

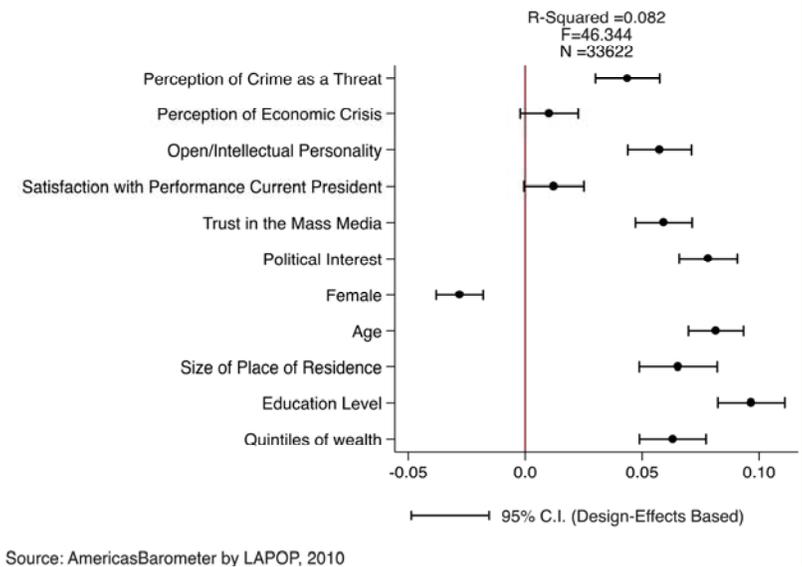
⁸ This variable is worded as: B37. To what extent do you trust the mass media? It is measured on a 1-7 scale recalibrated here into a 0-100 scale.

Further, I include a measure of satisfaction with the performance of the current president.⁹ Those who support the current president may be more likely to seek information in the news given that they are more interested in the policies implemented, or that they like the leader. Simply put, they are on the ‘winning’ side and have more incentives to follow news regarding the government.

Finally, I include a personality trait, *openness to experience*. This is measured using a question regarding whether a person considers herself to be open and intellectual.¹⁰ Following prior research (Gerber et al. 2010) I hypothesize that an open and intellectual person is more likely to consume news in the media.

Before discussing the results, it is important to recognize that the associations among threats, trust in the media, and news consumption may run in complex directions. The more people consume news in the media, the more they may feel threatened, the more they may be interested in politics, and the more they may trust the media. Given this potential problem, I do not make a claim for causation, but for association.¹¹ As an alternative measurement strategy, I test two other variables tapping economic and security threats: crime victimization and whether a respondent or family member lost a job; and I get the same

Figure 2. The Impacts of Threats and Individual Factors on News Consumption, 2010



results.¹² This supports the causal direction theorized in this report, since we cannot argue that news consumption has an impact on whether a person lost a job or was victim of a crime.

Figure 2 presents the results of this OLS regression analysis of news consumption. The dependent variable GI0, which runs from 1 to 5, was recalibrated on a 0-100 scale. Each independent variable included is listed on the vertical axis. The impact of each of these variables on levels of news consumption is shown by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical “0” line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left a negative impact. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals for these effects. We can be at least 95% confident that a given effect is statistically significant if its confidence interval does not cross the vertical axis at 0. All coefficients are standardized for ease of comparison, and this model includes country-fixed effects not shown in this figure for ease of presentation.

⁹ This variable is worded as: M1. Speaking in general of the current administration/government, how would you rate the job performance of the president? This variable runs from 1 ‘Very good’ to 5 ‘Very bad’ and here was recalibrated to a 0-100 scale.

¹⁰ Unfortunately this variable was not asked in Honduras. Thus, this country is excluded in the following analysis. I run the same model excluding this variable (so, the model includes Honduran data) and get the same results.

¹¹ One possibility is to run a two-stage least square model or to include an instrumental variable. Given the intentionally limited scope of this *Insights* report, I do not run this sophisticated model.

¹² VIC1EXT asks people whether they have been victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months. I also use a variable that taps whether a family member has lost his or her job in the past two years.

The results support the main expectations. The coefficient for crime victimization is statistically significant, and in the expected direction. The more people perceive crime as a threat for their well-being, the more they seek information in the media. So, crime as a threat may trigger anxiety and therefore greater consumption of news in the media.

The perception of economic crisis is not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, but it is nearly so, and in the expected direction. Using a broader confidence interval, it becomes clear that the more serious people feel the economic crisis is, the more they seek information in the media.

In sum, in accord with recent studies in political psychology, I present some evidence that threats are associated with information seeking.

The variable for satisfaction with the performance of the president is not significant at the $p < .05$ level, but is in the expected direction. Using a broader confidence interval, the results indicate that those who support the president have more incentive to follow the news in the media to get information about expected policies or about their leader.

Further, I find that the more a person considers herself to be open and intellectual, the higher the level of news consumption.

Finally, the remaining variables are also statistically significant and coefficients are in the expected direction. The results indicate that the richer, the more educated, those who live in urban areas, those who are older, men, those who are more interested in politics, and those who trust the media more consume more news. Conversely, they also indicate that other individuals consume less news in the media. This may be because groups such as the poor or those living in rural areas face barriers to access the media; or it may be because they are not interested in or motivated to consume national and international events in the news. It is

noteworthy that similar results have been found in other regions in the world, such as Europe (Chan and Godthorpe 2007, Elvestad and Blekesaune 2008). Thus, this pattern is not exclusive to Latin America.

Conclusion

In sum, this *Insights* report shows, first, that there is a wide variation in average levels of daily news consumption, with South American countries generally being higher on the scale developed here than those in Central America and the Caribbean. Second, the report supports the argument that threats may trigger media consumption for Latin American citizens. As such, these findings support prior research done in political psychology on the role of threats, emotions, and behavior. This research emphasizes the role of a negative emotion, such as anxiety, in information seeking. Here, I assume that economic and security threats activate this negative emotion, which in turn triggers news consumption. Future research should directly assess the extent to which those who perceive an economic crisis or a security crisis develop negative emotions and, more interestingly, what kind of emotions, if any, distinguish between those who perceive and those who do not perceive threats.

Third, this report explores a personality trait related to news consumption. In a study of the US, Gerber et al. (2010) find that an open person is more likely to consume news, particularly through internet and television. They do not find evidence that this trait has an effect on levels of newspaper reading. This *Insights* report also finds the effect of this trait on news consumption, but I could not specify the effect of a specific medium. Next steps should focus on testing the specific impact of personality on consumption of each medium in Latin America, as well as the effect of other personality traits.

This report also shows that news consumption in Latin America follows the same patterns as

in other regions in the world: some particular groups consume less news in the media. It may be because they face barriers, such as lack of money to buy newspapers or time to watch news on television; or, it could be because those living in rural areas are unable to access media. More research is needed to identify as precisely as possible the factors that explain why these particular groups do not consume news in the media.

As I mentioned at the beginning, most research on news consumption has focused on the implications of news consumption for political outcomes such as political interest or participation. Here, I put the emphasis on the determinants of this consumption, a question

that has recently caught the attention of scholars. That threats trigger news consumption and that certain sociodemographic groups confront obstacles to becoming informed are important insights that can be used to address questions about the political outcomes of news consumption.

Other future avenues of research may include studies that focus on the differences in average consumption across countries. I find that Central American and Caribbean countries appear to have lower levels of news consumption than South American ones. What explains this regional difference? In short, there is more research that can be done to strengthen our understanding of this topic.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Ordinary Least Squares Model of News Consumption (Design Effect Adjusted)¹³

	Coefficient	t-value
Perception of Crime as a Threat	0.044*	6.24
Perception of Economic Crisis	0.010	1.63
Open/Intellectual Personality	0.057*	9.58
Satisfaction with the Performance of the Current President	0.012	1.88
Trust in Mass Media	0.059*	9.58
Political Interest	0.078*	12.35
Female	-0.028*	-5.48
Age	0.082*	13.61
Size of Place of Residence	0.065*	7.69
Education Level	0.097*	13.25
Quintiles of Wealth	0.063*	8.69
Mexico	-0.052*	-6.27
Guatemala	-0.068*	-7.55
El Salvador	-0.064*	-8.32
Nicaragua	-0.081*	-6.78
Costa Rica	0.007	0.93
Panama	0.002	0.20
Colombia	-0.019*	-2.70
Ecuador	-0.010	-0.99
Bolivia	-0.045*	-3.74
Peru	-0.020*	-2.33
Paraguay	-0.000	-0.06
Chile	-0.023*	-3.02
Brazil	-0.104*	-6.89
Venezuela	-0.049*	-4.04
Argentina	-0.035*	-3.83
Dominican Republic	-0.023*	-3.53
Jamaica	0.008	1.13
Guyana	-0.024*	-2.08
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.019*	-2.64
Belize	-0.037*	-4.28
Suriname	-0.026*	-3.40
<i>Number of Observations</i>	33622	
<i>R-squared</i>	0.082	
<i>F</i>	46.34	

Note: Coefficients from weighted linear regression are significant at *p<0.05.

¹³ Uruguay is the country of reference.



AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 71

Why are There More Partisans in Some Countries than in Others?

By *Frederico Batista Pereira*
frederico.b.pereira@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report attempts to understand why some citizens, but not others, are attached to political parties across the Americas. Using data from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys, the analysis tests the hypothesis that less complex political environments foster partisanship by helping voters assign responsibility for outcomes to political parties. Less complex political environments have a smaller number of parties and individuals competing for power, and also tend to display more concentration of responsibility for political and economic outcomes among groups. After taking into account some individual level factors that could explain variation in partisanship, the analysis tests the relevance of four different indicators of clarity of responsibility. Interestingly, the results indicate that none of those four measures helps to explain the different proportion of partisans across countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The conclusion can be stated quite simply: less complex political systems do not have more partisans than more complex ones.

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

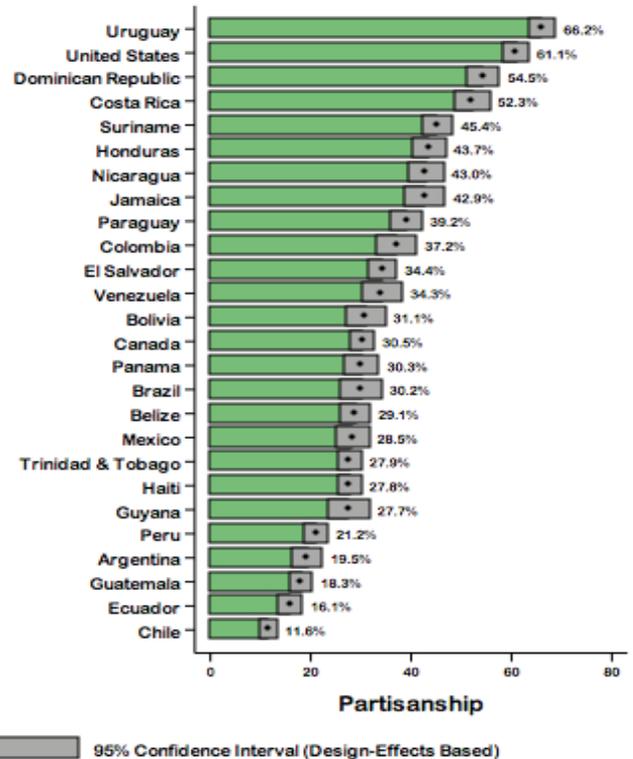
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Party identification - or simply partisanship - refers to “people’s psychological association to parties” (Campbell et al, 1954, p. 90; Campbell et al, 1960). The extent to which people are attached to political parties is important for a variety of reasons. Dalton (2007) argues that public attachment to parties is an indicator of party system development; similarly, Jones (2005) builds on research by Mainwaring and Scully (1995) to argue that partisan ties reflect the extent to which a party system is institutionalized. Downs (1957), followed by many others, stresses the importance of partisanship as a heuristic that helps citizens to organize and simplify information relevant to electoral competition. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) present evidence that partisanship stimulates participation and voting behavior. For these and other reasons, the examination of partisanship in comparative perspective is a relevant topic in the study of democracy.

Why do some citizens declare a preference for a political party, while others do not? At least three sets of individual factors may help answer this question. First, factors such as political interest and knowledge may help citizens to better understand the role of parties in politics, and also to distinguish the positions of different parties on relevant issues. So, more interested and knowledgeable citizens are more likely to be partisans (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Huber et al, 2005). Second, socialization over the life course seems to be one of the most important reasons people like parties (Converse & Pierce, 1992; Dalton & Weldon, 2007), and so partisanship may vary by age cohorts.¹ Third, individuals may acquire partisanship from a “running tally” of retrospective assessments, which is a series of evaluations they make concerning party performance (Fiorina, 1981). Even though many individuals learn to like parties in their earlier socialization, they may update their partisanship based on the performance of parties in office. While testing the latter expectation is outside the scope of this

¹ In addition, though not tested here, extant scholarship suggests that individuals in older party systems may learn to like a specific party because their parents transmit their own long-standing attachments to their children.

Figure 1. Percentage of Citizens who are Partisans by Country in the Americas, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

paper, in this *Insights* report I assess the extent to which factors such as an individual’s age, political interest, and political knowledge help predict partisanship.

In addition, it is possible that context plays a role. In what follows I test, but fail to find evidence for, the argument that the degree to which institutions are structured so that political responsibility is comparatively clearer may affect the extent of partisan ties in a country.

The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) asked 43,990 respondents the question at the center of this study in the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer:²

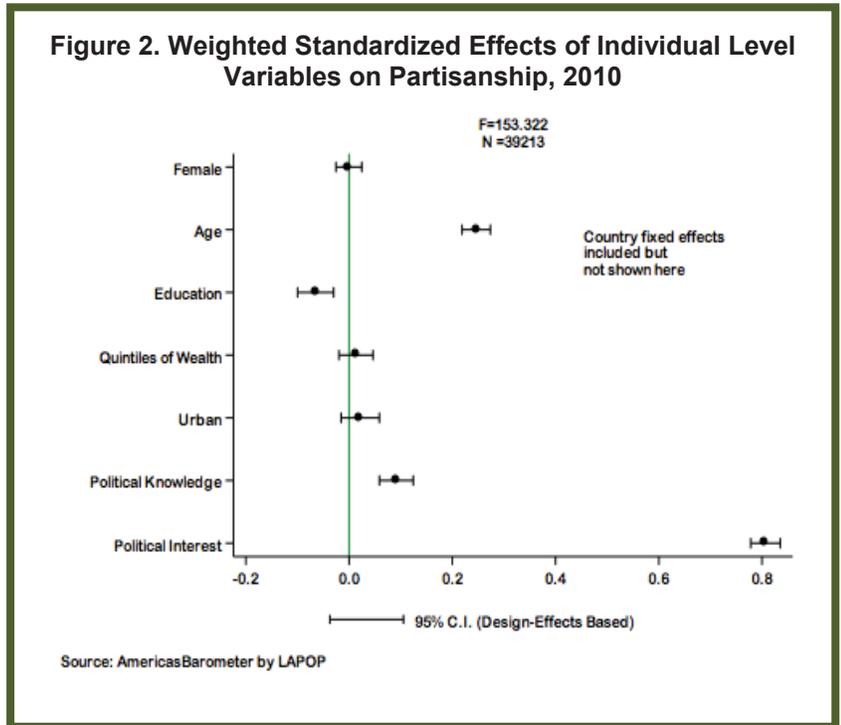
² Funding for the 2010 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at:

VB10. Do you currently identify with a political party?

Positive answers to the question were coded as one, while negative answers were coded as zero.³ Figure 1 shows the proportion of partisans with confidence intervals among citizens in all 26 countries in the AmericasBarometer surveys.⁴

Figure 1 shows that there is a lot of variation in the proportion of partisans across the Americas. Uruguay and United States appear in the top of the graph as the only countries in which more than 60% of the respondents have preference for a party. At the bottom, four countries have partisanship levels lower than 20%: Argentina (19.5%), Guatemala (18.3%), Ecuador (16.1%), and Chile (11.6%).

Why there is so much variation in the proportion of partisans across those countries? One can argue that those differences are exclusively due to individual factors. According to this line of reasoning, some countries have more partisans because citizens have higher values on the individual level factors that cause partisanship. However, one can argue that there may be differences across countries that do not relate directly to individual level factors. Factors such as electoral rules and party system complexity could facilitate the psychological attachment in some countries, while they could undermine those attachments in other countries. The next section explores the extent to which selected individual and contextual factors predict partisanship.



Individual Traits, Knowledge, and Interest as Predictors of Partisanship

Figure 2 displays the results of a logistic regression model that assesses the determinants of the likelihood an individual reports being a partisan. The analysis does not include the United States and Canada. The model includes seven independent variables. Political interest and political knowledge indicate respondents' involvement with politics and are expected to have positive effects.^{5,6} I also test the relevance of age with an index of 6 age categories.⁷ Four additional socioeconomic and demographic variables are included as control variables:

⁵ The question about political interest (POL1) asked: "How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?" Item non-response on the question was about 1%.

⁶ A battery of factual political information questions measured political knowledge. The questions were about the number of provinces/departments/states in the country (GI1), the name of the US President (GI3), and the length of the presidential/prime ministerial term in the respondent's country (GI4). The questions were coded 1 if correct and 0 if incorrect. Missing values were coded as 0. The final variable was the sum of the three items.

⁷ Item non-response on this question (Q2S) was 0.5% with and without Haiti.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ Item non-response was 2.5% excluding the United States and Canada, and 2.4% excluding the United States, Canada, and Haiti.

⁴ All analyses presented here were conducted using STATA v11.1.

female, education, wealth, and urban. Wealth is an index comprising 5 quintiles and is based on an analysis of household assets.⁸ Education is measured in years of schooling.⁹ Female and Urban are binary variables.¹⁰ The model also includes a binary variable for each country (except for Uruguay, which was the country of reference); these country fixed effects are not shown in the figure.

In Figure 2, the dot indicates the standardized regression coefficient. If the dot is to the right of the vertical line, the effect is positive; if it is to the left, the effect is negative. The horizontal lines extending from the dot are confidence intervals and, if they do not pass through the vertical line, the effect is statistically distinguishable from zero. Figure 2 shows that, as expected, the associations between partisanship and political interest and knowledge are positive and statistically significant. The effect of political interest is very strong, indicating that motivational attachment to politics may be even more important than cognitive factors such as knowledge in explaining partisanship. Age has a positive and statistically significant association, so that those who are older are more likely to express a partisan attachment.¹¹ The measures of sex (female), wealth, and urban residence have no association with partisan ties. Interestingly, education has a surprising negative association when interest and knowledge are included in the analysis.¹² This result deserves further treatment, beyond this report.

In general, some important individual level factors explain the probability of a respondent reporting to be a partisan. However, those factors do not account for all the country level

variation. The binary variables for each country still have strong and statistically significant effects, meaning that the country level differences remain when the individual level factors are included in the analysis (see Appendix Model 1). Therefore, the next section uses country level variables to test if the complexity of the political system helps to explain the different proportion of partisans across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Simpler Political Systems Do Not Produce More Partisans

Among the many possible answers to the question about cross-national variation of partisanship, one approach focuses on the complexity of the political system (Powell and Whitten, 1993; Huber et al, 2005). In this view voters' attachments towards political parties operate as "running tallies" of retrospective assessments (Fiorina, 1981). Voters use new information about political and economic outcomes to update their orientations towards the parties and other relevant political actors. Arguably, the nature of the political system could facilitate or stymie voters' task of attributing responsibility for outcomes to parties and other political actors. In less complex contexts, it is thought to be easier for voters to punish or reward parties and candidates according to their performances. Thus, according to this argument, in less complex political systems the availability and clarity of information about the political process make it easier for voters to update their running tallies about the parties and, possibly, make it more likely that voters report a partisan attachment.

To assess this expectation, I use four indicators of clarity of responsibility. It is often said that federal systems disperse power in comparison with unitarian systems, and hence make it more complicated for voters to identify to what extent incumbents from national and sub-national levels are responsible for outcomes (Gerring & Thacker, 2004). Also, Powell and Whitten (1993) argue that bicameralism may contribute to the dispersion of power and the complexity of the distribution of responsibility that voters perceive. Another common indicator of clarity

⁸ Item non-response in this question (QUINTALL) was 0.3% and 0.2% without Haiti. More details about the construction of this variable can be found in a previous number of the *Insights* series (Córdova, 2009).

⁹ Item non-response in this question (ED) was 0.5% and 0.4% without Haiti.

¹⁰ These variables had no missing values.

¹¹ A parallel model tested and confirmed the linearity of this relationship by including binary indicators of each age category.

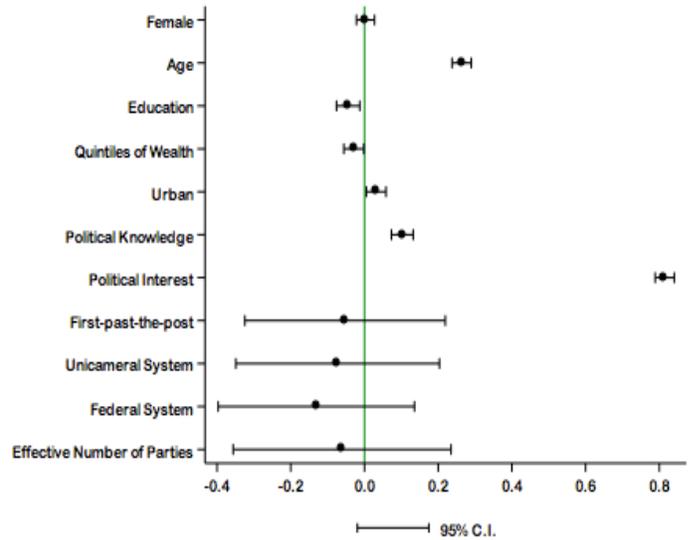
¹² Education has a positive impact on partisanship when political interest and knowledge are not included in the analysis.

of responsibility is the number of effective parliamentary parties (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979). This number indicates the extent of legislative fractionalization and also relates to how difficult it is for voters to find out which political actors are responsible for which outcomes (Huber et al, 2005, p. 372). Finally, the electoral formula is usually seen as relevant. In proportional systems, the number of parliamentary candidates tends to be higher, which could make the environment much more complex than in majoritarian systems (“first-past-the-post”).

Figure 3 displays the results from a hierarchical logit model in which partisanship is the dependent variable. Once again the model does not include the US and Canada, and includes the same individual level independent variables as in the model presented in Figure 2.¹³ As indicated, four country level variables represent clarity of responsibility. “First-past-the-post” and unicameralism are binary variables expected to enhance clarity of responsibility and increase the probability of a respondent being a partisan. If complexity matters to partisanship, they should have positive effects. By contrast, the binary variable indicating that the country is a federal system should have a negative effect. The effective number of parties is a continuous variable and should also have a negative effect.¹⁴

The results in Figure 3 show that clarity of responsibility does not seem to be the answer to the question of what causes cross-national variation in partisanship in Latin America and the Caribbean. None of the four variables has statistically significant effects. Further, the signs on the coefficients for the electoral formula (“First-past-the-post”) and unicameralism measures are contrary to what was expected. These null results are robust to analyses in which just one measure of clarity of

Figure 3. Weighted Standardized Effects of Individual and Country Level Variables on Partisanship, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

responsibility/system complexity is included at a time.¹⁵

Discussion

This *Insights* report asked what predicts varying levels of partisanship at both the individual and country levels. The analysis focused on countries from Latin America and the Caribbean. Several individual characteristics were shown to predict partisanship, including political interest, political knowledge, and age.

According to some scholarly perspectives, different levels of partisanship across countries might be explained by the complexity of the political system. However, after controlling for individual level determinants of partisanship, the analysis did not support the hypothesis that political environments in which it is easier for voters to assign responsibility for outcomes have more partisans.

So, since clarity of responsibility does not seem to explain the variation in partisanship across

¹³ In addition, Haiti was excluded in this analysis because the information about the country level variables is either not available or not reliable.

¹⁴ Data for this variable were collected from Gallagher and Mitchell (2008).

¹⁵ One could be concerned that the null results in Figure 3 are due to a problem of collinearity among indicators of clarity of responsibility; however, none has a statistically significant effect when included one at a time.

the countries analyzed in this report, other factors should be considered in further examinations. The age of the party system and the salience of social and ethnic divisions inside the countries are common alternative explanations (Huber et al, 2005), and these might be examined by future research on this topic in the Americas. Other types of citizen-party linkages in Latin America and the Caribbean may also constitute interesting avenues of research on the topic, such as how some parties connect to voters through clientelistic practices (Vidal et al., 2010).

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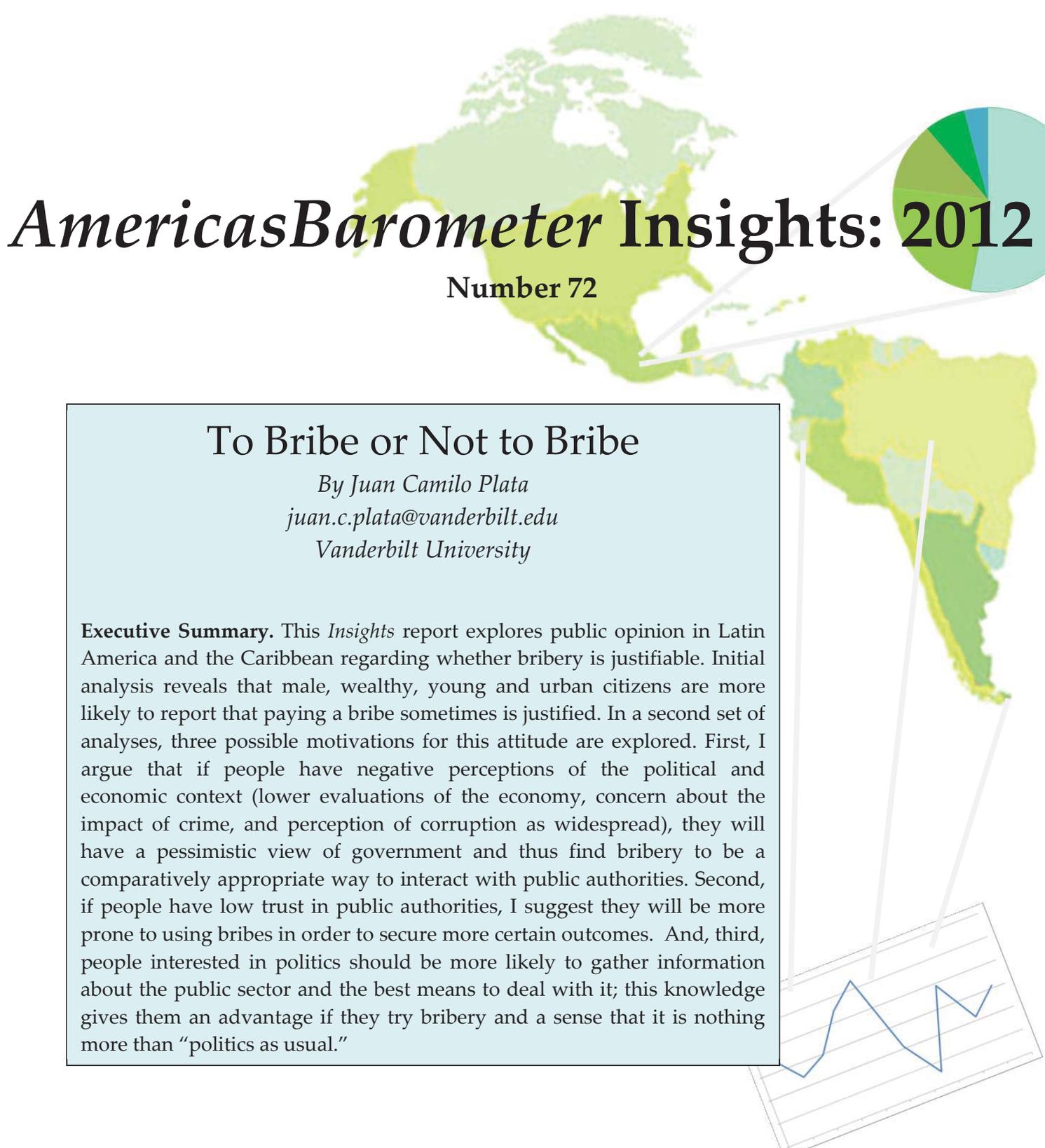
Appendix. Predictors of Partisanship in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unstandardized Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Coefficient	Unstandardized Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Coefficient
Female	-0.001 (0.025)	0.000 (0.013)	0.006 (0.025)	0.003 (0.012)
Age	0.161* (0.009)	0.246* (0.014)	0.171* (0.009)	0.264* (0.013)
Education	-0.015* (0.004)	-0.065* (0.018)	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.044* (0.016)
Quintiles of Wealth	0.009 (0.012)	0.013 (0.017)	-0.020* (0.010)	-0.029* (0.014)
Urban	0.045 (0.039)	0.022 (0.019)	0.066* (0.029)	0.032* (0.014)
Political Knowledge	0.095 (0.017)	0.091 (0.017)	0.107* (0.016)	0.103* (0.015)
Political Interest	0.835 (0.015)	0.807 (0.015)	0.840* (0.014)	0.815* (0.013)
First-past-the-post			-0.165 (0.435)	-0.053 (0.139)
Unicameral System			-0.146 (0.283)	-0.073 (0.141)
Federal System			-0.342 (0.356)	-0.131 (0.136)
Effective Number of Parties			-0.030 (0.075)	-0.061 (0.151)
Mexico	-1.449 (0.114)	-0.277 (0.022)		
Guatemala	-1.925 (0.110)	-0.362 (0.021)		
El Salvador	-1.143 (0.094)	-0.218 (0.018)		
Honduras	-0.754 (0.095)	-0.146 (0.018)		
Nicaragua	-0.519 (0.110)	-0.099 (0.021)		
Costa Rica	-0.341 (0.105)	-0.064 (0.020)		
Panama	-1.275 (0.101)	-0.242 (0.019)		
Colombia	-0.933 (0.108)	-0.175 (0.020)		

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unstandardized Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Coefficient	Unstandardized Coefficient (Standard Error)	Standardized Coefficient
Ecuador	-2.037 (0.118)	-0.531 (0.031)		
Bolivia	-1.345 (0.115)	-0.351 (0.030)		
Peru	-1.736 (0.103)	-0.326 (0.019)		
Paraguay	-0.769 (0.104)	-0.145 (0.020)		
Chile	-2.432 (0.122)	-0.520 (0.026)		
Brazil	-1.178 (0.115)	-0.281 (0.027)		
Venezuela	-1.167 (0.134)	-0.219 (0.025)		
Argentina	-2.067 (0.117)	-0.377 (0.021)		
Dominican Republic	-0.333 (0.095)	-0.062 (0.018)		
Haiti	-1.170 (0.095)	-0.237 (0.019)		
Jamaica	-0.703 (0.127)	-0.132 (0.024)		
Guyana	-1.249 (0.132)	-0.237 (0.025)		
Trinidad and Tobago	-1.463 (0.100)	-0.275 (0.019)		
Belize	-1.214 (0.106)	-0.228 (0.020)		
Suriname	-0.926 (0.101)	-0.175 (0.019)		
Constant	-1.173* (0.110)	-0.873* (0.018)	-2.137* (0.372)	-0.810* (0.122)
<i>Number of Obs.</i>		39,213		37,701

* $p < 0.05$

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at $*p < 0.05$, two-tailed



AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 72

To Bribe or Not to Bribe

By Juan Camilo Plata

juan.c.plata@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report explores public opinion in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding whether bribery is justifiable. Initial analysis reveals that male, wealthy, young and urban citizens are more likely to report that paying a bribe sometimes is justified. In a second set of analyses, three possible motivations for this attitude are explored. First, I argue that if people have negative perceptions of the political and economic context (lower evaluations of the economy, concern about the impact of crime, and perception of corruption as widespread), they will have a pessimistic view of government and thus find bribery to be a comparatively appropriate way to interact with public authorities. Second, if people have low trust in public authorities, I suggest they will be more prone to using bribes in order to secure more certain outcomes. And, third, people interested in politics should be more likely to gather information about the public sector and the best means to deal with it; this knowledge gives them an advantage if they try bribery and a sense that it is nothing more than “politics as usual.”

The Insights Series is co-edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
www.AmericasBarometer.org

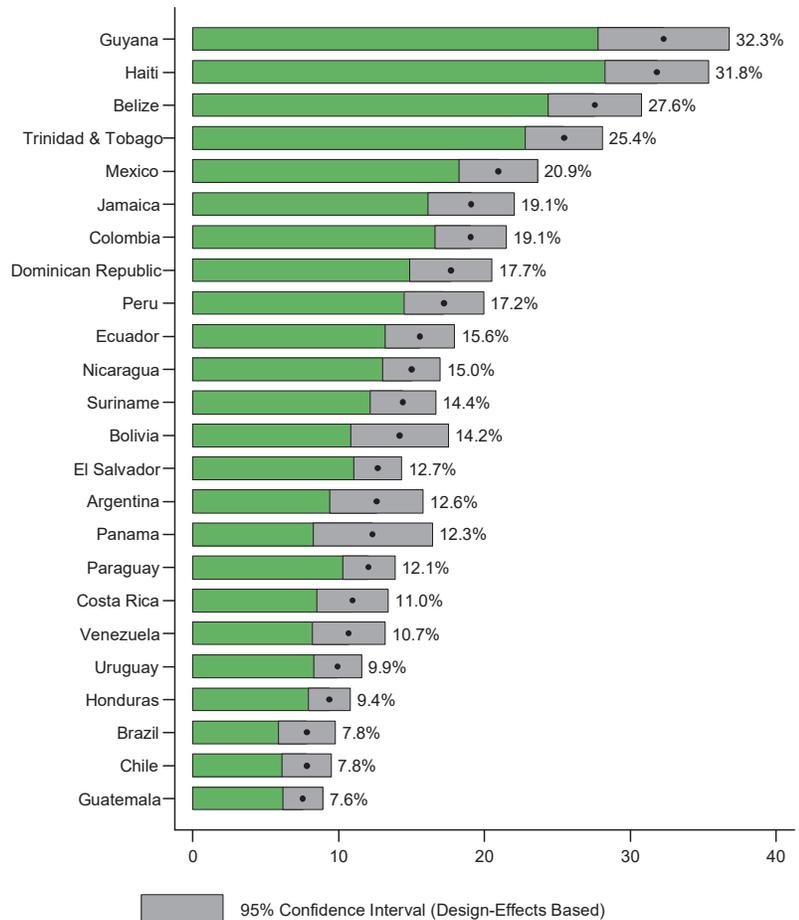
Bribery, as a form of corruption, distorts interactions between citizens and the state. When a public bureaucrat takes a bribe, he is using his control over public resources for private gain (Warren 2004). While any particular instance of bribery is localized, pervasive bribe-taking can have broader negative impacts on society and politics. For example, it can negatively affect national economies and investment levels (Mauro 1995) and erode trust in the fairness of institutions (Seligson 2006). And finally, it can reduce levels of diffuse support for the government and levels of interpersonal trust (Seligson 2002).

In this *Insights* report¹ I explore who across the Americas finds it sometimes justifiable to pay a bribe, and why. I focus the analysis on the following question from the 2010 AmericasBarometer² survey by LAPOP, in which 40,990 survey respondents from 24 countries were asked to respond “Yes” or “No” to the following statement:

EXC18. Do you think given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified?³

Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents answering “Yes” to the question in each country. Rates of agreeing that bribery can be justified under current circumstances range from between 7.6% and 7.8% in Guatemala, Chile and Brazil, to more than 30% in Haiti and Guyana. More than 20% of individuals in Mexico, Belize, and Trinidad &

Figure 1. Percentage of people thinking that given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Tobago respond affirmatively. About 15 of the 24 countries have between 10 to 20% of the population agreeing that bribery is sometimes acceptable.

The variation presented above suggests that attitudes toward bribery vary depending on national context. Yet, while explaining this cross-national variation is worthy of additional study, this *Insights* report focuses on individual-level predictors of this attitude. In what follows, using sociodemographic variables, I first explore if the likelihood of finding bribery justified is related to being part of particular sectors within

¹ Prior issues in the Insights series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>
 The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop>

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ This particular question was left unanswered by 3.46% of respondents (considering the pooled dataset).

the population. Next, I test three additional, non-rival expectations. First, people evaluating the social and economic context poorly will be more likely to accept that it may be justified to pay a bribe. Second, people lacking trust in the public authorities will agree that bribery is justifiable to compensate for the associated uncertainty. And, third, people interested in politics will be more likely to find bribery justifiable.⁴ I will further explain the logic of each of these three expectations in what follows, but first I examine a very basic model for bribe justification.

A Simple Profile of Bribe Justifiers

Extant research supports the expectation that some variation in responses to the question of whether bribes are justified can be attributed to sociodemographic factors (e.g., Redlawsk and McCann 2005).⁵ I assess the predictive power of socioeconomic and demographic factors in a simple model, in which the dependent variable is respondents' yes (1) / no (0) answers to a question about whether, given the current circumstances, paying a bribe is sometimes justified.⁶ Given the dichotomous nature of the

dependent variable, I use logit analysis. Among the independent variables, I include wealth⁷ and education (coded in four categories: none, primary, secondary, and higher). Assuming that those who are wealthier are more likely to have the means, motives, and opportunity to offer bribes, I expect that wealthier people will be more likely to condone bribery (see also Redlawsk and McCann 2005). Additionally, I suggest that the more educated know better how politics actually works and abandon "naïve" visions of altruistic politicians, perceiving more benignly public "favoritism," including bribery (Johnston 1986: 385-387; Jong-Sung and Khagram 2005).

I also include an urban versus rural locale variable (coded 0 for rural and 1 for urban). Seligson (2006) suggests that the urban milieu may be related to a higher acceptance of paying a bribe; state offices are more common in those contexts, thus creating more opportunities for bribery and, by extension, greater tolerance for this act. Age (coded in years) is expected to be related to bribery. Seligson (2006) finds that the relationship between age and corruption victimization is not linear, suggesting it is associated to the life cycle and the need to deal with state institutions; I tested, but found no evidence for a non-linear relationship between age and perceived acceptability of bribe-paying. And finally, I include a measure of gender (coded 0 for male and 1 for female). The rationale for including this variable is research on gender role differences, which finds that women tend to condemn the violation of public norms than men (Redlawsk and McCann 2005: 265).

Figure 2 shows the results of the logit regression analysis by reporting the effects of each predictor in the model using standardized

⁴ Previous research has also shown that bribery's acceptability is conditioned on being a local citizen, whereas bribery by foreigners is condemned (Tsalikis and Nwachukwu 1991). This line of argument goes beyond the analysis presented in this report.

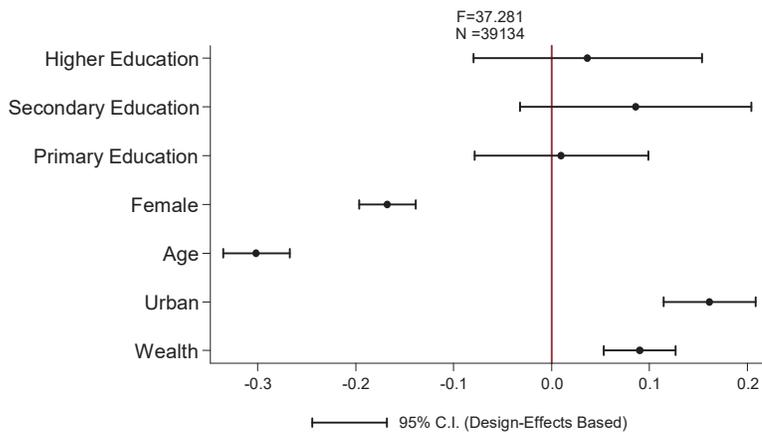
⁵ Redlawsk and McCann (2005) find, for the U.S., that individuals with higher education and income, and who are white, female, conservative and older are more likely to consider activities involving clear law-breaking to be corrupt. By contrast, considering practices of "favoritism" as corrupt is negatively associated with education, income, being white and Republican, but positively related to being female, older, a Democrat and, although only slightly, to being conservative.

⁶ The question used here asks the respondent to make a two-part evaluation. Initially they need to evaluate the conditions in their country, and immediately, they assess the repertoire of alternatives to face that context. One of them is paying a bribe, which is a concept easily understandable across countries, avoiding several of the comparability problems found in studies about corruption (Andersson and Heywood 2009).

⁷ See Abby Córdova, 2009, "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators" for a description of the construction of the wealth index:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

Figure 2. Logistic model predicting who considers paying a bribe justified



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
 Note: Country fixed effects and intercept included but not shown here

coefficients, so that the relative effect of each can be more easily discerned. The estimated effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable is represented by a dot. If the dot and its corresponding bars, which indicate the 95% confidence interval, fall to the left of the 0 line, then the relationship is considered both negative and statistically significant; if the dot and bars fall to the right of the 0 line, the relationship is considered positive and statistically significant.

The results in Figure 2 show that education does not significantly predict one's tendency to justify bribery, considering current conditions. As expected, however, women are less likely to condone paying bribes. Also as expected, wealth and living in an urban setting are positively associated with the likelihood of considering paying a bribe justified. Finally, as age increases, the probability that someone will agree that bribery is sometimes justified decreases.⁸ Interestingly, the effect of age is quite strong. Some (Torgler and Valev 2006) suggest this effect can be attributed to the increasing stakes of older people in maintaining a fair system in

⁸ For age, I also tested a squared value to take into consideration the results of Seligson (2006), who finds that there is a peak in the chances of experiencing corruption, but then it decreases. However, I did not find support for a similar non-linear relationship in this model.

which they are deeply invested. Nonetheless, if that were the case, wealth level should capture some of this effect. Some of this may be related to an individual's decreased tendency, over time, to interact with public officials in arenas where bribe-taking is common, though it is unclear if this would explain completely what is a very strong effect. The next section explores the impact of additional factors to develop a more extensive explanation of when and why bribery is likely to be considered justified.

Why Might Individuals Condone Bribery?

While the above tells us something about who is more likely to report that paying a bribe is justified, it does not tell us much about *why*. I assert that to understand when individuals find paying a bribe justified, one needs to take into consideration three general sets of criteria: perceptions of social and economic conditions; perceptions related to uncertainty when dealing with public officials (measured via trust in political institutions); and, awareness of "politics as usual" (measured via political interest).

With respect to perceptions of economic and social conditions, the expectation is that negative assessments will make individuals more likely to find bribery appropriate; the reason is that poor circumstances will motivate individuals to accept unattractive means in order to secure better outcomes (Mocan 2008). This mechanism is consistent with what others have argued: opinions about corruption are informed by perceptions of other salient issues in a given country, such as violence, poverty, or protection of rights (Abramo 2007).

Respondents' perceptions of perceptions of economic and social conditions are assessed through retrospective evaluations of the national

economy,⁹ perceptions of the impact of crime on the country's future,¹⁰ and beliefs that corruption is widespread among public officials.¹¹

Uncertainty in the interaction with public employees should also help explain who finds bribery justified. Husted (1999) found that, at least for risk-averse people, paying a bribe is a means for producing more certain results in environments where the arbitrariness of justice and bad economic conditions lead to uncertainty. The same reasoning could be extended if we assume that low levels of trust in public authorities produce uncertainty when dealing with them. Therefore, when institutional trust is low, the likelihood of finding the use of corruption justified to compensate for uncertain outcomes will be higher. This expectation is consistent with the findings of Morris and Klesner (2010: 1273), according to whom tolerance of corruption is associated with lower levels of trust in political institutions.

The following variables are included to capture the effect of trust in institutions on the belief that it is justifiable to pay a bribe: trust in the municipal government¹² and trust in the national police.¹³ I selected these trust measures because they refer to comparatively proximate interactions with public officials. However, to gauge the relevance of more distant ties as well, I include trust in the national government¹⁴ and trust in the justice system.¹⁵ Generally speaking,

the expectation is that lower levels of trust will be associated with a higher propensity to find bribe-taking sometimes justifiable, under the circumstances.

Finally, dealing with the state is costly. In addition to the economic costs, it requires having information about public procedures and motivation to deal with it in spite of its rigidities. People interested in politics have an advantage in this realm because they monitor more closely the public world, learning about its processes, its timing, and the most effective means to deal with it.¹⁶ These are all important skills when negotiating with state officials and securing their complicity in illegal transactions (Collins et al. 2009: 93). Along these lines, I expect that people are more likely to find paying a bribe justified if they are interested in politics,¹⁷ because they have a better understanding of the public sector and they are more alert to the best means to get things done, even if that implies paying bribes (Huntington 2006).

The results in Figure 3 support expectations regarding the relationships between negative perceptions of one's context and finding paying bribes to be a justifiable behavior. If respondents perceive that the national economy has gotten worse in the past 12 months, that crime is a threat for their future, or that corruption is very common among public officials, they are more likely to report that paying a bribe is justified.

Additionally, trust in the more immediate authorities (police and the municipal government) is negatively related to the likelihood of believing that paying bribes is justified if these variables are included in the

⁹ **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?: Better, Same, Worse.

¹⁰ **AOJ11A.** And speaking of the country in general, how much do you think that the level of crime that we have now represents a threat to our future well-being? None, Little, Somewhat, Very Much.

¹¹ **EXC7.** Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is: Very uncommon, Uncommon, Common, Very Common.

¹² **B32.** To what extent do you trust the local or municipal government?

¹³ **B18.** To what extent do you trust the National Police?

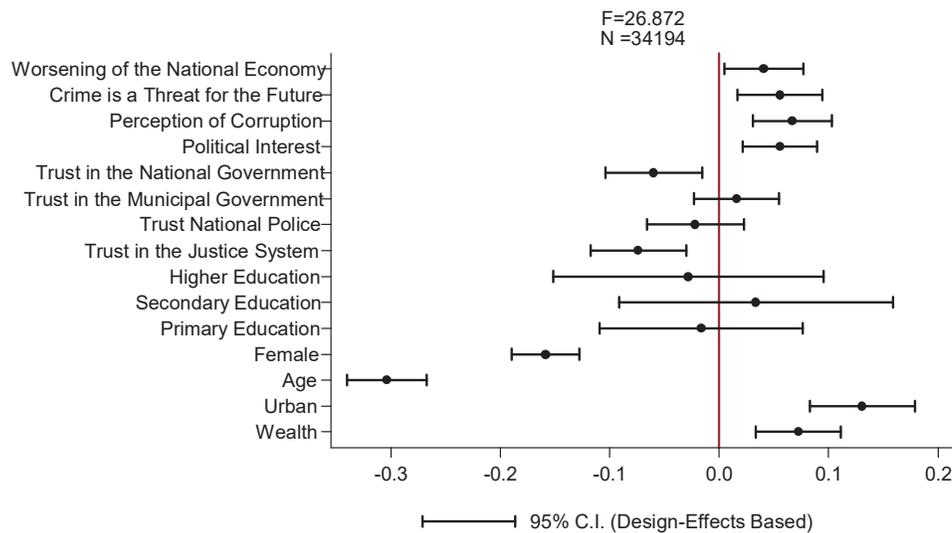
¹⁴ **B14.** To what extent do you trust the national government?

¹⁵ **B10A.** To what extent do you trust the justice system?

¹⁶ The potential economic benefits of dealing effectively with the state can be an important incentive for bribery. It has been shown that in contexts with windfall rents there are high incentives for paying bribes to secure access to those resources (Ades and Di Tella 1999).

¹⁷ **POL1.** How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?

Figure 3. Logistic model predicting when is justified paying a bribe



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
 Note: Country fixed effects and intercept included but not shown here

model independently of the other trust measures (in analyses not presented here). But, when trust in the justice system and the national government are added, as is the case in Figure 3, those variables are statistically significant and trust in the police and the municipal authorities cease being statistically significant. This finding suggests the underlying dimension behind the initial results is not the institutions' proximity to individuals, but rather their association with the State more generally. If the national government or the justice system are not perceived as trustworthy, the likelihood of finding paying a bribe appropriate increases.¹⁸

Finally, the more interested in politics someone is, the more likely she is to find paying a bribe justifiable. Although the model does not include a direct measure of the contexts where bribery could be used, interest in public affairs certainly

¹⁸ It is important to distinguish between perceiving that these institutions are fighting corruption and their trustworthiness. Initial analyses (not shown) demonstrated that the perception of the extent to which the current administration is fighting corruption has no relationship to the likelihood of condoning bribery.

favors the acquisition of information relevant when considering paying a bribe.

Conclusions

Paying a bribe is believed to be justified when there are negative expectations about one's context. Thus, if crime is perceived as a threat for one's future, if the economy is perceived as having gotten worse in recent months, if corruption is thought to be common among public officials, or if public institutions are not

perceived as trustworthy, it is understood that a reasonable way to attempt to secure a better outcome is through bribery. Additionally, when there is a high interest in political affairs people have a better understanding of the public sector and are more alert to the best means to get things done, even if that implies paying bribes.¹⁹

Although corruption might be seen as an appropriate response to overcome bad conditions in a country, we must consider possible ways to circumvent this logic. Increasing the general public's interest in public affairs so that one particular group is no longer advantaged when dealing with the state may have the desirable properties of promoting a more realistic evaluation of how common corruption is (Allison and Canache 2005) and increasing public oversight. Additionally, higher

¹⁹ They may, in addition, be more cynical, as they are more tuned in to "politics as usual"; of course, however, the trust in institutions variables should pick up some of that effect. An avenue for future research is analyzing if these effects are conditioned under specific circumstances. Initial analyses show that the effect of interest in politics is lower if crime or corruption are perceived to be pervasive, thus diluting the advantage of knowing how to deal with the public sector.

interest in politics and better oversight might increase the levels of trust in public institutions, also leading to greater disapproval of bribery. However, it may be an uphill battle to instill high levels of political interest in all citizens; and, moreover, it could have the reverse and unfortunate consequence of spreading tolerance of bribery and distrust of institutions. A more direct route, then, would be to work to increase trust in institutions; the more that people perceive the authorities as playing a fair game,

the more likely they will be to approach politics with norms of fairness.

In conclusion, corruption is not just the product of unscrupulous people, but for many citizens bribery is a rational adaptation to their situation and the available means. Therefore, solutions also ought to be found in the improvement of people's living conditions and in facilitating effective and bribe-free interactions with their state.

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Appendix 1. Logit model explaining agreement with the statement that given how things are, it is sometimes justified to pay a bribe

	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error
Worsening of the National Economy	0.0407	0.0183
Crime is a Threat for the Future	0.0556	0.0198
Perception of Corruption	0.0666	0.0184
Political Interest	0.0555	0.0173
Trust in the National Government	-0.0596	0.0225
Trust in the Municipal Government	0.0160	0.0197
Trust in the National Police	-0.0217	0.0226
Trust in the Justice System	-0.0739	0.0222
Primary Education	-0.0162	0.0473
Secondary Education	0.0337	0.0637
Higher Education	-0.0281	0.0630
Female	-0.1585	0.0157
Age	-0.3037	0.0185
Urban	0.1309	0.0245
Wealth	0.0724	0.0198
Mexico	0.1365	0.0262
Guatemala	-0.0841	0.0297
El Salvador	0.0269	0.0259
Honduras	-0.0352	0.0272
Nicaragua	0.0448	0.0253
Costa Rica	-0.0205	0.0296
Panama	0.0240	0.0379
Colombia	0.1212	0.0251
Ecuador	0.0972	0.0375
Bolivia	0.0893	0.0431
Peru	0.0768	0.0290
Paraguay	-0.0148	0.0284
Chile	-0.0612	0.0353
Brazil	-0.1025	0.0427
Venezuela	-0.0250	0.0320
Argentina	-0.0300	0.0314
Dominican Republic	0.1063	0.0279
Haiti	0.2594	0.0291
Jamaica	0.1269	0.0290
Guyana	0.2804	0.0312
Trinidad & Tobago	0.1830	0.0259
Belize	0.2074	0.0262
Suriname	0.0983	0.0290
Constant	-1.8132	0.0243
<i>F(38, 2097)</i>	26.87	
<i>Observations</i>	34194	

No education is the reference category for education, and Uruguay for country fixed effects.

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 73

Pigmentocracy in the Americas: How is Educational Attainment Related to Skin Color?

By Edward Telles and Liza Steele
etelles@princeton.edu
Princeton University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report addresses the question of whether educational attainment, a key indicator of socioeconomic status, is related to skin color in Latin America and the Caribbean. Based on data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer, our analysis shows that persons with lighter skin color tend to have higher levels of schooling than those with dark skin color throughout the region, with few exceptions. Moreover, these differences are statistically significant in most cases and, as we show in a test of several multiracial countries, the negative relation between skin color and educational attainment occurs independently of class origin and other variables known to affect socioeconomic status. Thus, we find that skin color, a central measure of race, is an important source of social stratification throughout the Americas today.

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

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Scholars of Latin America have recently increased their attention to issues of race and ethnicity. Challenging long held narratives that Latin American nations have avoided the racial and ethnic divisions that have plagued the rest of the world through race mixture (*mestizaje*), several of the region's nations have constitutionally declared themselves as multicultural. Most national censuses in Latin America, for example, now ask questions about whether respondents self-identify as indigenous or black/Afro-descendant. A handful of countries, such as Brazil and Colombia, have gone as far as instituting race-based affirmative action programs, while Bolivia has elected a president who asserts his indigenous (Aymara) identity. These changes have been largely in response to growing black and indigenous social movements throughout the region.

Social and economic inequalities by race and ethnicity are also beginning to be recognized. As early as 1944, Alejandro Lipschutz, a Chilean anthropologist, coined the idea of Latin America as a pigmentocracy where the region's social hierarchies are ethnic or color-based. However, that idea has been largely ignored until recently, when research has begun to document racial inequalities based on the new census data on racial identification (Flórez et al 2001, Telles 2004, 2007, Ñopo et al 2007).

New research on racial and ethnic inequality in Latin America often relies on new census or survey data, which determines one's ethnoracial classification according to self-identification. These data require that respondents identify themselves among a number of categories including white, *negro* (black), mulatto, mestizo or indigenous. These studies often show that Afro-descendant and indigenous people occupy the lowest rungs of the income, educational and occupational ladder in the multiracial countries of Latin America.

However, racial identification in Latin America—where the categories themselves are context dependent and have fuzzy boundaries—is often more ambiguous and fluid than in the United States. Respondents often identify themselves as belonging to categories that are different from the ones into

which others place them (Harris 1963; Telles and Lim 1998). For various reasons, persons that are perceived as black, mulatto, or indigenous may choose to identify themselves as mestizo, or even white (Wade 1997; Telles and Flores forthcoming).

Therefore, persons with the same color and physical appearance might choose to identify in distinct ethnoracial categories from each other. Moreover, ethnoracial identification also often hides considerable physical variation. For example, persons who identify as mestizo comprise population majorities in countries like Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, but that category may include a full spectrum of people ranging from fair-appearing persons with light hair to those who appear indigenous and have a dark brown skin tone (Telles and Flores forthcoming).

Self-identification may largely reflect classification by others but it may also be conditioned by people's experiences and how they want to be understood. Moreover, individuals of different skin colors but who

Figure 1. Skin Color Palette Used in the 2010 AmericasBarometer



identify in the same ethnoracial category might be treated differently because of their skin tone, leading to differences in their life chances. Thus ethnoracial identification may be inadequate for capturing racial differences in socioeconomic status (Telles and Lim 1998).

For this reason, we use actual skin color in this study. As an outward measure of race, we believe that skin color is relatively objective and better reflects classification by others. A study of five Latin American countries has shown that skin color is more closely correlated with occupation and education than is the ethnoracial self-identification used in the censuses, perhaps reflecting that social treatment in labor and educational markets is based more on how others perceive a person than how that person defines himself or herself (Telles, Flores and Urrea 2011).

In this study, we ask: To what extent are years of schooling related to skin color? Skin color ratings have been used in several surveys about racial discrimination and racial attitudes in the United States, but we know of no research on the effect of skin color specifically in Latin America. We then ask whether color/racial inequalities, if they exist, are simply coterminous with class or whether they also act independently of class. Unfortunately, there is little empirical research in Latin America and the Caribbean that examines the effect of both race and class simultaneously, outside of Brazil (Telles 2008).

In the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer, the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University incorporated a new measure of skin color.¹ This measure was

The skin color palette provides a unique perspective on race in 23 countries of the Americas.

developed and sponsored by Princeton University's Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) (the PERLA website may be found at perla.princeton.edu). To measure skin color, interviewers rated the facial skin color of each respondent according to colors on a skin color palette, which was not shown to the respondent. The palette, found in Figure 1, included eleven skin tones, with "1" being the lightest and "11" being the darkest.² The colors of the palette came from internet photographs and the palette was extensively pre-tested in several countries in the region for ease of use by interviewers and to see if it covered the range of colors found in the field. The resulting variable, **COLORR**, is available for 39,238 respondents in 23 of the 26 countries of the AmericasBarometer (excluding Haiti, the United States, and Canada), providing a unique perspective on race across the Americas.³

In Figure 2, we show the relation between skin color and schooling for 23 countries in the 2010 AmericasBarometer.⁴ Our dependent variable is educational attainment, which is based on the grade level completed by the respondent.

Figure 2 graphically represents the relation between educational attainment and skin color in four regions, where the lightest persons are near 1 and the darkest near 11. We present data points only where there are at least 30 persons from the survey. Categories with fewer than 30 respondents are combined with contiguous groups (for example, 1's are combined with 2's in many countries, in which case the combined category is reported as a 2). Thus the lines never span the entire color spectrum. As a rule of thumb, self-identified whites are

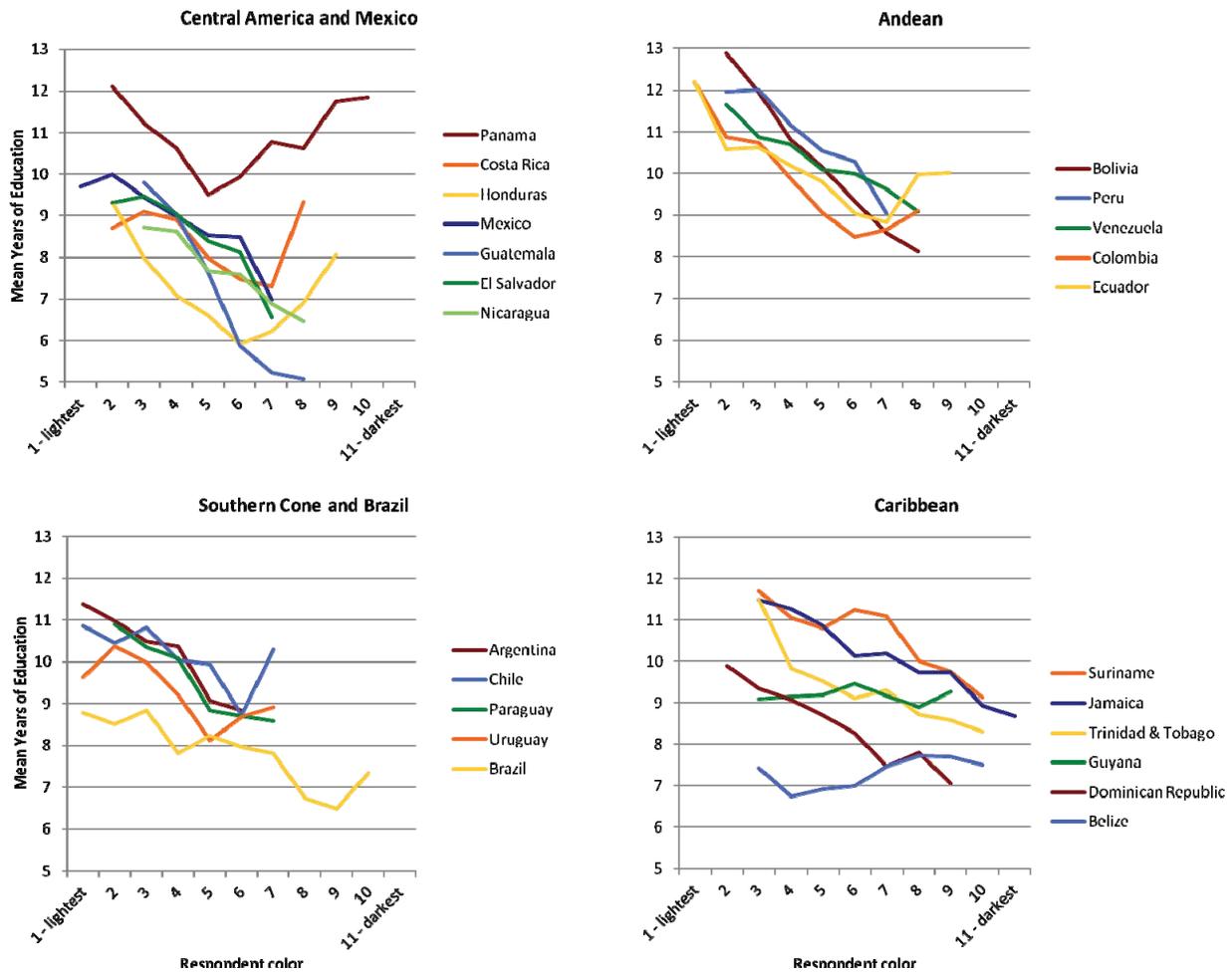
¹ Funding for the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

² Interviewers were also asked to code their *own* skin color at the end of the interview using the same color palette; these data are not reported on in this *Insights* report, but are available in the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey data.

³ Across the countries where this variable was included, only 62 respondents, or 0.16% of the sample, could not be classified.

⁴ The authors thank Dominique Zéphyr for help developing the figures presented in this report.

Figure 2. Relation between Skin Color and Educational Attainment in Latin America and the Caribbean



concentrated in the 1-4 skin color categories, mestizos are 3-5, indigenous peoples and mulattos in 4-6, mulattos and blacks in 6 and higher (Telles, Flores and Urrea 2011), but as these values show, there is much overlap by skin color among persons identifying in distinct ethnoracial categories.

Most of the lines reveal a downward trend from the lightest persons having the highest mean educational attainment to the darkest persons having the lowest. This trend is especially clear and steep in the Andean region, where the mean usually decreases from about 12 years for the lightest persons to about 9 years for the darkest persons; the fall is steepest in Bolivia, where it goes from 13 years of schooling.

The negative relation between color and schooling is also apparent throughout the color spectrum in four of the seven countries (Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua) in the Mexico/Central American region. At the extreme, schooling decreases from a mean of about 10 years for the lightest Guatemalans to about 5 years for the darkest.

However, Panama is a clear exception where the mean dips for persons with skin colors of 4 and then trends upward from there to the point that the darkest Panamanians have equivalent levels of schooling as the lightest. This may reflect the especially low status of a sizeable indigenous and mestizo population in that country, while Afro-descendants, primarily those of West Indian background, seem to have a relatively high status in that country, similar

to those at the light end of the color spectrum. There are somewhat similar trends in Honduras and Costa Rica, though the upward trends begin at a darker color point.

The negative trend is also apparent in the Southern Cone and Brazil, though it tends to be less steep than in the Andean and Mexico/Central America regions. Also, the darkest ends tend to rise slightly in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, though they never reach the levels of the lightest population, as they do in some Central American countries. Moreover, because of the small number of respondents in these categories in the Southern Cone and Brazil, the values may not be statistically different from those of the adjacent categories.

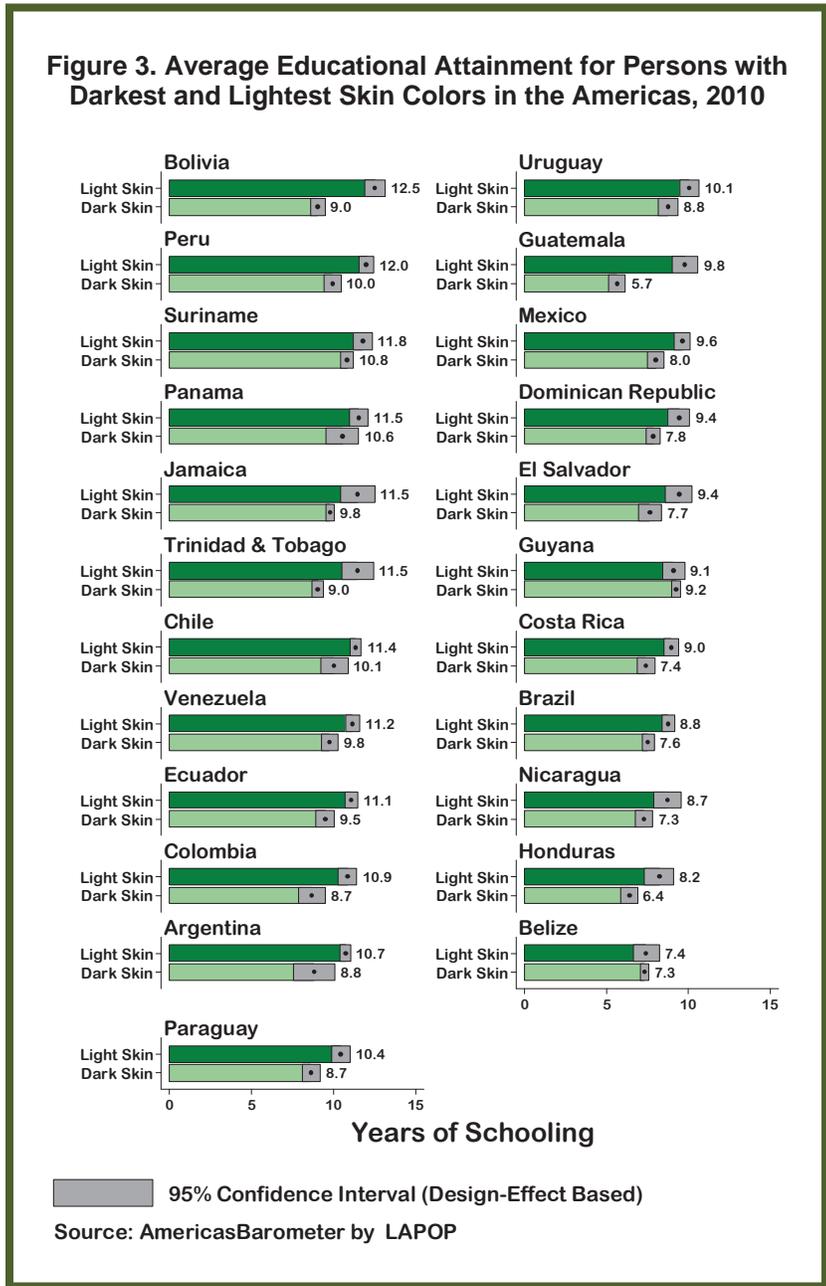
Finally, countries in the Caribbean show the widest variation in the relation between color and education. Perhaps the clearest evidence of a pigmentocracy in the Caribbean is for the Dominican Republic, the one Spanish speaking country in the region. In contrast, the trend for Guyana is fairly flat while Belize trends in the opposite direction to all other countries, though only slightly.

Figure 3 shows the mean levels of schooling for the residents with the lightest skin (1-3) compared to those with darkest skin (6+) in all 23 countries, ordered by the size of the average difference between the two. Figure 3 also presents confidence intervals around these means, given that there is a margin of error for these population samples, as there is in all survey samples of large populations.

Figure 3 reveals that we can be 95% confident that in the national population, persons with light skin have more years of schooling than their dark skin counterparts in almost every country. The exceptions are Panama, Suriname, Belize and Guyana, where there are no statistically significant differences in educational attainment between their lightest and darkest citizens. The findings in Figure 3 largely reflect those in Figure 2,

though the former shows when differences are statistically significant between persons on the two ends of the color continuum.

Interestingly, the largest national differences are in Guatemala and Bolivia, the two countries with the largest proportion of indigenous peoples and with only tiny Afro-descendant populations. This seems to reflect the especially



low socioeconomic status of indigenous people in the region, even when compared to Afro-

descendants. Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia and Peru also have sizeable differences in educational inequality.

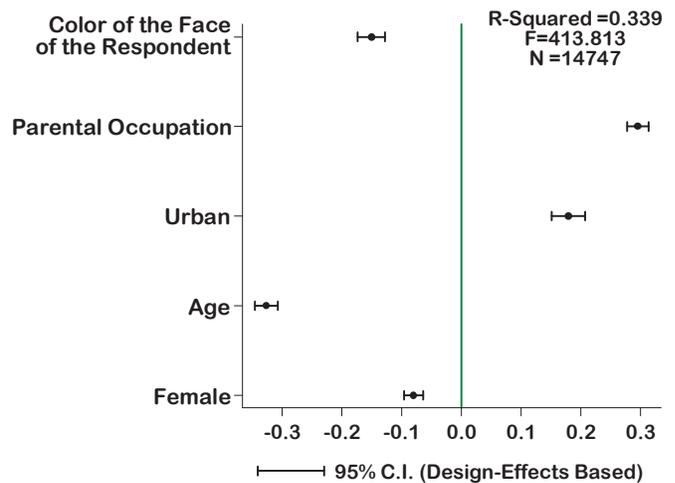
In most other countries, actual mean differences, although high in some cases, often have large margins of error. For example, since Argentina has few persons with dark skin and Jamaica has few persons with light skin, the margin of sampling error around the means for those categories is large. Surprisingly, racial educational inequality in Brazil, the country with the most developed scholarly tradition of studying race, is relatively low, and the margins of error are relatively small.

We now turn to the important question of whether the relation between color and education that we have found is simply a reflection of class and other inequalities or whether race has an independent relation with education. The dominant scholarly tradition on socioeconomic inequalities and social mobility in Latin America often ignores issues of race, arguing that racial differences are merely an epiphenomenon of class or that class origins are more important than race or color (González Casanova 1965; Portes and Hoffman 2003; Atria 2004; Filgueira 2001). According to González Casanova's (1965) influential sociological text, class is the most important cleavage; ethnicity, especially indigenous ethnicity, is important but transitory; and race is mostly insignificant.

Since other factors besides color may affect years of schooling, we run a regression analysis predicting years of education by skin color, as well as class origin, age, sex, urban/rural residence and country of residence. We run the regression model only for the eight countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru) in which the class origin data are available.

We are particularly interested in the effect of class origins since the traditional scholarly approach in Latin America expects that class origins are able to explain racial/color inequalities. To model class origins we follow the standard approach of using a status ranked set of parental occupational groups. These are

Figure 4. Effects of Skin Color and Other Factors on Educational Attainment in Select Latin American Countries



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

based on the occupations of the heads of household when the respondents were 14 years old (see Telles, Flores and Urrea 2011 for more information on methods). The results of the OLS regression analysis are shown in the first column of the Appendix and are summarized graphically in Figure 4. In order to compare the relative sizes of the effects, the figure presents standardized coefficients.

For reasons of space, we do not show the country controls in Figure 4. As the confidence interval bars reveal in the graph, all of the variables in our model are statistically significant and thus they are all independently associated with educational attainment. While darker skin color, older age and being female are associated with lower educational attainment, having parents in occupations of higher status and living in an urban area are associated with having more schooling. In particular, the color effect is about half the size of the class origins effect and about twice as large as the effect of sex, based on the standardized regression coefficients. (The unstandardized regression coefficient, which we do not show, reveals a decrease of about one-third (0.34) of a year, on average, for each darker shade along our 11-point skin color continuum.)

Finally, the second OLS regression model reported in the Appendix includes interactions between skin color and an indicator variable for each country, using Brazil as the country of reference. Importantly, that model reveals that *skin color has a statistically significant effect on educational attainment in all eight countries*, even after controlling for factors such as social class, gender, and urban/rural residence. The relation between color and education in Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and the Dominican Republic is similar to that in Brazil, while dark skin color penalizes Guatemalans and Bolivians even more than nationals of the other countries. Guatemala and Bolivia are therefore particularly pigmentocratic, confirming the descriptive findings shown in Figures 1 and 2. This is consistent with findings from related research that indigenous persons are the poorest ethnoracial group in several Latin American countries (Telles, Flores and Urrea 2011).

Conclusion

In sum, we show that the bulk of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean may be safely characterized as pigmentocracies. The most educated persons tend to have the lightest skin color while those with the least education tend to have the darkest. In another study, we have shown that color is a better predictor of education and income than ethnoracial identification for a handful of countries (Telles, Flores and Urrea 2011) and here we have shown that color predicts educational attainment in the large majority of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, inequalities by skin color do not appear to be mere results of historical processes; rather, they occur independently of parental occupation,

suggesting that racial differences are also being reproduced within the current generation.

These findings on the importance of race run against much of the traditional thinking about social stratification south of the U.S. border. Race has been surprisingly ignored by many leading social scientists in the region, in favor of primarily class-based explanations. However, because of their theoretical prisms or because of the unavailability of race data, analysts have rarely empirically tested whether race--especially skin color--is related to socioeconomic status in the region.

Not that class is unimportant. Race and class operate together to shape stratification in the

Americas, though the effect of race has been underestimated in previous research. In addition, it is important to note that class origins themselves are also the result of accumulated racial privileges and disadvantages acquired in the past, including through formal institutions such as *casta* systems, slavery and other forced labor systems that indigenous people, blacks and mulattos were regularly subjected to, as well as through informal racial discrimination.

Finally, the extent to which race is correlated with education varies substantially in the region. The most notable pigmentocracies are Guatemala and Bolivia, the two countries with the proportionately largest indigenous populations. This is even in comparison to Brazil, where most research on race has concentrated, and to several other racially diverse countries. This finding largely reflects the especially low status of the indigenous population. On the other hand, we find a U-shaped relation between color and education in Panama and the complete lack of a pigmentocracy in Belize and Guyana.

Dark skin color penalizes Guatemalans and Bolivians even more than nationals of the other countries.

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Appendix: Ordinary Least Squares Models Predicting Years of Schooling in Select Latin American Countries, 2010

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error
Skin color	-0.151*	0.012	-0.116*	0.017
Parental occupation	0.295*	0.009	0.293*	0.009
Female	-0.080*	0.008	-0.082*	0.008
Age	-0.326*	0.010	-0.325*	0.010
Urban	0.179*	0.014	0.176*	0.014
Mexico	0.042*	0.008	0.049*	0.016
Guatemala	0.018*	0.008	0.102*	0.020
Colombia	0.076*	0.009	0.075*	0.017
Ecuador	0.135*	0.009	0.150*	0.025
Bolivia	0.145*	0.010	0.210*	0.024
Peru	0.122*	0.007	0.117*	0.017
Dominican Republic	0.056*	0.009	0.073*	0.019
Interaction: Mexico X skin color			-0.006	0.016
Interaction: Guatemala X skin color			-0.095*	0.021
Interaction: Colombia X skin color			0.001	0.018
Interaction: Ecuador X skin color			-0.016	0.026
Interaction: Bolivia X skin color			-0.073*	0.027
Interaction: Peru X skin color			0.006	0.017
Interaction: Dominican Republic X skin color			-0.021	0.018
<i>Constant</i>	-0.289*	0.020	-0.288*	0.021
<i>R-Squared</i>	0.339		0.341	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	14,747		14,747	

Note: Coefficients are standardized, and are statistically significant at * $p < .05$, two-tailed. Brazil is the country of reference.

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 74

Who Trusts the Mass Media in Latin America?

By Matthew L. Layton
matthew.l.layton@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report focuses on and assesses selected explanations of levels of trust in the mass media among citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean. On average, trust in the media is evident in the region; yet, many citizens remain unconvinced. To explain varying levels of trust, I focus on a range of indicators of political awareness. Interestingly, the results suggest that there are systematic differences in how different dimensions of political awareness relate to trust in the media. Thus, the report paints a nuanced portrait of the correlates of trust in the media in the region and raises many important questions that merit further study in the context of the Americas.

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

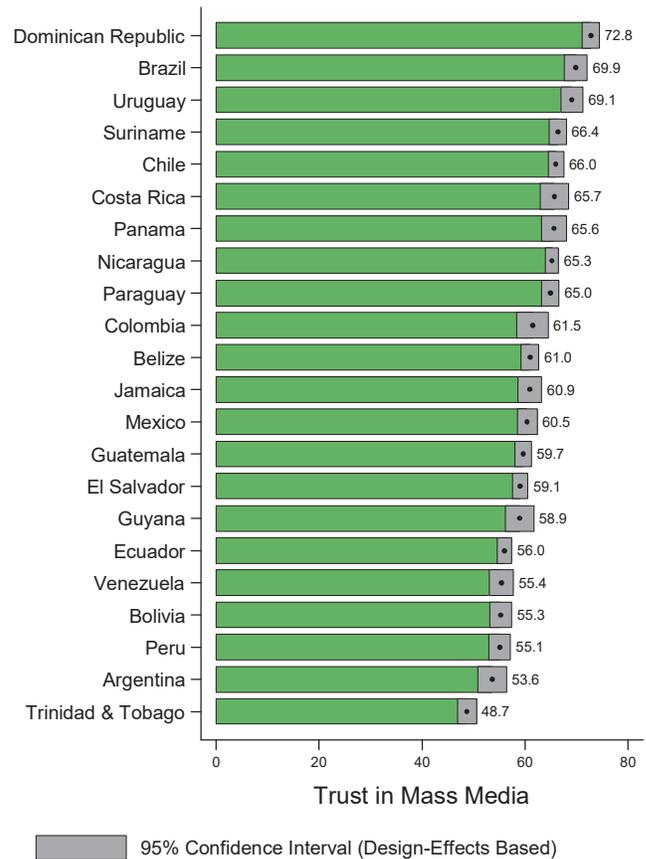
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In democracies, the media plays an intermediary role between elites and the mass public. When a society allows and protects the free exchange of ideas and when the media make use of that freedom, both elites and the mass public can benefit. Indeed, under these conditions, the media can be both an effective vehicle for criticism of ruling elites and a vital medium through which elites seek support for their electoral ambitions (Sen 1999, 152). At the individual level, the availability of political news, its content, and the way in which an individual allocates attention to that news significantly determine the political opinions of citizens (Zaller 1992) and can determine the extent of individual exposure to cross-cutting world views (Mutz and Martin 2001). Still, it is unlikely that the messages presented in the media will be persuasive to individuals unless they first trust the “messenger” (Boudreau 2009; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Miller and Krosnick 2000).

In this *Insights* report¹, I focus on and assess selected explanations of levels of trust in the mass media among citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean. On average, trust in the media is evident in the region; yet, many citizens remain unconvinced. To explain varying levels of trust, I focus on a range of indicators of political awareness. Interestingly, I find that there are systematic differences in how different dimensions of political awareness relate to trust in the media.

This report focuses on the following question from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP:²

Figure 1. Average Level of Trust in Mass Media across Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

B37. “To what extent do you trust the mass media?”³

Figure 1 shows mean responses (with confidence intervals) by country, with responses recalibrated from the original seven-point scale (on which responses ran from not at all, “1”, to a lot, “7”) to a 0-100 scale where

¹ Prior issues of the *Insights* series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ The non-response rate for this question was 1.94%. This report excludes the USA and Canada because its emphasis is on Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, this report excludes Haiti and Honduras given the exceptional events leading up to the survey fieldwork, which may have altered citizen trust in media in unique ways. Moreover, these countries lack key measures for the models presented in the analysis to follow. After excluding these countries, non-response was 2.21%. For purposes of comparison, mean trust in the media in the excluded countries was: USA=28.3; Haiti=43.5; Canada=45.4; Honduras=59.8.

higher values indicate more trust in the mass media.⁴

In Figure 1, mean levels of trust vary between a low of 48.7 in Trinidad & Tobago and a high of 72.8 in the Dominican Republic. In short, average trust in the mass media ranges from ambivalent levels (near the midpoint of 50) to fairly trusting levels across the countries examined here. Still, it is interesting to note that less than 5% of the variance in the measure of trust in the mass media is at the country level; the bulk of the variance is at the individual level.⁵ Given the relative invariance in trust at the national level, the remainder of this report will focus on individual-level determinants of trust in the mass media after controlling for the “fixed effects,” or mean levels of trust, at the national level.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Media Trust

The mass media provide an important source of information for citizens, although as Zaller (1992, 22) notes, citizens “are more than passive receivers of whatever media communications they encounter.” This raises the question of whether there are any systematic patterns as to who reports higher trust in the media.

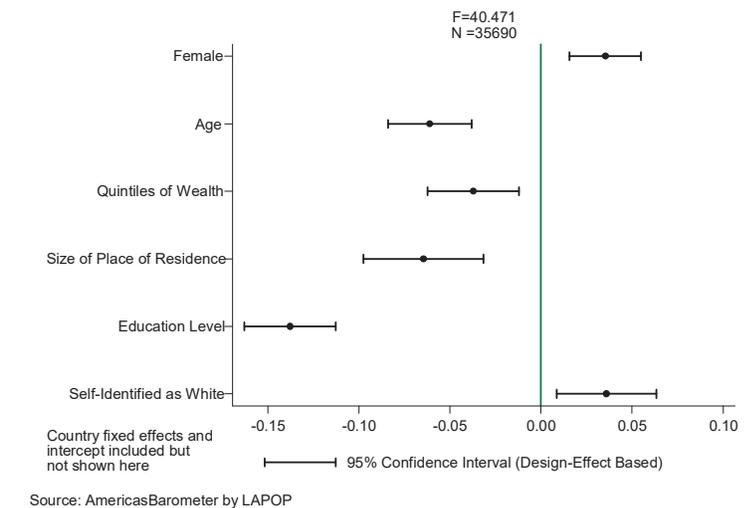
In this section I examine the extent to which a simple battery of socioeconomic and demographic variables relates to trust in the media. Specifically, I include age (divided into six categories), gender, quintile of wealth⁶, level of education, size of the respondent’s city (town) of residence, and racial self-

⁴ All analyses were conducted with STATA v11 and results were adjusted for the complex sample design employed.

⁵ Stated more precisely, after fitting a 3-level hierarchical linear null model, with individuals at level 1, primary sampling units (PSUs) at level 2 (to account for correlated variance among respondents in the same cluster), and country at level 3, 89.36% of the variance is found at the individual level, 6.04% at the PSU level, and 4.59% at the country level.

⁶ For details on the creation of the wealth measure see Córdova (2009).

Figure 2. Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors as Predictors of Trust in the Mass Media



identification in the model of trust in the mass media. The results from this analysis appear in Figure 2.⁷ Independent variables appear on the vertical axis. The impact of each of these variables on levels of trust in mass media is shown by a dot, which if located to the right of the vertical “0” line indicates a positive effect, and if to the left a negative impact. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals for these effects. We can be at least 95% confident that a given effect is statistically significant if its confidence interval does not cross the vertical axis at “0”. All variables are standardized for ease of comparison and the model includes country-fixed effects which are not shown in this figure for ease of presentation (see Appendix for details).

The results of this demographic model show that, on average and all else equal, women and those who self-identify as white are more trusting of the mass media than men and non-whites, respectively. Moreover, older, wealthier, and more educated respondents are

⁷ The model is run using ordered logistic regression with parameter estimates corrected for the complex sample design. Full results appear in the Appendix.

less trusting of the mass media, as are respondents who live in larger cities. Of these findings, the correlation between education and trust in the mass media is the strongest. This strong finding for education raises the question of whether other measures of citizen awareness might explain additional variation in individual levels of trust in the mass media.

Informed Citizens and Trust in the Mass Media

Prior literature has proposed many dimensions of political awareness. Zaller (1992, 21) notes several of these: “media exposure, political participation, education, and self-described interest in politics,” as well as “simple tests of neutral factual information about politics” (i.e., political knowledge). An individual’s sense of internal efficacy (Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991), or the degree to which they claim that they understand the most important issues in the country, is yet another component of awareness.

Arguably, each of these is a different dimension of an individual’s political exposure and awareness. The data used here include indicators of all of these dimensions of awareness and thus provide a means to test the effect that being informed in each of these different ways has on levels of trust in the mass media at the individual level.⁸ Some forms of

⁸ The items that measure each of these are as follows. *Media exposure* is measured using question **GI0**, “About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet?” The response options are: daily, a few times a week, a few times a month, rarely, or never. *Political participation* is measured using two indicators of campaign and party activism, which is arguably the most awareness-intensive dimension of political participation identified in the literature (for other dimensions see Booth and Seligson 2009). *Opinion leader* is measured using **PP1**, “During election times, some people try to convince others to vote for a party or candidate. How often have you tried to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate?” Response options were “frequently,” “occasionally,” “rarely,” “never.” *Worked campaign* is measured using **PP2**, “There are people who work for parties or candidates during electoral campaigns. Did you work for any candidate or party in the last presidential

elections?” Response options were yes (1) and no (0). *Education* is measured using the level of school completed, as in the demographic model. *Interest in politics* is measured using question **POL1**. “How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?” *Political knowledge* is measured as a four-point count (0 to 3) of the number of factual political knowledge questions the respondent answers successfully, using items **GI1**, **GI3**, and **GI4**. *Internal efficacy* is measured using question **EFF2**, which asks respondents to report how much they agree or disagree with the following statement: “You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country.” Admittedly, this is only one component of internal efficacy as traditionally conceptualized (Morrell 2003); however, it is the only component available in the 2010 data.

After controlling for the demographic variables examined in the previous section (age, gender, quintile of wealth, size of the respondent’s city of residence, and racial self-identification), the model of trust in the media proposed here attempts to isolate the effects of the several dimensions of being an informed citizen by controlling for other indicators that might contribute to the degree to which respondents are exposed to information. These controls include self-reported measures of two personality traits⁹: critical-quarrelsome and open-intellectual. The model also controls for interpersonal trust¹⁰ and church attendance¹¹ as indicators of the respondent’s inherent level of trust.

Respondents who self-report critical or quarrelsome personalities should be less trusting of the media, as they would be of any institution. Those who report being open and

⁹ Measured using **PER2** and **PER5** from the self-reported personality battery included in the 2010 questionnaire. There is an interesting literature that suggests that stable and enduring personality traits can significantly influence political outcomes including attitude change and engagement in political behaviors (e.g. Haugtvedt and Petty 1992; Mondak et al. 2010).

¹⁰ Measured using item **ITI1**: “Now, speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy?”

¹¹ Measured using item **Q5A**: “How often do you attend religious services?”

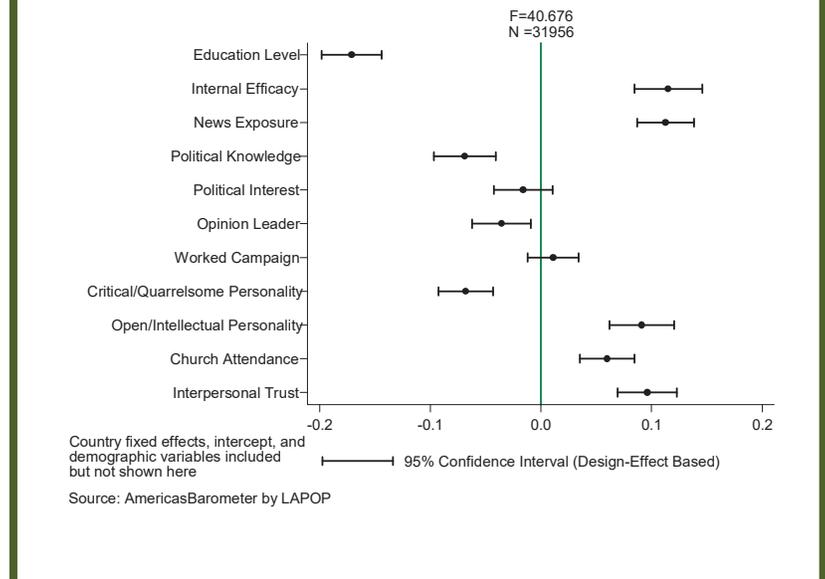
intellectual should be more trusting overall. Those respondents who have higher inherent trust (as observed by more frequent church attendance and higher interpersonal trust) should express higher levels of trust in the media.

The results of this model appear in Figure 3 in the same format as those presented in Figure 2.¹² Again, all variables are standardized for ease of comparison and the model includes country-fixed effects which are not shown in this figure for ease of presentation (see Appendix for details).

Considering the socioeconomic and demographic variables first, the results are nearly the same as those presented in Figure 2. Women express higher levels of trust in the mass media than do men; older respondents express lower trust; respondents in higher wealth quintiles express lower trust; residents of larger cities are less trusting than residents of smaller cities, and self-identifying whites express greater trust in the mass media than non-whites. If there is any change, it is that the effect of level of education is somewhat more negative in this model than before. Thus, these results, with the exception of those for level of education, are excluded from Figure 3 to allow for more focused attention on the new variables introduced here.

Looking briefly at the control variables, both personality type and inherent trust in others have significant effects on trust in the mass media. As expected, those who are critical or quarrelsome express lower trust in the media; those who are open or intellectual express higher trust. Respondents who attend church services more frequently express more trust in the mass media and respondents who express higher levels of interpersonal trust are also

Figure 3. Individual Factors as Correlates of Trust in the Mass Media



more likely to express higher trust in the media.

Finally, the key results here provide evidence of systematic dimensionality within the concept of political awareness. As with level of education, respondents with more political knowledge are less trusting of the mass media than those with more limited political knowledge. Moreover, respondents who have attempted to influence the political opinions of fellow-citizens are less trusting of the mass media than those who have not. Conversely, respondents who express higher levels of internal efficacy and respondents who have more frequent contact with the media express *more* trust in the mass media than otherwise.

Yet, there are two insignificant findings. First, respondents who worked for a campaign during the previous presidential elections are no more or less likely to trust the mass media than those who have not. Second, respondents who express more interest in politics are not significantly different in their trust of the media from those who are less interested in politics.

¹² As in the previous model, the model for Figure 3 is run using ordered logistic regression with parameter estimates corrected for the complex sample design. Full results appear in the Appendix.

Conclusion

The findings in this *Insights* report suggest that the mass media in Latin America and the Caribbean currently enjoys at least moderate trust across much of the region. However, there are signs that not everyone accepts the integrity of the media unquestioningly. Indeed, the results presented here show that there is an interesting tension among the factors that explain support for trust in the media in the region. Opportunities to become informed, in terms of political knowledge and education, as well as efforts to shape others' political opinions are all negatively correlated with trust in the principal means of communication in Latin American and Caribbean societies. On the other side of that tension, trust in the mass media correlates positively with news media exposure and efficacy.

Some of this tension may reflect the ambiguity in the dependent variable used here. In terms of socio-economic position, do the rich and the poor or the educated and uneducated consume the same type of media? Moreover, when we ask politically aware individuals about their trust in the media, do they take into account the same considerations as do unsophisticated respondents? More specifically, does the term "mass media" trigger thoughts of "news" or "entertainment" for respondents? Answering these questions in the context of the span of the Americas is well beyond the scope of this *Insights* report, but they are important questions to consider and explore further; depending on how we answer these questions the conclusions drawn from the findings presented here may vary considerably. For instance, it seems that it would be normatively desirable that citizens be able to trust their news outlets (even if citizens are self-selective in their media exposure), but it may be less heartening to find comparatively greater "trust" in mediums of entertainment.

Still, if we take the findings presented here as representative of an assessment of the integrity

of the means of transmitting factual information in Latin American societies, the tension in the relationships between alternative dimensions of awareness and trust in the mass media may be a good sign. These findings certainly seem to speak to Zaller's declaration that citizens are more than "passive recipients." In fact, these results tell a nuanced story that seems to suggest that citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean are neither unquestioning neophytes of the latest influential impulse nor, in spite of some turbulent, authoritarian histories, jaded cynics in relation to the mass media.

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Appendix

Table 1. Ordered Logistic Models of Trust in Mass Media (Design Effect Adjusted)

	Model 1		Model 2	
Education Level	-0.138*	(-10.79)	-0.171*	(-12.31)
Self-Identified as White	0.036*	(2.58)	0.032*	(2.26)
Size of Place	-0.064*	(-3.82)	-0.063*	(-3.71)
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.037*	(-2.89)	-0.051*	(-3.77)
Age	-0.061*	(-5.22)	-0.087*	(-6.92)
Female	0.035*	(3.54)	0.042*	(3.89)
Interpersonal Trust	-	-	0.096*	(7.04)
Church Attendance	-	-	0.060*	(4.74)
Open/Intellectual Personality	-	-	0.091*	(6.16)
Critical/Quarrelsome Personality	-	-	-0.068*	(-5.42)
Worked Campaign	-	-	0.011	(0.94)
Opinion Leader	-	-	-0.036*	(-2.63)
Political Interest	-	-	-0.016	(-1.19)
Political Knowledge	-	-	-0.069*	(-4.79)
News Exposure	-	-	0.113*	(8.57)
Internal Efficacy	-	-	0.115*	(7.40)
Mexico	-0.112*	(-5.72)	-0.127*	(-6.40)
Guatemala	-0.136*	(-7.47)	-0.149*	(-7.78)
El Salvador	-0.138*	(-7.80)	-0.159*	(-8.60)
Nicaragua	-0.066*	(-3.68)	-0.086*	(-4.42)
Costa Rica	-0.051	(-1.92)	-0.062*	(-2.31)
Panama	-0.058*	(-3.07)	-0.085*	(-4.43)
Colombia	-0.095*	(-4.42)	-0.119*	(-5.50)
Ecuador	-0.229*	(-9.44)	-0.253*	(-10.47)
Bolivia	-0.251*	(-9.17)	-0.260*	(-8.98)
Peru	-0.169*	(-8.67)	-0.166*	(-8.31)
Paraguay	-0.060*	(-3.25)	-0.075*	(-3.99)
Chile	-0.044*	(-2.25)	-0.054*	(-2.66)
Brazil	0.023	(0.87)	0.028	(1.05)
Venezuela	-0.175*	(-7.93)	-0.196*	(-8.70)
Argentina	-0.194*	(-8.81)	-0.184*	(-7.66)
Dominican Republic	0.058*	(3.04)	0.042*	(2.13)
Jamaica	-0.097*	(-4.50)	-0.114*	(-5.04)
Guyana	-0.137*	(-5.47)	-0.158*	(-6.28)
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.251*	(-13.24)	-0.278*	(-14.64)
Belize	-0.120*	(-6.13)	-0.129*	(-6.32)
Suriname	-0.02	(-1.06)	-0.037	(-1.88)
<i>Number of Observations</i>	35,690		31,956	
<i>F</i>	40.471		40.676	

Note: Standardized coefficients from ordered logistic regression are significant at * $p < 0.05$; t -scores presented in parentheses. Uruguay is the reference country.

