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## Mexico, the Americas and the World 2010 Foreign Policy: Public Opinion and Leaders

Importante

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## Executive summary

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The principal findings from the fourth edition of the survey *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* can be summarized in 11 key trends observed in Mexicans' international political culture and national mood. In general terms, the survey results suggest a portrait of a conflicted, indecisive Mexico in the year of the Bicentennial of Mexico's Independence and the Centennial of the Revolution.

- 1. A country largely nationalistic but unsatisfied, that shows signals of openness to the exterior.** Mexicans are proud of their nationality and identify as Mexicans first, but are unsatisfied with the achievements of their country over the 200 years since independence. The population is divided between symbolic nationalism and openness towards those foreign influences deemed to improve standards of living. Resistance to open the country culturally, economically, and politically has subtly but significantly loosened.
- 2. A country that is pessimistic and overwhelmed, but with aspirations.** Though the outside world is viewed with pessimism and apprehension, and direct contact with other countries through travel and family ties has indeed declined, Mexicans favor active international participation and aspire for Mexico to play a prominent role in the world.
- 3. A country interested in participating in global issues, but with a deficit of attention, reluctant to invest resources abroad, and unwilling to assume leadership.** Mexicans are uninformed about national or international politics, and are not willing to invest resources, assume responsibilities, or carry out international actions that imply costs or larger commitments.
- 4. A country confident in its soft power.** Both leaders and the public overwhelmingly favor the exercise of soft power and believe in its capacity to wield influence through cultural diplomacy and international trade. On the contrary, there is wide opposition to Mexico becoming a military power.
- 5. A country with a foreign policy synchronized with its own level of prestige and with the needs of its population.** Mexicans are more pragmatic than idealistic or altruistic about the threats and priorities for action abroad.
- 6. A country anchored in the Americas and positioned as a regional actor.** The aspirations, interests, priorities, and identities of Mexicans are concentrated almost exclusively in North America and Latin America. Mexico has positioned itself more as a regional actor with priorities centered in the western hemisphere.

- 7. A country without a global vision or perspective in Asia Pacific and Europe.** *There is little interest in other regions or countries outside of the American continent. In general, the population is concerned with neither emerging nor traditional powers. In the particular case of Asia Pacific, this disinterest reveals a lack of vision that prevents Mexicans from recognizing the opportunities and risks presented by changes in the global distribution of power and the emergence of Asia as the primary engine of global economic growth.*
- 8. A country of selective, superficial, and limited multilateralism.** *Mexicans trust multilateral organizations, even more than internal actors such as politicians, the police force, and the president. Nevertheless, they prioritize other objectives over strengthening the United Nations or Organization of American States. Mexico's multilateral commitment is superficial: Mexicans are unwilling to accept multilateral decisions or delegate authority when such action is viewed as contrary to national interests.*
- 9. A country that aspires to a special relationship with the United States.** *Mexicans would prefer to seek a separate agreement with the United States rather than coordinate with other countries that may have common interests based on geographical proximity or cultural bonds, such as Canada or Latin America. With the arrival of president Barack Obama, survey results reflect an improvement not only in the image of and trust towards the United States, but also in the possibilities for cooperation between the two nations.*
- 10. A country of migrants struggling to resolve its contradictions as both a destination for and source of immigration.** *Mexicans favor an immigration policy that is both comprehensive and open, centered on protecting migrants' rights and resolving the contradiction between the rights demanded for Mexican emigrants to other countries and the rights granted to immigrants in Mexico. Nevertheless, they are opposed to unrestricted immigration from Central America and to any Latin American integration that implies the free movement of individuals across the region.*
- 11. A country with dissolving regional differences, but with large gaps between socioeconomic groups and divisions among leaders.** *For the first time in the history of the survey differences in identity between the North, South, and Center of the country have fallen. Nevertheless, there are significant differences across gender, age, education, and income, as well as differences between the general public and leaders. Leaders are divided by party affiliation and profession, most prominently in their evaluation of the government's performance, attitudes toward foreign investment, and preferences towards cooperation with the United States.*

## Resumen ejecutivo

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Los hallazgos más interesantes del cuarto levantamiento de la encuesta México, las Américas y el Mundo se sintetizan en 11 rasgos y tendencias centrales que se observan en la cultura política internacional de los mexicanos y en el ánimo de la opinión nacional frente a un mundo incierto, vulnerable y cambiante. A grandes rasgos, los datos nos ofrecen el siguiente retrato de un México ambivalente en el año del Bicentenario de la Independencia y del Centenario de la Revolución:

- 1. Un país nacionalista, pero inconforme, que muestra indicios de apertura al exterior:** los mexicanos se muestran orgullosos e identificados con su nacionalidad, aunque insatisfechos con los logros del país en 200 años de vida independiente. La población se debate entre el nacionalismo simbólico y la apertura a las influencias extranjeras que valora convenientes para mejorar sus condiciones de vida. Así, las resistencias a abrirse en lo cultural, económico y político se desvanecen sutilmente.
- 2. Un país pesimista y agobiado, pero con aspiraciones:** si bien el mundo se contempla con aprehensión y pesimismo, y el contacto directo con el exterior vía viajes y relaciones familiares pierde dinamismo, los mexicanos favorecen la participación internacional activa y aspiran a que México ocupe un lugar prominente en el mundo.
- 3. Un país interesado en participar en temas globales, pero con déficit de atención, reacio a invertir recursos en el exterior y sin voluntad de liderazgo:** los mexicanos no prestan mayor atención ni a la política interna ni a la exterior. Tampoco están dispuestos a invertir recursos ni asumir responsabilidades o llevar a cabo acciones internacionales que impliquen costos o compromisos mayores. A pesar de la aspiración de que México ocupe un lugar destacado en el ámbito internacional, los ciudadanos están renuentes a asumir los costos y responsabilidades que conlleva ser jugador global o líder regional y participe del activismo internacional.
- 4. Un país confiado en su poder blando:** la población y los líderes privilegian intensamente los instrumentos del poder blando y su capacidad de influencia mediante la diplomacia cultural y comercial. Por el contrario, no muestran ningún interés en que México se convierta en una nación con poder militar.
- 5. Un país con una política exterior en sincronía con su prestigio y las necesidades de su población:** los mexicanos manifiestan una inclinación más pragmática que idealista o altruista frente a las amenazas y prioridades que identifican en el exterior. Están a favor de una agenda de política exterior centrada en los asuntos

directamente relacionados con sus condiciones de vida, bienestar, seguridad y prestigio nacional.

6. **Un país anclado en el continente americano que se ubica como un actor regional:** las aspiraciones, intereses, prioridades e identidades mexicanas están concentradas casi exclusivamente en América del Norte y América Latina. México se ubica más como un actor regional con prioridades centradas en la región cuyo rango y horizonte de acción se reducen al hemisferio occidental.
7. **Un país sin visión global ni perspectiva de Asia-Pacífico o Europa:** hay poco interés en otras regiones y países del mundo más allá del continente americano. En general, la población no presta atención ni a las potencias emergentes ni a las potencias tradicionales. En el caso particular de Asia-Pacífico, su desinterés revela una falta de visión que le impide percibir las oportunidades y los riesgos que implican para México los cambios en la distribución del poder mundial, en especial el desplazamiento de los motores del crecimiento económico de Occidente hacia Oriente.
8. **Un país de multilateralismo selectivo, acotado y superficial:** los mexicanos simpatizan y confían en los organismos multilaterales, incluso más que en actores internos como los políticos, la policía y el presidente; sin embargo, dan prioridad a otros objetivos antes que al fortalecimiento de instituciones como la ONU y la OEA. Su compromiso multilateral es superficial pues no siempre están dispuestos a acatar las decisiones multilaterales ni a delegar autoridad en caso de no convenir a sus intereses.
9. **Un país que aspira a una relación especial con Estados Unidos:** los mexicanos prefieren tratar directamente con Estados Unidos que coordinar sus posiciones frente al poderoso vecino del norte con otros países del continente que bien podrían tener intereses compartidos por cercanía geográfica o cultural, como Canadá o América Latina. Con la llegada del presidente Barack Obama, se observa una mejoría no sólo en la imagen y confianza hacia Estados Unidos, sino en las posibilidades de cooperación entre ambas naciones.
10. **Un país de migrantes que busca solventar sus contradicciones como emisor y receptor:** los mexicanos se inclinan a favor de una política migratoria integral y abierta, centrada en la protección de los derechos de los migrantes y la reducción de las contradicciones en el trato que se pide a otros para los emigrantes y el que se da a los inmigrantes. Sin embargo, no ven con buenos ojos que la integración latinoamericana implique el libre tránsito de personas, en especial de los centroamericanos.
11. **Un país donde se acortan las distancias entre regiones, pero siguen abiertas las diferencias sociales y la división entre los líderes:** por primera ocasión se acortan las diferencias de identidad entre el norte, centro y sur del país. Sin embargo, se mantienen las

*distancias de género, edad, educación e ingreso, así como las brechas entre población y líderes. Es notable la fragmentación al interior de las élites por razones partidistas y sectoriales, sobre todo en materia de evaluación del desempeño gubernamental, apertura a la inversión extranjera y cooperación con Estados Unidos.*



# MEXICO, THE AMERICAS, AND THE WORLD 2010

FOREIGN POLICY: PUBLIC OPINION AND LEADERS



GUADALUPE GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ  
JORGE A. SCHIAVON  
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Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas  
International Studies Division

# **Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010**

Report and results for the fourth biennial national survey of public opinion and leaders  
in Mexico on foreign policy and international relations  
<http://mexicoyelmundo.cide.edu>

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*Foreign Policy: Public Opinion and Leaders*



GUADALUPE GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ  
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CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y DOCENCIA ECONÓMICAS  
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## CONTENTS

FOREWORD . . . . .	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . .	11
SUMMARY OF 2010 TRENDS AND RESULTS . . . . .	13
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	17

### CHAPTER 1

#### Who are we? Mexicans and the Bicentennial in a Globalized World

Identities: A Single Nation . . . . .	23
Mexican Identity: Pride and Discontent . . . . .	27
A Steady March towards Cosmopolitanism . . . . .	32
Sovereignty: Decline and Pragmatism . . . . .	34
The Erosion of Economic Nationalism . . . . .	38
A Country Interested but Uninformed . . . . .	45
A Country Increasingly Isolated from the World . . . . .	47

### CHAPTER 2

#### What We Want? Threats, Aspirations, and Action in Foreign Policy

Pessimism and Hope for the World, Optimism towards Latin America . . . . .	53
Growing International Threats . . . . .	58
Foreign Policy Priorities: Social Progress and Prestige . . . . .	60

Capabilities and Instruments of Foreign Policy . . . . .	64
Evaluating Foreign Policy <i>Vis-à-vis</i> Other Public Policies . . . . .	67

**C H A P T E R 3**

**What is Our Place in the World? Visions of Countries, Regions and International Actors**

Who Are the Favorites? . . . . .	73
Moving Up: Attitudes towards Mexico’s Northern Neighbors . . . . .	78
The America South of the Border . . . . .	83
Looking West and East . . . . .	88
Mexico and Multilateralism . . . . .	90

**C H A P T E R 4**

**How do we Understand Migration? The Challenge of Populations in Movement**

The Paradox of Migration . . . . .	97
Migration in 2010: Mexico as the “New North”? . . . . .	98
Those Who Leave: Heroes or Victims? . . . . .	99
Those that Arrive: Integration or Segregation?. . . . .	102
A Double Standard: The Rights of Emigrants and Immigrants . . . . .	108
The Role of Government: What to do with so many People? . . . . .	109
Learning to Be a Country of Migration . . . . .	111

CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	113
NOTES ON METHODOLOGY . . . . .	119
ACRONYMS . . . . .	124



## FOREWORD

**M***exico, the Americas, and the World* is an ongoing research project of the Division of International Studies of the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) that aims to study the social reality and political culture of Mexicans with respect to foreign policy and international relations. The project consists of a biennial survey designed to collect basic information about the opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and values of Mexicans with respect to the world. The survey is administered every two years to a representative sample of the national population and a group of leaders in government, politics, business, academia, social, civic, and non-profit organizations, and the media. Since the first edition of the survey in 2004, the *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* team has counted on the collaboration of the *Mexican Council of International Affairs* (COMEXI) to disseminate the survey results and on the guidance of the *Chicago Council on Global Affairs* (CCGA) in establishing research methodology and survey design.

*Mexico, the Americas, and the World* is unique in Mexico and Latin America for its focus on the social conditions that inform attitudes towards international affairs, as well as its broad coverage of themes (cultural, economic, political, social, and security) relevant to Mexicans and those who study the region. The survey collects information on general

perceptions and attitudes towards foreign policy and the world rather than tracing current events, and is applied both to the general population and leaders.

One of the characteristics that distinguishes *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* from other research on public opinion and foreign policy is its comparative focus, permitting simultaneous comparisons and cross tabulations at five distinct levels: *sub-national*, across geographic region (North, Center, South); *national*, between elites and the Mexican public as well as economic and socio-demographic variables, *intra-elite*, between government, political, business, academic, and social leaders, *international*, between the populations of different countries, and *longitudinal*, or across survey editions. For each edition of the survey, the *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* team has defined a specific area of global coverage. In 2004, the first year of the project, the survey was carried out in two countries, the United States and Mexico. In 2006, the survey was carried out in the United States and Mexico in addition to four Asian countries: China, South Korea, India and Japan. The 2008 version of the survey was administered in Mexico and three Latin American countries: Colombia, Chile, and Peru, and for this edition the survey will be extended to Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador, in addition to Colombia and Peru.



The primary objective of this study is to contribute to filling the void of empirical, rigorous, and objective information in an area of strategic importance for Mexico, where independent, reliable data is scarce and often lacks continuity. Gaining an insight into Mexicans' perceptions of how the world works and how it should work is indispensable for evaluating—from the perspective of the Mexican population and leaders—the effectiveness and legitimacy of institutions, rules, and actors in the international arena. Understanding Mexicans' opinions and priorities also improves public and private decision-making, and nurtures academic research on foreign policy and international affairs.

The survey comprises 12 subject areas: *Interest, Contact, Knowledge, Identity, Confidence and Security, Mexico's Role and Foreign Policy, Rules of the International Game, Migration, International Economy and Regional Integration, Relations with Latin America, Relations with the United States, and with Other Countries and Regions in the World.*

To analyze and interpret results comprehensively and systematically, the survey design uses a distinct conceptual framework that makes it possible to locate the attitudes and perceptions of the general public and leaders on four axes: the degree of openness to the world (isolation versus internationalism), the framework from which international reality is observed (realism versus idealism), the degree of openness to

international cooperation (unilateralism versus multilateralism), and regional alignment (sympathies towards regions and countries across the globe).

*Mexico, the Americas, and the World* aims to be of utility for a wide and diverse audience: decision makers in Mexico and other countries at the public, private, social, and international level, as well as academic institutions, researchers, and students in the social sciences. It is our hope that this project serve as a key instrument in the formulation and exercise of strategic decisions, public policies, and good governance, and contribute to academic research and social communication in a fast moving and globalized world.

This report presents the principal results of the fourth edition of the survey, *Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010*. The report provides in-depth analysis of public opinion with respect to Mexico's international action and objectives, as well as the impact of globalization and the internationalization of norms in the political culture of the Mexican public and leaders. This edition of the survey also integrates a number of new questions on international migration. The complete information and disaggregated data on the 103 thematic questions and 26 socio-demographic measures included in the survey, in addition to the complete database in SPSS format, may be consulted without cost at <http://mexicoymundo.cide.edu> •



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (CIDE) and the *Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010* research team gratefully acknowledges all the public, private, national, and international institutions, as well as the individuals who contributed, in one way or another, to the realization of this project.

The publication of this fourth edition would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* (Mexican Ministry of Foreign Relations). We wish to express our most sincere gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Relations, Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, for her generous time and support. We would also like to recognize María de Lourdes Aranda Bezaury, Subsecretary of Foreign Relations and President of the *Instituto Matías Romero*, for her enthusiasm and dedication to the project, María Celia Toro Hernández, Executive Director of the *Instituto Matías Romero*, Rogelio Granguillhome Morfín, Director of the Division of Economic Relations and International Cooperation, and José Octavio Tripp Villanueva, Executive Director of Technical and Scientific Cooperation.

We are especially grateful for the guidance and collaboration of the *Committee of Foreign Relations* of the Mexican Senate in carrying out the survey, and

in particular, that of the current president, Senator Rosario Green Macías and her hardworking staff.

We are grateful as well for the generous financial support of the *Government of the State of Mexico*. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the steadfast support of Governor Enrique Peña Nieto of the State of Mexico, Arnulfo Valdivia Machuca, Coordinator of International Affairs for the State of Mexico, and Rodrigo Arteaga Santoyo, Assistant Director of the Promotion and Analysis of Projects for the Coordination of International Affairs.

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The *Konrad Adenauer Foundation* deserves special thanks, particularly the efforts of Frank Priess and Daniela Diegelmann in marshalling the resources necessary to carry out and publish the results of the survey of leaders.

We would like to recognize the tremendous contributions of the *Embassy of the United States of America* in Mexico, particularly the work of Ambas-



sador Carlos Pascual and Cultural Attaché Judith Bryan and her exemplary staff, who facilitated the interaction and feedback between the Mexican research team and prominent academics from the United States and Latin America.

We would also like to recognize the unconditional support of the *Embassy of Canada* in Mexico, in particular that of Ambassador Guillermo E. Rishchynski and his dedicated staff, who helped disseminate the results of the present and previous survey editions.

We would like to acknowledge the support of various individuals, whose extensive experience as professional diplomats, public officials, business leaders, lawyers, and journalists contributed to the design and realization of this study. We are particularly grateful to the members of the *Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales* (Mexican Council on Foreign Relations): Enrique Berruga, President; Andrés Rozental, President of the Board; Fernando Solana, former President of the Council; Aurora Adame, former Executive Director; Olga Pellicer, Member of the Governing Board, and Jorge Eduardo Navarrete, Associate Member. As specialists in the study and practice of international relations, their active participation and invaluable contributions during the planning stages of the project, strategic meetings, and working groups proved essential.

The survey was administered with the utmost rigor and professionalism by the exceptional team at *Data-Opinión Pública y Mercados*. DATA supervised the implementation of the survey for the national population and leaders, under the leadership of Pablo Parás and the efficient technical coordination of Carlos López Olmedo. DATA's experience and professionalism were indispensable in drafting the questionnaires, forming work teams, designing samples, coordinating the survey and field work, as well as coding all the data.

We would like to recognize here the contributions of our team members at CIDE, starting with the invaluable support of Ana González-Barrera, Executive Secretary for the project, Yolanda Muñoz in the administrative and financial coordination of the project, Jan Roth Kanarski, project research assistant, and Luis Rodrigo Morales and Virgilio Larralde, research assistants of the Division of International Studies.

To all of the individuals and institutions that in one way or another collaborated in the realization of this report, we would like to extend our most sincere thanks. Any positive initiative or outcome related to the publication of this survey is the product of a collaborative effort. Finally, the results reported and opinions therein are the exclusive responsibility of the research team of *Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010* •



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Though the outside world is viewed with pessimism and apprehension, and direct contact with other countries through travel and family ties has indeed declined, Mexicans favor ac-

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There is little interest in other regions or countries outside of the American continent. In general, the population is concerned with neither emerging nor traditional powers. In the particular case of Asia Pacific, this disinterest reveals a lack of vision that prevents Mexicans from recognizing the opportunities and risks presented by changes in the global distribution of power and the emergence of Asia as the primary engine of global economic growth.

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**9. A country that aspires to a special relationship with the United States**

Mexicans would prefer to seek a separate agreement with the United States rather than

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## SUMMARY OF 2010 TRENDS AND RESULTS

### *Nationalism and Identity*

- **National identity continues to be predominant in Mexican society:** 62% of those surveyed identify first as Mexican, rather than as a citizen of their state, while for 37% local identities take precedence over national, a distribution unchanged from 2008.
- **In terms of regional identity, citizens and leaders identify primarily as Latin American. Nevertheless, among the public, Latin American identity has continued to decline:** The majority of the public identifies first as Latin American (51%), followed by citizen of the world (26%) and North American or Central American (7%). Nevertheless, in the last four years the percentage of those identifying as Latin American has declined, falling by 11 points since 2006.
- **On the occasion of the Bicentennial of Mexico's Independence, nationalism remains strong:** 81% of the public and 78% of leaders are proud to be Mexican. The principal source of pride for the public is origin (37%), while for leaders it is culture (55%).
- **Mexicans are on average satisfied with what the country has accomplished in the 200 years since independence, while leaders are disappointed:** The

majority of the public is very much or somewhat satisfied with Mexico's achievements in terms of independence (65%), social equality (57%), and economic development (54%). Among leaders, however, the level of dissatisfaction reaches 79% for social equality, 71% for internal security, and 68% for economic development.

### *Threats, Trust, and Security*

- **Continued pessimism among the public and relative optimism for leaders:** 68% of Mexicans believe that the world is worse off compared to the past decade and 50% believe that the situation will grow worse for the decade to come. Leaders are less pessimistic than the public: 54% consider that the world today is worse off, while 57% believe their situation will improve during the next decade.
- **Mexicans are pragmatic; the international threats identified as most important are those with the greatest impact on their daily life:** in order of descending importance, drug trafficking and organized crime (82%), the threat of global warming (80%), the scarcity and lack of food (80%), the threat of natural disasters (78%), world poverty (76%), and arms trafficking (76%).



- **The overall perception of threats has increased:** Compared to earlier years, there has been a general increase in the intensity of threats perceived. The threats with the greatest increase in intensity are those related to security: the threat posed by guerrillas (+ 13%), and border conflicts and territorial disputes (+ 13%).

#### *The Role of Mexico and Foreign Policy*

- **There is broad support for active participation in international affairs:** 68% of Mexicans want the country to play an active role in international affairs, while 22% would prefer that the country limit its involvement. Leaders overwhelmingly support an active role (96%).
- **Mexicans identify as priorities of foreign policy those issues that are related directly or indirectly to their daily lives:** the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime (75%), protecting the environment (74%), promoting Mexican culture (74%), protecting the interests of Mexicans abroad (73%), promoting the sale of Mexican products (73%), and attracting tourists (73%).
- **Both the public and leaders prefer using instruments of soft power to increase Mexico's influence in world affairs:** 54% prefer emphasizing culture; 53%, trade; 36% diplomacy; and 20%, military force. Leaders show an even greater preference for the instruments of soft power and reject emphatically the use of force. Eighty-seven percent favor the use of cultural resources, 84% commercial and diplomatic, and only 6% military.
- **Leaders and the public continue to evaluate foreign policy more favorably than domestic policy:** Among the public only education (64%) ranked higher than foreign policy, followed by trade policy (53%), the protection of Mexicans abroad (50%), Mexico's foreign policy in general (49%), the fight against poverty (48%), economic policy (47%), and public security (41%). Leaders evaluated foreign policy much more favorably than domestic policy: foreign policy (56%), trade policy (53%), the protection of Mexicans abroad

(53%), economic policy (42%), public security (32%), the combat of poverty (30%) and education (24%).

#### *Free Trade and Globalization*

- **A relatively favorable opinion of globalization:** 43% believe that economic globalization is generally good for Mexico (9% higher than in 2004).
- **Greater enthusiasm for free trade:** 75% believe that free trade is beneficial for the economy of developed countries, 63% consider that it benefits the Mexican economy, and 59% believe it has benefitted their standard of living.
- **A positive vision of foreign investment but with limits in certain sectors:** Although a wide majority (79%) believes that foreign investment benefits Mexico, 62% of the public oppose foreign investment in the petroleum sector.

#### *North America*

- **The "Obama effect" improves the image of the United States:** Evaluations of the U.S. improved 5 points with respect to 2008. Distrust towards the U.S. fell 16 points (from 61% to 45%) but is still higher than sentiments of trust.
- **North America is the most popular region and the highest priority for Mexicans:** Canada and the United States were evaluated first and second most favorably, respectively, while North America ranked as the region to which Mexico should direct most of its attention. In 2008 this position was held by Latin America.
- **Citizens prefer negotiating bilaterally with the United States rather than coordinating interests with other countries:** 51% consider that Mexico should seek a separate agreement with the United States, independently of its relation with Canada; 49% say the same with respect to Mexico's relation with Latin America.
- **Despite greater sympathy with the United States, Mexicans adamantly affirm their independence from their neighbor to the north:** In spite of greater



popularity and declining distrust, the percentage in favor of receiving aid from the United States to fight drug trafficking has remained constant (54% in 2010 compared to 55% in 2008).

### *Latin America*

- **Optimism over Mexico's relationship with Latin America:** Despite ranking the region as Mexico's second priority, Mexicans consider that relations with Latin America have been improving and will continue to do so.
- **Mexico less willing to assume a role of regional leadership:** Only a third of those surveyed (35%) believe Mexico should seek to be a regional power, 6 percentage points lower than in 2008.
- **Brazil is Mexicans' favorite for regional leadership:** Asked what country might serve as the region's leader, Brazil was ranked above Mexico, an important change with respect to the results from 2008. Brazil continues to be the most favorably evaluated country in the region.
- **Mexicans favor integration with Latin America similar to that with North America:** More than two thirds of the population agree with actions such as building roads and bridges to connect the region and permitting the free flow of investment, goods and services. However, a majority opposes the free movement of people among Latin American countries and the creation of a Latin American army.

### *Relations with Other Countries and Regions*

- **Mexicans continue to view developed countries with approval:** The regions most favorably evaluated are North America and Europe, while the countries of Latin America and Central America in particular are ranked at the bottom, below all developed countries.
- **Positive attitudes toward Spain at 200 years of independence:** For three out of five (58%), the dominant sentiment towards Spain is trust, while

half also reported admiration. An absolute majority (52%) considers that relations with Spain have improved over the past decade and will become even better in the next (55%).

- **Asia is viewed with optimism but is not a priority for Mexico:** Despite being evaluated more favorably than Latin America and the Middle East, and just behind North America and Europe, Asia is not viewed as a priority of Mexican foreign policy, ranked behind North America, Latin America, and Europe.

### *Migration*

- **Decline in the rate and number of Mexicans migrating abroad:** Between 2004 and 2010 the percentage of Mexicans reporting a relative living abroad declined from 61% in 2004 to 52% in 2010.
- **One third of homes that receive remittances are dependent on them:** 30% of those interviewed responded that remittances account for half or more of monthly income.
- **Contrary opinions with respect to the benefits of migration:** 57% of Mexicans believe that immigration benefits the receiving country, 47% believe it benefits their town or community of origin, 45% for the families of immigrants, and 44% for the country. The majority of leaders consider that immigration has a negative effect for each one of these categories.
- **Mexicans are willing to grant immigrants the same rights they demand for their compatriots abroad, but with less intensity:** An overwhelming majority of Mexicans consider that the following rights should be granted to Mexicans abroad: the right to health services (99%), the right to look for work under the same conditions as country nationals (97%), access to public education (96%), and the right to bring their families with them (83%), while smaller majorities would grant these same rights to immigrants living in Mexico (94%, 85%, 91%, and 81%, respectively).



- **Mexicans favor a comprehensive immigration reform that would legalize the status of undocumented immigrants in the United States:** Mexicans favor, in order of decreasing intensity, the following policies: the legalization of undocumented Mexicans (33%), investment in the generation of jobs in Mexico (26%), the negotiation of a guest worker program with the U.S. (23%), and the provision of legal services to undocumented Mexicans residing in the United States (17%) •



## INTRODUCTION

The year 2010 was symbolic for Mexico, marking the Bicentennial of the struggle for independence and the hundredth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. The commemoration of these events was met by an intense debate over the past and future of Mexico, driving both media coverage and political discourse. The multitude of cultural activities, public works programs, and educational campaigns organized by the federal government were joined by the efforts of local governments, universities, corporations, non-profits, and media campaigns. The celebration of these two historic events, however, unfolded in a climate of increasing difficulty for the country. Despite invocations of patriotism, the polarization of Mexican politics prevented the establishment of a national dialogue to address Mexico's most immediate challenges and project unity at home and abroad.

If the Mexican economy has indeed begun to recover, registering 5.5% growth after having shrunk by 6.1% in 2009, this recovery has not been felt in the pockets of most Mexicans. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America

and the Caribbean (CEPAL), the partial reactivation of economic activity rests on the dynamism of Mexican exports, while internal consumption continues to be weighed down by the decline in real wages, a weak labor market, and high unemployment. In short, macroeconomic growth has been less strong than in other Latin American countries and insufficient to compensate for the global financial crisis and its aftershocks on unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Mexico continues to remain tightly integrated with the U.S. market, and has not been able to take advantage of the economic expansion led by fast-growing countries in Asia.

In addition to economic difficulties, Mexico is currently facing the most serious challenge to public and national security in its history, as the government's campaign against organized crime has led to unprecedented levels of violence and instability. According to official sources, 2010 registered the highest number of homicides related to organized crime in Mexican history<sup>1</sup>, leaving a toll of over 11,000 deaths. The instability wrought by organized crime has become Mexicans' primary concern, while the government's

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<sup>1</sup> The figures cited here were first reported by the Undersecretary of the National Security Council (Consejo de Seguridad Nacional) and spokesman in matters of security for the government of President Felipe Calderón. See Alejandro Poiré, "Los homicidios y la violencia del crimen organizado. Una revisión a la tendencia nacional", *Nexos*, num. 398, February 2011, p. 37.



inability to contain the violence has revealed longstanding problems of corruption, impunity, and institutional weakness. Repercussions of the fight against organized crime have affected Mexico's international image, hindering relations with the United States and the countries of Central America in particular, as attacks on foreigners and travel alerts grow more common. Cooperation between the United States and Mexico in matters of security, which reached a new level of commitment with Plan Merida, began to face tensions as the political climate soured on both sides of the border. With security occupying an ever greater place on the bilateral agenda, economic issues were pushed into the background.

In addition to security, the subject of immigration turned particularly sensitive in 2010. Growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States led to the adoption of ever more strict measures at the state level, culminating in the law SB 1070 in Arizona and dimming chances for comprehensive immigration reform. The success of anti-immigrant legislation in the United States dominated the national discussion in Mexico and reflected the growing rift in public opinion in both countries. Further north, fallout from Canada's decision to impose visas on Mexican tourists continued to weigh on Mexico-Canada relations. To the south, the murder of 72 undocumented immigrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas forced Mexicans to acknowledge their country's status as a destination for immigration and a country of transit, an issue typically ignored by both political actors and public opinion. The international corollary to this massacre was the growing fear and alarm among Mexico's neighboring countries over the potential for violence to cross to both sides of the border. The discussion of how to confront the challenges of migration, in particular for a country of emigrants, immigrants, and transmigrants, was not limited to the national, bilateral, and sub-national arenas. The national debate on immigration was extended to a comparative and multilateral plane with Mexico's hosting of the Fourth Reunion of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco.

Various developments on the world stage also resonated throughout Mexico on the occasion of its Bicentennial. The earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, the catastrophic flooding in Pakistan, and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, along with the hurricanes "Karl" and "Alex" in Mexico, generated widespread concern on the impact and response to various natural disasters and the possible consequences of climate change. These events revealed both the reach and limits of the international community's response to catastrophic natural disasters and the challenges of humanitarian aid in general. To this effect, Mexico participated actively in the coordination of the international community's efforts to rebuild Haiti as well as in disaster response and the sending of humanitarian aid. Mexico played an important role in global deliberations over climate change as host of the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Quintana Roo, facilitating negotiations and working actively to push countries toward a final resolution.

For all of its challenges, 2010 presents a unique opportunity to observe, measure, and analyze the evolution of Mexicans' collective identities and basic affective attitudes towards their nation and the world, and to what extent these respond to inherited cultural patterns, changes in material conditions and the country's economic and political developments as well as the constant evolution of international affairs. How have the national or international circumstances discussed above affected Mexicans' perceptions of themselves, Mexican society, and their relationship with the world? Who are the Mexicans of the Bicentennial and how do they view each other and their place in the world? How Mexican do they feel? Are they proud of their country? Are they satisfied with what has been achieved over the two hundred years of independence? How does the overlap of patriotic celebrations, a crisis of security, and economic uncertainty influence their vision of the world and their place in it? Are they affected by world politics and events or absorbed in internal problems? How exposed and how open might they be to influence from abroad?



The results of the fourth edition of the survey *Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010* present an invaluable opportunity to gain a better understanding of these questions and those surely to follow. The present report does not claim to be exhaustive, but aims rather to cast light on some of the key elements of Mexico's relation with the world at 200 years of existence as an independent country. The report is organized into four chapters that frame

the principle findings with respect to the following questions: Who are the Mexicans of the Bicentennial? What are their concerns and aspirations in the world? How and where do they view themselves in the international arena? How do they understand and confront the phenomenon of migration? Finally, this report closes with a section of conclusions, reviewing key findings that may contribute to the formulation of Mexican foreign policy •





# CHAPTER 1

WHO ARE WE?

MEXICANS AND THE BICENTENNIAL IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD





## WHO ARE WE? MEXICANS AND THE BICENTENNIAL IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

In Mexico, the year of the Bicentennial of Independence and the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution passed without shame or glory. The results of the fourth edition of the survey *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* indicate that in the year marking the commemoration of the Bicentennial, the dominant trends in Mexican public opinion have shifted little with respect to 2008. In general, Mexican society remains largely concerned with internal issues and relatively isolated and indifferent to developments abroad. Surprisingly, the Bicentennial did not seem to give rise to an overall resurgence in nationalism. Two of the traditional pillars of Mexican nationalism—cultural and economic—continued to decline, while political nationalism and national pride maintained their upward trajectory. In spite of widening instability and sluggish economic growth, the commemoration of the Bicentennial does seem to have led to the strengthening of Mexican over sub-national identity.

### *Identities: A Single Nation*

At two hundred years of independence, the question of whether and to what extent Mexicans identify as

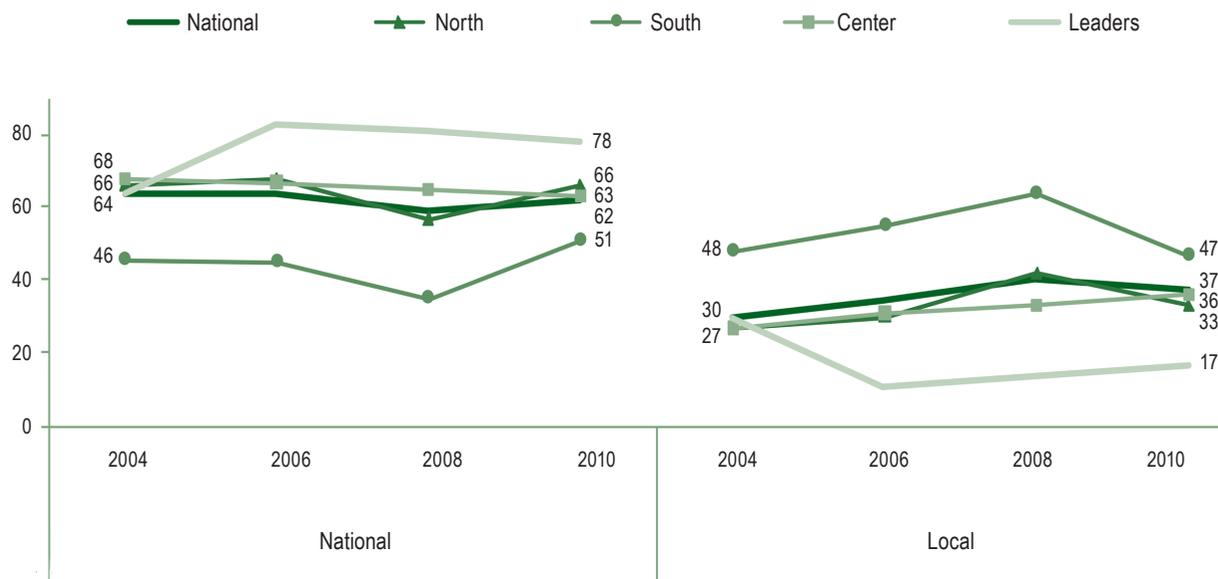
a nation is fundamental, especially in a context of increasing globalization. The interplay of national and local identities has gained new importance in a global context, with the possibility of local identities being shaped by contact with the exterior. Whether globalization has prompted new and stronger local identities to form, and whether these have come at the expense of a national identity has generated considerable academic interest. With the aim of measuring the evolution of national and local identities, the 2010 version of *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* posed the question “What do you most identify as: Mexican, or citizen of your state, province or region?” As in the three previous editions of the survey, a majority of Mexicans ranked national above local identity, despite changes in the political situation and the volatility of the economy. As shown in Figure 1.1, in 2010 62% of those surveyed responded “Mexican” over state, province or region, while 37% identified with a state, province or region over Mexico as a whole. Leaders, as measured by a separate survey, were the group most likely to identify as Mexican (78% reported Mexican while 17% responded state or region).



**Figure 1.1. National and Local Identity 2004-2010**

*What do you most closely identify with..?*

(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

A detailed analysis of the data by region reveals that national identity has indeed strengthened. Over the past two years the percentage of those who identify as Mexican has increased three points among the general population (from 59% to 62%), although this percentage did not reach the levels of 2006 and 2004 (64%). Meanwhile, local identity has fallen from 40% in 2008 to 27% in 2010. While the percentage of those who identify primarily with a state, province or region has fallen, it remains relatively high, at 7 percentage points higher than six years back. While national identity is predominant, local and regional identities are rooted deeply, especially in the states of the South and Southeast.

Mexico at its Bicentennial is less heterogeneous and diverse than the results reported in previous years. The advance of local over national identities has been reversed, and the traditional gaps separating the South from the North and Center of the country have narrowed. On a regional level, the survey shows that states in the North and South registered a notable

increase in national identity and a proportional decrease in local identities. At the same time, identity in the states in the central part of the country remained largely the same. Between 2008 and 2010, national identity increased from 35% to 51% in the South and from 57% to 66% in the North, while during this period the percentage of those ranking national above local identity in the Center of the country remained constant. Local identities declined both in the South (from 64% to 47%) and in the North (42% to 33%), while increasing slightly in the Center of the country. The overall decline of local identities represents a reverse in the trend towards greater localism that has been observed since 2004.

This shift has changed the map of collective identities. For the first time in the history of the survey, a majority of Mexicans in each region identified primarily as Mexican rather than of a state, province, or region. Even in the South, where local identity surpassed Mexican by 29 percentage points in 2004, 2006, and 2008, national identity in 2010



(51%) has come to prevail over local sentiment (47%). This is nothing less than a sea change with respect to earlier years.

Nevertheless, movement towards a more national identity has not entirely erased local sentiments. Mexicans in the South continue to describe themselves as less Mexican than their counterparts in the North and Center of the country. While national identity is now a majority in the South, at 51%, it is still 11 percentage points lower than the national average.

Generational differences have also narrowed, with national sentiment growing steadily among Mexican youth. In the youngest age group measured (between 18 and 29 years of age), those identifying primarily as Mexican increased from 55% to 61% from 2008 to 2010. At the same time, the percentage of those identifying primarily with a region, province, or state decreased from 43% to 38%. The distribution of identities among middle aged Mexicans (between 30 and 49 years of age) mirrors that of the youngest group, while those 50 years old and up registered a slightly higher level of national sentiment (64%) and slightly lower local sympathy (35%). National or local identity did not vary significantly by gender, income, or level of education.<sup>1</sup> In sum, the year of Mexico's Bicentennial has seen a considerable increase in national sentiment, with the majority of Mexicans identifying with national over local identity. Two important observations may help explain the strengthening of national identity in 2010: On the one hand, the year-long celebrations

to commemorate the Bicentennial may have boosted feelings of national pride. On the other, 2010 may simply represent a return to historic levels of nationalism, which had fallen in 2008.

In addition to local and national sentiment, Mexico's ever-evolving debate over racial and ethnic identities has affected Mexican attitudes towards the world. Throughout the twentieth century, political elites have attempted to promote a single, mestizo identity characterized by the fusion of Spanish and indigenous cultures, although the concept of mestizo identity has come under increasing criticism for its exclusion of the diverse customs and cultures of Mexico's distinct ethnic groups. The Bicentennial presents a unique opportunity to evaluate up to what point Mexican society identifies as mestizo or whether identities have evolved to reflect greater cultural pluralism.<sup>2</sup> To measure how Mexicans view themselves in terms of race and ethnicity, the survey posed the following question: "Considering the diversity of the population of Mexico, do you consider yourself to be mestizo, indigenous, white, interracial, black, or Asian?". As might be expected, the results confirm the dominance of mestizo identity. Fifty nine percent of Mexicans consider themselves mestizo, 17% indigenous<sup>3</sup> and 11% white.

