

# ANTI-AMERICANISM IN LATIN AMERICA

## Economic Exchange, Foreign Policy Legacies, and Mass Attitudes toward the Colossus of the North

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*Abstract: Do Latin American citizens admire the United States for its material wealth and the opportunities this creates for them, or do they revile the United States because of the military and economic threat it has historically posed? Both narratives have a strong presence in Latin American societies, and much scholarship on mass anti-Americanism in the region portrays the dominant narrative as one of the United States as threat. In this article, we consult surveys from contemporary Latin America and find that various forms of ongoing economic exchange with the United States—trade, aid, migration, and remittances—are the primary influence on mass perception of the northern hegemon and actually promote goodwill, rather than bitterness, toward the United States. Moreover, we demonstrate that the most powerful channel through which economic exchange does so is consumption: inflows of US imports boost pro-American sentiment more than do other forms of exchange. In contrast, the legacy of US imperialism has little resonance in mass beliefs about the colossus of the north.*

Do Latin American citizens admire the United States for its material wealth and the opportunities this creates for them, or do they revile the United States because of the military and economic threat it has historically posed? Both narratives have a strong presence in Latin American societies (Morris 2005), but scholarship on the region has yet to provide any evidence about which version of the “colossus of the north”—United States as threat or United States as opportunity—holds greater sway over the mind-set of Latin American citizens. Existing scholarship falls into two camps. The first camp, the “foreign policy legacy of resentment,” paints the region as an “especially prominent pocket of visceral anti-Americanism” (Sweig 2006, xv) because of the two-centuries-long list of military

Authors’ names are in alphabetical order. We are very grateful to Isabella Alcañiz, Timothy Hellwig, David Leblang, Alan McPherson, Sophie Meunier, Stephen Morris, Patricio Navia, and Mitch Seligson for providing valuable comments and other forms of assistance on previous drafts of this article. The group on institutions at the Institute for Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder (Carew Boulding, David Brown, Moonhawk Kim, James Scarritt, and Sarah Sokhey) also provided valuable comments. We are also grateful to Shanker Satyanath for providing his data on Central Intelligence Agency-backed presidents. Previous versions of this article were presented at the 2010 Midwest Political Science Association Meeting and the 2010 International Political Economy Society Meeting. A supplemental online appendix for this article is posted at <http://spot.colorado.edu/~bakerab/publications.html>.

and economic wrongs committed by the northern hegemon in its so-called backyard. The “ambivalence” camp sees Latin Americans as expressing a love-hate sentiment toward the United States—repelled by its foreign policy legacies yet allured by the material prospects it has to offer.

In this article, we consult public opinion data on mass anti-Americanism in contemporary Latin America and find that, collectively, both camps provide a highly inaccurate, or at best vague portrayal of the nature of mass beliefs about the United States in the region. We instead show that various forms of day-to-day economic exchange with the United States—trade, aid, migration, and remittances—promote goodwill, rather than bitterness, among Latin Americans toward their northern neighbor. In fact, a majority of Latin Americans are pro-American. Moreover, we find that economic exchange with the United States is the primary cause of mass judgments about “El Norte,” a point the ambivalence camp has been too noncommittal to make. Indeed, we go one step further to demonstrate that the most powerful channel through which economic exchange with the United States promotes goodwill is consumption: inflows of US imports boost pro-American sentiment more than do other forms of exchange. In contrast, the legacy of US diplomatic and military imperialism in Latin America has almost no resonance in mass beliefs about the United States.

Our findings are of more than just academic import. There has been a recent explosion of interest, both academic and popular, in the prevalence and causes of anti-Americanism worldwide. Most observers claim that anti-Americanism has increased since September 2001, a prospect that could have a long list of concrete (and to some undesirable) consequences: greater difficulties for the United States in securing cooperation from foreign governments and thus fulfillment of its foreign policy goals, threats to US commercial success in global markets (e.g., from consumer boycotts), and an increased risk of violence against US citizens (Gould 2009; Nye 2004). Our study of Latin American cases illustrates that fears of anti-Americanism, which are often based on impressionistic data, are exaggerated. The alleged problems that mass anti-Americanism poses for the United States in Latin America are similarly overblown (Friedman 2012).

We first describe and critique the existing scholarly camps on Latin American anti-Americanism and then present our economic-exchange argument. We support that argument by reporting our analysis of survey data from the region, and we conclude by offering some prescriptions for both scholars and policy makers.

#### RESENTMENT OR AMBIVALENCE?

Research by Latin Americanists on mass anti-Americanism is largely wedded to a “foreign policy legacy of resentment” (FPLR) theory of the phenomenon’s degree and causes (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b, 37). This school of thought holds that most Latin American citizens possess a “deeply rooted disposition” (Radu 2004, 162) against the United States and an “instinctive anti-American reflex” (Sweig 2006, 3, 8–9): “From the days of independence to the middle of the twentieth century, anti-US sentiment touched every major social group in Latin America” (McPherson 2006a, 11; see also Aguirre and Montes 1979; Crockatt 2003;

Galeano 1973; McPherson 2006a, 11; Ross and Ross 2004). In this view, the widely shared Latin American distaste for the United States is derived not from mere abstractions about US military, economic, and diplomatic hegemony but from tangible experiences with its often brutal consequences. After all, the region has been more frequently victimized by US meddling than any other set of countries in the world. Over the past two centuries, the United States has annexed territory, colonized and occupied independent states, embargoed trade, invaded to collect debts, staged coups, removed democratic leaders, backed brutal despots, expropriated land, dominated trade and investment relations, and sponsored violent insurgencies in Latin America (Smith 2008). According to the FPLR school, these misdeeds remain engrained in citizens' perceptions of the United States through their active recounting and reconstruction (McPherson 2006a, 2; Radu 2004). This school of thought fits well with research on other world regions that has largely concluded that anti-Americans dislike "what America does," not "who America is" (Blaydes and Linzer 2012; Chiozza 2009; Nye 2004).

The FPLR school contains two closely related currents. One focuses on US geopolitical wrongs toward the region and the other on the hegemon's economic sins. The first and by far most common current indicts two centuries of US geopolitical strategy toward the region as the primary source of mass bitterness: the repeated meddling by the United States in Latin American countries' domestic political affairs, often with a narrowly defined US interest in mind and frequently accompanied by military violence, has generated resentment by those in the countries that have been victimized by this imperialist impulse. The long list of incidents and US policies includes the Monroe Doctrine, the Mexican-American War, dollar diplomacy, and Cold War containment, all of which resulted in losses of Latin American sovereignty, assets, land, and life. Many observers allege that these imperialist abuses continue today, for example, in the form of the trade embargo of Cuba and the sponsorship of the short-lived 2002 Venezuelan coup (Fonseca 2008; Sweig 2006; Vulliamy 2002). Although not targeted directly at the region, the perceived unilateralism of the second Iraq War and other aspects of George W. Bush's foreign policy were, according to some scholars, a source of rising anti-Americanism in Latin America (Fonseca 2008; Noya 2003; Ojeda 2005).

