



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree program
in Comparative International Relations

Final Thesis

**Imperial development?
An analysis of Mexico-United States
relations during the 1960s as depicted by the
US elite**

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Duccio Basosi

Graduand

Maddalena Sartor
850237

Academic Year

2021 / 2022

Acknowledgments

This work has many intellectual debts. The biggest and most difficult to give back are those I own to my supervisor, who supported me with constant professionalism, meaningful discussions, feedbacks, and words of encouragement. The contribution of my Mexican friends was also fundamental, as their point of views fundamentally shaped my research approach.

To all the peers and friends, who shared with me the joys and hardships of these years: thank you. Not a single part of this journey has gone as planned, yet, the process has been an incredible source of community, knowledge and personal growth. I am also deeply grateful to all the backpackers and the people I have been meeting in my travels around the globe, because differences are the best source to question and heal oneself – and the world.

Last but not least, the biggest thank you goes to my parents, my sister, and my adorable dog Paco – whose unconditional love and generosity will never find enough pay-back. Thank you for teaching me humbleness, commitment, and honesty each and every day. For a thousand of “Who cares, Maddalena!” more.

A mia nonna Livia, che avrebbe tanto voluto esserci.

A mia nonna Pierina, che c'è.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	5
List of Abbreviations	10
Introduction	11
Mexico towards the Global Sixties.....	18
1. The foundations of the modern Mexican state.....	18
2. State authoritarianism and the myth of the Revolution	22
3. The construction of the Mexican Miracle (1940-1970).....	26
4. A dual society: social inequalities in Mexico(s)	30
5. The expansion of education and the young “rebel Mexico”	34
6. The political Left and the anti-communist rhetoric	41
7. Power and society: a crisis of consensus?.....	46
Mexican-American relations and the Cold War in Latin America.....	51
1. The foundations of Mexican-American relations and the bequest of the Revolution 51	
2. Mexican-American relations in the first phase of the Cold War in Latin America (1940-1954)	58
3. López Mateos’s internationalism in the second phase of the Cold War	67
4. An “indifferent Señorita”: the development of economic Mexican-American relations in the inter-American system.....	75
5. Lyndon Johnson and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz: did the presidential friendship mean rapprochement?	82
The representation of Mexico given by the American elite to its public in the Sixties	87
1. Premise: The Manifest Destiny and the racial bias of the Mexican-American relations	87
2. The myth of the Mexican democracy	90
3. Bringing up the language of love: the bilateral friendship	94

4. The Mexican opposition, los rebeldes and state violence	98
5. From “underdeveloped” to “developing” Mexico	104
6. Exchanges in knowledge.....	109
Conclusion.....	114
Bibliography	118

Abstract

Con un confine di tremila miglia a separarli, il Messico e gli Stati Uniti hanno origini etniche, religiose e culturali profondamente diverse. Le loro storie sono drammaticamente diverse e caratterizzate da differenze politiche, sociali ed economiche. La relazione tra questi due stati è stata segnata da eventi storici turbolenti e sanguinosi, che hanno lasciato cicatrici indelebili nella memoria collettiva, soprattutto in Messico.¹ La guerra messicano-statunitense e il *Manifest Destiny* degli Stati Uniti hanno plasmato le percezioni che queste nazioni avevano l'uno dell'altro fin dal primo momento delle loro relazioni diplomatiche, in modi le cui ripercussioni sono ancora visibili ancora oggi.

Dopo la seconda guerra mondiale, gli Stati Uniti emersero come la superpotenza egemonica in un mondo parzialmente distrutto dalla guerra. Il Messico, invece, era rimasto pressoché immutato – caratterizzato da un forte isolazionismo e guidato da un regime autoritario.² Mentre Washington si impegnava a disegnare un nuovo ordine mondiale composto da nuove istituzioni internazionali per esercitare la leadership globale e ottenere la cooperazione di altre nazioni; il Messico cercava di guadagnarsi un proprio spazio all'interno del sistema internazionale, sforzandosi di mantenere la propria indipendenza dal Stati Uniti secondo i propri principi cardini di sovranità e non interventismo. Come spiega Vanni Pettinà nel suo libro *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*, sarebbe sbagliato intendere la Guerra Fredda solo come la storia del confronto bipolare tra l'Occidente (considerato essere composto da Stati Uniti ed Europa) e l'Unione Sovietica. Infatti, la Guerra Fredda, sostiene Pettinà, colpì e influenzò anche quegli attori che sono stati tagliati fuori dalla storiografia tradizionale della Guerra Fredda, ma che sono stati fondamentali catalizzatori geopolitici. Per l'America Latina, il periodo della Guerra Fredda significò pressioni brutali, ma anche nuove opportunità che lo scenario bipolare aveva aperto, “attraverso l'interazione triangolare tra i progetti egemonici sovietico e americano, e i processi di allineamento delle élite locali del Terzo Mondo con il conflitto est-ovest.”³ Tra il 1947 e la fine degli anni Ottanta, la regione sperimentò un forte aumento dell'intervento statunitense, un alto livello di polarizzazione interna, e la consolidazione degli attori più conservatori, fattori che

¹ Sergio Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*, vols. (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, 1998).

² Ibid.

³ Pettinà Vanni, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina* (Colegio de México, 2018) 23.

accumunarono le esperienze estremamente diverse dei vari paesi della regione.⁴ Dalla storiografia revisionista della Guerra Fredda, il Messico emerge come uno degli attori chiave della Guerra Fredda in America Latina, protagonista delle rivendicazioni del Terzo Mondo contro il blocco dei paesi industrializzati e imperialisti. Durante quella che Pettinà definisce come la prima fase della Guerra Fredda in America Latina⁵, Washington era impegnato a contenere la diffusione del comunismo nell'Europa occidentale, e l'America Latina non era una priorità nell'agenda della politica estera. Nel frattempo, il Messico era impegnato in un modello di sviluppo stato-centrico per raggiungere lo sviluppo economico ed industriale. Trasformando il “valore intrinseco” della rivoluzione messicana in un mito che faceva appello al gusto ideologico della società messicana e giustificava l'autoritarismo dello stato in nome della democrazia, il Messico ha potuto godere di un raro grado di stabilità politica e sicurezza interna.⁶ Da questo momento e fino agli anni Sessanta, il *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) ha guidato un processo di rapida industrializzazione, crescita demografica, urbanizzazione, espansione dell'agricoltura capitalista, miglioramento delle infrastrutture e campagne di alfabetizzazione. Insieme a queste trasformazioni materiali, il governo messicano cercava di costruire un sentimento di unità nazionale e “promuovere relazioni più armoniose” tra lo Stato, “il settore privato e la Chiesa cattolica”⁷. Tra la seconda metà degli anni Cinquanta e la fine degli anni Sessanta, il “miracolo messicano” segnò una nuova era, la quale mutò profondamente le strutture socio-economiche interne del Messico e ne elevò la posizione globale.⁸

Nel 1959, il fantasma della Rivoluzione cubana riempì la politica degli Stati Uniti in America Latina di considerazioni ideologiche tipiche della Guerra Fredda, le quali diventarono un elemento distintivo nelle relazioni degli Stati Uniti con l'America Latina.⁹ La storiografia latinoamericana revisionista di oggi dimostra che il Messico ha svolto un ruolo attivo nel complesso dialogo con gli Stati Uniti e il mondo, negoziando, facendo concessioni, cooperando e persino opponendosi agli Stati Uniti. Comprendendo l'importanza dell'amicizia

⁴ Ibid., 23–24.

⁵ Per una nuova periodizzazione della Guerra Fredda in America Latina, vedi: Pettinà Vanni, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina* (Colegio de México, 2018).

⁶ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* (El Colegio de México, 1988) 135.

⁷ Ochoa Enrique C. (eds.) Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2018), 3.

⁸ Loaeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968” *Nueva Historia General de México*. (2010): 387–412.

⁹ Jorge I. Domínguez, *The Future of Inter-American Relations*, vols., 1999.

con il Messico nonostante le divergenze, durante gli anni Sessanta Washington accolse le richieste messicane come mai prima. Tra il 1959 e il 1962, il presidente messicano Lopez Mateos sviluppò una politica estera che mirava a internazionalizzare le relazioni del paese. Questo fece sì che il Messico diventasse l'unico paese in tutta la regione a mantenere le relazioni con Cuba, e persino coltivasse quelle con l'Unione Sovietica. Per questo, il Messico è un caso significativo negli anni Sessanta della Guerra Fredda come unico paese latinoamericano che mantenne relazioni con Cuba, senza ripercussioni significative nelle sue relazioni bilaterali con gli Stati Uniti.¹⁰ Infatti, nonostante l'internazionalismo di López Mateos alterò per un breve periodo l'equilibrio delle relazioni economiche tra Messico e Stati Uniti,¹¹ non riuscì ad alterare in modo significativo l'equilibrio del rapporto, fin tanto che il principio cardine del mutuo sostegno veniva fedelmente rispettato da entrambe le parti. Allo stesso tempo, la Rivoluzione cubana risvegliò gli spiriti rivoluzionari nella sinistra messicana e diede slancio a una nuova coscienza sociale e politica, critica dell'ordine prestabilito. Mentre il miracolo messicano faceva crescere lo stato dello sviluppo economico, il Messico sperimentava un tremendo malcontento sociale a causa delle disuguaglianze prodotte dal sistema e della natura repressiva dello stato.¹² Di conseguenza, l'eco della Rivoluzione cubana si aggiunse alle profonde disuguaglianze, scoppiando in sempre più proteste sociali a livello nazionale, che sarebbero poi culminate nel giorno più buio della storia degli anni Sessanta messicani: il massacro di Tlatelolco.¹³

Gli anni Sessanta furono un decennio particolarmente effervescente dal punto di vista politico, un momento spartiacque nella storia delle lotte sociali, un decennio fervido per la produzione di idee, e un periodo di transizione nelle relazioni bilaterali Messico-Stati Uniti. Questa tesi studia la relazione bilaterale tra queste due nazioni analizzando le percezioni che l'élite statunitense aveva del Messico e l'immagine che offrì al suo pubblico nei lunghi anni Sessanta, principalmente attraverso il quotidiano *The New York Times*. Cercherò quindi di esplorare le seguenti domande: come era percepito e rappresentato il Messico da parte dell'élite statunitense tra il 1958 e il 1969? Queste percezioni sono cambiate nel tempo? E se sì, come e perché? In che modo queste percezioni rappresentavano la realtà messicana?

¹⁰ Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution*, vols. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹¹ Vanni Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964" *Monde(s)*. 18.2 (2020): 73–94.

¹² Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*, vols. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

¹³ *Ibid.*

Quanto oggettive erano? Per formulare una risposta, cercherò innanzitutto di rispondere a un'altra serie di domande secondarie: com'era politicamente, socialmente ed economicamente il Messico nei lunghi anni Sessanta? Quali erano le dinamiche che costituivano il rapporto tra il Messico e gli Stati Uniti? Sono cambiate nel tempo? Se sì, come? Quali sono stati i principali elementi di divergenza e di convergenza?

La struttura della tesi è suddivisa in tre capitoli. Il primo capitolo descriverà il background economico, culturale e politico interno del Messico concentrandosi sulle nozioni centrali del discorso politico messicano: identità nazionale, sovranità e sviluppo economico. Inoltre, evidenzierà alcune intersezioni con il contesto internazionale. Il secondo capitolo procederà con l'analisi delle relazioni messicano-statunitensi nel contesto della guerra fredda in America Latina. Particolare attenzione sarà rivolta alle relazioni economiche che il Messico e gli Stati Uniti intrattenevano nell'era del presidente Lopez Mateos (1958-1964), e come le relazioni bilaterali si intersecavano con il quelle a livello interamericano. Ci sono due ragioni principali per cui ho deciso di concentrarmi sui rapporti economici durante l'amministrazione Lopez Mateos – e più in generale nei lunghi anni Sessanta. In primo luogo, la sfera economica era per il Messico e gli Stati Uniti una questione di disaccordo perché i due paesi facevano affidamento su due diverse concezioni dello sviluppo economico. In secondo luogo, l'amministrazione Lopez Mateos ha segnato un passaggio nella politica estera messicana dal “bilateralismo” al “globalismo”¹⁴, oltre a mettere a dura prova le relazioni bilaterali con gli Stati Uniti, proprio perché il presidente messicano ha cercato di svincolarsi dalla dipendenza economica del suo paese dagli Stati Uniti. Inoltre, lo sviluppo economico è diventato un elemento centrale nell'agenda della politica estera statunitense in America Latina negli anni Sessanta. Il capitolo mira a fornire una panoramica delle dinamiche che muovono i rapporti bilaterali, piuttosto che a riscrivere le vicende storiche. Si spera che questo fornisca al lettore tutte le informazioni necessarie per comprendere l'analisi selettiva presentata nella seconda sezione. Infine, nel terzo capitolo, analizzerò l'immagine generale del Messico offerta dall'élite americana al pubblico anglofono negli Stati Uniti. A questo punto, cercherò di svelare i legami tra rappresentanza e politica estera, nonché di esaminare le possibili implicazioni delle rappresentazioni del Messico, se ce ne sono. Il tentativo non è quindi quello di dimostrare le diverse percezioni all'interno dell'apparato governativo degli Stati Uniti, ma piuttosto come il governo degli Stati Uniti abbia selezionato, usato e anche manipolato le

¹⁴ Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.”

informazioni per offrire un'immagine specifica del suo vicino meridionale. Questo capitolo si baserà principalmente su una fonte secondaria, *Myths and Perceptions* di Sergio Aguayo, pubblicato nel 1998. Anche se un po' datato, il lavoro di Aguayo si distingue come l'unico libro del suo genere. Il suo lavoro analizza le percezioni dell'élite americana e l'immagine dell'élite statunitense del Messico tra il 1945 e il 1997 attraverso una rigorosa selezione di articoli di giornale, opere accademiche e documenti governativi. Come ha osservato Aguayo, il Messico non era una priorità nell'agenda degli Stati Uniti e, pertanto, non ricevette molta attenzione in questo decennio. Tuttavia, le percezioni e le rappresentazioni statunitensi del Messico stavano subendo un fervido cambiamento. Il *New York Times* è considerato “come uno dei giornali che meglio rappresentavano le idee sul Messico che circolavano tra l'élite statunitense.”¹⁵ Oltre ad essere un riflesso della società in cui operano, i giornali statunitensi sono imprese private che dovrebbero agire come vedette sulle azioni del governo ed essere guidati da un codice di responsabilità sociale in cui i media rappresentano gli interessi pubblici. Di conseguenza, la stampa statunitense rappresenta l'eterogeneità della sua società, nonostante la loro tendenza politica. Il *New York Times* (NYT) offre un punto di vista privilegiato come giornale liberale ma anche fortemente legato all'*establishment* politico *bipartisan*, non solo durante la svolta liberale di Kennedy negli anni Sessanta ma anche durante le precedenti e più colloquiali amministrazioni statunitensi. Per completare e integrare il lavoro di Aguayo, analizzerò le percezioni dell'élite americana basandomi su fonti primarie governative e non, per lo più raccolte negli archivi digitali del NYT, della John F. Kennedy Library, dell'Office of the Historian del Dipartimento di Stato e della Ford Foundation.

¹⁵ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. 64.

List of Abbreviations

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JFK	John Fitzgerald Kennedy
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LBJ	Lyndon Baines Johnson
MLN	Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NYT	New York Times
OAS	Organization of the American States
PAN	Partido de Acción Nacional
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank

Introduction

Sharing a two-mile border, Mexico and the United States have profoundly diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural origins, as well as political, social, and economic differences. Their relationship has been signed by turbulent and bloody events in history, which have left enduring scars in the collective memory of Mexico.¹⁶ The Mexican-American war and the US Manifest Destiny have fundamentally shaped the perceptions that these countries had of one another, whose repercussions are still visible today.

After the Second World War, the United States had emerged as the hegemonic superpower in the world. Mexico, instead, remained pretty unchanged – with a strong isolationism and led by an authoritarian regime.¹⁷ While Washington engaged in the design of a new world order composed of new international institutions to exercise global leadership and obtain cooperation of other nations, Mexico found itself on a mission to gain its own space within the international system, striving to maintain its independence from the United States under its principles of sovereignty and non-interventionism. As Vanni Pettinà explains in his book *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*, it would be wrong to understand the Cold War only as the history of the bipolar confrontation between the West (considered to be composed of the United States and Europe) and the Soviet Union. In fact, the Cold War, Pettinà argues, affected and influenced also those actors who were cut off from the traditional historiography of the Cold War, but who played a fundamental role in the geopolitics of the era. For Latin America, the Cold War period meant brutal pressures, but also new opportunities that the bipolar scenario had opened, “through the triangular interaction between the Soviet and American hegemonic projects, and the processes of alignment of the local Third World elites with the East-West conflict.”¹⁸ Between 1947 and the late 1980s, the region experienced a sharp increase in US intervention, a high level of internal polarization, and the consolidation of more conservative actors, factors that combined the extremely different experiences of the various countries in the region.¹⁹ Based on the most recent revisionist historiography of the Cold War, Mexico emerges as one of the key players of the Cold War in Latin America, protagonist of the claims of the Third World against the bloc of

¹⁶ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 21.

¹⁷ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. 21.

¹⁸ Pettinà Vanni, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina* (Colegio de México, 2018) 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

industrialized and imperialist countries. Throughout the first phase of the Cold War in Latin America²⁰, Washington was busy containing the spread of Communism in Western Europe, and Latin America was not a priority in the foreign policy agenda. Meanwhile, Mexico was focused on its state-led policies to achieve economic development and industrialize its economy domestically. By turning the “intrinsic value” of the Mexican Revolution into a myth that appealed the ideological taste of the Mexican society and justified the state’s authoritarianism in the name of democracy, Mexico was able to enjoy a rare degree of stability and security.²¹ From this moment on, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI)²² led a process of rapid industrialization, demographic growth, urbanization, expansion of capitalist agriculture, enhancements in infrastructure, and alphabetization’s campaigns. Together with these material transformations, the Mexican government was committed to construct national unity and “promote more harmonious relationship” between the state, “the private sector, and the Catholic Church.”²³ Stretching from the second half of the Fifties to the end of the Sixties, roughly, the Mexican Miracle marked a new era that profoundly changed the internal socio-economic structures of Mexico and soared the country’s global position.²⁴

In 1959, the phantom of the Cuban Revolution filled the US policy in the region with ideological considerations that made the Cold War geopolitics emerge as a distinctive in US relations with Latin America.²⁵ A recent body of scholarship demonstrates that Mexico performed an active role in the complex dialogue with the United States – and the world – by negotiating, making concessions, cooperating, and even opposing the United States. Understanding the importance of befriending Mexico despite divergences, during the Sixties Washington pleased the Mexican requests as never before. Between 1959 and 1962, Mexican President Lopez Mateos developed a

²⁰ This thesis adopted the periodization proposed by Pettinà. See: Vanni Pettinà, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*, vols. (Colegio de México, 2018).

²¹ Loeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 135.

²² The PRI was first established in 1929 under the name of National Revolutionary Party (Spanish: Partido Nacional Revolucionario, PNR), it was then renamed as the Party of the Mexican Revolution (Spanish: Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, PRM), and finally as the PRI beginning in 1946. The party held power in the country from 1929 to 2000, when the National Action Party (in Spanish: Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) won the general elections under the guidance of President Vicente Fox.

²³ Ochoa Enrique C. (eds.) Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2018), 3.

²⁴ Loeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968.”

²⁵ Dominguez, *The Future of Inter-American Relations*.

foreign policy that aimed at internationalising Mexico's relations. This led Mexico to continue maintaining its relations with Cuba, and even cultivate those with the Soviet Union. For this, Mexico is a significant case in the Cold War Sixties as the only Latin American country that maintained relationships with Cuba, without significant repercussions in its bilateral relations with the United States.²⁶ In fact, even though Lopez Mateos internationalism altered the equilibrium of Mexico-US economic bilateral relations for a while,²⁷ it did not considerably alter the balance of the relation as a whole, to the extent that the basic principle of mutual support was faithfully respected by both parties. At the same time, the Cuban Revolution produced a revival of the revolutionary spirit in the Mexican Left and gave impetus to a new consciousness. While the Mexican Miracle levelled up the status of economic development, the country experienced a tremendous social discontent due to the inequalities produced by the system as well as the repressive nature of the state.²⁸ As result, the echo of the Cuban Revolution added to the deep inequalities, erupting in more and more social protests nationwide, which would culminate in the darkest day in the history of the Mexican Sixties: the Tlatelolco Massacre.²⁹

The Sixties were a particular politically effervescent decade, considered by many scholars as the watershed moment in the history of social struggles, a fervent decade for the production of ideas, and a period of transition in Mexico-US bilateral relations. This work studies the relations between Mexico and the United States through the analysis of perceptions and representations of Mexico that the American elite offered to its English-speaking public in the long Sixties, mainly through the newspaper the *New York Times*. I will therefore try to explore the following questions: how did the US elite perceive Mexico between 1958 and 1969? Did these perceptions change over time? And if yes, how and why? How objectively or truthfully did these perceptions portray the Mexican reality? To formulate an answer, I will first try to reply to another set of secondary questions: how did Mexico look like politically, socially and economically in the long Sixties? What were the dynamics constituting the relation between Mexico and the United States? Did they change over time? If yes, how? What were the main key elements of divergence and of convergence?

²⁶ Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution*.

²⁷ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964."

²⁸ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*.

²⁹ Ibid.

The thesis rotates around four axes, namely, the Cold War geopolitics, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico, and the perceptions that the American elite had, and the image it gave, of Mexico. The file rouge of the analysis, as well as the research lens, will be the notion development. Thus, I will try to assess how this notion, typical of the Mexican state and of the international political discourse of the time, was used – or not used – in the US elite perceptions and its public representation of Mexico. My goal is twofold. On the one hand, I aim at highlighting how the United States elite used the Mexican's state principles of identity and sovereignty resembled in the myth of the Revolution as a tool of foreign policy in constructing a public image of Mexican politics that dissociated from the reality. I aim at showing how the United States manipulated rhetoric to depict a reality that served the American best interests. Secondly, I will attempt to demonstrate how the US tried to use the notion of development to sustain its imperialism on the ground by reinforcing the image of Mexicans as objects of pity in its public narrative and foreign policy programs.

The structure of the work is divided in two sections and three chapters; the research was conducted on various sources divided into primary and secondary sources. The first section is composed of two chapters, which are historical and aim to provide the reader with the necessary information to understand the main features and developments of both the domestic Mexico and the Mexico-United States relations in the framework of the Cold War in Latin America. The first chapter will describe the domestic economic, cultural, and political background of Mexico by focusing on the central notions of the Mexican political discourse: national identity, sovereignty, and economic development. Also, it will pinpoint some intersections with the international context. The primary sources consist on an extensive selection of scholarly works that have done an impressive effort in revealing the domestic situation of Mexico in the span-time considered, which have long been neglected by the Mexican official historiography. The main authors I will consider are Soledad Loaeza, Jaime Pensado, Lorenzo Meyer, Pozas Ricardo, Paul Gillingham, and Ariel Kuri Rodriguez.

By the same token, the second chapter will proceed with the analysis of Mexican-American relations in the context of the Cold War in Latin America. Specific attention will be given to the economic relations Mexico and the United States entertained in the Lopez Mateos era, and how this level intersected with the inter-American level. There are two main reasons why I decided to focus on the economic relations during the Lopez Mateos administration – and more generally in the long Sixties. First, the economic sphere was for Mexico and the US a matter of disagreement because the two countries relied on two different plans for economic development. Second, the Lopez Mateos administration marked a shift in Mexican foreign

policy from “bilateralism” to “globalism”, as well as strained the bilateral relations with the United States, exactly because the Mexican President sought to disentangle from his country’s economic dependence from the United States. Moreover, economic development became a central element in the US foreign policy agenda in Latin America in the 1960s. Lastly, it should be made clear that this chapter aims at providing an overview of the dynamics moving the bilateral relations, rather than at rewriting historical events. This will hopefully give the reader all necessary information to comprehend the selective analysis presented in the second section. For this second chapter, primary sources will consist of the existing literature on the topics; a few documents from the Office of the Historian of the US Department of State and other sources will be used as secondary sources. Particular attention will be paid to the review of the latest revisionist works of Latin Americanists Vanni Pettinà, Lorenzo Meyer, Soledad Loaeza, Renata Keller, Eric Zolov, Jorge I. Domínguez, and Christie Thornton. These scholars are considered among the revolutionaries in the field of Mexican external relations during the Cold War, because they propose a different historical narrative of the role of Latin American countries, and thus of Mexico, looking at them as active actors in the scene. Relying on an extensive quantity of primary sources retrieved from multiple archives from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, the USSR, and other countries involved in their studies, their works are considered the most accurate reconstruction of the history of the Cold War in Latin America, at the present time. This thesis therefore makes part of the big umbrella of studies questioning the traditional American history of US foreign policy, to offer a more complex and bias-free story of the events. While following a revisionist trajectory, I aim to present both standpoints, the Mexican’s and the United States’, to highlight the points of convergence and disagreements.

Finally, in the second section, the third chapter, I will analyse the general image of Mexico offered by the American elite to the English-speaking public in the United States. At this point, I will try to reveal the ties between representation and foreign policy, as well as to look at possible implications, if any. The attempt is, therefore, not to demonstrate the diverse perceptions inside the US governmental apparatus, but rather how the US government selected, used, and also manipulated information to offer a specific image of its southern neighbour. This chapter will be based on mainly one secondary source, Sergio Aguayo’s *Myth and Perceptions*, published in 1998. Although a bit dated, the work of Aguayo stands out as the only book of its kind. His work analyses the US elite perceptions and image of Mexico between 1945 and 1997 through a rigorous selection of newspaper articles, academic works, and governmental documents. As Aguayo noted, Mexico was not a priority in the US agenda

and, therefore, did not receive much attention in this decade. Nonetheless, the US perceptions and representations of Mexico were undergoing a fervent change. For practical reasons, I decided to follow Aguayo's methodology, relying on his suggestion that the *New York Times* be "as one of the newspapers that best represented the ideas on Mexico that circulated among the U.S. elite"³⁰. Thus, I will use this newspaper as the main archive to conduct my research and formulate a selection of sources. Besides being a reflection of the society in which they operate, the US newspapers are private enterprises who should act as watchdogs over the government's actions and be guided by a social responsibility code in which the media represents the public interests. By consequence, the US press represents the heterogeneity of its society, in spite of their *bipartisanship*. The *New York Times* (NYT) offers a privileged point of view as a liberal newspaper but also closely linked to the political *establishment bipartisan*, not only during the Kennedy's liberal turn in the Sixties but also during the previous, more conservative US administrations. In each subchapter, my reasoning will follow two steps: first, I will analyse the main perception within the US administration on a given topic. Second, I will analyse the image offered by the NYT. The last two subchapters will also take into account various works of academics and philanthropic foundations. Therefore, this thesis seeks to complete and integrate Aguayo's work. Primary sources will be mostly thrived by the historical archive of the *New York Times*, available online, consisting of articles, illustrations, and advertisements. Other primary miscellaneous sources will also be used, among which, memorandums, books, and scientific journal articles, mainly retrieved from the digital archives of the John F. Kennedy Library, the Office of the Historian of the Department of State, the Eisenhower Presidential Library, and the Ford Foundation.

Disclaimers

The research initially wanted to investigate the role of education through private and public investments in the US foreign policy towards Mexico during the 1960s. However, halfway to research, I met with several obstacles that prevented me from going further and eventually delimited the change in trajectory. First, primary resources of the American philanthropic foundations were not available digitally, nor easy to access in person from Italy. Second, while scant research exists on this topic, it focuses on the years up to the 1950s, thus, the absence of literature on the topic in the Sixties

³⁰ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. 64.

was almost total. This helped me detect a huge gap in academic research that scholars may want to address in the future. Needless to say, the American private investors had a say in the making of the notion of development in Latin America, yet little is known about its influence in Mexico and how it was received by the people of Mexico in the crucial time of the 1960s. I believe that, in order to understand the weight and role of ‘ideas’ in the making of US-Mexico relations during the so-called Cold War era, investigating the US private foundations and businesses is paramount, especially given the private nature of many interactions that characterised the Mexican-American relations. This will also help understand better the ties between Mexico and the Alliance for Progress, another topic left out from the scholarly work at the moment. Chances are that we find new answers to old questions that continue to remain supposedly unsolved nowadays. As my focus shifted towards more easily accessible resources, I found myself deeply interested in the language used by American politicians in their dialogue about Mexico, and I further expanded my investigation to the representation that the American political elite, more broadly, sought to give of Mexico to its English-speaking public. The limits of this work are many. First, the limited access to archival sources remains a problem of real concern in spite of the change in trajectory, mainly because a consistent part of archival material from the Fifties and Sixties has not been digitalised yet. This impediment contributed to the decision of focusing on just one liberal newspaper, although I recognise that the use of other newspapers, such as the *Voice of America* – the official newspaper of the government through the USIA – would have given a more detailed picture. This notwithstanding, by focusing on just one editorial line I could carry out a more detailed reconstruction of the change going on within a specific group of minds. Besides, this choice gives to this work an additional substantial degree of reliability. By relying on Aguayo’s work, my study is backed by an accurate quantitative data analysis of the resources of the *Times*, which I would have not been able to realize by my own. I encourage further similar analysis to merge. Second, the analysis fails to dig into, and therefore excludes, the narrative of some categories of identities that would nevertheless require attention, as well as it excludes a priori the border issue. Third, for practical reasons, the Mexican-Soviet and Mexican-Cuban relations take a marginal space in the research, failing to offer a comprehensive view of the driving forces behind international processes and processes of representation. Nevertheless, I think that this thesis advances our knowledge on Mexico-US relations in the long Sixties and offers a stimulus for further research on the topic.

Chapter One

Mexico towards the Global Sixties

Por esta libertad que es el imperio de la juventud.

(Fayad Jamis, La Habana, 1962)

1. The foundations of the modern Mexican state

To fully comprehend the complex economic, cultural, political, and social features that characterised the Mexican landscape of the long Sixties, and therefore how the government of Mexico interacted in the international arena, it is imperative to acquaint oneself with the foundations of the modern Mexican state.

