Political Culture of Democracy in Jamaica and in the Americas, 2014:

Democratic Governance across 10 Years of the AmericasBarometer

Executive Summary

Anthony A. Harriott, Ph.D.
University of West Indies, Mona

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

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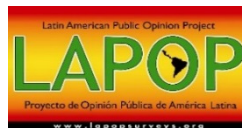## Democratic Governance across 10 Years of the AmericasBarometer

Executive Summary

By:

Anthony A. Harriott, Ph.D.
Centre for Leadership and Governance
UWI, Mona

Balford A. Lewis
Centre for Leadership and Governance
UWI, Mona

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

Centre for Leadership & Governance,
University of the West Indies, Mona

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Introduction

The 2014 AmericasBarometer and this report mark an important milestone for the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP): we are now able to assess over a decade of values, assessments, and experiences that have been reported to us in first-hand accounts by citizens across the region. The AmericasBarometer surveys, spanning from 2004 to 2014, allow us to capture both change and continuity in the region on indicators that are vital to the quality and health of democracy across the Americas. During this period, the AmericasBarometer has expanded to include 28 countries in the region and more than 50,000 respondents.

LAPOP has carried out the AmericasBarometer in Jamaica since 2006. The 2014 survey was conducted by The University of the West Indies in February and March and 1,506 people were interviewed.

This report summarizes the main findings of the 2014 round of surveys. We present findings about experiences with crime and insecurity in the region, focusing particularly on the results for Jamaica on these subjects. Key findings related to citizens' evaluations of the economy, their perceptions of and experience with corruption, their interaction with and evaluations of local government, and their support for democracy and democratic attitudes are also reported. We identify prominent regional patterns, as well as the evolution and sources of change along these dimensions. We also present the main findings for Jamaica on issues pertaining to citizens' attitudes towards the police and implications for police-citizen partnership in crime control; as well as on Jamaicans' tolerance for the rights of homosexuals, support for abortion, perceptions of social activism, attitudes towards the welfare state, and support for environmental protection.

1. Crime and Insecurity in the Americas

In looking back over the decade, one trend is clear: citizens of the Americas are more concerned today about issues of crime and violence than they were a decade ago (see Figure 1). The AmericasBarometer provides a unique tool for policymakers, academics, and others interested in issues related to crime, violence, and insecurity in the Americas. Data from police reports on crime can suffer from problems that make comparisons across countries and over time difficult; these include under-reporting by citizens, political pressures to adjust reports, and other problems. Data on homicides, in contrast, are sometimes viewed as more reliable, but in fact often obscure information such as where the crime took place and ultimately provide an overly narrow portrait of citizens' experiences, which can range across distinct types of crime: for example, from burglaries to extortion and from drug sales in the neighbourhood to murders. The AmericasBarometer in general, and in particular with the addition of several new modules on crime and insecurity in the 2014 survey, provides a reliable and comprehensive database on citizens' experiences and evaluations of issues of crime and violence. Standardization of questionnaires that are administered by professional survey teams increases our ability to make comparisons across time, countries, and individuals and, as well, to investigate the correlates, causes, and consequences of crime, violence, and insecurity in the region.
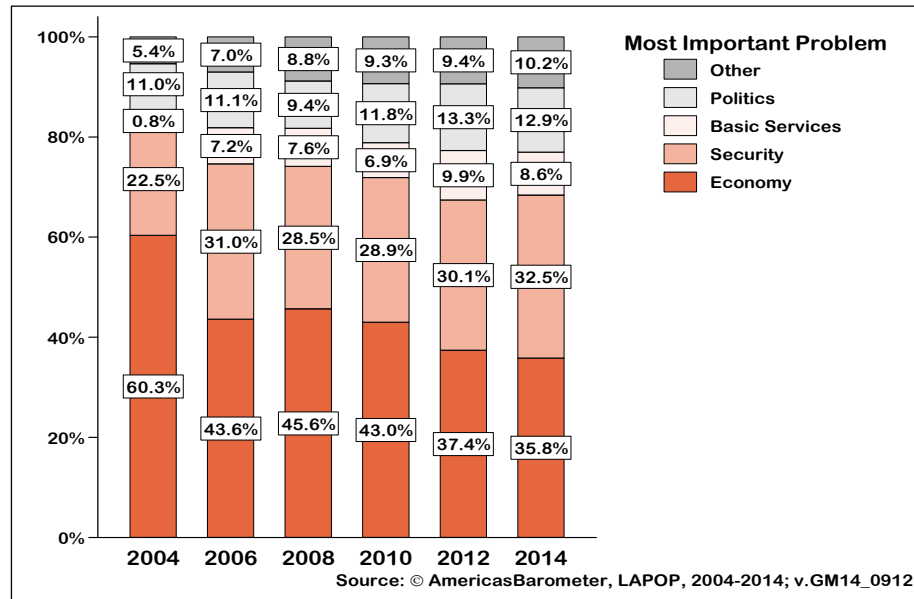
**Figure 1. Most Important Problem Facing the Country, Regional Perspective
2004-2014**

      The data document change over time with respect to citizens' perceptions of and experience with crime and violence in the region. As noted above, citizens of the Americas are comparatively more concerned with issues related to security in 2014 than they have been since 2004. In 2014, on average across the Americas, approximately one out of every three adults reports that the most important problem facing their country is one related to crime, violence, or insecurity. As shown in Figure 2, Jamaica ranks high among the countries in the region in terms of this concern. One in two Jamaicans (49.8%) identifies security-related concerns as the most serious problem facing the country in 2014. This represents a significant increase in the proportion of respondents identifying security as the country's main problem in comparison with 2012, when 38.5% of Jamaicans reported crime-relate issues as their main concern.
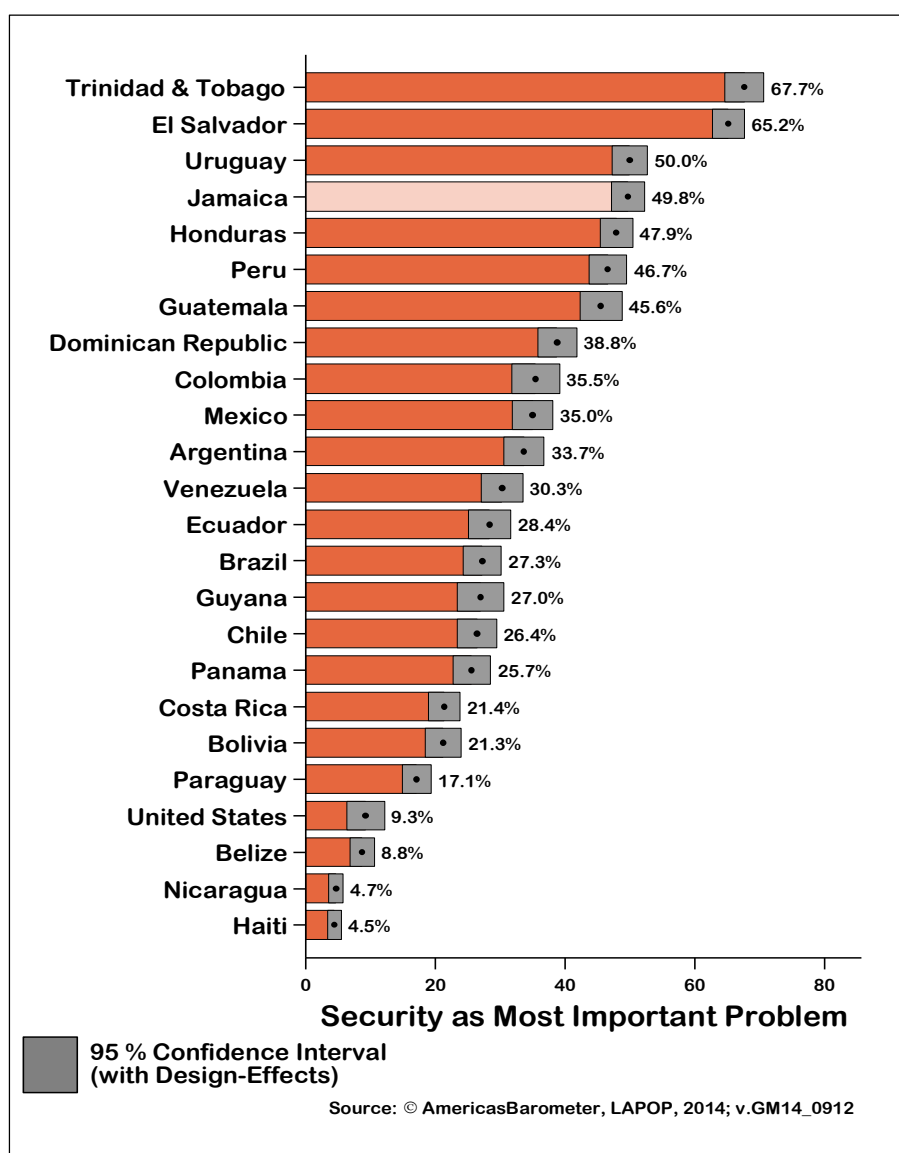
Figure 2. Percentage Identifying Security as the Most Important Problem, 2014

      Interestingly, overall crime victimization rates have held steady for the region for the last decade, with the exception of a notable spike in 2010 (see Figure 3). As with just about any measure we examine in this report, we find important differences within and across countries. For example, the types of crimes individuals experience and witness vary across countries. Our data also affirm that most crime is experienced in proximity to where the individual lives.
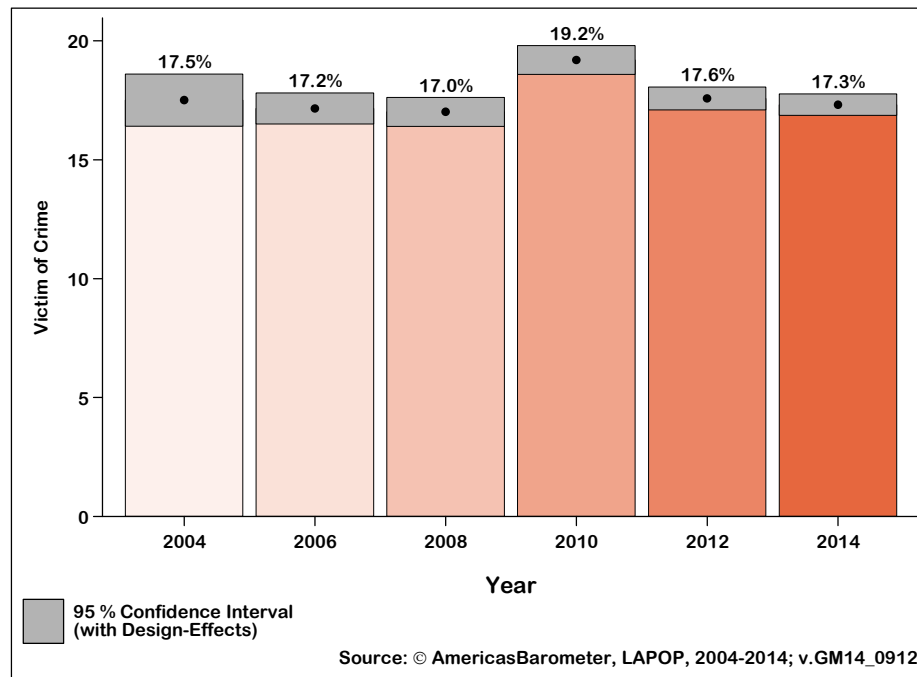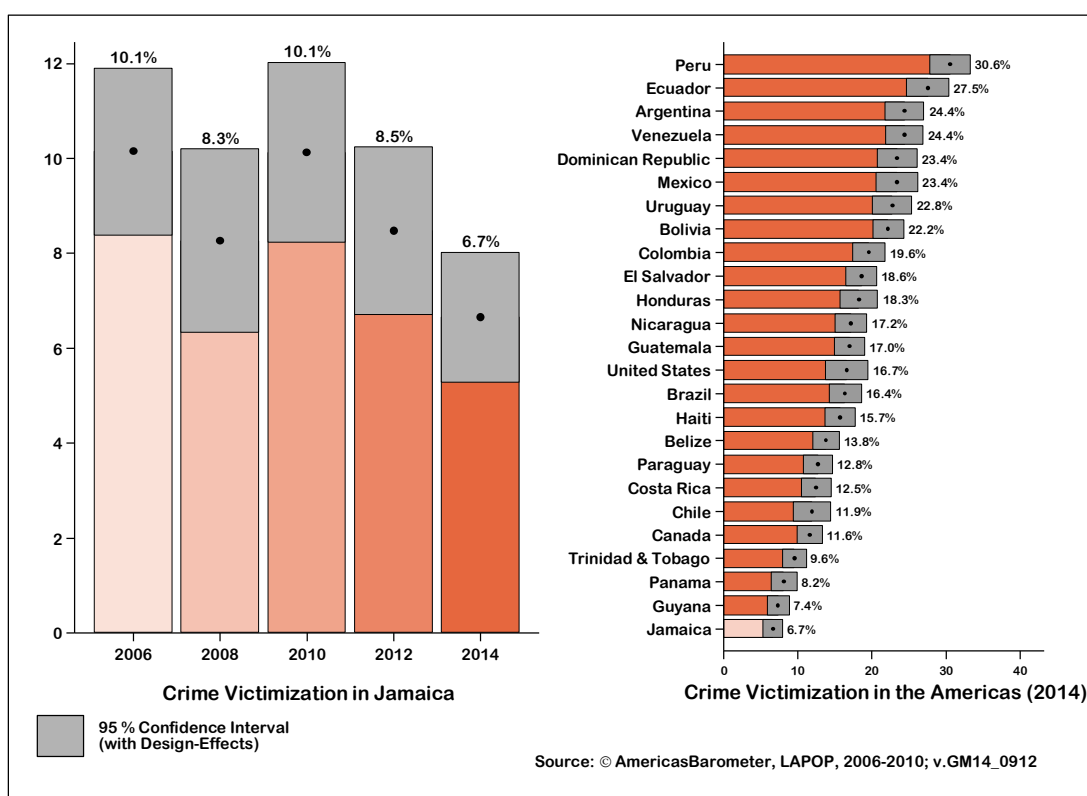
Figure 3. Crime Victimization in the America, Regional Perspective 2004-2014

Despite the popular perception that crime is a nation-wide problem in Jamaica, and the evidence that security-related concerns are foremost in the minds of most Jamaicans, crime tends to be unevenly dispersed across the country, with urban and inner city communities tending to be more prone to crime than others. When asked if they had personally been the victim of at least one criminal act in the past 12 months, only 6.7% of those interviewed answered affirmatively in 2014 (Figure 4).[1] Compared to previous survey years, the data indicate a marginal year-to-year decline in victimization since 2010 in Jamaica, with a statistically significant decrease between 2010 and 2014. For 2014, Jamaica ranked as the country with the lowest national crime victimization rate for the voting age population in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Figure 4).

