



December 2020 | Laura M. Sellers

# Spotlight on Intentions to Emigrate in Latin America and the Caribbean

*The average rate of intention to emigrate increased in recent years in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region*

## In most LAC countries, nearly one in four intends to live or work abroad

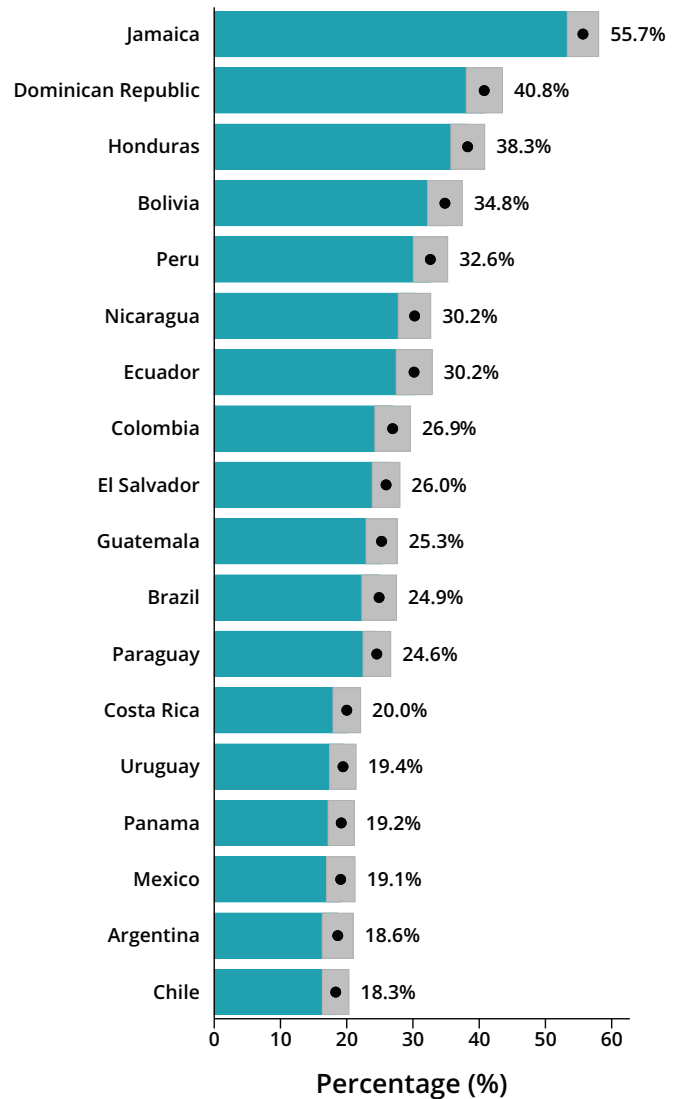
Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer has measured people’s intention to live or work abroad by asking the following question:

### Q14. Do you have any intention of going to live or work in another country in the next three years?

In the 2018/19 round, this question was included in surveys in 18 LAC countries. The response options are “yes” or “no.” Here we report on the percentage of people who responded affirmatively.

The country with the highest percentage of people who report the intention to live or work abroad in 2018/19 is Jamaica (55.7%), while Chile (18.3%) has the lowest percentage. In most countries, about a quarter or more intend to live or work abroad. On average across the region, 28.0% report having the intention to emigrate in the next three years.

