

United States–Mexico: The Convergence of Public Policy Views in the Post-9/11 World

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This article explores the state of public policy preferences between the United States and Mexico in the realm of foreign policy in the context of the post-9/11 world, democratic change within Mexico, and the immigration protests within the United States. Specifically, we will analyze the differences and possible convergence of public policy views on the issues of terrorism, immigration, free trade agreements, drug trafficking, and foreign policy. We find that although there are differences of opinion, particularly in the application of force in Iraq and on the benefits of free trade, there still remains a significant degree of positive convergence within the policy issues of terrorism, immigration, and drug trafficking. Although there are institutional impediments to progressive policy change, future relations between the United States and Mexico do not need to be contentious as long as the focus is on the similarities, rather than the differences, in public preferences between the populations of the two states.

KEY WORDS: United States, Mexico, immigration, terrorism, drugs, NAFTA, Iraq, issue-based approach

“And today, we find ourselves in a situation not only trying to cope with that illegal alien tide, which is rising every day, but with the fact that now this terrorism issue has been added to it, and we feel frankly like sitting ducks.” Former Mayor of San Diego and Radio Commentator Roger Hedgecock during a Congressional Hearing (Committee on Government Reform, United States House of Representatives, 2002)

Introduction

An alarming trend seems to be developing in the United States. Public leaders frequently make connections (such as the one made by Roger Hedgecock above) between the degrading national security situation regarding terrorism and the possibility of a nefarious threat coming from the South. The idea is that the immigrant “tide” is a danger to the national security of the United States. This research seeks to understand these perceptions in light of four recent events that call for a re-examination of U.S.–Mexican relations: the 9/11 attacks, increased drug conflict within Mexico, the rise of democratic institutions in Mexico, and the immigration debates and protests within the United States.

On January 31, 2002, during a Congressional hearing regarding security, Chairman Mark Souder stated: "The attacks of September 11 and the heightened scrutiny over the last four months have emphasized the urgency of dealing with the terrorist threat as well as the problems of narcotics interdiction and illegal immigration" (Committee on Government Reform, United States House of Representatives, 2002). After 9/11, government officials have increasingly linked the issue of terrorism with the issues of immigration, free trade, and drugs. Relations between the United States and Mexico have been profoundly changed by the shift in public discourse between the two countries. The linkage of disparate issues has changed the character of the dialogue between the two countries.

Prior to 9/11, relations between the United States and Mexico were generally positive during the years of the Fox Administration. There was much optimism in relation to the future conduct of foreign policy, mainly regarding immigration reform, expansion of free trade agreements, and consolidation of democracy in the region. That optimism has been quickly replaced by negativity. To the casual observer, it may seem that relations between the two states are at their lowest point since the end of the Mexican–American War (1848). Hakim (2006) notes that, "No one was surprised by the dramatic shift in U.S. priorities in the aftermath of the attacks towards a reemphasis on security and the Middle East. But the virtual expulsion of Mexico and the rest of Latin America from the U.S. foreign policy agenda was brusque and unexpected." Empirically, Flint, Adduci, Chen, and Chi (2009) demonstrate that Mexico has literally fallen off the map in terms of mentions during the foreign policy portion of the State of the Union address. During the first Bush Administration (1989–92 addresses), Mexico was mentioned between 12 and 53 times in the State of the Union; and during the Clinton Administration, Mexico was mentioned between 40 and 97 times (Flint et al., 2009, pp. 617–19).¹ This stands in stark contrast to Mexico never being mentioned during the years 2001–04 and being mentioned between 3 and 35 times during the years 2005–08 (Flint et al., 2009, pp. 620–91).

The purpose of this research is to examine the state of public and elite preferences when looking at specific issues that matter for bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico. Herein, the issue-based approach (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981) is utilized to inductively analyze issues of interest to bilateral relations. We look into the sources of disagreement as well as paths to eventual collaboration in the realm of foreign public policy issues. Two countries so closely linked by history cannot continue their current course without some re-evaluation of the sources of discontent and separation. This article points to the areas of mutual understanding that can strengthen ties between the two neighbors. It is hoped that congruence in policy views can ultimately shape a positive policy relationship on foreign policy and domestic issues.

Bilateral Issues at Stake

This article calls for a re-examination of U.S.–Mexican interactions based on an exploration of common issues of concern and discord using the issue-based

approach. A number of public opinion surveys administered in both the United States and Mexico show that the publics and the elites within these countries are concerned with many of the same issues. The convergence around these issues illustrates that the two countries have ample common ground upon which they can work together.

The relations between the United States and Mexico must be understood according to five interdependent dimensions outlined below. First, the United States is concerned with drug trafficking. There was a widespread movement prior to 9/11 to fight the "war on drugs." Most drugs arriving in the United States come through Mexico. In addition to U.S. concerns, the Mexican public is concerned with the widespread violence that the drug networks have brought into Mexico. A recent spike in violence in late 2008 and 2009 only makes the problem more pressing.

Second, there is a current of thought within the United States that immigration from Mexico is uncontrolled and a source of potential danger to the U.S. national interest (Buchanan, 2004; Huntington, 1997, 2004). Movements within Congress to limit immigration, crack down on border violations, and target illegal immigrants currently living in the United States show the high degree of salience this issue has in the United States. Latinos in the United States and Mexicans both feel deep distress regarding the negative aspects of the immigration debacle that has been brought to the national level of debate.²

The third dimension of interest is international terrorism, arguably the most important security concern of the United States in the post-9/11 world. The shock of 9/11 has reoriented U.S. national security toward the problems of international terrorism. Given its own porous borders and strong U.S. ties, Mexicans also feel that they may become a target for terrorists. Terrorist activities provoke a local response. Actors on both sides of the border fear the possibility of further terrorist attacks in the Western Hemisphere.

Fourth, many proponents claim that free trade is good for global progress and improving global equality (e.g., Alderson & Nielson, 2004; Dollar & Kraay, 2002). Yet free trade has been empirically shown to support income inequality within states (e.g., Bloom & Brender, 1993; Dreher & Gaston, 2006; Fieleke, 1994; Richardson, 1995). Others suggest that free trade can improve global equality in some circumstances yet worsen it in others (e.g., Anderson, 2008; Harrison, 2006). What are the general perceptions in both states about the success or failure of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? What are the prospects that the NAFTA agreement will lead to further economic cooperation between Mexico and the United States and perhaps provide a path toward stable relations?

Finally, what do Mexicans think about the United States' current record of military adventurism? Almost all security concerns in the United States' national interest involve the issue of terrorism in some way. What has been the impact of the United States' policy of preemption and forced democratic transitions on the public mood between the United States and Mexico?

Each dimension raised is not new, yet scholars have not taken the time to comprehensively reevaluate the relations between Mexico and the United States in the post 9/11 environment. Additionally, there has been little work on how

democracy and the democratic spirit evident in Mexico will affect bilateral relations and public opinion. As tensions increase in relation to the immigration debate, what are the prospects for a comprehensive agreement between the two states?

This study will seek to empirically and historically evaluate the progressive or regressive nature of the relationship between the United States and Mexico. It is hoped that this investigation can identify issues of agreement for the advancement of cordial and warm relations between the two states and suggest a positive path for solutions to these important policy concerns.

Historic United States–Mexican Relations

Our research question is concerned with the state of affairs between Mexico and the United States. These two countries have had a long history of relations that has often been strained and occasionally conflictual. Therefore, in order to evaluate their current prospects for collaboration, we first offer a brief history of their prior relations and interactions.

