Forced Returns Fuel Anti-Americanism: Evidence from U.S. Deportations to Latin America

Christian Ambrosius (Freie Universität Berlin)

Covadonga Meseguer (UNED)

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Abstract

In the past two decades, forced removals have been the main feature of U.S. migration policy toward Latin America. In this research, we explore whether this policy has had implications in terms of Latin Americans' public opinion toward their northern neighbour. We argue that deportations breed anti-Americanism by curtailing the flow of information and money associated with emigration, which has proven to be a source of better dispositions toward the United States. Using public opinion data and municipal data on deportations in El Salvador, we show that these perceptions have worsened over time and that rates of deportation are related to this trend. By using public opinion data on Latin America and deportation rates in the region, we also show that this pattern holds beyond our case study. We call attention to destination migration policies as a source of resentment among domestic audiences, which can be capitalised by new populisms in the region.

Keywords: Anti-Americanism, Latin America, El Salvador, deportations, public opinion, foreign relations.

Introduction

The literature on anti-Americanism in the Latin American region has been rich in historical accounts that identify a secular resentment towards the United States, rooted in a long list of perceived wrongs. The U.S. has frequently been seen as a threat to national sovereignty and the cause of the region's underdevelopment – a view often embraced, if not spurred, by intellectuals and political elites, mostly of the Latin American left (Radu 2004; McPherson 2004; Sweig 2006; Rubinstein and Smith 1988; McPherson 2013). Only recently has scholarship started to systematically test whether Latin American public opinion is predominantly anti-American, finding that the average Latin American is not (Baker and Cupery 2013; Azpuru and Boniface 2015; Maldonado, Castillo, and González 2015). Some authors have attributed the sources of mass sympathy toward the United States to the fact that many households' and communities' economic well-being depends heavily on the northern neighbour. Processes of trade integration have expanded the range of products available to the average Latin American, and contact through travel and emigration has increased the flow of information and money between home countries and the host, making individuals and households interested in sustaining those exchanges (Baker and Cupery 2013; Azpuru and Boniface 2015).

In this research, we focus on what happens when these flows are abruptly interrupted due to forced removals. We are interested in this topic because since the 1990s, deportations have been central to United States policy for deterring unauthorised migration (Hiemstra 2012). Even so, scholarship has paid no systematic attention to the consequences that deportations may have for the image that the U.S. holds among Latin Americans (Azpuru and Boniface 2015, 131).

Our main argument is that forcible returns put an end to all the positive flows associated with emigration and in turn pose serious problems for households – such as the burden of unpaid debts – as well as for communities – such as increased tensions in labour markets and more crime (Hiemstra 2019; Ambrosius and Leblang 2020; Ambrosius 2021). Therefore, we hypothesise that forced removals translate into worse opinions about and less trust in the United States. Looking at both opinions and trust is important because, as Katzenstein and Keohane (2007) clarify in their influential work, while opinions are often transient, distrust can be consequential in terms of foreign policy.[1]

We test the hypothesis that forcible removals negatively affect dispositions toward the United States using the case of El Salvador. On the one hand, El Salvador's economy depends heavily on *el norte*. On the other hand, the country has a long record of U.S. interventions in support of autocratic regimes, counterinsurgent movements, and conservative governments, which has often been a source of tension in the bilateral relationship (Langley 1988; Colburn and Cruz 2014; Paarlberg 2019). Despite this ambivalence, the average Salvadoran has traditionally been pro-American. Even so, we show that people's dispositions toward the U.S. have steadily worsened over the last two decades. We contend that this trend in public opinion attitudes is causally related to the massive increase in deportations that the country has experienced over the same period. We also show that this pattern is not exclusive to El Salvador, but it is also evident in the Latin American region over the period 2000 through 2015.

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[1] While opinions are predispositions based on particular situations associated with what the United States *does*, trust is based on judging certain inherent features of the United States that are considered part of what the U.S. *is*. If distrust becomes "entrenched in societies", it can translate into "opposition or lack of support of the United States" (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007, 21–22).

Our exploration of the impact of deportations on dispositions toward the United States is significant not only for what we contribute to better understanding of the determinants of mass public opinion toward the U.S. in the region. We also argue that increased resentment motivated by draconian U.S. enforcement policies has been capitalised by populist leaders in the region, reviving anti-American rhetoric with palpable foreign policy consequences. If we add to the picture that deportations seem to do little to deter emigration and remigration (Hiemstra 2012; 2019); that forced removals do not seem to reduce crime and violence in the U.S. (Hines and Peri 2019; Miles and Cox 2014); and that they likely have negative effects on GDP and employment (Edwards and Ortega 2016), it may well be the case that the main outcome of forcible returns is to feed populist rhetoric in international relations.

Our paper proceeds as follows. In the first section, we frame our research within the literature about anti-Americanism and present our argument and working hypothesis. In Section 2, we discuss the case of El Salvador. In Section 3, we test our hypothesis that deportations have increased resentment toward the U.S. in El Salvador in the last two decades. We test the external validity of this finding using Latin American data in Section 4. Finally, we conclude in Section 5 with some policy implications and paths for future research.

1. Literature Review and Hypothesis

Anti-Americanism is the subject of a long intellectual tradition in the study of foreign relations. It can be defined as the expression of negative dispositions toward the United States (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007, 12).[2] In this work, we follow Giacomo Chiozza

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[2] Therefore, we do not explore attitudes toward the citizens of the United States, nor attitudes toward the country's policies. This is an important distinction as there is often a discrepancy between what the United States is and what it does. Another definition of anti-Americanism is "any hostile action or

in defining "the study of anti-Americanism as the analysis of popular sentiment towards the United States". By "popular", we mean the feelings reported by ordinary citizens rather than those of elites. And by "sentiment" we also follow Chiozza's definition as "a mood that ordinary people entertain about the United States" (Chiozza 2009, 36). Some authors refer to anti-Americanism as a "venerable intellectual tradition" (Rubinstein and Smith 1988, 36) in Latin America.

In their important contribution, Katzenstein and Keohane (2007) identified six different varieties of anti-American sentiment: liberal, social, sovereign-nationalist, radical, elitist, and legacy anti-Americanism. In the Latin America context, sovereign-nationalist, legacy, and elitist sources of anti-Americanism have been predominant.[3] By sovereign nationalist anti-Americanism, Katzenstein and Keohane mean the widespread perception that the U.S. has often abused its power, carrying out intrusive policies that range from attempts to topple domestic regimes to shaping domestic economic development for its benefit. Latin Americans "have gained much knowledge about the contradictions of living next to a superpower that protects while occupying, invests as it exploits, and professes friendship as it makes enemies" (McPherson 2004, 141; see also Baker and Cupery 2013, 108).[4] Legacy anti-Americanism stems from a perception of past wrongdoings committed against a society. Take for instance the case of Mexico,

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expression that becomes part and parcel of an undifferentiated attack on the foreign policy, society, culture, and values of the United States" (Rubinstein and Smith 1988: 36).

