

September, 2022 | Alexandra Rounds

Spotlight on Trust in the Mass Media in Latin America and the Caribbean

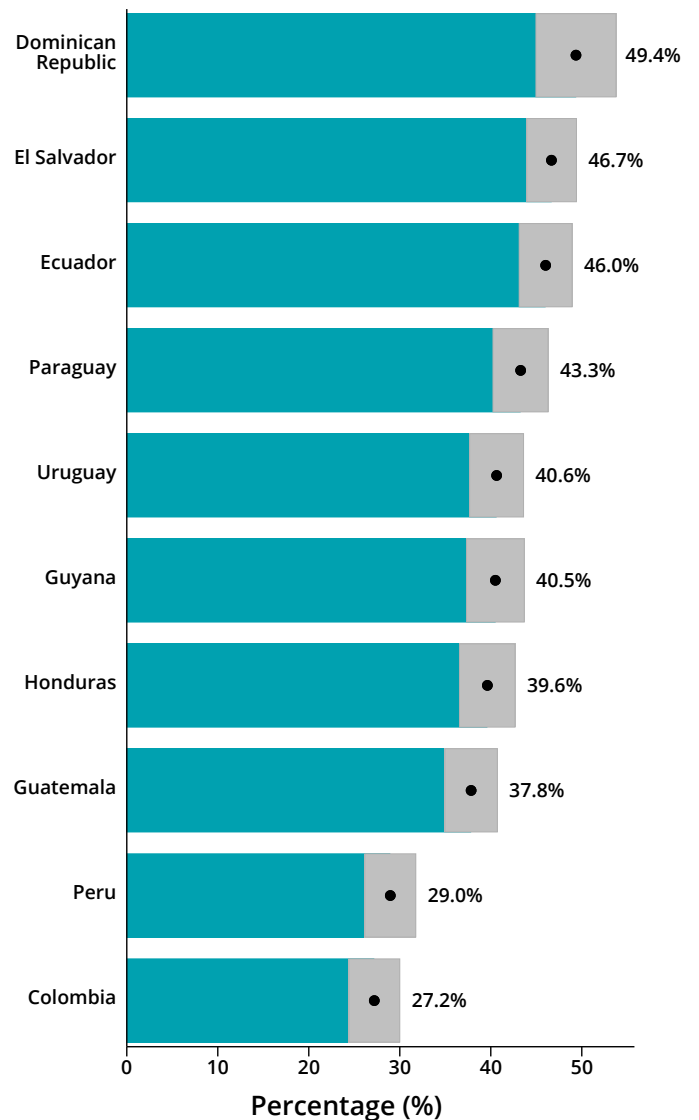
Trust in the mass media in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region decreased in 2021

In the LAC region, less than half of people have trust in the mass media

Since 2004, LAPOP's AmericasBarometer has measured trust in the mass media in the LAC region by asking the following question: **B37. To what extent do you trust the mass media?** In the 2021 survey round, this question was included in surveys in 10 LAC countries. Respondents indicated their opinion using a 1-7 scale, where 1 means "not at all" and 7 means "a lot." Here we recode responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows us to estimate the percentage of people in the country that have trust in the mass media. Specifically, responses were recoded to indicate trust in the mass media by combining responses "5" through "7" into one category, while placing the remaining responses ("1" through "4") into a baseline category.

Less than half of respondents in each LAC country surveyed demonstrate trust in the mass media, though trust varies across the region. The Dominican Republic reports the highest trust in the mass media (49.4%), while Colombia demonstrates the lowest level of trust (27.2%).