An early dispute between the United States and Mexico occurred nine years after Mexico gained its independence from Spain and involved the question of immigration into Texas. In 1830 Mexico passed an ordinance that prohibited U.S. immigration in Texas because many of the new settlers flouted Mexican law and continued to keep slaves. This move angered the U.S. immigrants and spurred an uprising that eventually led to the capture of General Santa Anna of Mexico at the Battle of Jacinto in March 1836. The captured Santa Anna signed a treaty that recognized the independence of Texas. About 10 years after gaining independence, Texas appealed for and was granted statehood into the United States. This act angered Mexico and led it to sever all diplomatic ties with the United States and also ignited an interstate rivalry between the two countries.

The resentment over Texas' annexation eventually boiled over into the U.S.–Mexican War. Mexico eventually capitulated to U.S. forces and conceded to their demands, signing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 that gave the United States undisputed control over Texas, established the U.S.–Mexico border on the Rio Grande River, and ceded the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Kansas to the United States for \$15,000,000 (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo).

The next major dispute between these two states occurred during the Mexican Revolution when Mexican officials mistakenly arrested a group of U.S. soldiers at the port of Tampico, Tamaulipas in 1914. After Mexico refused to apologize in a way suitable to the United States, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the bombardment of the port at Veracruz and occupied the territory for seven months in a debacle later referred to as the Tampico Affair. A couple years later in 1916, Pancho Villa and his men raided Columbus, New Mexico, attacking army barracks, robbing local stores, and killing seventeen U.S. citizens. Brigadier General John Pershing organized an 11-month expedition into Mexico to try to rout Villa from hiding, an expedition that was ultimately unsuccessful and highly resented by the Mexican government and citizenry.

After the first World War, U.S. lawmakers lobbied to include limits on Mexican workers in a way similar to the quota system placed on Europeans. Although this did not pass, the Immigration Act of 1924 established border stations to formally admit Mexican workers and to collect a visa fee and tax on each person entering. During the Great Depression, people in the United States began to perceive Mexican immigrants as competition for jobs and a drain on social services, thus prompting a forced repatriation program of Mexicans across the border. This policy was reversed in 1942 when the United States instituted the Bracero Program that began the first official temporary contract labor program that, by its end, sponsored more than 4.5 million immigrants. This influx of workers prompted President Eisenhower in 1954 to implement Operation Wetback, a forced repatriation program that relocated approximately 1.3 million immigrants back into Mexico.

In 1982, Mexico experienced an economic crisis and was forced to devalue the peso three times. The economic stagnation and inflation that followed spurred many Mexicans to cross the border into the United States. Issues over illegal immigration from Mexico have gone on unabated into the twenty-first century and continue into the present day.

Despite the antagonisms that resulted from some of these policies, there were some issue areas that appeared to establish a more convivial relationship between the United States and Mexico. First, maquiladora assembly plants constructed along the U.S.–Mexican border have employed over a half a million Mexican workers and account for approximately 40 percent of Mexico's worldwide exports. Second, in January of 1994, NAFTA was passed, a trilateral agreement among the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Although currently unpopular in both Mexico and the United States, its signing appeared to foster a more intimate relationship between the two countries on the economic level.

Unfortunately, the collapse of the peso in December of 1994 shows just how tenuous the relationship between Mexico and the United States really is. Although the United States eventually loaned Mexico around \$50 billion during the crisis, there were many in the U.S. government and media that vehemently opposed any U.S. involvement. Although Mexico repaid the loan in just two years time, the unwillingness of the United States to help during the crisis fostered resentment within Mexico and highlighted the pervasive sense of distrust many U.S. citizens feel toward Mexico.

Past Research of U.S.–Mexican Relations and Questions Left Unanswered

Given this longstanding U.S.–Mexican history the question, then, is in what ways has the relationship between these two countries changed? And, more importantly, what is the current state of their bilateral relations in the post-9/11 world? Prior to 9/11, the mood was that the future of relations between the United States and Mexico would be promising and deeply cooperative (Johnson, 2001; Purcell, 1997; U.S. Department of State Dispatch, 1992). The general sense in the current media is that this is not the case (Hall & Bachelet, 2006). What are the current sources of disagreement and convergence between the two states?

As Richard Lugar (Sen-R) put it during a committee hearing on U.S.–Mexican relations, “Americans and Mexicans must understand the fate of our two nations is inextricably intertwined. Mexico is the second largest trading partner of the United States” (Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 2004). In short, each state is dependent on the other. Declines or demands in production clearly impact Mexican internal economic stability and immigration patterns. A decline in economic stability within Mexico will consequently impact the United States due to increased immigration and decreased buying power. One cannot live without the other, but as is typical in so many relationships, both states feel resentful and negative after so many contentious interactions. In other words, there are elements of strategic vulnerability (Waltz, 1979) in the relationship between the countries. The question for both states is; where do we go from here?

Very little academic research has been done on the current state of relations between the United States and Mexico in the sphere of public opinion. Although De la Garza’s (1980) article focusing on Chicano relations with Mexico in the 1980s falls into this category, it is somewhat dated and does not provide an understanding of U.S.–Mexican relations in the post-9/11 world. Other than this, however, little has subsequently been done on public opinion and U.S.–Mexico questions. There have been recent efforts to understand Latino political preferences in the United States and externally (De la Garza, 1980; De la Garza, Falcon, & Garcia, 1996; De la Garza & Pachon, 2000; Orozco & Wainer, 2002; Suro, 2005; Valeriano, 2007), but little work on how these preferences might converge or diverge from the opinions of the United States citizenry, especially in the post 9/11 context.

Despite the dearth of scholarship within the U.S.–Mexico public opinion front, there has been some research dealing with U.S. foreign policy and how it corresponds with the foreign policy of Mexico and other Latin American countries. Before 9/11 some noted that the United States and Mexico were in the process of collaborating across a complex agenda of transnational issues that included interests within such sectors as business, media, immigration, and nongovernmental organizations (Domínguez & de Castro, 2001). Since then, however, U.S. foreign policy has been dominated by issues that almost solely revolve around that of terrorism, securing Iraq and Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation, and other security-related concerns (Castaneda, 2003; Hakim, 2006). This focus upon security matters has diverted the attention of the United States away from concerns regarding Mexico, effectively weakening the gains in the issue areas noted above.

The possibilities for fostering a more intimate relationship between the two countries may be bolstered by Mexico’s recent move toward democratic consolidation. Their dedication to democratic principles has not only led to more accountability, checks and balances, and richer policy options (Baer, 1997), but has also made Mexico increasingly receptive to a more open and ambitious program of foreign relations (Leiken, 2001).

Additionally, the move toward liberal democracy has opened the possibility for a wider and more diverse range of actors within Mexico to participate in the foreign policy process. Yet the transition to democracy has not been without its problems; other authors have pointed out that authoritarian tendencies are still present in

Mexico (Mizrahi, 2004; Osten Van 2006). The recent decentralization measures have had a difficult time overcoming the legacies of the past (Santin Del Rio, 2004) and Mexico's transition to democracy is currently in a state of flux (Krauze, 2006; Middlebrook, 2003).

In any discussion of bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico, the issue of immigration must be acknowledged. When President Fox came to power in Mexico, it initially appeared that he would make progress in this area. President Bush not only agreed to place immigration at the top of the countries' bilateral policy goals, he also created a top-level migration commission made up of such figures as Colin Powell and John Ashcroft (Leiken, 2001, 2002). Unfortunately, once the 9/11 attacks occurred any hope of collaborating on these issues became of secondary importance to the United States.

The 2006 immigration protests in the United States had the potential to spur increased diplomatic relations with Mexico. These protests took place in over 100 cities country-wide, spanning such locations as Washington, DC, Chicago, New York, Las Vegas, and Detroit. They began in February of 2006 and did not end until May of that same year. Although significant immigration reform was unable to pass both houses of Congress, the protests demonstrated the resolve of both the illegal immigrants residing in the United States as well as their domestic supporters. The protests were also instrumental in putting the issue of immigration reform back on the presidential agenda for a brief period. For instance, on March 14, 2007, Bush convened a meeting with Mexican President Felipe Calderon to discuss the reforms he pledged to make to the controversial immigration laws (BBC, 2007). Unfortunately, the election of President Obama has not led to any new moves to introduce comprehensive immigration reform as of July 2010.

