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Latin American Public Opinion Project

LAPOP

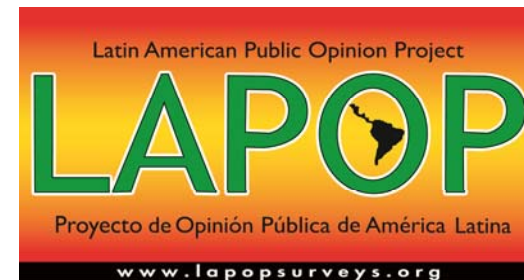
Proyecto de Opinión Pública de América Latina

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## Citizen Insecurities and Democracy in the Americas: Looking Back over a Decade of the LAPOP AmericasBarometer, 2004-2014



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Associate Professor of Political Science, Vanderbilt University**

**Mitchell A. Seligson, LAPOP Founder & Senior Advisor, and  
Centennial Professor of Political Science, Vanderbilt University**

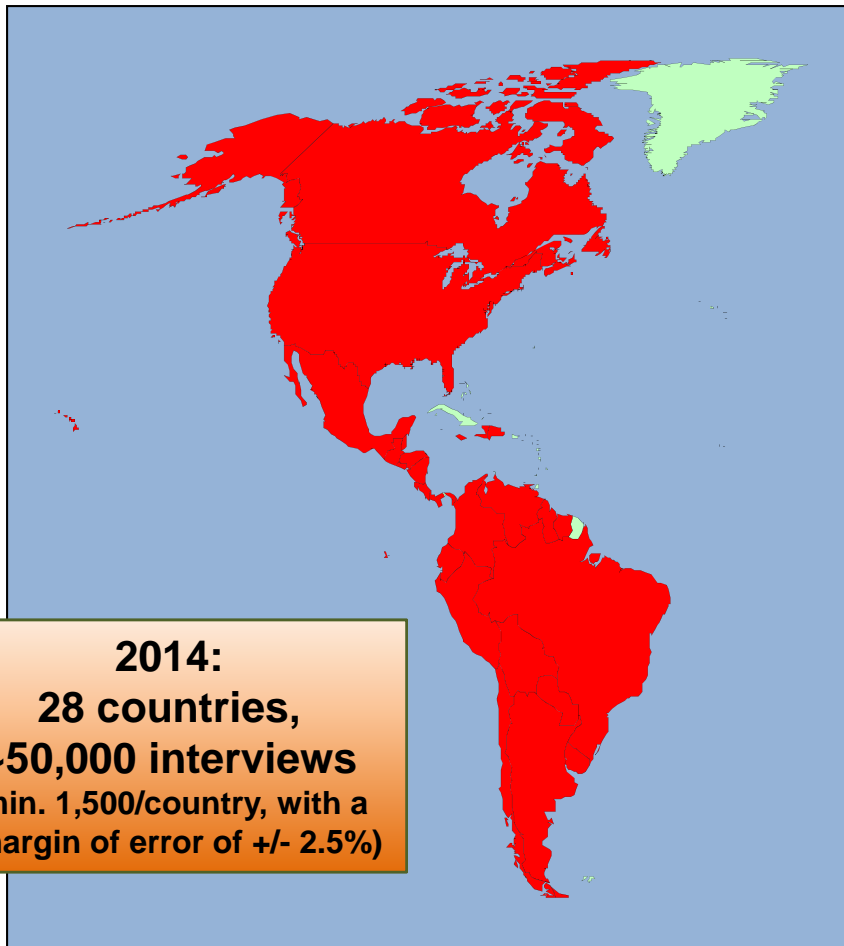
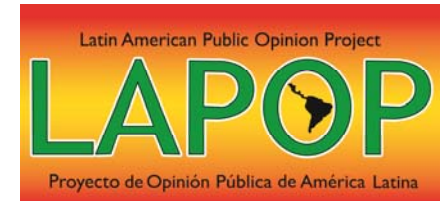
# Focal Points of Today's Presentation

- I. Crime is increasingly worrisome for residents of the region.  
*Per the UNODC:*
  - Homicide about 7x higher in Americas than Asia/Europe
  - 1/3 of all the homicides in the world occur in the Americas
  - Gang and organized crime-linked homicide = 30% of all murders in the Americas, 1% in Asia and Europe
  - Homicide conviction rate in the Americas is ½ the rate than that in Europe
- II. Citizens are increasingly affected by crime in their daily lives
- III. These concerns are grounded in personal experience
- IV. Crime is eroding support for key democratic institutions

...but first, a short primer on the data we have collected for the  
**2014 AmericasBarometer**

# The AmericasBarometer

2004-2014: ~232,000 interviews



- The only household survey that includes North, Central and South America, and key countries in the Caribbean
- Minimum of 1,500 interviews per country
- Nationally representative; includes rural and urban areas
- Face-to-face interviews, conducted in more than 10 languages
- Multiple pre-tests conducted over the course of a year



## LAPOP Supporters in Recent Years



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE






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Canada	THE ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE
United States	  



## The LAPOP Consortium: Covering the Americas

A network of prestigious universities and research centers spanning the Americas

Andes / Southern Cone	
Argentina	UNIVERSIDAD TORCUATO DI TELLA
Bolivia	 
Brazil	VOX BRASIL
Chile	 
Colombia	 
Ecuador	 
Paraguay	
Peru	IEP Instituto de Estudios Peruanos
Uruguay	 
Venezuela	

The Caribbean	
Bahamas	
Belize	
Dominican Republic	 
Guyana	
Haiti	
Jamaica	
Suriname	
Trinidad and Tobago	

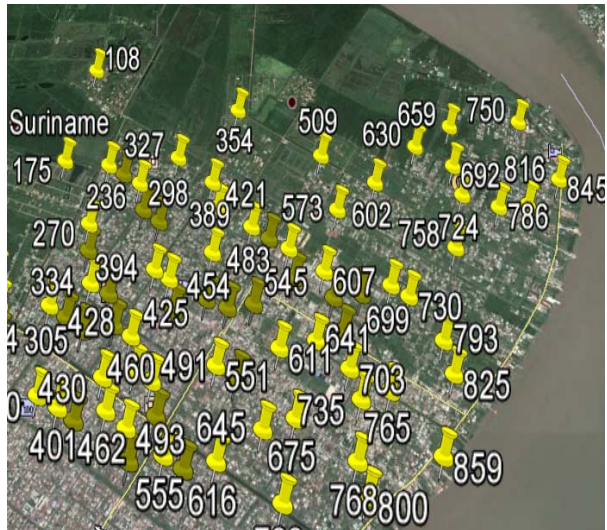
Mexico and Central America	
Costa Rica	  
El Salvador	
Guatemala	
Honduras	 
Mexico	 
Nicaragua	
Panama	

## “Firsts” Featured in the 2014 AmericasBarometer:

- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- More than 50,000 interviews
- Large urban samples in selected Caribbean nations to measure crime with unprecedented precision
- Remote sensing to design samples (LASSO)
- Extended questionnaire battery on crime and violence
- Question modules on state capacity, environment, disaster risk reduction, domestic violence norms, and more



# 2014 Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals (national level)



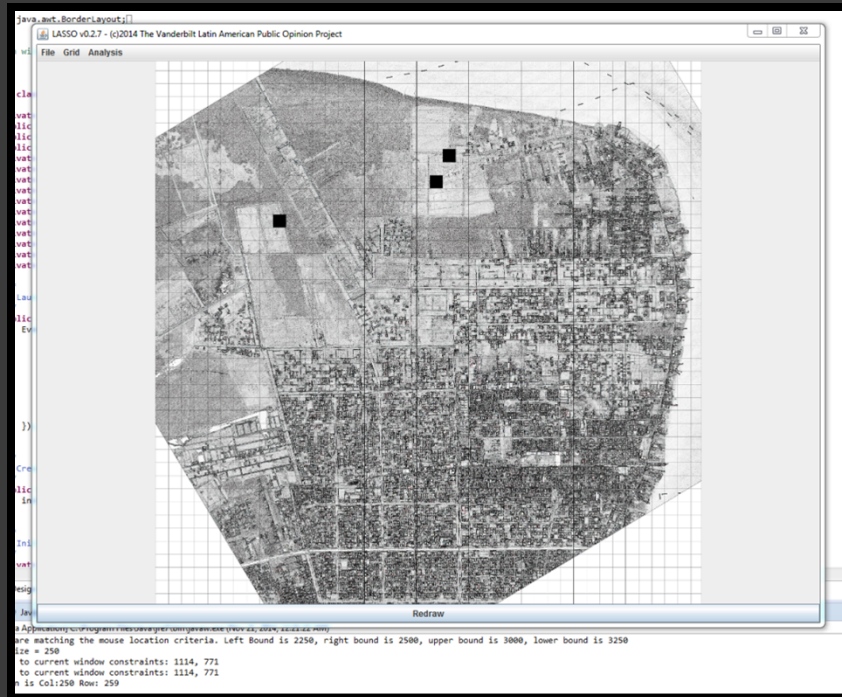
LASSO: A new technology for  
sample design

Country	Sample Size	Sampling Error
Mexico/Central America		
Mexico	1,578	±2.5%
Guatemala	1,506	±2.5%
El Salvador	1,512	±2.5%
Honduras	1,561	±2.4%
Nicaragua	1,547	±2.4%
Costa Rica	1,541	±2.5%
Panama	1,508	±2.4%
Andean/Southern Cone		
Colombia	1,512	±2.5%
Ecuador	1,512	±2.5%
Peru	1,500	±2.5%
Bolivia	3,068	±1.8%
Paraguay	1,515	±2.5%
Chile	1,571	±2.5%
Uruguay	1,512	±2.5%
Brazil	1,500	±2.5%
Venezuela	1,500	±2.5%
Argentina	1,512	±2.5%
Caribbean		
Bahamas	3,429	±1.8%
Barbados	In progress	
Belize	1,534	±2.5%
Dominican Republic	1,520	±2.5%
Guyana	1,558	±2.5%
Haiti	1,512	±2.3%
Jamaica	1,506	±2.5%
Suriname	4,000	±1.6%
Trinidad & Tobago	4,207	±1.6%
United States and Canada		
Canada	1,517	±2.5%
United States	1,500	±2.5%
Total	49,738	
*Confidence intervals based on unweighted sample sizes. For cross-national analysis purposes, LAPOP weights each sample to 1,500.		



# LAPOP Survey Sample Optimizer (LASSO)

## Computer Vision for Counting Rooftops



- Java-based code permits use on multiple desktop and mobile platforms (PC, Mac, Android)
- Point-and-click GUI allows areas to easily be selected or deselected from the satellite image

- Native C-compiled OpenCV code runs object analysis
- Pre-compiled executable can be multithreaded

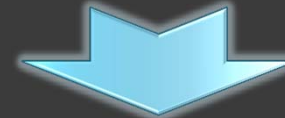
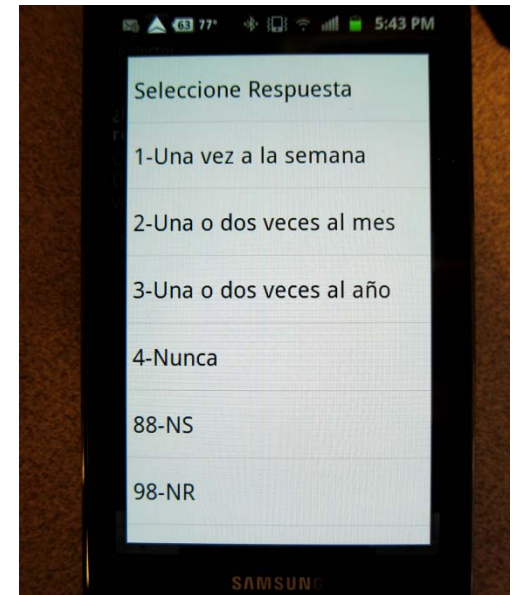


Image Square Label	Number of Rooftops Detected	Square size (pixels)	Square Location (column - px)	Square location (row - px)
51	21	330	990	990
52	16	330	990	1320
53	7	330	990	1650
54	19	330	990	1980
55	19	330	990	2310
56	12	330	990	2640
57	14	330	990	2970
58	3	330	990	3300
59	1	330	990	3630
60	2	330	990	3960
61	4	330	990	4290
62	4	330	990	4620
63	0	330	990	4950

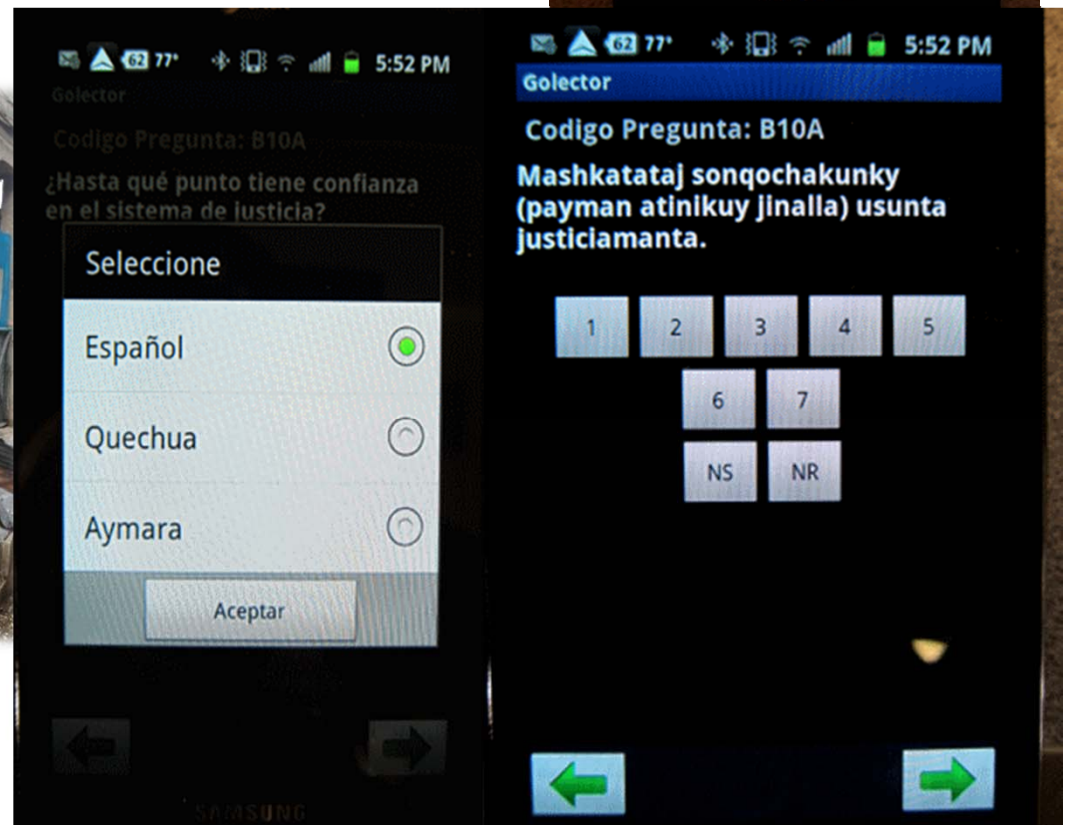
User is given color map output complete with reference grid, numbering system, and rooftop counts, as well as a corresponding spreadsheet.

The only regional survey using handheld computers, with software developed by academic partners in Costa Rica and Bolivia:

- Reduces data entry errors
- Allows for multiple languages
- Is easily customized
- Permits embedded experiments



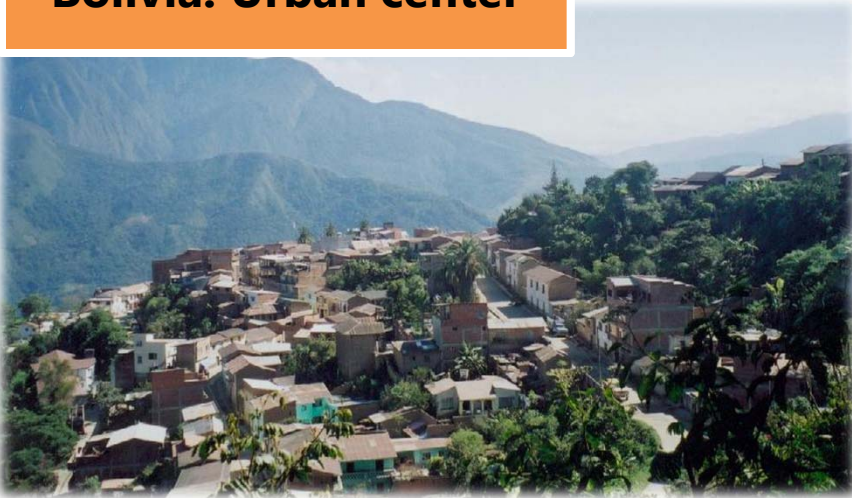
Pretesting in Jamaica





# Representative surveys, covering urban centers and rural regions

**Bolivia: Urban center**



**RAAS (Atlantic Zone),  
Nicaragua**



**Bolivia: Rural area**



# Interview teams face challenges in remote regions



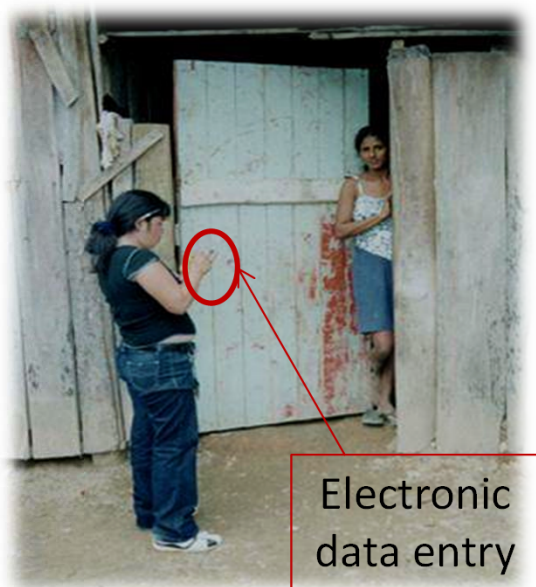


# Interview being conducted in Miskito





All Surveys are Pre-tested In-Country; All Interviewers are Trained by LAPOP; All Fieldwork Monitored by LAPOP



Pretesting in Honduras



Pretesting in Panama



Pretesting in the D.R.



