

**UNITED STATES – MEXICO BILATERAL RELATIONS
UNDER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP**

BY

LAWRENCIA NAA RIZA SACKEY

(10455958)

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

LEGON

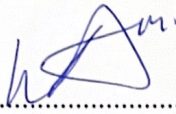
DECEMBER 2021

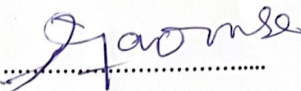


DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is entirely my research except the references that have been made to the works of other authors. Such references have been cited and duly acknowledged.

I assume full responsibility for this work.


.....
LAWRENCIA NAA RIZA SACKEY
(STUDENT)


.....
DR. BONI YAO GEBE
(SUPERVISOR)

DATE: 13/01/2022

DATE: 13TH/01/2022



DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this work to God Almighty for blessing me with the opportunity and the grace to embark on this academic journey. I also dedicate it to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Sackey and my siblings Caleb, Madlyn, Irene and Kelvin for their continuous support.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest gratitude goes to the Almighty God for the strength, guidance and protection throughout my studies. It is his Grace that has brought me this far.

I am very grateful for my supervisor, Dr. Boni Yao Gebe for this advice, supervision, critique and guidance and corrections. This study would not have been possible without his meticulous supervision. I would also like to acknowledge all my lecturers in Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy for the guidance and teachings throughout my study.

I am highly indebted to my parents and family; Mr. Emmanuel Annan Sackey, Mrs. Alice Sackey, Caleb, Irene, Madlyn and Kelvin for their support, effort and interest in my studies. To my mum especially, thank you for your sacrifices and prayers. This would not have been possible without you.

Furthermore, I will like to acknowledge my friends and colleagues especially Emmanuel, Sakina, Debrah and Miriam. I deeply appreciate your encouragement and constant support.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

DACA - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DREAM - Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act

NAFTA - North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement

MPP - Migration Protection Protocol



TABLE OF CONTENTS

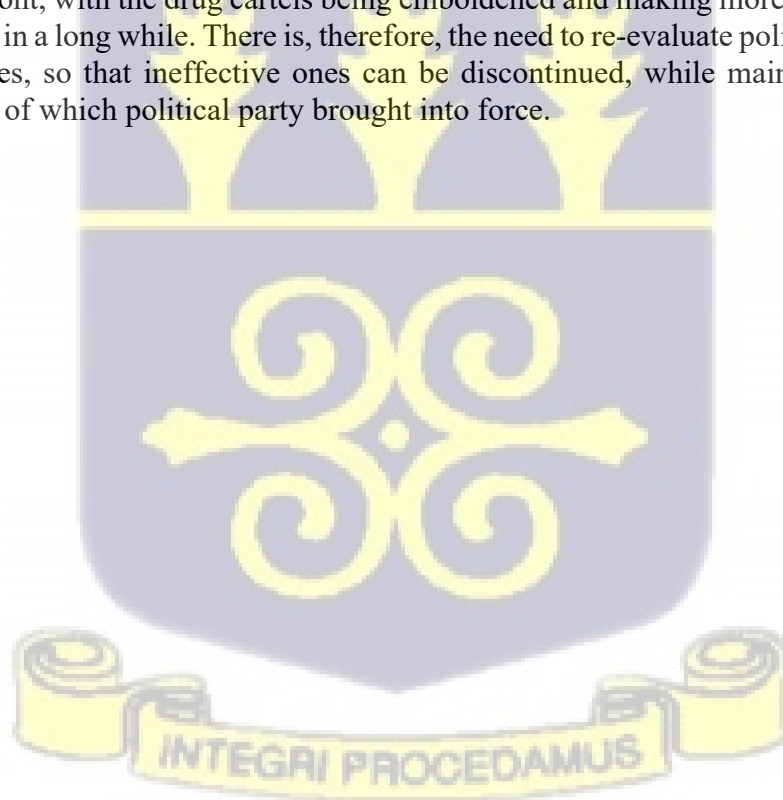
Contents

DECLARATION	Error! Bookmark not defined.
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Research Problem.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	5
1.3 Research Questions.....	8
1.4 Research Objectives.....	9
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	9
1.6 Rationale of the Study	10
1.7 Hypothesis	11
Justification for Hypothesis	11
1.8 Conceptual Framework.....	12
1.8.1 National Interest	12
1.8.2 Theory of Nationalism	13
1.9 Literature Review	15
1.9.1 Mexico and the United States: Odd Bedfellows.....	16
1.9.2 Impact of Trump's threats on Mexico's Economy.....	16
1.9.3 Trump and the Border	17
1.9.4 U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation	18
1.9.5 Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations.....	20
1.10 Sources of Data.....	22
1.11 Research Methodology	23
1.12 Organization of Chapters.....	23
CHAPTER TWO	27
STATUS OF U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS BEFORE TRUMP PRESIDENCY AND THE DOMESTIC CHANGES U.S. AND MEXICO HAVE FACED IN THE LAST TWO DECADES	27
2.1 Introduction.....	27

2.2 Status of U.S.-Mexico Relations Before Trump Presidency	27
2.2.1 U.S.-Mexico Relations under President Bill Clinton	28
2.2.1.1 Trade	29
2.2.1.2 Mexican Economy	30
2.2.1.3 Drugs and Immigration	33
2.2.2 U.S.-Mexico Relation under President George H.W. Bush Jnr.	35
2.2.2.1 Immigration and Border Security	35
2.2.2.2 Trade	37
2.2.2.3 Drug Trafficking	38
2.2.3 U.S.-Mexico Relation under President Barack Obama	39
2.2.3.1 Trade	39
2.2.3.2 Drug Trafficking	39
2.2.3.3 Immigration and Border Security	40
2.3 Domestic Changes Mexico and the United States Have Faced in the Last two Decades.....	41
2.3.1 Domestic Changes: What Next?	42
2.3.2 Structural Characteristics of the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Relations	45
CHAPTER THREE	52
IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC CHANGES ON U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS DURING TRUMP PRESIDENCY, AND ASSESSMENT OF U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS 100 DAYS POST-TRUMP PRESIDENCY	52
3.1 Introduction.....	52
3.2 Donald J. Trump: A Brief Personality Profile	52
3.3 Brief Historical Background of 2016 Presidential Campaign.....	54
3.4 Implications of Domestic Changes on U.S.-Mexico Relations During Trump Presidency	57
3.5 Donald J. Trump: Some Accomplishments of the One-Term President.....	63
3.6 Status of U.S.-Mexico Relations 100 days post-Trump Administration.....	64
CHAPTER FOUR	77
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	77
4.1 Introduction.....	77
4.2. Summary of Findings	77
4.3 Conclusions.....	87
4.4 Recommendations.....	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	90

ABSTRACT

United States-Mexico bilateral relations can best be described as a ‘bromance’ – a love-hate relationship; their ‘rich’ history bears that out. Donald J. Trump during the early days of his presidency was a major threat to U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. The threat posed by President Trump to U.S.-Mexico relations occurred along three main dimensions – his utterances/rhetoric, foreign policy agenda, and personality. The economic benefit of US-Mexico relations appeared to be one-sided in favour of Mexico, prior to Trump becoming president, as reflected by the 100-billion-dollar trade deficit with Mexico. To top it all up, Mexico through its immigration policies was making the United States also feel unsafe at its southern border, by allowing migrant caravan to pour into the United States’ southern border. These coupled with other factors prompted Trump’s strong stance against Mexico. The study, thus, sought to examine U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations under President Donald Trump. The results of the study showed that prior to Trump becoming President, the status of U.S.-Mexico relations remained relatively stable. In the last two decades, domestic changes in the United States included but not limited to a (1) shift in the U.S.’ traditional view of immigration as an economic and cultural issue to now viewing illegal border crossings as a national security threat especially fueled by the crisis of 9/11. Although doom and gloom, triggered by domestic changes in both countries, were predicted for U.S.-Mexico relations under President Donald Trump; the bilateral relations between both countries seemed to have rather strengthened to the amazement of onlookers. 100 days post-Trump presidency was a total mess on the immigration and narcotics front, with the drug cartels being emboldened and making more money than they have ever made in a long while. There is, therefore, the need to re-evaluate policies to determine effective policies, so that ineffective ones can be discontinued, while maintaining effective ones regardless of which political party brought into force.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research Problem

United States-Mexico bilateral relations can best be described as a ‘bromance’ – a love-hate relationship; their ‘rich’ history bears that out. From the onset, the contentious issue of recognizing the Independence of Mexico split American leadership into two major factions – John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay.¹ Finally, in 1822, the United States acknowledged² the Independence of Mexico.

Prior to 1822, the United States hesitated to give Mexico a formal recognition primarily because of the desire of the United States presidents to ‘sit on the fence’ during the struggle between Spanish troops and freedom fighters in Mexico – Mexico was a vassal territory or colony of Spain at the time. Mexico’s struggle for Independence from Spain was given a major boost when France under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Spain in 1808. However, the territorial ambitions of the United States resulted in a war between Mexico and the U.S. The war lasted from 1846 to 1848. In 1836 colonists living in the Texas area seceded from Mexico to become an independent state. A year later the U.S. acknowledged the new Republic. Eight years after the United States’ recognition of the Republic of Texas, Texas became a U.S. state³. Mexico was not happy.⁴ War was in the offing. Instability in the body politic of Mexico ensued and generated strains in U.S. – Mexico relations.

It was on March 4, 1845, that United States President James K. Polk indicated his endorsement of the entry of the Republic of Texas into the Union in his address at his inauguration. Mexico

responded by severing diplomatic ties with the U.S.⁵ In December 1845 Texas was allowed to join the Union as the 28th U.S. state. But in April of the next year, the Mexican military launched an attack on what they saw to be incursive U.S. forces that had taken over land under dispute between the two countries. The following month, the United States through its Congress made a declaration of war against Mexico. In 1848 the war was ended⁶ and diplomatic ties resumed.⁷ A decade later, in 1858, the US – Mexico relations was again to be disrupted and normalized once again a year later. The 1858 US-Mexico bilateral relations disruptions were a consequence of the Mexican Government's mistreatment of U.S. citizens and their assets.

At the turn of the 20th century, the 'bromance' between these two countries would emerge again, as if the earlier disruptions in their relationship was not enough. After the Tampico incident of 1914, the United States President Woodrow Wilson decreed that Veracruz be bombarded and occupied by the United States marines. The Tampico incident involved the arrest of 2 officers in the U.S. navy and 7 crew members who were paraded through the streets of Mexico. Mexico severed diplomatic ties to protest the occupation of Veracruz. On March 3, 1917, diplomatic ties were once again reset. From the above brief historical overview, relations between the United States and Mexico have not always been cordial but rather contentious. Notwithstanding, the decades in the latter part of the 20th century witnessed deep changes in U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations.⁸ This was in sharp contrast to what hitherto had prevailed.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 was a catalyst that served to bring the two nations closer together to work in a more cooperative fashion, even as their national interests began to align more and more. During the Cold War era, that was not the case. The signing of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 was the high point of this new era of US-

Mexico bilateral relations. The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement was considered mutually beneficial,⁹ but was that truly the case? Before long, the two countries had retraced to their past – contentions about traditional issues like drugs, immigration and trade began to reemerge. For example, in trade, the Mexican Peso was devaluated to disadvantage the United States in trade in December 1994.¹⁰

That newfound cooperation led to the United States and Mexico becoming more interdependent. The passing of the NAFTA deal served to distort the distinction between foreign and domestic issues, which had for some time started to wane. Consequently, after NAFTA, delinking the different bilateral issues became problematic. This development was re-echoed by political scientists Jeff D. Colgan and Robert Keohane in their article, ‘The Liberal Order is Rigged’, “*Today’s crucial foreign policy challenges arise less from problems between countries than from domestic politics within them,*”¹¹ suggesting that domestic issues more often than not are the main source of foreign policy challenges in US-Mexico relations.

And domestic problems within both countries were rife. Colgan & Keohane¹² argue that the breakdown in social contract contributed to the election of Donald J. Trump: “*The Brexit and Trump phenomena reflect a breakdown in the social contract at the core of liberal democracy. The bill for that broken social contract came due in 2016.*” It is essential to note that the domestic issues prevailing in the U.S. during the presidential candidature of Donald J. Trump and the early days of his presidency may have contributed in large part to fueling his rise to the presidency, not to mention putting Mexico in the ‘cross-hairs’ of his presidency. Overdose deaths from opioids produced in the lab shot up by 525% from 2013 to 2016. In 2017, about 72,000 individuals died from an overdose of drugs such as illegal drugs and prescription opioids, surpassing all historical highs.¹³ The deaths due to overdose in 2017 were thrice that of what happened in 2002; this was a major problem, even a crisis.^{14,15,16} The trajectory on

which the overdose deaths were concerning. Synthetic opioids or heroin accounted for more than 30,000 of the 72,000 overdose deaths reported for 2017. And which country happens to be the principal producer of heroin in the Americas and the chief supplier of the drug to the U.S.? The answer: Mexico.¹⁷

And so, in vintage Trump fashion, the rhetoric began. Trump is a practical person. When he feels he has identified a problem, he begins to talk about it (often not in complimentary terms) until it has gathered enough public attention and awareness for phase two to begin, which entails taking concrete corrective actions. He applied the same *modus operandi* with China.

From 1974 to 2015, the real median household income for U.S. citizens who had no high school diplomas declined by about 20%, while those in possession of high school diplomas but no college education had their income falling by 24%.¹⁸ In the U.S., life expectancy for 2015 and 2016 declined and that was a result of the high mortality rate from unintentional opioid overdoses,¹⁹ not to mention the spread of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. The potency of fentanyl is unbelievable – only two milligrams of fentanyl is enough to trigger a lethal overdose. That is because fentanyl's potency is 100 times that of morphine and 50 times that of heroin and this potency was not without its effect on the American population. Out of the 64,000 overdose mortalities in the United States in 2016 - the year Trump rose to political power and becoming the leader of the free world – 19,000 of those deaths were attributable to fentanyl, the principal U.S. supplier of which remains Mexico. Mexico was, thus, seen as the primary source of the U.S. drug problem and so the soon-to-be 45th U.S. President would launch incessant attacks on Mexico, thereby threatening the relatively solid, hard-fought U.S.-Mexico relations. The next section presents the statement of the research problem.

1.2 Problem Statement

The presidency of Donald J. Trump was a major threat to U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. The threat posed by President Trump to U.S.-Mexico relations occurred along three main dimensions – his utterances/ rhetoric, foreign policy agenda, and personality.

Trump's Utterances/ Rhetoric

"I have a lawsuit in Mexico's corrupt court system that I won but so far can't collect. Don't do business with Mexico!"

– Donald J. Trump's Tweet

On Feb 24th, 2015 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

"The protesters in New Mexico were thugs who were flying the Mexican flag. The rally inside was big and beautiful, but outside, criminals!"

– Donald J. Trump's Tweet

On May 25th, 2016 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

"The 'Rust Belt'²⁰" was created by politicians like the Clintons who allowed our jobs to be stolen from us by other countries like Mexico. END!"

– Donald J. Trump's Tweet

On July 30th, 2016 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

The tweets above are but only three examples of the 338 archived tweets having Mexico as a subject matter. The first tweet had to do with the Trump Organization business dealings. The tweet was posted in 2015, a year before the U.S. November Elections. It suggests that Mexico's court system was unjust and full of corruption and advises businesses not to 'open shop' in Mexico. Such a statement threatens Mexico economically, as it is heavily reliant on the United States for capital inflows as well as the export of its goods. In the second tweet, Trump suggests the protesters outside his rally in New Mexico were from the nation of Mexico because they were flying the Mexican flag and goes further to equate those protesters to criminals and by extension intimating that Mexico was a nation of criminals. These are harsh utterances. In the

third tweet, Mexico is attacked for ‘stealing’ U.S. jobs, implying that Mexico as a nation was a ‘thief’. In diplomacy, such statements are reprehensible and do not augur well for bilateral relations. But then, Donald Trump is not a diplomat, and neither is he a politician. And it was those traits and his bluntness or forwardness that perhaps endeared him to the masses in the United States who have long suffered from broken promises from the Washington elites. Colgan & Keohane²¹ in their work, “The Liberal Order is Rigged” said it best: *The bill for that broken social contract came due in 2016*. No one expected Trump to win the U.S. Presidency, and yet he did.

Trump’s Foreign Policy Agenda

Trump’s foreign policy agenda can be summed up in two words, “America First!”. The idea(s) contained in these two words formed the thrust of his entire presidential campaign, which essentially was “Make America Great Again!”, MAGA for short. Such was the energy his base derived from these two slogans. In as much as these slogans energized Trump’s base, it was a potential source of worry for Mexico as far as the US-Mexico bilateral relations were concerned. Both “America First” and “Make America Great Again” are U.S-centric and inward-looking. To the people of Mexico, these slogans seemed like a “double-edged sword” because their implementation could negatively affect Mexico’s trade with the U.S.

Trump’s Personality

Trump is a go-getter.

Moreover, the United States under President Donald Trump felt Mexico was not a significant contributor to the U.S-Mexico bilateral relations.

“People have been saying for years that we should talk to Mexico. The problem is that Mexico is an “abuser” of the United States, taking but never giving. It has been this way for decades. Either they stop the invasion of our Country by Drug Dealers, Cartels, Human Traffickers.”

– Donald J. Trump’s Tweet

On June 2nd, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

Consequently, any sense of obligation to the bilateral relations seemed to be “up in the air”.

“On June 10th, the United States will impose a 5% tariff on all goods coming into our country from Mexico, until such time as illegal migrants coming through Mexico, and into our Country, STOP. The Tariff will gradually increase until the Illegal Immigration problem is remedied.”

– Donald J. Trump’s Tweet

On May 30th, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

Ultimately, the end goal of all bilateral relations is the economic benefit and national security the two countries stand to gain. An instance of economic benefit is when bilateral relations lead to businesses moving in and creating jobs for citizens of both countries. However, in the case of US-Mexico relations, it appears the economic benefit was one-sided:

“...We have a 100 Billion Dollar Trade Deficit with Mexico. It’s time!”

– Donald J. Trump’s Tweet

On May 31st, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

Only one country seemed to have gained from the relationship and that was Mexico, as reflected in the huge trade deficit between the two countries. And that was a situation President Trump was not too happy about. To top it all up, Mexico through its immigration policies was making the United States also feel unsafe at its southern border:

“90% of the drugs coming into the United States come through Mexico & our Southern Border. 80,000 people died last year; 1,000,000 people ruined. This has gone on for many years & nothing has been done about it....”

– Donald J. Trump’s Tweet

On May 31st, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

This was a ‘slap in the face’ that was not to go unanswered. National security is the other ultimate end goal of bilateral relations, and it appears the United States is not getting it from its diplomatic relations with Mexico, thereby threatening the continued viability of U.S-Mexico

relations. National security includes but not limited to the defence against and elimination of perceived and or potential threats from other nation-states especially neighboring nations to a country's national security. In that sense, the United States' national security especially at the southern border has been infringed upon, with Mexico allowing waves upon waves of migrant caravan to pour into its neighbor's southern border:

"...Mexico's attitude is that people from other countries, including Mexico, should have the right to flow into the U.S. & that U.S. taxpayers should be responsible for the tremendous costs associated w/ this illegal migration. Mexico is wrong and I will soon be giving a response!"

– Donald J. Trump's Tweet

On May 21st, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

This action or inaction by Mexico does not appear to suggest Mexico care about the welfare of its diplomatic partner and for that matter US-Mexico relations. To the U.S., the relationship with Mexico is perhaps more of ensuring security at its 'backyard' (i.e., southern border) while to Mexico is more possibly about achieving economic gain.

"Working hard in New Mexico. I built the Wall (security) ..."

– Donald J. Trump's Tweet

On September 25th, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

To the United States under Donald Trump, security was paramount, and it appeared not to be getting it from its dealings with Mexico and so the United States under President Trump resorted to the building of a wall to provide security across its southern border – a move that may have undermined the U.S-Mexico bilateral relations. The research questions and research questions are put forward in the next two sections.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What was the status of the United States-Mexico bilateral relations before the presidency of Donald J. Trump?

- ii. What are the domestic changes Mexico and the United States have faced in the last two decades?
- iii. What are the implications of the domestic changes on U.S.-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration, trade (NAFTA) and drugs?
- iv. What is the status of US-Mexico relations 100 days post-Trump presidency?

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Assess the status of the United States-Mexico bilateral relations before the presidency of Donald J. Trump.
- ii. Investigate the domestic changes Mexico and the United States have faced in the last two decades.
- iii. Explore the implications of the domestic changes on U.S-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration, trade (NAFTA) and drugs.
- iv. Assess the status of U.S.-Mexico relations 100 days post-Trump administration.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. The period under consideration is primarily from 2016 to 2020, during President Donald J. Trump's first term in office. However, the study does take the liberty of making some references to years prior to the period under investigations during the tackling of some objectives to provide context for the study's examination of the influence of President Donald J. Trump on U.S.-Mexico relations,

for good or for worse, as well as the first 100 days of President Joe Biden's presidency as it relates to U.S-Mexico relations in a post-Trump era.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The United States of America is the world's superpower. What happens in America affects the world; and what happens between America and other nations, especially neighboring nations like Mexico has implications for its stability and ability to function on the world stage. America and the traditional ideals they stand for are a beacon of hope for many across the globe.

The ties between Mexico and the United States go far beyond the official and diplomatic levels, to a greater degree than United States relations with any other nation.²² Restrepo and others²³ described U.S.-Mexico relations as the “the most consequential U.S. bilateral relationship in the world”. Upwards of 35 million individuals in the U.S. are either born in Mexico or have Mexican lineage. Correspondingly, there are more than 1 million United States citizens residing in Mexico, and possibly a huge number of people with dual nationalities.²⁴

Moreover, Mexico is the destination of choice for many vacationing U.S citizens and others engaged in foreign travel. Similarly, the United States is the preferred destination of choice for many Mexicans travelling overseas. Numerous firms in the United States and about 5 million workers in the United States have jobs that rely on trade with Mexico, and with around 80 % of Mexico's exports drawing on demand in the United States, there are a massive number of Mexican citizens who depend on U.S-Mexico bilateral trade and joint manufacturing to make a living. There is, thus, strong interdependence between the two countries. Consequently, there is the need to understand how such a controversial political figure head like Donald J. Trump affected the ‘delicate dance’ between these two neighboring countries whose history can only be described as contentious.

1.7 Hypothesis

Donald Trump's presidency negatively affected relations between the United States and Mexico.