The United States has come to focus largely on security issues in the post-9/11 world, at the expense of other foreign policy concerns. This has had the unfortunate consequence of placing substantial pressure and strain on U.S.–Mexican relations. Immigration debates remain an area of intense significance between the United States and Mexico, and likely will remain so until the two states can come to an agreement on a resolution. This leads us to inevitably question whether or not the United States and Mexico have reached a crossroads relating to these and other issues.

Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

Before examining the common issues of concern within the publics of the United States and Mexico, one must first examine past research on the impact of public opinion toward the conduct of foreign policy.³ There are a number of views on this topic. In the early twentieth century, the "public" was often seen to be ignorant, distracted, and motivated by self-interest. Theorists of pluralism such as Lippmann (1925) and Dahl (1956) disagreed with the idea of the public as being a community effectively capable of expressing itself. They perceived of it as a mix of incongruent interest groups that participated only when their specific interests were threatened. Other scholars in this group conclude that the political beliefs of the mass public lack

a structure or ideological coherence that can guide individuals' thinking in a systematic and consistent manner (Converse, 1964). There are also a number of studies that demonstrate the inability of public opinion to effectively influence foreign policy. Cohen's (1973) research on the foreign policy bureaucracy indicated that State Department officials had a rather modest interest in public opinion, and to the extent that they even thought about the public, it was an entity to be educated rather than an entity to be followed.

The "participatory school" takes a different approach and has gathered empirical evidence to support its propositions. Instead of viewing society as merely waking up when its interests are threatened, this school of thought sees the public acting independently and having the capacity to be "elite-directing." With strong civil society and adequate social capital, it can address social problems independently and without elite direction (Almond & Verba, 1963, 1980; Inglehart, 1990; Putnam, 1994). Furthermore, instead of being volatile, public opinion is often characterized by strong and stable qualities of active engagement (Caspary, 1970). Similarly, Page and Shapiro (1988) find that public opinion is not only stable, but that when it does change, the changes tend to be "event driven" reactions to real world situations (see also Jentleson, 1992). Also, in a highly influential work by Erikson, MacKuen, & Stimson (2001), the authors develop a macro-polity model that elucidates how individual voters can affect the policy-making process. The study contends that the apparently random choices of the large number of relatively uninformed voters effectively cancel one another out (Erikson et al., 2001, p. 429). Although the preferences of these voters are unlikely to influence policy in any discernable way, the body of well-informed voters can, in the aggregate, override the seemingly random component of the uninformed bloc. It is this active and informed segment of the electorate that forces politicians to incorporate the demands of the citizenry when making policy.

Other research demonstrates that public opinion has the potential to influence policymakers. For instance, Graham (1989), in an analysis of 500 public opinion surveys, finds that public opinion has an important impact upon decisions on all stages of the policy process, from getting an issue on the agenda, to its ratification, and through its implementation. In her study of early U.S. history, Graber (1968, p. 318) concludes that public opinion was "an important factor in decision making, but by no means the most important single factor." Hooghe and Marks (1999, p. 74) contend that as the scope and depth of EU integration increases, political elites have become more vulnerable to generalized public pressure and that one can "no longer . . . conceive of decision making about basic institutional rules of the EU as insulated from public opinion, for even where referenda are not imminent constraints, politicians are induced by public scrutiny to act as if they were." Similarly, Hooghe and Marks (2008, p. 9) further argue that governments often try to anticipate the effect their decisions on domestic publics and that "public opinion on European integration has become a field of strategic interaction among party elites in their contest for political power." In sum, although the "public" may not always be the prime mover of foreign policy, studies have shown that it has the potential to influence the ambit of policy decisions. Furthermore, the ability of the public to

impact policy has only increased in the modern era with increased speeds of communication and new methods of participation (Jones, 1994).

In short, the current view of the research community is that the public can be a dynamic, well-informed, "elite-directing" group, capable of addressing fairly complex issues without the guidance of elites. This suggests that politicians may utilize polls as a way to anticipate the public's reaction to potential policies that they may initiate. Similarly, the results of polls can help politicians get elected by offering them a way to identify policies that are in line with public opinion. The above framework thus provides us with the foundation upon which to study the current perceptions and realities in the U.S and Mexican relationship in the post-9/11 world.

Theoretical Approach: Foreign Policy Dimensions and Issues

The media currently points to wide issues of divergence between the publics and leaders of the United States and Mexico (Althaus, 2008; Leiken, 2002). The general public mood within the United States is one of unhappiness with the influx of immigrants. They see the Mexican border as a threat to U.S. national stability. The general sense in Mexico is that the United States has ignored them; only 27 percent of Mexicans described a feeling of "fraternity" toward the United States, while 38 percent of the Mexican public expressed a feeling of "resentment" toward the country (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales, 2006b). We follow the issue-based paradigm in which the salience of issues is perceived as an important consideration in the analysis of interstate relations (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981). The main question in this analysis is whether relations between the United States and Mexico are truly at a crossroads. If this is true, we will observe wide disagreement by the publics over which issues are seen to be the most important and differences over how to solve these common problems.

Because our research question is concerned with determining the degree to which public opinion in the United States and Mexico coalesces around one another, our issue-centric approach is the most appropriate theoretic foundation upon which to base our study. Our research, instead of attempting to hypothesize the ways in which issues become perceived as foreign policy preferences, focuses upon identifying common issues of concern between the two countries that could be used as a platform for greater cooperation and then investigate the levels of support for each issue in both countries. We expect to find positive examples of cooperative intentions as the issues under discussion become more salient. The issue paradigm is not new (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981) yet it has failed to be adopted widely in international relations policy analysis.⁴ This research is an example of how issues between two countries can become the focus of analysis in policy studies of international bilateral engagement. The first step is to identify the common salient issues at the forefront of relations. Hypotheses should be minimized in favor of inductive research on specific issues. Once issues are identified, policy analysts can then investigate the convergence or divergence of public opinion on these important issues to establish the

current dynamics of perceptions. Investigators can then suggest future pathways toward governmental policy convergence and understanding based on inductive theoretical reasoning.

Data used to undertake this analysis come from a variety of sources. Most information was gathered from primary sources: news reports, opinion pieces, government documents, and other such materials. For comparative data on public and elite preferences in Mexico and the United States, the 2004 and 2006 Global Views and Mexico and the World Projects were used. In addition to this, we also use 2008 data from the "Mexico, the Americas, and the World" project; although this survey does not include respondents from the United States, it allows us to see if the opinions on the above issues have recently changed in Mexico. All three surveys include collaboration with Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) and Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales (COMEXI) to sample the Mexican public.⁵

Drug Trafficking

Drugs, whether one is discussing trafficking, production, or general drug-related crime, seem to be one of the primary issues at stake between Mexico and the United States. One cannot understand the dimensions of immigration and terrorism in the United States without the connection made between these issues and drug production and trafficking.

From the general tone of the debate, one would expect to find that the U.S. public is deeply concerned and aware of the threat "Mexican" drugs might pose to themselves and their children, more so than Mexicans who may be the source of the problem. Although we find pockets of the Mexican citizenry that likely supports drug production and trafficking for economic prosperity reasons, the vast majority of the population wholeheartedly opposes the drug trade. The Mexican public seems to be more concerned (and with good reason) about the drug problem than the U.S. public, thus confounding our expectations (Table 1).

