

# The Human Rights Sector in Mexico

Evidence from Activists, the Public, and Elites



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July 2014

# **The Human Rights Sector in Mexico: Evidence from Activists, the Public, and Elites**

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## Suggested Citation:

Ron, James, Shannon Golden, Archana Pandya, Sarah Peek, Laura Sparling, and David Crow. 2014. "The Human Rights Sector in Mexico: Evidence from Activists, the Public, and Elites." *Working Paper #2, The Human Rights Organizations Project*, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Available at: <http://jamesron.com/Public-Polls.php>.

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## Executive Summary

Mexico's political system is opening up, and the government is rhetorically and legally committed to promoting human rights. The country has been plagued by an extremely violent drug war, however, which the state has fought with an aggressively militarized approach. Both criminals and state agents have engaged in widespread human rights abuses.

The Mexican human rights movement has grown dramatically in the past three decades, developing dynamic agendas, strategies, and networks. To learn more about its resources, capacities, reputation, and prospects, we gathered data in 2010-12 from local human rights organizations (LHROs), the general public, and Mexican elites. This work is one part of a broader study of [local human rights communities](http://www.jamesron.com/Current-Projects.php) and [public opinion](http://www.jamesron.com/Current-Projects.php) worldwide, the details of which are available at <http://www.jamesron.com/Current-Projects.php>.

We began by interviewing a representative sample of 30 local human rights organizations in Mexico City and 15 LHROs in San Cristóbal, for a total of 45 local human rights workers. According to these informants:

### **1. Spreading human rights ideas is hard in Mexico.**

The human rights concept itself is not inherently complicated, but it is often difficult for ordinary people to understand, and many factors block the spread of human rights discourse in Mexico. These include the public's association of human rights with "defending criminals," its view of human rights protections as government "favors," and a disconnect between human rights concepts and people's daily lives. Respondents were split on whether human rights ideas have taken root more firmly in urban or rural areas; generally, they agreed that more politicized communities are more cognizant of human rights. LHRO workers in San Cristóbal, consequently, were more likely than those in Mexico City to think that the concept of human rights was *not* difficult to understand.

### **2. Local funding for human rights work is rare and difficult.**

Mexican LHROs are heavily dependent on foreign funding, and most respondents predicted at least a partial collapse without this support. They did, however, have some confidence in the sector's resiliency, explaining that LHROs have already had to deal with decreasing funding. Local funding is possible, in theory, but LHRO workers see local money as very hard to access. Bureaucratic requirements and distrust prevent access to substantial government funds, while individual donations are limited because there is no strong "culture of giving." Mexicans who do donate money prefer to give to the Church or charitable causes.

### **3. The Catholic Church is better at reaching ordinary people.**

The Church is the Mexican organization most able to reach the grassroots; its rootedness in local communities, geographic spread, and offer of tangible benefits lends the Church powerful advantages over human rights groups. Some Mexican rights groups are content to merely coexist with the Church, while others describe strong collaborations, particularly with liberation theology churches. Gender, sexual orientation, and reproductive rights are major sticking points.



We then conducted a representative survey of 2,398 Mexican adults and 535 members of the Mexican elite, asking for their views on human rights issues and organizations. Like the Mexican public, these respondents tended to be Catholic, struggled to meet household expenses, and often had not gone beyond secondary school. Our surveys revealed that:

**1. Both elites and ordinary people often encounter the term “human rights.”**

Elites had particularly high exposure, but so did many of the general public. People with higher socioeconomic status, particularly those with more education, heard “human rights” more often.

**2. Respondents view “human rights” favorably.**

Both elites and the public tended to associate human rights with positive ideas, including “protecting people from torture and murder,” “promoting socioeconomic justice,” and “promoting free and fair elections.”

**3. Public contact with Mexican human rights groups, however, is low.**

Unlike Mexican elites, few members of the general public had met someone working for a Mexican rights group, participated in a human rights group activity, or donated money to a human rights organization. Those who had met human rights workers tended to be older, wealthier, more educated urban residents.

**4. The public believes Mexican LHROs are locally funded.**

Despite these low rates of donation, much of the public thought local rights groups are funded from Mexican sources. Mexican elites, however, believed that local rights groups are internationally funded.

**5. The public and elites trust human rights groups.**

Both the public and elites hold Mexican and international rights groups in moderate-to-high trust, with elites particularly trusting of both. Public respondents who highly trusted the Mexican political establishment, however, were much *less* trusting of LHROs. Individuals who trusted the army and who regularly heard human rights language were *more* likely to trust local rights groups.

## **Comparing the Data Sources**

In many cases, Mexican human rights workers accurately assessed the public’s attitudes towards them and their work. For example:

1. While frequently hearing the term “human rights” (pages 30-31) doesn’t necessarily mean people understand the concept, it does indicate some familiarity. This is consistent with some LHRO workers’ assessments, particularly in San Cristóbal, that human rights resonate locally (pages 13 and 23).
2. At the same time, other human rights workers talked about the difficulty in making human rights ideas understandable to the average person (page 15). Indeed, our surveys found that elites and

others with greater socioeconomic resources were more exposed to human rights language and organizations (page 31).

3. Human rights ideas are sometimes critiqued as being “western.” Mexican human rights workers, however, did not describe this as a barrier to their work and, moreover, the public did not see “human rights” as a foreign concept (pages 32-34).
4. Many LHRO respondents were skeptical of political groups and government agencies (pages 20-21 and 26), and some said human rights activists are seen as anti-government (page 17). Indeed, this is supported by our finding that people who highly trust politicians, Parliament, or the police are less likely to trust LHROs (page 37).
5. The public most commonly participated in the activities of religious organizations (page 38) and trusted the Church more than other institutions (pages 36-37). This is consistent with LHRO respondents’ positive assessment of the Church’s ability to mobilize support among grassroots communities (pages 24-25).

In other cases, however, the professional rights workers’ assessments differed from those of the general public:

1. LHRO respondents said the public associated human rights with “defending criminals” (pages 14 and 16-17), but less than 25% of persons surveyed in our public opinion poll reported a strong association with this idea (pages 32-34).
2. LHROs depend substantially on foreign funding (pages 17-19), but the general public believes they are locally funded (page 35).
3. LRHO workers say there is no “culture of giving” in Mexico (page 21), but this is not entirely accurate. True, our surveys show that only one percent of the public has ever donated to a local rights group (page 38). Yet many others give to religious organizations and parent associations. LHROs have not figured out how to gain access to this local revenue stream.
4. Nearly half of persons surveyed in the public opinion poll strongly associated human rights with “protecting the interests of people in big cities” (pages 32-24). Only some LHRO respondents grasped the extent of Mexico’s rural-urban cleavage on this issue, however (pages 15-16).
5. Some human rights workers strongly argued that wealthy, urban, conservative people had negative perceptions of human rights organizations in Mexico (pages 15-17). Our survey, however, did not find associations between income, urban residence, or party affiliation and trust in LHROs (page 37), and found that elites had more positive perceptions of human rights than the public (pages 32-33).

## Part I: The Context

### Human Rights, Drug Wars, and Organized Crime

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI) ruled an essentially one-party system. Political competition grew in the late 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the 2000 election of Vicente Fox, the first elected leader from the opposition since 1929. Opening of the Mexican political system was facilitated by significant electoral and legislative reforms.

Today, the Mexican government is rhetorically and legally committed to human rights. In 2000, the government signed cooperation agreements with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), and soon after, the foreign minister publicly agreed that “Mexico faced severe human rights challenges and explicitly rejected the sovereignty and non-intervention approach to human rights” (Anaya Muñoz 2009). In 2002, the UNOHCHR established a permanent Mexican office and in 2003, published a comprehensive human rights assessment with significant civil society input. From 2002 to 2005, the government launched a national human rights program and ratified a series of

international rights conventions. Mexico also grew increasingly active in the UN Commission on Human Rights, created a government human rights bureaucracy, and passed constitutional prohibitions on discrimination, along with a new law on freedom of information (Acosta 2010; Anaya Muñoz 2009).



Photo by Esparta Palma via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/esparta-palma/).

The Calderón administration (2006-2012) maintained these rhetorical commitments while taking strong, militarized action against organized crime. It promised to further open the country to international scrutiny and pledged to actively participate in international human rights mechanisms (Anaya Muñoz 2013b). Although

Calderón’s officials denied security force responsibility for specific violations, the government did not jettison its formal commitment to human rights principles (Anaya Muñoz 2013c; Stephens Waller 2010). Its words were unmatched by deeds, however, and Calderón’s administration ultimately failed to promote a robust human rights policy or to incorporate genuine, rights-based perspectives into its security policy (Anaya Muñoz 2012).

In December 2012, the PRI’s leader, Enrique Peña Nieto, returned the party to power and promised to shift the government’s priorities from militarization to development, crime prevention, and citizen participation. Critics charge the new government with making few real changes, however.

Working through the “Merida Initiative,” the United States (U.S.) says it will help Mexico “fight organized crime” while “furthering respect for human rights...”<sup>2</sup> The new government says it is ready to more fully embrace the Merida Initiative’s fourth pillar, “Build Strong and Resilient Communities,” by addressing violence’s root causes and making better use of social and policy evaluations.<sup>3</sup>

On their own, however, official commitments rarely lead to positive outcomes (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2007; Landman 2005), especially when officials face threats to public, regime, and/or state security (Anaya Muñoz 2012; Shor 2008).

## Contemporary Human Rights Concerns

Mexico’s murder rate declined during the 1990s and much of the 2000s, but began a steep climb in 2008, two years after Calderón declared open war on organized crime (Escalante Gonzalbo 2007, 2011). Official sources say nearly 95,000 people were murdered from 2008 to 2012, along with 11,000 during the first seven months of 2013.<sup>4</sup> From 2007 to 2010, the homicide rate increased by 260 percent (Human Rights Watch 2011).

The violence stems from battles between organized crime and the security forces, on the one hand, and between and within drug cartels, on the other. As a result, Mexico is facing its most severe human rights and security crisis since the Revolution (Anaya Muñoz 2013a).

Non-state actors are responsible for most executions, abductions, and torture, but Mexico’s security forces are also complicit. The military is increasingly involved in fighting crime and policing the population, with some 50,000 troops reportedly involved in policing (Amnesty International 2012; Human Rights Watch 2011). In 2007, the number of official National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) complaints against the Army and Navy were 367 and 31, respectively, but in 2011, those numbers soared to 1,695 and 495 (Anaya Muñoz 2013d). Mexican security force involvement appears to have exacerbated the country’s climate of fear.



Photo by John S. and James L. Knight Foundation via flickr.com.

Although there is no complete data, the evidence suggests widespread disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings (Amnesty International 2012; Human Rights Watch 2011). For example, some

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Merida Initiative.” Available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/merida/>, last accessed March 27, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Figures by the Executive Secretariat of the National System of Public Security. Available at: <http://www.secretariadodejecutivosnsp.gob.mx/>, last accessed on September 12, 2013.

25,000 people in Mexico disappeared from 2007 to 2012, often with state involvement. In some cases, the police or military may have collaborated with organized crime (Human Rights Watch 2013).

Unfortunately, suspected official abuses are seldom investigated or prosecuted, investigations are inadequate, legislation lags behind international standards, and judicial reforms are slow moving. The authorities often blame victims, whom they accuse of criminal activity (Human Rights Watch 2011, 2013). Furthermore, cases involving military personnel fall under military legal jurisdiction, a system that is neither independent nor impartial. Despite opening nearly 5,000 cases of abuse by soldiers against civilians from 2007 to 2012, the military justice system has found very few guilty of criminal offenses (Human Rights Watch 2013). The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Mexico's National Supreme Court say human rights cases involving civilians must be tried in civilian courts, but pressure to maintain military jurisdiction is strong. As a result, most cases are still directed away from the



*Photo by Peter Haden via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/peterhaden/).*

national justice system (Amnesty International 2012; Human Rights Watch 2013). Taken together, these factors contribute to a culture of impunity.

There are also a range of other human rights concerns in Mexico, including: harassment of, violent attacks against, and killings of human rights defenders (Amnesty International 2010b); discrimination against minorities, particularly irregular migrants and indigenous peoples (Amnesty International 2010a, 2011); and gender-based violence and lack of support for victims (Amnesty International 2008; Human Rights Watch 2006).

It remains to be seen if Peña Nieto's administration will begin serious investigations into past human rights violations and, importantly, if existing patterns of abuse will continue. There have been some promising government reactions—such as in the state of Nuevo León, where government officials have started to investigate reported disappearances in earnest, prompted by local victims' rights organizing (Human Rights Watch 2013).

## **Mexico's Non-Governmental Rights Sector**

The first Mexican rights groups appeared in the 1980s with help from pro-democracy intellectuals and Catholic liberation theology activists. Alleged electoral fraud (Anaya Muñoz 2010) and the 1985 Mexico City earthquake helped delegitimize the ruling PRI and attract foreign aid and interest to Mexican NGOs (Acosta 2010; Estévez López 2007). Shortly thereafter, the Salinas administration created the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH).



In 1984, researchers counted only four human rights groups in all of Mexico, but by 1991, that number had swelled to 60 (Fox and Hernández 1995). In 1993, researchers identified over 200 separate Mexican rights groups (Sikkink 1993) and by 1995, “of all the NGO sectors, the human rights network is one of the broadest based, including many church-oriented groups and spanning the political spectrum” (Fox and Hernández 1995:199). Many of these groups received international support and were linked to transnational activists and inter-governmental organizations in Latin America and elsewhere (Anaya Muñoz 2009).



Photo by greensefa via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/greensefa/).

In the mid-1990s, both local and international rights activists protested the government’s heavy-handed response to the Zapatista rebellion (Anaya Muñoz 2009). In 1997, Mexican activists piggy-backed on debates over the country’s European free trade agreement to successfully demand greater government transparency and civil society involvement in policymaking (Estévez López 2008; Somuano 2006).

In the new millennium, Mexican rights groups shifted their focus from democratization and elections to judicial reform, public security, minority rights, social policy, trade, and international economics (Estévez López 2008). And as the human rights consequences of the government’s war on organized crime became evident, rights groups began protesting its more dramatic manifestations, including the plight of Central American migrants, enforced disappearances, and military jurisdiction over suspected soldier wrong-doing.

Over the past several years, Mexican civil society actors have worked hard to monitor and track human rights abuses. They provide information to the local and international media, legally represent victims, expose security force misdeeds, and pressure the government to respond publicly to victims of drug violence and their families. In 2007, Mexican civil society played a key role in publicizing the fatal alleged gang-rape of an elderly indigenous woman by soldiers in Veracruz, pushing the CNDH to get involved and helping to bring the case before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. Mexican civil society has also pressured the CNDH to investigate and denounce the 2007 shooting deaths of a Mexican family at a military checkpoint in Sinaloa. In 2012, Mexican rights groups successfully pushed the Mexican Supreme Court to block military jurisdiction over soldiers accused of illegally shooting an indigenous man at a Guerrero checkpoint. Social movements, such as the *Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity*, moreover, have mounted intense media and advocacy campaigns, successfully pressuring the government to create a national registry and DNA databank for the forcibly disappeared.

These civil society efforts have resulted in few official policy changes, however, and even fewer prosecutions or convictions of wrongdoers. Security force abuses still go unpunished, and a veil of impunity shields the worst violators. To date, Mexican rights groups and their civil society allies have not succeeded in generating a sufficiently powerful wave of outrage to force the government’s hand and hold official rights violators to account.

## **Part II:**

### **Local Human Rights Organizations in Mexico City and San Cristóbal**

Part II draws on interviews with representatives of local human rights organizations (LHROs), reporting both their personal experiences and their informed opinions. We present respondents' perceptions of the resonance of human rights ideas in Mexico, resources available to support LHROs' work, and relationships between LHROs and other types of organizations.

#### **Methodological Overview**

We conducted 45 in-depth interviews in 2010 and 2012 with a stratified random sample of LHROs in Mexico City and San Cristóbal de las Casas, capital of Chiapas State. We chose Mexico City because it is the administrative, political, cultural, and economic center of the country, and we wanted to compare this data to our research in other urban centers worldwide. We chose San Cristóbal because it was likely to have a strong human rights movement, as a result of its centrality to the leftist Zapatista social movement. San Cristóbal, in other words, is a "most likely" case for the development of a strong local human rights movement.

To include a LHRO in our sampling frame, it needed to be a registered civil association, not be part of an international organization, and use "rights" in describing its mission or major activities. To draw up a list of candidate organizations, we conducted web searches in multiple languages, followed links on organizations' webpages, scoured online databases, examined network membership lists, and conducted key informant interviews. We verified candidate organizations met our inclusion criteria, winding up with a list of 52 in Mexico City, and 25 in San Cristóbal. To the best of our knowledge, our sampling frames included all LHROs active in these areas in 2010.

We stratified these organizations with the help of *Issue-Crawler*, a web-based hyperlink analysis program, dividing them into three groups: those with websites that were linked to one another in cyberspace ("central network actors"); those with websites that were NOT linked to one another ("peripheral network actors"); and those without a web presence. We sampled randomly within each of these strata. We contacted 38 groups in Mexico City to generate 30 interviews (79% response rate) and 18 groups in San Cristóbal for 15 interviews (83% response rate).

We contacted organizations by phone and/or email, and met with whomever the LHRO chose to send. Interviews were in Spanish and English, and they took an average of 67 minutes in San Cristóbal and 73 minutes in Mexico City. The survey instrument included both open-ended and fixed-choice questions. We conducted the San Cristóbal interviews and 14 of the Mexico City interviews from May to August 2010, and we did the remaining 16 Mexico City interviews in February-March 2012.

For additional details, see Appendices A and B.

## Characteristics of LHROs and Respondents

The 45 Mexican human rights workers we interviewed were, on average, older, more highly educated, and less religious than the Mexican public. As indicated in Table 2.1,<sup>5</sup> about 60% of the LHRO respondents were female, and most were in their late 30s or 40s. All of the respondents in Mexico City had attended university, for an average of five years, and all but two had attended university in a major city. Most (80%) of the San Cristóbal respondents had also attended university in a major city, also for an average of five years. Just 20% of San Cristóbal respondents' parents (either mother or father) had attended university, while the parents of Mexico City respondents were more likely to have a university education (52% of fathers and 35% of mothers). Sixty percent of San Cristóbal respondents identified as Christian, compared to 38% of those from Mexico City. In contrast, a third of respondents from San Cristóbal reported no religious identity and nearly double that reported the same in Mexico City (59%), both of these much higher percentages than the non-religious in the general population (8%). Most of those who claimed a religious identity also reported being practicing members of their faith.

