


MEMORANDUM

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Subject: Research report

Date: January 2, 2007

Dear Amy, Dr. Patrick:

Attached you will find the research report for the project supported by a 2005-2006 grant from The Texas Center. Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to carry out this activity.

Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development
College of Business Administration
Texas A&M International University
Texas Center Research Fellows Grant Program 2005-2006

THE BORDER BEYOND THE BORDER

Content Analysis of Editorial Articles on the U.S./ Mexico Border Published in National
Newspapers as a Source for Assessing the Perception of the Border Region in Bi-national Public
Opinion

Research Project Report

Prepared by

Rogelio Hinojosa

December 31, 2006

“The boundary between Mexico and the United States has become perhaps the most militarized frontier between two nations at peace anywhere in the world.”

The Wall That Keeps Illegal Workers In
Douglas S. Massey, *The New York Times*
April 4, 2006.

*“... there is no way of measuring
the damage to a society when
a whole texture of humanity is
kept from realizing its own power,
when the woman architect who
might have reinvented our cities
sits barely literate in a semilegal
sweatshop on the Texas- Mexican border,
when women who should be founding
colleges must work their entire
lives as domestics ...”*

**Adrienne Rich (b. 1929), U.S. poet, essayist,
and feminist. *Blood, Bread and Poetry*,
ch. 12 (1986).
The Columbia World of Quotations. 1996.**

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Executive Summary

Editorials and opinion articles published by newspapers of national circulation (i.e. “national newspapers”) are highly influential journalistic documents. An editorial published by *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* in the U.S.A. or by *Reforma* or *El Universal* in Mexico City, are crucial in establishing public opinion about the topics they cover. Editorials generate public opinion, and public opinion in turn largely defines the path decision-makers may take in both countries, thus affecting bi-national relationships.

For this research project, software packages SimStat and WordStat were used in conducting a quantitative content analysis of 631 editorial articles published between 1996 and 2006 in one American newspaper: *The New York Times*, and one Mexican newspaper: *Reforma*. These newspapers were selected for this project because of their influence, prestige, national circulation in each country, and availability of retrospective information via commercial databases. This analysis provides objective information on the key concepts communicated about the US/Mexico border region by editorial and opinion writers in both countries. The study shows that, overall, the top three subject categories covered by border-related editorials are: **Security & Law Enforcement, Immigration, and Crime & Violence**. Research findings indicate that this ranking varies slightly when results are analyzed separately by newspaper. A general comparison of issues discussed in each country demonstrates that Mexican and U.S. editorial writers exhibit concerns and attitudes that differ by nationality, and that certain significant topics are barely covered in their opinion articles. The top three subject categories covered by U.S. editorials from *The New York Times* are Security & Law Enforcement, Immigration, and Finance & Economy. In contrast, the top three subject categories covered in Mexican editorials are Crime & Violence, Security & Law Enforcement and the third place is

ted by Immigration and Finance & Economy topics. Based on the number of editorials published in each source analyzed, we can infer that the U.S./Mexico border is more significant to Mexican editorialists than it is to their American counterpart. For every three articles written in *The New York Times* about the border, seven articles are published in *Reforma*.

Research Objective

Whenever a national newspaper and/or a broadcasting corporation publishes or broadcasts a news story about the U.S./Mexico border, millions of people in both countries develop an image of this geographic area. The image of the U.S./Mexico border beyond the border region itself has a direct impact on the regional economy as a whole. Such image, or perception of “how things are” on the border, also has an impact on powerful decisions that often have substantial economic and developmental implications for our region. Tourism, direct investment, commercial ventures, and legislative decisions are impacted by the image of a geographic location. The U.S./Mexico border region is a prime example of such effects. The objective of this research project was to discover the way in which the border region has been depicted over the past decade (1996-2006) in newspaper editorials of national circulation in both the United States and Mexico. This research was carried out by using electronic information resources and quantitative content analysis software. As a result of this bi-national study of editorial content, the key subject matters covered by influential opinion leaders when they referred to the border region in their editorials were identified quantitatively. It is safe to assume that the vast majority of the readers of the editorials analyzed do not live in the border region, but learn about this geographic region through the news, and especially through newspaper editorials.

Considering the significant influence editorial writers have on millions of readers, it is expected that this research will help gain a new bi-national perspective on the perception of the border region by the public in both Mexico and the United States.

Hypothesis

For this project, I decided to concentrate on the following working hypothesis:

**The image of the border region projected in editorial
writings of national newspapers is mainly negative**

Positive connotations of border-related editorials are relatively uncommon, and I intend to verify and quantify this assumption by coding and classifying editorials published in both countries.

Defining the U.S./Mexico borderlands

The boundary between the United States and Mexico has historically been an area of both unique conflict and incomparable opportunities. This region is one of the longest borders between two countries on the planet, stretching over 1,951 miles. It is the only border in the world between a superpower and a third world country. Like most boundaries, the U.S. / Mexico border region is the result of historical conflicts associated with “power politics, military pressure and warfare” (Martinez 4). In its website, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides a comprehensive definition of the U.S./Mexico border region. It covers geographic, sociological, demographic, and economic considerations:

The U.S.-Mexico border region is defined as 100 Km (62 miles) north and south of the international boundary. Two thousand miles long, the border region includes four states in the U.S. (California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas) and six states in Mexico (Baja California Norte, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo

Leon and Tamaulipas). There are approximately 13 million American and Mexican residents in the border area. About 19% of the U.S. border residents



Figure 1. The United States-Mexico Border
Source: Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/images/us-mexico-border.jpg>

live below the federal poverty level, as compared to 13% of the entire U.S. population. The average educational level of the U.S. border residents is lower than the national average. About 49% of these residents are of Hispanic origin, primarily of Mexican ancestry. (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*)

Theoretical Framework

The Editorial or Opinion section of a newspaper is always the place where the most experienced journalists offer newspaper readers thought and analysis of current issues. It is important to distinguish between a newspaper editorial and an opinion column. Both are usually found in the editorial section of a newspaper. An editorial represents the official newspaper position on a topic. It is not signed, and it is “the expression of the point of view (...) of the owner or management” (Sterling 528). On the other hand, editorial columns, also called “Op-Ed” articles are often signed, and present “other (and sometimes disagreeing) individual expressions of opinion” (Sterling 528). Both editorials and opinion columns are commonly referred to as “editorials”. Not all newspapers carry unsigned editorials anymore. In many newspapers – local, regional and national – the opinion section is comprised only of columnists’ opinions or perspective on the issues of interest to the readers. Regardless of the newspaper’s decision to include or not include unsigned editorials with the management’s official view of an issue, the editorial or opinion section is often a central element in any newspaper issue published.

Editorials can and should always be the strongest part of newspapers because “opinion pages are where readers and the newspaper publicly intersect” (Scarp 75). Editorials shape people’s minds and create public opinion. The relevance of editorials in shaping public opinion has been well documented over time. In 1986, Rystrom reported that editorials contributed to deciding statewide electoral results in California. His research further established that “Editors apparently have a greater opportunity to influence voters on non-controversial, less known measures than in more emotional, narrow-margin measures” (27). There is no question that editorial and opinion writers are powerful individuals. To many readers they are the essence of journalism. They have access to the minds of millions, and they use this power as often as they publish their material.

Vic Cantone expressed this concept by stating that editorialists have access to powerful weapons. They use symbols, facts, and metaphors, to help “shape the readers’ and viewers’ impression of the news” (42). This has been true for centuries. From the beginning of modern journalism to the present time, editorialists have been passionate in their beliefs and persuasive in their writing. Michael Gartner states that the editorials of William Allen White of the Emporia (Kansas) Gazette contributed to putting William McKinley in the White House in 1897. In 1918, Henry Watterson, of the Louisville Courier-Journal won the Pulitzer Prize for two editorials that supported the U.S. entry into World War I. His editorial writing helped in practice “stir our nation to war” (75). More recently, we all know that the research of journalists Bernstein and Woodward, supported by the editorials of the *Washington Post* and many other newspapers across the country forced Richard Nixon to resign the Presidency in 1974. Despite the competing presence of television media, newspaper editorials are still a vital element in the shaping of public opinion in any country. The internet has given newspapers a powerful ally that allows them to reach readers in any part of the planet, and thus extend their power in influencing and shaping the way people view and interpret issues of public interest. Given that editorials are such a force in shaping public opinion, it follows that analyzing their content can help us understand the image and perception of the general public over the specific issues covered. How can editorials be analyzed to better understand their influence on a variety of topics? The answer lies in content, or discourse analysis, methodologies. Content analysis of editorials has been used for researching the image conveyed to the public on a diversity of topics of general interest, such as:

1. **Racism**, as in “*The Influence of Editorial Framing on Reader Attitudes toward Affirmative Action and African-Americans*”, by John Richardson.

2. **Drug Policy**, as in “*Finnish newspapers' positions on drug policy between 1993 and 2000*”, by Jukka Törrönen.
3. **Editorial Eulogies** in the article “*Post-assassination editorial eulogies: Analysis and assessment*”, by Steven R. Goldzwig and Patrica E. Sullivan.
4. **Self-Censorship**, as documented in the paper “*Newspaper editorial discourse and the politics of self-censorship in Hong Kong*” by Francis L.F. Lee and Angel M. Lin.

These studies have provided insights on the way these issues are communicated to the masses. Some of them were carried out manually, with the research team or principal investigator literally browsing through the sources utilized, and manually coding their findings for subsequent analysis. Others have been carried out using specialized software for identifying frequency of terms used in textual documents, but none of them has focused on the analysis of bi-national editorial writings about the U.S./Mexico border region. This is precisely the focus of this research project.