The Global Views poll asks if drug trafficking is a "very important" threat to the United States. A sampled majority of the U.S. public (63 percent) in 2004 viewed this

Table 1. Drug Trafficking

Year	Sample	Percentage	Year	Sample	Percentage
Drug trafficking is a "very important" threat to the United States			Drug trafficking is a "critical" threat to Mexico		
2004	American Public	63	2004	Mexican Public	89
2004	American Elites	46	2004	Mexican Elites	84
			2006	Mexican Public	80
			2006	Mexican Elites	93
			2008	Mexican Public	79
			2008	Mexican Elites	88

Source: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas and the Consejo Mexicano De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004; Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, 2006b, 2006d, 2008.

as a very important issue. The issue demonstrates a 9 percent drop in opinion since 2002. Forty-six percent of elites saw this as a “very important” problem. It is clear that drugs are an important issue for the U.S. public, but it is not a “critical” issue, nor does it rank anywhere near the top of possible concerns. Indeed, a majority of leaders do not even perceive drugs as an important concern for external relations.

In 2004, drug trafficking ranked as the number one critical threat to both the public and the elite in Mexico. Eighty-nine percent of the public viewed this as a key problem and 84 percent of the elites viewed the issue in the same way. Although the question was worded slightly differently, the results from the 2006 survey report similar findings. Eighty percent of the public and 93 percent of the elites saw drugs as the “first threat to Mexico’s most important interests” (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo México De Asuntos Internacionales, 2006b, p. 26). In 2008, 79 percent of the public and 88 percent of the Mexican elites continued to view the trafficking of drugs as a “grave threat.” Drug trafficking is indeed a pressing issue for an overwhelming majority of Mexicans.

Why would the Mexican public see drugs as such a problem? U.S. citizens may forget that as a source of the drugs coming into the United States, Mexico experiences many of the same problems that the United States undergoes from the negative effect of drugs on society. The survey notes, “the salience of drug trafficking is not surprising, not only because of Mexico’s role in the international illegal drug market, but also because of domestic corruption, violence, and criminality created by drug trafficking and consumption” (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo México De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 16). The Mexican public is just as concerned with the drug trade as the U.S. public because of how it affects the criminal and family elements of their own communities. Future polls should only show an increased awareness by the Mexican public in light of waves of drug violence experienced in 2008 and 2009 (Table 2).

Where does one place the burden of responsibility regarding the drug issue? Mexicans seem to place slightly more responsibility on themselves to control the spread of drugs to the United States. In 2004, 38 percent of the population viewed this as a Mexican problem while only 27 percent of the population thought the issue should be dealt with solely by the United States (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 34). Mexicans want to tackle the drug issue just as strongly as U.S. citizens do, perhaps even more so.

Table 2. Drugs and Responsibility

Year	Sample	Percentage
Mexico is responsible for controlling the movement of drugs into the United States		
2004	Mexican Public	38
The United States is responsible for controlling the movement of drugs into the United States		
2004	Mexican Public	27

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004.

It should not be surprising that the drug issue is so salient in Mexico given the large amount of violence that accompanies the drug trade. For instance, in 2007 more than 2,500 civilian lives were claimed from drug violence, up from 1,800 in 2005 and 1,304 in 2004 (Hanson, 2008). Given the corruption in Mexico, there is little hope that this will change in the near future. For instance, a fair proportion of the Mexican police have ties to the drug cartels, making efforts to stem the drug trade even more difficult (COMTEX, 2007). Worse yet, the Mexican government has announced on several occasions that specialized units designed to undertake anti-drug activities have been prosecuted for involvement with drug trafficking and narco-corruption (Murray, 2003). Given the entrenched nature of the drug trade, it is not surprising that this issue has become such a salient topic in Mexican politics.

Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction

The recent United States war against Iraq was fought mainly over the presumed presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and the potential that those weapons could be handed over to terrorists. The prior war with Afghanistan was fought over the Taliban government's support of terrorist organizations. Terrorism is clearly the number one issue for U.S. national security after 9/11. Terrorism and its potential connection to WMDs represent key issues at stake between the United States and Mexico.

What is interesting about the issue of terrorism is how it has invaded the space of other issues. Terrorism is connected to immigration in that the United States has moved to clamp down on the free flow of immigrants so that potential terrorists can not infiltrate the United States from the south.⁶ Terrorism is connected to drugs in that the U.S. administration makes a concerted effort to show that the funding of terrorist organizations is sponsored through the production of drugs (Richman, 2002). Terrorism is connected to Free Trade issues in that open borders and efficient trade routes could allow for easier infiltration of terrorists into the United States. As noted by Stephen Flynn during a Congressional hearing, "the most important reason to get border management right is to satisfy what is arguably the most critical homeland security imperative of our time: to reduce the risk that hemispheric and global trade lanes will be exploited to smuggle weapons of mass destruction into the United States" (Murray, 2003; see Table 3).

According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey, 75 percent of the U.S. public in 2004 and 74 percent in 2006 perceived international terrorism as a "critical threat" to U.S. interests. The issue has dropped in salience by eleven percentage points from its all-time high in 2002 of 85 percent. In 2004, 66 percent of the U.S. public perceived chemical and biological weapons as key threats to the United States. Yet this issue has dropped 16 percentage points since 2002. Also, 64 percent of the public in 2004 and 69 percent in 2006 still saw the acquisition of nuclear weapons by countries unfriendly toward the United States as a key threat to the country's national interests, despite an overall drop of 14 percentage points since 2002. Although a majority of the U.S. public is worried about terrorism and weapons of

Table 3. Terrorism and Threat

Year	Sample	Percentage	Year	Sample	Percentage
International terrorism is a "critical threat" to United States interests			International terrorism is a "critical threat" to Mexican interests		
2002	American Public	85	2004	Mexican Public	81
2004	American Public	75	2006	Mexican Public	70
2006	American Public	74	2008	Mexican Public	63
Chemical and biological weapons are "key threats" to United States interests			Chemical and biological weapons are "key threats" to Mexican interests		
2002	American Public	82	2004	Mexican Public	86
2004	American Public	66	2006	Mexican Public	75
			2008	Mexican Public	64

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, 2006, 2008.

mass destruction, concern has declined since 2002 and will most likely continue to do so barring another devastating terrorist event.

What remains to be answered is the question of how widely public preferences diverge on the issue of terrorism in the United States and Mexico. No one seems to ask what Mexican preferences really are and many do not realize that former President Fox declared Mexico a firm ally with the United States in the war on terror (Thompson, 2002). According to the surveys, Mexicans view both terrorism and chemical/biological weapons as national security risks with 81 and 86 percent of the population, respectively, viewing these issues as "critical threats." Although the 2008 numbers dropped to 63 and 64 percent they still remain very salient. Although elite interest in these issues did not reach the same levels in 2004, the 2006 and 2008 surveys find that this gap has lessened, suggesting that public preferences have impacted elite attitudes. The "Public Values" survey states, "the importance Mexicans give to the menace posed by chemical and biological weapons is surprising because Mexico has no experience with and is located far from countries suspected of having huge chemical and biological arsenals that pose actual direct threats" (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 16). It seems that Mexican fears regarding terrorism are much more extreme than U.S. views. This result was not expected because Mexico has not been attacked by external terrorist groups and because the government is not pressing the issue the same way the U.S. government was at the time (e.g., color-coded threat levels).

Table 4 demonstrates that Mexican views on terrorism are so extreme that the public is open to compromising its sovereignty to achieve progress on the issue. "Mexicans consider the threat of international terrorism to be so serious that they are willing to allow U.S. officials into Mexico to help guard Mexico's borders, airports, and seaports in the fight against it" (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 8). Sixty-three percent of the Mexican public in 2004 (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 17) and 51 percent in 2006 (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales, 2006a, p. 18) were in favor of this. It would be interesting to know

Table 4. Terrorism and Sovereignty

Year	Sample	Percentage
International terrorism is so serious that United States officials should be let into Mexico to help guard Mexico's borders, airports, and seaports		
2004	Mexican Public	63
2006	Mexican Public	51

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, 2006a.

what percent of the U.S. public would be willing to let Mexico patrol our borders to help tackle the problem of terrorism.

