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Author(s): John T. Passe-Smith

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**ECONOMIC PENETRATION AND MEXICAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: COMPARING  
FRONTIER AND INTERIOR ATTITUDES\***

**John T Passé-Smith**

*University of Central Arkansas*

**Introduction**

In the 1980s after the collapse of the peso sent US dollars fleeing to more stable markets, the Mexican government initiated a number of policies intended to liberalize their economy and entice more investment from the United States. Jorge Castañeda (1993) argued that the failure of these policies to draw sufficient foreign investment pushed the Mexican government into negotiating and signing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The treaty, Castañeda reasoned, would soothe investors' concerns about the government's commitment to the new policy by making it more difficult for Mexican policymakers to change their minds and return to a more traditional and nationalistic, anti-American policy. While official Mexican policy toward the United States can hardly be said to be truly anti-American, the rhetoric coming out of Mexico City can at times be positively acrimonious. Indeed, Mexican leaders since the revolution have eschewed blatantly close ties with the United States out of fear of domination, and anti-Americanism long has been an important ingredient in the formation and nurturing of Mexican national identity (Loaeza 1994, 145).

Consequently many observers were surprised that the Salinas administration agreed to the trade deal, but perhaps even more surprising was the fact that a well-organized, nationalist opposition to the new path has yet to take shape (Loaeza 1994, 146). Last year's party assembly notwithstanding (see Graff 1996), full-scale opposition to the new relations with the United States remains poorly organized, even as the increased American presence has given rise to a growing concern that Mexico's national identity could be swallowed whole by an American-style consumer culture.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of US economic and cultural penetration on Mexican national identity and to compare border nationalism with that of the interior of Mexico. To accomplish this, the debate between those who hold that economic integration homogenizes cultures and those who believe that it has strengthened nationalism will be examined in the following section. Then the results from a survey conducted in Jalisco will be compared with the conclusions of studies on border nationalism.

**What has been said?**

The recent literature on US-Mexican relations has been dominated by discussions of the passage and implementation of NAFTA. Most of the studies conducted, however, have focused upon such issues as job creation, job flight, relative labor costs, economists' fears about the potential costs of environmental protection, etc. (see, for instance, Anderson 1993; Castañeda 1993; Globerman and Walker 1993; Grinspun and Cameron 1993; Hufbauer and Schott 1993; Lustig et al. 1992; Morici 1991). While it is very important to understand the economic dimension, whether NAFTA remains a viable agreement also depends on whether or not Mexicans perceive it to be a threat to their national identity.

In examining whether the extension of trade relations between the US and Mexico could be perceived as a threat to Mexican national identity, it is important to understand how cultural characteristics are transmitted. If characteristics such as national identity arise only internally, there is little need to examine external stimuli. In analyzing the process of development, modernization theorists suggested that cultural changes occurring during the process are spurred by domestic as well as foreign influences. These theorists have long argued that the process of modernization produces what Claude Welch, Jr. called a "global culture" (1971, 4). Samuel Huntington stated that modernization theorists believed that development brings about changes in lifestyle and worldviews—due, in large part, to industrialization, urbanization and "the diffusion of [newly gained] knowledge throughout society through increased literacy, mass communications, and education" (1968, 33). Those cultural traits associated with national identity could be expected to weaken as individuals became more familiar with modern cultures and adopted similar, modern values. Among the ways that individuals become familiar with the values and lifestyles outside of their own country is through direct contact by traveling, and indirectly through television and radio and, to a lesser extent, the print media.

Those associated with the World Values Project offer a second explanation for relatively rapid value transformation. To be more specific they are looking for the adoption of what they call postmaterialist values. Postmaterialism is distinct from modernization in that the proposed cultural changes occur as a result of a spread of higher living standards, not, as modernizationists believed, because the new economy required a new series of values, habits, and spatial living arrangements. According to Inglehart, generations raised in Western Europe prior to World War II experienced economic turmoil such that their material well-being was not ensured, thus producing a materialistic political culture—a culture in which people are concerned with issues of economic and physical security (Inglehart and Abramson 1994, 336). Those born after the war did so during an era of economic wealth and luxury that acted as a material and psychological cushion between the individual and a harsh environment. The resulting culture places "greater emphasis on freedom, self-expression, and the quality of life, or postmaterialist values" (Inglehart and Abramson 1994, 336; Inglehart 1988, 1212; Inglehart 1979, 307-309).

In the early 1980s the World Values Project began looking for the global spread of postmaterialist values (Inglehart and Abramson 1994). Their series of surveys included Canada, Mexico, and the United States. In examining the values of the NAFTA countries, Neil Nevitte, Miguel Basañez, and Ronald Inglehart state that in their view, the prospects for the trade agreement hinge not only on economic factors but cultural factors as well (1991, 245). The surveys conducted in 1980 (1981 for Mexico) and 1990 set forth three goals: first, to determine whether the basic values of the three countries were similar; second, to ascertain whether or not any assumed differences that existed were increasing in number or intensity; third, to determine if the value clusters that were revealed could be called postmaterialist.

Nevitte *et al.* conclude that postmaterialist values are present in all three NAFTA countries. The World Values Project is particularly interesting because the proponents of postmaterialism claim that as people adopt these less materialistic values they become less interested in appeals to national identity.

Post-materialists are less deferential to authority, more secular, and they are less likely to express confidence in government and nongovernmental institu-

tions. Post-materialists are less likely to score high on national pride; they are more cosmopolitan... Cross-national differences are eroding in what economists argue is the most significant attitudinal domain for a workable non-conflictual free trade arrangement (1991, 252, 259).

This not only suggests that the political culture of North America is growing more homogenous, but that as it does so national identity has and will continue to weaken.