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[1] Jamaica's low national rate of personal victimization found in the survey mirrors the low levels of reported household victimization. Fewer than 6% of respondents report that someone in their household was victimized by crime within 12 months prior to the survey.

Figure 4. Crime Victimization in Jamaica and the Americas, 2006-2014

As Figure 5 shows, 41.8% of Jamaican victims report that they experienced the criminal act at home and 33.7% that the incident occurred in their neighbourhood. In sum, nearly three in four of all victims report that they were victimized within their neighbourhood. These figures buttress the notion that crime is predominantly a localized problem and consequently requires a community response.
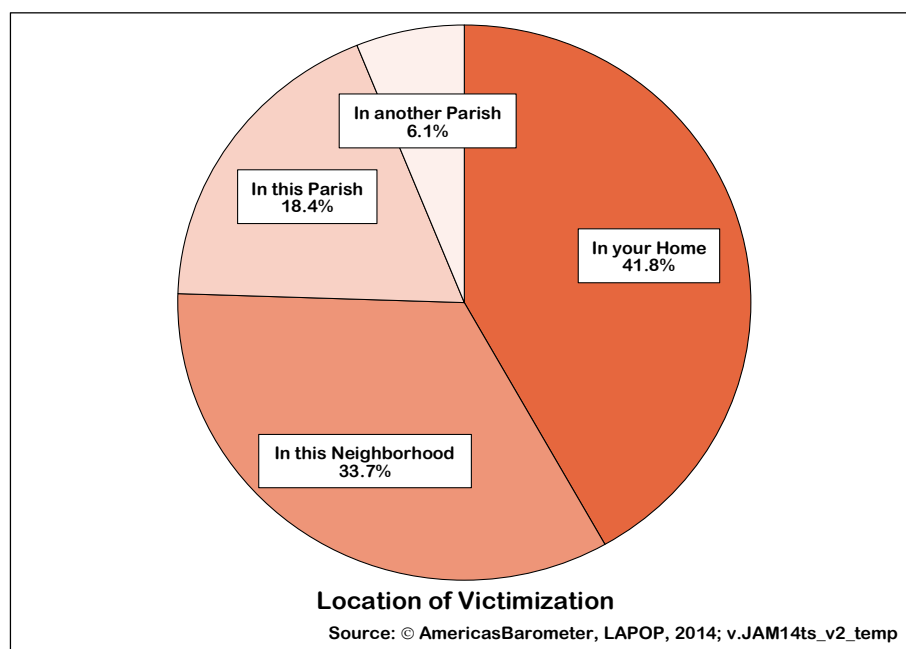
Figure 5. Place of Most Recent Crime Victimization, Jamaica 2014

One persistent theme in this report is that perceptions of insecurity in the region matter independently from crime victimization. Perceptions of insecurity and assessments of violence by citizens of the Americas are fuelled by personal experiences *and* by the diffusions of news about the broader context; thus, being the victim of a crime is associated with higher levels of reported insecurity, and so is paying more attention to the media.

Mirroring the low level of crime victimization, the overwhelming majority of Jamaicans indicate a belief that their neighbourhoods are safe. As shown in Figure 6, approximately 83% feel their neighbourhoods are "safe," with some 40% among that portion saying they feel "very safe." Only about 17% indicate that their communities are unsafe. When we examine perceptions related to citizen safety over time on a 0-100 scale,[2] we see that insecurity has declined: Jamaican citizens reported feeling safer in their neighbourhoods in 2012 and 2014 compared to earlier years of the AmericasBarometer survey.
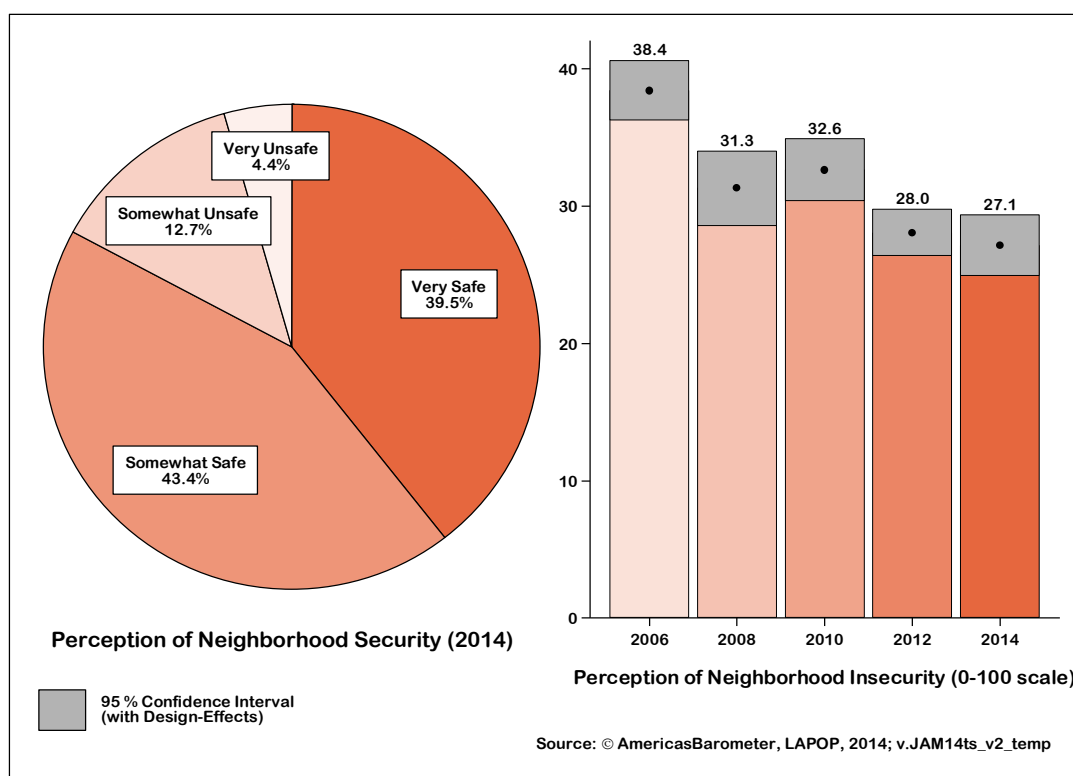
Figure 6. Perception of Neighbourhood Security in Jamaica, 2014

There is growing consensus in research and policy circles that governments need to go beyond law enforcement and criminal justice options in their efforts to address problems of neighbourhood crime and insecurity (World Health Organization 2002). The increasingly popular UNDP's "Community Security and Social Cohesion" (2009) approach is informed primarily by this "community-driven" philosophy. It emphasizes "participatory assessments, planning and accountability and seeks to improve service delivery, reduce social exclusion, enhance relations between social groups and strengthen democratic governance" as means to identify the "causes of insecurity" and develop a "coordinated response" within neighbourhoods (UNDP 2009 [Executive Summary], 2).

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[2] The scale of perceptions of neighbourhood insecurity is coded 0 (very safe) to 100 (very unsafe).

Approaches along these lines necessarily involve agencies of the state working collaboratively with civil society groups and organizations to influence behaviour, thinking, and attitudes, with the key goal of preventing potential offenders from turning to crime and correcting those who have already done so.[3] The work undertaken by state agencies with communities is facilitated to the extent that there are shared perspectives on the best way to address issues of crime and violence.

The 2014 AmericasBarometer asked Jamaicans about their level of support for preventive approaches to crime control in Jamaica and their actual participation in neighbourhood activities out of their concern about crime. As seen in Figure 7, more than a half of respondents (56.5%) prefer increased punishment for criminals as the means for curbing crime. Just over one in 10 (10.8%) opt for a combination of the two approaches. Despite their reporting of crime and crime-related concerns as Jamaica's most serious national problem, Figure 7 also shows that only 10.1% of Jamaicans report having been involved in any organized activity within the last 12 months, aimed at dealing with the problem of neighbourhood insecurity.

How to Reduce Crime

- Both 10.8%
- Implement preventive measures 32.7%
- Increase punishment of criminals 56.5%

Organized in Neighborhood for Security

- Yes 10.1%
- No 89.9%

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.JAM14ts_v2_temp
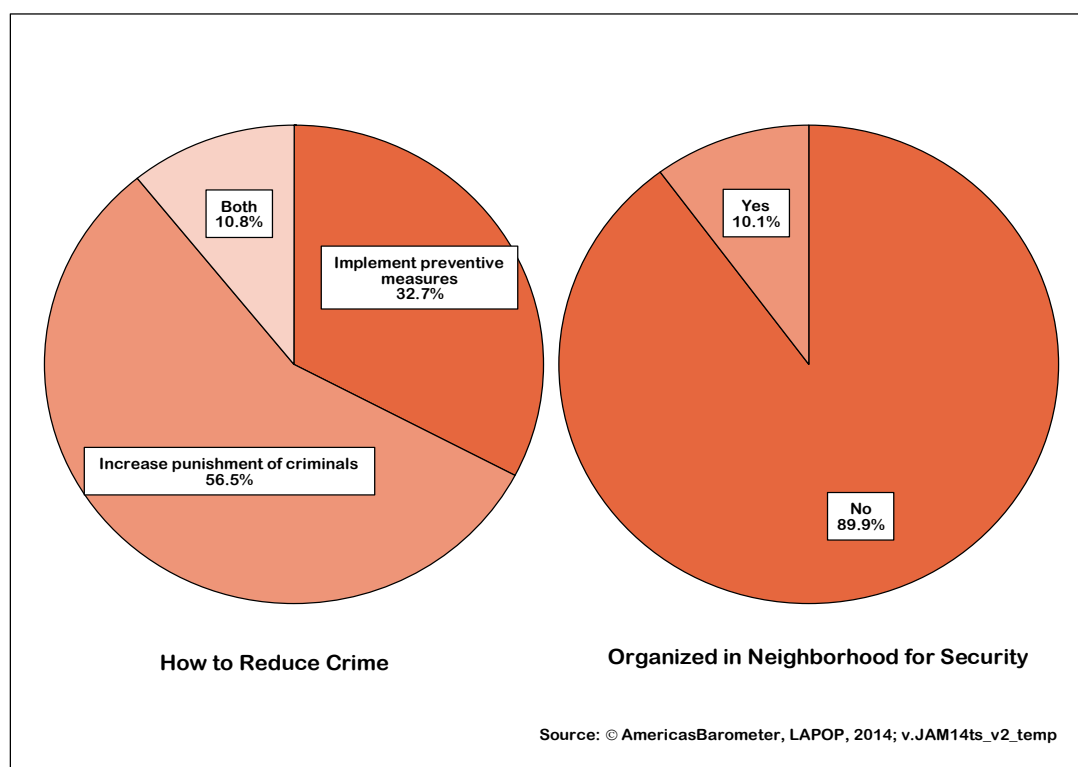
Figure 7. Citizens' Opinions on how to Reduce Crime and Their Rates of Involvement in the Neighbourhood, Jamaica 2014

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[3] Given that governments in developing countries such as Jamaica are often unable to adequately address citizen security needs due to resource constraints, the role of bilateral or multilateral agencies is also critical to the process.

## *Crime, Insecurity, and Social Capital in Jamaica*

Dealing with the problem of crime effectively requires a well-coordinated and comprehensive national strategy, involving local citizens' active participation, which in turn requires communities with the organizational capacity and structures, as well as the requisite attitudes in support of cooperation among community members and with other stakeholders. Community participation entails the active involvement of individuals in collaborative activities aimed at changing problematic conditions in their neighbourhood or to influence policies and programs that affect the quality of life of community members (Ohmer 2007). Here, social capital, defined in terms of a community's stock interpersonal trust (Helliwell and Putnam 2000; Inglehart and Welzel 2005), and level of civil society participation are examined as a potential resource for the building of social order and neighbourhood security in Jamaica.

Without some basic level of trust, members of a community would be less likely to initiate, invest in, or sustain neighbourhood groups and organizations (Simpson 2013). Given the line of argument that dealing with the problem of crime and insecurity is a "shared responsibility" requiring active community involvement, which in turn might reasonably be fuelled by trust among neighbours, responses to a question about trust in one's community are assessed here.