Ethnic identity in the South continues to diverge from the rest of the country, exhibiting two important differences. First, the segment of those who identify as mestizo is considerably less in the South (44%) than in the Center (63%) and North (60%).

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the impact of sociodemographic variables on sub-national identities in Mexico for the 2008 data, see Jan Roth Kanarski, "Identidad Fragmentada: Divisiones regionales en el sentimiento nacional", *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 4, October 26, 2010, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, <http://mexicoyel mundo.cide.edu>

<sup>2</sup> The work of Agustín Basave and Roger Bartra, among others, provides a critical review of the success and contradictions of a singular, mestizo identity advanced by the discourse and policies of the Mexican government. See Agustín Basave Benítez, *México Mestizo: Análisis del nacionalismo mexicano en torno a la mestizofilia de Andrés Molina Enriquez*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002; Roger Bartra, *Anatomía del mexicano*, Mexico, Plaza y Janés, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the percentage of Mexicans identifying as indigenous in this survey is significantly higher than that of other estimates based on the criteria of language and lifestyle, as is the case for the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI). The CDI estimates that for 2005 the indigenous population of Mexico accounts for 9.5% of the total population, 7.5 percentage points lower than our estimation. This difference may be due to two reasons: First, the criteria for this survey is based on subjects' self-identification independent of whether they speak an indigenous language, and second, the question is designed to control for the under-reporting of indigenous identities due to discrimination. Together with the Bicentennial's emphasis on the cultural diversity of Mexico, these factors may have had the effect of increasing the proportion of the indigenous population reported.



Second, the proportion of the population identifying as indigenous is higher in the South (25%) than in the Center of the country (17%) and in the North (10%). The North, on the other hand, contains the largest proportion of Mexicans identifying as white (16%).

Other variables such as education and income are important for understanding the distribution of ethnic identities. Among those who have completed only primary education, 25% identify as indigenous, while 14% of those who have completed secondary education and 9% of those who have completed high school or higher identify as indigenous. Mexico's indigenous population is also plagued by lower income levels, with indigenous groups accounting for 20% of the lowest income range measured and only 12% of higher earners. These results are consistent with data compiled by the Mexican bureau of the census and testify to the socioeconomic difficulties of Mexico's diverse indigenous groups.<sup>4</sup>

Another critical aspect of Mexican identity consists of how Mexicans describe themselves in relation to regions outside of their country and communities of origin. To this end, survey respondents were asked "What do you most identify as: Latin American, North American, Central American, or citizen of the world?". As in previous editions of the survey, three main characteristics shape Mexicans' international outlook. First, the great majority identify primarily as *Latin American* (51%). Second, there is an increase in cosmopolitanism, as one in four Mexicans (26%) describe themselves as a *citizen of the world*. Third, Mexicans are far less likely to describe themselves as *North American* or *Central American* (7% in each case), showing far less sympathy for those geographic entities closer to home. Nevertheless, Latin American identity has fallen 11 points since 2006, as Figure 1.2 shows. The percentage of those identifying as

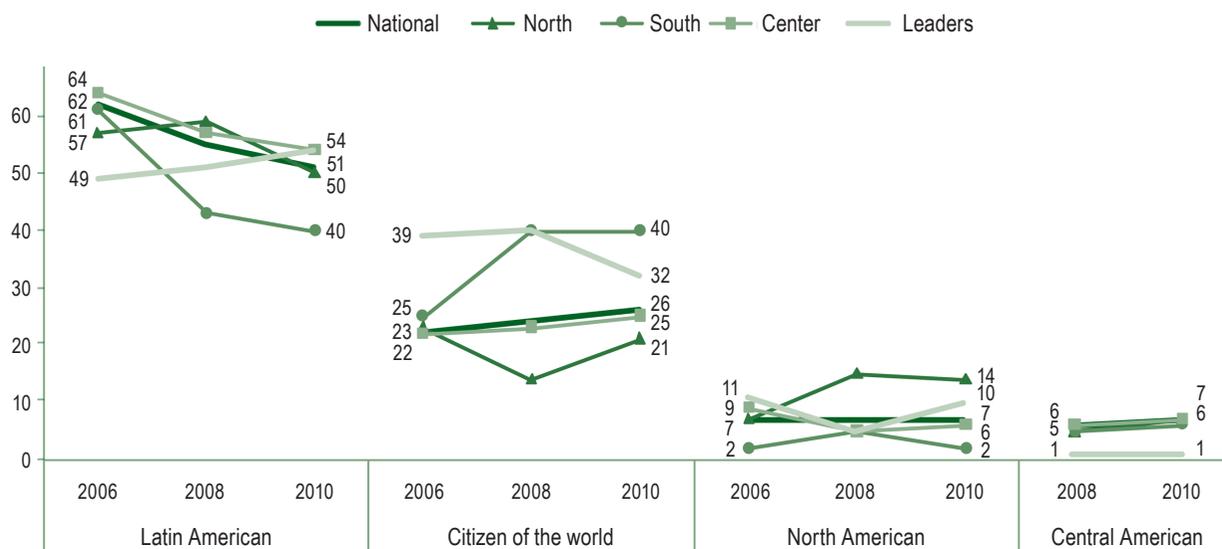
Latin American fell from 62% in 2006 to 51% in 2010, while the percentage of Mexicans registering a more cosmopolitan identity (citizen of the world) saw an increase of four points (from 22% to 26%) during the same period. While Latin American identity has declined, there has been no proportional rise in North American identity. Rather, the decrease in Latin American identity more closely reflects a movement towards a more international reality. It is worth noting that the decline in Latin American identity has occurred precisely in the year in which Mexico and other Latin American countries mark the bicentennial of their independence. This decrease in identification with Latin America thus runs contrary to what might be expected on the occasion of the Bicentennial.

Indeed, the international sympathies of Mexicans as reported above do not necessarily follow the geographic concentration of the national population or its closeness to other markets. In the states of the South that border Central America and mark Mexico's opening to Latin America, identification with Central America is minimal (6%) and Latin American identity, at 40%, is 11 points lower than the national average. Identification with North America, as might be expected, is practically nonexistent (2%). In line with 2008, the South of Mexico is the region with the highest percentage identifying as *citizens of the world* (40%), despite lower levels of income, education, and contact with the outside world. In the North half of those surveyed identified as *Latin American*, and one out of five describe themselves as a *citizen of the world*, while 14% identify as *North American* and 7% *Central American*. In the Center of the country, the distribution of identities is similar to the North: 54% identify as *Latin American*, 25% as a *citizen of the world*, 7% as *Central American*, and 6% as *North American*. Although variables such as

<sup>4</sup> According to official estimations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the CDI based on data from the Mexican census, the indigenous population of Mexico is at a clear disadvantage in terms of health, education, and income. Indicative of this gap is the difference in the Human Development Index between the indigenous population in 2008 (0.6761) and that estimated for the non-indigenous population for the same year (0.7628). See PNUD-CDI, *Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano de los Pueblos Indígenas. El reto de la desigualdad de oportunidades*, October 2010, p.38.



**Figure 1.2. International Identity 2006-2010**  
 Tell me, what do you most closely identify with..?  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

language, religion, and political tradition might explain the strength of Mexicans' identification with Latin America and the scant identification with North America, identification with Central America is low, despite cultural similarities.

The position of leaders is not much different from that of the general public with respect to supra-national identities. Fifty-four percent identify as *Latin American*, 32% as a *citizen of the world*, 10% as *North American*, and 1% as *Central American*. These results suggest that the group of leaders tend to be more internationally oriented than the general public, although they share the same level of identification with Latin America as well as a tendency to identify least with North America. Surprisingly, identification with the two sub-regions that are geographically closest to Mexico is minimal, both among leaders and the general public, despite shared borders and an elevated level of social and economic encounters. Surprisingly, North American identity has remained low in both groups, especially for a country with almost 11% of its population living in

the United States and an economy whose trade and investment is concentrated in North America.

### *Mexican Identity: Pride and Discontent*

Mexican nationalism has remained strong in the years leading up to the Bicentennial. As Figure 1.3 shows, a large majority of Mexico's adult population (81%) is "very proud" to be Mexican. While the level of national pride did not change over the 2008-2010 period, it has strengthened significantly in the four years since 2006. From 2006 to 2010 the percentage of Mexicans "very proud" of their nationality jumped 9 percentage points. The low percentage of Mexicans who feel "not very" or "not at all" proud of their nationality (5%) reaffirms the perception of strong nationalism. Mexicans in the South continued to register the highest level of national pride (85%), followed by the Center of the country (81%) and North (76%). Pride is strong among younger Mexicans and Mexicans at the highest education and



income levels, although these groups are slightly less enthusiastic overall.

The majority of leaders (78%) share the public's strong sense of pride. However, unlike the general public, leaders demonstrate significant differences across political affiliation, profession, and age. Leaders who identify with the *Partido de la Revolución Institucional* (PRI) tend to register higher levels of national pride (93% reported "very proud") than those who sympathize with the *Partido de Acción Nacional* (PAN) (87%) and the *Partido de la Revolución Democrático* (PRD) (78%). Those with no party affiliation were less enthusiastic, with 67% reporting "very proud". By sector, politicians represent the highest percentage reporting "very proud" (94%) followed by government officials (83%), leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations (76%), business executives (75%) and those that work in media and academia (62%). It is particularly noteworthy that the most skeptical group – journalists and academics – is precisely that which specializes in producing and disseminating ideas that shape public opinion. While 82% of leaders older than 50 are "very proud" of their nationality, only 60% of leaders younger than 30 share this enthusiasm: The above reported differences correspond to the percentage of those who responded "very proud". When the categories of "somewhat" and "very" proud are added together, these differences are less marked, but do not entirely dissolve.

The 2010 version of the survey incorporates a new, open-ended question designed to measure the diverse sources of national pride. Answers to this question were classified into six categories: origin, culture, natural resources (including natural beauty as well as mineral and energy resources), the country's achievements, patriotic symbols, and other. Of all of these factors, the principal force driving national pride is origin; that is, 37% attributed their pride in being Mexican to the simple fact of being born in the country. This is followed by culture

(23%), national achievements (20%) and natural resources (12%). Patriotic symbols and other reasons do not account for a significant percentage of responses. For leaders, culture is the primary motive of national pride (55%), followed by origin (18%), achievements (12%) and natural resources (11%). The motives of national pride vary interestingly according to geographic region, age, level of education, and income level. The importance of origin is greater than the national average in the Center of the country, among those forty and over, and for those with the lowest level of education and income. In contrast, culture is notably more important for those in the North, those younger than 30, those with a higher level of education and a more comfortable economic situation. While the motives behind national pride are diverse, Mexicans are generally united in their high level of national pride.

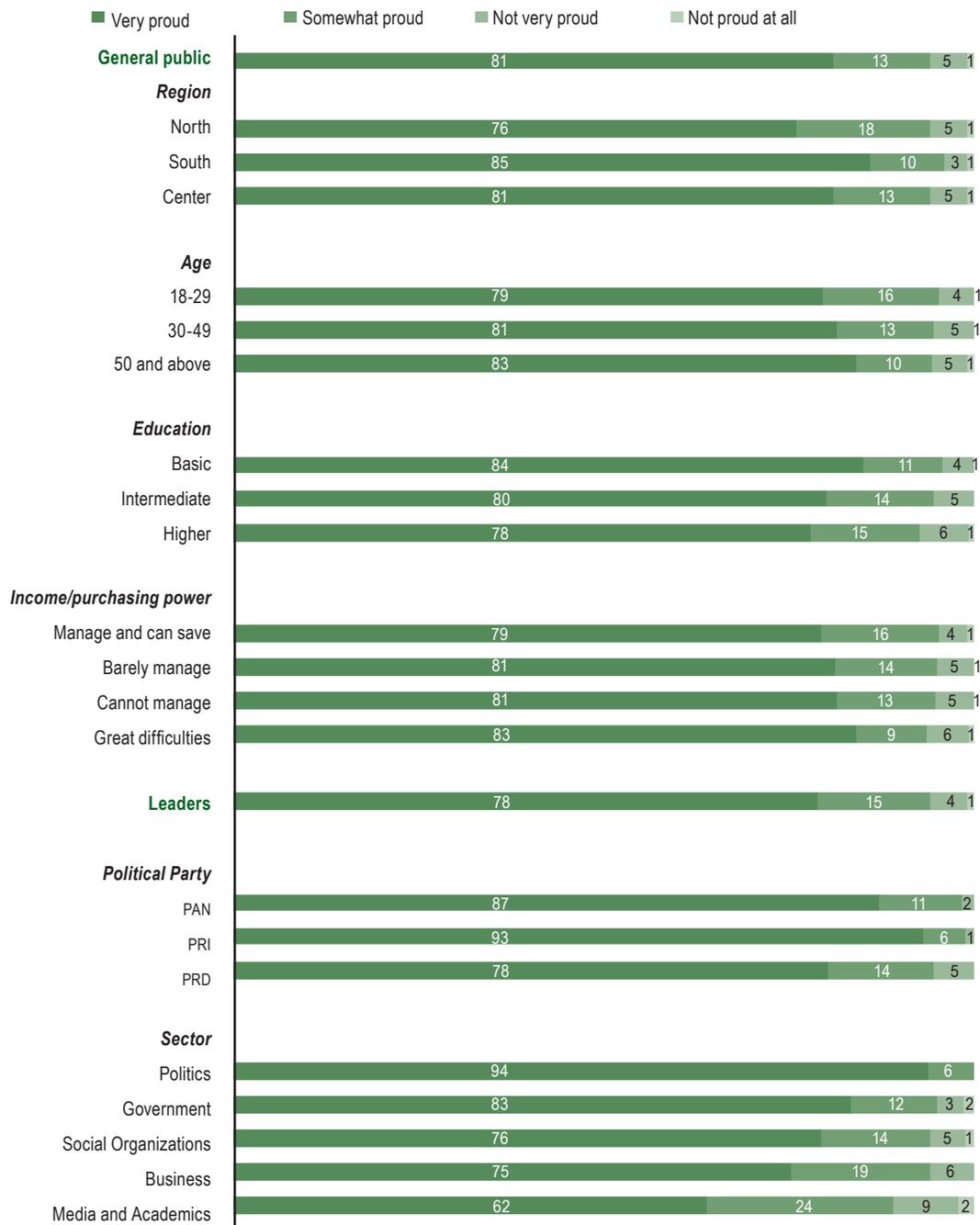
Although only 5% of Mexicans responded "not very" or "not at all" proud, it is important to explore the reasons behind their disaffection. To this end, the 2010 survey also included an open-ended question directed at this segment of the population.<sup>5</sup> Dissatisfaction with government was the principle motive for low national pride at 37%, followed by a preoccupation with security (22%), the economy (20%), and their fellow citizens' personal conduct (9%).

Once again, the variables affecting pride are different for different social groups. For leaders, the conduct of fellow Mexicans represents the primary motive of disaffection (46%), followed by government (27%), and the state of the economy (19%). Differences are also considerable across generations. While 46% of youth (Mexicans 30 and younger) mention government as the principal reason for their disaffection, only 15% of those over 50 share this sentiment. For Mexicans over 50 years of age, internal security (36%) and the poor state of the economy (30%) are more important. At the same time, frustration with the government is increasingly cited as education and income rise. While 46% of those who have attained

<sup>5</sup> Data on the sources of low national pride should be interpreted with caution, as they are based on a small number of respondents. The findings offered here are intended primarily to inspire further investigation.



**Figure 1.3. National Pride**  
*How proud are you of being Mexican?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



at least a high school degree cite government as the primary source of their disaffection, only 14% of those with the lowest level of education do so. Likewise, the percentage of respondents at the highest income level who attribute their low national pride to government is 13 points higher than the percentage of those who do so at the lowest income level. In sum the young, educated, and well off with low national pride are more critical of their government and cite this as the main reason for their alienation.

How Mexicans view the importance of their country in the international arena is another useful measure of Mexican nationalism. Although Chapter 2 will discuss this topic in greater detail, we note here that Mexicans' positive perception of their country's importance on the international stage is consistent with their strong national pride. A majority of Mexicans (57%) consider that Mexico is "very" important on the international stage, and a further 31% believe that Mexico is "somewhat" important. A minority (11%) consider Mexico to be "not very" or "not at all" important. In general, Mexicans also have a positive perception of the country's international trajectory over the last decade, and in spite of widespread insecurity and sluggish economic growth, a majority of the general public believe that Mexico will gain importance on the world stage.

The arrival of the Bicentennial provides a unique opportunity to go beyond traditional indicators of nationalism and measure how history and the perception of Mexico's achievements affect national pride. To this end, the 2010 edition of the survey included a new question designed to measure how satisfied Mexicans are with "what Mexico has achieved in 200 years of independence". Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction in four distinct areas: economic development, social equality, peace and internal security, and independence with respect to international affairs. These questions can potentially cast light on how Mexicans, on balance, view their country's progress after two hundred years of independence.

In general, Mexicans are mildly satisfied with Mexico's progress with respect to all of the variables

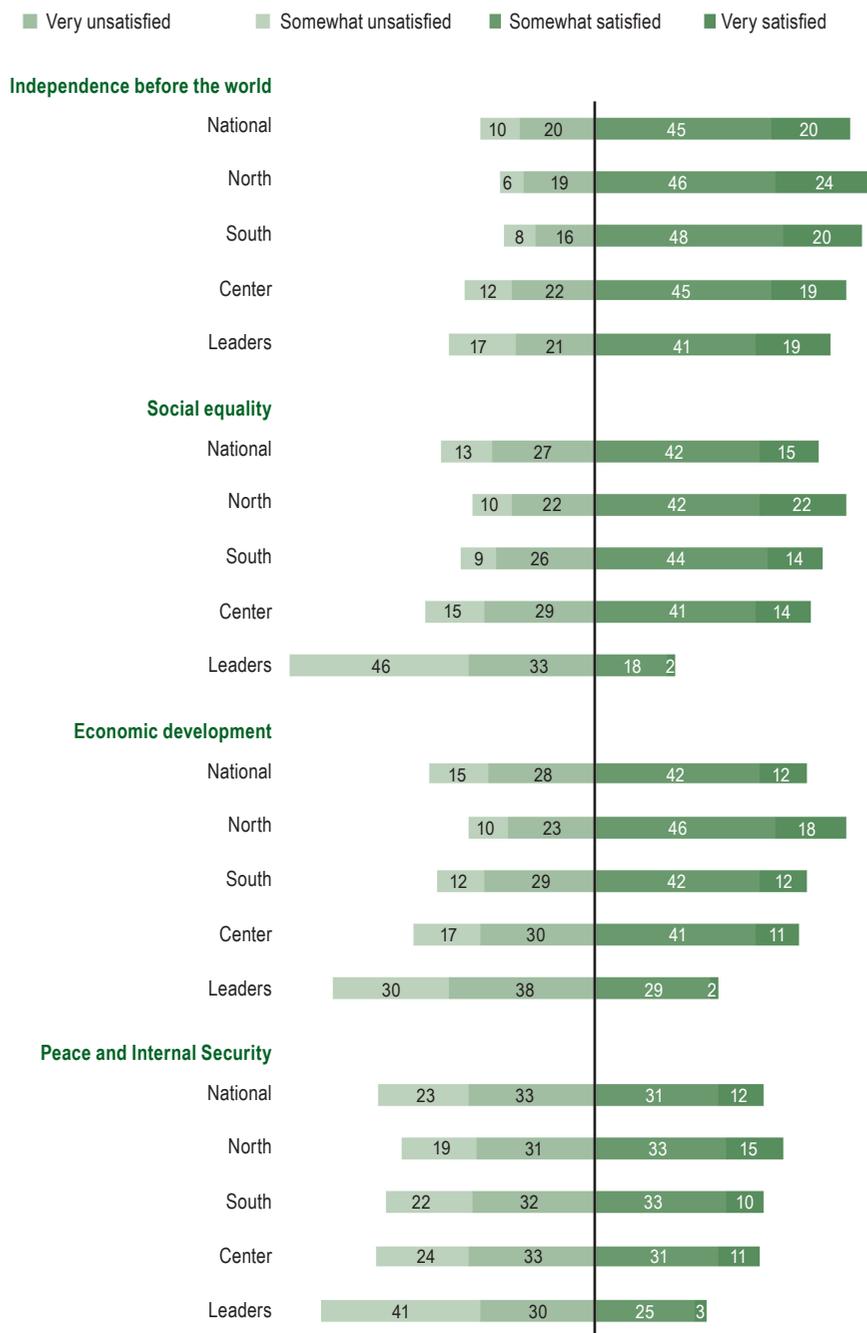
measured, except for peace and internal security. Figure 1.4 displays the levels of satisfaction and discontent across the four variables measured. Surprisingly, there is an important gap between Mexicans' evaluations of national progress, on the one hand, and high national pride, on the other. While an overwhelming majority of both the general public and leaders are very proud of their nationality, skepticism or, at best, intermediate levels of satisfaction characterize both the general public's and leaders' perceptions of national progress. The percentage of respondents reporting that they are "very satisfied" with Mexico's progress is low across the four variables measured: 20% in independence, 15% in social equality, and 12% each in economic development and peace and internal security. These results suggest that progress—that is, what has been achieved over the last 200 years—has not kept up with Mexicans' aspirations and expectations.

The general public and leaders are clearly divided in their perceptions of Mexico's progress. While the general public is mildly satisfied, leaders are more clearly discontented. The majority of the general public is "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with Mexico's achievements in terms of national independence (65%), social equality (57%) and economic development (54%). However, only a minority of those surveyed (43%) is "very" or "somewhat satisfied" with peace and internal security. The percentage of satisfaction in the North of the country is consistently higher for all four variables than that of other regions, with differences of up to 12 percentage points. For the general public, those with lower levels of education are consistently more content than those who have completed high school and higher, with differences of up to 11 percentage points. This suggests that education generates greater criticism and expectations with regard to the progress of the country. Ideology and party affiliation are also influential. Those who identify with the PAN and PRI are considerably more satisfied than those who identify with the PRD in terms of economic development (PAN 66%, PRI 59%, PRD 51%), social equality (PAN 64%, PRI 64%, PRD 46%), peace and internal



**Figure 1.4. Satisfaction after 200 years of Independence**

*How satisfied or unsatisfied are you with what Mexico has achieved over 200 years of independent life in terms of..?*  
(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



security (PAN 51%, PRI 47%, and PRD 43%), and independence (PAN 74%, PRI 67%, PRD 63%). It is difficult to determine whether the more critical orientation of those who identify with the PRI and PRD is a question of ideology or of their parties' current status in the opposition. Perhaps most striking is that those with no partisan attachments—that is, “independents”—are least satisfied on all four variables (economic development 47%, social equality 52%, peace and internal security 37%, and national independence 62%).

In contrast with the general public, leaders are for the most part dissatisfied. In decreasing order of dissatisfaction, leaders register 79% dissatisfaction in social equality, 71% in internal security, and 68% in economic development. The only area where leaders are relatively satisfied is that of national independence: 60% are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied, while 38% are not. Leaders are highly fragmented by party affiliation: leaders who vote for the PAN are consistently more satisfied than those who sympathize with the PRI or PRD. The difference between those that sympathize with the PAN and those who identify with the PRI and PRD is as large as 25 percentage points. There are also substantial differences among leaders according to profession: business executives are more dissatisfied with security, while academics, the media, and leaders of social, civic and non-profit groups are primarily concerned with social equality.

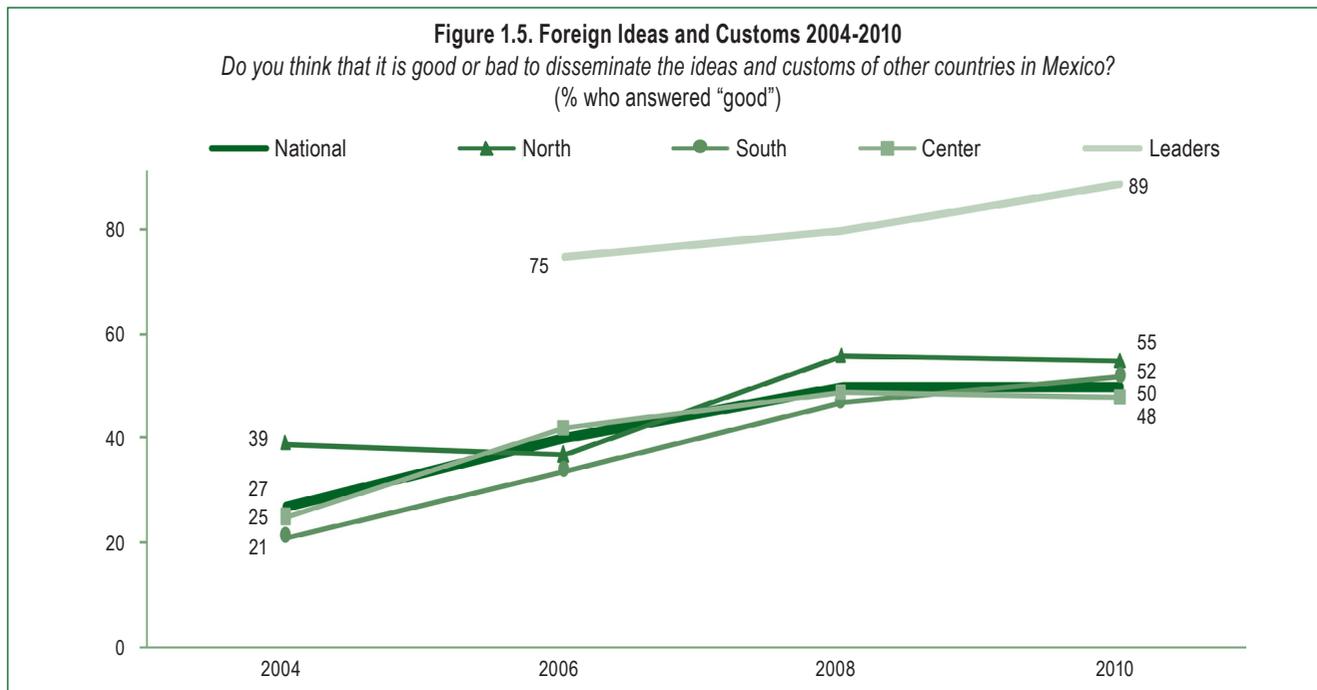
### *A Steady March towards Cosmopolitanism*

Nationalism is a complex phenomenon reflecting numerous cultural and historical patterns. The interaction of these components, nevertheless, is vital for understanding public opinion and the extent to which it may be shaped. The links between various elements of national identity may be based on factors as distinct as territory, ethnicity, language, history, and common customs and traditions, just to name a few. As reported in the previous section, Mexicans consider their culture to be one of the principal mo-

tives of national pride, emphasizing the importance of national cuisine, music, folklore, and family traditions. We will also see that for the majority of Mexicans, culture is a key element in their relationship with the world, while promoting Mexican culture across the globe ranks as one of the most important objectives of foreign policy. Given the strong bond of Mexicans to their culture and the importance that they ascribe to it in relations with the outside world, it is fitting to ask how open Mexicans might be to influences and cultures of other countries. This question is especially relevant given the increasing exposure of Mexicans to other cultures through immigration, international trade, foreign investment, and the international media.

The survey results cast light on the role of culture in Mexican nationalism and have documented a slow but consistent opening to foreign cultures and ideas. Along with the three previous editions of the survey, respondents were asked if they considered the diffusion of ideas and customs from other countries to be positive or negative. As is shown in Figure 1.5, there is an overall inclination towards opening: 50% of Mexicans consider the diffusion of other cultures to be positive, while a little less than a third (31%) consider it to be negative and 17% are ambivalent. This is a considerable change from 2004, where the balance of public opinion was more defensive. In 2004, 51% of the population rated as negative the diffusion of other cultures in Mexico while only 27% considered it to be positive. The move towards greater cultural openness is most marked in the South and Center of the country, where the percentage of positive opinions regarding the diffusion of foreign cultures jumped 31 and 22 points, respectively, in the period between 2004 and 2010. Negative opinions fell by 29 percentage points in the South and 19 points in the Center of the country over this same period.

These data point toward a narrowing of the gap in cultural openness between Mexico's regions. The North continues to be the region most open to cultural influences from abroad (55% reported a positive opinion of the diffusion of foreign cultures and ideas), followed by the South (52%) and the Center of



the country (48%). As in the three previous editions of the survey, the Center of the country registered the highest percentage of cultural nationalism –that is, those who consider negative the diffusion of foreign cultures and ideas (Center of the country 35%, South 28%, and North 21%).

In contrast to regions, the traditional gap between leaders and the general public in terms of cultural openness has widened further, with leaders growing more cosmopolitan. The great majority of leaders fall within the category of cultural cosmopolites: 89% consider positive the influence of foreign cultures, representing an increase of 9 percentage points over the previous two years. The difference with respect to the general public is considerable (39 percentage points) Leaders do not vary across party affiliation or sector, confirming the overall trend toward openness in this group.

Among the general public there are significant differences according to gender, education level, age, and income. A greater percentage of men perceive

as positive the diffusion of ideas and influences than women (54% and 46%, respectively). Level of education is associated positively with the degree of openness to other cultures: while 44% of those with basic education consider positive the influence of ideas from abroad, 63% of those with a high school degree or higher state the same. Openness towards other cultures increases as age group declines. The difference between those younger than 30 (55% ranking the diffusion of other cultures positively) and those greater than 50 (40% ranking other cultures positively) adds up to fifteen percentage points. Income also makes a considerable difference in the level of cultural cosmopolitanism or nationalism. The perception of foreign cultural influences as positive is 15 percentage points higher in the highest income level measured (59%) than those with lower incomes. On the whole, men, younger Mexicans, and those with the highest level of education and income are the most open to other cultures.



### *Sovereignty: Decline and Pragmatism*

No other aspect of nationalism has received greater attention on the occasion of the Bicentennial than the role of politics in the process of nation building. Questions of territorial integrity and control, the demarcation of borders, the independence of Mexican politics in the international sphere, and the consolidation of national authority over the population, natural resources, and the rule of law have formed the heart of public discourse amid the celebrations of the Bicentennial of Independence and the Centennial of the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, most of these issues are framed by the Mexican constitution as the founding principles of national sovereignty. In its basic legal framework, the Mexican state is traditionally viewed as the guardian of national sovereignty.

However, how deeply entrenched are traditional notions of national sovereignty and political independence in 2010? The survey includes a series of questions on several subjects—such as the desirability of further integration with neighboring countries, the willingness to grant citizenship to foreigners, the willingness to cede, share, and delegate questions of sovereignty, and the possibility of accepting the jurisdiction of international organizations—that allow us to analyze attachment to traditional ideas of national sovereignty, non-intervention, and national independence. On the whole, survey data reveal that political nationalism is deeply rooted unless ceding sovereignty is perceived to bring gains in economic well-being or public security.

What happens to Mexican nationalism when the possibility of sharing sovereignty brings economic benefits in return? With the purpose of evaluating the willingness of Mexicans to share sovereignty with a more powerful country in exchange for an increase in individual welfare, Mexicans were asked whether they would agree with Mexico forming a single country with the United States. As shown in Figure 1.6, sovereignty is a less constant component of political nationalism than national symbols or culture. Posing the question of an eventual political union with the United States, the distribution of opinion in 2010

is similar to that of 2006, with a majority of 52% “very much” or “somewhat” in agreement and 45% “somewhat” or “very much” in disagreement. On the other hand, opinion in 2008 was more inclined toward rejection, with 45% in favor and 51% against a possible union of the two countries.

In addition to the changing nature of attitudes toward a political union with the United States, the 2010 data confirm two important trends recorded in earlier years. First, the distribution of preferences by region matches our expectations: in the South and Center of the country attitudes toward a potential union are more nationalist than in the North, where one out of three Mexicans favors union with the United States if this would result in economic benefits. Second, opinion varies according to age, party affiliation, and income. While 52% of adults older than 50 disagree with ceding sovereignty even in the case of better living conditions, 57% of Mexicans younger than 30 are in favor. With respect to party affiliation, those that sympathize with the PAN and PRI are for the most part in favor (62% and 54% respectively), while 58% of those who identify with PRD are against. Those that reported greater economic difficulties are more pragmatic where economic benefits are guaranteed, favoring a union with the U.S. by 8 percentage points higher than the national average.

As might be expected, the willingness to cede sovereignty declines notably when no concrete benefit is proposed in return. In order to measure how far the promise of better living standards affects sentiments with respect to sovereignty, half of survey respondents were asked whether they approve of union with the United States, this time without the mention of economic benefits in return. When asked simply “How much would you agree to Mexico and the United States forming a single country?” an absolute majority (56%) identified as “strongly” or “somewhat” in disagreement. Even so, a considerable percentage of respondents reported to be “somewhat” or “strongly” in agreement (42%). To those that disagreed, the question was posed a second time, this time with the condition that possible union with the



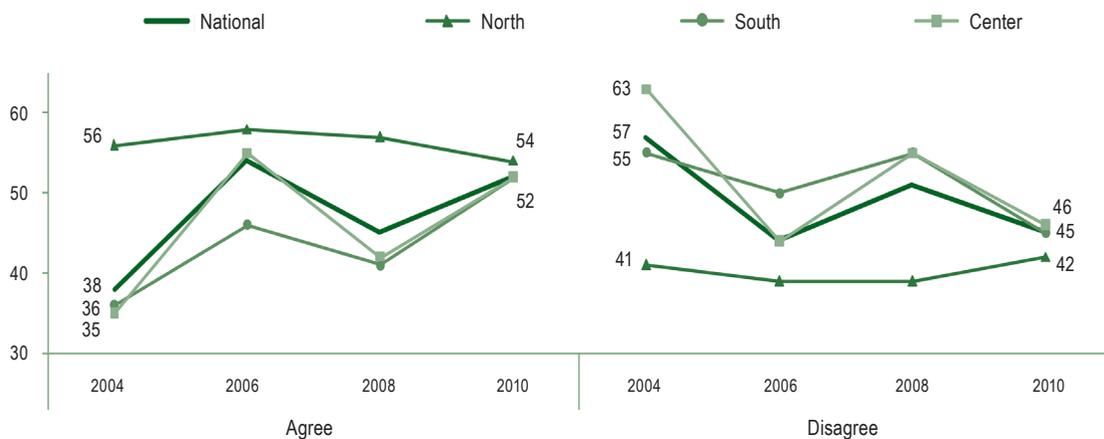
U.S. would raise living standards. Of this group, 53% could be called “hardline” defenders of sovereignty, as the promise of better living standards did nothing to modify their initial position. On the other hand, the 42% who changed their position when prompted with the prospect of improved living standards could be called “pragmatic” with respect to questions of sovereignty.

Do Mexicans feel the same about a potential union when the country(s) in question is less powerful and more culturally similar, as in the case of

Central America? On the whole, data from Figure 1.6 show that there is a smaller degree of agreement for political union with Central American countries than with Mexico’s powerful neighbor to the north, independent of the material benefits perceived. Nevertheless, the difference is small: 48% of Mexicans “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that Mexico and the countries of Central America form a single country if this would result in greater living standards, but a similar percentage “strongly” or “somewhat” disagrees. Interestingly, in the southern states that share

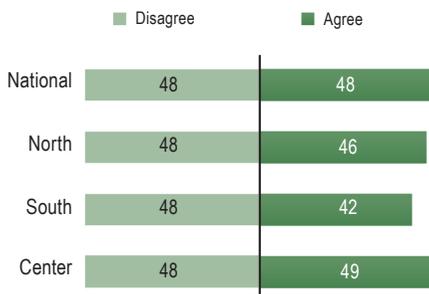
**Figure 1.6. Mexico’s Union with Other Countries**  
**Union with the United States 2004-2010**

*How much would you agree to Mexico and the United States forming a single country if this meant an improvement in your life quality?*  
 (%)



**Union with Central America**

*How much would you agree to Mexico and the countries of Central America forming a single country if this meant an improvement in your life quality?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for “Don’t know” or “No Answer”.



a direct border with Central America, the level of agreement is lower (42%) and disagreement, greater (48%) than in the rest of the country.

The slight preference for union with the United States over Central America continues to hold for the split sample, where survey respondents were asked to consider union with Central America first without mention of the prospect of improved standards of living. Asked solely to consider a union with Central America, 37% of Mexicans responded in favor, while 58% disagreed. When those who disagreed were asked to reconsider union with Central America on the condition that living standards would rise in return, 58% still disagreed. This would make the percentage of “hardline” defenders of sovereignty equal to those who rejected union outright. Only 34% of those who first rejected union with Central America changed their position, making the percentage of “pragmatists” almost equal to those that support union from the start. Since the question of union with Central America was posed for the first time in the 2010 edition of the survey, data do not yet exist to measure whether attitudes towards a political union with Central America are as volatile over time as those towards the United States.

The survey also allows us to observe another important variable related to sovereignty and national independence: the degree of openness of Mexicans towards the participation of foreigners in political and national life. Mexican law imposes restrictions that impede nationalized, foreign-born citizens and dual nationals from being elected to certain public positions, while the national media constantly debate the pros and cons of allowing foreign athletes to represent Mexico as members of its national teams. The question of who has the right to bear the national colors serves as a metaphor beyond a strictly athletic sense, describing in more general terms the boundaries between who belongs to the Mexican nation (“us”) and foreigners (them).

In this sense, Mexican political nationalism is just as present as in earlier years, although slightly less intense, as the data from Figure 1.7 show. In general, Mexicans are unwilling to accept as full members

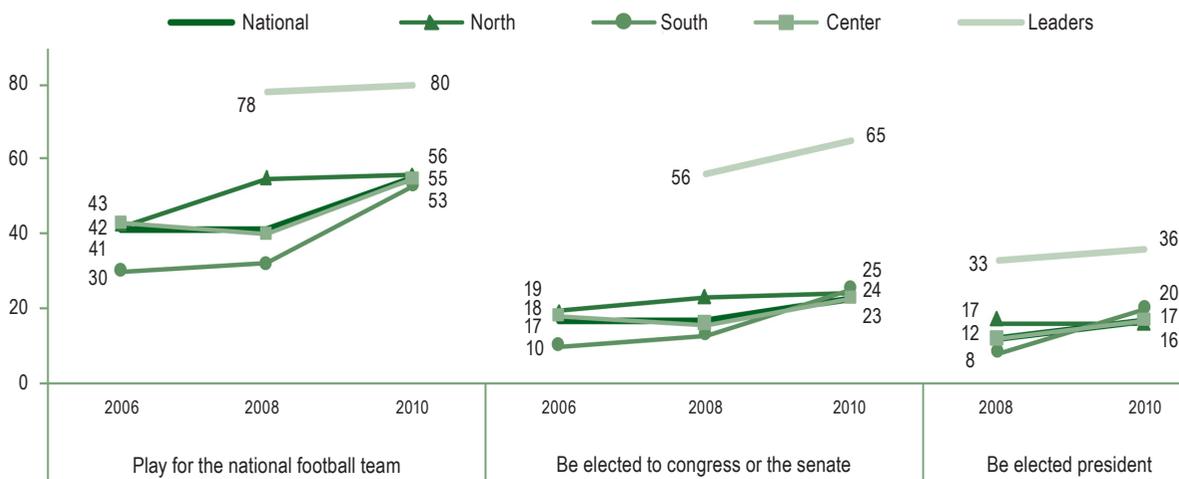
of the national community foreigners who obtain Mexican nationality. Seventy-three percent of the general public opposes allowing a nationalized foreigner to seek office as a senator or congressman and 80% reject the possibility of a nationalized foreigner becoming president. While this rejection has held steady over the previous editions of the survey, in 2010 there is slightly less opposition to a foreigner assuming both positions. The percentage of those who oppose the election of foreigners to Congress has fallen 8 points since 2006, while opposition to nationals born outside of Mexico assuming the presidency is 4 percentage points lower than in 2008. As in previous editions, opposition to a foreign national holding the presidency is greater in the Center of the country and the North, with 81% and 79% rejection respectively, than in the South (74% against). No significant differences were observed among gender, education, party affiliation, or income, reflecting a deeply rooted suspicion in Mexican society towards foreigners holding positions of power.

