



JRC TECHNICAL REPORT

# Youth Perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean; Evidence from Latinobarómetro survey

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## **Abstract**

Youth is an important component of the European Union's (EU) external policies and programmes. It is a key element in the EU's external action, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in the EU external action for 2022-2027 – a policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world. Young people are important agents of change. They are essential to advance sustainable and inclusive development in every region of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Against this background, this report provides evidence of the main concerns and perspectives of young people in the LAC region on economic, political and social issues in their countries, with the objective to provide scientific support for the preparation of the EU-CELAC Summit in July 2023, as well as subsequent relations. The report is based on a descriptive analysis of data from the Latinobarómetro public opinion survey, which covers 18 countries in the region. It first focuses on the primary concerns of young people (defined in the report as people aged between 18 and 29 years of age) and then examines the opinions of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean concerning five thematic areas: (i) digital access and transformation, (ii) environmental protection and climate action, (iii) social cohesion and inequalities, (iv) democratic governance and political participation and (v) attitude towards the EU.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report methodologically relies on the following two publications: (i) Kalantaryan, S., and McMahon, S. 'Youth Perspectives in Africa: what are the most important issues for 18 to 35 year olds?', EUR 30298 EN Publications Office of the European Union 2022. and (ii) McMahon, S., and Kalantaryan, S. 'Youth Perspectives in Africa: How young people view politics, society and the environment'. EUR 30367 EN Publications Office of the European Union 2020.

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## Executive summary

Young people are important agents of change. They are essential to advance sustainable and inclusive development in every region of the world, and they have an important role to play in achieving societal goals. The European Union has introduced major initiatives directed at young people in Europe as well as in its external action. In October 2022, the European Commission adopted the Youth Action Plan in EU External Action to promote meaningful youth participation and empowerment in the EU's external action for sustainable development, equality, and peace.

Latin America recently passed a demographic turning point when it comes to its youth population. The youth population of LAC peaked at 161 million in 2017. Today, the youth in LAC only represent one in four people. With the share of young people trending further downwards on the continent in the future, a focus on youth in policymaking is vital for their participation and empowerment.

This study supports the objectives of the Youth Action Plan with a regional focus on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It further seeks to contribute to the deliberations on the topic of youth at the third EU-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2023, which is set to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and LAC built on shared values and interests, economic and cultural ties, and extensive people-to-people contacts.

Based on a descriptive analysis of data from the most recent wave of Latinobarómetro public opinion survey, the report provides evidence of the main concerns and perspectives of young people (defined in the report as people aged between 18 and 29 years of age) in Latin America and the Caribbean on economic, political and social issues. It zooms in on young people's perspectives in proposed key areas of the EU-LAC partnership, such as green and digital transformation, social cohesion and inequalities, democracy and political participation, and multilateralism and trade. The survey involved more than 20 000 interviews. It covers 18 of 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, representing more than 600 million inhabitants (or 95 % of the population in the region). However, the survey only included one country in the Caribbean. The other 17 belong to the Latin America region.

The study finds that young people in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are mostly concerned about problems of economic nature. About half of the young respondents (45 %) selected problems related to the economy as being the most important concern for them. This is more than for all other categories combined: 20 per cent of the respondents cited problems related to politics, 10 per cent cited problems related to social issues, 8 per cent cited problems related to security and less than 1 per cent cited problems related to infrastructure as their top concerns. 'Economy' is also the issue that young people in the LAC region most frequently cited as the most important problem that their country is facing (19 % of young respondents), followed by 'Unemployment' (11 %). The third and fourth most salient concerns are 'Corruption' and 'Political problems', accounting together for 20 per cent of responses.

While security related concerns accounted for a small share of responses (8 %) in the 2020 wave of Latinobarómetro survey used in this study, the analysis of previous waves reveals this is rather an exception. Security is the second most popular group in all previous waves conducted from 2020 to 2018 accounting for from 24 to 34 % of responses. The unusually low percentage recorded for 2020 might be explained by Covid-19 pandemic related mobility restrictions and lockdown measures. Hence it is likely to be a short-term phenomenon as the pandemic has also exacerbated underlying factors associated with criminal violence.

Against the backdrop of the support for a green transition and sustainable development in the EU's global action, environmental protection and climate change are not among the top ranked concerns of the youth population in the region. Yet, survey results show that a significant share of young people express the view that environmental protection is not guaranteed and that they would be willing to step up action in this area. The highest concerns are observed in Chile (74 %), Paraguay and Brazil (75 %).

Young people in Latin America and the Caribbean have broad access to digital resources such as smartphones, computers, and the internet and are generally confident about managing new technologies. However, there are considerable differences across socio-demographic groups. Young men, highly educated individuals, employed individuals, and those living in larger cities have higher rates of device ownership or network access compared to women, individuals with low or medium levels of education, unemployed or inactive individuals, and those living in small cities or rural areas. Despite a general increase in access to digital appliances and the Internet among young people in the LAC region compared with older citizens, there are important inequalities within and between countries. If these differences persist, they might have negative implications for future development,

including a lack of adequate human resources to enable the digital transformation at the country level and the skills and competence necessary to be part of this transformation at the individual level.

From the perspective of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean, social cohesion and inequality are problematic issues for countries in the region. A large share of young people in LAC consider income distribution (75 %), access to justice (74 %), healthcare (60 %) and education (53 %) as either unfair or very unfair. This is particularly pronounced among young people residing in small towns and rural areas. There are also big differences across countries. For instance, in Chile 96 % of the young people consider income distribution as either unfair or very unfair, while in El Salvador the share is two times lower.

Young people in the LAC region also display limited trust in democracy and participation in political processes on the national and local level. Just under half of the young people in the LAC region view democracy as preferable to other kinds of government and feel that their freedom for political participation is guaranteed in their country. Furthermore, young people have little trust in the responsiveness of the government on the local level. Across countries, the trust in democracy and democratic governance is higher among young people in countries that also exhibit stronger characteristics of liberal democracy and provide political and civil rights.

In the context of reinforcing the EU-LAC partnership, the study finds that the majority of young people in the region have a favourable opinion about the EU and see perceive the relations of their country with the EU to be good. Young people are also slightly more positive about the EU than the adult population above age 30. In particular, young people with medium or high level of education living in larger cities hold a favourable opinion about the EU.

Overall, the results point to the strong role played by education in ensuring a more secure and active position for young people in society regardless of the issue in focus (whether protesting for climate change or feeling equipped with the right skills to be part of digital transformation). This points to the crucial role that improving access to education can play for the development of the countries and the region as a whole.

The study contributes to addressing the recommendation of the JRC Science for Policy report titled 'Youth Action Plan; Bridging policies and data'. The report was drafted to provide the evidence base for the Joint Communication on Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022-2027. In this respect, the study provides new evidence to support EU policies linked to youth in the LAC region and bi-regional cooperation. Moreover, following the recommendation that came out of earlier reports, it uses regional public opinion survey data to address the data gaps in several thematic policy-relevant areas. While the generated data relies solely on the Latinobarómetro survey and covers only 18 out of 33 countries in the region, and hence is not generalisable to the whole region, it highlights the importance of age-disaggregated data for understanding young people's concerns and perspectives, as well as the potential of public opinion surveys in filling this gap. In this respect, the information provided by other public opinion surveys and efforts in harmonising the questionnaires across surveys could help generating a comprehensive region-wide picture of views, monitor its dynamics over time and across countries as well as various sociodemographic groups.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Political context

The European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are connected by historic and cultural ties as well as trade, political and cooperation agreements in numerous areas. The strategic partnership between these two regions was established in the first bi-regional Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1999). A decade later, the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, 'European Union, 'Latin America and the Caribbean: joining forces for a common future' (17 April 2019), set out the first elements of the current policy framework for relations between the two regions.<sup>1</sup>

The European Union considers the partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean of geostrategic relevance and sees the countries in the region as essential partners in the fast evolving world with new global realities and new challenges<sup>2</sup>. High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice President Josep Borrell, highlighted the importance of relaunching the partnership between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>3</sup> when visiting countries in the region (Uruguay and Argentina, 24 to 31 October 2022) and during the EU-CELAC meeting of foreign affairs ministers (Buenos Aires on 27 October 2022). The High Representative outlined three fundamental reasons of mutual interest for closer and better cooperation: (i) to promote peace through a multilateral order based on fairer and more inclusive rules, (ii) to develop an agenda to address the three great challenges of the 21st century that are climate change, the digital revolution and social cohesion, (iii) to support a stronger and more unified regional voice of Latin American and Caribbean leaders. The bi-regional summit that is to be held in Brussels on 17-18 July 2023 is set to manifest the way to renew and intensify the partnership<sup>4</sup>. Ahead of the EU-CELAC summit, the High Representative and the European Commission have adopted a Joint Communication setting out a New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>5</sup>. Following the proposal of the New Agenda, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen visited Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico between 12 and 16 June 2023, meeting the national leaders. On this occasion, she stated that 'the EU-LAC strategic partnership is more important than ever. We are key partners to strengthen the rules-based international order, stand up together for democracy, human rights and international peace and security. Our Global Gateway will also boost investment and closer cooperation.'<sup>6</sup>

Latin America recently passed a demographic turning point when it comes to its youth population. It is following Europe as a region where the number of young people has started to decline. In 2023, there are 160 million young people in LAC, compared to 120 million in Europe. The youth population of LAC peaked at 161 million in 2017, with some small variations at subregional level. The number of young people first started to decline in the Caribbean in 2014 after reaching 10.6 million, and then in South America in 2016 after reaching 150 million. For Central America, the turning point is projected for 2026, when the number of young people should be around 46.4 million. In contrast to the declining youth population in the LAC region, the total population continues to increase due to growth in the adult and older adult populations. This is a result of the combination of higher fertility in the past and expanding life expectancy. Today, the youth in LAC only represent one in four people. With the share of young people trending further downwards on the continent in the future, a focus on youth in policymaking is vital for their participation and empowerment. During the period covered by the survey, the youth unemployment rate was 21.2 per cent which is significantly above the global figures for the same period

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<sup>1</sup> A Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean: joining forces for a common future (April 2019), Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52019JC0006>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>2</sup> EEAS (2022) A strategic geopolitical partnership for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Strategic communications, 20.01.2022, Available online at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/latin-america-caribbean/strategic-geopolitical-partnership-challenges-21st-century\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/latin-america-caribbean/strategic-geopolitical-partnership-challenges-21st-century_en) Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Re-launching the partnership between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. HR/VP speech at the Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers in Buenos Aires on 27 October 2022. Available online at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/re-launching-partnership-between-eu-and-latin-america-and-caribbean\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/re-launching-partnership-between-eu-and-latin-america-and-caribbean_en). Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>4</sup> EU-CELAC summit, 17-18 July 2023. Available online at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/07/17-18/> Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council A New Agenda for Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023JC0017&qid=1686302597845>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Global Gateway: Latin America and the Caribbean, Sharing history and future. Available online at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway/global-gateway-latin-america-and-caribbean\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway/global-gateway-latin-america-and-caribbean_en). Last accessed 30 June 2023.

(15.5 %) (ILO 2022). Moreover, 24 per cent of young people are neither employed nor in education, which points to existing difficulties young people experiences in the transition to adulthood.

Young people have an important role to play in achieving these goals and the European Union has introduced major initiatives directed at youth in Europe as well as in its external action. The High Representative stressed the need for the involvement of young people in EU-LAC cooperation: 'The more than 230 million young people on both sides of the Atlantic have indeed a lot to say'. In October 2022, the European Commission adopted the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU External Action (2022-2027) to promote meaningful youth participation and empowerment in EU external action for sustainable development, equality, and peace<sup>7</sup>. While global in outlook, its implementation foresees a tailor-made approach adapted to the needs and circumstances of young people in specific regions. Concerning Latin America and the Caribbean, the YAP foresees (i) support to the Inclusive Society Team European Initiative, which in turn will include extending the EUROsocial+ programme<sup>8</sup> and (ii) supporting the involvement of young people in the LAC region in policy efforts to improve inclusive access to health, education, labour market, good governance and political participation. The EU also aims to further support youth employment and entrepreneurship through Erasmus+ capacity-building projects to foster accessibility and responsiveness of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) in the region. The EU additionally plans to promote young people's health and wellbeing in the region via the Spotlight Initiative, which focuses on ending gender-based and domestic violence<sup>9</sup>.

Besides the initiatives dedicated to youth in EU external action, Latin America and the Caribbean region is central to the EU's 'Global Gateway' strategy, which aims at boosting smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and strengthening health, education and research systems across the world<sup>10</sup>. On March 2023, a new joint initiative 'European Union-Latin America and Caribbean Digital Alliance' was launched to foster a human-centric approach to digital transformation.<sup>11</sup> On 9 May 2023, the EU officially launched its Euroclima flagship programme for green action to all 33 countries across the region, which will contribute to the implementation of the Global Gateway Investment Agenda in the region.<sup>12</sup> During her visit to Latin America in June 2023, President von der Leyen announced several Global Gateway projects, including a 2 billion euro investment to support Brazil's production of green hydrogen and to promote energy efficiency, a new partnership between the EU and Argentina on sustainable raw materials value chains, and launch of the Fund for Renewable Hydrogen in Chile, supported by 'Team Europe' with an initial budget of 225 million euro<sup>13</sup>.

## 1.2 Methodology

This study provides a snapshot of young people's (defined in the report as people aged between 18 and 29 years of age) concerns and perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean by presenting a descriptive analysis of data coming from a regional public opinion survey. It methodologically builds on the approach developed by Kalantaryan and McMahon (2020) and McMahon and Kalantaryan (2020) and forms part of a series of publications supporting the EU's external action focused on youth in partner countries. Earlier reports looked at youth in Africa using information from the Afrobarometer survey covering 34 African countries. The first report titled 'Youth Perspectives in Africa: what are the most important issues for 18 to 35 year olds?' focuses on the primary concerns of young Africans (Kalantaryan and McMahon 2020). The second one titled 'Youth

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<sup>7</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.2, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>8</sup> EUROsocial+ PROGRAMME, Presentation Dossier, Available online at: [https://www.eurosocial.eu/files/2017-09/Dossier%20Presentation%20EUROSociAL\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eurosocial.eu/files/2017-09/Dossier%20Presentation%20EUROSociAL_EN.pdf), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>9</sup> The global Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls is a United Nations initiative supported by the European Union and other partners. More information available online at <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/where-we-work?region=152>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>10</sup> The Global Gateway stands for sustainable and trusted connections that work for people and the planet. Available online at [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Global Gateway: EU, Latin America and Caribbean partners launch in Colombia the EU-LAC Digital Alliance. Available online at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_1598](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1598), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Global Gateway: EU, Latin America and the Caribbean lead the charge for a Green and Just Transition, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-lead-charge-green-and-just-transition-2023-05-10\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-lead-charge-green-and-just-transition-2023-05-10_en)

Euroclima is the EU's flagship programme for green action to all 33 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. More information is available online at <https://www.euroclima.org/en/>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Global Gateway: Latin America and the Caribbean, Sharing history and future. Available online at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway/global-gateway-latin-america-and-caribbean\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway/global-gateway-latin-america-and-caribbean_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

Perspectives in Africa: how young people view politics, society and the environment' focuses on a set of topics, some of which are looked at also in this study (McMahon and Kalantaryan 2020).

This report presents the primary concerns of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean and their opinions concerning topics related to the EU's initiatives in its external action. The report uses information provided by the Latinobarómetro annual survey, an opinion survey conducted by the Latinobarómetro Corporation<sup>14</sup>. From 1995 to 2020, there were 22 survey rounds. For our analysis, we use data from the latest round conducted in 2020<sup>15</sup>. The survey involved more than 20 000 interviews. It covers 18 of 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, representing more than 600 million inhabitants (or 95 % of the population in the region). However, the survey only included one country in the Caribbean. The other 17 countries included in the survey belong to the Latin America region. Hence, the presented results are not necessarily generalizable for the whole region LAC region. The 2020 survey round includes information about the Covid-19 pandemic during which the Latinobarómetro managed to conduct face-to-face surveys (all the countries of the region with the exception of Argentina). The full survey covers a wide range of topics such as opinions on the most pressing current and future issues, attitudes toward democracy, trust in institutions, level of political participation, intentions to migrate, views on crime and corruption and other topical issues pertaining to Latin American and Caribbean countries. Its results are widely used by social and political actors, international organisations, governments and the media to monitor the concerns of different segments of the population, country specific and regional trends. In 2021, Latinobarómetro data was incorporated into the Regional Human Development Report (UNDP 2021).

In the first part of the study, we map the main concerns of the young population in the region by examining the following question: 'In your opinion, which is the most important problem facing the country today?' Such questions are commonly included in public opinion surveys (such as Afrobarometer, Arab Barometer, Eurobarometer, etc.) to examine the salience of particular concerns. The analysis of the primary concerns provides a broad picture of the salience of different issues for different groups and countries in the LAC region. The question is open and respondents could provide any response that reflects their concerns. These responses were later grouped into a list of 45 possible answers. We aggregate this pool of specific issues into six broader categories (the economy, politics, social issues, security, infrastructure and the environment) and describe the salience of these across the whole youth population included in the survey. This is followed by a cross-country comparison of major issues. We further disaggregate the reported main concerns by socio-demographic categories such as gender, age, type of settlement, education level, and labour market status.

For the second part of the report, we focus on five thematic areas, which are either key areas of EU-LAC cooperation, or important for regional development. Individual sections address the following; (1) Digital access and transformation; (2) Environmental protection and climate action; (3) Social cohesion and inequalities; (4) Democracy, governance and participation; (5) attitude towards the EU.

The study contributes to addressing the recommendation of the JRC Science for Policy report titled 'Youth Action Plan; Bridging policies and data'. The report was drafted to provide the evidence base for the Joint Communication on Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022-2027. In this respect, the study provides new evidence to support EU policies targeting young people in the LAC region and bi-regional cooperation. Moreover, following the recommendation that came out of earlier reports, it uses regional public opinion survey data to address the data gaps in several thematic policy-relevant areas. The generated data relies solely on Latinobarómetro survey and covers only 18 out of 33 countries in the region, and is hence not generalisable to the whole region. Nonetheless, it highlights the importance of age-disaggregated data for understanding young people's concerns and perspectives and the potential of public opinion surveys in filling this gap. In this respect, the information provided by other public opinion surveys such as AmericasBarometer or Gallup World Poll and efforts in harmonising the questionnaires across surveys could help in generating a comprehensive region-wide picture of young people's views, monitor its dynamics over time and across countries as well as various sociodemographic groups.

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<sup>14</sup> Latinobarómetro Corporation is a non-profit NGO based in Santiago, Chile. It conducts public opinion surveys in the region since 1995. The data is publically available online. More information is available online at <https://www.Latinobarómetro.org/lat.jsp>. Last accessed 30 June 2023. In few instances the Latinobarómetro derives indicators are complimented by information coming from other sources which properly are acknowledged in the study

<sup>15</sup> AmericasBarometer is another regional public opinion survey (conducted by LAPOP, Vanderbilt University) which could be used to study the concerns and views of youth in the region. The choice of Latinobarómetro over AmericasBarometer is defined by the set of specific questions in the former one that fits the thematic focus of the current report corresponding to bi-regional cooperation priorities such as digital transformation, climate action and attitude toward EU.

## 2 Mapping young people's concerns in the Latin America and the Caribbean region

### Key messages

• *Problems of economic nature are the most salient concern for young people in the region. About half of the young respondents (45 %) selected problems related to the economy as being the most important. This is more than for all other categories combined: 20 per cent of respondents cited problems related to politics, 10 per cent cited problems related to social issues, 8 per cent cited problems related to security and less than 1 per cent cited problems related to infrastructure.*

• *While security related concerns accounted for a small share of responses (8 %) in the 2020 wave of Latinobarómetro survey used in this study, the analysis of previous waves reveals this is rather an exception. Security is the second most popular group in all previous waves conducted from 2020 to 2018, accounting for 24 -34 per cent of responses. The unusually low percentage recorded for 2020 might be explained by Covid-19 pandemic related mobility restrictions and lockdown measures. Hence it is likely to be a short-term phenomenon, as the pandemic has also exacerbated underlying factors associated with criminal violence.*

*Looking at specific single problems, 'Economy' is the issue that young people in the LAC region most frequently cited as the most important problem their country faces (19 % of young respondents), followed by 'Unemployment' (11 %).*

• *The third and fourth most salient concerns do not belong to the group of economic issues. These are 'Corruption' and 'Political problems' and fall into the political category, accounting together for 20 per cent of responses.*

• *The prevalence of economic concerns is observed in the majority of countries, regardless of age, gender, size of settlement they live in, education level or labour market status.*

In this section, we look at the main concerns of young people in the LAC region by examining the question on primary concerns asked to Latinobarómetro respondents: 'In your opinion, which is the most important problem facing the country today?' The question is open and respondents could provide any response that reflects their concerns. These responses were later grouped into a list of 45 possible answers (See Table 1). Such questions are commonly included in public opinion surveys (such as Afrobarometer, Arab Barometer, Eurobarometer, etc.) to examine the salience of different issues<sup>16</sup>. The analysis of the primary concerns provides a broad picture of the salience of different issues for different groups and countries in the LAC region.

### 2.1 The big picture: economic and political issues predominate

In order to gain a general overview of people's opinions across the region (18 countries covered by the Latinobarómetro survey), we pooled individual problems into broad categories regarding the economy, politics, social issues, security, infrastructure and the environment.<sup>17</sup> Table 1 presents the full set of answers provided by the respondents grouped into six larger groups (see also Annex 3). The results indicate that, overall, young people's concerns in the surveyed countries are most frequently related to the economy (

<sup>16</sup> Salience is defined as the extent to which an issue is important to the public and includes two dimensions; (i) the importance of issues themselves (i.e. how much thought people give to them), and (ii) the relative importance of issues compared to one another (Dennison 2019).

<sup>17</sup> The survey was conducted in 2020 and the respondents were given an opportunity to indicate Covid-19 pandemic as the most important problem. As it was a year specific problem, it was separated into a dedicated category.

Figure 1). This can be explained by the fact that although the share of the population in the LAC region living in poverty has declined since the mid-90s from 16 to less than 4 per cent in 2020<sup>18</sup>, and almost three decades of positive economic growth from 1990 to 2019<sup>19</sup>, the region remained trapped in a combination of high income inequality and low economic growth. According to the UN report, ‘the region remains the second most unequal in the world, and countries in LAC exhibit higher income inequality than those in other regions at similar development levels’ (UNDP 2021). Moreover, during the period covered by the survey, the youth unemployment rate was 21.2 per cent, which is significantly above the global figures for the same period (15.5 %) (ILO 2022). About half of the young people (45 %) selected problems related to the economy as being the most important issue. This is more than for all other categories (aside from ‘Others’<sup>20</sup> and ‘Covid-19’) combined: 20 per cent of respondents cited problems related to politics, 10 per cent cited problems related to social issues, 8 per cent cited problems related to security and less than 1 per cent cited problems related to infrastructure or environment.

*Table 1. Most important problems aggregated into major groups*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Single responses</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Low salaries Poverty Income distribution Unemployment Inflation/ rising prices Economy/ Economic problems/Financial problems Shortage of groceries/Hoarding All expensive Employment instability
<b>Political</b>	Violations of human rights Freedom of expression State violence, repression Corruption Political problems Immigrants Foreign people
<b>Social</b>	Poor basic services Education problems Housing issues Health issues Opportunities for youth are missing Drug consumption Discrimination by race Caring for old people
<b>Security</b>	Terrorism/ war Delinquency / public security Violence / gangs Domestic violence Verbal violence Drug traffic Border problems Conflicts with neighbouring countries
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Transportation Energy problems Gas, lack of fuel No parks and places for recreation A lot of dirt Infrastructure
<b>Environment</b>	Environmental issues

<sup>18</sup> It slightly increased following the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. World Bank (2023), Poverty and Inequality Platform (version 20230328\_2017\_01\_02\_PROD) [data set]. Available online at <https://pip.worldbank.org>. Last accessed 30 June 2023.

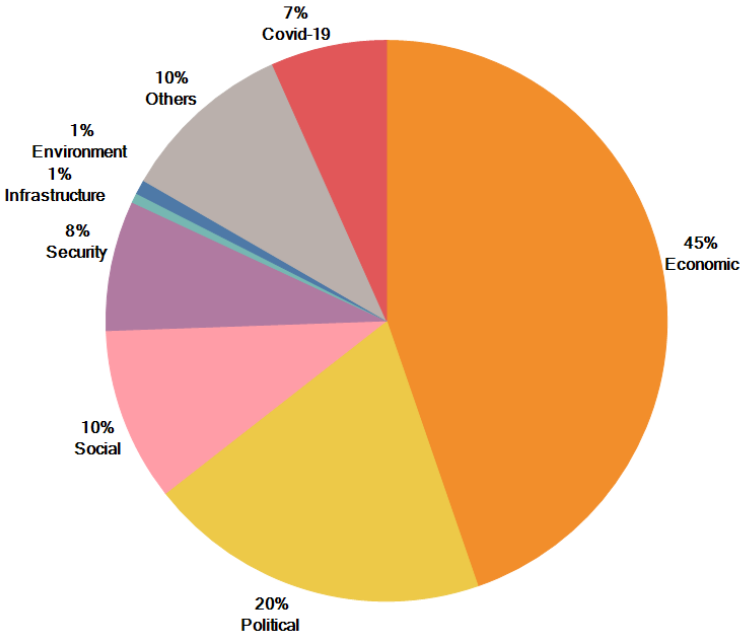
<sup>19</sup> The only exception is 2009 when the regional GDP per capita growth was negative. Data from: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data, GDP per capita growth (annual %) - Latin America and Caribbean. Available online at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>. Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>20</sup> As reported in Table 1 the ‘Others’ category included the following options: ‘Other’ ‘None’, ‘No answer’, and ‘Don’t know’.

	Global warming
	Contamination
<b>Covid-19</b>	Covid-19
<b>Others</b>	No answer
	Don't know
	Other
	None

Note: The table is based on the following question from Latinobarómetro survey: 'In your opinion, which is the most important problem facing the country today?'

Figure 1. Share of most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries (%)

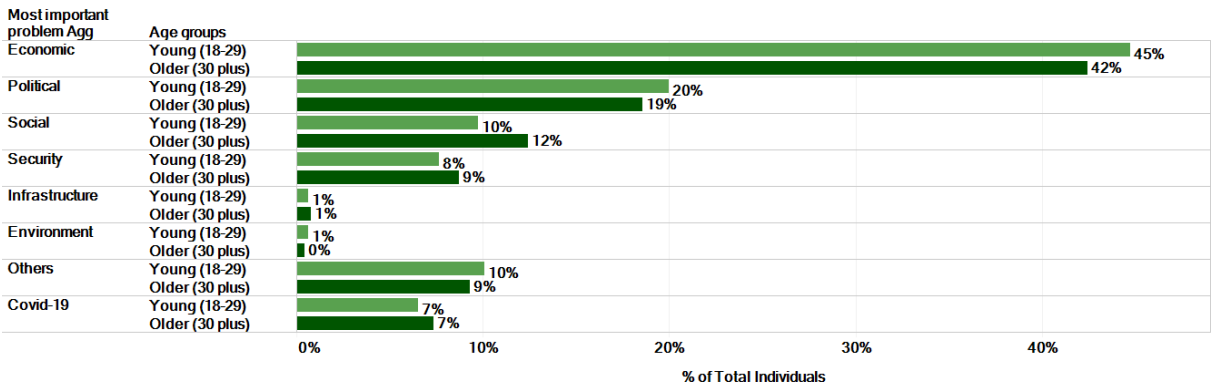


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Note: Due to rounding up the total does not always sum up to 100. This applies to the following figures too.

Moreover, there is little difference between the most important problems for young people and for older people. Economic issues were also predominant for people above 30 years of age, albeit to a slightly lesser degree than for younger people (42 % of respondents considered the most important problem to be of economic nature). For people above 30 years of age too, the second most important set of problems belongs to the group of political problems; every fifth young individual in the region picked up an answer from this group (19 %). Unlike economic and political problems, here the share of individuals who mentioned social or security problems is higher for the older age group, 12 and 9 per cent respectively. The percentage of those who replied that the most important problems for the country are related to infrastructure or the environment are about 1 per cent both for young and older age groups.