Rendering this issue even more complex, work by scholars such as Edward J. Williams (1990) suggests that Mexican national identity, like all nationalisms, is not evenly spread across the country, nor is it likely to be felt with the same intensity from one person to the next. That is not to say that nationalism would spread randomly. In his 1990 study of regionalism in Mexico, Williams opines that those living in Mexico's central highland valley find the *Norteños'* commitment to the Mexican nation suspect. The northerners are often perceived as having been overrun and corrupted by the United States (Williams 1990, 305-306). The *Norteños'* admiration of the United States crystallizes in their desire for Mexico to be more like the United States and for their country to forge closer ties with their neighbors to the north (Williams 1990, 310, 318).

Ana María Alonso (1988, 204) extends Williams's sentiment that border nationalism differs from that of the interior by stating that Mexicans who live on the frontier have a dual nationalism. She states that Northerners describe their region as 'another country' while at the same time declaring themselves to be Mexicans (Alonso 1988, 204). Border attributes that blend Mexican and American cultural characteristics fill out the other part of the dual nationalism. Alonso explains that, "The perpetual 'pilgrimages' from one side to the other have led to the 'imagining' of this region as a distinct sociocultural zone which has more in common with the United States than with the rest of Mexico.... 'things American' have a charisma that 'things Mexican' lack" (Alonso 1988, 206). Alonso's description of border nationalism grows darker as she adds racist elements to the mix. According to Alonso, "an invented tradition of origins affirmed (and continues to stress) the 'whiteness' of the *norteños* in contradistinction to the 'brownness' of the *chilangos*" (1988, 205).

In an impressive study of border nationalism, Jorge Bustamante (1995) reacts defensively to this claim that border dwellers are less Mexican or less nationalistic than those in the interior. Bustamante states that "if one agrees that stereotypes are basically expressions of ignorance... the people on the Mexican side of the border have to deal with stereotypes originating both from the South and from the North" (Bustamante 1995, 183).

In fact, in a series of surveys Bustamante found no evidence of weakened nationalism among border dwellers. To the contrary, his data seem to show that the closer his subjects were to the US border the *more nationalistic* they were (1995, 186-187). He suggested that, "for border peoples, the notion of otherness is particularly important to one's own ethnic identity. The paradox is that otherness seems to help *fronterizos* reaffirm their ethnic identity as Mexicans, by helping them know what they are not" (Bustamante 1995, 187). In terms of this study, those Mexicans who have been exposed more to American culture are not "converted" into Americans; rather their distinctiveness or Mexican-ness is reinforced and heightened by seeing what is different. Those living along the border did, according to Bustamante, adopt some Spanglish terms and patterns of life which, in and of themselves, could be interpreted as weakening of national identity. However, they were strongly nationalistic in their self-identification.

Alan Knight's (1994) research on nationalism, and more specifically on Mexican national identity, raises some questions about the conclusions drawn by both the modernization/WVP and the debate over border nationalism. Rather than thinking of nationalism as a monolithic entity as do both of the previous perspectives (modernization/WVP and the border debate), Knight calls for the disaggregating of nationalism into 5 sub-types: political, cultural, economic, xenophobic, and nation-building (1994, 138-139). Political nationalism refers to the degree to which a people or "imagined community" (in Benedict Anderson's terms, 1989) within the territorial confines of a state embrace the state as the representative of their community (Knight 1995, 138; Anderson 1983). Cultural nationalism is the recognition of a distinct cultural tradition. Economic nationalism is the desire for a people to control and benefit from the economic resources within their territory. Xenophobic nationalism is a dislike of people and things foreign. One feature that distinguishes economic nationalism from xenophobic nationalism is that xenophobia is driven by fear and hatred, whereas economic nationalism is a desire to own "what is ours" (Knight 1995, 139). The final subtype is nation-building. Nation-building is a project of the elite to gain the loyalty of the people living within the confines of the state.

The importance of Knight's work is that it suggests that the WVP's assumption of a direct relationship between rising postmaterialism and declining nationalism may be too simple. If Knight is correct, it may be that the decline in one of the subtypes of nationalism could be counterbalanced by a rise in one of the other types. It could also mean that while border nationalism may weaken in one subtype it may strengthen in another. In fact, if there are different sources of nationalism then it may be that the rise or decline in the various subtypes of nationalism are relatively unrelated.<sup>1</sup>

Mitchell Seligson's (1993) work on the attitudes of Central Americans on economic and political integration lend some credence to disaggregating nationalism. Seligson found that while Central Americans liked the idea of economic integration, they—and particularly those on the ideological right—did not desire political integration (1993, 13). While Seligson's work was not a test of the Knight definition, it did suggest that economic and political nationalism need to be examined separately.

Several related clusters of research questions arise from the above review of the discussion and debate over nationalism. First, both proponents of modernization and postmaterialism suggest that a growing 'global culture' is eroding traditional feelings of national identity; however, they disagree as to the agent of change. Modernizationists view the processes of industrialization and urbanization in conjunction with the mass media, as the agents of change, while postmaterialists believe that economic well-being alleviates survival fears and allows for nonmaterial concerns to arise. These nonmaterial concerns are similar across previously different cultures and eventually constitute the new postmaterialist culture. The following section will include a discussion of the agents of change and the potential weakening of Mexican nationalism. The second set of questions revolve around the uniqueness of the border. Is border nationalism distinct from the interior? The final series of questions arise from the assertion by Knight that there are multiple facets to nationalism. The findings of a survey of 525 Mexicans conducted in the cities of Guadalajara and Lagos de Moreno in the south-central Mexican state of Jalisco are compared with other studies of Mexican nationalism to address these questions.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Agents of Change and National Identity**

This section exams the validity of claims about how cultural changes have arisen in Mexico as well as with the strength of Mexican national identity. Proponents of modernization argue that exposure to modern cultures in tandem with the political, economic, and social dislocations that go with development brings new, modern values to the traditional society. Postmaterialists assert that a substantial improvement in the standard of living and a general belief that the economy will continue to sustain that standard brings a generational change in attitudes.