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

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Who Blames the Government versus “the Rich Countries” for the Recent Economic Crisis, and *Why*?

By Daniel Zizumbo Colunga
daniel.zizumbo-colunga@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. What explains variations in blame attribution for economic crisis? This *Insights* report investigates why some citizens of the Americas blame their own government while others blame “rich countries” for the economic crisis that began in 2008. Using data from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys, I test whether, holding other economic determinants constant, citizens who perceive the government to be effectively handling the economy are less likely to blame the government for the economic crisis. Further, building on the clarity of responsibility literature I test whether incumbents that have stayed in power for a longer amount of time and have more control over the legislature are blamed more for the crisis. Overall, the results show that citizens are less likely to blame their own government when they perceive it to be handling the economy effectively. Additionally, the results show that governments that have been in power longer are blamed more for the crisis. Yet, there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that executives with more control over the legislature are more likely to be blamed for the crisis than executives whose parties make up a congressional minority.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

In 2008 a global financial crisis shook many countries in the Western hemisphere.¹ According to the AmericasBarometer, while most individuals in the Americas perceived the existence of an economic downturn, not everyone agreed on whom to blame. Attributions of responsibility are an important determinant of citizens' attitudes and behavior with respect to political actors (see, for example Iyengar 1996). It is therefore crucial to understand what factors influenced individuals' varying allocations of blame in the wake of the recent economic crisis.

To assess attributions of responsibility for the recent economic crisis, in the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP² respondents were first asked whether they thought there was an economic crisis.³ The 92.9% who thought there was were then asked:

CRISIS2. Who is the most to blame for the current economic crisis in our country from among the following: the previous administration; the current administration; ourselves, we [the people of the country]; the rich people of our country; the problems of democracy; the rich countries; the economic system of the country; or have you never thought about it?⁴

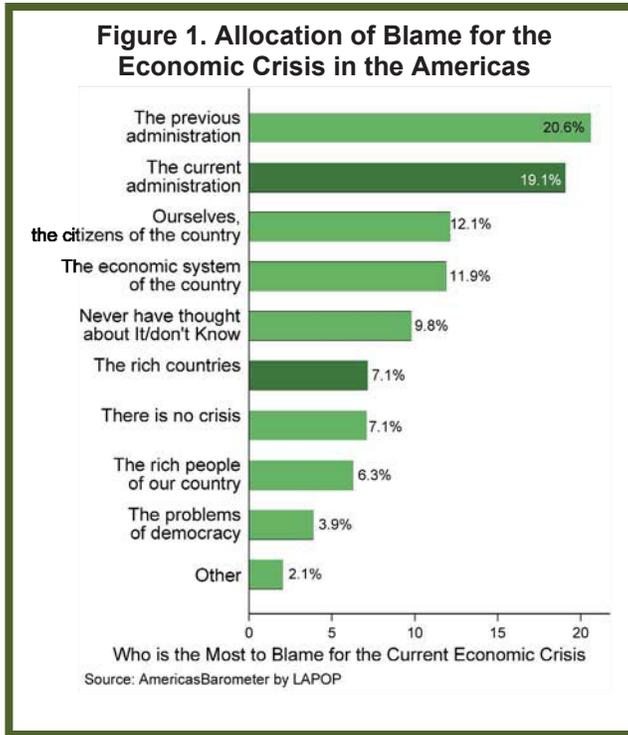


Figure 1 shows the percentage of Latin American citizens who chose each of the offered alternatives (in order to represent the full population, the figure also includes the 7.1% who were not asked about blame attributions because they reported that there was no economic crisis in response to the previous question). The largest

percentages chose to blame either the previous or current national government: 20.6% of citizens in the Americas blame the previous administration for the crisis, while 19.1% consider the crisis to be the fault of the incumbent administration.

Other domestic agents also receive some blame. For example, 12.1% of citizens in the Americas blame the citizens of their own country for the crisis, and 6.3% blame the rich people of their country. In addition, 11.9% of respondents blame their country's economic system, but only 3.9% blame the "problems of democracy." This latter result is consistent with previous research (e.g., Booth and Seligson 2009; Orcés, Seligson,

because there was a change of president during the fieldwork.

⁴ The non-response rate for this question averaged 1.84% across all countries.

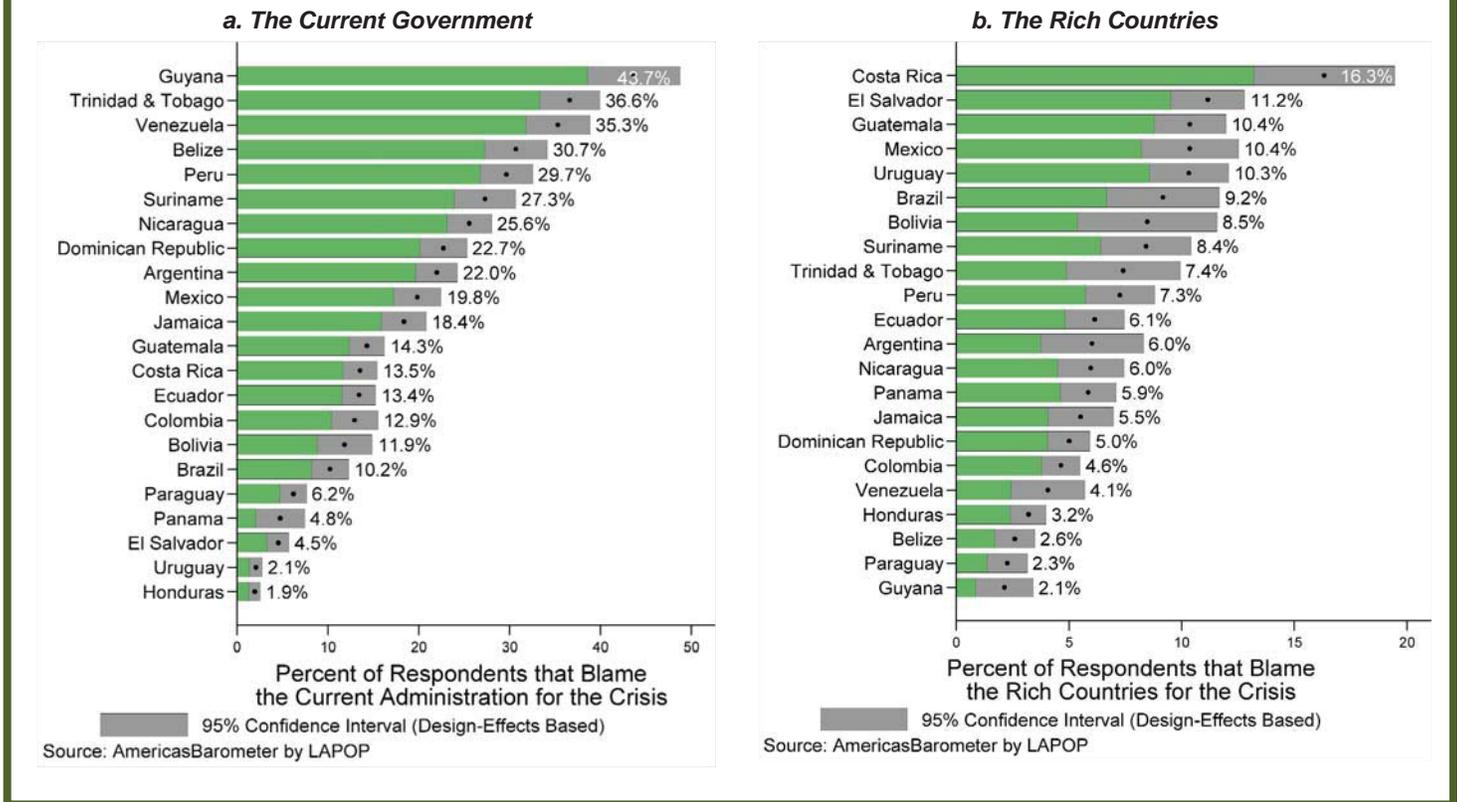
¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ Throughout this report Haiti and Chile as well as the United States and Canada were excluded from the analyses. The last two countries were excluded because of the study's focus on Latin American and the Caribbean as well as the ambiguity that might have been introduced in these two countries in having their citizens choose between the "rich countries" and "the current government." Haiti, for its part, was excluded because the question was not included in this wave of the AmericasBarometer and Chile was excluded

Figure 2. Blame in Comparative Perspective



and Smith 2010; also see Easton 1975), which suggests that diffuse support for democracy is highly resistant to economic crisis. Finally, a small proportion of citizens – 7.1% - place blame outside the confines of their own country; specifically, they blame “the rich countries.”

In this *Insights* report, I analyze why some citizens in the Americas blame their current government for the economic crisis while others blame “the rich countries.” I test two principal hypotheses: first, that other things held constant, citizens are less likely to blame the current government for the crisis when they believe that it has handled the economy effectively; and second, that administrations that have been in power longer and that have stronger control over policy receive more blame than weak and new administrations. This latter expectation draws on scholarship that proposes that certain contextual and institutional features of the political system make citizens more prone to blame the incumbent government for political

and economic outcomes (Powell and Whitten 1993; Duch and Stevenson 2008).

A first step in narrowing the focus to only two response options - blame the rich countries or the current government - is to examine the percentage of individuals who placed blame in these two categories cross-nationally. As Figures 2a and 2b show, there is substantial variation in the pattern of attribution of responsibility for the crisis across countries.

In some countries, such as Guyana (45.2%), Trinidad & Tobago (38%) and Venezuela (37.6%), the proportion of citizens who blame the current administration for the economic crisis is relatively large. Yet, in others, such as Honduras (2%), Uruguay (2.1%) and El Salvador (4.5%), only a small minority of respondents answered that the current government of the country was to blame for the current economic crisis.

Similarly, countries also are very different in the proportion of their citizens that blame the rich countries of the world. For instance, in Costa Rica (16.3%), El Salvador (11.2%) and Guatemala (10.4%), relatively large proportions of the population blame “rich countries.” Conversely, in countries such as Guyana, Paraguay and Belize only a few citizens blame rich countries for the crisis.

Why Do Individuals Blame the Current Administration For the Economic Crisis?

The 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers was widely publicized, suggesting the important role “rich countries” played in triggering the crisis. Nonetheless, a sizable number of citizens in the Americas blamed their current administration for the economic crisis. Why?

Individual-Level Economic Factors

Although Wall Street’s financial collapse had a broad and deep impact in the countries of Latin America,⁵ not all citizens suffered economically to the same degree. One level on which we can evaluate the crisis’ economic impacts is that of the household. While some citizens saw their household income substantially reduced during the economic crisis, others experienced less of an impact.⁶ Drawing on basic tenets of retrospective voting theory (e.g., Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981), we might expect that those who perceived a negative change in their household income are more likely to blame their current government for the crisis. Along these same lines, I also test whether more general

⁵ Annual GDP change for Latin America in 2009 was -2.09% (see Izquierdo and Talvi 2010).

⁶ Orces, Seligson and Smith (2010) report that 27.3% of the citizens of the Americas indicated their income decreased and 22.8% indicated their income increased.

evaluations of the state of one’s personal economic situation have a similar effect.⁷

Yet, it is possible that citizens’ evaluations of the national economy are more significant to their placement of blame. An important strand of literature has underlined the importance of perceptions of the national economy in determining political attitudes and behaviors (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981). Other authors have noted that people are more likely to blame the president instead of other actors when they perceive that the national economy is performing poorly, and thus feel higher levels of economic threat (Heider 1944; Tyler 1982). Thus, I test whether more negative retrospective evaluations of the national economy help predict the likelihood of blaming the current administration for the crisis.⁸

In addition, it is also important to assess the impact of citizens’ evaluations of the government’s economic performance (Downs 1957). A number of scholars have argued for the importance of citizens’ evaluations of the efficacy with which the incumbent administration handles the economy as an important determinant of a wide array of political behavior, ranging from voting to political identification (see, for example, Fiorina 1981; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2008). In this *Insights* report, I propose that citizens who perceive that the government is doing an effective job handling the economy and fighting unemployment and poverty are less likely to blame it for the current crisis.⁹

⁷ The variable used to measure this is Q10E. *Over the past two years, has the income of your household decreased, remained the same, or increased?*

⁸SOCT2. *Do you think that the country’s current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago?*

IDIO2. *Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago?*

⁹I create a single measure based on the following questions: N1. *To what extent would you say the current administration fights poverty?*

N12. *Combats unemployment?*

N15. *Is managing the economy well?*

Individual-Level Controls

In assessing predictors of blame, I include a number of individual-level control variables in the model. These include two important economic controls: indicators of individuals' actual economic condition and their expectations with respect to the role of the state. The former I measure using the LAPOP wealth measure described in detail in Córdova (2009). With respect to the latter, respondents who expect the government to be responsible for citizens' economic welfare might be more prone to blame the government for the lack thereof during crises. To measure this, I include an index that gauges individuals' general preferences about the role of the state.¹⁰

Additionally, given prior research that proposes that under situations of economic threat, citizens with low levels of information are more likely to blame the president as opposed to other actors (Tyler 1982; Gomez and Wilson 2001), it is important to control for both political knowledge and education.¹¹ Because of its obvious importance in this issue I also control for the respondent's approval of the administration of the current president.¹²

This scale has a high level of internal reliability ($\alpha > .86$).

¹⁰ The AmericasBarometer asked respondents: *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements:*

ROS2. *The (Country) government, more than individuals, should be primarily responsible for ensuring the [well-being of the people].*

ROS3. *The (Country) government, more than the private sector, should be primarily responsible for creating jobs.*

ROS4. *The (Country) government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor.*

This scale has a high level of internal reliability ($\alpha > .78$).

¹¹ The AmericasBarometer survey includes a battery of questions designed to recover levels of political knowledge based on respondents' answers to three factual knowledge questions: GI1. *What is the name of the current president of the United States?* GI3. *How many provinces/departments/states does the country have?* GI4. *How long is the presidential/prime ministerial term of office in country?* ($\text{Alpha} = 0.53$). In addition the AmericasBarometer asked the respondents about the last year of education they completed.

¹² Respondents of the Americas Barometer were asked: M1. *Speaking in general of the current administration, how would you rate the job performance of President (NAME)?*

Clarity of Responsibility and Blame

Aside from individual differences in the degree to which citizens have and perceive they have been affected by the economic crisis, it is evident in Figures 2a and 2b that there are substantive differences in blame attribution between countries. I propose that one explanation for this variation may be found in the extent to which a country's institutional context promotes clarity of responsibility.

A wide array of literature has looked at the way punishment for political and economic downturns varies across political contexts (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2008; Stokes 2001). Some have noticed that specific institutional and situational characteristics affect the degree to which citizens are able to hold their government accountable (Powell and Whitten 1993; Powell 2000; Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002; Tavits 2007).

These scholars have proposed that as power becomes more centralized and the actor responsible for the incumbent government more salient and clear, citizens become more prone to "assign responsibility for economic and political outcomes to the incumbent" (Powell and Witten 1993, p. 398).

In addition, and with the objective of controlling for possible partisan (Campbell et al 1960; Nawara 2011; Rudolph 2003, 2006) and winner/loser status biases (see Anderson et al. 2007), I include a control for those who voted for the incumbent in the last election. I also control for the respondent's ideology (to do so, I use the *L1* and *L1r* measures, and combine these into a series of dummy variables: Right/Conservative, Left/Liberal, Center, and Missing). I include ideology because, in Latin America, left wing rhetoric often argues that the economic fortunes of peripheral economies are influenced by the dynamics and fortunes of central (rich) countries within the world system (e.g. Cardoso and Fishlow 1992; Wallerstein 2004). Finally, because of its theorized direct and indirect roles as a determinant of performance evaluations, I also control for the respondent's nationalism (see Hetherington and Nelson 2003; Feldman and Stenner 1997) and media exposure (Iyengar and Kinder 1988; Iyengar 1996).

A contextual feature that may make the incumbent more easily identifiable as responsible for outcomes is the length of time that he or she has spent in power. The notion is that over time it will become easier for citizens to recognize who is the incumbent and, as well, easier for them to believe that the incumbent has had an important impact on the economy. With this in mind, I test whether governments that have been in power longer are more likely to be blamed for the economic crisis.¹³

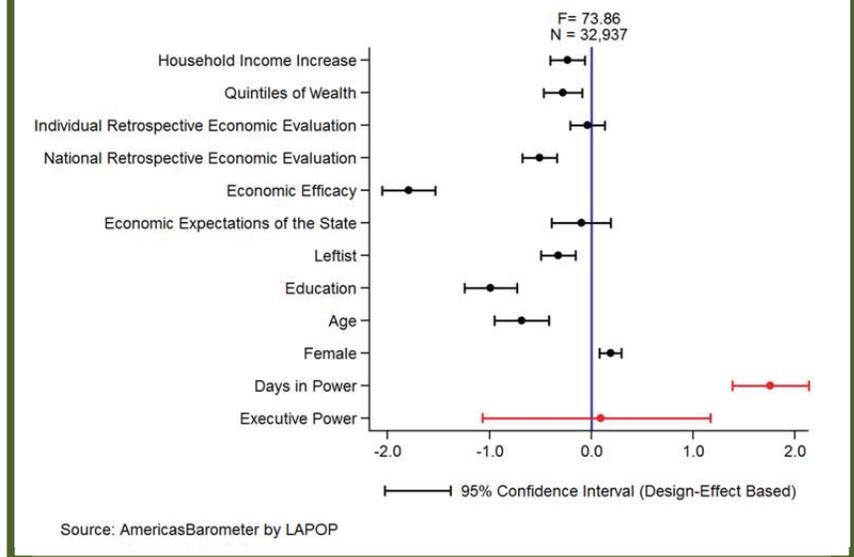
In addition, it might be the case that executives that have broad control over the legislature are more easily blamed for the crisis because citizens perceive they are better able to push through the legislation necessary to react or adapt to economic problems facing the country. I measure executive power as an ordinal variable where 1 represents an executive whose party is a minority party in the lower chamber; 2 represents an executive whose party is the largest minority (and there is no majority party) in the lower chamber of the legislature; and 3 represents an executive whose party controls more than 50% of the seats in the lower (or only) chamber of the national legislature.

Results

Before engaging in the analysis the dependent variable was recoded to reflect one of three types of blame attributions: blaming one's own government; blaming the rich countries; or blaming another actor for the crisis (that is, any other blame assignment shown in Figure 1). Because the dependent variable has three categories, I run a multinomial logit regression; for the sake of parsimony, only the part of this

¹³ I measure the executive's time in office as a count of the number of days between his or her inauguration day and the median date of the AmericasBarometer fieldwork in the country.

Figure 3. Predictors of Blaming the Current Administration vs. Blaming Rich Countries for the Recent Economic Crisis



analysis that focuses on blaming the current administration versus the rich countries is shown here (see appendix for full model).

Thus, Figure 3 shows the determinants of the probability that a respondent will blame the current administration of her own country for the crisis instead of the rich countries.¹⁴

Each dot in the graph represents the estimated effect of the independent variable noted to the left, while the horizontal line represents the 95% confidence interval. If the dot is to the left of the central vertical line, it means that as the level of the independent variable increases, the likelihood of a respondent placing blame for the crisis on the current administration of her own

¹⁴As a reminder, controls included in the analysis but not shown in the figure are: centrist ideology, missing ideology, presidential approval, nationalism, political knowledge and media consumption. Although the figure presents multinomial logit estimates, the results are robust to both a multinomial probit specification and a hierarchical multinomial logistic specification treating Days in Power and Executive Power as second level variables. Results of other specifications can be found in the appendix. Analyses were conducted with STATA v11 and HLM v7. Confidence intervals in red reflect standard errors that appropriately disjoin the within and between country variance using HLM v7.

country, as opposed to the rich countries, *decreases*.

Similarly, if the dot is to the right side of the vertical line the results indicate that as the independent variable increases, the likelihood of a respondent blaming the current administration, versus the rich countries, *increases*. Finally, if the horizontal line crosses the zero line, then it should be concluded that regardless of the direction of the measured association, there is not sufficient evidence to be 95% confident of an effect in either direction.

With this in mind, the results shown in Figure 3 indicate that citizens of the Americas in the lower quintiles of wealth are more likely to blame their own government and less likely to blame the rich countries. Similarly, citizens whose income increased in the last two years are less likely to blame the current government than to blame the rich countries of the world.

With respect to subjective perceptions, although individual retrospective economic evaluations do not seem to make a big difference, citizens who perceive that the state of the national economy is worse now than a year ago are more likely to blame the current administration of their country for the economic crisis. This result supports the earlier-stated expectation for the effect of evaluations of the national economy. The fact that personal evaluations are insignificant fits with classic economic voting scholarship, which typically finds that sociotropic evaluations exert a more important effect than pocketbook ones on political evaluations and choice.

With respect to the evaluation of the performance of the incumbent administration, the results are consistent with the expectation that, other things held constant, citizens that perceive their government to be doing an effective job handling the economy are also less

likely to blame it for the economic crisis.¹⁵ The opposite is equally true: citizens who perceive their government to be handling the economy ineffectively are more likely to blame it for the crisis than the rich countries.

In addition, there seems to be ideological bias in blame attributions. This is, respondents who identify with the left are more likely to blame the rich countries for the crisis than the government of their own country, even when variables like education, income, partisanship, and presidential approval are taken into consideration.

Finally, the results indicate that older and more educated citizens are less likely to blame the current government of the country for the crisis than they are to blame rich countries. For their part, female respondents are less likely than men to blame the rich countries for the crisis, as opposed to the current administration.

In addition, to some degree context matters, in line with expectations developed based on the clarity of responsibility literature. Overall, Figure 4 shows that as the amount of time that an incumbent remains in power increases, so does the probability that the average citizen will blame her for the economic crisis. On the other hand, the analysis shows that there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that, once their time in power is held constant, executives with majorities in the legislature were more strongly blamed for the crisis than those whose parties controlled only a minority in the legislature.

The dots labeled with country names in Figure 4 are based on the raw data for the percentage of people in a country blaming the current

¹⁵ It is important to note that the results shown here cannot completely isolate the reciprocal causation between citizens' likelihood to blame the government for the economic crisis and the perceived effectiveness of the government in handling the economy. However, many of the control variables included in the model address potential causal pathways by which an effect in the opposite direction might occur.

administration, and for the executive's time in office. They show that those administrations that had been in power for more time when the survey was conducted in 2010 were more likely to be blamed for the economic crisis than administrations that had only been in office for a short period of time. The straight line in the figure represents the predicted values, based on the bivariate relationship. As can be seen in the figure, a one month increase in the time that an administration has been in power is associated with around a .19 percentage point increase in the percentage of people blaming the current government.

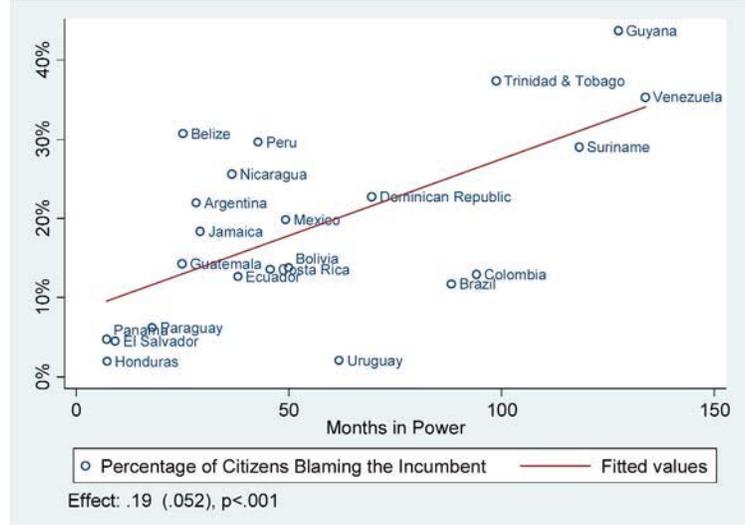
Conclusions

Overall, the findings of this report show that citizens in the lower wealth quintiles, those who reported their income to have decreased in the last two years, and those who perceive the national economy to be worse now than a year ago are more likely to blame the current administration than the rich countries of the world for the recent economic crisis in their country.

In addition, and consistent with the hypothesis presented at the beginning, I found that, holding other things constant, as citizens perceive that their government handles the economy, fights poverty, and combats unemployment more effectively, they are less likely to blame it for the current economic crisis.

This is of relevance for politicians and policymakers who need to be aware that, even

Figure 4. Bivariate Relation between Time in Power and Percentage of People Blaming the Current Government



in the face of an international economic crisis, to the extent that they implement responsible economic policies and are able to communicate their efforts to their citizens, they might be able to avoid being blamed for the economic downturn. Conversely, even in the face of an exogenous economic crisis, if citizens perceive that their government does not take efficient action to solve the problems derived from the crisis, the administration will start to be blamed for the economic troubles.

With respect to the economic context, it is important for policymakers to consider that as their term in office advances they will be more likely to be blamed for negative economic conditions. Overall, those politicians who have remained for a longer time in power should expect to pay a heftier toll for economic crises than those who are relative newcomers.

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Appendix

A1. Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimates

VARIABLES	(1) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries [†]	(2) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries	(3) HMNL Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries
Power of Executive	---	0.375*** (0.0963)	0.072 (0.582)
Days in Power ^{††}	---	1.489*** (0.112)	1.90*** (0.67)
Wealth	-0.267*** (0.0972)	-0.280*** (0.0972)	-0.296*** (0.084)
Household Income Increased	-0.238*** (0.0905)	-0.234*** (0.0878)	-0.212*** (0.082)
Retrospective Personal Economy	-0.0431 (0.0864)	-0.0360 (0.0863)	-0.032 (0.083)
Retrospective National Economy	-0.449*** (0.0867)	-0.507*** (0.0866)	-0.483*** (0.086)
Gov. Economic Performance	-1.473*** (0.136)	-1.794*** (0.134)	-1.51*** (0.13)
Government's Role	-0.135 (0.152)	-0.0992 (0.148)	-0.215 (0.136)
Female	0.209*** (0.0551)	0.188*** (0.0545)	0.201*** (0.054)
Age	-0.499*** (0.140)	-0.686*** (0.136)	-0.45*** (0.143)
Education	-1.104*** (0.136)	-0.989*** (0.132)	-1.071*** (0.129)
Centrist	-0.270*** (0.0731)	-0.245*** (0.0735)	-0.3*** (0.068)
Leftist	-0.311*** (0.0921)	-0.325*** (0.0879)	-0.325*** (0.088)
Missing Ideology ^{†††}	-0.0741 (0.0953)	-0.0698 (0.0971)	-0.096 (0.083)
Presidential Approval	-2.273*** (0.149)	-2.250*** (0.140)	-2.267*** (0.14)
Voted for the Incumbent	-0.480*** (0.0637)	-0.399*** (0.0625)	-0.50*** (0.06)
Nationalism	0.345** (0.172)	0.298 (0.185)	0.34** (0.143)
Political Knowledge	-0.390*** (0.119)	-0.532*** (0.116)	-0.32*** (0.103)

A1. Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimates

VARIABLES	(1) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries [†]	(2) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries	(3) HMNL Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries
News Consumption	-0.0747 (0.139)	-0.0650 (0.138)	-0.039 (0.127)
Constant	3.811*** (0.328)	3.614*** (0.298)	-0.357 (0.45)
Countries	22	22	22
Observations	32,937	32,937	32,937

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[†]Country fixed effects Included but not shown in the table

^{††}Variable was recoded from 0 to 1 in order to show maximum change like the rest of the independent variables. 0 is the executive with the fewest days in power and 1 is the executive with the most days in power.

^{†††}“Missing ideology” refers to those who did not answer the ideology question. Left and Liberal are combined into the same category in the analyses, as are Right and Conservative (only one of two ideology questions, left-right or liberal-conservative, was asked in each country; see the codebooks available on the LAPOP website for more information). Right/Conservative is the baseline (comparison category).

Note: Haiti, the United States, Canada and Chile were excluded from the analyses.

A2 Multinomial Probit estimates

VARIABLES	(1) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries [†]	(2) Blame the Current Government Vs. Blaming the Rich Countries
Power of Executive	---	0.231*** (0.0645)
Time in Power [†]	---	1.074*** (0.0756)
Wealth	-0.180*** (0.0623)	-0.177*** (0.0620)
Household Income Increased	-0.167*** (0.0586)	-0.163*** (0.0563)
Retrospective Personal Economy	-0.0281 (0.0565)	-0.0267 (0.0555)
Retrospective National Economy	-0.311*** (0.0569)	-0.355*** (0.0560)
Government Economic Performance	-1.003*** (0.0900)	-1.186*** (0.0874)
Government's Role	-0.0716 (0.0987)	-0.0470 (0.0957)
Female	0.129*** (0.0363)	0.114*** (0.0352)
Age	-0.360*** (0.0929)	-0.465*** (0.0884)
Education	-0.717*** (0.0890)	-0.646*** (0.0848)
Centrist	-0.198*** (0.0475)	-0.171*** (0.0473)
Leftist	-0.228*** (0.0601)	-0.223*** (0.0572)
Missing Ideology ^{††}	-0.0565 (0.0610)	-0.0537 (0.0616)
Presidential Approval	-1.581*** (0.0974)	-1.598*** (0.0905)
Voted for the Incumbent	-0.328*** (0.0411)	-0.275*** (0.0402)
Nationalism	0.229** (0.114)	0.195 (0.120)
Political Knowledge	-0.255*** (0.0758)	-0.354*** (0.0728)
News Consumption	-0.0337 (0.0889)	-0.0406 (0.0875)
Constant	2.613***	2.437***

Countries	(0.213)	(0.191)
Observations	22	22
	32,937	32,937

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Fixed effects included but not shown in the analysis.

† This variable was rescaled to go from 0 to 1 where 0 is the country in which the executive has had the least time in power and 1 is the country in which the executive has had the most time in power.

†† “Missing ideology” refers to those who did not answer the ideology question. Left and Liberal are combined into the same category in the analyses, as are Right and Conservative (only one of two ideology questions, left-right or liberal-conservative, was asked in each country; see the codebooks available on the LAPOP website for more information). Right/Conservative is the baseline (comparison category).

Note: Haiti, the United States, Canada and Chile were excluded from the analyses.

AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 76

AmericasBarometer 2012 Round Draws on Lessons from 2010 Surveys

By Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister
*mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu, amy.e.smith@vanderbilt.edu,
liz.zechmeister@vanderbilt.edu*
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. With fieldwork halfway complete and data rolling in from 26 countries across the hemisphere, the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer promises to be the best yet. This *Insights* report describes the AmericasBarometer's fifth wave of surveys, which will be completed by the beginning of May. We focus especially on lessons learned from our 2010 round, in which we examined the impact of the economic crisis across the Americas. In that round, we found that while the region weathered the crisis perhaps surprisingly well, certain groups were disproportionately disadvantaged: in particular, citizens from marginalized ethnic groups, the less wealthy, and women. In 2012, we seek to understand further the extent, causes, and consequences of marginalization across the Americas.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

The recent economic crisis drew into sharp relief differences in the experiences and perceptions of various groups in the Americas, particularly ones defined by race, gender, and social class. As we prepared the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey to go into the field, the Americas were undergoing one of the worst worldwide economic crises of the past century. Concerned about the impacts of this crisis on citizens' well-being and on the fate of democracy in the region, for our 2010 round of surveys we chose to focus on the theme of "Democracy in Hard Times." As reported in our 2010 *Report on the Americas* (Seligson and Smith 2010), we asked such questions as: Who was most affected by the economic crisis? And, did pro-democracy attitudes and system support decline under crisis conditions?

Our analyses of the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey yielded many surprises. Some were pleasant ones for those who might have feared that democracy would collapse under the weight of economic crisis; others were more troublesome. Taken together, they pointed to the need to explore in much greater depth in 2012 the extent and effects of marginalization across the Americas.

The politics of marginalization is thus a core focus of the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer, which will examine democracy and society in 26 countries of the Americas. While preserving a common core of questions for cross-temporal analyses, we have also been able to include a number of new questions in the 2012 round that will help us to address questions of discrimination and inclusion.

The process of developing this study entails contributions from a massive group of people across the region. Between January and early May of this year, we will interview 39,000 citizens of the Americas, from northern Canada to Chilean Patagonia, from Mexico City to the rural Andean highlands. These citizens will contribute to the project by sharing with us

their attitudes towards their democratic systems and governments, as well as such experiences as victimization by crime and corruption. Conducting these interviews will involve work by over a thousand people, from interviewers and data entry specialists, to academics from every country, to sampling statisticians and survey experts.

Preparations for the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer began in the last quarter of 2010, as we were finishing analysis and reporting from the 2010 round, and continued full-swing throughout 2011. Field work for the 2012 round commenced in the first countries in January of this year, and will be concluded in the last countries by early May. When data collection is finished in each country, we undergo a rigorous process of data entry and verification to minimize sources of error in the data. These procedures, following internationally recognized best practices, give us greater faith in the validity of the analytical insights we will draw from the data. Our goal is to make the verified 26-country database available to the public by December 2012.

Once we have a final database, a new phase of research for the 2012 round will begin. We will comb through the fresh data, looking for unexpected patterns, surprising trends, and resolution of long-discussed puzzles. Many of the reports we produce based on the 2012 round will focus on a deeply important topic: the extent to which the region's citizens experience equality of opportunity.

In the remainder of this *Insights* report, we discuss the 2012 theme in greater depth. The selection of this theme reflects lessons learned in previous rounds, in particular our 2010 study of the politics of economic crisis.¹

¹ Core funding for the 2010 and 2012 rounds is provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Vanderbilt University, and the Tinker Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and others; a complete list

Lessons from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer: Economic Crisis, Marginalization, and Equality of Opportunity in the Americas

To measure the impact of the crisis, in our 2010 survey we asked 43,990 citizens across the Americas whether they perceived an economic crisis, and if they did so, whether they thought it was serious.² We found that most citizens in the Americas perceived an economic crisis, but that they were divided on whether or not it was severe. The perceived severity of the crisis varied greatly across the Americas, and also across different ethnic and identity groups. As detailed in the 2010 report, perceptions of a

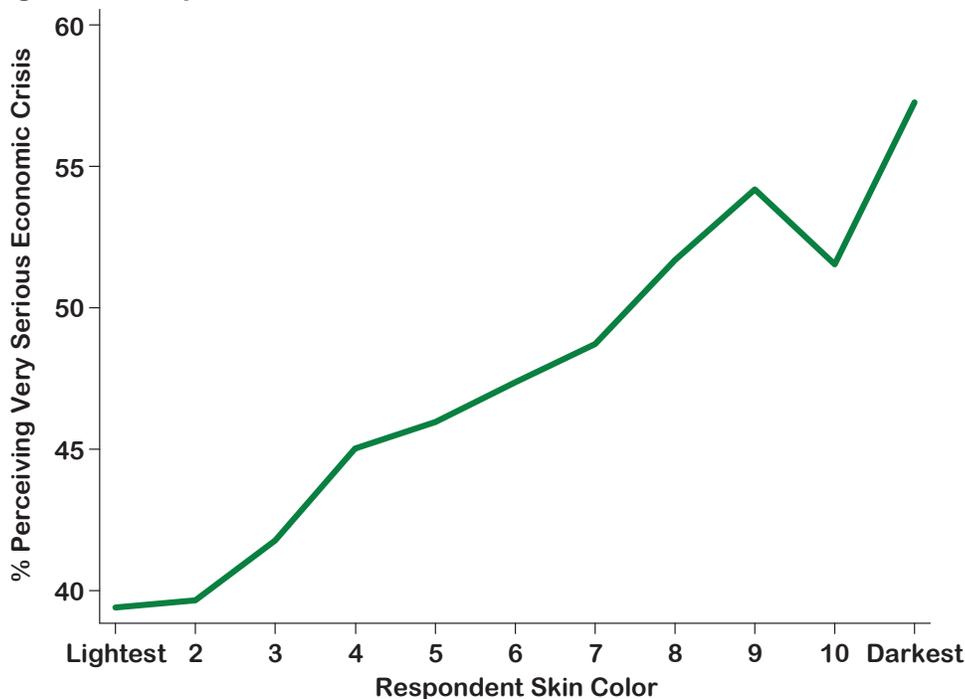
severe economic crisis were highest in countries such as Jamaica, the United States, and Honduras, where at least three-quarters of respondents reported that their countries faced a severe economic crisis. Unemployment especially affected countries such as Mexico and Colombia, where almost 40% of respondents reported that someone in their household had lost his or her job in the last two years. At the same time, though, we found that in many countries of the region, the crisis' impact was surprisingly muted. About three out of every four citizens told our interviewers that they either gained income or did not lose it during this period of worldwide economic decline.

Moreover, we found that citizens who perceived that the national government was doing a good job reported stronger support for democratic values. In other words, during times of crisis, good governance can help citizens retain their confidence in democracy and other key values. Our results also demonstrated some surprising good news: in general in the Americas, support for

democracy did not decline substantially as a consequence of the crisis. We thus concluded that unprecedented levels of macroeconomic

² The variable measuring economic crisis perceptions is CRISIS1.

Figure 1. Perceptions of Severe Crisis and Skin Color, 2010 AmericasBarometer



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

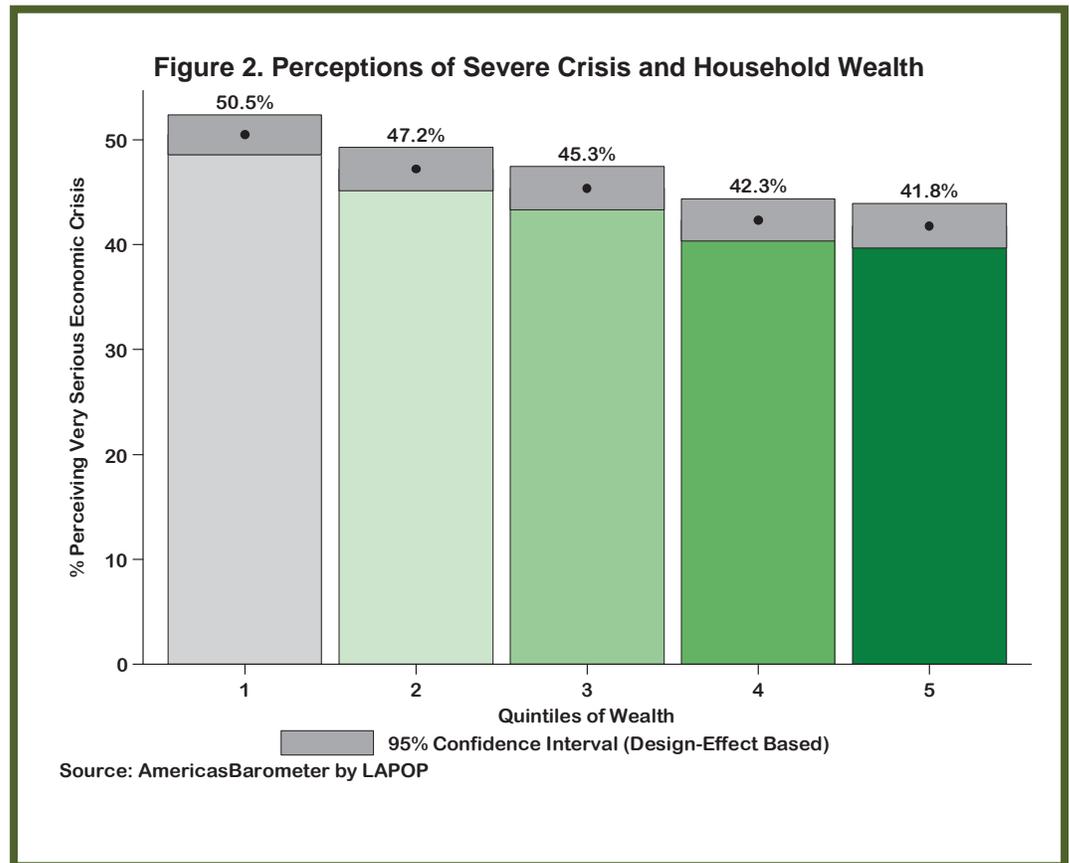
can be found on our website at www.LapopSurveys.org. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

stability coupled with pro-poor policies that helped mitigate the crisis for those most affected by it, in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis may well have staved off not only more serious economic decline but also threats to democracy itself.

Importantly, however, we found that the impact of the crisis was not evenly distributed across important sub-groups within the population. An innovative component of our 2010 survey was that, for the first time, we asked the interviewer to code the skin color of the respondent's face using a color palette ranging from 1 (lightest) to 11 (darkest) (see Telles and Steele 2012). In a recent *Insights* report, Telles and Stelle (2012) show that skin tone is an important predictor of educational attainment in the Americas. In our analysis of the effects of the crisis, we find that reports of economic distress vary by skin tone. We further find that the crisis had different effects across income groups, and (to a more limited extent) by gender.

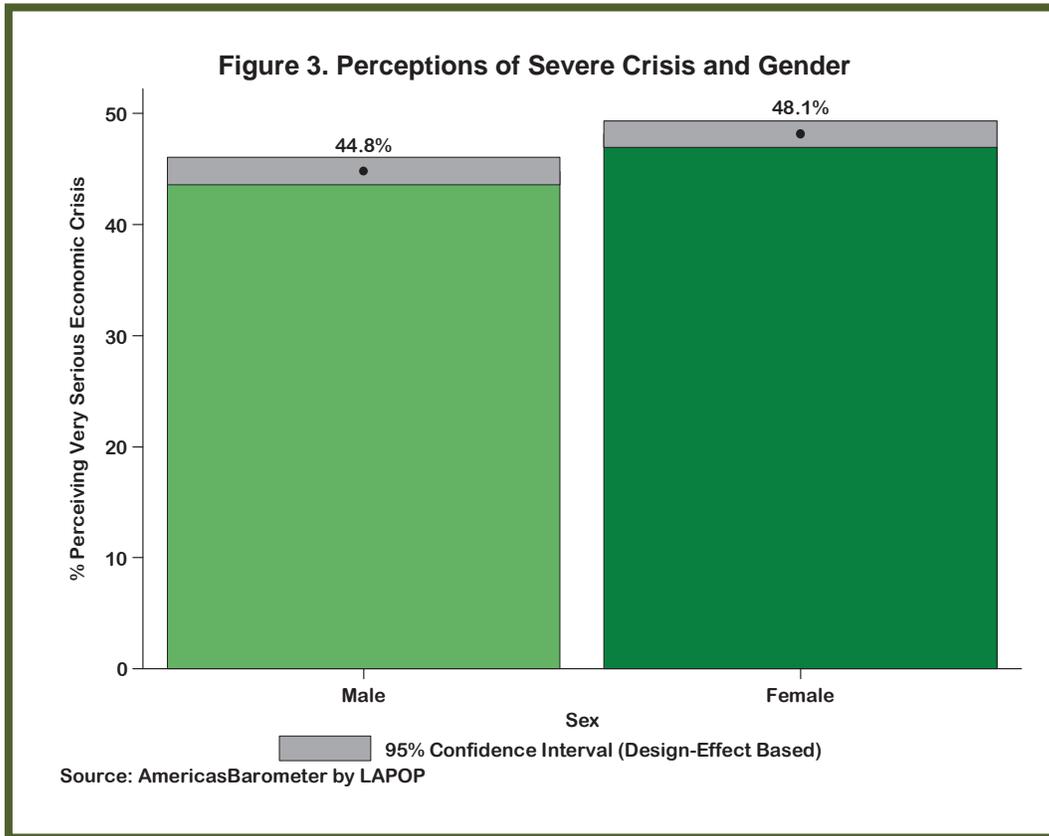
As Figure 1 shows, respondents with darker facial skin tones were much more likely to perceive a severe economic crisis. Among those with the lightest skin tones, the percentage of individuals who reported perceiving a grave economic crisis was around 40-45%, on average across the Latin American and Caribbean regions; at the other end of the scale, for those with the darkest skin tones, over 50% of individuals expressed the belief that their

country was experiencing a severe economic crisis.



Similarly, Figure 2 demonstrates that respondents from wealthier households were much less likely to perceive a severe economic crisis. This leads us to conclude that the crisis especially hurt the region's most vulnerable populations: those who were worse off prior to the crisis felt its negative effects most strongly.

Finally, we also uncover some limited evidence that women were more likely to be affected by the crisis. Figure 3 shows that, while 44.8% of men in the Americas perceived a severe economic crisis, 48.1% of women did so, a difference that is statistically significant, but not especially large.



hope to be able to answer with the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer, we seek to deepen our understanding of marginalization in the region. We hope to understand the extent to which political and economic opportunities are distributed equitably, as well as what can be done about persist inequalities between women and men, and between citizens of different ethnicities and social backgrounds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we reported some good and some bad news in our 2010 AmericasBarometer *Report on the Americas*. On the one hand, the economic crisis was relatively mild in most of Latin America, and democratic attitudes proved remarkably robust. On the other hand, the crisis especially hurt certain segments of the population that have been historically marginalized in the social, economic, and political systems of the Americas: those with lowest household wealth, ethnic minorities, and women. Among many questions that we

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AmericasBarometer Insights: 2012

Number 77

Explaining Support for Interethnic Marriage in Four Countries

By Mollie J. Cohen

mollie.j.cohen@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University and the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report addresses questions of ethnic inequality in the Americas. Using data from four countries in the Americas, this *Insights* report finds evidence suggesting that political tolerance and ideology are associated with support for marriage to indigenous persons. Similarly, a respondent's self-identified ethnicity is strongly linked to support for marriage to indigenous persons, with indigenous respondents being the most likely to support such a union, and self-identified white individuals being the least likely. Surprisingly, demographic variables such as wealth, education and sex have no statistical impact on support for interethnic marriage.

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

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Racial and ethnic discrimination exists within a number of different domains across the Americas (see, for example Patrinos 2000).¹ Although efforts have been made in recent years to decrease the effects that generations of discrimination have had on members of indigenous and black minorities in the Americas, prejudicial attitudes likely persist.

This *Insights* report explores attitudes towards indigenous minorities in four countries with substantial indigenous populations: Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru. The 2010 AmericasBarometer² survey in these countries included the following question³:

RAC3B. To what extent would you approve if one of your children were to marry an indigenous person?

Respondents were asked to rate their approval on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 signifying strong

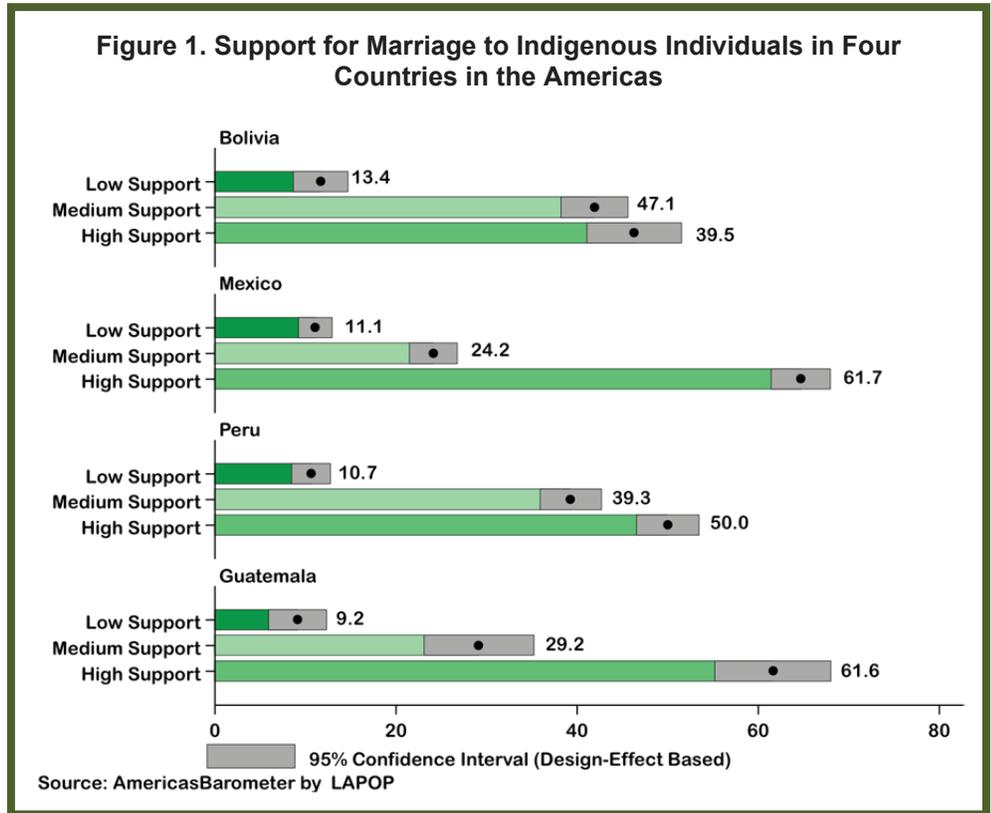
¹ Thanks to Professor Edward Telles for very helpful feedback on a previous draft.

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ A similar, but not exactly comparable, question was asked about marriage to “blacks” or “darker colored people” in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. Although it is possible that some of the correlates of discrimination towards black and indigenous individuals are similar, the countries listed in this footnote are not included in the current report because of the comparability problem.



disapproval and 7 signifying strong support for the child’s marriage.⁴ Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses to this question in each of the four countries where this question was asked.^{5,6} The figure reveals interesting variation in respondents’ support for a child’s marriage to an indigenous person in these countries.

⁴The non-response rate for this item was 19.5%. Non-response in Guatemala was particularly high, with 76.06% of those surveyed not providing an answer. In the other three countries, non-response rates were much lower: 2.5% in Mexico, 7.7% in Bolivia, and 4.2% in Peru. These high rates of non-response in Guatemala must be kept in mind as they limit the extent to which we can confidently assert that the findings reported here are representative of the population at large; instead, the results presented in this report should be considered representative only of those who selected to respond to this sensitive question. The high rates of non-response, especially for the case of Guatemala, merit additional analysis and consideration, but that lies outside the scope of this report.

⁵ All analyses presented here were conducted using STATA v11.1.

⁶ Responses of 1 or 2 were recoded for this analysis as “low support” for a child’s marriage to an indigenous person, values of 3, 4, or 5 were grouped together as “medium support”, and responses of 6 or 7 were labeled “high support.”

Although the plurality of respondents place themselves in the “high support” category, a substantial proportion of respondents reported middling and low levels of support, particularly in Bolivia and Peru.

Individuals’ attitudes about a child’s hypothetical marriage to a member of a socially disadvantaged and often stigmatized group have been studied in the United States context largely as relates to black-white marriage. Since the 1920s, surveys conducted in the United States have asked white parents how much they would support their child’s hypothetical decision to marry a member of a racial minority; the item is typically inserted within a series of questions on social distance between racial groups (Bogardus 1967; Parrillo and Donoghue 2005). Scholarship using this item over time has found that, in comparison to other questions about acceptance of racial minorities, responses to the marriage question were slow to change over time, with respondents continuing to express resistance to interracial marriage even as they accepted greater black-white socialization in a variety of other realms (Erskine 1973; St. Jean 1998; Weaver 2008). Thus, inter-ethnic marriage remains a sore point in the U.S.

Figure 1 indicates that on average respondents in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru express moderate levels of support for their children marrying indigenous individuals. Responses are not uniformly positive, however. What accounts for individual level differences in attitudes towards indigenous persons in these countries?

This *Insights* report attempts to answer this question in two ways: first, I explore socioeconomic and demographic factors that might affect support for interethnic marriage. Second, when this approach proves insufficient, I draw from value theory, arguing that individuals who possess more egalitarian values and a more open worldview are more likely to support interethnic marriage. Support is found for this second perspective, suggesting that one’s life experiences, one’s predispositions

towards openness, and one’s values all work together to predict support for interethnic marriage.

Who Approves of Interethnic Marriage?

Who holds positive versus negative views of a child marrying a member of an ethnic minority? Scholarship focused on the United States suggests that a number of demographic variables predict these attitudes. A respondent’s age is an important explanatory factor in the U.S., with those who came of age before the civil rights movement expressing less support for interracial marriage than members of younger cohorts (Erskine 1973; Johnson and Jacobson 2005). A similar pattern could be expected to emerge in Latin America, with members of older age cohorts holding less accepting views of ethnic minorities than members of younger age cohorts.

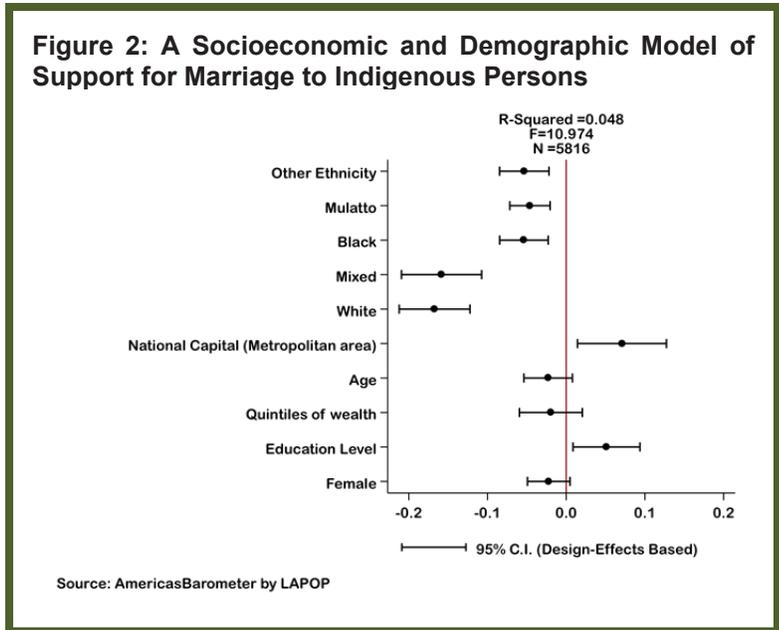
Education has also been found to affect individuals’ approval of interracial socialization, with more educated individuals tending to intermarry more and to express more support for interracial marriages (Schoen, Wooldredge and Thomas 1989; Jacobson and Johnson 2006). There are two reasons to expect this relationship between education and support for interracial marriage: increased education involves increasing exposure to egalitarian values; and, increased education generates exposure to more varied kinds of people, thus altering individuals’ preconceptions about different ethnic and racial groups (Johnson and Jacobson 2005).

The respondent’s self-identified ethnicity should matter as well. I expect higher levels of support for marriage to indigenous individuals from members of less privileged ethnic groups (particularly among self-identified indigenous people) than from members of socially privileged ethnic groups (particularly self-

identified “white” individuals).⁷ This expectation follows from U.S. research suggesting that social privilege affects individual responses to questions about interracial marriage (Dunleavy 2004; Jacobson and Johnson 2006).

I use regression analysis to test the extent to which socioeconomic and demographic variables predict support for interethnic marriage by one’s child. In the model, age is coded from 1 to 6 with 1 representing younger cohorts and 6 representing the oldest cohort.⁸ Educational level is measured from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating that an individual has no education, 2 indicating primary schooling, 3 indicating secondary schooling, and 4 indicating that an individual has some amount of higher education. I also include measures of an individual’s self-reported race/ethnicity, using indigenous as the comparison category. As controls, I include a measure of the individual’s size of place of residence,⁹ and a measure of wealth in quintiles.¹⁰ Gender is also controlled for in the model (coded 1 for female, 0 for male).

Figure 2 displays the results of an analysis predicting support for interethnic marriage with the above-mentioned variables.¹¹ Country-level



dummy variables are included in the regression model but not shown here to save space. The results displayed in Figure 2 are normalized regression coefficients.

Each dot in Figure 2 represents the estimated relationship between a given independent variable and the dependent variable, support for marriage to an indigenous person. The horizontal bars indicate 95 percent confidence intervals around these point estimates. If a dot falls to the right of the vertical line at 0, its estimated effect on the dependent variable is positive; if a dot falls to the left of the line, the estimated effect for that variable is negative. If the horizontal bar does not cross the vertical line, the relationship is significant with at least 95 percent confidence; if the bar crosses the vertical line, the relationship in the data does not meet standard thresholds of statistical significance.

Surprisingly, few of the demographic indicators have a statistically significant effect on support for a child’s hypothetical marriage to an indigenous person. While age does have the expected negative relationship to the dependent

indicating that Guatemala is not driving the findings presented here.

⁷ As a robustness check, all models were run excluding self-identified indigenous individuals from the analysis. Results were substantively similar to those reported here.

⁸ Age cohorts are grouped as follows: cohort 1(16-25); cohort 2 (26-35); cohort 3 (36-45); cohort 4 (46-55); cohort 5 (56-65); and cohort 6 (66+).

⁹ Size of respondent’s city or town of residence is coded as a five-category variable with 1 indicating a rural area, 2 signifying a small city, 3 indicating a medium sized city, 4 meaning a large city, and 5 meaning the national capital or metropolitan area. These categories were defined according to the definition in each country’s census.

¹⁰ See Abby Córdova, 2009, “Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators” for a description of the construction of the wealth index:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

¹¹ Due to high levels of non-response in Guatemala, and because non-response seemed to vary along ethnic lines, all analyses were conducted excluding Guatemala as a robustness check. The results were substantively similar,

variable, there is no statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and age, wealth, or gender.¹² Education, on the other hand, as predicted, has a positive and significant effect on support for interethnic marriage. Similarly, size of place of residence has a positive and significant effect on support for interethnic marriage, with individuals living in national metropolitan areas reporting greater support for a child's marriage to an indigenous person than those living in rural areas, all else equal.¹³ This suggests that something about living in an urban center, perhaps higher levels of education or greater exposure to ethnic diversity, has an impact on individuals' opinions about interethnic marriage.

Finally, as expected, respondents' self-identified ethnicity matters in predicting support for interethnic marriage. Compared to the baseline category (self-identified indigenous individuals) respondents of all other ethnic groups are less supportive of a child's hypothetical interethnic marriage¹⁴. Self-identified blacks and mulattos, as well as those who place themselves in the "other" category, express less approval of marriage to an indigenous person than those in the baseline category, and these results are significant with 95% confidence. More dramatic are the responses from whites and mestizos, who on average express even lower levels of support for interethnic marriage than members of non-indigenous but still potentially marginalized ethnic groups.

This analysis is interesting but incomplete. What else besides the ethnic identity of the respondent affects support for interethnic marriage? To attempt to answer this question, I now turn to a discussion of value theory.

Value Theory and Support for Interethnic Marriage

The analysis presented in Figure 2 shows that socioeconomic and demographic variables are marginally useful in explaining variation in responses to the interethnic marriage question. What else might matter? One hypothesis, which I test here, stems from value theory.

Value theory suggests that individuals hold certain value-based attitudes, which affect their perceptions of social out-groups (see, for example, Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay and Hough 1976). Dunleavy (2004) indicates that a conservative set of values (specifically religious and political conservatism) increases opposition to interracial marriage, whereas egalitarian values and openness to change increase acceptance of interracial marriage.

I provide a preliminary test of this hypothesis in Figure 3. Egalitarian values are proxied using a political tolerance scale.¹⁵ I further control for individual level personality traits, which some scholars (e.g., Sagiv and Schwartz 1995) have suggested affect openness to intergroup contact, using a question tapping an individual's openness to new experiences.¹⁶ Finally, I include

¹² For all categorical variables, dummies representing each category were used to check for non-linear relationships. No non-linear relationships were found for age or education.

¹³ Non-linear effects were accounted for regarding size of town of residence. Residence in a metropolitan area was the only statistically relevant category compared to the baseline of "rural residence", where most of the indigenous population in these countries is located. Other size of location dummies are included in the regression but not shown here to conserve space.

¹⁴ As a robustness check, respondent's native language was used as a measure of ethnic identity, rather than self-identified ethnicity. The results, not reported here, were substantively similar.

¹⁵ D1-3: "There are people who only say bad things about the (country's) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote/ to conduct peaceful demonstrations/ to run for public office/ to make speeches?" Item D4 asked about support for homosexuals' rights to run for public office, and D5 asked about support for same-sex marriage. Respondents were asked to rate their approval from 1 to 10, with 10 indicating complete support and 1 indicating total disapproval.

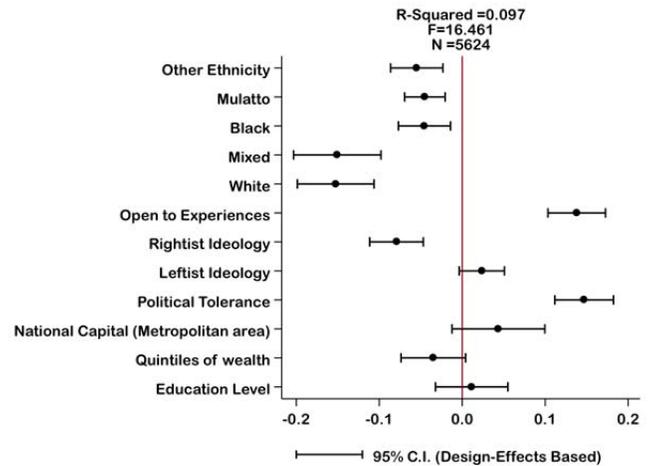
¹⁶ PER5B asked respondents to rate their agreement on a 1 to 7 scale that they were "open to new experiences and intellectual person," with 7 indicating complete agreement with the characterization of their personality.

a measure of left-right ideology to see whether political orientation is a significant predictor of ethnic tolerance.¹⁷ Figure 3 presents the normalized regression coefficients from a regression analysis that includes all the variables from the prior analysis, plus these new indicators.¹⁸

Notably, the effects of an individual's ethnic identification have not been attenuated—indigenous respondents are more supportive of marriage to indigenous persons than mulattos and blacks, and whites and mestizos are substantially less supportive of interethnic marriage than these groups. The effect of size of place disappears, however, with individuals living in metropolitan areas reporting similar levels of support for indigenous marriage as individuals from rural areas.¹⁹

Ideology is of mixed significance in the model, although it consistently works in the expected direction. Those reporting more rightist ideology are less supportive of intermarriage than those reporting centrist ideology, all else equal. The coefficient for leftist ideology is positive, suggesting that those who lean left politically are more supportive of interethnic marriage, although this coefficient is not

Figure 3. Values and Support for Marriage to Indigenous Persons



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Consistent with value theory, political tolerance is also statistically significant in the model, with those reporting higher levels of political tolerance reporting greater support for marriage to indigenous individuals, even when controlling for the personality trait of openness. In fact, openness to experience and tolerance are now two of the most powerful predictors in the model, as determined by the sizes of their coefficients.

Interestingly, the inclusion of personality and tolerance variables attenuates the effect of education seen in Figure 2: here, the effect of education is no longer statistically significant. This indicates collinearity between education and tolerance/individual openness; assessing the precise causal link, if any, among education, tolerance and openness is beyond the scope of this report. But, assuming that personality precedes both political ideology and education, it is fair to say that personality is a key factor in determining attitudes toward interethnic marriage in these four countries. On the basis of this outcome and the fact that size of place of residence also becomes statistically insignificant

¹⁷ L1: "On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. One means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those leftists and those rightists. 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?" Using responses to this question, I created a three-category variable, with response values of 1-3 coded as "Leftist Ideology", 4-7 as "Centrist Ideology" (the baseline here), and 8-10 as "Rightist Ideology." Missing values were included in the baseline category, "Centrist Ideology"; the results reported here are robust to changes in the coding of missing values as their own category, and to their exclusion from the analysis.

¹⁸ In order to conserve space, the coefficients for gender and country dummies, are not shown here, although these variables were included in the regression.

¹⁹ As before, dummy variables for size of town were included in the regression, but are not shown here. None were significantly different from the baseline, rural areas, in this analysis.

in this model, we can infer that one's values are at least partially shaped by one's life experiences, at least with respect to level of education and place of residence.

Discussion

What can be done to decrease negative feelings towards members of other ethnic groups at the individual level in Latin America? Education is not significant in the final model; however, political tolerance, which can be learned, is. This result suggests that efforts to increase political tolerance, through civic education or public awareness campaigns, might lead to greater levels of tolerance with respect to interethnic marriage.

Finally, it is important to consider national level variations in trends regarding support for interethnic marriage. While general trends reported here hold at the country level, there are important national differences. In analyses not report here, I examined the model presented in

Figure 3 for each country separately. Ideology is overwhelmingly important in Mexico and Bolivia, while in Peru and Guatemala its effect on support for interethnic marriage is negligible. Tolerance is more important in Mexico and Peru than in Guatemala and Bolivia for predicting support for interethnic marriage, and the effect of size of place, while not significant in the pooled sample, maintains significance in Peru. Finally, a respondent's ethnic identification is highly significant in Mexico and Bolivia, but only marginally relevant in Guatemala (where the category "white" was not offered to respondents, since only the terms "ladino" and "indígena" are used in that country), and does not achieve statistical significance in Peru.

Thus, while the individual level differences noted in this *Insights* report matter on average across these four countries, contextual differences in relations among ethnic groups might be responsible for a substantial part of the variation in attitudes towards interethnic marriage.

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Appendix. Figures 2 and 3. Socioeconomic, Demographic, and Value Explanations for Support for Interethnic Marriage

	Coefficient (Figure 2)	Standard Error (Figure 2)	Coefficient (Figure 3)	Standard Error (Figure 3)
Female	-0.022	0.014	-0.013	0.014
Age	-0.024	0.016	-0.001	0.015
Metropolitan Area	0.071*	0.029	0.044	0.028
Years of Education	0.047*	0.022	0.007	0.022
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.018	0.021	-0.033	0.020
White +	-0.182*	0.024	-0.166*	0.024
Mestizo	-0.16*	-0.024	0.152*	0.025
Black	-0.061*	0.017	-0.052*	0.018
Mulatto	-0.049*	0.014	-0.048*	0.014
Other Ethnicity	-0.049*	0.014	-0.051*	0.014
Political Tolerance			0.149*	0.018
Leftist Ideology ++			0.025	0.014
Rightist Ideology			-0.080*	0.016
Openness to Experience			0.136*	0.017
Guatemala +++	-0.034	-0.018	-0.029	0.017
Bolivia	-0.193*	0.034	-0.177*	0.033
Peru	-0.115*	0.020	-0.100*	0.021
Constant	0.054*	0.031	0.046*	0.030
<i>R-Squared</i>	0.043		0.093	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	5816		5578	

+ The reference category is indigenous.

++ The reference category is centrist ideology.

+++ The reference country is Mexico.

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Gender and Community Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

By *Frederico Batista Pereira*
frederico.b.pereira@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report explores why women tend to participate less than men in community activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Using data from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys, the report finds some innovative, and yet self-evident, responses to this question. The analysis shows that this gender gap in participation is not entirely explained by the fact that women tend to have lower levels of education, political interest, and political knowledge, which are conventional variables in the explanation of political participation. I show instead that a great part of the gap in participation between men and women is explained by gender roles inside the family. Being a homemaker and having children at home strongly decreases women's participation relative to men in community affairs throughout the Americas.

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

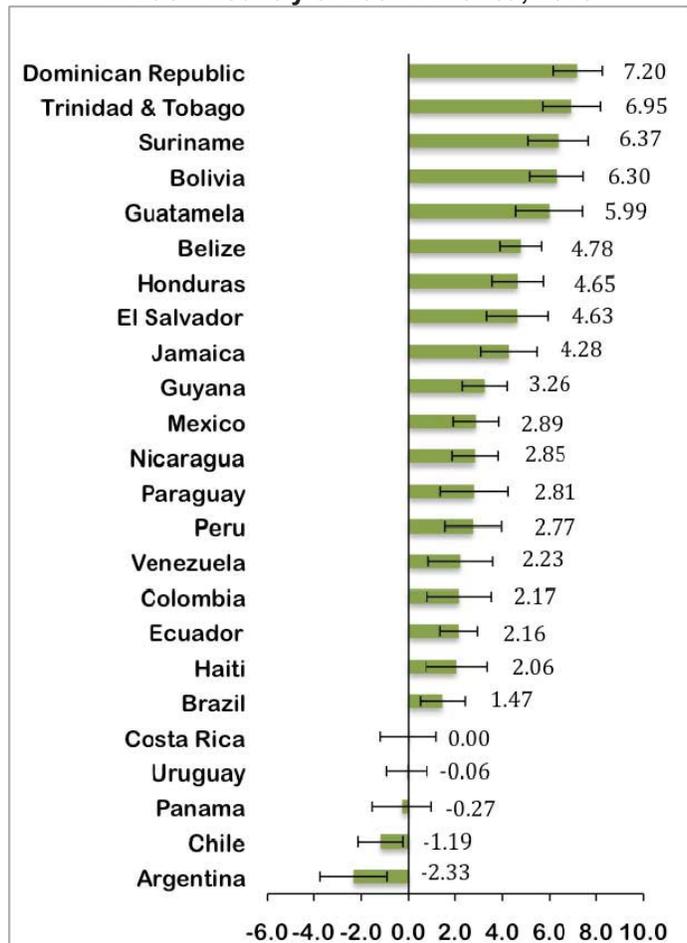
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Political participation at the local level is usually seen as a defining aspect of democracy (Hirschman, 1970). Among the ways in which citizens can participate in local politics, in this *Insights* paper we look at communal participation, a form of activism that is increasingly seen as foundational for stable democratic politics (Reid, 2000). By organizing at the community level, citizens can manage to improve their life conditions by generating local resources and attracting resources from central governments and thus overcome some of the most immediate needs they face. However, for communal participation to have these positive democratizing effects, it is vital that different groups within the community have the same opportunities to participate. In this sense, one troubling aspect of community level politics is the tendency in many countries for gender bias to manifest itself. In both the United States and Latin America, scholars have shown that, on average, women tend to participate less than men in different types of political activities (Burns, Schlozman & Verba, 2001; Kam, Zechmeister & Wilking, 2008; Deposato & Norrander, 2009).

An important challenge for both scholars and policymakers is to explain and help reduce the gender gap in political participation. Allowing it to persist only serves to weaken democracy by denying equal opportunity to all groups, in this case, women. One frequently mentioned explanation for the gap is that women tend to have lower levels of education and political interest, which are factors frequently found to be important determinants of all forms of political participation.¹ However, many analyses show that, even after taking into account these and other variables theorized by the mainstream model of political participation (e.g. education, income, political interest and knowledge), part of the gap between men and women still remains to be explained (Verba, Burns & Schlozman, 1997; Burns, Schlozman & Verba, 2001, Deposato & Norrander, 2009).

¹ In the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys, men have on average higher levels of education, wealth and political interest than women.

Figure 1. The Gender Gap in Community Participation in Each Country of Latin America, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Another possible explanation for the gap relates to gender roles in the family, and, more specifically, to two aspects of family life and the gendered division of labor. First, the burden of housework tends to be disproportional between men and women, being heavier on the latter (Baxter, 1997). Second, the division of labor regarding childcare also tends to fall much more heavily on women than on men (Howell & Day, 2000).

This AmericasBarometer *Insights* report will, first, examine the gender gap in community participation across countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, it will examine whether such differences are explained by the mainstream model of political participation, which will be represented by indicators such as

education, political interest, and political knowledge. Finally, this report will analyze to what extent gender roles in the family help explain the gap. Two variables are important in that last step: homemaker status and number of children at home.

The Gender Gap in Community Participation

The report looks at two survey questions asked about participation in community activities from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP),² in which 40,990 respondents from 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were asked the following questions:

CP5. “Now, changing the subject. In the last 12 months have you tried to help to solve a problem in your community or in your neighborhood?”

“I am going to read a list of groups and organizations. Please tell me if you attend their meetings at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never.

CP8. Meetings of a community improvement committee or association?”

The response options offered were “Never,” “Once or Twice a Year,” “Once or Twice a Month,” and “Once a Week.”³ The response levels were coded from 0 (“Never”) to 3 (“Once a Week”), and the two variables were added to form a single variable.⁴ The final variable was then transformed to range between 0 and 100. Figure 1 shows the average gap in community

participation between men and women for each of the 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁵

Figure 1 shows that there are moderate and statistically significant gender gaps in community participation in 19 out of the 24 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. The gap is not statistically significant in Uruguay, Costa Rica, or Panama, while it is statistically significant but in the opposite direction (i.e., men participate *less* than women) in Argentina and Chile. The largest gap in favor of men is in the Dominican Republic (7.2), while the average gap is about 2.9.

Explaining the Gap

Why do women participate less than men in community activities across Latin America and the Caribbean? In order to make a first attempt to explain the gap, I consider the mainstream model of political participation, which considers participation rates to be a product of one’s general opportunities (e.g., education), resources (e.g., wealth), and motivation (e.g., interest in politics). In the AmericasBarometer survey, there are eight variables that can be considered good indicators for this model. Wealth is an index comprising five quintiles and is based on an analysis of household assets.⁶ Education is a continuous variable measuring years of schooling. Urban is a binary variable indicating if the respondent lives in an urban area. Interpersonal trust is a continuous indicator ranging from 0 to 100, measuring to what extent the respondent trusts other people.⁷ External efficacy is measured on a 1 to 7 scale.⁸ Political

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ Item non-response for CP6 was 0.6%. Item non-response for CP8 was 0.8%

⁴ The Pearson correlation between the two variables was .38, which is sufficiently large to allow the inclusion of those variables in a single construct.

⁵ All analyses presented here were conducted using STATA v11.1.

⁶ More details about the construction of this variable can be found in a previous number of the *Insights* series (Córdova, 2009).

⁷ Interpersonal trust is usually seen along with civic engagement (participation) as a component of social capital (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). Even though the causal direction between the two variables goes beyond the scope of this report, it is important to take into account the possibility that citizens that are most trustful of others are also more likely to participate.

⁸ The question about external political efficacy (EFF1) asked how much respondents agreed or disagreed with the

interest and political knowledge indicate respondents' involvement with politics.^{9,10} The model also controls for age and indigenous identity. Age is a continuous variable measured in complete years. Indigenous is a binary variable indicating whether the respondents considers herself indigenous.¹¹ The main independent variable in the model is a binary variable indicating if the respondent is a woman. If the mainstream model entirely explains the gap, the effect of "Woman" should be close to zero and not statistically significant in the model. The model also includes a binary variable for each country (except Uruguay, which is the country of reference); these country fixed effects are not shown in the figure.

Figure 2. Weighted Standardized Effects of Gender and Control Variables on Community Participation, 2010

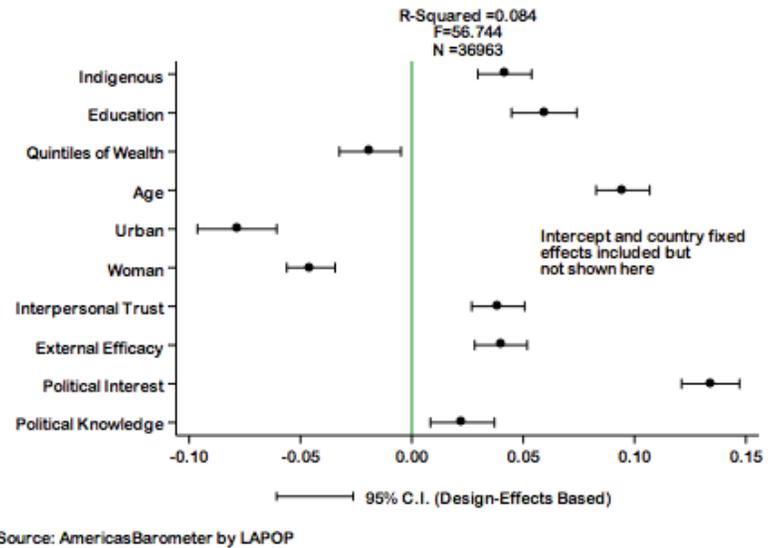


Figure 2 displays the results from the mainstream model of political participation. First, it is notable that the effect of "Woman" is negative and statistically significant even after the inclusion of the variables from the mainstream model. This reveals that factors such as education, political interest, and interpersonal trust do not entirely explain the gap between men and women in community participation. Second, even though the gap still has to be explained, most of the variables from the mainstream model have the expected effects. Only "Quintiles of Wealth" and "Urban" have negative and statistically significant effects, while the other variables have the expected

positive effects. So, general factors related to opportunities, resources, and motivation for political participation do not fully explain the existence the gender gap.

The next step is to take into account gender roles in the family to try to explain the gap. To do so, I add three variables to the mainstream model in order to provide a more complete account of the gender gap in community participation. These variables attempt to capture the process by which the division of labor in the home constrains women's participation in community politics. First, a binary variable indicates whether the respondent declares herself to be a homemaker.¹² Second, the model also includes a continuous variable for the number of children still living with the respondent.¹³ However, in order to capture the separate effect the number of children can have for women and men, it is also necessary to include a multiplicative term between "Woman" and "Number of Children at Home." So, when the respondent is a man,

following statement: "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think." It ranges from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 7 ("Strongly Agree"). Item non-response for this question was 4.3%

⁹ The question about political interest (POL1) asked: "How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?" Item non-response on the question was about 1%.

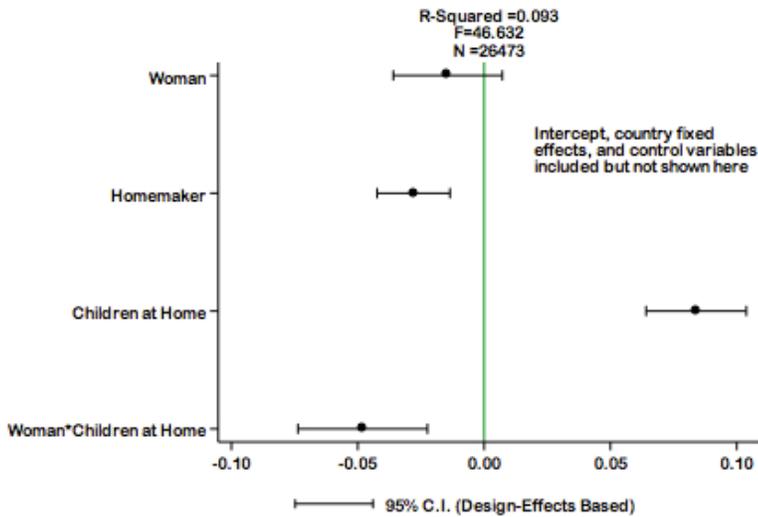
¹⁰ A battery of factual political information questions measured political knowledge. The questions were about the number of provinces/departments/states in the country (GI1), the name of the US President (GI3), and the length of the presidential/prime ministerial term in the respondent's country (GI4). The questions were coded 1 if correct and 0 if incorrect. Missing values were coded as 0. The final variable was the sum of the three items.

¹¹ Item non-response for this question (ETID) was 2%.

¹² Respondents who said that they "mainly spend their time" by "taking care of the home" were coded as "homemakers." Only 1.5% of male respondents chose this option, while 37.2% of female respondents did so. Males who stay at home were excluded from the analysis since they are a residual category with difficult interpretation.

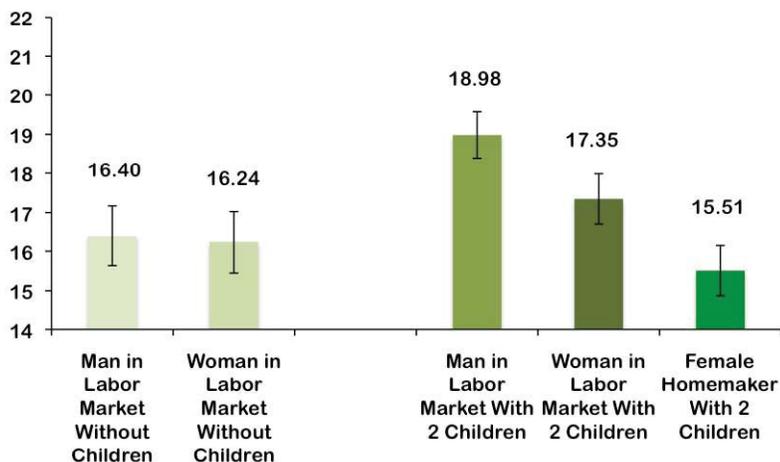
¹³ The variable ranges from 0 to 20, with about 98% of the cases falling between 0 and 5.

Figure 3. Weighted Standardized Effects of Gender and Gender Role Variables on Community Participation, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Figure 4. Predicted Values of Community Participation for Different Types of Respondents, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

“Woman” equals 0, and the coefficient of “Number of Children at Home” refers to the effect among men. When the respondent is a woman, the coefficient of “Number of Children” added to the coefficient of the multiplicative term represents the effect of having children at home among women. Figure 3 shows the results from this model. The model also includes all the variables from the mainstream model and the

country indicators, but they are not shown in the figure due to lack of space (see Appendix for full models).

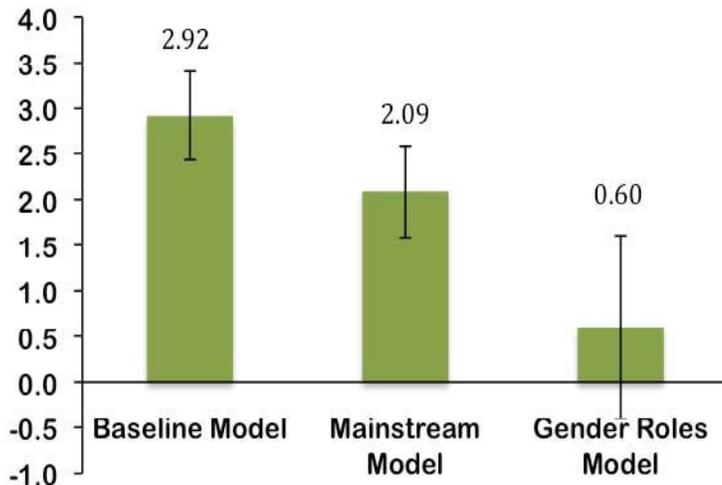
The results from Figure 3 show that gender roles are indeed an important key to explaining the participatory gap. The coefficient of “Woman” falls very close to zero and is not statistically significant, meaning that the gap between men and women is closed when the analysis takes into account gender roles. Homemaker status has a negative and statistically significant effect on community participation. Regarding the number of children, the effects have to be carefully interpreted. Having more children has a positive effect for men (since the effect of “Children at Home” alone is positive), and an

almost null effect among women (because the positive coefficient of “Children at Home” is balanced and neutralized by the negative multiplicative term). In this sense, having kids fosters community participation among men, while it does not among women, who may be more directly involved in the day-to-day care of the children, and who are probably also taking care of the home.

Therefore, on the one hand, women are disadvantaged because of the constraints in having time to participate, mainly caused by the fact that on average they tend to care for children at home to a greater degree than men. On the other hand, even though housewives could conceivably have less time constraints than women who work, the latter

presumably have more opportunities to learn skills and avenues for engagement in politics. Figure 4 helps in the interpretation of the coefficients just discussed. It displays the predicted participation for specific types of respondents, by showing the differences between male and female respondents, between respondents with and without children, and between housewives and non-housewives.

Figure 5. Gender Gap in Local Level Participation Across Different Models, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Finally, another way to interpret the magnitude of the contributions of the mainstream and the gender role models is to see how the gap decreases as variables are added into the analysis. Figure 5 compares the initial gap (“Baseline Model”) when no other variables are included in the analysis with the gaps in the two models discussed above.¹⁴ The gap drops from 2.9 in the baseline model to 2.1 in the mainstream model, and it is still statistically significant. When the gender role variables are included in the last model, the gap drops from 2.1 to 0.7 and is no longer statistically significant.

While the analyses here have been conducted in a manner that considers the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole, I also assessed the models for each country. Regarding the effects in each country, the mainstream model fully explains the gap of 7 of the 19 countries where the gap originally existed, leaving another 12 countries with a gap to be explained. The gender roles model brings substantial improvements in

¹⁴ This gap corresponds to the effect of gender on community participation in a model that only takes into account age, urban/rural residence, indigenous ethnicity, and the country fixed effects.

this respect, leaving only Bolivia and Suriname with gender gaps in need of additional explanation, a task that might be taken up by future research on the subject.

Discussion

This *Insights* report asked why women participate less than men in community activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to variables that are typically seen as explaining the existence of this type of gap, such as education, political interest, and interpersonal trust, the analysis here also took into account factors related to gender roles in the family. For that purpose, variables measuring homemaker status and the number of children at home were included in the analysis in order to verify

if the gender gap in community participation could be better explained when these variables are taken into account.

The findings from the empirical analysis using the 2010 round of the Americas Barometer survey clearly indicate that gender roles are fundamental in understanding the gap. While variables from the mainstream model of political participation help to explain a small part of the gap, homemaker status and number of children at home are shown to be major factors in the differences between men and women.

The results presented in this *Insights* report have some important practical implications. The 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys confirms that there is a gap between men and women in regards to community participation, and shows that this gap is explained by gender roles in the family. In this sense, increasing women’s participation in communities across the area depends heavily on developing strategies and forms of participation that take into account the trade-off many women face between taking care of the family and engaging in politics.

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Appendix. Predictors of Community Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

	Mainstream Model Standardized Coefficient (Standard Error)	Gender Roles Model Standardized Coefficient (Standard Error)
Political Knowledge	0.023* (0.007)	0.028* (0.008)
Political Interest	0.134* (0.007)	0.128* (0.008)
External Efficacy	0.040* (0.006)	0.037* (0.007)
Interpersonal Trust	0.039* (0.006)	0.046* (0.007)
Woman	-0.045* (0.006)	-0.013 (0.011)
Urban	-0.078* (0.009)	-0.086* (0.010)
Age	0.095* (0.006)	0.061* (0.008)
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.019* (0.007)	-0.015 (0.008)
Education	0.059* (0.007)	0.066* (0.009)
Indigenous	0.042* (0.006)	0.035* (0.007)
Homemaker		-0.031* (0.007)
Children at Home		0.081* (0.010)
Woman*Children at Home		-0.045* (0.013)
Mexico	0.040* (0.008)	0.036* (0.010)
Guatemala	0.096* (0.009)	0.084* (0.010)
El Salvador	0.057* (0.009)	0.052* (0.011)
Honduras	0.018 (0.010)	0.008 (0.012)
Nicaragua	0.054* (0.009)	0.047* (0.009)
Costa Rica	0.018* (0.009)	0.014 (0.009)

	(0.009)	(0.012)
Panama	0.021	0.002
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Colombia	0.028*	0.019*
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ecuador	0.055*	0.042*
	(0.011)	(0.013)
Bolivia	0.102*	0.095*
	(0.013)	(0.015)
Peru	0.075*	0.073*
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Paraguay	0.115*	0.097*
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Chile	0.017	0.015
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Brazil	0.015	0.004
	(0.014)	(0.016)
Venezuela	0.090*	0.085*
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Argentina	0.015	0.006
	(0.008)	(0.010)
Dominican Republic	0.116*	0.110*
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Haiti	0.158*	0.168*
	(0.010)	(0.011)
Jamaica	0.055*	0.042*
	(0.010)	(0.012)
Guyana	0.029*	0.010
	(0.010)	(0.012)
Trinidad & Tobago	0.031*	0.012
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Belize	0.023*	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Suriname	-0.011	-0.025*
	(0.010)	(0.012)
Constant	-0.002	0.038*
	(0.008)	(0.009)
<i>R-Squared</i>	0.084	0.093
<i>F-test</i>	56.74*	46.63*
<i>Number of Obs.</i>	36963	26262

* $p < 0.05$

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 79

When Do High Levels of Corruption Justify a Military Coup?

By Brandon Bell

*LAPOP Undergraduate Research Fellow
Vanderbilt University*

Executive Summary: This *Insights* report assesses how various measures related to corruption predict the public's acceptance of interruptions in democratic processes. When considering a scenario of high corruption, corruption victimization is one of the strongest predictors of support for a military takeover of the government. In contrast, an individual's perception of corruption in general does not significantly influence his or her support for a coup d'état. In addition, those who are older, more educated and who are wealthy are more likely to oppose military-takeovers under a scenario of high corruption, along with those citizens who have a positive perception of the government's attempt to curb corruption.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

Corruption is viewed by some as the “grease” that makes it possible for democracy to function (Merton 1957; see also Huntington 1968), but corruption can also have the pernicious effect of weakening public support for democracy (e.g., Morris and Klesner 2010). Public support for democracy is especially critical in regions of the world in which “interruptions” to normal democratic politics have not been uncommon. In Latin America, Valenzuela (2004) counted 14 pre-term departures of presidents between 1985 and 2004, and as recently as 2009, the region witnessed another such incident when the Honduran military escorted President Zelaya out of the country (see Seligson and Booth 2009). As Seligson and Booth (2009) suggest, public tolerance for unconstitutional and undemocratic maneuvers can fuel instability by signaling to elites the public’s willingness to acquiesce to such turns of events. Thus, in a region in which perceptions of corruption are high (Seligson and Smith 2010), it is important to understand the ways in which corruption can lead individuals to express higher levels of approval for interruptions to the democratic rules of the game.

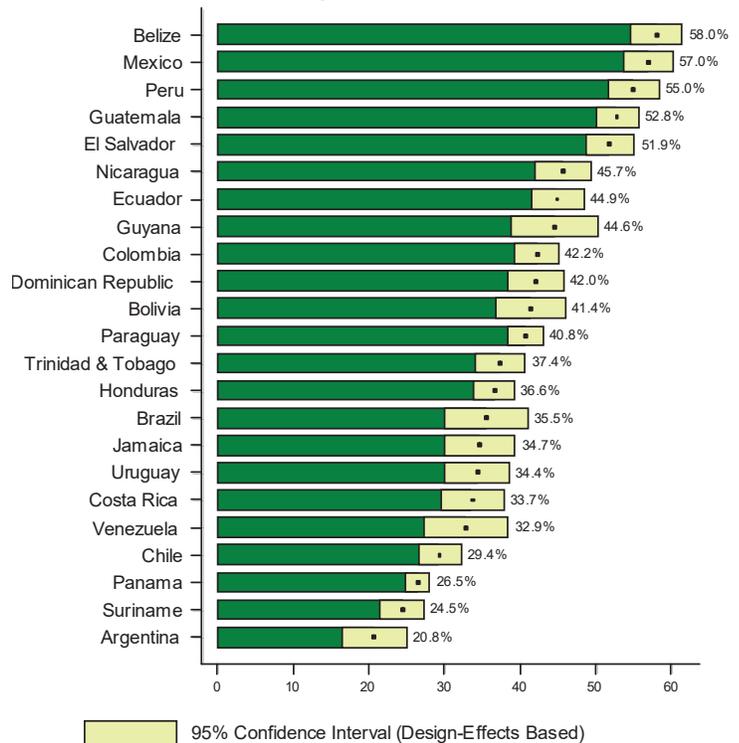
This *Insights* report¹ focuses on the following question from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer survey² by LAPOP, in which 38,521 survey participants stated that it would or would not be justified for the military to take power. Here is the question that they were asked:

JC13: [Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

Figure 1. Support for Military Coups Under High Corruption



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2010

d'état (military coup). In your opinion would a military coup be justified under the following circumstances:] when there is a lot of corruption.³

Figure 1⁴ shows the percentage of respondents who would support a military coup d'état under conditions of high corruption. The highest percentage of support is found in Belize at 58.0%, with Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, and El Salvador all at or above 51.9% in support for a military take-over. The great majority of

³ Non-response was 1.83% for this question across the sample. The question was not asked in Haiti, which does not have an army. The question was customized for Costa Rica and Panama by replacing “los militares” with “Fuerza Pública” and “Fuerza Pública de Panamá,” respectively as these two countries also do not have armies. Analysis was conducted using STATA v12.

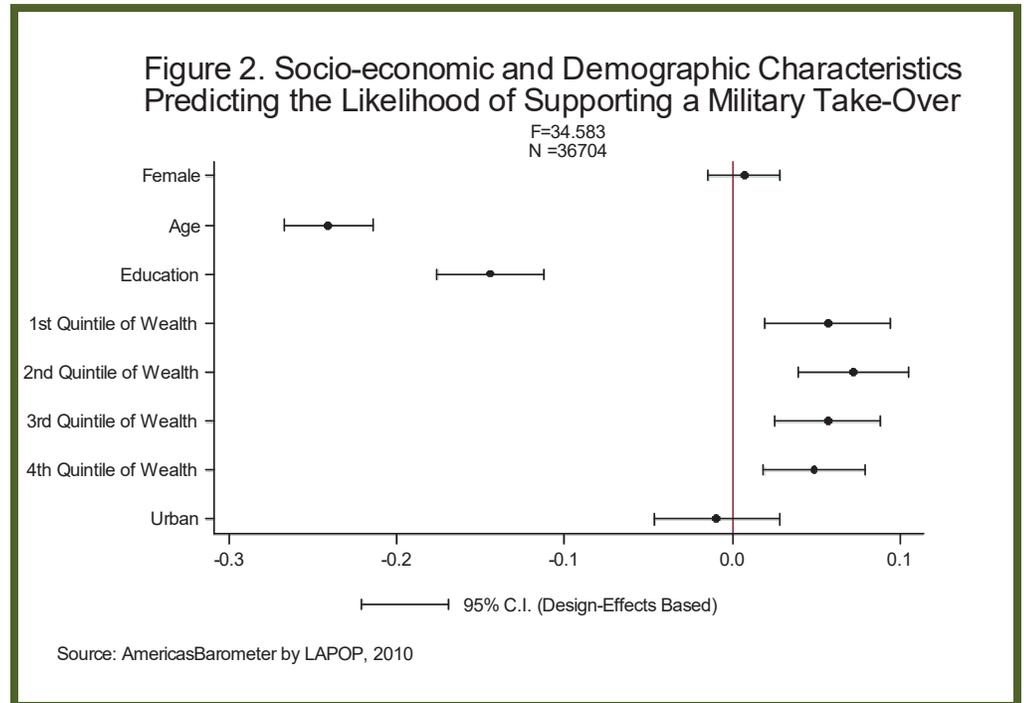
⁴ Because the focus of the *Insights* series is on the Latin American and Caribbean region, I exclude the U.S. and Canada from the comparative analysis in Figure 1 and all subsequent analyses.

countries are within the 30% to low 40% support range. At the lower end are Chile, Panama, Suriname, and Argentina, all with less than 30% of respondents expressing support for a military take-over of the state given corrupt governmental conditions. At first glance, it may not be surprising to find Argentina at the bottom, with 20.8% support, given its poor experiences with repressive military rule in the 20th century. However, other Latin American nations have experienced similar struggles with military regimes and still reported relatively high numbers. For example, 52.8% of respondents in Guatemala said a military take-over would be justified under the specified condition.

