

**Attitudes towards the National Militaries in
the Americas**

Abstract

Somewhat contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Armed Forces have become one of the most trusted institutions in the Americas. In this article, we analyze data from the 2014 AmericasBarometer public opinion survey and argue that heightened confidence in the military is driven by favorable evaluations of their performance and limited negative experiences with the military bodies (in particular, little corruption victimization in hands of military officers). We conclude the favorable public mood towards the Armed Forces will be of help in the ongoing process of redefinition of civic-military relations

Key Words

Public opinion – Latin America – trust in Armed Forces- performance evaluation

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Introduction

The Armed Forces are key political institutions to democracy. Even when the particular set of tasks in which they engage might vary in scope and success across countries, at the very core of those functions stand the defense of the national sovereignty and independence, and the preservation of the internal stability and security;¹ in other words, they exist to preserve the democratic regime from both external and internal threats. However, in many countries of the Americas the Armed Forces have been relevant players in coups against the regimes they were supposed to protect, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. With the new wave of democratization in the continent,² the role of the military has been subject to severe scrutiny and in most countries it has been redefined; in many cases these processes have been carried amid tensions between the military and the new civilian rulers.³

The conventional wisdom establishes that in part due to their preeminent role in dictatorial governments that ruled most countries of the Americas during a great part of the Twentieth Century, the Armed Forces are not always held in great esteem by the citizens. A few analyses exist,⁴ but this conventional wisdom deserves further

investigation by means of systematic data analysis. The AmericasBarometer has included a series of questions about the military, which provides an overview of citizens' views of the Armed Forces across countries and across time, and also in contrast with other political institutions.⁵ The most recent data challenges the conventional wisdom, as the Armed Forces of the Americas are the most trusted institution, even surpassing the confidence levels garnered by the Catholic Church. Favorable evaluations of their performance –especially in what regards to their respect for Human Rights- is at the core of this enhanced trust.

After reviewing the evolution of trust in the militaries of the Americas, this article moves to performance evaluation of the Armed Forces, focusing on views towards respect for Human Rights by the militaries. Next, it assesses direct experiences with military corruption in the Americas. Corruption victimization has proven to be a strong predictor of support for institutions and for democracy in general and having institution-specific corruption victimization data provides a deeper insight into how those experiences might affect views toward the military. The final section evaluates the impact that performance evaluation of, and direct experiences with (regarding corruption in particular), the Armed Forces shape citizens' trust in the military bodies and its implications for the role the Armed Forces are called to play in contemporary democracies.

Trust in Armed Forces in the Americas

The AmericasBarometer surveys ask respondents “To what extent do you trust the Armed Forces?” within a larger battery of questions on institutional trust that also quests for trust in the branches of government and other non-political institutions such as the

media or the Catholic Church. Interviewees offer their responses in a 1-7 scale in which 1 means “not at all” and 7 means “a lot”. To facilitate data analysis and comparison, in this paper we rescaled these responses into a 0-100 metric, which preserves the substantive meaning of responses while making data interpretation easier and more intuitive. In this new scale, 0 means no trust at all, and 100 indicates the maximum level of trust an individual can confer to an institution. The midpoint of the scale is situated at value 50; values lower than 50 suggest poor levels of trust, while values higher than 50 indicate a predominant feeling of institutional confidence. The figures reported for each country, region, or year represent the average of all responses offered by the individual interviewees.⁶

The average value of trust in the Armed Forces in the Americas from 2004 to 2014 -that is the average of all respondents surveyed in the various countries covered by the AmericasBarometer in each round- has remained relatively stable across time, evolving from 56.2 in 2004 to 61.0 in 2014. The highest score was registered in 2006 with 62.4; the lowest was the 2004 average.⁷ In all cases the yearly average for the continent is greater than the midpoint of the scale, situated in 50, which suggests that citizens of the Americas are more trusting than distrusting of their military bodies. It is important to point, however, that data points for each of the years are not strictly comparable as they do not cover the exact same group of countries. The 2004 round consisted of 11 countries, but many more were added in the subsequent rounds until the 2014 round, that covers 28 countries.⁸ Therefore, changes in the values might obey to a new set of countries entering the pool of countries whose data are being analyzed, rather than to substantive changes in citizens' views. Moreover, while the regional average remains fairly constant, there

might be different trends operating in the countries or subregions that might cancel each other out, for instance.

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

But what does an average level of trust of around 60 points tell about views of citizens towards the military? This is 10 points above the midpoint of the scale, but is this as good as it gets? Or is it rather low compared to other institutions? In order to better ascertain what these figures mean, it is worth looking at what are the levels of trust that other institutions receive in the Americas. Figure 1 presents a brief summary, with average levels of trust by year for the Catholic Church, the Legislatures, the Police and the military (again).