Research methodology and data collection

Most content analysis of textual material is either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the methods applied by the researchers. The difference between these two approaches to text analysis is described by Roel Popping in the following manner: “Quantitative methods are those that follow deductive reasoning, that use inferential statistics, and that are confirmatory. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, are inductive, non-statistical, and exploratory” (5). This research project followed a quantitative content analysis approach. It was carried out using software packages SimStat and WordStat to process data, and it was organized in the following nine steps:

1. Investigating and acquiring quantitative content analysis software and computer equipment to process information.
2. Identifying newspapers that circulate at a national level in both the United States and Mexico.
3. Investigating availability of editorial content both through the websites of the newspapers identified in step 1 and through commercial news databases.
4. Defining search strategies and electronically downloading to a personal computer editorials referring to the U.S./Mexico borderlands.
5. Studying all downloaded editorials to identify key concepts discussed.
6. Creating a thesaurus of key issues by organizing them into subject categories, sub-categories, and bilingual keywords used.
7. Creating a database of the downloaded textual units (editorial articles).
8. Using the software products SimStat and WordStat to process downloaded text against the thesaurus of categories.
9. Analyzing results.

Scope and Limitations

Step 2, above-mentioned, required identifying potential sources in each country for collecting editorial information. Table I shows the newspapers that were initially considered for analysis after initial findings indicated that electronic information was available for them:

<u>U.S. National Newspapers</u>	<u>Dates data available</u>	<u>Source</u>
<i>New York Times</i>	1980 – present	Commercial database
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	1984 - present	Commercial database
<i>The Washington Post</i>	1987 - present	Commercial database
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	1985 - present	Commercial database
<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	1988 - present	Commercial database

<u>Mexican National Newspapers</u>	<u>Dates available</u>	<u>Source</u>
<i>Reforma</i>	1995 – present	Comercial database
<i>El Universal</i>	1999 – present	Newspaper website
<i>La Jornada</i>	1996 - present	Newspaper website

Table I. National Newspapers Initially Considered

Editorial information available from these sources was obtainable either via the newspaper websites and/or through commercial database aggregators such as ProQuest. Given the enormous amount of data accessible, and considering the limited time available for this study, early in the project a decision was made to narrow the scope by first reducing the number of sources to scan from five to two newspapers from each country, and secondly by analyzing ten years of editorials in each source (1996-2006). The period to scan was decided after taking into account that most of the newspapers in Table I above covered the years 1996-2006, even though a decade of editorial writings was in fact a fairly large sample for an initial approach to a content analysis project of this nature. Once the data collection process started, additional complexities and inconsistencies in the electronic archives of some of the potential Mexican sources were found. This made the retrieval process more complex and challenging. For example, some of the Mexican sources (*e.g.*, *La Jornada*) did not provide easy mechanisms in their websites for identifying editorial articles. A subscription to *El Economista*'s electronic service confirmed that this source did not have an opinion section *per se*, and its editorials and opinion articles were scattered through the various sections of the newspaper. Similarly, a subscription to *El Financiero*'s online proved useless for this project as the service did not provide access to archival information. Table II shows some of the difficulties encountered with Mexican newspapers originally considered.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Limiting factors</u>
<i>El Universal</i>	Data available only from 1999. No comprehensive coverage of the newspaper in electronic form from 1999 to 2003.
<i>El Economista</i>	No Opinion section. Editorials scattered through the newspaper. Not indexed in commercial databases.
<i>La Jornada</i>	No advanced search mechanism in its website. Not indexed in commercial databases.

Table II. Difficulties Met with Mexican Newspaper Sources

Because of the complexities above mentioned, and even though hundreds of editorial articles had already been gathered for three American national newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*), it was clear that information from some of the Mexican sources originally considered would not be available for the whole decade under study. This disproportion might produce biased and inconsistent quantitative results. A new redefinition of the scope became necessary as the project progressed through the summer and fall of 2006. Ultimately, it was decided that only two key news sources would be analyzed in parallel. One would be *The New York Times*, and the other would be *Reforma*. Both sources presented the following consistencies:

1. Available in the ProQuest databases *National Newspapers* (NYT) and *Latin American Newsstand* (*Reforma*). This provided a flexible search interface that permitted the combination of a diverse set of search variables in order to retrieve editorials discussing border-related issues.
2. Holdings available for research in both cases spanned at least over ten years, which would allow us maintenance of the ten-year sample originally desired.
3. Both sources are highly respected newspapers. Each is recognized as a high quality independent newspaper in both countries.

Both *Reforma* and *The New York Times* have award-winning and influential editorial writers and opinion columnists. Following is a short list of some of the editorial authors used in this study:

Reforma

Carlos Fuentes (internationally recognized essayist and novelist)
Homero Aridjis (environmental activist)
Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (now Mexico's President)
Adolfo Aguilar Zinser (former Mexican National Security Advisor and Ambassador to the United Nations).
Jorge Castañeda (former Mexico's Foreign Secretary)
Lorenzo Meyer (a renowned Historian at El Colegio de Mexico)
Jeffrey Davidow (former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico)
Antonio (Tony) Garza (current U.S. Ambassador to Mexico)

The New York Times

William Safire (a long-time syndicated columnist. Received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006)
Thomas L. Friedman (three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his New York Times editorials)
David Brooks (well-known syndicated columnist)
Carolyn Curiel (former Clinton speechwriter, and U.S. Ambassador to Belize)
Roger Mahoney (Roman Catholic Archbishop of Los Angeles)
Linda Chavez (former Staff Director of the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights)
John Tierney (a liberal columnist that took over William Safire Op-Ed job)
Edwin Meese III (former U.S. Attorney General)

Search strategies and information retrieval

For the present study, it was decided to include all editorials of the two selected newspapers in which the border region has been depicted over the past decade (1996-2006). Different strategies were used to retrieve editorials that comprise the sample in this study. Table III describes various search strategies that were applied for each source in order to retrieve as many relevant editorials as possible.

<u>Source / period</u>	<u>Search strategy</u>
<i>Reforma</i> / 1996 – 1999	Use of keywords “frontera” and “artículo de opinión or “página editorial” and then review results to identify editorial articles.
<i>Reforma</i> / 2000-2006	Use of keywords “Frontera” and “Section = I” (for Primera Sección, where editorials are published), and then review results to identify editorial articles.
<i>NYT</i> / 1996-2006	Document type = “editorial” or “commentary” or “op-ed” combined with keywords “border” and Section = “A” combined with keywords “border”.
<i>NYT</i> / 1996-2006	Document type = “editorial” or “commentary” or “op-ed” combined with keyword “border” and Section = “A” combined with keywords “border” and “Mexico”.

Table III. Search Strategies Used

Each document retrieved was carefully studied in order to determine the context in which the border region was discussed. This process permitted the identification of keywords, which were in turn structured into subject categories, as described in the following section of this report. Altogether, 631 editorial articles related to the border region were collected from *The New York Times* and *Reforma*. Of these 180 (29%) were published in *The New York Times* and 451 (71%) in *Reforma*. Table IV shows the distribution of editorials retrieved by year and source. There is a 3:7 correlation of editorials published about the U.S./Mexico border between *The New York Times* and *Reforma*, that is, for every three editorials in *The New York Times* about the border region, *Reforma* publishes seven. This uneven distribution demonstrates that the

borderlands is a more recurrent, and therefore a more significant topic among Mexican editorial writers than it is among their American counterparts. It is interesting to notice the significant drop in the number of editorials on border issues published in 1998. It is possible that this

	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>Reforma</i>
1996	20	27
1997	13	19
1998	2	8
1999	4	9
2000	13	24
2001	18	36
2002	11	52
2003	12	49
2004	18	59
2005	21	115
2006	48	53
Subtotal	180	451
TOTAL		631

Table IV. Number of Editorials Analyzed by Year and Source

reduction in the interest on border issues by editorial writers in both countries may have been largely due to the Clinton- Lewinsky affair that was heavily in the news and editorials of both countries throughout 1998 and part of 1999. In 1999, the number of editorials written about the border region was also relatively small, and this may be related to the fact that Presidential campaigns were getting started in both countries. By graphing the data in Table IV, we can visualize in Figure 2 an interesting parallel trend in the number of editorial articles published about the border by the two newspapers from 1996 to 2000. This chart also shows that, from 2001 to 2005, the number of *Reforma* articles about border-related issues skyrocketed in comparison with those published in *The New York Times*. This is probably a representation of the growing expectation the Fox presidency created in Mexican public opinion about reaching a