[3] Liberal anti-Americanism denounces the hypocrisy of the United States in that the country claims to profess certain liberal values that do not, however, accord with its policies. For instance, liberal anti-Americans criticise the United States for supporting autocratic governments around the world or mercantilist trade policies to protect American markets. Social anti-Americanism denounces a too liberal approach on the part of the United States when it comes to giving priority to markets over the states in economic policy making and to unilateralism versus multilateralism in foreign policy making. Radical anti-Americans believe that the United States' values and policies trump "the furtherance of good values, practices, and institutions" in the rest of the world. Consequently, defenders of this approach argue "for the weakening, destruction, or transformation of the political and economic institutions of the United States" (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007, 33).

[4] See also Hakim (2006).

where the historical memory of past annexations by the United States spurred *anti-yanquismo*, which continues to echo today. Finally, elitist sources of anti-Americanism speak of the embracing of this type of position among intellectual and political elites, quite often with instrumental purposes (Rubinstein and Smith 1988: 41). For instance, in countries such as Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and more recently Peru and El Salvador, leftist leaders have adopted an anti-imperialist rhetoric. For some, this rhetoric is a tool to cement loyalties and deflect responsibility over domestic economic and political failures (McPherson 2004, 147; Azpuru and Boniface 2015, 121–22).

Scholars of anti-Americanism often assume that the antagonistic position adopted by some Latin American elites toward the United States is shared by the average citizen. Consequently, most of what we know about anti-American sentiment in the region is based on research into political elites' and intellectuals' stands with respect to the north (Radu 2004; Sweig 2006). As a result, our knowledge of the drivers of mass public opinion toward the United States is often taken to be an extrapolation of elites' discourses (Chiozza 2007 is an exception).[5] In Latin America, empirical research based on public opinion data is limited to a handful of articles. And what this research shows is that opinions about the U.S. among the public do not often mirror elites' hostility (Baker and Cupery 2013; Azpuru and Boniface 2015; Maldonado, Castillo, and González 2015; Meseguer, Jaupart, and Aparicio 2017).

Our argument revolves around an oft-cited determinant of (less) Anti-Americanism that directly connects with our goal of exploring the relationship between deportations, anti-Americanism, and foreign policy. The so-called "contact-and-information" hypothesis holds that frequent travel, living in the U.S., or contact with

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[5] Unfortunately, Chiozza's (2007) study does not include the Latin American region.

emigrant relatives enhances trust in the U.S. and improves perceptions of it (Nye 2004; Chiozza 2007; 2009; Baker and Cupery 2013; Azpuru and Boniface 2015; Meseguer, Jaupart, and Aparicio 2017). As a result of emigration, relatives become stakeholders with a strong interest in a good-neighbour relationship with the United States. A side effect of this is that relatives who remain behind have incentives to be more informed about what happens in the U.S., improving their knowledge about and reducing prejudice against the host country (Meseguer, Jaupart, and Aparicio 2017, 8). These social remittances; that is, the transmission of ideas and information to relatives left behind (Levitt 1998; Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow 2010) are often accompanied by financial remittances or the money that migrants send back to their relatives. One factor that makes families more supportive of a fluid bilateral relationship is that émigrés' jobs guarantee a steady flow of income to the households left behind (Meseguer, Jaupart, and Aparicio 2017). Consequently, social and financial remittances, and contact with emigrants are considered good strategies for generating positive attitudes toward the United States. In other words, by multiple channels, emigration facilitates stayers becoming interested in sustaining amicable foreign relations with the country that is the source of a fundamental lifeline. Social and financial remittances are therefore closely intertwined (Vari-Lavoisier 2016).[6]

Certainly, migration is not always "rosy". For many Latin Americans in the United States, unauthorised migration makes life and work in destination countries a constant struggle (Baker and Cupery 2013, 119).[7] In fact, we argue that deportations, the most difficult scenario an emigrant can encounter, erode mass public opinion about

[6] In their study, Azpuru and Boniface (2015) use remittances as a proxy to operationalise the contact-and-information hypothesis. They find that more remittances breed lower distrust of the United States and conclude: "our research demonstrates that remittances can have a positive effect on the image of the United States abroad, more specifically in the case of Latin America" (Azpuru and Boniface 2015, 130).
[7] In a similar vein, Radu (2004, 162) asserted that "[anti-Americanism] is a deeply rooted disposition, also shared by the many unauthorised or legal immigrants to the United States …"

and trust in the United States. The reason is that forcible returns put an end to all the positives that emigration brings about, both material and non-material.

Since the 1990s, but most prominently after September 11, the United States tightened its immigration regulations, in particular enforcement policies. Deportations have increased at dramatic rates, accompanied by a rhetoric centred in the criminalisation of migration and the militarisation of human mobility (Hiemstra 2019, 53). In practice, this has meant that large numbers of unauthorised migrants, a considerable percentage of them convicted felons, have been forced to return to their origin countries (Ambrosius and Leblang 2020; Ambrosius 2021). Several U.S. administrations have put in place aid programs designed to outsource control of unauthorised immigration to countries of origin, as well as to strengthen local judicial systems, training for militarising borders, and anti-smuggling efforts (Hiemstra 2019; Cheatam 2021). The continuation of such aid has frequently been conditioned on out-migration countries policing the flow of unauthorised migrants.[8]

Since deportations put an end to the flow of positive information and financial flows, forcible returns are deeply resented by deportees' families and their communities. Indeed, deportations raise frustration as well as indignation against the United States for what emigrants and their families consider unwarranted: when families learn about a relative's detention, a frequent reaction is: "she was only trying to work!" (Hiemstra 2012, 299). For forcible returnees, deportation comes with the stigma of unpaid debts and failure; for households, forced returns mean the end of the income stream the emigrant relative secured; for the communities they return to, deportees entail more pressure on precarious labour markets (Menjívar, Morris, and Rodríguez 2018).

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[8] For example, in 2019, following what the Trump administration considered a failure by Northern Triangle countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) to curb emigration, Trump withheld aid to these countries.

Moreover, the deportation of convicted felons may have dramatic consequences, reflected in an increase in criminal violence at the local level (Blake 2014; Ambrosius and Leblang 2020; Ambrosius 2021; Rozo, Anders, and Raphael 2021). Finally, governments confronted with the consequences of mass deportations may find in blaming U.S. immigration and enforcement policies a way to externalise responsibility for longstanding socio-economic problems, which often are at the root of emigration streams. Anti-Americanism is then a scapegoat strategy that seeks to foment the attribution of responsibility to the United States for deteriorating economic and security conditions at home (McPherson 2004; 2013; Azpuru and Boniface 2015). If successful, the strategy can generate or reinforce a hostile predisposition toward the U.S. among public opinion.