The positions of leaders are distinct from those of the general public in four aspects. First, leaders are more willing to grant political rights to naturalized Mexicans. Second, differences in willingness to accept naturalized citizens as legislators and as president are notable, which suggests a greater level of political sophistication. Third, leaders are more open than in earlier years to the possibility of nationalized foreigners holding *any* political office. Finally, leaders’ opinions vary according to party affiliation and sector of employment. While the general public is opposed to allowing nationalized foreigners seek office as congressmen or senators, 65% of leaders are in favor and only one out of three oppose. The group of leaders, or elites, whose political affiliation tilts towards the PRD are less likely to be in favor (59% agree) than those who sympathize with the PRI (61%) and PAN (70%). At the same time, academics and the media are the most open to granting nationalized foreigners the right to run for legislative office, with 78% in favor, while politicians are the most opposed (only 55% in favor).



**Figure 1.7. Rights of Nationalized Foreigners 2006-2010**

Tell me, do you agree or disagree that a Nationalized foreigner may...?  
(% who agree)



Along with the general public, leaders share an overall reluctance to grant nationalized foreigners the right to run for president: 62% oppose, while only 36% agree. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the level of rejection of leaders with respect to this question is 18 percentage points less than the general public. In addition, when it comes to the presidency, differences across political parties narrow, although the gap dividing the most open sector (academics and the media) from the least open is more marked. While the question of allowing a nationalized Mexican to run for the presidency divides academics and the media (49% in favor and 50% oppose), politicians are overwhelmingly opposed (76% oppose and 22% in favor).

The issue that saw the most pronounced decline in nationalist attitudes is the participation of foreigners on national sports teams. While in 2006 and 2008 the majority of the general public opposed the possibility of a nationalized Mexican forming part of the Mexican national soccer team, in 2010 public opinion is marked by a decisive reversal, with a majority of 55% in favor and 40% against. In reality, this shift

is due more to changes in the climate of nationalism in the South and Center of the country, where overwhelming opposition –61% and 55% respectively—gave way to levels of support reaching 53% and 55%. At the same time, those groups traditionally open to the participation of foreigners didn't report significant changes: the North registered the same level of openness as 2008 (56%) while the support of leaders remained strong at 80%.

What might explain such a marked change with respect to an issue as charged with symbolism as participation in Mexico's national sports teams? With the data and observations collected up to this point, it is not possible to determine whether Mexicans' greater openness reflects a true shift towards less nationalistic attitudes or a temporary boost provided by the celebration of the 2010 World Cup, which concluded just before the realization of this survey. If so, the greater openness towards allowing foreigners to play for the Mexican national team would more likely reflect the hope that foreigners would improve the team's performance. What we can conclude from attitudes towards the participation of foreign-born



citizens in politics and sports is that nationalist sentiment in the Center of the country, and especially in the South, has declined.

Another way of measuring political nationalism –particularly the traditional ideas of national sovereignty and non-intervention in states' internal affairs– is through the willingness of Mexicans to take part in, accept, and abide by the decisions of international organizations. In this respect, the survey includes a series of questions on willingness to accept the decisions of the United Nations (UN), to abide by the decisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and willingness to accept extradition and the jurisdiction of world legal bodies over national legislation. The results reported in Figure 1.8 demonstrate that in general, Mexicans are neither firmly committed to multilateral organizations nor clearly decided with respect to ceding sovereignty even to international organizations of which Mexico is a member.

Despite Mexicans' high regard for the UN, when asked whether they agree with Mexico accepting UN actions to resolve international problems, the majority (51%) disagree if they view the decision as unfavorable, while only one out of three are in agreement. It is worth noting that resistance to UN decisions is slightly lower than in 2008, and that it is less in the North (40%) than in the South (51%) and the Center of the country (54%). Once again, nationalist attitudes are less marked in the North than in the rest of the country.

Opinion is more divided with respect to the jurisdiction of international legal bodies over crimes against humanity committed by nationals. Forty-seven percent of those interviewed do not agree that a Mexican accused of a crime such as torture who has not yet been tried in Mexico should be judged by an international court, while 41% agree. Mexicans' reluctance to support international jurisdiction is unchanged from 2008. Regional variations follow the expected pattern: the South is less open to the jurisdiction of international courts (60% disagree, 30% agree), while the North is more so (39% disagree, 45% agree) and the Center of the country falls

somewhere in the middle (46% oppose, 42% agree). What is most striking is the size of the gap between opinion in the North and South.

The only circumstance in which support for some extent of delegation of authority to external bodies exists is in the case of extradition of criminals who have taken refuge in Mexico, independent of their nationality. Eighty-eight percent of the public and 94% of leaders agree that criminals taking refuge in Mexico or in some other country should be returned for trial to the country where they committed the crime.

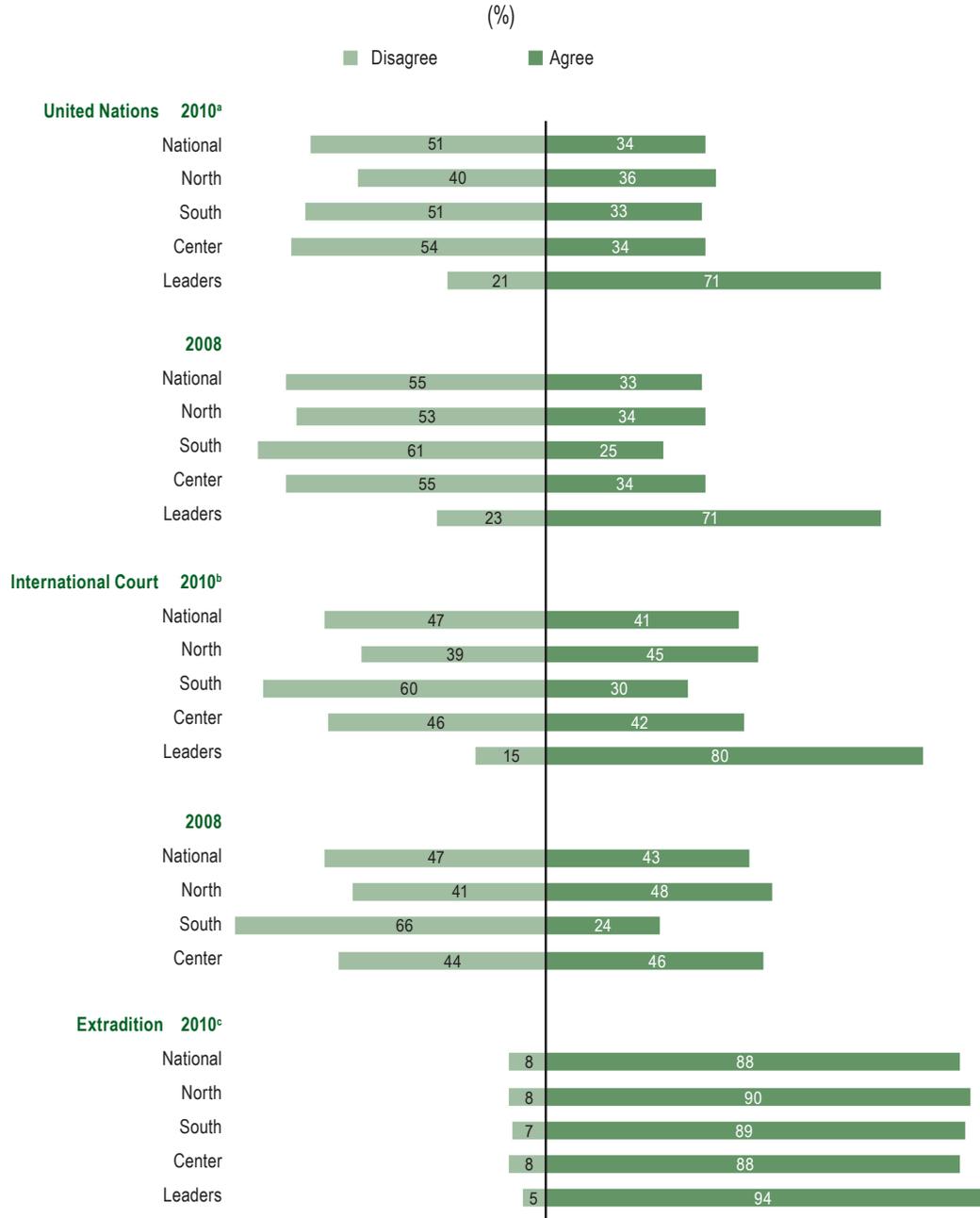
In the case of multilateral commitments, the position of leaders is diametrically opposed to that of the general public, with leaders more willing to cede sovereignty. Survey results reveal that there is a strong disposition among leaders to recognize the authority of international organizations: a broad majority (71%) agree that for the resolution of international problems, Mexico should accept the decisions of the United Nations even if they do not agree with them. At the same time, with respect to trade disputes with other countries, 80% consider that Mexico should accept the decisions of the WTO even if they are unfavorable. Four out of five leaders also agree that international legal bodies may judge Mexicans who have committed crimes against humanity.

### *The Erosion of Economic Nationalism*

Mexicans in 2010 are less resistant to opening the country to economic contact from abroad. However, enthusiasm towards free trade is much higher than in the case of globalization or foreign investment. Despite Mexico's economic difficulties and serious problems of unemployment, poverty, and inequality –and the world financial crisis of 2008-2009– feelings of protectionism do not seem to have grown. While Mexicans support free trade and globalization in general, they are also cautious toward potentially adverse consequences. The survey does not measure whether general support for economic opening translates to support for specific public policies related



**Figure 1.8. Willingness to Accept Multilateral Decisions 2008-2010**



<sup>a</sup> Tell me whether you agree with the following statement or not. In order to settle international problems, Mexico must accept the decisions of the United Nations, even if it does not like them.

<sup>b</sup> Do you agree or disagree that if a Mexican is accused of a crime against humanity, such as torture, and has not been tried in Mexico, said Mexican should be judged by an international court?

<sup>c</sup> To what extent do you agree that criminals who hide in Mexico or in another country to avoid justice should be transferred to the country where they committed the crime in order to be tried and punished there?

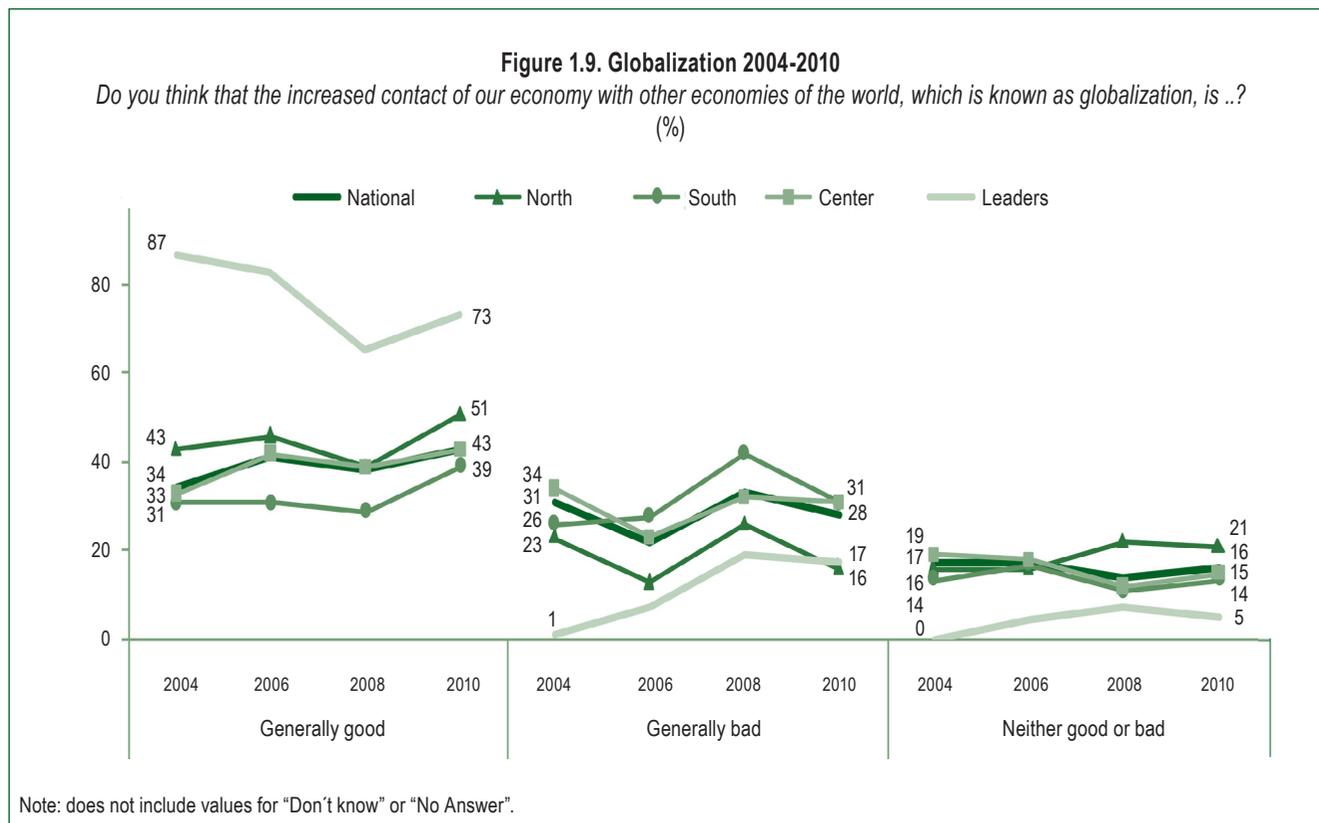
Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



to economic liberalization such as the adoption of international regulations or the removal of subsidies, among others. But it does allow us to measure opinion towards the flow of foreign capital in key sectors. As in previous years, attitudes are most protectionist towards Mexico's petroleum industry, where the majority is opposed to foreign investment.

In the past six years, economic globalization has become more popular in Mexico, although not yet a majority. As Figure 1.9 shows, a plurality of Mexicans (43%) believe that globalization, defined as the greater contact of the Mexican economy with other economies in the world, is generally good for

Mexico, while 28% consider it to be generally bad and a further 16%, neither good nor bad. The proportion of the population with positive opinions of globalization has increased 9 percentage points since 2004. Attitudes towards globalization vary according to region as we might expect: in the North the belief that globalization is positive for Mexico is considerably higher (51%) than in the Center of the country (43%) and the South (39%). Opposition is inversely proportional, reaching higher levels in the South and Center of the country (31%) than in the North (16%).



Once again, the sociodemographic characteristics of those that might be called "globaphilics" and "globaphobics" coincide with the findings of earlier years. In general, men have a more positive perception of globalization (47% consider it beneficial) than women (40%). There is also a considerable

generational gap: 46% of those under 30 believe that globalization is "good" while only 40% of those older than 50 report the same. The higher the level of education, the more sympathetic attitudes are towards globalization: 48% of those with a high school degree or higher consider globalization to be



positive, versus 40% of those who have only completed basic education. The variation is greater over differing levels of income.<sup>6</sup> The proportion of those who view globalization positively among those that report a comfortable economic situation (52%) is 13 points higher than those in the lowest income range who report great economic difficulties (39%).

As a final point, leaders again welcome globalization with much greater enthusiasm than the general public. Seventy three percent of leaders believe that globalization is beneficial for the country, which represents an increase of 8 percentage points in comparison with 2008. An interesting observation is that in spite of their clear “globaphilic” orientation, the intensity of leaders’ support varies considerably with party affiliation, employment sector, and age. Those that identify with the PAN hold an opinion of globalization considerably higher (87%), than those that sympathize with the PRI (69%) and PRD (46%). The same variation exists with public servants and business executives (85%), media (71%) representatives of social, civic, and non-profit groups (62%) and politicians (61%). In terms of age, while 83% of young leaders consider globalization to be beneficial, a proportion considerably less of leaders older than 50 believe the same (64%).

Given that globalization is often a broad and ambiguous term, a more in-depth understanding of globalization would require an examination of attitudes towards more concrete and tangible factors such as free trade and foreign direct investment. Figure 1.10 illustrates the perceptions of the costs and benefits of free trade for distinct variables, pointing to an overly positive perception of free trade both among the general public and for leaders. The majority of the general public (75%) reports that free trade is

beneficial for developed countries, and 63% consider it to benefit the Mexican economy. It is important to note that 59% of those interviewed report that free trade is beneficial for their own standard of living and a similar percentage responded that it is also beneficial for Mexican farmers. A plurality (49%) believe that globalization benefits the environment. Positive attitudes are more frequent in the North than in the Center of the country and the South, with differences that vary from 2 to 11 percentage points.

Leaders view free trade even more positively than that of the general public for almost all of the categories measured. Wide majorities believe that free trade is beneficial for the economies of developed countries (90%), for their standard of living (79%), and for the Mexican economy (73%), and pluralities believe that free trade has benefitted the environment (48%) and Mexican farmers (45%). Among the general public, the youngest, highest educated, and highest earning Mexicans tend to have a more positive perception of free trade. Most importantly, positive perceptions have not only held up in times of great economic uncertainty (such as 2009 and 2010), but have actually increased slightly across all of the categories measured. A possible explanation for this support is that Mexicans are more likely to evaluate free trade as consumers –perceiving gains in welfare from a greater variety of goods and lower prices –than as actors in the labor market<sup>7</sup> searching for more and better paid opportunities. Finally, positive perceptions of free trade may be indicative of the fact that economic nationalism, in general, is less deeply rooted than political nationalism.

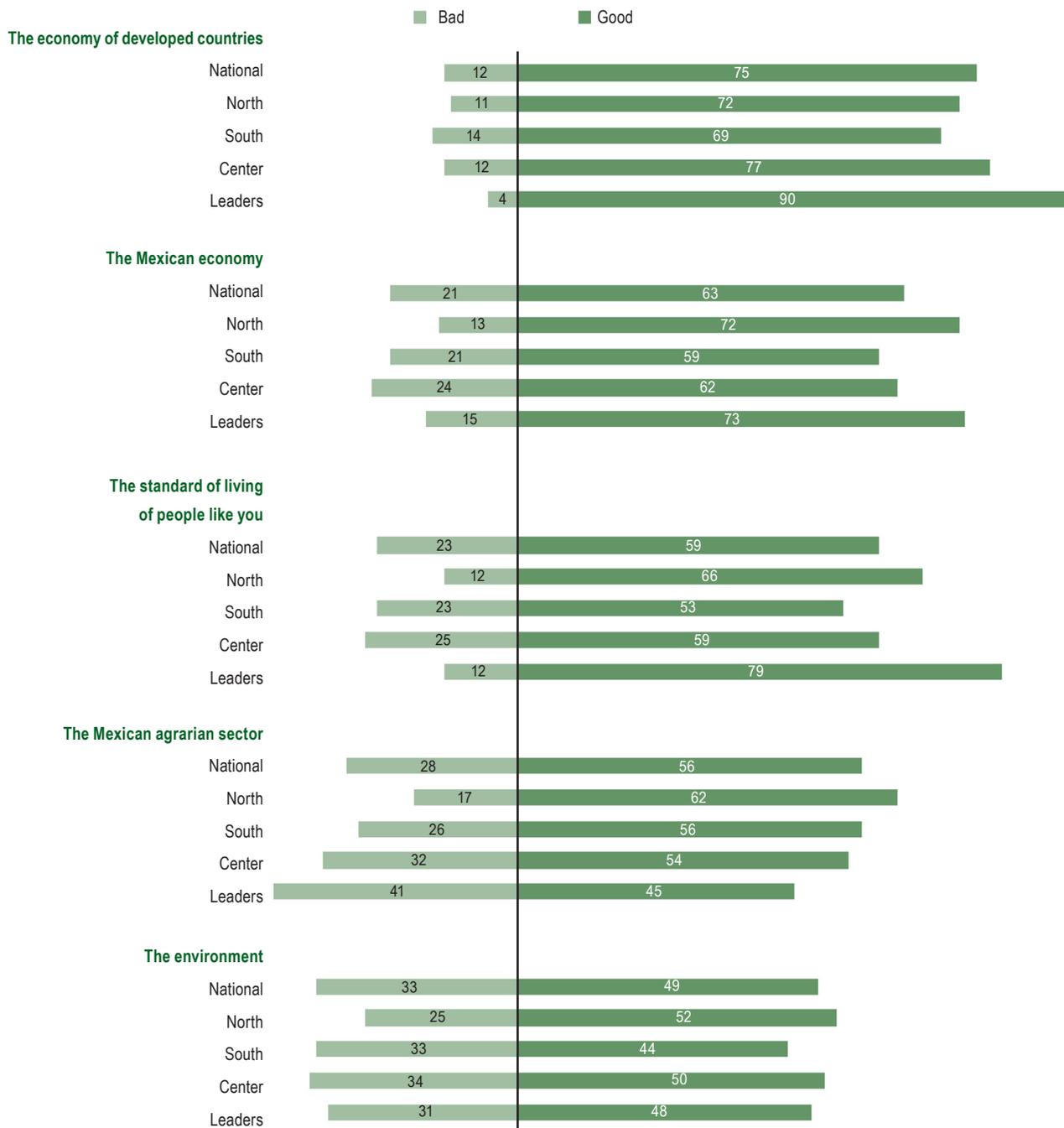
Are Mexicans equally as open to foreign investment as free trade? The data from Figure 1.11 suggest the answer is affirmative, providing evidence of

<sup>6</sup> An analysis of data from the 2008 survey coincides with evidence in 2010 that negative perceptions of globalization increase among those at the lowest socioeconomic levels. See: Virgilio Larralde, “Quiénes son los globalifóbicos en México”, *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 6, November 23, 2010, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, in <http://mexicoyel mundo.cide.edu>

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of perceptions toward free trade in the 2008 survey point toward this phenomenon. See Jesse Rogers, “Los mexicanos frente al libre comercio: ¿Cada quién habla de la feria como le va en ella?”, *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 3, October 12, 2010, and “México y el libre comercio: sacando un peso de diez centavos”, *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 8, January 11, 2011, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, in <http://mexicoyel mundo.cide.edu>



**Figure 1.10. Free Trade**  
*In general, do you think that free trade is good or bad for..?*  
(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



a considerable level of coherence in Mexican public opinion. When asked “How much do you believe foreign investment benefits Mexico?” 45% of the general public answered “very much”, 34% “somewhat”, 15% “not very much”, and 4% “not at all”. On the whole, a majority (79%) have a positive perception of foreign investment, while only 19% disagree. The proportion of those viewing free trade as “very” beneficial is 12 percentage points higher than in 2008. Nevertheless, the intensity of positive evaluations varies across region, level of education, and income. In the North, the proportion of those who believe foreign investment to be very beneficial is 16 percentage points higher than in the South. Those with higher levels of education and income evaluate foreign investment higher than those less well off, with a difference of 11 and 18 percentage points, respectively.

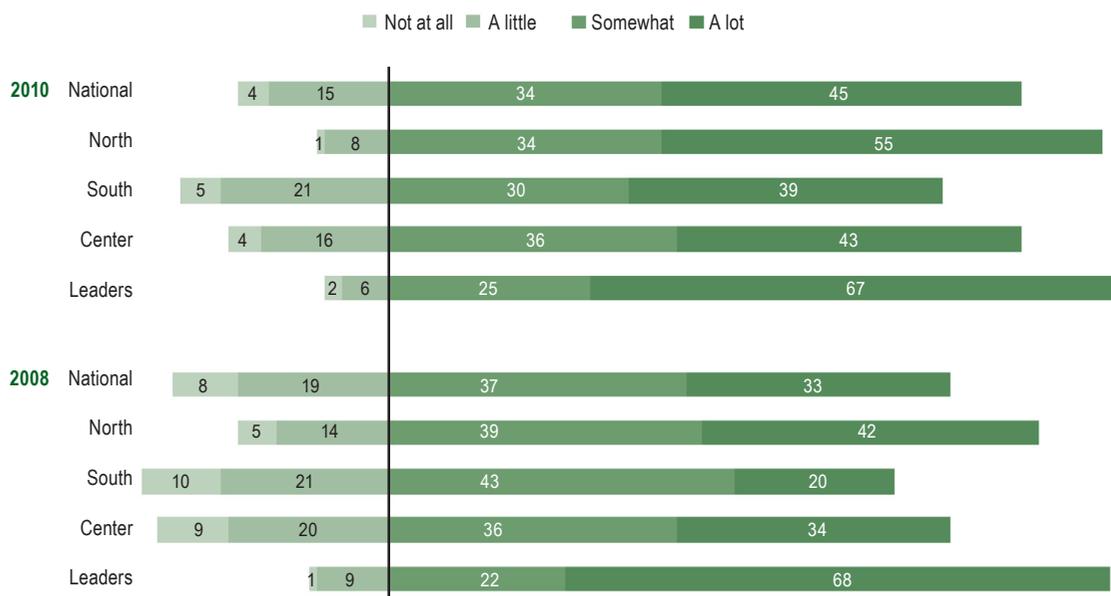
On the other hand, leaders are the group with the most positive perception of foreign investment: 67% consider that it benefits Mexico “very much”,

25% “somewhat”, and only 8% reporting “not very much” or “not at all”. However, differences in intensity across party affiliation and sector are quite high. The proportion of those that identify with the PAN that believe that foreign investment is very beneficial to Mexico reaches 82%, while 69% of those that sympathize with the PRI and only 32% of those who sympathize with the PRD report the same. Business executives and government officials value the benefits of foreign investment (83% and 81%) much more than politicians (63%), leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations (55%) and academia and the media (51%).

To measure whether there is resistance to permitting the entry of foreign investment in individual sectors considered strategic or of symbolic importance to the Mexican public, respondents were asked if the government should allow foreigners to invest in the following sectors: telecommunications, electricity, petroleum, and mass media such as newspapers and

**Figure 1.11. Foreign Investment 2008-2010**

*To what extent do you think that foreign investment benefits Mexico?*  
(%)



Note: does not include values for “Don’t know” or “No Answer”.

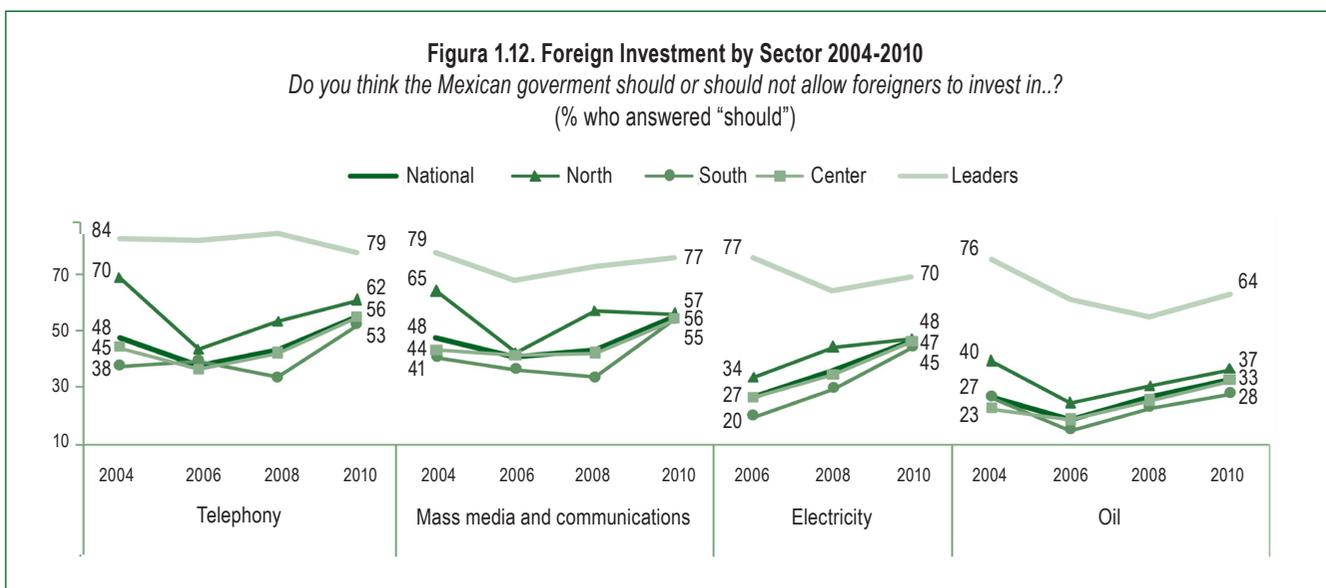


television broadcasting. As Figure 1.12 shows, the degree of openness towards international capital flows differs depending on the sector, but leaders are more positive overall. While Mexicans are open to investment in telecommunications and mass media, attitudes towards foreign investment in the petroleum sector are almost uniformly negative, while attitudes towards electricity are ambivalent. In general, the majority of the population is open to foreigners investing in communications such as telephones (56%), and television and newspapers (56%), although opposition is considerable in both cases (40% and 39% against). Leaders share an inclination towards openness, although with greater intensity: 79% are in favor of investment in telecommunications and 77% in media.

With respect to energy, as in 2004, 2006, and 2008, the general public overwhelmingly opposes the possibility of allowing foreigners to participate in the production, exploration, and distribution of petroleum (62% against, 33% in favor), contrasting with leaders, who widely support opening the sector (64% in favor, 34% against). If there is indeed a fall of 8 percentage points in the level of rejection among the general public with respect to 2008, the gap between

leaders and the public was unchanged, as rejection among leaders fell by the same proportion. In the North, the level of rejection is 5 percentage points lower than the national average, and in the South is 4 percentage points above. What is particularly interesting is that on the subject of petroleum there are no significant differences in opinion according to age, level of education, or income. The lack of difference is striking given that in other sectors, opposition to foreign investment increases considerably with age, and falls with increasing levels of education and income. It is thus safe to conclude that Mexicans share a broad consensus towards opposing foreign investment in petroleum and view the petroleum sector as distinct from other areas of investment.

On the other hand, the general public is undecided on whether foreign investment should be permitted in electricity, with 47% in favor and 49% against. Nevertheless, from 2006 to 2010 the proportion of those who agree increased by 20 percentage points, suggesting an erosion of nationalistic attitudes in this sector. In the case of leaders, the majority are in agreement with opening electricity to foreign investment (70%).





### *A Country Interested but Uninformed*

In general, Mexicans pay little attention to questions related to national or global affairs. The inclination towards disinterest in national affairs changed little in the year of the Bicentennial, despite constant media coverage of political, social, and economic subjects linked with Mexico's Independence and the Mexican Revolution. The level of attention among the general public to news about the political and social situation of the country is similar to 2008: 54% of those interviewed stated that they are very much (27%) or somewhat (27%) interested, while 42% stated they are "not very" (26%) or "not at all" interested (16%). The level of attention to news on economic and financial affairs is 8 percentage points lower than interest in political or social developments, with a greater proportion of respondents disinterested (51%) than concerned (46%).

As might be expected, the level of interest in events surrounding public life remained stable with respect to 2008, along with the level of interest in international developments. Fifty six percent of those interviewed are "very much" (25%) or "somewhat" (31%) interested in news tracking Mexico's relations with other countries, while 42% are "not very" (29%) or "not at all" (13%) interested. These results call into question the general belief that Mexicans are only interested in what happens within their country. In reality, Mexicans' level of interest in public affairs, independent of whether they are of national or international concern, can best be characterized as medium. Surprisingly, the nationalist emphasis of media coverage and government affairs on the occasion of the Bicentennial has not produced a reduction in interest in international affairs.

As Figure 1.13 shows, levels of interest are lower in the South than in the Center of the country or the North for all categories measured. Nevertheless, regional differences are greater when it comes to international affairs: among the states of the South interest in world news is 10 percentage points lower than in the North. This trend is consistent with the fact that overall interest in the news increases up to

25 percentage points with level of education and income, and to a lower degree, with age.

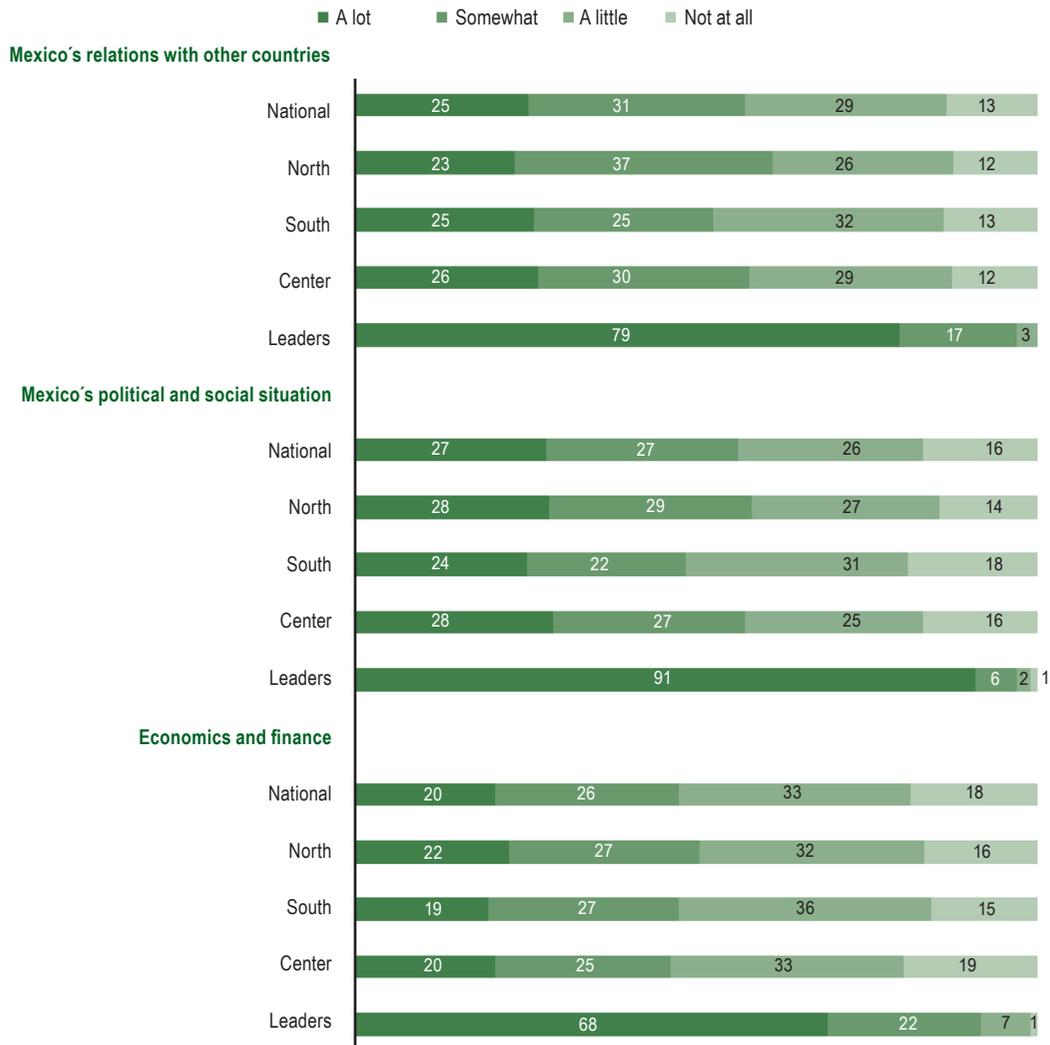
With respect to interest in politics in general and international developments in particular, the most important gap is that separating leaders from the general public. The proportion of leaders who follow the news is, based on an average of three different topics, 43 percentage points higher than the general public. Leaders are part of the so-called "informed public", as they make up the proportion of the population that most follows local, national, and world news. The levels of interest among leaders are the following: 90% are interested in economic developments (68% very much, 22% somewhat), 96% in international affairs (79% very much, 17% somewhat), and 97% in the country's political and social situation (91% very much, 6% somewhat).

In addition to degree of interest, it is important to identify how informed respondents are at the moment of registering their opinions. Research on this question suggests that those who lack information on a subject tend to form opinions based in more general attitudes of affective or normative character, especially with respect to ideological inclinations or basic values. Research also suggests that those with greater levels of education and knowledge are more critical, demanding, and tend to be more consistent with respect to their political preferences.

How informed are Mexicans and how much do they know about international affairs? To better answer this question, the survey includes a series of eight acronyms that respondents are asked to identify one by one. The data reported in Figures 1.14 and 1.15 coincides with the findings of previous editions of the survey in four aspects. First, Mexicans' knowledge of international affairs falls into a medium to low range. Second, Mexicans are more knowledgeable about local affairs than national and international developments. Third, Mexicans' level of information and knowledge vary considerably according to the region in which they live, gender, age, education, and income. Mexicans with higher income and greater education, and who are generally older and live closer to Mexico's northern border are



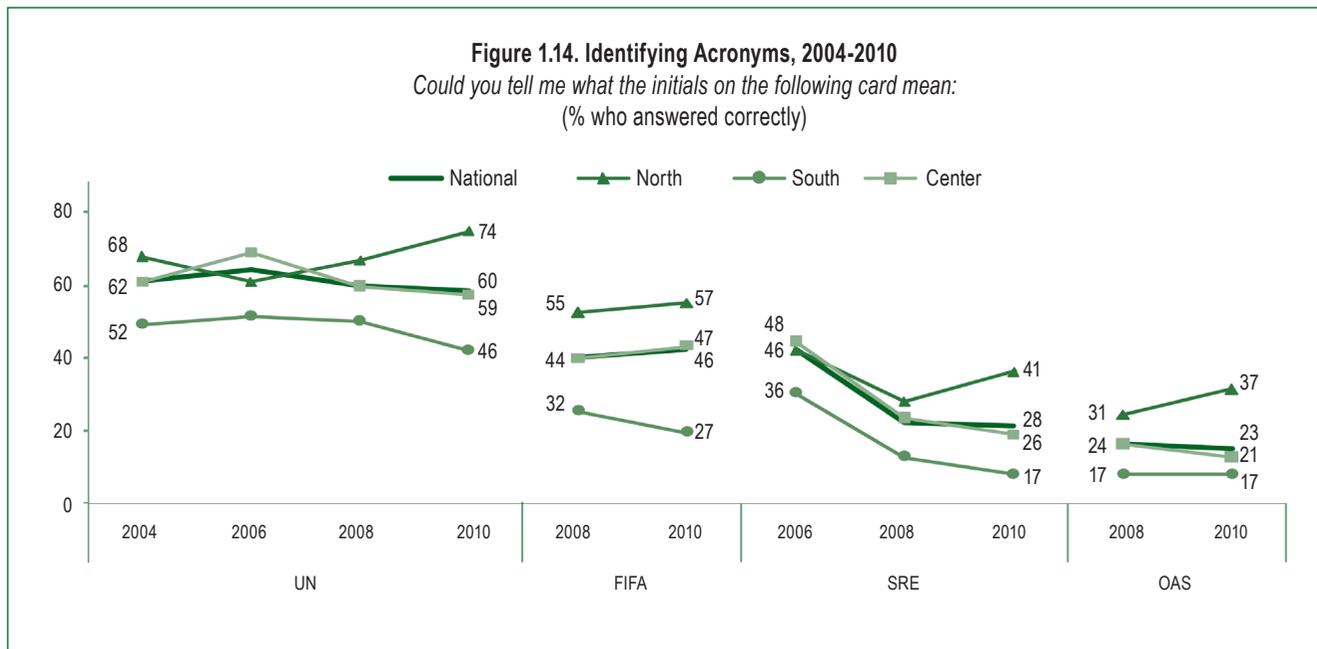
**Figure 1.13. Interest in the News**  
*When you follow the news, how interested are you in news about..?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

more knowledgeable overall. Fourth, and finally, leaders are much more informed than the general public. It is important to mention, in addition, that levels of knowledge of international affairs have varied little over the course of time, despite the advance of cultural cosmopolitanism and a preference for economic opening.

As shown in Figure 1.14, only 23% of respondents could identify correctly the initials of the Organization of American States, which is not surprising given the low visibility of the organization in Mexico. Nevertheless, it is difficult to understand the low level of knowledge of closer, more visible actors such as the International Federation of Association



Football (46% correctly identified the initials) and the Ministry of Foreign Relations (28% correctly identified the initials). That the level of recognition of FIFA did not improve is especially surprising, given the extensive coverage in 2010 of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Similarly, 55% of Mexicans do not know that the Euro is the currency of the majority of the countries of the European Union, and only 6% know the name of Mexico's foreign affairs minister. On the other hand, 77% correctly identified the governor of their state.