The second current of the FPLR school portrays many Latin Americans as largely opposed to US economic foreign policy and, in particular, to their region's stubborn underdevelopment and dependency on the US economy (McPherson 2006b, 272). In this formulation, the United States is both an agent and a symbol of global capitalism. As an agent, part of US foreign policy is to promote or impose—through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Washington Consensus, and its own multinational corporations—free-market policies in Latin America and, historically, to "underdevelop" the region. As a symbol, economic globalization is considered synonymous with US influence (Morris 2005, 27; Sweig 2006, 43). Either way, the presumption is that Latin American citizens blame the United States for the alleged failures of development and neoliberalism on their home soil (Dorn 2006; Hakim 2006; Sweig 2006); chafe against the growing consumerism and cultural effects of US imports and corporations (Nye 2004, 39); and bemoan the loss of sovereignty over their own economic fate (Dorn 2006; Taffet

2006). These sentiments are alleged to have increased in recent years: “[In] Latin America, distrust and bias [against the United States] have increased rapidly in recent years as left-wing governments are taking over in the wake of widespread disappointment with the effects of the neoliberal policies supported by the United States” (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007a, 276).

To be sure, not all scholarship on Latin American anti-Americanism takes the FPLR approach. Some thinkers emphasize the Janus face that Latin Americans use when viewing the northern hegemon and locate the sources of mass attitudes toward the United States not just in foreign policy abuses but also in the allure of American material culture and consumerism (McPherson 2003; Morris 2005; Rangel 1977; Rivas 2006). This “ambivalence” school recognizes that many Latin Americans are repulsed by America’s military indiscretions in the region and elsewhere. Yet it also notes the apparent widespread mass appeal of the United States as a source of consumer goods and entertainment, as well as a destination for Latin American exports, emigrants, and tourists (Weiss and Argüello 1995). Indeed, in stressing Latin American ambivalence instead of just resentment, this school of thought is in line with a recent wave of scholarship on anti-Americanisms worldwide—one that takes a theoretically inclusive approach in recognizing both the multidimensionality and wide-ranging sources of mass attitudes toward the United States (Chiozza 2009; J. Kane 2006; Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b).

### *Theoretical and Methodological Challenges*

Although both schools carry a high degree of surface-level plausibility, we argue that they each suffer from severe theoretical and methodological flaws that collectively paint an incomplete and even inaccurate portrait of the nature and degree of anti-Americanism in Latin America. The FPLR school of thought rests on dubious theoretical grounds for several reasons. First, US interventions, especially during the Cold War, were forays into already-divided societies, with the United States picking sides in preexisting partisan and ideological struggles (Brands 2010). Thus, far from fomenting unanimous opposition and resentment, US foreign policy transgressions in Latin America created winners alongside the losers. Scholarship that posits a widespread anti-American reflex in the region due to US foreign policy ignores the fact that such US violations of sovereignty actually served the interests and fulfilled the wishes of many locals. Consider the following examples in which conservative stakeholders and other opponents of the Left favored and benefited from US involvement: opponents of the Sandinista regime supported Ronald Reagan’s backing of the Nicaraguan Contras, Pinochetistas backed Richard Nixon’s maneuvers to “make the economy scream” in Chile so as to induce Allende’s ouster, and anti-Chavistas appreciated George W. Bush’s thinly disguised enthusiasm for Hugo Chávez’s temporary dismissal (Brands 2010; Sweig 2006).<sup>1</sup> In summary, US indiscretions, even when brutal, would not automatically leave a long-standing legacy of heightened anti-Americanism in a

1. These beneficiaries were not just limited to a small, wealthy elite, as some portrayals hold. Opponents of the Left were often a large minority or even a majority. For example, El Salvador’s US-backed,

victimized country, because many of that country's citizens sided politically with the interventions.

Second, foreign policy wrongdoing by the United States may not translate directly into mass resentment because of the standard failures of human cognition and collective memory. The peak of US imperialist interference is nearly a century old. Even the relatively recent Cold War intrusions by the United States occurred more than two decades ago, and at the time US involvement was often covert and disguised by the mostly autocratic governments they were designed to aid. For these episodes to breed resentment, society must actively commit to recounting them (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b, 37). To be sure, institutional narration of historical wrongs does occur in Latin America, as evidenced by treatments of the Mexican-American War in Mexico's textbooks (Morris 2005, chapter 3; see also McPherson 2006a, 2; Pastor and Castañeda 1988, 29–30). More typically, however, foreign policy legacies are not so actively nurtured or well known in Latin America (Rubin and Rubin 2004, 117, 123).

Third, the theoretical notion that Latin Americans condemn economic exchange with the United States as a dependency-breeding, loss-making relationship is weak. Economic exchange with the United States is often an individual-level choice that many see as an opportunity (Morris 2005; Nye 2004, chapter 2). For example, the conspicuous consumption of imports and services provided by multinational corporations conveys status and cultural sophistication in many social circles, including those peopled by the poor and marginalized (Tinsman 2006). Similarly, many see employment in export-oriented manufacturing firms and emigration to the United States—even with all of their shortcomings—as desirable to the alternatives (Sargent and Matthews 1999). Empirically, Latin Americans, on balance, support economic globalization in a variety of forms, as evidenced not just by public opinion polls (Baker 2009) but also by the 2007 Central America–United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) referendum result in Costa Rica. Also, Latin Americans are far more likely to blame their domestic governments than the IMF, the United States, or globalization writ large for their economic ills (Alcañiz and Hellwig 2010). In summary, dependence on the US economy certainly has opponents and carries important costs for many in Latin America, yet the notion that most citizens seethe under the weight of US economic hegemony carries little empirical support.

Moreover, the FPLR school typically arrives at its conclusion that anti-Americanism is a majority, if not a near-unanimous, sentiment on faulty methodological grounds. At best, empirical work focuses on fervent anti-Americanism among highly vocal and active groups, such as university students, intellectuals, politicians, and labor unions (McPherson 2003; Radu 2004). Often, scholars commit the fallacy of assuming that the sentiments behind anti-American elite rhetoric are shared by the masses (Yúdice 2004). In some instances, the existence of widespread anti-Americanism is arrived at by assumption (Sweig 2006). In the end, scholars in the FPLR tradition rarely consult systematic mass-opinion data.

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brutal military regime of the 1970s and 1980s had a political wing, *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*, which won four consecutive presidential elections after the collapse of the autocratic regime.