In sum, we argue that forcible returns put an end to the previous channels that contributed to stayers' favourable opinions of the U.S., causing frustration and fuelling resentment against the northern neighbour. Considering our previous discussion, our working *hypothesis* is that more restrictive enforcement policies on the part of the U.S. and the increase in the flow of deportations negatively shape public opinion about and erode trust in the United States among Latin American publics.

We test our hypothesis using public opinion data on opinions about and trust in the U.S. for El Salvador in the years 2012 through 2018. To test the external validity of our proposition, we expand our analysis to the rest of Latin American countries in the period 2000 through 2015. Controlling for other alternative explanations of attitudes toward the U.S., we find that deportations substantially erode mass public opinion of the United States, confirming our hypothesis.

2. **Case Study: El Salvador**

El Salvador has traditionally been considered the "closest ally" of the U.S. in the region.[9] This small Central American country has a tightly-knit historical relationship with the United States (McPherson 2004; Baker and Cupery 2013, 109). The U.S. is El Salvador's main trading partner (Ribando Seelke 2020, 28). In 2001, the country adopted the U.S. dollar, abolishing all exchange rate risks with the United States. The U.S. is also the main provider of foreign aid to the country, disbursing approximately 300 million USD per year.[10] This strong economic dependence makes El Salvador a least likely case for testing our proposition that deportations breed anti-Americanism.

In parallel to its deep economic ties, El Salvador is closely linked to the U.S. via international migration. Large-scale emigration from El Salvador started in the 1980s with the outbreak of a civil war between Marxist guerrillas and the U.S.-backed military regime (1980–1992). Migration networks and the lack of economic opportunities led to a further increase in migration from the 1990s on. More recently, high levels of violence have been an additional driver of emigration (Clemens 2021). Today, an estimated 1.4 million people born in El Salvador reside in the U.S., a number equal to almost a fifth of the Salvadoran population still in the country (Menjívar and Gómez Cervantes 2018). In 2020, Salvadorans sent 6 billion USD of remittances, which contributed to 24% of the country's GDP in that year (World Development Indicators 2022). Besides being an economic pillar, the Salvadoran diaspora also plays a key role in the transmission of values, norms, and information back home (Burgess 2012; Paarlberg 2017; González-Ocantos, Jonge, and Meseguer 2018).

As a result of these personal and economic ties, the contact hypothesis predicts a positive attitude and high levels of trust by Salvadorans towards the U.S. (Azpuru and

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[9] https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-59558957. Accessed 07/02/2022.
[10] https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-59558957. Accessed 07/02/2022.

Boniface 2015). In fact, El Salvador has traditionally ranked among the highest in the region in terms of good public sentiments toward *el norte* (Baker and Cupery 2013). However, the migration status of many Salvadorans has left them vulnerable to deportation. In 2011, an estimated 660 thousand Salvadorans in the U.S. lacked formal documents (Hoefer, Rytina, and Baker 2012). Only 29% of all first-generation Salvadoran immigrants had acquired U.S. citizenship (Migration Policy Institute 2015). The U.S. threatened to suspend the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that has shielded up to 250,000 El Salvadorans from being forcibly removed. Since 2000, El Salvador has received more than 250 thousand deportees, equivalent to 4% of its population stock (see Figure 1). This rate is higher than any other country in the Western Hemisphere, approached only by neighbouring Honduras. This means that there are many Salvadoran families that have witnessed the forced return of relatives, friends, and neighbours. We expect this experience to undermine the positive perceptions that many Salvadorans have or had of the U.S., controlling for other factors that may shape the perceptions of the United States.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of Salvadoran citizens' opinions with respect to the U.S. and the cumulative inflow of deportees over the course of the 18-year period from 2000 to 2018. The cumulative number of deportees received over this period is shown as bars on the right axis. Opinions are measured as differences with respect to the average of all Latin American countries on the left axis. As we would expect from the contact hypothesis, in 2000, more than 92% of all respondents stated that they had a good or very good opinion of the U.S. (Latinobarometer Survey 2000). This value was 21 percentage points above the average of all countries (71%) and the highest value among all 19 countries surveyed in that year.

However, this "over-sympathy" of Salvadorans toward the U.S. in comparison to citizens in other Latin American countries has steadily decreased over time. By 2018, the share of the population with a positive opinion of the U.S. had dropped to 62%, slightly below the average of all Latin American countries, which also declined over this period (to 63%). This deterioration of attitudes towards the U.S. happened at the same time as an increase in the cumulative number of deportees, shown on the right-hand axis. We contend that these variables are causally related.

Figure 1: Opinions of the U.S. and the Cumulative Inflow of Deportees, 2000–2018, El Salvador.
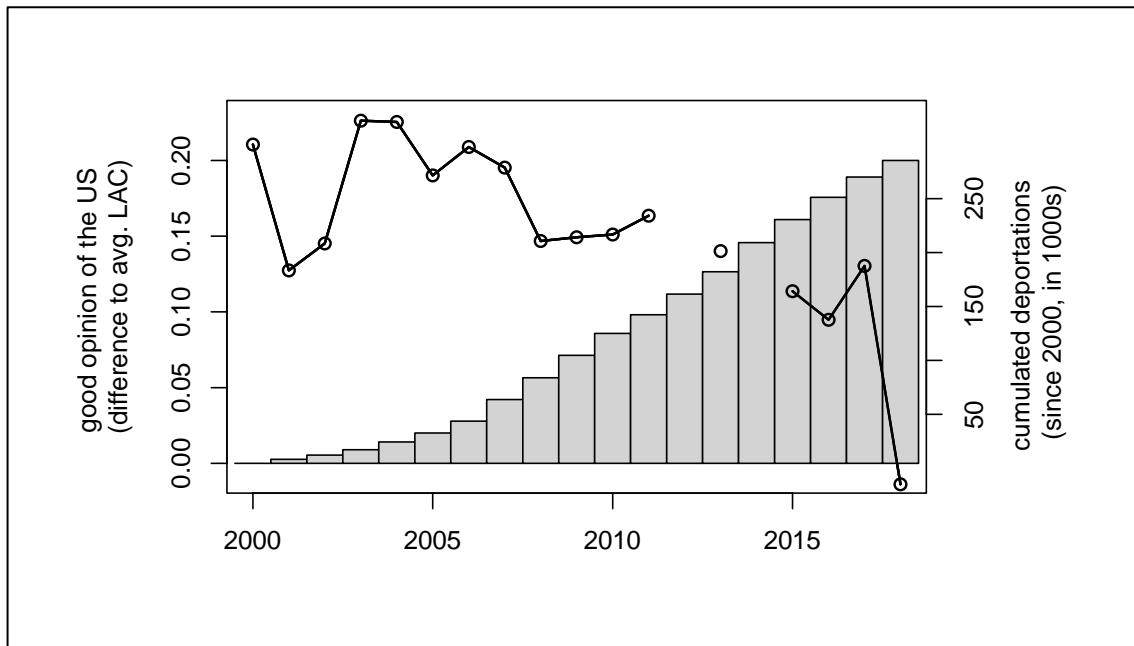
Scale on the left axis represents "over-sympathy" defined as difference in percentage points between the population share of Salvadorans who have a good or very good opinion of the U.S. and the average of 19 countries covered by the Latinobarometer surveys. Data on cumulative deportees (right axis) comes from the Department of Homeland Security.