In general, Mexicans' knowledge of international affairs is not only low, but seems to be limited to two elements: the UN and the president of the United States. Sixty percent correctly identify the initials of the UN and 70% know the name of the current U.S. president. If we look more carefully at all of the categories measured, only knowledge of the UN and U.S. president vary across region and socioeconomic status. While in the North 74% recognize the initials of the UN and 81% know who the president of the United States is, in the South 54% are unable to identify the UN and 43% were not able to identify Barack Obama. The level of knowledge of the UN is three times higher among those who have completed

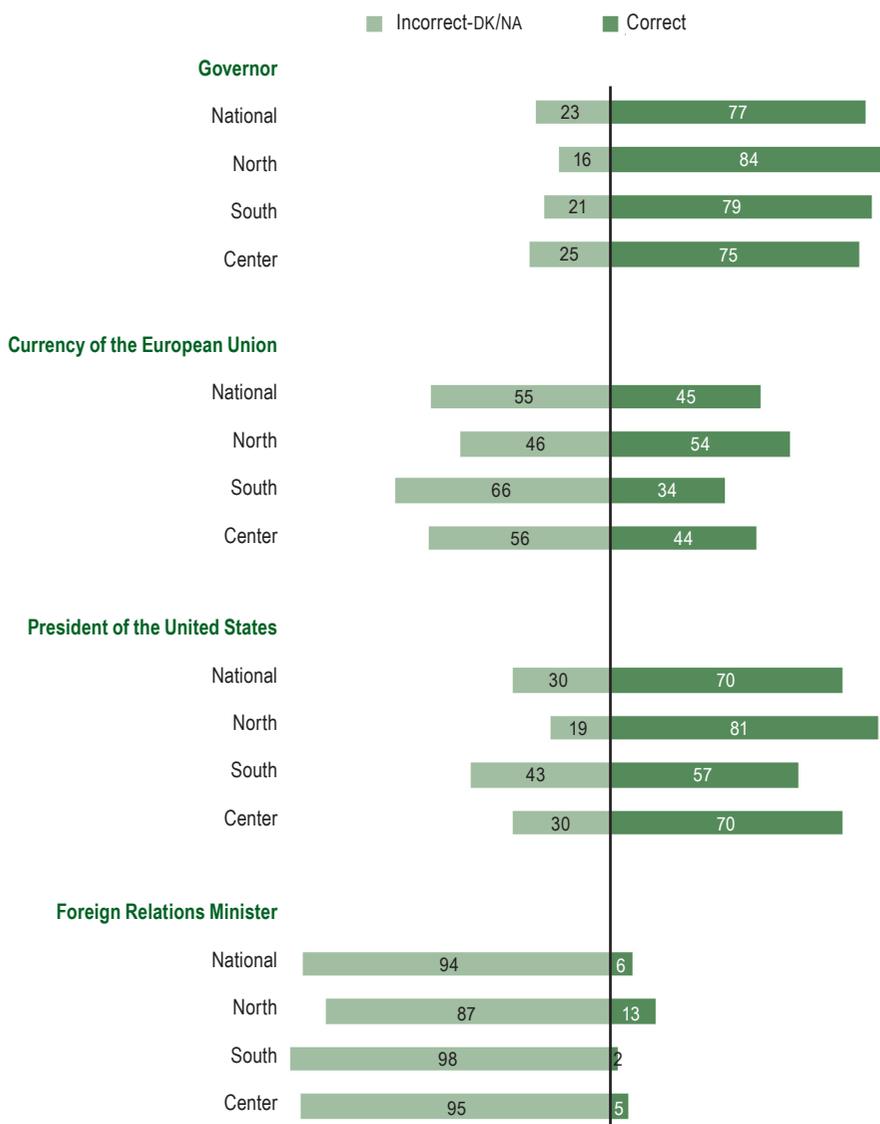
high school or higher than among those with only basic education. In sum, the gap in world knowledge in Mexico is impressive and coincides with indicators of social and economic inequality.

### *A Country Increasingly Isolated from the World*

Up to what point has the resurgence of national identity and the strong identification with political nationalism observed in the year of the Bicentennial contributed to greater isolation? One of the most interesting findings in the survey is that Mexicans' contact with other countries has been decreasing over the last six years. Increasing isolation, therefore, would not seem to be an effect of the influence of the Bicentennial, but rather a tendency with past precedence. One way of measuring contact with the world is through travel to other countries, whether or not one plans to live there. In 2010, 24% of the population claimed to have traveled outside of Mexico at least once, which represents a level of contact 8 percentage points lower than in 2008 and 26 percentage points lower than 2004. As seen in Figure 1.16, the decline in contact has extended to all zones of the country,



**Figure 1.15. General Knowledge**  
*Please, can you tell me the name of..?*  
 (%)



even in the North, which registered an increase of 9 points in the population that has never traveled outside of the country with respect to 2008. The capacity to travel abroad has diminished considerably since 2004, when respondents reported having traveled outside of the country an average of 3.5 times

in their lives. In 2010, the average number of trips abroad per respondent was 1.5.

As might be expected, leaders maintain a high level of contact with countries abroad and have more resources at their disposal when preparing to travel. Ninety-three percent have traveled abroad at least

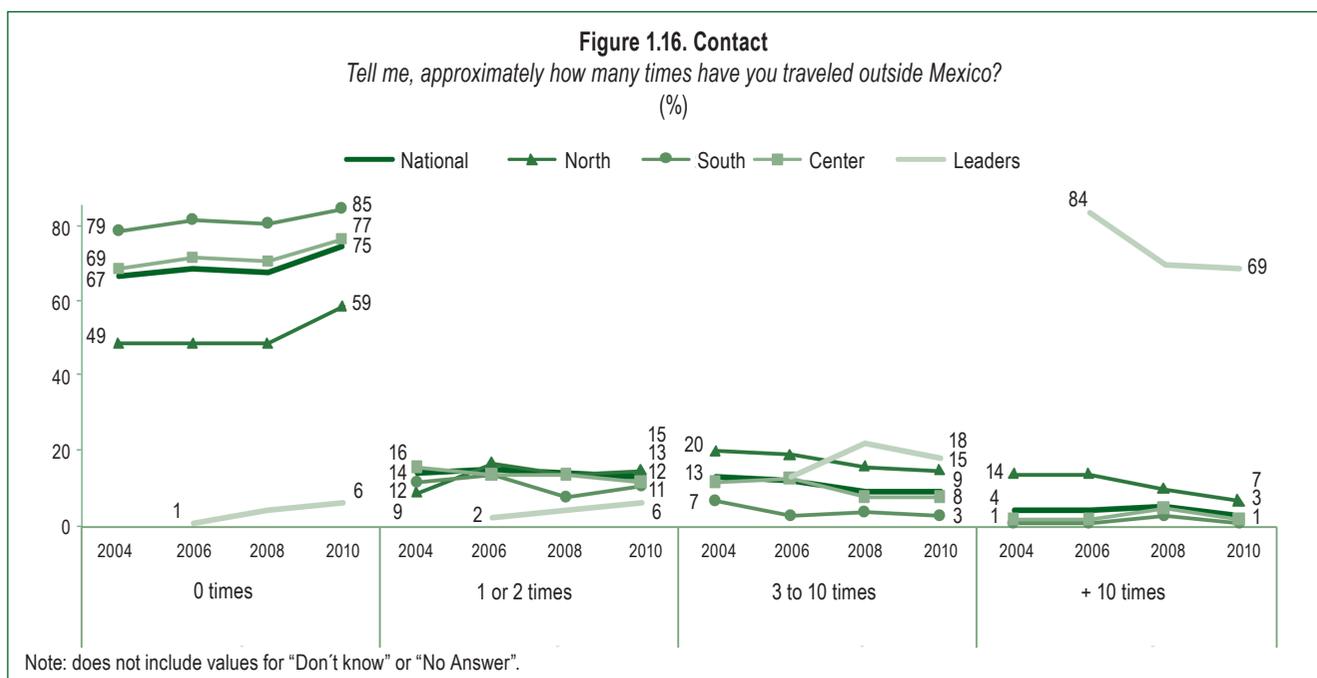


once, while a further 69% have traveled outside of Mexico more than 10 times. The average number of trips among leaders who have traveled abroad is 30, which not only permits a greater level of contact with the world but also affords them a distinct type of interaction than that of the general public. Nevertheless, even among leaders there has been a decrease in the level of contact, as the proportion of leaders who have never left the country increased from 4% in 2004 to 6% in 2010. The decrease in the frequency of the contact that Mexicans maintain with the world is also reflected in the measures of other variables reported in the final chapter of this report, such as the percentage of those with relatives who live abroad and of those who receive remittances.

In addition to the decreasing levels of international contact observed in Mexican society, another interesting aspect of the survey results is the gap between regions. While in the South 85% of the population has never traveled outside of Mexico, in the North this proportion is 26 percentage points lower. Likewise, the Center of the country reported levels of contact abroad almost as low as the South,

with 77% of respondents never having traveled outside the country.

As a final point, contact with the outside world may be measured indirectly by whether or not Mexicans speak a foreign language. This additional indicator allows us to measure not only the strength of contact but in which direction cultural links are formed. The question of whether Mexicans speak a foreign language, and if so, which, was included for the second time in 2010. According to the data collected, 88% of Mexicans do not speak a foreign language. Once again, regional variations are considerable, as in the North the proportion of those who do not speak a foreign language is lower (84%) than in the Center of the country (87%) and the South (95%). English is by far the foreign language most spoken by Mexicans: 99% of those who reported another language (12% of those surveyed overall) named English. With respect to leaders, 83% speak another language, for which the majority is English. In sum, Mexicans at the Bicentennial perceive the world as a land distant and unknown, with communication limited to those who can speak English •





A faint, light green map of the Americas, showing North and South America, is centered in the upper half of the page. It serves as a background for the chapter title.

## CHAPTER 2

WHAT WE WANT? THREATS, ASPIRATIONS,  
AND ACTION IN FOREIGN POLICY





## WHAT WE WANT? THREATS, ASPIRATIONS, AND ACTION IN FOREIGN POLICY

**H**ow do Mexicans perceive the international situation in juxtaposition with their national reality? In 2010 Mexicans are more concerned with the state of their country than with global developments. In good measure, this tendency might reflect repercussions of the crisis of public security and the long period of economic stagnation, directing concern towards national rather than global affairs. Nevertheless, Mexicans perceive international action as a possible option for resolving domestic problems. The perceptions and preferences of the Mexican public and leaders with respect to threats, objectives, and instruments of foreign policy are thus shaped by this context. Social questions have gained priority on the Mexican foreign policy agenda while the two faces of “soft power”, diplomacy and culture, are considered central elements of Mexico’s interaction with the world. Additionally, while Mexicans are very quick to criticize the public policies of their government, they evaluate foreign policy consistently higher than domestic programs. The following sections will explore each of these ideas.

### *Pessimism and Hope for the World, Optimism towards Latin America*

How do Mexicans observe world affairs? Is the world better or worse off than a decade ago? Do they believe that their situation will improve in the following ten years? How similar or different are perceptions towards the world and Mexico’s geographical region, Latin America? Do preferences towards international action correspond with perceptions of where the world is headed? Does support for international action increase in the face of global conflicts or problems, or are Mexicans more likely to distance themselves from international affairs given persistent problems at the national level?

For Mexicans, the two previous options are not mutually exclusive: there may be a greater focus on international cooperation, provided it is directed at solving national or local problems. The combination of an unfavorable external environment, severe problems of security within Mexico, and economic difficulties makes Mexicans more concerned with their immediate surroundings. Nevertheless, there



are some issues for which taking action in the international arena is viewed as positive. While Mexicans are indeed focused on problems of institution building and security at the local and national level, international cooperation is seen as a viable option to resolve issues that pose the greatest threat to internal stability and daily life.

To analyze attitudes towards the current international situation, respondents were asked to evaluate the global reality both retrospectively and prospectively, that is, whether they believe that the world is better or worse off than it was a decade ago and whether they expect improvement for the decade to come. As shown in Figure 2.1, a majority of Mexicans are pessimistic with respect to the current world situation: 68% report that the world today is worse off than ten years ago.

There is interesting variation in global perceptions across region, income, and party lines. While in the North (64%) Mexicans tend to be less pessimistic than in the Center of the country (69%) and the South (70%), the level of pessimism increased substantially in the North over the past two years, moving from 54% to 64%. Attitudes in the Center of the country and the South did not register significant changes. Greater pessimism in the North may reflect the increase in violence and worsening security in the states bordering the United States. In terms of party affiliation, those that identify with the PAN tend to be less pessimistic concerning the direction of world affairs (61% reporting that the world is worse off) than those that sympathize with the PRI (70%) and PRD (74%). There is also an inverse relationship between economic situation and perception of the state of world affairs: while 71% of those who reported “great difficulties” meeting their expenses believe that the world is worse off than a decade ago, 63% of those who fall into the highest income range believe the same. There doesn’t appear to be a clear relationship between education and age and perceptions of the international situation.

On the other hand, leaders are much less pessimistic than the general public: only 54% consider the world to be worse off than a decade ago.

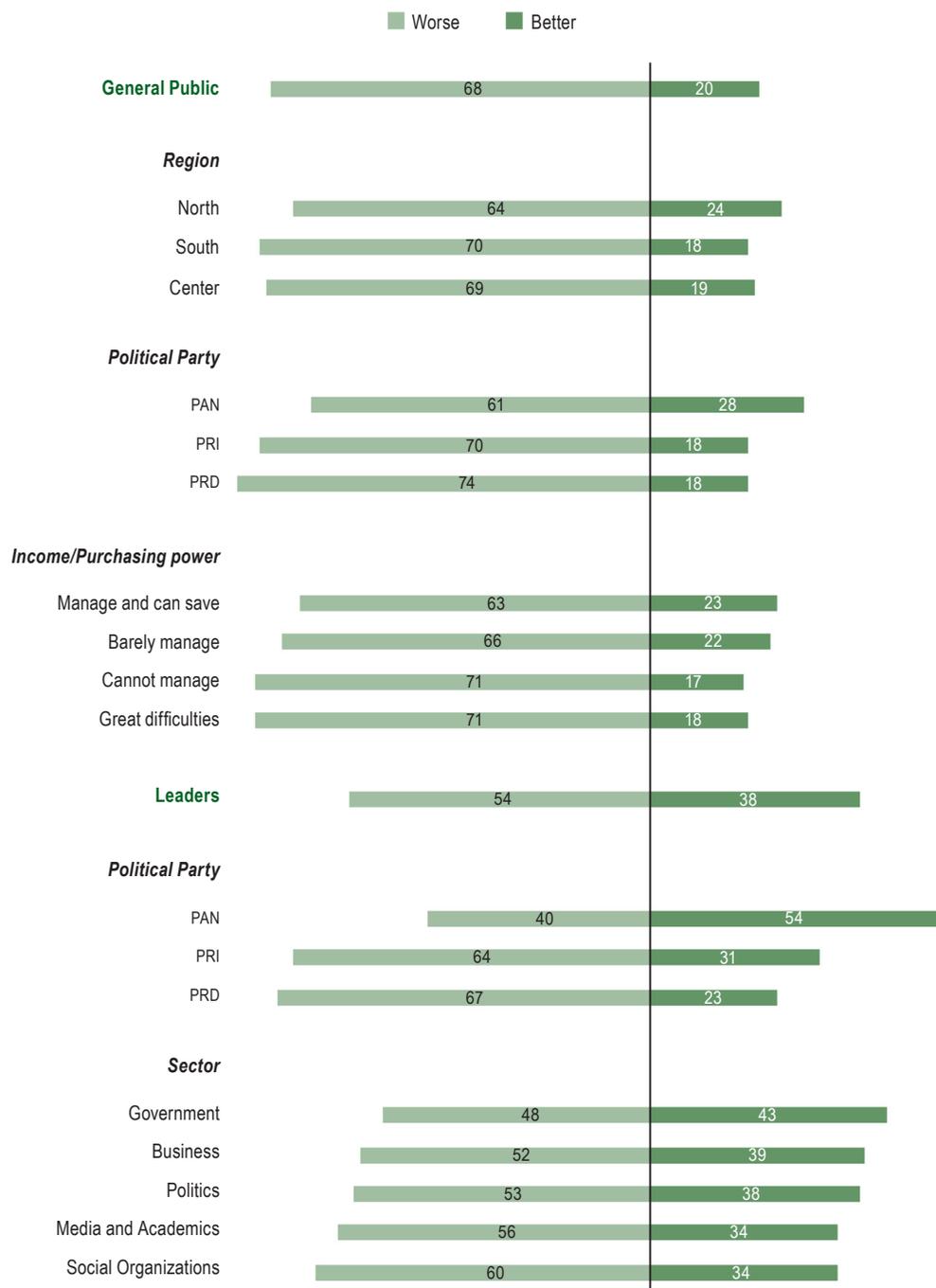
Nevertheless, the level of pessimism among elites increased significantly from 2008 to 2010, climbing from 40% to 54%. Leaders’ perceptions of the current international situation vary greatly, especially across party lines. Those that identify with the PAN are less pessimistic, with 40% considering that the international situation is worse today than a decade ago. On the contrary, pessimism dominates within the ranks of the PRI and PRD (64% and 67%, respectively). In terms of sector, government officials (48% report that the world is worse off) are less pessimistic than business executives (52%), politicians (53%), members of the media and intellectuals (56%), and leaders of social, civic, or non-profit organizations (60%). It would seem then, that Mexicans form their perceptions of the international situation according to their socioeconomic, employment, and personal conditions: those who wield political or economic power tend to be less pessimistic. This suggests that Mexicans perceive the world according to their immediate reality. Nevertheless, if perceptions are indeed linked to socioeconomic condition, both elites and the general public agree that the state of the world has worsened over the past decade, with pessimism in both groups increasing since 2008.

In contrast to evaluations of the past decade, Mexicans exhibit a certain degree of optimism about the world for the decade to come. According to Figure 2.2, while 58% of Mexicans in 2008 believed that the world would be worse off in the decade to come, this percentage decreased to 50% in 2010. Optimism is particularly strong among leaders: only 32% believe that the world will be worse off, a decrease of 2 percentage points with respect to the 34% reported in 2008. Both among leaders and the general public, there seems to be a consensus perceiving a light at the end of the tunnel.

Perceptions towards the future vary significantly by region and income, although party affiliation, level of education, and age make little difference. Regionally, perceptions of the future are more pessimistic the further south one looks: 40% negative in the North, 51% in the Center of the country, and 56% in the South. The only region registering a significant



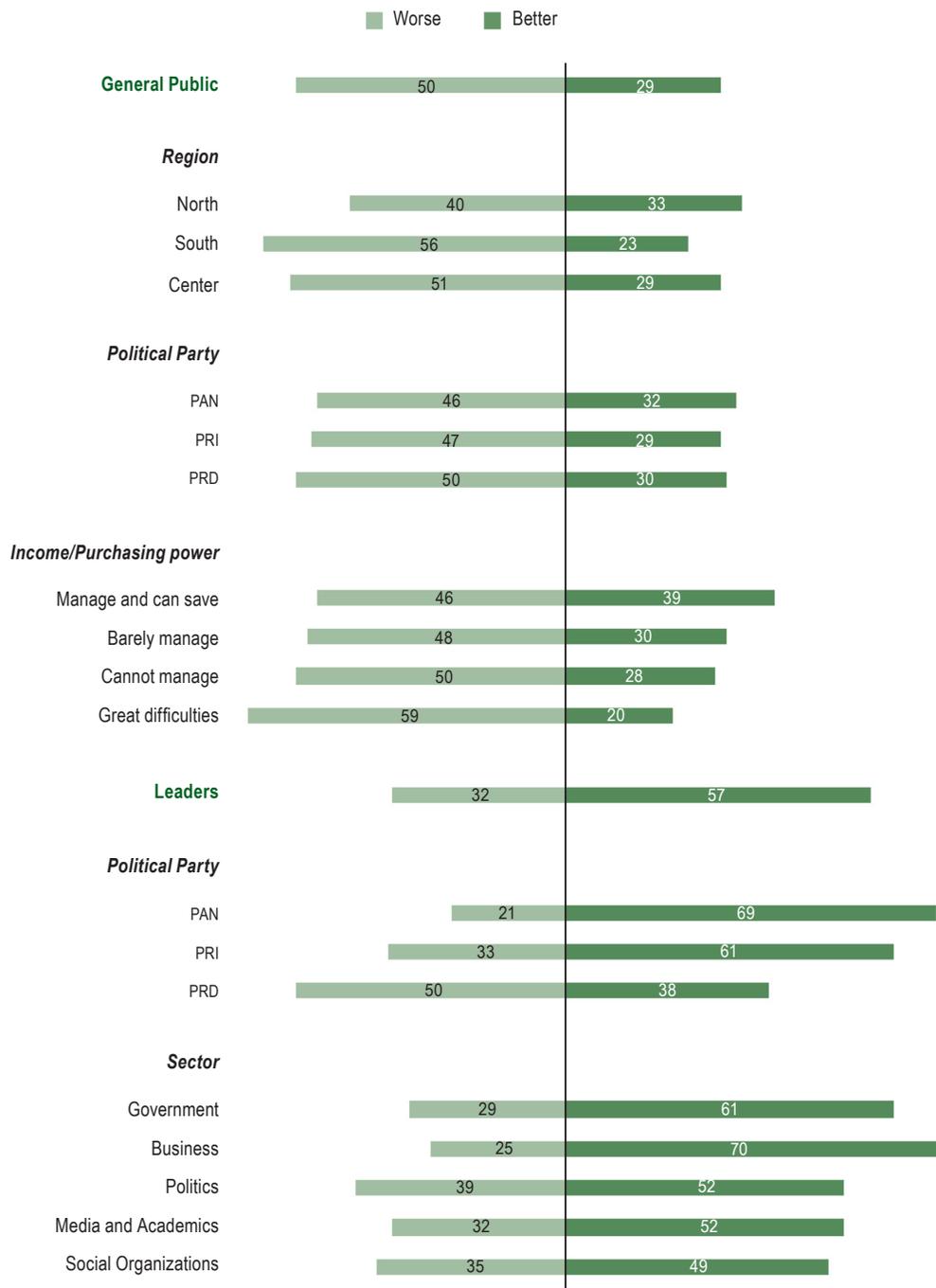
**Figure 2.1. World Situation in Retrospect**  
*Do you believe the world is better or worse than 10 years ago?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



**Figure 2.2. Future World situation**  
*Do you believe the world will be better or worse in 10 years?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



change is the Center, where negative perceptions decreased 11 percentage points from 62% in 2008. In relation to income, once again those who have greater difficulties meeting expenses are more pessimistic (59% worse off), compared to those in the highest income range (46% worse).

While differences across party affiliation are minimal among the general public, there are deep fissures across party lines and sector of employment for leaders. Those who sympathize with the PAN are much more optimistic regarding the future (69% better off) than those that identify with the PRI (61%) and PRD (38%). Independents, or those that have no party affiliation, demonstrate an intermediate level of optimism, at 57%. Similarly, “traditional” elites—business executives and government officials—tend to be more confident that the world situation will improve (70% and 61%, respectively), than “emerging” leaders (media and academics, 52%, leaders of social, civic and non-profit groups, 49%).

Are Mexicans’ attitudes towards the region as pessimistic as their views towards the world? Contrary to the general pessimism with which Mexicans view the current international situation, perceptions towards their Latin American neighborhood are much more optimistic, particularly for the years to come. Forty percent of the population believes Latin America is better off than ten years ago while 31% consider it to be worse off. At the same time, 46% believe Latin America will be better off in the decade to come, while only 22% disagree. Optimism is considerably higher among leaders: 67% and 78% evaluate Latin America positively both retrospectively and with respect to the future.

There are important differences in the general public across regions, party affiliation, income, and level of education. Regional attitudes are surprisingly similar to the pattern observed with respect to the world situation: the closer to Latin America, the more negative the perception of the current situation (North 49% better off, Center of the country 39% better, and South 35% better) and its future (North 50% better off, Center of the country 47% better, and South 38% better). At the same time, positive

perceptions increase with level of education, with 36% of those who have completed only basic education, 40% of those who have completed secondary education, and 48% of those who have completed high school or higher reporting that the region is better off than ten years ago. Those with higher levels of education also report greater optimism for the decade to come (41% basic education, 47% secondary, and 55% high school or higher). There is also a positive relationship between rising income and regional optimism. Only 34% of those who manage and can save meeting expenses evaluate the current situation in Latin America positively, and only 38% are optimistic with respect to the decade to come, while 47% of those who manage and can save evaluate the present positively, and 56% are optimistic towards the future. With respect to party affiliation, PAN sympathizers are more optimistic (47% past decade, 55% future) than the PRI (39% and 43%) and the PRD (37% and 40%).

Differences across party and sector are also considerable for leaders. Nevertheless, the attitudes of leaders who identify with the PRD are more similar to the PAN than to the PRI (past decade: 76% “better off” for PAN, 69% PRD, and 57% PRI, and future: 88% “better off” for PAN, 89% PRD, and 76% PRI). In terms of sector, “traditional” elites are more positive towards the region than “emerging” leaders, with respect to both the past and future (business executives 74% “better off” than a decade ago and 79% “better off” in next decade, civil servants 71% and 80%, politicians 68% and 81%, members of the media and intellectuals 65% and 76%, and leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations, 58% and 73%, respectively).

Mexicans’ overall positive perception of Latin America may be related to improvements in the principal economic and political indicators in the region over the past decade. In spite of the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and political disputes in Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Venezuela, the majority of the economies of the region have maintained consistently high economic growth, while democracy has advanced and social indicators improved across



the region. In sum, Mexicans view the present with pessimism, while maintaining hope for the future. Latin America is viewed with greater overall optimism, and opportunity.

### ***Growing International Threats***

In an atmosphere of pessimism toward the past and fragile hope for the future, what threats do Mexicans perceive in the international sphere? Have attitudes towards potential threats changed over time? Are there differences between the general public and leaders? Table 2.1 tracks attitudes towards 17 potential threats for Mexico. Of these, four are new and thirteen are repeated from 2008, nine from 2006, and six from 2004. Coinciding with observations of pessimism towards the current state of the world, there has been a considerable movement in the intensity of perceived threats. In almost all of the variables that can be compared with 2008 (12 of 13), perceptions of the severity of threats among the general public have increased greatly.<sup>1</sup> In the case of leaders, the intensity of threats has only increased in eight of the 13 variables measured. Nevertheless, the two groups concur as to the threat that has increased most: guerrilla groups, which registered a 13 percentage point increase in intensity for the general public and 14 percentage points for leaders. Among the general public, the perceived intensity of border conflicts and territorial disputes increased by 13 percentage points compared to 2008 while the threat of international terrorism increased by 9 points. For leaders, the threat of nuclear proliferation (14 percentage points higher than in 2008), conflicts over territory (10 points higher), and economic crises (10 points higher) registered the greatest increases after guerrilla groups. With the exception of economic crises, the threats that registered the

greatest increase in intensity are those related to international and national security.

Perceptions of international threats can be divided in three groups according to intensity: 1) the most immediate, classified as grave by more than 75% of the population, 2) intermediate, classified as grave between 60% and 75% of those interviewed, and 3) low, rated grave by 60% or less of the population surveyed.

Perceptions of the most serious international threats are consistent with the findings of previous editions of the survey, both among the general public and leaders. As in 2008, Mexicans ranked drug trafficking and organized crime as the greatest threat, which has held the top position over the four editions of the survey (2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010). The international threats perceived as most dangerous are those that affect daily life, suggesting that threats are evaluated according to their local or personal relevance. Threats ranking in the intermediate range are related to traditional themes of national and international security, such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and border conflicts. Finally, the threats perceived as least immediate are those more removed from daily life, such as the rise of China as an international power, the increase in military spending and the flow of illegal immigrants to Mexico. (This may be explained by the overall low levels of contact with immigrants. As discussed in Chapter 4, the number of immigrants in Mexico is not estimated to be particularly high.)

Results for 2010 are very similar to those of 2008, with the principal threats ranked as follows: 1) drug trafficking and organized crime (general public, 82%, leaders, 91%), which both groups rank as the highest threat, having increased 3 percentage points in both groups since 2008; 2) global warming (general public 80%, leaders 80%), ranked by both groups as the second most grave; 3) scarcity of food (gen-

<sup>1</sup> Possible responses to the question, in order of descending severity, are “Grave threat”, “Important but not grave threat”, “Threat of little importance”, and “Not a threat”. The following tables and analysis only report the responses to “Grave threat”.



Table 2.1 Grave Threats 2008-2010\*

Threat	Public				Leaders			
	Grave threat 2008	Grave threat 2010	Rank 2010	Change	Grave threat 2008	Grave threat 2010	Rank 2010	Change
Drug trafficking and organized crime	79	82	1	+3	88	91	1	+3
Global warming	77	80	2	+3	81	80	2	-1
Shortages and high price of food	73	80	2	+7	77	72	6	-5
Natural disasters	n.a.	78	4	n.a.	n.a.	70	7	n.a.
Poverty in the world	73	76	5	+3	75	79	4	+4
World economic crises	69	76	5	+7	69	79	4	+10
Weapons trafficking	n.a.	76	5	n.a.	n.a.	80	2	n.a.
Epidemics, like AIDS	75	72	8	-3	45	43	13	-2
Nuclear weapons	64	72	8	+8	37	51	10	+14
International terrorism	63	72	8	+9	53	59	8	+6
Border conflicts and territorial disputes	49	62	11	+13	37	47	11	+10
Instability in neighbouring countries	n.a.	60	12	n.a.	n.a.	40	14	n.a.
Guerrillas	46	59	13	+13	30	44	12	+14
Rich countries making it difficult for immigrants to enter	51	52	14	+1	66	57	9	-9
The increase of military spending in the region	n.a.	52	14	n.a.	n.a.	40	14	n.a.
The entry of undocumented migrants into Mexican territory	37	40	16	+3	18	24	16	+6
The development of China as a world power	32	40	16	+8	20	19	17	-1

\* Percent of those who answered "Grave threat". n.a.= not available.



eral public 80%, leaders 72%); 4) natural disasters (public 78%, leaders 70%); 5) global poverty (public 76%, leaders 79%); 6) economic crises (public 76%, leaders 79%), and 7) arms trafficking (public 76%, leaders 80%). Survey results show wide consensus between the general public and leaders in ranking the seven principal international threats facing Mexico, and that the perceived intensity in both groups is very similar. Additionally, each one of these threats is directly related to personal or community welfare, affecting daily life, living standards, and security.

Threats falling in the intermediate range of gravity included the following: 1) epidemics like AIDS (general public 72%, leaders 43%); 2) nuclear weapons proliferation (general public 72%, leaders 51%); 3) international terrorism (general public 72%, leaders 59%); 4) territorial conflicts (general public 62%, leaders 47%); and 5) instability in neighboring countries (general public 60%, leaders 40%). Once again, there is considerable agreement between elites and the general public regarding intermediate threats, as Table 2.1 shows. Nevertheless, the general public consistently perceives threats as more intense—by 13 to 29 points—than do leaders. Aside from epidemics, all of the intermediate-level threats are related to national or international security, even though these threats are, on the whole, more distant to the everyday reality of most Mexicans, unless a global or regional crisis were to break out.

The third group of threats, perceived as least immediate (60% and lower) comprises: 1) guerrilla groups (general public 59%, leaders 44%); 2) the prospect of more well-off countries restricting immigration flows (general public 52%, leaders 57%); 3) an increase in military spending (general public 52%, leaders 40%); 4) undocumented immigration to Mexico (general public 40%, leaders 24%); and 5) the rise of China as a global power (general public 40%, leaders 19%). Interestingly, Mexicans—especially elites—view the rise of China as a low-intensity

threat, which might be related to the relatively high levels of support for free trade and foreign investment discussed in the previous chapter. With the exception of leaders' concern over the potential restriction of migratory flows, there is a general consensus between the public and leaders over which threats are least important (located at the bottom of the table). As with the second group of threats, with the exception of individuals who have close contact with migrants or migration, these threats are more removed from Mexicans' daily lives. Again, perceptions of low-intensity threats' seriousness are consistently higher for the general public than leaders (up to 21 points), following the pattern for intermediate-severity threats.

Surprisingly, with respect to global threats, there are no significant differences across age, level of education, party affiliation, income, and geographic region. Thus, consensus among the general public and leaders over which threats are most serious does not depend on socioeconomic situation or political affiliation. The only variable that does register important differences is gender: in general, women perceive threats with greater intensity than men; (between 1 and 7 points).<sup>2</sup>

### ***Foreign Policy Priorities: Social Progress and Prestige***

Do the objectives and actions that Mexicans expect their country to adopt in the international arena reflect their perceptions of international threats? In short, yes. The majority of Mexicans expect Mexico to participate actively in international affairs (68%) against a minority preferring isolation (22%). However, as analyzed in greater depth below, the most important objectives of foreign policy are those perceived to address social and national problems, rather than strengthening international security

<sup>2</sup> Previous analysis of the 2008 data also point toward the existence of differences in the perceptions of threats among men and women. See Karen Marín, "Visión de género y opinión pública en política exterior", *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 2, September 28, 2010, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, in <http://mexicoyelmundo.cide.edu>



and global institutions. This level of support for international action is similar to 2008 (69%) but considerably higher than 2006 (56%) and 2004 (57%). There is a strong relationship between preference for an active foreign policy and higher income levels (those who report great difficulties approve of international action by 56%, those who cannot manage, 64%, those that can barely manage, 71%, and those who manage and can save, 84%), as well as level of education (basic education only, 55%, completion of secondary education, 71%, and completion of high school or higher, 87%). Likewise, enthusiasm for international action is higher among younger Mexicans (those older than 50, 61%, those between 30 and 50, 66%, and those younger than 30, 75%). Support for international action also differs according to party affiliation (PRD 55%, PRI 66%, and PAN 71%) and is greater the closer one is to the border with the United States (South, 65%, Center of the country 67%, and the North, 72%). In line with previous editions of the survey, leaders almost uniformly call for international engagement (96%), with little differences across party lines or sector of employment, and only slight variation over 2008 (93%), 2006 (96%), and 2004 (94%).

Mexicans on the whole prefer their country to be more active on the world stage, making an analysis of foreign policy objectives especially important. In the 2010 edition of the survey, Mexicans were asked to rank 16 foreign policy objectives according to their relevance.<sup>3</sup> Only one objective, promoting and protecting human rights, is new, allowing comparison of 15 variables with the 2008 survey, 9 with 2006, and 8 with 2004. Results are reported in Table 2.2. Among leaders, there is a significant overall increase in the importance of foreign policy objectives for 11 of the 15 variables shared with 2008, registering an increase of 1 to 7 percentage points and an average of 4, while enthusiasm for three of the objectives decreased marginally (3 points or less) and attitudes

toward one objective have not changed. Among the general public, only nine of the 15 objectives have grown in importance.

Following the previous ranking of policies according to their priority, the principal objectives of foreign policy are divided into 1) high priority, with the proportion of those that responded “very important” 70% or higher; 2) intermediate priority, between 50% and 70% judging the policy objective “very important”, and 3) low priority, less than 50% responding “very important”. Since the average intensity of support is lower for policy priorities than the intensity of perceived threats, the ranges of the policy priority categories vary slightly from those of threats. Nevertheless, the distribution of priorities in the high, intermediate, and low categories corresponds to that of threats, as the following analysis confirms.

There is a general consensus between leaders and the general public on the priorities of Mexican foreign policy, which have remained consistent from 2008 to 2010. As in the case of threats, Mexicans rate most important those objectives directly or indirectly related to daily life. That is, priorities are centered on a social agenda that targets, in the first place, well being, and then prestige. This suggests a high degree of consistency between perceptions of international threats and foreign policy preferences. The foreign policy objectives ranked as most important are those with the potential to improve Mexicans’ standard of living and that of their immediate community.

Again, as with threats, intermediate-priority policy objectives are traditionally related to issues of international security (combating terrorism, preventing nuclear proliferation, enforcing border security) and economic (regional integration). Finally (and once again in line with perceived threats), low-priority policy objectives relate to strengthening international organizations (UN and the OAS) and international welfare (promoting democracy and

<sup>3</sup> The range of responses recorded, in descending level of importance, are “Very important”, “Somewhat important”, “Little important”, or “Not important”. The following paragraphs and tables only report the percentage of those who answered “Very important”.



Table 2.2 Foreign Policy Objectives 2008-2010\*

Objective	Public				Leaders			
	Very Important 2008	Very Important 2010	Rank 2010	Change	Very Important 2008	Very Important 2010	Rank 2010	Change
Fighting drug trafficking and organized crime	81	75	1	-6	91	89	3	-2
Protecting the environment	76	74	2	-2	94	91	1	-3
Promoting Mexican culture	73	74	2	+1	77	82	6	+5
Protecting Mexican interests in other countries	76	73	4	-3	85	86	4	+1
Promoting sales of Mexican products in other countries	71	73	4	+2	85	90	2	+5
Attracting tourists	62	73	4	+11	74	78	7	+4
Bringing foreign investment to Mexico	62	71	7	+9	78	83	5	+5
Protecting our land and sea borders	65	64	8	-1	69	69	9	0
Combating international terrorism	61	62	9	+1	58	59	12	+1
Protecting and promoting human rights in other countries	n.a.	60	10	n.a.	n.a.	53	14	n.a.
Promoting regional integration	52	57	11	+5	70	71	8	+1
Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons	56	54	12	-2	59	60	11	+1
Helping improve the standard of living in less-developed countries	47	43	13	-4	58	56	13	-2
Strengthening the UN	42	43	13	+1	58	65	10	+7
Helping spread democracy to other countries	37	43	13	+6	27	35	16	+8
Strengthening the OAS	31	34	16	+3	49	53	14	+4

\* Percent of those who answered "Very important". n.a.= not available.



international economic development), which are perceived as more distant to Mexicans' everyday reality.

In concordance with both perceived threats and 2008 survey results, the greatest priorities for Mexican foreign policy in 2010 are: 1) fighting drug trafficking and organized crime (general public 75%, leaders 89%); 2) protecting the environment (general public 74%, leaders 91%); 3) promoting Mexican culture (general public 74%, leaders 82%); 4) protecting the interests of Mexicans abroad (general public 73%, leaders 86%); 5) promoting Mexican products abroad (general public 73%, leaders 90%); 6) attracting tourism (general public 73%, leaders 78%), and 7) attracting foreign investment (general public 71%, leaders 83%). As in the case of international threats, leaders and the general public coincide on the top seven objectives of foreign policy. Nevertheless, the level of intensity is substantially greater for leaders (from 5 to 17 percentage points). Focus on welfare at home and the prestige of Mexico and Mexicans abroad characterizes these seven principal objectives of foreign policy, reflecting an agenda of social progress on economic and national security issues. In sum, the foreign policy objectives ranked as most important are those directly related to Mexicans' welfare and security, although the goal of enhancing Mexico's international image and prestige, especially by promoting Mexican culture abroad, is also relevant.

Priorities in the intermediate range include: 1) protecting Mexico's borders (general public 64%, leaders 69%); 2) The combat of terrorism (general public 62%, leaders 59%); 3) promoting and defending human rights across the globe (general public 60%, leaders 53%); 4) promoting regional integration (general public 57%, leaders 71%), and 5) preventing nuclear proliferation (general public 54%, leaders 60%). Once again, there is considerable agreement between leaders and the general public on the objectives that rank as intermediate. In addition, the level of importance accorded these objectives is rela-

tively similar, with intermediate priorities for foreign policy directly related to issues of security or global economic stability.

The lowest-priority foreign policy objectives are: 1) helping to raise living standards in less developed countries (general public 47%, leaders 56%), 2) strengthening the UN (general public 43%, leaders 65%), 3) promoting democracy (general public 43%, leaders 35%), and 4) strengthening the OAS (general public 34%, leaders 53%). Except for the UN's importance to leaders, there is a general consensus among the public and elites towards priorities of less importance. The breakdown of this final category suggests that Mexicans are less concerned about multilateral organizations than other policy objectives, and that multilateralism, the promotion of democracy, and cooperation for global development have not gained ground in Mexican public opinion.