Justification for Hypothesis

The justification for settling on this hypothesis lay in the highly negative media coverage all things Trump seemed to have attracted during his time in office. In the United States of America, the Free Press is a vital institution commonly regarded as a pillar of democracy, with one of its roles being to offer checks and balances on the government in power through fair, accurate, and balanced reporting. However, following Donald Trump's election to the US presidency, the media's barrage of attacks on his person has been relentless, even though the economy is thriving, and the country's national security is improving at home and abroad.

According to a survey performed by the Media Research Center, nearly two-thirds of evening news reporting of the Presidency of Donald Trump by ABC, CBS, and NBC (three major broadcast networks) has focused on just five major issues over the last four months: North Korea diplomacy; the Russia investigation; the Kavanaugh nomination; immigration policy, and US-Russia relations. The broadcasters' covering of all of these themes has been overwhelmingly negative, while positive aspects of the Trump administration, such as the rising economy, have received less attention (less than 1% of total coverage for the four-month period).²⁵ In summary, the survey discovered that television news coverage of President Trump is 92 percent negative, plus or minus a percentage point or two, with less than 1% covering the economy or other bright aspects.²⁶ (Harper, 2018). These negative news coverages, coupled with Trump's earlier utterances concerning Mexico is expected to adversely affect bilateral relations.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

For this research study, two conceptual frameworks were employed: National Interest and Theory of Nationalism.

1.8.1 National Interest

National Interest was adopted as the conceptual framework for this study. Several researchers have endeavored to describe the concept of national interest. Per William Bloom's explanation, "the national interest is that which can be perceived as being part of national identity and thus, is capable of triggering national mass mobilization to defend or enhance it".²⁷ Elsewhere, Daniel Papp defines national interest as "a constant set of national objectives than a changing approximation of what the leaders of a particular or other significant individuals or groups within a country view as important".²⁸

National interest is a concept that plays a crucial role in international relations since it is used to clarify and concisely examine foreign policy of states. Usually, when policy makers arrive at decisions that affects or involve other states, such as making an alliance, becoming part of a regional grouping, or imposing economic sanctions on other countries, they argue their decision to be in service of the national interest of their own countries. Frankel contends that 'national interest' is an amorphous concept as it is imprecise. Scholars are yet to reach a consensus as to its definitive definition since the various meanings of the concept cannot easily be synchronized.²⁹ Bilateral relations between two countries is a product of foreign policy. Frankel further contends that if foreign policy can be defined as "a formulation of desired outcomes intended to be consequent upon decisions adopted or made by those who have authority or ability to commit machinery of the state to that end, then national interest describes the desired outcome."³⁰ National interest is a concept that statesmen associate great import to in the design of foreign policy.

In view of the above, one cannot dismiss Palmerton's pronouncement stating that "we (the US) have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies. Our interests are eternal and those it is our duty to follow".³¹ Hans Morgenthau, an expert in international relations, observed that a country's bilateral relations should be driven by her national interest rather than utopian and dangerous moralistic, legalistic and ideological reasons.³² Morgenthau relates national interest in the arena of power in international relations and opines that, a country's national interest can be reduced to the protection of a country's territorial integrity as well as defending her political and cultural identity from incursion by other nation-states.

The concept of the national interest has come under heavy criticisms because of its ambiguous nature and the notion that it is bent by the ruling elites to serve their parochial interests. Rosenau posits that the concept of national interest is values driven, and, thus, is not easy to employ as a potent tool of rigorous analysis. Statesmen discuss their goals in terms of national interest and are inclined to claim that their goals are the national interest.³³

The concept of national interest is relevant for the study because, it seeks to explain the various motives in relation to how states behave within the international system. A country's foreign policy thrives on a set of principles and policy objectives be it that they are joining a regional grouping, entering into alliances or enforcing economic sanctions on other states, the main focus is under the parasol of the state's national interest.³⁴

1.8.2 Theory of Nationalism

This research is also guided by the theory of Nationalism. Nationalism is "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential nation".³⁵ It is an idea that

promotes interests of citizens in a nation and articulates that the loyalty and devotion of individuals in a nation surpasses group interests. It involves building and maintaining national identity free from interference of other states and encouraging national achievements like patriotism.

There has been countless number of debates concerning the nature of nationalism. It aims at maintaining sovereignty and national identity. Whiles some sources say nationalism began in the 18th century with the French Revolution, scholars like Hans Kohn wrote in 1944 that nationalism goes as far back as the 17th century. Nationalism was however, firmly grasped in the 19th century.³⁶

Nationalism has received many criticisms. In the liberal tradition, it is viewed as dangerous and a cause for conflict between nation-states. In 1862, Lord Acton, a historian and politician, described nationalism as “insanity”. He argued that nationalism subdues minorities and places country above moral principles. He also stated that it can create a dangerous individual attachment to the state. Scholars like Albert Einstein has also criticized the theory of nationalism, stating that “nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind”. British pacifist and socialist, Bertrand Russell criticized nationalism. He argues that nationalism blinds the individual’s ability to judge foreign policies of his/her nation.

Donald Trump’s presidential campaign and his election bordered on nationalism. By 2017, Republicans were largely united around nationalistic issues such as support for building a wall on the southern border, respecting the flag, and opposing amnesty for illegal immigrants.³⁷ The United States has always had a resonant of nationalism. The concept of Trumpism, a political movement associated with the presidency of Donald Trump, his political base, and his style of

governance, which was made popular during the United States 2016 presidential elections, involves a mixture of nationalism. Trumpism rest on three pillars, nationalism, religion, and race.³⁸ Nationalism being its major pillar as Trump garnered many votes from his policy to put America first.

Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election saw a revival in nationalism in Mexico. As Trump called for "America First", Peña Nieto also called for "Hecho en Mexico", meaning made in Mexico, borrowing ideas from Trump, who promised Americans he would restore jobs they have lost to Mexicans back to them. This nationalist policy pursued by the Mexican president was because of Trump's comments about Mexicans and his promise to build a border wall. Mexicans embarked on a journey to boycott U.S products and companies such as Walmart, Starbucks, and others. In February of 2017, thousands came together in Mexico City to march and protest Trump and his policies towards Mexico. Both countries uncovered nationalistic sentiments which affected their relations. The theory of nationalism best explains the approach taken by both countries in their bilateral relations.

1.9 Literature Review

This section reviews some literature relevant to the study. In all, 24 journals articles, documents and reports were reviewed.³⁹⁻⁶² Some examples of the literature reviewed were: *U.S.-Mexico Economic Relations: Trends, Issues, and Implications* by Villarreal; *U.S.-Mexico security cooperation 2018-2024* by Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies; *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* by Velasco; *Trump's Assault on the Global Trading System* by Bown and Irwin; *Immigrants in the United States* by American Immigration Council; *NAFTA's impact on US-Mexican border security: Drug, trade and migration* by Fernández.

1.9.1 Mexico and the United States: Odd Bedfellows

The United States has a strategic partnership with Mexico. It is the United States' second-largest export market. As a result of this, the United States is Mexico's most important trading partner.³⁹ The two nations have a complicated interdependence in both the security and economic arenas.⁴⁰ Notwithstanding the fact that the United States and Mexico share a huge socioeconomic affinity, the two countries' connections have deteriorated over the last several decades. The two nations' bilateral ties have been strained by unlawful migration.⁴¹ After Donald Trump threatened Mexico during his presidential campaign in 2016, the situation became critical. Trump was concerned about the surge in Illegal migration, denouncing Mexico and the Mexican government, and in the event of his election as president, he was planning to terminate DACA, build a border wall, and leave NAFTA.⁴² NAFTA, Trump said, is the worst trade agreement the US has ever ratified. After becoming the U.S. president, Trump continued to have such a view on NAFTA.⁴³

1.9.2 Impact of Trump's threats on Mexico's Economy

In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential elections, Mexico's national currency, the Peso, was devalued by 13%⁴⁴ as a direct consequence of President Trump's threats.⁴⁵ The Trump Administration ended DACA in 2017 as promised, and for Mexicans who had acquired DACA's amnesty before its expiration, new requirements were established.⁴⁶ President Trump resurrected the subject of immigration in May 2018 by threatening a new 25% tax on Mexican imports unless the country stopped the influx of migrants.⁴⁷ Only 44.7 million immigrants (foreign-born persons) were accounted in the United States in 2018, with 25% of them coming from Mexico, according to the American Immigration Council.⁴⁸ During a meeting with Mexican and Canadian officials on December 1, 2018, President Trump told them of his plan to remove the United States from NAFTA in six months.⁴⁹ His

administration did start fresh discussions later on though, and came up with the new agreement, USMCA, which is a modernized version of NAFTA.⁵⁰

1.9.3 Trump and the Border

When Donald Trump entered office, he proceeded to erect physical barriers along the border between the United States and Mexico, which had already been in place for 650 miles.⁵¹

The border has been fortified by Trump's erection of massive iron structures and the extension of physical barriers. Besides stopping the influx of migrants, tighter border controls between the United States and Mexico were implemented to combat another issue: the influx of opioid and illicit drugs from Mexico into the United States, which results in the death of thousands of Americans each year.⁵² For the purpose of avoiding tariffs and enhancing cooperation on issues such as tighter border enforcement between Mexico and Guatemala (from which the majority of migrants enter the United States), combating smuggling and criminal activity (which facilitates illegal migration), asylum, temporary visas, and work permits in Mexico, the Mexican government reached an agreement with the United States government on June 7, 2019.⁵³

The migration problem, on the whole, remains unsolved despite several agreements and close coordination between the parties.⁵⁴ The Trump administration's attempt to tighten border controls proved fruitless, since there was no decrease in the number of people crossing the border illegally. Unauthorized migration, on the other hand, expanded in scope. The issue of trade deficits persisted and continue to do so in the economic realm, much like the issue of migration. The trade imbalance between the United States and Mexico and Canada rose even more in 2019 after the entry into force of the USMCA.

1.9.4 U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation

U.S.-Mexican relations are based on a shared commitment to public safety, order, and prosperity. In terms of security, the 1,988-mile border between the two nations is crucial since it is the busiest in the world.⁵⁵ Border enforcement efforts have run into difficulties in recent months because of the rising number of migrants and the humanitarian situation on the US-Mexico border. Future migrants, particularly children, are in danger because of the situations they may face in the near future. More unlawful border crossings were blocked in May 2019 than in May 2018, the highest rate since 2006 (133,000), compared to May 2018, the month before the border wall was built, according to U.S. Border Patrol data. 688,000 people were apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border in the first nine months of 2019 alone.⁵⁶ Migrants try to cross the border in more perilous and distant regions once border barriers are erected, and this results in deaths.⁵⁷ Overdose deaths attributed to accidental opioid and illegal drug ingestions have surged in the United States, decreasing life expectancy. In 2017, about 72,000 individuals died from a drug overdose, a statistic that is three times more than the 2002 death toll from overdose. Overdose fatalities from synthetic opioids rose by 525 percent between 2013 and 2016.

But then why do people think of Mexico when they hear these numbers? – Despite the fact that Asia is a major exporter of illicit drugs (such as synthetic opioids, which are largely produced in China and shipped directly to the United States via mail and courier services or cargo arriving at U.S. ports), Mexico is the primary producer of heroin in North and South America, accounting for 90% of all illicit poppy cultivations worldwide. Mexico is the primary source of opioids for the vast majority of opioid users in the area.⁵⁸ Violence linked to organized crime, as well as narcotics trafficking, is an issue in Mexico and in the US. Drug trafficking routes and markets are being sought by organized crime organizations, who are also expanding their criminal operations to include oil theft, illegal immigration,

abduction, and human trafficking. Organized crime in Mexico has claimed the lives of 109,000 individuals since 2006, while another 30,000 have gone missing as a result of the violence. Since Felipe Calderón's presidency, organized crime in Mexico has been at its highest level since 2017.⁵⁹ Movement from Mexico to the United States has been linked to the development of Tuberculosis in the United States, and the return migration from the United States to Mexico has been linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Even if this is the case, some academics believe that it is a political strategy to oppose particular socioeconomic groups.⁶⁰

Mexican American security cooperation was developed during bilateral meetings on migration and security concerns between the two nations in the early 1980s. In 1981, the Binational Commission was established, followed by the Border Governors Conference and the Interparliamentary Group meetings, which were established in the following years. Prior to the finalization of NAFTA, Mexico inked a number of environmental and agricultural agreements with the United States. These accords were essential in developing North American cooperation. Central American peace and security projects have also been undertaken by Mexico and the United States in tandem. The 1992 El Salvador Peace Accords at Chapultepec (Mexico City, Mexico), attended by an official U.S. delegation as a honored witness, is a clear example of this. A total of five cooperations were established between the United States and Mexico to enhance counterterrorism cooperation and security of the Mexican-U.S. border following the 9/11 terrorist attack: the High-Level Contact Group for Drug Control in 1996, Security Partnership of North America (SPP), Mérida Initiative in 2006, and Operation Centinela in 2003, which were established after the 9/11 terrorist attack to enhance counterterrorism cooperation and security of the border.⁶¹ (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 2018).

1.9.5 Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations

Velasco⁶² studied the future of U.S-Mexico relations. In Velasco's paper, it was argued that ever since Donald J. Trump began his campaign to the White House, "U.S.-Mexico relations have been in crisis" (p. 3). But is that really the case? The author further cited how Trump was heavy in his criticism of Mexico and its citizens, and how he threatened to expatriate millions of undocumented Mexicans by putting a stop to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative first started by Barack Hussein Obama. Not only that, Velasco also contended that the determination of Trump to build a wall along the southern border and the expressed intent to leave or modify the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have muddied to some extent the U.S.-Mexico relationship.⁶³ The aggressiveness behind virtually all communications and posts that has to do with Mexico coupled with the Mexican president's inability to handle Trump's "spanner in the works" have all come together to produce uneasy situations between policymakers of both nations. The author additionally claimed that for intellectuals and officials in Mexico, U.S.-Mexico relations were at their lowest point in over 25 years.

The author noted as well that it has come to the attention of journalists and political analysts that after years of cordiality between the two countries, the primary concern of Mexico in foreign affairs was to launch a resistance against Trump. However, to the Trump presidency, Mexico was not a pivotal issue but rather one of many. The author, thus, sought to examine whether a considerable change occurred in U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship during the Trump presidency. To achieve the research objectives, the author examined not only prevailing events but also the structural environments that drove the current situation between the United States and Mexico. The author found that domestic politics of both nations, especially the United States, wields a lot of influence on the bilateral relationship and is often the root of present-day

political tensions. “Only by understanding Mexico and U.S. domestic politics will we be able to comprehend the nature of current events and how these domestic conditions will determine the future of bilateral relations.”⁶⁴

Mosashvili conducted a study into U.S.-Mexico relations and the role of migration as an impeding factor during the Trump era.⁶⁵ The study observed that the U.S. had often tried to strengthen its immigration policy as far as Mexico was concerned, even before Trump came on the scene. The increase in border controls in the year 2001, followed by the Bush administration’s decision to put up a fence on the Mexico-U.S. border are clear pieces of evidence that Donald Trump only came to finish what had already started; only that he was more clear-eyed and decisive about it. To wit, President Trump is not the only American president to have pursued a tough stance on issues of U.S.-Mexico border crossings. His go-getting attitude, strongmindedness and focused policy on the Mexican migration problem made his administration more effective. Comparing the results of Trump’s administration with previous administrations, the latter seemed to have engaged in “talk shop”. His effectiveness, paradoxically, greatly altered the U.S.-Mexico relations during his time in office.

Renegotiating the NAFTA agreement was a key policy mandate pushed by the Trump campaign. To put it lightly, Mexico was not too happy about the upcoming change especially when NAFTA had served her interests so well, leading to tensions between the two countries. Mosashvili, after studying key provisions of NAFTA and US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) agreement arrived at the conclusion that modifications made in the new USMCA would not yield the desired impact on trade between Mexico, United States and Canada nor will they resolve the U.S. trade deficit – a problem that can only be addressed if production in the U.S. goes up.⁶⁶

Restrepo, in an article discussing the preservation and the strengthening of U.S.-Mexico relations, argued that the Trump administration should endeavor to cooperate with Mexico knowing full well that the people of the United States and Mexico are inextricably linked.⁶⁷ The article further accused Trump of using Mexico as a scapegoat for public policy failures on the part of the United States that had disenfranchised many American workers in the era of globalization and automation. Indeed, it is not Mexico's fault that American workers have been negatively impacted. It is the responsibility of every country to see to it that their citizens are being taken care of and that is something Mexico did but U.S. leaders prior to Trump failed to do. The uproar that was stirred by the America First policy agenda appeared to suggest the political elites, corporations and those who matter in society had gotten used to putting America and the interests of its citizens last – a situation that perhaps personally advantages them. Hence, the uproar.

To solve the marginalization of American workers, Restrepo recommends a solution and that is to strengthen ties with Mexico⁶⁸. But then what use is the deepening of a relationship that leaves the citizens of one country in a bilateral relationship marginalized in the world of work. National interest is key. The foundation of all bilateral relationship should be alignment of national interests. Alignment of national interests breeds cooperation. When a bilateral relationship is not working for one, it is more than likely that one or more national interests of the respective countries is/are out of sync.

1.10 Sources of Data

Data from both the primary and secondary sources were used for this study. Primary data was obtained through interviews. The data was obtained from current officials of the Embassy of Mexico and the Embassy of the United States in Ghana to establish the historical and current information

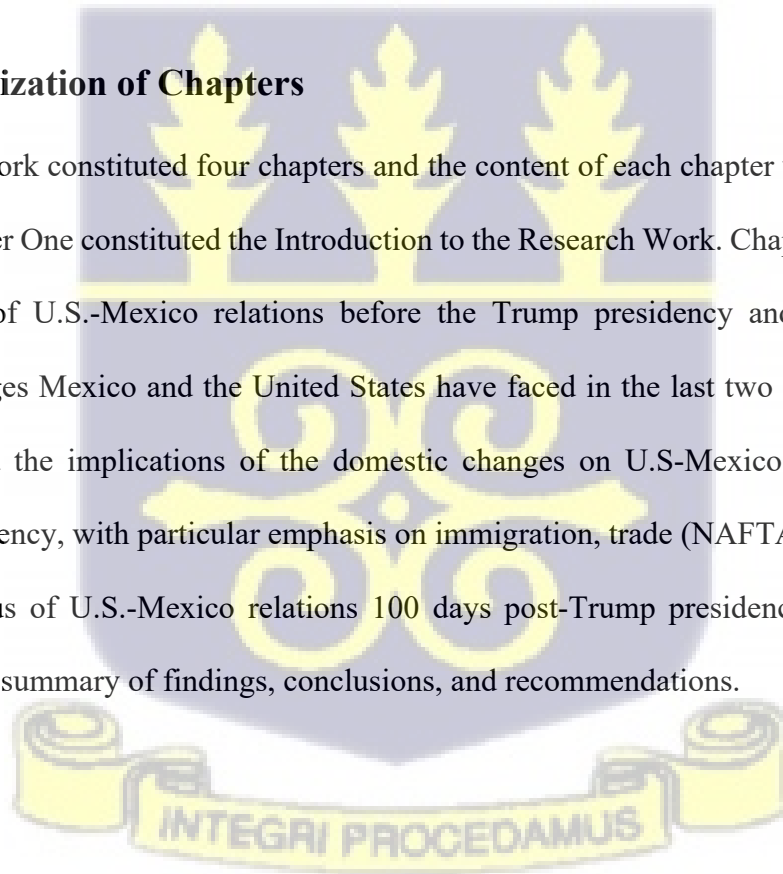
concerning the nature of US-Mexico relations prior to and during the trump administration. Purposive sampling method was used in sampling specific individuals and the organizations interviewed for the study with structured interview guidelines. Secondary data sources were gathered from internet sources, published and unpublished books, articles and journal articles, newspaper articles, magazine posts, the Trump Doctrine, data from conferences. The Balme and LECIAD libraries were also utilized.

1.11 Research Methodology

A qualitative method was used for this research. The decision to use a qualitative approach was to make it possible to conduct an explanatory, interpretative and descriptive study of the research topic.