The legalization and legitimization of the structure of the state within the Mexican society was ultimately made possible by the country's constitution, where the foundations of the modern state are still treasured nowadays. Between 1876 and 1911, Mexico was ruled by Porfirio Díaz, a very ambitious dictator who wished to transform Mexico into a capitalist country driven by industrial and modernization development. Under the era of *porfiriato* (1876-1911), Mexican peasants and rural workers suffered greatly and the whole population was subjected to strict limitations of individual freedoms, political and intellectual repression, a high degree of corruption within the State and the Church, and massive social disparities.³¹ As a result, in the last years of his presidency, Porfirio Díaz had become increasingly unpopular because of his elitist policies that favoured wealthy landowners and industrialists. Widespread class struggle added to Porfirio Díaz's inability to secure presidential succession when his opposer Francisco Madero called for revolt against the official government on 20 November 1910, after he was released from prison. The Mexican Revolution had begun. The revolt led by Madero inspired many unsatisfied Mexicans throughout the entire country and gave birth to agrarian revolts guided by the mystify figures of Pascual Orozco, Pancho Villa, Álvaro Obregón, and Emiliano Zapata among others.³² To put it simply, they demanded the

³¹ Paul Garner, *Porfirio Diaz*, vols. (Routledge, 2014). For a different standpoint, see also: Kelly Lytle Hernández. *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands*. (W.W. Norton, 2022)

³² Francisco Hoyos Martínez, *Breve Historia de la revolución mexicana*, vols. (Ediciones Nowtilus, 2015). For more reference to the history of the Mexican Revolution see also: Lorenzo

reversal of Porfirian policies of centralization and agrarian commercialization, but also free elections and municipal freedom. The revolutionary forces were thus comprised of a variety of factions, leaders, and dissidents who represented different people groups. Every group had a very different vision of both events and how the future nation should be, yet they were unified in their fights against the enemy.³³ In the spring 1911, the Federal Army failed to keep rebels quiet who, in turn, forced Porfirio Díaz to resign. Madero took the presidency over, but he was soon criticized for his ineffectiveness in securing the land reforms he had promised. Political leaders played fast and loose with power until the ascendancy of Venustiano Carranza, who by the 1916 controlled every Mexican state except from Chihuahua and Morelos. Eager to legitimize the revolution and to become president, in November that year Carranza gathered the new Mexican political elite together in Santiago de Querétaro in order to create a new constitution that would be ratified on 5 February 1917. But Carranza's destiny was not fortunate: he was murdered before making his dream of the elections come true. On 16 October 1920, his counterpart, Álvaro Obregón, who had revolted against Carranza a month before his death, sworn in as official president of the nation. The Revolution was over, even though sporadic clashes continued until 1934, when populist president Lázaro Cárdenas took office and institutionalised most of the reforms that were fought for during the revolution.

The cultural product of the Revolution was a liberal-republican constitution, the Mexican Constitution, that forged a new era based on the liberal principles of human rights, democracy, and citizenship. The Mexican Constitution – still in force today – incorporated some radical social provisions, such as the protection of labour, the promotion of agrarian reforms, and the commitment to secular education. It laid down the basis for the construction of the State project of modernization, embracing education, anticlericalism, nationalism, and development. Consequently, its ideological weight had been the grassroot of the economic, political, and social transformations of the Sixties as well.³⁴

As I mentioned, and as it will emerge throughout the chapters, the conceptual frameworks deposited in the Constitution articulated most of the socio-political landscape of the Mexican Sixties. We will discuss how and why some of these themes became central either in the national discussion and in the American political representation of Mexico, that is, in

Meyer. *México para los mexicanos. La Revolución y sus adversarios*. (El Colegio de México, 2019). John Womack. *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*. (Vintage, 2011). Linda Biesele Hall. *Alvaro Obregon: Power and Revolution in Mexico, 1911-1920*. (Texas A & M Univ Pr, 1981).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ For a recent reinterpretation of the concept of revolution, see: Enzo Traverso, *Rivoluzione. 1789-1989: un'altra storia*. (Feltrinelli Editore, 2022).

terms of American interests and perceptions of its southern neighbour. What is more, with its 137 articles serving to nationalize various socio-economic sectors and to limit the power of the Catholic Church, the Constitution enshrined the nationalist and revolutionary rhetoric of the modern Mexican state by promising to destroy traditions associated with old patterns of cultural hegemony. Not only did the Mexican Constitution become the model influencing the life of every Mexican, but also it constituted the legitimacy for the political power that would continue to rule Mexico for over three decades.³⁵

In the years following the end of the Revolution, the future of the country fell in the hands of a political party that was officially created in 1929 when General Calles brought officers together to form the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*, *PNR* (English: National Revolutionary Party), later renamed as *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana*, *PRM* (English: Party of the Mexican Revolution) and lastly as the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, *PRI* (English: Institutional Revolutionary Party). The PRI was founded with the aim to offer a political space where all revolutionary leaders and combatants could contribute to solve Mexico's political crisis that had exploded after the assassination of President-elect Álvaro Obregón in 1928. Strengthened by the spirit of the Revolution, between 1920 and 1940, the Mexican political elite built the project for the modern Mexican state whose watchword became *reconstruction*. On the one hand, *reconstruction* stood for the achievement of economic development, that will be discussed in the next subchapter; on the other hand, it stood for the achievement of political stability. Similar to many other processes of state formation, political stability was the key to guarantee the success of the revolutionary project. In order to achieve it, the political power organized itself around a centralized and vertical patriarchal structure similar of that of the traditional family. As explained by Zolov in *Refried Elvis. The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*:

The idealized family of the postrevolutionary order was one in which the father eastern in his benevolence, the mother saintly in her maternity, and the children royal in their obedience. Faith in the father's ultimate commitment to the progress of the family – even when that father had been corrupted by temptation and error -excused his mistakes and pardoned his sins.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid. 15-25

³⁶ Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis. The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (University of California Press, 1999) 4.

In this family picture, the PRI became the ‘Revolutionary Family’³⁷ which was composed by selected males belonging to the Mexican elites who ruled the country since the advent of the Revolution. Otherwise collected in the official party, this group of men represented the ‘family home’ at the apex of whose there was the fatherly figure of the president. The mother, instead, was a saint and sufferer whose “moral superiority and spiritual strength”³⁸ maintained the stability of the family and the country. Being the father of the nation, the *Señor Presidente* played an exclusive role in decision-making and became the most powerful actor in the political scene upon which the destiny of Mexico depended. The legislative and judicial powers strengthen Mexican presidentialism by de facto being in hand of the President, as well as weakening the executive power – whose function became merely representative. Not only was the presidential figure a patriarch, but also a macho, noticed Octavio Paz:

The father figure is two-pronged, the duality of patriarch and macho. The patriarch protects, is good, powerful, wise. The macho is the terrible man, the chingòn, the father who has left, who has abandoned a wife and children. The image of Mexican authority is inspired by these two extremes: *Señor Presidente* and Caudillo.³⁹

With his authority, he guided the country towards progress and modernization; as such, the father was excused for his mistakes – even when that would mean corruption and/or violence.⁴⁰ Zolov writes:

Faith in the father's ultimate commitment to the progress of the family-even when that father had been corrupted by temptation and error-excused his mistakes and pardoned his sins.⁴¹

The centralization of power in a family-based structure and the concentration of authority in the presidency of the Republic was the main feature that allowed the PRI’s 70-year-long hegemony.

³⁷ The concept of the Revolutionary Family was first introduced by Frank Brandeburg in *The Making of Modern Mexico* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (Grove Pr, 1994) 336.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5

⁴¹ Ibid.

2. State authoritarianism and the myth of the Revolution

The major force operating behind the Revolutionary Family's ability to have people accept this vertical, non-democratic, at time repressive, political power, was state authoritarianism. The Mexican state exercised state authoritarianism through a combination of corporatism, co-option, repression, state violence. When it would not use force, it would reach hegemonic consensus by a continued dialogue with, and support from, the population through campaigns, slogans, corruption, and propaganda.⁴² In the Mexican PRI-made state project, "access to power was limited to members of the political elite, and stability rested on non-participation and on the nationalist and liberal consensus built in the 1940s."⁴³ According to a well-established interpretation, in their role of 'father of the nation', PRI presidents exercised metaconstitutional powers, including the right to select their successors via a secretive process called the *dedazo*, meaning handpick by pointing with one's finger.⁴⁴ As head of both the ruling party and the nation, presidents helped to select the PRI's state-level gubernatorial and mayoral candidates, who, in turn, were elected by the populace. Local legislatures and courts also tended to follow the presidential line; otherwise, arbitrary decisions by the presidents were taken without congressional consultation. In fact, the modern Mexican governance obscured many aspects of the political process and made use of undemocratic methods both inside the political structure of the party and outside, in the political sphere, as well as in the administration of the nation and its citizens. Inside the 'family home', there were severe restrictions placed upon political mobilization, for instance, the *Señor Presidente* would choose its own successor and control access to the PRI's candidate lists for all other public offices. In terms of political expression, opposition was left with a very irrelevant space to have a say, as very few parties could obtain official recognition. Outside the officially recognized political parties, dissidents were not allowed to have a say and would easily become subject to the state's repression and violence. The main adversaries of the PRI were the right-wing Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and the Partido Popular (PP). None of them posed particular

⁴² Gillingham Paul and Smith Benjamin T., *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968* (Duke University Press Books, 2014) 1.

⁴³ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 179.

⁴⁴ Luis Javier Garrido, *El partido de la Revolución institucionalizada*, vols., Siglo XX editores. (Mexico, 1982).

threat to the PRI hegemony: although they were classified as an anti-democratic, they did not worry the ruling party as far as popular support was not achieved.⁴⁵

This, of course, originated from the fact that the PRI-led state electoral system was extremely fraudulent. Elections were indeed subjected to “subordinate inclusion” and “deferred compensation”⁴⁶: the PRI sought local candidates with appeal on the community and a record of achievements in public works.⁴⁷ In other words, elections were non-competitive, under government control and electoral rules useful to preserve the political-legislative monopoly of the official party that upheld the constitutional supremacy of the President of the Republic. Rather than being the mechanism of effective competition between parties that any democratic system supposes, elections in Mexico were the instrument of legitimation of the existing relations of power.⁴⁸ In this sense, the modern Mexican state was far away from being the democratic country it would state to be.

Moreover, the Mexican state had organized society in a corporatist system of interest representation that reinforced the presidential system and could control all social classes. For instance, the PRI tied itself with the working class by PRI-controlled labor unions and controlled peasants by PRI-controlled peasant unions, to exchange votes and other legitimacy signs for material favors.⁴⁹ The PRI also monitored rural farmers through direct control of the *ejidos* (state-owned portions of land that peasant could farm), and the intelligentsia was kept docile by financial support. The state organized the peasants in the National Peasants’ Confederation (CNC) created by Cárdenas, the workers in the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), but also teachers, women, professionals, government bureaucrats, and small merchants – the middle class – in the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP).⁵⁰ Businessmen were, in turn, required by law to join noncompetitive trade associations excluded by the party but recognized by the state. Within the corporative structure, government officials used economic and political patronage so that the state was

⁴⁵ Miguel Ángel Ramírez Hernández, “La ideología y la institucionalización de la identidad política. El caso del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (1929-2017)” (El Colegio de San Luis Potosí A.C., Aug. 2018) 143–146.

⁴⁶ Mary Kay Vaughan, “Mexico, 1940-1968 and Beyond: Perfect Dictatorship? Dictablanda? or PRI State Hegemony?” *Book Review Essay*. 53.1, *Latin American Research Review* (2018): 170.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Francie R. Chassen-Lopez, *From Liberal To Revolutionary Oaxaca: The View From The South, Mexico, 1867-1911*, vols. (Pennsylvania State Univ Pr, 2005).

⁴⁹ Kenneth Edward Mitchell, *Revival: State-Society Relations in Mexico (2001): Clientelism, Neoliberal State Reform, and the Case of Conasupo*, vols. (Routledge Revivals, 2001).

⁵⁰ Renata Keller, *Mexico’s Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution* 20–21.

able to impose tripartite negotiations among the government, the capitalists (businessmen), and the labor force. Moreover, the state had created a huge military apparatus that was strictly related to all spheres of power and whose goal was that of “fighting, controlling and eliminating whoever doubted, criticized, or opposed the government.”⁵¹

The second force to main political stability was nationalism and, more specifically, the myth of the Revolution. Since its birth, the ruling party was able to create a national identity that not only differentiated “*lo mexicano*” from the rest, but also enshrined the Mexican democracy. In his book, *The Myth of the Mexican Revolution* (2010), Alan Knight explains that the story of the Revolution was moulded and shaped to suit the revolutionary party’s political agenda by mythising the past. With the constitution granting concessions to stakeholders, he wrote, the PRI turned the Revolution into a political ideology itself.⁵² In what he refers to as the ‘formative period’⁵³, between 1920 and 1940,

the generation which had come to power during the armed revolution consolidated power, created the official party (1929), implemented some of the social goals of the Revolution and strove to create a hegemonic revolutionary myth.⁵⁴

In searching historical legitimacy, the ruling power presented the history of the Revolution as a coherent succession of events to preserve in the present, and whose ultimate goal was a democratic, balanced, and developed society. From this perspective, the present became a necessary transition stage to a fundamentally healthy structure that justified the unjust system of the present. In point of fact, by the 1940s, the Revolution had become a myth, “a symbol of optimism, a value in itself that validated the present based on a future of democratic improvement.”⁵⁵ According to Christiansen and Zachary, the myth enshrined the idea that “Mexico can complete the unachieved goals of the Revolution through politics and government action rather than through violence”.⁵⁶ Although this was never really the case,

⁵¹ Aguayo Quezada Sergio, *Los archivos de la violencia* (Grijalbo: Reforma, 1998) 30. For more about the topic see Aguayo (1998) and the Violence project.

⁵² Alternative interpretations argue that the Mexican Revolution was the first Latin American revolution that enshrined the patriotic liberal dream.

⁵³ Alan Knight, “The Myth of the Mexican Revolution” *Past & Present*. 209 (2010) 238.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Loaeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968” 133.

⁵⁶ Christiansen Samantha and Scarlett Zachary A., *The Third World in the global 1960s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013) 172.

the political myth of a Revolutionary Mexico appealed the Mexican people. In the aftermath of the Revolution, most powerful politicians, scholars, and writers of the time produced “a shared language of values, rights, identities, and expectations”⁵⁷ – whose cultural product be the constitution – that intended to express aspirations of how the nation could or should be, rather than offering a pragmatic image of the nation. This “set of social and moral values and a normative ‘world view’ of social life”⁵⁸ “had widespread acceptance throughout Mexican society and has served to legitimate the actions of state.”⁵⁹ To cite Renata Keller, “the shared language encompassed ideas of nationalism, secularism, populism, and democracy”⁶⁰ that strengthened the political power and influence of the PRI, as much as guaranteed a common acceptance of the established political order, regardless how democratic its actions. To be precise, it was the 1917 Constitution itself that demanded national identity by slipping away the emphasis on the individual and putting it into the nation.

Indeed, thanks to the Constitution the nation turned onto the entity having constitutional rights and, by consequence, onto the main recognised entity, both legally and politically.⁶¹ Knight’s assumption is that the political myth created a kind of story that had an “emotive past”⁶² and was “not, of course, literally ‘true’, nor is its importance necessarily proportional to its true content; but it needs to be believed”⁶³ in order to mobilise political support. The PRI created policies such as the land reform, *indigenismo*, education and economic nationalism; established new institutions, like the labour unions, the federal school system and the Ministry of Education, the *ejido*, and the official party; it also exalted national identity and Mexican folklore (*lo mexicano*) and race (*mestizo*)⁶⁴ by creating a set of imagines, icons, heroes, stories, songs, anniversaries, and slogans by financing the writing of official histories, using popular culture, and manipulating public spaces.⁶⁵ Culture was fundamental in manipulating rhetoric, sanctify monuments, and feathering in national and regional ritual performance. For instance,

⁵⁷ Renata Keller, *Mexico’s Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution* 14.

⁵⁸ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrificies: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005) 54, in Christiansen Samantha and Scarlett Zachary A. (2013).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Renata Keller, *Mexico’s Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) 14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶² Knight, “The Myth of the Mexican Revolution” 228.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 228–229.

⁶⁴ Roger Bartra, “Changes in Political Culture: The Crisis of Nationalism.” In *Mexico’s Alternative Political Futures*, edited by Wayne A. Cornelius, Judith Gentleman, and Peter H. Smith., 30 (La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1989) 199.

⁶⁵ Knight, “The Myth of the Mexican Revolution” 224.

heros cults about four assassinated revolutionary leaders – Madero, Villa, Carranza and Zapata – were used to encourage the social groups represented by each hero in order to identify with the state. Propaganda surrounding these figures had six major characteristics: the claim that the regime was revolutionary; the promotion of nationalism; the obfuscation of history; the denigration of politics; the use of Catholic imagery; the masculinization of the heroes and promotion of patriarchal values.⁶⁶ The extensive use of propaganda had the goal to create a public consciousness that would facilitate the government’s maintenance of its claimed ‘revolutionary’ nature, even though its political and economic policies were not revolutionary.⁶⁷ Ultimately, nationalism and the myth of the Revolution were of use to call out political opposition and depict any opponent actions as an attack against the nation, as so as to justify the use of force against it.

3. The construction of the Mexican Miracle (1940-1970)

To achieve economic development, the PRI adopted a strategy that privileged agrarian reforms, industrial advancements, urbanization and education. Particularly starting from the 1930s, Latin American economists had been striving to find a new model of development functional to Latin American conformations. After the Great Depression and World War II, most of Latin American countries’ leaders relied on the structuralist approach promoted by the Argentinian economist, Raúl Prebisch, whose economic paradigm was based on industrialization, import substitution and the centralized economy. According to this model, “the state machine was conceived as the higher authority which could integrate and orient internal interests, bolster their economic and political weaknesses, and take the lead, on an equal footing, with the external private and public nuclei of power.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ilene V. O’Malley, *The Myth of Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940*, vols. (Praeger, 1986).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ ECLAC, “Change and Crisis: Latin America and the Caribbean” in *Crisis and Development: The Present Situation and Future Prospects of Latin America and the Caribbean.*, vol. 1 (Santiago: United Nations, 1985) 3.

In the 1960s, “the centrality of Latin America in framing a new form of globalization alternatively to the liberal’s was absolute”⁶⁹, with Mexico standing out as both an example and an exception. All Latin American countries adopted the structuralist approach promoted by the Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch, which attached import substitution to exports through currency devaluation. On the contrary, Mexico privileged a different theoretical structuralist approach in line with the idea of Brazilian economist Celso Furtado, who pointed out that import substitution industrialization should have focused on the domestic market with income redistribution instead.⁷⁰

Mexico’s sustained economic growth model was first speeded up in 1938 thanks to socialist president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) who promoted agrarian reforms, the nationalization of the oil industry, the development of the financial system, increase in public investments and land distribution.⁷¹ By the time he stepped down from power, the nation was ready for mixed capitalist growth in which domestic and foreign investments could count on a stable economy. Mexican economic development continued its rampant acceleration under President Manuel Ávila Camacho, and even more so with President Miguel Alemán Valdés, who would make Mexico one of the most advanced economies in Latin America. Indeed, in the aftermath of World War II, Mexico began a sharp shift towards industrial economy by dismantling the *cardenistas* land policies and massively reducing public expenditures once destined to the agrarian sector.

Hence, the country sustained a process of industrialization against the rural sector paired with the consolidation of local businesses and Mexican domestic market.⁷² The state enacted government expenditures that supported increasing accumulation of capital, on the one side, and meant huge spending in public infrastructures, on the other. At the same time, the state endorsed a full model of import substitution that, together with protectionism, aimed to lift the domestic welfare and reduce Mexico’s dependence on foreign investments, in a world where the new norm of free trade triggered international competition.⁷³ In doing so, the

⁶⁹ Vanni Pettinà, “El largo otoño de la irrelevancia internacional latinoamericana” *On Cuba News.*, 15 Mar. 2021, Available: <https://oncubanews.com/opinion/el-largo-otono-de-la-irrelevancia-internacional-latinoamericana/>.

⁷⁰ Celso Furtado, *Teoría y política del desarrollo económico*, vols. (Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1968).

⁷¹ Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe, “Crecimiento rápido seguido de estancamiento: México (1950-2010)” *El Trimestre Económico.* 80.318 (2) (2013): 238.

⁷² Loaeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968” 393.

⁷³ Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe, “Crecimiento rápido seguido de estancamiento: México (1950-2010)” 247–249.

country closed up towards foreign trade⁷⁴ except for its bilateral agreements with the US, but remained open to foreign investments and imports in the captive markets, where international corporations like Ford, the General Motors and Coca-Cola had huge space of manoeuvre.⁷⁵ In 1950 national industries satisfied 95% of the national market for products such as textiles, food, beverages, and tobacco, footwear and soap, rubber, alcohol, and glass. However, for intermediate, durable and capital goods, there was a significant degree of import substitution.⁷⁶ The import-substitution model of development produced a twofold effect in pure economic terms. On the one side, the Mexican model of development made Mexico posed to an “economic take-off”⁷⁷ that would spark in the economic boom of the mid Fifties and Sixties. It boosted the economy of the country, increased alphabetization, and bettered services and infrastructures. On the other side, import-substitution left Mexico highly dependent on US investments, undermining Mexico’s internal stability.

Indeed, in 1958 domestic and regional political instability caused a wave of flee of foreign capital away from the country that, in turn, led to destabilization. As a countermeasure, Mexican economist Antonio Ortíz Mena⁷⁸ – who was appointed to Ministry of Finance in December 1958 – suggested that Mexico undertake a model of development called “stabilizing development”⁷⁹. Similar to the previous model, he saw economic stability as the driving force of the economic and social development of the country and argued that the State must guarantee both stable price and exchange rate to stimulate savings plus. State intervention increased under the government of López

⁷⁴ For instance, Mexico did not enter the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947).

⁷⁵ Loaeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968” 395.

⁷⁶ Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe, “Crecimiento rápido seguido de estancamiento: México (1950-2010)” 249.

⁷⁷ According to Walt W. Rostow, “Take-off is an industrial revolution, tied directly to radical changes in methods of production, having their decisive consequences over a relatively short period of time.” For Rostow see: Rostow, W. W. “The Take-Off into Self-Sustained Growth.” *The Economic Journal*, 66(261), 1956, 25-48. For the application of the Rostow model in Mexico see: Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe (2011).

⁷⁸ Antonio Ortíz Mena was the Secretary of Finance during Adolfo López Mateos and Gustavo Díaz Ordáz administrations (1958-1970). In 1971 he became the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (1971–1988) thanks to the support of both Mexico and the U.S. Although it is overshadowed, his figure may be of interest for those scholars who are approaching the late Cold War period from a political economic perspective – a quite recent field of research in the Mexican Global Sixties.

⁷⁹ Ortiz Mena Antonio, *El desarrollo estabilizador: reflexiones sobre una época* (Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 1998) 9. The book is worth of mention as it provides a post-insight from a direct actor and testimony of the years.

Mateos (1958-1964) as a catalyst for growth. In order to do so, additional financial sources for capital and technology were needed to expand Mexico's capabilities for import substitution industrialization. This in turn required both greater access to foreign loans and investment but also to expanded markets for Mexican commodity exports.⁸⁰

The Mexican model of development initiated in 1958 and implemented (with few changes) until 1970 was promoted by a strong, intervening protectionist, highly regulatory state, with policies of investing in infrastructure (the oil industry, road systems, health and education) and capital goods. Federal spending to promote industry and trade grew 158 percent, and expenditures in communications and transportation rose by 100 per cent. Over those twelve years, the economic sectors of electricity, commerce, transportation, and communications, manufacturing, services, and mining grew significantly due to the import substitution model and growth of the domestic market, while agriculture registered the lowest rate. Political stability was therefore dependent on the ability to maintain stable the relation with either foreign and national private investors, and that with the working and middle classes. In order to do so, the Mexican government continued to stimulate fiercely foreign investments, mostly American, by introducing a new measure that, according to a US newspaper article of the time had extended "to foreigners the privilege of making bank deposits without revealing the identity of the depositor" in order to "demonstrate the stability of Mexican banking institutions and to provide safe lodging for funds of foreigners who 'do not wish their capital taxed.'"⁸¹

At the same time, pressures from the Mexican private sector led the government in 1960 to approve a law that protected the domestic economy from foreign capital inflow, through a form of conditionality. The new law established that foreign capital must consist of 41-50 per cent of total capital against Mexican capital, in order to promote the Mexicanization of industries. As a result, Mexico had adjusted its own model of development throughout the time, bringing the Mexican Miracle to a climax that lasted until the end of the Sixties. Between 1950 and 1970, the gross domestic product (GDP) grew 6 per cent average per year, production of goods doubled compared to 1940, and the industrial sector occupied 35 per cent of the national product.⁸² In the 1960s, Mexico experienced its highest level of GDP growth

⁸⁰ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 22.

⁸¹ "Anonymity is Helped: Mexico Permits Withholding of Depositors' Names" *The New York Times*. 13 Jan. 1960.

⁸² Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo, "Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968" *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*. 234 (2018): 112–114.

in history.⁸³ During the government of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), the GDP grew 6.84 per cent, the highest in the country's history, with inflation of only 2.76 per cent.⁸⁴ On a side note, it is interesting to mention that a comparative study reveals that between 1950 and 1981 Mexico grew faster than the United States; this was the second out of two times that such a trend happened.⁸⁵

However, an event in the Sixties revealed the limits of the stabilizing development model that had given the country such favorable results. In 1965, Mexico found itself with no more surplus of corn to export. As the authors Kehoe and Meza noted in their abovementioned study, this detail may seem irrelevant, but the economic model depended exactly on the export of grains and minerals to finance imports of machinery that required import substitution. Because of its orography, Mexico will never be a great producer of grains, so, the economic model required an adjustment in its exports (for example, in those years Mexico had great capability in industrial and agricultural goods and services). This, however, would come only two decades later.

4. A dual society: social inequalities in Mexico(s)

The rapid economic development was accompanied by demographic growth, increasing internal migrations from rural to urban settings, and accelerated urbanization. However, a major flaw of the economic model was that it did not plan a redistribution of the seeds of growth, neither at geographic nor at socio-economic level. Many studies highlight that at the verge of the miracle two different Mexico(s) seemed to coexist within the national borders. On the one side of the spectrum, there stood the modern Mexico (otherwise called the 'Westernised' Mexico): urban, progressive, and in development. Between 1940 and 1960, the mortality rate decreased by 50 per cent, while population growth registered an increase of 3 per cent. The Mexican population rose from 27,791,017 in 1950, to 34,923,19 in 1960, to 48,225,238 in 1970.⁸⁶ The general improvement of living conditions the also kept the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo, "Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968" 114.

⁸⁵ Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe, "Crecimiento rápido seguido de estancamiento: México (1950-2010)" 242.

⁸⁶ Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo, "Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968" 115-116.

population young, especially in the urban settings. The average age was 23.7 in 1950, 22.9 in 1960, and 22.3 in 1970.⁸⁷ In the same period, the major industrial centres like Mexico City, the Hidalgo state and Estado de Mexico enlarged in size because of the expanding employability in the manufacturing industry. Subsequently, the urban population sprouted from 42.6 per cent to 58.7 per cent in nearly one decade, that of the Sixties.⁸⁸

Most of the state's interventionist projects in sanitation, healthcare, clean water, and education were concentrated in these areas indeed. On the other side, there was the traditional Mexico: rural, traditional, and underdeveloped.⁸⁹ In the Sixties Mexico remained a rural country, with 57 per cent of the total population still living in small rural villages in 1950 and dropping to 41 per cent by 1970.⁹⁰ As opposed to the urban areas, the rural areas were composed by small villages grouping a small number of people whose way of living was based on a self-sufficient closed economy, and who were isolated from the cities as much as from one another. Like in many other Latin American countries, the spatial distribution of the population increased social inequalities and conditioned the quality of the services that the populations could receive. Notwithstanding, rural populations were also subjugated to the expansion of capitalist agriculture and defunding of campesino agriculture under the Green Revolution.⁹¹ As we have previously seen, the economic miracle needed public and private investment be redirected into the industrialized sector and the urban areas to the extent that the social benefits in education, health and drinking water, became more expensive to be able to access the rural population which was therefore left behind in the state project.

Moreover, the economic boom deepened class divergences and socio-economic inequalities within the same setting, giving birth to new class struggles. Between 1940 and 1958, the Mexican society experienced a high level of social mobility that changed the class composition and developed new suburban cultures, as people migrated from both the rural and the small urban villages to the big industrial centres.⁹² The internal migration and the new model of industrialization paved the way for the rise of new middle-class sectors - the direct product, beneficiary, and fuel of the Miracle all in once.⁹³ The middle-class(es) received

⁸⁷ Ibid. 119.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* (El Colegio de México, 1988) 126.

⁹⁰ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies 1*.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* (El Colegio de México, 1988) 126.

⁹³ Ibid.

important benefits from social policies on education, health, economy and labor, implemented by the PRI-led state. At the same time, the improvement in the quality of life of this sector of society increased and diversified the demand of goods and services associated with the urbanised quality of life that sustained the industrialization: household appliances, private cars, white goods, durable consumer goods, but also goods and services related to entertainment, communication, and information. Even though they remained a limited percentage of the population, they acquired more and more social prestige and, as the vanguard of social transformation, their support became fundamental in the maintenance of the PRI's hegemony. Economic prosperity had brought hope of new possibilities of individual enrichment which made part of the middle-class justify the lues of the Mexican elite. A consistent part of this new class was prone to "subordinate the defence of democracy to individual economic satisfaction."⁹⁴ In the words of sociologist Soledad Loaeza:

[...] economic growth created mobility and well-being perspectives that dominated concerns that inspired the monopolization of power, the nullity of the elections and intolerance in the face of union dissent. In the prosperity, the internal antagonisms [of middle classes] took a backseat too. Therefore, the middle classes were willing to understand participation as a contributory to the modernizing project of the state through their incorporation either to the public administration, the political staff, or the private sector of an expanding economy.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the Mexican state also played a great role in acquiring the middle-classes' support. Indeed, the PRI

offered the Mexican middle-class leadership in the party by means of the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP), where the middle class found a corporatist haven. However, as the state courted the middle class, it was forced to hold contradictory visions seeking to satisfy the very paradoxical middle class. The middle class integrated a diversity of cultural, political and economic visions ranging from liberalism to conservatism.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Emilio Mario Coral García, "The Mexico City middle class, 1940-1970: between traditions, the state, and the United States" (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, 2011). iii.