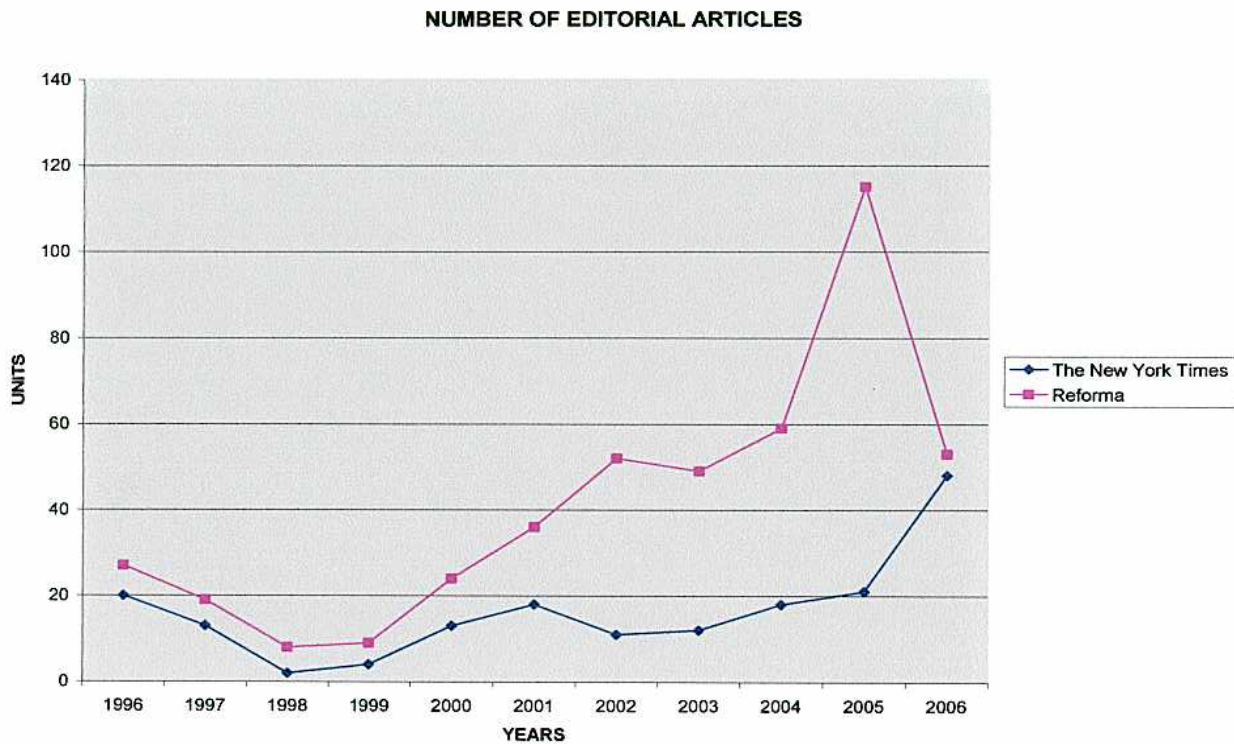


Figure 2. Graphic Representation of Editorial Articles Published, 1996-2000

comprehensive immigration reform with the United States. Mexican editorialists were also writing systematically about the increased number of migrants' deaths when trying cross the Arizona desert or the Rio Grande.

Organization of information

The ten-year editorial sample collected was organized into the following fourteen subject categories (in alphabetical order):

1. Environment –topics related to water, ecology, environmental protection, toxic waste, drought, sustainable development, etc.
2. Geographic Area – included geographic references to the border.
3. Commerce & Trade – NAFTA, logistics, energy, maquiladoras, import/export, transportation, etc.
4. Community & Culture – sister cities, bi-nationalism, art, music, cultural issues, etc.

5. Crime & Violence – contraband, money laundering, organized crime, kidnappings, fraud, drug traffic, kidnappings, assassinations, etc.
6. Education – schools, universities, social impact of education, etc.
7. Finance & Economy – banking, economic reforms, labor, remittances, unemployment, economic stability, etc.
8. Health – illnesses, sanitation, health care, contagious diseases, etc.
9. History – historic treaties, bracero program, war of 1847, U.S. civil war, etc.
10. Immigration – legal and illegal aliens, deportations, guest workers, amnesty, etc.
11. Politics – political stability, border political issues, etc.
12. Racial issues – discrimination, hate, racism, prejudice, etc.
13. Security & Law Enforcement - border sealing, national guard, border fence, border patrol, etc.

Each of these subject categories include bilingual keywords that were taken directly from the contents of the editorials. The keyword in context (KWIC) feature of WordStat was used to refine the assignment of keywords to subject categories, as it permitted contextual identification of semantic differences in word use in the editorials that comprised the sample used in this study. Figure 3 shows an image from WordStat of the KWIC file for subject category Crime & Violence. Appendix I includes a complete listing of the subject categories and associated keywords used in the project.

WordStat v5.1.3 - BORDIR EDITORIALS1996-2006.DBF

Dictionaries | Options | Frequencies | Crosstab | Key-Word-In-Context | Feature Extraction

List: Included Sort by: Keyword & Before

Keyword: CRIME_VIOLENCE Context delimiter: None

RECNO	KEYWORD	SOURCE
258	narcotics	7
7	narcotics	1
27	narcotics	1
85	narcotics	1
7	narcotics	1
84	narcotics	1
3	narcotics	1
30	narco-traffickers	1
171	narco-traffickers	1
263	narcotraficante	7
492	narcotraficante	7
203	narcotraficante	7
203	narcotraficante	7
558	narcotraficante	7
190	narcotraficante	7
540	narcotraficante	7
401	narcotraficantes	7
210	narcotraficantes	7
464	narcotraficantes	7
223	narcotraficantes	7
577	narcotraficantes	7
554	narcotraficantes	7
258	narcotraficantes	7
555	narcotraficantes	7
555	narcotraficantes	7

Adolfo Aguilar Zinser / La omisión
Adolfo Aguilar Zinser. Reforma. Mexico City: Dec 5, 2003. pp. 19

Document URL:
http://www.iesl.com/librariavirtual/edu/2004/indohweb?dir=4R470RR91&site=2RFmb=3&urlenfo=99&RQT=30&RName=PDF

Number of items: 2822
631/631 records

Buttons: Edit, Close, Filter, Cancel, Help

Figure 3. Keyword in Context Screen
(WordStat image)

Content analysis of editorials collected

Using content analysis software from Provalis Research, a database file structure was created in the SimStat module, where each editorial article in the sample was entered in text format. The database included the following fields: source, date, and text. Using the WordStat module, the information from the database was cross-referenced against the previously identified subject categories. WordStat applies text mining methods that permit the exploration of relationships between the contents of documents and information stored in categorical variables. The data output from WordStat represents the essence of the quantitative content analysis process. In our case, it facilitates making inferences on:

- 1) The relevance editorialists assign to border region issues.
- 2) The influence the image of the border has on public opinion at a national level in both countries.

The most recurrent subject category in border-related editorials published in *The New York Times* and *Reforma* over the last decade has been **Security & Law Enforcement** with 3,324 word hits, narrowly followed by **Immigration** with 3,000 and **Crime & Violence**, with 2,872 keyword hits. The least discussed topic is related to **Racial Issues**, with only 120 word hits. A word hit is any keyword mentioned in the text of an editorial that is associated with a subject category. The subject categories **History**, **Education**, and **Environment** received a similarly low level of attention by editorialists, each with word hits in the 400-range. Table V and Figure 4 show results by distribution of keyword frequency in the subject categories of the sample of editorials used in the study.

<i>Subject Category</i>	<i>Word Hits</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SECURITY & LAW ENFORCEMENT	3324	18.2%
IMMIGRATION	3000	16.4%
CRIME & VIOLENCE	2872	15.7%
FINANCE & ECONOMY	2740	15.0%
COMMERCE & TRADE	1869	10.2%
POLITICS	1733	9.5%
COMMUNITY & CULTURE	860	4.7%
HISTORY	441	2.4%
ENVIRONMENT	419	2.3%
EDUCATION	418	2.3%
HEALTH	284	1.6%
GEOGRAPHIC AREA	210	1.1%
RACIAL ISSUES	120	0.7%

Table V. Content Analysis Results by Frequency and Percentage of Subject Categories

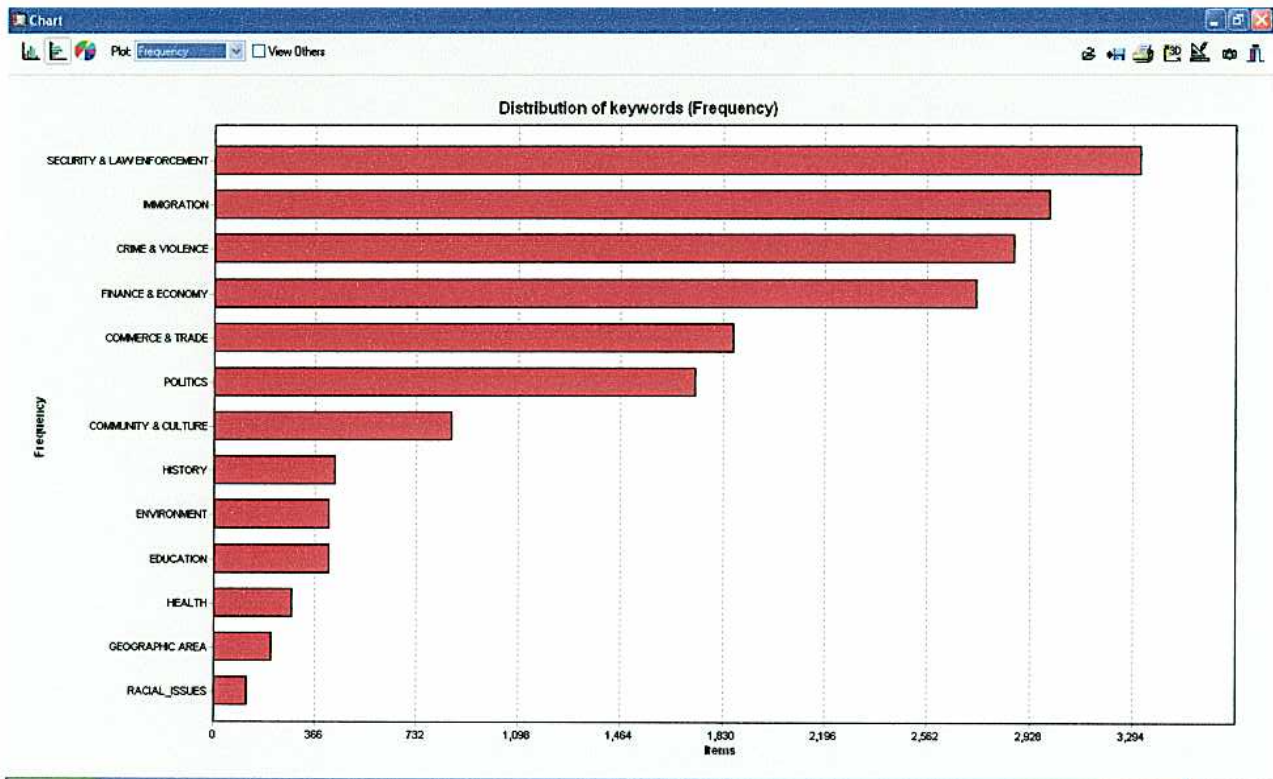


Figure 4. Distribution of Subject Categories Frequency in Chart Form

(WordStat image)