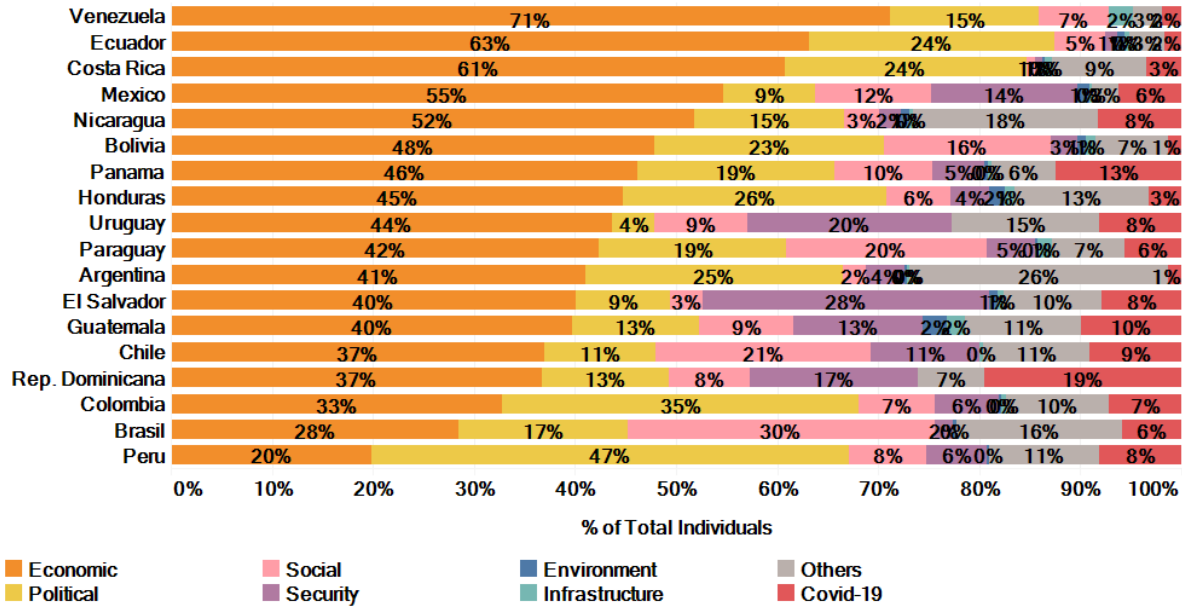
Figure 2. The share of most important problems in 18 LAC countries, by age group (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

The predominance of economic issues is also evident when we examine specific countries, albeit with some differences. Economic issues are cited by more people than the other problem categories in 15 of the 18 countries included in the survey (Figure 3). This is not the case only in three countries: in Peru and Colombia political problems, and in Brazil social issues are more frequently cited by young people. Moreover, it should be noted that in these three countries economic concerns are also ranked second.

Figure 3. The share of most important problems reported by young people, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Nevertheless, there are differences across the countries regarding the extent to which economic issues predominate in relation to other issues. In five countries, economic issues are cited by over half (50 %) of the young respondents. The countries where the largest proportion of the youth population is concerned about economic issues above all others are Venezuela (71 %), Ecuador (63 %), Costa Rica (61 %), Mexico (55 %) and Nicaragua (52 %). In other countries, a much smaller proportion of the youth population considers economic issues to be the primary concern. The smallest are in Peru (20 %), Brazil (28 %), and Colombia (31 %), where economic problems are also not the most frequently mentioned among young people.

Aside from the predominance of economic issues, the survey also shows the following:

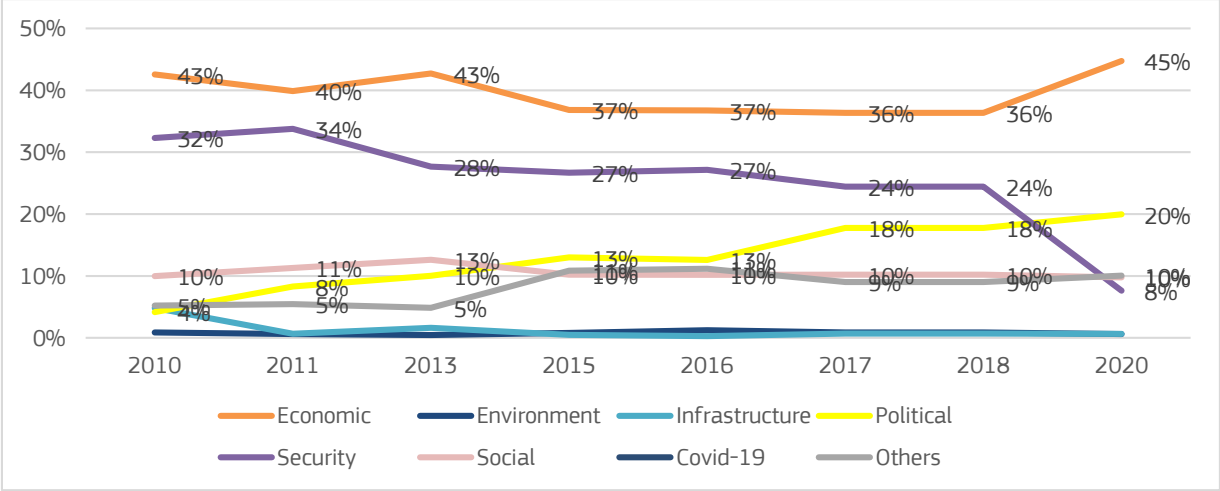
- The countries where the largest proportion of young people consider political issues to be the most important are Peru (47 %) and Colombia (35 %). It is also the second most important group of problems in six countries. The percentage of respondents who mentioned political issues as most important is above 20 per cent in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Honduras. On the contrary, much lower figures are observed for Uruguay (4 %), Mexico (9 %) and El Salvador (9 %).
- Environmental issues are not considered as the most important problems by a significant part of young people in any of the countries. The largest figures, yet modest, are observed in Guatemala (2.4 %), Honduras (1.6 %) and Mexico (1.2 %).
- Similarly, infrastructure issues are not considered as the most important problems by a significant part of young people in any of the countries. The largest shares, yet modest, are observed in Venezuela (2.5 %), Guatemala (1.8 %) and Paraguay (1.2 %).
- The countries where the largest proportion of young people consider social issues to be the most important are Brazil (30 %), Chile (21 %), and Paraguay (20 %).

The survey wave used in this study was conducted in the year 2020, characterised by the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected all aspects of life of people all over the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. The governments introduced measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on the economy in the region. However, the economies that were in already in a weak situation on the pandemic eve remained with limited fiscal space to mitigate the negative consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic (OECD 2020). An exceptional event such as a global pandemic might have affected the distribution of population concerns, which would not necessarily reflect the situation in the pre or post-pandemic periods. To attenuate the potentially



biased picture painted by the 2020 survey wave, we compare the results obtained for the 2020 wave to those from previous waves.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 4. The distribution of main concerns among young people in selected LAC countries over time (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, elaboration  
 Note: The set of countries included in the survey varies over time

Figure 4 presents the dynamics of the distribution of concern groups since 2010 and confirms the prevalence of economic concerns over the whole decade.<sup>22</sup> The share of young people concerned with issues belonging to the economic group accounted for about one-third of respondents, which is about 10 percentage points lower compared to what is observed for 2020. Unlike in 2020, during the whole decade, security-related concerns were the second most important concern group, accounting for 24 to 34 per cent of young respondents, which is three times higher compared to the 8 per cent observed in 2020. The unusually low percentage recorded for 2020 might be explained by Covid-19 pandemic related mobility restrictions and lockdown measures. Estévez-Soto (2021) suggests that most crime categories decreased during the pandemic, and that some of the declines were associated with the changes in routine activities (measured by the number of passengers using public transport). Bickel (2021) claims pandemic-related restrictions led to a reduction in homicide rates across Latin America, which however is likely to be a short-term phenomenon as the pandemic has also exacerbated underlying factors associated with criminal violence. The share of young people concerned with problems of political nature has been growing over time (from 5 % in 2010 to 20 % in 2020) and this tendency was preserved also during the Covid-19 pandemic. The share of young people considering social issues as most important was stable over time, accounting for about 10 per cent over the whole period. Only a small share of respondents mentioned environmental and infrastructure related issues over the whole period.

### 2.2 Zooming in on specific problems

In this section, we look closer into the categories described above, to examine how specific problems (single categories listed in see Table 1) are ranked among the young people. The top ten most often named problems by young people are the economy, unemployment, corruption, political problems, Covid-19, security, poverty, education, health and income distribution. These together account for three-fourths of all reported concerns.

Pooling the data from all countries shows that among the questions related to the group of economic concerns, the state of the ‘Economy’ is the issue that young people in the LAC region most frequently cited as the most important problem their country faces (19 % of young respondents), followed by ‘Unemployment’ (11 %). Together, these two problems account for 30 per cent of all responses to the survey by young people and one-third when excluding the period specific category of Covid-19.

The third and fourth most salient concerns do not belong to the group of economic issues. These are ‘Corruption’ and ‘Political problems’ and fall into the political category, accounting together for 20 per cent of responses. With the exception of ‘Delinquency / public security’, which is related to security and account for 6 per cent of

<sup>21</sup> Annex 4 presents the evolution of the distribution of single concerns and concern groups among youth over time  
<sup>22</sup> Annex 3 presents the distribution of most important problems by sociodemographic characteristics (age group, gender, settlement type, education, labour market status).

all responses, the remaining top-rated problems are related to the group of social matters ('Poverty', 'Education', 'Health' and 'Income distribution'). It is worth mentioning that the option 'Opportunities for young people are missing' was mentioned only by 0.5 per cent of young respondents. It is mentioned in seven countries and accounts for at most 2 per cent in Chile and less than 3 per cent in Bolivia. Covid-19 accounts for 7 per cent of all responses by young individuals. However, it is a period specific global scale concern that was relevant for the survey conducted in 2020 only.

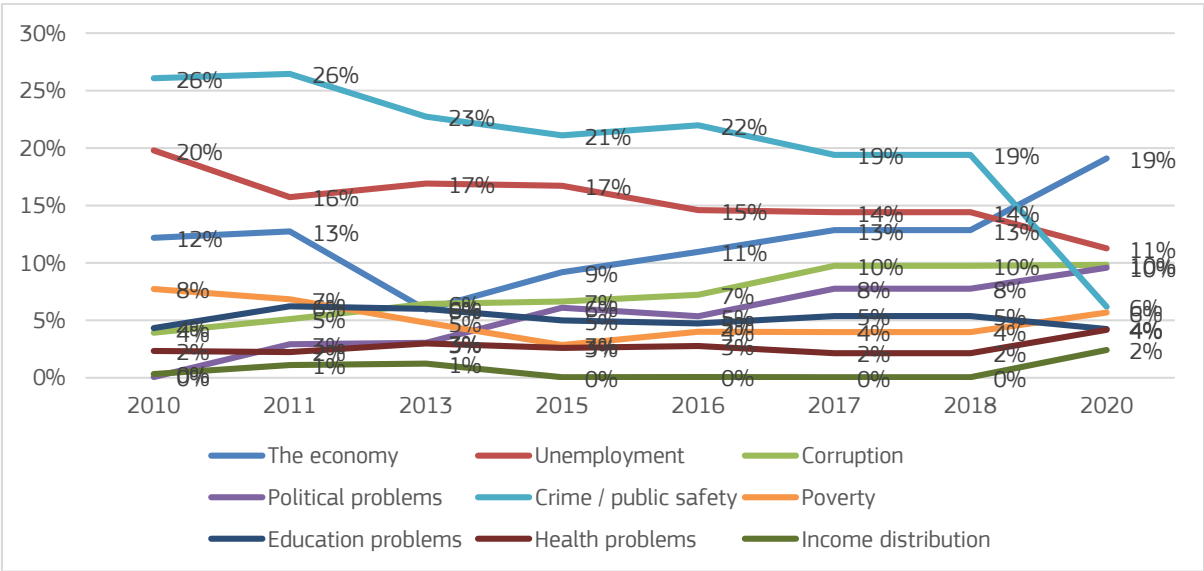
Table 2. Ten highest ranked concerns of young people in 18 LAC countries

Concern	Concern category	% of respondents
Economy	Economic	19
Unemployment	Economic	11
Corruption	Political	10
Political problems	Political	10
Covid-19	Covid-19	7
Delinquency / public security	Security	6
Poverty	Social	6
Education	Social	4
Health	Social	4
Income distribution	Social	2

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

We look also at the evolution of above presented top ten concerns reported in 2020 over time (except Covid-19). 'Crime / Public safety' is the most frequently mentioned most important issue, although it has been declining over time – from 26 per cent in 2010 to 19 per cent in 2018. The sharp drop in 2020 is likely to be pandemic related as explained in the previous subsection. Unemployment is the second most important issue over the whole decade, followed by economy, which steadily gains importance over time. The importance of corruption and political problems is increasing over time too. Poverty seemed to be losing its importance over time but then picked up again during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 5. The distribution of the top ten ranked concerns of young people in selected LAC countries over time (%)



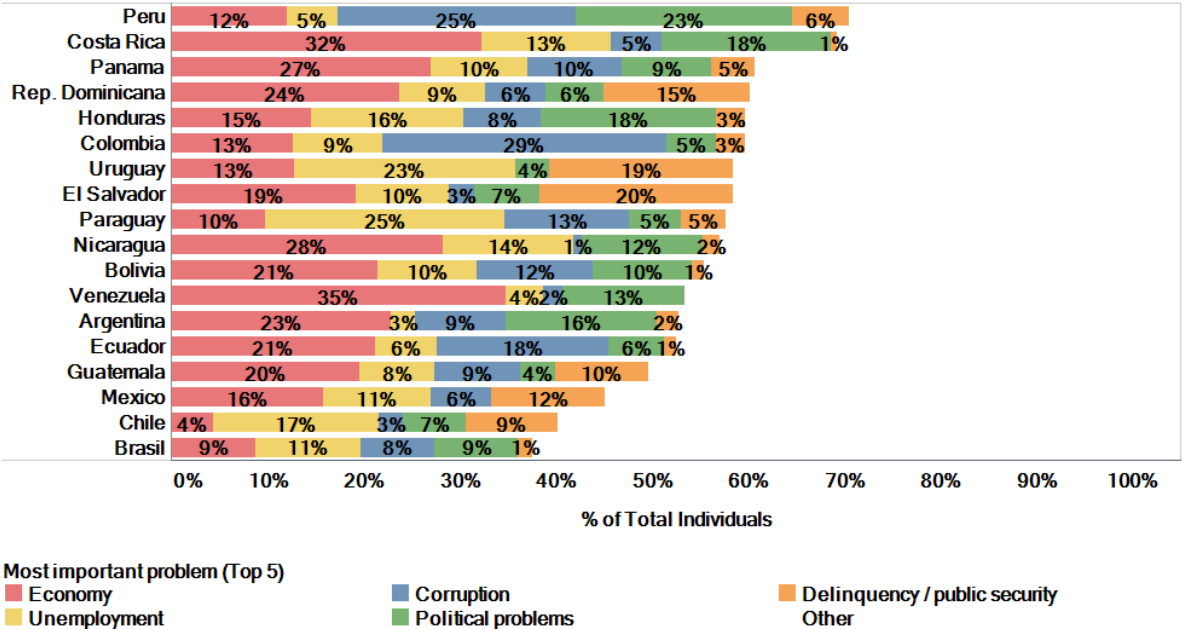
Source: Latinobarómetro, elaboration

Note: The set of countries included in the survey varies over time

Looking at individual countries, we see that 'Economy' was the most salient problem in most countries, but here too there are differences observed across countries. In ten out of the 18 countries covered by the survey, 'Economy' was ranked first among the concerns of young people. In the remaining countries, there is greater variation. In particular, in three countries, 'Unemployment' was the highest ranking primary concern (Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay), in two countries it was 'Corruption' (Colombia and Peru). 'Health issues', 'Delinquency/

public security' and 'Political problems' were the most important problem in one state only – Brazil, El Salvador and Honduras respectively.

Figure 6. Top 5 most important problems for young people at the regional level, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

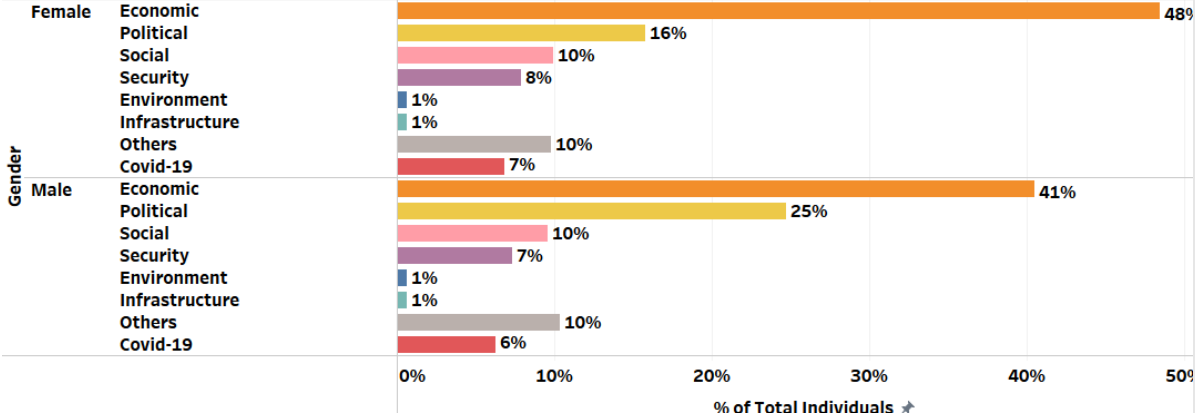
### 2.3 Differences between sociodemographic groups and countries

While there is a high degree of consistency in the predominance of economic issues among the concerns of young people in the LAC region, there are also important variations to be taken into consideration. The 18 countries in the Latinobarómetro survey represent a broad range of different social, economic and political realities. With this in mind, in this section we go beyond the general picture described above, to examine the salience of concerns for different social groups.

#### 2.3.1 Differences in concerns by gender

In terms of gender, there are some alignments but differences between the problems considered most important for young men and young women in the LAC regions we have data for. When pooling the data from across all countries, it is revealed that problems belonging to the economic group are more often mentioned by young women (48 %) than by young men (41 %). The opposite is observed for the group of problems of political nature. While one in four young men indicate problems of political nature as the most important one, only 16 per cent of young women do so.

Figure 7. The share of most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries, by gender (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Looking at the single most important problem indicated by young people, we see that ‘Economy’ is most frequently cited as the most important by young men and women (see Table 3). ‘Corruption’, ‘Unemployment’, and ‘Political problems’ are among the top five most important problems for both groups, although the ranking differs across gender groups. While according to young women ‘Poverty’ is the fifth most important problem, for young men it is ‘Delinquency / public security’.

Table 3. Five most-frequently cited concerns for young women and men (pooled answers from all countries)

Rank	Problems for young women	Problems for young men
1	Economy (21 %)	Economy (16 %)
2	Unemployment (11 %)	Corruption (13 %)
3	Corruption (8 %)	Political problems (12 %)
4	Political problems (8 %)	Unemployment (11 %)
5	Poverty (7 %)	Delinquency / public security (6 %)

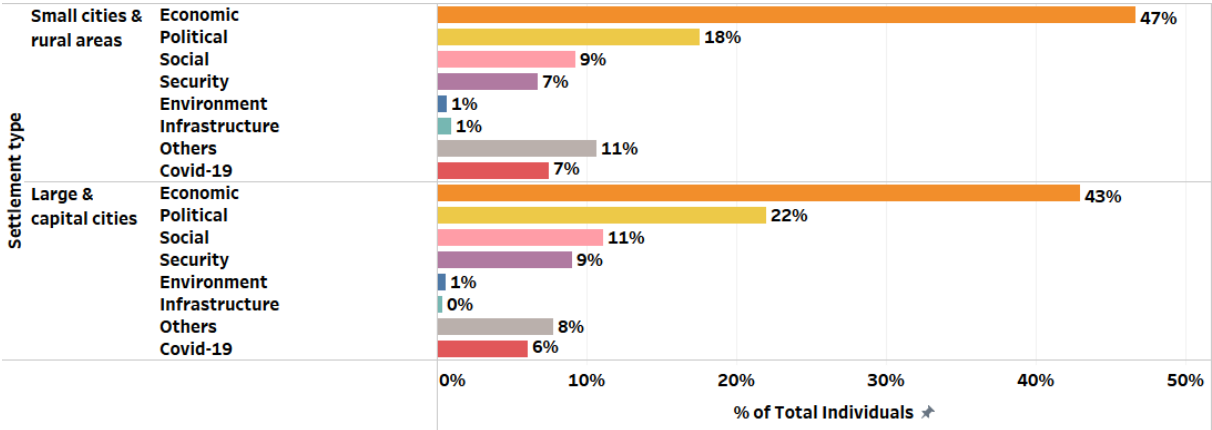
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

However, there are some differences in the ranking of issues. For example, ‘Economy’ is the highest-ranking concern for women in ten countries (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Argentina, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia and Venezuela), ‘Unemployment’ in three countries (Chile, Honduras and Paraguay) and ‘Corruption’ (Colombia and Peru) and ‘Delinquency / public security’ (Salvador and Uruguay) are the highest-ranking concern in two countries each. Also for young men ‘Economy’, is the highest-ranking problem in seven countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela), followed by ‘Unemployment’ (Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay) and ‘Corruption’ (Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) are rated first in three countries each, followed by ‘Political problems’ in two (Costa Rica and Honduras) and ‘Education’, ‘Health issues’ in one county (Brazil and El Salvador, respectively).

### 2.3.2 Differences in concerns by settlement type

In this study, we distinguish between those residing in large and capital cities – with a population above 100 000 –, and those who live in small cities and rural areas with a smaller population. The predominance of issues of economic nature as the primary concern of the young people in the LAC region is evident also across types of settlement, more for those residing in small cities and rural areas (47 %) than their peers in large and capital cities (43 %). Instead, political and social issues are more often mentioned by young people residing in large and capital cities.

Figure 8. The share of most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries, by settlement type (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Looking at the single most important problem indicated by young people, we see that ‘Economy’ is most frequently cited as the most important problem for people in both small (18 %) and large (20 %) settlement contexts. In small cities and rural areas, it is followed by ‘Unemployment’, ‘Political problems’ and ‘Corruption’. In large and capital cities, the set of most pressing problems indicated by young respondents is the same, yet in a different order (Table 4). ‘Corruption’, and ‘Political problems’ are ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by ‘Unemployment’. Further in the ranking, the differences in main problems are more evident: while in small cities

and rural areas young people are concerned with 'Poverty', their peers in cities give more importance to 'Delinquency / public security'.

Table 4. Five most-frequently cited problems for young people in small and large settlements

Rank	Problems for residents in small cities and rural areas	Problems for residents in large and capital cities
1	Economy (18 %)	Economy (20 %)
2	Unemployment (13 %)	Corruption (12 %)
3	Political problems (9 %)	Political problems (10 %)
4	Corruption (8 %)	Unemployment (10 %)
5	Poverty (6 %)	Delinquency / public security (8 %)

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

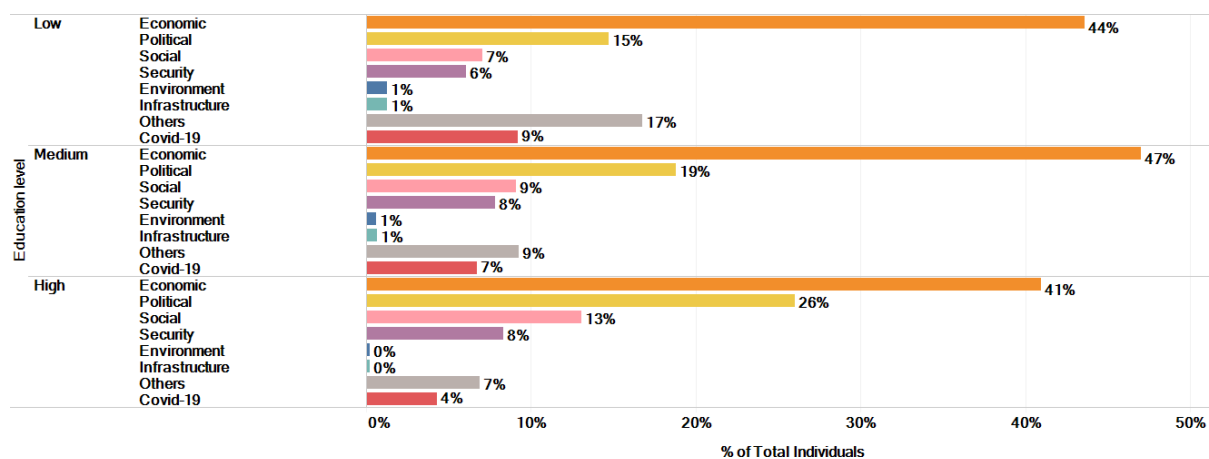
Note: The presented results omit Argentina from the pooled sample as for this country information on the type of settlement is not reported.

Differences in the ranking are also visible across countries. 'Economy' is most frequently cited as the most important problem for young people who live in large and capital cities in ten countries (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, and Venezuela). For young people in small cities and rural areas, this is the case only in eight countries (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela). 'Corruption' is identified as the most important problem for those residing in all types of settlements in two countries (Colombia and Peru). 'Unemployment' is of major concern for residents in small cities and rural areas in three countries - Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. 'Delinquency / public security' are mentioned as a major problem by young people residing in large cities of Uruguay and El Salvador. 'Poverty' and 'Political problems' (as well as 'Income distribution', 'Health issues') are each considered the most important problems by young people in small settlements in one country in the region (Mexico and Honduras). Similarly, in larger settlements, 'Unemployment' (as well as 'Education problems' and 'Health issues') is mentioned in one country (Paraguay).

### 2.3.3 Differences in concerns by education level

In our analysis, we find that education is less salient among young people compared to other issues - only 4 per cent of young people in the region consider it the most important problem in the country. However, there are important variations in young people's concerns according to their level of education. We distinguish three groups. Low level of education refers to those who have up to six years of schooling (54 % of young people), medium to those from 7 to 12 years of schooling (27 %), and high to those with technical or university education (some or completed) (19 %). Overall, the survey shows that economic issues are the most salient for young people in the LAC region, regardless of education level. However, there are differences in the extent to which this is the case and in the salience of other issues (Figure 9). Interestingly the ranking of the major groups is identical - Economic problems are ranked first, followed by 'Political', 'Social' and 'Security'.

Figure 9. The share of most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries, by education level (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Economic issues are considered most important by 44 per cent of those with low level of education, and 47 per cent of those with medium level of education. The figure is lower among those with high level of education – 41 per cent. The second most important issue for all education groups is ‘Political’, however, the extent to which it manifests across education groups is more heterogeneous. While more than a quarter of young individuals with high level of education consider ‘Political’ problems to be the most issues, the figures for young people with medium education is significantly lower (19 %), and about half for those with low level of education (15 %). ‘Social’ problems are mentioned the most by those with higher level of education (13 %), compared to 7 and 9 per cent documented for the other two groups. Security related problems instead are more often mentioned by young people with medium and higher level of education (8 %), compared to those with scarce education (7 %). ‘Infrastructure’ and ‘Environment’ are mentioned but by close to 0 % in all three groups. Interestingly, the share of those who opted for Others (which includes those who provided ‘No answer’, ‘Don’t know’, an answer not included in the list of options, considering that there is ‘None’) is the highest (17 %) among those with low level of education. This might indicate that education enables young people to form a clear opinion about the most important problem their country faces.