The postmaterialist claim that economic well-being brings change will be examined first. According to Ronald Inglehart, postmaterialism arose due to "historically unprecedented prosperity and the absence of war that has prevailed in Western countries since 1945," and, "younger birth cohorts place less emphasis on economic and physical security than do older groups, who have experienced a much greater degree of economic insecurity" (1988, 1224). This seems to be a plausible explanation for the spread of postmaterialism in Western Europe and the United States. Here one can speak of "historically unprecedented prosperity"; however, the idea seems to lose its intuitive force when it is applied to Mexico.

Nevitte, Basañez, and Inglehart state that "Mexico enjoyed substantial economic expansion during the past fifty years, growing at an impressive rate of 6.5 percent annually from 1941 to 1981..." (1991, 248). Although Mexico's forty years of growth was truly incredible, the question remains: Was it sufficient to create postmaterialist values? It must be remembered that postmaterialism is in large part a state of mind. This means that a person can adopt postmaterialist values without actually having experienced significantly improved conditions. If economic growth continues over an extended period of time and a portion of the population is seen to improve their lot in life, they become a demonstration group whose improvement promises to extend to a greater percentage of the population as economic growth proceeds. Those who witness the improvement and who begin to believe that they will soon join this group become postmaterialists as well, even though they have not yet experienced improvement.

While Nevitte, Basañez, and Inglehart (1991) accurately portray the tremendous growth in Mexico, there is significant room to doubt whether the average citizen in Mexico believed that "historically unprecedented prosperity" was heading their way in the not-too-distant future. An examination of GNP/pc data could also be misleading in that neither income nor standard of living is measured by the national production data provided in the GNP. Table 1 provides a very basic picture of life experiences in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The data come from the World Resources Data Base (1994) and *The State of the World's Children*, 1985 (UNICEF 1985). In addition to life expectancy being shorter in Mexico than in the United States and Canada, Mexico shows some disturbing figures concerning children. The data indicate that in 1980, at the very end of the period of economic growth mentioned by Nevitte, Basañez, and Inglehart (1991, 248), the number of children dying per thousand population in Mexico is more than six times that of either Canada or the United States. In addition, infants were about twice as likely to be of a low birth weight in Mexico than in the other two countries. This does not provide much support for the notion that Mexico's miracle growth provided "historically unprecedented prosperity."

**Table 1. Some Factors Related to the Standard of Living**

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Life Expectancy

Mexico	51 (1955)	69 (1990)
Canada	69 (1990)	77 (1990)
United States	69 (1955)	75 (1991)

Infant Mortality (Younger than 5 years—Deaths per 1,000)

Mexico	141 (1960)	81 (1980)
Canada	33 (1960)	13 (1980)
United States	30 (1960)	13 (1985)

Child Malnutrition

Mexico (Stunting)	22 (%—1991)
Mexico (wasting)	6 (%—1991)
Canada	—
United States	—

Infants with low birthweights

Mexico	12
Canada	6
United States	7

Safe Drinking Water

Mexico (Rural/Urban)	64 (%—1980)
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Percent of Household Income Spent on Food

Mexico	35 (1985)
Canada	11 (1985)
United States	13 (1985)

Labor Force by Economic Sector, 1991

Mexico	23 (%-Ag.)/29 (%-Industry)/48 (%-Services)
Canada	4 (%-Ag.)/24 (%-Industry)/72 (%-Services)
United States	3 (%-Ag.)/26 (%-Industry)/71 (%-Services)

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A lot has been said about the decline in real wages that occurred in Mexico during the "lost decade" of the 1980s, making it easy to forget that even during the previous four decades of miraculous economic growth, trickle down was not providing very much to the average Mexican. Citing several studies on real incomes in Mexico, Judith Hellman (1988, 288, n13) states that "...in 1958 the incomes of the richest 5 percent of all Mexicans were 22 times those of the poorest 10 percent; by 1980 the gap had more than doubled and the rich enjoyed incomes 50 times greater than those of the poorest sector of the population" (1988, 61).

As the economy expanded, however, the standard of living of poor Mexicans might still have been significantly better even as the income gap widened. However, the data in Table 1 shows that in 1985 Mexicans spent an average of slightly more than one-third of their household income on food, compared with about 12 percent in Canada and the United States. Furthermore, Hellman reports that in the early 1970s the average income of the agricultural sector—one in four workers in 1991—was \$64 per month and about one-third of these workers earned no more than \$24 per month (Hellman 1988, 105). Nora Hamilton (1982, 33) reports that in the late 1970s, the last few years of the growth period cited by Nevitte et al., the lowest 20 percent of the population received less than 4 percent of the total income. It is not at all apparent that prosperity has arrived in Mexico to such an extent that postmaterialist values would be created.

Nevitte et al. (1991, 250), however, report that in 1980 10 percent of the American population could be said to have postmaterialist values, while 9 percent of the Mexican population was postmaterialist. The data in the previous paragraphs do not support the claim that prosperity and economic security sufficient to generate the proposed cultural shifts has come to Mexico. If postmaterialism is born of hope rather than some absolute standard of living, then postmaterialist values in Mexico could result from the hope generated by the post-World War II economic boom. However, for most of the last 20 years Mexico has faced very troubling economic conditions. A survey conducted in the state of Jalisco during the summer of 1995 found that 75 percent of the respondents reported that their economic situation had worsened in the previous five years and about 40 percent of the respondents thought the next 10 years offered little hope for improvement. This does not reveal a deep-seated belief that the economy is going to lift Mexicans out of poverty.

