

20
23

LAPOP's
AmericasBarometer
takes the

Pulse of Democracy in Belize

REPORT EDITORS

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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AmericasBarometer
Barómetro de las Américas

Our Mission

LAPOP Lab is a center for excellence in international survey research. Located at Vanderbilt University, our mission is to:

- Produce high-quality public opinion data
- Develop and implement cutting-edge methods
- Build capacity in survey research and analysis
- Generate and disseminate policy-relevant research

The lab is run by experts in survey methodology who innovate approaches to public opinion research. The team is dedicated to collaboration and pedagogy. The lab's work facilitates evidence-based dialogue and policy decisions about a broad range of issues related to democratic governance.

A Letter from USAID

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is a proud supporter of the AmericasBarometer, an award-winning project that captures the voice of the people of the Americas. Drawing upon survey data from over 34 nations from North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean, the AmericasBarometer informs discussions over the quality and strength of democracy in the region.

Since 2004, the AmericasBarometer measures attitudes, evaluations, experiences, and behavior in the Americas using national probability samples of voting-age adults. Survey topics include the economy, rule of law, state capacity, trust in institutions, individual values, corruption, security, and more.

USAID relies on the AmericasBarometer to inform strategy development, guide program design, and evaluate the contexts in which we work. The AmericasBarometer alerts policymakers and international assistance agencies to key challenges. Importantly, the project provides citizens with information about democratic values and experiences in their country, over time, and in comparison to other countries.

Chantal Agarwal
Agreement Officer's Representative
Democracy Human Rights and Governance Team
Office of Regional Sustainable Development
Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean
United States Agency for International Development

While the AmericasBarometer is coordinated by LAPOP Lab at Vanderbilt University, it is a collaborative international project. LAPOP consults with researchers across the Americas, local survey teams, USAID, and other project supporters at each stage. These rich discussions increase the relevance and validity of questionnaires; improve sample designs; build and maintain state-of-the-art quality control protocols; and support the development and dissemination of data and reports. As a collaborative project, the AmericasBarometer also builds capacity in public opinion research via knowledge transfers to local teams, student participation in the project, and frequent workshops.

USAID has been the largest supporter of the surveys that form the core of the AmericasBarometer. In addition, each round of the project is supported by individuals and institutions. USAID is grateful to that network of supporters, the LAPOP team, their outstanding former and current students, the many experts and institutions across the region that contribute to and engage with the project, the local fieldwork teams, and all those who took the time to respond to the survey.



LAPOP

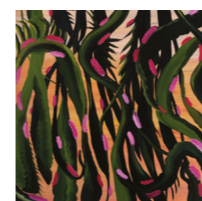
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UNDERSTANDING THE FIGURES IN THIS REPORT

AmericasBarometer data are based on national samples of respondents drawn from each country; naturally, all samples produce results that contain a margin of error. It is important for the reader to understand that each data point (for example, a country's proportion of citizens who support democracy) has a confidence interval, expressed in terms of a range surrounding that point. Many graphs in this study show a 95% confidence interval that takes into account this sampling variability. When two estimated points have confidence intervals that overlap to a large degree, the difference between the two values is typically not statistically significant; conversely, where two confidence intervals do not overlap, the reader can be confident that those differences are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Estimates for the 2023 AmericasBarometer are based on weighted data where applicable. Due to sampling discrepancies, calibration weights are generated for national surveys in Ecuador, Trinidad & Tobago, The Bahamas, and Brazil by strata based on population distributions for urban/rural population, gender, and age. Weights for Haiti and Nicaragua (telephone surveys) are calculated by estimating baseline probabilities adjusted for eligibility and non-response, then calibrated to the distributions of gender, education, age, and region in the most recent previous face-to-face AmericasBarometer country surveys. Cross-time and cross-country weights are standardized so that each country/year has the same effective sample size. Data for this report are based on the pre-release dataset; analysts may find small differences in point estimates when using publicly released datasets due to ongoing data cleaning and quality control.



COVER ART
'Plagas de jardín' [Garden plagues]
50 x 52 cm, oil on paper, 2020, by Sylvia Fernández

Sylvia Fernández (Lima, 1978) graduated with a gold medal in Fine Arts from Corriente Alterna, in Lima, Peru, in 2002. Her painting explores the abstract boundaries of the mind and body and its relationship with nature, time and memory. <https://www.sylvia-fernandez.com>

Sylvia is represented by Galería del Paseo
Founded in 1998 in Montevideo, Uruguay—and present as well in Lima, Peru, since 2003—Galería del Paseo promotes young Latin-American artists in the field of contemporary arts. <https://www.galeriadelpaseo.com>

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Introduction

Mariana Rodríguez¹ and Valerie Schweizer-Robinson²

This report explores three key aspects of Belizean society: democracy, system support and trust in institutions, and migration. Using data from the 2023 AmericasBarometer survey, we examine the contrasting landscape of high expert assessments of democracy alongside public uncertainty. While most Belizeans support democracy as a form of government, pressing issues such as political corruption, concerns about freedom of expression, and hope for the future must be addressed to restore faith in democracy to levels seen over a decade ago.

The first chapter analyzes Belizeans' support for and satisfaction with democracy. Expert assessments and robust voter turnout suggest a healthy democracy; however, AmericasBarometer data reveal a more nuanced reality. Over half of Belizeans (57%) support democracy in the abstract—similar to the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) regional average—but this reflects a decline from a decade ago. Satisfaction with democracy has similarly waned, with about two in five (42%) reporting satisfaction with its functioning. This decline is mirrored by heightened perceptions of restricted freedom of expression and widespread political corruption. Notably, those who think all politicians are involved in corruption tend to be less supportive of and satisfied with democracy.

At the same time, Belizeans' tolerance for military coups during periods of high crime and corruption has remained stable in the past decade. Furthermore, their tolerance for executive coups and the dissolution of the Supreme Court aligns closely with the LAC region average. Despite Belizeans' dissatisfaction with how democracy functions, they would not tolerate undemocratic actions.

The second chapter examines system support and institutional trust in Belize. A similar pattern emerges: while Belizeans are supportive of the political system in principle, fewer think the system is working. Over half respect political institutions (58%) and think people should support the political system

¹ Mariana Rodríguez is the Director of Research and Engagement with LAPOP Lab.

² Valerie Schweizer-Robinson is a Statistician with LAPOP Lab.

(54%); however, only about one-third believe the courts guarantee a fair trial (35%) or that their basic rights are protected (34%). Since 2014, all measures of system support have increased in Belize, though few have returned to levels seen in the previous decade. Trust in various institutions is particularly low, especially regarding political actors; only one-third (32%) of Belizeans express trust in the Prime Minister, and one-fourth (24%) in political parties.

Two critical predictors of system support and institutional trust emerge: executive approval and perceptions of corruption among public officials. Those who are more approving of the executive are more likely to support the political system and trust its institutions, while perceptions of corruption are associated with lower system support and institutional trust.

The chapter concludes with a focus on a key tenet of democracy—elections. Trust in elections has slightly recovered, with two in five Belizeans (42%) expressing confidence, significantly surpassing the LAC regional average in 2023. However, doubts persist regarding the accurate counting of votes and the secrecy of ballots. These trends again highlight the paradox of Belizeans' faith in democracy: while trust in elections is relatively high compared to the region and has shown improvement, many remain skeptical about the fairness of the electoral process.

The final chapter explores public opinion on migration from and to Belize. Over one

in five Belizeans (22%) intend to emigrate in 2023, a notably lower level than the one in three (33%) average for the LAC region. Given Belizeans' strong commitment to the political system, it is understandable that so few want to leave. Among those intending to emigrate, over two in five (45%) say it is "very likely" they will do so, yet few have taken concrete action. Economic opportunities are the primary motivation for over three-quarters of those considering emigration.

As Belize primarily receives migrants rather than sending them, the latter half of the chapter examines Belizeans' attitudes toward immigrants. In general, Belizeans hold a positive view of immigrants, with most believing the arrival of Central American immigrants is justified due to their home country's political, security, and economic challenges. A majority would not mind having an immigrant neighbor and support immigrants' access to social services such as health care and education. However, levels of support vary significantly depending on the type of migrant; Belizeans are less bothered by a Spanish neighbor compared to an "immigrant" or a Central American neighbor, and fewer agree with providing Central Americans access to the same services as "immigrants" or Spaniards.

A negative outlook on the future is associated with more negative views of immigrants. Belizeans who lack hope for the future are less likely to justify the arrival of immigrants and less supportive of social services, work permits, and citizenship for them. This suggests that Belizeans are more open to immigrants during prosperous times but more skeptical when the future appears uncertain.

The findings of this report underscore Belizeans' commitment to democracy, despite perceived corruption, little trust in political actors, and uncertainty of free and fair elections. While many Belizeans express dissatisfaction with how democracy functions and perceive limited freedom of expression, there remains strong support for the system and little tolerance for undemocratic actions such as coups. This sentiment is reflected in Belize's relatively low levels of emigration intentions—few wish to leave Belize, and those who do primarily seek better economic opportunities rather than to escape a problematic political system. Overall, while Belizeans support democracy, institutions, and immigrants, AmericasBarometer data reveal a nuanced understanding of the pulse of democracy in Belize.

Belizeans show a strong commitment to democracy, despite dissatisfaction with its functioning, widespread perceptions of corruption, and low trust in political institutions. They remain supportive of the political system in principle, resist undemocratic actions, and hold a relatively positive view of immigrants. AmericasBarometer data highlight a nuanced balance between faith in democratic ideals and skepticism of institutional performance.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,100
interviewers

2023
AMERICASBAROMETER

41,524
interviews

180
core questions included in
most countries

415
country-specific questions

26
COUNTRIES

- Argentina
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Suriname
- The Bahamas
- Trinidad & Tobago
- United States
- Uruguay

006

007

INTERVIEWER TRAINING

24
local firm
trainings

420
training
hours

CAPACITY BUILDING IN SURVEY RESEARCH IN 2023

33 events

600+ hours

1,390 attendees

THE AMERICASBAROMETER SERIES

10 waves of
surveys across
20 years

34 countries

385,000+
interviews

Democracy

Mariana Rodríguez and Valerie Schweizer-Robinson

Belize, a relatively young democracy, gained independence in 1981 and held its first national election in 1984.¹ Since then, it has made strides by organizing free and fair elections and upholding freedom of speech, according to Freedom House.² Yet, public opinion data from the 2023 AmericasBarometer in Belize reveal a more complex reality: over half say there is little freedom of expression, and the country has continued to grapple with corruption.³ Although a majority of Belizeans support democracy, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the current functioning of democracy in the country.

This chapter explores Belizeans' support for democracy, focusing on how perceptions of corruption and freedom of expression shape democratic attitudes and beliefs. It also examines Belizeans' tolerance for undemocratic actions.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Support for and satisfaction with democracy reached record lows in 2023 (57% and 42%, respectively).
- Over three in four (78%) believe corruption is widespread among public officials.
- Those who believe all politicians are corrupt have lower support for and satisfaction with democracy.
- More than half (54%) believe there is “very little” freedom of expression in 2023.
- Perceived restrictions on the freedom of expression are associated with lower levels of satisfaction with democracy.
- Tolerance for military coups under conditions of high crime (47%) and corruption (43%) has remained stable.
- Tolerance for an executive coup and dissolving the Supreme Court reached a record high in 2023 (25% and 38%, respectively).

SUPPORT FOR AND SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY CONTINUE TO DECLINE

To understand public opinion on democracy, it is essential to understand whether Belizeans support the concept of democracy in the abstract and how satisfied they are with how this form of government is working in the country. The AmericasBarometer measures support for and satisfaction with democracy with the following questions:

*Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?*⁴

In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Belize?

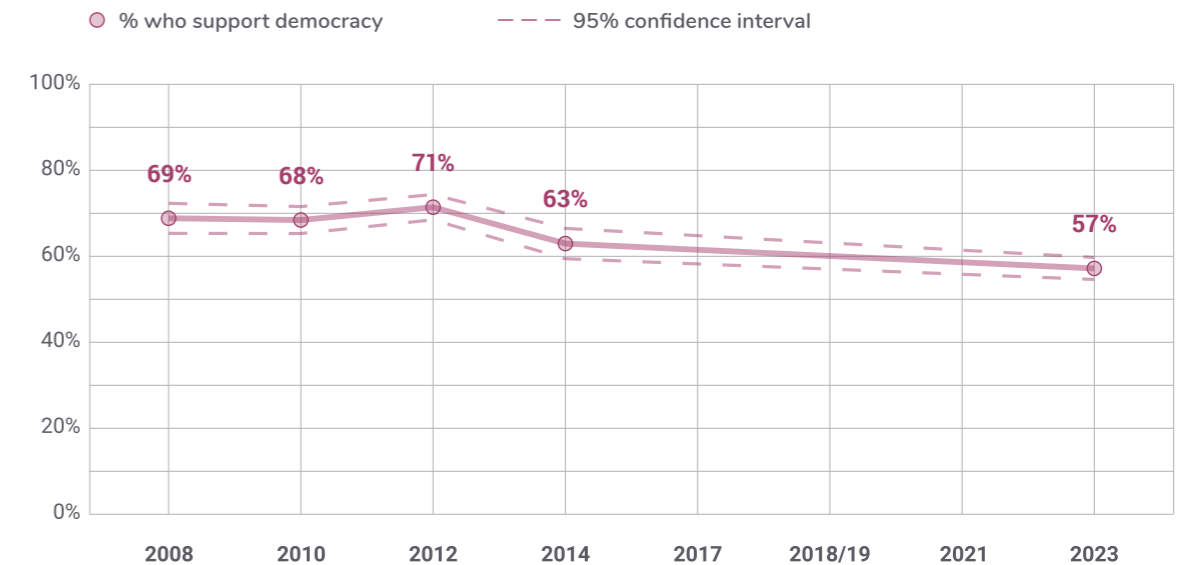
Though most Belizeans support democracy (57%) in 2023, this percentage represents a continued decline since

2012 and marks a record low (Figure 1.1). Support for democracy was highest in 2012 when the country was recognized for having “exemplary practice” for its general election processes.⁵ In 2020, Belize elected its first new Prime Minister in over a decade, Johnny Briceño. This switch from a conservative to a progressive head of government, as well as a notable level of voter turnout,⁶ signaled that Belizeans were eager for a change of pace in their government. In 2023, those who perceive Prime Minister Briceño as doing a “very good” job as Prime Minister are over 20 percentage points more likely to support democracy than those who think he is doing a “very bad” job.⁷

Belize is culturally similar to both Central America and the Caribbean, so in this report, we point out relevant comparisons between Belize and countries from both of these regions. Belize has significantly higher support for democracy than direct neighbor Guatemala and Caribbean countries like Jamaica, Haiti, and Suriname (Figure 1.2).

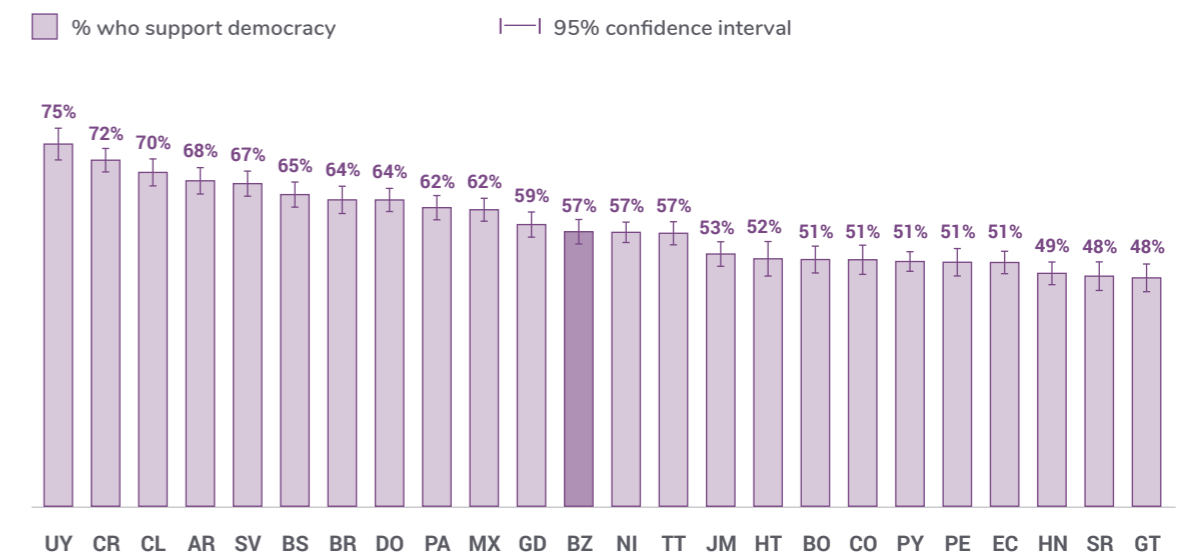
Though most Belizeans support democracy (57%) in 2023, this percentage represents a continued decline since 2012 and marks a record low in the AmericasBarometer series in the country.

