



Sustainable Human Development

ESSAYS ON BUILDING THE NEW PARADIGM OF PEOPLE AND PLANET

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Mexico using blatant lies or manipulated facts that can only elicit disdain or hatred among US citizens. In this narrative, succinctly, Mexico is a perennially poor country with lots of violence and corruption that puts it on the brink of becoming a failed state, which is having a negative social and economic impact on the US. Yet the US has deliberately plundered Mexican socioeconomic structures and

A map of North America (USA, Canada, and Mexico) is shown in a light beige color. Overlaid on the map are various political and social terms in different colors and orientations, representing a complex ideological landscape. The terms are as follows:

- Systemic evasion of root causes of immigration** (black, top center)
- bi-national Robber Barons oligarchic elite** (black, top center)
- fake news** (red, center-left)
- Neoliberalism** (red, center-left)
- bigory** (red, center-left)
- illegal aliens** (red, center-left)
- capture of democracy** (red, center-left)
- capture of workers-North & South** (red, center-left)
- Systemic Human-Rights violation** (red, center-left)
- Trump's hate-mongering wall** (red, center-left)
- Direct Democracy** (red, center-left)
- NAFTA** (red, center-left)
- Modern slave work** (red, center-left)
- Malta State** (red, center-left)
- Systemic crafting of** (red, center-left)
- institutional investors** (red, center-left)
- manifest destiny** (red, center-left)
- ASPAN** (red, center-left)
- Bracero Programme** (black, bottom center)
- Washington Consensus** (black, bottom center)
- Systemic malice towards Mexico** (black, bottom center)
- Dictatorship of the market** (black, bottom center)
- endemic racism** (red, bottom center)
- Systemic pauperisation of workers** (black, bottom center)
- Assymetric-squash-of-imperialist-neo-colonisation** (black, bottom center)
- Precariat: the New Dangerous Class** (black, bottom center)
- market-localist global empire** (black, bottom center)
- centre-periphery relationship** (black, bottom center)

its people. This paper will debunk all the deliberately malicious myths advanced by the US' equally-corrupt elites with a vested interest in denigrating its southern neighbour and present the true facts behind the lies.

The marketocratic global empire behind so-called nation states

To debunk the myths about Mexico in US popular culture, it is necessary to first establish the context in which the world lives and expose the conventional myth that advances the idea that most societies in the world, however imperfectly, enjoy a democratic ethos. There is no such thing as truly democratic and sovereign states. Representative democracy is a nefarious euphemism for the oligarchic systems that rule societies across the world. True democracy can only materialise if the public agenda is freely determined and controlled by the people. To accomplish this no special interest can interfere in the process, through political parties or through paid lobbyists. Nonetheless, it is precisely the opposite that has prevailed with very few exceptions. So-called democratic societies have political systems that have been completely corrupted by the holders of economic power. These are the institutional investors of international financial markets (asset management firms, pension funds and investment companies). The largest shareholders of international investment firms and banks with a global presence through financial markets, such as JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, BNP Paribas, HSBC, Deutsche Bank, Mitsubishi, UBS, Lloyds, Credit Suisse, Axa, Allianz and other public and private pension funds, insurance companies and savings institutions, have been in control of the public matter for a long time. They have made sure that truly democratic ethos remain theoretical and never materialise.

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The oligarchic elites control the public agenda through so-called representative democracy systems embodied by legislative structures. In a truly democratic ethos, the Demos (the people), whether they are students, independent professionals, small merchants and entrepreneurs, blue or white collar workers, farmers, bureaucrats, retired people or homemakers embody the interests of the vast majority of the ranks of society. They represent the 99% of the Demos. If we add the one-percent elite of owners of capital, whether they are sole owners or shareholders of companies providing goods and services or shareholders of financial institutions, then we have comprised the entire spectrum of the social strata. Yet, it is this tiny elite of oligarchs comprising less than one percent that has been in full control of the public agenda by controlling the politicians in the legislative, executive as well as judicial powers. They have implemented a revolving door system that consists in the movement of their agents between roles as legislators and regulators or as executives in the economic sectors affected by legislation and regulation. This includes the cadres of lobbyists who can

be at times working for a trade group or holding a legislative seat. The tacit connivance between those who are in control of the public and private arenas has guaranteed that control of the legislative power remains in the hands of “legislators” that for the most part represent the interests of the business and political elites and not of the majority of the population. This practice has become the norm in the US in a very conspicuous manner, beginning with the emergence of the Military Industrial Complex in the early nineteen sixties¹ and then gradually expanding to many economic sectors. This elite of oligarchs controls the system by creating institutions that enforce through laws the status quo that protects their economic and political preeminence. They try to “trump up” the system to defend their wealth. Using Jeffrey Winters terminology for oligarchies, these are civil oligarchies that focus on lowering taxes and on reducing regulations that protect workers and citizens from corporate malfeasance, precisely the neoliberal mantra that dominates economic policy today.² They build “democratic” institutions that legally shield them from judicial actions against their malfeasance. And, as Winters explains, they sustain all of this by political campaign financing and a cadre of professional lobbyists that allow them to exert undue influence over policy. To be sure, this has also gradually become the “new normal” for many decades in many countries to secure control of the regulatory powers of these countries to protect the wealth of their oligarchies.

In this way, through the revolving door system, the tiny elite of oligarchs representing barely the less than one percent actually dictates the public agenda and takes full control of so-called sovereign states. They decide which items of the public matter get to be addressed and only in the direction that benefits their very private interests. The conflict of interest is clearly evident and results in the capture of the regulatory process and therefore of the essence of representative democracy. Legislators for the most part do not work for their constituents but for the very private interests that put them in power. Indeed, it is the economic elites that, by financing the political campaigns of their chosen politicians, get to dictate the public agenda. Consequently, ***instead of living in democratic societies we live in marketocratic societies for we live under the dictatorship of the owners of the market.*** This is a reenactment of the mercantilistic era that, contrary to popular belief, manipulated by neoliberal propaganda, Adam Smith denounced in his “Wealth of Nations” because of the monopolistic nature of the merchant guilds. Smith had a profound dislike for the motives of merchants and monopolists. He viewed them as a sort of guild of oppressive conspirators against the welfare of society: *People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in conspiracy against public, or in some contrivance to raise prices.*³ Today we endure a refreshment of mercantilism with the global corporations dominating the market.⁴ Who are the owners of the market? Namely, the aforementioned institutional investors. The owners of the market not only control their private financial institutions but also, as institutional investors, all the transnational corporations as well as the halls of government. Hence, the agents operating through the revolving door system are actual “market agents” in pursuit of the materialisation of the “public agenda” that was agreed upon by the tiny marketocratic elite. Thus they have made of representative democracy a mockery of what it pretends to be; forcing the vast majority of humanity to endure an everlasting toxic marketocratic ethos. Furthermore, this has been taken to the extreme in the last two decades, where “marketocracy” has come to embody the casino-like economy controlled by sheer speculation in investment markets. Indeed, in the last two decades almost every aspect of life has been securitised for speculation in the stock markets; from mortgages, consumer and commercial loans and insurance, to pensions, commodities and a wide array of other assets. Given that in marketocracy

¹ “The Military–Industrial Complex; The Farewell Address of Presidente Eisenhower” Basements publications 2006

² According to Winters the existential motive of all oligarchs is wealth defense. How they respond varies with the threats they confront, including how directly involved they are in supplying the coercion underlying all property claims, and whether they act separately or collectively. These variations yield four types of oligarchy: warring, ruling, sultanistic, and civil. Jeffrey A. Winters: *Oligarchy*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

³ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, New York: Modern Library, Random House, 1994, p. 148.

⁴ Álvaro J. de Regil: *The Historical Background in the XVIII and XIX Centuries. The Neo-Capitalist Assault – Essay Two of Part I (The Economics of Reference)*. A TLWNSI Issue essay series. The Jus Semper Global Alliance, April 2001.

everything has to be privatised to turn it into a merchandise, the privatisation of natural resources vital for life, such as water, air and plants, as well as the privatisation of all public goods, such as the key elements of welfare systems (education, healthcare, secured retirement...) which are supposed to be universal human rights, are increasingly treated as market commodities for sale and financed through loans and later securitised for investment market speculation.

Essentially, the marketocratic ethos is a euphemism for a capitalist ethos, which has in effect supplanted democracy by the rule of the market, given that capitalism is completely incompatible with true democracy. It is of the utmost importance to acknowledge that the usurpation of the democratic ethos was bound to occur for capitalism cannot coexist with real democracy.

They are inherently incompatible. Making believe that they are compatible is the greatest deception of our time. ***The argument in favour of the concept of a capitalist democracy or of democratic capitalism is unsustainable, for we can hardly find a more direct antagonism between the raison d'être of democracy and that of capitalism.***



Democracy has as its only end to produce a tacit agreement for social coexistence with the sole purpose of creating an ethos of welfare for every rank of society, and especially for the dispossessed, for its main attribute —and the purpose of the inherent social contract— is the procurement of equitable welfare. In this way, democracy's end is to reconcile the public interest (the common good) with the individual interest (the private good) in such a way that the individual's freedom does not allow the individual to seek his own private interest in detriment of the public interest. As in the old Greek Agora, the purpose of democracy is to serve as the regulating agent of an ethos that truly reconciles the public with the private interest, always with the common good —the welfare of people— with preeminence over the individual and private good.

On the other hand, capitalism is on the opposite end. Parting from individual freedom, it goes in pursuit of the individual's private interest with no regard whatsoever for the impact that such activity has on the welfare of all other participants in the system. There is no other consideration but profit. It is about all out competition, about the supremacy of the mightiest —euphemistically referred to as the fittest— regardless of whether it competes under equal conditions or what the consequences of its stronger position upon all other participants are. Fundamental elements of true democracy such as equality, social justice, welfare and regulation are anathema to capitalism and thus to marketocracy. The maximisation of wealth in share of income from the entire economic activity is its only mantra and its only moral. This is why real wages across the world have declined or exceptionally remained stagnant since the change of paradigm beginning in the 1980s. In the US the share of income of the less than one percent doubled between 1979 and 2007.⁵ As could be expected, the major forces behind this trend since 1979 have been the expansion of the finance sector (and escalating pay in that sector) and the remarkable growth of executive pay. Since 2007 profits have reached record highs and the stock market has boomed whilst the wages of most workers have declined over the so-called "recovery".⁶ Furthermore, according to economic research, the increased incomes in finance and for executives do not reflect a corresponding increase in their efficiency. Rather, they are simply a zero-sum redistribution away from the rest of the economy and toward finance and corporate managers.⁷ As for Mexico, after decades of economic and social policies deliberately

⁵ Natalie Sabadish and Lawrence Mishel: CEO pay and the top 1%. How executive compensation and financial-sector pay have fuelled income inequality. Issue Brief#331, Economic Policy Institute, 2 May 2012.

⁶ Alyssa Davis and Lawrence Mishel: CEO Pay Continues to Rise as Typical Workers Are Paid Less. Issue Brief#380, Economic Policy Institute, 12 June 2014.

⁷ Economic Policy Institute: The Agenda to Raise America's Pay, 6 December 2016.

designed to impoverish and nauseate the vast majority of the population, there are at least fifteen Mexican billionaires, according to the Forbes list of the richest people in the world, with Carlos Slim ranked at times as the wealthiest person in the world.⁸

There are two impeccable and clearly the most illustrative examples of the calculated connivance between private interests and politicians to supplant the regulatory instruments of a democratic ethos. One is the elimination of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933. The other is the case of Citizens United versus the Federal Electoral Commission in the US supreme court of 2010.

