

AmericasBarometer 2021: U.S.

Technical Information

Country	Year	Sample Size	Weighted/Unweighted	Fieldwork dates
United States	2021	1,500	Weighted	July 19 th -July 25 th 2021

LAPOP LAB AmericasBarometer 2021 Survey Round

LAPOP Lab is a pioneer in survey research methods in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. LAPOP Lab's AmericasBarometer is a unique tool for assessing the public's experiences with democratic governance. The AmericasBarometer permits valid comparisons across individuals, regions, countries, and time, via a common core questionnaire and standardized methods.

The 2021 AmericasBarometer represents the 9th round of this comparative project. In 2020 and through 2021, for surveys in the LAC region, LAPOP Lab switched from its conventional data collection mode (Face-to-Face household surveys) to Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). We made this change in order to minimize risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This change affected our sampling strategy. LAPOP Lab has traditionally designed complex, area probability samples using censuses as sampling frames to select survey respondents¹. With the adoption of CATI, LAPOP Lab transitioned to Random-Digit Dialing (RDD) using mobile phone numbers as sampling frames. This sampling method has the advantage of covering a more dispersed sample of the population relative to Face-to-Face (FtF), although it only includes individuals who have access to functioning mobile phones. In addition, RDD can more easily incorporate certain hard-to-reach populations.

Classic sampling methods in the U.S. for telephone survey research have typically involved list-assisted landline RDD (AAPOR Cell Phone Task Force 2010).² More recently, however, survey methodologists have incorporated mobile phone numbers into sampling frames. In some cases,

¹ In some cases, such as Mexico, voter registry information is combined with census data to create the sampling frame.

² AAPOR. 2010. "Cell Phone Task Force Report: New Considerations for Survey Researchers When Planning and Conducting RDD Telephone Surveys in the U.S. With Respondents Reached via Cell Phone Numbers." AAPOR.org.

such as the U.S., dual sampling frames that include landline and mobile phone numbers are considered best practice in CATI studies. While this has been the case in the U.S., there is comparatively lower landline coverage in the LAC region. Data from the AmericasBarometer show that from 2004 to 2018/19, landline coverage in LAC households declined from 42 to 28%. In contrast, mobile phone coverage increased from 33 to 90% in the same period.

A World Bank report³ corroborates the high rate of mobile phone penetration found in the AmericasBarometer. The report shows that as early as 2012, nearly 98% of the region's population had access to mobile phones, and 84% of LAC households had a subscription with some type of mobile service. A more recent report by the International Telecommunication Union (UTI) shows that in 2018, mobile penetration reached 104% in Latin America, just below East and Central Europe, where this metric reaches 154%, and Western Europe, where it reaches 129%. After a cost/benefit analysis, LAPOP Lab determined that using a single frame of mobile phone numbers is relatively more efficient than using dual frames.⁴

With the exception of the U.S. and Canada AmericasBarometer surveys (that are carried out through self-administered online surveys), LAPOP Lab carried out single frame mobile phone interviews in partnership with local survey firms throughout the Americas. All data in the LAC region were collected with SurveyToGo© (STG), a data collection and management software that runs on Windows, and Android and iOS tablets and phones. Survey firms utilized predictive, automatic, or manual dialing systems to make the calls. For quality control purposes, firms recorded and stored in a secured cloud domain the audio of the 100% of the interviews.^{5,6} In the 2021 AmericasBarometer, LAPOP Lab has continued a tradition of innovation, with improvements in monitoring interview quality on a daily basis during the course of fieldwork.⁷

The target sample size for LAC region countries in the 2021 AmericasBarometer was 3,000 interviews with an overall length of about 25 minutes. To achieve this goal the questionnaire was a split-design, with approximately half the respondents randomly assigned to "Core A" and about half randomly assigned to "Core B". Users are advised to consult the questionnaires for more information. Variables names starting with CA and CB in the questionnaire refers to Core A and Core B respectively. Also, each dataset contains a variable called "**core_a_core_b**" that distinguish questions included in each core.

³ World Bank. 2012. Information and Communications for Development 2012: Maximizing Mobile. Washington, DC: World Bank. DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-8991-1; website: <http://www.worldbank.org/ict/IC4D2012>.

⁴ For more information, see "Sampling in the 2021 Round of the AmericasBarometer: Transitioning from Face-to-face to Telephone Sample Design." (forthcoming)

⁵ LAPOP Lab does not make available any direct identifiers. During datasets processing, LAPOP Lab ensures anonymity and minimizes the risk of breaches of confidentiality.

⁶ Due to the increasingly sensitive situation in Nicaragua, LAPOP lab decided not to record the interviews in that country in order to offer survey participants an additional layer of privacy.