Figure 1.1 Though most support democracy, preference for this form of government in Belize continues to decline



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

Figure 1.2 Belize ranks close to the regional average in support for democracy in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

42%
are satisfied with how democracy functions in Belize.

Like support for democracy, satisfaction with democracy is also in decline in Belize (Figure 1.3). At two in five (42%), satisfaction with how democracy is currently working reached its lowest-recorded level in the 2023 AmericasBarometer in Belize. Satisfaction with democracy in Belize is also sensitive to opinions on the government. Similar to support for democracy, those who think the Prime Minister is doing a “good” job have significantly higher satisfaction than those who think the executive is doing a “neutral” or “bad” job.

As seen with regional comparisons of support for democracy, Belize also displays levels of satisfaction with democracy similar to the regional average (40%). Belize has a higher level of satisfaction than Haiti, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, and Honduras but significantly lower satisfaction than the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and El Salvador (Figure 1.4).

PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION ARE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING DECLINING VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY

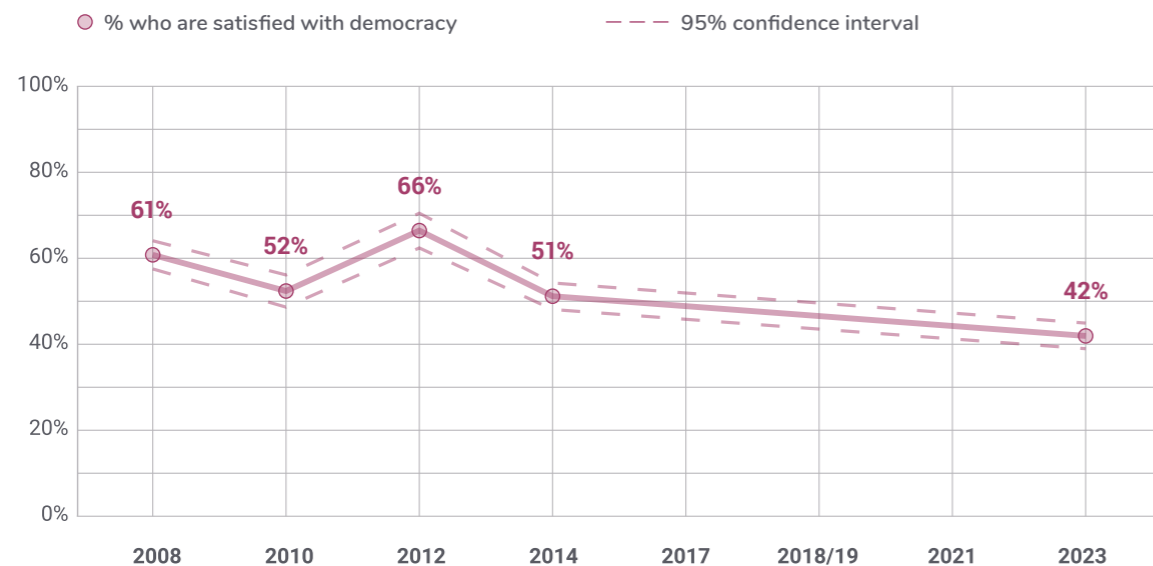
To measure perceptions of corruption, the AmericasBarometer asked the following questions:

Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is: 1) Very common 2) Common 3) Uncommon 4) Very uncommon

Thinking of the politicians of Belize... how many of them do you believe are involved in corruption? 1) None 2) Less than half of them 3) Half of them 4) More than half of them 5) All

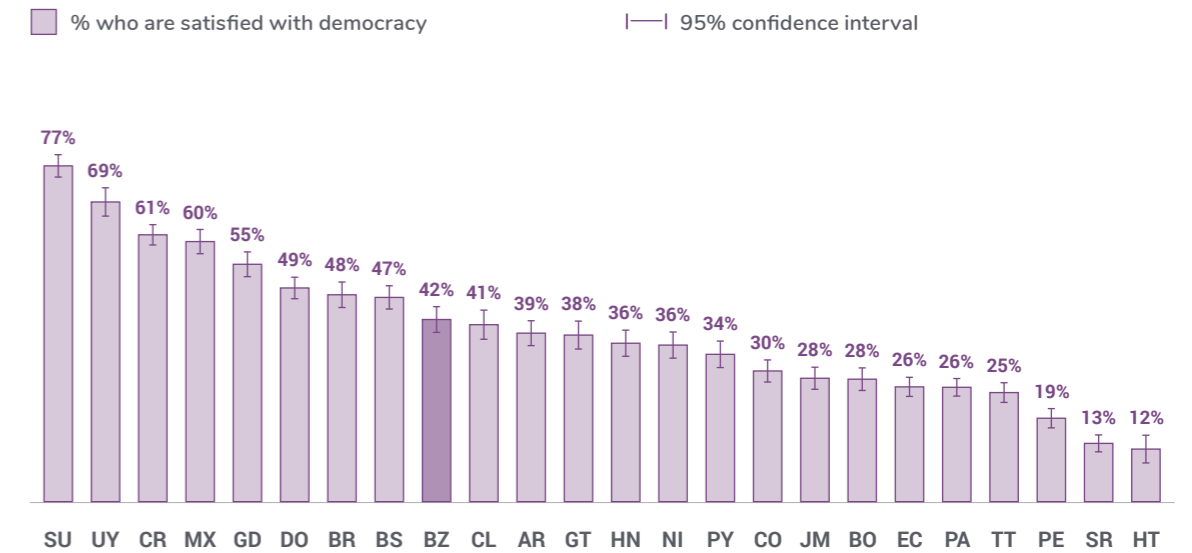
Over three in four (78%) think corruption is pervasive among public officials, a rate that has remained relatively stable since 2008 (Figure 1.5). Those with secondary

Figure 1.3 Satisfaction with democracy in Belize also continued to decrease, reaching a record low



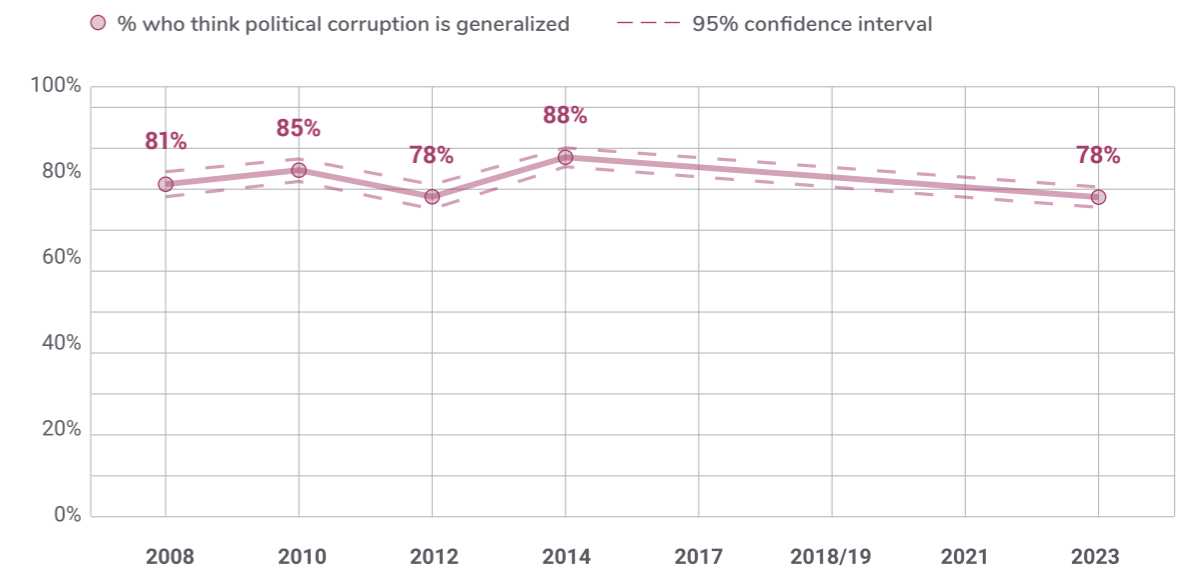
Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

Figure 1.4 Belize ranks similar to the region average on satisfaction with democracy at over two in five



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

Figure 1.5 Since 2008, a large majority of Belizeans believe that political corruption is widespread



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

34%
of those who think all politicians are corrupt are satisfied with democracy.

education or higher and those with higher wealth are significantly more likely to believe that corruption among public officials is widespread compared to their less educated and less wealthy counterparts. Belize is significantly higher than the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region average on this perception of corruption, ranking fourth out of 19 countries in 2023.

When asked specifically how many politicians they think are involved in corruption, over three in five (64%) think more than half or all politicians are corrupt. This percentage matches the regional average but is significantly lower than in Guatemala (76%). Highly educated individuals are more likely to say that most politicians are involved in corruption compared to those who are less educated. Executive approval

plays a role in Belizeans' opinions, as perceiving that the Prime Minister is doing a "bad" or "very bad" job is also associated with believing most politicians are corrupt. We do not find robust evidence that opinions on freedom of expression are linked with perceptions of political corruption.

In line with research that indicates that corruption perceptions are connected to perceptions of democracy,⁸ the data show that fewer Belizeans who perceive that all politicians are corrupt support democracy compared to those who perceive lower levels of corruption (Figure 1.6).⁹ Similarly, only one-third of Belizeans who think that *most or all* politicians are corrupt (36% and 34%, respectively) are satisfied with democracy, also significantly lower than those who say that less than half to no

politicians are corrupt.¹⁰ These findings indicate a clear connection between perceptions of widespread corruption in Belize and diminishing faith in democratic governance.

their actual perceptions of reality, even as expert assessments suggest otherwise.

Belizeans were asked the following question regarding freedom of expression:

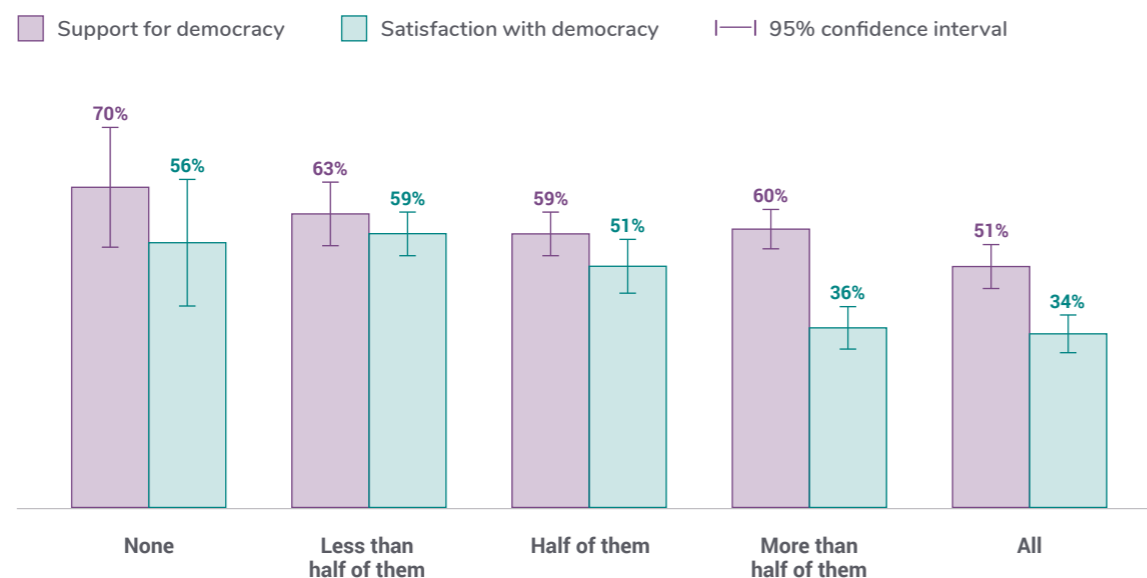
Do you think that now in the country we have very little, enough or too much freedom to express political views without fear?

PERCEIVED RESTRICTIONS ON EXPRESSION ALSO ERODE SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY

Freedom House gives Belize a perfect score on freedom of expression in 2023, noting that Belizeans have the freedom to express their political opinions without fear.¹¹ However, public opinion data from the AmericasBarometer 2023 contradict this assessment as a slight majority say the country lacks freedom of expression. This contrast invites us to examine the lived experiences of Belizeans, uncovering a gap between the concept of freedom and

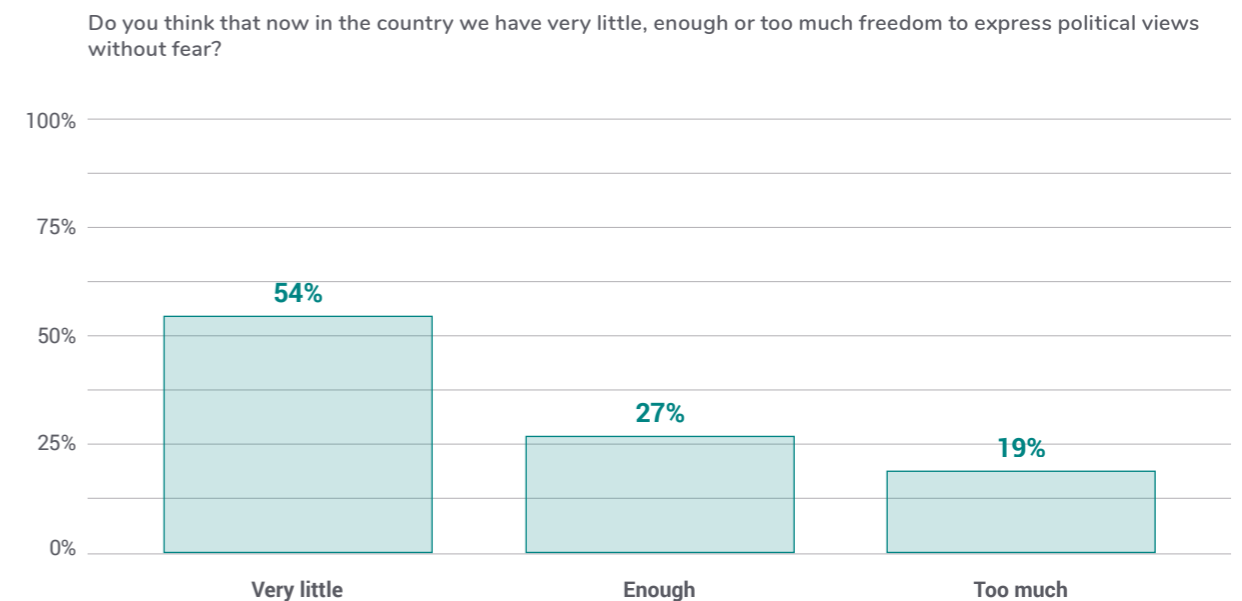
Over half of Belizeans (54%) believe there is "very little" freedom to express political views without fear in 2023 (Figure 1.7). This outlook on freedom of expression is similar to the regional average (56%) but is significantly lower than neighboring Guatemala (76%). Younger Belizeans, those age 18 to 35, are more likely to say there is "very little" freedom compared to older Belizeans aged 66 and older (60-62% versus 36%).

Figure 1.6 Belizeans who perceive corruption among all politicians are less supportive of and satisfied with democracy



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Figure 1.7 More than half of Belizeans think there is "very little" freedom of expression in the country



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

As seen in **Figure 1.8**, among those who believe there is “very little” freedom of political expression, 36% express satisfaction with democracy. This suggests that feeling restricted in political expression is associated with lower levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, 54% of respondents who think there is “enough” freedom are satisfied with democracy, indicating that perceptions of adequate political expression correlate with higher democratic satisfaction. Interestingly, among those who perceive “too much” freedom of expression, satisfaction with democracy drops to 41%, suggesting that perceived excessive freedom may also contribute to dissatisfaction.