The Glass-Steagall Act was instituted at a time when, on average, five banks collapsed on a daily basis under a deluge of non-performing loans due to the sheer speculative and corrupt practices of their main shareholders and managers. The law imposed a strong regulatory framework on the financial sector. The law deliberately separated commercial banking from investment banking with the specific purpose of prohibiting that commercial loans and consumer savings would be securitised in financial markets. In this way, investment banks were barred from participating in the management of commercial lending to businesses and consumers and the earnings derived from savings. Furthermore, the law virtually barred any lending intended to be used in speculative operations and eliminated the pervasive possibility of conflicts of interest. Moral hazard was under firm control. This law was instrumental in eliminating the main practices that triggered the 1929 debacle and played a fundamental role in the efforts for the economic recovery in the US after WWII.

Unfortunately, human greed is unrelenting. In 1980, parts of the Glass-Steagall Act were superseded by the Deregulation and Monetary Control Act. Then, in 1998, the US Congress attempted to regulate the derivatives in Commodity Futures Trading. But, Secretary of the Treasury Rubin, Summers, his deputy, and Greenspan, Chief of the Federal Reserve Bank, adamantly defeated any controls. For their conniving deregulatory manoeuvres, economist Dean Baker —co-founder of the Centre for Economic and Policy Research— regarded them as the high priesthood of the bubble economy.⁹ Subsequently, in 1999, the core of the Glass-Steagall Act was repealed by the US Congress as a culmination of a \$300 million lobbying effort by the banking and financial-services industries. Its worst effect was a cultural change replacing prudent traditional commercial banking practices into a speculative spree that sought to securitise commercial banking. Finally, in 2004, the US Securities and Exchange Commission allowed investment banks to increase their debt to capital ratio from 12:1 to 30:1 or more, with the aim of enabling them to acquire more mortgage-backed securities, inflating the housing bubble in the process.¹⁰ Deliberately, nothing has been done to address the root cause of the problem: the imposition of marketocracy as the end in itself in the lives of so-called democratic societies. In the US the Dodd-Frank Reform to protect consumers was passed in 2010.¹¹ However, after much pressure from financial markets, it passed in a rather weakened form and it did not restore, whatsoever, the separation of commercial and investment banking to the previous ethos provided by the Glass-Steagall Act. In fact, since 2012 the Dodd-Frank law has been constitutionally challenged by banks and more than a dozen US states and it remains in court proceedings. The Volcker Rule —section 619 of the Dodd-Frank Act— that specifically intended to separate commercial and investment banking, is still in its implementation phase, and it is deemed to be ineffective and to need new solutions to adequately regulate proprietary trading, for it is argued that in contrast with Glass-Steagall it attempts to regulate actions instead of structures.¹²

⁸ Eréndira Espinosa: Los mexicanos más ricos del mundo según Forbes, Dinero, 21 de marzo de 2017.

⁹ Dean Baker, The high priests of the bubble economy. The Guardian, 10 November 2008.

¹⁰ Joseph Stiglitz, Capitalist Fools, Vanity Fair, January 2009.

¹¹ [111th Congress Public Law 203] [From the US Government Printing Office]: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-124/pdf/STATUTE-124-Pg1376.pdf>

¹² R. Rex Chatterjee: DICTIONARIES FAIL: THE VOLCKER RULE'S RELIANCE ON DEFINITIONS RENDERS IT INEFFECTIVE AND A NEW SOLUTION IS NEEDED TO ADEQUATELY REGULATE PROPRIETARY TRADING. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-124/pdf/STATUTE-124-Pg1376.pdf>

Another criticism is that the current rules are too complex to understand. Indeed, Lord King, former head of the Bank of England points out that the regulations introduced after the 2008 crash are too complex. He explains that the Prudential Regulation and Financial Conduct Authorities in the UK have rulebooks exceeding 10.000 pages, while the Dodd-Frank Act runs to 2.300 pages. In contrast, the Glass-Steagall Act runs to only thirty-seven pages. King argues that only a fundamental rethinking of how we organise our system of money and banking will prevent a repetition of the crisis.¹³ Yet, crises are not really a concern of the tiny imperial robber baron's elite of the less than one percent as long as marketocracy prevails.

Another rather pathetic case of the market supplanting democracy is the idea in the United States, which has permeated its culture for most of its existence, that corporations should be regarded as equals to persons with their own personal rights. Indeed, in 2010, the US Supreme Court ruled that companies ought to be regarded as legal persons with individual rights, almost as if they were natural persons, and, therefore, that corporations have the right to the first amendment, which, otherwise, would be exclusively part of the Bill of Rights of the citizenry, in a political context. In this way, the court equated the persona of corporations to that of citizens, so that corporations can exercise their "right" to freedom of speech in political campaigns.¹⁴ With this ruling the court provided corporations unlimited influence over US elections. Companies can now spend as much as they want to support or oppose individual candidates.¹⁵ The court did not even bother to distinguish between domestic and foreign-owned corporations. Consequently, corporations are now completely free to financially support the political agendas of their choice and, frequently, of their own design. With some variation, the halls of government have been overtaken by corporate power all over the world. Thus, with this kind of political ethos it would be a complete delusion to expect governments to fulfil their so-called "democratic" mandate by moving forward and developing a strict regulatory framework to control the market and its owners, namely financial market speculators. What has been happening for decades is exactly the opposite of what should take place in a truly democratic ethos: the market has overtaken the public arena and dictates over the lives of societies around the world. A study designed to track how closely government policies in the US matched the preferences of voters at different points of the income distribution, found that the influence of average voters drops to insignificant levels, while that of economic elites remains substantial when the elites' interests differ from those of the rest of society. When this happens, it is their views that count —almost exclusively. As Gilens and Page, the authors of the study explain, we should think of the preferences of the top 10% as a proxy for the views of the truly wealthy, say, the top one percent —the genuine elite.¹⁶

The marketocratic system of revolving doors making a mockery of democracy and turning almost every aspect of life into profitable merchandise —through privatisation of the public matter and the dismantling of the entire spectrum of human rights (civil, political, economic, social, labour, cultural, and environmental rights)— reproduces itself across the world. This takes place through the neocolonial system of tacit agreements between the centre-periphery elites to exploit all human and natural resources in the territories under their direct jurisdiction. The economic political paradigm dominating the political economy of the metropolises —namely the G7 countries— of the system is almost invariably reproduced in the periphery. In the first decades of the post war era, Keynesian demand-side economics dominated US, European and Japanese economic policy. Western Europe, Japan and South Korea embarked in demand-side policies to recover their markets from the ravages of war. And so, the same economic paradigm was replicated across the periphery. In the case of Mexico, industrialisation and imports substitution,

¹³ Simon Neville: Banks face another crash if they do not reform, warns Lord King, The Independent, 29 February, 2016.

¹⁴ United States Supreme Court: Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 21 January 2010.

¹⁵ Robert Barnes and Dan Eggen: Supreme Court rejects limits on corporate spending on political campaigns, The Washington Post, 22 January 2010.

¹⁶ Dani Rodrik: How the Rich Rule, Project Syndicate, 10 September, 2014.

anchored as well on demand-side policies, reduced poverty and produced a middle class while enjoying almost half a century, between the late 1930s and early 1980s, of partial economic and foreign policy sovereignty. When the Nixon administration decided to abandon the gold standard in 1971, given the US loss of productivity and competitiveness, it moved from supporting demand to supporting neoclassical supply-side economics, better-known today as neoliberalism. The other metropolises of the system shortly followed through with the change of paradigm.

Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, this is also a system of net extraction of wealth, not just for the benefit of both centre and periphery oligarchies, but also from periphery countries in the South for the benefit of the metropolises of the system in the North. Just in the last three decades (1980-2012), excluding China, a total of \$11,7 trillion dollars was extracted from the developing countries (\$1,1 trillion in recorded transfers and \$10,6 trillion in illicit capital outflows). This is equivalent to 6,7% of these countries' GDP, and it was equivalent to 8,3% of GDP, just before the 2008 global crisis.¹⁷ Net extraction indicates that the net result between capital inflows and outflows is a net outflow of capital.

The customary Centre-Periphery relationship and the new imperial order

Nine years after the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, ten years after the refusal to regulate speculation and four years after allowing the banks to mount a speculative binge, US financial markets imploded and dragged the world's capitalist system to its worst crisis since 1929. All this could have been considered part of history if we were witnessing an acknowledgement of unforgivable mistakes, in the best of cases, and of bad intentions, with a more realistic hue, that key figures in the US government advanced during the last twenty years. It could have been indeed history if there was a will to change the system. Unfortunately, the prospects for a paradigmatic shift, even within the context of capitalism, are practically nil. We can easily observe that the top economic advisers during the Obama administration are well-known fervent apologists of neoliberal deregulation and revolving door operators. As for Trump's cronies, they are nothing more than even more vicious apparatchiks of the less than one percent oligarchy whose only goal is to flood the swamp.

Who are these apologists? Several of the same characters who eliminated the Glass-Steagall Act. First, Robert Rubin, who as Secretary of the Treasury was Clinton's economic adviser for two years and Chairman of the Board of Goldman Sachs. With Clinton he played a preponderant role in the rather controversial rescue of US investors from their speculation with Mexican treasury bonds in 1995. Not surprisingly, this was a rescue of US punters that enjoyed the full and enthusiastic support of the Mexican government. US speculators gambled with Mexican treasury bonds in pesos, known as "Tesobonos". When the peso collapsed they lost their bet. But the US decided to exert its power on its Mexican cronies to save US gamblers. The deal was to give Mexico a \$52 billion loan to bail out several thousand US financial gamblers. The cost was to be absorbed by Mexican taxpayers.¹⁸ "Serendipitously," at the end of the Clinton administration, Rubin was rewarded for his services, for having created the conditions —bypassing the Glass-Steagall Act— for the creation of Citigroup. As a result, between 1999 and 2009 Rubin served as advisor to the Board of Directors; General Manager of Citigroup (five weeks) and Chairman of the Executive Committee. Coincidentally, Banamex, the largest bank in Mexico was sold to Citibank in 2001 for \$12,1 billion dollars with the enthusiastic approval of the Mexican pupils of the Washington Consensus. During this period Rubin was widely criticised for many of his tenebrous actions that ultimately led to the Citigroup debacle, which was later bailed out by US taxpayers. This triggered a lawsuit by many investors in December 2008, who claimed that Rubin and other Citigroup executives sold them stock

¹⁷ Centre for Applied Research, Norwegian School of Economics; Global Financial Integrity; Jawaharlal Nehru University; Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos; Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research: Financial Flows and Tax Havens: Combining to Limit the Lives of Billions of People, December 2015. http://www.gfintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Financial_Flows-final.pdf

¹⁸ Alejandro Nadal, Obama: La campaña decomisada, La Jornada, 27 de agosto de 2008.

at inflated prices.¹⁹ Nefariously, since the summer of 2008, Rubin joined Obama's transition team as one of his main advisors.²⁰ It is not surprising that in a reedition of the culture of social Darwinism, a pirate such as Rubin is considered one of the most influential personages of US capitalism. For this reason almost all members of Obama's initial economic team were considered followers of the so-called "Rubinomics" and many of them had served under him.²¹

The second in hierarchy is Larry Summers — Secretary of the Treasury under Rubin and later Secretary of the Treasury when Rubin left for Citigroup — named Director of Obama's National Economic Council. During Clinton's term, Summers distinguished himself as one of the most zealous operators of the Washington Consensus, taking a prominent part in the 1995 Tesobonos outright robbery in Mexico, and the alleged rescues —via IMF— of Russia and South Korea. In those times the actions by Greenspan, Rubin and Summers persuaded Time magazine to euphemistically name them "The Committee to Save the World." Summers is also remembered for his enthusiastic collaboration with Kenneth Lay, another famous pirate of the bankrupted Enron, to press, with the help of Alan Greenspan, and California Governor Gray Davis to deregulate the electrical energy sector and relax its environmental standards, arguing that the problem was too many regulations.²² These absolutely predatory practices caused Summers to earn strong criticism from noted economists. Two Nobel prize economists, Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, and others more prone to moderation such as Jeffrey Sachs, questioned that Summers did not admit to the manipulation of electrical energy markets and the role that he and the US government and their Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) —IFM and World Bank— played in the Asian crisis at the turn of the century and in the imposition of neoliberal orthodoxy austerity on the developing world.²³

The fact that two notorious members of the high priesthood of the bubble economy had great influence on Obama's economic policy explain why the disciples of this hierarchy were put in positions of fundamental importance in Obama's economic cabinet. The first is Tim Geithner, as Secretary of the Treasury and Peter Orszag, Budget Director. Geithner was Undersecretary of the Treasury for international affairs under Rubin and under Summers and President of the Federal Reserve of New York. Orszag was an advisor to the Clinton Advisory Council and later one of its economic advisers. According to the New York Times, Orszag is also a protege of Robert Rubin.²⁴

These appointments attest to the continuum of the marketocratic ethos dictated by the institutional investors that own the system both on its metropolises and on its periphery. In the US, since the return to neoclassical economics in its current neoliberal version, beginning forcefully with Reagan, the trend has been an unrelenting push to impose policies designed to benefit the less than one-percent oligarchy in detriment of the rest. It does not matter whether the governments are Democratic or Republican, for economic policy designed for the benefit of the "Robber Baron" class only varies in the overtones but not on its fundamental structure to sustain and protect the privileges of the less than one percent.