In order to understand why the Mexican public perceives terrorism as a key issue despite the claim that there is no significant threat on this front, one must first understand what terrorism actually means to the Mexican population. Newspaper and personal accounts suggest that Mexico's interest in terrorism is likely facilitated by a potential link to the drug trade. A situation has developed in which there is "overlap between criminal and terrorist activity" (Miro, 2003). For instance, drug organizations in Mexico have tactics and organizational strategies similar to those employed by terrorist groups, making it difficult to distinguish one type of group from the other. This linkage creates the perception that drug cartels are akin to terrorist groups. In addition to the similar organizational structures, terrorist groups and drug cartels are particularly likely to adopt the same violent methods to achieve their respective goals.

There are other reasons why the Mexican public feels strongly about the issue of terrorism, namely the existence of both domestic and international terrorist groups inside their borders. The Mexican government recognizes the existence of three insurgent groups: the Zapatista National Liberation Army, the People's Revolutionary Army, and the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People.⁷ Stemming both from the linkage between drug and terrorist groups and the existence of terrorist groups inside its territory, Mexico and its citizens are rightly anxious about this potential threat. Even if the linkages joining these issues are not always completely accurate, they could still work to provide a stronger foundation upon which joint U.S.-Mexican relations can take place. It is in issue areas such as these that bilateral relations between the two states have the potential to be the most promising.

Immigration

Immigration is currently a significant issue in the United States. Despite its salience, however, any hope of enacting some type of immigration reform was dashed at the same time the Twin Towers came crashing down. The general feeling is that our security and economic prosperity is threatened by the masses of immigrants coming into the country (Leiken, 2002). Senate leader Bill Frist noted that the immigration system is "flat out broken" (CNN, 2006). A *Time Magazine* poll found that 82 percent of the U.S. population feels that the government is not doing enough to keep illegal immigrants out of the country (Tumulty, 2006).

To us, it is unclear how the issue of immigration and terrorism became connected. The rise in border agents and scrutiny of the other than Mexican (OTM) class of peoples crossing the border has not resulted in any significant arrests or seizure of materials. Furthermore, terrorists are much more likely to arrive by air or sea than through Mexico; of the 48 terrorists implicated in the 9/11 attacks, none of them came through the Mexican border (Leiken, 2002). Nonetheless, the security of the United States is now directly connected to the issue of immigration. A Ford Foundation poll found that 58 percent of U.S. citizens say tighter immigration controls would strengthen national security (Arumi & Bittle, 2005, p. 7). When asked which measures should be used to tackle terrorism, 76 percent of the U.S. public in 2004 supported restricting immigration into the United States (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 19). Also, in 2006, 58 percent of U.S. citizens felt that controlling immigration should be a foreign policy priority (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006, p. 55). This shift toward security through greater immigration control has profound effects for U.S.–Mexican relations.

The main complaint by the U.S. public against immigration seems not to be related to terrorism, but to the fiscal cost of services provided to immigrants and lost jobs. A recent report released by the Thomas Rivera Institute alleges that “the fiscal cost to the state of California related to immigration from Mexico is approximately \$179 million per year” (Cortin, de la Garza, Bejarano, & Wainer, 2005, p. 1). Yet, this same immigration brings in an estimated \$159 billion per year for the state while directly supporting more than 200,000 U.S. jobs. This estimate does not capture the hidden services and payments created by migrant’s underground economies.

It cannot be denied that immigration is changing the makeup of the United States. It is estimated that 25 percent of the population of California is Mexican in origin (Cortin et al., 2005). Once the Latino population is fully enfranchised, their voting power will increase threefold. Latinos will eventually become the majority within the United States according to current birthrates. However, immigration is not increasing as commonly perceived. According to a Pew Hispanic Center report: “Rather than undergoing a continuous increase in immigration levels as is commonly perceived, the United States experienced a sharp spike in immigration flows over the past decade that had a distinct beginning, middle, and end” (Passel & Suro, 2005, p. i). Recent studies have confirmed this finding by showing that the 2008 economic meltdown has contributed to the largest decline in net immigration in recent memory (USA Today, 2009).

Recent research suggests that the perception of immigration threat depends on who the immigrants are, finding that Latino immigrations provoke higher levels of threat responses when compared with European immigrants (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008). What, then, is the public perception regarding the issue? A slight majority of the U.S. public feels that “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the U.S.” are a critical threat to U.S. interests. Fifty-two percent of the population took this view in 2004, while 51 percent had the same opinion in 2006 (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 12; Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006, p. 48) (Table 5).

Table 5. Future Migration Levels

Year	Sample	Percentage
Migration into the United States from Mexico should be increased		
2004	American Public	11
2006	American Public	13
Migration into the United States from Mexico should remain constant		
2004	American Public	31
2006	American Public	39
Migration into the United States from Mexico should decrease		
2004	American Public	54
2006	American Public	46

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, 2006.

Table 6. Responsibility and Migration

Year	Sample	Percentage
Mexico should be responsible for reducing levels of undocumented Mexicans to the United States		
2004	Mexican Public	54
The United States should be responsible for reducing levels of undocumented Mexicans to the United States		
2004	Mexican Public	21
Mexico should be responsible for reducing levels of undocumented migrants from other countries to the United States		
2004	Mexican Public	41

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo México De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004.

When asked about Mexican immigration levels in 2004, only 11 percent of the U.S. public wanted the number of migrants to be increased and 31 percent would like the number to remain constant. Finally, 54 percent of the population thinks immigration levels should be decreased (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 47). Americans' views toward immigration were slightly more accepting in 2006 with 13 percent calling for its increase and 39 percent thinking it should stay the same. Still, 46 percent of the U.S. public continued to call for its decrease (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006, p. 57) (Table 6).

Perhaps surprising to U.S. citizens, a slight majority of the Mexican public believes that Mexico should be responsible for reducing the high immigration levels of undocumented Mexicans to the United States. In 2004, 54 percent of the Mexican public felt the issue was Mexico's responsibility while only 21 percent felt the burden should be placed on the United States (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo México De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 34). When asked about undocumented migrants from other countries, 41 percent of the Mexican public felt it was still Mexico's responsibility to tackle the problem. President Fox remarked that Mexico is committed to stopping migration flows in the south of Mexico before they reach the United States border (White House, 2006b).

What future paths can the U.S. take on the immigration issue? There are three competing ideas. One option is that a guest worker program be established that

Table 7. Future Migration Options

Year	Sample		Percentage		
A guest worker program should be established that would allow immigrants to work in the U.S. for a number of years and then return to Mexico					
2005	Latinos		56		
2005	American Public		56		
Year	Sample	Percentage	Year	Sample	Percentage
Illegal immigrants should be given an option of amnesty and be allowed to stay in the country as long as they wish			Immigrants should be allowed to remain in the U.S. if they have a job, demonstrate proficiency in English, and pay their taxes		
2005	Latinos	84	2005	American Public	78

Source: Taken from Suro (2005) and Tumulty (2006).

would allow immigrants to work in the United States for a number of years and then return to Mexico. Fifty-six percent of Latinos support this option (Suro, 2005). According to a recent AP poll, 56 percent of the entire U.S. population also supports this option (Benac, 2006; see Table 7). The next proposal contends that illegal immigrants should be given some option of amnesty and be allowed to stay in the country as long as they wish. Eighty-four percent of Latinos support this proposal (Suro, 2005). Latinos are not in favor of any solution to the problem that would force immigrants living in the United States to return to Mexico to gain citizenship. Seventy-eight percent of Americans polled favor allowing immigrants to remain in the United States “if they have a job, demonstrate proficiency in English, and pay their taxes” (Tumulty, 2006; see Table 7).