While legislatures –together with political parties- are among the least trusted institutions not only in Latin America but also in the world,⁹ the Catholic Church has been traditionally regarded with the great esteem in Latin America, often receiving the highest scores in institutional trust.¹⁰ These two institutions establish the highest and lowest parameters to evaluate trust in the military. The police is added as an additional reference.

The most outstanding revelation from Figure 1 is that the Armed Forces have nearly surpassed the Catholic Church as the most trusted institution in the Americas as a whole in 2014. This virtual tie is the result of different trends: a moderate increase followed by stabilization in trust levels in the case of the Armed Forces, plus a clear drop in the case of the Catholic Church, for which the average trust in the continent has consistently dropped with each new round of the AmericasBarometer surveys. A similar downward trend in trust, although less markedly, has been experienced by the Police, which stands at a significantly low average trust, with 46.9 points in 2014. The

legislatures received in 2014 an average level of trust of 41.6 – the second lowest since the AmericasBarometer started its series in 2004.

The information described in the precedent paragraphs provides some context to assess the current levels of trust in the Armed Forces in the Americas. Although enlightening, such a context is not enough to fully ascertain the current situation. It is important to note that these relatively steady regional averages might conceal greater within and between country variations; the regional average might reflect very dissimilar country-scores that converge in the reported summary measure, therefore a by-country outlook is of order.

Figure 2 shows the average levels of trust in the Armed Forces for all countries covered in the AmericasBarometer 2014 for which there is data available and that actually have Armed Forces; this excludes Costa Rica, Haiti and Panama, as they do not have Armed Forces.¹¹

There is, indeed, variation across countries. The highest score of insitutional trust is found in Ecuador, where virtually all institutions have experienced a boost in confidence in the recent past, followed closely by Canada and the United States, two countries with traditional high levels of trust and pride in their militaries. Guatemala comes close at an average of 70.3, a significant 10-point increase in trust in the Armed Forces from 2012 which consolidates a 20-point increase from the beginning of the AmericasBarometer series in the country, in 2004.

[FIGURE 2 HERE]

At the other end of the continuum, with the only average value that falls below the midpoint of the scale, there is Venezuela. Trust in the Armed Forces in Venezuela in 2004 averages 42.4 points, falling 17.5 points from the 2012 score, and situating 18.8 points below the highest point, registered in 2006 . Trust in other political institutions has dropped as well in Venezuela: trust in the President fell from 59.1 in 2012 to 35.6 in 2014; trust in the Legislature dropped from 51.2 in 2012 to 35.9 in 2014; trust in the justice system also decreased markedly, from 47.8 in 2012 to 35.3 in 2014.¹² Thus, the confidence drop in the Venezuelan Armed Forces is clearly part of a wider phenomenon of institutional erosion.¹³

Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic are all countries with average levels of trust in the Armed Forces above the midpoint of the scale –which, as mentioned, suggests that trust triumphs over mistrust. These confidence levels, however, barely surpass the midpoint. For Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago the trust values found in 2014 resemble those from previous rounds, with very little variation. In the case of Argentina, the average trust in the Armed Forces in 2014 consolidates an upward trend already observed in 2012; quite the contrary happens in Dominican Republic, where trust in Armed Forces has decayed, slowly but steadily since 2008 when it scored 68.1 compared to the current 55.3 value.

The rest of the countries shown in Figure 2 present trust levels that are close to the regional average. Given this varied range of levels and trends in institutional trust in the military, it is worth exploring what are the key factors that might be behind them. The next two sections are devoted to that task, first discussing performance evaluation of the Armed Forces, and next searching into one form of direct experience with the military: corruption victimization.

Performance Evaluation of the Military

Performance evaluation is a key predictor of trust in government,¹⁴ in institutions more in general¹⁵ and of support for the militaries in the Americas in particular.¹⁶ The belief in the Armed Forces personnel respecting Human Rights is a proxy for performance evaluation. Therefore, in order to know the respondents' perceptions about the current role of the Armed Forces in what regards to respect for Human Rights in their own countries, they were asked: "To what extent do you believe that the [national] Armed Forces respect [nationals] Human Rights nowadays?"¹⁷

Great variation in responses across countries exists, with Ecuador (68.4) almost doubling the national average in Guyana (35.2). There is a set of countries in which according to citizens' perceptions the Armed Forces are doing rather poorly when it comes to respecting the Human Rights of its people. In addition to Guyana, Jamaica, Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru all have scores below the midpoint of the scale, which suggests that evaluations of respect for Human Rights do not pass the minimum mark in these countries. Other countries, in turn, do fairly well. However, with exception of Ecuador (68.4) and Uruguay (61.8) the averages are below 60.