This permeates across the world through the customary centre-periphery relationship both in developed and so-called developing economies. In the European Union there is much opposition to the calls to enact a European Glass-Steagall law.²⁵ Some argue that the idea of structural separation in banking is an old-fashioned, rules-based approach for what

¹⁹ Martha Graybow, "Investors accuse Citi execs of "suspicious" trades". Reuters. 3 de diciembre de 2008.

²⁰ Eric Dash y Lousie Stoy, Rubin Leaving Citigroup; Smith Barney for Sale, The New York Times, 10 de enero de 2009

²¹ Time Topics, Robert E. Rubin, New York Times, extracted on 6 April 2009.

²² Alex Gibney, Larry Summers' Enron Problem. The Daily Beast, 12 de noviembre de 2008.

²³ Jonathan Chait, Shoeless Joe Stiglitz, The American Prospect, 30 November 2002

²⁴ Jackie Calmes. The New team, Peter R. Orszag, The New York Times, 19 November 2008.

²⁵ Editorial, Page (July 3, 2012). "Restoring trust after Diamond". Financial Times. Retrieved 15 July 2012. quoting FT Editorial Page.

should be, under the capital add-ons of Basel III and its Pillar II, a matter of supervisory discretion.²⁶ They support discretionary measures, the preferred neoliberal do nothing idea, so that nothing really changes. Indeed, since 2010 governments everywhere have enthusiastically surrendered themselves to adopting the policies demanded by financial market speculators, which have been materialising in the form of less labour rights, less social benefits, in the form of lower retirement benefits, and of other remnants of the quasi defunct Welfare State. The entirely undemocratic policies of the “troika” in Europe and particularly in Greece are emblematic of the sheer power of imposition of the market agents, and of the complete contempt for any attempt for the democratic say of the people in the decisions to be taken on its behalf, which have a paramount weight on their livelihoods.²⁷ In true democracy, the Demos would demand that such an important issue as the separation in banking would be submitted, after a period of objective information, to a referendum. However, the market agents in the US, in the utterly undemocratic European Commission —which is not a body elected by the Demos— and elsewhere have adamantly operated to stop any attempt for the direct involvement of the Demos in the decision making of the public matter, such as the regulation of the financial sector. Instead, they have unrelentingly consolidated the dictatorship of investors.²⁸ Yanis Varoufakis, the former Greek finance minister during the brief attempt to build a truly democratic ethos to address Greece’s severe crisis, shared with the public a clear example of the blatant disregard for a truly democratically sanctioned mandate and sovereignty when Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany’s finance minister, representing the centre, blatantly told Varoufakis, representing one peripheral country, that Elections cannot be allowed to change an economic programme of a member state!²⁹

Another perfect case of market agents working for the owners of the system both in the centre and in the periphery just took place as I wrote these lines. The US less than one-percent senate just voted to kill a new rule that was to allow class-action lawsuits against banks. This rule would have allowed the US citizenry to file class-action suits against banks instead of being forced in many cases into private arbitration. The latter is the standard that financial institutions and many other sectors that provide products or services to consumers have imposed on them because that provides far reaching leverage to companies by imposing asymmetric conditions in their favour when a dispute is in contention. Consumers are forced to give up their right to sue a company if they want to do business with them. Evidence shows that private arbitration panels tend to favour companies. The rule voted down was unveiled by the US government’s Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (created by Obama and now put down by Trump) to give to average people more power to fight industry abuses, such as Wells Fargo & Co.’s creation of millions of unauthorised accounts or the recent massive data breach at credit reporting company Equifax.³⁰

Trump’s government acted immediately to crush the rule on behalf of its true constituents, the owners of the system. Arbitration is not only used against people when they act as consumers. It is also being used against people in their role as workers. Employers are forcing arbitration against their workers, which is used to prevent employees from seeking justice in court when disputes arise in the workplace. Arbitration is again a form of private dispute resolution in which the employer and employees submit their dispute to professional private arbitrators. According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), arbitrators are supposed to hear both sides’ positions and decide who wins. The arbitrator’s decision is legally binding and generally non-appealable in court—meaning, it’s final. As in the case of banks, customarily, the arbitrator deciding the dispute is chosen by the employer. According to the EPI, in the US these legal agreements are becoming more and more common in the private sector. Between 1992 and today, the share of employees subject to

²⁶ Karel Lannoo: A European Glass_Steagall to preserve the single market, CEPS Commentary, 24 January 2014.

²⁷ Debt Truth Committee: Truth Committee on Public Debt, Preliminary Report, June 2015.

²⁸ Éric Toussaint: Bankocracy, Resistance Books and IIRE, CADTM, 2015

²⁹ The long read – Yanis Varoufakis: Why we must save the EU, The Guardian, Tuesday 5 April 2016.

³⁰ Jim Puzzanghera: Senate votes to kill new rule allowing class-action lawsuits against banks after Pence casts deciding vote. Los Angeles Times, 25 October 2017.

forced arbitration has increased from just two percent to 56 percent in the private sector, tantamount to 60 million employees. In other words, the labour rights of almost three-fifths of US workers are violated by their employers, given that they are forced to give up their right to take their disputes to court.³¹ Arbitration panels are also the standard used in trade agreements in the form of investor-state dispute settlements. Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a notable example. Countries give up their judicial systems and any dispute brought forward by an investor has to be settled through arbitration panels, typically through the arbitration rules of the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Arbitration panels are typically composed of private law firms that make a business of this practice and that have gained a reputation for siding with companies.

This has created a global moral hazard, which concurrently dramatically accelerates corruption and a feeling of enjoying impunity among the cadres of market agents both in the centre and in the periphery. Paul Krugman described moral hazard as any situation in which one person makes the decision about how much risk to take, while someone else bears the cost if things go badly.³² This is exactly what happened in the economic recession that began in 2008, when the institutional investors were bailed out — because they were “too big to fail” — by the US and EU governments. By doing this, central banks or other institutions encourage risky lending in the future if those that take the risks believe that they will be completely rescued or will not have to carry the full burden of potential losses. This is just what happened when the US forced Mexican taxpayers to bail out US investors of “tesobonos”; an act that send a clear signal that they could continue to take high risks and feel secure. Moral hazard also occurs in the political arena in the US-Mexico relationship.

The Mexican oligarchy knows that as long as it continues to act as a pupil of its tutor, by following the economic and social policies that fulfil the US imperial interests, they are free to do anything they need to remain in power. They can commit, as they have systematically and customarily done, the most blatant and overt electoral violations to win the elections. They can brazenly violate the most basic human rights of the Mexican citizenry to crush social unrest and they can confidently bank on being endorsed and supported, time and time again, by the US government. Hence they perceive very little risk in maintaining the Mexican citizenry oppressed and pauperised. This is a classic of the centre-periphery relationship across the world. The oligarchic members on both sides of the system collude to exploit their people and their natural resources by following the tune outlined by the metropolises of the system.

The careful crafting of a deceitful narrative about Mexico as a fundamental element in pursuit of the US geopolitical national interest

A fundamental element in the pursuit of a global power's geopolitical interest is to manipulate the truth or simply make up blatant lies to instil in public opinion the perception that a power regards as the most effective to carry out the actions that will materialise its so-called “national interest”. This is how the US has customarily crafted carefully deceitful narratives of countries' realities to fulfil its imperial interest. ***When a government wants to carry out actions that cannot be morally justified, according to the prevailing moral standards of its citizenry, it always resorts to making up a narrative filled with half truths or exclusively outright lies to justify its policies.*** Frederick Ponsonby is credited with the saying *when war is declared, truth is the first casualty*, which is in fact an axiomatic adage. Indeed, the United States has been at war for most of its history and it has certainly played tribute to Ponsonby's adage to materialise its national interests. However, nations do not need to be at war and the US has certainly not needed to be at war to build deceitful narratives about specific countries in line with its agenda for each country, for the standard

³¹ Alexander J.S. Covin: The growing use of mandatory arbitration. Economic Policy Institute, report 27 September 2017.

³² Paul Krugman; *The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008*. W.W. Norton Company Limited, 2009.

practice is to build completely deceitful narratives to fulfil the goals of a nation. This is the level of perversity, malfeasance, hypocrisy and cynicism that prevails in foreign relations among all nations.

In the case of the United States and Mexico, the US narrative starts with the US “doctrine” of *manifest destiny* to justify its expansion to the West by taking by force nearly a million square miles from Mexico, or 55% of its territory, through the annexation of Texas and the US war against Mexico. *Our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allowed by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions*, according to John L. O’Sullivan, editor of the Democratic Review in his article “Annexation” in 1845,³³ which meant the spread of Anglo-Saxon multiplying millions. From inception, the US only had enmity towards Spain’s possessions in the Americas and later towards the new republics. One year after Mexico consolidated its independence from Spain in 1821, Monroe sent Joel R. Poinsett, a sort of plenipotentiary envoy to Mexico, on a secret mission to assess the political situation there with the ulterior motive of taking as much territory as possible from Mexico’s northern regions. Hence he discussed with the head of Mexico’s foreign relations commission, Francisco Azcaráte, by drawing a line on a map, the possibility of the secession of Texas, New Mexico, the Californias, and parts of the states of Sonora, Coahuila and Nuevo León with the argument that the territories were so distant from Mexico’s centre that he was convinced that they should be absorbed by the US. This was evidently a rather conniving demeanour given that the Mexican territories were even more distant from the US centre, namely Washington, New York and Boston. Azcaráte disregarded it and later sought to ratify the Adams-Onís treaty of 1819, delineating the boundaries between the US and Mexico.³⁴

In a country where racism is deep-seated in its culture from inception, for its so-called founding fathers were a cadre of noted slaving landowners, its demeanour vis-à-vis Mexico has always been anchored on a mix of racism and despise. The dominant view at the time of the aggression against Mexico was that the Anglo-Saxon race was *separate, innately superior and destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity and Christianity to the American continents and the world*. It also believed that *inferior races were doomed to subordinate status or extinction*.³⁵ Senator Calhoun said to his fellow congressmen in favour of the war against Mexico that *We have conquered many of the ... tribes of Indians, but we never thought of ...incorporating them into our Union. They have either been left as an independent people amongst us, or been driven into the forests. . . . [W]e have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race-the free white race. To incorporate Mexico, would be. . . incorporating an Indian race; for more than half of the Mexicans are Indians, and the other is composed chiefly of mixed tribes. I protest against such a union as that! Ours. . . is the Government of a white race*.³⁶

That is why when California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, most of today’s Colorado and small portions of Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming were robbed from Mexico and were made part of the US, there were many documented incidents of expulsion of Mexicans who were born in these territories or had chosen to remain in them,³⁷ with their lands raided and stolen by brute force and with many submitted to peonage or outright slavery as in the case of Texas.³⁸ ***There is also the scarcely known incident of the “illegal” –a favourite term amongst today’s anti-immigrant apologists of Trump’s hate mongering obsessions– and certainly unconstitutional expulsion and deportation of up to two million people of Mexican descent beginning in 1929, of which at least 60% were US***

³³ Howard Zinn: A People’s History of the United States 1492 to present, Harper Collins Publishers 2003

³⁴ José Fuentes Mares: Poinsett – Historia de una Gran Intriga, Ediciones Océano, 1982.

