

ABOUT ME

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I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am also the editor of the academic journal The Latin Americanist.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014

Latin American Views of the United States

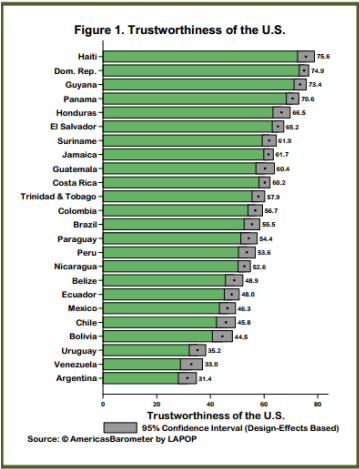
Laura Silliman, "Bridging Inter-American Divides: Views of the U.S. Across the Americas," *AmericasBarometer Insights* 105 (2014). [Ungated](#)

Abstract:

The United States has long suffered from an image problem across much of the Americas, due in large part to the many cases of U.S. involvement in Latin American and Caribbean affairs. As these legacies of military and economic interventions perhaps begin to recede in the minds of Latin Americans, the question arises as to what factors influence the views of the U.S. among citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean? In this analysis of 2012 AmericasBarometer survey data, I find that the growing levels of economic and social ties between the U.S. and some countries in the Americas are a source of more positive views of the U.S. Alternatively, citizens living in those countries with fewer direct connections to the U.S. tend to express more negative views of the U.S. This study examines these relationships and the resulting policy implications.

This goes along the lines of an [article by Baker and Cupery](#) that I wrote about last year (and which is cited in this one).

Two things come to mind:



First, the distance issue is quite interesting and counter-intuitive because the U.S. has interfered/intervened more with nearby countries, which you would expect to generate some negative feelings (depending on how long ago it was). This is a short article and she doesn't really get into it, but part of the answer may well be ideology, which she does note. At least right now, countries closer to the United States tend to be more conservative while countries further away tend to be more leftist.

Second, we need to stop talking about U.S.-Latin American relations in terms of grand strategy, big plans, bold moves, etc. The daily, consistent and lower level interactions are what really make the relationship tick. She mentions the potential positive impact of free trade, which I would

argue is not necessarily clear given that trustworthiness with Chile and Mexico are under 50%. However, engagement in general is a good thing, and it does not need to be "big," which unfortunately seems to be a fad with a lot of the commentariat even in the total absence of supportive evidence.



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Posted by Greg Weeks at 10:35 AM 

Labels: Academic Article, U.S.-Latin American relations

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