As a more balanced approach, the ambivalence school is surely a step in the right direction, yet it remains ambiguous about the relative importance of the competing narratives on the colossus of the north. It is a truism that both outrage against US foreign policy and attraction to its economy exist side by side in Latin American public opinion. Which, however, is more important? The ambivalence school of thought is too hesitant, far more so than the FPLR school, to yield concrete expectations about the predominant causes and overall rates of anti-Americanism in the region. To be sure, the ambivalence camp is much more likely than the FPLR camp to consult public opinion data. Cross-national studies have used the Pew Global Attitudes survey (Chiozza 2009), and case studies, especially of Mexico, have used rich single-country surveys (Kocher and Minuschkin 2007; Morris 2005). In the end, however, this camp fails to commit to claims about the relative importance of competing causal considerations (e.g., opportunity versus threat) in mass mind-sets.

### *Empirical Challenges*

We take a brief and preliminary look at widely available public opinion data and uncover three empirical puzzles that directly challenge this conventional wisdom on anti-Americanism in Latin America. In our empirical analyses, we define anti-Americanism as a “psychological tendency to hold negative views of the United States” (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b, 12). This simple definition has two advantages over previous conceptualizations of anti-Americanism. First, by defining anti-Americanism as a “tendency,” we capture the fact that mass sentiments toward the United States fall on a continuum from vehemently anti-American to vehemently pro-American. This avoids the asymmetrical focus on the *anti* of anti-Americanism that plagues the extant literature.

Second, rather than defining anti-Americanism as an evaluation of a specific aspect of the United States (such as its economy or foreign policy), we refer to the United States in general to capture an overall summary judgment. To be sure, Latin Americans undoubtedly have variegated opinions about these different faces of the northern colossus (e.g., hating the president’s foreign policy but liking American pop culture), and further research on these differences is surely merited (Chiozza 2009). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this article, we maintain the general conceptual focus so as to be agnostic about, and thus treat as an empirical question, which aspect of the United States causes foreigners’ overall attitudes toward it.

We use the following survey question from the Latinobarómetro survey data series as our measure of anti-Americanism: “I would like to know your opinion about the following countries. Do you have a (1) very good, (2) good, (3) bad, or (4) very bad opinion about the United States?”<sup>2</sup> (We thus set up our variable so that higher values equate to more negative evaluations of the United States and lower values to more positive evaluations.) Figure 1 plots the trajectory of anti-Americanism in eighteen Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil,

2. Information on the Latinobarómetro survey data source is available at <http://www.latinobarometro.org>.

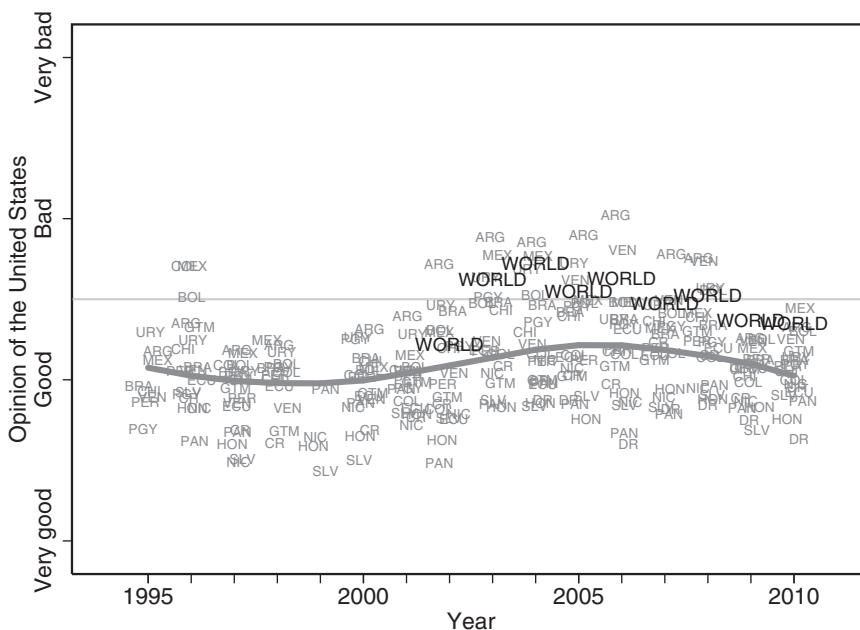


Figure 1 Degrees of anti-Americanism in eighteen Latin American countries and the rest of the world, 1995–2010. Three-letter codes are scatterplot points for a given country in the corresponding year. Codes are World Bank country-name abbreviations.

Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) over the past decade and a half and provides a point of reference by also giving estimates of average anti-Americanism in the rest of the world. Instead of scatterplot points, the figure plots country-name abbreviations, which indicate the placement of each Latin American country’s mean level of anti-Americanism in each year from 1995 to 2010.<sup>3</sup> In the figure, we spread the y-axis out over the entire range of this variable to convey the magnitude of change and overall balance of opinions. The thick gray line captures levels and patterns of change, as it is a LOWESS-estimated central tendency of the entire region’s annual mean level of anti-Americanism. The figure also reports, with the black labels “WORLD,” the estimated rates of anti-Americanism in the rest of the world. These are from the Pew Global Attitudes Project survey, which has been conducted yearly starting in 2002.<sup>4</sup> The annual estimates reported in figure 1 are based on a sample of at

3. There are some exceptions to this, as not all countries were surveyed in 1995, all countries were only polled once for the 1999–2000 period, and the Dominican Republic did not enter the sample until 2004.

4. Information on the Pew Global Attitudes Project survey data source is available at <http://pewglobal.org>.

best forty countries and often just twenty, but they serve illustrative purposes nonetheless.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1's first puzzling finding, especially in light of the FPLR school's intimation of an "instinctive" and "deeply rooted" anti-Americanism in the region, is that Latin Americans are, on average, pro-American. Regionwide, responses were centered around "good" opinions of the United States, with a mean of 2.10 on the one-to-four scale. Even at its peak in 2006, the degree of anti-Americanism was well below the scale midpoint (marked by the thin gray line). Citizenries leaned anti-American (i.e., had a mean above the scale midpoint) in fewer than 10 percent (22 of 253) of the country-years. In contrast, the rest of the world leaned anti-American in five of nine years, and unfavorable responses outnumbered favorable ones in 43 percent of available (183) country-years in the rest of the world. The overall world mean was virtually at the scale midpoint (2.46), and the annual world mean was always higher than the Latin American one. Thus, the first empirical puzzle is as follows: why are Latin Americans pro-United States?

Despite the fact that figure 1 shows the average Latin American citizen and country to lean pro-American, it also hints at important cross-national differences, as evidenced by the modest vertical spread of points around the LOWESS line. Figure 2 presents more clearly the underlying differences in national levels of anti-Americanism by plotting each country's overall mean from all survey responses made during the entire sixteen-year period. The figure plots the country means as a function of physical distance from the United States,<sup>6</sup> which allows us to depict the following novel finding about the geography of anti-Americanism in the Western Hemisphere: a tight positive relationship exists between distance from the United States and anti-Americanism. America's neighbors in Central America (and the Dominican Republic) are more pro-American than South Americans. The overall correlation between distance and anti-Americanism is +.6626. Moreover, the relationship is equally strong within South America (+.6527), as, for example, Ecuadoreans are more pro-American than Argentines.

