

December 2020 | Stacy Horton

# Spotlight on Trust in the U.S. Government in Latin America and the Caribbean

*Trust in the U.S. government is low and declining in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region*

## In most LAC countries, fewer than half the public trusts the U.S. government

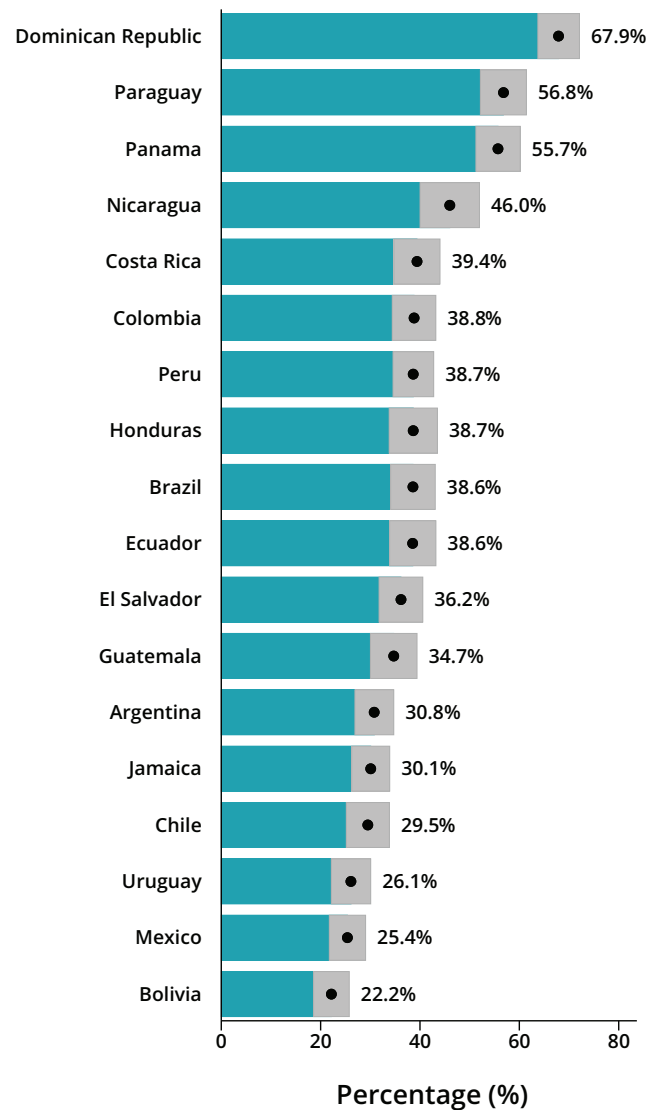
Since 2012, the LAPOP AmericasBarometer project has been measuring the trust in U.S. government by asking the following question in its surveys:

**MIL10E. The government of the United States. In your opinion, is it very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy, or not at all trustworthy, or do you not have an opinion?**

In the 2018/19 round, this question was included in surveys in 18 countries. Here we code responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows us to estimate the percentage of people in the region who trust the U.S. government. Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable indicating trust in the U.S. government by combining the “very” and “somewhat” trustworthy responses into one category, while placing the other responses (“not very” or “not at all” trustworthy) into a baseline category. Those responding that they do not have an opinion are excluded from the analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The country with the highest trust in the U.S. government in 2018/19 is the Dominican Republic (67.9%), while Bolivia (22.2%) holds the lowest trust in the U.S. government in the LAC region. Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Guatemala, have a statistically similar level of trust in the U.S. government in the 2018/19 round.

**Trust in the U.S. Government, 2018/19**



 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

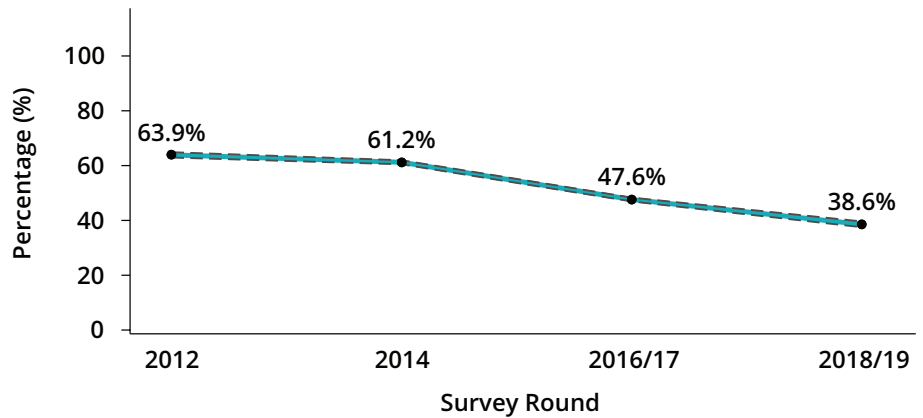
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2018/19; GM1.0

<sup>1</sup> On average in 2018/19, 34% of survey respondents in the LAC region do not have an opinion about whether the U.S. government is trustworthy or not. This is a large number of non-respondents, and should be kept in mind when interpreting the data in this report.

## Trust in the U.S. government is declining

In the average LAC country, trust in the U.S. government declined substantially between 2012 and 2018/19 when it reached its lowest reported level. In 2012, on average, 63.9% trusted the U.S. government. Only 38.6% trust the U.S. government in 2018/19. Over the intervening six years, trust in the U.S. government fell by almost 25 percentage points.

Trust in the U.S. Government in the LAC Region, 2018/19



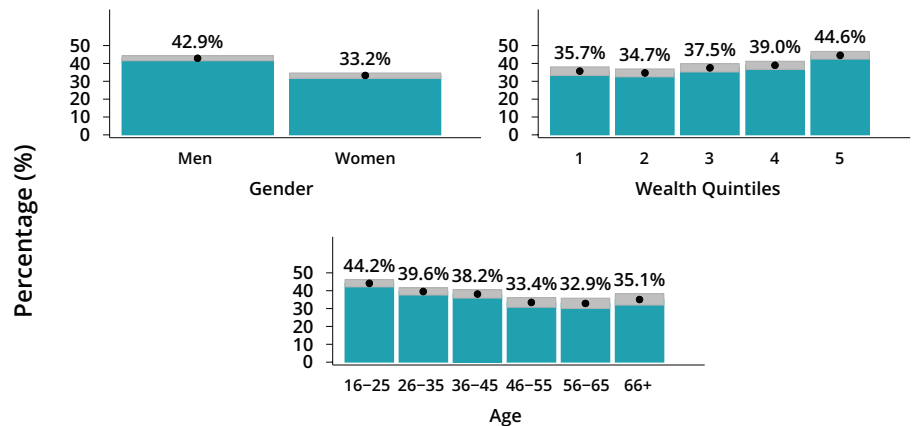
--- 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

## Trust in the U.S. government is higher among the wealthy, the young, and men

What characteristics of individuals predict trust in the U.S. government in the LAC region? On average, men report more trust in the U.S. government compared to women (42.9% and 33.2%, respectively). Among the wealth quintiles, the highest levels of trust are found in the richest quintile. Lastly, younger individuals express greater trust in the U.S. government compared to those respondents born before the 1990s.<sup>2</sup>

Trust in the U.S. Government in the LAC Region, 2018/19



■ 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

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**Interested in knowing more about the LAPOP Lab's AmericasBarometer study?**  
 Consult the data and our reports at [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop).

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 [vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys](http://vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys).

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<sup>2</sup> Level of education and place of residence (urban/rural) are not statistically significant predictors of the likelihood of trusting the U.S. government in the LAC region in 2018/19.