Table 2.1  
Characteristics of the LHRO Respondents

	Mexico City (N=30)	San Cristóbal (N=15)
<b>Sex</b>	62% female	60% female
<b>Age (mean)</b>	42 years	46 years
<b>Education</b>		
Completed secondary	100%	93%
Attended university	100%	80%
<b>Urban experience<sup>6</sup></b>		
Attended secondary in major city	97%	64%
Attended university in major city	93%	100%
<b>Religious identity</b>		
Christian	38%	60%
No religion	59%	33%
<b>Religious practice</b>		
Practicing	35%	57%
Not practicing	65%	43%
<b>Position at LHRO</b>		
Years at current LHRO (median)	8 years	10 years
Senior staff position	89%	62%
Mid-level staff position	11%	39%
Work-related international trips in past five years (median)	5 trips	3 trips

Respondents had worked at their current organization for eight years, on average, in Mexico City and 10 years in San Cristóbal. Our Mexico City sample included more senior-level staff (89% compared to 62% in San Cristóbal). Their work often required travel, with respondents in Mexico City and San Cristóbal taking five and three international trips, on average, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> All figures, here and in the remainder of the document, report valid percentages unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> This excludes those who did not attend secondary or university; the figures report the urban experiences of those who did attend secondary and/or university

Over 70% of LHROs in Mexico City were nationally oriented, while those in San Cristóbal were more likely to focus on the provincial or state (40%) or village (27%) levels, as seen in Table 2.2. There was substantial diversity in the LHROs' primary activities, though many focused on human rights education (32% in Mexico City, 47% in San Cristóbal).

Table 2.2  
Characteristics of the LHROs

	Mexico City (N=30)	San Cristóbal (N=15)
<b>Scope</b>		
Village	11%	27%
Provincial/State	7%	40%
National	71%	27%
Global	11%	7%
<b>Primary activity</b>		
Human rights education	32%	47%
Formal legal intervention	25%	13%
Public advocacy	11%	0%
Other	32%	40%
<b>Founded</b>		
Year (median)	1993	1996
Before 2001	70%	60%
From 2001-2010	30%	40%
<b>Staff</b>		
Range	3-12,500 staff <sup>7</sup>	3-1,500 staff
Number (median)	15 staff	10 staff
Paid staff (mean)	63%	49%
<b>Funding</b>		
Receive government funding	50%	27%
Receive foreign funding	77%	67%
<b>Visits from foreign organizations last year (median)</b>	2 visits	3 visits

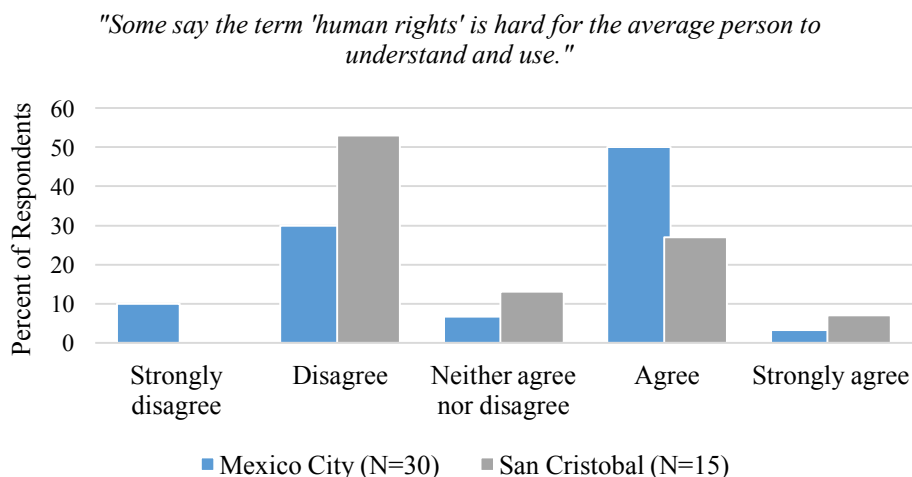
These groups were founded, on average, in the mid-1990s, so most had been in operation for over ten years when we met with them. They had relatively small numbers of staff, on average, though there was considerable variation; those in Mexico City were larger (a median of 15 staff, compared to 10 in San Cristóbal) and had a higher average of paid workers (63% compared to 49%). Groups were more likely to receive international funding than Mexican government funding, and many received several annual visits from international groups.

<sup>7</sup> These figures include both volunteers and paid staff. Groups with very large numbers of reported staff claimed large numbers of volunteers.

## Resonance of Human Rights Ideas

To measure the local traction of human rights discourse, we asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement, “*Some say the term ‘human rights’ is hard for the average person to understand and use.*” As Figure 2.1 indicates, respondents in the two cities gave very different responses. Over half of those in San Cristóbal (8/15, 53%) disagreed, whereas the same percentage (16/30) in Mexico City agreed. Clearly, LHROs in Mexico City and San Cristóbal face different communication challenges.

Figure 2.1  
LHRO Workers in Mexico City Were More Likely to Think Human Rights Language is Difficult to Understand



Some said the concept of human rights was easy to understand because it is “reflective of [people’s]

needs and reality,”<sup>8</sup> is a “part of culture,”<sup>9</sup> and reflects Mexicans’ growing tendency to be “involved in social and political issues.”<sup>10</sup> Many respondents, moreover, were optimistic that public understanding and use of human rights ideas is improving,<sup>11</sup> particularly as a growing number of organizations use a rights-based framework,<sup>12</sup> and the legislature has recently passed a number of laws protecting specific rights.<sup>13</sup>

A few respondents thought better educated people understood human rights more clearly,<sup>14</sup> but others disagreed,<sup>15</sup> saying that “in some ways, [human rights] is already in their sense of justice...and living well.”<sup>16</sup> One respondent explained that people may not understand human rights “from an academic point of view,” but that “many people know what human rights are because they are confronted with violations or demands from the grassroots.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> SP-03-2010

<sup>9</sup> SP-11-2010

<sup>10</sup> SP-12-2010

<sup>11</sup> SP-05-2010, SP-06-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010, LS-08-2010, AP-03-2012, AP-08-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>12</sup> SP-08-2010, SP-15-2010, AP-17-2012

<sup>13</sup> SP-06-2010, SP-010-2010

<sup>14</sup> SP-10-2010

<sup>15</sup> SP-09-2010, SP-04-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-08-2010, AP-17-2012

<sup>16</sup> SP-09-2010

<sup>17</sup> SP-04-2010



## *Barriers to Resonance*

Yet even those respondents who did not think human rights language was difficult to understand understood that there were barriers, with special emphasis on three challenges: 1) the human rights movement is associated with “defending criminals”; 2) human rights are seen as favors dispensed by the government; and 3) human rights are seen as a technical or highly legalistic concept.

The association between human rights and the defense of suspected criminals is a particularly severe challenge, according to respondents,<sup>18</sup> because many people think “that human rights defenders help to release murderers and rapists and that it is because of their work that these people are released.”<sup>19</sup> Responsibility for this perception rests with the government, right-wing groups, and, particularly, the corporate media, respondents said.<sup>20</sup> These groups deliberately present a narrative of human rights as primarily concerned with defending the rights of criminals, which then causes “many people [to] see it as a term that is against their morals and values.”<sup>21</sup> The people most likely to believe this claim, respondents said, were urban, upper-class, conservative populations. Thus, one reason San Cristóbal respondents thought human rights ideas were more resonant in rural areas was that people living in the countryside were more insulated from government and media propaganda.



*Photo by Joe Driscoll via flickr.com.*

The second major obstacle to the diffusion of human rights discourse, respondents said, was people often viewed human rights as government favors,<sup>22</sup> “like a gift.”<sup>23</sup> As one explained, “Mexicans aren’t accustomed to having rights... It is like the government is doing me a favor to walk freely—it isn’t seen as ‘rights.’” The general population, moreover, “gets offended if you demand something from the government.”<sup>24</sup> After decades of political clientelism under the PRI, respondents said, citizens have low expectations of their government.<sup>25</sup> Respondents said this was a particular problem for positive rights, or the

“right to” things (rather than “the right to freedom from”), including most economic and social rights. Citizens don’t see adequate housing as a right, for example, but rather as a favor bestowed upon cooperative citizens by the government. Those who oppose the authorities, by contrast, should not expect similar treatment.<sup>26</sup> Mexican citizens, in other words, see human rights “in a very reduced form,” not as an “obligation of the state” that “should be expected from all levels of government.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>18</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-02-2010, SP-15-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-01-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>19</sup> LS-07-2010

<sup>20</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-12-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-14-2010

<sup>21</sup> SP-09-2010

<sup>22</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-05-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-06-2012

<sup>23</sup> SP-08-2010

<sup>24</sup> LS-05-2010

<sup>25</sup> SP-08-2010, LS-05-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-09-2012

<sup>26</sup> LS-01-2010

<sup>27</sup> SP-04-2010

A third challenge, respondents said, is that human rights are often not readily seen as relevant to the average person's lived experiences.<sup>28</sup> Some said human rights are seen as "technical terms...related to courts and the law."<sup>29</sup> Others said people have a general awareness of human rights, but do not have specific knowledge about what that means in concrete, immediately relevant terms.<sup>30</sup> Many people associate human rights with the legal system, which has a "problem of access" and which many in Mexico see as "unachievable."<sup>31</sup> Justice in the formal system, respondents said, remains the purview of an elite few. As a result, ordinary people see human rights as "a bourgeois word...that isn't a reality that we live."<sup>32</sup>

Respondents in San Cristóbal also described a more literal challenge with translation, saying that "human rights" has no clear equivalent in the local indigenous language.<sup>33</sup> As a result, human rights "is often confused for the social actors that demand or promote human rights," with people thinking that rights groups themselves *are* "human rights."<sup>34</sup> This also makes it difficult for some to distinguish between "a crime between individuals and...a human rights violation."<sup>35</sup>

Finally, respondents said it was particularly difficult to speak of sexual, reproductive, and gender-based rights, including LGBT rights and the right to abort. Advocating on these issues as "rights," respondents said, goes against the public's deeply-held beliefs.<sup>36</sup>

### *Rural Pockets of Resonance?*

Respondents in both Mexico City and San Cristobal said that in "politicized" communities with histories of human rights struggle, such as Chiapas, the human rights discourse has taken deeper root.<sup>37</sup>

Views were split on awareness of rights in the cities. On the one hand, urban residents often have more access to information, higher education, and less poverty; this, some Mexico City respondents said, leads to more awareness of rights.<sup>38</sup> Others



Photo by PWRDF via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pwrdf/).

<sup>28</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-15-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-04-2010, LS-15-2010, AP-11-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-14-2012

<sup>29</sup> SP-09-2010 (source of direct quote), LS-10-2010

<sup>30</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, AP-06-2012, AP-07-2012

<sup>31</sup> SP-04-2010

<sup>32</sup> SP-01-2010

<sup>33</sup> LS-02-2010, LS-05-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-12-2010, AP-06-2012

<sup>34</sup> LS-14-2010

<sup>35</sup> LS-03-2010

<sup>36</sup> SP-06-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-15-2010

<sup>37</sup> LS-11-2010, LS-12-2010, AP-04-2012

<sup>38</sup> SP-06-2010, SP-10-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-03-2012, AP-05-2012, AP-06-2012, AP-09-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-15-2012, AP-17-2012

cautioned, however, that the deep influence of government and media conglomerates in urban areas, which spread misinformation about human rights, can have the opposite effect.<sup>39</sup>

San Cristóbal respondents said people in Chiapas understand human rights as, simply, living with dignity, and many respondents said human rights were more resonant in rural areas.<sup>40</sup> This because “human rights discourse is more understood...among people whose rights are violated,”<sup>41</sup> in communities with high poverty and proximity to violence. In Chiapas, rural and indigenous populations have a history of rebelling against violations of their rights, and thus “have a culture of human rights defense.”<sup>42</sup>

Respondents also noted that the Catholic Church in Mexico has long-standing connections to rural populations and has often been an educator and defender of rights.<sup>43</sup> In Chiapas, the human rights movement was begun and led by the radical Church, particularly those preaching liberation theology and indigenous rights. Although the Church has lately become less active in rights work, its historical connection to human rights struggles has contributed to higher rural awareness of human rights.

### *Increasing Politicization*

Some respondents, particularly in Mexico City, said that recent political events are “politicizing” people and causing human rights to become increasingly resonant.<sup>44</sup> The violence of the drug war, especially, has pushed some people towards the human rights movement. For example, the *Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad*, a grassroots organization, was founded by victims of the drug violence. Groups of this type, respondents said, have mobilized new sectors and exposed people for the first time to the language of rights. Others have gained exposure to human rights ideas through protests against the new security laws, some of which could be used to limit civil rights.<sup>45</sup>

Legal developments in the Federal District, including passage of a same-sex marriage law<sup>46</sup> and legal protections of the right to choose abortion have also contributed to higher public awareness. Some respondents said that unlawful police detentions were decreasing, and that the system’s respect for due legal process was increasing.<sup>47</sup> These developments, some said, suggest the growing resonance of human rights ideas in influencing policy change.

### *Perceptions of Human Rights Workers*

Many respondents said that the Mexican public commonly views them in problematic ways: “defenders of criminals,” “rabble rousers” and “troublemakers.” The more human rights workers are associated with defending criminals, the more they are portrayed as extreme and at odds with the interests of

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<sup>39</sup> SP-07-2010

<sup>40</sup> LS-04-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-08-2010, LS-09-2010, LS-10-2010, LS-14-2010

<sup>41</sup> LS-03-2010

<sup>42</sup> LS-08-2010

<sup>43</sup> LS-01-2010, LS-09-2010

<sup>44</sup> SP-05-2010, AP-05-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>45</sup> SP-05-2010

<sup>46</sup> SP-06-2010

<sup>47</sup> SP-08-2010

Mexican society.<sup>48</sup> They are often viewed as radically anti-government, take-to-the-streets types who stir up trouble, disturb peoples' lives, and even incite violence.<sup>49</sup> In San Cristóbal, several respondents said members of the public view them as criminals.<sup>50</sup> Much of the blame for this, respondents said, rests with misinformation spread by the government and national media.

Other members of the public see human rights workers in a more positive light: human rights “defenders,”<sup>51</sup> “promoters,”<sup>52</sup> or “social fighters,”<sup>53</sup> particularly if their activities focus on education or “do-gooder” work. Respondents in San Cristóbal worked particularly hard to distance themselves from negative perceptions, and many were uncomfortable even describing themselves as “activists.”<sup>54</sup> Those who see human rights workers favorably, respondents explained, see them as people who fight for the social good, promoting and defending the interests of all people.<sup>55</sup> Respondents added that socio-economic status mattered in determining views of human rights workers: conservative, wealthy, and urban people were more likely to have negative perceptions, while those from poorer rural communities are more likely to be supportive.<sup>56</sup>

## Resourcing the Mexican Human Rights Sector

We asked respondents how their organizations were funded. Figure 2.2 illustrates that a comfortable majority receive foreign funds—77% in Mexico City and 67% in San Cristóbal—suggesting that the Mexican human rights sector relies heavily on overseas aid. Half (50%) of sampled groups in Mexico City received government funds, compared to only 27% in San Cristóbal, suggesting that LHROs in outlying areas may be less reliant on government aid.

Figure 2.2  
LHROs in Mexico City More Likely to Receive  
Both Government and Foreign Funding



<sup>48</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-03-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-06-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-11-2010, SP-13-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-08-2010, LS-11-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-03-2012, AP-05-2012, AP-07-2012, AP-08-2012, AP-10-2012

<sup>49</sup> SP-02-2010, SP-03-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-12-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-02-2010, LS-05-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-10-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-12-2010, AP-07-2012, AP-11-2012

<sup>50</sup> LS-01-2010, LS-02-2010, LS-04-2010

<sup>51</sup> SP-15-2010, LS-08-2010, LS-13-2010

<sup>52</sup> LS-12-2010, LS-13-2010

<sup>53</sup> SP-11-2010

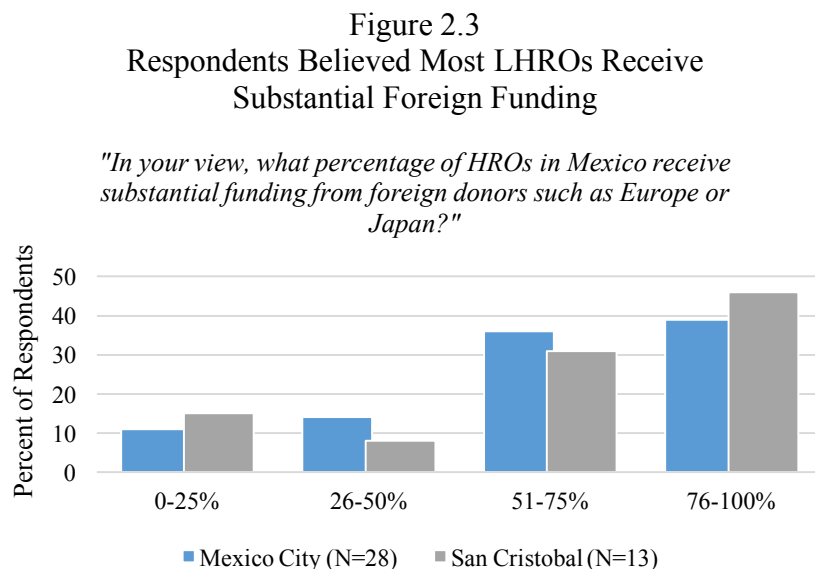
<sup>54</sup> LS-06-2010, LS-12-2010, LS-13-2010, LS-14-2010, AP-17-2012

<sup>55</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-02-2010, SP-03-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-11-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-03-2012, AP-10-2012, AP-15-2012

<sup>56</sup> LS-03-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-08-2010, AP-04-2012

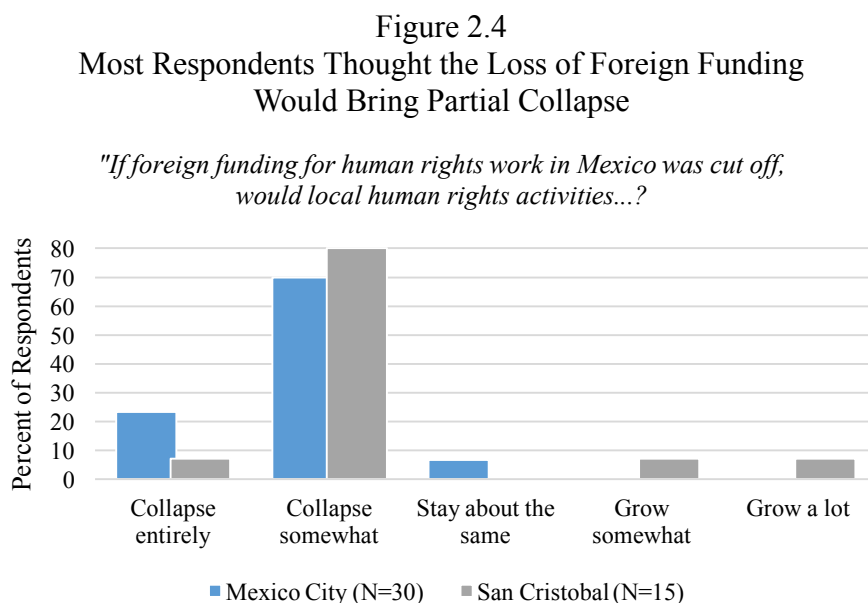
## Dependence on Declining Foreign Funding

As informed experts on the Mexican human rights sector as a whole, we asked respondents to estimate how reliant LHROs are on foreign funds, and as Figure 2.3 suggests, most thought that 50% or more received “substantial” overseas aid.