All of the above data on the standard of living in Mexico does not prove that Mexicans have not adopted postmaterialist values; it does bring into question the proposed agent of cultural change. As discussed above, modernization theorists suggest that direct contact and the media can be an agent of cultural homogenization. Assuming that the world values project correctly identified postmaterialist values in Mexico, if economic well-being or even its promise did not transmit those values then what did? The results of the survey below suggest that the modernizationists may be correct; it may be a result of the cultural and economic penetration of Mexico by the United States. To be more specific, the increased economic penetration of Mexico by American businesses as a result of growing economic ties, and most recently by NAFTA, also brings with it more American products and advertising campaigns intent on selling the goods of America's consumer society as well as its lifestyle. These agents of modernization may bring with them a homogenization of culture which was described by Inglehart, et al. as a decline in nationalism. If this is true, it means that prosperity did not usher in changed attitudes in Mexico, but rather it was American economic and cultural hegemony.



Table 2 reports the results of questions from the Guadalajara survey concerning the respondents awareness of and receptivity to American culture. First, respondents were asked if they perceived an increase or decrease of foreign presence in the previous decade. Over 80 percent believed that there had been an increase in American influence over the prior decade. Only 3 percent said that they did not recognize an increase in influence from the United States.

Table 2.

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Mexican Exposure to American Culture

1. Has US influence in Mexico increased over the last 10 years?

	(%)
A. More influence	84
B. Less influence	3
C. About the same	12

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2. How many times in the last month have you eaten at an American fast food restaurant?

	(%)
A. None	82
B. 1-5 times	16
C. 5-10 times	1
D. 10-15 times	.2

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3. Do you follow any North American sports such as football, basketball, baseball, or hockey?

	(%)
A. Yes	46
B. No	54

The "Yes" responses were divided up as follows:

A. Football	9
B. Basketball	21
C. Baseball	15
D. Hockey	.6

4. Can you name any American television programs or movies that are being shown in Mexico? (Prompt for 3) The percentages for the "Yes" answer below is the percentage of people who listed an American program being shown in Mexico. The "No" category included everyone else (answering no, I don't know, and missing data) except those who said they don't watch television.

	(%)
A. Yes	48
B. No	47
C. I don't watch TV	35

Now I would like to know something about the type of radio station you listen to. Does the station you listen to play music in Spanish, Spanish and English, or all American music?

	(%)
A. Music in Spanish	65
B. English language music	5
C. In both Languages	30

The respondents were asked a series of questions that attempted to determine the extent of cultural and economic penetration. First, the respondents were asked if they had traveled to the United States. Direct contact with American cultural and economic values were acknowledged by 34 percent of the respondents who answered that they had been to the United States. This is particularly significant because Jalisco is hundreds of miles from the US border. Indirect contact was measured through questions concerning dining, sports, television and movies, and radio listening habits.

American fast-food restaurants have sprung up in Mexico at an amazing clip. As is the case in medium to large-sized cities throughout Mexico, Guadalajara has witnessed an explosion in the construction and operation of American owned fast-food chains like Carl's Jr., McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. It would be difficult to cross the metropolitan area without coming upon several of these multi-storied stores. When asked how often they had eaten at an American fast-food restaurant in the previous month, 16 percent of the respondents said 1 to 5 times (see Table 2). Given the number of stores around the city, perhaps the larger surprise was that 82 percent said that they had not eaten at one of these restaurants. It is not clear, however, if the respondents avoided the restaurants to preserve the uniqueness of their culture or because of the relatively high cost of eating there.

The communications revolution has obviously altered preferences in Mexico. Even the casual observer would note on a stroll through the neighborhoods around Guadalajara that basketball has become a passion for many young Mexicans. Table 2 reveals that 46 percent of the respondents said that they follow American sports. While soccer remains the sport of choice, American sports are becoming more popular. Tradi-

tionally baseball has been the most popular American sport in Mexico, but this survey showed that basketball has eclipsed baseball as the "gringo" sport of choice. Beyond sports coverage, American television programming in general has also become popular in Mexico. When asked if they could name an American television show or movie currently showing in Mexico, 48 percent of the respondents actually named an American program being shown in Mexico. It is important to note that it is quite possible that this percentage would rise dramatically if a list of programs were read for recognition, but I was particularly interested in determining whether Mexicans were aware of the American economic and cultural penetration without prompting.

The second communications-related question asked if the respondent listened to a radio station that played English-language music. English speaking disc-jockeys, American musical groups, and English-language songs are not unusual in Guadalajara, but it could be that their focus—perhaps like that of the fast-food restaurants—is the American retirement and expatriate community. As reported in Table 2, 35 percent of the respondents listen to radio stations that play a mix of Spanish and English-language music or English-language music. This shows a considerable spread of American musical influence into the heart of Mexico.

From the above responses having to do with American food, sports, movies, television, and radio, it is fair to say that Mexicans are aware of and have been consumers of American economic and cultural penetration. This offers support to the modernizationists claim that the media is an agent of change, but it is not necessarily true that this change means a weakening of national identity. The following questions asked the respondents of the survey to determine if they felt the increased American presence threatened Mexican culture.

Mexicans have many reasons not to trust the United States, including numerous real and perceived interventions in Mexican politics (Pastor and Castañeda 1989). If Mexicans are suspicious or even hostile to a growing American presence, or if they perceive that their cultural identity is being diluted by the increasing penetration of Mexico by the US, then a backlash may be simmering. Previous polls are mixed. A poll conducted in 1986 by *Excelsior* in Mexico City reported that 59 percent of the respondents called the United States an "enemy country" (Hellman 1988, 271 n27), while that very same year the *New York Times* reported that only 27 percent of Mexicans viewed the US unfavorably as opposed to 48 percent with a favorable opinion (November 17, 1986, 1A).