*Table 5. Five most-frequently cited problems for young people by level of education (pooled answers from all countries)*

Rank	Problems for residents with low level of education	Problems for residents with medium level of education	Problems for residents with high level of education
1	Economy (18 %)	Economy (20 %)	Economy (16 %)
2	Unemployment (13 %)	Unemployment (11 %)	Corruption (15 %)
3	Political problems (9 %)	Political problems (9 %)	Political problems (11 %)
4	Corruption (6 %)	Corruption (9 %)	Unemployment (10 %)
5	Poverty (5 %)	Delinquency/public security (6 %)	Delinquency/public security (7 %)

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

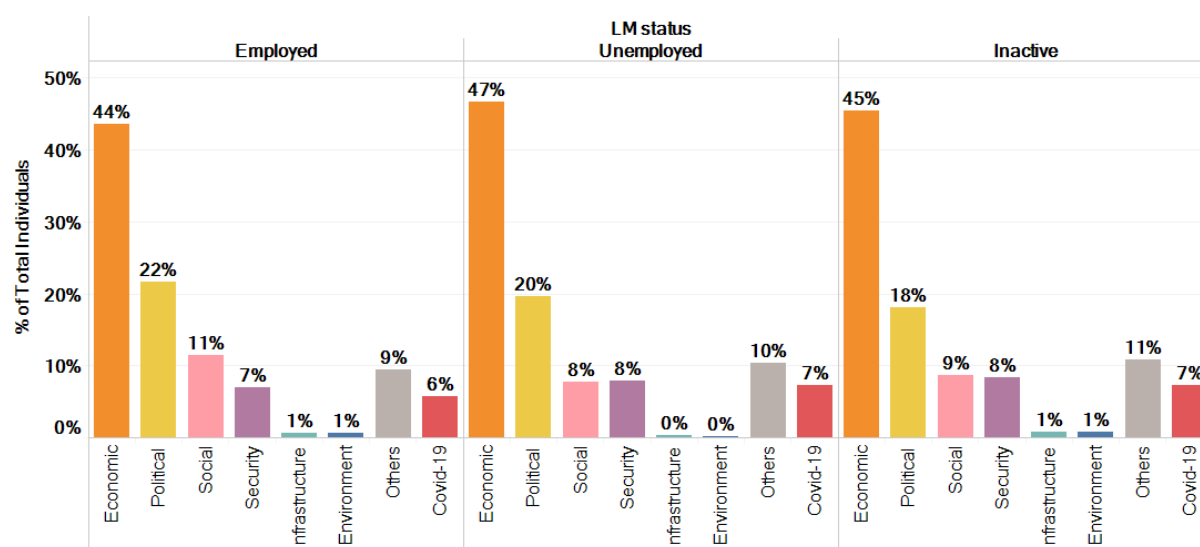
Across education levels, there are also similarities and distinctions in the salience of specific problems. ‘Economy’ is the most salient problem for people regardless of their education level. But whereas the second most salient problem for those with a primary and medium level education is ‘Unemployment’, for young people with high level of education ‘Corruption’ ranks second. For those with high level of education ‘Unemployment’ ranks 4<sup>th</sup> (lower than for the other two groups) indicating that education helps to integrate into the labour market. ‘Political problems’ rank the 3<sup>rd</sup> for all three groups. The main difference is observed for the problem ranked fifth. For those with low level of education it is ‘Poverty’, for those with medium or high level education ‘Delinquency / public security’.

### **2.3.4 Differences in concerns by labour market status**

Economic problems predominate for young people in the LAC region regardless of their employment status (Figure 10)<sup>23</sup>. Economic issues are the primary concern for approximately 47 per cent of unemployed young persons and 45 per cent of the inactive. The share of those employed who state economic problems to be the most important problem is only slightly lower – 44 per cent.

<sup>23</sup> The survey provides information on labour market status of respondent distinguishing between employed (self-employed and employees in private or state company), unemployed (temporary out of work) and inactive (homemakers, pensioners and students). International Labour Organisation (ILO) provides the following definitions. Unemployed is person who is without work but available for and seeking employment. Un employed person is a person aged 15 years or older who have worked or having a job from which being absent under conditions on the reason of absence or duration. Employees, self-employed or family workers are covered. Illegal workers are included. Inactive is a person outside labour force.

Figure 10. The share of most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries, by labour market status (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Analysing the single most important problem reveals that ‘Economy’ is the highest-ranking problem for all three groups. Moreover, ‘Unemployment ranks second for those unemployed (12 %), or inactive (11 %), but also those who are employed. On the one hand, this may reflect a lack of available employment, especially for those who were not working at the time of the survey. But on the other hand, it may also reflect the precarity of the available employment in terms of stability, low salaries, and career development prospects. (see Table 6). ‘Political problems’ and ‘Corruption’ rank third and fourth for young individuals who work. The reverse is observed for unemployed and inactive young individuals in the region.

Table 6. Five most-frequently cited concerns for young people by working status (pooled answers from all countries)

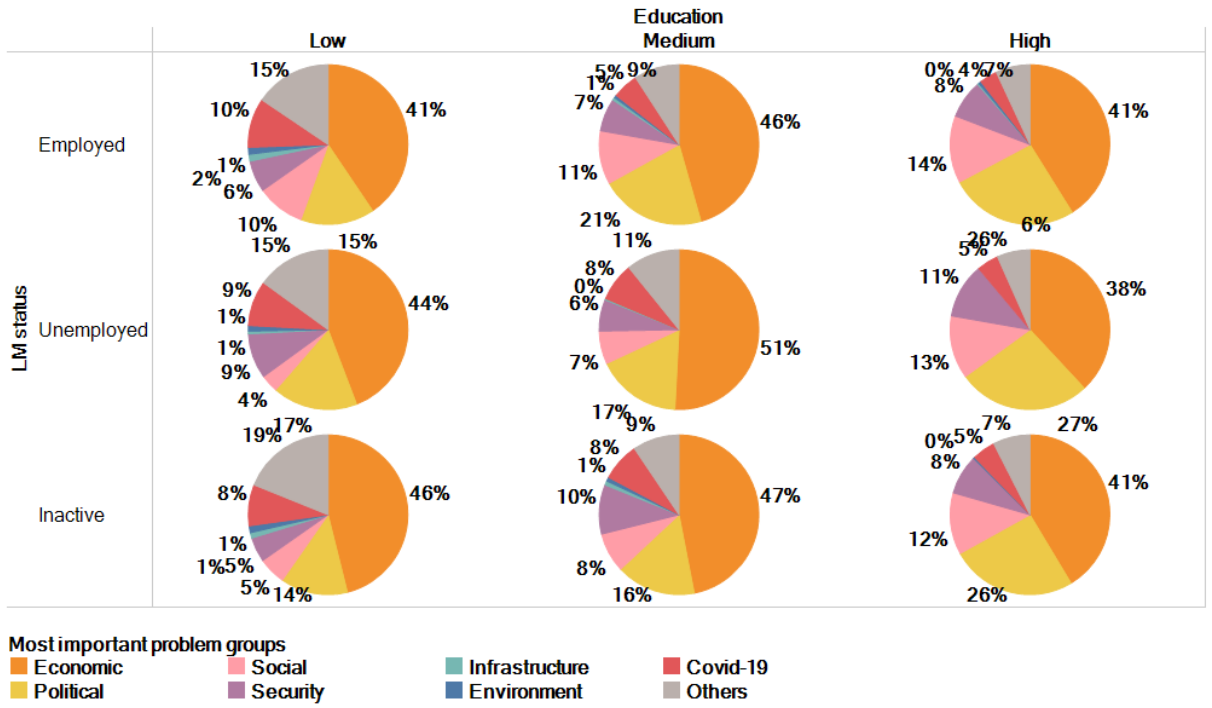
Rank	Problems for employed	Problems for unemployed	Problems for inactive
1	Economy (18 %)	Economy (20 %)	Economy (19 %)
2	Unemployment (11 %)	Unemployment (12 %)	Unemployment (11 %)
3	Political problems (11 %)	Corruption (10 %)	Corruption (10 %)
4	Corruption (11 %)	Political problems (9 %)	Political problems (8 %)
5	Delinquency/ public security (6 %)	Delinquency/public security (6 %)	Delinquency/public security (7 %)

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

When crossing labour market status with the level of education the following is revealed (Figure 11):

- Economic problems are mentioned most often by medium educated unemployed young individuals (51 %)
- Political problems are mentioned most often by young individuals with high level of education: 27 per cent among unemployed, 26 per cent among employed and inactive.
- Social problems are mentioned most often by economically active (employed and unemployed) young individuals with high level of education (14 % and 13 %, respectively).
- Security problems are mentioned most often by young individuals with high level of education: 14, 13 and 12 per cent among employed, unemployed and inactive respectively.
- Infrastructure and Environment are not ranking high for any group across labour market status and education level, yet the highest (though still extremely modest) figures are recorded for employed young people with low level of education (1.6 % and 1.4 % respectively).

Figure 11. Most important problems reported by young people in 18 LAC countries, by labour market status and education level (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration



### 3 Digital access and transformation

#### Key messages

- For all four indicators considered to measure access to digital means (mobile phone, smartphone, computer ownership and access to the Internet) larger shares of device ownership or network access are observed for young men (compared to women), highly educated (compared to those with low and medium levels of education), employed (compared to unemployed and inactive) and those living in larger cities (compared to those living in small cities and rural areas).
- The largest differences in computer ownership and Internet access rate are observed for young individuals with low and high levels of education. While two-thirds of young people with high level of education own a computer and have access to the Internet, among those with low level of education these figures are only 16 and 25 per cent respectively.
- Young men are more likely (than their female peers with the same level of education) to think they are capable of managing new technologies at the workplace. Moreover, better educated young individuals (both men and women) more often report being able to manage new technologies compared to those with lower levels of education.
- Despite a general increase in access to digital appliances and the Internet among young people in the LAC region compared with older citizens, there are important inequalities within and between countries. If these differences persist, they might have negative implications for future development, including a lack of adequate human resources to enable the digital transformation at the country level and the skills and competence necessary to be part of this transformation at the individual level.

The diffusion of digital technologies leads to a transformation of economies and societies in every part of the world, including the LAC region. SDG Goal 9.C calls for a ‘Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020’<sup>24</sup>. While digital technology diffusion brings a wide range of benefits, it is also associated with several challenges. Mobile connectivity, access to computing and technological innovation are part of a foreseen Fourth Industrial Revolution, which could raise global income levels but also increase inequality and discontent if not managed appropriately (Schwab 2016). Hence, it is important to manage the digital transformation to attenuate its adverse consequences. Digital is one of the sectors (together with energy and transport) mentioned in the Global Gateway new European Strategy announced by the European Commission and the EU High Representative.<sup>25</sup> It is also high on the EU – LAC regional agenda. On 13 March 2023, a new joint initiative – the EU –LAC Digital Alliance – was launched in Bogota, Colombia. As stated in the press release, ‘The Alliance’s aim is to foster the development of secure, resilient and human-centric digital infrastructures on the basis of a values-based framework, ensuring a democratic and transparent enabling environment and putting a strong emphasis on privacy and digital rights’.<sup>26</sup>

In this section, we look at several aspects of digital transformation. First, we focus on access to the Internet and mobile technology and their use. Second, we examine how young people in the LAC region see the challenges related to issues such as technological changes, digital transformation, or automation.

#### 3.1 Access to digital infrastructure

The Latinobarómetro survey allows examining the extent to which young people in the region access digital resources and infrastructure, in particular their ownership of a computer, a mobile phone, smartphones and Internet access at home<sup>27</sup>. Access to digital resources is uneven both across countries and different social groups (Figure 12). About 90 per cent of young people in the region own a mobile phone which is five percentage points higher compared to what is observed from the older age group. While the ownership of mobile phones is extensive across the region, access to other devices and internet infrastructure is more limited. It is less

<sup>24</sup> SDG Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. Available online at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/>. Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Global Gateway, European Commission. Available online at [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en). Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Global Gateway: EU, Latin America and Caribbean partners launch in Colombia the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, Available online at European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_1598](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1598). Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>27</sup> The following questions were used to analyse the access to digital and mobile devices. ‘Do you or any member of your family have any of the following goods?’ for the following categories: computer, mobile phone, smartphone, Internet connection at home.

common for young people to have a smartphone (58 %), or a computer (44 %). Only half (53 %) of young individuals have Internet access at home. Important gender, territorial, educational and labour market status inequalities can be observed in young people's access to digital devices. The differences are particularly evident according to the settlement type respondents live in and their education level.

### **Computer ownership**

Whereas more than half (53 %) of young people in large or capital cities have their own computers, this is the case for only one-third (33 %) of young people in rural areas or small cities. And whereas only 16 per cent of young people with a low level of education own their own computer, 38 per cent of those with a medium and 73 per cent of a high level of education do. The gender and labour market gap is evident too, although to a lesser degree; more than half (52 %) of young men do not have access to a computer, which rises to 60 per cent in the case of young women.

### **Mobile phone ownership**

Mobile phone ownership among young people in the LAC region is extensive and relatively equally diffused among different groups (Figure 12). The vast majority of young individuals reported owning a mobile phone. Not much difference is observed between young people residing in larger and smaller settlements (92 % vs 84 %), men and women (90 % vs 88 %), and labour market status (91 % among employed, and 87 % among unemployed and inactive). The largest differences are observed across young people with various levels of education. Whereas 95 per cent of young individuals with high level of education own mobile phone, only 78 per cent of those with low level of education does.

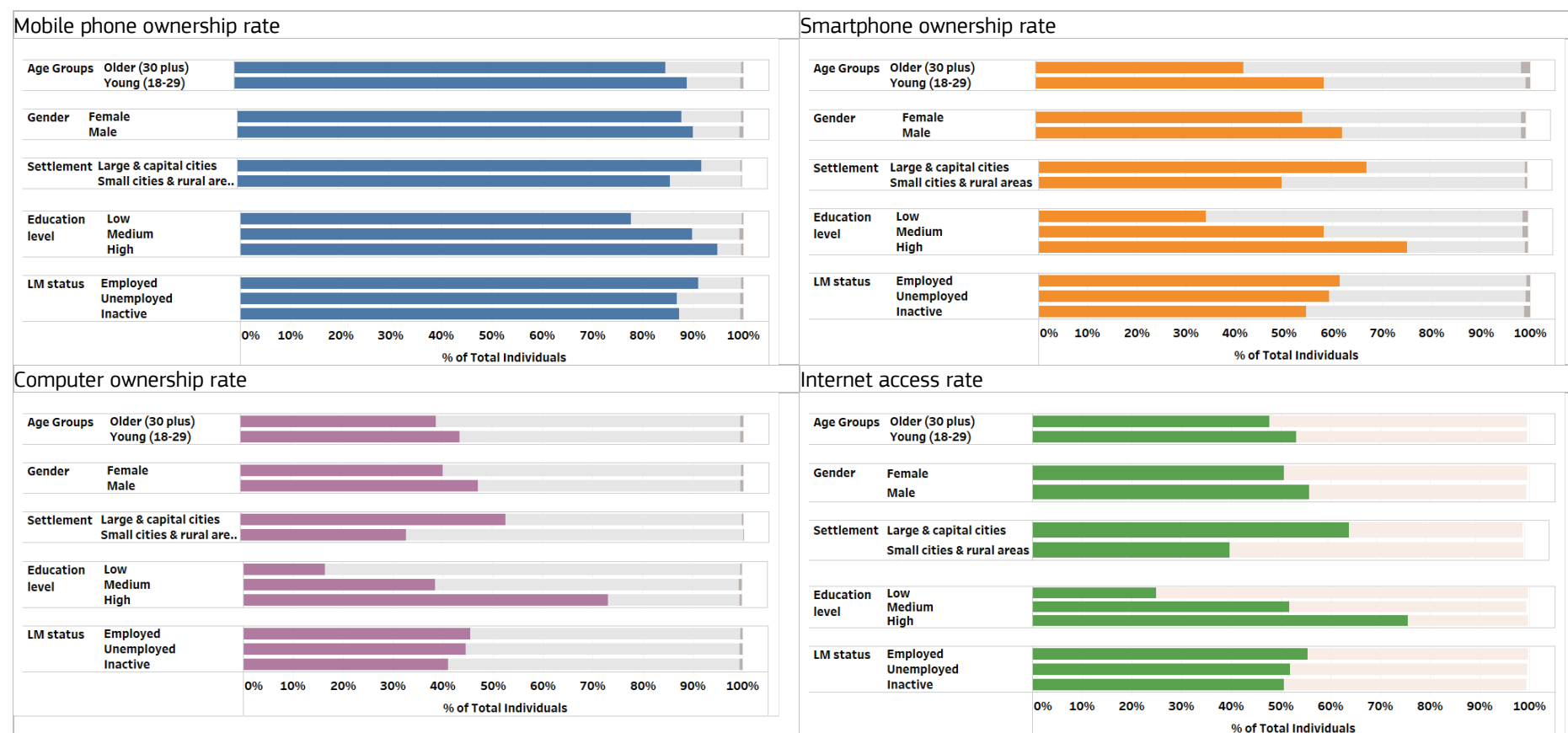
### **Smartphone ownership**

The smartphone ownership rate among young individuals is much lower (58 %) with larger discrepancies observed across various groups. For instance, the smartphone ownership gender gap is about 9 percentage points (63 % and 54 % for men and women respectively). Moreover, while only half of young individuals in small cities and rural areas own a smartphone, two-thirds (67 %) of those in large and capital cities own one. The largest difference – more than double – is observed among young individuals with high (75 %) and low (34 %) levels of education. It is also more common for people in employment to have a smartphone (61 %) than the unemployed (59 %) or inactive (54 %). The observed differences are important as many young people use smartphones for accessing the Internet.

### **Internet access**

Over half (53 %) of those aged 18 to 29 have access to Internet, which is only five percentage points higher compared to what is observed for older citizens. However, significant differences are observed between young people with different level of education. While only a quarter of young people with low level of education have access to the Internet, half of those with medium and the vast majority (75 %) of those with high level of education have access. Also, those residing in small cities and rural areas are disadvantaged compared to their peers in large and capital cities – 40 vs 64 per cent access rate.

Figure 12. Access to Internet and digital device ownership rates in 18 LAC region countries (by age, sex, settlement type, education level and labour market status) (%)

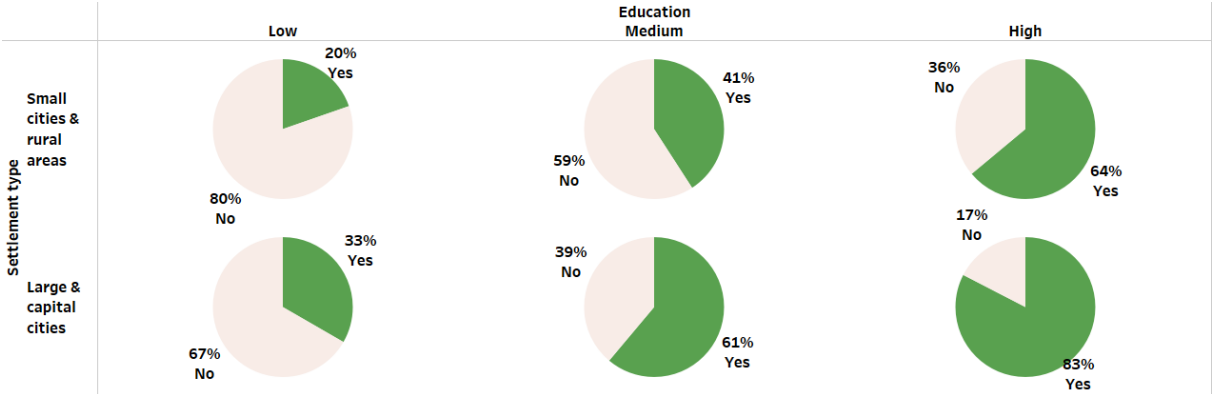


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Note: The figures on settlement type exclude Argentina due to missing information

Education level and type of settlement are the two characteristics, which are associated with largest heterogeneity in Internet access rate among young individuals. Hence, it is worth looking at the combination of the two to disclose further details so far hidden beyond the already presented single dimensional aggregates. Indeed, the Internet access rate is systematically higher among young individuals with high level of education (regardless of the types of settlements they live in) and those who live in large and capital cities (regardless of level of education). The highest figures are observed for young individuals with high level of education residing in large cities and capitals – 83 per cent. Instead, the lowest Internet access rate is observed for those on the opposite extreme of education – settlement type spectrum; only 20 per cent of young people with low level of education in small cities and rural areas and 33 per cent of young people with low level of education residing in large and capital cities have Internet access (Figure 13).

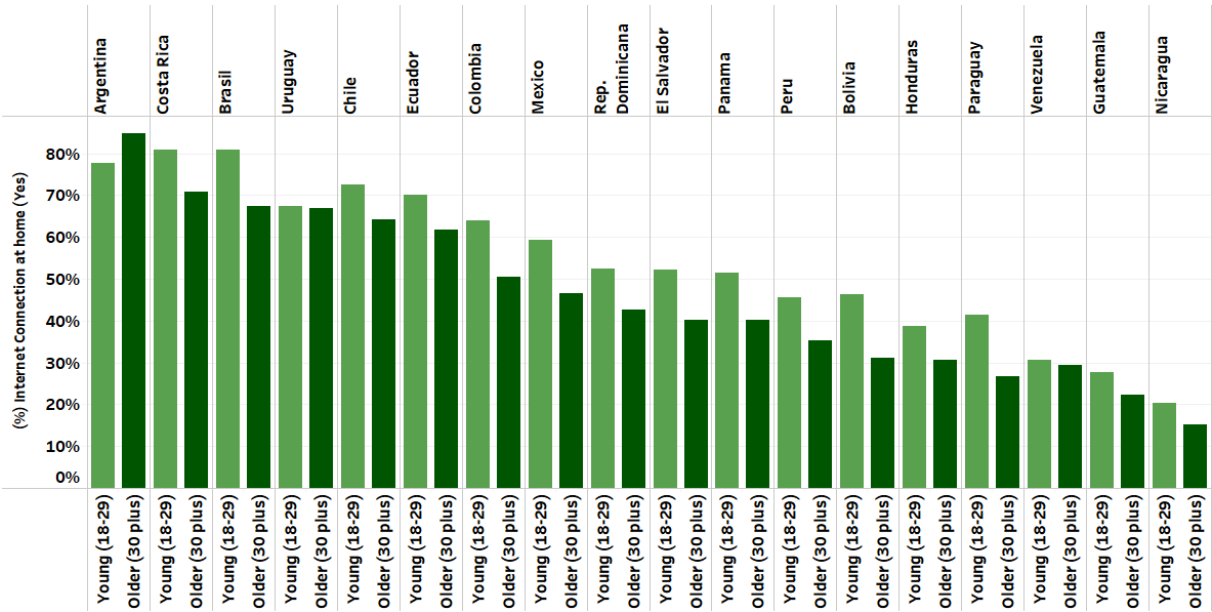
Figure 13. Internet access rate among young individuals in 17 LAC countries by education level and settlement type (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration  
 Note: The figures on settlement exclude Argentina

There are also notable cross-country differences in Internet access among young individuals. In almost all countries, Internet access rate is higher among the younger generation. The only exceptions are Argentina, where the opposite is observed, and Uruguay, where the rate is equal across age groups. As can be seen in Figure 14, countries with the highest access to Internet are Argentina, Costa Rica and Brazil, where about 80 per cent of young individuals have Internet access. On the contrary, the Internet is accessible to less than one-third of young individuals in Nicaragua (20 %), Guatemala (28 %) and Venezuela (31 %).

Figure 14. Internet access rate across countries in 18 LAC countries, by age group (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

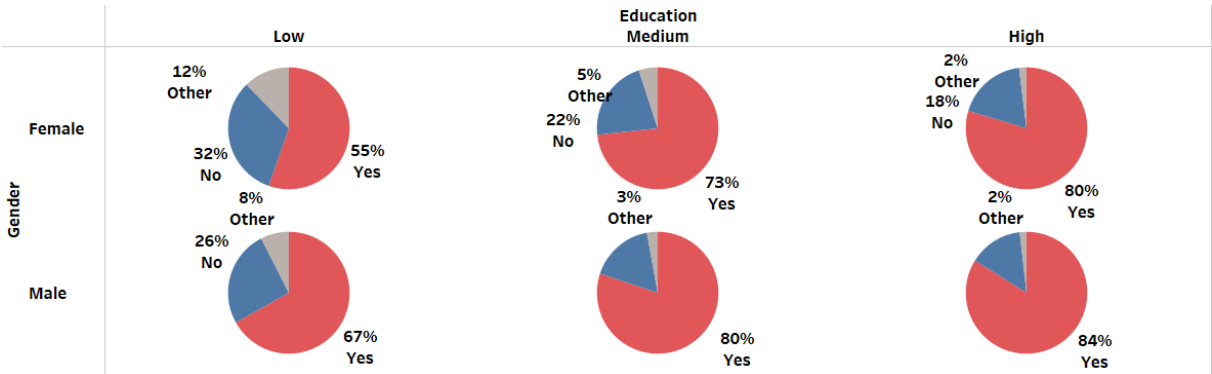
Access to digital resources and the Internet are crucial for successful digital transformation both at country and individual levels. The figures above highlight how, despite a general increase in access to digital appliances and the Internet among young people in the LAC region compared with older citizens, there are important inequalities within and between countries. If these differences persist, they might have negative implications for future development, including a lack of adequate human resources to enable the digital transformation at the country level and the skills and competence necessary to be part of this transformation at the individual level.

### 3.2 The consequences of digital transformation seen by young people

The increasing digitalisation of the economy and society is profoundly affecting the world of work, and the trend is expected to continue and even accelerate in the years to come. Technological advances provide young people with both opportunities and challenges in the labour market. While young people are early adopters of new technologies, they often worry about the possibility of their jobs being replaced by robots and artificial intelligence (ILO 2020). According to the World Economic Forum report, while Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to replace 85 million jobs globally already by 2025, it may create 97 million new roles which, however, will differ from those that are being lost (World Economic Forum, 2020). Latinobarómetro survey contains a set of questions that allow examining how young people see the consequences of digital transformation.

At the regional level, 60 per cent of young people think that AI and robots will make disappear more workplaces than they will create. Looking at their own prospects in the labour market in the coming decade, 42 per cent think robots will have taken away their workplace. About a fourth thinks they are not capable of managing new technologies at the workplace. However, these regional aggregates hide important cross-country, gender and education level specific differences.

Figure 15. Share of young people who consider they are capable of managing new technologies at the workplace in 18 LAC countries, by gender and education (%)

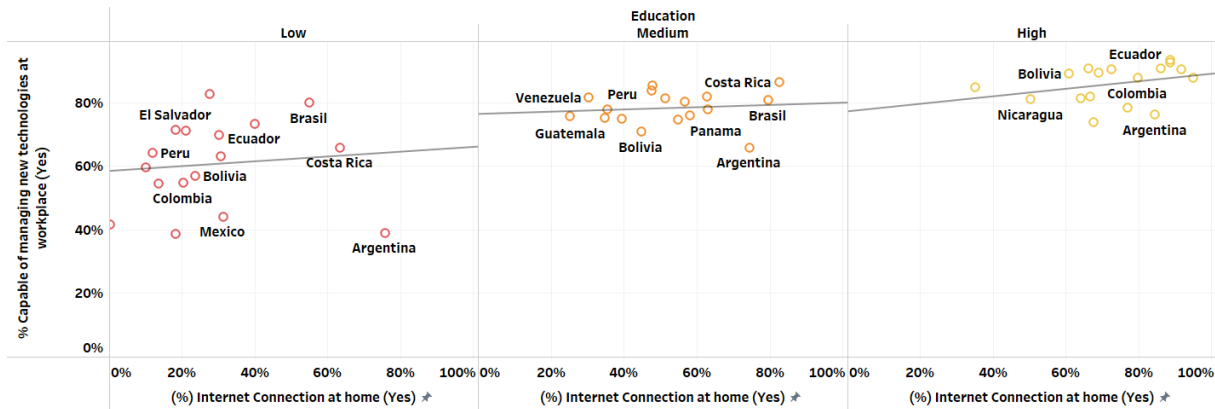


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

When asked about their capacity of managing new technologies at the workplace, young men are more likely to respond positively, compared to their female peers with the same level of education (Figure 15). Moreover, better educated young individuals (both men and women) more often report being able to manage new technologies, compared to those with a lower level of education. Whereas the highest figures are observed for young men with high level of education (84 %), the lowest are for women with low level of education (55 %). These gender and education specific patterns are also confirmed when examining country level figures and point to the existing gender gap and the key role played by education.

