



MÉXICO Y EL MUNDO

GLOBAL VIEWS 2004

**Mexican Public Opinion
and Foreign Policy**



CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y DOCENCIA ECONÓMICAS
CONSEJO MEXICANO DE ASUNTOS INTERNACIONALES

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CIDE is a center for research and teaching in the social sciences. It is publicly financed and guided by international quality standards for research and education. CIDE's central objective is to contribute to Mexico's development through the generation of rigorous and relevant knowledge and through the development of a new generation of leaders capable of creatively and responsibly succeeding in an open, competitive environment.

COMEXI is a pluralistic, multidisciplinary forum for debate and analysis on the role of Mexico in the world. The Council is an independent, nonprofit forum with no government or institutional ties and is financed exclusively by membership dues and corporate support.

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Mexican Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

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INTRODUCTION

A New Foreign Policy for a New Democracy?

The 2004 Mexico and the World survey, conducted by Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) and Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales (COMEXI), is the first-ever comprehensive study of Mexican public and leadership opinion on international affairs. The study is designed to measure general attitudes and values concerning Mexico's relationship with the world rather than opinions on specific foreign policies or issues. This year's survey was conducted in cooperation with The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations' (CCFR) 2004 study of American public and leadership opinion on foreign policy, a periodic survey conducted since 1974. Approximately one-third of the questions on the Mexican and American surveys were asked of the general public in both countries. The thematic emphases of the surveys are the rules and norms of foreign policy interaction between nations and within international organizations and the bilateral relationship between Mexico and the United States. The Mexico survey also emphasizes Mexico's foreign policy decision-making processes as well as its relations with other countries and regions. CIDE and COMEXI will conduct this survey every two years to measure changes in Mexican attitudes on important international and foreign policy issues.

When CIDE and COMEXI first began planning this study, we encountered some skepticism at the idea of asking Mexicans their opinions about world affairs and Mexico's relations with other countries. Some

observers said that because Mexico is an inwardly focused country relatively isolated from the world, the Mexican public would not be interested in world affairs or would not have the knowledge to form opinions on such topics. Others predicted that more than 60%, even 90% of the responses would be "don't know," making the survey results very difficult to interpret and not representative of the population's true opinions. This groundbreaking survey demonstrates that this skepticism is unjustified, both for the country as whole and for all of the three major regions covered in the report.

The report begins with a summary of the study's most important findings. The chapters that follow examine the survey's results on questions of Mexicans' national identity, the goals and processes of foreign policymaking, the rules of the game for the international system of states and international organizations, and Mexico's relations with other countries, especially its bilateral relationship with the United States.

The Mexico and the World general public survey was conducted from July 9–19, 2004, using a nationally representative sample of 1,500 face-to-face interviews in the respondents' homes. The Mexican leadership survey used telephone interviews to survey 82 members of COMEXI and was conducted from July 13–August 12, 2004. While the leadership survey should not be considered representative of Mexico's political, business, and cultural leadership, it does reliably capture a significant sector of these leaders with an interest in and influence

on Mexico's foreign policy. Further information on the surveys' methodological design is included in the Notes on Methodology at the end of this report.

A different world, a different country

Mexico's foreign policy is currently under public revision and debate as a consequence of the profound changes that have taken place within the country over the long process of economic liberalization and democratization initiated in the late 1980s. The unexpected transformations of the world since the dramatic events of September 11, 2001, demand an adjustment in Mexico's international role and strategies. Mexico must adapt to the new realities of unprecedented U.S. economic and military supremacy and to the intensification of nontraditional global threats linked to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime, and chronic violence in failed states.

Uncertainty in the new international setting also arises from proposed reforms of international institutions and global economic instability. Central components of the multilateral institutional architecture are undergoing reform, and key international organizations, particularly the United Nations, are redefining their roles vis-à-vis other major international players. Economic and financial crises in developing countries have punctuated the processes of economic globalization and created contention over its benefits in many parts of the world.

The new international setting is particularly demanding for a middle-income country like Mexico, which has not developed the sustained ambitions or broad vision necessary to become a middle power with an active global or regional foreign policy, as other countries have done with similar resources. It is within this external context that Mexico is currently redefining its international ambitions and foreign policy.

Within Mexico, the domestic foreign policymaking context has changed dramatically from that of the past. In Mexico's new democratic environment, divisions within government and intense electoral competition have created opportunities for new actors to become involved in the foreign policy decision-making process

and increased the contestation of existing and proposed policies.

Mexico's long-standing and deep social, regional, economic, and cultural differences are rising to the surface of the political arena. Democratization is giving voice and opening channels of participation to a myriad of social groups that were previously underrepresented. There is more opportunity for public debate about the most important pending national issues, particularly those related to Mexico's increased interaction with the world.

Increased exposure and interaction

Mexico is facing these new and demanding international and domestic situations when its exposure to and interaction with the world is greater than it has ever been. Mexico is Latin America's largest exporter and the world's eighth largest. Foreign trade and capital are now Mexico's main engines of growth. In 2003 foreign trade represented about 65% of Mexico's GDP, and foreign direct investment was its second largest source of foreign exchange after oil exports.

Mexico's growing openness to the world is not exclusively economic. Mexico ranks forty-fifth on the 2004 A.T. Kearney/Foreign Policy Magazine Globalization Index, a relatively high score for a developing country. Mexican migration to the north opens a window to the United States and, by extension, to the world. Through telephone calls and increasingly by e-mail, many of these Mexican migrants in the United States maintain close contact with their families and friends in Mexico, providing information and different perspectives on the world.

Defensive traditions and new challenges

Mexico is a large country with the capacity to be a regional power, yet it has not developed its military power or sought a leading role in the world, except during a few brief periods. The traditional principles of Mexico's foreign policy are defensive, shaped by its history of foreign interventions, territorial losses, and domestic turmoil during the nineteenth century and by

the ideological, political, and institutional inheritance of nationalism from the Mexican Revolution. Since the end of World War II, Mexico has faced a safe, stable, and benign regional environment with no immediate or real conventional security threats, largely because of the implicit U.S. security shield it enjoys. This has allowed Mexico to disengage from world affairs and to choose when and how to involve itself in them.

One critical challenge for Mexican foreign policy derives from Mexico's unique geopolitical position as the less developed neighbor of the world's most powerful country. On the one hand, geography and economics push Mexico towards a northern rather than southern focus and toward a bilateral orientation as a natural geographical ally of the United States rather than a unilateral orientation. Yet, factors linked to its history, culture, and domestic politics push Mexico in the opposite direction, toward keeping a prudent distance from its neighbor and largest trading partner, maintaining its noninterventionist principles and pacifist diplomatic tradition, supporting a multilateral foreign policy orientation to counterbalance the United States, and seeking closer relations with other developing countries, particularly in Latin America.

Foreign policy debates in Mexico rotate around the axes of these competing pressures of pragmatism pointing toward the north and of principles pointing toward the south. Pragmatists argue that Mexico should take full advantage of its geographical position by seeking a special relationship and eventually a close strategic alliance with the United States. From this perspective, given Mexico's stable and relatively benign external environment and relatively little influence over that environment even if it became more hostile, economic interests should be the determining factor in Mexican diplomacy.

According to principle-based perspectives, Mexico should place international rules, laws, and sovereignty above any other possible objective or consideration, given its condition as an underdeveloped country with huge domestic social and economic shortcomings. Mexico should seek to overcome the drawbacks of its geographic position by looking for opportunities to counterbalance U.S. power. Diversification of its rela-

tions away from the United States and multilateralism are thus the best strategic options for Mexico. One variant in the principles-based argument is that human rights and democracy are the most important international values for a new democratic country and that a strict defense of Mexico's traditions of sovereignty and nonintervention is not always justified when they conflict with these higher values.

The key question posed by this debate between pragmatism and principles-based foreign policy is whether Mexicans are so deeply divided on these issues that the divisions impair Mexico's capacity to respond to the challenges ahead. This report offers empirical evidence to shed light on some of these important policy and analytical questions.

Acknowledgments

This report reflects the combined efforts of three institutions, the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), the Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales (COMEXI), and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR), supported by a network of social scientists in Mexico and in the United States. We are largely indebted to Guadalupe González, professor of international studies at CIDE, Andrés Rozental, president of COMEXI and Marshall Bouton, president of the CCFR, whose vision and ideas launched this joint project. We would like to thank Enrique Cabrero, director general of CIDE, for embracing and supporting this initiative with enthusiasm.

The project would not have been possible without the encouragement and generosity of its many sponsors. We are deeply grateful to the Ford Foundation for its generous and invaluable support. The Ford Foundation was the principal financial sponsor of the CIDE/COMEXI study. This support was possible thanks to the leadership and commitment of Mario Bronfman, representative of the Ford Foundation in Mexico, and Cristina Eguizábal, program officer for Security and Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere at the Ford Foundation in Mexico. CIDE and COMEXI are particularly appreciative of the early funding provid-

ed by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico. This funding made possible the project's first working session, which brought together members of the CIDE, COMEXI, and CCFR project teams as well as representatives of all major polling firms in Mexico City.

The survey design and data analysis presented in this report reflect the joint efforts of the CIDE, COMEXI, and CCFR teams. Susan Minushkin, professor of international studies at CIDE, led the CIDE/COMEXI team and served as project director. Team members include Guadalupe González; Antonio Ortiz Mena, director of the International Studies Division at CIDE; Aurora Adame, director of COMEXI; and Ana González, research assistant in the International Studies Division at CIDE. Laura Cedillo, Ph.D. student at Northwestern University, joined our team late in the project, but her contribution to report writing, editing, and graphics was essential to its success.

The CIDE/COMEXI team counted on the invaluable substantive contribution of the following remarkable individuals who served as advisors to the project: Robert Shapiro, professor of political science at Columbia University, whose expertise and active role as co-editor of the Mexican and the U.S.-Mexico comparative reports was key in designing the survey, analyzing the data, and writing the reports; Ulises Beltrán, professor of political studies at CIDE and director of the Mexican polling firm BGC, whose commitment, generosity and technical advice was invaluable in all stages of the project, particularly in the coordination and funding of the field work in Mexico. His advice and support permitted us to overcome with great success some technical and financial difficulties under a tight schedule.

The CIDE/COMEXI team would like to express its great appreciation to all the members of the CCFR team that under the leadership of Marshall Bouton, patiently and enthusiastically worked with us to undertake this collaborative effort. We especially thank Christopher Whitney, director for studies at the CCFR, who shared his impressive logistical and organizational skills and guided us in all stages of the project, Jennie Taylor, Benjamin Page, Steven Kull, and Catherine Hug.

We would like to acknowledge the support and input of many individuals in the conceptualization of this first-of-its-kind study in Mexico. First, we are grateful to the members of COMEXI who offered their time and insight on Mexican foreign policy in several meetings and conference calls. Miguel Basáñez, political scientist and president of Global Quality Research Corporation, was COMEXI's advisor to the project. His insight and experience was very important for the general design of the study. We would like to express our appreciation to Jorge Montaña, Gustavo Mohar, and Pilar Álvarez, all members of COMEXI, whose extensive comments immeasurably improved the Mexico questionnaire. Luis Herrera-Lasso, director of Grupo Coppan and member of COMEXI, graciously provided extensive comments on numerous drafts of our questionnaire and opened his offices to the project team for weekend meetings.

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The data from this survey will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut, and NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago. It will also be deposited in the CIDE library's Public Opinion Survey Databank in order to be available for consultation by scholars, professionals, students and any interested person in Mexico. The report will also be available on the Internet at www.cide.edu, www.consejomexicano.org, and www.ccfcr.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mexico's role in world affairs

- Against all expectations, Mexicans are not inwardly focused. They are interested in and knowledgeable about what happens beyond their borders.
- They want the voices of ordinary Mexicans to be extremely influential in foreign policymaking.
- The Mexican public is quite worried about the state of the world and the direction it is taking. However, leaders (political, business, and cultural leaders with an interest in world affairs and Mexico's foreign policy) have a less pessimistic view.
- Both leaders and the public reject a reactive engagement in international affairs and favor an assertive, proactive foreign policy, but they limit Mexico's activism to those issues that directly affect Mexico.
- Leaders disagree with the government's foreign policy performance, yet the general public supports the government's handling of foreign affairs.

Mexico's most critical threats

- Security issues predominate on the list of threats considered critical to Mexico over the next 10 years. Drug trafficking, chemical and biological weapons, and international terrorism are priorities in the

minds of Mexicans. These threats reflect Mexico's geopolitical position and interdependence with the United States. Nevertheless, Mexicans are also quite worried about the threat of world economic crisis.

- Mexicans consider the threat of international terrorism to be so serious that they are willing to allow U.S. officials into Mexico to help guard Mexico's borders, airports, and seaports in the fight against it. This runs counter to Mexico's traditional nationalism and suspicion of foreign intervention by the United States. Leaders have a traditional, defensive attitude more in line with nationalist discourse.

Selective multilateralism

- Mexicans have very favorable feelings toward the UN. More Mexicans feel warmly toward the UN than toward any other international institution.
- They even support the UN Security Council authorizing the use of force in a variety of situations.
- More Mexicans favor Mexico's participation in UN peacekeeping missions than oppose it.
- However, they are divided on ceding national prerogatives to multilateral decision making within the UN and the World Trade Organization.

- A majority of the public opposes international courts judging Mexican citizens for human rights abuses. Leaders do not oppose this.

Globalization, trade, and foreign investment

- A large majority of leaders believe that economic globalization is mostly good for Mexico, yet the general public is split in their opinion of whether it is mostly good or mostly bad.
- Mexicans believe that Mexico benefits from foreign investment, but they oppose it in politically sensitive sectors. A large majority of Mexicans strongly oppose foreign investment in gas, electricity, and petroleum as well as in government bonds. They are divided on investment in telecommunications, media, and infrastructure.
- Leaders generally support foreign investment, even in politically sensitive sectors. The divide between leader and public opinion is particularly noteworthy on investment in gas, electricity, and petroleum.
- Even though Mexicans believe that the United States has benefited more from the North American Free Trade Agreement than has Mexico or Canada, they still favor NAFTA and show support for other important free trade agreements.
- Export promotion is among the top foreign policy goals supported by Mexicans.
- Economic competition from the United States and the development of China as a world power rank at the bottom of the list of threats that Mexicans consider critical, although at least a plurality still considers them a critical threat.

The Mexican diaspora

- Protecting the interests of Mexicans residing in other countries tops the list of foreign policy goals considered very important by the Mexican public and leaders.

- The public believes that Mexicans who live outside of the country should have the same rights and obligations as Mexicans who live within national territory.

Relations with the United States

- Mexicans have more favorable feelings toward the United States than they do toward any other country asked about except Japan, which Mexicans see just as favorably as the United States.
- However, Mexican feelings are quite mixed in terms of their trust, empathy, and admiration for the United States.
- Both leaders and the public strongly object to the U.S. role as world policeman and prefer to pursue an independent foreign policy rather than follow the U.S. lead as a general rule when it comes to international issues.
- Mexican leaders and the public support cooperation with the United States on issues ranging from combating international terrorism to controlling drug trafficking.
- They support an agreement between the Mexico and United States in which Mexico would crack down on illegal drug trafficking and migration into the United States and the United States would permit more Mexicans to live and work in the United States.
- They oppose an agreement in which Mexico would give the United States greater access to its energy and the United States would permit more Mexicans to live and work in the United States.
- Their opposition is strongest to a deal in which Mexico would ally militarily with the United States in exchange for a migration agreement.

Relations with other countries

- Mexicans feel more favorably toward developed countries such as Japan, the United States, and Canada than they do toward Latin American countries such as Brazil, Cuba, and Guatemala.

- Nevertheless, both the Mexican public and leaders want their country to diversify its foreign relations by emphasizing relations with Latin America.
- The Mexican public does not believe Mexico should pay more attention to Asia. Leaders disagree.
- Mexicans want their country to participate in international efforts to improve human rights in Cuba but want it to stay out of the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Leaders energetically condemn the U.S. embargo.

CHAPTER ONE

Mexicans, Mexican Identity, and the World

Mexico faces a number of pressing internal challenges, leading many to think that Mexicans are largely focused inward, preoccupied with domestic economic, social, and political issues rather than broader foreign policy concerns. Is Mexico really an inwardly focused country? How interested are Mexicans in the world? How much contact do they have with the world? How do they define their identity as Mexicans? This chapter describes various aspects of the Mexican public's contact with foreign countries, peoples, and customs as well as their feelings toward foreign countries and influences in Mexico.

Mexicans do not believe that foreign relations are one of the government's most important activities, as might be expected. Thirty-six percent rank foreign relations in last place among the seven government activities asked about in the survey, with another 41% ranking it sixth and only 2% ranking it first (Figure 1-1). It is not surprising that Mexicans would consider foreign relations less important than government activities that have a direct effect on their daily lives such as education and public security. Only national defense ranked (almost) as low in terms of importance.

