



BRIEF HISTORY OF US/LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS

1.12

THIS AND NEXT WEEK

Introduction:

- Today: brief history of US/Latin American relations (lecture)
- Next week: methodological/theoretical approaches through a reading of Columbus's first letter to the King and Queen of Spain (discussion)
- Quick Nearpod quiz. Go to **join.nearpod.com**. You can use your map, but not Google.

WHAT IS LATIN AMERICA?

- Latin America vs. Spanish America (Latinoamérica / Hispanoamérica). Are they the same?
 - S.A. includes Spain, not Brazil, Haiti or French Guyana. L.A. includes these, not Spain
 - Not just territorial – historical, ideological
- Lat. Am. countries won their independence from Spain/Portugal (1810s-20s, mostly). But, still had economic/political/cultural relationships with Europe
- France created the term “Latin” America to compete with Spain’s “Spanish” America (1850s). Denoted whiteness.



WHAT IS LATIN AMERICA?

- After independence, development of the nation-states.
 - Except: Cuba and Puerto Rico, which remain under US control after independence in 1898.
- Territorial wars throughout 19th century (War of the Pacific, War of the Triple Alliance). Makes the dream of a “united” Latin America difficult.
- Erasure of racial minorities, either by genocide or integration discourses.
 - Coloniality does not end, it continues as constitutive part of the republican model.
- US as both model and threat.



The caste system

BECOMING THE UNITED STATES



- In 1776 the US only had a fraction of the territory it does now. But motivated through its Manifest Destiny: the idea that the nation should stretch east to west – but also north to south.
- Debates in Congress in 19th century as to whether to “annex” regions in Latin America, primarily Cuba and Mexico.
 - Annexation of Mexico’s north to US after Mexican-American War of 1846 (New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado, Texas).
 - What to do with these states regarding slavery?

THE CASE OF CUBA



- In the early 19th century, some US politicians saw Cuba as an extension of the US and sought to control it and annex it to the Union. Why? Location (control over the Gulf) and economy (dependent on slave labor, abolished only in 1886).
- So, the US wanted Spain out of the way. Cuba obtains independence in 1898, but goes to US control right away.

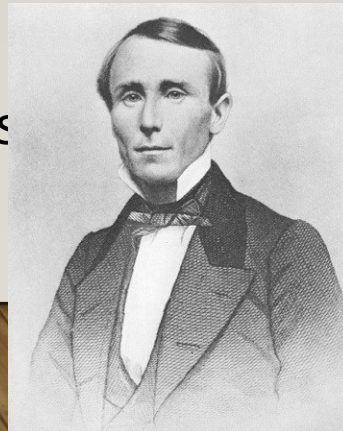
From: *Puck*
magazine,
1898



SOVEREIGNTY AND IMPERIALISM



- Monroe Doctrine (1823): Europe cannot intervene in the hemisphere politically, in theory.
 - French invasion of Mexico, Spanish return to Peru
 - Trade relations between Lat. Am. countries remained with England, France, later Germany, Italy.
- The “filibuster” William Walker declared himself President of Nicaragua in 1856 – and US government backed him up.

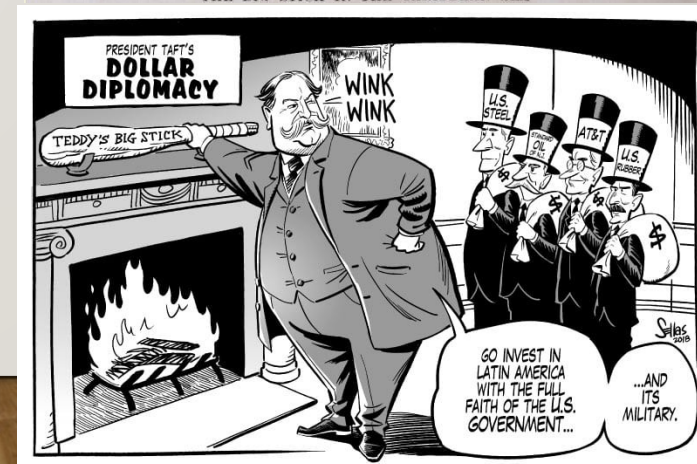


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJC-WAY4oQg> • Imperialism: challenges the **sovereignty** of Latin American countries – the right to rule

"DOLLARS FOR BULLETS"

Imperialism:

- Teddy Roosevelt's Big Stick Policy: defend US interests in the region through military force – "gunboat diplomacy".
 - Latin American commodities play major role in new global markets (coffee, sugar, banana, rubber, minerals).
 - Occupation of Cuba and PR (1898); intervention in Colombia to incite Panama's secession (1903).
- Taft's Dollar Diplomacy: use investment, not force. But you can still use force.



SUMMARY



- After independence from European powers, newly formed Latin American nation-states began to consolidate borders, governments, identities. US was a model of democracy.
- But, US also had economic and political interests in the region; this led to expansionism and military interventionism.
- Many Latin American leaders and elite aligned with US interests, sometimes against the interests of their emerging nations.
- This conditioned US/Latin American relations ever since.

FOR NEXT CLASS

- We are going to read Columbus's letter to the Spanish King and Queen of Spain, after arriving in "the Indies" in 1492. Why?
 - To understand the power of language in creating meaning and influencing perceptions and ways of understanding reality.
- Text and guiding questions on OAKS > Content > Week 2. Write down your reflection in your notebook for the class.