³⁵ Reginald Horsman: Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism, Harvard University Press, 1986.

³⁶ Jean Stefancic: Terrace v. Thompson and the legacy of Manifest Destiny, Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons, 2012.

³⁷ Howard Zinn: A People’s History of the United States 1492 to present, Harper Collins Publishers 2003

³⁸ Héctor Figueroa: Mexican American Workers in the United States: A Profile, NACLA Report on the Americas, Nov/Dec 96, Vol. 30 Issue 3,

citizens by birth. Indeed, taking advantage of the 1929 Great Depression, US Mexicans were used as scapegoats under the false flag of taking jobs from workers. Given that in this narrative Mexicans were stereotyped as *unclean, improvident, indolent, and innately dull*,³⁹ it was easy for President Hoover to fulfil the demands of organised labour and other groups. This was anchored on existing racial/nativist sentiments that regarded northern Europeans as the “natives” of US territories. The Saturday Evening Post ran a series about the racial inferiority of Mexicans⁴⁰, that was echoed by many political groups and a variety of farmers, progressives, labour unions, eugenicists, and outright racists to call for restrictions on Mexican immigration. Their propaganda was of course competition for jobs and the cost of public assistance for indigents, but racism was the underlying and overriding factor.⁴¹



This was a blatant —but not unprecedented— violation of the most basic human rights committed by the US government against a portion of its citizens, but it was also a blatant violation of the US constitution.⁴² However, history has shown that this is only another case in US history of endemic racism. The internment of over a hundred thousand US citizens of Japanese descent in concentration camps during World War II is another major case of endemic racism, where those who were as little as one-sixteenth Japanese⁴³ and orphaned infants with *one drop of Japanese blood* were placed in internment camps, as if they could pose a threat to the benevolent Anglo-Saxons and related groups.⁴⁴

Parting from the US inherently racist DNA, its southern neighbour has customarily been depicted as a backward country whose people are inferior to the US citizenry in almost every aspect of life. This is instilled sometimes subtly and sometimes overtly in US culture through media and education. A personal experience allowed me to witness directly a depiction of Mexico in seventh grade in a junior high school in Maryland. The curriculum of a seventh grade geography class required students to get acquainted for the first time with the countries in the Americas. Mexico was presented through a ten minute film. The entire film exclusively showed a peasant and his wife in their tiny landhold in an impoverished part of Mexico. All we saw was the peasant tilling the land, his shack house, his wife and his burro. Then, after a long day of work, he would sit on a rock outside his shack to play the guitar right next to his wife and his burro. This is how Mexico was depicted to seventh-grade students in a Maryland junior high in 1967. As young as I was, I sensed that such a biased narrative of Mexico was not accidental but intentional propaganda to depict Mexico as an extremely backward country. Why? I could not find a reason that would make sense to me at the time. However, the rationale behind such intention was to accommodate the national agenda to elicit among US citizens a very low esteem of developing countries in general and of the neighbour to the South in particular. In this way, the national interest to intervene in the US “backyard”, whenever it was deemed convenient, was to be much easier. The less cognisant the

³⁹ Abraham Hoffman: *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939*, The University of Arizona Press, 1974.

⁴⁰ Vicki L. Ruiz: *Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁴¹ Neil Betten and Raymond A. Mohl: *"From Discrimination to Repatriation: Mexican Life in Gary, Indiana, during the Great Depression"*. *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 42 No. 3, Aug., 1973.

⁴² Christine Valenciana: *Unconstitutional Deportation of Mexican Americans During the 1930s*, a Family History & Oral History, Multicultural Education Publisher: Caddo Gap Press, 22 March 2006.

⁴³ Lily Havey, *Short History of Amache Japanese Internment*. Retrieved from [New World Encyclopedia](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Japanese_American_internment): Japanese American Internment. Archived from the original, retrieved 25 October, 2017.

⁴⁴ SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION – National Museum of American History: *Removal process*, *A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the US Constitution*, retrieved from <http://amhistory.si.edu> on 26 October 2017.

general population is about a country, the lower the esteem and thus the less opposition to US foreign policy in Mexico and the rest of the Americas.

Mexicans were depicted in popular US journals and newspapers as an “uncivilised species—dirty, unkempt, immoral, diseased, lazy, unambitious and despised for being peons” (González, 2004: 8). Through constant repetition, a racialised identity of the non-American (sic), “unkempt” Mexican was constructed, along with a US identity considered civilised and democratic despite its engagement in oppression, exploitation, and economic domination of Mexico. Consequently, the hegemonic discourse provided a veil for “imperial encounters,” turning them into missions of salvation rather than conquests, or in Mexico’s case, economic control (Doty, 1996; Rodríguez, 2005).⁴⁵

In line with such demeanour, the deportation of millions of Mexicans in the 1930s was depicted through propaganda as a “Repatriation” to their “homeland”, which was supposed to be Mexico: *“Repatriation” was a propaganda term created by the local agencies to mask the unconstitutional deportation of Mexicans, many who were legal residents and had lived in the United States for decades along with their American (sic)-born children⁴⁶ This policy was presented as a way to stop a draining of government funding and to rid the country of those who were not “real” Americans (sic).*⁴⁷ This shameful episode has been hidden for a long time and thus it is scarcely covered in school textbooks. In a 2006 survey of the nine most commonly used history textbooks, four did not mention the issue, and only one devoted more than half a page to the topic. In total, four pages addressed the repatriation issue directly affecting up to two million people. By comparison, the same survey found eighteen pages covering the Japanese internment camps,⁴⁸ which affected 120 thousand people. This particular dark chapter of US history about US citizens being “illegally” expelled to Mexico was presented for the first time to US audiences on national television by PBS on November 2003.⁴⁹

After the great westward expansion of the US, its vocation for manifest destiny never stopped and with a two-thousand mile border with Mexico it never stopped intervening directly on Mexican affairs. The majority of the citizenry in the US does not embrace the idea of its nation as imperialist for it evidently carries a context of oppression, conquest and dominance over the people of other nations. Nonetheless, a central part of the imperial agenda is to instil in people a feeling of superiority, but by hiding its inherent imperial streak. Instead, the standard narrative is to claim that the country is a source of good. The intention is to instil in its people’s consciousness that the so-called home of the free and the brave is the beacon of democracy that was endowed –by God– with the power to bring freedom and democracy to the rest of the world. The mythology of US greatness is anchored on basic ideas that make its people believe that its country is the best in the world, that keeps the world safe, that is full of compassion and ready to help countries achieve freedom, democracy and prosperity by getting rid of their oppressors and that it is always one step ahead of the rest in foreseeing potential problems for humanity. This is the narrative of so-called “US Exceptionalism”. Jessica Mathews, former President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who also served in the State Department and on the National Security Council staff in the White House, describes this vision unambiguously: *American (sic) contributions to international security, global economic growth, freedom, and human well-being have been so self-evidently unique and have been so clearly directed to others’ benefit that Americans (sic) have long believed that the US amounts to a different*

⁴⁵ Armando Ibarra and Alfredo Carlos: Mexican mass labor migration in a not-so changing political economy. *Ethnicities* 2015, Vol. 15(2) 211–233 !The Author(s) 2015. Sage Publications.

⁴⁶ Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez: *Decade of betrayal: Mexican repatriation in the 1930s*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.

⁴⁷ Christine Valenciana: *Unconstitutional Deportation of Mexican Americans During the 1930s*, a Family History & Oral History, Multicultural Education Publisher: Caddo Gap Press, 22 March 2006.

⁴⁸ Kasie Hunt: Some stories hard to get in history books, *USA Today*, 5 April 2006.

⁴⁹ Francisco E. Valderrama: The Emergence of Unconstitutional Deportation and Repatriation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as a Public Issue, *Radical History Review* Fall 2005.

kind of country. Where others push their national interests, the US tries to advance universal principles. As she argues, the extreme of this vision is that the US should not be bound by international rules, but be in a position above the rest of the world.⁵⁰

This is systematically reinforced by the imperial order emanating from the most prominent establishment's journals of opinion and then disseminated through all kinds of popular media outlets, electronic or printed. For instance, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, concerned about the US decline, the authors called for a retrenchment on the practice of *dispatching forces around the world for humanitarian missions*. They were concerned about imperial decline due to a *weakened economic condition, because the United States' economic supremacy is no longer assured, and this uncertainty will reduce its geopolitical dominance*. The context is evidently that the *raison d'être* for US geopolitical dominance is its humanitarian mission. Such propaganda mission is unrelentingly spread like a gospel through mass media. Conversely, in Mexico and the rest of the continent the US is generally perceived as an empire devoted to the exploitation of the people of all the nations in the American continent and the world. It is also perceived as abusive in the appropriation of the name of the continent as the name of its citizens, since all the people of the nations of the Americas consider themselves Americans as well. By the same token, the "West" is another term appropriated by the US that excludes the rest of the Americas.⁵¹ This is completely irrelevant for the imperial order to be sure, because it has been extremely successful in indoctrinating the vast majority of the US citizenry to think of its country as America and the greatest source of good.⁵² The imperial streak is never publicised, but is recorded in the annals of US foreign policy. In a declassified Department of State paper of 1948 reviewing current trends, the imperial streak was outlined blatantly by George Kennan, at the time Director of the Policy Planning Staff. He argued that the US has half of the world's wealth but only 6,3% of its population. Henceforth, *our real task... is to maintain this position of disparity, and, to do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction. We should cease to talk about vague and... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratisation*.⁵³

Indeed, rhetorical democracy is only allowed if it fits the imperial agenda of world domination. Consequently, ***Mexico would never have a chance to pursue its own destiny by removing its US backed oligarchic elite and building a truly democratic ethos in pursuit of the welfare of the vast majority of citizens. The imperial agenda, from the outset, designated Mexico to be its most logical fiefdom given its geopolitical situation. Thus Mexicans would be doomed to fulfil the serfdom needs of the US imperial domination as modern slave workers, both as immigrants and domestically in what is left of its territory.***

There are other economic assessments that attempt to explain the causes of immigration other than plainly due to imperialism. One is part of neoclassical economic theory, which, as expected, looks at immigration as an individual choice, where migrants go through a decision process to migrate or not and where to migrate based on comparative

⁵⁰ Jessica T. Mathews: *The Road from Westphalia*, *The New York Review of Books*, 19 March, 2015.