Yet Mexicans *are* interested in matters beyond their borders. When asked how interested they are in news about Mexico's relations with other countries, 40% say they are very interested and another 47% say they are somewhat interested. Only 9% say they are not at all

interested (Figure 1-2). While fewer Mexicans can identify the initials "UN" as the United Nations (62%) than can identify "SEP" as the Secretaría de Educación Pública (75%), 75% of Mexicans are aware that Mexico opposed the U.S. and British invasion of Iraq, 68% have heard that President Bush made a proposal so that Mexicans would be able to work in the United States, and 62% are aware that the International Court of Justice determined that the United States should review

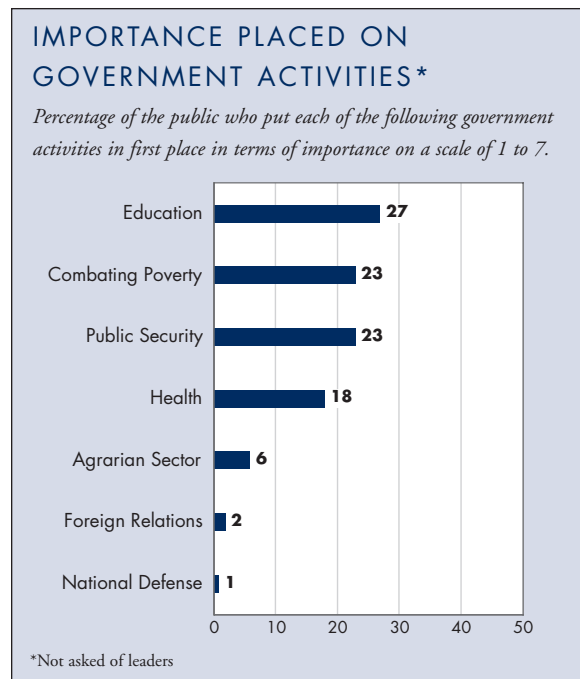


Figure 1-1

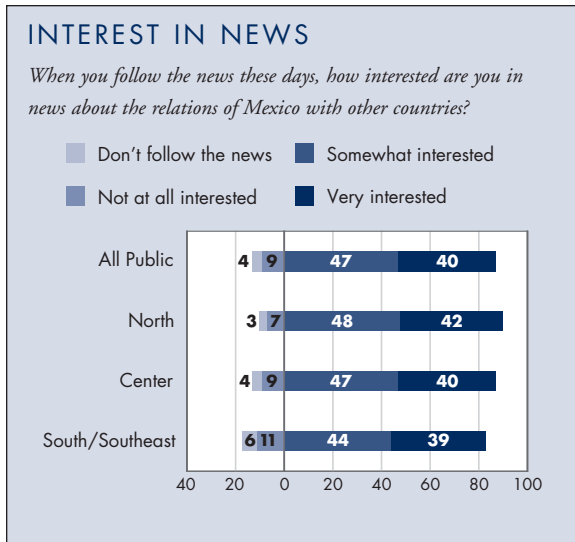


Figure 1-2

the trials that condemned to death various Mexicans. While northern border state residents tend to be more interested and more knowledgeable than other Mexicans, majorities in southern and southeastern states also demonstrate interest in and knowledge of Mexico's relations with other countries.

Mexicans have a great deal of contact with the world, although most of this contact is through family members living and working in other countries. Thirty-one percent of Mexicans have traveled to another country, although fewer residents of southern and southeastern states have done so (21%) than residents of northern border states (43%). Sixty-one percent of Mexicans have relatives that live in another country, although fewer people again from the south and southeast have relatives abroad (48%) than residents of the northern border states (63%). Twenty-one percent of Mexicans say that they receive remittances from family members working outside of Mexico. In this case, more southerners and southeasterners receive remittances (24%) than northern border state residents (16%). Only 15% of Mexicans have frequent personal contact with foreign people, businesses, or institutions. Six percent of those in the south and southeast have frequent personal contact, but 22% of those living in northern border states do (Figure 1-3).

Notwithstanding the direct and indirect contact that Mexicans have with the world, Mexicans are fearful

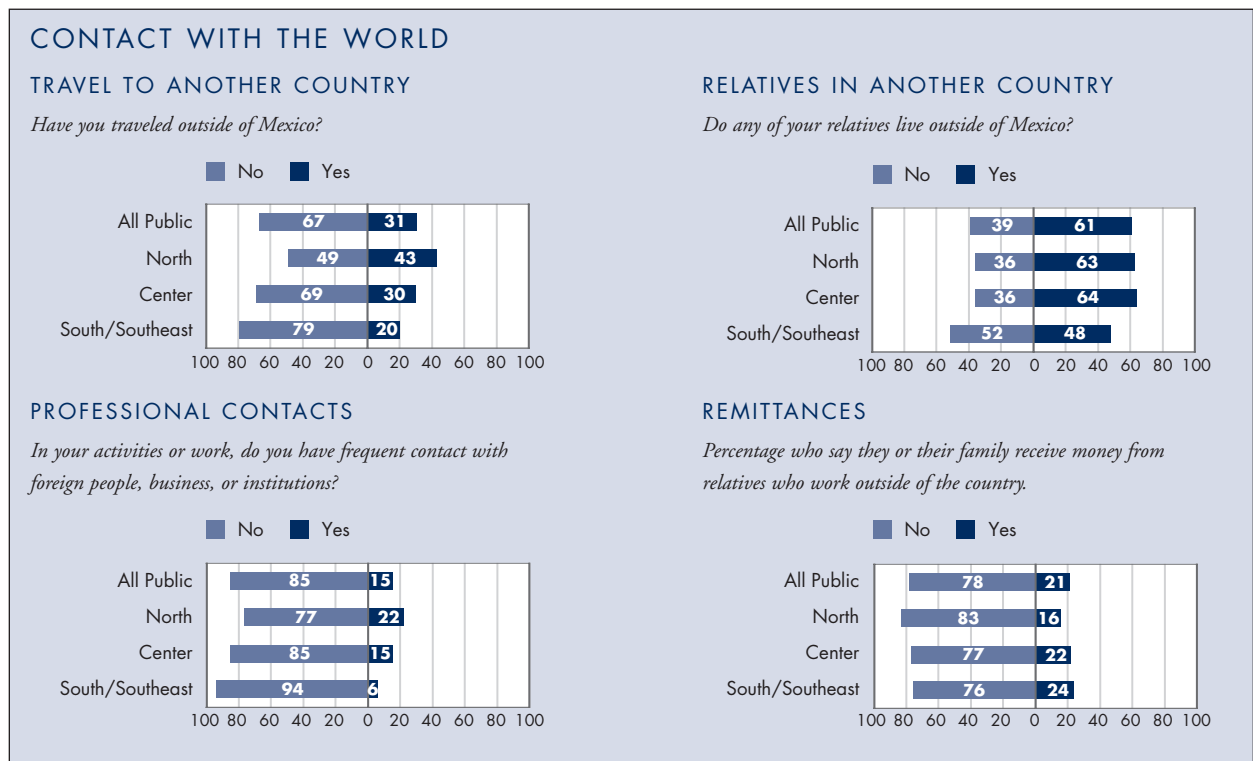


Figure 1-3

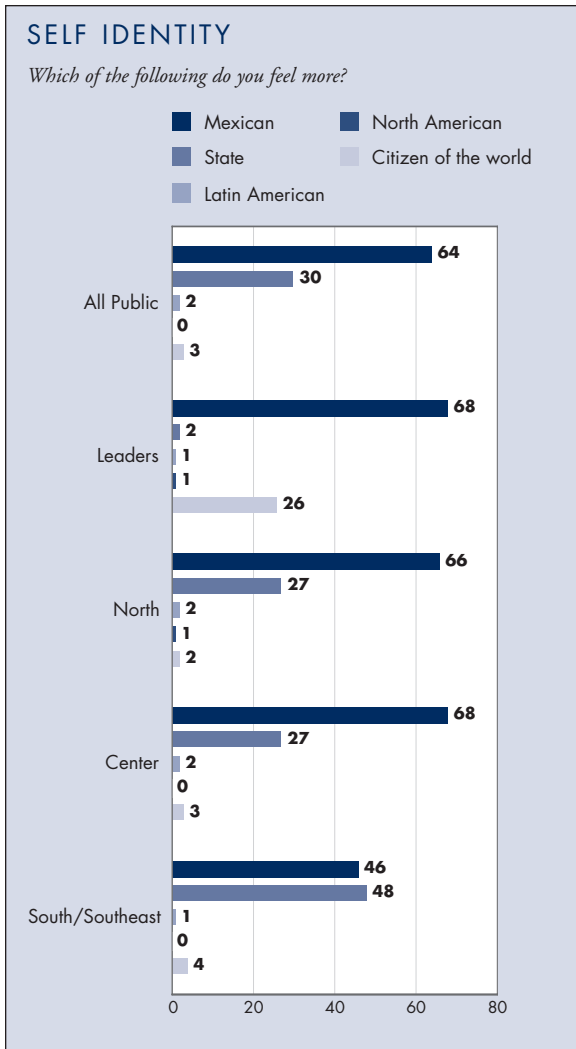


Figure 1-4

of cultural influences from other countries spreading throughout Mexico. Fifty-one percent say that it is bad for the ideas and customs of other countries to spread in Mexico, and only 27% say it is good. Those living in the northern border states are more divided, with 37% saying it is bad and 39% saying it is good. The ideas and customs that most Mexicans want to protect are those that comprise their national identity as Mexicans rather than those of their local state or of some wider geographical area. Sixty-four percent say that they identify themselves more as Mexicans, versus only 30% who feel a stronger state identity, such as Oaxacan or Zacatecan (Figure 1-4). However, state identity is stronger in the south and southeast than in other regions of the country. Broader identities, such as Latin

American, North American, or citizen of the world do not resonate among Mexicans.

This strong national identity extends to the foreign policy area, especially vis-à-vis the United States. A large majority of Mexicans believe that Mexico should have an independent foreign policy. When asked whether Mexico should follow the U.S. lead as a general rule when it comes to international issues or whether it should have its own foreign policy, 89% of Mexicans say that Mexico should have its own foreign policy (Figure 1-5). There is substantial agreement among Mexicans from all regions of the country on Mexico's foreign policy independence.

Mexicans are not willing to give up their independent national identity even if it means that they would have an improved standard of living. Only 33% say they would go live in the United States if they could, and 57% say that they disagree (48% strongly and 9% somewhat) with Mexico and the United States becoming a single country if this would mean a better standard of living for themselves. Thirty-eight percent strongly or somewhat agree.

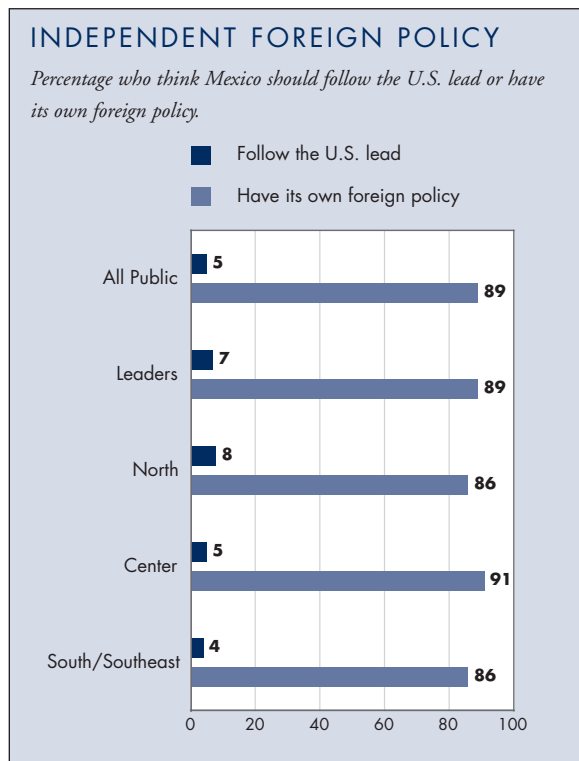


Figure 1-5

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEXICANS WHO LIVE ABROAD

Percentage who think Mexicans that live outside of Mexico should have the same rights and obligations as Mexicans that live in Mexico.

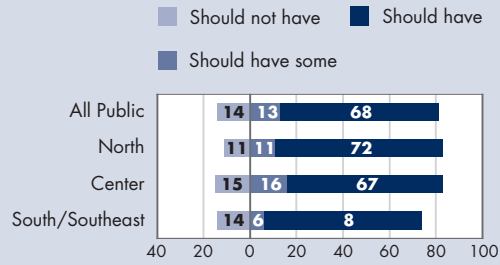


Figure 1-6

Mexicans' strong national feelings also extend to those Mexicans who live outside of Mexico. When asked if Mexicans in other countries should have the same rights and obligations as Mexicans who live in Mexican territory, 68% agree that they should and only 14% say they should not (13% volunteered the answer that they "should have some of the same rights and responsibilities") (Figure 1- 6).

CHAPTER TWO

Mexico's Role in the World

Mexicans are surprisingly attentive to international issues and quite knowledgeable about what happens beyond their borders, but believe the government should emphasize the domestic public policy agenda as reported in the previous chapter. Given these preferences, how do Mexicans feel about the world outside of Mexico? Do they fear it, or do they see it as a source of opportunity for themselves and their country? What possible external threats worry them most? Should Mexico take an active part in world affairs to address these sources of vulnerability and concern? How should Mexico engage the world, proactively or reactively? Leading or following? Looking north or looking south? What should be the goals and objectives of Mexican foreign policy? This chapter examines these most general aspects of Mexicans' attitudes toward the world and their beliefs about what should be Mexico's role in the world.

A bleak view of the world

Mexicans feel a general, widespread concern about the state of world affairs, but there are important regional differences in the degree of concern. Only 26% of Mexicans agree that the world is going in the right direction, with 69% disagreeing (50% strongly and 19% somewhat) (Figure 2-1). However, Mexicans in northern states are somewhat less negative than those in

the central and southern and southeastern states. Fifty-four percent in the north disagree that the world is going in the right direction (only 28% strongly), while 72% in central Mexico (54% strongly) and 73% in the south and southeast (56% strongly) disagree.

These pessimistic beliefs about the direction the world is going are reflected in perceptions of threats to Mexico over the next 10 years (Figure 2-2). From a list of eight possible threats, the threats that the largest number of Mexicans identify as critical are mostly security threats—drug trafficking, weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and violent ethnic and



Figure 2-1

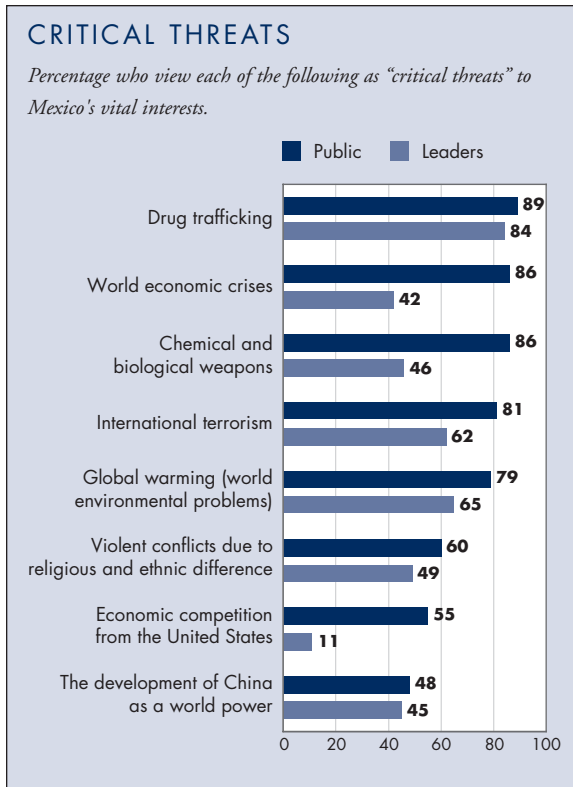


Figure 2-2

religious conflicts. However, the threat of world economic crises is also near the top of the list of concerns. Other economic issues—economic competition from the United States and the emergence of China as a world power, which is perceived almost exclusively as an economic issue in Mexico—come lower on the list of threats. The threat posed by world environmental problems ranks in the middle of the list of threats, but a strong majority still considers it critical. It is noteworthy that on threats the regional results are very similar to those of the national sample. In contrast to other foreign policy questions, Mexicans from different parts of the country share a common view about the most critical dangers to Mexico’s well-being.

Drug trafficking elicits the highest level of public concern of any of the possible threats asked about in the survey. Eighty-nine percent of the public judge drug trafficking to be a critical threat to the most important interests of Mexico in the years ahead. The salience of drug trafficking is not surprising, not only because of Mexico’s role in the international illegal drug market, but also because of the domestic corruption, violence,

and criminality created by drug trafficking and consumption.

Two very different kinds of international dangers, one related to security (chemical and biological weapons) and the other to the general state of the economy (world economic crisis), are tied for second on the threat list in terms of the percentage of Mexicans who see them as critical threats. Eighty-six percent of Mexicans believe that chemical and biological weapons pose a critical threat to Mexico’s security, and an equal 86% say that the possibility of world economic crisis is a threat to the country. Two of the three top critical threats, drug trafficking and world economic crisis, are issues that have the potential to affect and have directly affected the lives of many Mexicans.

The importance Mexicans give to the menace posed by chemical and biological weapons is surprising since Mexico has no experience with and is located far from countries suspected of having huge chemical and biological arsenals that pose actual direct threats. Mexicans’ strong fear of chemical and biological weapons may reflect a more general sense of vulnerability given Mexico’s porous and long border with the United States and the intense and broad network of economic and social interaction with that country, which could be a target for a biological or chemical attack. Mexico’s strategic position as a major transit point for a myriad of illegal flows of people and goods entering into the United States from third countries make it a potential route for transporting or launching such weapons.

International terrorism comes in third place on the list of threats. Eighty-one percent of the Mexican public see international terrorism as a menace. Mexicans in northern border states are somewhat more concerned (85%) about the danger posed by international terrorism than are residents in the south and southeastern states (76%). This regional difference may well reflect the closer proximity to and daily contact that residents of northern border states have with the United States.

The survey shows that Mexicans take international terrorism very seriously, seeing it as a critical threat to their country. The view of international terrorism as a

critical threat by such a large majority of the public translates into majority support for various controversial measures to combat it (Figure 2-3). Fully 87% of Mexicans favor increasing controls on the movement of goods crossing its borders, seaports, and airports to combat international terrorism. A nearly equally large majority (84%) also believes that Mexico should increase its entry and exit requirements for people from other countries who wish to travel to or leave Mexico. A smaller but still significant majority of Mexicans (63%) favor permitting American agents to participate with Mexican agents in the surveillance of Mexican borders, airports, and seaports to help combat international terrorism. More Mexicans in northern and south and southeastern states favor this last measure (74% and 66%, respectively) than those living in the central region of the country (59%).