As depicted in Figure 8, individuals in Jamaica generally trust their neighbours: 68.4% of those surveyed express the view that their neighbours are either "somewhat" or "very trustworthy." Only 11.7% of respondents describe people in the neighbourhood to be "untrustworthy." When examined over time, the mean score of 55.6 in 2014 on a 0-100 point scale was slightly lower than previous years, but the overall picture was one of stability with regard to interpersonal trust since 2006.[4]

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[4] The scale of interpersonal trust is coded 0 (not very trustworthy) to 100 (very trustworthy).
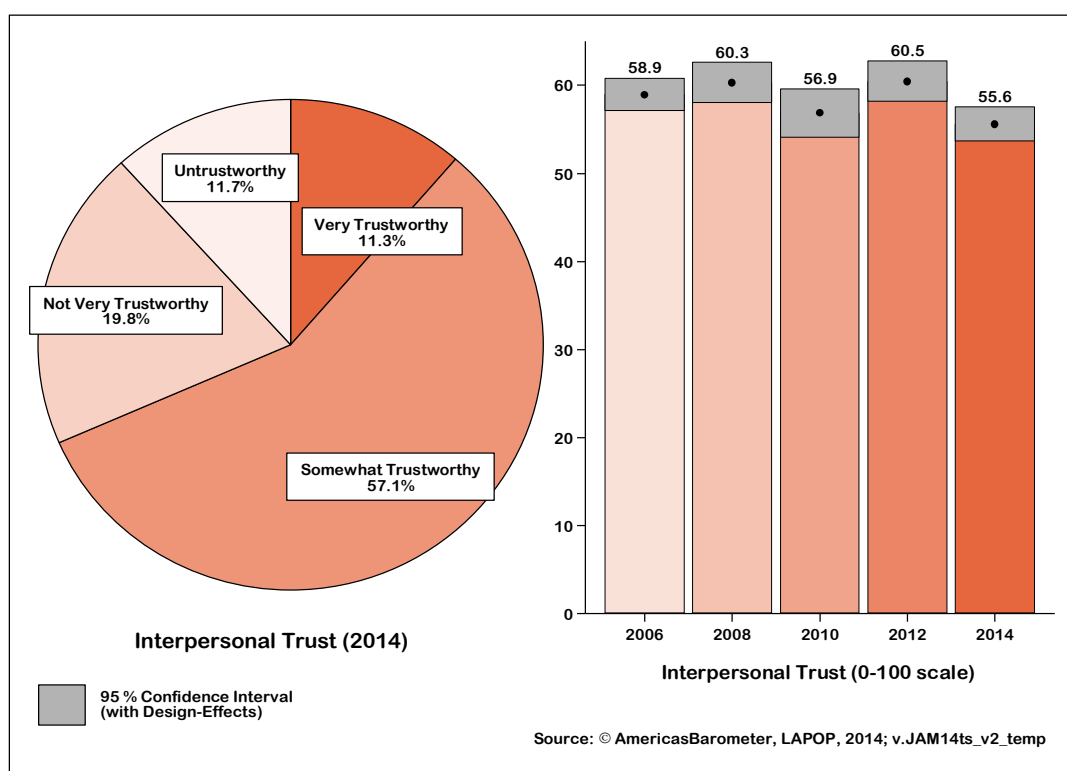
Figure 8. Interpersonal Trust in Jamaica, 2006-2014

To assess rates of community participation, the AmericasBarometer includes questions about respondents' participation in local religious organizations, parents' associations, and community improvement groups. As seen in Figure 9, participation at the community level, based on all three indicators, is quite low in Jamaica in 2014. As has been the case in all previous LAPOP studies, attendance to religious meetings is much higher than the other two entities but as Figure 9 shows, it still falls below the 50-degree mark on the 0 to 100 scale.[5]

Figure 9 also depicts a pattern of overall decline in participation in key community groups in Jamaica. The most striking decline concerns the nearly 17 degree drop in attendance to religious organizations between 2006 and 2014. It is notable, though, that in the case of all three indices, attendance has been generally stable since the 2010 survey. Average participation, as summarized by the community participation index, reflects the general trend of lower citizen involvement in local organizations and groups in the 2010-2014 periods compared to previous years.

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[5] The scales for community participation are coded 0 (never) to 100 (once a week).
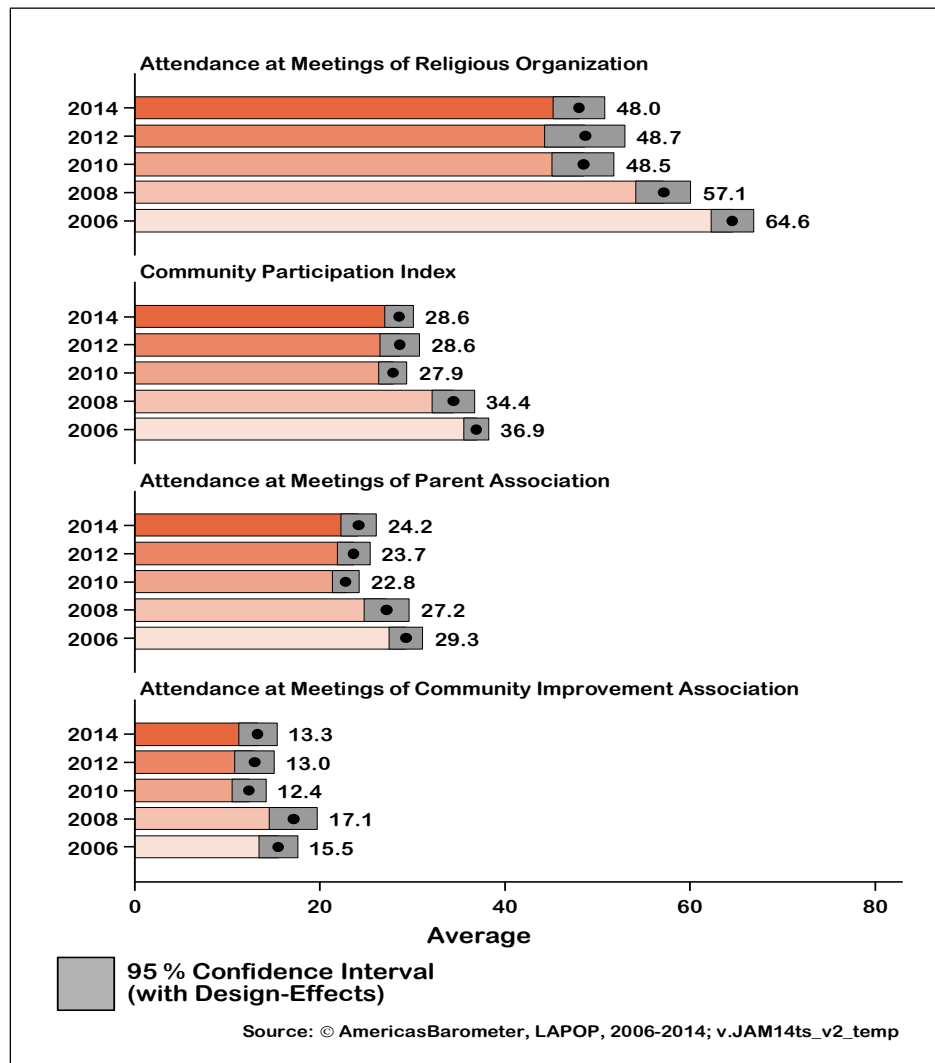
Figure 9. Degree of Participation in Community Groups and Organizations over Time, Jamaica 2006-2014

Communities' capacity for interventions that would facilitate the reduction of exclusions and disparities which engender division, distrust and conflict are assumed to be greater to the degree that social capital is greater. From this perspective, the findings of falling levels of community participation and (albeit slightly) lower interpersonal trust seem likely to militate against an "active local citizenship approach" to treating with the problems of neighbourhood crime and insecurity. This seemingly inauspicious outlook is, however, counterbalanced by findings that the majority of Jamaicans express the feelings that members of their communities are strongly bonded to each other, and would be a willingness to help or to act in the interest of others and on behalf of their community "for the common good." This inventory of collective efficacy and the large albeit declining stock of social capital may be a useful resource in efforts to ensure social order in community.

2. Economic Development and Perceived Economic Performance in the Americas

The 2014 AmericasBarometer shows that citizens in the Americas own more basic household goods than they have at any other time in the last decade. That said, gaps in wealth do continue to exist across groups, such that single individuals, those who are less educated, individuals with darker skin tones, and those who live in rural areas have comparatively lower wealth. Yet when citizens of the Americas are asked about their household financial situation, the proportion of people who say they are struggling to make ends meet has not improved noticeably in comparison to previous waves of the survey (see Figure 10).
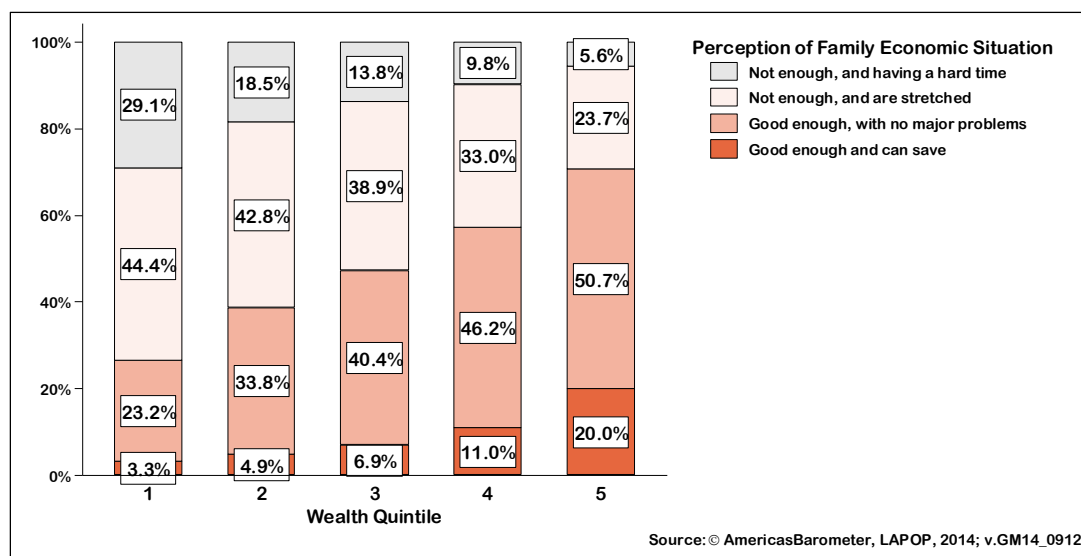
Figure 10. Perceptions of Household Finances across Household Wealth Quintiles, 2014

Households may own more things, but they do not feel more financially secure. This finding is particularly significant for Jamaica, which ranks among the countries with the most negative perceptions of household economic situation with an average of 41.8 in 2014 (see Figure 11).[6] Jamaicans' perceptions about whether the household income is sufficient deteriorated significantly in 2010, and although it remains stable since 2012, citizens have become slightly more positive in the outlook of their family economic situation in 2014.

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[6] The scale of perceptions of household economic situation is coded 0 (not enough and having a hard time) to 100 (good enough and can save).
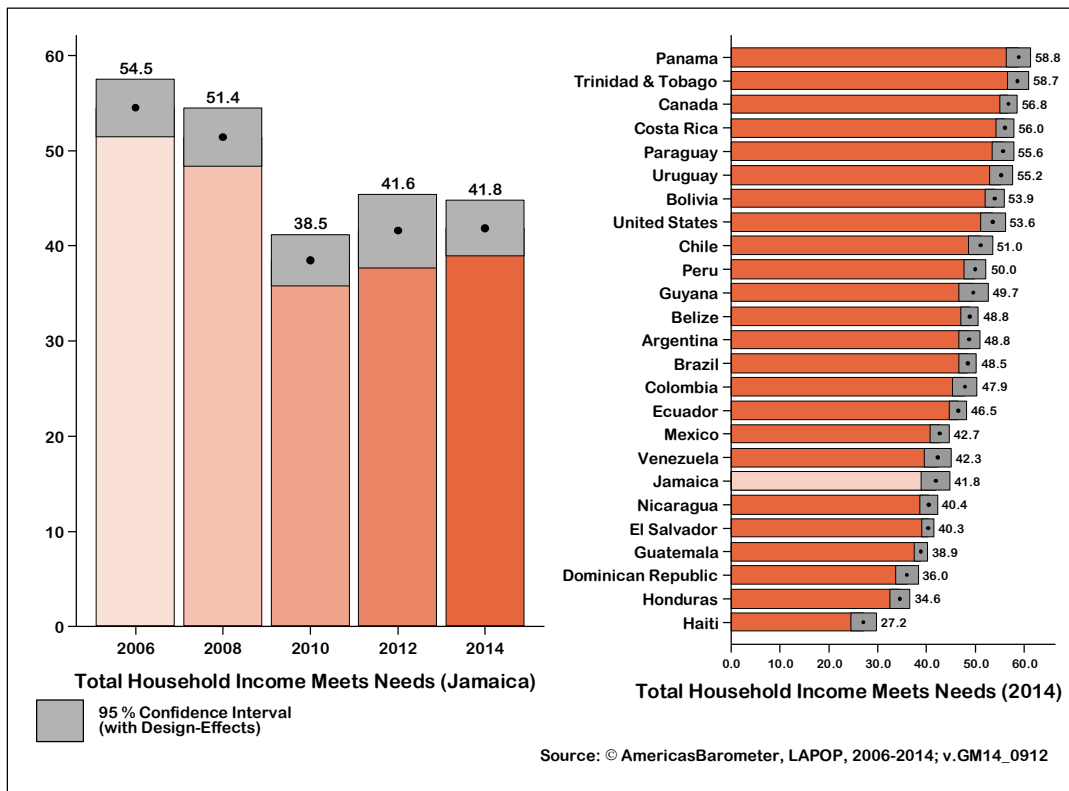
Figure 11. Perceptions of Household Finances by Country, 2014

Beyond citizens' personal finances, the 2014 AmericasBarometer asks respondents to assess national economic trends. On average, the national economy is viewed less positively in the region than it was in 2010 and 2012. For 2014, Jamaicans report an average evaluation of the national economy of 23.2 on a 0 to 100 scale (see Figure 12).[7] This represents a 17.5-degree deterioration in Jamaican's perceptions of the state of the national economy in comparison to 2012. Clearly, Jamaicans do not think the country's economy is headed in the right direction, as 63.4% of respondents indicate that the economy is performing worse than it did 12 months prior to the survey.