⁵¹ Very few in the Americas would refer to America as the Western Hemisphere, a nomenclature used in the US to refer to the continent so that "America" can be used for its own. In the same way, and in contradiction with the Western Hemisphere narrative, the "West" or "Western World" in the US has been appropriated to refer to Europe, the Anglosphere (US, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and Israel. The rest of the Americas tends to be culturally excluded (particularly in intellectual circles) and is not considered part of the West. This is so despite the fact that its entire legal system is based on Roman Law, its education is anchored on the Greek and Latin corpus that was brought to the Americas by Spain, Portugal and France, and its languages are romance languages. Essentially, it can be argued convincingly that the Latin countries are far closer to the Western tradition emanating from Greece and Rome than the various barbarian tribes that inhabited northern Europe and were not part of the Roman Empire, such as the Teutonic, Scandinavian and Slavic tribes.

⁵² Joseph M. Parent and Paul K. MacDonald: *The Wisdom of Retrenchment*, *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 6, November/December 2011, pp 32-47..

⁵³ Memo by George Kennan, Head of the US State Department Policy Planning Staff. Written February 28, 1948, Declassified June 17, 1974. George Kennan, "Review of Current Trends, US Foreign Policy, Policy Planning Staff, PPS No. 23. Top Secret. Included in the US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, volume 1, part 2 (Washington DC Government Printing Office, 1976), 509-529.

cost-benefit expectations between the home country and various host countries as well as the labour question of demand and supply (Borjas 1994).⁵⁴ They ignore however why they want to migrate, what are the root causes that push the potential migrants to look at various scenarios of migration. They argue the reason for migrating is based on economic and political factors in the home country but ignore the root causes of such factors (Hanson, Scheve, Slaughter and Spilimbergo 2001). For instance, they argue that *the immigrant's decision to leave his or her country of birth is one with substantial costs and risks. More often than not it is a decision born of economic and political instability in that country. Consequently, setting immigration policy in part defines a nation's strategy for responding to political violence and repression around the world and addressing the acute poverty that often accompanies such instability.*⁵⁵ However, they do not ask themselves the root causes of such political stability and repression, which may very well be in many countries a combination of exogenous and endogenous causes, which in the case of Mexico is the collusion of the centre-periphery elites to exploit the labour pool. The US is a direct actor and stakeholder, along with the Mexican oligarchy, in the prevailing ethos of political instability and repression; but the authors choose to ignore the blatant evidence and instead opt for justifying the host country's strategy to respond to such situation.

Another perspective is based on cultural traditions and the idea of social capital theory. This perspective formed out of a secular tradition that in the case of the US and Mexico created a “North American migration system”. The system began to emerge in the XIX century and was already well established by the 1960s because of deep-rooted migrant networks. According to this narrative, this migration system was altered by US immigration reform in 1986 that caused the established networks to be transformed from a circular flow of male Mexican workers going to three states into a much larger settled population of Mexican families living in 50 states (Massey 2011).⁵⁶ However, once again, the genesis explaining why Mexicans migrated to three or fifty states from their homeland are not addressed. In a later paper Massey talks about a new element that is affecting negatively the “US-Mexico immigration system”, which is the *self-interested actions of politicians, pundits, and bureaucrats who benefit from the social construction and political manufacture of immigration crises when none really exist.*⁵⁷ ***Nonetheless, as is customary, the structural causes of why Mexican migrants decided to leave their homeland in pursuit of an uncertain and perilous future are not addressed. It seems that the more than evident imperialist agenda that the US has exerted over Mexico to make it a supplier of cheap labour on both sides of the border is never addressed. It appears that this chapter of the imperial agenda, anchored on a premeditatedly created “modern-slave-work system” in collusion with the Mexican oligarchy, that began to develop in the last quarter of the XIX century and has continued ever since, is never truly evident.*** The above notwithstanding, as Mexico continues to reverse the social and economic progress achieved during the thirty-year postwar period, as a result of NAFTA and extreme neoliberalism —with inequality and poverty returning to levels reminiscent of Diaz’s thirty-five year dictatorship (1876-1911)— the imperialist perspective through a centre-periphery partnership —the root cause of Mexico’s demise— is gaining a lot of traction among scholars⁵⁸ and anglo activist working at the grass-root level in the US.

⁵⁴ George Borjas: The Economics of Immigration, Journal of Economic Literature Vol. XXXII (December 1994), pp. 1667–1717

⁵⁵ Gordon H. Hanson, Gordon Kenneth F. Scheve, Kenneth, Matthew J. Slaughter, Matthew and Antonio Spilimbergo: Immigration and the US Economy: Labor-Market Impacts, Illegal Entry, and Policy Choices (May 2001). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=296108> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.296108>

⁵⁶ Douglas S. Massey: Chain Reaction: The Causes and Consequences of America’s War on Immigrants. Julian Simon Lecture Series, 2011.

⁵⁷ Douglas S. Massey: A Missing Element in Migration Theories, Migration Letters, Volume: 12, No: 3, pp. 279-299, September 2015

⁵⁸ Armando Ibarra and Alfredo Carlos: Mexican mass labour migration in a not-so changing political economy, Ethnicities, 2015. Vol. 15(2) 211-233.

- *The Bracero Programme*

By comparison, in Mexico the collusion between US imperialism and the Mexican “robber baron” oligarchy, as the root cause of Mexico’s depredation and pauperisation, has always been the predominant vision in general opinion. The fact is that the US showed imperialist aspirations almost from inception. It was first manifested blatantly in the US war on Mexico of 1845 and later with the US war against Spain in 1898, with the capture of the remnants of the Spanish empire in Asia and the Caribbean. In Mexico the vision of the US intending to exert a hegemonic control over Mexico began almost right after the US Civil War. William S. Rosecrans, a politician and profiteer and US minister to Mexico, very much involved in the promotion of US railroads into Mexico, talked clearly about the need to push US companies into Mexico as a means of *peaceful conquest of the Country*, particularly of railroads and oil which were his favourite industries.⁵⁹

This perception was reinforced when many Mexicans were also uprooted from their communities as a result of the predatory practices of the Mexican and US robber barons of the Gilded Age and began to migrate to the US almost right after the end of the US Civil War. Indeed, Mexican workers and particularly farm workers always had a presence in the US since the last quarter of the XIX century. This was the first institutionalisation of Mexican labour migration into the US. Tens of thousands of Mexican workers accounted for a big share of the work force in the expansion of the railroad companies in the Midwest and Southwest between 1870 and 1930.⁶⁰ Many Mexicans also crossed into the US to work in agriculture, railroads and mining during the Mexican civil war of 1910-1917. After WWI, the 1917 Immigration Act restricted admission to *persons... who have been induced ... to migrate to this country by offers or promises of employment*. This prompted California farmers to argue with the US Department of Labour the need to *admit temporarily otherwise inadmissible aliens* —a rather derogatory term that is still used in official practice— to work on their farms. This was in fact the first “bracero programme”. As could be expected, the deal was poorly regulated and allowed many abuses resembling the system imposed in Mexico during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, where workers were permanently indebted to their masters in the haciendas. Workers had to buy from the hacienda-owned stores and always had to borrow, for their wages were never enough to buy the minimum necessary to survive. In the same way, in the 1920s Mexican farm workers experienced discrimination in the US and many ended with debt and no savings because of the loans they had at the farmer-owned stores.⁶¹



With the US involvement in WWII, the shortage of workers, particularly in agriculture, forced the US to create an agreement with the Mexican government to import labour to fulfil the demand. This was the Mexican Farm labour agreement, commonly known as the “Bracero Programme.” The unusual shortage of labour had given way in 1942 to a new bracero agreement, yet it lasted twenty-three years until 1964, creating a constant flow of migrant workers, accounting for almost five million during the period.

This is perhaps the most paradigmatic case of centre-periphery collusion for the exploitation of workers. The high shortage of labour in the US gave way to an agreement for Mexican farm and railroad workers. The latter ended after the war but the farming agreement was extended. After the war many seasonal workers returned to Mexico but many

⁵⁹ Gilbert G. González: *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico, and Mexican Immigrants, 1880–1930*, University of Texas Press, 2004.

⁶⁰ Jeffrey Marcos Garcilazo: *Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers in the United States, 1870–1930*, University of North Texas Press, 2016.

⁶¹ Philip L. Martin: *Promise Unfulfilled: Unions, Immigration, and Farm Workers*. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2003.

decided to remain in the US,⁶² becoming the forebears of millions of US citizens of Mexican descent. The agreement received much criticism on both sides of the border. In the US many had the customary view that Mexicans were taking jobs from the “natives”. Others argued that the programme encouraged other workers to migrate without the proper permits after the yearly quotas had been filled. In Mexico public opinion considered that the exodus of Mexican workers would generate a negative image of the country. It was also argued that it made evident the failure of Mexico's socioeconomic structures after the agrarian reforms of the Mexican revolution to provide decent livelihoods for millions of families; and there was also concern in the Catholic Church about the influence of Anglo-Saxon culture, with lower standards and the influence of protestant missionaries that would end the virtual monopoly the Church had on Mexican religious believers.⁶³

The above notwithstanding, and in contrast with the first programme, the new programme required employers to pay a “decent” wage of thirty cents an hour (the same minimum wage paid to US citizens), plus decent living conditions, namely sanitation, adequate shelter and food. However, as could be expected, many employers preferred to hire undocumented workers to save the transportation cost from Mexico and many Mexican workers also sought this arrangement to avoid paying bribes in Mexico to get on the recruitment lists. The end result was that in some years more undocumented workers were hired than documented ones. In 1949, 20.000 Mexican workers received contracts but over 87.000 “had their backs dried out” at the border. This was done through a process pejoratively called “drying out the wetbacks,” which involved taking them to the Mexico-US border to get documented and then returned to the farms where they worked.⁶⁴

In comparison with the first bracero programme of the 1920s, the second programme had many regulations that stipulated equal and “decent” treatment to workers. Nevertheless, workers were systematically cheated and discriminated. Workers were frequently underpaid, and living conditions were below what was stipulated in their contracts. This prompted many strikes, including one where both Mexican and Japanese workers united to strike.⁶⁵

This was clearly an employment system of legalised “modern slave work” practices. Lee G. Williams, responsible for the programme at the Department of Labour, described it as a system of “legalised slavery”.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the cheating, exploitation and stealing was also enthusiastically carried out by the US periphery partner next door. Evidently, Mexican workers were seeking a living in the US because social conditions back home —under Mexico's customary system of exploitation— guaranteed them a life of deprivation. The Mexican government knew quite well that Mexican workers were also going to be discriminated and exploited in the US, albeit not to the extent they were in Mexico. For the Mexican robber barons, the programme acted as a safety valve to relieve the prospect of social unrest. However, they attempted to get a share of the business by cheating the Mexican workers with their wages. As part of the programme between 1942 and 1948, workers were forced to accept a mandatory deduction of 10 percent of their pay for savings accounts that they were supposedly “guaranteed” to receive upon their return to Mexico at the end of their contracts. Most railroad workers received their savings, most likely because they were unionised in Mexico; but for farm workers the reimbursement never happened. Sixty years later they were still fighting the Mexican government through lawsuits.⁶⁷ The funds were supposedly deposited in an account with Wells Fargo for

⁶² Manuel García y Griego: The importation of Mexican contract laborers to the United States, 1942-1964 : antecedents, operation, and legacy. La Jolla, Calif. : Program in United States-Mexican studies, University of California, San Diego, 1981.

⁶³ Alberto Hernández Hernández: Transformaciones Sociales y Cambio Religioso en la Frontera Norte de México, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005.

⁶⁴ Philip L. Martin: Promise Unfulfilled: Unions, Immigration, and Farm Workers. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2003.

⁶⁵ Jerry García: Gilberto García, editors: Memory, community and activism : Mexican migration and labor in the Pacific Northwest, JSRI Books, Michigan State University Press, 2005.