These findings are particularly interesting given Mexico's historically suspicious attitude toward the overt or covert presence in Mexico of military, police, and intelligence agents of other countries, particularly those from the United States. The presence of foreign security agents and the deployment of joint security operations in Mexico's national territory are long-standing taboos in Mexico's traditionally defensive and nationalist foreign policy discourse. These results indicate that because of Mexicans' fear of international terrorism, they are

willing to set aside their defensive attitudes towards with the United States when they believe that their security is at stake.

Next on the list of threats come concerns about the environment and ethnic and religious violence in other parts of the world. The threat of world environmental problems is considered critical by 79% of Mexicans, and violent armed conflicts due to religious and ethnic differences are considered critical by 60%. The general concern about world environmental problems can be attributed to Mexico's serious domestic environmental problems that affect the living conditions of many Mexicans. In the case of violent ethnic and religious conflict, the presence of indigenous and peasant armed movements in many rural regions of the country sharpens Mexicans' awareness of and perhaps concern about these conflicts.

Last on the list of threats are those related to economic competition. Compared to other issues, fewer Mexicans are worried about economic competition from the United States. Fifty-five percent see economic competition from the United States as a critical threat. Even fewer (48%) see the development of China as a world power as a critical threat. This finding contrasts sharply with the substantial media coverage in Mexico recently on the threat posed by China. China displaced Mexico as the United States' second most important trade partner in 2003, and Chinese goods have successfully penetrated a variety of Mexican markets. Mexicans do not appear to fear economic competition from other countries as much as they fear economic instability from a world economic crisis. These differing levels of concern related to economic issues are consistent with Mexico's experience of recurrent economic and financial crises linked to abrupt changes in international prices, capital flows, and political cycles.

In sum, Mexicans are generally negative about the direction of world affairs. The threats considered critical in the minds of most Mexicans are those related either to issues that have or may have a direct negative impact on the security and economic conditions of their daily lives, such as drug trafficking and world economic crisis, or to issues linked to Mexico's geographical position as a



Figure 2-3



Figure 2-4

neighbor of the United States, such as chemical and biological weapons and international terrorism.

Pragmatic, not principled internationalists

Mexicans' general sense of unease about what is happening beyond their borders does not translate into defensive, passive, or isolationist attitudes. On the contrary, a majority of Mexicans (57%) support an active role for Mexico in world affairs, although one-third (34%) do

believe that Mexico should stay out of world affairs (Figure 2-4). There are, however, large regional differences on this issue. In the north, 61% say that Mexico should be actively engaged in world affairs and in the center, 58% share this opinion. In the south only 47% support an active role for Mexico in the world.

Nevertheless, this generally positive endorsement of an active foreign policy should not be interpreted as an indicator of a strong internationalist or activist orientation in the Mexican public. When asked about the specific conditions under which they believe Mexico should take an active part in world affairs, Mexicans are more pragmatic. Nearly one-third (31%) of Mexicans fall into what we call the strong internationalist category, believing that Mexico should participate in resolving the world's critical problems. Yet, the majority of Mexicans (58%) fall into what we call the light internationalist category, believing that Mexico should participate in resolving only those world problems that directly affect Mexico. Few Mexicans (9%) are isolationist, saying that Mexico should not participate at all in solving the world's problems (Figure 2-5). In all three regions more people prefer to focus exclusively on those world problems that directly affect Mexico than on global problems more generally or on none of these problems at all.

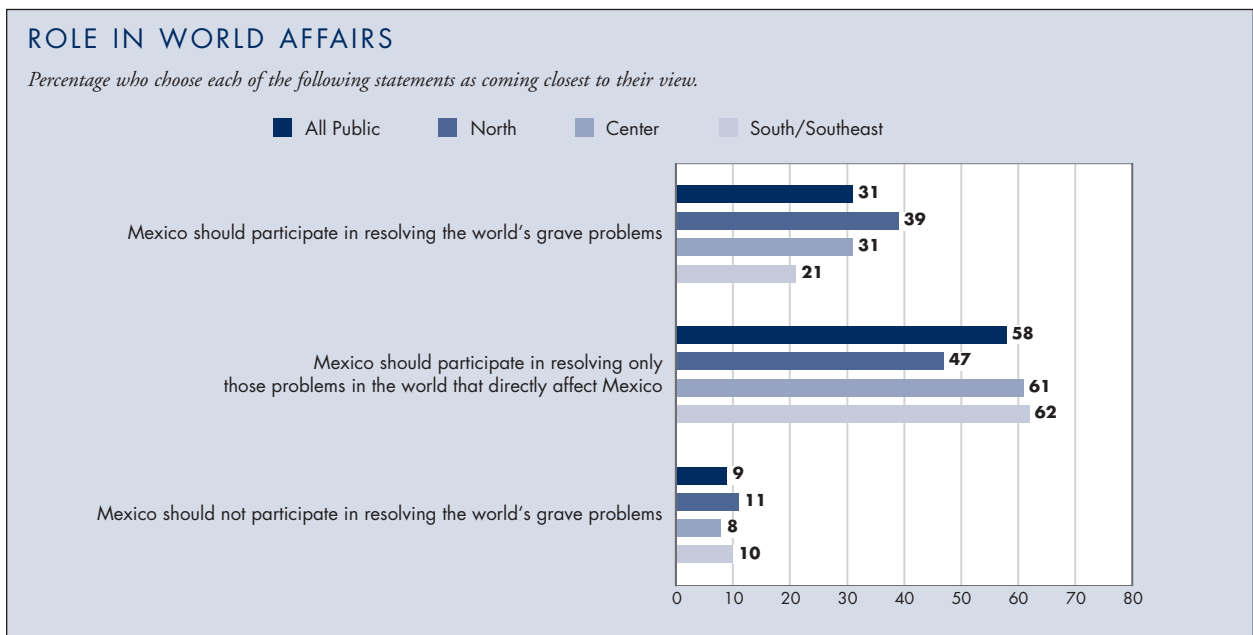


Figure 2-5

Economic and security interests trump principles

Opinions on Mexico's foreign policy goals reflect an interesting combination of pragmatism and principles and a clear hierarchy between them (Figure 2-6). More Mexicans identify economic and security issues as high priority foreign policy goals than more altruistic goals that do not directly affect their lives.

Mexicans are more likely to say that protecting the interests of Mexicans living in other countries should be a very important foreign policy goal than any other goal asked about in the survey. This is not surprising given the number of Mexicans living abroad. The importance of protecting the interests of Mexicans living abroad can be attributed not only to material interests (remittances are a key income source for many Mexican families living under difficult economic conditions), but also to the belief that a democratic government has a fundamental

responsibility to its citizens. Mexicans also favor an economic-centered foreign policy driven by domestic economic considerations. Eighty-five percent of Mexicans say that promoting exports should be a very important foreign policy goal, and 83% say that stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the United States should be very important. In sum, the three foreign policy goals that Mexicans are most likely to identify as very important of those asked in the survey—protecting the interests of Mexicans abroad, promoting exports, and stopping the flow of illegal drugs—are all closely related to domestic problems and living conditions. This could be considered an indicator that Mexico is an inwardly-focused country.

Yet, the second tier of foreign policy goals, which relate to global security concerns, also receive strong majorities. Seventy-eight percent of Mexicans believe that combating international terrorism is a very important goal for Mexico's foreign policy, and a virtually

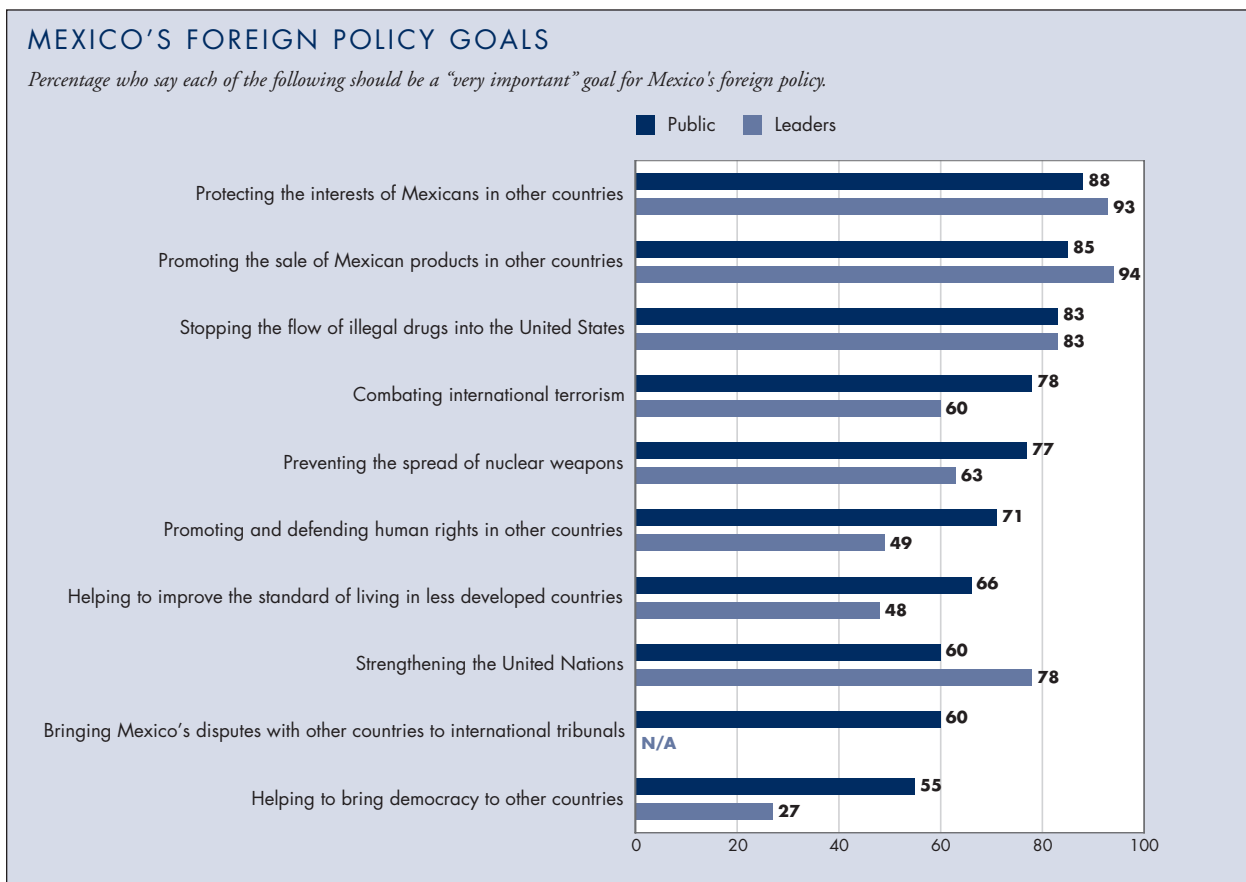


Figure 2-6

equal percent (77%) say the same about preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. These results are consistent with the high levels of concern in the Mexican public about the threats of international terrorism and chemical and biological weapons and indicate that Mexicans are keenly aware of the importance of addressing new threats to international security and want their government to do so.

Many Mexicans believe altruistic foreign policy goals are also important, but they are less likely to say so than for economic and security objectives. Seventy-one percent of Mexicans believe that promoting and defending human rights in other countries is a very important goal for Mexico's foreign policy, and 66% think the same about helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries. That somewhat more Mexicans want their government to address the human rights situation in other countries than the material conditions in these countries is consistent with findings from the 2000 World Values Survey that indicate that Mexicans are gradually becoming less materialist in their general value orientations.

Helping to bring democracy to other countries, a goal that is primarily altruistic but that implies a more interventionist stand than does defending human rights

and helping to improve standards of living, is at the bottom of the list of very important foreign policy objectives asked about in the survey. Fifty-five percent of Mexicans say that engaging in activities to bring democracy to other countries is a very important goal.

Overall, Mexicans from the north and center of the country converge in their attitudes on foreign policy goals, with some exceptions, with those residing in the southern states. In the south and southeast, the foreign policy goal that receives the largest majority is not the protection of the interests of Mexicans living abroad but the promotion of Mexican exports (84%), which ranks second overall. Combating illegal drugs comes in second in this part of the country, with 79% saying it is very important. Close behind in third place is protecting the interests of Mexicans residing in other countries (78%). In the north, the public assigns considerably more importance to stopping the flow of illegal drugs than in the south, a difference of seven points. There is an even larger difference of eleven points between north and south regarding the importance of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, which Mexicans living in the northern border states consider to be a more important foreign policy goal than those in the south and southeast.

CHAPTER THREE

Global Governance, the Use of Force, and International Institutions

Institutions and actors

Mexicans are pragmatic in their opinions about Mexico's role in the world and strongly prefer an independent foreign policy that is not allied with that of the United States. As a medium-sized, developing country, many would argue that Mexico can best maintain its policy independence from the United States through multilateral foreign policy strategies rather than seeking to act on its own. These strategies can best be implemented through international institutions such as the United Nations. This chapter examines Mexican attitudes toward such international institutions and other important actors in the international system, views on the conditions under which the use of force by states should be permitted, and beliefs about the fairness and benefits of increased economic integration with the world.

To determine how Mexicans view international organizations, Mexicans were asked to indicate their feelings toward some organizations and actors on a 100-point thermometer scale, with 100 meaning a very warm feeling, 0 meaning a very cold feeling, and 50 meaning neither warm nor cold (Figure 3-1). The organization that receives the highest thermometer rating is the United Nations, which receives a mean rating of 75 degrees. This is followed next by international human rights organizations, which have an average rat-

ing of 70 degrees. Next is the International Monetary Fund, which receives an average of 63 degrees. The other organizations rated were the European Union, the Organization of American States, and multinational corporations. These all have average ratings of 62 degrees.

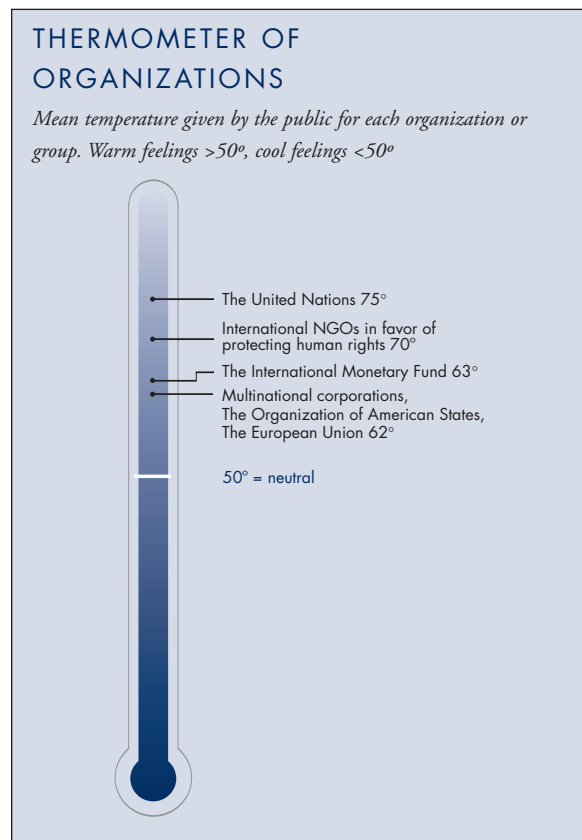


Figure 3-1

These ratings are all generally positive, with each organization scoring above the neutral point of 50, but the United Nations and human rights organizations stand above the rest. These organizations can be distinguished by their greater focus on international cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The other organizations, by contrast, are mainly concerned with economic issues and relations.

Mexicans' positive feelings toward the UN are reflected in their generally strong support for strengthening this visible international organization. When asked how important the foreign policy goal of strengthening the UN should be, 60% of Mexicans respond that this should be a very important goal, 24% say it should be somewhat important, and only 8% say it should be not important (see Figure 2-6). This support can be attributed at least in part to the emphasis in Mexican society on the principles embodied in the Mexican Constitution and the United Nations Charter. The Mexican Constitution's emphasis on international cooperation, the sovereignty of states, nonintervention, the legal equality of states, and, most importantly, the peaceful settlement of disputes are paralleled the United Nations Charter. Mexican children are taught about these principles and the importance of the United Nations as the central international institution that promotes peace and cooperation in the world.

Not surprisingly, and directly related to the principle of legal equality of states, Mexicans appreciate that in the United Nations each country has an equal vote in the General Assembly. When asked whether they agree that the votes in the UN of countries with large populations should count more than the votes of countries with small populations, 60% disagree, with 43% disagreeing strongly and 17% disagreeing somewhat.

Regional differences on these particular attitudes toward the UN are not surprising. Respondents from the south and southeast consider strengthening the UN an important goal (73% of them overall when very and somewhat important are combined), but this is a smaller percentage than the 94% for Mexicans in the north. Northerners' greater contact with the world and knowledge of the UN likely explain this difference. As report-

ed in Chapter 1, 68% of those in the north correctly identified the UN by its initials, whereas only 52% of those in the south and southeast do so. In the case of the equality of country votes in the UN, 47% of respondents from central Mexico, compared to 33% from the north, disagree strongly that votes from countries with large populations should count more than the votes of countries with small populations. This is also as expected, given the greater support of those in central states for a strict interpretation of the constitutional principles of Mexican foreign policy, as seen on a variety of questions in the survey.