The final proposal would make being an illegal immigrant a felony and seek to deport all Mexican nationals in the United States. Forty-seven percent of the U.S. public views illegal immigration as a “serious criminal offence” (Benac, 2006). However, only one in four U.S. citizens support making it a felony (Tumulty, 2006). Large protests within the United States during 2008 show that most Latinos are against this option. Yet, the April 2006 AP poll on the issue demonstrates that 41 percent of the U.S. population is against any move to give residency status and amnesty to illegal immigrants. A final solution would be to erect a border wall between the two countries. A *Los Angeles Times* report notes, “The wall does not yet exist, and it may never be built, but already the proposed 700 miles of fencing and electric sensors loom like a new Berlin Wall in the Latin American imagination” (Tobar, 2006).

Free Trade Agreements

NAFTA was signed in 1992 by Mexico, Canada, and the United States and ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1993. At the time, it was estimated that 70 percent of all Mexican exports were headed to the U.S. (the current level stands at 90 percent). NAFTA is primarily a mechanism to lessen and eventually abolish tariffs in the region. Research on NAFTA has suggested the agreement worked, and worked well in certain sectors of the economy, but it has by no means been either an economic

dream or a financial panacea for the countries involved. Trade between Mexico and the United States has skyrocketed, increasing from \$81 billion in 1993 to \$231 in 2002 (Williams, 2004). It is important to note, however, that although imports and exports grew for each country, income disparity has gotten worse (Barry, 1997; Hanson, 2003).

President Fox of Mexico remarked that NAFTA was directly responsible for a positive balance of trade in Mexico estimated at \$535 billion and a rise in per capita income in border regions to \$10,000 when the rest of the country averages \$7,000 (White House, 2006b). The managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Rodrigo de Rato (2006) remarked, "helped by a generally favorable external environment, growth in the region, after reaching a 24-year high in 2004, remained above historical averages at 4 percent in 2005 and we expect similar performance again this year." De Rato also said that benefits for Mexico from NAFTA in the realm of trade and investment have been "enormous."

Despite these positive sentiments, current efforts to strengthen NAFTA and institute a Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) seem to be stalling. Instead of pushing for free trade reform in 2002, the United States instead passed new farm subsidies that go against reforms demanded by NAFTA (Krauze, 2003).

Gilpin and Gilpin (2001, p. 343) contend that the advent of NAFTA was driven by market forces and not the political environment. If NAFTA was a natural process and not a political or public demand, what is public opinion on the issue? It appears that the U.S. public feels that most of the gains from NAFTA go to Mexico. Sixty-nine percent of the U.S. population in 2004 felt that NAFTA was good for the Mexican economy and only 42 percent believed it was positive for the U.S. economy (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 46). Sixty percent of the population in 2004 felt that NAFTA created insecurity for U.S. workers and 56 percent viewed NAFTA as a negative factor in creating jobs for the United States. In fact, only half of the U.S. population believes that Mexico practices "fair trade" with the United States.

When asked if "protecting the jobs of American workers" was a "very important" goal, the Global Views survey finds that 78 percent of the public in 2004 and 67 percent in 2006 viewed this as an important issue. It is the highest polled issue of all that were sampled (including WMDs, energy supply, drugs, immigration, and military power), demonstrating that this topic has a preponderantly high level of salience in the United States.

Mexican views of NAFTA have also been largely negative. When the proposal for a free trade agreement was first put on the agenda, the Mexican population lacked a broad consensus on the issue (Purcell, 1990). In fact, the initial response was armed rebellion in the Chiapas region. Fears that globalization and market integration would harm the poor underclass in Mexico manifested themselves in anti-free trade sentiment and political violence (Table 8).

Support for NAFTA within Mexico has not improved with time. For example, in 2004 the Centro de Investigacion y Docencias Economicas found that only: (i) 44 percent of the population believes that NAFTA is good for the Mexican economy; (ii) 41 percent thought it was good for their standard of living; and (iii) 39 percent believed it to be good for the environment (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia

Table 8. NAFTA Opinions

Year	Sample	Percentage
NAFTA is good for the Mexican economy 2004	Mexican Public	44
NAFTA is good for the standard of living 2004	Mexican Public	41
NAFTA is good for the environment 2004	Mexican Public	39

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004.

Table 9. Who Benefits from NAFTA?

Year	Sample	Percentage
Most of the benefits of NAFTA go to the United States 2004	Mexican Public	70
Most of the benefits of NAFTA go to Mexico 2004	Mexican Public	8
	American Public	69

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, 2006c.

Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004). Furthermore, in 2006 fully 52 percent of the Mexican public wanted to renegotiate parts of NAFTA; this figure increased to 67 percent in 2008 (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2008, p. 70). The reason that NAFTA has lessened in popularity can be traced to a number of different causes. For one, Mexican citizens thought that participation in the association would provide them with “First World” status; in reality, it has been perceived to only bring wealth and progress to a narrow segment of commercial exporting groups (Marentes, 2004). The agreement has also been accused of irreversibly damaging key agricultural sectors by inundating the Mexican market with low-priced products that Mexican producers cannot compete with (Saldana, 2007). Another reason for this discontent can be traced to the feeling that Mexico is being economically exploited by the United States. In the words of Adolfo Zinser, Mexico’s former envoy to the UN, “[NAFTA is] a weekend fling. The U.S. isn’t interested in a relationship of equals with Mexico, but rather in a relationship of convenience and subordination” (Smith & Lindblad, 2003). This point ties in with the contention that the adoption of NAFTA and the increasing of Mexico’s trade relations with the United States has come at the price of its sovereignty and “Mexicanidad” national identity (Meyers, 1993) (Table 9).

In light of these overall negative assessments, why do some in Mexico still look on NAFTA favorably? The answer probably lies in global trends. The economic collapse and U.S. bailout of the peso in 1995 demonstrated that the Mexican economy is vulnerable to global fluctuations. Eighty-six percent of the Mexican public in 2004 viewed the possibility of a world economic crisis as a “critical threat” to Mexico (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico

De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 16), although this figure dropped to 70 percent in 2006 and 69 percent in 2008 (Chicago Council of Global Affairs, 2008, p. 22). Another reason likely resides in that new commercial opportunities and a rise in wage rates have produced a segment of the general population that has personally benefited from NAFTA. This has been complemented with the rise in trade with the United States as well as Mexico's newfound access to high technology and capital investment in the United States (Salinas-Leon, 1991).

When asked specifically about NAFTA, 70 percent of the Mexican public in 2004 felt that most of the benefits for the agreement went to the United States while only eight percent of the population felt that Mexico benefited the most (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 36). When asked the same question, 69 percent of the U.S. public felt that Mexico gained the most from the agreement. It is interesting to see how the public in each state perceives the gains from the agreement differently. Most seem to look to the neighbor to place the blame for the lack of perceived economic progress in the region.

External Use of Force Policy

The National Security doctrine (Bush Doctrine) of the United States post 9/11 emphasizes the right of preemption when the interests of the United States are threatened, particularly by terrorist groups or rogue nations. 9/11 taught the Bush Administration that weak states can threaten the national interest of strong states like the United States. Implicit within former President Bush's strategy was the view that unilateralism is possible and in fact optimal when vital interests are at stake. It was also held that democracy will prevent future wars, therefore promoting the view that going to war to establish democratic governance is a viable and legitimate goal (Table 10).

Table 10. Trust and the United States

Year	Sample	Percentage
The United States is a country that should be "trusted"		
2004	Mexican Public	20
2006	Mexican Public	25
2008	Mexican Public	25
The United States is a country that should not be "trusted"		
2004	Mexican Public	43
2006	Mexican Public	53
2008	Mexican Public	61
The United States is a country that I feel "warmly" toward		
2004	Mexican Public	68
2006	Mexican Public	74
2008	Mexican Public	62

Source: Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004; Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006.