Trends in the perception of the U.S. are also visible in the discourse of the political elites. Between the end of the civil war in 1992 and 2008, the country was governed by the rightist *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA). ARENA was formed in the early 1980s by sectors of the military and the landowning oligarchy that had been actively supported by the U.S. government to fight the Marxist guerrillas during the civil war. ARENA pursued policies of trade liberalisation with the U.S. and was responsible for the introduction of the U.S. dollar as official currency to back their pro-American policy.

In 2009, the main opposition party, *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN) – the successor of the guerrilla groups that rose against the state during the civil war – took power under the moderate leadership of Mauricio Funes. In the run-up to the party's second five-year term in 2014, FLMN candidate Salvador Sánchez Cerén, a former leader of the guerrillas, adopted an adversarial stance, aspiring

to reduce the country's dependence on the United States (Colburn and Cruz 2014, 149–50; González-Ocantos, Jonge, and Meseguer 2018). In turn, Washington has not remained neutral in its position toward El Salvador's domestic politics. The U.S. has often used foreign aid as a diplomatic tool to influence electoral outcomes in favour of the conservative ARENA and to force changes in domestic migration policies. For example, as Paarlberg (2019, 546) describes in detail, in the months before El Salvador's 2004 presidential elections, U.S. congressmen Tom Tancredo of Colorado and Dan Burton of Indiana made public statements that "should the FMLN candidate Schafik Handal win, the U.S. would review its remittance and immigration policy towards El Salvador."[11]

In practice, however, throughout the ten-year rule of the left, foreign relations between the United States and successive FLMN governments have remained cordial. Since leaders of the party are aware of the utter importance that a good-neighbour policy has for the ordinary Salvadoran, moderation has prevailed. Despite rhetorical differences, El Salvador's mainstream parties and political elites have for the most part agreed in that nurturing good diplomatic relations with the U.S. is in the country's interest (Azpuru 2010, 113; Sprenkels 2019; Ribando Seelke 2020).

Relations with the U.S. have taken a surprising turn under the leadership of Nayib Bukele, a former FMLN member and former mayor of San Salvador. Bukele came to power in 2019 on an anti-establishment platform as an independent candidate of the *Gran Alianza por la Unidad Nacional* (GANA), which challenged the traditional two-party system from opposing ends of the political spectrum (Meléndez-Sánchez

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[11] At the domestic level, "ARENA made these statements a central focus of its campaign, directly quoting U.S. officials in print, radio, and TV ads" and telling voters that their access to remittances depended on their support for the ARENA candidate, using a 'strategy of fear' around changes in migration policy (Paarlberg 2019, 548).

2021). Bukele has revived tensions in the bilateral relationship, with migratory issues figuring as a top concern. In March 2019, the Trump administration decided to suspend foreign aid, accusing El Salvador of not meeting its commitments to contain unauthorised migration and asylum-seeker flows. Initial assumption of responsibilities on the part of Bukele's administration to contain irregular migration and a subsequent resumption of bilateral aid have been followed by an inflamed anti-American rhetoric against Joe Biden's approach to the region, with which Nayib Bukele openly disagrees.[12] After he attacked a high-ranking diplomat on social media – the Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador – diplomatic relations between El Salvador and the United States were "temporarily on hold" due to the Salvadoran government's "apparent lack of interest in dialogue", according to U.S. officials.[13] In response, Bukele has tightened relationships with China and Global South powers in his emphasis on attracting investments rather than "handouts", and as a statement that El Salvador is not for sale ("*no se vende*").[14]

As we show next, the increase in forcible returns over the period of study is a neglected, yet consequential factor for understanding the sustained growth in public hostility toward the U.S. in El Salvador and Latin America.

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[12] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/01/world/americas/nayib-bukele-migrant-deaths.html. Accessed 10/02/2022.

[13] https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-official-says-el-salvador-relations-paused-lack-interest-2021-11-22/ Accessed 07/04/2022.

[14] In view of persistent corruption, Biden's administration decided to redirect foreign aid through civil society. This prompted Bukele's accusations of Biden's use of foreign aid to support the opposition, whom Bukele describes as communists. https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/from-bad-to-worse-nayib-bukeles-split-with-washington/ Accessed 10/02/2022.

3. Results: Deportations and Loss of Trust in the U.S. in El Salvador

We hypothesised that the worsening of opinions about the U.S. among the public was partly driven by the inflow of deportees. In order to test the argument that deportations fuel anti-Americanism, we exploit the geographical variation in the annual inflow of deportations at the subnational level between 2012 and 2018.

The map in Figure 2 shows the inflow of deportees from the U.S. in per capita terms, with a higher inflow of deportees in darker shading. In the most affected municipalities, we observe close to 10 deportees per 100 residents over this 8-year period. Since each deportee is likely to be connected to and share experiences with others, we posit that the impact of deportations on public opinion is potentially considerable. The observable implication of our hypothesis is that trust in and opinions about the United States should become *less positive* in those municipalities that saw a larger increase in the number of deportees over this period.