Training in Guatemala

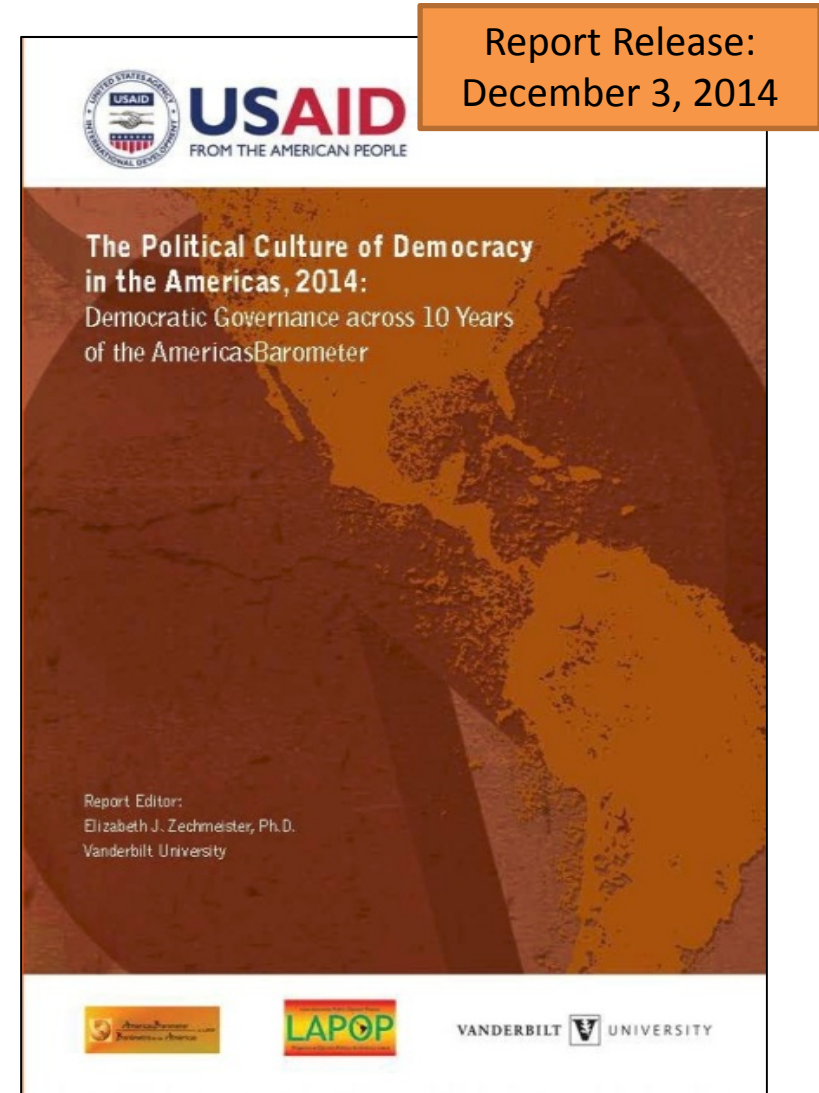


Training in Haiti

# World-Wide Release of 2014 Data: December 1, 2014



World-wide free access made possible by the support of the Tinker Foundation



[www.LapopSurveys.org](http://www.LapopSurveys.org)



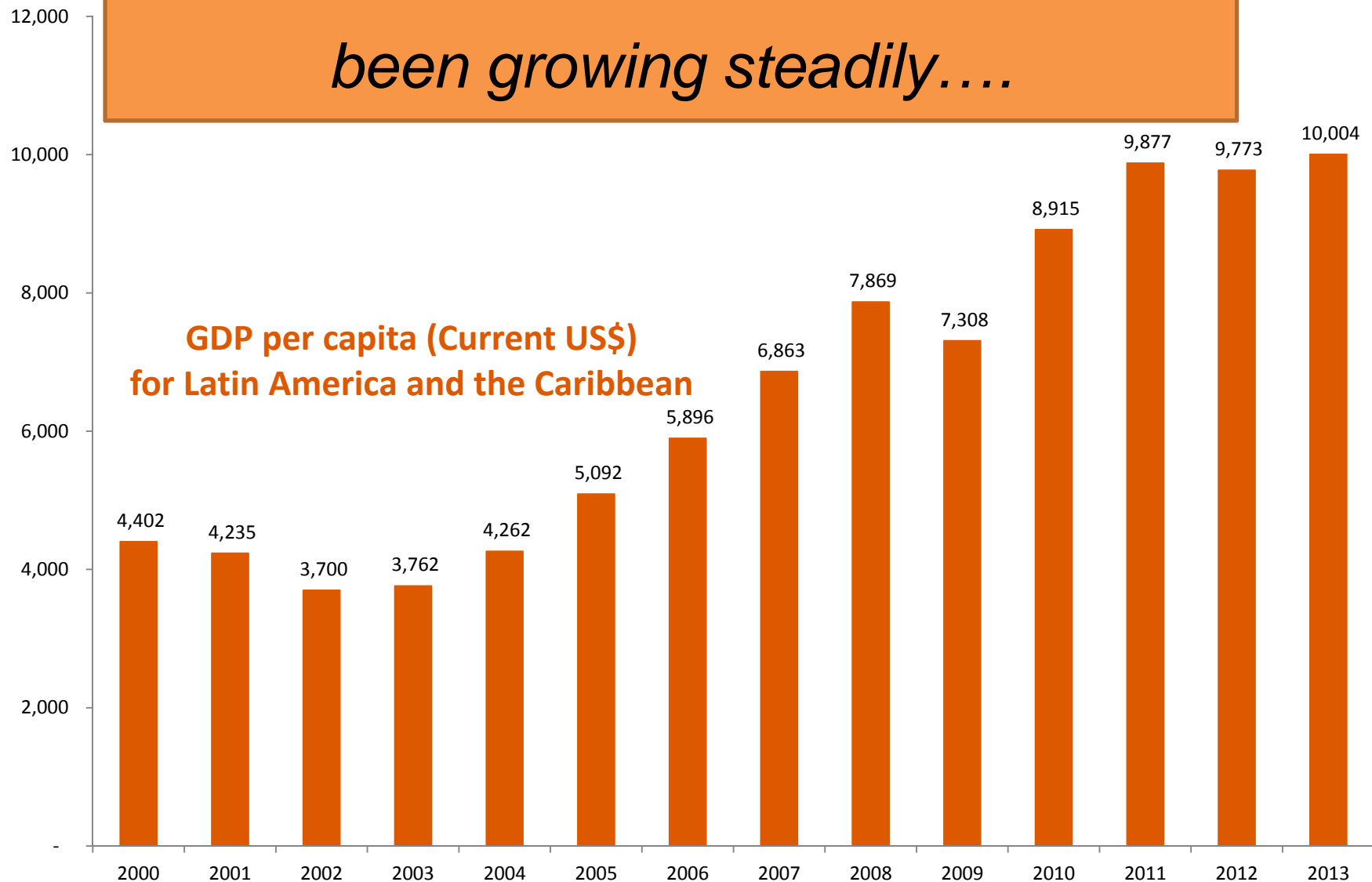
***Looking back over the decade of the LAPOP  
AmericasBarometer, we find:***

**Citizens of the Americas are more  
concerned about crime today than in  
the past**



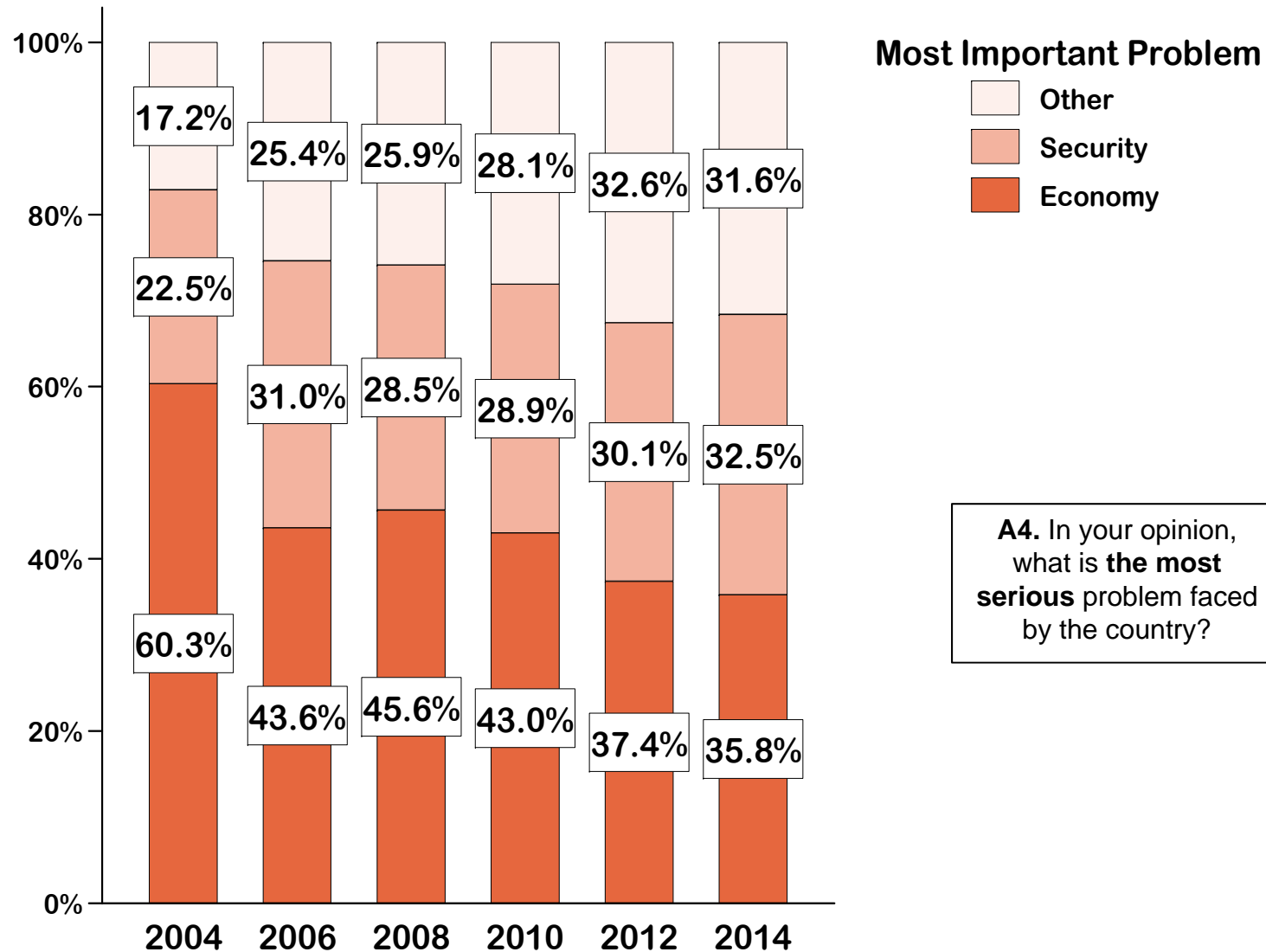


*The economies of the region have  
been growing steadily....*



Source: World Bank

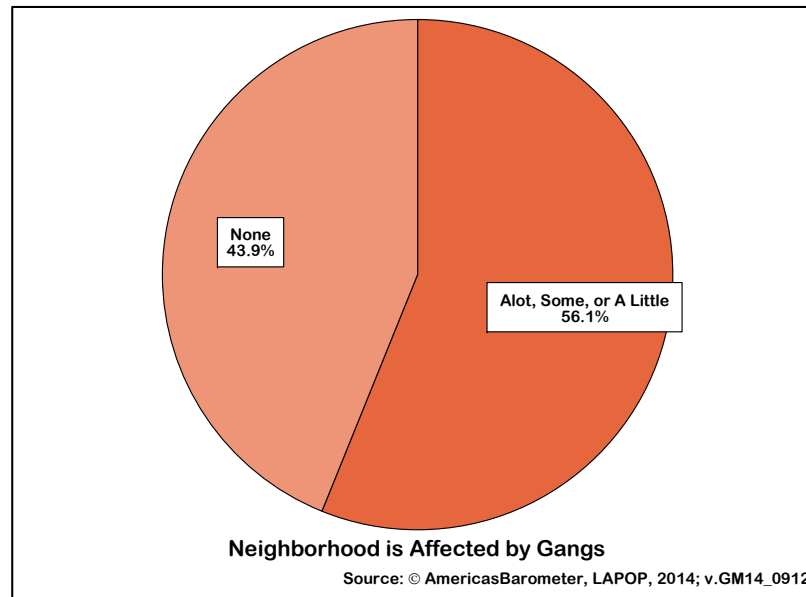
# Concerns about security have increased over time, while concerns about the economy have decreased



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2004-2014; v.GM14\_0912

# The majority of respondents report that their neighborhoods are affected by gangs:

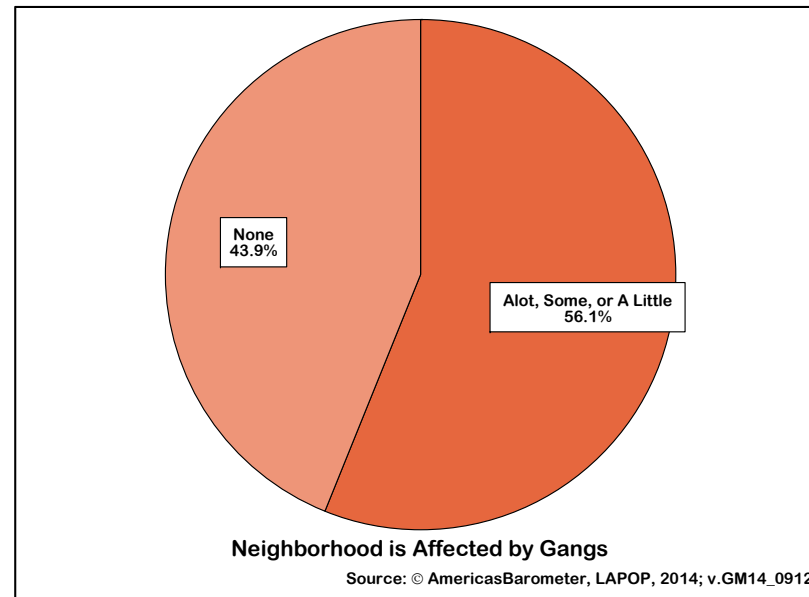
urban areas are most seriously affected



**AOJ17.** To what extent do you think your neighborhood is affected by gangs? Would you say a lot, somewhat, a little or none?

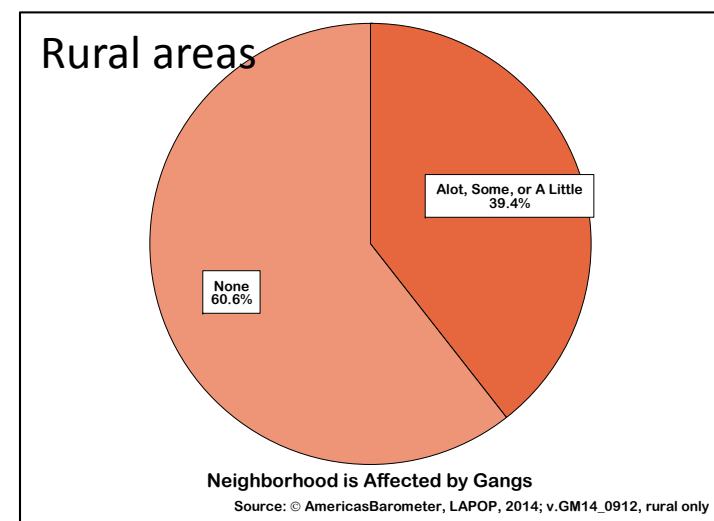
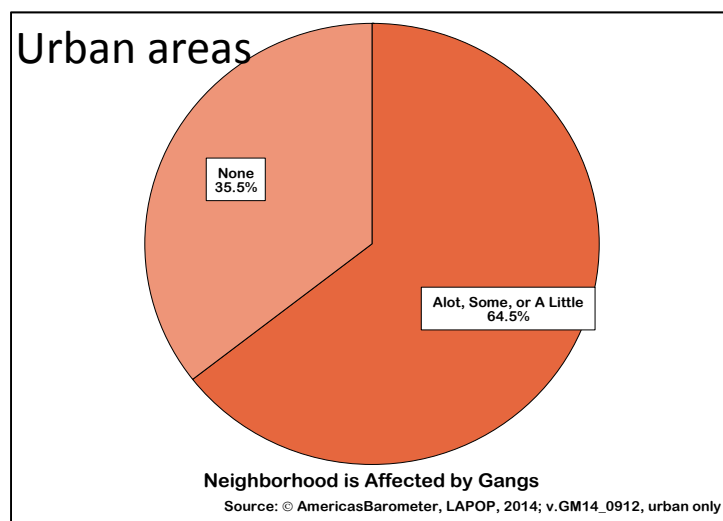
- (1) A lot
- (2) Somewhat
- (3) Little
- (4) None

# The majority of respondents report that their neighborhoods are affected by gangs: urban areas are most seriously affected



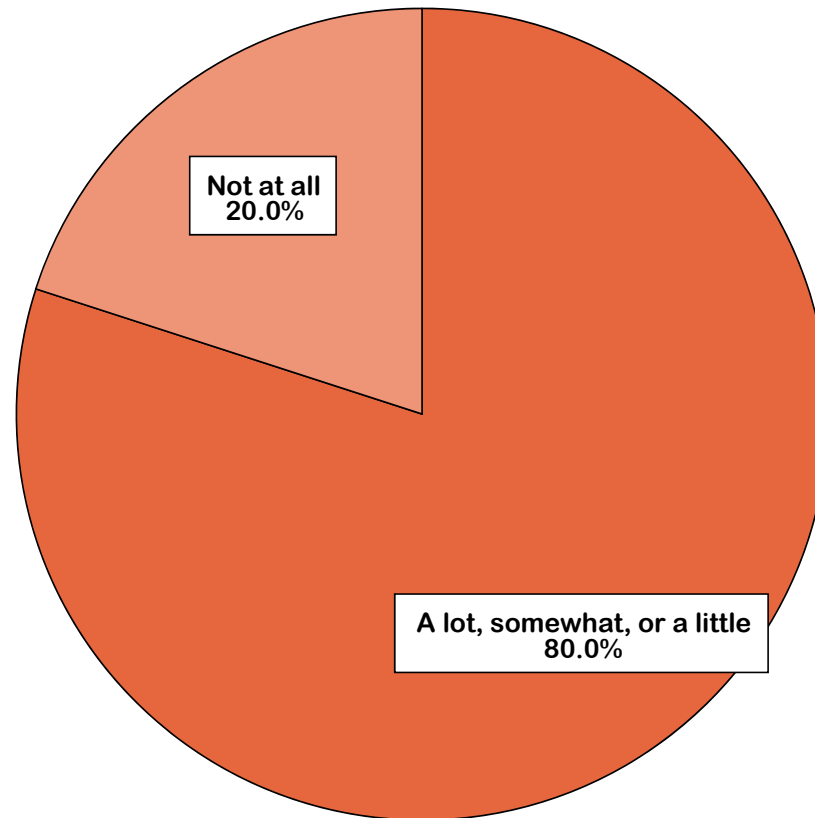
**AOJ17.** To what extent do you think your neighborhood is affected by gangs? Would you say a lot, somewhat, a little or none?

