

1 Anti-Americanism and the rise of world opinion

While it may do little to constrain immediate US policy objectives ... anti-Americanism is a serious threat to long-term US interests.

Lee Hamilton, Vice Chairman of the 9/11 Commission

Loving and hating the United States of America

What are the consequences of anti-Americanism? How can such information help US policy-makers and business leaders allocate their resources more efficiently and better protect American interests, at home and abroad?

Such questions arise from the memory of the terrorist attacks committed against the United States on September 11, 2001, when hijackers commandeered four commercial airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the fields of Shanksville, Pennsylvania, murdering nearly 3,000 civilians.¹ These questions also hail from the rash of anti-American protests that swept the Arab world in September 2012. Provoked by the film *The Innocence of Muslims*, which mocked the Prophet Mohammed, thousands took to the streets and vented their rage at the gates of US embassies in the Middle East and against American businesses like McDonald's.

Yet, considering these events as outliers – examples of extremism unrepresentative of the vast majority of people around the globe who are peaceful – it is important to consider the effects of anti-Americanism more broadly and systematically. My motivation is to understand how anti-Americanism influences the behavior of average citizens around the globe and their political leaders, not a small portion of an extremist fringe that uses suicide terrorism or engages in violent protests. How much is anti-Americanism a serious threat to the long-term interests of the United States, as Lee Hamilton, Vice Chairman of the 9/11 Commission,

¹ A list of the 9/11 victims can be found online at CNN.com: www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/memorial/lists/by-name.

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contends? Is world opinion, as seen through anti-American sentiment, a meaningful force that policy-makers in Washington, DC should consider when contemplating American foreign affairs? Or is it simply much ado about nothing?

Recent scholarship has made significant strides in exploring the sources of anti-Americanism. The works of Alan McPherson (2003), Andrei Markovits (2007), Brendon O'Connor (2007), Ole Holsti (2008), Giacomo Chiozza (2009), Sophie Meunier (2012), and the masterfully edited volume by Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane (2007a) come to mind. Yet, despite such scholarship, only a few works examine the impact of anti-Americanism, most notably the concluding chapter in the Katzenstein and Keohane (2007a) volume. And among the handful of studies that do focus on the consequences of anti-Americanism, the findings are inconclusive and troubled by methodological design flaws. A significant gap in our understanding therefore prompts the need for additional research.

In this book, I consider the effects of pro- and anti-Americanism longitudinally. My goal is to understand the extent to which these sentiments matter for the United States,² in terms of consequences for its political, economic, and military interests. I explore the impact of anti-Americanism not only throughout the tenure of George W. Bush and the first term of Barack Obama's presidency, but also before the start of the millennium, during the administrations of Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush. At the same time, by treating anti-American sentiment as a case study of world opinion, I hope to contribute to a research agenda that explores the extent to which ordinary people, using a variety of social media (for example, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.), can develop and express their opinions, even in oppressive regimes (Simmons 2011).

The central argument

The central argument of this book is that the consequences of anti-Americanism mirror its multidimensionality. Ordinary people across

² Throughout this book, I use the terms "America" and "the United States" interchangeably, although some would argue this conflates the multiplicity of nation states and identities throughout Northern, Central, and South America, and ignores the indigenous peoples inhabiting the Americas prior to the arrival of European explorers (e.g. Ramos 2001; Brysk *et al.* 2002). Indeed, one senior Latin American diplomat I interviewed for this book discussed the importance of not equating "America" with "the United States." "We are all Americans, part of the American continent," she said. Yet, given its ubiquity in mass media and popular culture, "America" has become synonymous (rightly or wrongly) with "the United States." In this book, I follow that convention.

the globe admire the United States, including its idealism and culture. At the same time, much of the world resents the United States when it behaves in an arrogant and unilateralist way. In general, when popular opinion abroad objects to US foreign policy, leaders and their publics seek to constrain America's influence through political and diplomatic statecraft. Countries tend to vote against the United States within those institutional bodies that can chastise, if not outright sanction it, for "misbehaving." The most powerful example of this is the UN General Assembly (UNGA), which scholars have long considered a forum of world opinion and an international custodian of collective legitimacy (Claude 1966; Keohane 2011). This book shows that public opinion influences and predicts how states cast their votes within the UNGA on issues of strategic importance to the United States, ranging from resolutions to prolong the economic embargo of Cuba, to protect Israel's sovereignty in the Middle East, and to condemn Iran and North Korea as renegade regimes. When the world is angry at the United States (as seen in high levels of anti-American sentiment), it distances itself from America within multilateral bodies like the UNGA.

