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National Pride in the Americas

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Executive Summary: This AmericasBarometer *Insights* series report examines the level of pride that citizens in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America have in their own countries. The analysis uses data from the 2012 round of the AmericasBarometer surveys and examines the factors that have a positive influence on national pride. Interpersonal trust, life satisfaction, and participation in meetings of political parties are positively related to the level of pride. This suggests that national pride is in part a function of individuals' level of civil and political engagement and in part a function of the level of satisfaction one has with her life.

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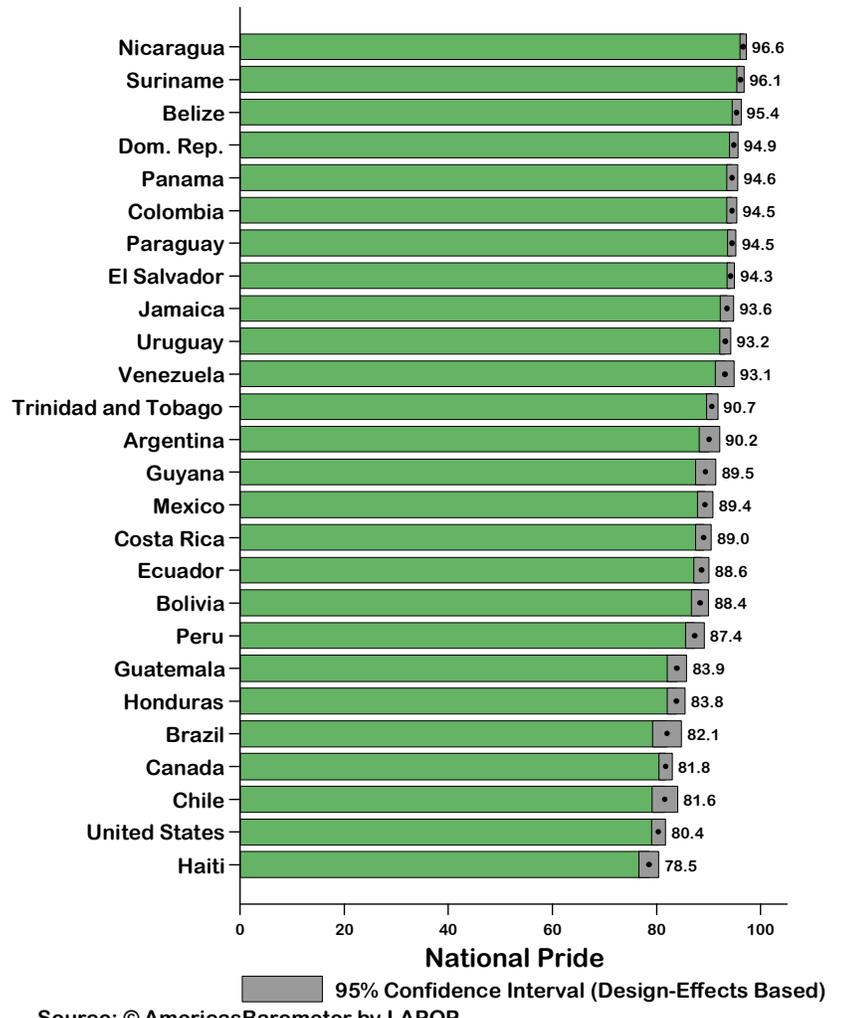
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National pride tends to run high across individuals and countries in the Americas, but still some are more proud of their national identity than others. What explains this variation across individuals and countries? The limited research on this topic finds a host of political, socio-economic, and cultural characteristics associated with high levels of national pride (Kelley 2002) In this AmericasBarometer *Insights*¹ report we look at these factors in an effort to understand variations in levels of national pride across citizens of the Americas.

The analysis uses AmericasBarometer data that measures respondents' pride in their country, and assesses both individual and national-level determinants. The 2012 survey of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) was carried out in 24 countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, as well as the United States and Canada. The survey item of particular interest for this analysis is:

B43: To what extent are you proud of being (nationality corresponding to country)?

