The State of the Region: Key Findings from the 2012 AmericasBarometer

Professor Mitchell A. Seligson, Founder and Director of LAPOP
Professor Elizabeth Zechmeister, Associate Director of LAPOP
I. Economic growth has been strong and inequalities in wealth are declining, but discrimination persists; barriers to opportunity are reinforced by cultural values.

II. Corruption concerns remain high in many countries but national executives are only “punished” for corruption when the economy is bad.

III. Prospects for stable democracy are strikingly divergent across the region: we find high system support in populist countries and decreased support in some long-standing democracies.

IV. Trust in China is lower than the U.S. in many, but not all, of the region’s countries.
Supporters of the AmericasBarometer
LAPOP Central at Vanderbilt
Unites a Consortium of Partners across the Americas

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| Panama       | |
|--------------| |
The AmericasBarometer

2004-2012: 178,864 Interviews

2004:

2012:
26 countries
41,632 interviews
(min. 1,500/country, with margins of error +/- 2.5%)
The Americas Barometer Data Base

2004-2012: 178,864 Interviews

- The only household survey of the hemisphere that includes North America, Central America, South America and key nations in the Caribbean
- Sample sizes of 1,500 respondents minimum per country
- Truly nationally representative, urban centers & rural areas
- Face-to-face interviews conducted in 13 languages
- Extensive, year-long pretests: 1,116 versions for 2012 round
The only regional survey using handheld computers, with software developed by academic partners in Costa Rica and Bolivia:

- Reduces data entry errors
- Allows for multiple languages
- Easily customized
- Permits embedded experiments

Pretesting in Guyana
The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2012:
Towards Equality of Opportunity
Preliminary Report—November 2012

Report Editors:
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Iowa State University

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Cultura política de la democracia en Bolivia, 2012:
Hacia la igualdad de oportunidades

Ciudadanía
Comunidad de Estudios Sociales y Acción Pública
LAPOP
Proyecto de Opinión Pública en América Latina
Free Access to Online Data Analysis Program in Beginner and Expert Modes

www.LapopSurveys.org
Free Access to Online Data Analysis Program in Beginner and Expert Modes

www.LapopSurveys.org

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<td>yes</td>
<td>3,871</td>
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<td>10.92</td>
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<td>81.08</td>
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Pearson chi2(1) = 44.5075 Pr = 0.000
Cramér's V = 0.0328
Kendall's tau-b = 0.0328 ASE = 0.005
World-Wide Free Access to the Data Sets

Latin American Public Opinion Project

Click here for free access.

AMERICASBAROMETER DATA NOW AVAILABLE FOR FREE DOWNLOAD WORLD-WIDE

LAPOP is the premiere academic institution carrying out surveys of public opinion in the Americas, with over thirty years of experience. Every two years it carries out the AmericasBarometer survey, which currently covers 26 nations including all of North, Central and South America, and the

www.LapopSurveys.org
Free Access: AmericasBarometer 2004-2012
SPSS and Stata Data Files

Latin American Public Opinion Project

Welcome

Search

Merged Datasets (All)

Search results. Search again

Argentina 2012
Country Director: German Lodola
directorio@utdt.edu

Stata File: Argentina 2012
SPSS File: Argentina 2012

Notes:
To download the files, click on the links shown or right-click on the file name and save it. You will not be able to open STATA or SPSS files unless your computer has the corresponding software available. The Questionnaires and Technical Information documents are saved as .pdf files which can be opened with PDF reader software available for free online such as Adobe Acrobat Reader get.adobe.com/reader/ and Foxit Reader www.foxitsoftware.com.

Belize 2012
Country Director: Mitchell A. Seligson
mitchell.a.seligson@vanderbilt.edu

Technical Document File: Belize 2012
Stata File: Belize 2012
SPSS File: Belize 2012

www.LapopSurveys.org
Selected Results from the AmericasBarometer 2012
Views of the Economy in the Americas Have Improved
The views of the national economy were more optimistic in 2012 than in any previous round.

**SOCT1.** How would you describe the country’s economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad or very bad?

- 2004: 33.6
- 2006: 36.5
- 2008: 37.3
- 2010: 41.6
- 2012: 45.3

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

*Trend in 10 countries in 2004*
But, views vary across countries.

Respondents tend to see the national economy more positively in South America than in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

SOCT1. How would you describe the country’s economic situation? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad or very bad?
Wealth inequality is steadily declining: based on the LAPOP Gini index of Household Wealth.

Index based on household ownership of:
- TV
- Refrigerator
- Landline
- Cellphone
- Vehicle
- Washing machine
- Microwave
- Motorcycle
- Indoor plumbing
- Indoor bathroom
- Computer

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Household wealth inequality increases and declines: Only three countries have increased inequality.