The current mood in Mexico seems to reflect deep disappointment with the actions of the United States in Iraq. Only 39 percent of the entire population in 2004 “somewhat agrees” or “strongly agrees” that the United States has been a positive influence throughout the world (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 25). In addition, only 20 percent of the population “trusted” the United States in 2004; although this figure increased to 25 percent in 2006 and 2008, distrust also increased from a 2004 value of 43 percent to 53 percent in 2006 and 61 percent in 2008 (Chicago Council on World Affairs, 2008, p. 69). On the other hand, in 2004 the United States and Japan were ranked first as the countries Mexicans felt most “warmly” (positively) toward (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo Mexico De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 31). Although the United States dropped to second place behind Canada in 2006, their overall score increased from 68 to 74 (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006, p. 40). Unfortunately, in 2008 the favorability ranking of the United States decreased to 62 points, the lowest level since the survey has been in existence. Although still closely connected and positive, there is a negative impression in Mexico regarding the United States’ actions, mainly in the context of the use of external force.

The question the Global Views poll investigates is “do Americans perceive the threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as requiring fundamentally new responses, including preventive war and regime change?” (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 4). The answer by the public is no. Although the public supports action if the UN authorizes it, no clear majority supports preventive uses of force without international support. Only 50 percent of the U.S. public in 2004 supported the use of force to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons and only 40 percent of the public supported using force to restore democratic governance (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 24). Sixty-one percent of the population, however, did support an attack to stop a country from supporting terrorist groups. Although the U.S. public supports war in the context of Afghanistan without UN approval, it does not support war in Iraq, Iran, or North Korea without UN authorization.

One interesting response (consistent with the public mood on the War in Iraq) is that a great majority of the U.S. public does not support unilateral actions to prevent states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Given former President Bush’s focus on unilateralism (at least prior to the Iraq backlash), why does a great majority of the U.S. public support multilateral efforts to solve international problems? When asked when it is acceptable to unilaterally declare war, only 17 percent of the U.S. public in 2004 supported war if there is strong evidence that the country is acquiring WMDs (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 25). A majority (53 percent) support war only in the case of an imminent attack, while 24 percent only support war in the case of a direct attack.

Another poll by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in 2005 investigated the U.S. public’s perceptions regarding the policy of democracy promotion. Fully 55 percent of those sampled oppose using military force to overthrow a dictator (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2005, p. 3). In addition, 66 percent of the U.S.

population feels that threatening military force to push democratic reforms “does more harm than good.”

Mexico was perceived to be weak regarding external uses of force by the Bush Administration due to one issue and solely one instance: Mexico did not support the war against Iraq and worked actively against the United States on the issue in the Security Council. The Associated Press noted, “Fox and the current U.S. president were both elected in 2000 and at first established unusually warm relations. But the U.S. administration became irritated when Mexico didn’t use its U.N. Security Council seat to support a U.S. invasion of Iraq” (Rice, 2003). The United States expected to have Mexico as an ally on the issue. Commenting on this topic former President Fox remarked, “It seems to us that this is a matter that should be channeled through United Nations Security Council; that there should be an opportunity for a visit by United Nations inspectors to Iraq. We will be pushing strongly in that direction” (Thompson, 2002).

The Global Views survey notes the lack of Mexican support for the War in Iraq. “The United States was disappointed in Mexico’s initially timid response to the attacks and, later, open reluctance to support the United States in taking military action against Iraq” (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 4). Only seven percent of the Mexican public supported the war against Iraq while a slight majority of U.S. citizens supported the war prior to its onset (Pew Hispanic Center, 2003). Former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda noted that the Iraq war, “has contributed to a wide, deep and probably lasting collapse of sympathy for the United States in the region” (Gedda, 2004).

In regards to the external use of force, Mexico is unique in the region because of its checkered past with the United States, an issue covered in detail earlier in this article. The Global Views poll notes, “The traditional principles of Mexico’s foreign policy are defensive, shaped by its history of foreign interventions, territorial losses, and domestic turmoil during the nineteenth century by the ideological, political, and institutional inheritance of nationalism from the Mexican Revolution” (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 5) (Table 11).

In 2004, when asked if “helping bring democracy to other countries” was a very important foreign policy goal, only 55 percent of the Mexican public and 27 percent of the elites answered in the affirmative. The numbers in 2006 were even lower when only 47 percent of the public and 18 percent of the elites perceived this as a highly salient issue (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006, p. 28); in 2008 a mere 37 percent of the Mexican public and 27 percent of Mexican elites saw this as an

Table 11. Democracy Promotion

Year	Sample	Percentage
“Helping bring democracy to other countries” is a very important foreign policy goal		
2004	Mexican Public	55
2004	Mexican Elites	27
2004	American Public	14

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, 2006.

Table 12. U.S. and Police Action

Year	Sample	Percentage	
The United States should not play the role of "world policeman"	2004	Mexican Public	72
	2004	American Public	76

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004.

important issue (Chicago Council on World Affairs, 2008, p. 35). Although the question was the lowest-ranked issue in relation to Mexico's foreign policy goals, it was still significantly higher than the percentage of those in the United States who were polled on the same issue. It seems that Mexicans are more positive about this foreign policy option than the U.S. public. Yet Mexico did not support the war on Iraq, possibility stemming from the fact that the Bush Administration did not make a connection between democracy and the war until after the war started.

Those in the United States are generally behind any effort to eradicate terrorism. Sixty-eight percent of the public in 2004 supported the assassination of individual terrorist leaders and 67 percent supported "toppling unfriendly regimes that support terrorist groups threatening the U.S." with force (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 19). Fully 87 percent of the population in 2004 supported "working through the UN to strengthen international laws against terrorism and to make sure UN members enforce them." Eighty-three percent of the public supported using air strikes to attack terrorists and 76 percent of the public supported the use of ground troops to attack terrorist camps (Table 12).

Overall, it seems that no one, including the U.S. public, wanted the United States to take the dominant role in international affairs. The poll shows that 76 percent of U.S. citizens and 72 percent of Mexicans are not in support of the United States playing the role of the world policeman (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 15).

Areas of Convergence

Overall, Mexico views its relationship with the United States as generally positive. Polls suggest that the Mexican public and elites support cooperation on a wide variety of issues including free trade, immigration, terrorism, and drug trafficking. This view differs from Hakim's (2006) assessment in *Foreign Affairs* in which he says "There is little reason to expect that U.S. relations with Latin America will improve soon. More likely, they will get worse."

Security cooperation and cordial-progressive relations between Mexico and the United States are not mutually exclusive goals. The initial objective of the Fox Administration was to foster amiable relations with the United States so as to reach agreements on immigration and border security. 9/11 seems to have ruined these initiatives. As typically happens in foreign policy, efforts to increase your security end up threatening a neighbor and provoking further hostility (Vasquez, 1993). Once on the verge of deep integration on multiple levels, the United States and Mexico now look to be headed for renewed rivalry if relations are allowed to continue in their current negative climate.

There is ample opportunity where the two states can cooperate on issues of mutual interest while still realizing advances in the area of security relations. Former President Fox had much hope that relations could be restored quickly after 9/11. He remarked in September 2002, "by dedicating so much concentration to the issue of security, bilateral matters pass to a secondary level. Those matters continue to have enormous importance to us, I ask myself if it is necessary to choose between the two issues" (Thompson, 2002). It is not necessary for a state to pursue security over other domestic goals, both can be pursued concurrently. The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North American initiative may be a small step in the right direction. The agreement was signed by the leaders of Mexico, Canada, and the United States in March 2005 and its goal is to "promote growth and economic opportunity, increase security and improve the quality of life of our peoples" (White House, 2006c).