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[7] The scale of national economic perceptions is coded 0 (worst) to 100 (better).
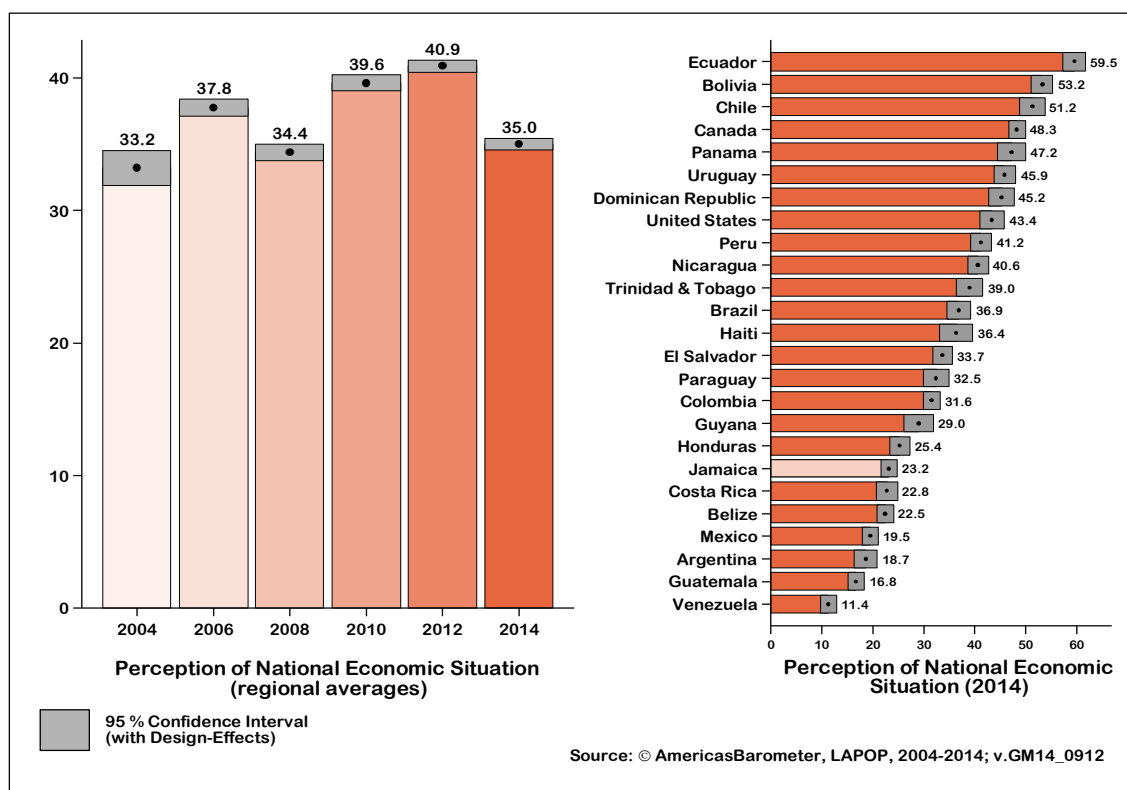
Figure 12. Average Perceptions of the National Economic Situation, overtime Regional Perspective and by Country for 2014
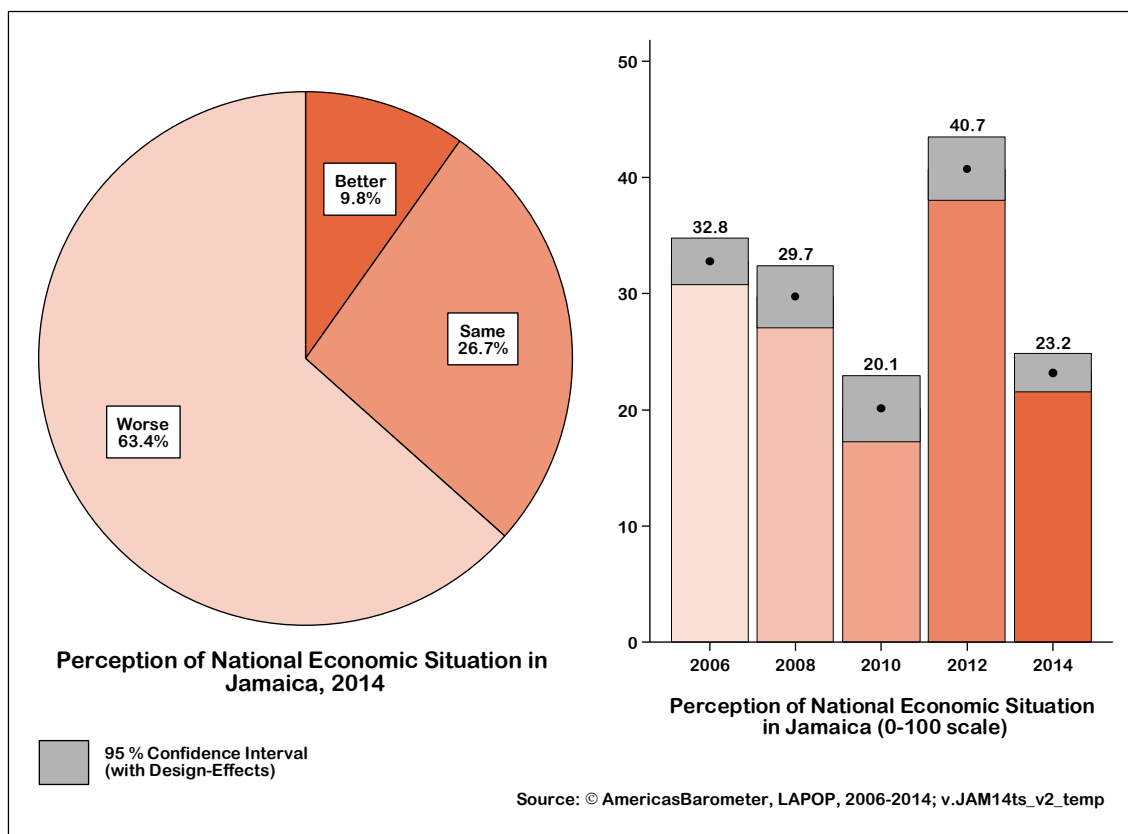
Figure 13. Average Perceptions of the National Economic Situation in Jamaica

Citizen evaluations of the national economy across the region are correlated with fluctuations in economic outcomes, but they also reflect differences in economic opportunity at the individual level as citizens who belong to economically and socially marginalized groups tend to have more negative opinions of national economic trends. Citizen views of the national economy are also weighed down by the security situation in their country. Individuals who live in high crime areas across the Americas judge national economic performance more harshly.

3. Corruption in the Americas

Corruption is also frequent in many countries in the Americas. The 2014 data show that 1 in 5 people in an average country were asked to pay a bribe in the past year (Figure 14). While several countries saw corruption levels decrease significantly, these improvements are balanced out by corruption victimization levels increasing in other countries, leaving the overall average frequency of bribery in the Americas essentially the same as in most previous waves of the AmericasBarometer. This corruption is occurring in many different locations, including interactions with the police, local government officials, the courts, and in schools and health service providers. Moreover, individuals who live in areas where crime is common are more likely to report that they were asked for a bribe. While we cannot use these data to determine the reason for this association, there is a general correlation between insecurity and reported experience with poor governance for the region as a whole.
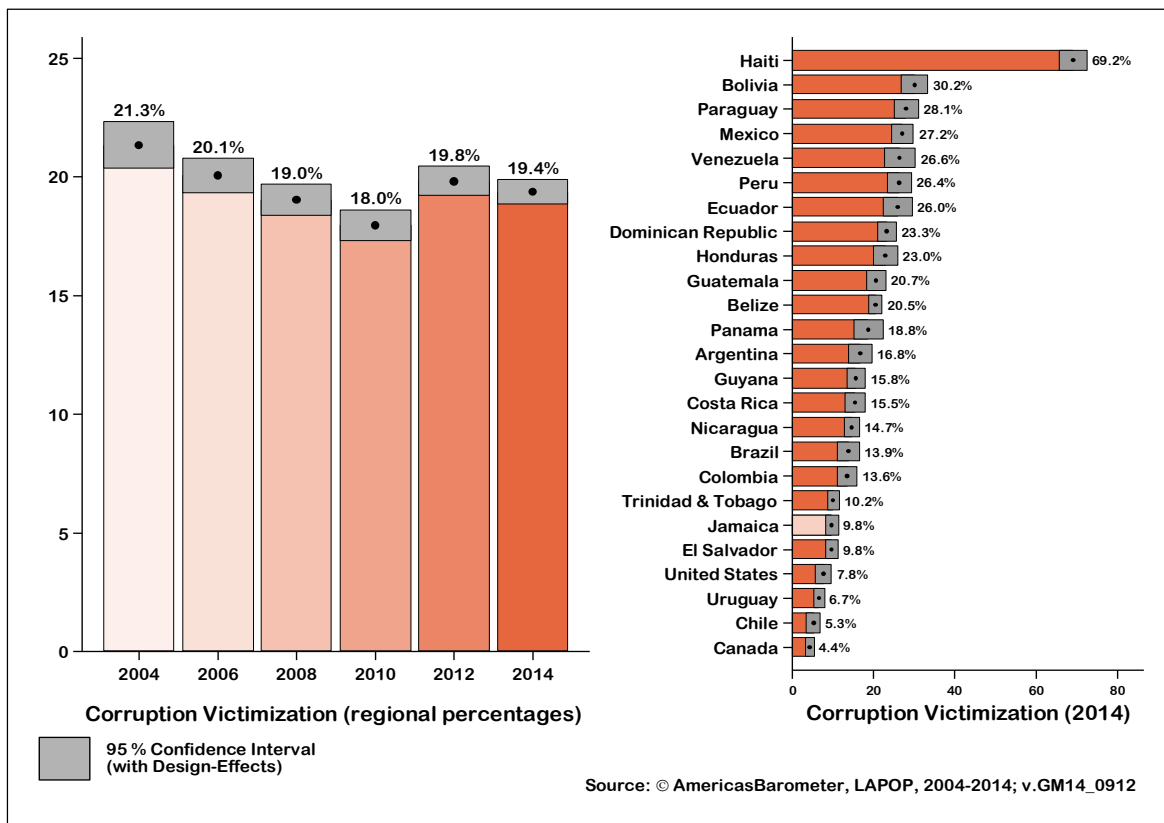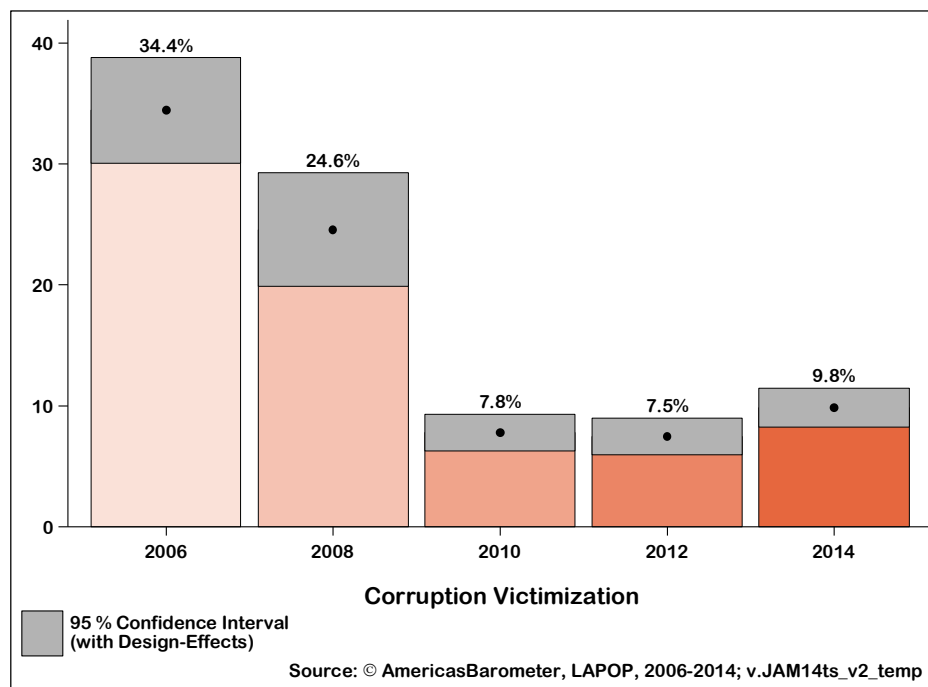

Figure 14. Corruption Victimization, overtime Regional Perspective and by Country for 2014

Figure 14 shows that Jamaica is one of the countries in the region where reported experience with corruption is surprisingly low in 2014. Only 9.8% of the population acknowledge being exposed to any form of corruption in the 12 months preceding the survey. This is an appreciable decrease since 2006, when 1 in 3 Jamaicans reported that they had been a party to at least one corrupt deal (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Corruption Victimization in Jamaica, 2006-2014

Despite the low frequency with which individuals are asked to pay bribes in Jamaica, many individuals consider corruption to be common among government officials. In fact, as Figure 16 shows, levels of perceived corruption in Jamaica on a scale from 0 to 100 have changed relatively little since 2006.[8] In 2014, the vast majority of Jamaicans report believing that corruption among public officials is either "very common" (46.1%) or "common" (44.8%).

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[8] The scale of perception of public corruption is coded 0 (very uncommon) to 100 (very common).
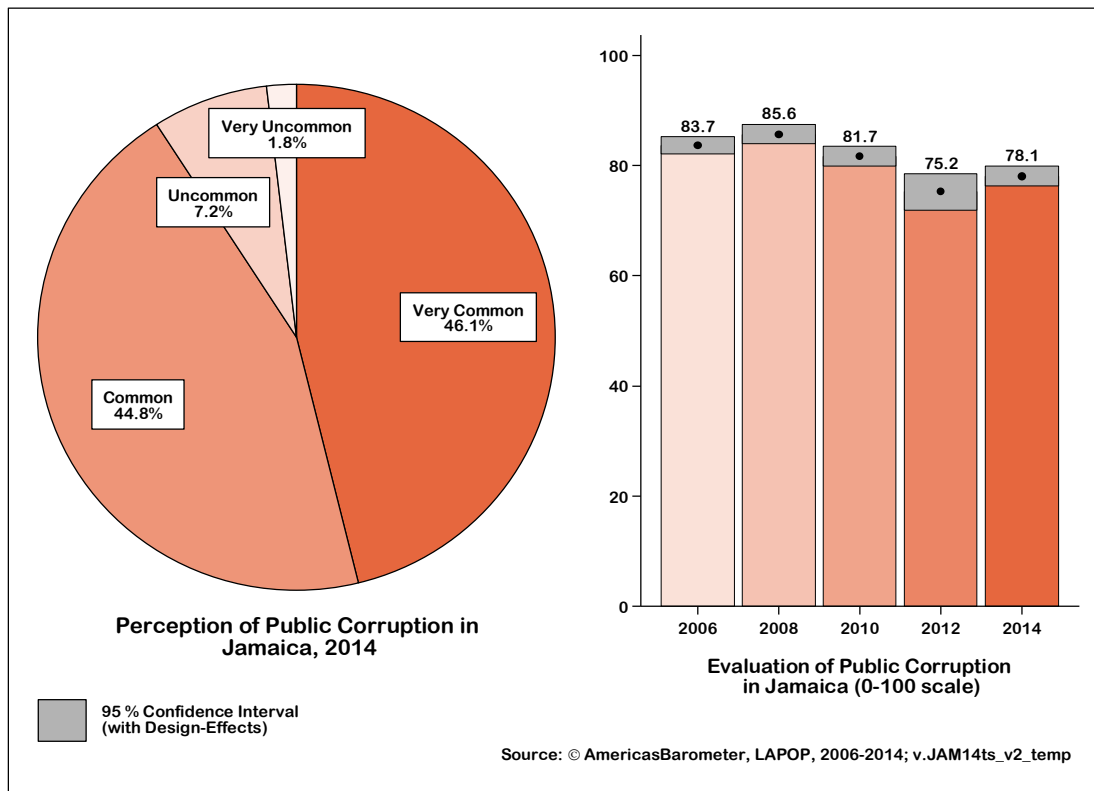
Figure 16. Perceptions of Public Corruption in Jamaica, 2006-2014