Figure 1: Average Levels of National Pride in the Americas, 2012



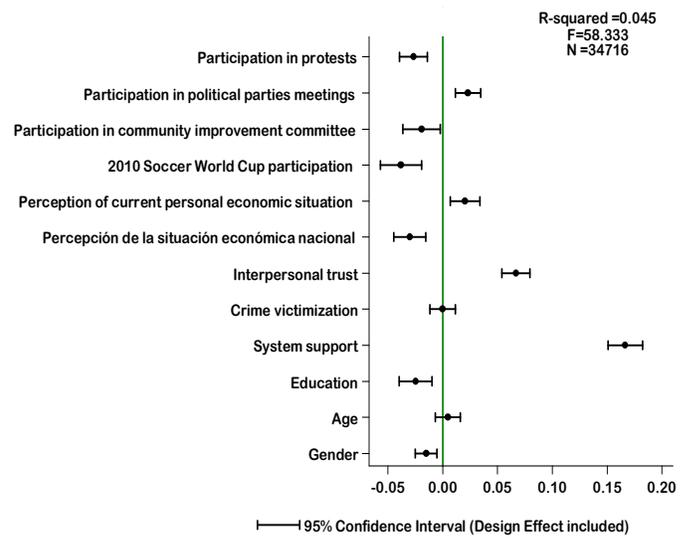
Responses were re-coded on a 0-100 scale to follow the LAPOP standard, which facilitates comparability across questions and survey waves.

Figure 1 displays the national average scores with their confidence intervals. The average level of national pride in the Americas is 89.5. The figure shows in descending order the mean level of pride for the 26 countries covered by the AmericasBarometer project in 2012. The results reveal national pride across the region is quite high. It is perhaps no surprise that Haiti registers the lowest value with 79.3 points,

¹ Funding for the 2012 round mainly came from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Important sources of support were also the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Vanderbilt University. This *Insights* report is solely produced by LAPOP and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the United States Agency for International Development, or any other supporting agency. Prior issues in the Insight series can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights.php>. The data on which they are based can be found at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/surveydata.php>

given that country's difficulties in recovering from the 2010 earthquake. However, it is perhaps more striking that among the countries that join Haiti on the bottom rung of our national pride rankings are four countries that are among the most developed in the region: Brazil, Canada, Chile, and the United States. Also somewhat surprising is the fact that Nicaragua records the highest level of national pride in the region despite that country's tumultuous political and economic developments over the past four decades. Given these intriguing cross-national results, we explore in more detail the question of the sources of national pride in this *Insights* report. In the next section we examine some of the national and individual-level factors that help explain why some citizens express pride in their country while others do not.

Figure 2: Predictors of National Pride in the Americas, 2012



What Predicts National Pride?

We begin our analysis of national pride by building on previous research on this question. At the individual level, Smith and Seokho (2006) find that national pride varies with citizens' age and education such that the elderly and less educated people tend to register lower levels of national pride.

Other research suggests that a country's participation in international sporting events such as the Olympics tends to strengthen national pride. Such events generate a connection between citizens and leads to stronger societal bonds that can contribute to greater pride in the nation as a whole. Hilvoorde and Elling (2010) find evidence of spikes in national pride around these types of international competitions. According to this perspective, then, we should find a somewhat higher level of national pride in those countries that participated in the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament held in South Africa, assuming that such effects are durable enough to persist through the first few months of 2012

when the AmericasBarometer data were collected. To analyze this factor we construct a dichotomous variable that indicates whether or not each of the 26 countries in the Americas participated in the 2010 World Cup.²

We also suspect that one's satisfaction with life will increase the degree of national pride she reports. Individuals who feel more satisfied with their own personal lives may transfer these positive feelings to the nation as a whole, resulting in a high level of national pride.

