

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



LAPOP

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AmericasBarometer
Barómetro de las Américas

From the Director



Seeing “small Vanderbilt make a huge difference” in the world is what Lawrence Waller (Class of '16) valued in his research assistant role in LAPOP Lab. Today we continue to advance global engagement, research innovation, and student immersion.

Global Engagement. When Peru’s Attorney General addressed the public in the midst of an attempted coup, she referenced LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer. Our data fuel dialogue and policy across the Americas, from Peru’s recent crisis to ongoing efforts by the US government to address immigration. In recent praise from USAID: “Your work is a critical driver in our thinking and our strategic planning.”

In 2022, our lab deployed new surveys and carried out briefings across the region. We hosted a regional conference in Guatemala, attended by dozens of researchers and practitioners. And LAPOP-VU alum Dr. Fernanda Boidi stepped up as Director of Fieldwork & Regional Partnerships, boosting our visibility and impact via media engagements, workshops, and new collaborations.

Research Innovation. Defining the research frontier, we continue to disseminate new discoveries in international survey methods and democracy. The Workshop on International Survey Methods attracts a global audience. A LAPOP-Vanderbilt Summer School in International Survey Methods will launch in 2023.

The lab annually produces dozens of technical, methods, and research reports. In 2022, we had four lab manuscripts accepted for publication. These present original findings on online sampling, phone-based surveys, opinions on election postponement, and support for democracy.

Student Immersion. LAPOP is where many of our students find their “sense of belonging at Vanderbilt.” Some, like Marco Navarro, grew up seeing references to LAPOP’s surveys in his home country and, on making the connection to Vanderbilt, set sights on our campus. Others, like Danni Chacon who presented research at our Guatemala conference, find the lab a “great opportunity to work with faculty on social science research” and an inspiration for pursuing a Ph.D.

In 2022, our lab published 7 *Insights* reports written by undergraduate students. Students gain transferable skills and experience communicating research. These reports build knowledge on democratic dynamics, as noted by an Associated Press reporter who recently retweeted a “timely” report on tolerance for executive coups written by Deniz Orbay (Class of '25). Graduate students also advance research in the lab, including through our new “Omnibus for LAPOP affiliates” survey.

LAPOP Lab is a microcosm of Vanderbilt’s ambition to generate a large global impact from our small campus. We excitedly anticipate another year of global engagement, excellence in research, and capacity building based on all our efforts, including the 2023 AmericasBarometer.

Liz Zechmeister

Director of LAPOP Lab

About the Lab

Vanderbilt University's [LAPOP Lab](#) is a center for excellence in the study of public opinion and democracy. The lab's mission is to:



Advance research innovations



Build capacity in survey methods and analysis



Collect high-quality public opinion data



Disseminate policy-relevant research

LAPOP's core project is the award-winning AmericasBarometer, a regular survey of citizens' experiences, evaluations, and expectations regarding democratic governance in the Western Hemisphere.

LAPOP's efforts are supported by major grants from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Inter-American Development Bank, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and others, as well as by support from Vanderbilt University. In 2022, the lab's awarded, obligated, and pending extramural grant funding—supporting work for that year and for future years—totaled \$2.9 million.

Advancing Research Innovations

116

new questions on migration and other topics in surveys of Central American countries

8

Workshops in International Survey Methods (WISM)

258

Workshops in International Survey Methods attendees

4

Lab research manuscripts accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals

2

Lab research manuscripts with revise-and-resubmit decisions



Implemented new survey measures related to migration and other topics in Central America

We conducted 3 face-to-face national surveys in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; a national phone survey in Nicaragua; and an online study in Guatemala. The face-to-face surveys marked LAPOP's first in-person interviewing activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducted in collaboration with USAID, these surveys provide new ways to measure and analyze migration and its drivers from a comparative perspective. The studies also included innovative measurements of critical but understudied topics: child marriage, LGBTQ+ identity, gender-based violence, and stigma toward returnees. The studies fielded 116 new questions designed to better understand the complexities of public opinion dynamics in the region.



Expanded the Workshop in International Survey Methods (WISM)

Launched in 2021, [this workshop series](#) features experts from around the world who deliver presentations on cutting-edge survey methodology, with a focus on research in international contexts. The series is intentionally trans-institutional, engaging multiple disciplines.