Interestingly, despite the perception that corruption is commonplace in government in the Americas, a large majority of citizens rejects the idea that paying a bribe can occasionally be justified (see Figure 17). This is true even among those individuals who were asked for a bribe in the last year. So while the high levels of corruption are likely to have political and economic costs for the region, the AmericasBarometer data suggest that many citizens in the region continue to reject the notion that these bribes are simply the cost of doing business.
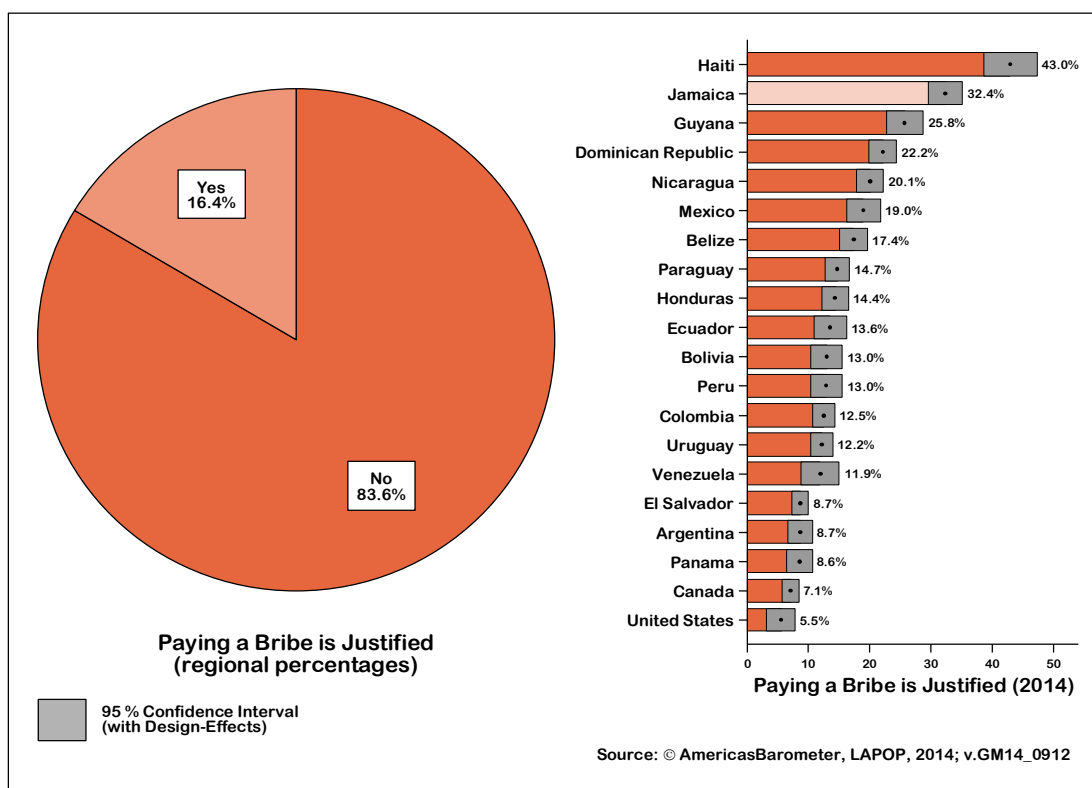
**Figure 17. Do Respondents Think Paying a Bribe is Justified at Times,
Regional Perspective 2014**

Jamaica, nonetheless, ranks among the countries with the highest percentage of respondents (32.4%) that justify the payment of bribes in 2014 (Figure 17). Figure 18 shows that corruption acquiescence declined precipitously between 2006 and 2010 in Jamaica. However, the percent of Jamaicans that justify the payment of bribes has steadily increased since.
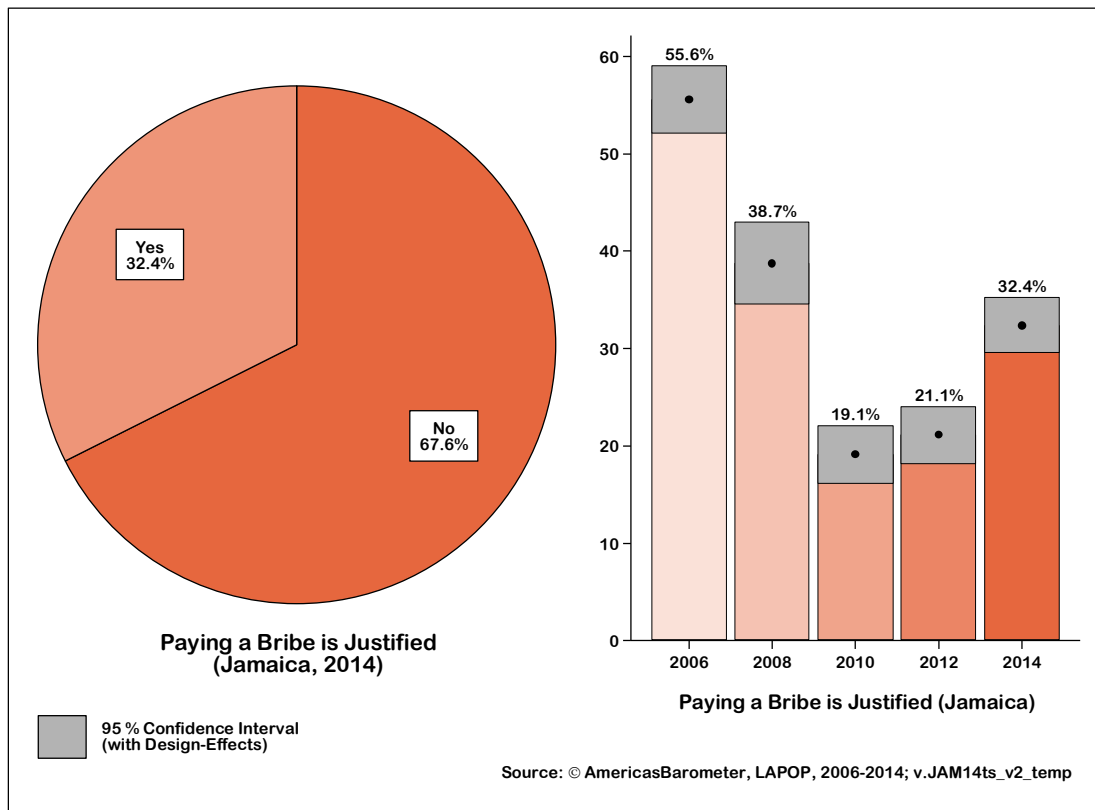
Figure 18. Do Respondents Think Paying a Bribe is Justified at Times, Jamaica 2006-2014

4. Democracy, Performance, and Local Government in the Americas

Typically, most citizens in the Americas interact with their government at the local level. The AmericasBarometer asks respondents about their political participation in municipal government and trust in local government. In 2014, the AmericasBarometer registered a new low in the level of involvement based on municipal meeting attendance but an appreciable degree of engagement in terms of demand making on local officials. We find that those individuals in the Americas with the greatest and least satisfaction with local services are the most likely to make demands, potentially indicating people engage with local governments when they are either successful in attaining services or when they are most in need of them.

With regard to trust in local governments the 2014 AmericasBarometer finds an overall pattern of decline in the region. The 2014 survey registered the lowest level of trust in local governments since 2004, and Jamaica is the country with the lowest level of trust (33.7) on a scale from 0 to 100 (see Figure 19).[9] Between 2012 and 2014, trust in local government among Jamaicans dropped 11.2 degrees. The factors that most strongly predict an individual's trust in local government are experiences with corruption, physical insecurity, and satisfaction with local services, indicating a link between institutional trust and institutional performance.

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[9] The scale of trust in local government is coded 0 (none) to 100 (a lot).
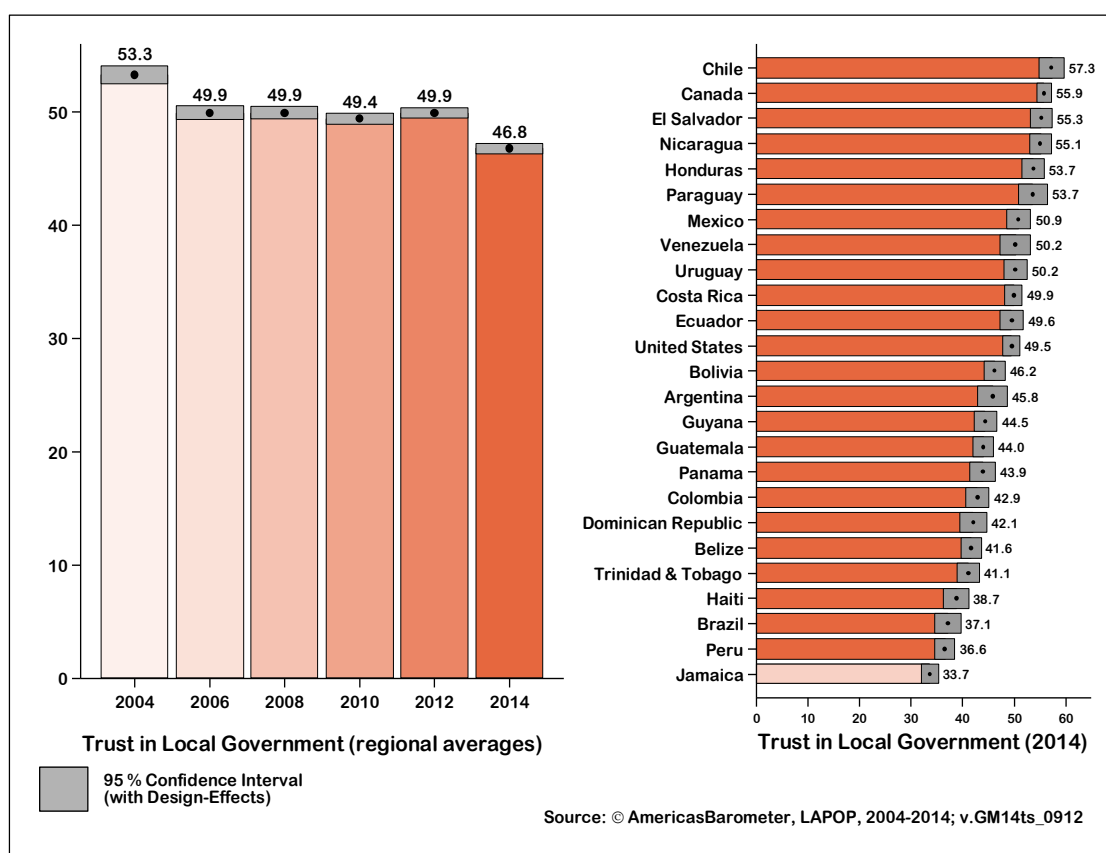
Figure 19. Trust in Local Government, overtime Regional Perspective and by Country for 2014

5. A Decade of Democratic Legitimacy in the Americas

In addition to regional comparisons for 2014, AmericasBarometer data now permit the assessment of a decade-long trend for each of these measures of democratic legitimacy, such as support for democracy in the abstract, trust in a range of state institutions, support for the political system, political tolerance, and the attitudinal profiles that result from combining the latter two. We particular pay attention to the institutions tasked with maintaining law and order – the armed forces, the national police, and the justice system – and how crime and violence may affect their legitimacy and, indeed, democratic support and values more broadly. Altogether, this approach permits an inspection of the attitudinal foundations of democracy across the region with an eye to one of its potential weak spots.

Our initial look at democracy's legitimacy in the Americas finds citizens strongly support democracy as a form of government. While fairly stable over time, 2014 saw abstract support for democracy regress to one of its lowest levels in a decade for the region. Going from this abstract notion of democracy to more particular political and social institutions changes the picture only somewhat in terms of average trust on a 0 to 100 scale (see Figure 20).[10] The armed forces and the Catholic Church maintain their pride of place as the most trusted institutions in the region; legislatures and, especially parties, continue to garner the least trust. Jamaicans' average level of trust in the armed forces dropped from 68.4 in 2012 to 63.6 in 2014; in the Parliament from 45.9 to

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[10] The scales of trust in different institutions are coded 0 (none) to 100 (a lot).

31.9; and in political parties from 40.1 to 28.1. Jamaicans report average levels of trust in the national legislature and political parties that are below the regional average in 2014.

According to regional results, since 2012, trust has not increased in any major social, political, or state institution and, in most cases, it has decreased. The ascent of the first Pope from the Americas in 2013 could not halt the slide in trust in the Catholic Church. For Jamaica, the average trust in this religious institution dropped from 40.1 in 2012 to 31.5 in 2014, well below the regional average in the latest survey. The most precipitous drop was in trust in elections, a worrisome finding considering that roughly half of the countries in the 2014 AmericasBarometer held a national election in the time between our 2012 study and the 2014 survey. In Jamaica, the average level of trust in elections fell from 49.6 in 2012 to 37.2 in 2014, also below the regional average for the latest survey.