Overall, as mentioned above, access to digital technologies is key for keeping the young generation equipped to deal with the rapidly changing competence profile at the workplace. The survey demonstrates that there is a positive correlation between the Internet access rate and the percentage of young individuals who consider themselves capable of managing new technologies at the workplace. The relationship is stronger for those with high level of education, compared to the other two groups (Figure 16).

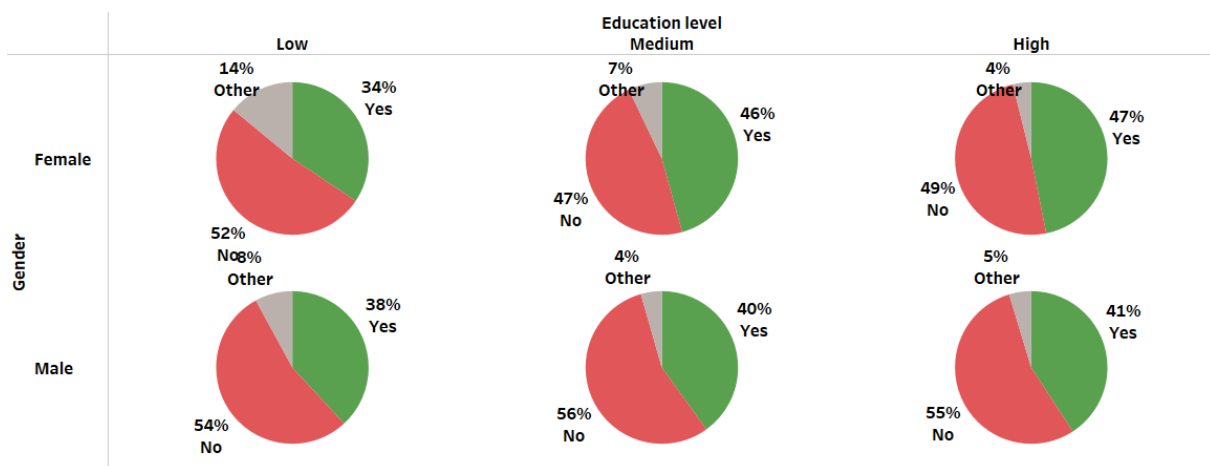
Figure 16. The relationship between Internet access rate and the percentage individuals capable of managing new technologies at the workplace among young people in 18 LAC countries, by education level (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Young men are more likely to think that their job will not be taken away by robots compared to their female peers with the same level of education. Moreover, a smaller share of better educated young individuals gave an ambiguous answer (such as I don't know or no answer at all), which means that education helps to stay informed about future labour market dynamics: 4-5 per cent among young people with a high level of education compared to 8-14 per cent among those with a low level of education (Figure 17).

Figure 17. In 10 years from now, robots will have taken away their workplace among youth in 18 LAC countries, by gender and education level (%)

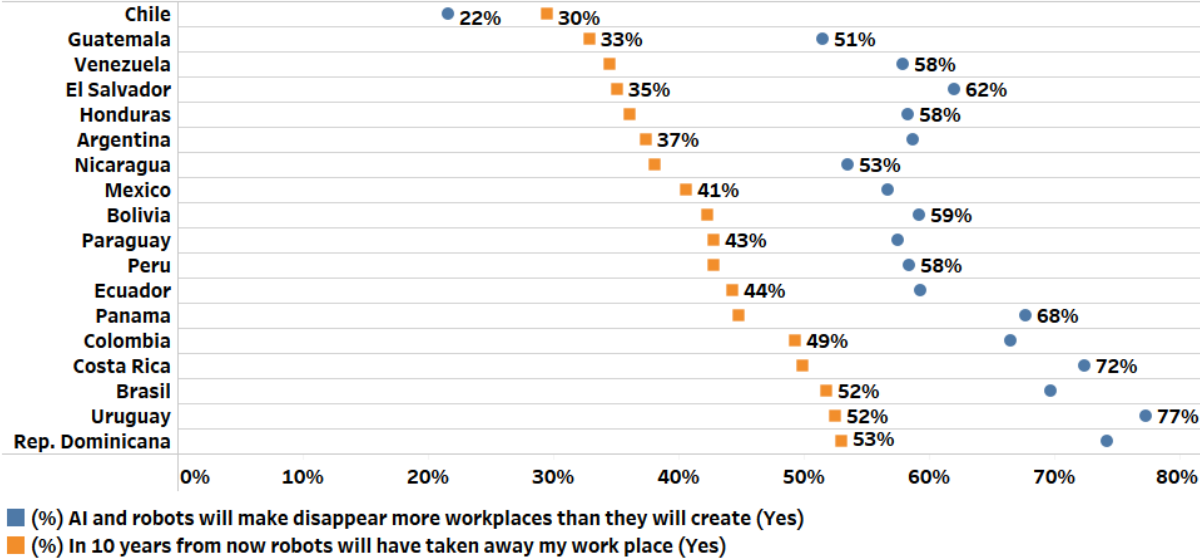


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

There are also significant differences across countries (Figure 18). In four countries (Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Brazil and Costa Rica) at least half of young respondents think that in 10 years from now robots will have taken away their workplace. In these countries, the share of respondents who think AI and robots will make disappear more workplaces than they will create is above 70 per cent. Chile constitutes an interesting case. Not only its young people are the least concerned about the adverse consequence of digital transformation in general (more workplaces will disappear than will be created) but they also have the least negative expectation about their job prospects in the decade to come. This could be explained by the financial resources the country invests in the education sector, which positively affects young people's expectations of the digital transition<sup>28</sup>. In Chile, the percentage of the population aged 25-35 with tertiary education is 40 per cent, which is well above what is observed in other countries in the region (OECD 2022).

<sup>28</sup> According to OECD, in Chile the total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure was the highest amount OECD countries (OECD 2022).

Figure 18. Share of young respondents concerned about the consequences of AI and automation for their workplace among young people, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Note: Responses to the following statements were used for this visualisation: (a) Artificial intelligence and robots will make disappear more workplaces than they will create (blue), (b) In 10 years from now robots will have taken away my workplace (orange).

## 4 Environmental protection and climate action

### Key messages

•Environmental problems are not among the top ranked concerns of the population in the LAC region. Yet, survey results show that there is a significant share of young people expressing the view that environmental protection is not guaranteed and express a willingness to step up action. The highest concerns are observed in Chile (74 %), Paraguay and Brazil (75 %).

•The education level and type of settlement young people live in define the level of prevalence of environmental concerns. Young people with a high and medium level of education are more likely to think that the protection of the environment is currently not guaranteed, regardless of the type of settlement they live in. Young people living in large and capital cities are more concerned about the protection of the environment compared to their peers in small cities and rural areas, regardless of their education level.

•Almost one-third of young people are willing to demonstrate/protest about climate change. Young men more often than young women express their willingness to demonstrate/protest for climate action (independent of education level).

•In all settlement types, young people with a high level of education are more willing to demonstrate against climate change (40 %) than young persons with lower levels of education.

The world already is, and will increasingly be, affected by extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, fires and storms as a result of climate change. Countries in the LAC region too are experiencing climate change (WMO 2021). The average rate of temperature increase in LAC countries was around 0.2°C/decade between 1991 and 2021, compared to 0.1°C/decade between 1961 and 1990, with sea level rise impacting the population disproportionately.<sup>29</sup> Also, droughts such as the ‘Central Chile Mega Drought’, the ‘Parana-La Plata basin drought’, hurricanes such as the ‘2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season’ and several floods in Brazil resulted recently in major climate-related losses in the region (WMO 2021).

Section 2 already briefly looked into the environmental concern of young people and concluded that environmental problems are not among the top-ranked concerns of the population in the region. Only a tiny share of respondents – less than 1 per cent – reported issues such as global warming, pollution and environmental issues as the most important problem in their country. In this chapter, we have a closer look and explore the environmental concerns of young people in the LAC region by examining a set of specific questions, which aim at capturing their attitude towards the environment and climate change. In particular, we analyse young people’s views regarding environmental protection and willingness to demonstrate and protest for climate change using two relevant questions from Latinobarómetro survey.<sup>30</sup> First, we look at whether young people consider that environmental protection is guaranteed in their country<sup>31</sup>, and then how willing they would be to demonstrate and protest to step up action against climate change.<sup>32</sup>

### 4.1 Environmental protection

To drive the green and just transition, the EU’s Global Gateway aims to provide sustainable development opportunities for young people in the LAC region.<sup>33</sup> The EU’s flagship programme Euroclima has the objective to support vulnerable population groups (including young people, women and indigenous populations).<sup>34</sup> As

<sup>29</sup> WMO (2021) New report details dire climate impacts in Latin America and the Caribbean. The summary is presented on the UN Climate Change webpage. Available online at <https://unfccc.int/news/new-report-details-dire-climate-impacts-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>. Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Albeit an important topic in the LAC region, the survey only includes two questions related to environmental protection and climate action. These two questions can be seen as a starting point for further investigation on environmental data focused on youth, to improve and harmonize the data landscape in the LAC region.

<sup>31</sup> The respondents were asked to answer the following question ‘To what extent do you think the protection of the environment is guaranteed in (country)?’ with the following set of answers: ‘Fully guaranteed’, ‘Somewhat guaranteed’, ‘Not guaranteed’, ‘Not at all guaranteed’ and ‘Don’t know’.

<sup>32</sup> The respondents were asked to answer the following question ‘On a scale from 1 to 10 where ‘1’ means ‘not at all willing’ and ‘10’ means ‘Completely willing’. How willing would you be to demonstrate and protest for climate change?’

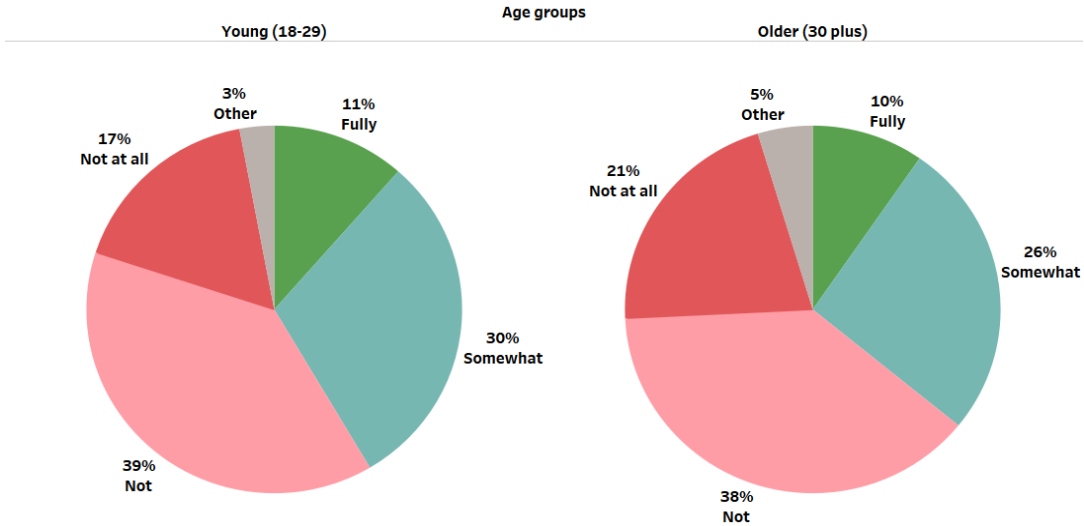
<sup>33</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.14, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en). Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Global Gateway: EU, Latin America and the Caribbean lead the charge for a Green and Just Transition, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-lead-charge-green-and-just-transition-2023-05-10\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-latin-america-and-caribbean-lead-charge-green-and-just-transition-2023-05-10_en). Last accessed 30 June 2023.



young people deserve to be heard, empowered and protected, it is paramount to look at how they view the protection of the environment as guaranteed in their country. Figure 19 illustrates the views of young people in the LAC region and demonstrates that all age groups in LAC are concerned about environmental protection in their country, yet the older age group seems slightly less positive than the young people. Among the young people, 31 per cent think that environmental protection is either fully (11 %) or somewhat (30 %) guaranteed, which is 5 percentage points more compared to their older peers. Instead, among the older age group, a slightly larger share of 59 per cent think that environmental protection is either not (38 %) or not at all (21 %) guaranteed.

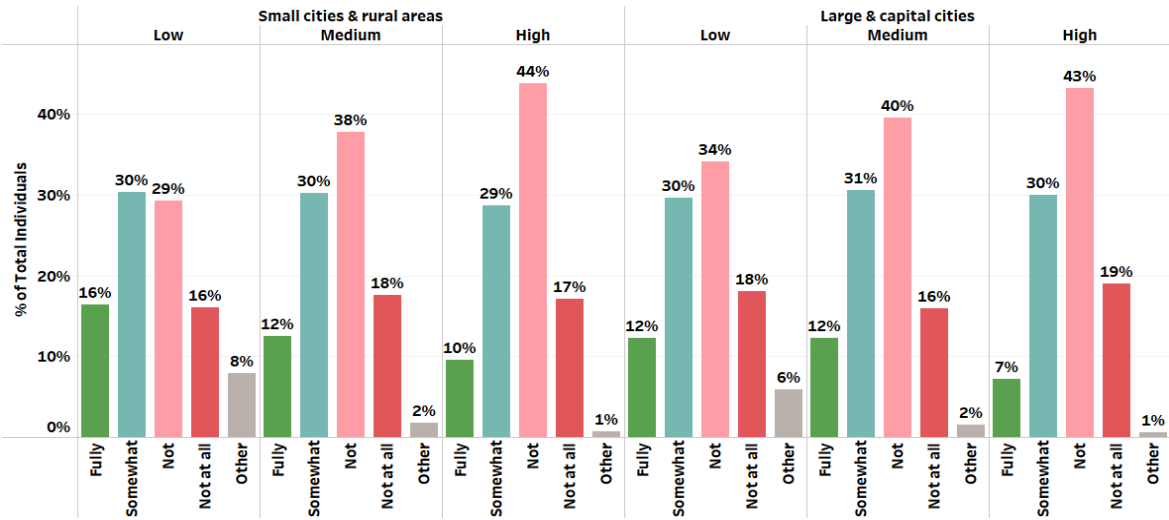
Figure 19. The degree to which participants view the protection of the environment as guaranteed in 18 LAC countries, by age group (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Focusing on young people and looking from the perspective of the settlement type and education level, the following patterns are observed (Figure 20). First, education level is positively associated with the level of prevalence of environmental concerns. At least 61 per cent of young people with a high and 56 per cent with a medium level of education think that the protection of the environment is not guaranteed, regardless of the type of settlement they live in. Second, young people living in large and capital cities are overall more concerned about the protection of the environment, regardless of their education level. Young people with a high level of education living in large and capital cities have the highest environmental concerns (62 %), whereas those with low level of education living in small cities and rural areas are less concerned (45 %).

Figure 20. The degree to which young people view the protection of the environment as guaranteed, by education level and settlement type (%)



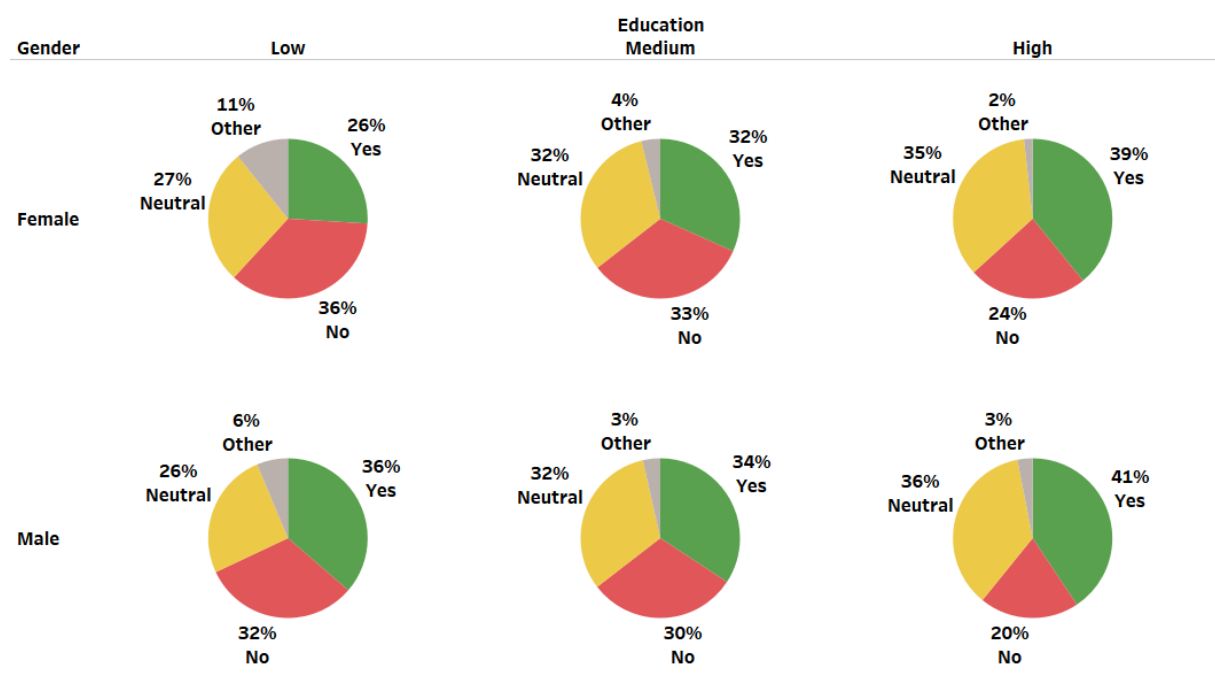
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

## 4.2 Climate action

In recent years, young people have shown to be in the first row to step up climate action. Many of them have seen climate change and environmental degradation themselves or experienced indirectly the instability caused by it. The EU's Youth Action Plan (YAP) strives for the inclusion of young people in climate decision-making and action. The Youth Empowerment Fund is a good example of how the EU supports the contribution of young people to SDG13 within their communities.<sup>35</sup>

To ensure the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised young people in green decision-making and climate action, it is important to understand their views and attitudes. In this context, the Latinobarómetro looks into the question of the willingness of young people in the LAC region to step up climate action. To analyse the survey responses, we grouped the one to ten scale responses to the question on willingness to protest/demonstrate for climate change into three answer categories: 'Yes', 'Neutral', and 'No'<sup>36</sup>. The data now show that there is not much difference in attitudes among the age groups. Almost one-third of both young people and older age groups are willing to demonstrate/protest against climate change.

Figure 21. The degree to which young people are willing to protest/demonstrate for climate action, by gender and education level (%)



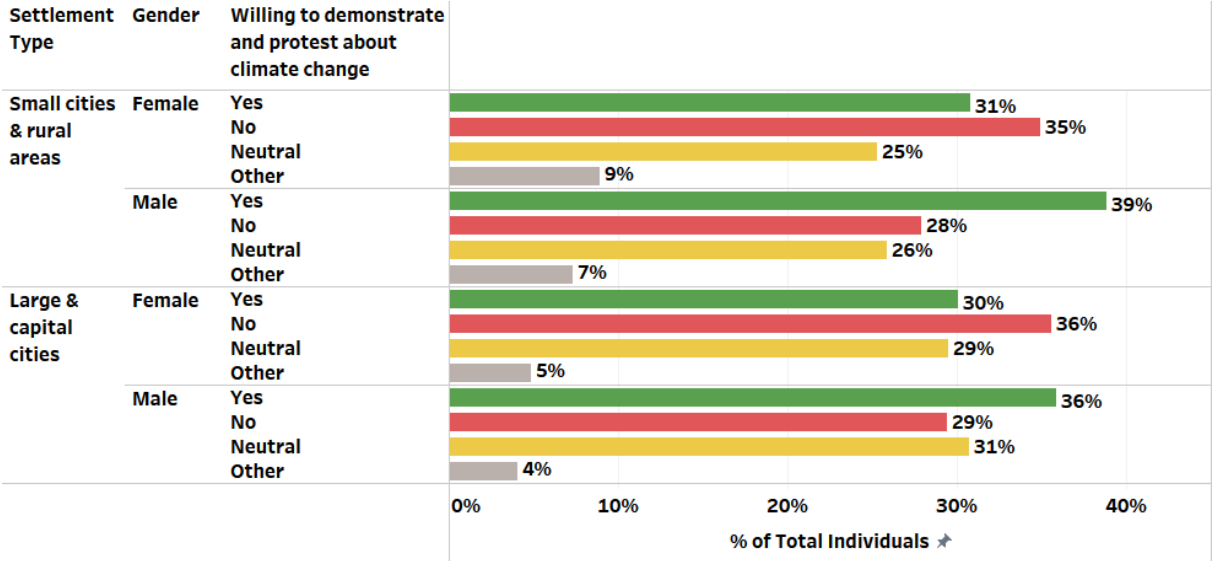
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

When looking more closely at the survey data from a gender perspective, we can see that men more often than women express their willingness to demonstrate/protest against climate change (independent from education) (Figure 21). Furthermore, the survey data also show that both men (41 %) and women (39 %) with higher levels of education are more willing to demonstrate/protest about climate change. Yet, women with higher levels of education are more willing to demonstrate/protest about climate change (39 %) than those with medium (32 %) or lower levels of education (26 %).

<sup>35</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.1, 2, 14, 17, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Answers from 1 to 3 are labelled as 'No', from 4 to 7 as 'Neutral', from 8 to 10 as 'Yes'.

Figure 22. The degree to which young people are willing to protest/demonstrate about climate change, by gender and settlement type (%)



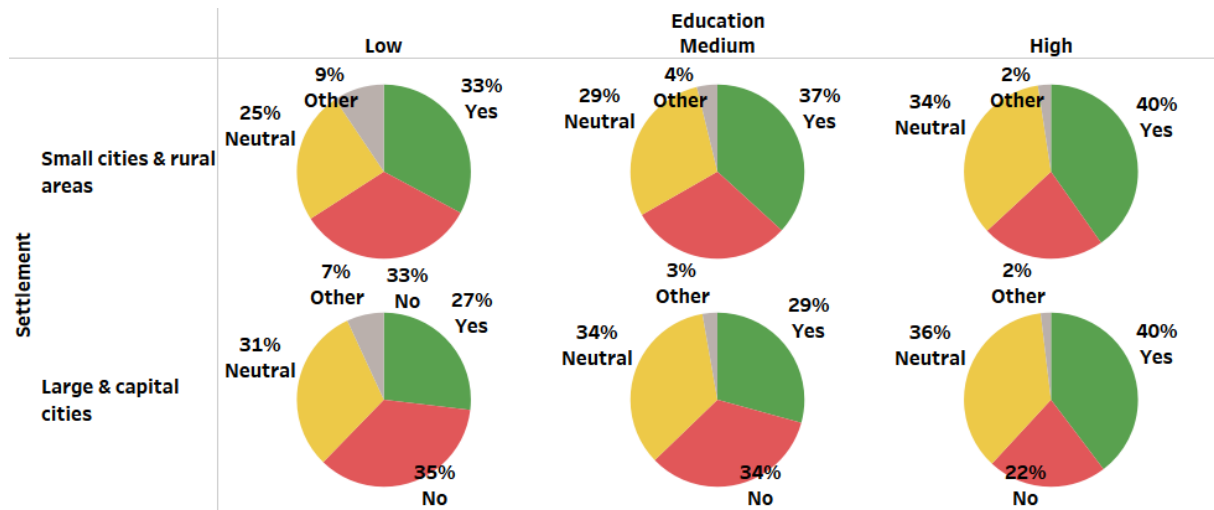
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

When looking at differences by settlement type, the survey data show that young people living in small cities and rural areas were more willing to protest/demonstrate about climate change (35 %), compared to young persons living in large and capital cities (33 %). Adding the gender dimension here reveals that the highest share of those willing to protest/demonstrate is observed among young men residing in small cities and rural areas (39 %), and the lowest among young women in large and capital cities (30 %) (

Figure 22).

In all settlement types, young people with a higher education degree are more willing to demonstrate/protest against climate change (40 %) than young people that completed lower or medium levels of education. Young people with medium (37 %) and lower levels of education (33 %) in small cities and rural areas were slightly more willing to protest about climate change than those from large and capital cities (29 % and 27 % respectively).

Figure 23. The degree to which young people are willing to protest/demonstrate for climate action, by education level and settlement type (%)



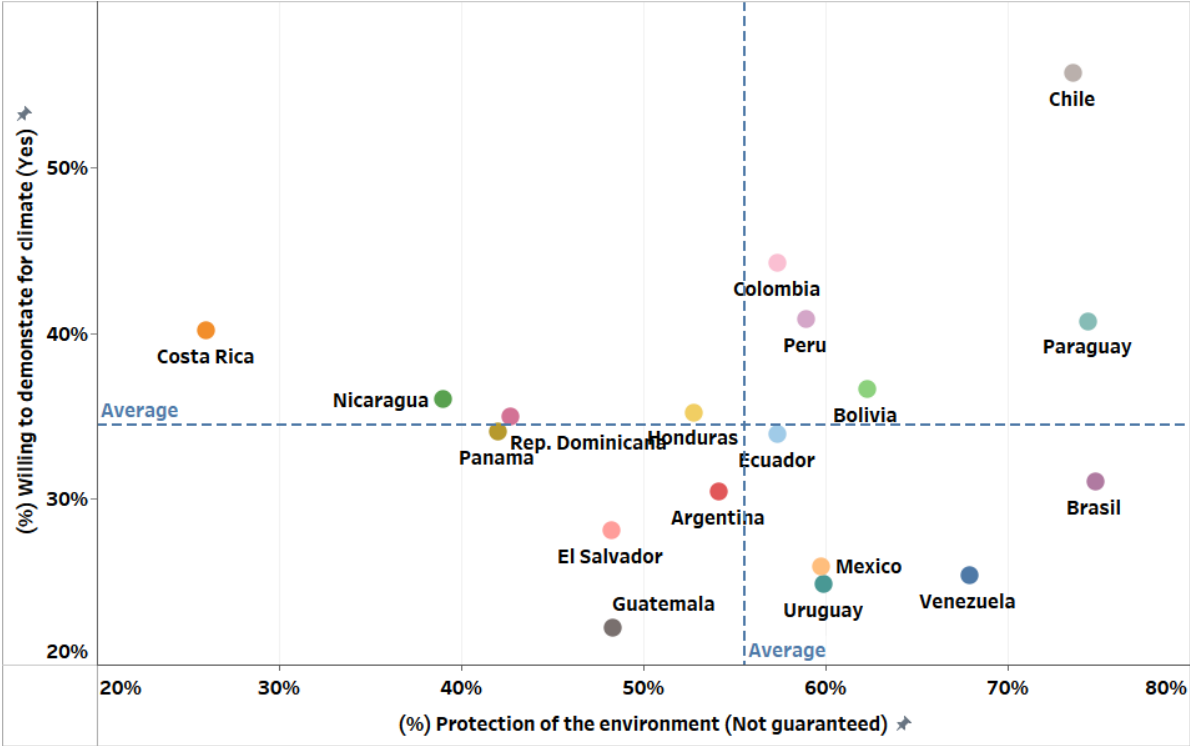
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

As identified already earlier in this report, in none of the countries environmental issues are considered the most important problem by a significant part of young people. The largest figures for this concern, yet modest, were observed in Central American countries: Guatemala (2.4 %), Honduras (1.6 %) and Mexico (1.2 %) (see Section 2).

Combining country level information on environmental protection (share of young people thinking it is not guaranteed) and willingness to protest/demonstrate against climate change paints a regional image characterised by heterogeneous trends (Figure 22). Chile, Paraguay, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia (sitting on the upper right corner of the scatterplot) are among the countries with young people both concerned about environmental protection and willing to demonstrate against climate change. In these countries, both measures are above the regional averages. In Chile, which is an evident outlier in the region, 74 per cent of young people expressed the view that environmental protection was not (at all) guaranteed, whereas 56 per cent were willing to protest/demonstrate against climate change. In Paraguay and Brazil, where young people are as concerned about environmental protection as in Chile, only 41 and 31 per cent respectively are willing to protest/demonstrate against climate change. According to the rankings on overall climate change mitigation performance of the Environmental Protection Index (

Table 7), these countries indeed have room for improvement when comparing their performance regionally and globally (Wolf et al. 2022).<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, there is a relatively high willingness to demonstrate/protest against climate change (40 %) in Costa Rica (as much as in Paraguay), despite a modest level of concern about environmental protection (26 %).