- (1) A lot
- (2) Somewhat
- (3) Little
- (4) None



# Concerns about safety on public transportation are nearly universal

**FEAR6e.** And in general, how worried are you that someone in your family will be assaulted on public transportation? Would you say a lot, somewhat, a little, or not at all?

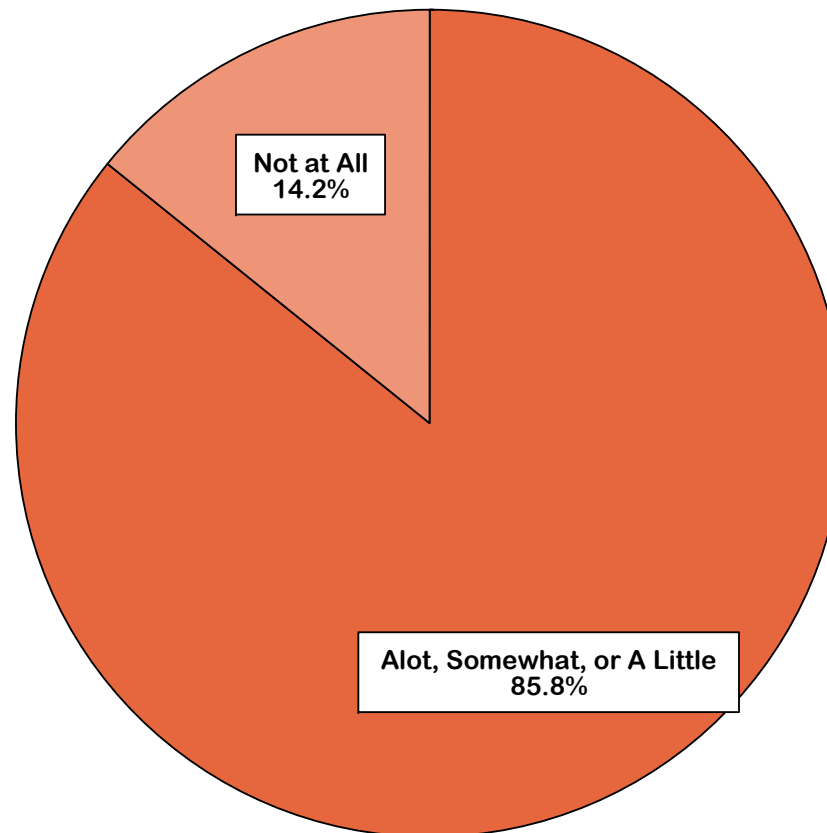


**Insecurity on Public Transportation**

Source: AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912

# Concerns about safety at schools are even more widespread

**FEAR6f.** And how worried are you about the safety of children in school? Would you say a lot, somewhat, a little, or not at all?



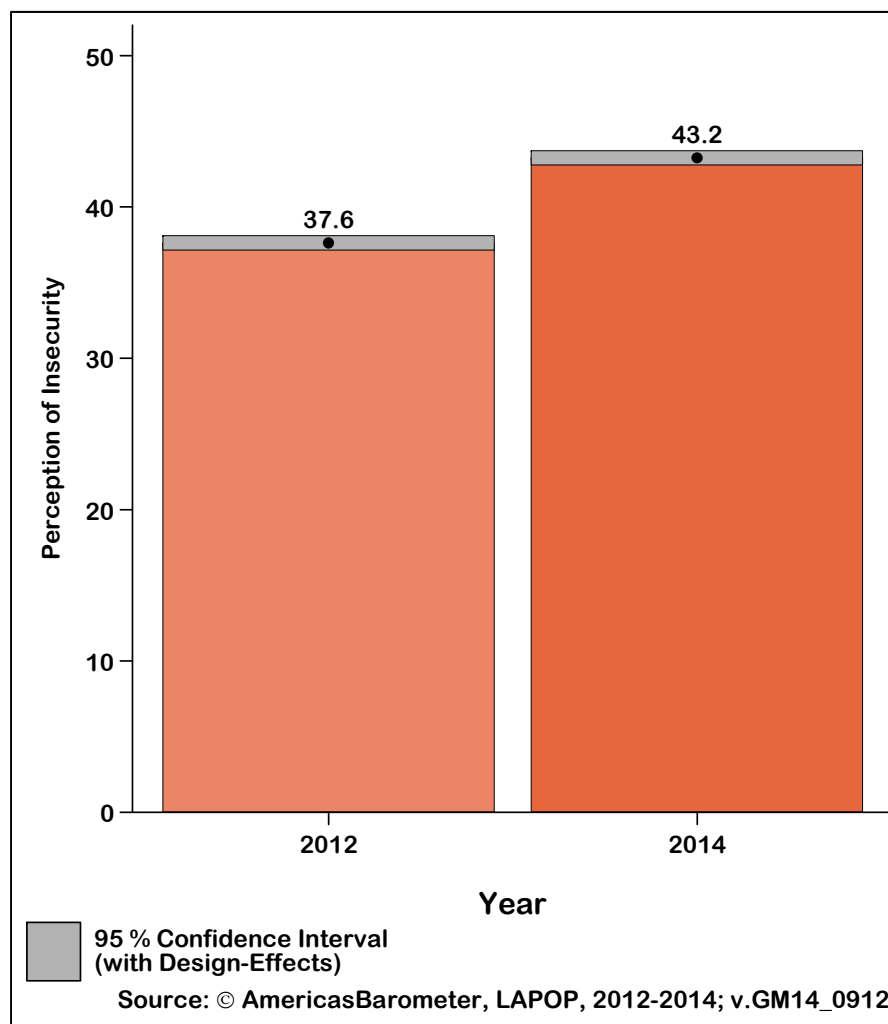
**Insecurity at Schools**

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912



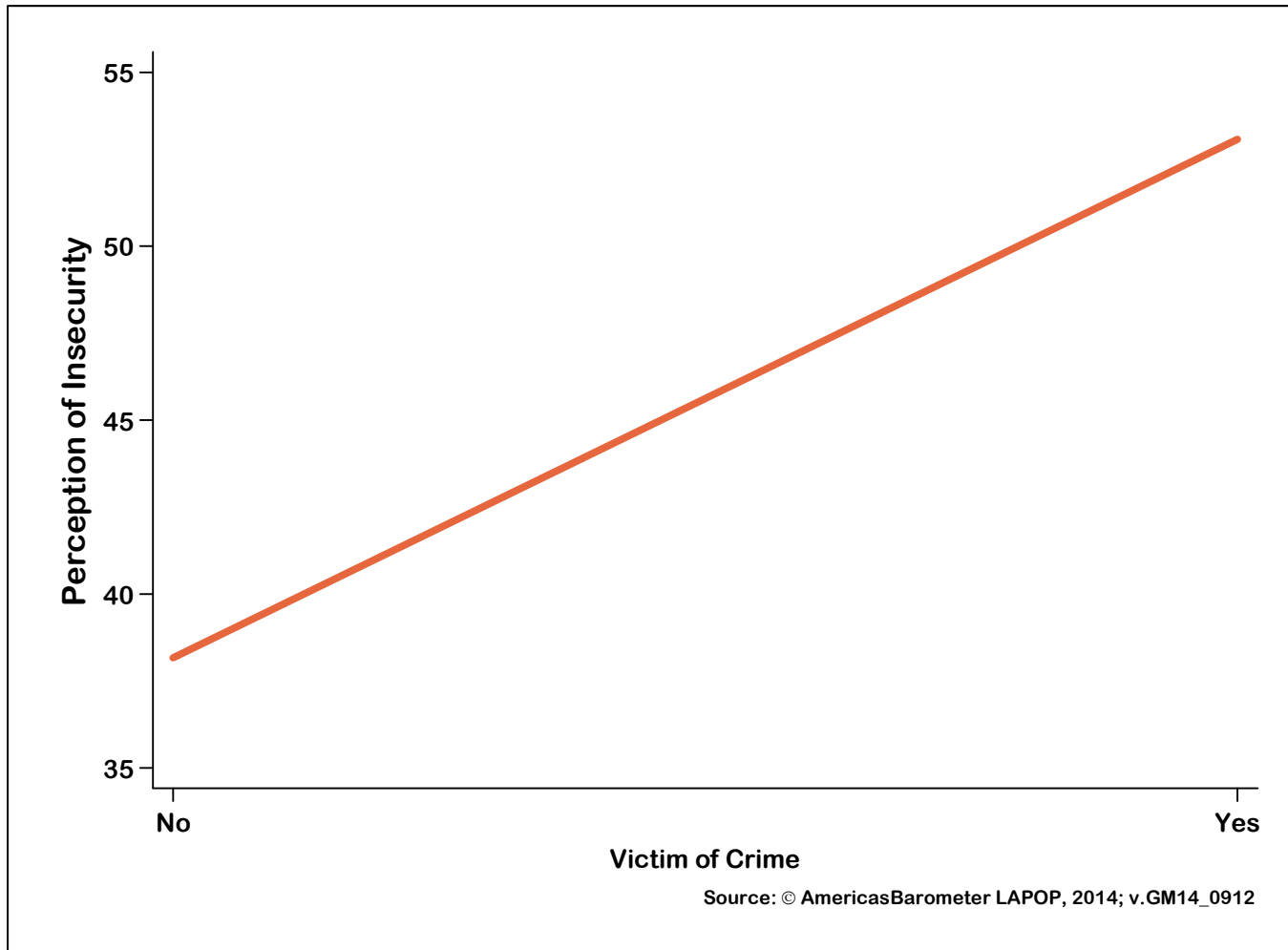
# Fears of assault and robbery increased between 2012 and 2014

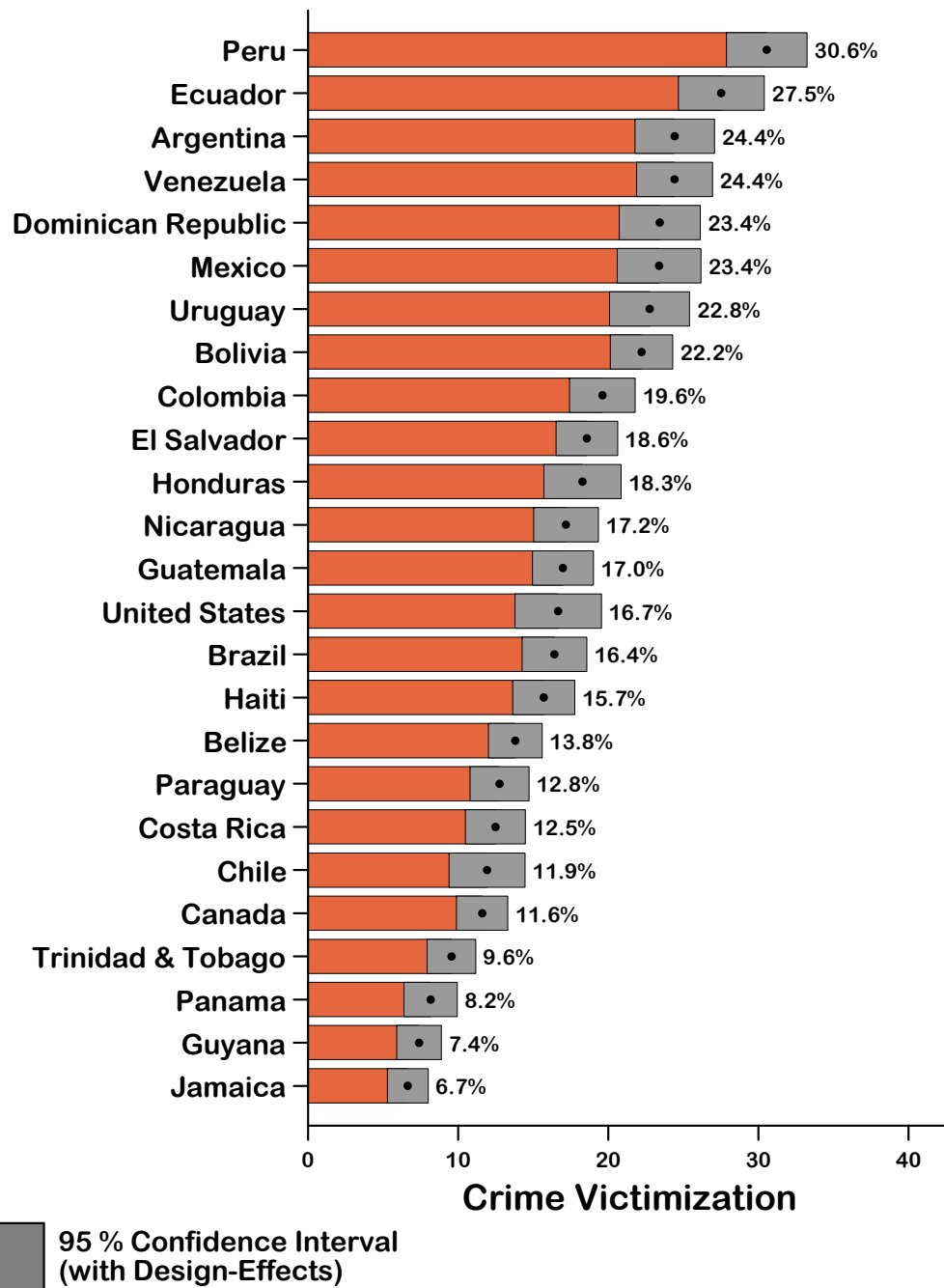
**AOJ11.** Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe? (Recoded so that 0 = Very safe and 100 = Very unsafe)



**Perceptions of insecurity are  
grounded in the reality of crime  
victimization**

## Crime victimization is associated with greater feelings of insecurity





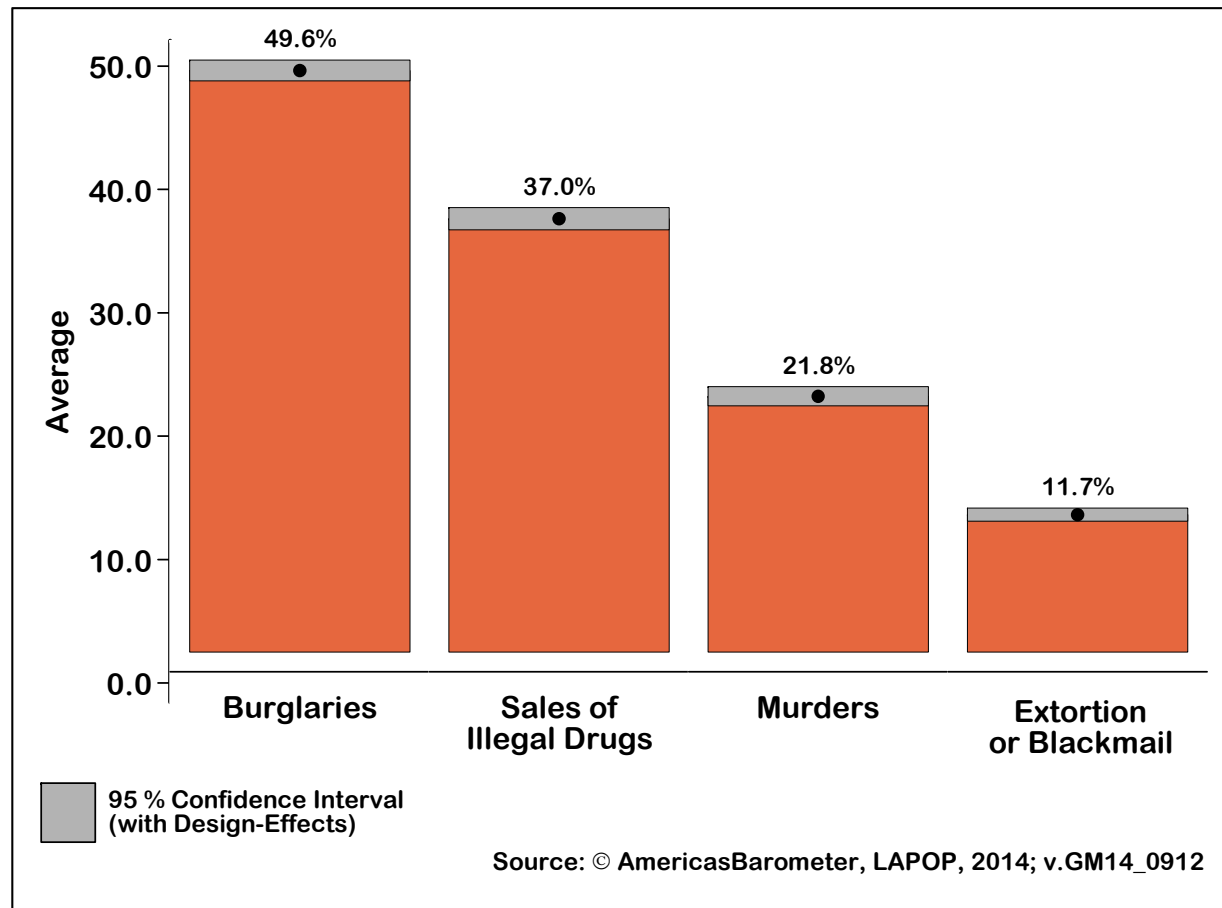
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912

