

Special Report: Community Resilience on the North Border

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This report presents a quick look at various aspects of community strength along the Northern border of Ecuador. It is based on a late 2001 national sample of Ecuador with a sample size of about 3,000 respondents. A special sample was drawn at the same time of close to 2,000 respondents to represent the North border region as defined by USAID. The results compare the three Northern border provinces to the nation, divided into urban and rural areas.

Contributing to the solution of local problems

The results shown in Figure 1 show responses to the question about the respondent's contribution to solving local problems over the past two years. As can be seen, urban areas in Carchi and Esmeraldas score higher than the nation as a whole, but rural areas are at about the same level. Sucumbíos alone is the laggard, with far lower levels than the other areas of the country.

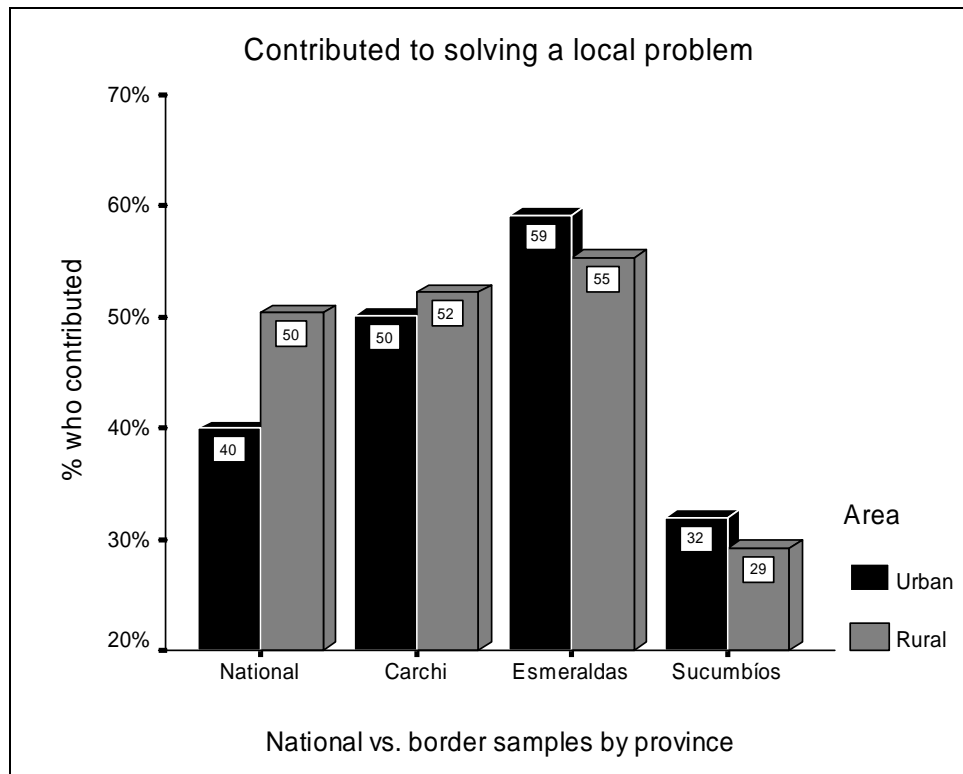


Figure 1

Civil Society Participation

Community problem solving, as shown above, depends upon a variety of factors, including the nature and magnitude of community problems. Another way of gauging community strength is to examine the level of civil society participation (CP6-CP13). We examined the levels of church group participation, and found, as shown in Figure 2, that church-related participation was much higher in Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos than in Carchi or the rest of the nation.