1.12 Organization of Chapters

The research work constituted four chapters and the content of each chapter was structured as follows: Chapter One constituted the Introduction to the Research Work. Chapter Two focused on the status of U.S.-Mexico relations before the Trump presidency and investigate the domestic changes Mexico and the United States have faced in the last two decades. Chapter Three explored the implications of the domestic changes on U.S-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration, trade (NAFTA) and drugs, and assess the status of U.S.-Mexico relations 100 days post-Trump presidency. Chapter Four highlighted the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

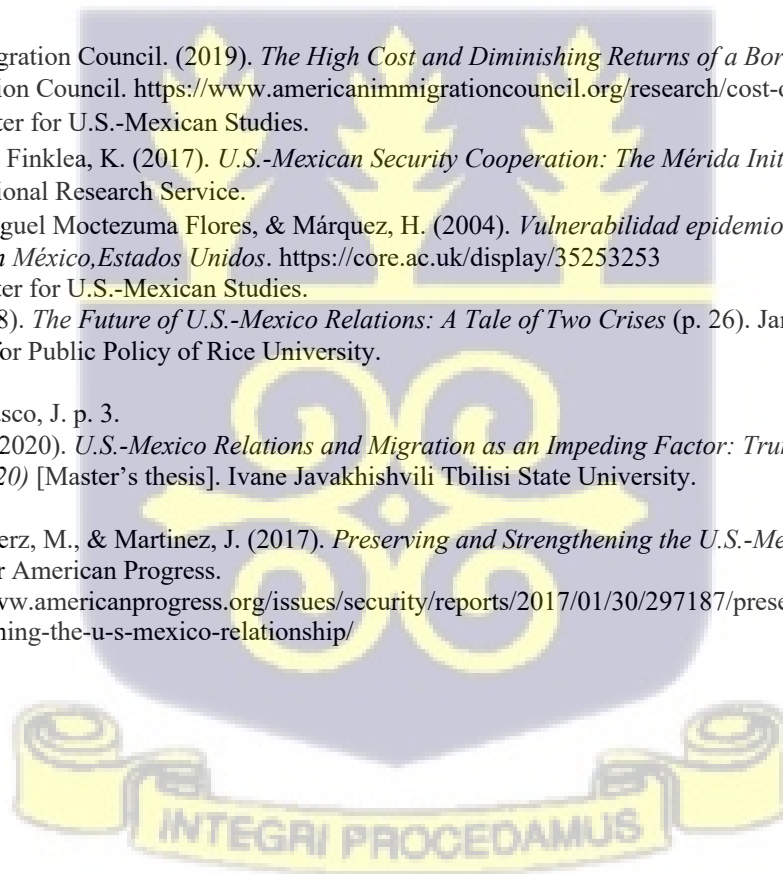


Endnote

-
- ¹ Office of the Historian. (2008). *A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Mexico*. <https://history.state.gov/countries/mexico>
- ² Diplomatic relations were established on December 12, 1822, when President James Monroe received José Manuel Zozaya as Mexican Minister to the United States. The American Delegation in Mexico was established on June 1, 1825, when Joel Robert Poinsett presented his credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to President Guadalupe Victoria.
- ³ On March 1, 1845, U.S. President John Tyler signed a congressional joint resolution favoring the annexation of Texas.
- ⁴ On August 23, 1843, the Mexican foreign minister informed U.S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico, Waddy Thompson, that U.S. annexation of Texas would be grounds for war.
- ⁵ The Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs informed U.S. Minister to Mexico, Wilson Shannon, on March 28, 1845, that Mexico was severing diplomatic relations with the United States.
- ⁶ The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed in Mexico City on February 2, 1848, and ratified by the Senate on March 10, 1848, ended the war.
- ⁷ Diplomatic relations were reestablished on December 4, 1848, when U.S. President James K. Polk accepted Luis de la Rosa's credentials as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States.
- ⁸ Purcell, S. K. (1997). The Changing Nature of US-Mexican Relations. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 39(1), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.2307/166501>
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O. (2018, December 8). *The Liberal Order Is Rigged*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-04-17/liberal-order-rigged>
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Taskforce. (2019). *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation 2018-2024* (p. 29). Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Whitepaper_Security_Taskforce.pdf
- ¹⁴ BBC. (2018, March 6). Opioid crisis: Overdose rates jump 30% in one year. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43305340>.
- ¹⁵ Soelberg, C. D., Brown, R. E., Du Vivier, D., Meyer, J. E., & Ramachandran, B. K. (2017). The US Opioid Crisis: Current Federal and State Legal Issues. *Anesthesia and Analgesia*, 125(5), 1675–1681. <https://doi.org/10.1213/ANE.0000000000002403>
- ¹⁶ *Op. cit.* see U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Taskforce.
- ¹⁷ U. S. Government Accountability Office. (2018, April). *Illicit Opioids: While Greater Attention Given to Combating Synthetic Opioids, Agencies Need to Better Assess their Efforts*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-18-205>
- ¹⁸ *Op. cit.* see Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O.
- ¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. (2018). *Global overview of drug demand and supply: Latest trends and cross-cutting issues*. United Nations. https://www.unodc.org/wdr2018/prelaunch/WDR18_Booklet_2_GLOBAL.pdf
- ²⁰ According to Wikipedia, the **Rust Belt** is a region of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States that has been experiencing industrial decline starting around 1980. It is made up largely of the Great Lakes Megalopolis, though definitions vary. *Rust* refers to the deindustrialization, economic decline, population loss, and urban decay due to the shrinking of its once-powerful industrial sector, such as steel production, automobile manufacturing, and coal mining. The Rust Belt runs westward from Central New York through Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, northern Illinois, and eastern Wisconsin.
- ²¹ *Op. cit.* see Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O.
- ²² Wilson, C. E., Olson, E. L., Salazaar, M. R., Selee, A., & Wood, D. (2013). *New Ideas for a New Era: Policy Options for the Next Stage in U.S.-Mexico Relations* (p. 61). Woodrow Wilson Centre.

- https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/misc/new_ideas_us_mexico_relations.pdf
- ²³ Restrepo, D., Werz, M., & Martinez, J. (2017). *Preserving and Strengthening the U.S.-Mexico Relationship*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/01/30/297187/preserving-and-strengthening-the-u-s-mexico-relationship/>
- ²⁴ Op. cit. see Wilson, C. E., Olson, E. L., Salazaar, M. R., Selee, A., & Wood, D.
- ²⁵ Harper, J. (2018). *Still hostile: News coverage of President Trump is 92 percent negative, study finds*. The Washington Times. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/oct/10/still-hostile-news-coverage-of-president-trump-is-/>
- ²⁶ Noyes, R. (2018). *Study: Economic Boom Largely Ignored as TV's Trump Coverage Hits 92% Negative*. Media Research Center Newsbusters. <https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/rich-noyes/2018/10/09/study-econ-boom-ignored-tv-trump-coverage-hits-92-percent-negative>
- ²⁷ Bloom, W. (1993). *Personal Identity National Identity and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- ²⁸ Papp, D. S. (1988). *Contemporary International Relations: Framework for Understanding*. Macmillan College.
- ²⁹ Frankel, J. (1970). Analytical Distinctions and Theories. In *National Interest* (pp. 31-41). Palgrave Macmillan UK
- ³⁰ Ibid
- ³¹ Morgenthau, H., & Nations, P. A. (1948). *The struggle for power and peace*. Nova York, Alfred Kopf
- ³² Morgenthau H, op. cit.
- ³³ Rosenau, J. N. (1980). *Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*. New York: Nichols Publishing Company.
- ³⁴ Atakora, A. B. (2017). *The foreign policy of the United States of America in the Asia Pacific Region and its implications for Sino-American relations* [Master of Arts degree in International Affairs]. Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, University of Ghana.
- ³⁵ Brice, M. (2019, June 10). Trump threatens more tariffs on Mexico over part of immigration deal. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-mexico-idUSKCN1TB182>
- ³⁶ Zimmer, O. (2003). *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- ³⁷ Bartels, L. M. (2018). Partisanship in the Trump Era. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4), 1483-1494. <https://doi.org/10.1086/699337>
- ³⁸ Katzenstein, P. J. (2018). *Trumpism is US*. Berlin Social Science Centre. <https://www.wzb.eu/en/news/trumpism-is-us>
- ³⁹ Villarreal, M. A. (2020). U.S.-Mexico Economic Relations: Trends, Issues, and Implications. *Congressional Research Service*, 32.
- ⁴⁰ Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. (2018). *U.S.-Mexico security cooperation 2018-2024* (p. 29). Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- ⁴¹ Tuirán, R. (2000). *Migración México-Estados Unidos. Presente y Futuro*. Consejo Nacional de Población.
- ⁴² Velasco, J. (2018). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* (p. 26). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University.
- ⁴³ Bown, C. P., & Irwin, D. A. (2019). *Trump's Assault on the Global Trading System*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2019-08-12/trumps-assault-global-trading-system>
- ⁴⁴ American Immigration Council. (2021, January 1). *Immigrants in the United States*. American Immigration Council. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-the-united-states>
- ⁴⁵ Fernández, M. J. R. R. (2017). *NAFTA's impact on US-Mexican border security: Drug, trade and migration* (Note d'analyse No. 9). Observatoire Politique de l'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes. https://www.sciencespo.fr/opalc/sites/sciencespo.fr.opalc/files/NAFTA_0.pdf
- ⁴⁶ Bruno, A. (2019). *Unauthorized Childhood Arrivals, DACA, and Related Legislation* (p. 20). Congressional Research Service. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/R45995.pdf>
- ⁴⁷ Bown, C. P., & Irwin, D. A. (2019). *Trump's Assault on the Global Trading System*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2019-08-12/trumps-assault-global-trading-system>

- ⁴⁸ American Immigration Council. (2021, January 1). *Immigrants in the United States*. American Immigration Council. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-the-united-states>
- ⁴⁹ Op. cit. see Villarreal, M.
- ⁵⁰ Villarreal, M. A., & Fergusson, I. F. (2020). *NAFTA and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)*. Congressional Research Service.
- ⁵¹ American Immigration Council. (2019). *The High Cost and Diminishing Returns of a Border Wall*. American Immigration Council. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/cost-of-border-wall>
- ⁵² Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. (2018). *U.S.-Mexico security cooperation 2018-2024* (p. 29). Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- ⁵³ Capps, R., Meissner, D., Soto, A. G. R., Bolter, J., & Pierce, S. (2019, August 2). *From Control to Crisis: Changing Trends and Policies Reshaping U.S.-Mexico Border Enforcement*. Migrationpolicy.Org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/changing-trends-policies-reshaping-us-mexico-border-enforcement>
- ⁵⁴ Mosashvili, G. (2020). *U.S.-Mexico Relations and Migration as an Impeding Factor: Trump's Presidency (2016-2020)* [Master's thesis]. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.
- ⁵⁵ Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. (2018). *U.S.-Mexico security cooperation 2018-2024* (p. 29). Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- ⁵⁶ Capps, R., Meissner, D., Soto, A. G. R., Bolter, J., & Pierce, S. (2019, August 2). *From Control to Crisis: Changing Trends and Policies Reshaping U.S.-Mexico Border Enforcement*. Migrationpolicy.Org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/changing-trends-policies-reshaping-us-mexico-border-enforcement>
- ⁵⁷ American Immigration Council. (2019). *The High Cost and Diminishing Returns of a Border Wall*. American Immigration Council. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/cost-of-border-wall>
- ⁵⁸ Op. cit. see Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- ⁵⁹ Seelke, C. R., & Finklea, K. (2017). *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*. Congressional Research Service.
- ⁶⁰ Foladori, G., Miguel Moctezuma Flores, & Márquez, H. (2004). *Vulnerabilidad epidemiológica en la migración México, Estados Unidos*. <https://core.ac.uk/display/35253253>
- ⁶¹ Op. cit. see Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.
- ⁶² Velasco, J. (2018). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* (p. 26). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Op. cit. see Velasco, J. p. 3.
- ⁶⁵ Mosashvili, G. (2020). *U.S.-Mexico Relations and Migration as an Impeding Factor: Trump's Presidency (2016-2020)* [Master's thesis]. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Restrepo, D., Werz, M., & Martinez, J. (2017). *Preserving and Strengthening the U.S.-Mexico Relationship*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/01/30/297187/preserving-and-strengthening-the-u-s-mexico-relationship/>
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.



CHAPTER TWO

STATUS OF U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS BEFORE TRUMP PRESIDENCY AND THE DOMESTIC CHANGES U.S. AND MEXICO HAVE FACED IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to assess the status of the United States-Mexico bilateral relations before the presidency of Donald J. Trump, and to investigate the domestic changes Mexico and the United States have faced in the last two decades.

The remaining portion of this chapter shall be divided into two main sections. Section 2.2 will address the first research question. Under Section 2.2, the status of the U.S.-Mexico relations under the previous three presidents – Bill Clinton, George Bush Jr., and Barack Obama – will be discussed. Section 2.3 will tackle the second research question.

2.2 Status of U.S.-Mexico Relations Before Trump Presidency

For the longest time, the U.S.-Mexico relationship could not be described as being on a strong solid footing. All that changed with the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This deal was put together by the Clinton administration. This section tackles the first research question, “*What was the status of the United States-Mexico bilateral relations before the presidency of Donald J. Trump?* Before 2016, in the last 24 years, there have been three presidents – President Bill Clinton (1993-2001), President George Bush Jr. (2001-2009), and President Barack Obama (2009-2017). One commonality binding all these presidents together regardless of their political party affiliation is that all these presidents had been members of the Washington political establishment before their presidency – meaning they were ‘insiders’ and had been in government for quite some time before holding the Office of the President and so did have a good idea as to how Washington functions.

President Bill Clinton was governor for the state of Arkansas for two non-consecutive terms. The first gubernatorial term was from 9th January 1979 to 19th January 1981, while the second gubernatorial term was from 11th January 1983 to 12th December 1992. Before that, he was the 50th Attorney General of Arkansas from 1977 to 1979. Bill Clinton also chaired the National Association of Governors from 1986-1987. Earlier, he vice-chaired the same association from 1985 to 1986. From this brief profile, it is safe to say Bill Clinton was already in politics before becoming a president. Meanwhile, President George Bush held the governorship position in the State of Texas as the 46th Governor from 17th of Jan., 1995 to 21st of Dec., 2000, implying he was the Governor of Texas during the Clinton Presidency. In the case of President Barack Obama, he had been a senator both at the state and federal levels representing his home state of Illinois. Obama's state senatorial status was from 1997 to 2004, meaning he occupied that lawmaking position during the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George Bush Jr. From 2005 to 2008, President Barack Obama became a U.S. senator, thus, representing Illinois at the federal level. In contrast, President Donald Trump had zero political experience before winning the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections. It, therefore, stands to reason that the approach of Donald Trump to the U.S.-Mexico question would likely considerably differ from how the previous three presidents would handle it.

In the next three sub-sections, an attempt shall be made to look at how the three former U.S. presidents handled U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations during their time in office in more detail.

2.2.1 U.S.-Mexico Relations under President Bill Clinton

This sub-section examines the status of U.S.-Mexico relations under President Bill Clinton. President Bill Clinton may well be the U.S. president that has done more for Mexico than any

other U.S. president before him or after him in recent decades. First, the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed into law during his presidency has greatly benefitted Mexico's economy in terms of trade. Second, President Bill Clinton came to the rescue of the Mexican Peso at a time of great financial crisis for the country.

2.2.1.1 Trade

The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement is a treaty between three North American countries, namely the United States, Mexico, and Canada. It is the first treaty of its kind to comprise two developed economies and a developing one; a fact which generated a lot of controversies.¹ The agreement came into effect in 1994. Earlier, in 1992, the agreement (i.e., NAFTA) had been signed by President George Bush Sr. and was approved by Congress on 20th November 1993. However, it was President Bill Clinton that signed the NAFTA Implementation Act into law on 8th December 1993.

His decision to do so brought immense benefits to the Mexican economy, with Mexico later on becoming United States's #1 trade partner.² This is evidenced by the increased trade deficit in favor of Mexico.³ The first time the free trade agreement was floated, some feared that under the NAFTA treaty, companies would move production from the United States to Mexico to reduce the cost of production, which it did. Mexico benefited hugely and so did the United States and Canada. Concerning trade between U.S and Mexico, it appears that the United States came out worse off, prompting calls for restructuring from the United States.^{4,5} The NAFTA treaty sought to eliminate trade barriers and tariffs and create a single giant open and free market accessible by the three participating countries. The first part of the preamble of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement read as follows:

“WHEREAS the Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America have

entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement having resolved to strengthen the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations, contribute to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation... ”⁶

From the above preamble, the first and most essential objective of the NAFTA deal was to enhance bilateral relations between and among Mexico, Canada, and the United States. The United States sits between Canada and Mexico on the North American continent and so it is ‘hemmed in’. Thus, it is prudent strategically and security-wise to be on friendly terms with both its northern and southern neighbors; otherwise, should a hostile nation like China or Russia gain undue influence or a foothold in any of these two countries it could generate great troubles for the United States in the occasion that a war breaks out with these hostile nations.

Then came President Trump, arguing for the renegotiation of NAFTA and even a possible dismantling and replacement of more than a two-decades-old treaty because he believed NAFTA had ‘robbed’ the United States of its auto industry and jobs. He achieved both; NAFTA was successfully renegotiated and replaced by the brand-new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

“When I originally became your all-time favorite President, the Great State of Michigan was hemorrhaging car companies and jobs. Plants were closing and moving to Mexico, and other places. No new plants for decades. I stopped the moves, & now many plants are and have been built...”

– Donald J. Trump’s Tweet

On July 8th, 2020 (Source: thetrumparchive.com)

2.2.1.2 Mexican Economy

The year 1994 is one that Mexico would not forget in a hurry. In that year, Mexico was brought to its ‘knees’ economically. In that year, two key political figures were assassinated. ‘All hell broke loose.’ The people of Mexico would not stand for it. They rose *en masse* in an uprising against the Mexican federal government. This uprising began in the state of Chiapas, the 8th

largest state in Mexico. Chiapas is home to the ancient Mayan ruins of Yaxchilán, Palenque, Chinkultic, Toniná and Bonampak.⁷ The Mayans were an aggressive and militaristic tribe. This same state is also home to the largest native population in Mexico comprised of 12 nationally recognized ethnic groups. By native, these ethnic groups were the original settlers in that space of land now called Mexico before the Spanish came. This further implies that citizens of the State of Chiapas were most likely a minority group.

During the 1990s, more than 60% of the people of Mexico residing in Chiapas lacked sewage service, only a little above 30% had electric power, and 50% of the residents lacked potable water. More than half of the available schools at the time provided education but only to the third grade and many of the pupils dropped out even before they finished first grade. In short, living conditions and prospects for the people of Chiapas was grim. The people felt neglected. They ‘simmered’ in silence – their anger was bottled in waiting for an opportune time. Before long, a man known only as Subcomandante Marcos came along willing to take up the people’s grievances. On the 1st of January, 1994 – an auspicious day – the very day the NAFTA treaty was put into motion – Marcos with his small leftist guerilla band called Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) took over and occupied 7 towns in Chiapas.⁸ They went further to lay siege to a military base, taking weapons and breaking out several prisoners from the jail cells. Earlier, protests had already been launched in the state to protest neoliberal economic policies, most especially the NAFTA deal.

Political instability triggered by the assassinations coupled with the Zapatista uprising and sustained uncertainty in the economy created the ‘perfect storm’ for capital flight from within the borders of Mexico. Virtually every foreign investor was pulling out. It was a desperate time. The Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo had to act fast. In December of 1994, the Mexican

government thought it expedient to devalue the Mexican Peso (i.e., the Mexican currency). This made matters worse. Anxiety and panic among foreign investor had now reached a fever pitch. The result? More foreign investment capital left the borders of Mexico – a situation that threatened the ability of the Mexican government to honor its debt obligations.

As all this chaos and uprising was unfolding in Mexico, Clinton had had his ‘ears to the ground’. To some extent, he may have felt partially or indirectly responsible for what was happening in Mexico because of the NAFTA treaty. He requested that the United States Congress proffer some assistance to Mexico, but it dragged its feet. Delay could be catastrophic. President Bill Clinton had to make a move. He had to act fast.

Eventually, President Bill Clinton decided to go ‘solo’ on his rescue mission of the Mexican economy, without Congressional involvement because of their inaction. This singular decision was perhaps one of the most defining events of his presidency as far as U.S.-Mexico relations were concerned. The Clinton Administration through an audacious and just-in-time initiative was able to avert the collapse of the Mexican economy in 1995.^{9, 10} Using his executive authority, he provided the Mexican government with billions of dollars in loan guarantees with funding from the International Monetary Fund.¹¹

Had President Clinton not taken the initiative when he did, the Mexican economy would have collapsed and resulted in untold hardship for the citizens of U.S.’ southern neighbor. Furthermore, such an incident could have led to a severe refugee crisis for the U.S., not to mention the attendant national security implications. Some two years later, this is what President Bill Clinton had to say about NAFTA and his intervention in the Mexico economic crisis:

“But I personally believe that our relationships and our individual economies are stronger because we passed NAFTA than they would have been if we hadn't passed NAFTA. And I think there is enough recent history-- you just go back over the last 25 years and look at what's happened in times of economic difficulty either in Mexico or the United States, and you look at all kinds of other issues--we are cooperating across a wider range of issues than ever before; we have a more integrated economic partnership than ever before; we are working on more labor and environmental issues than ever before...”

So my view is that we did the right thing to pass NAFTA and that both the United States and Mexico are in better shape today than they would be if we hadn't done it...It I think, is clear support for the decision that I made a couple of years ago to enter a partnership with Mexico when it was in difficulty, because I felt very strongly that the potential of the Mexican economy and the Mexican people was very great, and that President Zedillo was pursuing the proper course.”

- President Bill Clinton, 1997 ¹²

Judging from Clinton’s remarks, the NAFTA treaty was mutually beneficial to all the participating countries – the United States, Mexico, and Canada as well. Even amid that success, many people in the United States were being slowly and surely left behind. This may have not been immediately apparent. The NAFTA treaty brought about some major structural changes in the U.S. economy. New jobs were created, many jobs were lost as well. That development would in some decades later lead to the rise of a populist leader, in the person of President Donald J. Trump – the U.S. political establishment’s worst nightmare. A man loathed by his political enemies (i.e., the Democrat Party and the liberal Media) and tolerated by his own party (i.e., Republican Party) bigwigs; and yet loved by the masses.

2.2.1.3 Drugs and Immigration

For some strange reason, drug trafficking and immigration are two inextricably linked issues that can always be seen to mark U.S.-Mexico relations, regardless of which political party is in power. One journalist of USA Today described the battles to stop drug smuggling from Mexico to the United States as an “endless” one.¹³ As, thus, expected, the drug issue came up as well during the Clinton years. In an exchange with the press before a meeting with Mexico’s president, Zedillo, Clinton was asked a question to the effect as to how he was going to

convince the United States Congress that the U.S. is a major consumer of drugs and that most narco-traffickers are inside the United States, while also convincing “people that only see Mexico as the bad guys.”¹⁴

President Bill Clinton responded as follows:

*“I think that Congress has targeted a number of other countries in a more focused way where the problem is not primarily the transit of drugs but is the **production of drugs**, so I wouldn't agree with that. I do believe that as least for our administration, we have been very clear that the reduction of demand and dealing with the infrastructure of drugs in the United States has to be a key part of our strategy, and we intend to implement that. I think the real issue, what we should be focusing on is how we can work together in our mutual interest **because drugs present a threat both to the United States and to Mexico**. My objective in working with Congress is to try to **get a united American position without regard to party, where we should have partnerships with all of the countries that are also beset by this problem in one way or the other**, and we should work together on all aspects of it. That's what I believe we should do”¹⁵.*

From the response above, some deductions can be made: (1) “...*the problem is not primarily the transit of drugs, but is the **production of drugs***” – by this statement, Clinton appears to suggest that Mexico is not the primary cause of the drug problem in the United States since drug traffickers only use Mexico as transit and that Mexico in itself may not be the major producer of the narcotics that find its way into the United States -; (2) In other words, President Clinton does not see Mexico as a perpetrator of the drug problem in the United States but rather a victim as adduced in the statement, “...*because drugs present a threat both to the United States and to Mexico*”. The Clinton approach to the drug problem in the U.S.-Mexico relations seems very different from that of the Trump administration which saw Mexico as an enabler of the drug problem in the United States; (3) “...*we have been very clear that the reduction of demand and dealing with the infrastructure of drugs in the United States has to be a key part of our strategy*” – from this statement, the Clinton administration hoped to make the reduction of the drug demand in the U.S. and its associated infrastructure the centerpiece of its strategy against the war on drugs; (4) “*My objective in working with Congress is to try to **get a united***

American position without regard to party, where we should have partnerships with all of the countries that are also beset by this problem in one way or the other...” – the first part of this statement seem to imply that there was division in the U.S. Congress along party lines as to how best to tackle the drug problem facing the U.S.; (5) “*My objective in working with Congress is to try to get a united American position without regard to party, where we should have partnerships with all of the countries that are also beset by this problem in one way or the other...*” – the second part of this statement connotes three things: firstly, the Clinton administration held the belief that no country was an enabler of the drug problem, secondly, all countries beset by the drug problem were all victims and not perpetrators, and thirdly, hope of solving the drug problem can only be done via partnerships with these other countries that are also ‘beset by this problem’.

In short, these deductions formed the basis of Clinton’s narcotics strategy in its U.S.-Mexico relations.