Experiences with the Military

The AmericasBarometer has included in its surveys a battery of questions on corruption victimization at the street level since even before the beginning of the regular series.¹⁸ With the underlying theory that corruption victimization might negatively affect

citizens' views of their political system and of democracy in general,¹⁹ this battery asks respondents directly if they were asked for a bribe in different contexts, such as the city hall, their jobs, at a local court, a school or when dealing with the Police. In 2012 a question about corruption victimization by a representative of the Armed Forces was added, and it was replicated again in 2014. Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents in each country who declared a soldier or a military officer requested them a bribe within the past 12 months. The corruption victimization rates by the Armed Forces are very low. The maximum level of victimization is reported in Dominican Republic, where 7.6% of respondents declared they were victims of corruption in the military. In many countries, victimization rates are lower than 1%. These results present little variation from the 2012 data.

[FIGURE 3 HERE]

The question asks respondents: "In the last twelve months, did any soldier or military officer ask you for a bribe?" A "yes" answer is unequivocal; however, a "no" might mean two different things: it might mean the respondent never interacted with military personnel within the past year, so the respondent was not put in a position where a bribe could have been solicited, or it could mean that the respondent was indeed in contact with military personnel, but was never requested a bribe. Therefore, in terms of interpreting the data, a low corruption victimization figure might actually mean there is little street-level corruption in the military or that there is little interaction between civilians and military personnel. Given this caveat, looking at corruption experience with the Police during the same period and asked in the same fashion (i.e.: without a filter question that previously asks if there has been contact with a military/police officer during the past year) helps in putting corruption victimization by the military in perspective.

Table 1 shows the corruption victimization percentages by the Armed Forces and by the Police in 2014, and the difference between them in the last column. On average for the whole continent, corruption victimization by the Police is 7.9 percentage points higher than corruption victimization by the Armed Forces. The national patterns are diverse, with very little difference between corruption prevalence in countries where corruption at all its forms is simply very low (Chile, Uruguay) and big differences in other countries, where Police corruption seems to be an important problem (Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia).

[TABLE 1 HERE]

The greater levels of corruption experienced with the Police might obey to the fact that the Police is, indeed, a more corrupt institution. But they also might be due to higher exposure: with more interactions with the Police body the chances of being requested a bribe increase. If citizens rarely cross paths with military officers in their daily lives, they are simply not put in a situation in which a bribe could be requested. This point about differential exposure and awareness is not just a mere methodological issue about the scope of the questions; it has implications for the analysis, especially for the future. As military presence increases in some countries of the Americas, it might be expected that experiences and perceptions of corruption of the Armed Forces increase in citizens' reports simply due to the military becoming more visible and interactions with its personnel augment.

The Determinants of Trust in the Armed Forces

This final section is devoted to exploring how all the factors discussed in the previous sections fit together. More specifically, it aims at answering to what extent trust in the Armed Forces is affected by performance evaluation of the military and by the experiences with it.

In order to examine the impact these two variables have upon trust in the Armed Forces, a linear regression analysis taking trust in the Armed Forces as the dependent variable was performed. The key independent variables included in the model were: belief in that Armed Forces respect Human Rights and Corruption victimization by the Armed forces in the past year. In addition to these variables of interest, a set of sociodemographic (size of place of residence, sex, age, education and wealth) and attitudinal (interest in politics and ideology) controls were included.

Performance evaluation is one of the most powerful determinants of trust in institutions. Scholars have encountered that trust in government is affected by dissatisfaction with its outcomes,²⁰ and the same has been demonstrated for specific institutions.²¹ Previous studies using AmericasBarometer data, although relying in different models, found that performance evaluation of the military in the Americas impact trust in the Armed Forces, with positive performance evaluations boosting trust in the institution.²² Along these lines, positive views towards the Armed Forces in what regards to their respect for Human Rights should bolster trust in the institution.

On the contrary, there is a wealth of evidence pointing at the pervasive impact that corruption has upon democratic values, institutional trust among them. Both direct experiences with corruption and perceptions of widespread corruption tend to decrease the levels of confidence in political institutions.²³ There is no measure of perception of

corruption in the Armed Forces for 2014, thus the analysis will only consider corruption victimization by a member of the Armed Forces as an independent variable. The expectation is that those who were requested a bribe by a soldier or military officer during the past year would trust less the Armed Forces than their fellow citizens who were not exposed to such a solicitation.

We also included a series of control variables. At the attitudinal level one of such variables is ideology, which measures whether or not the respondents consider themselves liberal or conservative (or left-leaning or right-leaning, according to the terminology used in Latin America): those who consider themselves more conservative or right-leaning should be more supportive of the Armed Forces and therefore more trusting of the institution.²⁴ The second attitudinal variable is interest in politics. As individuals who are highly interested in politics tend to be more cynical and critic of the political system in general,²⁵ trust should decay with political interest. The sociodemographic controls are the usual: gender, age, education, wealth and size of place of residence, with no particular expectations for any of them.