On the other side of the coin, high-speed levels of industrialization needed cheap labor force to exploit. The Green Revolution and the industrial production that sustained the Mexican miracle fueled the state's support to private entrepreneurs in the sectors of the economy relevant to the model of import substitution as well as the landowners. In contrast, the state exploited the urban and rural proletariat. This phenomenon started becoming relevant in the 1950s, when social inequalities reached a conspicuous level, as the pyramidal income structure, population surge, and accelerated urban growth posed serious problems of employment and marginalization.⁹⁷ By the end of the 1960s, the real wage of workers and peasants had dramatically declined⁹⁸ and, at the beginning of the 1970s, only 3 per cent of Mexican population had benefited from the Mexican stabilizing development, at least in terms of wages.⁹⁹

Correspondingly, in the Sixties, *campesinos* in the countryside and low-income urban workers in the cities sharply contested the terms of the *Cardenista* land redistribution's reforms, of the restrictions of worships, and of the promised economic betterment. In urban settings, the expansion of state-labour relations and social welfare system in the 1940s helped create a "radical nationalism and ideology of citizenship"¹⁰⁰ that offered workers not only a language to define their interests but also a lever to press for them. The result was an increase in labour unions asking for their rights, though the number of workers strikes in Mexico remained contained.¹⁰¹ In the rural areas, the state left its management in the hands of corrupt state officials and the agribusiness, as well as used a large number of military forces for enacting civilian political and social control and for building agrobusiness empires on which the sort of the economic miracle depended. Consequently, peasant leaders lost power against the corporate worker leaderships and against the organizations of the agricultural sectors, losing their capacity to own a space within the ruling party.¹⁰² The 1960s, registered a decrease in the peasants' support for the legitimacy of the PRI vis-a-vis other classes, class sectors and social groups, especially resulting from a general distance between the social condition of the social bases of the agrarian sector – the peasants – and its elite. The result was

⁹⁷ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 126.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁰⁰ See Thomas Miller. *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile's El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951*. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 1998.

¹⁰¹ Sjaak Velden et al., eds., *Strikes around the world, 1968-2005: Case-studies of 15 countries*, Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publisher, 2007. 114–132.

¹⁰² Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* 42.

The loss of identity between those represented [the peasants] and the representatives [the leaders] of the peasant corporate institutions that were part of the triple political structure of captive representation in which the social bases of the PRI were organized in three sectors: the peasant, of which the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), the worker and the popular.¹⁰³

Starting from the second half of the Fifties, peasant demonstrations intensified in both frequency and intensity. The state did almost nothing to help the poorer and responded to their requests with violence that led to the death of thousands of people; many more were imprisoned, kidnapped, disappeared, and tortured. The Mexican army was the executor of this new doctrine of domestic repression that utilized brutal violence. By the Sixties, peasants had lost faith in the traditional forms of politics and their struggles took the organized form of *guerrillas*.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the rural Mexico “became a laboratory for social control and repression later applied in urban centers and nationally.”¹⁰⁵ In general, the 1960s and 1970s count on many social and revolutionary movements of a variety of forms, including militant strikes, land invasions, cross-country marches, independent forums, popular organizing, and urban and rural guerrilla uprisings. In many regions of Mexico, different expressions of democracy developed from the ground up, especially in Chihuahua, Guerrero, Jalisco, Mexico City, Puebla, and Nuevo León, where state repression was most evident.¹⁰⁶

5. The expansion of education and the young “rebel Mexico”

Like in many other processes of modernity, education was a core stone of the national strategy. In post-revolutionary Mexico, education was seen in the Gramscian way as the tool of the state to main the status quo, thus, it was given responsibility to solve the internal societal complexity, that was one of the major problems of the modern Mexican society. So, since the late 1940s, the state enacted a series of laws aimed at expanding the educational system, starting with increasing public secondary schools and

¹⁰³ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies*..

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

widening the access to the middle school cycle. Between 1940 and 1960, the percentage of young Mexicans between 15 and 19 years old in secondary school increased from 6 per cent to 13 per cent.¹⁰⁷ The rise of new middle classes and the consolidation of their new purchasing power also gave impetus to a growing demand for higher education for their children, leading to an increase in the demand of access to other levels of education offering professional training. According to one author:

After the Great Depression (1929-1934) and the economic expansion of World War II, these classes stabilized and consolidated their social mobility, which they translated into the “legitimate aspiration” that their children have a university degree.¹⁰⁸

In the 1950s and 1960s, Mexican universities were popularized, making it possible for young people from the middle and lower middle classes to get access to higher education. University and technical school enrolment had more than doubled, increasing from 32,500 in 1950 to 75 434 in 1960 students in institutions of higher education; and by 1970, the number had risen to 208,944.¹⁰⁹ In the 1960s, four more universities were founded. Despite the fact that universities outside Mexico City began to meet regional demand, most of universities were located in the Federal District, where only 11 per cent of the total population actually lived. This originated a migration flow of young people, as students from small cities massively came to the capital to pursue their degrees and soon became the new population of the area. In 1960, 40 per cent of the total number of secondary school students and 65 per cent of the total high-school students studied in Mexico City.¹¹⁰ Many of these young students would come with the enthusiasm and the recklessness of the cultural immigrant and, from the mid-1950s, they would be the seed of the new Mexican political, economic, and cultural elites. The change in the university environment also included the expansion of careers in university public and private institutions, the process of professionalizing social sciences, and the creation of contemporary debates on its agenda of problems. In the words of one author:

[...] the discussion around modernization and the development and in the following decade the revolutionary ideal and the redefinition of the anti-imperialist discourse were

¹⁰⁷ Loeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 129.

¹⁰⁸ Ricardo Horcasitas Pozas, “Mexico in the 1960s” *Voices of Mexico*. 106 (2018): 29.

¹⁰⁹ Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo, “Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968” 121.

¹¹⁰ Loeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 130.

incorporated. Many elements subscribed this way: the wars of Korea and Vietnam, the processes of decolonization in the call of the Third World, the war of Argelia, the Second Vatican Council and the debate over the social role of the Church, the Chinese-Soviet conflict but especially the Cuban revolution of 1959 and its later socialist orientation. The intellectual and academic climate revolved in part on these questions, advancing to the questioning and resignification of the role of the university as an actor of social transformation.¹¹¹

In this scenario, the world experienced the emergence of new organizations that gave students visibility as a political actor, articulating specific demands at three levels: national (in Mexico), regional (in Latin America), international. As in many other countries globally, the Sixties in Mexico were the decade of the urban, sexual and feminist revolution, the Cold War, media culture, and counterculture, all representing the struggle for freedom. A global culture of student protest emerged as an expression of a new desire to rebel against a sense of alienation from the established order, and a profound distaste for authoritarianism in any form. As Pozas writes:

Young people began to rebel against the guardians of order and their certainties and convictions. They confronted the faith that their elders had in the universe of values and beliefs sustained in dogmatic duty and that their children experienced as old-fashioned.¹¹²

In Mexico, the youth began to lose trust in the government as much as workers and campesinos did. Furthermore, the external factor of the Cuban Revolution contributed to influence the Mexican youth seek 'liberation' in its political terms as "an innovative language of dissent and an egalitarian ethos that student activists embraced to confront capitalism and imperialism as well as the reformism, authoritarian structure, and corporatist apparatus of the Old Left."¹¹³ Part of the Mexican youth embraced a variety of socialist and communist ideas as well as had links with the young wing of the Mexican Communist Party, giving the PRI government an excuse for its authoritarianism. Nevertheless, most of authors found that Mexican student movements responded to homegrown realities rather than international pressures, and that they were inhabited by different radicalisms: leftist, Catholic, and ultra-right. In fact, their

¹¹¹ Laura Luciani, "Movimientos estudiantiles latinoamericanos en los años sesenta" *Historia y memoria*. (2019): 83–85.

¹¹² Horcasitas Pozas, "Mexico in the 1960s" 30.

¹¹³ Jaime Pensado, "'To Assault with the Truth': The Revitalization of Conservative Militancy in Mexico During the Global Sixties" *The Americas*. 70.3 (2014): 421.

demands were based on very national problems: article 3 of the Constitution, the national educational system, corruption, militarism in universities, state violence, repression and antidemocracy. According to the most recent historiography, this new era of student activism in Mexico begun in 1956, when working-class students of the National Polytechnic Institute [IPN] (*politécnicos*) organized a big strike. Students asked for greater participation in the decision-making process, the resignation of the IPN corrupted director, and an increase in funding destined to scholarships and school's infrastructure.¹¹⁴ For the first time ever,

students challenged notions of power and authority in public by bringing a broader concept of democracy and new strategies of struggle into the streets. At the strike's peak, more than 100,000 students took to the streets in the nation's capital.¹¹⁵

Not only was the 1956 protest “the last in a series of student demonstrations demanding a return to ‘popular politics’”¹¹⁶, but also, it “represents the first direct challenge to the state within the framework of an organized student political structure (Frente Nacional de Estudiantes Técnicos [FNET]) during the long Sixties.”¹¹⁷ – he explains. The protest reverberated nationally, for many schools across the country joined the strike.¹¹⁸ As years went by, the PRI-led state gave more and more reasons to its students and teachers to protest. Among these, the 1960 educational reform was, for sure, one of the most important fuel of the student movements. Early that year the government of Lopez Mateos enacted a new law that would distribute teaching books for free. According to the official version, the measure aimed to reduce inequalities and open the access to education to the most vulnerable sectors of society. However, the reform was just one of the many ways of the PRI-led state to impose its national agenda under authoritarian measures. In reality, the Comisión Nacional Revisora de Libros de Texto y de Consulta del CNTE, the state organism in charge of the reform, would publish a list of books authorized for educational purposes in 1960. The list appeared in most of national newspapers as a way of state propaganda. At this point, teachers and students felt even more directly exposed to the state's control, and a new surge of protests

¹¹⁴ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* 57.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Jaime Pensado, “The (forgotten) Sixties in Mexico” *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*. 1.1 (2008): 84.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* 57.

began.¹¹⁹ Movements of the kind of that of 1956 continued to gain verve throughout the long Sixties, regardless geographical location, involving institutes like the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Normal School, and the National School of Agriculture of Chapingo.

As events unfolded in the urban areas, the battle of students was fought also in the rural Mexico. In the most comprehensive collection of all times, *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* (2018), Tanalís Padilla explains:

[...] during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40), normales rurales (then known as Escuelas Regionales Campesinas, or Regional Peasant Schools) numbered thirty-five. In the 1940s President Manuel Ávila Camacho's (1940–46) more conservative administrations eliminated co-education, mandated a uniform curriculum with urban normales, and reduced funding, leading some of these schools to close. His administration also eliminated Marxists from the SEP and overturned the socialist education framework the ministry adopted for the general curriculum during the 1930s. Nonetheless, the normales rurales preserved a distinct identity characterized by their boarding school structure, students' agricultural activities, and the presence of the Federación de Estudiantes Campesinos Socialistas de México (Mexican Federation of Campesino Socialist Students, FECSM). Formed in 1935, and still in existence today, the FECSM has long politicized the student body of the normales rurales. With committees in each school, it has fought for campus resources, sought a voice in institutional matters, and participated in wider student and popular struggles. Its militant advocacy has long contributed to the radical reputation rural normalistas still enjoy.¹²⁰

In the 1960s, rural teachers and students took to the street and gave a great contribution to peasants' protests. The tie between these subjects was their shared *campesino* identity. *Normalistas* rurales were the sons and daughters of peasants, who were the legitimate owners of the land the state was sharply selling to the agrobusiness. Most of the times, these movements were forced to adopt violent solutions to fight a system of coercion and repression

¹¹⁹ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 245–251.

¹²⁰ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* 54.

that had been trying to undermine the dignity and survival of the rural population.¹²¹ A remarkable episode was that of Chihuahua in 1965. On 23 September that year, *normalistas* joined the agrarian unrest and attacked the military barracks of Ciudad Madera, Chihuahua. They protested against their governor's authoritarianism, structural violence in the countryside, the US aggression against Cuba, and, most importantly, they fought against the state's large estates. Together, their political activity contributed to produce anxiety within the state, specifically in the Secretary of Professional Education (SEP) and led to an educational reform aiming to neutralize the political voice of the rural students. Most of teacher-leaders who led the rural movements in the Sixties were people with *campesino* backgrounds who had pursued their degree(s) in Mexico City before coming back to their own homeland. Often, they had actively participated in the urban activism of the mid 1950s. This was the case, for instance, of Arturo Gamiz. Originally from Durango, his family moved to Mexico City in 1950 when he was 10. After his studies at IPN, he returned to Chihuahua to dedicate his life as a teacher for the rural poor. He was very active in the IPN protest of 1956, as well as amongst the charismatic leaders who headed the agrarian unrest in Chihuahua in 1965.¹²² At large, student militants in Mexico opted for nonviolent methods of resistance and forged broad national alliances. On the contrary, the state confronted them with deviating authorities—inside and outside the government. By the 1960s, according to Pensado, the state implemented

aggressive forms of repression that included illegal mechanisms of control in the cities, paramilitary violence, various forms of popular co-optation in rural Mexico, and torture and killings of activists across the nation.” In Guadalajara, as Herrera Calderón argues, state-sponsored shock brigades played an important yet unsuccessful role in deterring student radicalism in both schools and working-class barrios. When legal and illegal mechanisms of control ultimately failed in containing the radicalisms of the era, the state then opted for more repressive measures.¹²³

The accelerated social change in the 1960s produced a gap between the new, modernizing social subjects and the maintenance of a political regime characterized by dense, heavy, presidentialist, authoritarian, corporatist political-culture traditions. The existing institutions were limited of producing legitimate responses in the face of the new demands

¹²¹ Ibid., 53–58.

¹²² Ibid., 57.

¹²³ Ibid., 12.

presented by the masses of young people who were entering the national public space(s). Mexican authorities were incapable of making the forms of political and social organization flexible, thus exposing the coercive nature of its institutions. The more student activism challenged the power of the ruling party, the higher the state's concern. In the 1960s, radical students became intended as a national issue, the well-known student problem. Under the presidencies of Lopez Mateos and Díaz Ordaz, the state accused students and teachers of being moved by anti-state interests and, therefore, being a threat to national security. The 'problematic' nature of the movements somehow justified the state to respond with a higher degree of state repression and violence.

As I will detail in the next section of this chapter, another argument used by the PRI-led state to silence political dissent was the external "Communist threat". Both the government of Lopez Mateos and, even more so, the right-wing government of Díaz Ordaz pictured Mexican students and teachers like affiliates, at times spies, of the Cuban and Soviet Communist parties. The rise of radical student politics in the Mexico Cold War atmosphere was therefore used to pursue national and foreign policy interests, as so as to cover up state repression. However, historiography is full of examples offering important insights into the relationship between the student movement(s) and the local demands articulated by the popular classes in the countryside, demonstrating how students became more engaged with social demands much beyond the university, and how their actions had little – if nothing – to do with a foreign communist plot.¹²⁴ The case of Chihuahua in 1956 is the perfect example: students and teachers got involved in the *campesino* armed struggle just as soon as they realized that social justice would never be brought by the PRI's developmental model. Like peasants, they revolted because they have lost faith in both the state and the channels of traditional politics. The intense change that transformed Mexico throughout the 1960s prompted *rebeliones* that blossomed into the well-known 1968 student movement. Unlike traditional historiography would argue¹²⁵, the 1968 movement was a continuum of social protests

¹²⁴ For more see: Pensado (2020), Mexican social movements and Mexican student movements recent historiographies.

¹²⁵ History produced by *68ocheros* has often narrated the 1968 movement as an extraordinary event with extraordinary state's response. See for instance, Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *Los archivos de la violencia* (Grijalbo: Reforma, 1998) and *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa* (Proceso, 2015). Recent historiography, on which this thesis is based on, has abandoned this trajectory to try to unveil what was happening beyond, before, and after the '68 movement to offer a broader and clearer picture of the Sixties in Mexico. For recent interpretations of the 1968 in Mexico refer to the works of Ariel Rodríguez Kuri and Sara Musotti.

in the nation, whose tip of the iceberg be the 1968 massacre of Tlatelolco. During this infamous confrontation between the state and society, countless of young students lost their lives, were kidnapped, disappeared, arrested, and tortured on the hand of the state.¹²⁶ From this perspective, the student struggles in the long Sixties can be considered as a symbol of the political limits of the Mexican model of development. These struggles showed the exhaustion of the authoritarian regime of the Mexican Revolution designed for the rural society that, in the Sixties, was not able to offer a future to its population anymore. There is a strong sense that after the Tlatelolco massacre something for youth fundamentally changed. Without any doubts, the date marked the end of youthful trust in the ruling party, and it made it clear that the costs of colluding in the fiction of the ‘democratic state’ outweighed the benefits. Urban and rural social movements of the Fifties and Sixties opened the way for more organized and bigger in size movements of the Seventies and Eighties who helped give birth to Mexico’s democracy. Between 1968 and 2000, Mexicans transformed their highly fraudulent electoral system into one that is more pluralistic, if not always clearly above suspicion.¹²⁷

6. The political Left and the anti-communist rhetoric

In the beginning of the chapter, it has been said that the PRI-led state had a tendency to silent political dissent but also to recognise, although undemocratically, some political parties as official parties. Furthermore, the Mexican political elite had been merging various competing groups within the same institutionalised party, the PRI, in order to create consensus and exert as much control as possible over society. The complex political structure resulting from this process was one characterised by a tension. As one author explains:

This tension—what Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez labels an “ideological dispute” between those who favored greater versus less state involvement in the economy and social institutions —increased during the 1950s, as the government turned more favorably in the direction of private capital.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ For more memorials of the 1968 student movement in Mexico see also: Paco Ignacio Taibo II, '68: *El otoño mexicano de la masacre de Tlatelolco* (Siete Cuentos, 29 October 2019).

¹²⁷ For more references see, for example, Dolores Trevizo. *Rural Protest and the Making of Democracy in Mexico, 1968–2000*. (Penn State University Press, 2011)

¹²⁸ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 22.

The state responded to the tension with its authoritarianism, politically justified with the anti-Communist rhetoric typical of the Cold War discourse. As the political environment in Mexico appeared very polarized, by the second half of the Fifties the anti-communist rhetoric displayed unprecedented strength and coherence.¹²⁹

Specialists of international relations have shown that the international context had a strong influence in spurring the anti-Communist sense one can detect in the Mexican long Sixties. In *The Last Good Neighbour*, Eric Zolov skilfully validates the crucial role of the Bandung Conference (1955) and the Cuban Revolution (1959) in redefining the domestic political discourse in Mexico during the long Sixties, exposing the paradigms of both the anti-Communist argument of the state and the conservative right vis-à-vis its anti-imperialist counter-argument safeguarded by the Mexican left. The Bandung Conference over the sort of the Third World and the Cuban Revolution had uplifted the spirits of some leaders within the Mexican Left and had intensified the existing revolutionary politics that had emerged in the Fifties. Marxist ideals and the figures of Fidel and Che Guevara inspired the Mexican leftists to revolt against long-standing tradition of institutionalized political oppression, repression of freedom of expression and state violence, along with encouraging their anti-American imperialism vis-à-vis the official US-aligned position of the Mexican state. The Mexican Communist Party had never had the strength it needed to be a competitor of the PRI, yet, Zolov explains, in the late Fifties one thing made the ruling party's security waving: the political resurrection of socialist ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas.

Cárdenas, who incarnated the socialist and anti-imperialist principles of the Mexican Revolution, was “the only leader within the Mexican Left able to inspire and unite the “Old” Left – nationalist yet openly identified with Soviet internationalism – and a “New” Left in formation.”¹³⁰ In 1959, he took a trip to make overseas alliances with Communists around the globe and, once back, he established the emerging far-reaching left-wing social movement, the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional (MLN). Born as an outcrop of the Soviet-backed World Peace Council (WPC) in 1961, the MLN seek to expand the foreign and national support of the Mexican Communist Party. Its program reaffirmed proposed to give real content with those principles and laws of the Mexican Revolution and the Constitution that had not been complied with. Strong of

¹²⁹ Loeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 281.

¹³⁰ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 14.

the leadership of Cárdenas, the MLN brought together almost the entire Mexican Left regardless of their partisan militancy. In a speech, Lázaro Cárdenas signaled that it was urgent to fight for agrarian reform and popular improvement because “never like today have the dominant oligarchies, the political clergy and North American imperialism conspired against that fight.”¹³¹ His claims were desirable for many societal sectors who were discontent with the fractures produced by the Mexican Miracle. Therefore, the MLN and the reappearance of Cárdenas posed a direct threat to the President and the hegemonic monopoly on power of the PRI. To protect Mexico’s political stability and its strategic relations with the United States, López Mateos negotiated with the Left more than any other President before.¹³² Just as Zolov argues,

The president needed the support of the MLN, at least initially, to deepen his political base and make evident to relevant US actors that his actions on the global stage had broad domestic support. Thus, while López Mateos contained and repressed various aspects and actors related to the MLN, he simultaneously cultivated and shielded others, such as the young novelist and highly influential intellectual Carlos Fuentes, who served as a key interlocutor between the regime and social movements in opposition.¹³³

Indeed, he explains, López Mateos’ initial ability to build bridges with Lázaro Cárdenas as well as with some sector of the left-wing intelligentsia proved successful not only to fulfill his national developmental project, but also to unified significant portions of the PRI with the Mexican Left that, although skeptical, could rally around its defense of a revolutionary spirit that guided the Third World project.¹³⁴ López Mateos’s internationalist policy was therefore able to generally unite divergent political interests and pacify domestic unrest, for example by the creation of a regime-friendly leftist journal or privately deploying Lázaro Cárdenas to Cuba.¹³⁵ Zolov also pointed out that the Mexican Left had limited inherent capacity of resurgence as evidenced by the MLN collapse in 1963, even though it still played a crucial role in limiting the state capacity for a short period of time.

¹³¹ Doralicia Carmona Dávila, “Se constituye el Movimiento de Liberación Nacional que reúne a casi toda la izquierda mexicana y agrupa a reconocidos luchadores sociales” *Memoria política de Mexico.*, n.d., Available: <https://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Efemerides/8/04081961.html>.

¹³² Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 4–6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

López Mateos's symbolic rapprochement to a segment of the Mexican Left never made its presidency more democratic, nor did it mean that he abandoned the anti-communist tradition. It is undeniable that the spirit of Bandung was of support for the claims of the State as the sole representative of the nation and of the fable of the Mexican democracy. Meanwhile, as mentioned in the case of student activism, the Cuban Revolution served to identify Communism as a threat the state must eliminate. López Mateos's initial populist governance might make us think that the state's anti-anti-Communism have toned down, whether this was reality or simple perception, it did not last long. Starting from 1961, the intensification of the international tensions, the newly emerged hostility of big businessmen¹³⁶, and the deepening of the fractures between political groups within the political elite¹³⁷ shifted the position of the *lopeomateista* government towards a more traditional position closed to conservative nationalism. As Loaeza claims:

Starting in 1961, the Mexican left began to complain about the progress of the right and the repression of which it was a victim. While the right criticized the "passive and tolerant attitude" of the government towards the "nuclei of agitation", the left denounced the "McCarthyism" of officials such as the Attorney General of the Republic, Fernando López Arias.¹³⁸

The anti-Communist rhetoric became at this point a convenient curtain to shadow the repression and marginalization from political decision-making of the leftists associated with Lázaro Cárdenas and other forces critic of the PRI.¹³⁹ In Loaeza's words:

David Alfaro Siqueiros and Filomena Mata, members of the PCM, were arrested after being accused of subversion. At the Mexico City airport, the judicial police seized all information and propaganda material coming from Cuba and the Soviet Union, without even respecting diplomatic bags or ministerial hierarchies, even though the sympathizers of the Cuban Revolution and socialism could present their ideas, the margins of tolerance had narrowed considerably.

¹³⁶ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 284.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 286.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹³⁹ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 15.

The demonstrations in support of Cuba, organized in April in Mexico City and other provincial cities to protest against the invasion of Playa Girón, were prohibited or repressed.¹⁴⁰

Starting from the second half of the 1950s, the work of the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS) and of the intelligence agency, the Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (DGIPS), had been intensified and expanded. The main targets of state's surveillance were, as Sergio Aguayo noted:

“[...] leftists, unionized workers (oil workers, railway workers), some foreigners, critical journalists, políticos who upset those in power, and members of the PRI who decided to join the opposition in pursuit of their own political self-interest.”¹⁴¹

The government also made extensive use of anti-Communist propaganda in public spaces, as a peculiar mean to fortify Mexican nationalism.

But the anti-Communist atmosphere of the Sixties was not only due to a radical trend in the government, the action of left-wing groups against the PRI, or social agitation. Soledad Loaeza interestingly noted that anti-communist prejudices were also the product of the mobilization of conservative sectors of public opinion, mainly allies of the Church and of some large business organizations.¹⁴² In the face of social agitation, these sectors of society found in the anti-liberal and anti-communist rhetoric the arguments to maintain their status quo. In the case of student activism, for example, right-wing groups of students emerged as opponent of the radical student movements: they were middle-class students with traditional values, who were often backed by the US intelligence, articulating a state-aligned political discourse to persuade their peers from radicalization and what they considered Marxist ideals.¹⁴³ As a result of all this, anti-Communism became one of the dominant threats of the political culture that foster the national consensus in the long Sixties.¹⁴⁴ Probably, the most interesting take-away from Zolov's work here is that, under Lopez Mateos, the state was able to maintain a balance between its anti-Communist rhetoric and the concessions it made to the Left. Unluckily, the same cannot be said for his successor. The conservative ideas of Gustavo

¹⁴⁰ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 293.

¹⁴¹ Sergio Aguayo in Zolov (2020) 15.

¹⁴² Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963*.

¹⁴³ See Pensado Jaime, ““To Assault with the Truth”: The Revitalization of Conservative Militancy in Mexico During the Global Sixties”, *The Americas*, 70:3, January 2014, 489-512

¹⁴⁴ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 163.

Díaz Ordaz and his anxious personality made him incapable of tolerating the stress of bargaining with the opposition. This led him to break up the relationship with the left-wing intelligentsia and “set the stage for the violence that culminated in the massacre of students in 1968.”¹⁴⁵

7. Power and society: a crisis of consensus?

We have seen so far that state authoritarianism, corruption, and social fragmentation produced by the economic miracle spurred protests and insurrections in the Sixties. The Mexican state responded with disproportionate use of force and the country fell into internal political instability. But was this enough to produce a crisis of political consensus?

In spite of being a closed structure of power, in the 1940s the PRI had accepted a limited integration of different actors representing different economic, religious and unions interests. In particular, the state had symbolically integrated the middle classes in its structure of power as a way to expand consensus.¹⁴⁶ Indeed,

thanks to its relative autonomy with respect to society, the State could choose and hierarchize the components of a consensus that contained deep intolerance, in the same way that in a given situation it could open the system to participation of certain social actors.¹⁴⁷

The expansion of the margins of political legitimacy, however, did never translate into a democratization of power in the sense of a liberalization of participation or the opening of the political game. By consequence, by the end of the 1950s the political system retained a solid concentration of power but the situation of political mobilization of the late 1950s helped put an end to the conformism of the middle classes too. One of the most important consequences of development had been the formation of centers of

¹⁴⁵ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 5.

¹⁴⁶ Loeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 179–180.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

opinion which, even though they were marginalized were from the political debate, had accumulated a considerable potential for autonomous action.¹⁴⁸

A part of Mexican society was particularly dissatisfied with their living conditions; some people did not identify with the state and claimed their political space; some others simply opposed the political wing. From this time onwards, Mexico registered a widespread sense of distrust in the state; peasant, worker, popular, and intellectual movements emerged or expanded in order to question the legitimacy of a regime that, beyond the façade social justice and democracy, spread inequality, authoritarianism, and antidemocratic practices. The urban and rural movements of the long Sixties exposed the weakness of state and revealed its true nature. Rather than a democracy, or a ‘perfect dictatorship’^{149 150}, the 1960s Mexico was a “hybrid regime that combine[d] democratic and authoritarian elements”¹⁵¹, named *dictablanda*. According to Gillingham and Smith, the Mexican elites succeeded to achieve only ‘rudimentary’ stability all over the country through a balance of force and consent. In this sense, the Mexican state was a competitive authoritarian regime characterized by a weak state that placed the executive power in the army, resorted to “censorship, intimidation, violence, and repression, although not at levels comparable with totalitarian or bureaucratic authoritarian regime”¹⁵², and attempted to control and distribute the economic growth. The unfolding of this crisis between state power and society also revealed the fractures in the consensus and fomented socio-political mobilizations. In the face of this, the ruling party harshened its “complex political machinery that included both clientelist practices or institutional co-optation strategies as well as mechanisms of coercion, repression, and annihilation of opponents.”¹⁵³

In particular, the presidency of Díaz Ordaz was characterized by a rigid structure aimed at preserving his conservative ideas at all costs and without any change. “It is up to us to be

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 179–180. 179–180.

¹⁴⁹ “Vargas Llosa: ‘México es la dictadura perfecta’” *EL PAÍS*. (México/Madrid, 1 Sep. 1990), online, Internet, 2 Sep. 2022. Available: https://elpais.com/diario/1990/09/01/cultura/652140001_850215.html.

¹⁵⁰ Gilbert M. Joseph and Jürgen Buchenau, *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Duke University Press, 2013) 12.

¹⁵¹ Gillingham Paul and Benjamin T., *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968*. 16

¹⁵² Vaughan, “Mexico, 1940-1968 and Beyond: Perfect Dictatorship? Dictablanda? or PRI State Hegemony?” 170.

¹⁵³ Israel Rodríguez, “Jaime M. Pensado y Enrique C. Ochoa (eds.), México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies, Tucson, The University of Arizona Press, 2018.” *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México*. 56 (2018): 158–168.

the solid bridge through which the new generations have to pass,”¹⁵⁴ he had said in 1960. Despite his willingness to connect with and serve the Mexican society, he was never able to lead the society by democratic means: he was personally unable to accept counter movements and social pressure, which attempted to repress with the weapons of violent pressure.¹⁵⁵ The existing institutions were limited and incapable of producing legitimate responses in the face of the new demands presented by the masses of young people who were entering the public space in national societies. The authorities were incapable of making the forms of political and social organization flexible, thus exposing the coercive nature of the institutions. Social complexity and diversification also contributed to the disruption of national unity, which was the foundation upon the regime of the modern Mexico was built.

By producing a gap between the new, modernizing social subjects and the maintenance of a political regime with dense, heavy, presidentialist, authoritarian, corporatist political-culture traditions, the accelerated social change of the developmental model transformed the balance of power between the state and society. The governments of the Mexican Revolution had built the regime over the first half of the 20th century and designed it to represent and dominate the majority of a mainly rural society that, by the end of the 1960s, was dismantled by the industrial development. Nation-wide spread social conflicts colluded with “a rigid closure of the state, its blindness to the social causes of discontent, and its fixation to see communist conspiracies everywhere.” While Díaz Ordaz tried to repress social conflicts, the myth of harmony and democracy collapsed under the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre, clearly exposing a fault of the political system.¹⁵⁶ As we have seen so far, Mexicans had long been aware of the PRI being violent, corrupt, and dishonest, but the promises of development kept them chill until then. In the following years, President Luís Echeverría was able to rebuild some political support for the PRI during his presidency (1970-1976), but a decline had been set off.