**Yet, reports of  
crime victimization  
vary greatly across  
countries**

**(Percentage of respondents  
answering “yes”)**

**VIC1EXT.** Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?  
(1) Yes (2) No

This is in part because we find striking differences in types of crime rates within neighborhoods throughout the Americas



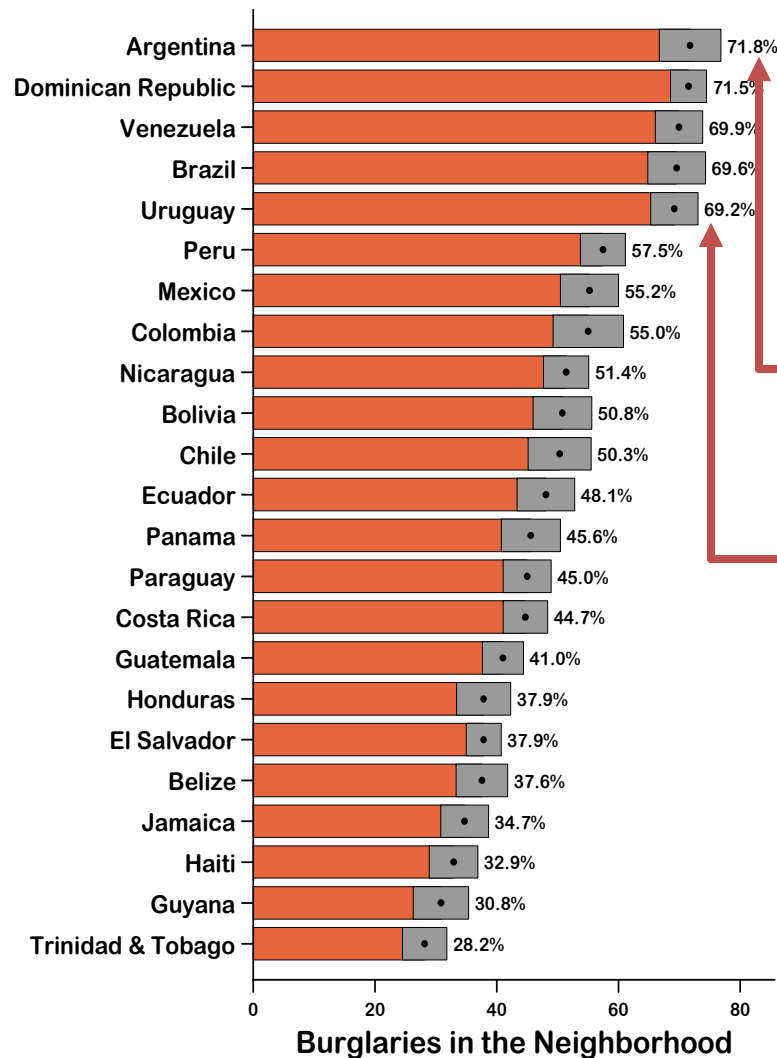
**VICBAR1.** Were there burglaries in the last 12 months in your neighborhood?

**VICBAR3.** Have there been sales of illegal drugs in the past 12 months in your neighborhood?

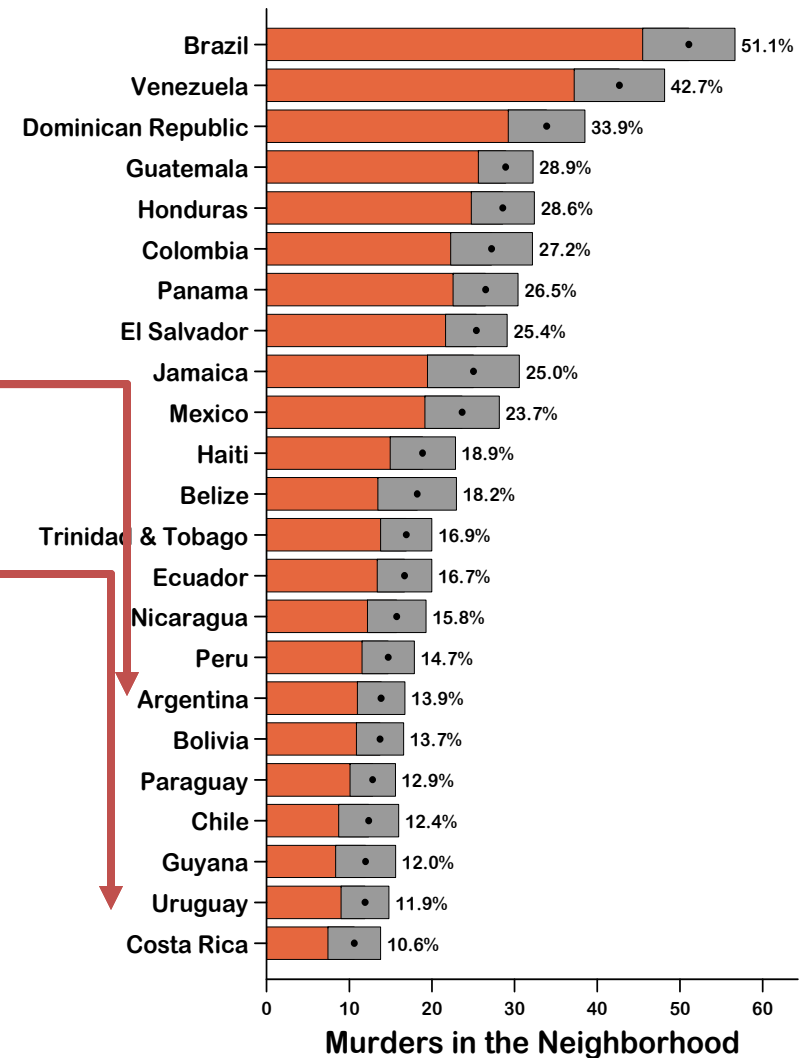
**VICBAR4.** Has there been any extortion or blackmail in the past 12 months in your neighborhood?

**VICBAR7.** Have there been any murders in that last 12 months in your neighborhood?

# The nature of crime varies across countries:



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912



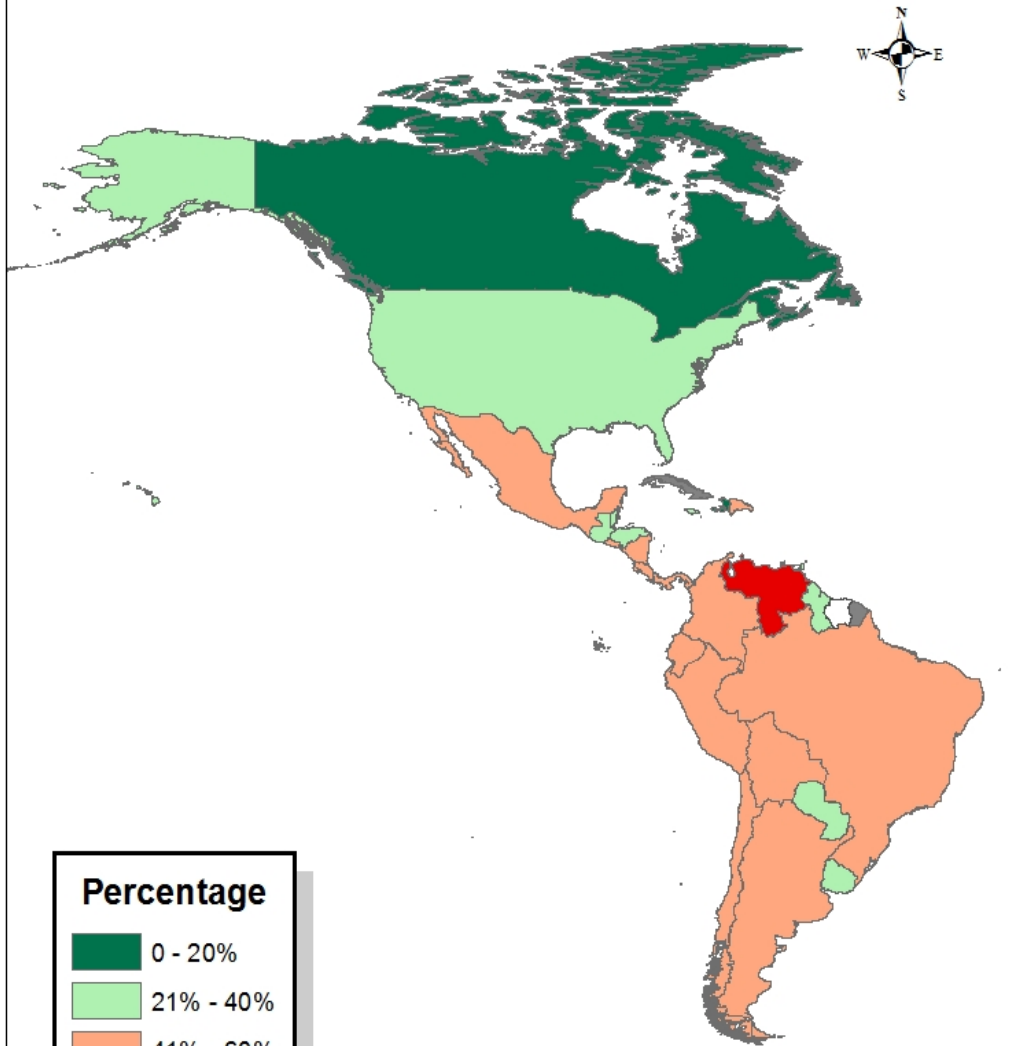
Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912



## ***The Costs:***

**Crime victimization and insecurity  
drive individuals to alter routines and  
augment intentions to emigrate**

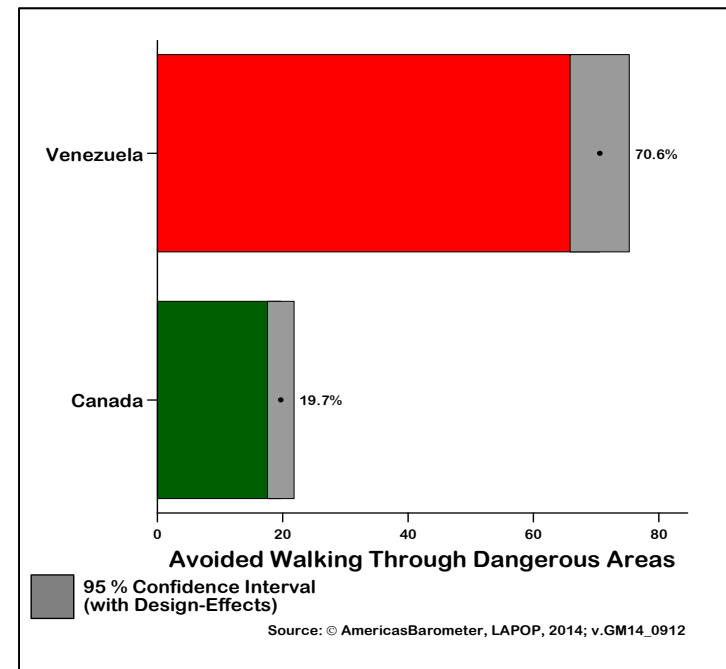
## Avoided Walking through Dangerous Areas in the Americas, 2014



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912.  
Map created from boundary data from: <http://www.gadm.org>

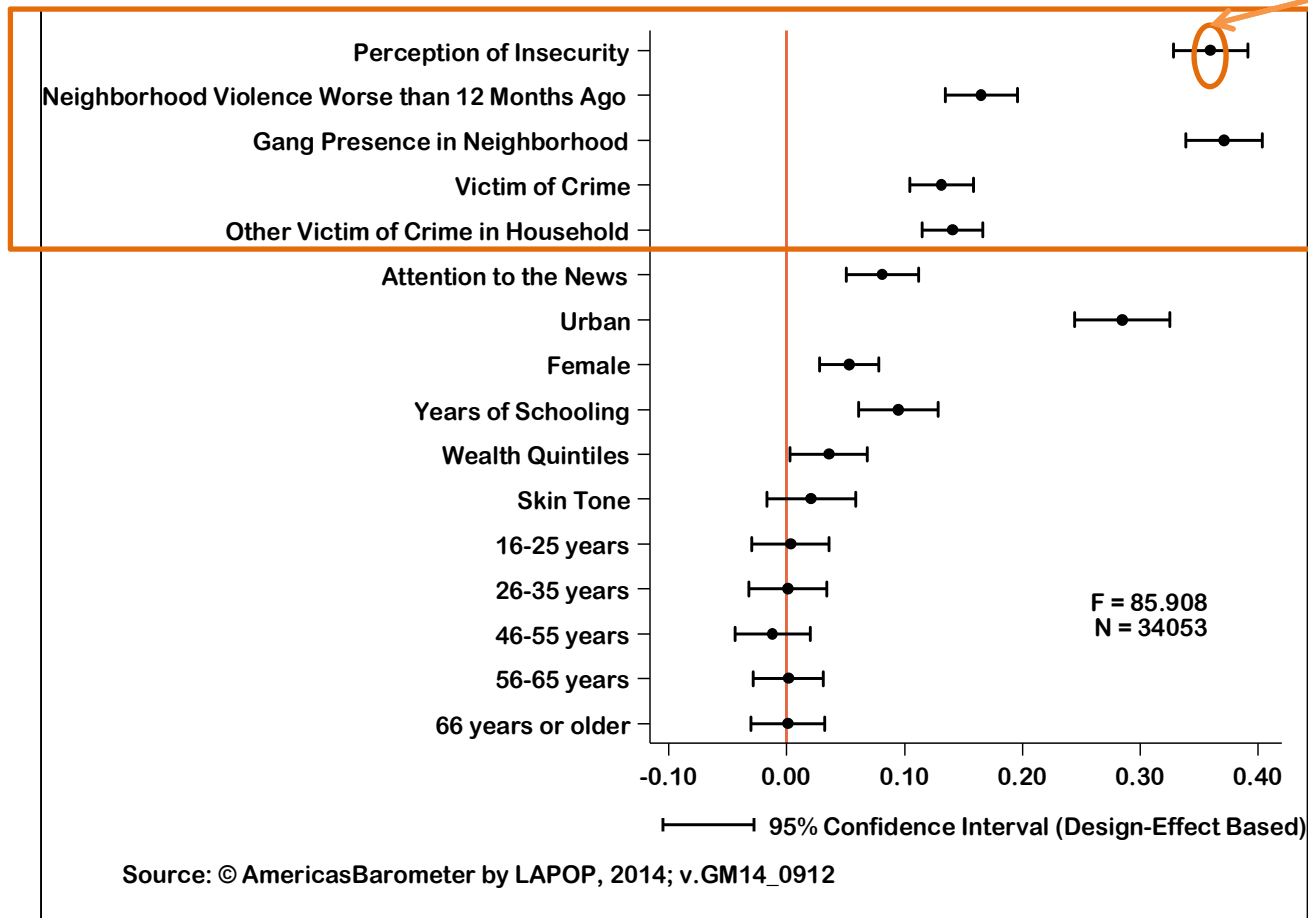
0 1,050 2,100 4,200 Kilometers

**Regionally, 40% of respondents of the Americas avoid walking through dangerous areas**



**FEAR10.** In order to protect yourself from crime, in the last 12 months, have you taken any measures such as avoiding walking through some areas in your neighborhood because they are dangerous?  
(1) Yes (0) No