In 2022, we hosted 8 workshops that covered topics such as the impact of response styles in socioeconomic research, creative approaches to collecting data during the COVID-19 pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, survey mode effects on sensitive questions, sensitivity analysis for survey weights, and complex data analysis of electoral data. A total of 258 attendees engaged in the workshops in 2022.

WISM expands Vanderbilt's global presence; from outreach by a prospective graduate student in Brazil: "I have been following the LAPOP seminars on survey methodology and became interested (in Vanderbilt)."



Generated new discoveries in public opinion research

LAPOP Lab had 4 articles accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals:

- Citizens are more supportive of postponing elections during a public health crisis like the current pandemic, according to [this article](#) published in the *Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública* by lab director Liz Zechmeister and senior statistician Luke Plutowski.
- Online surveys in Latin America have inherent sampling biases, according to [this article](#) published in *P.S. Political Science & Politics* by Noam Lupu, Luke Plutowski, and Liz Zechmeister.
- Data from Costa Rica suggests that responses to phone surveys tend to exhibit higher rates of social desirability bias and extreme responses when compared to face-to-face surveys, according to [this article](#) in *Revista Latinoamericana de Opinión Pública* by Noam Lupu and Adam Wolsky.
- Corruption scandals like that of Peru's Vacuna-gate can undermine democratic stability by deteriorating the legitimacy of a political system, according to a forthcoming article in the *Journal of Experimental Political Science* by Oscar Castorena, Noam Lupu, Adam Wolsky, and Liz Zechmeister.

Two other lab manuscripts received revise-and-resubmit decisions and are in progress; topics range from the implications of fabricated survey data to survey data collection modes and household selection.

Our lab also published 7 new [Insights](#) reports authored by Vanderbilt undergraduate students, as well as a series of [Methodological Notes](#) authored by our research staff on survey innovations.

Building Capacity

6

graduate research
assistants

8

fieldwork
training sessions

24

workshops and
webinars

18

undergraduate
fellows

22

undergraduate
research assistants

"My experience at the LAPOP Lab this year has been immersive, innovative, and collaborative. Working alongside people who are passionate in our mission not only supplemented my academic interests in public policy but also strengthened applicable skills that I can take with me wherever I go."

Stanley Zhao,
3rd Year UG at Vanderbilt

241

interviewers

38

interviewer
training hours

814

workshop
attendees

3

Postdoctoral
Fellows



Daniela Barba
Ph.D. Politics & Social Policy
Princeton University



Eli Rau
Ph.D. Political Science
Yale University



Boyoon Lee
Ph.D. Political Science
Pennsylvania State
University



The LAPOP Lab Team



Implemented a new workshop series to boost data access and analytical training across the Americas

We designed and introduced a new series of data access and analysis workshops in collaboration with local partners in the Latin America and Caribbean region; the workshops engaged university students, civil society stakeholders, and policymakers. Workshops in Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, Jamaica, Paraguay, and Peru focused on access to AmericasBarometer data online, how to analyze the data using our [Data Playground](#), and how to conduct more complex data analysis and create data visualizations using R.



Increased capacity building of fieldwork teams to facilitate in-country interviewer training

We built on the success of our 2021 virtual training protocols to increase the ability of local country team leaders to train interviewers in person. Our staff created a new virtual curriculum for “training trainers” and successfully piloted it in projects in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Local team leaders now have increased self-sufficiency to implement LAPOP’s expertise in conducting high-quality survey interviews. This new approach to interviewer training will be expanded in the 2023 AmericasBarometer.



Conducted dozens of workshops on survey research methodology and data analysis

LAPOP hosted 24 workshops with 814 participants. These workshops covered a variety of topics on how to conduct survey research in the LAC region, with a particular focus on access and analysis of AmericasBarometer data, cognitive questionnaire pretesting, and innovations in survey methods.



Successfully transitioned post-doctoral fellows

LAPOP’s two recent post-doctoral fellows gained employment at the University of Virginia (tenure track) and the World Justice Project. Two new post-docs joined and are collaborating on research on migration and democracy.



Engaged dozens of undergraduate students in lab activities

Our Research Fellow Program ran via an Honors Seminar in the spring, participation in the national Leadership Alliance Program in the summer, and Independent Studies in the fall. “Excited” to have engaged in a “wonderful learning experience” is how one Research Fellow described the path to publication of his *Insights* report, which was referenced in a [tweet](#) by an Associated Press reporter.