Anecdotal evidence adds some flesh to the surveys. In 1992 Marjorie Miller reported for the *Los Angeles Times* that Mexicans were torn between being pleased with the increasing number of consumer goods and fear and anger over the potential loss of national identity. In the article, she said, "Taxi driver Alfonso Constantino stopped at a red light and pointed to a remodeled gas station belonging to the national oil company, Pemex. The containers over new gas pumps were printed in English. 'Look at that!' Constantino barked. 'Either I learn English or I'm going to have to leave here, because the United States is buying us up'" (Miller 1992, A8). What the article did not offer was how widespread were the fears of the cab driver. Asked if they believe American influence is good or bad, Table 3 (Question 1) shows that 67 percent of the respondents said they thought it was bad. If the American presence in Mexico is widely viewed so negatively, it would seem that NAFTA is not in safe waters.

**Table 3.**

**Affective Response to US Economic and Cultural Penetration**

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1. In general, do you think that American influence is a good or bad influence, or neither?

	(%)
1. Good	15
2. Bad	67
3. Don't Know	18

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2. If Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the most to keep their side of the agreement

1. Japan	35
2. US	27
3. Canada	17
4. Britain	4
5. Cuba	2
6. Chile	2
Other	14

---

3. Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the least to keep their side of the agreement

1. Cuba	45
2. US	33
3. Japan	5
4. Chile	4
5. Britain	3
6. Canada	2
Other	9

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4. Do you believe that it is appropriate for Mexicans to celebrate American holidays?

1. Yes	4
B. No	91
C. Dont know	5

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I also was concerned with levels of trust of the United States and Canada among Mexicans. Table 3 (Questions 2 and 3) displays the answers to the questions, "If Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the most (and the least) to keep their side of the agreement?" A deeply felt trust would place a

country high on the trust question and low on the distrust question. The United States was the second most trusted country with 27 percent saying that they trusted the US to keep its end of an agreement, but it was also the second least trusted country with 33 percent saying that they trusted the US the least. Unlike the US, Canada was trusted to keep its end of a bargain and Mexicans showed little distrust of Canadians. Another very interesting finding was that only 2 percent of Mexicans trusted the Cubans to keep their end of an agreement and 45 percent said that they could not be trusted at all. Cuba was once seen as a model for development, offering Latin Americans one of the few alternatives to the U.S.-capitalist model. But if Cuba were ever admired in Guadalajara, there is little evidence of that attitude remaining today.

While direct and indirect contact seems to have altered Mexican culture, there is significant evidence that Mexican national identity remains quite strong. From the anger of a taxi cab driver to Mexicans' fear of a withering culture to the distrust felt when asked about treaties with the United States, Mexicans reveal a healthy nationalism.

## 2. Border Nationalism

In this section I explore the divergent opinions of Jorge Bustamante and Ana María Alonso. Bustamante argues that border dwellers are not Americanized Mexicans. In fact he suggests that living on the border constantly reminds Mexicans of what they are not. This creates an even stronger nationalism than that held by those in the interior. As discussed above, Ana María Alonso asserts that *fronterizos* are fundamentally different than those living in the interior.

Bustamante (1995, 185) suggests that the historic tendency toward centralization in Mexico has led Mexicans to believe, like Alonso, that "the closer a Mexican resides to the United States, the more Americanized that Mexican is likely to be." The evidence used to demonstrate the American-ness of border dwellers, Bustamante asserts, often revolves around their use of a mixture of Spanish and English terms in their speech. Bustamante argues that "for Mexican *fronterizos*, borrowing words from the language of the "other side" is in fact a process of ethnic reaffirmation" (1995, 185).

To test this hypothesis Bustamante correlated the results of a language and a Mexican values test. The language test involved content analysis of taped interviews from which Anglicisms were counted and analyzed. The Mexican values test was that created and tested by Rogelio Díaz Guerrero, a Mexican social psychologist (Bustamante 1995, 186-186). These tests were conducted on the border as well as in the interior. The conclusions drawn from the analysis of the exams was that those living closer to the border have daily exposure to Americans—what they are not—and this reinforces and strengthens their Mexican-ness. To put a finer point on the difference between the border and interior, Bustamante says, "Mexicans from the interior tend to have a view of Americans coming from the mass media...always negative. Mexicans from the border, however, tend to have a view of Americans arising from face-to-face interactions" (1995, 187).

Although Bustamante's study is quite impressive, I believe that there is a flaw in his assertion that those in the interior always receive negative images of Americans from the mass media. Perhaps this is true of information that is interpreted for the consumer, such as a news report where a reporter interprets the events of the day. However, it is growing more common for Mexicans to view American entertainment programming which often portrays American life as wealthy, glamorous, and exciting. It is also important to note that in a city hundreds of miles from the US border, 34 percent of

the Guadalajara sample claimed to have traveled to the US. However, it remains true, according to Bustamante's study, that those on the border showed higher levels of nationalism than the interior.

The problem with both Bustamante and Alonso's argument is that they define Mexican nationalism by the Mexican's proximity to the US border. Alonso argues that stronger nationalism lies deep in the interior where Americans do not alter the way of life, while Bustamante's border dweller is more nationalistic because they get a daily reminder of how different Mexicans are from Americans. Perhaps a stronger case could be made for the difference to balance upon the degree of Mexican exposure to modern (American) culture than physical distance. The hypothesis becomes:

Mexicans who are exposed to a foreign (or modern or American) culture exhibit a different set of cultural values than those who have less exposure

Table 4 compares the attitudes of Mexicans who have had more exposure to American culture to those who have not. Exposure has been operationalized by identifying those Mexicans who have travelled to the United States, watch television programs that originate in the United States, or listen to English-language radio stations. This measure includes the face-to-face exposure that Bustamante found important as well as media sources that could transmit American values. If those who have been exposed to the United States are more open to future contact with American culture and business, then it is assumed that American values can be transmitted through personal exposure and media exposure.