Intention to Emigrate, 2018/19



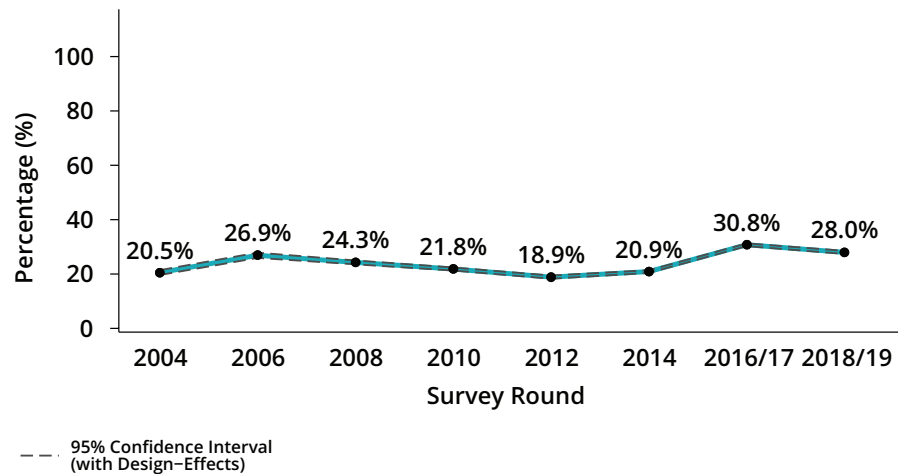
95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

## Intentions to emigrate have increased since 2014

On average across the region, the percentage of people with intentions to emigrate remained relatively steady between 2004 and 2014. Over this period, anywhere from about one in five to one in four has indicated a desire to live or work abroad over the subsequent three years. After reaching an all-time high of 30.8% in the 2016/17 round, 28.0% of those surveyed in the average Latin American country within the 2018/19 round expressed the intention to emigrate.

**Intention to Emigrate in the LAC Region, 2004–2018/19**

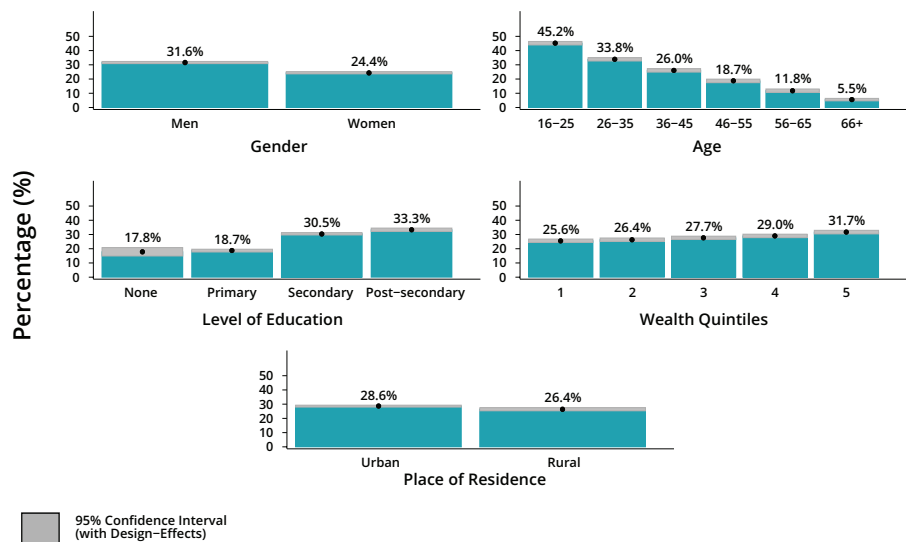


Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2004–2018/19; GM1.0

## Intentions to emigrate are higher among those who are men, young, educated, wealthy, and live in urban areas

What characteristics of individuals predict an intention to live or work in another country in the next three years? On average, men are more likely than women to express intentions to emigrate (31.6% and 24.4%, respectively). There is a steep decline in emigration intention by age cohort, with 45.2% of the youngest respondents expressing intentions to live or work abroad compared to 5.5% among the oldest respondents. Those with post-secondary education are more likely to express an intent to emigrate: the rate for this group is 33.3, a level that is about 15 percentage points higher than those with no education (17.8%). As wealth increases, so do emigration intentions. Finally, urban residents are slightly more likely than rural residents to have intentions to emigrate (28.6% and 26.4%, respectively).

**Intention to Emigrate in the LAC Region, 2018/19**



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

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