Figure 2: Per Capita Inflow of Deportees from the U.S. at the Level of Salvadoran Municipalities, as Shares of Population Size (2012–2018)
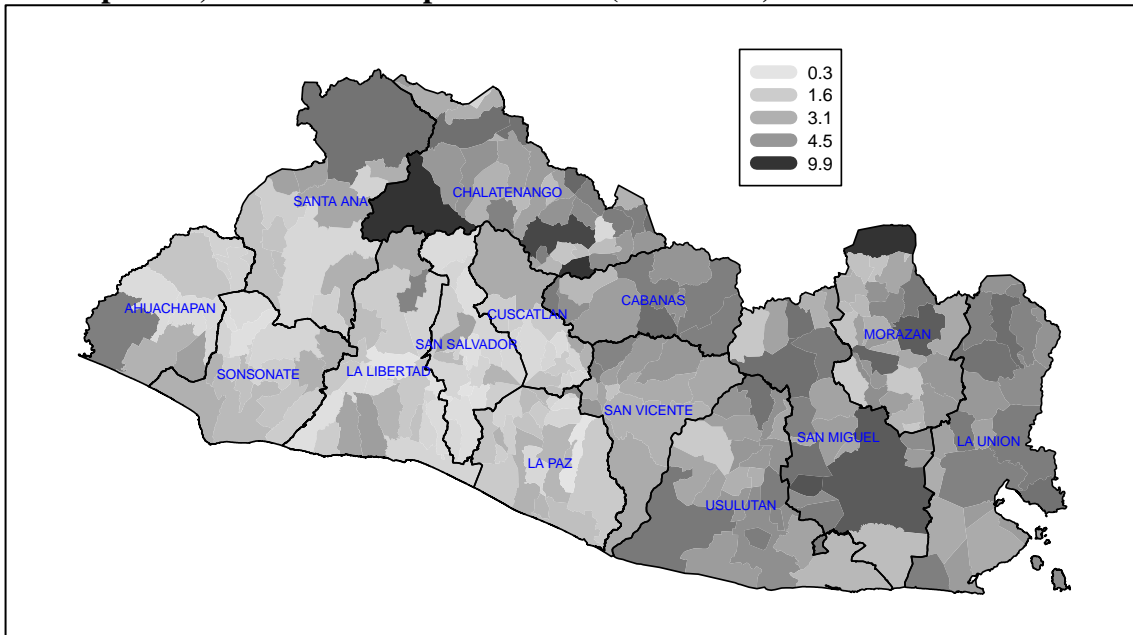
The map shows the number of deportees at the level of 262 Salvadoran municipalities during the period 2012 to 2018, as shares of their population size in 2007. Data comes from *División General de Migración y Extranjería* (DGME) and the 2007 Census. The legend shows values for quantiles, with a value of 3.1 deportees per hundred persons for municipalities at the median, and a value of 9.9 in the most affected municipality.

We use data from LAPOP to capture opinions with respect to the United States. LAPOP surveys are carried out bi-annually in survey years t (2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018) for a sample of approximately 1500 respondents in each survey, sampled from 61 different municipalities j.

Our dependent variable, *TRUST,* measures whether respondents considered the U.S. to be "very", "somewhat", "a little" or "not" trustworthy. We recoded it as a binary variable, assigning a value of 1 to all households that said they find the United States very trustworthy or somewhat trustworthy. This procedure follows a common practice in the literature that compensates for respondents' preference to provide answers closer to the median (e.g., Eichenauer, Fuchs, and Brückner 2021; Mayda and Rodrik 2005; Kleinberg and Fordham 2010). We use logistic regression on this binary outcome to

estimate the following model of individual responses i nested within municipalities i in survey year t:

(Eq. 1) $TRUST_{i,j,t} = \beta_1 DEPORT_{j,t} + \beta_2 X_{i,t} \; v_j + \tau_t + u_{i,j,t}$

As discussed in the theory section, the literature on anti-Americanism has focused on variables related to geographic proximity to the U.S. (Baker and Cupery 2013) and the legacy of historical events that compromised national sovereignty due to the United States meddling with domestic politics and economics (Sweig 2006; Radu 2004; McPherson 2003; McPherson 2013). These events have often been used by some groups of Latin American political and intellectual elites to cement national coalitions against the United States.

In contrast to this literature, our model looks at short-term changes in deportation rates over two-year periods rather than focusing on slow-changing historical patterns and legacies. Municipality fixed effects v_j control for all those variables that do not change over time, such as geographical differences, slow-changing institutional features, or other historical legacies and their accompanying narratives. Moreover, since our model is applied to Salvadoran municipalities, we also control for all variables that are defined at the national level, comprising common historical narratives and elite discourses that have been the focus of theories on sovereign nationalist anti-Americanism (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007). Survey year fixed effects τ_t control for time-varying variables such as global events or changes in U.S. policy that affect all municipalities at a given time. Standard errors are clustered at the level of municipalities (e.g., the same level as our main variable of interest, the inflow of deportees).

X is a vector of time-varying socio-demographic control variables at the level of individuals that may have an impact on respondents' opinions with respect to the U.S. These include age, age squared, gender, and marital status. Since self-ideological

placement toward the left of the ideological spectrum has been shown to be a robust predictor of anti-American sentiment (Azpuru and Boniface 2015), we also control for whether respondents identify with the FMLN, the party with roots in the guerrilla insurgency. As a proxy for personal economic conditions, we include a binary variable capturing whether households considered their income to be sufficient. This control proxies scapegoat theories of anti-American sentiment, meaning that resentment may be caused by the attribution of a worsening of individual economic conditions to U.S. policies (Azpuru and Boniface 2015).

Additionally, two migration-related variables are included: whether households receive remittances and whether respondents have intentions to migrate. Based on the contact-and-information hypothesis, we expect these variables to be positively correlated with positive attitudes and better evaluations of the U.S.[15] u stands for the usual error term, and the β are the estimated coefficients.

Table 1 shows the results for the model of surveys nested within Salvadoran municipalities. The first column is the baseline specification, using year and municipality fixed effects only. The second column adds time-varying control variables for age, age squared, marital status, whether respondents' income was considered to be sufficient, whether the households received remittances, whether respondents had the intention to migrate abroad, and whether they identified with the FMLN. In column 3 we include past values (lagged by one period) to evaluate whether effects of deportations on trust occur with a time lag. Column 4 includes leading values from the following period.[16] All coefficients are on the logit scale. Standard errors are clustered

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[15] See Annex 1 for a description of case study variables.
[16] The reason we include a specification with leading values is to emphasise that it is indeed past deportations that affect current attitudes, and not an anticipation of future events or common trends.

at the municipality–year level since this is the level at which we measure the inflow of deportees.

According to Table 1, and in line with our hypothesis, the inflow of deportations is associated with a loss of trust in the U.S. in El Salvador. When we take sociodemographic characteristics of respondents into account, the effect is larger in size and statistical significance in column 2. We also observe an effect of lagged deportations that occurred 2 years earlier in column 2, despite sacrificing observations for the 2012 survey round. As expected, no statistically significant effect is observed for the leading values of deportations in column 4. This mitigates concerns about reverse causality and supports our assumption that opinions towards the U.S. are based on experiences in preceding years and not on anticipating future events. Marginal effects obtained from the coefficients on the logit scale indicate that the effect of deportations on trust in the U.S. is substantial: for a mean value of the sample – corresponding to a probability of considering the U.S. to be trustworthy of roughly 70% in 2012 – a doubling of deportees is associated with more than 10 percentage points drop in trust.