We then asked respondents to evaluate what would happen if foreign funding ended, and Figure 2.4 shows respondents were more likely to be pessimistic in Mexico City, where nearly a quarter of respondents predicted local human rights work would “collapse entirely.” Overall, most thought human rights work would “decline somewhat,” the next-to-most pessimistic category in our set of response options.

Some respondents explained that foreign funds already have been declining,<sup>57</sup> as more donors view Mexico as “developed” and “democratic.” Mexico joined the OECD in 1994,<sup>58</sup> and in 2000, elected an opposition leader to the presidency,<sup>59</sup> signaling “that Mexico had transitioned to democracy.”<sup>60</sup> International donors’ priorities are shifting, respondents said, and are focused more on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.<sup>61</sup>



<sup>57</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-02-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-12-2010, LS-04-2010, AP-06-2012, AP-14-2012

<sup>58</sup> SP-02-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-12-2010

<sup>59</sup> SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010

<sup>60</sup> SP-09-2010

<sup>61</sup> SP-07-2010, SP-12-2010, AP-04-2012



This decline has not pushed Mexican NGOs to develop their capacity to raise local funds, however,<sup>62</sup> and many feared the loss of remaining external funds would trigger at least a partial sectoral collapse.<sup>63</sup> For some, loss of foreign funding meant losing their group's "professionalization,"<sup>64</sup> since foreign aid is the only way LHROs can pay staff salaries. As one said, "the highest cost for organizations is that people have become so accustomed to...immense resources that they don't know how to work without a salary."<sup>65</sup> Losing foreign funds means losing "the people whose total time is dedicated to the promoting, managing, and lobbying (for) human rights."<sup>66</sup> Foreign funds are also typically more long-range than local money, allowing groups to develop multi-year projects and goals.<sup>67</sup>

Still, many thought human rights work could continue without foreign aid, albeit in a different form, through grassroots mobilization and "readjustments" to their operations. Foreign aid has been declining since the 1990s, and organizations have begun learning how to get by with fewer resources. People truly committed would continue to do the work, respondents believed.<sup>68</sup> In San Cristóbal, several respondents said their groups were already operating with very little funding and were preparing for a sudden loss of foreign aid.<sup>69</sup> A few even suggested funding loss could trigger renewed growth.<sup>70</sup>

Estimates of sector resiliency in the face of a foreign aid cutoff varied by organizational characteristics:

1. **Respondents from organizations not currently receiving foreign funds were more confident:** 25% thought the sector would "stay the same" or "grow somewhat," as opposed to 3% of respondents from groups that did receive foreign aid.
2. **Respondents from older groups were more confident:** just 5% from organizations founded before 1995 thought the movement would "collapse entirely," 82% thought it would "collapse somewhat," and 14% said it would "stay the same" or "grow somewhat." By contrast, 30% of respondents from groups founded during or after 1995 thought the sector would "collapse completely," 65% thought it would "collapse somewhat," and 4% said it would "stay the same" or "grow somewhat."
3. **Respondents from organizations with less paid staff were more optimistic:** 21% of respondents from organizations with less than half of their staff paid thought the sector would "stay the same" or "grow," compared to none from organizations with more than half paid staff.

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<sup>62</sup> SP-05-2010

<sup>63</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-01-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010, LS-02-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-08-2010, LS-09-2010, LS-10-2010, LS-11-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-03-2012, AP-04-2012, AP-05-2012, AP-06-2012, AP-07-2012, AP-08-2012, AP-09-2012, AP-10-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-14-2012, AP-16-2012

<sup>64</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-14-2010, AP-08-2012

<sup>65</sup> LS-01-2010

<sup>66</sup> SP-07-2010

<sup>67</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-10-2010,

<sup>68</sup> LS-08-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-12-2010, LS-15-2010, AP-03-2012

<sup>69</sup> LS-04-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-14-2010

<sup>70</sup> LS-07-2010, LS-14-2010

## Local Funding

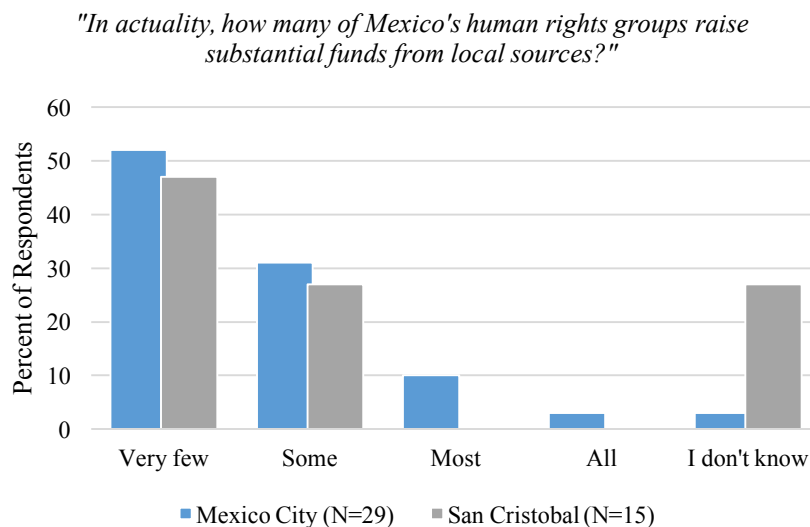
We asked, “*Is substantial local funding for human rights organizations a possibility in Mexico?*” As Figure 2.5 notes, 77% of Mexico City respondents said local funding was possible, compared to only 40% in San Cristóbal.

Yet as Figure 2.6 notes, half of respondents thought “very few” Mexican rights groups actually do actually raise “substantial” local funds. Local funding may be possible in theory, but our respondents didn’t think that many groups were taking advantage of these opportunities in practice.

Figure 2.5  
Mexico City Respondents Were More Likely to Think There is Local Funding Available



Figure 2.6  
Respondents Did Not Think Many LHROs Receive Funds from Local Sources



When we asked, “*How many human rights organizations in Mexico receive most of their funding from government sources?*” most respondents said that few local groups received Mexican government money (Figure 2.7). This estimate appears largely correct; as noted above, 48% of our Mexico City sample and 27% of the San Cristóbal sample reporting receiving such funds.

Most government funds are small, short-term, and project-based, and cannot be used for staff salaries or overhead.<sup>71</sup>

Bureaucratic reporting

obligations, moreover, are substantial,<sup>72</sup> requiring complicated reports even when “they give you one peso.”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, some respondents thought the government’s funding system was so complex in order to deliberately frustrate, rather than support, Mexican rights groups.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-02-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-06-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-02-2012, AP-05-2012, AP-07-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-17-2012

<sup>72</sup> SP-05-2010, LS-05-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-10-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-02-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>73</sup> AP-02-2012

<sup>74</sup> SP-07-2010

The biggest problem, however, was distrust. Respondents thought the government didn't want to support groups that criticized them ("I am not going to pay you so you can hit me.")<sup>75</sup> Many rights groups are similarly fearful;

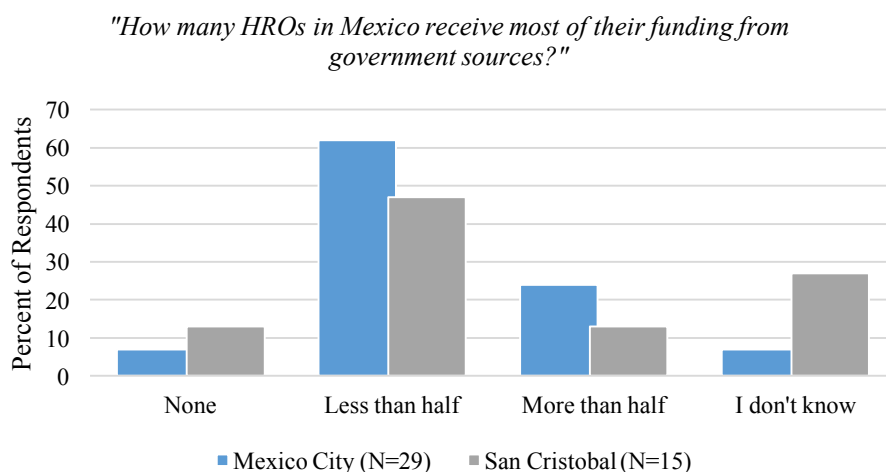
government funds could easily lead to greater surveillance, loss of autonomy, and conflicts of interest.<sup>76</sup> Yet many groups still did take government aid, and one reported trying to think of government aid as the public's money.<sup>77</sup> Others were more open to receiving funds from state-level government, rather than federal.

Individual donations from the public were also hard to come by. There is no

"culture of individual giving" in Mexico,<sup>78</sup> some said; when people do give, it is typically to the Catholic Church, charities, or to international groups able to mount large, and highly visible, fundraising drives.<sup>79</sup> Organizations also need to obtain the legal status of "authorized donor" so as to issue tax-deduction receipts;<sup>80</sup> respondents said the bureaucracy involved was onerous and expensive,<sup>81</sup> that approvals could be politically biased,<sup>82</sup> and that it could entail unwanted government control.<sup>83</sup> As a result, LHROs receive very few donations from the general public<sup>84</sup> or private sector.<sup>85</sup>

Respondents also felt that the private sector and LHROs had a "conflict of interests,"<sup>86</sup> limiting potential fundraising. Mexican businesses may be responsible for or ignore abuses,<sup>87</sup> and do not see human rights groups helping their bottom line. "Human rights," one respondent said, "questions local power structures...touch[ing] on the economic interests of...businesses and the wealthy."<sup>88</sup> Some were

Figure 2.7  
Respondents Did Not Think Many LHROs  
Are Funded by the Government



<sup>75</sup> LS-04-2010 (source of direct quote), LS-08-2010, AP-04-2012

<sup>76</sup> SP-02-2010, SP-04-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-05-2012

<sup>77</sup> SP-04-2010

<sup>78</sup> SP-02-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-04-2010, LS-05-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-08-2010, LS-09-2010, AP-06-2012

<sup>79</sup> SP-02-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-09-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-15-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-03-2012

<sup>80</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-09-2010, AP-06-2012, AP-17-2012

<sup>81</sup> SP-06-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010

<sup>82</sup> SP-07-2010, AP-06-2012

<sup>83</sup> SP-05-2010, SP-06-2010, LS-04-2010

<sup>84</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, LS-01-2010

<sup>85</sup> LS-03-2010, LS-04-2010

<sup>86</sup> SP-09-2010

<sup>87</sup> AP-04-2012

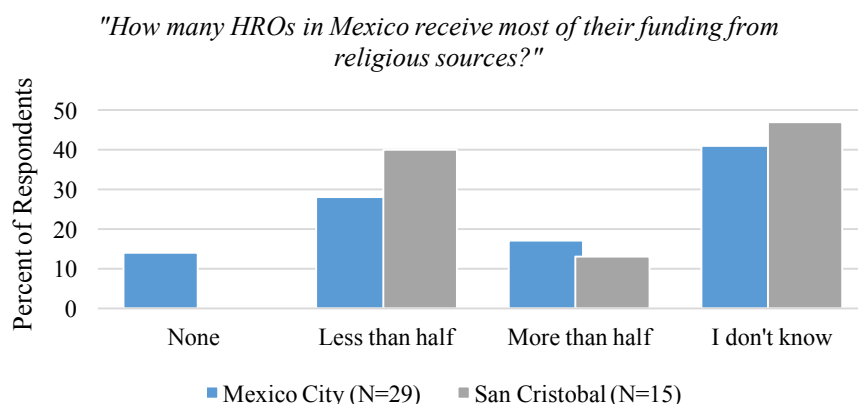
<sup>88</sup> LS-11-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-03-2010

also skeptical of funding from private foundations, seeing them as linked to the international or local private sector,<sup>89</sup> or as interested only in charitable work that does not challenge the status quo.<sup>90</sup>

Respondents tended to believe that rights groups did not receive much funding from religious institutions, or were not sure of their answer to this question (Figure 2.8).

Rights groups in San Cristóbal found it more difficult than groups in Mexico City to access local funds, given high levels of negative publicity about their work and very rare receipt of tax-exempt charitable status. One respondent thought that only one rights group in all of Chiapas had been granted such legal status.<sup>91</sup>

Figure 2.8  
Respondents Were Unsure if LHROs  
are Religiously Funded



Some respondents said they had tried alternative fundraising methods: sharing resources with other organizations,<sup>92</sup> consulting,<sup>93</sup> charging small fees for services,<sup>94</sup> accepting in-kind donations,<sup>95</sup> or selling posters, books, and handicrafts.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, these did not bring in significant money.

In sum, respondents said the Mexican human rights sector was precariously reliant on a shrinking pool of foreign funds, and that local fund-raising from government, individual donors, and the private sector was both rare and difficult.

<sup>89</sup> SP-04-2010

<sup>90</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-02-2010, AP-14-2012

<sup>91</sup> LS-04-2010

<sup>92</sup> LS-07-2010

<sup>93</sup> SP-09-2010, LS-13-2010

<sup>94</sup> SP-07-2010, AP-02-2012

<sup>95</sup> LS-02-2010, LS-14-2010

<sup>96</sup> LS-06-2010

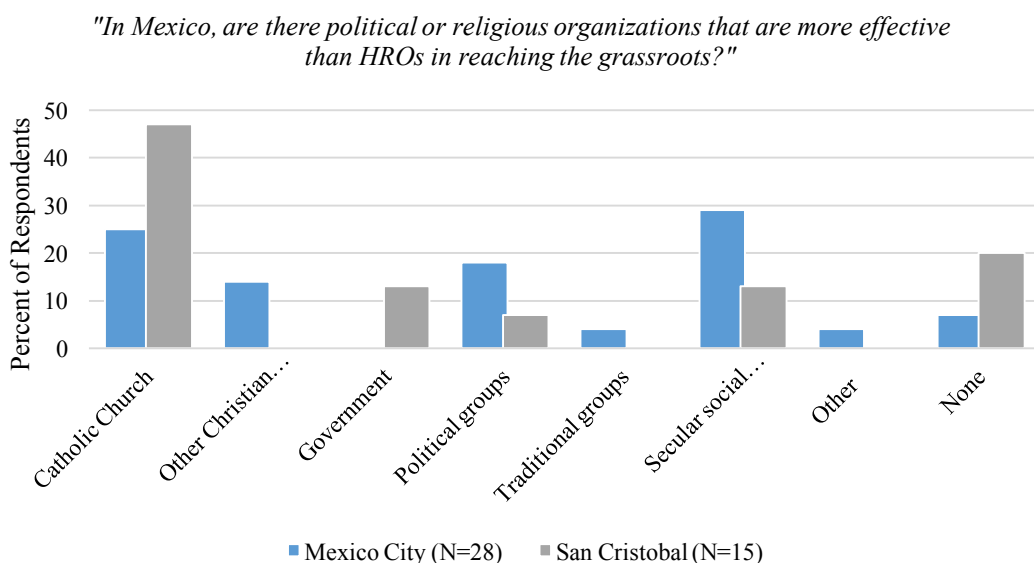
## Relationships with Other Social Sectors

We were curious to learn how the human rights sector's influence and grassroots-mobilizing capacities compared to other social sectors and movements, asking *"In Mexico, are there political or religious organizations that are more effective than human rights organizations in reaching the grassroots?"* and *"Why are these other groups more successful?"*

Nearly all respondents (89%) named at least one group that was more effective than LHROs at mobilizing the grassroots, including the Catholic Church, secular social movements, political parties, and the government. In Mexico City, 29% thought "social

movements" were more effective than local rights groups, while 25% said the same of the Church. In San Cristóbal, 47% cited the Church.

Figure 2.9  
Respondents Thought Other Groups Are More Effective  
at Mobilization than HROs



Yet respondents also thought the human rights approach, as opposed to others, was effective because it focuses on "people's basic needs,"<sup>97</sup> empowers,<sup>98</sup> creates an "awareness of social injustice,"<sup>99</sup> and utilizes an internationally supported legal framework.<sup>100</sup> The human rights approach was also holistic, respondents said, focusing on the interconnectedness of different rights and presenting a "comprehensive" and "broad" paradigm.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> SP-01-2010

<sup>98</sup> AP-02-2012

<sup>99</sup> SP-02-2010

<sup>100</sup> SP-05-2010, AP-01-2012, AP-09-2012

<sup>101</sup> SP-04-2010 (source of the direct quote), LS-01-2010, AP-05-2012, AP-14-2012



## *The Church's Reach*

In both cities, respondents talked extensively about the Catholic Church's reach and mobilizing power,<sup>102</sup> especially in rural areas.<sup>103</sup> The Church has a long history of "living with the people," and as a result has a "permanent presence" and "relationships" in local communities.<sup>104</sup> Geographically, moreover, the Church is present in nearly all parts of the country;<sup>105</sup> in Chiapas, it functions in areas



*Photo by Enrique López-Tamayo Biosca via flickr.com.*

where even the government is not present.