⁶⁶ Southern Poverty Law Centre,: Guestworker Programs in the United States, 18 February 2013.

⁶⁷ México Migrante: Buscan recuperar fondos del Programa Bracero, 20 de abril de 2009.

fourteen years, accruing to about 700 million dollars. Subsequently, they were transferred to a government's bank for rural and cattle raising credit. But the bank merged with another government bank and the government did not fulfil its part of the bargain.⁶⁸ Lawsuits were presented in federal courts in California documenting the malfeasance with the savings deductions. They did not prosper because the Mexican bank never operated in the US.⁶⁹ Finally, the Mexican government opened a fideicomiso (trusteeship) to pay workers up to the equivalent of about \$3,500,00 as "support," provided they could prove they were part of the programme between 1942 and 1948.⁷⁰ By 2012 the government had a total count of two hundred thousand beneficiaries.⁷¹ It is estimated that, accruing interest, half a billion dollars is owed to the ex-braceros.⁷²

The many strikes that were triggered by this indenture ethos gave fruition to the United Farm Workers Union (UFW) founded by Mexican immigrants and led by Cesar Chávez in 1965, one year after the end of the bracero programme. After the end of this programme the US government managed temporary work through the H-2 visa for temporary workers and changed, since 1986, to the H-2A visa for temporary or seasonal agricultural work. Workers in capitalism have always been treated as disposable labour units in as much as possible, but migrant workers were treated in the US far worse and customarily cheated and discriminated as previously noted. The H-2A visa constitutes a "slaving straight jacket" for migrant workers. The visa allows them to work with only a designated employer who must cover all expenses for the workers such as transportation and housing. However, if the employer does not comply, the worker cannot seek employment at another farm. He is also afraid of complaining for he risks being expelled without a legal permit and he can be reported to immigration enforcement for deportation procedures.⁷³

Migration to the US since the end of the second bracero programme continued steadily and mostly to work in agriculture until the 1980s, but not at the preceding level. This was due to the fact that the post-war period, until the mid 1970s, was the best period of economic growth and social improvement in Mexico's history, as it consolidated its import-substitution strategy. Between 1959 and 1970 real GDP grew at its most powerful pace, averaging 7,1% with inflation only at 2,9%. Since the 1940s the middle class expanded in a very meaningful way. Real wages in general grew steadily, until reaching their best position ever in the mid seventies. Yet, the exodus to the US receded but did not stop because wages were still not enough to guarantee a dignified livelihood. The programme reached its limits, and between 1970 and 1975, a year before a major devaluation, GDP grew at a still strong 5,7%, but with inflation running at 12% and with a trade balance deficit above 20%.⁷⁴

- *Mexico's robber barons adjustment to the neoliberal winds blowing from the US*

As earlier noted, Nixon abandoned the Gold Standard in 1971 and put an end to Keynesian demand-side economics.

Frederick Hayek and Milton Friedman gradually became the gurus of the neoliberal supply-side economic paradigm that would bring steadily, and without any real abatement, a deterioration of every aspect of life (real wages, health, education, social safety nets, security...) for the vast majority of people in the US and globally. The share of income of the top less than one percent began to super concentrate and continued this trend steadily until now. ***Inequality became and remains the main feature of the social structures both in the***

⁶⁸ Secretaría de Gobernación. Fondo de Apoyo Social para Ex-Trabajadores Migratorios Mexicanos. Auditoría Financiera y de Cumplimiento: 11-0-04100-02-0463 GB-009

⁶⁹ Philip L. Martin: Promise Unfulfilled: Unions, Immigration, and Farm Workers. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2003.

⁷⁰ Secretaría de Gobernación. Fondo de Apoyo Social para Ex-Trabajadores Migratorios Mexicanos. Auditoría Financiera y de Cumplimiento: 11-0-04100-02-0463 GB-009

⁷¹ Estados Unidos Mexicanos: Secretaría de Gobernación: Libro Blanco del Fideicomiso Fondo de Apoyo Social para Ex Trabajadores Migratorios Mexicanos 1942 - 1964 - Del 1º de diciembre de 2006 al 30 de noviembre de 2012.

⁷² Philip L. Martin: Promise Unfulfilled: Unions, Immigration, and Farm Workers. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2003.

⁷³ Emilio Godoy: México – EEUU: Las visas de la esclavitud. Interpress Services, 11 October 2017.

⁷⁴ Álvaro de Regil Castilla: México Frente a la Escoria Ladrón: Dignidad o Capitulación, La Alianza Global Jus Semper, 2010.

metropolises of the system and in the periphery, giving way to the emergence of a large segment of hundreds of millions of people that Guy Standing correctly described in his *The Precariat – The New Dangerous Class*.⁷⁵ As could be expected, Mexico's robber barons followed through with the change of paradigm and began to surreptitiously — as was done the world over— impose the structural adjustments demanded by the neoliberal Washington Consensus by the late 1970s. After Pinochet's ultra right and fascist elite, the Mexican robber barons became the best "Chicago Boys Alumni" of the Milton Friedman gospel of liberalisation and privatisation in the periphery. The flow of migrant workers to the US fleeing from endemic destitution resumed. The already well-established image in the US of Mexicans as unrelentingly backward and poor —with all the customary stereotypes— was reinforced in its narrative of Mexico, but new stereotypes were added as an excuse to meet the new needs of the imperial hegemonic agenda of neocolonialism which continues until this day.

Complementing the main depiction of Mexico as a backward and inferior country, this narrative also portrayed it as a country with leftist undertones, which from a US perspective and for the most part it was indeed true. Mexico was the only country in Iberian America that did not comply with the US demand to break relations with Cuba after Castro. Castro himself was allowed to plan and prepare from Mexico his assault on Cuba on the Granma yacht. Mexico also provided great support to Chileans after the US-backed Pinochet coup with the support of ITT, by granting immediate refugee status to many Chileans who would have otherwise been incarcerated and/or assassinated. The same demeanour was true in the case of Argentinians fleeing from the US-supported dictatorship in the 1970s. In fact, the Mexican Constitution of 1917, still rhetorically in force today, was considered quite progressive because it was the first to include social rights and it is argued that it served as the model for the Weimar Republic of 1918 and the Russian Constitution of 1919.⁷⁶

The leftist inclinations of the Mexican robber barons notwithstanding, they have been all along mostly rhetoric or have been gradually eliminated or reduced to assuage the demands of both domestic and foreign investors. Many progressive labour laws enshrined in the constitution were customarily violated in Mexico by both domestic and foreign companies. After the expropriation of the oil industry in 1938, subsequent Mexican governments were far more pro-business and apologists of the system demanded by US governments and investors. This created a cozy centre-periphery relationship where the US would tolerate the "non-aligned countries" and leftist rhetoric of the Mexican governments, mostly in its foreign relations. This was also strengthened with Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" programme of the 1960s, which sought to revolutionise the countries of the Americas through economic assistance but was generally viewed as a public relations gimmick and deemed a failure. The US fundamental interest all along has always been to ensure that the region remains under the realm of its hegemonic power as client states and not veer towards socialist economics. In the context of neocolonialism, client states are developing countries with weak democracies or autocratic governments which are economically and, when necessary, politically controlled by a centre of power; but they are not politically absorbed by the colonising power.⁷⁷ The immense natural resources of the region were and continue to be of vital importance for the US and its transnationals. Consequently, given that the Mexican governments had faithfully adhered to an import-substitution model anchored on the prevailing Keynesian paradigm winds —in support of aggregate demand— and then switched as expected to the new neoliberal winds blowing from Washington —in support of the one percent, the US felt little concern for Mexico's otherwise leftist rhetoric. This was being used mostly for domestic

⁷⁵ Precariat: social group suffering multiple forms of insecurity formed by people suffering from precarity, which is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. See: Guy Standing: *The Precariat – The New Dangerous Class*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.

⁷⁶ Gerhard Robbers (2007). *Encyclopedia of World Constitutions*, Facts on File, Inc. 2006.

⁷⁷ Álvaro J. de Regil: *The Neo-Capitalist Assault: Development with Asymmetries: The Third World and its Post-War Development Strategies*, Essay One of Part II (Asymmetric Order and Collapse), The Jus Semper Global Alliance, 2001.

propaganda about sovereign independence from its northern tutor. Hence, until the mid 1980s, Mexico had little relevance in US foreign policy. This changed in the coming decades.

The imposition of the neoliberal paradigm in Mexico through the Washington Consensus

First, ***it should be clear that the main culprit in the loss of Mexico's sovereignty has always been Mexico's corrupt political-business elite that has unrelentingly monopolised political and economic power to exploit the people and depredate Mexico's natural resources.*** Second, ***the US has certainly been complicit in such malfeasance and an avid shareholder in the financial gains that come from customarily endorsing an elite devoted to extracting as much wealth as possible from the people and Mexico's natural resources.*** The tacit arrangement is simple. The Mexican elite imposes the economic ethos that guarantees the maximisation of benefits for its members and its economic and political "tutor" and the US endorses the results of the systematic and blatantly fraudulent electoral system that guarantees the elite the monopolisation of political and economic power. Always in the context of the customary centre-periphery structures of imperialism, Mexican-US relations are carried out essentially under a tutelage system where the US becomes the true elector of the Mexican political class in power as long as they follow the policies that benefit US national interests, namely its imperial interests. This is replicated globally. ***From the US perspective, Mexico is just another client state as part of US imperial interests, publicly touted as US national interests. From Mexico's "robber baron" elite perspective, the US is both its tutor and its only true constituent, which moves Mexico's oligarchy to enthusiastically adopt the role of a US economic and political pupil.***

Since 1938, with the expropriation of the oil industry and subsequently the electrical power industry, the Mexican "robber baron" elite acquired a good degree of "sovereignty" vis-à-vis the US and other metropolises of the system. Economic industrialisation began in 1939. World War II also helped to accelerate economic industrialisation and economic policy during the postwar period centred on import substitution. This allowed Mexico to sustain a rather strong economic growth that averaged 6,2% in GDP between 1939 and 1975.⁷⁸ However, by the late 1970s Mexico was in urgent need of a progressive fiscal reform that would greatly expand the tax base and allow supporting the continued growth of aggregate demand with public investment in infrastructure and social services without incurring any meaningful public deficits. The business side of the oligarchy systematically opposed demand-side driven public spending policies. To stop the fiscal reform it induced a major devaluation through capital flight in 1976. In reaction, the Echeverría government took the risk of financing public investment with foreign debt contracted with private and multilateral banks. The subsequent government of López Portillo took on further risks by banking public investment on oil futures. Since then, currency devaluations repeated themselves constantly over three decades. If Echeverría indebted the country and the business oligarchy devalued the peso, López Portillo mortgaged Mexico's economic sovereignty. Due to the importance that the state granted to the oil sector, after the announcement that proven reserves increased almost ten fold, López Portillo took the risk of embarking on the further financing of public investment with foreign debt and desisting from pushing forward the needed fiscal reform opposed by the business elite. This placed Mexico in a rather weak position vis-à-vis the change of paradigm that was taking place in the US. The winds blowing from the North were already neoliberal. The US had already broken with Keynesianism and with the gold standard and sought to open the markets of the South for its transnationals and to consolidate the dollar as the world's de facto currency of trade in global capitalism. By suspending the convertibility of the dollar to gold at a fixed price, the other metropolises of global capitalism adopted the

⁷⁸ René Villarreal, *Industrialización, Deuda, y Desequilibrio en México (1929-2000)*, Fondo de Cultura Económica 2000.

system of floating currencies. This prevented Mexico and the rest of the developing countries from sustaining real and stable trade-based exchange rates.