Index based on household ownership of:
TV, Refrigerator, landline, cellphone, vehicle, washing machine, microwave, motorcycle, indoor plumbing, indoor bathroom, computer

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Despite Positive Economic Trends, Economic Inequalities and Experiences with Discrimination Remain Important Barriers
Those with Darker Skin Tones have Lower Levels of Wealth

Significant differences in levels of wealth are found in 21 of 24 countries (no significant difference in Chile, Guyana, and Panama)

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
On average, in the Americas, women have lower incomes.
Women and those with Darker Skin are at Higher Risk of Food Insecurity

![Graph showing the relationship between various factors and food insecurity](image)

**FS2.** In the past three months, because of a lack of money or other resources, did your household ever run out of food?

**FS8.** In the past three months, because of lack of money or other resources, did you or some other adult in the household ever eat only once a day or go without eating all day?

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Experiences with Discrimination Vary Across the Americas

Note: Slide shows Percentage experiencing discrimination in any of the following places:
- Workplace or school
- Public places
- Government offices

Aggregation of DIS2, DIS3, and DIS5.

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Experiences with Discrimination Vary by Race/Ethnicity

Those who identify as indigenous report more discrimination in government offices.

Those who identify as black report more discrimination in public places.
Despite Strengthened Economies, Discriminatory Attitudes Underwrite Unequal Outcomes
Machista attitudes continue to give priority to men in the labor market.

**GEN1.** Some say that when there is not enough work, men should have a greater right to jobs than women. To what extent do you agree or disagree?
Machista attitudes continue to cede political leadership roles to men.

VB50. Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree?
Discriminatory attitudes also persist with respect to support for political leadership by those with darker skin tone.

**VB53.** Some say that in general, people with dark skin are not good political leaders. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?
However, there are strikingly high levels of support for gender quotas in most countries.

**GEN6.** The state ought to require that political parties reserve some space on their lists of candidates for women, even if they have to exclude some men. How much do you agree or disagree?
And, as well, there exists support for race-based affirmative action among many in the Americas.

RAC2A. Universities ought to set aside openings for students [with darker skin/who are racial or ethnic minorities], even if that means excluding other students. How much do you agree or disagree?
And, time-series evidence points to a diffusion of tolerance: increased support for gay political leaders 2004-2012

D5. And now, changing the topic and thinking of homosexuals, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?

[Graph shows mean values on 0-100 scale; trend is comparable if only original 2004 countries are included]
Corruption is an Important Issue: But, Presidents are Not Always Held Responsible for Corruption
The perception of corruption is very high in most countries (Suriname is the exception)

EXC7. Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is:

1. Very common
2. Common
3. Uncommon
4. Very uncommon
Even when perceptions have decreased slightly over time, politicians are largely perceived as corrupt.

**EXC7.** Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among public officials is:

1. Very common
2. Common
3. Uncommon
4. Very uncommon

![Perception of Corruption](chart.png)

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

*Trend in 10 countries in 2004*
But, Presidents are “Punished” for High Corruption Only When Economic Performance is Poor

*Result based on research forthcoming in a leading field journal: Comparative Political Studies*
For Many, Concerns about Corruption Decrease Support for the Democratic Rules of the Game

Some people say that under some circumstances it would be justified for the military of this country to take power by a coup d’état (military coup).

In your opinion would a military coup be justified under the following circumstances?

[Read the options after each question]:

[Customize for Costa Rica (Fuerza Pública), Panama (Fuerza Pública de Panamá), and Haiti (Police Nationale d’Haiti)]

JC13. When there is a lot of corruption.

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
The economy, discrimination, and corruption influence a key component of LAPOP’s barometer of democratic stability: system support.

Perceptions of Corruption (and experiences with corruption) reduce system support.
Prospects for Stable Democracy: Strikingly Divergent Trends across the Americas
LAPOP has developed a validated index as a key indicator of democratic stability

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Legitimacy (System Support)</th>
<th>Tolerance to the right of opposition (political tolerance)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
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- **High Legitimacy, High Tolerance**: Democracy
- **Low Legitimacy, High Tolerance**: Stable Democracy
- **Low Legitimacy, Low Tolerance**: Authoritarian Stability
- **High Legitimacy, Low Tolerance**: Unstable Democracy
- **Low Legitimacy, Low Tolerance**: Democracy at risk

LAPOP has developed a validated index as a key indicator of democratic stability.
Legitimacy (system support)

**B1.** To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?

**B2.** To what extent do you respect the political institutions of (country)?

**B3.** To what extent do you think that citizens’ basic rights are well protected by the political system of (country)?

**B4.** To what extent do you feel proud of living under the political system of (country)?

**B6.** To what extent do you think that one should support the political system of (country)?
In 2012, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador are in the lowest positions in terms of public perception that courts guarantee fair trials.

**B1. To what extent do you think the courts in (country) guarantee a fair trial?**
D1. There are people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people’s right to vote?

D2. How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views?

D3. Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to run for public office?

D4. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television to make speeches?
D1. "There are people who only say bad things about the (country) form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's right to vote?"