Mexicans' positive opinions of the UN are qualified by their pragmatism. Mexicans do not overwhelmingly agree that when dealing with international problems Mexico should be willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that Mexico will sometimes have to go along with a decision that it would not have preferred. Only 44% agree with this, 38 percent oppose, and 11% respond that it depends on the circumstances (Figure 3-2). Moreover, they have mixed views about different proposals that have been made to strengthen the UN. Only a bare plurality of Mexicans (48%) favor giving the UN the power to regulate the international arms trade, while 46% oppose this. Their opinions are split on giving the UN the power to fund its activities by taxing such things as the

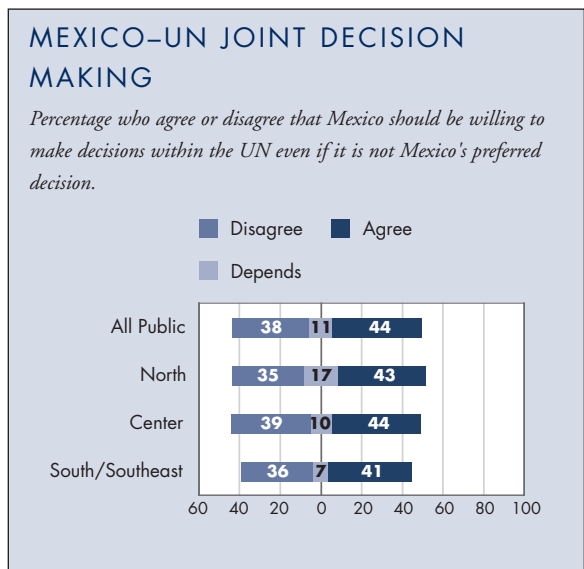


Figure 3-2

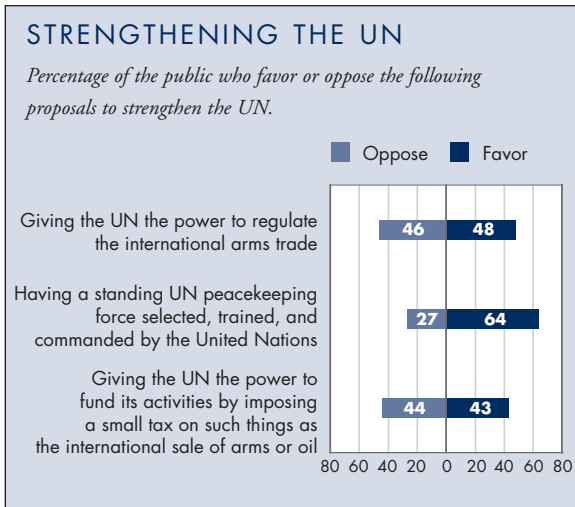


Figure 3-3

international sale of arms or oil: 43% favor giving the UN this power, and 44% oppose this. Mexicans do, however, support having a standing UN peacekeeping force, with 64 percent favoring the peacekeeping force and only 27% opposing it (Figure 3-3).

As indicated above, Mexicans have positive attitudes toward international human rights organizations (see Figure 3-1). This concern for human rights extends to Mexico participating in international efforts to improve human rights in Cuba: 61% agree with Mexico participating (32% strongly and 29% somewhat). As might be expected, this support is greatest in the north

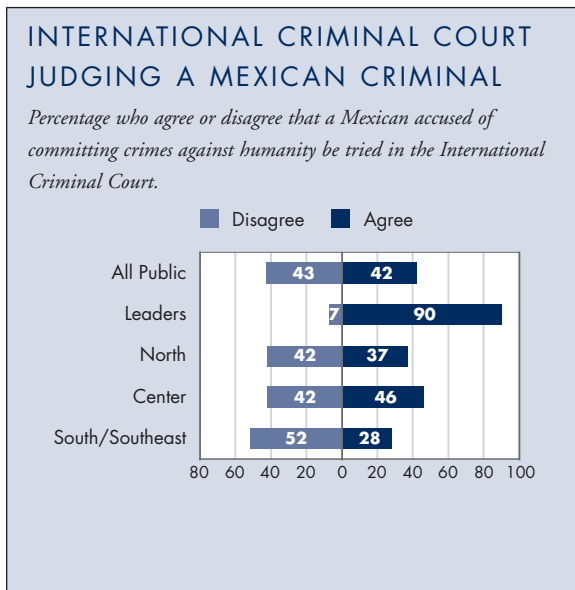


Figure 3-4

(66%) and least in the southeast (51%), with 62% supporting it in the center. By contrast to support for this international effort, Mexicans in all regions have more negative opinions toward the United States' trade embargo on Cuba. Only 14% support it, while 11% condemn it, and 66% think that the Mexican government should stay on the margins.

With regard to other international organizations or bodies, 80% of Mexicans think it should be a very (60%) or somewhat (20%) important goal of Mexican foreign policy to bring Mexico's disputes with other countries to international tribunals (see Figure 2-6). While a large percentage of Mexicans from the southeast (69%) think this should be a somewhat or very important goal, this percentage is smaller than the 87% of Mexicans in the north and 80% from the center who think this. These findings are consistent with other responses indicating that Mexicans living in the south and southeast are somewhat more isolationist and less multilateral than are other Mexicans.

The survey also asked if Mexicans accused of crimes against humanity such as genocide and torture who have not been tried in Mexico should be tried in the International Criminal Court. Only 42% of Mexicans agree that this should happen, and 43% disagree. More respondents from the southeast disagree (52%) than those from the north and center (42%). While Mexicans want Mexico's conflicts with other countries dealt with by international institutions, they do not similarly support such bodies interfering with how Mexico deals with issues involving its citizens (Figure 3-4).

Use of force

Although Mexicans have some doubts about giving the United Nations certain powers and also about going along with all UN decisions, they do support, as noted previously, the UN having a peacekeeping force. They also support—in strong numbers—the UN's right to authorize the use of force. Mexicans think the UN should be able to authorize the use of force to prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide (79%),

UN SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORITY

Percentage of the public who think the UN Security Council should or should not have the right to authorize the use of military force in the following situations.

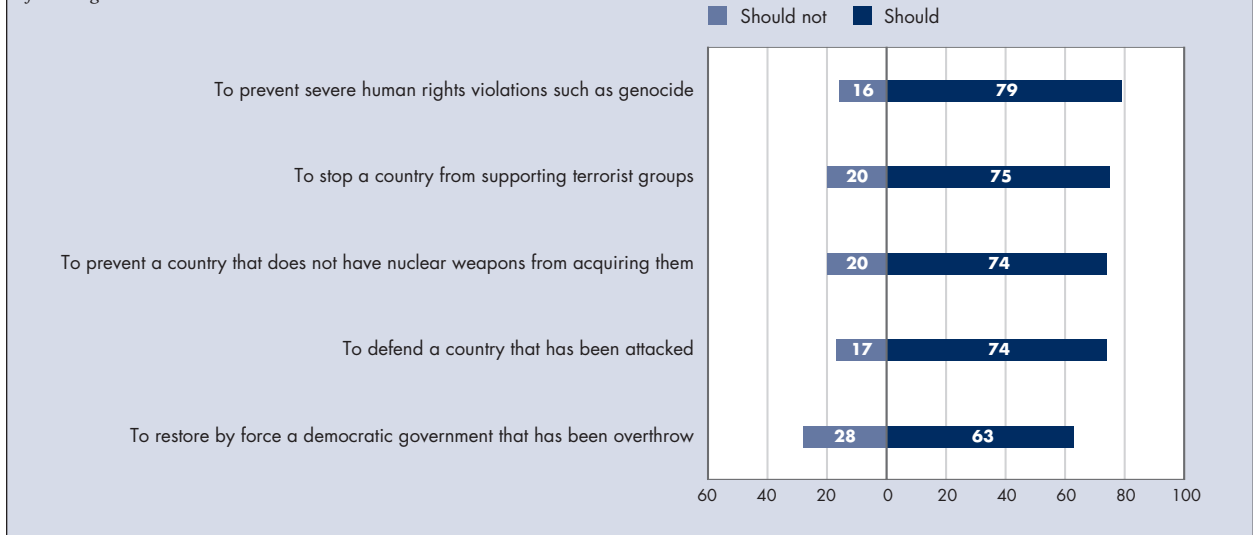


Figure 3-5

to stop a country from supporting terrorist groups (75%), to prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them (74%), to defend a country that has been attacked (74%), and to restore by force a democratic government that has been overthrown (63%) (Figure 3-5). Support for all these UN powers, as to be expected, is greatest in the north, where support is 11 to 22 percentage points greater than in the southeast, but only a very small 2 to 5 percentage points higher than in the center of the country.

This support for the UN to authorize the use of force is congruent with the foreign policy goals that Mexicans cite as important, as described in the previous chapter (see Figure 2-6). Support for authorizing force to prevent serious human rights violations appears to be closely associated with the 71 percent of Mexicans who say that promoting and defending human rights should be a very important goal. Support for authorizing force to combat terrorism relates to the 78% of Mexicans who say that combating international terrorism should be a very important goal. The high level of support for authorizing the UN to use force to stop countries from acquiring nuclear weapons is very likely related to the 77% of Mexicans responding that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons should be a very important foreign

policy goal. The somewhat smaller (but still high) percentage of Mexicans who would give the UN authority to use force to restore a democratic government parallels the smaller (but also still high) 55% of Mexicans who say that helping to bring democracy to other countries should be a very important goal.

Given current Mexican foreign policy and presumed public opposition to Mexican involvement in the use of force abroad, one might not expect the high level of support for the authorization of force by the UN to mean that Mexicans would support Mexico participating in UN peacekeeping. However, when asked if Mexico should participate in a UN peacekeeping force or leave this type of activity to other countries, a plurality of Mexicans (48%) say that Mexico should participate. This percentage is 59% in the north, 46% in the southeast, and 45% in central Mexico. This is not a majority, except in the north, but it is still greater support than one might expect, particularly considering that 10% volunteered the answer that “it depends” and an additional 6% responded that they did not know (Figure 3-6).

When it comes to using force around the world, it has been the United States, as the world’s superpower, that has taken the lead and acted largely alone, with

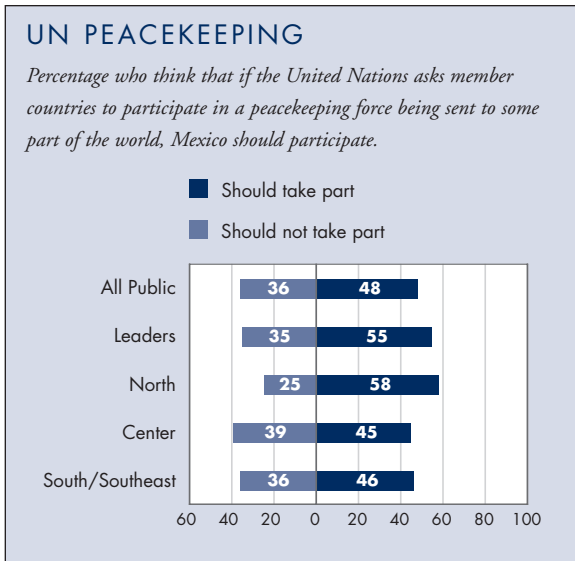


Figure 3-6

some support and assistance from the British, in using force to deal with recent international conflicts. Mexicans are quite critical of this. In response to one survey question, 55% of Mexicans disagree that the United States has a generally positive influence in the world, with 38% disagreeing strongly and 17% disagreeing somewhat (Figure 3-7). This strong disagreement is least in the north (18%), compared to 44% in the center and 38% in the southeast. Moreover, when asked directly if the United States has the responsibility to play the role of world policeman and fight violations of international law and aggression around the world, fully 72% disagree, feeling that the United States does

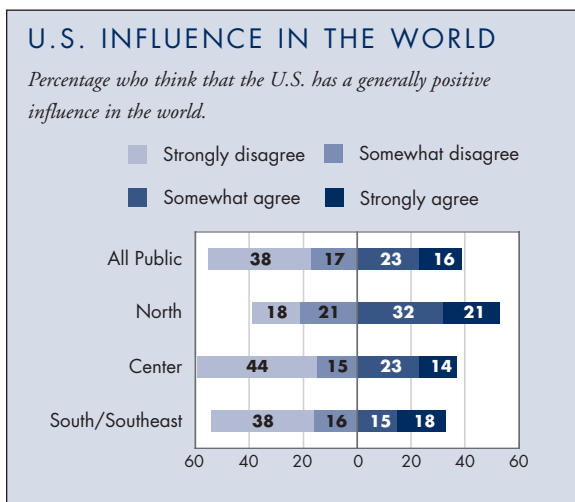


Figure 3-7

not have that responsibility. This disagreement is greatest in the center (76%), compared to 64% in the north and 60% in the southeast.

Mexicans clearly prefer that the United States participate with other countries in solving international problems. Fifty-five percent say the United States should do this as opposed to continuing to be the pre-eminent leader in solving international problems (10%) or staying out of most efforts to solve international problems (28%). Not surprisingly, more Mexicans from the center prefer that the United State stay out of solving international problems (32%), compared to 20% of Mexicans in the north and 18% in the southeast.

Economic governance

Mexicans are divided in their views regarding the effects of economic globalization on Mexico. While 34% say that globalization is mostly good, 31% believe it is mostly bad (17% volunteer neither good nor bad). However, in the north, where people have more direct exposure to international trade than in other regions of the country, 43% believe that it is mostly good and only 23% say it is mostly bad (Figure 3-8). One negative consequence of economic globalization is more frequent financial crises and a greater risk of a world financial crisis because of increased interconnections between national financial markets. As reported earlier, Mexicans are very concerned about world economic crises, with 86% considering it a critical threat, second only to drug trafficking (see Figure 2-2).

Mexicans' negative feelings toward economic globalization may stem from their feelings that economic relations between rich and poor countries are not fair. Fifty-two percent of Mexicans strongly disagree that rich countries negotiate international trade agreements fairly with poor countries, an additional 14% somewhat disagree. Only 27% strongly or somewhat agree. Opinions are not as emphatic in the northern border states, although a majority either strongly disagrees (34%) or somewhat disagrees (21%) that rich countries negotiate fairly with poor countries (Figure 3-9). Thus, it is not too surprising to find that only a plurality of Mexicans

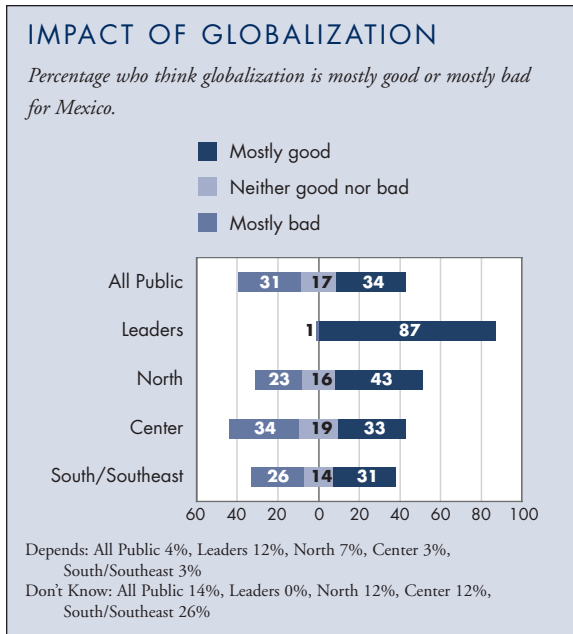


Figure 3-8

(48%) believe that if a country files a complaint against Mexico at the WTO and it rules against it, Mexico should comply. This may reflect dissatisfaction with existing rules rather than a blanket preference for non-compliance with adverse rulings. Only 28% believe that Mexico should not comply, and a significant 16% (24% in the north) volunteered an “it depends” response. As with other issues reported earlier, Mexicans qualify their multilateral principles with their pragmatism of what is “best” for Mexico in a particular situation.

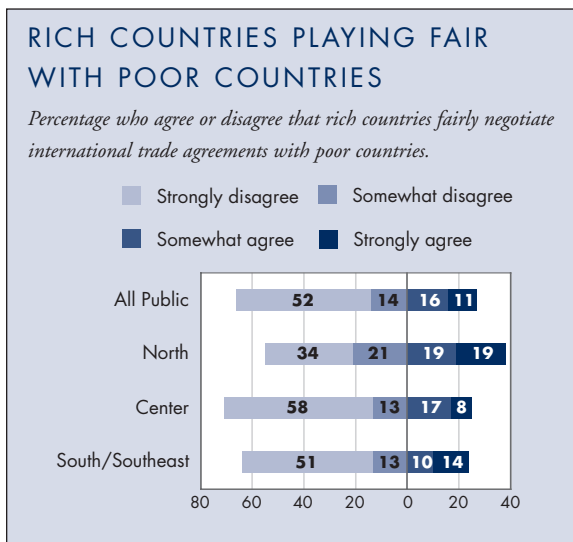


Figure 3-9

A majority of Mexicans (67%) agree that countries that are part of international trade agreements should be required to maintain minimum standards for working conditions, and an even higher percentage (76%) agree that countries that are part of such agreements should be required to maintain minimum standards for the protection of the environment. There is relatively less support in the northern border states than in the center states for linking trade with labor and environmental standards. Sixty-three percent in the north favor linking trade with labor standards versus 69% of those in the center; 69% in the north favor linking trade with environmental standards versus 79% of those in the center.