On the whole, there are no significant variations by age, party affiliation, and income with respect to the ranking of foreign policy objectives. Only education shows differences with regard to the intensity of priorities: the higher the level of education completed, the greater the overall enthusiasm for international engagement. Differences in support for foreign policy objectives between the lowest level of education measured and the highest range from 1 to 30 percentage points, with greater support for values and strengthening international institutions as level of education increases). More educated citizens tend to be more open to international exchange and prefer active engagement on global issues and institutions, in addition to sharing objectives that traditionally have a more direct impact on their communities or on national prestige.

In sum, Mexican public opinion on potential international threats and foreign policy objectives has coalesced around the shared priorities of the general public and leaders. A wide consensus exists within, and between, both groups for an active foreign policy that is nevertheless tailored to address the situation at home and promote the values of Mexico abroad.



### Capabilities and Instruments of Foreign Policy

The previous analysis of international threats and priorities allows us to understand how Mexicans view themselves in the international arena when faced with concrete choices. Taking a step back, though, we must ask how Mexicans evaluate the country's capabilities for a more active global participation. To this end, Mexicans were asked to evaluate Mexico's importance on the world stage at three critical moments: on the occasion of the Bicentennial, compared to the previous ten years, and with respect to the decade to come. In general, the majority of Mexicans believe that their country is important internationally (general public 88%, leaders 86%).

As shown in Figure 2.3, there is a wide consensus regarding Mexico's importance on the international

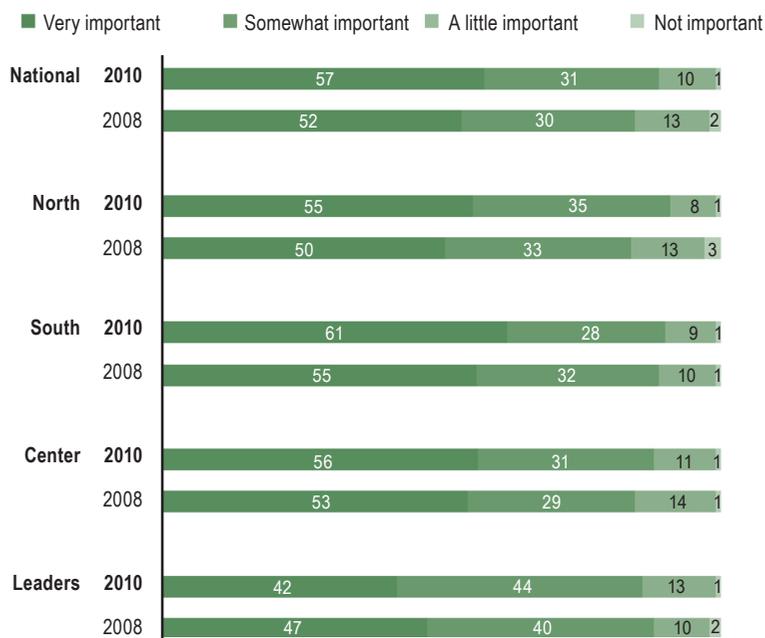
stage, with perceptions of Mexico's importance rising 6 percentage points from 2008. Nevertheless, there are substantial variations between leaders and the general public. Leaders share a positive appreciation of Mexico's role in the world, but lean toward a more modest evaluation of Mexico's relevance. While 57% of the general public consider Mexico to be "very" important on the international stage, only 42% of leaders agree, with a further 44% ranking Mexico as "somewhat" important.

There are also important differences across education, income, and age groups. Perceptions of Mexico's international importance rise as income falls (great difficulties, 64%, cannot manage, 59%, barely manage, 55%, manage and can save, 48%) and as the level of education falls (64% basic, 54% secondary, and 49% high school or higher), while positive percep-

**Figure 2.3. Mexico's International Importance 2008-2010**

*How important is Mexico at an international level?*

(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



tions increase with age (older than 50, 61%, between 30 and 49, 58%, and less than 30, 52%). Differences across region and party affiliation are minimal.

Mexicans' evaluation that their country has increased in importance over the past decade confirms their belief country is capable of meaningful action on the international stage. Sixty-eight percent of those surveyed believe that Mexico is more important today than ten years back, while only 13% disagree and 15% reported that its importance has not changed. The proportion of those reporting a greater importance than a decade ago has increased 4 percentage points since 2008, and is stronger in the South (74%) than in the Center (68%) and the North (64%) of the country. Although a majority of leaders coincide with this positive evaluation, leaders' optimism is less intense, falling from 69% to 55% over the last two years. Leaders are notably more pessimistic about the country's trajectory over the past decade, with the percentage of those reporting that Mexico has lost importance increasing from 25% to 34%. Among leaders, differences across party lines are pronounced. Though the majority of leaders who identify with the PAN believe that Mexico is more important today than ten years back (76%), only 38% of PRD sympathizers believe the same, compared to a majority of sympathizers (53%) that reported that the country has lost importance. Those that sympathize with the PRI fall between these two poles (55% more important, 34% less).

How do Mexicans perceive their country's future importance in the world? As in 2008, the general public is optimistic about the country's position in the international power structure: 64% consider that in the next ten years its international importance will increase, 17% believe it will remain the same, and 12% believe it will decrease. A majority of leaders share this optimistic evaluation (72%) but leaders' pessimism increased by 5 percentage points over 2008, reaching 17%. Once again, ideology and party affiliation divide leaders' opinions: while 84% of those that identify with the PAN and 78% of those that identify with the PRI believe that Mexico's importance will grow, a lower proportion of those that sympathize with

the PRD (58%) believe the same. In sum, Mexican nationalism is manifest primarily in symbolic issues such as pride and national importance. The perception of Mexico as a country that has gained importance and will continue to do so confirms aspirations that Mexico should participate more actively in international affairs.

There is broad agreement over Mexico's global importance, both in the present, with respect to the past decade, and the decade to come. Nevertheless, leaders, younger Mexicans, and those with greater income and level of education are more critical.

Mexicans clearly assign considerable significance to their country's role in the world and favor greater participation in international affairs. But are they willing to invest the resources necessary to establish a greater international presence? What kind of foreign policy instruments do they favor to reach this goal? A good measure of Mexicans' willingness to devote resources to promoting foreign policy aims is whether Mexicans are willing to increase, decrease, or maintain the number of Mexican embassies and consulates abroad. On this point, though, there is no clear consensus. However, Mexicans are generally satisfied with the current level of representation: 44% believe that Mexico should maintain the current level of representation abroad while 33% believe that representation should be increased and 17% would like to see a decrease. Contrarily, despite an overall preference for an active foreign policy, the majority of the population does not believe it is necessary to invest additional resources abroad.

When it comes to instruments of foreign policy, what type of engagement do Mexicans prefer: the exercise of "hard power" (military action), "soft power" (diplomatic and cultural), or what might be called "intermediate power" (economic and trade policy)? Given Mexico's geographical and strategic position—a mid-level power with regional (Latin American) influence and a border with the world's hegemonic power (the United States), which provides an umbrella of security (to some extent)—Mexico has historically eschewed instruments of "hard power" in favor of "soft power" (diplomacy, judicial action,



and the promotion of Mexican culture). Starting with the implementation of neoliberal structural reforms in the 1980s to the signing of NAFTA, and the adoption of a wide range of trade agreements with other countries during the 1980s and the 1990s, trade policy as well has increasingly been used as an instrument of foreign policy.

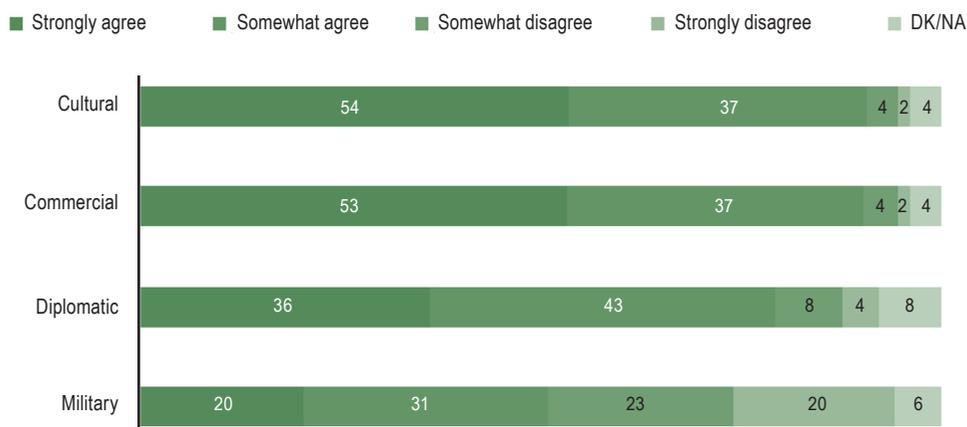
Figures 2.4 and 2.5 report the results for the general public and leaders. In general, leaders favor the use of cultural (87%), commercial (84%), and diplomatic (84%) resources to increase Mexico's influence in the world, overwhelmingly rejecting the use of military power (82% "somewhat" or "very much" disapprove). The general public's ranking of preferences for policy instruments is identical to that of elites, although support for using all forms of power is considerably less intense: 54% favor promoting culture, 53% favor deepening commercial ties, and 36% favor diplomacy. Among the general public, however, there is wide disagreement over the use of military force: 51% are very much or somewhat in agreement while 43% somewhat or very much disapproving of its use.

Among the general public, younger Mexicans and those with higher levels of education tend to favor the use of soft and intermediate levels of power (cultural, commercial, and diplomatic). At the same time, there is an inverse relationship between income and preference for military power (the percentage of those reporting great difficulties that are "very much" in agreement: 28%, cannot manage: 20%, barely manage: 20%, manage and can save: 15%) and education (basic 22%, secondary 21%, and high school or higher, 14%). Among leaders, the level of disapproval of military power varies across political affiliation ("very much" in disagreement: PAN 52%, PRI 65%, PRD 76%).

In conclusion, there is a strong correlation between threats, objectives, and the instruments favored to achieve them. For international situations that threaten individual and social welfare, Mexicans prefer instruments that focus on social wellbeing and prestige, such as diplomacy and increasing cultural and commercial ties. Finally, it is important to point out the high level of convergence among the public and leaders in the overall vision of foreign policy, which

**Figure 2.4. Foreign Policy Instruments**

*In order to increase Mexico's influence in the world, how much would you agree with Mexico using the following resource...?*  
(% General public)

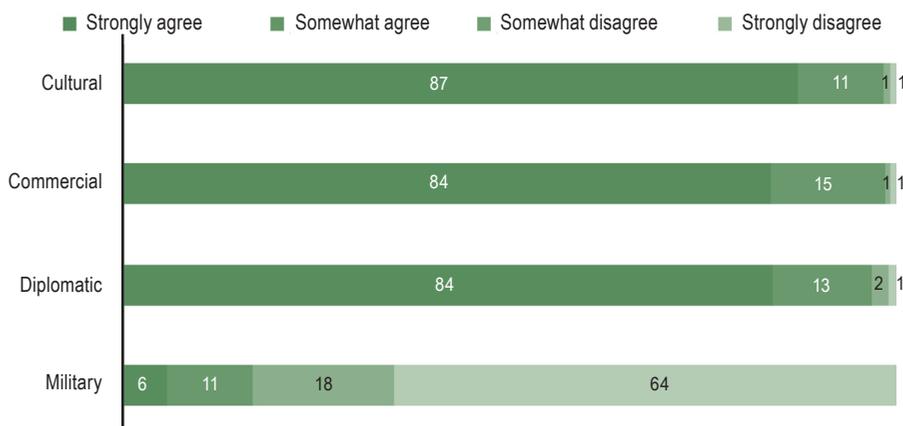


Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



**Figure 2.5. Foreign Policy Instruments**

*In order to increase Mexico's influence in the world, how much would you agree with Mexico using the following resource...?*  
(% Leaders)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

suggests that there is a high degree of representation of the threats, objectives, and instruments preferred by the general public in the goals of the elites.

### ***Evaluating Foreign Policy Vis-à-vis Other Public Policies***

How do Mexicans evaluate the country's foreign policy and how does this evaluation compare with other elements of public policy? The 2010 edition of the survey asked respondents to evaluate seven areas of public policy, three related with international issues (foreign policy, protecting Mexicans' interests abroad, and trade policy) and four corresponding to domestic policy (combating poverty, the economy, internal security, and education). Three of the four domestic policy objectives were also included in the 2008 edition of the survey, while each of the three foreign policy objectives have been included in the three previous editions of the survey (2004, 2006, and 2008).

In general, there is strong criticism of the performance of the Mexican government in all of the areas

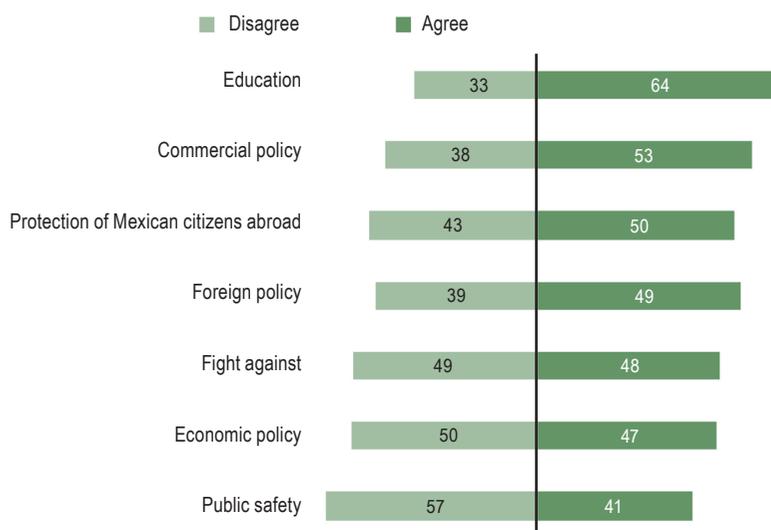
of public policy reported. As shown in Figures 2.6 and 2.7, both leaders and the general public coincide in the low percentages of those who "strongly agree" with the government's performance. The general public evaluates education policy the most favorably out of all policy areas: 19% of the general public "strongly agree" with the government's performance in education. On the other hand, elites evaluate foreign policy most highly, with 13% strongly agreeing. Nevertheless, leaders' absolute levels of approval have fallen dramatically since 2008, decreasing 25 percentage points from the 38% reported two years ago. In the case of the public, approval for government policies has been falling steadily throughout the decade: 37% in 2004, 33% in 2006, 13% in 2008, and 10% in 2010.

Adding together the percentages of the population that "strongly" or "somewhat" agree, on the one hand, or "somewhat" or "strongly" disagree, on the other, produces two interesting results. In the first place, there is a greater degree of variation for elites (32 point difference between the highest and lowest ranked policies) than the general public (only 23 points). Thus, it appears that elites may have be



**Figure 2.6. Government Performance**

*Do you agree or disagree with the Mexican government's performance concerning...?*  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

more capable of distinguishing between and criticizing public policy than the general public. This may be due to the fact that in general, leaders are more educated than the general public. Alternatively, their professions may depend on a constant evaluation of public policies and on making decisions based on this analysis.

Secondly, leaders evaluate foreign policy performance more highly than that of domestic policy. In descending order of approval, the percentages of survey respondents who agree with government policy "strongly" or "somewhat" are: foreign policy (56%), trade policy (53%), and protecting rights of Mexican nationals abroad (53%), followed by a gap of 11 points above the next highest ranked –economic policy (42%) – and low levels of approval for internal security (32%), the combat of poverty (30%), and education (24%). For the three outwardly-oriented policy areas, approval is higher than disapproval, but the reverse is true for perceptions of domestic policy. In the general public, we observe the same order of

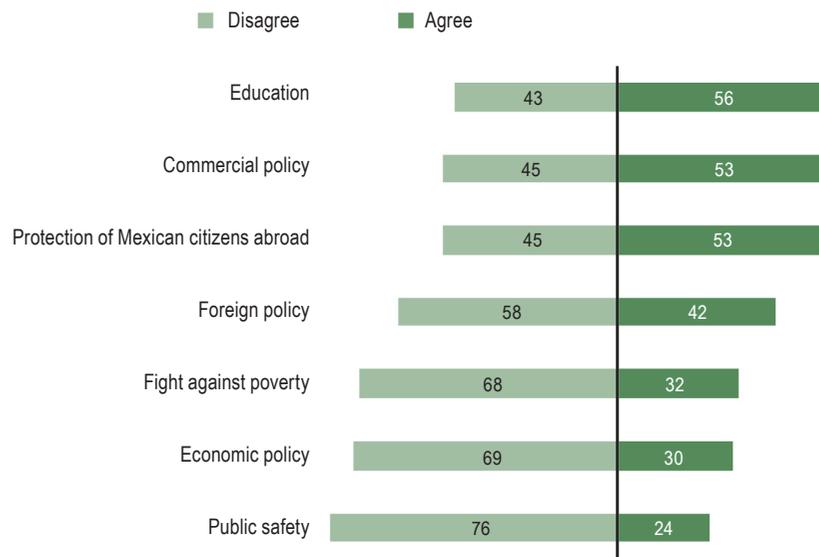
preferences with respect to foreign and domestic policies, with the exception of education, which, by far, ranks highest: education, 64% "strongly" or "somewhat" agree, trade policy 53%, protecting Mexican nationals abroad 50%, foreign policy 49%, combating poverty 48%, economic policy 47%, and internal security 47%. In addition to education, agreement is greater than disapproval for the three policy areas that relate Mexico to the world, while for the remaining three domestic policies, agreement is higher than disagreement.

In evaluating government policies, party affiliation is particularly important, especially among leaders, who are considerably more polarized than the general public. Among elites, PAN sympathizers approve of government policy the most, followed by the PRI, and much more distantly, by the PRD. Approval of outwardly-oriented foreign policy areas for each party is: foreign policy (PAN 77%, PRI 56%, PRD 28%), trade policy (PAN 73%, PRI 64%, PRD 28%), and protecting Mexican nationals



**Figure 2.7. Government Performance**

*Do you agree or disagree with the Mexican government's performance concerning...?*  
(% Leaders)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".

abroad (PAN 74%, PRI 54%, PRD 36%). Approval of government policies also varies greatly across sector: "traditional" elites tend to evaluate government policies better than "emerging" elites, among whom academics and members of the media are particularly critical. Leaders' opinions of outwardly-oriented policies breaks down by sector as follows: foreign policy (government officials 70%, business executives 68%, politicians 56%, leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations 44%, and academia and the media 43%), trade policy (government officials 64%, business executives 58%, politicians 56%, leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations 47%, and academia and the media 39%), and protecting Mexican nationals abroad (government officials 72%, business executives 57%, politicians 55%, leaders of social, civic, and non-profit organizations, 43%, and academia and the media 36%).

Among the general public, evaluations of those who identify with the PAN are consistently and substantially higher across the entire range of government policies included in the survey, while those that

sympathize with the PRI and PRD are considerably more critical. Levels of approval for outwardly-oriented policy rank as follows: foreign policy (PAN 60%, PRI 51%, PRD 39%), trade policy (PAN 62%, PRI 60%, PRD 40%), and the protection of Mexican nationals abroad (PAN 59%, PRI 56%, PRD 44%). Aside from political affiliation, only education accounts for a significant difference on policy approval, with criticism increasing as levels of education rise.

In sum, Mexicans consistently evaluate outwardly-oriented policy areas more highly than domestic policy. Nevertheless, even though evaluations of foreign policy are positive, it would seem that foreign policy, in the year of the Bicentennial, falls short of the international aspirations of Mexicans. This leaves open a window of opportunity for a more active and engaged foreign policy, backed by broad agreement between the public and leaders, that favors the use of cultural, diplomatic, and trade instruments to fulfill not only local objectives, such as social welfare and insecurity, but also to promote the country's international prestige •



A faint, light green world map is centered in the background of the page, showing the outlines of continents.

## CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD? VISIONS OF COUNTRIES,  
REGIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS





## WHAT IS OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD? VISIONS OF COUNTRIES, REGIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

**H**ow do Mexicans see themselves in relation to the world? What opinion do they have of other countries, regions, and international institutions? How do they evaluate relations with other countries? What are the points of agreement and divergence between the Mexican public and leaders? In 2010 Mexicans in general view their interests as closer to North America than Latin America. Indeed, the most significant change in 2010 is the overall improvement in attitudes towards the United States. Although Latin America has not lost ground, Mexico's aspirations for regional leadership have declined with the rise of Brazil. While Mexicans view Europe and Asia very positively, this appreciation is not reflected in the prioritization of Mexico's relations with the world.

### *Who Are the Favorites?*

To measure Mexicans' preferences and priorities with respect to other countries, survey respondents were asked to evaluate twenty four countries on a scale of 0-100, where 0 represents a very unfavorable opinion, 50 is neutral, and 100 represents a very favorable

opinion. Results are reported in Figure 3.1. Based on this scale, the most popular country among both the Mexican public (an average of 68 points) and leaders (82 points) in 2010 is Canada, which ranked first among the public in the 2006 and 2008 editions of the survey and has held the top position among leaders since 2004. Attitudes towards Canada have been consistently positive, despite bilateral disagreements and negative press coverage of Canada's decision in 2009 to require visas for visiting Mexicans.

While leaders and the public strongly agree on the country they view most favorably, the two groups are divided over which country comes next. For the general public, the highest evaluated countries after Canada are: the United States (an average of 68 points)<sup>1</sup>, Spain (64), Japan (64), Germany (63), China (62) Brazil (61), Argentina (56) and Chile (54). Among leaders, preferences in descending order are: Germany (81) –which also ranked second in 2008–Brazil (79), Chile (76), Japan (75), Spain (73) and the U.S. (72), which shares seventh place with China. Leaders and the public are also divided over which countries they rank least favorably. Among the public, the countries least favorably evaluated, in descending order, are: Guatemala (46), Vene-

<sup>1</sup> Average evaluations for Canada and the United States before rounding are 68.1 points, and 67.5 points, respectively, putting Canada slightly ahead of the U.S.

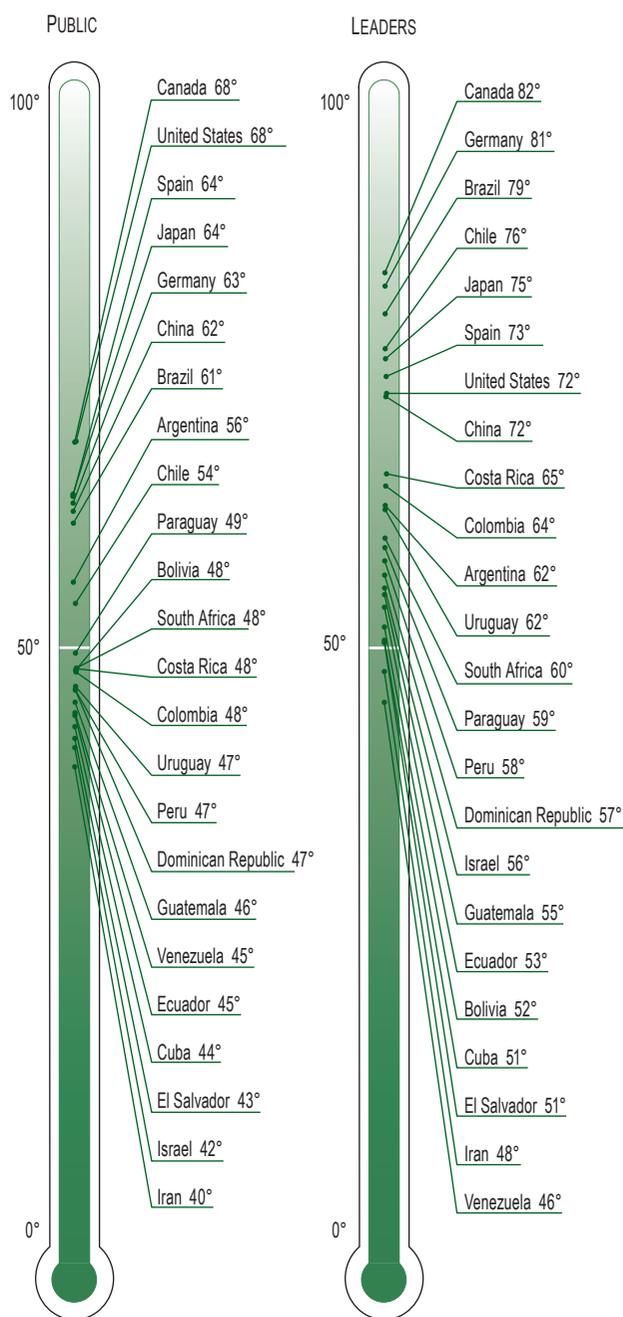


zuela (45), Ecuador (45), Cuba (44), El Salvador (43), Israel (42) and Iran, ranked last (40). The least favorably evaluated countries among leaders are: Guatemala (55), Ecuador (53), Bolivia (52), Cuba (51), El Salvador (51), Iran (48), and Venezuela, ranked last with 46 points.

However, despite differences on countries' specific positions, leaders and the public coincide on the overall pattern of countries ranked at the upper and lower ends of the scale. On the one hand, Mexicans rank as most favorable countries with whom they hold historical ties and close relations (Canada, the United States, Spain) as well as countries they perceive as examples of success for their level of development and stability (Germany, Chile, Japan) or pace of economic growth (Brazil, China). On the other hand, Mexicans rank lowest countries that in recent years have been at the center of international conflicts (Israel, Iran) and regional controversy (Cuba, Ecuador, Venezuela), or those with lower levels of development and problems of criminal violence such as Guatemala and El Salvador.

In general, leaders' evaluations are characterized by a greater average of points for each country. For leaders, the average of all countries evaluated is 60 points, while for the public, this number is only 52. In some cases the differences are more marked, such as Chile (leaders, 22 points higher), Brazil (18 points higher), and Germany (18 points higher), all of which fall into the higher range of leaders' evaluations. Nevertheless, there are countries for which the difference is much smaller, such as the United States (leaders, 4 points higher), Bolivia (4 points higher), and Venezuela (rated by leaders as one point higher), with these two final countries among the lowest ranked for both public and leaders. In sum, leaders are much more enthusiastic than the public towards countries at the higher end of the scale, but their perceptions are closer to those of the public for countries rated as least favorable.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 3.1. Thermometer of Countries, 2010**  
(mean values for each country)



<sup>2</sup> It is important to mention that the public's knowledge of other countries is strong, ranging from a high of 95% who correctly identify the United States to a low of 75% for South Africa. The relatively low level of recognition for South Africa is surprising, considering that the country was the host of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The Dominican Republic and Israel were identified correctly by 75% of respondents, placing them among the lesser known countries.

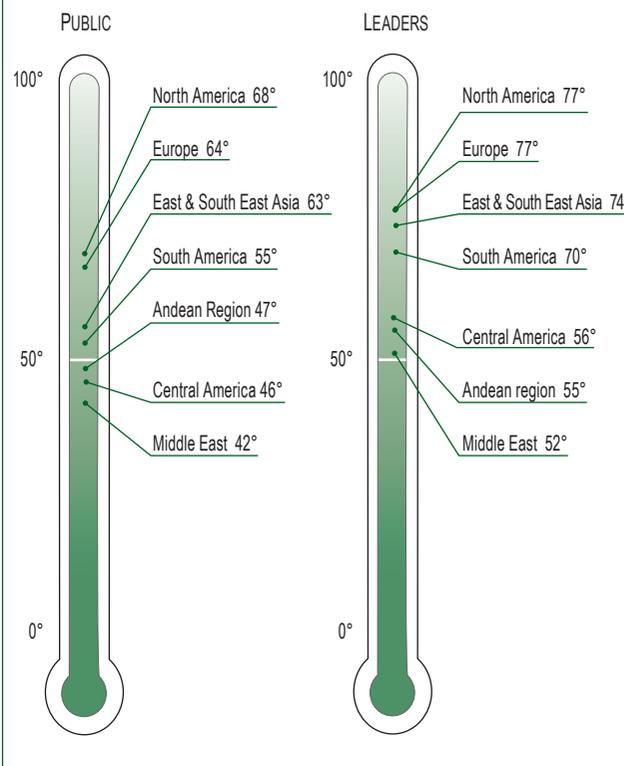


Are Mexicans' evaluations consistent with previous editions of the survey? In 2010, the general public rated almost all countries lower than in 2008, but with important variations: Canada dropped 3 points, while El Salvador's rating dropped by 7. The only exception to this pattern is the U.S., which not only rose 6 points, but also moved from the seventh to the second position. Among leaders as well the majority of countries lost points, from 6 points less for Cuba to one point for Chile. Nevertheless, there were a few countries whose rating rose (Colombia, Iran, and Peru). Among these the most interesting cases are the U.S., which rose both in rating (3 points) and position, and China, which rose two points resulting in a tie with the U.S. for seventh place. Brazil, which rose 3 points, moved from the sixth to the third place for leaders.

Survey respondents were also asked to report their opinion of regions, broken down into North America, the Southern Cone, the Andean Region, Central America and the Caribbean, Europe, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> As Figure 3.2 shows, the highest evaluated regions both by the general public and leaders are North America (68 and 77 points, respectively) and Europe (64 and 77 points). Both groups rank Asia Pacific third (63 and 74 points), and the Southern Cone fourth (55 and 70 points). The general public and leaders also coincide in evaluating the Middle East last (42 and 52 points). The only differences between the two groups are the Andean Region (fifth for the general public and sixth for leaders) and Central America and the Caribbean (sixth for the general public and fifth for leaders).

If Mexicans indeed evaluate higher those regions with which they have had historical ties and important current relations, the regions of Latin America

**Figure 3.2. Thermometer of Regions, 2010**  
(mean values for each region)



are an exception to this pattern, as countries of the Southern Cone are higher ranked than Andean or Central American countries, with which Mexicans have more direct ties.

Do heads of state rank as high as the countries they lead? Survey respondents were asked to evaluate 7 heads of state on the same scale applied to countries, with 100 points indicating highly favorable, 50 points, neutral, and 0, highly unfavorable. As shown in Figure 3.3, respondents able to identify heads of

<sup>3</sup> Instead of grouping regions by continent, such as Asia or Latin America, the survey organizes regions by sub-continental areas which are relatively more homogenous. The countries corresponding to each region are, from North America: Canada, and the United States; Southern Cone: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay; Andean Region: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela; Central America and the Caribbean: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic; Europe: Germany, and Spain; Asia Pacific: China, and Japan; and Middle East: Israel, and Iran.



state<sup>4</sup> rated Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then president of Brazil (an average of 64 points), and Barack Obama, president of the United States (63 points) highest. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (56 points) and Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (62 points) fall into the medium range of the scale. The worst evaluated leaders are Raúl Castro, president of Cuba (42), and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela (34). Among leaders, the highest evaluated heads of state are also Lula da Silva (83) and Obama (70). Rodríguez Zapatero (67) occupies the third place. Leaders also coincide with

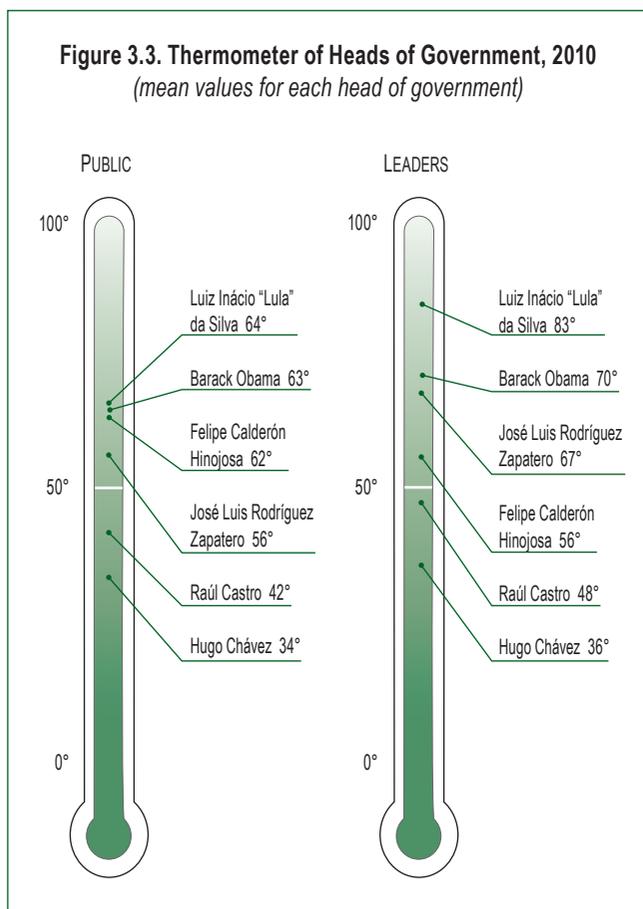
the general public with respect to the worst ranked: Castro (48) and Chávez (36).

Evaluations for most heads of state fell from their 2008 levels, both among leaders and the general public. Approval of Hugo Chávez changed least in both groups, (a mere 2-point decline among the public and a 4-point decline among leaders), while Felipe Calderón lost 6 points among the general public and 11 among leaders. The only head of state whose approval increased was Lula da Silva, rising 4 points in each group. Although there is no comparable data for Obama, it is interesting to note that evaluations of the president of the United States have risen considerably compared to Obama's predecessor, George Bush, who at 45 points for the public (18 points less than Obama) and 31 points for leaders (39 points less) was the worst evaluated head of state in 2008.

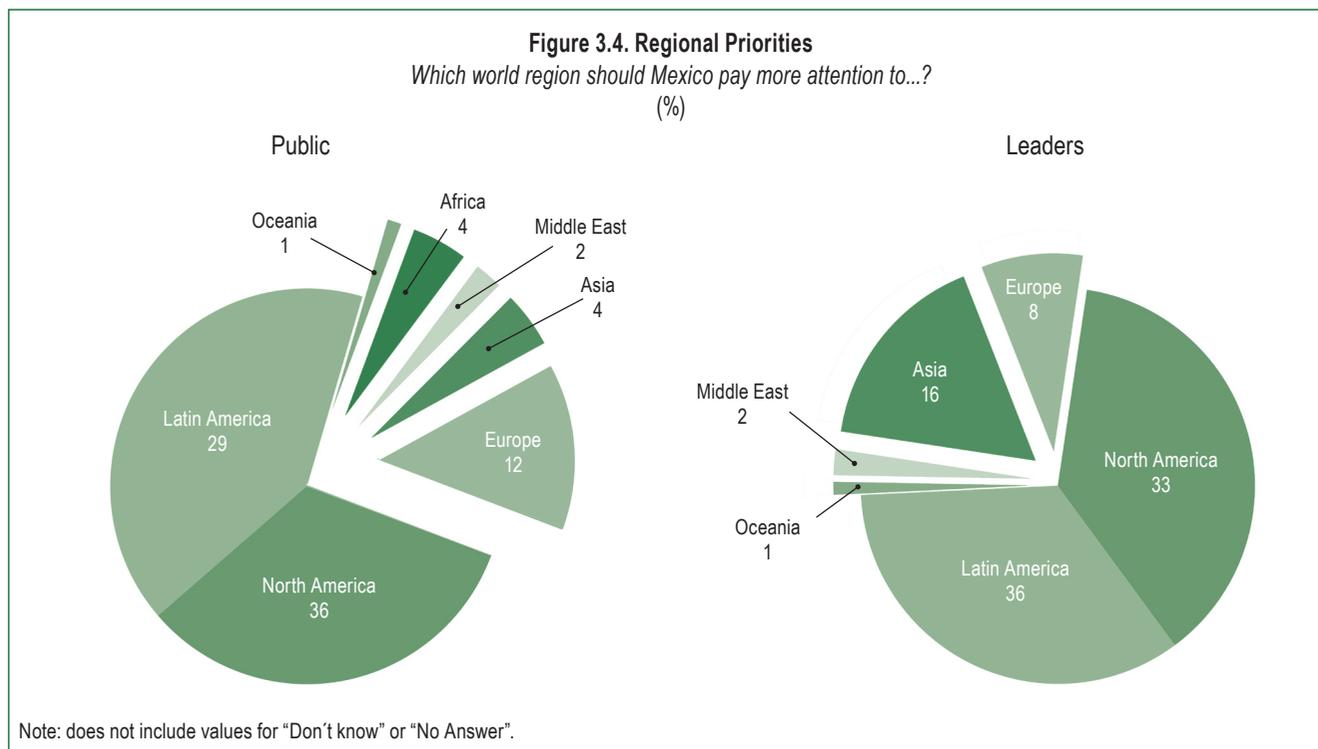
There is a considerable degree of consistency between the countries and leaders most favorably evaluated. The leaders of the most favorably evaluated countries also received the highest number of points. Similarly, the leaders of the least favorable countries received a lower number of points. An important exception is Lula da Silva, the only head of state evaluated more favorably than his country. With the exception of Brazil, all countries are rated more favorably than their leaders, with the spread between Venezuela and Hugo Chávez at 10 points.

Finally, do the regions which Mexicans most favorably rate coincide with those they believe should be strategic priorities? Not entirely. To begin with, leaders and the general public are divided in their responses to the question of which region should Mexico pay the most attention to. According to Figure 3.4, a little more than a third of the public (36%) believe that North America should be the

**Figure 3.3. Thermometer of Heads of Government, 2010**  
(mean values for each head of government)



<sup>4</sup> It is important to distinguish between levels of recognition for countries and that of heads of state among the general public. Whereas recognition of other countries is relatively high, a considerable proportion of survey respondents were unable to identify heads of state. However, there is a slight increase in recognition compared to the 2008 survey. The world leaders with the highest level of recognition among the general public are Felipe Calderón, followed by Barack Obama (89%), Hugo Chávez (71%), Raúl Castro (56%), Rodríguez Zapatero (44%), and finally, Lula da Silva (38%). There is an interesting relation between recognition and evaluation, with opinion most divided among those with an average level of recognition. For further analysis, see José Luis Caballero, "Conocerlos es quererlos ¿o no? Evaluación de Jefes de Estado de las Américas y España", *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 5, November 9, 2010, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, in <http://mexicoyel mundo.cide.edu>



highest priority, while a similar proportion of leaders favor Latin America. Preferences among the general public have changed dramatically since 2008. Latin America ranked as the highest priority two years ago, but dropped 8 percentage points in 2010. On the other hand, North America gained 6 points in the same period. Among leaders, Latin America gained 3 points while North America gained 5, even though Latin America is still ranked as a higher priority overall. Europe is considered to be a much lower priority: only 12% of the general public and 8% of leaders reported that Mexico should direct more attention toward the region. In fact, among leaders, Asia ranks well ahead of Europe, at third with 16%.

Mexicans' affinities for different world regions do not entirely correspond to strategic priorities, both for leaders and the general public. For the public, priorities and affinities do align for North America, which Mexicans both evaluate most favorably and believe merits the most attention. While Mexicans' evaluations of Latin America are not particularly favorable (54%), the region does rank as a high priority

for Mexicans (29%). The opposite goes for the case of Europe. Mexicans' affinity for Europe is high (64 points), but only 12% believe it should be accorded greater priority.

The gap between affective attachment and strategic priorities is slightly greater for leaders. While North America and Europe are most favorably viewed (77 points each), a plurality (36%) believe that Mexico's priorities should focus on Latin America (36%). Even a region whose countries were evaluated less favorably, such as Asia, is viewed as a greater priority than higher-rated Europe. Still, a third of leaders (33%) and a slightly larger percentage of the general public believe that Mexico should focus more on North America.

In sum, there is both considerable agreement and ambivalence between the public and leaders, complicating an evaluation of which is the most favored country or region for Mexicans. Additionally, the survey does not report the reasons behind individual evaluations. However, for historical, geographic, economic, and diplomatic reasons, it is reasonable



to conclude that Mexicans look first to the North, second to the South, and third to Europe and the East.