Our Research Assistant Program saw students participating in data analysis, social media content creation, report design, career panel discussions with peers, translation of important documents, dataset cleaning, creation of a LAPOP questionnaire matrix, and more!

Collecting Data

4

country face-to-face
and phone surveys

2

countries
surveyed online

117

unique online
survey questions

198

unique face-to-face and
phone survey questions

2,008

online interviews

8,636

face-to-face and phone
interviews conducted

Guatemala

Honduras

El Salvador

Nicaragua



Conducted over 10,000 interviews

Across face-to-face, phone, and online surveys, over 10,000 interviews were completed.

Survey projects in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador all contained national samples plus oversamples designed to assist USAID's programming efforts.

Our lab implemented innovative survey experiments in an online study in Guatemala, with results presented in Antigua, Guatemala at LAPOP's annual conference.



Successfully returned to face-to-face interviewing

LAPOP Lab implemented best practices for minimizing health risks as we returned to face-to-face interviews in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador



Launched a new research opportunity for data collection by Vanderbilt scholars

The "Omnibus for LAPOP Affiliates" (OLA) is an online study that permits students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty to collect original data in a collaborative survey. The inaugural OLA was conducted in Brazil with modules proposed by 4 lab affiliates

Two new post-docs joined and are collaborating on research on migration and democracy.



Disseminating Research

17

annual conference
papers using
our data

55

reports
published

59

presentations of
research findings

2,414

dissemination event
attendees

42,600

website visitors

3,500

Data Playground
users

81

scholarly papers
using our data

107

news media
mentions

Disseminating Research

8,821

Twitter followers



14%

increase from 2021

1,429

Twitter mentions



265%

increase from 2021

1,095,500

Twitter impressions



100%

increase from 2021

including



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY



KONRAD
ADENAUER
STIFTUNG

48

partner
institutions



IDB
Inter-American
Development Bank



Asociación de Investigación
y Estudios Sociales

CORPORACIÓN
PARTICIPACIÓN
CIUDADANA



ECUADOR



Centro de Información
y Recursos para el Desarrollo



FOPRIDEH
Federación de Organizaciones
No Gubernamentales para
el Desarrollo de Honduras



data



IEP
INSTITUTO DE
ESTUDIOS
PERUANOS



Completed dissemination of findings of the 2021 AmericasBarometer

Our lab published 55 reports in 2022, including Topline Briefs, country reports, Insights, and Spotlights.

We partnered with at least 48 institutions across 22 countries to host 59 research dissemination activities for findings of the 2021 AmericasBarometer. More than 2,400 people attended these events across the Americas.



Published research conducted by undergraduate students

Our lab also published 7 new [Insights](#) and 30 [Spotlight](#) reports authored by Vanderbilt undergraduate students. Insights provide in-depth analyses at the regional level of individual-level predictors, both sociodemographic and political, of key survey questions from the AmericasBarometer. Spotlights provide quick snapshots of survey items from the AmericasBarometer across Latin America and Caribbean countries and across time.



Delivered Topline Briefs on 2022 study findings

Our research staff produced Topline Briefs for studies in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which included a focus on findings related to emigration intentions and their drivers. Each report was presented to USAID country Missions. Additionally, we hosted a presentation of findings in a regional perspective to key stakeholders of the USAID's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and regional experts from the State Department. These U.S. government stakeholders make wide use of LAPOP data to inform their programming efforts in the Latin America and Caribbean region.



Expanded the use of our data by students, scholars, and policymakers

More than 40,000 users visited our [website](#), where LAPOP Lab makes all AmericasBarometer data and reports freely available.

Key stakeholders at USAID, policy and research audiences in the Americas and across the globe, other U.S. government institutions, journalists, and the public have access to ALL AmericasBarometer country-specific and regional, technical reports for all 22 countries surveyed in the AmericasBarometer 2021 round. These reports include sample design information, response rates, and weighting specifications. The data shape program and policy outcomes, as noted by USAID's Deputy Assistant Administrator, Mileydi Guilarte, in recent remarks: "I cannot overstate the contributions LAPOP has made to evidence-based programming... truly the gold standard. In this moment of immense challenges, your work has never been more important."

The data also shape dialogue on democracy, as evidenced by Peru's Attorney General referencing LAPOP AmericasBarometer data in the midst of recent political turmoil in the country.