Given their qualms about economic globalization, the behavior of rich countries in trade negotiations, and

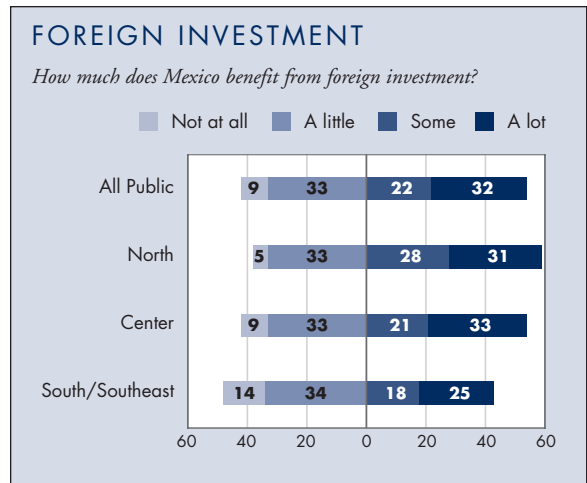


Figure 3-10

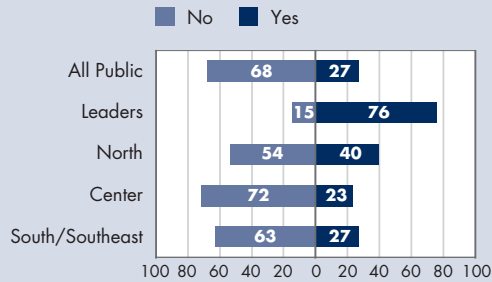
adverse WTO rulings, Mexican attitudes toward foreign investment are no surprise. While a majority (54%) of Mexicans do believe that Mexico benefits a lot or some from foreign investment, a significant number (42%) say that Mexico benefits little or not at all from such investment (Figure 3-10). They also have a relatively lukewarm opinion regarding multinational corporations (a 62-degree thermometer rating) compared to their ratings of other international organizations and groups (see Figure 3-1).

Mexicans’ reservations about the benefits of foreign investment correspond to their feelings about foreign investment in different sectors of the economy. A majority of Mexicans are opposed to foreign investment

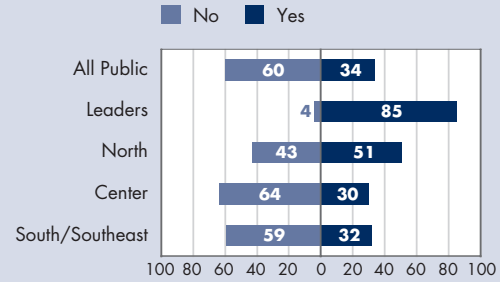
FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Percentage who say the Mexican government should or should not permit foreigners to invest in the following.

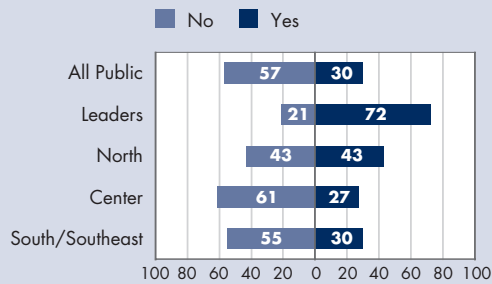
OIL PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION



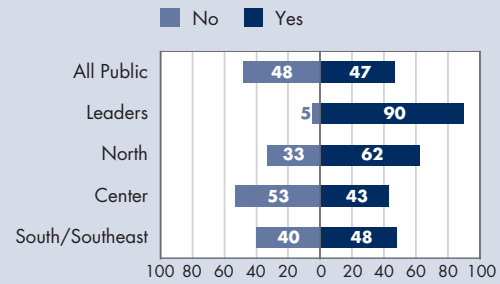
ELECTRICITY AND GAS



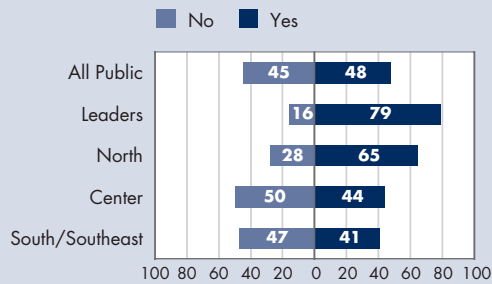
GOVERNMENT BONDS SUCH AS CETES



INFRASTRUCTURE—ROADS, PORTS, ETC.



MEDIA—TV NETWORKS, NEWSPAPERS



TELECOM—SUCH AS TELMEX OR AVANTEL

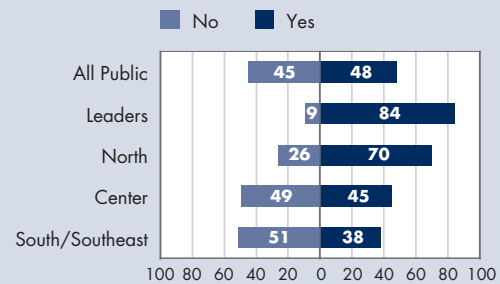


Figure 3-11

in electricity and gas (60%), oil production and distribution (68%), and government bonds (57%). Yet, they are divided on other sectors such as telecommunications, media companies, and infrastructure. Forty-eight percent favor foreign investment in telecommunications companies such as Telmex or Avantel, but 45% oppose it. Forty-seven percent believe that the government should permit foreign investment in infrastructure, and 48% believe it should not. Forty-eight percent say foreign investment should be permitted in media companies such as television networks and newspapers, but 45% say it should not (Figure 3-11).

Regional differences are very striking for this politically sensitive issue. In the north, a majority favor foreign investment in telecommunications (70%), electricity and gas (51%), media companies (65%), and infrastructure (62%). Northern border state residents are divided on foreign investment in government bonds such as Cetes: 43% say it should be permitted, and 43% say it should not. Only regarding oil production and distribution do a majority of northerners (54%) oppose foreign investment. The differences of opinion are especially stark when comparing residents of the northern border states with those of the central states.

For those items in which a majority in the north favor foreign investment, there is an average 22 percentage point difference between opinions in the north and those in the center of the country.

In short, Mexicans are divided in their opinions on economic globalization, they do not believe that rich countries negotiate fairly on trade with poor countries, they have reservations about complying with adverse rulings at the WTO, but are nevertheless very keen on promoting Mexican exports. Mexicans also believe that countries that are part of international trade agreements

should maintain minimum standards for working conditions as well as minimum environmental standards. They have very strong reservations on liberalizing foreign investment, especially regarding oil production and distribution, but the differences of opinion between those living in the northern border states (who favor of foreign investment in all sectors covered by the survey, except oil) and those living in the center states (where there is no majority in support for foreign investment in any sector) is noteworthy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Other Relations

It is a long-standing goal of Mexican policy to diversify its foreign relations and reduce its dependence on the United States, although this goal's importance has been variable over time, becoming more important when Mexico's relations with the United States have been particularly intense or frequent. The survey asked Mexicans to rank various reasons for diversifying foreign relations.

Thirty-eight percent of Mexicans rank the opening of new markets and sources of foreign investment as the most important reason for diversifying Mexico's foreign relations, while 32% rank the reduction of dependence on the United States as the number one reason. Enabling Mexico to negotiate better deals in international organizations is not an important reason at all,

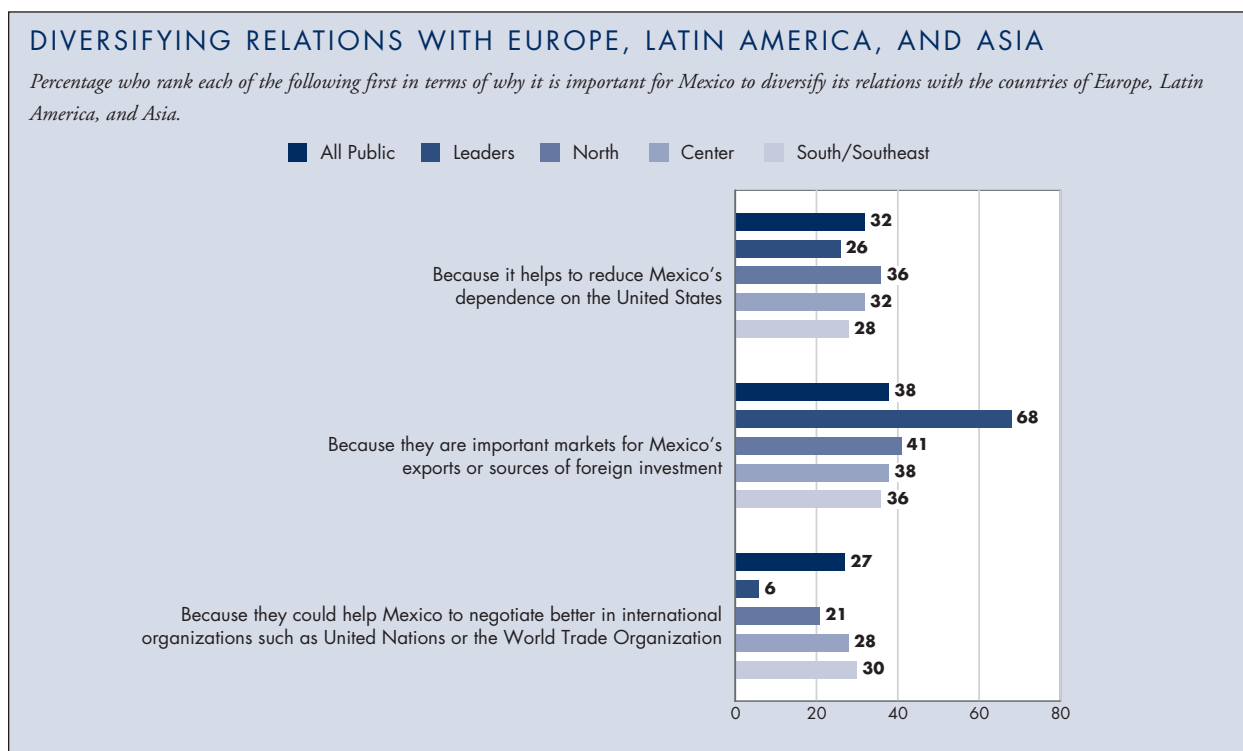


Figure 4-1

with 40% of Mexicans ranking it last in importance (Figure 4-1).

A key question then for Mexican foreign policy is where to concentrate its diversification efforts. When asked to which group of countries (Latin America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, or Africa) Mexico should pay more attention, more Mexicans say Latin America (44%) than any other, with Europe second (25%). While all regions respond quite similarly for Latin America (44% in the northern border states, 44% in the south and southeastern states, and 43% in the center states), opinions vary much more regarding Europe. Twenty-nine percent of respondents in the center states say Mexico should pay more attention to Europe, whereas only 18% of those in the northern border states and 13% of those in the south and southeastern states do so (Figure 4-2). Mexicans display little interest in relations with Asian and Middle Eastern nations (4% say they should get more attention, with very little regional variation), though residents of the northern border states are somewhat more inclined toward rela-

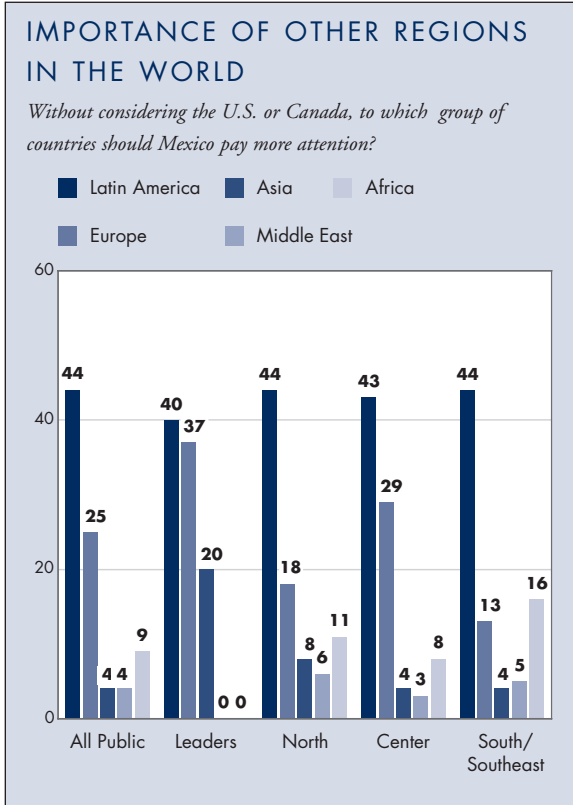


Figure 4-2

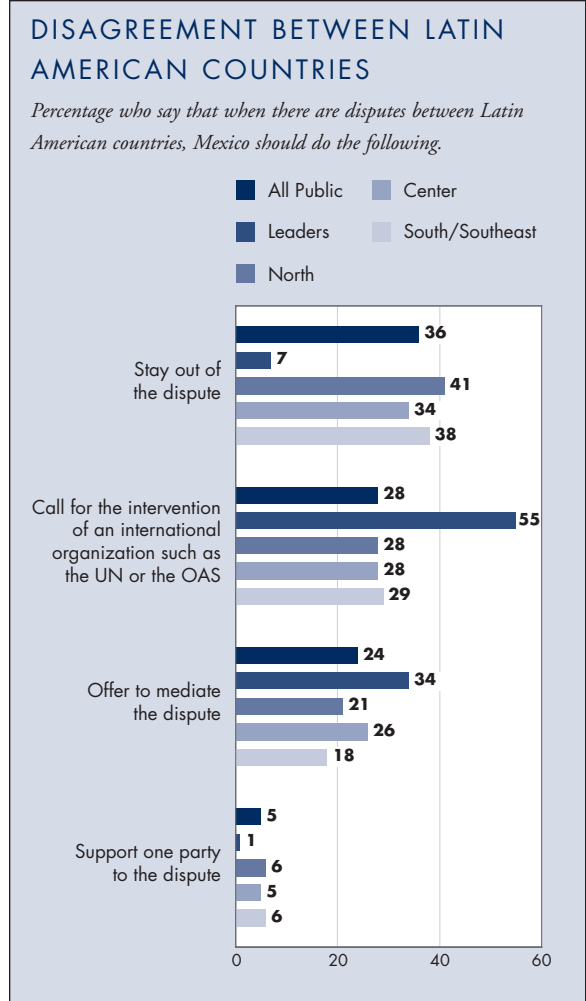


Figure 4-3

tions with Asian countries (8% more attention). Moreover, Mexicans are more likely to say African countries deserve more attention than Asian and Middle Eastern ones, with 9% of the national sample responding that way (16% of southern and southeastern states and 11% of those in the northern border states). Africa's surprising numbers are likely another expression of the solidarity Mexicans feel with the less privileged in the world.

When asked about the role Mexico should play when there are disputes between Latin American countries, a majority (52%) favor an active diplomatic role, though they are divided over multilateral versus unilateral mediation strategies. Twenty-four percent think Mexico should offer to mediate the disputes, while 28% think it should call for the intervention of an interna-

tional organization such as the United Nations or the Organization of American States. On the other hand, a sizable minority (36%) prefer to remain disengaged from international disputes even within Latin America (Figure 4-3).

Although Mexicans believe that foreign policy should pay more attention to relations with Latin American countries, when asked about their feelings toward these countries they are surprisingly neutral. Mexicans appear to have more favorable feelings toward countries that are economically successful than they do toward those with which they most want to engage diplomatically. The survey asked respondents to rate their feelings toward several countries on a thermometer scale of 0 to 100, with zero meaning extremely cold feelings, 100 meaning extremely warm feelings, and 50 meaning neutral feelings. The United States and Japan lead the list with average ratings of 68 degrees and median ratings of 75 degrees (Figure 4-4). Surprisingly, Mexicans are more likely to have favorable feelings toward China than toward Brazil, even though 48% of Mexicans think that the development of China as a world power is a critical threat to the vital interests of Mexico in the next 10 years (see Figure 2-2). On the other hand, Mexicans reveal relatively unfavorable attitudes toward Guatemala and Cuba, with only Israel and Iraq behind them.

On the issue of trade relations, most Mexicans favor the main free trade agreements signed by Mexico in recent years. Sixty-four percent favor the North America Free Trade Agreement, 70% favor the free trade agreement with Chile, and 79% are in favor of the agreement with European countries. This support for free trade is also evident in the question about foreign policy goals (see Figure 2-6), in which a striking 85% of Mexicans rate promoting the sale of Mexican products in other countries as a very important goal, as reported earlier. When asked about the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), a majority of Mexicans support it (62% favor it, and 19% oppose it), though this is somewhat less than for the other free trade agreements.

Even though Mexicans support extending trade relations in the Americas, 39% say that an agreement

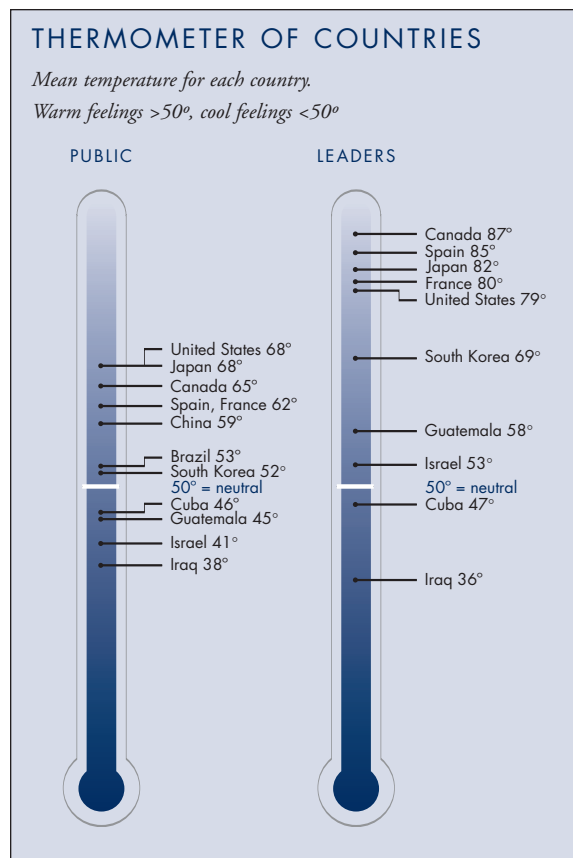


Figure 4-4

with Central America to promote the development of these countries and the southeast part of Mexico would provide little benefit to Mexico if this would mean reducing the resources for the development of other regions in Mexico. Only 36% believe that it would benefit Mexico a lot or somewhat. Even people in the southern and southeastern states, who are those most likely to enjoy the benefits of this agreement, perceive this agreement as offering little or no benefit to their country (48%), versus only 37% who say it would provide a lot or some benefit.