As could be expected, the periphery was forced to follow through with economic neoliberalisation. Mexico's oligarchy not only abandoned supporting the generation of aggregate demand via a consistent growth of real wages, but also surrendering its sovereignty over economic, foreign and social policies and food sourcing, and subjecting itself to the ten commandments of the so-called "Washington Consensus". Its ten commandments can be summarised into their mantra: "Stabilise, Privatised and Liberalise".⁷⁹ The essence of these commandments are to liberalise economic policy from state-driven policies and transform them into market-driven policies; hence the maketocratisation of societies. It is the privatisation of benefits and socialisation of costs. The 1976 devaluation marks the entry of the Washington Consensus, the main US imperial weapon to impose its economic hegemony on developing economies through the IMF and World Bank. Weeks after the 1976 devaluation, Mexico commits for the first time to an agreement with the IMF to stabilise the currency and finance its debt. This implies initiating a neoliberal structural adjustment that, in essence, cancels the support of the generation of aggregate demand in support of supply, ergo, of the owners of capital. It is the entrance of savage capitalism to Mexico. From a publicity perspective, the undemocratic imposition of these policies was portrayed by the Mexican government as a necessary "State Reform" which included specific prescriptions for "Economic Structural Adjustment".

Lopez Portillo does not willingly surrender to the IMF and instead bets on Mexico's newly found oil reserves. Consequently he decides to further increase the external debt and incur more deficit to sustain growth, betting on speculation with future oil sales and volatile interest rates. Additionally, he does so without the corporate elite's commitment to support domestic demand —increasing labour share of income— and the much-needed fiscal reform that would have allowed the state to keep a low deficit. Lopez Portillo further indentures Mexico's future to US national interests when he also links economic growth prospects to the relationship with the US hegemon. Washington does not immediately press Mexico to submit to the IMF prescriptions for structural adjustment to impose free trade —aimed at dismantling Mexico's demand-side imports-substitution development strategy. However, it does ensure that in return Mexico will fulfil its desire to support its strategic oil reserve. This decision commits Mexico to produce crude for the United States for times of contingency rather than to produce and export as defined by a rational strategic plan that is not centred on the export of a commodity with very little added value.

The devaluation of 1976 generates an external imbalance that prevents maintaining the imports-substitution model in the period 76-82. Concurrently, the decision to overvalue the peso generates an aggregate demand that exceeds the domestic capacity to produce consumer goods. This increases the trade deficit in a sustained manner when imports of consumer goods soared. The stage of import substitution starts being replaced by the stage of import restitution. Oil revenues, foreign investment and manufacturing and agricultural exports are not enough, and the government uses more external debt to finance the current account deficit —betting on the increase of future oil revenues. In the end, the deficit in: (1) the trade balance —due in large part to a trade deficit in manufacturing caused by the growing consumption of imported goods, and (2) a financial services imbalance caused by the payment of interest on the external debt —with high interest rates demanded by the creditor metropolises— and a new wave of capital flight —provoked by the lack of

⁷⁹ The actual ten points developed by John Williamson, Senior Fellow, Institute for International Economics are: 1. Fiscal Discipline, 2. Reordering Public Expenditure Priorities, 3. Tax Reform, 4. Liberalising Interest Rates, 5. A Competitive Exchange Rate, 6. Trade Liberalisation, 7. Liberalisation of Inward Foreign Direct Investment, 8. Privatisation, 9. Deregulation, 10. Property Rights

confidence in economic management — generates a rather large external imbalance. This triggers a mega-devaluation of almost 500% (from 25 to 148 pesos per dollar) and the country's prostration in 1982.⁸⁰

At the end of his period, Lopez Portillo bequeathed a fourfold external debt —in relation to the debt incurred by Echeverría— exceeding \$80 billion dollars. When the economy collapses in 1982 he resorts to direct state control of the banking system and to requesting a new and urgent rescue package from the IMF. But embarking on foreign indebtedness puts debtors at the mercy of the interest of its creditors. Thus, when the economy collapsed Mexico's government fell into the trap of conditional lending imposed by the BWIs for they customarily condition any rescue lending packages to imposing the prescriptions for structural adjustment of the Washington Consensus. That implicitly and effectively ended any sovereignty over economic and social policy. Such inept economic management, drastically reduced Mexico's options by further limiting its freedom of action vis-à-vis the Washington Consensus.

It is in this way that Mexico abandons Keynesianism, not because of the ineffectiveness of the paradigm but because of four main factors/actors whose private interests combined to end endogenous development policies:

- Opposition of the business oligarchy to a comprehensive tax reform and to gradually improving labour's share of income in order to increase the generation of aggregate demand and the economies of scale of the domestic market in a sustainable way;
- Lack of technological development due to the minimal interest of governments and the private sector, which, with great shortsightedness, always preferred to import technological processes and capital goods instead of making technological development the cornerstone of a successful capitalist competitive development, as in the copy-cat strategy followed by South Korea;
- US interests in maintaining their traditional neocolonial hegemony and imposing a new centre-periphery relationship within the new world-capitalist system and their new international division of labour in which transnationals, with the opening of markets, designed their new global system of operation based on the best efficiencies for each part of the operational process, the so-called global supply chain;⁸¹
- Negligent and corrupt management of a presidential authoritarian system, determined to continue its partnership with domestic and foreign capital and determined to abandon society to the jaws of savage capitalism in order to remain in power.

Notwithstanding the inept economic management by Mexico's governments, the overriding interest of Mexico's oligarchy is to preserve the privileges they obtain by maintaining the customary centre-periphery relationship. Therefore, at the end, with the change of economic paradigm, it was the collusion of interests between Mexico's oligarchic class, the United States and the other metropolises of the system —to inject a new and even more predatory life to the old neocolonial centre-periphery relationship— which imposed the new paradigm of unrestricted support for the owners of capital on both sides of the border, and to do it behind closed doors. To be sure, it would have never crossed their minds to submit such decisions to public consultation. That would be anathema. This is how the elites on both sides of the border have kept and continue to keep their tacit agreement to permanently abjure from the most basic responsibility of any democratic society: to procure the welfare of all ranks of society, with special emphasis on the dispossessed. Moreover, the end of the period is also the transition point from the mafias of the old political guard to the mafia of the cadres of the

⁸⁰ René Villarreal, *Industrialización, Deuda, y Desequilibrio en México (1929-2000)*, Fondo de Cultura Económica 2000, pp. 405-419

⁸¹ The "New International Division of Labour", as it came to be known, captured the phenomenon of peripheral industrialisation in which a small number of less-developed countries participated in the global dispersal of production facilities by transnational corporations: Ankie Hoogvelt: *Globalization and the Postcolonial World – The New Political Economy of Development*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1997.

so-called Mexican technocrats, who were imbued with the neoliberal predatory mentality instilled in the schools of the Anglo-Saxon metropolises promoting the new era of social Darwinism.

The new technocratic cadres are the architects of today's Mexico, by any measure Mafia-State, which lacks any spirit of public service in pursuit of the welfare of the Mexican Demos. Both in the centre and in the periphery, corruption has always been a major factor in the struggle for building free and democratic societies through social contracts designed to supposedly materialise the welfare of every rank of society. Corruption in the public arena in Mexico has always been prevalent throughout its history. Nonetheless, since the emergence of the technocrats, corruption has been carried out to extremes and, in contrast with the past, deprived of any trace of national interest. This is possible given that under the new absolutely marketocratic global economic order the only object with the elites entrenched in political power is their very private benefit.

A new asymmetric ethos of imperialist recolonisation

Before we embark on the unfolding of the new imperial agenda that we are witnessing and how it is played out in Mexico, we need to make a pause to assess the conditions of the post-war global capitalist system preceding the current one. To be sure, there was no overt global capitalist system. There was a lot of economic protectionism in trade relations. However, the terms of trade arrangements were consistently global, defining an asymmetric sort of North-South tacit pact between the oligarchic elites of so-called developed and developing countries, where Mexico's relation with the US and the other metropolises of the system was clearly established.

The US sought to impose its imperialistic hegemony through a new kind of colonialism; one where economic control need not exert formal political control. Through economic and political coercion, undermining local democratic movements that aimed to free people from traditional oppression, the US established its neo-colonial empire of "Pax Americana". Colonialism is the essence at the heart of empires lasting in various degrees until the first half of the XX century." Neocolonialism was the natural prolongation of the previous state. With colonialism came the metropolises and the colonies. With neocolonialism came the centres of power and the periphery. With the periphery, political absorption was no longer necessary. In the colonies, as slavery was gradually abolished, all subjects of an empire became its citizens. But since the nationals of the colonies could now migrate to the metropolises, this became an unintended disadvantage, for the stock of the metropolises did not generally mingle with the indigenous stock of their colonies for the former were inherently racist. Evidently, the idea of having a periphery of client states fitted much better with the preferences of the centres of power. Client states are politically controlled by a centre of power but they are not politically absorbed by the colonising power. In this way modern empires could exploit the resources —including prominently labour— of their client states, extracting their raw materials and selling to them manufactured goods, without, in principle, the previous disadvantages, and still pay lip service to their clients' "new found freedom."

With the promotion of trade spearheaded by the US, on the immediate thirty-year period after WWII, the unequal terms of trade between the North and South created a clearly asymmetrical relationship that many explain as a dependency ethos.⁸² In this system the North has always acted upon the South with an exploitative nature and has forced its political will, and, when necessary, its military will, to impose the asymmetric conditions necessary for it to profit at the South's expense. It explains that the North is in need of the South's supply of raw materials and of the South's demand for the

⁸² See Raul Prebisch. The Economic Development of Latin America and the Principal Problems (New York: UN Economic Commission for Latin America, 1950: and Hans Singer: The Distribution of Gains between Investment and Borrowing Countries, American Economic Review, Supplement, May 1950.

northern manufactured goods, as well as for opportunities for investment in the South in order to sustain the growth of its economic enterprises. The terms of trade, foreign investment and aid are asymmetrical and, in the end, tend to extract a net benefit for the North. This is possible due to the cooperation of the local elites of the Southern states, who, for the most part, benefit from this system of economic dominance, and, thus, cooperate with the capitalist enterprises from the North in order to maintain the system. As a result, the corporations of the North and the oligarchies of the South partner to exploit the wealth of the South at the expense of the South's civil societies. In consequence, this situation has fuelled development in the North and deterred development in the South.⁸³ ***It can be clearly asserted that the South subsidises the North's economic growth in terms of capital extraction, namely of the North's shareholder value, workers' wages and consumer prices.*** The explanation to all of this is that, beyond the terms-of-trade for exports and imports, all the terms of economic activity of the North in the South (what is called the factor endowments⁸⁴) have been, and they still are, tremendously advantageous for the North. The Northern companies, when operating in the South, regularly obtain much greater margins because they are able to pay, with the enthusiastic acquiescence of the local oligarchies, bondage labour costs. They also have frequently obtained, until today, many other incentives such as tax breaks, free plots of developed industrial land, and no cost of utilities, such as water and electricity, used in their manufacturing process, for several years. What do client states get in return? They get direct and indirect employment of otherwise unemployed workers, but at an extremely cheap labour cost. Thus, the low wages paid have no effect on the levels of aggregate demand, because they do not allow workers to acquire a purchasing power for anything beyond the minimum means to survive in bare conditions. What do the local elites get in return? They get a share of the pie by participating in the depredation of the state, with their own companies that work with foreign corporations and by being endorsed to remain fraudulently in control of political power and enjoy a free rein to personally benefit financially from such power. This situation has generated incredible competitive advantages for the transnational corporations (TNCs) of the North that operate in the South. For instance, in 1991 —before the major trade agreements— US foreign direct investment (FDI) in the South accounted for 25% of total US FDI but it accounted for 40% of US foreign earnings,⁸⁵ because of much higher productivity due to a system that imposed lower operating cost with wages being the predominant factor.