Closely related to disapproval of the United States in the UNGA is the isolation of America in its unilateral military pursuits, such as the war in Iraq. Research presented in this book reveals that public opinion toward the United States across the globe explains the type of support (political, logistical, or military) America received at the beginning of the war in 2003 – a war which many nations did not deem legitimate. Without approval of the use of force within the United Nations, the United States shouldered much of the burden of the war, proving more costly (in terms of blood and treasure) than many Americans could have ever expected.

Although there was significant opposition to the US-led war in Iraq among America's traditional allies, like France and Germany, people in those same countries nevertheless enjoyed Coca-Cola, ate at McDonald's, frequented Starbucks coffee shops, and watched popular American movies like *Man of Steel* at their local theaters. Ordinary citizens across the globe may resent US foreign policy when it is unilateral, but they simultaneously appreciate and enjoy American culture. This apparently paradoxical nature of anti-Americanism speaks to its multidimensionality, which has led some to proffer the term "anti-Americanisms" to illustrate more appropriately the nuances in how one may simultaneously love and hate the United States (McPherson 2003; Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b; Chiozza 2009).

There are nonetheless hard-hitting economic consequences of anti-Americanism for the United States as a tourist destination and place

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where foreign college students matriculate for their study abroad experience. Accounting for other explanations, such as differences in exchange rates with the US dollar and visa restrictions, my analysis shows that if foreign publics do not like the United States, they will not visit it as often, nor will foreign students come to study abroad as much. This costs the US tourist industry significant revenues each year that America is relatively unpopular abroad. This also costs the United States in terms of not being able to attract the best and brightest college students from around the globe. Given that a great deal of American entrepreneurship stems from its history of immigration, it might be something of an understatement to say that a decline in tourism and foreign students is harmful to the US national interest.

Lastly, although many states constrained US foreign policy during George W. Bush's tenure in office, there was some relaxing of these policies at the outset of the Obama presidency, notably through increases in the major contributors to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. This may have stemmed not only from stronger diplomacy on Obama's part, but also from the notion that Obama (compared to his predecessor) began to restore America's moral authority abroad. Loving or liking the United States, then, matters for its interests in the war on terror.

In summary, at a time when we lack systematic knowledge on how much, and in what ways, foreign anti-Americanism matters for US political, business, and military interests, this book argues that there is a significant relationship between foreign national opinions toward the United States and how nations conduct their foreign and economic policies with America. These results attenuate the conventional wisdom that anti-Americanism's effects are, at best, muted (Keohane and Katzenstein 2007). For the policy-making community, my empirical analysis shows how world opinion is a useful factor in making sense of how nations will interact with a country as powerful as the United States. When attitudes toward the United States are favorable, countries tend to work more in cooperation with its interests. Conversely, when global attitudes toward America are unfavorable, countries seek to constrain its hegemonic influence. These results carry substantial implications for US public diplomacy and suggest that the United States needs to invest more time and resources in cultivating pro-Americanism abroad. This is far more than a cosmetic improvement. It can result in more support for US-led wars, greater cooperation within multilateral fora, more foreign students who matriculate at America's colleges and universities, and more business for the US tourist industry. Anti-Americanism matters.

