

Abby B. Córdova

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1. EDUCATION

August, 2005-December, 2008 Ph.D in Political Science, Vanderbilt University

Fields of Study: Comparative Politics, Research Methods, and International Relations

Dissertation: “Divided We Fail: Economic Inequality, Social Mistrust, and Political Instability in Latin American Democracies”

Committee: Mitchell A. Seligson (Chair), John Geer, Marc Hetherington, and Jonathan Hiskey

Abstract: In my dissertation, I theorize that high levels of economic inequality intensify disagreement over redistributive policies between the rich and poor by eroding interpersonal trust. To test my arguments, I use multilevel modeling techniques based on large-N surveys combined with contextual data at both the national and subnational level. I find that patterns of discrimination against the poor and fear of crime, especially among the wealthy, are primarily present in highly unequal *and* economically underdeveloped societies; those patterns in turn translate into social distrust. As a result, low levels of interpersonal trust in such contexts lead to reduced support for public policies to shrink the gap between the rich and poor, particularly among prosperous individuals.

August, 2003-May, 2005 M.A. in Latin American Studies, Vanderbilt University

Fields of Study: Economics and Political Science

August, 2001-May, 2003 M.A. in Economics, Vanderbilt University, Graduate Program in Economic Development (GPED)

Thesis: “Analyzing Poverty in El Salvador: A Research Using Quantile Regression and Bootstrap Econometric Techniques”

Abstract: In this study, I explore alternative ways to measure poverty in El Salvador, and using bootstrap econometric techniques examine the statistical significance of changes in poverty indicators from 1998 to 2000, a period of transition toward economic liberalization. The results show that contrary to the government’s estimates, extreme poverty was not reduced in El Salvador during this time frame. In addition, using quantile regression, I analyze the effect of gender and education on earnings inequality across urban and rural areas in El Salvador.

March, 1996-May, 2000 B.A. in Economics, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, El Salvador (highest GPA of the class, completed five year program in four years)

Thesis: “Convergence and Economic growth in Central America, A Time Series Analysis From 1950 to 1995”

Methods Courses Taken at Vanderbilt University

- Fall, 2001** Statistical Analysis, Department of Economics
- Spring, 2002** Econometrics, Department of Economics
- Fall, 2002** On the Measurement of Poverty and Inequality: Theory and Applications (Independent Study with James E. Foster), Department of Economics
- Fall, 2005** Research Design, Department of Political Science
- Spring, 2006** Topics in Political Methodology (focus: time series analysis), Department of Political Science

Methods Courses Taken at the University of Michigan

- Summer, 2009** Experimental Methods and Causal Inference, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
- Summer, 2007** Institute for Survey Research (ISR):
-Questionnaire Design
-Semi-structured interviewing
-Focus Groups
- Summer, 2006** Institute for Survey Research (ISR):
-Multilevel Modeling using HLM
-Survey Methodology
-Analysis of Complex Samples
-Structural Equations Analysis

2. PUBLICATIONS IN REFEREED JOURNALS

- 2011** The Role of Social Capital in Citizen Support for Government Action to Reduce Economic Inequality. *Journal of International Sociology* 41 (2): 28-50. (Special Issue on Political Inequality in Latin America)
- 2010** Economic Shocks and Democratic Vulnerabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Latin American Politics and Society* 52 (2): 1-35. (co-authored with Mitchell A. Seligson)
- 2010** Governance and Support for Stable Democracy in Latin America: Results from the AmericasBarometer 2008. *Journal of Democracy en Español* 2: 28-46. (co-authored with Mitchell A. Seligson)
- 2009** Economic Crisis and Democracy in Latin America. *PS: Political Science & Politics* (4): 673-678. (co-authored with Mitchell A. Seligson)

3. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

- 2008** Measuring Relative Wealth using Household Asset Indicators and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). *Insights Series* 6. Nashville: Latin American Public Opinion Project, Vanderbilt University. <http://vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/I0806en.pdf>

4. BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2011** *Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project. (co-authored with Dominique Zéphyr; 240 pp.)
- In press** “Measuring Migration Connections across Latin America.” In *Migration and Remittances: Trends, Impacts and New Challenges*, ed. Alfredo Cuécuecha. Maryland: Lexington Books. (co-authored with Jonathan Hiskey)

5. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 2011** Contributor to the study, *Crime and Violence in Central America: A Development Challenge*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- 2010** “Democratic Values in Hard Times.” In *Democratic Consolidation in the Americas in Hard Times: Report on the Americas*, eds. Mitchell A. Seligson and Amy Erica Smith. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project. (co-authored chapter)
- 2008** “Social trust, Economic Inequality and Democracy in the Americas.” In *Challenges to Democracy in the Americas, evidence from the AmericasBarometer 2006*, ed. Mitchell A. Seligson. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project.
- 2008** “Corruption and its Impact on Support for Stable Democracy.” In *Political Culture of Democracy in Ecuador: The Impact of Governance*, ed. Mitchell A. Seligson. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project.
- 2006** *The Political Culture of Democracy: Haiti 2006*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project. (co-authored with Dominique Zéphyr and Yves Pierre)
- 2006** “Capital social y su impacto en la democracia.” In *Auditoría de la democracia: Informe Bolivia 2006*, ed. Mitchell A. Seligson. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project.
- 2000** Crecimiento Económico y Convergencia en Centro América. *Realidad, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 77. Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas.
- 2000** Pobreza, Crecimiento Económico, y Distribución del Ingreso en El Salvador en la década de los 90's. *Realidad, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 73. Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas. (co-authored with Dominique Zéphyr)

6. PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION

Explaining Social Mistrust in Economically Divided Democracies: An Examination of the Interplay between Individual and Contextual Economic Traits.

The Impact of Social Capital on Neighborhood Safety and Citizens' Political Attitudes: A Multi-Site Cluster Randomized Experiment in Central America. (Book Project)

Explaining Variations in Trust in Local Government across Neighborhoods: A Multilevel Model using Data for 71 Neighborhoods in El Salvador. (co-authored with Matthew Layton)

Inequality, Party Loyalty, and Social Trust in El Salvador: An Internet-based “Trust Game” Experiment. (co-authored with Ryan Carlin and Gregory Love)

Citizens and the Role of the State in the Americas. (Book Project with Mitchell A. Seligson and John A. Booth)

Education, Wealth of Nations, and Political Tolerance in the Americas: A Multilevel Level Model Based on 71 Country-Year Observations. (co-authored with Mitchell A. Seligson and Daniel Moreno)

A Natural Experiment: The Impact of Haiti’s 2010 Earthquake on the Quality of Democracy

7. HONORS AND AWARDS

January, 2001-May, 2003 **Fulbright Scholarship**, Master’s degree in Economics

May 2003 **“Most Outstanding Student” award**, class 2001-2003. Graduate Program in Economic Development (GPED), Vanderbilt University. (highest GPA of the class)

May 2003 **“Most Outstanding Thesis” award**, class 2001-2003. Graduate Program in Economic Development (GPED), Vanderbilt University. (Best thesis award)

Summer 2008 **Summer Research Award**, College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University

Summer 2008 **Summer Field Research Award**, Center for the Americas, Vanderbilt University

8. EMPLOYMENT

December, 2008 to present **Post-Doctoral Fellow**, Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University

August, 2009 to present **Lead Researcher** of Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) Field Experiment Research on Impact Evaluation, Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)

May-August, 2008 **Consultant for the World Bank**, Poverty and Gender section for the Latin American and Caribbean region (Study on Crime and its Political Effects in Central America)

May-December, 2000 **Instructor of Economics**, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA), El Salvador

9. GRANTS

- September, 2009** **\$3.2 million- Experimental Impact Evaluation** of Neighborhood-Based Crime Prevention Strategies, Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). In charge of the research design of the study (including Power Statistical Analysis), writing of grant proposal, preparation of survey questionnaires, design of neighborhood selection strategy, supervision of research assistants, and project execution (award granted by USAID to the Latin American Public Opinion Project for the implementation of a multi-year randomized field experiment in more than 100 at risk neighborhoods, and data collection in 75 low risk neighborhoods across three Central American countries)
- July, 2011** **\$22,000- Mellon-Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Seminars Grant.** Project titled, “Experiments for Export? Assessing the Suitability of Behavioral Experiments in Latin America” (with Fernanda Boidi, Ryan E. Carlin, Gregory J. Love, and María del Rosario Queirolo; activities include a two day workshop during the Spring semester, 2012, the organization of a panel on behavioral experiments in Latin America in the LASA Congress in San Francisco, California, in May, 2012, and a publication on the main themes discussed in the seminars)