Trust in the Mass Media, 2021



95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2021; GM_20211108

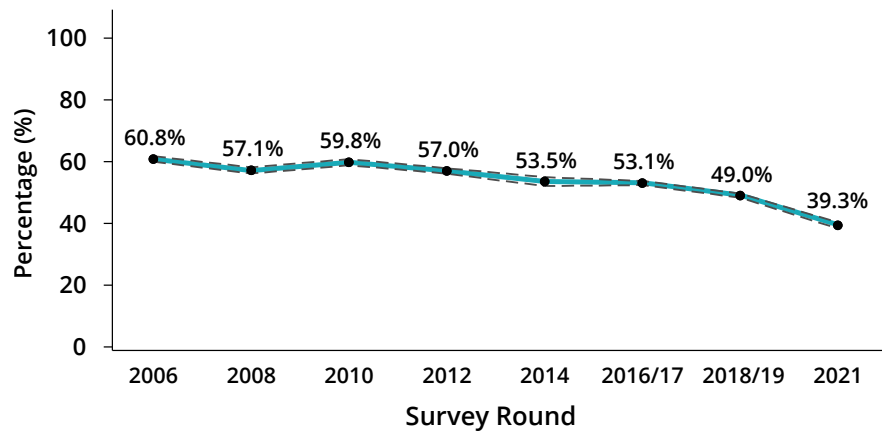
In 2021, trust in the mass media in the LAC region decreased

Trust in the mass media in the LAC region was highest in 2004 (65.7%) but has decreased over time, reaching record-low levels in 2021 (39.4%). From the previous survey round in 2018/19, trust in the mass media declined by the largest amount ever recorded for this question in the AmericasBarometer.¹

Trust in the mass media is highest among women, individuals with lower levels of education, older respondents, and those with lower levels of wealth

What characteristics of individuals predict trust in the mass media in the LAC region? On average, women (43.1%) are more likely than men (35.7%) to have trust in the mass media.² Trust is highest among those with no education or at least some primary education (46.8%) and lowest for those with at least some post-secondary education (27.6%). Older individuals age 66+ (45.1%) are more likely to report trust in the mass media than those in the middle age groups. Those age 18-25 (42.5%) are also more likely to have trust in the mass media than those age 26-35 and age 36-45. Individuals in lower wealth groups are more likely to report having trust in the mass media than those in the wealthiest groups.³

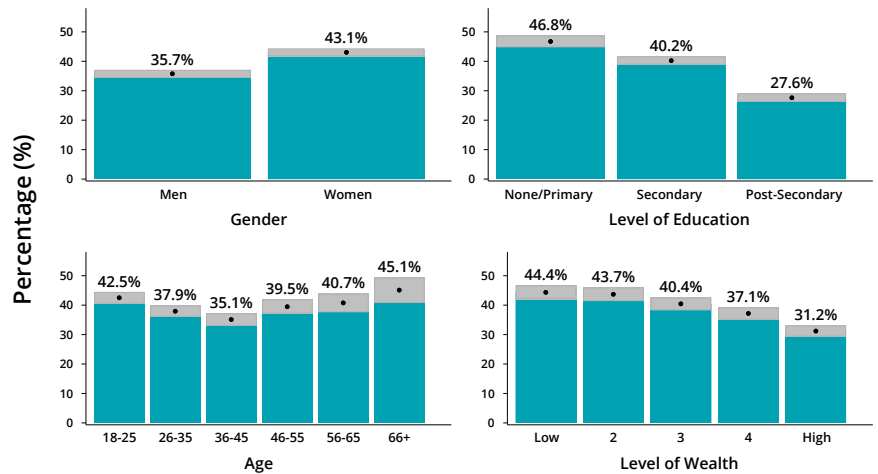
Trust in the Mass Media in the LAC Region, 2006-2021



— 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2006-2021; GM_20211108

Trust in the Mass Media in the LAC Region, 2021



■ 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2021; GM_20211108

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¹ The number of countries included in the AmericasBarometer has increased since the initial rounds. Our conclusions in over-time analyses do not change if we focus only on the countries surveyed consistently since 2004, or if we focus on the countries included in the 2021 round.

² 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.

³ 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.



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

As a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative, 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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