



CHAPTER 3:

Students' perceptions of public institutions and government

Chapter highlights

Most students in the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries supported justifications for dictatorships.

- About two thirds of students on average agreed that dictatorial rule may be justified when it brings order and safety or economic benefits. (Table 3.1)
- Students with higher levels of civic knowledge were less likely than students with lower levels of knowledge to agree with justifications for dictatorships. (Table 3.2)

Students' support for authoritarian government practices varied across the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries.

- Between 2009 and 2016, only one country recorded a decrease in students' support for authoritarian government practices. (Table 3.3)
- Students who studied at urban schools, students who expected to attain a university degree, and students who had higher levels of civic knowledge were less likely than the other students to support authoritarian government practices. (Table 3.4)

While the ICCS 2016 Latin American students tended not to agree with corrupt practices, there was some variation across countries in the extent of agreement.

- Support for corrupt practices decreased slightly in one of the participating countries between 2009 and 2016 and increased in two of the countries between 2009 and 2016. (Table 3.5)
- Students who studied at urban schools, students who expected to attain a university degree, and students who had higher levels of civic knowledge were the students less likely to support corrupt practices in government. (Table 3.6)

Students' trust in institutions in Chile and Colombia declined between 2009 and 2016.

- Schools remained a trusted institution among students in the Latin American region. (Table 3.7)
- Chile and Colombia recorded a general decline in students' trust in civic institutions over the 2009–2016 period; students from the Dominican Republic expressed somewhat higher levels of trust than they did in 2009. (Table 3.7)
- Students with lower levels of civic knowledge expressed more trust in government and political parties than those students with higher levels of civic knowledge. This pattern did not hold, however, for trust in schools or the armed forces.

This chapter explores data relating to the ICCS 2016 Latin American students' perceptions of forms of government, corrupt practices, and selected institutions. It is concerned with ICCS 2016 Research Question 4: *What beliefs do students in participating countries hold regarding important civic issues in modern society and what are the factors associated with their variation?* The results presented in this chapter are based on data reflecting affective responses to civic issues and relate to the following questions:

- To what extent do students justify and endorse authoritarian forms of government?
- To what extent do students express acceptance of corrupt practices in government?
- To what extent do students express trust in selected institutions in their society?

In line with the approach described in the ICCS 2016 technical report (Schulz, Carstens, Losito, & Fraillon, 2018), we used a student questionnaire to measure the constructs underpinning the scales and items presented in this chapter and used IRT (Item Response Theory) scaling to derive reporting scales. All scales have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10, with equally weighted national data either for 2016 or, where equated, for 2009. Item maps describe the scales presented in this chapter. The maps, which link scale scores to expected item responses under the scaling model, can be found in Appendix C. Readers should remain aware that cross-national differences of scale scores need to be interpreted with some caution because questionnaire formats may not always provide entirely consistent measurement across the diversity of cultures and national contexts evident in the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries.

The chapter also reports on associations between the above measures and selected variables such as students' civic knowledge, gender, parental education, media information, and school location. For each questionnaire scale, we compare scale score averages across three different comparison groups, each of which is divided into two categories (e.g., students with high and students with low levels of civic knowledge). Graphical displays of differences between groups and the statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) of these differences accompany those comparisons.

Students' justification of dictatorship and endorsement of authoritarian government practices

Surveys conducted in the Latin American region with the aim of measuring adults' and adolescents' support for authoritarian government practices have shown majorities of these respondents tending to endorse non-democratic governments provided they solve economic problems (see, for example, United Nations Development Programme, 2004). Research has also indicated that support for non-democratic governments is related to educational background, with more educated citizens tending to be the citizens less in favor of authoritarian government practices (Cox, 2010).

The Latin American regional questionnaire for ICCS 2009 included a set of items measuring endorsement of authoritarian government practices and justification of dictatorships (see Schulz, Ainley, Friedman, & Lietz, 2011). Results indicated that considerable proportions of lower secondary students in all five participating countries supported non-democratic government practices, and that majorities among students saw dictatorships as justified if they provided economic benefits or greater security.