As can be seen in Table V and Figure 4 above, editorialists say very little in their writings about issues such as the environment, education, community and culture, and health. It is interesting to notice that such apparently neglected issues in national editorial writing are at the same time very relevant to those living along the U.S./Mexico border strip, and represent real problems faced on a day-to-day basis by a historically underserved population. Figure 5 below shows the count of keywords by source. The subject priorities assigned by editorialists from each country when referring to the U.S./Mexico border, are slightly different. *Reforma* opinion writers have paid more attention to writing about Crime & Violence issues, while *The New York Times* editorialists have written more extensively about Security & Law Enforcement matters, which is second place among *Reforma* editorialists. However, the fact that both broad topics are

intricately related, forces us to infer that the border is being depicted in the public opinion of both countries as a violent zone in general, which supports the hypothesis that the border

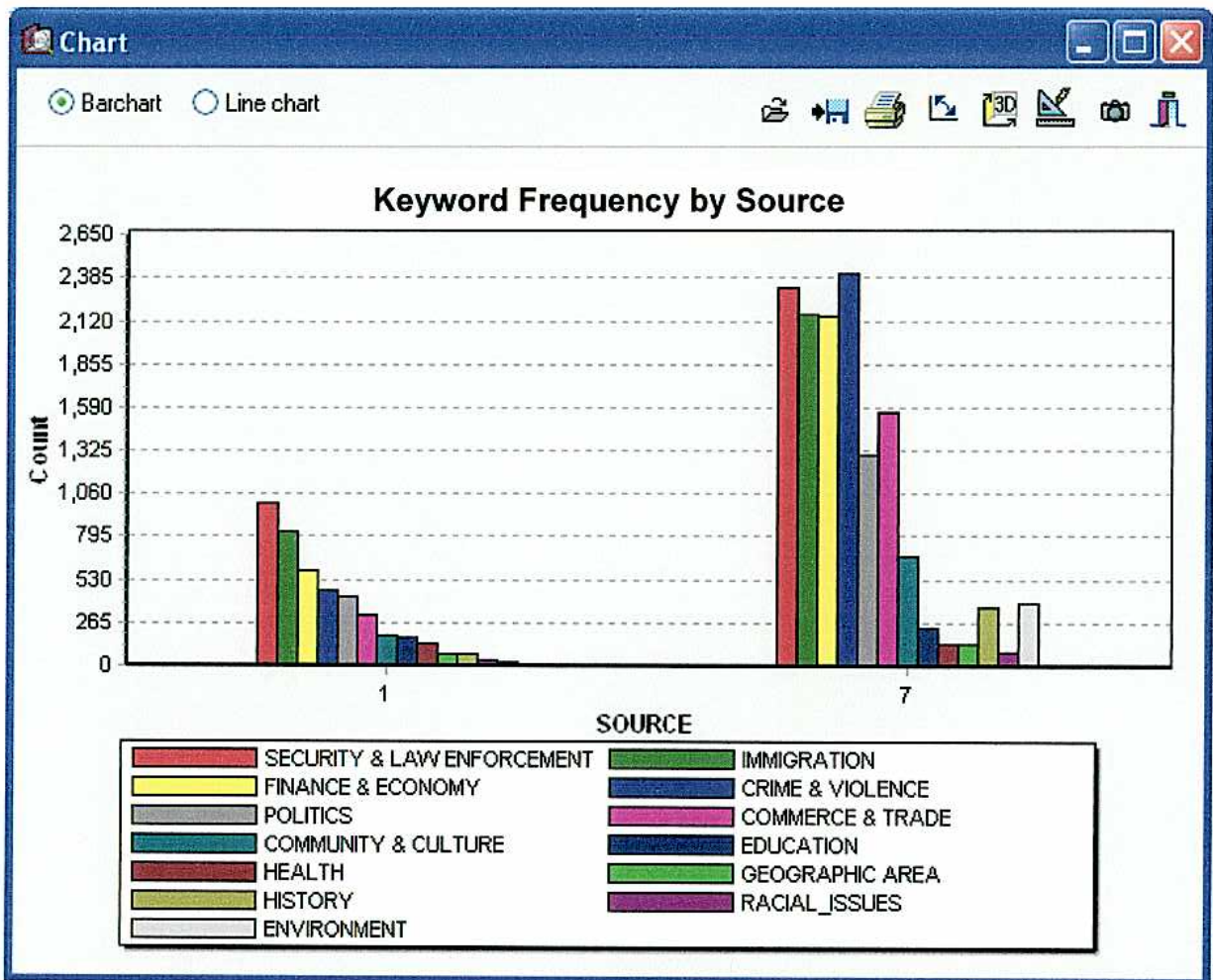


Figure 5. Keyword Frequency by Source

(WordStat Image)

Region is referred to mostly in a negative way in editorials of national newspapers. Following are two excerpts of editorial articles WordStat processed under Security & Law Enforcement and Crime & Violence. They illustrate the general context in which editorialists often refer to the border:

**United States of Emergency; [Editorial]
The New York Times. August 20, 2005.**

Anyone who has been to the border areas in Arizona and New Mexico knows about some of the horrible things that are happening at America's edge. The news is so alarming and the hope for relief from Washington is so dim that the governors of New

Mexico and Arizona have finally declared states of emergency in those areas. It is as if those counties bordering on Mexico had been hit by floods or hurricanes or any other natural disaster, except that this is not a natural disaster. The scenes of death, drug smuggling, kidnapping and more are manmade, a security emergency that should be fixed, soon, by politicians in Washington and Mexico City.

Estado Mayor / El desastre final

Carlos Humberto Toledo. *Reforma*. May 24, 2005. pg. 12

El embajador de Estados Unidos -al cabo norteño-, fue franco, sincero, directo y al grano. "La violencia que han desatado los carteles de la droga en México frenará la inversión y el turismo en el país, en especial en la frontera norte, si no se logra controlarla".

Immigration issues occupy the third place in *Reforma*, but it is the second most frequent subject in *The New York Times*. At the other end of the spectrum are the least relevant subject categories. One of them is the Environment, which is of less concern to *The New York Times* editorial writers than it is to *Reforma*'s, even though in both instances it is discussed very little. History is more often mentioned in *Reforma* than in *The York Times*, but it is almost insignificant in the overall picture.

WordStat also permitted the use of hierarchical data clustering and multidimensional scaling for analyzing the subject matter in the editorials used in this study. The Proximity Plot technique used is "the most accurate way to graphically represent the distance between objects by displaying the measured distance from a selected object to all other objects on a single axis" (*WordStat User's Guide*, 103). A proximity plot is essentially a data visualization tool that facilitates the understanding of subject category relationships. In a proximity plot, "all measured distances are represented by the distance from the left of the plot. The closer an object is to the selected one, the closer it will be to the left" (*WordStat User's Guide*, 103). Figure 6 shows a subject category proximity plot, of editorials discussing Crime & Violence issues. In this plot, subject categories Security & Law Enforcement, Finance & Economy, and Immigration are clustered with Crime and Violence due to their statistical proximity.

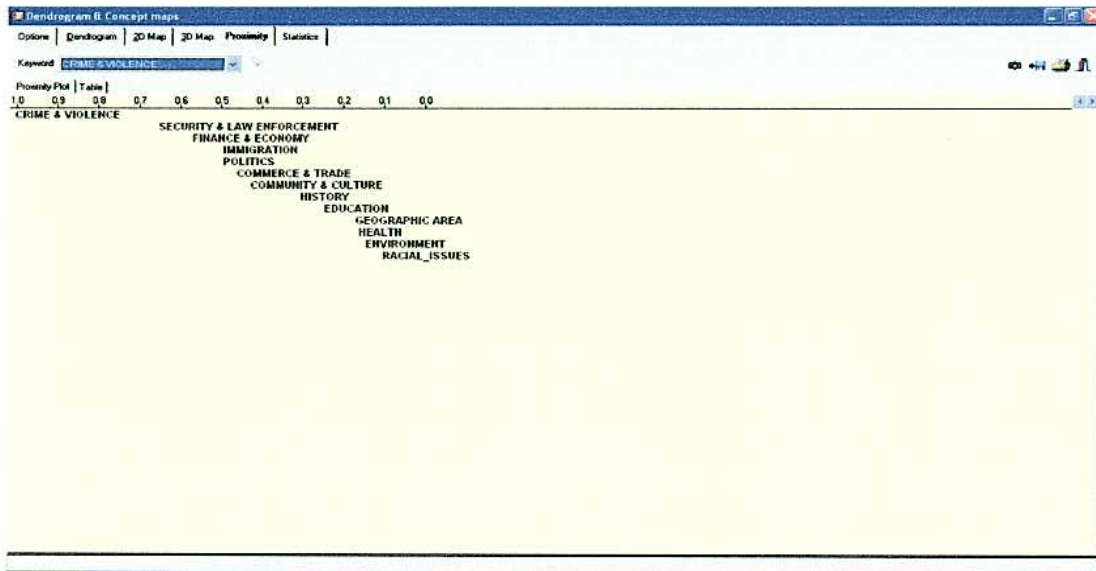


Figure 6. Proximity Plot for Subject Category Crime & Violence (WordStat Image)

In contrast, Figure 7 graphically shows the reduced statistical proximity of subject categories associated to Health.