Among law-and-order institutions in the region – armed forces, national police, and the justice system – public trust in the latter is lowest and has declined the most since 2012. In Jamaica, average level of trust in the police dropped from 48 in 2012 to 38.3 in 2014, and trust in the justice system deteriorated slightly more from 52.6 in 2012 to an average of 41.1 in 2014. Jamaicans' levels of trust in both of these institutions are below the regional averages for 2014.
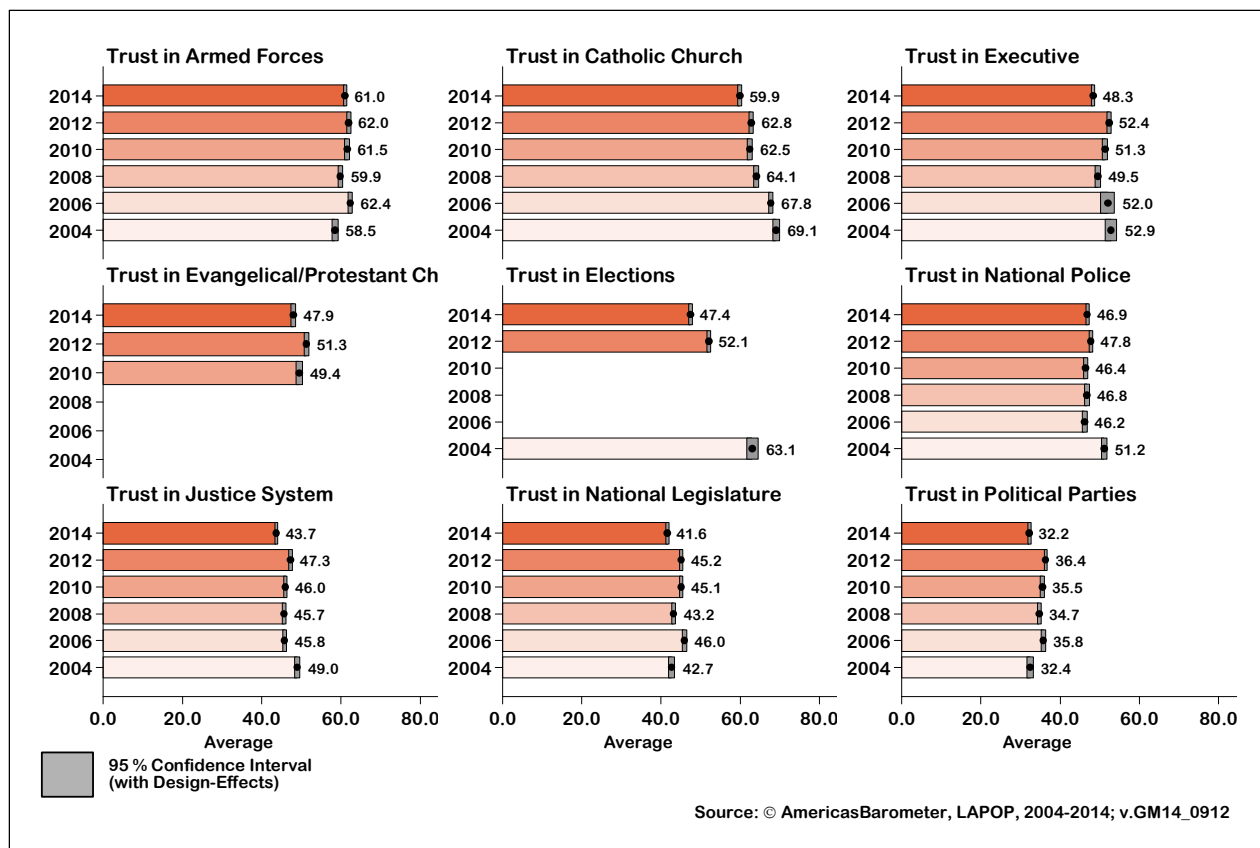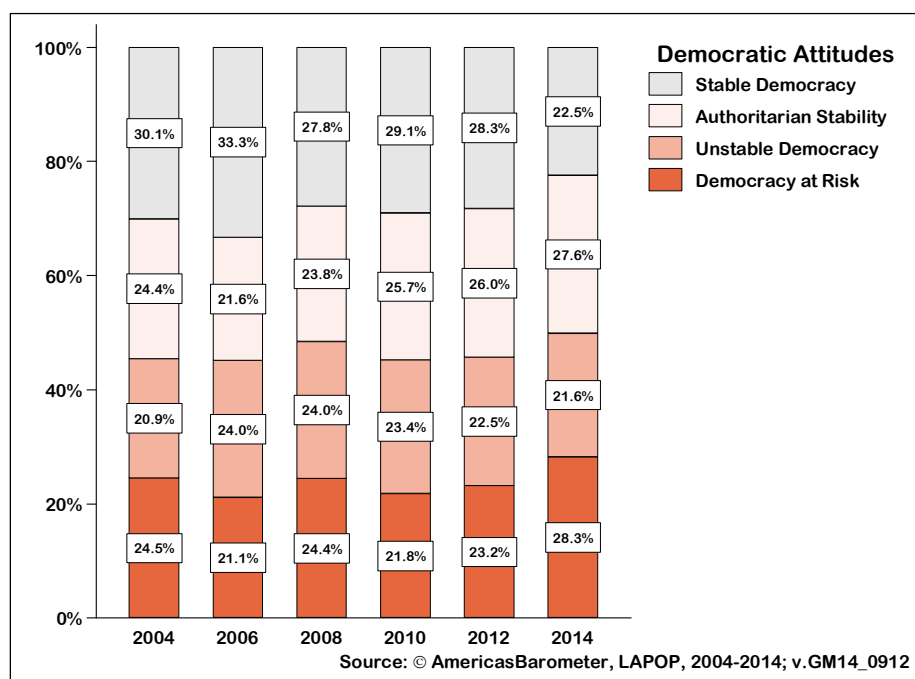

Figure 20. Trust in Institutions in the Americas, 2004-2014

System support – the inherent value citizens' place in the political system – fell in 2014. Beliefs about the legitimacy of courts and the system's ability to protect basic rights deteriorated the most. In Jamaica the average level of support for the political system dropped significantly from

53.6 in 2012 to 42.5in 2014, on a scale from 0 to 100.[11] The results of our analyses for the region as a whole suggest system support in the Americas reflects how citizens evaluate and interact with the national and local governments. Specifically democratic legitimacy hinges on the system's ability to deliver public goods in the areas of the economy, corruption, and security. These same factors do not, however, increase tolerance of political dissidents, a key democratic value. Rather, the happier citizens of the Americas are with the performance of national and local governments, the less politically tolerant they are. In Jamaica the average level of political tolerance declined from 60.1 in 2012 to 55.4 in 2014.[12] Lastly, we observe a decline in the percentage of citizens in the Americas who hold the combination of attitudes most conducive to democratic stability (high system support and high political tolerance) and a marked increase in the attitudes that can put democracy at risk (low system support and low political tolerance) (see Figure 21). For Jamaica, the distribution of these democratic attitudes in 2014 displays a higher concentration of respondents in the "unstable democracy" profile in comparison to the regional distribution. The percentage of Jamaicans that report attitudes in support for stable democracy significantly dropped from 37.3% in 2012 to 16.7% in 2014. At the same time, 16.5% exhibit attitudes conducive to authoritarian stability in 2014 (also a drop from 20% in 2012), 37.8% to unstable democracy (an increase from 26.2% in 2012), and 28.9% to democracy at risk (an increase from 16.5% in 2012).

Figure 21. Democratic Attitudes Profiles over Time in the Americas, 2004-2014

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[11] The political system support index is a scale recoded from 0 (none) to 100 (a lot), created with the variables B1 (trust in courts), B2 (respect for institutions), B3 (trust in the protection of basic rights), B4 (pride in the political system), and B6 (how much citizens should trust the system).

[12] The political tolerance index is a scale recoded from 0 (none) to 100 (a lot), created with the variables D1 (right to vote), D2 (right to protest), D3 (right to run for public office), and D4 (right to freedom of expression).

6. Citizens' Attitudes towards the Police in Jamaica: Implications for Police-Citizen Partnership in Crime Control

Trust in the police, much like trust in any one person or institution, essentially implies a belief that law enforcement officers have what Hardin (2006, 17) denominates as "the right intentions" and behaviour toward citizens to the extent that they seek to perform to a society's expectations in the delivery of their prescribed duties and obligations. As a branch of the criminal justice system, the police are assigned the very important tasks of controlling crime, preventing disorder, and ensuring procedural justice. In return, they are expected to wield their authority in a fair, competent, certain, and impartial way, thereby ensuring that they provide citizen protection and reassurance effectively and equally across society.

Since the AmericasBarometer was first carried out in Jamaica in 2006, the survey has tracked citizens' level of trust in the police and other key national institutions. Figure 23 shows that 1 in 4 Jamaicans express a total lack of confidence in the police in 2014. This is compared to less than 6.7% who express having a lot of trust in the police. The intensity of citizens' mistrust is further highlighted by the fact that while only about 27% of respondents express a moderate to a high level of trust by selecting 5, 6, or 7 on the scale, about 55% identified their sense of trust at the low end of the scale by choosing a score between 1 and 3. Figure 22 also shows a trend of a progressive decline in confidence in the police over the first three rounds of the AmericasBarometer, which was then interrupted with a significant, 16-degree increase on a 0-100 scale in trust in the police between 2010 and 2012.[13] In 2014, however, Jamaican citizens' trust in the police declined by 10 degrees to 38.3 – the second lowest level of trust in the police since the first AmericasBarometer survey in 2006.
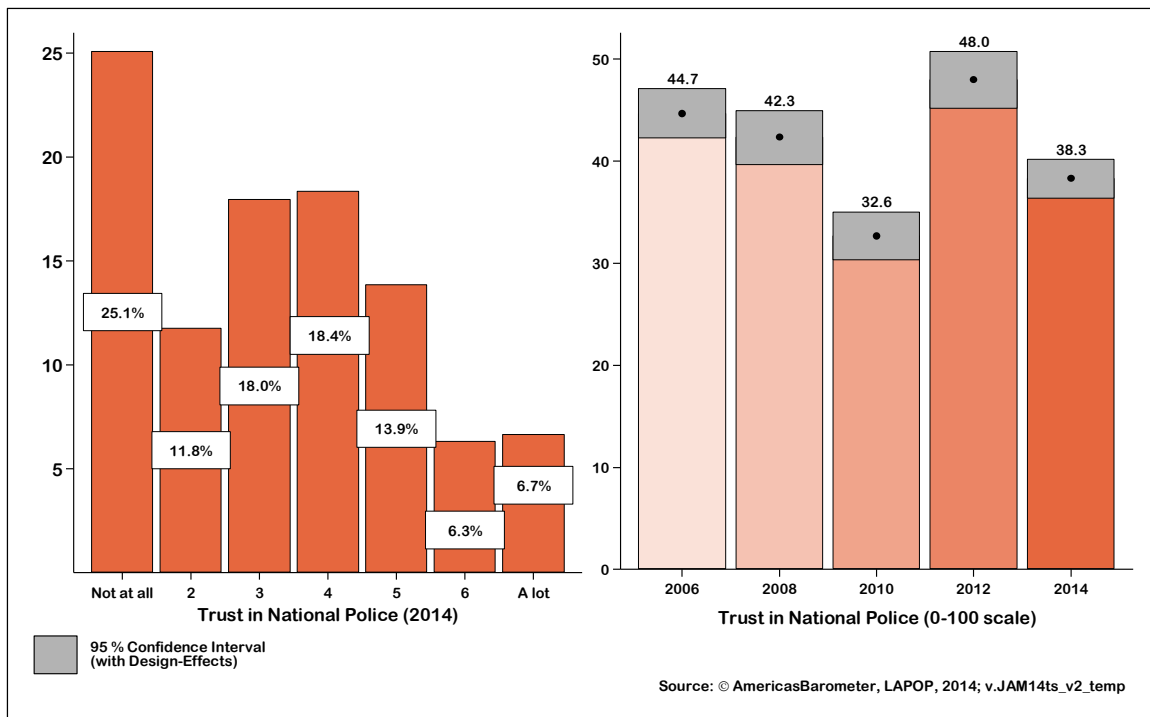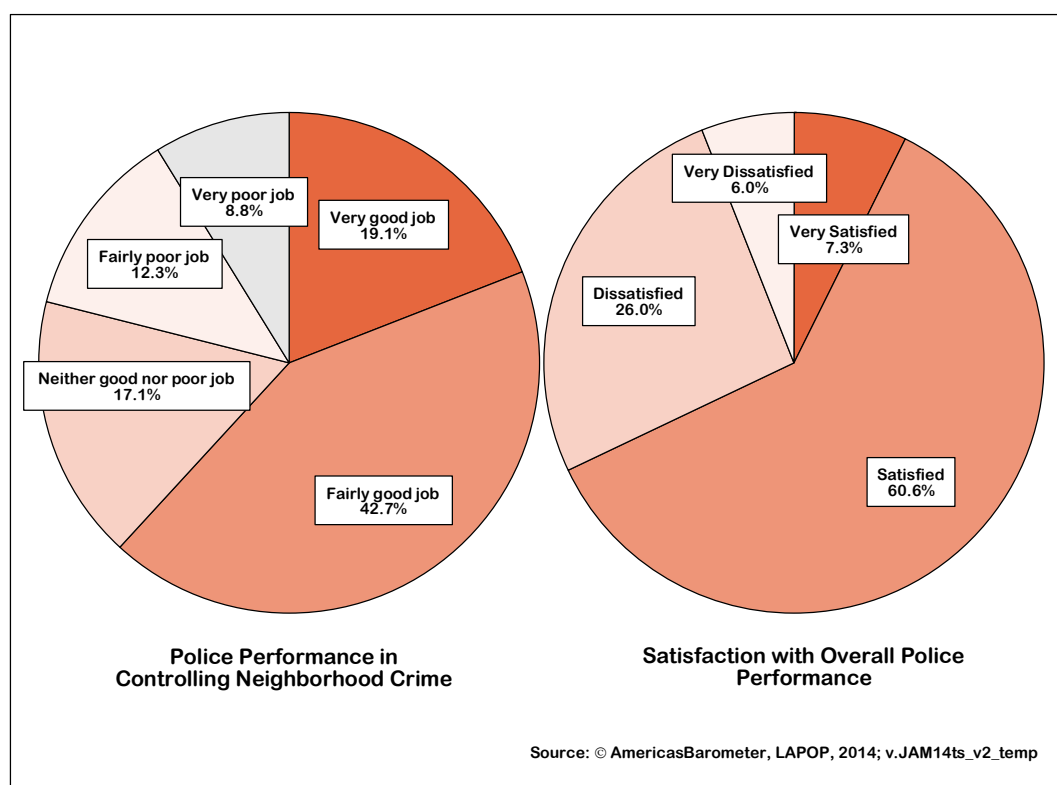

Figure 22. Citizens' Trust in the Police in Jamaica, 2006-2014

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[13] The scale of trust in the National Police is coded 0 (not at all) to 100 (a lot).