Of course, distance from the United States is a theoretically unspecified variable. Figure 2 merely presents a descriptive finding that calls out for a causal mechanism, which we provide below. For now, we use this relationship to draw out the second empirical puzzle. Historically, the United States' Mexican, Central American, and Caribbean neighbors have been more victimized by its imperialist aggression than those in South America. Between 1898 and 1934, the United States intervened militarily in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean more than thirty times (Smith 2008, 55). In contrast, and by way of example, consider the following quote about the most anti-American country in the region: "Of all of the nations of the Americas, Argentina prior to World War II may well have had the least cause for open antagonism toward the United States" (Dorn 2006, 62).

5. The question wording in the Pew survey is virtually identical: "Please tell me if you have a (1) very favorable, (2) somewhat favorable, (3) somewhat unfavorable, or (4) very unfavorable opinion of the United States."

6. To be more exact, distance from the United States is defined as the distance in miles between Wichita, Kansas (which is close to the geographical center of the United States) and each Latin American country's capital city.



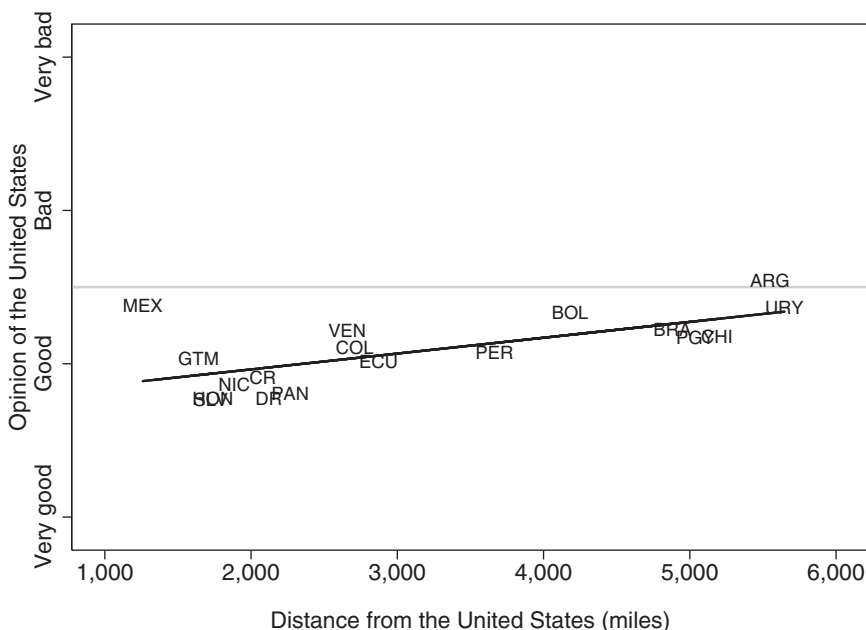


Figure 2 Anti-Americanism in eighteen Latin American countries as a function of distance from the United States, 1995–2010. Three-letter codes are scatterplot points for a given country in the corresponding year. Codes are World Bank country-name abbreviations. Pearson's  $r = +.66$ ;  $r = +.84$  without Mexico.

During the Cold War and post-Cold War era, the most visible interventions were in nearby countries, such as Cuba (the Bay of Pigs Invasion and subsequent embargo), the Dominican Republic (occupation), El Salvador (support for military regime), Grenada (overthrow of Hudson Austin), Guatemala (overthrow of Jacobo Árbenz), Haiti (negotiated departure of Raoul Cédras), Nicaragua (support for the Contras), Panama (overthrow of Manuel Noriega), and Venezuela (support for the abortive coup against Hugo Chávez). All told, the ten South American countries in the Latinobarómetro sample had an average of 2.7 militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) with the United States between 1800 and 1992, whereas the eight non-South American countries averaged 6.0.<sup>7</sup> The correlation between distance and number of MIDs with the United States over the past two centuries is  $-.5294$ . In the end, the correlation between the number of MIDs and a country's mean anti-Americanism is not positive but moderately negative ( $-.2492$ ).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the second

7. Militarized interstate disputes are "united historical cases of conflict in which the threat, display or use of military force short of war by one member state is explicitly directed towards the government, official representatives, official forces, property, or territory of another state. Disputes are composed of incidents that range in intensity from threats to use force to actual combat short of war" (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996, 163).

8. Number of MIDs with the United States is logged for these calculations.

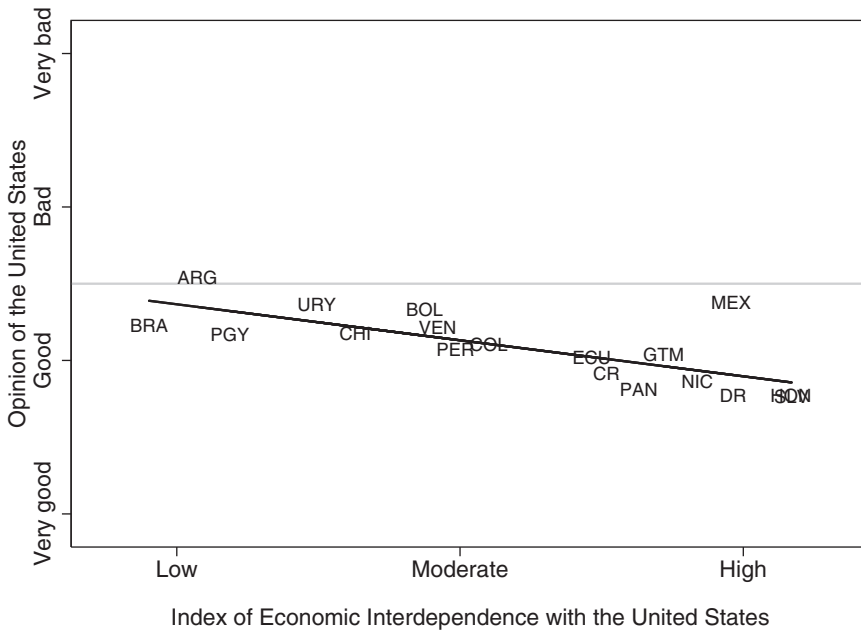


Figure 3 Anti-Americanism in eighteen Latin American countries as a function of economic interdependence with the United States, 1995–2010. Three-letter codes are scatterplot points for a given country in the corresponding year. Codes are World Bank country-name abbreviations. Pearson's  $r = -.73$ .

puzzle, for both the FPLR and the ambivalence schools, is the following: why are the historical victims of US imperialist aggression the most pro–United States?<sup>9</sup>

Figure 3 plots cross-national variance in anti-Americanism as a function of each country's level of economic linkage to the US economy. We create an index of economic interdependence with the United States that combines three aspects of economic exchange into a single indicator: trade with the United States (as a percentage of the country's gross domestic product, GDP), aid from the United States (as a percentage of GDP), and emigrants living in the United States (as a percentage of the country's active workforce). Countries that trade heavily with the United

9. Mexico is an outlier in that it is more anti-American than its distance from and economic linkages with the United States would dictate, and it has had many MIDs with United States (twenty-five; the next-highest country has eight). Mexico's higher-than-predicted levels of anti-Americanism would seem to lend some support to the FPLR argument: Besides the large number of MIDs, it is the only country to have fought a major war with the United States, a war that resulted in the loss of half of its territory. Ultimately, however, we believe that Mexicans are still far more pro-American than this history alone would dictate. Why, for example, are Argentines, who have never had a MID with the United States, even more anti-American than Mexicans? Indeed, given the depth of the historical transgressions, the second puzzle—why victims of American imperialism are still pro–United States—is more germane to the Mexican case than to any other.