While most countries fall within a 12.8 percentage point range (between 32.9% and 45.7%) with respect to average rates of justifying a military take-over, there is still substantial variation among the 23 nations reported in Figure 1. Given the range of responses to this question in a region with a long history of military dictators and coups, it appears as if additional factors than just a nation's prior experience with democratic stability affect public support for a future military take-over under conditions of high corruption.

Individual Characteristics and Support for a Military Takeover Given High Corruption

In this section, I examine the way five socioeconomic and demographic variables predict public support for a military take-over of the state during times of high corruption. First, I expect education to be a negative predictor of



support for a military coup, given that higher education is argued to foster democratic values. Previous research (Lipset 1959; Glaeser et al. 2006) indicates that there is a consistently high correlation between education and stable democracies over the past half-century. Many scholars also (Lipset 1959; Krishna 2008; Córdova and Seligson 2010) theorize that economic difficulties at the individual level correlate with reduced support for democracy. This follows in the vein of thinking that “poor people make poor democrats,” although recent scholarship finds evidence against this argument (Krishna 2008, p. 5). Therefore, I expect to see the most support for a military take-over among the poorest.

Figure 2 presents the results of a logistic regression analysis that assesses how education and wealth, but also gender, urban residence, and age, relate to support for a military coup. In order to examine the effects for different levels of wealth, the wealth measure is divided into five quintiles.⁵

⁵ Each variable was tested for linearity, but evidence for nonlinearity was only found in the wealth variable. The richest quintile was preserved as the baseline for comparison

Each independent variable included in the analysis is listed on the vertical axis. The dot represents the impact of the variable, and the bar represents the confidence interval. When the bar does not intersect the vertical “0” line, that variable is statistically significant. While gender and urban versus rural are not statistically significant, the other variables are, with 95% confidence.

The data support my expectation for education: education is a negative predictor of support of a military take-over. The results also show that age is a significant negative predictor, with older individuals less likely to support a coup. This could be due to the fact that the younger members of these societies did not live under the authoritarian regimes that took hold in many countries in the 1960s and 1970s (Córdova and Seligson 2010), or it may be that the young in general are more inclined than the old to accept undemocratic transitions of power. This finding requires more study.

Wealth matters as well, but the results are somewhat different than I had originally expected. Compared to the wealthiest quintile, all lower wealth quintiles express greater support for a military take-over in times of corruption. Interestingly, the nonlinear results show that the least wealthy do not show more support for a coup than the middle classes, which is consistent with the research reported by Krishna noted above.⁶

against the four dummy variables. See Abby Córdova, 2009, “Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators” for a description of the construction of the wealth index:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

⁶ If anything, the second quintile of wealth appears to express marginally lower support for a military take-over, but that result is not statistically significant, as the model shows the effects for the four lower wealth quintiles are not statistically distinct from each other. To further consider the economic dimension, drawing upon ideas presented in other scholarship (see, e.g., Krishna 2008), I conducted a series of logistic regression analyses to determine if the macroeconomic situation of each country had a conditioning effect on the relationship between wealth and the individual respondent’s willingness to support a coup. To do so, I

While support for a military take-over under conditions of high corruption can be partially explained by these individual characteristics, broader attitudes concerning corruption throughout Latin America and the Caribbean must be considered in order to fully appreciate regional commitment to democracy.

Corruption and Democratic Support

While it may seem obvious that corruption has deleterious effects on democracy in general, it is important to discern what aspects of corruption make individual citizens more prone to support a military take-over under a high corruption scenario. Clearly, individual socio-economic and demographic characteristics shed some light on the issue, but what specifically about *corruption* makes individuals willing to abandon the rules of the democratic game?

It is important to consider how corruption might motivate citizens to discard their democratic values and permit a military coup d’état. And, yet, this is not a perfectly straightforward task, as merely defining corruption has long stymied politicians, scholars and the mass media. Transparency International (TI), a leading Non-Governmental Organization which has spent nearly two decades raising corruption awareness, defines it as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International 2010, p. 5). Yet, some scholars (Andersson and Heywood 2009) object to the term “entrusted” powers, as if those officials, dictators and despots who are never “entrusted” with power cannot be corrupt.⁷ Others (Brown

divided the countries above and below a Gross National Income (GNI) of US\$4,000, respectively, and then ran the model in Figure 2 for each subset. Interestingly, the results show that individual wealth is only a statistically significant predictor of individual support for a coup in the more wealthy countries, that is, those with a per capita GNI over US\$4,000.

⁷ The Pearson’s correlation between **JC13** and Transparency International’s 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, presented in Appendix C, shows little correlation and underscores the difficulty in analytically studying various facets of corruption from the macro and micro levels (See Ruhl, 2011).

2006; Alatas 1990), however, generally agree with Transparency International and identify betrayal of trust as the most basic, universally comprehensible conception of corruption.⁸

To cast a broad net with respect to measures of public opinion concerning corruption, I examine three specific indicators of public opinion as they relate to support for a military take-over in the presence of corruption: corruption victimization (measured in terms of incident counts)⁹, government performance with respect to combating corruption¹⁰, and perception of political corruption.¹¹

With respect to corruption victimization, scholarship (Seligson 2002, 2006; Dininio, 2009) suggests that this is a leading contributor to an individual's willingness to support anti-democratic movements such as a military take-over of the current regime. Studies of corruption victimization "have an appealing authenticity because they draw on the personal experiences of thousands of people rather than on perceptions" (Ruhl 2011, p. 44).¹² Basing their claims on this seemingly more objective indicator of victimization, many scholars maintain that personal contact with episodes of

corruption such as bribery "erodes belief in the legitimacy of the political system" (Seligson 2006, p. 382). In fact, Dininio (2009, p. 148) concludes that corruption victimization not only in Latin America but also in Africa "was the largest reason for people to rate their government as less legitimate, ahead of crime victimization, personal income, and whether or not a person voted for the government in power."

Scholarship also points to the potential relevance of government efforts to combat corruption. Dininio (2009, p. 153) asserts that successful government programs aimed at eliminating corruption will "mobilize civil society, the business sector, and media and enlist them as key stakeholders and partners in this [governmental] effort." By involving the public at large in collaborative corruption fighting programs, one might infer that democratic tendencies should be bolstered under such conditions.

Exogenous factors such as international aid can also affect public perception of the efficacy of anti-corruption programs and, by extension, regime legitimacy. For example, Andersson and Heywood (2009) suggest that many international "good governance" initiatives are almost exclusively directed at those countries with already well functioning anti-corruption programs. Although the external aid might raise the saliency of corruption in general, these programs might also reinforce the public's perception of their government's success in combating corruption while neglecting those countries whose anti-corruption programs are struggling or nonexistent.

For the last category, perceptions of corruption, the literature indicates that it plays a role in public trust in the overall regime. Morris and Klesner (2010) argue that perceptions of corruption and trust in government are endogenously linked. They assert that a "lack of trust in politicians or institutions combines with the perception of corruption to create the

⁸ Brown (2006, p. 76) recognizes that there is no basic template, so researchers must preserve the essential betrayal of trust component of corruption while basing "their analysis deeply within the specific social context with which they are concerned."

⁹ This corruption victimization count measure is calculated using the EXC series of questions, inquiring the number of ways a citizen has been victimized in the past year through bribing the police, courts, school officials, coworkers, health service providers, municipal workers, or public employees.

¹⁰ This is based on a rescaled version of question N9, asking respondents on a scale of 1-7, "To what extent would you say the current administration combats government corruption?" with 1 corresponding to "Not at all" and 7 corresponding to "A lot."

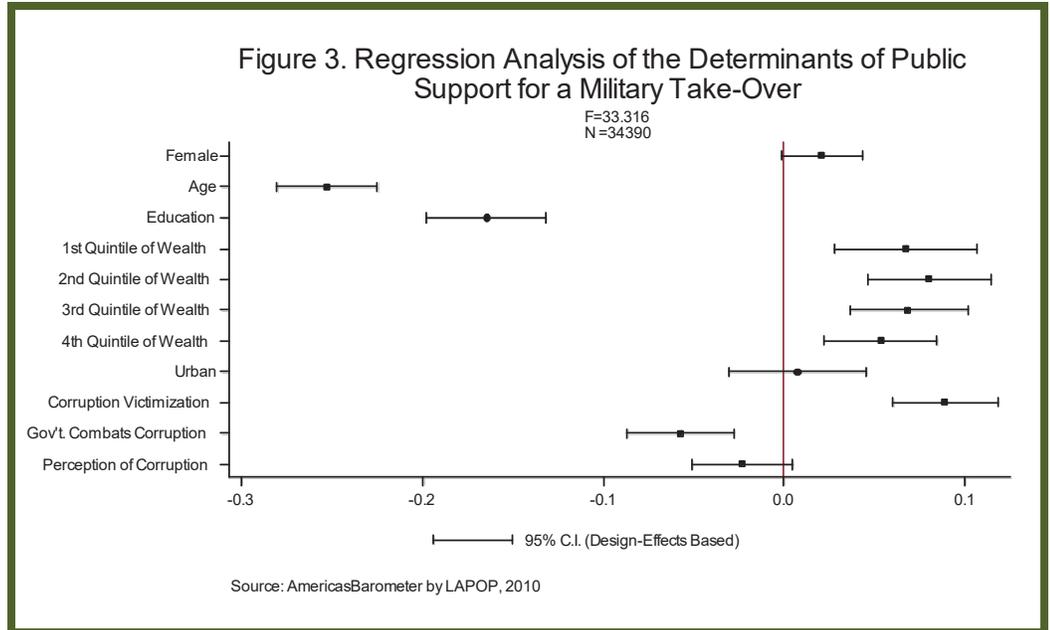
¹¹ This was measured using a rescaled version of question EXC7, "Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is (1) Very common (2) Common (3) Uncommon or (4) Very uncommon?"

¹² Ruhl (2011) also presents evidence that measures of corruption victimization are weakened by the unwillingness of respondents to admit to participating in illegal activities such as bribery.

expectation of corruption and inductively feed corrupt behavior” (Morris and Klesner 2010, p. 1266).¹³ Seligson (2002, 2006) also acknowledges the role that perceptions of corruption play in regime legitimacy and support for democracy. He characterizes trust as “an important precursor to legitimacy” which can be diminished by perceptions of corruption (Seligson 2002, p. 427). Ruhl (2011, p. 52) reaches a similar conclusion, stating that

“public distrust generated by widespread corruption makes it difficult to build the broad mass support for democracy necessary for democratic consolidation.” In this way, it seems that the public’s tendency to lose trust in the government due to perceived corruption could ultimately undermine the legitimacy of the regime and open the possibility of support for a coup d’état.

Figure 3 presents the results of a logistic regression model incorporating these three indicators of public opinion with respect to corruption.¹⁴ By comparing these results to those



in Figure 2, we first see that the inclusion of these three measures of corruption do not significantly alter the results of the socio-economic and demographic predictors.¹⁵

More importantly, the model indicates that corruption victimization is the single greatest predictor of supporting a military take-over under conditions of high corruption. The large, significant and positive effect is consistent with expectations drawn from the literature, as discussed above. The more victimized an individual is by corruption, the more likely he or she is to accept military intervention under a scenario of high corruption. As expected, the results also show that positive perceptions of the government’s efficacy in combating corruption negatively predict support for a coup.

¹³ It is beyond the scope of this report to parse the analysis in such a way as to assess the extent to which perceptions of corruption fuel undemocratic attitudes and, simultaneously, the reverse. It is worth noting that corruption victimization could also be endogenously related to democratic attitudes, though presumably that link should be comparatively weaker. As Seligson (2002, pp. 423-424) writes “Rather, those experiencing bribery have a lower level of support for the legitimacy of the system than those who do not. Presumably the direction of causality here is clear since those from whom bribes were solicited could not be selected by public officials because of the latter’s foreknowledge of the former’s legitimacy perceptions. Or could they? What if bribe targets are selected precisely because the incumbent political party favors its friends and ‘taxes’ its enemies?”

¹⁴ I also performed the logistic regression analysis with a trust index based on the AmericasBarometer’s “B series” of trust in institutions questions. I found that its inclusion caused public opinion of the government’s efficacy in

combating corruption to be statistically insignificant to its support of a coup. In a way that fits with the literature, this suggests that trust in the government and its ability to combat corruption are related, with trust being a mediating variable when incorporated into the military take-over model.

¹⁵ I considered the relevance of trust in the military as a predictor and found that it is positive and significant if added to the model presented in Figure 3; yet, the results of the other predictors were not affected by the inclusion of public trust in the military.

Finally, public perceptions of corruption in general are not statistically significant predictors of an individual's likelihood to discard the democracy and support a military take-over. This null result remains even if the other two indicators related to corruption are removed from the model. Thus, the results suggest that a government's efforts with respect to combating corruption and actual experiences are more important predictors of one's willingness to stick to the rules of the democratic game under high corruption than are perceptions of corruption. It may be that perceptions of corruption lower trust in government, as others have shown, but simply perceiving corruption does not necessarily translate into a situation in which the public deems the current regime illegitimate or otherwise worthy of being replaced by military governance.

Discussion

This *Insights* report examined the factors that might cause the general public to abandon the democratic rules of the game and support a military take-over of their own state when corruption is high. While the general public's seemingly high overall willingness to back a military coup d'état under such conditions seems to indicate some weaknesses with respect to the public's commitment to democratic values across the Latin America and the Caribbean, this report focused on what predicts individual opinions on this issue.

As the results show, the extent to which an individual citizen has been victimized by corruption proves to be one of the strongest predictors for his or her support of a military coup under conditions of high corruption. Even though some (see, e.g., Ruhl 2011) suggest that there are difficulties in measuring corruption victimization due to self-reporting on potentially illegal acts, the results still indicate a strong correlation between one's reported exposure to corrupt practices and decreased democratic values.

Additionally, the government's perceived efficacy in fighting corruption negatively predicts public support for a military takeover. It is important that international organizations and aid agencies do not limit anti-corruption efforts solely to those countries with already well established anti-corruption programs. As many scholars have noted, fear of squandering and misuse might sometimes cause economic aid agencies to shy away from those countries that are suffering the most from corruption and could use foreign assistance. For example, "The U.S. government's Millennium Challenge Account... announced that countries invited to bid for aid would have to demonstrate their commitment to good governance" (Andersson and Heywood 2009, p. 758). The literature suggests that this lack of ability to apply for aid diminishes the possibility of effective anti-corruption programs, thus negatively effecting public perception of government efficacy where corruption is high. This "vicious cycle" might partially explain why those countries that successfully combat corruption enjoy more political legitimacy and stability in general. At the individual level, this research suggests that those who perceive more efficacious efforts to combat corruption will be more committed to the democratic rules of the game. And, thus, it underscores the importance of programs that target corruption broadly as opposed to only within selected countries.

Finally, and to conclude, the results presented here are heartening in that they suggest that high perceptions of corruption among the public do not necessarily translate into a lack of democratic values. This is important for both academics and policymakers, as anti-corruption campaigns may raise the salience of corruption. While such increased perceptions of corruption may erode trust in government (Seligson 2002, 2006; Morris and Klesner 2010), they do not necessarily likewise erode support for democratic governance.

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When Do High Levels of Corruption Justify a Military Coup?

Brandon Bell

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Appendix A

Table 1. Pearson's Correlation between JC13 and Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index

	Support for Coup	2010 Corruption Perceptions Index*
Mexico	0.57	0.31
Peru	0.55	0.35
Guatemala	0.528	0.32
El Salvador	0.519	0.36
Nicaragua	0.457	0.25
Ecuador	0.449	0.25
Guyana	0.446	0.27
Colombia	0.422	0.35
Dominican Republic	0.42	0.3
Bolivia	0.414	0.28
Paraguay	0.408	0.22
Trinidad & Tobago	0.374	0.36
Honduras	0.366	0.24
Brazil	0.355	0.37
Jamaica	0.347	0.33
Uruguay	0.344	0.69
Costa Rica	0.337	0.53
Venezuela	0.329	0.2
Chile	0.294	0.72
Panama	0.265	0.36
Argentina	0.208	0.29
Pearson's Correlation Coefficient		-0.278946751

*1 Indicates "very clean." 0 Indicates "highly corrupt"

**In addition to the United States, Canada and Haiti, both Suriname and Belize were omitted from the correlation due to a lack of data from the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Appendix B

Table 2. Determinants of Support for Military Take-Over under High Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Urban	-0.009	0.018	0.007	0.019
4 th Quintile of Wealth+	0.049*	0.015	0.053*	0.015
3 rd Quintile of Wealth	0.057*	0.016	0.068*	0.016
2 nd Quintile of Wealth	0.072*	0.016	0.081*	0.017
1 st Quintile of Wealth	0.057*	0.019	0.067*	0.019
Education	-0.143*	0.016	-0.164*	0.016
Age	-0.240*	0.013	-0.249*	0.013
Female	0.007	0.010	0.020	0.011
Perception of Corruption			-0.023	0.014
Government Combats Corruption			-0.057*	0.014
Corruption Victimization			0.091*	0.015
Mexico	0.162*	0.021	0.150*	0.022
Guatemala	0.120*	0.020	0.112*	0.021
El Salvador	0.117*	0.021	0.113*	0.021
Honduras	-0.019	0.021	-0.026	0.022
Nicaragua	0.053*	0.023	0.053*	0.024
Costa Rica	-0.027	0.025	-0.038	0.026
Panama	-0.083*	0.020	-0.083*	0.020
Colombia	0.045*	0.021	0.052*	0.022
Ecuador	0.105*	0.031	0.101*	0.031
Bolivia	0.058	0.033	0.054	0.035
Peru	0.156*	0.022	0.138*	0.022
Paraguay	0.030	0.020	0.015	0.021
Chile	-0.042	0.024	-0.030	0.025
Brazil	-0.017	0.036	-0.033	0.038
Venezuela	-0.019	0.030	-0.018	0.028
Argentina	-0.146*	0.030	-0.167*	0.031
Dominican Rep.	0.047*	0.023	0.045	0.023
Jamaica	0.002	0.026	-0.004	0.026
Guyana	0.061*	0.028	0.047	0.030
Trinidad & Tobago	0.009	0.022	-0.023	0.022
Belize	0.150*	0.022	0.135*	0.024
Suriname	-0.087*	0.024	-0.099*	0.024
Constant	-0.423*	0.019	-0.396*	0.019
F	34.58		33.32	
Number of Observations	36,704		34,390	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay

+Category of Reference: 5th quintile of wealth

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 80

Mano Dura in the Americas: Who Supports Iron Fist Rule?

By Cornelia Buchanan, Liz DeAngelo, Ruidan Ma, Chris Taylor

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary: This *Insights* report investigates the extent to which performance failures, and other factors, influence public attitudes over so called “iron fist” policies, which is centralized get-tough approaches to governance, known in Spanish-speaking Latin America as “*mano dura*.” Using data from the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey, we examine the extent to which citizens support a policy of iron fist rule rather than preferring widespread public participation in governance issues. We find that support for *mano dura* varies across countries, though support for it is not the majority opinion in any country in the Americas. We find that education is the strongest predictor of opposition to *mano dura* among socioeconomic variables, while level of wealth is less consequential. Focusing on the influence of government performance failures in predicting support for *mano dura* policies, we find that crime victimization, perceptions of insecurity, direct experience with corruption, and perceptions of corruption all independently predict increased support for *mano dura*. In addition, we find that interpersonal trust matters: those lower in social trust are more supportive of iron fist rule.

LAPOP is pleased to note that this report was developed and written by undergraduate students participating in a Vanderbilt University honors seminar in the Spring of 2012. That class, HONS186, was taught by Professor E. J. Zechmeister and Margarita Corral acted as teaching assistant. Author names are listed here in alphabetical order; biographies of the authors are provided in the report appendix.

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

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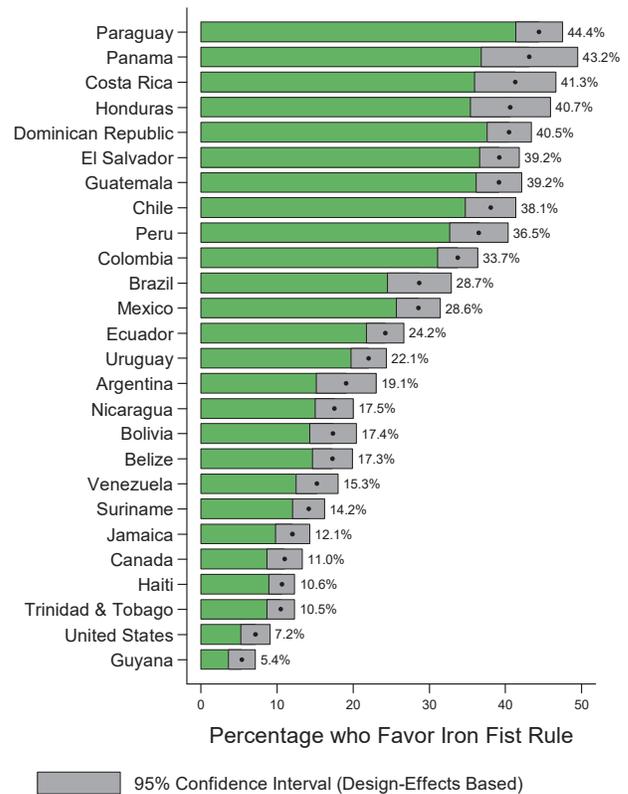
In recent times, crime rates have been steadily increasing and widely affecting societies within the Latin American and Caribbean regions (e.g., Malone 2010). Crime and the insecurity it fosters pose major obstacles to democratization (Pérez 2003-2004). Some governments in Latin America have turned to *mano dura* programs or iron fist policies, which use hardline and militaristic approaches to combat crime. People’s support for *mano dura* differs depending on a range of factors, but most scholars have hitherto focused predominantly on crime. When fear of crime is high, people are more likely to accept a *mano dura* authoritarian approach to combat crime (Goldstein, Achá, Hinojosa, and Roncken 2007). Additionally, support for *mano dura* is highest in countries where crime rates are the highest (Malone 2006). In order to examine more broadly what factors lead to support for *mano dura* across the Americas, we assess and compare the extent to which various indicators of performance failure, as well as interpersonal trust, predict attitudes toward iron fist governance in the Americas.

This report focuses on the following question from the 2010 AmericasBarometer¹ survey by LAPOP²:

DEM11. “Do you think that our country needs a government with an iron fist, or that problems can be resolved with everyone’s participation?”³

Figure 1 shows the percentage of people who favor iron fist rule, as opposed to “everyone’s

Figure 1. Support for Iron Fist Rule in the Americas, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer 2010, by LAPOP

participation,” by country with confidence intervals. We notice that fewer than 50% of people favor iron fist rule in all countries surveyed, which suggests that the public in the Americas generally does not support iron fist rule. Yet, support for iron fist rule varies across countries. Guyana demonstrates the least support for iron fist rule at 5.4%, while Paraguay exhibits the highest support at 44.4%. Not surprisingly given prior research connecting violence to preference for iron fist rule, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the three countries with the highest homicide rates in the Central American region,⁴ have some of the highest rates of support for *mano dura*. We also notice that the countries are not grouped at

¹ Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University

² Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

³ The question was asked to 42,486 respondents across all 26 countries (a split sample format in the US and Canada meant the question was asked of only 750 individuals in each of these two countries); the non-response rate across the pooled sample is 2.7%.

⁴ Casas-Zamora, Kevin. 2011 (May 25). “U.S.-Central America Security Cooperation.” United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, Written testimony.

the two extremes; instead, the figure shows a steady increase of support for iron fist rule from 5.4% to 44.4%.

We find Costa Rica's support level for iron fist rule at 41.3% particularly interesting, because people in Costa Rica generally have comparatively high levels of support for democracy.⁵ This seeming discrepancy between support of iron fist rule and democracy illustrates that the two are not mutually exclusive (see Seligson 2003).⁶ Further, it suggests that the word "democracy" may have different nuances and connotations in different countries. Despite the interesting cross-national differences that we see in the data, in this report we focus on individual-level explanations of support for *mano dura*.

[A]s levels of education increase, people become less likely to support mano dura.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Support for an Iron Fist Rule

What at the individual level predicts support for iron fist rule? In this section we first examine a simple model in which we predict support for *mano dura* with five standard socioeconomic and demographic measures: urban (versus rural) area of residence; wealth (measured in quintiles)⁷; age; sex; and education. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, we run a

⁵ Seligson, Mitchell A. and Amy Erica Smith. 2010. "The Political Culture of Democracy, 2010." *AmericasBarometer Insights Series*. (December 13, 2010). <<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/2010-RegRep-en2.pdf>>. (April 3, 2012).

⁶ Seligson (2003, p. 563) discusses survey research showing that "respondents in Latin America can simultaneously prefer leaders who rule with a strong hand while preferring democracy over dictatorship."

⁷ See Abby Córdova, 2009, "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators" for a description of the construction of the wealth index: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

logistic regression. We also exclude the U.S. and Canada from this and additional analyses, in order to focus on the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

The results of the regression analysis are presented in Figure 2. As with all *Insights* reports, the dot in the figure represents the standardized regression coefficient and the lines represent the 95% confidence intervals around that estimate. The results in Figure 2 demonstrate that living in urban versus rural areas does not have a significant effect on people's support for *mano dura*, which is seen in the figure by the confidence interval lines overlapping with the vertical "0" line. On the other hand, the results show that people who are wealthier, younger, and female are significantly less likely to support *mano dura*.

To evaluate the effect of education on support for *mano dura*, we compare respondents with primary, secondary, and university educations to those with no education (the latter is the omitted comparison category in the analysis). We expect that people with higher education levels will be more likely to support "everyone's participation" over *mano dura*. Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer (2007) argue that education promotes civic participation by socializing children and teaching them how to cooperate. Additionally, these authors note that "education raises the benefits of political participation" (5); thus, education may encourage people to support systems that allow significant levels of public participation in politics. Consequently, education should be negatively correlated with people's support for *mano dura*.

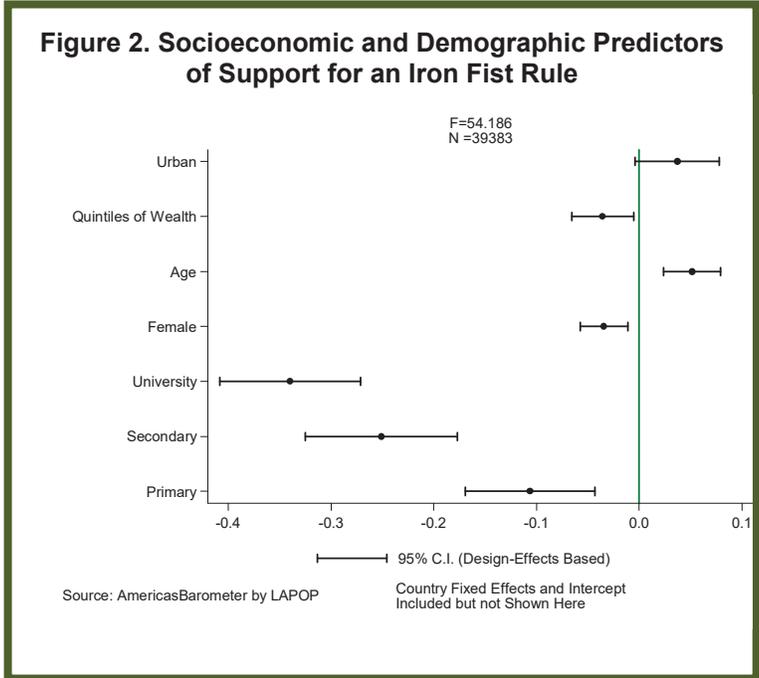
We notice from Figure 2 that as levels of education increase, people become less likely to support *mano dura*. The figure shows that primary education has the smallest negative coefficient, secondary education has a middle-

valued coefficient, and university education has the largest negative coefficient. These effects should each be interpreted in comparison to the reference category, which are those respondents reporting having received no formal education. In particular, we find that each education level is a significant negative predictor of support for *mano dura*. Additionally, we find that the higher the education level is, the more negative the predictor is. Therefore, the likelihood of supporting *mano dura* decreases with every level of education. This negative correlation between education and support for *mano dura* fits our expectation.

Performance Failures, Interpersonal Trust, and Support for *Mano Dura*

In this section we explore what other factors might render a person more likely to support *mano dura*. More specifically, we formulate expectations about the effects of various “performance failures” and interpersonal trust on support for *mano dura*. We examine performance failures through public opinion about problems related to crime and corruption (though, as we note later, we also tested and found similar effects for economic factors). For both crime and corruption, we find that both direct victimization and higher perceptions of these problems are associated with higher support for *mano dura*. With respect to interpersonal trust, we find that those who are more trusting of their neighbors are less likely to support *mano dura*. In the analysis that follows, we first explain the logic behind our expectations for these variables, and then describe the results in more detail.

We expect that those who are victimized by crime and who perceive insecurity are more likely to support *mano dura*. Scholarship indicates that crime victims seek swift solutions



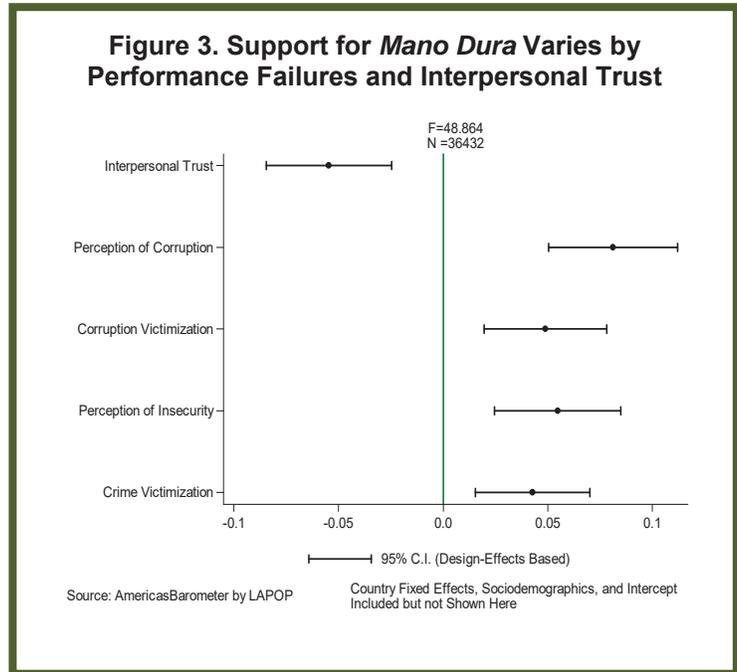
to issues of crime; thus, victims turn to *mano dura* policies, which tend to implement quick and harsh programs to suppress crime (Dammert and Malone 2006; Pérez 2003).⁸ Other scholars contend that perception of insecurity or fear of crime puts pressure on governments to respond to crime in overt and punitive ways, which again encompasses *mano dura* (Goldstein et al. 2007, Hume 2007; Smulovitz 2003). Seligson (2003) indicates that crime victimization may not be directly correlated with support for *mano dura*; rather, crime victimization produces fear of crime, which then affects democratic attitudes. Since the scholarship is conflicted about whether crime victimization or perception of crime matters more, we test both factors. We expect that both crime victimization and perception of insecurity will be positively correlated with support for *mano dura*.

Little has been written about either the relationship between corruption victimization and perceptions of corruption, or the

⁸ Pérez (2003, p. 638) argues that *mano dura* “in many instances results in highly repressive and undemocratic measures.”

relationship of these variables and support for *mano dura*. However, we believe that corruption victimization and perception of corruption will both be positively correlated with support for *mano dura*. We theorize that, in a manner analogous to the reactions to crime described above, those who have been victimized by corruption seek fast solutions to the issue of corruption, and thus turn to *mano dura* policies. Seligson (2006) finds that corruption victimization, independent of perception of corruption, erodes democratic legitimacy. Thus, we expect victims of corruption to be less likely to support solving problems with “everyone’s participation.” However, Seligson (2006) also argues that “even if corruption is at low levels, if perception is that it is high, democracy could be weakened” (Seligson 2006, 382). Morris and Klesner (2010) suggest that perception of corruption and the resulting lack of trust make citizens less likely to “work actively with others or the government to seek solutions to the problem of corruption” (1276). For these reasons, we also expect those with higher perceptions of corruption to be less likely to support “everyone’s participation.”

We also expect that those who trust their neighbors will be less likely to support *mano dura* and will desire everyone’s participation in democracy instead. Almond and Verba (1989) claim that social attitudes affect political attitudes. They state that those who have more “faith in people” tend to believe that they can work with each other to “influence the government” (228). Consequently, we expect that people with higher levels of interpersonal trust will tend to value other citizens’ abilities and contributions more. Thus, they are more likely to support everyone’s participation rather than *mano dura* policies. Using the 2008 AmericasBarometer survey data, Pérez (2009) finds that people with lower levels of interpersonal trust are more likely to support military coups. Since support for military coups represents a preference for hardline policies in a



way that is somewhat analogous to *mano dura* approaches, we expect that people with lower levels of interpersonal trust are also more likely to support *mano dura*.

To test our expectations, we created a multiple variable logistic regression model, which includes the individual level characteristics seen in Figure 2⁹ and the following variables: crime victimization, perceptions of insecurity, corruption victimization, perceptions of corruption, and interpersonal trust.¹⁰ As

⁹ Full results appear in the Appendix.

¹⁰ The item that measures crime victimization is 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?” Perception of insecurity is measured using AOJ11. “Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being victim of assault or robbery, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?” Corruption victimization is based on a series of questions asking about whether the respondent has been received a request for a bribe from the police, public employees, municipal officials, anyone at work, in the justice system, when using health services, and at school. Perception of corruption is measured using the item EXC7. “Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is very common, common, uncommon or very uncommon?”

illustrated in Figure 3, the results of our statistical analysis support our expectation that performance failures (as measured by crime victimization, perception of insecurity, corruption victimization and perception of corruption) are positively correlated with support for *mano dura*. We also find that interpersonal trust is negatively correlated with support for *mano dura*. All five variables are statistically significant.

Figure 3 illustrates how crime victimization and perception of insecurity are both statistically significant, independent of one another. Similarly, corruption victimization and perceptions of corruption are statistically significant, independent of each other, and while controlling for all other variables in the model. Thus, while prior research has focused primarily on crime, we can conclude that not only crime, but also other performance failures – such as corruption – can cause individuals to prefer iron fist rule in the Americas.¹¹

Conclusion

The strong predictive effects of education levels and performance failures prove to be our most important findings in respect to explaining support for *mano dura* policies. We expected education to be linked with democracy, but it is

Responses were recoded so that larger figures mean greater perceived corruption. Finally, we measure interpersonal trust using IT1. “Now, speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...?” Again, the responses were recalibrated so that larger numbers mean more interpersonal trust.

¹¹ In an analysis that we conducted but have not shown in this report, we found that negative perceptions of the economic situation of the country were also positively correlated with support for *mano dura*, while perceptions of the personal economic situation were statistically insignificant. A line of scholarship suggests that it is difficult for people to relate their personal situation to the broader economic situation or politics (Villarreal 1999, 136). The finding for the national economic situation, though, suggests that even perceived economic performance failures matter for support for iron fist rule.

interesting that support for *mano dura* continues to decline with each increased level of education. It is also significant that, in contrast, wealth levels are less important in our study. Our findings about performance failures suggest that support for *mano dura* can be a reflection of overall government performance rather than only issues related to crime prevention and punishment. This finding is important because it suggests that support for *mano dura* could remain high even if victimization rates decline as long as other insecurities remain.¹² Additionally, perceptions of corruption appear to have a substantially stronger relationship to support for *mano dura* than victimization itself. This is important because support for *mano dura* could still be high even if corruption rates go down.

These findings are significant for politicians and policymakers, since they suggest that crime victimization and insecurity are not the only or even the most significant factors in determining support for *mano dura*. In fact, our analysis suggests that perception of corruption may be the strongest predictor among measures of performance failures. It is important to note that increased media attention on anti-corruption efforts could actually increase rates of corruption perception even when actual corruption is declining (Seligson 2006). Thus, an unintended side-effect of anti-corruption campaigns could be to increase support for iron fist rule. Therefore, we advise policy makers to continue efforts to stamp out corruption while focusing on the importance of broadly inclusive civic and political participation, which are crucial aspects of the democratic process. To the degree that policy makers seek to decrease support for iron fist rule, we advise increasing access to education because even primary education significantly decreases support for *mano dura*.

¹² A study of national crime rates might be interesting to pursue in future research, but we do not include it here for the sake of brevity in this report.

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Appendix –

Table 1. Predictors of Support for Iron Fist Rule in Latin America and the Caribbean
 2010

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Primary Education	-0.106*	0.0322	-0.1081*	0.0357
Secondary Education	-0.251*	0.0377	-0.2693*	0.0414
University	-0.339*	0.0349	-0.3607*	0.0377
Female	-0.034*	0.0117	-0.0272*	0.0123
Age	0.051*	0.0140	0.0544*	0.0146
Urban	0.037	0.0208	0.0218	0.0213
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.035*	0.0153	-0.0346*	0.0155
Crime Victimization			0.0428*	0.0139
Perception of Insecurity			0.0548*	0.0154
Corruption Victimization			0.0489*	0.0149
Perception of Corruption			0.0812*	0.0157
Interpersonal Trust			-0.0547*	0.0153
Mexico	0.064*	0.018	0.0478*	0.0194
Guatemala	0.145*	0.017	0.1333*	0.0182
El Salvador	0.155*	0.016	0.1508*	0.0172
Honduras	0.155*	0.026	0.1528*	0.0264
Nicaragua	-0.051*	0.021	-0.0573*	0.0207
Costa Rica	0.164*	0.024	0.1619*	0.0239
Panama	0.197*	0.026	0.1906*	0.0245
Colombia	0.132*	0.017	0.1241*	0.0179
Ecuador	0.045	0.025	0.0309	0.0259
Bolivia	-0.052	0.033	-0.0642*	0.0314
Peru	0.154*	0.020	0.1324*	0.0205
Paraguay	0.198*	0.017	0.1879*	0.0187
Chile	0.177*	0.020	0.1809*	0.0216
Brazil	0.074*	0.028	0.0643*	0.0300
Venezuela	-0.070*	0.023	-0.0797*	0.0235
Argentina	-0.021	0.026	-0.0385*	0.0268
Dominican Rep.	0.152*	0.017	0.1359	0.0182
Haiti	-0.161*	0.024	-0.1866*	0.0266
Jamaica	-0.120*	0.024	-0.1211*	0.0242
Guyana	-0.288*	0.037	-0.2829*	0.0358
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.148*	0.022	-0.1640*	0.0235
Belize	-0.065*	0.022	-0.0800*	0.0226
Suriname	-0.071*	0.022	-0.0628*	0.0241
Constant	-1.174*	0.021	-1.1774*	0.0204
<i>F</i>	54.19		48.86	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	39,383		36,432	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay

Appendix: Author Biographies*

At the time of writing this report, **Cornelia Buchanan** is a freshman in the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt University. She is pursuing an interdisciplinary major in Spanish, Portuguese, and European Studies and minors in Latin American Studies and World Politics. She is a Cornelius Vanderbilt Scholar and a member of the College Scholars Honors Program. She serves on the board of Manna Project International and is also a member of the Vanderbilt Equestrian Team and Kappa Delta Sorority.

Liz DeAngelo has recently finished her sophomore year at Vanderbilt University and is a member of the College Scholars Honors Program. She is double majoring in Classics and Interdisciplinary English and History. She has worked as an office aid in the Classics Department and will be a peer consultant at the Vanderbilt Writing Studio next year. She also has been a peer editor for the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal for two years. After graduation, she plans on attending graduate school.

Ruidan Ma has just finished her sophomore year at Vanderbilt University and is a member of the College Scholars Honors Program. She is majoring in Chemistry and minoring in Spanish and Biological Sciences. She works as a student tutor in College of Arts and Science and an Undergraduate Research Assistant in the Department of Chemistry. She will also be a student mentor in Vanderbilt Visions next year. She plans to attend dental school after graduation.

Chris Taylor has finished his sophomore year at Vanderbilt University and is a member of the College Scholars Honors program. He is majoring in Philosophy. He is a peer editor for the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Research Journal and a member of the Vanderbilt Ultimate Frisbee Team. After graduation he plans to attend graduate school.

**Author names are listed alphabetically. Margarita Corral, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, acted as a technical consultant on this report.*

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 81

Asking for Help in the Americas: The Importance of Needs, Efficacy, and Political Engagement

*By Megan Lynch, Sylvie Render, and Megan Twomey
Vanderbilt University*

Executive Summary: This AmericasBarometer *Insights* report examines the factors that influence citizens' likelihood of requesting help from the local government. Taken as a whole, our results highlight the role of needs related to both financial and physical security in motivating requests for help: those of a lower quintile of wealth and those who have been victimized by crime are more likely to request help. In addition, we find that those with higher political efficacy and those who participate in politics in other ways are more likely to request help. Given the importance of needs, efficacy, and political engagement, we conclude that political education programs and the opening of more opportunities for citizens to participate in the political system will increase citizens' tendencies to request help.

LAPOP is pleased to note that this report was developed and written by undergraduate students participating in a Vanderbilt University honors seminar in the Spring of 2012. That class, HONS186, was taught by Professor E. J. Zechmeister and Margarita Corral acted as teaching assistant. Author names are listed here in alphabetical order; biographies of the authors are provided in the report appendix.

The Insights Series is co-edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
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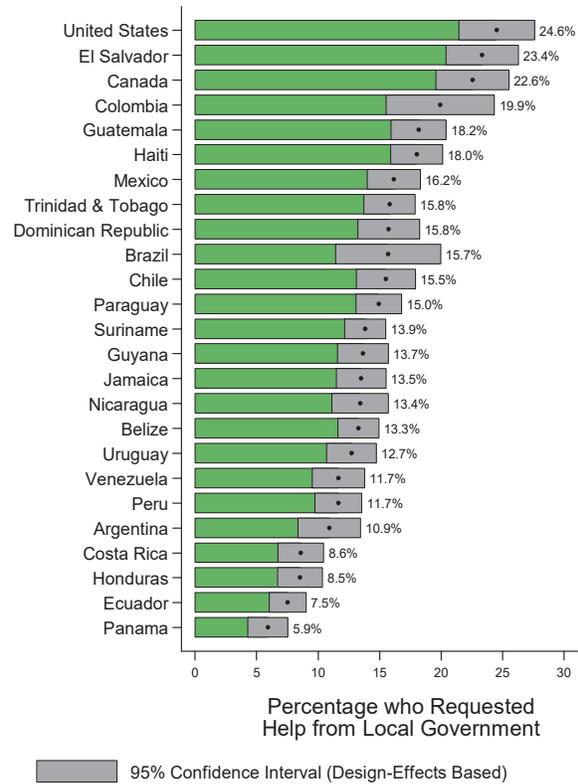
As citizens we may ask ourselves, why should we participate in politics in our societies at all? Many argue that the answer to this question is that participation deepens democracy by teaching civic skills and demonstrating government responsiveness to individuals (see, for example, Goldfrank 2007). Analysts claim that Latin American democracies are “shallow” and that increasing citizen participation opportunities is a potential solution (Caputo 2004). Benefits of political participation at the local level include the strengthening of civil society and the improvement of reliability and responsiveness of local government. As this is the closest level of government to citizens, such involvement in turn leads to the overall strengthening of democracy (Goldfrank 2007).

One important way that citizens become involved in politics is by reaching out to their local governments to request help. This AmericasBarometer *Insights* report looks at the extent to which citizens request help from their respective local governments in the Americas. We then investigate individual-level determinants that may account for variation between and within these countries in frequency of requesting help. A key issue we test is whether requests for help are more likely to come from those with greater *resources* or from those with greater *needs*. As we will show, needs trump material resources in explaining who seeks help from local government, while participation in other domains of politics and feelings of internal efficacy also appear to matter.

The data for this report come from the 2010 round¹ of the Latin American Public Opinion

¹ Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University

Figure 1. Asking Local Government for Help in the Americas, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer 2010, by LAPOP

Project (LAPOP) survey,² in which respondents from 25 countries in the Caribbean and North, Central, and South America³ were asked to answer yes or no to the following question:⁴

CP4A. In order to solve your problems have you ever requested help or cooperation from a local public official or local government, for example a mayor, municipal council, councilman, provincial official, civil governor or governor?

² Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php> The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

³ This question was not asked in Bolivia.

⁴ The response rate for this question for the pooled sample was greater than 99%. In the US and Canada the question was asked to only 750 individuals in each of these two countries.

Figure 1 displays the percentage of respondents in each country who responded “yes” to the question—meaning that they have requested help from the local government. On average, 14.6% of respondents in each country answered “yes.” While all countries report percentages under 25%, there is some variation among the 25 countries, as the response rates span 18.7 percentage points. The United States, El Salvador, Canada, and Colombia have the highest percentages of respondents answering “yes,” at 24.6%, 23.4%, 22.6%, and 19.9% respectively. Looking at the other extreme, Panama, Ecuador, Honduras, and Costa Rica have the lowest percentages of respondents who have requested help, with respective percentages of 5.9%, 7.5%, 8.5%, and 8.6%. The remaining countries vary slightly and lie between these two extremes.

What factors explain whether or not people request help? Hirlinger (1992) suggests that participation in multiple avenues of political activism increases the likelihood of partaking in additional politically-relevant activities, such as requesting help from the local government. Do other forms of political participation actually predict the likelihood of asking for help from the local government? What other factors play a role in determining whether or not a citizen will request help? To assess these questions we first turn to a simple regression model that investigates a set of classic socioeconomic and demographic measures as predictors of requesting help from local government.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors

Extant literature pertaining to political involvement and civic engagement in the Americas justifies an expectation that socioeconomic status (SES) will help predict who seeks help from a local public or government official. Two key factors within SES are income (which we measure by quintiles of

wealth⁵) and level of education (Hiskey and Seligson 2003). The ability to examine income and education separately is a key point in our analysis. While wealth and education are frequently found to be closely linked, it is possible that they have distinct effects on our dependent variable.

Current scholarship presents mixed findings about the relationship between quintiles of wealth and our dependent variable. Two conflicting theories emerge from this literature. One position is that a positive correlation exists between these variables because the wealthy have access to the time and resources required to be politically active (West and Zuckerman 1985). Since one mode of activism is political contacting, this theory suggests we should find that the wealthier are more likely to contact local government for assistance. Another theory centers on perceived needs, claiming that those who are poorer feel the need to reach out to local government for assistance more often and are thus more likely to initiate contact (Cornelius 1974; Hirlinger 1992; Oliver 1999). We find the latter perspective more persuasive, especially in the Latin American and Caribbean context, as we believe that needs trump availability of resources. We assert that the desire to acquire essential services (especially among the poor) is a strong motivator for contacting, whereas an abundance of free time does not necessarily push an individual to become politically engaged in the manner we examine here.

Considering education, a significant amount of research in the field suggests that the educated are more likely to participate in politics (see, for example, Galston 2001). However the explanation as to why this is the case varies considerably. One theory is that education

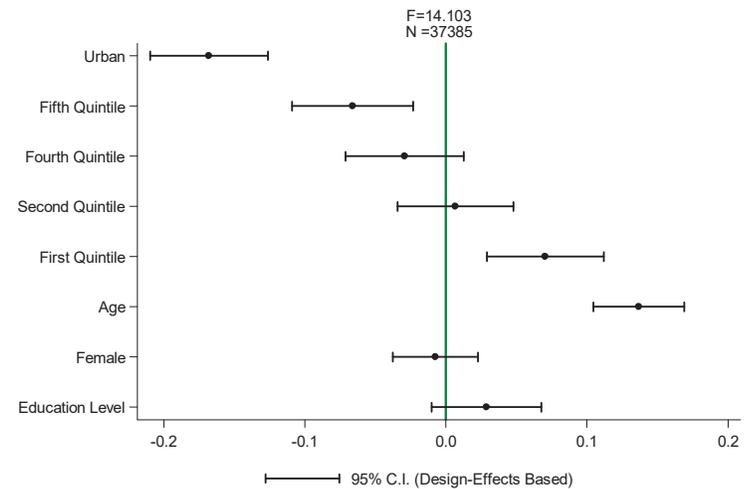
⁵ See Abby Córdova, 2009, “Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators” for a description of the construction of the wealth index:
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

increases political ties and thus increases contacting (West and Zuckerman 1985). Another theory is that education increases an individual's understanding of personal and community interests, making him or her more inclined to make contact (Galston 2001). We imagine that those who feel confident in their political knowledge and access to the system are more likely to use the resources of the system—one of which is contacting local officials to ask for help. Thus, we expect education to be positively correlated with our dependent variable.

To test these expectations, we seek to predict the likelihood that an individual says that they have contacted local government for help by looking at the following variables: urban, quintile of wealth, age, gender, and level of education. Figure 2 shows the results of this basic logit regression analysis.⁶ The values on the horizontal axis represent the relative effect of each independent variable on our dependent variable. Those variables with confidence intervals crossing the 0-line are deemed to be statically insignificant, although the variable may positively correlate (falling to the right of the green line) or negatively correlate (falling to the left of the green line) with our dependent variable.

The results of Figure 2 show that there is a direct and significant relationship between wealth and asking local government for help. In the analysis, we included four quintiles of wealth and compare the effects of these to the omitted comparison (or baseline) category—the third quintile. The extremes (the first and fifth quintiles) are statistically significant. This means that, compared to the middle categories, the highest quintile of wealth group is *less* likely to report having asked for help while the lowest

Figure 2. Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Requesting Help from Local Government



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Country Fixed Effects and Intercept Included but not Shown Here

quintile of wealth group, i.e., the poorest, is more likely to have done so. These results support our expectations about the role of needs in motivating requests for help from local government: the poorest seek help, while the richest do not. This demonstrates that it is needs, and not free time or available resources, which motivates this form of political participation. This finding is also consistent with a conclusion of Booth and Seligson (2008).

Additionally, although we expected level of education to positively correlate with our dependent variable, Figure 2 shows that the relationship is positive but statistically insignificant. Such a result leads us to two conclusions. First of all, the variables of education and quintile of wealth are not always capturing the same traits, a finding that supports Hiskey and Seligson's (2003) conclusion that SES needs to be broken down into more defined factors. Secondly, of these two factors, wealth is the more important SES indicator with respect to our dependent variable.

⁶ The U.S. and Canada are excluded from this and all subsequent analyses in this report. Full details of the analysis are available in the report appendix.

Other non-SES factors were included in Figure 2 to create a broader picture of the general characteristics of those who are more likely to ask for help at the local level. Gender (female) is statistically insignificant and negatively correlated with requesting help; age is statistically significant and positively correlated⁷; and urban is statistically significant and negatively correlated. In the next section we investigate additional predictors of our dependent variable—crime victimization and political participation—in an attempt to develop a more thorough explanation of *who* specifically asks for local-level help.

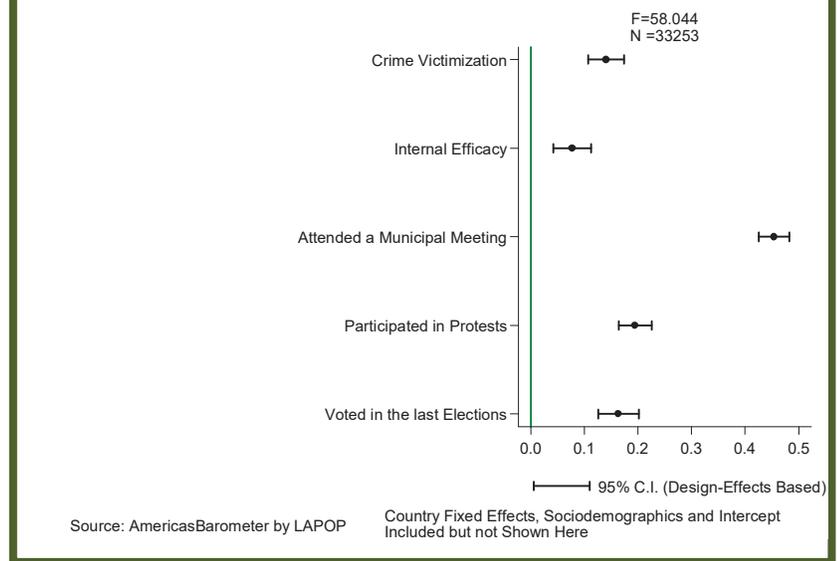
Political Participation, Crime Victimization, and Requesting Help

In the previous section, we argued that needs motivate requests for help and we examined this with respect to wealth. Here we extend that framework to include crime victimization as a motivator for requesting help. In addition, we examine whether other forms of political participation and internal political efficacy are predictors of requesting local help.

Prior scholarship links victimization to various forms of political engagement, but not specifically to requesting help from the local government. Rather, we found scholarship suggesting a strong and positive correlation between crime victimization and general political engagement (Bateson 2009). Other literature indicates that being a victim of crime leads to increased voting and political efficacy (Blattman 2009; Bellows and Miguel 2009). While none of these works focus on requesting help, it is possible that crime victimization has a

⁷ While not shown in this figure, when the independent variable age was further broken down into groups there was a curvilinear relationship between age and asking for help. The age range of 46 to 55 years is the most likely to ask for help.

Figure 3. An Extended Model of Predicting Requests for Help from Local Government



similar positive effect on this type of participation, as crime victims may be motivated to request help from local government out of need for help or desire for justice.

In considering political participation more generally, we propose that high levels of participation in other political domains should be associated with an increased likelihood of requesting help from the local government. Research suggests that previous participation in political activities will make a person more likely to become involved in additional political actions, such as requesting help (Hirlinger 1992). Thus, we expect that attendance at municipal meetings will also be related to increased likelihood of asking for help. We assert that attending meetings demonstrates political interest and involvement that would increase one’s likelihood to ask for help due to increased knowledge of the municipal government.⁸ This hypothesis is supported by LAPOP’s *2010 Report on the Americas*, which states that those who attend municipal meetings are most likely to make a demand or request from a local

⁸ It is also possible that some citizens actually make their requests for help at municipal meetings.

government official (Seligson and Smith 2010, pp. 137-138).

Booth and Seligson (2005) also suggest that citizens with ties to political actors and citizens who are more engaged in civil society activism are more likely to request help from the government. Following this broader perspective, we expect that protesting and voting in past elections will also positively correlate with asking for help. In a related vein, we also expect that internal political efficacy will be related to increased likelihood of requesting help because confidence in personal knowledge of the political situation in one's country should fuel political engagement.⁹

To test these expectations, we ran a multiple variable analysis that includes (but does not show) the individual-level characteristics from Figure 2 while also assessing the effects of the factors mentioned above. We measure the effect of crime victimization on the likelihood of requesting help by using a question from the AmericasBarometer 2010 on crime victimization. In order to measure political participation, we include the following variables: attendance at a municipal meeting, participation in protests, and voting in the last election. In addition, we include a measure of internal efficacy. Results from the logistic regression analysis are shown in Figure 3.^{10,11}

⁹ The item that measures crime victimization is **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?" We used **EFF2** "You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?" to measure internal efficacy. We also used the item **NP1**. "Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting in the past 12 months?" To measure participation in protests, we used **PROT3**. "In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?" And finally, to measure voting we used the item **VB2**. "Did you vote in the last presidential elections (year of last presidential elections)?"

¹⁰ Once we include the new independent variables for Figure 3, the effects for age, urban versus rural, and quintiles of

We hypothesized that crime victimization, other forms of political participation, and internal efficacy would all positively predict an individual's likelihood of requesting help. The results show that crime victimization, internal efficacy, attendance at a municipal meeting, participation in protests, and voting in the last election are all significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable. Attendance at a municipal meeting is the strongest correlate of requesting help, while internal efficacy is the weakest. The results show that those who are victimized by a crime, those who participate more in other political activities, and those who have greater levels of internal political efficacy are more likely to request help from the local government. The positive and significant finding for crime victimization suggests that financial needs are not the only issues that motivate individuals to seek help from local officials, but rather needs related to physical security matter as well.

Conclusion

In sum, this *Insights* report indicates multiple factors that predict citizens' likelihood of requesting help from their respective local governments. In support of our hypotheses, crime victimization, political efficacy, and various components of political participation (participation in protests, voting, and attending a municipal meeting) all positively predict an individual's likelihood of requesting help. Our finding that political participation in various arenas is positively correlated with our dependent variable supports Hirlinger's (1992) theory that one avenue of political participation

wealth remain unchanged, but education is now negatively correlated yet still statistically insignificant, and female is now positive and statistically significant (see Appendix for full results).

¹¹ We also expected trust in institutions to positively correlate with our dependent variable. After running a separate analysis, we found trust in the national government is statistically significant and positively correlated while trust in the justice system is not correlated; for the sake of parsimony we left this out of the body of our report.

increases activity in other forms of political participation. We further found that needs, not availability of resources, drive requests for help. While level of formal schooling is not a significant predictor, lack of wealth and crime victimization are significant determinants of requesting help from local government.

For politicians and policy makers, a pertinent finding from our study is that political efficacy and political participation increase likelihood of requesting help from local government. These findings indicate that citizens with more knowledge of the political system and current political situation in their country will be more active. This underscores the importance of political education programs to increase a citizen's basic knowledge and confidence in his or her understanding of the political system. In addition, policies that create more opportunities for citizens to participate in the political system (through activities such as voting and attending government meetings) are likely to increase the likelihood of requesting help from local government. Through the efforts of such programs and policies, citizens become more likely to engage in multiple forms of political participation, potentially strengthening democracy in their countries.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Requesting Help in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Education	0.029	0.020	-0.043	0.022
Female	-0.008	0.015	0.036*	0.017
Age	0.137*	0.016	0.085*	0.019
Urban	-0.168*	0.021	-0.148*	0.023
1 st Quintile of Wealth	0.070*	0.021	0.099*	0.022
2 nd Quintile of Wealth	0.007	0.021	0.014	0.023
4 th Quintile of Wealth	-0.029	0.021	-0.027	0.024
5 th Quintile of Wealth	-0.066*	0.022	-0.094*	0.024
Crime Victimization			0.140*	0.017
Internal Efficacy			0.077*	0.018
Attended a Municipal Meeting			0.454*	0.014
Participated in Protests			0.195*	0.016
Voted			0.164*	0.019
Mexico	0.049*	0.023	0.064*	0.026
Guatemala	0.061*	0.023	0.047*	0.026
El Salvador	0.128*	0.023	0.129*	0.026
Honduras	-0.098*	0.028	-0.086*	0.029
Nicaragua	0.005	0.025	-0.003	0.027
Costa Rica	-0.089*	0.028	-0.071*	0.030
Panama	-0.166*	0.032	-0.131*	0.033
Colombia	0.094*	0.029	0.130*	0.031
Ecuador	-0.150*	0.037	-0.148*	0.040
Peru	-0.022	0.024	0.034	0.025
Paraguay	0.023	0.023	0.095	0.031
Chile	0.048	0.028	0.107	0.045
Brazil	0.068	0.044	-0.024	0.030
Venezuela	-0.007	0.026	-0.033	0.029
Argentina	-0.020	0.030	-0.013	0.026
Dominican Rep.	0.040	0.024	0.048	0.027
Haiti	0.062*	0.025	0.031*	0.027
Jamaica	-0.013	0.024	-0.001	0.028
Guyana	-0.015	0.026	0.040	0.026
Trinidad & Tobago	0.031	0.023	-0.020	0.027
Belize	-0.006	0.023	0.012	0.027
Suriname	-0.001	0.022	-1.977	0.031
Constant	-1.870*	0.025	0.064*	0.026
<i>F</i>	14.10		54.04	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	37,385		33,253	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed. The country of reference is Uruguay. The 3rd Quintile of Wealth is the category of reference for wealth variables.

Appendix: Author Biographies*

At the time this report was written, **Megan Lynch** was finishing her freshman year at Vanderbilt University. She is a member of the College Scholars Program and is majoring in Neuroscience and potentially Medicine, Health, and Society. Over the next couple of years at Vanderbilt Megan hopes to become involved in Neuroscience research on campus. Additionally, Megan is an active member in the Global Medical Brigades organization on campus.

Sylvie Render was finishing her junior year at Vanderbilt University. She is a member of the College Scholars Program and is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Medicine, Health, and Society. She is very active in Vanderbilt Hillel, serving her second term on the Executive Board. After graduation Sylvie hopes to attend graduate school for speech-language pathology.

Megan Twomey was finishing her junior year at Vanderbilt University. She is a member of the College Scholars Program and is double majoring in Mathematics and Physics. She is part of the founding cohort of the Susan Gray-Murray House Fellowship Program and is currently the Co-Chair of Vanderbilt Alternative Spring Break. After graduation Megan hopes to work for a few years for a service organization and then return to school to get a graduate degree in public policy.

**Author names are listed alphabetically. Margarita Corral, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, acted as a technical consultant on this report.*

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 82

Riches Don't Explain Campaign Participation in the Americas, but Community Involvement Does

By Erica Graff, Maranda Orrell and Alex Rigg
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary: Campaign work involves a subset of the population that is highly dedicated to exercising its democratic right to participate in politics. It can therefore be used as an indicator of electoral participation beyond voting. We find that rates of campaign participation vary across individuals and countries in the Americas, with rates in certain Caribbean countries especially high. Focusing on the individual level, we find that education is a positive predictor of this type of involvement in electoral politics, but wealth is not. Interestingly, we also find that interpersonal trust negatively predicts campaign work. We discuss two potential explanations for this finding: one is that those with more interpersonal trust might feel less compelled to participate because they trust others to do so, and the other is that participation in the inner-workings of electoral politics might sour people and decrease interpersonal trust.

LAPOP is pleased to note that this report was developed and written by undergraduate students participating in a Vanderbilt University honors seminar in the Spring of 2012. That class, HONS186, was taught by Professor E. J. Zechmeister and Margarita Corral acted as teaching assistant. Author names are listed here in alphabetical order; biographies of the authors are provided in the report appendix.

The Insights Series is co-edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
www.AmericasBarometer.org

The electoral process arguably is the most significant feature of a modern democracy. It is principally through elections that systems meet “the claim of democracies to be governments in which the people participate in policy making” (Powell 2000, p. 3). While most individuals participate in elections through voting, *if* they participate at all, a smaller subset of citizens devote time and energy to political campaigns. Citizen participation in campaigns to elect representatives demonstrates commitment to the system, reflects a strong interest in exercising the basic democratic right of participation, and may impart important political knowledge and skills. Thus, it is important to understand who participates in campaign work in the Americas, and why.

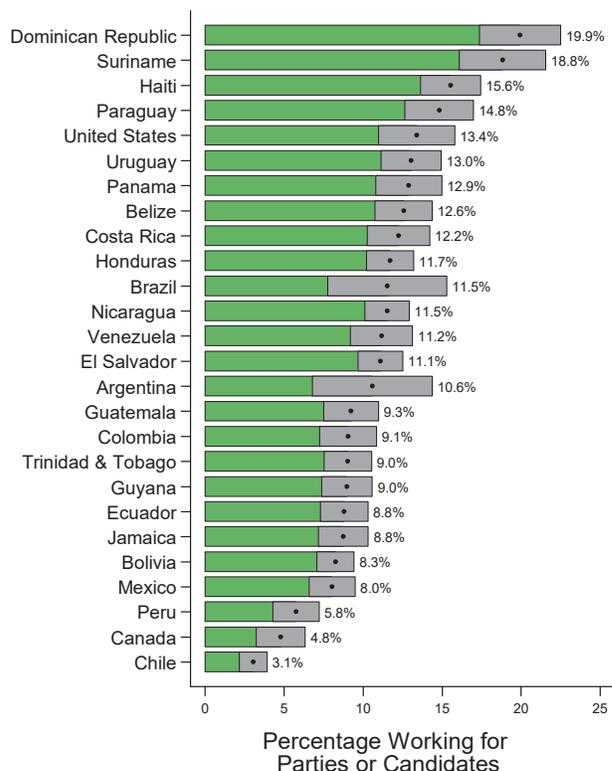
In this *Insights* report, we examine individual level variables that predict a person’s likelihood of having worked on a recent national campaign. We focus in particular on resources and social capital. With respect to the first category, interestingly, we find that wealth is not a predictor of participation in campaign work, while education is. Together this provides only modest support for a classic resource model of participation.¹ Moving on, we assess two dimensions of social capital: community engagement and interpersonal trust. We find that indicators of community engagement positively predict working for an electoral campaign. In contrast, trust has a slight *negative* relationship with campaign work. As we discuss later, this latter finding could be due to exposure to the conflict inherent in political campaigns, though testing such a causal relationship is outside the scope of this report.

The question at the center of this *Insights* report was included in the 2010 AmericasBarometer²

¹ Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995, p. 273) identify time, money, and civic skills as “resources for political participation.”

² Funding for the 2010 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American

Figure 1. Working for Parties or Candidates during Campaigns in the Americas, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer 2010, by LAPOP

survey by LAPOP³, and was presented to 42,488 individuals across 26 countries.⁴ The question was worded as follows:

PP2, “There are people who work for parties or candidates during electoral campaigns. Did you work for any candidate or party in the last Presidential [Prime Minister] elections of 20[XX]?”

Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University

³ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php> The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

⁴ The 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer included 43,990 respondents, but the question examined here was asked of only a split sample in the U.S. and Canada; the average non-response rate for this question for the pooled sample is 1.9%.

Figure 1 depicts the percentage of individuals in each country who report having worked for a political party or candidate in the last national, executive-level electoral campaign. The rates of participation range from 3.1% in Chile to 19.9% in the Dominican Republic. The gray bars indicate the 95% confidence interval; countries with overlapping confidence intervals are statistically indistinguishable with respect to their estimated rates of participation in electoral campaigns. The countries with the highest levels of participation are found in the Caribbean region, namely the Dominican Republic and Suriname, whereas there is only modest variation across the remaining 24 countries, with percentages tapering off slowly. Overall, working for a political party or candidate in the more recent national campaigns is a task that is only taken on by a small subset of the population. But who are these select few? In the next sections we evaluate a number of possible individual level predictors of campaign work.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics and Working for a Party or Candidate

One dominant explanation of political participation is the resource model (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995). Drawing on this perspective, one might expect that those with more wealth and education are more likely to participate because wealth might provide people with the time and financial resources to support participation in campaigns and education should impart civic skills. While we test these expectations here, we found two reasons to caution against making strong *a priori* predictions along these lines. First, much of the literature dealing with political participation

does not address campaign work as the sole focus of its research, and therefore our research expectations are based on extrapolation from more general works on political participation. Second, resources may encompass more than just the benefits of wealth and education; thus, other factors might reasonably matter more than status in predicting campaign work in the Americas.⁵

Political campaign activism is high in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic and Suriname lead all nations in the Americas, while Canada and Chile lag far behind.

We conduct a logistic regression analysis in which we predict our dichotomous dependent variable, working for a political party or candidate, with the following

measures: place of residence (urban versus rural), quintiles of wealth⁶, age, gender, and education level.⁷ Figure 2 presents the results of this analysis, with the independent variables aligned on the vertical axis. Each dot on the graph corresponds to the relative predicted impact of each independent variable based on standardized coefficients. Dots to the left of the vertical line at 0.0 represent a negative correlation with working for a political party or candidate. Likewise, the dots to the right of the line represent a positive correlation with work for a political party or campaign. The lines flanking the dot on either side represent the 95% confidence interval. When the confidence interval does not overlap the vertical “0.0” line we conclude that the coefficient for that independent variable is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

⁵ Huckfeldt and Sprague (1992) claim that political structure exists independently of social structure and therefore, social status may not always predict political participation.

⁶ See Abby Córdova, 2009, “Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators” for a description of the construction of the wealth index:
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

⁷ In this and subsequent analyses in this report, we omit the U.S. and Canada in order to focus on public opinion and behavior in the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

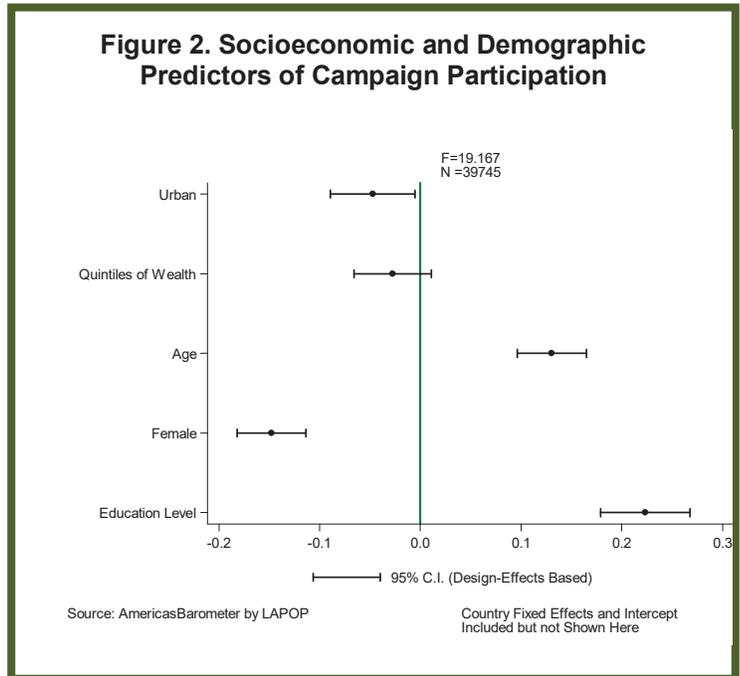
All of the independent variables *except* quintiles of wealth are statistically significant predictors of the likelihood that a person worked for a political party or candidate. The variables “urban” and “female” are negatively correlated, whereas “age”⁸ and “education level” are positively correlated. Thus, those who live in rural areas, men, those who are older, and those who are more educated are more likely to have worked for a campaign in the last national election. The relative strength of each correlation is determined by the absolute value of the standardized coefficient. Thus, in relation to each other and the dependent variable, urban versus rural place of residence has the weakest significant relationship, while education level has the strongest correlation with the dependent variable. Thus, while we find no support for the expectation, drawn from the standard resource model framework, that wealth matters, we do find that education has a strong effect on one’s likelihood of working for a campaign or party in national elections in the Americas.

Community Involvement, Interpersonal Trust, and Political Identification as Predictors of Working for a Party or Candidate

One additional factor that may influence the likelihood that a person has worked for a political party and/or candidate in an election is social capital. Klesner (2007) defines “social capital” as the quantity of communal bonds formed in society, which allow citizens to pursue similar goals and objectives. Social capital thus implies both social trust and participation. Drawing on this perspective, we consider that high levels of social trust and

⁸ Interestingly, age does not show a perfectly linear relationship with the dependent variable. After the age of 55, the likelihood of campaign participation decreases, suggesting a curvilinear relationship. For the sake of brevity and focus, this was eliminated from the discussion.

participation in one’s community, which capture the two principal dimensions of social capital, might be related to a higher likelihood that citizens will actively participate in politics, with



such participation in this case evidenced by work for a political campaign.

Our extended model thus includes three types of indicators: interpersonal trust, community involvement, and general political attachment and involvement. Before introducing the specific measures, we provide further discussion of our expectations for these factors.

The general social capital framework suggests that, as a component of social capital, interpersonal trust should be positively correlated with campaign work. One might reasonably assume that the more trust a person has in others, the more likely he or she will be to engage with other citizens and political leaders. Amber Seligson (1999) introduces the idea of interpersonal trust as a factor in determining engagement with a political system, though she concedes that her research did not fully support this hypothesis. Thus, there is reason to think that interpersonal trust, though often associated

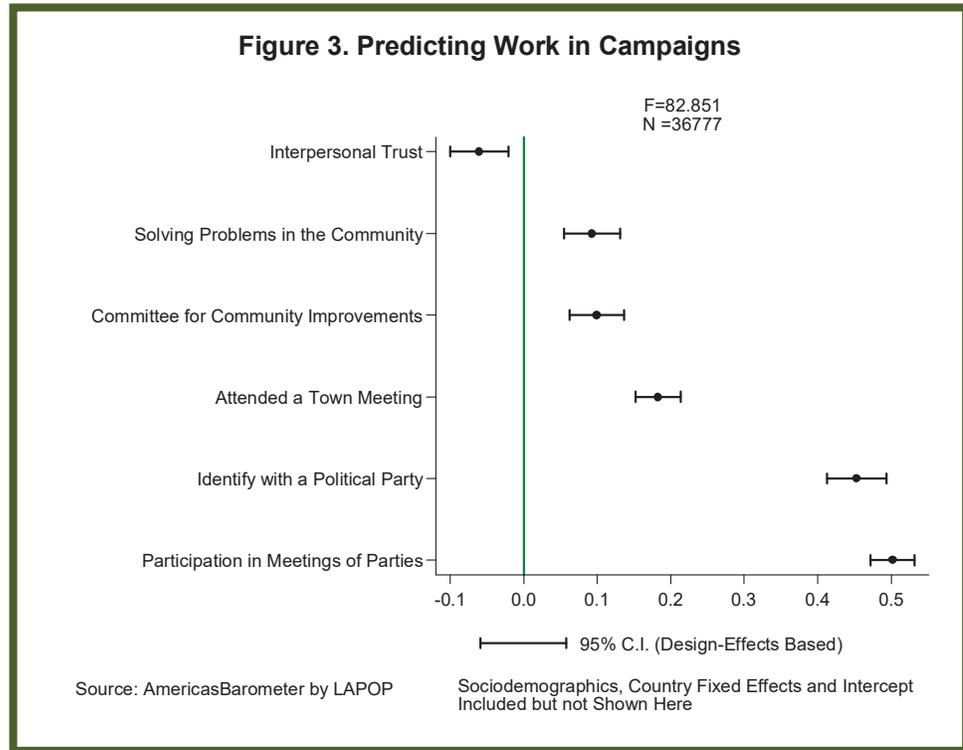
with social capital, should be considered independently from community involvement. Focusing on the complexity of social capital, Uslaner and Brown (2005, p. 874) assert, “[T]rust should not work the same way (if at all) across different forms of participation. There is little reason to believe that trust should affect all forms of civic engagement equally, or even at all...” The mixed theory and ambiguous findings in prior research leave this as an open question: does interpersonal trust positively predict campaign work?

The second set of variables relates to community involvement.

According to Amber Seligson (1999 p. 357-358), “participation in community development groups appears to be one of the keys to sparking further democratic participation.” Furthermore, she argues that “institutions working on strengthening democracy would best use their resources in forming community development groups and supplying them with the funds with which to sustain their projects” (p. 359), which again emphasizes the importance of social capital. Therefore, we have reason to expect a strong link between community participation and political participation. We examine community involvement with measures of active participation in working to solve problems and resolve issues in the community, in addition to attending community meetings.

Our third basket of variables relates to general political attachment and participation. In identifying with a party, a person is attaching

himself or herself to a set of beliefs and policies. As Klesner (2007 p. 26) asserts, “for the five forms of conventional and unconventional



political activity, ...either political interest or a sense that politics is important was a significant indicator in all forms.” Rather than examine political interest in the abstract, we test whether specific expressions of interest – party identification and attending meetings of parties – affect participation in campaign work. We expect to find positive correlations for these variables.

The results of our new analysis are presented in Figure 3. The model includes a measure of *Interpersonal Trust*.⁹ It also includes the following measures of community involvement: *Solving Problems in the Community*, *Participation in Committee for Community Improvement*, and

⁹ IT1. And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...?

Attending a Municipal Meeting.¹⁰ Finally, we include two measures of more general political attachment and involvement: *Identifying with a Political Party* and *Participating in Meetings of Parties*.¹¹ The model also includes the socioeconomic and demographic measures and country fixed effects contained in the analysis shown in Figure 2; the full set of results is available in the appendix.

One of the most interesting results from our analysis is that, contrary to expectations drawn from the social capital literature, interpersonal trust is *negatively* correlated with work for political parties. This suggests that social capital indeed is a nuanced factor when it comes to its role in political engagement. The negative correlation that exists between interpersonal trust and our dependent variable runs counter to conventional wisdom that involvement strengthens trust and makes an individual more apt to approve of political participation. It does, however, fit with classic conceptions of the ways in which political parties can sow divisions within a society. George Washington, in his 1796 Farewell Address, warned against divisive partisanship that could create less-trusting political participants. As Washington stated, “the alternate domination of one’s action over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissention ... is itself a frightful despotism” (Washington 1796). Thus, one possibility is that engagement in campaign work decreases interpersonal trust by exposing an

individual to the political discord inherent in democratic politics. Another possibility is that those with high interpersonal trust are content to let others do the work involved in campaigns, as they trust that others can get the job done well. We note that our analyses cannot adjudicate between these possibilities; it is possible that either one, or both, explains the negative correlation and we urge researchers to take up this topic in more detail in future work.

Our measures of community and general political attachment and involvement work as expected. First, working to solve problems, participating in community improvement meetings, and attending municipal meetings are all positive predictors of working for a political campaign. Second, as anticipated, identification with a political party and attending political party meetings are very strongly correlated with campaign work.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the AmericasBarometer 2010 data suggests that working for a political party or campaign is uncommon. Therefore, we wondered what factors help account for the small percentage of active, involved citizens. Our discussion highlighted two principal types of factors that could matter: resources and social capital. We find only moderate support for a resource model: education matters, but not wealth. This suggests that the intangible lessons and resources obtained through education are more important to involvement in campaign work than the material resources that wealth provides. Beyond just resources, education may instill a sense of duty, which may be a cause or effect of community participation and activism. In other words, not only do people need a specific skill set, but they also need to feel obligated to participate, and education may be one avenue through which individuals acquire this sense of duty.

¹⁰ We used the following items to measure these variables: **CP5**: “In the last 12 months have you tried to help to solve a problem in your community or in your neighborhood?” **CP8**: “Have you attended meetings of a community improvement committee or association?” and **NP1**. “Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting in the past 12 months?”

¹¹ These items are: **VB10**: “Do you currently identify with a political party?” and **CP13**: “Have you attended meetings of a political party or political organization?” We also considered *Approving of People Working for Campaigns*. Although it shows a strong positive correlation with our dependent variable, there is insufficient support from the literature at this time to provide us with the basis for a strong theoretical claim of its causal relationship to our dependent variable.

With respect to social capital, our discussion and results highlighted the importance of distinguishing between the engagement and trust dimensions. We found that interpersonal trust and engagement in local and partisan politics both matter, but in opposite ways. We have several thoughts as to why this is so. With respect to engagement, it may be that involvement in community and political affairs, like education, sharpens civic skills in ways that promote electoral campaign involvement. With respect to trust, our analyses point to the possibility, though we caution it is only a possibility, that working for a campaign decreases social trust (we can infer this as a *possibility* because the relationship between these two variables is negative in our model). To the extent there is indeed this type of causal relationship at work, our analyses have implications for policymakers who might wish to increase citizen involvement in electoral campaigns; specifically, our findings with respect to the negative relationship between trust and electoral work cautions against civic engagement and education programs that emphasize partisan differences and competition, for these may be the aspects of working for a campaign that undermine social trust. If future work were able to demonstrate that this negative correlation we find is indeed rooted at least in part in such a causal process, then there is a potential dark side to citizen involvement in campaign work.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Campaign Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Education	0.223*	0.023	0.167*	0.025
Female	-0.148*	0.017	-0.071*	0.018
Age	0.131*	0.018	0.041*	0.020
Urban	-0.047	0.021	-0.008	0.023
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.028*	0.020	-0.025*	0.021
Solving Problems in the Community			0.092*	0.019
Participated in Committee			0.099*	0.019
Attended Municipal Meeting			0.182*	0.016
Identify with a Party			0.452*	0.020
Participated in Meeting of Party			0.501*	0.015
Interpersonal Trust			-0.060*	0.020
Mexico	-0.090*	0.025	-0.020	0.025
Guatemala	-0.053	0.025	0.032	0.027
El Salvador	-0.024	0.021	0.021	0.022
Honduras	0.005	0.022	0.047*	0.022
Nicaragua	-0.009	0.021	0.016	0.022
Costa Rica	-0.003	0.023	0.068*	0.023
Panama	-0.005	0.024	0.088*	0.026
Colombia	-0.089*	0.026	-0.033	0.028
Ecuador	-0.112*	0.032	0.083*	0.032
Bolivia	-0.129*	0.030	-0.069*	0.030
Peru	-0.179*	0.030	-0.098*	0.029
Paraguay	0.032	0.022	0.066*	0.022
Chile	-0.334*	0.037	-0.146*	0.037
Brazil	-0.017	0.049	0.124*	0.050
Venezuela	-0.035	0.024	0.007	0.027
Argentina	-0.035	0.039	-0.018	0.030
Dominican Rep.	0.107*	0.022	0.023	0.021
Haiti	0.052*	0.023	0.065*	0.024
Jamaica	-0.097*	0.024	-0.031	0.026
Guyana	-0.076*	0.025	0.021	0.025
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.083*	0.023	-0.013	0.025
Belize	0.012	0.022	0.087*	0.023
Suriname	0.061*	0.024	0.033	0.027
Constant	-2.152*	0.024	-2.440*	0.026
<i>F</i>	19.17		86.75	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	39745		37,605	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay

Author Biographies*

Erica Graff has just finished her sophomore year at Vanderbilt University, where she is a member of the College Scholars Program. Erica is majoring in Communication Studies, but plans on attending medical school after graduation. Erica blogs for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and volunteers at a medical clinic.

Maranda Orrell has just finished her junior year at Vanderbilt University. She is a History major and a member of the College Scholars Program. She is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha, serves as Community Service Chair for Sigma Phi Lambda, and is the Event Coordinator for Reach Out and Read. After graduation, she is considering business school.

Alexandra Rigl has just finished her sophomore year at Vanderbilt University. She is a member of the College Scholars (Honors) Program. She is majoring in English Literature and minoring in Medicine, Health, and Society. She currently serves as the Vice President of Member Education of Kappa Delta Sorority and was recently nominated to participate in the Lead Now Initiative. After graduation, she plans to attend law school and pursue a career in the nonprofit realm.

**Author names are listed alphabetically. Margarita Corral, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, acted as a technical consultant on this report.*

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 83

Can Democracy Exist Without Parties? Education Increases Support for Party-Based Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean

*By Patrick Ahern, Neal Cotter, and Duncan Hall
Vanderbilt University*

Executive Summary. Can democracy exist without political parties? In this *Insights* report, we examine responses to this question, using data from the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys. We begin with the notion that there are two opposing conceptions of democracy: one in which parties are critical for democratic governance, and one in which parties are unnecessary. Our analyses reveal that, across the Americas, political parties are generally regarded as necessary, but there is a relatively large degree of cross-national and individual-level variation in responses. Of the factors we examine, one of the most significant predictors of attitudes concerning the importance of parties to democracy is education. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to disagree with the idea that democracy can exist without parties. Moreover, as education levels increase, people become more likely to associate support for democracy with the belief that democracy relies on political parties to function effectively.

LAPOP is pleased to note that this report was developed and written by undergraduate students participating in a Vanderbilt University honors seminar in the Spring of 2012. That class, HONS186, was taught by Professor E. J. Zechmeister and Margarita Corral acted as teaching assistant. Author names are listed here in alphabetical order; biographies of the authors are provided in the report appendix.

The Insights Series is co-edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
www.AmericasBarometer.org

Are parties truly essential for democracy? Throughout modern history, this question has been debated by a range of individuals. Some, like George Washington, have warned against political parties because of their potential to divide and corrupt the nation (Washington 1796). Others, including many political scientists, insist that political parties are necessary for political progress (Aldrich 1995, Bryce and Bryce 1921, Dahl 1990, Downs 1957; see also Schattschneider 1942). Thus, it appears that in theory two conceptions of democracy exist: one in which parties are vital to the democratic system, and one in which democracy can exist without a formal party system.

In this *Insights*¹ report, we explore the factors that influence which of these two conceptions of democracy the public holds. We find that education not only influences whether or not people believe that political parties are necessary for democracy, but also conditions the extent to which they relate support for democracy with support for political parties' role in democracy.

This report focuses on the following question from the 2010 round of the LAPOP AmericasBarometer survey.² Interviewees were asked to rate their response on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 7 indicating "strongly agree."³

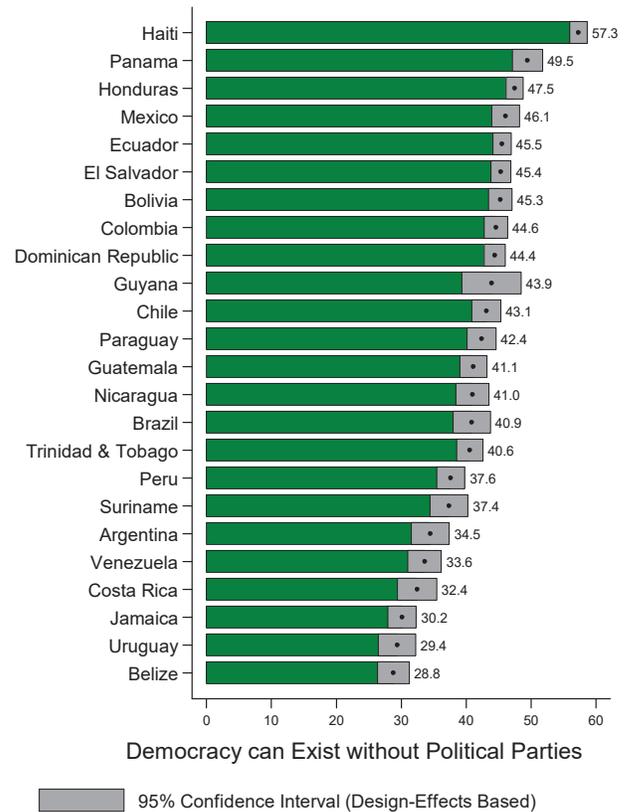
¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php> The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University

³ The question was asked to 42,486 respondents across all 26 countries (a split sample format in the US and Canada meant the question was asked of only 750 individuals in each of these two countries, though we exclude these countries from analysis here in order to focus on Latin America and the Caribbean). The non-response rate for this question for the entire pooled sample was 7.32%.

Figure 1. Average Belief that Democracy can Exist without Political Parties, 2010



DEM 23: Democracy can exist without political parties. How much do you agree or disagree?

Figure 1 reports mean responses to this question, on a rescaled index that runs from 0 to 100. The figure shows that our variable exhibits considerable variation across Latin America and the Caribbean; the two extreme cases (Belize at the low end and Haiti at the high end) are separated by a range of just under 30 units on the 0-100 scale. The national averages seem to cluster around the low 40s with the mean across all nations landing at 41.3 units, indicating that, considering Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, the average citizen displays only a slight preference for party-based democracy. Citizens of Haiti tend to have the strongest belief that democracy can exist without political parties, while in Belize the overall opinion tends toward greater faith in the role of political

parties in the democratic system, as demonstrated by its average score of 28.8. Another noteworthy result is Venezuela's low placement on the distribution. Considering that Hugo Chávez's leadership style has tended to rely on his personality and on political structures that differ from traditional democratic parties, some might be surprised to find that the Venezuelan public has a high degree of support for political parties' essential role in democracy.

Since the 26 nations surveyed show a substantial degree of variation in average responses to this question, it could be that country-level factors help predict attitudes on this variable; however, we tested whether polarization, level of democracy, or GDP were significant predictors and found no support for any of these relationships.

Therefore, we turn to an examination of various individual-level factors that help to explain the public's reaction to the idea of democracy without political parties. Our key focus is the influence of education as a direct predictor of belief in the necessity of parties and as a factor that conditions the ways in which people link support for democracy to the need for the parties within that system.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of the Belief that Democracy Can Exist Without Parties

Existing scholarship suggests a role for socioeconomic and demographic factors, especially education, in influencing public opinion about political parties. According to Gronke and Levitt (2007), there is some debate over whether heightened levels of education and knowledge of political systems leads to trust in the political institutions of one's country

or, instead, to cynicism; yet, at the same time, they argue that the more educated are also less likely to want to delegate power to a strong leader.⁴ Given that we are not examining trust *per se*, but instead whether one conceives of democracy as needing parties, we draw from this discussion the notion that education may exert a strong, direct, and negative influence on the belief that democracy can exist without political parties.

Belief that parties are unnecessary for democracy is highest in the Haiti. Considering Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, the average citizen displays only a slight preference for party-based democracy.

Literature on individual characteristics has indicated that age is also related to a person's attachment to the political system, with older citizens exhibiting stronger party ties and younger people showing more skepticism (Converse 1969, Dalton 1984, Henn, Weinstein,

and Wring 2002). Therefore, we suspect that being older is associated with lower values of our dependent variable, since such a response indicates support for the role of political parties in democracy.

In Figure 2,⁵ we assess the above expectations, while also examining the role of urban versus rural area of residence and wealth.⁶ More specifically, the figure presents the results of an OLS regression analysis in which the belief that political parties are not necessary for democracy is predicted by education, age, gender, location

⁴ Interestingly, varying levels of education have also been connected to the types of parties people support, with the lesser educated tending to show greater support for parties with a religious or highly conservative background, and more educated people favoring liberal parties (Arian and Barnes 1974). Exploration of this tendency here is outside of the scope of this report.

⁵ See full results of the models in the Appendix.

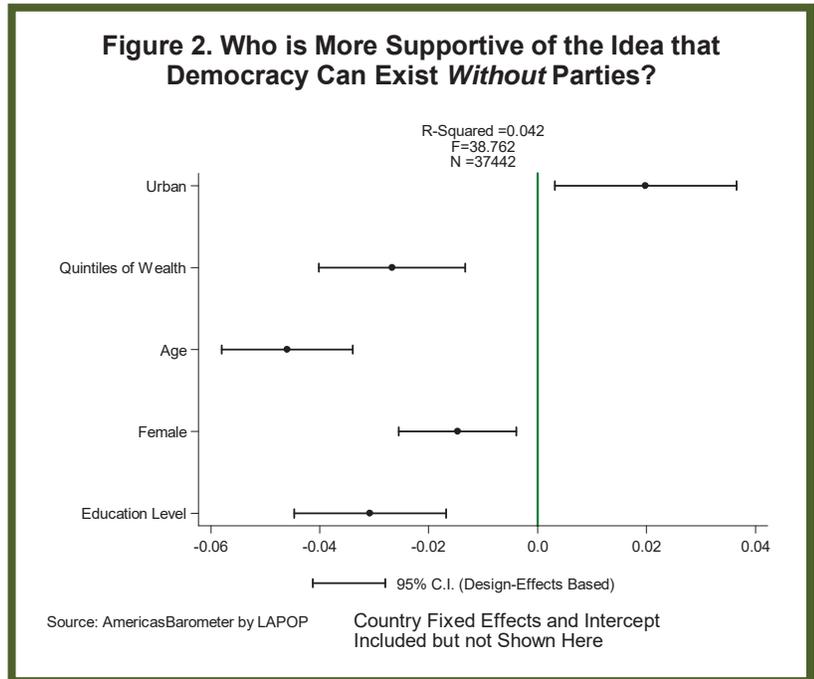
⁶ See Abby Córdova, 2009, "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators" for a description of the construction of the wealth index:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

(urban vs. rural) and quintiles of wealth. It is important to recall that higher values on our dependent variable indicate greater support for the notion that democracy can exist without parties.

The independent variables are shown on the vertical axis, while belief in the need for political parties is the dependent variable. Since none of the dots' corresponding bars (which represent 95% confidence intervals) intersect the vertical "0" line in our figure, we conclude that all five variables are statistically significant. Dots falling to the left of the "0" line indicate a negative correlation, which for our purposes means that greater values on the predictor are associated with a tendency to reject the idea that democracy can exist without parties. Dots falling to the right of the "0" line, on the other hand, indicate a positive correlation, indicating an association between higher values on that variable and the belief that political parties are not necessary for democracy.

Figure 2 shows that the wealthier, older, and more educated, along with women, have lower agreement with the statement that democracy can exist without political parties, while living in an urban area is associated with a greater belief that parties are unnecessary. The strongest predictor of the belief in the need for political parties is age. However, education, which is the principal focus of this paper, also shows a significant relationship. As we expected, education is negatively associated with the dependent variable, which means that the more educated have a greater attachment to the notion of political parties as important to



democracy. In the next section, we further explore how education affects individuals' beliefs by interacting it with support for democracy.