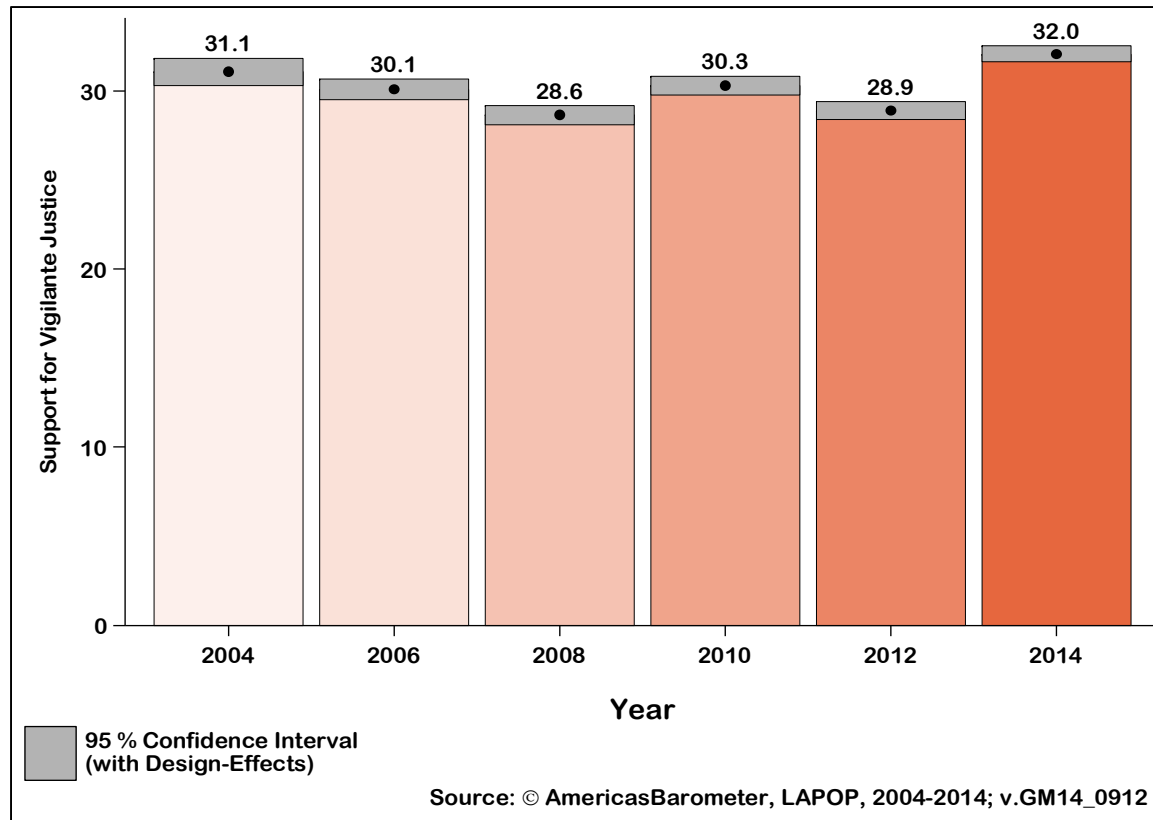
# Crime and insecurity lead individuals to avoid walking through dangerous areas



Predictor of avoiding dangerous areas because of fear of crime

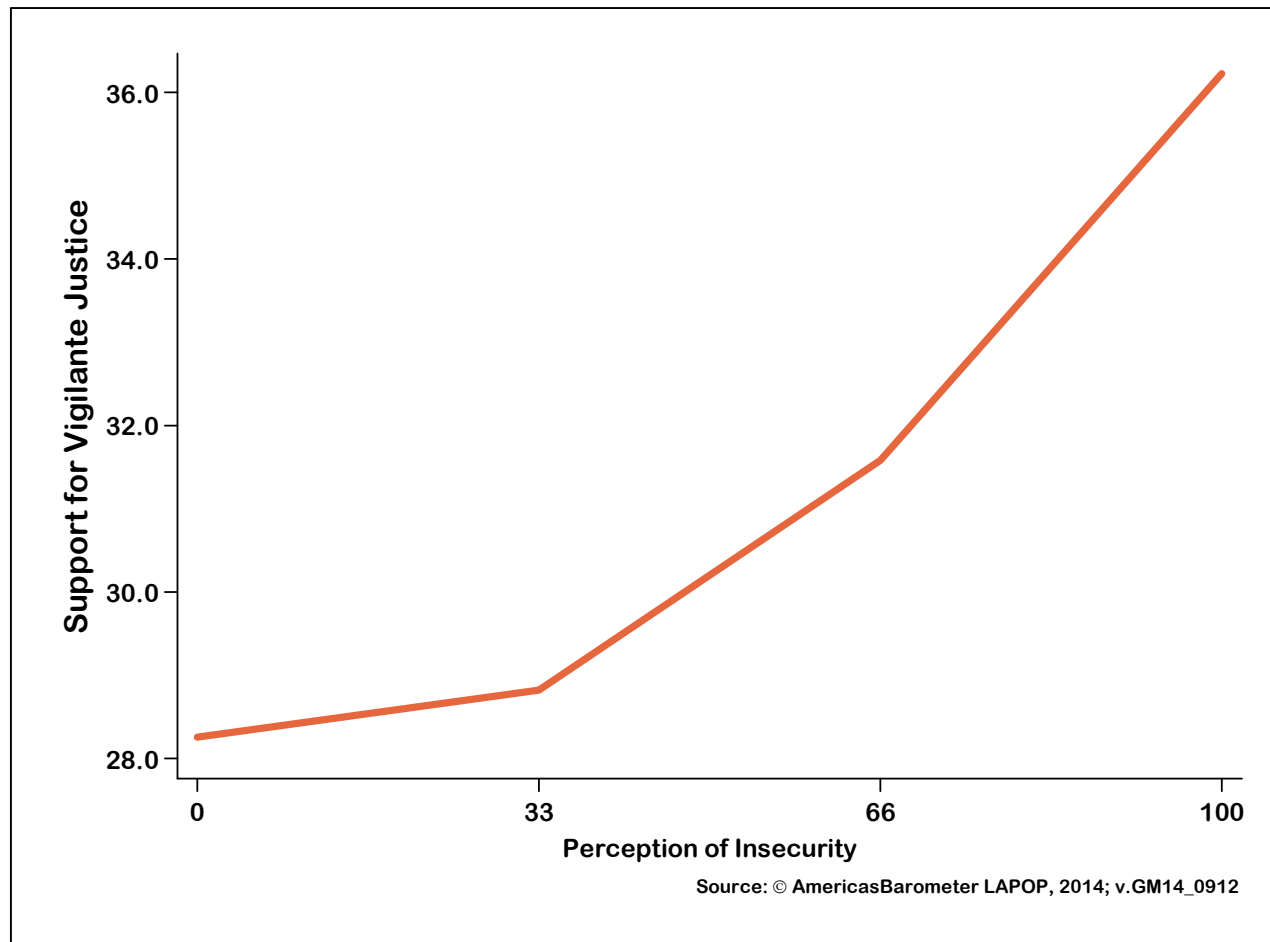
**FEAR10.** In order to protect yourself from crime, in the last 12 months, have you taken any measures such as avoiding walking through some areas in your neighborhood because they are dangerous?  
(1) Yes (0) No

**Across time, on average, support vigilante justice hovers around 30 units on a 0-100 scale**



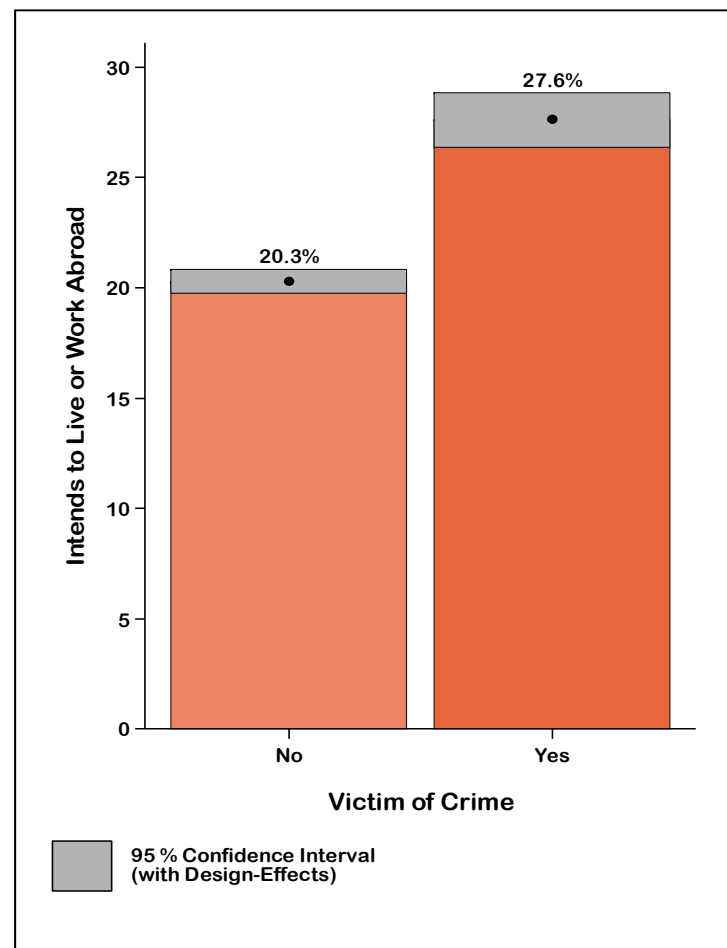
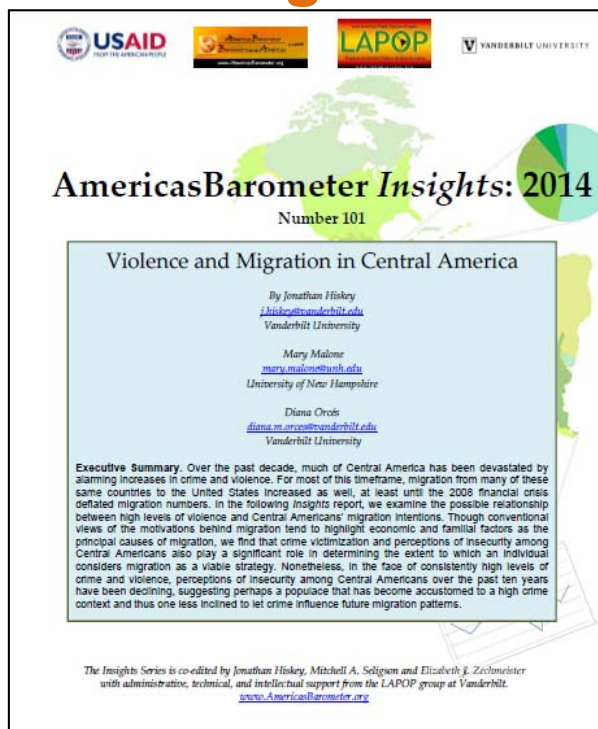
**E16.** Of people taking the law into their own hands when the government does not punish criminals. How much do you approve or disapprove? [1-10, recoded 0-100, strongly disapprove to strongly approve]

# Insecurity is a positive predictor of support for vigilante justice



# Intention to emigrate trended upward between 2012 and 2014: One factor increasing the desire to emigrate is crime victimization

Those who were a victim of a  
crime were much more likely  
to report intentions to  
emigrate



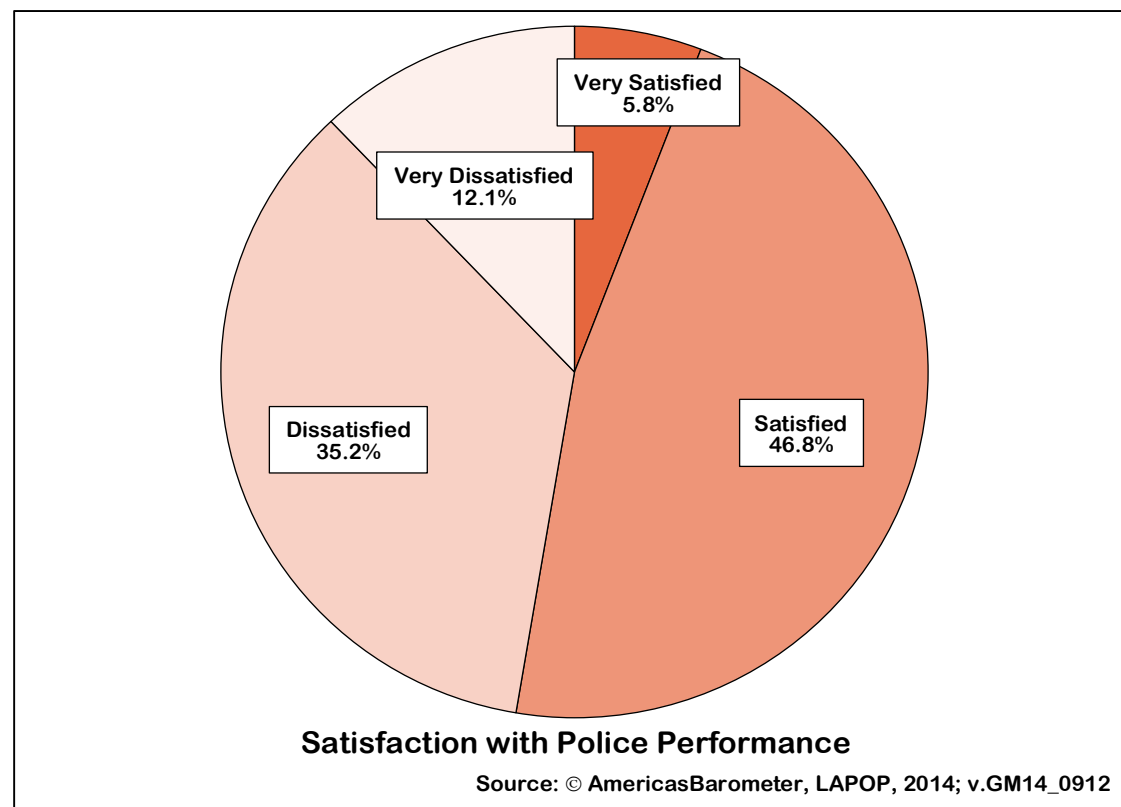
**Q14.** Do you have any intention of going to live or work in another country in the next three years? (1) Yes (2) No

# **Crime and Democracy: A Troubling Link**

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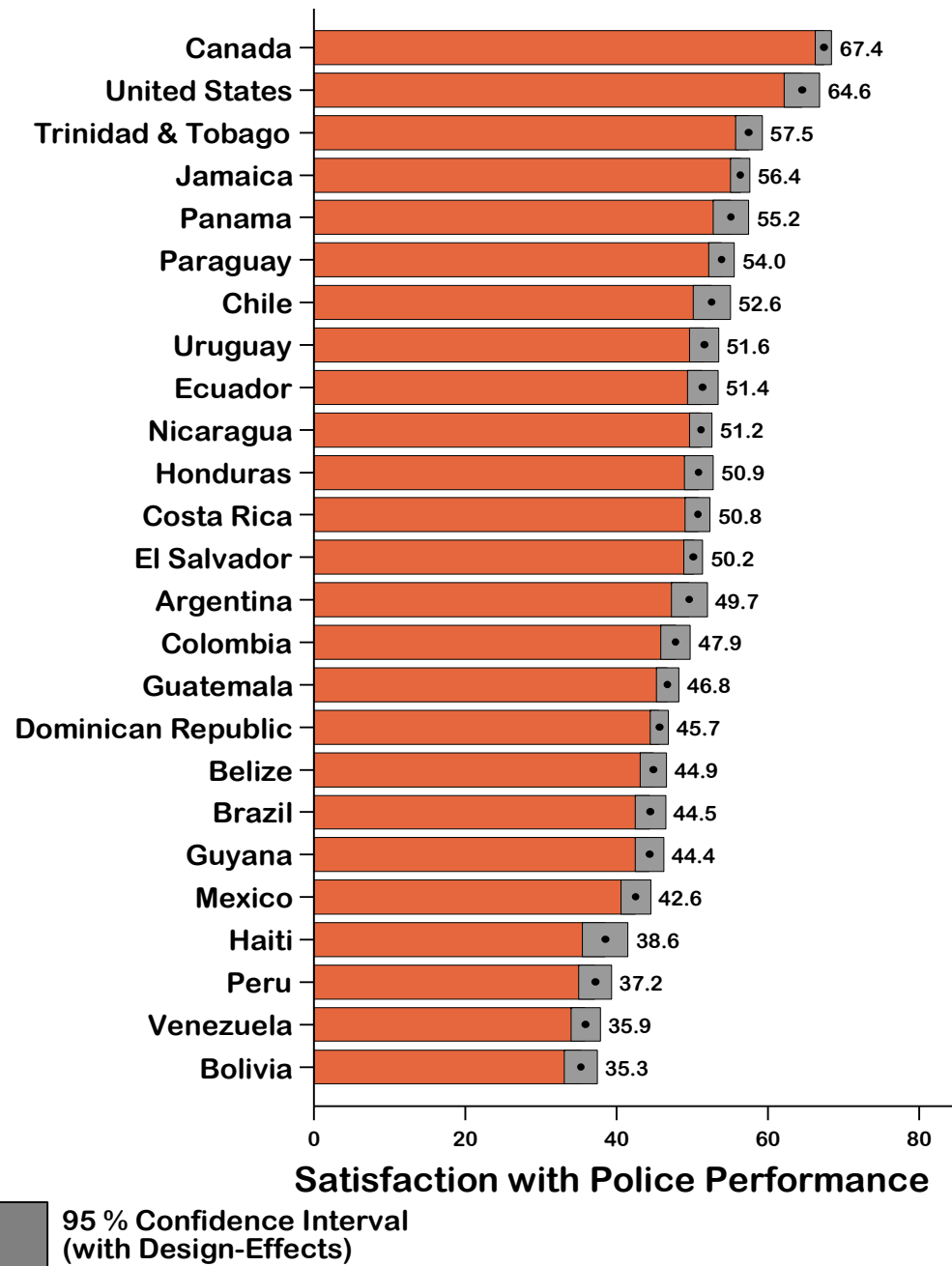
**Security concerns affect evaluations of  
public security institutions**

**On average, there is almost an even split across the Americas between those with some level of satisfaction and some level of dissatisfaction with local police performance**



**POLE2N.** In general, are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the performance of the police in your neighborhood? [If respondent says there is no police, mark 4 "Very dissatisfied"]