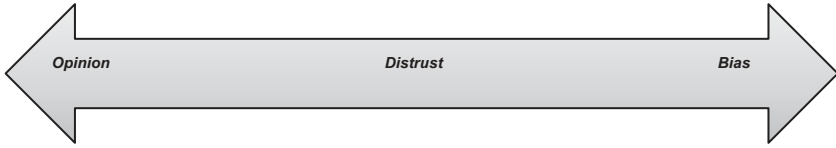


Figure 1.1 A continuum of attitudinal formation

Understanding anti-Americanism

Most discussions of anti-Americanism, at academic conferences or on Capitol Hill, begin with its nature and origin. What is anti-Americanism, where does it come from, and how can we measure it? This line of inquiry is a natural starting point and has received the lion's share of attention from scholars, policy-makers, and pundits. Before proceeding to a discussion of its consequences, which forms the core of this book, it is important to distill its meaning and causes.

Defining anti-Americanism

Scholars have developed, debated, and refined definitions of anti-Americanism for decades. The earliest generation of scholars described anti-Americanism in terms of actions or statements that involve sanctions or attacks against the policy, society, culture, and values of the United States (Tai *et al.* 1973; Rubinstein and Smith 1985). Another generation conceptualized anti-Americanism as a prejudice, in which views toward the United States were seen as immutable, irrational, and even obsessive (Haseler 1986; Minogue 1986; Hollander 1992; Revel 2003; Berman 2004).

A more useful approach arises from a third wave of scholars who define anti-Americanism as an *attitude*, based on how an individual identifies with the policies and values of the American people and US Government over time (Kull and Ramsay 2001; Katzenstein and Keohane 2007b; Meunier 2007; Chiozza 2009). Among the architects of this definition, the pioneering work of Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane (2007b) stands out. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, Katzenstein and Keohane conceptualize attitudes toward the United States along a spectrum, ranging from opinion to bias, with distrust in-between.

Opinion refers to an individual's feelings toward the United States (including its policies and values), based on how that person thinks about America. *Distrust* entails not only an individual's opinion, but also their long-standing predispositions, based on past experiences. This provides

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Table 1.1 *A typology of anti-Americanism*

Type	Definition	Example
Liberal anti-Americanism	Criticism of the United States for not living up to its ideals	Comments that the United States is hypocritical and does not live up to “the American Dream”
Social anti-Americanism	Value conflicts between one’s sense of social order and justice compared to that of the United States	Comments that the United States does not guarantee enough social welfare benefits for its poor
Sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism	A political elite’s use of anti-American rhetoric for political gain	Gerhard Schröder’s use of anti-American rhetoric to win the 2002 election in Germany
Radical anti-Americanism	Physical violence enacted against symbols of the United States	The terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001

Source and inspiration: Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 29–34.

an overarching framework in how an individual shapes their thoughts and opinions. *Bias* entails a predisposition whereby an individual’s thoughts and feelings are hardened to the extent that they are deeply resistant, and thus carry a fixed response.

Because the interplay of opinion, distrust, and bias changes based on how an individual updates their beliefs, multiple attitudes toward the United States can develop at the same time. As Table 1.1 illustrates, there are at least four types of anti-Americanism: *liberal anti-Americanism* (criticism of the United States for not living up to its ideals); *social anti-Americanism* (value conflicts with the United States based on an individual’s sense of social order and justice); *sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism* (a political elite’s use of anti-Americanism to create a “rally round the flag” effect and capitalize upon anti-American sentiments for personal gain); and *radical anti-Americanism* (such as the terrorist attacks on 9/11). Individuals can be anti-American in relative degrees along different attitudinal dimensions: they may loathe US foreign policy in the Middle East, for instance, but simultaneously believe in “the American Dream.” They may resent the spread of US culture overseas, but still appreciate and consume American goods and services. In effect, the phenomenon of anti-Americanism is so multifaceted and complex that it may very well be a misnomer to say anti-Americanism in one nation means the same thing as it does in another. The word itself holds a plurality of meanings.

Measuring anti-Americanism

The problem with such a complex definition is that it becomes a challenge to measure (Meunier 2012), which is important in empirically testing its effects. Ideally, scholars could develop a measure of anti-Americanism that distinguishes cross-national variation in an individual's opinion, distrust, and bias toward the United States over time (as Katzenstein and Keohane conceptualize) and then administer that measure within surveys around the globe. Of course, such data are ephemeral. Moreover, even the best surveys are inherently prone to instrumentation, as respondents may answer questions in a manner they believe the surveyor wants to hear (Berinsky 2004; Chiozza 2007; Holsti 2008).