If numerous studies have demolished the simplistic idea that between the 1930s and the 1960s there was an absolute state control over the population, it is also true that the hegemony achieved by the PRI was a reality. Even though the political consensus began to diminish by the end of the 1950s, the state was still able to maintain a certain degree of legitimacy among the public opinion, not only because of all achievements of

¹⁵⁴ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biografía del poder* (Mexico: TUSQUETS EDITORES, 2014) 1512.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Pensado Jaime M., *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* 40.

the previous decade,¹⁵⁷ but also because the power of the Mexican society continued to be weaker than the power of the state.¹⁵⁸ Following Gillingham and Smith's interpretation, the weakness of the state itself allowed the PRI to spread its presence across the whole country crosscutting social and political boundaries.¹⁵⁹ Yet, if the state needed delegations and concession to survive, society also exchanged its political and civil rights with greater economic rights. Such mechanisms of political socialization favored the development of a mass culture that was generally uncritical, little interested in the political life, and that subordinated the rule of law to the interests of the political class of the hegemonic party in power.¹⁶⁰ All considered, it seems like, in the Sixties, most of the Mexican population remained relatively pervaded by a sense of optimistic hope that saw in the State the "reliable way towards democracy and development".¹⁶¹ According to Soledad Loaeza, this was mainly due to the PRI's ability to symbolically incorporate various social classes within the political sphere. The new axiom between power and society was, as Loaeza argues, a powerful tool for the state to gain legitimization, limit political participation, and reinforce presidential authoritarianism for over seventy years.¹⁶² Historian Lorenzo Mayer made the point saying that until the 1990s the PRI was somehow successful at managing losses and gains: by means of the state it was able to give something to the workers while protecting the capitalist class; make concessions to the peasants while protecting the landowners; leave the poorest behind while responding to the demands of the urban middle class.¹⁶³ As a result, state interventionism added up to authoritarianism and nationalism as the main forces in the maintenance of a high degree of conformity of the Mexican population towards an integrated and coherent state that included social organizations like the Church, parties of political opposition, and business organizations. Social fragmentation vis-à-vis economic growth helped the ruling party stay in power, and only in 2000 the Mexican people will vote the ruling President out of office.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 180.

¹⁵⁹ Gillingham Paul and Benjamin T., *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968*.

¹⁶⁰ Luis Fernando Villafuerte Valdés, "México: del autoritarismo a la democracia defectuosa" *Revista UIS Umanidades*, 39.1. (2011): 11-13.

¹⁶¹ Aguayo Quezada Sergio, *Los archivos de la violencia* 28.

¹⁶² Loaeza Soledad, *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963* 129-131.

¹⁶³ Lorenzo Mayer, "A Conversation with Lorenzo Mayer about Mexico's Political Transition: From Authoritarianism to What?," interview by David Thelene, Apr. 1998, Available: <http://archive.oah.org/special-issues/mexico/lmeyer.html>.

¹⁶⁴ Knight, "The Myth of the Mexican Revolution" 224.

The hybrid form of power of the 1960s, *dictablanda*, worked through a complex range of incentives and disincentives: bribery and violence, inclusion and coercion, elections and beatings, subsidies and censorship. The consolidation of *dictablanda* itself can be seen as the first sign of political weakness that unveiled the state's difficulty to respond to the new forms of struggle of emerging social groups and political factions in the decade of the Sixties. When in 1968, the Olympics Games set the eyes of the world on Mexico, the PRI wanted to show the world its achievements in terms of modernity and developments to set itself as an example for all Central and Latin American countries,¹⁶⁵ but the massacre of Tlateloco will be the only event the Mexican Sixties will be remembered for. In 1970 Luis Echeverría became President and the discourse of 'openness to democracy' was back into the domestic policy.¹⁶⁶ Notwithstanding, social inequalities, political violence and state autarchy continued to increase. In conclusion, I would argue that throughout the 1960s the PRI experienced a decrease of political consensus, rather than a crisis, as the tradition of patronage of Mexican politics and its authoritarianism – as discussed by Mayer, Gillingham and Smith, among others – had still some cards to play.

¹⁶⁵ Pettinà Vanni, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*.

¹⁶⁶ Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo, "Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968" 113.

Chapter Two

Mexican-American relations and the Cold War in Latin America

*Gorgojo, más chico que un piojo;
así de chiquito produce enojo.*

Mexican proverb

1. The foundations of Mexican-American relations and the bequest of the Revolution

The history of Mexican-American relations began in the later 18th century with the arrival of merchants – those whom many Mexicans would have disparagingly called Yankees or *gringos* – in Tampico, well before the United States developed its capacity to exercise a power influence in the world. The early business contacts and ties grew in complexity and scope during the 19th century until today. In their work *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980*, published first in 1982, historians Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Mayer pointed out that the Mexican attitude towards the United States has been always characterised by a mix of admiration and distrust, justified ever since the early years of Mexican independence. The former derived from the US economic capability and democratic form of state many Mexicans looked at as an example to follow. The latter, instead, was built upon the US imperialistic will.¹⁶⁷

Almost twenty years later, Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro explained that until 1940 US-Mexican relations were characterised by one major pattern: conflict. Three factors were the cause of this turbulent and unstable relationship: Mexico's economic stagnation and internal instability due to regional interests and factions struggling for the Mexican national government until 1880; US expansionism; the European quest for political and economic influence in the former Spanish colony.¹⁶⁸ In this period, "Washington behaved as the dominant power and generally imposed its will."¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, as John Mason Hart demonstrated, the US citizens had a great role in attempting to export their unique

¹⁶⁷ Lorenzo Mayer and Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980* (El Colegio de México, 1982) 25.

¹⁶⁸ Jorge I. Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*, second edition kindle. (Routledge, 2009) 37.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

“American dream” to Mexico under the principles of social mobility, Protestant values, a capitalist free market, a consumer culture, and a democracy of elected representation.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, Porfirio Diaz’s regime brought a six-year moment of closeness between the two countries. Be that as it may, most of researchers would agree that the two defining moments of this early conflictual period be the Mexican-American war and the Mexican Revolution.

The current geographical borders of Mexico were defined during the Mexican-American war (1846-1848) indeed, which is considered by many to be the departure of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries. While it was victorious for the United States, the war is one of the most obscure moments in the history of Mexico; for sure, its collective memory was stained by this time in history. According to Rafael Fernández de Castro, director of the Centre of Mexican Studies of University California in San Diego, the historical wound left by the Mexican-American war has been influencing the sentiments that Mexicans have had towards their northern neighbour for about a century, or more. Both in schools and at home, Mexicans of the 20th century, he argues, were taught to think that the source of all the bad in their country was the United States.

In the 19th century, the United States was embedded in the idea of Manifest Destiny, the popular belief that white American settlers, as an “army of Anglo-Saxon emigration”¹⁷¹, had the right and duty to expand their territory across North America stretching from the founding thirteen colonies to California.

From the US standpoint, the Manifest Destiny justified the appropriation of territories and reorganization of borders. In 1810 a series of revolts across Mexico arise because of Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called for Mexico’s independence from Spain. The Hidalgo rebellion failed, but fights continued while the United States and Spain were carrying on a border dispute. Mexico finally achieved its independence from Spain in 1821, and obtained the US recognition a year later, when US President James Monroe received José Manuel Zozaya as Mexican Minister to the United States.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (University of California Press, 2006): 2.

¹⁷¹ John O’ Sullivan, “Annexation” *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. 17 (1845): 5–6, 9–10.

¹⁷² US State Department, Office of the Historian, “Mexico”, <https://history.state.gov/countries/mexico> (last access: 21 January 2023)

The first official dispute between Mexico and the United States concerned migration. In 1830, Mexico made immigration from the US to Texas illegal, with the goal of containing the influx of English-speaking settlers. In order to achieve so, Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna abolished slavery and enforced customs duties. In 1835, colonists from the United States and Hispanic Texans, backed by the US government, claimed their independence from Mexico, established the Republic of Texas, and asked for the annexation of the Republic by the United States. In March 1836, Mexican President Santa Anna was taken prisoner and forced to sign a treaty that would recognize the independence of Texas. Nevertheless, the Mexican government refused to recognize the Republic as a sovereign state and intermittent conflicts between the two entities continued for over ten years.¹⁷³

In December 1845, US President James K. Polk signed the annexation bill, accepting Texas as the twenty-eighth state of the Union. Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the US and the dispute over the territory began. The US and Mexican troops were sent on the soil and negotiation efforts initiated; one year later, the issue culminated in a full-scale US invasion.¹⁷⁴ Besides the disputed areas of Texas, the US occupation soon expanded to other territories in Mexico. On 2 February 1848, the two countries signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo establishing that Mexico must cede territory that will become Arizona, New Mexico, and California, as so as parts of Colorado and Nevada. Meanwhile, the treaty obliged the US not only to pay \$15 million in compensation for war-related damage to Mexican land, but also to protect the property and civil rights of Mexicans living in the US territory. Mexicans who lived in those territories could opt for moving south to Mexico or keeping their property and become American citizens: around 80,000 people out of 100,000 decided to remain. Although the Treaty protected these people and their rights by law, most of them lost their land either by force or fraud because of discrimination and intolerance. With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico lost 55 per cent of its land and about 1 per cent of its population.¹⁷⁵ Diplomatic relations were re-established at the end of the year.

¹⁷³ On the early years of Mexican-American relations, see: Mayer and Zoraida Vázquez, *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980* 25. Jason Hart, *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*.

¹⁷⁴ On the Mexican-American war, see: Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*. (Knopf, 2012); Timothy J. Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States* (Hill and Wang, 2007); Peter Guardino, *La marcha fúnebre. Una historia de la guerra entre México y los Estados Unidos*. (Polifemo, 2018). For a solid conventional American perspective of the war, see also: John S.D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War With Mexico, 1846-1848*. (University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

¹⁷⁵ See: Manuel G. Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*, (Indiana University Press, 2019)

The Mexican-American war left enduring scars in Mexican consciousness and necessarily modified Mexican attitudes towards the United States. From this point onwards, Mexico would try its best to ignore its northern neighbour and keep it at arms' length. On the contrary, the US would start its involvement in Mexico. John Mason Hart explained that it was particularly after the American Civil War (1861-1865) that what he calls 'the first phase of American involvement in Mexico' can be tracked down. At the time, US capitalists detected the opportunities for wealth and power that Mexico had to offer and established mercantile and financial relationships.¹⁷⁶ The US expansionist will under the Manifest Destiny's ideal and its concerns over the global competition for empire that preoccupied the Western powers continue to deepen in Mexico over the following decades – and, I would add, centuries. By the end of the 19th century the United States government had indeed consolidated control over the western reaches of North America and dominated trade in the Pacific.

The second phase of American involvement in Mexico, he noted, started under *porfiriato*¹⁷⁷ (1876-1911).¹⁷⁸ This was also a time characterised by a spirit of what Dominguez and Fernández de Castro would call “bilateral cooperation.”¹⁷⁹ Porfirio Díaz's state project attracted considerable investment from the US industrial elite, thanks to the creation of new markets and industries – mining, manufacturing, and rail corporations. So, Mexico turned into a client of the US, who instead was leading its industrialization process, and the American private sector got deeply involved in the development of Mexican infrastructures and railroads.

The railroads allowed these men to gain access to Mexico's rich resources and encouraged other Americans to settle there. [...] During the Porfiriato the Americans sought ownership of Mexico's natural resources, and they also began to settle there as colonists.¹⁸⁰

By the early 1900s the largest part of Mexican foreign trade was in fact concentrated in the US, with the US industrial market absorbing 76 per cent of total Mexican exports of raw materials, specifically metals. A consistent amount of capital circulating within Mexico was,

¹⁷⁶ Hart, *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*. 2.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Hart, *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*.

¹⁷⁹ Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* 44.

¹⁸⁰ Hart, *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* 2.

surely, of US sources.¹⁸¹ Between 1870 and 1910, total trade between the two countries skyrocketed from 9 million pesos to 117 million pesos.¹⁸² In those years, Mayer wrote, “the aggressiveness of US investors, who had contributed to make some modern sectors of the Mexican economy true enclaves, was notable.”¹⁸³ By 1911, Mexico was the only Latin American country where US investment was greater than British investment.¹⁸⁴ At diplomatic level, many researcher would argue that the regime of Porfirio Díaz sought to shape decision-making in the US as well as to carefully manage border issues. This period of tension relief was soon broken by revolts and uprising going on throughout Mexico.

The second crossroads of US-Mexican relations was the Mexican Revolution. First of all, the Mexican insurgency worried the US government for the large sum of capital that its citizens had invested in Mexico. At the same time, the bloody Mexican Revolution caused a flood of Mexican immigrants to seek refuge in the United States that, meanwhile, was experiencing a shortage of labour and benefitted from the exploitation of labour force. Faithful to the Monroe Doctrine, the US government got involved in the Mexican Revolution, shifting a national struggle into a foreign issue. This was one of the many periodical US military interventions in Latin American countries in the early 20th century in order to protect its interests – particularly the commercial interests of the US businessmen. In *Myths and [mis] perceptions* Aguayo noted:

President Woodrow Wilson sympathized with the revolutionaries and believed that they would demonstrate the viability of democracy for the Hispanic American nations. To aid Venustiano Carranza in his struggle against Victoriano Huerta, Wilson invaded Veracruz, manipulated weapons deliveries, and played the trump card of diplomatic recognition. However, Wilson's experiment in support of democracy faltered when the United States began gearing up in 1917 to enter World War I. The Bolsheviks' triumph in Russia that same year completely reversed U.S. opinion concerning the Mexican Revolution.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Mayer and Zoraida Vázquez, *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980* 109-110.

¹⁸² Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* 45.

¹⁸³ Mayer and Zoraida Vázquez, *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980* 109-110.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 33.

From the Mexican perspective, US interventionism was received with not so much enthusiasm and the anti-American sentiment erupted throughout Mexico. In major Mexican newspapers, three letters written from Carranza to the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile began to circulate, containing a warning of the dangers of US intervention, consequently influencing the public opinion.¹⁸⁶

Secondly, the end of the Mexican Revolution and the nationalist agenda enshrined in the 1917 Constitution marked a shift towards a Mexican independent foreign policy. As Sergio Aguayo elucidated:

[...] after the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17, Mexico followed policies that diverged from the paradigms set down by the United States. That is, Mexico pursued an independent foreign policy in which the United States was viewed as a potential threat; its economic model was a mixed property regime in which the State played an active, clearly protectionist role; and its one-party, authoritarian, corporatist, and presidentialist political system bore no resemblance to the liberal paradigms that prevailed in the United States.¹⁸⁷

The Mexican Constitution contained the promise of asserting greater national sovereignty by creating economic and social programs and paring down the burden of foreign interests. Yet, during the previous era (*porfiriato*) the US economic interests had made important advancements and the new nationalistic policies of Mexico worried the US elite. The US initial hostility was, for some, largely a result of the economic nationalism affirmed in Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, as well as the foreign policy principles embodied in the Carranza Doctrine: juridical equality among all nations, non-intervention, self-determination, and domestic control over natural resources.

In the 1930s, the US found itself in the middle of the Great Depression and directed much of its efforts towards the domestic struggles deriving from it. Meantime, the region of Latin America was experiencing a period of political and social changes in a sustained manner towards 'democracy'. Mexico itself was busy consolidating its authoritarian political structure and its institutions under the name of democracy. At this moment in history, the US foreign policy towards Latin America changed under US president Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) as he encouragingly articulated a new

¹⁸⁶ The United States and the Mexican Revolution: "A Danger for All Latin American Countries," Letters from Venustiano Carranza. <https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4940> (accessed 05/01/2022)

¹⁸⁷ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 31.

policy around the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of Latin America. His policy, which took the name of Good Neighbour policy, maintained the idea that the United States would engage in reciprocal exchanges with Latin American countries with the goal to create new economic opportunities and reassert the influence of the United States in the region. At political level, the Good Neighbour policy would allow, according to the US plan, the construction of a hemispheric alliance against the Axis power during WWII.¹⁸⁸ Far from dispensing wealth and equality, Roosevelt's new policy aimed at controlling the region as much as possible and would find it hard to maintain its initial promises. Early that time, in Mexico the Good Neighbour policy found both a fertile ground and a jealous farmer. Friedrich E. Schuler's investigation showed that Mexican foreign policy under President Lazaro Cárdenas was one that valuably opposed US imperialism which is often portrayed as of undiscussed success by mainstream historiography. Cárdenas, he argues, was able to professionalize a highly capable technocratic elite composed of diplomats and federal bureaucrats who were "better skilled in international negotiations, more realistic in the evaluation of historical contexts, and more creative in situations than their European and U.S. counterparts."¹⁸⁹ In so doing, the government of Cárdenas, he wrote, could play a great power against the US without produce US intervention.

In this period, the main divergencies between Mexico and the US originated from the matters of migration, Mexico foreign debt, and the treatment of US citizens as well as their financial capital in Mexico. The already existing question of oil also played a role in creating tensions. In 1938, Mexican workers of the foreign-owned oil companies demonstrate asking for an increase in wages. Mexico's Supreme Court ruled that wages must be increased, but foreign oil companies reject to do so. Taking advantage of the situation and of its good diplomatic skills, President Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized all the sixteen foreign-owned oil companies by means of expropriation. Most of these companies were owned by US businessman who suddenly lost much of their wealth, yet, Washington decided to keep relatively quiet on this matter because it was afraid Mexico might align with Japan, Germany, and Italy during the WWII - a fact that reiterates Schuler's argument. Nevertheless, the US remained unhappy with the new Mexican nationalistic attitude deriving from the Mexican Constitution, as much as Mexico was discontent with the never-ending US expansionist goals;

¹⁸⁸ Jorge I Domínguez, *The United States and Latin America: the new agenda*, Ed. Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley (Great Britain: London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1999) 38–39.

¹⁸⁹ Friedrich E. Schuler, *Mexico Between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lázaro Cárdenas, 1934–1940* (Albuquerque, 1998), 1.

thus, while the conflict was not necessarily continuous – as Dominguez and Fernández de Castro showed in the case of *porfiriato* – their relationship remained one step away from conflict until the 1940s.

2. Mexican-American relations in the first phase of the Cold War in Latin America (1940-1954)

The Second World War helped Mexico retain a substantial degree of autonomy from its northern neighbor, as assessed by a handful of recent studies. Stephen R. Niblo showed that the war was an opportunity seized by the US officials to recoup the influence it had lost during the previous decade, “imposing their will on the Mexican decision-makers” by “changing the rules of the game.”¹⁹⁰ The US economy of war implied a series of new controls and regulations on trade and finance that required Mexicans to channel their business through the US embassy. Between 1940 and 1952, the Mexican governments shifted away from the *cardenista* model and allowed a massive return of foreign capital into the nation – a direction that, according to the author, was the result of the influence exercised by US technocrats dispatched to Mexico City with the aim of imposing uniform standards required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), predecessor of the current World Bank.¹⁹¹ In spite of its quality, Niblo’s investigation overlooked the Mexican capacity to influence its most powerful neighbor. From the Mexican point of view, the war was the chance to affirm national sovereignty and push industrial development. In her study, María Emilia Paz highlighted that Washington’s eagerness to see Axis nationals in Mexico closely controlled, and the desire for joint military operations and rights to keep US bases on Mexican territory, gave the Mexican government “a certain leverage,” exercised in part by ex-president Cárdenas in his new positions as a key military commander and later as Minister of Defense. WWII was characterized by the Good Neighbor policy and an alliance between the US, Mexico,

¹⁹⁰ Stephen R. Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938-1954* (Wilmington, DE, 1995), 285.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

and most Latin American countries against the Axis power.¹⁹² Mexico understood its own degree of influence on Washington, and it actively established a relationship of bilateral cooperation. Bilateralism would continue after the war, but it would also lay bare the benefits of international alliances for the Mexican development.¹⁹³ In Vanni Pettinà's words:

The years between the 1940s and the end of the 1950s represented the peak of Mexico's bilateralism, a foreign policy strategy that, basically, hinged on the political and economic alliance, woven with Washington during WWII.¹⁹⁴

The post-war world order was one of bipolar sphere of interests, from which the US had emerged as the new hegemonic power vis-à-vis the other superpower, the Soviet Union. By 1945, the United States was unquestionably the hegemonic power both economically and militarily, producing 40 per cent of the global goods and holding a monopoly on atomic power in a world system that was designed by and for the US. But right when it seemed that Washington would successfully set about crafting a new world order made of multilateral institutions, the spread of Soviet Communism throughout the globe posed a direct threat to the American nation and its supremacy. The Cold War was a geopolitical rivalry that manifested itself through military alliances, clandestine operations, and proxy wars as both the US and the USSR engaged in a competitive run to spread their respective ideologies throughout the world. This polarizing global struggle left no country scot-free. Most of scholars concur with the fact that Latin America was not a priority in the US agenda of the first phase of the Cold War, yet, the US paranoia echoed in the Latin American subcontinent too.

The global competition of the Cold War brought fears among US officials that the USSR would project their power into the region, threatening their most direct area of influence. It is no coincidence that the US tried to build a system of alliances in Latin America to contain a potential Soviet threat; a controversial system that would, slowly but steadily, cut short the Good Neighbour policy. In Domínguez's interpretation, US-Latin American relations did not change much with preceding US policies in the region, even though he noted:

¹⁹² On Mexico-US relations during WWII, see, for instance: Halbert Jones, *The War Has Brought Peace to Mexico: World War II and the Consolidation of the Post-Revolutionary State* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2014).

¹⁹³ Maria Emilia Paz, *Strategy, Security, and Spies: Mexico and the U.S. as Allies in World War II* (University Park, PA, 1997), 6.

¹⁹⁴ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964" 93.

The Cold War years proved distinctive, however, because anti-communist ideological objectives overwhelmed other US foreign policy goals towards Latin America in each and every case when the United States chose to deploy its military forces or chose to overthrow a Latin American government through some other means. [...] When the ideological fear of communism was absent, the United States did not deploy its military forces nor seek to overthrow Latin American governments.¹⁹⁵

The beginning of the Cold War shaped a new behaviour of the US towards Mexico in their bilateral relations. Soledad Loaeza pointed out that the United States expected its allies to embrace democratic and liberal ideals within their institutions and politics, so, between 1944 and 1948, many Latin American countries took a path of hope towards democratic consolidation. Mexico too tried to move steps in this direction, producing an increase in the country's nationalistic will. However, the US expansionist policy and the implications of the new world order undermined Mexican nationalism, that is to say, the solid base of the state project. As Soledad Loaeza noted, Mexico:

[...] could not escape the spheres of influence or the restrictions of the neighborhood with the superpower, leader of democracies and the capitalist world. Geographic contiguity has been a condition of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico that is not shared by other Latin American countries, hence its particularities. Proximity intensifies ambivalent reactions among Mexicans towards a neighbor who, on the one hand, exerts a powerful attraction, and, on the other, produces defensive feelings and an imperious desire for differentiation.¹⁹⁶

In layman's terms, geographic contingency represented for Mexico a potential opportunity to carry on its project of modernization through trade and investment opportunities as well as credits and financial support from international agencies. However, geographic contingency also represented a threat to national sovereignty in a moment in history when the national project represented Mexico's number one priority. This context favored Mexico's adoption of a divergent foreign policy towards the US during the first phase of the Cold War (1940-1954)

¹⁹⁵ Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*.

¹⁹⁶ Loaeza Soledad, "Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968" 387.

that lasted until the end of the 1960s. A foreign policy that sought independence from the US, but recognised and tried to counterbalance the limits of it.

Mexican foreign policy towards the United States was, in fact, characterized by two competing positions: the belief in the value of non-intervention and the need to accommodate fundamental US interests. On the one hand, Mexico aligned with Washington's geopolitical plans to contain a potential Soviet threat in Latin America, on the other hand, it demonstrated increasing uneasiness with the US economic plan in Latin America – Vanni Pettinà argued.¹⁹⁷ Its active presence in multilateral organizations enabled Mexico to develop a foreign policy that sought to acquire substantial independence from Washington, while aligning firmly with the United States on the issue of the Soviet communist activities in the hemisphere. In fact, in the international arena, Mexico would position among those Third World countries that refused to align themselves either with the US and the USSR in the hope to remain neutral. In many ways, Mexico disregarded to join the Western bloc, not because it sympathized with the Soviet communists, but because of its own tradition of defending national sovereignty. While the United States justified aggressive interventionist policies as a reaction to the Communist threat, Mexico “viewed the Cold War not as a principled crusade, but as an example of aggression by imperialist states whose financial and military power allowed them to dominate less developed nations.”¹⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Mexico spoused the anti-Communist rhetoric typical of the US to counter domestic opposition, as elucidated in chapter one. This provoked a partial sense of trust, although ambiguous, in the American political elite, which allowed Washington and Mexico City to maintain a stretched atmosphere in their diplomatic relations.¹⁹⁹

On economic matters, Mexico-US bilateral cooperation flourished after the war, but the two countries increasingly diverged over contrasting development strategies discussed within the inter-American and international systems. I will discuss in the third section how this condition caused, as Pettinà pointed out, a “strain” in their economic relations which would show up in the Sixties.²⁰⁰ Far from belonging to a North American political and economic space shaped by Washington, in the Cold War years Mexico strived to find its space and

¹⁹⁷ Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.”

¹⁹⁸ Julia Sloan, “Carnivalizing the Cold War: Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, and the Events of 1968” *European journal of American studies.* , 2009: 1.

¹⁹⁹ Loeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968.” 400.

²⁰⁰ Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.”

bilateral relations came as a result of diplomatic activity from both parties – rather than from mere US persuasion. In his book *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*, Pettinà mentioned that, in the post-war period, the Latin American region was pervaded by a sense of economic optimism. He wrote:

This optimism was due to the fact that, at first, the approval of a new international economic system, in the summer of 1944 at Bretton Woods, which was to replace the one that had been articulated from the gold standard, seemed to favour the relative position of the Latin American subcontinent. At Bretton Woods, Washington signed its commitment to building an international financial architecture based on multilateral institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with tasks of both regulating financial flows and supporting peripheral development processes. With the decisive contribution of the Latin American countries, the United States had tried to reconcile, in the words of Daniel J. Sargent, the freedom and expansion of international trade with the maintenance of the welfare state in the center and its construction in the peripheries.²⁰¹

The Western abandonment of protectionist measures and the openness of domestic economies to international trade, coupled with the reconversion of US military industries, had spurred international competitiveness. The new world order appealed Mexico to seek international recognition in order to bring the Mexican foreign policy originated from the Revolution into full realization. Soledad Loaeza explained that this new relation of Mexico with the outside required institutional and political adjustments. As the US supremacy caused

a bad disguised nervousness in a poor neighbour, with a relatively reduced population (20 million inhabitants compared to 160 million Americans) and dispersed in an immense territory, whose industrialization process was still modest. The challenge that this new power raised was a vigorous stimulus for the Mexican government to accelerate economic growth and strengthen the State, understanding that with this it [Mexico] would not only fulfil the old yearning to integrate the nation, but would increase the ability to negotiate with the neighbouring superpower. A greater state strength was a necessary condition to reduce the risks involved in cooperation policy with a stronger country.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Pettinà Vanni, *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*. 65

²⁰² Loaeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968”

Washington recognized Mexican foreign policy tradition to seek to preserve and expand its sales to foreign markets, yet Mexico economy remained highly dependent on the US markets. In Pettinà's words, "whereas Cold War ideology worked as a driver bringing Mexico closer to the United States, economic development represented a factor that strained bilateral relations"²⁰³ and eventually pushed Mexico to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy, shifting from the bilateralism of the late 1940s to the globalism of the late 1950s. As he elucidated, during the three inter-American conferences (1945-1948), Mexico had advocated for a new regional economic order, based on inter-American institutions and arrangements. This new economic order, he wrote:

could grant Latin American countries the resources and the support they needed for the continuation of the import substitution industrialization strategy adopted by some of the largest nations of the hemisphere since the early 1930s.²⁰⁴

On the contrary, Pettinà's argument continued, the US favored

a regional economic strategy that, rather than investing in expensive attempts to industrialize the hemisphere, suggested capitalizing on the comparative advantages Latin American countries enjoyed. This meant that, according to Washington, to improve their countries' social conditions, Latin American nations should further specialize in the production of primary commodities while giving up on ISI strategies.²⁰⁵

Although Mexico was never able to persuade the US over developmental issues, it was able to increase US concessions in terms of its bilateral requests.²⁰⁶

As seen in chapter one, in the early years of its state project Mexico adopted protectionism as a measure to sustain its industrialization process, so, the country did not join international trade, nor did it enter the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) on free trade promoted by the US. This challenged the US, distancing Mexico City from Washington through their emphasis on import substitution industrialization rather than the free-market policies promoted by the US. However, to sustain the industrial surge, Mexico needed both foreign capital and financial means to subsidize its import of machinery and

²⁰³ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964" 76.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 75.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 85.

equipment and the economic growth, which would bring to the Mexican Miracle. As a consequence, Mexican presidents Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) and Miguel Alemán Valdez (1946-1952) sought to intensify relations with the IBRD, adopted US standards of national income accounting, and allowed a huge quantity of US capital into the nation. As an example of bilateral gains, in 1950 Mexico received a \$150 million multipurpose loan by the Export-Import Bank to strengthen some industrialization projects.²⁰⁷ Notwithstanding, Pettinà concluded that:

Even during the bilateralist era, Mexico's long-term economic strategy pushed in a different direction, one that at times seemed to collide with the country's Cold War ideological position, thus straining the alliance with the new Superpower.²⁰⁸

On security matters, Mexico adopted different tactics that made its position ambiguous. As we have seen so far, Mexico aligned with Washington's regional plan of containment, but would fear American military intervention in its territory. Mexico and the United States had always had divergent interests in terms of their own international security, but shared a major deterrent: geographical proximity. In the Cold War era, for the US geographical contingency meant expansionist prospects and control over the Latin American region. From the Mexican point of view, Washington's obsession over a security threat put Mexico's sovereignty and borders control reasonably in danger. In his masterpiece, Domínguez suggested that from the end of WWII to the late 1960s:

Mexico's security dilemma was that it must cooperate to varying degrees with the only source of threat to its international security; and that, in so doing, it must compromise some of its security goals for the sake of achieving others.²⁰⁹

For the US, instead, the author explains:

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. 93.