CHAPTER FIVE

Relations with the United States

Cooperation, drug trafficking, and migration

Mexico's most important bilateral relationship is with the United States. The United States is the destination of about 90% of its exports. Approximately 10 million Mexican citizens live in the United States and roughly 25 million residents of the United States are of Mexican origin.

The intensity of Mexico's relationship with the United States is mirrored in opinions on foreign policy goals. The four goals receiving the largest majorities as very important goals—protecting the interests of Mexicans living in other countries, promoting the sale of Mexican products in other countries, stopping the flow of illegal drugs to the United States, and combating international terrorism—all concern U.S.–Mexican relations (see Figure 2-6). Achieving these goals requires cooperation between the United States and Mexico, albeit history and culture make this cooperation more difficult.

Mexico's history with the United States—particularly the 1847 war in which half of Mexico's territory was lost to the United States, U.S. military and political interventions during the early part of the twentieth century and during the Mexican Revolution, Mexico's expropriation of oil from its foreign (mostly U.S.) owners, and Mexico's sympathy with the Cuban Revolution

during the height of the Cold War—helped create animosity toward the United States. Yet other factors may partially mitigate the negative historical influences on Mexican feelings toward the United States, such as sustained immigration from Mexico to the United States, relatively integrated and fast-growing border cities, American cultural influences, and, more recently, NAFTA and increased economic integration between the two countries.

Surprisingly, Mexican feelings toward the United States in general terms are very favorable. The average thermometer rating is 68 degrees, and 50% of Mexicans rate the United States at 75 degrees or higher, the most favorable feelings toward any country asked about in the survey except Japan, which also receives a mean 68 degrees (see Figure 4-4). Mexican attitudes and perceptions of the United States, however, are much more mixed than these generally favorable feelings indicate.

First, there are important regional differences in feelings toward the United States. Residents of the northern border states have a more positive attitude toward the United States on a variety of questions, as would be expected due to their greater exposure to some of the more recent positive influences in U.S.–Mexico relations, than do residents in the south and southeastern and center states. Secondly, the very favorable feelings in general terms are not matched on questions about specific issues and feelings.

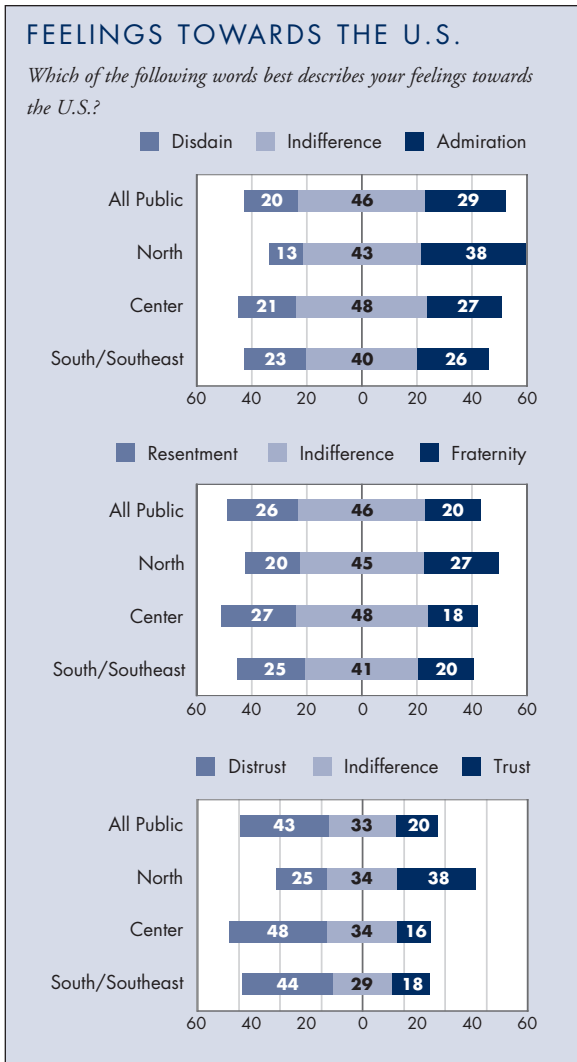


Figure 5-1

Mexicans do not believe that the United States is having a generally positive influence in the world, as reported in Chapter 3. Only 20% of Mexicans trust the United States, and 43% distrust it. However, 38% of residents in the northern border states trust the United States and only 25% distrust it (Figure 5-1). Twenty percent of Mexicans feel fraternity or empathy towards the United States and 26% resent it, whereas in the northern border states 27% feel fraternity or empathy and 20% resent it. Yet, more Mexicans admire the United States (29%) than feel disdain toward it (20%). Northern border state residents are even more positive, with 38% admiring the United States and 13% disdain it.

Regardless of how they feel about the United States, Mexicans appear to be pragmatic. Mexicans want

a high level of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no cooperation and 10 is complete cooperation, Mexicans prefer a level of seven, on average (Figure 5-2). The average level of cooperation preferred by northern border residents is higher at eight, as might be expected given their proximity to the United States and the greater effect that border issues have on their daily lives. It appears that Mexicans favor the National Action Party's (PAN) approach to cooperation with the United States. In terms of its position on cooperation with the United States, Mexicans give the PAN an average of seven, whereas the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) position scores an average of six and the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) scores only five.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Mexicans are especially willing to cooperate on measures to combat terrorism. Eighty-seven percent believe Mexico should increase controls on the movement of goods through Mexico's border, ports and airports, 84% believe it should increase Mexico's entrance and exit requirements

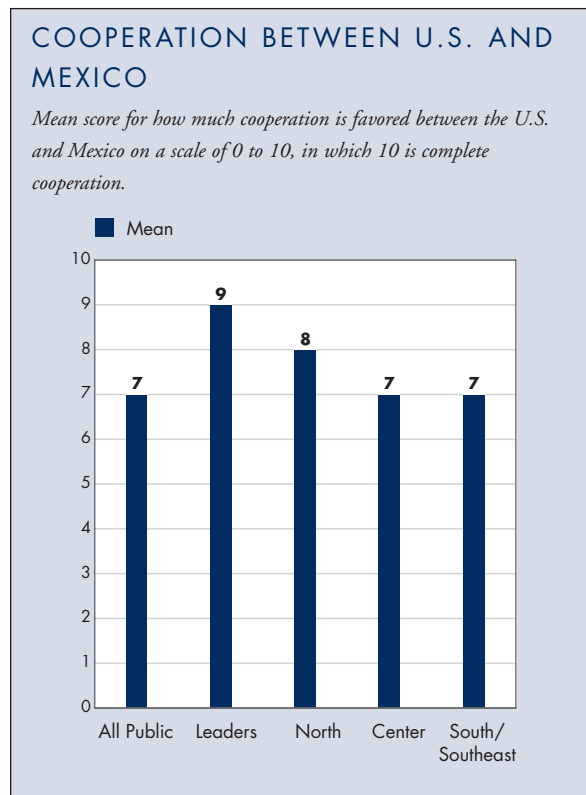


Figure 5-2

MEXICO-U.S. JOINT DECISION MAKING

Percentage who agree or disagree that when dealing with common problems the U.S. and Mexico should be more willing to make decisions jointly even if this means Mexico will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not what it would have preferred.

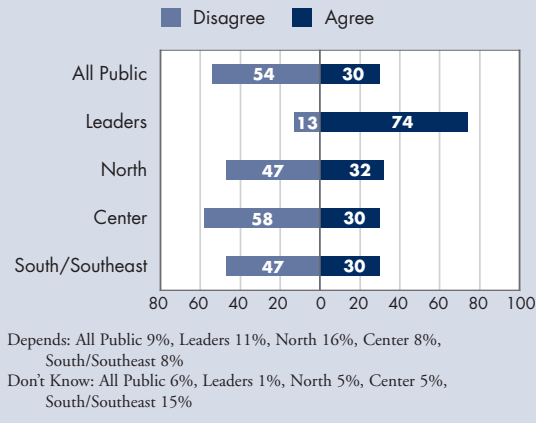


Figure 5-3

for people from other countries, and, as mentioned previously, a significant 59% are willing to permit American agents to participate with Mexican agents in guarding Mexico's airports, ports, and borders.

Nevertheless, Mexicans' views on cooperation with the United States are somewhat contradictory. Mexicans disagree (54%) that the United States and Mexico should be more willing to make decisions jointly when dealing with common problems even if this means that Mexico will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not what it would have preferred, with only 30% agreeing (Figure 5-3). Residents of the center states are more likely to disagree (58%) than are those living in the northern border states (47%).

Mexicans are willing to assign themselves greater responsibility than the United States to solve a problem (Figure 5-4), if the problem originates in Mexico. A majority of Mexicans (54%) say that Mexico has more responsibility for dealing with the problem of undocumented Mexican migrants entering the United States, a plurality (41%) say that Mexico has more responsibility for undocumented migrants from other countries entering the United States from Mexico, and 38%, also a plurality, say Mexico is more responsible for dealing with drug trafficking from Mexico to the United States.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMON U.S.-MEXICO PROBLEMS

Percentage who say the United States or Mexico should be more responsible for dealing with each of the following problems.

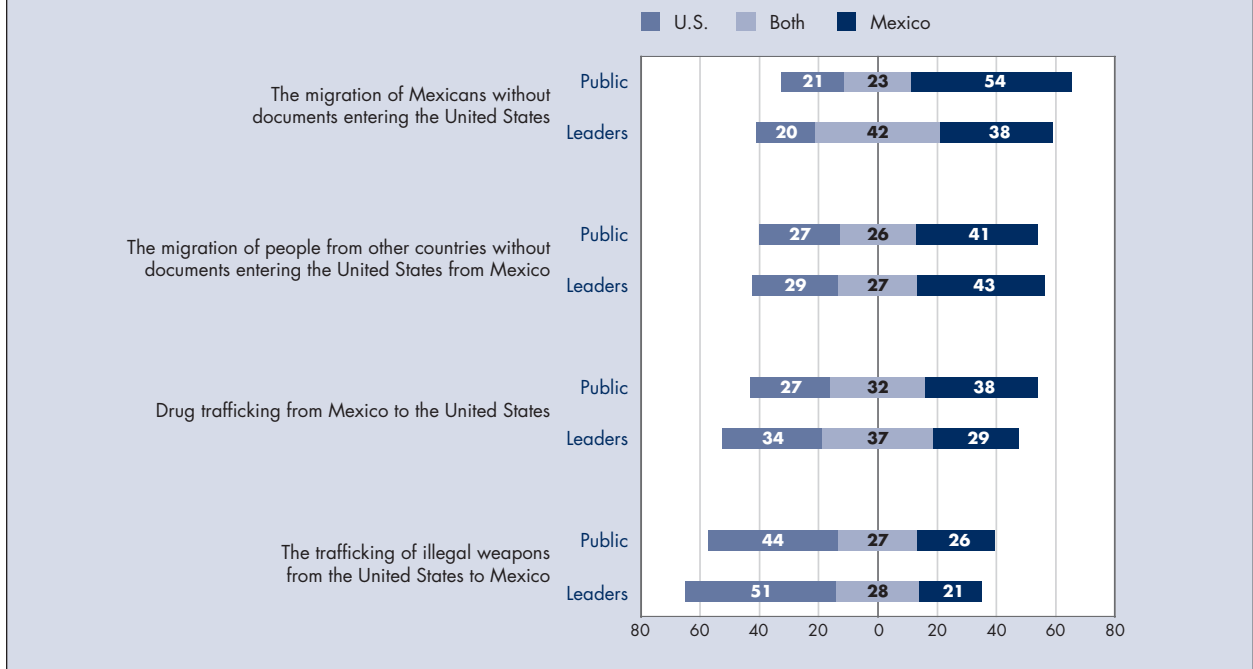


Figure 5-4

Interestingly, a plurality (44%) believes that the United States has greater responsibility than Mexico for dealing with the trafficking of weapons from the United States, where they are legal, to Mexico, where they are illegal. Northern border state residents are less likely to say that Mexico has more responsibility and more likely to volunteer the answer that both countries are responsible, a response consistent with their greater willingness for the United States and Mexico to make decisions jointly when dealing with common problems.

One of the most prominent issues on the Mexican foreign policy agenda is Mexican migration to the United States. As reported earlier, protecting the interests of Mexicans in other countries ranks first in the percent of Mexicans who believe it to be a very important foreign policy goal. The Fox government has given this issue a great deal of its attention, actively seeking an immigration agreement with the United States in the early days of the Bush administration and negotiating, pressuring, and working with the U.S. government on a myriad of migration-related issues. Mexicans approve of the government's efforts: 64% agree or partially agree with the manner in which the Mexican government is treating the problem of immigrant workers with the U.S. government. In the northern border states 74% agree or partially agree, whereas in the center states only 62% agree overall.

Securing a migration agreement with the United States may involve a trade-off. While Mexicans appear to want a migration agreement, they are not willing to cede some of their most important principles. When asked if they would favor a migration agreement with the United States in which the United States would give Mexicans greater opportunities to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico giving the United States greater access to Mexico's oil, gas, and electricity, an overwhelming 71% of Mexicans say they would not (Figure 5-5). Opinion is strongest in the center states, where 76% say they would oppose such an agreement, compared to 60% opposed in the north and 61% in the south and southeast. This is one of the few questions in which Mexicans in the northern border states and south and southeastern states both diverge

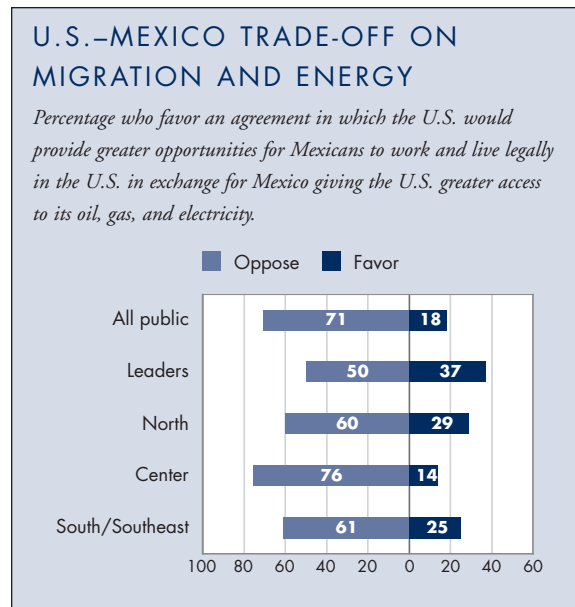


Figure 5-5

from the national average in the same direction, although this may well be for different reasons. Those in the north consistently respond more favorably than the rest of the country toward the United States and cooperation with it. Mexicans living in the south and southeast, who generally show a greater wariness of relations with the United States as well as with the world in general, may be less opposed because of the great benefits they might receive from a migration agreement.

Some confirmation of this is found in responses to two questions about migration agreements. When asked if they would favor or oppose Mexico participating as an ally with the United States in a military conflict in exchange for a migration agreement, 73% of Mexicans oppose such an agreement. In the south and southeast 58% oppose such an agreement, while in the north 68% oppose it and in the center 78% are opposed. Again, those in the north and those in the south and southeast are less likely to oppose the agreement than those in the center.

Mexicans respond much more positively to a proposal in which the United States would provide greater opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico making greater efforts to reduce illegal migration and drug trafficking to the United States. Seventy percent say they would favor

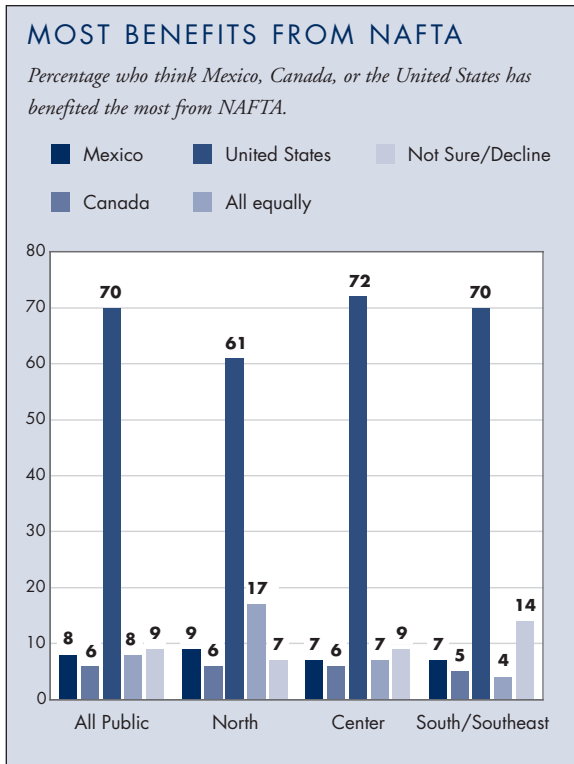


Figure 5-6

such an agreement and only 20% would oppose it. In this case, while northerners (79%) and those in the south and southeast (72%) are both a bit more likely to support such an agreement than those in the center (68%), these differences in attitudes, and particularly the rare convergence of opinion in the north and south and southeast, are not as striking as in the case of the other two trade-offs asked about in the survey.

Economic relations and NAFTA

It is easy to forget that in the not too distant past—in the early 1980s—Mexico had a closed economy, and the government nationalized the banks and imposed exchange controls. Only 10 years later it was negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States and Canada, which Mexico hoped would foster foreign investment in Mexico through more stable trade relations and through guaranteed access to the U.S. market.

A majority of Mexicans (70%), however, say that the United States is the country that has benefited the most from NAFTA, while only 8% of them believe that

Mexico has benefited the most (Figure 5-6). Mexicans nevertheless do not view NAFTA in zero-sum terms. While a majority (78%) believes that NAFTA is good for the U.S. economy, pluralities also believe that it is good for the Mexican economy (44%), for Mexican businesses (50%), for job creation in Mexico (49%), and for the standard of living of people like themselves (41%). Opinion is split regarding the effect of NAFTA on the environment, with 39% believing it is good, and an equal percentage saying it is bad. A plurality (49%) take the view that NAFTA has been bad for the agrarian sector (Figure 5-7).