**Table 4.**

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The Impact of Exposure on Mexican Cultural Values

1. How have you done over the last five years?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Same or Better	25	23
C. Worse	75	77

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2. Thinking about the future, how do you think your economic situation will change in the future?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Same or Better	64	54
C. Worse	36	46

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3. Assuming that the prices were the same, would you buy an American product, a Mexican product, or a Japanese product?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Mexican	69	85
B. American	22	10
C. Japanese	7	3

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4. If Americans ran PEMEX, do you think that it would be a more efficient company?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Yes	43	31
B. No	46	54
C. Don't Know	12	16

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5. Do you believe that the goals and promises of the Mexican revolution are still important today?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Yes	69	70
B. No	31	30

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6. In general, do you think that American influence is a good or bad influence, or neither?

	Exposure	No Exposure
A. Good	16	13
B. Bad	66	67

---

7. If Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the most to keep their side of the agreement

	Exposure	No Exposure
1. Japan	40	25
2. US	19	40
3. Canada	18	15
4. Britain	5	3
5. Cuba	1	2
6. Chile	2	1
Other	13	15

---

8. Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the least to keep their side of the agreement

	Exposure	No Exposure
1. Cuba	46	43
2. US	36	26
3. Japan	3	9
4. Chile	4	5
5. Britain	2	3
6. Canada	2	2
Other	7	13

The first question presented in Table 4 has to do with the economic experience of the respondent over the last five years and how optimistic they are about the coming years. Table 4 shows that Mexicans who have had more contact with the United States fared only slightly better economically than those who had less contact. However, those who have had significant exposure to the US are much more optimistic about the future than those who have not had much exposure to the US. When asked about their economic future, 64 percent of the exposed believe that they will do at least the same or better over the coming years while 54 percent of those not exposed believe their lot will improve.

Question 3 in Table 4 asked the respondent if the prices were the same, would they buy an American product, a Mexican product, or a Japanese product? I would expect that if exposure to American media had any impact, it would be to make Mexicans more willing to buy American goods. Here the attitudes of Mexicans exposed to American culture and those less exposed differ drastically. More than twice the percentage of exposed than less exposed respondents stated that Mexicans should "Buy American." Elsewhere the percentages were often just as telling. For example, 43 percent of those exposed thought that if PEMEX were run by an American company it would be more efficiently run. Only 31 percent of those with less exposure to the American culture agreed with this assessment.

When questions concerning the degree of association with Mexican historical, cultural, and political symbols were asked, those exposed to American culture showed little difference from their unexposed counterparts. For instance, 69 percent of those who have been exposed to American culture and 70 percent of those not exposed stated that the goals of the Mexican Revolution remained important today. Thus, important changes have taken place with reference to economic attitudes toward the US, while little slippage can be said to have taken place when it comes to adherence to traditional symbols and beliefs concerning Mexico's past.

Since those exposed to US culture tend to favor more open economic ties with the US, does it follow that they trust the American government and Americans in general more than those who are not exposed? While only three percentage points separate the exposed from the less exposed, those Mexicans with greater exposure to American values are more likely to believe that American presence in Mexico has been positive. About 16 percent of those identified as exposed claimed that American influence had been positive, while only 13 percent said that it was negative. However, this does not mean that the exposed are more trusting of the United States. When asked, "If Mexico were signing a treaty with another country, which country would you trust the most to keep their side of the agreement?," those most exposed to US culture chose Japan (41 percent) as the most trusted country. Those who have had less exposure to the United States selected the US as the country that they most trusted (40 percent). Only 19 percent of those who have been more exposed to US culture chose the US as the most trusted country.

Table 4 clearly shows that Mexicans who have experienced significant contact with the US have different attitudes than those who have not had significant contact. Question 6 in the same table suggests that these attitudes have changed without weakening Mexican nationalism. While this confirms Bustamante's claim that border dwellers are not Americanized, it appears to refute his claim that they are *more nationalistic*. Those Mexicans who have been exposed more to American culture are not "converted" into Americans; rather their distinctiveness or Mexican-ness is reinforced and heightened



by seeing what is different.

### 3. Disegregating Nationalism

This section returns to Alan Knight's subtypes of national identity. As discussed above, Knight proposes five subtypes: political, cultural, economic, xenophobic, and nation-building (1994, 138-139). The importance of Knight's work is that it suggests that the WVP's assumption of a relationship between rising postmaterialism and declining nationalism may be too simple. It may be that the decline in one of the subtypes of nationalism is counterbalanced by a rise in one of the other types. It could also explain the contradictory conclusions of Alonso and Bustamante. Perhaps border dwellers are both more nationalistic (e.g. stronger in one of the subtypes) and less nationalistic (e.g. weaker in one of the other subtypes) at the same time. It is reasonable to think that a Mexican could be strongly nationalistic in their belief that the Mexican government represents the interests of the nation (Knight's political nationalism), yet reveal a weak national identity when it comes to allowing American economic influence to expand into Mexico (Knight's economic nationalism).

Some changes became necessary when attempting to analyze Knight's nationalist subtypes. First, I did not attempt to measure nation-building because it seems to be fundamentally different than the other four subtypes. Nation-building is the process of creating and manipulating one or more of the above subtypes; therefore, I do not believe that it should be considered a type of nationalism. Second, I was unable to isolate the xenophobic subtype because in the end the survey questions were not sufficiently nuanced to distinguish xenophobia from the other subtypes. For instance in one question the respondents are asked:

Do you think Mexicans should buy products made by Mexicans companies so that Mexicans benefit from the purchase, or should they shop for the best price?

If the respondent says that Mexicans should buy Mexican products they may be exhibiting xenophobia or they may be responding as an economic nationalist. Below the three remaining subtypes of nationalism are measured and discussed.