Figure 24. The degree to which young people view the protection of the environment as not guaranteed and are willing to protest/demonstrate against climate change (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

<sup>37</sup> The Environmental Performance Index Report (2022) has used a ranking for benchmarking performance towards net-zero emission target in 2050, to enable comparison of LAC countries among their 'peers'. Overall, the Caribbean countries are performing better to meet the net-zero greenhouse gas commitment, while many other countries, especially in Latin America will need to redouble their efforts to reduce emissions.

Table 7. Regional rankings on overall climate change mitigation performance in the LAC region

Country	Ranking		EPI score	10-year change	Sub Region	Latinobarómetro
	Regional	Global				
Bahamas	1	28	56.2	9.8	Caribbean	No
Barbados	2	36	53.2	12.7	Caribbean	No
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3	36	53.2	8.9	Caribbean	No
Antigua and Barbuda	4	39	52.4	9.7	Caribbean	No
Dominica	5	42	51.2	10.2	Caribbean	No
Panama	6	47	50.5	9.9	Central America	Yes
Belize	7	49	50	-2.1	Central America	No
Saint Lucia	8	53	49.4	0.3	Caribbean	No
Grenada	9	58	47.9	7.1	Caribbean	No
Trinidad and Tobago	10	59	47.8	19	Caribbean	No
Cuba	11	60	47.5	6.8	Caribbean	No
Chile	12	65	46.7	6.8	South America	Yes
Ecuador	13	66	46.5	9.2	South America	Yes
Venezuela	14	67	46.4	0.2	South America	Yes
Costa Rica	15	68	46.3	4	Central America	Yes
Suriname	16	70	45.9	-8	South America	No
Jamaica	17	72	45.6	-2	Caribbean	No
Mexico	18	73	45.5	12.4	Central America	Yes
Brazil	19	81	43.6	5.4	South America	Yes
Colombia	20	87	42.4	-0.5	South America	Yes
Dominican Republic	21	89	42.2	-3.1	Caribbean	Yes
Argentina	22	92	41.1	7.8	South America	Yes
Paraguay	23	93	40.9	-6	South America	Yes
El Salvador	24	95	40.8	7.6	South America	Yes
Bolivia	25	99	40.1	0.6	South America	Yes
Peru	26	101	39.8	-0.4	South America	Yes
Guyana	27	105	38.5	-6.1	South America	No
Nicaragua	28	110	37.7	-0.9	Central America	Yes
Uruguay	29	113	37.4	3.3	South America	Yes
Honduras	30	121	36.5	7.2	Central America	Yes
Guatemala	31	167	28	-3	Central America	Yes
Haiti	32	173	26.1	2.4	Caribbean	No
Saint Kitts & Nevis	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Caribbean	No

Source: Environmental Performance Index 2022, Available at <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/component/epi>  
 Note: The last column of the table indicated whether the country is included in the 2020 wave of Latinobarómetro survey. EPI stands for Environmental Performance Index and has scores ranging between 0 and 100, from worst to best performance. A perfect 100 score indicates that a country has achieved an internationally recognised sustainability target or the expert consensus of good performance.

Prone to climate disasters, including hurricanes, the Caribbean are also vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Table 7). For Caribbean countries with a small administration, challenges remain to address the impact of natural hazards. Although the Latinobarómetro hardly covers the youth in the Caribbean (only Dominican Republic),<sup>38</sup> it is paramount to also tackle the social and environmental concerns of young people in a way that ensures sustainable development in the region as a whole. The EU is already supporting sustainable

<sup>38</sup> Limitations and a call for comprehensive environmental data focused on youth in the Caribbean, to improve and harmonize the data landscape in the LAC region.

management of natural resources and climate change among others, in Cuba, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>39</sup>

To summarise, this chapter has been looking into a set of questions of the Latinobarómetro that are relevant for anchoring a new EU-LAC green partnership. As illustrated by the survey results:

- All age groups in LAC are concerned about environmental protection in their country, yet the older age group seems slightly less positive than the young people.
- The education level is positively associated with the level of prevalence of environmental concerns. Young people with a high and medium level of education think that the protection of the environment is not guaranteed, regardless of the type of settlement they live in. Second, young people living in large and capital cities are more concerned about the protection of the environment regardless of their education level. Young people with a high level of education living in large and capital cities have the highest environmental concerns, whereas those with low level of education living in small cities and rural areas are less concerned.
- Young men more often than young women express their willingness to demonstrate/protest for climate change (independent from education level and settlement). Both men and women with higher levels of education are more willing to demonstrate/protest for climate change. Yet, women with higher levels of education were more willing to demonstrate/protest against climate change than those with medium or lower levels of education. Instead, there is close to no difference between women living in large and capital cities and small cities and rural areas.
- In all settlement types, young people with a higher education degree were more willing to demonstrate/protest for climate change than young people that have completed lower or medium levels of education, whereas young people with medium and lower level of education in small cities and rural areas were slightly bit more willing than those from large and capital cities.
- In Chile, Paraguay and Brazil, a significant percentage of young people are concerned about environmental protection, yet the degree to which they are willing protest/demonstrate against climate change varies significantly across these countries. On the other hand, there is a relatively high willingness to demonstrate/protest against climate change in Costa Rica, despite a modest level of concerns about environmental protection.
- Although the Latinobarómetro hardly covers the youth in the Caribbean (only Dominican Republic), it is paramount to also tackle the social and environmental concerns of young people in a way that ensures sustainable development in the region as a whole.

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<sup>39</sup> International partnerships – Americas and the Caribbean, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/americas-and-caribbean\\_en#countries-in-the-region](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/americas-and-caribbean_en#countries-in-the-region), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

## 5 Social cohesion and inequalities

### Key messages

- More than half of the young people in the LAC region view income distribution, access to justice, healthcare and education as either unfair or very unfair. The largest share is observed for income distribution (75 %) and access to justice (74 %), followed by health (60 %) and education (53 %). However, there is much variation between and within countries. For instance, Chile hosts the highest share of young people (96 %) who consider income distribution as either unfair or very unfair, whereas in El Salvador it is twice lower.
- At the regional level, three out of four young people think that access to justice is unfair. In Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, the share of young people considering access to justice either unfair or very unfair is the highest in the region – above 85 per cent. In Costa Rica and Nicaragua, it is significantly lower, yet above 50 per cent.
- A significant part of young people in all LAC countries are willing to demonstrate and protest for a more egalitarian society with the highest share (three in four) completely willing to demonstrate in Colombia, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic.
- Young people in the LAC region view poor, indigenous people, homosexuals, black people or of African descent, and immigrants as the most discriminated.
- More than half (52 %) of young people in the region think that gender equality is not guaranteed.
- *Young people in the LAC region face challenges in accessing education and health services, with the highest share found both in Chile and Paraguay. More than half of the young people in the LAC region are willing to step up action for improvement of access, with the highest share found for young people in Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic.*

Most LAC countries make efforts to ensure decent work and economic growth (SDG8), quality education (SDG4), good health and wellbeing (SDG3) and reduced inequalities (SDG10). Yet, despite progress, the region needs to further step up action (ECLAC 2023). Also in the field of intergenerational justice (SDG 16), a better understanding of who young people in LAC are and which role they play for peace and security in the region is paramount.<sup>40</sup>

To understand better the views of young people in the LAC region on sustainable development, equality and peace, the Latinobarómetro contains a set of nine relevant questions that allow examining young people's views on sustainable development, equality and peace: notably by assessing their perspective on income distribution (SDG8), education (SDG4), health (SDG3) and justice (SDG16) as well as gender equality (SDG5) and discrimination (SDG10). The survey reflects young people's views on how fair the distribution of income is in their country<sup>41</sup> and also identifies their views on the taxes that citizens of their country should pay.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the survey records how fair the participants find their access to education, health and justice<sup>43</sup>, and how willing they are to demonstrate and protest for improvement in healthcare and education<sup>44</sup>, or a more egalitarian society.<sup>45</sup> The data also provide insights on citizens' views about discrimination; the most vulnerable groups of people in their country,<sup>46</sup> as well as the guarantee of gender equality in their country<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> UN – Agenda 2030 LAC, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions | 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda2030lac.org), Available online at <https://agenda2030lac.org/en/sdg/16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>41</sup> With the following set of answers: very fair, fair, unfair, very unfair and don't know/no answer.

<sup>42</sup> With the following set of answers: all the same, earn more pay more and don't know/no answer.

<sup>43</sup> The respondents were asked to answer the following question 'How fair is access to education/health/justice' with the following set of answers: very fair, fair, unfair, very unfair and don't know/no answer.

<sup>44</sup> With the following set of answers: not at all willing to completely willing and don't know/no answer.

<sup>45</sup> With the following set of answers: very fair, fair, unfair, very unfair and don't know/no answer.

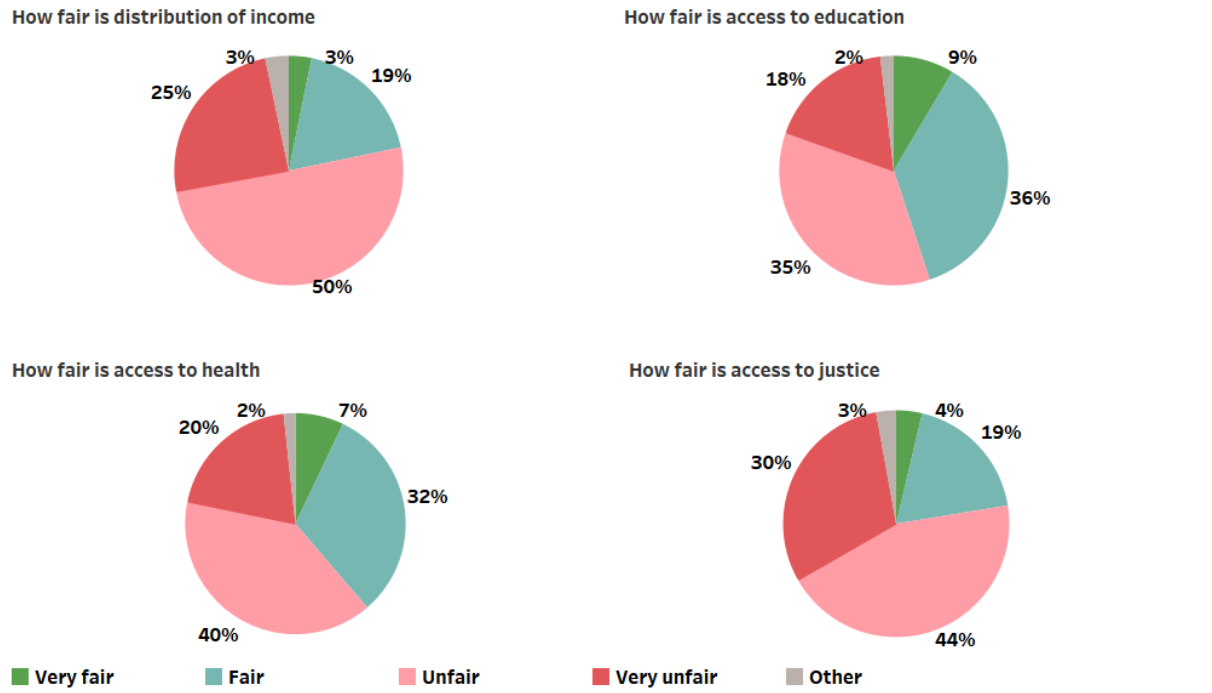
<sup>46</sup> With the following set of selected answers : black people/African descent, indigenous and native people, white people, mulattos, mestizos, Asian people, poor people, immigrants (all in general), immigrants of Latin-America, of Venezuela, of Colombia, of Bolivia, of Peru, handicapped, AIDS patients, homosexuals, drug addicts, people with tattoos, women, old people, young people, illiterates, religious people (evangelicals, Mormons, Pentecostals), people who belong to a political party (communist, socialists), people who belong to a union, feminists, people discriminated by minority ideologies, single mothers, homeless (people who live on the street), peasants (they work in the fields), people who live in rural areas, criminals (people who belong to a gang), people who belong to armed groups, alcoholics, people discriminated by race, doctors or health workers.

<sup>47</sup> With the following set of answers: fully guaranteed, somewhat guaranteed, not guaranteed, not at all guaranteed and no answer.



While the LAC region is made up mostly of (upper) middle-income countries and is rich in natural resources, large disparities and structural economic challenges continue to exist.<sup>48</sup> The survey data shows overall that more than half of the young people in the LAC region view income distribution, access to justice, healthcare and education as either unfair or very unfair. Young people in this region are especially concerned about income distribution (75 %), followed by access to justice (74 %), health (60 %) and education (53 %).

Figure 25. The degree to which young people in the LAC region view the distribution of income, access to education, health and justice in their country as fair (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

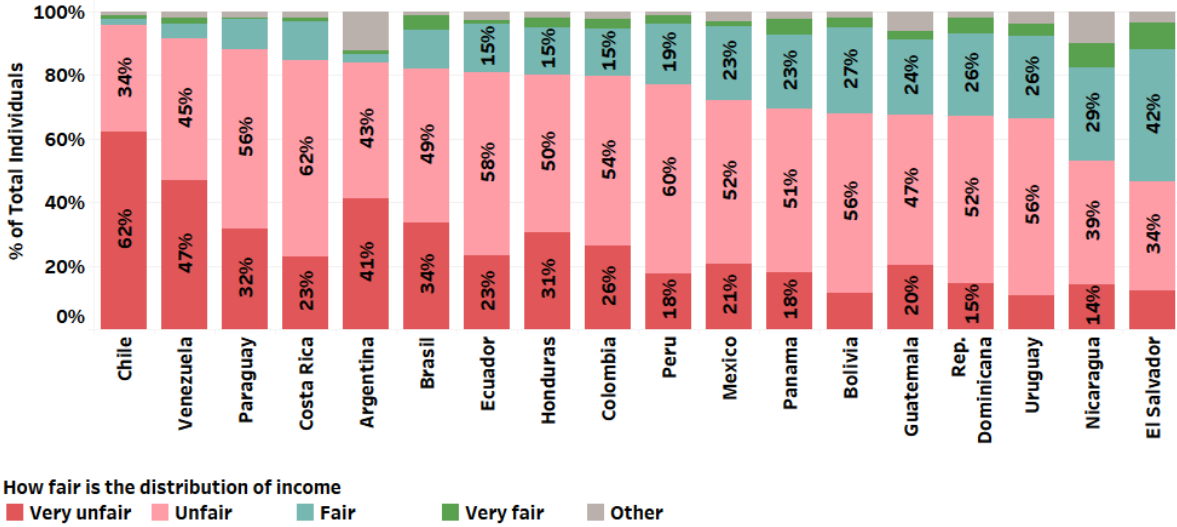
### 5.1 Income distribution

The survey data indicates that within the general trend of young people being not satisfied with income distribution, there are also large discrepancies across countries. The countries with the largest share of young people viewing the income distribution as (very) unfair are Chile (96 %), Venezuela (92 %), Paraguay (88 %) and Costa Rica (85 %). This is confirmed by the Gini Index (World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform) which shows that these countries are characterised by important income equality.<sup>49</sup> On the contrary, El Salvador (47 %) and Nicaragua (53 %) and Uruguay are the countries among all LAC countries with the lowest share of young people having the opinion that income distribution is unfair or very unfair. Interestingly, El Salvador is the only country where the share of those thinking income distribution is fair exceeds the share of those who think it is unfair.

<sup>48</sup> World Bank - Latin America and the Caribbean Overview: Development, news, research, data, Available online at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/lac/overview>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>49</sup> The Gini index presents the extent to which the distribution of income among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution, whereby zero represents complete equal distribution, and 100 represents complete inequality. Chile, Venezuela and Argentina have a score of 40.50 out of 100 whereas Paraguay performs slightly better with a score between 36.80 and 40.50. World Bank - Gini Index, Available online at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?view=map&year=2020>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

Figure 26. The degree to which young people in the LAC region view income distribution in their country as fair, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

At the sub-national level (Figure 27), we can see that the share of young people expressing their concern about income distribution varies from small cities and rural areas to large and capital cities. However, there are discrepancies in these differences too. In some countries, young people living in small cities and rural areas express a higher concern about the distribution of income (such as in Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela), whereas in others, young people living in large and capital cities are more concerned (such as in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay).

Figure 27. The degree to which young people in the LAC region view income distribution in their country as fair, by country and settlement type (%)



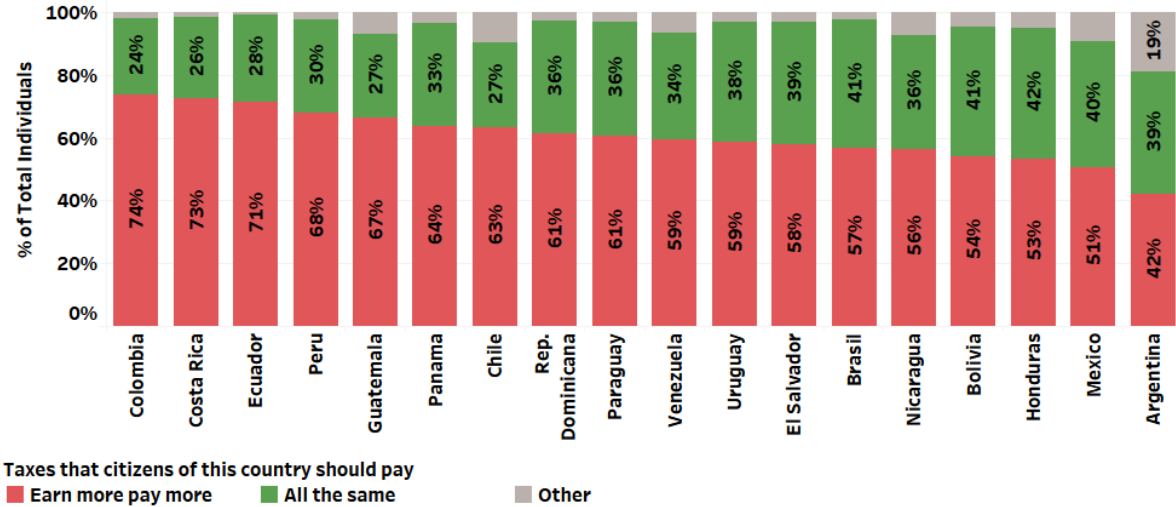
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Note: The figures on settlement type exclude Argentina due to missing information.

Furthermore, the Latinobarómetro results show that young people play an important role in addressing economic challenges. Overall, more than half of the young people in the LAC region think that citizens of the

country that earn more should also pay more taxes. The highest figures can be found in Colombia (74%), Costa Rica (73%) and Ecuador (71%), the lowest in Argentina (42%), Mexico (51%), and Honduras (53%).

Figure 28. The degree to which young people in the LAC region view that citizens of their country that earn more should pay more, by country (%)

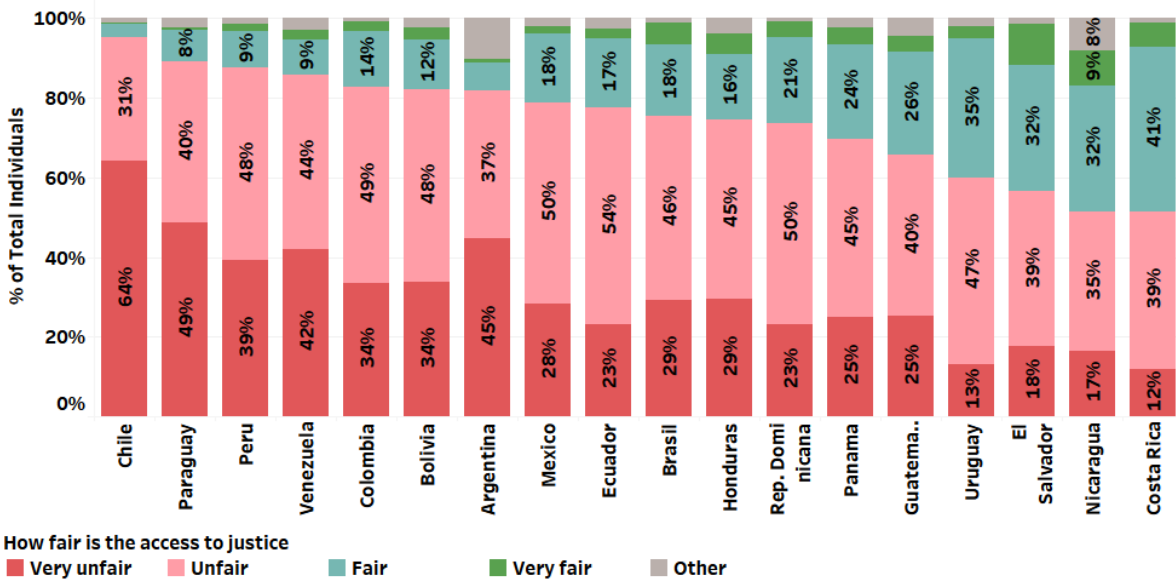


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

### 5.2 Access to justice

Trafficking in human beings as well as drugs and arms, organised crime, corruption and money laundering remain significant challenges to LAC communities. The United Nations Convention against Corruption is an instrument to which LAC countries are committed to achieving progress in SDG 16, that is focusing on achieving a just, peaceful and inclusive society by reducing violence, fighting corruption and (organised) crime (Martínez et al, 2022). The survey results show that the prospects and capacity of young people to act are often limited by a lack of inclusive access to justice. At the regional level, three in four young person think that access to justice is either unfair (44%) or very unfair (30%). In Chile (95%), Paraguay (89%), Peru (87%) and Venezuela, (86%) the share of young people considering access to justice either unfair or very unfair is the highest in the region. In Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the share of those with negative views is significantly lower, yet above 50 per cent.

Figure 29. The degree to which young people in the LAC region view access to justice as fair, by country (%)



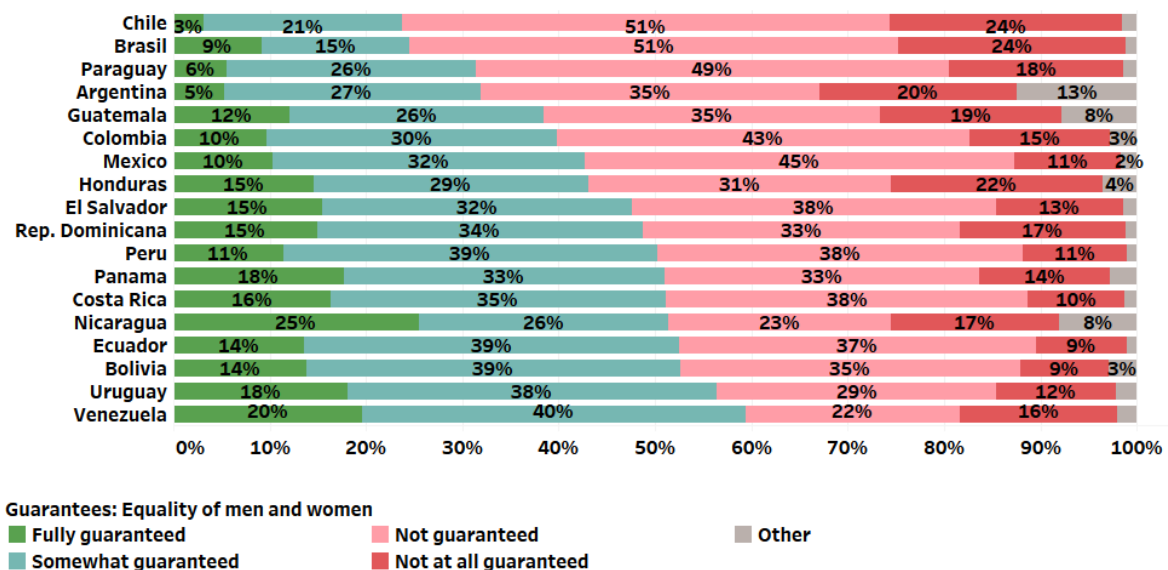
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

### 5.3 Gender equality and discrimination

Social cohesion does not go without gender equality. Ensuring gender equality is not only a sustainable development goal (SDG5) but a human right.<sup>50</sup> It strives for equal representation of women and men in different sectors of society, such as in national political leadership.<sup>51</sup> Despite the progress made in the region, this is not obvious for all LAC countries. This has for instance been reflected in the most recent term of office, where there was only a 28.7 per cent female participation in ministerial cabinets.<sup>52</sup> The EU promotes gender equality and women's empowerment across the globe, both in international fora and through external actions.<sup>53</sup> For instance, in Chile, the EU has included a dedicated trade and gender chapter in the EU-Chile agreement, with commitments to eliminate discrimination against women.<sup>54</sup>

Achieving gender equality requires additional efforts and further mainstreaming social cohesion policies in the region. The highest share of young people reporting that equality between men and women is not (at all) guaranteed can be found in Chile and Brazil, both with 75 per cent and Paraguay with 67 per cent. The highest share of young people that expressed that gender equality was somewhat/fully guaranteed is observed in Venezuela (60 %), Uruguay (56 %) as well as Ecuador and Bolivia (53 % each).

Figure 30. The degree to which young people in LAC view gender equality as guaranteed, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Identifying and tackling mechanisms of racial and ethnic exclusion is of most importance for any region, including the LAC countries (Aggleton et al. 2003). Until today, in the LAC region, the distinction between people is still often made based on gender, ethnic-based violence or economic, social or cultural inequality (UNAIDS 2023). For this reason, the extent to which young people view people or groups of people as most discriminated in their country was included in the Latinobarómetro. The results show that young people in the LAC region view poor (21 %), indigenous and native people (10 %), homosexuals (7 %), black people or of African descent (6 %), and immigrants (5 %) as the most discriminated people groups of people in their country.

<sup>50</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.3, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.

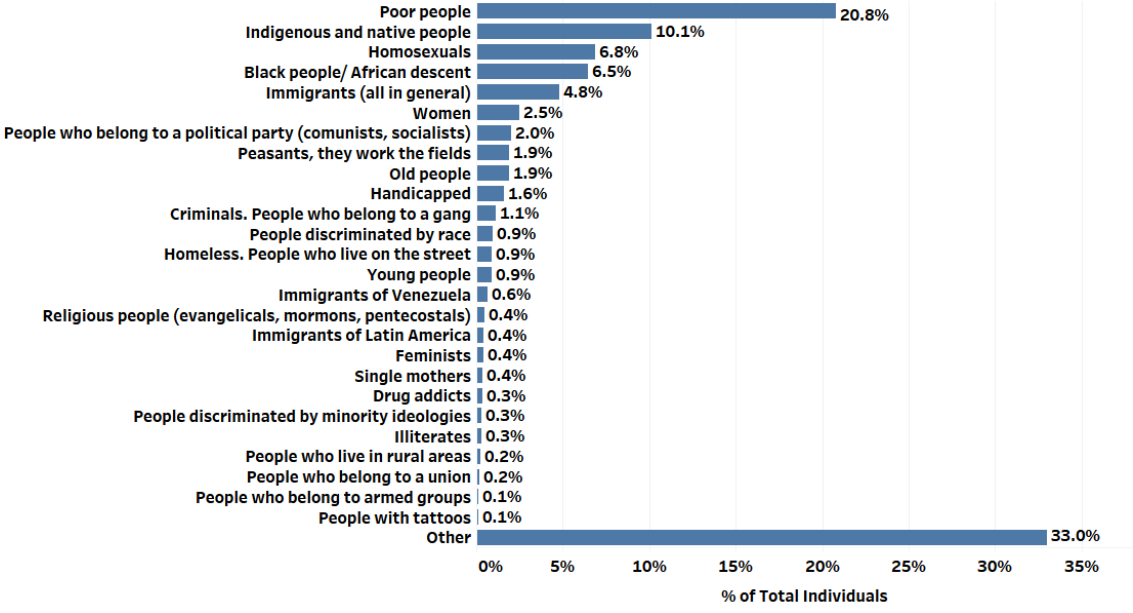
<sup>51</sup> SDG 5, United Nations, Available online at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5> Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>52</sup> Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. Available online at <https://oiq.cepal.org/en>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>53</sup> Promoting gender equality and women's rights beyond the EU, European Commission. Available online at [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/promoting-gender-equality-womens-rights-beyond-eu\\_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20has%20committed%20to,enshrined%20in%20the%20other%20SDGs.](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/promoting-gender-equality-womens-rights-beyond-eu_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20has%20committed%20to,enshrined%20in%20the%20other%20SDGs.) Last accessed 30 June 2023.