The results of a regression analysis of factors associated with trust in the police in Jamaica indicate that respondents who were victims of a crime in the 12 months preceding the survey are less likely to trust the police. Similarly, those who have little or no confidence in the ability of the justice system to punish the guilty have lower levels of trust in the police than those with higher levels of confidence in the efficacy of the system. Persons who strongly support the use of vigilante measures in crime control strategies are likely to be less trusting of law enforcement officers. Lastly, older persons and those who actively participate in their community tend to have higher levels of trust in the police. It is important to keep in mind that people's lack of confidence in the police could also manifest itself in reduced confidence in the judiciary, more support for vigilante approaches to crime control and a lower participation rate in community activities.

Jamaican respondents for the 2014 AmericasBarometer were also are asked to evaluate police performance, both in terms of how well they are perceived to be controlling neighbourhood crime, and also more generally in terms of level of satisfaction with overall police performance. Figure 23 shows that the majority of respondents (61.8%) feel that the police are doing a good job in controlling crime in their neighbourhoods. This proportion comprises 19.1% who view police performance as "very good" and 42.7% who view the performance as "fairly good." On the other hand, 21.1% think the police do a poor job in controlling crime in their neighbourhoods. Figure 23 also shows that 2 out of 3 respondents (approximately 68%) are satisfied with the overall performance of the police. This majority includes 60.6% who state that they are "very satisfied" with police performance and 7.3% are "satisfied." In contrast, 32% of Jamaicans report some level of dissatisfaction with the police.

Police Performance in Controlling Neighborhood Crime

- Very poor job 8.8%
- Very good job 19.1%
- Fairly poor job 12.3%
- Neither good nor poor job 17.1%
- Fairly good job 42.7%

Satisfaction with Overall Police Performance

- Very Dissatisfied 6.0%
- Very Satisfied 7.3%
- Dissatisfied 26.0%
- Satisfied 60.6%

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.JAM14ts_v2_temp

Figure 23. Citizens' Evaluation of Performance of the Police in Jamaica, 2014

These results are important because they contrast, to some degree, with the results for trust in the police. They suggest that there is a tendency among individuals to report more positive evaluations of the work that police are doing in their own communities and yet less positive evaluations of the police force at the national level.

To further examine Jamaicans perceptions of the police, the AmericasBarometer asked respondents about the problems of bribe-taking and citizen harassment as elements of police misconduct in Jamaica. Figure 24 shows that 5.7% of respondents indicate that a police officer solicited them for a bribe within the 12 months prior to the survey. Data for previous survey rounds show that bribe solicitation rates by the police decreased steadily between 2006 and 2012, pushing back upward just slight, negligible amount in 2014.
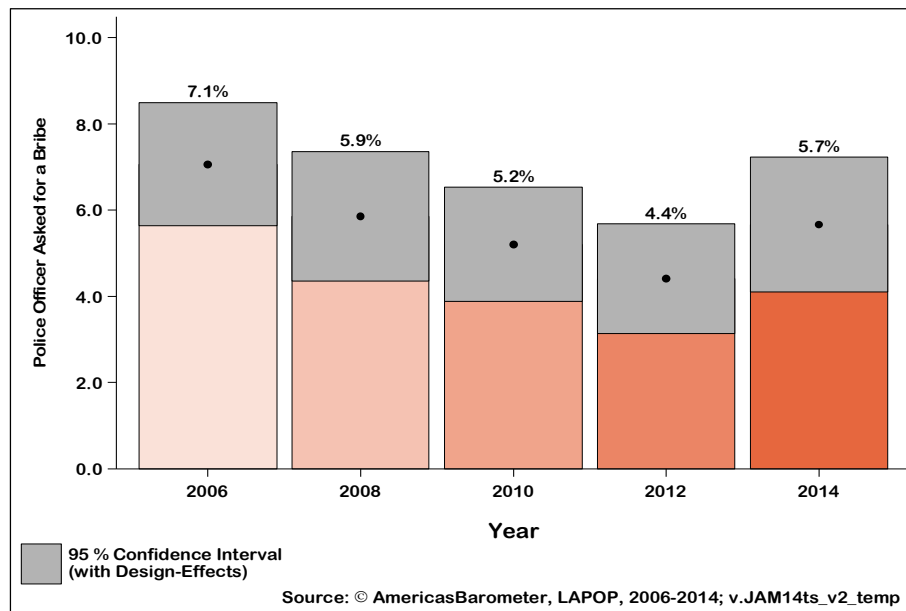
Figure 24. Reported Bribe Solicitation by the Police over Time in Jamaica, 2006-2014

With regard to the issue of citizens' encounters with the police in law enforcement or other policing activities, the survey asks respondents about concerns over harassment to determine the extent to which this is perceived to be a problem in citizen-police relations. As shown in Figure 25, slightly less than a third of Jamaicans view police harassment as a serious problem in their neighbourhoods. However, the majority of Jamaicans do not think that police harassment is a problem. This finding supports earlier results citing generally positive evaluations of police performance in communities.
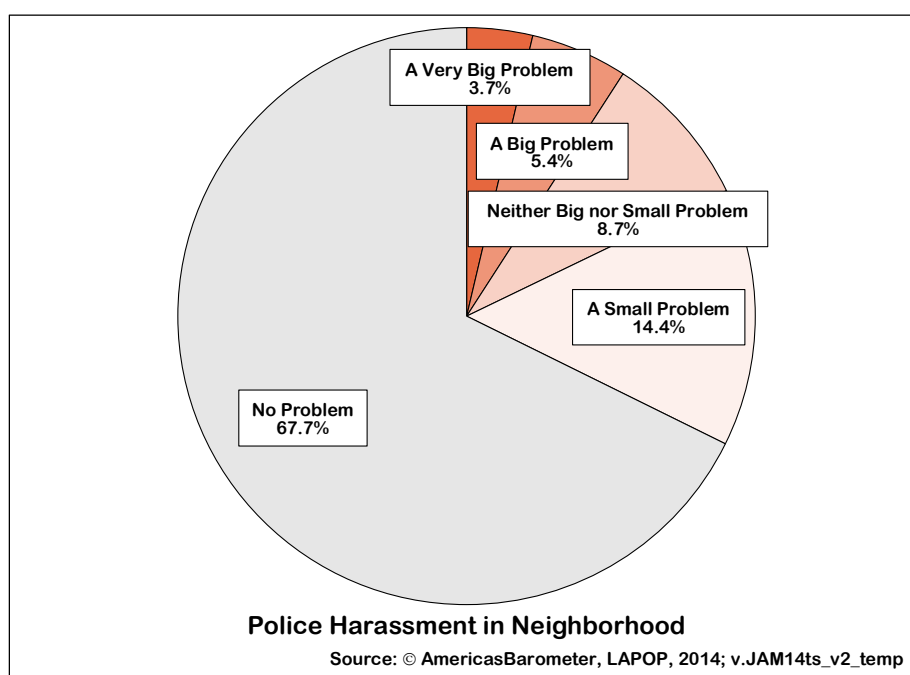
Figure 25. Reported Levels of Police Harassment in Jamaica, 2014

If the police are to attract greater public trust, they must be less reliant on the use of force and must do so by continuing to improve their crime control performance, displaying greater respect for the rights of all citizens, and improving integrity within their ranks. Moreover, although rates of crime victimization, complaints of harassment, and bribe-solicitation are relatively low, these factors can have a significant impact on public confidence in the police. Visible behavioural change is required, which simultaneously should be encouraged by appropriately structuring the relationship between the police and the public.

7. Beyond Crime and Security: Perceptions of Jamaicans on Selected Citizen Rights Actions and Issues

While formal democratic procedures revolve around elections, robust liberal democracies are marked by elements such as an ethos of choice, peaceful coexistence, participation, and inclusiveness. Like many countries in the Americas, Jamaica wrestles with chronic crime and security-related challenges, including the increasing incidence of human rights denial and abuse in some spheres (Williams 2012); issues that can, in effect, undermine a culture of inclusion, tolerance, and participation.

This section focuses on these, and some other concerns, about accommodation and social inclusion in Jamaica. Specifically, this section summarizes results from the 2014 AmericasBarometer regarding attitudes and perceptions on selected topics relating to social tolerance, social activism, and social responsibility.

Figure 26 presents the attitudes of respondents toward the dimension of tolerance. As indicated, the overwhelming majority of Jamaicans are intensely opposed to allowing homosexuals the basic democratic right of running for public office. Some 7 out of 10, or 69%, select the most

extreme level of disapproval while only about 5% respond that they "strongly approve." Figure 26 also shows that there has been a pronounced change concerning the level of support for homosexual rights in Jamaica since 2006. Although the level of approval is generally low for all periods (the highest is 20.8 degrees in 2012 on a 0-100 scale), the outcome for 2008 points to a lowest level of support at 8.7 degrees.[14] The nearly five-degree decline in 2014 compared to 2012, a statistically significant difference, represents a substantial erosion of support in over two years (from 20.8 to 16, respectively).
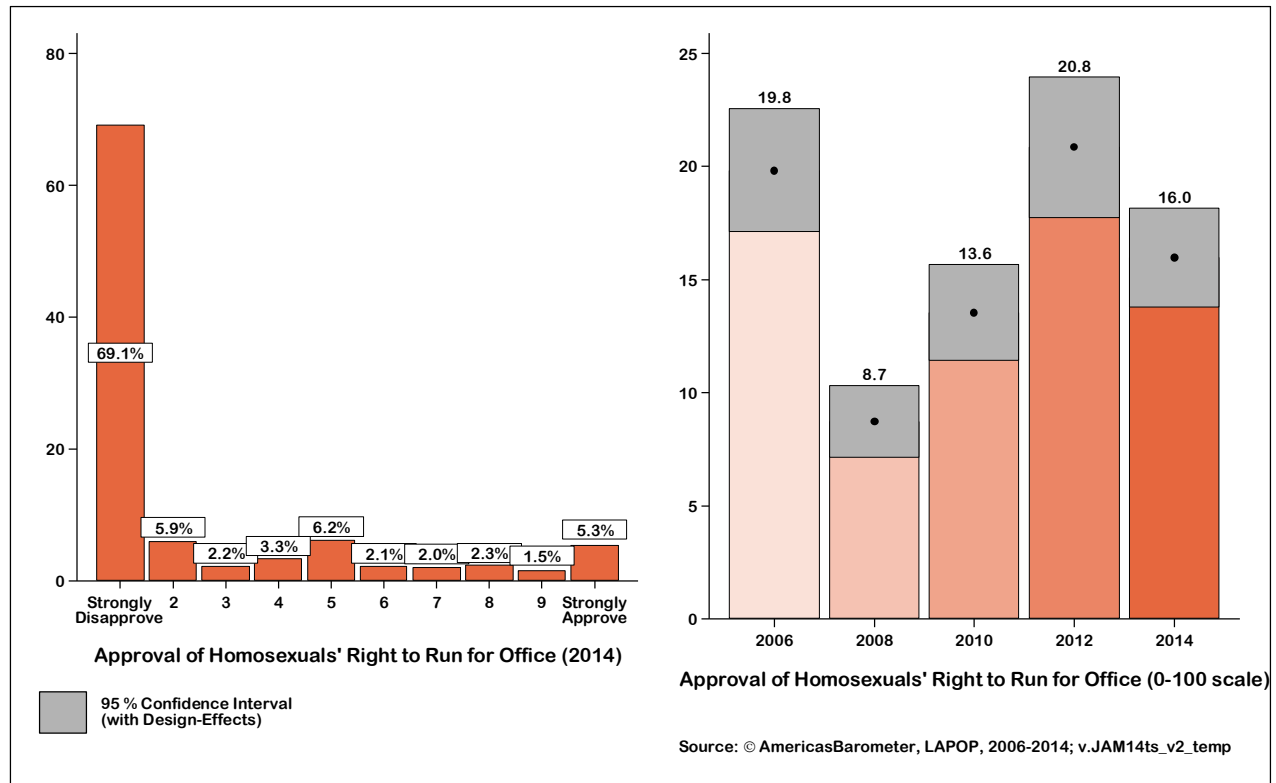

Figure 26. Approval for Homosexuals' Right to Run for Office in Jamaica, 2006-2014

On the issue of same-sex marriage, evidence of increasing levels of tolerance and support found elsewhere in the Americas has had little resonance in the debate about the rights of homosexuals in Jamaica. As illustrated by Figure 27, Jamaicans unequivocally reject the notion of same-sex couples being afforded the right to marry. Ninety six percent of those surveyed are either neutral or outright disapproving in that they selected "5" or below on the 10-point scale, with 89% expressing total disapproval by choosing "1." This level of opposition is markedly stronger than the stance taken against homosexuals being permitted to run for public office. There is virtually no change in the usual hard line rejection of same-sex marriage by Jamaicans between 2010 and 2014, as measured on a 0-100 scale.[15]

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[14] The scale of approval of homosexual's right to run for public office is coded 0 (strongly disapprove) to 100 (strongly approve).