These results highlight the importance of perceptions of political freedoms in

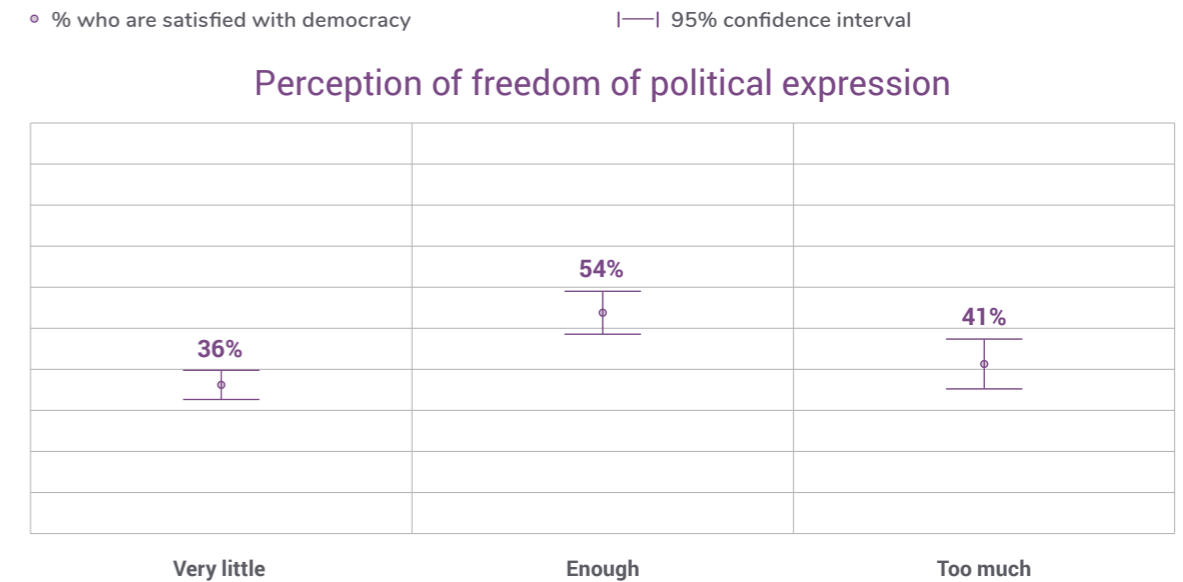
shaping public opinion toward democratic satisfaction. Those who feel they have enough room to express themselves politically are most satisfied, while both extremes—either too little or too much freedom—are associated with lower satisfaction.

Further analysis of perceptions of freedom of expression in Belize also reveal significant political divides.¹² When we explore whether political party is associated with these perceptions, we find that those in the United Democratic Party (UDP) and People’s United Party (PUP) parties believe there is “very little” freedom at a similar rate (51% vs. 47%).¹³

Notably, among those who do not identify with a political party—a substantial 70% of the population—over half (57%)

Belizeans who feel they have enough freedom to express themselves politically are most satisfied with democracy, while both extremes—either too little or too much freedom—are associated with lower satisfaction.

Figure 1.8 Those who think there is an adequate level of freedom of expression in Belize are more satisfied with democracy



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

think there is “very little” freedom of expression, which is significantly higher than among those who do identify with a party. This suggests a connection between feeling inadequately represented by the available party options and feeling unable to express one’s true political beliefs.

TOLERANCE FOR MILITARY COUPS REMAINS STEADY WHILE TOLERANCE FOR EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL COUPS IS ON THE RISE

Declining satisfaction with democracy, along with perceptions of widespread corruption and restricted political freedoms, may signal a potential openness among Belizeans to undemocratic actions.¹⁴ To explore

how likely Belizeans are to break with democratic norms, the 2023 AmericasBarometer asked the following questions:

Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a military coup. In your opinion would a military coup be justified...

When there is a lot of crime?

When there is a lot of corruption?

Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the prime minister of the country to close the National Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate) and govern without the National Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate)?

Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the prime minister of the country to dissolve the Supreme Court and govern without the Supreme Court?

47%

would justify a coup when there is a lot of crime.

Tolerance for a military coup during times of high crime remains stable (47%) compared to a decade ago and has yet to return to the elevated levels seen in 2008 and 2010 (Figure 1.9). A similar percentage of Belizeans would justify a coup (43%) when there is high corruption. Tolerance for a coup under these circumstances was significantly higher in 2008 and 2010 and has not returned to these elevated levels. Belizeans report similar levels of tolerance for coups as the regional averages in 2023 (43% during high crime and 38% during high corruption).

25%

would justify the closing of the National Assembly by a prime minister.

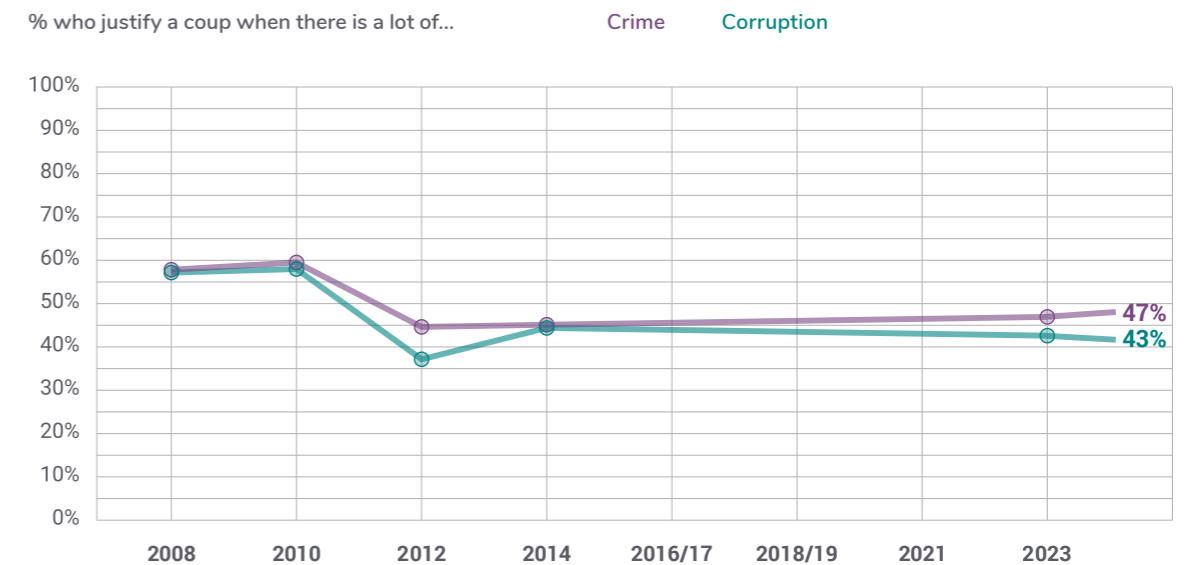
Age and executive performance evaluations play a key factor in Belizeans' willingness to justify coups. Younger adults (age 18 to 25) would tolerate a coup due to high crime or corruption at a higher rate than their older counterparts, a trend that is common in the region.¹⁵

Regarding coups during times of high crime, urban residents, individuals with lower levels of wealth, and those with positive evaluations of the prime minister's performance are more likely to justify such actions compared to their counterparts.

Tolerance for a prime minister closing the National Assembly during difficult times reached a record high in 2023, with one in four Belizeans (25%) saying it is justified (Figure 1.10). This represents a threefold increase from 2012. Justification for a prime minister dissolving the Supreme Court follows a similar pattern, albeit an even greater surge—increasing over sevenfold to a record high for Belize at almost two in five (38%). Belize has a similar level of tolerance for executive coups as the 2023 LAC average (24%). Belizeans justify dissolving the Supreme Court at a higher level than the region average in 2023 (32%).

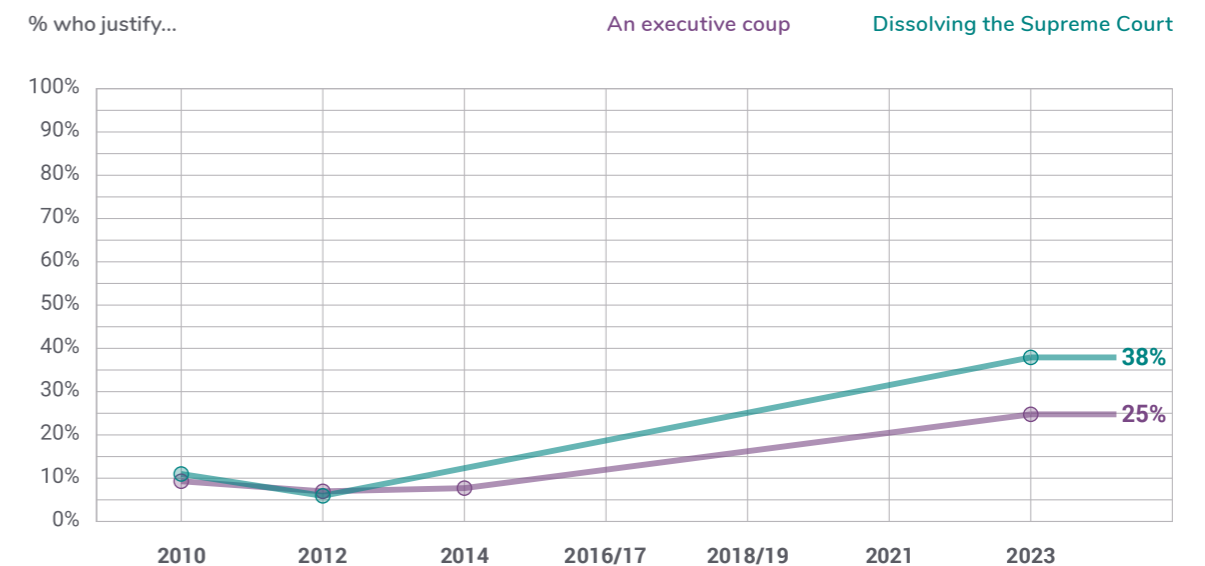
Belizeans with low levels of wealth and education express higher tolerance for an executive coup than their wealthier, more educated counterparts. On the other hand, age and level of education seem to shape Belizeans' opinions about the dissolution of the Supreme Court. Young individuals (18-25 years) and those with primary or secondary levels of education would tolerate this action at a significantly higher rate than all other age and education groups. Outside of sociodemographic indicators, only one other variable is related to tolerance of executive and judicial coups: executive approval. Those who think the prime minister is doing a "good" or "very good" job are significantly more likely to justify the closing of Congress of the Supreme Court than those who give the prime minister negative performance evaluations.

Figure 1.9 Tolerance of coups during high crime and high corruption remains stable above two in five



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

Figure 1.10 Tolerance of an executive coup and dissolving the Supreme Court reached their highest-ever levels in Belize in 2023



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2010-2023

Conclusion

Belizeans display a complex relationship with democracy in 2023. Although AmericasBarometer data show that Belizeans' support for and satisfaction with democracy remain in line with regional averages, both measures have steadily declined, reaching record lows.

The data also show that this waning confidence in democracy is linked to perceptions of widespread corruption and restrictions on freedom of expression. While a large majority of Belizeans believe corruption among public officials is widespread, many Belizeans feel that they lack the freedom to express political views without fear.

At the same time, tolerance for undemocratic actions like executive and judicial coups is rising, reflecting growing frustrations with the political system. Younger Belizeans, those with lower wealth and education, and supporters of the Prime Minister are more likely to justify these actions. However, this increasing tolerance does not seem to directly reflect a rejection of democracy itself; rather, it suggests dissatisfaction with how democracy is functioning in practice, particularly in the face of corruption and governance challenges.

While Belizeans still broadly support democracy, their declining satisfaction and growing tolerance for undemocratic measures signal a critical need for reforms that address corruption and protect freedom of expression. These efforts will be essential in revitalizing commitment to democracy and preventing further erosion of democratic norms in Belize.

Notes

- 1 BBC News 2022.
- 2 Freedom House 2023.
- 3 Gentle 2022 In 2022, Belize's Assistant Commissioner of Police, Marco Vidal, stepped down after his subordinates were arrested for drug plane landings (Gentle 2022). That same year, leading members of both the United Democratic Party (UDP) and People's United Party (PUP) political parties were implicated in corruption (Freedom House 2023).
- 4 Responses were given on a 1 = "strongly disagree to 7 = "strongly agree" scale. The analyses in this report focus on the percentage of Belizeans who responded 5-7.
- 5 OAS 2012.
- 6 Dyde 2021.
- 7 Any results in this chapter that identify a relationship between dependent variables of interest with socioeconomic and demographic variables are statistically significant in a t-test or chi-square test and in a multivariate regression model including gender, age, urban/rural residence, wealth, and education. Results that discuss the relationship between dependent variables and experiential or attitudinal variables, as mentioned here, are also statistically significant when controlling for these demographic variables, plus executive job approval, perception of corruption among politicians, crime victimization, and perception of political expression.
- 8 Seligson 2006; The Conversation 2019.
- 9 Results from multivariate regression analyses show that individuals who have high levels of wealth and education, have been victims of crime, or have positive evaluations of the executive's performance are also more likely to support democracy than their counterparts.
- 10 A perceived lack of freedom of expression and negative evaluations of the executive's performance are also associated with lower satisfaction with democracy.
- 11 Freedom House 2023.
- 12 Nowottny 2007.
- 13 Most (67%) did not identify with a political party in 2023. The only parties we can observe on this variable with any confidence are the PUP and UDP parties. Half (51%) of those who identify with the PUP party and 47% who identify as UDP party believe there is "very little" freedom of political expression. These two groups are not significantly different from each other.
- 14 Seligson 2006; Booth and Seligson 2009.
- 15 Cassell et al. 2018.

Belief that Men are Better Political Leaders than Women

Luis Felipe Nino¹

More than one in four Belizeans think men are better political leaders than women.

Among LAC countries, Belize has relatively low levels of women's representation in its national legislature. In 2023, only 15.6% of seats were held by women—ranking Belize just above Haiti (2.5%), Saint Lucia (11.1%), and Antigua and Barbuda (11.1%).² However, Belize demonstrates more encouraging of progress at the city council level, where in 2021 women held 36.2% elected city positions, surpassing the LAC regional average of 32.7%.³

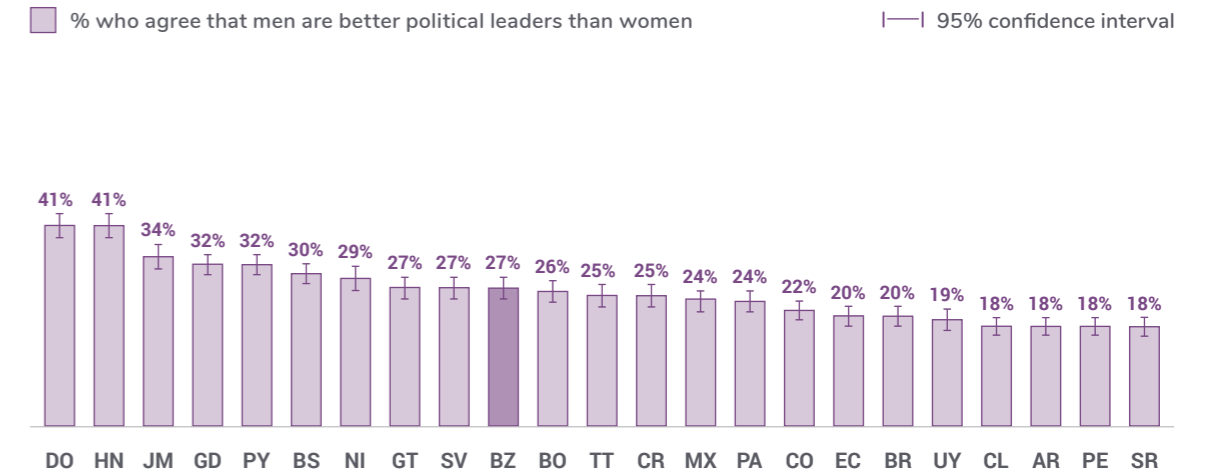
Since 2008, the AmericasBarometer has measured the belief that men are better

political leaders than women using the following question:

Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

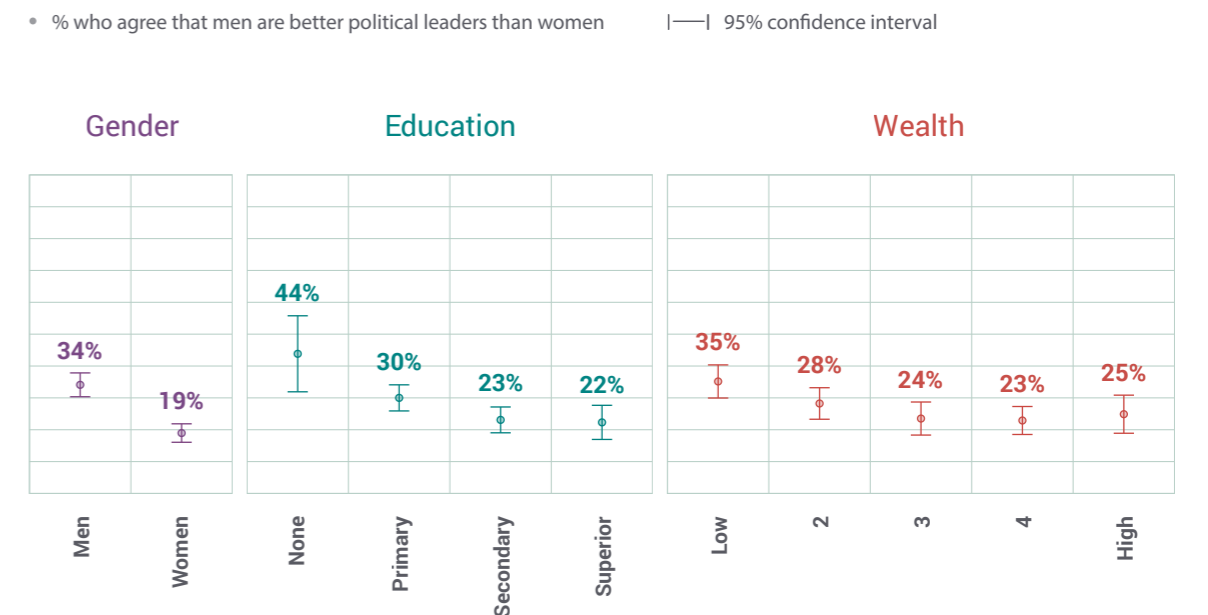
Here, I code responses into a binary variable to estimate the proportion of Belizeans who agree that men make better political leaders.⁴ Across the LAC region, an average of 26% of the population agrees that men are better political

Belize ranks near the regional average in agreement that men are better political leaders than women



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

Men, those with lower education, and those with less wealth are more likely to believe that men are better political leaders



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

leaders than women. The Dominican Republic and Honduras have the highest levels of agreement at 41%, while Chile, Argentina, Peru, and Suriname share the lowest at 18%. In Belize, just over one in four (27%) agree that men are better political leaders than women.