The ICCS 2016 Latin American student questionnaire included two questions that together had a total of 11 items designed to measure student attitudes toward authoritarian forms of government and authoritarian practices. Students rated their level of agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree") with statements endorsing authoritarian government practices or justifying the establishment of dictatorships. Two of these items, identical versions of which were used in the ICCS 2009 survey, contained justifications for dictatorial rule as "bringing law and safety" and "bringing economic benefits."

When comparing the percentages of ICCS 2016 students who expressed agreement with these two statements with the corresponding percentages from ICCS 2009 (see Table 3.1), we found that the majority of students in all Latin American countries supported justifications for dictatorship. On average across the five countries, 69 percent of the ICCS 2016 students agreed that law and safety and 65 percent of them agreed that economic benefits are acceptable justifications for dictatorial rule. We also observed some variation across countries. The proportion of students supporting these statements was lowest in Chile and highest in Peru.

A comparison of these results with those from ICCS 2009 revealed a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) decrease (of nine percentage points on average) for order and safety as a justification in Chile and statistically significant decreases for economic benefits as a justification in Chile and Colombia (averages of 12 and two percentage points respectively). The Dominican Republic recorded statistically significant increases in agreement for each of these statements (averages of three and four percentage points respectively).

Table 3.1: Students' perceptions of the benefits of dictatorships in 2016 and 2009

Country	Percentages of students who agreed or strongly agreed that:					
	Dictatorships are justified when they bring order and safety			Dictatorships are justified when they bring economic benefits		
	2016	2009	Difference	2016	2009	Difference
Chile	57 (1.1) ▼	65 (1.1)	-9 (1.5)	52 (1.0) ▼	64 (1.0)	-12 (1.4)
Colombia	73 (0.8) △	74 (0.7)	-1 (1.0)	68 (1.1) △	70 (0.6)	-2 (1.2)
Dominican Republic	73 (0.9) △	70 (1.0)	3 (1.4)	70 (1.1) △	66 (1.1)	4 (1.5)
Mexico	67 (1.0) ▽	69 (0.8)	-1 (1.3)	66 (1.0)	66 (0.7)	0 (1.2)
Peru	77 (0.8) △	-		72 (0.8) △	-	
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	69 (0.4)			65 (0.4)		
Common countries average	67 (0.5)	70 (0.5)	-2 (0.7)	64 (0.5)	67 (0.4)	-3 (0.7)

National ICCS 2016 percentage:

- ▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▼ More than 10 percentage points below ICCS 2016 Latin American average

Notes:

- () Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent.
- Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in bold.
- No comparable data available.

Our comparison of students' agreement with justifications for dictatorial rule by levels of civic knowledge (students with test scores at or above Level B¹ versus those with scores below Level B) revealed strong differences (Table 3.2). In all participating countries, students with the higher levels of civic knowledge had significantly lower percentages of agreement than the less knowledgeable students. For justifications of dictatorship in terms of order and safety, the average difference was 14 percentage points, ranging from eight points in Peru to 25 points in the Dominican Republic. For justifications in terms of economic benefits, the average difference was 19 percentage points, ranging from 12 points in Peru to 32 points in the Dominican Republic. These results suggest that students who know more about the political system are less likely to endorse justifications for the establishment of dictatorships. However, on average across countries, and even among the more

1 ICCS 2016 measured students' civic knowledge using a test consisting of 87 items. Outcomes were reported on a described scale with the following levels: students working at Level D demonstrate familiarity with concrete, explicit content and examples relating to the basic features of democracy; students working at Level C engage with the fundamental principles and broad concepts that underpin civics and citizenship; students working at Level B typically demonstrate some specific knowledge and understanding of the most pervasive civic and citizenship institutions, systems, and concepts; and students working at Level A demonstrate a holistic knowledge and understanding of civic and citizenship concepts and demonstrate some critical perspective.