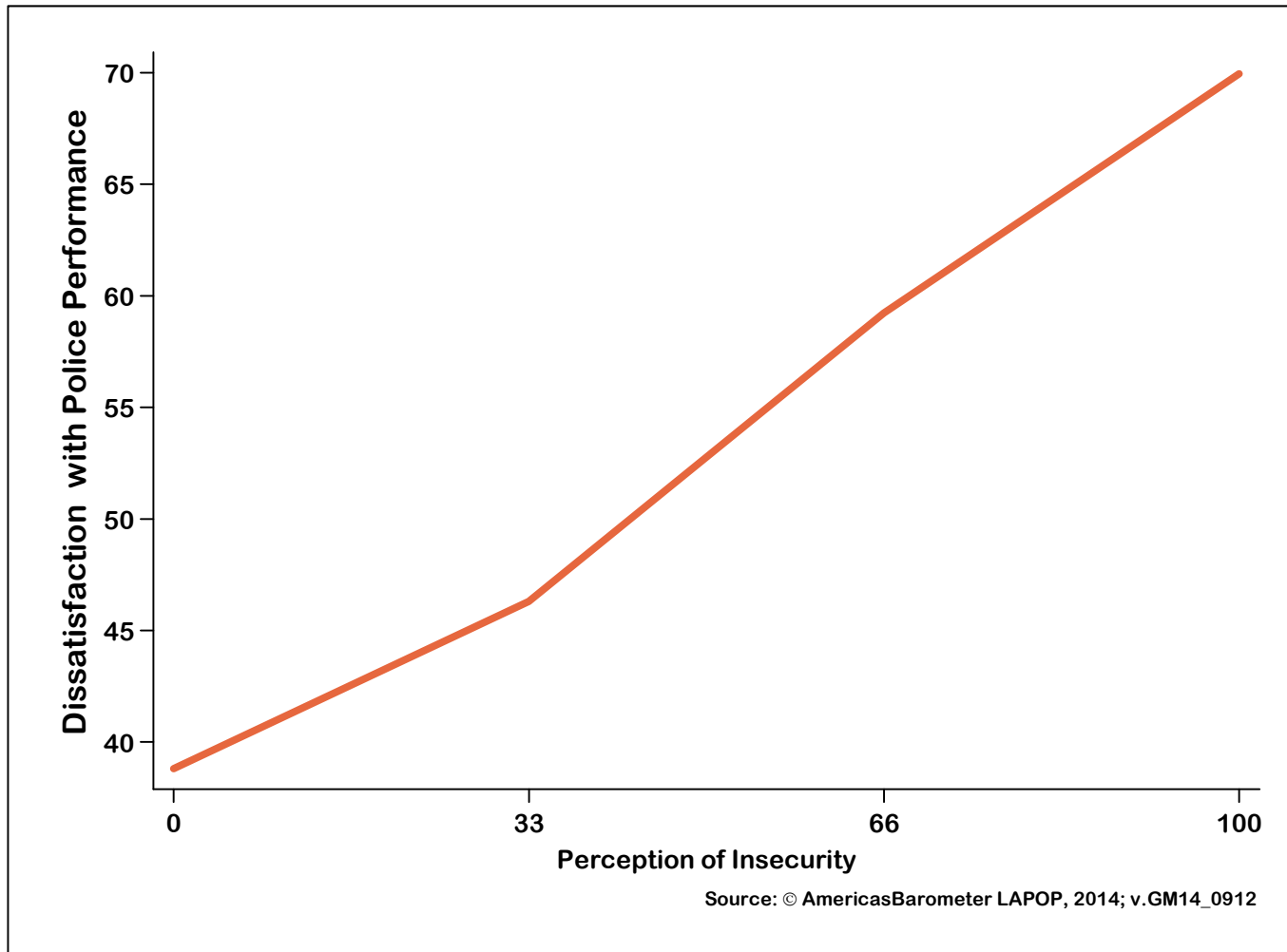


Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; v.GM14\_0912

**Satisfaction with  
police performance  
varies strongly  
across countries**

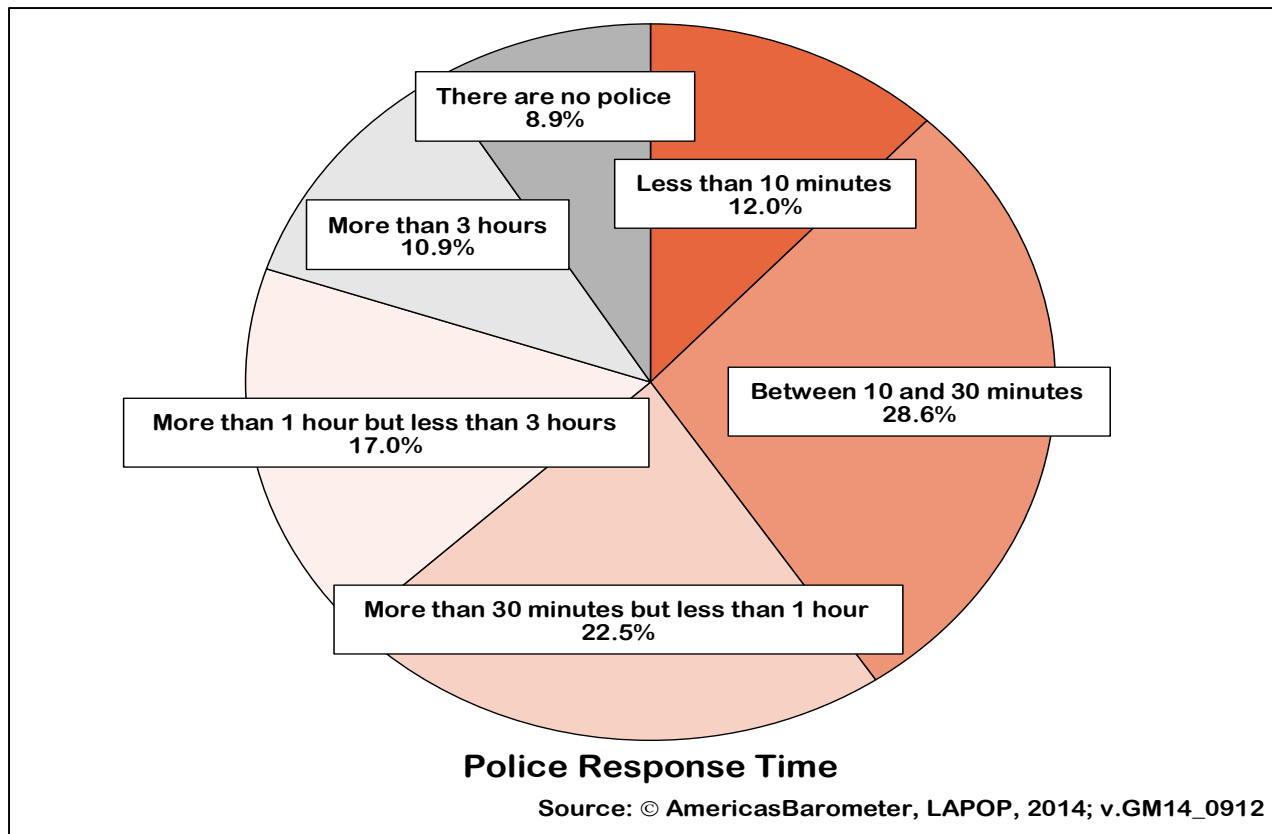
**POLE2N.** In general, are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the performance of the police in your neighborhood?  
[If respondent says there is no police, mark 4 "Very dissatisfied"]

## Greater insecurity is linked to greater dissatisfaction with the police



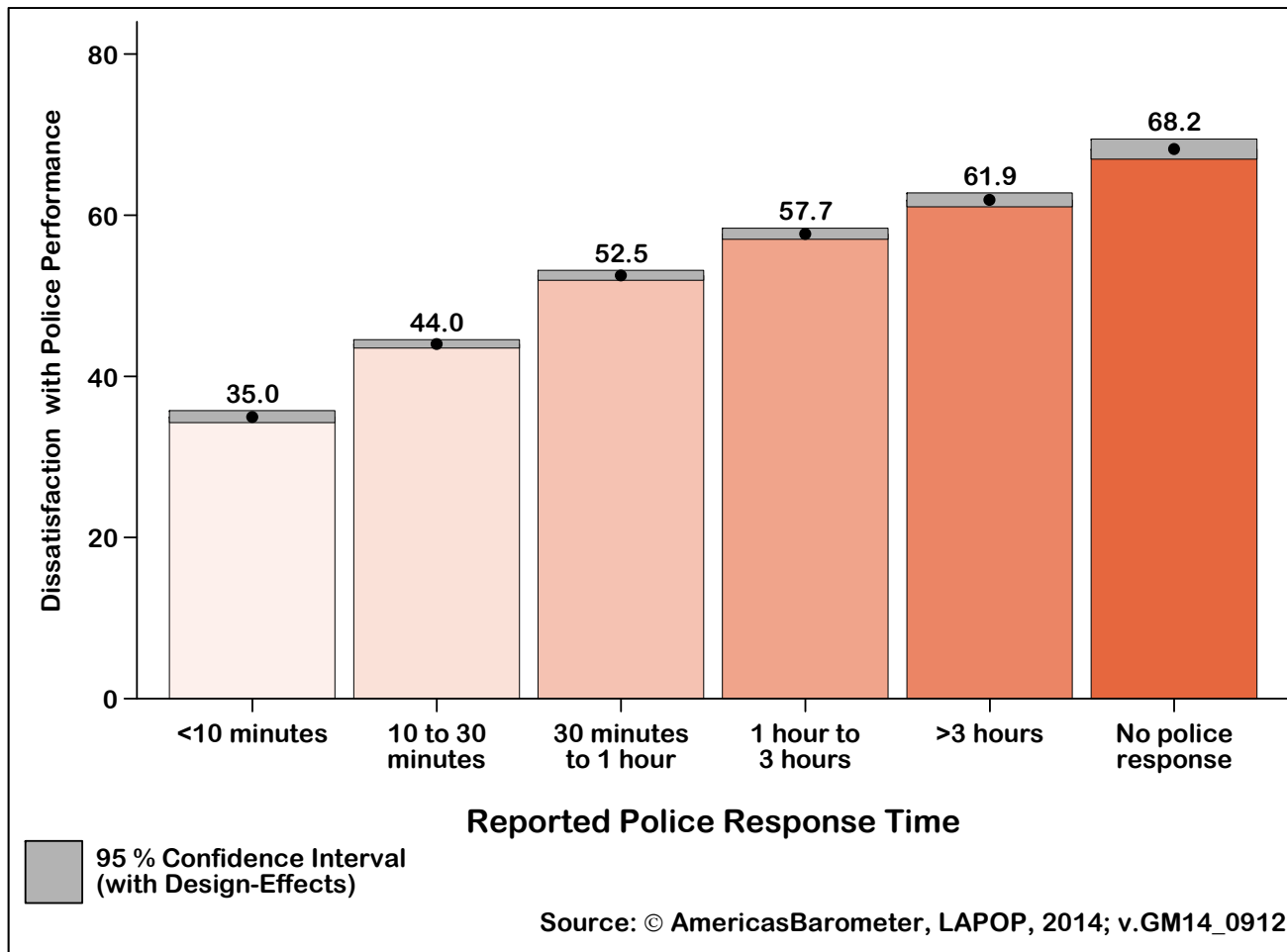
## What else fuels discontent with the police?

On average across the Americas, the majority of respondents indicate that typical police response time is more than 30 minutes

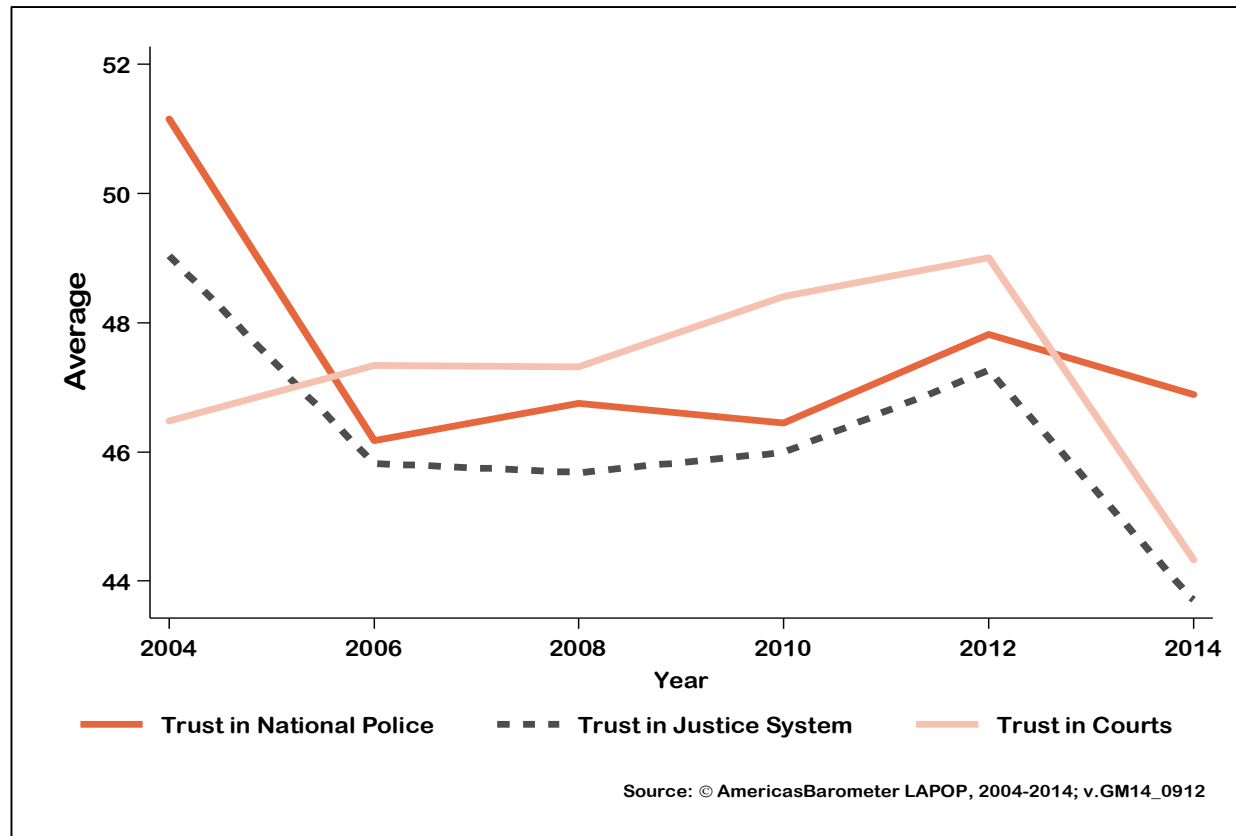


**INFRAX.** Suppose someone enters your home to burglarize it and you call the police. How long do you think it would take the police to arrive at your house on a typical day around noon?

# Response time is strongly related to dissatisfaction with the police



## Trust in the National Police, the courts, and the justice system: Declined across the Americas between 2012-2014 (on average, regionally)



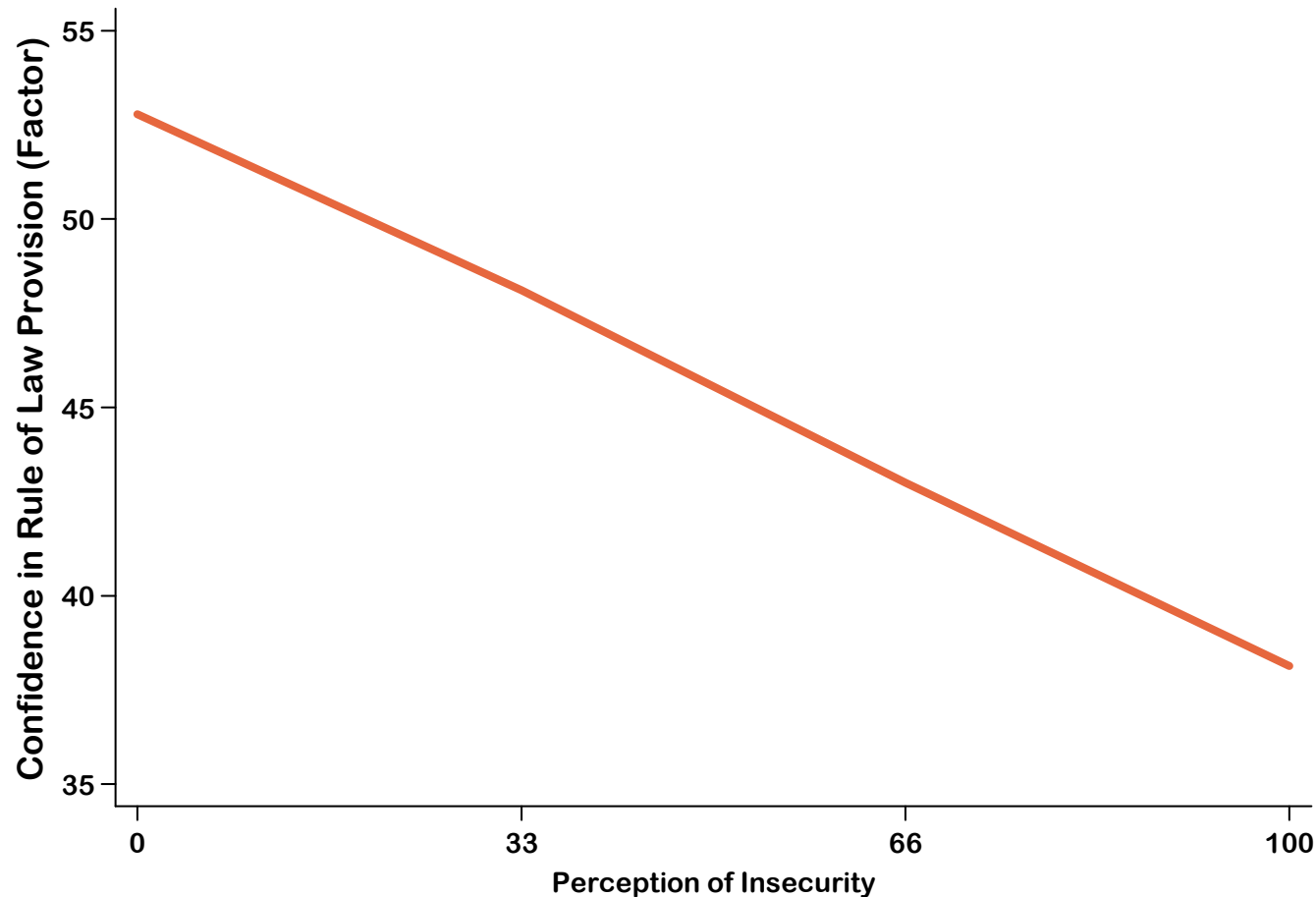
**B1.** To what extent do you think the courts (country) guarantee a fair trial? (**Read:** If you think the courts do not ensure justice at all, choose number 1; if you think the courts ensure justice a lot, choose number 7, or choose a point in between the two.)