What characteristics predict the belief that men are better political leaders than women in Belize? On average, this belief is most common among men,⁵ those with

lower levels of education (with primary or no education), and individuals with less wealth. However, age and place of residence are not significant predictors.⁶

Gender equality in elected leadership remains a challenge across the LAC region, including Belize. While a notable 27% of Belizeans believe men are better political leaders than women, nearly three-quarters (73%) do not share this view.

Gender equality in elected leadership remains a challenge in Belize, as more than a quarter of citizens believe men are better political leaders than women.

Notes

- 1 Luis Felipe Nino is an undergraduate research assistant at LAPOP Lab. He is currently a second-year student of Political Science at Vanderbilt University.
- 2 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023.
- 3 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean 2021.
- 4 Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable by focusing on responses 1 = “strongly agree” and 2 = “agree”, and putting the rest (3 = “disagree” and 4 = “strongly disagree”) into a baseline category.
- 5 In Belize in 2023, there were not enough cases to report out on those who responded, “neither man nor woman” or “no response.” Since these categories are exclusive, I do not collapse categories. In Belize in 2023, no respondents identified as a gender other than man or woman and 0.01% gave no response.
- 6 I performed a logistic regression where the dependent variable is coded as 1 if a respondent agrees that men are better political leaders and 0 if not. I include sociodemographic predictors in the model-gender, age cohorts, wealth, place of residence and education.
- 7 Muñoz-Pogossian and Freidenberg 2020.

System Support and Trust in Institutions

Valerie Schweizer-Robinson

System support and institutional trust are fundamental to a stable democracy.¹ AmericasBarometer 2023 data, as highlighted in the *Pulse of Democracy*, show that higher levels of trust in institutions are associated with stronger support for democracy.² The same is true for Belize—those who support the political system and trust institutions tend to have more positive views of democracy.³ According to the World Justice Project, trust in law enforcement, the executive, and the judiciary in Belize increased in 2022.⁴ However, despite these positive trends, Belize continues to face significant challenges with government transparency, police brutality, and corruption.⁵ Understanding public opinion on system support and trust in institutions within this contrasting context is essential to gauge the pulse of democracy in Belize.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Over half of Belizeans respect their political system and think people should support it, but fewer have pride in it, think the courts guarantee a fair trial, and believe that basic rights are protected. All these system support measures improved in Belize from 2014 to 2023.
- Perceptions of corruption are related to lower levels of system support and institutional trust, while approval of the executive is connected to higher levels of system support and trust in institutions.
- Trust in elections increased slightly in 2023, reaching over two in five—higher than the regional average.
- In 2023, most Belizeans have doubts that votes are counted correctly and that ballots are secret.

WHILE SYSTEM SUPPORT HAS IMPROVED OVER THE LAST DECADE, MOST LACK CONFIDENCE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

54%

believe people should support the political system.

Democratic stability depends on strong public support for the political system.⁶ Therefore, to fully assess the strength of Belize’s democracy, it is essential to understand how the Belizean public feels about their political system. To examine public system support, the AmericasBarometer 2023 asked the following series of questions:

To what extent do you think the courts in Belize guarantee a fair trial?

To what extent do you respect the political institutions of Belize?

To what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of Belize?

To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of Belize?

To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of Belize?

34%

believe basic rights are protected.

Each of these questions was asked on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale. This chapter focuses on the percentage of those who responded 5 to 7. **Figure 2.1** shows that a majority of Belizeans respect political institutions (58%) and believe people should support the political system (54%). Significantly fewer, however, express pride in their political system (46%). Additionally, only one in three believes the courts guarantee a fair trial (35%) or that their basic rights are protected (34%). While all measures of system support increased between 2014 and 2023, none have yet

returned to the higher levels seen over a decade ago (**Figure 2.2**).

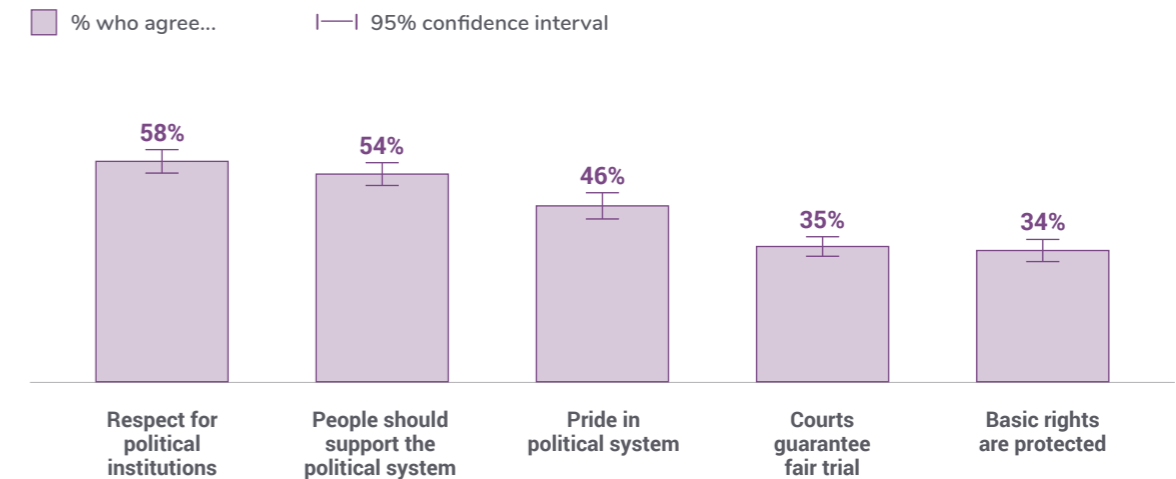
Wealth, education, and place of residence are significant predictors of system support. Those with the lowest level of wealth tend to have higher levels of belief that courts guarantee a fair trial and express greater respect for political institutions at a higher level compared to their wealthier counterparts. Similarly, Belizeans with no formal education or only primary education are more likely to believe that basic rights are protected, have pride in the political system, and believe people should support the political system than those who are more educated. Additionally, urban residents in Belize have more respect for, pride in, and belief in supporting the political system than those who live in rural areas.

The perception that the Prime Minister is doing a “good” or “very good” job is related to higher levels of system support, a trend that is consistent across all measures of system support.⁷ Perceptions of corruption, on the other hand, undermine system support. Belizeans who believe most or all politicians are corrupt exhibit lower levels of system support across all measures, except for their belief that the courts guarantee a fair trial.

MOST INSTITUTIONS LACK PUBLIC TRUST, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE DEFENSE FORCE

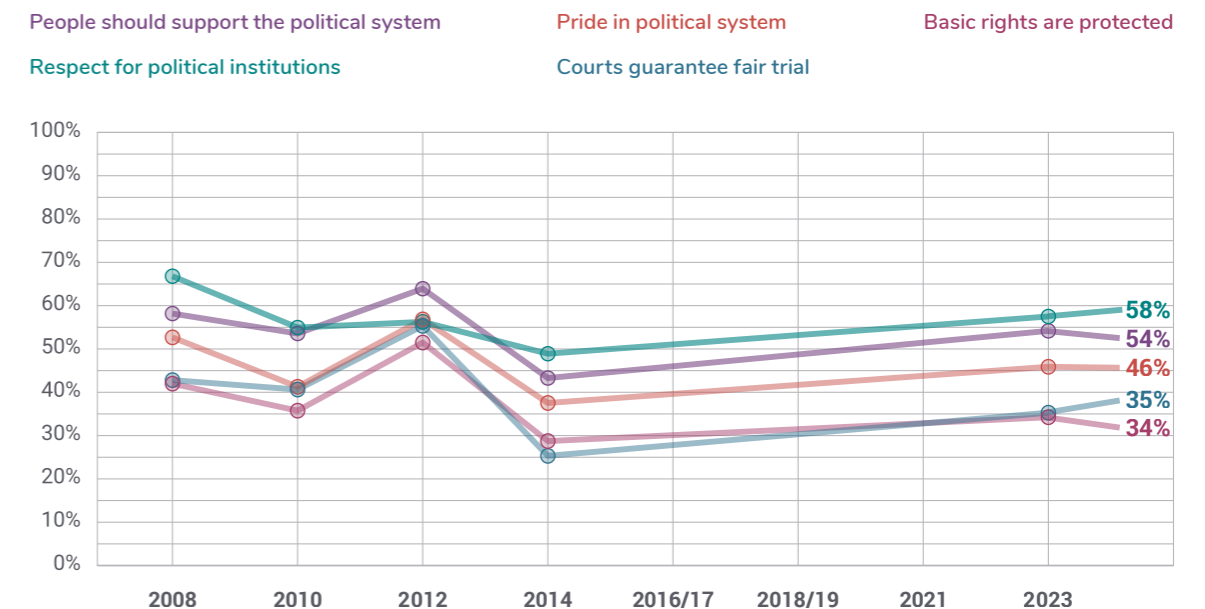
The previous chapter highlighted that Belizeans perceive politicians as corrupt and are increasingly dissatisfied with and less supportive of democracy. Lack of trust in institutions is closely linked to eroding opinions of democracy.⁸ By analyzing the AmericasBarometer measures of institutional trust, we can

Figure 2.1 In 2023, over half of Belizeans respect political institutions and believe that people should support the system



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Figure 2.2 All measures of system support in Belize have increased since 2014



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

better understand how Belizeans feel about their institutions.

Among the institutions examined in this chapter, Belizeans express the highest level of trust in the Defense Force, with over three in five indicating trust in 2023 (62%). Half (50%) trust the Supreme Court, while less than half express trust in the National Assembly or local government (Figure 2.3).

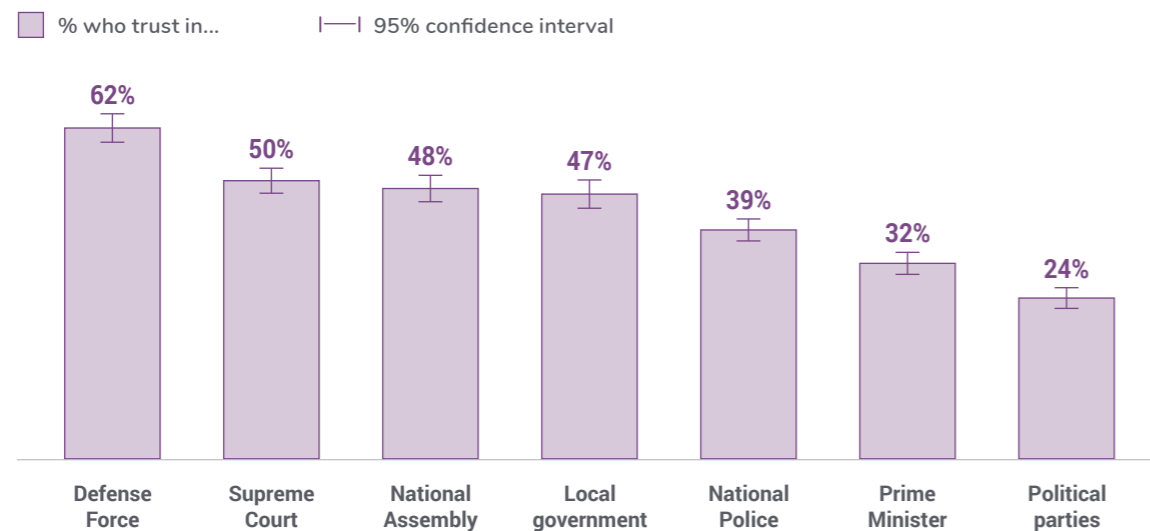
Police brutality remains a significant concern in Belize. In recent years, the Belize National Police have been accused of human rights abuses, including wounding and beating civilians, extortion, human trafficking, rape, and murder.⁹ In 2023, the United Nations conducted a human rights training program for the police department to address these issues.¹⁰ Despite this initiative, trust in the police remains low,

with only two in five (39%) expressing trust, though this represents a 10-percentage-point increase from 2014.

About a third (32%) trust the Prime Minister, a rate similar to 2014 but significantly lower than the 52% recorded in 2012. Belizeans exhibit the lowest level of trust in political parties, with about one in four (24%) expressing confidence. In line with this low level of trust, political parties are considered the most corrupt institution in the country.¹¹

As observed with system support, executive approval is associated with higher levels of trust in all assessed institutions. At the same time, believing that most or all politicians are corrupt is correlated with lower trust in institutions (except for the Defense Force).

Figure 2.3 Belizeans have the highest level of trust in the Defense Force and the lowest in political parties



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

MOST HAVE DOUBTS IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Belize exhibits a relatively high level of institutional trust compared to the LAC region; however, less than half of the population trusts key institutions like the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, and political parties. Given these levels of trust and a declining faith in democracy, it is important to understand how Belizeans perceive elections, a tenet of democratic systems.

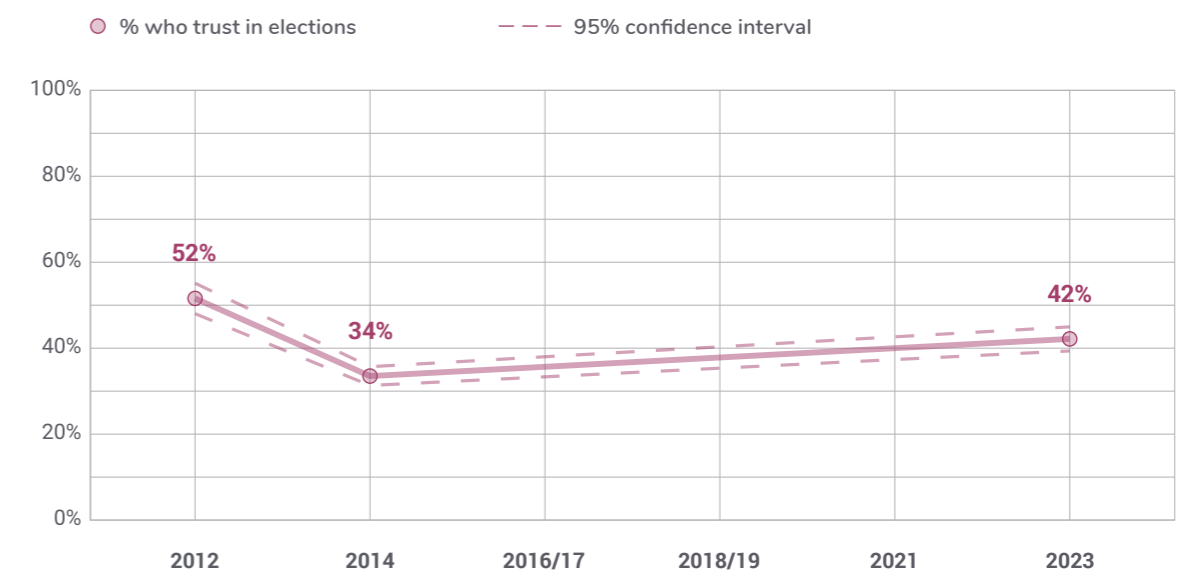
To assess this, the 2023 AmericasBarometer asked the following question:

To what extent do you trust elections in this country?

In 2023, about two in five (42%) Belizeans say they trust elections, reflecting an 8-point increase from 2014 (Figure 2.4). However, trust levels have not yet returned to the 2012 peak of 52%. Previous research has indicated a relationship between age and trust in elections.¹² In Belize, those 66 and older report trusting elections at a higher level than younger cohorts. Additionally, individuals who view the executive as performing well tend to have greater trust in elections, while those who think most politicians are corrupt report lower trust. As expected, higher trust in elections correlates with increased support for and satisfaction with democracy in Belize.

In comparison to the region in 2023, Belize's trust in elections exceeds the LAC average of 38% and ranks higher than Haiti,

Figure 2.4 Trust in elections recovered slightly in Belize in 2023, reaching over two in five



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2012-2023

42%
have trust
in elections
in Belize.