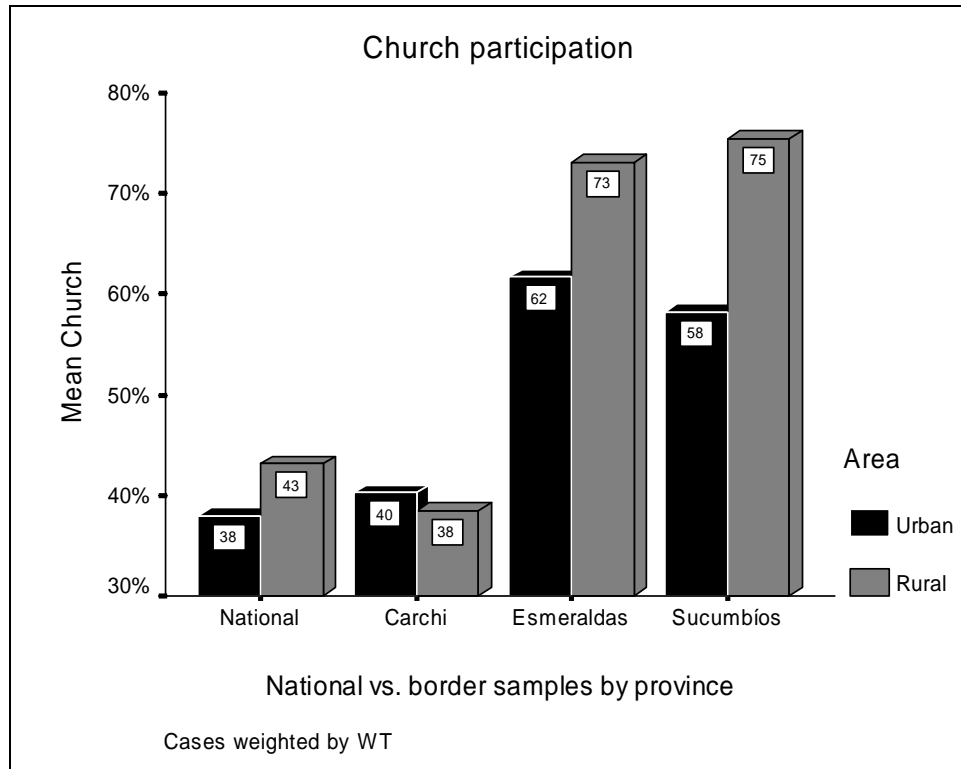


Figure 2

A similar pattern, although not as dramatically different, is found for participation in parent-teacher organizations. The results are shown in Figure 3. But, the reader should observe closely the urban/rural differences.