Valid and reliable survey data measuring anti-Americanism do exist, however, even if they are not yet as nuanced as one might hope. Since the early 1950s, the former United States Information Agency (USIA), now a part of the US State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, made a concerted effort toward measuring attitudes in relation to the United States around the world. To retrieve these data, I undertook several trips to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, between 2005 and 2007, and explored the files of Record Group 306 of the USIA. Record Group 306 houses thousands of print and electronic records from the 1950s to the early 2000s, in which the USIA polled respondents around the world on their attitudes toward the United States, typically in response to the survey question, "What is your opinion of the United States? Is it very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?"³ I then aggregated these records with comparable survey data from the Pew Research Center ("Pew")⁴ and Zogby International ("Zogby").⁵ Despite any methodological shortcomings of these surveys and their inability to distinguish fine shades of anti-American sentiment, they nonetheless provide a well-spring of information allowing for a broad range of cross-national variation over time in foreign attitudes toward the United States.

In the interests of transparency, it is important to provide the precise wording of the questions used from all of these surveys, to establish that these polling organizations really are measuring the same thing. Table A1 in the Appendix provides a detailed comparison, in which I list the name of the country, source of the survey (i.e. Pew, Zogby, or USIA), together

³ I also obtained unclassified USIA public opinion records from the Internet, the US Army War College, and gracious staff at the US State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

⁴ Pew Research Center, www.pewglobal.org.

⁵ Zogby International, www.zogbyresearchservices.com.

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with the precise wording of the question posed to respondents by the surveyor. Longitudinally, surveyors used the same questions for each country. Moreover, although the sample size varies for each country, every survey polled at least 500 respondents from a random sample, ensuring a degree of impartiality and representativeness of the population.

Table A1 demonstrates that, with the exception of some minor variations in the placement of an article (i.e. “a,” “an,” or “the”) and punctuation, the survey data from Pew, Zogby, and USIA consistently measure favorable opinion toward the United States over time. In none of these surveys are there any meaningful changes in the use of nouns or verbs. By aggregating measures of favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward the United States largely from the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s in Table A1, I have amassed perhaps the most complete publicly available dataset on cross-national pro-American and anti-American sentiment over time.

Table A2 in the Appendix lists all of the data that measure foreign attitudes toward the United States. The level of analysis is the country-year. In the empirical chapters to follow, I draw upon these data to test *the public opinion hypothesis*⁶ – an array of suppositions pertaining to the political, economic, and military consequences of anti-American sentiment for the US national interest.

The sources of anti-Americanism

Scholars have advanced our understanding of the sources of anti-American sentiment considerably. They explain anti-Americanism in terms of what the United States *does*, what the United States *is*, and a synthesis of these two attributes.

Some dislike the United States for what it does

Many scholars explain anti-American sentiment in terms of opposition to what the United States *does*, namely, its perceived unilateralist behavior, “special relationship” with Israel, and apparently hypocritical foreign policies.

Some argue that anti-Americanism is a function of American unilateralism. Jean-François Revel, for instance, points to the “Bush doctrine” (in which President George W. Bush declared in 2002 that the United

⁶ The counter-argument is that public opinion plays little, if any role, in explaining interstate relations. I engage this debate at length in Chapter 2.

States has the right to strike pre-emptively against enemies of the state and against those thought to be enemies) as an egregious demonstration of American unilateralism and disrespect for those multilateral institutions it founded after the Second World War, like the United Nations. Such disrespect, Michael Mastanduno (1997) argues, rouses the ire of the international community. Thus: “While the United States regularly denounces various countries as ‘rogue states,’” Samuel Huntington (1999, 42) writes, “in the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower.”