The state of the economy can also play an important role in the national pride level. The economy itself can be an object of pride in a country; a strong national economy can both directly affect feelings toward the country as a whole in a positive way and also have an indirect effect on national pride through its effect on the quality and breadth of cultural offerings such as arts, music, and sporting events that may also result in higher levels of national pride (Kelley, 2002). As individuals might make either or both of these links based

² These countries were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, United States, and Uruguay.

on their perception of the economy, we expect to find a positive relationship between perceptions of the national economy and one's level of national pride. We also include respondents' evaluation of their personal economic situation, as this too could contribute to more positive feelings of the nation as a whole. These economic perceptions may be particularly important in 2012 given that, for many Latin American countries, this period marks the point at which economic recovery from the 2008-2009 global financial crisis was at its peak. Perceptions of the ability of these countries to weather this economic crisis and rebound quickly and robustly, in contrast to the slower and more tepid recovery in Europe and the United States, are likely to have proved to be a point of pride for many in the region.

Previous research on the topic of national pride also highlights the role of interpersonal trust in generating feelings of national pride. The ability to trust one's neighbors and society more generally is viewed as a core component of the foundation of what "national pride" captures.

If an individual does not trust those around her, it is less likely that she will express positive feelings toward the country as a whole (Smith and Jarkko 1998).

The same logic suggests that those individuals victimized by crime will tend to report lower levels of national pride than those individuals who have never had such an experience. Like people with low levels of interpersonal trust, crime victims may translate their individual experiences into a general negative characterization of the country as a whole, resulting again in low levels of national pride. Therefore, on one hand, we expect to find a positive relationship between interpersonal trust and national pride and, on the other, a negative relationship of pride with crime victimization.

In the political arena, we expect citizens who express high levels of support for their political

system will also report strong feelings of national pride. Though the cross-national comparisons displayed in Figure 1 may seem to run counter to this proposition, we argue that in countries where democracy is judged to be more established and effective, and where crime and corruption are perceived to be less of a problem, individuals should have higher levels of national pride (Smith y Seokho, 2006). To test this relationship, we included a "political system support" index as an independent variable.³ Citizens with higher levels of support for the political system should have stronger feelings of national pride.

Finally, previous research on this question of national pride finds that those individuals who more actively participate in conventional political activities tend to be prouder of their countries. However, those who participate in non-conventional activities (roadblocks, strikes, boycotts, among others), perhaps as a result of their dissatisfaction with the formal political system, tend to report lower levels of national pride. Conventional activities are promoted by democratic societies and, especially, by citizens who are satisfied with the political performance of their government (Rooij and Reeskens 2012). We expect to find a positive relationship between respondents' reported rates of conventional participation in politics (e.g., voting) and the level of national pride, while for those participating in non-conventional forms of participation we expect the opposite relationship.

Bringing all of these propositions together we run a multivariate analysis predicting responses to the AmericasBarometer national pride item. The results of this regression analysis are shown in Figure 2. Each variable

³ Political system support is calculated as the average of the answers to five questions: B1 (courts guarantee a fair trial); B2 (respect to the national political institutions); B3 (citizens' basic rights are well protected); B4 (proud of living under the political system); y B6 (one should support the political system). The variable related to these questions is recoded on a scale from 0 to 100.

included in the model is listed on the vertical (y) axis. The standardized impact of each of those variables on national pride is shown graphically by a dot, which if falling to the right of the vertical “0” line implies a positive contribution and if to the left of the “0” line indicates a negative impact. Only when the confidence intervals (the horizontal lines) do not overlap the vertical “0” line is the variable statistically significant.

From this analysis we find several intriguing and revealing results. Consistent with some previous research, we find that women and respondents with higher levels of education tend to report lower levels of national pride. In contrast, age appears to have no significant impact.

Regarding the role of individuals’ perceptions of their personal and national economic situations, we find surprisingly that these factors have contrasting effects on national pride: positive views of one’s own economic situation predict higher levels of national pride while positive views of the national economic situation correspond with lower levels of national pride. What these findings may suggest is a much more powerful role for so-called “pocketbook assessments” of the economy in shaping one’s larger views of her society and country as a whole.