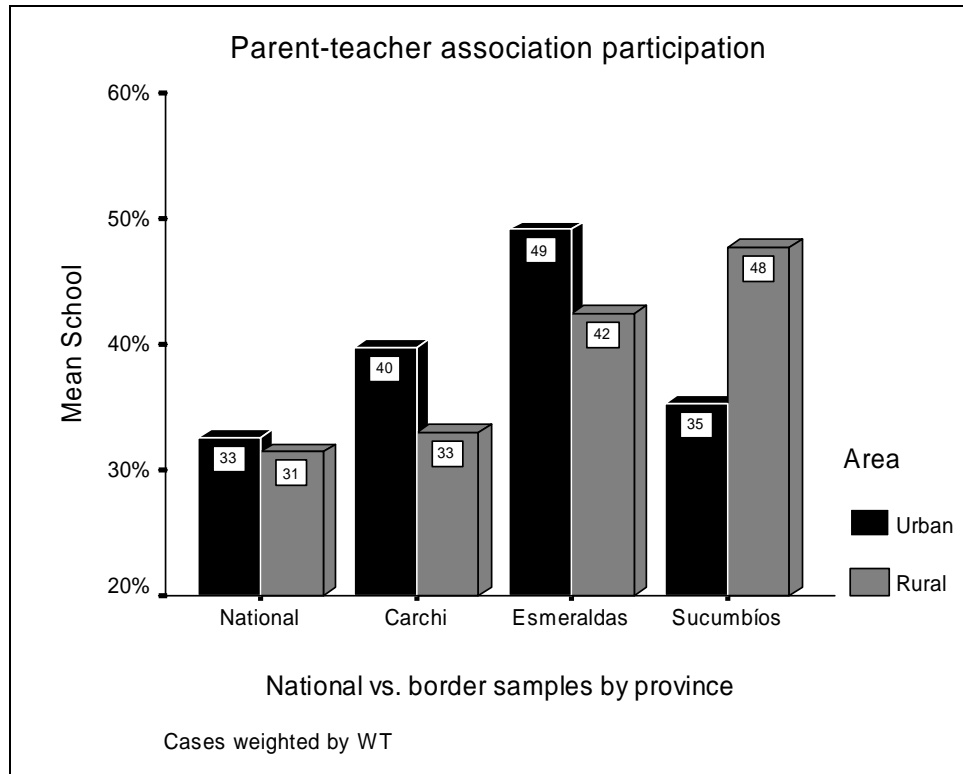


Figure 3

The remaining community-based organization in which there is significant participation in Ecuador are the community development associations. The results are shown in Figure 4. As can be seen, the rural/urban patterns are reversed. This suggests considerable variation in different patterns of community activism in Ecuador.

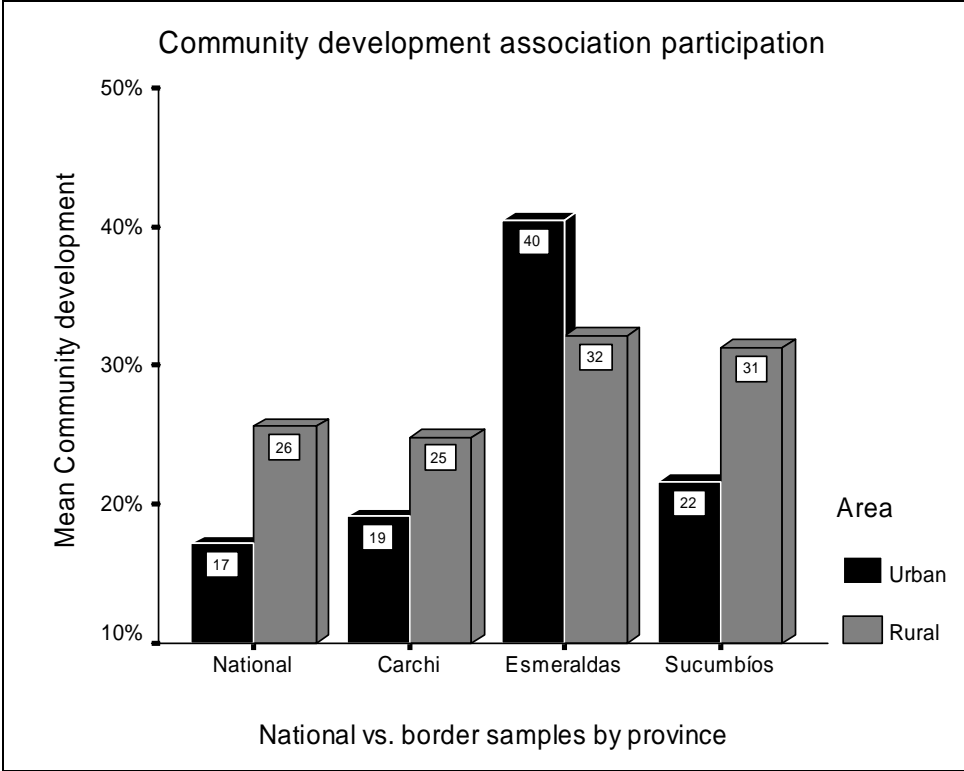


Figure 4

Crime

The “flip side” of community strength is crime. The patterns of crime victimization are shown in Figure 5. Urban crime levels are clearly worse than rural.

