Spotlight on Corruption Victimization in Latin America and the Caribbean

There is notable variation in corruption victimization across the LAC region

Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer has measured corruption victimization in the LAC region by asking the following question: EXC6: In the last twelve months, did any government employee ask you for a bribe? In the 2021 survey round, this question was included in surveys in 20 LAC countries. Respondents stated whether they were a victim of corruption in the past twelve months by answering "yes" or "no." Here we report on the percentage of people that responded affirmatively.

In the majority of countries, less than one-tenth of adults were asked to pay a bribe in the past year. However, there is great variation by country. Countries with the highest rates of corruption victimization include Mexico (26.2%) and Nicaragua (21.7%), while countries with the lowest rates of corruption victimization include Uruguay (2.3%) and Chile (2.0%).

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2021; GM_20211108

Corruption Victimization, 2021

- Mexico: 26.2%
- Nicaragua: 21.7%
- Paraguay: 19.0%
- Guatemala: 15.0%
- Bolivia: 14.9%
- Peru: 13.9%
- Honduras: 13.5%
- Haiti: 10.4%
- Ecuador: 10.1%
- Dominican Republic: 8.5%
- Argentina: 7.7%
- Colombia: 7.5%
- Panama: 6.1%
- Costa Rica: 5.9%
- Guyana: 4.9%
- Jamaica: 4.8%
- Brazil: 4.8%
- El Salvador: 4.7%
- Uruguay: 2.3%
- Chile: 2.0%

95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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In 2021, corruption victimization by a government employee increased

Corruption victimization showed little fluctuation between the 2004 and 2018/2019 survey rounds, remaining relatively stable around six percent. However, reported victimization experienced an increase of 4.3 percentage points between the 2018/19 and 2021 survey rounds, reaching 10.2% – the highest value ever observed in the AmericasBarometer.

Corruption victimization is highest among those with at least some post-secondary education, younger individuals, those with higher levels of wealth, and men

What characteristics of individuals predict corruption victimization in the LAC region? Those with at least some post-secondary education (12.6%) report higher corruption victimization than those with lower education levels. Those age 26-35 report the highest corruption victimization (12.2%) compared to all other age groups. Individuals with the highest levels of wealth are most likely to report being victims of corruption compared to those with lower levels of wealth. Men (13.6%) are more likely to be victims of corruption than women (6.8%).1,2

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1 In order to avoid excluding non-binary respondents from the analysis, we recode the gender variable to include non-binary respondents with women. In this survey in the LAC region, 0.28% of respondents identified as a gender other than man or woman.

2 The variable for place of residence (ur1new) has been omitted for this round of Spotlight Reports due to a change in survey mode for the 2021 round of the AmericasBarometer.