Education's Influence on Conceptions of Democracy

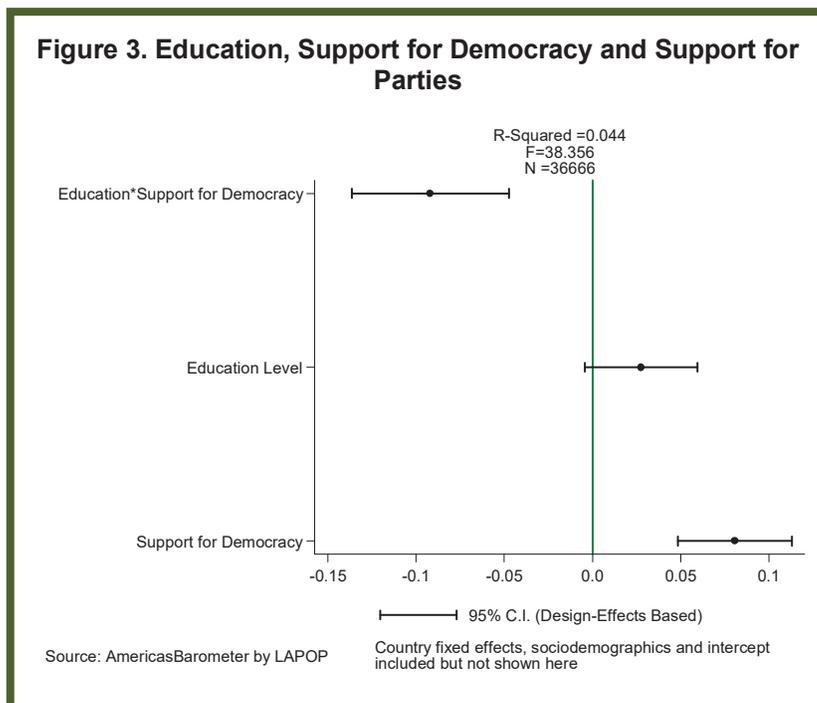
In this section we continue to focus on education, while at the same time introducing a more complex argument and model. Specifically, we argue that people's level of education influences how they relate their degree of support for democracy with the notion that democracy can exist without political parties.

Prior research indicates that an individual's beliefs about democracy are highly conditioned by his or her education level and, consequently, we suspect that education will act to produce different conceptions of the role of parties in democracy. In particular, several studies have noted the association between higher education levels and a stronger support for democracy (Dennis 1996, Evans and Whitefield 1995). Political knowledge, which is a logical result of greater education, has been observed to have the same relationship (Holmberg 2002). By the same token, education has also been linked to a rejection of authoritarian principles in favor of more democratic values (Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shleifer 2006, Rose and Mishler 1996).⁷ Given that parties are traditionally key vehicles for political participation, this may then simultaneously increase individuals' belief that parties are necessary, and thus lead to a tendency for the highly educated to have belief systems in which support for democracy and belief in the need for political parties are strongly related.⁸

⁷ Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shleifer (2006) observe as well that increased education levels are associated with the shift from dictatorship to democracy, but not in the opposite direction—education tends to stabilize democracy, and the authors propose that schooling may help to socialize citizens into a culture of political participation (on the general relationship between education and democracy, see also Lipset 1959).

⁸ Other studies have suggested that the opposite may be true: the highly educated may be more likely to turn away from parties. Although Finkel, Sabatini, and Bevis (2000) felt education was linked to support for democracy, they found that increased awareness of political systems leads people to critique them; from this, one could extrapolate the notion that higher levels of education lead individuals to be less trusting of parties. Similar findings suggest that as people become more educated, they tend to detach from the party system because they feel more capable of making political decisions independently (Dalton and Wattenberg 2001). While these authors' arguments run counter to our expectation that higher education will lead people to support a democracy that depends on the traditional structure of political parties, it is possible that their findings

Figure 3. Education, Support for Democracy and Support for Parties



To test this expectation, we created a model that interacts education with support for democracy.⁹ The results of this model are shown in Figure 3, which is presented in the same format as Figure 2; the analysis includes the same measures as before, but now also includes

are still consistent with our hypothesis. Although educated people may begin to detach from the party system and scrutinize it, this does not necessarily imply that they do not find it necessary for democracy; on the contrary, they may still view it as a useful tool that simply needs to be improved, as opposed to rejected altogether.

⁹ There is a suggested link between slow economic growth and political instability (Alesina et al. 1996). Furthermore, when it comes to the economy, people usually look to place blame or credit with one concrete group of people, especially when these leaders are easy to identify. (Anderson 2000). One might then consider whether perceived economic conditions are a significant determinant of whether or not a respondent believes political parties are necessary for democracy. However, examining this lies outside the scope of this particular report.

support for democracy¹⁰ and its interaction with education.^{11,12}

As before, the coefficients reported in the figure are standardized and confidence intervals falling entirely to the right of the “0” line indicate a positive correlation, which means that

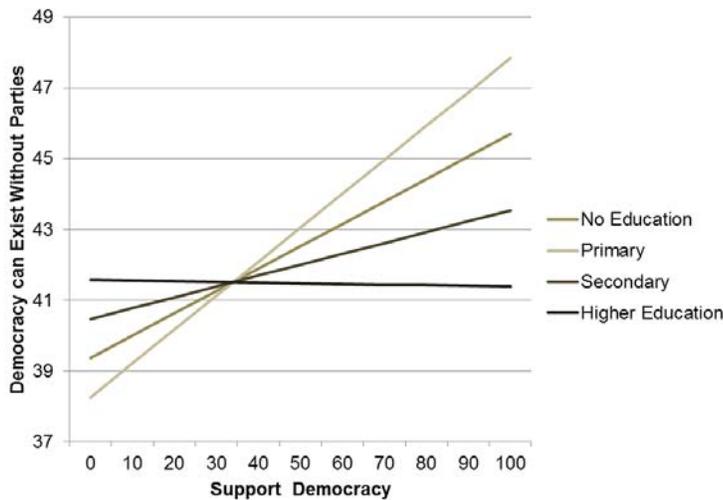
belief that political parties are necessary for democracy.

The first variable presented in Figure 3 illustrates the interaction between education and support for democracy. Interaction terms are difficult to interpret directly from regression output, but we can nonetheless draw two conclusions. First, the interaction is significant, which lends support to our expectation that education conditions the relationship between support for democracy and our dependent variable. Second, the direct effect of support for democracy (the third variable listed in Figure 3) is significant and positive. Given that this result represents the effect of support for democracy for those with little to no education, we can conclude that for those with little to no education, support for democracy is positively and significantly related to a belief that democracy can exist without political parties.

Because of the difficulty of interpreting Figure 3, we refer the reader to Figure 4. This new figure expresses the conditioning relationship in a different way, by presenting the predicted value of our dependent variable for people with different levels of support for democracy for each of the four education brackets. The darkest line shows the predicted relationship for those with higher education, while the lightest line shows the relationship for those without any education. The two lines in the middle represent the relationship among those with primary education and those with secondary education, respectively.¹³

As Figure 4 shows, people with secondary education or lower tend to reject the need for

Figure 4. Predicted Attitudes toward Party-Based Democracy at Varying Levels of Support for Democracy and Education



Source: The AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

higher values of a variable are associated with the belief that democracy can function without political parties. Conversely, variables whose confidence intervals fall entirely to the left of the “0” line show a negative relationship, meaning that increased values are associated with the

¹⁰ We measured this using the ING4 variable, which asks “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?”

¹¹ When we ran the analysis with these new variables, all of the socioeconomic and demographic variables from Figure 2 remained statistically significant except for gender, which became insignificant.

¹² We also tested a model that included a control for trust in political parties; the coefficient is significant and positive, but including it does not change the results shown in Figure 3 and therefore, for the sake of parsimony, we omit this control variable.

¹³ The predicted levels of support for a democracy without political parties were calculated for male respondents with all other variables set at their mean.

political parties in democracy as their support for democracy increases, which suggests that they ascribe to a definition of democracy that does not include parties. This trend is the strongest for those with no education and weakens as education increases, with highly educated citizens showing a weak trend in the opposite direction. This means that for this demographic, higher support for democracy is (at least modestly) associated with a greater belief in the need for political parties. It therefore appears that formal education influences an individual's conception of democracy and the role of parties in it. While those with lower levels of education are able to simultaneously approve of democracy and cast off the role of parties in democratic government, the most educated in society view parties as a necessary element of democracy, and express support for democracy alongside the belief in the necessity of political parties.

[T]hose with the highest levels of education tend to support a vision of democracy that necessarily includes political parties.

Conclusion

In this *Insights* report, we have demonstrated that people with different levels of education perceive the relationship between political parties and democracy in drastically different ways. Whereas those with the highest levels of education tend to support a vision of democracy that necessarily includes political parties, many people with lower levels of education seem to hold a view of democracy in which parties are not vital. This is a surprising result that underscores the role of education in the formation of the public's political views and understanding of government structure.

Nevertheless, we must consider the possibility that the wording of the question used to measure political party support influenced the results of this survey. Since respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a statement that

claimed democracy can exist without political parties, a response of "disagree" introduces a confusing double-negative situation in which disagreeing with the statement somewhat counter-intuitively translates to support for the role of parties in democracy. In short, this is a difficult question and the ability to understand it may have varied by levels of education. Future scholarship on this topic might test different variations on this question, and determine whether the complex wording affects response patterns in ways that would be important for the conclusions we have drawn here.

Assuming that the findings reported here are accurate, the significant impact of education on people's overall definition of democracy bears important implications for public policy.¹⁴ It reinforces the role of schooling in the

formation of people's civic values, which suggests that in addition to continuing efforts to encourage people to pursue higher levels of education, policymakers who value political parties as vehicles for democratic communication and representation should consider including greater amounts of civic education in the early school years to give people with even a limited education a basic background in the functioning of democracy. While the importance of education is by no means a new concept, the results of this *Insights* report help to further justify it by suggesting that education can lead to more consistent public support for the role of party systems within modern democratic politics.

¹⁴ The fact that average levels of support for party-based democracy are fairly low across Latin America and the Caribbean also suggests that parties could do a better job securing the support of the people (see *Radiografía a los Partidos*, June 22, 2012).

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Can Democracy Exist without Political Parties?
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Appendix –

Table 1. Predictors of Support for the Idea that Democracy can Function without Parties
in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Education	-0.031*	0.007	0.028	0.016
Female	-0.015*	0.006	-0.012*	0.006
Age	-0.046*	0.006	-0.047*	0.006
Urban	0.020*	0.008	0.018*	0.009
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.027*	0.007	-0.029*	0.007
Support for Democracy			0.081*	0.016
Support for Democracy * Education			-0.092*	0.023
Mexico	0.088*	0.010	0.092*	0.010
Guatemala	0.060*	0.010	0.065*	0.010
El Salvador	0.083*	0.009	0.087*	0.009
Honduras	0.094*	0.009	0.098*	0.009
Nicaragua	0.058*	0.010	0.059*	0.011
Costa Rica	0.013	0.011	0.013	0.011
Panama	0.107*	0.010	0.109*	0.010
Colombia	0.081*	0.009	0.085*	0.009
Ecuador	0.118*	0.012	0.122*	0.012
Bolivia	0.116*	0.013	0.118*	0.013
Peru	0.044*	0.010	0.048*	0.010
Paraguay	0.067*	0.010	0.071*	0.010
Chile	0.084*	0.011	0.088*	0.011
Brazil	0.076*	0.014	0.079*	0.014
Venezuela	0.021	0.011	0.022	0.011
Argentina	0.023*	0.011	0.024*	0.011
Dominican Rep.	0.078*	0.009	0.083*	0.009
Haiti	0.156*	0.009	0.159*	0.010
Jamaica	0.007	0.010	0.009	0.010
Guyana	0.077*	0.015	0.079*	0.015
Trinidad & Tobago	0.059*	0.010	0.061*	0.010
Belize	-0.006	0.010	-0.003	0.010
Suriname	0.045*	0.011	0.047*	0.012
Constant	-0.035*	0.008	-0.034*	0.008
<i>R-squared</i>	0.042		0.044	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	37,442		36,666	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay

Appendix: Author Biographies*

Patrick Ahern has just finished his freshman year in the College Honors Scholars Program at Vanderbilt University. He is planning to major in Economics, with a double minor in Corporate Strategy and Financial Economics. He is a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and actively participates in community service. Eventually, he plans on entering the business world, hopefully as a part of an entrepreneurial venture. Patrick is originally from Cincinnati, OH.

Neal Cotter is a sophomore College Scholar from Los Angeles, CA majoring in Spanish and Mathematics. On campus, he works as Training Director at WRVU, produces and hosts a cooking show on VTV, and writes music reviews for the Hustler. His plans after graduation are still undecided, but he is considering going into Marketing or Human Resources.

Duncan Hall has just finished his freshman year in the College Honors Scholars Program at Vanderbilt University. Originally from Lago Vista, TX, he is currently planning on majoring in Public Policy, with a double minor in Spanish and Theater. He is a member of Tongue-N-Cheek, Vanderbilt's comedic improv troupe, a member of Vanderbilt University Theater and an active participant in Manna Project. Currently, he plans on working in Foreign Service in Latin America or pursuing an acting career.

**Author names are listed alphabetically. Margarita Corral, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, acted as a technical consultant on this report.*

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2012

Number 84

Honest and Effective Efforts are Rewarded with Trust in National Legislatures in the Americas

*By Mitchell Boynton, Regina Lee,
Shannon Radomski, and Benjamin Ries*

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary: This *Insights* report examines levels of trust in national legislatures throughout the Americas. Through analyses of the 2010 round of AmericasBarometer survey, we find that the most important predictors of trust in the national legislature are trust in political parties and perceptions of representatives doing a good job. Other, but less consequential, predictors of trust include external efficacy, perceptions of the national economy, and perceptions of the level of political corruption in the country. Considering the results as a whole, we conclude the following: a national legislature whose representatives and parties are perceived to be both honest and reliable will be most trusted by its citizens.

LAPOP is pleased to note that this report was developed and written by undergraduate students participating in a Vanderbilt University honors seminar in the Spring of 2012. That class, HONS186, was taught by Professor E. J. Zechmeister and Margarita Corral acted as teaching assistant. Author names are listed here in alphabetical order; biographies of the authors are provided in the report appendix.

The Insights Series is co-edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
www.AmericasBarometer.org

A few months ago, a CNN Poll found that the U.S. public's faith in the national government had reached an all-time low, with only 15% of respondents saying that they trust the government in Washington to do what's right always or most of the time.¹ Is such a low level of trust in the government unique to the United States, or are the other countries in the Americas faring the same? National legislatures play essential roles in elections, policy, and representation in modern democratic governments. While some have found that people effectively distinguish between criticisms of the current government and problems with democracy in general, levels of trust in legislatures can be an important indicator of public opinion with respect to the political system and the people in power. Scholarship has suggested that higher levels of trust follow from the enactment of policies that the people want, as "people are more likely to trust things they perceive to be working effectively" (Hetherington 1998, p. 794). The AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP allows us to answer these questions: To what degree do citizens in the Americas trust their national legislatures? What factors explain high or low levels of trust?

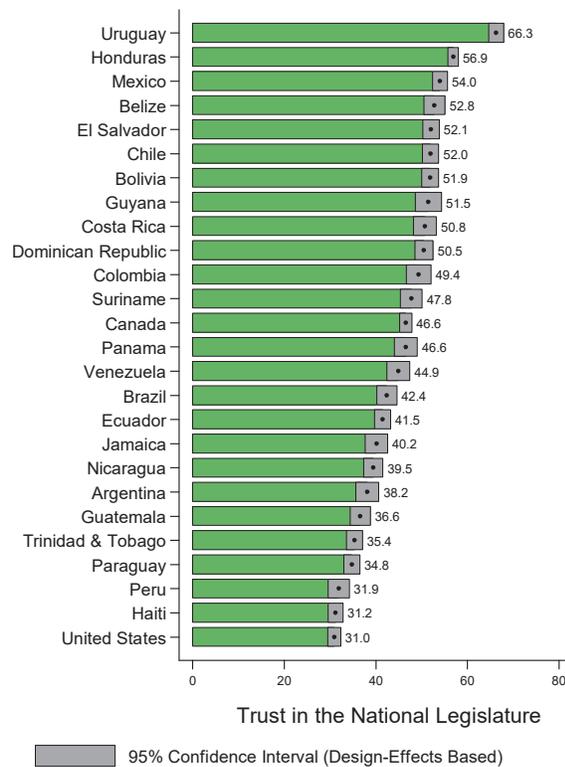
This *Insights*² report looks at levels of trust in the national legislature in the Americas and assesses individual determinants of variation in those levels. Past *Insights* reports have examined trust in Supreme Courts (I0854), elections (I0837), and the armed forces (I0827), but trust in the national legislature has yet to be examined. To evaluate this topic, we query the 2010 round of the Latin

¹ "CNN Poll: Trust in government at all time low." CNN. September 28, 2011.

<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/09/28/cnn-poll-trust-in-government-at-all-time-low/>

² Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/surveydata.php>.

Figure 1. Trust in the National Legislature across the Americas, 2010



Source: AmericasBarometer 2010, by LAPOP

American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys³, in which 43,990 respondents from 26 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada were asked the following question:

B13 "To what extent do you trust the national legislature?"

Respondents were asked to choose an answer from 1 to 7 where "1" represents "Not at all" and "7" "A lot." Responses were recoded on a 0-100 scale following the LAPOP standard, in

³ Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University.

order to ensure comparability across questions and survey waves.

Figure 1 displays national average scores with their margins of error (i.e., confidence intervals). The mean response across all countries was 45.18, indicating that most respondents have somewhat low levels of trust in the national legislature.⁴ Uruguay has the highest level of trust with an average of 66.3, followed by Mexico and then Belize. The United States has the lowest with an average level of trust in Congress of only 31.0, followed by Haiti and then Peru. The wide divide of 35.3 points between the countries with the highest and lowest levels of trust suggests that country-level factors might be an important part of a broader study of trust in national legislatures across the Americas, but in this report we focus on the individual level while controlling for country differences.

[M]ost respondents have somewhat low levels of trust in the national legislature.

At the individual level, what factors explain variation in trust in national legislatures in the Americas? We examine this question by, first, presenting a basic linear regression model that includes classic socioeconomic and demographic independent variables. Then we present a more extensive multiple variable regression analysis that takes into account variables suggested by relevant literature, including measures that tap trust in political parties and perceptions of the government acting in the public's best interest by successfully implementing policy.⁵

⁴ Non-response to this particular question was 4.1% across the sample as a whole.

⁵ All statistical analyses in this report were conducted using STATA v10.1 and results were adjusted for the complex sample designs employed. The analyses include a series of dummy variables accounting for the impact of national context, which is assumed to be "fixed" (or constant) for each respondent within the country. When using this technique we must set one of the dummy variables as the reference, and in this case it is Uruguay.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors and Trust in the National Legislature

We begin by examining how socioeconomic and demographic factors affect the dependent variable, the respondent's trust in the national legislature.⁶ Among the independent variables, we include measures of wealth and education levels. Although intuition might lead one to expect those who are wealthier⁷ and have a higher education level tend to trust the government more because they are clear beneficiaries of the status quo, several scholars find the opposite (Gronke 2004; Hibbing and Theiss-Moore 2002; Moreno 2001). The logic offered for such

a negative relationship – at least for education – is that those with a higher education level have a higher level of political awareness, which leads to criticism and even cynicism towards the government (Gronke 2004). In addition to measures of wealth and education, our analysis also includes age⁸, gender⁹ (coded 0 for male 1 for female), and urban (versus rural) place of residence. While we have fewer *a priori* expectations for these latter variables, we note that Moreno (2001) suggests that age has a positive correlation with the dependent variable.

⁶ As a typical practice for the *Insights* series, we omit Canada and the United States from this and other analyses in the report to focus on the Latin American and Caribbean cases.

⁷ The measure of wealth we use is described in a previous *Insights* report by Abby Córdova (2009), <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

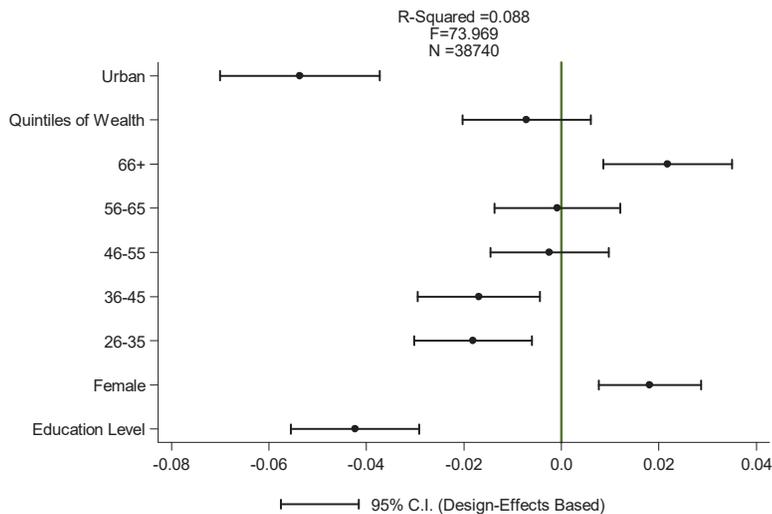
⁸ Age was coded into 5 quintiles that were then compared to the age of 18-25. The quintiles included 66+, 56-65, 46-55, 36-45, and 26-35.

⁹ Gender is included as a control and also because many often speculate that women in Latin America will have more confidence and trust in the national legislature because of the patriarchal societies (Moreno 2001). We include this in our analysis even though there is no theoretical basis to hypothesize the effects of the variable.

To assess our expectations, we created a regression model that tests the relationships

are less likely to trust in their legislature than those who live in rural communities.

Figure 2. Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Trust in the National Legislature



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Country Fixed Effects and Intercept Included but not Shown Here

between these five individual level factors and trust in government. The results, displayed in Figure 2, show standardized coefficients for ease of comparison (see appendix for full results of this and any subsequent analysis). The estimated effect of each independent variable is shown by a dot. The corresponding bars represent a 95% confidence interval around that estimate. If the dot and the bar fall to the left of the 0 line then the variable is both negative and significantly significant. If the dot and bar fall to the right of the 0 line then the variable is both positive and significantly significant.

As we had expected, we found that those with a higher education level are less likely to trust the government than those with less education. Also, females and older people trust in their national legislatures more than males and younger people. Interestingly, we found that wealth does not have a significant impact on individuals' trust in the national legislature. Finally, those who live in urban communities

Perception of Effective Government and Trust in the National Legislature

Prior research on trust in institutions has led us to identify two sets of factors that should help explain trust in the national legislature. First, trust in the integrity of politicians to act as honest and sincere representatives should matter. Political scandals have been found to be associated with lower trust in the national legislature, possibly because such events cause the public to doubt the sincerity and honesty of legislators (Bowler 2004; Chanley 2000; Nye 1997; Sotero 2005). Trust in political parties is also positively related to trust in the national legislature (Nye 1997, Patterson 1992).

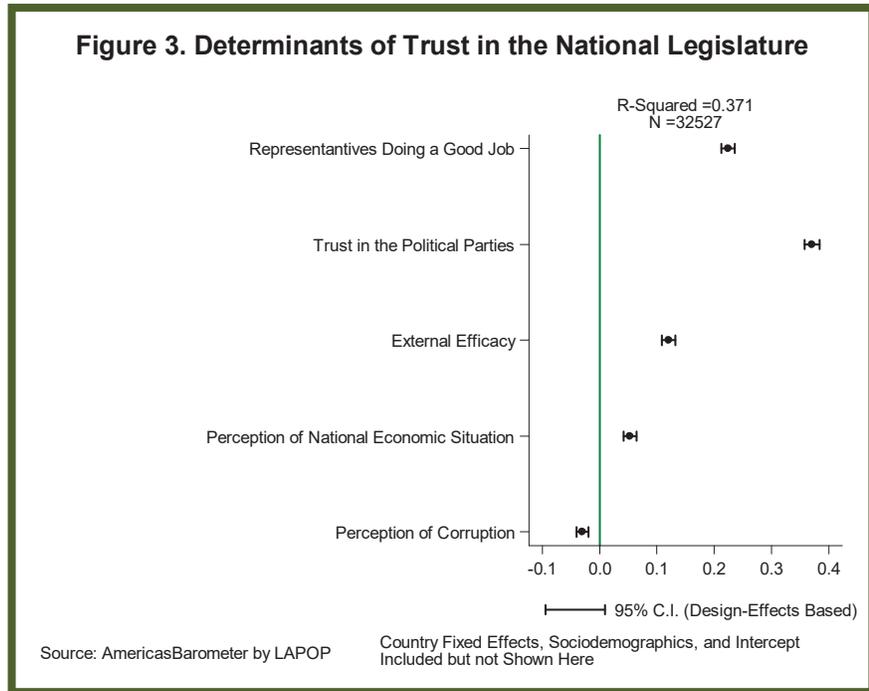
Since political parties are a prime means through which the people and legislators interact, having reliable channels of communication may help strengthen trust. External efficacy, or how much someone feels that their opinion matters and how capable they feel of influencing decision-makers, has also been found to be correlated with higher trust in the national legislature (Catterburg 2000; Patterson 1992). In short, we expect to find that the more people feel that the national legislature is free of corruption and elected representatives are receptive to their priorities, the greater the level of trust in that institution.

Second, trust in the national legislature should also be tied to measures of material performance. Chanley (2000), Levitt (2011), and Patterson (1992, 1997) have found that the perception of the national economic situation is positively related to trust in the legislature, making it plausible that people hold the legislature responsible for the economic

condition of the nation. The overall perception of the work of the legislature is clearly linked with its performance, and also should influence the level of trust in the body (Catterburg 2006; Hetherington 1998; Levitt 2011).

Jointly, with these two themes, sincere interaction and successful implementation of policy, we are suggesting that people come to trust legislatures more when the legislatures prove that they are able and willing to understand the priorities of the citizenry and effectively legislate with these in mind.

To test this model of trust in national legislatures, we conducted a regression analysis that includes the following: perceptions of corruption,¹⁰ trust in political parties, external efficacy, perceptions of the national economic situation, and approval of legislative performance.^{11,12} Figure 3 displays the results for



the analysis, in the same fashion as Figure 2. Each coefficient is standardized to capture the relative impact of each variable and allow for comparison. Standard socioeconomic and demographic variables and country-fixed effects are also included as controls, though not shown in the figure.¹³ Independent variables are significant when their 95% confidence intervals, represented by the brackets, do not intersect the 0 line.

¹⁰ The perception of corruption measure captures the extent to which scandals are frequent in a given context.

¹¹ The data are drawn from the AmericasBarometer survey. The relevant survey questions are: **M2** Performance of Congress (“Now speaking of Congress and thinking of members/senators and representatives as a whole, without considering the political parties to which they belong, do you believe that the members and representative of Congress are performing their jobs: very well, well, neither well or poorly, poorly, or very poorly?”); **B21** Trust in Political Parties (“To what extent do you trust political parties?”); **SOCT1** Perception of the National Economic Situation (“How would you describe the country’s economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, or very bad?”); **EFF1** External Efficacy (“Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement.”); and **EXC 7** Perception of Corruption (“Taking into account your own experience or what you

have heard, corruption among public officials is...very common, common, uncommon, very common”).

¹² We also ran a regression analysis for other independent variables. These included trust in elections, trust in the President/Prime Minister, respect for political institutions, and asking for help from a representative from Congress. While our analysis does not focus on these variables, we note the first three were positively correlated with trust in national legislature and the last was statistically insignificant.

¹³ Canada and the United States are again omitted from the model. Figure 3 controls for the same socioeconomic and demographic variables included in Figure 2 as well as country fixed effects. After adding new variables to the analysis, those tested in Figure 2 did not change with the exception of two age variables. The age categories 26-35 and 36-45 were both negatively correlated and significant in Figure 2. However, these variables lost their significance in Figure 3. This indicates that they must in some way be related to the variables that we tested in Figure 3.

The outcome of the regression analysis is consistent with the expectations we drew from the literature. All variables shown in Figure 3 are statistically significant. Thus, we find strong support for our argument that, when individuals believe their legislature is comprised of sincere individuals who take into account the views of the citizenry *and* when legislature are perceived as doing a good job, then people are willing to invest greater trust in the legislative institution as a whole.

A reader might wonder if the results of this analysis remain stable when the U.S. and Canada are included. At the start of this report, we noted public discontent with congress in the United States. Our presentation of mean levels of trust in the legislature across the Americas shows that the U.S. is not exceptional in this regard; some other countries in the Americas have similar low average levels of trust in this institution. If we include the U.S. and Canada in the model presented in Figure 3 (in which case we substitute out the wealth variable for an income measure), our results remain the same.

We also acknowledge that the variable for congressional performance may be too closely related to our dependent variable, so that we are essentially predicting positive views of the legislature with positive views of the legislature. While we acknowledge this as a reasonable concern, we note that the independent variable in our model taps evaluations of performance, while the dependent variable relates to trust. More importantly, when we omit “Representatives Doing a Good Job” from the model, the results for the other factors in the model, and thus our conclusions, remain the

same. For the interested reader, we provide this reduced model in graph form in Appendix B.

Conclusion

The findings from this *Insights* report show that in general those with lower levels of trust in political parties, those who have a lower perception of legislative representatives’ performance, and those with a higher perception of political corruption are the least likely to trust in the national legislature. Furthermore, the report finds that those with lower external efficacy and more negative perceptions of the national economy tend to trust less in the national legislature, though these effects

are smaller than some of the other effects found in this report. These results suggest that the way people relate to their national legislature and evaluate its performance strongly influences their overall trust in the institution. In other words, people will trust more in legislatures when they believe that institution to be run by honest and reliable politicians who have heard their concerns and who implement them into action.

Though not addressed in this report, scholarly research (Catterburg 2006; Hetherington 1998; Levitt 2011) indicates that people who identify with the majority party in the national legislature tend to trust in legislature more. In future work on this subject, researchers might consider extending the analysis we presented here to take into account the majority party in power and the party with which individuals most identify, which could contribute to an even more nuanced understanding of trust in the

[P]eople will trust more in legislatures when they believe that institution to be run by honest and reliable politicians who have heard their concerns and who implement them into action.

national legislature.¹⁴ We also have reason to believe that the media – by virtue of the fact that it acts as an information conduit - can affect people’s perception of corruption, which in turn would affect their trust in their legislatures. Further investigation is recommended to determine if there is a correlation between attention to the media and trust in the national legislature.

In the meantime, we conclude as follows: Honest and effective translation of the priorities of the people into policies bolsters trust in national legislatures.

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¹⁴ In fact, in a separate analysis not shown here, we found evidence that support for the majority party in the national legislature was positively and significantly correlated with trust in the national legislature, meaning that those who identify with the party with the largest number of seats in the national legislature tend to have more trust in the institution.

Appendix A

Table 1. Predictors of Trust in National Legislatures in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2010

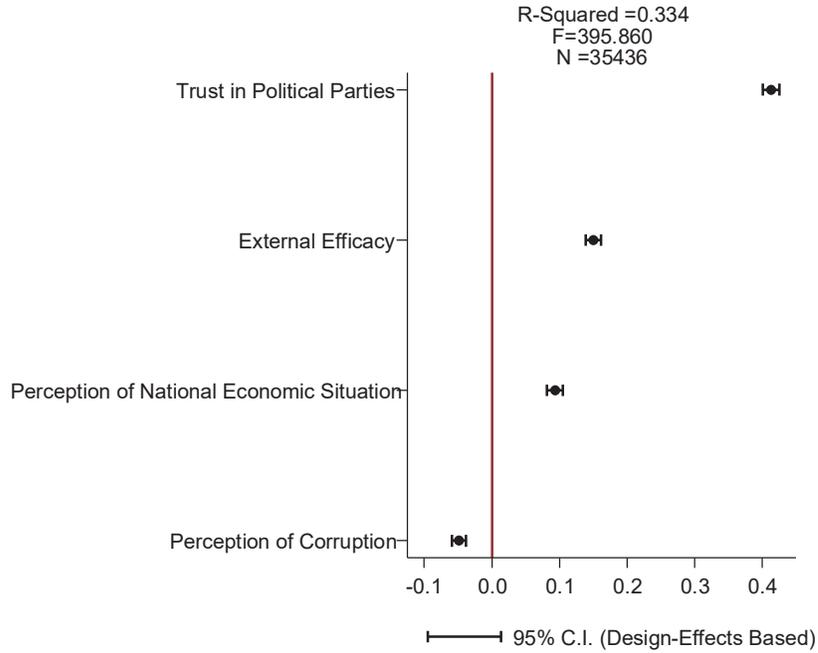
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Education	-0.042*	0.007	-0.020*	0.006
Female	0.018*	0.005	0.011*	0.005
26-35	-0.018*	0.006	-0.003	0.006
36-45	-0.017*	0.006	-0.003	0.006
46-55	-0.002	0.006	0.007	0.006
56-65	-0.001	0.007	0.002	0.006
66+	0.022*	0.007	0.014*	0.006
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.007	0.007	-0.007	0.006
Urban	-0.054*	0.008	-0.027*	0.007
Perception of Corruption			-0.030*	0.005
Perception of National Economic Situation			0.053*	0.006
External Efficacy			0.121*	0.006
Trust in Political Parties			0.371*	0.007
Representatives doing a Good Job			0.224*	0.006
Mexico	-0.077*	0.008	0.018*	0.008
Guatemala	-0.191*	0.009	-0.067*	0.008
El Salvador	-0.094*	0.007	-0.024*	0.007
Honduras	-0.071*	0.007	-0.027*	0.007
Nicaragua	-0.173*	0.009	-0.059*	0.009
Costa Rica	-0.102*	0.010	-0.025*	0.008
Panama	-0.124*	0.010	-0.058*	0.007
Colombia	-0.101*	0.009	-0.031*	0.008
Ecuador	-0.211*	0.011	-0.073	0.011
Bolivia	-0.122*	0.011	-0.012*	0.010
Peru	-0.207*	0.009	-0.085*	0.008
Paraguay	-0.196*	0.008	-0.078*	0.008
Chile	-0.097*	0.009	-0.023*	0.009
Brazil	-0.186*	0.011	-0.075*	0.010
Venezuela	-0.126*	0.010	-0.048*	0.009
Argentina	-0.164*	0.009	-0.048*	0.008
Dominican Rep.	-0.101*	0.008	-0.009	0.008
Haiti	-0.238*	0.008	(dropped)	
Jamaica	-0.165*	0.010	-0.047*	0.009
Guyana	-0.101*	0.011	-0.042*	0.008
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.194*	0.008	-0.069*	0.008
Belize	-0.092*	0.010	0.004	0.008
Suriname	-0.118*	0.010	-0.052*	0.008
Constant	0.071*	0.008	0.057*	0.007
<i>R-squared</i>	0.087		0.37	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	38,740		32,527	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay

Appendix B: Figure 3 with “Representatives Doing a Good Job” Omitted



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Country Fixed Effects, Sociodemographics, and Intercept Included but not Shown Here

Appendix C: Author Biographies*

Mitchell Boynton is a freshman at Vanderbilt University. He is a political science and economics major and a member of the College Scholar Honors Program. His particular interests include international relations and the influence of religion on politics. He plans on a career in government service in the future.

Regina Lee is a currently a freshman at Vanderbilt University. She is a member of the College Scholars Honors Program. She is majoring in molecular and cellular biology and is considering options for a minor. She is a member of the CommonDore's Programming Council, a subset of the Vanderbilt Student Government, and is on the executive board for the Association of Biology Students. After graduation, she plans to attend medical school with a focus on pediatrics.

Shannon Radomski is a freshman at Vanderbilt University in the College Scholars (Honors) Program. She is studying Medicine, Health, and Society and Spanish with a pre-med concentration. She is a Resident Advisor, on the executive board of Global Medical Brigades, and a sister of Pi Beta Phi Sorority. She plans to study abroad in Bilbao, Spain this summer.

Benjamin Ries is a junior in the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science and double major in Political Science and Film Studies originally from Roanoke, Virginia. Benjamin is the President of the Vanderbilt College Democrats and a Chancellor's Scholar, a full-tuition scholarship awarded for bridging gaps among diverse groups and demonstrating interests in diversity education, tolerance, and social justice. Benjamin is also a co-founder of the political discussion group Current Events and Critical Conversations, a staff write/senior producer for Vanderbilt's newspaper, a three-time participant in Alternative Spring Break, and a veteran of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature program. Benjamin interned for CNN last summer and will be doing research and legal analysis for the First Amendment Center starting this June.

**Author names are listed alphabetically. Margarita Corral, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Vanderbilt University, acted as a technical consultant on this report.*

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 85

The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012: Towards Equality of Opportunity – Executive Summary

By Nicole Hinton

nicole.l.hinton@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Amy Erica Smith

aesmith2@iastate.edu

Iowa State University

and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister

liz.zechmeister@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. In 2012, the Latin American Public Opinion Project's AmericasBarometer surveyed over 41,000 individuals in 26 countries. This *Insights* report presents the executive summary of our newly published regional report, *The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012: Towards Equality of Opportunity*. In the full report, we analyze responses to new questions and standard core modules in order to develop a portrait of public opinion in the Americas. In the 2012 round, a special emphasis was placed on issues related to equality of opportunity. Interested readers can find the full report at our website (www.americasbarometer.org). All data from the AmericasBarometer series are also available at that same website.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

In the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), we examine inequalities that affect the quality, and at the extreme the stability, of social, economic, and political life in the Americas¹. We draw on an extensive set of questions from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP. The study covers 26 countries, making it a truly regional survey project.² Our report, *The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012: Towards Equality of Opportunity*³, complements our series of country-specific reports for the 2012 AmericasBarometer by offering a comparative perspective on inequalities in experiences and attitudes across both individuals and countries. In the first part of the report, we pay particular attention to inequalities by gender, race/ethnicity (including skin tone), and parents' background and social status, as well as attitudes toward gay individuals, those on welfare, and those who are disabled. Beyond objectively measured inequalities, we consider attitudes towards the political and economic involvement of historically marginalized groups as well as policies to remedy inequalities. We also examine how inequalities are related to engagement in and attitudes toward the political system. In the latter part of the report, we broaden our

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights Series* can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ The report was written by a team of researchers: Ryan E. Carlin (Georgia State University), Fred Batista Pereira (Vanderbilt), Mollie Cohen (Vanderbilt), Nicole Hinton (Vanderbilt), Gregory J. Love (University of Mississippi), Mason Moseley (Vanderbilt), Mariana Rodriguez (Vanderbilt), Matthew M. Singer (University of Connecticut), Amy Erica Smith (Iowa State University), Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (Vanderbilt), and Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga (Vanderbilt). The report was edited by Mitchell A. Seligson, Amy Erica Smith, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister.

Figure 1. 2012 AmericasBarometer Coverage



perspective to consider issues related to government performance in key areas (the economy, crime, and corruption); local government; and democratic legitimacy.

In Part I, we examine (in)equalities of opportunity in the Americas. In the first chapter, we describe economic and social inequalities by demographic characteristics. This look at the 2012 AmericasBarometer reveals important inequalities in levels of education, wealth, income, and food insecurity. Individuals with darker skin tones, on average, have fewer years of education and lower personal incomes than do those with the lightest skin tones. Women who work have lower personal incomes on average than do men, even after taking education into account. We further find that both those with darker skin tones and women are at greater risk of food insecurity in the Americas. Additionally, we find that family background (measured by mother's educational attainment) is strongly

related to how well or poorly citizens fare in the Americas.

Turning to public opinion, we find that many individuals across the Americas support the general notion of government action to reduce inequalities. With the exception of the United States, the average citizen in every country of the Americas strongly agrees that government should implement policies to reduce income inequalities.

But on the other hand, when we ask about policies targeting particular groups we find more mixed public opinion. For example, average support for race-/skin tone-based affirmative action programs hovers just below the neutral point across the Americas as a whole. The average citizen is significantly supportive in eight countries, while the average citizen is at least somewhat opposed to affirmative action in seven others. We also find evidence of a welfare stigma, seen in negative views of those who receive social assistance, in a number of countries. Thus, there exists some tension in public opinion in the Americas: while some favor government intervention to reduce inequalities, others adopt negative views of racial targeting as well as those who receive government assistance. Further, we find evidence that discriminatory attitudes underwrite some inequalities in the Americas. For example, in 13 countries at least 20% of the population blames poverty among dark-skinned individuals on culture. In addition, approximately 30% of citizens of the Americas agree at least somewhat with the notion that men should have priority over women in the labor market. At the same time, there is significant variation in experiences and attitudes across the Americas. Chapter One thus provides insight into the notion that governments and publics in the Americas that

wish to create more equalities of opportunity for their citizens face both levels of support and constraints that vary by country.

In Chapter Two we measure participation among different groups in electoral politics and civil society. We find that self-reported turnout rates by gender have converged over time: in 2012, there is no evidence of a significant gender gap in electoral participation by gender. We do find, however, that gender roles are related to other forms of civic and political engagement. Across the Americas as a whole, female homemakers participate more than men and female non-homemakers in religious and parent associations, though this participation is not always reflected in leadership roles in those or other organizations. Men, on the other than, are more likely to participate in community improvement organizations as both members and leaders, more likely to try to persuade others of their political views, and more likely to work for political campaigns.

The 2012 AmericasBarometer contains interviews with 41,632 individuals from 26 countries. Each national sample consists of a minimum of 1,500 respondents and margins of error are +/- 2.5%.

Beyond gender gaps, we examine participatory inequalities across socioeconomic groups and racial lines. The good news is that on average we find little evidence of differences in participation across different racial groups, though in a number of countries citizens with darker skin are actually likely to participate *more* than others in political campaigns. The not-so-good news, however, is that inequalities are much larger and more persistent across lines of social class: those who are wealthier and better educated participate much more in most all forms of politics than the least educated and the poorest citizens.

Because attitudes can create barriers to participation in political and civic activities, we also examine public opinion with respect to participation by different types of individuals. While average views tend against

discrimination, we nonetheless find that approximately 1 in 4 individuals across the Americas believes that men make better political leaders. But, at the same time, among those who make a distinction by gender, individuals tend to report that female politicians are less corrupt and more capable of managing the economy. In addition, we find that 10% of citizens across the Americas express discriminatory attitudes towards dark-skinned political leaders, while 20% disagree with allowing the disabled to run for office, and 51% disapprove of allowing gays to do so.

In Chapter Three, we relate social, economic and political differences in the Americas to measures of public contentment and democratic political stability. We assess how experiences of discrimination are associated with internal efficacy (evaluations of one's own ability in politics) and external efficacy (belief that politicians care about one's interests). Average rates of self-reported discrimination in government offices or public places are low. However, people who self-identify as black or indigenous are much more likely to report discrimination. Women are not more likely than men to report discrimination. Our analyses reveal that experiences of discrimination are associated with greater internal efficacy and lower amounts of external efficacy. Moreover, those who report higher rates of discrimination have lower levels of system support and support for democracy. Higher rates of self-reported discrimination are also associated with increased rates of protesting – almost double the rates of protesting compared to those not reporting being a victim of discrimination.

Part II broadens the focus on the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP. In this section, we examine issues related to governance, local government performance, and support for democracy in the Americas. The introduction to Part II, written by the authors of that section, provides a detailed overview. We discuss just some of the findings here.

Chapter Four examines government performance on the economy, crime, and corruption, all of which are posited to influence levels of life satisfaction. Overall, citizens of the Americas perceive government economic performance as improving: evaluations of one's personal and national economic well-being continue to trend upward in 2012. Crime rates have dropped on average across the Americas in 2012 (compared to 2010), but experiences differ significantly by country. The same is true when we consider concerns about corruption. For example, 32% of Hondurans report that issues related to corruption and government constitute the most important problem facing the country, whereas less than 5% of the populations of Nicaragua, Uruguay, and El Salvador express a similar concern. Overall, across the Americas, perceptions of corruption have decreased somewhat but remain high; actual *experiences* with corruption (rates of being asked for bribes to access public services) increased somewhat in comparison to rates found in the 2010 Americas Barometer survey. Nonetheless, and likely due in part to continued positive economic outcomes, life satisfaction is increasing in the Americas.

In Chapter Five, we focus on local government, examining citizens' participation and perceptions of its effectiveness and performance. The data reveal very low levels of participation and interaction with the local government as well as mediocre levels of satisfaction. There is great variation among countries: in Haiti, 21% of respondents report attending a town meeting in the last twelve months, while only 4% of Chileans report having done the same. Higher attendance rates are associated with higher requests of the local government, but when requests are voiced, only a limited number of citizens feel those requests were resolved. We find fairly consistent results on these measures in 2012 compared to earlier time periods. We also find that lower trust in the local government is associated with low performance ratings and low participation rates.

Chapter Six addresses democratic attitudes in the Americas. Analysis of the AmericasBarometer data reveals that the following attitudes have increased over time: trust in democratic institutions, support for rule of law, and support for the political system. Political tolerance and support for democracy have been consistently high, for the most part, over time. Support for democracy is highest in Uruguay, Venezuela, and Argentina and lowest in Honduras. Moreover, the analyses reveal that those who benefit from the current system support it; they are also, however, less tolerant of political dissent (that is, of the rights of regime critics to participate in politics). The analysis affirms that increasing the capacity of state institutions with respect to economic performance, reducing crime, eliminating corruption, and maintaining

transparency will deepen the attitudinal and normative foundations of democracy.

The complete comparative report for the AmericasBarometer 2012 study, and all country-specific reports and our *Insights* series reports, are freely available at www.americasbarometer.org. As well, the data from the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer, and all previous AmericasBarometer studies, are available free of charge at that same website. Individuals and institutions can also select to subscribe to receive premium access to the data, codes, and technical support.

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 86

Inequality Matters: The Role of Education in Defining Social Class in Colombia vs. Uruguay

By María José Álvarez-Rivadulla and Rosario Queirolo
mariaj.alvarez@urosario.edu.co and rqueirolo@um.edu.uy

Universidad del Rosario (Colombia) and Universidad de Montevideo

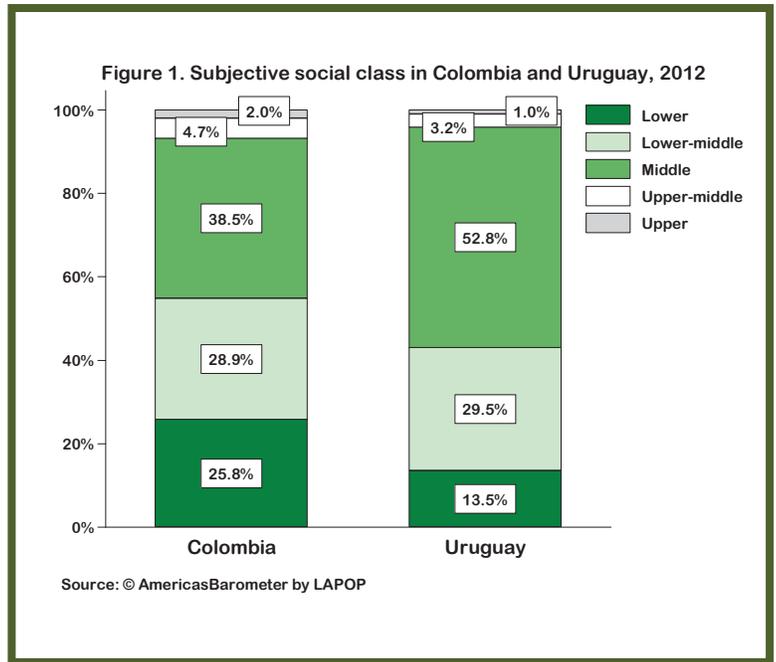
Executive Summary. Despite the high levels of inequality in Latin America, we know very little about how citizens perceive themselves in terms of social class. Using a question on subjective social class included in the AmericasBarometer 2012, this *Insights* report compares two countries that represent opposites in the regional distribution of inequality: the more egalitarian Uruguay and one of the most unequal countries in the world, Colombia. We explore how Colombians and Uruguayans identify on the social ladder and the determinants of this perception. As expected, we find that those who are wealthier and more educated place themselves in higher classes. Yet, the role of education varies. It is more relevant in Colombia than in Uruguay, where access to education is more equal. Moreover, ascribed factors such as a darker skin color and living in a rural area are related to lower class self identification in the more unequal Colombia, but not in Uruguay. Finally, we present evidence that other perceptions such as the evaluation of one's current and past personal economic situations or general life satisfaction are as important as more objective measures of well-being in determining class perceptions in these two countries.

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

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Latin America is the most unequal region of the world in terms of income distribution (Hoffman and Centeno 2003). Yet, we know little about how people locate themselves on the social ladder. Research on class perceptions or subjective social status, popular in English speaking countries, has not received the same attention in the region. Hence, we do not know whether objective measures of inequality mirror how people perceive themselves in terms of class (but see Zechmeister, Sellers, and Seligson 2012).¹ Part of this lack of attention comes from the absence of data on class perceptions.

Fortunately, the 2012 AmericasBarometer included a question on this topic.² In this *Insights* report, we use these data to understand what determines subjective social class, meaning where citizens identify on the social ladder. It is important to investigate the determinants of such subjective class identity, as one's identification as upper or lower class has an independent impact on various political behaviors and even health outcomes, both physical and psychological (Adler et al., 2000; Huckfeldt, 1984; Ostrove et al., 2000; Singh-Manoux et al., 2003). We compare two countries at opposite extremes of income inequality: Colombia, one of the most unequal countries in Latin America (and the world) and Uruguay, one of the most egalitarian countries in the region.³ Our expectation is that determinants of social class identification may vary across less and more equal contexts. And, in fact, we find that



education matters more for social class perceptions in relatively unequal Colombia compared to more equal Uruguay.

Although most research on class perceptions has been conducted at the national level there are some examples of cross-national comparisons (Wright 1997). In our case, comparing citizens' self perceptions of class in two countries with distinct income distribution contexts will provide leverage in understanding the impact such contexts can have on how individuals perceive themselves.

In this *Insights* report, we show how Colombians and Uruguayans perceive themselves in terms of social class, focusing on the following question from the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP:

MOV1. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, or lower class?

Figure 1 shows the distribution of class perceptions in Colombia and Uruguay.⁴ There

⁴ The response rate for this question is high for both countries: 99% in Colombia and 98% in Uruguay. The

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ Colombia has a Gini index of 55.9, while in Uruguay it is 45.3. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. Data from 2010, source: World Bank.

are no important differences in the upper end of the distribution. Self-identification with the upper and upper middle classes is low in both countries. Yet, two main differences stand out. While in Colombia the proportion of people who think of themselves as middle class is 38.5%, in Uruguay the proportion reaches more than half of the population (52.8%). And that difference is in large part due to the fact that Colombia has a much bigger group of people who consider themselves lower class (25.8% versus 13.5%). This picture, based on subjective perception, mirrors objective data, given the higher levels of poverty and inequality in Colombia.

Predictors of Subjective Social Class

From Marx onwards there has been little agreement about how class consciousness works. Do people identify themselves with the class they belong to according to objective measures of occupation or education, or not? Evidence is mixed. In the U.S. context, Jackman (1979) found education, income and occupation impact individuals' perceptions of their social class. But, she argues, people do not only consider their current situation when faced with a question such as "What class do you belong to?" Assessments of past class trajectories and future expectations of well-being matter as well. Jackman also found that a husband's occupation affects his wife's class identification, so relational assessments with members of the family may matter as well.

In this section we examine the factors that influence subjective social class. We first include some indicators of the socioeconomic well-being of the person usually associated with objective social class, such as quintile of wealth⁵ and education.⁶ Occupation is a "usual

question was asked of only half the sample (via a split sample design) in Colombia.

⁵ The variable QUINTALL is created based on an index of household goods. For more information on the creation of the wealth quintiles, see Córdova (2009).

suspect" in the definition of class perception (Pampel and Vanneman 1977), but we need comparable data on specific occupational categories for that type of analysis. Given that those data are not available in the AmericasBarometer 2012, we only use one category in relation to occupation: unemployment, with the expectation that being unemployed will lower class perceptions.⁷

To account for the person's overall assessment of her economic situation (following Jackman, 1979) we included evaluations of one's current personal economic prospects as well as an evaluation of her past economic conditions.⁸ The hypothesis here is that those who evaluate more positively their economic situation are more likely to identify with upper classes, all else equal.

Based on previous research that shows a positive relationship between income and life satisfaction (Corral 2011; Lora 2008; Stevenson and Wolfers 2008; Di Tella and MacCulloch 2008), we also include life satisfaction as a predictor of subjective social class.⁹ It is possible that individuals with higher levels of satisfaction consider themselves as part of an upper class, other things being equal. However, Lora (2008) finds that despite the enormous income inequality prevalent in Latin America,

⁶ ED: "How many years of schooling have you completed?"

⁷ We included a dummy for "unemployed," which takes the value of 1 if the respondent has no job but is looking for one and 0 otherwise. We considered a person to be unemployed if she was actively looking for a job (OCUP4A = 3).

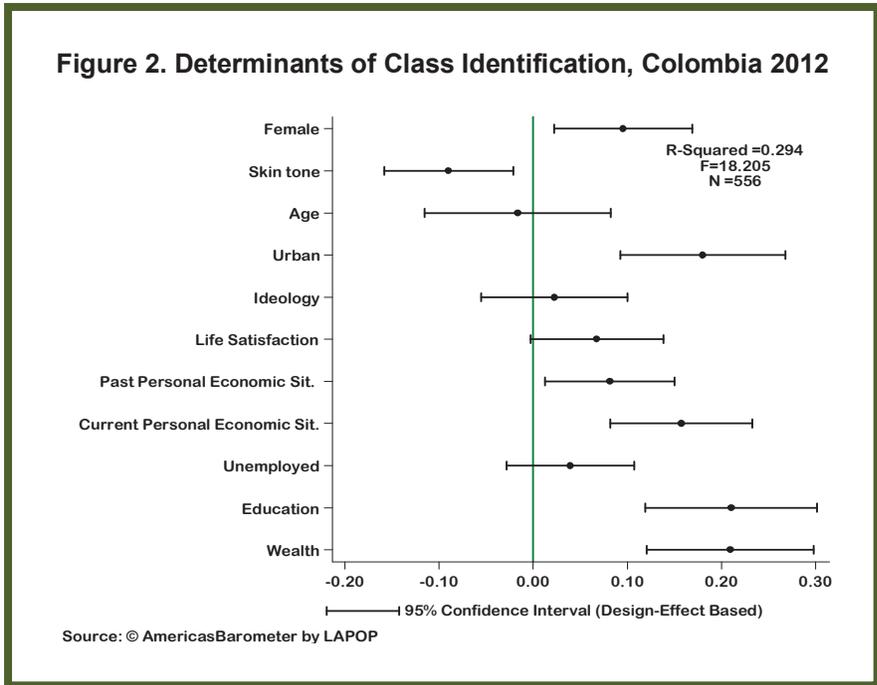
⁸ Because of space constraints, LAPOP did not include questions about evaluations of future economic situations in the 2012 round. The questions we include are measured with IDIO1 and IDIO2 (recoded to a 0-100 scale). IDIO1: "How would you describe your overall economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad or very bad?" IDIO2: "Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago?"

⁹ Measured with LS3 (recoded to a 0-100 scale). LS3: "To begin, in general how satisfied are you with your life? Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?"

individuals from different income levels have surprisingly similar levels of satisfaction.¹⁰

Following the idea that people may consider things other than material conditions when placing themselves on the social ladder, we have included ideology as a predictor (1 is completely to the left and 10 is completely to the right).¹¹ We are here inverting class cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), which states that the social position that an individual has in a society determines his/her political preferences. Our hypothesis is that other (material) things being equal, those that lean to the left will not identify themselves with the upper classes because it would go against their egalitarian values.

We do not have information about family members to test, for example, partner and children's placement in relation to the household head's class, but we have included gender to see if there is a difference between women and men in their self-placement in terms of class (0 for male and 1 for female).



Other socio-demographic controls are age and place of residence (coded 0 for rural, and 1 for urban). We have also included skin color as an indicator of race. Experts consider this measure better than racial or ethnic self-identification for comparative purposes in inequality research in Latin America (Telles and Steele 2012).¹²

¹⁰ We acknowledge that causality, in this case, can also go in the opposite direction: being upper class could make you happier. However, with this model, we are testing the impact of life satisfaction on subjective social class.

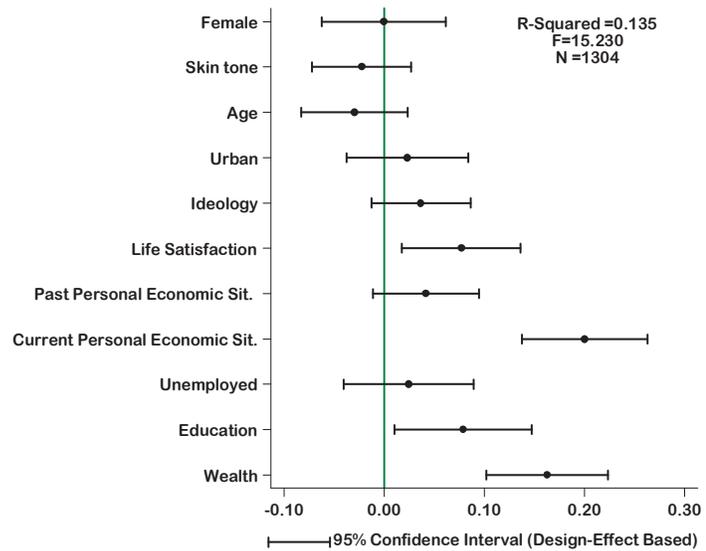
¹¹ Measured with L1: "According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale?" Because a fair number of respondents do not answer the left-right question and therefore are eliminated from analyses that rely on this direct measure, we also examined ideology as a series of distinct dummy variables, including one for those who do not answer the left-right question, and found no significant effect for any of these variables in either of our analyses. However, recovering the missing values on ideology in the Colombia analysis does cause life satisfaction to become statistically significant and perception of one's past personal economic situation to become statistically insignificant. Recovering the missing on ideology in this same way has no effect on the other measures included in the Uruguay analysis.

¹² Measured by COLORR, a variable which runs from 1 (lightest skin) to 11 (darkest skin). Skin tone is registered discretely by the interviewer, without asking, using a color chart.

The results of the linear regression models are shown in Figures 2 and 3 (see Appendix 1 for the regression table), which display standardized regression coefficients.¹³ Our dependent variable is social class identification, which takes the values of 1 for lower class, 2 for lower-middle, 3 for middle, 4 for upper-middle, and 5 for upper class. Each dot in the figures represents the estimated standardized coefficient, which captures the relative relationship of the identified factor with class identification. If a dot falls to the right of the vertical line at 0, its estimated effect on class identification is positive; if a dot falls to the left of the line, its estimated effect is negative. The horizontal bars indicate 95 percent confidence intervals around these point estimates. We can be at least 95 percent confident that the effect is statistically significant if the horizontal bar does not cross the vertical line.

Results show commonalities and differences for the two countries. Wealth and education are significantly and positively associated with class perceptions. Yet, education has a smaller effect in Uruguay than it does in Colombia.¹⁴ This makes sense given that access to education is more widespread in the former country. Being unemployed, in turn, does not change

Figure 3. Determinants of Class Identification, Uruguay 2012



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

class identification.¹⁵ Neither does age. In both countries, more positive evaluations of people’s current economic situation correspond to higher social class identifications. Contrary to what we expected, self-placement on the ideological scale is not a significant predictor. This issue deserves further attention given that in an exploratory analysis of respondents across all of Latin America, ideology emerges as an important predictor of one’s class identification

Some variables are significant only for Colombia. The first is gender. Colombian women tend to place themselves in a higher social class than men. We do not have any theory or hypothesis to explain this, so it remains a puzzle. Second, evaluations of past economic situations do affect positioning in the social ladder in the analysis presented in Figure 2. More positive evaluations correspond to

¹³ Given that our dependent variable varies only from 1 to 5, we also ran an ordered logit model. Results were substantively the same. All analyses were conducted with STATA v12 and results were adjusted for the complex sample design employed.

¹⁴ As a robustness check, we pooled the data for the two countries and ran a single analysis in which we included an interaction between “Uruguay” and the education measure; the interaction is significant and negative, affirming that the effect of education is statistically less powerful in Uruguay compared to Colombia.

¹⁵ In future work we hope that more specific occupational categories can be tested to account for the great theoretical relevance sociology gives to occupation in relation to class locations and perceptions.

identification with higher classes. Third, urban Colombians position themselves above their fellow countrymen who live in rural places. Finally, skin tone is significant, showing that the darker the respondent, the lower is his/her placement in the social structure. None of these variables achieves statistical significance in Uruguay.

In turn, life satisfaction turns out significant in Uruguay while not in Colombia (but see footnote 11). The more satisfied Uruguayans are with their lives, the higher they position themselves.

Conclusions

Colombians and Uruguayans are fairly class conscious, given the correspondence between measures of well-being and self-perception in terms of class. Those who are more educated and wealthier position themselves in higher classes. Yet, there is a striking difference in the role of education for subjective social class. While for Colombians education is a key factor determining class identification, it matters less for Uruguayans. This needs to be understood in the context of different levels of educational coverage and achievement in the two countries we compare. Education has more value and status when it is a scarce good, that is, in more unequal contexts.

A salient finding is the key role that some ascribed factors have in determining class perceptions in the more unequal Colombia. Rural and darker skinned Colombians locate themselves at lower social classes than fellow Colombians with the same education and wealth (and the other characteristics we control for). The first finding may relate to the wider gaps in that country between rural and urban areas, which may in turn cause a feeling of relative deprivation among rural populations. According to the last Human Development Report, rural areas in Colombia are much more vulnerable than urban areas (PNUD 2011).

The relation between skin tone and class perceptions shows the intersectionality of race and class. The lack of relationship in Uruguay remains a puzzle, given that in both countries there is evidence of racial inequalities (Bucheli and Scuro 2008; Rodríguez et al. 2008; Urrea and Viáfara 2007). More single country and comparative research is needed here to understand the complex ways in which race and class perceptions mutually influence each other.

One of the most interesting findings, however, relates to how, beyond these “objective” well-being and ascribed factors, other more subjective factors also affect how people understand their position in the class structure. Thus, better evaluations of one’s current economic situation increase respondents’ self ratings in terms of class. In addition, while the general assessment of life satisfaction matters in Uruguay, the evaluation of one’s past personal economic situation matters in Colombia. We recognize causality can work both ways between these evaluations and class perceptions. Thus we prefer to speak of associations between well-being and class identification.

We conclude that class perceptions are not mere mirrors of “objective” class positions. People consider other subjective aspects when they define themselves in terms of class, and some of those aspects vary by context. In addition, some objective factors such as education are valued differently in different contexts, in terms of their relevance for how people locate themselves in the social ladder. Finally, we show that ascribed factors not only impact inequality, as many others have demonstrated, but they can impact how people perceive themselves, as we show here.

In this brief paper we analyzed the determinants of self class identification for two countries. Given that the measure of social class self-identification was part of the 2012 AmericasBarometer core survey, we hope that scholars will conduct similar analyses for all

the countries in the LAPOP sample. We are also interested in understanding the relationship between these perceptions and other attitudes, perceptions and behaviors such as discrimination experiences and perceptions. We posit that perception of one's social class may be affected by a wide variety of experiences with fellow citizens and with public officials. It remains to be seen, however, whether these relationships exist in the data and whether they vary by country, as do some of the factors we have analyzed here.

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Appendix. Regression Results: Determinants of Class Perception

	Uruguay		Colombia	
Wealth	0.094***	(0.02)	0.145 ***	(0.03)
Education	0.016*	(0.01)	0.046***	(0.01)
Unemployed	0.051	(0.09)	0.207	(0.12)
Current Personal Economic Sit.	0.009***	(0.00)	.008 ***	(0.00)
Past Personal Economic Sit.	0.094	(0.06)	0.227*	(0.09)
Life satisfaction	0.003*	(0.00)	0.003	(0.00)
Ideology	0.011	(0.01)	0.009	(0.01)
Urban	0.069	(0.09)	0.424***	(0.10)
Age	-0.001	(0.00)	-0.001	(0.00)
Skin tone	0.014	(0.01)	-0.050**	(0.02)
Female	0.000	(0.05)	0.181*	(0.07)
Constant	1.271***	(0.18)	0.337	(0.31)
<i>Number of observations</i>	<i>1304</i>		<i>556</i>	
<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>	<i>0.13</i>		<i>0.29</i>	

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
 Standard errors in parenthesis.

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 87

Power to the People? Support for Direct Democracy in the Americas

By Juan Camilo Plata
juan.c.plata@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive summary. This *Insights* report explores public opinion in the Americas regarding support for having direct government by the people rather than representative democracy. While average levels of support are low, on average, there is quite a bit of variation across countries and individuals. This report examines individual-level variation in support for direct government. Initial analyses reveal that the wealthy, urban and more educated are more supportive of representative government, while the young and indigenous are more receptive to some form of direct government. A second set of analyses finds that direct democracy supporters tend to feel more politically efficacious and be more supportive of their political system and popular elections, but less supportive of political parties. When taken together, these findings suggest that support for direct democracy is more a reflection of citizens' desires for more effective outlets for their collective political voice than a rejection of the system and core democratic processes.

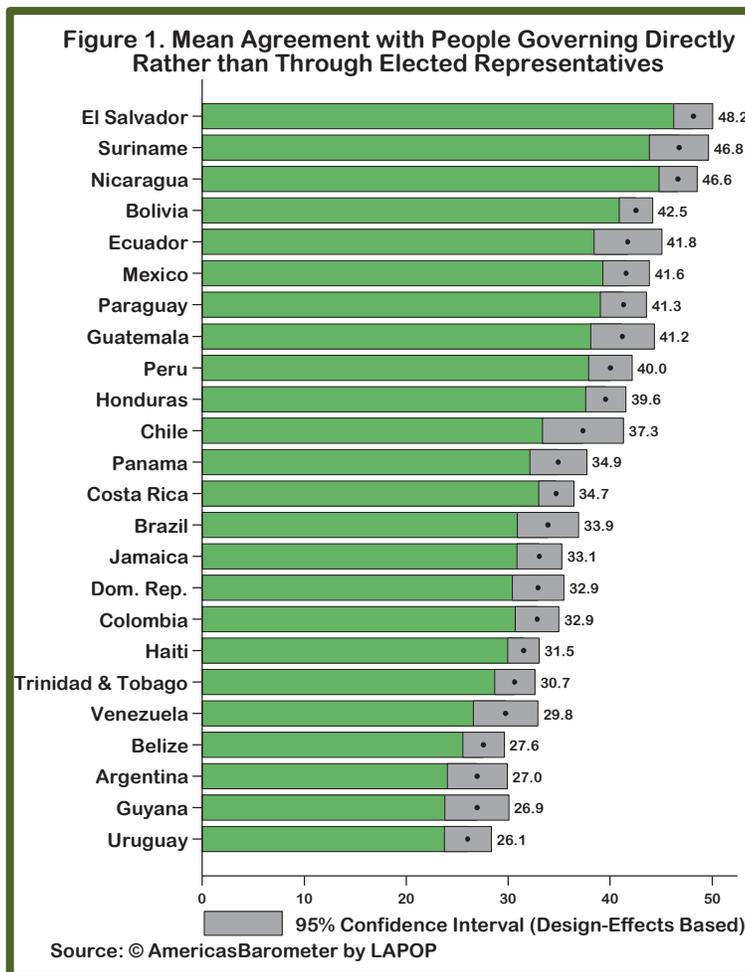
The Insights Series is co-edited by Jonathan T. Hiskey, Mitchell A. Seligson, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.
www.AmericasBarometer.org

Contemporary democracies have favored the election of representatives as a governance mechanism well-suited for large, complex, modern nation states. Yet from their seats in various institutions, such as the office of the president and the parliament, elected officials can appear prone to infighting and deadlock (Linz 1990). These days, trust in parties and support for party-based democracy exist at moderate to low levels across the Americas (Ahern et al. 2012). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that a fair number (but far from the majority) of individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean express a preference for bypassing elected officials via a system of direct democracy.

In this *Insights* report¹ I explore the extent to which there is agreement across the Americas that the people should govern directly, rather than through elected representatives. I focus the analysis on the following question from the 2012 AmericasBarometer² survey by LAPOP, in which 38,631 survey respondents from 24 countries³ were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statement:⁴

POP107. The people should govern directly rather than through elected representatives. How much do you agree or disagree?

This question thus helps to distinguish between those who agree with direct government and



those who prefer a system of elected representatives.⁵ Figure 1 shows mean levels of agreement that direct democracy is preferable to representative democracy. At one extreme we find Uruguay, Guyana and Argentina, where mean agreement with having direct government is at or less than 27 units on the 0 to 100 scale. At the other extreme we find El Salvador, Suriname and Nicaragua where agreement with direct government reaches a mean level of just over 45 units.

⁵ The original scale from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”) was rescaled from 0 to 100 to facilitate interpretation. It is important to note that about 35% of respondents answered that they “strongly disagree”, which indicates that a lot of people have strong reservations about direct democracy; on the other side of the scale, only about 8 percent “strongly agree”.

¹ Prior issues in the Insights series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>
The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop>

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ The United States and Canada were excluded in keeping with the tendency for *Insights* reports to focus on the Latin American and Caribbean region.

⁴ Non-respondents are 6.1% of the LAC sample.

In the upcoming analyses, I first explore if higher levels of support for direct government are associated with specific socio-demographic groups across Latin America and the Caribbean. Thereafter, I try to clarify the motivations for preferring one form of government over the other.

To foreshadow my results, I find higher support for direct government among individuals who support the political system in general, believe in the importance of elections and a citizen's role in politics, but see political parties as unnecessary for democracy to function. These are interesting results, as they suggest that it is not discontent with the current system per se that fuels preferences for direct democracy, but a search for an alternative mode of input into it (e.g., one devoid of parties). I discuss these results in greater detail later in the report. First, though, I assess what subgroups express greater levels of support for direct democracy.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Support for Direct Governance

Political scientists (Arrow 1963; Bartels 2003) have shown that the contemporary system of representative democracy often fails to satisfy the normative expectation that public policy will correspond with the will of the people. Studies distinguish between representatives who act as "trustees" and follow the preferences of the public and those who act as "delegates" and independently decide what kind of policies are

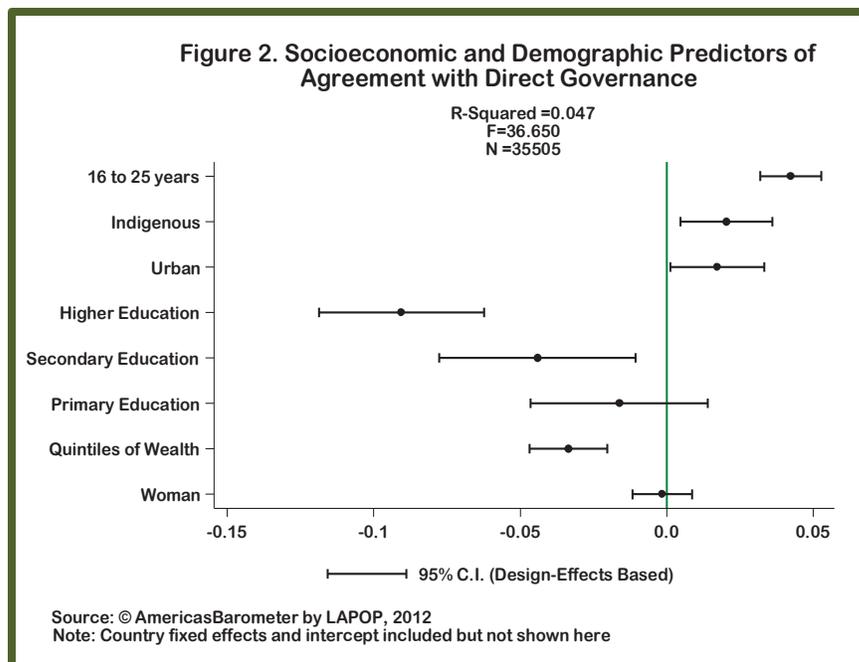
best for their constituents (O'Donnell 1994; Rehfeld 2009). This distinction highlights the possibility that at least some representatives may be unresponsive to the public's input. Underrepresentation has been identified as a critical challenge for particular social groups that tend to be "marginalized" in the policy domain: women (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005), the indigenous (Yashar 1998), the poor (Bartels 2010), the less educated (Besley and Reynal-Querol 2011), and the rural population (Tarrow 1971). Given these representation biases in many contemporary systems, we might expect to find higher levels of support for direct government among these socio-economic groups.

It is not discontent with the system that fuels preferences for direct democracy, but instead a search for an alternative mode of input into it.

In order to examine the extent to which socioeconomic and demographic characteristics predict favoring direct government, I develop a linear model predicting respondents' level of agreement with the notion that the people should govern directly. In line with the above discussion, the expectation is that women should be more supportive of direct government, given the comparatively marginal position of women's interests in representative forms of democracy (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). Those who self-identify as indigenous should also express greater agreement with the idea of governing directly. Such an attitude is consistent with the modern surge of indigenous organizations willing to promote their interests directly without relying on alliances with political parties (Van Cott 2000).

Conversely, more educated and wealthier citizens should be more likely to prefer representative democracy, as this form of government tends to favor these groups (Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Besley and Reynal-Querol 2011). Education may matter for other reasons as well: those people with higher education are more likely to develop civic skills in daily life and be invited to participate in political activities (Schlozman et al. 2005). Other factors that may affect support for direct government include a respondent's place of residence (rural vs. urban) and age, where younger people may be more open to a move toward direct democracy while older citizens may be more aware of the negative consequences a move away from representative government could entail (Seligson 2007).⁶

The standardized results of the model are presented in Figure 2. The estimated effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable is represented by a dot. If the dot and its corresponding bars, which indicate the 95% confidence interval, fall to the left of the 0 line, then the relationship is considered both negative and statistically significant; if the dot and bars



fall to the right of the 0 line, the relationship is considered positive and statistically significant.

Interestingly, and counter to the above expectations, these results show that all else equal women's support for direct government does not differ significantly from that of men. We do find, however, that respondents identifying as indigenous are more likely to be in favor of direct forms of government when compared to those who self-identify as non-indigenous. Also, as expected, the wealthier a person is, the less she prefers direct government as an alternative to elected representatives. With respect to education, we find that those with higher and secondary education express greater support for a system of elected representatives than do those with no education. The urban population is only marginally more likely than the rural population to prefer direct government. And finally, compared with respondents over 25 years, those between 16 and 25 years are more open to considering some form of direct government.⁷ Although these

⁶ I coded female as 1, and 0 for male. I also coded as 1 those who identified themselves as indigenous and 0 any other alternative. Education was coded in four categories: "No education", "Primary education", "Secondary education" and "Higher education." "No education" is used as the reference category. See Abby Córdova, 2009, "Methodological Note: Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators" for a description of the construction of the wealth index:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

I coded 1 the respondents living in the urban area, and 0 those living in a rural setting. And finally, I coded age into two groups to highlight the preferences of the youngest (those between 16 and 25 years) versus those above 25 years. Note that in most cases, those aged 17 and below are excluded from the study; an exception is the case of Nicaragua, where the voting age is 16.

⁷ Initial analyses showed the difference in the preferences between the youngest and any of the older age categories was very similar. Therefore, to keep the presentation as

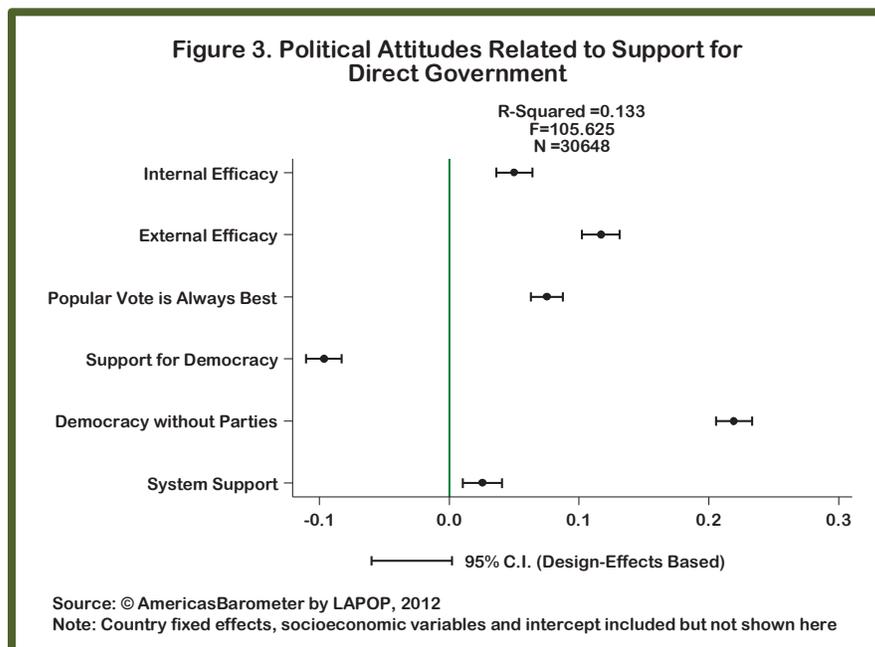
results are statistically significant, substantively they exert only marginal influences on the dependent variable. Thus, I now explore the possibility that attitudes toward the system, efficacy, and disenchantment with parties and democracy might explain support for direct government.

The Role of Support for Democratic Institutions and Political Efficacy

The argument underlying the above discussion is that certain groups are more satisfied with indirect representative democratic politics than others, and oppose change to this status quo. It is possible to go further and test whether general disenchantment with the components of democratic governance (system support, embracing the use of elections, preferring democracy to any alternative, and favoring the existence of political parties) explains support for direct government. Furthermore, it is also important to clarify if the preference for people governing directly is related to having a high perception of one's own ability to understand and impact politics. Political efficacy promotes political activism, which is a key incentive for politicians to be responsive in a democratic context (Almond and Verba 1965). Political efficacy (both internal and external) is also an indication of having the necessary resources to take part in politics as direct government requires.

In a model that builds on the results shown in Figure 2, I now include measures of system support, attitudes toward elections, political parties and democracy in general; and, as well, I

parsimonious as possible, I focus on the difference between the youngest and respondents any older than 25 years.



include measures of internal and external efficacy. I measure system support with an index based on one's perception that the state guarantees a fair trial, respect for political institutions, perception that the system protects basic rights, level of pride related to living in the country and the extent of belief that one should support the system. I also test if those who agree that democracy can exist without parties are more approving of direct government.⁸ Additionally, I examine the relationship between one's view of elections and willingness to empower unelected officials with the level of support for direct democracy.⁹ Finally, I evaluate if having higher levels of political efficacy is related to a greater preference for

⁸ DEM23. Democracy can exist without political parties. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?

⁹ ING4. Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. AUT1. There are people who say that we need a strong leader who does not have to be elected by the vote of the people. Others say that although things may not work, electoral democracy, or the popular vote, is always best. What do you think? (1) We need a strong leader who does not have to be elected. (2) Electoral democracy is the best.

governing directly rather than through representatives.¹⁰

Figure 3 shows the results of this new, extended model (see Appendix for the full model, which includes all the variables included in the analysis reported in Figure 2). Those respondents with higher levels of system support are *more likely* to agree with people governing directly rather than through elected representatives. Thus, it is not discontentment with the system (beyond parties) but rather satisfaction with and support for the system that predicts a preference for direct government. And while support for democracy in the abstract is associated with lower levels of support for direct government, those respondents who agree that “the popular vote is always best” are more open to some form of direct democracy. Yet another noteworthy result here is that thinking democracy can work without parties predicts greater openness to an alternative for the current representation system. Finally, an individual who believes she understands politics and that the system is responsive also is more likely to support direct government.¹¹

Conclusions

Wealthy, more educated, urban respondents are more likely to embrace representative democracy according to the results presented here. Conversely, the young and indigenous are more open to the possibility of governing directly. The attitudinal analysis of support for direct democracy finds that respondents who

¹⁰ **EFF1.** Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?

EFF2. You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?

¹¹ These results hold even if we exclude any given variable. Notice that the correlation between “Popular Vote is Always Best” and “Support for Democracy” is only -0.22, which confirms that both variables are capturing different attitudes about the democratic regime.

feel more politically efficacious, supportive of their political system and electoral democracy, but skeptical of the role of political parties in democracy are more receptive to direct government.

Overall, these results suggest that supporting direct government may be an expression of the inclination to engage in politics, and a reaction to the deficiencies political parties and democracy in the abstract are perceived to have. Although political engagement is a central component of democratic governance to keep politicians accountable, this participatory impulse leads to looking for alternatives to the status quo system of indirect democratic governance.¹² Therefore, in addition to signaling high levels of efficacy and potentially having positive implications for civic engagement, high levels of support for direct government could also be seen as a signal of a failure of the traditional party system and of democracy in the abstract but, not, it seems of elections or the political system itself.

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¹² Additional analyses not included here show that respondents supporting direct government also are more likely to approve the violent overthrow of the government and other contentious methods.

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Appendix 1. OLS model explaining preference for direct government rather than through elected representatives

	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error
System Support	0.025***	0.007
Democracy without Parties	0.219***	0.007
Support for Democracy	-0.096***	0.007
Popular Vote is Always Best	0.075***	0.006
Internal Efficacy	0.116***	0.007
External Efficacy	0.050***	0.007
Women	0.004	0.005
Wealth Quintal	-0.025***	0.006
Primary Education	-0.011	0.016
Secondary Education	-0.042	0.018
Superior Education	-0.085***	0.015
Urban	0.011	0.007
Identify as Indigenous	0.013	0.007
16 to 25 years	0.032*	0.005
Mexico	0.077***	0.007
Guatemala	0.052***	0.008
El Salvador	0.100***	0.008
Honduras	0.052***	0.008
Nicaragua	0.108***	0.007
Costa Rica	0.062***	0.005
Panama	0.056***	0.008
Colombia	0.039***	0.007
Ecuador	0.074***	0.009
Bolivia	0.112***	0.008
Peru	0.076***	0.007
Paraguay	0.081***	0.006
Chile	0.058***	0.010
Brazil	0.045***	0.008
Venezuela	0.039***	0.008
Argentina	0.021***	0.008
Dominican Republic	0.026***	0.007
Haití	-0.023**	0.008
Jamaica	0.052***	0.007
Guyana	0.004	0.007
Trinidad & Tobago	0.036***	0.009
Belize	0.008	0.007
Suriname	0.104***	0.009
Constant	0.008	0.007
<i>R</i> ²	0.133	
<i>Observations</i>	30648	

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

'No education' is the reference category for education, 'over 25 years' for age, and Uruguay for country fixed effects.

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 88

Violations of the Rule of Law Fuel Tolerance of Bribery in the Americas

By Ryan E. Carlin
rcarlin@gsu.edu
Georgia State University

Executive Summary. Understanding citizen attitudes toward bribery is important for identifying the micro-foundations of democracy and the rule of law. This *Insights* report tests a rational-actor model of bribe justification using public opinion data from the Americas. In line with this model, the evidence suggests that where citizens detect norms of corruption and law disobedience, they are more likely to see bribery as a justifiable behavior. Specifically, support for bribe justification increases with having been asked to pay a bribe, perceptions of corruption, distrust of the justice system, doubts that police protect citizens, and the rejection of the rule of law. These results point to the strategic dilemmas citizens face in contexts where anti-corruption and law-obedience norms are not firmly established. They further point to both the importance of and challenges inherent to efforts to reform institutions, laws, and policies that reflect and motivate adherence to the rule of law in the Americas.

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

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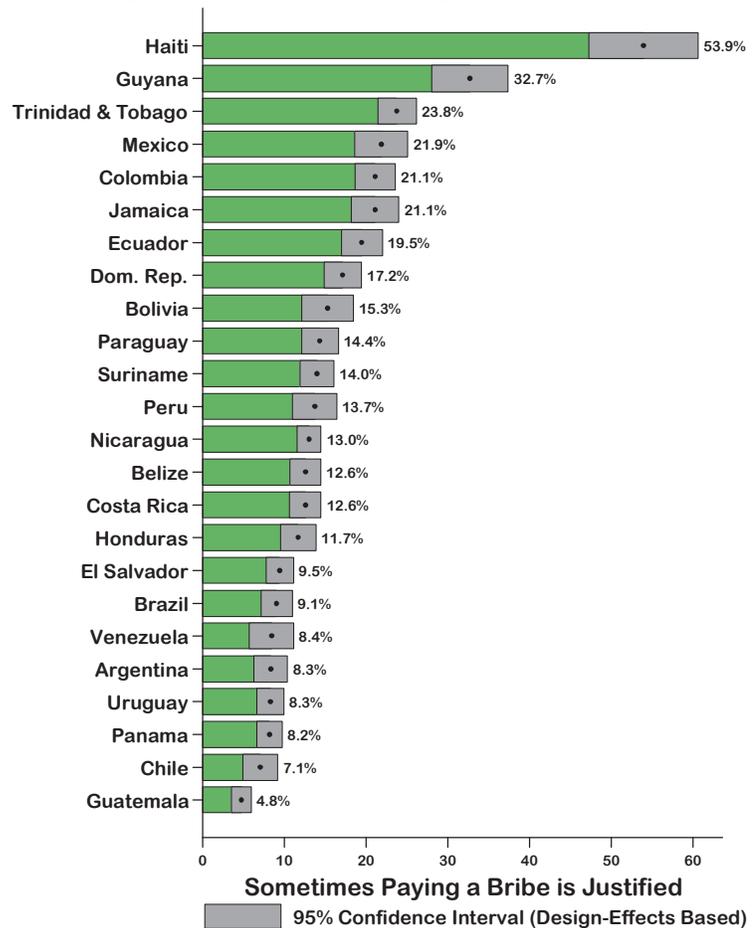
Bribery is a means by which citizens can seek preferential treatment from state officials. When public officials solicit or accept bribes, they engage in a specific form of corruption, the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International 2012b). At the “street level” (Rose-Ackerman 1999), bribery undercuts citizen support for rule of law (Carlin et al. 2012) and democracy (Seligson 2002). At the national level, it “threatens or distorts both economic development and democracy” (Morris and Blake 2009, 9). Given these findings, we should expect most citizens to oppose paying bribes. And, as this *Insights* report shows, most do. Yet some citizens feel justified in paying a bribe. Why?

I argue that citizens’ attitudes toward bribery are shaped by the rule of law. If rule of law is weak, social behavioral norms can foster a “vicious circle of noncompliance”: recurring violations of the law incentivize others to violate the law, “further feed[ing] the spiral of normative disobedience” (Sarsfield 2012, 220). Where disregarding the law is normal rather than an aberration, citizens are more likely to see paying a bribe as in their best interest (*ibid*; Bergman 2009). Where obeying the law is the norm and disobeying it constitutes deviant behavior, citizens are more likely to reject bribery. If this argument holds, it uncovers a rationale of bribery and informs the design of reforms meant to address it. Thus identifying *who* sees bribes as justified, and *why*, is critical.

This *Insights* report¹ investigates attitudes towards bribery using the following question

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

Figure 1. Percentage of people who think given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

from the 2012 AmericasBarometer² survey by LAPOP, to which 39,380 respondents from 25³ countries were asked to respond⁴ “Yes” or “No”:

EXC18: Do you think given the way things are, sometimes paying a bribe is justified?

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ The question was not asked in Canada and was asked only of a split-sample in the United States. The latter is excluded from the report in order to focus on respondents from the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

⁴ Of those asked, 37,335 gave a response.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who answered “Yes” in each country. In most countries, less than one in six respondents feel paying bribes is sometimes justifiable. The range, however, spans from a low of 4.8% to a high of 53.9% in Haiti. In six countries – Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Colombia, Jamaica, Ecuador – at least 20% say bribe-paying can be justified. In short, across countries there is a great deal of variation in the belief that paying a bribe is justifiable at times. Accounting for confidence intervals, these 2012 levels differ very little from those reported in 2010 (Plata 2012). The glaring exception is Haiti, which saw a 22 percentage-point increase.

Existing theories suggest that democratic age and level of democracy could matter for explaining variation in attitudes toward bribery. Over time, democracy is thought to reduce corruption by constructing horizontal, vertical, and social accountability mechanisms (Gerring and Thacker 2004, Smulovitz and Peruzzotti 2000, Thacker 2009, Treisman 2000). Yet the percentage of citizens across the Americas who say paying a bribe is sometimes justified is not systematically related ($r = -.24$, $p = .28$) to the durability of democracy (measured as the number of years since the last regime change by Polity IV). The *level* of democracy may lower tolerance for corruption (Johnston 2005, Rose-Ackerman 1999, Sandholtz and Koetzle 2000). But this conclusion is at odds with higher or equal levels of corruption in Latin America since the return to democracy (Morris and Blake 2009). When I examined this question, I found an unreliable relationship ($r = .36$, $p = .08$) between the percentage of citizens who see bribe-paying as justified and democracy levels (measured as the inverse average of Political Rights and Civil Liberties ratings by Freedom House).

In contrast to these perspectives, then, I argue the behavioral norms associated with the rule

of law offer more a more compelling account why of bribery justification varies throughout the Americas.

Rule of Law, Norms & Bribery Justification

While the rule of law is a contested concept (Carlin and Sarsfield 2012; Skaaning 2010), most definitions include a baseline of legal equality, the notion that no one is above the law (Dicey 1959). Behavioral studies of bribe victimization and corruption perceptions suggest legal equality is unevenly dispersed in the Americas (Singer et al. 2012; Transparency

International

2012a). Similarly, institutional analyses find rule of law, broadly conceived, is more firmly rooted in some parts of the

hemisphere than in others (Bergman 2012, Carlin 2012, Møller and Skaaning 2012). Such variation may owe to differing local norms of law obedience, disobedience, and enforcement.

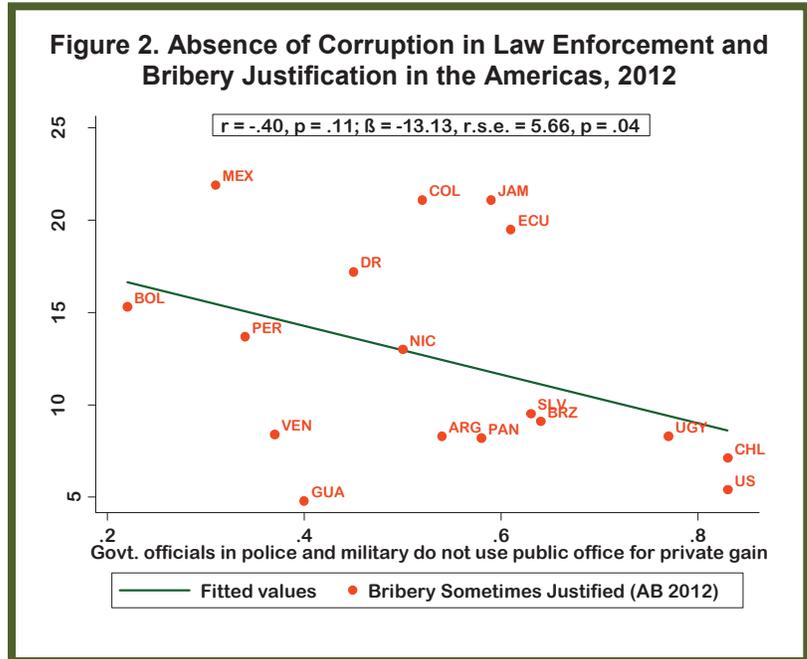
Norms allow citizens to form reliable expectations about the behavior of others. According to Sarsfield’s (2012) rational-actor model, corruption norms, like bribery, are created as follows, “[i]f citizen *A* believes the majority of citizens are corrupt, *A* will be more likely to accept corruption as a behavioral norm” and act accordingly, since, “if most citizens are corrupt, obeying the law becomes a costly, irrational decision” (223). To flesh out this logic, Sarsfield crafts a formal proof of a driver’s decision to pay a *mordida* (bribe) to a Mexican traffic officer. The driver faces a dilemma: (A) to uphold the law by not bribing the officer, pay the fine, retrieve the car the next day from an insecure impound, and find transportation home, versus (B) to break the law by paying the bribe, avoid the fine, forego the next-day retrieval of the (potentially damaged or looted) car from impound, and

Bribery justification reflects expectations of corrupt behavior on part of state actors.

carry on. If norms of bribery are strong and the threat to impound the car if a bribe is not paid is credible, the costs of (B) will typically exceed the costs of (A). Thus to the driver, paying a bribe is a rational decision.

Beyond their own experiences with bribes and corruption, citizens draw conclusions about prevailing social behavioral norms via their perceptions of other citizens and state actors. For example, it is more difficult to reject bribery “[i]f citizens perceive a circle of impunity within and around government and big business” (Sarsfield 2012, 223). Conversely, if elites are held accountable for corruption scandals and crimes citizens will internalize law-abiding norms. Perceptions of legal and law enforcement institutions, e.g. the judiciary and police, are also critical: “[i]f one sees those central to law enforcement as corrupt, why should one reject corrupt activity?” (Sarsfield 2012, 224). On the other hand, if judges and police officers are viewed as incorruptible and willing to uphold the laws, citizens will detect these norms and adjust their expectations and behavior accordingly. In sum, citizens’ views of bribery reflect their own experiences with it, their perceptions of how systemic the problem is, and the odds that they or others will be punished for such behavior. In other words, they reflect social norms related to rule of law.

I test how well these propositions account for the variation in attitudes toward bribery both across countries and across citizens using data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer and the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (Agrast et al. 2012).



Bribery Justification across the Countries of the Americas

Are local norms of law (dis)obedience with respect to corruption and legal equality related to the propensity of citizens feeling justified in paying bribes? Figure 2 plots the percentage of respondents in each country that says paying a bribe is sometimes justified (*y*-axis) against point estimates of the aggregate scores for the World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index sub-factor, *Absence of Corruption in Law Enforcement*⁵ (*x*-axis). These scores have a range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates greater adherence to the rule of law, in this case, less corruption.⁶ The regression line’s negative slope⁷ suggests the extent of police and military corruption corresponds directly to the outright rejection of bribery. Although the AmericasBarometer and

⁵ “Government officials in the police and the military do not use public office for private gain.”

⁶ These estimates are based on answers to 16 questions asked on expert and public opinion surveys in each country. For more details on the methodology please consult <http://worldjusticeproject.org/methodology> and Botero and Ponce (2011, 42).

⁷ Due to heteroskedasticity, White-Huber robust standard errors are reported in this and all other bivariate analyses.