States, receive much aid from the United States, and send many migrants to the United States have higher values on this index. The FPLR school, and particularly its economic dependency current, would expect a positive relationship between this variable and the level of anti-Americanism, yet figure 3 depicts not only a negative relationship but also a strong one ( $r = -.7281$ ). The citizens of Latin American economies that are tightly linked to the United States are far more enthusiastic about their hegemonic exchange partner than are those that are only loosely connected to the US economy. Therefore, the third puzzle is why countries that are economically dependent on the United States are more pro-United States.

#### INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC EXCHANGE AND ANTI-AMERICANISM

An explanatory approach that emphasizes ongoing economic exchange with the United States as the primary source of mass attitudes toward El Norte and recognizes this exchange as creating goodwill rather than resentment is more theoretically satisfying and better explains the empirical patterns of the previous section.

##### *Theory*

We define economic exchange broadly to include aid, investment, remittances, migration, and trade. The list of theoretical avenues through which these forms of exchange with the United States promote goodwill toward it is more plausible than that positing a negative relationship between the two. In international relations theory, the commercial peace and soft-power literatures find that economic linkages between nations create bidirectional informational flows that promote tolerance, cross-cultural understanding, mutual attraction, and a desire to adopt each other's values (Nye 2004). They also mitigate distrust about partners' motives (Reed 2003) and reduce stereotyping and ethnocentrism (Epstein and Rioridan 1989; Morris 2005, 259). Similarly, economic interdependence creates material stakeholders who benefit from ongoing exchange (Kleinberg and Fordham 2010; Russett and O'Neal 2001). For example, a large percentage of Mexican and Central American citizens have a relative living in the United States, and these relatives frequently send remittances back home.

Moreover, exchanges with a foreign partner, especially one with the economic scope of the United States, are easily translated into citizens' attitudes about the United States because of their prevalence and visibility in everyday life. International economic exchange creates a barrage of citizen encounters with some aspect of a foreign partner that are typically more common and noticeable than military and diplomatic legacies. For example, "Mexicans' greatest contact with the US takes place through the consumer market" (Morris 2005, 215), as many products are easily and (for marketing purposes) intentionally identifiable as US-made goods and services. Also, anticipating monthly remittances from relatives in the United States surely keeps the northern hegemon on recipients' radar. In short, various forms of economic exchange easily overcome the cognitive barriers that often prevent objective experiences from influencing citizens' attitudes.

Finally, even as it shapes day-to-day life and economic payoffs, economic exchange with a foreign partner as large as the United States can alter the discursive and rhetorical environment in which citizens reside. Economic interdependence can shape the way that elites talk about a dyadic partner (Hill 1996). In countries with strong economic ties to the United States, many political elites are economic stakeholders in this process of exchange, so they are reticent to foment anti-US sentiments for fear of provoking economic consequences for the overall economy and for their own interests (Bowman 2006). Anti-Americanism is often promoted by elites who seek to blame domestic shortcomings on external factors, yet kowtowing elites in countries that carry deep stakes in exchange with the United States may think twice before doing so. In summary, economic exchange with the United States can create a pro-American rhetorical environment that citizens are likely to absorb (Zaller 1992).

*Empirical Questions Answered and Raised*

This body of theory yields immediate empirical benefits because it solves the aforementioned puzzles. In answer to the first puzzle—why are Latin Americans so pro-United States?—an economic-exchange approach points not to the fact that Latin America has been the most frequent victim of US imperialism but to the fact that it is the most economically interdependent with the United States. Only Latin America's heightened volume of international economic exchange with the United States, relative to the rest of the world, can explain why the region's citizenry expresses pro-American attitudes on balance and why it is more pro-American than the world average.

The economic-exchange approach also provides an effective answer to both the second puzzle (why are the historical victims of US imperialist aggression the most pro-American?) and the third puzzle (why are countries that are economically dependent on the United States more pro-American?). When economic exchange is viewed theoretically as contributing to rather than detracting from goodwill toward the United States, the strong negative correlation between economic dependence and anti-Americanism makes far more sense. Physical proximity lowers the costs of international transactions; therefore, trade, aid, and migration volumes with the United States are higher among Central American and Caribbean countries than among South American countries. (The correlation between our economic interdependence index and distance from the United States is  $-0.92$ .) The high volume of economic exchange with the colossus of the north thus explains why the United States' immediate southern neighbors, despite their status as the most historically victimized countries of the region, are more pro-American than its South American ones. In summary, an economic-exchange approach fits the observed cross-national patterns in anti-Americanism (both intra- and interregionally) much better than the existing approaches do.

Still, the economic-exchange approach as currently specified leaves important questions unanswered. The existing literature from international relations theory is not specific enough to generate precise arguments about the causal channels through which exchange fosters mass goodwill. For example, the standard claim

from the commercial peace and soft-power literatures about the economic effects of trade is that trade produces net benefits and thus foments positive sentiment toward trading partners. Does this effect occur, however, through the export channel or through the import channel? In other words, which promotes greater trust and confidence between trading partners, sales to foreigners or purchases from them? Moreover, does trade matter more or less than other elements of economic exchange, such as migration, remittances, and aid? Alternatively, perhaps the economics of exchange have only indirect effects on public opinion, and it is instead the environment of elite rhetoric shaped by exchange volumes that ultimately has the direct effect on mass publics. For the remainder of this article, we put our economic-exchange argument through more rigorous tests than the simple cross-national analysis shown earlier, and we move beyond vague statements contained in the international relations literature about the benefits of economic cooperation or interdependence.

#### HYPOTHESES

We discuss four forms of economic exchange with the United States and list them in descending order of hypothesized impact on lowering anti-Americanism. To derive this theoretical ordering, we considered both the net economic benefits of the type of exchange and the visibility to common citizens of these economic effects. We then discuss the elite rhetoric hypothesis.