**Political Nationalism.** Modern Mexican political nationalism was forged in the revolution at the turn of this century. Born of Porfirio Díaz's modernizing dictatorship, the calls to arms were numerous but at their core was a desire for democracy, land reform, and social equity. While the revolution ended without providing any of these ideals, it crystallized the idea in Mexicans that it was the government's duty to struggle to achieve these goals. The respondents in our survey were asked if they thought that the goals of the Mexican revolution still important today and Table 5 shows that 70 percent responded affirmatively. Various descriptions of democracy and political rights (36 percent) were the most common response to an open-ended question asking for the most important goals of the revolution. Table 5 (Question 3) identifies land reform as the second most common response (22 percent), followed by social and economic equality (20 percent).

Table 5.

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Nationalist Subtypes the Political Nationalism

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1. Do you believe that the goals of the Mexican revolution are important today?

	(%)
A. Important	70
B. Not Important	30

---

2. What do you think are (or were) the most important goals of the revolution?

	(%)
A. Democracy/political rights	36
B. Land/land reform	22
C. Social or Economic Equality	20
D. Sovereignty	6
E. Economy for Mexicans	1
Dont Remember	14

---

3. Do you think that the government is still trying to fulfill these goals?

A. Yes	36
B. No	53
C. Don't Know	11

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Economic Nationalism

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4. How should PEMEX operate in future?

	(%)
A. As a Mexican Company	37
B. As an American Company	5
C. Government retain it	53
D. other	5

---

5. If Americans ran PEMEX, do you think that it would be a more efficient company?

	(%)
1. Yes	38
2. No	48
3. Don't Know	13 6.

---

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Do you think Mexicans should buy products made by Mexican companies so that Mexicans benefit from the purchase, or do you think that you should shop for the best price?

(%)

- |                |    |
|----------------|----|
| A. Buy Mexican | 82 |
| B. Best price  | 18 |

---

7. Assuming that the prices were the same, would you buy an American product, a Mexican product, or a Japanese product?

(%)

- |             |    |
|-------------|----|
| A. Mexican  | 76 |
| B. American | 18 |
| C. Japanese | 6  |

---

8. Should Mexico grow all of the corn and beans that are consumed by Mexicans or should Mexico buy these products from abroad?

(%)

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| A. Produce it | 96 |
| B. Import it  | 4  |

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#### **Culture in General**

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9. Do you believe that the Mexican government tries to protect Mexican culture?

(%)

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| A. Yes        | 54 |
| B. No         | 38 |
| C. Don't Know | 8  |

---

10. Should the government try to protect the Mexican culture?

(%)

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| A. Yes        | 97 |
| B. No         | 1  |
| C. Don't Know | 2  |
-

11. What aspect of Mexican culture do you believe needs the most protection? (answers that exceed 5 percent of the percent of the answers)

	(%)
A. Culture in General	24
B. Indian Heritage	16
C. Promoting or Teaching	16
D. Arts	15
E. Language	5
F. History	8

This evidence is supported by the reaction the Salinas administration received to their proposed land reform program (in fact, ending land reform as it had been known over the past six decades) in November 1991. Peasants in Telpancingo, Mexico learned of Carlos Salinas's proposal when a government functionary was dispatched to explain the proposed reform law. Tim Golden, of the New York Times, described the peasants' reaction this way, "'What?' an older man bellowed over the din that rose in the ruins of a once-vast estate here, not far from where the peasant revolutionary Emiliano Zapata was killed in 1919. 'Was the revolution worth nothing? what did all of those people die for? There is nobody, not even the President of the republic, who can take away our land!' There were a few shouts of 'Viva Zapata!'..." (Golden 1991, 1 Sec. A). Our survey asked if respondents thought the government was trying to achieve the goals of the Mexican revolution; over 50 percent said no (see Table 4).

National identity serves as a filter for information and creates the rationale for a political response, but it does not mean that Mexican attitudes toward the United States are immutable. Attitudes can and do change, by serendipity or even by design.

**Economic Nationalism.** Economic nationalism is the demand of a people to control and benefit from the economic resources within their territorial boundaries. This belief runs contrary to the free-market ideology promoted by neoliberals, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United States, and the ideology of choice to the technocratic elite in Mexico. Proponents of free-market capitalism believe that all parties benefit when impediments to trade, such as tariff and nontariff barriers, are removed. Economic nationalists believe that protective barriers are sometimes needed in trade to protect their own citizens. Mexicans who are economic nationalists promote 'buy Mexican' campaigns, while free market champions promote shopping for the best price.

The last series of questions in Table 5 attempt to tap economic nationalism. The first question asked if the national petroleum company (PEMEX), an important economic and symbolic treasure, should be run by the Mexican government (as it is now), a Mexican company, or an American company. Over half of the respondents (53 percent) said that the government should continue to run PEMEX, while only 5 percent suggested that it should become an American firm. Almost 40 percent (see Table 4) thought that PEMEX would more efficient if it were an American company, yet believe that it is such an important national asset that it should not be relinquished. Just like the popularity of the "Buy American" public relations campaign in the United States, Mexicans respond powerfully to economic nationalism. Over 80 percent believe Mexicans should "Buy Mexican" and 96 percent think Mexico should produce its essential food-

stuffs (see Table 4).

**Cultural Nationalism.** The last series of questions concern cultural nationalism. The last three questions in Table 5 show the responses to questions concerning cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism is defined as the display of, pride in, teaching of, and/or promotion of Mexican artforms, history (Hispanic and indigenous heritage), the language, music, dance, etc. In the survey the respondents were asked if they thought the government was protecting the Mexican cultural heritage. Table 5 shows that almost 40 percent thought that the government did not protect their culture. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 97 percent, said that the government should preserve the culture. The respondents were then asked in an open-ended question, what aspects of culture needed to be protected? The most common answer was a very general "all of it." Mexico's Indian heritage was the most common specific answer. Equally important to the respondents (16 percent) was the idea that the government should do more to teach Mexicans to appreciate their culture.