Guatemala, Jamaica, Honduras, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, and Nicaragua (Figure 2.5). However, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Grenada have higher trust in elections than Belize.

The most recent municipal elections in Belize took place in early March 2024, with a voter turnout of about 58%. While this turnout rate is consistent with recent years, it has yet to recover to the higher levels seen in 2012, which reached about 68%.¹³ In terms of parliamentary elections, Belize holds one of the highest levels of turnout in the LAC region, with over four in five voters participating in the 2020 elections.¹⁴

Despite high levels of turnout and greater trust in elections compared to the LAC region, more than half of Belizeans do not trust elections. To better understand public perceptions, the AmericasBarometer asks the following questions about electoral integrity:

Votes are counted correctly and fairly. Would you say it happens always, sometimes, or never?

Politicians can find out who each person voted for. Would you say it happens always, sometimes, or never?

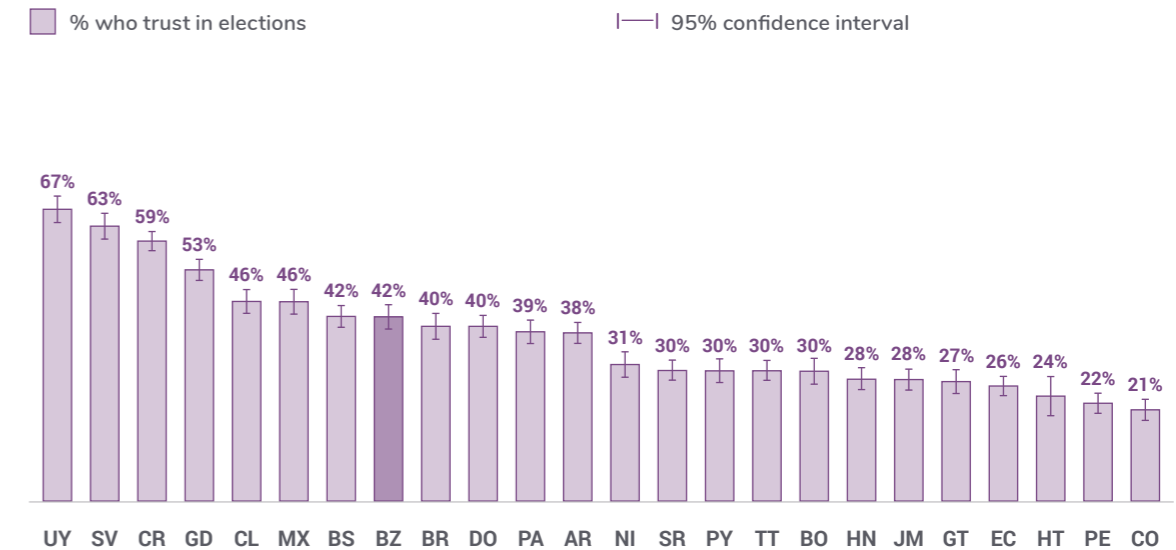
Doubts about vote counting and secrecy in Belize are evident, with over half (56%)

stating that votes are counted correctly and fairly “sometimes,” and less than a third (29%) believing this occurs “always” (Figure 2.6). Additionally, nearly half (47%) believe politicians can “sometimes” find out how individuals voted, while one in three Belizeans (33%) believe this is true “always.”

While fewer people Belizeans claim votes are “never” counted correctly compared to the LAC region average (19%), the belief that politicians can “always” find out who one voted for is higher than the regional average (28%). This suggests that, while perceptions of vote counting may be slightly more favorable than in the wider region, Belizeans are much more skeptical about ballot secrecy.

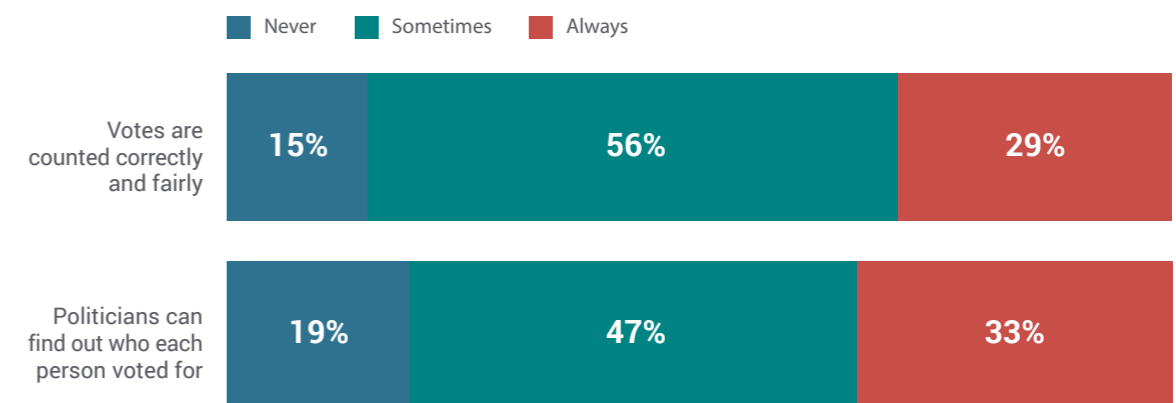
As with previous findings, Belizeans who perceive corruption among most politicians are more likely to say votes are never counted correctly. Executive approval is associated with the belief that votes are at least sometimes counted fairly. Moreover, those who believe votes are “sometimes” or “always” counted correctly report significantly higher support for and satisfaction with democracy than those who think this “never” happens. Conversely, those who think politicians can “always” find out who they voted for tend to have lower satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 2.5 In 2023, Belize has higher reported levels of trust in elections than most countries in the region



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

Figure 2.6 In 2023, most Belizeans have doubts that votes are counted correctly and that ballots are secret



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Conclusion

Belize is regarded as having a relatively stable democracy, but persistent problems like corruption and police brutality remain. Despite these issues, all measures of system support and trust in several institutions have increased between 2014 and 2023. Recent government undertakings to reform the judicial system, revise the constitution, and train the police force could be possible explanations for increasing system support.¹⁵

On average, Belizeans report higher trust in institutions than in other LAC countries. However, less than half express trust key institutions such as the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, and political parties. Additionally, most Belizeans doubt their votes are counted correctly and believe that ballots are not secret, signaling a deeper concern about the electoral process that general trust measures might overlook.

Two factors are closely linked to system support and institutional trust: perceptions of corruption and executive approval. The belief that most politicians are corrupt is associated with lower trust in institutions, reduced system support, and diminished confidence in democracy. Conversely, a positive view of the executive is tied to stronger support for the system and greater institutional trust.

Efforts to strengthen Belizean democracy should focus on reducing perceptions of corruption while building on the public's approval of the executive. Despite low levels of trust in key institutions, increasing system support and comparatively higher levels of trust in institutions offer encouraging signs.

Notes

- 1 Pérez 2011; Warren 2017.
- 2 Lupu et al. 2023.
- 3 Logistic regression analyses reveal that in Belize in 2023, all measures of system support are significant predictors of support for and satisfaction with democracy. Almost all measures of institutional trust are significant predictors of satisfaction with democracy (except trust in local government).
- 4 World Justice Project 2023.
- 5 Looney 2020; Breaking Belize News 2017; Freedom House 2023.
- 6 Cohen, Lupu, and Zechmeister 2017.
- 7 The results in this chapter that discuss the relationship between dependent variables of interest with socioeconomic and demographic variables come from multivariate regression models including gender, age, urban/rural residence, wealth, and education. Results that discuss the relationship between dependent variables and experiential and attitudinal variables, as mentioned here, come from multivariate regression models including the socioeconomic and demographic variables above, plus executive job approval, perception of corruption among politicians, crime victimization, and perception of political expression.
- 8 Lupu et al. 2023.
- 9 Breaking Belize News 2017; Breaking Belize News 2022; U.S. Department of State 2022.
- 10 Channel 5 Belize 2023.
- 11 World Justice Project 2023.
- 12 Birch 2008; Navarro Stanic 2023.
- 13 Elections and Boundaries Department 2024.
- 14 International Idea 2024.
- 15 Freedom House 2023; Channel 5 Belize 2023.

Approval of Same-Sex Marriage

Emily Noh¹

Although approval of same-sex marriage in Belize has reached its highest level to date, it remains below the regional average.

Like most Central American countries, Belize does not legally recognize same-sex marriage.² Only recently has it begun establishing legal frameworks for same-sex relationships, marked by the historic 2016 Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing of same-sex sexual activity. Previously, Belize’s criminal code defined same-sex relations as a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison.³ In 2016, the Supreme Court declared this criminalization unconstitutional, affirming the right to personal dignity, privacy, and equal treatment of all persons before the law⁴—a decision upheld by the Court of Appeal in 2019.⁵

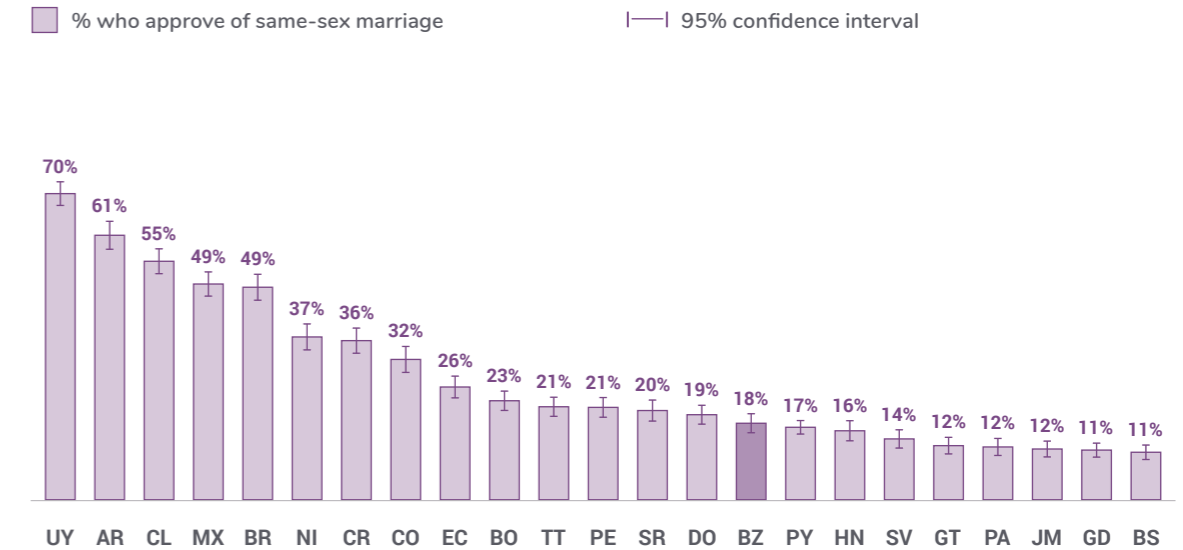
These rulings were landmark legal steps toward recognizing same-sex relationships in Belize, though they also spurred strong opposition from church

leaders, who labeled the 2016 ruling a “mess” and attributed natural disasters to its effects.⁶ Given these development and public resistance from some community leaders, what do Belizeans currently think about same-sex marriage? Since 2010, the AmericasBarometer has measured approval of same-sex marriage by asking:

How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry?

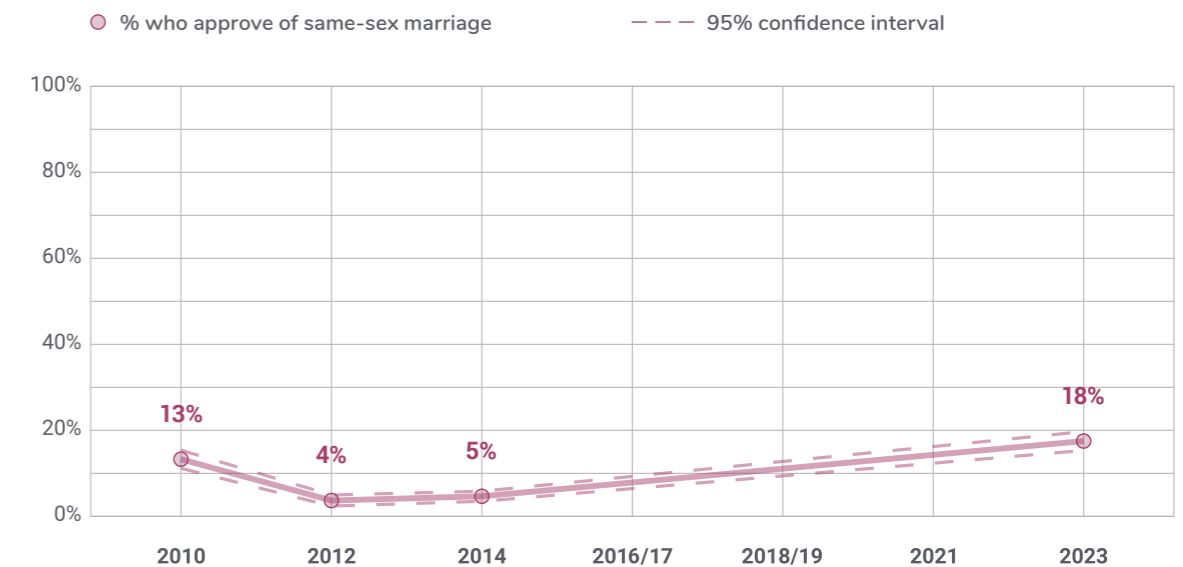
Respondents rated their views on a 10-point scale from 1 “strongly disapprove” to 10 “strongly approve.” To create a measure of approval, I recode responses 8 to 10 into an “approve” category, while the remaining responses are grouped into a baseline category.

Fewer than one in five Belizeans approve of same-sex marriage, a rate that falls below the regional average



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

Approval of same-sex marriage in Belize reached its highest level in 2023, though it remains a minority view



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2010-2023

Belizeans' approval of same-sex marriage in 2023 stands at 18%, below the LAC regional average of 26%. Despite this, it marks a significant progress since 2014, when Belize ranked among the lowest in the region. Approval has more than tripled since then, though Belize's increase from 13% in 2010 to 18% in 2023 lags regional trends, where approval doubled from 14% to 28% over the same period.

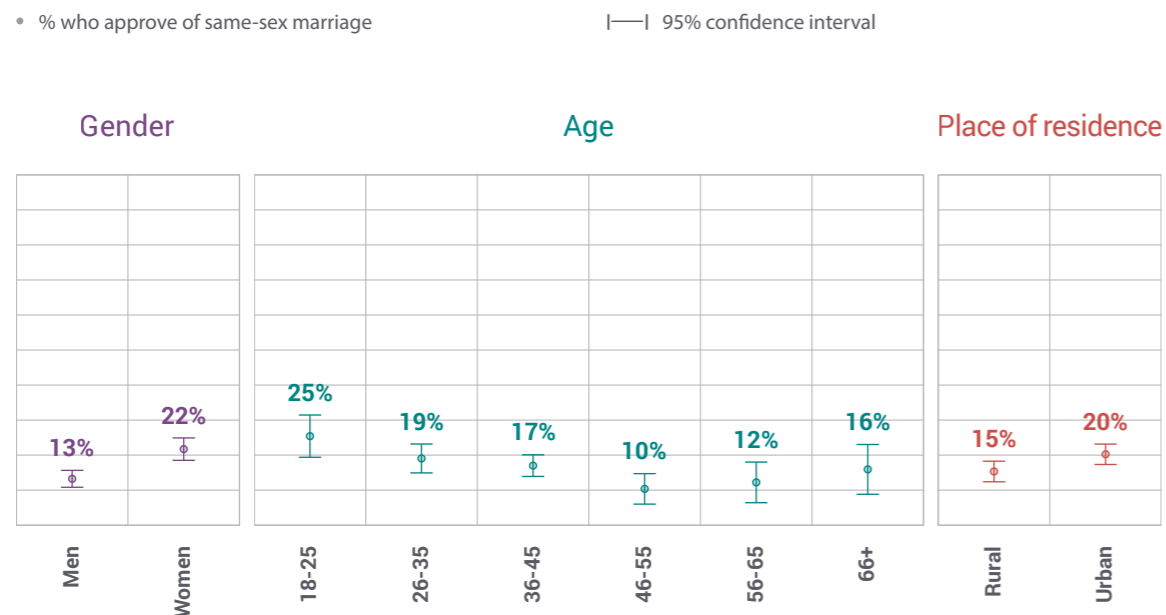
higher levels of approval with one in four in this age group expressing favorable attitudes toward same-sex marriage, compared to fewer than one in seven middle-aged adults. Urban residents are more approving than their rural counterparts (20% vs. 15%). However, education and wealth are not statistically related to the approval of same-sex marriage in Belize.