The Church is in tune with the "daily concerns of the people,"<sup>106</sup> offering spiritual benefits<sup>107</sup> and tangible services for both daily and emergency needs.<sup>108</sup> The Church also has access to substantial government and international resources.<sup>109</sup>

Rights groups, by contrast, have none of these advantages. Still, respondents did not see the Church as a competitor, arguing that it fulfills a different role and pursues different objectives.<sup>110</sup> Some LHROs—especially in Mexico City—make no attempt to reach the grassroots, focusing instead on legal advocacy and policy reform.<sup>111</sup> Others see the

Church and LHROs as working together in communities, but meeting different needs; the Church, they say, is more focused on providing material assistance.<sup>112</sup>

Many respondents spoke of a past history of collaborations with segments of the Church. LHROs do not work with conservative Church personnel,<sup>113</sup> but noted that liberation theologians helped create the Mexican human rights movement in the 1970s and 1980s,<sup>114</sup> particularly in Chiapas, where "all the human rights centers...are born from the Church."<sup>115</sup> Bishop Samuel Ruiz, for example, was a leftist Church leader in San Cristóbal who advocated for indigenous rights and founded the *pobrecita*

<sup>102</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-04-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-12-2010, LS-13-2010, LS-14-2010, LS-15-2010, AP-04-2012, AP-06-2012, AP-07-2012, AP-09-2012, AP-11-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-17-2012

<sup>103</sup> SP-04-2010

<sup>104</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, LS-07-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-12-2010, LS-14-2010, AP-04-2012, AP-07-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>105</sup> SP-07-2010, SP-12-2010, LS-15-2010

<sup>106</sup> SP-04-2010

<sup>107</sup> SP-10-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-04-2010, LS-05-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-14-2010, AP-07-2012, AP-09-2012

<sup>108</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-05-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-10-2010, LS-06-2010, AP-04-2012

<sup>109</sup> SP-06-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-07-2010, AP-06-2012, AP-11-2012

<sup>110</sup> SP-08-2010, AP-11-2012

<sup>111</sup> AP-02-2012

<sup>112</sup> SP-10-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-04-2010, LS-14-2010, AP-04-2012

<sup>113</sup> LS-13-2010

<sup>114</sup> SP-05-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-11-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-04-2010

<sup>115</sup> LS-01-2010

church.<sup>116</sup> Ruiz focused on making “the work of the Church [not] purely religious, [but] also political and socially critical.”<sup>117</sup> For many respondents, this part of the Church is still an ally of LHROs, as both seek to serve the poor.<sup>118</sup> Some rights groups work with the Church to gain access in communities where LHROs do not yet have connections or public trust.<sup>119</sup>

There are limits, however. Many see the Church as an ally, in general, but do not directly cooperate,<sup>120</sup> while others were even more skeptical, fearing that no one in the Church today really cares about structural change. Sexual and reproductive rights were also a major sticking point; when those issues came up, collaboration, respondents said, was impossible.<sup>121</sup>

### *The Street Power of Social Movements*

Secular social movements were also effective at reaching the grassroots, respondents said,<sup>122</sup>

largely because of their established history in specific communities.<sup>123</sup> From the 1960s, union, *campesino*, and urban movements have been key players, and like the Church, often concern themselves with daily problems and context-specific needs.<sup>124</sup> Local rights groups in urban areas, by contrast, focus more on the policy level. Respondents in San Cristóbal said social movements were effective because they were heavily invested in successful movement outcomes.<sup>125</sup> As a result, local communities saw them as legitimate and trustworthy.

Most respondents saw social movements as allies, rather than competitors or enemies. Some described active collaborations<sup>126</sup> in which LHROs provided technical assistance and expertise,<sup>127</sup> or legal advocacy for activists “charged with crimes they had not committed” or subjected to torture.<sup>128</sup> Many thought there could, and perhaps *should*, be more collaboration.<sup>129</sup> Cooperation is often limited by different styles and strategies<sup>130</sup> and by “distinct ways of doing things.”<sup>131</sup> LHROs critique social



Photo by PWRDF via [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pwrdf/).

<sup>116</sup> LS-04-2010, LS-11-2010, LS-14-2010

<sup>117</sup> LS-11-2010

<sup>118</sup> SP-05-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-09-2010, SP-11-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010

<sup>119</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-01-2010, LS-11-2010

<sup>120</sup> SP-08-2010, SP-10-2010, LS-03-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-15-2010

<sup>121</sup> SP-04-2010, SP-06-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-08-2010, SP-11-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-15-2010, AP-06-2012, AP-09-2012, AP-13-2012, AP-17-2012

<sup>122</sup> SP-05-2010, SP-07-2010, SP-13-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010, LS-08-2010, AP-02-2012, AP-04-2012, AP-10-2012, AP-16-2012

<sup>123</sup> SP-08-2010, LS-08-2010, AP-02-2012

<sup>124</sup> SP-12-2010, SP-13-2010, SP-14-2010, LS-08-2010

<sup>125</sup> LS-08-2010

<sup>126</sup> SP-01-2010, SP-12-2010, SP-13-2010, SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010

<sup>127</sup> SP-13-2010, SP-14-2010

<sup>128</sup> SP-14-2010

<sup>129</sup> SP-14-2010, SP-15-2010

<sup>130</sup> SP-07-2010, SP-12-2010, AP-02-2012

<sup>131</sup> SP-15-2010

movements because “they don’t document, systemize, or think strategically,” while social movements complain LHROs “don’t do political work, participate in barricades, or go to protests.”<sup>132</sup>

In sum, most respondents thought the Church and social movements had either good or better access to the general population than human rights groups. Few saw this as a problem, however; rather, respondents thought the others were either allies or had their own distinct and useful niche.

### *Political Groups and the State*

A handful of respondents thought the government, political parties, or other political groups were effective at reaching the grassroots. Political actors have historically developed ties to the Mexican public,<sup>133</sup> and for many respondents this includes bribery and “buying votes.”<sup>134</sup> The government and political parties “arrive with gifts,” thereby gaining entry to communities.<sup>135</sup> Some respondents said political groups were successful simply because of power and resources<sup>136</sup> and because they provided services that addressed concrete needs.<sup>137</sup> Local communities collaborate in political programs in the hope they will “gain better services and government resources.”<sup>138</sup>

Respondents had mixed views of potential collaboration with political groups. A few vehemently said they would never work together;<sup>139</sup> two said they have working relationships;<sup>140</sup> one said his groups collaborated with the National Commission on Human Rights;<sup>141</sup> and a few said, pragmatically, they could work with certain individuals, or enjoyed working relations with members of the ruling party.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> SP-15-2010

<sup>133</sup> SP-01-2010, AP-05-2012

<sup>134</sup> AP-06-2012

<sup>135</sup> LS-04-2010, LS-09-2010, AP-03-2012, AP-05-2012, AP-13-2012

<sup>136</sup> SP-08-2010, LS-03-2010, AP-01-2012

<sup>137</sup> AP-01-2012, AP-03-2012

<sup>138</sup> LS-03-2010, AP-09-2012

<sup>139</sup> AP-03-2012, LS-03-2010, LS-06-2010, LS-09-2010

<sup>140</sup> SP-08-2010, AP-01-2012

<sup>141</sup> SP-03-2010

<sup>142</sup> AP-05-2012, AP-06-2012, AP-13-2012

## Summary

Our interviews with representative samples of 30 human rights workers in Mexico City and 15 in San Cristobal revealed that:

- 1. The San Cristóbal human rights community is more optimistic about the reputation of rights groups and the resonance of rights language.** Mexico City respondents, by contrast, emphasized reputational challenges, including the public's association of human rights workers with "defending criminals."
- 2. In both cities, local rights groups rely on international donors.** Most groups are concerned by this dependence and want to develop their local funding capacities. Few believe local sources are immediately available, however, for a variety of cultural, political, and legal reasons.
- 3. Respondents in both cities saw the Church and secular social movements as effective grassroots mobilizers and potential allies of the human rights movement.** Neither sample, however, was particularly enthusiastic about collaborating with the government.

## Part III: Mexican Public and Elite Opinion

Part III contrasts the LHRO sector's self-evaluation, described in Part II above, with the reality of public and elite opinion in Mexico.

### Methodological Overview

In 2012, we collaborated with *The Americas and the World* survey project at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE), Mexico City, to ask the public and elites for their views on human rights organizations and issues.<sup>143</sup> We surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,398 adults, as well as a stratified sample of 535 members of the Mexican elite.<sup>144</sup> The survey instrument asked about a wide variety of issues, but we focus here only on our human rights questions. For the full dataset, please visit *The Americas and the World* website.

For the public survey, we used multi-stage randomized sampling to infer about the entire non-institutionalized, over-18 population living in Mexico. Stage one included electoral sections, as defined by the Mexican Federal Electoral Institute;<sup>145</sup> stage two included blocks within the selected electoral sections; stage three included individual households within selected blocks; stage four included individual respondents within selected households. Seventy surveyors conducted surveys in person, in respondents' homes, for 35 minutes, on average, contacting 6,102 households to achieve 2,398 interviews (39% response rate).

For the elite survey, we polled individuals holding high-level positions in government, politics, the private sector, mass media, academia, and civil society. We defined the institutions and positions to include and compiled a directory of 4,000 leaders across all sectors; we contacted, in writing, a random sample of persons within each sector's directory.<sup>146</sup> Ten percent responded, and 18 trained interviews surveyed these persons via telephone for an average of 45 minutes. This technique includes elements of random, quota, and convenience sampling; it is not strictly representative of all Mexican elites. See Appendix C for details.

### Respondent Characteristics

Table 3.1 outlines key socio-demographic characteristics of respondents from the public and elite samples.<sup>147</sup> Just over half of respondents in the public sample were female, compared to less than a third of elites. Average age in the public poll was 39, while the average elite was nearly a decade older. The average public respondent's household made \$2,401-3,200 monthly; 53% of public respondents were

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<sup>143</sup> For more information, please see <http://lasamericasyelmundo.cide.edu/>.

<sup>144</sup> Respondents in the public survey are referred to as the "public" and respondents from the elite survey are referred to as "leaders" or "elite."

<sup>145</sup> Certain regions of the country were oversampled, but the results we present here have been weighted to account for this.

<sup>146</sup> In the final elite sample, about 21% of respondents were from the government, 21% were in politics, 19% were from the private sector, 21% were from the media or academia, and 18% were from social, civic, and non-profit organizations.

<sup>147</sup> Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics are described in detail in Appendix D.



currently working and 41% said their income was adequate to cover expenses. The elites were much more educated; 96% of elite respondents were educated beyond secondary school, compared to only 16% of our public sample.

In the public survey, 62% self-identified as mestizo and 70% as Catholic; 40% said religion was extremely important in their lives. Public and elite respondents reported “no party affiliation” in 39% and 40% of all cases, respectively; 31% and 23% supported the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI); 18% and 21% supported the National Action Party; and 12% and 13% supported the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD).

Table 3.1  
Public and Elite Survey Respondent Characteristics

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Elite</b>
<b>Sex</b>	51% female	29% female
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	39 years	48 years
Range	18-93 years	23-82 years
<b>Monthly Household Income (in USD)</b>		
Less than \$1,600	24%	n/a
\$1,601 to \$5,400	56%	n/a
More than \$5,401	20%	n/a
Median income range	\$2,401-3,200	n/a
Feel their income can cover household expenses	41%	n/a
<b>Primary economic activity</b>		
At home	31%	n/a
Working	53%	n/a
<b>Education</b> <sup>148</sup>		
Primary or no formal education	30%	0%
Secondary	55%	5%
Post-secondary	16%	96%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Mestizo	62%	n/a
Indigenous	20%	n/a
White	10%	n/a
<b>Religion</b>		
Catholic	79%	n/a
Religion “very important” in their lives (10 on a 0-10 scale)	40%	n/a
<b>Politics</b>		
Does not support a political party	39%	40%
Supports the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	31%	23%
Supports the National Action Party (PAN)	18%	21%
Supports Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)	12%	13%
Did not vote in the last election	22%	n/a

<sup>148</sup> These figures indicate the percentage of respondents who completed at least one year of education at each level; for example, 55% of the public sample completed at least one year of secondary school.

Weights were derived and applied to the survey data in order to correct imbalances in the public sample on sex and age. We also adjusted for the survey design's over-sampling of the northern and southern regions, adjusting each to reflect its true share of the national population.<sup>149</sup> All results describe the weighted public sample.

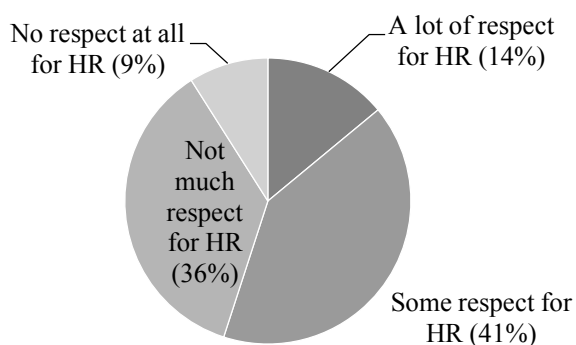
## Human Rights Conditions in Mexico

The World Values Survey asked Mexican respondents *"How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays?"*

While our survey included a similar item in other countries, in Mexico we were not able to ask this question because of space constraints. In 2005, the World Values survey found most respondents said there was "some respect" (41%) or "not much respect" (36%).<sup>150</sup>

Figure 3.1  
World Values Respondents Said There is Some or Not Much Respect for Individual Human Rights in Mexico (N=1,543)

*"How much respect is there for individual human rights nowadays?"*



## Human Rights Resonance and Reach

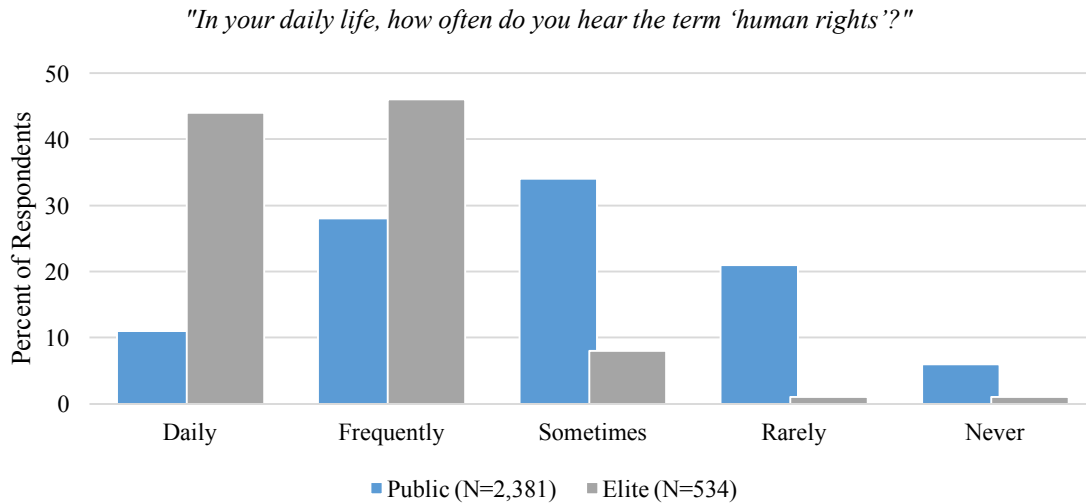
*Adults in Mexico are heavily exposed to the term "human rights" and have positive associations with the concept. Their personal contact with human rights workers, however, is low. Mexican elites have similarly positive associations with "human rights," but are more exposed to the term and have more personal contact with human rights workers.*

We asked, *"In your daily life, how often do you hear the term 'human rights'?"* Figure 3.2 indicates that most members of the general public hear the term "sometimes" or "frequently," while most elites hear the term "frequently" or "daily."

<sup>149</sup> Details are available upon request.

<sup>150</sup> See the World Values Survey for Mexico, available online at: <http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSAnalyzeQuestion.jsp>. Accessed 17 May 2013.

Figure 3.2  
 Mexican Elites Heard "Human Rights" Far More Frequently,  
 But General Public Also Heavily Exposed



We also found that people with higher socioeconomic status heard “human rights” more frequently:<sup>151</sup>

- 1. Higher education was associated with greater exposure to human rights language:** Those who completed secondary school, for example, were twice as likely as those with no education to hear “human rights” daily or frequently.
- 2. Urban residents heard human rights more often:** Respondents in urban areas had a 39% chance<sup>152</sup> of hearing “human rights” daily or frequently, compared to 35% for rural residents.
- 3. More income means more human rights exposure:** People with higher perceived income (who reported their income “can cover expenses and savings”) had a 39% chance of hearing “human rights” often, while those who reported their income “cannot cover expenses and [they] have major difficulties” had a 32% chance.
- 4. Using the internet is associated with hearing “human rights”:** Respondents who are online have a 39% chance of hearing the term often, compared to a 35% chance among non-internet users.

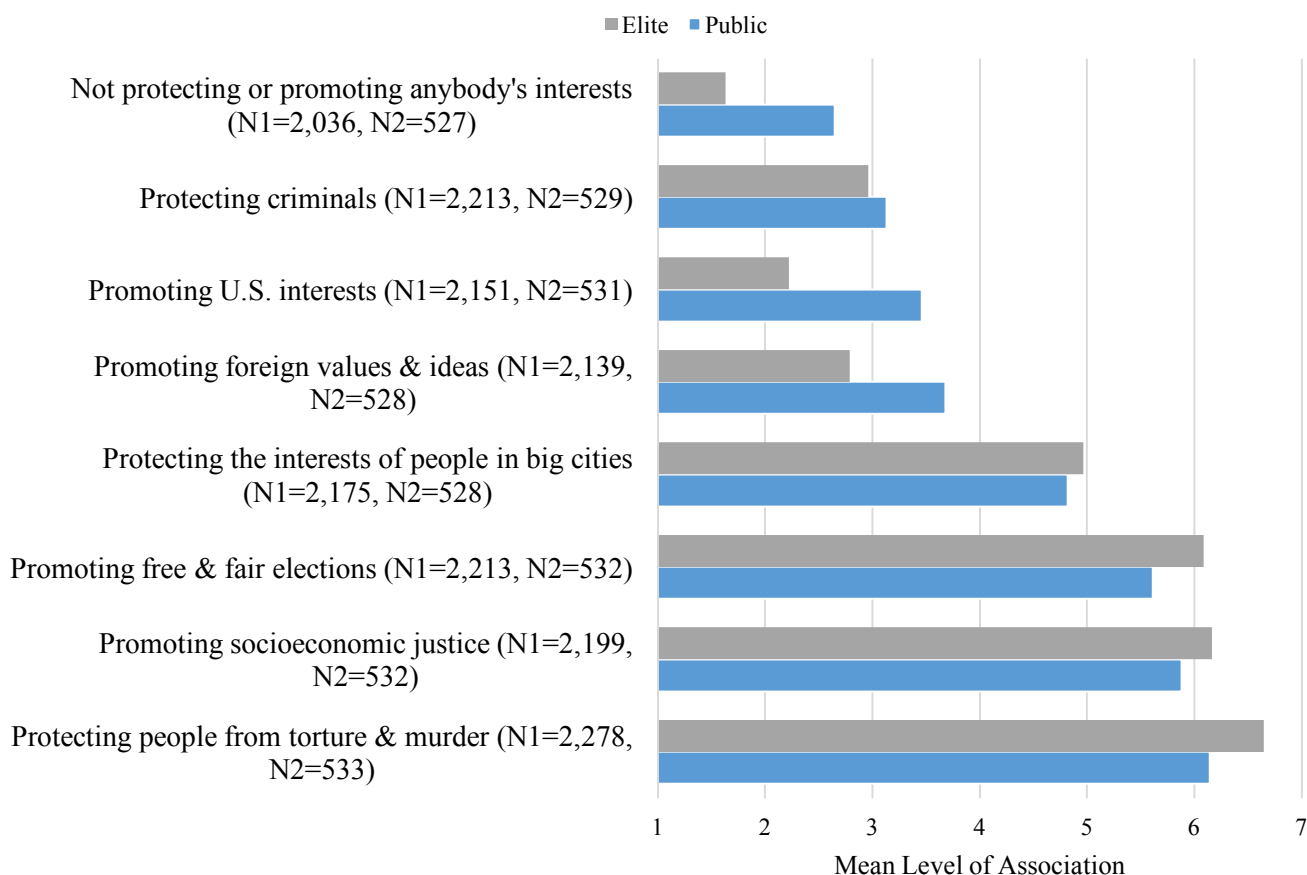
<sup>151</sup> These multivariate findings are statistically significant at the .10-level in an ordinal logistic regression; the model also controls for sex and age. Full results are forthcoming (Ron, Crow, & Golden 2014).