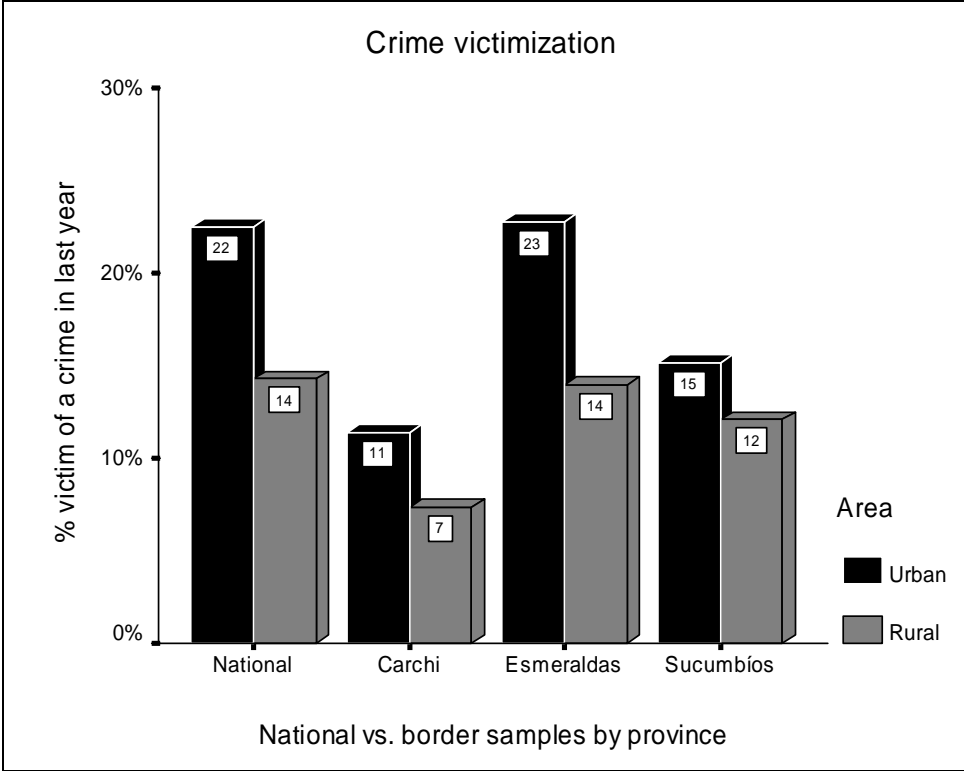


Figure 5

Trust in Local Government

Trust in the municipio varies somewhat among the various areas I the sample. The results are shown in Figure 6.