The results of the OLS regression upon trust in Armed Forces are shown in Figure 4. The figure displays the standardized regression coefficients for each of the variables that appear in the vertical axis with dots. The confidence intervals for each coefficient (dot) are indicated by the horizontal lines that extend to each side of the dots. The vertical red lines indicates the value 0 for coefficients; dots placed at the right of this vertical line indicate a positive relationship between the variable of interest and trust in the Armed Forces, while dots placed at the left of this vertical line indicate a negative relationship between the variable of interest and trust in the Armed Forces. If the confidence interval for a coefficient crosses the vertical red line (indicating that the coefficient might have a

value of 0), then there is no certainty that the true impact of the variable is statistically significantly different from 0.

[FIGURE 4 HERE]

Political interest and wealth yield no statistical significance (as shown by the confidence intervals crossing the red line at which the coefficient has a value of 0). Ideology, on the other hand, has a moderate, positive impact upon trust in Armed Forces: those who identify themselves as right-leaning tend to trust the Armed Forces more than their fellow citizens. A look at the results for the socio-demographic controls indicates that women are less trusting than men, and that older, more educated individuals and those who live in more urban areas tend to confer less trust to the Armed Forces.²⁶

The two variables of interest have the expected impact: the more individuals think the national Armed Forces respect Human Rights in the country, the more they tend to trust them, as shown by the positive (and large) and statistically significant coefficient for this variable. Likewise, the experience of corruption victimization by military personnel has a negative impact in trust in the Armed Forces, as indicated by the negative coefficient.

For those who think the Armed Forces do not respect Human Rights at all, the average level of trust in the Armed Forces is a bit over 30 points in the 0-100 scale. As the level of agreement with the idea that the military indeed respects Human Rights grows, so does trust in the institution, linearly. Among those who most firmly believe the Armed Forces respect Human Rights (those who expressed a lot of agreement with the question statement) the level of trust in the Armed Forces peaks up to over 80 points.

Similarly, the impact of corruption victimization is evident. Confidence in the Armed Forces is 60.4 among those who were not asked a bribe by military personnel during the past year, but it falls 13 points, to 47.4, among those who were victims of corruption.

Final Remarks

By constitutional mandate, the Armed Forces are the ultimate institution responsible for defending national sovereignty and for guaranteeing stability and security in their countries. Across the Americas, the military bodies fulfill such a mandate through a wide range of actions and tasks with great variation in scope and success. In most countries of the region, the Armed Forces hold the monopoly of the military power, and the sole threat of that power operates as a deterrent to potential menaces. In other countries, however, the relationship between their by-design role in democracies and their actual performance is more complicated than envisioned by the Constitutions. For instance, the Colombian Armed Forces have been the paradigm of inability to guarantee the rule of law across the entire national territory,²⁷ and the Venezuelan Armed Forces have garnered concern due to their reportedly increased connections to organized crime in the last years.²⁸

Beyond these rather extreme cases, the Armed Forces in the region face challenges that are mostly related to the redefinition of their roles in a new context; the Armed Forces in many countries of the Americas struggle to keep their power and privileges from previous eras while the national authorities still negotiate with them delicate matters such as the fate of military intelligence units and Congressional oversight of the Armed

Forces.²⁹ Moreover, rejection for the belligerent resolution of international conflicts prevails, which certainly defies the ancient purpose and actions of the military bodies. At the same time, the need for the Armed Forces to engage in new activities arises, with the call for the military involvement in facing insecurity problems probably being one of the most salient transformations at the domestic level,³⁰ while multi-lateral collaboration in fighting transnational crime appears to be another pressing matter (Kelly 2015).³¹

In this complex and changing environment, the AmericasBarometer asked citizens of the Americas about their views towards their national Armed Forces. Despite the challenges they face, in the eye of the public the militaries are doing well. First, they are one of the most trusted institutions in the Americas in 2014, showing an impressive ability to maintain an aggregate level of confidence (as discussed earlier, the national trends vary) while other institutions face a significant, long-term trend of decrease in trust. Second, the trust conferred to the institution seems to rest on the positive evaluation of its performance citizens hold regarding their respect for Human Rights. Third, the low amount of street-level corruption (both in absolute terms and in comparison with the Police, for instance) also contributes to the heightened levels of trust in them.

If trust is conceived as a demonstration of *support* for institutions in Easton's terms,³² it can be seen as "... a reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effect of which they see as damaging to their wants."³³ Thus, while the Armed Forces in the Americas face several challenges, AmericasBarometer data indicates their impression on the public is not one of those challenges. Rather, it constitutes an asset upon which rebuild their role before the citizenry.