**B10A.** To what extent do you trust the justice system?

**B18.** To what extent do you trust the National Police?

**[continue with Card B: 1-7 point scale] NOT AT ALL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A LOT**

# Greater insecurity is linked to lower confidence that the rule of law is being upheld



Source: © AmericasBarometer LAPOP, 2014; v. GM14\_0912

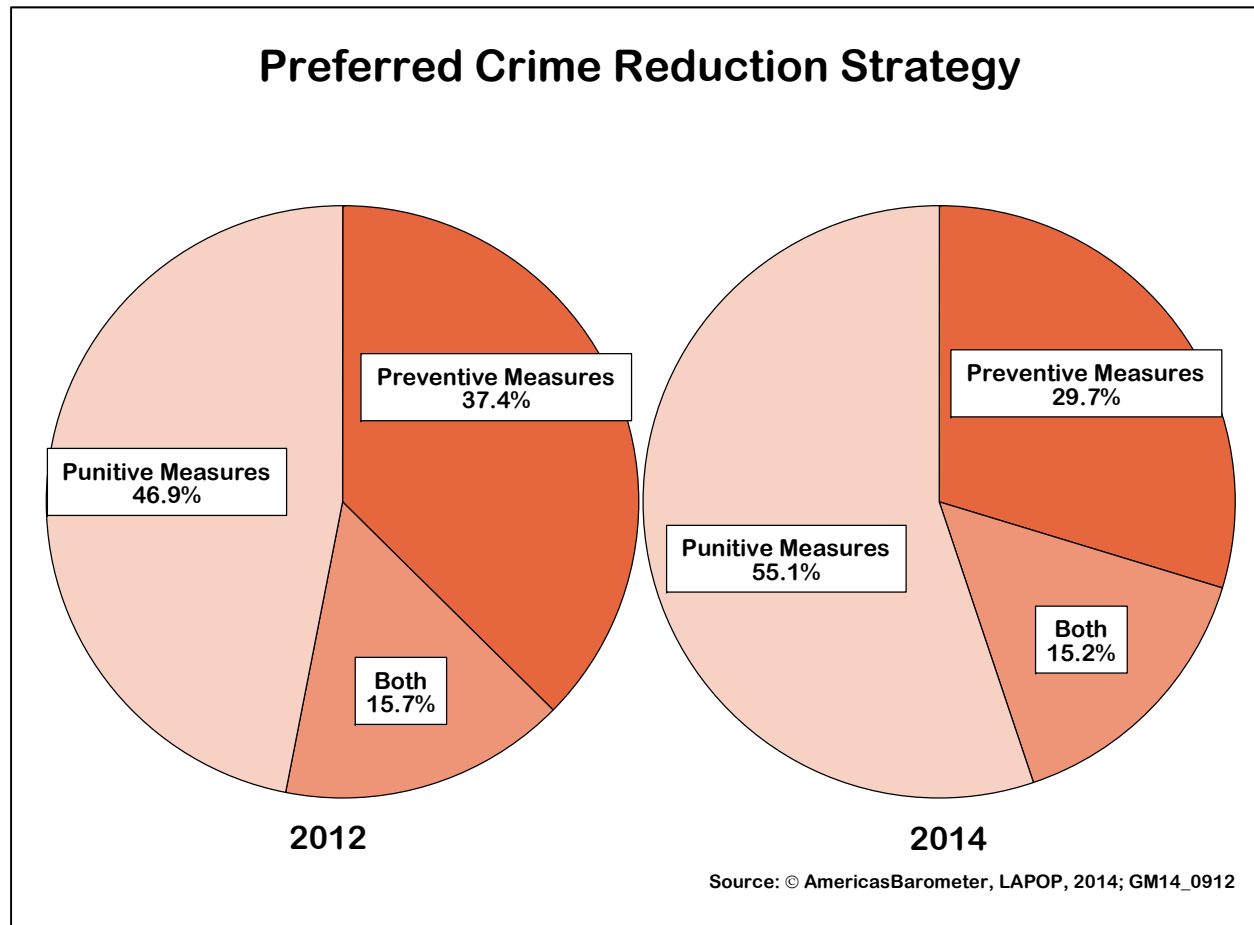
## Confidence in Rule of Law Provision Factor based on:

- B1.** To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?
- B10A.** To what extent do you trust the justice system?
- B18.** To what extent do you trust the National Police?

**Fear of crime and crime  
victimization  
are affecting citizen policy  
preferences**



Between 2012 and 2014, there was a statistically significant 8.2 percentage point increase in approval of more punitive crime prevention measures

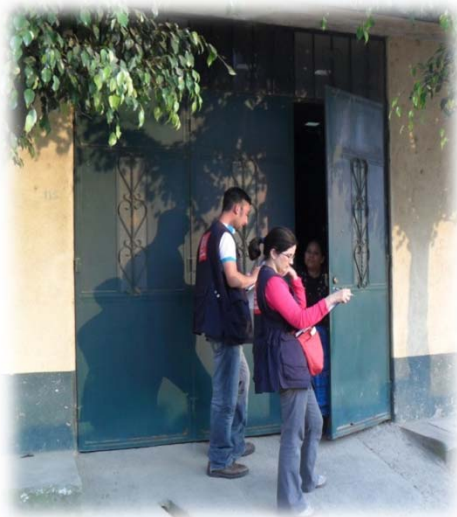


**AOJ22.** In your opinion, what should be done to reduce crime in a country like ours: Implement preventive measures or Increase punishment of criminals?

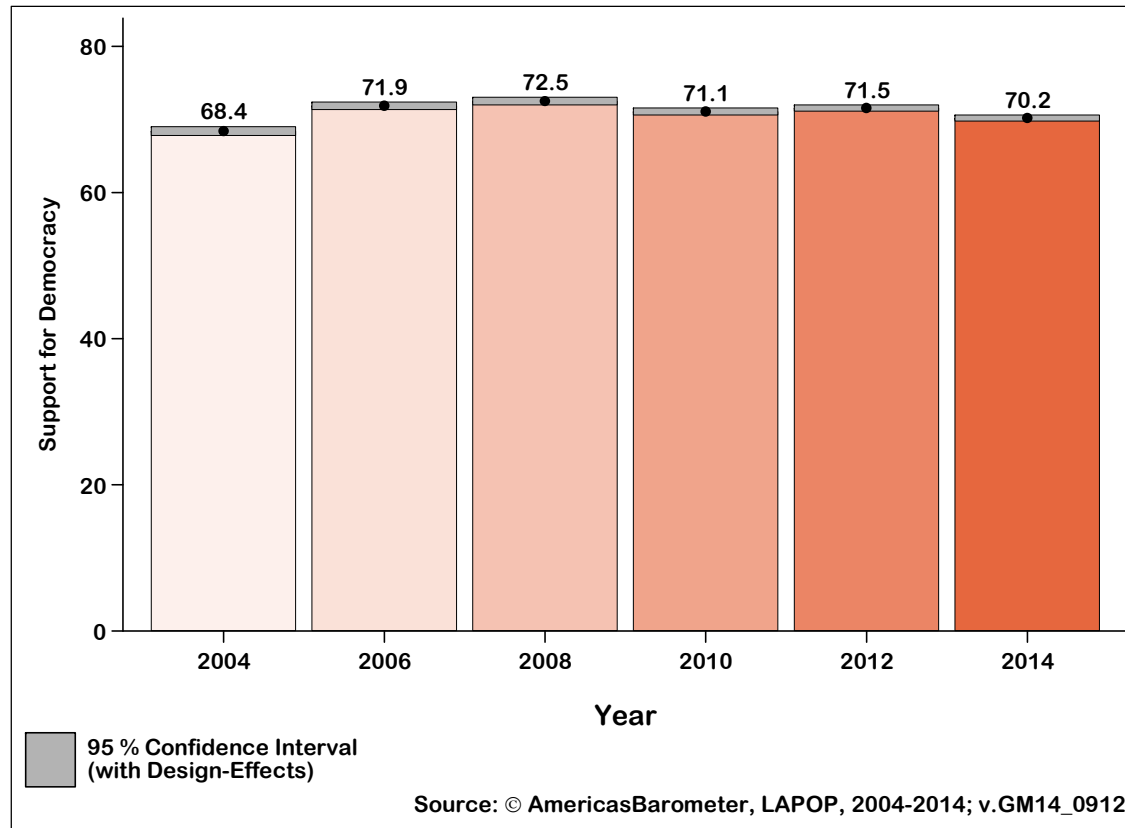
(1) Implement preventive measures    (2) Increase punishment of criminals    (3) **[Don't read]** Both    (88) DK    (98) DA

***Looking back over the decade of the LAPOP  
AmericasBarometer, we find:***

**Democratic legitimacy has declined  
and remains fragile in the Americas**



# Support for democracy as a system of government is not in question



**ING4.** Changing the subject again, democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

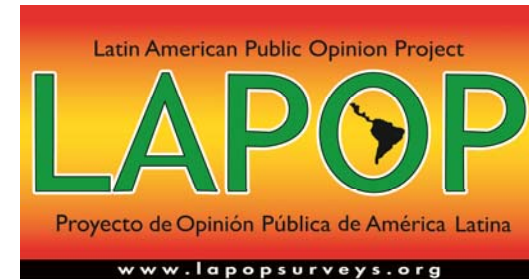
# System Support

- B1.** To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?
- B2.** ... respect the political institutions of (country)?
- B3.** ... that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?
- B4.** ... feel proud of living under the political system of (country)?
- B6.** ... support the political system of (country)?

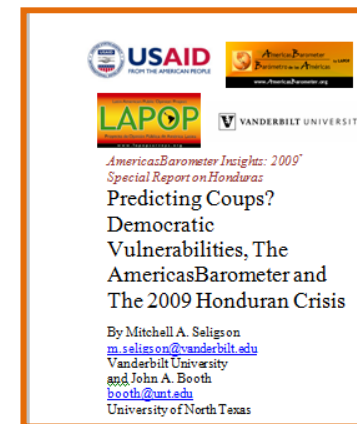
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# Political Tolerance

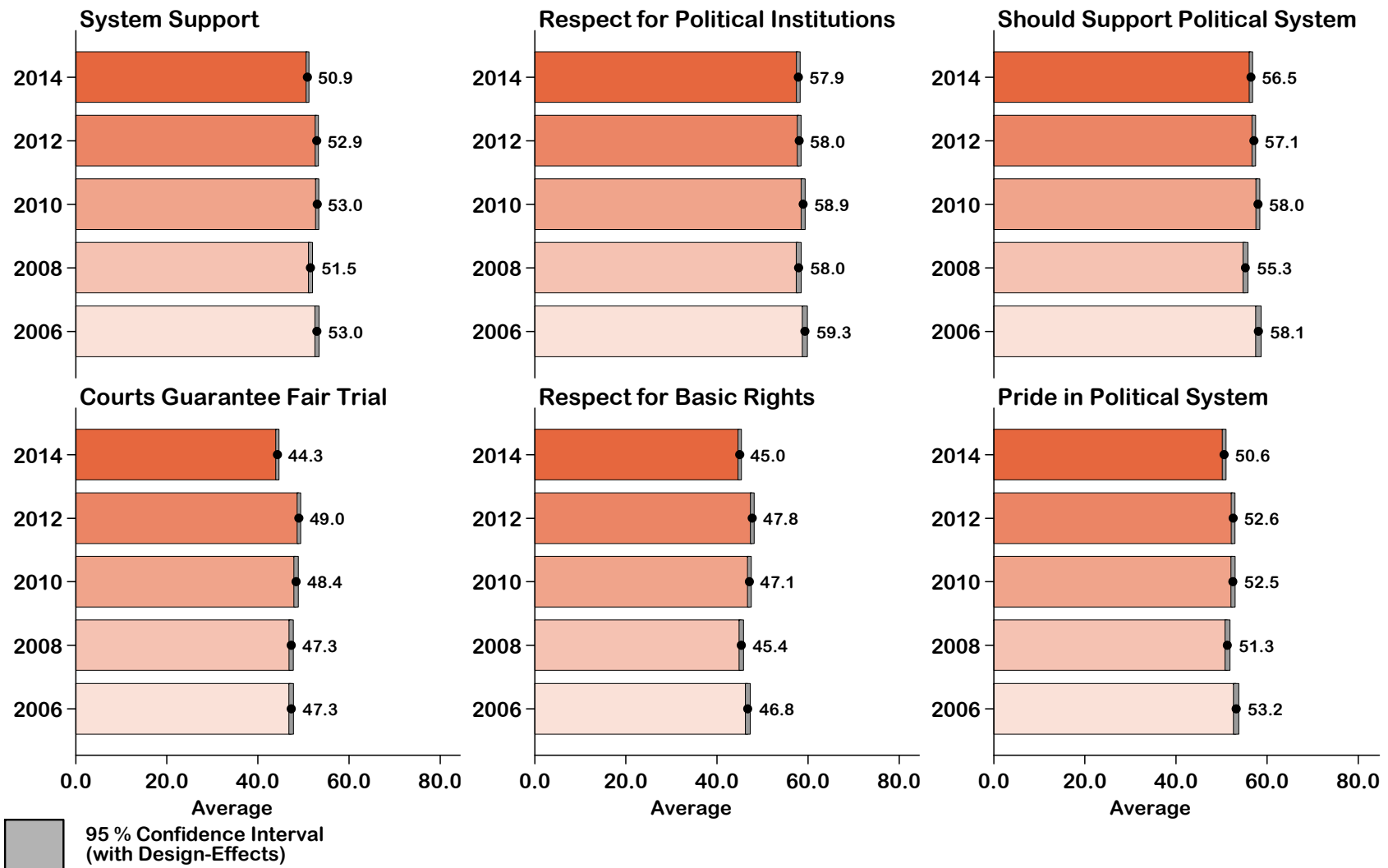
- D1.** There are people who only say bad things about the [country's] form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote?
- D2.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views?
- D3.** [H]ow strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?
- D4.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches?