Table 3.2: Students' perceptions of the benefits of dictatorships by levels of civic knowledge

Country	Percentages of students who agreed or strongly agreed that:					
	Dictatorships are justified when they bring order and safety			Dictatorships are justified when they bring economic benefits		
	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high–low)	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high–low)
Chile	65 (1.4)	50 (1.4)	-15 (2.0)	63 (1.3)	42 (1.2)	-21 (1.8)
Colombia	77 (1.2)	69 (1.1)	-9 (1.8)	76 (1.5)	60 (1.4)	-16 (2.1)
Dominican Republic	77 (0.9)	51 (2.6)	-25 (2.7)	74 (1.0)	42 (2.9)	-32 (3.0)
Mexico	73 (1.3)	60 (1.4)	-13 (2.0)	73 (1.2)	59 (1.2)	-15 (1.5)
Peru	80 (0.9)	72 (1.6)	-8 (1.8)	76 (1.1)	64 (1.4)	-12 (1.9)
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	74 (0.5)	60 (0.8)	-14 (0.9)	72 (0.6)	53 (0.8)	-19 (0.9)

Notes:

() Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) between students with high and low levels of civic knowledge are displayed in bold.

knowledgeable students, majorities of students agreed with both justifications for dictatorial governments. Chile and the Dominican Republic were the only countries where majorities among students with civic knowledge at or above Level B disagreed that economic benefits justify dictatorships.

As in ICCS 2009, we used the following nine items to derive a scale reflecting students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices: (a) "It is better for government leaders to make decisions without consulting anybody" (ICCS 2016 average percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement: 21%); (b) "People in government must enforce their authority even if it means violating the rights of some citizens" (29%); (c) "People in government lose part of their authority when they admit their mistakes" (50%); (d) "People whose opinions are different than those of the government must be considered its enemies" (20%); (e) "The most important opinion of a country should be that of the president" (51%); (f) "It is fair that the government does not comply with the law when it thinks it is not necessary" (27%); (g) "Concentration of power in one person guarantees order" (58%); (h) "The government should close communication media that are critical" (28%); and (i) "If the president does not agree with Congress, he/she should dissolve it" (40%).



The scale was equated to ensure the resulting scale scores could be compared with those collected in the 2009 survey. The ICCS 2016 scale had high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85) on average across the participating countries (see the item map in Figure 3.1, Appendix C).

On average, students in most of the ICCS 2016 countries tended to disagree with statements endorsing authoritarian government practices (as indicated by the location of most national averages in the darker shaded area of the graph in Table 3.3). We also observed marked differences across the five participating countries, with national average scale scores ranging from 45 in Chile to 55 in the Dominican Republic. When we compared the results with those from the previous ICCS cycle, we recorded a statistically significant decrease in the level of endorsement of authoritarian government practices in only one country—Chile. Here, the difference was almost three score points, equivalent to between a quarter and a third of a regional standard deviation. This finding is in line with the notable decreases in support for justifications of dictatorship among Chilean students.

Table 3.4 displays scale scores comparing the endorsement of authoritarian government practices between students studying at schools in urban communities (i.e., with more than 100,000 inhabitants) and students studying in rural communities, between students expecting to attain a university degree and other students, and between students with higher (at or above Level B) and students with lower levels of civic knowledge. For all three pairs of comparison groups, we observed consistently significant associations on average across countries.

Table 3.3: National average scale scores indicating students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices

Country	2016	2009	Differences (2016-2009)	40	45	50	55	60
Chile	45 (0.3) ▼	48 (0.3)	-2.9 (0.5)					
Colombia	48 (0.3) ▽	48 (0.2)	-0.3 (0.5)					
Dominican Republic	55 (0.3) ▲	54 (0.3)	0.7 (0.5)					
Mexico	49 (0.3)	49 (0.3)	0.3 (0.5)					
Peru	51 (0.2) △	-	-					
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	50 (0.1)							
Common countries average	49 (0.2)	50 (0.1)	-0.6 (0.2)					

 2016 average score +/- confidence interval
 2009 average score +/- confidence interval

National ICCS 2016 average:

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS 2016 average

On average across items, students with a score in the range with this color have more than a 50% probability of indicating:

Disagreement
Agreement

Notes:

- () Standard errors appear in parentheses. Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in bold
- No comparable data available.

In four of the five countries (the exception was the Dominican Republic), students studying at schools in urban communities had significantly lower levels of endorsement of authoritarian government practices than students at non-urban schools. The difference between these two comparison groups was three scale score points on average. Students expecting to attain a university degree had significantly lower scale scores than other students in all five countries. On average across the five countries, the difference between the two groups was five scale score points. Our comparison of the average endorsement of authoritarian government practices scale scores for students with low and students with high levels of civic knowledge revealed a very large difference of about 11 score points (equivalent to more than a standard deviation). The differences in all five countries were significant and of similar size. In line with the findings of our analysis of the extent to which these two groups endorsed justifications of dictatorship, the results indicate that more knowledgeable students are considerably less likely than their less knowledgeable peers to endorse non-democratic government practices.