<sup>152</sup> This means there is a predicted probability of .39 that urban respondents heard human rights daily or frequently; in other words, out of 100 urban residents, we would expect that, on average, 39 individuals heard human rights daily or frequently.

We then asked respondents to rank the extent to which they associated “human rights” with other positive and negative sounding phrases. “*In your opinion,*” we asked, “*how strongly do you associate \_\_\_\_\_ with the term ‘human rights’?*” As Figure 3.3 indicates, most respondents<sup>153</sup> associated “human rights” with positive phrases, including “protecting people from torture and murder,” “promoting socioeconomic justice,” and “promoting free and fair elections.” Elites were slightly more positive.<sup>154</sup>

Figure 3.3  
Respondents Had Positive Associations with "Human Rights"

*"In your opinion, how strongly do you associate \_\_\_\_\_ with the term 'human rights'?"*

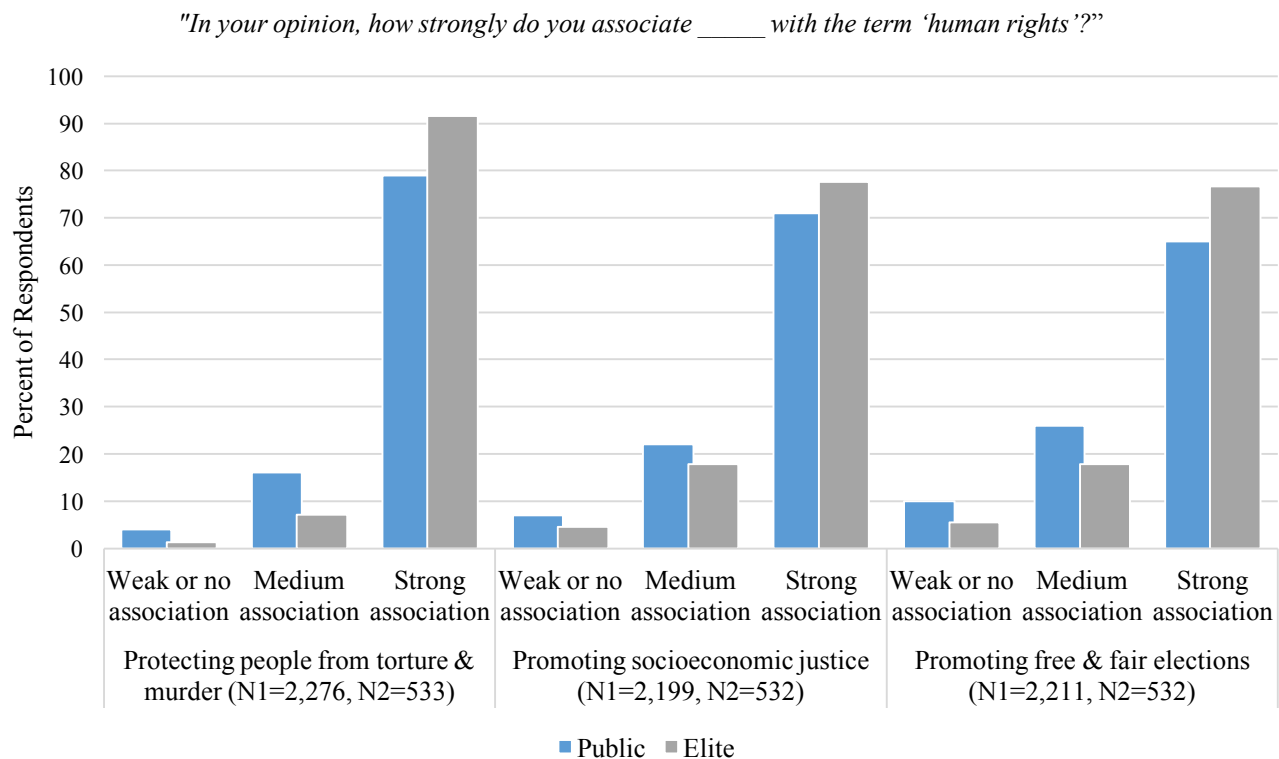


<sup>153</sup> Here, and in the remaining figures, N1 refers to the number of respondents with a valid response from the public sample, while N2 refers to the elite sample.

<sup>154</sup> For the public sample, all the differences between means in this figure are statistically significant at the .05-level. Because the elite sample is not representative of the total population, we did not test for statistically significant differences (here, as well as in the remainder of the report).

We divided responses into those “strongly associating” human rights with each phrase (respondents who selected a 6 or 7 on the 1-7 scale), and compared it to those with a “medium association” (3-5) and “weak association” (1- 2). Figure 3.4 demonstrates that: 79% of the public sample strongly associated human rights with protecting people from torture and murder; 71% with promoting socioeconomic justice; and 65% with promoting free and fair elections. Again, elite respondents displayed slightly stronger positive associations.<sup>155</sup>

Figure 3.4  
Respondents Strongly Associated "Human Rights" with Positive Definitions



As Figure 3.5 shows, a sizeable minority strongly associated human rights with less positive phrases: 49% in both samples strongly associated it with “protecting the interests of people in big cities”;<sup>156</sup> 28% of the public and 11% of elites strongly associated it with “promoting foreign values and ideas”; 25% and 7%, respectively, with “promoting U.S. interests”; 23% and 15% with “protecting criminals”; and 18% and 6% with “not protecting or promoting anybody’s interests.”<sup>157</sup>

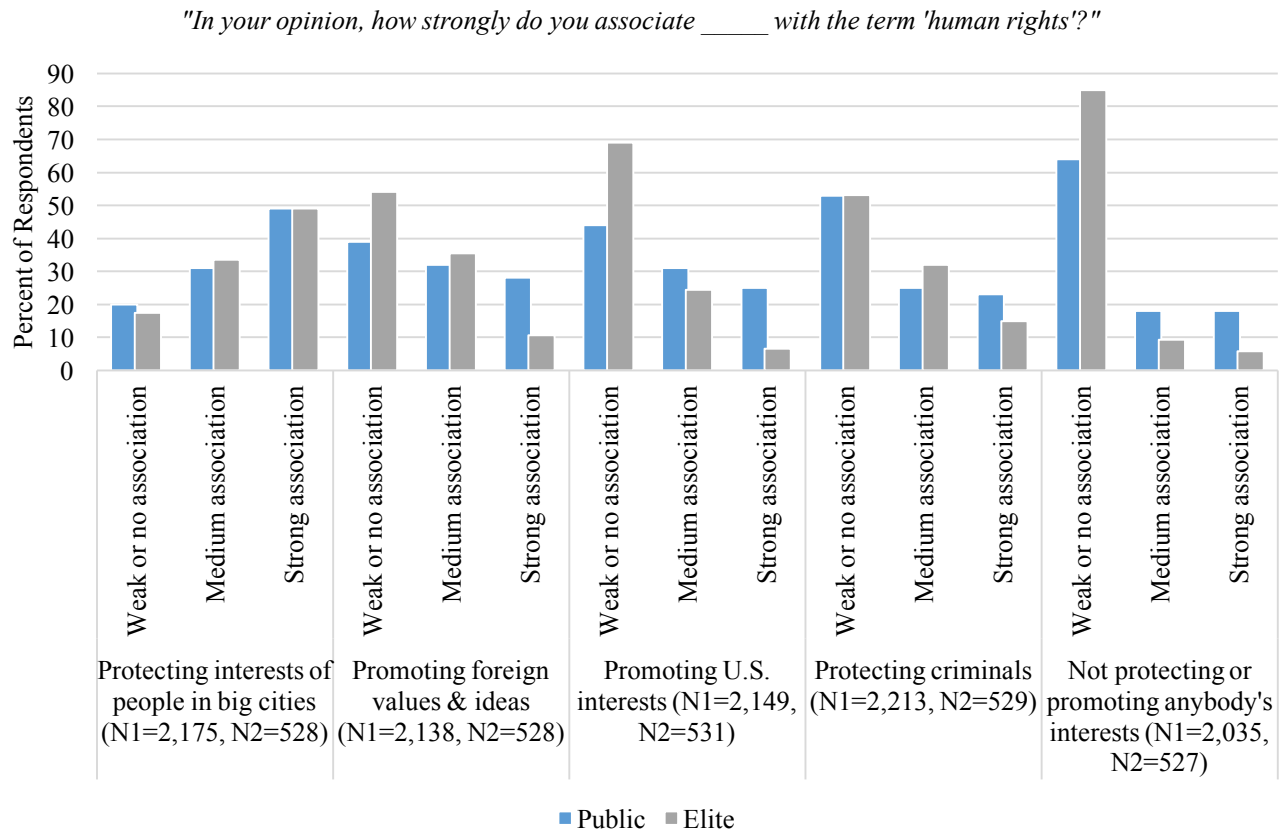
<sup>155</sup> As noted earlier, here again N1 refers to the number of respondents with a valid response from the public sample, while N2 refers to the elite sample. This is the case for the remaining figures, as well.

<sup>156</sup> There was not a sizeable difference between rural and urban respondents in the public sample; 47% of respondents in rural areas had a strong association with “protecting the interests of people in big cities,” compared to 51% of urban respondents.

<sup>157</sup> The Spanish translation of “not protecting or promoting anybody’s interests” was “no proteger ni promover nada.” Although not a literal translation, we used this translation to more accurately reflect the intended meaning of the item, as “interests” in Spanish has a connotation of self-interest.



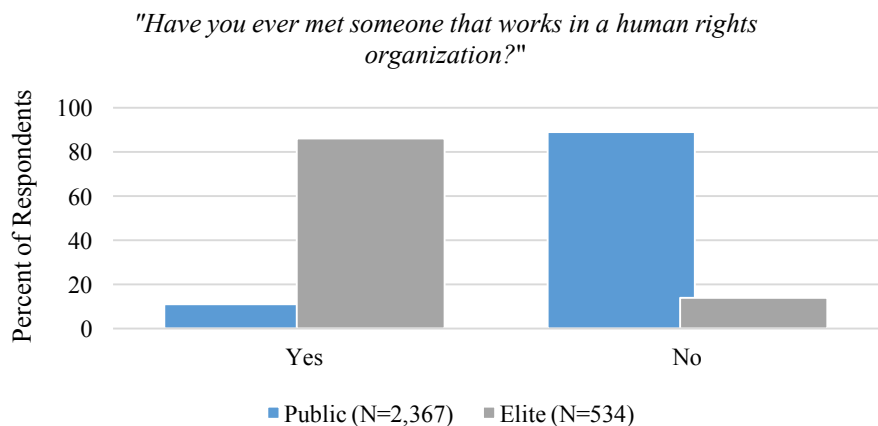
Figure 3.5  
Some Associate "Human Rights" with Protecting People in Big Cities and with Other Negative Definitions



Overall, respondents in both samples had positive feelings towards human rights; the public sample, however, was slightly more skeptical.

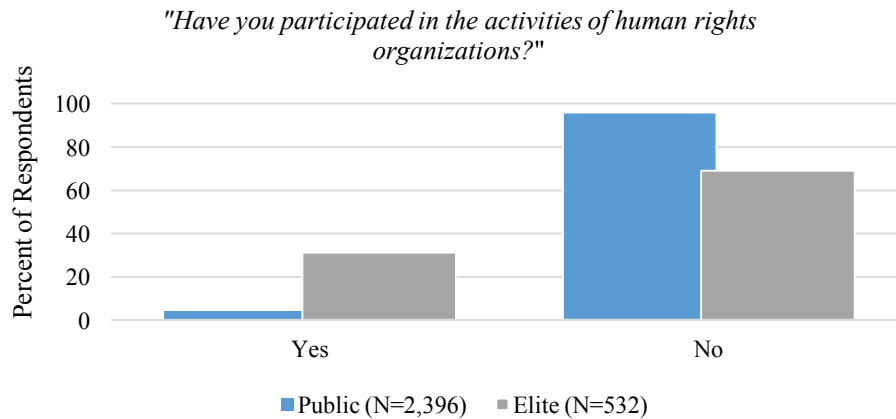
The general public appears to direct its attitudes towards human rights groups in general, rather than specific groups; as Figure 3.6 notes, just over 10% had ever met someone working for a local or international HRO.<sup>158</sup> Among elites, however, the vast majority (86%) had had personal contact.

Figure 3.6  
Mexican Elites Were Far More Likely to Have Met a Human Rights Worker



<sup>158</sup> About 1% of respondents said they didn't know whether or not they had met someone who works at an HRO.

Figure 3.7  
Mexican Elites Were More Likely to Have  
Participated in HRO Activities



Here again, socio-demographic characteristics matter. Among public respondents, older, more educated, and higher income individuals were more likely to have met a human rights worker (Ron et al. 2014).

Elites were also much more likely than the general public to have personally participated in an HRO activity: 31% to 4% (Figure 3.7).

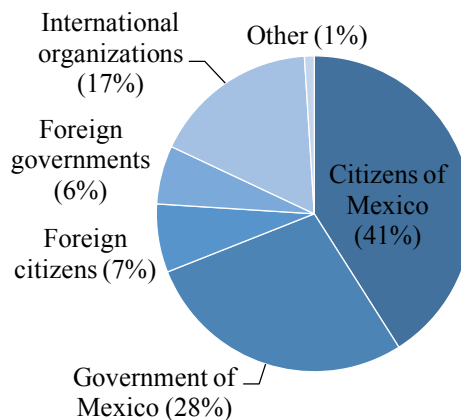
## Resourcing LHROs

*Most public respondents thought Mexican rights groups are funded by Mexican citizens and government agencies, but most elite respondents believed they are internationally funded. Very few public respondents had ever donated money to a Mexican rights group.*

We asked, “In your opinion, where do you think that non-governmental human rights organizations in Mexico receive most of their funding?” Some 18% of respondents in the public survey were unsure, but of those who did respond, 41% thought the money for human rights groups came mostly from Mexican citizens, while 28% thought it came from the Mexican government.

Figure 3.8  
Most Public Respondents Believed Mexican HROs Are  
Locally Funded (N=1,952)

“In your opinion, where do you think that non-governmental human rights organizations in Mexico receive most of their funding?”

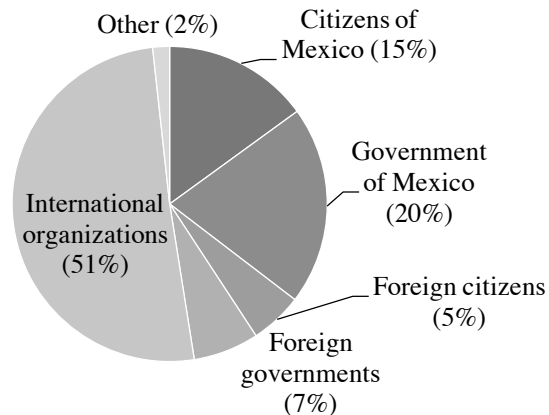


Among respondents in the elite survey, however, 51% thought Mexican LHROs were funded by international organizations. A further 15% thought the money came from Mexican citizens and 20% from the government. Only 3% said they didn't know.

Although 41% of the public thought LHROs were funded mostly by Mexican citizens, only 1% reported having donated money themselves to such groups (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.9  
Most Elite Respondents Believed Mexican HROs Are Internationally Funded (N=520)

*“In your opinion, where do you think that non-governmental human rights organizations in Mexico receive most of their funding?”*



## Trust in Local Rights Groups

*For both the public and elites, Mexican LHROs were situated near the top of respondents' spectrum of trust.*

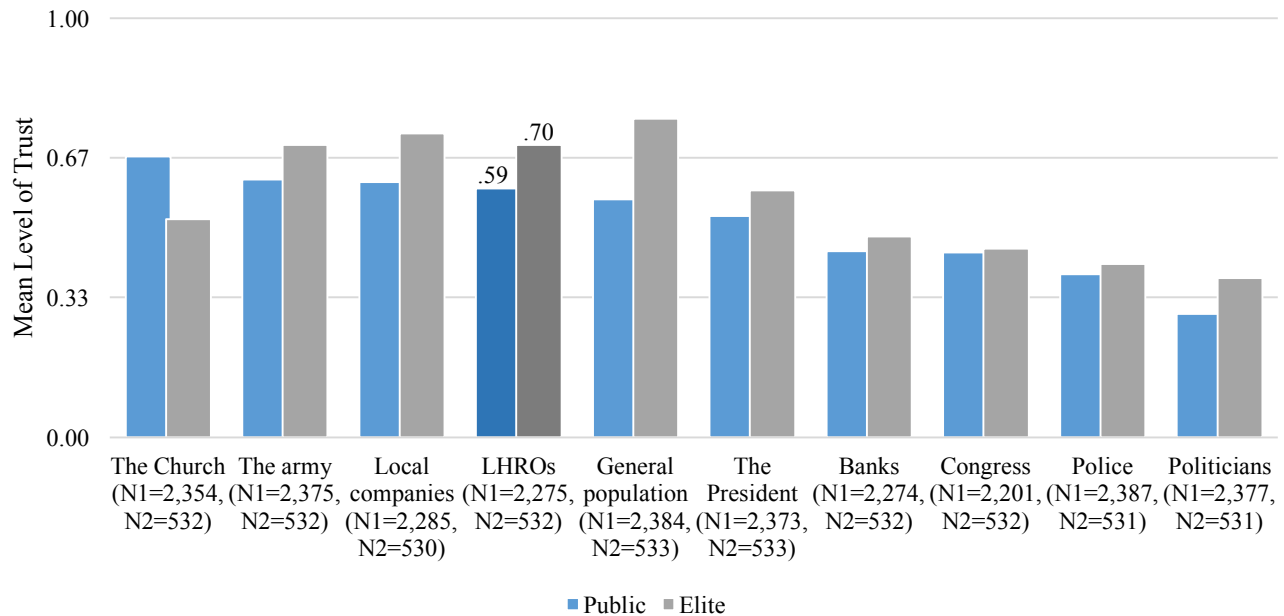
We asked, “Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons...”, and gave a list of domestic and international institutions. We discovered that the most trusted domestic institution for members of the general public was the Catholic Church, and public and elite respondents also highly trusted the Mexican army, local businesses, and Mexican human rights organizations.<sup>159</sup> Least trusted were Mexican politicians, police, and Congress. As Figure 3.10 indicates, trust in Mexican local rights groups is comparatively high.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>159</sup> About half the public respondents were asked the question with a four-point scale (where 1 was “none” and 4 was “a lot”) and the other half were asked the question with a seven-point scale (where 1 was “none” and 7 was “a lot”). Elite respondents were only asked the question on the four-point scale. The results presented in Figure 3.10 show the means converted to a 0 to 1 scale (where 1 is the highest level of trust), in order to allow comparison between the public and elites.