Others single out America’s “special” relationship with Israel as the chief source of anti-American sentiment, particularly in the Middle East. As Abdel Mahdi Abdallah observes: “Many Arabs see US economic, political and military aid to Israel and its biased policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict as the main cause of anti-American sentiment in the Arab world” (2003, 71). Similarly, Georges Corm (1998) opines: “The US is pro-Israel, and this dominates US Middle East policy. Israel is culturally important to Western culture, and there is a strong pro-Israel lobby in America. US and Israeli policies are antagonizing large segments of Arab public opinion.” Likewise, in their controversial work on the Israeli Lobby, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt maintain, “there is in fact abundant evidence that US support for Israel encourages anti-Americanism throughout the Arab and Islamic world and has fueled the rage of anti-American terrorists” (2007, 65).⁷

Still others point to America’s perceived hypocritical policies as the chief reason for anti-American sentiment around the globe.⁸ Stanley Hoffmann contends that anti-Americanism is “more often than not, a resentment of double standards and double talk, of crass ignorance and arrogance, of wrong assumptions and dubious policies” (2003, 80). Such reasoning bears out in Dina Iordnova and Yaha Kamalipour’s (1998) research of anti-Americanism in Bulgaria. After the Cold War, Iordnova and Kamalipour maintain, many expected that the United States would become involved in Bulgaria’s transition to a democracy and “would try to wrest [Bulgaria] from the Soviets and facilitate its turning to the West”

⁷ Some might counter that America’s special relationship with Israel cannot account for cross-national variation in anti-American sentiment given that the relationship has not changed much over time. Although this might be true, what has changed is how *other* states perceive and react to the relationship, thus producing variation in pro- and anti-American sentiment throughout the Middle East. For Israel, foreign affairs with the United States – and how others perceived this – were substantially different, for instance, under the authority of Yitzhak Rabin than Benjamin Netanyahu. Likewise, US–Israeli relations (and how others perceived such relations) were different under George W. Bush than Barack Obama.

⁸ This falls under Katzenstein and Keohane’s typology as “liberal anti-Americanism,” as Table 1.1 illustrates.

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(1998, 78). Yet, when this did not come to pass, Bulgarians became resentful of American interests and foreign policy, feeling betrayed by the one country in the world ostensibly devoted to defending universal values of democracy, freedom, and human rights. Hoffmann reasons that such behavior has “alienated many clients, as well as potential friends, and bred strains of anti-Americanism” (2004, 36).

Others dislike the United States for what it is

A smaller group of scholars argues that anti-American sentiment stems largely from a negative reaction to the identity, culture, and values of the United States. In a spirited study of anti-Americanism in Europe, Andrei Markovits (2007, 4) contends:

Negative sentiments and views have been driven not only – or even primarily – by what the United States does, but rather by an animus against what the Europeans have believed that America is . . . While the politics, style, and discourse of the Bush administration – and of George W. Bush as a person – have undoubtedly exacerbated anti-American sentiment among Europeans and fostered a heretofore unmatched degree of unity between elite and mass opinion in Europe, they are not anti-Americanism’s cause.

Markovits is so confident that anti-Americanism is a function of what the United States *is*, he contends that even “a change to a center-left administration in Washington, led by a Democratic president, would not bring about its abatement, let alone disappearance.”⁹

Although Markovits’ claim is debatable given Europe’s deep embracement of Barack Obama, his views on anti-Americanism are not alone. Russell Berman also maintains that anti-Americanism in Europe is a “cultural problem,” “impervious to rational arguments or factual proof” (2004, xiv). Likewise, Adam Garfinkle points to Americans’ deep-rooted “vulgarity, disrespect for elders and teachers, and countless variations on puerile promiscuity” as a chief source of cross-national anti-American sentiment (2004, 198). In broader terms, Ian Buruma (2004, B10) implies that anti-Americanism is a reaction to the West’s self-anointed sense of universalism, in which the United States sees itself as a bastion of “universal values and has the God-given duty to spread democracy.”

Polyvalent sources of anti-Americanism

Others argue that anti-Americanism is a synthesis of what the United States *is* and *does* (Faath 2006; Chiozza 2007, 2009). According to

⁹ This is a claim I explore in Chapter 6.