Students' endorsement of corrupt practices in government


Corruption is widely regarded as one of Latin America's most salient impediments to a democratic society (Blake & Morris, 2009; Reimers, 2007). Cross-national surveys in this region show that, with only a few exceptions, countries tend to have low indices of transparency (see, for example, Transparency International, 2014). Researchers have also found associations between citizens' perception that corruption is present and lower levels of political trust (e.g., Canache & Allison, 2005; Morris & Klesner, 2010), a finding which suggests that corrupt practices have the potential to undermine citizens' confidence in democracy and its institutions. Also, large proportions of Latin American citizens who completed regional surveys reported direct experience of corrupt practices (Morris & Blake, 2010). The World Values Survey found that acceptance of corruption among the countries in this region was higher than in other countries (Torgler & Valev, 2004).

Research on the effects of corruption on democratic legitimacy has provided evidence of the detrimental effects of experience of corruption on perceptions of the political system in general (Seligson, 2002). In addition, individual acceptance of corruption tends to be reinforced by living in contexts where people are, on average, less averse to corrupt practices (Gatti, Paternostro, & Rigolini, 2003). Using 2005–2007 World Values Survey data from six Latin American countries, Lavena (2014) showed variation across countries in the extent to which respondents accepted

Table 3.4: National average scale scores indicating students' endorsement of authoritarian government practices by school location, expected education, and level of civic knowledge

Country	Scale score average by school location		Scale score average by expected university degree		Scale score average by level of civic knowledge	
	Rural school	Urban school	Not expecting university	Expecting university	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)
Chile	47 (0.6)	44 (0.5)	49 (0.4)	43 (0.3)	51 (0.3)	40 (0.3)
Colombia	50 (0.5)	46 (0.5)	52 (0.4)	47 (0.4)	53 (0.4)	44 (0.4)
Dominican Republic	55 (0.3)	54 (0.6)	57 (0.3)	52 (0.3)	56 (0.2)	44 (0.5)
Mexico	50 (0.4)	48 (0.5)	54 (0.4)	48 (0.3)	55 (0.2)	43 (0.3)
Peru	52 (0.3)	48 (0.4)	53 (0.3)	49 (0.3)	54 (0.2)	45 (0.3)
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	51 (0.2)	48 (0.2)	53 (0.1)	48 (0.1)	54 (0.1)	43 (0.2)

 Difference between comparison groups statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

 Difference between comparison groups not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Notes:

0 Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Score averages that are significantly larger ($p < 0.05$) than those in the comparison group are displayed in **bold**.

corruption, and associations between acceptance and the variables of age, education, ethnicity, cultural values, and confidence in public organizations.

Through its Latin American regional questionnaire, ICCS 2009 gathered data about young people's attitudes toward corrupt practices. While the results showed acceptance of corrupt practices among many of the students, these students were not in the majority (Schulz et al., 2011). The results also showed that students with higher levels of civic knowledge tended to be less inclined to endorse corruption in the civil service and government.

The ICCS 2016 Latin American student questionnaire asked students to rate their agreement ("strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," "strongly disagree") with the following statements justifying or endorsing corrupt practices in the public service and government: (a) "It is acceptable for a civil servant to accept bribes if his/her salary is too low" (ICCS 2016 average percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement: 25%); (b) "It is acceptable for a civil servant to use the resources of the institution in which he/she works for personal benefit" (35%); (c) "Good candidates grant personal benefits to voters in return for their votes" (40%); (d) "Paying an additional amount to a civil servant in order to obtain a personal benefit is acceptable" (34%); (e) "It is acceptable that a civil servant helps his/her friends by giving them employment in his/her office" (53%); and (f) "Since public resources belong to everyone, it is acceptable that whoever can keeps part of them" (36%). While, on average across the ICCS 2016 countries, majorities among students tended to disagree with items justifying corrupt practices, more than half of them found it acceptable for civil servants to provide their friends with employment in their office.

