

December 2020 | Kaitlen Cassell

Spotlight on Approval of Regime Critics' Right to Protest in Latin America and the Caribbean

Most in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region do not approve of regime critics' having the right to protest

In most LAC countries, less than half approve of regime critics' right to protest

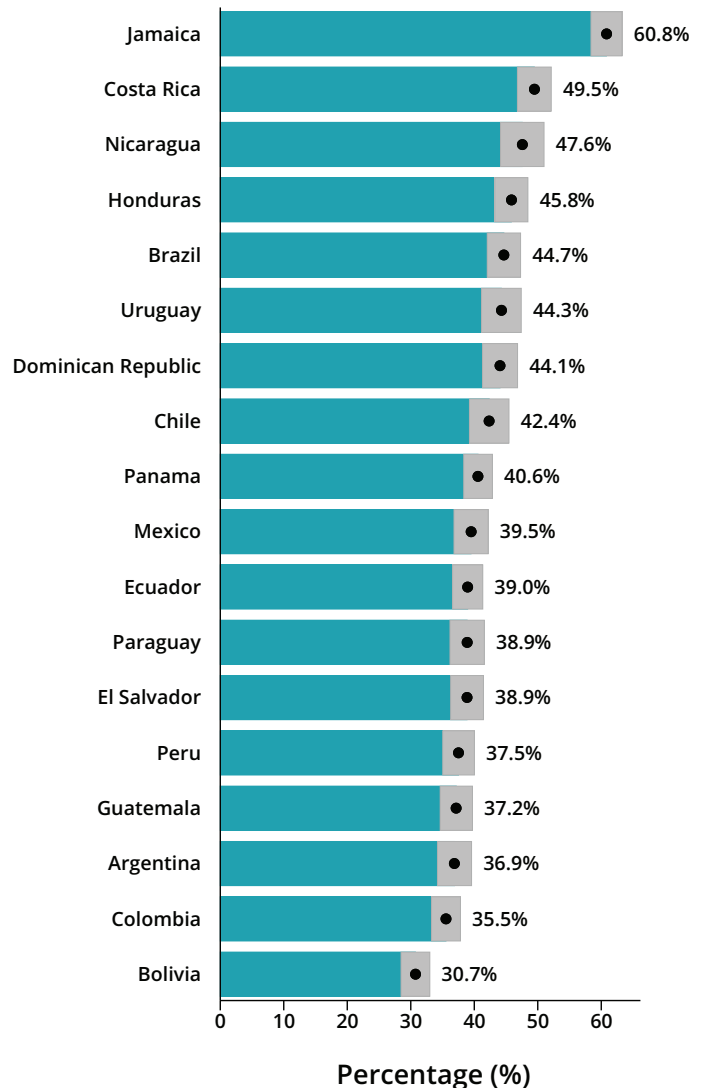
Since 2004, LAPOP's AmericasBarometer has measured the degree to which individuals believe that regime critics should be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations by asking the following question about "people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the current (incumbent) government but the system of government":

D2. How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views?

In the 2018/19 round, this question was asked in 18 LAC countries. Respondents indicated their opinion using a 1-10 scale, where 1 means "strongly disapprove" and 10 means "strongly approve." Here we code responses into a dichotomous variable, which allows us to estimate the percentage of people in the region who approve of regime critics having the right to protest. Specifically, responses were recoded into a dichotomous variable indicating approval of regime critics' right to protest by combining responses "8" through "10" into one category, while placing the other responses ("1" through "7") into a baseline category. The regional average rate of approval of regime critics' right to protest is 41.7%.

Jamaica has the highest percentage of people who approve of regime critics' right to protest (60.8%), while Bolivia has the lowest in the LAC region (30.7%). In most LAC countries in the 2018/19 round, less than half of adults approve of regime critics' right to protest.