In the previous paragraphs three of Knight's subtypes of nationalism have been measured, but they only present the data for one time point. In order to determine if the above measures are actually tapping different subtypes of nationalism, scales were produced. Unfortunately there was not a sufficient number of questions on the survey to measure each nationalist subtype; however, I did include questions that could be used to make summated scales of political and economic nationalism. The first measure of Mexican national identity is a measure of political nationalism. Five questions measuring political nationalism—having to do with the importance of the revolution and its goals—were recoded such that the low end of the scale (1) identified the most nationalistic answer and the high end (3) measured the least nationalistic. Then summated scales were created.<sup>3</sup> A second measure of political nationalism was produced specifically measuring anti-Americanism. Because more questions were available, ten questions were used to construct this variable—whether US influence was positive or negative, following traditionally American sports, listening to English-language radio stations, trust in the US. The third scale created from five questions was made for Mexican economic nationalism—the propriety of buying foreign goods, should Mexicans shop for the best buy or buy Mexican, should the government run PEMEX. For each of these scales the low end of the scale (1) identified the most nationalistic answer and the high end (3) measured the least nationalistic.

The three resulting measures of political nationalism were very weakly correlated. Economic nationalism correlated with political nationalism at the .1 level and the Anti-American political nationalism scale at .15. While economic nationalism is not statistically significantly related to political nationalism, the measure is significant for Anti-American nationalism. The two measures of political nationalism are correlated at .08 and are not significantly related. The correlational evidence suggests that Knight was correct in disaggregating nationalism. A rise in the level of economic nationalism, according to the data, is only very weakly related to a rise in Anti-Americanism and not significantly related to political nationalism at all.

### Conclusions

The Mexican government caught many people off guard when it declared that it would pursue a free trade agreement with the United States. Journals, reports, and newspapers were flooded with economic projections and analysis of the impact of the agreement. While it is very important to understand the economic dimension, the future of

close economic ties with Mexico also depends on whether Mexicans perceive it to be a threat to their national identity. The purpose of this paper has been to explore the impact of US economic and cultural penetration on Mexican nationalism and to compare border nationalism to that of the interior of Mexico.

First, the world values project argument that change in Mexican nationalism was due to a spreading sense of economic security in Mexico was brought into question by data indicating the position of the poor in Mexico. This does not mean that postmaterialist values are absent from Mexico, but rather that the data presented above *suggest* that something other than economic well-being produced it.

Second, the Jaliscans interviewed in this study believed that American economic and cultural penetration in Mexico is widespread and growing. The Mexicans recognized it and at times felt threatened by it. Modernizationists have argued for decades that the agent of change includes the structural dislocations wrought by industrialization, urbanization, and the mass media. This seems to be a more likely explanation for changing values than economic well-being.

The third conclusion qualifies the second. The survey in Guadalajara shows that while Mexicans who are more exposed to American culture are more likely to see US economic presence as benign, they retain a very strong sense of Mexican political identity. There does not seem to be a 'global culture' as the modernizationists suggest. Therefore, the agent seems to be right, but the cultural homogenization is absent—unless cultural homogenization *ONLY* refers to economic nationalism.

The fourth conclusion has to do with the debate between Ana María Alonso and Jorge Bustamante. The analysis above suggests that it is wrong to define nationalism by the proximity to the border as both Alonso and Bustamante did. Rather, the important factor is exposure to modern values and lifestyles. This does not, however, contradict Bustamante's finding that the border is very nationalistic. The data from the interior suggested that those exposed to American culture tend to believe that American economic presence in Mexico is positive, but they are less likely to trust Americans and more likely to trust the Japanese than those less exposed to American penetration (who trusted the US more).

The final point to be made is that disaggregating nationalism offers much promise for understanding a very complex set of interactions. The correlational evidence suggests that Knight was correct in disaggregating nationalism. A rise in the level of economic nationalism, according to the data, is only very weakly related to a rise in Anti-Americanism and not significantly related to political nationalism at all. This suggests that border dwellers being more exposed to American culture may actually be weaker on some measures of nationalism, as Alonso suggested, but that does not mean that their political nationalism or identity will weaken—supporting the claims of Bustamante.

### Notes

1. An example from US politics illustrates the importance of disaggregating complex concepts. The Republican party in the United States currently is split by 3 subtypes of conservatism: religious, political, and economic conservatives. Certainly there are areas in which all three conservative factions agree, but there are also areas of intense disagreement. The religious right often focuses its efforts on issues such as abortion and public school-directed prayer. Political conservatives discuss walling the borders

and complain that foreigners take advantage of Americans' naivete (see Sanger, 1995). Economic liberals seek a laissez-faire economic order. Like conservatism, nationalism needs to be disaggregated. Knight's more nuanced definition then would allow a strongly nationalistic attitude in one area (subtype) to coexist with a weakening national identity in another area (subtype).

2. A stratified sample of 500 respondents was selected from Guadalajara and from Lagos de Moreno and interviewed in their homes by Centro de Estudios de Opinion (CEO) in Guadalajara. In the sample females were over-represented so a random sampling of the males was taken and added to the original sample yielding an N of 525. The research team believed that Guadalajara would be a good test site because it is a relatively wealthy modern Mexican city that is not too close to the border. The wealth is sufficient to draw US investment, yet far enough away from the border for people to feel that they can perhaps escape some aspects of American influence if they choose.

3. Two of the five questions had to do with governmental protection of culture. If there had been sufficient questions to measure culture, these probably would have been shifted over to that category and two more questions concerning political nationalism would have been added.

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