2.2.2 U.S.-Mexico Relation under President George H.W. Bush Jnr.

This sub-section examines the status of U.S.-Mexico relations under President George H.W. Bush Jnr. To tackle the object of this sub-section, Gutiérrez¹⁶ shall be heavily drawn upon.

,2.2.2.1 Immigration and Border Security

Soon after his inauguration in the Office of the President of the United States, George W. Bush made it known to the public that his first overseas trip will be to their southern neighbor, Mexico. The trip intended to meet with President Vicente Fox, a man who had recently defied the odds to become Mexico’s President. Vicente Fox of the conservative Alliance for Change coalition was sworn into the Office of the President for Mexico in 2000, a year before Bush was sworn in. In Mexico, a presidential term lasts 6 years. Among other things, Vicente had promised to ensure the promotion of free-market policies, provide support for rule of law and

democracy, launch an anti-corruption and anti-crime agenda, and resolve the political impasse and the instability in the state of Chiapas. Notably, Vicente Fox's inaugural ceremony brought to a close more than 7 decades of presidential rule by Mexico's long-dominant political party. Notably, Vicente Fox's inaugural ceremony brought to a close more than 7 decades of presidential rule by Mexico's long-dominant political party.¹⁷

George bush's trip to Mexico was in fulfilment of his campaign promise to build a "special relationship" with Mexico, like that which the United States has with the United Kingdom. That campaign promise was crucial to his winning Latino votes in New Mexico, Texas, California, New York, and Arizona. However, cardinal to this relationship was the contentious issue of immigration, the passage of legal and illegal workers alike from Mexico into the U.S., and more critically their handling and fate in the United States. For 7 years, the Bush presidency strived to fulfil its campaign promise to put together legislation that would ensure the unrestricted flow of cheap Mexican labor into the U.S. and to safeguard it via pathways to becoming an American citizen. The resistance to the legislation was huge, especially from within his party, the Republican Party. In June of 2007, the U.S. Senate failed to gather the 60 filibuster votes needed to end the debate on the proposed legislation, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007.

As publicized, Bush did visit Vicente's ranch in Monterrey, Mexico in the early part of February of 2001. During their photo op before the press, the two men highlighted how they have in common a rural agrarian culture, and their deep mutual respect. As an offshoot of the public show of this friendship that was developing between the two presidents, Bush signaled his resolve to tackle the urgent cross-border issues of illicit drug trafficking, border industrialization, environmental degradation, and immigration. Whilst a candidate, Bush had pledged a guest-worker initiative that will permit a greater number of Mexicans to access work

visas to come work in the U.S.¹⁸ Not only that, but the initiative also as intimated earlier above, would have paved the way for permanent legal residency and ultimate citizenship for the almost 3 million Mexicans then illegally holding jobs in the United States. Winding up their first state visit, both presidents promised to nurture their special relationship and to organize a conference in the U.S. later in the year to continue to tackle immigration and bilateral matters. The second conference failed to move the ‘needle’ on the issues that had been raised in the first.¹⁹

Following the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attack on the U.S. in 2001, everything changed. Everything else was relegated to the background, including U.S.-Mexico relations but not border security. Border security, thus, became a primary focus of U.S.-Mexico relations in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Mexican nationals living in the United States were mistreated in the name of counterterrorism.²⁰ The 9/11 incident dramatically altered the U.S.-Mexico border and migration policy stance. Before 9/11, public discourse in the U.S. centred on public safety and the importance of educating migrants about the likely dangers associated with border crossings, plus continuing concerns over human and drug trafficking. Now, all that changed. The rhetoric became all about national security, and efforts to control the movement of Mexican migrants across the border.²¹ In furtherance to the preceding, in 2005, Bush implored Congress to make available more funds for border security and committed to releasing 6,000 National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border.

2.2.2.2 Trade

Under President’s Bush’s administration, NAFTA institutions continued to function. Under NAFTA, trade between the two nations had tripled. Instances, where there had been issues and allegations of a party violating labor and environmental stipulations of the NAFTA deal, have been looked at. No attempt was made by the Bush administration to dismantle the NAFTA

deal. On the contrary, the Bush presidency contended for the merits of NAFTA making the case that the treaty has yielded modest positive gains to the economies of the three participating countries.²² However, farmers in Mexico have railed on the effects of NAFTA. The U.S.-Mexico trade dispute during Bush's presidency involved telecommunication, trucking, sugar, sweeteners, and tuna.

2.2.2.3 Drug Trafficking

During the presidency of George Bush, there was an unprecedented level of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico in counter-narcotics. Mexico under President Fox went all out against major drug traffickers. These efforts the Bush presidency officials regularly praised. In April 2004, the State Department, however, indicated that opium poppy and marijuana cultivation grew considerably in Mexico in 2003. In 2004, the Drug Enforcement Administration officials indicated that they had disassembled a major Mexican drug trafficking and money laundering organization based in the U.S. This was achieved through Operation Money Clip.²³

In sum, Bush's foreign policy style appears to leverage more on his close personal relationship with the leaders of the countries he was dealing with. A case in point is his close personal relationship with Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. In relating with Mexico, therefore, President Bush appeared to rely upon his close personal relationships with Mexican President Vicente Fox. Consider the excerpt by Gutiérrez²⁴:

“Indeed, when Bush was asked about his foreign policy credentials during one of the nationally televised presidential debates, he responded that he knew Vicente Fox, the President-elect of Mexico very well: “He’s a man I know from Mexico.””

2.2.3 U.S.-Mexico Relation under President Barack Obama

2.2.3.1 Trade

In 2008, when Obama won the presidency, Painter, a BBC Latin America correspondent wrote that Washington analysts do not expect any major changes or projects, but just a change in tone from the incoming Obama presidency. That was the consensus among the experts on Obama's likely foreign policies towards Mexico and other countries in Latin America. It was expected that Barack's approach would be more of getting things done through multilateral organizations. However, in March 2009, President Obama put on hold a pilot program, which George Bush had brought into being in 2008 to pave the way for a broader, more comprehensive U.S.-Mexico cross-border trucking initiative.²⁵ This suspension was the beginning of Obama's first trade war and with Mexico for that matter.²⁶ The program was intended to make it possible for a restricted number of trucking firms based in Mexico to function within allocated United States zones. Critics of the initiative held the view that the program was 'hemorrhaging' U.S. trucking jobs.

2.2.3.2 Drug Trafficking

In framing America's drug problem, President Obama is on record to have said that the strong demand in the U.S. for illegal drugs is a primary contributory factor to the United States' narcotics problem in the U.S.²⁷ This statement mirrors how President Clinton also framed drug trafficking in the U.S during his time in office as president.

For a long time, policies against drug trafficking have not yielded the desired results. The failure is largely acknowledged, even as the war on drugs continue to be based on a *mano dura* ("Iron Fist", or "Firm Hand") approach. President Obama's election overlapped with this

“Ironfisted” approach. President Felipe Calderón’s of Mexico had taken a strong stance against the Mexican drug cartels by deploying the military against them. The Obama administration was also bequeathed the Merida Initiative – a project that advances massive support from the U.S. to Mexican and Central American military and law enforcement bodies. Judicial officials were not left out of the support. The purpose of the support from the Merida Initiative was to help law enforcement bodies in Latin America control the production of narcotics, trafficking, and organized crime. The Merida Initiative was a legacy of the Bush Administration and a possible outgrowth of the close personal relationship with the then President Vicente Fox of Mexico. In 2008, the U.S. Congress advanced USD400 million to Mexico and a further USD65 million to some countries in Central America to aid in the war efforts against drug trafficking, its production and organize crime. Obama did not cancel these initiatives but rather supported them. In his first year in office, Obama made available another USD300 million to the program. In 2009, President Calderón deployed 5,000 soldiers into Ciudad Juarez, a Mexican city on the United States border. The city, and northern Chihuahua as a whole, had been a battleground for competing drug cartels. The move produced some limited results against the drug cartels, however, the collateral damage was huge – thousands of civilians died in the process.²⁸ The election of Enrique Peña Nieto in 2012 heralded a change in Mexican policies, a de-escalation of military operations against the drug cartels.

2.2.3.3 Immigration and Border Security

Once every 12 years, Mexico and United States presidential election cycles overlap, producing a unique opening to examine the changing context of U.S.-Mexico relations and to prospect for new and better ways to move that relationship forward.²⁹ In 2012, the presidential election cycles of the U.S. and Mexico coincided. For President Peña Nieto of Mexico, this was his first term as the newly elected president of Mexico; for Barack Obama, this was his second term in

office. Both presidents would be functioning in a landscape of bilateral relations that has metamorphosed so greatly since the last time presidential elections in both countries overlapped. Optimism for the relationship was high.

In 2012, Obama easily won reelection, winning the popular votes and the electoral college in the process. His victory was on the back of massive Latino support and votes. This massive support had implications for U.S.-Mexico relations. To lock in these massive Latino votes, the Obama administration adopted a more measured approach in its dealings with Mexico (Selee, 2012). Obama's deferred action plan also known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA³⁰, and the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, DREAM Act³¹ bill were made in that regard. These two programs seemed to be a watered-down version of President Bush's proposed Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007.

In sum, even though, President Obama had no foreign policy experience and may have had no clear initial U.S.-Mexico policy initiatives, he was smart enough to continue walking in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations template that his predecessor had already laid out for him. It was not until 2012, after his re-election that he would devise the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy and the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (the DREAM Act).

2.3 Domestic Changes Mexico and the United States Have Faced in the Last two Decades

The U.S.-Mexico bilateral relation is heavily influenced by domestic policies within each country. Colgan & Keohane have argued that "*Today's crucial foreign policy challenges arise less from problems between countries than from domestic politics within them.*"³² In addressing this second research question, Velasco³³ shall be heavily drawn upon.

To properly understand U.S.-Mexico relations during Trump's time as president, it is essential to examine the domestic changes that have driven the U.S.-Mexico relations in the last two decades. This section broadly explores the domestic politics of both countries – especially the U.S. – since it is the more influential of the two in the U.S.-Mexico relations. Section 2.3.1 will explore domestic changes as regards immigration and NAFTA.

2.3.1 Domestic Changes: What Next?

Trump's rise to the Office of the President in the United States was a watershed moment both for the U.S. and Mexico. The American voters saw him as the change they needed, and the Mexicans viewed him as a threat to their economic wellbeing. The erection of a border wall and the deportation of illegal aliens were inimical to Mexico's economic interest. The 2016 U.S. Election Cycle could be considered as a referendum on globalism and nationalism. Nationalism won out in the person of Trump. For the people of the U.S., they now have a president in the oval office who is not a politician or behold to special interest, but one who would put their interest first – an American-First president. For the ordinary Mexican and the Mexican government, the thought of a U.S. president seeking to physically erect a wall across the U.S.-Mexico border was viewed as an insult.

In this section, an overview of the domestic changes Mexico and the United States has experienced in the last 20 years is explored. From the onset, Trump's anti-immigration stance was clear. But then, he was only mirroring the sentiments of the larger American public. This time the anti-immigration sentiments among the American public were quite different from what it has traditionally been.³⁴ Conventionally, anti-immigration arguments were two-pronged – economic and cultural. Economic arguments against immigration had to do with the

loss of jobs from citizens of the United States to immigrants, while cultural anti-immigration arguments insisted that the influx of immigrants into the U.S. alters or dilutes American culture. Since the late 1990s, these arguments have changed. They have taken on a new dimension. Now, some individuals in the U.S. perceive immigrants as even physically hazardous. Others feel immigrants could be terrorists, waiting for an opportune time to harm American citizens. Still, others have framed the illegal immigration problem as a national security threat, and others as a danger to the safety of U.S. citizens and an existential threat to the U.S.³⁵

Before the early 1980s, issues precipitated by cross-border migration were economic, humanitarian, and centred on social integration and the labour market; since then, a migration-security nexus has arisen. This nexus came into sharp focus after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. This nexus was front and centre during Donald Trump's presidency. In an interaction with the press, President Trump opined that the Democrats do not care about securing the U.S.-Mexico border. He further argued that erecting a border wall will prevent gang members like the MS-13 gang from coming into the country to cause havoc such as "stabbing people and cutting people up."³⁶ Opposition to the border wall policy was stiff. Between 55-58% of U.S. Citizens opposed the erection of a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Support for the wall was strongest among Republicans and weakest among Democrats,^{37, 38} an indication of how partisan the border security issue had become. That was not always the case though. In 2006, the United States Senate in a majority vote (80-19) passed the Secure Fence Act, which legalized the putting up of a physical infrastructure to secure U.S. borders.³⁹

Despite the immense opposition, the Trump administration managed to construct 727 km of a border wall or fencing as of the time he was leaving office. Among the many arguments against Trump's border wall, there was one prominent one and that was, walls don't work. However,

the facts on the ground after the border wall was built told a different story. The border security system President Trump set up was found to be effective in disrupting criminals and smugglers. In the Yuma Sector of the U.S.-Mexico border, illegal entries at the zones with the new border security system fell more than 87% in 2020 when compared to the previous year. In the San Diego sector, the rate of confiscation of narcotics such as marijuana, methamphetamine, and fentanyl all went up in 2020 compared to 2019, an indication that the border wall was driving smugglers of narcotics to where customs and border patrol agents were most adequately prepared to catch them.

On the other side of the U.S. border, Mexico was busy debating the impact Trump's immigration policies would have on Mexico should he succeed in implementing them. The United States and Donald Trump was a crucial debate topic. Immigration, NAFTA, border militarization, and the border wall proposition were major topics of debate throughout the Mexican presidential campaign. But then why should the domestic issues of the U.S. trouble Mexico so? The short answer: U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations is driven primarily by domestic issues.⁴⁰

The NAFTA deal is another traditional aspect of the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship that has been impacted by domestic changes, especially on the U.S. side. Although the NAFTA deal faced a lot of opposition, it eventually got passed. This was done during the Clinton administration. One unique thing about the NAFTA deal is that since its passing, it has subsequently been supported by successive presidents without any qualms until President Trump. He challenged the usefulness of the deal to the American people. During his presidential campaign, he described NAFTA as “the worst deal maybe signed anywhere.”⁴¹ From the onset, he was determined to alter a key pillar of U.S.-Mexico relations. His anti-

NAFTA rhetoric caused a decline in support for NAFTA among the U.S. population. Per the results of Gallup Polls, in 1997, 37% of people living in the United States states NAFTA was good for the U.S and 47 % indicated that it was bad.; in 2000, the result was a reversal – 47% rated NAFTA good and 37% rated the deal badly. In 2017, the proportion of Americans who rated the deal bad had jumped from 37% in 2000 to 46% in 2017, representing an increment of 9 percentage points. At the partisan level, public opinion on NAFTA looked even grimmer. In 2000 A.D., 46% of surveyed Republicans indicated the NAFTA deal was good for the U.S., but this percentage declined to 40% in 2004 which further dipped considerably to 20% in 2017. However, the result was different among Democrat’s voters: in 2000, 49% favored NAFTA, while only 39% supported it in 2004 and 67% favoring it in 2017. Before Trump left office, the NAFTA deal was successfully renegotiated to become USMCA.

There are structural conditions that have controlled U.S.-Mexico relations for the last two decades. Understanding this relationship would go a long way to enable stakeholders in both countries to explore ways to ‘mine’ these structural conditions. The next sub-section will examine the structural characteristics of U.S.-Mexico relations.

2.3.2 Structural Characteristics of the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Relations

In this sub-section, we shall attempt to understand the structural conditions that have controlled U.S.-Mexico relations for the last two decades. The U.S.-Mexico relations is underpinned by not less than six rudimentary concepts.⁴² These concepts describe the structural characteristics that inform U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. Per the first concept, both the United States and Mexico attach different levels of importance to their bilateral relationship. For the United States, Mexico represents but a piece in its myriad of foreign relations spread across the globe. However, the United States is Mexico’s most significant global partner. Due to the role the United States had to play in a post-Cold War era, its priorities keep shifting at any point in time

depending on the exigencies of the time. The United States is seen as a stabilizing power on the world stage. This has considerable implications for U.S.-Mexico relations, as external events can quickly change the trajectory of the bilateral relations. The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 is one such example. Before the 9/11 Attack, the United States and Mexico were in deep talks, ‘hammering out’ the details of comprehensive immigration reform. After 9/11, everything changed. War on terror suddenly became more important than Mexico and immigration reform.⁴³

Power asymmetry is the second concept that characterizes U.S.-Mexico relations.⁴⁴ The United States is the world’s superpower. Mexico, on the other hand, is not much of a global player and still exhibits characteristics of a developing nation. In that respect, the United States appears to wield more power in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations, thereby reducing Mexico’s ability to safeguard its interests. Notwithstanding, when there is a confluence of national interests of the two nations, Mexico stands to benefit considerably. The North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement is a case in point. Security cooperation is another area Mexico can benefit from, particularly in the anti-narcotics fight. The United States cares deeply about security and security related issues, home and abroad, and so partnering with the U.S. on that front could easily see Mexico gaining access to U.S. intelligence power in the war against drugs.

Interdependency between Mexico and the United States is the third concept that describes the structural characteristics of the U.S-Mexico relations. Both nations are inextricably linked, socially, economically, and culturally. As of 2019, 37.19 million U.S. citizens were reported to be of Mexican descent.⁴⁵ What happens between the two countries has a direct influence on the livelihoods and lives of millions of U.S. citizens, be it education exchange, trade and economic reform, anti-drug trafficking campaigns, citizen security, human trafficking,

migration, entrepreneurship, public health, energy cooperation, and innovation. The two-way trade across the U.S.-Mexico border, daily, is projected to be worth USD 1.5 billion.^{46, 47, 48} In 2019, President Trump threatened to close the U.S.-Mexico border in response to the free flow of Central Americans migrant caravans making their way to that border through Mexico. The initial lack of assistance from the Mexican government to the Trump administration in stemming the migrant flow to the U.S.'s southern border did not help matters.⁴⁹ If the border had been closed, both countries would have suffered, although it is most likely Mexico would have suffered more. Despite the interdependency between these two countries, Mexico relies more heavily on the United States than the United States on Mexico, a clear indication of an asymmetrical relationship.⁵⁰

'Intermestic' is the fourth concept that describes the structural relationship of the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship.⁵¹ 'Intermestic' is an amalgamation of the first syllable of the word, '*international*' and the last two syllables of the word, '*domestic*'. The concept of intermestic means foreign relations between Mexico and the United States is partly domestic and partly international. Drug trafficking and immigration are some examples of issues that is part domestic and part international – in short, intermestic. The domestic politics of each nation is increasingly becoming a weighty factor in their bilateral relations. A domestic issue can soon become an international one. Trump's border wall was one such example.

Complexity is the fifth concept that defines the structural relationship of U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. The relationship covers a wide range of issues such as immigration, commerce, oil, drug trafficking, border security, and water – and involve several actors, for example, the president, states, Congress, firms, political parties, think tanks, and lobbyists, to mention a few. The interplay between these issues and the conflicting interests of the actors in each nation

create complexity within the bilateral relationship that is not so easily untangled, making it hard for both countries to reach agreements on any issue or topic.

Last but not the least, the concept of tradition also characterizes U.S.-Mexico relations. The bilateral relation between the two countries is controlled by routine rather than crisis. Extraditions, border crossings, or money transfers are daily occurrences that have varying effects in each nation. For instance, in 2010, the United States deported more than 600,000 Mexicans, while in 2016 less than 300,000 Mexican citizens were expatriated.⁵² These actions by the U.S. harm Mexico - because the Mexican economy is unable to provide jobs for all these deportees. However, on the side of the United States, a lot of money is spent to carry out these deportations and even secure the border to prevent border crossings. Available data reveals that in 2016, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) spent USD 3.2 billion to physically remove illegal immigrants from the U.S. population.⁵³ Each expatriation costs the U.S. government USD 10,854.

In summary, U.S.-Mexico relations are marked by a firmly set structural relationship that is extremely difficult to alter. United States Presidents that had attempted to go against the structural relationship became unpopular very quickly. A case in point was former U.S. President George Bush Jr. His proposed comprehensive immigration bill that, among other things, sought to create a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants made him extremely unpopular; his approval ratings dropped below 30%.^{54, 55} (Murray, 2005; Schlesinger, 2006). Modification to these fundamental ties does not essentially rely on the emergence of a new United States president, even though the president or Congress could become key actors in transforming the structural bonds.

Endnote

-
- ¹ Villarreal, M. A., & Fergusson, I. F. (2017). *The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* (p. 43). Congressional Research Service.
- ² Roberts, K. (2020). *It's Official: Mexico Is No. 1 U.S. Trade Partner For First Time, Despite Overall U.S. Trade Decline*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenroberts/2020/02/05/its-official-mexico-is-no-1-us-trade-partner-for-first-time-despite-overall-us-trade-decline/>
- ³ Office of the United States Trade Representative. (2020). *Mexico: U.S.-Mexico Trade Facts*. <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/mexico>
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Op. cit. see Roberts, K.
- ⁶ <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-23.8/FullText.html>
- ⁷ Holloway, A. (2015). *Researchers confirm that recently discovered Tonina Pyramid is Largest Pyramid in Mexico* [Text]. Ancient Origins. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/researchers-confirm-recently-discovered-tonina-pyramid-largest-pyramid-mexico-020433>
- ⁸ Meisenhalter, F. (2017). *A Biography of the Subcomandante Marcos: Rebel Leader of the Zapatistas in Mexico*. Amazon.
- ⁹ Cabral, L.-A. (2010). Managing Economic Crises; Bill Clinton and the Mexican Peso Crisis. *The Undergraduate Review*, 6(8), 29–34.
- ¹⁰ Riley, R. L. (2016, October 4). *Bill Clinton: Life Before the Presidency*. Miller Center. <https://millercenter.org/president/clinton/life-before-the-presidency>
- ¹¹ Op. cit. see Cabral, L. A.
- ¹² Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton (1997, Book II) - Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters. Available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1997-book2/html/PPP-1997-book2-doc-pg1557-3.htm>, date accessed 28th May, 2021.
- ¹³ Solis, G. (2021, June 8). Drug smuggling, and the endless battle to stop it. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/drug-trafficking-smuggling-cartels-tunnels/559814001/>
- ¹⁴ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton (1997, Book II) - Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters. Available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1997-book2/html/PPP-1997-book2-doc-pg1557-3.htm>, date accessed 28th May, 2021.
- ¹⁵ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton (1997, Book II) - Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters. Available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1997-book2/html/PPP-1997-book2-doc-pg1557-3.htm>, date accessed 28th May, 2021.
- ¹⁶ Gutiérrez, R. (2007). George W. Bush and Mexican Immigration Policy. *Revue Francaise Detudes Americaines*, No 113(3), 70–76.
- ¹⁷ Congressional Research Service. (2004). *Mexico-U.S. Relations: Issues for the 108th Congress* (No. RL31876; p. 30). CRS Report for Congress.
- ¹⁸ Op. cit. see Gutiérrez, R.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Waslin, M. (2003). *The New Meaning of the Border: U.S. - Mexico Migration Since 9/11*. 15.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Op. cit. see Congressional Research Service
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Op. cit. see Gutiérrez, R. p. 71
- ²⁵ Selee, A. (2012). *U.S.-Mexico Relations Under President Obama's Second Term*. Woodrow Wilson Centre.
- ²⁶ Soukup, B. J., & Alexander, K. W. (2010). Obama's First Trade War: The US-Mexico Cross-Border Trucking Dispute and the Implications of Strategic Cross-Sector Retaliation on U.S. Compliance Under NAFTA. *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, 28(2), 1–31.
- ²⁷ Painter, J. (2008, November 6). Latin America awaits Obama action. *BBC Latin America News*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us_elections_2008/7710855.stm

²⁸ Op. cit. see Painter, J.