Tables and Figures

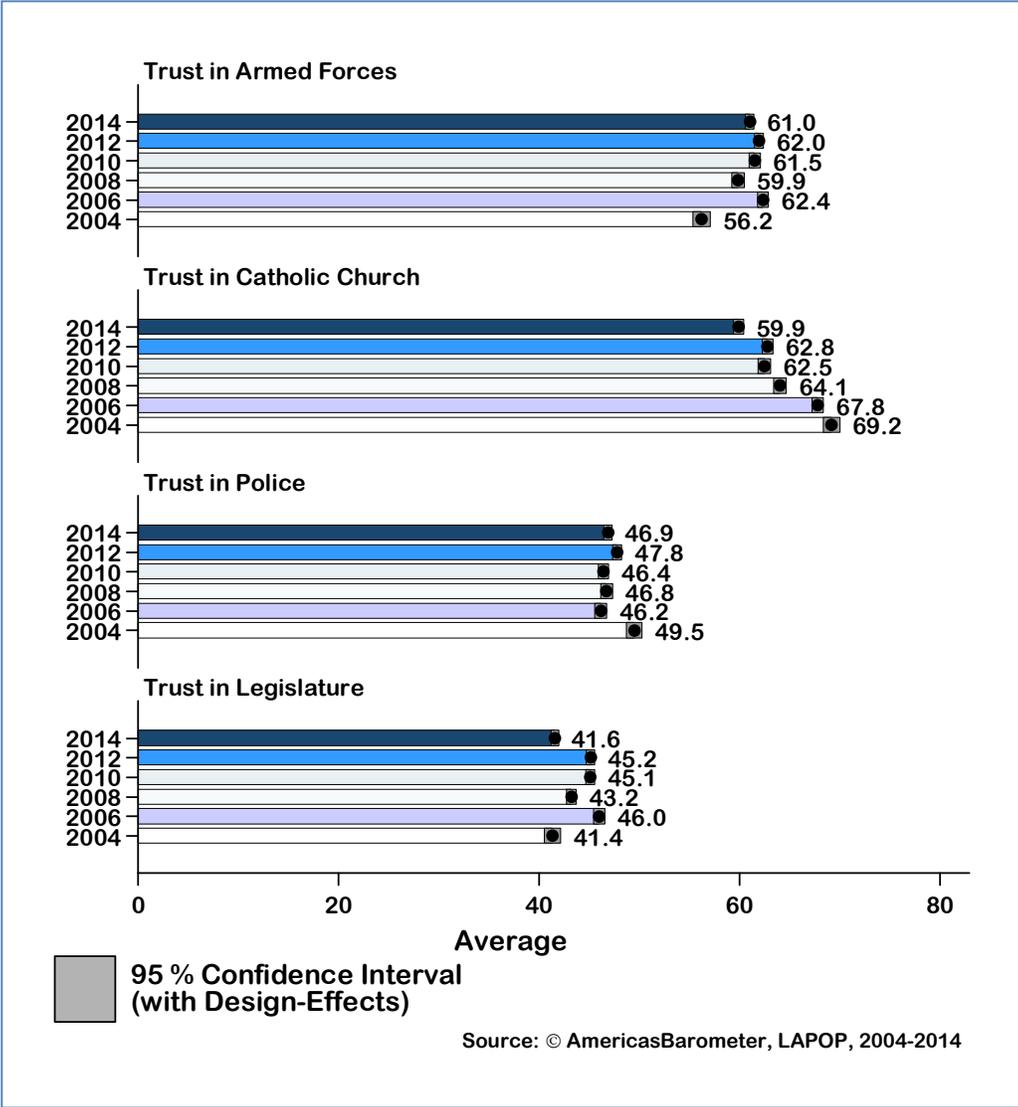


Figure 1. Trust in institutions in the Americas, 2004-2014

Average scores by year in scale 0 (not at all) – 100 (a lot)