We used this set of items to derive a scale reflecting students' endorsement of corrupt practices in government. The higher scores on this scale reflect higher levels of acceptance of corrupt practices (see the item map in Figure 3.2, Appendix C). Across countries, we recorded high reliability for this scale, with an average coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.85. Because this question was included in the ICCS 2009 Latin American questionnaire and had not been modified, we were able to equate it to the one established for ICCS 2009 and then compare the scale scores across the two ICCS cycles.

As evident from the location of national score averages in the darker-shaded area of the graphical part of Table 3.5, the average student in most of the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries tended to disagree with statements endorsing corrupt practices. The highest scale score average, recorded in the Dominican Republic, was five score points above the average scale score for all five participating countries. The lowest scale score, recorded for Chilean students, was three score points below the ICCS 2016 Latin American average. When we compared the scale scores of the ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 common countries, we recorded statistically significant differences across time in three of the four countries: Chile recorded a significant decrease of more than one score point in the endorsement of corrupt practices, while Colombia and Mexico each recorded a significant increase in endorsement of about one score point.

Table 3.6 displays scale scores comparing the endorsement of corrupt government practices across three comparison groups: school location, expected educational attainment, and levels of civic knowledge. For all three pairs of comparison groups, we observed consistently significant associations across the participating countries. On average, students in non-urban contexts had scale scores more than two points higher than the scores for the students studying at urban schools; the largest difference was recorded in Peru. Students who expected to gain a university degree were less likely (by about four scale score points) than the comparison group to endorse corrupt practices. The largest endorsement difference that we observed was again across levels of civic knowledge. The scores of students with civic knowledge at Level B proficiency or above were about nine points lower, on average, than the scores of the students with lower levels of civic knowledge.

Table 3.5: National average scale scores indicating students' endorsement of corrupt practices in government

Country	2016	2009	Differences (2016–2009)	40	45	50	55	60
Chile	48 (0.3) ▼	49 (0.3)	-1.1 (0.5)					
Colombia	49 (0.2) ▽	48 (0.2)	1.0 (0.4)					
Dominican Republic	56 (0.3) ▲	55 (0.3)	0.8 (0.5)					
Mexico	50 (0.3) ▽	49 (0.3)	0.9 (0.5)					
Peru	51 (0.3) △	–	–					
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	51 (0.1)							
Common countries average	51 (0.1)	50 (0.1)	0.4 (0.2)					

■ 2016 average score +/- confidence interval
 ■ 2009 average score +/- confidence interval

National ICCS 2016 average:

- ▲ More than 3 score points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▼ More than 3 score points below Latin American ICCS 2016 average

On average across items, students with a score in the range with this color have more than a 50% probability of indicating:

	Disagreement
	Agreement

Notes:

- () Standard errors appear in parentheses. Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in bold
- No comparable data available.

Students' trust in institutions

Surveys of adults in the Latin American region have shown that these adults tend to have lower levels of political trust than adults in other regions of the world (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Mainwaring, 2006). In comparison with people in European countries, people in Latin American countries have particularly low levels of trust in parliament and public services (Segovia Arancibia, 2008). Research further suggests that political trust in Latin American countries is sensitive to changes in political contexts, shows considerable within-country variation over time, and is associated with respondents' political inclinations (Castillo, Bargsted, & Somma, 2017).

Results from the 1999 CIVED study showed that the average level of trust in civic institutions among young people in Chile and Colombia was similar to the average level of trust among students across all CIVED countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Use of a similar item set with a modified question format in the ICCS 2009 student questionnaire produced results which showed that, compared with students from across all ICCS 2009 countries, the Latin American students tended to express relatively lower levels of trust in political parties, courts of justice, and the police, but much higher levels of trust in schools (Schulz et al., 2011). Research based on ICCS 2009 data also illustrated that in countries with relatively high scores on indices of corruption and low scores on indices of government efficiency (many of these countries were Latin American), students with the higher civic knowledge scores expressed less trust in civic institutions. In contrast, positive correlations between civic knowledge and trust were recorded in countries with low indices of corruption (Lauglo, 2013).