The Global Views survey reports similar findings for both publics regarding the issues of terrorism and WMDs. Seventy-five percent of the U.S. public and 81 percent of Mexicans sampled viewed terrorism as a critical threat in 2004 (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2004, p. 16). Likewise, 86 percent of the Mexican public in 2004 was concerned with WMDs, while 66 percent of the U.S. public was concerned about the same issue. In some cases, Mexicans are more concerned than U.S. citizens about issues presumed relevant to only the United States. This situation is changing however; although U.S. citizens in 2006 were still as concerned with terrorism as in 2004 (74 percent), the percentage in the Mexican populous decreased 11 points to 70 percent.

The polls also demonstrate a high level of concern about drug trafficking. Although "stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the United States" was viewed as a "very important threat" by 63 percent of U.S. respondents polled in 2004, 83 percent of Mexicans had the same view. There is ample evidence of convergence of these views by both publics; generally Mexican views are more extreme than U.S. views.

The Global Views report also notes that the public "support(s) an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which Mexico would crack down on illegal drug trafficking and migration in the U.S and the U.S. would permit more Mexicans to live and work in the United States" (Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas and the Consejo México De Asuntos Internacionales, 2004, p. 9). Trading one salient issue for positive movement on another salient issue should be the focus of future relations. The goals of each state surrounding the issues of drugs, terrorism, and migration can be achieved through bilateral trade-offs. Using tit-for-tat strategies can help overcome issue stalemates. It is not advisable that issues such as terrorism and migration are linked together, but this linkage has already become a reality. By realizing the preferences of one state on an issue the other state can achieve positive concessions in other areas.

Both the United States and Mexico seem inclined to believe that the immigration problem is an issue that both countries must work together to solve. Former President Bush remarked in March 2006, "border security is not just one country's prerogative; it's the prerogative and duty of both countries" (White House, 2006a). Former President Fox of Mexico said, "we want to have a safe border for the benefit of our citizens and for the benefit of our relationship with the United States." A

renewed push to settle the issue in 2010 should not be focused on domestic initiatives alone; only in collaboration with Mexico can the issue truly be tackled.

The main issue of divergence is found in relation to the use of force (Iraq) and perceptions of NAFTA. Hopefully, the debate on free trade will become more enlightened as time goes on. Former President Bush recently remarked, "And one of my vows, and I know the other leaders share this goal, is to make sure that people are able to connect the NAFTA relationship with improvement of their quality of life" (White House, 2006b). Although the benefits of free trade are not distributed equally, each side seems to be better off because of the agreements. Public discourse on this issue needs to be shaped by strong leaders and not the personal feelings of the minority who are negatively affected by NAFTA.

Regarding the use of force—currently very little can be done about the issue. Mexico did not support the war against Iraq and nor should the United States have immediately expected the country to fall in line on the issue. The two countries need to move past the disagreement. Just by looking at the history of Mexico one would not expect the state to support an interventionist war against an independent leader. The Mexican public and elites likewise must understand that perceptions as to what constitutes international threats have changed in the United States since 9/11.

Future Directions and Conclusions

Due to Mexico's burgeoning democratic movement and continuing immigration to the United States, the United States cannot ignore the strategic implications of upsetting its massive neighbor to the south. Mexico is one of the United States' main suppliers of oil. The discovery of a field that will produce 10 billion barrels of oil (compared with 1.6 billion produced currently) should only prompt the United States to determine how to work more closely with its neighbor and overcome their present differences (Hernandez, 2006). Furthermore, Mexico represents the United States' second largest trading partner, trailing only Canada in the overall level of commerce; the proliferation of negative relations could potentially damage both countries' economies. It is also important to note that nearly two out of every three Latinos in the United States is of Mexican origin. Mexico is inevitably going to play an increasingly integral role within the United States' economic, political, social, and cultural sectors. For this relationship to be fruitful, both sides must find a way to address the fracturing relationship between the two countries and overcome past structural impediments to collaboration.

Fortunately, our research indicates that successful bilateral relations have the potential to take place, a finding that can only be uncovered utilizing the issue-based approach. Differences between the two countries are not insurmountable. This article calls for a reexamination of the interactions between the United States and Mexico based on an exploration of common issues of concern, spanning such fields as drug enforcement, immigration reform, international terrorism, free trade, and U.S. military adventurism. This observation carries increased significance given the way in which some of the issues we have mentioned are similarly linked within the two

countries. For example, the issues of drug trafficking and terrorism are perceived to have a direct influence over one another on both sides of the border.

While the issue-based approach has been successful in this application, there are a few limitations we should highlight before others proceed in a similar fashion. First, it is difficult to predict which issues will become important in the future. We know that certain issues based on past discussions are critical but the issue-based approach cannot anticipate future critical issues that will arise. Prior to 2001, there was no way to anticipate that terrorism would be an important issue for U.S.–Mexican relations. Another consideration deals with rivalry (Valeriano, 2003), a situation of long-standing hostility and animosity. If tension between the United States and Mexico escalates to an extreme level it will no longer matter which issues are at stake because every issue that comes up will be critical. Finally, we have utilized public opinion data to examine preferences regarding issues as they stand now, but we have no way to account for how perceptions and attitudes will change according to stimuli. This would require a behavioral approach to issue-based studies that is beyond this model.

To conclude, it is important to note that our findings indicate that the two countries may not share similar concerns for too much longer. We also note that the optimism we express here is not the norm for the two countries. This period of convergence may not last and its historic importance should be noted. Time is running out. In almost every issue area that we examined, divergences in public opinion have been growing stronger over time. This almost undoubtedly stems from the fact that the impact of the 9/11 attacks are retreating further and further into peoples' memories. As a result, if Mexico and the United States are to take advantage of the close correspondence of views, they must do so in the relatively near future. Future research might note the impact of specific policies on bilateral relations through time or examine which actors are important in the settlement of important issues and what power they can utilize to solve these important problems.

The Obama Administration has the opportunity for a fresh start in negotiating bilateral issues without the baggage of the Iraq War to impede progress. A reliable and nondiscriminatory form of border enforcement (in addition to airport and port security) should be the first step. This will decrease the potential that terrorism will become an issue of concern. Once border security is tackled, all indications suggest that immigration and drug trafficking can be dealt with based on foundation of border safety for both countries. Perhaps a security regime focused on drugs and potential terrorist threats might be useful in the region. Economic support needs to be provided to Mexico so there is less of an economic need for migrant or drug trafficking to occur on the southern border. Once these three core issues are tackled, it is likely the issues of war and bilateral trade can be discussed in a positive manner. Some may suggest all these goals and ideas are utopian, yet the data suggests that these views are only a reflection of public preferences and therefore represent realistic options.

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Notes

We thank Paul Hart, Amy Beth Schoenecker, John Van Benthuyzen, William Baum, John Vasquez, Patrick James, and the reviewers of PSJ for their comments and suggestions. Research contained in this article was inspired by a Fulbright-Hays Grant awarded to Valeriano in 2005 to explore Mexico.

1. Flint et al. (2009) only present dots that indicate levels of support.
2. In this article, we will use the term Latinos to refer to those of Hispanic heritage living inside the United States. The term Mexicans purely refers to Mexican nationals.
3. By foreign policy, we simply mean any policy question that relates to international or external problems and issues.
4. The main reason the issue approach has failed to be adopted for so long is the focus on power relations that is typical for international relations scholars. While power differentials are important, they have provide little leverage in understanding relationships such as the United States and Mexico.
5. The 2006 version lacked some of the questions that were in the 2004 version. In these cases only the findings from the 2004 survey were reported.
6. Is there any indication that the border between Mexico and the United States is any less secure than the longer border between the United States and Canada? Attempts to infiltrate America from Canada have been intercepted, yet have there been any significant attempts to use the Mexican border to attack America?
7. In addition to these groups, there are also as many as sixteen other guerrilla bands operating in Mexico (Miro, 2003, p. 34).

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