Belizeans now show the highest level of approval for same-sex marriage than ever recorded by the AmericasBarometer, more than triple the rate from 2014. However, Belize still lags its peers in the LAC region. While recent legal advances, such as the decriminalization of same-sex relationships, signal progress, significant public resistance remains toward recognizing same-sex marriage.

What individual characteristics are associated with the approval of same-sex marriage in Belize? On average, women, young adults, and urban residents are more likely to express approval.⁷ Women are notably more supportive, with 22% approving of same-sex marriage compared to 13% of men.⁸ Young adults, particularly those aged 18-25, also show

22%
women approving of same-sex marriage.

Women, younger adults, and urban Belizeans are more likely to approve of same-sex marriage



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Belizeans' approval of same-sex marriage has more than tripled since 2014, but at 18%, it still garners only minority support and lags behind the LAC region. Despite progress, such as decriminalizing same-sex relationships, significant public resistance to marriage equality persists.

Notes

- Emily Noh received her PhD in Political Science from Vanderbilt University in 2024 and was a LAPOP Lab affiliated researcher.
- See <https://database.ilga.org/same-sex-marriage-civil-unions>
- Scott 2015.
- Associated Press 2016; Humes 2016.
- Lavers 2020.
- 7 News Belize 2016.
- I performed a logistic regression where the dependent variable is coded as 1 if a respondent approves of same-sex marriage and 0 if not. I include sociodemographic predictors in the model—gender (women vs. men/other), age cohorts, education (none vs. primary vs. secondary vs. superior), wealth, and place of residence (urban vs. rural).
- There were not enough cases to report out on those who responded, “neither man nor woman,” “don’t know,” or “no response.” In 2023, no Belizeans identified as a gender other than man or woman, 0.90% said they do not know, and 0.19% gave no response.

Migration

Valerie Schweizer-Robinson

High rates of immigration from Central America have made Belize one of the countries with the highest percentage of immigrants relative to its population.¹ Economic opportunities, political stability, and access to social services and land draw immigrants to Belize.²

Belize is also a source of emigration, with about 16% of Belizeans living abroad. Much like the immigrants arriving in Belize, Belizeans leave for better jobs and educational prospects and send remittances back, significantly benefiting Belize's economy.³

This chapter examines Belizeans' emigration intentions, reasons for leaving, and likelihood of moving abroad. It also explores public opinion on immigration to Belize, focusing on attitudes towards immigrants' access to social services, the justification for their arrival, and the roles of various entities in managing immigration.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Over one in five Belizeans intend to emigrate in 2023. This reflects an increase from 2012 and 2014, while it remains consistent with levels seen in 2010.
- Belize's emigration intentions are significantly lower level than LAC regional average.
- Half of those who intend to emigrate have spoken to others about leaving, but few have taken more concrete steps.
- Three-quarters of Belizeans with emigration intentions cite a lack of economic opportunities as the most important reason for wanting to leave.
- Public opinion regarding immigrants in Belize is generally positive; most think the arrival of immigrants is justified and support their access to social services. However, opinions vary based on the immigrants' country of origin and the type of government assistance provided.
- A lack of hope for the future is predictive of negative views toward immigrants, particularly Central American immigrants.

INTENTIONS TO EMIGRATE REACHED A RECORD HIGH BUT REMAIN LOWER THAN THE REGIONAL AVERAGE

The AmericasBarometer assesses emigration intentions using the following question:

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

In 2023, close to one in five (22%) intend to emigrate from Belize, an increase from 2012 and 2014, and comparable to 2010 levels (Figure 3.1). Despite this rise, Belize, primarily a receiving country, exhibits lower emigration intentions to emigrate than the broader LAC region, where the average is 33%. Emigration intentions in Belize are similar to that of Guatemala (Figure 3.2).

At the regional level in 2023, food insecurity, crime victimization, having no hope for the future, and experiencing a natural disaster are associated with higher emigration intentions.⁴ This pattern is also observed in Belize, where men, young people, and urban residents are more likely to consider emigration than their counterparts.

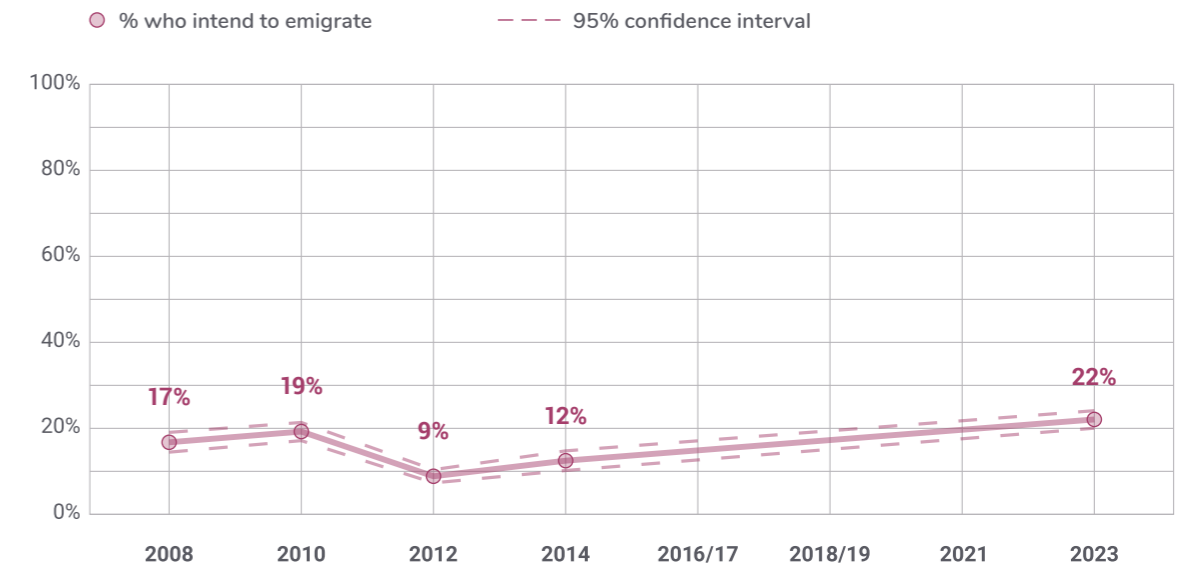
The intention to emigrate and the actual likelihood of leaving can differ significantly. To explore this gap, the AmericasBarometer asked Belizeans with emigration intentions about their perceived likelihood of leaving with the following question:

How likely is it that you will go to live or work in another country in the next three years?

Among those who intend to emigrate, three in four say it is “somewhat” (30%)

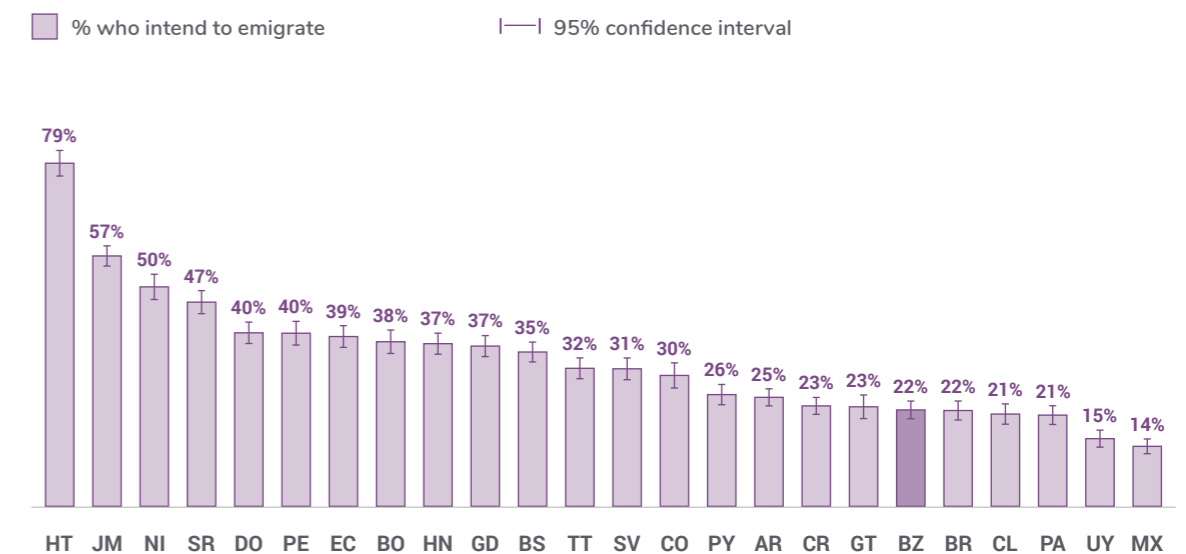
In 2023, 22% of Belizeans intend to emigrate—an increase since 2012–2014 but similar to 2010 levels. Despite this rise, Belize’s emigration intentions remain below the LAC regional average of 33%.

Figure 3.1 In 2023, over one in five intend to emigrate from Belize, the highest rate recorded by the AmericasBarometer in the country



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2008-2023

Figure 3.2 Relative to the rest of the LAC region, Belize has a low level of emigration intentions



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

44%

of those with intentions to emigrate say it is very likely they will leave.

or “very likely” (45%) that they will do so in the next three years (Figure 3.3). Notably, no sociodemographic factors predict the likelihood of intending to emigrate in Belize in 2023. Additionally, experiences related to natural disasters, food insecurity, crime victimization, or hopefulness for the future do not appear to influence this likelihood.

Another key aspect in assessing Belizeans’ likelihood to emigrate is understanding the actions they have already taken toward that goal. In 2023, a slight majority (51%) have discussed their intentions to emigrate with others (Figure 3.4). Around one-third have taken more concrete steps, such as processing necessary documents (34%) or saving money for the trip (30%). While most Belizeans with intentions to emigrate have taken at least one step

toward leaving (63%), fewer have taken two or more steps (27%).⁵

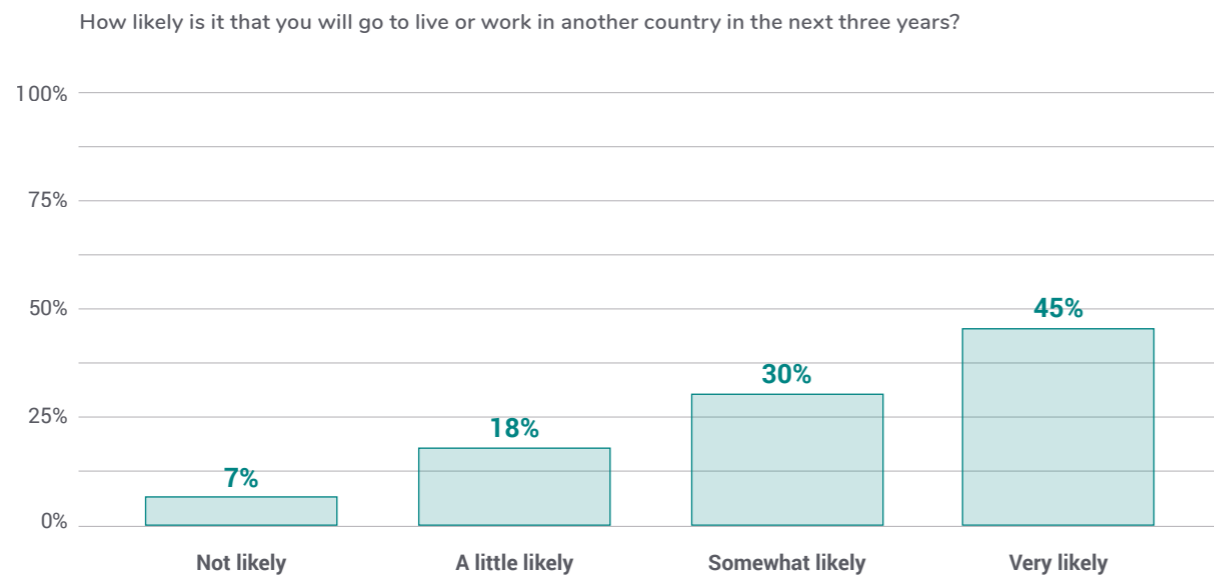
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR CONSIDERING EMIGRATING

We have examined Belizeans’ intentions to leave, but what drives their desires to emigrate? To find out, 2023 AmericasBarometer asked the following question:

*And what is the most important reason why you have thought about emigrating?*⁶

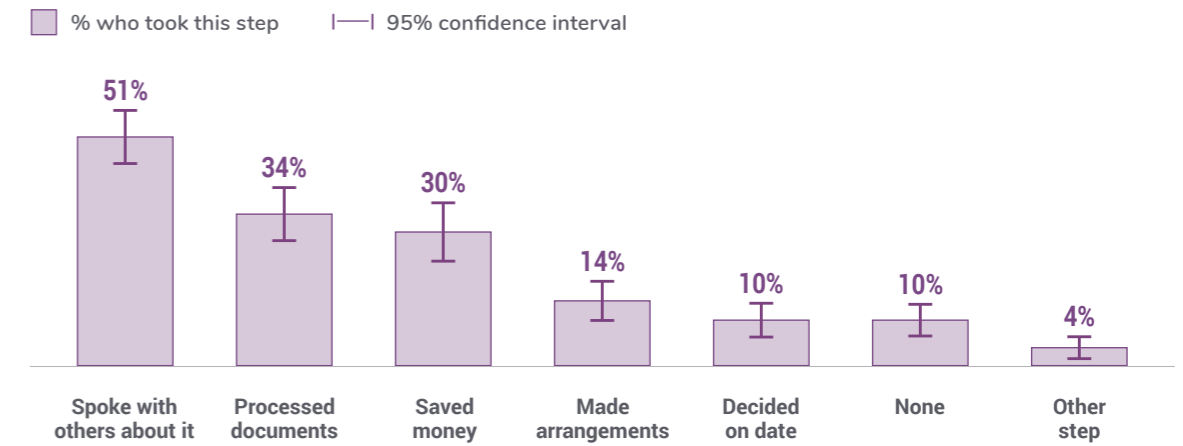
Over three in four Belizeans cite a lack of economic opportunities as their primary reason for intending to emigrate (Figure 3.5). No sociodemographic

Figure 3.3 Over two in five Belizeans who intend to emigrate say it is “very likely” they will leave



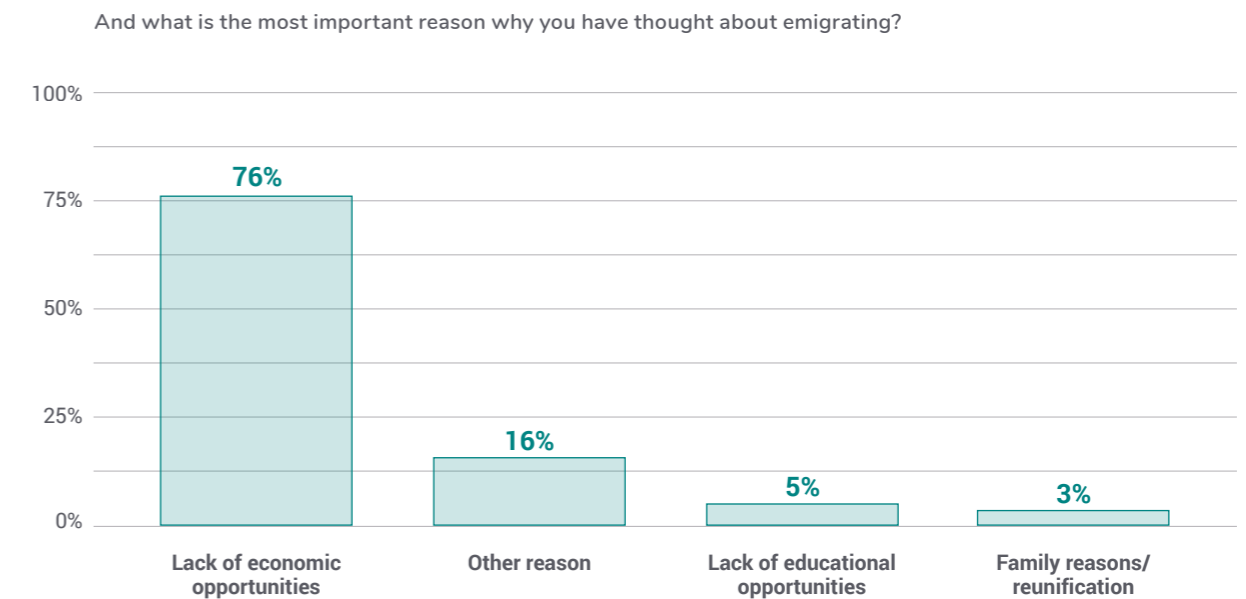
Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Figure 3.4 Over half of Belizeans who intend to emigrate have spoken to others about leaving, but fewer have taken more concrete steps



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Figure 3.5 Over three in four Belizeans who intend to emigrate cite the lack of economic opportunities as the most important reason



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

factors are associated with saying that economic limitations drive their emigration intentions. Among the nine countries surveyed, Belize ranks second in citing a lack of economic opportunities, just behind its neighbor Guatemala (77%).