²⁰⁹ Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* 85.

the optimal outcome was for Mexico to be its ally across all security issue areas; the minimally acceptable outcome was for Mexico to have no military allies and to be incapable of posing a security threat to the United States. [...] ²¹⁰

In this scenario, Mexico and the US developed a “stable and cost-effective” relation based on the “strategy of abnegation”²¹¹. “Mexico practiced, and the United States tolerated, the abnegation strategy.”²¹² The strategy of abnegation, characterising Mexico’s international security strategy from 1945 to 1969, had five elements. According to Domínguez, Mexico:

1. eschewed alliances with any U. S. rival;
2. pursued no foreign policy interest that the United States might construe as a threat to its own security interests;
3. failed to develop a military capability that could resist the United States;
4. relied on many different international suppliers of weapons;
5. and cooperated little or not at all with the United States over international security issues.²¹³

To summarize the author’s argument, after WWII, the use of military means to resolve disputes became unthinkable, Mexico embodied the realism of a weak state²¹⁴ and the “boundary between the two countries became demilitarized.”²¹⁵ Yet, Mexico did not become a US ally for practical military purposes, and cooperated remarkably little with the US over security matters.²¹⁶ For example, Mexican-American disputes over border security, territory, and immigration policies would remain substantially locked until the end of the Sixties. Similarly, Mexico would continue its previous efforts to avoid the possibility of future US military intervention in political affairs, by, for instance, creating a system of defense to protect the presidency. ²¹⁷

Nevertheless, Los Pinos would stand by the side of Washington in guaranteeing security from a Communist take-over in Latin America. At regional level, Pettinà showed that Mexico supported Washington’s proposal to establish an inter-American principle of

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid. 82.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid. 84

²¹⁵ Ibid. 88.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid. 84-88

reciprocal assistance in case of external threat; create a solid anti-Soviet military alliance; and found the Organization of American States (OAS), that is, a supranatural body to govern the hemisphere.²¹⁸ However, Pettinà did not address the question of to what extent Mexico City was a loyal supporter of the US's plan rather than a concessive adversary. He also failed to detect Mexico City's gradual disengagement in the regional security discourse in the second half of the 1950s, as Mexican Ambassador Claude Heller's²¹⁹ thesis did instead – a situation that will be clearer in the next section of this chapter.²²⁰ Indirectly, however, Pettinà's work reinforce Heller's hypothesis. In fact, he noted that during the first three inter-American conferences, Washington's focus on military and security rather than economic matters was a matter of dismissal for Mexican delegates, who firmly supported economic security through cooperation as substantial to achieve political security in the region.²²¹ One could argue that until the first half of the 1950s, cooperation on security matters increased on issues regarding the Communist issue. At national level, this hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that Washington helped strengthen Mexico's intelligence capabilities. For instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) helped organize Mexico's Federal Security Directorate; the CIA established contacts at every level of the Mexican government; and the number of US diplomatic bodies in Mexican land started to grow. Therefore, Washington may have had considerable knowledge of Mexico's security concerns during the Cold War. Yet, it is important to bear in mind that Mexico's driving force to move towards such cooperation was, first and foremost, Mexico's domestic, rather than foreign, policy. From its side, Washington refrained from intervening in any substantive way, because "U.S. leaders knew that their Mexican counterparts shared their anti-communist orientation and trusted them to manage their own affairs."²²²

²¹⁸ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964."

²¹⁹ Claude Heller Rouassant has worked as the Mexican's Ambassador to various countries, including France, Cuba, Switzerland, Japan. He was also the Mexican Permanent Representative to the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2009–2010, and Ambassador to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, and to the Organization of American States.

²²⁰ See Claude Heller, "México en la OEA; tesis y posiciones tradicionales," *Revista mexicana de política exterior*, no. 54 (June 1998), 9–18.

²²¹ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964" 82.

²²² Keller, Renata, "U.S.-Mexican Relations from Independence to the Present." (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History, March 2016), 13.

Last but not least, Mexico-US bilateral security strategy of abnegation reassured Washington that Mexico City would pose no serious harm. Also, many studies confirmed that the Mexican security apparatus had no chance to compete with the American one, thus, the US knew that Mexico would have no real interest in undermining American foreign policy's primary objective(s). In the first phase of the Cold War, Mexican-American security relations seem to have relied on concessions made from both Washington and Los Pinos, but the question remains on whether or not one may define Mexico-US security relations a relation of "cooperation".

3. López Mateos's internationalism in the second phase of the Cold War

From the second half of Fifties until the first half of the Sixties, Mexico-US bilateral relations would remain generally the same of the previous Cold War phase. However, they experienced a period of distress, as the Good Neighbour policy's principles started to clash with its actual implementation in many Latin American nations. The Guatemalan coup d'état (1954), the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), the Cuban-missile crisis (1961), and the situation of the international political economy served as catalysers of Mexico's partial disengagement with the US under Lopez Mateos's presidency. According to Eric Zolov, President López Mateos relied on this "good neighbour"²²³ relationship to create a third-way diplomacy that engaged Western and communist bloc counterparts effectively by engaging with Cuba and the USSR, while also maintaining good relations with member states of the Non-Aligned Movement. In response, worries increased among certain sectors of the US establishment that Mexico would act against American best interests. Still, López Mateos never suffered serious breaches with Washington.²²⁴

On security matters, the promotion of nationalism, of anti-imperialism and of US confrontation typical of the Cuban movement pushed Washington to impose itself in Latin America by military intervention. This caused a gradual deterioration of the Good Neighbour policy in many parts of Latin America. In summer 1954, the US launched the first (of a series of) military expedition to Guatemala to subvert democratically elected president Jacobo

²²³ Zolov, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*.

²²⁴ Ibid.

Árbenz because his reformist agenda undermined the American interests in the region. The CIA-backed coup d'état in the name of American democracy was perceived by Latin American countries as an attack to the principle of independence, thus, it strengthened the distrust and the long-established anti-American sentiment in the region.²²⁵ Mexico's too was subject to this feeling, although it kept itself out of any interregional dispute on the Guatemalan matter, loyal to its tradition of noninterventionism. Time would reveal that the tenth inter-American conference held in Caracas, Venezuela, earlier that year (between February and March 1954) served to legitimize the coup d'état in Guatemala. On the occasion, the US delegation had presented a resolution that provided for the "defensive" intervention of the member states of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), should a communist government come to power in any of them (Mexico abstained). In light of this, Mexican Ambassador Claude Heller noted that the Guatemalan experience would leave room for Mexico's disinterest in the OAS and defensive policy to grow.²²⁶ As the US tendency to use inter-American conferences to legitimize its intervention continued, Mexican disengagement from and disinterest on OAS matters would increase.²²⁷

At the same time, the Guatemalan crisis of 1954 was a warning for Mexico to reinforce its anti-Communist apparatus domestically. Understandably, the event galvanized the *Cárdenistas* who were already bothered by the increasing authoritarianism and inequalities. Ex-president Lazaro Cárdenas publicly stood in solidarity with "the government and the people of Guatemala." The event reinforced the anti-imperialist sentiment, and students, intellectuals and leftists organised in support to Guatemalans and to repudiate US interventionism. The Guatemalan experience acted as a unifying factor for the left, as well as a fuel for the new Left, bringing the Mexican government to increase its warnings over the Mexican opposition.²²⁸

At national level, Mexico-US security relations remained ambiguous. Loaeza found out that after the summer in 1954, Mexican President Ruiz Cortines and US Ambassador Francis White would meet several times in Los Pinos to discuss a closer collaboration to fight Soviet-led subversion. "Between 1954 and 1955 eight high-

²²⁵ Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* 120.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ See: Zolov, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*.

ranking missions of the United States Army visited Mexico”²²⁹, she noted. In addition, as mentioned before, the CIA office in Mexico City was developing too. Starting from the second-half of the Fifties, under the guide of Winston Scott, Head of the CIA office in Mexico City (1956-1969), the CIA activities in Mexico began to increase in number and quality very sharply. Collado Herrera expressed that:

The CIA station in Mexico grew out of the Cold War demand to monitor communist activities in Latin America. Mexico was a prominent place because it gave asylum to dissidents from the region and because the USSR and several Eastern countries had embassies from which they carried out espionage.²³⁰

On their side, in early 1950s, US officials believed that the Mexican government was not sufficiently worried about Communism. In 1953, the State Department prepared a background paper for President Eisenhower warning that “The Communist danger is not fully appreciated in Mexico.” In 1957, a National Intelligence Estimate reported on how “the tolerant attitude of the Mexican government has permitted the use of the country as a center for [Soviet] Bloc activities in Latin America”, since the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City was second in size only to the United States Embassy – according to the report. Although these are just an example of the “alarmism” characterising many US officials serving during the Cold War, the language and rhetoric used may, at some point, have influenced Scott’s view over the vitality of expanding the CIA in Mexico City.

The event that shook the balance of Mexico-US relations was the the Cuban Revolution, when on January 1, 1959, the Cuban forces overtook President Batista and installed the new government under the leadership of Fidel Castro. From Washington’s standpoint, the echo of the Cuban Revolution in the whole region left US officials with a widespread sense that the United States must reconsider its policy towards Latin America. Between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, Washington built up what Mario Ojeda called the “Latin American version of ‘multiple deterrence’” policy.²³¹ The three objectives of the new policy toward Latin America, he explained, would be the isolation of Cuba from the hemisphere, the discreditation

²²⁹ Loeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968.” 401.

²³⁰ María del Carmen Collado Herrera, “La guerra fría, el movimiento estudiantil de 1968 y el gobierno de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. La mirada de las agencias de seguridad de Estados Unidos.” *Secuencia. Revista de historia y ciencias sociales*. 98 (2017): 165.

²³¹ Ojeda Mario, *Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México*, México D.F. (El Colegio de México, 1976) 38.

of the image of the Cuban Revolution in the region, the creation of a twenty-states alliance, the Alliance for Progress (AFP) – discussed in the next section.²³² As Mario Ojeda puts it:

To achieve the first objective —the isolation of Cuba from the hemisphere— Washington launched an offensive on the diplomatic front through a series of consultation meetings within the OAS mechanisms. This offensive had as its first result the exclusion of Cuba from the inter-American system in 1962, followed by the collective economic blockade of the island, and culminated in 1964 with the breaking of relations with the Castro government by all the member countries of the OAS that to date they had not done so, with the exception of Mexico.

For the second objective, to discredit the image of the Cuban Revolution in the hemisphere, the United States launched an intense propaganda campaign. [...] The security of the American continent, another objective of the new policy, was also adjusted to the criteria of “multiple deterrence”. [...] With the new policy, the hemispheric defense emphasis was placed on internal security and political stability. Hence, all the effort was concentrated on counteracting the danger of internal subversion.²³³

If this is an appropriate reading, we should conclude that, in its bilateral relation with Mexico, the United States would achieve quite satisfactory results on the second objective, but very few on the first and third ones.

Mexico, on the other hand, perceived that its national sovereignty was in danger once again. Differently from the Guatemala experience, the Cuban effects pervaded all levels of Mexican society: it inspired the *Cardenistas* and leftists to fight for their nation; frightened the anti-Communist middle and upper classes; increased the PRI-led government’s anti-Communism but spurred Mexico’s foreign policy towards internationalization. López Mateos himself, who was a socialist-oriented PRI president entering his second year of presidency, expressed solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and recognized the new Cuban government as he felt the two countries had undergone similar transformative paths. Indeed, Mexico sought to improve its foreign relations with the main influential actors of the Cold War in Latin America: Cuba and the USSR.

²³² Ibid., 38

²³³ Mario, *Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México* 38–40.

Lopez Mateos foreign policy of “Mexican internationalism”²³⁴ allowed the country to establish durable political relations with these actors besides the United States, albeit with limited results.²³⁵ ²³⁶ For most of Latin American, the Washington’s tolerance over Mexico-Cuba relations represents a unique exception in the inter-American system. Alternatively, some others have questioned the exceptionality of such attitude, by arguing that Cuba-Mexican contacts were made possible by the US interests in the region, as well as US strict covert control of such relations. As anything, I believe that truth can be found in a good balance of both arguments.

On a pragmatic level, what compelled López Mateos to defend Castro was the need to maintain the government’s revolutionary legitimacy in domestic affairs, and placate Cardenas revitalization.²³⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 26th of July Movement against military dictatorship and corruption reminisced the Mexican Revolution, and the triumph of charismatic leaders, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, in January 1959 not only revived the myth of revolutionary action, but also put an end to the Mexican monopoly on the model of the successful revolution. Loeza writes that:

the Cuban experience became a benchmark for comparison that called into question Mexico’s advances or its claims to independence from the United States, and was a cause for concern and division.²³⁸

Coupled with internal social dissatisfaction caused by structural problems, the verve of the Cuba Revolution echoed in social movements that were inhabiting the Mexican political sphere. Not only did these movements grew in number and scope, but they also developed a transnational network, at times backed by the Soviets, that caused real concerns among the Mexican presidents and the US officials. In his pioneering study on the triangular Cuba-

²³⁴ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 1.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ On the trilateral relations between Washington, Havana and Mexico City, see: Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). On Soviet-Mexican relations in the 1960s, see: Vanni Pettinà “¡Bienvenido Mr. Mikoyan!: tacos y tractores a la sombra del acercamiento soviético-mexicano, 1958-1964”, *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 66. 2, 262 (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, octubre-diciembre 2016). On the limits of Mexico-Soviet rapprochement during the 1960s, see: Vanni Pettinà, “Mexican-Soviet Encounters in the Early 1960s: Tractors of Discord”, in Thomas C. Field Jr., Stella Krepp, Vanni Pettinà, eds., *Latin America and the Global Cold War*, op. cit., p. 73-99 (cf. note 35).

²³⁷ See, for instance, Keller, *Mexico's Lukewarm Defense*, 102.

²³⁸ Loeza Soledad, “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968” *Nueva Historia General de México*. (2010): 401.

Mexico-US relations titled *Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States During the Castro Era*, Christopher White highlighted Mexico's extraordinary ability to be "friend and foe" in the interaction between the two blocs of the Cold War. Contrary to the classic interpretation, White recognized that, in the Sixties, Mexico had an active and independent role in pursuing its cross purposes, although often influenced by the leaders in Washington and Moscow. Evidently, Mexico's interactions with Cuba had always remained very formal and never became substantial, neither in terms of economic relations despite Lopez Mateos' plans.²³⁹ Meanwhile, Lopez Mateos official discourse domestically kept on being dense of PRI-typical anti-Communism, echoing a significant portion of the Mexican elite's ideals.

In the name of anti-communist rhetoric, geopolitical convergence continued over the Soviet-Cuban issue. Mexico indeed secretly favored the United States' anti-Castro policies by allowing US espionage and repression over Cuba in Mexican territory. Mexican and American intelligence agencies worked in strict and increasing cooperation to fight the Communist threat. Subsidies from the US to develop Mexican intelligence apparatus increased, so did covert operations. By the time the Cuban Revolution victoriously ended, the CIA in Mexico City looked like an empire that was able to spy at all levels of Communist-oriented politics in Mexico and control over everything that was related with Havana and Moscow passing via Mexico. As the cherry on top, in 1960, Winston Scott created a network called LITEMPO, whose twelve members were all Mexican top high officials and the presidents. Among them figured Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, as Secretary of the Interior of Adolfo López Mateos; Luis Echeverría Álvarez, Undersecretary of the Interior; Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios, deputy director of the Federal Directorate of security. Lopez Mateos was also part of this linkage before starting his mandate.²⁴⁰ As Collado Herrera suggested, it is well-documented that Mexico passed information to the CIA on, for instance, left-oriented people who did spying activities in Mexico (such as students, intellectuals, etc.), or Cubans who solicited Mexican visas in La Havana. It would be simplistic, however, to

²³⁹ See: Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964". See also: Pettinà, *Historia Mínima de la Guerra Fria*

²⁴⁰ On the CIA presence in Mexico during the 1950s and 1960s, see: Jefferson Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA*, vols. (University Press of Kansas, 2008). See also: Kate Doyle and Jefferson Morley, *LITEMPO: The CIA's Eyes on Tlatelolco CIA Spy Operations in Mexico*, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 204 (October 18, 2006).

say that the CIA, or the collaboration between the agency and Mexico's high-level officials, was the invisible hand behind the fates of the country. According to Collado Herrera:

This derived from the deep anti-communist conviction shared by the authorities of both countries. The need for Mexican national security to have accurate information on subversive activities in the country was also another reason for keeping this channel of inquiry open. Thus, both the US and Mexican governments benefited from the exchange of their research. In the latter, Soviet and Cuban spies also operated with the tolerance of the government.²⁴¹

As a matter of fact, Mexico continued to seek not to get too close to the US in terms of security matters at international and regional levels. For instance, Domínguez reports that

Mexico refused to sign a defence assistance treaty with the United States in 1951. Mexico was the only Latin American country other than Cuba not to host a U. S. Military Assistance Advisory Group during the Cold War. [...] Mindful of how the United States had used security assistance toward other Latin American countries, Mexico curtailed U. S. influence over Mexican defense and security policies. It pursued an overt and deliberate effort to build nationalist armed forces free from foreign influences. Mexico did accept grant International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds. About a thousand Mexicans attended U. S. military courses between 1950 and 1980; another thousand did so from 1980 to 1993. [...] Mexico condemned the U.S.-supported invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, declined to participate in the naval blockade of Cuba in 1962 during the so-called Missile Crisis (but it did call for the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba), and refused to implement the collective hemispheric sanctions imposed on Cuba in 1964 and 1967 (because of Cuban support for insurgencies) under the Inter-American Treaty for Reciprocal Assistance. [...] Given such extensive non-collaboration, Mexico managed carefully its relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba to reassure the United States that Mexico's international security policy was truly one of abnegation, not one seeking to balance U.S. power.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Collado Herrera, "La guerra fría, el movimiento estudiantil de 1968 y el gobierno de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. La mirada de las agencias de seguridad de Estados Unidos." 166.

²⁴² Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*. 89.

No other substantial achievements were made at national level, but it must be recognised that when President Kennedy visited Mexico City in 1962, the first step towards the solution of a very contentious issue, the Chamizal, were moved.

On economic matters, López Mateos would attempt to disentangle his nation from the US by diversifying its partners, while continuing to take advantage of geographical proximity. In Loaeza's terms, thanks to Mexico-US ideological alignment:

Between 1952 and 1960, Mexican governments were able to carry out nationalizations, maintain trade protections, and maintain restrictions on foreign investment without retaliation from the United States, and nothing prevented Mexico from receiving credits from the United States, Eximbank and commercial banks such as Bank of America and Chemical Bank.²⁴³

Mexico indeed remained largely dependent on exports and imports from and to the US. Yet, in the mid-Fifties, economic growth started to partially lose dynamism, when on April 17, the Mexican government announced the Mexican peso's devaluation in response to US recession but Mexican agricultural exports continue to decrease. By the end of the decade, the negative balance of payments and instability in the international economic system produced by the Cuban Revolution negatively affected the development processes of Third World countries. In the early 1960s, Mexico's economic rate of growth started to show a tendency to slowdown, partially due to capital flight caused by fluctuating prices of Mexico's main exports, namely, cotton and sugar, as well as a decline in agricultural productivity. As a consequence of both international and inherent challenges, the Mexican model of development was deteriorating.²⁴⁴ Pettinà argued that the gradual worsening of economic rates of growth during the late 1950s forced Mexico City to reevaluate its bilateral foreign policy strategy with the United States, opening up Mexico's vision over its system of trade. Up to that moment, Mexico had not significantly expanded its trade beyond the US agreements and, as a result, it had become very dependent on US trade. By the time protectionist policies were adopted by the American government in a climate of increasing US interventionism, Mexico sought to implement not

²⁴³ Loaeza Soledad, "Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968" 400.

²⁴⁴ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964." 85-86.

only its political but also its economic relations with Cuba and the USSR. Regardless their limits, they shook Mexico's relations with Washington.²⁴⁵

4. An “indifferent *Señorita*”: the development of economic Mexican-American relations in the inter-American system

When studying Mexican-American relations in the long Sixties, the development of Mexico-US relations within the international economic institutions appears fundamental to fully embrace the complexity of their relations. Firstly, since the end of the war the top priority of the Mexican agenda was “economic” development, for which the country played an active role in international economic and financial institutions. Secondly, in the Sixties, the United States paid due attention to its “economic” relations with Latin America for the first time ever since the beginning of the Cold War. Put them together, the most logical conclusion one could draw from these two observations is that, in the Sixties, Mexican-American economic relations would finally shine. Mexico was a “weak” state in needs of economic means at the border of a “strong” (hegemonic) state, the United States, who suddenly displayed propensity to help its southern weak neighbours. However, recent historiographical works present a more complex reality. More than a decade of unaddressed disagreements over contrasting models of economic development were a stressor for Mexico-US economic relations that brought Mexico to increase its participation in Third World forums while disengaging from many inter-American discussions. With Washington's new foreign policy, the Sixties had the potential to be a time of convergence on economic matters, which never materialised; instead, the decade was a time of Mexico's disentanglement from Washington and its economic plans. As Vanni Pettinà argues, divergent development strategies and Mexico's new preferences towards Communist countries “strained US-Mexican bilateral relations.”²⁴⁶

After the Second World War, Washington and Los Pinos converged on geopolitical plans but had two very different ideas of how economic development must be pursued. For Pettinà, this abiding divergence is key to understanding the evolution of Mexican foreign policy during the first part of the Cold War.²⁴⁷ Similarly, it is key to understand the increasing disengagement of Mexico in inter-American and international economic institutions of the

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 75.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 76.

Fifties and Sixties. As mentioned already, in its early years Mexico optimistically engaged in the construction of the new international system and its institutions. At international level, Mexico actively participated to the work of many United Nations agencies, like the IMF, the ECOSOC, and others.²⁴⁸ The work of Christie Thornton, *Revolution in Development*, perfectly shows how, in the 20th century, the Mexican delegation seized moments to affirm itself as a leader in the struggle for a different kind of world economic order.²⁴⁹ She noticed:

The Mexican vision for global economic governance was one that afforded representation to the countries of what would become the Global South and enabled redistribution of the surplus capital of the Global North. As they looked to reconstruct their war-torn country in the aftermath of the twentieth century's first social revolution, Mexican leaders quickly came to understand that their national economic progress was deeply dependent on the rules and institutions that governed global capitalism, and they therefore set out to change those rules to favor their country and others like it.²⁵⁰

In the inter-American system, Mexico was an advocate for the economic and social development of the poor, arguing in favour of a new inter-American economic order that would provide Latin American countries the resources and support they needed to keep sustaining their industrialization process based on the import-substitution model, which Mexico and other countries had adopted in the 1930s.²⁵¹

Pettinà explains that

Mexico's economic vision encompassed measures like commercial protectionism, the enhancement of state intervention and regulatory functions in the country's economy, and a sharp increase in bilateral or multilateral economic aid focused on fostering industrialization. The contention that industrialization represented the only possible strategy to fix Mexico's enduring social imbalances and income inequalities was at the core vision.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ On Mexico's role in international economic and financial institutions see the full book, Christie Thornton, *Revolution in Development*, vols. (California: University of California Press, 2021).

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁵¹ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964" 75.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

On the contrary, the United States supported a model of economic development based American liberal values. Pettinà specifies,

Since Chapultepec, U.S. delegates had indeed firmly advocated for a regional economic strategy that, rather than investing in expensive attempts to industrialize the hemisphere, suggested capitalizing on the comparative advantages Latin American countries enjoyed. This meant that, according to Washington, to improve their countries' social conditions, Latin American nations should further specialize in the production of primary commodities while giving up on ISI strategies.²⁵³

This divergence of interests was already visible during the first inter-American conference held in the Castel of Chapultepec, Mexico City, in 1945, when, in contradiction with what it had presented at Bretton Woods, Washington defended a liberal regional order.²⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Pettinà's work suggests that it was during the second and third inter-American conferences – in Rio (1947) and Bogotá (1948) – that the divergence became irreconcilable. We have seen that the intensification of the Cold War led to a reorganization of priorities in the US foreign policy agenda. Security came to occupy the top of the list at international, regional and national level thus Washington shifted its resources and sensibilities on the Communist bloc, leaving Latin American countries to their own faith whilst expecting to impose the US will. Starting from this moment, Mexico and the US diverged not only over economic development strategies, but also over the order of priorities within the inter-American system. While for the US security became a matter of exclusive concern in the region, Mexico was more preoccupied with economic matters. Within the regional context, Mexico played what Christie Thornton has defined a “role of leadership.”²⁵⁵ In the Chapultepec Conference and the subsequent two inter-American conferences – in Rio (1947) and Bogotá (1948) – Mexico stood up for Latin America's needs and interests, urging the US diplomats to turn the discussion from political and military cooperation to economic

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ For a detailed explanation, see: Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.” 82. On the notion of development within the Bretton Woods negotiations, see: Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014)

²⁵⁵ See: Thornton, *Revolution in Development* 149.

topics, and proposing feasible alternatives in terms of policies and institutions.²⁵⁶ The United States remained deaf. In Pettinà's terms,

Washington's reluctance to support Latin America's developmentalist agenda created a dilemma for Mexico as much as it generated a dissonance between the country's political and economic interests. [...] At Bogotá, Latin American and U.S. delegates approved the creation of the Organization of American States and the issuing of an anti-communist declaration. However, the Conference's failure to ratify an economic chart, which was also provoked by Mexico's diplomatic brinkmanship, ruined Washington's design to build a complete unitary bloc on the continent.²⁵⁷

As a consequence, Mexico began to disengage from the inter-American discourse and, from the mid-1950, it even engaged in the Third World discourse. Thornton's work detailed Mexico's back seat by explaining that, in the two inter-American economic conferences during the 1950s—in Rio in 1954 and Buenos Aires in 1957—Mexican delegates contributed to the operationalization of the ideas, but, Thornton argues,

in the end, US officials were able to convince both Mexican and Brazilian officials to push the rest of the Latin Americans toward producing a mere declaration, rather than a binding treaty. After the declaration was passed, the US representative reported, "nothing specific was agreed of any consequence at the conference."²⁵⁸

Nonetheless, Washington would notice Mexico's indisposition by the end of the century.

The Cuban Revolution had produced a sense of urgency in the United States to turn its eyes to the subcontinent and respond to its needs. At inter-American level, the third objective of the new United States policy toward Latin America, was the creation of the Alliance for Progress, a ten-year program to strengthen economic cooperation with Latin America.²⁵⁹ During the change of presidency between Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy (1961-1963), diverse US officials suggested that American future best practices should include the development of economic cooperation within the inter-American system. The common perception was that Washington had dismissed Latin

²⁵⁶ Pettinà, "From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico's Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964." 82.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 83.

²⁵⁸ Thornton, *Revolution in Development* 152.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 38.

American country's requests to discuss different economic strategies of development for far too long. This was seen as a mistake that had eroded the trust and hopes of Latin American countries in the inter-American system.

On February 1961, Edward G. Cale sent a memorandum to US Ambassador Thomas Mann discussing over the most tactical strategy to adopt towards Mexico to obtain the Mexican support on matters of US foreign policy. E.G. Cale referred to Mexico as an "indifferent Señorita" that, with its "cool indifference" for the international community's matters, had become one of the few unreliable nations in the Inter-American relations. López Mateos, the cable goes, lacked "of genuine interest" in reciprocal relations and was "noncommittal (at times to the point of silence) and unresponsive in discussions of substantive matters of prime importance to the United States and its foreign relations."²⁶⁰ The memorandum also suggested to strengthen economic cooperation with Los Pinos, given López Mateos openness to the Soviet markets.²⁶¹ Even after the Alliance for Progress was created in August 1961, in Punta del Este, Uruguay, it seems like Mexico was left unreceptive. Current historiography recognises that Mexico played a minor role within the Alliance, as well as the minor role played by the Alliance within the Mexican politics.²⁶² For example, Christie Thornton suggested that

One consequence of Mexico's dogged insistence on maintaining relations with Cuba was that the Alliance for Progress—which looked in many ways like the culmination of the kind of economic assistance program Mexico had advocated for decades—actually played a minimal role in Mexico, and Mexico played a minimal role in the Alliance.²⁶³

However, Thornton's explanation for Mexico's disengagement from the Alliance is not fully convincing given that, in their Cold War bilateral relations, Mexico and the US had frequently addressed political and economic matters separately, in spite of Mexico's firm belief that they must be discussed together. All of this aside, little is known about how Washington and Mexico City dealt with each other within the AFP, because, Pettinà noticed, this topic has not

²⁶⁰ Edward Cale G., "Letter from Edward G. Cale to Thomas C. Mann, February 141," 14 Feb. 1961, Document 179, Foreign Relations of the United States.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² See Mario Ojeda, *La política Exterior de Mexico*. See also Christie Thornton, *Revolution in Development*

²⁶³ Thornton, *Revolution in Development* 149.

yet received attention from scholars.²⁶⁴ With such a gap in literature, we can only suppose – rather than affirm – that Mexico was reluctant and only partially entered Kennedy’s program. If this proves true, the argument of Mexico’s disentanglement from the US in the Sixties will be further reinforced. Still, Pettinà argued, it is certain that Mexico was a beneficiary of the Alliance’s aid during the 1960s.²⁶⁵ For a country that was deeply dependent on US investments for its Miracle, it is reasonable to suppose that the program somehow affected Mexico’s development process and, with it, the Mexican foreign policy. While such claims appear rushed in absence of sources, it opens a set of questions for the future. What was the amount of aid Mexico received by the AFP? Did the benefits produced by this aid influence the Mexican choices in its relations with the United States? If yes, how? If Mexico proved to have limited the aid of the AFP, was this reluctance a strategy of abnegation?

Recent historiographic works confirm the shift in Mexico’s foreign policy and disclose the country’s disengagement from international economic matters at international and regional levels. For example, Christie Thornton made a careful work in showing that in the 1950s and 1960s Mexico would shift from a “leader” into a “follower”.²⁶⁶ She argues that:

When in the 1950s and 1960s foreign capital began to pour into Mexico, the country’s officials abruptly changed tactics, [...]. In this period, Mexico made a few political interventions that allowed it to maintain plausible distance from its largest creditor, while at the same time seeking technical reforms that were actually meant to defend the international financial status quo. In a period when myriad new political and economic institutions were being created in the burgeoning Third World, Mexico largely retreated from its leadership role and even played a key role in arguing down a Third World proposal to circumvent the IMF. Instead, when unilateral US economic policy changes began to have an impact on Mexican finance and trade, Mexican officials decided to pursue a new broader framework for global economic governance.²⁶⁷

Pettinà further confirmed the shift, showing how in the 1960s Lopez Mateos’s disillusionment of Washington’s plans for Latin America coupled with the downturn in Mexican economy, brought the him to pursue,

²⁶⁴ Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.”