Table 1: Deportations and Trust in the U.S., Case Study El Salvador (Logit)

|	"Do you find the US trustworthy?"			
ln (deportations)	−0.61 **	−0.767 ***		
	(−2.40)	(−2.94)		
ln (lagged deportations)			−0.45 **	
			(−2.24)	
ln (leading deportations)				−0.32
				(−1.25)
obs.	3751	3662	3080	3662
Controls	Only year and time fixed effects	Full set	Full set	Full set
Periods	4	4	3	4
# of clusters (municipalities)	61	61	55	61

Coefficients from a logit regression on a binary outcome variable, whether respondents found the U.S. "somewhat trustworthy" or "very trustworthy", or not. The inflow of deportees is measured at the municipal level, as weighted mean over 2-year periods. Z-scores from standard errors are clustered at the level of municipalities. All regressions use municipality and survey year fixed effects. Columns 2, 3, and 4 also control for age, age squared, gender, marital status, migration intentions, reception of remittances, whether income was considered sufficient, and whether respondents identified with the FMLN party. Stars denote statistical significance at the 1% (***), 5% (**), and 1% (*) level, and standard errors are clustered at the municipality–year level.

4. External Validity: Deportations and Anti-Americanism in Latin America

In order to test the external validity of these findings beyond the El Salvadoran case, we test our hypothesis on deportations as a driver of anti-Americanism for a panel of Latin-American countries. Extending the analysis to the rest of the region allows us to explore important cross-country variation in terms of both attitudes and exposure to the inflow of deportees. Figure 3 shows trends in forced removals for the 19 countries included in the country-level analysis. Deportations are measured as annual inflows per 100 thousand home country population, measured on a logarithmic scale on the vertical axis. A group of four countries stands out from the rest of the sample due to their strong exposure to the inflow of deportees: El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. Cumulative deportations since 2000 are equivalent to between 2% and 4% of current population stocks in these four countries (authors' calculation based on Department of

Homeland Security). A second group with more moderate, but still considerable numbers of deportees per capita comprises the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, followed by Costa Rica and Colombia.

Figure 3: Annual Inflow of Deportees (per 100 thousand home country populations, 2000–2015)
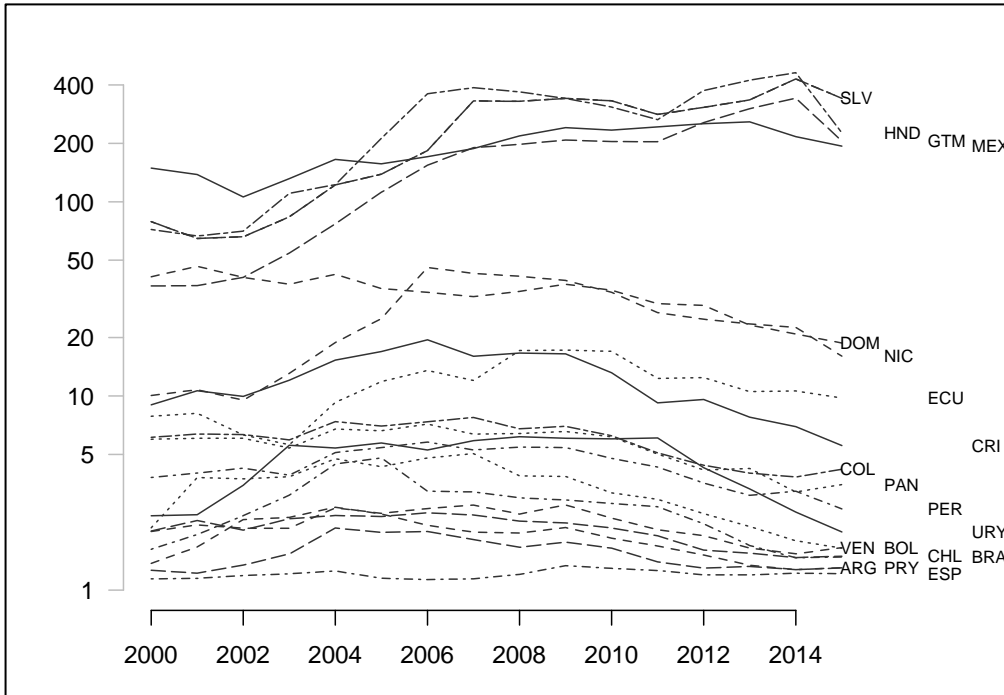
In measuring opinions towards the U.S., we rely on data from the Latinobarometer public opinion surveys. The surveys ask questions on attitudes toward the U.S. in up to 19 countries over the period 2000 through 2015. These attitudes vary greatly, ranging from sympathy rates above 90% (e.g., El Salvador and the Dominican Republic in some years) to rates as low as 20% (e.g., Argentina in 2006). We match yearly average attitudes with the annual inflow of deportees at the country level. Since no surveys were run in 2012 or 2014, we are left with a maximum of 14 annual periods. The country-level model follows a similar specification as Equation 1, and measures responses of respondents i nested in country c during survey year t:

$$\text{(Eq. 2)} \quad OPINION_{i,c,t} = \beta_1 DEPORT_{c,t} + \beta_2 X_{i,t} + \beta_3 X_{c,t} + v_c + \tau_t + u_{i,c,t}$$

For the country panel, the dependent variable $OPINION$ measures anti-Americanism via the question "What is your opinion of the U.S.?" on an ordinal scale from "very good, through "good" and "bad" to "very bad". We see the question on opinions rather than trust as a test of robustness of our findings with respect to different but closely related indicators of public opinion toward the United States (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007, 21–22). As in the case study of El Salvador, we create a binary indicator for whether participants had a good or very good opinion of the U.S., or not, and use a logit model to estimate the binary outcome.

Deportations (the variable $DEPORT$) are measured as the (logged) annual inflow of total deportees at the country level. In addition to year fixed effects τ_t, global variables that change for all countries at a given time, and country fixed effects v_c (such as geographical conditions, slowly changing institutions, and other historical legacies), the country model also controls for a battery of variables X measured either at the person level or at the country level and that could explain either a change in attitudes or a change in deportations or both, and therefore potentially lead to biased estimates.

The country-level model also allows us to address omitted variable bias that could come from other variables that may affect both a change in attitudes and the number of deportees. Some of these are relevant alternative hypotheses frequently referred to in studies of anti-Americanism. Consider, for instance, international trade. Some regard the economic activities of the U.S. in the region as an attempt to impose its free-market views on Latin American governments by supporting the activities of American foreign firms. Under this view, the economic relationship between the U.S. and Latin America generates underdevelopment (Rubinstein and Smith 1988; Sweig 2006; Chiozza 2007), and is also a potential driver of migration and subsequent

deportations. However, other authors contend that economic integration and access to imports associated with it is a source of support for the U.S., at least among the average Latin American citizen (Baker and Cupery 2013, 116). From this perspective, a positive growth effect from trade might both reduce emigration intentions (and deportations) and lead to more positive attitudes.