²⁹ Wilson, C. E., Olson, E. L., Salazaar, M. R., Selee, A., & Wood, D. (2013). *New Ideas for a New Era: Policy Options for the Next Stage in U.S.-Mexico Relations* (p. 61). Woodrow Wilson Centre. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/misc/new_ideas_us_mexico_relations.pdf

³⁰ **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** is a United States immigration policy that allows some individuals with unlawful presence in the United States after being brought to the country as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit in the U.S.

³¹ The **Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act**, known as the **DREAM Act**, is a United States legislative proposal to grant temporary conditional residency, with the right to work, to unauthorized immigrants who entered the United States as minors—and, if they later satisfy further qualifications, they would attain permanent residency.

³² Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O. (2018, December 8). *The Liberal Order Is Rigged*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-04-17/liberal-order-rigged>

³³ Velasco, J. (2018). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* (p. 26). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Lohrmann, R. (2000). Migrants, Refugees and Insecurity. Current Threats to Peace? *International Migration*, 38(4), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00118>

³⁶ Hoft, J. (2019, January 10). BRUTAL!... President Trump: Democrats Don't Give a Damn About Crime - Don't Care About Gang Members Stabbing People (VIDEO). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2019/01/brutal-president-trump-democrats-dont-give-a-damn-about-crime-dont-care-about-gang-members-stabbing-people-video/>

³⁷ Kafura, C., & Smeltz, D. (2019, December 24). *Majority of Americans Oppose Expanding US-Mexico Border Wall* [Research]. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/majority-americans-oppose-expanding-us-mexico-border-wall>

³⁸ Pew Research Centre. (2019, January 16). Most Border Wall Opponents, Supporters Say Shutdown Concessions Are Unacceptable. *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/01/16/most-border-wall-opponents-supporters-say-shutdown-concessions-are-unacceptable/>

³⁹ Homeland Security. (2020, October 29). *The Border Wall System is Deployed, Effective, and Disrupting Criminals and Smugglers*. Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/10/29/border-wall-system-deployed-effective-and-disrupting-criminals-and-smugglers>

⁴⁰ Op. cit. see Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O.

⁴¹ Gillespie, P. (2016, September 27). *Trump hammers America's "worst trade deal."* CNNMoney. <https://money.cnn.com/2016/09/27/news/economy/donald-trump-nafta-hillary-clinton-debate/index.html>

⁴² Op. cit. see Velasco, J.

⁴³ It is important to highlight that several members of the Bush administration had hesitations and objections about the immigration accord proposed by the Mexican government. There were clear indications that even without September 11, the immigration agreement would have faced serious opposition within the administration and Congress, as well as from different interest groups involved in the topic. For more information about the difficulties to achieve an immigration agreement between the Vicente Fox and the George W. Bush administrations, see Jesús Velasco, "Acuerdo Migratorio: La Debilidad de la Esperanza," *Foro Internacional* 48, no. 1 and 2 (January-June 2008)

⁴⁴ Op. cit. see Velasco, J.

⁴⁵ Statista. (2020). *Hispanic population in the U.S. by origin 2019*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/234852/us-hispanic-population/>

⁴⁶ Mark, M. (2019). Closing the border would put the US economy at a "standstill" and actually worsen illegal border crossings. Here's how it would affect food prices, jobs, and Americans' everyday lives. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-mexico-border-closed-what-could-happen-2019-4>

⁴⁷ Miroff, N. (2018). U.S. customs agency is so short-staffed, it's sending officers from airports to the Mexican border. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-customs->

agency-is-so-short-staffed-its-sending-officers-from-airports-to-the-mexican-border/2018/01/18/44420a94-fc77-11e7-a46b-a3614530bd87_story.html

⁴⁸ Snibbe, K. (2019, April 5). Here's how much traffic crosses the U.S.-Mexico border. *Orange County Register*. <https://www.ocregister.com/heres-how-much-traffic-crosses-the-u-s-mexico-border>

⁴⁹ Op. cit. see Miroff, N.

⁵⁰ Op. cit. see Velasco, J.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Baker, B. (2017). *Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2016*. (p. 11) [Annual Report]. U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

⁵³ Blanco, O. (2017, April 13). *How much it costs ICE to deport one undocumented immigrant*. CNNMoney. <https://money.cnn.com/2017/04/13/news/economy/deportation-costs-undocumented-immigrant/index.html>

⁵⁴ Murray, M. (2005). *Bush approval dips below 40 percent*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna9672058>

⁵⁵ Schlesinger, S. (2006, April 24). Bush's Low Ratings Reflect Pre-9/11 Views. *Observer*. <https://observer.com/2006/04/bushs-low-ratings-reflect-pre911-views/>



CHAPTER THREE

IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC CHANGES ON U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS DURING TRUMP PRESIDENCY, AND ASSESSMENT OF U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS 100 DAYS POST-TRUMP PRESIDENCY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three explored the implications of the domestic changes on U.S.-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration, trade (NAFTA) and drugs, and assess the status of U.S.-Mexico relations 100 days post-Trump presidency.

In the previous chapter, an exploration of the status of U.S.-Mexico relations before Trump was conducted, followed by a discussion of the changes U.S. and Mexico have faced in the last two decades. The remaining portion of this chapter shall be divided as follows: Sections 3.2 to 3.5 will address the third research question. In section 3.2, an attempt shall be made to understand the person of Donald J. Trump, the man behind the name. Section 3.3 provides a historical background of his 2016 presidential campaign to give context to the domestic changes that drove him to the White House, while highlighting the playing out of his personality on the biggest stage of all – the U.S. presidential election. Meanwhile, Section 3.4 will discuss the implications of the domestic changes on U.S.-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency. Section 3.5 outlines some accomplishments of President Trump before he left office. Lastly, Section 3.6 will tackle the fourth research question.

3.2 Donald J. Trump: A Brief Personality Profile

President Donald Trump is a billionaire businessman who made his fortune in real estate. Before becoming president, he was most popularly known for being the host of the American Reality TV series, "The Apprentice" where candidates competed against one another for the position of the apprentice.

Trump was born on 14th June 1946 – a blood moon – meaning on that day there was a total lunar eclipse. In Bible prophecy terms, that was significant.¹ Strang investigated, documented, and wrote about signs and prophecies concerning Trump and the 2016 election.² Here are some of the things he found: (i) the day of his birth and counting forward to the day Israel³ became a nation, May 14, 1948, it is exactly 700 days; (ii) the day Donald Trump was sworn in as president of the United States, he was 70 years, 7 months, and 7 days old. In the Jewish calendar, that year is number 5777; (iii) Trump defeated Hillary Clinton for president by 77 electoral votes; and (iv) the middle part of Trump’s term of office, which was January 20, 2019, was also a blood moon. The above facts appear too often to be considered accidental. In Biblical terms, “7” is the number of God and stands for completeness and perfection.⁴

Some believe those signs are from God and an indication of His hand on Donald Trump. It is hard to argue against such notions, considering he is the only United States president who has been impeached not once, but twice, all in his first term of office and has managed against all odds to survive them, even to the amazement of his detractors.^{5, 6, 7} That has never happened before. No one gave him a “dog’s chance” to win the 2016 Election; he was simply written off by the media both national and international – the liberal U.S. media especially; and yet he won. Even amid the Obama administration’s spying on his campaign, in what has become known as “Obamagate”, he still managed to emerge victorious.^{8, 9, 10, 11, 12} In an opinion piece, Petri described “Obamagate” as the “the biggest political crime in American history by far.”¹³

The United States has never had a president of his caliber.¹⁴ Firstly, the U.S. in its history has never elected a billionaire to the office of president. Secondly, a man of his personality – aggressive, controversial, confrontational, and direct – has never occupied the Oval Office¹⁵. Politicians tend to avoid controversy, confrontation and being direct, seeking to be politically

correct, but not Trump. He thrives on them. He says what he means, and he means what he says. Perhaps, that is why the people love him and trusts him, even after leaving office, as attested by the huge number of people who have attended his “Save America” rallies this year.^{16, 17}

3.3 Brief Historical Background of 2016 Presidential Campaign

On 16th June 2015, Donald Trump’s bid for the 2016 presidency was officially announced. This was done at Trump Tower in the capital of the state of New York. Having won his party’s nomination at the 2016 Republican National Convention, Trump became the Republican Party’s flagbearer for the Office of the U.S. President, fending off 16 challengers and winning the most presidential primary votes in the history of the Republican party.^{18,19,20} After consultations, Trump settled on Mike Pence as his running mate. Mike Pence, at the time was governor of the state of Indiana. In 2016 on November 8th, Donald Trump and Mike Pence became president and vice president of the United States respectively, having won the presidential election.

It is widely agreed that Trump’s populist stance^{21, 22} on certain issues such as being against illegal immigration, building a physical wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership that he deemed did not favour Americans garnered for him support particularly among male, Caucasian citizens,²³ citizens who were working class and held blue-collar jobs, as well as those without college degrees.^{24, 25} The former Oklahoma GOP Chairwoman, Pam Pollard, put it this way:

“I think he has touched a part of our electorate that doesn’t like where our country is...I have no problem supporting Mr. Trump.”

– Pam Pollard, former Republican Party Chairwoman for Oklahoma.

In short, Trump's position resonated with the people. Despite that, conservatives were slow to accept him, not sure of his conservative credentials.²⁶ According to Edwards,²⁷ conservatism is a philosophy and not an ideology. Chief among the cardinal values of conservatism is an individual's use of his or her free will, given to him or her by God, and it is from this free will he or she derives the right to be free from "arbitrary force". Conservatism holds that freedom is a God-given right and does not come from government. But that freedom of the American from arbitrary force is fast fading under the Biden Administration through vehicles such as the federal COVID-19 vaccine mandates both at the state and local level,^{28, 29} despite the reported significant side effects,^{30, 31} and the creation of COVID Passports.³² Conservatives are pro-family – supports the traditional family system; and pro-life (anti-abortionist stance) – they believe that babies in the womb have the right to live and should not be aborted. Democrats, on the other hand, are in opposition to all of that. For example, they have passed bills to legalize abortion even to the 9th month of pregnancy. One such example is a bill deceptively titled Women's Health Protection Act.³³ This new bill by the democrats seeks to make it legal to abort a baby even in the process of it being born, mutilating babies, and cutting off the heads of babies for whatever reason.^{34, 35} Aside that, the proposed House democrats bill seeks to also undermine parental authority, where underage children may not require parental consent before undergoing abortion. By so doing, the traditional family system in the United States gets further eroded, as the subtle war on parental authority by the democrats continue to be waged.^{36, 37, 38}

Several of Trump's rhetoric were confrontational. This strategy enabled his campaign to get a lot of free media coverage. Media houses thought he was interesting, others thought he was just entertaining, others on the other hand thought he was just fooling around and deem him not a serious candidate. Whatever the reasons were, Trump accepted all media invitations for

an interview, regardless of their reasons. He believed there was no such thing as bad publicity and so capitalized on every opportunity to get his campaign message out.

Trump's contempt for political correctness was a recurring theme throughout his rallies, and it resonated with his followers.³⁹ Several people, such as mainstream pundits and notable Republican politicians, saw him as attractive to racism,^{40, 41, 42, 43} an accusation that Trump has categorically denied.⁴⁴ But then, the Democrats and their Liberal media allies were wont to label Republican candidates whom they view unfavourably as racists – a tried and tested approach that has been used in the past to ‘sink’ political candidatures.

Trump's most divisive and widely publicized proposals concerned immigration and border security, particularly his planned expulsion of all undocumented migrants; the planned building of a considerable wall on the Mexico–United States border, with Mexico paying for it; his stereotypical portrayals of many Illegals of Mexican extraction as "criminals, drug dealers, rapists, and so on,"^{45, 46, 47} and a temporary suspension on non-resident Muslims coming to the United States (which he subsequently changed to apply to persons who come from nations with a history of terrorism against the US or its friends, as he defined it.⁴⁸

Republicans (who saw Trump as irreversibly damaging to the party and its chances to win elections after and during 2016, resulting in the formation of the Stop Trump movement) and Dems (who denounce Trump's anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policy initiatives, his attitudes toward naysayers, his handling of the media, and his endorsement from the ethno-nationalist alt-right) grew in resistance to Trump and his presidential campaign. Even though some important Republican leaders refused to endorse Trump after winning the Republican nomination,^{49,50} he has received widespread support. Despite serious personal or political differences with Trump, several Republican members of Congress indicated support for him

and his policy stances.⁵¹

Some Trump campaign supporters were criticized by both conservatives and progressives for emphasizing party allegiance and avoiding alienating Trump followers to assure re-election, and so abstaining from criticising Trump's conduct.^{52,53}

3.4 Implications of Domestic Changes on U.S.-Mexico Relations During Trump Presidency

This section shall attempt to discuss the implications of domestic changes on U.S.-Mexico relations during the Trump Presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration/border security, trade, and drug trafficking. It is generally accepted and asserted that the United States and Mexico share a similar destiny. In recent times, plans to create joint responsibility in anti-narcotics and organized crime policy, and a common tactic to migration, have aligned with the progressive amalgamation of their societies and economies, particularly ever since the 1990s.⁵⁴ Interactions on a trilateral (with Canada) and a bilateral basis until 2016 witnessed the development of a regional and global common agenda. The responsive international relations that were being nurtured created a power structure of friends, partners, and allies across the Rio Grande/Bravo.

This solid growth ended in 2017 when Trump fractured the template of North American relations by attacking the credibility of NAFTA and adopting a more aggressive stance to bilateral ties,⁵⁵ making threats at Mexico with tariff barriers and border closures if it did not fulfill expectations to stem illegal migration flow into the United States.^{56, 57, 58} Indeed, to many Trump was a 'disruptor-in-chief'. Simultaneously, protectionist tariffs were imposed on Mexican steel and aluminum imports to the US, and President Trump pressed forward with expanding the border wall.⁵⁹

“We have fully signed and documented another very important part of the Immigration and Security deal with Mexico, one that the U.S. has been asking about getting for many years. It will be revealed in the not-too-distant future and will need a vote by Mexico’s legislative body. We do not anticipate a problem with the vote, but if for any reason the approval is not forthcoming, tariffs will be reinstated.” – Donald J. Trump’s Tweet in June of 2019 (source: as cited in Brice, 2019).

President Trump was never shy to leverage the economic might of the United States for foreign policy ends. In June 2019, Trump told reporters his administration will place 5% tariffs on imported goods from Mexico. Unless Mexico ended uncontrolled immigration across its U.S.-Mexico border, the tariff rates would have risen each month until they managed to reach 25% in October.^{60, 61, 62}

President Trump's threat elevated his immigration battle with Mexico. This battle was a major move against an American allied nation. He primarily dared Mexico to risk economic disaster in both countries if it refused to yield to the U.S. president's requests.⁶³ While President Trump has made immigration and border security a top priority, his pronouncement on putting tariffs on goods coming into the U.S. from Mexico imperiled another of his top priorities: the redoing of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada to become USMCA (US-Mexico-Canada trade pact).

The financial markets reacted almost immediately.⁶⁴ The Mexican peso fell against the US dollar, while shares of Automotive manufacturers from Japan fell since many of them have production plants in Mexico.⁶⁵ Futures contracts that track American stocks predicted that Wall Street would open fairly lower. Past administrations have attempted to put pressure on Mexico to do more to prevent the flow of undocumented immigrants and fight narcotics trafficking and other forms of crime. No U.S. president, however, has ever used the passive-aggressive threat that Mr. Trump had used against a neighbouring nation and strategic partner as important to the American economy as Mexico.

In the course of Trump's first and only term (as of the time of this writing), an edgy compromise and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico emerged as a result of the successful negotiation and approval of the US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade pact, and bilateral cooperation between U.S. and Mexico to halt the flow of immigrants from Central America before they arrived at U.S.-Mexico border.⁶⁶ Additionally, an unlikely personal friendship was birthed between President Trump and the Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in the process of crafting the USMCA. Political watchers were amazed at this turn of events. This friendliness between the two was affirmed by Agren of the Guardian: "*López Obrador...got along well with Donald Trump....*"⁶⁷ But once again, this is vintage Trump - always unpredictable and able to make friends out of seeming adversaries, if he so desires. Their friendship is described as unlikely because of the bashing and harsh criticisms levelled against Mexico by Trump during his presidential campaign and the early days of his presidency. Notwithstanding all the criticisms, their friendship thrived to the extent that Mexico voiced his opinion against the banning of President Trump from social media by sites like Twitter and Facebook and was one of the last world leaders to congratulate President Joe Biden, only after the Electoral college had voted (6 weeks after the election). That delay was picked up by the media. In an article, Agren observed that "*López Obrador...has showed muted enthusiasm for the arrival of Joe Biden.*"⁶⁸

It must be noted that the bilateral cooperation to halt the flow of immigrants from Central America before they arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border – was critical to the emerging relations between the two presidents and their respective administrations.⁶⁹ For Trump, the relationship was important for one main reason: he can now demonstrate tangible progress in halting illegal immigration to the U.S. On the other hand, Mexico's president, President Andrés Manuel López

Obrador, had a similarly one-dimensional perspective: he soon discovered that if he could appease Trump on immigration, Trump would pay no heed to anything he, AMLO, tried to do on local policies that affected relations with the United States.⁷⁰ This gave AMLO a free hand to make advances and countermoves against U.S. manufacturers, service providers, and energy investors (in both the petroleum and electricity sectors), as well as to undermine the regulatory system and independent institutions that have played a critical role in Mexico's growth of democracy and a free market.

It was, thus, a win-win for both presidents. And so, instead of unmaking U.S.-Mexico relations as the political pundits had predicted, Donald Trump seemed to have rather strengthened it to the amazement of onlookers. Through his actions on immigration, Trump made Mexico a stronger partner of the U.S. since the U.S. would now depend on Mexico more than ever before to secure its southern border. For instance, President Trump was able to successfully compel Mexico to boost military presence at the U.S.-Mexico border to stop immigrants from Central America. To stem the flow of migrants into the United States and stop plans to impose tariffs on Made in Mexico goods, Mexico and U.S signed the Migration Protection Protocol (MPP), known as *Programa Permanecer en México* in January 2019.⁷¹ Under this new arrangement, migrants who are not Mexicans looking for an asylum had to live and wait in Mexico for their day in court to confirm whether indeed they are asylum-seekers or not before entering the United States. Prior to the MPP, the practice was what had been termed “catch and release”, where the asylum seeker is given a court date and gets released into the interior of the U.S., but never comes to court when the court date is due. Many past U.S. presidents tried to get Mexico to be more helpful on immigration/border security, but it appears it was only Trump who was able to get it done. This was a major win for the U.S. Another win for the U.S.-Mexico relations during the Trump era was that under the MPP, Mexico pledged to extend humanitarian assistance to the immigrants, such as legal aid, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The

collaboration with the Mexican government was fused with stringent U.S. Immigration protocols, such as denial of naturalization.⁷² According to the Pew Research Institute, arrests of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border reached its highest point in 12 years.

It is contended that Trump restricted the extent of security cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico by focusing primarily on two objectives: fighting international crime organizations and improving border security.⁷³ The first objective necessitated the continued execution of the kingpin strategy, whereas the second objective required that the Mexican authorities take tangible steps to diminish migrant flow to the U.S.

Mexico's assent to the MPP and the USMCA trade pact, in a way, put it in a stronger position with the U.S. to also have its concerns addressed. After all, helping the U.S. secure its southern border does not and would not threaten Mexico's national interest. However, it does give it leverage in other matters such as the passing of a national security law – a security law that was considered the most significant flash point in U.S.-Mexico relations since Trump's threat on imposing tariffs on goods coming into the U.S. from Mexico.⁷⁴ The new law, however, diminishes the immunity of agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA),^{75, 76} thereby hampering the fight against drug trafficking across the U.S.-Mexico border. The new law required that all foreign agents, regardless of the country, operating in Mexico to share any and all intelligence collected with Mexican authorities. It also would require any Mexican officials with whom they communicate to make a written report to federal officials.^{77, 78, 79, 80}

Now, one may argue that Mexico is a sovereign state and does not need the United States' permission to pass legislations that affect it. However, when there is a strong interdependency between the two countries and the passing of such a law influence both countries' anti-narcotics fight, that thus raises eyebrows and may attract calls for a protest. And indeed, there was protest

especially on the U.S. side of the border. In criticizing that law, one headline read, *“The winners are the cartels, Mexico slaps cuffs on the DEA”* (Kryt, 2020). Another headline read, *“Mexico: new security law strips diplomatic immunity from DEA agents”*.

The Mexican drug cartels are one of the most powerful in the world, with allegations of them having even infiltrated Mexico’s national security apparatus.^{81, 82} Hence, it is feared that any intelligence shared with Mexican authorities could find their way into the lap of corrupt officials who could then pass it on to the drug cartel. The U.S. Attorney General Barr indirectly echoed those sentiments: the new security law "would have the effect of making cooperation between our countries more difficult. This would make the citizens of Mexico and the United States less safe".^{83, 84} The U.S. Attorney General further indicated that the new security law “can only benefit the violent transnational criminal organizations and other criminals that we are jointly fighting.”^{85, 86} Interestingly, in the midst of the diplomatic fallout from this new security law by Mexico, Trump seemed to have been unusually quiet,⁸⁷ lending further credence to the assertion that Mexico’s assent to the MPP and the USMCA trade pact may have gone a long way to put Mexico in a stronger position with the U.S. to also have its concerns addressed.

Although, doom and gloom were predicted for U.S.-Mexico relations under President Donald Trump, the reality was surprising. Under Trump, U.S.-Mexico relations had even become stronger spurred on by the friendly relations between the two presidents. In July 2020, AMLO paid a visit to President Trump at the White House. During that visit, the Mexican president made no attempt to engage the then presumptive Democratic Presidential hopeful, Joe Biden, or pay him any courtesy call; furthermore, AMLO visited no Democrat - a possible indication of the strength of the relationship that had come to exist between Trump and AMLO.