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Thornton, *Revolution in Development* 151.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

an international strategy aimed at both diversifying its political-economic relations and at attempting to modify those distortions of the international economic system that hampered Mexico and other Third World countries' economic development.²⁶⁸

As it has emerged already, the Mexican administration developed its political and economic relations with the USSR and Cuba participating in and hosting diplomatic exchanges. Mexico also increased its involvement in the Third World discourse, although his relation with these countries remained ambiguous. For instance, in 1962 Lopez Mateos a long trip to Asia to meet with some of the leading figures of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and discuss a Third World solution.²⁶⁹ While engaging with the Third World in economic matters, Mexico disengaged in the economic inter-American discourse. At the inter-American conferences Mexico would take a neutral and “indifferent” position indeed. Of course, the Mexican administration did not support Washington’s economic plan, but remained always aware of the fact that Mexico’s economy strictly depended on the US market. Hence, while Lopez Mateos advocated for a substantial change of Mexico’s trade relations with the US, he also knew how to balance his radical spirit, to preserve US investments in Mexico needed for the country’s economic development. Furthermore, Mexico’s interaction with the Third World was limited to economic matters, as they diverged in political matters due to Mexico’s alignment with Washington’s Soviet containment. Thus, during Lopez Mateos’ activism, the country disengaged in the economic discourse at inter-American and international level, because it diverged with the United States and it blamed it for the problems of “weak” countries. Meanwhile, Dominguez detected the same disengagement in inter-American security matters, confirming the general distant attitude of the Mexican delegations in inter-American affairs.²⁷⁰ Under the Díaz Ordaz and Johnson administrations, Mexico and the United States would continue to diverge on inter-American matters and Mexico would continue to refrain from opposing the United States will by, instead, following it.

²⁶⁸ Pettinà, “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964” 87.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 88. On Mexico in the Third World, see: Samantha Christiansen and Zachary Scarlett, *The Third World in the Global 1960s*. See also: Christie Thornton, *Revolution in Development*, chapter four

²⁷⁰ Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* 120.

5. Lyndon Johnson and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz: did the presidential friendship mean rapprochement?

The tensions originated by Lopez Mateos globalism diminished with the next Mexican presidency. By the time Díaz Ordaz took office in 1964, the country's internal stability had eroded and the president found himself dealing with the highest levels of political, social and economic turmoil Mexico had experienced ever since the end of the Mexican Revolution. Thus, internal instability required the PRI-government's extra care and attention which led the Mexican state to return to a more inward security domestic focus. On the other hand, it was Díaz Ordaz's personal trait itself that led to a more traditional position: he was a conservative man, right-wing oriented, who shared little or nothing of his predecessor's socialist stance.²⁷¹ Mexican President Díaz Ordaz and United States President L.B. Johnson (LBJ) went along quiet well and developed a warm, harmonious, almost brotherly relationship, which produced significant results in the relations between their countries.²⁷²

From a general overview, LBJ, who was not an expert of Latin America, sought to cultivate relations of good neighbourhood with Mexico. In his foreign policy, Díaz Ordaz abandoned the globalist sprint to return back to a more US-oriented position. Both presidents' positions favoured Mexican-American bilateral relations, producing a reproachment. Hence, from 1964 to 1970, Mexico and the United States found themselves in a renovated spirit of bilateral cooperation. As an example, Zolov suggested that, following the US invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and the escalation of the Vietnam War, Mexico, became the United States' "last good neighbour".²⁷³ The author reconducted the historical shift to the arrival of Díaz Ordaz to the presidency and his retirement from Lopez Mateos's activist foreign policy. While this is certainly true, limiting to depict Mexico's foreign policy as US-oriented would make us fall into the trap of simplification. A similar position indeed would miss out of the Díaz Ordaz government's continuity, although very limited, with the

²⁷¹ On President Díaz Ordaz's personality see: Enrique Krauze, *Mexico: Biografía del poder*, (Tusquets Editores, 2014)

²⁷² Arturo Santa Cruz, "La evolución de la agenda de seguridad México-Estados Unidos" *Estudios Internacionales*, 2014: 160.

²⁷³ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*.

internationalism Mexico have long sought to achieve ever since the end of WWII. As Thornton demonstrates, during the presidency of Díaz Ordaz:

[...] the Mexican state became more dogmatically anti-communist, but the country's international stances remained ambiguous. Even after Mexican activists advocated armed struggle at the Tri-Continental Confidential Property of University of California Press Conference in Havana in 1966, Mexican diplomats still refused to vote for an OAS resolution condemning the conference. They did, however, begin a propaganda and counterintelligence campaign within Mexico that would paint student protestors as Cuban and Soviet sleeper agents, ultimately leading to the Not for Reproduction, Distribution, or Resale spectacular state violence at Tlatlelolco on October 2, 1968.²⁷⁴

The underlining agreement for balance of power was reiterated by President Díaz Ordaz in his first meeting with the new US Ambassador to Mexico, Fulton Freeman. To cite Zolov:

Mexico, Díaz Ordaz stated, would “never be a supine friend ‘on its knees’” if confronted by “the dominating will” of the United States, in either domestic or international matters. However, he added, “when vital issues [are] involved,” when world peace was threatened, Mexico “would follow [the] US lead implicitly.”²⁷⁵

Soledad Loaeza pointed out that, in 194, LBJ abandoned the diplomacy inspired by the AFP towards a more interventionist policy in Latin America that scared Díaz Ordaz. As a consequence, on the one hand, Díaz Ordaz used the principle of legalism rooted in the Estrada Doctrine to resist US interventionist foreign policy in Latin America.²⁷⁶ On the other hand, it would bond with Washington, understanding the importance of accommodating the US it specific terms to defend Mexico's best interests. The conservative president also relied on the US to pursue domestic stability in view of the XIX Olympic Games which were due to be held in Mexico City in 1968, emblematic for the PRI internationalist program.²⁷⁷ It must also be side-noted that, lacking of the opportunities that had characterised the first half of the decade, the international environment favoured Diaz Ordaz isolationism. In his *sesenio*,

²⁷⁴ Thornton, *Revolution in Development* 149.

²⁷⁵ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties* 247.

²⁷⁶ See: William C. Kelly, “Gustavo Díaz Ordaz's Foreign Policy: A Cold War Study.” (*The Latin Americanist*. 60.3 (2016): 347–369.

²⁷⁷ On the political role of the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, see: Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Museo del universo. Los juegos olímpicos y el movimiento estudiantil de 1968* (El Colegio de Mexico, 2019)

Mexico would thus prefer its northern neighbour rather than advocating for a failing Third World's project.

US President L.B. Johnson, too, had his merits in the revival of bilateral cooperation. The biggest one, as chapter three will better explain, was that of understanding – more than any other president before him – the operational system of Mexican foreign policy which deeply differed from that of the United States. The second, but not less important, credit of LBJ was his personal commitment to make US relations with Mexico a showcase of good will and achievement.²⁷⁸ Many authors throughout a four-decade span time have confirmed LBJ personal diplomacy played a key role in bettering the Good Neighbour relations between the United States and Mexico, in a moment where historical events would project a different expectation. Willam C. Kelly noted that

Johnson, then, was predisposed to trust Díaz Ordaz for three reasons: first, LBJ felt that he knew and understood how Mexicans thought based on his lived experiences in Texas; second, Díaz Ordaz had demonstrated a firm commitment to anti-communism since at least the mid-1950s; and third, Díaz Ordaz had been a CIA informant in the LITEMPO program for most of the decade before he took office. Although Latin America remained the undercard in the global fight against communism – the main event, of course, was anything to do with the Soviet Union and its European proxies – Johnson was convinced that Díaz Ordaz and the PRI would be solidly anti-communist and would provide continued political stability.²⁷⁹

Once again, the complex reproachment of the mid-Sixties is explicative of the extraordinary uniqueness of Mexican-American relations.

On security matters, Mexico maintained its ambiguity. In international and regional institutions, the Díaz Ordaz administration still opposed both to the intervention and to US proposal to establish an OAS Inter-American Peace Force on the island, but would take a more accommodating position towards the United States which would reassure American officials of Díaz Ordaz's bonafede.²⁸⁰ The neighbours reinforced their cooperation in terms of anti-Communist projection in the region, loyal to their mutual help towards international security against the same threat. Diaz Ordaz, who was

²⁷⁸ Santa Cruz, "La evolucion de la agenda de seguridad Mexico-Estados Unidos" 163.

²⁷⁹ William C. Kelly, "Gustavo Díaz Ordaz's Foreign Policy: A Cold War Study. (*The Latin Americanist*. 60.3 (2016): 349–350.

²⁸⁰ Zolov Eric, *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*. 246-284.

not interested in increasing relations with Cuba, kept them open at the time when Fidel Castro had gained power in that country. Implicitly, he confirmed that Mexican-Cuban relations “obeyed in part to an informal agreement with Washington regarding the advisability of having a member of the OAS with a “foot in the door” that could be useful to US interests.”²⁸¹ In the second half of the mid-Sixties, the CIA’s activities in Mexico City reached the tipping point of collaboration with the Mexican officials. As noted previously, Mexican presidents and other officials agreed to collaborate with the CIA ad-hoc program. Contrary to what a former US national security advisor would say, the rule between the United States and Mexico was not simply “you have diplomatic relationships with Cuba, but you let us crack everything the Cubans do in Mexico.” Indeed, Mexico’s main benefit from having the US spying Cuba was that the PRI-led state could retrieve useful information from the CIA office in Mexico City, since it was known that the guerrilla groups operating in Central and South America were supported by Castro. Hence, while Mexico helped Washington control the Cuban and Soviet flows, Winston Scott provided to Los Pinos a daily summary of intelligence collected by the CIA station in Mexico City to closely monitor the student situation – and the Mexican Left more broadly.²⁸² However, cooperation did not mean there were no misunderstandings or divergencies. As Collado Herrera noted, the Tlatelolco massacre was indeed an example of this as, regardless the shared anti-communist rhetoric and the extensive collaboration, “the US security agencies did not support the Mexican government’s version that the 1968 student movement was the result of manipulation of infiltrated Soviet or Cuban agents.”²⁸³

Other issues finally came to an end in this period, which had long been an irritant to good Mexican-American relations. For instance, as soon as their presidency started, LBJ and Díaz Ordaz successfully converged in the ratification of the treaty that resolved the Chamizal dispute, a tract of 630 acres left north of Rio Grande when the river changed its course. Being the first convention signed by LBJ, it marked an auspicious start for Mexican-American relations under these administrations. The United States show that a difficult issue could be peacefully resolved, that a new, cooperative spirit had entered US-Latin American relationships. The following year, in 1965, Johnson and Díaz Ordaz also reached an agreement over the Colorado River’s salinity problem. Both presidents used the success of their

²⁸¹ Ibid., 95.

²⁸² Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA*. 345

²⁸³ Collado Herrera, “La guerra fría, el movimiento estudiantil de 1968 y el gobierno de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. La mirada de las agencias de seguridad de Estados Unidos.”. 160.

negotiations to loud the emblematic cooperation between their respective states. For Willam C. Kelly, “the salinity issue became a symbol of Mexican foreign policy independence in that the US had treated Mexico as an equal rather than an inferior.”²⁸⁴

On economic matters, the Johnson administration’s commitment to keep further the work of the ALF found a positive reception in Díaz Ordaz’s goal to protecting the interests of his country in a time of economic slowdown vis-à-vis the culmination of the Mexican Miracle. Díaz Ordaz administration abandoned the globalism of Lopez Mateos by not cultivating economic relations with neither Cuba nor the USSR; consequently, the US returned to be the main trade partner for Mexico. As President, LBJ had appointed Ambassador Thomas Mann to Mexico to both the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and the coordinator of the Alliance for Progress aid program. With his long career in Latin American issues, Mann knew that economic development was a far more important issue for those countries. Hence, he built up a brand-new policy of promoting the economic interests of US businesses, which stepped away from the political centrism typical of the AFP. The Mann Doctrine’s four principles were: to promote economic growth while remaining quiet on issues of social reform; to protect US investments; to respect the principle of non-intervention in Latin American affairs; and to practice anti-communism.²⁸⁵ In Mexico, the conservative economic policies of Díaz Ordaz allowed US private investments a rampant flow into the country in the sectors of interests of the AFP, such as agriculture, tourism, education, but also cultural exchanges of people. Economic cooperation of the second half of the Sixties was the epitome of the renovated bilateralism between Mexico and the United States in the atmosphere of presidential friendship.

²⁸⁴ Kelly, “Gustavo Díaz Ordaz’s Foreign Policy: A Cold War Study.” 353.

²⁸⁵ See: William C. Kelly, “Gustavo Díaz Ordaz’s Foreign Policy: A Cold War Study.” (*The Latin Americanist*. 60.3 (2016). On the Mann Doctrine, see: Walter LaFeber, “Latin American Policy” in *The Johnson Years: Foreign Policy, the Great Society, and the White House*, Robert A. Divine, ed. (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1987), 65–66 and Alan McPherson, “Lyndon B. Johnson and Latin America,” in Mitchell B. Lerner, ed., *A Companion to Lyndon B. Johnson* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2012). See also: Alan McPherson, “Thomas C. Mann: President Johnson, the Cold War, and the Restructuring of Latin American Foreign Policy”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 21 (3), (2019), 262–264.

Chapter Three

The representation of Mexico given by the American elite to its public in the Sixties

*If a free society cannot help the many who are poor,
it cannot save the few who are rich.*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

1. Premise: The Manifest Destiny and the racial bias of the Mexican-American relations

I consider it important to shed some light on the bases that constituted the intricate rhetoric shaping the United States politics, which resonated somehow into the image given back by the US elite to its public. Even though an analysis of racial discrimination falls out the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to bring the topic into discussion as the point of origin. Embedded in their idea of the Manifest Destiny, the American elite navigates in the idea that their country is “the” elected nation “above all nations” to lead the world. The exceptionality in the very nature of their nation makes the others inferior. Ever since the beginning of formal diplomacy between Mexico and the United States, the latter had had a devaluing opinion of the former, which mostly derived from the Spaniards’ colonial era, with a marked racial bias. The history of the Mexican-American War is narrated by countless of stories in of filibusters who ambioned to appropriate additional territories in Mexico, to cleanse the territory of Indians before, and even after, the signature of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The Manifest Destiny and the United States’ divine duty was displayed by newspapers and politicians to justify and promote the war against Mexico by associating indigenous peoples of Mexico to people who were incapable of governing themselves, and, therefore, rightfully subjected to foreign domination.²⁸⁶ During the ratification process for the peace treaty, conservative Senator from South Carolina, John C. Calhoun, gave a famous speech to

²⁸⁶ On the notion of race in the Manifest Destiny, see: Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Harvard University Press, 1981). See, also: Sylvia Zamora, *Racial Baggage Mexican Immigrants and Race Across the Border*. (Stanford University Press, 2022). Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race in Mexico and the United States, 1910–1950*, (The University of North Carolina Press: 2018).

Congress on January 4, 1848, opposing the unification by arguing that the “the Government of a white race” [the United States] should have not put “savage people” – “the Indians and mixed race of Mexico” – “on an equality with the white race.”²⁸⁷ The Treaty itself contains the same racial bias of Senator Calhoun’s speech, demonstrating that racial discrimination crosscut different political orientations. Ten years later, in 1858, the *United States Democratic Review* – part of the yellow press in the US – issued the editorial entitled “The Fate of Mexico”, resembling the rhetorical fallacies of both the Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine. It is worth quoting some paragraphs:

[Mexico] became free and the world looked for another Washington Republic in the West. [...] She started with every chance in her favor except one—her people were not white men—they were not Caucasians. [...] They were a bad mixture of Spaniards, Indians, and negroes—making an aggregate containing few of the virtues of either, with most of the vices of all. [...] Such men did not know how to be free: they have not learned the lesson to this day, nor will they learn it, till they are taken into the district school of American Democracy, where the master will govern them till they learn how to govern themselves. They must pass their novitiate. [...] Mexico cannot govern herself. [...] The time has come when it is as imperatively our duty—made so by Providence—to take control of Mexico, and wheel her into the train of the world’s progress, as it was ever our duty to plant the Caucasian race on this soil, and open its illimitable bosom to the sun. [...] No race but our own can either cultivate or rule the western hemisphere. [...] [It] is a work which the Almighty has given us to do.²⁸⁸

The editorial is explicative of the racial bias and territorial ambitions, which would justify American imperialism for enough time and which remained in the US discourse long after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed. Far from satisfying the desire for imperial supremacy, the Treaty indeed became a call for further US expansion into Mexico and further lands; an expansionist desire that would change its face and means, but not its goal. As it has emerged in the second chapter, some authors have pointed out that the ideas moving behind the United States interventionism in Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s were tracing

²⁸⁷ John C. Calhoun, “A Southern Senator Opposes the "All-Mexico" Plan,” (SHEC: Resources for Teachers, accessed February 9, 2023) <https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1273>

²⁸⁸ “The Fate of Mexico”, *United States Democratic Review* (1858): 340–343. In Manuel Broncano Rodríguez, “A literary history of mental captivity in the United States. Blood Meridian, Wise Blood, and Contemporary Political Discourse”, *Review of International American Studies*. vol.13, 1 (2020): 85-86

back to the those of the Manifest Destiny. In the early years of the 20th century, when Mexico was governed by dictator Porfirio Diaz, the US elite reputed dictatorship the “ideal” regime for people incapable of governing themselves.²⁸⁹ In the late 1920s, US Ambassador to Mexico James Sheffield called Mexicans “Latin Indians” incapable of understanding “any argument save brute force.”²⁹⁰ In turn, Mexico saw foreigners, especially those from the United States, as a danger that people urged to unite against. After the Mexican Revolution, the necessity to protect the country from a new foreign threat, also embodied in the Carranza Doctrine, became the imperative of the new Mexican state, which used it as a tool toward national unity.²⁹¹ What is more, it had become a non-negotiable thing for the cordiality of the Mexican-American relations. From here, the principles of sovereignty and non-interventionism would guide the Mexican and the United States respective foreign policies in their bilateral relations.

Although the United States had contrasting perceptions of the Mexican Revolution in the time it occurred, its officials expressed distaste for both the revolutionary democracy and the form of state project. This perception was altered by the Cuban Revolution which led the US elite reconsider the Mexican revolution as opposed to the Cuban example.²⁹² Although the US consciousness in Sixties was significantly different from the one in place at the time of the Manifest Destiny, both the racial bias and the sense of superiority deriving from it remained (not so) silently there. While the vocabulary changed, the inequality and exceptionalism embedded in the Manifest Destiny permeated the American elite in the Sixties, as much as its public representation of Mexico. An article appearing in the *New York Times* in 1963 reported that “Americans as Americans meet the utmost friendliness in Mexico, as millions of tourists have discovered. But strip a Mexican down to a state of nature and you find anti-Yankeeism.”²⁹³ If we take a closer look at the use of the language, we can notice it is very problematic in the terms of its representation. The friendship was a success of Americans, not of Mexicans nor of a mutual effort, just for being Americans (“Americans as Americans”); the Mexicans were someone you could exert violence on (“strip down”) to bring them back to their animal instinct, the “savage” state, (“to the state of nature”), and there you will find the anti-Americanism – hate and uncivilization (“anti-Yankeeism”). Other

²⁸⁹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 33.

²⁹⁰ Lorenzo Meyer, *The Mexican Revolution and the Anglo-American Powers: The End of Confrontation and the Beginning of Negotiation*. Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1985, 22.

²⁹¹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 33.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ “A Gesture for Mexico”, *The New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1963

government documents subjected to my analysis, although sporadically, made use of a racially biased terminology like “Indians”. When the racial bias was not so evident, the unequal worthiness of the two countries in the perception of the US elite was widespread. Even if I would not problematize the relation of domination in linguistic terms in the next subchapters, the reader will probably note that this aspect may recur and it was worthy spending a few pages to acknowledge it.

2. The myth of the Mexican democracy

One of the most salient features of Mexican-American cordiality in the Cold War is the difference in the two countries’ system. As it has emerged, the United States was based on principles of democracy, liberal trade, and private property; Mexico, instead, was an authoritarian regime, committed to state-driven policies and nationalization, who ideologically aspired to become a democracy.²⁹⁴ Given the United States’ intolerance toward divergent tendencies, it was striking to notice that, differently from other Latin American cases, the authoritarian nature of the Mexican regime was hardly exposed to the American public during the Cold War era. The destruction left by World War I had brought into the United States elite a new consciousness that shaped a new arrangement in its foreign policy, which is still in place today.²⁹⁵ Committed to avoid the US involvement in future global conflicts, the new foreign policy was based in what President Coolidge announced as “A firm adherence to our rights and a scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of Mexico”²⁹⁶ “accompanied by patience and tolerance.”²⁹⁷ From here, the principle of mutual support that forged the Mexican-American relations, based on a tacit mutual agreement: the United States would respect Mexico’s principles of non-interventionism and sovereignty, while Mexico would support the United States in its most important issues. After World War II, the US State Department believed that in Latin American it was necessary to spread

²⁹⁴ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 21.

²⁹⁵ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 230.

²⁹⁶ LLoyd H. Dopp, “A Summary of the Relations of the United States and Mexico Since 1919” *World Affairs*. 98.3 (1935): 189.

²⁹⁷ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 230.

“an orderly evolution toward democracy throughout the hemisphere,” thus establishing a continent where “everybody accepts and practices...the same political, social, and economic principles [as the United States]”²⁹⁸

in order to achieve the Pax Americana²⁹⁹. Thanks to mutual internal security’s interests, Mexico and the United States could cultivate their best bilateral relations in years. But Mexican authoritarianism and its model of development urged the United States to find a justification to give to its domestic public. As seen, Mexico was far from being a democracy. When it came to the electoral process, the PRI-led political system was based on electoral fraud, its electoral system was full of irregularities, and the opposition was fictitious. The incoming president was elected through the practice of *dedazo*, not by a fair electoral process – which, by contrast, was merely for show. Yet, in the Fifties, the US State Department was confident that democracy could be exploited to Mexico, because the Mexican political elite was ready to undertake such transformation. The clues that brought to this conclusion were mainly the presence of a middle-class, the presence of the opposition, and political stability. The enemies of democracy, according to the US State Department, were the nationalists and/or the Communists exploiting “instabilities, deficiencies, and demagogy”³⁰⁰, not the political elite. To deal with the discrepancy between the US elite perception and the Mexican reality, the escamotage of the press was to create what Sergio Aguayo defined a “myth of the Mexican democracy”³⁰¹. He explains that

When discrepancies appeared between the U.S. vision and events on the ground in Mexico, the American elites merely resorted to a number of evasive mechanisms: disassociation, the manipulation of time distinctions, an enduring faith in the perfectibility of Mexican politicians, selective criticism, and silence about the role played by the United States.³⁰²

In the media coverage of the electoral processes, the *Times* tried to cope with the fraudulent system without masking too evidently. The tactic of dissociation was used to dissociate the PRI candidates from the negative elements linked to the system, for which the *caciques* were

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ On the Pax Americana and the influences in the 1960s, see: Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*, vols. (Oxford Academic, 2014).

³⁰⁰ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 231.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 224.

³⁰² Ibid., 237.

blamed instead.³⁰³ The manipulation of time distinction (“the present is better than past, and there is always hope for the future”³⁰⁴) was commonly employed to smooth discrepancies between perceptions and reality. In the coverage of the 1952 elections, the *New York Times* maintained that if Mexico continued to keep the present course, it could become “even more democratic”.³⁰⁵ Approaching the 1958 elections, when Mexican women voted for the first time, the *Times* exposed the fraudulent nature of the system regarding López Mateos as the winner owing that he had the current president’s support.³⁰⁶ Yet, it was argued, at the present condition Mexican people could change the system, because “they are not held down by force, as they were in the time of Porfirio Díaz.”³⁰⁷ The article concluded that “the system has produced some corruption and some abuses of power, but just now it seems to lead toward liberal policies and does not stir up strong popular opposition.”³⁰⁸ The 1964 elections repropounded the same feeling of a “virtually certain” outcome for Díaz Ordaz.³⁰⁹ The image of a democratic country persisted in various articulations, even when it was depicted as “a paradox of a democratic country run by a single party with a President whose power is so great that he comes to be closer to being the Government of Mexico by himself.”³¹⁰

The tools used in the media coverage that Aguayo identified came into play to deal with a bunch of different problems, such as abstentionism, popular demonstrations, the rise of the political Left, among others, throughout the decades.³¹¹ Interestingly, the myth of democracy was also used to justify Mexico’s opposing stances at inter-American level, something that Aguayo missed out in his analyses. For instance, in response to Mexico’s firm opposition to any intervention in Cuba during the inter-American Conference in Punta del Este, the *New York Times* mitigated Mexico’s opposition affirming that “Mexico is a democracy”³¹² but Mexican officials, who are middle-class Mexicans and “for many years, have been moderates”, cannot “take an open stand against the Castro regime without serious internal trouble” produced by “the intellectuals [...], and workers and peasants [...]”³¹³ The image returning to the American public was, thus, that of a nation guided by the best politicians it

³⁰³ Ibid., 191.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 191.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 192.

³⁰⁶ “How the Mexicans do it”. *New York Times*, 24 November 1957.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Paul P. Kennedy, “Mexicans Choose President Today”, *New York Times*, 5 July 1964.

³¹⁰ “No surprise due in Mexican vote”, *New York Times*, 16 March 1958.

³¹¹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 192.

³¹² “Why Mexico Opposes” *New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1962.

³¹³ Ibid.

could hope for, but inhabited by a segment of society who was responsible for troubles with the United States. A clear example of what Aguayo defined as the “enduring faith in the perfectibility of Mexican politicians.”³¹⁴

Nonetheless, a part of the US elite was aware that Mexico was far from being a democratic country that guaranteed its people full enjoyment of their basic civil rights.³¹⁵ Although, at least until the 1965, the United States itself did not guarantee the full enjoyment of basic civil rights to its population. In 1952, a *New York Times* correspondent would note that “very few, if any, are willing to pretend that democracy actually exists [in Mexico].”³¹⁶ Ten years later, James Reston, as a special envoy of the *New York Times*, would appraise Mexico for its progress, but admitted that “It has certainly not set an example either of austerity or democracy at the top of the government or stamped out political corruption.”³¹⁷ Even though the lack of democracy was mitigated by impressive “progress”, the new goal of US foreign policy under the Kennedy administration. In 1962, a columnist pointed out that Mexico was politically “fairly distant from our notion of democracy”³¹⁸, while more and more journalists acknowledged the one-party ruled nature of the Mexican state. These views demonstrated a shifted in perception among the US elite over the political system of Mexico and the extent to which a system could, or could not be, considered democratic. All in all, “the general political balance” was optimistic, to the point that Mexico was even proposed as a model for other countries.³¹⁹ ³²⁰ Aguayo noted:

Such optimism grew out of the U.S. elite’s belief that Mexico was gradually coming to resemble the United States. Scott suggested that Mexico was becoming “systematized into a working political culture in the Western sense”; he concluded that even if Mexico did not yet “have a ‘perfect’ political system,” the country had nonetheless “fulfilled the most basic requirements for a Western political system” (1959: 17, 32)³²¹

³¹⁴ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 236.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

³¹⁷ James Reston, “Mexico City: Love Is the Problem” *New York Times*, 10 Dec. 1962.

³¹⁸ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 316.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 231.

³²⁰ Diverse editorials of the *New York Times* confirm this idea was maintained through the 1960s. Secretary of State Dean Rusk is said to have seconded it, too. See: Daniel James, “Kennedy Visits a ‘New’ Mexico”, *New York Times*, 24 June 1962.

³²¹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 231.

The myth of democracy served the United States worked out so well, that, until the early 1980s, “most Americans believed that the Mexican system was (almost) a democracy.”³²² This picture disclose how much Washington was open to give up in terms of ideology, in order to preserve its foreign policy’s security interests.

3. Bringing up the language of love: the bilateral friendship

In close conjunction with the myth of democracy, there stood the concept of ‘friendship’. Throughout the 1960s, the “general overview of the relationship” between Mexico and the United States was overwhelmingly positive.³²³ In the Western tradition, ‘friendship’ is part of the everyday lexicon in politics and was historically bound to the idea of enmity, and to the logic of “us” versus “them”.³²⁴ In the Cold War era, the friendship between Mexico and the United States seems to fit quite well into Wendt’s interpretation, who argues that friendship is a relationship between two states where “disputes will be settled without war or threat of war”³²⁵ and that they will “fight as a team if the security of any one is threatened by a third party”.³²⁶ In these relations, “friendship is understood as a mutually constructed bond that enhances security by prioritizing negotiation and cooperation as the first modes of interaction in times of stress or crisis.”³²⁷ ³²⁸ Ever since the Coolidge’s turn, friendship had become a stable feature in both the language of US foreign policy and the

³²² Ibid., 224.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Nicholas Smith Ross and Tracey Fallon, “‘The importance of bona fide friendships to international politics: China’s quest for friendships that matter’,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. (2022).

³²⁵ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*. *Cambridge Studies in International Relations*, vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1999). 298-299.

³²⁶ Ibid., 298-299.

³²⁷ Nicholas Ross Smith & Tracey Fallon, “The importance of bona fide friendships to international politics: China’s quest for friendships that matter”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (11 March 2022), 2.

³²⁸ The debate on the concept of ‘friendship’ in diplomacy is ongoing within political scientists. Many are the interpretations and theories, and skepticism over their use is real. On the concept of friendship in diplomacy in modern Western nation-states, see: Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) and *Constitutional Theory*, (London: Duke University Press, 2008). See, also: Evgeny Roshchin, *Frindship among nations: History of a concept*. (Manchester University Press, 2017); and Kristin Haugevik, *Special Relationships in World Politics. Inter-state Friendship and Diplomacy after the Second World War*. (London: Routledge, 2018) For a recent a revision of the concept, see: Astrid H M Nordin, Graham M Smith, “Reintroducing friendship to international relations: relational ontologies from China to the West”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 18.3, (September 2018), 369–396.

media coverage of Mexico-US relations, which is still present nowadays. The ‘friendly’ nature of US relations with its southern neighbours had been put pen to paper by Roosevelt’s Good Neighbour policy and reinforced when the Cold War began to hamper the United States in the 1950s. In a memorandum dated March 7, 1953, to the Personal Assistant to President Eisenhower, Charles Douglas Jackson³²⁹, Colonel Edward G. Lansdale³³⁰ had then suggested that to achieve the Pax Americana in Latin America, the United States should “love they neighbour as thyself”³³¹ (love their neighbours as themselves). Colonel Lansdale, who was a firm advocate of containment and of psychological warfare, believed that if the United States wanted to win its enemies, it must appoint men who “loved” the US and their correspondent country of assignment.³³² He had in mind skilled and locally savvy officers, just like Winston Scott, Thomas Mann, and Fulton Freeman in Mexico. Lansdale’s embedding the notion of love to the notion of containment is just exemplary here of the due attention that part of the US elite paid to befriend the countries in Latin American and their people, although with different methods, at diverse degrees, and with very different outcomes. The administrations of Kennedy and Johnson, who indeed partially followed Lansdale’s line, were fully aware that accommodating Mexican requests and keeping the ‘friendship’ closer and closer would have benefit the US best interests. By the Sixties, in order to cultivate the friendship with their southern neighbour, the United States elite was willing to accept high compromises, even if they contrasted with the United States’ interests. Thanks to the agreement of mutual support, Mexico was a favourite in this game. Yet, at the end of the Fifties there was a certain degree of worry inside the US government about Mexico’s bashful attitude.