Similar arguments could be made with respect to the strategic use of Official Development Aid (Nye 2004), which could simultaneously have an effect on growth, emigration, and attitudes. Historically, the geopolitical use of international aid has spurred resentment of the sovereign–nationalist type. More recently, financial aid has been used to twist recipient governments' arms for policy purposes, restraining unauthorised migration being a prominent one (Hiemstra 2019).

For the country regressions, we control for GDP growth, the log of per capita income, the log of total imports from the U.S., and the log of USAID disbursements at the country level c. In order to take into account other migration variables, country regressions also control for the log of remittances received, the log of asylum requests from the respective country, the log of visas granted to citizens from the country, and the log of population size. Person-level variables include age, gender, and marital status, as well as survey questions asking whether respondents consider their personal situation and the country situation to be good or very good, or not.

Table 2 shows the results for the country model. The baseline model in column 1 includes year fixed effects, country fixed effects, and a linear trend for each country. The second column adds the full set of time-varying variables measured at the country level and at the individual level. The third and fourth columns provide outputs for the same full model but use the lagged inflow of deportations and leading values instead of current inflows. All standard errors are clustered at the country–year level.

The results shown in Table 2 complement and confirm patterns found for El Salvadoran case study: countries that received more deportees had a more negative opinion of the U.S., on average. This result is robust across different specifications and holds for lagged effects, while leading values (the inflow of deportees in subsequent years) do not explain current perceptions of the U.S.

# Table 2: Deportations and Opinion of the U.S., Country Panel (Logit)

	"Do you have a good or very good opinion of the US?"			
ln (deportations)	-−0.26 **	−0.32 **		
	(−2.55)	(−2.17)		
ln (lagged deportations)			−0.33 ***	
			(−2.92)	
ln (leading deportations)				−0.06
				(−.35)
individual-level controls	No	yes	yes	yes
country-level controls	No	yes	yes	yes
Period	2000–2015	2001–2015	2001–2015	2001–2013
# years	14	13	13	12
# countries	19	18	18	18
# obs.	299,697	248,939	248,939	230,123

Coefficients from a logit regression on a binary outcome variable, with z-scores from standard errors clustered at the level of 19 countries. The inflow of deportations is measured at the level of 19 countries. All regressions use country fixed effects, year fixed effects, and country-specific time trends. Individual-level demographic controls include age, age squared, gender and marital status, whether respondents considered their personal situation "good" or "very good", or not, and whether respondents considered the country situation to be "good" or "very good", or not. Country-level controls include growth rate, the logged number of asylum applications, the logged number of visas granted, the logged amount of annual remittances received (in USD), the logged amount of USAID disbursements, the log of population size, the log of per capita GDP, and the log of imports from the US. Stars denote statistical significance at the 1% (***), 5% (**), and 1% (*) level. Standard errors are clustered at the country-year level.

Figure 4 shows a partial regression plot for country regressions based on country-level aggregates rather than individual responses (see Annex 3 for the model using linear regression for country level aggregates rather than the logistic regressions on individual survey responses). The unexplained variation in the lagged inflow of deportees is plotted against the unexplained variation in opinions of the U.S., after controlling for country and year fixed effects, as well as country-specific linear trends. The regression line shows an average decrease of positive opinion by 5.6 percentage points for a doubling of deportees (an increase of 1 in log of deportations). Country–year observations for El Salvador are highlighted as blue dots. As is evident in the graph, El Salvador is a well-predicted case that fits the regression line for the cross-

country regression, showing a pattern of decline in good opinions of the United States as deportations increase. This is consistent with our previous findings using subnational variation in El Salvador.

Figure 4: Partial Regression Plot for Aggregate Regional Data, Country-Level
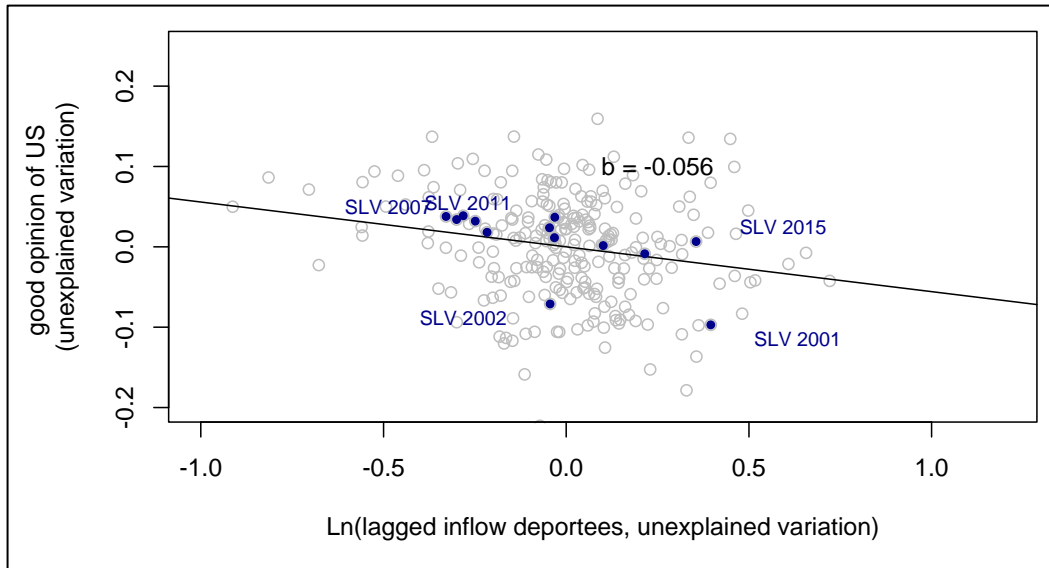
The partial regression graph plots unexplained variation (error terms) after controlling for country fixed effects, time fixed effects, and country-specific linear trends applying OLS to a panel of 19 Latin American countries between 2000 and 2015. See Annex Table 3 (column 1) for the underlying model.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to our understanding of the determinants of anti-American sentiment. We have shown that the emphasis on deportations by several U.S. administrations to deter unauthorised migration is a factor that breeds resentment against the U.S.: deportations have worsened the opinion and decreased trust among Latin Americans toward the United States over the last two decades. Our research makes the following theoretical and empirical contributions: first, it systematically considers forced removals and, more generally, enforcement policies as a source of anti-Americanism. This factor had not been considered in previous research on public opinion toward the United States. Second, empirically, we combine survey data with

novel data on deportations and look at both subnational (El Salvador) and regional

dynamics (Latin America) in what constitutes a valuable addition to the dearth of public

opinion research on this topic.