	High Tolerance	Low Tolerance
High System Support	Stable Democracy	Authoritarian Stability
Low System Support	Unstable Democracy	Democracy at Risk

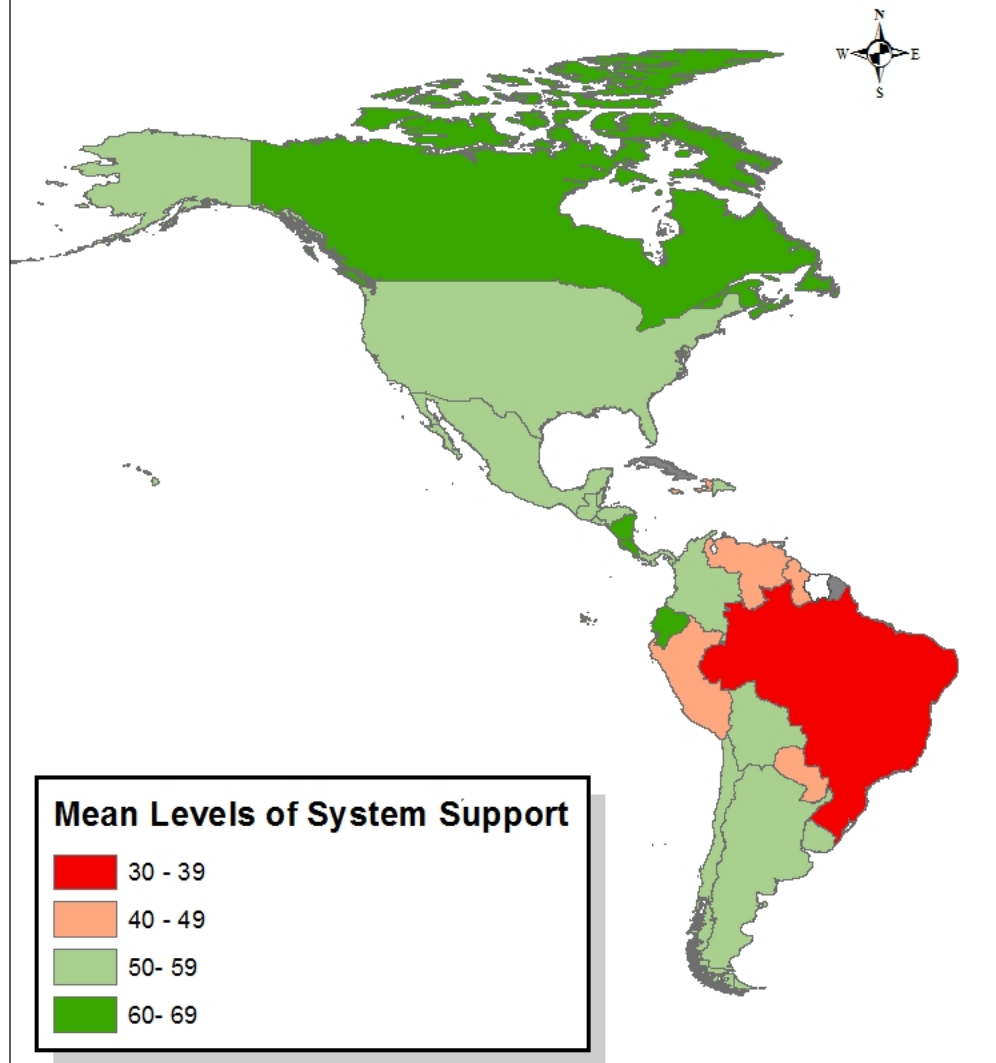


# System support fell to its lowest level in 2014, since 2006



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2006-2014; v.GM14\_0912

## System Support in the Americas, 2014



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, 2014.  
Map created from boundary data from: <http://www.gadm.org>

0 8501,700 3,400 Kilometers

**System support  
in 2014 is highest  
in Costa Rica and  
lowest in Brazil**

**B1.** To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?

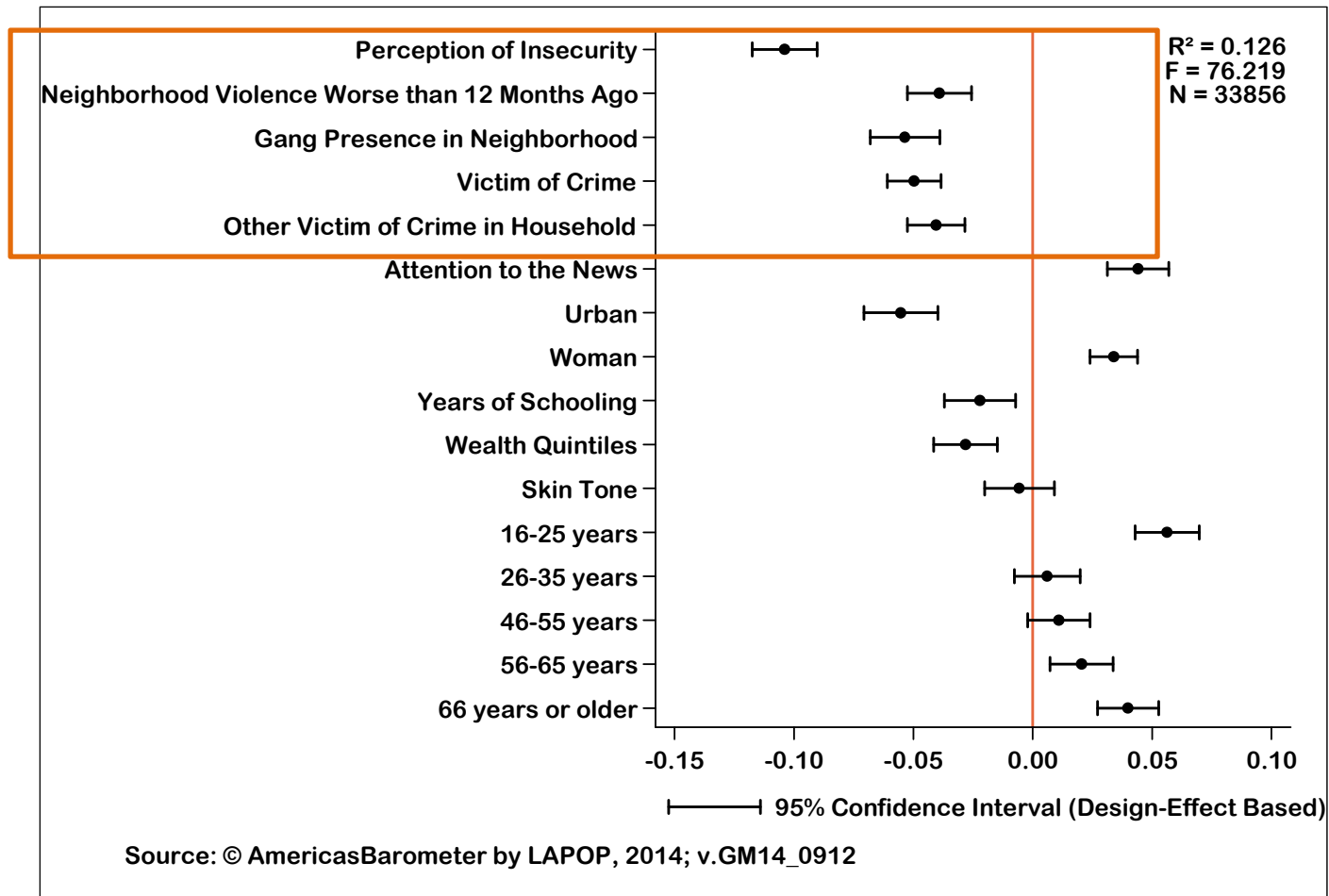
**B2.** To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)?

**B3.** To what extent do you think that citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?

**B4.** To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)?

**B6.** To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)?

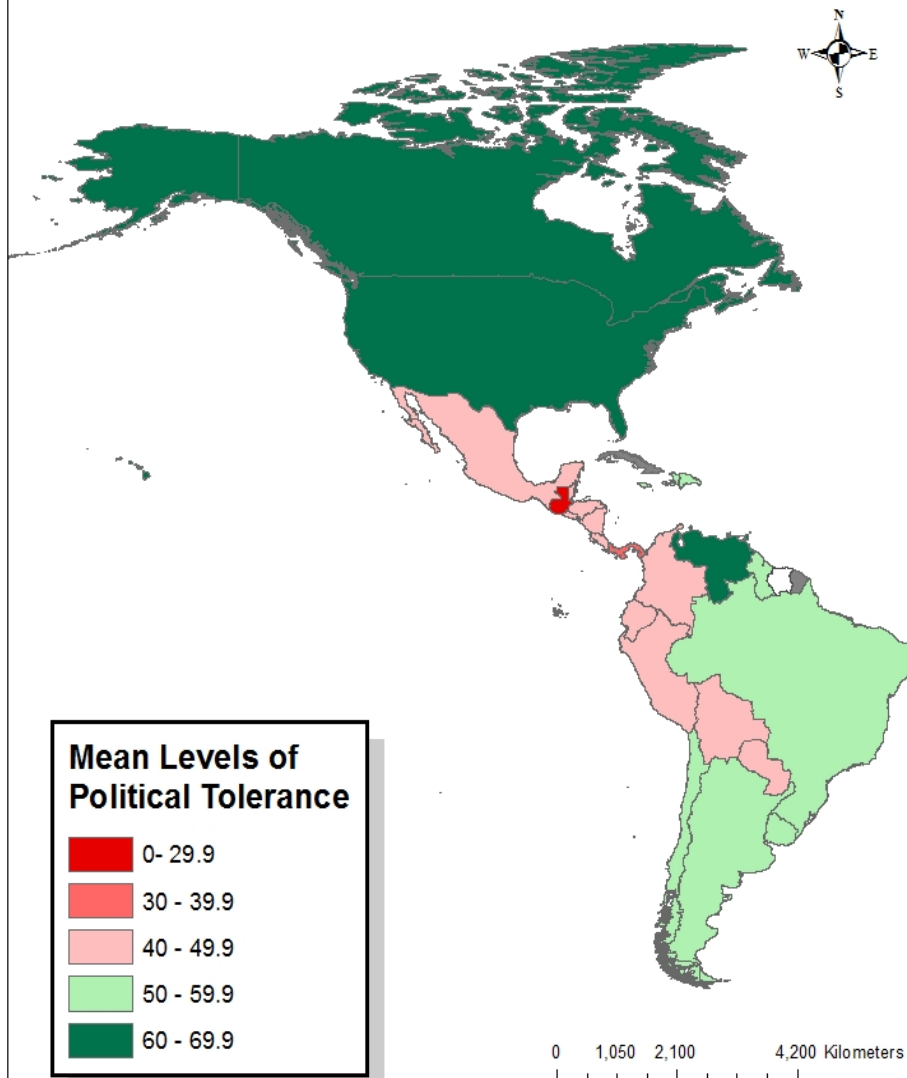
# Crime and insecurity negatively impact system support



Predictors of system support in the Americas



## Political Tolerance in the Americas, 2014



Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP 2014.  
Map created from boundary data from: <http://www.gadm.org>

**Political tolerance of political minorities is highest in the United States and Canada and lowest in Guatemala**

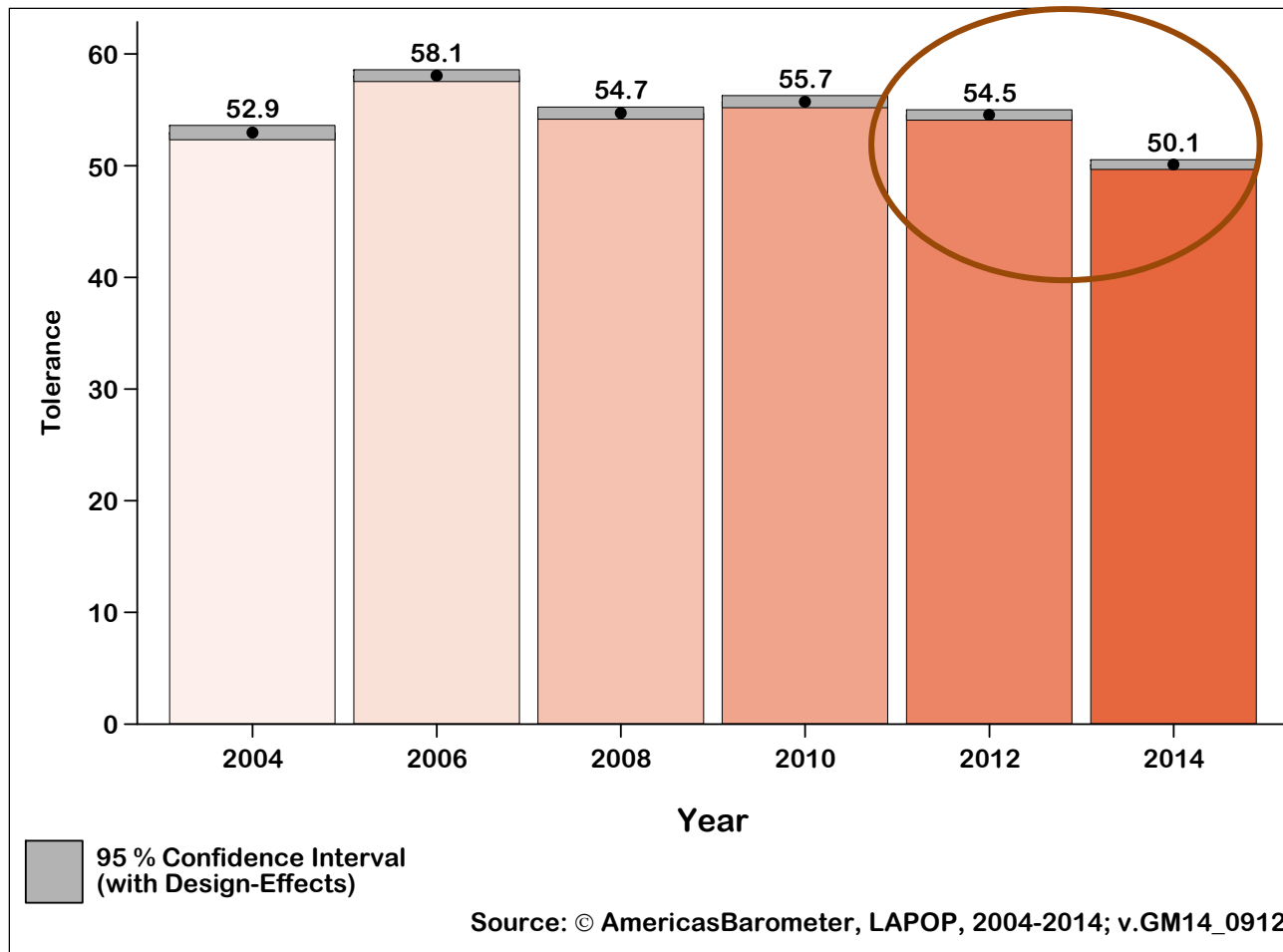
**D1.** There are people who only say bad things about the [country's] form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote? Please read me the number from the scale [1-10 scale]: [Probe: To what degree?]

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

**D3.** Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the [country's] form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?

**D4.** How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches?

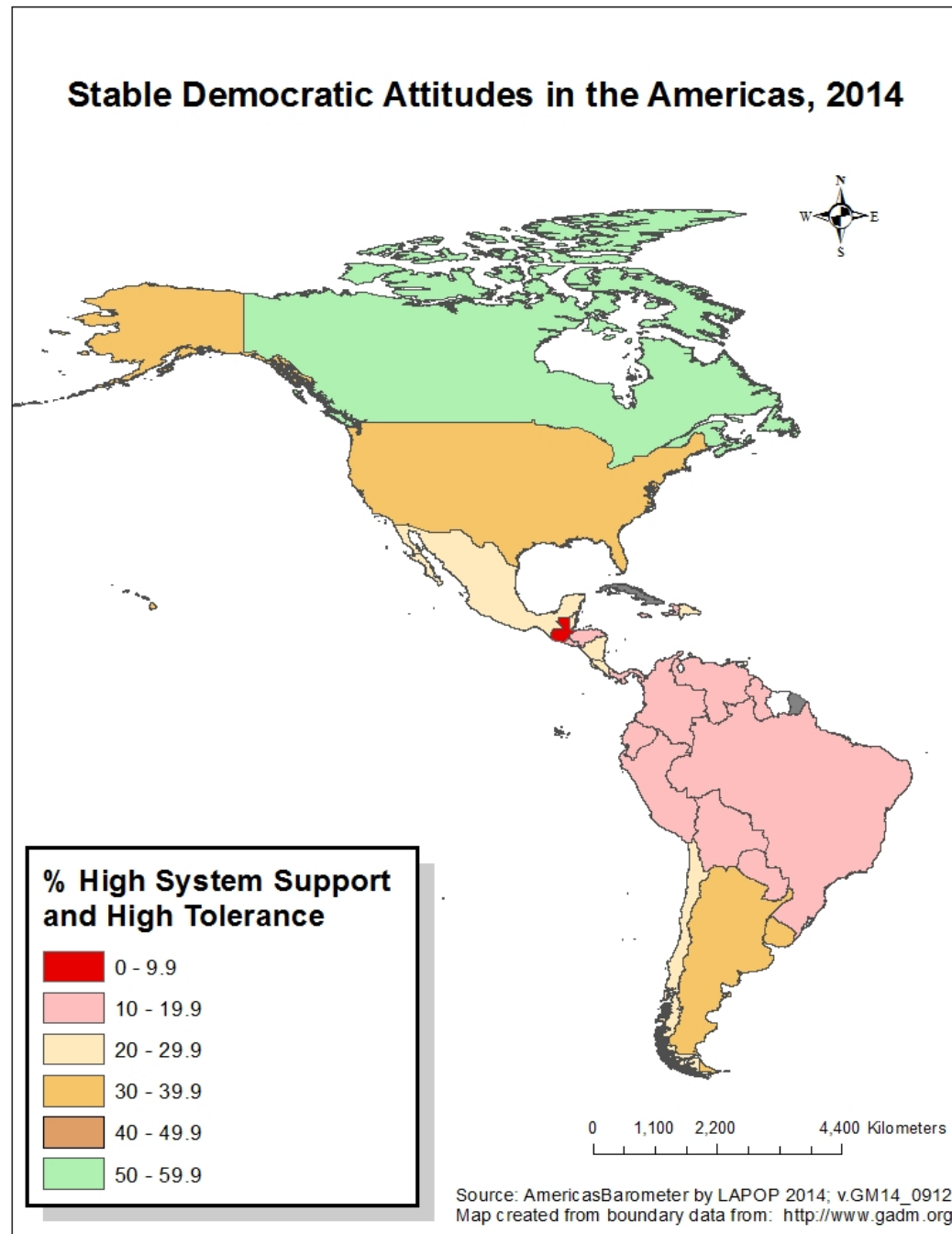
# Levels of political tolerance declined in 2014



**Percentage of those with attitudes consistent with  
“stable democracy” fell to their lowest, and  
“democracy at risk” rose to its highest level,  
region-wide for the decade in 2014**

2012		
	High Tolerance	Low Tolerance
High System Support	Stable Democracy 28.3%	Authoritarian Stability 26.0%
Low System Support	Unstable Democracy 22.5%	Democracy at Risk 23.2%

2014		
	High Tolerance	Low Tolerance
High System Support	Stable Democracy 22.5%	Authoritarian Stability 27.6%
Low System Support	Unstable Democracy 21.6%	Democracy at Risk 28.3%



**Canada and Guatemala are at the two extremes in terms of percentage of Stable Democrats.**

**At best, most countries have only modest percentages of populations having attitudes supporting stable democracy.**



# Summing up

*Looking back over a decade of LAPOP's AmericasBarometer:*

- Concerns over crime and violence are elevated
- These concerns are rooted in crime victimization
- These factors affect individuals' behaviors, intentions to emigrate, preferences for hardline policies, evaluations of the police and the incumbent administration, system support, and tolerance
- Democratic legitimacy has decreased, in part due to crime, violence, and the insecurity it fuels



Latin American Public Opinion Project


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