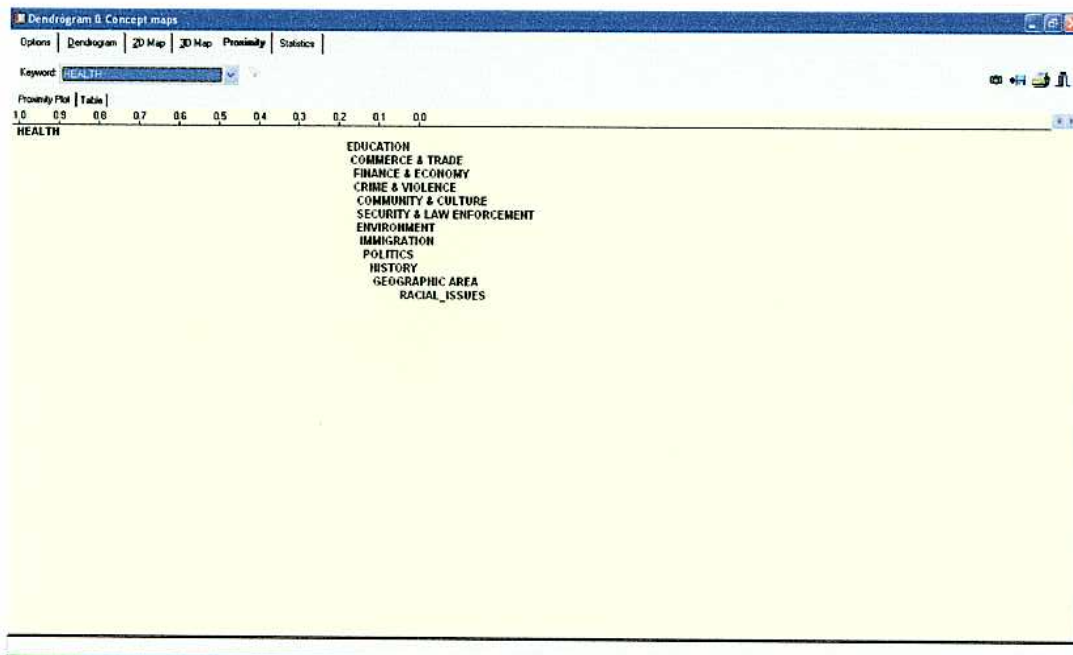
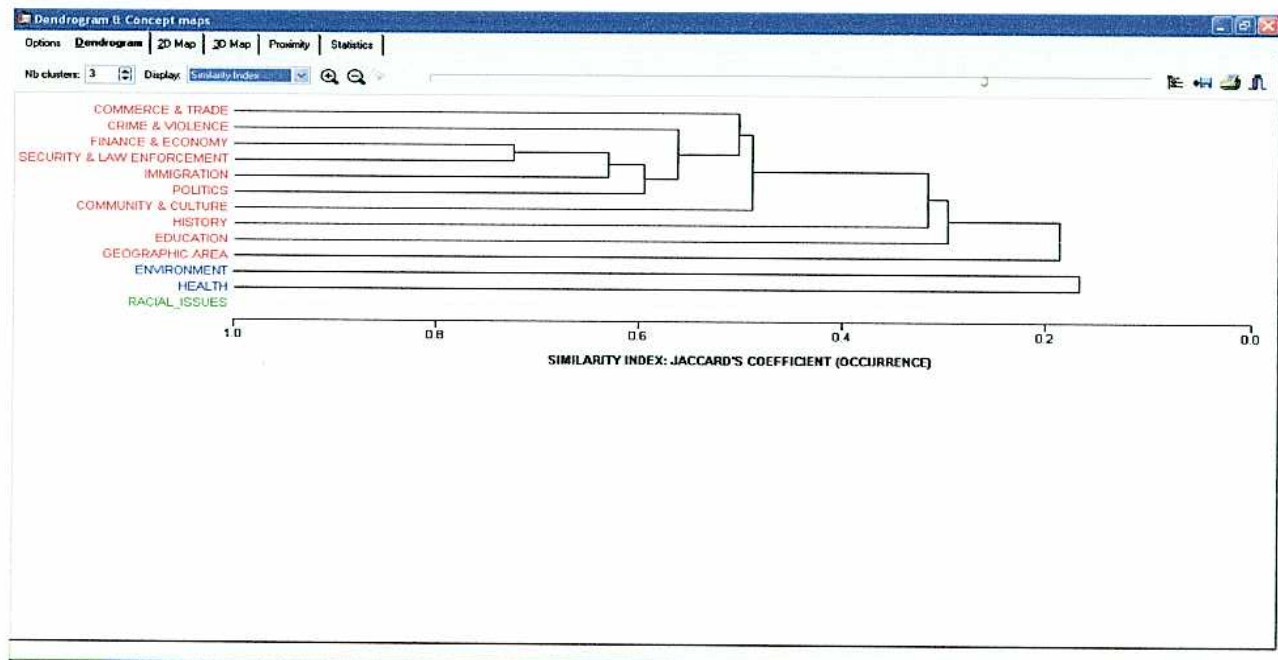


Figure 7. Proximity Plot for Subject Category Health (WordStat Image)

Almost all subject categories are, from a statistical perspective, equally distant from Health, Education being the closest one. This means that border health issues have very little significance in the editorials analyzed. It also means that all other subject categories are all distantly clustered relative to health matters in editorial writings of *The New York Times* and *Reforma*. Another clustering tool that was used through WordStat was the dendrogram, or tree graph. Using the dendrogram map, it was possible to create subject category clusters by similarity, in which the vertical axis is made up of the subject categories, and the horizontal axis represents the clusters created at each step of the clustering process. Subject categories that tend to appear together in the editorials analyzed are combined at an early point, while those that are independent from one another or those that do not appear together at all tend to be combined at the end of the clustering process. Figure 8 shows the dendrogram that was produced with the 631 editorials analyzed in this project.



**Figure 8. Dendrogram of Subject Categories
(WordStat Image)**

The map in Figure 8 indicates, in summary, that keywords included in the subject categories Security & Law Enforcement, Finance & Economy, Immigration, and Crime & Violence are tightly interrelated. An case in point is the regular discussion in *NYT* editorials of the federal budget in relation to the needs for increased border security and enforcement. The dendrogram also shows a close association of the subject category Immigration with the first cluster. At the opposite end are Environmental, Health, and Racial issues, which are completely dissociated from the rest of the subject categories in the dendrogram. Figure 9 shows these concepts in a two-dimensional map. Many editorialists write about several interrelated issues at once. These interconnected discussions are influencing the clustering hereby reported. Analyzing these subject links in more detail is appropriate for a future research project.

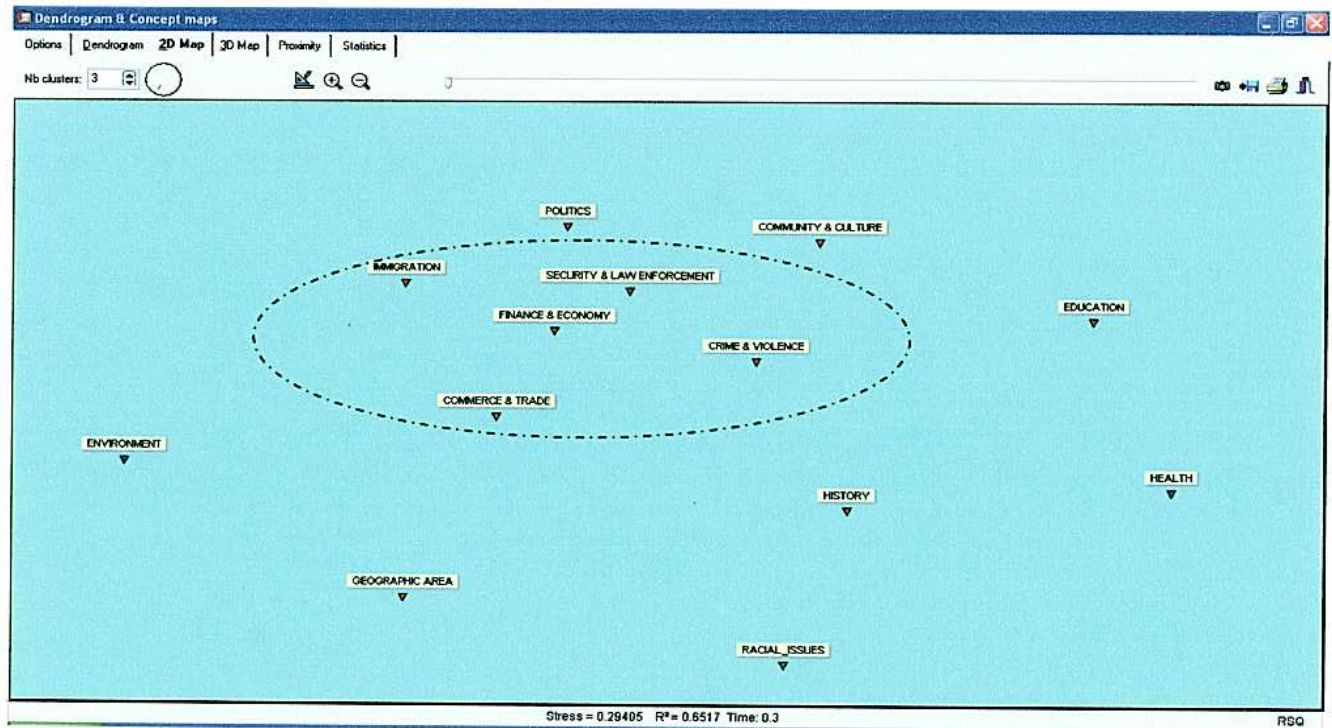


Figure 9. Dendrogram of Subject Categories in a Two-Dimensional Map (WordStat Image)

