

December 2020 | Stacy Horton

Spotlight on Basic Rights Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean

Basic rights protection is low and declining in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region

In most LAC countries, less than a third believe their basic rights are protected

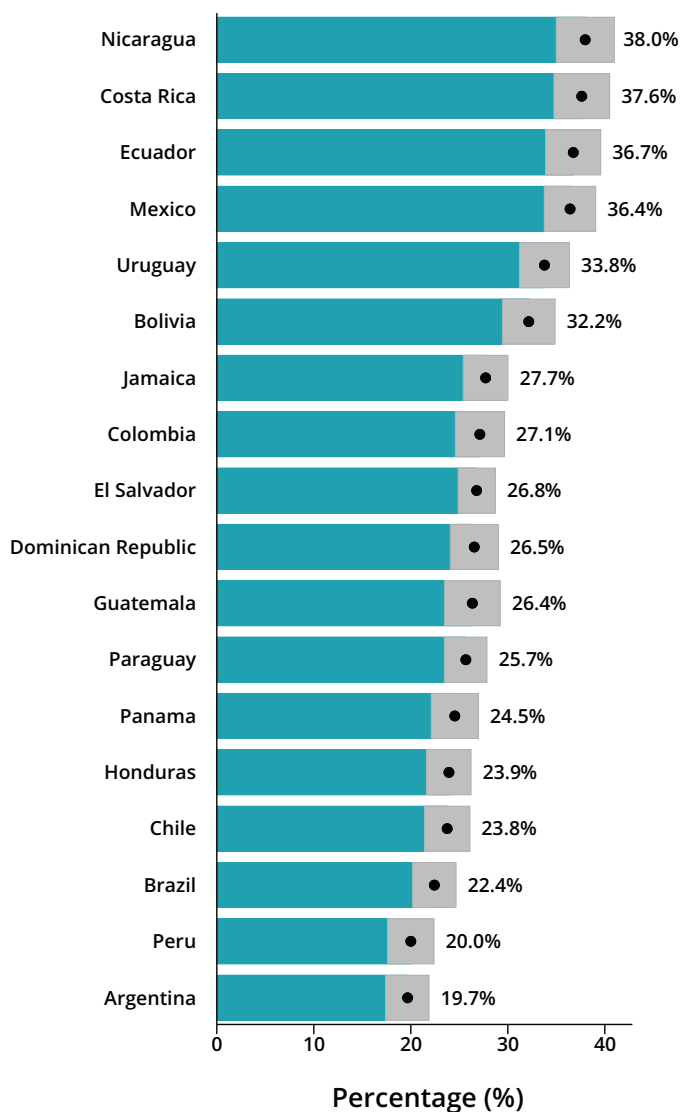
Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer has measured the belief that basic rights are protected by the political system by asking the following question:

B3. To what extent do you feel the basic rights of citizens are protected by your political system?

In the 2018/19 round, this question was included in surveys in 18 LAC countries. Respondents indicated their opinion using a 1-7 scale, where 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot.” Here we code responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows us to estimate the percentage of people in the region who believe citizens’ basic rights are protected by the political system. Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable indicating belief that rights are protected by combining responses “5” through “7” into one category, while placing the other responses (“1” through “4”) into a baseline category.

The country with the highest percentage of people who believe that their basic rights are protected in 2018/19 is Nicaragua (38.0%), while Peru and Argentina rank lowest in the LAC region. In the majority of countries in the region, fewer than one in three adults believes that basic rights are protected in their country.

Basic Rights are Protected, 2018/19



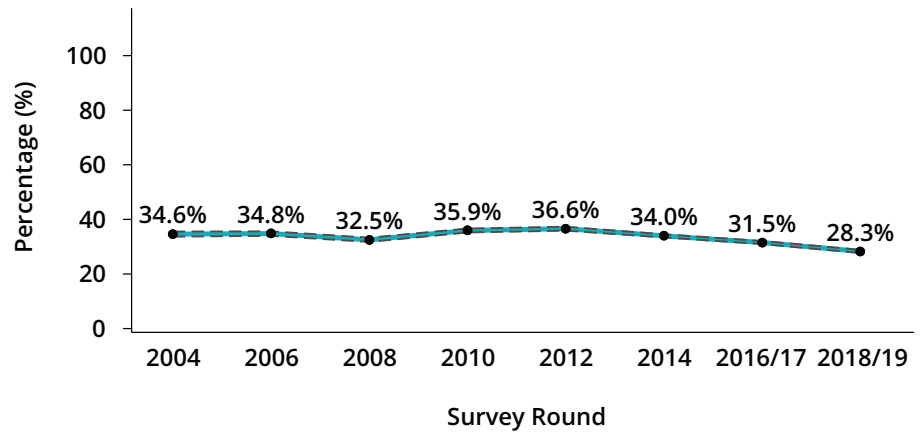
95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

Believing that basic rights are protected has declined

In the average LAC country, the belief that basic rights are protected remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2014, with about a third reporting that they believe their basic rights are protected. Between 2014 and 2018/19, this rate of belief in basic rights protection fell by almost 6 percentage points.

Basic Rights are Protected in the LAC Region, 2004–2018/19



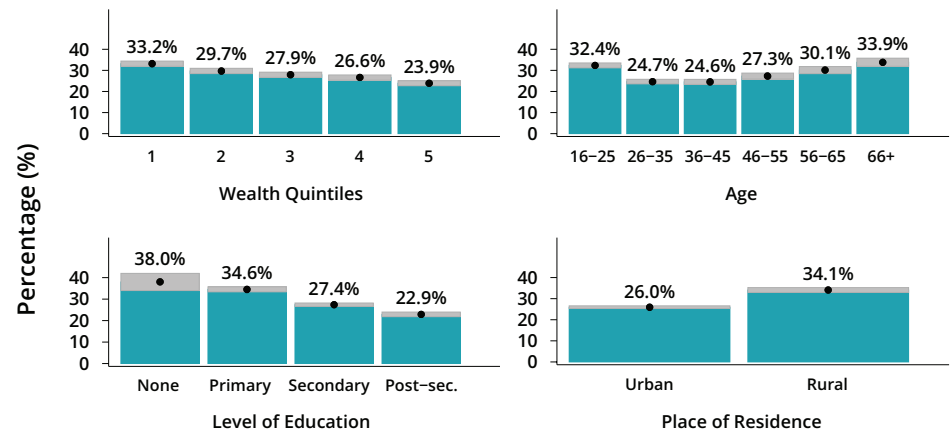
--- 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2012–2018/19; GM1.0

Believing that basic rights are protected is higher among poorer, less educated, and rural individuals

What characteristics of individuals predict the belief that basic rights are protected by the political system in the LAC region? Among wealth quintiles, the highest average levels of belief are found in the poorest quintile. Higher levels of belief that basic rights are protected are found among the youngest (16-25) and the oldest (66+). Those with no formal education (38.0%) report believing that basic rights are protected more frequently than highly educated individuals (22.9%). Lastly, more respondents in rural areas report believing that basic rights are protected than in urban areas (34.1% and 26.0%, respectively).¹

Basic Rights are Protected 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 Gender is not statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of believing that basic rights are protected in the LAC region in 2018/19.

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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