



January 28, 2008, Updated 6:48 AM

Search

Login | Not a member? [Create your account](#) | [Lost your password?](#)

User

Password

- LOCAL
- ECONOMY
- WORLD
- TECHNOLOGY
- TOURISM
- OPINION
- POVERTY
- THIS & THAT
- SPORT

-  CLASSIFIEDS
-  RSS FEEDS
-  CONTACT

World - 26 January 2008, 6:34 PM

Text size:  [Smaller](#)  [Bigger](#)

AmericasBarometer reveals political culture in Latin America

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Bookmark](#)  [Save to my profile](#)  [0 Comments](#)



[+ Zoom Picture](#)

Mexico City.– The Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) has unveiled for the first time in Latin America the comprehensive results of surveys that assess the political culture of 21 countries in the Western hemisphere.

The Casa de la Universidad de California en Mexico (Carment I, Chimalistac, Ciudad de Mexico) hosted a one-day conference spotlighting the conclusions of the 2006 AmericasBarometer, an effort to measure democratic values and behaviors in the Americas. The survey used national probability samples of voting-age adults. Scholars from 19 countries presented findings from surveys in which more than 30,000 people were interviewed about their democratic values and behaviors.

The conference presentations compared issues vital to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of democratic systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. The AmericaBarometer uses a questionnaire that includes questions about topics such as political tolerance, support for the system, trust in political institutions, security, corruption perception and victimization, and understanding of democracy.

The analyses were based on data from Mexico, the United States, Canada, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guyana and Jamaica.

Researchers hope that the data and the conclusions drawn from the 2006 AmericasBarometer surveys will help strengthen democracy throughout the Western Hemisphere.

We aim to provide relevant and useful information to academia and the public in general, with a view to advancing knowledge about values that promote stable democracies, said Mitchell Seligson, Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt and founder and director of LAPOP. The AmericasBarometer introduces elements of leading indicators of democratic stability for policy makers, scholars and citizens to use to advance democracy in their own countries.

The following results were highlighted at the presentation:

A strong indicator of the prospects for democratic stability in a given country is citizens belief in the legitimacy of their governments and their willingness to respect the right to political opposition. By that standard, the highest scoring countries (on a 0-100 scale) are Canada (68), the United States (64), Costa Rica (50), Uruguay (46) and Mexico (41). At the low end are Nicaragua (25), Haiti (24), Paraguay (20), Bolivia (20) and Ecuador (12).

While the majority of citizens in the Americas believe that democracy is the best possible political system, percentages still vary dramatically, with 91 percent in the United States, 87 percent in Canada, 82 percent in Uruguay, 77 percent in Costa Rica, 69 percent in Mexico and 60 percent in Nicaragua and Peru ranking democracy the best.