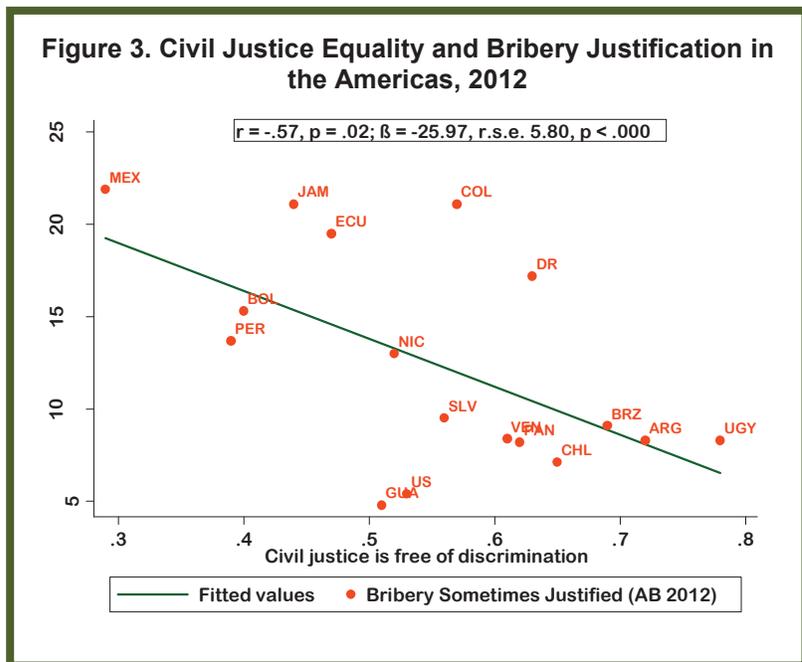
World Justice Project have just 17 cases⁸ in common, similar results obtain with Transparency International's (2012a) *Corruption Perceptions Index*,⁹ which only excludes Belize, and the World Bank's (2011) World Governance Indicators *Control of Corruption*¹⁰ measure, which overlaps with all 25 cases for which the AmericasBarometer included this item. I use the World Justice Project measure for consistency with the next analysis.

Figure 3 depicts a stronger and more robust relationship between bribery justification rates (y-axis) and point estimates of the aggregate scores for the World Justice Project's *Civil Justice Equality*¹¹ (x-axis). Again, these scores range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates greater adherence to the rule of law, in this case, no group-based discrimination or bias in civil justice.¹² It suggests that where courts do not regularly discriminate in favor of some groups and against others, citizens do not generally justify occasional bribery.

These findings are consistent with expectations derived from Sarsfield's (2012) rational-actor model vis-à-vis norms of corruption, legal equality, and the likelihood of punishment. Namely, citizens feel more justified in paying bribes where corruption is rampant and where equal treatment by the civil justice system is not guaranteed.

Bribery Justification across the Citizens of the Americas

Rule-of-law based theories help explain why bribe justification is higher in some parts of the Americas than others. But does it grant us any purchase on the question of why some citizens justify bribes and others reject them?



⁸ The latter excludes Belize, Costa Rica, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

⁹ $r = -.45$, $p = .03$; $\beta = -.32$, $r.s.e. = .15$, $p = .04$.

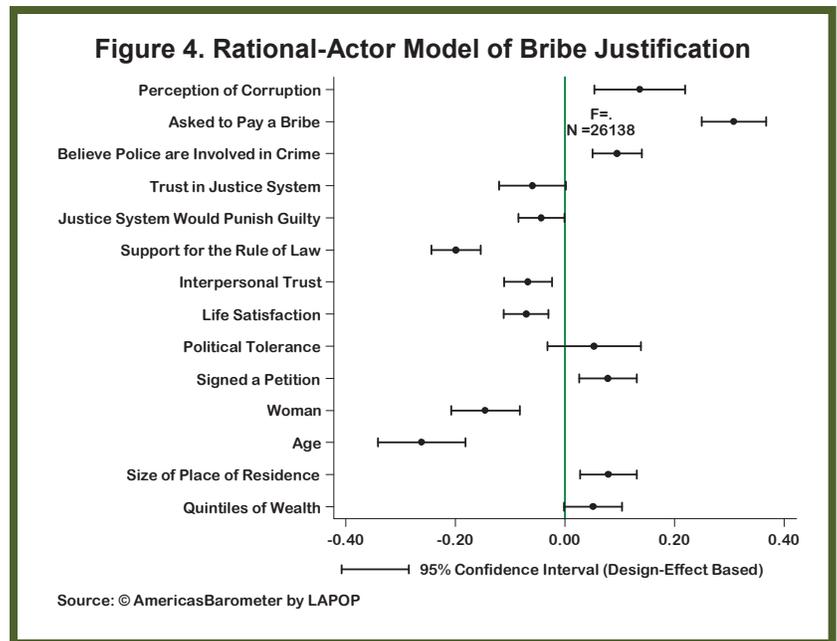
¹⁰ $r = -.45$, $p = .02$; $\beta = -6.52$, $r.s.e. = 3.08$, $p = .045$.

¹¹ "Civil justice is free of discrimination."

¹² These estimates are based on answers to 7 questions asked on expert and public opinion surveys in each country. For more details on the methodology please consult <http://worldjusticeproject.org/methodology> and Botero and Ponce (2011, 50).

To tap citizens' assumptions about the likelihood that state actors will abide by the law, I use items asking respondents about their perception of the scope of corruption among state officials,¹³ if various officials have solicited a bribe from them,¹⁴ and whether they see the police as complicit in crime.¹⁵ Rule of law norms, and the expectations of officials' behavior they yield, should also permeate citizens' levels of trust in the justice system¹⁶ and its ability to ultimately punish criminals.¹⁷

Finally, if citizens' attitudes towards paying bribes reflect a broad spectrum of law-abiding norms, they should be associated with other attitudes in this vein. The AmericasBarometer asked respondents if authorities should always abide by the law in their apprehension of criminals or if they can disregard it on occasion.¹⁸ Following Malone (2010) I label this measure *Support for Rule of Law*.



Beyond these theoretical predictors, I control¹⁹ for orientations related to what Inglehart and Welzel (2003) call “effective democracy,” i.e. systems that not only respect political and civil freedoms but are also free from the corruption that threatens to reduce these freedoms’ effectiveness. They theorize without “deeper-rooted orientations of tolerance, trust, and a participatory outlook, the chances are poor that effective democracy will be present at the societal level” (62). Since these orientations may produce anti-corruption norms apart from the rational-actor and rule-of-law theories, I control for four variables Inglehart and Welzel identify: interpersonal trust,²⁰ life satisfaction,²¹ political tolerance,²² and petitioning.²³

¹⁹ Excluding these controls does not substantively change the inferences we can draw from this model.

²⁰ IT1. And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in this community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...? (1) Very trustworthy, (2) Somewhat trustworthy, (3) Not very trustworthy (4) Untrustworthy. Coding reversed and recoded 0-100.

²¹ LS3. To begin, in general how satisfied are you with your life? Would you say that you are, (1) Very satisfied, (2) Somewhat satisfied, (3) Somewhat dissatisfied, (4) Very dissatisfied. Coding reversed and recoded 0-100.

²² This index is composed of the following four items:

D1. There are people who only say bad things about the [country’s] form of government, not just the incumbent

¹³ EXC7. Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is: Very uncommon, Uncommon, Common, Very Common. (Scale reversed, recoded 0-100).

¹⁴ A scale is formed from positive answers about having been asked to pay a bribe to police EXC2, government employee EXC6, soldier or military officer EXC20...

¹⁵ AOJ18. Some people say that the police in this community (town, village) protect people from criminals, while others say that the police are involved in the criminal activity. What do you think? [Read options]

(1) Police protect people from crime or
(2) Police are involved in crime
(3) [Don’t Read] Neither, or both

Responses recoded into a dummy variable coded 1 for “Police protect people from crime” and 0 otherwise.

¹⁶ B10A. To what extent do you trust the justice system? (Scale recoded 0-100).

¹⁷ AOJ12. If you were a victim of a robbery or assault how much faith do you have that the judicial system would punish the guilty. (1) A lot, (2) Some, (3) Little, (4) None.

¹⁸ AOJ8. In order to catch criminals, do you believe that the authorities should always abide by the law or that occasionally they can cross the line?

(1) Should always abide by the law
(2) Occasionally can cross the line
Coding reversed and recoded 0-100.

Figure 4 reports the results of a fixed-effects logistic regression model of bribe justification.²⁴ Consistent with the proposition that bribery justification reflects citizens' expectations that state actors will accept or require bribes, the likelihood of justifying bribery increases for those who perceive widespread corruption, have been solicited for a bribe, and believe the police are involved crime. Citizens who trust the justice system and have faith it will punish the guilty are more likely to rebuff bribery as well. Evidence that "support for rule of law" reliably predicts bribery rejection suggests attitudes towards bribe-paying align with other law-abiding attitudes.

Predicted probability simulations show the likelihood of bribery justification rises by 5-8% over the range of most of these variables. But having been asked to pay a bribe yields by far the greatest effect, boosting the odds of justifying bribery by 18%. This may be due to rationalization among those respondents who actually paid the solicited bribe; that is, those who have engaged in this behavior may be more strongly motivated to consider it acceptable.

Results for the controls are mixed. We observe roughly the same socio-demographic profile of bribe justifiers as found by Plata (2012). Interpersonal trust and life satisfaction are associated with rejecting bribe-paying as

government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's **right to vote**? Please read me the number from the scale [1-10]:

D2. How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to **conduct peaceful demonstrations** in order to express their views? Please read me the number.

D3. Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the [country's] form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to **run for public office**?

D4. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to **make speeches**?

²³ **PROT6.** In the **last 12 months** have you signed any petition? (1) Yes, signed, (2) No, has not signed.

²⁴ Canada, Bolivia, Suriname, United States are excluded for lack of data.

expected, but political tolerance is insignificant and petitioning is significant in the unexpected direction.

In sum, the individual-level analyses shown here support the claim that citizen expectations of the behavior of state actors produce norms of law (dis)obedience that, in turn, color their views on the justifiability of bribery.

Conclusion

Why is bribery more justifiable in some countries and to some people in the Americas? This report suggests bribe justification is a strategic response to citizens' expectations of corrupt behavior on the part of state actors. These expectations are shaped by law-abiding norms that vary with levels of rule of law in the hemisphere. The results indicate that bribery has a self-perpetuating mechanism: if the rule of law is so weak that state actors are brazen enough to solicit bribes and self-interested citizens feel justified in paying them, the supply and demand of bribery will converge to form strong social behavioral norms. Hence we should not expect anti-bribery or anti-corruption norms to spring automatically from the processes of modernization and democracy. It will require state actors to change their behavior and, in so doing, reshape citizens' expectations about them. Until then, we should expect many citizens to continue to see paying the occasional bribe as in their own best interest and to act accordingly.

Drastic behavioral modifications such as these often require new institutional incentives, both carrots and sticks. In the last two decades governments, aid and development agencies, and non-governmental organizations have made huge investments in anti-corruption campaigns, judicial system overhauls, and police and security reforms. According to this report, such governance and rule of law reforms are critical to beginning a virtuous cycle of law obedience that will generate anti-

corruption norms that, over time, would make bribery a non-starter in the Americas.

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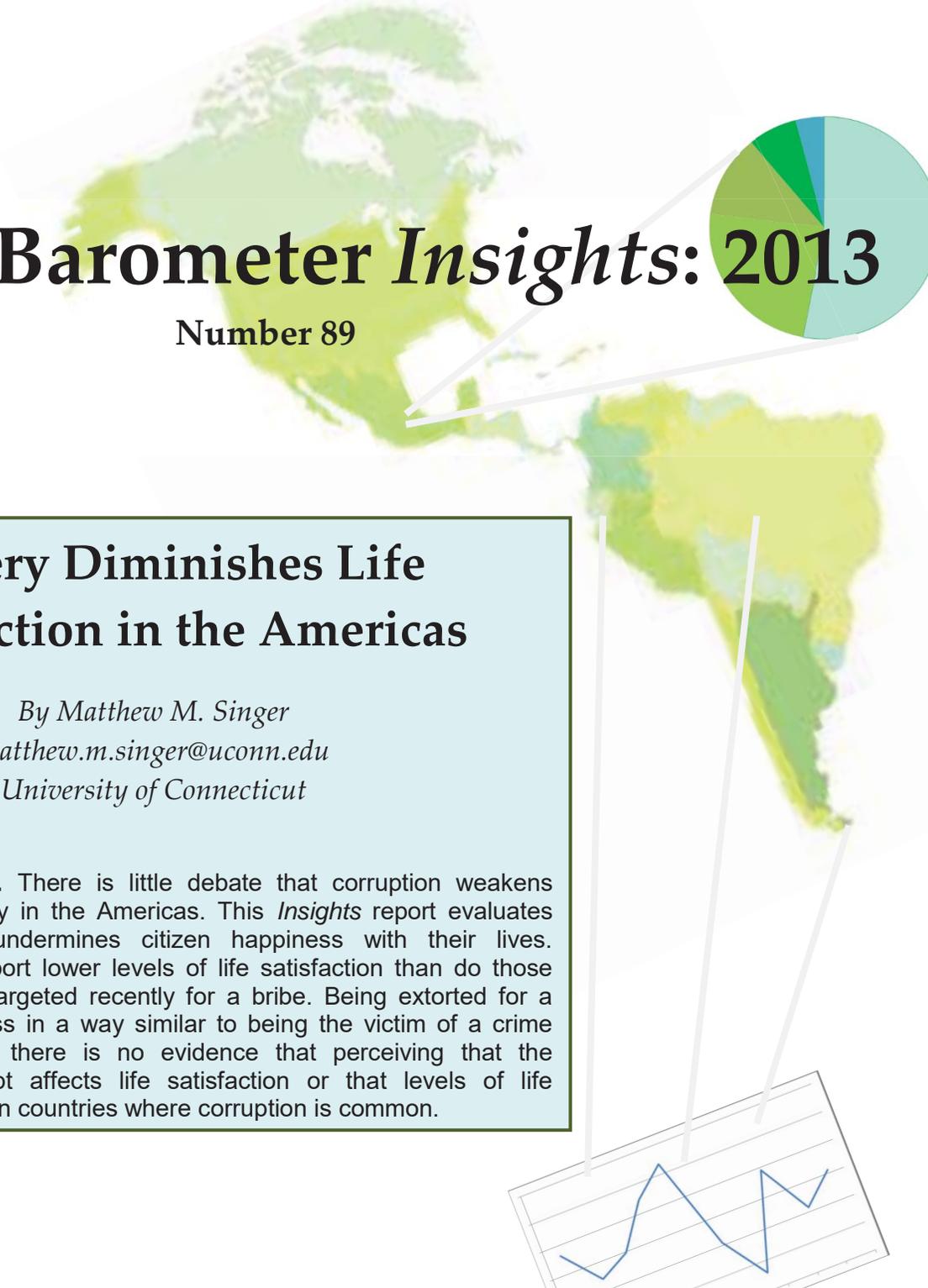
Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Agreement that Sometimes Paying a Bribe is Justified, 2012

	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error
Perception of Corruption	0.173*	0.040	0.136*	0.043
Asked to Pay a Bribe			0.311*	0.030
Believe Police are Involved in Crime			-0.063*	0.031
Trust in the Justice System	-0.074*	0.025	-0.064*	0.032
Justice System Would Punish the Guilty			-0.044*	0.021
Support for the Rule of Law			-0.199*	0.023
Interpersonal Trust			-0.070*	0.023
Life Satisfaction			-0.071*	0.021
Political Tolerance			0.049	0.042
Signed a Petition			0.077*	0.027
Worsening of the National Economy	0.011	0.024		
Trust in Police	-0.005	0.024		
Trust in Local Government	-0.085*	0.031		
Political Interest	0.028	0.018		
Education	-0.048	0.025		
Age	-0.311*	0.047	-0.263*	0.041
Quintiles of Wealth	0.074*	0.027	0.05	0.027
Woman	-0.166*	0.031	-0.144*	0.032
Size of Place of Residence	0.123*	0.027	0.082*	0.026
Mexico	0.193*	0.006	0.174*	0.005
Guatemala	-0.142*	0.007	-0.161*	0.005
El Salvador	0.026*	0.005	0.019*	0.005
Honduras	0.049*	0.009	0.045*	0.009
Nicaragua	0.108*	0.004	0.109*	0.005
Costa Rica	0.101*	0.006	0.099*	0.006
Panama	-0.010*	0.004	0.015	0.010
Colombia	0.169*	0.005	0.198*	0.008
Ecuador	0.190*	0.002	0.137*	0.007
Bolivia	0.144*	0.005		
Peru	0.073*	0.004	0.052*	0.007
Paraguay	0.090*	0.005	0.088*	0.005
Chile	-0.027*	0.006	-0.026*	0.004
Brazil	0.001	0.003	0.002	0.004
Venezuela	-0.019*	0.005	0.006	0.004

	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error
Argentina	0.003	0.007	-0.019*	0.005
Dominican Rep.	0.129*	0.006	0.132*	0.005
Haiti	0.554*	0.005	0.465*	0.012
Jamaica	0.214*	0.004	0.226*	0.007
Guyana	0.326*	0.008	0.323*	0.007
Trinidad & Tobago	0.221*	0.007	0.199*	0.007
Belize	0.093*	0.006	0.095*	0.004
Suriname	0.170*	0.008	0.095*	
Constant	-1.841*	0.015	-1.935*	0.017
Pseudo-R ²		.096		.124
Number of Obs.		32414		26138

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.
Country of Reference: Uruguay



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Bribery Diminishes Life Satisfaction in the Americas

By Matthew M. Singer
matthew.m.singer@uconn.edu
University of Connecticut

Executive Summary. There is little debate that corruption weakens support for democracy in the Americas. This *Insights* report evaluates whether corruption undermines citizen happiness with their lives. Corruption victims report lower levels of life satisfaction than do those who have not been targeted recently for a bribe. Being extorted for a bribe affects happiness in a way similar to being the victim of a crime more generally. Yet, there is no evidence that perceiving that the government is corrupt affects life satisfaction or that levels of life satisfaction are lower in countries where corruption is common.

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

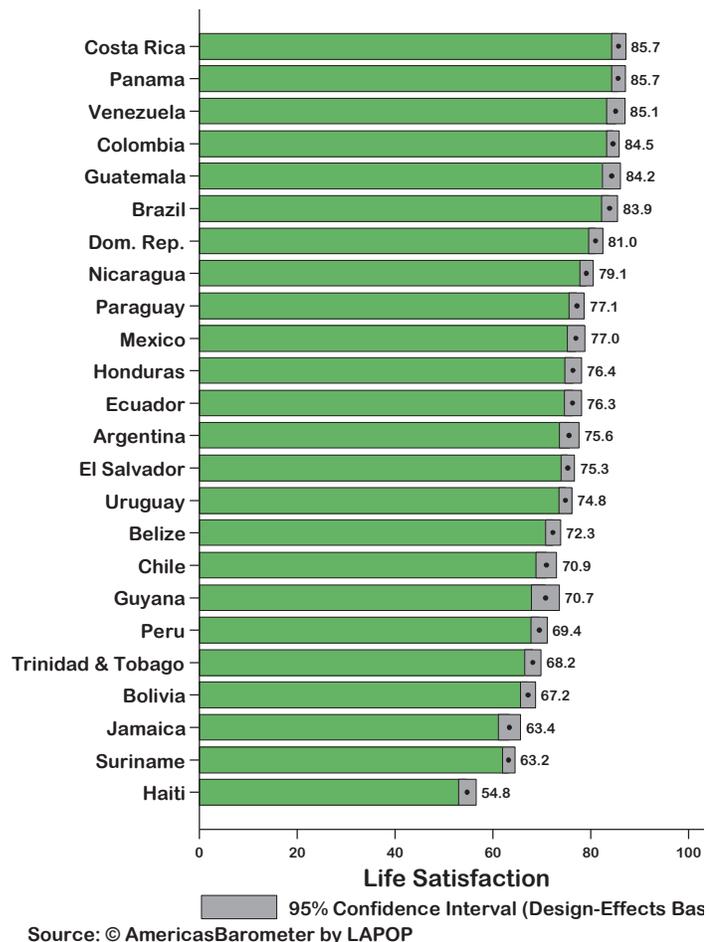
www.AmericasBarometer.org

There is little debate that corruption serves as a drag on the economy (Blake and Morris 2009) and reduces support for democracy (Booth and Seligson 2009, Carlin et al. 2013). In this *Insights*¹ report I explore whether bad governance has a more personal effect. That is, does exposure to corruption make citizens of the Americas unhappy with their own lives?²

Several recent studies focusing on other regions of the world suggest there is a link between good governance and citizen happiness (Helliwell 2003, Tavits 2007, Helliwell and Huang 2008, Rodríguez-Pose and Maslauskaitė 2012, Kim and Kim 2012). These studies have almost exclusively looked at aggregate trends: citizens living in countries where corruption is widespread tend to be less happy than are those who live in countries where corruption is less common. Yet these studies do not explore whether individual-level experiences with corruption affect citizen happiness. Thus it remains an open question if corruption hurts all members of society equally or if its effect is particularly concentrated on bribe victims.

Data for this report come from the 2012 round of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) surveys³, in which 38,631 respondents

Figure 1. Life Satisfaction Levels by Country, 2012



from 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were asked the following question:⁴

LS3. In general how satisfied are you with your life? Would you say that you are...

- (1) Very satisfied
- (2) Somewhat satisfied
- (3) Somewhat dissatisfied
- (4) Very dissatisfied

Responses to this question were recorded so that high values represent high levels of life satisfaction and rescaled to run from 0-100.

⁴ The United States and Canada were also included in the survey but I exclude them from this analysis because data on household wealth are not available for the U.S. or Canada. These countries are in the bottom half of the hemisphere's happiness rankings.

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

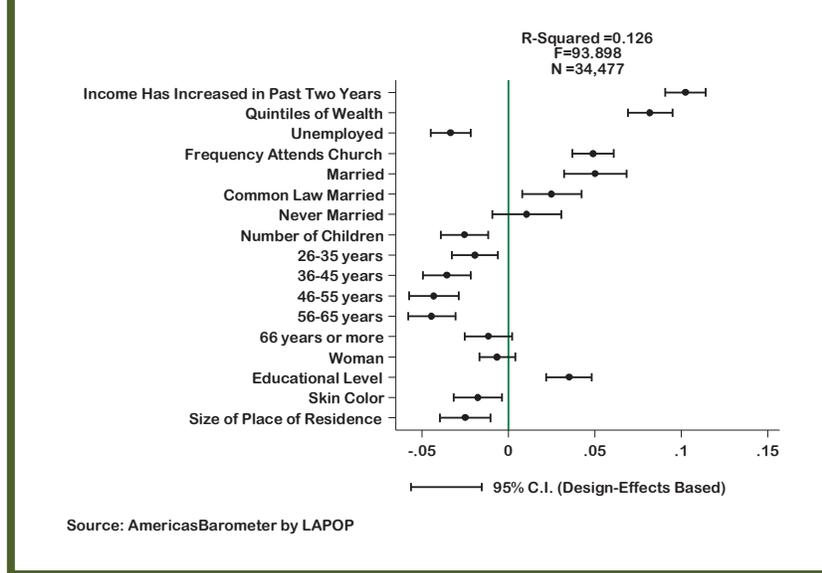
² The literature uses the terms "happiness", "life satisfaction", and "subjective well-being" interchangeably (Larsen et al 1985), a practice I follow here.

³ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

Most respondents in the 2012 wave expressed high levels of life satisfaction: roughly 42 percent reported being very satisfied and another 45 percent were satisfied. Life satisfaction levels in 2012 were higher than those recorded in 2010 (Singer et al. 2013).^{5,6}

Life satisfaction varies across countries. Figure 1 graphs the average level of happiness in each country in the hemisphere and its confidence interval. It is highest in Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, and Brazil. The lowest levels are in Haiti followed by Suriname, and Jamaica. While satisfaction levels are lowest in Haiti, which is also the poorest country in the hemisphere, these country differences in 2012 do not seem to correspond neatly with national income. Chile, Uruguay, and Trinidad and Tobago, the three countries with the largest per capita GDP's in Latin America and the Caribbean, are all in the bottom half of the happiness rankings. This is consistent with previous work finding a weak correspondence between economic development and life satisfaction at the aggregate level (Easterlin 1995, Frey and Stutzer 2002). As countries develop, aspirations change and happiness levels may thus remain the same in the aggregate.

Figure 2. Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Life Satisfaction



Demographic Characteristics and Happiness

Before looking at how governance outcomes predict happiness, I establish a baseline model of how life satisfaction levels vary across economic and social groups, following empirical specifications developed by Corral (2011). Several economic trends are clear in the literature. Wealthy individuals are more likely to be happy than are those who struggle to get by (Graham and Pettinato 2001, Diener and Biswas-Diener 2002, Frey and Stutzer 2002, Graham and Felton 2006). The unemployed are also likely to report being dissatisfied with their life generally while individuals whose income increases are more likely to be happy (Gallie and Russell 1998, Frey and Stutzer 2002, Lucas et al 2004, Kassenboehmer and Haisken-DeNew 2009). In short, economic security generally should lead to greater feelings of personal satisfaction.

Moving beyond pure economics, individuals who have a strong support network, such as those who are married or who participate actively in a church community, are also expected to be satisfied with their lives (Ellison 1991, Lane 2000, Radcliff 2001). Yet having children has been linked to lower levels of

⁵ The AmericasBarometer annual report *The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012: Towards Equality of Opportunity* (Seligson et al. 2013) tracks the evolution of citizen attitudes toward the economy, corruption, crime, local government performance and life satisfaction as well as trends in democratic attitudes in the hemisphere. It is available for download at www.americasbarometer.org.

⁶ A previous *Insights* report examines life satisfaction in 2010 and shows that variation within the Americas is associated with economic variables like personal wealth and employment and social variables like church attendance, marriage status, and family size (Corral 2011).

happiness as parenting can create a financial burden and occasionally an emotional drain, although this relationship shifts over the life of the child (Margolis and Myrskylä 2011). Individual life satisfaction may also shift over the life cycle, with middle age individuals expressing less happiness than the very young who face fewer financial pressures or family commitments or older citizens who are well established (Oswald 1997, Frey and Stutzer 2002).

In Figure 2 I model individuals' life satisfaction as function of demographic variables.⁷ I control for unmeasured differences across countries by including dummy variables for countries, but I do not report these in the figure. The figure presents the estimated coefficient from an OLS analysis.⁸ The impact of each of those variables on life satisfaction is shown graphically by a

⁷ The *income has increased* variable is drawn from a question asking "Over the past two years, has the income of your household decreased, stayed the same, or increased?" The *wealth* variable is based on an index of household access to water and electricity and ownership of television, vehicles, appliances, and other household goods-see Córdova (2009) for details. The *unemployed* variable refers to respondents who are actively looking for a job and contrasts them to those who are working, students, housewives, the retired and the disabled. The *frequency of church attendance* is measured using the question How often do you attend religious services? Never or almost never, once or twice a year, once a month, once per week, or more than once per week. Marriage is expected to increase happiness via its provision of companionship but not all relationships are equally secure, so I separately distinguish *married couples* and couples who are in a *common law relationship*. The baseline category is individuals who were previously in a long-term relationship but are now divorced or widowed, with *single individuals* as an intermediate category. The *number of children* variable is a count of the number of kids the respondent has; as a robustness check I have modeled it as a dichotomous measure of whether or not the respondent has any children and the substantive results do not change. The age cohort variables use the 16-25 cohort as a reference category. *Education* measured as the highest level of school that was completed: none, primary, secondary, or higher. *Skin color* is measured using a series of reference palettes enable the interviewer to rate the skin color of the interviewee on an 11 point scale, where 1 is the lightest skin tone and 11 the darkest (see Telles and Steele 2012). Finally, the *size of place of residence variable* distinguishes whether the respondent lives in a rural area, a small, medium, or large city, or the national capital, with high values representing larger cities.

⁸ An alternative specification using ordered logit reaches comparable results.

dot and the bars represent the 95% confidence intervals. The figure also plots the "0" line to judge easily the direction of the coefficient and its statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Coefficients are presented in standardized form (i.e., "beta weights") to facilitate comparison within the model.

Economic factors have large associations with life satisfaction. Wealthy individuals are more likely to report feeling happy than poor individuals are. Unemployment is associated with lower levels of happiness; in analyses not reported here I find that this is true at all levels of household wealth. Finally, individuals whose income has increased are more likely to report being satisfied with their life. Income, both in its overall level and its trend, is more strongly connected to life satisfaction levels than is any other demographic variable in the model.

Life satisfaction also differs systematically across demographic groups. Respondents' family situations also correspond to their happiness levels. Married individuals tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction. In contrast, individuals with children report less happiness than those without children. Church attendance is also associated with high levels of life satisfaction. Happiness is highest among the very old and very young. Women, individuals with dark skin, the uneducated, and individuals living in large cities tend to have lower levels of happiness (though the coefficient for the gender measure does not pass a strict significance test). In general, these life satisfaction patterns in the Americas tend to mirror those found in other regions.

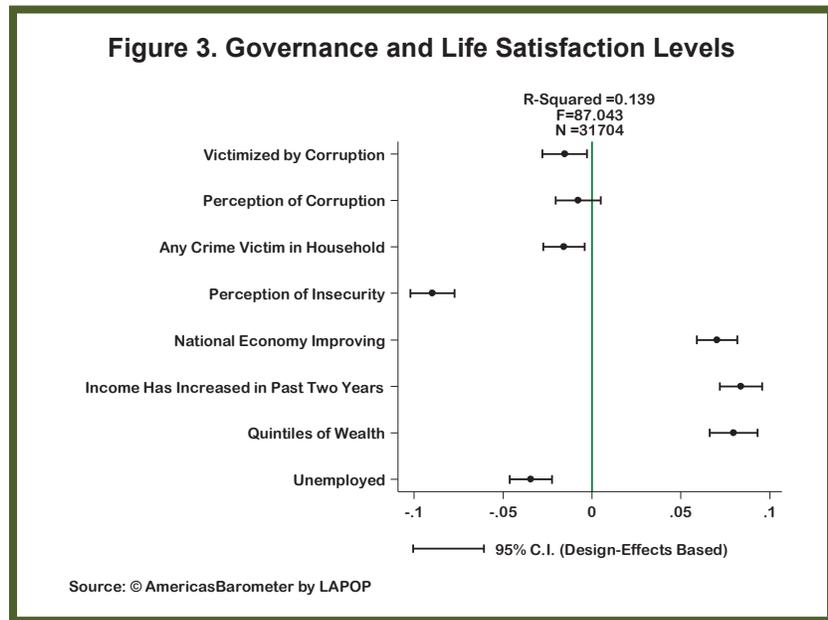
Corruption and Life Satisfaction

Moving beyond demographics, recent scholarship suggests that life satisfaction is associated with good governance (Helliwell 2003, Tavits 2007, Helliwell and Huang 2008, Rodríguez-Pose and Maslauskaitė 2012, Kim and Kim 2012). Some of these studies assume that the linkage between corruption and

happiness is through the economic costs associated with corruption at the macro-level and thus focus on aggregate indicators of corruption. Yet this pattern might also rest on several micro-level foundations.

One possibility is that corruption victims are similar to crime victims. Crime victims are less happy than are non-crime victims as a result of both the direct costs of the crime and the psychological costs of perceiving a lack of control over their own lives (Adams and Serpe 2000, Powdthavee 2005, Cohen 2008, Graham 2009, Graham and Camilo Chaparro 2012). Being targeted for a bribe likely results in similar material costs and loss of personal control and therefore could lead corruption victims to experience a drop in satisfaction similar to crime victims.

A second potential mechanism depends less upon personal experiences with corruption and focuses more on the normative costs of corruption. Corruption violates norms of fairness and reminds citizens that the cards are stacked against them if they stick to the rules while trying to get ahead (Tavits 2007, Helliwell and Huang 2008). This may diminish life satisfaction. Moreover, even if you yourself have not been targeted for corruption, the specter of corruption may have negative consequences. Previous work has documented a similar pattern with respect to crime; individuals who have not been crime victims themselves but who live in high crime areas also experience a drop in happiness as they live in fear of being attacked (Michalos and Zumbo 2000, Powdthavee 2005). Thus, corruption may have a negative effect on life satisfaction even among individuals who have not recently been targeted for a bribe.



To test these expectations, I add measures of bad governance to the baseline model of life satisfaction I estimated previously in Figure 2. I assess the relevance of personal experiences with corruption by modeling whether the individual has been targeted for a bribe in the past year.⁹ I also model perceived levels of corruption in the government.¹⁰ To put these findings in perspective, I also control for personal experiences with crime and whether the respondent feels insecure in her neighborhood (even if she may or may not have actually been a crime victim).¹¹ Finally, as we move beyond personal experiences and their impact on life satisfaction to focus on the context surrounding citizens, I add an

⁹ The corruption victimization measure is a dichotomous measure with 1 indicating that a member of the household was targeted for a bribe by a policeman, government employee, court, local government official, or in the workplace, school, or health system and 0 for non-victims.

¹⁰ The corruption question asks “Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is very common, common, uncommon, or very uncommon?” Responses are coded so that high values represent a high degree of perceived corruption.

¹¹ The crime experience question is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the respondent or any other member of her household was a crime victim in the last year and 0 otherwise. The crime perceptions question asks “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?”.

additional control for the individual's assessment of the state of the national economy to compare how governance compares to economic performance as a driver of life satisfaction.¹² In order to make the results in Figure 3 easier to read, I omit from them most of the demographic controls and the country dummies; the full results are in the appendix.

The results in Figure 3 are consistent with the conclusion that corruption victims experience a drop in life satisfaction. Victims who paid a bribe are less satisfied with their lives than are those who did not. Victims of corruption have similar levels of unhappiness as do those from households where someone was a victim of a crime. Corruption and crime victims thus seem to experience a drop in happiness as a result of those experiences.¹³

There is less evidence, however, that life satisfaction levels are lower among those who perceive corruption within the government but have not necessarily been targeted for a bribe.

While the estimated coefficient for corruption perceptions is negative as expected, it is not significantly different from 0.¹⁴ As an additional consideration, I analyzed whether levels of happiness at the country-level are correlated with levels of corruption reported in the World Bank's Governance Indicators or by Transparency International, and I find no significant correlations. In contrast to much of the previous work on other regions, I find little

Victims of corruption have similar levels of unhappiness as do those from household where someone was a victim of a crime.

evidence that high levels of perceived corruption have a significant effect on how citizens of the Americas perceive their own lives. In other words, in the Americas, the evidence from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey is that the negative effect of corruption on life satisfaction is driven by personal experiences, such that this relationship is limited to bribe extortion victims.

Another key finding from Figure 3 is that corruption's effect on life satisfaction is smaller than is the effect of economics or a general sense of insecurity. The effects of wealth and changes in income are substantially larger than is the effect of being targeted for a bribe. While the effects of crime victimization and corruption victimization are roughly equal in

magnitude, both are dwarfed by the effect of living in an area that is unsafe. Fear of violence is associated with large levels of discontent even among non-crime victims; the predicted impact of this factor is roughly equal to any of the economic variables in the

model. So while corruption appears to diminish life satisfaction in the Americas, the results here suggest that this relationship is less consequential than is that between life satisfaction and measures related to economic performance and security, two issues consistently rated as more important problems than corruption in the AmericasBarometer surveys (Singer et al 2013).

Conclusion

The results presented here support the notion that government performance can have an important effect on personal happiness. Consistent with the importance of other individual-level economic factors, a strong national economy is linked to higher levels of life satisfaction. Yet non-economic factors can

¹² Respondents were asked "Do you think that the country's current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was 12 months ago?" with high values representing an improving economy.

¹³ It is also possible that those who are unhappy are more likely to report themselves to be victims of these negative experiences; in an analysis of the type presented here, such reciprocal causation cannot be tested for, or ruled out.

¹⁴ The effect of general corruption perceptions is insignificant even if we drop the corruption victimization measure from the models.

also leave important imprints on citizens' lives. Crime victimization and living surrounded by crime create real costs to individuals, and therefore result in drops in happiness.

Yet this study also suggests that the costs of government corruption include an effect on citizens' life satisfaction. Being targeted to pay a bribe reduces life satisfaction even if overall levels of perceived corruption do not. The close correspondence of crime victimization and corruption victimization is instructive—they both entail monetary costs and the psychological costs of confronting the lack of control victims have over their lives. These findings suggest that, if steps are taken to keep citizens safe from criminals or from officials abusing their positions to extract bribes, happiness should improve among those individuals who are most frequently targeted.

While overall levels of perceived corruption do not have a strong negative effect on citizen satisfaction with their own lives, we should not conclude that citizens are resigned to corruption or ignore it. *AmericasBarometer* data not presented here (but see Carlin et al. 2013) show that citizens who perceive that the government is corrupt tend to be less supportive of democratic institutions, less likely to be satisfied with the overall state of democracy in their country, and more likely to tolerate political activities by those looking to enact regime change. Citizens in the Americas thus recognize the negative political consequences of political corruption for democracy and the economy and may be willing to take political steps to reduce it even if there is less evidence of a direct connection between how citizens of the Americas perceive levels of government corruption and how they perceive their own welfare.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Life Satisfaction in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Coefficient	Standard Error
Victimized by Corruption			-0.015*	(0.006)
Perception of Corruption in Government			-0.008	(0.006)
Crime Victim in Household			-0.016*	(0.006)
Perception of Insecurity			-0.090*	(0.006)
National Economy has Improved			0.070*	(0.006)
Income has Increased in Past Two Years	0.102*	(0.006)	0.084*	(0.006)
Quintiles of Wealth	0.082*	(0.007)	0.080*	(0.007)
Unemployed	-0.033*	(0.006)	-0.034*	(0.006)
Frequency Attends Church	0.049*	(0.006)	0.045*	(0.006)
Married	0.050*	(0.009)	0.052*	(0.010)
Common-Law Married	0.025*	(0.009)	0.028*	(0.009)
Never Married	0.011	(0.010)	0.009	(0.011)
Number of Children	-0.025*	(0.007)	-0.026*	(0.007)
26-35	-0.019*	(0.007)	-0.019*	(0.007)
36-45	-0.036*	(0.007)	-0.032*	(0.007)
46-55	-0.043*	(0.007)	-0.040*	(0.007)
56-65	-0.044*	(0.007)	-0.043*	(0.007)
66+	-0.011	(0.007)	-0.009	(0.007)
Woman	-0.006	(0.005)	-0.005	(0.005)
Educational Level	0.035*	(0.007)	0.037*	(0.007)
Skin Color	-0.018*	(0.007)	-0.009	(0.007)
Size of Place of Residence	-0.025*	(0.007)	-0.004	(0.008)
Argentina	-0.021*	(0.011)	-0.025*	(0.011)
Belize	-0.030*	(0.009)	-0.038*	(0.010)
Bolivia	-0.114*	(0.013)	-0.113*	(0.014)
Brazil	0.040*	(0.010)	0.029*	(0.010)
Chile	-0.044*	(0.011)	-0.054*	(0.011)
Colombia	0.051*	(0.009)	0.043*	(0.009)
Costa Rica	0.058*	(0.009)	0.054*	(0.009)
Dominican Rep.	0.034*	(0.009)	0.033*	(0.009)
Ecuador	-0.013	(0.010)	-0.016	(0.010)
El Salvador	-0.014	(0.009)	-0.013	(0.009)
Guatemala	0.048*	(0.010)	0.048*	(0.009)
Guyana	-0.058*	(0.013)	-0.067*	(0.013)
Haiti	-0.151*	(0.011)	-0.152*	(0.011)
Honduras	0.002	(0.011)	0.005	(0.011)
Jamaica	-0.103*	(0.011)	-0.120*	(0.011)
Nicaragua	0.017	(0.009)	0.001	(0.010)
Panama	0.070*	(0.009)	0.053*	(0.009)
Paraguay	-0.011	(0.010)	-0.022*	(0.010)
Peru	-0.063*	(0.010)	-0.065*	(0.010)
Suriname	-0.106*	(0.009)	-0.120*	(0.010)
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.077*	(0.010)	-0.088*	(0.010)
Uruguay	-0.021*	(0.009)	-0.037*	(0.009)
Venezuela	0.056*	(0.010)	0.054*	(0.010)
Constant	-0.004	(0.007)	-0.002	(0.007)
<i>R-squared</i>	0.128		0.139	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	34,477		31,704	

* Denotes coefficients that are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Mexico



AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

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Wither Honduras? Volatile Elite Politics and Citizen Dissatisfaction

*By Orlando J. Pérez
perez1oj@cmich.edu
Central Michigan University*

*Mitchell A. Seligson
mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University*

*John A. Booth
booth@unt.edu
University of North Texas*

Executive Summary: This *Insight* report examines “triple dissatisfied” citizens in Honduras. Triple dissatisfied individuals are those who express low levels of support for regime democratic values, regime institutions, and regime economic performance. The report finds substantial increases in triple dissatisfaction since 2010. Over a third of Hondurans are triply dissatisfied in 2012, more than three times higher than in the last round of the *AmericasBarometer*. Honduras has the highest levels of triple dissatisfaction among the 26 nations surveyed by LAPOP in 2012. Citizens that express greater concern about gang activity in their neighborhood, express less confidence in the judicial system, are more supportive of former president Manuel Zelaya, and are less supportive of current President Porfirio Lobo exhibit the greatest levels of dissatisfaction.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

“Honduras 'no longer functioning' after plunging over fiscal cliff”¹. This headline appeared on January 25, 2013, and captures at least some of the deep sense of crisis facing this Central American country. This *Insights Series* report² revisits the political situation in Honduras by examining a measure of “triple dissatisfaction” developed by John Booth and Mitchell Seligson (2009)³. This approach provides insight into a moment of deep citizen discontent and volatile elite politics in contemporary Honduras.

Using the 2004 *AmericasBarometer* survey Booth and Seligson detected serious warning signs of political instability in Honduras five years before the 2009 crisis that toppled then President Manuel Zelaya. They found that citizen views of political legitimacy in Honduras were very low compared to its neighbors in Central America. The authors examined the proportion of citizens who were “triply dissatisfied” as a percent of all voting aged citizens versus those who were “triply satisfied.” The “triply satisfied” were the citizens who scored above the scale midpoint (i.e. “satisfied”) on each of three key dimensions, namely 1) support for democracy,⁴ 2) support for national institutions,⁵ and 3)

¹See:

<http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/01/25/16692051-honduras-no-longer-functioning-after-plunging-over-fiscal-cliff?lite>.

² Prior issues in the *Insights Series* can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

³ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

⁴ This dimension is measured by a scale composed of three questions: How much do you approve or disapprove? E5. Of people participating in legal demonstrations; E8. Of people participating in an organization or group to try to solve community problems; and E11. Of people working for campaigns for a political party or candidate. The questions are measured originally on a 1-10 point scale.

⁵ Support for national institutions is measured by scale summarizing results of seven B-series questions (b2 b3 b4 b6 b21 b13 b31): B2. To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)? B3. To what extent do

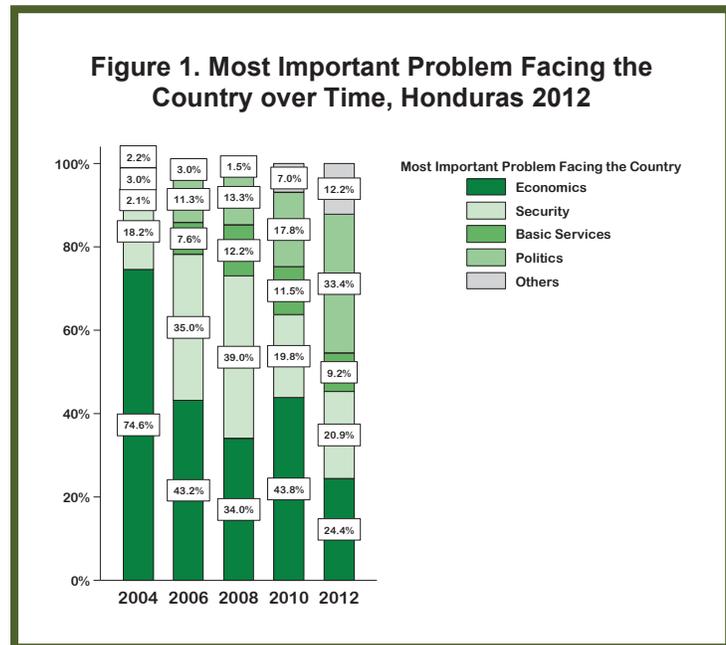
evaluation of the incumbent government’s economic performance.⁶ The “triply dissatisfied” group consisted of those citizens who fell below the legitimacy scale midpoint on those same three key dimensions. Seligson and Booth revisited this issue in a prior *Insights “Special Report”* using the 2008 *AmericasBarometer* survey and found the situation even more extreme than it had been in 2004 (Seligson and Booth, 2009).

The results from the 2008 survey indicated extremely high levels of dissatisfaction among Honduran citizens, an indication of the sources of political discontent and polarization that served as a background to the military coup of June 28, 2009. After the coup, and using data from the immediate post-election period in early 2010, in yet another *Insight Series* report, using the 2010 *AmericasBarometer* survey, Orlando J. Pérez, John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson (2010) reported substantial improvement, as measured by a sharp decline in the proportion of “triply dissatisfied” citizens when compared to the pre-coup period. They concluded that “the removal of President Zelaya and subsequent election [of President Porfirio Lobo] seemed to have been cathartic for the Honduran population in terms of their levels of dissatisfaction with the legitimacy of their political system...”

you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)? B4. To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)? B6. To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)? B13. To what extent do you trust the National Legislature? B21. To what extent do you trust the political parties? B31. To what extent do you trust the Supreme Court?

⁶ Perception of regime economic performance is measured by the following questions: SOCT1. How would you describe the country’s economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good/nor bad, bad or very bad? 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? IDIO1. How would you describe your overall economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good/nor bad, bad or very bad? IDIO2. Do you think that your economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago?

In this LAPOP *Insights* report, Pérez, Booth and Seligson again revisit Honduras's "triplely dissatisfied" citizens. It is troubling to find that in many ways, the political and economic situation in the country is now comparable or worse than prior to the coup. Some indicators of social stress are that crime has increased significantly. Over the past three years, there have been 20,573 homicides, with 7,172 murders in 2012 alone. The murder rate is 85.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, 10 times the world average. In comparison, murder rates in neighboring Nicaragua and Costa Rica are 12 and 11.5 per 100,000 inhabitants respectively.⁷ In addition to high levels of crime, the country is currently facing deep institutional and fiscal problems. President Lobo encouraged Congress to remove four Supreme Court justices following several decisions that went against his administration. Congress, the majority held by Lobo's National Party, did so without an impeachment process.⁸ Judicial controversies are not the only problems plaguing Honduras in 2013. The government finished 2012 with a budget deficit that exceeded \$1 billion (6% of GDP) and many public sector employees did not receive their December salaries or year-end bonuses.⁹ Polls



conducted over the past two years have consistently found high levels of dissatisfaction with democracy in Honduras. They have also found little or no confidence in almost every political institution in the country, with political parties among the least trusted (Pérez, et al. 2012).

The political and fiscal problems serve as the backdrop to the 2013 presidential elections. Since returning to Honduras former President Zelaya (formerly of the Liberal Party) and his supporters have formed a political party, *Partido Libertad y Refundación* (LIBRE). The party nominated Zelaya's wife, Xiomara Castro, as its presidential candidate. The rise of LIBRE as a viable political force has deepened the polarization of Honduran politics and fragmented the traditional bi-partisan system controlled by the National and Liberal parties. The National party nominated the President of Congress, Juan Orlando Hernandez, a close ally of President Lobo, and the Liberal candidate will be Mauricio Villeda, a vocal opponent of former President Zelaya. A poll conducted by CID-Gallup between January 14 and January

⁷ "Seguridad sigue siendo el dolor de cabeza del presidente Lobo," *Proceso Digital*, January 25, 2013 (<http://proceso.hn/2013/01/26/Nacionales/Seguridad.sigue.siendo/63414.html>); "Honduras, el más violento de Centroamérica," *El Heraldo.hn*, January 26, 2013 (<http://www.elheraldo.hn/Secciones-Principales/Pais/Honduras-el-mas-violento-de-Centroamerica>).

⁸ The Honduran Constitution did not contain a formal process for impeaching public officials. On January 22, 2013, however, the Congress approved a constitutional amendment to establish an impeachment process. The changes would require a three-fourths majority in congress to impeach public officials, including the President and Supreme Court justices. See: Mariano Castillo, "Years after crisis, Honduras considers impeachment," *CNN*, January 23, 2013, (<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/23/world/americas/honduras-impeachment>).

⁹ Reynaldo Yanes, "Lobo dejará una economía desastrosa, según economistas," *La Prensa.hn*, January 22, 2013, (<http://www.laprensa.hn/Secciones-Principales/Honduras/Apertura/Lobo-dejara-una-economia-desastrosa-segun-economistas#.UQgDBonjki6>);

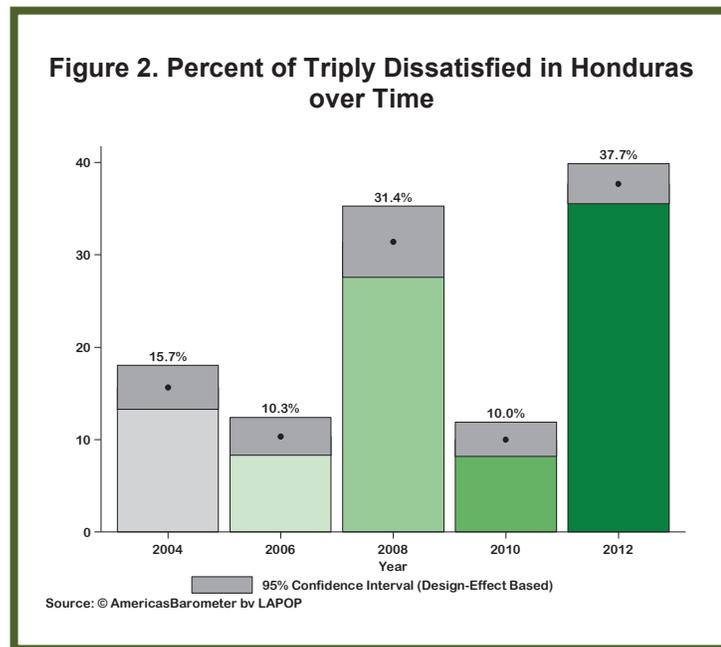
Alberto Arce, "Honduras can't pay its bills, neglects services," *The Associated Press*, January 24, 2013, (<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/honduras-cant-pay-its-bills-neglects-services>).

18, 2013 with 1256 likely voters, indicated that Xiomara Castro was in a statistical tie with Juan Orlando Hernandez, 25% to 23%. Mauricio Villeda was trailing with 16%, with another protest candidate, Salvador Nasralla, of the *Partido Anti-Corrupción*, obtaining 18% support. The remaining 16% either did not express a preference or refused to answer.¹⁰ The electoral ballot may get even more crowded as former head of the armed forces, retired General Romeo Vásquez Velásquez, who led the coup against Zelaya in 2009, enters the fray with his own party, *Alianza Patriótica Hondureña*. The political crisis engendered by the removal of the Supreme Court judges raises questions about the handling of the electoral contest. In addition, the *AmericasBarometer* 2012 national report for Honduras found a significant drop in levels of political tolerance (Pérez, et al. 2010). The low levels of tolerance, weak institutions, and political polarization create a volatile environment within which to hold democratic elections.

Politics the Main Problem Facing the Country

Figure 1 shows that in the 2012 *AmericasBarometer* a plurality of Hondurans (33.4%) chose “politics” as the most important problem facing the country. Since 2004 the mention of “politics” as the most important problem facing the country has increased 10 times, from 3% in 2004 to 33.4% in 2012. The mention of economic problems has fallen from 74.6% in 2004 to 24.4% in 2012. In the 2010 and 2012 surveys, the percentage of Hondurans who believe politics are the major problem facing the country nearly doubled. No other

¹⁰ “Honduras: Xiomara Castro se perfila para convertirse en presidenta,” *El Libertador*, January 30, 2013, (<http://www.ellibertador.hn/?q=article/honduras-xiomara-castro-se-perfila-para-convertirse-en-presidenta>).



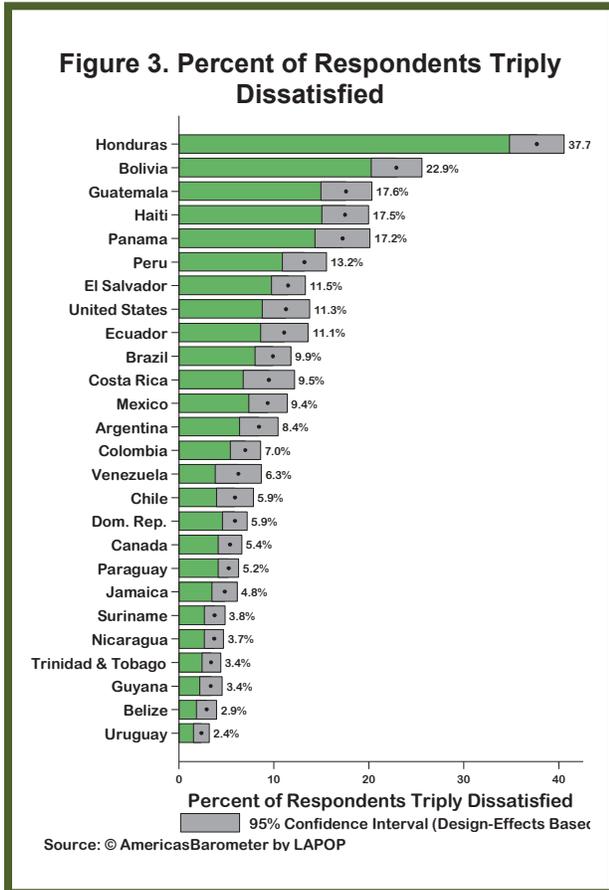
country in the 26-nation *AmericasBarometer* had anywhere near this level of concern over political problems.

Triple Dissatisfaction over Time

If we examine the “triple dissatisfaction” measure we find significant increases between 2010 and 2012. Figure 2, indicates that the percentage of triply dissatisfied citizens shot up from 10% in 2010 to 37.7% in 2012. These troubling numbers are actually higher than they were in 2008 prior to the coup. In fact, the 2012 numbers are the highest of any country since the *AmericasBarometer* series of surveys began in 2004.

When compared to the rest of the *AmericasBarometer* countries we find that Hondurans exhibit the highest level of triple dissatisfaction. Figure 3 shows the levels of triple dissatisfaction among all countries surveyed in 2012. For some points of comparison, ten times more Hondurans are triply dissatisfied than are their neighbors in Nicaragua. Twice as many Hondurans are triply dissatisfied as Guatemalans and Panamanians. And there are roughly three and a half times more triply dissatisfied Hondurans

than Costa Ricans. Hondurans are twice more likely to be triply dissatisfied than Haitians, a country that went through what was perhaps the most devastating earthquake of the last 100 years!



As mentioned earlier, the triple dissatisfaction measure is composed of three indicators: 1) support for democracy, 2) support for national institutions, and 3) evaluation of the incumbent government's economic performance. When we examine the evolution of each of these indicators in Honduras, we find substantial decrease in support for national institutions. Figure 4 shows a 20 point drop in support for institutions between 2010 and 2012; lower now than prior to the 2009 coup.

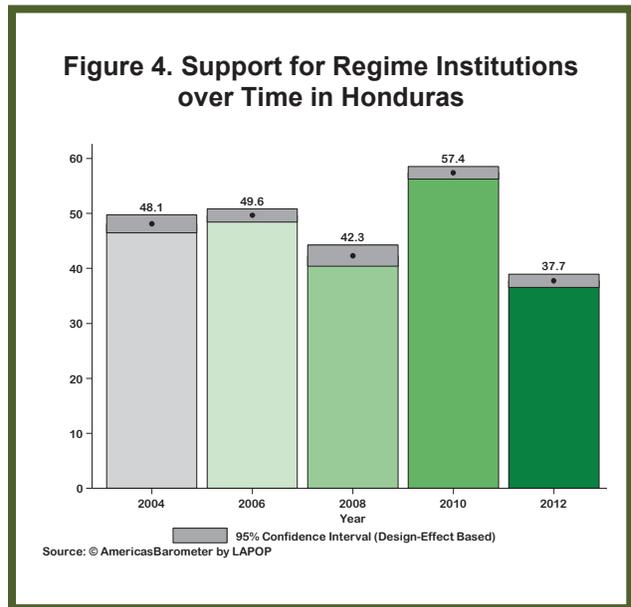


Figure 5 indicates a steady erosion of support for democratic principles since 2006. The figure shows an 8 point drop in support between 2010 and 2012.

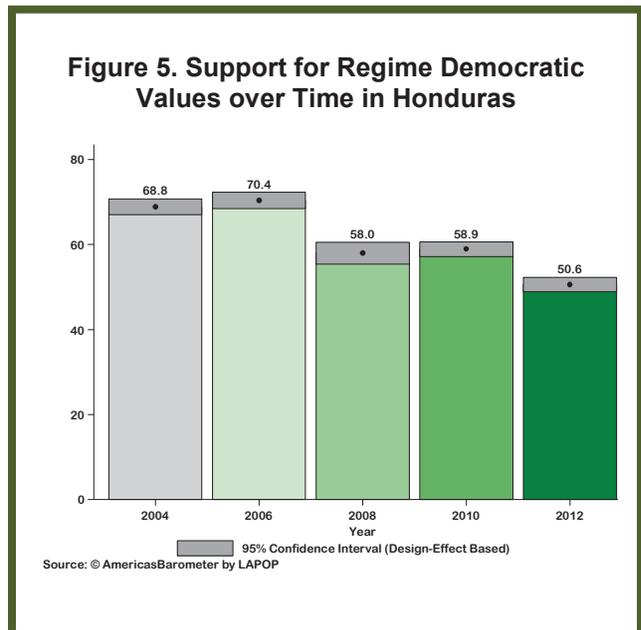
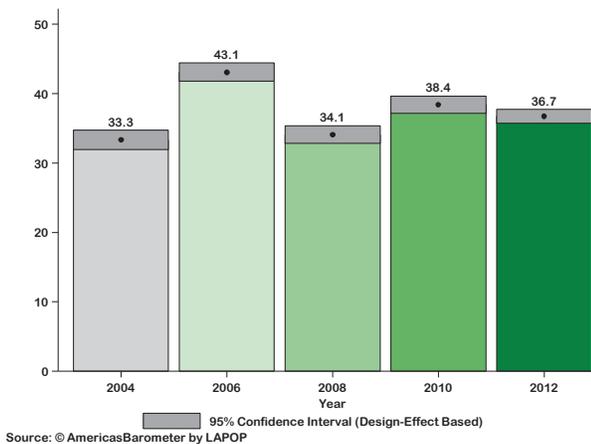


Figure 6. Support for Regime Economic Performance over Time in Honduras



The third component of the triply dissatisfied measure is evaluation of the economic performance of the government. This component, however, does not exhibit much change since 2008. In fact, there is a slight improvement. In sum, the large rise in the number of Hondurans who are disgruntled with these three important legitimacy components comes mostly from the rapid deterioration of their evaluations of political institutions and a substantial loss in commitment to basic democratic norms.

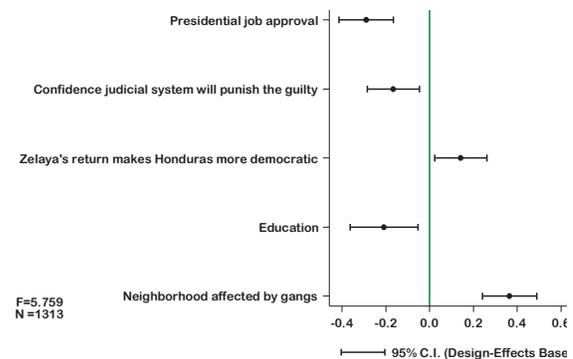
Using logistic regression analysis we find that perception of the neighborhood affected by gangs, confidence in the judicial system to punish criminals, education, presidential job approval and extent of belief that Zelaya's return to Honduras¹¹ improved the country's democracy are the most significant factors in explaining levels of triple dissatisfaction. Figure 7¹² displays the regression model with the significant variables.¹³

¹¹ President Zelaya returned to Honduras in May 2011 after a deal was struck with President Lobo. The accord also paved the way for Honduras' re-entry into the Organization of American States (OAS).

¹² 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

The results indicate that triple dissatisfaction is *highest* among individuals with *less* education, who perceive *more* gang activity in their neighborhood, are *less* confident in the judicial system, and express *greater* support for Zelaya and *less* support for President Lobo.

Figure 7. Predictors of Triple Dissatisfaction in Honduras 2012



Support for Military Coup

The high levels of triple dissatisfaction beg the question: Do Hondurans support a similar outcome as in 2009? The answer, as revealed in Figure 8, is *no*. Support for a military coup¹⁴ has declined substantially since 2008.

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 appendix shows the regression coefficients.

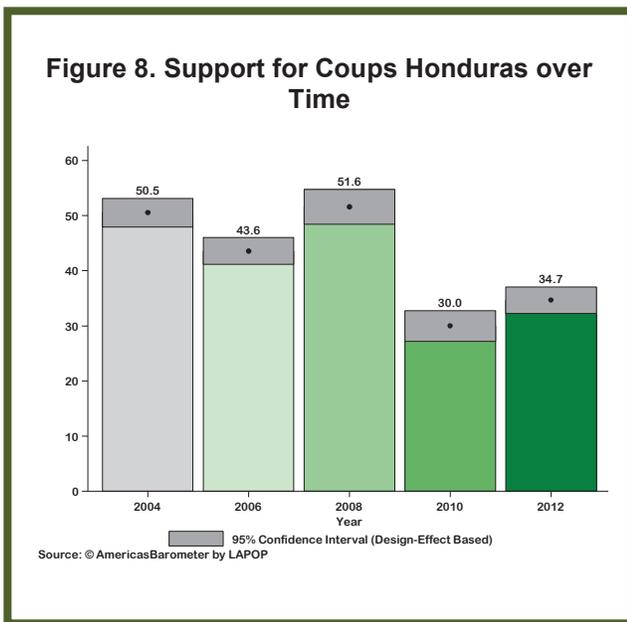
¹³ The analysis included demographic variables for age, wealth, gender, skin color and place of residence. Additionally, variables measuring crime and corruption victimization, perception of family economic condition and perception of insecurity were also included but not shown in the graph because they failed to reach the threshold for statistical significance.

¹⁴ Support for coups is measured by a scale composed of responses to three questions measuring extent of support for a military takeover of power under conditions of (1) high crime, (2) high inflation, and (3) high corruption. The scale is measured 0-100.

Support for coups declined by nearly 20 points between 2008 and 2010, and while there was a slight increase in 2012 the difference is not statistically significant. While public opinion does not induce a coup nor does it prevent it, it can create the environment within which institutions, in this case the military, see their range of possible actions. High levels of triple dissatisfaction can indicate to the military that they might suffer limited public resistance and

Conclusion

In 2013, Honduras faces many of the same problems it faced in 2009. Some problems, in fact, have worsened. By many measures, crime, political polarization, institutional weakness, impunity and corruption have gotten worse. The erosion in political and institutional stability is reflected in the significant increase of triply dissatisfied citizens. More than a third of Hondurans are triply dissatisfied. That is, more than a third of Hondurans simultaneously do not support democracy, do not support national institutions, and disapprove of the government's economic performance. The consequences for regime stability are troubling. A repeat of the events similar to those of June 2009 appears very unlikely to happen, especially given strong public opposition to coups, and potential for negative international reaction. However, the deterioration of institutional support is not a propitious environment in which to hold national presidential elections on November 10, 2013.



few consequences in terms of their legitimacy if they launch a coup. Conversely, where public opinion is opposed to a coup the military might come to believe that toppling the extant government might be too high a price to pay in terms of institutional legitimacy.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Being Triply Dissatisfied in Honduras, 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Neighborhood affected by gangs	0.366*	(5.81)
Education	-0.208*	(-2.64)
Zelaya's return makes Honduras more democratic	0.143*	(2.35)
Confidence judicial system will punish guilty	-0.166*	(-2.74)
Presidential job approval	-0.290*	(-4.61)
Age	-0.104	(-1.34)
Female	-0.044	(-0.82)
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.058	(-0.81)
Skin color	0.026	(0.41)
Crime victimization	-0.106	(-1.62)
Perception of insecurity	0.052	(0.76)
Perception of family economic situation	0.022	(0.32)
Corruption victimization	-0.022	(-0.34)
Urban	0.031	(0.51)
Constant	-0.558*	(-10.74)
F	5.76	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	1,313	

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

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Iran is Not Highly Trusted in the Western Hemisphere

By
Dinorah Azpuru
dinorah.azpuru@wichita.edu
Wichita State University
and
Dexter Boniface
dboniface@rollins.edu
Rollins College

Executive Summary. The rising influence of Iran in the Western Hemisphere has raised concerns among policymakers in the United States. This *Insights* report examines whether citizens in the Americas trust in the government of Iran and what factors explain their trust or distrust of the country. We find that Iran is largely unknown among citizens of the Americas but that citizens who live in countries that are part of ALBA are more likely to be aware of its existence. With regards to the predictors of trust in Iran, we find that citizens of ALBA countries are more likely to trust Iran if they give their president a high approval rating, self-identify as being on the left of the political spectrum and are less supportive of democracy. None of these factors are statistically significant in non-ALBA countries.

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

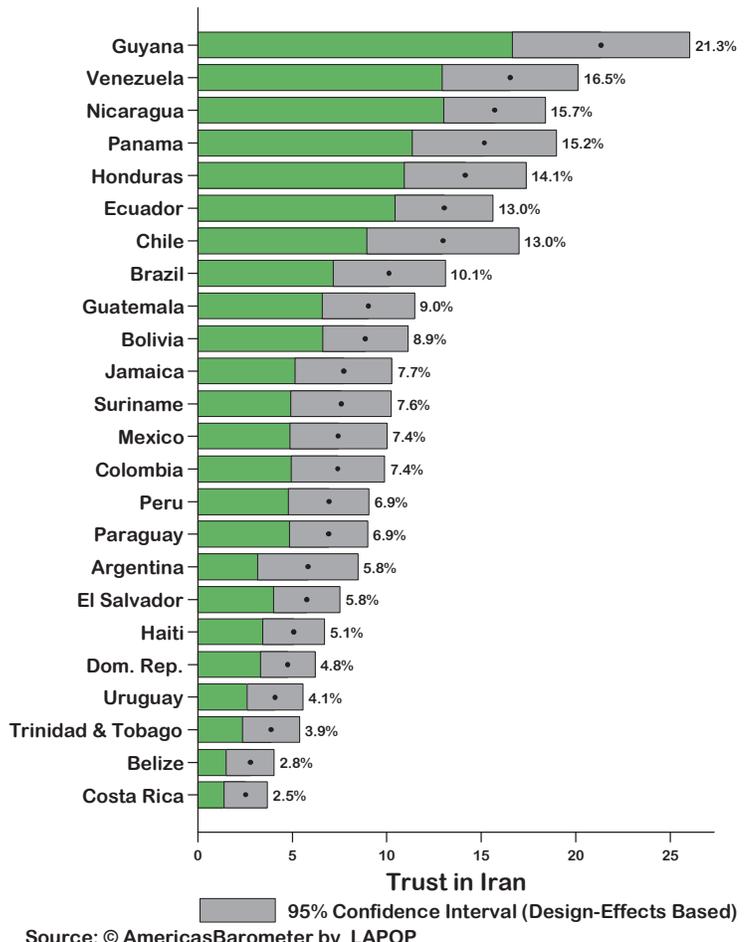
www.AmericasBarometer.org

This *Insights* report explores the extent and the determinants of trust in the government of Iran in the Western Hemisphere.¹ This report is possible because in 2012 the AmericasBarometer survey project included a module of questions that asked citizens about their views of several foreign governments, including Iran.²

Washington’s Concern about Iran’s Presence in the Americas

Over the past two decades, some countries in the Americas have significantly expanded their ties with countries outside of the Western Hemisphere, notably China. Yet it is the region’s growing ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran that have most visibly alarmed policy-makers in the United States. Washington’s distress culminated in 2012 with the passage of the “Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012,” passed by an overwhelming majority in Congress and signed into law by President Obama on December 28.³ The five-page bill calls for the United States “to use a comprehensive government-wide strategy to counter Iran’s growing hostile presence and activity in the Western

Figure 1. Trust in the Government of Iran in the Americas
(percent who trust as opposed to distrust or give no opinion)



Hemisphere” and instructs the Secretary of State to carry out an assessment of Iran’s activities within 180 days.⁴

There is no doubt that Iran has expanded its connections in the Western Hemisphere. Iran added six new embassies in the region since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s election in 2005, bringing the total to eleven.⁵ Presidential visits between Iran and Latin America have also multiplied. Such visits were most notable

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also Duke University’s China Research Center, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. The authors would like to thank Margarita Corral and Carole Wilson for their assistance.

³ “H.R. 3783--112th Congress: Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012.” [www.GovTrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us). 2012. <<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr3783>>

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3783-2.

⁵ The six new embassies are in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Uruguay. The five older embassies are in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela.

in the countries that make up the Venezuela-led Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA),⁶ but also included non-ALBA members, most significantly Brazil (Johnson 2012, ix).⁷ Iran's economic ties with the region have also risen. Trade between Iran and Latin America, while still rather miniscule, has multiplied from less than \$1 billion in 2007 to \$4 billion today, with Brazil and Argentina accounting for more than 95% of the total (Latinvex 2012). Beyond trade, Iran has also pledged to make significant aid contributions and investments in Latin America, especially in the ALBA countries. However, with the possible exception of Venezuela, few of Iran's pledged investments have yet materialized. Iran's increased presence in Latin America has triggered a fierce debate in Washington as to whether or not Iran's actions should be regarded as a serious threat to U.S. national security or merely an "annoyance" (Arnson, Esfandiari and Stubits 2010).

In addition to advancing its economic interests, it is clear that Iran has a political agenda aimed at decreasing the country's international isolation, particularly by forming alliances with other countries that share its anti-American stance. Yet some observers believe Iran has more menacing goals in Latin America such as obtaining uranium for its nuclear program or developing the infrastructure to carry out terrorist attacks against Western targets in the region (Berman 2012, Cárdenas 2012, Goforth 2012, Noriega 2012, Seligson 2013). Declarations by the Venezuelan government that Iran is assisting Venezuela in its search for uranium reserves certainly heightened suspicions about

the nature of the two country's interactions (Padgett 2009). Moreover, critics note that Iran and its proxies are implicated in the terrorist bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994 and the foiled plot to hire a Mexican drug cartel to kill the Saudi Ambassador to the United States in 2011 (Levitt 2012, Savage and Shane 2011). Still, others remain skeptical that Iran's increased presence in the region poses a serious security threat to the United States, dismissing such claims as either unfounded or simply paranoid (Main 2013, Miller 2013).

In short, Iran has moved from a position of obscurity to one of increased visibility in the Americas. Although this has become a hot topic in Washington, one issue which has received little attention is how citizens in the region view Iran.⁸ We seek to fill this gap.

How Relevant is Iran for Citizens in the Americas?

The 2012 AmericasBarometer survey asked citizens in 24 countries if they considered the government of Iran to be very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or not at all trustworthy.⁹ For the purposes of our analysis we recoded the answers in to two categories: very and somewhat trustworthy were considered as positive responses and not very trustworthy and not at all trustworthy, as well as no opinion at all were considered as negative answers. Figure 1 shows the extent of trust in the government of Iran among citizens in the Americas. Taking into account the rate of non-response, the levels of trust in Iran among citizens who are aware of its existence is fairly low. In this report we pay particular attention

⁶ In 2009 the member countries decided to call the organization the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP).

⁷ Ahmadinejad visited Latin America six times between 2005 and early 2012 and attended the funeral of Hugo Chávez and the inauguration of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela in early 2013. Iran also received Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez nine times, Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega three times, Bolivian president Evo Morales two times, as well as Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa, Guyanese president Bharrat Jagdeo and Brazilian president Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva.

⁸ An exception, with respect to Iran, is Stephen Johnson's short and descriptive review of Iran's image problem, based on recent polls conducted by the BBC and Pew Research Center (Johnson 2012: 20-21).

⁹ They were also given the explicit option of "or do you not have an opinion"? The question was not asked in the United States and Canada, the other two countries included in the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey.

to whether citizens in ALBA member countries (where Iran is an observer nation) are more likely to trust Iran than those in non-ALBA countries. We observe that even in the ALBA countries (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador), less than 20% of the population displays high levels of trust in Iran. In fact, in most countries in the Western Hemisphere less than 10% of respondents express trust in the government of Iran. By contrast, the levels of mistrust are rather high in most countries (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

It is very important to note that in most countries there seems to be little knowledge about Iran. We can glean this from the rates of non-response and “no opinion” responses, the details of which are in Table 1 in the Appendix.

The non-response/no opinion rates reach over 60% in Suriname, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Belize, Trinidad & Tobago and Uruguay and over 50% in El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica, and Paraguay. In another seven of the 24 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Honduras and Panama) over 40% of citizens did not give an answer about Iran. The percentage of non-response is lower in three of the ALBA countries, Ecuador, Nicaragua and particularly Venezuela, where only 32% of citizens have not heard about Iran. Nonetheless, in another of the ALBA countries, Bolivia, almost half of the population did not answer the question about trust in Iran.

Who Trusts the Government of Iran?

Even though the number of citizens of the Americas who trust the government of Iran is relatively low, it is important to understand the reasons that lie behind that trust. Our main research question revolves around the reasons why some citizens are more likely than others to trust Iran. Those citizens who trust Iran are

evidently aware of the existence of a country that is largely unknown in the region and believe that the government of that country is trustworthy in spite of the questionable reputation of Iran at the international level.

Given that historically the United States, and to a lesser extent other advanced democracies, has been the dominant external actor in the countries of the Western Hemisphere, there is little theoretical background for understanding trust in extra-hemispheric actors, particularly

those that, like Iran, are regarded as rogue states.¹⁰ One approach is to try to look at the theories behind anti-Americanism, which seems to be a common point of

agreement between Iran and the countries in the Western Hemisphere that have sought to strengthen relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to Rubinstein and Smith (1988) anti-Americanism has at least four variations: issue-oriented, ideological, instrumental and revolutionary. We examine if two of these explanations, instrumentalism and ideological empathy, help explain trust in the government of Iran in the Western Hemisphere. Instrumentalism refers to the manipulation of anti-American sentiments by political elites seeking domestic support for their own political agendas (Rubinstein and Smith 1988). Ideological empathy refers to the identification that individuals may have with anti-imperialism, which is a common trait of the left in Latin America (Levitsky and Roberts 2011, Smith 2008). In addition, other scholars have found that paying attention to the news can influence anti-American attitudes (Chiozza 2007, Blaydes and Linzer 2012).¹¹ Finally, given

The majority of citizens in the Americas do not have an opinion about trust in the government of Iran.

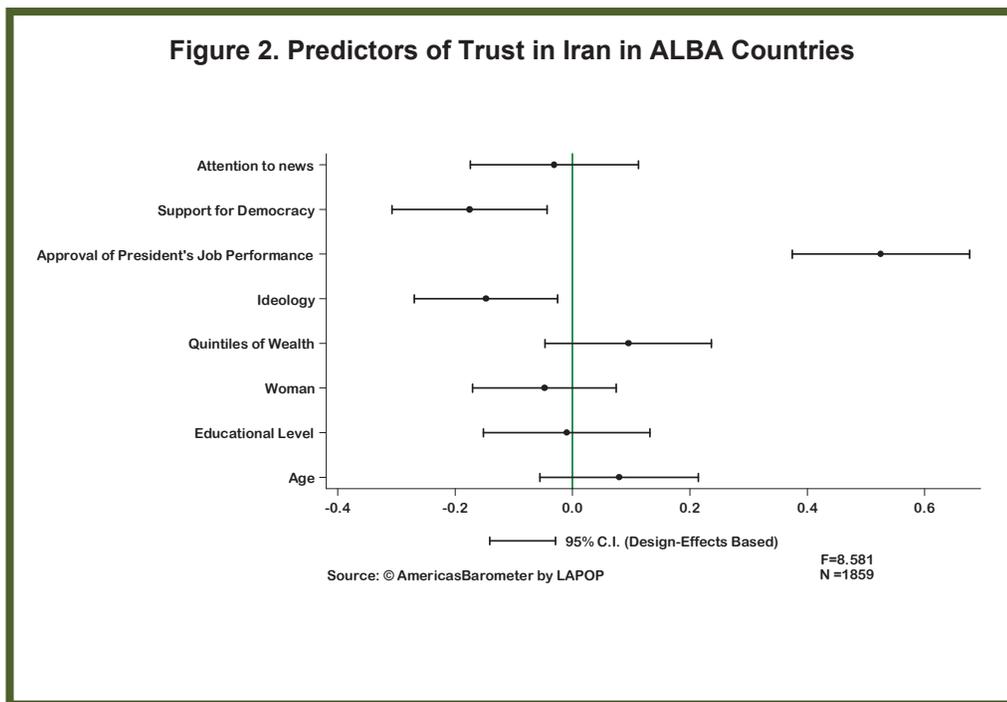
¹⁰ For a definition of the term rogue state, see Hoyt (2000).

¹¹ Following Chiozza (2007), those who are more aware of news would be less likely to hold feelings of anti-Americanism. This hypothesis is based on the premise that

that Iran is an authoritarian regime, it is feasible that citizens who trust the government of that country are, at least to some extent, more willing to tolerate authoritarian leaders and less prone to support democracy.

In order to identify whether these or other variables are associated with trust in the government of Iran we propose a logistic regression model and test it on citizens of two separate groups of countries: those that belong to ALBA (4 countries) and those that do not belong to ALBA (20 countries). As explained above, the inroads that Iran has made in the ALBA countries merit a separate consideration. The regression model uses a dichotomous dependent variable (trust or no trust in Iran)¹² and the following independent variables: approval of the job performance of the country's president (to test for instrumentalism)¹³; ideology (to test for ideological empathy)¹⁴; attention paid by the

respondent to the news¹⁵; and a variable that measures the support for democracy.¹⁶ In



addition to country dummy variables (see the appendix), we add to the model four standard control variables: level of education, age, gender and wealth.

individuals who explore international news are more likely to 'learn the truth' about the United States than if they derived their news exclusively from domestic media sources. Of course, it is also conceivable that media attentiveness could exacerbate anti-American attitudes. In their study of the Islamic world, for instance, Blaydes and Linzer find that "Muslims who regularly follow international news also tend to be more anti-American" (2012, 233).

¹² In the regression the dependent variable was recoded into a dummy variable in which 100 represents respondents who said that the government of Iran was very or somewhat trustworthy. Respondents who answered a little, not at all or who did not provide an answer were coded as 0.

¹³ This variable (M1) asks: Speaking in general of the current administration, how would you rate the job performance of president (NAME): 1) Very good 2) Good 3) Neither good nor bad 4) Bad and 5) Very bad. We have recoded the variable in a 0-100 scale, in which 100 means a positive rating.

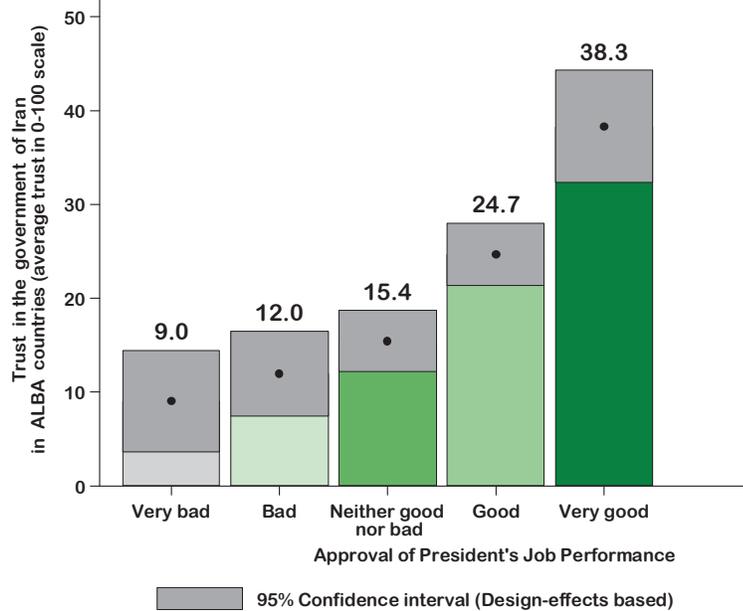
¹⁴ This variable (I1 or I1b) asks: According to the meaning that the terms 'left' and 'right' have for you, and thinking

of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale? The scale, as is customary in surveys around the world, ranges from 1 (left) to 10 (right). In Caribbean countries the terms liberal and conservative are used instead.

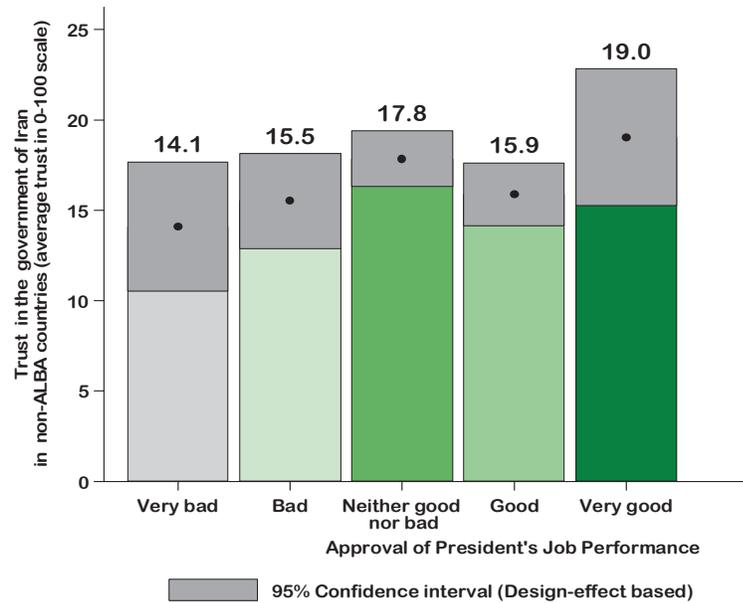
¹⁵ This variable (gi0) gauges on how often respondents listen, watch or read news. The options are: 1) Daily 2) A few times a week 3) A few times a month 4) Rarely and 5) Never.

¹⁶ This variable (ing4) is considered a 'Churchillian' measure of democracy. It asks respondents: 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? (1-7 scale)

Figure 3. President's Approval and Trust in Iran



Source: © AmericasBarometer 2012



Source: © AmericasBarometer 2012

First we examine the determinants of trust in Iran among citizens of countries that belong to ALBA. Figure 2, which presents standardized beta coefficients (dots) accompanied by a confidence interval (horizontal line) around those estimates, shows that the most important predictor of support for Iran among citizens of

ALBA countries is approval of their own president's performance. As noted earlier, the presidents of the ALBA countries have all visited Iran on more than one occasion and the current president of Iran has also visited several of those countries. It is interesting to note that the influence of the president in those countries could expand to issues of an international nature. Figure 2 also shows that ideology is a significant factor in explaining trust in the government of Iran among citizens of ALBA countries: those who self-identify themselves as being on the left of the political spectrum are more likely to trust Iran. Finally, it is important to note that a lower support for democracy is associated with a higher level of trust in Iran, a non-democratic country.

The model shows that the level of attention paid to the news and the sociodemographic variables (gender, age, wealth and education) are not significantly related to trust in the government of Iran. The details of the regression model can be found in Table 2 in the Appendix.

We next ran the same regression model using the 20 countries in the sample that do not belong to ALBA. The results, presented in Table 3 in the Appendix, contrast sharply with those in Figure 2. While in the ALBA countries the approval of the president's performance, left ideology and a lower support for democracy are all associated with a

higher level of trust in Iran, none of these variables are relevant in the non-ALBA countries. Instead, in the non-ALBA countries, only one variable, gender, is correlated with a higher trust in Iran: men are slightly more likely to trust Iran.

Conclusion

An examination of the extent of trust in the government of Iran in 24 countries of the Western Hemisphere shows that, at least from the public opinion perspective, Iran appears to be an inconsequential actor. High levels of non-response/no opinion to a question about trust in this country suggest that the country is largely unknown among citizens in the Americas, even in countries that in recent years have strengthened relations with Iran, particularly those that belong to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA). Nonetheless, it is clear that citizens in those countries are more aware of the existence of Iran than in most other countries in the hemisphere, and also display higher levels of trust in the government of that country.

We also examined the predictors of trust in the government of Iran. We found that there are stark differences between citizens who live in countries that belong to ALBA and countries that do not belong to that organization. Citizens of ALBA countries who have higher levels of approval for their president are more likely to trust Iran. As can be observed in Figure 3, which shows mean values from the survey data, this is not the case for countries that do not belong to ALBA.

Additionally, we found that citizens in ALBA countries who place themselves to the left of the political spectrum, and those who show lower support for democracy are more likely to trust Iran. By contrast, we found that ideology and support for democracy are not correlated with higher or lower trust in the government of Iran in non-ALBA countries. In the latter only gender turned out to be a significant predictor, with men being more likely than women to trust Iran. Sociodemographic factors are not

correlated with trust in the government of Iran in ALBA countries.

Overall these results indicate that the concern about the inroads that Iran is making in the Western Hemisphere may be overstated. Although the situation seems to be somewhat more relevant in countries whose leaders are open advocates of strengthening ties with Iran, even in those countries, public support does not seem to be strong and far-reaching.

Trust in the government of Iran is closely related to approval of the president's performance, but only in countries that belong to ALBA.

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Appendix

Table 1. Knowledge and Trust in the Government of Iran in the Western Hemisphere, 2012 (Percentages)

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>TRUST</i>	<i>NO TRUST</i>	<i>NO RESPONSE/OPINION</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
ALBA COUNTRIES (1)				
Bolivia	8.9	44.5	46.6	100%
Ecuador	13.0	54.0	33.0	100%
Nicaragua	15.7	45.5	38.8	100%
Venezuela	16.5	51.5	32.0	100%
<i>Average for ALBA countries</i>	13.5	48.9	37.6	100%
NON-ALBA COUNTRIES				
Argentina	5.8	45.2	48.9	100%
Belize	2.8	32.9	64.3	100%
Brazil	10.1	49.7	40.1	100%
Chile	13.0	49.3	37.7	100%
Colombia	7.4	43.2	49.4	100%
Costa Rica	2.5	57.1	40.3	100%
Dominican Republic	4.8	25.8	69.4	100%
El Salvador	5.8	43.8	50.5	100%
Guatemala	9.0	22.7	68.3	100%
Guyana	21.3	30.9	47.8	100%
Haiti	5.1	41.4	53.5	100%
Honduras	14.1	40.3	45.5	100%
Jamaica	7.7	39.7	52.6	100%
Mexico	7.4	54.0	38.6	100%
Panama	15.2	40.2	44.6	100%
Paraguay	6.9	42.1	51.0	100%
Peru	6.9	53.3	39.7	100%
Suriname	7.6	19.9	72.5	100%
Trinidad & Tobago	3.9	35.2	60.9	100%
Uruguay	4.1	31.1	64.8	100%
<i>Average for non-ALBA countries</i>	8.1	39.9	52.0	100%

(1) Other ALBA members were not included in the 2012 survey: Cuba, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Table 2. Predictors of Trust in the Government of Iran in ALBA countries in 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Age	.0797329	.0686917
Level of education	-.00971	.0721406
Gender (woman)	-.0477796	.0622918
Wealth	.0950116	.0722433
Ideology	-.1470223*	.0620506
Approval of president's performance	.5254089***	.0768049
Support for democracy	-.1752604**	.0670658
Attention to news	-.0307039	.0730163
Nicaragua	.0683317	.0874079
Ecuador	-.1903318*	.0945552
Venezuela	.1472737	.0885782
Venezuela	-1.398521	.0874477
Constant		
<i>Goodness-of-fit-test</i>		41.17*
<i>Number of Observations</i>		1,859

Note: Coefficients marked with asterisks are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Bolivia

Table 3. Predictors of Trust in the Government of Iran in non-ALBA countries in 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Age		
Level of education	-.078206	.0411484
Gender (woman)	-.0674305	.0495796
Wealth	-.0749962*	.0364302
Ideology	.0237667	.0436024
Approval of president's performance	.0759929	.0401259
Support for democracy	-.0024404	.0384796
Attention to news	.0307896	.0421934
Mexico	.023058	.0711186
Guatemala	.2603629	.0663453
El Salvador	.0131954	.0667635
Honduras	.2295456	.0666903
Costa Rica	-.1941811	.0800608
Panama	.2532724	.0633006
Colombia	-.0525547	.0739203
Peru	.0098987	.0678116
Paraguay	.0280408	.0678917
Chile	.1918217	.067922
Uruguay	.0064499	.0693931
Brazil	.088526	.0688861
Argentina	.0353786	.0771515
Dominican Republic	.0542975	.0678604
Haiti	-.0270666	.074885
Jamaica	.0914408	.0659983
Guyana	.356381	.0660379
Trinidad & Tobago	-.1397511	.078166
Belize	.1826932	.0767719
Constant	-1.701451	.0471729
<i>Goodness-of-fit test</i>	89.22*	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	5,883	

Note: Coefficients with asterisks are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Suriname

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 92

Political Social Media Users in the Americas are Tolerant and Pro-Democratic

By Jessica Brunelle

LAPOP Undergraduate Research Fellow

jessica.m.brunelle@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. The report examines the use of social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Analysis of a question included in the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey shows the proportion of citizens who have read or shared political information over social network websites in the last year varies across countries. In addition, younger, wealthier, more educated, and urban residents are more likely to engage in politics via social media. Furthermore, those who use social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region are more ideologically polarized, but also more politically tolerant and more supportive of democracy in the abstract. Thus, the use of social media for political purposes in the Americas is a positive complement to more conventional forms of democratic political engagement.

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

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With the advent of social media, the twenty-first century is witnessing a revolution with respect to the ways in which individuals engage in politics. In the last decade, use of various sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Orkut has escalated across Latin America and the Caribbean (Synthesio 2011). Around the globe, citizens are increasingly using social media as a mechanism to distribute political information (e.g., Davis 2010). But, who are these citizens? While some scholars have examined this question in other contexts (e.g., Effing and Huibers 2001), little is known about who uses social media sites for political information gathering and expression in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

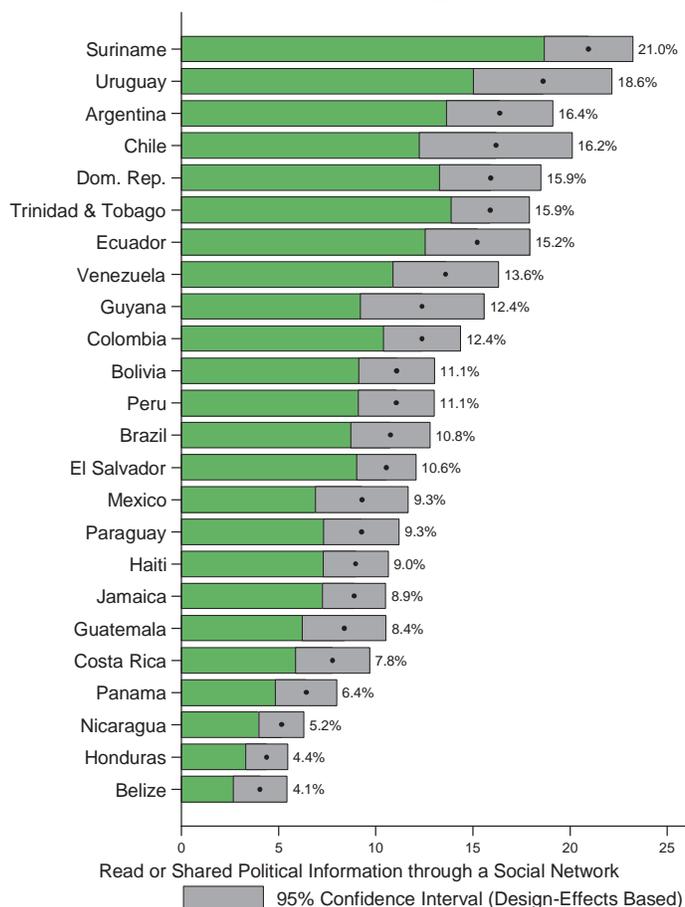
This *Insights* report¹ presents two profiles of the type of people who engage in politics using social media. First, I examine the extent to which socioeconomic and demographic factors predict this type of activity. Second, I assess the political profiles of those who utilize social media for political purposes. Some scholarship in other contexts has indicated that those who engage in politics via social media tend to be more politically polarized (Kushin and Kitchener 2009). Thus, this report asks: In 2012, are self-identified political social media users in Latin America and the Caribbean more or less supportive of democracy, politically tolerant and/or ideologically extreme?

This report is possible because, for the first time in 2012, the AmericasBarometer survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)² asked 41,632 individuals across 26 countries the following yes/no question:

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American

Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents Engaged in Politics via Social Media



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2012

PROT8. And in the last twelve months, have you read or shared political information through any social network website such as Twitter or Facebook or Orkut?³

Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University.

³ In order to focus on the Latin American and Caribbean region, I omit the United States and Canada from this report. Rates of political participation via social media in these countries are 41.5% and 24.7%, respectively, in the AmericasBarometer 2012 studies. This report uses v47 of the AmericasBarometer 2012 merged dataset.

Figure 1 reports the percentage of individuals who answered affirmatively to this question.⁴ Rates of political participation via social media vary significantly across countries, from a high of 21.0% in Suriname to a low of 4.1% in Belize.⁵ Given very high estimates of general social media use for the region (and, in particular countries such as Brazil), we can conclude from the results in Figure 1 that the use of such websites for political purposes is much lower than are the rates of general, non-political social media use (Synthesio 2011).