Conclusions

The working hypothesis was that the image of the border region conveyed through editorial writing in national newspapers both in Mexico and the U.S.A. was mainly negative. After gathering, organizing and analyzing 631 editorials from one major national newspaper in each country, this hypothesis has proved right. Some positive aspects such as economy & finances, commerce & trade, were eclipsed by other topics like drug traffic, illegal immigration, and violence. Beyond the border region itself, the U.S./Mexico Borderlands is perceived as a dangerous zone, where there is confluence of key issues such as national security, financial & economic conditions, commerce & trade, and immigration. At the same time, the people, the communities, the history and cultural roots that tie together this vast region in so many ways are seldom mentioned in the editorial sample that comprised this study. The border region beyond the border seems to be an abstract thought, devoid of educational, cultural, and ecological stories. For instance, toxic waste resulting from the “maquiladora” plants, the poverty of many communities living along the Rio Grande, the lack of adequate health services of a large and historically underserved population, and the significant effort many border states are making in both countries to educate the new generation of border residents, are unappreciated in the national context. Some issues that had long been on the agenda of politicians on both sides of the border have gradually become a reality (e.g. border militarization and a border wall) or are more openly being discussed thanks largely to the pressure of public opinion (e.g. immigration reform). This study showed, among other things, that common concerns about the border are treated with different emphasis by editorialists (and therefore by national public opinion) in each country. It also showed that some issues affecting the day-to-day life of border residents are barely visible in the national context possibly because they are highlights noticeable at local and

regional levels only. Perhaps revelation and emphasis of this contrast can be a starting point that will encourage editorialists and decision makers to make border public opinion more visible at a national level.

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APPENDIX I

Subject Categories & Thesaurus Structure

SUBJECT CATEGORIES

- 📁 COMMERCE & TRADE
- 📁 COMMUNITY & CULTURE
- 📁 CRIME & VIOLENCE
- 📁 EDUCATION
- 📁 ENVIRONMENT
- 📁 FINANCE & ECONOMY
- 📁 GEOGRAPHIC AREA
- 📁 HEALTH
- 📁 HISTORY
- 📁 IMMIGRATION
- 📁 POLITICS
- 📁 RACIAL_ISSUES
- 📁 SECURITY & LAW ENFORCEMENT

SUBJECT CATEGORIES AND KEYWORDS

📁 COMMERCE & TRADE

- AGRICULTUR*
- APERTURA
- ARANCEL*
- CAMION*
- CASINO*
- COMBUSTIBLE
- COMERC*
- COMMERC*
- ELECTRICIDAD
- ELECTRICITY
- ENERGY
- EXPORT*
- FAST_TRACK
- FREE_TRADE
- GAS
- GASOLINA
- GLOBAL*
- IMPORT
- IMPORTACION
- Industr*
- INTEGRACION*
- INTEGRATION*
- LOGISTIC*
- MAQUILA*
- MARKET*
- NAFTA
- NORTH_AMERICAN_FREE_TRADE_AGREEMENT
- OIL
- PETROL*
- TARIFF*
- TLC
- TOURIS*
- TRADE
- TRADE_BALANCE
- TRADE_POLICY
- TRATADO_DE_LIBRE_COMERCIO
- TRUCK*

📁 COMMUNITY & CULTURE

- ANCESTR*
- ART
- ARTE
- ARTIST
- BINACIONAL
- BINATIONAL
- BORDER_CITY*
- BORDER_TOWN
- CIUDAD_FRONTERIZA
- CIUDADES_HERMANAS
- COLONIA*
- COMMUNIT*
- COMUNIDAD*
- CULTUR*
- DESARROLLO_LOCAL
- DESARROLLO_REGIONAL
- FAMIL*
- LOCAL_DEVELOPMENT

- MUSIC*
- POVERTY
- REGIONAL_DEVELOPMENT
- TRANSBORDER

📁 CRIME & VIOLENCE

- ASESIN*
- ATAQUE
- ATTACK*
- AUTOS_CHOCOLATE
- CONTRABAND*
- CORRUP*
- CRIMEN
- CRIMEN_ORGANIZADO

📁 DRUG TRAFFIC

- AMPHETAMIN*
- ANFETAMIN*
- CARGAMENT*
- CARTEL*
- CERTIFICA*
- COCAINE
- CONSUMO_DE_DROGA
- DECOMISO
- DROGA*
- DRUG*
- DRUG_ABUSE
- HEROIN
- MARIJUANA
- MARIHUANA
- MARIJUANA
- METANFETAMINA
- METHAMPHETAMINE
- NARC*
- SEIZURE
- TRAFFIC*
- TRAFIC*
- ESCLAV*
- EXTORSION*
- EXTORTION
- FALSIFIC*
- FELON*
- FORGERY
- FRAUD*
- GANGSTER*
- HUMAN_TRAFFIC
- IMPUN*
- KIDNAPP*
- LAVADO_DE_DINERO
- MAFIA
- MONEY_LAUNDER*
- MURDER*
- ORGANIZED_CRIME
- PLAG*
- SECUESTRO*
- SLAVERY
- SMUGGL*
- TORTUR*
- TRAFFIC

SUBJECT CATEGORIES AND KEYWORDS

- TRAFICO_DE_ARMAS
- TRAFICO_HUMANO
- VICTIM*
- VIOLEN*
- 📁 EDUCATION
 - EDUCA*
 - ESCUELA*
 - SCHOOL*
 - STUDENT*
 - UNIVERSI*
- 📁 ENVIRONMENT
 - AGUA
 - AGUAS_RESIDUALES
 - BASURERO
 - DESARROLLO_SUSTENTABLE
 - DESECHOS
 - DROUGHT
 - ECOLOGIA
 - ECOLOGY
 - ECOSISTEMA
 - ECOSYSTEM
 - ENVIRONMENT
 - HABITAT
 - MEDIO_AMBIENTE
 - POLLUTION
 - PROTECCION_AMBIENTAL
 - RESIDUOS_PELIGROSOS
 - RESIDUOS_TOXICOS
 - RIVER
 - SEMARNAT
 - SEQUIA
 - SUSTAINABILITY
 - SUSTENTA*
 - TOXIC*
 - WASTE
 - WATER
- 📁 FINANCE & ECONOMY
 - BAILOUT
 - BANCO*
 - BANK*
 - BANQUERO*
 - BUDGET
 - DEFAULT
 - ECONOM*
 - ECONOMIC_REFORM*
 - ECONOMIC_STABILITY
 - EMPLOY*
 - ESTABILIDAD_ECONOMICA
 - FOREIGN_DEBT
 - IMPUESTO*
 - INFLACION
 - INFLATION
 - INFRAESTRUCTURA
 - INFRASTRUCTURE
 - INVERSION*
 - INVESTMENT*
 - LABOR
- LOAN*
- PAYMENT*
- PRESUPUESTO
- PRIVATIZA*
- REMESA*
- REMITTANCE*
- REPAY*
- STANDARD_OF_LIVING
- SUSTAINABLE
- TAX*
- TRABAJ*
- UNEMPLOY*
- 📁 GEOGRAPHIC AREA
 - ACROSS_THE_BORDER
 - AT_BORDER*
 - AT_THE_BORDER
 - BORDER_CROSS*
 - COMMON_BORDER
 - CROSS*_BORDER
 - CRUCES_FRONTERIZOS
 - DESIERTO
 - DESSERT
 - FRONTERA_COMUN
 - NORTH_OF_
 - RIO_BRAVO
 - RIO_GRANDE
 - SOUTH_OF
 - THIS_SIDE_OF
- 📁 HEALTH
 - AIDS
 - CANCER
 - CONTAG*
 - DENGUE
 - DIABETES
 - DISEASE*
 - ENFERMEDAD*
 - H.I.V.
 - HEALTH
 - HEALTH_CARE
 - HEALTH_INSURANCE
 - HIV
 - ILLNESS*
 - IMMUNIZATION
 - INFECTIOUS
 - INMUNIZACION
 - MEDICAL
 - MEDICAMENTO*
 - MEDICATION*
 - MEDICINAS
 - MOSQUITO*
 - PANDEM*
 - PEST
 - PESTICIDA
 - PESTICIDE
 - SALUD
 - SANIDAD*
 - SANITATION