Regionally, the northern border states have the most positive view of NAFTA, while the southern and southeastern states and the center have more lukewarm opinions toward it. A majority of Mexicans in the northern border states believe that NAFTA is good for the Mexican economy (55%), for Mexican businesses (56%), for job creation in Mexico (60%), and for their own standard of living (51%). In the rest of the country there is no majority that believes that NAFTA is beneficial for Mexico in terms of the environment, the Mexican economy, their standard of living, job creation, Mexican businesses, or the agrarian sector.

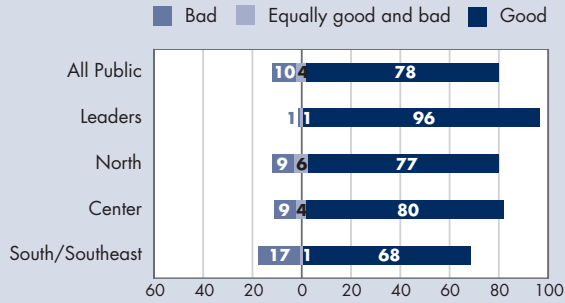
Despite clear regional divisions in terms of opinions on NAFTA and the belief that the United States and U.S. businesses have benefited the most from the agreement, a majority of Mexicans (64%) support NAFTA. In the north and northern border states a full 76% favor it, and in the other two regions a majority also favors NAFTA (Figure 5-8).

Mexican support for NAFTA may be related to beliefs that it provides Mexico with an opportunity to seek special treatment from the United States, even at the expense of coordinating positions with its other NAFTA partner, Canada, to gain leverage in negotiations with the United States. A majority of Mexicans (51%) believe that Mexico should seek special treatment directly from the United States as opposed to coordinating its positions with Canada in order to defend its interests against the United States. Those living in the northern border states generally have the most positive view of relations with the United States, are the most

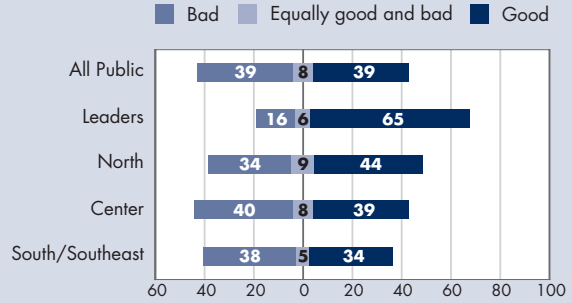
BENEFITS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Percentage who think the North American Free Trade Agreement, also known as NAFTA, is good or bad for the following.

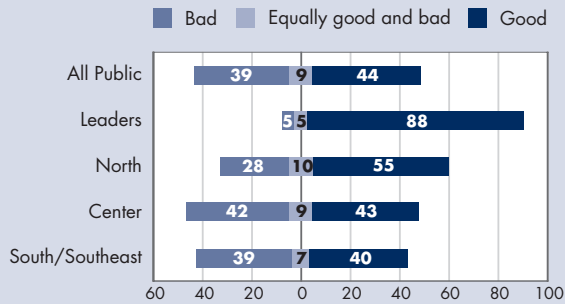
THE U.S. ECONOMY



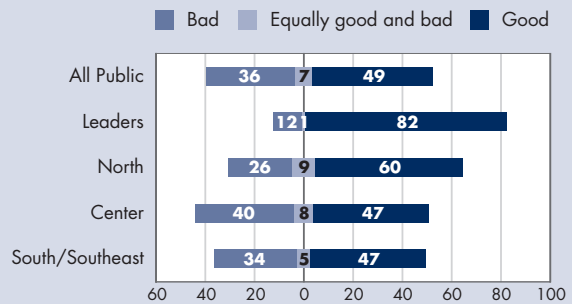
THE ENVIRONMENT



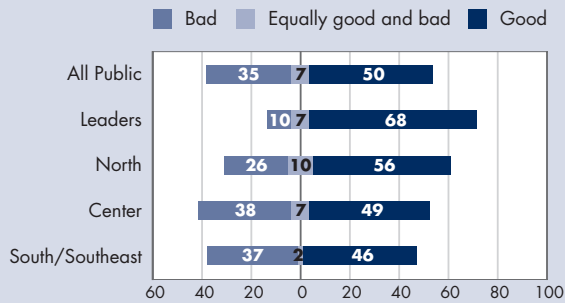
THE MEXICAN ECONOMY



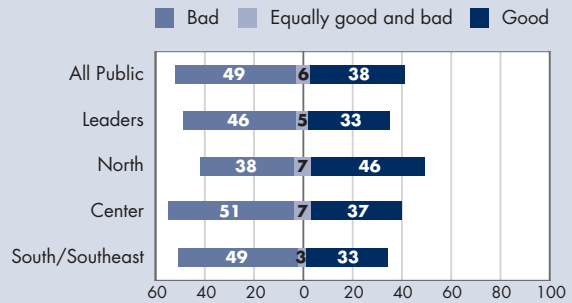
JOB CREATION IN MEXICO



MEXICAN BUSINESSES



THE MEXICAN AGRARIAN SECTOR



THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF MEXICAN PEOPLE LIKE YOU

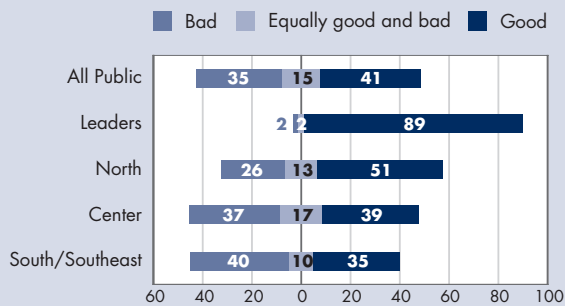


Figure 5-7



Figure 5-8

open to foreign investment, and evince a more pragmatic stance compared to the more ideologically based preferences of Mexicans in the center and the more cautious stances of residents of the southern and southeastern states. However, on this question Mexicans in the south and southeast have a stronger preference for special bilateral deals with the United States (62% in favor compared with 52% in the north and 48% in the center) as opposed to coordinating Mexico's positions with Canada. This illustrates, perhaps, the desire of even the most cautious Mexicans to be pragmatic and play the best hand they are given by seeking preferential treat-

ment from the United States whenever possible.

While a majority of Mexicans prefer dealing bilaterally with the United States than coordinating positions with Canada, it is unclear that bargains can be struck to address issues that concern each country. As mentioned previously, while Mexicans are very interested in protecting the interests of Mexicans in other countries, most of whom live in the United States (the top foreign policy goal), they do not favor an agreement giving the United States greater access to Mexico's oil, gas, and electricity in exchange for greater opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States (see Figure 5-5). When asked a similar question regarding greater U.S. access to Mexican oil, gas, and electricity in exchange for greater financing of Mexico's economic development, the opposition is just as strong (70%) (Figure 5-9).

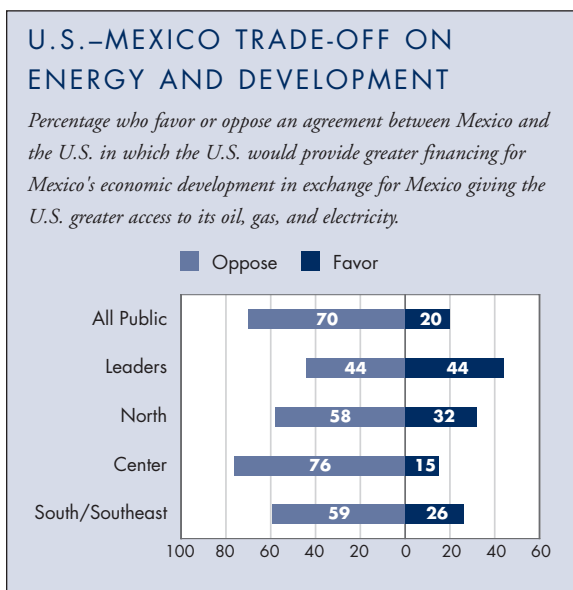


Figure 5-9

CHAPTER SIX

Leader Opinions and Public Policy Implications of the Study

Mexico's new democratic environment has had important implications for conducting and making foreign policy. Today, policymaking involves more than the traditional interrelationship of the president, a rubber-stamping Congress, and few organized interests on issues that are not visible to the majority of Mexicans. Democratization in Mexico has created a broader political environment in which contending elites compete for support before a national audience over the country's foreign policy direction and the potential impact of foreign policy actions. Public discussion among opposing elites and the use of intensive mass media campaigns allow for increased public engagement. Consequently, the public has become an influential participant. From a policy perspective, this new engagement augments the importance of public-leader agreement versus disagreement. From the point of view of representative democracy, any deep divide between Mexican leaders and the public would cast doubt on the responsiveness of the nascent democratic regime in Mexico.

This chapter examines the attitudes of a set of influential foreign policy leaders and assesses whether

these attitudes align with those of the general public. The leaders surveyed agree with the majority of Mexicans on a number of issues, including some that are controversial in policymaking circles. On other issues, however, this consensus falls apart. Some divergences likely reflect informational differences, but others appear to reflect genuine discrepancies between the values and interests of foreign policy leaders and those of Mexican citizens.

It is important to note that the leader sample is not representative of Mexico's full range of leaders. Rather, it is a sample made up of members of the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI),¹ all of whom have an interest in foreign affairs and have been involved in foreign policymaking discussion and processes in Mexico.²

The making of foreign policy and the new democratic environment

The new democratic environment in Mexico is characterized by division within the government. For the first

¹ COMEXI is a pluralistic, multidisciplinary forum for debate and analysis on the role of Mexico in the world. The Council is an independent, nonprofit forum with no government or institutional ties and is financed exclusively by membership dues and corporate support (<http://www.consejomexicano.org>).

² CIDE attempted to contact by telephone all 176 members of COMEXI who are Mexican and living in Mexico of a total membership of 230, 82 of which answered the survey between July 13 and August 12, 2004. The leaders sampled have high levels of education compared to the general public: 79% hold graduate degrees. They were also much more likely to be male: 76% of the

respondents are men and 24% are women. They were drawn from distinct groups: administration officials belonging to different ministries as well as other agencies dealing with foreign policy; members of Congress (Senators and Deputies) or their staff; state government officials or staff and administrators; active members of Mexico's political parties; business and financial executives; university faculty and researchers; leaders of organizations active in foreign affairs; top executives of consulting firms; journalists from Mexico's major newspapers as well as writers and staff of major magazines and foreign policy publications; and leaders of trade associations.

INFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND GROUPS ON FOREIGN POLICY

Mean level of influence that the following people or groups should have on foreign policy, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 meaning extremely influential.

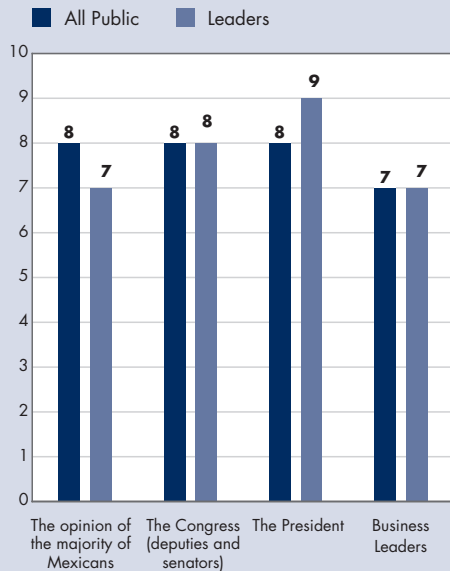


Figure 6-1

time in the process of making foreign policy in Mexico, Congress is contesting existing and proposed policies. This debate has increased the visibility of the issues and increased the engagement of other actors such as administration officials, state governments, and business leaders with the public.

Given this new environment, the survey asked Mexicans how much influence they think various actors should have in shaping foreign policy. In terms of rating on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means “should have no influence” and 10 means “should be extremely influential,” both leaders and the public give the president the highest score (Figure 6-1). It is worth noting that in the context of this new representative democracy, Congress receives the same score in terms of preferred influence on foreign policy as the opinion of the majority of Mexicans. The business sector ranks last in both the leader and public surveys.

While leaders and the public agree that the president should exercise the most influence on Mexico’s foreign policy, they also support checks and balances on

that influence. A full majority of Mexicans favor Congressional supervision and approval of presidential action that deals with fundamental or core issues of foreign policy. The results show that 90% of leaders and 83% of the general public agree that the president needs Congress’s approval for declaring war; and 82% of the leaders and 84% of the public support Congressional approval for negotiating treaties and international agreements.

It is noteworthy that there is a significant divide between the leaders and public opinion regarding Congressional approval of less fundamental issues like the decision of the president to travel abroad. In contrast to the general public, 68% of leaders say that the president should travel without Congressional approval, while 79% of the general public says that the president should only travel with Congressional approval. Leaders overall seem to be more supportive of presidential empowerment when it comes to foreign affairs. When asked whether or not the president needs Congressional approval to make important decisions in international organizations, a large majority of leaders (63%) say that they oppose the need for Congressional approval before presidential action.

In general terms, there is a significant leader-public divide regarding the performance of the Mexican gov-

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT’S PERFORMANCE ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS

Percentage who agree or disagree with the Mexican government’s performance on foreign policy matters.

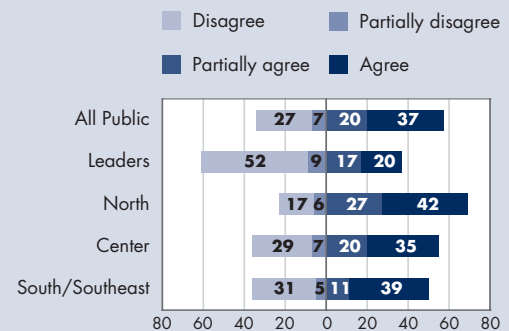


Figure 6-2

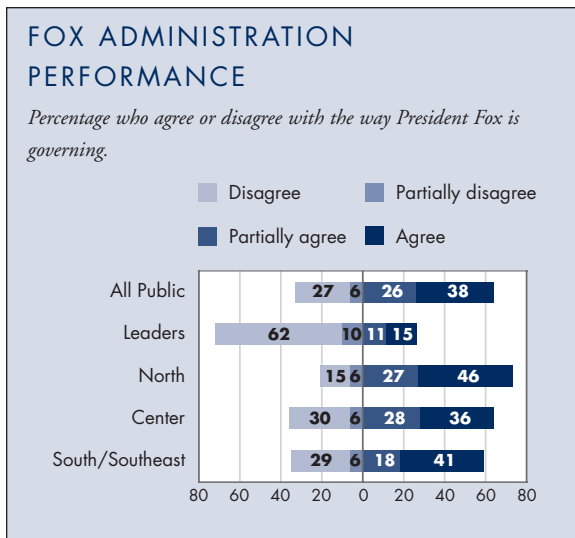


Figure 6-3

ernment on foreign policy matters (Figure 6-2). Sixty-one percent of the leaders disagree or partially disagree with the way the government is conducting international affairs, whereas only 34% of the public disagree or partially disagree, with 57% of the public agreeing or partially agreeing with the government’s foreign policy performance. On a more general question about the current administration’s performance, the divide of opinion is again quite substantial: 62% of the leaders versus 27% of the public disagree with the way President Fox is governing (Figure 6-3).

Agreement on foreign policy goals

In contrast to different perceptions of overall foreign policy performance and governing in general, the public and leaders converge in their opinions of “very important” foreign policy goals, with the same three goals topping both lists. Large majorities of leaders (94%) and the public (85%) favor promoting the sale of Mexican products in other countries, 93% of leaders and 88% of the general public favor protecting the interests of Mexicans living abroad, and 83% of both leaders and public favor stopping the flow of illegal drugs.

It is worth noting that helping to bring democracy to other countries ranks last on the list of foreign policy considered very important for both leaders and public: 55% of Mexicans say that engaging in activities to bring

democracy to other countries is a very important goal, and only 27% of the leaders say this. Moreover, only 42% of leaders support UN Security Council action to restore by force a democratic government that has been overthrown. Leader’s low level of support for intervening to promote democracy in other countries follows Mexico’s traditional diplomatic principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other countries.

Agreement on an independent, nonaligned foreign policy

Both leaders and the public strongly support an independent foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States. By an overwhelming 89%, both leaders and citizens think that as a general rule when it comes to international issues, Mexico should have an independent foreign policy rather than follow the U.S. lead. Eighty-one percent of the leaders and 73% of the general public also oppose Mexico participating as an ally with the United States in a military conflict in exchange for a migration agreement between Mexico and the United States. This suggests that Mexicans of both groups are willing to maintain an independent foreign policy even when important issues such as migration are at stake.

Agreement on authorization by the Security Council on the use of force

There is also substantial convergence among the public and the leaders on support for a UN peacekeeping force, and both support—indeed, overwhelmingly support—the UN’s right to authorize the use of force. Fully 92% of the leaders and 79% of the public think the Security Council should be able to authorize the use of force to prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide; 75% of the public and 76% of the leaders support UN authorization of force to stop a country from supporting terrorist groups; and 79% and 74% of leaders and the public, respectively, support the UN authorizing force to defend a country that has been attacked.

This support by both leaders and public for the UN authorizing force, however, does not translate into

support for Mexico participating in UN peacekeeping. When asked if Mexico should participate in a UN peacekeeping force or leave this type of activity to other nations, a bare majority of leaders (55%) say that Mexico should participate. This percentage is lower among the general public (48%). Nevertheless, these percentages might actually be higher if the approximately 10% of both leaders and public who volunteered the response “it depends on the circumstances” are taken into account.