<sup>54</sup> EU-Chile agreement: text of the agreement (trade and gender equality) Available online at [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/chile/eu-chile-agreement/text-agreement\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/chile/eu-chile-agreement/text-agreement_en) Last accessed 30 June 2023.

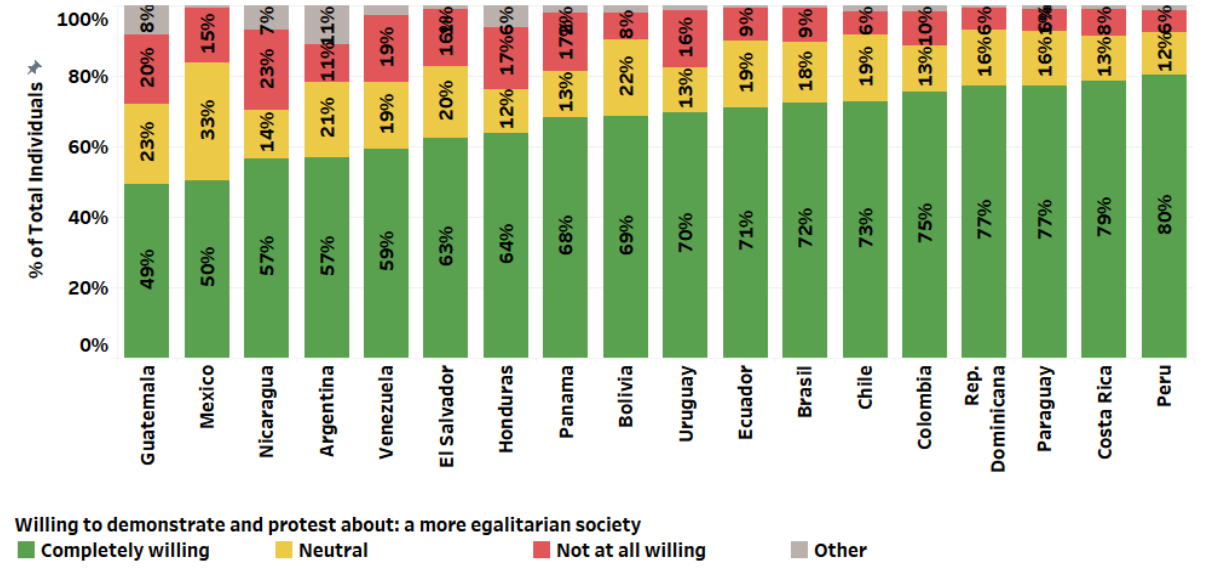
Figure 31. The extent to which young people in the LAC region view people or groups of people as most discriminated people in their country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Advancing human development, and leaving no one behind is a shared priority of young people across the region. The results of the survey indicate that overall young people in all LAC countries are willing to demonstrate and protest about a more egalitarian society, with the highest share of completely willing to demonstrate in Peru (80%), Costa Rica (79%), Paraguay (77%), Dominican Republic (77%), Colombia (75%).

Figure 32. The degree to which young people are willing to demonstrate and protest for a more egalitarian society, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

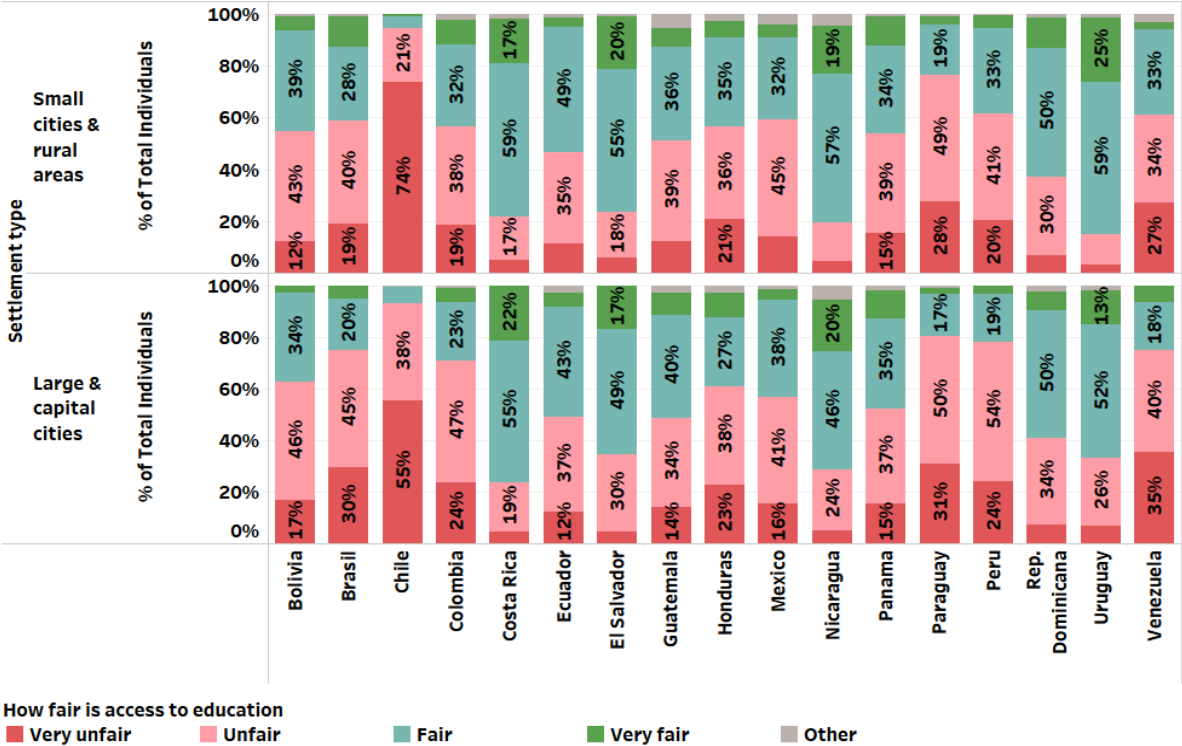
### 5.4 Access to education and healthcare

Access to education (SDG4) and health (SDG3) are essential for young people to realise their full potential and actively take part in their communities. This has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, with education

services disrupted for almost 170 million children and adolescents<sup>55</sup> and more than 2.8 million lives lost in the region.<sup>56</sup> The EU is very much in favour of further empowering young people’s access to education<sup>57</sup>. EUROsocial+ is an example of how the EU aims to improve inclusion, equality, social cohesion and education in the region<sup>58</sup>.

The share of young people who see access to education as unfair or very unfair varies from one LAC country to another, as well as among respondents living in different types of settlements, with a slightly higher discontent among young people in large and capital cities. Figure 33 also shows that Chile has the highest share of young people that express their dissatisfaction independent of the type of settlement, followed by Paraguay.

Figure 33. The degree to which young people view access to education as unfair, by country and settlement type (%)

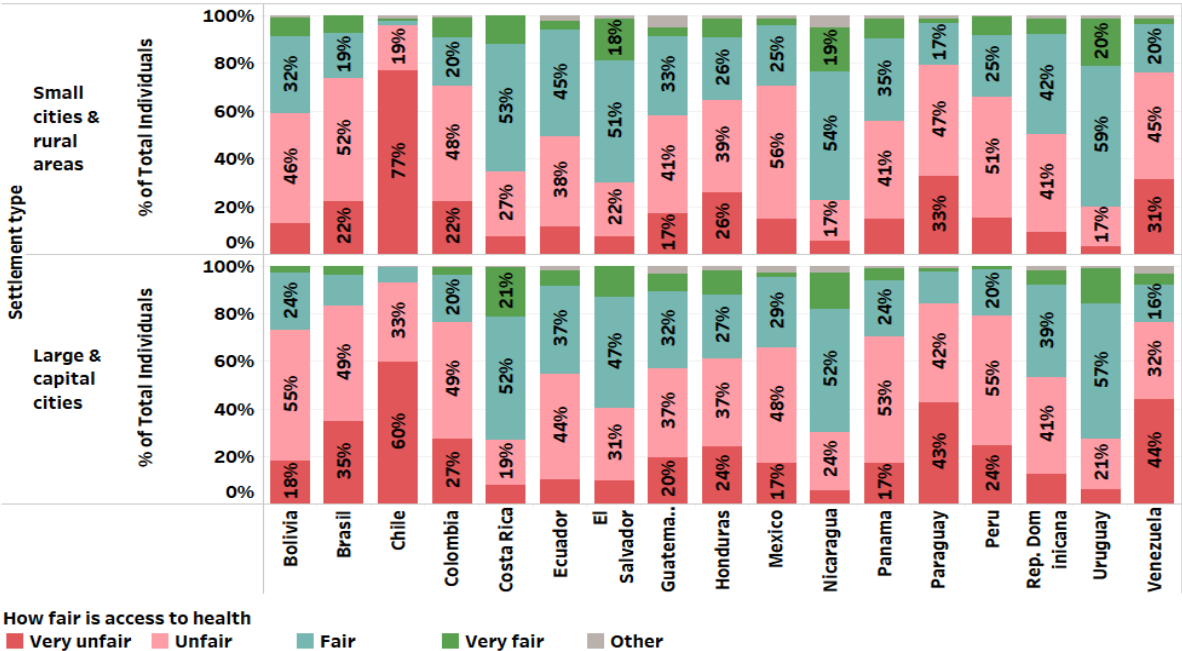


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration  
 Note: The figures exclude Argentina due to missing information on the settlement type

Latinobarómetro survey indicates that young people in the LAC region are still facing significant challenges in accessing health services and information. The share of young people in the LAC region who see access to health as unfair or very unfair varies from one LAC country to another as well, with a slightly higher discontent among young people in large and capital cities. Figure 34 again shows that Chile has the highest share of young people who express their dissatisfaction independent of the type of settlement, followed by Paraguay and Brazil.

<sup>55</sup> UNESCO - Education in Latin America and the Caribbean at a crossroads, Available online at [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/full\\_report\\_regional\\_monitoring\\_report\\_sdq4-e2030.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/full_report_regional_monitoring_report_sdq4-e2030.pdf), Last accessed 30 June 2023  
<sup>56</sup> PACO – Advancing towards universal health in Latin America and the Caribbean: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, Available online at <https://www.paho.org/en/stories/advancing-towards-universal-health-latin-america-and-caribbean-lessons-covid-19-pandemic>, Last accessed 30 June 2023  
<sup>57</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.15, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en), Last accessed 30 June 2023.  
<sup>58</sup> EUROsocial + - programme for social cohesion, Results - Eurosocial, Available online at: <https://eurosocial.eu/en/results/>, Last accessed 30 June 2023

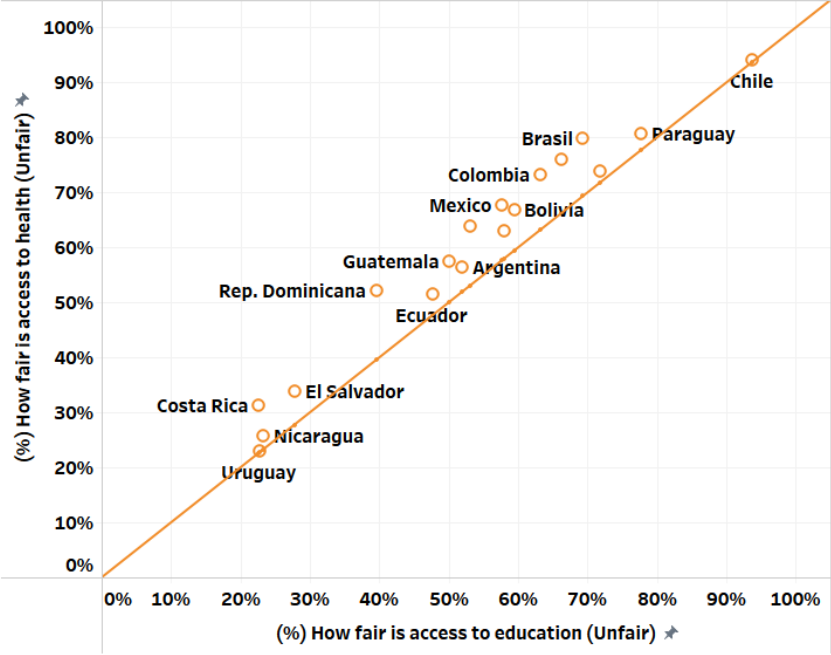
Figure 34. The degree to which young people view access to health as unfair, by country and settlement type (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration  
 Note: The figures exclude Argentina due to missing information on the settlement type

In general terms, discontent with access to healthcare goes hand in hand with discontent with access to education. Moreover, the share of young people considering access to healthcare unfair is higher (or equal in the case of Uruguay and Chile) than the proportion of those who consider access to education unfair. The highest share of young people who think they have (very) unfair access to education is found in Chile (94%), followed by Paraguay (78%). These same countries present the highest share for (very) unfair access to health, with Chile scoring the highest (94%), then Paraguay (81%). The lowest level of discontent with access to education and healthcare is observed in Uruguay, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

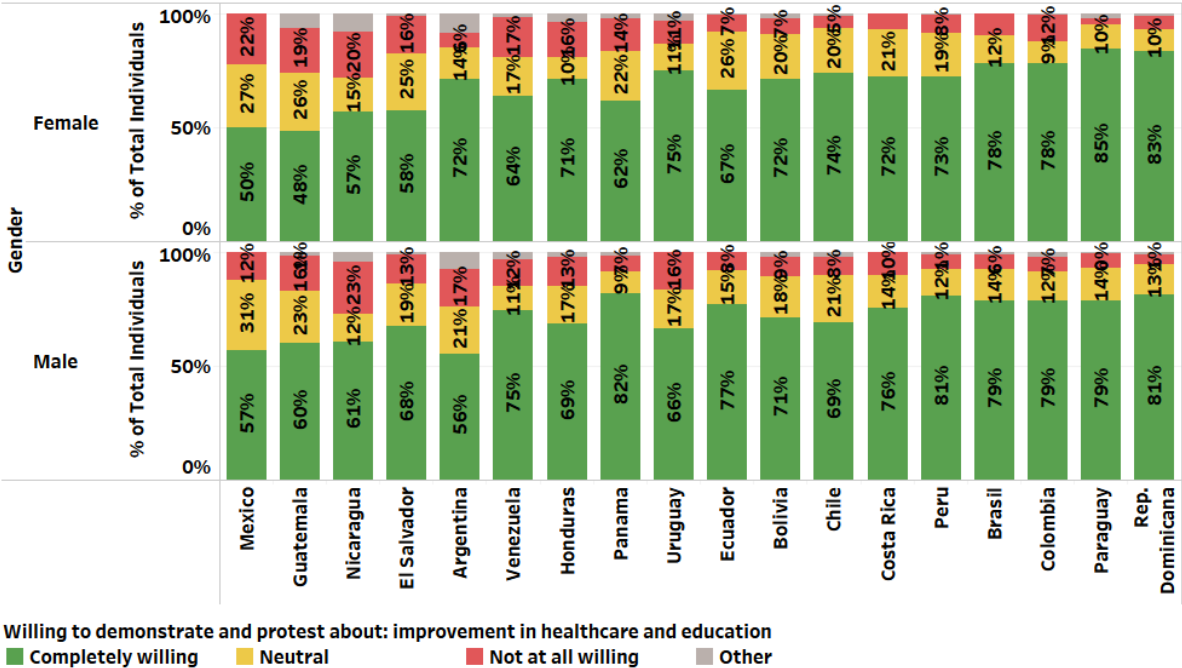
Figure 35. The degree to which young people view access to education and health as unfair, by country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

If we then look at willingness to step up action, we see that young people in all countries are willing to demonstrate and protest for the improvement in healthcare and education. In general terms, more young people in Brazil (78%), Colombia (79%), Paraguay (82%), Dominican Republic (83%) are completely willing to demonstrate for improvement in healthcare and education. Concerning gender, Figure 36 also shows some variation, notably with a larger share of young women willing to step up action. The survey data show furthermore that young women in Paraguay (85%), Dominican Republic (83%) in particular are willing to demonstrate for improvement in healthcare and education, whereas the largest share for young men is found in Panama (82%), Peru and Dominican Republic (81%).

Figure 36. The degree to which young people are willing to demonstrate and protest about improvement in healthcare and education, by gender and country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on young people’s education, and mental well-being.<sup>59</sup> While many young people have shown great engagement to protect senior peers in society during the pandemic, it has also highlighted the need for greater intergenerational fairness to build equitable access to free and quality education and healthcare in the interest of the future of the young generations.<sup>60</sup> To summarise, access to justice as well as quality education and healthcare are basic human rights and enable equality, active citizenship and sustainable livelihoods. Yet, in the LAC region, young people express concerns about social cohesion and equality notably on income distribution, followed by access to justice, health, and education.

- The share of young people expressing their concern about income distribution varies both across and within countries (small cities and rural areas vs large and capital cities). Yet, overall, more than half of the young people in the LAC region have the opinion that citizens of the country that earn more should also pay more taxes. In addition to this, more than half of the young people in each LAC country has the view that access to justice is unfair or very unfair.
- Concerning the guarantee of gender inequality, there is some more variation across LAC countries.
- Yet, in general terms, young people in the LAC region view poor, indigenous and native people, homosexuals, black people of African descent, and immigrants as the most discriminated people groups of people in their country. In each LAC country, up to half of the young people are willing to demonstrate or protest for a more egalitarian society. Finally, the survey results showed that young people in the LAC region report challenges in accessing health and education. The share of young

<sup>59</sup> Covid19 Survey, Decent jobs for Youth, Available online at <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/campaign/COVID19-survey>, Last accessed 30 June 2023.  
<sup>60</sup> Joint Communication - Youth Action Plan in EU external action 2022 – 2027, p.1, Available online at [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en), [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Joint-Communication\\_-\\_Youth\\_Action\\_Plan\\_in\\_EU\\_external\\_action\\_2022\\_-\\_2027.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Joint-Communication_-_Youth_Action_Plan_in_EU_external_action_2022_-_2027.pdf) Last accessed 30 June 2023.



people viewing access to education and health as unfair or very unfair varies from one LAC country to another, as well as among different types of settlement, with a slightly higher discontent among young people in large and capital cities. Also, more than half of the LAC young people in the region were willing to step up action, with a slightly larger share of young women willing to demonstrate/protest for access to education and health.

## 6 Democracy, governance and participation

### Key messages

•Just under half of the young people in the LAC region view democracy as preferable to other kinds of government and feel that their freedom for political participation is guaranteed in their country. Among the youth population, support for democracy and the perception of freedom of participation increases considerably with higher levels of education.

•The extent to which countries exhibit characteristics of liberal democracy and provide political and civil rights tends to be reflected in stronger support for democracy and a more positive view on the guarantee of freedom of political participation.

•Young people have little trust in the responsiveness of the government on the local level. Less than a third of young people think that it is likely that their local authority would respond if they reported a problem; they display a lower level of trust than the older adult population.

•Half of the young people in the region usually express their opinion about problems in their country. While young women prefer to express their opinion in the family, young men do so mostly among friends. A small proportion of young people uses social media or attends rallies or protests to express their opinion.

In recent years, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have witnessed several youth-led movements and protests expressing their concern about issues such as social inequality, education reform, corruption, discrimination, social justice and threats to the environment. Against this backdrop, it is important to understand young people's perceptions of democracy and governance and their considerations on representation in societal process and the responsiveness of different levels of government. The current global political context, with liberal democracy and the rules-based international order under pressure, adds significance to the question about how young people view existing political frameworks.

The European Union is committed to liberal democracy and a rules-based international order and seeks cooperation with other regional grouping. Its major Global Gateway initiative aims to build partnerships that strengthen value-based and accountable democratic governance through investments in infrastructure development: 'Democracies – and values that underpin them – must demonstrate their ability to deliver on today's global challenges. They must have the capacity and the ambition needed to help improve people's lives around the world'<sup>61</sup>. This is further highlighted in two of the six key principles of the Global Gateway, which are democratic values and high standards and good governance and transparency.

We take information from the Latinobarómetro to look into the views of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean on their freedom of political participation, the support for democracy, the responsiveness of government, and their willingness to express political opinions.

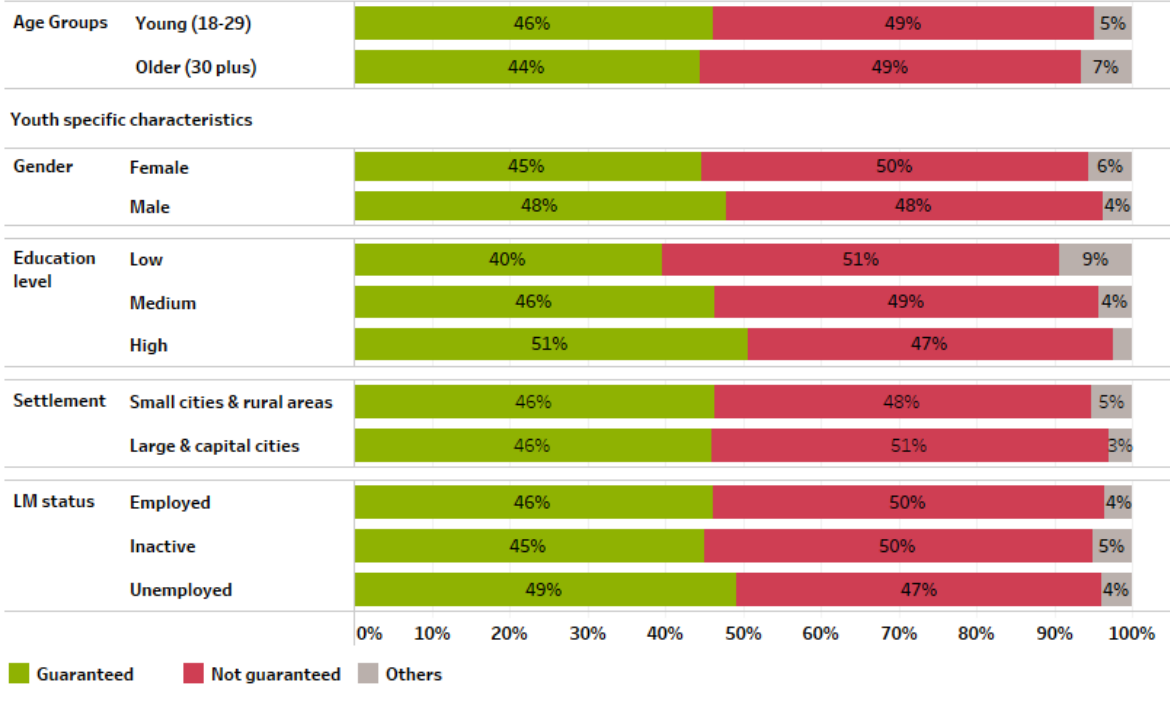
### 6.1 Freedom of political participation

The Latinobarómetro provides information about the extent to which young people think that the freedom of political participation, which can be broadly understood as the freedom to voluntarily undertake activities to influence public policy, is guaranteed in their country. The survey finds that fewer young persons across the region regard the freedom of political participation as guaranteed (46 %), compared to those who regard it as not guaranteed (49 %; 5 % of young people did not provide an answer or did not know). This is a slightly more positive view compared to the adult population above the age of 30, among whom only 44 per cent see the freedom of political participation as guaranteed in their country (Figure 37). Young people in Latin America have increasingly demonstrated their willingness to engage in political processes. The results indicate an absence of significant intergenerational differences in views about freedom to participate in political processes. This has been highlighted as an important cornerstone of democracy. In the context of international development, for example, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, highlighted intergenerational dialogue and the participation of young people as imperative to achieve development goals and the need to involve "all stakeholders to successfully manage societies and democracy".

<sup>61</sup> European Commission. The Global Gateway. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. Brussels 1.12.2021, JOIN (2021) 30 final. Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0030>

Among young people in Latin America and the Caribbean, young women are slightly less convinced (45 %) than young men (48 %) that their country guarantees the freedom of political participation (Figure 37). Views on political freedom are similar across settlement types, with 45 per cent of young people in small cities and rural areas as well as young people in large and capital cities believing political freedom is guaranteed. There is also little variation among young people who are employed (46 %), unemployed (49 %) or not active in the labour market such as students (45 %). The differences are greater according to the level of education: whereas 51 per cent of the young people with a high level of education feel that their freedom of political participation is guaranteed, the figure is only 46 per cent for those with a medium level of education, and falls to 40 per cent for those with a low level of education.

Figure 37. Youth perception of freedom of political participation in their country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

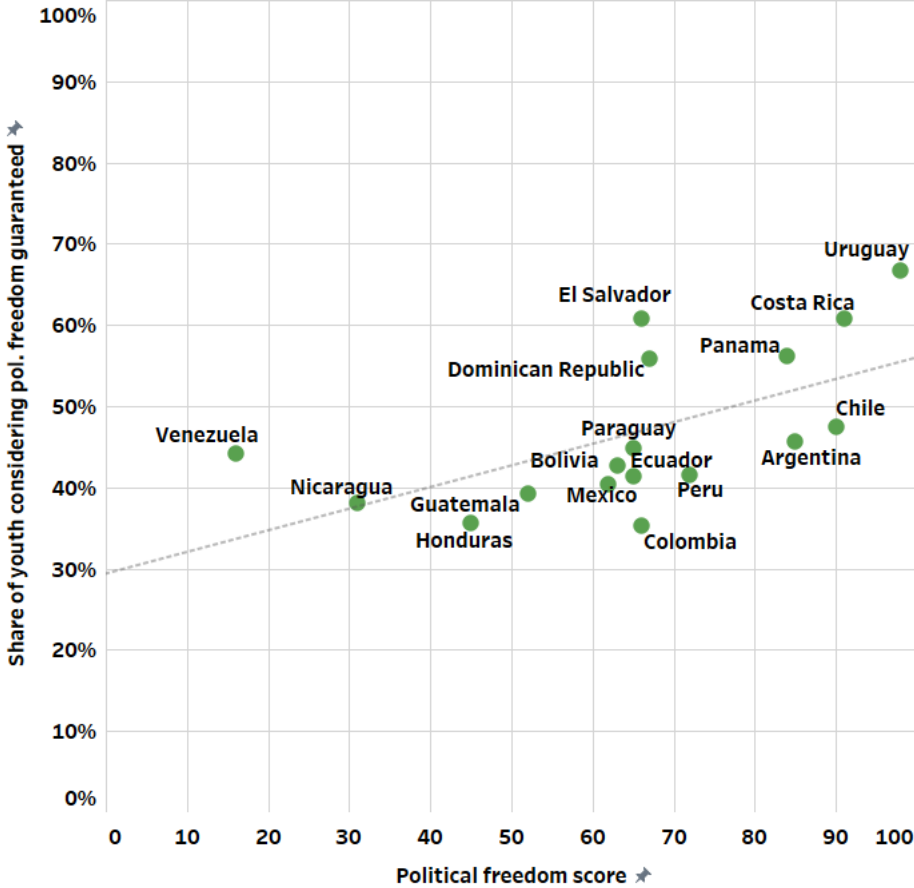
There are strong differences in the perception of the guarantee of political freedom across countries. The share of young people that view their political freedom as guaranteed in their country ranges from only 35 per cent in Colombia to 67 per cent in Uruguay. The share of young people is also below 40 per cent in the Central American countries of Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, while it is below 50 per cent in the South American countries of Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Besides Uruguay, more than half of the youth population in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica and El Salvador consider their freedom of political participation as guaranteed. The fact that the countries with the highest scores are in different sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean indicates the absence of a regional cluster in the perception of political freedom among young people.