### ***Moving Up: Attitudes towards Mexico's Northern Neighbors***

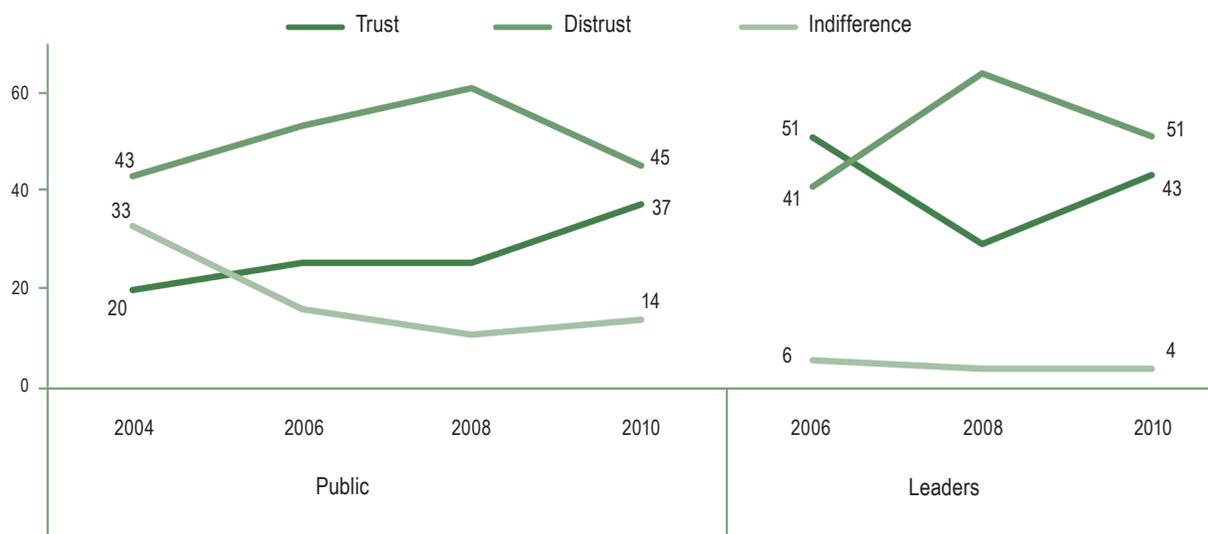
In no small measure, the United States is the country most relevant for Mexico, not only for socioeconomic reasons –the enormous flows of capital, trade, and migrants between the two countries– but for geopolitical reasons as well: Mexico shares its northern border with the most important country in the world. Geographical proximity has undoubtedly shaped views towards the United States. In previous editions of the survey, public opinion towards the United States had declined in several aspects, and support for North American integration had lost ground. This tendency reversed course in 2010, which saw considerable improvement in Mexicans' perceptions of the United States. The United States is the only country whose thermometer scores rose for both the

general public and leaders, and evaluations of the U.S. president are on par with the highest ranked world leaders.

Another important measure of public opinion, the level of trust towards the United States (Figure 3.5), confirms this trend. Although “distrust” towards the United States is still higher than trust among the general public (45% versus 37%) and leaders (51% versus 43%), in 2010 Mexicans' hesitancy to trust the U.S. has been reversed. Though 2008, two thirds of both the general public and leaders reported “distrust” towards the U.S. However, in 2010, distrust fell 16 points and trust rose by 12 points among the general public, while for leaders distrust fell 13 points and trust rose by 14 points.

In addition to trust, the survey also asked Mexicans whether they view the United States with “admiration”. Forty-two percent report “admiration”, 29%, “indifference”, and 22%, “disdain”. Admiration also predominates among leaders, at 57%, although disdain (20%) is greater than indifference (15%). Among the public, admiration is at its highest since

**Figure 3.5. Trust in the United States 2004-2010**  
*Which of the following words best describes your feelings about the United States...?*  
(%)



Note: does not include values for “Don’t know” or “No Answer”.



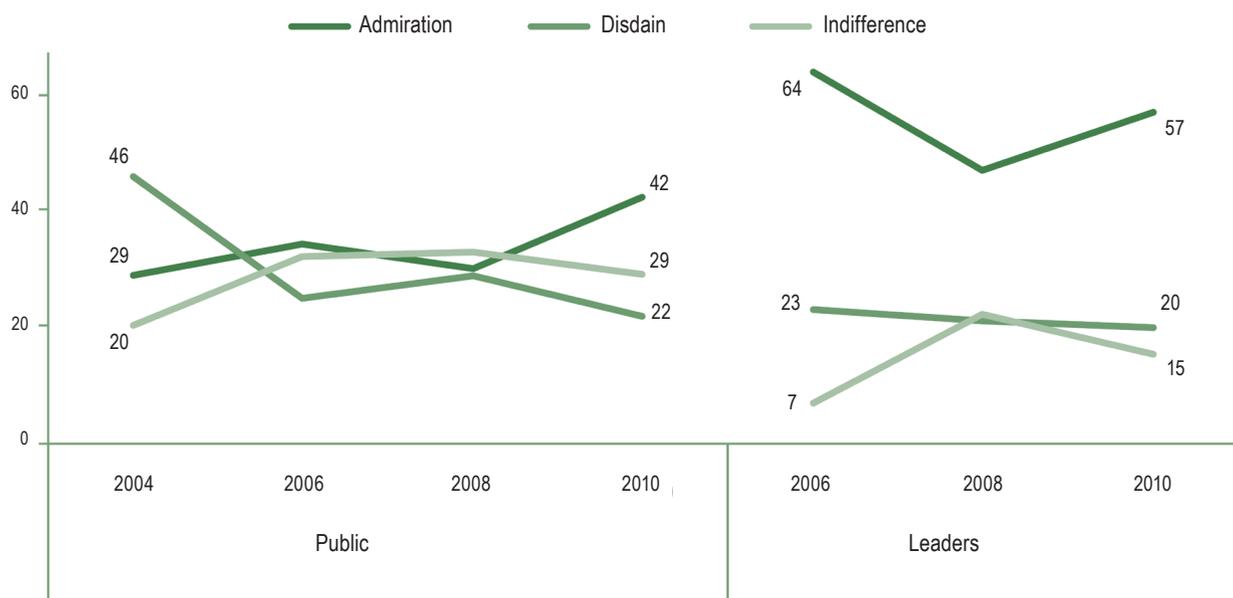
the first edition of the survey in 2004, and rose by 12 percentage points from 2008. Similarly, disdain is also at its lowest since 2004, and fell 7 points from 2008, confirming the decline of anti-U.S. sentiment. If admiration has indeed been the dominant sentiment of leaders in all previous editions of the survey, it increased by 10 points over 2008 – although it did not reach in 2010 its previous high of 2006 (64%). Disdain has declined consistently among leaders, although without drastic changes.

Positive sentiment towards the United States is consistent across other variables included in the survey. For half of the general public (52%) being a neighbor of the United States is considered more of an advantage than a problem. This figure represents an increase of 7 points, reversing the perception in 2008 that sharing a border with the United States is more of a disadvantage. In 2010, two thirds (66%) of leaders also believe that being a neighbor of the United States represents an advantage. However, unlike

the general public, this sentiment fell 3 points since 2008 and is lower than the 85% reported in 2006. At the same time, though, the opinion that being a neighbor of the U.S. represents a *disadvantage* has increased since 2006.

Given its military power and geostrategic importance, the United States understandably provokes contrary reactions among Mexicans concerning its role in the world. On the one hand, out of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United States is the country that Mexicans most trust (35%) to keep world peace. But it is also the *least* trusted country (31%), although distrust of the U.S. has decreased by 13 points in the last two years. After the United States, the countries most trusted to keep world peace are France (19%) and China (12%). In 2008, France had earned the trust of the highest percentage of Mexicans. However, in 2010, France lost 4 points while the United States gained 14 points. Leaders exhibit a similar trend: while the

**Figure 3.6. Admiration towards the United States 2004-2010**  
Which of the following words best describes your feelings about the United States...?  
(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't know" or "No Answer".



United States gained 5 points in trust over 2008 while France lost 20, a greater percentage of leaders (32%) selected *neither* of these countries in 2010. After the United States, the countries Mexicans *least* trust to keep peace in 2010 are China (23%), in which distrust increased by 10 points, and Russia (20%). Leaders concur with the public on the most trusted country, the United States (39%), but differ on second most trusted country, China (30%), though trust in the U.S. fell by 19 points, and trust in China rose by 11, since 2008.

How do Mexicans evaluate bilateral relations with the U.S. given ambivalence towards the United States' international role? A plurality of the public (44%) and an absolute majority of leaders (54%) report that relations with the United States have improved over the past decade. In fact, only 29% of the public and leaders report that relations are worse than in 2000. At the same time, a majority of the public (50%) and leaders (66%) believe that relations will improve in the coming decade. Though 21% of the general public respond that relations will not change, no significant percentage believe that relations will worsen.

While Mexicans perceive that relations with the U.S. have both improved over the past ten years and will continue to improve in the decade to come, does this optimism extend to concrete foreign policy preferences? Particularly, do Mexicans believe that they share their greatest common interests with the U.S. and, thus, prioritize a closer relation with their neighbor to the north? Or do they prefer deepening relations with other neighboring countries and regions, such as Canada or Latin America, to defend common interests against the region's leader? On par with their positive evaluations of U.S.-Mexico relations, both the general public (51%) and leaders (52%) prefer negotiating bilaterally with the U.S. over coordinating with Canada to defend Mexican interests. Support for prioritizing the "special relationship" with the United States over relationships with other countries, has remained largely constant among the general public since the first edition of the survey in 2004, but has gained 8 points among leaders in that time. Only a third (33%) prefers aligning with

Canada to defend common interests vis-à-vis their shared neighbor. In addition, a plurality of the public (49%) and an absolute majority of leaders (51%) feel that Mexico should coordinate interests with the United States independently of its relationship with other Latin American countries. Only 37% report that Mexico should align its foreign policy with Latin America to defend common interests. The previous data indicate that Mexicans prefer a special relationship with the United States over coordinating objectives with Canada or Latin America.

Given the clear inclination towards deepening relations with the United States, how do Mexicans evaluate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada 16 years after the treaty took effect? Have attitudes grown more negative? The short answer is no. An important segment of the public (60%) and leaders (71%) report that NAFTA has been "very much" or "somewhat" beneficial for Mexico. The survey also measures whether leaders' enthusiasm for other trade agreements is as high as that for NAFTA. There is a clear order to preferences with respect to trade agreements, with 42% of leaders reporting that NAFTA has benefitted Mexico "very much". When added to those responding "somewhat" beneficial, approval for NAFTA reaches 71%. On the other hand, 22% of leaders believe that Mexico's free trade agreement with the European Union (TLCUE) has benefitted Mexico "very much", a percentage that increases to 61% when answers of "somewhat" are added in. Finally, leaders evaluate the country's free trade agreement with Japan slightly less favorably, with 13% reporting that it has benefitted Mexico "very much" and 49% "somewhat."

Of course, relations with the United States are not restricted to trade and investment. The two countries also cooperate extensively in other areas, especially on fighting organized crime and drug trafficking. Though broad coordination requires joint decision making, a majority of the public (55%) oppose decisions reached with the United States if these entail commitments that they disagree with. This proportion has not changed greatly since 2008:



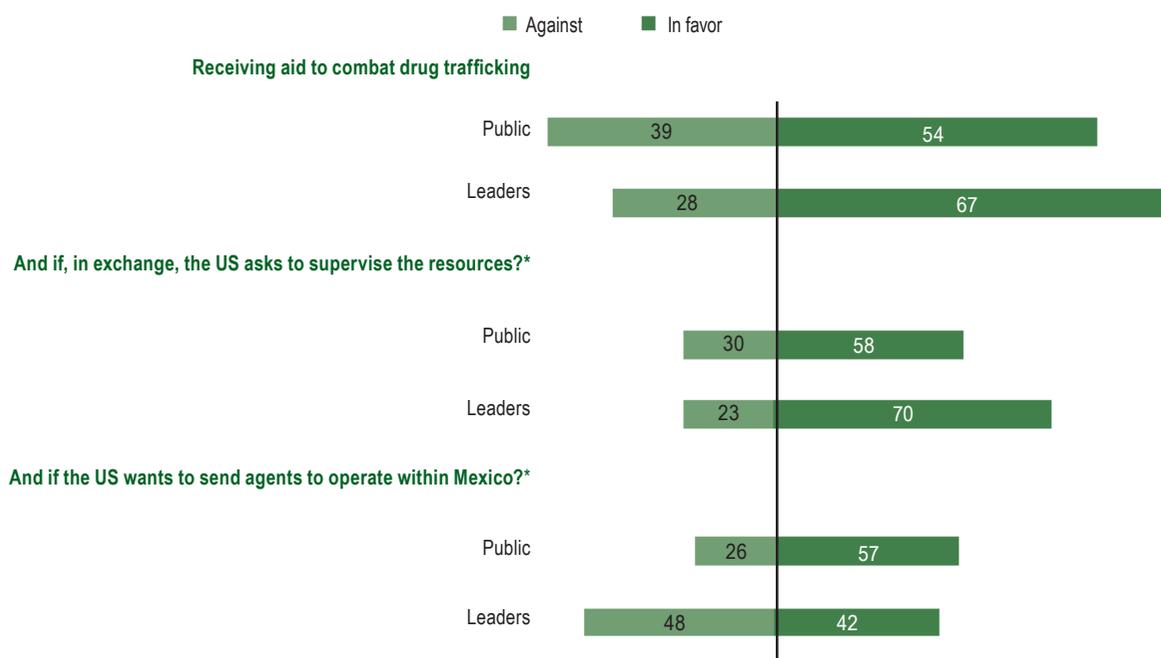
disapproval decreased 6 points and agreement rose 7 points in the past two years. This suggests that Mexicans are slightly more willing today to accept decisions their government makes jointly with the U.S., even when they do not agree. Leaders' preferences are much more divided: 47% are willing to accept joint decisions while 46% are not, virtually unchanged from 2008.

In the case of drug trafficking and the combat of organized crime, half of the general public (54%) is willing to accept aid from the United States while 67% of leaders report the same, as shown in Figure 3.7. It is important to note that while positive perceptions towards the United States have increased in 2010, attitudes towards specific areas of cooperation have not, decreasing slightly from two years ago. This trend may be explained by the worsening situation with respect to the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime over the past two years.

While attitudes towards cooperation with the United States are positive in general, does public opinion change when aid is conditioned on U.S. supervision of the distribution of resources and operations? On the one hand, of those who are in favor of U.S. aid to combat organized crime and drug trafficking, 58% of the public and 70% of leaders continue to be in favor even if aid is conditioned on U.S. supervision of resources – a position that increased 15 points for leaders. On the other, 57% of the general public and 42% of leaders continue to be in favor if the U.S. conditions aid on sending U.S. agents to operate within Mexico. This position fell 13 points compared with 2008. In fact, with respect to the acceptance of U.S. agents, disagreement is greater among leaders (48%) than the general public (26%). In sum, not all those in favor of U.S. aid continue to do so if it is conditioned on the presence of U.S. agents or supervision. What is interesting to note is that while a majority

**Figure 3.7. Cooperation with the United States: Financial aid to combat drug trafficking**

*Are you for or against Mexico's receiving financial aid from the United States to fight drug-trafficking and organized crime? (%)*



\* Follow-up question, only asked to those who answered "in favor"  
Note: Does not include values for "Depends" "Don't know" or "No Answer".



of the public is willing to accept possible conditions imposed by the U.S. (which might be interpreted as the population's desperation to find alternatives to the Mexican government's combat of organized crime and drug trafficking) leaders on the other hand are willing to accept U.S. supervision of resources but oppose allowing U.S. agents to operate in Mexico.

Without a doubt, the cooperation of U.S. agents with Mexican forces guarding airports, ports, and borders is a possibility that has been considered by leaders and the public. Nevertheless, as analyzed above, it is not an option that is welcomed by the same proportion of each group. However, would sentiment change if the purpose of U.S. agents was not to combat drug trafficking but to help facilitate the arrival of Mexicans to the United States? To answer the first question—whether Mexicans approve of cooperation between Mexican forces and U.S. agents in Mexican ports, borders, and airports to combat drug trafficking—almost half (48%) of the general public agree, while 56% of leaders disapprove. Results observed in Figure 3.8 are consistent. These results are consistent with the above responses regarding the participation of U.S. agents in return for financial resources, with leaders' opposition

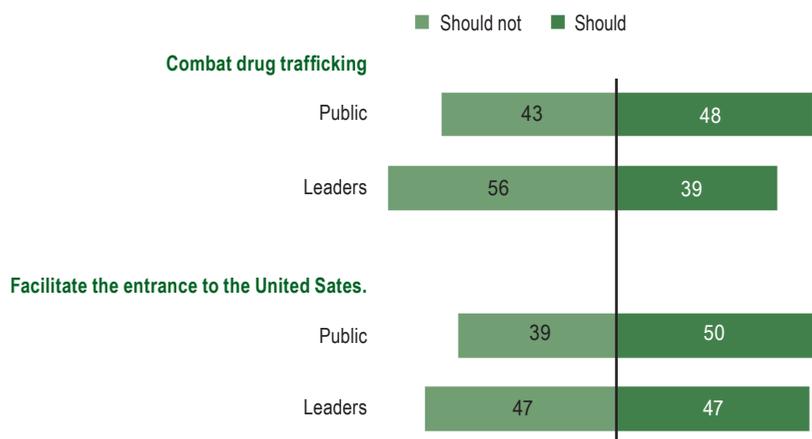
5 points lower than in 2008. However, approval for the participation of U.S. agents is less driven by nationalism than by benefits perceived in return, as the following question shows. Fifty percent of the general public and 47% of leaders agree that Mexico should allow the participation of U.S. agents with the purpose of aiding Mexican migrants. Sentiment increased for both public and leaders with respect to 2008: 31 points for public and 20 points for leaders.

In sum, these results suggest that Mexicans trust and admire the United States considerably more than in years past. For the first time in the survey, the majority of both the general public and leaders believe that being a neighbor to the U.S. is an advantage rather than a source of trouble, and both groups ranked the U.S. as the country most trusted to keep world peace. A majority believes relations with the U.S. have improved with respect to the past decade and expects them to improve for the decade to come. A majority also prefers maintaining a “special relationship” with the United States over closer relations with Canada and Latin America.

Mexico's relation with the U.S. covers diverse areas of cooperation, each defined by various levels

**Figure 3.8. Cooperation with the United States: Entrance of United States Agents**

*Do you think that Mexico should or should not allow U.S. agents to participate with Mexican agents in the surveillance of Mexico's airports, ports and borders in order to...?*  
(%)



Note: Does not include values for “Depends”, “Don’t Know or “No Answer”.



of engagement. With respect to trade and commercial ties, the majority of Mexicans surveyed believe that NAFTA has benefitted Mexico (more so than free trade agreements with Europe or Japan, which were also evaluated favorably). With respect to the combat of drug trafficking and organized crime, a majority of Mexicans welcome U.S. aid, but are more reluctant when aid is conditioned upon U.S. supervision or the reception of anti-drug agents on Mexican territory. While a slim majority of the public favors closer cooperation between U.S. and Mexican forces, leaders are staunchly opposed. On a balance, Mexicans favor close relations with the U.S. and also look toward their northern neighbor with admiration. However, this relation is not without certain limits and reservations.

### *The America South of the Border*

Mexico is geographically and economically bound to North America, yet historically, culturally, and politically part of Latin America. With one foot in North America and the other pointing south, how do Mexicans perceive potential conflicts of identity and interest? The following two questions permit a greater understanding of this dual identity. With respect to the economy, 36% of the public and 38% of leaders report that Mexico should prioritize greater economic integration with North America. Although support for integration with North America is not much greater than that for Latin America, support for North American integration jumped 6 points among the general public and 11 points for leaders since 2008, representing a reverse in opinion towards which region should be the priority. In 2010, support for economic integration with Latin America registers 31% for the public and 35% for leaders.

On the other hand, a relative majority of Mexicans consider Mexico to be more Latin American (45%) than North American (37%), as do leaders (48% and 36%, respectively). Nevertheless, identification with Latin America dropped 8 percentage points from 2008, while identification with North America rose

by 9 points. This suggests that in as far as economic questions are concerned, Mexicans' preferences tilt towards North America, while culturally, Mexicans identify more as Latin Americans. Nevertheless, this difference seems to have narrowed, as the percentage of Mexicans identifying with North America increased considerably in 2010. These findings confirm the overall increase in positive perceptions towards the United States as described above.

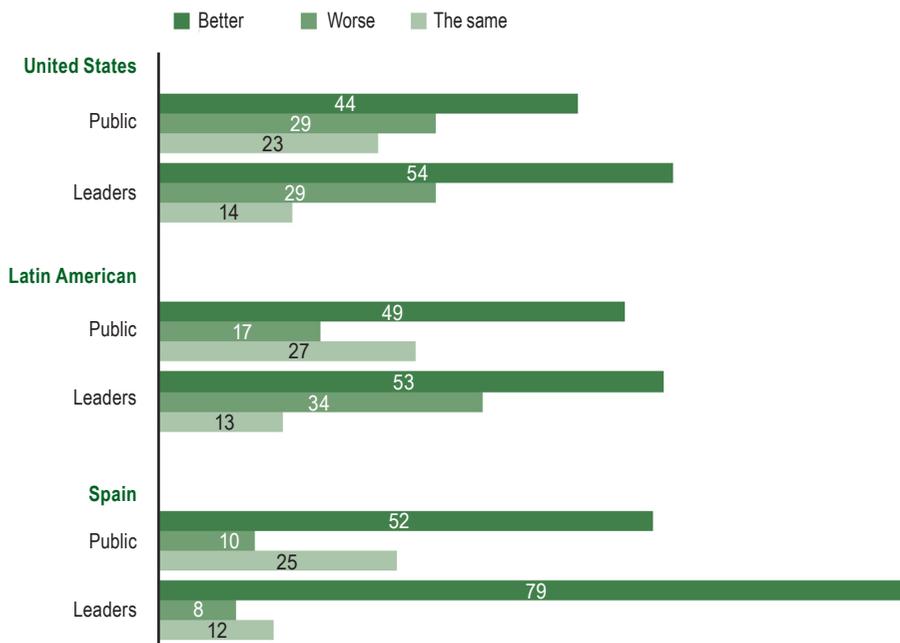
Have substantial gains in views towards the U.S. come at the expense of Latin America? Not necessarily, as we noted in the previous chapter. A relative majority of the public (40%) believes that Latin America is better off than ten years back, while 46% reported that the region will improve in the decade to come. Among leaders, 67% report that the region has improved and 78% believe that it will continue to do so in the decade to come.

While views of the region have not deteriorated, might views of Mexico's relation with Latin America have declined? Survey data suggest that this is not the case. On the contrary, half of the general public (49%) and 53% of leaders believe that Mexico's relations with other Latin American countries are better now than in 2000. While 17% of the public believes relations today are worse, 34% of leaders expect relations to decline. Among the public, the proportion of those who believe relations will stay the same accounts for the second largest group, rising from 22% in 2008 to 27% in 2010. More than half of the public also believe that relations with Latin America will improve for the decade to come, while 82% of leaders believe the same. These proportions have not changed much since 2008.

Data from Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show that with respect to Latin America, Mexicans are not only optimistic, but view relations with Latin American countries more favorably than those with the U.S. —although not as favorably as relations with Spain, which will be discussed in the next section. Mexicans evaluate relations with Latin America more favorably by 5 points, both retrospectively and with respect to the future, while leaders' enthusiasm varies depending on the time period measured. Comparing



**Figure 3.9. Mexico's Relationship with the United States, Latin America and Spain in Retrospect**  
*Compared with 10 years ago, do you think that Mexico's relations with... are better or worse?*  
 (%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

present relations to the past decade, leaders evaluate the U.S. as one percentage point higher, while for the decade to come, leaders believe relations with Latin America will improve by 16 points higher than relations with the U.S. As might be expected, those who view Latin America with greater pessimism are more likely to evaluate relations with the U.S. more positively.

After comparing Mexico's external relations, concern that Latin America has lost ground does not seem to hold up, despite overall improvement in the image of the United States. Indeed, while the U.S. has gained importance, its image in previous surveys was much lower to begin with. However, have developments in Latin America affected Mexicans' view of their own country's importance? For leaders, Mexico is and should continue to be the region's leading power. Perceptions among the general public

are a little more reserved: little more than a third (35%) believe Mexico should be the leading power in Latin America, 46% prefer Mexico to work in conjunction with other countries without necessarily pursuing a leading role, and 13% believe the country should stand aside from Latin American affairs. This distribution is similar to that of 2008, although the proportion of those calling for a greater regional role decreased 6 percentage points. Leaders are a little more divided: 50% would rather see Mexico work with other countries than contend for regional leadership, while 47% believe that Mexico should strive to be a regional power.

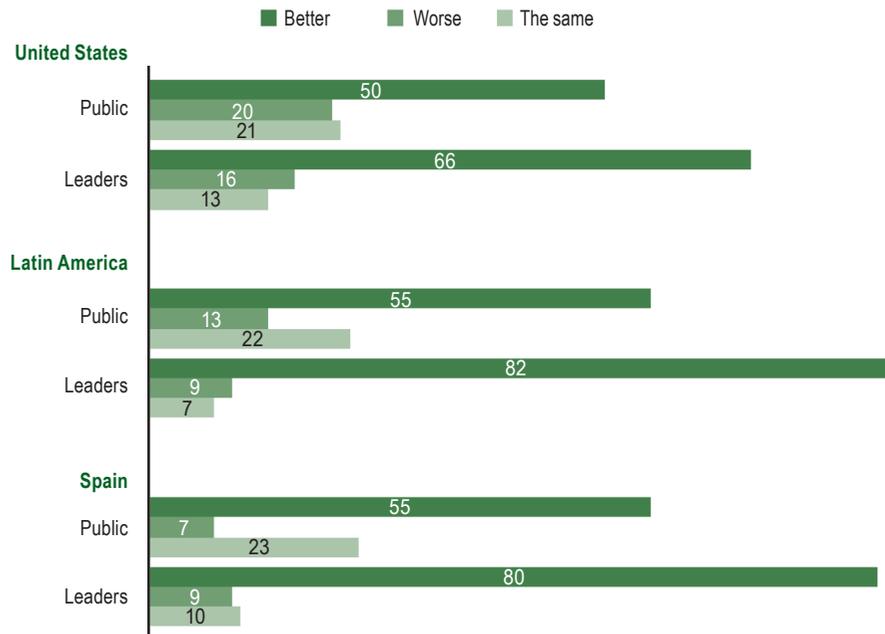
If a relative majority of leaders and public would prefer Mexico not to assume a leadership role, is there a country that is or might be willing to do so? When asked which Latin American country has been most influential over the past decade, 66% are unable to



**Figure 3.10. Mexico's Relationship with the United States, Latin America and Spain in Retrospect**

*And in 10 years, do you think that Mexico's relations with... will be better or worse?*

(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

answer, a proportion that increased dramatically compared to 2008, when only 22% did not answer. Of the 34% that do answer, Brazil is rated as the most influential, chosen by 11% of the public, followed by Mexico (8%), which was ranked first in 2008. Among leaders, Brazil is chosen as the most influential country (83%), while only 5% named Mexico. In general, countries were ranked lower among the general population: while Brazil only lost 7 points, Argentina lost 10 and Mexico 14. Among leaders, Brazil rose almost 20 points and Chile lost 11, the latter being ranked second after Mexico in 2008. The order of countries ranked most influential over the past decade corresponds with the ranking of most influential countries for the decade to come. When asked which country will be most influential in the following ten years, only 30% of the public was able to name one; two years ago, only 26% did not answer. Among those that do answer, there is a certain degree

of optimism towards Mexico (11%), which is ranked by one point as the most influential country above Brazil (10%), although support for Mexico decreased 17 points from 2008. Argentina also lost 10 points in these two years. Among leaders, 71% believe that Brazil will be the most influential country, followed by Mexico (18%), with Brazil gaining 17 points compared to Mexico's loss of 10.

These changes suggest two possible readings. First, the decrease in those who aspire for Mexico to be a regional power may reflect more realistic perceptions of a decline in its possible influence and leadership in Latin America. Second, the country that has indisputably become Latin America's leading power, and is widely viewed to continue as such, is Brazil. This should not be surprising given the improvement in Brazil's image and that of its president, Lula, observed in the beginning of this chapter. Brazil not only captures the first position among Latin American



countries among both the public and leaders, but is also one of the few countries to be rated higher over the past two years, while its president is rated highest among heads of state for 2010.

For Mexicans, what risks and challenges would regional leadership imply? While views towards the present and future of Latin America are largely positive, it is certain that recent years have seen substantial conflicts of national and regional scale. In this context, a relative majority of the public (42%) believes that there is a greater possibility for an armed conflict in the region than ten years ago—a percentage similar to 2008—and 16% believe it to be the same. On the other hand, 54% of leaders believe that the possibility of conflict is less today than ten years ago. The probability of regional conflict is thus different depending on which group is asked.

When asked to consider which, if any, country has generated the most conflict in the region over the past ten years, only 45% of the public answered. The country viewed as most conflictive is Venezuela (14%) followed by Colombia (12%). Among leaders opinion is more decisive, with 65% naming Venezuela and 15% Colombia, a distribution not much different from 2008. With respect to the country with the greatest possibility to generate conflict in the next ten years, the proportion of the public that respond is even less: 36%. Of these, the same two countries are mentioned above all else: Venezuela (13%) and Colombia (8%). For leaders as well, Venezuela (62%) followed distantly by Colombia (8%), are viewed as those most likely to provoke conflict.

These results are not surprising, giving the popularity of both countries reported earlier in the chapter. Although Colombia does not rank among the least favorable countries, Venezuela, and especially Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, are little popular among Mexicans surveyed, which might be due to the perception of potential conflict. It is

important to note, as observed in the beginning of the chapter, that countries of the Andean region—to which Colombia and Venezuela both belong—are on average the lowest ranked, especially among leaders, in comparison to the higher affinity towards countries of the Southern Cone, Central America, and the Caribbean.

If the potential for conflict indeed represents one of the forces preventing greater unity, its opposite—regional integration—may provoke sentiments just as strong. As mentioned earlier, Mexicans prefer economic integration with North America over Latin America. Might this preference be due not only to the improvement in the United States' image but to the few alternative options for integration and Mexicans' general resistance to sharing sovereignty as well? The response to the first condition is negative, as there is a sizable consensus favoring closer relations with Latin America. The 2010 survey includes a list of seven possible steps or policies that would deepen integration in Latin America and reign in to a greater or lesser extent countries' autonomy. The following analysis will present those integration policies that registered the highest levels of support among both the public and leaders.<sup>5</sup>

The first point of interest is that both leaders and public evaluate the seven possible steps toward integration in the same order of preference. Leaders' support, however, is much more enthusiastic. More than 70% of the Mexican public supports the construction of roads and bridges to connect the region, as well as the free movement of goods, services, and investment. Leaders support the above steps by over 90%. A little more than half (60%) of the public and 65% of leaders are in favor of creating a Latin American parliament with binding legislative powers, while 50% of leaders and the public support the creation of a common Latin American currency. The two proposals with the least support are allowing

<sup>5</sup> To measure views towards the favorability of Latin American integration, the Mexican population was divided into two sub-samples, with the first asked to evaluate the favorability of the following actions “being taken in Latin America”, and for the second, “being taken to favor Latin American integration”. However, responses to the two questions did not produce significant differences nor variation in the percentage of favorability reported, for which they were averaged and reported as one.



the free movement of people across the region, without border controls, and the formation of a Latin American army. Interestingly, this last proposal is the only one for which support of the public is higher than that of leaders (by 21 points).

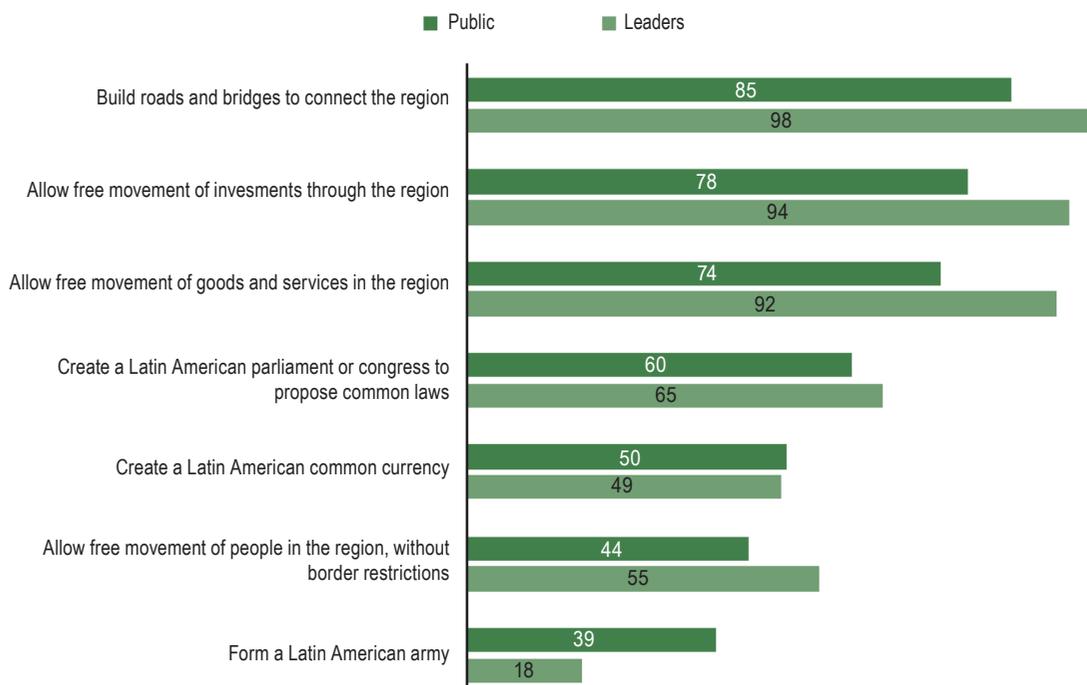
As might be expected, distinct stages and degrees of commitment receive different levels of support. In the first place, the possibility of *material and commercial integration* (infrastructure, investment, goods and services) obtain the highest level of support among the public and leaders, suggesting that Mexicans support integration policies that would produce clear material benefits. Secondly, there is far less of a consensus towards *political-institutional integration* (Congress, currency, army), with a Latin American congress gaining far more approval than a regional army. Finally, *social integration* (the free movement of people) generates the least support, as

Mexicans, and the public in particular, firmly oppose the loosening of border controls.

In brief, the overall rise in the image of the United States does not reflect a decline in identity or relations with Latin America. In general, Mexicans look with optimism toward the future of Latin America and value relations with Latin American countries more than relations with the United States. Nevertheless, Mexico is no longer seen as a regional leader, and enthusiasm for Mexican leadership has fallen from earlier years, when Mexico was seen as the preeminent regional power. What might have caused this reversal? There are two possible explanations. First, the recent success of Brazil has seemed to impact Mexicans' views towards both countries, as the advance of the Brazilian economy and Brazil's efforts as an international mediator elevated the country's status as a regional and global power. Secondly, lower

**Figure 3.11. Possible Actions towards Latin American Integration**

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following actions to promote Latin American integration?  
(% who agrees)





support might be due to the new challenges that regional leadership would imply, such as the resolution of conflicts between Venezuela and Colombia. Regional leadership might imply other burdens as well, such as determining the direction and scope of regional integration. As far as integration with Latin America, Mexicans are in favor of certain proposals which would reduce barriers to the flow of goods, services, and investment across the region. However, there is far less support for the creation of supranational institutions and social integration, or the free movement of people across borders. It would seem that Mexicans are not willing to take steps that would reduce autonomy or imply specific costs.

### *Looking West and East*

In the first pages of this chapter we noted that among the highest evaluated countries are those in Europe and Asia, slightly below Mexicans' trading partners in North America but higher than the countries of South America. Nevertheless, Europe and Asia are not considered among the regions that Mexico should direct more attention to. What explains the distance between appreciation and priorities? We will begin first with Europe.

The countries of Europe are among those receiving the highest points on the thermometer measuring Mexicans' affinity towards foreign countries. Nevertheless, Germany and Spain have fallen in position and have been losing points since 2004 among both the general public and leaders. As mentioned above, France fell in position among those countries most trusted to keep world peace, and the president of Spain was viewed less favorably and ranked in the middle of world leaders measured, falling in position with respect to previous years. Finally, for the general public, Europe ranks as the third region to which Mexico should direct its attention (favored only by 12%) and ranks as fourth among leaders (with only 8% of support). Without question, Europe has lost importance among the foreign policy priorities of Mexicans.

Has Europe actually lost Mexicans? This question is not out of place if we consider the historic importance and current relevance of ties with Spain, a relation that is of special importance for experts and decision makers in Mexico. The low priority accorded to relations with Europe doesn't correspond to the high degree of esteem reserved for at least one of its countries. In 2010 the survey included a series of questions intended to measure the importance of Spain for Mexicans, which has become a point of reflection in the year of the Bicentennial of Independence. On the one hand, almost two thirds of the public (58%) view Spain with "trust", while 18% report either "distrust" or "indifference". Among leaders, "trust" is even higher (80%). Half of the public looks toward Spain with "admiration", while the other half is characterized more by "indifference" (31%) than "disdain" (only 10%). Leaders almost uniformly view Spain with "admiration" (76%).

These results are interesting compared with feelings of trust and admiration recorded toward the United States. As Figure 3.12 and 3.13 show, Spain generates a higher proportion of trust and admiration than the United States. While distrust towards the U.S. accounts for the majority among the public and leaders, Spain is viewed much more favorably (20 points higher among the public and almost 40 points (which would make trust towards Spain twice as favorable as that towards the U.S.) for leaders). Additionally, Spain is admired by a greater proportion of Mexicans than the U.S., although the difference in points is not as great. Mexicans' admiration for Spain is 8 points higher than the U.S. for the general public and 19 points for leaders.

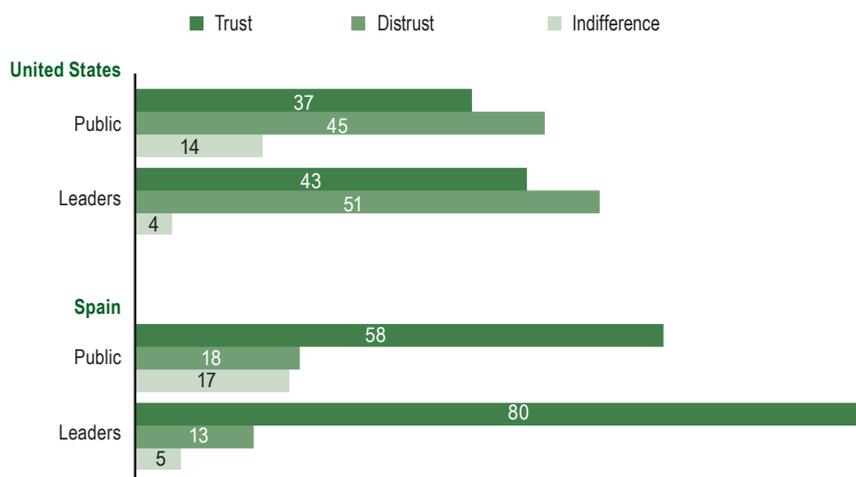
Are relations between Mexico and Spain evaluated as positively as Mexicans' perceptions of trust and admiration? Without a doubt, the answer is yes. When asked to evaluate Mexico-Spain relations compared to the previous decade, half of the public (52%) consider that relations have improved and almost a third (25) respond that relations are the same. A majority of leaders (79%) believe that relations have improved over the past decade. More than half of the public (55%) believe that Mexico-Spain relations



**Figure 3.12. Trust in the United States and Spain**

Which of the following words best describes your feelings towards...?

(%)

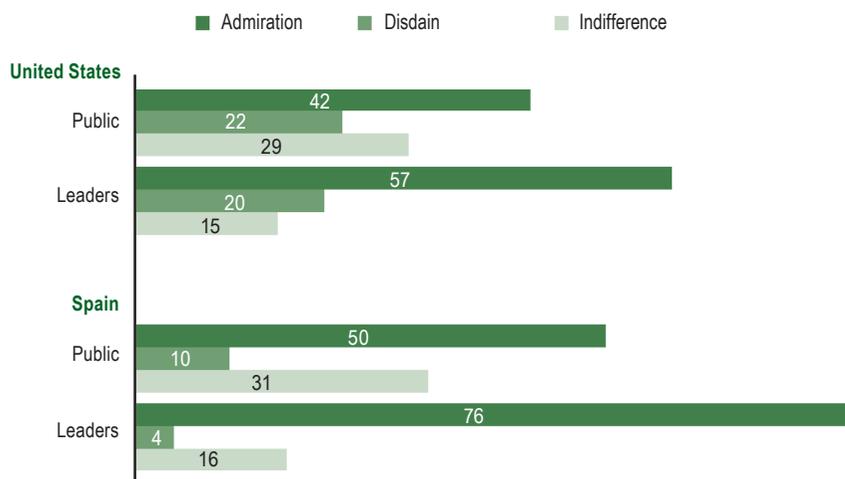


Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

**Figure 3.13. Admiration towards the United States and Spain**

Which of the following words best describes your feelings towards...?