##### *The Imports Hypothesis*

We expect imports to have the most positive effect in fomenting pro-American feelings in Latin America. The economic benefits from trade accrue most heavily through the consumer channel in the form of lower prices and greater variety of goods and services. In Latin America, many consumers see foreign-made goods as particularly desirable, as they carry the status of quality and sophistication (Richey, Rose, and Dominguez 2000; Tinsman 2006). Moreover, gains to consumers have a wide visibility and scope because they are spread across much of the population and, in recent times, have become available even to lower-class citizens (Baker 2009). In contrast to export-channel gains and losses, one does not have to be employed in a tradable-goods sector to be directly affected by imports. Imports also overcome the steep cognitive barriers to attitude influence because foreign-made goods and services often have clear names and labels that convey their external origins (Ghosh 1998). We thus expect the consumption of imports to be the most important factor in lowering rates of anti-Americanism in Latin America.

##### *The Aid Hypothesis*

Wealthy countries often grant foreign aid for altruistic purposes, so many scholars and policy experts consider aid an essential tool of US foreign policy, and in particular soft power (Nye 2004; Sachs 2008). At worst, aid has negligible benefits, and it often has positive ones. However, we suspect that the impact of aid

on public opinion might not be as substantial as that of imports. In particular, aid does not carry the ready-made informational content of foreignness and country of origin that imports do. Much of it gets lost in the relatively large coffers of recipient-country governments and is spent or invested at the discretion of those governments. Similarly, aid is not always devoted to humanitarian purposes, instead finding its way into the pockets of corrupt public officials and often coming with conditions for its use that violate sovereignty (Taffet 2006).

#### *The Exports Hypothesis*

Besides expanding the inflow of foreign goods, trade yields benefits by leading to a proliferation of jobs in the export-oriented sector. Many of these jobs create new economic opportunities, and systematic research suggests that these jobs often pay higher wages than those in nontrading sectors (Hanson 2004; Sargent and Matthews 1999). Yet controversy still swirls around export-oriented jobs, as many pay low wages and feature poor working conditions. Moreover, in terms of visibility, it is only a minority share of the workforce that lands such a job. We expect exports to lower rates of anti-Americanism in Latin America, but not as substantially as aid and imports do.

#### *The Migration Hypothesis*

Emigration to the United States is a particularly important economic strategy for millions of Latin American expatriates. Moreover, many migrants send remittances back to their country of origin, and remittances to some Latin American countries can reach 20 percent of domestic GDP (Ratha and Shaw 2007). As a result, migration to the United States has very visible effects on families residing in Latin America. However, migration scenarios are not always so rosy and economically beneficial. Illegality for many Latin American expatriates in the United States makes life and work both brutal and precarious. Because of the highly mixed economic consequences of migration to the United States, we hypothesize that the goodwill-promoting effect of this form of economic exchange is not as strong as the other forms.

#### *The Elite Rhetoric Hypothesis*

The aforementioned hypotheses all assume that citizens are fiercely focused on the economic gains from international exchange. There is an important strain of research in political psychology, however, that doubts that material self-interest plays an important role in public opinion formation. Instead, many political psychologists find that citizens arrive at their beliefs on important political and social issues not by reasoning for themselves but by absorbing elite rhetoric (Zaller 1992). More specifically, scholarship on Muslim societies shows that cross-national differences in political elites' publically expressed vitriol toward the United States accounts for mass-level variation in anti-Americanism (Blaydes and Linzer 2012). If the elite rhetoric hypothesis holds in its strictest form, then economic factors

should be irrelevant to mass anti-Americanism when controlling for the degree to which elites in a country are anti-American.

#### DATA AND METHODS

We use the mass anti-Americanism variable introduced earlier as a dependent variable in a series of regression models. Our statistical analysis stays at an aggregated level. We first conduct small-*N* cross-national regressions using each country's mean anti-Americanism across all years. We then conduct panel regressions in which each case is a country-year, and we collapse anti-Americanism to its mean for each of these country-years.<sup>10</sup>

We measure three aspects of international economic exchange with the United States. First, we measure trade with the United States as total trade flows with the United States as a (logged) percentage of the country's GDP.<sup>11</sup> Given our desire to decipher the precise channel through which trade matters, we also disaggregate trade into exports to the United States and imports from the United States, again expressing these as (logged) percentages of GDP. We address potential endogeneity concerns by employing in some of our regression models an instrumental variable for imports from the United States. It is probably the case that Latin American citizens who are pro-American for reasons unrelated to import consumption are in turn more likely than anti-American citizens to purchase US-made imports.<sup>12</sup> If so, then import flows to a country are endogenous to its level of anti-Americanism, and ignoring this fact could inflate our estimates of trade's impact on mass attitudes. To alleviate this concern, we use imports from non-US countries as an instrumental variable that is highly correlated with the exogenous portion of imports from the United States (i.e., the portion that is due to technological, economic, and policy factors that ease or restrict trade inflows) but not correlated with the endogenous portion (i.e., the portion that is due to consumers' preferences for goods specifically because they are or are not US made).<sup>13</sup>

Second, we capture aid from the United States with the country's aid inflows from the United States as a (logged) percentage of its GDP.<sup>14</sup> This variable is also potentially contaminated by endogeneity: the US government surely gives less

10. Statistical results reported in this section do not include any 2010 data. We do not conduct an individual-level analysis for reasons described in section 1 of the supplemental online appendix.

11. All trade data are from the International Monetary Fund's *Direction of Trade Statistics*. The GDP data come from the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

12. Two examples of such endogeneity effects are nationalistic and/or country-of-origin product bias and consumer boycotts, although evidence suggests that the latter are usually quite ineffective (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007a; Davis and Meunier 2011).

13. More technically, we use instrumental variables regression to achieve this goal. The procedure first regresses the endogenous variable, imports from the United States, on imports from non-US countries and all other regressors, then uses the predicted values from that regression as an independent variable (in the place of imports from the United States) in the subsequent regression in which anti-Americanism is the dependent variable.

14. Aid data are from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's *DAC Statistics*, [http://www.oecd.org/document/33/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_36661793\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html#dac](http://www.oecd.org/document/33/0,2340,en_2649_34447_36661793_1_1_1_1,00.html#dac).

aid to countries that it considers anti-American. To resolve this problem, we use aid from all non-US countries as an instrumental variable in some regressions.