Strong opposition for the U.S. role as a world policeman

When asked directly if the United States has the responsibility to play the role of “world policeman” and fight violations of international law and aggression around the world, virtually all of the leaders (99%) and a large majority of the Mexican public (72%) disagree. The high level of opposition to this powerful U.S. role is likely to be related to the 98% of leaders who think that the United States should participate with other countries rather than be the preeminent leader in solving international problems or stay out of most efforts to solve these problems. This leader percentage is significantly higher than the 55% of the Mexican public who say the United States should work with other countries in solving problems. It is interesting to note that while none of the leaders (0%) think the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems (10% for the public), leaders clearly want the United States engaged in world affairs. Only 1% say that the United States should stay out of most efforts to solve international problems (28% for the public).

Support for free trade agreements

As discussed in previous chapters, the majority of the Mexicans favor the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In terms of future free trade agreements, a solid majority of leaders (77%) and the public (62%) favor the possibility of having a Free Trade

Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) similar to the Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the United States, and Canada. This is likely related to the fact that both leaders and the public seem to have a positive view of the importance of diversifying Mexico’s economic relations with other countries and regions because they are important markets for Mexico’s exports or sources of foreign investment. Moreover, both leaders and the public rank Latin America as a region that deserves more attention than Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

It is worth noting that both leaders and the public agree that countries that are part of international trade agreements should be required to 1) maintain minimum standards in the working conditions of its workers (83% leaders and 67% public) and 2) maintain minimum standards for protection of the environment (84% leaders and 76% public).

Leader and general public disagreement on foreign policy

Although leaders share opinions with the general public on many issues, there are many issues upon which the foreign policy preferences of leaders and the public are at odds (Figure 6-4). A deep divide between Mexican leaders and the general public is important for two reasons. On one hand, it would signal problems of leadership. Because leaders are assumed to have more information, their role should be to help the general public understand their views when they differ from that of the public. To the extent that a deep divide exists between leaders and the public, leaders are not fulfilling their function. On the other hand, a deep divide that leaders do not respond to by educating the public or by adapting their own views to correspond more closely to those of the public would cast doubt on the extent of democratic responsiveness in foreign policymaking.

The evidence from our surveys indicates that there are many discrepancies between the foreign policy views of leaders and the Mexican public that in many cases are large. Some gaps probably reflect informational differences between leaders and citizens (suggesting a failure

of leaders to educate and persuade), while others probably reflect genuine differences in values and interests. Whether these differences in values and interests reduce democratic responsiveness has more to do with how leaders represent the public than with the mere fact that these differences exist.

More leaders embrace a “citizen of the world” identity

As discussed in Chapter 1, most Mexicans have strong nationalistic feelings. Moreover, more than half of Mexicans are fearful of cultural influences from other countries spreading throughout Mexico. Most leaders also have strong feelings of national identity. In contrast to the public, however, they do not seem to be fearful of cultural influences from other countries. In addition, while 68% of leaders define their identity as Mexican (64% for the public), 26% of the leaders versus 3% of the general public define their identity as “citizen of the world.”

Leaders are less pessimistic about the course of world affairs

As described in Chapter 2, Mexicans in general are not positive about the course of world events. Only 26% of Mexicans agree that the world is going in the right direction. By contrast, leaders are less negative about the state of world affairs: 44% say that the world is going in the right direction. Moreover, while fully half of Mexicans strongly disagree with the statement that the world is going in the right direction, only 28% of the leaders disagree.

Leaders are less alarmed by economic threats

While there is general agreement between leaders and members of the public regarding many of the critical threats, there is an important gap between them in the case of economic threats. While more than half (55%) of the Mexican public see competition from the United

States as a critical threat, only 11% of the leaders do. This could be explained by the strong network of economic interaction with the United States that these leaders are involved in or see as part of pragmatic policymaking in Mexican-U.S. relations.

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2, there seems to be a keen awareness among Mexicans of dangers from unstable international economic conditions, which could explain why 86% of the general public assert that the possibility of a world economic crisis is a threat to the country. Leaders, however, are less concerned about this potential threat. In sharp contrast to the public, fewer than half of the leaders (42%) view the possibility of a world economic crisis as a critical threat.

Greater leader support for globalization

A large gap exists on the idea that the increasing contact with other economies around the world—that is globalization—is good for Mexico. While the Mexican public is divided in their views regarding the effects of economic globalization (34% say it is mostly good and 31% say it is mostly bad), there is no division in the views of the leaders. Eighty-seven percent say that globalization is mostly good. Their high level of support for globalization could be explained by the greater exposure that leaders have to international trade and other economic interactions.

This high level of support is consistent with leader support for the North American Free Trade Agreement. There is a similar leader-public gap of more than 40 percentage points for perceptions of NAFTA as good for the Mexican economy and for job creation in Mexico. The Mexican public is much less likely than leaders to see any positive impact of NAFTA on the economy and job creation for Mexicans.

Greater leader support for foreign investment

The Mexican public has reservations on the benefits of foreign investment. A clear majority of Mexicans oppose foreign investment in electricity and gas (60%), oil pro-

THE PUBLIC AND LEADERS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Percentage who say the following.

| | PUBLIC | LEADERS |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Congress should give its approval before the president declares war | 83 | 90 |
| Congress should give its approval before the president negotiates treaties and international agreements | 84 | 82 |
| Congress should give its approval before the president travels abroad | 79 | 31 |
| Percentage who agree with the Mexican government's performance on foreign policy matters | 37 | 20 |
| Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries should be a very important foreign policy goal of Mexico | 66 | 48 |
| As a general rule, when it comes to international issues, Mexico should have an independent foreign policy | 89 | 89 |
| Mexico should participate as an ally with the United States in a military conflict in exchange for a migration agreement between Mexico and the United States | 17 | 6 |
| The United States has the responsibility to play the role of world policeman, that is, to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur | 18 | 0 |
| As the sole remaining superpower, the U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems | 10 | 0 |
| The U.S. should participate to solve international problems together with other countries | 55 | 98 |
| The U.S. should stay out of most efforts to solve international problems | 28 | 1 |
| Favor the possibility of having a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas similar to the Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the United States, and Canada. | 62 | 77 |
| Define their identity as "citizen of the world" | 3 | 26 |
| In general, the world is going in the right direction | 24 | 44 |
| Economic competition from the United States is a critical threat to the most important interests of Mexico in the next 10 years | 55 | 11 |
| World economic crisis is a critical threat to the most important interests of Mexico in the next 10 years | 86 | 42 |
| Increasing contact of our economy with others around the world, what is known as globalization, is mostly good for Mexico | 34 | 87 |
| The North American Free Trade Agreement is good for the standard of living of people like you | 41 | 89 |
| The North American Free Trade Agreement is good for the Mexican economy | 44 | 88 |
| The North American Free Trade Agreement is good for job creation in Mexico | 49 | 82 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in telecommunications companies | 48 | 84 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in electricity and gas | 34 | 85 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in oil production and distribution | 27 | 76 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in government bonds | 30 | 72 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in media companies | 47 | 79 |
| The Mexican government should permit foreigners to invest in infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports, and rail lines | 47 | 90 |
| In order to combat international terrorism, Mexico should permit American agents to participate with Mexican agents in guarding Mexico's airports, ports, and borders | 63 | 31 |
| It is better for the future of Mexico to take an active part in world affairs | 57 | 94 |
| The United Nations should have the power to regulate the international arms trade | 48 | 81 |
| Favor having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations | 64 | 82 |
| Mexicans accused of crimes against humanity who have not been tried in Mexico should be tried in the International Criminal Court | 42 | 90 |

Figure 6-4

| THE PUBLIC AND LEADERS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (continued) | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| <i>Percentage who say the following.</i> | | |
| | PUBLIC | LEADERS |
| When dealing with common problems, the U.S. and Mexico should be more willing to make decisions jointly, even if this means that Mexico will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not what it would have preferred | 30 | 74 |
| Oppose an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which the U.S. would provide greater financing for Mexico's economic development in exchange for Mexico giving the United States greater access to its oil, gas, and electricity | 70 | 44 |
| Oppose an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which the U.S. would provide greater opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico giving the U.S. greater access to its oil, gas, and electricity | 71 | 50 |
| Favor an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which U.S. would provide greater opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico making greater efforts to reduce illegal migration and drug trafficking into the United States | 70 | 88 |
| The position of the Mexican government toward the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba should be to stay on the margins | 66 | 18 |

Figure 6-4

duction and distribution (68%), and government bonds (57%). The difference of opinion between leaders and the general public are striking, especially taking into account that these are politically sensitive issues for both groups. Eighty-five percent of leaders favor foreign investment in electricity and gas, 76% favor foreign investment in oil production and distribution, and 72% favor foreign investment in government bonds. As described in Chapter 3, the Mexican public is divided between those who support and oppose foreign investment in areas such as telecommunications, media companies, and infrastructure. However, leaders are not divided, again showing high levels of support for foreign investment in those sectors.

Greater leader sensitivity to controversial measures for combating international terrorism

While both the general public and leaders take international terrorism very seriously, a significant majority of the general public (63%) favor a historically controversial measure of permitting American agents to participate with Mexican agents in the surveillance of Mexican boarders. The northern states have even a more favorable opinion, with 74% agreeing with this controversial measure. At odds with the general public and the residents of the center, south and southeast, and northern

regions, leaders take the traditionally defensive attitude of national sovereignty vis-à-vis Mexico's geographical position as neighbor of the United States. Sixty-one percent of leaders versus 31% of the members of the public strongly oppose allowing American agents to participate with Mexican agents in guarding Mexico's airports, ports, and borders.

More leaders embrace active internationalism

As also emphasized earlier, the majority of Mexicans (57%) support Mexico playing an active role in world affairs. Leaders are even more supportive of Mexico's active engagement in world affairs, with 94% favoring such an internationalist role. Moreover, while one-third of the general public believes that Mexico should stay out of world affairs, fewer than 5% of the leaders do. It is likely that leader's high level of contact with and knowledge of the world explains their more internationalist attitude compared to that of the public.

As Chapter 2 also points out, the majority of Mexicans (58%) are "light internationalists," who believe that Mexico should actively participate internationally only on those world problems that directly affect Mexico. Only one-third of the Mexican public can be considered "strong internationalists." By contrast, leaders seem to have a broader view of the role

that Mexico should be playing in the world. On a separate question not asked of the public, 67% of leaders believe that Mexico's role in the world should be as a promoter of multilateralism, including international law and multilateral institutions, and almost half of leaders believe that Mexico's role should be to promote and defend human rights around the world. This follows the principle-based perspective that places international rules, laws, and sovereignty as high objectives of Mexican foreign policy.

Leaders show a greater commitment towards strengthening the UN

There is substantial convergence of the public and leaders on support for an active Mexican role to strengthen the UN, with large majorities of leaders (78%) and the public (60%) responding that strengthening the U.N. is a very important foreign policy goal for Mexico. Yet, there is a sharp difference between them regarding specific proposals that have been made to strengthen the United Nations. Eighty-one percent of leaders favor giving the UN the power to regulate international arms trade, whereas only a bare plurality of the Mexican public (48%) favors this measure. Eighty-two percent of leaders versus 64% of the public favor having a standing UN peacekeeping force that is selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations, and 66% of leaders versus 43% of the public favor giving the UN the power to fund its activities by taxing such things as the international sale of arms or oil.

Leaders show a greater commitment towards multilateralism and international law

As described in Chapter 2, while Mexicans want Mexico's conflicts with other countries dealt with through international courts (60% favor bringing Mexico's disputes with other countries to international tribunals), they do not similarly want such bodies to interfere with how Mexico deals with issues involving its citizens. On this latter point there is a leader-public gap

of 48 percentage points, with leaders showing greater support for such bodies taking action involving Mexican citizens. Indeed, when asked if Mexicans accused of crimes against humanity such as genocide and torture who have not been tried in Mexico should be tried in the International Criminal Court, only 42% of the Mexican public agree that this should happen, compared to 90% of leaders who agree. This high level of support among leaders for actions by international organizations is very likely also related to the fact that 72% of leaders respond that the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of military force "to apply international law" (this item was not asked of the public).

Greater leader disposition to cooperate with the United States

When asked to rate their position regarding Mexico-U.S. relations on scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no cooperation and 10 is complete cooperation, 31% of leaders favor complete cooperation versus 16% of the public. The leader-public gap increases to 40 percent points among those who gave a score of 8 or higher. Divisions of opinion are also evident when it comes to cooperation to deal with common problems. When asked whether the United States and Mexico should be more willing to make decisions jointly even if this means that Mexico will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not what it would have preferred, an overwhelming majority of the Mexican leaders (74%) say that they agree versus 54% of the public who disagree with this position.

It is important to note, however, that in spite of the high level of support for cooperation by leaders, this group is evenly divided in the case of an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which the United States would provide greater financing for Mexico's economic development in exchange for Mexico giving the United States greater access to its oil, gas, and electricity. Opposition from leaders increases to more than 50% when they are asked about the possibility of an agreement between Mexico and the United States in

which the United States would provide opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico giving the United States greater access to its oil, gas, and electricity. The general public is not divided when responding to such trade-offs in which Mexico's energy resources would be opened to the United States. The public opposes both proposals by 70% and 71%, respectively.

Leaders and the general public do agree, however, on cooperating with the United States on the issue of drug trafficking. Regarding the possibility of an agreement between Mexico and the United States in which the United States would provide greater opportunities for Mexicans to work and live legally in the United States in exchange for Mexico making greater efforts to reduce illegal migration and drug trafficking into the United States, both leaders and the public have a favorable view, with 88% of leaders and 70% of the public supporting such an agreement.

Relations with Cuba

As discussed earlier, Mexicans have positive attitudes toward participating in international efforts to improve human rights in Cuba, and the same holds for the leaders: 71% of the leaders and 61% of the public agree with Mexico participating in such efforts. In spite of this support, however, Mexicans have negative opinions of the United States' trade embargo against Cuba. Only 14% of the public support it, while 11% condemn it, and 66% think that the Mexican government should stay on the margins. Leaders hold a much more negative view. Fully 77% condemn it, 18% think that the Mexican government should stay on the margins, and 4% support it.

Conclusions

Overall, the survey results show that there is substantial convergence between the views of the public and leaders on the most general aspects of Mexico's relations with world. Both have a pragmatic view of foreign policy goals. Both prefer an independent and nonaligned

diplomacy. Both want a pro-free trade foreign economic policy. Both oppose a unilateral U.S. role as superpower with few limits, and both support the multilateral use of force when necessary. Leaders and the general public support independent foreign policy decision-making processes based on the principles of self-determination and nonintervention. Both strongly reject any type of alliance with the United States and strongly oppose the U.S. role as world policeman.

However, there are many differences between the public and the leaders that reflect a substantial level of disagreement, using the criterion of more than a 15 percentage point difference. In general terms, leaders are more optimistic about the world, supportive of globalization and foreign investment, committed to multilateralism, strong internationalists, cooperative with the United States, and sensitive to changes in foreign policy traditions. The most important divide between leaders and the public is on the foreign policymaking process.

After 70 years of a dominant presidential system, the public appears to be demanding that the division of powers be respected. The public strongly favors a process of checks and balances on any presidential action, whereas the leaders are more selective about the need for Congressional supervision and approval of presidential action. Finally, the public wants a greater voice for itself in the foreign policymaking process.

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

For this first-time survey of Mexican public opinion on foreign policy issues, CIDE and COMEXI worked with a consortium of Mexican survey organizations who joined to conduct the general public survey from July 9 to July 19, 2004. The group, led by Ulises Beltrán, included Consulta, Ipsos-Bimsa, and Parametría. The survey was conducted by in-person (face-to-face) interviews based on a sample of the adult Mexican population aged 18 and older. In-person interviews were necessary because of the low rate of telephone and Internet penetration in Mexico.

The general public survey consists of 1,500 interviews based on a probabilistic sample design. Given the nature and objectives of the study to compare Mexicans' opinions across regions of the country, it was necessary to oversample the populations of the states in the north that border the United States and the relatively sparsely populated regions of the southeast. The resulting sample included 600 respondents in the six states of the north, 300 respondents in the seven states of the south and southeast, and 600 respondents in the remaining nineteen states constituting the country's center region.

The sample design was based on a list of 63,594 electoral sections defined by the Federal Election Institute for the 2003 Mexican federal elections. This design provides for an exhaustive and exclusive division of the population. The selection process used was multi-stage sampling, in which the first stage is the grouping or "conglomeration" of sections in the same state and township. This was done to reduce costs by reducing the geographic dispersion of the survey. The number of conglomerates per township increases with the popula-

tion size of the electoral list. This combining of sections produced 6,080 section conglomerates. The selection of 75 conglomerates was then done through random sampling with probabilities proportional to the size of the electoral list. The second stage consisted of choosing two electoral sections inside a conglomerate, selected through random sampling with probabilities proportional to the size of the sections. In the next stages, blocks and then residences were selected randomly with equal probabilities. Inside the residences respondents were chosen using quotas for age and sex based on known demographic characteristics, according to the 2000 Mexican Census. The overall survey response rate was 60%. The survey took from 25 minutes to 40 minutes to complete.

Because of the general public survey design, regional oversampling, and sample deviations from the distributions of age and sex, the data were weighted for the national and regional analyses based on the known demographic characteristics. There were, however, generally small differences between the weighted and unweighted results.

For the results based on the total national sample of 1,500 respondents, the sampling error for a 95% confidence interval is plus or minus 4 percentage points. Each regional sample has a larger sampling error. For the North it is plus or minus 6 points, for the southeast it is plus or minus 8 points, and for the center it is plus or minus 6 points. This margin of error does not include any additional error that can occur due to question wordings and other characteristics of the survey and interview process.

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