BELIZEANS HAVE FAIRLY POSITIVE VIEWS OF IMMIGRANTS, BUT OPINIONS VARY ON THE SERVICES THEY SHOULD RECEIVE

For the remainder of this chapter, the focus shifts from Belizean emigrants to immigrants arriving in Belize. Over the past 40 years, Belize has experienced a significant influx of immigrants, with an estimated 15% of the current population being foreign-born.⁷

The 2023 AmericasBarometer included questions about Belizeans’ opinions toward immigrants, particularly those from Central America—specifically El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.⁸ Some questions ask about these nationalities directly, while others assess opinions on various migrant groups, including Spaniards or “immigrants”. Henceforth, we will refer to Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans collectively as “Central Americans.”

First, we explore whether Belizeans believe the arrival of Central Americans is justified through the following questions:⁹

Do you think that the arrival of Salvadoran, Honduran, and Guatemalan immigrants to Belize is justified due to the [insecurity/political/economic] situation in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala?

Most Belizeans believe the arrival of Central American immigrants is justified due to the insecurity (60%) and political situations (61%) in those countries (Figure 3.6). Yet, a larger proportion (70%) think their arrival is justified primarily due to economic conditions.

A negative outlook on the future not only influences Belizeans’ intentions to emigrate but also affects their opinion of immigrants. Those who lack hope for the future are less likely to justify the arrival of Central American migrants for any of these three reasons.

Next, we investigate whether Belizeans would be bothered by different categories of immigrant neighbors, asking:¹⁰

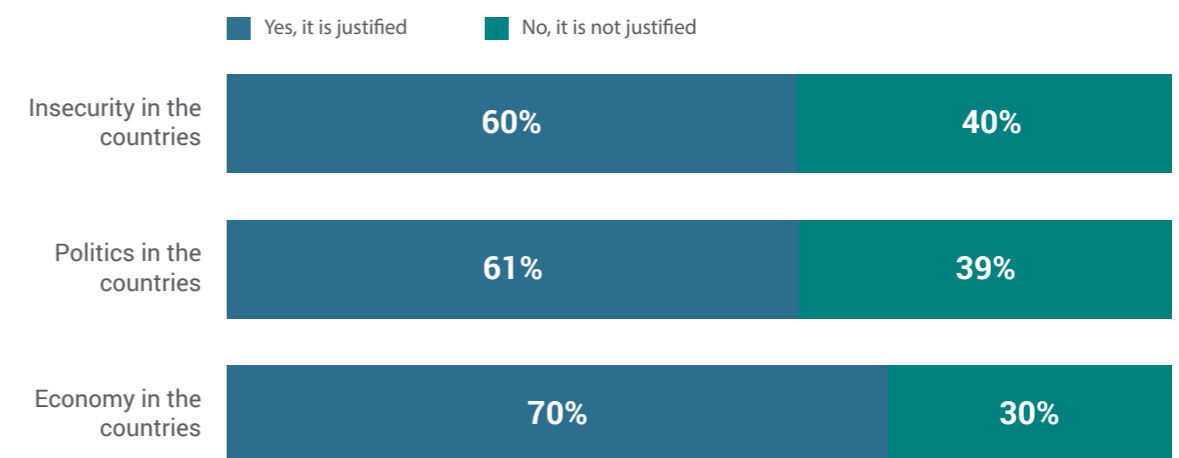
And how much would it bother you to have a [Salvadoran, Honduran, or Guatemalan/immigrant/Spaniard] as a neighbor? Would it bother you a lot, some, a little, or not at all?

In line with the general belief that the arrival of immigrants is justified, a majority of Belizeans would not be bothered by having an immigrant neighbor. However, they are less comfortable with an “immigrant” or Central American neighbor compared to a “Spanish” neighbor. Women and individuals with lower levels of wealth are more likely to say that they would be bothered by Central American neighbors.

While a majority of Belizeans think that the arrival of immigrants is justified and

Most Belizeans believe the arrival of Central American immigrants is justified due to the insecurity (60%) and political situations (61%) in those countries. Yet, a larger proportion (70%) think their arrival is justified primarily due to economic conditions.

Figure 3.6 Most Belizeans believe that the arrival of Central American immigrants is justified, but more justify it due to the economy in countries of origin



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

express willingness to have immigrant neighbors, opinions diverge regarding the types of services the government should extend to immigrants. The Belizean government offers various services to both undocumented and documented immigrants, including access to health care.¹¹

The 2023 AmericasBarometer in Belize measured attitudes about immigrants receiving social services with the following questions:¹²

To what extent do you agree that the Belizean government should offer social services, like health assistance, education, housing to [Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans/immigrants/Spaniards] who come to live or work in Belize?

About half (51%) agree that immigrants should have the same rights as the majority of Belizeans. When looking at specific rights, **Figure 3.7** shows that an even larger majority support access to social services for immigrants, although fewer agree on this point for Central Americans (61%) compared to “immigrants” (69%) or Spaniards (71%).

Once again, a lack of hope for the future seems to impact public opinion on immigrant services. Belizeans who feel less optimistic about the future are significantly less likely to support social services for all three categories of immigrants.

Belizeans generally hold positive views of immigrants, with a majority believing they should have access to

social services. When it comes to other government-provided services, over three in five support government assistance in helping immigrants find work in the country, although one in four disagrees.¹³ A negative outlook on the future continues to adversely affect public opinion regarding all three categories of immigrants; those with a negative outlook on the future are significantly less likely to support government initiatives to help immigrants find work.

When asked whether “immigrants” or Central Americans perform jobs Belizeans do not want or whether they take jobs from Belizeans, a vast majority think both groups primarily full unwanted positions.¹⁴ Education and wealth notably influence these perceptions: as education level increases, so does

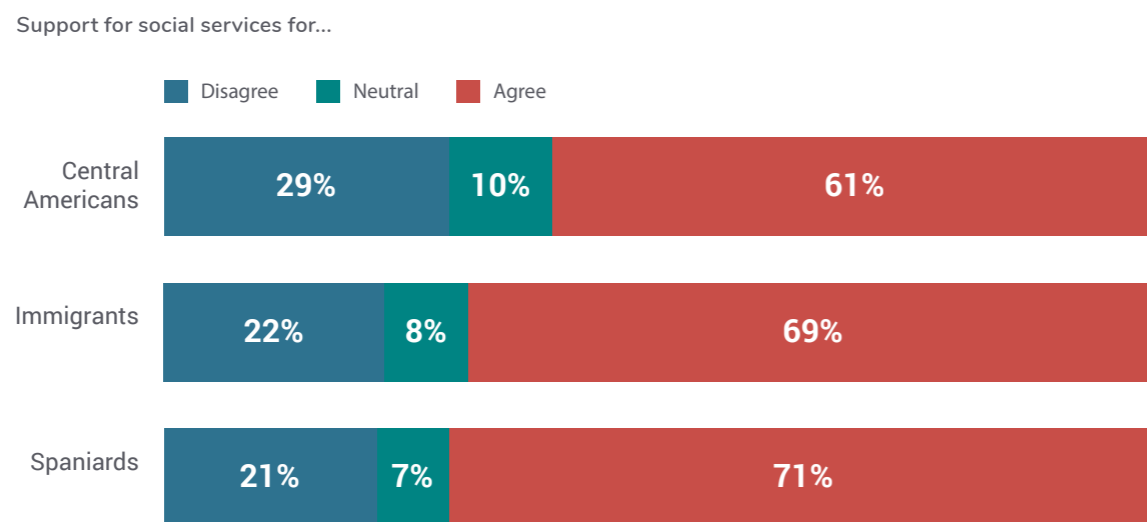
the belief that immigrants take on undesirable jobs. Conversely, individuals in the lowest wealth category are significantly less likely to believe that immigrants do unwanted jobs compared to those in higher wealth categories.

To further investigate public opinion on immigrant rights, we examine the following questions:¹⁵

To what extent do you agree with the children of Salvadoran, Honduran and Guatemalan immigrants born in Belize being Belizean citizens?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Belizean government granting work permits to undocumented Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans living in Belize?

Figure 3.7 Fewer agree that Central Americans should have access to social services compared to other immigrants or Spaniards, yet more than three in five still support access



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Half of Belizeans believe immigrants should have equal rights, with strong support for access to social services. However, fewer extend this support to Central Americans (61%) compared to general “immigrants” (69%) or Spaniards (71%).

77%

agree that children of Central American immigrants should be Belizean citizens.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Belizean government taking measures so that undocumented Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans living in Belize can legally settle permanently in the country?

A vast majority (77%) agree that children of Central American immigrants should be citizens (Figure 3.8). However, fewer support granting work permits to undocumented immigrants (42%) or allowing them to become citizens (57%). Belizeans with a negative outlook on the country’s future are less likely to support work permits or citizenship for Central American immigrants, while crime victims tend to be more supportive of citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

Belizeans hold mixed views about the role of Central Americans in society. Nearly one in three (31%) believe that Central American immigrants exacerbate crime problems, a sentiment that is more prevalent among rural residents than their urban counterparts. In contrast, two-thirds (66%) feel that Central American immigrants are good for the economy, and over half (58%) believe they enrich Belizean culture.

However, those with little hope for the future are less likely to view Central American immigrants are good for the economy.

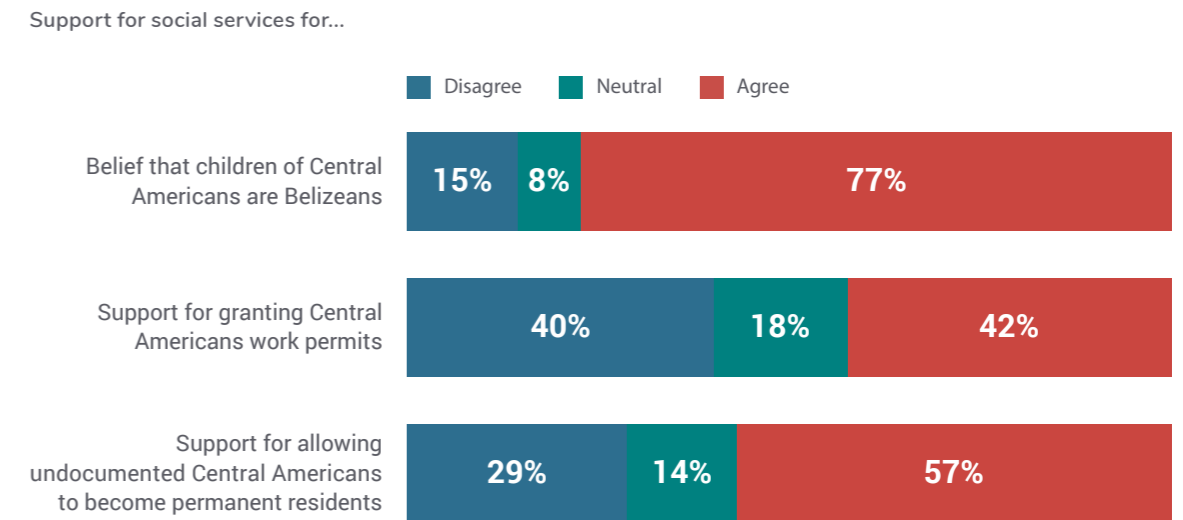
Overall, Belizeans tend to support measures to assist immigrants, although opinions vary on the methods and entities responsible for implementing these measures. To explore this, we examine on the following questions:¹⁶

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the governments of Belize and the region should take joint measures to help migrants that arrive in our countries?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Belizean and the United States governments taking joint measures to help migrants that arrive in this country?

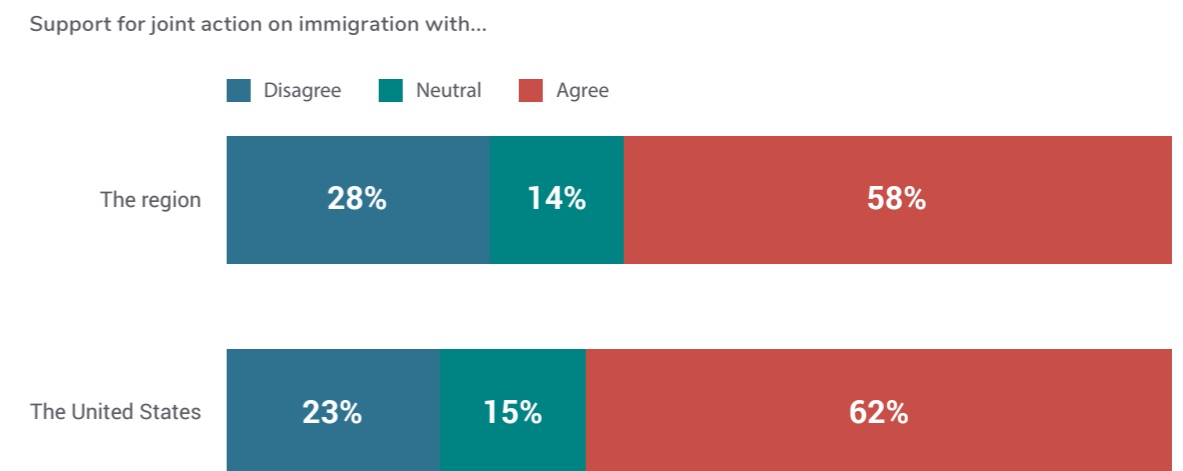
Most agree that both regional governments (58%) and the United States (62%) should take joint action with the Belizean government to help immigrants arriving in the country (Figure 3.9). Additionally, those with a superior level of education are more likely to support joint regional efforts (69%) compared to those with secondary education (57%) or less (54%).

Figure 3.8 More agree that children of Central Americans are citizens than they do with granting work permits or permanent residency



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Figure 3.9 Most are supportive of both the region and the United States taking joint action with Belize on immigration



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Conclusion

Despite being known as an immigrant “receiving” country, one in five Belizeans intend to emigrate in 2023, marking an increase compared to a decade ago. Among those planning to leave, a majority say it is likely they will do so, yet only about a third have taken concrete steps toward emigration.

The primary motivation for considering emigration is the lack of economic opportunities. While Belize has significantly lower levels of emigration intentions than the regional average, certain factors, such as hopelessness for the future, food insecurity, crime victimization, and experiencing a natural disaster, are associated with heightened emigration intentions in Belize in 2023.

Public opinion toward immigrants in Belize tends to be somewhat positive, with a majority supporting access to social services for immigrants and believing that the children of immigrants should be recognized as citizens. However, a concerning trend emerges: those with little hope for the future tend to hold more negative views of immigrants.

As Belize grapples with a rapidly evolving immigration landscape, its ability to address these challenges is crucial for maintaining economic and social stability. When considering emigration solutions, most Belizeans support collaborative action with regional partners and the United States to help immigrants within the country.

Notes

- 1 IOM 2024.
- 2 Integral Human Development n.d. In 2022, three United Nations entities—the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the Children’s Fund (UNICEF)—signed a joint plan with Belize’s government to enhance support for immigrants and refugees (UNICEF 2022).
- 3 Integral Human Development n.d.; Babcock and Conway 2000.
- 4 The results in this chapter that discuss the relationship between dependent variables of interest with socioeconomic and demographic variables come from multivariate regression models including gender, age, urban/rural residence, wealth, and education. Results that discuss the relationship between dependent variables and experiential and attitudinal variables, as mentioned here, come from multivariate regression models including the socioeconomic and demographic variables above, plus food insecurity, crime victimization, hopefulness for the future, and experience with a natural disaster.
- 5 Respondents could choose multiple steps.
- 6 Answers were originally coded into the following categories: (1) insecurity and violence, (2) lack of economic opportunities, (3) lack of educational opportunities, (4) family reasons/reunification, (5) hunger, (6) drought, (7) natural disaster, (8) corruption, (9) discrimination, (10) pressures (family, community), (11) political reasons, and (77) other. Here, categories 1, 8, and 11 were combined with 77 since there were not enough cases to analyze them separately.
- 7 UNICEF 2022.
- 8 Integral Human Development n.d.
- 9 Each question was asked to one-third of the sample.
- 10 Each question was asked to one-third of the sample.
- 11 IOM 2020.
- 12 Each question was asked to one-third of the sample. Answers were originally coded in the following categories: 1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = somewhat disagree; 5 = strongly disagree. Here, categories 1 and 2 are recoded into an “agree” category and categories 4 and 5 are recoded into a “disagree” category.
- 13 The question wording for these measures is: “To what extent do you agree with the Belizean government offering help to find a job to [Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans/immigrants/Spaniards] who come to live or work in Belize? Do you... 1) Strongly agree 2) Somewhat agree 3) Neither agree nor disagree 4) Somewhat disagree 5) Strongly disagree.” Each question was asked to one-third of the sample. Here we examine categories 1 and 2.
- 14 The question wording for these measures is: “In general, would you say that [people from another country/Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans] who come to live here do the jobs that Belizeans do not want, or that they take the jobs away from Belizeans?” Each question was asked to half of the sample.
- 15 Each question was asked to one-third of the sample. Answers range from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Here, categories 1, 2, and 3 are recoded into a “disagree” category and categories 5, 6, and 7 are recoded into an “agree” category.
- 16 Each question was asked to half of the sample. Answers range from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Here, categories 1, 2, and 3 are recoded into a “disagree” category and categories 5, 6, and 7 are recoded into an “agree” category.
- 17 Jackiewicz and Govdyak 2015.