One result entirely consistent with our expectations emerges from the interpersonal trust variable. For this we see a translation of trust in one’s fellow citizens into greater feelings of pride in the nation. As we discussed above, and as the results confirm, feelings of national pride seem to be fundamentally tied to one’s views toward those around her. This finding, then, helps in understanding what in fact national pride may be telling us about the society of a particular country.

Our expectations regarding how victims of crime may have more negative views of the nation as a whole are not borne out in the model. We find, rather, that crime victimization

has no significant impact on the level of pride an individual feels in the nation.

The strongest, and most theoretically intuitive, result comes from the system support index. Here we see that those with higher levels of support for their political system tend to also have higher levels of national pride. This result highlights the potential significance of levels of national pride as another indicator of society’s level of confidence in and support for the political system itself. The results from the conventional and non-conventional political participation variables reinforce this idea that national pride in part is a product of how much support citizens have for their political system. Here we see that respondents who report high levels of engagement in conventional forms of political behavior tend to register high levels of national pride, while those participating in protests and other non-conventional activities are far less likely to have strong feelings of national pride. The only result that runs slightly counter to this pattern is the marginally significant negative relationship that participation in community improvement meetings seems to have with national pride.

Finally, with respect to our national-level hypothesis concerning participation in international athletic competitions, we in fact find results that are directly counter to our initial expectations. All else equal, respondents living in those countries that participated in the 2010 World Cup reported lower levels of national pride than respondents living in countries that did not make the World Cup tournament. This result may be a product of the fact that the “national pride effect” of this event had faded by the time of the survey and/or the fact that those AmericasBarometer countries participating in this event, with the possible exception of Uruguay who reached the final four of the tournament, did not match the expectations of supporters. Both Brazil and Argentina, for example, were defeated in the quarterfinals of the tournament while the U.S. team succeeded in advancing to the round of sixteen only to suffer a disappointing loss to

Ghana. We can conclude from this, then, that it is not simply a country's participation in an international event that will lead to an enduring boost in national pride, but rather the citizenry's view of the performance of the country's teams/individuals in that event that is the determinative factor.

Conclusion

This AmericasBarometer *Insights* report suggests that the level of national pride in the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America is related to both political and social factors.

In the Americas, citizens with fewer years of formal education and men have a higher level of national pride than women and people with more education.

Support for the political system has a strong relationship with the level of national pride, which shows that individuals who see their countries as having more established and effective democracies tend to be those with stronger feelings of national pride.

Likewise, interpersonal trust plays an important role, as it is a factor that has a large substantive relationship with the level of national pride. Just as high levels of interpersonal trust have been linked to stronger democracies, so too do we find that where individuals trust each other, there tends to be a stronger feeling of national pride.

Missing from this analysis that future research might explore is an assessment of how cultural factors within a country might influence the level of national pride. Returning to the somewhat counter-intuitive result of Nicaraguans recording the highest level of national pride in the Americas, one possible explanation for this result that is left out of the

current analysis is the role of the country's past conflicts and political struggles that may, in some way, have contributed to stronger feelings of national pride than we might expect.

Now that we better understand the predictors of national pride, we can also conclude that, at least at the individual level, feelings of national pride may be an important "canary in the coalmine" for political leaders in assessing the level of confidence and support citizens have for one another and for the political system more generally.

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Appendix

Table 1. Predictors of the National Pride Level in Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America, 2012

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Participation in protests	-0.032*	0.006
Participation in political parties meetings	-0.019*	0.006
Participation in community improvement committee	0.022*	0.007
2010 Soccer World Cup Participation	-0.059*	0.009
Perception of current personal economic situation	0.018*	0.007
Perception of current national economic situation	-0.023*	0.007
Interpersonal trust	0.077*	0.007
Crime Victimization	-0.006	0.006
System Support	0.156*	0.007
Education	-0.018*	0.005
Age	0.024*	0.005
Gender	-0.009	0.005
Constant	0.024*	0.008
<i>R-squared</i>	0.042	
<i>Number of Observations</i>	35,394	

* p<0.05

Note: Coefficients are statistically significant at *p<0.05, two-tailed.

Country of Reference: Uruguay