

December 2020 | Stacy Horton

Spotlight on Satisfaction with Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Satisfaction with democracy is low in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region

In most LAC countries, less than half are satisfied with democracy

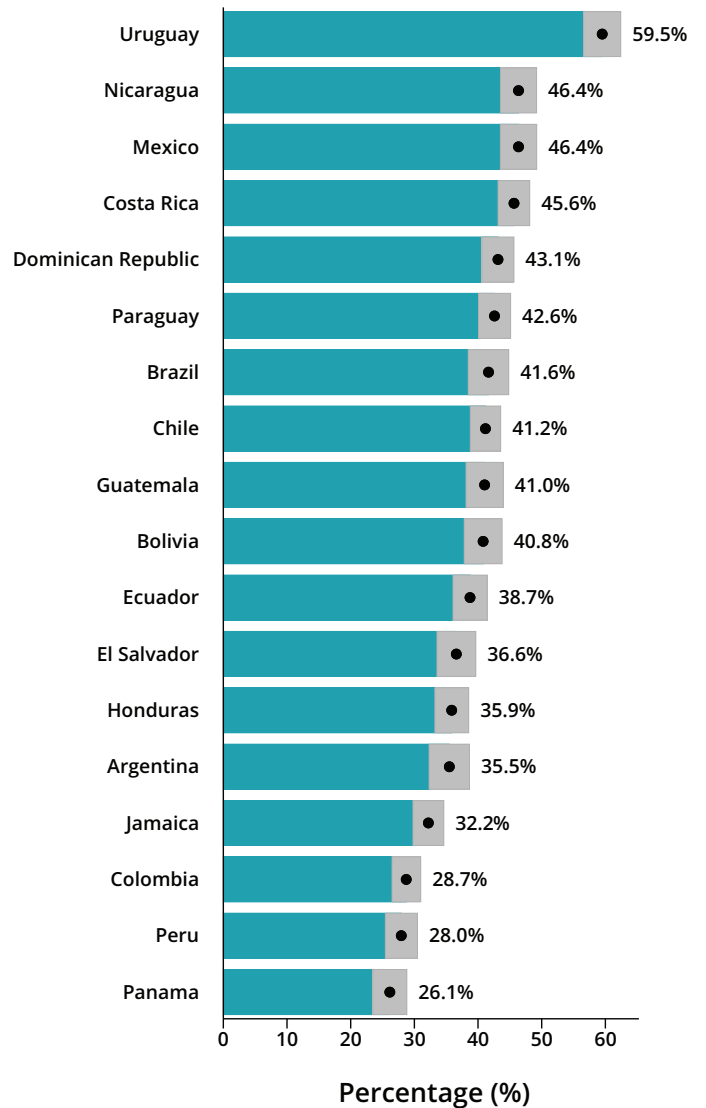
Since 2004, LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer has measured satisfaction with democracy by asking the following question:

PN4. In general, are you very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with the form in which democracy functions in (country)?

In the 2018/19 round, this question was included in surveys in 18 LAC countries. Responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable, which allows us to estimate the percentage of people in the region who are satisfied with democracy. Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable indicating satisfaction with democracy by combining the “very satisfied” and “satisfied” responses into one category, while placing the other responses (“unsatisfied” and “very unsatisfied”) into a baseline category.

The country with the highest satisfaction with democracy in 2018/19 is Uruguay (59.5%), while Panama (26.1%) holds the lowest satisfaction with democracy in the LAC region. In four countries – Jamaica, Colombia, Peru, and Panama – fewer than one in three adults is satisfied with how democracy is working in their country in 2018/19.

Satisfaction with Democracy, 2018/19



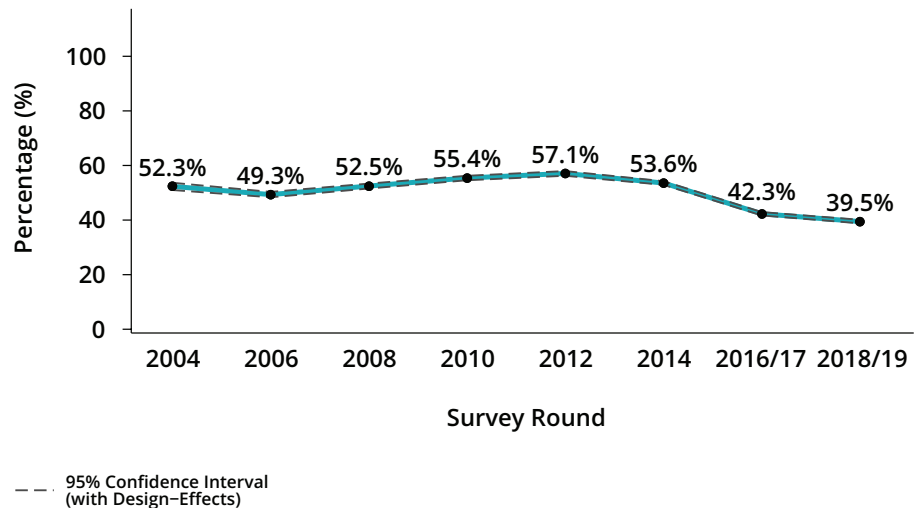
95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

Satisfaction with democracy has declined

In the average LAC country, satisfaction with democracy has declined substantially since 2012, reaching its lowest reported level in the 2018/19 round. Satisfaction with democracy reached its highest reported level in 2012 (57.1%). Only 39.5% are satisfied with democracy in 2018/19. Since 2012, satisfaction with democracy has fallen by nearly 18 percentage points.

Satisfaction with Democracy in the LAC Region, 2004–2018/19



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

Satisfaction with democracy is higher among those who are male, older, poor, less educated, and rural

What characteristics of individuals predict satisfaction with democracy in the LAC region? On average, men are more likely to report satisfaction with democracy compared to women (42.1% and 36.7%, respectively). Among wealth quintiles, the highest rates of satisfaction with democracy are found in the poorest quintile. Older (66+) and less educated individuals also report more satisfaction with democracy. Lastly, respondents in rural areas express greater satisfaction with democracy at a higher rate compared to respondents in urban areas.

Satisfaction with Democracy in the LAC Region, 2018/19



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



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

Stacy Horton is a senior at Vanderbilt University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Cinema and Media Arts and Latin American Studies with minors in Sociology and Anthropology. She is hoping to use her studies and video experience to become a social documentarian in Latin America.

Series Editors: Sebastián C. Larrea, Mariana Rodríguez, Valerie Schweizer, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister

As a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative, the LAPOP Lab is committed to routine disclosure of our data collection and reporting processes. More information about the AmericasBarometer sample designs can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.php

The contents of this Spotlight Report are the sole responsibility of the authors and LAPOP and do not necessarily reflect the views of any supporting organization. LAPOP's AmericasBarometer surveys are supported predominantly by USAID and Vanderbilt University. The 2018/19 round also had support from the IADB, World Bank, and academic partners and researchers across the Americas.