(Scale 1 – 10, converted to 0 – 100 scale)

In 2012, Honduras (but also Peru, Bolivia, El Salvador, and Ecuador) have low levels of support for the right of regime critiques to vote.
Democracy at risk, 2012

Political Tolerance

Legitimacy (System Support)

High
Low

High
Stable Democracy
Authoritarian Stability

Low
Unstable Democracy
Democracy at risk

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Support for Stable Democracy: Changes between 2010 and 2012

- Honduras: -19.8%
- Costa Rica: -15.1%
- Panama: -12.4%
- Colombia: -8.6%
- Bolivia: -7.2%
- Suriname: -6.6%
- Uruguay: -6.5%
- Brazil: -5.4%
- Venezuela: -4.7%
- El Salvador: -2.9%
- Mexico: -2.8%
- Peru: -2.7%
- Dominican Republic: -0.5%
- Ecuador: 0.1%
- Guatemala: 2.0%
- Chile: 2.2%
- Paraguay: 2.7%
- Argentina: 2.8%
- Nicaragua: 3.5%
- United States: 4.5%
- Guyana: 10.7%
- Bolivia: 7.6%
- Panama: 7.4%
- Haiti: 7.0%
- Canada: 6.6%
- Trinidad and Tobago: 7.4%
- Jamaica: 7.9%
- Belize: 8.0%
- Honduras: -19.8%
- Costa Rica: -15.1%
- Panama: -12.4%
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- Dominican Republic: -0.5%
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- Guatemala: 2.0%
- Chile: 2.2%
- Paraguay: 2.7%
- Argentina: 2.8%
- Nicaragua: 3.5%
- United States: 4.5%
- Guyana: 10.7%
- Bolivia: 7.6%
- Panama: 7.4%
- Haiti: 7.0%
- Canada: 6.6%
- Trinidad and Tobago: 7.4%
- Jamaica: 7.9%
- Belize: 8.0%
Democracy at Risk, 2006

Tolerance of the right to dissent

Low System Support and Low Tolerance

95% Confidence Interval (Design-Effects Based)

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Protestas y escándalos acusan al gobierno de Chinchilla en Costa Rica

El Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones (TSE) de Costa Rica solicitó a la Fiscalía del país investigar a 90 dirigentes del Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) luego de concluir que el partido de Gobierno le cobró al Estado, dentro de sus gastos de campaña, 800 mil dólares por contratos aparentemente simulados de alquiler de carros.

Miles de trabajadores protestan contra la corrupción en Costa Rica

Unas 5,000 personas, en su mayoría educadores y trabajadores de la salud, marcharon este martes por una de las principales avenidas de capital costarricense para expresar su repudio a la corrupción en el gobierno y exigir mejores salariales, constató un periodista de la AFP.

"Alto a la corrupción", "alto al desmantelamiento del Estado", "que los banqueros paguen la crisis", eran algunas de las consignas de los manifestantes, que recorrieron la Avenida Segunda de San José desde el sector oeste hasta el edificio del Congreso, en el centro de la ciudad.

La protesta fue convocada por la Asociación de Profesores de Segunda Enseñanza (APSE), la Unión de Empleados de la Caja del Seguro Social (UNDECA) y otras organizaciones sociales.

The media report on signs of system discontent in Costa Rica

ESCÁNDALOS DE CORRUPCIÓN GENERAN PESIMISMO EN EL CONSUMIDOR

Escrito por Cristian Leandro Córdoba
Jueves 31 de Mayo de 2012 00:00

* Según informe de la Escuela de Estadística de la UCR

* Aumenta la apatía sobre políticas económicas de Laura Chinchilla

Las familias costarricenses no están contentas con las políticas económicas de la administración Chinchilla Miranda ya que, a pesar del crecimiento de la producción, le pasó la factura por los últimos escándalos de corrupción.

En la edición 34 del Indicador de la Confianza de los Consumidores, elaborado por la Escuela de Estadística de la Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), se evidencia un aumento del pesimismo sobre el futuro de la economía.

Denuncian por corrupción a dirigentes del partido de Gobierno en Costa Rica

Los presuntos implicados están siendo investigados por cobrar 800 mil dólares en contratos simulados de alquiler de autos. El Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones en Costa Rica reveló una información en la que compromete a funcionarios del gobierno.

Integrantes del Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) están presuntamente implicados en escándalos de corrupción, señaló el Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones de Costa Rica (FOTO:ARCHIVO)
Trouble in Paradise?

In 2012 the Americas Barometer shows the lowest system support in Costa Rica in 34 years.

Costa Rica remains in the upper-tier of “Stable Democracies,” but system support has declined significantly in recent years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval (Design-Effects Based)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
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Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Emerging Issue Area: Attitudes toward China
MIL10A. How much do you trust the government of China (U.S)? In your opinion, is it: very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy, not at all trustworthy (Scale 1–4, converted to 0–100 scale)
Relative levels of trust in the U.S. versus China vary across the region.

Trust in China more than the US

Trust the US more than China

Average Difference in Trust in US - Trust in China

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Who Trusts China More?

Those who are less educated, live in urban areas, and women are more likely to trust in China.

Yet, as many as 16.25% of respondents do not have expressed attitudes on China.

Source: © AmericasBarometer by LAPOP
Heckman Selection Model by: ideology, education, size of place, age, wealth, sex