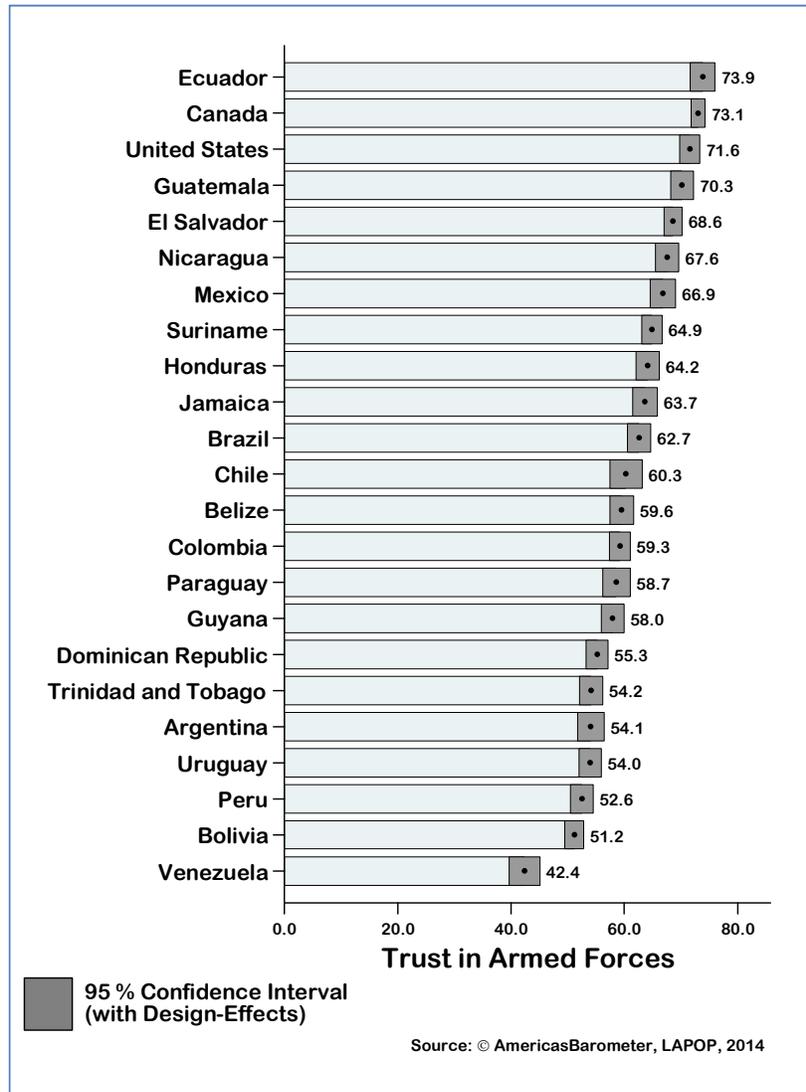
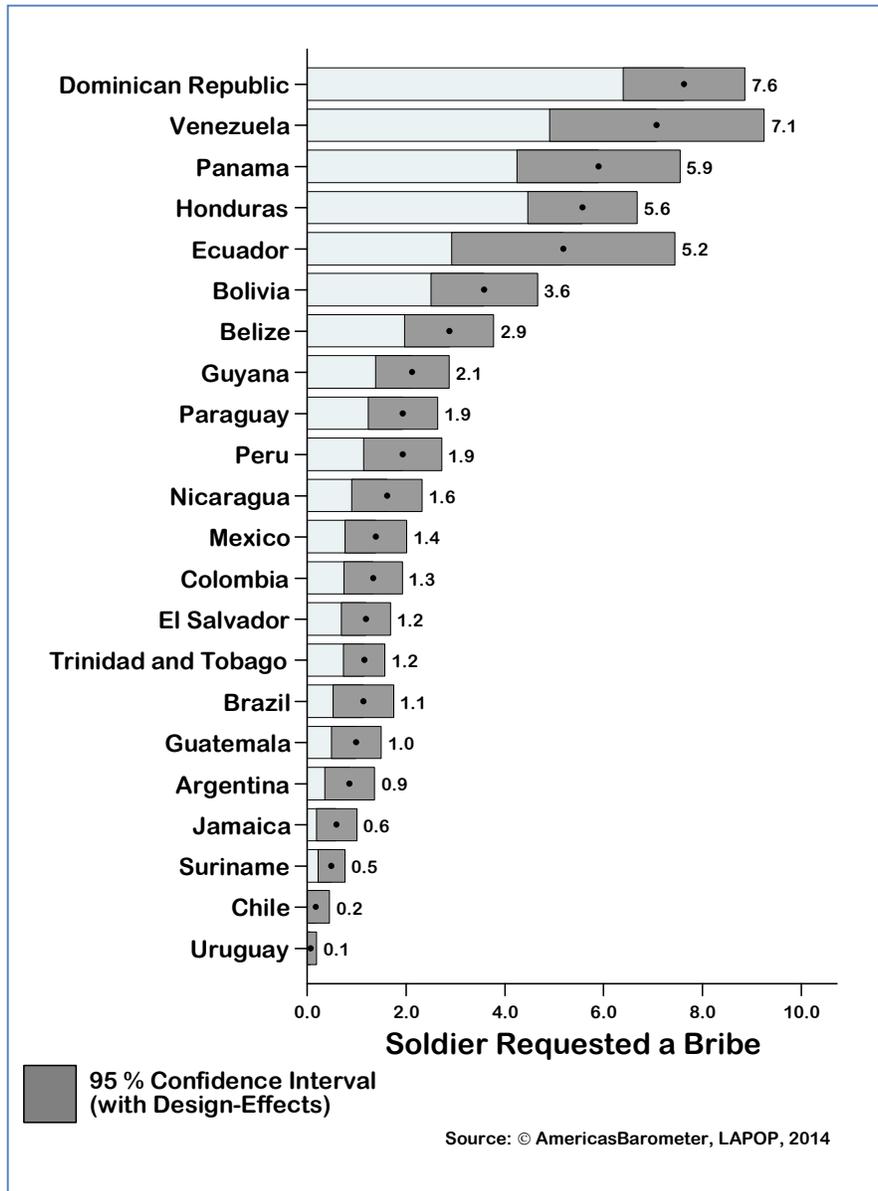