The view of young people about the guarantee of the freedom of political participation tends to be in line with the diverse state of access to political rights and civil liberties across countries in the region. Figure 38 shows the comparison of the share of young people that answered that they view their freedom of political participation as guaranteed with the political freedom score of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean available (Freedom House 2023)<sup>62</sup>. The political freedom score is available from the Freedom House organisation, which annually assesses the state of political rights and civil liberties in countries worldwide. We compared the values in 2020 as the Latinobarómetro survey was also conducted that year. The figure shows that the share of young people who perceive political freedom as guaranteed tends to be higher when political freedom in the country is higher. The largest mismatch is in El Salvador, which comes second in perceived political freedom among young people, while its political freedom score is only about average and significantly lower than in countries such as Uruguay, Costa Rica or Chile. There is also a large mismatch in Venezuela. The

<sup>62</sup> Freedom House assigns a score to between 1 and 100 to each country based on its level of political rights and civil liberties.

country scores very low on political freedom and has the lowest value in the region, but almost half of the young people in Venezuela view their freedom of political participation as guaranteed, an average value for the region.

Figure 38. Comparison of the perception of guaranteed freedom of political participation with the status of political freedom and civil liberties in 2020 across countries



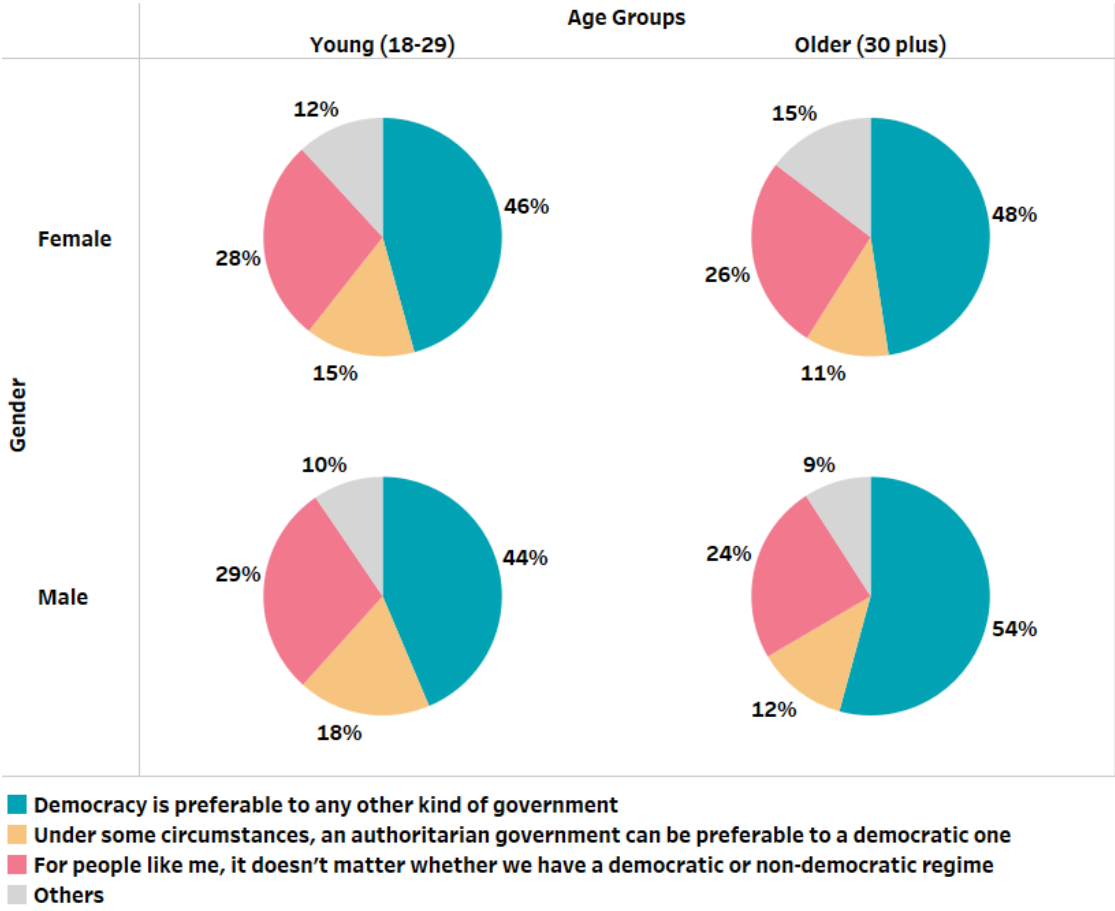
Source: Additional data sources: Freedom House (2023) Freedom in the World Dataset

### 6.2 Support for democracy

Information about the support for democracy is queried in the Latinobarómetro through the question whether, according to the respondents, democracy was preferable to any other kind of government, whether under some circumstances an authoritarian government could be preferable to a democratic one, or whether it would not matter if there was a democratic or non-democratic regime. The majority of young people (45 %) voiced their support for democracy as the preferable kind of government, whereas 16 per cent answered that an authoritarian regime could be preferable under some circumstances, and 28 per cent answered that it would not matter (11 % did not know or did not provide an answer).

However, the support for democracy is weaker among young people in Latin America and the Caribbean than among the adult population of 30 years of age and older. More than half (51 %) of the older adult population view democracy as the preferable kind of government and there is less agreement with the statements that the form of government would not matter (12 %) or that an authoritarian regime could have advantages under certain circumstances (12 %). This gap between the youth and older population is much larger among the male population than among the female population. Whereas the share of older men who prefer democracy to any other government is 54 per cent and 10 percentage point higher than among young men, women have relatively similar views across age groups (Figure 39). The gap among women is only 2 percentage point with 46 per cent of younger women expressing a preference for democracy and 48 per cent of women 30 years of age and older. The support for democracy also drops considerably among young people with low levels of education, while employment status and place of residence have less of an influence.

Figure 39. Support for democracy among young people by age group and gender (%)

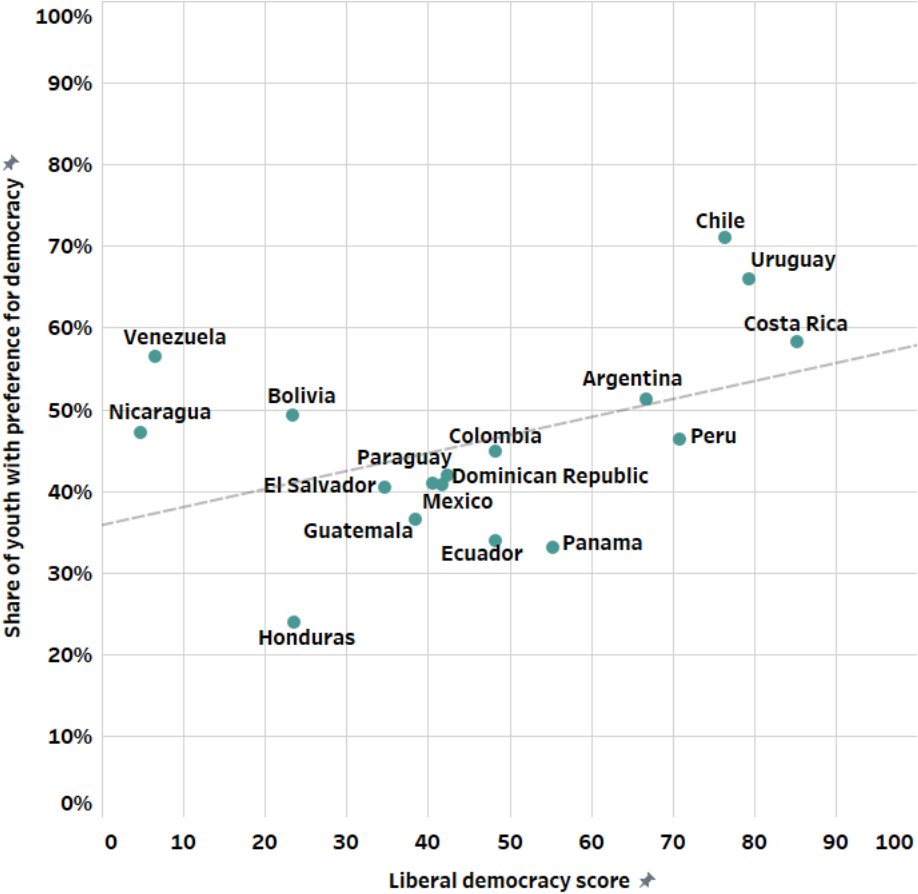


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

The support for democracy broadly follows the state of democracy in the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Figure 40 shows the comparison of the support for democracy expressed in the Latinobarómetro and the status of liberal democracy as assessed by V-Dem (2023)<sup>63</sup>. The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index measures the extent to which a country exhibits characteristics of liberal democracy. Scores are adjusted to range from 0 to 100 for better comparison, with higher scores indicating a higher level of adherence to liberal democratic principles. The countries with the highest support of democracy - Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica - also had the highest liberal democracy score in 2020. The liberal democracy score generally declines with lower shares of young people supporting democracy across countries. An exception are the countries with the lowest liberal democracy scores, Venezuela and Nicaragua, where the share of young people that views democracy as the preferable kind of government is on par with most other countries in the case of Nicaragua, and among the higher values of expressed support for democracy in the case of Venezuela.

<sup>63</sup> The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index measures the extent to which a country exhibits characteristics of liberal democracy. This index captures multiple dimensions of liberal democracy, including electoral processes, political pluralism, civil liberties, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. The Liberal Democracy Index score ranges from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating a higher level of adherence to liberal democratic principles. V-Dem Dataset: Coppedge (2023) V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset.

Figure 40. Comparison of the support of democracy among young people with the status of liberal democracy in 2020 across countries



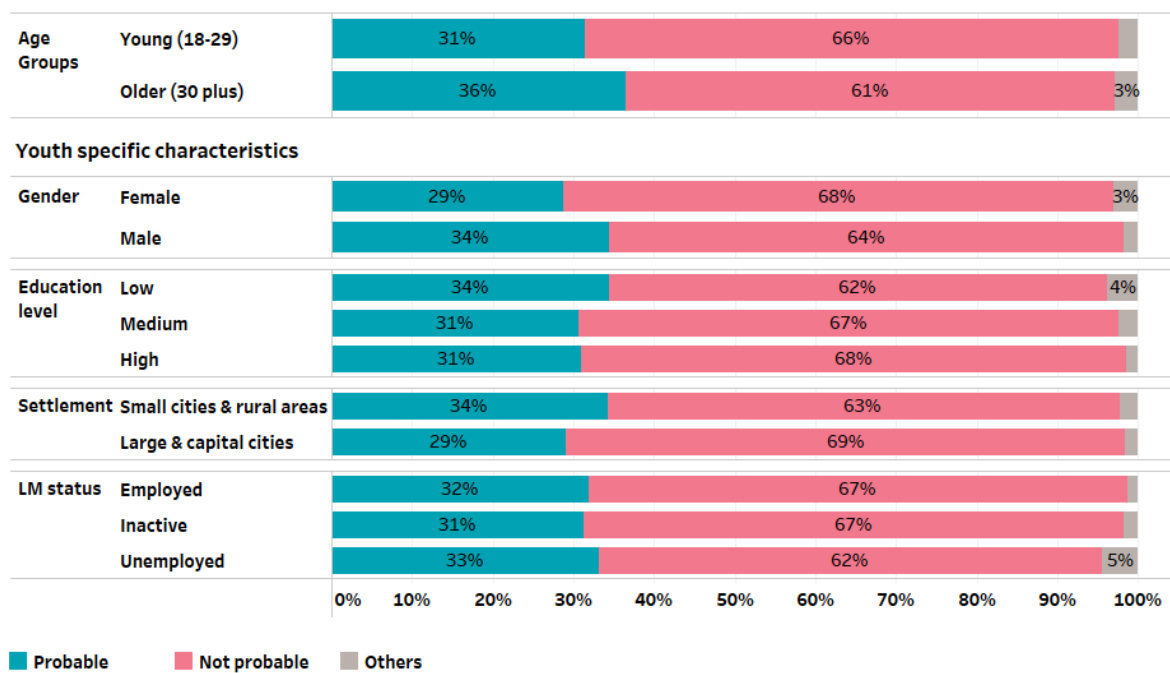
Source: Additional data source: V-Dem (2023) V-Dem democracy indices dataset.

### 6.3 Responsiveness of local government

Local government has emerged as a new space for youth political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the downward extension of democratic governance from the national to the local level remains a challenge for youth participation in political processes in order to ensure that their interests are taken into account (UNDP 2013). The Latinobarómetro includes a measure on the responsiveness of local government by asking about the likelihood that local authorities would listen to people when they report a problem in their neighbourhood. Looking at the responses, only 31 per cent of young people in Latin America and the Caribbean think it is likely that their local authority would respond if they report a problem; whereas two-thirds do think that it is not probable (Figure 41). Young people have less trust in local authorities than older adults aged 30 years and above. Among those, 36 per cent view the response of local authorities as likely and 61 per cent find it unlikely.

There is little difference within the youth population in their opinion about the responsiveness of local authorities in terms of education level and labour market status. Especially for the respondents' levels of education, this is a contrasting finding compared to findings for young people's general support of democracy and the view on the freedom of participation on the national level. While young people with low level of education were considerably less supportive of democracy and were less convinced that their political freedom of participation was guaranteed than young people with medium and high levels of education, they are slightly more positive about the responsiveness of local government (34 % compared to 31 % for both medium and high level of education). Considerable differences exist within the youth population across gender and the place of residence: young women (29 %) are more negative about the responsiveness of local authorities than young men (34 %) as are young people in large and capital cities (29 %), compared to those in small cities and rural areas (34 %).

Figure 41. Youth perception of the likelihood of local authorities to listen when reporting a problem in the neighbourhood (%)



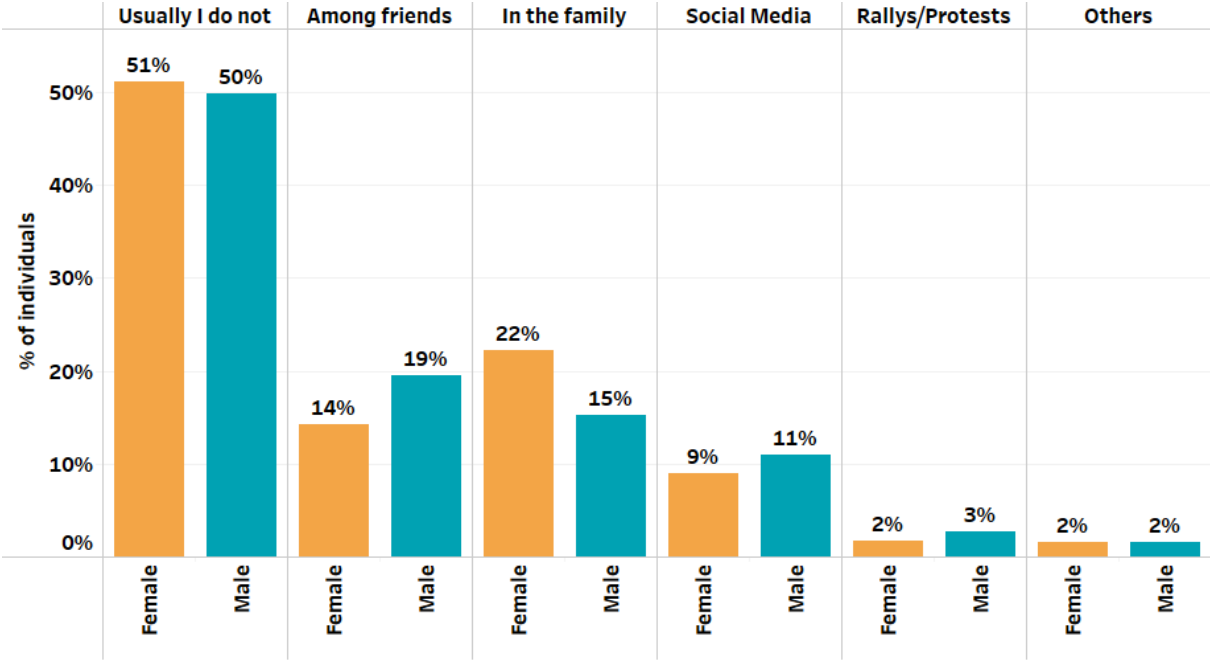
Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

## 6.4 Where young people express their opinions

The Latinobarómetro provides information about where young people express their opinions about problems in the country. Half of the population of young people report that they do not usually express their opinion. This number is similar for young women (51 %) and young men (50 %). Among the population aged 30 and over, the proportion is similar for women (50 %), but men aged 30 and over are more likely to express an opinion, with only 42 per cent saying they would not usually do so. Generally, the place where young people express their opinion is in the family (19 %), among friends (17 %), or on social media (10 %). Only a small share reports that they would usually express their opinion at rallies or protests (2 %).

There is a difference in the place to express their opinion between genders (Figure 42). Young women express their opinion most frequently in the family (22 %) before doing so among friends (14 %), whereas young men most frequently express their opinion among friends (19 %) and less in the family (15 %). Young men also show a slightly higher use of social media to express their opinion (men 11 % vs women 9 %) and by participating in rallies or protests (men 3 % vs women 2 %). The share of young people that expresses an opinion also increases with educational level (low 38 %, medium 48 %, and high 60 %) and is higher among those living in larger and capital cities (52 %) than in small cities and rural areas (45 %). Especially among friends, young people with low level of education tend not to discuss their opinion about problems in the country. Young people in large and capital cities are more likely to use social media to express their opinion than young people in small cities and rural areas.

Figure 42. Place where young people usually express their opinion about problems in the country (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration



## 7 Attitude towards the European Union

### Key messages

*The majority of young people in the LAC region have a favourable opinion about the EU and perceive the current relations of their country with the EU as good. They are slightly more positive than the adult population above age 30*

*•Across countries in the LAC region, a larger share of young people tends to express a positive opinion about the EU than give a positive view on the current status of bilateral relations. Especially young people with medium and high levels of education living in larger cities hold favourable opinion about the EU, but a more critical of the current relationship between their country and the EU.*

*•Many more young people in the LAC region consider foreign investment as beneficial for the country than as harmful. However, the share of young people that see foreign investment as positive is lower than the share among the rest of the population; this gap between young and old is largest among the highly educated.*

The European Union recognises the important strategic geopolitical partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>64</sup>. It is based on strong historical, cultural and economic ties and common interests. The two regions share the commitment to multilateralism in addressing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century related to human rights, democracy, sustainable development and multilateral cooperation. The partnership between the EU and LAC dates back to the San Jose dialogue of 1984 and has been marked by eight summits, including the Rio process in 1991 and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) since 2013. Regular ministerial meetings and high-level engagements, such as the EU-LAC Foreign Ministerial Meeting in 2020, demonstrate their commitment to strengthening bi-regional cooperation, including addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Collective leadership at the United Nations on issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss has contributed decisively to the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement.

The EU also engages at the sub-regional level with agreements such as the Central America Association Agreement and the new agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) for the Caribbean. The EU maintains relations with other regional organisations such as the Central America Integration System (SICA), the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Mercosur, the Pacific Alliance, and the Andean Community. There is also a strong representation of the EU at the national level. The EU has established diplomatic relations with all 33 countries in LAC and is represented by 26 EU delegations in the regions. Association, trade, or political and cooperation agreements have been negotiated with 27 out of the 33 countries, making LAC one of the regions with the densest network of formal ties with the EU.

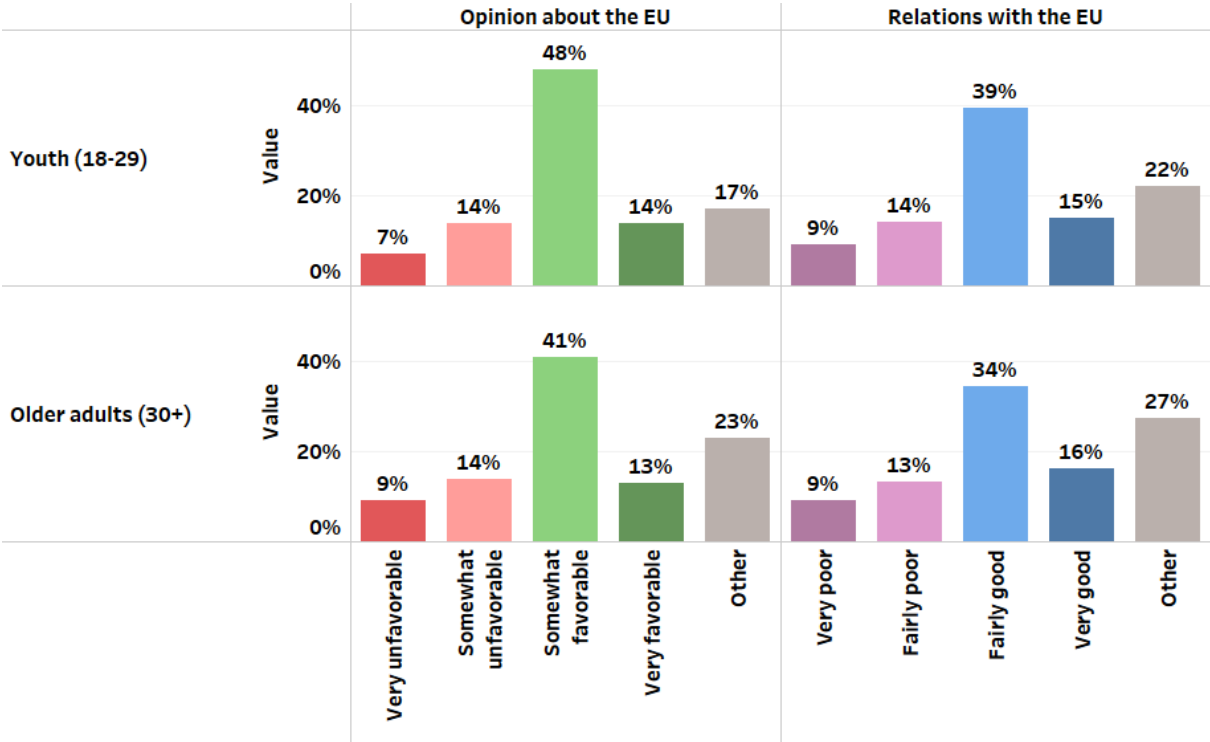
### 7.1 Opinion about the EU and view of current bilateral relations

The Latinobarómetro provides insights into whether this geopolitical partnership is reflected in the opinion about the EU and about the status of current relations across Latin American countries (Figure 43). The answer categories were formulated slightly differently. Respondents were asked about their opinion about the EU on a scale of very unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable, favourable and very favourable. Their view on relations with the EU was asked on a scale from very poor, fairly poor, fairly good and very good. Nevertheless, the four answer categories used in both questions offer a basis for comparison.

About six out of ten young people in the survey (62 %) express a somewhat favourable or very favourable opinion of the EU. Only 4 out of 10 young people (21 %) hold a somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable opinion while 17 % did not provide an opinion. When asked to rate the relationship of their country with the EU, the numbers are slightly lower. Just over half of young people in LAC (55 %) rate the relationship of their country with the EU as fairly good or very good (23 % rated it as fairly poor or very poor and 22 % other). The higher proportion of young people with a favourable opinion compared to their judgment of the current relationship with the EU could be cautiously interpreted as disposition towards intensifying relations as more young people think more positively about the EU than how they see current relations.

<sup>64</sup> EEAS (2022) A strategic geopolitical partnership for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Strategic communications, 20.01.2022, URL: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/latin-america-caribbean/strategic-geopolitical-partnership-challenges-21st-century\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/latin-america-caribbean/strategic-geopolitical-partnership-challenges-21st-century_en)

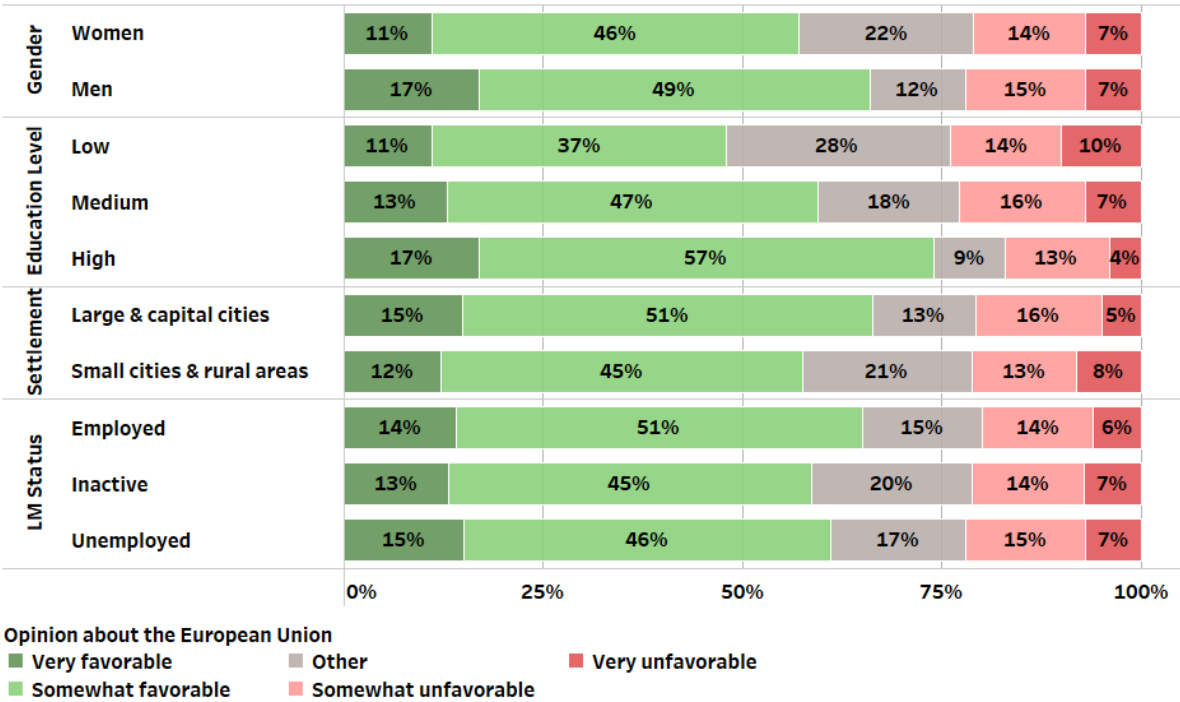
Figure 43. Opinion about the EU and rating of relations with the EU



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

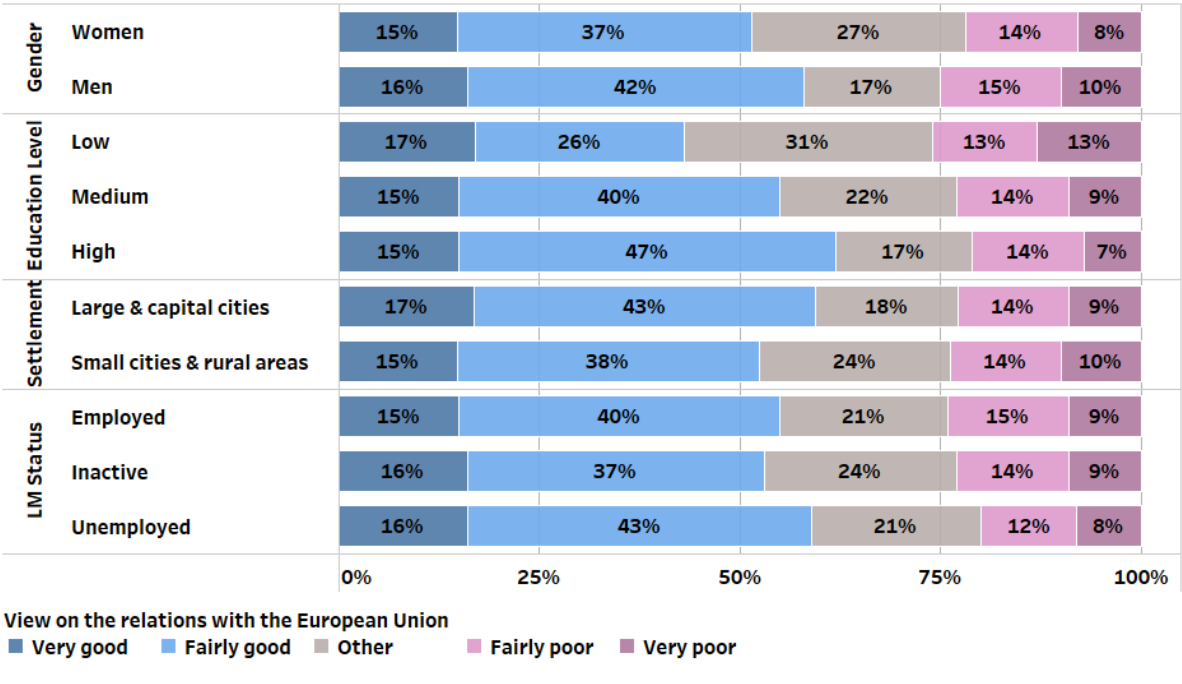
Young people in LAC are more positive about the EU than adults above the age of 30 (Figure 44). The proportion of adults with favourable opinion is only 54 per cent and only half of adults (51 %) rate the relationship of their country with the EU as fairly good or very good (55 % among young people). The better opinion of the EU among young people and their better rating of the relationship points towards a chance of continuity of a close partnership between the EU and LAC countries in the future.