⁷ For more information about quality control, see <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/insights/IMN008en.pdf>

For the 2021 AmericasBarometer, LAPOP Lab collected data in 22 countries in the Americas, from January to August 2021. All country datasets and reports available for download for free at www.LapopSurveys.org.

2021 AmericasBarometer: United States

This survey was carried out between July 19th and July 25th of 2021, as part of LAPOP's AmericasBarometer 2021 wave of surveys. It is a follow up to the national surveys of 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017 and 2018/19 carried out by the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). The 2021 survey fieldwork was carried out by YouGov on behalf of LAPOP. Key funding came from the Vanderbilt University and the National Science Foundation.

Questionnaire pretesting took place between July 10th and July 14th, 2021. Survey questionnaire was programmed in Spanish and English. A full copy of the 2021 AmericasBarometer United States questionnaire can be found at LAPOP's website at www.LapopSurveys.org.

The best practice known to do a probability-based web survey is a technique called "sample matching" described by Rivers (2011): a target is selected from the sampling frame (e.g. a national census) using a random sampling of some type. Then the closest match in the pool of available respondents (i.e. the panel) is chosen for surveying. This matching is performed using propensity score to measure the similarity between pairs of respondents. The resulting sampling distribution is similar to that of simple random sampling from the population if the pool is sufficiently large and diverse.

YouGov Polimetrix United States interviewed 1,811 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 1,500 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) one-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file).

Sample matching starts with an enumeration of the target population⁸. In the case of LAPOP AmericasBarometer Survey, the target population is adult general population of the United States (18 years and older). The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined, and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and region. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were

⁸ In other LAPOP surveys, this would be the sampling frame. Unlike conventional sampling, web-based surveys are not drawn from a sampling frame, so it is necessary to define and enumerate the target population as a first step.

then post-stratified on 2016 and 2020 Presidential vote choice, and a four-way stratification of gender, age, race, and education, to produce the final weight.

Table 1 shows the unweighted sample size in each of the four regions (strata) and by demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Sample sizes by Strata and demographic characteristics in the 2021 AmericasBarometer Survey in the United States

Unweighted Sample Size	
Strata	
West	354
Midwest	306
Northeast	249
South	591
Age	
18-25	112
26-35	212
36-45	312
46-55	216
56-65	349
66+	299
Gender	
Male	665
Female	835
Race	
White	1,047
Black	163
Hispanic or Latino	149
Other	141
Total	1,500

Participants were awarded points for completing the survey which they can be redeem for gift cards. The points for the 2021 Americas Barometer survey in the U.S were the equivalent to about US\$1.50.

Quality Control in the United States Dataset

Participants responses are regularly checked during fieldwork. Interviews in which respondents speed through the survey, skip too many questions in the questionnaire, or give conflicting demographic information based on what we have previously profiled are dropped by Yougov.

Response Rates in the 2021 AB survey in the United States

Below we show the number of participants invited from the panel to complete the survey, the number of participants that never accepted the invitation, and the total number of complete interviews. AmericasBarometer response rates are based on AAPOR's Standard Definitions. The response rate is the number of complete interviews with reporting units divided by the number of eligible reporting units in the sample.

Table 2: Response Rates in the 2021 AmericasBarometer Survey in the United States

Description	Number of Participants
Invitations	3076
Nonrespondents	621
Starts	2455
Screenout	232
Partial completes	174
Completes	2049⁹
	Rates
Eligibility rate	90.55%
AAPOR RR3 - Response Rate	73.56%

Weighting of the United States dataset

The dataset contains a variable called “wt” which is the “country weight” variable. Since in the case of the United States the sample is not self-weighted, the weight factor (“wt”) should be used to produce cross-time comparisons. When using this dataset for cross-country comparisons, in order to give each country in the study an identical weight in the pooled sample, LAPOP reweights each country data set in the merged files so that each country has an N of 1,500. The weight variable for cross-country comparisons is called “weight1500.” In SPSS, this is done via the “weight” command. Weights are already activated in SPSS datasets. In Stata, one should use the svyset command to weight the data and declare the sampling information to correctly compute standard errors that take into account the design effects. The command for single country, single year studies is: **svyset upm [pw=wt], strata(estratopri)**. For cross-country and/or cross-time studies, the command is: **svyset upm [pw=weight1500], strata(strata)**. These declarations have been made in Stata datasets. However, you must use the svy prefix with estimation commands to compute the weighted statistics and correct standard errors (see help svy_estimation within Stata for more information).

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⁹ Dataset is further clean by Yougov to delete the top 2% of interviews in which respondents skipped questions, the top 2% of interviews in which respondents rushed their answers and interviews in which respondents gave bad answers un open ended questions.