SUBJECT CATEGORIES AND KEYWORDS

- SEGURO_DE_SALUD
- SIDA
- TUBERCULOSIS
- VACUNA
- VIRUS
- WEST_NILE
- 📁 HISTORY
 - BRACERO
 - CONFEDERAT*
 - EMANCIPA*
 - GUADALUPE_HIDALGO
 - GUERRA_DEL_47
 - HISTOR*
 - LINCOLN
 - MCLANE_OCAMPO
 - PANCHO_VILLA
 - SANTA_ANA
 - SANTA_ANNA
 - TRATADO_DE_AGUAS
- 📁 IMMIGRATION
 - AGRICULTURAL_EMPLOYER*
 - AGRICULTURAL_WORKER
 - ALIEN
 - AMNESTY
 - AMNISTIA
 - ASILO
 - ASUNTOS_MIGRATORIOS
 - ASYLUM
 - BIRTHRIGHT
 - BLANKET_AMNESTY
 - CITIZENSHIP
 - CIUDADANIA
 - COYOTE
 - DEPORT*
 - EXPEDITED_REMOVAL
 - GREEN_CARD
 - GUEST_WORKER*
 - I.N.S.
 - ILEGAL*
 - ILEGAL_ALIEN
 - ILEGAL_ENTRY
 - IMMIGRANT
 - IMMIGRATION_ACT
 - IMMIGRATION_AND_NATURALIZATION_SERVICE
 - IMMIGRATION_POLICY
 - IMMIGRATION_REFORM
 - INDOCUMENTAD*
 - INMIGRACION
 - INS
 - LEGAL_ALIEN
 - MIGRA*
 - MINUTE*
 - NATURALIZA*
 - PASAPORTE*
 - PASSPORT*
 - PATERO*
 - PERMANENT_RESIDENCE
- POLITICA_MIGRATORIA
- POLLERO*
- REDADA*
- REFORMA_MIGRATORIA
- RESIDENCIA_PERMANENTE
- SERVICIO_DE_INMIGRACION_Y_NATURALIZACION
- TARJETA_VERDE
- TEMPORARY_EMPLOYMENT
- TEMPORARY_WORK*
- TRABAJADOR*_AGRICOLA
- TRABAJADOR*_HUESPED*
- TRABAJADOR*_TEMPORAL*
- UNDOCUMENTED
- VIGILAN*
- VISA*
- 📁 POLITICS
 - DIPUTADO*
 - ELECCION*
 - ELECTION*
 - ELECTORAL
 - ESTABILIDAD_POLITICA
 - LEGISLADOR*
 - LEGISLATO*
 - PLATFORM
 - POLITICAL_STABILITY
 - POLITICIAN*
 - POLITICO*
 - POPULIS*
 - REDISTRICTING
 - REPRESENTATIVE*
 - SENADOR*
 - SENATOR*
 - VOT*
- 📁 RACIAL_ISSUES
 - CIVIL_RIGHTS
 - DERECHOS_CIVILES
 - DERECHOS_HUMANOS
 - DISCRIMINACION
 - DISCRIMINATION
 - HATE
 - HATRED
 - HUMAN_RIGHTS
 - PREJUDICE
 - PREJUICIO
 - PROFILING
 - RACISM*
- 📁 SECURITY & LAW ENFORCEMENT
 - ARMY
 - BARDA
 - BIO_TERROR*
 - BIO_WEAPON*
 - BIOMETRI*
 - BIOTERROR*
 - BLINDAJE
 - BORDER_CONTROL
 - BORDER_SECURITY
 - BORDER_SECURITY_BILL

SUBJECT CATEGORIES AND KEYWORDS

- CERRAR
- CHECKPOINT
- CIERRE
- EJERCITO
- FENCE
- FINGERPRINT*
- FRONTERA_POROSA
- GUARDIA_NACIONAL
- HOMELAND
- HUELLA*_DIGITAL*
- 📁 LAW_ENFORCEMENT
 - AFI
 - AGENT*
 - BORDER_AGENT*
 - BORDER_ENFORCEMENT
 - BORDER_PATROL
 - CARCEL*
 - CORTE
 - COURT
 - COURTS
 - DEA
 - DETAINE*
 - DETENIDO*
 - DETENTION_FACILITY
 - DRUG_ENFORCEMENT_ADMINISTRATION
 - EXTRADI*
 - FRONTERA*_INTELIGENTE*
 - FUGITIVE*
 - IMPRISONED
 - INTELIGENCIA
 - INTELLIGENCE
 - INTELLIGENT_BORDER*
 - INTERDICTION
 - JAIL
 - JUDGE
 - JUEZ
 - LAW
 - LEGAL
 - MEXICO_SEGURO
 - OPERACION_GUARDIAN
 - OPERATION_BE_ALERT
 - OPERATION_BLOCKADE
 - OPERATION_DESERT_SAFEGUARD
 - OPERATION_GUARDIAN
 - PATROLLING_THE_BORDER
 - PFP
 - POLICE
 - POLICIA*
 - POLICIA_FEDERAL_PREVENTIVA
 - PRISON*
 - RULE_OF_LAW
- MILITARIZA*
- MILITARY
- MURALLA
- MURO
- NATIONAL_GUARD
- NATIONAL_SECURITY
- POROUS_BORDER
- PUNTO_DE_INSPECCION
- SEAL*
- SEALED_BORDER
- SECURITY
- SEGURIDAD
- SEGURIDAD_EN_LA_FRONTERA
- SEGURIDAD_FRONTERIZA
- SEGURIDAD_NACIONAL
- SELLA*
- SURVEILLANCE
- TERROR*
- TROOP*
- TROPA*
- VIGILANCIA
- WALL

APPENDIX II

Excerpts from Selected Editorials Analyzed

SELECTED EDITORIAL EXCERPTS

The Mexican Connection; [Editorial]
The New York Times.

Jan. 23, 1996

“But in the rapidly shifting world of drug trafficking Mr. Garcia Abrego was already a man of the past. His arrest alone will barely slow the torrent of drugs flowing over the Mexican border. Only a systematic drive by Mexico to end official complicity with drug lords can bring meaningful results.”

Certiably Wrong on Mexico; [Editorial]
The New York Times.

Feb. 28, 1998.

“Though Washington finds it diplomatically inconvenient to acknowledge, Mexico has a chronic problem with drug traffickers who always seem able to secure the political influence they need to avoid arrest and prosecution. This drug corruption greases the flow of narcotics into the United States. Mexico's drug networks span the border, supplying cocaine, heroin and marijuana to American users. Mexico must face up honestly to its drug corruption problem as it tries to create a more democratic and accountable political system. The most flagrant abuses come from corrupt military and police officials who take payoffs to protect one set of traffickers at the expense of their rivals.”

In the Border Brutality, Discerning a Bright Side; [Op-Ed]
Ginger Thompson. The New York Times.

Oct. 26, 2005.

“More than 130 people have been killed there so far this year, including a city councilman and a police chief gunned down less than seven hours after being sworn in, as drug traffickers fight for control of the lucrative transportation routes that run through Nuevo Laredo onto Texas Interstate 35. That is more than twice the number of people slain in Nuevo Laredo last year. But the number of killings is not what has alarmed people across the country as much as the style and duration of the violence. At the end of a recent interview, Deputy Attorney General Jose Luis Santiago Vasconcelos showed a videotape of a shooting in Nuevo Laredo last summer. Automatic machine-gun fire lasted for seven full minutes on a main avenue of the city. The camera captured exploding cars and images of bodies turned to ashes and bone.”

Called by God to Help; [Op-Ed]
Roger Mahony.

The New York Times.

Mar. 22, 2006.

“I've received a lot of criticism for stating last month that I would instruct the priests of my archdiocese to disobey a proposed law that would subject them, as well as other church and humanitarian workers, to criminal penalties. The proposed Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control bill, which was approved by the House of Representatives in December and is expected to be taken up by the Senate next week,

would among other things subject to five years in prison anyone who "assists" an undocumented immigrant "to remain in the United States."

Some supporters of the bill have even accused the church of encouraging illegal immigration and meddling in politics. But I stand by my statement. Part of the mission of the Roman Catholic Church is to help people in need. It is our Gospel mandate, in which Christ instructs us to clothe the naked, feed the poor and welcome the stranger."

The Wall That Keeps Illegal Workers In; [Op-Ed]

Douglas S. Massey.

The New York Times.

Apr. 4, 2006.

"Naturally, public perceptions of chaos on the border prompted more calls for enforcement and the hardening strategy was extended to other sectors. The number of Border Patrol officers increased from around 2,500 in the early 1980's to around 12,000 today, and the agency's annual budget rose to \$1.6 billion from \$200 million. The boundary between Mexico and the United States has become perhaps the most militarized frontier between two nations at peace anywhere in the world."

Bad News on the Border; [Editorial]

The New York Times.

Jul. 6, 2006.

"The title gave the plot away. The hearing was useful only if the problem of illegal immigration consists mainly of narco-traffickers who decapitate police officers in Tijuana and send drugs in 18-wheelers across the border at Laredo, or Islamic fundamentalists who sneak into the United States disguised as Mexicans. "It's probably already happened," said Sheriff Rick Flores of Webb County, Texas, one of several witnesses who obliged the Republicans by depicting life on the southern border as something out of a "Mad Max" movie."

"There are, of course, very serious concerns about border violence and drug trafficking. But they can never be dealt with effectively without the other pillars of sensible immigration reform, the ones that House Republicans are trying to undermine by stage-managing a specter of border chaos."

Securing The Border (Again); [Op-Ed]

John Tierney.

The New York Times.

Jun. 6, 2006.

"President Bush heads to New Mexico today to visit his new favorite school, the Border Patrol Academy. He wants it to train thousands more federal agents, but they'll make little difference unless Bush can teach Republicans the lesson learned by agents like Buck Brandemuehl a half century ago -- the last time anyone could seriously claim the border was under control.

In the 1950's, federal agents were initially overwhelmed by waves of Mexican farmworkers illegally crossing the border. The number of immigrants apprehended

surpassed half a million in 1951 and was approaching 900,000 in 1953, a level roughly comparable to the situation now.

Back then there were fewer than 2,000 federal agents patrolling the borders, less than a fifth the size of today's force. But within two years, the flow of illegal immigrants declined so drastically that the immigration service declared in its 1955 annual report, "The border has been secured."

Splitting the Difference at the Border; [Op-Ed]

Jill Stewart.

The New York Times.

Jul. 31, 2006.

"Likewise, he reluctantly agreed in early June to send 1,000 members of the California National Guard to the Mexican border, but refused a request later that month from President Bush to send 1,500 guardsmen to other states. Unhappy with slow progress by the Bush administration on immigration reform, he is maintaining pressure by saying he won't keep the guard at the California-Mexico border after 2008.

The governor has also split the baby on social services. He insists that "every child, if they are here legally or illegally" must get schooling and health care -- and has poured vast sums into both this year. Yet he defied California's liberal Legislature on a plan to spend hundreds of millions of additional dollars on a statewide subsidized health care program known as Healthy Families that is used by many illegal immigrants."

Lecciones, interrogantes y...