Mariia Marchuk¹

One in six Belizeans report gender-based discrimination, a rate comparable to the LAC regional average.

Despite progressive strides in policy and legislation to advance gender equality, gender discrimination remains a notable issue in Belize. The country has enacted several key laws aimed at combating gender discrimination and promoting women's rights. The Revised National Gender Policy, for example, underscores Belize's commitment to gender equality under both its constitution and international conventions.² Additionally, the Domestic Violence Act has strengthened protections for victims by outlining comprehensive measures for interventions and penalties. The Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act further supports gender equality

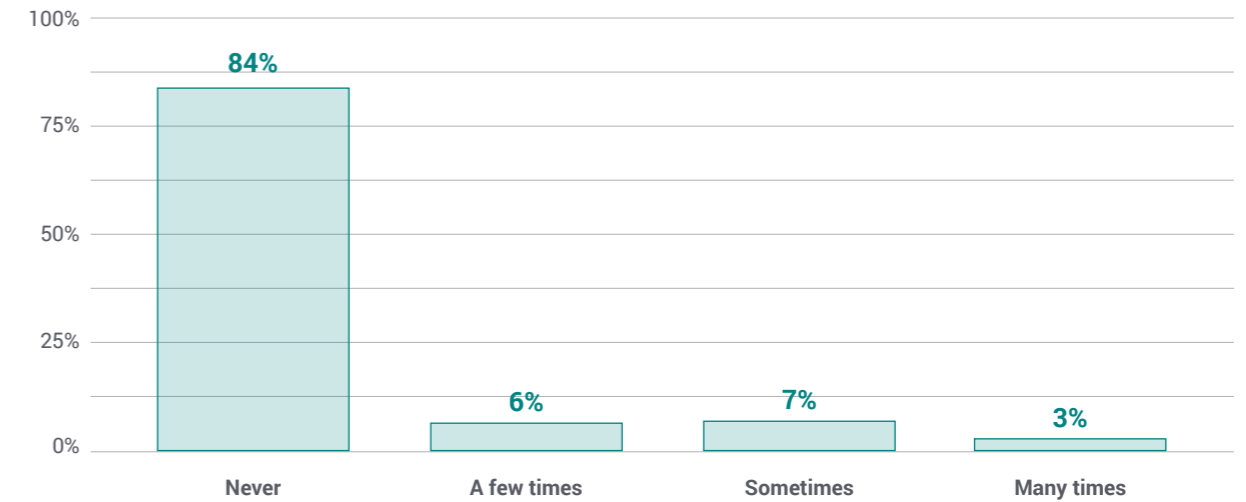
by fostering a safer working and living environment free from harassment, underscoring the nation's commitment to safer work and public spaces.³ Together, these policies provide essential context to Belizeans' personal experiences with gender discrimination, highlighting both progress made and persistent challenges.

In 2023, AmericasBarometer measured gender discrimination with the following question:

And thinking about the last five years, have you ever felt discriminated against, or have you been badly or unjustly treated because of your gender or sex?

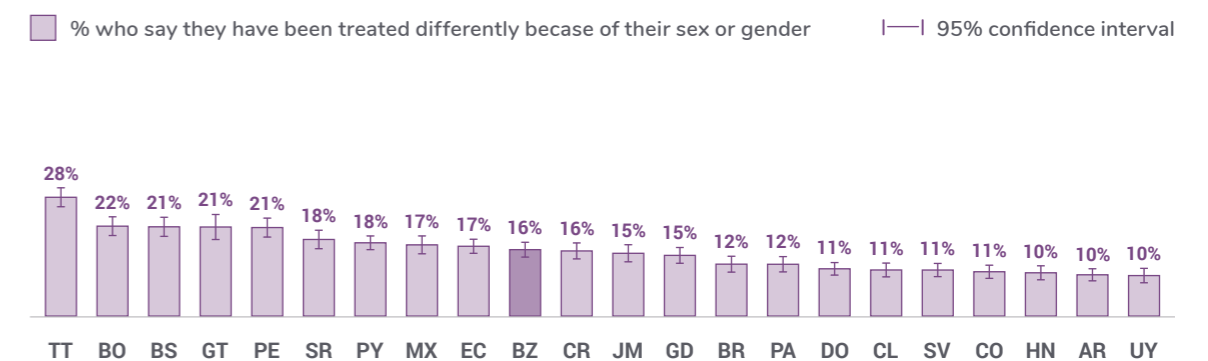
About one in six Belizeans have been discriminated against because of their gender in the last five years

And thinking about the last five years, have you ever felt discriminated against, or have you been badly or unjustly treated because of your gender or sex?



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer Belize 2023

Belizeans report gender discrimination at a similar rate to the rest of the LAC region



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

16%

report having experienced gender discrimination.

Here I code responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows me to estimate the percentage of people in Belize who have experienced gender discrimination.⁴ Findings show that 84% report never having experienced gender discrimination, while 16% report various degrees of it: 6% a few times, 7% sometimes, and 3% many times.

Across the region, Belize's reported gender discrimination rate of 16% aligns with the regional average but is lower than Trinidad & Tobago (28%) and Bolivia (22%) and significantly higher than Argentina and Uruguay (10%). These findings highlight the varied experiences of gender discrimination shaped by distinct cultural, economic, and legal contexts across countries.

Analysis shows that, while one in six Belizeans report experiencing gender discrimination, no sociodemographic variables significantly predict this experience, suggesting that it affects various segments of the population broadly.

Despite Belize's progressive legislative efforts, the AmericasBarometer survey findings reveal persistent challenges to achieving gender equality. This aligns with insights from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Gender Equality Observatory, both of which emphasize that gender-based disparities remain a critical barrier across the LAC region.⁵

One in six Belizeans report experiencing gender discrimination, and this type of discrimination affects a broad range of the population, impacting various segments of society without clear demographic distinctions.

Notes

- 1 Mariia Marchuk was an undergraduate research assistant at LAPOP Lab in 2024. She is currently a fourth-year student of Public Policy and Economics at Vanderbilt University.
- 2 The National Women's Commission 2013.
- 3 UN Women 2023.
- 4 Specifically, responses indicating "Many times," "Sometimes," and "A few times" were coded as 1, representing "Has been discriminated against." The response "Never" was coded as 0, indicating "Never discriminated against." This recoding facilitates a clearer analysis of the prevalence of discrimination within the population.
- 5 The National Women's Commission 2013.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION FOR THE 2023 AMERICASBAROMETER IN BELIZE

This survey was carried out between September 13 and October 31, 2023, as part of LAPOP's 2023 AmericasBarometer. It is a follow-up to LAPOP's AmericasBarometer survey of Belize in 2012, 2016/17, and 2018/19. The 2023 survey fieldwork was carried out by Borge y Asociados on behalf of LAPOP. Key funding came from Vanderbilt University and USAID.

Questionnaire pretesting took place on August 8-10 and August 15-17, 2023, and interviewer training took place from August 28 to 30, 2023. Pilot surveys were conducted on September 4. A full copy of the 2023 AmericasBarometer Belize questionnaire can be found at LAPOP's website at www.LapopSurveys.org.

The project used a national probability sample design of voting-age adults, with a total N of 1,550 people involving face-to-face interviews conducted in English and Spanish. In the 2023 round, LAPOP used the SurveyToGo® (STG) software, running on Android tablets and phones, to conduct 100% of the interviews.

The survey used a complex sample design, including stratification and clustering. The sample was developed by LAPOP, using a multi-stage probability design, and was stratified the six major regions of the country: Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek, and Toledo. The sample is representative at the national level and of the six regions. Each stratum was further sub-stratified by size of municipality¹ and by urban and rural areas within municipalities. Respondents were selected in clusters of six in urban and rural areas. Reported statistics or statistical analyses should be adjusted for the design effect due to the complex design of the sample.²

The sample frame used for the sample is the 2022 Population Census. The sample consists of 63 primary sampling units and 252 final sampling units across the set of all provinces in Belize. A total of 691 respondents were surveyed in urban areas and 859 in rural areas. The estimated margin of error for the survey is ± 2.43 . Margin of sampling errors are not adjusted for weights. The final sample achieved in the survey is self-weighted.

For more details on the methodology used in Belize, see the complete technical report at <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/belize.php>.

¹ The sample design includes three different strata of municipalities classified according to their size: (1) small municipalities with less than 3,000 inhabitants, (2) medium-sized municipalities with between 3,000 and 10,000 inhabitants, and (3) large municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

² For more information visit <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/survey-designs.php>

AMERICASBAROMETER DATA AND REPORTS AT A GLANCE

DATA

The AmericasBarometer datasets feature a common core set of questions that have been asked from 2004 to present day. In addition, LAPOP has datasets that date back to the 1970s. Data files are free and publicly available for download.



Users can also access AmericasBarometer data through our Data Playground. This data analysis tool is free and interactive. It is particularly useful for those individuals unfamiliar with advanced statistical software programs. Data Playground users can analyze AmericasBarometer data through tabulations of a single variable, cross-country comparisons on a map, and cross-tabulations of two variables.



REPORTS

LAPOP produces numerous reports on the AmericasBarometer and other projects. Our goal is to provide analysis and evidence for scholars and practitioners on public opinion and democratic governance.

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Standard Insights engage social science research and AmericasBarometer data to develop and assess theories regarding links between public opinion and democracy.

Topical Insights use project data to provide evidence and context on a current event.

Methodological Insights offer windows into our cutting-edge approaches, report on our innovations, and engage scholars who work at the survey research frontier.

Global Insights introduce findings from LAPOP-affiliated research outside the Americas.

Spotlights present quick snapshots of AmericasBarometer questions across countries, time, and subgroups.



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Country reports are book length, contain more extensive analyses, and are organized thematically to address findings relevant to democratic governance, strengthening, and stability. They include a focus on topics that stakeholders, especially USAID Missions, identify as important in the local context.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY FOR THE 2023 AMERICASBAROMETER

The AmericasBarometer is a multinational, multiregional, and multicultural (3MC) public opinion survey of democratic values and behaviors of voting-age citizens and permanent residents in the Western Hemisphere.

Respondents are selected through national probability samples in Latin America and the Caribbean, and through nonprobability panels in the United States and Canada. The project uses a standardized core questionnaire and country-specific modules to collect data via face-to-face household surveys, except in Haiti and Nicaragua, where the project uses computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), and in the United States and Canada, where the project uses self-administered Web surveys. The per-country average sample size of 1,512 respondents enables national and subnational estimations of key population variables.

066

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The AmericasBarometer survey instruments consist of a core questionnaire and country-specific modules that measure attitudes regarding, experiences with, and behaviors within political, economic, and social systems. The core questionnaire is a set of structured items that permit valid comparisons across time and space. Country-specific modules measure opinion on context-specific sociopolitical phenomena. As in every round, new questions are designed through workshops with input from country experts and leading scholars in the field. While the average face-to-face questionnaire includes 152 questions and lasts 45 minutes, the average CATI questionnaire includes 77 questions and lasts 20 minutes. The main questionnaire topics in 2023 are democratic values, system support, the rule of law, gender, and migration intentions.

COGNITIVE PRETESTS

The core questionnaire and country-specific modules are thoroughly pretested with a three-stage iterative cognitive interviewing process. First, LAPOP cognitive interviewers carry out a handful of in-depth tests of new modules to develop early drafts of questionnaire items. Second, LAPOP extensively trains research assistants and consultants to conduct cognitive interviews of the full core questionnaire in selected countries from different regions of the Americas to ensure context variation. Third, a similar process is carried out in all countries for each country-customized questionnaire. For the 2023 AmericasBarometer, local survey institutions recruited pre-test participants, and, in some cases, a small incentive was offered for their participation. Most cognitive interviews were conducted remotely using video or phone calls.

067

SAMPLING

LAPOP uses a stratified, multistage, and clustered sampling strategy to draw national probability samples in countries where the survey is administered face-to-face. LAPOP-trained enumerators interview any eligible respondent available at the time of the survey. A single respondent is selected in each household and no revisits are required. In face-to-face studies, LAPOP uses “frequency matching,” a technique that ensures that the samples achieved mirror the national distributions of age and gender in the sampling frame. Frequency matching is implemented at the cluster level. In countries where the survey is conducted via CATI, LAPOP uses random-digit dialing (RDD) of mobile phones. In cases of unanswered calls, each number selected into the sample is called at least five times before it is discarded.

WEIGHTS

The 2023 AmericasBarometer sample design strategy in face-to-face studies produce self-weighted observations, with a few exceptions. Datasets in Ecuador, Trinidad & Tobago, The Bahamas, and Brazil use calibration weights to compensate for sample size deviations. LAPOP computes these weights using population distributions by strata for urban and rural population, gender, and age. Weights for Haiti and Nicaragua (CATI) are calculated by estimating baseline probabilities adjusted for eligibility and non-response, then calibrated to the 2018/19 AmericasBarometer country samples on gender, education, age, and region. Cross-time and cross-country weights are standardized so that each country/year has the same effective sample size.

INTERVIEWER, SUPERVISOR, AND AUDITOR TRAINING

In the 2023 AmericasBarometer is designed as an opportunity for fieldwork personnel to grow their knowledge base and to standardize data collection and monitoring practices. Training workshops include an in-person component, where LAPOP-trained fieldwork personnel instruct interviewers and quality control auditors on logistics, security protocols, and fieldwork monitoring; a virtual component, where LAPOP representatives review the full questionnaire and country samples with each team; a set of pre-recorded training videos that review best practices in survey research, ethical principles, and operations with the data collection platform; and a full pilot of the survey, where fieldwork personnel practice what they have learned before launching the actual survey. Training sessions typically last two full days and all trainings conclude with a learning assessment that interviewers have to pass (>80% correct answers) in order to be certified to work on the project.

QUALITY CONTROL

The 2023 AmericasBarometer uses LAPOP’s Fieldwork Algorithm for LAPOP Control over survey Operations and Norms (FALCON). FALCON collects multiple types of paradata, including voice recordings and interviewer images, question and questionnaire timing, and interviewer performance indicators. These paradata indicators are monitored daily during data collection so that any corrections or cancellations resulting from a failure to meet quality control standards are made while fieldwork is in progress. Final datasets include high-quality interviews only. Each technical report for an AmericasBarometer survey summarizes the results of this process.

Acknowledgements

The AmericasBarometer emerges from collaborations among hundreds of individuals involved in its design and implementation. We thank all the members of the public who generously shared their beliefs and experiences with our survey teams. We are also grateful to our dedicated partner survey organizations and fieldwork teams across the region.

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Noam Lupu & Liz Zechmeister

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The AmericasBarometer is carried out by LAPOP Lab, a center for excellence in international survey research based at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. LAPOP has deep connections to the Latin America and Caribbean region, established during more than five decades of public opinion research. The AmericasBarometer is possible due to the activities and support of a network that spans the Americas. To complete each round, LAPOP partners with individuals, survey firms, universities, development organizations, and others in up to 34 countries within the Western Hemisphere.

Project efforts are informed by LAPOP's mission: to produce objective, non-partisan, and scientifically sound studies of public opinion; to innovate improvements in survey research; to disseminate project findings; and, to build capacity.

The AmericasBarometer project receives generous support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Vanderbilt University. Other institutions that have contributed recently to multiple rounds of the project include Environics Institute, Florida International University, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Over the years, the project has benefited from grants from the United States National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development in Brazil (CNPq), the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and numerous academic institutions across the Americas.

The 2023 AmericasBarometer was carried out via face-to-face interviews in 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries, phone surveys in Haiti and Nicaragua, and online surveys in Canada and the United States.

All samples are designed to be nationally representative of voting-age adults. In all, more than 41,524 individuals were interviewed in this latest round of the survey. The complete 2004-2023 AmericasBarometer dataset contains responses from over 385,000 people across the region. Common core modules, standardized techniques, and rigorous quality control procedures permit valid comparisons across individuals, certain subnational areas, countries, regions, and time. AmericasBarometer data and reports are available for free download from the project website: www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop. Individuals can also use that website to query the data via an interactive Data Playground. Datasets from the project also can be accessed via "data repositories" and subscribing institutions across the Americas.

Through such open access practices and an extensive network of collaborators, LAPOP works to contribute to the pursuit of excellence in public opinion research and ongoing discussions over how programs and policies related to democratic governance can improve the quality of life for individuals in the Americas and beyond.

LAPOP's AmericasBarometer
takes the Pulse of Democracy in Belize

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