Our [Data Playground](#), a free online, interactive data analysis tool, makes AmericasBarometer 2004-2021 data easily available to students, journalists, and others. Users have access to data on 128 survey questions on topics including the economy, political participation, citizen security, corruption, political tolerance, and democracy. About 3,500 users visited the Data Playground in 2022. The Data Playground allows users to tabulate frequencies for a single variable, visualize cross-country comparisons on a map, and conduct crosstabulations.

Our data are also widely used by scholars and policymakers who publish their research. In 2022, we tracked at least 81 articles using LAPOP data that were published in peer-reviewed journals and in reports from international policy and research organizations.



Returned to an in-person annual conference hosted in Guatemala

For the first time since 2019, LAPOP Lab hosted its [annual academic conference](#), The Public and Democracy in the Americas, in person. In partnership with the Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASÍES), our annual conference took place in Antigua, Guatemala.

Along with a former vice president and USAID officers, a total of 58 scholars and local experts joined us for this two-day event, which included 17 research manuscripts using AmericasBarometer data. The conference also featured a student research poster session, at which Vanderbilt student Danni Chacon participated as the sole undergraduate participant.



Grew our presence on online through social and news media

LAPOP data and findings were referenced at least 107 times in the media, including news publications from dozens of countries across the Americas.

The lab's social media presence grew to a record level in 2022. On Twitter, LAPOP had 8,821 followers in 2022, an increase of 14% from 2021. In 2022, the lab had 1,095,500 Twitter impressions and 1,429 mentions, a nearly 265% increase and 100% increase, respectively, from 2021.

2022 The Public and Democracy in the Americas Annual Conference



LAPOP Lab hosted its [annual academic conference](#) in person for the first time since 2019. In partnership with the Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASÍES), our annual Conference took place in Antigua, Guatemala on Sept. 30 - Oct. 2, 2022.

A total of 58 scholars and local experts participated in panels and special presentations, which included 17 research manuscripts using AmericasBarometer data.



The conference featured a student research poster session. The session featured 10 research projects from students at universities across the Americas using AmericasBarometer data. Vanderbilt student Danni Chacon participated as the sole undergraduate participant.



This annual conference brings together scholars from across the Americas working on topics related to public opinion, political behavior, and their consequences for democracy in the region. Scholars and local experts from dozens of universities and organizations joined us for the two-day event.

The Seligson Prize

[The Seligson Prize](#) is awarded annually to the best scholarship (paper, book, dissertation, or other scholarly work) using LAPOP's AmericasBarometer data that was published or finalized in the prior two calendar years. The prize is named in honor of Mitchell Seligson, the founder of LAPOP and a pioneer in the study of public opinion in Latin America.

2022 Winners



Carew Boulding, Ph.D
Professor of Political Science
University of Colorado



Claudio A. Holzner, Ph.D
Professor of Political Science
The University of Utah

These scholars were awarded the Seligson Prize for their book [*Voice and Inequality: Poverty and Political Participation in Latin American Democracies*](#)

Our Team



**Elizabeth J.
Zechmeister**

LAPOP Director &
Cornelius Vanderbilt
Professor of Political Science



**Noam
Lupu**

LAPOP Associate Director
& Vanderbilt Associate
Professor of Political Science



**Rubí Esmerelda
Arana**

Senior Research Program
Coordinator & Instrument
Design Co-Lead



**Laura
Kramer**

Manager of Financial &
Administrative Operations



**Maria Fernanda
Boidi**

Director of Fieldwork &
Regional Partnerships



**Sebastian
Larrea**

Quality Control Lead &
Student Programs Co-Lead



**Oscar
Castorena**

Senior Statistician &
Online Research Lead



**J. Daniel
Montalvo**

Director of Survey
Research Operations



**Georgina V.
Pizzolitto**

Senior Statistician &
Sampling Lead



**Lindsey
Thomas**

Administrative Program
Coordinator



**Luke
Plutowski**

Senior Statistician &
Research Lead



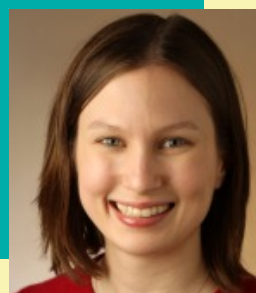
**Carole
Wilson**

Senior Data
Scientist



**Mariana
Rodríguez**

Director of Research
and Engagement



**Laura
Sellers**

Associate Publications
Editor & Data Analyst



**Valerie Schweizer-
Robinson**

Statistician and Student
Programs Co-Lead

LAPOP

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