Jaime Sanchez Susarrey.

Reforma.

Mar. 1, 1997.

"La certificacion de los Estados Unidos sobre nuestro pais impone una reflexion elemental pero cierta: sin consumo no hay demanda y sin demanda no habria produccion. Pero ademas cabe preguntarse: Quien distribuye y comercializa la droga en el otro lado de la frontera? Por que nunca ha caido un gran capo en manos de la justicia estadounidense? Donde esta el Al Capone de la droga? La explicacion recurrente de nuestros vecinos es absurda. Segun ellos, allende la frontera solo hay pequenas redes de distribucion y no grandes capos. Como creer semejante disparate cuando se sabe que Estados Unidos es el principal consumidor del mundo y cuando se conoce que las cifras de ese comercio suman cientos de miles de millones de dolares?"

La migracion a Estados Unidos

Adolfo Aguilar Zinser.

Reforma.

May. 2, 1997.

"Muchos de los mejores trabajadores mexicanos, de los mas capaces emprendedores y decididos, estan en los Estados Unidos. Para millones de jovenes de las regiones mas disimolas del pais, la aventura de cruzar la frontera significa mucho mas que la

necesaria búsqueda de un empleo mejor remunerado; es una hazana personal, una prueba de temple y de carácter. Emigrar al norte no es un mero asunto de dinero, es un acto de rebeldía y de dignidad. Dejan esos mexicanos su casa y a su familia y salen de su país en las condiciones más adversas, no solo para ganarse de alguna manera el pan, sino para demostrarse ellos, y demostrarles con esa riesgosa aventura a sus semejantes, que valen más de lo que son en sus lugares de origen, que no permanecen de brazos cruzados frente a su miseria, que tienen las agallas para cruzar al otro lado, para enfrentarse a los gringos y salir adelante. Son la mayoría trabajadores de casta, mexicanos de primera, jóvenes a quienes su país desecha y que son tratados como seres de segunda en Estados Unidos.”

Los muertos de la frontera

Jorge Ramos Avalos.

Reforma.

Sep. 2, 2001.

“El caso de María Isabel no es una excepción. La Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de México calcula que un inmigrante mexicano muere en la frontera cada 20 horas. El año pasado murieron 436 inmigrantes mexicanos en la frontera con Estados Unidos, más que en 1999 (358 muertos), más que en 1998 (329 muertos), más que en 1997 (149 muertos) y más que en 1996 (87 muertos).

De hecho, desde que Estados Unidos puso en práctica las operaciones Gatekeeper en California, Safeguard en Arizona y Río Grande en Texas en 1995, ha aumentado dramáticamente el número de muertos en la frontera. Y la razón es muy sencilla. Si los agentes del INS vigilan y bloquean las entradas cerca de las ciudades, los inmigrantes tienen que buscar la entrada por los desiertos, montañas y lugares más peligrosos. Esto, a su vez, ha convertido en indispensables a los polleros y multiplicado sus negocios.”

Paisanos p'atras;

Luis Eduardo Villarreal Rios.

Reforma.

Jan. 5, 2004.

“Desde 1994, año en que Estados Unidos puso en marcha los operativos Guardian, Salvaguarda y Río Grande, han fallecido 2 mil 50 mexicanos, un promedio de 200 muertes por año.

Las causas principales de los fallecimientos son, en orden de importancia, las condiciones climatológicas, ahogamientos, accidentes y homicidios. La cifra de muertos no incluye a centro y sudamericanos.

“Para el 2002, el presupuesto para controlar el flujo migratorio era ocho veces mayor que en 1986, y el número de integrantes de la Patrulla Fronteriza llegaba a 12 mil agentes uniformados.

No obstante la aflicción que ocasiona este nuevo estamento policiaco a los migrantes, la Patrulla Fronteriza se beneficia de un presupuesto anual superior a los mil millones de dólares, lo que demuestra cuán disfuncional es esta política.”

Jaque Mate / El tratado

Sergio Sarmiento.

Reforma.

Mar. 24, 2005.

“La verdad es que los mexicanos debemos buscar que se profundice el TLC antes que revisarlo para imponer nuevas barreras al comercio. Para empezar, tenemos que demandar que los acuerdos originalmente firmados en 1993 se apliquen cabalmente. La apertura de la frontera de Estados Unidos a los camiones mexicanos, por ejemplo, estaba prevista hace años, pero el proceso no se ha completado. El azúcar mexicano debe tener acceso al mercado estadounidense, así como la alta fructosa estadounidense -o mexicana- debe recibir un trato justo en nuestro país. Deben, por otra parte, eliminarse los obstáculos a la importación por Estados Unidos del atún mexicano.

Tarde o temprano un verdadero mercado abierto debe permitir el libre movimiento no solo de mercancías e inversiones sino también de trabajadores. Pero los mexicanos debemos entender que no es fácil para ningún país dejarse invadir por millones de personas con una etnia y una cultura distintas. Muchos mexicanos han mostrado también una actitud de rechazo a los inmigrantes que han llegado a nuestro país en el pasado - libaneses, españoles, argentinos, chilenos, guatemaltecos- a pesar de que por su número nunca fueron una amenaza a la identidad cultural de la nación como lo son los mexicanos en la Unión Americana.”

Relación México - EU: Seguridad y prosperidad, piedra angular

Antonio O. Garza.

Reforma.

Oct. 23, 2005.

“Mantener una frontera segura, próspera y abierta es tal vez el mayor desafío de seguridad nacional que enfrentan nuestros dos países. Ningún ciudadano de Estados Unidos entiende mejor este principio fundamental que el presidente de Estados Unidos, George W. Bush.”

Ex-chulas fronteras

Rogelio Ríos Herrán.

Reforma.

Dec. 27, 2005.

“Es un momento apropiado para reflexionar también sobre que hemos hecho para rescatar a la frontera del cliché de lugar de asiento para el crimen organizado, un estereotipo que tiene el peso de la fatalidad pero no es inmutable.

La frontera no es un apéndice del centro ni un peón en el tablero de ajedrez manejado desde el interior de México y Estados Unidos. No debe ser botín político para Washington ni para la Ciudad de México.

Por el contrario, la línea fronteriza tiene cultura, economía y política propias, una vida artística intensa y un dinamismo social sin comparación con el resto del país en el lado mexicano.

Dejarla sumida en las manos del crimen organizado es en el fondo una medida de control político, de extensión del centralismo a niveles absurdos. En Washington pasa algo similar al centralismo mexicano en el deseo de imponer cambios drásticos en su paisaje y cultura bajo el pretexto de proteger la seguridad nacional.”

Que falta haces, Piporro! Tus "Chulas fronteras" estan a punto de desaparecer bajo el peso de intereses politicos. Solo tu podrias derribar la posibilidad de que se construya el muro fronterizo con una de tus ingeniosas canciones."

La carta del embajador

Felipe Diaz Garza.

Reforma.

Jan. 29, 2005.

"Por supuesto que la atmosfera de empleos y futuro que respiraba Fox, en esos dias idilicos para el, incluia los asesinatos de mujeres en Juarez, los de periodistas en Nuevo Laredo y Tijuana y los enfrentamientos con saldos mortales entre narcos y narcos y entre narcos y policias, que ya los habia en octubre y mucho antes.

Ya habia en octubre retenes, policiacos o militares, el aspecto y el significado es el mismo, en Nuevo Laredo, en Reynosa y en Juarez cuando menos, a los que se agregan hoy los de Reynosa y Matamoros derivados de las matanzas o ejecuciones punitivas llevadas a cabo presuntamente por narcos. Entre las personas secuestradas y asesinadas en la frontera los ultimos meses figuran ciudadanos estadounidenses, dice la carta del embajador americano Tony Garza, en la que, a nombre de su gobierno, pidio al nuestro, como usted ya lo sabe, mano dura contra la narcoviolencia."

Los idus de julio, 2: trabajadores (II)

Carlos Fuentes.

Reforma.

Jul. 19, 2006.

"El alcalde de Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, resume la fórmula: Los EE.UU. tienen derecho a proteger sus fronteras. Pero también tienen la obligación de regular la migración laboral de manera justa y productiva. En cambio, la ley Sensenbrenner HR4437 del Senado no sólo penaliza la migración: la criminaliza, considerando al trabajador migratorio un reo sujeto a la cárcel y a la deportación. La aplicación de esta ley racista y discriminatoria crearía una pesadilla policiaca. Varios millones de trabajadores y sus familias serían detenidos, encarcelados y deportados. La cuestión es la siguiente: ¿Quién tomaría sus puestos de trabajo? Meter a once millones de emigrantes en la cárcel equivale, ni más ni menos, a cinco veces el número de ciudadanos norteamericanos encarcelados en la actualidad. Hoy, la Guardia Nacional ha sido desplazada a la frontera con México (antes de embarcarse rumbo al sangriento pozo sin fondo de Irak, en una operación rotativa). Los "Vigilantes", organización represiva de corte fascista, se ha autodesignado para atrapar y matar inmigrantes. Y un servicio macabro de vigilancia televisiva permite a un buen ciudadano de Virginia o Illinois detectar el paso de trabajadores y denunciarlos a las autoridades (o a los "vigilantes"). En muchos comercios de los EE.UU. se encuentran videojuegos en que más puntos gana quien más mexicanos mate cruzando la frontera. Matar a una mujer embarazada vale dos puntos. Aunque el tema se encuentra en suspenso legislativo en los EE.UU., y el presidente George W. Bush apenas ha ofrecido un paño caliente electoralista resucitando la oferta de trabajadores huésped, sin duda el siguiente presidente de México tendrá que atender un asunto que desborda no sólo la decisión unilateral de los EE.UU. sino que implica la responsabilidad de México. Doble responsabilidad. "