3.5 Donald J. Trump: Some Accomplishments of the One-Term President

This section presents a brief list of Trump's achievement concerning the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations during his one term in office as president⁸⁸ (Hoft, 2021):

- The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was terminated and replaced with the completely new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).
- The USMCA included significant new safeguards for American manufacturers, automakers, farmers, dairy producers, and workers. Over a ten-year period, the USMCA is estimated to produce over \$68 billion in economic activity and potentially create over 550,000 new jobs.
- NuStar's New Burgos pipeline to transport American gasoline to Mexico was approved quickly by the Trump administration.
- Bilateral agreements have been reached with Mexico and Canada to ban non-essential travel and expedite the return of illegal aliens to their homelands.
- Trump dispatched over 5,000 troops to the US-Mexico border. In addition, Mexico sent tens of thousands of its own soldiers and national guardsmen to secure its side of the US-Mexico border. Ended the damaging practice of catch-and-release, which means that instead of being released into the US until future hearings, never to be seen again, illegal migrants are imprisoned pending deportation and subsequently deported to their home countries.
- Three historic asylum cooperation agreements were signed with Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala to combat asylum fraud and accommodate illegal migrants in third-party countries pending asylum petitions.
- Initiated a historic agreement with Mexico known as the "Migrant Protection Protocols" in order to securely return asylum-seekers to Mexico while they await hearings in the United States.

- The Trump administration collaborated with Mexico and other regional allies to eliminate human smuggling networks in both the Northern and Western hemispheres, which profit from human misery and exacerbate the border situation by abusing vulnerable communities.

Before the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States listed below are some major economic gains chalked by the Trump presidency:

- America added 7 million new jobs under Trump, more than triple government forecasts.
- Middle-class family income climbed by approximately \$6,000, well over five times the previous administration's gains.
- The unemployment rate fell to 3.5 percent, the least in five decades.
- Attained a 40-months streak with more job vacancies than job hires.
- Well almost 160 million more Americans reported being hired than it has ever been.

3.6 Status of U.S.-Mexico Relations 100 days post-Trump Administration

The focus of Biden presidency from the onset seemed to have been to undo what Trump did during the latter's time in office. On the very first day of the Biden presidency, hours after his inauguration, 17 executive orders (EO) were signed. These executive orders touched on immigration, regulation, ethics, environment, and equity.⁸⁹ None touched on drug trafficking and trade, however, as far as the first day EOs were concerned. Three of the executive orders targeted a reversal of Trump's immigration policies. These Trump immigration policies were: (1) limitations on entry to the United States for passport holders from 7 Muslim-majority countries – the limitations were removed by Biden's EO; (2) expanding immigration enforcement within the United States – the EOs enacted on day one mandated a halt to that immigration enforcement expansion, and (3) the building of a U.S.-Mexico border wall using

funds from the national emergency declaration – President Biden’s EO stopped the border wall construction by cancelling the emergency funding.

Soon, “the chickens came home to roost”. The consequences of Biden’s Executive Orders targeting some of Trump’s legacy began to unfold: a collapsing economy and the free flow of illegal migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border, with no end in sight. During the Democratic Presidential debate, former Vice-President Biden promised, “*In the first 100 days of my administration, no one, no one will be deported at all.*”⁹⁰ Little did the American people know that under the Biden presidency it was not just going to be a deportation-freeze for illegal aliens but also “open borders” across the U.S-Mexico border. This situation has given the Mexican drug cartels a free hand to operate across the U.S.-Mexico border, further bolstered by the cancellation of a Trump-era directive initiating a “zero tolerance” enforcement policy for migrants illegally crossing the US-Mexico border.⁹¹ Unfortunately, this policy resulted in thousands of family separations.

Under the “zero tolerance” policy, any adult caught illegally crossing the border would be prosecuted for illegal entry. Families were separated and children were taken into custody by Health and Human Services, which manages unaccompanied children at the border, because children cannot be jailed with their family members. That any adult caught crossing the border illegally would be prosecuted for illegal entry. Because children cannot be jailed with their family members, families were separated and children were taken into custody by Health and Human Services, which manages unaccompanied children at the border. Mexican drug cartel members feared this policy and were wary of indiscriminately crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Now, they are not. In fact, many U.S. Border Patrol agents have been overtly threatened and derided by different cartel group members that are staying put on Mexico’s side of the border. Conradson reports that the cartel members are now even wearing bulletproof tactical

vests and wielding machine guns.⁹² At a point those machine guns were fired over the Border Patrol tower.

*“NEW: “Holy sh*t!” We witnessed tracer rounds from a suspected cartel machine gun being fired from Mexico into the U.S. early this morning while we were embedded with the TX National Guard in Roma, TX. Soldiers tell us the rounds went above one of their observation posts.”*

– Tweet from Bill Melugin⁹³ on 8th October 2021.

“[The] negligence [of the Biden administration] has emboldened the cartels like never before and things have become downright dangerous for everyone who is close to the border.” - Conradson (2021)

The Biden administration seem to have indeed emboldened the drug cartels. Under the Trump administration, it was very unlikely that the Mexican Drug Cartels would have ever dared to threaten the U.S. Border Patrol agents. The Cartels seemed to have known the sort of man he was – a man who appears to have no tolerance for illegalities, especially when it has to do with the border and the lives of law enforcement officers. After the altercation between the U.S. Border Patrol Agents and the Mexican Drug Cartels, France24 reported that the Biden administration and Mexico were seeking to revamp their anti-narcotics fight.⁹⁴

Some conservative commentators have opined that a Democrat presidential victory is the most advantageous thing that could ever befall the Mexican Drug Cartels; Wayne Allyn Root is one such example.⁹⁵ Wayne Allyn Root hosts a nationally syndicated radio show in the United States. He has a huge listenership nationwide. On the face of it, such opinions by prominent conservative journalists may seem biased and divisive. Earlier, experts had predicted that drug cartels worldwide made roughly \$500 billion (for emphasis, that’s half a trillion dollars) annually in trafficking narcotics, and the Mexican Drug cartels account for a large chunk of that. Senator Dianne Feinstein, a prominent Democrat, at a hearing on Narcotics Control on 11th June 2019, said:

“The illicit drug trade is a business, valued at anywhere between \$426 [billion] and \$652 billion. Its reach is global. Its distribution is growing. Its leadership is criminal.” – Senator Dianne Feinstein

But then those are just estimates for the narcotics only. What of the human smuggling? More than 117,000 migrants entered the U.S. illegally through the U.S.-Mexico border in February 2021.⁹⁶ The Cartels charge USD10,000 per human smuggled. If the number of illegal aliens that entered the U.S. is multiplied by the Cartel fee for human trafficking per person that computes to more than USD 1.1 billion, just in a month for the Mexican Cartels. Even that, child sex trafficking has not been added to the mix. It is horrible what is happening at the U.S.-Mexico border to the extent that the Mexican Drug Cartels are selling children for USD 3,200 per head.⁹⁷ What is even more interesting is the fact that Google has joined the mainstream liberal media in burying information about such atrocities through censoring and the filtering out of such query results from the first page of its SERP (Search Engine Results Pages). Here are some screenshots to attest to the above:

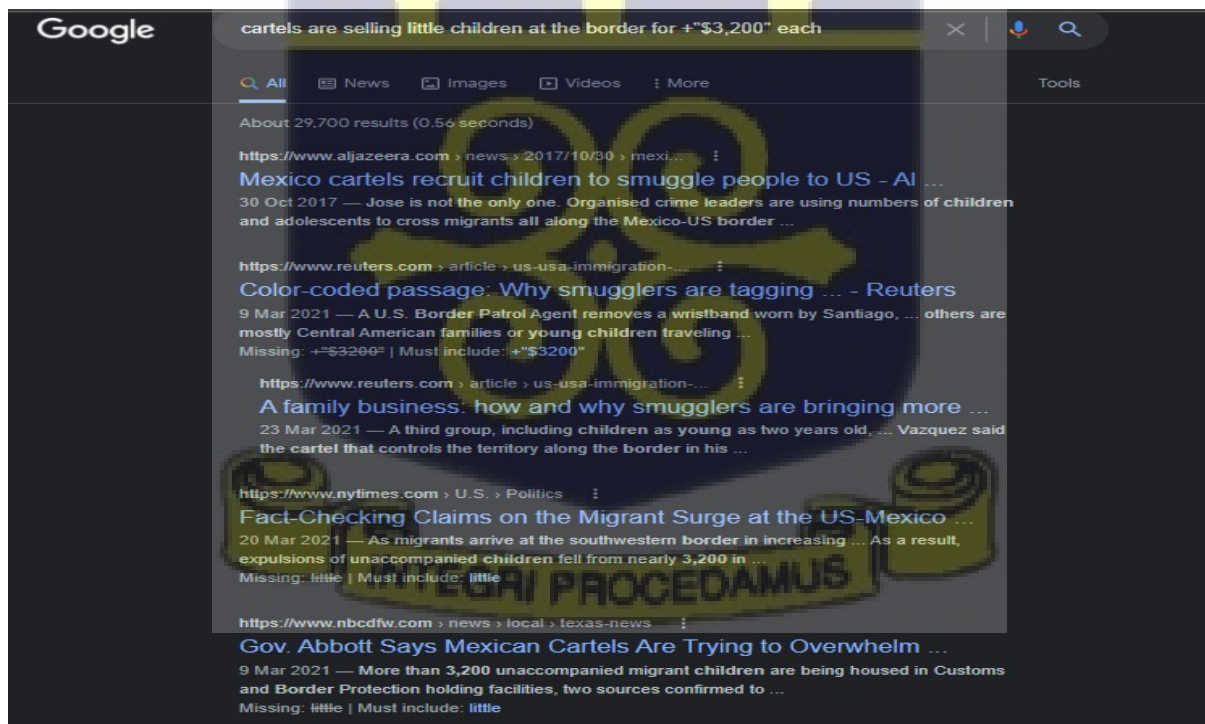


Figure 1: Screenshot of SERP for the query "cartels are selling little children at the border for +\"\$3,200\" each" (date accessed 12/11/2021).

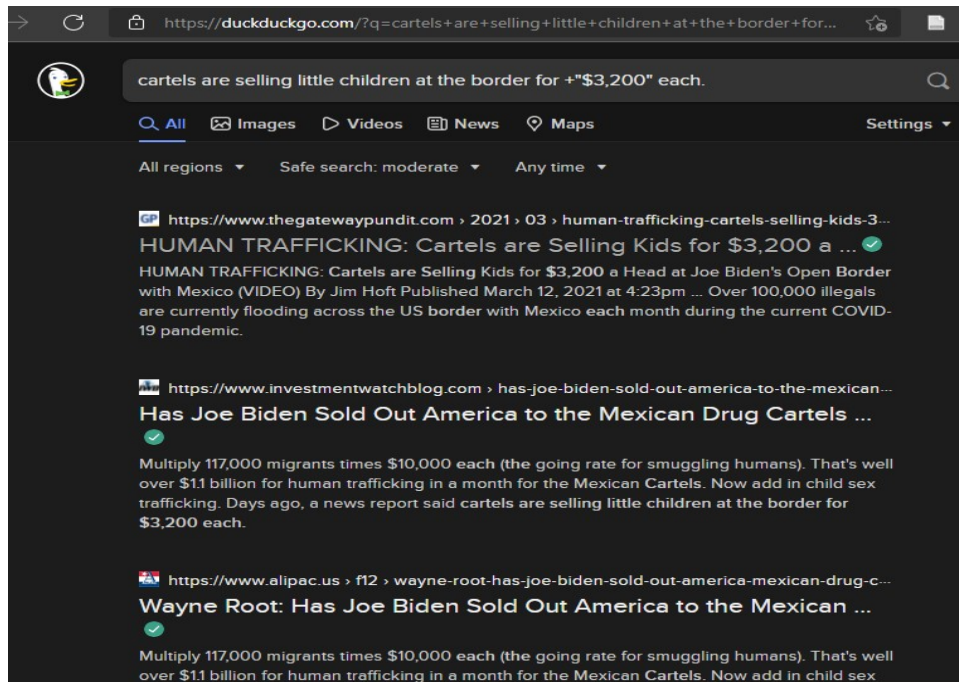


Figure 2: Screenshot of Duckduckgo SERP for the query "cartels are selling little children at the border for +\"\$3,200\" each" (date accessed 12/11/2021).

It is interesting to note that even though Google had that information, it was unwilling to produce it in its SERP, even after requiring Google to produce only search results that include \$3,200, using the search query command: +\"\$3,200\". Google deliberately avoided producing that information even though it knew the answer to that question. A rival search engine, duckduckgo.com that is privacy-centred was able to answer that question and Google was not. Does that mean Duckduckgo is superior to Google? No, not by any stretch of the imagination. The only plausible answer is Google was censoring that information but to what end? Does that mean Duckduckgo is superior to Google? No, not by any stretch of the imagination. The only plausible answer is Google was censoring that information but to what end? In the screenshot below, we find the answer to the query in the first position in the search engine result (Figure 2).

A look at the SERP in Figure 2 shows that the answer was located on a website called thegatewaypundit.com. To determine if indeed Google had the information but censored it, the search query will be modified by adding the search operator, “site: thegatewaypundit.com” to the end of the original query. Below is the screenshot:



Figure 3: Screenshot of Duckduckgo SERP for the query "cartels are selling little children at the border for +"\$3,200" each" site: thegatewaypundit.com

From the above, it is clear as seen in Figure 3, that indeed Google did have the information but censored and buried it to hide the truth from the people especially the American people. And so, there appears to be a concerted effort by the Democrat Party machine, the mainstream liberal media, and Big Tech to hide the truth of what is happening on the U.S.-Mexico borders from the American people. If nothing is going wrong at the U.S.-Mexico border, why hide the information.

President Joe Biden has by his actions at the U.S.-Mexico border covertly embraced an “Open Border” policy which seem to greatly favour the Mexican Drug Cartels and that was why people like Wayne Allyn Root felt the Cartels were hoping for a Democrat presidential victory.^{98,99} Other notable conservatives that have accused Biden of engaging an Open Border policy are Republic National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel, House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (Republican), and Fox News host Sean Hannity.¹⁰⁰

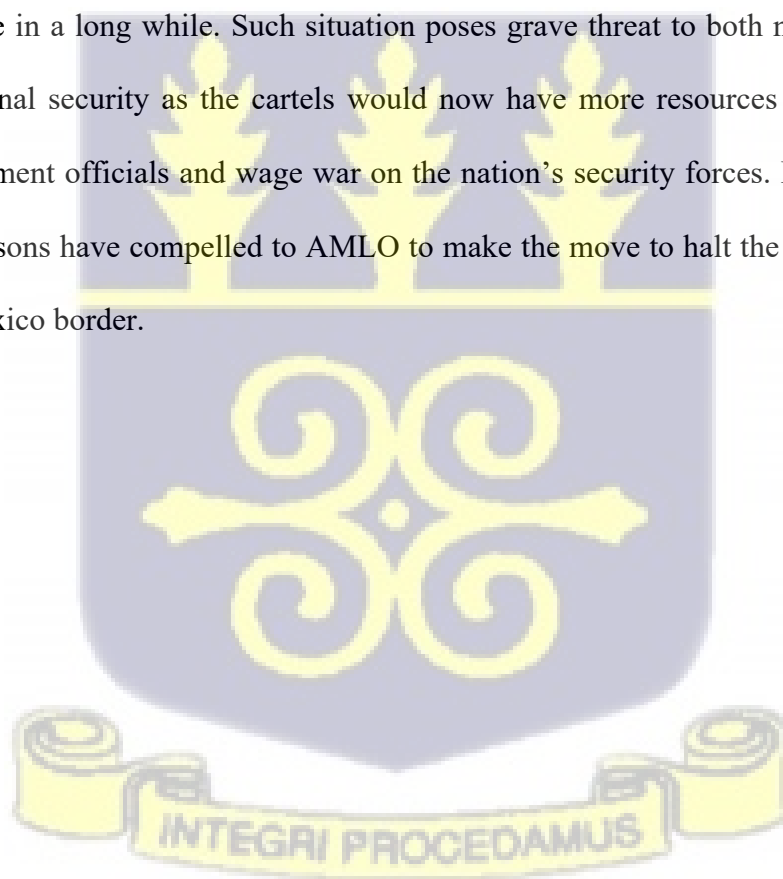
Although the “Open Border” policy has not been publicly announced by the Biden presidency, it seems it is secretly being implemented. This is evinced by the regime’s actions at the border such as banning the construction of the border wall. The U.S. Customs Border and Protection in its operational updates reported that 208,887 individuals were captured in August alone while trying to unlawfully enter the U.S. through the U.S.-Mexico border.¹⁰¹ That figure represents a 317% increment from last August 2020 when Trump was in power. Besides that, the agency claims that over 1.2 million individuals have been captured unlawfully crossing the border since February 2021. Despite the happenings at the border, news on the matter appears to be well contained in the mainstream liberal media. That is because the liberal media is a strong ally of the Democrat party, which does a lot to spin the truth in favour of democrats. For instance, a Forbes article is interestingly and deceptively titled, “No, Biden Hasn’t Introduced ‘Open Borders,’ Despite Surge in Migrants”. It is like saying, “No, the man did not steal the jewellery, despite holding the said jewellery” or “The boy did not steal meat from the stew, despite chewing meat from the stew”. This can go on and on.

“They [migrants from Central America] see him [Biden] as the migrant president, and so many feel they’re going to reach the United States.”

- Mexican President Andres M. L. Obrador¹⁰²

In response to Biden's covert "Open Border" policy, the Mexican president had no choice but to act before Mexico's economy get overrun by the upsurge of immigrants trooping to the U.S.-Mexico border. In March, Saavedra reported that Mexico was getting ready to considerably reinforce efforts to hold up migrants headed for the U.S. southern border.¹⁰³ This Mexico hoped to do using security forces to halt the migrant flow, much of whom hail from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Mexico hoped to deploy the same team that helped stopped the migrant caravans of 2019.

In conclusion, 100 days post-Trump presidency was a total mess on the immigration and narcotics front, with the drug cartels being emboldened and making more money than they have ever made in a long while. Such situation poses grave threat to both nations especially Mexico's national security as the cartels would now have more resources to influence and corrupt government officials and wage war on the nation's security forces. Perhaps, that and many other reasons have compelled to AMLO to make the move to halt the flow of migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border.



Endnotes

- ¹ Copeland, K., & Strang, S. (2020). *God, Trump and the 2020 Election* (p. 14) [Broadcast Notes]. Kenneth Copeland Ministries. <https://www.kcm.org/watch/tv-broadcast/god-trump-and-2020-election?m=39240>
- ² Strang, S. E. (2020). *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election: Why He Must Win and What's at Stake for Christians if He Loses*. Frontline.
- ³ Israel is an important ally of the United States.
- ⁴ Greene, T. (2019, September 16). Time: Angel Numbers: Number 7: Biblical Meaning Number 7. Grief Probate Journey. <https://griefprobatejourney.com/2019/09/16/time-angel-numbers-number-7/>
- ⁵ Brooks, M. (2021). This is why Donald Trump was impeached the first time—Previous charges against former US president explained. *The Scotsman*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/why-was-donald-trump-impeached-first-time-previous-charges-against-former-us-president-explained-3100617>
- ⁶ Pramuk, J. (2021, January 13). Trump becomes first president to be impeached twice, as bipartisan majority charges him with inciting Capitol riot. *CNBC*. <https://www.cbc.com/2021/01/13/house-to-impeach-trump-for-inciting-capitol-riot.html>
- ⁷ Schultz, M. (2021, January 13). Trump impeached by House over Capitol riots, becomes first president to face rebuke twice. *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-impeaches-president-trump-second-time>
- ⁸ Attkisson, S. (2017, September 20). *It looks like Obama did spy on Trump, just as he apparently did to me* [Text]. *TheHill*. <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/351495-it-looks-like-obama-did-spy-on-trump-just-as-he-did-to-me>
- ⁹ Felten, E. (2020, November 18). *Media Keep Lying About Obama's Agencies Spying On Trump's Campaign*. *The Federalist*. <https://thefederalist.com/2020/11/18/democrats-and-the-media-keep-lying-about-obamas-agencies-spying-on-trumps-campaign/>
- ¹⁰ O'Connor, L. (2020). *Now There's No Denying It: Obama's FBI Spied On Trump... Period*. *Townhall*. <https://townhall.com/columnists/larryoconnor/2020/08/14/now-theres-no-denying-it-obamas-fbi-spied-on-trump-period-n2574380>
- ¹¹ Tyrrell Jr, R. E. (2019). *Obama administration's spying on Donald Trump*. *The Washington Times*. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/oct/29/obama-administration-spying-on-donald-trump/>
- ¹² Vespa, M. (2021, September). Confirmed: The Obama DOJ Went Rogue to Spy on an Ex-Trump Campaign Official. *Townhall*. <https://townhall.com/tipsheet/mattvespa/2021/09/22/fisa-court-ruling-confirms-obamas-doj-illegally-spied-on-carter-page-n2596275>
- ¹³ Petri, A. (2020, May). Obamagate was the worst crime ever committed and here is what it was. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/13/obamagate-was-worst-crime-ever-committed-here-is-what-it-was/>
- ¹⁴ Op. cit. see Strang, S.E.
- ¹⁵ The Oval Office is the formal working office space of the president of the United States. It is located in the West Wing of the White House, in Washington, D.C., part of the Executive Office of the President of the United States.
- ¹⁶ Hoffmann, B. (2021, August 24). Newsmax's Audience More Than Doubles for Trump Rally as 5 Million Watch. *Newsmax*. <https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/rally-viewship/2021/08/24/id/1033617/>
- ¹⁷ Muñoz, A. (2021, August 22). Trump Draws 45,000 To The Heart Of Alabama For "Save America" Rally. *Right Side Broadcasting Network (RSBN)*. <https://rsbnetwork.com/featured/trump-draws-45000-to-the-heart-of-alabama-for-save-america-rally/>
- ¹⁸ Alberta, T. (2016, July 19). BREAKING: Trump Clinches Nomination in Cleveland. *National Review*. <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/breaking-trump-clinches-nomination-cleveland/>
- ¹⁹ Associated Press. (2016). Trump reaches the magic number to clinch nomination—News—The Florida Times-Union—Jacksonville, FL. *Jacksonville*. <https://www.jacksonville.com/breaking-news/2016-05-26/story/trump-reaches-magic-number-clinch-nomination>
- ²⁰ Kelly, A. (2016, May 26). Donald Trump Clinches GOP Nomination. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2016/05/26/479588197/donald-trump-clinches-gop-nomination>
- ²¹ Becker, B. (2016). Trump's 6 populist positions. *POLITICO*. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/02/donald-trump-working-class-voters-219231>
- ²² Kazin, M. (2016, March 22). How Can Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders Both Be 'Populist'? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/magazine/how-can-donald-trump-and-bernie-sanders-both-be-populist.html>