<sup>160</sup> Although small, for the public sample the difference in means for trust in LHROs and local companies is statistically significant (sig.=.022), as is the difference between the means for LHROs and the general population (sig.=.001). For the public sample's four-point scale, the difference in means for trust in LHROs and trust in the general population is not statistically significant (sig.=.324), but the difference between LHROs and the President is significant (sig.=.000) and the difference between LHROs and local companies is also significant (sig.=.008). On the public sample's seven-point scale, there is not a significant difference between LHROs and local companies (sig.=.567) or LHROs and the army (sig.=.352), but the difference between LHROs and the Church is significant (sig.=.000) and between LHROs and the general population is significant (sig.=.000).

Figure 3.10  
Compared to Other Domestic Institutions,  
Trust in Mexican LHROs is Moderately High

*“Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons...”*



We found certain key factors to be associated with trust in Mexican rights groups:<sup>161</sup>

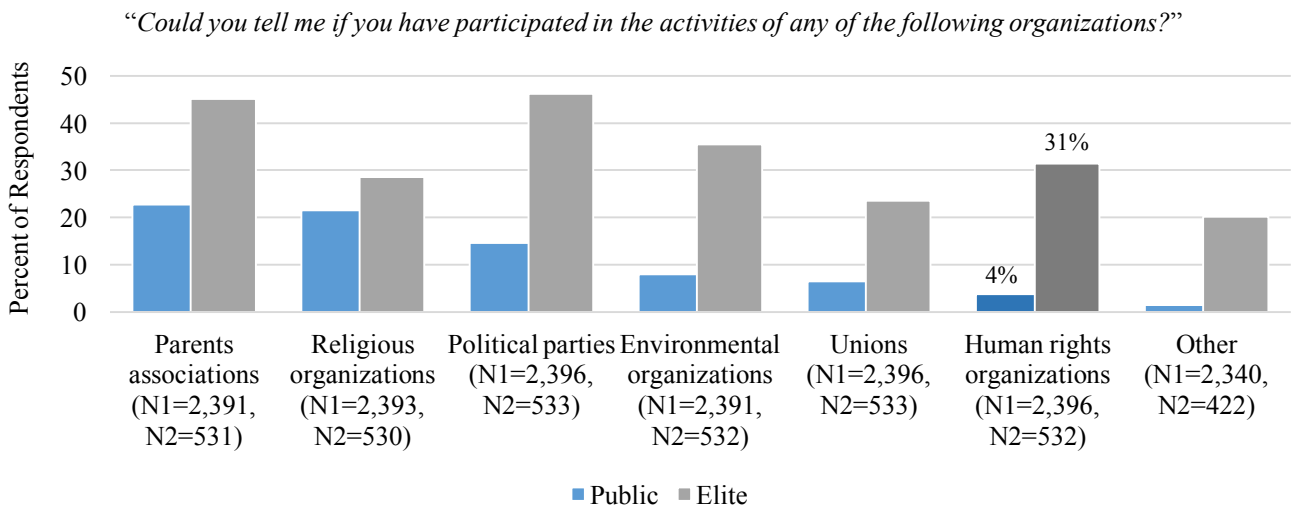
- Hearing “human rights” more regularly was associated with a modest increase in trust:** Respondents who heard the term daily were about 7% more trusting of LHROs than those who never heard “human rights.”
- Those who trust the political establishment were less trusting of LHROs:** For each point increase (on the 7-point scale) in trust in politicians, there was a 20% decrease in trust in rights groups. Trust in Parliament and the police show a similar, albeit smaller in magnitude, effect.
- Trust in the army was accompanied by higher LHRO trust:** A one-point increase in trust in the army was associated with a 23% increase in respondents’ trust in LHROs.
- Surprisingly, some factors were insignificant:** Having contact with a human rights worker or participating in LHRO activities was not associated with greater trust. Similarly, we did not find a relationship between having transnational connections (such as using the internet and traveling outside Mexico) and trusting LHROs. Socioeconomic status also was not a significant factor.

<sup>161</sup> These associations are statistically significant at the .10-level in an OLS regression model. The model also accounts for: perceptions of LHRO funding, trust in the President, party affiliation, voting behavior, speaking a foreign language, urban residence, education, income, sex, age, ethnicity, and the number of light bulbs and rooms in the respondent’s home; none of these variables were statistically significant. Full results are forthcoming (Ron & Crow 2015).

# Civic Participation and Donations

We also asked, “*Could you tell me if you have participated in the activities of any of the following organizations?*” Only 4% of the public reported participating in human rights groups’ activities, compared to 23% participation in parents’ associations and 22% in religious organizations (Figure 3.11).

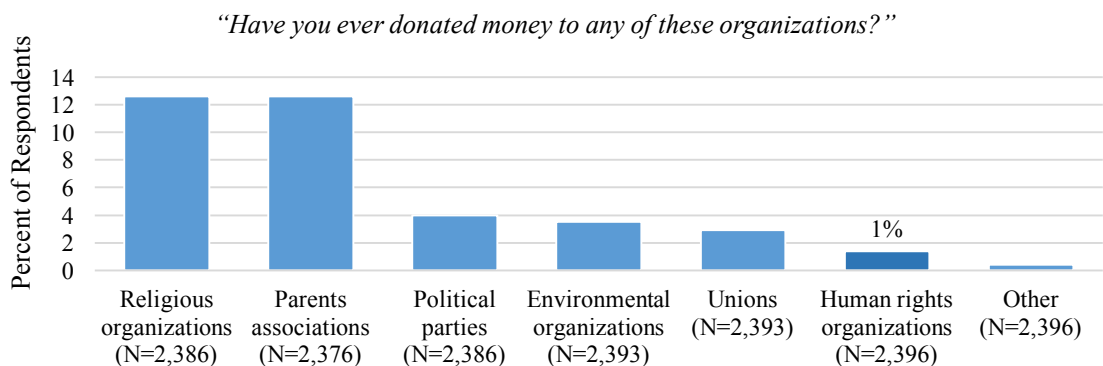
Figure 3.11  
Elite Participation in HROs was Much Higher than the Public



Civic engagement among elites was much higher overall, most commonly in political parties (46%) and parents associations (45%). Nearly a third (31%) reported participation in some kind of organized human rights activity, far higher than the general public’s rate of participation.

We also asked whether respondents had ever donated money to civic organizations. Leading recipients were religious organizations and parents associations; donations to human rights groups ranked very low.<sup>162</sup>

Figure 3.12  
Few Public Respondents Donated to HROs



<sup>162</sup> Based on 2011 Gallup World Poll data, the *World Giving Index* reported that 22% of respondents in Mexico reported donating money in the last month, 17% reported volunteering time, and 46% reported helping a stranger. See page 40 of the



## Views of International Human Rights Organizations

*Public poll respondents similarly trusted domestic and international HROs, whereas elite respondents trusted international HROs more than Mexican organizations. Both groups trusted international HROs more than other international actors.*

Figure 3.13 shows that the Mexican public trusted international rights groups about the same as local rights organizations.<sup>163</sup> Figure 3.14, however, shows that elites trusted international rights groups a bit more; 44% trusted international HROs “a lot,” and 31% said the same of LHROs.

To place these trust figures in comparative perspective, Figure 3.15 demonstrates that respondents in both samples trusted international rights groups *more* than all other international actors in the survey.<sup>164</sup> Elite respondents displayed similar trust patterns to the public, but, across the board, were more trusting of international institutions.

Figure 3.13  
Public Respondents Trusted Mexican HROs and International HROs About the Same

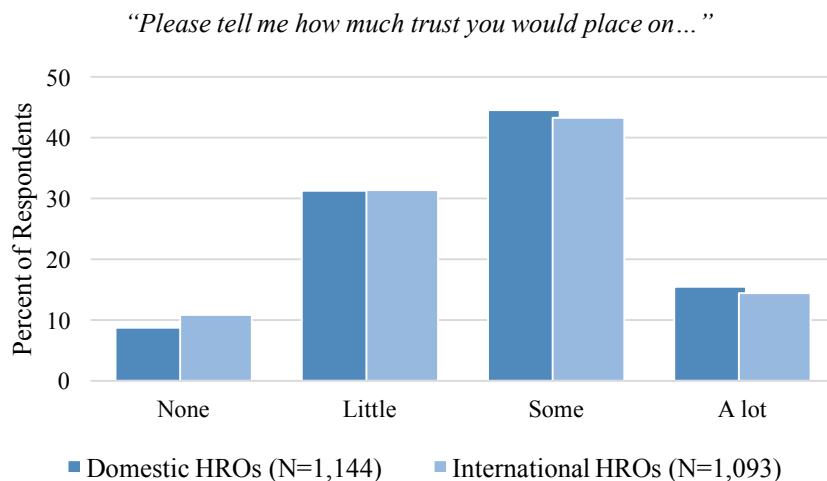
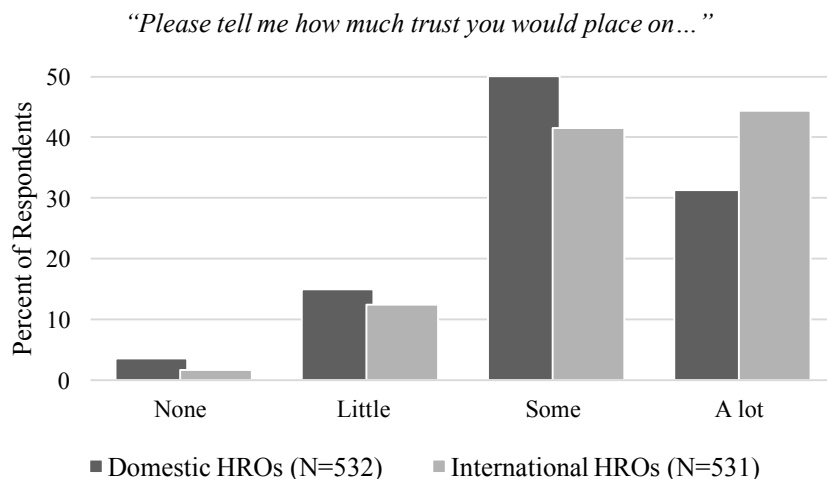


Figure 3.14  
Elite Respondents Trusted International HROs More Than Mexican HROs



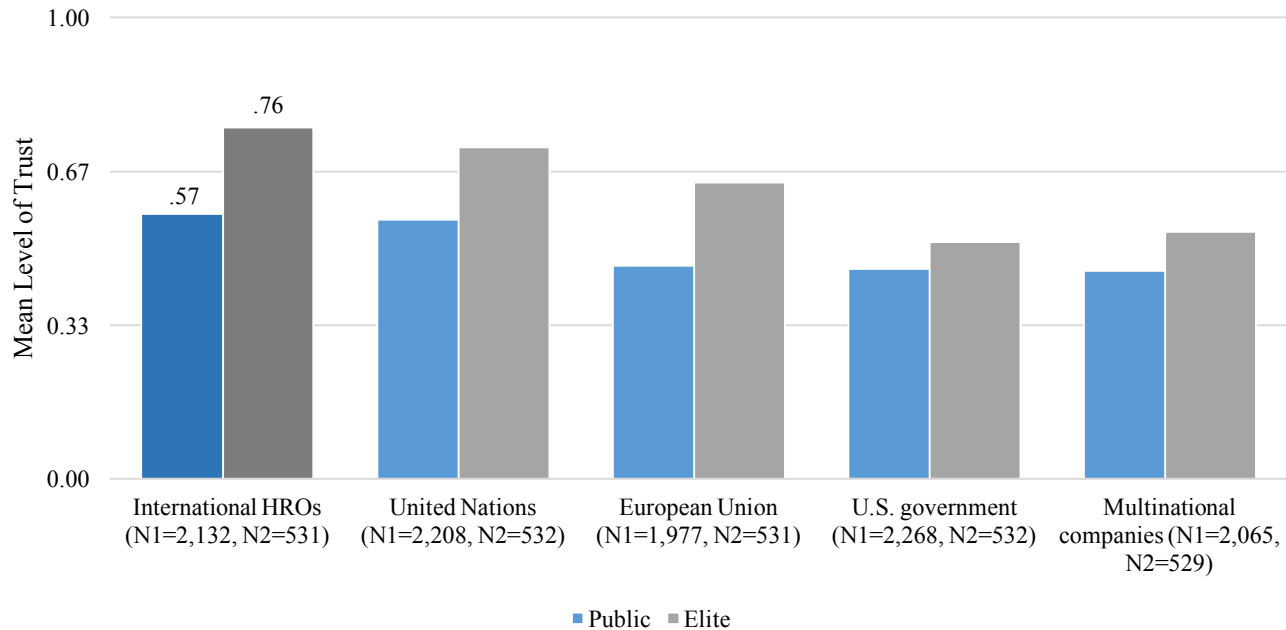
“World Giving Index 2012: A Global View of Giving Trends,” by Charities Aid Foundation, available at: <https://www.cafonline.org/PDF/WorldGivingIndex2012WEB.pdf>. See also the Gallup World Poll, available at: <http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/en-us/worldpoll.aspx>. Last accessed July 13, 2014.

<sup>163</sup> As explained above, we asked half the sample this question with a four-point scale, resulting in the lower N. The difference in means was small in magnitude: a mean of 2.7 (out of four) for LHROs and 2.6 for international HROs. The difference is statistically significant, however (sig=.081).

<sup>164</sup> For the public sample, the difference in means between international HROs and the UN was statistically insignificant using the four-point (sig=.265) and seven-point (sig=.153) scales; on the 0-1 scale, however, the difference was significant (sig=.071). The difference between international HROs and the European Union was significant for the 0 to 1, four-point, and seven-point scales (sig=.000).

Figure 3.15  
Respondents Trust International HROs More than Other International Actors

*“Please tell me how much trust you would place on the following institutions, groups or persons...”*

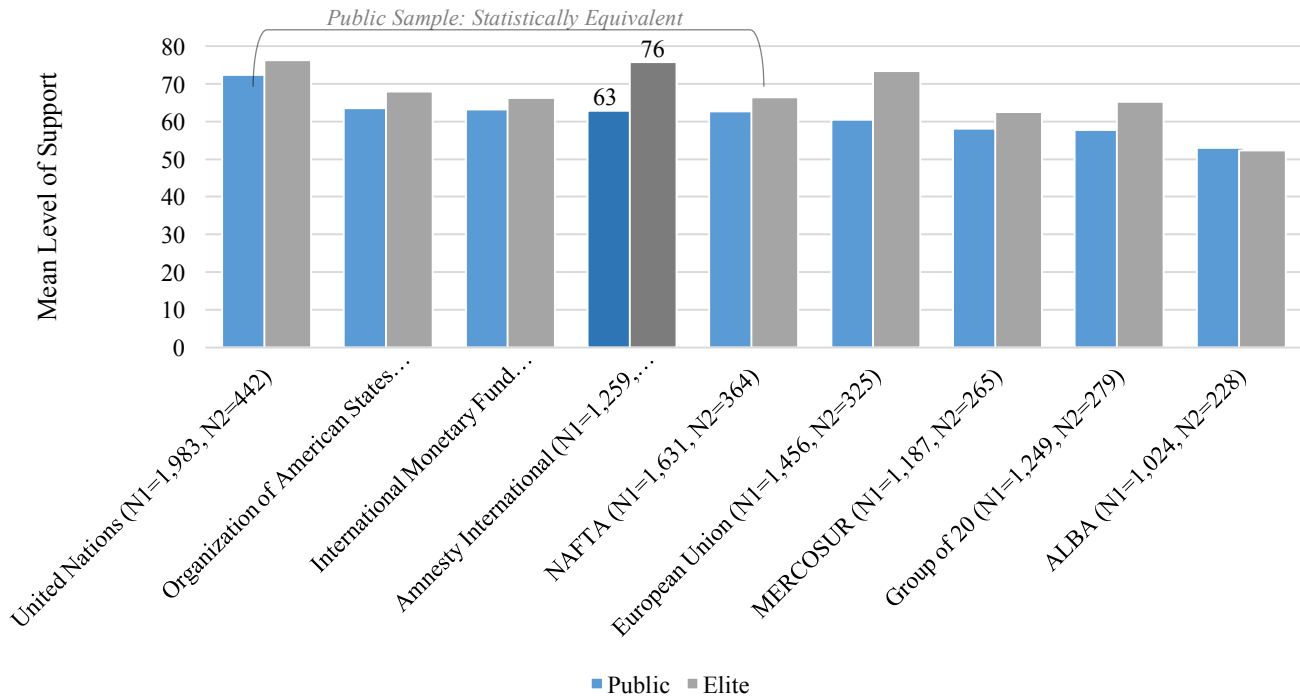


We also asked about trust in Amnesty International in comparison to other international institutions: *“On a scale of 0-100, with 0 being very unfavorable feelings, 100 being very favorable, and 50 being neither favorable nor unfavorable feelings, what are your feelings towards the following international organizations?”* The general public placed Amnesty directly in the middle of their feelings thermometer (Figure 3.16), while elite respondents placed Amnesty second only to the U.N.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>165</sup> The Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) is an international governmental organization promoting the integration of Latin American, Caribbean, and South American countries. Mercosur is an economic agreement promoting free trade between South American countries. The Group of 20 (G-20) is an economic council of 20 of the world’s major economies.