(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

will improve in the decade to come, and almost a fourth expect them to remain the same. Once again, the great majority of leaders (80%) believe relations will be even stronger.

Mexicans evaluate relations with Spain even more positively than those with the United States and the countries of Latin America. As Figures 3.09 to 3.10 show, Mexicans' evaluation of current relations with



Spain with respect to ten years back is higher than those reported for Mexico's neighbors to the north and south of the continent. With respect to the decade to come, the proportion expecting improvement in Mexico-Spain relations among the public is the same as that for Latin America, and two points lower than that for Latin America among leaders. In either case, both relations are viewed more positively than those with the United States.

Asian countries, and specifically those in the Asian Pacific, are among those most favorably ranked, although with differences among the public and leaders. For the public, Japan rose two positions from 2008 to 2010, while China fell by two. Among leaders, Japan fell by two positions in the ranking, ending up in fifth place, and China maintained the same position with respect to 2008, tied with the U.S. for seventh. While China rose in points among leaders, its score among the public decreased. As observed in the beginning of this chapter, Asia as a region is ranked in the middle of all regions measured, higher than the distinct sub-regions of Latin America and the Middle East. Nevertheless, as in the case of Europe, affinity towards Asia does not correspond to the foreign policy priorities of Mexicans, as it is ranked behind Latin America.

The distance between positive evaluations and priorities is particularly interesting for Asia, and specifically China, which over the course of the last decade has risen to become a major global economic power. The rise of China, thus, could represent an opportunity for trade and investment diversification for Mexico. Has China's economic growth produced divisions in Mexican public opinion? Results seem to indicate that this is indeed the case. As shown in Figure 3.14, forty percent of the public reported that it would be positive for the world if the size of China's economy would surpass that of the United States, while 37% reported that it would be negative. On the part of leaders, reactions to the potential of China's economy surpassing that of the United States are on the whole positive (59%). With respect to 2008, positive attitudes towards China fell 6 points among the public (46% positive in 2008) while negative

perceptions increased by 8 points (29% negative in 2008). Among leaders, positive opinion of China's rise did not change with respect to 2008 but negative perceptions rose 8 points. At the same time, for a majority of Mexicans (75%) the countries of Asia represent an "opportunity" rather than a "risk".

Mexicans view the world to the east and west in a different manner. In general, attitudes are not only more positive towards Spain and Mexico-Spain relations retrospectively and for the decade to come but are also more positive than those towards the U.S. and Latin America. Mexicans look towards the West with optimism and idealism, but countries of this region do not represent a particular priority for foreign policy. The East, meanwhile, is less admired and is characterized by greater divisions in opinion. Leaders, in turn, are more optimistic towards the economic rise of China than the Mexican public.

### *Mexico and Multilateralism*

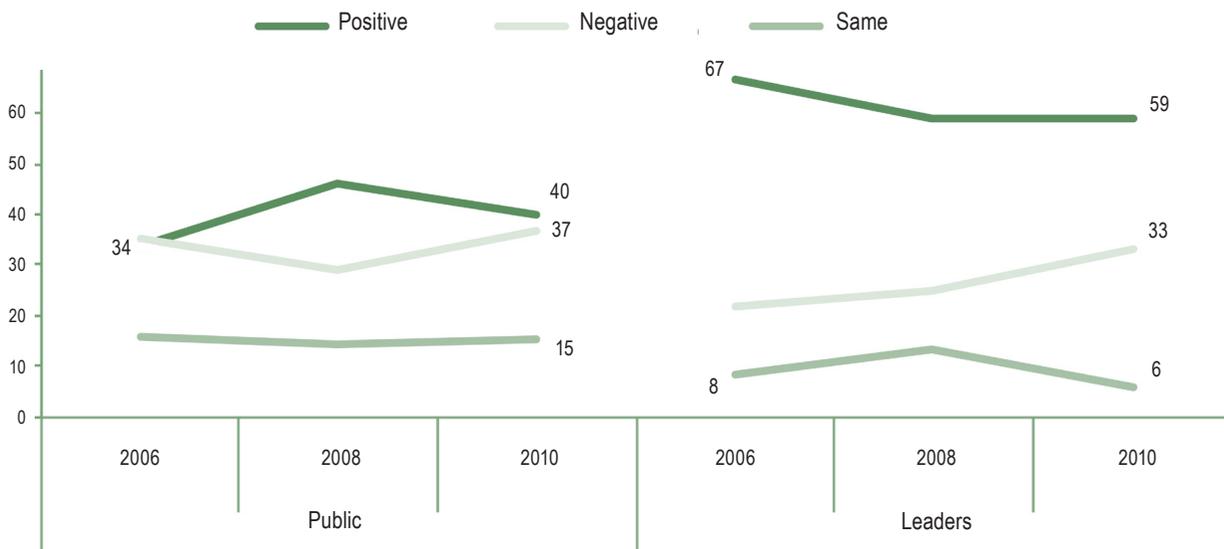
Mexicans not only place great value on bilateral relations, but under certain circumstances are willing to participate in multilateral institutions and organizations as well. To this end, Mexicans were asked to evaluate distinct organizations and actions of multilateral character in both the regional and international arena using the same scale of 0-100 elaborated above.

As might be expected, public opinion and leaders vary with respect to their evaluation of organizations and decisions listed in Figure 3.15. While the most positively evaluated organization for the general public is the U.N. (75 points), for leaders it is the European Union (77 points). For leaders, the UN is the second most positively evaluated organization (73) points, while for the public, this is multinational corporations (64), which rank among the lowest organizations by elites. The European Union occupies the fourth position for the public (63 points) right before the Organization of American States (64). On the contrary, leaders rank as third non-profit organizations (71) and rank the OAS as fourth (64). Surprisingly, given its importance for



**Graph 3.14. China's Economic Growth 2006-2010**

*In your opinion, if the Chinese economy grows to the point of being as big as the US economy, do you think that this would be positive or negative for the world?*  
(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

Mexico, NAFTA is ranked in the middle (63) for the public – alongside the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – which is ranked lower among leaders (NAFTA, 62), tying with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and lower than the IMF (63).<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, leaders and the public agree, broadly, on the *least* favorably viewed organizations. The lowest-ranked are the G20, (54 public, 60 leaders) and ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, 52 public, 47 leaders). Leaders and the general public share similar evaluations of the Organization of American States and the International Monetary Fund. In contrast, leaders rate the European Union and non-profit organizations higher (14 and 10 points higher, respectively) than the general public,

while the public evaluates ALBA and multinational corporations slightly higher (5 points and 3 points, respectively) than do leaders.

Comparing present perceptions to those of years past, the UN and the European Union have been the international organizations most favorably evaluated by the public and leaders since 2004. Interestingly, multinational corporations have risen from fourth to second place among the public, knocking the OAS and the EU to third and fourth place, respectively. International non-profits had ranked as third since 2004 among leaders. Trust in all organizations has declined among the public and leaders since 2004, except for international non-profits, which rose 2 points since 2008 and have gained ground in each edition of the survey since 2004.

<sup>6</sup> While a majority of leaders recognize all of the international organizations mentioned, knowledge among the public is much more varied, going from 87% for the UN to organizations known by less than half of the public, such as the G20 and ALBA, or Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (47% and 38%, respectively). In addition, there seems to be a certain relationship between knowledge and favorability for the public, as the better known an organization is, the higher its ranking.



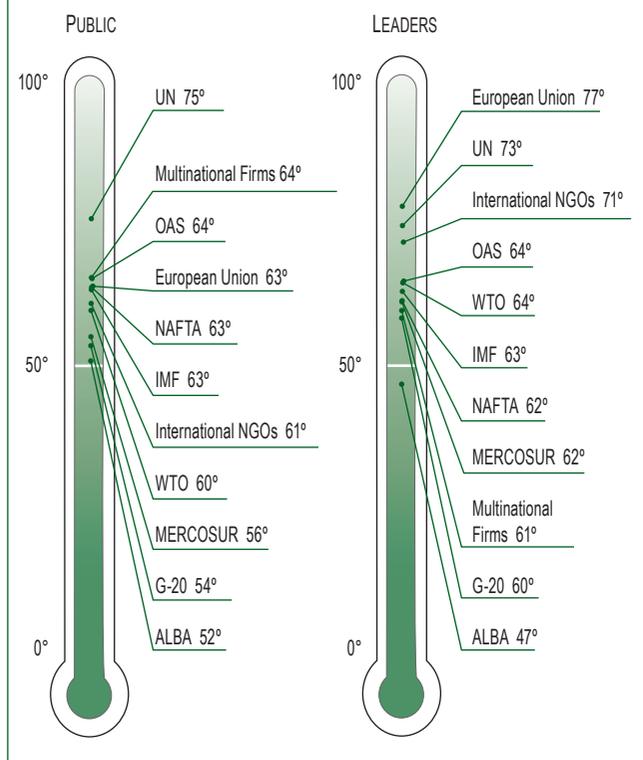
The one organization explicitly designated by the international community to resolve multilateral issues and promote cooperation is also the organization most positively viewed by Mexicans. At the same time, however, belonging to the UN implies international commitments on the part of Mexicans that produce significant polarization in public opinion. There is little agreement between the public and leaders on the *type* of organizations and international actors they trust most. Neither multilateral organizations (IMF, WTO, and the G20) nor regional organizations (OAS, MERCOSUR, ALBA) figure as systematically high or low ifor both the public and leaders. Perhaps the only exception is the European

Union, which is the most favorably evaluated by leaders and one of the highest evaluated among the public. In addition, nongovernmental actors, such as multinational corporations and nonprofits rank at opposite ends of each group's evaluations. Aside from the UN, Mexicans disagree sharply on which international organizations they trust most and believe are most important.

The UN is the only organization that both the public and leaders evaluate positively.<sup>7</sup> It is also one of the most trusted organizations of those included in the survey. A little more than half of the public (52%) trusts in the UN, and this proportion increases to 77% among leaders. On the other hand only 36% of those surveyed trust in the United States, although among leaders this proportion is more than half (56%). The UN is the institution that generates the most trust among leaders, a level of trust only below trust in other Mexicans (82%). The public also trusts the UN, but less than the army (67%) and other Mexicans (55%). However, leaders and the public trust the United States *government* even less. It ranks above only the Mexican police force (27% public, 23% leaders) and politicians (16% public, 24% leaders).

How willing are Mexicans to participate in, abide by, and carry out the decisions of the United Nations? In general, support for cooperation and participation is high, especially among leaders. Though public support for the UN is generally high, support for specific actions is more ambivalent and varies according to the type of action proposed. A majority of the public (close to 60%) support sending Mexican troops to participate in UN peacekeeping missions, a percentage unchanged from 2008. Fifty-six percent of leaders also support Mexican troops participating in peacekeeping, an impressive 20-point jump from 2008, when 59% preferred not to send Mexican soldiers. Nevertheless, as reported in Chapter 1, half of the public (51%) believe that Mexico should not accept

**Figure 3.15. International Organizations Thermometer, 2010**  
(mean values)



<sup>7</sup> However, attitudes towards the UN's role in resolving armed conflicts vary considerably between leaders and the public. According to survey data, faced with possible armed conflict in Latin America, the public overwhelmingly favors UN action to resolve it, followed by the OEA (11%), and a coalition of countries within the region (10%). In contrast, leaders prefer the OEA (36%) over the UN (31%).



UN decisions when they are deemed to be unfavorable (with no change from 2008) while two in five oppose trying Mexicans accused of torture in international courts. Leaders, however, believe the opposite: 71% agree that Mexico should abide by decisions of the UN to resolve international problems.

The UN enjoys a high level of popularity and trust among the public. A majority of Mexicans are willing to send Mexican troops on UN peacekeeping missions, although most also oppose complying with decisions they deem to be unfavorable. The UN also inspires great trust among leaders, though it is only the second-most trusted institution. For leaders, trust in the UN translates into greater support for its decisions and increased willingness to contribute Mexican troops for peacekeeping missions. Leaders' willingness to abide by the decisions of the

UN reflects their broad desire to strengthen other international institutions. When asked how much they agreed with expanding regulatory and oversight capabilities of financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank if these measures were to prevent financial crises, 90% of leaders agree, of which 66% agree "very much".

Mexicans are more divided towards multilateral action in the international sphere. The public trusts in and holds the UN in high esteem, and would be willing to aid in carrying out its decisions, despite being unwilling to accept all of them. No other international organization enjoys this level of prestige and acceptance. Leaders hold the European Union in higher esteem than the UN, if only slightly. Unlike the public, they are more willing to accept decisions of the UN and other international organizations •



A faint, light green map of the Americas, showing North and South America, is centered in the background of the page.

## CHAPTER 4

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND MIGRATION? THE CHALLENGE  
OF POPULATIONS IN MOVEMENT





## HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND MIGRATION? THE CHALLENGE OF POPULATIONS IN MOVEMENT

### *The Paradox of Migration*

The subject of immigration, ever present in Mexicans' daily lives, reached a boiling point in 2010. If the growing wave of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States dominated national discourse, the massacre of Central American migrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, forced Mexicans to look inward and reassess immigration to Mexico. With these events in mind, the 2010 edition of *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* considerably expanded its coverage of immigration.

Migration, whether to or from Mexico, raises several paradoxes. First, while Mexicans have long accepted migration northward, increasing difficulties for immigrants in the United States and hardship for the families of those who leave provoke strong and conflicting sentiments. Second, while Mexicans state their openness to immigration from other countries in the region, in practice, immigrants from Latin America are viewed less favorably. Third, Mexicans are willing to grant immigrants in Mexico the same rights they demand for Mexican emigrants abroad, although with certain restrictions. Fourth, Mexicans still hope for the legalization of "undocumented" immigrants in the United States, but favor the deportation of "illegal" immigrants in Mexico. Fifth, while

Mexicans fear a tightening of immigration policy in the developed world, they oppose the free transit of peoples in Latin America. Finally, Mexicans' most longstanding demands of their government are precisely those least likely to be fulfilled.

This chapter will examine the conditions and policies that shape public opinion towards immigration in Mexico. To begin with, contact with the United States—whether by means of family members living there, remittances, and Mexicans' desire to immigrate—is still an overwhelming factor of daily life for many Mexicans, despite a reduction in migratory flows to the north. More than half (52%) of the population surveyed report having a family member in the United States, of which 12% receive remittances. On the whole, Mexicans believe their country benefits more from emigration than is harmed. However, public opinion towards the potential benefits and consequences of emigration remains divided.

In general, Mexicans evaluate immigration from other countries positively, with a majority considering that foreigners contribute positively to Mexico's economy and society. Nevertheless, attitudes towards immigrants vary significantly depending on migrants' socioeconomic profile, country of origin, and legal status. Opposition to illegal immigration has grown increasingly firm, with the majority of Mexicans



favoring increased border control and deportations. Additionally, Mexicans expect their government to advocate more directly on behalf of Mexican emigrants abroad and to take firmer action against undocumented immigrants in Mexico.

Leaders largely share the public's vision regarding migration, but with certain exceptions. While leaders' desire to emigrate has grown, the range of destinations and reasons for leaving the country are much more varied than that of the public. Elites are also less preoccupied with emigration to the U.S. than the public in general. Before negotiating a comprehensive solution to the status of undocumented immigrants in the United States, leaders would prefer their government to focus on generating jobs at home.

In short, both emigration and immigration present significant challenges for the country. How should Mexico respond to the dissolution of families and communities as a result of emigration to the north? How do Mexicans adapt to new values, customs, and encounters? After reviewing recent setbacks, the following sections will examine Mexicans' attitudes towards immigrants in Mexico, the rights Mexicans should (or should not) be granted as emigrants in other countries, and the role of government and the international community before the international migration crisis.

### ***Migration in 2010: Mexico as the "New North"?***

The "Old North", or United States, continues to dominate Mexicans' perspectives towards immigration. At least 11.4 million Mexican citizens permanently reside in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>, of which 6.7 million do so illegally.<sup>2</sup> The number of Mexicans residing in the United States continues to grow, although the

economic crisis of 2008-2009 and a climate of rising anti-immigrant sentiment have slowed the rate of growth by contributing to a decline in emigration flows. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, net annual migration (new emigrants minus those who have returned to Mexico) registered a decline of 63% from 2006 to 2008, as net annual emigration declined from 547,000 Mexican nationals to 203,000.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, total remittances fell from 26 billion dollars in 2007, a historic high, to 21.2 billion in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

The year of 2010 was marked by substantial legislative setbacks for immigrants' rights in the United States. Despite the campaign promises of U.S. president Barack Obama, vacillation in the ranks of the Democratic Party and an increase in anti-immigration sentiment struck a definitive blow to hopes of comprehensive reform. A bill to grant residency to undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as minors –the much-touted "Dream Act" (*Iniciativa de sueños*)– was voted down in the Senate, in spite of having passed the House of Representatives. Further complicating this situation was the introduction of various state measures to curb illegal immigration, the most notorious being the Law SB 1070 of Arizona, which since April of 2010 granted local police the power to detain anyone suspected of residing "illegally" in the state.

While the fate of those north of the border continues to dominate national discourse, immigration to Mexico has become an ever more prominent concern. As both a destination for immigrants and springboard to the United States, Mexico might be thought of as a kind of "New North", where the hardships faced by Mexican emigrants are reflected on those who arrive from the Caribbean, Central, and Latin America. Violence towards migrants and violations of human

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, Table B05007 "Place of Birth by Year of Entry by Citizenship Status of the Foreign Born Population", <http://factfinder.census.gov> [January 18, 2011].

<sup>2</sup> Department of Homeland Security, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January, 2009", [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois\\_ill\\_pe\\_2009.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2009.pdf) [January 18, 2011]

<sup>3</sup> Pew Hispanic Center, "Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?", July 22, 2009, p. 1, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/112.pdf> [January 20, 2011].

<sup>4</sup> Banco de México, "Quarterly Worker's Remittances Statistics", <http://www.banxico.org.mx>.



rights have increased substantially in recent years, especially affecting Mexicans and transmigrants en route to the United States. However, the massacre in August 2010 of 72 migrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas (the majority of which were Central American) brought to national attention the severity of violence towards migrants in Mexico. What many had long been hesitant to acknowledge – the gross violations of human rights at the hands of drug traffickers, organized crime, and in some cases, Mexican officials – drew national attention and publicity with the murders in Tamaulipas. According to the National Commission for Human Rights, almost ten thousand migrants, primarily from Central America, had been kidnapped between April and September of 2010, while the “kidnapping en masse” of up to 150 individuals at a time marked a new turn in the boldness of criminal organizations. While anti-immigrant sentiment in Mexico has risen, negative attitudes towards immigrants have so far failed to ignite a national campaign of the scale of that sweeping the United States.

### ***Those Who Leave: Heroes or Victims?***

Mexicans’ contact with the world—whether through family members living abroad, remittances, travel to other countries, and the widespread desire to migrate north—is still vibrant, despite a reduction in emigration flows across the northern border. In no small measure, migration to the United States dominates the national conversation, being the country where 95% of Mexican emigrants have settled.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the decline in net emigration, a high (if decreasing) percentage of Mexicans continue to report relatives living abroad. Data from Mexico, the Americas, and the World corroborate the decline in net emigration observed by outside sources, as the percentage of Mexicans reporting relatives living outside of Mexico

fell from 61% in 2004 (the first year for which survey data is available) to 52% in 2010, a decrease of 9 percentage points, as reported in Figure 4.1. The fact that the percentage of Mexicans in this survey that report relatives living abroad does not correspond to data reported by the Pew Hispanic Center (a decline in net annual migration of 63%) is most probably explained by the increasing number of Mexicans in the U.S. who decide to stay. The number of migrants returning to Mexico has remained relatively constant (from 479,000 in 2006 to 433,000 in 2008), but the number of those leaving Mexico has decreased significantly (from one million in 2006 to 636,000 in 2008).<sup>6</sup> Those that have succeeded in crossing to the United States are ever less likely to return, as increased surveillance and police enforcement has made crossing the border even more costly. In sum, while the percentage of Mexican families reporting at least one relative living abroad has decreased, more than half have a relative living abroad.

The percentage of Mexicans with a family member living abroad who *used to live in the same house* as the individual surveyed also fell between 2008 and 2010 as shown in Figure 4.1. Two years ago, 29% of Mexicans reported a close family member living in another country. In 2010, this percentage shrank to 22%, a decline of 7 percent. In sum, fewer homes are sending family members to the United States.

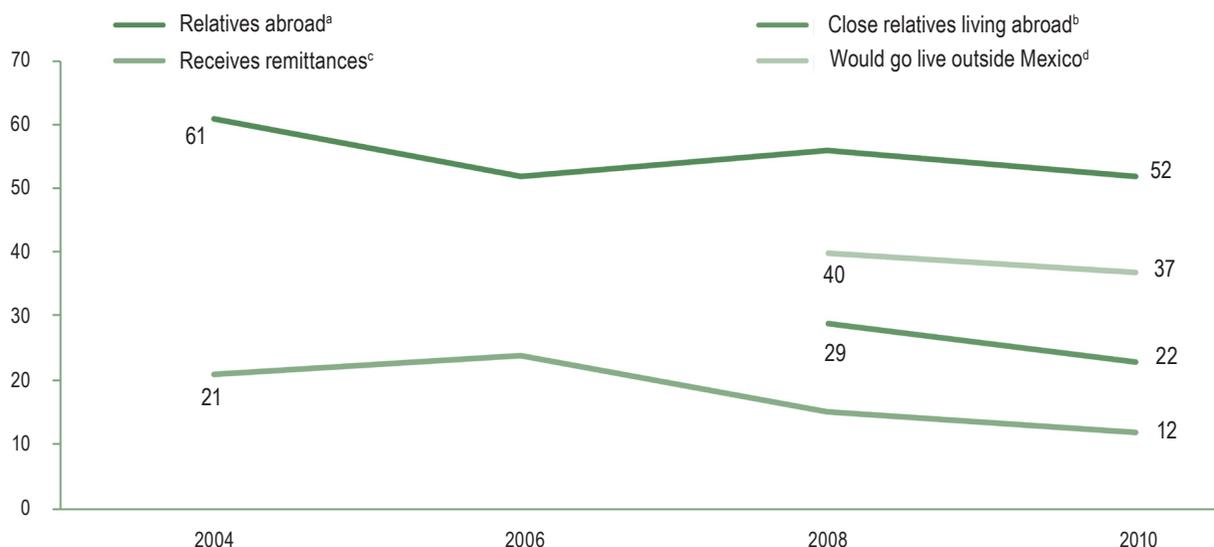
At the same time, notwithstanding a significant decrease in the total value of remittances, these are still the country’s second source of foreign currency after petroleum exports. However, the flow of remittances is concentrated in relatively few homes: 12% of Mexicans report that either they or someone in their family receive remittances from relatives abroad. As shown in Figure 4.1, the percentage of Mexicans receiving remittances has closely followed the increase from 2004 and decrease since 2007 of the total amount sent from the U.S. (source of 96% of remittances) to Mexico. In 2004, 21% of those

<sup>5</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Immigration Database”, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoec/18/23/34192376.xls>.

<sup>6</sup> Pew Hispanic Center, *op. cit.*



**Figure 4.1. Contact with the Outside through Migration**  
(% of general public who answered “Yes”)



<sup>a</sup> Do you have relatives living outside Mexico?

<sup>b</sup> Do you have relatives that used to live in this household and now live outside Mexico?

<sup>c</sup> You or family receive money from relatives working abroad?

<sup>d</sup> If you could, would you live outside Mexico?

surveyed reported having received remittances, a figure rising to 24% in 2006 to later fall to 15% in 2008 and 12% in 2010. While the number of homes receiving remittances in 2010 has fallen, the importance of these has not, as 30% of those receiving remittances report that they represent half or more of total household income.

Despite the tightening of immigration policy in the U.S. and the economic crisis of 2008-2009, emigration continues to be an attractive option for many Mexicans. Thirty seven percent of those interviewed report that if given the opportunity, they would leave Mexico to live abroad, a proportion slightly lower than in 2008 (40%) (See Figure 4.1). The United States is the primary destination of those willing to

emigrate (the destination of 62% of those willing to leave Mexico) followed by Canada (13%) and Spain (7%), in second and third place, respectively. Only 3% (for each of the following countries) would move to France, Germany, “any European Country”, or other, if given the opportunity.

Mexicans’ willingness to emigrate is strongly conditioned on the variables of gender and trust toward the United States. Of all men surveyed, 42% are willing to emigrate, while only 32% of women report the same.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, of those who report that “distrust” “best describes your feelings toward the United States”, only 33% would be disposed to emigrate to another country, compared with the 42% of those who reported “trust” towards the United States.

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of 2008 data confirms the gap between gender with respect to immigration. See Karen Marin, “Visiones de género sobre la migración internacional: ¿los hombres se quieren ir y las mujeres se quieren quedar?”, *Boletín Analítico Las Américas y el Mundo*, num. 7, December 7, 2010, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, in <http://mexicoymundo.cide.edu>.



The percentage of leaders who would live in another country (35%) is similar to that of the population in general. Nevertheless, this percentage varies substantially by profession. Among leaders, government officials are most willing to live abroad (56%, 21 points above leaders' average), followed by those who hold elective office (politicians 18%). The case of social, civic, and non-profit leaders is less clear: 29% would prefer to live abroad if given the opportunity. However, this percentage should be interpreted with caution, due to the small number of social, civic, and non-profit leaders in the total sampled for this question. No substantial variations from leaders' average were registered in other sectors. Contrary to what might be expected, party affiliation plays no role in leaders' desire to migrate, even though those that identify with the PAN are more open to international influences than the more nationalist PRD sympathizers, as observed in the first chapter.

If it is certain that similar percentages of leaders and public prefer to migrate, both the countries to which they would go and reasons for leaving are different for each group. The first three countries preferred by the public – the United States, Canada, and Spain, are also chosen by leaders, however, the percentage of leaders choosing the United States (20%) is much lower than the general public. At the same time, the percentage of those choosing Canada and Spain (18% and 11%, respectively) is higher than that of the public. The reasons for migration differ greatly for leaders and the public. In addition to work, the motives most cited by leaders are the desire to experience other cultures, the potential for a higher quality of life, the options for study, and the deteriorating security in Mexico. The general public, in contrast, almost exclusively in search of work.

The adverse consequences of migration also weigh importantly on the opinion of Mexicans and Mexican families. The breaking up of families, usually by the departure of a male head of family, implies a series of readjustments and transformations that may negatively affect family life and community leadership. Migration may also deprive communities of their

most responsible and hardworking members who would otherwise fill leadership roles.

On balance, it is important to clarify Mexicans' perceptions towards the possible benefits and disadvantages of emigration. Do Mexicans consider emigration largely beneficial or harmful? For whom? As shown in Figure 4.2, the majority (57%) of Mexicans report that the emigration of Mexicans to other countries is beneficial for the countries that receive them, in contrast to 29% who disagree and 10% who responded "neither good nor bad". On the other hand, when asked to evaluate the potential benefits for Mexico and Mexicans, opinion is more divided: 45% believe that emigration benefits the families of emigrants (41% negative and 13% neither good nor bad), 47% believe that emigration is beneficial for their community, city, or place of origin (38% negative, 13% neither good nor bad), and 44% reported that emigration of Mexican nationals to other countries benefits Mexico (44% negative, 10% neither good nor bad).

Emigration is also fiercely debated within households, which are just as divided as the population in general. There is a clear inclination towards viewing migration favorably among men: 49% believe that migration to other countries is beneficial for Mexican families (compared to 41% of women), 52% believe that it benefits their communities (women, 42%), and 51% believe emigration benefits Mexico (women, 37%). Attitudes towards emigration also differ across regions, with opinion more favorable in the Center of the country. Forty eight percent of those in the Center of the country believe that emigration has benefited families (compared with 44% in the North and 34% in the South), 50% report that it has benefited their communities (North, 42%, South 38%), and 47% report that it is beneficial for Mexico (North, 40%, South, 36%).

In general, leaders are more pessimistic than the public. If leaders do indeed agree that emigrants benefit the countries that receive them (76%), opinion toward the consequences of migration for families, communities, and the country is more negative. Only



35% of leaders believe that migration is good for the families of those who migrate, while 41% consider it to be negative. Leaders' opinion with respect to the effects on migrants' communities (31% "good", 52% "bad"), and for Mexico as a whole (29% "good", 57% "bad"), is even more negative.

Attitudes towards migration also vary widely across profession. Business executives (46% "good", 36% "bad") and academics and journalists (44% "good", 27% "bad") are slightly less inclined to believe that migration harms Mexican families. Politicians and civil society, on the other hand, view migration as more harmful than beneficial for Mexican families (26% good and 55% bad for both groups). The more favorable position of business executives, journalists, members of the media, and academics is particularly relevant, as these sectors tend to have greater influence over public opinion, especially given the general climate of disillusionment towards politicians.

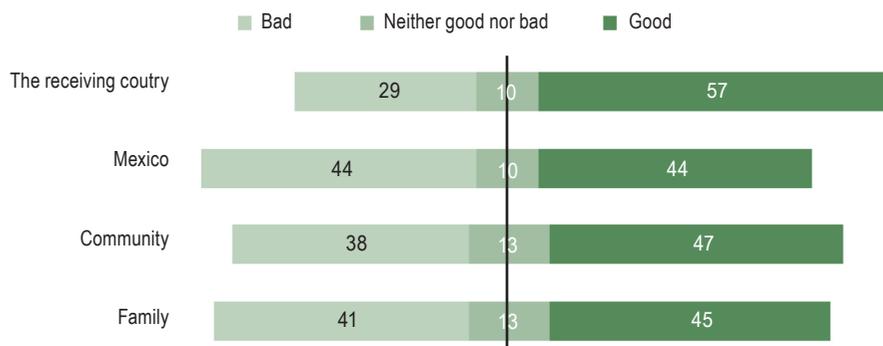
### *Those that Arrive: Integration or Segregation?*

Although public discourse has largely centered on emigration to the United States, the topic of immi-

gration to Mexico has become ever more visible in the last few years. What do Mexicans think of foreigners who come to live in Mexico? How do immigrants adapt and what contributions might they make to Mexican society? While Mexicans display a certain degree of openness towards foreigners, not all are welcomed with the same enthusiasm. Variables such as socioeconomic situation, country of origin, and legal status play a large part in determining attitudes towards immigration. Leaders, who tend to be more open to immigration, are also more hesitant to accept those with lower levels of education and of lower-paying professions.

Mexicans in general have little contact with foreigners, despite strong feelings towards immigration. Indeed, only 18% report that they have "contact with foreigners living in Mexico". Of these, 70% characterize their relation as "friendship", followed by work (32%), family ties (20%), neighbors (13%), and through school or university (12%).<sup>8</sup> Interaction with foreigners is largely limited to young males with higher education and a relatively comfortable level of income. Twenty two percent of men report contact with immigrants, in comparison with only 15% of women. At the same time, 22% of those 30 years or

**Figure 4.2. Emigration Good or Bad**  
Do you think that the migration of Mexicans to other countries is good or bad for...?  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

<sup>8</sup> The sum of the percentages for type of relation is greater than 100% because contact might extend to two or more settings.



less have had contact with immigrants while only 14% of those 50 years and above report the same. Forty percent of those with a high school degree or higher have firsthand contact with foreigners, in contrast to 8% of those who have completed only basic education. Thirty three percent of Mexicans with greater income (those who manage and can save) have had contact with immigrants in contrast with 13% of those reporting “great difficulties”.

On a whole, Mexicans have a positive opinion of immigration. Combining the responses of “very good” and “good”, 63% have a favorable opinion of “foreigners who come to live in Mexico” while 22% respond “neither good nor bad” and 12% view immigration as unfavorable (combining the categories of “bad” or “very bad”). The population in general is not particularly concerned by the number of foreigners residing in Mexico, with the majority (53%) reporting that the number of foreigners is “about right”, 29% reporting that there are “too few”, while 32% report that there are “too many” and 14% respond that they “do not know”. Leaders are even more open to immigration, as 33% report that the number of immigrants is just right and 46% respond that there are not enough.

Acceptance of foreigners varies greatly with gender, age, education, income, and the type of relation with persons of another country. Once again, younger men with greater income and level of education are more open to the presence of foreigners, while women, older Mexicans, those with less education and lower income are much more likely to be opposed. Thirty five percent of women (in contrast to 29% of men), 36% of those 50 years of age and up (against 29% of Mexicans thirty years and under), 35% of those who have only completed basic education (against 25% who have completed high school or higher) and 38% of those reporting great difficulties with respect to income (against 26% whose income is sufficient and allows them to save) respond that there are “too many” foreigners in Mexico. On the other hand, it would seem that those who have direct contact with foreigners view them more favorably, as 65% of those who have come into contact with fo-

reigners are satisfied with the number of immigrants in Mexico and only 51% of those who have no direct relation to foreigners report the same.

For the majority of Mexicans, immigration has important advantages, particularly in economic terms, while a majority of Mexicans disagree that immigration has a negative impact on society and Mexican culture. As shown in Figure 4.3, a majority (77%, the sum of those who “very” or “somewhat” in agreement) believes immigrants “bring innovative ideas”, while 76% agree that immigrants “contribute to the national economy”.

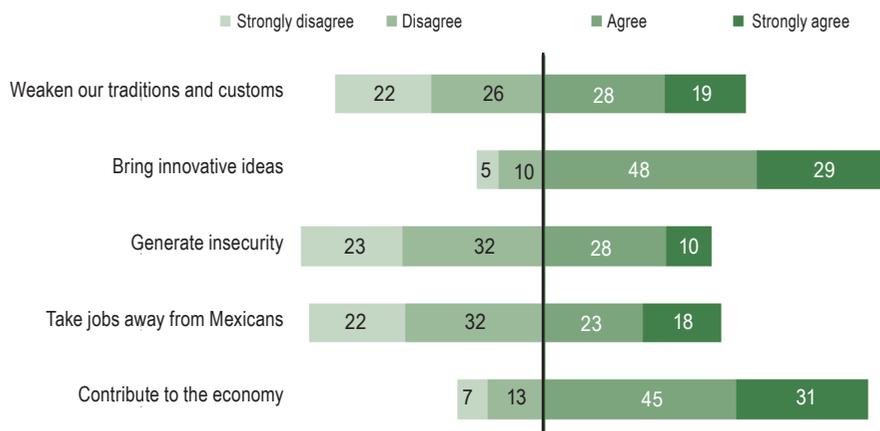
On the other hand, few Mexicans view immigration as a disadvantage, and few agree with the traditional criticisms or complaints towards immigrants. According to Figure 4.3, 55% of those surveyed reject the assertion that foreigners jeopardize national security, while 54% disagree that immigrants “take jobs away” from Mexicans. Opinion is more divided with respect to the effects of immigration on Mexican culture: 48% disagree that foreigners “weaken Mexican traditions and customs”, while 47% agree. This contrasts with the results reported in Chapter 1, indicating that a majority of Mexicans are open to the contributions of cultures from other countries. As discussed in Chapter 1, half (50%) of Mexicans agree that the diffusion of other customs and cultures in Mexico is “positive” (compared to 31% who believe that the spread of other cultures in Mexico is “bad”), pointing toward an overall trend of cultural cosmopolitanism. Seen from the perspective of immigration, the preoccupation with maintaining cultural traditions intact is greater when members of other cultures are present physically. Might Mexicans be more concerned with the protection of Mexican culture when members of other cultures are present in flesh and bone?

In any case, attitudes towards immigrants as measured in this section are more positive among younger men with greater education and income. Attitudes towards immigrants also differ across regions and party lines. Consistent with data reported above, northerners are more open to influence from abroad than citizens of other regions. Northerners agree



**Figure 4.3. Attitude Towards Foreigners**

*How much would you agree or disagree with the following statement...?*  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

in higher percentages that foreigners contribute to the Mexican economy (84%), compared with 75% in the Center of the country and 69% in the South. Northerners are also less likely to feel their jobs threatened by the arrival of immigrants (35% believe immigrants take jobs away from Mexicans, compared with 43% for both the Center of the country and the South), and threaten Mexican culture (39% agree in the North, 48% in the Center of the country, and 51% in the South).

Party affiliation is also influential. Seventy-seven percent of those who sympathize with the PAN and 81% of those who identify with the PRI report that the participation of foreigners is beneficial for the Mexican economy, while 65% of PRD voters report the same. The sympathies of party members are not surprising, given their perspectives towards the economy analyzed in Chapter 1 (PAN voters prefer a greater opening while PRD voters are more protectionist). Opinion towards the possible contributions of immigrants is therefore consistent with parties'

economic orientations. On the other hand, the fact that PRI voters registered the highest level of support seems to contradict the PRI's more nationalist orientation and lesser affinity for economic globalization than the PAN. However, the high degree of support among the technocratic wing of the PRI for economic liberalization might be beginning to be reflected in the preferences of the party's social base. Finally, independents, or those who don't identify with any party (38% of the general public, a figure suggesting considerable disillusionment with Mexican politics) are least likely to feel that the presence of other cultures has the potential to dilute Mexican culture, with 44% viewing the influence of other cultures unfavorably compared to 50 to 52% among adherents of the three principal parties: the PAN, PRI, and PRD. In fact, opinion that other cultural influences have a positive impact is due precisely to the number of independents among the Mexican public.<sup>9</sup> However, despite differences among social groups over the advantages and disadvantages of immigration, ma-

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, for reasons of space, this series of questions was not applied to leaders.



majorities in each group believe that immigrants have made important contributions to Mexico's economy and society.

Nevertheless, Mexican opinion is highly sensitive to the socioeconomic status and professional qualifications of potential immigrants. A large majority of Mexicans believe that immigrants should meet certain requirements before being permitted to enter the country. In order of descending importance (summing the responses of "very" and "somewhat" important), Mexicans believe that those intending to immigrate should speak fluent Spanish (86%), exercise a profession of vital interest to the country (86%), possess a high level of education (81%), come from a country culturally similar (67%), have sufficient financial resources (65%), and finally, have relatives already living in the country (65%). Leaders on the other hand prioritize occupation (92%) and level of education (90%) in their vision of the ideal immigrant, over cultural similarity (42%), family ties (50%), economic situation (56%) or language (73%).

Mexicans' generally positive perceptions of foreigners (63% view them favorably) show large variation when country of origin is taken into account. The survey asked respondents to evaluate the favorability of "groups of foreigners living in Mexico" from seven countries and the African continent. Figure 4.4 lists the order of preferences. The most favorably evaluated immigrants (opinion towards them "very good" or "good") are not Latin Americans, but rather those from the United States (56%) and Spain (55%), followed by China (51%). The most favorably evaluated immigrants from Latin America are Argentines and Cubans (45% each), while Africans are ranked slightly lower at 41% favorable. Those worst evaluated are Colombians (39%) and Guatemalans (36%).

Despite substantial differences in favorability, positive evaluations of immigrants from each country outweigh negative perceptions. Those who evaluate immigrants as "neutral" or who are unsure oscillate between 22% and 41%, making positive opinions the majority in each case. Even so, it would seem

contradictory that Mexicans want immigrants to come from nations that are culturally similar, but evaluate immigrants from these countries among the least favorable of those measured. One possible explanation might be that Latin Americans are less likely to match the socioeconomic profile and level of education that Mexicans –both leaders and public– demand.