- ²³ McGill, A. (2016, September 14). Out of Every 10 Trump Supporters, Nine Are White. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/dissecting-donald-trumps-support/499739/>
- ²⁴ Bump, P. (2015). Why Donald Trump's big advantage among those without college degrees is important. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/12/04/why-trumps-big-advantage-among-those-without-college-degrees-is-important/>
- ²⁵ Noah, T. (2016). Will Blue-Collar Dems Run to Trump? Fuhgeddaboutit! *POLITICO Magazine*. <http://politi.co/2hQtkso>
- ²⁶ Op. cit. see Associate Press.
- ²⁷ Edwards, L. (2018). *What Is Conservatism?* [NGO]. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/what-conservatism>
- ²⁸ Dohms-Harter, E. (2021, July 22). *What Does The Law Actually Say About Vaccine Mandates?* Wisconsin Public Radio. <https://www.wpr.org/what-does-law-actually-say-about-vaccine-mandates>
- ²⁹ Mendelson, L. (2021, August 6). *Mandatory Employee Vaccines – Coming to A State Near You?* Littler Mendelson P.C. <https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/mandatory-employee-vaccines-coming-state-near-you>
- ³⁰ Hoft, J. (2021c, July 22). CDC Quietly Deletes 6,000 COVID Vaccine Deaths From Its CDC Website Total in One Day—Caught by Internet Sleuths (VIDEO). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/07/cdc-quietly-deletes-6000-covid-vaccine-deaths-cdc-website-total-one-day-caught-internet-sleuths-video/>
- ³¹ Hoft, J. (2021d, September 13). According to VAERS Website: There Were 3,296 COVID Vaccine Deaths in US Since July 24 - Or an Average of 70 Deaths per Day. *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/09/us-averaging-70-deaths-per-day-due-covid-vaccine-since-july-24th-3296-covid-total-vaccine-deaths-recorded-vaers-website/>
- ³² Martin, H. (2021, June 14). *COVID vaccine “passports” in the U.S.: Here’s what we’re getting and why*. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-06-14/covid-vaccine-passport-united-states>
- ³³ Hoft, J. (2021e, September 25). Pelosi Cheers as Dems Pass Radical Abortion Without Limits Bill—Legalizes Partial Birth Abortion, Dismembering Babies, Lifts All Restrictions. *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/09/pelosi-cheers-dems-pass-radical-abortion-without-limits-bill-legalizes-partial-birth-abortion-dismembering-babies-lifts-restrictions/>
- ³⁴ Conradson, J. (2021a, September 24). SICKENING: California Governor Newsom Signs Bills That Enable Children to Hide Sex Operations and Abortions From Their Parents. *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/09/sickening-california-governor-newsom-signs-bills-enable-children-hide-sex-operations-abortions-parents/>
- ³⁵ Op. cit. See Hoft, J. (2021e, September 25).
- ³⁶ Lu, R. (2019, December). Who destroyed the American family? *The Week*. <https://theweek.com/articles/881641/who-destroyed-american-family>
- ³⁷ May, E. T. (2003). “Family Values”: The Uses and Abuses of American Family History. *Revue Francaise Detudes Americaines*, no97(3), 7–22.
- ³⁸ Roarty, A. (2021). *Liberal groups set up ‘war room’ to push Democrats to extend child tax credit*. McClatchy Washington Bureau. <https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/article252428913.html>
- ³⁹ Itkowitz, C. (2015, December). Donald Trump says we're all too politically correct. But is that also a way to limit speech? *Washington Post*.
- ⁴⁰ D'Antonio, M. (2016). *Is Donald Trump Racist? Here's what the record shows*. Fortune. <https://fortune.com/2016/06/07/donald-trump-racism-quotes/>
- ⁴¹ Schleifer, T. (2016). *Romney says Trump will change America with “trickle-down racism.”* CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/06/10/politics/mitt-romney-donald-trump-racism/index.html>
- ⁴² Steinhauer, J., Martin, J., & Herszenhorn, D. M. (2016, June 7). Paul Ryan Calls Donald Trump's Attack on Judge ‘Racist,’ but Still Backs Him. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/08/us/politics/paul-ryan-donald-trump-gonzalo-curiel.html>
- ⁴³ Waldman, P. (2015). *Donald Trump is running the most explicitly racist campaign since 1968*. The Week. <https://theweek.com/articles/590711/donald-trump-running-most-explicitly-racist-campaign-since-1968>
- ⁴⁴ Kristof, N. (2016, July 23). Is Donald Trump a Racist? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/24/opinion/sunday/is-donald-trump-a-racist.html>

- ⁴⁵ Bedford, C. (2021, May 12). *Behind The Curtain: How The New York Times Manufactures Lies For Democrats To Attack Their Opponents*. AllSides. <https://www.allsides.com/news/2021-05-12-0742/behind-curtain-how-new-york-times-manufactures-lies-democrats-attack-their>
- ⁴⁶ Blackwell, K. (2019). *Democrats Use The Specter Of Racism To Sow Racial Discord*. Townhall. <https://townhall.com/columnists/kenblackwell/2019/07/25/democrats-use-the-specter-of-racism-to-sow-racial-discord-n2550633>
- ⁴⁷ Thompson, A. (2010). *What did we use before toilet paper?: 200 curious questions & intriguing answers*. Ulysses Press : Distributed by Publishers Group West.
- ⁴⁸ Donald J Trump for President. (2017, May 8). *Donald J. Trump Statement on Preventing Muslim Immigration*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170508054010/https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/donald-j.-trump-statement-on-preventing-muslim-immigration>
- ⁴⁹ Graham, D. A. (2016, November 6). *Which Republicans Oppose Donald Trump? A Cheat Sheet*. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/where-republicans-stand-on-donald-trump-a-cheat-sheet/481449/>
- ⁵⁰ Shaw, A. (2017, February 22). *Trump facing revived criticism from GOP ranks, ahead of high-stakes address* [Text.Article]. Fox News; Fox News. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-facing-revived-criticism-from-gop-ranks-ahead-of-high-stakes-address>
- ⁵¹ Isenstadt, A. (2016). *Stop Trump movement goes to work on GOP leaders*. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/04/stop-trump-movement-gop-222315>
- ⁵² Detrow, S. (2016, August 1). *GOP Criticism Mounts As Trump Continues Attacks On Khan Family*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2016/08/01/488213964/gop-criticism-mounts-as-trump-continues-attacks-on-khan-family>
- ⁵³ Liptak, K. (2016). *Obama on Republicans disavowing Trump: Too little, too late*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/10/13/politics/barack-obama-republicans-donald-trump-criticism/index.html>
- ⁵⁴ Wilson Center. (2020). *Re-Building a Complex Partnership: The Outlook for U.S.-Mexico Relations under the Biden Administration* (p. 110). Mexico Institute. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Re-Building%20a%20Complex%20Partnership_The%20Outlook%20for%20U.S.-Mexico%20Relations%20under%20the%20Biden%20Administration.pdf
- ⁵⁵ Condon, B. J. (2019). *From NAFTA to USMCA: Two's Company, Three's a Crowd*. *Latin American Journal of Trade Policy*, 1(2), 30. <https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-9368.2018.52140>
- ⁵⁶ Brice, M. (2019, June 10). *Trump threatens more tariffs on Mexico over part of immigration deal*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-mexico-idUSKCN1TB182>
- ⁵⁷ Karni, A., Swanson, A., & Shear, M. D. (2019, May 30). *Trump Says U.S. Will Hit Mexico With 5% Tariffs on All Goods*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/us/politics/trump-mexico-tariffs.html>
- ⁵⁸ Kullgren, I., & Kumar, A. (2019). *Trump threatens Mexico with tariffs over immigration*. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/trump-threatens-mexico-with-tariffs-over-immigration/>
- ⁵⁹ Op. cit. see Wilson Centre.
- ⁶⁰ Op. cit. see Brice, M.
- ⁶¹ Op. cit. see Karni et al.,
- ⁶² Op. cit. see Kullgren, I. & Kumar, A.
- ⁶³ Op. cit. see Karni et al.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Op. cit. see Wilson centre.
- ⁶⁷ Agren, D. (2020, December 15). *Mexico: New security law strips diplomatic immunity from DEA agents*. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/15/mexico-security-law-dea-agents-us>
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Op. cit. see Wilson Centre.
- ⁷⁰ Op. cit. see Wilson Centre.
- ⁷¹ Franzoni, M. (2020, November 28). *Opinion – The future of Mexico-US relations Post-Trump*. *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/11/28/opinion-the-future-of-mexico-us-relations-post-trump/>
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ Op. cit. see Wilson Centre.

- ⁷⁴ Sheridan, M. B. (2020). Mexico lashes out at U.S. with law expected to harm cooperation on drug fight. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/mexico-drug-trafficking-dea-amlo/2020/12/15/fea76612-3e47-11eb-8bc0-ae155bee4aff_story.html
- ⁷⁵ Op. cit. see Agren, D.
- ⁷⁶ Stevenson, M. (2020). *Mexico's Congress approves law limiting foreign, DEA agents, lifting their immunity*. El Paso Times. <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2020/12/16/mexicos-congress-approves-law-limiting-foreign-dea-agents/3921621001/>
- ⁷⁷ Op. cit. see Agren, D.
- ⁷⁸ Reuters staff. (2020, November 19). Mexico's president: We didn't threaten to expel U.S. drug agents over General Cienfuegos arrest. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-usa-idUSKBN27Z26T>
- ⁷⁹ Op. cit. see Sheridan, M.B.
- ⁸⁰ Op. cit. see Stevenson, M.
- ⁸¹ Op. cit. see Agren
- ⁸² Kryt, J. (2020, December 16). 'The Winners Are the Cartels': Mexico Slaps Cuffs on the DEA. *The Daily Beast*. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/mexico-slaps-cuffs-on-the-dea-after-arrest-of-general-salvador-cienfuegos>
- ⁸³ Op. cit. see Agren
- ⁸⁴ Op. cit. see Kryt, J.
- ⁸⁵ Op. cit. see Agren, D.
- ⁸⁶ Op. cit. see Kryt, J.
- ⁸⁷ Op. cit. see Sheridan, M.B.
- ⁸⁸ Hoft, J. (2021a, January 16). White House Releases List of President Trump's Accomplishments—And It Is Historic! *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/01/white-house-releases-list-president-trumps-accomplishments-list-mile-long/>
- ⁸⁹ Bradner, E., Klein, B., & Hickey, C. (2021, January). *Biden targets Trump's legacy with first-day executive actions*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/politics/executive-actions-biden/index.html>
- ⁹⁰ Fairbanks, C. (2020, March 16). Joe Biden: "In First 100 Days of My Administration, No One, No One Will Be Deported At All." *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2020/03/joe-biden-in-first-100-days-of-my-administration-no-one-no-one-will-be-deported-at-all/>
- ⁹¹ Balsamo, M., & Long, C. (2021, January 31). *AP Exclusive: DOJ rescinds 'zero tolerance' immigration rule* - *The Washington Post*. https://web.archive.org/web/20210131102346/https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/ap-exclusive-doj-rescinds-zero-tolerance-immigration-rule/2021/01/26/c840fb1c-601e-11eb-a177-7765f29a9524_story.html
- ⁹² Conradson, J. (2021b, October 9). Biden's Border Crisis Pops Off: Cartel Fires Machine Gun Over Border Patrol Tower After Days of Threats Against Agents by Armed Gangs in Tac Vests; "We Should Just Shoot You Soldiers" - (Video). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/10/bidens-border-crisis-pops-off-cartel-fires-machine-gun-border-patrol-tower-days-threats-agents-armed-gangs-tac-vests-just-shoot-soldiers-video/>
- ⁹³ <https://t.co/wJrcDF885r> / Twitter [Bill Melugin on Twitter: "NEW: "Holy sh*t!" We witnessed tracer rounds from a suspected cartel machine gun being fired from Mexico into the U.S. early this morning while we were embedded with the TX National Guard in Roma, TX. Soldiers tell us the rounds went above one of their observation posts. @FoxNews](https://www.foxnews.com/mexico/biden-border-crisis)
- ⁹⁴ France24. (2021, October 8). *US, Mexico seek to revamp fight against drug cartels*. France 24. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211008-us-mexico-seek-to-revamp-fight-against-drug-cartels>
- ⁹⁵ Root, W. A. (2021, March 15). Wayne Root: Has Joe Biden Sold Out America to the Mexican Drug Cartels? *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/03/wayne-root-joe-biden-sold-america-mexican-drug-cartels/>
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Hoft, J. (2021b, March 12). HUMAN TRAFFICKING: Cartels are Selling Kids for \$3,200 a Head at Joe Biden's Open Border with Mexico (VIDEO). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/03/human-trafficking-cartels-selling-kids-3200-head-joe-bidens-open-border-mexico-video/>
- ⁹⁸ Jordan, C. (2021, October 7). *We must fight the Biden administration's open border policies* [Text]. TheHill. <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/homeland-security/575726-we-must-fight-the-biden-administrations-open-border>

⁹⁹ Op. cit. see Root, W.A.

¹⁰⁰ Walsh, J. (2021). *No, Biden Hasn't Introduced 'Open Borders,' Despite Surge In Migrants*. Forbes. Retrieved October 30, 2021, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2021/03/14/no-the-us-mexico-border-isnt-open-despite-surge-in-migrants/>

¹⁰¹ U.S. Customs Border and Protection. (2021). *CBP Releases August 2021 Operational Update*. U.S. Customs and Border Protection. <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-august-2021-operational-update>

¹⁰² Graham, D. (2021, March 10). Exclusive: "Migrant president" Biden stirs Mexican angst over boom time for gangs. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-mexico-exclusive-idUSKBN2B21D8>

¹⁰³ Saavedra, R. (2021, March). *Mexico Plans Massive 'Crackdown' On Illegal Immigration After Crisis Erupts Under Biden*. Daily Wire. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/mexico-plans-massive-crackdown-on-illegal-immigration-after-crisis-erupts-under-biden>



CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The present study sought to examine the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations under President Donald Trump. The study addressed four objectives. Firstly, it assessed the status of the United States-Mexico bilateral relations before the presidency of Donald J. Trump. Secondly, it investigated the domestic changes Mexico and the United States have faced in the last two decades. Thirdly, it explored the implications of the domestic changes on U.S.-Mexico relations during Trump's presidency, with particular emphasis on immigration, trade (NAFTA) and drugs. Fourthly, it assessed the status of U.S.-Mexico relations 100 days post-Trump administration. This chapter looks at the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the study as well as recommendations made by the study.

4.2. Summary of Findings

United States-Mexico bilateral relations can best be described as a 'bromance' – a love-hate relationship; their 'rich' history bears that out. From the get-go, the contentious issue of recognizing the Independence of Mexico split American leadership into two major factions.

Prior to 1822, the United States hesitated to give Mexico a formal recognition primarily because of the desire of the United States presidents to 'sit on the fence' during the struggle between Spanish troops and freedom fighters in Mexico – Mexico was a vassal territory or colony of Spain at the time.

The territorial ambitions of the United States resulted in a war between Mexico and the U.S. The war lasted from 1846 to 1848. In 1836 colonists living in the Texas area seceded from Mexico to become an independent state.

Mexico was not happy. War was in the offing. Instability in the body politic of Mexico ensued and generated strains in U.S. – Mexico relations. After formal acceptance of Texas into the Union, Mexico responded by severing diplomatic ties with the U.S.

In April 1846, the Mexican military launched an attack on what they saw to be incursive U.S. forces that had taken over land under dispute between the two countries. The following month, the United States went to war with Mexico. In 1848 the war ended, and diplomatic ties resumed.

The decades in the latter part of the 20th century witnessed deep changes in U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. This was in sharp contrast to what hitherto had prevailed.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 was a catalyst that served to bring the two nations closer together to work in a more cooperative fashion, even as their national interests began to align more and more. There was a newfound cooperation.

That newfound cooperation led to the United States and Mexico becoming more interdependent. The passing of the NAFTA deal served to distort the distinction between foreign and domestic issues, which had for some time started to wane. Consequently, after NAFTA, delinking the different bilateral issues became problematic. And domestic problems within both countries were rife.

The domestic issues prevailing in the U.S. during the presidential candidature of Donald J. Trump and the early days of his presidency may have contributed in large part to fueling his

rise to the presidency, not to mention putting Mexico in the ‘cross-hairs’ of his presidency. Some have argued that the breakdown in social contract contributed to the election of Donald J. Trump.

Trump is a practical person. When he feels he has identified a problem, he begins to talk about it (often not in complimentary terms) until it has gathered enough public attention and awareness for phase two to begin, which entails taking concrete corrective actions.

Donald J. Trump during the early days of his presidency was a major threat to U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations. The threat posed by President Trump to U.S.-Mexico relations occurred along three main dimensions – his utterances/ rhetoric, foreign policy agenda, and personality.

His utterances/rhetoric: His utterances could best be described as a “tell it as it is” attitude. In the eyes of the liberal media, the democrats, some republicans and other political watchers, this attitude was an affront to political correctness. The “tell it as it is” attitude of President Donald Trump was a double-edged sword – while it increased his support base, it made him a lot of enemies among the Washington elites and across the borders. But then Donald Trump is not a diplomat, and neither is he a politician. And it was those traits and his bluntness or forwardness that perhaps endeared him to the masses in the United States who have long suffered from broken promises from the Washington elites.

Trump’s foreign policy agenda was encapsulated in two words, “America First!”. These two words formed the thrust of his entire presidential campaign, which essentially was “Make America Great Again!” In as much as these slogans energized Trump’s base, it was a potential source of worry for Mexico as far as the US-Mexico bilateral relations were concerned. Both “America First” and “Make America Great Again” are U.S-centric and inward-looking. To the

people of Mexico, these slogans seemed like a “double-edged sword” because their implementation could negatively affect Mexico’s trade with the U.S.

Trump’s Personality: Trump is a go-getter. The United States under President Donald Trump felt Mexico was not a significant contributor to the U.S-Mexico bilateral relations. Consequently, any sense of obligation to the bilateral relations seemed to be “up in the air”. As a result, his administration was willing to impose a 5% tariff on goods in transit to the U.S. from Mexico, and even steadily increase that tariff until the illegal immigration problem is solved.

The economic benefit of US-Mexico relations appeared to be one-sided in favour of Mexico, prior to Trump becoming president, as reflected by the 100-billion-dollar trade deficit with Mexico. To top it all up, Mexico through its immigration policies was making the United States also feel unsafe at its southern border, by allowing migrant caravan to pour into the United States’ southern border.

This action or inaction by Mexico does not appear to suggest Mexico care about the welfare of its diplomatic partner and for that matter US-Mexico relations. To the U.S., the relationship with Mexico is perhaps more of ensuring security at its ‘backyard’ (i.e., southern border) while to Mexico is more possibly about achieving economic gain.

To the United States under Donald Trump, security was paramount, and it appeared not to be getting it from its dealings with Mexico and so the United States under President Trump resorted to the building of a wall to provide security across its southern border – a move that may have undermined the U.S-Mexico bilateral relations.

But then, the U.S. had often tried to strengthen its immigration policy as far as Mexico was concerned, even before Trump came on the scene. The increase in border controls in the year 2001, followed by the Bush administration's decision to put up a fence on the Mexico-U.S. border are clear pieces of evidence that Donald Trump only came to finish what had already started; only that he was more clear-eyed and decisive about it. The domestic politics of both countries is perhaps the most significant driver of U.S.-Mexico relations.

Tensions always arose between two countries when their national interests fail to align. NAFTA was one example – the U.S. under Trump wanted an overhaul of the treaty; but Mexico wanted it to be left untouched. In the end, the U.S. prevailed – NAFTA became USMCA.

The foundation of all bilateral relationship should be alignment of national interests. Alignment of national interests breeds cooperation. When a bilateral relationship is not working for one, it is more than likely that one or more national interests of the respective countries is/are out of sync.

For the longest time, the U.S.-Mexico relationship could not be described as being on a strong solid footing. All that changed with the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

President Bill Clinton may well be the U.S. president that has done more for Mexico than any other U.S. president before him or after him in recent decades. First, the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which was signed into law during his presidency has greatly benefitted Mexico's economy in terms of trade. Second, President Bill Clinton came to the rescue of the Mexican Peso at a time of great financial crisis for the country.

The first and most essential objective of the NAFTA deal was to enhance bilateral relations between and among Mexico, Canada, and the United States. The first time the free trade

agreement was floated, some feared that under the NAFTA treaty, companies would move production from the United States to Mexico to reduce the cost of production, which it did. Mexico benefited hugely and so did the United States and Canada. Concerning trade between U.S and Mexico, it appears that the United States came out worse off, prompting calls for restructuring from the United States.

The NAFTA treaty brought about some major structural changes in the U.S. economy. New jobs were created, many jobs were lost as well. That development would in some decades later lead to the rise of a populist leader, in the person of President Donald J. Trump – the U.S. political establishment’s worst nightmare. A man loathed by his political enemies (i.e., the Democrat Party and the liberal Media) and tolerated by his own party (i.e., Republican Party) bigwigs; and yet loved by the masses.

Then came President Trump, arguing for the renegotiation of NAFTA and even a possible dismantling and replacement of more than a two-decades-old treaty because he believed NAFTA had ‘robbed’ the United States of its auto industry and jobs. He achieved both; NAFTA was successfully renegotiated and replaced by the brand-new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

For some strange reason, drug trafficking and immigration are two inextricably linked issues that can always be seen to mark U.S.-Mexico relations, regardless of which political party is in power. One journalist of USA Today described the battles to stop drug smuggling from Mexico to the United States as an “endless” one.

President Clinton’s approach to the drug problem in the U.S.-Mexico relations seems very different from that of the Trump administration which saw Mexico as an enabler of the drug problem in the United States. The Clinton administration did not see Mexico as the primary

cause of the drug problem in the United States since drug traffickers only use Mexico as transit and that Mexico may not be the major producer of the narcotics that find its way into the United States. The Clinton administration further saw Mexico as a victim of the drug problem.

Years later Mexico ceased being just a transit for narcotics to become a production hub during the administration of George Bush Jr. In April 2004, the State Department indicated that opium poppy and marijuana cultivation grew considerably in Mexico in 2003.

During the presidency of George Bush, there was an unprecedented level of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico in counter-narcotics. Mexico under President Fox went all out against major drug traffickers.

Regarding trade, President's Bush's administration continued to support NAFTA institutions. Under NAFTA, trade between the two nations had tripled.