Figure 3.16  
Elite Respondents Felt More Favorably About Amnesty International

*“On a scale of 0-100, with 0 being very unfavorable feelings...what are your feelings towards the following international organizations?”*



Interpret these results with caution, however, as they suffered from low response rates. Only 53% expressed feelings about Amnesty, suggesting limited name recognition. Also note that many of the differences in the public sample's mean support are not statistically significant (Figure 3.16).<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> For the public sample, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean levels of support between Amnesty and both the UN (sig.=.000) and the EU (sig.=.000).

## Conclusions

We found Mexican human rights workers troubled by what they perceived as formidable barriers to the broad public resonance of human rights discourse. Mexican rights workers fear their reputation is compromised by their association with “criminals,” and they believe that the human rights discourse is seen as far removed from the public’s daily realities. They are also worried about a precarious funding situation; so much of their support comes from overseas, and local sources are difficult to access. They also believe that other groups, including the Catholic Church and social movements, are better equipped than they to reach the Mexican grassroots. Despite these worries, human rights workers had a sense of optimism, seeing their organizations as familiar with hard times and human rights activists as equipped with a tenacious ability to persevere.

Our surveys, however, suggest a somewhat more positive picture. The public hears human rights language often, and has positive associations with human rights terminology. They generally do not see human rights as protecting criminals or as a foreign concept, and, moreover, Mexican human rights groups enjoy the public’s trust. Particularly among those who mistrust the Mexican political establishment, human rights groups are seen quite favorably. The human rights “brand,” it seems, is in better shape than human rights workers suspect.

Participation in human rights activities, however, is largely confined to Mexican elites. Most of the public has not met a human rights worker and even fewer had made financial donations to human rights groups. Mexican human rights groups are not translating their strong local brand into broad based participation or donations and remain, for now, socially and organizationally elite.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: San Cristóbal and Mexico City LHRO Sampling Methodology

#### *Mexico City Sampling Methodology*

The Mexico City data was gathered from May 2010 to March 2012. The sampling frame includes 52 LHROs, from which the research team sampled 30 organizations (58%).

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:** To be included in the sampling frame, organizations needed to be: NGOs that were legally registered as “civil associations”; based in Mexico’s Distrito Federal; not part of an international NGO; and contain the term “rights” (either in an international language or in the vernacular) in their mission statements or major activity descriptions.

**Web-based Searches:** All 52 groups had a web presence. We found no legally-registered LHROs in Mexico City without a URL. We searched the following online sources for organizations that potentially fit our criteria. We then verified that the organizations met our inclusion criteria through further web searches, phone calls, physical contact, or key informant consultation.

- First five pages of results from a search of Google.int/en using the terms “derechos humanos y Mexico” and “derechos humanos y Distrito Federal.”
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) [database of NGOs](#), hosted at the Union of International Associations.
- Postings on [Idealist](#), a site posting internships and jobs with non-profit organizations around the world.
- The [Directory of Development Organizations 2010](#), a database of 70,000 development organizations, arranged by country of operation.
- NGO and social movement national network membership lists, including: *Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC)*; *Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia Mexico (MCD Mexico)*; *Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos*; *Red Por Los Derechos de la Infancia en Mexico*; and *Red National de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos "Todos Derechos para Todos y Todos."*<sup>167</sup>

**Issue Crawler Search:** After conducting a Google search for “derechos humanos” + “Distrito Federal,” and “derechos humanos” + “Mexico” on Google.int/es on 6 May 2010, we inputted URLs from the first five pages into Issuercrawler, a Web-based “mapping” device that identifies inter-organizational networks on the Internet.<sup>168</sup> We conducted two “crawls,” one for the “Distrito Federal” results, and another for the “Mexico” results. Our goal was to identify two different “issue networks” of organizations with a valid web presence, working on rights-based issues in the Distrito Federal and in Mexico as a whole.<sup>169</sup> We compared these two lists to the list created through the Web searches outlined above and added new organizations that matched our criteria.

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<sup>167</sup> We also included legally registered network secretariats, as long as they had human rights in their mandate.

<sup>168</sup> See [issuercrawler.net](#) and Richard Rogers, “Mapping Public Web Space with the Issuercrawler,” in *Digital Cognitive Technologies: Epistemology and Knowledge Society*, Claire Brossard and Barnard Reber, Eds, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010) 89-99.

<sup>169</sup> The crawls were conducted on 6 May 2010. See [Issuercrawler.net](#), “Scenarios of use for NGOs and other researchers: Issue Crawler Applications for Civil Society—Locating Networks,” Govcom.org (n.d.),

**Key Informant Verification:** We sent a draft sampling frame to five key informants in Canada and Mexico for verification and substantiation. Two of these were based at Canada's International Development Research Centre, one at the Ottawa-based non-profit Inter Pares, one from the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) Mexico City Office, and one from the Mexican National Network for Human Rights (Todos Derechos para Todos y Todos). These experts provided suggestions and cross-checked our sampling frame.

Our final sampling frame included 52 LHROs in the Mexican Distrito Federal.

**Sampling:** On May 27, 2010, we conducted an inter-actor Issue Crawl on the URLs of all 52 LHROs. From these results, we created two sampling strata: 1) the 30 "core" organizations (58% of the sampling frame), with URLs that received at least two links from the other 51 organizations' URLs; and 2) the 22 "peripheral" organizations (42% of the sampling frame), with URLs that received one or no links from the others.

We used a random number generator to select a proportionate sample from the two strata; the final sample included 17 "core" and 13 "peripheral" LHROs.

**Interview Process:** We conducted the first 14 interviews from May to August 2010 and the remaining 16 from February to March 2012. Interviews, conducted largely in Spanish, included an oral portion with 19 questions and a written portion with 31 fixed-choice questions. The interviews lasted an average of 73 minutes, with a range of 24 to 138 minutes, and a standard deviation of 26 minutes.

**Data Recording and Analysis:** The interviews were digitally taped and are on file with the project leader. Interviewers took written notes during interviews, summarized the interview's contents after the interview, and translated and added verbatim interview quotes.

**Funding:** The Mexico City interviews were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

### *San Cristóbal de las Casas Sampling Methodology*

The San Cristóbal data was gathered in 2010. The sampling frame included 25 LHROs, from which the research team sampled 15 organizations (60%).

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:** Identical to Mexico City; see above.

**Web-based Searches:** To locate potential LHROs, we searched the following sources. Then we verified if the organizations fit our inclusion criteria through online searches, phone contact, physical contact, or key informant input.

- First five pages of search results from [www.google.mx](http://www.google.mx), [www.google.int/en](http://www.google.int/en), and [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) in English and Spanish, for the terms "human rights" + "Chiapas" and "human

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<[http://www.govcom.org/scenarios\\_use.htm](http://www.govcom.org/scenarios_use.htm)> for a description of social networks versus issue networks. This page describes an issue network as "the network of organizations around a particular issue," and notes that the Issuecrawler was originally purposed to locate such networks.

rights” + “San Cristóbal.”

- Results from the same search engines listed above for Spanish language searches of key issues or categories of rights, including women’s rights, indigenous rights, migrant rights, reproductive rights, children’s rights, and land rights. This led to the discovery of several issue-specific networks.
- Membership lists of the Mexican NGO and social movement networks identified above.
- Postings on [Idealist](#).
- Website of [LaNeta](#), a civil society organization which serves as an electronic communication service for NGOs and other non-profit organizations.
- Key online directories: the [Directory of Development Organizations 2010](#) and [The Struggles for Women’s Rights in Chiapas: A Directory of Social Organisations Supporting Women in Chiapas](#), a list of registered organizations focused on women in the state of Chiapas.

**Issue Crawler:** On May 6, 2010, we searched for “derechos humanos” + “San Cristóbal” and “derechos humanos” + “Chiapas” on Google.int/es, and identified all URLs of organizations in the first five pages of results. We then entered those URLs into Issue Crawler, conducting separate “crawls” for San Cristóbal and Chiapas. This created two “issue networks,” which we compared to the list of LHROs created above.

**Key Informants:** We sent the draft sampling frame to four key informants, including one employee of the *Fray Bartolomé Centre for Human Rights* in San Cristóbal, one from *Servicio Internacional para la Paz (SIPAZ)*, one former employee of *Desarrollo Economico y Social de los Mexicanos Indigenos (DESMI)*, and one from *Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria (CIEPAC)*. They checked our list, and added several additional groups that we had not otherwise identified.

**Sampling:** Seventeen of the final list of 25 San Cristóbal-based LHROs had websites. We entered their URLs into Issue Crawler for an inter-actor crawl on July 12, 2010, and identified seven “core” organizations whose URLs received at least two links from the other organizations, and 10 “peripheral” organizations with one or no links to the other URLs. We also had eight LHROs with no web presence at all. We used a random number generator to select five LHROs from each strata for inclusion in our sample.

**Interview Process:** The questionnaire and procedures used were the same as in Mexico City (see above). San Cristóbal interviews lasted an average of 67 minutes, with a range of 40 to 92 minutes, and a standard deviation of 17 minutes.

**Data Recording and Analysis:** The interviews were digitally taped and are on file with the project leader. Interviewers took written notes during interviews, summarized the interview’s contents after the interview, and translated and added verbatim interview quotes.

**Funding:** The San Cristóbal de las Casas interviews were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

## Appendix B: San Cristóbal and Mexico City LHRO Sampling Frames

### *Mexico City Sampling Frame*

1. Abogados y Abogadas para la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos, A.C.
2. Academia Mexicana de Derecho de la Seguridad Social
3. Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, A.C. (AMDH)
4. Agenda LGBT
5. APIS - Fundación para la Equidad, A. C.
6. Asistencia Legal por los Derechos Humanos, A.C.
7. Asociación Nacional de Locutores de México, A.C.
8. Asociación Nacional para la Protección de los Derechos Humanos y la Vigilancia Permanente de la Aplicación de la Ley A.C.
9. Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de Personas Violadas (ADIVAC)
10. AVE de México, A.C.
11. Balance, Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud A.C.
12. Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, A.C.
13. Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Francisco de Vitoria”, O.P.
14. Centro de Derechos Humanos “Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez”, A.C.
15. Centro de Reflexión y Acción Laboral (CEREAL-DF) (Distrito Federal) – Ver COS-MONTIEL; se puede solicitar más información por correo electrónico
16. Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, A.C. (CEMDA);
17. Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social, A.C. (CENCOS)
18. Cochitlehua, Centro Mexicano de Intercambios, A.C. (CEMIAC)
19. Colectivo contra la Tortura y la Impunidad, A. C.
20. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C.
21. Comité Nacional de los 63 Pueblos Indígenas, A.C.
22. Comunicación e Información de la Mujer, A.C. (CIMAC)
23. Convergencia de Organismos Civiles, A.C.
24. Desarrollo, Educación y Cultura Autogestionarios (DECA), Equipo Pueblo
25. Educación con el Niño Callejero (Ednica), Institución de Asistencia Privada (I.A.P.)
26. Enlace, Comunicación y Capacitación, A.C. (ENLACE)
27. Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, A.C.
28. FIAN México, A.C. (Red por el derecho humano a alimentarse)
29. Fundación Infancia, A.C.
30. Fundación para la Protección de la Niñez, I.A.P.
31. Fundar
32. GIMTRAP, A.C. - Grupo Interdisciplinario sobre Mujer, Trabajo y Pobreza (México)
33. Grupo de Educación Popular con Mujeres (México)
34. Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE), A.C.
35. Incide Social, A.C.
36. Iniciativas para la Identidad y la Inclusión (INICIA), A.C.
37. Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia
38. IQ - Investigaciones Queer, A.C.

39. Letra S, Sida, Cultura y Vida Cotidiana, A.C.
40. Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
41. Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales, A.C. (PRODESC)
42. Red de Jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos, A.C.
43. Red Democracia y Sexualidad, A.C. (DEMYSEX)
44. Red Nacional Género y Economía (REDGE) / Mujer para el Diálogo (México)
45. Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos “Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos” - Secretaría Ejecutiva
46. Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México
47. SERAPAZ (Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz)
48. Servicios a la Juventud, A.C.
49. Sin Fronteras, I.A.P.
50. SIPAM - Salud Integral para la Mujer, A.C.
51. Sociedad Mexicana Pro Derechos de la Mujer (SEMILLAS)
52. Taller Universitario de Derechos Humanos, A.C. (TUDH)

*San Cristóbal de las Casas Sampling Frame*

1. Capacitación, Asesoría, Medio Ambiente y Defensa del Derecho a la Salud (CAMADDS), A.C.
2. Centro de Capacitación en Ecología y Salud para Campesinos – Defensoría del Derecho a la Salud, A.C.
3. Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas, A.C.
4. Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas”, A.C.
5. Centro de Investigación y Acción de la Mujer Latinoamericana, A.C.
6. Chiltak A.C.
7. Colectivo de Empleadas Domésticas de los Altos de Chiapas (CEDACH), A.C.
8. Colectivo de Promoción de los Derechos Civiles y Desarrollo Social, A.C. (DECIDES/Alianza Cívica Chiapas)
9. Colectivo Educación para la Paz y los Derechos Humanos, A.C.
10. Comité de Derechos Humanos de Base de Chiapas “Digna Ochoa”
11. Coordinación Diocesana de Mujeres
12. Diócesis de San Cristóbal de las Casas
13. Formación y Capacitación, A.C. (FOCA)
14. FORO para el desarrollo Sustentable, A.C.
15. Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya (FOMMA), A.C.
16. Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal - COLEM, A.C.
17. K’inal Antsetik, A.C. (Chiapas)
18. Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste, A.C.
19. Melel Xojobal, A.C.
20. NICHIM JOLOVIL, A.C.
21. Otros Mundos Chiapas, A.C.
22. Programa de Apoyo a la Mujer, A.C.
23. Proyecto DIFA, Alternativas y Actualización, A.C. (DIFA)
24. Red de Defensores Comunitarios por los Derechos Humanos, A.C.
25. Skolta’el Yu’un Jlumaltic, A.C. – Ch’ulme’il (SYJAC)

## Appendix C: Human Rights Perceptions Poll Survey Methodology

In order to conduct a national level poll in Mexico, we collaborated with the [Mexico, the Americas, and the World](#) initiative based at the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas (CIDE). Since 2004, this initiative has been conducting multi-country surveys on foreign policy and public opinion in Latin America on biannual basis. The surveys are conducted on a national level and include a wide range of topics including: interest in politics, contact with the world, trust and security, national and regional identity, political knowledge, foreign policy and the country's role in the world, international rules of the game, and regional and international relations.

In 2012, we added nine questions specific to perceptions of human rights and human rights organizations to the existing Mexico survey instrument.<sup>170</sup>

**Sampling:** A local Mexican survey firm, Data-OPM, conducted the survey between August and October 2012. The survey only included Mexican nationals residing in Mexico who were 18 years or older.

The sampling frame used for the survey population was the electoral sections defined by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) which included data from the latest federal election in 2012. The survey utilized a multi-stage sampling strategy where the survey firm conducted a randomized selection process for each of the three sampling units. The primary sampling units were electoral polling districts, the secondary sampling units were blocks within each electoral polling district, and the tertiary sampling unit was the households and individuals within each block.

The survey firm collected a sample of 2,400 in order to allow for analysis of the results at both national and regional levels. The sample margin of error was +/-2.0%. Field researchers hired by the survey firm conducted face-to-face interviews in Spanish. For details on the territorial and national breakdown of the sample and more information on sampling procedures, please see pages 121 to 126 of [Mexico, The Americas, and the World 2012-2013 report](#).

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<sup>170</sup> The Mexico survey instrument and further details on the added questions are available upon request.



## Appendix D: Characteristics of Human Rights Perceptions Poll Respondents

### Socioeconomic Status

There were 2,398 respondents in the nationally representative public sample and 535 respondents in the sample of Mexican elites. As Table D.1 illustrates, respondents from the elite sample were more likely to be men,<sup>171</sup> older,<sup>172</sup> and more highly educated than the general public sample.<sup>173</sup> Public sample respondents' households typically made between \$2,401 and \$3,200 a month, combined income of all individuals who work.<sup>174</sup> About 44% of public sample respondents had a home telephone and 60% had a cell phone.<sup>175</sup> About 33% of respondents report using the Internet; of those, about 56% use it at least once a day.<sup>176</sup> Public sample respondents had an average of seven light bulbs in their home.

Table D.1  
Respondent Characteristics

	Public Sample	Elite Sample
<b>Sex</b>	51% female	29% female
<b>Age</b>		
Mean	39 years	48 years
Range	18-93 years	23-82 years
<b>Monthly household income range (median)</b>	\$2,401-\$3,200	n/a
<b>Completed secondary education or above</b>	36%	98%
<b>International experience</b>		
Lived outside Mexico	50%	49%
Travelled outside of Mexico	24%	96%
Number of trips outside Mexico (mean)	1 trip	41 trips
<b>Physical assets</b>		
Has home telephone	44%	n/a
Has cellular/mobile phone	60%	n/a
Light bulbs in home (mean)	7 light bulbs	n/a
<b>Uses the internet</b>	33%	n/a
At least once a day <sup>177</sup>	17%	n/a

<sup>171</sup> The percentage of women in the elite sample is only somewhat less than other known percentages of female leaders in Mexico. Women currently comprise 37% of the Mexico Chamber of Deputies and 33% of the Mexico Senate. See "Mexico-Chamber of Deputies" and "Mexico-Senate" at the Inter-Parliamentary Union's PARALINE database, accessed at <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>, on 15 June 2013.

<sup>172</sup> According to the CIA World Factbook, the median age in Mexico is 28 years. The median age of public sample respondents was 36 years old. Whereas our survey only included adults, the CIA World Factbook figures apply to the entire Mexican population, so certain discrepancies in these comparisons are expected. See "Mexico," CIA World Factbook, accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html>, on 02 June 2013.

<sup>173</sup> All percentages reported represent valid percent, with missing values or non-applicable responses excluded. The results given here are also weighted.