In the next section I explore if higher levels of use of social media for political purposes are associated with certain socio-demographic groups in Latin America and the Caribbean. Not surprisingly, I find that the younger, wealthier, more educated, and urban residents are more likely to engage in politics via social media. But, what about their political preferences? In a subsequent section and set

of analyses, I find that those who use social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region are more ideological extreme, but also more politically tolerant and more supportive of democracy in the abstract.

[T]hose who use social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region are more ideologically polarized, but also more politically tolerant and more supportive of democracy in the abstract.

Who is More Likely to Use Social Media to Share and Acquire Political Information?

In this section I examine how specific demographic and socioeconomic factors predict social media use for political purposes. My principal expectation is that those who are younger, wealthier and more educated will be more likely to use social media for political activism because these individuals are likely to be more familiar with and fluent in social media in the first place (see Rainie et al. 2012).⁶

In assessing the political use of social media in the U.S., Rainie and Smith (2008) find that age is the most prominent determinant for social media political activism. According to the authors, two-thirds of American internet users

surveyed under the age of 30 have social networking profiles and half of these utilize such sites to gain or share political information. Although their study focuses on the United States, it is reasonable to expect that a younger age – and, as well, a higher education, a higher income, and urban residence – positively predict social media use for political activism in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

⁴ Across the AmericasBarometer 2012 study as a whole, 3.0% of respondents did not answer the question; these individuals are not included in the analyses in this report.

⁵ As a typical practice for the *Insights* series, I omit the United States and Canada from this and other analyses in the report to focus on Latin America and the Caribbean.

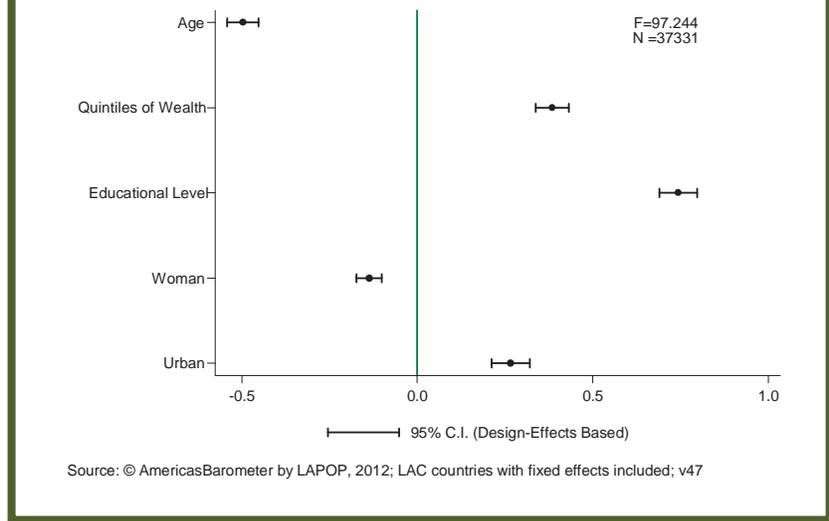
⁶ Rainie et al. (2012) report on a survey of 2,253 adults in the U.S. on their use of Twitter.

To analyze these expectations, I developed a basic logistic regression model that uses socioeconomic and demographic measures (age, wealth, education⁷, gender, and urban/rural residence) to predict the likelihood an individual reports using social media use for political information gathering or sharing. Figure 2 shows standardized coefficients from that analysis (see appendix for full results). The estimated effect of each factor is depicted by a dot. The corresponding bars represent a 95% confidence interval around the estimate for each factor. If the dot and bar fall to the left of the 0 line then the variable is both negative and statistically significant. If the dot and the bar fall to the right of the 0 line then such variable is both positive and statistically significant.

As expected, Figure 2 shows that those with a higher education level are more likely to use social media sites for reading and sharing political information compared to those with less education. Also in line with expectations, younger age cohorts use social media sites for political activism more than do older age cohorts (the negative coefficient shows that as one increases in age, one is less likely to report using social media to read or share political information). Additionally males and those who live in an urban population are more likely to use social media sites for a political purpose. In short, the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the average user of

7 Education was coded into quartiles as follows: No Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Higher Education. The latter category is the baseline/comparison category in the analyses. For both the education and the wealth measures, I tested whether the relationship is non-linear with a series of dummy variables for education cohorts and wealth quintiles, and found no support for a non-linear relationship in the analyses.

Figure 2. Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Political Engagement via Social Media



social media for political purposes is similar across the Latin American and Caribbean region to that which has been found in the United States: mirror more general trends, using social media for political activism is most common among the young, the wealthy, the more educated, and those living in urban areas.⁸

Political Social Media Use and Political Attitudes in Latin America and the Caribbean

What else may determine the profile of individuals who use social media for political purposes? Rainie and Smith (2012) report that, in the U.S., the most active and engaged political participants on social media sites tend to be found on opposite and extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. The question of who uses social media for political purposes is thus important from the perspective of democratic politics: understanding the political attitudinal

⁸ It is interesting to note that while the study of the U.S. reported by Rainie et al. (2012) noted that women are more likely to use social media sites (but just as likely to use Twitter) compared to men, we see that men are more likely in the Latin American and Caribbean region to report using social media for political purposes.

profile of those who participate in this way provides important insight into the types of political content and discussion that are distributed via social media. Thus, this final section assesses the types of democratic attitudes and political ideological preferences that predict political use of social media use in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

In a model that builds on the results shown in Figure 2, I now include measures of support for democracy, political tolerance, system support and ideology to predict the likelihood that an individual responded affirmatively to using social media for political purposes. I measure support for democracy with a question that asks the extent to which the respondent agrees or disagrees that democracy is better than any other form of government.⁹

I measure political tolerance with an index based on the extent to which respondents agree that those who criticize the regime should be able to vote, conduct peaceful demonstrations, run for public office, appear on television to make speeches. System support is measured with an index based on one's perception that the state guarantees a fair trial, respect for political institutions, perception that the system protects basic rights, level of pride related to living in the country and the extent of belief that one should support the system. Finally, I include measures of left-right ideology to test whether political orientation is polarized among social media users for political purposes.¹⁰

⁹ 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?

¹⁰ LI: "On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. One means left and 10 means right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those leftists

Figure 3 presents the standardized regression coefficients from a regression analysis that includes all the variables from the prior analysis, plus these new indicators.¹¹

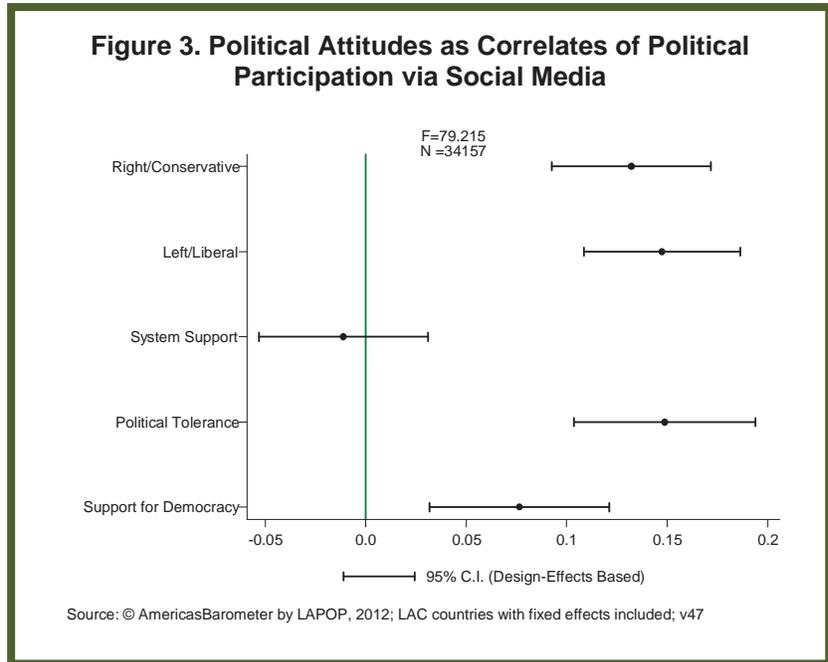


Figure 3 shows that while system support is not a statistically significant indicator of political social media use, political tolerance, support for democracy and a slightly more liberal ideology are all positive predictors of

and those rightists. 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?" Using responses to this question, I created a three-category variable, with response values of 1-3 coded as "Leftist Ideology", 4-7 as "Centrist Ideology" (the baseline here), and 8-10 as "Rightist Ideology." Missing values were included in the baseline category, "Centrist Ideology"; the results reported here are robust to changes in the coding of missing values as their own category, and to their exclusion from the analysis. In several Caribbean countries, the ideology question is asked in reference to liberal or conservative; in these cases, I considered and coded liberal as left and conservative as right, per the coding scheme noted here.

¹¹ In order to conserve space, the coefficients for gender, education, income, geographic distribution and age are not shown here, although these variables were included in the regression.

using social media use for political purposes. In other words, the analysis shows that those who report having recently read or shared political information via social media are more likely to be on the “right” or the “left” of the ideological spectrum, as opposed to placing themselves in the “center” or not taking an ideological stance. In addition, those who report using social media for political purposes on average are more politically tolerant and more supportive of democracy in the abstract.

Conclusion

With the Arab Spring that began in 2010 and affected significant parts of the Middle East and Africa, the topic of social media for political activism has been recently placed under the global microscope. Although Latin America and the Caribbean and the regions affected in the Arab Spring are very different on some dimensions, social media around the world has gained traction as a medium capable of translating the voices of individuals into well-organized and collective movements for political change (Howard and Hussain 2011). The increasing rates of general social media use and the examples set by previously successful uses of social media for political activism suggest that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. In fact, the AmericasBarometer 2012 survey supports the notion that those who engage in politics via online social networks are more likely to engage in grassroots and other forms of political participation. That is, in analyses not shown here for the sake of brevity, we find that political social media users in the Americas are more likely to have participated in a protest in the last twelve months, though they are not more likely (than those who do not engage in politics via social media) to have voted.¹²

Understanding who uses social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2012 is important, as it is likely that this profile will shift over time as new groups enter social media networks. At this point in time, the political use of social media networks in Latin America and the Caribbean is – like social media use more generally – more likely among those who are younger, wealthier, and more educated. It is also more likely to be found among urban (versus rural) residents.

From the perspective of democratic politics, even more interesting is the attitudinal profile of those who use social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The analyses here support prior work that suggests those who are more ideologically polarized are more likely to use social media in this way. But, as well, I find that those who read and share political information via social network websites are also more politically tolerant and more supportive of democracy in the abstract. Thus, the use of social media for political purposes in the Latin American and Caribbean region provides a positive complement to conventional political participation. To the extent that those who are engaged in political discussions and activism via social media are more tolerant and more pro-democratic, this medium for political engagement has the potential to enhance the quality of democratic culture and politics in the Americas.

¹² These results come from a model that extends from those presented in Figure 3 to also include a measure of whether or not the individual reports having protested in the last twelve months and whether or not s/he reports having voted in the last presidential elections.

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Appendix

	Figure 2		Figure3	
	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error
Urban	0.266*	(0.028)	0.263*	(0.028)
Woman	-0.137*	(0.018)	-0.115*	(0.019)
Educational Level	0.744*	(0.027)	0.711*	(0.028)
Quintiles of Wealth	0.385*	(0.024)	0.378*	(0.024)
Age	-0.497*	(0.023)	-0.512*	(0.023)
Support for Democracy ⁺	.	.	0.076*	(0.023)
Political Tolerance ⁺	.	.	0.149*	(0.023)
System Support	.	.	-0.011	(0.021)
Left/Liberal	.	.	0.147*	(0.020)
Right/Conservative	.	.	0.132*	(0.020)
Constant	-2.678	(0.031)	-2.666*	(0.032)
<i>Number of Observations</i>		37331		34157
<i>Prob>F</i>		0.000		0.000

Note: Coefficients marked with an asterisk are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, two tailed.
 Country fixed effects are included but not shown.



AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 93

Prosperity and Protest in Brazil: The Wave of the Future for Latin America?

By Mason Moseley

Mason.moseley@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Matthew Layton

Matthew.l.layton@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

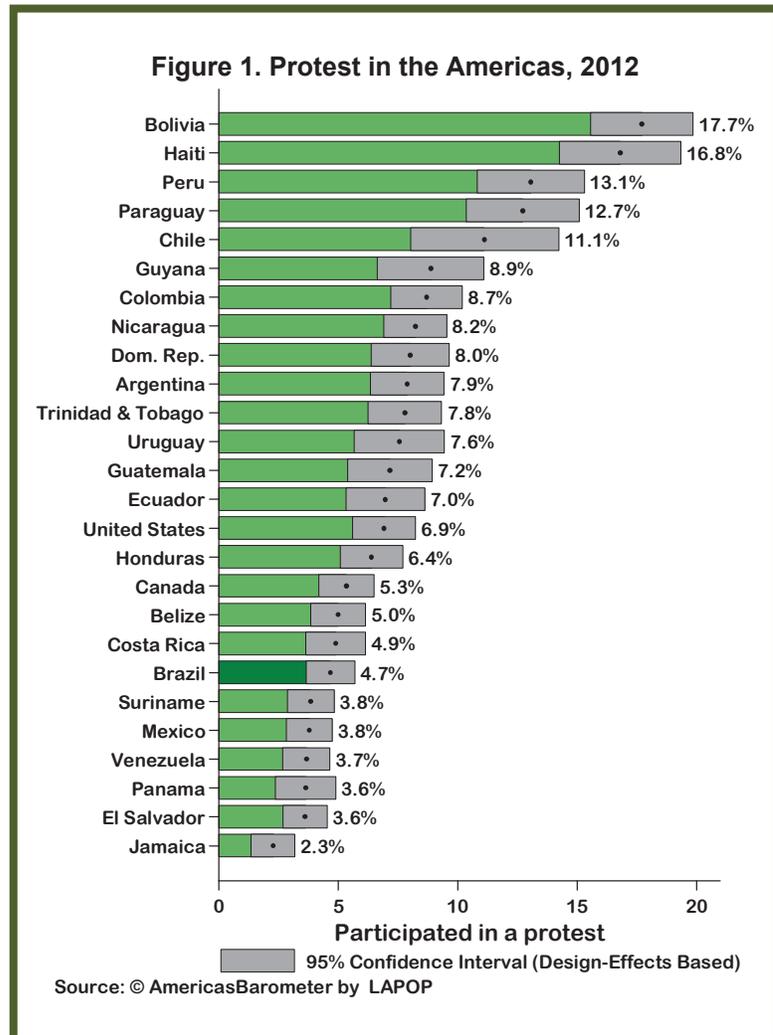
Executive Summary. Results from the 2012 AmericasBarometer Survey indicate that the current protests in Brazil are truly unprecedented in the country's recent history. However, the 2012 data from Brazil also reveal certain trends in socioeconomic development and disenchantment with government performance that have created an environment ripe for the emergence of contentious demonstrations. In a regional analysis of protest participation, rising education levels, increased use of social media, and widespread dissatisfaction with public services emerge as critical determinants of contentious politics, thus shedding light on the recent demonstrations in Brazil. More generally, these findings suggest that across Latin America, the past decade of strong economic growth, advances in education and increased access to social media may portend a new era of protests in countries such as Chile, Uruguay, and Peru that have enjoyed similar periods of rapid socio-economic development amidst high levels of citizens dissatisfaction with public services.

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

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With all eyes on Brazil during the recent Confederation's Cup—the precursor to next summer's World Cup—the country emerged as a picture of social disarray. What began on June 6 as a local conflict over a hike in public transportation costs in São Paulo evolved into a nationwide indictment of low quality public services, widespread political corruption, and worsening inflation. These extraordinary mass demonstrations are the largest and most contentious in Brazil since 1992, when protestors called for and eventually achieved the deposal of a sitting president.¹ As hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets throughout the month of June, it appeared that the “country of the future” had now become embroiled in a highly contentious present.

What led to this explosion of protests in Brazil? Was there any way to predict that Latin America's most notable economic and political success story of the 2000s was on the verge of entering such a tumultuous period? Finally, what might these protests in Brazil imply for the rest of Latin American and Caribbean countries? In this *Insights* report, we look to the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey for answers.²



Recent Protest Participation in Brazil

As most commentators have noted, the events of June are unprecedented in the recent history of Brazil. As recently as 2012, Brazil registered one of the lowest rates of protest participation in region, with only 4.7 percent of Brazilians claiming they had taken part in a protest rally or public demonstration in the previous year.³ This rate places Brazil well behind fellow middle-income South American countries like Argentina and Chile, and even behind the United States and Canada.

¹ Notably, that president, Fernando Collor, has revitalized his political career and is now a senator for the state of Alagoas.

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

³ 41,632 persons were asked the question **PROT3**: “In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?” The non-response rate was 0.51 for the whole sample.

Because protest participation has been so low in Brazil—since the AmericasBarometer began in Brazil in 2006, it has never recorded a rate of over 6 percent—it would seem difficult to glean much from predictors of past participation. Below we look to other socioeconomic trends that might have made Brazil a ticking time bomb for contentious political activity.

Explaining the Current Protests

“Resource mobilization” theory argues that protest movement formation depends both on the existence of a particular grievance *and* contentious actors’ access to the organizational resources that allow for a movement’s dissemination and growth (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Jenkins 1983). In other words, in addition to the presence of some motivating issue, potential protestors must also possess the tools necessary to foment and consolidate their movement by spreading it to additional actors. This approach dispels the notion that protestors are extremists in pursuit of drastic reforms and is backed by substantial empirical evidence (e.g. Norris 2002, Norris et al. 2005, Dalton et al. 2010, Booth and Seligson 2009).

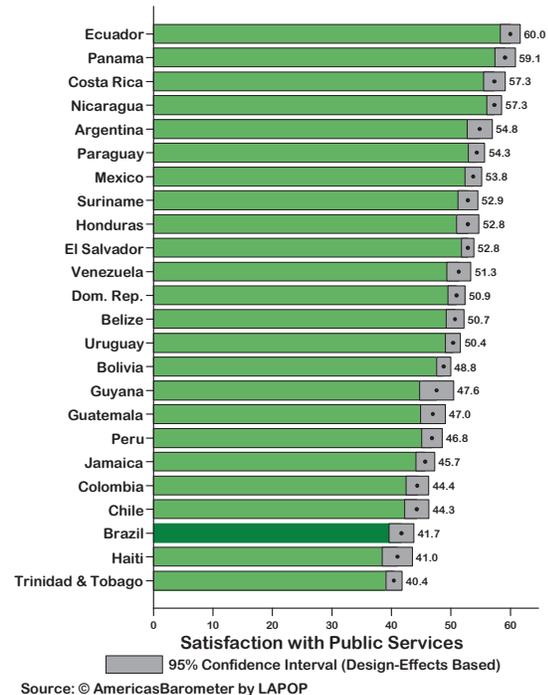
In this section, we take these two factors in turn, focusing on the potential grievances and organizational resources that could have facilitated the current demonstrations in Brazil.

Seeds of Discontent?

Public Services

Despite Brazil’s substantial economic and social gains over the past decade, Brazilians rank as some of Latin America’s most dissatisfied citizens regarding the government’s provision of social services. Much of this probably has to do with the high taxes that Brazilians pay

Figure 2. Satisfaction with Public Services in the Americas, 2012



(about 36% of GDP), and the perception that citizens are paying rich country taxes for poor country services.⁴

While the current protests are unprecedented in Brazil, conditions were ripe for widespread demonstrations.

Figure 2 summarizes Brazilians’ approval of three different public services: the quality of roads, public schools, and public health services. Respondents rate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction on a four-

point scale for each of these services. We recode those responses on a 0-100 scale where higher scores reflect higher satisfaction with services. From the average level of satisfaction with public service provision in these three areas, it is clear that Brazil ranks very low in Latin America, ahead of only Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago. This estimate coincides with recent

⁴ “Taking to the Streets.” *The Economist*, June 22, 2013. <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21579857-bubbling-anger-about-high-prices-corruption-and-poor-public-services-boils-over>

news reports and some protestors' messages that highlight the failure of Brazil's public sector to match heightened expectations with corresponding improvements in service quality.

Perceptions of Corruption

Another common rallying cry of protestors has been that Brazil's political system is fundamentally corrupt. In 2012, around 65 percent of Brazilians perceived that the political system was corrupt – a figure that is not necessarily high by regional standards, but which merits further attention as an individual level determinant of participation in protests.

System Support

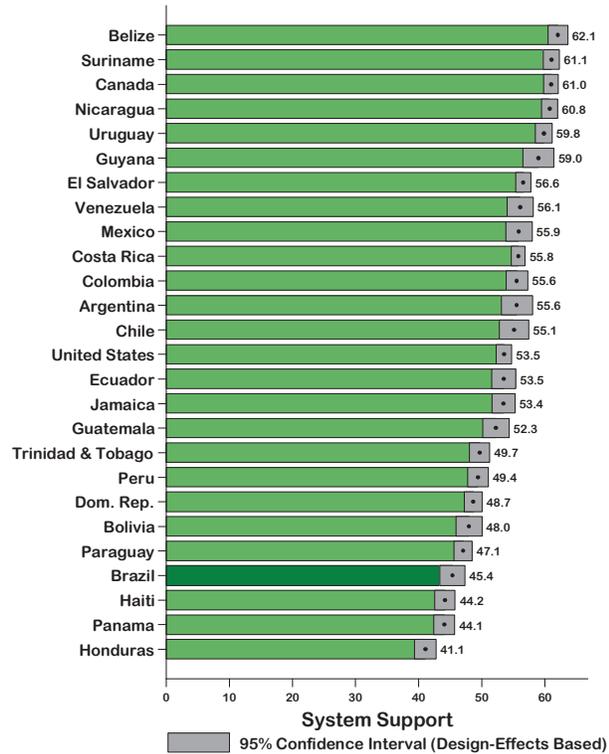
Despite its recent economic boom, in 2012 Brazil ranked 22nd among 26 countries in the Americas in terms of support for national political institutions (Figure 3).⁵ As Booth and Seligson (2009) have noted, this type of disenchantment with the political system can motivate individuals to adopt more aggressive forms of political participation in an effort to make their voices heard. Thus, the low levels of support for key national political institutions we observe in Brazil might have created an environment where mass protests could potentially take hold, even if they had yet to actually appear in Brazil.

Political Efficacy

Another potential source of frustration theoretically fueling these protests is widespread dissatisfaction with Brazil's system of democratic representation. In 2012, less than

⁵ Support for national institutions is measured by scale summarizing results of seven B-series questions (B2 B3 B4 B6 B21 B13 B31): **B2**. To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)? **B3**. To what extent do you think that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)? **B4**. To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)? **B6**. To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)? **B13**. To what extent do you trust the National Legislature? **B21**. To what extent do you trust the political parties? **B31**. To what extent do you trust the Supreme Court?

Figure 3. Support for the Political System in the Americas, 2012



35% of Brazilians believed that politicians were interested in what people like them thought, an indication of how disconnected most Brazilians feel from their political system.

Increasing Organizational Resources

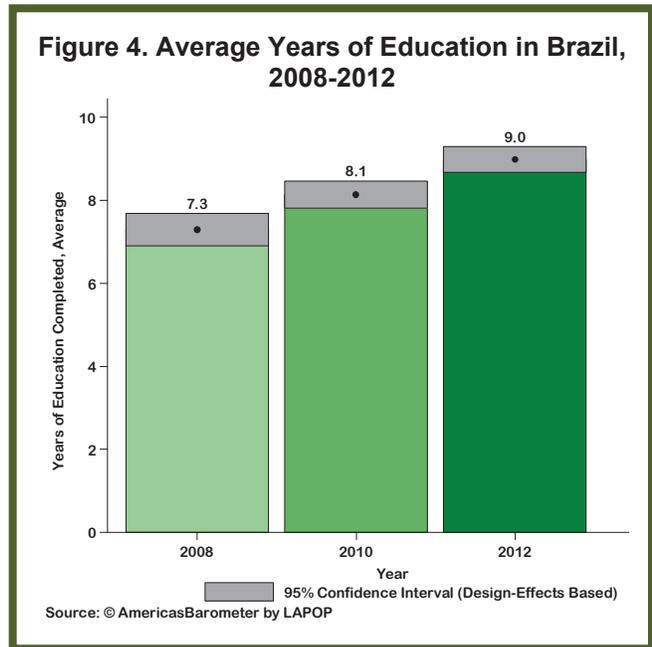
The basis of the resource mobilization approach to understanding protest is that protestors are generally educated, interested in politics, and have access to organizational resources via traditional civil society groups or more recently, social media networks. In other words, the citizens who protest are usually the same ones who participate through “conventional” vehicles, and are, on average, more educated, affluent, and politically engaged than non-protestors (e.g. Norris et al. 2005, Dalton et al. 2010).

According to analysts, thirty-five million Brazilians have climbed out of poverty since 2003.⁶ Whereas in the early 1990s as much as 25 percent of the Brazilian population lived in extreme poverty, that number fell to 2.2 percent in 2009. In 2011, Brazil's Gini coefficient, a common measure of income inequality, reached a 50-year low of .52.⁷

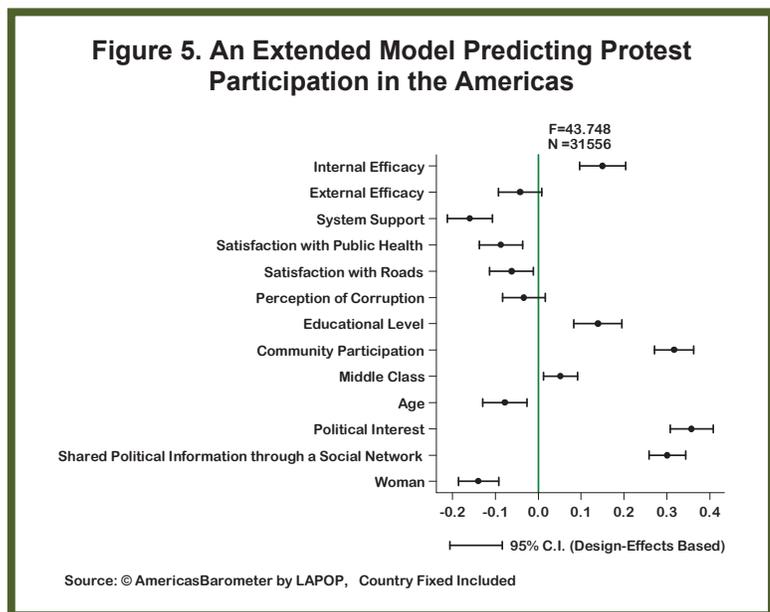
This economic progress is borne out in the survey data as well. According to the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey of Brazil, the country experienced substantial increases in average years of education completed, rising from an average of 7.3 in 2008 to 9.0 in 2012. Moreover, in 2012 Brazil ranked third to last in Latin America in food insecurity, illustrating the vast gains in poverty reduction obtained by a country once stricken by some of the most severe poverty in the region. These developments create a more easily mobilized society, as more educated and less impoverished citizens are more likely to have access to groups that recruit and organize activism via interpersonal relationships or the Internet, and are more likely to be aware of the issues facing Brazilians that could potentially merit involvement in contentious modes of participation.

A Predictive Model of Protest

Figure 5 presents findings from a logistic regression that analyzes individual-level predictors of Latin American



respondents' self-reported protest participation in the year prior to the 2012 survey. We use a



⁶ Gupta, Girish. "Brazil's Protests: Social Inequality and World Cup Spending Fuel Mass Unrest." *TIME Magazine*, June 18, 2013. <http://world.time.com/2013/06/18/brazils-protests-social-inequality-and-world-cup-spending-fuel-mass-unrest/>

⁷ The Gini Index ranges from 0-1 with a higher score representing a more unequal distribution of income. The Gini coefficient for neighboring Uruguay is .45, These data are drawn from the World Bank Brazil country review, accessed June 25, 2013: www.worldbank.org/en/country/brazil/overview and the World Bank development indicators page: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

regional analysis because there are too few observations of protest participation in the 2012 data from Brazil to offer sufficient insight into the recent mass demonstrations. This regional model, then, offers a more general treatment of what causes individuals to protest and allows us to investigate the explanatory value of some of the factors discussed above.

As predicted by the resource mobilization theory of protest, education, community activity,⁸ and interest in politics have a powerful positive impact on the likelihood that one participates in a protest. Clearly protestors across the region are more educated and politically involved citizens, who probably have access to the organizational tools necessary for movement mobilization. Protestors also appear to be young, male, and emerge from the middle class. Insofar as recent socioeconomic trends have increased the number of people who belong to these groups, Brazil has become a country where mass protests are more likely.

One of the most interesting findings from this logistic regression is the importance of information sharing through social networks in mobilizing protest participation. In

Brazil, where Internet usage has risen from roughly 3 percent of the population in 2000 to 45 percent in 2012,⁹ this increased ability to share information regarding movement activities clearly plays an important role in explaining why the current demonstrations arose now as opposed to before.

Discontent like that expressed by protestors in Brazil also seems to have an important impact on the probability that one protests across the region. Specifically, satisfaction with public services like healthcare provision and the quality of schools *decreases* the probability of protesting (conversely, dissatisfaction with these services will *increase* the likelihood of

⁸ Community participation is calculated as the average response to three questions regarding involvement in a religious organization, parents' association, or general community improvement association.

⁹ Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics for Brazil, accessed July 3, 2013. www.internetworldstats.com/sa/br.htm

protest). Considering the widespread criticisms of public services expressed in Brazil in 2012, this finding would seem prescient in explaining the current conflict. Perceptions of corruption, on the other hand, fail to correlate with protest behavior.

In 2012, on the heels of a decade of impressive economic growth, the standard LAPOP series of items measuring support for the system was surprisingly low. We now believe that low score was a leading indicator of the protests that have broken out, the particular catalyst for which is of course unpredictable. In the regional model, an increase in level of system

support decreases the probability of protest participation. In fact, system support has an even stronger effect on participating in a protest than satisfaction with public services, the most oft-mentioned

rallying-cry in Brazil.

Finally, measures of efficacy have an interesting dual effect on protest participation. Internal efficacy—or the belief that one understands the most important issues facing the country—has an important positive impact on the probability of protesting. If internal efficacy has increased along with levels of education and interest in politics in Brazil, it might be important in explaining why so many Brazilians currently feel affirmed in expressing their opinions in such an open and confrontational manner. However, external efficacy—the belief that politicians are interested in what the people think—decreases the probability of protesting, suggesting those people have faith in more traditional, formal modes of representation.

Conclusion

The recent protests in Brazil have been unprecedented due both to their sheer size and seemingly spontaneous nature. However, according to results from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey, Brazil displayed several harbingers of potential protest activity, including widespread dissatisfaction with public services and core democratic institutions, increasingly high levels of education and Internet usage, and decreasing levels of poverty. Though a substantial majority of Brazilians also perceived that the political system was corrupt, we find no direct effect of these perceptions on the probability of protest activity.

In many ways, the protests appear to be achieving their goals as we understand them from the AmericasBarometer data. Following the demonstrations against the bus fare hike in São Paulo, the local government reneged on the proposed rate increase. On June 24 President Dilma Rousseff announced an additional 23 billion dollars would be dedicated to public transportation, and renewed the government's commitment to improving a variety of other public services. More surprisingly, she announced a five-point proposal to reform the political system through constitutional amendment that included proposed changes to campaign finance law, the electoral system, replacement of senators, votes in Congress, and political party alliances.¹⁰

Should these protests be viewed in a positive or negative light? On one hand, they appear motivated by grievances related to poor public services and a lack of faith in key political institutions—areas where the Brazilian government obviously needs to improve. While most of the demonstrations have been peaceful, violent actions on the part of both the protestors and the government are also

concerning. However, the findings presented above also indicate that the current demonstrations might have been made possible by a more educated and politically active citizenry that is finally taking ownership of their democracy. Indeed, one could argue that Brazil's enormous social and economic gains over the past decade actually lie at the root of the current demonstrations, which have been led by educated, middle-class Internet users rather than fringe extremists.

Taking a step back from Brazil, then, our findings suggest that conditions may be ripe for an outburst of protest in many of the region's countries where rising education rates and sustained economic growth combine with low quality political institutions and inferior and sporadic public service provision. While few countries will have a catalyst for protest similar to Brazil's staging of multiple international sporting events, the potential for such widespread protests appears to exist in many Latin American regimes.

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¹⁰<http://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2013/07/dilma-sugere-que-plebiscito-aborde-ao-menos-5-temas-diz-cardozo.html>

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Appendix

Table 1. Determinants of Protesting in the Americas, 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Female	-.1390**	.02401
Shared Political Information	.3011**	.0216
Interest in Politics	.3580**	.02537
Age	-.0783**	.02628
Middle Class	.0516**	.02026
Community Participation	.3167**	.0234
Years of education	.1389**	.0286
Perception of Corruption	-.0332	.0254
Satisfaction with Roads	-.0624**	.02591
Satisfaction with Public Health	-.0864**	.0258
System Support	-.1595**	.0267
External Efficacy	-.0418	.0258
Internal Efficacy	.1502**	.0274
Mexico	-.1275**	.03794
Guatemala	-.02566	.03578
El Salvador	-.1355**	.03728
Honduras	-.01745	.03639
Nicaragua	.03326	.03256
Costa Rica	-.0503	.03685
Panama	-.1319**	.04537
Colombia	.00386	.03346
Ecuador	-.03364	.03568
Bolivia	.21024**	.04783
Peru	.10680**	.03217
Paraguay	.10808**	.0336
Chile	.09379**	.03853
Brazil	-.114 **	.03497
Venezuela	-.17263**	.03833
Argentina	.03544	.03461
Dominican Republic	-.05433	.03370
Haiti	.15017**	.03519
Jamaica	-.2386 **	.04570
Guyana	.05150	.03589
Trinidad & Tobago	-.05343	.03428
Belize	-.04803	.03388
Suriname	-.09950**	.03857
Constant	-2.732	.0322
F	43.75	
Number of Observations	31,556	

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at ** p<0.05. Country of Reference: Uruguay

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 94

Evangelicalism and Gay Rights in Latin America

By Isaiah Marcano

Isaiah.j.marcano@gmail.com

LAPOP Undergraduate Research Fellow

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report addresses questions of religious identification and tolerance for gays in the Americas. Using data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey, I first examine the demographic and socioeconomic correlates associated with the nearly 15 percent of Latin Americans that identify with Evangelical denominations. I find that women, younger populations, poorer individuals, and Latin Americans with low to moderate levels of education are more likely to identify with Evangelical Christianity. Next, I examine the link between religious identity and attitudes toward gay persons. I find that a respondent's self-identified religious affiliation is strongly linked to his or her support for gays and gay rights in Latin America, with Evangelical respondents expressing the lowest levels of tolerance overall. I conclude by noting cross-cutting findings, whereby women and young individuals are more likely to belong to Evangelical churches and, at the same time, more likely (on average) to express higher tolerance toward gay persons. I note that this may have implications across time with respect to social tolerance within Latin American Evangelical congregations.

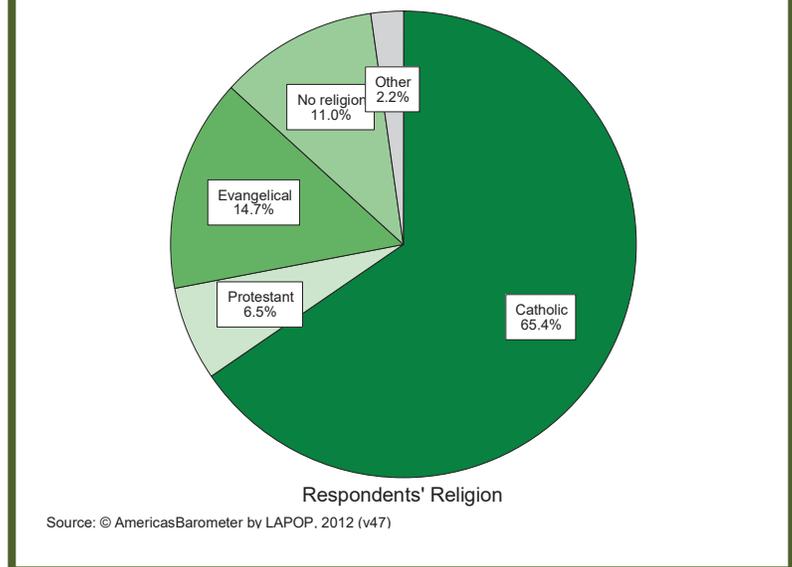
The Insights Series is co-edited by Jonathan T. Hiskey, Mitchell A. Seligson, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

www.AmericasBarometer.org

Tolerance toward gays and support for gay rights are ongoing topics of interest in social and political spheres across the Americas.¹ A previous Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) *Insights* report explores this subject by analyzing levels of support for same-sex marriage in the 2010 round of the AmericasBarometer survey (Corral and Lodola 2010). The authors of that report find that support for the right of same-sex couples to marry is higher among wealthier individuals, urban residents, and women. In addition, the authors find that members of Evangelical denominations² are comparatively less tolerant of same-sex marriage than members of other religious groups in the region. Other scholarship also finds a sizable gap in attitudes on such social issues between Evangelicals and the non-religious, and a smaller gap between the former and Roman Catholics (Boas and Smith 2013; Seligson and Moreno 2010).

Given the continued growth of Evangelicalism in Latin America, it is important to take an extended look at Evangelical populations and how Evangelical social attitudes differ from those held by others in the region.³ Thus, in this *Insights* report,⁴ I first describe Evangelical identity in the Americas in 2012. Then, I take a closer look at the intersection of Evangelical identity and attitudes towards gay individuals in Latin America, by comparing those affiliated with Evangelical Christian denominations to

Figure 1. Religious Identifications in Latin America, 2012



other religious (and non-religious) groups in the region.

To accomplish these objectives, this report focuses on four questions from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey:⁵ a measure of religious self-identification and three measures of attitudes toward gay individuals, each drawing on a distinct dimension of tolerance.⁶

What percentage of Latin Americans⁷ affiliate with Evangelical denominations? Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents to the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey who identify with Roman Catholicism, Mainline Protestantism, Evangelicalism, other religious groups, or no religion whatsoever.⁸ The results

¹ Boas and Smith (2013) note that ‘moral issues’ such as abortion and same-sex marriage have been increasingly salient and relevant to many Latin American elections.

² I refer here to individuals who express an affiliation with a religious group that is coded as Evangelical by the AmericasBarometer in response to open-ended question Q3c: “What is your religion, if any?” More information is available on the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP official site.

³ See, for example, the discussion in Boas and Smith (2013).

⁴ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

⁵ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

⁶ The reader should keep in mind that the results presented in this report are averages for the region.

⁷ As is typical practice for the *Insights* series, I omit the United States and Canada from this and other analyses in the report. I also omit the Anglophone Caribbean and Dutch speaking nations surveyed. In this way, I narrow the focus of the report to Latin America alone.

⁸ The question, Q3c, asks: “What is your religion, if any?” Respondents’ open-ended answers are then coded into one

show that, on average, 15 out of every 100 Latin American adults identify with Evangelical Christian denominations. Analysis of the AmericasBarometer data further reveals that rates vary significantly across countries, from a high of 34.2% in Guatemala to a low of 4.9% in Haiti.⁹ Taken as a whole, and in the words of Boas and Smith (2013, 1), it clearly is no longer reasonable to consider Latin Americans to be Catholic “by default.”

Though national and regional contexts likely affect one’s religious identification, I focus here on the extent to which standard socioeconomic and demographic factors predict Latin Americans’ identification with churches coded as Evangelical in the data. Then, having examined these factors, I shift the report’s focus to the extent to which tolerance toward and support for gay rights vary across Evangelicals and other prominent religious (and non-religious) groups in Latin America.

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CORRELATES OF EVANGELICAL IDENTIFICATION

In order to better understand the social and political implications of Evangelicalism, it is important to know the demographic and socioeconomic correlates of those identifying with Evangelical churches. Several scholars have identified Evangelical movements in Latin America as predominantly female-led (Hallum 2003). More specifically, some have sought to place the rise of Pentecostalism, the largest Evangelical denomination in Latin America,

of the following categories: Catholic, Protestant, Non-Christian Eastern Religion, Evangelical/Pentecostal, LDS (Mormon), Traditional/Native, Jewish, Jehovah’s Witness, None, Agnostic/atheist, or other. Across the Americas, 2.9% of respondents did not answer the question; these individuals are not included in the analyses in this report.

⁹ The country-specific results from the 2012 AmericasBarometer correspond, with slight variations, with findings in other reports (e.g., “Overview: Pentecostalism in Latin America”).

within the context of feminist movements within the region. Others simply note a high proportion of female founders of Evangelical movements coupled with high rates of female conversion and membership (Freston 2008; Hagopian 2009; Hallum 2003; Stoll 1990). One explanation for this phenomenon lies in the

For every 100 Latin American adults, 15 identify with Evangelical Christian denominations.

opportunities for women within Evangelical churches to confront and perhaps escape from the influences of *machismo* (Freston 2008; Hallum 2003; Stoll 1990). Many Evangelical denominations denounce alcoholism and help female

members attain varying degrees of influence within their communities. Smilde (2007) suggests that stay-at-home women are more likely to have extra-household neighborhood ties than men, and in turn these relationships may be associated with higher rates of conversion to Evangelicalism among women than men. He also points to depictions of Latin American women as more religious than men, and notes that non-Evangelical families may be more accepting of a female member’s conversion (Smilde 2007). While it is beyond the scope of this report to identify with precision the specific reasons for which individuals of a particular gender might identify as Evangelical at higher rates than their counterparts, we can nonetheless assess the extent to which gender matters concerning Evangelical movements.

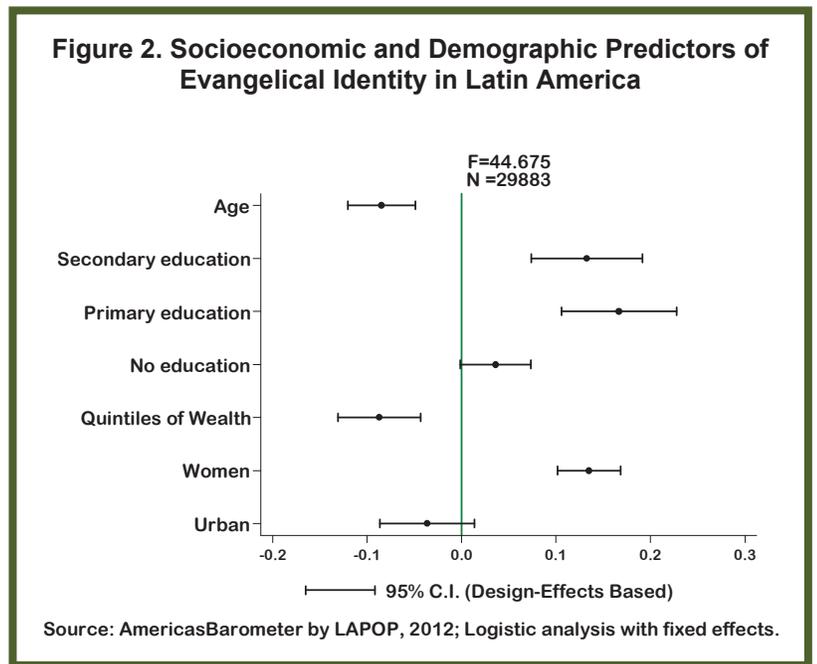
In addition to gender, I analyze how age, level of education, wealth, and urban v. rural place of residence predict respondents’ likelihood of affiliating with an Evangelical denomination.¹⁰ Freston (2008) specifies Protestantism, and especially Pentecostalism, as disproportionately associated with poorer and less educated Latin Americans. Furthermore,

¹⁰ Education is coded into quartiles as follows: No Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, and Higher Education. The latter category is the baseline/comparison category in the analyses.

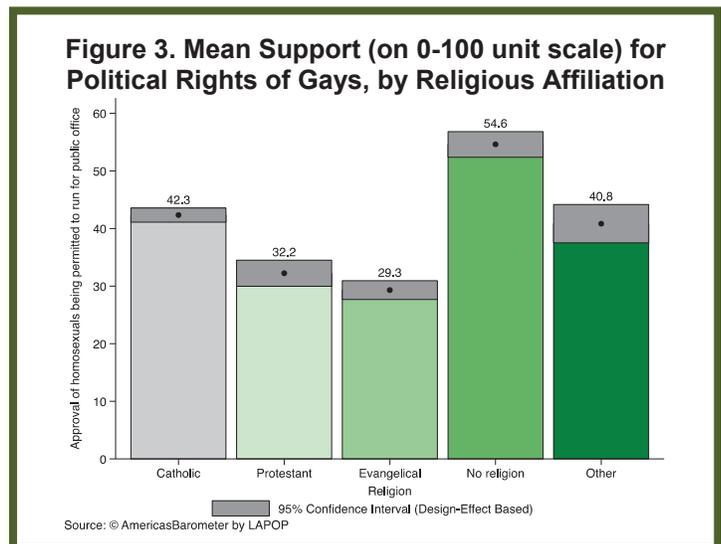
Gaskill (1997) refers to extensive studies that identify Protestantism as an urban refuge for displaced or migratory rural populations in Latin America. Thus, I expect lower levels of wealth and education as well as urban residence to help predict affiliation with Evangelical denominations.

To assess these expectations, I use a logistic regression model that examines the relationships between these individual level factors and individuals' identification as Evangelical. The baseline category in the analysis is *any* other response to the religious identification question. The results, displayed in Figure 2, show standardized coefficients for ease of comparison. The estimated effect of each independent variable is shown by a dot. The corresponding bars represent a 95% confidence interval around that estimate. If the dot and the bar fall to the left of the 0 line then the variable is both negative and significant. If the dot and bar fall to the right of the 0 line then the variable is both positive and significant. Country fixed effects are included in the analysis but not shown in the figure (see appendix for full model). In order to maintain a narrow focus on Latin America, the analysis excludes those countries that are noted in Footnote 7.

As expected, wealth is significantly related to the likelihood that a respondent affiliates with an Evangelical denomination. Specifically, Latin Americans with lower levels of wealth are more likely to report an affiliation with Evangelicalism. Also, females and younger people tend to express Evangelical affiliations more than, respectively, males and older individuals. The comparatively greater rates of Evangelical affiliation among female populations accord with existing scholarship on this topic. Interestingly, individuals who lack education are not much more likely to affiliate with Evangelicalism when compared to the baseline group of respondents with post-secondary education. Those respondents with a primary and/or secondary level education,



however, are more likely to affiliate with Evangelical denominations than those with advanced education. Finally, contrary to expectations, no significant relationship between place of residence (urban or rural) and membership in Evangelical churches exists in the model.



EVANGELICALISM AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GAYS IN LATIN AMERICA

Having identified some of the socioeconomic and demographic factors that affect the likelihood of individuals' affiliation with Evangelical denominations, I now examine these individuals' attitudes toward gays and gay rights in comparative perspective (that is, compared to those expressing other religious, or non-religious, identifications).¹¹ More specifically, I compare responses among these groups to the following questions from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey:

D5: How strongly do you approve or disapprove of homosexuals being permitted to run for public office?

D6: How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry?¹²

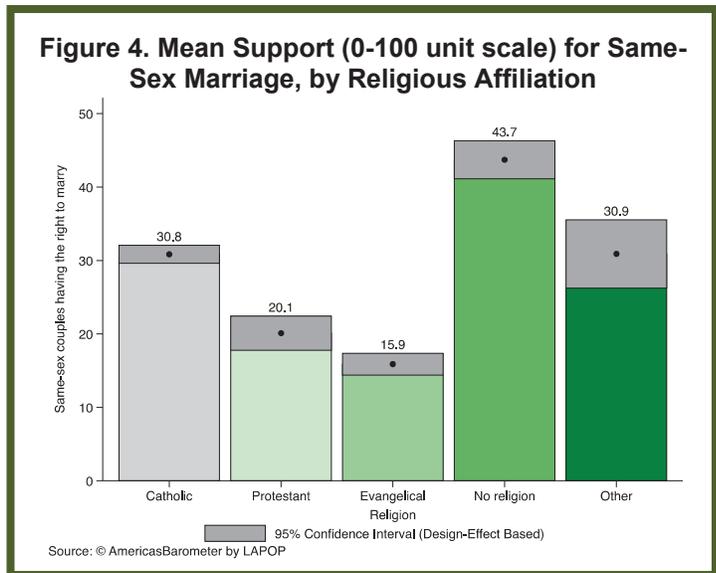
Dis35a: To what extent would you mind having gays as neighbors?¹³

Figures 3 and 4 display mean responses across five major religious groups in Latin America: Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, Evangelical, No Religion, and Other (the latter category includes Judaism, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnesses, among others). These figures show average responses on a scale from 0 to 100, with lower values indicating strong disapproval and higher values indicating strong approval. Figure 5, in turn, reflects responses given on a binary scale; that is,

¹¹ It is important to note that this report does not address whether different social attitudes among Evangelicals emerge as a result of religious conversion or, instead, if those with distinct social attitudes are attracted to and choose to convert into Evangelicalism. This issue is important because it has implications for whether increased levels of Evangelicalism in Latin America will be accompanied by changes in social attitudes, towards gays and others, in Latin America.

¹² This question was asked of a split-sample, that is of half the survey respondents in the AmericasBarometer 2012.

¹³ This question was optional for each country in the 2012 AmericasBarometer; of the Latin American countries, the question was asked in the following: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Uruguay.



respondents either reported discomfort with having homosexual neighbors or they did not mind. Figure 5 therefore shows the percentage of individuals in each religious identification category who report that they would not mind having gay individuals as neighbors.

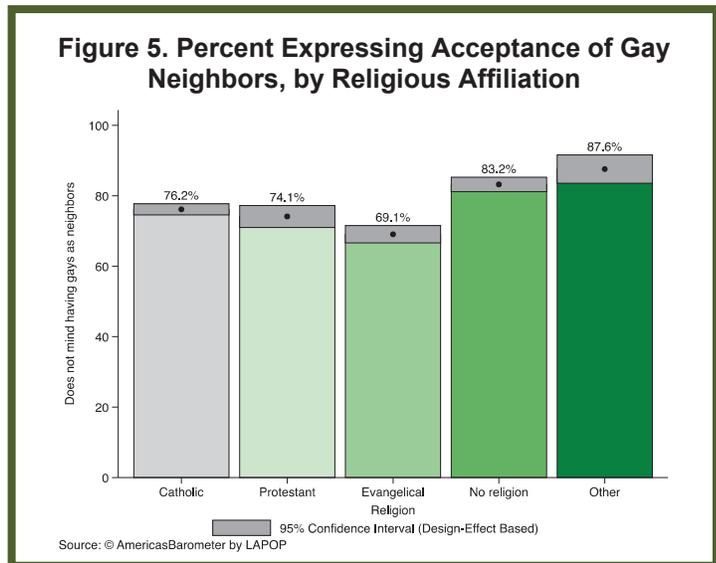


Figure 3 and Figure 4 suggest particularly low levels of approval among Evangelicals for gay individuals being permitted to run for public office and for same-sex marriage, respectively. These results are in line with earlier conclusions presented by Corral and Lodola (2010). Furthermore, levels of disapproval for

gays in public office and same-sex marriage among Evangelicals do not differ greatly from their mainline Protestant counterparts. They do, however, differ much more so when compared to other religious groups such as Roman Catholics or those categorized as 'Other.' Figure 5 portrays similar tendencies, with Evangelicals expressing the lowest levels of comfort with gay neighbors. Interestingly, however, Evangelical responses in Figure 5 do not trail far below mean values of other groups, so that differences across religious (and non-religious) groups observed in this graph are smaller than those observed in Figure 3 and Figure 4.¹⁴ Finally, across all these comparisons, those who report no religious affiliation tend to be among the most tolerant.

According to Corral and Lodola (2010), levels of support for same-sex marriage are higher among women. Given the evidence from Figure 2 that women are more likely to participate in Evangelical movements in Latin America, this suggests the need for a multivariate analysis of this question in order to control for gender and other respondent characteristics. Figures A1-A3 in the appendix display the results of three regression analyses predicting responses to each of the measures shown in Figure 3-5, respectively, with categorical variables for the religion groups (the omitted baseline category is No religion) and the same controls (female, education, wealth, age and urban; and, as well, country fixed effects) that were included in the analysis in Figure 2. From these results, we find that on average Latin American women are significantly more inclined to support gay rights and more tolerant of gays than men. These results contrast with those finding comparatively higher rates of Evangelicalism among women. Thus, it appears that there are two distinct currents with respect to gender and social issues in Latin America: on the one hand, on average, women are more likely to

express more acceptance of gay individuals and their political and social rights; on the other hand, women are also more likely to participate in Evangelical movements, which tend toward lower levels of tolerance and acceptance of gay persons in Latin America.

There is another interesting cross current in Latin American public opinion related to the likelihood of Evangelical identification and tolerance. When the regression analyses in the appendix are run according to each respective age cohort, a linear relationship between a respondent's age and his/her level of tolerance toward gays and gay rights becomes apparent. Younger respondents in Latin America typically express higher levels of tolerance for gays and gay rights. This stands in contrast to earlier analyses in this report, which point to younger populations as more likely to identify as Evangelical. Thus, we again find opposing tendencies: young individuals are more likely to be tolerant but simultaneously more likely to identify as Evangelical, a religious group that is less tolerant when compared to others in the region. Certainly, more research is warranted into the ways in which gender, age, Evangelicalism, and social attitudes intersect.

Finally, I also examined whether the differences in attitudes towards gays among distinct religious groups may be driven by religion's level of importance for an individual. In fact, the AmericasBarometer 2012 data reveal that religion is more important in Evangelicals' lives when compared to Catholics and those in the 'other' category (and, of course, compared to those who identify as having no religion).¹⁵ Yet, even if importance of religion is controlled for in regression analyses predicting tolerance

¹⁴ It is important to keep in mind that the set of countries analyzed in Figure 5 differs from that in Figures 3 and 4 (see Footnote 13).

¹⁵ Q5b asks: "Please, could you tell me how important is religion in your life? [Read options] (1) Very important; (2) Rather important; (3) Not very important; (4) Not at all important." On a rescaled measure from 0 to 100, where higher values correspond to more importance, the mean value for Catholics in Latin America is 81.3; the mean value for Protestants is 90.3; and, the mean value for Evangelicals is 92.3. These averages only reflect the region under study in this report (see Footnote 9).

for gay individuals, results similar to those reported above for the most part hold. That is, Evangelicals as a group still express comparatively lower levels of tolerance for gay individuals (see Appendix Figures B1 and B2; note that for the analysis of support for gay marriage, the distinction between Evangelicals and mainline Protestants narrows in this analysis). Only in the case of acceptance of gay individuals as neighbors does adding the importance of religion measure erode the distinction between Protestants and Evangelicals, with both more likely to be unaccepting of gays as neighbors compared to Catholics, “others”, and those with no religion (see Appendix Figure B3). Thus, importance of religion matters but is not the only factor explaining differences in attitudes towards gays between Evangelicals and other religious (and non-religious) groups in Latin America.

CONCLUSION

It is widely accepted that Evangelicalism has been growing in Latin America over time. Roughly 15% of individuals in Latin America identify with Evangelical denominations, though these rates vary across countries. As Evangelicalism continues to grow in the region, its strength will continue to vary across countries, and we should continue to find differences across sub-groups within the Evangelical category. Evangelical denominations appeal to certain groups within Latin America, including the poor and those younger populations that are perhaps still in the process of forming a strong religious attachment. Evangelical movements also draw a great deal of support from women and those with limited education.

In my analyses of Evangelical attitudes toward gay persons and gay rights, in turn, I found that individuals affiliated with Evangelical churches express the lowest levels of approval for gays being allowed to run for public office and same-sex marriage. These individuals, on average, also express the lowest levels of comfort concerning homosexual neighbors in

their communities, though the gaps across groups narrow in that analysis (and the gap between mainline Protestants and Evangelicals disappears once importance of religion is controlled for in Figure B3). These findings and the aforementioned socioeconomic correlates raise important questions. Principally, given high levels of tolerance among younger populations and women, is it possible that comparatively less tolerant Evangelical denominations will develop along more moderate or liberal lines in the future? If Evangelical churches continue to draw populations more tolerant of gays and gay rights in Latin America, therein lies potential for change in these churches’ socio-political stances. Future work is necessary to determine these populations’ influence within specific denominations, and whether their attitudes remain stable across time spent under an Evangelical identification.

Finally, though not addressed in this report, scholars have observed varying degrees of political participation and interest within Evangelical movements, with significant variation across national borders (Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1997; Stoll 1990; “Overview: Pentecostalism in Latin America”). More work on this topic ought to consider levels of political participation among Evangelicals in Latin America. Although Evangelical movements are characterized by a variety of approaches to political activism, their presence in public life throughout the region cannot be ignored (“Overview: Pentecostalism in Latin America”). Further studies along these lines might then contribute to a better understanding of Evangelical populations’ potential impact on both LGBT policy and the nature of democratic politics across Latin America.¹⁶

¹⁶ Thank you to Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, PhD; Margarita Corral; Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga; Nicole Hinton; Alejandro Diaz-Dominguez; Amy Erica Smith; and the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP team for their insight and support. Any questions concerning shortcomings in the report should be directed to the author.

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Appendix

A. Supplementary Analyses: Predicting Attitudes toward Gay Individuals and Gay Rights with Demographic Measures and Religious Affiliations

Note: For each analysis, country fixed effects are included but not shown; analysis restricted to Latin American countries (see Footnote 7).

Figure A1. Tolerance for the Political Rights of Gay Persons (OLS)

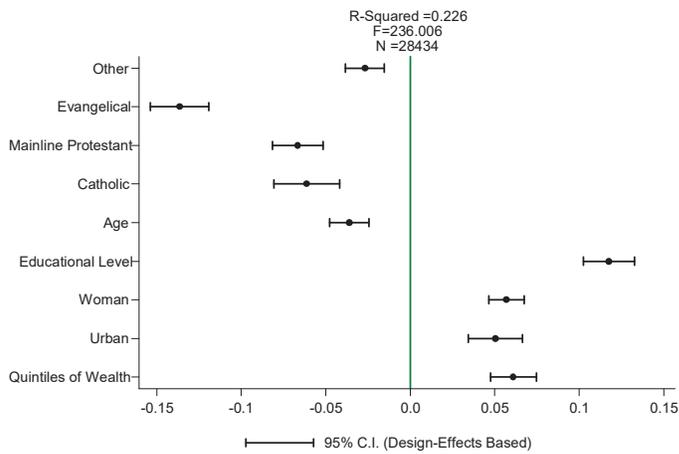


Figure A2. Support for the Gay Marriage (OLS)

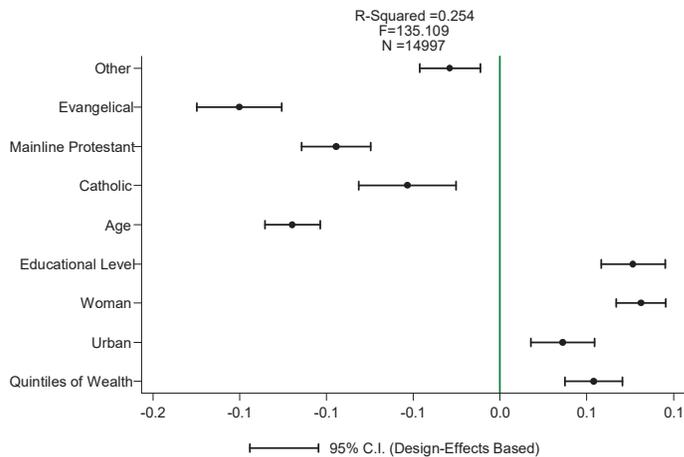
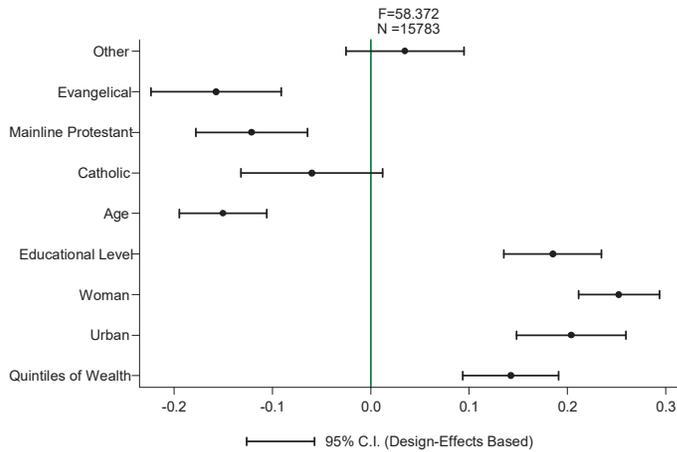


Figure A3. Acceptance of Gay Persons as Neighbors (Logit)

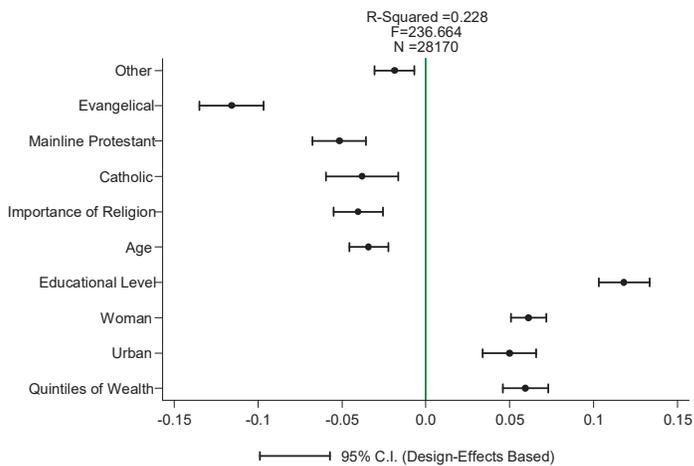


Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2012; dv=dis35aap (neighbors)

B. Supplementary Analyses: Predicting Attitudes toward Gay Individuals and Gay Rights with Demographic Measures and Religious Affiliations, AND Importance of Religion

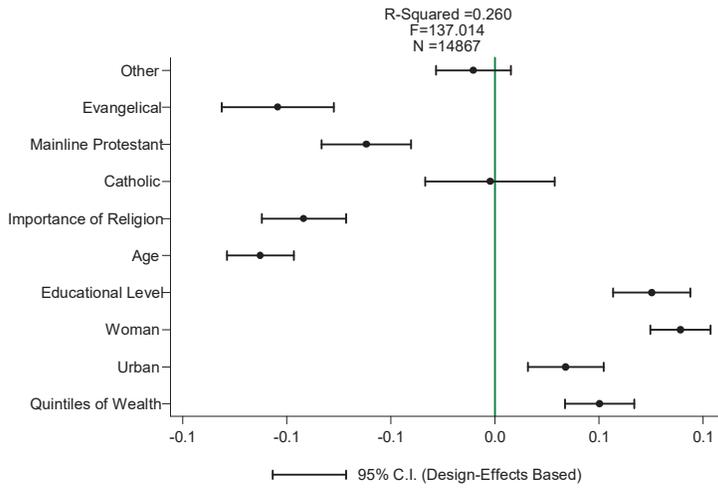
Note: For each analysis, country fixed effects are included but not shown; analysis restricted to Latin American countries (see Footnote 7).

Figure B1. Tolerance for the Political Rights of Gay Persons (OLS)



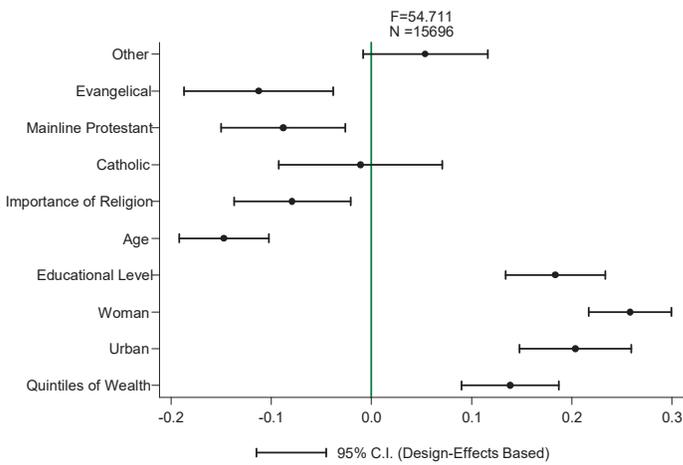
Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2012; v47; dv=d5r (office)

Figure B2. Support for the Gay Marriage (OLS)



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2012; v47; dv=d6 (marriage)

Figure B3. Acceptance of Gay Persons as Neighbors (Logit)



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 95

The Gender Gap in Politics in Guatemala: 20 Years of Advances and Setbacks

By Dinorah Azpuru

dinorah.azpuru@wichita.edu

Wichita State University

Executive Summary. This *Insights* report examines the gender gap in politics in Guatemala using data gathered over the past 20 years. We find significant improvements in certain areas: overall participation in politics has increased, with both men and women perceiving greater levels of freedom to exercise their political rights. Despite these advances, a gender gap still exists. Women have substantially lower levels of political participation than men, and feel less free to vote, participate in community groups, join demonstrations, and, in particular, run for office. These differences in perceived freedom, then, suggest that much more work needs to be done in Guatemala before gender equality in politics can be achieved.

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

www.AmericasBarometer.org

The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) has been conducting surveys in Guatemala on a regular basis since 1993. The 2012 survey represented the tenth study carried out in the country during that period, a milestone in LAPOP's history.¹ This *Insights* report examines these rich data to focus on trends in the development of women's political rights and political participation in the country. We find evidence of progress but also many indications that women are still unequal participants in Guatemala's democracy.²

I. Democracy in Guatemala

Electoral democracy in Guatemala began in 1985, when the first civilian president in decades was elected (Azpuru et. al 2007).³ Though free, fair and competitive elections are an essential aspect of any conception of democracy (Dahl 1971, Diamond and Lipset 1989) most scholars emphasize that for democracy to deepen within a society, all citizens' political rights must be respected, with inclusion and equality of rights to participate as a *sine qua non* condition of any democracy (Przeworski 1991, Diamond 1999). In Guatemala, as in many other emerging democracies, a reduction in the gender gap in political participation has become a critical marker for evaluating that country's democratization process. Taking advantage of the nearly two decades of LAPOP survey data from Guatemala, this report offers an assessment of progress and remaining

¹ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. In the case of Guatemala, USAID has consistently supported the project since 1993.

² Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. On the topic of women's political participation in the Americas see *Insights* number 78.

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

³ Some scholars consider that democracy did not take hold in Guatemala until after the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, but formal democracy began with the election of Vinicio Cerezo in 1985.

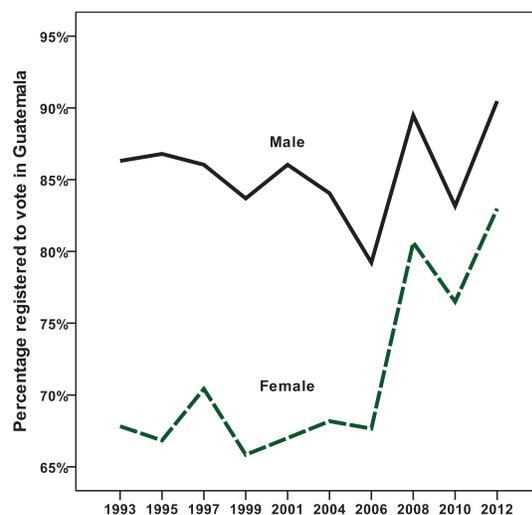
challenges the country faces in working toward gender equality in politics.

A Gender Gap in Voting?

The 1985 Guatemalan Constitution specifically recognizes full equality of opportunity and responsibility for men and women (Article 4). In turn Article 136 stipulates full equality in terms of citizens' participation in politics, from voting to running for office. In theory, then, gender equality in politics has been a founding principle of Guatemala's democracy since its inception. However, tremendous disparities in participation rates and views on political freedoms have persisted between men and women since we began collecting data in the early 1990s.

As we can see in Figure 1, women have always trailed men in terms of their voter registration rates, even though men and women have the same opportunity to register upon reaching the age of 18. We see from this figure, though, that the gap in registration rates has improved substantially over the past twenty years, with the 2012 gap a mere 6 percentage points.

Figure 1. Gender Gap in Voter Registration 1993-2012

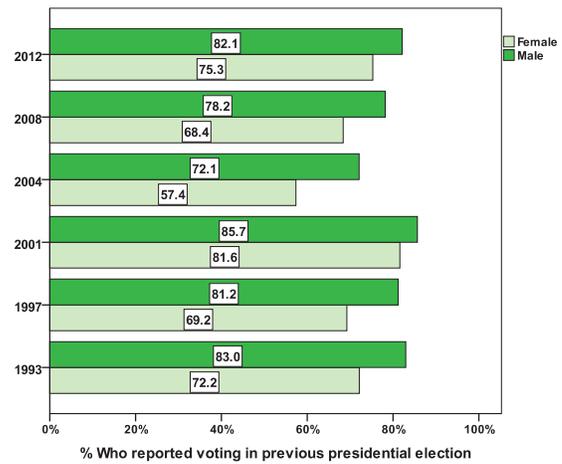


Source: © AmericasBarometer, Guatemala

In an effort to better understand who registers to vote and why some Guatemalans do not, we ran a multivariate analysis in order to examine the socioeconomic and demographic determinants of voter registration. Figure 2 displays the results of this analysis, revealing that women, younger Guatemalans, and those with darker skin color are all less likely to register.⁴

Respondents who indicated that they were registered to vote were then asked if they had voted in the (first round) of the previous presidential election. Figure 3 shows only those years in which the survey was administered within two years (or less) of a presidential election in order to minimize misreporting.⁵ In this figure, the participation gap between men and women is clear, but again, we see an improvement over time—in 1993 the gap was over 10%, but by 2012 had dropped to 6.8%. The difference in turnout rates among men and women, though, remains statistically significant for all years.

Figure 3. Voter Turnout by Gender in Guatemala (First round, in year closest after presidential election)

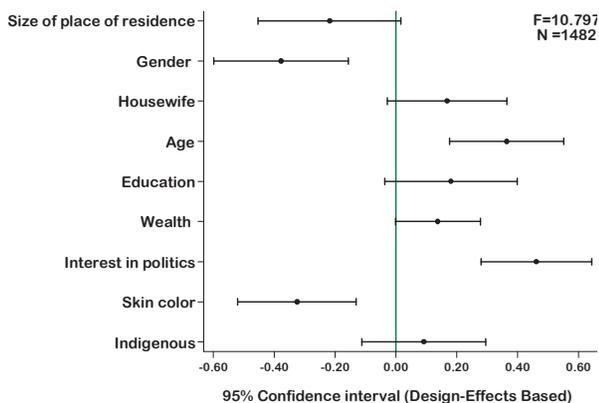


Source: © AmericasBarometer, Guatemala

Gaps in the Perception of Freedom to Exercise Political Rights

Beyond casting a vote, it is important to examine whether Guatemalan citizens feel equally free to exercise their political rights, or whether the gender gap we see in participation also exists in the extent to which men and women perceive themselves to be free to participate in their political system. Such perceptions of political freedom can be critical in understanding why some individuals choose to participate in politics. Do Guatemalan women feel as if they are fully free to participate in politics in any way they wish or do they perceive the political playing field to be uneven? A series of questions tapping this issue have been asked in Guatemala since 1993.⁶ The questions ask if respondents feel free to vote, to participate in groups to solve

Figure 2. Determinants of Voter Registration in Guatemala in 2012



Source: © AmericasBarometer 2012

⁴ The graph shows standardized coefficients (dots) from a logistic regression analysis, with the horizontal lines capturing the 95% confidence interval for the estimated coefficient.

⁵ The presidential elections included would be those of Jorge Serrano in 1991, Álvaro Arzú in 1995, Alfonso Portillo in 1999, Oscar Berger in 2003, Álvaro Colom in 2007 and Otto Pérez Molina in 2011.

⁶If you decided to participate in the activities that I will mention, would you do it without fear, with some fear or with a lot of fear

DER1. Participate in solving community problems.

DER2. Vote in a national election.

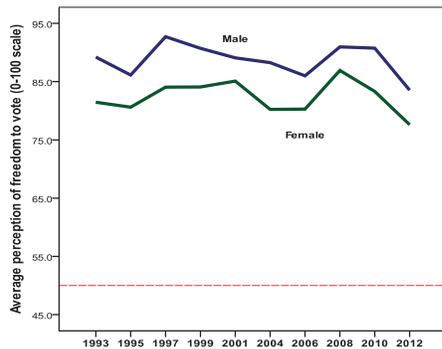
DER3. Participate in a peaceful demonstration.

DER4. Run for office.

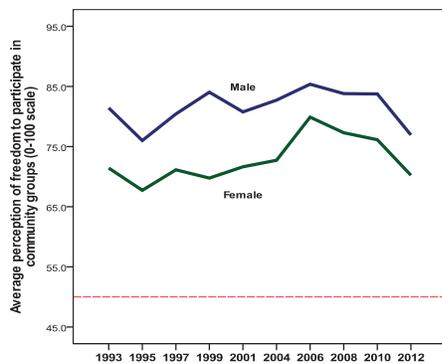
community problems, to participate in a peaceful demonstration, and to run for office. Responses were recoded into a 0-100 scale, with a score of 100 representing those individuals with no fear of participating (a high level of perceived freedom) and 0 those with a lot of fear of participating in politics. Figures 4 and 5 show the results. In all cases a reference line has been drawn at the 50-point mark.

Three general findings emerge from these figures. First it is evident that the gender gap exists across all the distinct forms of participation rights. These differences are all statistically significant and suggest a widespread tendency among women to be more hesitant about engaging in politics than their male counterparts.

Figure 4. Perception of Freedom to Vote and to Participate in Community Groups (1993-2012)



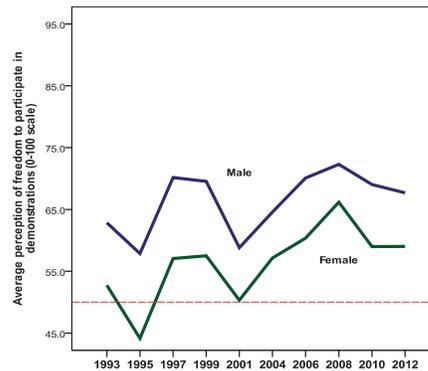
Source: © Americas Barometer, Guatemala



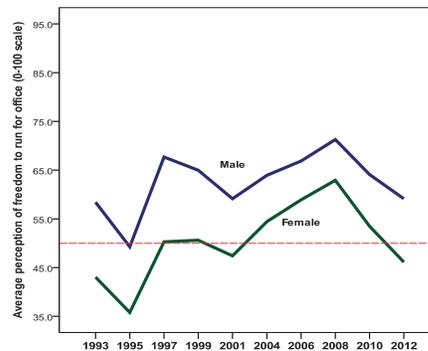
Source: © AmericasBarometer, Guatemala

Secondly, this gap is particularly notable in areas of participation such as joining a demonstration or running for office. The perception of freedom to vote and the perception of freedom to participate in groups have consistently been higher over the years than the freedom to demonstrate and to run for office.

Figure 5. Perception of Freedom to Participate in Demonstrations and to Run for Office (1993-2012)



Source: ©AmericasBarometer, Guatemala



Source: © AmericasBarometer, Guatemala

Finally, despite the persistence of the gap between males and females along these dimensions, over the past twenty years a general trend of increased feelings of political freedoms for all Guatemalans has emerged. Though this trend reversed somewhat in 2012 more data are necessary to determine if this decline represents a reversal of the longer term positive movement in perceived political freedoms.

Differences among Women

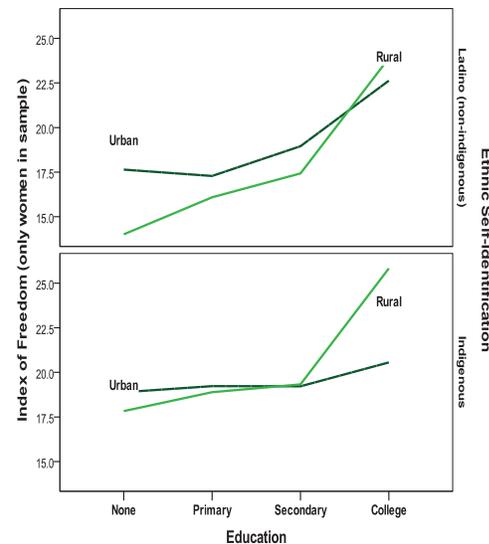
Further analysis of the data allows us to explore those factors that help explain which women tend to feel more freedom to participate in politics. We create a summary index of freedom by adding together responses to the four political rights items mentioned above⁷. When a regression analysis of the 2012 data (Table 2 in the Appendix) is performed only using women in the sample, one can see that important differences emerge: women with more education and those who live in larger cities are more likely to perceive higher levels of freedom to exert their political rights. Interestingly, indigenous women also emerge as more likely to feel free to participate in politics than their non-indigenous counterparts. Age and wealth do not appear to be significant predictors of the perception of freedom among women.

Figure 6 displays some of those differences in the perception of freedom among Guatemalan women. Among non-indigenous women, those living in urban areas are more likely to feel freer; but education levels play a significant role as well. In both in urban and rural areas, women with higher levels of education are more likely to feel free to participate in politics than women with lower levels of education. In fact there is virtually no difference among educated women who live in rural areas and those who live in urban areas. Given the conventional view that individuals in rural areas tend to be less engaged with politics, this finding suggests the power of education to bridge that urban-rural divide in political attitudes and behaviors, at least among women.

Women now vote almost as much as men, but women are still at disadvantage in several aspects, including the perception of freedom to participate in politics.

⁷ The higher numbers represent more perception of freedom.

Figure 6. Differences in the Perception of Freedom Among Women in Guatemala in 2012



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2012

With regards to indigenous women, the impact of education is only evident in rural areas. For indigenous women living in urban areas there is only a slight increase in the perception of freedom for those with some college education compared to those with less education. In rural areas, however, having a secondary education, and particularly some college education, has an important influence in terms of the perception of freedom. Educated indigenous women living in rural areas are significantly more likely to feel free to exercise their political rights than their less educated counterparts. Indeed, when compared to other groups of women, college-educated indigenous women living in rural areas of Guatemala have the highest average perception of freedom. The detailed results can be seen in Table 4 in the Appendix.

Again, these findings suggest the great potential of continued advances in Guatemala's education system, among other benefits, to bridge the gender gap in political engagement that has characterized the country since the arrival of democracy.

Conclusion

This *Insights* report has examined the gender gap in politics in Guatemala. We see that across the board there have been improvements overtime – men and women in Guatemala now participate more in politics than in the past and perceive greater levels of freedom to exercise their political rights.

We also see, however, that there have existed, and still remain, important differences between males and females in the country, with women showing lower levels of participation and perceived political freedom. One point of optimism from this report concerns the role of education in bridging this political participation gap. If we accept that this gender divide in politics is an obstacle for the deepening of democracy in Guatemala, then the strides made by educated women in both the urban and rural sectors of the country to participate more and feel more comfortable with such participation suggest that continued advances in the education of women are necessary for advancing Guatemalan democracy as well.

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Appendix

Table 1. Logistic Regression for Predicting Voter Registration in Guatemala in 2012

	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
Indigenous	.1890027	.1744497
Skin color	-.253901*	.0654311
Interest in politics	.0160923*	.0033209
Wealth	.0957542	.0653071
Education	.0384025	.0236482
Age	.2428192*	.0634747
Housewife	.4198604	.2260846
Woman	-.7538597*	.1852908
Size of place of residence	-.1338667*	.0597592
Constant	2.332902	.5412341

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at ** p<0.05.

Table 2. Regression for Predicting the Index of Perception of Freedom for Women in Guatemala in 2012

	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
Age	.134	.224
Education	1.531*	.499
Indigenous	2.492*	.695
Size of place of residence	.626*	.206
Wealth	-.048	.246
Constant	14.215*	1.203

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at ** p<0.05.
Only women respondents were included in this analysis.

Table 3. ANOVA Test for Gender Gap in Politics in Guatemala

Political participation	Male	Female	Difference (Chi Square test)
<i>Registered to vote</i>			
1993	86.3 %	67.8 %	57.61*
2012	90.5 %	83.0 %	20.02*
<i>Voting turnout</i>			
1993	83.0 %	72.2 %	15.23*
2012	82.1 %	75.3 %	10.47*
Perception of freedom to exercise political rights (average 0-100 scale)	Male	Female	F-test
<i>To vote</i>			
1993	89.2	81.4	19.95*
2012	76.9	70.2	15.13*
<i>To run for office</i>			
1993	58.4	43.0	32.64*
2012	59.1	46.1	40.61*
<i>To participate in peaceful demonstrations</i>			
1993	62.9	52.7	16.57*
2012	67.6	59.0	20.80*
<i>To participate in community groups</i>			
1993	81.4	71.4	24.77*
2012	76.9	70.3	15.13*

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at ** p<0.05.

Table 4. ANOVA Test for Differences in Perception of Freedom Among Women in Guatemala (averages in scale 0-40)

Gender Group	Average Perceived Freedom (0-40)
<i>Ethnic Self-Identification*</i>	
Indigenous women	18.97
Ladino women (non-indigenous)	17.88
<i>Education*</i>	
None	17.18
Primary	17.54
Secondary	18.76
College	23.05
<i>Size of Residence*</i>	
Capital (Guatemala City)	20.24
Large city	18.30
Medium city	17.07
Small city	17.67
Rural area	17.68
<i>Age</i>	
18-25	17.90
26-35	19.35
36-45	17.42
46-55	19.15
56-65	18.11
66 +	15.66
<i>Wealth</i>	
First quintile	17.21
Second quintile	19.66
Third quintile	18.48
Fourth quintile	17.94
Fifth quintile (wealthier)	18.46

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at ** p<0.05.

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 96

Social Protest in Chile: Causes and Likely Consequences

By Juan Pablo Luna

jpluna@icp.puc.cl

Instituto de Ciencia Política, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Sergio Toro Maureira

storo@uct.cl

Universidad Católica de Temuco

Executive Summary. In 2011 widespread student protests in Chile made international headlines. In this *Insights* report we analyze Chilean political opinion in the aftermath of those protests. The results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey discussed in this report seem to convey a clear message: the legitimacy of political institutions is very low in Chile. Moreover, a younger generation that is progressively gaining majority status in the country has contributed to increased incidents of collective action around a demand for political and socioeconomic change. Such demands have resonated broadly with society at large, shaping protest movements, influencing relevant policy debates, and leading to widespread calls for political and constitutional change. Our analysis suggests that unless the Chilean political system is able to effectively respond to these demands, the country may continue to see similar protest movements in the future.

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

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Much like the wave of protests that swept Brazil in 2013, Chile's student movement made international headlines in 2011 by taking their political dissatisfaction to the streets. At home, the massive strikes, street demonstrations, and occupation of educational facilities put President Sebastian Piñera's government on the defensive. Although initially centered on education, the students' demands came to resonate with popular discontent with the political establishment and unfulfilled promises of Chile's unequal socioeconomic model. "Street politics" rapidly diffused across issue areas and across the country as legitimate and ultimately effective ways to extract concessions from a "cornered" government (and political class). In contrast, 2012 was relatively quiet and this might be interpreted as signaling that Chileans have reverted again to "normal" modes of political behavior. In this *Insights* report,¹ with data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP,² we provide an alternative interpretation.

Our argument has two parts. First, we will argue that the wave of protests that ensued in 2011 has had a significant impact on Chilean public opinion. Those effects are visible on at least three fronts: public support for the political system and its main institutions (i.e., political parties and Congress, which we do not report here³); the country's public policy agenda; and citizens' preferences regarding political change and the instruments to pursue it. Such emerging trends are similar to those

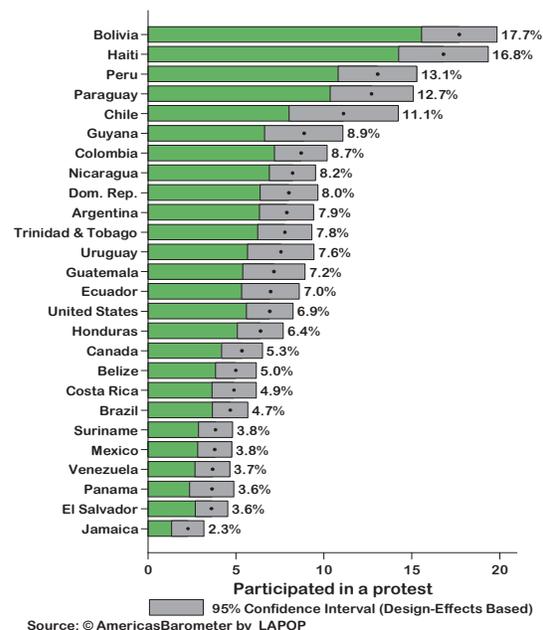
¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³These trends are reported in Chile's 2012 AmericasBarometer country report, which can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/>.

Figure 1. Rates of Protest, 2012



observed in other countries that have witnessed rapid and drastic political change and the virtual collapse of traditional party systems (e.g., those in the Andean region in the 1990s and early 2000s). They also mirror in many ways patterns we are beginning to see in Brazil (e.g., Moseley & Layton 2013).

Second, we will argue that challenges to the legitimacy of Chile's political system, while catalyzed by the 2011 protest wave, are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Institutional safeguards that isolate the political system from societal demands are key to explaining this outcome. Yet, the findings reported in this note suggest that institutional stability comes at a cost: an increasing split between civil society and the "political class", which faces increasing challenges in terms of translating citizens' preferences into public policy outcomes.

We begin by analyzing the relative incidence of social protest in the case of Chile. Based on the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer, Figure 1 reveals the percentage of the population in each country that reported having protested (at least

once) in the twelve months preceding the date of the interview.⁴

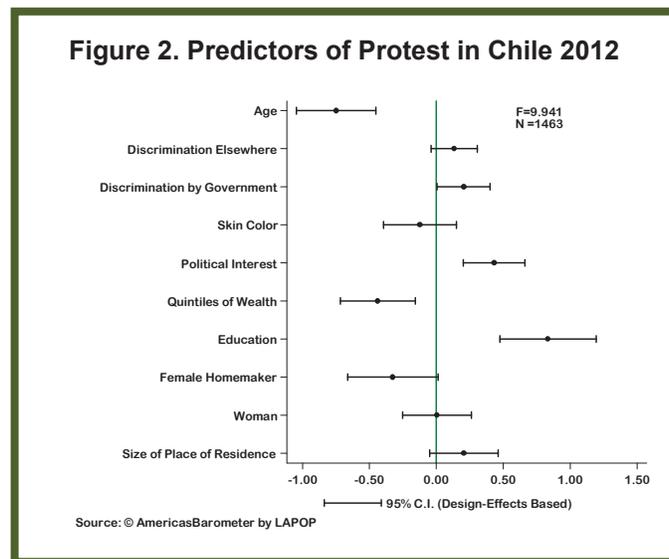
As shown in Figure 1, the proportion of the population that participates in protests is relatively small in all countries. Yet, in relative terms, Chile ranked among the cases with the highest percentage of protest participants, with about 11% of survey respondents reporting participation in at least one protest. Moreover, when compared to the results observed in the 2010 *AmericasBarometer* (Luna & Zechmeister, 2010), the change observed in Chile is striking. In 2010, Chile was among the four cases in the region in which protest was least prevalent: only 4.7% of respondents indicated having protested in the prior year. This short-term shift is fully consistent with the political events that unfolded in the country in 2011.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Predictors of Protest Activity in Chile

As a first step, we assess who was more likely to have reported protesting in the 2012 *AmericasBarometer* survey of Chile. Across Latin America, protest events have occurred across a series of issue-areas in recent years (PAPEP/PNUD, 2011). However, the nature of protest participation is typically case-specific. Therefore, we present the results of a logistic model that seeks to identify significant socioeconomic and demographic predictors of protest activity in Chile.

The standardized results of the analysis are presented in Figure 2. The estimated effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable is represented by a dot. If the dot and its corresponding bars, which indicate the 95% confidence interval, fall to the left of the 0 line, then the relationship is considered both

negative and statistically significant; if the dot and bars fall to the right of the 0 line, the relationship is considered positive and statistically significant. If the dot or its corresponding bars overlap with the 0 line, the predictor is not statistically significant.



As observed in Figure 2, age and wealth are significantly and negatively associated with protest activity in Chile. Conversely, interest in politics and education are significantly and positively associated with protest activity. This means that *ceteris paribus*, those who are younger, those with lower levels of wealth⁵, those more interested in politics, and those with greater levels of education were most likely to have reported participating in a protest during 2011 (the year prior to the survey).

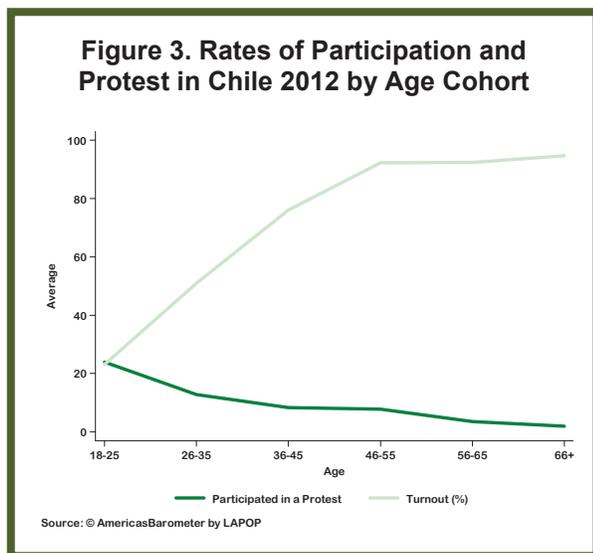
Two of these results are of particular interest in the context of Chilean democracy: the political engagement of youth and the relative impact of social class (approximated with the wealth measure) on the propensity of engaging in protest activities. Whereas the latter implies the politicization of distributive issues in Chilean society, the former partially counteracts the claim that younger cohorts are politically

⁴ The measure is PROT3: In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march? Fieldwork in Chile took place between March and May of 2012.

⁵ For more on how the income measure is created, see Córdova 2009.

disengaged (Luna & Seligson, 2006; Riquelme, 1999; Toro, 2007, 2008). In this regard, taken together with recent political events, the evidence of the 2012 AmericasBarometer, suggests the need to amend conventional understandings of the political engagement profile of the younger generation of Chileans.

Figure 3 compares different age cohorts in Chile regarding their propensity to engage in electoral politics (through voting in elections) and in social protest. These types of political participation seem to behave as mirror images. Those age cohorts that participate more in electoral politics seem to protest less, and those that have participated in protests recently tend to have voted much less frequently. Interestingly, though, the youngest cohort appears to participate in protest and in voting at equal rates.



For all Chileans, then, and particularly the younger generation, protest participation in 2011 appears to have been a product of dissatisfaction with the country's formal representative institutions. In this way, it was instrumental in activating the voice and collective action of those that felt less represented by the established party system and the Chilean socioeconomic model, and those who had, until 2011, shown the lowest

levels of political engagement. In the remainder of this report, we explore the possible consequences of this wave of protests for the country.

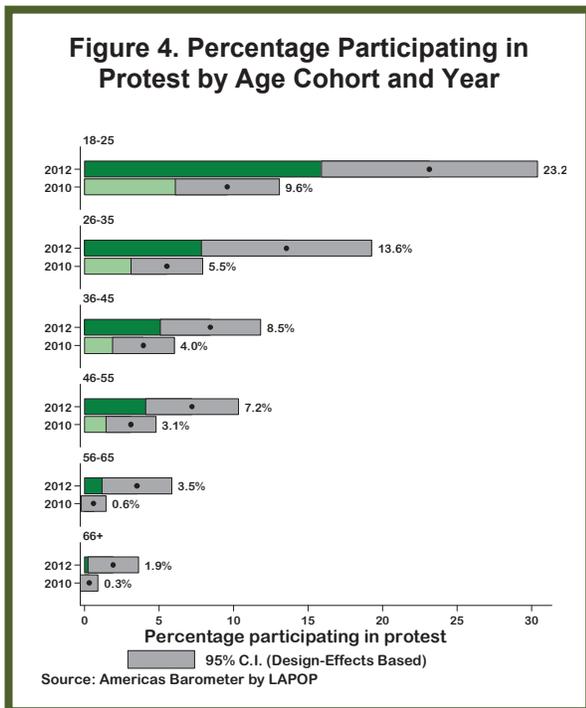
The Political Aftermath of the 2011 Protests

The protest wave of 2011 had various political effects, including the emergence of new political leadership and organizations that will likely become key political actors in years to come. Yet, four political consequences are of particular interest with respect to the broader legacies of the 2011 protest wave.

First, the protest wave likely generated demonstration effects, leading to an increase in protest events across a series of other policy areas (e.g., the local movements of Calama and Aysén in the past two years). Second, protest activity has also diffused across age cohorts. To illustrate this trend, Figure 4 compares the reported protest activity by members of different age cohorts in the 2010 and the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey. Whereas protest is more extensive and has grown more among the youth, it also appears to have diffused to older cohorts.⁶

In this way, protest activity seems to have catalyzed and reinforced the previously "inconsequential" (yet growing) discontent with political and representative institutions. As we find in analyses not presented here, the percentage of party sympathizers in Chile is among the lowest in South America, and their presence has declined steadily in recent years.

⁶These results should be read carefully because the absolute number of "protestors" in each age cohort is small. Therefore, the graph illustrates an observed trend, but the observed percentages for each age cohort and year do not display statistically significant differences (the error bars overlap for different years and the same cohort).



Third, yet related to the previous two trends, the 2011 protest wave seems to have yielded the articulation of a “social movement” that seeks political and social change in the country, and that is prepared to participate in both institutional (via the creation of new electoral vehicles) and non-institutional political arenas. Current public opinion on the need for a constitutional reform in the country is perhaps the starkest manifestation of such claims for “change”. In 2012, the AmericasBarometer’s Chile questionnaire included an item that asked about the perceived need for constitutional reform:

CHI60. [W]e have had a debate on the need to introduce in Chile a reform to the Constitution, aiming at changing the political functioning of the country... To what degree do you agree with the idea of introducing such reform?