The ICCS 2016 student questionnaire included the same set of 15 items as in ICCS 2009 to measure student trust in civic groups and institutions. However, the 2016 item set was augmented by an item measuring trust in social media. The international report on ICCS 2016 showed that while, in some countries, levels of trust in civic institutions increased between 2009 and 2016, the level of confidence decreased in particular in two Latin American countries: Chile and Colombia (Schulz et al., 2018).

To illustrate (in this chapter) changes in trust in civic institutions in the ICCS 2016 Latin American countries, we use data for four civic institutions—schools, the military, political parties, and the

Table 3.6: National average scale scores indicating students' endorsement of corrupt practices in government by school location, expected education, and level of civic knowledge

Country	Scale score average by school location		Scale score average by expected university degree		Scale score average by level of civic knowledge	
	Rural school	Urban school	Not expecting university	Expecting university	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)
Chile	49 (0.6)	47 (0.4)	51 (0.3)	46 (0.3)	52 (0.3)	43 (0.3)
Colombia	50 (0.4)	48 (0.4)	52 (0.3)	48 (0.2)	53 (0.3)	45 (0.3)
Dominican Republic	56 (0.3)	54 (0.5)	58 (0.3)	53 (0.3)	57 (0.3)	46 (0.5)
Mexico	51 (0.3)	49 (0.4)	53 (0.3)	49 (0.3)	55 (0.2)	45 (0.3)
Peru	53 (0.3)	49 (0.5)	54 (0.3)	50 (0.3)	54 (0.2)	46 (0.3)
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	52 (0.2)	49 (0.2)	54 (0.1)	49 (0.1)	54 (0.1)	45 (0.1)

█ Difference between comparison groups statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

□ Difference between comparison groups not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Notes:

0 Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Score averages that are significantly larger ($p < 0.05$) than those in the comparison group are displayed in **bold**.

national government. Given the important role the armed forces have played during the last decades in all these countries, and because school is the place where young people tend to experience civic engagement for the first time, we contrast trust in these institutions with trust in two other important institutions in a democracy—governments and political parties.

As evident from [Table 3.7](#), the Latin American students' level of trust in schools as an institution in society was generally high. On average, 80 percent of students expressed quite a lot or complete trust; the national percentages ranged from 71 in Chile to 91 in the Dominican Republic. Majorities of students in these Latin American countries also expressed trust in the armed forces as an institution, with national percentages ranging from 64 in Peru to 78 in Colombia. When comparing these results with those from ICCS 2009, we recorded significant and larger decreases in trust for both schools (by nine percentage points on average) and the armed forces (seven points) in Chile, and lower but still significant decreases in Colombia. In both the Dominican Republic and Mexico, however, trust in the armed forces increased significantly (by six and nine percentage points, respectively).

Although majorities of students in three of the five ICCS 2016 Latin American countries expressed trust in their national governments (58% on average, ranging from 49% in Peru to 78% in the Dominican Republic), students generally had less confidence in their national political parties. Across the countries, only 36 percent of students expressed quite a lot or complete trust in these institutions. The Dominican Republic was the only country where at least half of the surveyed students expressed confidence in political parties as an institution. Trust for political parties and the national government decreased in Chile and Colombia between 2009 and 2016, whereas trust in the national government increased in the Dominican Republic during this period.

[Table 3.8](#) illustrates the relationships between trust in these institutions and levels of civic knowledge. Trust in schools as an institution was significantly higher among students with higher levels of civic knowledge in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. Confidence in the armed forces was also higher among more knowledgeable students in four of the five countries. The Dominican Republic was the one country where students with higher civic knowledge expressed less trust in this institution. For both political parties and national government, levels of trust were much lower among the students with higher levels of civic knowledge than among the students with lower levels of knowledge.

We recorded, on average, a difference of 18 percentage points for political parties, and 14 percentage points for national governments, findings which suggest that being more knowledgeable about civic society is associated with lower levels of confidence in these important institutions in a democratic society. A possible reason for these findings is that students with higher levels of knowledge are more aware of the impact that negative aspects in these countries, such as high levels of corruption and inefficiency, have on the effective democratic functioning of civic institutions.