Figure 2. Trust in the Armed Forces in the Americas by country, 2014

Average scores by country in scale 0 (not at all) – 100 (a lot)



**Figure 3. Corruption Victimization by a member of the Armed Forces
in the countries of the Americas, 2014**

Percentage of respondents in each country who reported being victim of corruption by a member of the Armed Forces during the previous 12 months

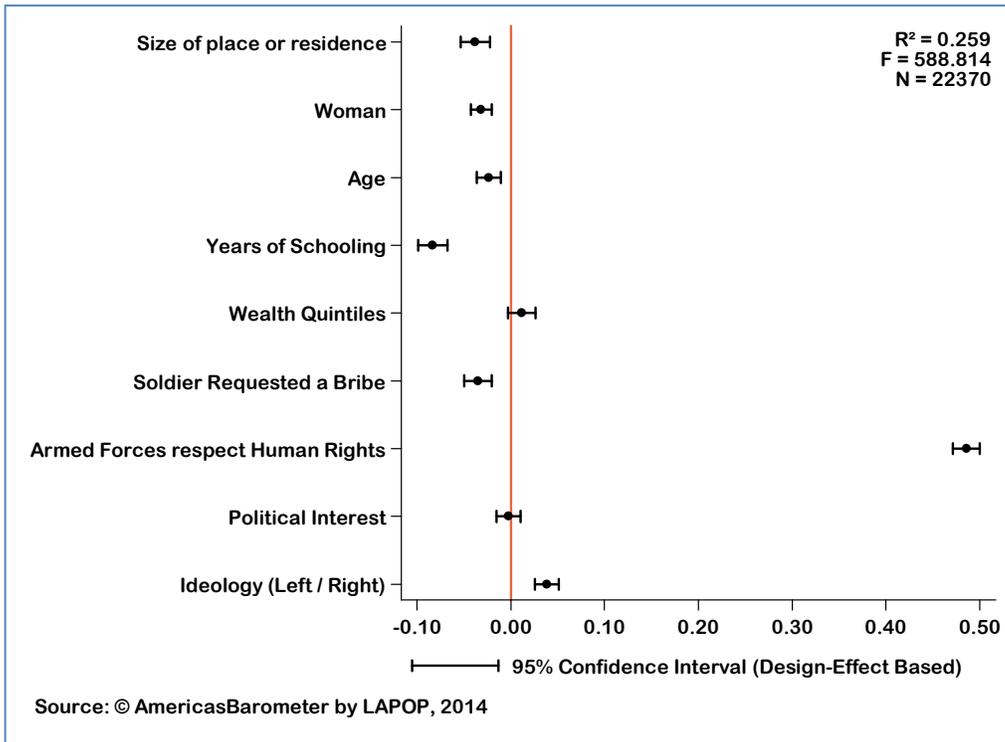


Figure 4. Linear regression on trust in Armed Forces in the Americas, 2014

Table 1. Corruption victimization by the Police and the Armed Forces in the Americas, 2014

Percentage of respondents in each country who reported being victim of corruption during the previous 12 months

	Corruption victimization by Armed Forces	Corruption victimization by Police	Difference Police - Military
Mexico	1.4	18.6	17.2
Bolivia	2.9	20	17.1
Paraguay	1.9	18.6	16.7
Peru	1.9	16.5	14.6
Guatemala	1	13.9	12.9
Belize	2.9	14	11.1
Guyana	2.1	12	9.9
Honduras	5.6	15.4	9.8
Ecuador	5.2	14	8.8
Dominican Republic	7.6	16.2	8.6
Nicaragua	1.6	8.7	7.1
Colombia	1.4	7.5	6.1
Argentina	0.9	6.9	6
Venezuela	7.1	12.6	5.5
Panama	5.9	11.3	5.4
Jamaica	0.6	5.7	5.1
El Salvador	1.2	5.4	4.2
Trinidad and Tobago	1.9	5.6	3.7
Brazil	1.1	4.3	3.2
Uruguay	0.1	3.1	3
Chile	0.1	0.5	0.4
All the Americas	2.2	10.1	7.9

End Notes

¹ Pérez, O. J. (2001). El neomilitarismo latinoamericano y su desafío a la democracia liberal. Militares y civiles. Balance y perspectivas de las relaciones civiles-militares venezolanas en la segunda mitad del Siglo XX. Caracas, Publicaciones UCAB.

² Huntington, S. P. (1991). The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, University of Oklahoma Press.

³ Diamint, R. (2002). "Civilians and the Military in Latin American Democracies." Disarmet Forum 2002: Human Security in Latin America, Agüero, F. and E. Hershberg, Eds. (2005). Memorias militares sobre la represión en el Cono Sur: Visiones en disputa en dictadura y democracia, Sigo XXI.