Draconian border enforcement policies have de facto implied deflecting

responsibility for migration policy to out-migration countries, with seemingly few

consequences for emigration and remigration intentions. Separating families, as

deportations often imply; making migrants *en route* and at the border more vulnerable

to human rights violations; and forcing migrants to return to communities where the

drivers to emigrate continue to be present; all are secure recipes for remigration

attempts (Hiemstra 2012; Cardoso et al. 2016; Hiemstra 2019).

Moreover, public discontent opens the door for anti-American leaders to

capitalise on such dissatisfaction and adopt populist foreign policies. For instance, in his

short mandate, President Nayib Bukele has cut diplomatic relations with Taiwan in a

rapprochement to China;[17] he has courted Erdogan's Turkey as part of his strategy to

diversify trade and investments;[18] and he has introduced the use of cryptocurrency in a

challenge to the country's economic dependence on the U.S. dollar.[19] More recently, El

Salvador has joined radical anti-American nations – Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and

Bolivia – in their silence on the United Nations' resolution calling for an end to the

Russian invasion of Ukraine.[20] Analysts interpret these actions as a clear departure from

the country's traditional geopolitical alignment with the United States.

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[17] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/21/world/asia/taiwan-el-salvador-diplomatic-ties.html/
Accessed 04/05/2022.
[18] https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-01-21/bukele-busca-inversiones-turcas-para-diversificar-su-politica-exterior.html. Accessed 04/05/2022.
[19] https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/12/06/bitcoin-city-el-salvador-nayib-bukele/. Accessed 06/05/2022.
[20] https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/03/10/five-latin-american-states-abstained-at-uns-ukraine-resolution-and-here-is-why/. Accessed 04/05/2022.

Notably, a drop in positive opinions toward the U.S. seems to have preceded President Bukele's turn in foreign policy. It is likely that in taking this radical step, Bukele has not been ignorant of the widespread resentment against the U.S. that has been mounting among Salvadorans over the past two decades. To be sure, the causes of this discontent are multifaced. We contribute by showing that on top of other socio-economic consequences, forced removals have spurred animosity against the U.S. among Salvadorans and are an important source of anti-American feelings. In our view, deportations should be added to the list of grievances that feed the anti-globalism and anti-Americanism that characterise populists in the region, whose ranks President Bukele seems to be joining (Brun, Rodríguez, and Rico 2022). We have also demonstrated that deportations are a factor to be systematically considered in the study of public sentiments toward the United States in Latin American, and most likely, in other regions of the world.

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Annex 1: Data Description, Case Study El Salvador

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev.
Indicator measured at the level of 61 municipalities (244 observations)			
deportations [a]	The total number of deportees received by each municipality during survey year t	166	189
Indicators measured at the individual level, nested within 61 municipalities (3662 observations)			
trust U.S. [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent trusts the United States of America "a lot" or "somewhat", or not	0.62	0.48
remittances [b]	Binary indicator of whether someone in the household receives remittances	0.24	0.43
emigration intention [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent has intention to live or work abroad in the next three years	0.31	0.46
male [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent is male	0.49	0.50
married [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent is married	0.55	0.50
age [b]	Age of respondent	40	17
identify FMLN [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent said that they identify with the FMLN (leftist party)	0.18	0.38
income_notenough [b]	Binary indicator of whether respondent said that income is not enough	0.62	0.48

Data description for Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) for survey years 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. Sources: a) División General de Migración y Extranjería (DGME) of El Salvador; b) LAPOP Survey El Salvador

Annex 2: Data Description, Country Level Model

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev.
Indicators measured at the level of 19 countries (up to 258 observations)			
deportations [ad]	Number of deportees from the U.S. received by the country during the current year	14,925	49,352
population size [b]	Population size (in millions)	31	46
GDP growth [b]	Annual growth of GDP	3.77	3.59
GDP per capita [b]	Per capita GDP, in constant 2010 USD	7,145	5,963
remittances [b]	Annual remittances received (current USD, in millions)	2,510	4,751
asylum applications [c]	Annual number of asylum applications submitted in the U.S.	1,401	3,493
visas granted [a]	Annual number of visas granted	6,817	14,958
imports [d]	Total value of imports from the U.S. (current USD, in millions)	16,969	45,932
U.S. aid [e]	Total aid imbursements (current USD, in millions)	103	166
Indicators measured at the level of individuals nested within countries (265,632 observations)			
opinions U.S. [f]	Binary indicator of whether respondent has a good or very good opinion of the U.S., or not	0.65	0.48
male [f]	Binary indicator of whether respondent is male	0.49	0.50
married [f]	Binary indicator of whether respondent is married	0.57	0.49
age [f]	Age of respondent	39.88	16.48
assessment country [f]	Binary indicator of whether respondent considers the current situation of the country to be good or very good, or not	0.15	0.35
assessment personal [f]	Binary indicator of whether respondent considers their current personal situation to be good or very good, or not	0.26	0.44

Data for the following 19 countries covered in Latinobarometer data: ARG, BOL, BRA, CHL, COL, CRI, DOM, ECU, ESP, GTM, HND, MEX, NIC, PAN, PER, PRY, SLV, URY, VEN in survey years 2001 to 2015. No surveys were held in 2012 and 2014. Sources: a) U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Annual Reports (URL: https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/media-resources/stats?title=Border+Patrol); b) World Development Indicators Online Database (URL: wdi.worldbank.org); c) United Nations High Commission on Refugees (URL: http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum_seekers); d) UN International Trade Statistics Database COMTRADE (URL: https://comtrade.un.org/); e) U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of State (URL: https://foreignassistance.gov/data); f) Latinobarometer survey.

Annex 3: Country-Level Model (Aggregated)

	Share of people with a good or very good opinion of the U.S.	
ln(lagged deportations)	−0.056 ***	−0.068 ***
	(−3.15)	(−3.06)
ln(population size)		2.89
		(1.63)
growth rate		−4.0e−05
		(−0.02)
ln(GDP per capita)		−2.2e−05
		(−1.26)
ln(remittances)		−5.2e−03
		(−0.07)
ln(asylum applications)		6.1e−03
		(0.53)
ln(visa granted)		5.6e−03
		(0.18)
ln(imports)		−0.01
		(−0.4)
ln(US aid)		3.0e−03
		(0.37)
adj. R2	0.83	0.83
# obs.	258	239

Coefficients from linear regressions, with t-values in brackets. All regressions use country fixed effects, year fixed effects, and a linear country-specific time trend. Stars denote statistical significance at the 1% (***), 5% (**) and 10% (*) level.