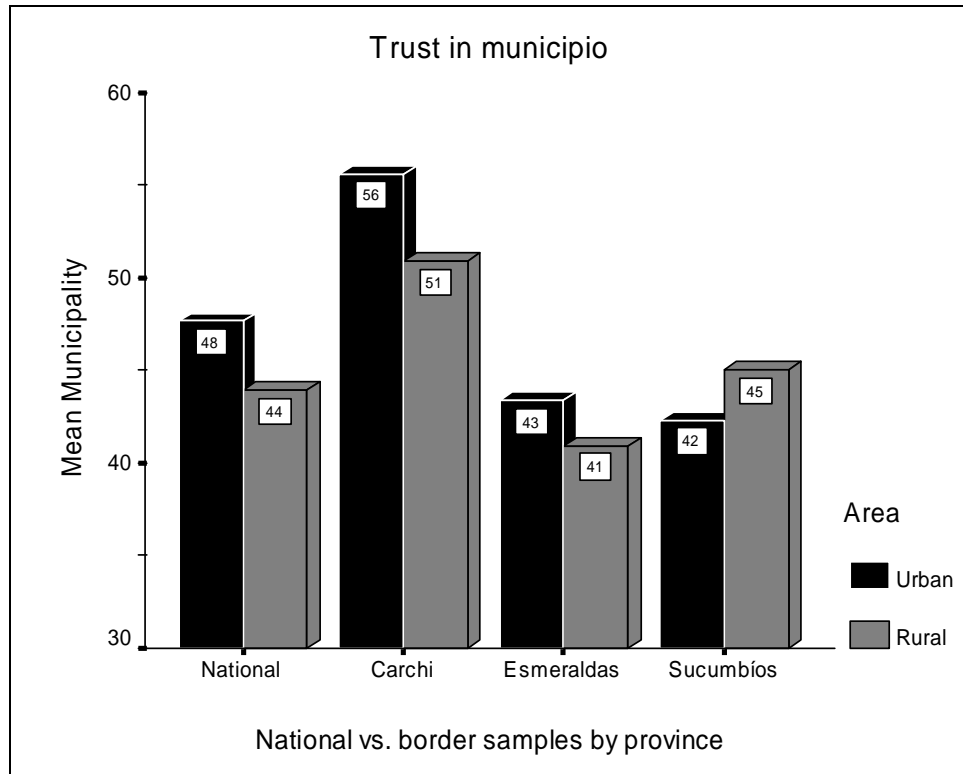


Figure 6

Trust in the Junta Parroquial

The Junta Parroquial is a new institution, created to stimulate local involvement. Trust in this institution does not, however, vary much among the elements of the sample.

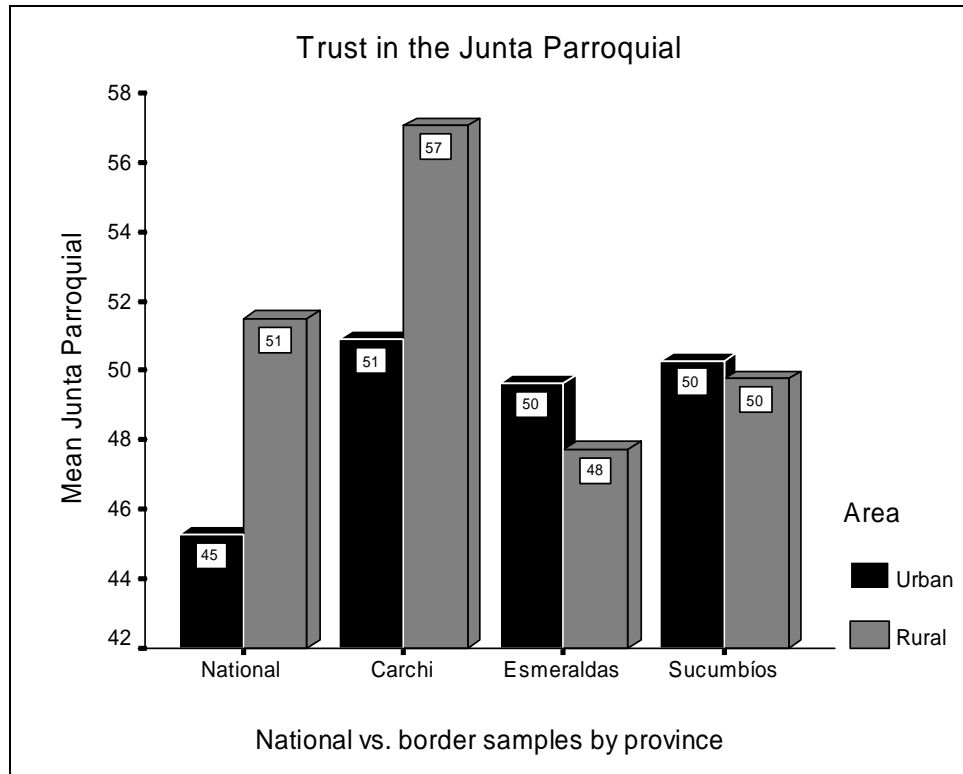


Figure 7

Satisfaction with Local Government

A comparison of satisfaction with local government is shown in Figure 8. The pattern is quite mixed, with urban satisfaction higher in the nation, and in two of the three Northern border areas, but not in Carchi.