Approval of Regime Critics' Right to Protest, 2018/19



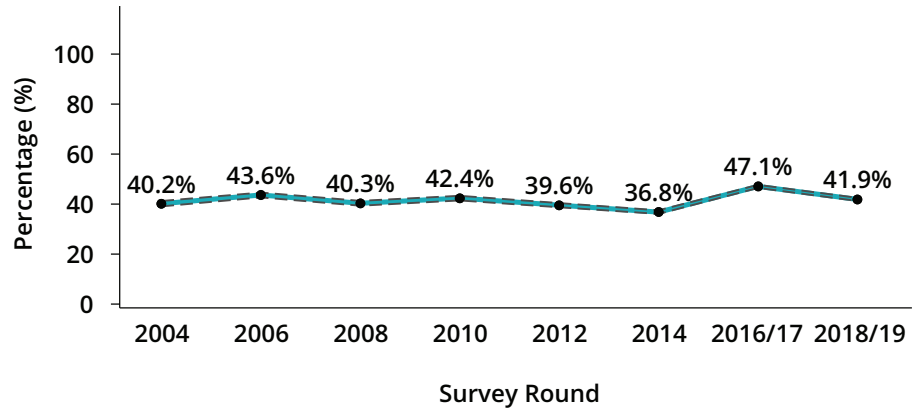
95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

Approval of regime critics' right to protest has increased slightly in recent years

After dropping to its lowest percentage in 2014 (36.8%), the regional average rate of people who approve of regime critics' right to protest increased to levels observed in earlier years of the survey. Mean approval of regimes critics' protest rights reached its peak in 2016/17 (47.1%).

Approval of Regime Critics' Right to Protest in the LAC Region, 2004–2018/19



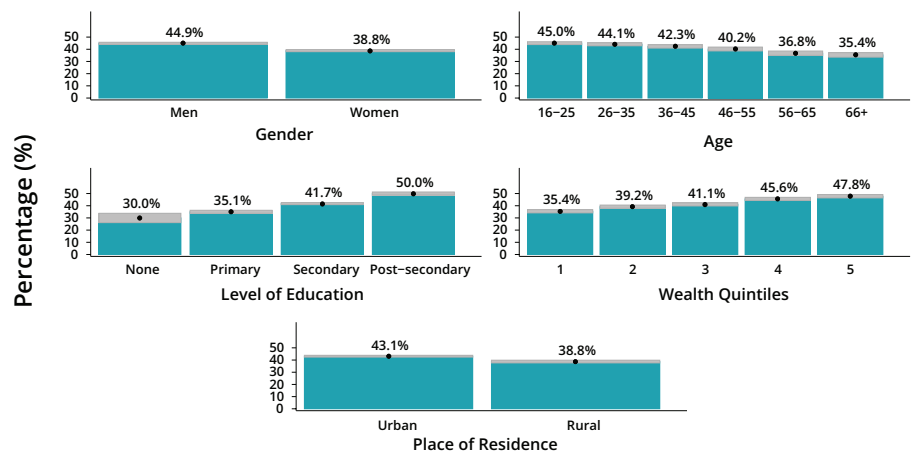
--- 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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

Approval of regime critics' right to peaceful demonstrations is higher among those who are male, young, educated, wealthy, and urban residents

What characteristics of individuals predict the approval of regime critics' right to protest in the LAC region? Men (44.9%) are much more likely to express approval than women (38.8%). Younger individuals are significantly more tolerant of regime critics' protest rights compared to older cohorts, with almost a 10 percentage point difference between the youngest and oldest cohorts. Meanwhile, more educated individuals are much more likely to express approval of regime critics' right to protest—half of individuals with post-secondary education express this approval, while only 30.0% of individuals with no formal education report the same approval. The wealthier individuals are, the more likely they are to approve of regime critics' voting rights. Additionally, individuals in urban areas are more likely to approve of these rights than rural residents.

Approval of Regime Critics' Right to Protest in the LAC region, 2018/19



■ 95% Confidence Interval (with Design-Effects)

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
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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 vanderbilt.edu/lapop/core-surveys.

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