Table 3.7: Students' trust in selected institutions in 2016 and 2009

Country	Percentages of students who expressed complete or quite a lot of trust in:											
	Schools			Armed forces			Political parties			National government		
	2016	2009	Difference	2016	2009	Difference	2016	2009	Difference	2016	2009	Difference
Chile	71 (1.0) ▽	80 (0.8)	-9 (1.3)	74 (1.0) △	81 (0.5)	-7 (1.1)	33 (0.8) ▽	34 (1.0)	-2 (1.3)	50 (1.0) ▽	65 (1.0)	-15 (1.4)
Colombia	85 (0.7) △	87 (0.6)	-2 (1.0)	78 (0.8) △	80 (0.7)	-3 (1.1)	28 (1.0) ▽	35 (1.1)	-7 (1.5)	55 (1.2) ▽	62 (1.2)	-7 (1.7)
Dominican Republic	91 (0.6) ▲	88 (1.3)	3 (1.5)	74 (1.0) △	68 (1.9)	6 (2.1)	50 (1.1) ▲	51 (1.2)	-1 (1.7)	78 (1.1) ▲	74 (1.3)	4 (1.7)
Mexico	73 (1.0) ▽	72 (0.9)	1 (1.3)	71 (0.7) ▽	62 (1.1)	9 (1.3)	37 (1.0)	35 (1.0)	3 (1.4)	57 (1.1)	58 (1.0)	-1 (1.5)
Peru	78 (0.7) ▽	-	-	64 (1.0) ▽	-	-	33 (0.9) ▽	-	-	49 (1.0) ▽	-	-
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	80 (0.4)	-	-	72 (0.4)	-	-	36 (0.4)	-	-	58 (0.5)	-	-
Common countries average	80 (0.4)	82 (0.5)	-2 (0.6)	74 (0.4)	73 (0.6)	1 (0.7)	37 (0.5)	39 (0.5)	-2 (0.7)	60 (0.5)	65 (0.6)	-5 (0.8)

National ICCS 2016 percentage:

- ▲ More than 10 percentage points above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- △ Significantly above Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▽ Significantly below Latin American ICCS 2016 average
- ▼ More than 10 percentage points below Latin American ICCS 2016 average

Notes:

- () Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent. Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in **bold**.
- No comparable data available.

Table 3.8: Students' trust in selected institutions by levels of civic knowledge

Country	Percentages of students who expressed complete or quite a lot of trust in:											
	Schools			Armed forces			Political parties			National government		
	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high-low)	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high-low)	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high-low)	Civic knowledge below Level B (below 479)	Civic knowledge at or above Level B (479 and above)	Difference (high-low)
Chile	66 (1.4)	75 (1.2)	9 (1.9)	71 (1.3)	77 (1.2)	5 (1.5)	38 (1.2)	28 (1.1)	-10 (1.6)	53 (1.3)	46 (1.3)	-7 (1.8)
Colombia	83 (1.1)	86 (1.0)	3 (1.4)	74 (1.1)	81 (1.1)	7 (1.5)	36 (1.3)	21 (1.0)	-15 (1.4)	62 (1.5)	50 (1.4)	-12 (1.9)
Dominican Republic	91 (0.6)	92 (1.7)	0 (1.9)	75 (1.2)	66 (3.3)	-9 (3.7)	53 (1.2)	28 (2.1)	-25 (2.3)	80 (1.2)	60 (2.9)	-20 (3.1)
Mexico	72 (1.4)	75 (1.2)	4 (1.7)	68 (1.2)	74 (1.0)	7 (1.7)	47 (1.4)	27 (1.1)	-20 (1.7)	64 (1.4)	49 (1.4)	-16 (1.8)
Peru	78 (0.9)	79 (1.2)	1 (1.5)	60 (1.3)	71 (1.4)	11 (2.0)	40 (1.1)	21 (1.3)	-19 (1.7)	55 (1.2)	38 (1.6)	-18 (2.1)
Latin American ICCS 2016 average	78 (0.5)	81 (0.6)	3 (0.8)	70 (0.5)	74 (0.8)	4 (1.0)	43 (0.5)	25 (0.6)	-18 (0.8)	63 (0.6)	49 (0.8)	-14 (1.0)

Notes:

- () Standard errors appear in parentheses. Because results are rounded to the nearest whole number, some totals may appear inconsistent. Statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) between 2009 and 2016 are displayed in **bold**.

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