Third, we measure the effects of migrant flows with two variables. We define emigrants working in the United States as a (logged) percentage of the local working population.<sup>15</sup> We also use remittances from the United States as a (logged) percentage of a country's GDP, although, given well-established difficulties in measuring remittance flows, this variable is both a noisy estimate of true remittance inflows and available for only one year (2005).<sup>16</sup>

Aside from these measures of economic exchange, we also include variables that measure other concepts. We measure the FPLR theory with four different indicators that, if the FPLR school is correct, should all be positively correlated with anti-Americanism. First, we include the aforementioned (logged) number of MIDs with the United States. Second, we include a measure of US troop presence in each Latin American country during the Cold War. This is the (logged) per capita number of US troops in the country between 1950 and 1995 (T. Kane 2006). Third, we consider inflows of arms from the United States during the Cold War with a variable that is the average annual US dollar value (in logged per capita terms) of arms imports from the United States between 1950 and 1995.<sup>17</sup> Finally, whereas the MIDs data set captures mostly overt US foreign policy involvement, we assess the role of covert meddling with a newly available variable that gauges Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) interventions in Latin American domestic politics during the Cold War. The variable *CIA-backed presidents* is the number of presidents in each country that the United States installed or materially backed during the Cold War and is based on recently declassified documents from the era (Berger et al. 2013). Unlike the economic-exchange variables, all of these FPLR measures vary across countries but not through time. We thus assess their empirical validity only in the cross-national regressions.

Finally, we test the impact of two other factors. The first is elites' pro-Americanism. We measure this with the interviews of Latin America's legislators conducted by the University of Salamanca for the Latin American Parliamentary Elites Project (Élites Parlamentarias de América Latina [PELA] data set). This project surveys Latin American legislators from eighteen countries once per legislative session, and the questionnaires have contained numerous queries about perceptions of the United States. We construct an index of elite's pro-Americanism that thus contains cross-national and longitudinal estimates of the slant in elite rhetoric. (For details, see section 2 of the supplemental online appendix). The second factor captures the effect of US foreign policy toward the Middle East. The variable *Bush during the Iraq War* is an indicator variable equal to 1 from 2003 to 2008 (inclusive) and 0 in other years.

15. Migration data are from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's *International Migration Database 2009*, <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=MIG>.

16. Remittances data are from Ratha and Shaw (2007).

17. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Arms Transfers Database*, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>.



## RESULTS

*The Cross-National Correlates of Anti-Americanism*

We first look at some regressions that exploit cross-national variation in the dependent and independent variables. These are similar in spirit to the results conveyed in figures 1 and 2. We conduct further small-*N* analyses of long-standing cross-national differences to parse out the potentially varied effects of the different aspects of economic dependence and exchange and to test our main hypotheses when including control variables.

Table 1 presents these cross-national regression results as ordinary-least-squares (OLS) standardized coefficients. The first column of results lists the coefficient for each independent variable when it is the only independent variable in the regression model (i.e., a bivariate regression). The solid horizontal lines separating each coefficient indicate that, despite appearing in the same column, these are each separately estimated models. Standardized coefficients in bivariate models are equivalent to Pearson's *r*, so readers can interpret this first column as they would simple correlation coefficients. The story from column 1

*Table 1 Explaining cross-national levels of anti-Americanism in Latin America, 1995–2009: OLS models*

International economic exchange	Bivariate models	Multiple regression models			
Trade with US	-.723* (.173)	-.551* (.293)	-.575* (.224)	-.503* (.264)	-.472* (.198)
Aid from US	-.640* (.192)	-.381* (.196)	-.418 (.254)	-.337* (.177)	-.316 (.235)
Emigrants working in US	-.630* (.199)	-.006 (.312)		.028 (.267)	
Remittances from US	-.604* (.199)		.060 (.285)		-.028 (.261)
Foreign policy legacies					
Number of MIDs	-.251 (.242)	.037 (.192)	.033 (.183)		
US troop presence	-.499 (.207)			-.275 (.154)	-.278 (.156)
Inflows of arms from US	.030 (.243)				
CIA-backed presidents	-.007 (.246)				

*Note:* Entries are OLS standardized regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is anti-Americanism. The dependent variable and all economic-exchange variables are averages for each country over the period 1995–2009. Time periods for the foreign policy legacy variables are reported in the text. *N* = 18.

\**p* < .05

is simple: all the economic-exchange variables matter in the expected (negative) direction, whereas none of the foreign policy legacy variables matter in the expected (positive) direction. Countries characterized by high volumes (relative to their GDP) of economic exchange with the United States have more pro-American citizenries. In the bivariate models, trade, aid, migration, and remittance flows are all highly and almost equally correlated with mass attitudes toward the northern hegemon. In contrast, past foreign policy misdeeds by the United States exert either a negligible impact (in the case of arms sales and CIA interventions) or are negatively correlated with anti-Americanism (as in the case of MIDs and especially US troop presence).

Is the impact of economic exchange maintained when controlling for foreign policy legacies, and, if so, which aspect of economic exchange is the most important? The various elements of economic exchange are correlated with one another (in part because proximity to the United States greases the wheels of all forms of exchange), so the bivariate correlations tell little about the independent effect of each one. The multiple regression models in table 1 provide answers. The impact of trade is hardly diminished when controlling for foreign policy legacy variables and for other aspects of economic exchange. Even in fuller models, a one-standard-deviation shift upward in trade volumes with the United States yields a half-standard-deviation shift downward in a country's level of anti-Americanism. Aid also continues to yield an important effect, although its impact is halved and teeters on the brink of statistical significance. The strong negative bivariate correlation between migration (as flows of both people and remittances) and anti-Americanism appears, however, to be spurious. Once trade and aid are controlled for, the effect of migration disappears. (To check the robustness of these findings to outliers and influential observations, we rerun them as robust regressions in section 3 of the supplemental online appendix.)

### *Panel Regression Findings*

These cross-national results are revealing, but we can also exploit the repeated measures of anti-Americanism in the Latinobarómetro data set. Including this time dimension allows us to incorporate the ongoing and more immediate effects of economic exchange into our overall assessments of its impact. The large  $N$  also allows us to tease out further effects. In particular, we can differentiate the impact of imports and exports, which is not possible in a strict cross-national framework.<sup>18</sup> The fuller data set also allows us to employ our instrumental variables solutions described earlier.

Table 2 summarizes the most important results from a series of panel regressions. We report the long-run multipliers (LRMs) for each variable across eight different regression models. We constructed our panel models to capture both the immediate and the future effect that an economic-exchange variable exerts on anti-Americanism. For example, a boost in the number of emigrants to the United

18. In the long run, exports and imports tend to balance in a country, so one really needs to track temporal shifts within nations to parse these two out.

Table 2 Explaining cross-national and longitudinal levels of anti-Americanism in Latin America, 1995–2009: Panel regression models

	Models							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
International economic exchange								
Trade with US	-.373* (.055)							
Imports from US		-.412* (.064)					-.176* (.058)	
Imports from US (instrumented)			-.915* (.125)					-.488* (.158)
Exports to US		.002 (.062)	.349 (.084)				.005 (.052)	.147 (.077)
Aid from US				-.146* (.015)			-.096* (.021)	-.083* (.015)
Aid from US (instrumented)					-.147* (.014)			
Emigrants working in US						-.243* (.030)	-.082* (.049)	.021 (.049)
Elite rhetoric								
Elites' pro-Americanism	-.119* (.034)	-.123* (.033)	-.096* (.031)	-.148* (.025)	-.149* (.022)	-.151* (.027)	-.125* (.029)	-.100* (.034)
US foreign policy								
Bush during Iraq War	.245* (.038)	.255* (.033)	.205* (.034)	.261* (.036)	.262* (.038)	.254* (.039)	.292* (.033)	.257* (.034)

Note: Entries are long-run multipliers calculated from error correction models (ECM) with standard errors in parentheses. The original ECM coefficients are reported in the on-line appendix. N = 252.

