

We are North America

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Grupo Editorial Cenzontle

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Preface

A common border. A shared history. The interaction between Mexico and the United States goes beyond a purely economic relationship between two neighboring countries. They share deep, historical ties, of which many are unaware of, and that are essential to understanding the current situation.

This book puts forth an analysis that leads us to breaking some schemes about the past, offering remarkable data that allows us to approach the relationship between these two countries from a different perspective. Topics that go beyond history are discussed. It is a past that is always present with chronological, geographical and commercial crossing points. It is not only a testimony of conflicts but also of alliances.

Based on the authors' extensive diplomatic experience, this paper presents a compilation of insightful data and analyzes some components of the bilateral relationship from a different perspective. Not only is it a question of revising those political, social and labor issues about Mexican immigration to the United States, but also about more than one and a half million Americans living in Mexican territory. Furthermore, it is about common history and values, a trillion-dollar-worth trade and reciprocal investments, amongst others.

The lesson of these topics, more than in its prose, is contained in the careful way in which facts and events are presented, ending in the constant yet complicated coexistence between two nations with radically different heritage and erroneous perspectives of one another.

"We are North America" analyses a relationship that is (and always has been) asymmetric, but furthermore, is currently under scrutiny, and the authors delve on the common ground in an attempt to match those perspectives to the reality.

On that note, and in order to reach a broader audience, UNAM LOS ÁNGELES is coediting the English version with Grupo Editorial Cenzontle.

Paula de Gortari
Director of UNAM Los Angeles
February 2018

Foreword

Shared historical events, a common border that promotes trade and is vital for mutual security, as well as complementary economies that make it easier to create value chains have made Mexico and the United States major trading partners as well as strategic allies.

Millions of people on both sides of the border are unaware of this reality at a crucial juncture for the future of the bilateral relation. This is why we undertook the task of compiling key events and data to show the importance of the relationship between these two countries. A binational culture, identified as North America when we consider Canada, has risen from the interaction of the peoples of Mexico and of the United States.

We are grateful to the Undersecretary for North America of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Carlos Manuel Sada Solana, for his invaluable feedback on a preliminary version of this text, for which we claim full responsibility. The data and insight provided by our colleague and friend Kenneth Smith Ramos was of great help. We also would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Ignacio Martínez Cortés for his suggestions on how to improve the narrative, as well as to our colleague and friend Mariana Díaz Nagore for the final revision of the work in Spanish and Gisela Calderón for the final revision of the work in English. Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge our editor, Jesús Hernández Garibay, and Diego Gutiérrez for making the English version a possibility.

Juan Carlos Mendoza Sánchez
Tania Miranda González
Mexico City

Introduction

Mexico and the United States of America are not only joined by a 3,141 km (1,952 mile) long border, but also by history; migration flows; interconnected supply chains; shared values of democracy, liberty, and independence; security strategies; bilateral trade that accounts for at least five million jobs in the United States and that is vital for the stability of the Mexican economy; and the rise of a binational culture that transforms the region of North America, which includes Canada, into a single entity.

During the electoral race that resulted in the election of Republican Donald Trump as president of the United States, Mexico was commonly used as the scapegoat and its perpetrator got off scot-free. As a strategic ally of the greatest importance for the economy and security of the United States, Mexico was presented to the conservative electorate, affected by the consequences of globalization and free trade, as the responsible for U.S.'s problems.

The beginning of Trump's administration presented a challenge for the Mexican government when the U.S. presidential candidate declared in a debate with Hillary Clinton that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was the worst treaty signed in the history of the country,¹ which implied that a renegotiation would have to be advantageous for both countries, otherwise Trump would begin the process to dismantle it. This complex situation, however, also implies that there is an opportunity for Mexico to update not only the trade relationship, but also the bilateral rela-

¹ In this debate, the Republican presidential candidate stated, "America lost a third of its manufacturing jobs since 1997—even as the country has increased its population by, think of this, 50 million jobs. At the center of this catastrophe are two trade deals pushed by Bill and Hillary Clinton. First, the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA. Second, China's entry into the World Trade Organization. NAFTA was the worst trade deal in the history of this country and China's entrance into the WTO has enabled the greatest jobs theft in the history of our country." From: <http://time.com/4386335/donald-trump-trade-speech-transcript/>.

tionship as a whole, as well to open new spaces of consensus with other countries. In the commercial sphere, the refusal of the United States to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)² opens up the possibility of incorporating topics that were not covered in NAFTA, such as e-trade, labor mobility, and the energy sector.

Whatever the results of the NAFTA renegotiation may be, this new reality between Mexico and the United States will imply a profound reconfiguration of the bilateral relation as a whole and will have an impact on the daily life of both nations.

Consequently, the central objective of this work is to present simple and specific examples to show how three factors have transformed Mexico and the United States from neighbors into strategic allies: history, geography, and trade. In general, these factors show the importance and significance of a strategic relationship in which people play a fundamental role in the rise of a binational culture that identifies us together as North America. While doing so, we extracted parts of research conducted by one of the two authors from prior publications on foreign policy and culture. It is not meant to be an academic work, nor an exhaustive research undertaking. Instead, it is a compilation of data and information produced and disseminated by scholars, organizations, research centers, and reports issued by both governments with a narrative including historical, geographic, demographic, economic, and commercial elements that we regard as necessary to foster a broader understanding at a crucial time for the future of bilateral relations between both countries.

The first part of the book addresses historical events that have marked both countries, such as:

- a) The nascence of Mexico as an independent republic, based on the name and three-branch government model of the United States;
- b) The ties between “Cinco de Mayo” and the U.S. Civil War;
- c) Joint participation in World War II, particularly Mexico’s backing of the U.S. economy through the Bracero Program and military support

² The Presidential Memorandum of January 23, 2017, signed by president Donald Trump says, “Based on these principles, and by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby direct you to withdraw the United States as a signatory to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), to permanently withdraw the United States from TPP negotiations, and to begin pursuing, wherever possible, bilateral trade negotiations to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages.” From: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-pres-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-withdrawal-united-states-trans-pacific>.

through the 201st Squadron, whose pilots carried out missions to aid the U.S. infantry in the liberation of the Philippines.

The second section presents the dynamics of the flow of Mexican migration to its northern neighbor, highlighting its origin, evolution, the age of massive migration, as well as the end of it. In this section, the migration of more than a million Americans to Mexico is also explored by touching on the reasons for this migration, the distribution of Americans in Mexican territory, and its growth potential as the baby boom generation enters retirement age. Indicators on the impact of tourism between both countries are also examined, providing concrete evidence of why geography is destiny.

The third part documents the importance and positive impact that bilateral trade has for both countries, detailing specifically that, in order to produce goods together, they have a distinctive and unique model in the world. Facts and indicators confirm the particular ways in which free trade and the integration of value chains benefit the states in both countries, as well as their positive repercussions on jobs, investment, economic growth, and the general wellbeing of two peoples who are neighbors, friends, and strategic partners.

We trust that this work will help readers formulate an idea beyond the purely commercial sphere of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the United States at a time when the results of the renegotiation of the NAFTA must chart its course, at least for the next five years.

We are firmly convinced that mutual understanding is the most effective path to raising awareness in both countries with respect to the crucial importance of a relationship that has and will continue to have positive consequences for their daily lives, as well as for the prosperity of the economies of both countries and their mutual security.