Figure 44. Opinion about the EU of young people in LAC disaggregated by socio-demographic characteristics



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Figure 45. Views on the relations with the EU of young people in LAC disaggregated by socio-demographic characteristics



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

However, within the youth population, there are also differences in the opinion of the EU and the perception of EU-LAC relations depending on gender, level of education and place of residence of the respondents (Figure 44 and Figure 45).

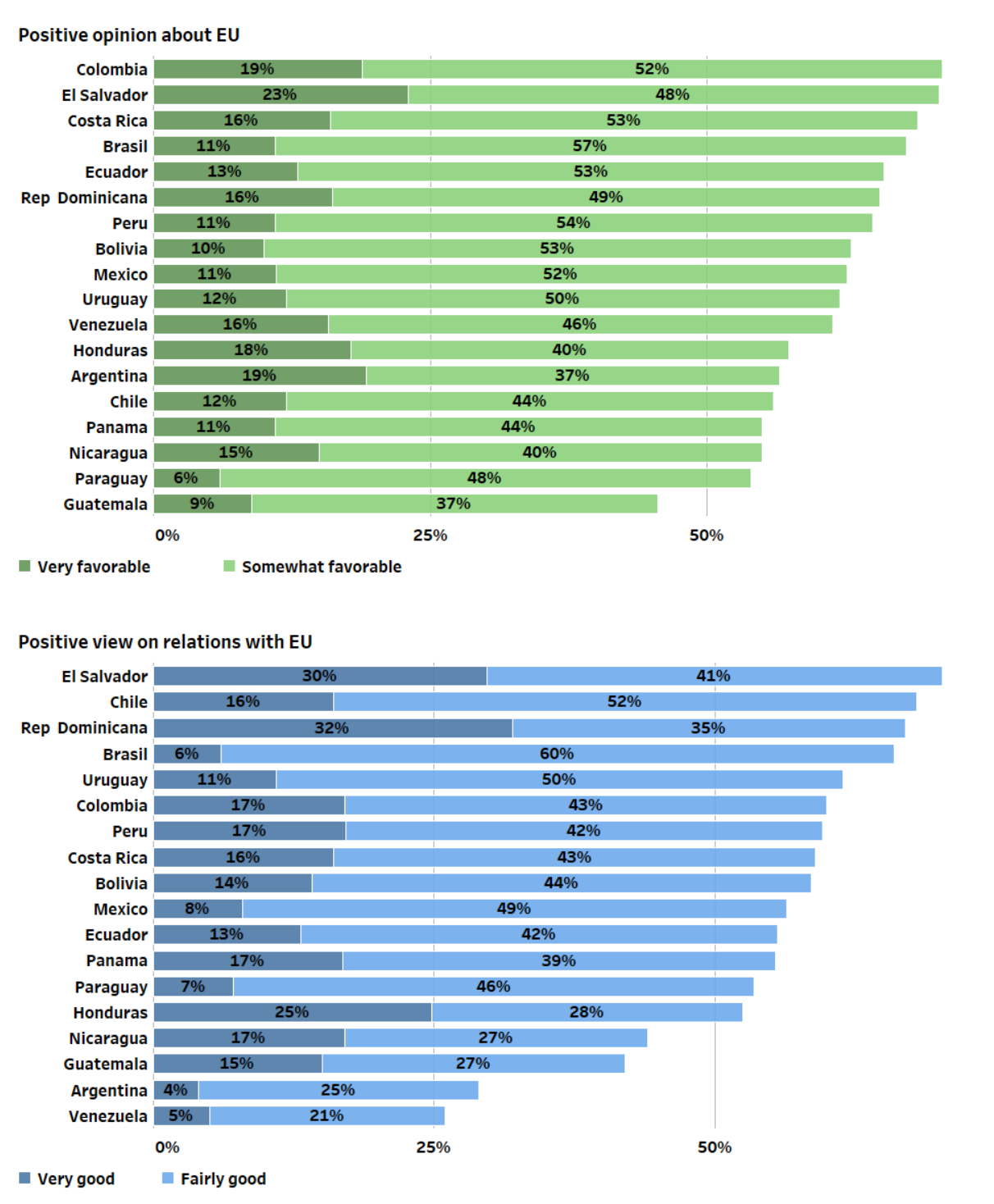
- Young men (66 %) tend to have more favourable views than young women (57 %) about the EU. Young men also give a better rating. 58 per cent of young men see the relations of their country with the EU as fairly good or very good while this view is shared by only 52 per cent of young women.
- Young people with higher education tend to have a more positive opinion about the EU. Three out of four (75 %) of those with completed or some tertiary education hold a favourable opinion. This proportion reduces with lower education attainment. About 60 per cent of young people with secondary education (7 to 12 years of education) and 48 per cent with primary education (up to 6 years of education) hold a favourable opinion about the EU. This gradient along levels of education is also evident for the rating of EU-LAC relations, with a positive rating among 62 per cent of respondents with tertiary education, 55 per cent in the group with secondary education, 43 per cent in the group with primary education. However, much of the difference across levels of education is explained not necessarily by unfavourable opinions or a poor rating of the relationship but by an increase in the number of people who did not know or decided not to answer the question.
- Young people in larger cities (66 %) are more likely to hold a positive opinion about the EU than young people in smaller cities and rural areas (58 %) and also give a better rating of relations (59 % vs 53 %). As with education, this does not translate into less favourable views, but is explained predominantly by a larger proportion of young people in small cities and rural areas that did not provide an answer or did not know.

How young people think about the EU also varies widely across countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia and El Salvador are the countries with the highest share of young people that hold a favourable opinion about the EU with more than 70 per cent of young people expressing a very favourable or somewhat favourable opinion (Figure 46). In nine countries this share is at least 60 per cent and in an additional six countries it is at least 50 per cent. There is only one country, Guatemala, where less than half of young people hold favourable opinion about the EU with 46 per cent.

Turning to the relations with the EU, El Salvador is the only country with more than 70 per cent of young people that view bilateral relations as very or fairly good (Figure 46). Generally, across the region, the share of young people that views current bilateral relations as good tends to be lower than the share of young people that

holds a favourable opinion about the EU. This difference stands out particularly in three countries. In Argentina, 56 per cent of young people express a favourable view of the EU, but only 29 per cent see good relations between Argentina and the EU. In Venezuela, 61 per cent of young people have a positive opinion, but only 26 per cent view relations as good. In Nicaragua, there is a considerable drop from 55 per cent with a favourable opinion particularly the EU to 44 per cent who give the relationship with the EU a positive rating.

Figure 46. Cross-country differences in positive opinion about the EU and positive views on the relations with the EU among young people in LAC (%)

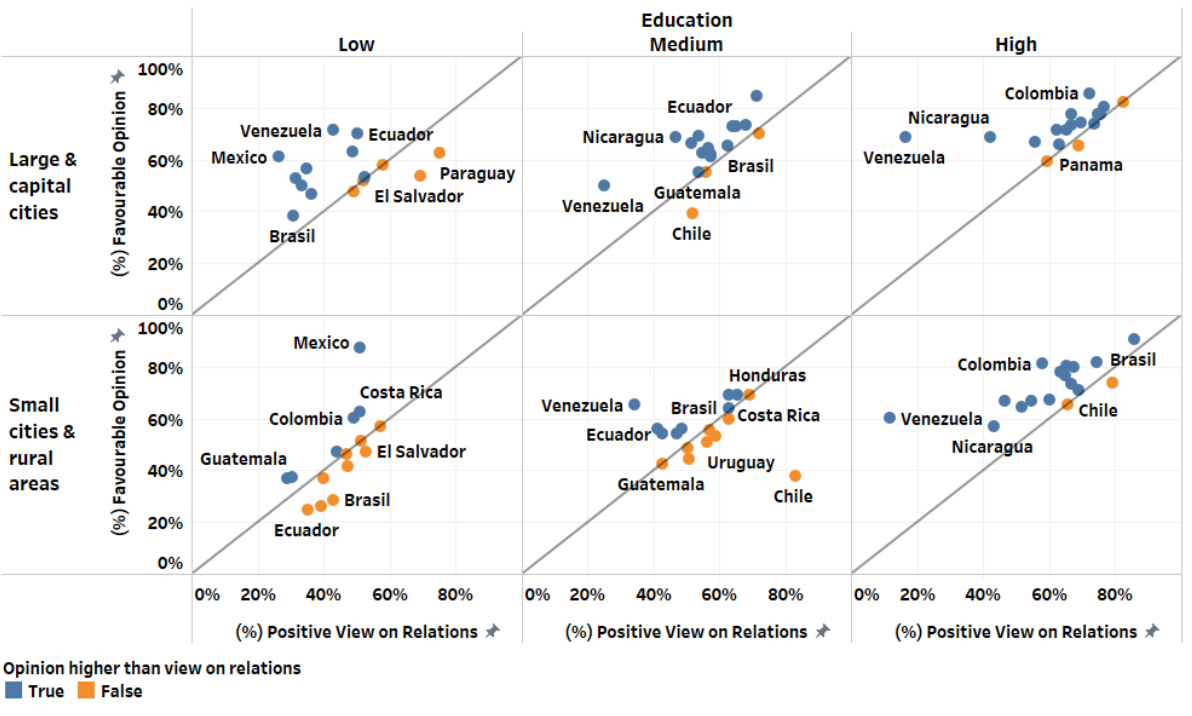


Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

Education and place of residence are linked to differences in young people’s opinions about the EU and their views of current bilateral relations across countries. Figure 47 shows the comparison of opinion about the EU

and view on relations by level of education and the type of settlement that respondents resided in at the time of the survey. Values close to the identity line, the 45-degree line in the plot, mark countries where opinions and views on relations are similar. The identity is a reference line to compare the relationship between variables opinion and view of relations. Points that fall exactly on the identity line indicate perfect one-to-one relationship, in other words, that in this country there is a match between the share of young people with a favourable opinion and a positive view on relations. Countries on the left of the line (blue circles) indicate a higher share of young people with a favourable opinion about the share that views current relations as good. It can be seen that in most countries opinions are more positive among young people than their view on relations and that this relationship is strongest among higher educated and young people in large cities. However, the opposite is found among young people in small cities and rural areas with low or medium level of education. They generally tend to be less positive about the EU, and the share of young people that views EU-LAC relations as good is higher than the share of people with a favourable opinion about the EU.

Figure 47. Comparison of the opinion about the EU and views on current relations across countries of LAC, by level of education and settlement type



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

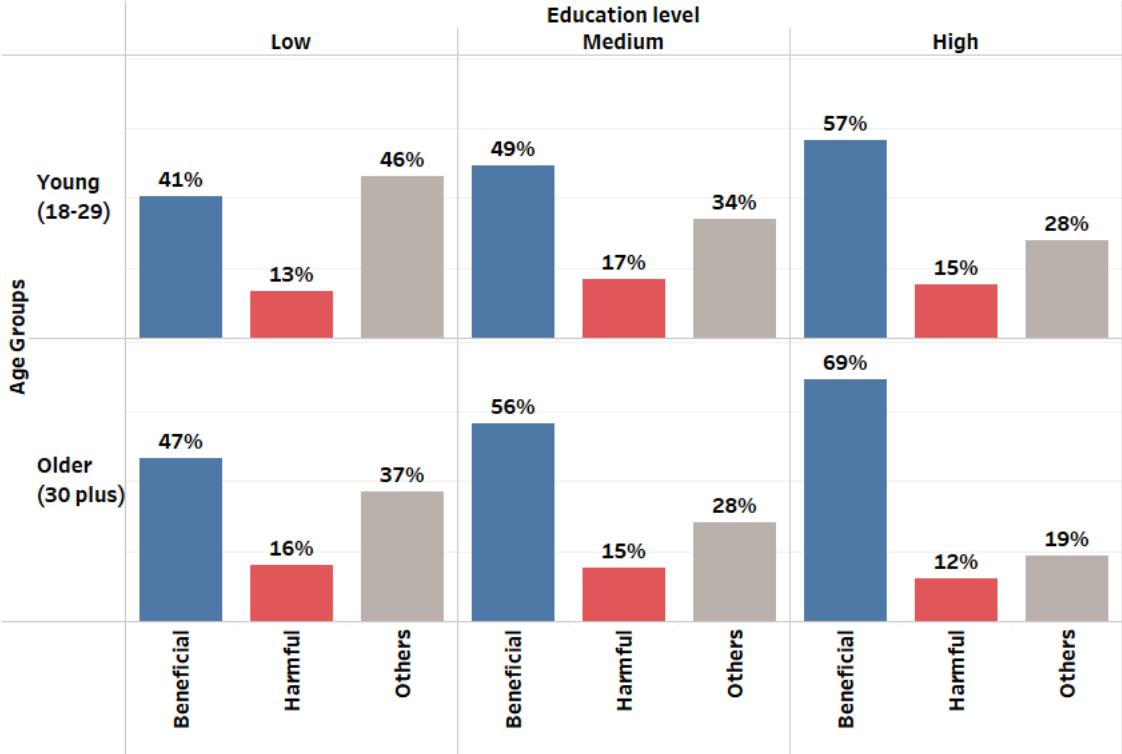
### 7.2 Opinions on foreign investment

The EU is the top investor in the LAC region and the third largest trading partner. Catalysing private sector investments is also one of the six principles of the EC’s Global Gateway<sup>65</sup> initiative and its Investment Agenda, which has a strong base for partnership in the region due to the already substantial EU investments and comparable policy agendas grounded in shared values. Young people in Latin America and the Caribbean express general openness to investments from outside the region. Asked about their attitude towards foreign investment, 50 per cent of young people see it as beneficial for their country while just 16 per cent consider it harmful (34 % did not provide an answer or stated that they do not know). However, young people are less open to foreign investment than the adult population above age 30 of which 5 per cent - six per cent more - see foreign investment as beneficial for the country, and only 15 per cent see it as harmful. The difference between young and older is particularly strong among those with a high level of education (Figure 48). More than two thirds (69 %) of the adult population above age 30 with a high level of education think that foreign investment is beneficial for the country and only 12 per cent think that it is harmful. The share of higher

<sup>65</sup> European Commission. The Global Gateway. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. Brussels 1.12.2021, JOIN (2021) 30 final. Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0030>

educated young people with a positive view on foreign investment is 12 percentage point lower compared to adults above age 30. Only 57 per cent of young people with a high level of education see foreign investment as beneficial. The value drops to 41 per cent among those with low level of education. However, this is not reflected in a higher share of those with low education that consider foreign investment as harmful. Almost half of the young people with a low level of education did not provide an answer or stated that they do not know.

Figure 48. Attitude towards foreign investment by age and level of education (%)



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

## 8 Conclusions

In this study, we have analysed young people's concerns and perspectives in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean on a set of issues that are a focus area for EU external action on youth in the region. Our study uses information from the most recent wave of Latinobarómetro survey. It provides new evidence to support bi-regional cooperation and EU policies targeting youth in the LAC region. It also contributes to the implementation of recommendations of the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU External Action (2022-2027) by increasing the availability and quality of data on youth bridging thematic and geographic gaps.

The study first analyses the salience of a range of issues for young people in the region. The findings show that the primary concerns of young people in the LAC region are related mostly to the economic situation of the country and the labour market. This is the case in a majority of countries and irrespective of age, gender, place of residence, education level or labour market status. The second most important group of concerns are of political nature. This presents a shift from previous years, where security related concerns were ranked the second. This could be a result of the latest survey having been collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was characterised by a temporary decline in criminal activity in the region. However, further research with post-pandemic waves of the Latinobarómetro is necessary to study this aspect.

The second part of the study presents young people's opinions on five thematic areas, which are either key areas of EU-LAC cooperation, or key for regional development (digital access and transformation, environmental protection and climate action, social cohesion and inequalities, democratic governance and political participation and attitude towards the EU). The results of the analysis reveal common trends for the whole region but also point to regional heterogeneity across countries with patterns specific to some countries or sub-regional geographic clusters of countries. There are also marked differences across sociodemographic groups such as gender, type of settlement, education level, and labour market status. Below are selected key findings

Youth access to digital means is crucial for the region's digital transformation. The findings of the report show that young people who are male, highly educated, employed or live in large or capital cities are more likely to report access to digital means. This has important implications on how the digital transformation will affect the young people currently transiting from education to labour market, as digital access is positively associated with the perception of a digital transformation and ability to manage new technologies at the workplace. The data shows that young men and those with high level of education are more likely to have a positive perception of digital transition and think they are capable of managing new technologies at the workplace.

While environmental problems were only listed by a small share of young people in the LAC region as their primary concern about issues facing their country, young people are concerned about environmental protection and express the willingness to step up climate action. Moreover, young men and those with a high level of education are more willing to demonstrate against climate change compared to young women or their less educated peers.

The majority of young people in the region are not satisfied with income distribution, access to justice, healthcare and education. A significant part of young people in all LAC countries are willing to demonstrate for a more egalitarian society, as well as for better access to education and healthcare services. The results indicate that young people see room for improvement when it comes to gender equality or discrimination of poor, indigenous and native people, homosexuals, black people or of African descent, and immigrants.

Less than half of the young people view democracy as preferable to other kinds of government and feel that their freedom for political participation is guaranteed in their country. Education level is a key factor also in this case; it is positively associated with the level of support for democracy. The extent to which countries exhibit characteristics of liberal democracy and provide political and civil rights tends to be reflected in stronger support for democracy and a more positive view on the guarantee of freedom of political participation. Half of the young people in the region usually express their opinion about problems in their country, yet they have little trust in the responsiveness of the government on the local level.

The majority of young people in the LAC region, especially young people with medium and high levels of education living in larger cities, have a favourable opinion about the EU and perceive the current relations of their country with the EU as good. The share of young people considering foreign investment as beneficial for the country is larger than those of the opposite opinion.

Overall, the results point to the strong role played by education in providing young people with a more secure and active position in society regardless of the issue in focus (whether it is about taking action to fight climate change or being part of the digital transformation). This points to the crucial role that improvements in access to education can play for the development of the countries and the region as a whole.

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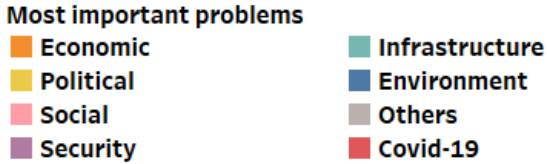
## Annexes

### Annex 1. Survey data description

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of observations</b>			<b>Youth in total adult respondents (%)</b>
	<b>Age 18-29</b>	<b>Age 30 plus</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Argentina	287	913	1,200	33 %
Bolivia	434	766	1,200	32 %
Brazil	261	894	1,155	26 %
Chile	265	935	1,200	20 %
Colombia	360	840	1,200	39 %
Costa Rica	302	698	1,000	43 %
Dominican Republic	324	676	1,000	38 %
Ecuador	386	814	1,200	38 %
El Salvador	324	676	1,000	40 %
Guatemala	364	636	1,000	43 %
Honduras	377	623	1,000	29 %
Mexico	305	895	1,200	42 %
Nicaragua	332	590	922	26 %
Panama	257	743	1,000	30 %
Paraguay	405	795	1,200	28 %
Peru	381	819	1,200	35 %
Uruguay	265	935	1,200	30 %
Venezuela	203	997	1,200	29 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,832</b>	<b>14,245</b>	<b>20,077</b>	<b>31 %</b>

Note: The share of youth in the total adult population is calculated using the individual weights.

**Annex 2. Map of youth concerns in 18 LAC countries**



Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration

**Annex 3. Most important problems by sociodemographic characteristics (%)**

Single Responses	Groups	Whole sample		Age group 18-29									
		Age group		Gender		Settlement type		Education			Labour market status		
		18-29	Over 30	Female	Male	Small	Large	Lower	Medium	High	Employed	Unemp	Inactive
Low salaries	Economic	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.3	1.6	3.0	2.1	1.0	2.1	1.3	2.0
Employment instability	Economic	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.9
Poverty	Economic	5.7	5.0	6.8	4.4	6.0	5.5	5.3	6.2	4.9	4.8	5.8	6.7
Income distribution	Economic	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.6	1.6	1.9	4.1	2.6	1.6	2.5
Unemployment	Economic	11.3	13.0	11.2	11.3	13.5	9.8	13.0	11.4	9.7	11.0	13.9	10.6
Inflation/ raise of prices	Economic	0.9	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.9
Transportation	Infrastructure	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		0.1		0.1		0.1
Energy problems	Infrastructure	0.1	0.2	0.1		0.1		0.2	0.1				0.2
Economy/ Economic /Financial	Economic	19.1	15.1	21.2	16.7	17.6	20.4	17.4	20.7	17.0	18.6	20.2	19.3
Poor basic services	Social	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4
Education problems	Social	4.2	3.6	4.2	4.3	3.6	5.1	2.2	3.7	6.8	4.8	3.8	3.7
Housing issues	Social	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1		0.1
Health issues	Social	4.2	7.2	4.5	3.8	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.7	4.9	3.2	3.7
Environmental issues	Environment	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2
Global warming	Environment	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2		0.3
Contamination	Environment	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2		0.2
Gas, lack of fuel	Infrastructure	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Shortage of	Economic	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.6	1.3	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.6
Opportunities for youth are	Social	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.3
Violations of human rights	Political	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Freedom of expression	Political	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
State violence, repression	Political	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Terrorism/ war	Security	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0		0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Delinquency / public security	Security	6.2	7.4	6.4	5.9	5.3	7.5	4.9	6.2	6.9	5.7	6.1	6.7
Violence / gangs	Security	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2	0.8	0.8	1.6	1.1
Domestic violence	Security	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1		0.2
Verbal violence	Security	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.0		0.0				0.0
Drug traffic	Security	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2
Drug consumption	Social	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2
Discrimination by race	Social	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2		0.2	0.2	0.2		0.2
Border problems	Security	0.0	0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0		

Conflicts with neighbouring	Security	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0				0.1	0.0		
Corruption	Political	9.8	8.4	7.6	12.3	8.5	11.4	6.0	8.9	14.5	10.3	9.6	9.3
Political problems	Political	9.6	9.7	7.7	11.7	8.5	10.1	8.2	9.5	10.7	10.9	9.2	8.1
Immigrants	Political	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
Foreign people	Political	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Caring for old people	Social		0.3										
No places for recreation	Infrastructure	0.0	0.0		0.0					0.0	0.0		
All expensive	Economic	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.5	1.2	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.9
A lot of dirt	Infrastructure	0.0	0.0	0.1			0.1	0.1	0.0		0.0		0.0
Infrastructure	Infrastructure	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.4
Covid-19	Covid-19	6.5	7.4	6.8	6.2	7.5	6.1	9.2	6.7	4.3	5.7	7.3	7.2
No answer	Others	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.5	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.1
Don't know	Others	4.7	3.6	5.1	4.2	5.5	3.3	11.0	4.2	1.3	3.8	4.6	5.7
Other	Others	3.9	4.5	3.3	4.6	3.6	3.5	3.0	3.8	4.7	4.3	3.9	3.4
None	Others	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.4	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.5
	<b>Economic</b>	44.9	42.3	48.5	40.5	46.7	43.1	43.5	47.0	41.1	43.5	46.7	45.4
	<b>Political</b>	20.1	18.6	15.8	24.7	17.7	22.0	14.8	18.8	26.0	21.7	19.5	18.0
	<b>Social</b>	9.9	12.4	10.0	9.6	9.3	11.2	7.1	9.1	13.3	11.5	7.7	8.6
	<b>Security</b>	7.6	8.6	7.9	7.3	6.7	8.9	6.0	7.7	8.3	6.9	7.9	8.3
	<b>Infrastructure</b>	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.4	1.3	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.8
	<b>Environment</b>	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.7
	<b>Others</b>	10.1	9.4	9.8	10.4	10.6	7.7	16.7	9.3	7.0	9.4	10.4	10.7
	<b>Covid-19</b>	6.5	7.4	6.8	6.2	7.5	6.1	9.2	6.7	4.3	5.7	7.3	7.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration.

Note: We distinguish three groups by level of education. Low level of education refers to those who have up to six years of schooling, medium to those from seven to 12 years of schooling, and high to those with technical or university education (some or completed). We distinguish between those residing in large and capital cities – with a population above 100 000, and those who live in small cities and rural areas with a smaller population.



#### Annex 4. Most important problems over time, youth (%)

Single Responses	Groups	2010	2011	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020
Low wages	Economic	0.5	0.2	4.9	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.8	2.0
Instability in employment	Economic	0.5	0.5	3.9	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.8
Poverty	Economic	7.7	6.8	4.8	2.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.7
Bad income distribution, social injustice	Economic	0.3	1.1	1.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.4
Unemployment / unemployment	Economic	19.8	15.7	16.9	16.7	14.6	14.4	14.4	11.3
Inflation / price increase	Economic	1.6	2.7	3.6	3.8	2.6	1.5	1.5	0.9
Transportation	Infrastructure	0.6	0.2	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.1
Energy problems	Infrastructure	1.1	0.3	0.1					0.1
The economy / economic / financial problems	Economy	12.2	12.7	5.9	9.2	11.0	12.8	12.8	19.1
Poor basic services	Social	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
Education problems	Social	4.3	6.2	6.0	5.0	4.7	5.4	5.4	4.2
Housing / room problems	Social	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Health problems	Social	2.3	2.2	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.1	2.1	4.2
Environmental problems	Environment	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.2
Global warming	Environment	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2
Pollution	Environment								0.2
Gas, fuel, scarcity, shortage.	Infrastructure	3.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Food, scarce	Economic								0.8
Lack of opportunities for youth	Social	0.3	0.2	1.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.5
Violation of human rights,	Political	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.2
Lack of freedom of expression	Political								0.1
State violence, state repression	Political								0.2
Terrorism / guerrilla	Security	1.6	0.5	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.1
Crime / public safety	Security	26.1	26.5	22.7	21.1	22.0	19.4	19.4	6.2
Violence / gangs	Security	3.8	4.9	2.5	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.6	1.0
Domestic violence	Security								0.1
Verbal violence	Security								0.0
Drug trafficking	Security	0.7	2.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.2
Consumption of drugs	Social	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.7	1.7	0.3
Racial discrimination	Social	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Boundary problems	Security	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0

Problems with neighbouring countries	Security	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1		0.1	0.1	0.0
Corruption	Political	3.9	5.1	6.4	6.6	7.2	9.7	9.7	9.8
Political situation / problems of politics	Political	0.1	2.9	3.0	6.1	5.4	7.7	7.7	9.6
Immigrants	Political								0.1
Foreigners	Political								0.1
Lack of concern for the elderly	Social								
Lack of parks, places of recreation	Infrastructure								0.0
All is very expensive	Economic								0.9
A lot of dirt, lack of cleanliness	Infrastructure								0.0
Infrastructures	Infrastructure								0.3
Shortages/ Lack of food/ Hoarding	Economic			1.4	2.5	3.6	2.2	2.2	
Coronavirus/ Covid-19	Covid-19								6.5
Other	Others	1.0	0.8	1.6	4.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	3.9
None	Others	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	4.9	3.0	3.0	0.6
No answer	Others	1.2	1.4	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.9
Don't k	Others	2.8	2.8	2.2	5.8	4.4	4.7	4.7	4.7
	<b>Economic</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>44.7</b>
	<b>Political</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>20.0</b>
	<b>Social</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>9.8</b>
	<b>Security</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>
	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>
	<b>Environment</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>
	<b>Others</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>10.1</b>
	<b>Covid-19</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Latinobarómetro, JRC elaboration, Waves 2010 – 2020

Note: the totals of might sum up to more/less than 100 due to rounding up in single categories.

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