\*p < .05 (one tailed).

States could influence levels of anti-Americanism both in the year in which the large outflow transpires and in subsequent years as cross-border communications and remittance flows occur. Rather than showing each of these immediate and lagged effects here, we report the LRM, which is the total effect (summed over current and future years) yielded by a change in each variable. (Readers interested in differentiating between the short- and long-term effects can find them in section 4 of the supplemental online appendix, which reports the original error correction model results.)

We estimated eight different models. Models 1–3 consider the impact of trade, models 4 and 5 look at aid, model 6 assesses migration, and models 7 and 8 control for all of these aspects of economic exchange to determine which ones survive the inclusion of these statistical controls. All models control for elites' pro-Americanism and the Bush presidency during the Iraq War.

As in the cross-national models, we find trade to play a statistically and substantively important role in reducing anti-Americanism. Model 1 makes clear that an increase in trade with the United States lowers anti-Americanism. Even a small shift in trade with the United States as a share of GDP of about 10 percent (e.g., from 10 percent of GDP to 11 percent) shifts anti-Americanism lower by one-eighth of a standard deviation. Greater differences of 50 percent (e.g., 10 percent of GDP to 15 percent) yielded boosts of half a standard deviation in pro-American sentiment.

But which channel produces these effects: exports or imports? Model 2 parses out the two and gives a resounding answer. It is the consumption of imports from the United States and not exports to it that lowers rates of anti-Americanism in Latin American countries. This finding even holds up when instrumenting imports with inflows of goods and services from non-US trading partners (model 3). Moreover, in a full model (models 7 and 8) that includes trade and the other forms of economic exchange, imports as a variable remains a statistically significant mitigator of anti-Americanism. In contrast, exports do not have this same effect on levels of anti-Americanism. In fact, increases in export volumes may even raise ill will toward the United States, although this finding is not a robust one. In summary, trade with, and in particular imports from, the United States promotes sentiments of goodwill toward the colossus of the north in Latin America.

Other forms of economic exchange with the United States matter. Aid (model 4) from the United States does promote pro-American sentiment, and the impact of aid is robust to the instrumentation of aid flows (models 5 and 8) and the inclusion of other economic-exchange variables as statistical controls (models 7 and 8). In general, however, the substantive impact of aid is less than that of imports. Even a large increase in aid flows (as a percentage of the recipient's GDP) of 50 percent boosts pro-Americanism by just one-fifth of a standard deviation.

We find the impact of emigration to the United States to be less substantial than that of trade and aid. Migration does carry a negative sign in the trimmest model (model 6), yet its effect does not withstand the inclusion of more statistical controls. Its statistical significance is marginal in one full model (model 7) and nonexistent in another (model 8). We thus draw a cautious conclusion about the impact of migration—while we are confident saying that emigration to the United

States does not increase anti-Americanism, we are less confident that it has an independent effect on promoting pro-Americanism.

Despite the existence of these strong economic effects, elite rhetoric also matters. Pro-American attitudes among each country's legislators are negatively correlated with mass anti-Americanism. However, the ongoing statistical significance of the economic variables, even when controlling for elite rhetoric, indicates that the latter is not the sole channel through which exchange with the United States foments pro-Americanism in Latin America.

Finally, we do find some evidence that foreign policy matters. The advent of the Iraq War boosted anti-Americanism in the region, and it did so by nearly a standard deviation. This finding still sits uneasily with the FPLR conventional wisdom, however, since this was obviously foreign policy aggression toward the Middle East, not Latin America. Indeed, the almost immediate disappearance of this Iraq War effect with the Obama inauguration in 2009 seems to suggest that Latin Americans are quickly forgiving toward the United States as a whole (if not toward the presidential perpetrator) when it commits foreign policy misdeeds. There seems to be no evidence that anti-Americanism is on a long-term structural rise in the region (Bowman 2006; Katzenstein and Keohane 2007a, 276).

In summary, our expectations about the relative impact of different forms of economic exchange are borne out. The most robust and substantively important variable is clearly imports. Consumption of US-made imports fosters positive images of the source country rather than fomenting a local resentment against its cultural and economic implications. In contrast, exports have a negligible or even negative impact on citizens' goodwill toward the United States. The impact of foreign aid from the United States falls somewhere in the middle in its substantive size, and emigration appears to have a negligible or at best minimal effect on mass attitudes toward the United States.

## CONCLUSION

While not excusing two hundred years of US imperialist and often violent meddling in Latin American affairs, we demonstrate in this article that this meddling has almost no resonance in mass attitudes toward the United States in today's Latin America. Instead, on average, the region's citizens are favorable toward the northern colossus, and they are more likely to view the United States through the lens of economic opportunity than of threat. Pro-American sentiment is greater where these opportunities are most prevalent, with the consumption of US-made goods and services being particularly effective in boosting goodwill.

These findings direct us to make a number of prescriptions. First, it is time to move beyond the caricature that paints Latin Americans as self-perceived helpless victims of an oppressive US economic imperialism. Scholarly observers often view the United States as a symbol of economic imperialism, with mass anti-Americanism considered tantamount to anti-globalization outrage. Such mass sentiments surely exist, yet we find that globalization, and particularly trade with the United States, attracts more than it repels. Stated differently, globalization builds far more pro-Americans than anti-Americans.

Second, observers have focused on rather grandiose causes of anti-Americanism (e.g., imperialism, religiosity, economic exploitation, cultural hegemony) and equally grandiose manifestations of it (e.g., terrorism, mass protests, consumer boycotts, and elite rhetoric such as Hugo Chávez's colorful criticisms of US presidents). Yet it is also time to recognize that Latin American beliefs about the colossus of the north are shaped far more by mundane, daily instances of economic exchange, and these continually unfolding events lead Latin Americans to, on balance, appreciate their northern neighbor.

Finally, our findings yield some obvious policy prescriptions. Soft-power and liberal theorists have long argued, but rarely empirically verified, that trade and aid are effective mechanisms of promoting mutual goodwill among mass citizenries. Our findings provide empirical support for these claims, although they cast a particularly strong vote in favor of trade as an inexpensive but highly effective way to lower anti-Americanism. Aid also builds pro-Americanism, but it is a less effective and more expensive way to do so. Greater cooperation on the part of the United States in global trade talks, both with Latin American and with other less developed countries, will boost positive perceptions of the United States and help advance its soft-power goals.

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