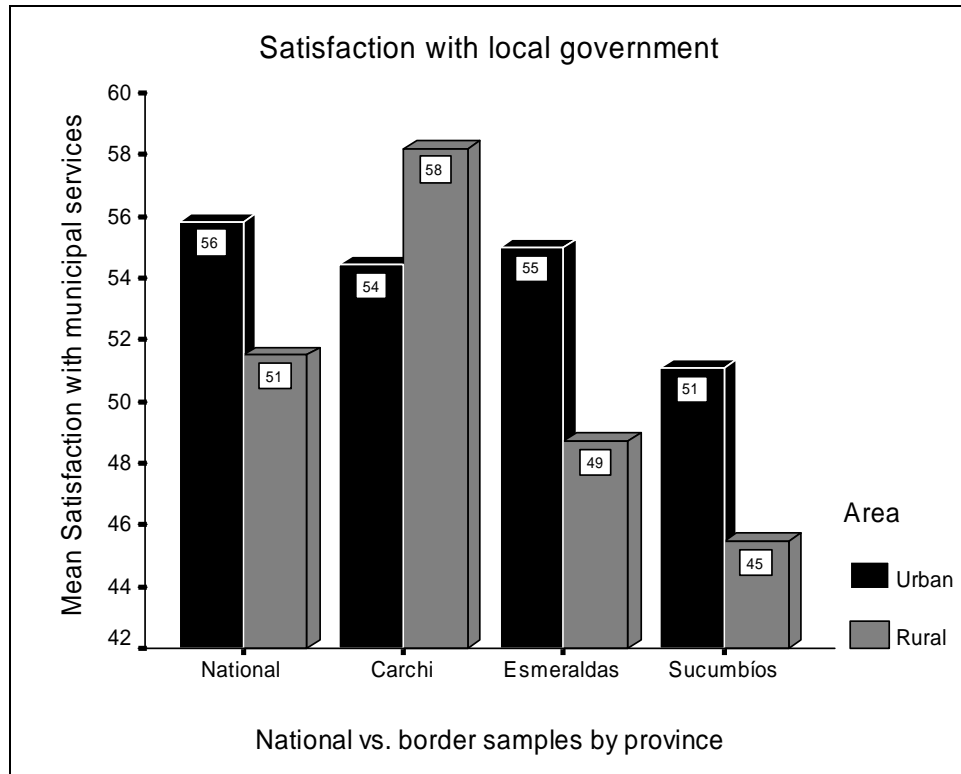


Figure 8

Trust of Friends

We now turn to interpersonal trust among friends, presumably an important basis for building strong communities. The results are shown in Figure 9. It is of note that in the nation as a whole, trust among friends is higher in urban areas than in rural, but in the Northern border, the reverse is the case.

