

December 2020 | Claire Q. Evans

Spotlight on Police Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean

Corruption victimization by the police is on the rise in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region

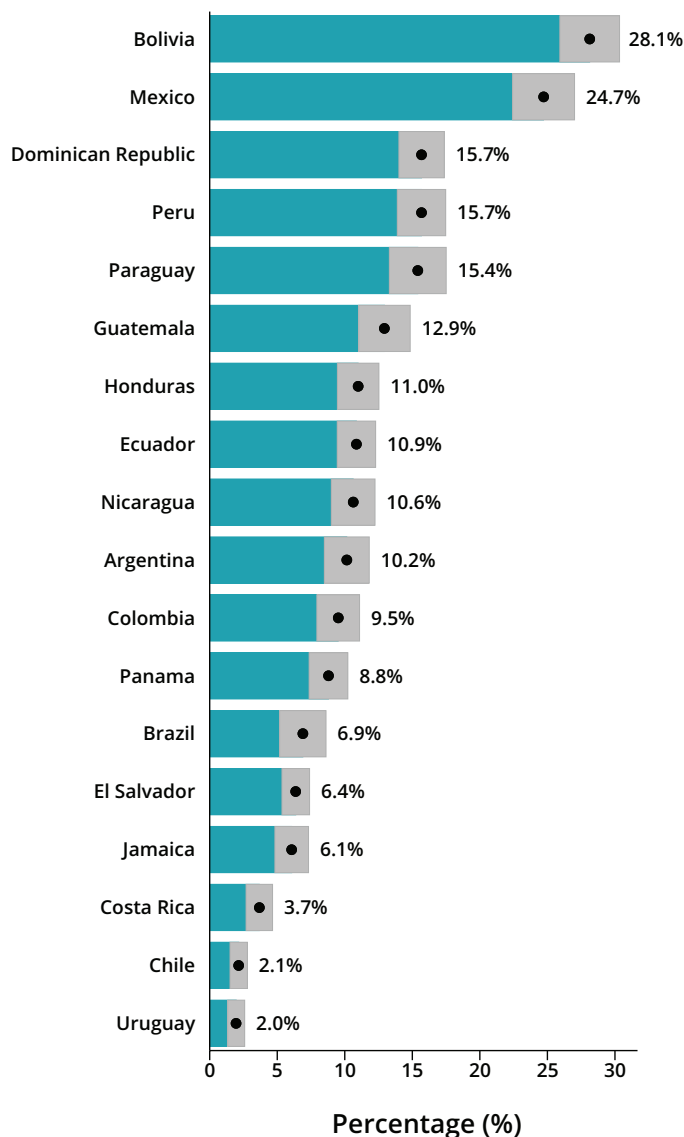
On average in the LAC region, one in ten adults are asked for a bribe by a police officer

Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer has measured corruption victimization by a police officer by asking the following question:

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

In the 2018/19 round, this question was included on surveys conducted in 18 LAC countries. Here we show the percentage of respondents who answered “yes” to this question. Police corruption is most prevalent in Bolivia and Mexico. In both countries, about a quarter of people report that they have been asked for a bribe by a police officer. No other LAC country reaches this rate of police corruption victimization. At the other end, corruption victimization by the police affects far fewer people in Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay – where less than 4% report this type of corruption experience.

Corruption Victimization by Police, 2018/19



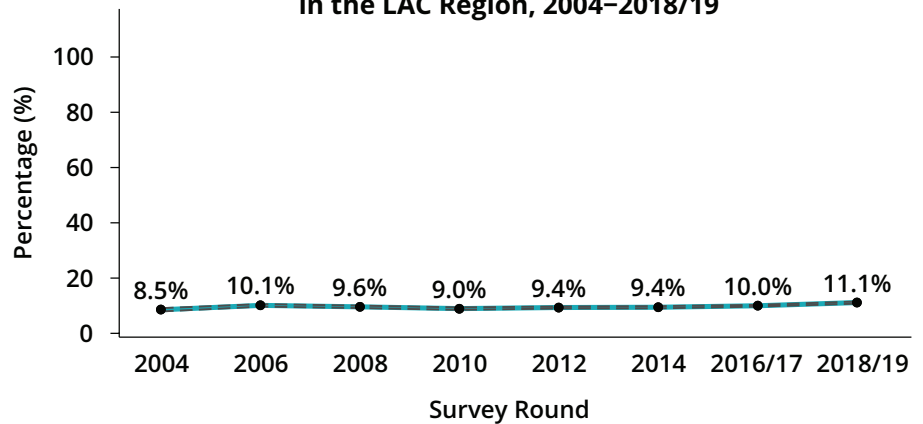
95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; GM v1.0

Rates of corruption victimization by the police show a slow but steady increase

In 2004, the LAC region saw its lowest rate of police corruption victimization experience, with 8.5% of people reporting this type of experience.¹ Since 2010, however, there has been a small, yet steady increase in the percentage of people who have been asked for a bribe by the police. Between the 2010 and the 2018/19 rounds, there was a two-point increase from 9.0% to 11.1%.

Corruption Victimization by the Police in the LAC Region, 2004–2018/19



— 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2004–2018/19; GM1.0

Being asked for a bribe by a police officer is most common among those who are male, urban residents, wealthy, and between 26-45 years old

Who is most likely to be asked for a bribe by a police officer? In the LAC region, the percentage of men (15.9%) who were asked for a bribe is more than double that of women (6.4%). Those living in urban areas are more likely to experience corruption via a police officer than those in rural areas. Among different wealth quintiles, the wealthiest individuals in the LAC region report police corruption at a rate nearly double that of the poorest wealth quintile: 16.4% versus 8.4%, respectively. Finally, individuals aged 26-45 are more likely to be asked for a bribe by a police officer in the LAC region than younger and older cohorts.

Corruption Victimization in the LAC Region, 2018/19



■ 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; GM1.0



Interested in knowing more about the LAPOP Lab's AmericasBarometer study?
 Consult the data and our reports at
www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop

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¹ The 2004 AmericasBarometer includes only a subset of 10 countries. These findings hold when looking at just these countries across time.

As a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative, the LAPOP Lab is committed to routine disclosure of our data collection and reporting processes. More information about the AmericasBarometer sample designs can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.php

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