10. TEACHING AND SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

- June, 2011** Instructor for “Multilevel Modeling Using STATA,” a 16 hour workshop organized by FUNDAUNGO at the Inter-Continental Hotel in San Salvador, El Salvador.
- May, 2009** Invited lecturer for “Introduction to World Politics,” Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University.
- November, 2007** Instructor for the training session of LAPOP’s Scientific Support Group on “Analysis of Complex Survey Data using STATA” at Start-up 2008 AmericasBarometer Conference
- May, 2007** Invited lecturer for “Survey Methodology,” Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University.
- Summer 2007, 2009** Worked on syllabus development project for Comparative Politics course on “Political Economy.” (*with Professor Mitchell A. Seligson, Vanderbilt University*)
- 2003** Teaching Assistant for “Education and Economic Development,” Department of Economics, Vanderbilt University, Spring semester.
- 2002** Teaching Assistant for the course “Statistical Analysis (M.A. level),” Department of Economics, Vanderbilt University, Fall semester.
- 2000** Taught “Intermediate Microeconomics” to more than 100 students (two sections), Universidad Centroamericana Jose Simeón Cañas, El Salvador

11. INVITED PRESENTATIONS

University of Colorado at Boulder, 36th Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop, Broomfield, Colorado (invited by Florida International University), July 9-12, 2011

Plenary: The 2010 Haiti Earthquake: Impacts and Ongoing Recovery Challenges.

Presentation titled: Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions.

<http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/workshop/2011/Sessions/ws201143.html>

USAID, the U.S. Department of State, and the Organization of American States (OAS)'s conference on Successful Models and Approaches on Youth Development and Crime Prevention, OAS Headquarters, Hall of the Americas, Washington, D.C., June 28, 2011.

Participated in panel on "Community Policing" (presented baseline results of CARSI's neighborhood based field experiment for El Salvador)

http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/usaid-state-oas_agenda.html

Florida International University (FIU), Latin American and Caribbean Center, Miami, January 28, 2011.

Presentation titled: Haiti in Distress: The Impact of the 2010 Earthquake on Citizen Lives and Perceptions, with Dominique Zephyr. <http://casgroup.fiu.edu/lacc/events.php?id=1053>

State Department's Third Annual Conference on Program Evaluation: New Paradigms for Evaluating Diplomacy in the 21st Century, Washington, DC, June 8-9, 2010.

Presentation titled: Improving Democracy and Governance Programs through Better Evaluation: The Impact evaluation of USAID's Central America Regional Security Initiative, with Eric Kite (USAID).

<http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/evaluationconference/2010/workshops/democracy/>

Woodrow Wilson Center's Conference on Municipal Strategies of Crime Prevention, Washington, D.C., December 2009.

Presentation titled: Measuring the Impact of Community Based-Crime Prevention Programs: A Scientifically Rigorous Methodology. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/municipal-strategies-crime-prevention>

Presentations at the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, State Department, and American Organization of States, Washington, D.C., March 2009.

Presentation titled: Economic Crisis and Democracy in Latin America, with Mitchell A. Seligson and Liz Zechmeister.

The World Bank, Poverty and Gender section for the Latin American and Caribbean region, Washington, D.C., June 28, 2008.

Presentation titled: Crime Victimization and Insecurity as Threats to Democratic Stability in Central America: Evidence from the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

12. RECENT PRESENTATIONS IN ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington, September 2-5, 2010.

Presentation of paper titled: How does Economic Inequality Erode Citizens' Democratic Values? Social Capital and the Interplay between Individual and Contextual Economic Traits.

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 22-25, 2010.

Presentation of paper titled: The Role of Social Capital on Neighborhood Safety and Citizen's Political Attitudes: A Multi-Site Cluster Randomized Experiment in Central America (A Research Design)

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, April 2009. Workshop on Datasets in Comparative Politics
Presentation of paper titled: "Economic Shocks and Democratic Vulnerabilities: Evidence from the AmericasBarometer Survey," with Mitchell A. Seligson.

13. FIELDWORK

Pre-test of survey questionnaires and training of interviewers and supervisors in:
Guatemala, April 2011, June 2011
El Salvador, November 2008, November 2009, April, 2010, August 2011
Nicaragua, June 2006, December 2008
Panama, August 2010
Guyana, February 2007, March 2009

14. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Manuscript Reviewer: American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Latin American Politics and Society, International Studies Quarterly

15. REFERENCES

Mitchell A. Seligson
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Director of the Latin America Public Opinion
Project (LAPOP), Vanderbilt University
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John Geer
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