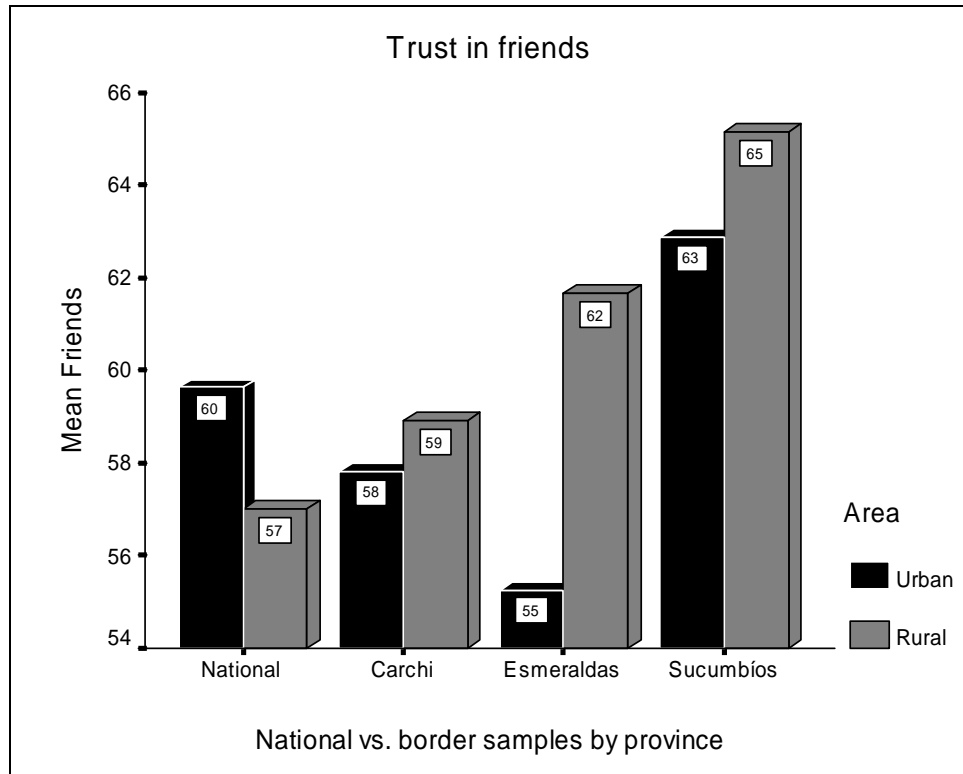


Figure 9

Trust in Neighbors

Beyond one's close circle of friends, there are neighbors, some of whom may be friends as well. In order to build strong neighborhood associations, trust among these individuals is important. The results are shown in Figure 10. It is of note to see that neighborhood trust is generally higher in the Northern border than in the nation as a whole. In addition, here we see a pattern for both the nation and the Northern border in which trust is higher in rural areas than urban.

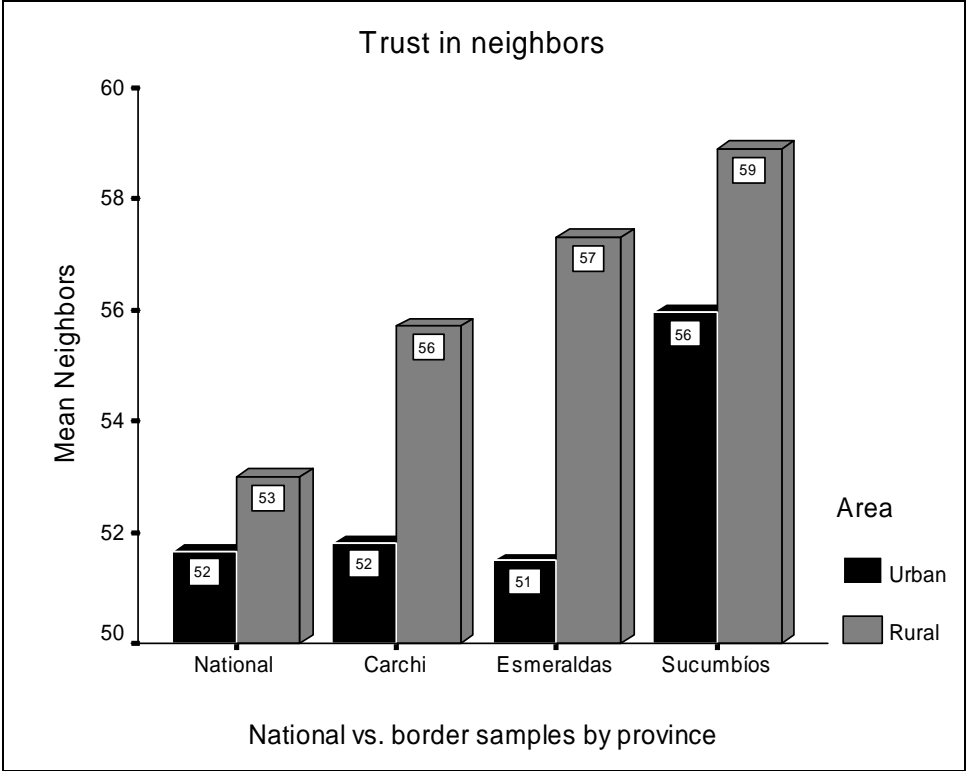


Figure 10