The Bush presidency strived to fulfil its campaign promise to put together legislation that would ensure the unrestricted flow of cheap Mexican labor into the U.S. and to safeguard it via pathways to becoming an American citizen. The resistance to the legislation was huge, especially from within his party, the Republican Party.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration approached trade from the standpoint of multilateralism. In March 2009, President Obama put on hold a pilot program, which George Bush had brought into being in 2008 to pave the way for a broader, more comprehensive U.S.-Mexico cross-border trucking initiative. This suspension was the beginning of Obama's first trade war and with Mexico for that matter.

In framing America's drug problem, President Obama is on record to have said that the strong demand in the U.S. for illegal drugs is a primary contributory factor to the United States'

narcotics problem in the U.S. (Painter, 2008). This statement mirrors how President Clinton also framed drug trafficking in the U.S during his time in office as president.

Concerning immigration and border security, President Obama toed the policy initiatives of his predecessor. It was later in 2012 that he devised the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy and the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (the DREAM Act).

In the last two decades, Mexico and the United States have faced a lot of domestic changes. Trump's rise to the Office of the President in the United States was a watershed moment both for the U.S. and Mexico. The American voters saw him as the change they needed, and the Mexicans viewed him as a threat to their economic wellbeing.

Conventionally, anti-immigration arguments were two-pronged – economic and cultural. Economic arguments against immigration had to do with the loss of jobs from citizens of the United States to immigrants, while cultural anti-immigration arguments insisted that the influx of immigrants into the U.S. alters or dilutes American culture. Since the late 1990s, these arguments have changed. They have taken on a national security dimension, and Trump did not fail to tap into those sentiments during his presidential campaign as evinced in his “Build the wall” promise which he did a lot to fulfill.

On the other side of the U.S. border, Mexico was busy debating the impact Trump's immigration policies would have on Mexico should he succeed in implementing them. The United States and Donald Trump was a crucial debate topic. Immigration, NAFTA, border militarization, and the border wall proposition were major topics of debate throughout the Mexican presidential campaign. But then why should the domestic issues of the U.S. trouble

Mexico so? The short answer: U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations is driven primarily by domestic issues.

There are six structural conditions that have controlled U.S.-Mexico relations for the last two decades namely (1) both the United States and Mexico attach different levels of importance to their bilateral relationship; (2) power asymmetry; (3) Interdependency; (4) 'Intermestic' – meaning foreign relations between the two countries is part domestic and part international; (5) Complexity, and (6) tradition.

U.S.-Mexico relations are marked by a firmly set structural relationship that is extremely difficult to alter. United States Presidents that had attempted to go against the structural relationship became unpopular very quickly.

Interactions on a trilateral (with Canada) and a bilateral basis until 2016 witnessed the development of a regional and global common agenda. The responsive international relations that were being nurtured created a power structure of friends, partners, and allies across the Rio Grande/Bravo. This solid growth ended in 2017 when Trump fractured the template of North American relations by attacking the credibility of NAFTA and adopting a more aggressive stance to bilateral ties.

Trump was a 'disruptor-in-chief', having imposed protectionist tariffs on Mexican steel and aluminum imports to the US, and pressing forward with expanding the border wall. In June 2019, Trump told reporters his administration will place 5% tariffs on imported goods from Mexico. Unless Mexico ended uncontrolled immigration across its U.S.-Mexico border, the tariff rates would have risen each month until they managed to reach 25% in October.

An edgy compromise and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico emerged because of the successful negotiation and approval of the US-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade pact, and bilateral cooperation between U.S. and Mexico to halt the flow of immigrants from Central America before they arrived at U.S.-Mexico border.

An unlikely personal friendship was birthed between President Trump and the Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador as a result. This was vintage Trump - always unpredictable and able to make friends out of seeming adversaries, if he so desires. Their friendship is described as unlikely because of the bashing and harsh criticisms levelled against Mexico by Trump during his presidential campaign and the early days of his presidency.

Instead of unmaking U.S.-Mexico relations as the political pundits had predicted, Donald Trump seemed to have rather strengthened it to the amazement of onlookers. Through his actions on immigration, Trump made Mexico a stronger partner of the U.S. since the U.S. would now depend on Mexico more than ever before to secure its southern border. For instance, President Trump was able to successfully compel Mexico to boost military presence at the U.S.-Mexico border to stop immigrants from Central America. To stem the flow of migrants into the United States and stop plans to impose tariffs on Made in Mexico goods, Mexico, and U.S signed the Migration Protection Protocol (MPP).

Mexico's assent to the MPP and the USMCA trade pact proposed by Trump, in a way, put it in a stronger position with the U.S. to also have its concerns addressed. After all, helping the U.S. secure its southern border does not and would not threaten Mexico's national interest. In January 2021, Trump left the Oval Office.

The focus of Biden presidency from the onset seemed to have been to undo what Trump did during the latter's time in office. On the very first day of the Biden presidency, hours after his

inauguration, 17 executive orders (EO) were signed. These executive orders touched on immigration, regulation, ethics, environment, and equity.

None touched on drug trafficking and trade, however, as far as the first day EOs were concerned. Three of the executive orders targeted a reversal of Trump's immigration policies. These Trump immigration policies were: (1) limitations on entry to the United States for passport holders from 7 Muslim-majority countries – the limitations were removed by Biden's EO; (2) expanding immigration enforcement within the United States – the EOs enacted on day one mandated a halt to that immigration enforcement expansion, and (3) the building of a U.S.-Mexico border wall using funds from the national emergency declaration – President Biden's EO stopped the border wall construction by cancelling the emergency funding.

Based on the above findings, the hypothesis that Donald Trump's presidency negatively affected relations between the United States and Mexico is rejected. A case in point is the friendly relations that developed between the Presidents of both countries. Another evidence supporting rejection of the above hypothesis is the Migration Protection Protocol (MPP).

4.3 Conclusions

The status of U.S.-Mexico relations before the Trump presidency remained relatively stable. Presidents Clinton and Bush all made conscious efforts not to 'rock the boat' but maintain friendly relations with Mexico. Notwithstanding, President Barack Obama's trade war on Mexico may have "rocked the boat" just a little bit, but nothing significant as to derail U.S.-Mexico relations.

In the last two decades, domestic changes in the United States included but not limited to a (1) shift in the U.S.' traditional view of immigration as an economic and cultural issue to now viewing illegal border crossings as a national security threat especially fueled by the crisis of 9/11 and (2) a renegotiation of the decades-old NAFTA deal, which eventually led to the formulation of a new trade deal called USMCA. In Mexico, major domestic changes were found to be (1) increased militarization of the war on drugs; (2) heightened distrust of Washington fueled by Trump's rise to power; (3) an elevated interest by Mexico in the U.S. presidential primaries and what it means for the fortunes of Mexico, especially following Trump's ascendancy to the Oval Office; (4) a rise in proactivity on issues of illegal immigration affecting U.S.-Mexico border. These domestic changes do not just happen but are controlled by certain structural conditions vis-à-vis attachment of different levels of importance to the bilateral relationship, power asymmetry, interdependency, 'intermestic', complexity of the bilateral relationship, and tradition.

Although doom and gloom, triggered by domestic changes in both countries, were predicted for U.S.-Mexico relations under President Donald Trump; the bilateral relations between both countries seemed to have rather strengthened to the amazement of onlookers. In the area of immigration, Trump was able to get Mexico for the first time to agree to a pact that required Mexican authorities to stop migrant caravans and illegal aliens from reaching the U.S.-Mexico border. Concerning trade, Trump successfully renegotiated NAFTA to become USMCA. Under Trump, large sections of the U.S.-Mexico border wall were built to prevent drug smuggling into the country, while at the same pursuing the kingpin strategy.

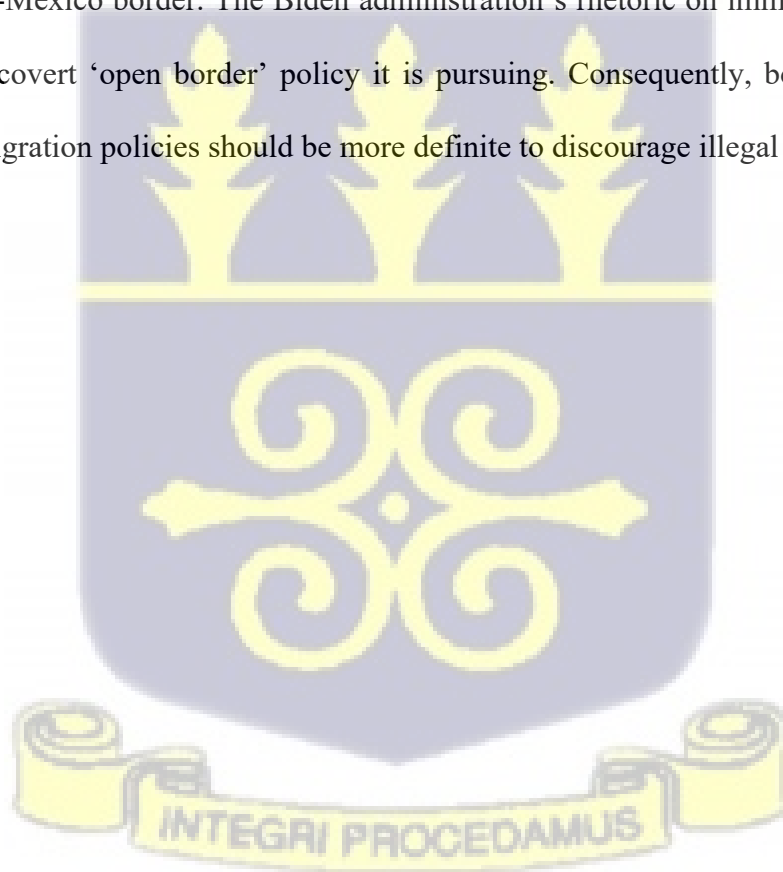
100 days post-Trump presidency was a total mess on the immigration and narcotics front, with the drug cartels being emboldened and making more money than they have ever made in a long

while. The Biden presidency seems to be focused on undoing the economic gains and the successes chalked by the U.S. under the Trump presidency.

4.4 Recommendations

Although Trump's style and behaviour may not always be desirable, his America First policies without doubt ushered the United States into an era of great economic prosperity and security.

It is, thus, recommended that the United States even under President Biden continue the Trump era policies on immigration and the anti-narcotics fight, since those policies were quite effective in clamping down illegal immigration and diminishing the operations of drug cartels across the U.S.-Mexico border. The Biden administration's rhetoric on immigration does not align with the covert 'open border' policy it is pursuing. Consequently, both Mexican and American immigration policies should be more definite to discourage illegal immigration.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Meisenhalter, F. (2017). *A Biography of the Subcomandante Marcos: Rebel Leader of the Zapatistas in Mexico*. Amazon.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Gutiérrez, R. (2007). George W. Bush and Mexican Immigration Policy. *Revue Francaise Detudes Americaines, No 113(3)*, 70–76.

Cabral, L.-A. (2010). Managing Economic Crises; Bill Clinton and the Mexican Peso Crisis. *The Undergraduate Review, 6(8)*, 29–34.

Gutiérrez, R. (2007). George W. Bush and Mexican Immigration Policy. *Revue Francaise Detudes Americaines, No 113(3)*, 70–76.

Lohrmann, R. (2000). Migrants, Refugees and Insecurity. Current Threats to Peace? *International Migration, 38(4)*, 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00118>

Soelberg, C. D., Brown, R. E., Du Vivier, D., Meyer, J. E., & Ramachandran, B. K. (2017). The US Opioid Crisis: Current Federal and State Legal Issues. *Anesthesia and Analgesia, 125(5)*, 1675–1681. <https://doi.org/10.1213/ANE.0000000000002403>

Soukup, B. J., & Alexander, K. W. (2010). Obama's First Trade War: The US-Mexico Cross-Border Trucking Dispute and the Implications of Strategic Cross-Sector Retaliation on U.S. Compliance Under NAFTA. *Berkeley Journal of International Law, 28(2)*, 1–31.

THESES & DISSERTATIONS

Mosashvili, G. (2020). *U.S.-Mexico Relations and Migration as an Impeding Factor: Trump's Presidency (2016-2020)* [Master's thesis]. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

Murray, M. (2005). *Bush approval dips below 40 percent*. NBC News.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna9672058>

Atakora, A. B. (2017). *The foreign policy of the United States of America in the Asia Pacific Region and its implications for Sino-American relations* [Master of Arts degree in International Affairs]. Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, University of Ghana.

Mosashvili, G. (2020). *U.S.-Mexico Relations and Migration as an Impeding Factor: Trump's Presidency (2016-2020)* [Master's thesis]. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

Purcell, S. K. (1997). The Changing Nature of US-Mexican Relations. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 39(1), 137–152.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/166501>

DOCUMENT & REPORTS

Restrepo, D., Werz, M., & Martinez, J. (2017). *Preserving and Strengthening the U.S.-Mexico Relationship*. Center for American Progress.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/01/30/297187/preserving-and-strengthening-the-u-s-mexico-relationship/>

Selee, A. (2012). *U.S.-Mexico Relations Under President Obama's Second Term*. Woodrow Wilson Centre.

Velasco, J. (2018). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* (p. 26). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University.

Baker, B. (2017). *Immigration Enforcement Actions : 2016*. (p. 11) [Annual Report]. U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Congressional Research Service. (2004). *Mexico-U.S. Relations: Issues for the 108th Congress* (No. RL31876; p. 30). CRS Report for Congress.

Gutiérrez, R. (2007). George W. Bush and Mexican Immigration Policy. *Revue Francaise Detudes Americaines*, No 113(3), 70–76.

Homeland Security. (2020, October 29). *The Border Wall System is Deployed, Effective, and Disrupting Criminals and Smugglers*. Department of Homeland Security.

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/10/29/border-wall-system-deployed-effective-and-disrupting-criminals-and-smugglers>

Office of the Historian. (2008). *A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Mexico*.

<https://history.state.gov/countries/mexico>

Office of the United States Trade Representative. (2020). *Mexico: U.S.-Mexico Trade Facts*.

<https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/mexico>

Selee, A. (2012). *U.S.-Mexico Relations Under President Obama's Second Term*. Woodrow Wilson Centre.

Snibbe, K. (2019, April 5). Here's how much traffic crosses the U.S.-Mexico border. *Orange County Register*. [https://www.ocregister.com/heres-how-much-traffic-crosses-the-u-s-](https://www.ocregister.com/heres-how-much-traffic-crosses-the-u-s-mexico-border)

[mexico-border](https://www.ocregister.com/heres-how-much-traffic-crosses-the-u-s-mexico-border)

U. S. Government Accountability Office. (2018, April). *Illicit Opioids: While Greater Attention Given to Combating Synthetic Opioids, Agencies Need to Better Assess their Efforts*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-18-205>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. (2018). *Global overview of drug demand and supply: Latest trends and cross-cutting issues*. United Nations.

https://www.unodc.org/wdr2018/prelaunch/WDR18_Booklet_2_GLOBAL.pdf

U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation Taskforce. (2019). *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation 2018-2024* (p. 29). Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Whitepaper_Security_Taskforce.pdf

Velasco, J. (2018). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: A Tale of Two Crises* (p. 26). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University.

Villarreal, M. A., & Fergusson, I. F. (2017). *The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* (p. 43). Congressional Research Service.

Waslin, M. (2003). *The New Meaning of the Border: U.S. - Mexico Migration Since 9/11*. 15.

Wilson, C. E., Olson, E. L., Salazaar, M. R., Selee, A., & Wood, D. (2013). *New Ideas for a New Era: Policy Options for the Next Stage in U.S.-Mexico Relations* (p. 61). Woodrow Wilson Centre.

https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/misc/new_ideas_us_mexico_relations.pdf

Wilson, C., Parás, P., & Enríquez, E. (2017). *A Critical Juncture: Public Opinion in U.S.-Mexico Relations* (p. 41). Wilson Centre Mexico Institute.

WEBSITES

Brice, M. (2019, June 10). Trump threatens more tariffs on Mexico over part of immigration deal. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-mexico-idUSKCN1TB182>

Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O. (2018, December 8). *The Liberal Order Is Rigged*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-04-17/liberal-order-rigged>

Conradson, J. (2021, October 9). Biden's Border Crisis Pops Off: Cartel Fires Machine Gun Over Border Patrol Tower After Days of Threats Against Agents by Armed Gangs in Tac Vests; "We Should Just Shoot You Soldiers" - (Video). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/10/bidens-border-crisis-pops-off-cartel-fires-machine-gun-border-patrol-tower-days-threats-agents-armed-gangs-tac-vests-just-shoot-soldiers-video/>

Edwards, L. (2018). *What Is Conservatism?* [NGO]. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/what-conservatism>

Graham, D. A. (2016, November 6). *Which Republicans Oppose Donald Trump? A Cheat Sheet*. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/where-republicans-stand-on-donald-trump-a-cheat-sheet/481449/>

Harper, J. (2018). *Still hostile: News coverage of President Trump is 92 percent negative, study finds*. The Washington Times. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/oct/10/still-hostile-news-coverage-of-president-trump-is-/>

Hoft, J. (2019, January 10). BRUTAL!... President Trump: Democrats Don't Give a Damn About Crime - Don't Care About Gang Members Stabbing People (VIDEO). *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2019/01/brutal-president-trump-democrats-dont-give-a-damn-about-crime-dont-care-about-gang-members-stabbing-people-video/>

Hoft, J. (2021, January 16). White House Releases List of President Trump's Accomplishments—And It Is Historic! *The Gateway Pundit*. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/01/white-house-releases-list-president-trumps-accomplishments-list-mile-long/>

Jordan, C. (2021, October 7). *We must fight the Biden administration's open border policies* [Text]. The Hill. <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/homeland-security/575726-we-must-fight-the-biden-administrations-open-border>

Kryt, J. (2020, December 16). 'The Winners Are the Cartels': Mexico Slaps Cuffs on the DEA. *The Daily Beast*. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/mexico-slaps-cuffs-on-the-dea-after-arrest-of-general-salvador-cienfuegos>

Noyes, R. (2018). *Study: Economic Boom Largely Ignored as TV's Trump Coverage Hits 92% Negative*. Media Research Center Newsbusters.

<https://www.newsbusters.org/blogs/nb/rich-noyes/2018/10/09/study-econ-boom-ignored-tv-trump-coverage-hits-92-percent-negative>

Office of the United States Trade Representative. (2020). *Mexico: U.S.-Mexico Trade Facts*.

<https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/mexico>

Painter, J. (2008, November 6). Latin America awaits Obama action. *BBC Latin America News*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/us_elections_2008/7710855.stm

Roberts, K. (2020). *It's Official: Mexico Is No. 1 U.S. Trade Partner For First Time, Despite Overall U.S. Trade Decline*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenroberts/2020/02/05/its-official-mexico-is-no-1-us-trade-partner-for-first-time-despite-overall-us-trade-decline/>

Root, W. A. (2021, March 15). Wayne Root: Has Joe Biden Sold Out America to the Mexican Drug Cartels? *The Gateway Pundit*.

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/03/wayne-root-joe-biden-sold-america-mexican-drug-cartels/>

Schlesinger, S. (2006, April 24). Bush's Low Ratings Reflect Pre-9/11 Views. *Observer*.

<https://observer.com/2006/04/bushs-low-ratings-reflect-pre911-views/>

Shaw, A. (2017, February 22). *Trump facing revived criticism from GOP ranks, ahead of high-stakes address* [Text.Article]. Fox News; Fox News.

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-facing-revived-criticism-from-gop-ranks-ahead-of-high-stakes-address>

U.S. Customs Border and Protection. (2021). *CBP Releases August 2021 Operational Update*. U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-august-2021-operational-update>

BBC. (2018, March 6). Opioid crisis: Overdose rates jump 30% in one year. *BBC News*.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43305340>

Blanco, O. (2017, April 13). *How much it costs ICE to deport one undocumented immigrant*.

CNNMoney. <https://money.cnn.com/2017/04/13/news/economy/deportation-costs-undocumented-immigrant/index.html>

Gillespie, P. (2016, September 27). *Trump hammers America's "worst trade deal."*

CNNMoney. <https://money.cnn.com/2016/09/27/news/economy/donald-trump-nafta-hillary-clinton-debate/index.html>

Hoft, J. (2019, January 10). BRUTAL!... President Trump: Democrats Don't Give a Damn

About Crime - Don't Care About Gang Members Stabbing People (VIDEO). *The*

Gateway Pundit. <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2019/01/brutal-president-trump-democrats-dont-give-a-damn-about-crime-dont-care-about-gang-members-stabbing-people-video/>

Holloway, A. (2015). *Researchers confirm that recently discovered Tonina Pyramid is*

Largest Pyramid in Mexico [Text]. Ancient Origins. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/researchers-confirm-recently-discovered-tonina-pyramid-largest-pyramid-mexico-020433>

Kafura, C., & Smeltz, D. (2019, December 24). *Majority of Americans Oppose Expanding*

US-Mexico Border Wall [Research]. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

<https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/majority-americans-oppose-expanding-us-mexico-border-wall>

Mark, M. (2019). Closing the border would put the US economy at a "standstill" and actually

worsen illegal border crossings. Here's how it would affect food prices, jobs, and

Americans' everyday lives. *Business Insider*. [https://www.businessinsider.com/us-](https://www.businessinsider.com/us-mexico-border-closed-what-could-happen-2019-4)

[mexico-border-closed-what-could-happen-2019-4](https://www.businessinsider.com/us-mexico-border-closed-what-could-happen-2019-4)

Miroff, N. (2018). U.S. customs agency is so short-staffed, it's sending officers from airports to the Mexican border. *Washington Post*.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-customs-agency-is-so-short-staffed-its-sending-officers-from-airports-to-the-mexican-border/2018/01/18/44420a94-fc77-11e7-a46b-a3614530bd87_story.html

Murray, M. (2005). *Bush approval dips below 40 percent*. NBC News.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna9672058>

Pew Research Centre. (2019, January 16). Most Border Wall Opponents, Supporters Say Shutdown Concessions Are Unacceptable. *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics &*

Policy. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/01/16/most-border-wall-opponents-supporters-say-shutdown-concessions-are-unacceptable/>

Riley, R. L. (2016, October 4). *Bill Clinton: Life Before the Presidency*. Miller Center.

<https://millercenter.org/president/clinton/life-before-the-presidency>

Solis, G. (2021, June 8). Drug smuggling, and the endless battle to stop it. *USA Today*.

<https://www.usatoday.com/border-wall/story/drug-trafficking-smuggling-cartels-tunnels/559814001/>

Statista. (2020). *Hispanic population in the U.S. by origin 2019*.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/234852/us-hispanic-population/>