[15] The scale of approval of same-sex marriage is coded 0 (strongly disapprove) to 100 (strongly approve).
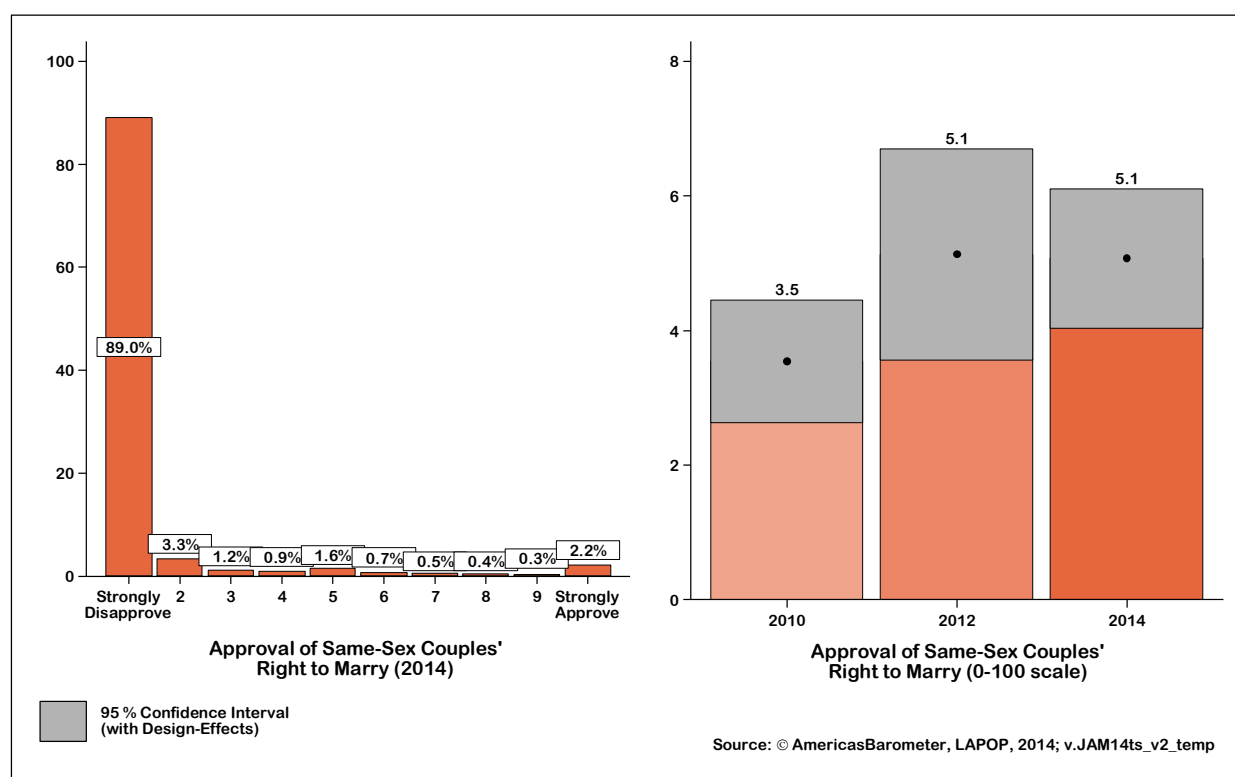
Figure 27. Approval of Same-Sex Marriage in Jamaica, 2006-2014

Shifting to other issues of social tolerance of important for Jamaica's democratic environment, peaceful protest behaviour such as picketing, road marches, and protest meetings in public spaces, as well as other channels that are legally permitted, are widely supported. However, such actions frequently exceed what is deemed peaceful to include the blocking of roads and defacing and destroying public property. Results in Figure 29 affirm that Jamaicans are strongly in favour of legal rather than illegal forms of protest and activism. For example, mean support for legal demonstrations averages 66.1 degrees on the 0 to 100 scale in 2014.[16] Average national approval of blocking roads and vigilante justice is at 36.3 on the same scale, and support for people working in a group to overthrow the government is much lower at 18.4 degrees on the 0 to 100 scale. Yet, Figure 28 also shows that citizens' approval for acts of *illicit* protest have increased substantially since 2006, especially with regard to the support for measures such the blocking of roads, while support for legal forms of protests dropped in 2014.

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[16] The scales of support for various forms of political activism are coded 0 (strongly disapprove) to 100 (strongly approve).
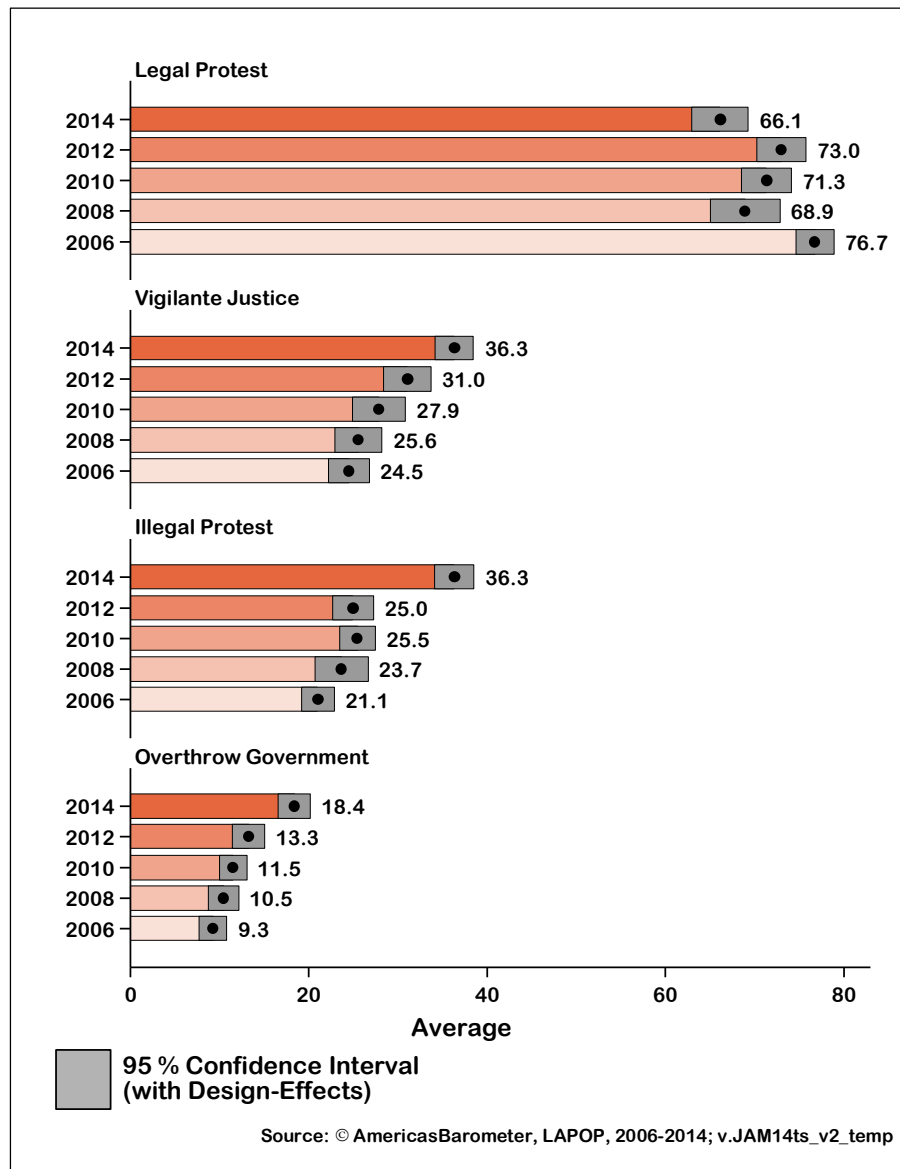
**Figure 28. Citizen Support for Selected Acts of Social and Political
Activism in Jamaica, 2014**

Next, we present results from the 2014 AmericasBarometer regarding citizens' sense of social responsibility as it relates to their perception of the role of government in reducing income inequality, as well as attitudes of Jamaicans toward economic development at the risk of the environment.

As shown in Figure 29, there is very strong support among the citizenry for the government to introduce policy measures to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor in Jamaica. Results show that 83.9% of those surveyed selected the mid-point of "4" or above on the scale, with 40.7% expressing unreserved agreement by choosing the highest number (indicating the highest degree of support) on the seven-point scale. Between 2008 and 2012, there was a period of relatively stable support for strong state action against inequality, and in 2014 we find a small but

statistically significant decline in citizens' support for such measures (from 77.6 degrees in 2012 to 71.6 in 2014, on a 0-100 scale).[17]
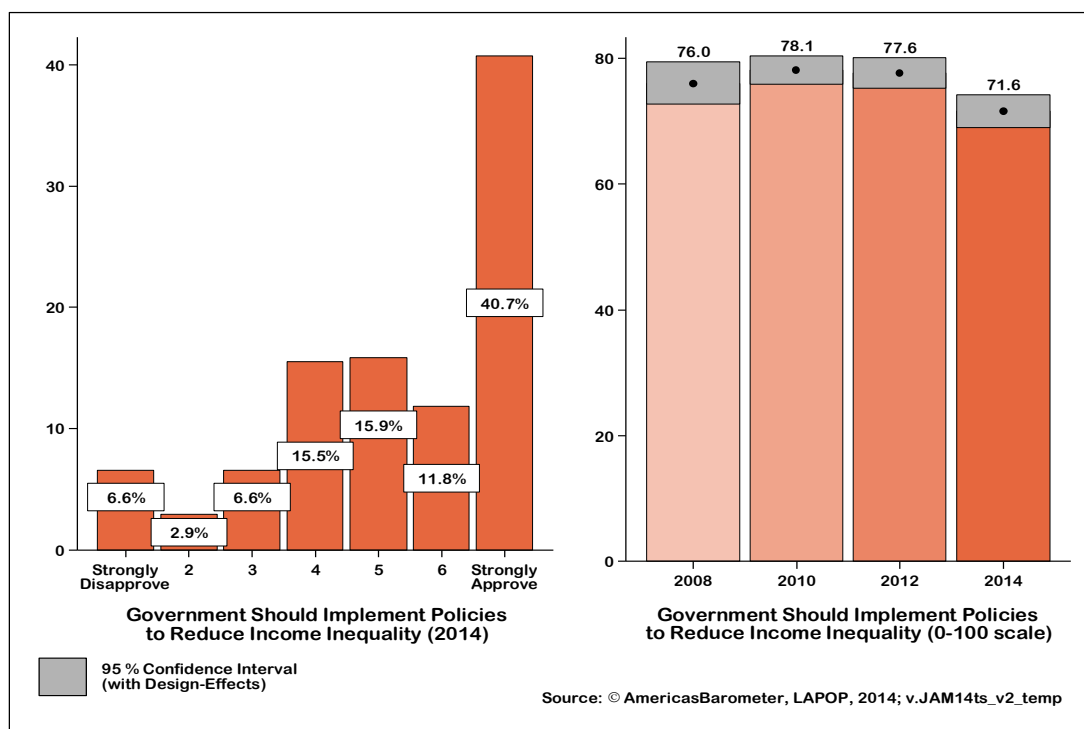
Figure 29. Citizens' Support for Government Intervention to Reduce Inequality in Jamaica, 2006-2014

As shown in Figure 30, Jamaicans are more likely to support prioritizing an economic growth agenda over environmental protection. The plurality of respondents, 52.1%, favours measures to grow the economy, while one in five indicates that both factors should receive due attention when considering priorities.

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[17] The scale of approval of government implementation of policies to reduce inequality is coded 0 (strongly disapprove) to 100 (strongly approve).
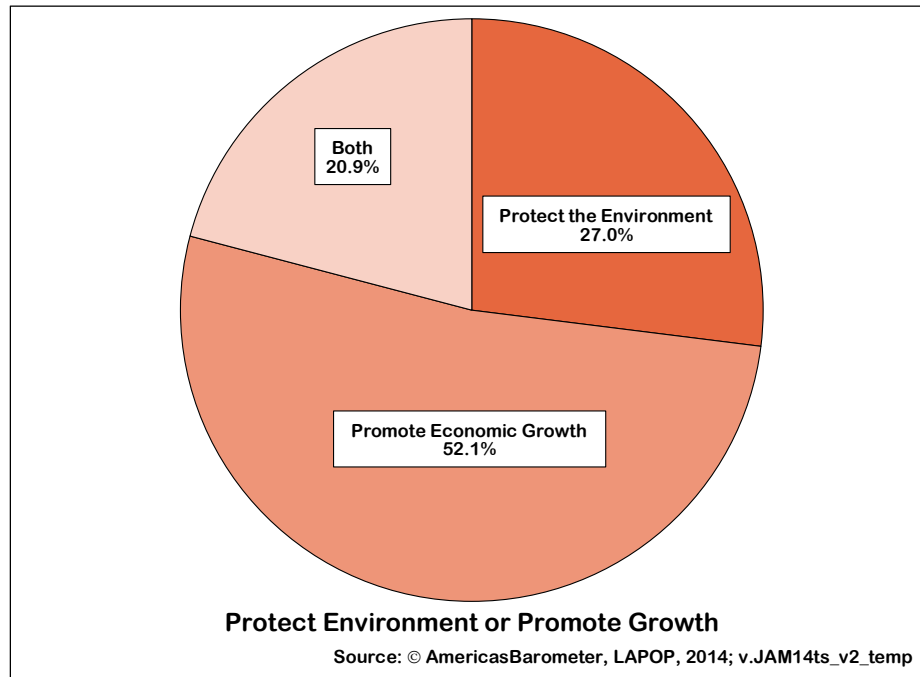
**Figure 30. Preference for Environmental Protection versus Economic Growth
Priorities in Jamaica, 2014**

In sum, this section shows that, on the subject of social tolerance, defined as respect and accommodation for the personal choices and lifestyle preferences of others, the results point to a tendency for social exclusion among Jamaicans when it comes to the LGBT community. On the question of social activism, the results show that Jamaicans are strongly in favour of legal rather than illegal forms of protest. In a democratic environment, nonetheless, the prevailing level of support for illicit forms of protest is troubling. Lastly, there is very strong support among the citizenry for the government to introduce policy measures to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor in Jamaica. And, in a context of sluggish economic growth and high unemployment, Jamaicans clearly support the prioritizing of an economic growth agenda over environmental protection concerns.

The AmericasBarometer

This study forms part of a research program that the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) has been carrying out for more than two decades. LAPOP is a consortium of academic and research institutions spread throughout the Americas, with its headquarters at Vanderbilt University, in the United States. More than 30 institutions throughout the region participate in LAPOP, whose efforts are directed at producing objective, non-partisan, and scientifically sound studies of public opinion. Those studies focus primarily on the measurement of political attitudes and behavior related to democracy and quality of life.

The project has received generous support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the College of Arts and Science at Vanderbilt University, the Tinker Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United States National Science Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Swedish Embassy in Bolivia as well as Duke University, Florida International University, University of Miami, Princeton University, the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, the National Center for Research in Brazil (CNPq) and the Kellogg Institute of Notre Dame University. LAPOP also maintains linkages with entities such as the Organization of American States.

The current surveys, whose results are analyzed and discussed in this publication, were carried out in face-to-face interviews in 2012, using nationally representative stratified and clustered probability samples in both urban and rural areas. Interviews were in the national language or in the major indigenous/creole languages of each country. The 2012 round of studies included 26 countries in the Americas and more than 41,000 interviews, which allows for comparison of the results of each individual country with other countries in the region.
LAPOP offers its AmericasBarometer datasets free to the public via its web page: www.lapopsurveys.org.

In addition to the datasets, the reports, articles and books that the Latin American Public Opinion Project produces are free to the public. This research and the data can also be accessed at our "data repositories" and subscribers in major universities in the United Stated and Latin America. With these initiatives, LAPOP continues to collaborate with the development of academic and policy excellence throughout the Americas.