Right after the election of López Mateos, on 11 November 1958, the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, R.R. Rubottom Jr, would send a letter to then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson expressing his worries:

³²⁹ Charles Douglas Jackson (1902-1964) was a United States government propagandist and senior executive of Time Inc., a mass media. He served as Special Assistant to the President in the Eisenhower administration, and as a speechwriter and White House manager (1958-1960). He was firmly anti-Communist and an expert on psychological warfare.

³³⁰ Colonel E. G. Lansdale worked as a United States Air Force officer during the Eisenhower administration. He served as a major general until 1963, and then continued his work with the CIA. In the early 1950s, he was working in the Philippines, suppressing the Huk insurgency. In 1954, he joined the forces in Vietnam and started the Saigon Military Mission. As a firm supporter of psychological warfare to win communist insurgencies and a trusting officer, C.D. Jackson asked him to produce a memo with his advices on the new strategies to adopt in Latin America. The administrations of Kennedy and Johnson based their strategy of containment on the idea that studying the psychology of the enemy was paramount to win, as Lansdale supported.

³³¹ E.G. Lansdale, Memorandum for C.D. Jackson, 7 March 1953. Eisenhower Library (accessed: 20/01/2023) https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/file/fy18_10.pdf

³³² Ibid.

If I had to describe our number one problem with Mexico, I would be inclined to say that it is that of obtaining Mexico's confidence in our good faith. [...] we should never relent in our effort to overcome this feeling and win her over completely to our side.³³³

As seen in the previous chapter, the uncertainty among US officials increased in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, due to the “socialist” orientation of López Mateos, the uprising of Mexican revolts, and the debate around the Third World problems, which costed Mexico the nickname of “indifferent *Senorita*”. At this time, the predominant perception within the US administration and the public image represented by the *New York Times* differed substantially. In fact, the strain caused by López Mateos internationalism in the first years of his presidency did not leak out in the public image proposed by the newspaper. The ‘friendship’ between the two countries played out as an escamotage to manage the southern President’s socialist turn. When Mexico and the United States publicly diverged, the ‘friendly’ nature of Mexico-US relations was further emphasized. Not so many articles of the *Times* openly exposed Mexico-US disagreements during the first years of López Mateos administration, but when they did, they made sure to mark the friendship even more. When in 1959, the Mexican President criticised the work of the OAS and the United States position on economic matters, the *New York Times* reported that López Mateos was discontent with the United States’ position on economic matters but dismissed the disagreement: “But he [López Mateos] did not specify what he wanted.”³³⁴ Instead, the article acclaimed the growing bilateral agreements and highlighted that the ties between the United States and Mexico “will be an example to the world of how two nations can live independently side by side in friendship, cooperative effort and mutual understanding.”³³⁵ Two days after, Edward C. Burks described López Mateos’ problematization of the economic issues of Latin America at the General Assembly as a “sober” discourse, and reinforced the President “firm” hand of friendship.³³⁶ “He [the President] made clear that the hand Mexico extended to the United States was not seeking gifts or grants. But he pointed out in various ways the United States could help Mexico and other Latin-American nations and thus solidify democracies.”³³⁷

³³³ Rubottom, R.R. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom) to Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, 11 Nov. 11, 1958. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v05/d319> (accessed: 27/01/2023)

³³⁴ “O.A.S. Criticized by Mexican Chief”, *New York Times*, 13 Oct. 1959

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Edward C. Burke. “Leader of Mexico welcomed to City”, *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1959

³³⁷ Ibid.

In the following years, as President López Mateos adopted a more critical stance towards Cuba by condemning the Castro', the United States high level officials came to acknowledge that Mexico's public position of disagreement against the United States was just a matter of rhetoric that guarantee President López Mateos to maintain order within the Mexican society. When Mexico publicly condemned the incompatibility between the Communist government that Cuba had become and Inter-American principles and agreements, the worries of the US State Department came to an end.³³⁸ As a matter of fact, a year later, in a memorandum dated May 24, 1963, Acting Secretary of State George W. Ball reassured President Kennedy that even the Mexican opposition on imposing economic sanctions against Cuba was "not unexpected."³³⁹ According to Ball,

In a long conversation with Assistant Secretary Martin at the end of January on a variety of possible measures with respect to Cuba, President Lopez Mateos made quite clear that Mexico would give its public support to any action against Cuba necessary to prevent a serious and direct threat to the security of the United States or the Hemisphere, as it did in the missile crisis.³⁴⁰

The Mexican President, he noted, needed to perform these public actions in order to "secure and maintain the support of all elements of his party"³⁴¹ as well as order at home, where both the left and the right wings were becoming more and more fervent. Mexican foreign policy to Cuba had become, in the view of the US State Department, a mere tool to fulfil domestic affairs. The change in perception within the US administration determined a reduction in the gap between this and the public image represented by the *Times*, to the degree that both the newspaper and the US State Department proposed the same perception of the issue. As a result, by the end of the year 1962, a Special correspondent for the *New York Times* summed up: "A note of harmony not seen here in years pervaded the capital today."³⁴²

A huge role in the maintenance of the friendliness was also played by the presidential visits the presidents of both countries paid to each other. While until the Eisenhower era

³³⁸ Dean Rusk, Telegram From Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, January 23, 1962. Office of the Historian (accessed: 27 Jan 2023), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d136>

³³⁹ George W. Ball, Memorandum From Acting Secretary of State Ball to President Kennedy, May 24, 1963, Office of the Historian, (accessed: 27 Jan. 2023), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d166>

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² "Harmony pervades Mexico at Year End", *New York Times*, 31 December 1962.

diplomatic exchanges were few in numbers, presidential visits became a determinant in the Kennedy administration, and even more so in the Johnson's years.³⁴³ During his short time in the White House, President Kennedy was featured frequently on magazine covers, he was loved and acclaimed by the crowds.³⁴⁴ The friendly nature of bilateral relations in the media narrative was further emphasized with the arrival of Johnson at the White House and lasted throughout the whole *sesenio* of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. During LBJ first visit to Mexico, the media coverage was overwhelmingly positive. President Johnson himself loved to address the Mexicans as: "good friend."³⁴⁵ For him, the people of Mexico had become his "brothers and sisters" and President Díaz Ordaz was beloved and respected in his country.³⁴⁶ For the *Times*, Johnson's solution of the Chamizal issue was a sign of historical justice for Mexico. The portray of the US and Mexican presidents, which have been extensively covered by historiography on both sides, unveil the intentionality with which the US elite tried to depict a fairly image of its southern neighbor. At the same time, the centric narrative around the figure of the Mexican President in foreign affairs issues adopted by the US elite makes us appreciate the US's understanding of the Mexican system and of the key role the president within it.³⁴⁷

4. The Mexican opposition, los *rebeldes* and state violence

The support given by the US elite for Mexican established order was remarked by the way the Mexican opposition was not (or erroneously) portrayed in the public image of the country. As noted by Aguayo, between 1945 and 1960 the opposition was minimized. The center-rightist tended to be somehow favored, while the US elite was very critic of the nationalists and of the Mexican Left, mainly due to US security concerns.³⁴⁸ While in 1948

³⁴³ On the number of presidential visits, see the data collected in Domínguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*. On the number of times Mexican Presidents were portrayed by the New York Times in the Sixties, see: Sergio Aguayo, *Myths and Perceptions*.

³⁴⁴ C. Schayegh, *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy*, *New Approaches to International History* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021) 131.

³⁴⁵ Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks in Mexico City at the Dedication of the Abraham Lincoln Statue. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/239372>

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ On the role of presidential visits, see: Sergio Aguayo, *Myth and Perceptions*. On the role of Kennedy presidential visits in the Global South, see: Schayegh, C.. *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy* (Bloomsbury Academic: 2021)

³⁴⁸ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 196.

the National Security Council was positive that Communism in Latin America was not a serious danger, in 1952 the US State Department believed that Communism could become a potential threat that foster nationalistic aspirations and guide the anti-US satellites.³⁴⁹ Moreover, the same body contended that the Mexican government was not sufficiently worried about Communism, and that such neutral attitude allowed the country “as a center for [Soviet] bloc activities in Latin America.”³⁵⁰

In the eyes of Washington, Communists were seen as those to blame for a myriad of issues; and the anti-Communist narrative in form of Communist conspiracy permeated the *New York Times* too, as a mean to cover various forms of excesses that diverged from the US interests.³⁵¹ From the analysis in the previous chapter it has emerged that, until the late Fifties, Washington’s biggest source of anxiety vis-à-vis the Mexican government was neutrality. A central question posed by the USIA “Barometer Study on Public Opinion” in Mexico in 1956 discloses Washington sentiment: “At the present time do you personally think that Mexico should be on the side of the Communist powers, on the side of the anti-Communist powers or on neither side?” The aggregate response supported the worry: 71 percent of the total respondents, from the twenty-three Mexican largest towns and cities, answered, “Neither side.”³⁵² The Cuban Revolution and the regional uprising of the Left further aggravated Washington’s anxiety, but they also led to a gradual change in the nature of relationships of domination – and in the US political elite’s perceptions.³⁵³ In point of fact, the US political elite started to recognize that their country encountered a certain degree of hostility in Latin America: it was time for a new strategy to combat Communism and gain the love of “the Latins”. In 1959, the US State Department acknowledged that a less radical position towards the leftists perhaps would bring the United States more gains than losses.³⁵⁴ Washington’s change in perceptions and renovated interest in its Latin American relations was confirmed by a memorandum wrote by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1959. To cite Aguayo, the Joint Chiefs of Staff criticized

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Renata Keller, 50-57

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War* (Duke University Press, 2008) 171. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822390664>.

³⁵³ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 226.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

the secretary of defense for perpetuating the United States' "negative perspective" toward the "Communist problem" and for "being against Communism for the sole reason that the United States has stated that Communism is evil." The Joint Chiefs suggested that the time was ripe for a "positive attitude" (JCS 1959).³⁵⁵

At the same time, the change in perceptions within the US administration happening throughout the Sixties was accompanied by a critical change in the US society.³⁵⁶ The United States domestic situation, pervaded by the civil rights movement throughout the whole Sixties, brought to the surface a more sceptic generation of intellectuals and journalists who was influenced by global social injustice as much as by the paradoxes of the Cold War ideology. As a result, revisionist thesis began to gain influence in the political spheres of the United States society. As a reflection, liberal thesis began to circulate in the US medias too. Despite their (sometimes harsh) critique to the US government, they tended to target individuals and single policies and laws rather than the foundations of the system.³⁵⁷

For this reason, the impacts of their ideas became apparent only by the last years of the 1960s and early 1970s, as the brutality of global events exploded. In the early Sixties, it was perhaps the same victory of Kennedy over Richard Nixon that granted liberal ideas and thesis to emerge from the oblivion in which they had fallen during the previous conservative presidencies.³⁵⁸ Kennedy's rhetoric was full of liberalism, optimism, and "messianic" activism, presenting a President fully ready to face any threats.³⁵⁹ Yet, he remained a firm proposer of containment and a promoter of a common security strategy in the inter-American system. Communism still posed the same big threat as before and remained an aggressive actor by nature. The bipolar rhetoric of the Cold War continued to dominate the scene and the US political elite continued to sustain the repressive actions of the Mexican government against its opposition, under the shared flag of the Communist conspiracy. Communists were blamed for electoral frauds, social protests, the anti-American sentiment, subversive actions, and many more. Many of the articles which appeared in the *Times* covered issues linked to the development of actions of the Mexican left-wing parties.³⁶⁰ Others used the supposed Mexican communism as a chance to promote the US policies against Cuba³⁶¹; while others

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 237.

³⁵⁶ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 224-231.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. 231.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 226.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 227.

³⁶⁰ "Leftists in Mexico again seeking union", *New York Times*, 19 May 1963

³⁶¹ Paul P. Kennedy, "Cuba crisis spurs Mexico rightists", *New York Times*, 4 November 1962

covered the elusive ventures of the Mexican government against the Communist threat. For instance, in 1965, a Special to the *New York Times* documented the arrest of thirty political dissidents in Mexico City who were jailed by the state authorities for having demonstrated in Mexico City and against the US “to protest the United States policy in Vietnam”³⁶². According to the author, protestors belonged to the Mexican Communist Party, the Independent Campesino Central and the Popular Electoral Front and “the arrests were made in what the authorities called the nationwide leftist conspiracy against the Government.”³⁶³ Despite the article did not openly acclaim the action, it did not condemn it indeed. The article was titled: “Mexico Arrests 30 in Raids on Leftists”, which is explicative itself of the intent to excuse the Mexican government for its undemocratic action by condemning the anti-Americanism. In reality, we know that anti-Americanism in Mexican social movements was only a matter of transnational rhetoric rather than a motive for protests itself.³⁶⁴ The same fact that news of this kind (frequently) appeared in the newspaper is eloquent of pervasiveness of United States foreign policy in the media. Nonetheless, the Sixties viewed a shift in the language used to described these entities. In fact, Aguayo noted that during the 1950s, Mexican leftists were referred to as “Reds” while in the Sixties they were labeled “left-wingers”³⁶⁵, although the former was still be used from time to time³⁶⁶. Such a moderation of perceptions was the result of the recognition that the Mexican left-wingers were not a threat for the established system.³⁶⁷

The other enemy of the United States in Latin America was anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism was a common feature of the image of either the Mexican left, the nationalists the right-wing groups, and even of the elite. Yet the attachment to each of these categories differed by intensity. As a matter of fact, anti-Americanism was highly condemned when it came to the left as a tool of manipulation; bearable when it came to the far/central-right; and understandable when it came to the Mexican president’s closest cycle. In 1963 a *Times*’ editorial would notice that “anti-Yankeeism”³⁶⁸ was acknowledged but generally not perceived as a problem as far as it “played no role in governmental relations” which “could

³⁶² “Mexico Arrests 30 in Raids on Leftists”, *New York Times*, 15 April 1965.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ See chapter one, subchapter 5.

³⁶⁵ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 317.

³⁶⁶ As in here: “Tie To Reds Stirs Mexico Farmers”, *New York Times*, 10 January 1965.

³⁶⁷ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 317.

³⁶⁸ The terminology “anti-Yankeeism” is purposely used to maintain the same ethos as of the primary sources. The same vocabulary of the primary sources is used; by no mean does it reflect the author’s intentionality.

not be more friendly”.³⁶⁹ In reporting about Kennedy’s first presidential visit to Mexico, Daniel James argued that anti-Yankeeism during the Sixties was even “no longer fashionable” in Mexico.³⁷⁰ Nonetheless, there were also figures inside the newspaper who stood out from the crowd and sought to give a fairer image of the anti-American sentiment in Mexico. Most notably, C.L. Sulzberger noticed that the Mexican elite was deeply suspicious of the conditions the United States attached to the Alliance’s aid, and that a general “sediment of anti-United States feeling remains among the Mexicans, tinged with a residue of suspicion.”³⁷¹ Sulzberger was part of that new generation of journalists who was critic towards the United States government and more culturally sensitive; still, his perception was seconded by the warnings coming from the CIA.

In 1964, the CIA conceded that “any signs that it [Cuba] was extending its revolution “could have an extensive impact on the statist trend elsewhere in the area” (CIA 1964: 7-8).”³⁷² On balance, an extensive analysis of the CIA in Mexico and the government’s documents of the second half of the Sixties confirm that Washington overall perception was that the anti-American feeling was present but not threatening. Thus, the weapon of anti-Americanism appears to be a tool of US propaganda rather than a real concern. The topic of anti-Americanism was brought up – with a higher frequency with respect to that of the previous decade, either in private and public political discussions. This reflected Washington’s anxiety deriving mostly from the rising of nationalists and leftists’ groups in Mexico, and generally in the world. Nonetheless, on a pragmatic level, the US anxiety produced by Communism and anti-Americanism impacted the public image given of Mexico, but was tempered by two factors. One, the US’s trust in the Mexican government to keep the opposition quiet; the other, the revisionist thesis of a new group of journalists who offered a less ideological picture of the reality.

Social protests in Mexico received a considerable degree of attention by the US elite in the Sixties, as a reflection of the greatest concerns of the US foreign policy in Latin America – as we will see further on.³⁷³ As it has emerged in the previous chapter, the CIA office in Mexico City was closely looking at the Mexican protests and controlling the situation with

³⁶⁹ “A Gesture for Mexico”, *New York Times*, 23 December 1963.

³⁷⁰ Daniel James, “Kennedy Visits A 'New' Mexico”, *New York Times*, 24 June 1962.

³⁷¹ C.L. Sulzberger, “J.F.K. and Another Kind of Democracy”, *Foreign Affairs, New York Times*, 30 June 1962.

³⁷² Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 231.

³⁷³ It must be noted that the globalization of social struggles, too, contributed to increase the *Times* media coverage on the strikes and protests starting in the second half of the Sixties compared to the previous half of the decade.

covert operations of propaganda. Reports produced by the agency on the students, teachers, workers and *campesinos* strikes revealed a degree of US trust in the Mexican government to manage domestic political opposition by its own. Mexican authoritarianism and the repressive nature of the state secured the United States that the Mexican *guerrillas* would have never harmed the United States security. As a result, the media coverage of social protests, in both rural and urban areas, completely obscured signs of social discontent and of state repression. In the Sixties, social protests reached high levels of state violence and of clashes between the society and the government very often but the *New York Times* fell into the same old tactics of media coverage or simply ignored the event. A nice try of avoiding any representation that could have embarrassed the Mexican government and outraged the United States citizens.³⁷⁴ Exceptional single voices like that of Henry Giniger were sometimes featured in the *Times* provided a more reasonable interpretation of the events. Reporting on student demonstrations preceding the Tlatelolco Massacre in 1968, Giniger exposed the use of arms by the Mexican government³⁷⁵ and accused it of “overreacting” and pointed out that “in democratic countries, it is accepted as normal and legitimate that the country’s chief policy maker be subject to public scrutiny and criticism. Not so in Mexico.”³⁷⁶ Yet, he did not report on the repressive actions of the system.

About the Tlatelolco Massacre which occurred on October 2, 1968, Washington rested on a discreet silence and timidly dissociated itself from the violence of the act, while the *Times* avoided to feature news that could expose too clearly the magnitude of the event. On October 4, in a letter to the editor, Ramon Eduardo Ruiz criticized the *Times*’s editorial line: “Judging by the content of letters to the times, recent events in Mexico have made no impression on the American public.”³⁷⁷ He exposed the nature of a political regime that “tolerates no effective dissent” and uses “harsh repression”. Few other voices, like that of Sidney Thomas Wise, criticized the Mexican government and questioned the truthfulness of the official narrative of the Massacre.³⁷⁸ Although a new critical sensitivity was gaining space in the US media, it is probable that these voices went unnoticed. The *Times* preferred the Olympics instead. And the tacit accord of mutual support was preserved.

³⁷⁴ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 320–321.

³⁷⁵ Henry Giniger, “50,000 Mexico City Students March in New Protest Against Police and Army”, *New York Times*, 2 August 1968.

³⁷⁶ Henry Giniger, “Mexico, The Calm Exterior is Deceiving”, *New York Times*, 18 August 1968.

³⁷⁷ Ramon Eduardo Ruiz, “Mexico City Unrest”, *New York Times*, 4 October 1968.

³⁷⁸ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 326.

5. From “underdeveloped” to “developing” Mexico

As seen above, the Cuban Revolution brought a new primary goal into the United States agenda in Latin America: avoiding “another Cuba” and the spread of Communism in the region. To achieve this goal the Kennedy administration formulated two strategies: reinforcing the Latin American security structures and promoting social transformation within economic development to preempt extremists from both the left and the right.³⁷⁹ Compared to the previous decade, in the early Sixties, there was a new desire for change, as a result of an increasing awareness of the problems surrounding the southern hemisphere, of the unequal distribution of wealth in the region, and of the role played by the state.³⁸⁰ Economic development intertwined now with social justice, recognizing a whole new dimension of the notion of development itself.

In his inaugural speech on 20 January 1961, President Kennedy identified three main social categories of intervention against poverty and hunger in Latin America: the *campesino* in the countryside, the *obrero* in the cities, and the *estudiante* (student) in the schools.³⁸¹ According to his administration, underdevelopment in the region was mainly the result of a lack of capital and technological know-how joint to the absence of an educated middle-class. For this reason, the United States would commit to invest in the export of technology and knowledge to the states of the south, so that they could elevate from the condition of misery in which they found themselves. Thanks to the Mexican Miracle, Mexico was the most economically developed country in Latin America. The US State Department believed that, through continued investment of American capital, the country would continue to serve as the model for the entire region.³⁸²

On March 10, 1961, the President’s Special Assistant, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., sent a memorandum to President Kennedy recognizing Mexico as the most economically “dynamic” nation together with Brazil. Yet, he noted, Mexico “still have great areas of poverty, illiteracy

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 241.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Inaugural Address, Kennedy Draft, 01/17/1961; Papers of John F. Kennedy: President's Office Files, 01/20/1961-11/22/1963; John F. Kennedy Library; National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁸² Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 215-219.

and stagnation.”³⁸³ Schlesinger thought that in order to fight the problem of political ferment in Latin America, the United State must create a

middle class revolution, where the processes of economic modernization carry the new urban middle class to power, and produce, along with it, such necessities of modern technical society as constitutional government, honest public administration, a responsible party system, a rational land system, an efficient system of taxation, mass education, social mobility, etc.³⁸⁴

The problem for him was that Latin American countries had not only the wrong model of development, but also a “lurid nationalist-populist rhetoric”³⁸⁵ which traced back to their revolutions. The economic development for him was the praise of the Mexican middle-class which nevertheless had grown in the last twenty years. The middle-class also reflected the “swing away from dictatorship and personalism and the increasing demand for stable free governments”³⁸⁶, namely, the myth of democracy. From here, the United States’ mandate to constitute a new middle-class of trained men in the Latin American countries. The memorandum also suggested that the United States should no longer try “to remake the other nations of the hemisphere in our own image”³⁸⁷. Something that Lansdale’s farsighted analysis had already suggested eight years before.³⁸⁸ The document is indicative of a new broadened consciousness and a different language and ideas surrounding the notion of political and economic development that was emerging within the US political elite in the Sixties. In the *New York Times*, too, there begin to appear the liberal thesis that questioned the United States model of exporting democracy and the new concessions Washington should consider in order to prevent another Cuba in the hemisphere. Aguayo added that

A 1961 *Times* editorial acknowledged that only after “many years, a frightening revolution in Cuba, and the entrance of the Cold War into the Western Hemisphere” did the United

³⁸³ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Memorandum From the President’s Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, 10 March 1961, Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v12/d7> (accessed: 07/02/2023)

³⁸⁴ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Memorandum From the President’s Special Assistant (Schlesinger) to President Kennedy, Washington, March 10, 1961.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ In the Memorandum for C.D. Jackson dated 7 March 1953, Lansdale noted that the differences between their economic and political systems did not matter for the fulfilment of the United States goals.

States realize that “economic growth without social progress keeps the great majority of the people in poverty, while a privileged few reap the benefits of growing abundance.”³⁸⁹

In an article issued on 30 June 1962, C.L. Sulzberger wrote that

We [the United States] may well have to swallow many of our ideological preferences, if we press forward with the Alliance for Progress, and recognize that a modified version of socialism might be the most effective form of government among Latin lands.³⁹⁰

Entering the Sixties, Mexico had achieved a great degree of economic growth and had made consistent advancements in the state’s project of development. The US elite acclaimed Mexican advancements in terms of economic growth, political stability, agricultural production, and expansion of education, to the point that Mexico figured as the model for other Latin American nations. In 1964, Special to the *New York Times*, Paul P. Kennedy, announced that it was a general widespread perception of the US elite that Mexico had lost its “underdeveloped” status to turn into a “developing” nation.³⁹¹

Besides praising achievements, however, in the first years of the Sixties there was also an increasing recognition of the substantial problems that Mexicans were facing. According to economist Raymond Vernon, one of the main problems was that the slowdown in the rate of growth that Mexico was experiencing might reflect structural deficiencies.³⁹² The *New York Times* confirmed that the import substitution strategy “had reached a point where the most promising and reasonable possibilities were covered.”³⁹³ Other major problems were represented by the rampant inequalities between the rich and the poor, the poverty of the latter, and the population growth whose rate speed was higher than the death rate. James Reston for the *Times* described the countryside as it follows: “the land looks the way the world must have looked when it began – unfenced, hard and stony; and everywhere there is the poignant symbol of the central problem: the patient mother trudging through the fields with one child on her back, a second at her heels, and often a third not yet born.”³⁹⁴ In a very stereotyped way, Paul

³⁸⁹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. 241.

³⁹⁰ C.L. Sulzberger, “J.F.K. and Another Kind of Democracy”, *Foreign Affairs*, *New York Times*, 30 June 1962

³⁹¹ Paul P. Kennedy, Extended Period of Political Stability is Termed a Basic Factor in Mexico’s Economic Advances. *New York Times*, 8 August 1964.

³⁹² Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 295.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ James Reston, Mexico City: Love is the Problem, *New York Times*, 10 December 1962

P. Kennedy even imputed the Mexican problems to the *fiestas* (“parties” or “holidays”) typical of the Mexican traditions. He noted: “It may well be that the abundance of holidays in Mexico eventually will be diminished by the growing industrialization of the country.”³⁹⁵ Representative of the difference in perceptions with the US elite and the long-established stereotypes which were far from being overcome.

The Kennedy’s administration gave rise to a renovated willingness to invest in rural areas of Latin America linked to a necessity driven by security concerns. As Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles urged “the rural areas in Latin America “offer both explosive dangers and great opportunities.”³⁹⁶ On the one hand, poverty among *campesinos* was a latent threat to stability and a useful lever for Communists to win the heart of the poor. On the other hand, the countryside offered immense imperialist opportunities for the US, great chances of investments for US businesses, and a hope for the American cultural Cold War’s goals. The *New York Times* dutifully reflected the increased US government’s attention towards the rural Mexico, as well as the acknowledgment of the difficulties these areas lived. In the mid-Sixties, the newspaper began to publish not only articles reporting on the agrarian lands and matters, but also stories of *campesinos*’ life and reviews of novels on similar topics.³⁹⁷ In 1964, Paul Kennedy noted that “the rural population, almost half of the nations’ total, has been caught in the classic squeeze of industrialization.”³⁹⁸ He also contented that it was the situation of the rural areas of Mexico what caused strained in the national equilibrium.³⁹⁹ In 1966, *Times* correspondent Henry Ginger took a long tour through northern rural Mexico and reported that “most of her [Mexico’s] population are still uneducated peasants and still very poor”⁴⁰⁰ and the Mexican countryside had “returned to the old pre-Revolutionary system of vast properties, in which a tiny minority controlled the nation’s agricultural wealth.”⁴⁰¹ In order to solve the Mexican problems in the agrarian sector, Schlesinger was convinced that US investments should go to small landowners rather than to the *ejidos*. But this theory was, of course, in deep contrast with the Mexican government state-driven policies and did not find a fertile ground to flourish (neither under Lopez Mateos nor Diaz Ordaz), even though Mexican Ambassador

³⁹⁵ Paul P. Kennedy, *Manana es fiesta*, *New York Times*, 1 August 1961.

³⁹⁶ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. 298.

³⁹⁷ See, for instance: *The Voice of Poverty Speaks for Itself*, *New York Times*, 3 May 1964.

³⁹⁸ Paul P. Kennedy, *Mexico, in an Industrial Boom, Loses 'Underdeveloped' Status*, *New York Times*, 8 August 1964.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Rural Mexico*, *New York Times*, 18 June 1966.

⁴⁰¹ *Pledge on the Alliance*, *New York Times*, 18 April 1966.

to the United States agreed with the US's proposal.⁴⁰² As noted in chapter two, for the past decades Mexico and the US deeply diverged on how to bring about economic development. In terms of investments, the US elite sought to promote US private businesses in the countryside of Mexico but the Mexican government, instead, firmly asked foreign capital be in forms of public sources, that is to say, loans from governments or international institutions. When Diaz Ordaz came into power, his conservative orientation suggested him to turn back to the Mexicanization of the economy by asking the Mexican businessmen to invest more domestically – a move that suggested Mexico was seeking independence from its northern neighbor. In the *Times*, Giniger acknowledged that by 1966, “the atmosphere for foreign private investments in Mexico is beginning to sour.”⁴⁰³ Regardless Mexican goals, Mexican private investments were not enough and the country remained profoundly dependent on private investments of US businesses.

As opposed to the dual image of a rural-urban Mexico(s), a more traditional image of the country continued circulating in forms of touristic adverts, tour guides, and articles of some sort of a similar nature. From this perspective, the features that characterized the Mexican underdevelopment were filled with false positive connotations to promote the United States tourism towards the southern neighbor, a very productive sector of the US and Mexican economies and a special destination for Kennedy's and Johnson's vacations. Throughout the Sixties, the two Mexican administrations put great efforts in promoting tourism in Mexico and in rehabilitating its northern borderland to make it suitable for American tourism, in order to increase its US dollars reserves. By 1964, the landscape of Mexico was much more urban and equipped with tourist facilities, yet, while the label was positive for some, American usual travelers to Mexico had mixed feelings about the new urbanization as they felt that the rustic ways and semi-isolation of fishing port was the reason of Mexico's charm. The rural and “unspoiled” areas of Mexico where the industrialization process had not yet left its impacts were emphasized in what it may be resumed as the typical image of the *exotic* land. Interestingly, this sort of promotional material made the “problems” of Mexico inexistant, and when it came to tourism, what were considered features of underdeveloped were exploited to attract capital. Mexico was depicted as the land of colorful villages, unspoiled areas, beautiful beaches, *fiestas*, *siestas*, and *burros* –

⁴⁰² Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 300.