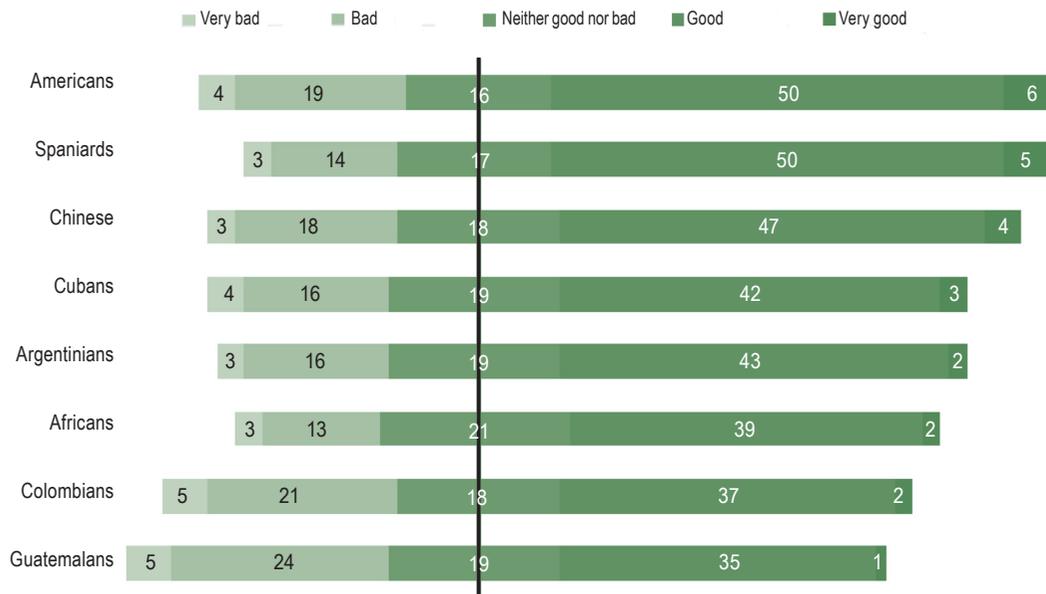
It should also be noted that the percentage of Mexicans whose general impression of Central American migrants is "very" or "somewhat" favorable rose substantially from 2006, when only 46% of Mexicans reported positive perceptions of Central Americans, to 60% in 2010 (after a slight drop to 41% in 2008). What might explain the growing acceptance of Central American immigrants while opinion towards Guatemalans and Latin Americans in general is among the least favorable of countries measured? It is difficult to know with certainty. Attitudes towards immigrants from other Central American countries not measured in the survey might outweigh less favorable opinions of Guatemalans and therefore account for the improvement in perceptions of the Central American region. On the other hand, positive perceptions of Central Americans might be higher when no country is mentioned in particular. Whatever the reason, perceptions of Central America in 2010 may be more cause for hope for Mexico's southern neighbors than two years ago.

Attitudes towards immigration diverge sharply when it comes to undocumented immigrants. While Mexicans are open to immigration on a whole, they firmly oppose illegal immigration. Among options considered to address the issue of undocumented immigration, Mexicans prioritize tightening border control and increasing deportations, even while they remain opposed to the construction of a wall on Mexico's southern border. However, there is a substantial countercurrent to these more severe measures to be found in those who support a temporal guest worker program. As shown in Figure 4.5, 75% of Mexicans are "very much" or "somewhat" in agreement with increasing border controls, 71% support the institution of a guest worker program, 66% are



**Figure 4.4. Opinion on Foreigners according to Origin**

*How good or bad is your opinion on the following groups of foreigners living in Mexico...?*  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

in favor of deporting immigrants to their country of origin, while 34% would permit the entry of immigrants without border controls and 21% support the construction of a wall. Interestingly, the two most extreme options posed in the survey –allowing the free transit of peoples and building a wall along the southern border– draw the least support. In sum, Mexicans firmly oppose illegal immigration, but would be willing to widen the possibilities for entering the country legally.

In considering the above measures, there seems to be a strong relation with those who view Central American immigrants favorably and the willingness to expand legal immigration. Of those who view immigrants from Central America favorably, 41%

would support the entry of Central Americans without obstacles (Compared to 24% of those with an unfavorable opinion) and 78% would support the creation of a guest worker program (against 63%). At the same time, those that hold a more favorable opinion towards Central Americans are less likely to support deportations (65% versus 73%).

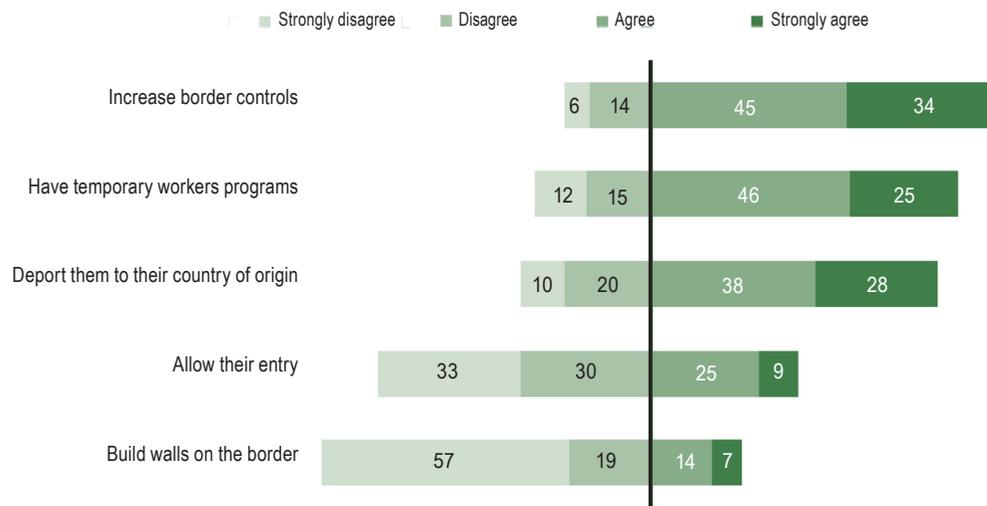
Data from *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* is consistent with a recent study from the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Conapred) reporting that 58% of Mexicans support tightening requirements for legal immigration from Central America.<sup>10</sup> It is also interesting to note that 21% of Mexicans' surveyed support the construction of a wall to limit illegal immigration on Mexico's

<sup>10</sup> Conapred, "Apuntes para la reflexión sobre la intolerancia en el México actual", <http://www.conapred.org.mx/depositobv/DocumentoInformativo-Tolerancia.pdf> [January 15, 2011].



**Gráfica 4.5. Actions against Undocumented Immigration**

Regarding undocumented immigrants coming to Mexico, how much would you agree or disagree to each of the following actions the Mexican government could take...?  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

southern border, while U.S. attempts to impose a wall on Mexico's northern border were met by almost universal outrage.

Leaders are no less opposed to illegal immigration, and coincide with the public with respect to the two highest priorities of immigration policy, although in reverse order: 85% favor a guest worker program while for 78% the highest priority is tightening border control. Leaders show greater variation across profession: government officials support a guest worker program in higher proportions (92%) than leaders of social, civic, or non-profit organizations (79%), with other sectors registering a level of support similar to leaders' average (85%). At the same time, business executives (85%) and government officials (82%) are more adamant that border controls be tightened than leaders of social, civic, or non-profit organizations (69%), with other leaders' support similar to the average (79%). Finally, business executives

(72%) and government officials (65%) are more in favor of deporting undocumented immigrants than journalists and academics (51%).

Although illegal immigration provokes considerable opposition, it is not seen as one of the principal threats facing the country. As noted in Chapter 2, only 40% of Mexicans view illegal immigration as a "grave threat", a percentage almost equal to 2008 (37%) but far below that of 2006 (50%). Of the seventeen possible threats survey respondents were asked to evaluate, illegal immigration ranked second to last, in order of descending severity, followed only by the "emergence of China as a world power". Leaders coincide in viewing illegal immigration as a less than immediate threat, also ranking it as second to last, but with less intensity (24%). This percentage, nevertheless, rose two points with respect to 2008.



### ***A Double Standard: The Rights of Emigrants and Immigrants***

Mexicans generally view immigration and emigration positively, with benefits outweighing potential harm. To this end, what rights do Mexicans demand for Mexican nationals in other countries and what rights are they willing to grant to foreigners living in Mexico? For the first time, the 2010 edition of *Mexico, the Americas, y the World* included an identical set of questions for both groups. An overwhelming majority of Mexicans claim the right to family reunification, access to public education and health care, the right of free association, and the right to work and vote in their country of residence. At the same time, large majorities would also extend these rights to immigrants in Mexico.

Even in the case of legal immigration, migrants may not be entitled to the same rights as native citizens. The rights claimed by migrants, therefore, may be divided into two categories: social: family reunification, access to public health and education, and the right to work, and political: the right to vote and the right form civil organizations to protect immigrants' rights. The percentage of Mexicans willing to grant the following social rights to immigrants in Mexico is only slightly lower than the percentage demanding the same rights for Mexicans abroad. As shown in Figure 4.6, 99% of those surveyed believe ("very" or "somewhat" in agreement) that Mexicans living abroad should "have access to public health-care", while 94% agree that immigrants in Mexico should have the same right. Ninety seven percent believe that Mexicans living abroad should "have the same right to work as the citizens of that country", while 85% agree that immigrants to Mexico should have this same right. Ninety six percent believe that Mexicans in other countries should have "access to public education", while 91% believe the same for immigrants in Mexico. Finally, 83% believe that Mexicans living in other countries should have the right to "bring their family to live with them", while 81% would let immigrants in Mexico do the same. It is important to note that the percentage willing

to grant the same rights to immigrants is high (the lowest, for family reunification, at 81%), and the difference between the two groups is relatively small in each category measured, with the largest difference, 12%, for the right to work.

Nevertheless, the Mexican public is more rigid when it comes to political rights. As seen in Figure 4.6, 93% of Mexicans believe that Mexicans living abroad should have the right to "form organizations to promote their rights", compared to 77% who support this same right for immigrants in Mexico. At the same time, 80% of Mexicans believe that they should be granted the right to vote in the country in which they reside, while only 61% agree that immigrants in Mexico should be permitted to vote.

Mexicans with a relative living in another country are even more concerned with the rights of Mexicans abroad, especially if that relative belongs to the same home. Eighty-eight percent of those who have a relative living abroad believe that immigrants should be able to bring their families with them, compared to 84% of Mexicans whose relative is not from the same home, and 81% for those that don't have any family member living outside of the country. Additionally, those with an immediate family member living abroad believe more intensely that Mexicans should be granted the right to vote in their adopted country (87%, compared to 79%, and 78% for the latter two categories).

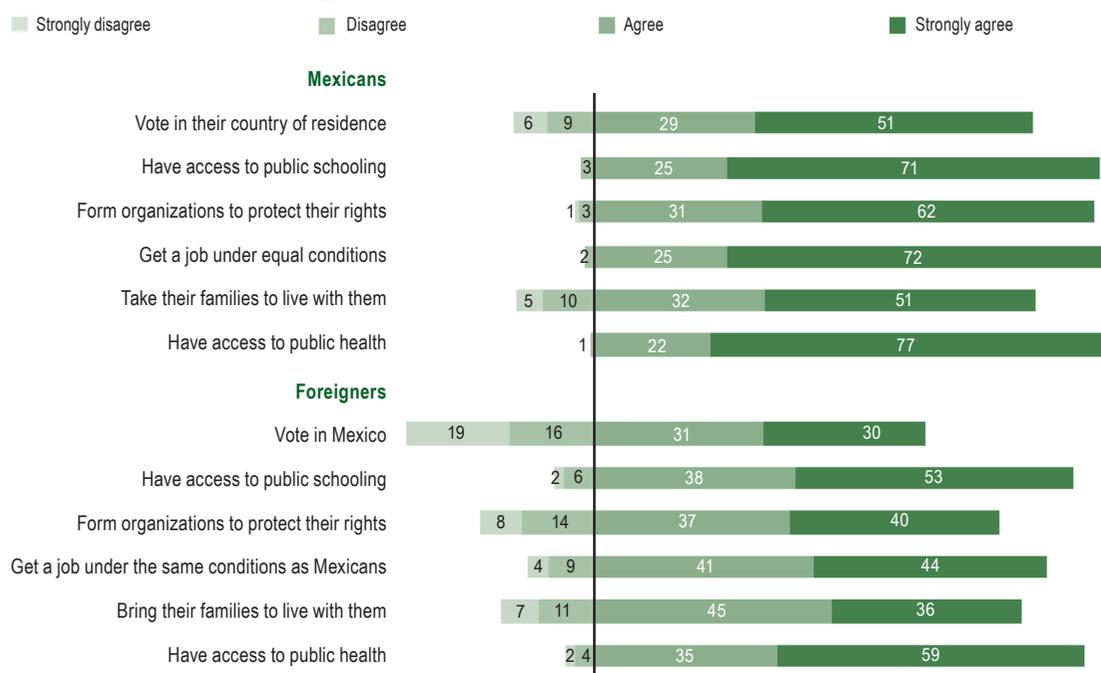
As might be expected, friendship with foreigners makes Mexicans more willing to support a broader range of immigrants' rights, including political. Eighty eight percent of those that count foreigners among their friends support the right of immigrants to bring their families to Mexico (against 81% who don't have ties of friendship), while 87% would permit foreigners to form associations to defend their rights (against 75% who don't).

In sum, the data analyzed here lends itself to two possible readings. First, considerable majorities would grant foreigners the same rights they demand for themselves in other countries, that is, support for human rights crosses both sides of the border. On the other hand, the percentage of those willing to



**Figure 4.6. Rights of Mexicans and Foreigners**

*How much would you agree or disagree to Mexicans who live abroad having the right to...?  
How much would you agree or disagree to foreigners who live in Mexico having the right to...?*  
(% General public)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

grant foreigners the same rights they demand for themselves is always lower –and sometimes by a lot– hinting at a double morality in Mexicans' vision of human rights.

In any case, there does not seem to be a hard and fast consensus in attitudes towards those that emigrate and those that arrive. Seventy five percent of those surveyed believe that Mexicans treat undocumented immigrants from Central America better than undocumented Mexicans are treated in the United States. Nevertheless, the proportion of those who believe Central Americans are treated better fell 6 percentage points with respect to 2008.

***The Role of Government: What to do with so many People?***

Before the ever-increasing challenges posed by immigration, how should governments and the international community respond? Mexicans want their government to play an active role in the welfare of Mexican migrants abroad. Of those surveyed, 73% report that “protecting the interests of Mexicans in other countries” should be “very important for the foreign policy of Mexico”. As observed in Chapter 2, of a list of 16 possible priorities of Mexican foreign policy, the “protection of Mexicans abroad” ranks as fourth,



along with “promoting the sale of Mexican products in other countries” and “attracting tourists”.<sup>11</sup> For leaders, the protection of Mexicans abroad is even more important (86%), although it also ranks fourth on the list of foreign policy priorities.

Of the four options proposed to resolve the problem of undocumented immigration in the United States, Mexicans would first prefer their government to negotiate an accord with the United States to legalize the status of undocumented immigrants (33%), followed by the Mexican government investing to create jobs in Mexicans’ community of origin (26%) and negotiating with the United States to create a guest worker program (23%). The provision of legal support and other services by Mexican consulates was ranked last (17%). Nevertheless, these demands seem little realistic given the scant possibilities of the Mexican government in influencing internal politics in the United States. Indeed, preferences seem to be inversely ordered toward those least likely to be realized.

Perhaps because of this, leaders favor, by far, the Mexican government investing to create jobs in Mexico (53%), over other actions such as the legalization of undocumented immigrants (19%) the establishment of a guest worker program with the United States (18%), and lastly, consular action to aid emigrants, such as legal services (8%). Once again, levels of support vary across sector. Perhaps predictably, the sector that least supports increasing government investment is business (business leaders, 47% in favor), given their traditional opposition to government intervention in the economy. In increasing order of preference are government officials (52%), members of the media and academics (55%), and politicians (63%). On the other hand, business leaders favor by 30% that Mexico negotiate a guest worker program with the United States, a position with only 13%-16% favorability among other sectors. Leaders’ party affiliation is a helpful predictor

of attitudes towards social spending (to create jobs in Mexico). While the position of PRD voters (72% in favor) is not surprising, the greater percentage of PAN than PRI voters in favor is (53% to 43%), giving the PAN’s traditional inclination towards the private sector and caution towards government spending.

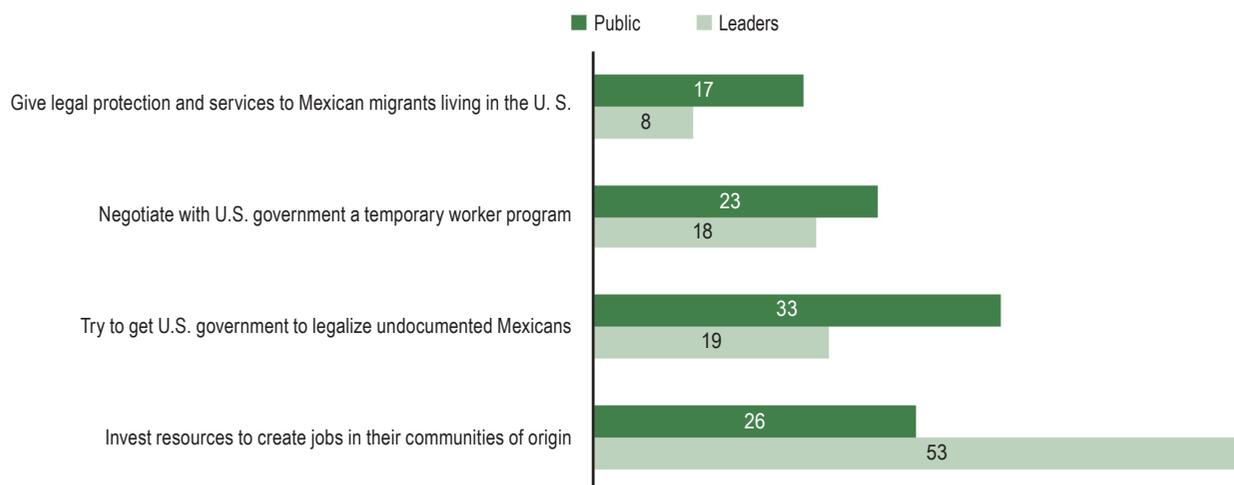
Mexicans are also in favor of the government expanding its campaign to dissuade Mexicans from crossing the border illegally. Given that “each year, more migrants lose their lives or are the victims of abuse” (as the introduction to the question informs), 96% of both leaders and public agree that the government should “inform Mexicans of the risks”, even though there has not been a rigorous analysis of how effective such campaigns have been in reducing illegal immigration. Surprisingly, 90% of the public and 77% of leaders support increased border vigilance by Mexican troops, specifically, that “the Mexican government prevent citizens from leaving the country through unauthorized crossing areas”, although this would probably conflict with article 11 of the Mexican constitution prohibiting the government from limiting the free transit of its citizens. Mexicans firmly reject the government “not doing anything” to warn of the danger of attempts to cross the border, position with which only 10% of the public and 5% of leaders are in agreement. Finally, as previously observed, Mexicans advocate greater government action to prevent illegal immigration to Mexico, from tightening border security to increasing deportations, although there is wide support for opening other channels of legal immigration such as a guest worker program.

What should be the response of other governments and the international community to the challenges posed by international migration? The response in itself is a paradox: while Mexicans, and especially elites, fear industrialized countries imposing ever greater barriers to immigration, Mexicans oppose loosening their own country’s immigration

<sup>11</sup> The difference between the defense of Mexican migrants and the three higher priorities (the combat of drug trafficking, the protection of the environment, and the promotion of Mexican culture) is of two percentage points or less suggesting that these four priorities may be viewed as equal in importance for the Mexican public.



**Figure 4.7. Priorities on Emigration**  
Regarding the issue of migration, what should the Mexican government's priority be...?  
(%)



Note: does not include values for "Don't Know" or "No Answer".

policy and allowing the free movement of peoples across the American continent. Fifty seven percent of leaders consider the possibility of "rich countries tightening restrictions to immigration" a grave threat, a proportion that declined from 66% in 2008, when it ranked ninth out of the seventeen possible threats mentioned by the survey. The public is less concerned than leaders with respect to tougher restrictions on immigration in industrialized countries: 52% regard it as a threat (14<sup>th</sup> out of 17), the same as in 2008, but significantly lower than in 2006 (66%). Meanwhile only 44% (and 56% of leaders) approve of permitting "the free movement of people in Latin America without border controls". However, as observed in Chapter 3, overwhelming percentages support the free movement of investment (78% of the public, 94% of leaders) in the region. As noted in Chapter 3, preferences towards investment do not change significantly with respect to party affiliation for the general public and party affiliation and sector for leaders (although the percentage of leaders who identify with the PRD that defend the free movement of *persons* (72%) is considerably higher than their PAN

and PRI counterparts, 51% and 50%, respectively). In sum, Mexicans express - independent of ideology and for leaders, sector as well - broad support for what might be called the "North American model" of integration: the free movement of goods, services, and capital, while maintaining barriers to the mobility of the workforce and relegating migration to a lower level on the policy agenda.

### *Learning to Be a Country of Migration*

Despite fewer Mexicans crossing the border to the United States and the reduction in remittances, emigration continues to have a significant impact in the economic and social reality of Mexico. At the same time, immigration to Mexico has become more relevant in recent years. Mexicans value the contributions of foreigners to Mexico's economy and society, and are inclined to grant immigrants' the social and political rights demanded by Mexican emigrants abroad.



Nevertheless, attitudes towards immigrants are bound by longstanding contradictions in public opinion. Mexicans prefer immigrants from countries with similar cultures, but view immigrants from Latin America less favorably than those from the United States and Europe. The demand for rights is frequently greater than Mexicans' disposition to grant them. Mexicans continue to call for the legalization of undocumented immigrants in the United States, but would nonetheless deport illegal immigrants residing in Mexico. Mexicans fear greater restrictions towards immigration in industrialized countries, but reject the possibility of the free movement of people in Latin American countries.

It would be a mistake to exaggerate the importance of these contradictions and allow them to overshadow Mexicans' more positive attitudes towards immigrants reported throughout the survey. Indeed, given Mexico's political, economic, and social heterogeneity, contradictions in public opinion are to be expected. The words of Walt Whitman might well be applied to Mexico as a country: "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself. I am large, I contain Multitudes."<sup>12</sup> After all, it is human nature to value what is ours above what is others' but also to be attracted by, and generous toward, those who come from elsewhere •

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<sup>12</sup> Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*.



## CONCLUSIONS

### NOTES FOR RETHINKING AND REDESIGNING MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY

In the field of foreign policy, if states were rational, they would conduct their external behavior with a definite purpose, analyze both the national and international climate, and within their capacities and restrictions both internal and external, would choose the best strategy to maximize their national interest. This “rationality” in the behavior of states doesn’t suppose that they always achieve their goals, but it does assume they will do everything in their power to do so, taking into consideration their relative power and the limitations they face.

The key question, then, is how states define their national interest and on what basis do governments formulate their priorities, strategies, and policies in the international arena. In democratic regimes, foreign policy is supposed to represent, coordinate, and defend national interests, themselves determined by a representative process of aggregation of the diversity and plurality of interests in a society. If a strict representation of the public’s preferences existed, national interests would reflect the vision of the majority or, where clear majorities are absent, the greatest points of agreement possible. Gaining a clearer and more precise idea of how Mexicans

perceive the world would make it possible to design a foreign policy that better represents their most urgent preferences and needs.

But first, what exactly are Mexicans’ preferences in the international arena and how precise and stable are they? Preferences and interests—whether individual, of a particular interest group, or of a state—may be defined in at least three different manners: from conventional wisdom, the guidelines and assumptions of theory, or observing them in reality.<sup>1</sup> Within this third possibility, one of the most common ways in which individuals reveal their preferences on a particular subject is through surveys of public opinion. These present potential subjects with a range of options over a specific issue, requesting that they indicate their inclinations to the respect. Depending on how the question is formulated, it is also possible, in some cases, to measure the *intensity* of preferences—that is, not just a black-and-white judgment of “approve” or “disapprove”, for example, but *how much* a respondent approves or disapproves.

The results of the survey *Mexico, the Americas, and the World* give us rigorous, reliable, public, and representative data that provide insight into the per-

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey A. Frieden, “Actors and Preferences in International Relations”, in David A. Lake and Robert Powell, eds., *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 53-66.



ceptions, preferences, and aspirations of Mexicans regarding their interaction with the world. Understanding how Mexicans perceive the world is essential for meaningful reflection on Mexico's foreign policy and the role of Mexico on the international stage.

The results of the 2010 study allow us to draw several conclusions. First, in the year of the Bicentennial, Mexicans identify more with their nationality, and at the same time are more open to cultural, economic, social, and political interaction with the world. Regional differences in identify have grown smaller, as have differences across regions in openness to influence from abroad. These changes have made it possible to speak of a Mexican identity that is less cautious and more pragmatic than that depicted by Octavio Paz in *El Laberinto de la Soledad*. Although pessimism towards the state of the world is growing and direct contact—whether through relatives living abroad or travel outside of Mexico—has fallen, Mexicans strongly favor international engagement.

What most divides the population is not a mental border between Mexico and the world outside but rather their degree of interest in public affairs. Those concerned with the country's domestic problems also follow developments in other latitudes. The overall trend, nevertheless, is of a lack of knowledge and interest in the world beyond the United States and Latin America. The "continental provincialism" of Mexicans makes it difficult to recognize the growing importance of other regions—particularly the emergence of Asia as the principle engine of the global economy—and the necessity to assume multilateral responsibilities in global governance. Resistance to greater global engagement does not rest on questions of identity or culture, but rather on cognitive and practical considerations. Specifically, resistance to engagement appears to owe to a limited understanding of its possible costs and benefits.

The second conclusion is that Mexicans view the world from the perspective of their immediate reality and concrete necessities. With respect to the gravity of international threats and the priorities of Mexican foreign policy, responses show a great degree of coherence with the previous editions of

the survey (2004, 2006, and 2008). As with their evaluations of threats, Mexicans' (public and leaders alike) priorities for foreign policy reflect their personal reality and issues that may impact their standard of living. In general, Mexicans believe that foreign policy should increase their economic well being while promoting Mexico's international image and opening doors abroad.

In Mexico there is broad consensus for a foreign policy centered on the wellbeing and security of the population as well as the country's prestige. Mexicans' most immediate foreign policy priorities reflect this consensus: fighting drug trafficking and organized crime, protecting the environment, promoting Mexican culture, promoting Mexican products and protecting Mexican interests abroad, attracting tourists, and promoting foreign investment. Each of these priorities is directed at improving the standard of living and prestige of Mexicans. Together, they point toward a foreign policy that protects the wellbeing of the population in economic terms and in terms of public and individual security as well.

Throughout its history, Mexico has preferred to exercise "soft" power (cultural, commercial, and diplomatic), which generates influence through persuasion rather than coercion or force ("hard" power). Mexicans approve the use of soft power to achieve foreign policy objectives, preferring—both among public and leaders—to cultivate cultural, commercial, and diplomatic ties rather than using military force. There is broad support for strengthening instruments of soft power, and cultural diplomacy in particular: survey respondents mentioned culture as the second greatest source of national pride. However, escalating violence and insecurity presents a significant dilemma: the exercise of soft power depends in great measure on a country's image, reputation, and international credibility, all of which could be jeopardized by Mexico's ongoing conflict with criminal organizations.

In conducting foreign policy, all states face limited resources. Try as they might, they are unable to dedicate the same attention to all countries or regions, or participate to the same degree in all summits and



international forums. Therefore, it is necessary to prioritize relations with certain countries and actors over others. Making these decisions is not simple, but the results of *Mexico, the Americas, and the World 2010* provide a measure of insight into the attitudes and preferences of Mexicans towards individual countries, regions, and international organizations.

Neither the public nor leaders share the vision of a Mexico that is both “front door” and “bridge” between the United States and Latin America, contrary to traditional conceptions of Mexico’s geographic and political destiny. Mexicans don’t consider it necessary to choose between either region nor opt to collaborate with one over the other. Rather, according to survey results, Mexicans believe it is both favorable and possible to increase exchange and cooperation with neighbors to the north and south. Mexico can –and should– act as a moderator and facilitator of relations within the Americas, synchronizing the agendas of both regions. Mexicans are more willing to cooperate with the United States than in past years, but on the condition that they retain their identity and closeness with Latin America.

This brings us to the third general conclusion: the vision of Mexico remains that of a country strongly anchored in the Americas. Two survey findings bolster this conclusion. The preceding conclusion can be further strengthened by the following two findings. First, even in the year of the Bicentennial of Mexican Independence, attitudes towards the United States are more positive than in previous years. A majority of Mexicans surveyed believe that being a neighbor of the United States represents an advantage and that relations with the U.S. are better today than ten years back and will continue to improve in the decade to come. Nevertheless, cooperation with the U.S. does have certain limits and conditions: trade with the U.S. and aid for combating drug trafficking continue to be viewed positively; the public is willing to allow U.S. Drug Enforcement agents to operate in Mexico, but leaders are not. The second finding is that appreciation and affinity for Latin America has stayed constant and that Mexicans highly favor integration with Latin America in terms of com-

merce and infrastructure. Nevertheless, Mexicans no longer aspire to occupy a position of leadership in the region, and would rather coordinate their actions with other countries and take part in joint initiatives. This position is consistent with Mexicans’ unwillingness to accept the costs and commitments of leadership and take on greater responsibilities with respect to the promotion of development and regional stability.

Without a doubt, Mexicans’ strategic interests and identity are firmly grounded in the American continent, making their attitudes and preferences towards other regions more a product of admiration or affinity rather than practical interests or concrete priorities. When looking out at the world, Mexicans rarely turn to the Atlantic or Pacific. But when they do, they look towards the European continent with idealism and optimism, and with slightly less appreciation, and even ambivalence, towards Asia. However, in neither case does there exist a sense of priority or desire to increase ties. Finally, Mexicans are willing to participate in multilateral efforts, but with significant reservations: while the United Nations and European Union are viewed with prestige, neither financial nor economic organizations (IMF, WTO, G20) nor regional pacts nor social organizations (OAS, MERCOSUR, ALBA/Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, international non-profits) were evaluated particularly favorably. Mexico should better use its resources to cooperate with and integrate the countries of the Americas, since Europe, Asia, and some multilateral institutions are viewed favorably but seen as geographically and politically remote. In sum, Mexicans prefer to shape international action from the American continent outward.

Finally, what international issues should be prioritized? The key is to choose global issues with the greatest relevance for the Mexican population, and in which Mexico could maximize the use of its soft power both regionally and multilaterally. One of the issues that perhaps best fits these criteria is immigration, especially since there is a wide domestic consensus toward the policies to be pursued. What can –and should– the Mexican government do in



terms of immigration? Mexico should base its action on the international stage as well as its internal policies on two basic principles. First, Mexicans should not ask for what the country is not prepared to grant. Second, policy makers must align the desirable with the realistic, that is, with the limits imposed by the international political climate and Mexican public opinion.

If Mexico is to demand the legalization of undocumented immigrants in the United States and, in general, a greater openness towards immigration in the industrialized countries, it should set the example at home with a progressive immigration policy. One of Mexicans' greatest hopes, that their government negotiate the normalization of the migratory status of undocumented Mexican nationals in the United States, seems implausible, at least at the current moment. The balance of power between Mexico and the United States (tilted even further by divided government, institutional obstacles to immigration reform, and the hostile climate towards immigrants in the U.S.) gives Mexico even less room to maneuver and attempt to influence U.S. politics. Certainly, Mexico should explore various options to link the issue of immigration with the two most important aspects of the relation from the perspective of the U.S.: security and trade. Faced with the stubbornness of *realpolitik*, the only other option is exerting moral pressure. Fortunately, this road has not yet been exhausted: the considerable convergence between the public and leaders in terms of immigration policy may provide solid backing for leaders willing to turn up diplomatic pressure.

Consequently, the following measures enjoy broad support among both segments of the population. To reduce the flow of immigrants to the U.S., the Mexican government should extend and amplify campaigns to warn citizens of the dangers of crossing the border illegally. There is also strong support for investing public resources to create jobs in the rural areas and cities that have been the biggest source of migration (the most popular measure among elites and the second most popular for the public). Surely such an increase and reorientation of public spending

would have to clear certain opposition among the business sector, among which, given traditional aversion to government intervention in the economy, support is weaker than in any other sector. While increasing public investment would have a redistributive effect, it could be complemented with more pro-market measures such as fiscal incentives, expanding credit programs, coupling private contributions with public investment, and a greater exploitation of remittances' productive potential, among others.

Regarding immigration to Mexico, Mexicans favor the creation of a guest worker program for Central and South American immigrants. While Mexicans favor stricter measures against undocumented immigration, they also support expanding opportunities to enter Mexico legally. The public and leaders also agree that the range of social and political rights granted to immigrants in Mexico should be expanded. Specifically, rules governing family reunification should be made more flexible (a measure that, in addition, reflects the emphasis on family values rightfully proclaimed by the majority of the population). Mexicans are also willing to grant immigrants greater political rights, such as freedom of expression and association. Theoretically, Article 33 of the constitution guarantees these rights, but this guarantee conflicts with the prohibition in the same article, ambiguous and imprecise, on meddling in national politics, creating a legal void that inhibits the exercise of political rights.

Of course, no Mexican government could afford to appear less than completely committed to the protection of the rights of Mexican immigrants in the United States, nor abandon the hope that the United States will normalize the migratory status of the almost seven million undocumented immigrants residing there. Mexico's exhortations might be more effective if they were accompanied by greater action by the Mexican government on its side of the border. This approach could be further amplified by taking joint action with other countries in Latin America that send large numbers of immigrants to the United States. Taking measures to reduce the flow of immigrants to the United States would demonstrate



good will on the part of the Mexican government to address a problem that worries not only Mexico's neighbor to the north but Mexico's Central American neighbors as well. In turn, reforming Mexico's own immigration policy would show that Mexico "practices what it preaches", giving greater moral backing to calls for the U.S. and other industrialized countries to liberalize their immigration policy. Moral pressure is sure to take time in bearing fruits, but its power shouldn't be underestimated as merely symbolic or

without impact in the real world. Over time, most governments are to some degree sensitive to international sentiment. Independent of the eventual reaction of the United States and other countries, returning to a progressive immigration policy reminiscent of that which gave shelter to political refugees from across the continent would present Mexico with the opportunity to retake international leadership on an issue more and more relevant to the relations between peoples and countries •





## NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

### NOTES ON METHODOLOGY FOR THE PUBLIC

Methodological Summary	
Target Population	Mexicans 18 years of age or older, living within the national territory at the time of the survey
Sample Size	2,400 persons
Data Collection Method	Face-to-face interviews conducted in the respondent's private home
Sampling Error	+/- 2.04% for the entire sample
Survey Date	September 27 <sup>th</sup> to October 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2010

**Universe:** A survey applied at the national level to a probabilistically representative sample that permits the generation of estimations applicable to the totality of the population of interest, composed of Mexicans 18 years of age and older, residing within the national territory at the time of the survey field-work.

**Sampling Frame:** The Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) electoral sections of the country were utilized as the reference sample frame. This included all of its forms for the entire country. Updated data from the last federal election (2009) were incorporated.

**Sampling Method:** A multistage sampling method was utilized. In each of its three stages a randomized selection process was done for each of the sampling units. The Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) composing the first stage of the sample were regions and states corresponding to the electoral sections, which were set in order according to size. The Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs) that formed the second stage of the sample were blocks within each electoral section. The Tertiary Sampling Units (TSUs) for the third stage of the sample were households.



The initial ordering of the elements of the sampling frame guarantees a selection probability proportional to size (PPS), which leads to more representative results. The sample is probabilistic, and thus can be used to make inferences from its results regarding the target population.

**Sample Size and Margin of Error:** In accordance with the objective of this study, the sample size chosen

was sufficient to allow analysis of the results on both national and regional levels. As with previous rounds, the survey required samples at both the national and the regional levels, which were stratified by states on the northern border and the south and southwest of the country. The following table describes the territorial distribution of the sample.

Territorial Division of the Sample	
North	Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Sonora
South and Southeast	Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and Yucatan
Rest of the country	Aguascalientes, Baja California Sur, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico DF, Michoacan, Morelos, Nayarit, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi, Sinaloa, State of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Veracruz and Zacatecas

Note: Due to security issues and for the safety of the fieldwork team, during the 2010 survey fieldwork the state of Tamaulipas was excluded from the sample, and only 11 municipalities were included in the sample in the state of Michoacan.

The size of the national sample as well as that for each region, along with the margin of error for estimations, is the following:

Domain	Sample Size	Theoretical Margin of Error
<b>National</b>	1,800	+/- 2.36
North	730	+/- 3.70
South and Southeast	480	+/- 4.56
Rest of the country	1,190	+/- 2.90
<b>Full sample</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>+/- 2.04</b>

The total number of interviews completed was 2,400. The distribution of interviews was 1,800 cases based on the electoral selections of the entire country. An oversample of 400 cases from the electoral sections that make up the North domain was added to the 330 similar cases from the national sample to create a total of 730 cases for this domain. Another oversample of 200 cases from the electoral sections

that make up the South and Southeast domain was added to those already included in the national sample from this domain, reaching a total of 480 cases. Finally, of the 1,800 cases of the national sample, 500 cases were subtracted from the states of the North and South and Southeast to form the rest of the country domain at 1,190 cases.



**Fieldwork and Dates:** The interviews were carried out from September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Each interview was administered face-to-face in the private homes selected to only one person residing in each household. The selection of this person was done in a random manner with a final adjustment of quotas, taking as a parameter the distribution of the population by sex and age resulting from the Second Count of Population and Households from the INEGI in 2005.

A previously structured questionnaire was used as data collection tool by professional interviewers qualified in fieldwork. Seventy-two data collectors, 10 supervisors, 15 capturers, an analyst and a project director participated in the fieldwork.

**Data Processing:** The processing and preliminary presentation of the data took place from October 25<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. All of the data collected were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software.



NOTES ON METHODOLOGY FOR LEADERS

Methodological Summary	
Target Population	Mexican leaders with high-level managerial or administrative positions in five sectors: government, political, private sector, mass media and academia, and social, civic and non-profit organizations
Sample Size	494 persons
Data Collection Method	Telephone interviews
Sampling Error	+/- 4.5% for the entire sample
Survey Date	July 26 <sup>th</sup> to November 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2010

**General Description:** To complement and compare the results of the general population, the study administered a revised version of the general public questionnaire that was asked of a sample of Mexican leaders.

**Universe:** The range of those considered as leaders includes individuals in positions of leadership that participate directly in decision-making in their professional sector or field of activity.

**Selection Method:** The method used to select the sample of leaders is based on the following definition and classification of five groups or key sectors:

1. *Government Sector:* high-level public servants from federal ministries, state governments, parastatal entities, and decentralized bodies.
2. *Political Sector:* governors, legislators, and leaders of political parties.
3. *Private Sector:* lists of influential business leaders from distinct sources (*Expansión* and *Conexión Ejecutiva*, among others), with data from leaders of the most important Mexican firms within the country.

4. *Mass Media and Academia Sector:* key leaders from newspapers, magazines, newswires, radio stations and television broadcasts with national coverage; members of the National Researchers System (*SNI*) of the 5<sup>th</sup> area (social sciences), and directors of international relations departments at public and private universities.

5. *Social, Civic and Non-Profit Sector:* representatives of religious groups, unions, professional organizations, and relevant non-governmental organizations.

**Sampling Method:** First the category structure in each sector (institutions and positions) was defined. Then a directory of 3,852 leaders was constructed and distributed among the different profiles. Written invitations to participate in the survey were sent to these individuals. The process of selecting the sample was randomized, considering each one of the groups described above as strata. The interviews were conducted according to the order and sorting of each individual.

**Sample Size and Margin of Error:** The size of the sample was 494 cases, with a margin of error of +/- 4.5, with a 95% confidence level. The distribution of those interviewed was as shown in the table below.



Sector	Interviews	Percent
Government	120	24.3
Political	94	19.0
Private Sector	101	20.4
Mass Media and Academia	94	19.0
Social, Civic and Non-Profit	85	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Fieldwork and Dates:** The interviews were administered by telephone by a professional and qualified team with previous experience interviewing leaders of this sort. Twenty-two interviewers, 2 supervisors, 12 capturers, an analyst and a project director participated in the fieldwork. The fieldwork was conducted from July 26<sup>th</sup> to November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**Data Processing:** The processing and preliminary presentation of the data took place from November 4<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. The resulting estimations from the database were weighted by each sector of Mexican leaders. All of the data collected were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software •



ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Community
CIDE	Center for Economic Research and Teaching
CCGA	Chicago Council on Global Affairs
COMEXI	Mexican Council on Foreign Relations
DK/NA	Don't Know/No Answer
EU	European Union
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
G20	Group of Twenty
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFE	Federal Electoral Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEGI	National Institute of Geography and Statistics
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PAN	National Action Party
PRD	Democratic Revolution Party
PRI	Revolutionary Institutional Party
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
PVEM	Green Party
SPP	Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America
SRE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mexico)
SSU	Secondary Sampling Unit
TSU	Tertiary Sampling Unit
UN	United Nations Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
U.S.	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organization

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