As shown in Figure 5, more than 50% of respondents indicated they “agree” with the need to introduce a constitutional reform, while another nearly 20% said they “strongly agree” with the proposed reforms. In the meantime, only close to 4% of respondents openly disagreed with such a proposal. A follow-up

question asked respondents whether an eventual reform should be discussed by Congress (as a representative institution) or adjudicated through popular vote over different reform proposals. Although unconstitutional in the frame of the country’s current legal framework, the “popular vote” alternative obtained close to 90% of survey responses. Taken together, then, these results can be seen as another reflection of widespread citizen distrust with the “political class”.

Fourth, and finally, the protest wave also helped reshape the country’s policy agenda. Whereas in previous years, education was not seen as a serious problem in Chile (Luna & Seligson, 2006; Luna & Zechmeister, 2010), in 2012 this issue increased in salience among the population (respondents who identified education as the most important issue for the country jumped from less than 3% in 2010 to about 10% in 2012). Moreover, as depicted in Figure 6, Chilean citizens’ perceptions regarding the quality of public schools in the country is on average the lowest of all the Americas. It seems likely that these opinions will influence the policy-agenda (and parents’ decisions regarding schooling options for their children) in the years to come.

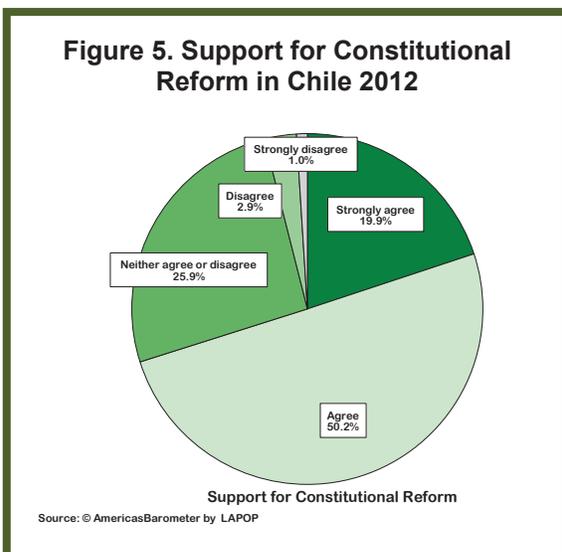
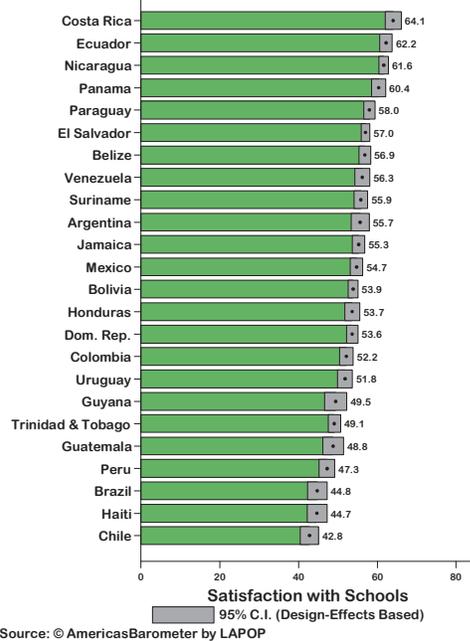


Figure 6. Satisfaction with Schools, 2012



What Lies Ahead for Chile?

The results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey in Chile discussed in this *Insights* report suggest that a newly politicized and active younger generation is at the forefront of a growing reliance among Chileans on contentious politics as a means of expressing its political voice. These new forms of political expression appear to be driven by demands for fundamental political and socioeconomic change and are becoming a more common feature of the Chilean political landscape. Whereas in the past Chile appeared to be relatively immune to the waves of protest that swept through its neighbors, it now seem that protest is quickly becoming part of Chileans' menu of political participation options.

From such a portrait one could assume that political change is forthcoming in Chile. Yet, that might not be the case. The current constitutional framework of the country, as well as the informal institutions through which the "political elite" has ensured its own reproduction (Altman & Luna, 2011) can still

succeed in isolating the formal political process from societal demands in the short to medium run. Change is thus likely to be protracted. Yet, Chile's contemporary political challenges do not seem likely to disappear any time soon and given the demographics of those on the front lines of recent protests, we should not expect such forms of collective action to go away any time soon either.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Protest in Chile 2012

	Standardized Coefficient	Standard Error
Size of Place of Residence	0.142	(0.131)
Woman	0.020	(0.128)
Female Homemaker	-0.415	(0.173)
Education	0.840*	(0.179)
Quintiles of Wealth	-0.411*	(0.143)
Political Interest	0.446*	(0.118)
Skin Color	-0.141	(0.141)
Discrimination by Government	0.188	(0.104)
Discrimination Elsewhere	0.117	(0.088)
Age	-0.735*	(0.149)
Constant	-3.026	(0.220)
<i>Number of Observations</i>	1463	
<i>Prob>F</i>	0.000	

Note: Coefficients marked with an asterisk are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, two tailed.

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Explaining Evaluations of the National Economy in Latin America and the Caribbean

By Oscar Castorena

oscar.castorena@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. Emerging from the 2008-09 global financial crisis relatively unscathed, many Latin American and Caribbean countries have experienced significant economic growth in recent years. Yet across all of these countries, citizens hold dramatically different views of the state of the national economy. This *Insights* report explores why individuals have differing evaluations of the national economy and the implications of these differing views for democratic accountability. Using data from the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey, I find that one's personal economic situation is the most powerful predictor of her views of the national economy but that this view is also colored by politics, in particular whether or not the individual supports or voted for the incumbent.

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www.AmericasBarometer.org

Critical to democratic accountability is that citizens are able to assess the performance of their governments and, based on that evaluation, either support or punish the incumbent at election time. It is therefore important to understand how individuals formulate their evaluations of government performance, in particular that of the national economy (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). Interestingly, individuals within the same national economic community often differ in their assessments of how things are going. While some of this variation may be due to the prioritization of different indicators or different economic experiences, other explanations lie in politics.

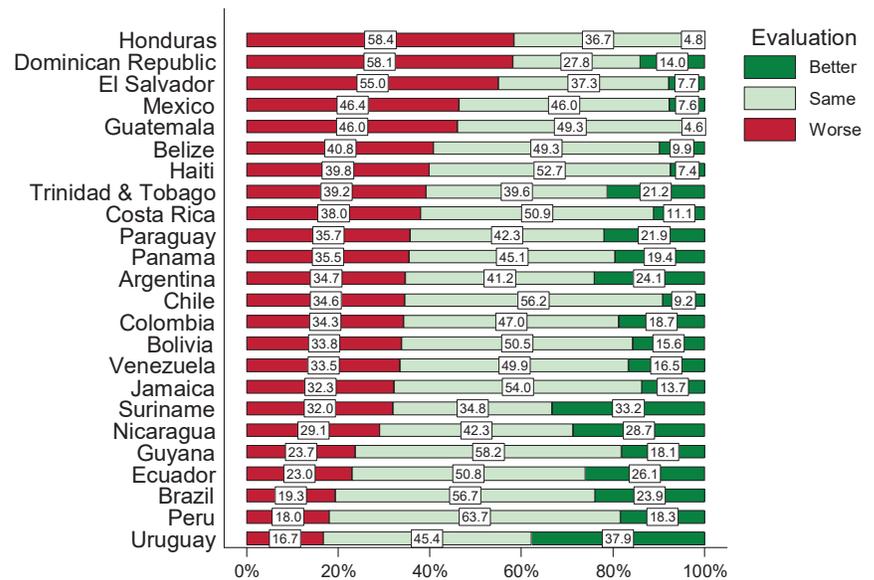
In this *Insights* report,¹ I first examine how evaluations of the economy vary along socioeconomic and demographic lines. I then extend this model to include personal economic, informational, and political factors. The key finding here is that the most decisive factor driving evaluations of the national economy is an individual's own economic situation. I also find, though, that national economic evaluations are filtered by an individual's partisan biases. The end result, then, is a complex mixture of one's own personal economic conditions and more subjective partisan biases, each serving as a basis for citizens' views of the national economy.

The key measure in this report is taken from the 2012 AmericasBarometer² survey, which

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Figure 1. Varying Retrospective Evaluations of the National Economy



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

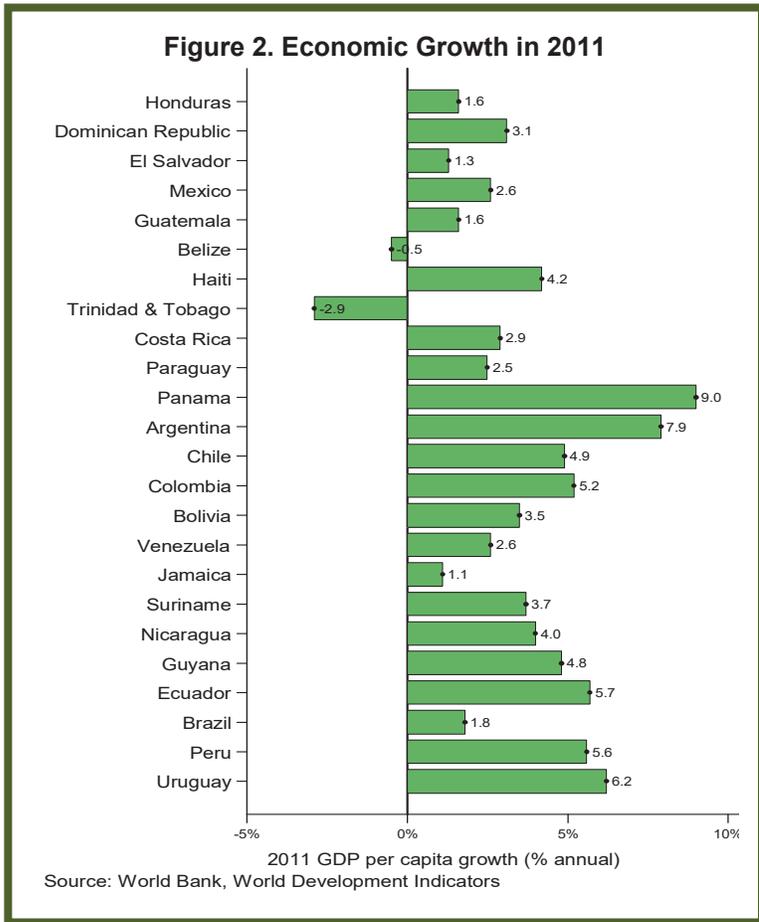
asked respondents from 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries the following question:

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?”³

Figure 1 shows a bar chart that presents the share of respondents who believed the economy was doing worse, the same, or better within each country in the region. The patterns range from predominantly negative evaluations in the Central American countries of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico to significantly more positive evaluations in Uruguay, which had the highest percentage of respondents saying the economy was doing better than the previous year (37.9%).

Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University.

³ The U.S. and Canada were also included in the study, but are excluded from analyses in this report. Non-response for the sample as a whole is 2.2%.



This latter result in particular maps well onto recent economic events in these countries. As Figure 2 shows, Uruguay experienced significantly better growth in 2011 than the Central American countries mentioned above. In short, the aggregation of Latin Americans' evaluations does seem to roughly capture the region's pattern of economic growth in 2011 and the particular countries that did relatively well that year. Yet, some countries with the highest rates of growth in the region, such as Panama and Argentina, only received lukewarm evaluations from citizens, with over one-third of respondents in those two countries viewing the national economy as worse off in 2012 than it was in 2011 despite the impressive macroeconomic figures.

Figure 1 also shows that there is substantial variation across the range of responses within each country despite the fact that the respondents reside within the same national economy. While there are a few countries in which one evaluation achieves a majority, in no case is there a clear consensus in how the economy is performing. The remainder of this report seeks to find answers to the question of what leads one individual to believe that the economy is doing well, whereas another individual in the same context believes the economy is doing poorly.

Individual Characteristics as Predictors of Evaluations of the National Economy

Are socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of individuals important predictors of their evaluations of the economy? Seligson et al. (2012) found that perceptions of severe economic crisis were higher among those with lower household wealth and women. To test the relevance of wealth and gender, along with age, education, and size of place of residence⁴ in predicting evaluations of the national economy, I use Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis. The dependent variable is based on the survey item discussed above. The response levels were coded from 0 ("Worse") to 50 ("Same") to 100 ("Better").⁵

⁴ Size of respondent's city or town of residence is coded as a five-category variable with 1 indicating a rural area, 2 signifying a small city, 3 indicating a medium sized city, 4 meaning a large city, and 5 meaning the national capital or metropolitan area. These categories were defined according to the definition in each country's census. Educational level is measured from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating that an individual has no education, 2 indicating primary schooling, 3 indicating secondary schooling, and 4 indicating that an individual has some amount of higher education.

⁵ Since the dependent variable is measured with three response categories that have ordinal but not cardinal values, I ran the same model with an ordered logit. The results support the same conclusions as those presented above. Country-level dummy variables are included in the regression model but are not shown here due to space limitations.

Figure 3 shows the normalized regression coefficients of the various socioeconomic and demographic variables' effects on evaluations of the national economy. From this figure we see that males, wealthier respondents, and those with high levels of education tend to offer more positive assessments of the economy while older respondents hold more negative views of the economy.

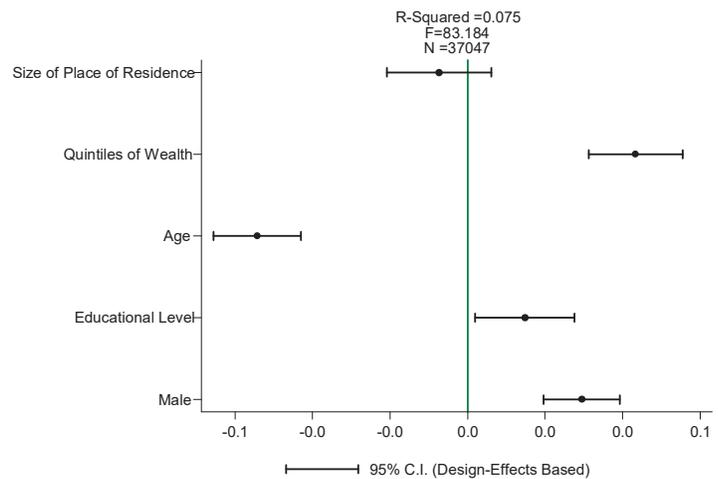
Taken together, these findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that those with privileged positions in society (the wealthier, the more educated, and males) tend to have more positive evaluations of the economy in both good economic times and bad (see e.g., Seligson et al. 2012).

One implication is that a respondent's personal experiences seem to play an important role in determining how they assess the economy's performance. I explore this relationship in greater depth in the following section, extending the model to include respondents' personal economic experiences, information consumption patterns, and political leanings.

Information and Political Factors

A likely source of variation in people's evaluations of the economy are the differences in the information sources upon which they rely when making such an evaluation. The first, and perhaps most important, source of such information is an individual's personal economic situation. This "hard bit of data" is available and accessible to everyone (Fiorina 1981, 5). While it may be difficult to understand or gather objective information on the state of the national economy, people are well aware of economic fluctuations in their own lives. Thus, when a person is asked to think about the condition of the national economy, the most readily available information will likely be based on her own economic experiences. In the United States, Funk and Garcia-Monet (1997)

Figure 3. Socioeconomic and Demographic Model of Evaluations of the National Economy



found that national evaluations are partially derived from one's personal financial situation. This leads to the expectation that in Latin America and the Caribbean, so-called "pocketbook evaluations" should be essential for understanding an individual's assessment of the national economy.

However, most people realize that their personal experiences cannot capture an entire country's economic situation. In order to make a more accurate judgment of aggregate economic events, an individual will often seek out external information about economic conditions outside of her own life. For many people, this entails consuming information from different media sources (television, newspapers, radio, etc.). Since news consumption provides information about aggregate economic events, I control for an individual's level of news consumption in the model that follows.⁶

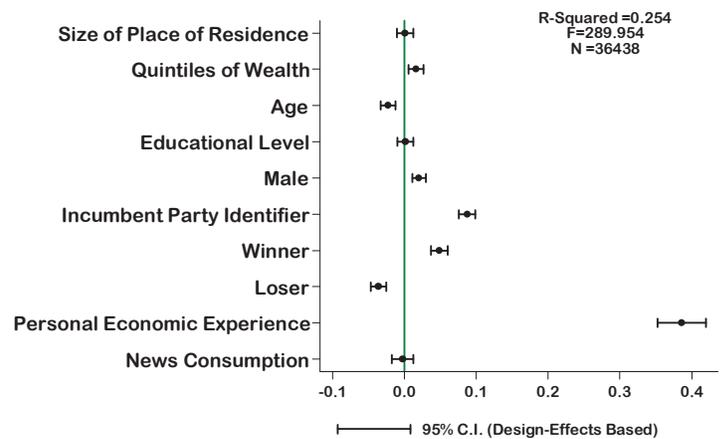
⁶ Because we cannot accurately measure the content of the news a person is exposed to, we must assume the news media in general will allow an individual to make a more informed assessment of the national economy. This assumption, though, does not allow for a directional hypothesis given the cross-national scope of the analysis – that is, a more informed assessment of the Guatemalan economy may contribute to a negative assessment by a

Aside from the informational sources on which individuals base their assessments of the national economy, there are also political factors that can lead people to have different evaluations of similar economic conditions. Here I focus on the role of partisanship and the distinction between electoral winners and losers. Partisanship has been found to shape the way individuals evaluate political objects and objective facts (Bartels 2002). A person who identifies with a party will have biased evaluations depending on how the issue relates to their party. With regards to the economy, a sympathizer with the incumbent party may be biased towards a more positive evaluation of the national economy than someone who does not hold such an attachment. In the United States, Duch et al. (2000) found that evaluations of the national economy are not purely objective but instead vary systematically along partisan lines. Though Latin America and the Caribbean tend to have weaker party systems than the United States, we should still find evidence of this partisan filter among respondents, where identification with the incumbent party should be associated with a more positive evaluation of the national economy's performance.

Similar to the role of partisanship, the difference between electoral winners and losers can be a source of variation in economic evaluations. Anderson et al. (2005) find that individuals who vote for the winning and losing parties in a national (presidential or legislative) election differ substantially in their subsequent evaluations of the political system, with winners viewing such things as the fairness of elections, the responsiveness of government, and the legitimacy of the political system in a much more positive light than those who voted for a losing candidate. This effect may also apply to the economic system, with losers having more negative evaluations and winners having more positive evaluations.

well-informed respondent while high levels of news consumption in Uruguay should produce a more positive view of the economy.

Figure 4. An Informational and Political Model of Evaluations of the National Economy



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Including the effect of electoral winners and losers (that is, those who voted for the incumbent and those who did not) is particularly important in Latin America and the Caribbean, where in many contexts partisan identities are not widespread or strongly held. Yet, lower levels of partisanship do not preclude the possibility of political factors influencing economic evaluations. Therefore it is important to include both types of political factors in the model. The expectation for their effects is similar: individuals seek consistency between their political choices and attitudes.

I again use OLS regression analysis to test the hypothesized effects of information and political factors on evaluations of the economy.⁷ Personal economic experience is operationalized using an item in the survey that mirrors the question on the national economy but asks about the respondent's personal situation (IDIO2). It is coded in the same way as evaluations of the national economy. News consumption is measured using an item that asks how often respondents pay attention to the news in several different

⁷ As with the first model, I also ran the second model using ordered logit. The results arrived at the same conclusions as those presented above.

media (GI0). The responses range from 0 (“Never”) to 4 (“Daily”). As for the political variables, identification with the incumbent party is a dummy variable with those sympathizing with the party in power coded as 1 and all other respondents coded as 0. Political winners and losers are both dummy variables, capturing whether a respondent voted for the winning or losing side respectively in the most recent election for executive office. The reference category is non-voters.

Figure 4 presents the normalized regression coefficients from an analysis that includes all the variables from the prior analysis, plus these new indicators. Again, country level dummies are included in the model but not shown. The effects of the three political variables are all significant and in their expected directions. Identification with the incumbent party results in a more positive evaluation of the nation’s economic performance and respondents who voted for the winner in the last national election also have a more positive evaluation of the economy relative to those who did not cast a vote. Those who voted for a losing candidate or party have a more negative evaluation compared to non-voters.

The results in Figure 4 also provide insights into the importance of individual information sources. We see a powerful effect of personal economic experience on national evaluations, even after controlling for the other factors included in the model.⁸ News consumption does not seem to have a discernible linear effect on economic evaluations.⁹ With respect to

information then, it seems clear that citizens rely heavily on their own personal economic experiences in evaluating their nation’s economy.

Discussion

The above results provide the basis for some important conclusions regarding citizens’ evaluations of the national economy. The significance of these evaluations is underscored by the emphasis placed on economic issues in political life. Indeed, in many national contexts, the state of the economy is often the most important predictor of presidential elections (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000). What I find across Latin America and the Caribbean is that a complex mix of political and experiential elements provides the basis for citizens’ evaluations of the national economy. Political factors, such as partisanship and electoral outcomes, emerge as decisive sources of bias in individuals’ national economic evaluations. Regardless of the actual state of the national economy, political supporters for the incumbent government will have more positive evaluations of it than opponents. This finding is particularly important for democratic accountability. If elections are meant for voters to either reward or punish their representatives based on performance (in this case, economic performance), political bias in those evaluations of performance poses a problem for this mechanism of accountability. However, it is possible that the direction of causality also runs from economic evaluations to partisan support. This type of sorting into political camps based on performance evaluations has much more benign implications for accountability. While this report cannot provide a definitive conclusion on the direction of causality, this question merits further research.

⁸ Given the proximity of the IDIO2 and SOCT2 items in the survey, it is possible that respondents are inclined to provide similar assessments. Therefore, the same regression analysis was run only replacing IDIO2 with Q10E, which asks about changes in the respondent’s income in the previous year and is located further down the survey. The results of this analysis arrived at the same conclusions as those reported using IDIO2.

⁹ I do not find support for the possibility that the effect of personal experience is strengthened (as predicted by Mutz 1994) or attenuated (Conover et al. 1986) as an individual consumes more news. Rather, the effect of personal economic experience remains the same as a respondent consumes more news. This was tested with an interaction

of news consumption and personal experience that was included in the same model as the results we see in Figure 4 but not shown to save space.

More encouraging though is the fact that personal economic experience also emerges as a powerful predictor of one's assessment of the national economy. If we accept that most people, most of the time, will not be able to accurately evaluate the state of the national economy, then expecting voters to be able to effectively use the state of the national economy as a basis for holding their politicians accountable is perhaps unrealistic. A more modest, but perhaps just as effective, mechanism of democratic accountability may lie in the role an individual's assessment of her personal economic situation plays in her evaluation of the national economy. Respondents across the Americas appear to be most influenced by the one condition they know best, their own economic situation, when asked to evaluate the economy as a whole. Clear political biases exist in this evaluation, thus muddying the waters of accountability. However, at its core, an assessment of the national economy appears most driven by what is happening to citizens' personal economies on a daily basis.

Finally, this report was limited in its ability to study outside information sources that would be expected to influence national economic outlook. For example, there was no significant effect of news consumption. However, it may be that the content of news is more consequential for evaluations than consumption *per se*. There are likely national level indicators that are suggestive of the content of news within a given country. While this analysis focused solely on individual level explanations, contextual factors are likely to account for a substantial part of the variation in citizens' sociotropic opinions and they offer an avenue for further research.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of Retrospective Evaluations of the National Economy in 2012

	Coefficient Figure 2	Standard Error Figure 2	Coefficient Figure 3	Standard Error Figure 3
Education Level	0.015*	0.007	0.001	0.006
Male	0.029*	0.005	0.020*	0.005
Age	-0.054*	0.006	-0.023*	0.005
Quintiles of Wealth	0.043*	0.006	0.016*	0.005
Size of Place of Residence	-0.007	0.007	0.001	0.006
Incumbent Party Identifier	--	--	0.087*	0.006
Winner	--	--	0.049*	0.006
Loser	--	--	-0.036*	0.005
Personal Economic Experience	--	--	0.386*	0.017
News Consumption	--	--	-0.003	0.008
Personal Experience x News Consumption	--	--	0.015	0.019
Mexico	-0.171*	0.008	-0.105*	0.007
Guatemala	-0.176*	0.007	-0.106*	0.007
El Salvador	-0.190*	0.007	-0.119*	0.006
Honduras	-0.223*	0.009	-0.139*	0.007
Nicaragua	-0.066*	0.009	-0.045*	0.007
Costa Rica	-0.131*	0.008	-0.088*	0.007
Panama	-0.110*	0.010	-0.059*	0.009
Colombia	-0.105*	0.008	-0.072*	0.008
Ecuador	-0.054*	0.009	-0.019*	0.007
Bolivia	-0.158*	0.011	-0.091*	0.009
Peru	-0.062*	0.008	-0.023*	0.007
Paraguay	-0.103*	0.009	-0.085*	0.008
Chile	-0.131*	0.009	-0.068*	0.008
Brazil	-0.050*	0.009	-0.038*	0.007
Venezuela	-0.109*	0.008	-0.073*	0.007
Argentina	-0.091*	0.010	-0.059*	0.008
Dominican Rep.	-0.184*	0.007	-0.127*	0.006
Haiti	-0.164*	0.009	-0.101*	0.008
Jamaica	-0.114*	0.010	-0.063*	0.008
Guyana	-0.080*	0.009	-0.033*	0.007
Trinidad & Tobago	-0.113*	0.009	-0.074*	0.007
Belize	-0.147*	0.007	-0.083*	0.006
Suriname	-0.057*	0.011	-0.016*	0.008
Constant	0.002	0.007	0.000	0.006
<i>R-squared</i>	0.075		0.254	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	37,047		36,438	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed. Country of Reference: Uruguay

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 98

Political Connections in the Americas

By Amy Erica Smith
aesmith2@iastate.edu
Iowa State University

Executive Summary. In the Americas, as in much of the world, having political connections is often critical for one's economic, social, and political chances of success. Access to politicians, however, is limited and often highly selective. In this *Insights* report, I explore the question of who knows and has access to politicians in the Americas. I find that nearly a third of citizens in the region report knowing personally a politician or someone who has run for local or national office. Not surprisingly, those individuals with personal access to the political world tend to be more politically active and civically engaged, and also are of a higher social status than those without such personal political connections. Where one lives also affects the chances of having political connections, with those living in smaller cities more likely to have ties with local politicians, and citizens of the smaller Latin American and Caribbean countries more likely to have connections with national-level politicians. These findings highlight the systematic, and non-representative, patterns of relationships between citizens and their representatives across the Americas that tend to exacerbate extant levels of political inequality.

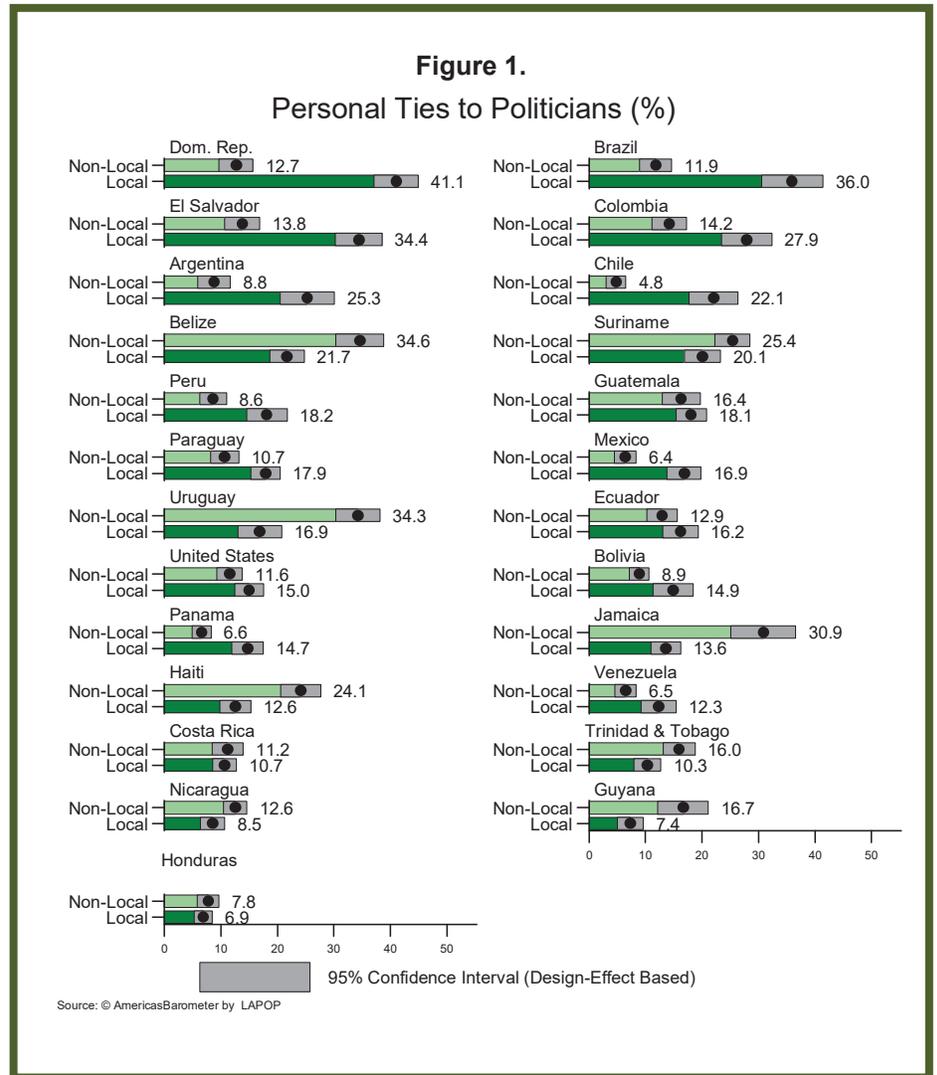
The Insights Series is co-edited by Jonathan Hiskey, Mitchell A. Seligson and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister with administrative, technical, and intellectual support from the LAPOP group at Vanderbilt.

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Social capital – broadly defined as personally or socially useful connections between people – is critical to politics. Many studies emphasize the value of horizontal ties between citizens, especially in community groups (e.g., Putnam 1993, 2000). Yet another form of social capital involves the vertical connections between citizens and politicians. Personal ties to politicians can mobilize citizens politically (Smith 2012), and give the well-connected greater political voice. For instance, a brother-in-law or a high school friend on the city council may be more receptive to one’s concerns about a neighborhood school than an official with no such connections. And often times, such ties are even more useful for addressing personal issues. When the public bureaucracy fails to serve all citizens efficiently and equitably, political ties can help citizens gain selective access to services, from finding space in a public hospital to securing a driver’s license. Political connections can also provide access to patronage. Citizens who know politicians personally may have privileged access to what are often called the “spoils of office,” such as public sector jobs or even, in some cases, contracts. In sum, throughout much of the Americas, political connections can often be a critical component of one’s life chances.

In this *Insights* report, I examine which citizens in the Americas have political connections.¹ The 2012 round of the LAPOP AmericasBarometer

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>



asked two questions to gauge personal ties to the political world:²

SNW1A. Do you personally know an elected official or some person who was a candidate in the most recent national, state/departmental or local elections?³

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University.

³ In countries without state or departmental elections (ones at an intermediate tier between local and national), the questions omitted that level. Non-response was 1.5% (SNW1A) and 1.0% (SNW1B). Due to limited questionnaire space, these questions were asked of a split-sample of respondents.

SNW1B. And is this position at the local, state/departmental or national level?

Across the region, 31% of citizens reported a connection; 52% of ties were local, 16% state/departmental, 24% national, and 6% at multiple levels. In Figure 1, I present the percentage of respondents in each country claiming connections to local and non-local (state or national) politicians and candidates. In most countries, local ties are more prevalent than non-local. This is not surprising, since local government is closest to citizens. Local politicians may live in one's own city, village, or even neighborhood, and do not migrate to a distant capital for work. Also, typically there are more local than state or national elected offices, increasing the chances that citizens will develop ties with local politicians. In fact, a common argument for the decentralization of government responsibilities to the local level is that citizens will have a greater opportunity to interact with the political system at the local level, and allow officials to tailor policy to local circumstances (Hiskey and Seligson 2003; Lassen and Seritzlew 2011). Personal ties to local politicians are particularly prevalent in the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and El Salvador, while fewer than 10% of citizens report such ties in Nicaragua, Guyana, or Honduras.

At the same time, non-local ties outstrip local ones in Uruguay and many Caribbean and Central American countries. These results suggest that citizens have better access to non-local politicians in smaller countries. In countries such as Uruguay (population 3.4 million), Jamaica (2.7 million) and Belize (310,000), commutes from outlying areas to the capital may often be relatively short, and national-level politicians may live in the same localities as constituents. In addition, though small countries have smaller national legislatures, they nonetheless have more legislators per capita.⁴ Furthermore, the role of

⁴ Analysis is author's own, based on data from the UNDP and the World Bank Database of Political Institutions. The

local governments in the lives of citizens in these smaller countries tends to be subsumed by a more powerful national government, making the value of national political connections far greater than in larger countries where local governments have a more significant role in the lives of citizens.

Who Has Political Connections?

In the following sections I explore which citizens are most likely to have personal ties with the political world. I start with the individual characteristics of the politically connected. Because the individual-level determinants of non-local and local connections turn out to be similar, I analyze the two types of ties together.⁵

With little research directly related to the question of political connections, I begin with the proposition that those individuals more engaged with their political system will be more likely to have personal political connections. Thus, I consider such factors as levels of community participation, political activism, interest in politics, socioeconomic status, gender and age. I deal with each of these in turn.

First, involvement in community groups may allow for increased access to politicians. Not only do politicians seek out such groups to contact many constituents at once, but such groups also may contact politicians to promote their own interests. This may be true even of groups that are not explicitly political, such as religious and school organizations. I therefore include as one predictor of political connections membership in several types of community organizations: community improvement

correlation between a country's population and number of legislative seats is .83, but the correlation between the population and *per capita* size of legislature is -.31.

⁵ In the appendix I present tables with full results breaking out the determinants of local and non-local connections separately.

committees, religious organizations, and school-related parents' associations.⁶

My next expectation is that those actively engaged in politics will be much more likely to know politicians. Some people become acquainted with leaders through political activism; for others, personal ties to politicians may *lead to* political activism. Whichever way the causal arrow points, I expect to find a correlation between activism and political ties. I examine two aspects of activism: participation in meetings of a political party or organization; and work for a party or candidate during a political campaign.⁷

Third, and relatedly, those who are more engaged with and interested in politics on a psychological level should be more likely to make the effort to know politicians. Thus, I include as predictors of political connections a measure of political interest, as well as variables for whether an individual identifies with a political party and whether she identifies with the political left or right.⁸

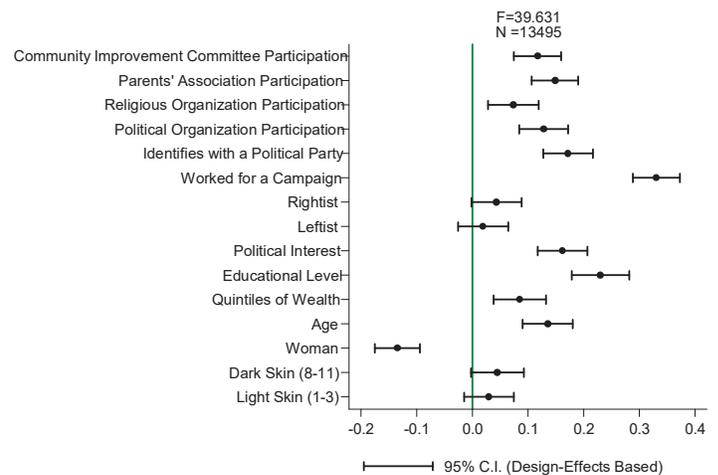
Fourth, socioeconomic status (SES) should also affect the probability of knowing a politician. Citizens with high SES are more likely to grow up with future politicians, to live in their neighborhoods as adults, and to have politicians in their personal or professional networks. I therefore include both respondents' education levels and wealth quintiles to assess

⁶ Variables CP6, CP7, and CP8 are each recoded on a 0-100 scale, with higher values representing more frequent participation.

⁷ Campaign work is an indicator based on PP2, with activists recoded as 100. Participation in political meetings is based on CP13, and is recoded on a 0-100 scale, with higher values indicating more frequent participation.

⁸ Political interest, based on POL1, is again recoded 0-100. To measure ideology, indicator variables are coded 1 for those who identify as 1, 2, or 3 (leftist), or as 8, 9, or 10 (rightist) on the 1-10 ideological self-placement scale (variable L1). Party identification is an indicator based on VB10, with identifiers recoded as 100, and non-identifiers as 0.

Figure 2. Individual Characteristics of the Politically Connected in the Americas



the role of socioeconomic status in the development of personal ties to politicians.⁹

Fifth, we might also expect age and gender to influence the likelihood of knowing a politician. Women and young adults may be less likely than older men to have politicians in their peer groups, and also less likely to have professional networks that overlap with the political world. Similarly, with the political elite of many countries historically made up of largely white and light-skinned individuals, we might also expect skin color to be a predictor of political connections. More recently, though, an indigenous political class has emerged in some countries that may increase the likelihood that indigenous citizens will also have political connections. I include dummy variables, then, to account for these two possibilities.

In Figure 2, I assess the individual-level determinants of political connections and find strong support for many of the propositions put forth. The figure presents coefficients from a logistic regression model. When the dot

⁹ Education is based on variable ED, and is recoded 0) no education, 1) elementary, 2) secondary, and 3) higher education. Wealth quintile is coded 1-5, as described in Córdova (2009).

corresponding to a variable falls to the right of the green axis at 0.0, that variable is positively related to knowing politicians; when it falls to the left, it is *negatively* related to political connections. The bracket surrounding each dot is the 95% confidence interval for the estimate. When the confidence interval does not overlap the axis at 0.0, we can be 95% confident that the respective variable is significantly related to political connections. Because the coefficients are standardized, the size of the coefficient represents the magnitude of the variable's association with social capital.

We see from Figure 2 that, as expected, those involved in any of the three community organizations included in the model are more likely to know politicians. Using an index of these three kinds of community activism, I find that moving from the minimum to maximum levels of engagement raises the likelihood of knowing a politician from 26% to 48%.¹⁰

Political activism matters even more than community participation. Among those who say they have worked for a campaign, 65% are predicted to know a politician, versus only 27% of those who have not done so. Similarly, 58% of those who attend party meetings are predicted to know politicians, as opposed to 27% of non-attenders.

Not surprisingly, citizens across the Americas who are more interested in politics and who identify with parties and ideological positions are more likely to become acquainted with politicians. Political interest and party identification are particularly important, while identifying with the ideological right or left does not seem to have a significant impact on the likelihood of knowing a politician.

Social status is, as expected, strongly associated with political connections. Among those with higher education, 39% are predicted to know a politician, as opposed to only 21% of those who report no formal education. Household wealth

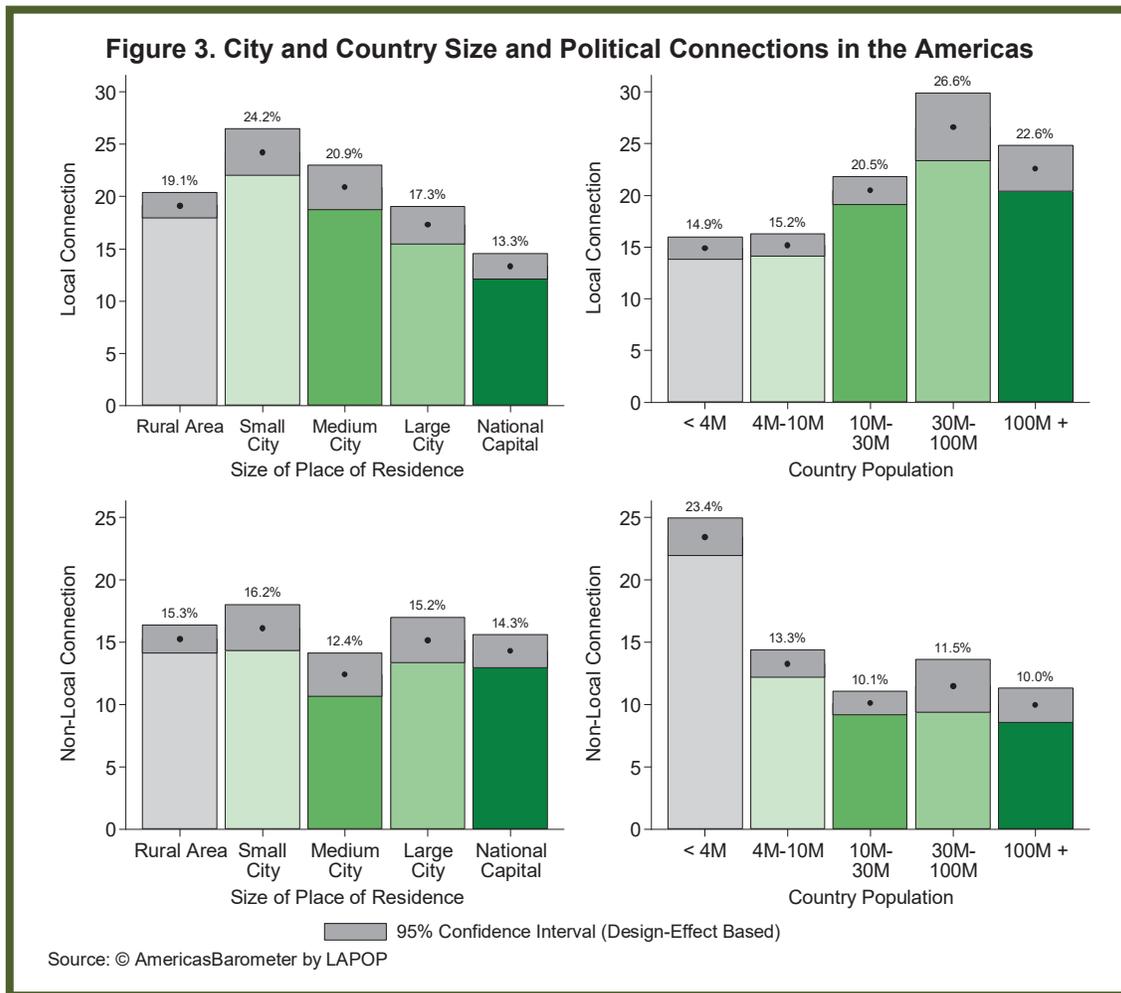
is a significant but more minor determinant, raising the probability of knowing a politician from 29% in the bottom quintile to 34% in the top. Gender and age also matter. Only 29% of women, compared to 35% of men, are predicted to know politicians. In an analysis not shown here, I find that the relationship between age and political connections is curvilinear, with respondents between the ages of 45 and 65 the most likely to know a politician. Finally, once accounting for the impact of all of these factors, the impact of skin color on political connections appears to be minimal.

What Kinds of Places Encourage Political Connections?

The results from the previous section show that those who know politicians in the Americas are quite different from those who do not. The politically connected are better educated, more involved in their communities and in politics, more engaged with the political system, and somewhat older and more likely to be male. At the same time, the discussion presented in the introduction suggests that citizens in some places have more opportunities to get to know politicians than citizens in other places.

In this section, I consider the role an individual's community and country play in the probability that she knows a politician. I focus first on the size of one's community. Opportunities to know *local* politicians should be strongly related to city size. In smaller cities, residents are more likely to meet any given other resident, politicians included. In part, this is simply about geographic proximity: residents of towns and small cities are likely to live closer to the seat of power than are residents of large cities. And with denser networks, residents of small cities can meet local politicians through multiple personal acquaintances.

¹⁰ All percentages discussed in this section are predicted probabilities, holding all other variables at their means.



Moreover, as I have shown in the case of Brazil, the number of local politicians per capita is higher in small cities, since city councils and local party systems do not scale in direct relation to city size (Smith 2012). Still, despite many politicians per capita, rural areas may provide fewer opportunities to meet those politicians, due to geographic isolation, the dispersion of the population, and thinner social networks, suggesting a nonlinear relationship between one’s community size and the probability of knowing a politician.

Country size should also be strongly related to both local and non-local political ties. In countries with relatively low populations and that are small geographically, national-level politicians are proportionately more numerous, and they may live closer to their constituents. At the same time, small countries tend to have highly centralized, unitary political systems

where local governments are of little real import. Thus, I expect connections between citizens and politicians in smaller, unitary systems to be characterized more by non-local relationships in which citizens will be more likely know national-level politicians.

In Figure 3, I examine the bivariate relationships between political ties, on the one hand, and size of place of residence and country population, on the other.¹¹ I find, as hypothesized, that city size is strongly related to local political ties; while a quarter of residents in small cities know a local politician, only an eighth of residents of national capitals are personally acquainted with someone who has run for or held local office. Again as

¹¹ See Appendix A for full, multivariate hierarchical logistic regression models confirming the statistical significance of these results.

expected, local connections are somewhat less common in rural areas than in small cities. By contrast, there is no clear relationship between size of place of residence and non-local connections. Turning to country size, Figure 3 indicates that in the smallest countries non-local connections are much more common than in those countries that are larger and tend to have more decentralized political systems.

This discussion suggests that in countries where the electoral and party systems produce more candidates – in particular, where the ratio of candidates to citizens is higher – more citizens will know politicians. In a preliminary analysis, I

developed a rough estimate of the per capita number of candidates in national elections by multiplying the number of seats in the national legislature by the number of parties, assuming each party runs a candidate for every seat, and dividing by the population. This preliminary estimate turns out to be strongly related to both measures of connections, especially non-local connections. Nonetheless, further research is needed to develop a better estimate and to confirm the robustness of the results.

Conclusion

Scholars often emphasize the democratic potential of citizens' horizontal connections with each other within civil society. Yet data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer reveal that many citizens also have vertical ties to people in positions of power. This form of social capital may convey a number of advantages, such as increased political voice, access to resources, and information. Elsewhere, I have shown that these connections in Brazil both mobilize citizens to take part in politics and provide increased access to clientelism (Smith 2012). The implications of such ties are thus ambiguous, promoting democratic engagement

and at the same time increasing personalization of politics.

What fosters such ties? Political connections are to a large extent self-selected; they are much more common among those who are more politically and civically engaged. Political ties also accrue to those whose social networks contain more socially prominent contacts in

general: those with higher education, men, and older citizens. At the same time, this important form of social capital is a product of not only personal but also contextual factors. Thus, a country's geographic and demographic characteristics are important determinants of the supply of potential political

contacts. As institutional designers consider modifications to electoral systems, they may consider the potential social capital consequences of different configurations of institutions.

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Appendix

Table 1. Determinants of Local and Non-local Political Connections in the Americas, 2012 (Multilevel Logistic Regression Models)

	Local Connections	State or Federal Connections
Educational Level	0.240* (0.036)	0.349* (0.040)
Woman	-0.179* (0.047)	-0.239* (0.052)
Age	0.007* (0.002)	0.011* (0.002)
Quintiles of Wealth	0.069* (0.018)	0.071* (0.019)
Light Skin (1-3)	0.052 (0.057)	-0.017 (0.068)
Dark Skin (8-11)	0.087 (0.083)	0.191* (0.081)
Political Interest	0.006* (0.001)	0.011* (0.001)
Leftist	0.083 (0.059)	0.171* (0.064)
Rightist	0.072 (0.055)	0.194* (0.061)
Religious Organization Participation	0.002* (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Parents' Association Participation	0.004* (0.001)	0.004* (0.001)
Community Improvement Group Participation	0.004* (0.001)	0.006* (0.001)
National Capital (Metropolitan Area)	-0.764* (0.070)	-0.171* (0.073)
Large City	-0.439* (0.075)	0.301* (0.080)
Medium City	-0.029 (0.074)	0.096 (0.086)
Small City	0.347* (0.071)	0.219* (0.081)
Country Population (Logged)	0.097 (0.106)	-0.297* (0.091)
Federal Country	-0.070 (0.420)	0.017 (0.364)
Constant	-3.611* (0.936)	-1.118 (0.806)
<i>Number of Observations</i>	13942	13942

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Number 99

National Pride in the Americas

By

Patricia Amoedo

pamoedo@correo.um.edu.uy

Universidad de Montevideo

and

Rosario Queirolo

rosario.queirolo@ucu.edu.uy

Universidad Católica del Uruguay

Executive Summary: This AmericasBarometer *Insights* series report examines the level of pride that citizens in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America have in their own countries. The analysis uses data from the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys and examines the factors that have a positive influence on national pride. Interpersonal trust, life satisfaction, and participation in meetings of political parties are positively related to the level of pride. This suggests that national pride is in part a function of individuals' level of civil and political engagement and in part a function of the level of satisfaction one has with her life.

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

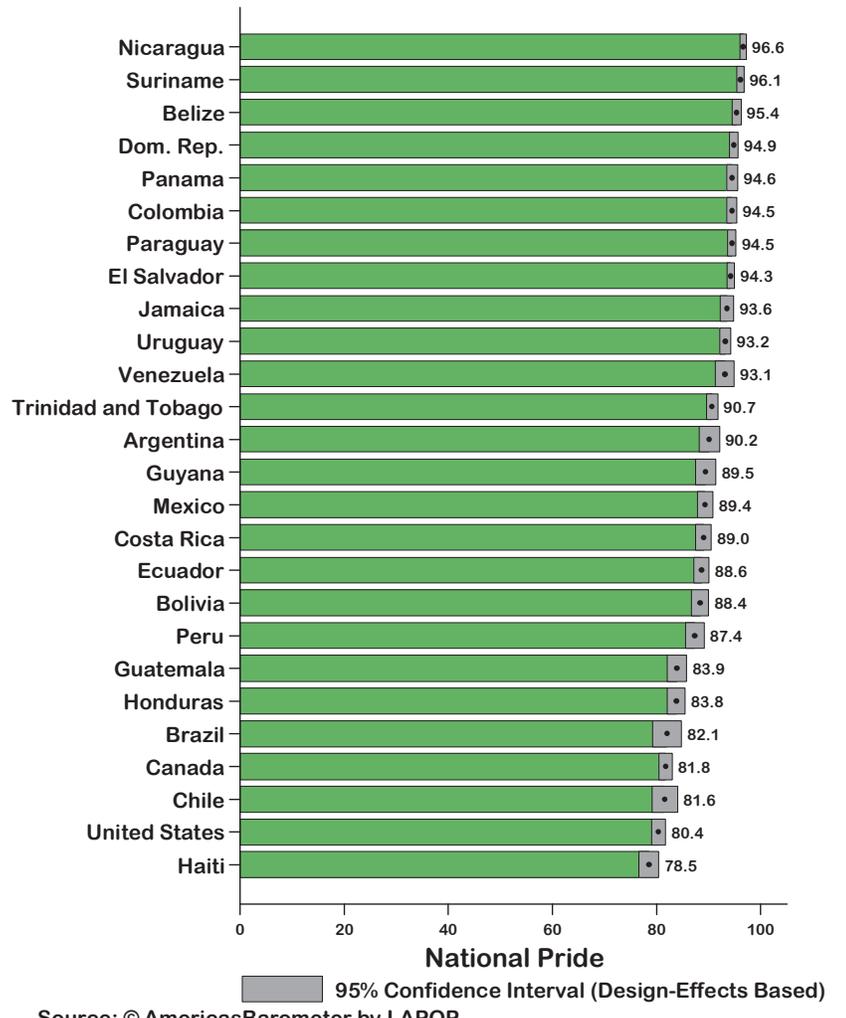
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National pride tends to run high across individuals and countries in the Americas, but still some are more proud of their national identity than others. What explains this variation across individuals and countries? The limited research on this topic finds a host of political, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics associated with high levels of national pride (Kelley 2002) In this AmericasBarometer *Insights*¹ report we look at these factors in an effort to understand variations in levels of national pride across citizens of the Americas.

The analysis uses AmericasBarometer data that measures respondents' pride in their country, and assesses both individual and national-level determinants. The 2012 survey of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) was carried out in 24 countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, as well as the United States and Canada. The survey item of particular interest for this analysis is:

B43: To what extent are you proud of being (nationality corresponding to country)?

Figure 1: Average Levels of National Pride in the Americas, 2012



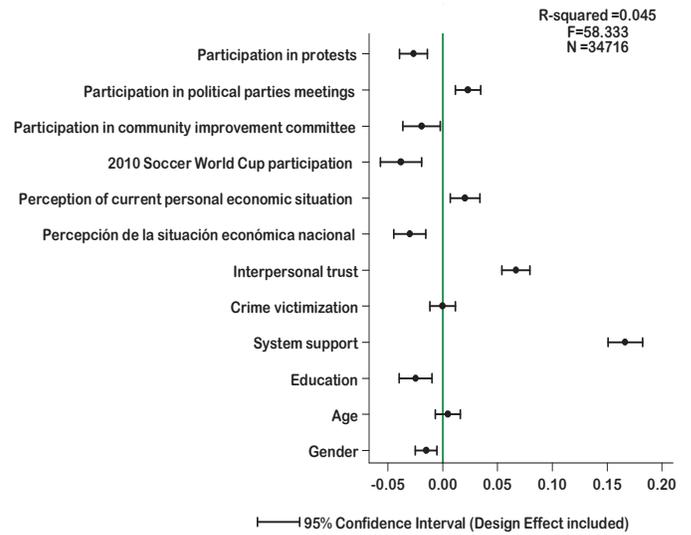
Responses were re-coded on a 0-100 scale to follow the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.

Figure 1 displays the national average scores with their confidence intervals. The average level of national pride in the Americas is 89.5. The figure shows in descending order the mean level of pride for the 26 countries covered by the AmericasBarometer project in 2012. The results reveal national pride across the region is quite high. It is perhaps no surprise that Haiti registers the lowest value with 79.3 points,

¹ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. This *Insights* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency. Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/surveydata.php>

given that country's difficulties in recovering from the 2010 earthquake. However, it is perhaps more striking that among the countries that join Haiti on the bottom rung of our national pride rankings are four countries that are among the most developed in the region: Brazil, Canada, Chile, and the United States. Also somewhat surprising is the fact that Nicaragua records the highest level of national pride in the region despite that country's tumultuous political and economic developments over the past four decades. Given these intriguing cross-national results, we explore in more detail the question of the sources of national pride in this *Insights* report. In the next section we examine some of the national and individual-level factors that help explain why some citizens express pride in their country while others do not.

Figure 2: Predictors of National Pride in the Americas, 2012



What Predicts National Pride?

We begin our analysis of national pride by building on previous research on this question. At the individual level, Smith and Seokho (2006) find that national pride varies with citizens' age and education such that the elderly and less educated people tend to register lower levels of national pride.

Other research suggests that a country's participation in international sporting events such as the Olympics tends to strengthen national pride. Such events generate a connection between citizens and leads to stronger societal bonds that can contribute to greater pride in the nation as a whole. Hilvoorde and Elling (2010) find evidence of spikes in national pride around these types of international competitions. According to this perspective, then, we should find a somewhat higher level of national pride in those countries that participated in the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament held in South Africa, assuming that such effects are durable enough to persist through the first few months of 2012

when the AmericasBarometer data were collected. To analyze this factor we construct a dichotomous variable that indicates whether or not each of the 26 countries in the Americas participated in the 2010 World Cup.²

We also suspect that one's satisfaction with life will increase the degree of national pride she reports. Individuals who feel more satisfied with their own personal lives may transfer these positive feelings to the nation as a whole, resulting in a high level of national pride.

The state of the economy can also play an important role in the national pride level. The economy itself can be an object of pride in a country; a strong national economy can both directly affect feelings toward the country as a whole in a positive way and also have an indirect effect on national pride through its effect on the quality and breadth of cultural offerings such as arts, music, and sporting events that may also result in higher levels of national pride (Kelley, 2002). As individuals might make either or both of these links based

² These countries were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, United States, and Uruguay.

on their perception of the economy, we expect to find a positive relationship between perceptions of the national economy and one's level of national pride. We also include respondents' evaluation of their personal economic situation, as this too could contribute to more positive feelings of the nation as a whole. These economic perceptions may be particularly important in 2012 given that, for many Latin American countries, this period marks the point at which economic recovery from the 2008-2009 global financial crisis was at its peak. Perceptions of the ability of these countries to weather this economic crisis and rebound quickly and robustly, in contrast to the slower and more tepid recovery in Europe and the United States, are likely to have proved to be a point of pride for many in the region.

Previous research on the topic of national pride also highlights the role of interpersonal trust in generating feelings of national pride. The ability to trust one's neighbors and society more generally is viewed as a core component of the foundation of what "national pride" captures.

If an individual does not trust those around her, it is less likely that she will express positive feelings toward the country as a whole (Smith and Jarkko 1998).

The same logic suggests that those individuals victimized by crime will tend to report lower levels of national pride than those individuals who have never had such an experience. Like people with low levels of interpersonal trust, crime victims may translate their individual experiences into a general negative characterization of the country as a whole, resulting again in low levels of national pride. Therefore, on one hand, we expect to find a positive relationship between interpersonal trust and national pride and, on the other, a negative relationship of pride with crime victimization.

In the political arena, we expect citizens who express high levels of support for their political

system will also report strong feelings of national pride. Though the cross-national comparisons displayed in Figure 1 may seem to run counter to this proposition, we argue that in countries where democracy is judged to be more established and effective, and where crime and corruption are perceived to be less of a problem, individuals should have higher levels of national pride (Smith y Seokho, 2006). To test this relationship, we included a "political system support" index as an independent variable.³ Citizens with higher levels of support for the political system should have stronger feelings of national pride.

Finally, previous research on this question of national pride finds that those individuals who more actively participate in conventional political activities tend to be prouder of their countries. However, those who participate in non-conventional activities (roadblocks, strikes, boycotts, among others), perhaps as a result of their dissatisfaction with the formal political system, tend to report lower levels of national pride. Conventional activities are promoted by democratic societies and, especially, by citizens who are satisfied with the political performance of their government (Rooij and Reeskens 2012). We expect to find a positive relationship between respondents' reported rates of conventional participation in politics (e.g., voting) and the level of national pride, while for those participating in non-conventional forms of participation we expect the opposite relationship.

Bringing all of these propositions together we run a multivariate analysis predicting responses to the AmericasBarometer national pride item. The results of this regression analysis are shown in Figure 2. Each variable

³ Political system support is calculated as the average of the answers to five questions: B1 (courts guarantee a fair trial); B2 (respect to the national political institutions); B3 (citizens' basic rights are well protected); B4 (proud of living under the political system); y B6 (one should support the political system). The variable related to these questions is recoded on a scale from 0 to 100.

included in the model is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The standardized impact of each of those variables on national pride is shown graphically by a dot, which if falling to the right of the vertical “0” line implies a positive contribution and if to the left of the “0” line indicates a negative impact. Only when the confidence intervals (the horizontal lines) do not overlap the vertical “0” line is the variable statistically significant.

From this analysis we find several intriguing and revealing results. Consistent with some previous research, we find that women and respondents with higher levels of education tend to report lower levels of national pride. In contrast, age appears to have no significant impact.

Regarding the role of individuals’ perceptions of their personal and national economic situations, we find surprisingly that these factors have contrasting effects on national pride: positive views of one’s own economic situation predict higher levels of national pride while positive views of the national economic situation correspond with lower levels of national pride. What these findings may suggest is a much more powerful role for so-called “pocketbook assessments” of the economy in shaping one’s larger views of her society and country as a whole.

One result entirely consistent with our expectations emerges from the interpersonal trust variable. For this we see a translation of trust in one’s fellow citizens into greater feelings of pride in the nation. As we discussed above, and as the results confirm, feelings of national pride seem to be fundamentally tied to one’s views toward those around her. This finding, then, helps in understanding what in fact national pride may be telling us about the society of a particular country.

Our expectations regarding how victims of crime may have more negative views of the nation as a whole are not borne out in the model. We find, rather, that crime victimization

has no significant impact on the level of pride an individual feels in the nation.

The strongest, and most theoretically intuitive, result comes from the system support index. Here we see that those with higher levels of support for their political system tend to also have higher levels of national pride. This result highlights the potential significance of levels of national pride as another indicator of society’s level of confidence in and support for the political system itself. The results from the conventional and non-conventional political participation variables reinforce this idea that national pride in part is a product of how much support citizens have for their political system. Here we see that respondents who report high levels of engagement in conventional forms of political behavior tend to register high levels of national pride, while those participating in protests and other non-conventional activities are far less likely to have strong feelings of national pride. The only result that runs slightly counter to this pattern is the marginally significant negative relationship that participation in community improvement meetings seems to have with national pride.

Finally, with respect to our national-level hypothesis concerning participation in international athletic competitions, we in fact find results that are directly counter to our initial expectations. All else equal, respondents living in those countries that participated in the 2010 World Cup reported lower levels of national pride than respondents living in countries that did not make the World Cup tournament. This result may be a product of the fact that the “national pride effect” of this event had faded by the time of the survey and/or the fact that those AmericasBarometer countries participating in this event, with the possible exception of Uruguay who reached the final four of the tournament, did not match the expectations of supporters. Both Brazil and Argentina, for example, were defeated in the quarterfinals of the tournament while the U.S. team succeeded in advancing to the round of sixteen only to suffer a disappointing loss to

Ghana. We can conclude from this, then, that it is not simply a country's participation in an international event that will lead to an enduring boost in national pride, but rather the citizenry's view of the performance of the country's teams/individuals in that event that is the determinative factor.

Conclusion

This AmericasBarometer *Insights* report suggests that the level of national pride in the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America is related to both political and social factors.

In the Americas, citizens with fewer years of formal education and men have a higher level of national pride than women and people with more education.

Support for the political system has a strong relationship with the level of national pride, which shows that individuals who see their countries as having more established and effective democracies tend to be those with stronger feelings of national pride.

Likewise, interpersonal trust plays an important role, as it is a factor that has a large substantive relationship with the level of national pride. Just as high levels of interpersonal trust have been linked to stronger democracies, so too do we find that where individuals trust each other, there tends to be a stronger feeling of national pride.

Missing from this analysis that future research might explore is an assessment of how cultural factors within a country might influence the level of national pride. Returning to the somewhat counter-intuitive result of Nicaraguans recording the highest level of national pride in the Americas, one possible explanation for this result that is left out of the

current analysis is the role of the country's past conflicts and political struggles that may, in some way, have contributed to stronger feelings of national pride than we might expect.

Now that we better understand the predictors of national pride, we can also conclude that, at least at the individual level, feelings of national pride may be an important "canary in the coalmine" for political leaders in assessing the level of confidence and support citizens have for one another and for the political system more generally.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of the National Pride Level in Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America, 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Participation in protests	-0.032*	0.006
Participation in political parties meetings	-0.019*	0.006
Participation in community improvement committee	0.022*	0.007
2010 Soccer World Cup Participation	-0.059*	0.009
Perception of current personal economic situation	0.018*	0.007
Perception of current national economic situation	-0.023*	0.007
Interpersonal trust	0.077*	0.007
Crime Victimization	-0.006	0.006
System Support	0.156*	0.007
Education	-0.018*	0.005
Age	0.024*	0.005
Gender	-0.009	0.005
Constant	0.024*	0.008
<i>R-squared</i>	0.042	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	35,394	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.
Country of Reference: Uruguay

AmericasBarometer *Insights*: 2013

Special 100th Edition

Democracy Progress Report Political Tolerance in the Americas, 2006-2012

By Jonathan Hiskey
j.hiskey@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Mason Moseley
mason.moseley@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Mariana Rodríguez
mariana.rodriguez@vanderbilt.edu
Vanderbilt University

Executive Summary. In this *Special 100th edition Insights*, we focus on a fundamental principle of democracy: political tolerance. An essential quality of democratic culture is that citizens support the political rights of unpopular groups. Using data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer, we find that while political tolerance has risen in many countries of the Americas since the 2006 round of the AmericasBarometer, in other countries highly intolerant citizens outnumber the highly tolerant. To test potential explanations of support for regime critics having the right to vote, we estimate two predictive models of tolerance—a national level model, and a context-based (i.e., multilevel model) of tolerance at the individual level. Analyses suggest that while experience with democracy, education, and political activity generally increase political tolerance, national levels of inequality, religiosity, and support for the current president diminish levels of support for the political rights of opposing groups.

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

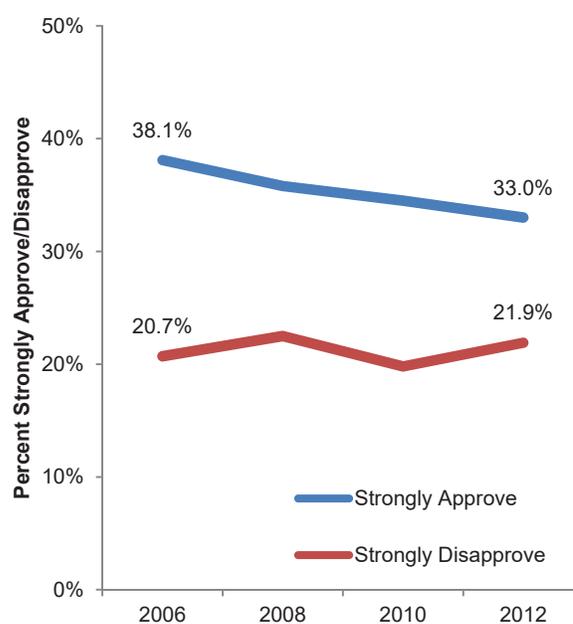
www.AmericasBarometer.org

In this *Special 100th edition Insights*, we focus on a fundamental principle of democracy: political tolerance.¹ An essential element of democratic political culture around the world is “the degree to which [individuals] permit opposition both to the democratic regime and to the leaders who happen to be in power at a given moment” (Sullivan, et al. 1982, 1). At the individual level then, it is important for democratic regimes to have a citizenry that is supportive of the basic right to oppose those in power and even the system of government. With this release of our 100th *Insights* report, then, we provide an overview of political tolerance in the Americas, highlighting some countries that have made the most progress over the past four rounds of AmericasBarometer surveys, and those countries in which tolerance levels are trending downward. We then explore in more detail the individual and country-level characteristics that are associated with willingness to tolerate opposition to the incumbent government and/or political system. In so doing, we highlight those factors that may lead in the future to greater levels of tolerance across the region.²

Broadly defined, political tolerance is a person’s willingness to support the civic and political rights of fellow citizens with whom she disagrees (Seligson 2000; Booth and Seligson 2009). Tolerant citizens who support “inclusive participation” are a basic requisite of democratic consolidation (Dahl 1971; Diamond 1994; 1999; Linz and Stepan 1996; Seligson

2000). Though certain levels of intolerance exist in even the most well-established democracies, particularly during times of crisis or threat (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009), a basic acceptance of an individual’s right to vote regardless of her political views is widely considered to be an important component of a democratic political culture. Variations in a society’s levels of tolerance for such basic political rights, therefore, can be interpreted as an attitudinal thermometer for the health of democracy and its political stability (Seligson 2000; Carlin and Singer 2011; Salinas and Booth 2011).

Figure 1. Levels of Tolerance between 2006 and 2012 across the Americas



In Figure 1, we examine levels of tolerance and intolerance over time by using a survey item from the AmericasBarometer that asks respondents about their willingness to allow critics of the political system to exercise their right to vote.³ We view this as a providing a

¹ Prior issues in the *Insights* Series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

² Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. This *Insights* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency.

³ Survey question wording: D1. There are people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of

fairly low threshold for assessing an individual's level of political tolerance, as granting even the most strident regime critic the right to vote would not seem to represent much of a risk to the political system itself.⁴

In order to create Figure 1, we first rescale the original response categories onto a 0 to 100 scale, where 0 represents the lowest level of approval ("Strongly Disapprove") and 100 the highest ("Strongly Approve"). We then analyze these responses from two perspectives. The blue line represents the average percentage of respondents across the Americas that fall on the "strongly tolerant" end of the scale (80-100). From this we see a troubling downward trend across time, with the percentage falling from 38.1% in 2006 to 33.0% in 2012. Although the decline is not sharp enough to be cause for alarm, this decline in the percentage of "strongly tolerant" respondents across the region warrants close attention moving forward and may be linked toward the recent growth of "competitive authoritarian" regimes in the region.

A slightly more encouraging result, perhaps, is the absence of any significant increase in those respondents who are "strongly intolerant"—with the percentage in 2006 (20.7%) rising only slightly more than 1 point across the six-year period. A more pessimistic read of these data, however, would focus on the fact that even after nearly two decades of democracy, across most countries in the region, one in every five citizens remains strongly opposed to allowing system critics the most basic of democratic rights—the vote. In general, though, this regional perspective on tolerance over time across the Americas paints a picture of societies that for the most part have more citizens strongly in favor of this basic democratic principle than those who are strongly opposed to it.

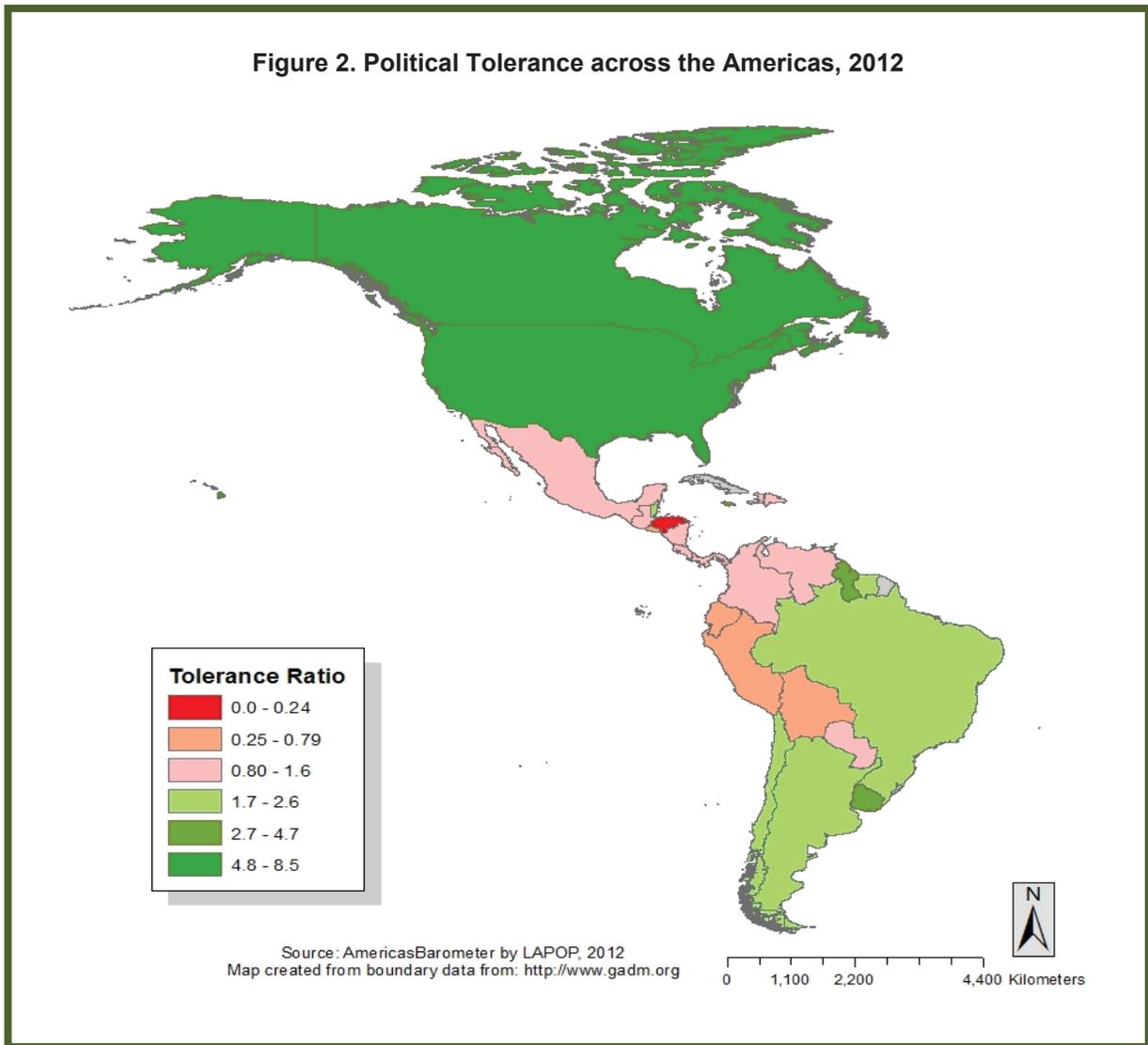
government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote?

⁴ For a brief history and explanation for this measure of political tolerance, please see Appendix 1.

As is often the case, though, an aggregate regional profile can be misleading. We therefore now turn to a closer look at these data, highlighting countries in which optimism for the consolidation of tolerance as a deeply held societal value is warranted and, conversely, those cases with a tolerance profile that does not bode well for the future of democracy. Using our focus on the "strongly tolerant" and the "strongly intolerant" as a point of departure, we create a "tolerance ratio" that simply divides the percentage of respondents who strongly approve of regime critics' right to vote by the percentage that strongly disapprove. Hence, the higher the number, the stronger the overall tolerance landscape is in a particular country, with a large percentage of "strongly tolerant" citizens contrasting with a considerably smaller percentage of "strongly intolerant."

Figure 2 offers a spatial view of tolerance across the Americas in 2012 using this tolerance ratio. The figure highlights those countries in red where the "strongly intolerant" outnumber, or come close to outnumbering, the "strongly tolerant" and, conversely, those countries in green where acceptance of the right to vote for *all* citizens appears to have consolidated itself as part of a democratic political culture.

Examining these cross-national differences in more detail, Figure 3 provides both the regional average across time as well as the tolerance ratios for two countries that highlight the divergent patterns of tolerance levels that exist across the Americas. Uruguay offers an example of a society with a strong and growing trend of increasing political tolerance between 2006 and 2012. On the other end of the spectrum, however, lies Honduras, a country where the tolerance ratio has declined sharply during this same time period. In this latter case, we see Honduras in 2010 entering into what we refer to as a "tolerance danger zone" where there is a greater number of "strongly intolerant" Hondurans than there are individuals who are "strongly tolerant." We have highlighted this "danger zone" through use of the dotted red



line in Figure 3. By 2012, we see Honduras firmly entrenched in this attitudinal danger zone, no doubt reflected in the country's current period of protest and conflict surrounding its recent presidential elections. As worrisome as the tolerance trends might be in Honduras, we see the flip side in a country like Uruguay, where an overwhelming percentage of "strongly tolerant" citizens predominate over a declining number of intolerant individuals. Overall, significant variation in political tolerance levels persists across the Americas.⁵

⁵ To illustrate the cross-country differences over time, Appendix 2 displays the tolerance ratio for countries included in the AmericasBarometer in 2006 and 2012. We

Explaining Tolerance

How do we explain why some individuals are tolerant, while others are not, and why do some countries tend to have a greater proportion of tolerant citizens than intolerant ones? The literature on political tolerance offers many potential explanations. In this section, we review several potential factors that have been found to be important determinants of

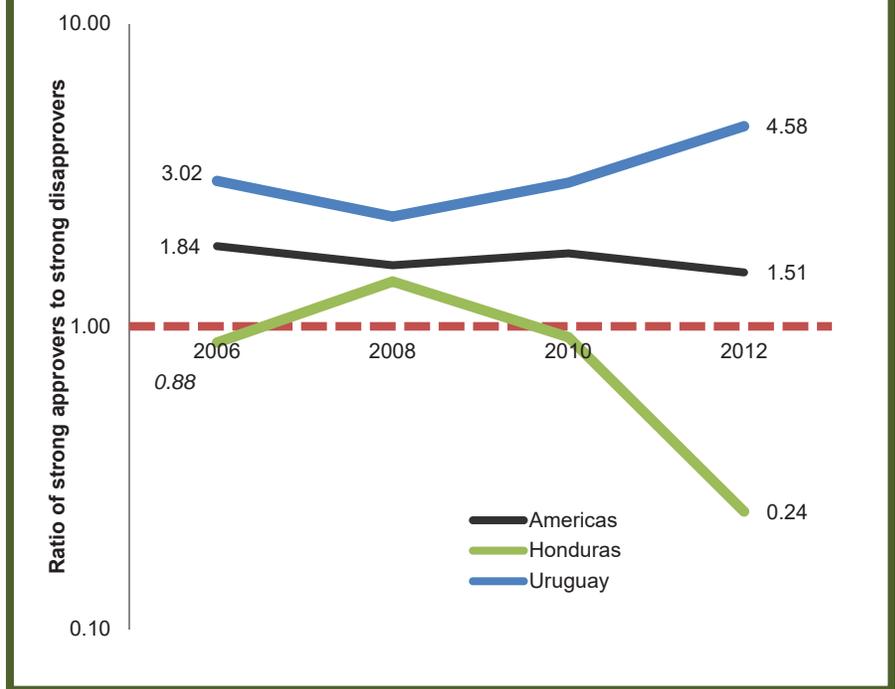
rank countries from the highest/best tolerance ratio to the lowest/worst according to the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey. Once again we highlight a "danger zone" threshold at 1:1 and in doing so identify those countries that have failed to make much progress in generating citizen acceptance of the basic democratic right of voting for all citizens.

both individual- and country-level variation in tolerance.

Many scholars have evaluated the impact of various sociodemographic, economic, and religious characteristics on levels of political tolerance. For example, age and gender have been found to have an important effect on the likelihood that individuals support granting civil liberties to opposition groups, with women and the elderly often found to be less tolerant than younger males (Sullivan et al. 1982). Education has most consistently been found to increase political tolerance, although the mechanism by which it has this effect has been debated (Zaller 1992), as has socioeconomic class (Katnik 2002). Religiosity, on the other hand, seems to have a fairly consistent negative effect on political tolerance dating back to foundational work on the topic (Stouffer 1955), while high levels of crime and perceptions of insecurity have generally been viewed as contributing to an increased level of intolerance within a society (e.g., Doty, Peterson, and Winter 1991).

Yet another set of theories has examined how other political attitudes and behaviors affect tolerance, generally finding that individuals who favor democracy as a form of government (Gibson and Gouws 2003) and possess high interpersonal trust (Gibson 1987) are more open to the political participation of unpopular groups. Moreover, a litany of empirical studies highlights the importance of political and civic participation in producing more tolerant individuals, as such activities expose one to a greater variety of political viewpoints and motivate individuals to work towards compromise in order to resolve differences in opinions.

Figure 3. Tolerance Ratio between 2006 and 2012 across the Americas



Finally, other researchers have endeavored to understand how country-level characteristics influence levels of tolerance cross-nationally. Peffley and Rohrschneider (2003) find that citizens who live in more long-lasting, high quality democratic regimes are more tolerant than their counterparts in authoritarian regimes and illiberal democracies. People who live in more ethnically diverse contexts in which there are strong in-group identities are more likely to hold intolerant values (Gibson and Gouws 2000). Economic inequality has also been found to fuel political intolerance (Andersen and Fetner 2008).

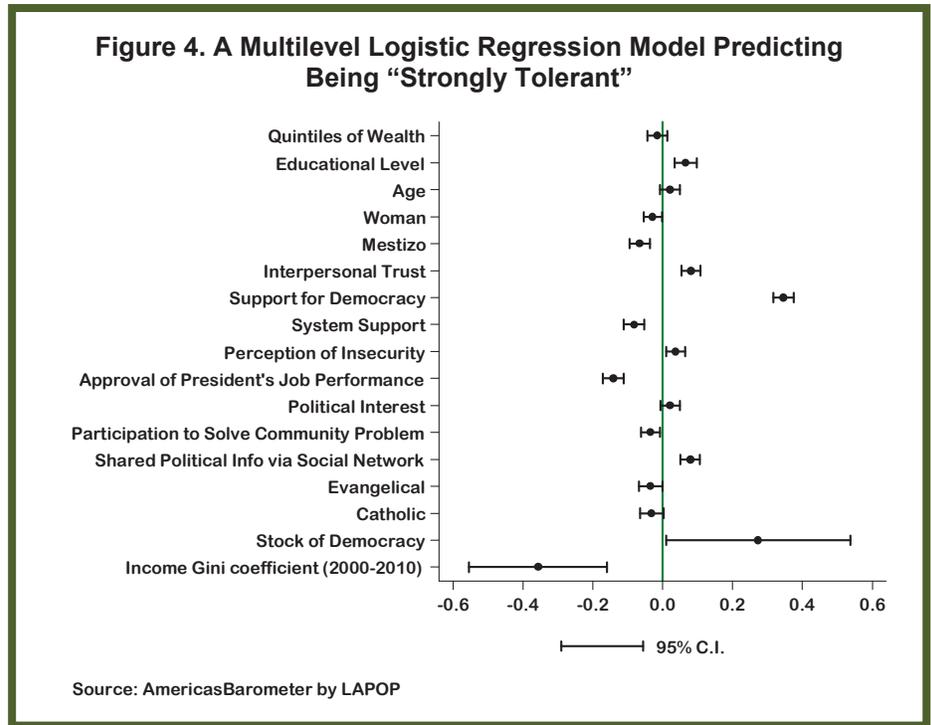
Two Predictive Models of Tolerance

To test these potential explanations of support for regime critics having the right to vote, we estimate two models of tolerance. In the first, we carry out a cross-national analysis of LAC countries' tolerance ratio scores to determine at

this aggregate level whether country characteristics such as the stock of democracy, level of income inequality, or degree of ethnic fractionalization affect country tolerance levels as per the ratio measure. In the second model, we look at the individual-level determinants of the probability that an individual survey respondent places herself on the “strongly tolerant” side of our tolerance ratio.

With respect to the first, cross-national analysis, we summarize (but for the sake of space do not present) our results. In this analysis, where the dependent variable is the country’s tolerance ratio, we find tentative support for some of the ideas put forth in the previous section. High levels of income inequality, using a country’s Gini coefficient as the measure, are related to a lower score on our tolerance ratio measure. On the other hand, the quality and longevity of democracy and levels of education are related to an increased number of strongly tolerant citizens compared to strongly intolerant ones. None of these findings, however, are statistically significant at acceptable levels, making them merely indicative of possible aggregate-level explanations for tolerance ratio scores across the Americas.

In order to more fully understand what is driving tolerance trends we must turn to an individual-level analysis of this question. Figure 4 summarizes the findings from our second model, which is assessed using multilevel logistic regression analysis and where our dependent variable is simply whether or not an individual falls into our “strongly tolerant” category. Here, then, we are looking at one side of our tolerance ratio in an effort to understand those individual and national-level factors that lead an individual to fully embrace the right to vote for all citizens as a fundamental principle of democracy.



The multilevel model of individual- and second-level predictors of being strongly tolerant provides more insight on the determinants of political tolerance. As for sociodemographic variables, the results corroborate previous findings with regard to education and gender, as more educated citizens appear more likely to be strongly tolerant, while women are less tolerant on average than men. Socioeconomic class does not appear to have a powerful effect on the probability of being strongly tolerant, nor does age, while being Evangelical or Catholic has a negative impact on levels of political tolerance. We also find from these results that when compared to other groups (e.g., indigenous, black, or white), mestizos across the Americas tend to be less likely to strongly embrace the right to vote for all citizens.

As expected, interpersonal trust is positively correlated with support for the rights of opposition groups. Notably, the belief that democracy is the best form of government has the strongest positive impact on being tolerant, demonstrating the extent to which citizens’ preference for democracy carries through to

one of democracy's core tenets. System support appears to have a negative effect on the probability of being tolerant, indicating that a political system's regime's strongest supporters are less likely to be in favor of allowing critics of that system a chance to vote.

Among the other political variables included in the model, support for the current president appears to have the strongest negative impact on political tolerance, supporting the well-established finding that supporters of the incumbent government have a tendency to try to silence critics *and*, as is pointed out in Appendix 1, opponents of the incumbent government tend to be strongly in favor of allowing regime critics the right to vote. For our purposes, though, it is simply important that we control for this factor when trying to understand the role of other, more durable, individual-level predictors of tolerance

Constituting perhaps the most surprising result from the model, the variables for political engagement offer a mixed bag in terms of their relationship to tolerance. While sharing or receiving political information via the Internet has a strong positive relationship to tolerance, as does interest in politics, participating to solve a community problem actually is negatively related to political tolerance. This might reflect that civic organizations can cultivate in-group/out-group mentalities, or that some organizations espouse inherently intolerant beliefs, but the mechanisms driving this result require further investigation.

Finally, the "stock" of democracy in a particular regime and the country's level of income inequality emerge as two significant national level predictors of being strongly tolerant. It seems that in countries where citizens have decades of experience with

democracy, and in contexts characterized by relatively low inequality, political tolerance prospers.

Conclusion

While the Latin America and Caribbean region has finally entered into an era in which electoral democracy is well established and widely accepted, progress in terms of citizen acceptance of basic democratic principles continues to be slow and uneven. In this report, we find that while tolerance has risen in many countries, in other cases strongly intolerant citizens outnumber the strongly tolerant. Given the importance of tolerance to the health of democracy, this represents alarming news.

However, our analysis of the individual- and national-level factors associated with high levels of tolerance offers several reasons for hope. Education constitutes one of the most important predictors of political tolerance, and education levels have been steadily rising across the region for more than twenty years. Moreover, internet use for political purposes is also on the rise in the Americas, and the evidence here suggests it

"...many citizens have trouble separating their current political sympathies from fundamental democratic rights."

could be strongly related to the cultivation of higher levels of tolerance. Finally, as democracy consolidates as the only legitimate form of government in the minds of citizens, and citizens gain more experience with the everyday realities of democratic governance, our results indicate that progress in terms of political tolerance will follow. The powerful relationship that support for democracy in general has with high levels of tolerance is encouraging in this respect. Moreover, to the extent that economic inequality is declining across the region, our findings suggest that this trend too bodes well for an increase in tolerance levels across the region in years to come.

Conversely, the connection between Evangelical religions and lower levels of tolerance suggests a troubling dynamic across the region, given the rise of Evangelical churches in Latin America (see Marcano 2013). In addition, the fact that support for the current administration and the political system has such a strong negative impact on political tolerance signals that many citizens have trouble separating their current political sympathies from fundamental democratic rights.

Given the results for the relationship between Polity democracy scores and tolerance, recent work indicating a reduction in democratic quality across many Latin American countries (e.g. Puddington 2012, Weyland 2013) helps us understand why tolerance levels across the Americas have remained stagnant and even fallen in certain cases. As democratic quality and stability increases, so too does political tolerance, and we can only hope that this recent uptick in illiberal democracy across the region reverses.

We conclude this special *Insights* issue, the 100th in our series, with points of optimism for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the emergence of strong attachments to the core principles of democracy around which a democratic culture is based. The many years of work at the Latin American Public Opinion Project devoted to measuring and analyzing citizens' political attitudes and behaviors is guided by the goal of shedding light on the region's constantly evolving, and highly diverse, democratic landscape.

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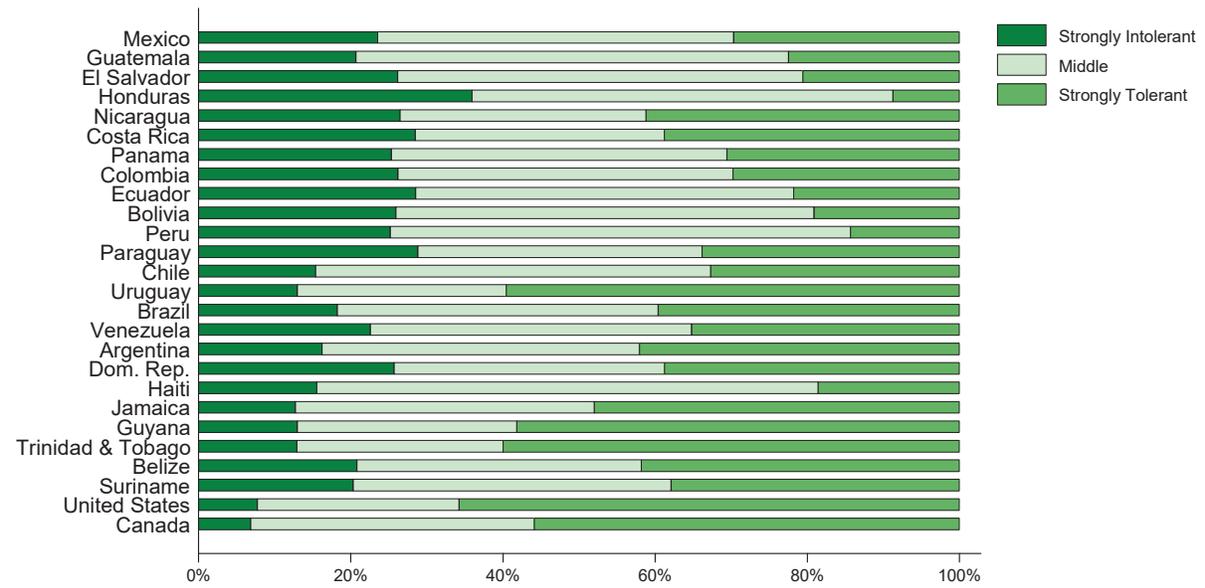
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Appendix

Appendix 1. The Long Road to Measuring Political Tolerance: Still No Perfect Solution

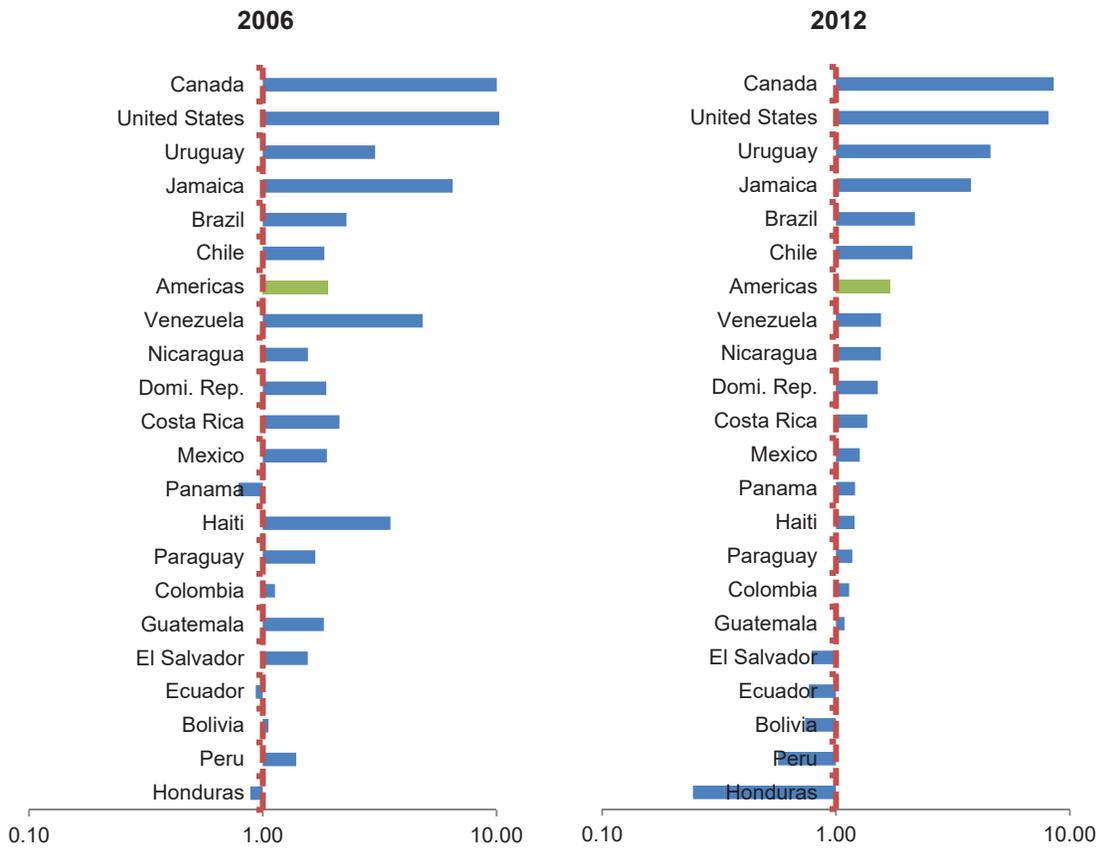
While the concept of political tolerance has held a central role in the theory of democratic values, its measurement has gone through many iterations, none of them completely satisfactory. The early work by Samuel A. Stouffer, carried out in the 1950s in the U.S., was focused on tolerance for communists, since at the time it was the fringe group garnering greatest public attention. Hence, questions were formulated about the rights of communist to, for example, teach in school or have their books in a public library. The problem in this approach became evident when, over time, surveys were showing that tolerance in the U.S. was on the rise, when in fact much of this increase may have been due to the decreasing national sense of threat from communists, especially as the Cold War ended. A further problem is that a focus on one group made the unreasonable assumption that there might not have been other fringe groups that might have been tolerated more (or less) by various sectors of the population. The solution to this problem emerged from John Sullivan and his fellow researchers, who developed the “least-liked group” approach. Respondents were read a list of groups and asked which one they liked the least. Then, respondents were asked if they would allow individuals belonging to such groups to enjoy basic civil liberties such as the right to vote. While this approach solved some of the Stouffer problems, it created others. One problem is that not all groups on the list were of the same threat level; granting rights to feminist groups (in the early 1980s), was one thing, while granting rights to Al-Qaeda terrorist cells. A further problem, discovered by Mitchell Seligson in his research in Nicaragua, is that large proportions of the population refused to pick a group, saying, “I am ok with everyone.” The result is that large proportions of respondents do not have tolerance scores. The LAPOP approach tries to “thread the needle” by avoiding specifying any specific group, but by focusing on those “who only say bad things about our system of government.” Thus, LAPOP avoids singling out a particular group (e.g., communists) and avoids having respondents who will not pick a least-liked group from a list. But the LAPOP approach does not solve the problem entirely, since we have found that those who oppose the incumbent administration are more likely to be tolerant of “those who only say bad things about our system of government.” Our solution has been to control for each respondent’s answer to the standard LAPOP question evaluating presidential performance. In that way, we attempt to purge from the tolerance scores the component that relates to antipathy toward the incumbent. That said, research by Jim Gibson in 1992 found that while different tolerance measures provide different levels of tolerance, there is a strong association among the different measures, such that whichever method is used, the items probably all tap into the same underlying concept: political tolerance of basic civil liberties.