⁴⁰³ Henry Giniger, Mexico Pressing Business to Shun Foreign Controls, *New York Times*, 8 November 1966.

parties, breaks, and donkeys. The rural landscape gifted the visitors with picturesque views and was exalted by the ancient Mayan and Aztec ruins. *Burros* recalled the imaginary of the rural and underdeveloped land. A *Times* article dated January 1, 1960 told the story of a cultural summer exchange between two young students, Luis from Mexico and Heather from the United States. While the article described the positive feedbacks of both parties, the headline was accompanied by a picture of Luis riding a donkey, with the following caption: “Burros at the Huston place help Luis feel at home.”⁴⁰⁴ *Fiestas*, instead, resembled the Mexican folklore full of traditional dances, colorful dresses, and live music.⁴⁰⁵ But also the Mexican friendliness. A *New York Times* editorial noted that when President Kennedy visited Mexico in June 1962, the visit looked more like a *fiesta* rather than a state visit. His argument was based on the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy were welcomed by a group of dancers – he concluded that the whole town was offering President Kennedy its friendship.⁴⁰⁶ But *fiestas* also resembled the “laziness” attitude Mexicans were said to have by many, or the cause of the slowness of the Mexican rate of growth. The image of the dreamed exotic land reflected the US interests in increasing its presence in the touristic sector of Mexico. The peaceful coexistence of such imaginary with that of a country profoundly problematic confirms us how the media sought to follow, and sometimes influenced, the foreign policy.

6. Exchanges in knowledge

The third main target of the Alliance for Progress were the young people. In his inaugural speech Kennedy exerted the young people to mobilize for their nation and for the good of human kind, under the American flag. Young people, students, and the citizens as a whole, became important in the fulfilment of the political agenda of the United States. He stated:

[...] In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe. [...] And so, my fellow Americans: ask

⁴⁰⁴ Roslyn Harbor, Mexican Boy, 12, Returns a Visit. *New York Times*, 1 January 1960.

⁴⁰⁵ Ralph Hancock, *Mexico* (New York: Macmillan, 1963) 118–119.

⁴⁰⁶ E.W. Kenworthy, State Visit by Kennedys Turns Into a Vast Fiesta, *New York Times*, 1 July 1962.

not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.⁴⁰⁷

A year later, celebrating the first anniversary of the Alliance, Kennedy would stress that without “the process of education, development is impossible”⁴⁰⁸, holding education to be crucial to economic development. The centrality of education, (of higher education in particular) was characteristic of the Cold War, owing that international higher education epitomized the oft-cited “battle for heart and minds”, and educational exchanges were used by the United States as a mean for social reproduction even before the Cold War.⁴⁰⁹ The reinvigorated interest in financing education in Latin America also responded to the very goal of the Mexican government of expanding literacy. In addition, it was a response to the Soviet Union’s cultural offense in Mexico and the construction of the Lumumba University in Moscow in 1960.⁴¹⁰ Soon after, the United States would reinforce its propaganda machine within the Mexican universities, the cultural exchanges for both outgoing and incoming students from and to Mexico, and the funds for local projects. In the Sixties, Washington’s key strategy was the expansion of foreign assistance and development policies through government agencies, the Alliance for Progress, international agencies such as the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank, and private foundations like the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and Mellon.⁴¹¹ Although little is known about the role of private philanthropic foundations and of educational exchanges in Mexico during the Sixties⁴¹², we know that Washington – in contrast with the interests of the Alliance – preferred

⁴⁰⁷ Inaugural Address, Kennedy Draft, 01/17/1961; Papers of John F. Kennedy: President's Office Files, 01/20/1961-11/22/1963; John F. Kennedy Library; National Archives and Records Administration.

⁴⁰⁸ Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. President's Office Files. Speech Files. Address on the first anniversary of the Alliance for Progress, 13 March 1962, John F. Kennedy Library, digitalized files (accessed: 10/02/2023)

⁴⁰⁹ The tool of education in US foreign policy towards Mexico was first introduced in 1924, by former US Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who argued that young Mexican should be educated to the American way of life and taught to respect the US leadership. In doing so, the US would exert control without the use of force. The same philosophy was then extended to the whole region.

⁴¹⁰ On the Lumumba University, see: Constantin Katsakioris, *The Lumumba University in Moscow: higher education for a Soviet–Third World alliance, 1960–91*. *Journal of Global History* (2019), 14: 2, 281–300

⁴¹¹ Daniel C. Levy, *To Export Progress: The Golden Age of University Assistance in the Americas*, vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁴¹² At the time this thesis is written, no considerable and comprehensive investigations have been carried out regarding the role of private philanthropic foundations in the Sixties, nor regarding international educational exchanges between Mexico and the United States. For a study on the

these projects to be sponsored entirely by private funds rather than through the Alliance for Progress. There are diverse plausible reasons for this. For examples, one could be represented by major US economic interests in cultivating bilateral agreements and grow American businesses in Mexico, rather than through the inter-American system of aid. Another reason might be the suspiciousness of Mexican officials toward the United States' aid and Lopez Mateos preference to dissociate from the United States on economic issues at inter-American level. As noted by Roger Hilsman in a memorandum to Edwin M. Martin, dated July 13, 1962, discussing the role of Mexico in the AFP: "The country's nationalistic views regarding education will probably limit its interest in foreign assistance in this field"⁴¹³; in addition, Mexico "do not wish to see a build-up of new privileged sectors of the population although they would probably permit limited assistance to the masses if it reduced politically dangerous unrest."⁴¹⁴ A mix of the two reasons presented here seems most likely to have determined the course of events. The fact that the greatness of academic exchanges under the Alliance For Progress in the Sixties be unknown to us, does not mean that Mexico did not benefit from the programs. In 1965, a *New York Times* correspondent reported the Mexico had succeeded in an "enormous educational growth" whose cost was bared entirely by the Mexican state, with three exceptions. "The exceptions were: "a 2 million loan for a graduate school and for research equipment at the Chapingo School of Agriculture; a so-called 'third-nation' program, through which graduate students from all over Latin America are brought to Mexico for a year's training; exchange professorships between Mexica and North American universities, financed under the Alliance for Progress."⁴¹⁵ The article also contented that an expansion of industrial training was under way, guided by the National University of Mexico and the National Polytechnic Institute. For such a goal to be achieved:

The Alliance for Progress program operates indirectly through both of these institutions, offering exchange professorships and certain parts of its third-nation educational program. This latter has become highly successful.⁴¹⁶

relationship between donors and recipients, see: Daniel C. Levy, *To Export Progress: The Golden Age of University Assistance in the Americas*, vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁴¹³ Memorandum from Roger Hilsman to Edwin M. Martin, 13 June 1962, Office of the Historian. (accessed: 04/02/2023) <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d192>

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Paul P. Kennedy, Mexico Exceeding Development Goals. *New York Times*, 13 January 1965.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

And Mexico stood out as the best country where to implement such programs.⁴¹⁷ This made the program to be featured often in the *Times*. And Mexico was once told to be the “showcase of the Alliance for Progress in Latin America.”⁴¹⁸

With Johnson in the White House, exchanges and trainings intensified in numbers and scope, while undergoing a change in trajectory. A studied called *American Education Abroad* authored by Kenneth W. Thompson in 1966 unveiled changing patterns in international education in the 1960s in the wake of Johnson’s new foreign policy and proposal for the International Education Program in 1966. A major change was in scope: educating individuals had proved not enough to the extent that many students once returning to their home countries found no outlet for their talents. Thus, the emphasis shifted from foreign students coming to the United States to the work of American professors who take up residence in foreign institutions around the world. Another change was a shift in emphasis from undergraduate to graduate education in the United States, which resulted from the gradual emergence of stronger local institutions.⁴¹⁹ She also noted that the number of students from abroad had enrolled in American colleges and universities in 1965-1966 floated around 90,000. “The largest flow of students came from Mexico, Cuba, Japan, China, the Philippines and other LA countries.”⁴²⁰

American specialists and students went to foreign settings to “prepare leaders for national responsibilities. They exchange the role of American critics standing in judgment [...] for that of participants in social and educational invention seeking to blend and adapt separate but compatible traditions of education.”⁴²¹ According to her, the most successful programs were those that, at the end of the training, had found space to build national institutions.⁴²² A distinct major change occurring by the second half of the Sixties – and which has already been highlighted by Paul Kennedy’s abovementioned article – was the expansion of programs to the field of social sciences. This was, for instance, the case of the Ford Foundation, which in 1965 decided to put

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Kenneth W. Thompson, “Education and the Developing Areas” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 366, American Civilization: Its Influence on Our Foreign Policy (1966): 17.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 20.

⁴²² This was the case of the Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored program for agriculture in Mexico. (Kenneth W. Thompson, 1966)

an end to its well-known Mexican Agricultural Program and redirect its capital towards the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Advanced Studies, aiming at assisting its “graduate management-education program [that] emphasizes modern techniques of decision-making.”⁴²³ Contingently, another change occurring throughout the Sixties was the gradual creation of a new generation of academics with a taste for the Latin American studies. In fact, the Cuban Revolution debunked the US knowledge of their southern neighbors and brought the need of allocating financial resources for regional studies.⁴²⁴ Contrary to Washington’s ideological expectations, as Aguayo noted, those who came from the United States to Mexico to study and transform the region met with Latin America’s intellectual sparkle for which they felt a genuine interest, and “felt impelled to recognize and respond to Latin American viewpoints.”⁴²⁵ As a result, Mexican and Americans academics created transborder networks of ideas that recognized the Latin American thought as valuable for probably the first time in the history of Mexican-American relations.⁴²⁶

⁴²³ Ford Foundation, *The Ford Foundation Annual Report 1965* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1965)

⁴²⁴ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 247.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico* 248.

Conclusion

December 12, 2022 marked the 200th anniversary of diplomatic friendship between Mexico and the United States. Reflecting on how the governments and people of Mexico and the United States perceive each other, there seems to be old answers to old problems. Years ago, Enrique Krauze rhetorically asked: “Are we condemned to be victims of our prejudices, stereotypes, and ghosts?”⁴²⁷ Prejudices from both sides are deeply rooted in the colonial era and embedded in the identity of both countries. The Mexican-American war has scarred the collective memory of Mexico, while giving birth to the divine assignment of the United States. Two centuries are too much to live, but are they enough to put the bad blood behind? “Mexico has to overcome its most ancient and maligned illness, which is resentment,” according to Krauze. “The United States also has to overcome its most problematic trait-ignorance of the southern neighbor that all too frequently leads to arrogance, to a sense of superiority that really harms the relationship.”⁴²⁸ None of the two have been achieved yet, nor had they in the Sixties. The image resulting from the analysis was one in transition, but three features remained fixed in order to respect the utmost tacit principle governing Mexico-US bilateral relations – mutual respect. The first evergreen in the US representation of Mexico was the myth of democracy. Ever since its origins, the United States have championed itself as a firm exporter of democracy. In its rhetoric, democracy was the one and only right form of state and Washington has hardly refrained to condemn those who diverged. Yet, in the case of Mexico, the United States justified the Mexican authoritarianism and closed nationalism. Thanks to a paucity of information, for over twenty years the United States used a set of tactics to portray the Mexican regime as one that was almost a democracy. The result was the creation of the myth of democracy, an elusive portray that carried the weight of false hopes and deafening silence. In the Sixties, part of the US elite began to question the truthfulness of this image by openly exposing the internal weaknesses and darkest side of the Mexican political system. Nonetheless, these voices remained a timid background with respect to the predominant perception and image. Washington continued supporting a clean public image of the Mexican regime as the carrier of stability and wealth, even in the face of the most violent clashes of the late Sixties. Thus, the Sixties set the pattern of overriding the use of force of the Mexican government, revealing

⁴²⁷ Mexico Institute, “Mexico and the United States: How We Perceive Each Other” *Wilson Center*. (2004), online, Internet, 12 Feb. 2023. , Available: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/mexico-and-the-united-states-how-we-perceive-each-other>.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

that the US elite, as a whole, completely ignored signs of serious social discontent in Mexico and the PRI government's brutal repression of dissidents. Thanks to the second evergreen – the threat of Communism – the US elite continued supporting the ruling party, but they also began to suggest gradual and peaceful reforms.⁴²⁹ It is no surprise, indeed, owing that Washington has always acted exclusive in its own best interests. Defending the Mexican regime, whatever its nature, served the United States foreign policy's goals and preserved the taste of American businessmen and tourists toward the land down Rio Grande. To mitigate divergencies and pursue its interests, in the Sixties Washington lobbied the friendliness of the Mexico-US relations which helped spread a positive perception of the American foreign policy toward Mexico in a time of growing domestic skepticism in the US foreign policy. Diplomatic friendship was the third evergreen of the representation of Mexico in the US media coverage. This was the reflection of either a real perception of Washington that relations were good, and of a US necessity to not exposing problems. As a matter of fact, when the US establishment had the perception of an “indifferent” Mexico abandoning the United States, the media coverage remained positive in maintaining that the countries were two very good friends. Nonetheless, both the myth of democracy and the notion of friendship would gradually fade by the Seventies.

Perhaps the most important shift in the perceptions and representation was that of Mexico's development status. The Mexican economic miracle impressed the US elite and put the country in the position of being a model for the other Latin American nations. In 1966, Mexico received the upgrade from “underdeveloped” to “developing” nation, thanks to the relative impressive advancements it had achieved. Nonetheless, the echo of the Cuban Revolution and Washington's liberal turn led to question the reality and the adaptability US model of development for Latin America. By the early Sixties, the US elite found itself in a new spirit, willing to recognize and solve the problems linked to the economic developmental model of the countries in Latin America. Within the US establishment there were different ideas circulating, showing how slow and intricate is the process of ideological deconstruction. In the Sixties, the revisionist thesis began to circulate more, further questioning the validity of the US proposals for the region. As a result, the *Times* portrayed the duality of Mexico, problematizing the impacts of industrialization and those of a model that was fading. Attention was given to the social condition of three main categories – the urban workers, the peasants in the rural areas, and the students – mirroring the goals of Kennedy's foreign policy. The

⁴²⁹ Aguayo, *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*.

general picture in the Sixties was that of a Mexico profoundly shaped by unequal distribution of growth, social injustice deriving from it, and structural problems within and between the urban and rural Mexico(s). The face of Mexico most covered and emphasized by the *Times* seems to have been the rural, where the recurrent patterns of the narrative were the condition of poverty, the low levels of school education, and the need for (American) private investments in the agribusiness to help the population elevate from misery. Yet, a more traditional image of Mexico continued to be featured in forms of what I have defined ‘touristic material’, fulfilling the basic aim of promoting American vacations and travels south of the border to spur the economy and incentives the establishment of new investments. In contrast with the new pragmatic – often revisionist – reading of the reality, this kind of articles resembled an image of the *exotic*, full of destructive stereotypes that still permeated the US political elite. The fact that critical opinions emerged among the government officials demonstrates how potent the revision of old assumptions was, and how important was the decade in terms of redefining the ways the United States addressed Mexico.

The belief that the United States must train the minds and souls of Latin American people was pervasive within the US elite. This idea was formulated crystal clear by the foreign policy’s discourse of the US government, which initiated an intense program of academic exchanges under the Alliance for Progress that intensified with the reforms proposed by Johnson. The same shared idea surreptitiously transpired in the *Times* media coverage, perhaps for a mere matter of content prioritization, given the little interest that Mexico publicly showed in the Alliance. Nonetheless, the *Times* sometimes gave space to the featuring of programs exchanges, emphasizing their results. Academic exchanges in the Sixties, however, appear to be not only an important goal of US foreign policy but also a driver of change in the perceptions the Mexican and American societies have of each other. As noted by Aguayo, the revisionism of the Sixties mixed to an increase in academic exchanges brought the American academics in touch with Mexican theories and point of views that led to reconsider the old assumptions typical of their inner system and to open up to new ideas from the south.⁴³⁰

In conclusion, the study of the image of Mexico reveals important patterns of and for the United States foreign policy. Although Mexico received scarce attention from the United States elite in the Sixties, important changes were occurring in perceptions and ideas that laid the basis for a change in how both countries and their people would perceive each other, which would be evident in the future. The globalization of the Sixties and the United States renovated

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 248.

interest in the region helped this social change. Nonetheless, the public image that was returning back to the American public from the media coverage of the *Times*, was that of a southern neighbor whose progress and exotic beauty were inherently not enough to achieve the standards of the United States. A famous historian once said: “the development of the United States depended on the underdevelopment of Mexico.” This thesis likely confirmed as much.

Bibliography

Archives (digital)

Eisenhower Presidential Library

Ford Foundation

John F. Kennedy Library

The Office of the Historian of the United States Department of State

Times Machine - The New York Times

Books and journal articles

Aguayo, Sergio. *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa*. Proceso, 2015.

——— *Los archivos de la violencia*. Grijalbo: Reforma, 1998.

——— *Myths and [mis] perceptions: changing U.S. elite visions of Mexico*. Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, 1998.

Bartra, Roger. "Changes in Political Culture: The Crisis of Nationalism." In *Mexico's Alternative Political Futures*, edited by Wayne A. Cornelius, Judith Gentleman, and Peter H. Smith. 30. La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1989.

Brandenburg, Frank. *The Making of Modern Mexico. Englewood Cliffs*. Prentice-Hall, 1964.
in *The Making of Modern Mexico*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

Broncano Rodríguez, Manuel. "A literary history of mental captivity in the United States. Blood Meridian, Wise Blood, and Contemporary Political Discourse", *Review of International American Studies*, vol.13, 1, 2020, 85-86.

Carmona Dávila, Doralicia. "Se constituye el Movimiento de Liberación Nacional que reúne a casi toda la izquierda mexicana y agrupa a reconocidos luchadores sociales." *Memoria política de México*, n.d. Available: <https://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Efemerides/8/04081961.html>.

Chassen-Lopez, Francie R. *From Liberal To Revolutionary Oaxaca: The View From The South, Mexico, 1867-1911*. Pennsylvania State Univ Pr, 2005.

Christiansen Samantha and Scarlett Zachary A. *The Third World in the global 1960s*. New

- York: Berghahn Books, 2013.
- Collado Herrera, María del Carmen. “La guerra fría, el movimiento estudiantil de 1968 y el gobierno de Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. La mirada de las agencias de seguridad de Estados Unidos.” *Secuencia. Revista de historia y ciencias sociales* 98 (2017): 158–203.
- Divine, Robert A. ed. *The Johnson Years: Foreign Policy, the Great Society, and the White House*. vol. 1. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1987.
- Domínguez, Jorge I. *The Future of Inter-American Relations*, 1999.
- *The United States and Latin America: the new agenda*. Ed. Victor Bulmer-Thomas and James Dunkerley. Great Britain: London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1999.
- *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*. Second edition kindle. Routledge, 2009.
- Dopp, Lloyd H. “A Summary of the Relations of the United States and Mexico Since 1919.” *World Affairs* 98.3 (1935): 86–191.
- ECLAC. “Change and Crisis: Latin America and the Caribbean.” In *Crisis and Development: The Present Situation and Future Prospects of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Vol. 1. Santiago: United Nations, 1985.
- Field Jr., Thomas C., Krepp, Stella, Pettinà, Vanni eds. *Latin America and the Global Cold War*, University of North Carolina Press, 2020.
- Furtado, Celso. *Teoría y política del desarrollo económico*. Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1968.
- García, Emilio Mario. “THE MEXICO CITY MIDDLE CLASS, 1940-1970: BETWEEN TRADITION, THE STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES.” Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, 2011.
- Garner, Paul. *Porfirio Diaz*. Routledge, 2014.
- Garrido, Luis Javier. *El partido de la Revolución institucionalizada*. Siglo XX editores. Mexico, 1982.
- Gilbert M., Joseph and Buchenau, Jürgen. *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution: Social Upheaval and the Challenge of Rule since the Late Nineteenth Century*. Duke University Press, 2013.
- Gilbert M., Joseph, and Spenser, Daniela eds. *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*. Duke University Press, 2008. Online. Internet. 15 Feb. 2023. . Available: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822390664>.
- Gillingham Paul, and Smith Benjamin T. *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968*. Duke University Press Books, 2014.

- Gonzales, Manuel G. *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*. Indiana University Press, 2019.
- Greenberg, Amy S. *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*. Knopf, 2012.
- Guardino, Peter. *La marcha fúnebre. Una historia de la guerra entre México y los Estados Unidos*. (Polifemo, 2018)
- Hall, Linda Biesele. *Alvaro Obregon: Power and Revolution in Mexico, 1911-1920*. Texas A & M Univ Pr, 1981.
- Hancock, Ralph. *Mexico*. New York: Macmillan, 1963.
- Hart, John Mason. *Empire and Revolution The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*. University of California Press, 2006.
- Helleiner, Eric. *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.
- Heller, Claude. “México en la OEA; tesis y posiciones tradicionales,” *Revista mexicana de política exterior*, no. 54 (June 1998), 9–18.
- Henderson, Timothy J., *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and Its War with the United States*. Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Hernández, Kelly. *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands*. W.W. Norton, 2022.
- Horcasitas Pozas, Ricardo. “Mexico in the 1960s.” *Voices of Mexico* 106 (2018).
- Hoyos Martínez, Francisco. *Breve Historia de la revolución mexicana*. Ediciones Nowtilus, 2015.
- John, Womack. *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*. Vintage, 2011.
- Jones, Halbert. *The War Has Brought Peace to Mexico: World War II and the Consolidation of the Post-Revolutionary State*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2014.
- Kehoe Timothy J. and Meza Felipe. “Crecimiento rápido seguido de estancamiento: México (1950-2010).” *El Trimestre Económico* 80.318 (2) (2013): 237–280.
- Keller, Renata. “A FOREIGN POLICY FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION: Mexico’s Lukewarm Defense of Castro, 1959—1969.” *Latin American Research Review* 47, no. 2 (2012): 100–119. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23321734>.
- Kelly, William C. “Gustavo Díaz Ordaz’s Foreign Policy: A Cold War Study. (.” *The Latin Americanist* 60.3 (2016): 347–369.
- Knight, Alan. “The Myth of the Mexican Revolution.” *Past & Present* 209 (2010): 223–273.

- Krauze, Enrique. *Mexico: Biografía del poder*. Mexico: TUSQUETS EDITORES, 2014.
- Levy, Daniel C. *To Export Progress: The Golden Age of University Assistance in the Americas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Loeza Soledad. *Clases medias y política en México: la querrela escolar, 1959-1963*. El Colegio de México, 1988.
- . “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la Superpotencia, 1944-1968.” *Nueva Historia General de México* (2010): 387–412.
- Luciani, Laura. “Movimientos estudiantiles latinoamericanos en los años sesenta.” *Historia y memoria* (2019): 77–111.
- Mary Kay Vaughan, “Mexico, 1940-1968 and Beyond: Perfect Dictatorship? Dictablanda? or PRI State Hegemony?” Book Review Essay. 53.1, *Latin American Research Review* (2018): 170.
- Mayer, Lorenzo, and Josefina Zoraida Vázquez. *México frente a Estados Unidos: un ensayo histórico, 1776-1980*. El Colegio de México, 1982.
- Meyer, Lorenzo. 1985. *The Mexican Revolution and the Anglo-American Powers: The End of Confrontation and the Beginning of Negotiation*. *Passi di: Sergio Aguayo*. “Myths and [Mis] Perceptions”. *Apple Books*. Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego: La Jolla, 1985.
- . “A Conversation with Lorenzo Meyer about Mexico’s Political Transition: From Authoritarianism to What?” Interview by David Thelene, Apr. 1998. Available: <http://archive.oah.org/special-issues/mexico/lmeyer.html>.
- . *México para los mexicanos. La Revolución y sus adversarios*. El Colegio de México, 2019.
- Miller, Thomas Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951*. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Mitchell, Kenneth Edward. *Revival: State-Society Relations in Mexico (2001): Clientelism, Neoliberal State Reform, and the Case of Conasupo*. Routledge Revivals, 2001.
- Morley, Jefferson. *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA*. University Press of Kansas, 2008.
- McPherson, Alan. “Thomas C. Mann: President Johnson, the Cold War, and the Restructuring of Latin American Foreign Policy”, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 21 (3), (2019), 262–264.
- Niblo, Stephen R. *War, Diplomacy, and Development: The United States and Mexico, 1938-1954*. Wilmington, DE, 1995.

- Nordin, Astrid H. M., Graham, M. Smith, “Reintroducing friendship to international relations: relational ontologies from China to the West”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 18.3. September 2018, 369–396.
- O’ Sullivan, John. “Annexation.” *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17 (1845): 5–6, 9–10.
- O’Malley, Ilene V. *The Myth of Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940*. Praeger, 1986.
- Ojeda Mario. *Alcances y límites de la política exterior de México*. México D.F. El Colegio de México, 1976.
- Ortiz Mena Antonio. *El desarrollo estabilizador: reflexiones sobre una época*. Ciudad de México: El Colegio de México, 1998.
- Paz, Maria Emilia . *Strategy, Security, and Spies: Mexico and the U.S. as Allies in World War II*. University Park, PA, 1997.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. Grove Pr, 1994.
- Pensado, Jaime. “The (forgotten) Sixties in Mexico.” *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 1.1 (2008).
- . “‘To Assault with the Truth’: The Revitalization of Conservative Militancy in Mexico During the Global Sixties.” *The Americas* 70.3 (2014).
- Pensado Jaime M., Ochoa Enrique C. (eds.). *México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2018. Available: doi: 10.22201/iih.24485004e.2018.56.68743.
- Pettinà, Vanni. “¡Bienvenido Mr. Mikoyan!: tacos y tractores a la sombra del acercamiento soviético-mexicano, 1958-1964”, *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 66. 2, 262. Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, octubre-diciembre 2016.
- . “El largo otoño de la irrelevancia internacional latinoamericana.” *On Cuba News*, 15 Mar. 2021. Available: <https://oncubanews.com/opinion/el-largo-otono-de-la-irrelevancia-internacional-latinoamericana/>.
- . “From Bilateralism to Globalism: Mexico’s Early Cold War Foreign Policy, 1947-1964.” *Monde(s)* 18.2 (2020): 73–94.
- . *Historia mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina*. Colegio de México, 2018.
- Pozas Horcasitas Ricardo. “Los años sesenta en México: la gestación del movimiento social de 1968.” *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 234 (2018): 111–132.
- Ramírez Hernández, Miguel Ángel. “La ideología y la institucionalización de la identidad

- política. El caso del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (1929-2017).” El Colegio de San Luis Potosí A.C., Aug. 2018.
- Renata Keller. *Mexico’s Cold War Cuba, the United States, and the Legacy of the Mexican Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Reston, James. “Mexico City: Love Is the Problem.” *New York Times*, 10 Dec. 1962: 8.
- Rodríguez, Israel. “Jaime M. Pensado y Enrique C. Ochoa (eds.), México beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies, Tucson, The University of Arizona Press, 2018.” *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* 56 (2018): 158–168.
- Rodríguez Kuri, Ariel. *Museo del universo. Los juegos olímpicos y el movimiento estudiantil de 1968*. El Colegio de Mexico, 2019.
- Roshchin, Evgeny. *Frindship among nations: History of a concept*. Manchester University Press, 2017.
- Rostow, W. W. "The Take-Off into Self-Sustained Growth." *The Economic Journal*, 66(261), 1956, 25-48.
- Santa Cruz, Arturo. “La evolucion de la agenda de seguridad Mexico-Estados Unidos.” *Estudios Internacionales*, 2014: 83–109.
- Sargent, Daniel J. *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*. Oxford Academic, 2014.
- Schayegh, C. *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy*. New Approaches to International History. Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.
- Schuler, Friedrich E.. *Mexico Between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lázaro Cárdenas, 1934–1940*. Albuquerque, 1998.
- Sloan, Julia. “Carnivalizing the Cold War: Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, and the Events of 1968.” *European journal of American studies*, 2009.
- Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Constitutional Theory*. London: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Schayegh, C.. *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.
- Smith Ross, Nicholas, and Tracey Fallon. ““The importance of bona fide friendships to international politics: China’s quest for friendships that matter’.,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (2022).
- Taibo II, Paco Ignacio. '68: *El otoño mexicano de la masacre de Tlatelolco*. Siete Cuentos, 29 October 2019.

- Thompson, Kenneth W. "Education and the Developing Areas." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 366. American Civilization: Its Influence on Our Foreign Policy (1966): 17–32.
- Thorton, Christie. *Revolution in Development*. California: University of California Press, 2021.
- Trevizo, Dolores. *Rural Protest and the Making of Democracy in Mexico, 1968–2000*. Penn State University Press, 2011.
- Vaughan, Mary Kay. "Mexico, 1940-1968 and Beyond: Perfect Dictatorship? Dictablanda? or PRI State Hegemony?" *Book Review Essay* 53.1. *Latin American Research Review* (2018): 167–176.
- Velden, Sjaak et al., eds. *Strikes around the world, 1968-2005: Case-studies of 15 countries*. Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publisher, 2007.
- Villafuerte Valdés, Luis Fernando. "México: del autoritarinismo a la democracia defectuosa" 39.1 *Revista UIS Humanidades* (2011): 11–28.
- Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics. Cambridge Studies in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 1999.
- Zolov, Eric. *Refried Elvis. The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*. University of California Press, 1999.
- . *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

Newspapers

El Pais

The New York Times

Websites and Multimedia

Calhoun, John C. "A Southern Senator Opposes the "All-Mexico" Plan," SHEC: Resources for Teachers. Accessed: 9/02/2023. <https://shcp.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1273>

Doyle, Kate and Morley, Jefferson. LITEMPO: The CIA's Eyes on Tlatelolco CIA Spy Operations in Mexico, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 204

(October 18, 2006). Accessed: 03/02/2023.

<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB204/>

History Matters. *The United States and the Mexican Revolution: "A Danger for All Latin American Countries," Letters from Venustiano Carranza*. Accessed: 12/12/2022.

<https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4940>

Mexico Institute. "Mexico and the United States: How We Perceive Each Other." *Wilson Center* (2004). Online. Internet. 12 Feb. 2023. . Available:

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/mexico-and-the-united-states-how-we-perceive-each-other>.

The American Presidency Project. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley. *Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks in Mexico City at the Dedication of the Abraham Lincoln Statue*. The American Presidency Project. Accessed: 18/01/2023.

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/239372>

United States State Department, Office of the Historian, "Mexico",

<https://history.state.gov/countries/mexico> . Accessed: 21/01/2023