<sup>174</sup> The GDP (PPP) per capita for Mexico in 2012 was \$15,300. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

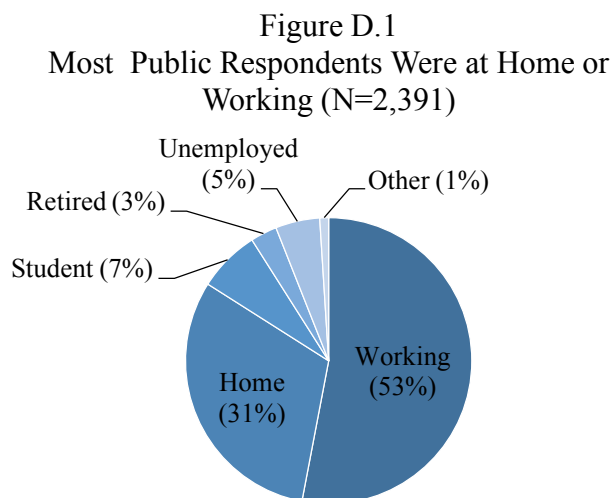
<sup>175</sup> In 2011 there were about 94.6 million cell phones in Mexico; with a 2013 national population of 116,220,947 people, this figure indicates that most of the population has at least one cell phone line. There were also about 19.7 million telephone lines in Mexico. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

<sup>176</sup> In 2009 there were about 13.2 million internet users in Mexico, or about 40% of the population. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

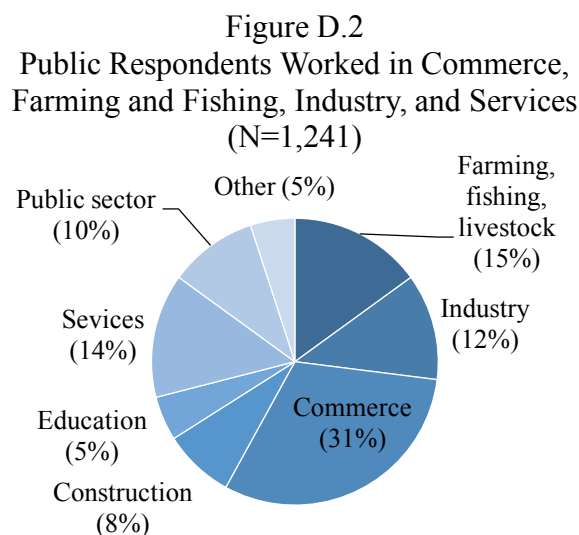
<sup>177</sup> This is not a valid percent, but rather indicates that 17% of the total sample reported using the internet at least once a day.

About half of respondents in both samples said that they have lived outside of Mexico, although there is likely non-response bias affecting the public sample.<sup>178</sup> Of those who had lived in another country, 90% of the public sample respondents had lived in the United States; 65% reported living abroad primarily for work and 27% for family reasons. In contrast, 48% of the elite sample respondents who had lived in another country named the United States, with 80% doing so for studies and 43% for work. The elite sample respondents had also travelled outside of Mexico much more frequently than the general public; on average, elites had taken 41 international trips, compared to just one visit for public respondents.

The public poll respondents were asked, “*What was your main activity last week?*” About 53% were currently working (including those who did not work the previous week, but typically do work), 31% stayed at home, 7% were students, 3% were retired, and about 5% were seeking work but were currently unemployed.<sup>179</sup>



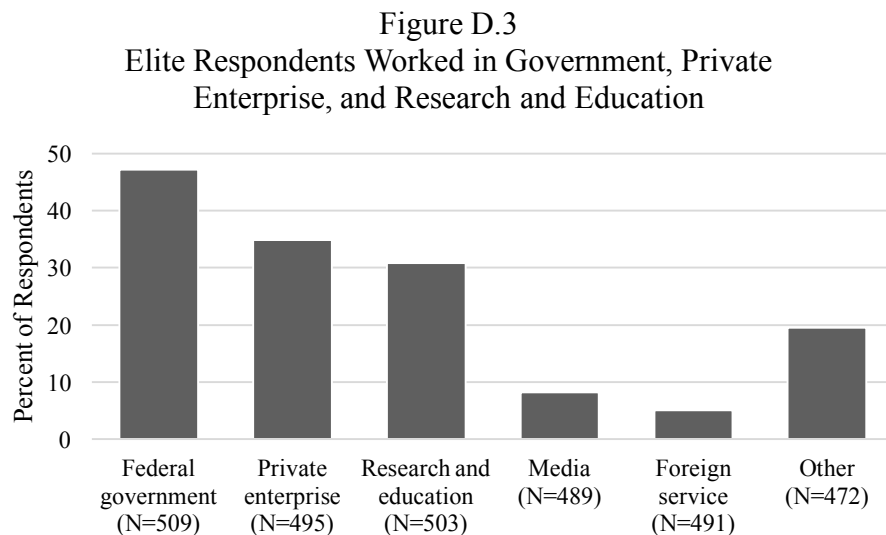
Respondents in the public sample who work outside the home were asked, “*What activity is the institution or company you work for involved in?*” As indicated in Figure D.2, of respondents who worked, about 31% worked in commerce, 15% in farming, fishing, or livestock, 14% in service, and 12% in industry. Significant minorities also worked in the public sector, construction, and education.<sup>180</sup>



<sup>178</sup> The response rate among the public sample was exceptionally low for this question; just 24% of respondents answered, perhaps indicating discomfort with reporting potentially undocumented international migration experiences.

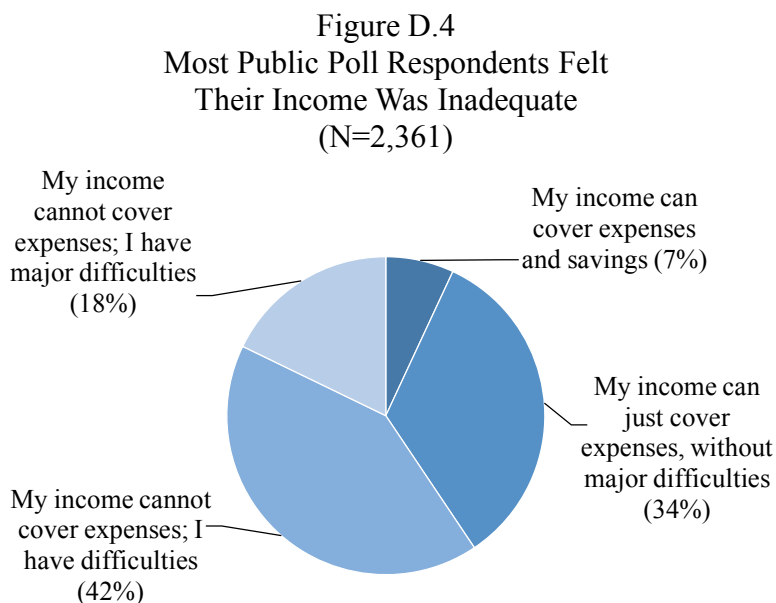
<sup>179</sup> The 2012 unemployment rate in Mexico was 5%. CIA World Factbook (2012) *op. cit.*

<sup>180</sup> In 2005, the labor force in Mexico was 14% agriculture, 23% industry, and 63% services. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*



In contrast, respondents in the elite poll worked for the Federal Government (47%), in private enterprise (35%), or in research and education (31%).<sup>181</sup>

Next, respondents were asked, “*With the total family income, which statement best describes your income status...?*” Well over half (60%) of respondents felt that their household income does not adequately cover their living expenses, while 34% felt that their income can just cover expenses, and a few (7%) reported that their income allowed them to have enough left over for savings.<sup>182</sup>



<sup>181</sup> Elite respondents were given the option to select more than one category, resulting in a total which exceeds 100%.

<sup>182</sup> In 2010, 51% of the population in Mexico was living below the poverty line. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

About 55% of public sample respondents had attended at least one year of secondary education. About 30% of the sample had a primary education or less. Nearly 16% had attended at least some university or post-graduate studies.

Figure D.5  
Most Public Respondents Attended  
Secondary School (N=2,382)

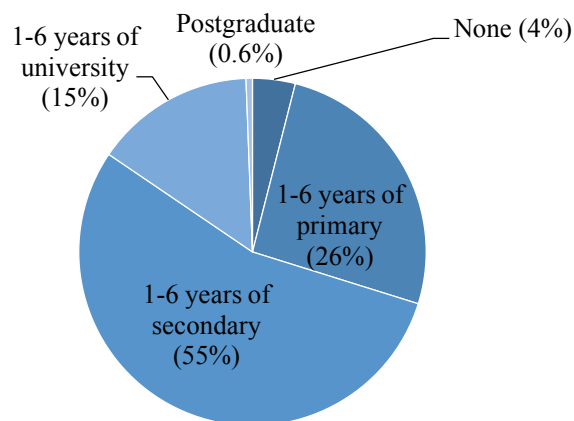
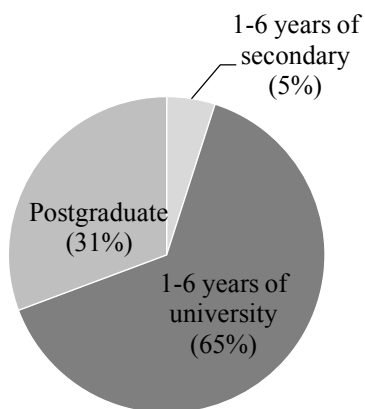


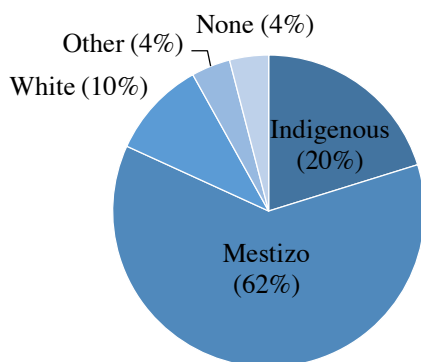
Figure D.6  
Most Elite Respondents Attended  
University or Beyond  
(N=533)



Not surprisingly, nearly all of elite poll respondents had completed secondary school, and 96% had attended university or post-graduate education.

## Ethnic Identity

Figure D.7  
Most Public Poll Respondents  
Identified as Mestizo (N=2,177)



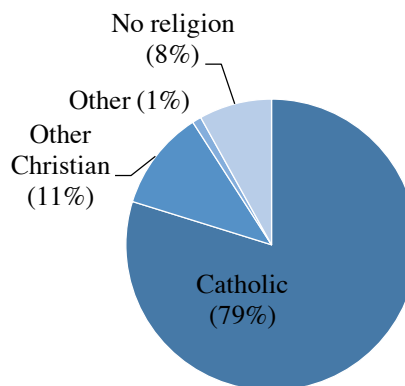
When given the options of mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish), indigenous, white, black, mulatto, Asiatic or Oriental, none, or other,<sup>183</sup> the majority of the sample (about 62%) self-identified as mestizo.<sup>184</sup>

## Religious Practice and Salience

Respondents in our general public sample were heavily Catholic (79%).<sup>185</sup> Of the non-Catholic respondents, about 11% were Christian, 8% did not claim a religious identity, and 1% identified with another religious group.<sup>186</sup>

Beyond claiming a religious identity, however, most public sample respondents claimed that religion is highly salient in their lives. When

Figure D.8  
Most Public Respondents  
Identified as Catholic (N=2,386)



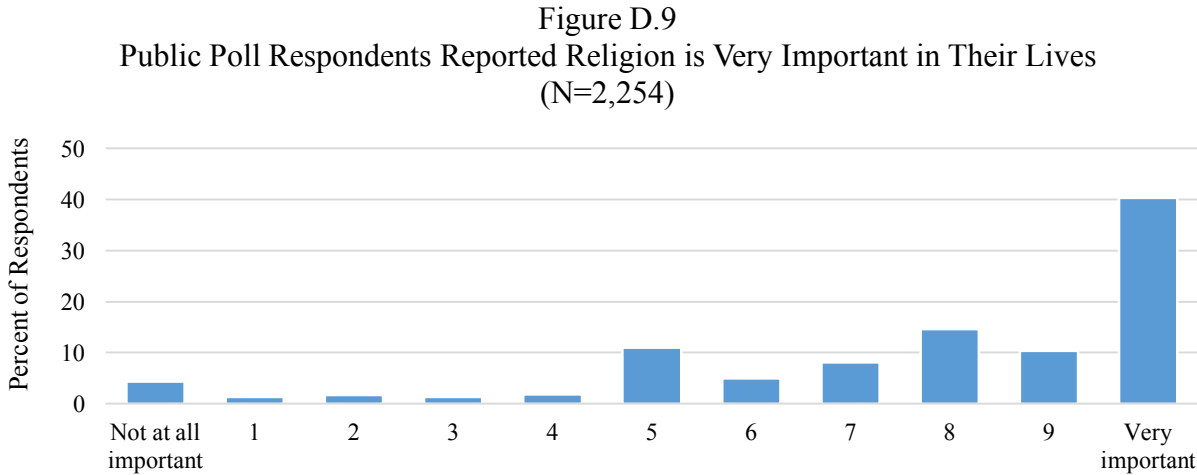
<sup>183</sup> About 1% of respondents identified as black, 1% as mulatto, 0.2% as Asiatic or Oriental, and 2% as other; these categories are combined as “other” in Figure D.7.

<sup>184</sup> About 60% of the population in Mexico is mestizo, while about 30% is Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian, 9% is white, and 1% is of “other” ethnic groups. CIA World Factbook, *op. cit.*

<sup>185</sup> Our data are similar to the Pew Research Center’s findings that 85% of Mexicans are Catholic, 10% identify with other Christian groups, and 5% identify as non-Christian. See <http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Catholic/Catholics-in-Mexico-and-Cuba.aspx>. Accessed 2 June 2013.

<sup>186</sup> Respondents were given the following response categories: Catholic, Christian, Protestant/Evangelical, Orthodox (Christian), Jewish, Muslim, other Christian religion or denomination, other oriental religion, other non-Christian religion, and no religion. Due to small percentages of some groups, Figure D.8 combines Christian, Evangelical/Protestant, orthodox (Christian), and other Christian religion or denomination into “other Christian,” and combines Jewish, Muslim, other oriental religion, and other non-Christian religion into “other.”

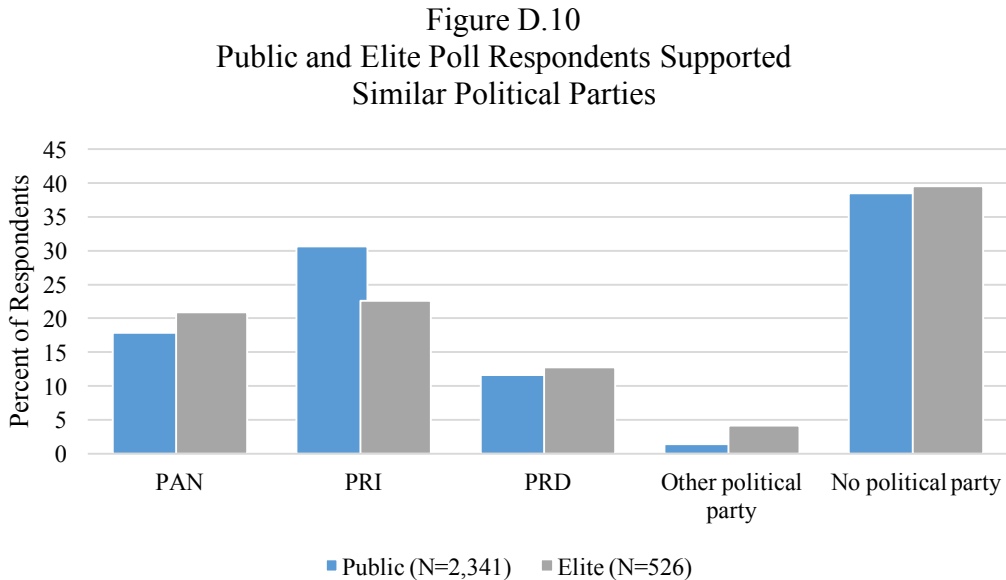
asked, “On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means not at all important and 10 very important, could you tell me how important religion is in your life?” about 40% of respondents chose 10, the highest category. The mean rank of the importance of religion in respondents’ lives was 7.7.



### Political Orientation and Participation

To determine political affiliation, respondents were asked, “Regardless of the party you voted for, do you normally consider yourself a supporter of [which party]?” As seen in Figure D.10, nearly 40% of respondents—in both the general public poll and the elite poll—did not identify with any political party. Of those who did

support a particular party, the majority (31% of the total in the public sample and 23% of the total elite sample) identified the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) claimed smaller, yet significant, minorities of both samples.



If respondents identified with a particular political party, they were asked, “*Would you say your support for this party is strong or somewhat strong?*” In the public sample, there was little variation in strength of support; for all political parties, from 45% to 56% of supporters said their support was “strong.” Similarly, among elite sample respondents, “strong” support for PAN, PRD, and “other political parties” ranged from 49% to 56%. Standing out, however, were elite supporters of PRI—70% of these individuals reported “strong” support for the party.

As a measure of political engagement, respondents in the public survey were asked, “*It is known that some people were unable to vote the day of the elections. Did you vote in the Presidential elections of July 2012?*” The majority of respondents (76%) reported that they voted in the election, while about 22% did not vote. Although the option was not given while administering the survey, about 2% of respondents volunteered that they annulled their vote in the election.

Survey participants were asked to rank their political orientation on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the political left and 10 meaning the political right. There were 18% of public sample respondents and 2% from the elite sample who said they did not know. Of those who did respond, the most common response was squarely middle of the road; 31% of public respondents and 26% of elites said they would be a 5 on the 0-10 scale. Nearly a quarter (24%) of public respondents were left-leaning, compared to 36% of elites. About 45% of public respondents and 38% of elites identified with the political right. The mean value for the public was 5.7 and for elites was 4.9.

Figure D.11  
Most Public Respondents Voted (N=2,370)

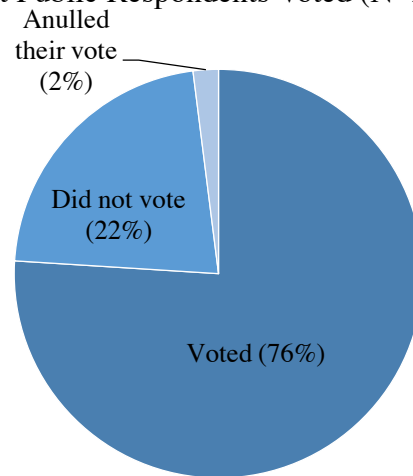


Figure D.12  
Most Respondents Identified as Politically Moderate