⁴ See, for instance Pérez, O. J. (2012). Las relaciones civiles-militares desde la perspectiva de la opinión pública. V Congreso Latinoamericano de Opinión Pública. Bogotá. Colombia, Pérez, O. J. (2013). La opinión pública y los parámetros de acción de las Fuerzas Armadas en América Latina. La seguridad: Un Concepto Amplio y Dinámico. V Jornadas de Estudios de Seguridad. S. A. Mejía. Madrid, Instituto Universitario General Gutiérrez Mellado - UNED: Madrid. 2013.

⁵ The AmericasBarometer is the round of surveys about democratic attitudes and behaviors carried out in the Americas by the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. Since 2004, and every two years, the project conducts face-to-face (with the exception of the United States and Canada, where surveys are web-based), nationally representative surveys of individuals in their homes, relying on stratified samples of at least 1,500 cases per country. The 2014 survey consists of nearly 50,000 interviews, conducted in 27 countries of the Americas. More

information on the AmericasBarometer and methodological aspects of the study can be found in www.lapopsurveys.org.

⁶ Thus, the proper way of “reading” each data point is as an *average value* of trust (in a 0-100 scale) and not as a percentage of those who trust.

⁷ AmericasBarometer data are based on national probability samples of respondents drawn from each country; as such, all samples produce results that contain a margin of error. It is important for the reader to understand that each *data point* (for example, in this case, the average level of trust in Armed Forces) has a *confidence interval*, expressed in terms of a range surrounding that point. The graphical representation of this confidence interval in Figure 1 and other similar to it is the grey block that surrounds the sample estimate (the mean in the case) represented by the black dot. 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 in bar graphs do not overlap, the reader can be very confident that those differences are *statistically significant* at the 95% confidence level.

⁸ The complete list of countries surveyed each year can be found in www.lapopsurveys.org.

⁹ Boidi, M. F. (2009). *The Missing Connection: Trust in Legislatures in Latin America*, Doctoral Dissertation Department of Political Science Vanderbilt University.

¹⁰ Cleary, E. L. (2009). *How Latin America Saved the Soul of the Catholic Church*. New Jersey, Paulist PRes, Booth, J. A. and P. B. Richard (2015). *Latin American Political Culture: Public Opinion and Democracy*, CQ Press.

¹¹ Some of the questions intended for the countries with Armed Forces only were nonetheless asked in Panama, as the country has a public force -“Fuerza Pública”- that fulfills the tasks typically carried out by the military.

¹² All data come from the AmericasBarometer series; in all cases trust in institutions is expressed as average in 0-100 scale, where 0 means the lowest level of trust and 100 the highest.

¹³ It is important to note, however, that the levels of trust did not decay for every Venezuelan institution, at least not significantly. Trust in the Catholic Church only fell 3 points from 2012, trust in the Police fell 2. Further elaboration on these trends exceeds the scope of this paper, but a possible hypothesis to explain them is that those institutions that are perceived as closely linked to President Nicolás Maduro –whose popularity has also plummeted recently- are those being punished by the Venezuelan citizens by rejecting their actions and withdrawing their trust in them. For more on this topic, see Rodriguez, M. and E. Zechmeister (2015) "Amid Low Evaluations of Maduro's Performance, Tolerance of Regimen's Critics Grows in Venezuela." AmericasBarometer Topical Brief.

¹⁴ Citrin, J. (1974). "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government." American Political Science Review **68**: 973 - 988.

¹⁵ Pharr, S. J., R. D. Putnam, et al. (2000). "A Quarter-Century of Declining Confidence." Journal of Democracy **11**(2): 5-25, Cook, T. and P. Gronke (2005). "The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions." The Journal of Politics **67**(3): 784-803.

¹⁶ Boidi, M. F. and R. Queirolo (2012). Las Fuerzas Armadas. Cultura política de la democracia en Uruguay y en las Américas 2012: Hacia la igualdad de oportunidades. R. Queirolo, M. F. Boidi and M. A. Seligson, LAPOP - Vanderbilt University.

¹⁷ Again, individuals were asked to report a score in a 1-7 scale, which for analytical purposes has been rescaled into a 0-100 continuum in which 0 means “not at all” and 100 means “a lot”. The wording for this question was carefully selected. In the question, it is highlighted that it refers to Human Rights of nationals of the country; the purpose of this clarification is to avoid “contamination” from perceptions about the role of the national military in foreign countries and their respect for foreigners. The question was designed to avoid impressions about Uruguayans troops’ respect for Human Rights in Haiti, for instance, or about American troops’ respect for Human Rights in the Middle East. Expecting to overcome the thoughts about the role of the Armed Forces with regards to Human Rights in the not-so-distant dictatorial past in many countries, the question emphasizes that it refers to the present only by adding the word “nowadays.”

¹⁸ Seligson, M. A. (1997). Nicaraguans Talk About Corruption: A Study of Public Opinion. Washington, D. C., Casals and Associates.

¹⁹ Seligson, M. A. (2002). "The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries." The Journal of Politics **64**(2): 408-433.

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