Appendix 2. Distribution of Citizen Tolerance Levels Across the Americas, 2012



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Appendix 3. Cross-national Comparisons of the Tolerance Ratio for 2006 and 2012



AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – Feb. 2013

Will Argentines Trust the Truth Commission?

By Prof. Mitchell Seligson, Vanderbilt University

In 1994, a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina was bombed, and 85 people were killed. For 19 years the case has gone unresolved. Argentine courts have pointed the finger at Iran, but the government of that country has refused to cooperate with the investigation. Now, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner has announced that a five-person Truth Commission will be jointly established, involving two members nominated by Argentina, two by Iran and the fifth to be selected based on mutual consent. Both chambers of the Argentine legislature, as well as the legislature of Iran, must approve the memorandum for it to become operative.

Assuming that the commission is approved in final form by both governments, and that it eventually releases its findings, how likely is it that Argentines will accept the results?

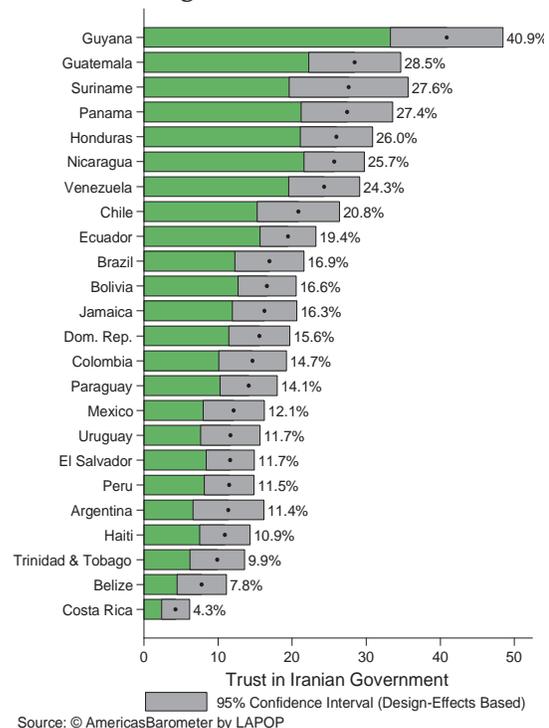
“Only 11% of Argentines trust the government of Iran.”

Not very, according to the AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). In March-April, 2012, a nationally representative sample of some 1,500 Argentines were interviewed as part of a broader study conducted in 26 countries of the Americas. In 24 of those countries, every second respondent was asked

about how much they trust the government of Iran. The results are shown in Figure 1.¹

Only 11% of Argentines trust the government of Iran; Argentines, on average, express less trust in the government of Iran than all but

Figure 1. Per cent of voting age adults who trust the government of Iran, 2012



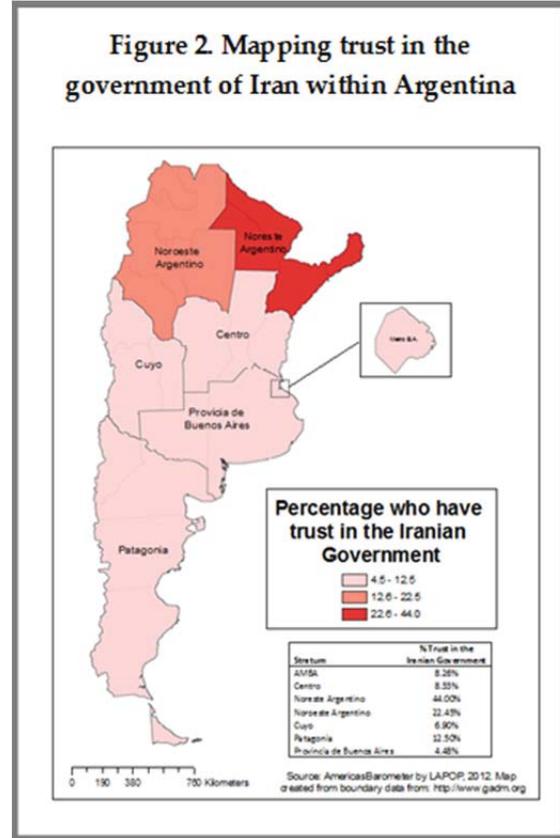
¹ Non-respondents are 49.5% of the sample.

four countries out of 24 in the Americas.

A statistical analysis of the Argentine data reveals that there are some bright spots for Iran in Argentina. Those who believe that the government of the incumbent president is performing well are significantly more likely to trust Iran. For example, 25% of those who give the government's performance a top rating ("very good") express trust in the government of Iran. This is higher than the national average, but still represents only one-quarter of the respondents. Geographically, Argentines who live in the Northern part of the country are more trusting of Iran than those who live in other regions (see Figure 2). The northern regions historically have been Peronist and President Fernández received a landslide victory in those provinces. But other factors, including socio-economic status, may play a role and need to be analyzed further.

If the results of the truth commission are to function like those of other truth commissions that have been established in the aftermath of national traumas, such as civil wars in Central America or Apartheid in South Africa, much work will need to be done to establish its

credibility. An important first step in doing so will be the selection of its members.



Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

Full results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer - Argentina survey will be available on-line at www.LapopSurveys.org by downloading, "*Cultura política de la democracia en Argentina y en las Américas, 2012: Hacia la igualdad de oportunidades*" (forthcoming), authored by Dr. Germán Lodola of the Universidad Torcuato di Tella. The full data set is available for on-line analysis or download (in SPSS and Stata formats) at no cost.

This study was carried out with support from the Tinker Foundation. The opinions expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the Tinker Foundation, United States Agency for International Development or Vanderbilt University.

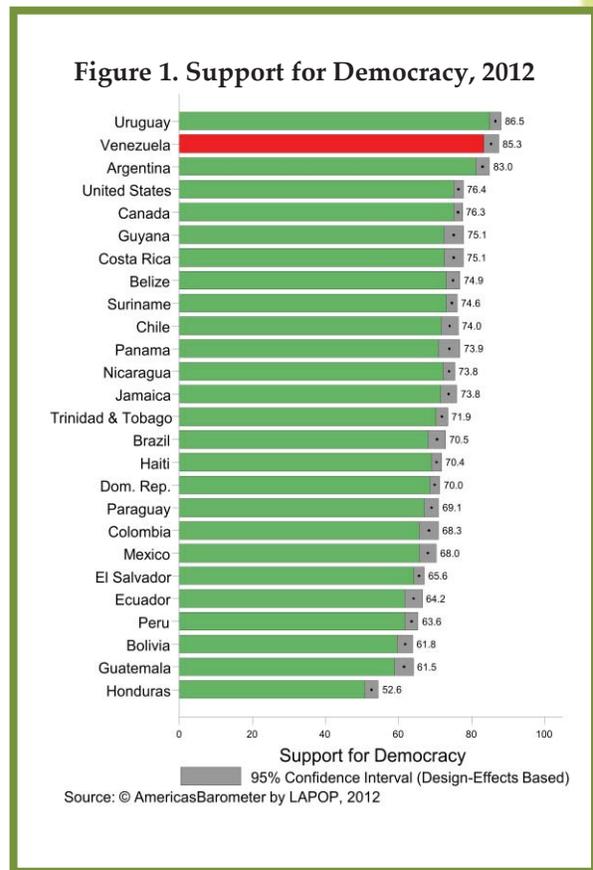
AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – March 11, 2013

Public Support for Democracy Endures in Venezuela

By Frederico Batista Pereira, Prof. Mitchell Seligson, and Prof. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University

The recent illness and now passing of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has raised many questions with respect to what will be the nature of democratic politics in the country following the departure of this highly influential leader. In light of widespread concern that Chávez, in power for 14 years, weakened traditional forms of representative democracy, now is a good moment to assess the extent to which Venezuelans are supportive of democracy as a system of government.

This *Insights* Topical Brief is the first in a series of reports focused on political attitudes in Venezuela. While Venezuela has one of the longest experiences with democracy in Latin America (dating back to 1958), questions of democratic commitment have been raised by critics of President Hugo Chávez’s administration. The disappearance of the traditional party system and the new style of populist leadership under Chávez left many questioning the prospects for democracy in that country. Furthermore, Venezuela has experienced a number of challenges in recent times that conceivably could shake confidence in democratic politics: the country was highly affected by the recent global economic crisis; high levels of crime and corruption have taken their toll on citizens’ sense of security; and, the political system has come to reflect deep and often vitriolic divisions between Hugo Chávez’s supporters and his opposition.



Nonetheless, according to the most recent AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), the Venezuelan public’s support for democracy is the second highest in the region. During February and March of 2012, a nationally representative sample of 1,500 respondents was interviewed as part of a broader study conducted in 26 countries of the

Americas. In all 26 countries, respondents were asked about to what extent they support democracy in the abstract. The results (mean values on a 0-100 scale) are shown in Figure 1.¹

Venezuelans' average support for democracy in abstract is 85 points on a 0-100 scale. This puts the country in second place on the list, just below Uruguay and above long-established established democracies such as the United States (4th), Canada (5th), and Costa Rica (7th).

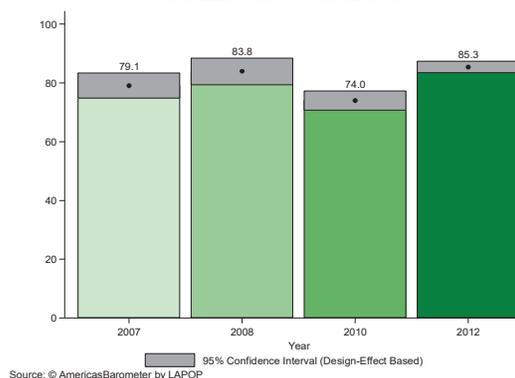
Beyond the comparatively high levels of support for democracy in the abstract among Venezuelans, Figure 2 shows that average support for democracy in Venezuela is also fairly stable over time. While support for democracy has endured at comparatively high levels in recent times, the data do show a drop of about 10 points between 2008 and 2010, likely due to the effects of the economic crisis. Nonetheless, by 2012 average support for democracy had increased again, to levels on par with the pre-economic crisis time period.

In analyses we conducted of factors that predict support for democracy in Venezuela in 2012, we find that the only factors that help distinguish those Venezuelans who are more supportive of democracy from those who are less supportive are age (older are more supportive than the young) and education (more educated are more supportive than the less well-educated), but beyond those two factors support for democracy is fairly evenly spread across the Venezuelan population (rich and poor, urban and rural).

Understanding Venezuelans' views on democracy seems crucial in the current context of political uncertainty with respect to when elections will be held and who will replace

¹ The question wording was the following: **ING4**. Changing the subject again, 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?" responses were given in a 1-7 agree/disagree scale and transformed to a 0-100 scale. Higher values indicate higher support for democracy.

Figure 2. Average Support for Democracy Over Time in Venezuela



Chávez as president of Venezuela. One might question whether the support for democracy in the abstract is grounded in support for basic democratic institutions (e.g., elections) and processes (e.g., checks and balances). In a forthcoming report we will show strong evidence that, indeed, Venezuelans express high levels of commitment to the basic democratic institutions and processes.

Frederico Batista Pereira is a graduate student in the Department of Political Science and an affiliate of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at frederico.b.pereira@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister is Associate Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Associate Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at liz.zechmeister@vanderbilt.edu.

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AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – March 25, 2013

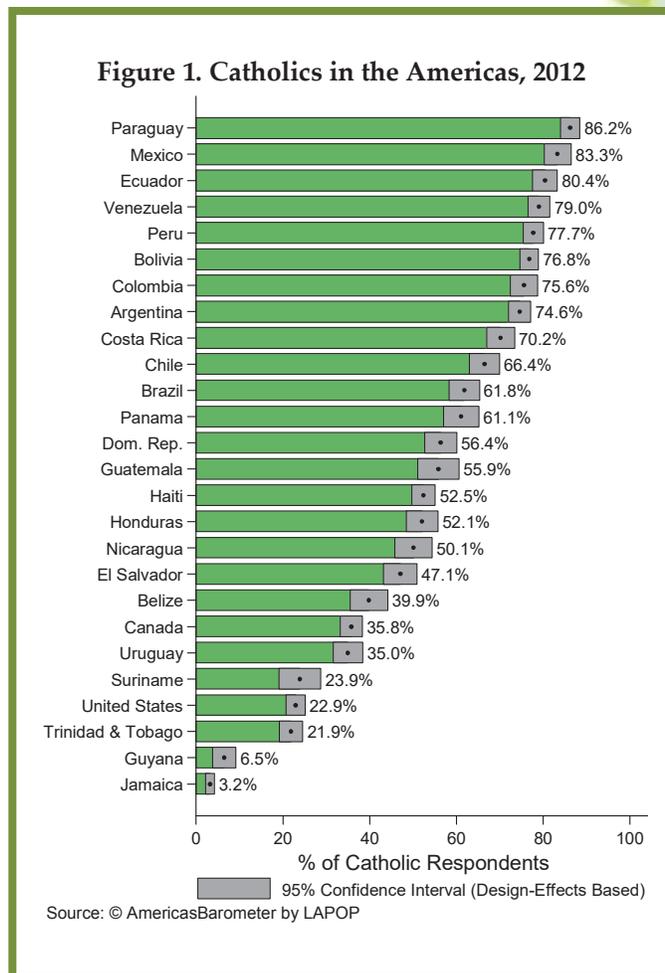
The New Pope is from the Americas: How Catholic are Americans?

By Alejandro Díaz-Domínguez, ITAM and Mitchell Seligson, Vanderbilt University

For the first time in history, a Pope has emerged from the Americas. The election results came as a surprise to many because even though half of the world's Catholics live in the Americas, only 29 percent of cardinal electors in the 2013 conclave were from that region. Yet, the new Pope comes from a Latin American country: Argentina.

In the months to come, debates will revolve around a myriad of expectations regarding the possible impact that the new Pope, Francisco, might have on the Catholic Church around the world. An especially relevant piece of information in which these debates are embedded is the social base of any religion: the size and composition of the faithful. Thus it is important to know how many they are, how they behave, and how much they care about religion.

According to the most recent AmericasBarometer surveys carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) during the first half of 2012¹, in which nationally representative samples of voting



aged adults were conducted in 26 countries of the Americas, respondents were asked about their religion. The results regarding the percent of Catholic respondents are shown in Figure 1.²

² The question wording (q3c) reads: "What is your religion, if any?" Response categories include a vast classification of religions in the Americas, in which Catholics are coded (1).

¹ Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

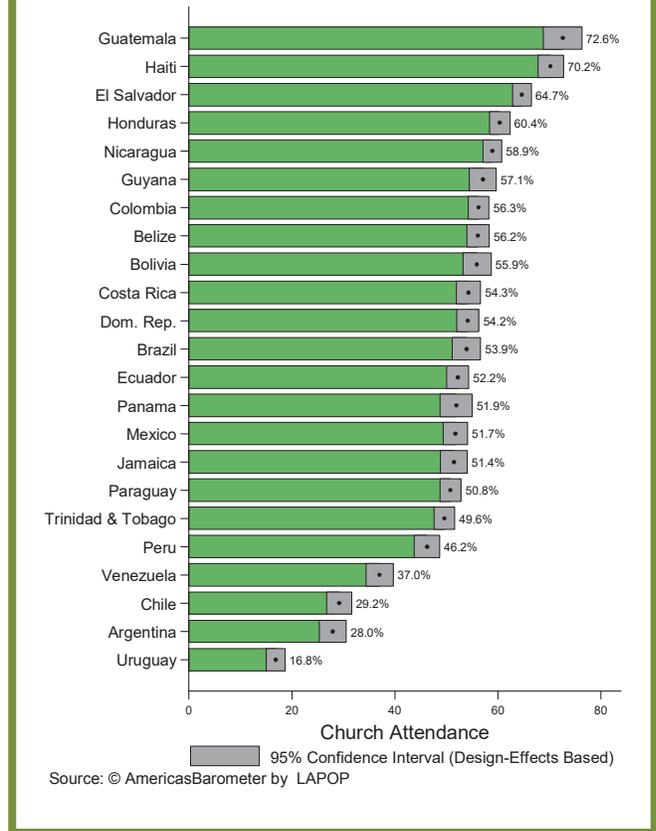
The traditional overwhelmingly Catholic countries (at the national level) score at the top, such as Paraguay, Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and Colombia, whereas practically all the English speaking countries score near the bottom: Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, the US, and Suriname. It is noteworthy that more than three quarters of Argentines, the Pope’s fellow countrymen and women, report identifying as Catholic, a figure that sharply contrasts with specific religious behaviors as we will show in the following graphs.

Church attendance can indicate how deeply felt religious identification is in behavioral terms. The newly elected Pope comes from a country in which, as we have shown, most people are Catholic, but as we show here, few actually attend Church on a regular level. Levels of church attendance among Catholics across the Americas vary sharply from country to country, as shown in Figure 2.³

Central American Catholics are likely to attend mass almost every week, whereas Catholics from the three well-known religiously liberal South American nations, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina go to mass less than once a month on average (the respondents in the US and Canada were not asked this question).

Another important religious attitude refers to the link between parishioners and their communities, giving us a measure of “religious social capital,” such as levels of attendance in religious groups, as shown in Figure 3.⁴

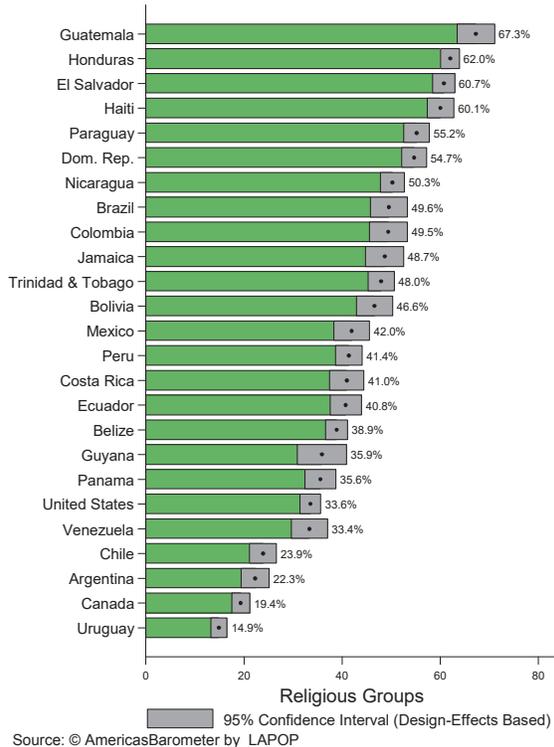
Figure 2. Catholic Attendance in the Americas, 2012



³ The question wording (q5a) reads: “How often do you attend religious services?”. Response categories are more than once per week, once per week, once a month, once or twice a year, and never or almost never.

⁴ The question wording (cp6) reads: “I am going to read a list of groups and organizations. Please tell me if you attend their meetings at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never: meetings of any religious organization? Do you attend them...”

Figure 3. Catholic Attendance Religious Groups, 2012



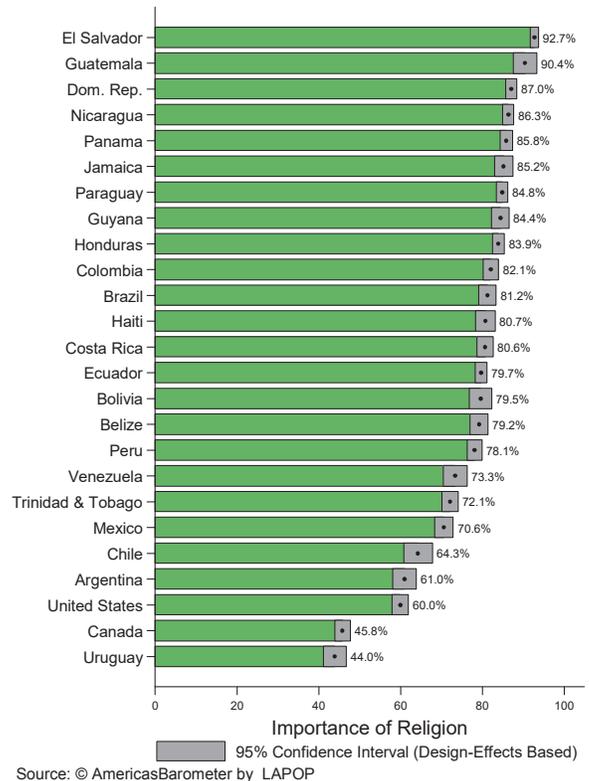
Once again, the Pope’s native Argentina scores near the bottom of the list. Central American Catholics score far higher.

How much Catholics in the Americas care about religion also varies, as shown in Figure 4,⁵ in which levels of importance of religion in the lives of the Catholic respondents is shown. Interestingly, although the US is typically considered as a very religious country, it ranks low in comparison to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Argentina is near the bottom. Central American countries again score at the top.

Church attendance however suggests a different scenario, in which all things equal, on average Catholics go to church less frequently when compared to non-Catholics. Similar behavior is reported for participation in religious groups, as shown in Figure 5. Overall, however, Catholics in the Americas are more likely to score higher when talking about how important religion is in their lives, when compared to non-Catholics.

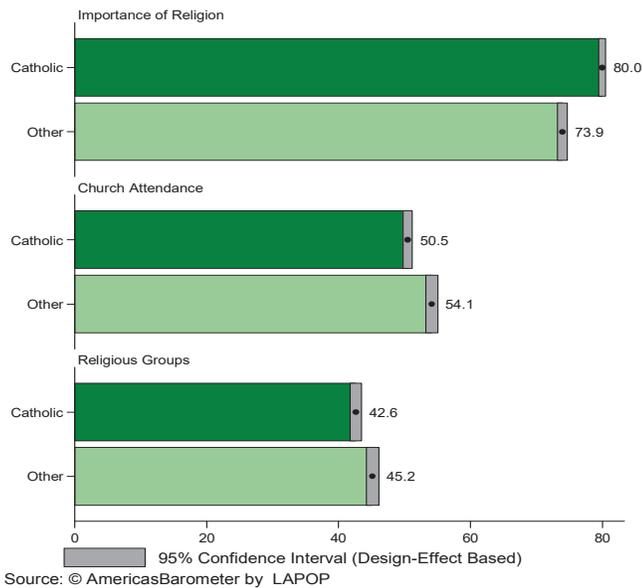
These pieces of evidence mainly suggest a spiritual continent, one now captivated with the first Pope from the region.

Figure 4. Importance of Religion, Catholics, 2012.



⁵ The question wording (q5b) reads: “Please, could you tell me how important is religion in your life?”. Response categories are very important, rather important, not very important, and not at all important.

Figure 5. Religious Attitudes in the Americas, 2012

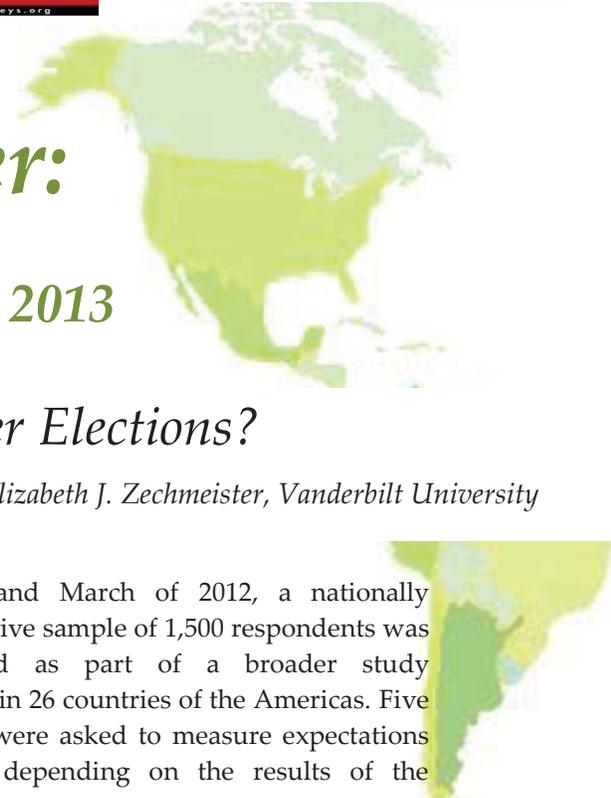


Alejandro Díaz-Domínguez is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt University, and Lecturer at the ITAM in Mexico City. He can be reached at alejandro.diaz@itam.mx

Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

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AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – April 1, 2013



Do Venezuelans Expect Unrest After Elections?

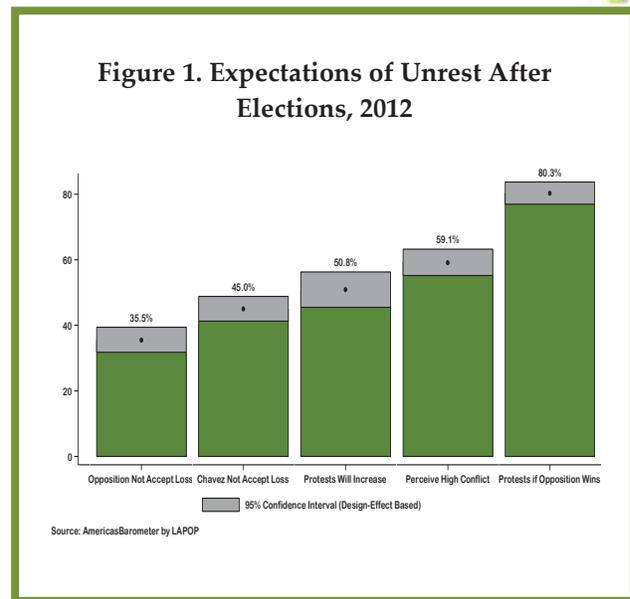
By Frederico Batista Pereira, Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson, and Dr. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University

The death of Hugo Chávez on March 5, 2013 has initiated a crucial moment in Venezuelan politics. Elections to replace Chávez are scheduled to be held on April 14 and, given the strong feelings among the pro and anti-Chávez supporters, questions have been raised about prospects for electoral unrest. This *Insights Topical Brief* is the second in a series of reports focused on political attitudes in Venezuela. In this brief we examine Venezuelans' expectations of unrest in the context of elections. In our analysis we document the fact that Venezuelans harbor significant concerns about the degree of protest and strife they anticipate that could follow elections and, as well, we show that attitudes toward Chávez are important predictors of those concerns. This latter finding underscores the political polarization, and related distrust between political camps, that came to characterize Venezuelan politics under Hugo Chávez.

The most recent AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) provides unique data that can help answer those questions¹. During

¹ Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at

February and March of 2012, a nationally representative sample of 1,500 respondents was interviewed as part of a broader study conducted in 26 countries of the Americas. Five questions were asked to measure expectations of unrest depending on the results of the



October elections. Even though the questions refer to that election, the one in which Chávez soundly defeated the opposition candidate, we believe that they help to shed light on general concerns about the transition phase that will take place in the country over the next few months.

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

Respondents were asked for their opinion on a) whether Chávez would accept an electoral loss; b) whether the opposition would accept a loss; c) if protests would increase as a result of electoral results; d) if there are high levels of conflict in the country; and e) if there would be protests in the streets if the opposition were to win the presidency. The proportion of respondents expressing high levels of concern in response to each of these questions is shown in Figure 1.²

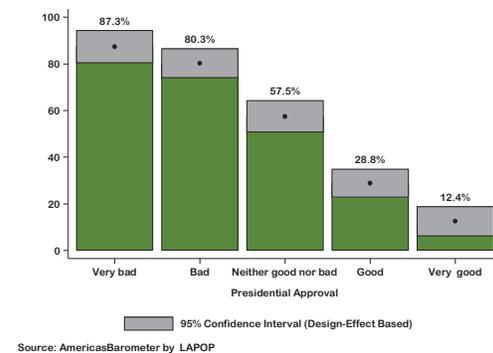
Figure 1 shows that sizeable numbers of Venezuelans worry that periods of electoral transition in Venezuela will lead to civil unrest. About 35% of survey respondents in 2012 said that the opposition would not accept a loss, while 45% believed that Chávez would not have accepted losing an election. About 51% of respondents believe that protests would increase, and 59% perceived high levels of conflict in the country. Finally, 80% said that they believed there would be protests in the streets if the opposition were to win election.

To what extent are these concerns based in individuals' support for or opposition to Chávez? During his 14 years in power, Venezuelan politics centered squarely around the personality and influence of Hugo Chávez. Even in the current transition period, Chávez's name is ubiquitous in politics and the campaigns. The deep animosity that has often characterized the pro- and anti-Chávez divide

² The question wordings are as follows, with the categories reported on in Figure 1 noted in *italics*: "VENVB11. If the opposition candidate in the next presidential elections were to lose, do you believe the opposition would accept the election results? Yes / No;" "VENVB12. And do you believe President Chávez would accept the results in case that he were to lose the next presidential election? Yes / No"; "VENPROT11. Do you believe that over the next few months social and political conflict will *increase*, stay the same, or *decrease*?"; "VENPROT10. Do you believe that the current level of social and political conflict in Venezuela is very low, low, neither low nor high, *high*, or *very high*?"; "VENVB15. If the opposition were to win the next election, do you think there will be public protests in the streets? Yes / No." Response options in *italics* were coded as 1, while the others were 0. Non-response rates were 20%, 18%, 10%, 5%, and 30%, respectively.

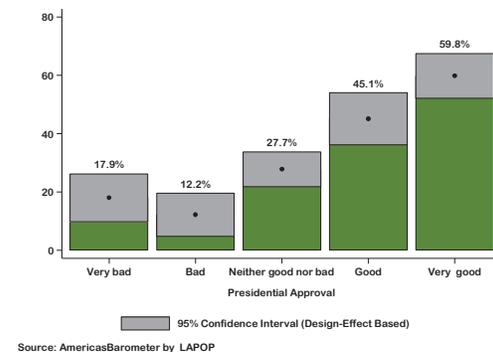
in Venezuela has left significant imprints on public opinion. Therefore, in the next set of analyses, we examine the extent to which the concerns expressed in Figure 1 are driven by political polarization. Figures 2 and 3 show how presidential approval influences individuals' assessments of the likelihood that the other side (Chavistas or the opposition) would accept an electoral loss.

Figure 2. Percent that Believes Chavistas Would Not Accept Electoral Loss, by Presidential Approval



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Figure 3. Percent that Believes Opposition Would Not Accept Electoral Loss, by Presidential Approval



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Figure 2 shows that presidential approval is strongly related to the likelihood that a respondent believes Chávez would not have accepted electoral defeat in the October 2012 election. That is, those who believe that Chávez is doing a very good job are far less likely to

believe that he would not accept defeat, while those who are highly critical of his rule strongly believe that he would not accept the defeat. Figure 3 shows that presidential approval also predicts the probability of a respondent saying that the opposition would not have accepted a defeat. In this case, those who highly approve of Chávez's job as president think the opposition would not accept the loss, while Chávez's detractors say they would have done so.

The strong evidence that one's political leanings influence expectations that Chávez supporters and opponents will accept unfavorable electoral results suggests deep levels of concern and mistrust among the electorate. At the same time, we see that individuals on each side express a belief in their own willingness to concede electoral defeat, and one could take this as a positive indicator for the prospects of a peaceful election this month.

The data discussed in this *Topical Brief* add perspective with to discussions of the future of democracy in Venezuela. Even though the Venezuelans are highly supportive of democracy in abstract, as shown by our previous *Topical Brief* on this topic, they express concerns about the possibilities of unrest during political transition periods. Moreover, these opinions are strongly influenced by attitudes pro and con toward Chávez, which reflects the high degree of political polarization in the country and the subsequent tendency for each side to mistrust the other's willingness to accept unfavorable electoral results. Our next *Insights Topical Brief* will investigate to what extent Venezuelans trust the electoral process and discuss how that trust might be important for acceptance of the electoral outcome.

Frederico Batista Pereira is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science and an affiliate of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at frederico.b.pereira@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

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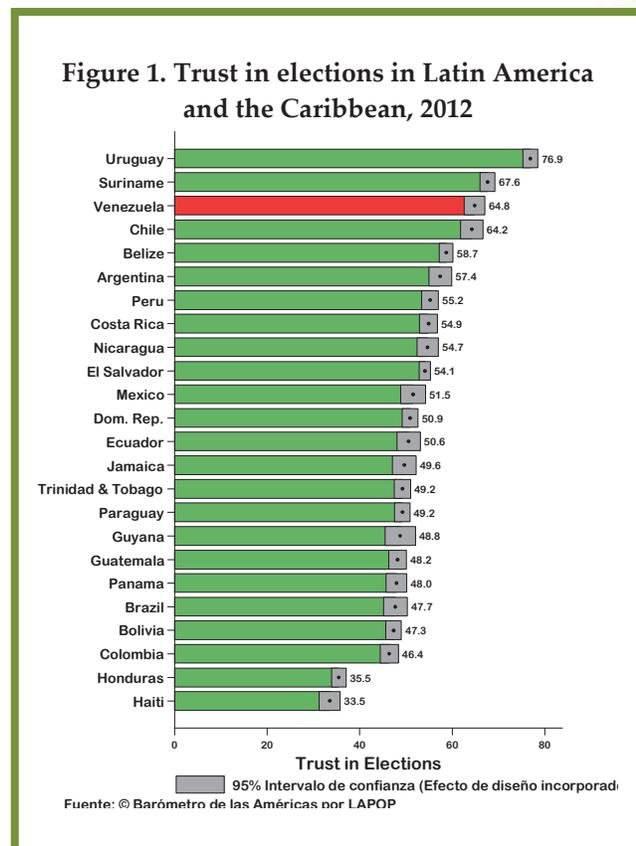
AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – April 8, 2013

Trust in elections in Venezuela

By Frederico Batista Pereira, Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson, and Dr. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University

Venezuelans will decide on April 14 who is to replace Hugo Chávez in leading the country. Given the high levels of polarization between pro- and anti-Chávez supporters we identified in our previous *Insights Topical Brief*, it is important to what extent do Venezuelans trust in the electoral processes in their country?¹ Trust in electoral processes is likely to be an important factor in determining the extent to which Venezuelans participate in and accept the outcome of elections this coming weekend. Therefore, in this *Insights Topical Brief* we examine Venezuelans' trust in elections, election outcomes, and the secret ballot.

The most recent AmericasBarometer survey carried out by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) provides the data for the analyses that follow. During February and March of 2012, a nationally representative sample of 1,500 respondents was interviewed as part of a broader study conducted in 26 countries of the Americas.² In all countries but



the United States and Canada, respondents were asked to what extent they trust elections in their countries. Figure 1 shows the average level of trust in elections among respondents

¹ This *Insights Topical Brief* is the third in a series of reports focused on political attitudes in Venezuela. In the previous two *Insights Topical Briefs* we showed that the level of support for democracy in abstract is high among Venezuelans, but that there is also some concerns about the possibility of unrest in case of a transition.

² Funding for the 2010 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at:

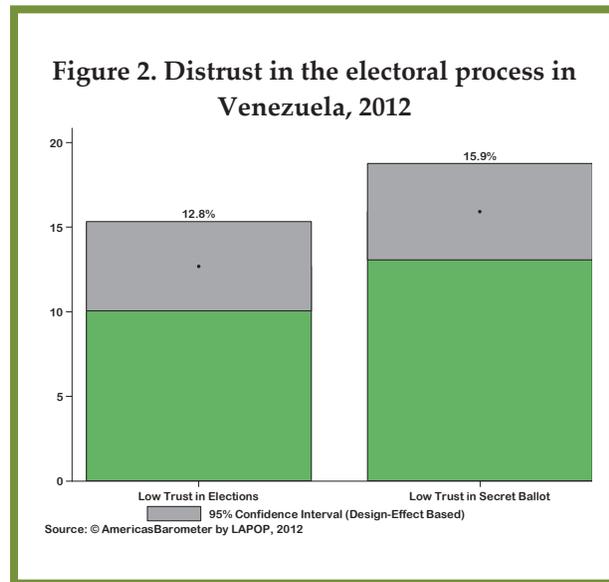
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

from 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean:³

Figure 1 shows that the level of trust in elections in Venezuela equals around 65 points on the 0-100 scale, which is the third highest score among all countries in the figure. Only Uruguay (77) and Suriname (68) display higher levels of trust in elections. Thus, we find comparatively high levels of trust in elections in Venezuela in 2012.

Two other questions about the fairness of the electoral process were asked exclusively in Venezuela due to the proximity of the survey to the 2012 presidential elections. Respondents were asked to what extent they believe that Venezuelan electoral results reflect actual votes, and if they believe the ballot is secret in Venezuela. Even though the questions were asked in early 2012, we believe that they help to shed light on the public's general impressions of electoral fairness. Figure 2 shows the percentages of respondents who express high levels of distrust in elections in their responses to those questions.⁴

Figure 2 shows that very few Venezuelans report significant levels of distrust in the electoral process. About 13% percent of respondents do not trust that the elections reflect actual votes in the country, while 16% of them do not trust that the vote is secret. Overall, these numbers show that the vast majority of Venezuelan survey respondents believe have confidence in these specific



aspects of the electoral process: the accuracy of results and the secret ballot.

The data discussed in this *Insights Topical Brief* paint a portrait of a public in Venezuela that expresses relatively high degrees of confidence in the Venezuelan electoral process. Combining these results with those from our previous *Insights Topical Briefs* on this topic, the overall picture with respect Venezuelan public opinion toward democratic politics is mixed. On the one hand, Venezuelans support democracy in the abstract and trust the electoral results in the country. On the other hand, they have concerns about unrest depending on the electoral results. These findings may indicate that the mass public in Venezuela is willing and ready to experience a peaceful and fair electoral process, but is somewhat concerned about how some of the losers may react in case of defeat. In such a context, it is especially critical for political elites to comport themselves with a level of transparency and integrity that allows themselves, and the public, to engage in and accept the results of this weekend's election.

³ The question wording is: "B47A. To what extent do you trust elections in this country?" Responses are in a 1-7 scale with the extreme points labeled as "not at all" and "a lot". The scale was transformed to 0-100, and Figure 1 shows the mean values for each country. Item nonresponse was 10%.

⁴ The wordings of the questions are: "VENB51: To what extent do you trust that the electoral results reflect the actual votes in Venezuela?" and; "VENB11: To what extent do you trust that the vote is secret in Venezuela?" Responses are in a 1-7 scale with the extreme points labeled as "not at all" and "a lot". Respondents that chose 1 or 2 as answers to the above questions are coded as 1 (distrustful), while the remaining is coded as 0. Item non-response was 4% for VENB51 and 2% for VENB11.

Frederico Batista Pereira is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science and an affiliate of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at frederico.b.pereira@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

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AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – April 11, 2013



Same-Sex Marriage in Uruguay: A New Law in Line with Citizens' Preferences

By Dr. María Fernanda Boidi, Vanderbilt University

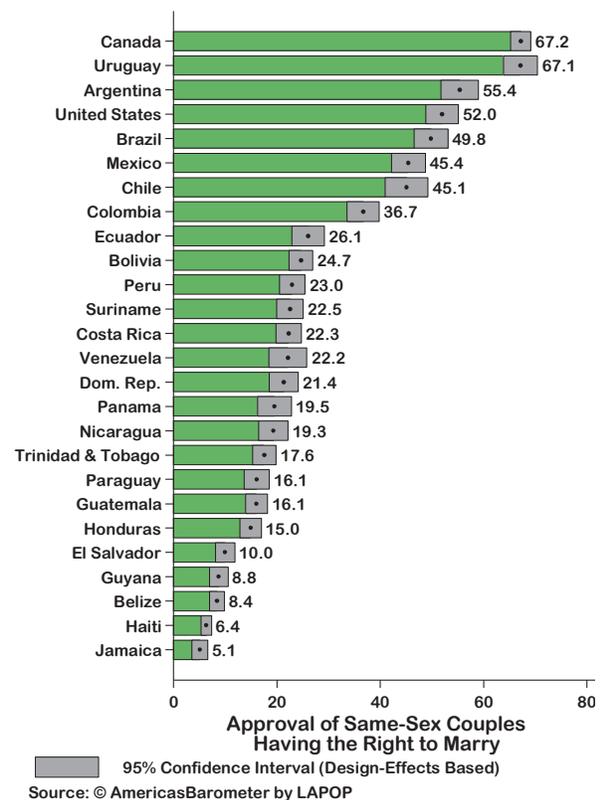
On April 10, the Parliament of Uruguay approved a law that recognizes the right to marry people of the same sex.¹ Uruguay, where homosexual relations have been “legal” since the 30s, became the twelfth country in the world to guarantee the right to same-sex marriage.

The law was passed by the Senate with 23 votes in favor (and 8 against). In the Chamber of Deputies, the law was passed with 71 votes of the 92 members present. The law received support from representatives of all political parties. The Uruguayan press reports expressions of appreciation from rights activists for sexual minorities, however, the passage of this law satisfies many more people than those who will directly benefit from it or who were fiercely committed to the cause. At least that is what the data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer suggests.²

¹ A preliminary version of this report appeared in the Razones y Personas Blog, in December 2012: <http://razonesypersonas.blogspot.com/2012/12/matrimonio-igualitario-en-uruguay-logro.html>

² Funding for the 2012 AmericasBarometer 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>

Figure 1. Approval of Same-Sex Couples Having the Right to Marry in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012



Uruguayans rank second in the Americas in expressing support for gay marriage, just one tenth of a point below Canada (67.1 and 67.2, respectively). Argentina, the third-ranked country with high support for marriage

between same sex individuals, falls more than 10 points lower (55.4) than Uruguay. This support is based on responses to the question: “How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry?” Figure 1 shows the averages for each country, expressed on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates “strongly disapproves” and 100 “strongly approves.”

In Uruguay, not surprisingly, those who are more in favor of marriage between homosexuals are younger, more educated, and place themselves toward the left of the ideological spectrum.³

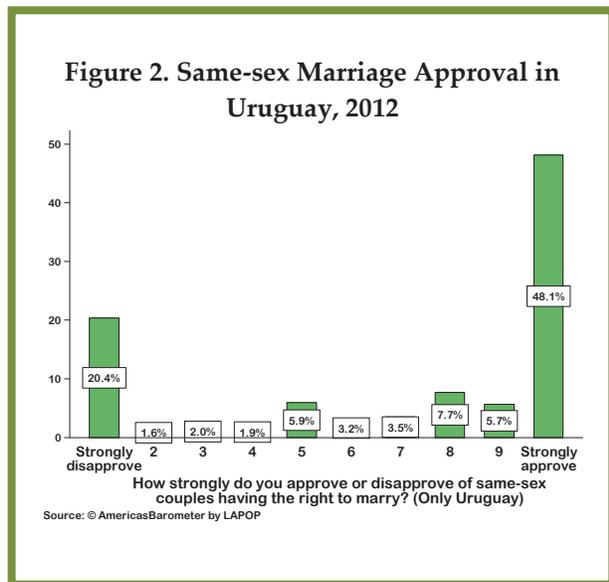
Despite these nuances, support is widespread: 48.1% of respondents in Uruguay indicated that they “strongly approve” of gay marriage, while only 20.4%, were at the extreme opposite, strongly disapproving. Figure 2 shows the distribution of preferences regarding the approval of the right for homosexuals to marry, now expressed in the original scale of 1 to 10, which was used in the questionnaire. This figure shows the percentage of respondents corresponding to each of the categories.⁴

According to the data, then, unlike opinions on on many other controversial issues, such as the legalization of abortion, for example, we do not find a sharply divided or polarized public opinion, but one clearly inclined to support the legislation that will take effect as soon as the Executive Power fulfills the formal requirement of enacting it.

The AmericasBarometer data suggest that the new legislation represents an historical

³ According to the results of the multivariate analysis not shown here, but available to the interested readers by contacting the author.

⁴ When these categories are recoded to the scale of 0 to 100 and averaged for Uruguay, we obtain the average of 67.1 shown in Figure 1. That is, then, the same information analyzed in two different ways. Figure 1 allows for a regional comparison, while Figure 2 helps visualize the distribution of the preferences in Uruguay.



achievement for gay rights activists and sexual minorities, but is also a law that is congruent with the opinion of the majority of Uruguayans, namely, that they feel that same-sex couples should be granted the right to marry. The passage of the law shows that the actions of the representatives are closely in line with the preferences of their constituents, which is often not the case. It is notable, however, that in the vast majority of the countries in the Americas, the public expresses far less support for the right to marry for same-sex couples.

Dr. Maria Fernanda Boidi (maria.f.boidi@vanderbilt.edu) is Program Coordinator and Operations at LAPOP and co-leader of the LAPOP team in Uruguay.

Full results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer - Uruguay survey and the AmericasBarometer 2012 comparative study can be consulted on-line at www.LapopSurveys.org. The full data set is available for on-line analysis or download (in SPSS and Stata formats) at no cost.

AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – June 3, 2013

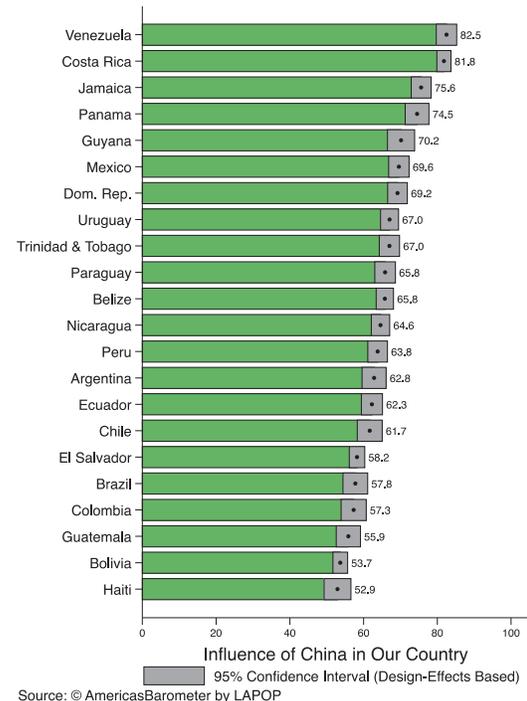
What Do Citizens of the Americas Think of China?

By Brian M. Faughnan and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University

Chinese President Xi Jinping is currently engaged in a four-country visit to the Americas. Between May 31 and June 6, he will visit Trinidad & Tobago, Costa Rica, and Mexico, and then finish in the U.S. It is well-known that economic relations between China and the region have increased significantly over the last decade.¹ But what do citizens of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region think of China? In this *Topical Brief* we provide a portrait of opinion toward China based on results from the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey.²

China's influence in the region has not gone unnoticed by the public. Rather, the average individual in the LAC region perceives China to have "some" influence in her country. This result is based on a question that asked whether China has "none" (0), "a little" (33), "some" (66), or "a lot" of influence in the

Figure 1. Mean Perceptions of the Extent of China's Influence, 2012



respondent's country. The average for the region is 66 units on this 0-100 scale, though Figure 1 shows significant variation across countries.³ The three LAC countries hosting the

¹ See, e.g., the IADB's *Ten Years After the Take-Off* (<http://www.iadb.org/en/publications/publication-detail,7101.html?id=7809>).

² The China attitudes module was asked in 22 of the 26 countries included in the 2012 study and, for each country, of a split sample (half) of the respondents. Support for this module came from the China Research Center at Duke University. Additional funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and, as well, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ FOR6. "And thinking now only of our country, how much influence do you think that China has in our country?" Coded so that 0=none; 33=a little; 66=some; 100=a lot. Non-respondents (16%) are not analyzed in Figure 1. Analyses in this report are weighted to account for the complex sample design and each country is weighted equally.

Chinese president's visit – Costa Rica, Mexico, and Trinidad & Tobago – are in the grouping of countries whose citizens perceive a comparatively high degree of Chinese influence. The mean scores for these countries are 81.8, 69.2, and 67, respectively. Joining Costa Rica at the top is Venezuela (82.5), while at the bottom are Bolivia (53.7) and Haiti (52.9).

But, what do citizens of the region think of the *quality* of this influence? Figure 2 presents the distribution of responses to a question that asked whether China's influence is positive, neither positive nor negative, or negative.⁴ The modal category is positive (63%). Thus, on average citizens in the LAC region are of the opinion that China's influence in their country is beneficial.

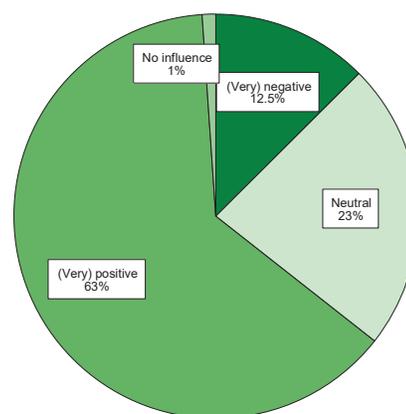
Once again, this general portrait masks interesting cross-national variation. When we examine opinions on the quality of China's influence by country, we find that the countries with the highest proportion of citizens who believe China's influence to be positive are the Dominican Republic (80%), Jamaica (80%), and Paraguay (77%). Both Costa Rica (73%) and Trinidad & Tobago (65%) are also in the upper-ranking of countries in terms of assessments of the quality of influence. Conversely, Mexico, which ranks near the top of in terms of quantity of influence (see Figure 1), is among a group of five countries in which only 50% or fewer evaluate China's influence as positive.⁵

Thus, it appears that the Chinese president will meet two different types of publics during his visit: one quite positively disposed toward China (Costa Rica and Trinidad & Tobago) and the one that perceives a strong influence, but is

⁴ FOR7. "In general, the influence that China has on our country is very positive, positive, neither positive nor negative, negative, very negative?" For this report, we combine the "very positive and positive" and "very negative and negative" categories. The 4.5% of respondents who did not answer the question are excluded.

⁵ Of those who responded to the question, 50% of those surveyed in Guatemala, Argentina, and Chile gave positive responses. This figure is 47% in Mexico and 41% in Bolivia.

Figure 2. Region-wide Assessments of the Quality of China's Influence, 2012



Perceptions of China's Influence in the Country

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP; v47; for7; not including NR

more critical of the quality of that influence (Mexico).

Finally, we note that we find a substantial amount of non-response to many of the questions in the China attitudes battery (see footnote 3). One interpretation of this comparatively high non-response is that opinion in Latin America and the Caribbean toward China has yet to consolidate. It may well be, then, that the visit by President Xi will leave an important imprint on public opinion in the countries hosting his visit and, possibly, the region more generally.

Brian M. Faughnan is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science and an affiliate of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. He can be contacted at: brian.m.faughnan@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister is Associate Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Associate Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. She can be contacted at: liz.zechmeister@vanderbilt.edu.

More information on the AmericasBarometer can be found at www.LapopSurveys.org. The datasets are available for online analysis or download at no cost.

AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – June 17, 2013

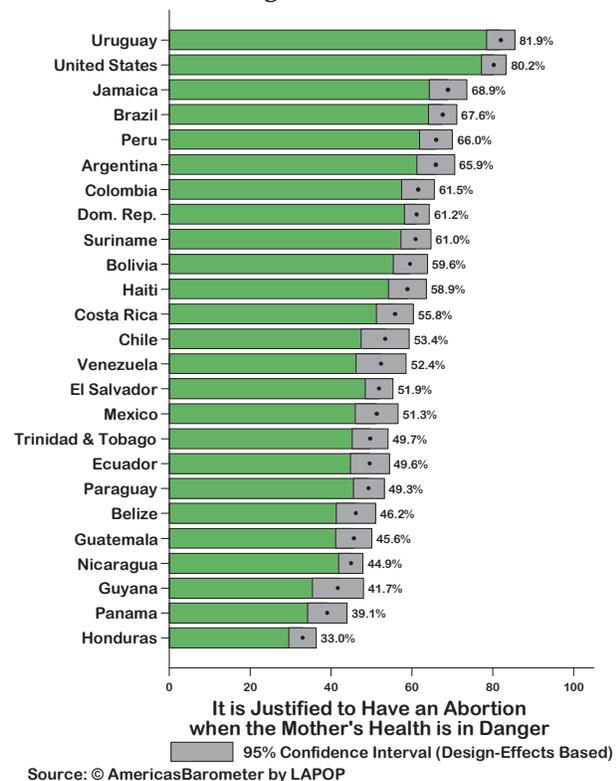
Public Opinion and Abortion Rights in the Americas

By María Fernanda Boidi and Margarita Corral, Vanderbilt University

The Brazilian Congress is currently considering a new abortion law under a heated debate that involves an active opposition by Catholic and Evangelical churches.¹ On June 23, Uruguayans will vote on a pre-referendum that challenges last year's law decriminalizing abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. In other countries across the region, the issue of abortion also has been placed in the spotlight by recent events. In the Dominican Republic in 2012 and in El Salvador last month, media attention worldwide focused on cases in which petitions for exceptions to strict abortion laws were denied despite serious health risks to the mother. In the former case, both mother and unborn child died and in the latter case, the infant (who had developed without a complete brain) died after doctors were able to perform an early C-section.²

In this *Topical Brief*, we ask to what extent citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean support permitting abortion when the mother's health is in danger. Figure 1 shows

Figure 1. Support for Abortion when the Mother's Health is in Danger in the Americas, 2012



¹http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/06/05/actualidad/1370458661_856676.html

² See <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201305/noticias/12231/>; <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2012/08/17/joven-dominicana-embarazada-muere-en-medio-de-debate-sobre-el-aborto/>. These are only two of many examples in a region that also has one of the highest rates of unsafe abortions according to the World Health Organization (http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75173/1/WHO_RHR_12.01_eng.pdf).

results from the 2012 AmericasBarometer³ survey by LAPOP, which asked a split sample

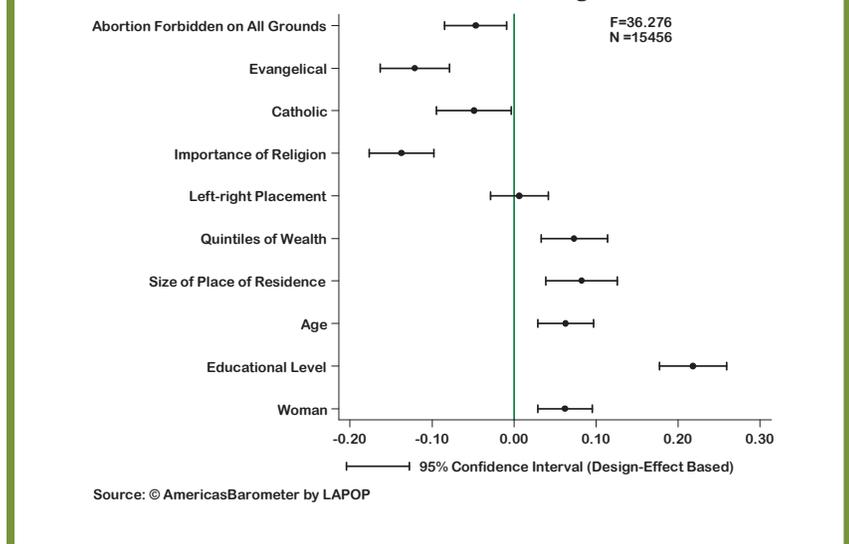
³ Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations

of respondents in 25 countries “Do you think it’s justified to interrupt a pregnancy, that is, to have an abortion, when the mother’s health is in danger?” The question thus captures attitudes towards abortion under one extreme circumstance.

The figure shows wide variation across countries.⁴ Uruguay has the largest percentage of citizens supporting abortion when a mother’s health is in danger (81.9%), while in Honduras only 33% do so. In sixteen countries the percentage exceeds 50%. El Salvador, Chile, Honduras, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic are the Latin American countries with the most restrictive abortion legislation, forbidding pregnancy termination on all grounds and with no exceptions.⁵ Only the latter – the Dominican Republic – is found in the upper-half of the ranking of countries.

To explain these attitudes in the Latin American and Caribbean region, Figure 2 shows results from a logistic regression. At the country level, living in a context in which abortion is forbidden on all grounds predicts lower support. For those having a Catholic and especially an Evangelical identity (as opposed to anything else) and for those who feel religion is important in their lives, support for abortion is lower, as one would expect. We also see that women, wealthier citizens, and those living in urban settings are more likely to report that abortion is justified when the mother’s health is in danger. Interestingly, those who are older are more supportive and

Figure 2. Determinants of Support for Abortion when the Mother’s Health is in Danger, Latin American and Caribbean Region, 2012



education has an especially substantial positive effect. In sum, individual characteristics as well as country context matter when it comes to predicting attitudes toward abortion across the Americas. At the individual level, two of the most important factors are religion and education.

In Uruguay’s pre-referendum on June 23, if enough affirmative votes (25% of the electoral body) are cast, the law will be submitted to a referendum later this year. While we see comparatively liberal views in Uruguay (Figure 1), it is important to note that these refer only to the exceptional case in which a mother’s health is in danger and, moreover, what is a stake in the June vote is not only support of the law, but the right of the citizenry to decide on it.⁶ What we can conclude with more confidence is that, as the public across the region continues to be drawn into debate and discussion over the topic, attitudes will continue to shift and evolve on this issue in the months and years to come.

Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

⁴ Item nonresponse was 7%; those who did not answer are not analyzed in this report.

⁵ United Nations, World Abortion Policies 2011 <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2011abortion/2011wallchart.pdf>. The UN report categorizes Honduras as allowing abortion when the mother’s health is at risk, but this is anchored in the Honduran Medical Ethics code. Honduran laws forbid abortion on all grounds.

⁶ The current Uruguayan abortion law was enacted by President José Mujica, who has expressed that the the issue is important enough to allow a popular vote on the matter. <http://diario.laprensa.com.uy/index.php/nacionales/33789-mujica-apoya-referendum-sobre-ley-del-aborto>

Dr. Maria Fernanda Boidi (maria.f.boidi@vanderbilt.edu) is Program Coordinator of Field Operations at LAPOP and co-leader of the LAPOP team in Uruguay.

Margarita Corral (margarita.corral@vanderbilt.edu) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science and research assistant of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University.

Full results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer - survey and the AmericasBarometer 2012 comparative study can be consulted on-line at www.LapopSurveys.org. The full data set is available for on-line analysis or download (in SPSS and Stata formats) at no cost.

AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – July 29, 2013

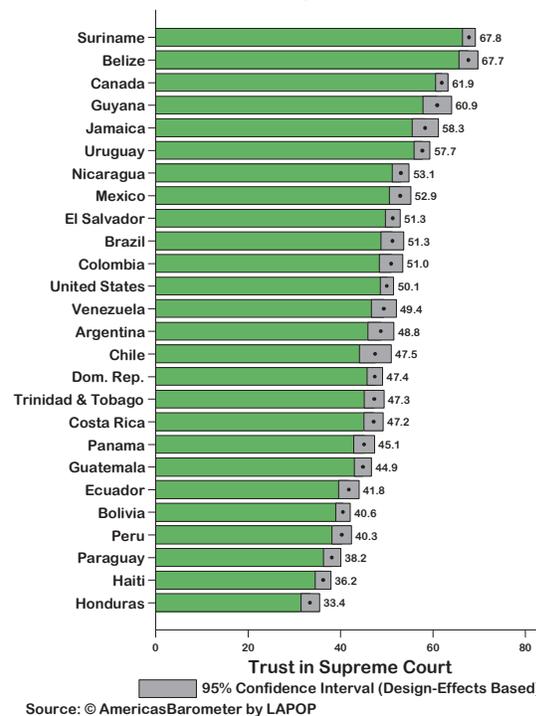
Public Opinion and Trust in the Supreme Court in Argentina

By Germán Lodola, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

Last month, Argentina’s Supreme Court ruled as “unconstitutional” several articles of a Congressionally-approved judicial reform that would allow citizens to elect under party ballots the members of the Magistrates’ Council – currently a non-elected body responsible for overseeing the appointment and removal of federal judges. The high court’s decision was met with strong disapproval from the executive branch, which had fervently promoted the reform as a mechanism to “democratize” the old and corporatist judiciary system. This political schism between the two institutions is particularly interesting from the perspective of public opinion, as this *Topical Brief* will show that at least through 2012 support for the president has been strongly linked to trust in the Supreme Court.

In the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey by LAPOP,¹ a total of 41,626 persons in 26 countries were asked “To what extent do you trust the Supreme Court?” This question was originally asked on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents “Not at all” and 7 “A lot”, and here is recalibrated on a 0 100 scale.

Figure 1. Trust in the Supreme Court in the Americas, 2012



¹ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>.

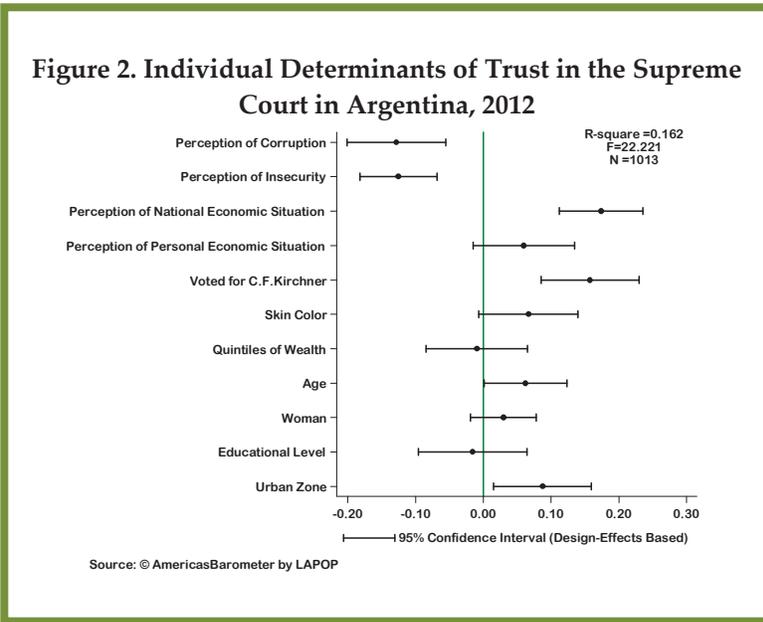
Figure 1 shows mean levels of trust in the Supreme Court in each country. As can be appreciated, there is wide variation across nations.² Suriname and Belize are at the top of the ranking with nearly 68 points, while Haiti and Honduras are at the bottom with 36 and 33 points respectively. Twelve countries have average levels of trust that exceed 50 points, meaning that their citizens tend to be positively disposed toward trusting this institution.

Interestingly, Argentina's score of 49 places it near the regional average and close to such countries as the United States and Chile, whose judicial branches are considered among the best developed in the region.

To explain differences in individual attitudes *within* Argentina, I estimated a linear regression model that includes the following variables: perception of corruption and insecurity, perception of the economy (both national and personal), whether the respondent voted for President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in the 2011 election, education level, age (coded in number of years), gender, wealth, skin color, and urban/rural residence. The coefficients are standardized for ease of comparison.

The results indicate that four sets of variables are statistically significant. First, among the socio-demographic variables, only the respondents' place of residence obtains statistical significance: urban dwellers have more trust in the Supreme Court than persons who live in a rural setting. Second, as one would expect, perceptions of corruption and crime erode trust in the Argentina's Supreme

² Item nonresponse was 4.4% across the sample as a whole; those who did not answer are not analyzed in this report.



Court.³ Third, evaluations of the national economic situation are positively associated with trust in this institution. There is no relationship, however, between one's own economic situation and levels of trust. Fourth and most importantly, the results indicate that respondents who voted for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner express substantially higher levels of trust in the Supreme Court than respondents who cast their votes for other presidential candidates.⁴

Therefore, it appears that in Argentina, at least in 2012, support for the executive and the Supreme Court moved in tandem. This result is consistent with the general tendency noted for the Latin American and Caribbean region by Maldonado (2011). In Argentina, this tendency may have been fueled to a large extent by the fact that former President Néstor Kirchner in 2003 led an overhaul of the Supreme Court, which had been packed by President Carlos Menem in 1990 and was widely perceived as politicized and corrupt. Sponsored by Kirchner, the Argentine Congress impeached or forced

³ I also estimated regression models including individual experiences (victimization) with corruption and crime. No matter how I estimated these models, victimization by corruption and crime never obtained statistical significance.

⁴ Including a variable of presidential popularity instead of this variable leads to virtually the same statistical results.

the resignation of six of the nine Supreme Court members and substituted them with highly respected jurists.

But, where in 2012 Argentine citizens linked their electoral support of the president to their trust in Supreme Court, we might expect this dynamic to shift in the current context. Indeed, a new chapter will open in the months to come as the Argentine Supreme Court has to rule on the constitutionality of another controversial law promoted by the national government and passed in 2009: the broadcasting law. Although this legislation does not regulate media content, it does indirectly affect private media profits (Kitzberger 2012).

In sum, it is important to consider how public attitudes toward the executive and the judiciary power will evolve in an environment marked by political disputes between these two separate branches of government. Only time will tell whether the recent rift between the executive and judicial branch over the Magistrates' Council reform will escalate in the near future and affect trust in the Supreme Court in Argentina.

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Dr. Germán Lodola (glodola@utdt.edu) is Associate Professor at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, member of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), and leader of the LAPOP team in Argentina.

Full results of the 2012 AmericasBarometer – Argentina survey and the AmericasBarometer 2012 comparative study can be consulted on-line at www.LapopSurveys.org. The full data set is available for on-line analysis or download (in SPSS and Stata formats) at no cost.

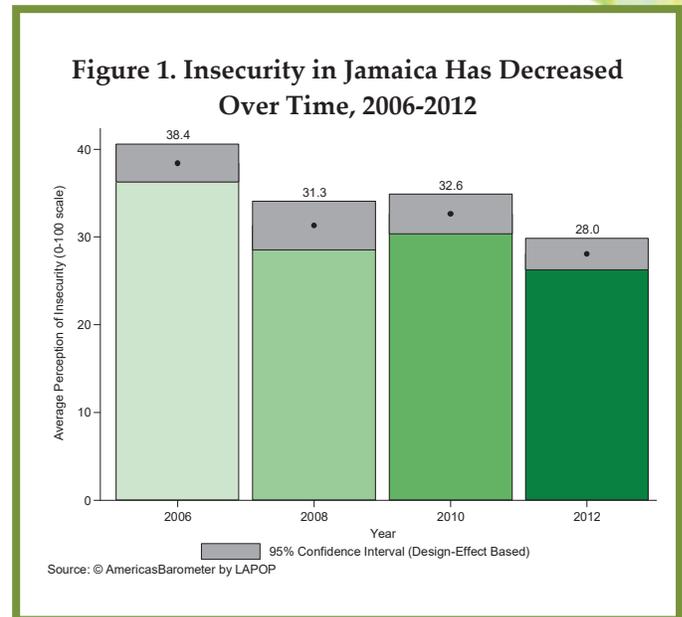
AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – August 19, 2013

Police Reforms Spur Security and Trust in Jamaica

By Elizabeth J. Zechmeister (Vanderbilt), Mitchell A. Seligson (Vanderbilt), Anthony A. Harriott (University of West Indies-Mona), and Balford A. Lewis (University of West Indies-Mona)

The *New York Times* this Sunday reported on important gains in security in Jamaica, citing LAPOP’s 2012 Jamaica country report, which the *Times* correspondent Damien Cave characterized (p. 6) as, “a respected study.” The in-depth article took note of the support Jamaica has received from the United States’ government-supported Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), a program carried out in partnership with USAID and the government of Jamaica, and important reforms to community-based policing as agents for increased security in the island country. This conclusion is in accord with our own assessment of the situation, expressed in the 2012 AmericasBarometer country report as follows: “Community policing offers much potential for building the confidence and trust of the people, transforming policing and making the JCF more effective in controlling and preventing crime (p. 192).” In this *Topical Brief* we review some of the key empirical findings related to this conclusion, based on analyses of data from our AmericasBarometer project, which has conducted national surveys in Jamaica every two years since 2006.

In each year of the AmericasBarometer survey, we have asked respondents “Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe (0), somewhat safe (33), somewhat unsafe (66) or very unsafe (100)?” (AOJ11, recoded). Figure 1 documents that



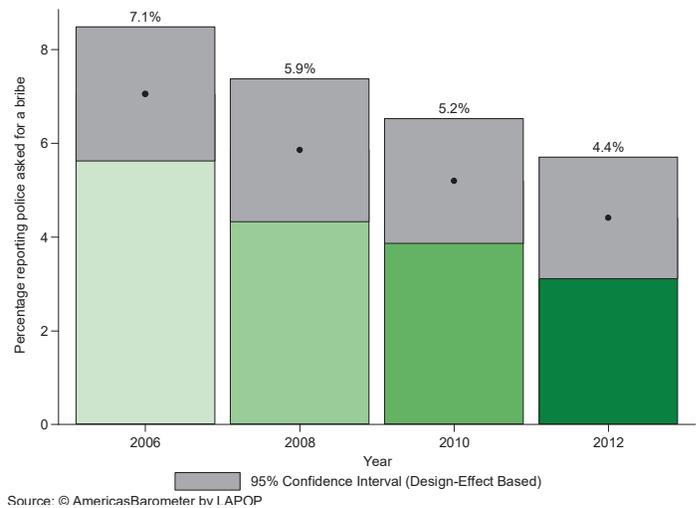
mean values on this insecurity measure have decreased steadily over time.

Some of this decrease in insecurity appears correlated with reforms to the police force. For example, we find that bribe solicitation by police officers has decreased over time exactly in step with the decreases in insecurity shown in Figure 1. In each round of the AmericasBarometer, we have asked “Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last twelve months?” (EXC2). Figure 2 shows that the percentage of individuals who responded “yes” has decreased from 7.1% in 2006 to 4.4% in 2012.

We also find evidence that trust in the police increased significantly in 2012 compared to prior years, and especially when compared to 2010, when trust levels experienced a significant dip. Each round of the AmericasBarometer has asked Jamaicans “To what extent do you trust the National Police?” (B18). Figure 3 shows these results. That the results do not track perfectly with decreases in insecurity and bribery suggests that other factors matter as well in predicting trust in the police. Some of these factors we show in our 2012 AmericasBarometer Jamaica report include age (older people are more trusting) and confidence in courts and the judicial system.

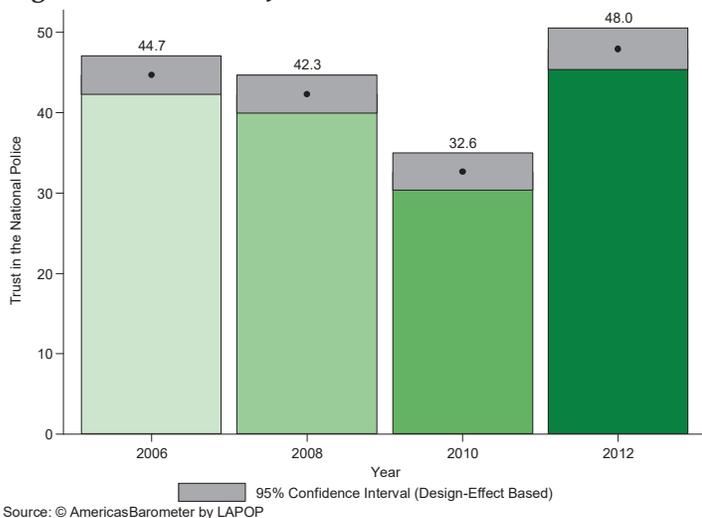
Another factor that may have helped increase trust in the police in the most recent year of the AmericasBarometer survey is the community policing efforts that have increased in the last several years. As the *New York Times* article noted, these reforms were catalyzed in part by the dramatic and deadly raid by authorities to arrest drug lord Christopher M. Coke in a Jamaican neighborhood in 2010, an event in which approximately 70 people were killed.

Figure 2. Bribe Solicitation by the Jamaican Police Has Decreased Over Time, 2006-2012



The 2012 AmericasBarometer survey in Jamaica also asked a series of questions about gangs in the country. For example, we asked respondents how they would “rate the performance of the police in their effort to dismantle gangs in your neighbourhood?” (JAMGANG9). As reported in the 2012 Jamaica country report, we find that only 17.3% report the police are doing a poor job. In contrast, 44.3% and 38.4%, respectively, believe the police are doing a fair or a good job.

Figure 3. Trust in the Jamaican National Police, 2006-2012



The empirical evidence presented here from the AmericasBarometer project provides only a glimpse into the ways in which these data can be used to track changes in citizens’ security, experiences, and evaluations over time (and, though not shown here, across countries). Our conclusion based on analyses of the Jamaica AmericasBarometer data is that police reform and related efforts in Jamaica have had significant positive effects. Of course, there is always more work to be done. In the 2012 AmericasBarometer Jamaica country report, we drew the conclusion that deepening the reforms in the police and judicial system in Jamaica would go a long way toward continuing to build bonds of trust between the community and the police and, at the same time, help to decrease violence and increase citizen security.

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Dr. Elizabeth J. Zechmeister is Co-Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Associate Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at liz.zechmeister@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Mitchell A. Seligson is Founder and Co-Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He can be reached at mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu.

Dr. Anthony A. Harriott is Founder and Director of the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security and Professor of Political Sociology at the University of the West Indies, Mona. He can be reached at anthony.harriott@uwimona.edu.jm.

Balford A. Lewis is Country Team Leader for the AmericasBarometer Jamaica study and co-author of the 2012 country report. He is a research Fellow at the Centre of Leadership and Governance at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus. He can be reached at blewis@utech.edu.jm.

Full results of the AmericasBarometer surveys in Jamaica and the additional 25 countries surveyed in the region can be consulted on-line at www.LapopSurveys.org. The full data sets are available for on-line analysis or download (in SPSS and Stata formats) at no cost.

AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – October 21, 2013

Legislators and the President Clash in Ecuador over Abortion Issue:

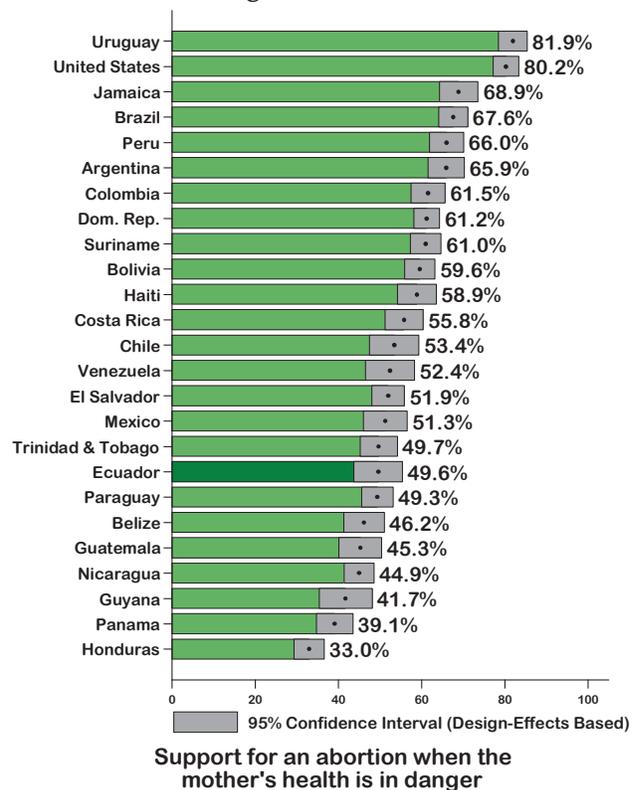
Who has the support of the people? By Diana Orcés, Vanderbilt University

On October 13, 2013, seventy-seven changes to the Ecuadorian Penal Code were approved by the unicameral National Assembly, the country's legislature, and now wait to be signed by President Rafael Correa (El Comercio, 2013). Included among these reforms was a proposal—by legislators of the President's ruling party, Alianza País—to decriminalize abortion in all cases of rape. The current law allows the procedure when the victim is mentally incapacitated, or when the mother's health is in danger due to the pregnancy. During a short legislative stand-off with President Correa, the entire judicial reform package was jeopardized by this single proposed modification to the country's abortion law, with President Correa taking the following stance against abortion:¹

"If these betrayals and disloyalty continue... I will present my resignation ... they can do whatever they want, I will never approve the decriminalization of abortion" (El Comercio 2013, El Universo, 2013).

¹ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. This *Topical Brief* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency.

Figure 1. Support for Abortion when the Mother's Health is in Danger across the Americas, 2012



In the face of Correa's immense popularity, legislators from his own party backed down and removed the proposal from the reform package. In this *Topical Brief* I explore Ecuadorians' views on the issue of allowing abortion cases where the health of the mother is threatened in an effort to understand the extent to which President Correa's position reflects those of his supporters and the Ecuadorian public more generally.

I analyze a question asked in the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer survey, which interviewed over 42,000 people in 26 countries in the Americas, including a nationally representative sample of 1,500 of voting age Ecuadorians. Respondents were asked about their support for an abortion with the following yes/no question:²

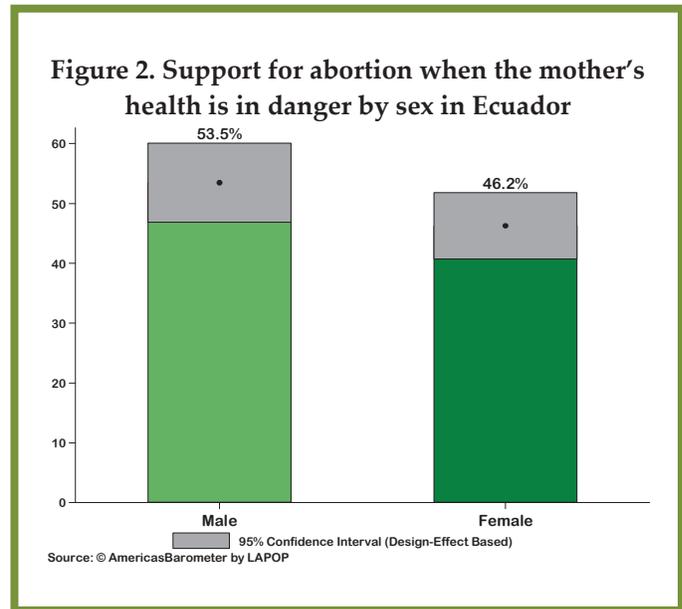
W14A. Do you think it's justified to interrupt a pregnancy, that is, to have an abortion, when the mother's health is in danger?

Figure 1 shows the percentages of citizens in the Americas who would allow an abortion when the mother's health is in danger. Ecuadorians express among the lowest level of support for abortion in the Americas and also exhibit a highly polarized public opinion landscape, with an even split of Ecuadorian respondents supporting and opposing abortion in cases where the mother's health is in danger. Only Panamanians (39%) and Hondurans (33%) are significantly less supportive of an abortion than Ecuadorians, with Paraguay, Belize, Nicaragua, and Guyana all falling in the same statistical range as Ecuador. Conversely, more than 80% of Uruguayans and U.S. citizens support the right to an abortion when the mother's health is in danger.³

What these initial results suggest is that both Correa and legislative proponents of even limited abortion rights have a strong base of popular support among the Ecuadorian public, but also face a significant percentage of the population who oppose their respective positions. In sum, the legislative push to decriminalize abortion in certain situations reveals a stark and divisive split running through Ecuadorian society.

² Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ Item nonresponse was 7%; those who did not answer are not analyzed in this short report.



In order to better understand the contours of this issue among the Ecuadorian public, I now turn to an analysis of the characteristics of those who support expanded abortion rights in Ecuador. In another recent LAPOP *Topical Brief*, Boidi and Corrales (2013) find that support for abortion rights across Latin American and Caribbean publics is lower among those who feel religion is important in their lives while support is higher among women, wealthier citizens, those with higher levels of education, and those living in urban areas. I take these findings as a point of departure for an analysis of the socioeconomic and attitudinal profiles of abortion opponents and supporters in Ecuador in an effort to identify the competing bases of popular support on which Correa and his legislative opponents have staked their positions on this hotly contested issue.

Beginning with a breakdown of supporters of expanded abortion rights by sex, Figure 2 reveals, perhaps surprisingly, no statistically significant differences between Ecuadorian males (53.5%) and Ecuadorian females (46.2%) in their support for an abortion when the mother's health is in danger. For a more complete assessment of supporters and opponents of this provision, though, I turn to a multivariate analysis in which various factors

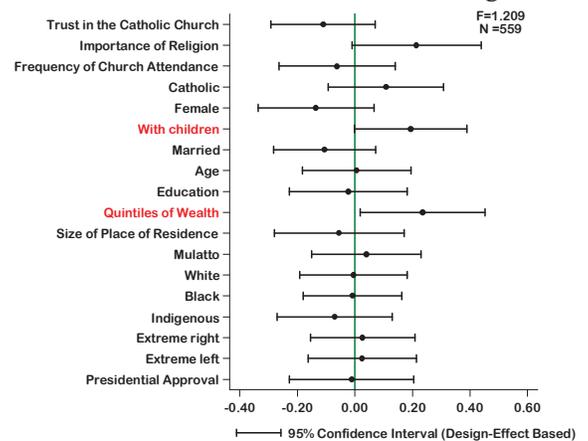
related to Ecuadorians' views on abortion are considered.

Figure 3 shows a graphical representation of a logistic regression model that seeks to identify the main socio-economic and attitudinal characteristics of abortion rights supporters. When the dot falls to the right of the green axis (0.0), that variable is *positively* related to support for abortion; when it falls to the left, it is *negatively* related to this support. The horizontal lines surrounding each dot represent 95% confidence interval for the estimate. When the confidence intervals do not overlap the green axis, we can be 95% confident that the variable is statistically significant related to support for abortion (for the sake of clarity, these variables are highlighted in red).

The results in Figure 3 indicate that there are no statistically significant differences across various socio-demographic indicators as sex, religion, civil status, age, education, area of residency and ethnic self-identification. Nor are there differences among those who approve of President Correa's performance, those who locate themselves to the right or left of the ideological spectrum, those who trust the Catholic Church, think that religion is important in their lives or attend church frequently. The only statistically significant differences are wealth, which echoes results found by Boidi and Corrales (2013) for the general population in the Americas, and marginally for those respondents with children. Wealthy individuals and those with kids are significantly *more* likely to support the right for an abortion when the mother's health is in danger compared to those with lower incomes and those without kids.

It remains to be seen how the debate over the decriminalization of abortion unfolds in Ecuador. What the above analysis suggests, given the relative absence of many significant correlates of Ecuadorians' views of the abortion debate, is that President Correa may risk very little in making his stance against abortion because the issue does not cut one way or

Figure 3. Determinants of Ecuadorians' support for abortion when the mother's health is in danger



Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

another across subgroups in the population. Further, he is not taking a position significantly at odds with his supporters but neither is he taking a position that is in line with his supporters. At the time of the writing of this *Topical Brief*, various women's organizations have expressed their views opposing President Correa's efforts to halt the liberalization of the current criminalization of abortion laws, this in a country where one in every four women has suffered some kind of sexual violence (El Comercio, 2013, line 7). It remains to be seen whether Ecuador will remain a country with one of the most restrictive abortion rights laws in Latin America or will eventually follow the path of countries like Uruguay, where the right to an abortion is protected by law and where more than 80% of the population supports such rights.

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Dr. Diana Orcés (diana.m.orces@vanderbilt.edu) is Researcher at LAPOP.

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AmericasBarometer: Topical Brief – November 18, 2013

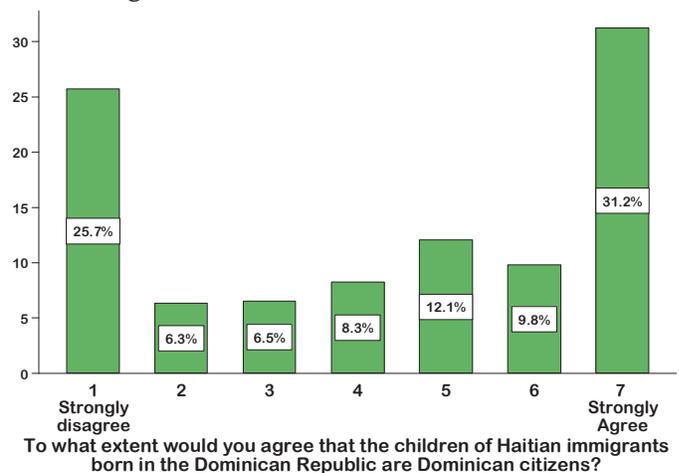
Dominicans or Not? Support for Citizenship of Dominican-born Children of Haitian Immigrants

By Diana Orcés, Vanderbilt University

The Dominican Republic has recently experienced a profound immigration reform that affects thousands of individuals residing in Dominican soil. The backdrop to this policy shift is a long history of Haitian migrants providing the bulk of the Dominican Republic’s seasonal agricultural labor force. Today more than 200,000 Dominicans of Haitian origins (among which many are children) live in the Dominican Republic and identify as Dominicans. Thus, while debate continues in the U.S. over immigration reforms targeted toward migrant workers and their children, in the Dominican Republic new legislation revokes citizenship rights and possibilities for many immigrants and their families.

On September 23, 2013, the Dominican Republic’s Constitutional Court ruled that children of undocumented Haitian migrants (including those born in the Dominican Republic) will no longer be entitled to citizenship. Moreover, the court has ordered an audit of all birth records dating back to June 1929, in order to identify individuals who no longer qualify for citizenship. Currently, many adults and children find themselves in a citizenship “limbo” (Archibold, 2013). Until the situation is solved, a short-term fix to the problem by government migration officials is the granting of temporary residency to these individuals, but stripping them of all the benefits of citizenship including the right to vote, access to public health insurance, and low-cost college tuition (Archibold, 2013; Vargas Llosa, 2013).

Figure 1. Dominicans’ Support for Citizenship of Haitian Immigrants’ Children Born on Dominican soil



How do Dominicans view the issue of migrant status for Dominican-born children of Haitian immigrants? In this *Topical Brief*¹ I explore public opinion on the question of citizenship status for the children of Haitian immigrants that are born in the Dominican Republic, in an effort to understand if the nation’s

¹ Funding for the 2012 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), and Vanderbilt University. This *Topical Brief* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency.

Constitutional Court ruling echoes the opinions of the general Dominican public.

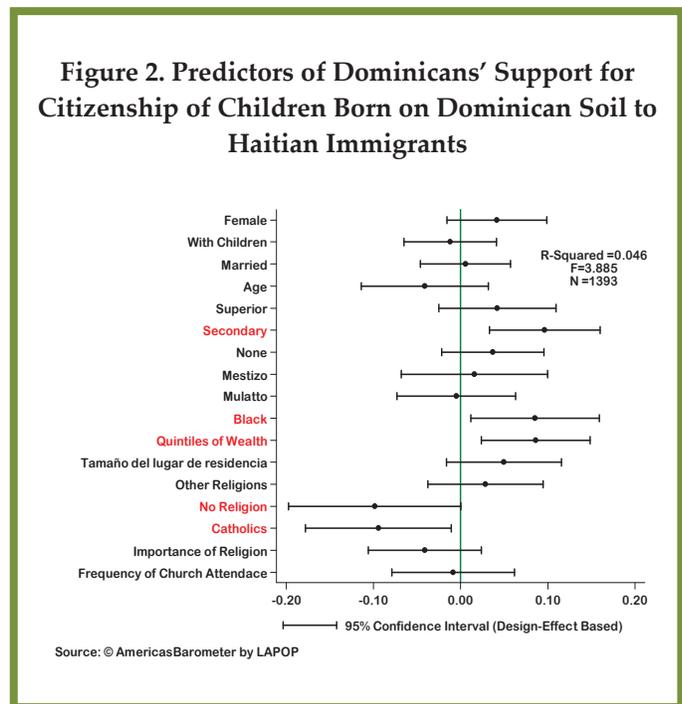
As part of the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer, in which a nationally representative sample of 1,512 of voting age Dominicans were interviewed, respondents were asked the following question:

DOMHAI1. To what extent would you agree that the children of Haitian immigrants born in the Dominican Republic are Dominican citizens?²

Figure 1 shows the percentages of responses that fall into each category within the 1-7 scale, where 1 represents strongly disagree and 7 represents strongly agree. Responses in the middle represent more moderate positions. Immediately apparent from these results is that the Dominican public is highly polarized over this issue. The majority of Dominicans selected one of the two extreme response options on the seven point scale, with a third of the population strongly agreeing that the children of Haitian immigrants born in the country are Dominican citizens and a fourth of the Dominican population strongly disagreeing with the statement. Given this striking public opinion divide, it seems unlikely that the Constitutional Court ruling represents the final resolution of this issue for Dominican society.

In order to better understand the contours of this opinion divide, I turn to an analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of those who support and oppose citizenship rights for the children of Haitian immigrants who were born in the Dominican Republic. Figure 2 shows a graphical representation of a linear regression model that identifies those socio-economic factors that help explain one's position on this

issue.³ In the figure, the dot represents the standardized regression coefficient. If the dot falls to the right of the green axis (0.0), that variable is positively related to support for immigrant rights; when it falls to the left, it is negatively related to this support. The horizontal lines surrounding each dot represent 95% confidence interval for the estimate. When the confidence intervals do not overlap the green axis, we can be 95% confident that the variable is a statistically significant predictor of opinions regarding whether Haitian immigrants' children born in the Dominican Republic are Dominican citizens.



The results in Figure 2 indicate that only a few of the many variables included in the model emerge as statistically significant (see those variables identified with red font in the figure). Dominicans who are educated, wealthy, and identify as black report higher levels of support for citizenship rights for migrants' children when compared to respondents who are less

² Prior issues in the *Insights* series can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-data.php>.

³ The original variable was recoded onto a 0-100 scale where higher values represent "strongly agree" with the statement that Haitian immigrants' children born in the Dominican Republic are Dominican citizens and lower values represent "strongly disagree".

educated, poorer, and identify as white. Those respondents who identify as Catholics, as well as those who do not have a religion but believe in a higher being show lower levels of this support compared to Evangelicals (the comparison category for the analysis).

The relevance of education and religious affiliation for attitudes on this issue is illustrated in Figure 3, which was created based on the raw survey data. The figure shows that Dominicans with secondary and higher education show average levels of 59.8 and 59.2 points, respectively, on a 0-100 scale in contrast to Dominicans with primary education, who exhibit significantly lower levels of support by more than 10 points on that same scale (47.9 points). Those with no education also present lower levels of support on average, though the confidence interval around this estimate does not allow us to conclude that this difference is statistically significant.

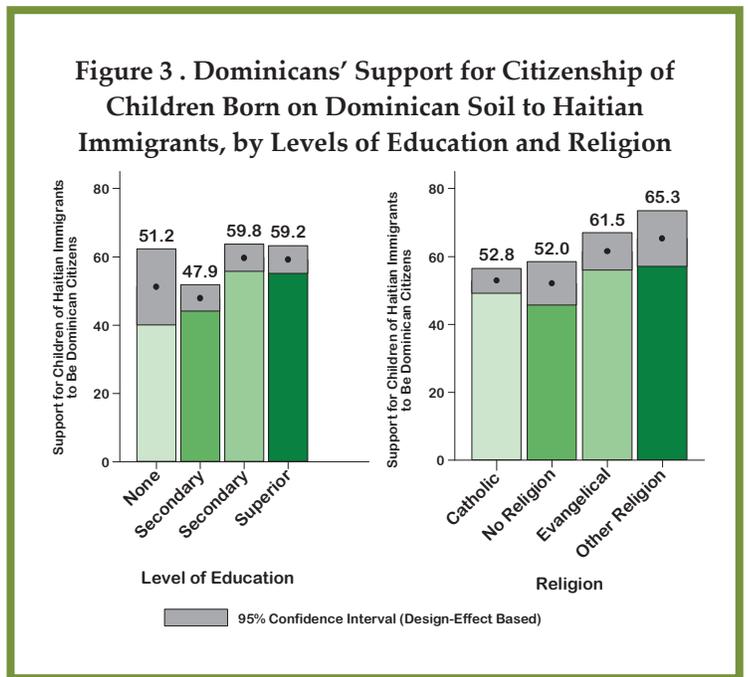
In considering religion, Figure 3 shows that Dominicans who identify as Evangelicals and who belong to other religions show significantly higher levels of support for migrant rights compared to Catholics and those with no religious affiliation. This divide between Catholics and other religious adherents is consistent with recent messages sent to parishioners by Church elites. For example, one of the most influential figures within the country, the archbishop of Santo Domingo, Cardinal Nicolás de Jesús López Rodríguez, recently spoke in support of the Court’s ruling and against foreign pressure on the issue:

“International organizations don’t rule here...I don’t accept anybody coming here to decree anything. No country, not the United States, not France, nobody. Here, we are in charge” (Archibold, 2013, p.2).

It remains to be seen how the Constitutional ruling proceeds in a country where more than 200,000 individuals of Haitian origins have

been put in a state of uncertainty with respect to their citizenship rights and possibilities (Archibold, 2013). As Mario Vargas Llosa stated in a recent opinion article in the Spanish newspaper *El País*:

“If such legal fallacy prevails, tens of thousands of Dominicans families of Haitian origin (near or remote) would be turned into zombies, not to people, beings unable to get a legal job, enroll in a school or public university, receive health insurance, retirement, leave the country, and therefore potential victims of all abuse and assaults”⁴.



Many of the benefits that come with citizenship have been temporarily put on hold while government officials identify which individuals do no longer qualify for citizenship. This ruling has a paradoxical quality in a country where approximately 13 percent of its population currently lives abroad, with a majority residing in the United States (OECD 2009), and where the public is clearly divided between two extreme views on the issue, with neither side holding a clear majority. As debate over

⁴ Author’s translation

immigration reform continues in the U.S., we can also expect debate over a similar set of issues, alongside the new legislation, to be debated for years to come in the Dominican Republic.

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Dr. Diana Orcés (diana.m.orces@vanderbilt.edu) is Researcher at LAPOP.

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Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN
www.lapopsurveys.org