Essentially, economic penetration of capital from the North produces a distorted economic structure with deteriorating terms of trade for the South, subordinating its economies to the North agenda. This also creates a dependence of the South to the North for capital, technology and production outlets. This dependency ethos has two prominent features: a centre-periphery class alliance and the production of extreme patterns of social inequality.⁸⁶ In the case of US-Mexico relations, the system worked as expected. Except for the nationalisation of oil and electrical power in the mid XX Century, US companies were free to roam Mexico to buy land and exploit its resources (agriculture, cattle ranching, mining...), particularly since the last quarter of the XIX century. Thus, the US would jointly exploit with the Mexican elite the labour and natural resources at the expense of the vast majority of Mexicans. As part of this order, the terms-of-trade imposed were, to be sure, very asymmetrical. Not just in Mexico, but globally, client states were relegated in the international division of labour and trade to supply raw materials at erratic prices in exchange for manufactured goods at dear and stable prices. In order to impose these neocolonial terms-of-trade, the centres of power had to develop local partners in the client states who would guard their economic interests. And, these, naturally, were the oligarchic elites. Why was this possible if the terms-of-trade were so negative to the so-called developing countries? Because they were still a

⁸³ Ankie Hoogvelt: *Globalization and the Postcolonial World – The New Political Economy of Development*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1997. pp. 37- 43.

⁸⁴ Factor endowments is commonly understood as the amount of land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship resources that a country possesses to economically exploit.

⁸⁵ Joan Edelman Spero, *The Politics of International Economics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997) pp 156-157.

⁸⁶ Ankie Hoogvelt: *Globalization and the Postcolonial World – The New Political Economy of Development*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1997. p. 39.

profitable operation for the oligarchies at the expense of labour. Labour was, in practice, shackled to work under a modern-slave-work system.

Beginning in the 1930s, a new stage of neocolonialism began to develop in US-Mexico relations. This was the transition from a supplier of raw materials into a process of industrial neocolonialism; yet still a decisively client state ethos nonetheless. Mexico would first supply cheap labour to extract raw materials and purchase manufactured goods. But in its quest for some degree of economic independence it embarked on a route of industrialisation, as it reacted to stop its dependency as a supplier of commodities under rather disadvantageous terms-of-trade.

Not surprisingly, this strategy did not meet significant opposition from the centres of power; for industrialisation was carried out, to a large degree, with the participation of corporations of the metropolises. It so happens that this arrangement fitted perfectly

their economic control. By technology required for most corporations were able to control on Mexico and the industrialisation. Moreover, fit with their need to expand to acquire both new in order to secure continuous operations into foreign global transnational could expand beyond their multinational entities. The



with their preferences to maintain overwhelmingly owning the industrial processes, exert a very strong economic South's strategy of strategically, it became a perfect beyond their domestic markets consumer and industrial markets growth. This expansion of markets later gave birth to the corporations, or TNCs, which original market and become TNC, as it reduced the weight of

its home business, became an economic power with no nationality and no binding laws to control its activity, if it so desired; all of this occurring under an ideal economic order: the neo-colonial centre-periphery system.

Foreign direct investment increased exponentially in Mexico and many other client states as large corporations in the metropolises evolved into TNCs. But foreign direct investment, which many touted as a very positive occurrence, was in fact a net extractor of capital from the client states to the metropolises. This explains why US TNCs were much in favour of NAFTA in 1993. Many US companies already had a presence in Mexico, many since early in the XX century, to serve the domestic market and not for exporting into the US or elsewhere. On the other hand, the export bound border in-bond industry or maquiladora, already well entrenched three decades before the trade agreement,⁸⁷ had



⁸⁷ In 1965 the Mexican government launched the Border Industrialisation Program (BIP) that gave way to thousand of maquiladoras or in-bond plants that operated at the border as, literally, sweatshops that pay hunger wages, admit no unions and are detached from the rest of the economy. In general, less than 4% of the product comes from local content. Most of the value added is labour at modern-slave-work costs. The benefit overwhelmingly goes to the owner of the maquiladora and the owner of the finished product. See: Álvaro de Regil Castilla: México Frente a la Escoria Ladrón: Dignidad o Capitulación, La Alianza Global Jus Semper, 2010, pp 66-68.



exploded in growth by then and customarily paid Mexican workers, by any criterion, hunger wages. The local elites and the local and federal governments that control these factories guarantee to investors non-unionised workers by systematically crushing any attempt to form a union. This constituted the first offshore operation to use cheap labour, or rather slave work, to increase productivity and shareholder value, namely profits. In a recent publication from the Mexican National Maquiladora Council, the trade group states that the context of the sector has always been anchored in a

process of liberalisation, where the government must be a promoter rather than a controller and overseer;⁸⁸ namely, it must overlook the absence of compliance with the inherent social and environmental responsibilities of business and instead provide incentives for both domestic and foreign investors. The in-bond plants sector of “free-trade zones” that initially was allowed only on a stretch along the border, was expanded in 1980, and by the summer of 2017 it had grown exponentially. If in 1976 the sector had 448 plants employing 74,500 workers, by the summer of 2017, it reported 6,166 plants employing almost 2,9 million workers, at modern-slave-work prices.⁸⁹ ***The level of exploitation, labour and human rights violations, and workplace hazards and insecurity is the worst in the industrial sector.***⁹⁰ ***This includes the murder or disappearance of hundreds of female maquiladora workers in Ciudad Juarez and many cities along the border. The main reason for offshoring into Mexico is, to be sure, cheap labour costs that allow employers to pay slave work wages.***⁹¹ Local content of raw materials or parts to be exported has remained for decades at less than 4%.⁹² Efforts have been made to move from the basic assembly of imported parts and textile production into actual high-tech manufacturing in automotive, aerospace and electronics. However, the major factor being played out remains extremely cheap labour that does not cover the cost, by far, of the basic basket of goods. We will address the structure of wages in detail further ahead.

It just happens that with every business project that a Northern corporation launches in the South, they and their Southern oligarchic partners generally get very high ROIs at the expense of all other participants, especially the Southern workers, because the factor endowments are so much more to the advantage of the TNCs. During the three decades of postwar Keynesian/Fordist economic policy, Mexico became deeply engulfed in the global capitalist system of wealth extraction from the South into the North through the tacit agreement between predominantly the US elites and its oligarchic class. Despite this, a vast sector of Mexican society managed to improve its quality of life and a middle class emerged in what was touted as the Mexican miracle. Real wages improved to their best historical position until 1980. Nevertheless, with the change of paradigm to supply-side neoliberalism triggered by the dwindling returns of the owners of the system, Mexico’s future was going to evolve into the demise of the vast majority in all aspects of life, as the Mexican elite enthusiastically joined the change to preserve its privileges as peripheral members of the system and impose the commands of the Washington Consensus. This is nothing new for this is the direct continuation of colonialism, as earlier noted. When the Poor Laws in England began to gradually protect the completely exploited British

⁸⁸ Consejo Nacional de la Industria Maquiladora y Manufacturera de Exportación, A. C: Zonas Económicas Especiales e IMMEX, Outlook Immex, 19 October 2017.

⁸⁹ Source for 1975: Armando Ibarra and Alfredo Carlos: Mexican mass labor migration in a not-so changing political economy. *Ethnicities*, 2015, Vol. 15(2) 211–233 [The Author(s) 2015. Sage Publications. Source for 2017: Consejo Nacional de la Industria Maquiladora y Manufacturera de Exportación, A. C: Balance del Sector Exportador, 10 October 2017.

⁹⁰ Joshua M. Kagan: Worker’s rights in the Mexican maquiladora sector: Collective bargaining, women’s rights, and general human rights: Law, norms, and practice. *Journal of Transnational Law & Policy* 15: 153–180.

⁹¹ Anne Vigna: Mexico: Hell is the Tijuana assembly line. A TLWNSI Issue Brief. The Jus Semper Global Alliance, September 2010.

⁹² INEGI: Estadísticas Económicas. Industria Maquiladora de Exportación. Publicación mensual, February 2007.

workers of the XIX century, the industrialists moved in full force to their Southern colonies, transferring the same exploitative structure and applied it even much more harshly. This built many of the huge fortunes of the industrial aristocracy and much of the wealth of the North at the expense of the South. Spero argues that only the managers of the TNCs benefit, but the fact is that the entire home economy benefits from the disproportionate wealth that their TNCs extract from the South. Everyone in the North benefits directly or indirectly from this activity since this wealth is brought back to the home country and spent there in its vast majority (or at the very least remains idle). Thus, by the TNCs enjoying asymmetrical conditions in the factor endowments, the home country benefits in several ways. First, there is a net inflow of capital that, in effect, is used to subsidise the higher operating cost of the North. For instance, the much higher wages of the TNCs' workers in the North are subsidised by the much lower salaries paid to the workers in the South who do the same kind of work. On average, the salaries in the South are less than 10% of those in the North. It is estimated that between 25% to 40% of the cost of labour in the North was subsidised by Southern meagre wages in what Hoogvelt calls the "social wage" that came from imperial profits. FDI is just a small part of wealth extraction as part of total capital flows, which come in the form of bank lending, insurance, export credits, home country government grants as well as a high diversity of financial speculative investments, which in the vast majority of cases are repatriated to the home countries of the TNCs.⁹³ A prominent example is the \$52 billion extraction through tesobonos as earlier noted.

The new world order for the new US Century agenda

With the fall of the Eastern European block and the disintegration of the USSR, the imperialist instincts of US elites went out of control. They gauged that the collapse of the Soviet Block offered the best opportunity to consolidate their grip and impose a "New World Order" of "trickle-down economics" for the benefit of their less than 1%. As the US moved to cope with its lost competitiveness and began to offshore primarily to Mexico, South East Asia and the Caribbean, it faced new challenges coming most importantly from the emergence of China. To cope with it, the US sought to integrate China into the realm of global capitalism it dominated. Hence it normalised economic relations with China, opening its economy to US mega corporations, and began to massively offshore production as part of the classic centre-periphery model of modern-slave work production. It also pressed China to join the WTO where China had to accept rules where it had no say and pressed it to increase the value of the yuan, which was regarded as artificially cheap, in order to keep in check China's competitiveness based on extremely low labour costs.⁹⁴ Yet, concurrently and paradoxically, it continues to oppose that China be considered a market economy by the WTO. The hypocrisy cannot be any more blatant but it has a clear explanation. The US position allows it to maintain high-anti-dumping duties on Chinese goods as part of its economic war on China.⁹⁵ Russia was considered to be geopolitically defeated and economically in serious dire straits. Hence the US moved to populate as many former Soviet Block countries as possible with missiles pointing at Russia, a strategy that has continued unabated until this day, in an increased spiral of geopolitical confrontations instigated by the US to attempt to quash any possibility of Russia developing a regional sphere of influence that would challenge US imperialism. It also moved to take a major military involvement in the Middle East to fulfil its convoluted geopolitical interests. Its first major involvement was the Gulf War in Iraq, which subsequently allowed it to begin to take control of Iraq's territory and energy resources, by imposing a "no fly zone" to arguably protect the Kurds and other minorities from the Saddam Hussein Regime. Then, using the 9/11 attacks on New York as the

⁹³ Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997) pp 48, 77 and 78.

⁹⁴ Álvaro J. de Regil: A comparative approximation into China's living-wage gap. A TLWNSI Living-Wage Assessment, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, June 2010.

⁹⁵ David Lauder, US formally opposes China market economy status at WTO, Reuters, November 30, 2017.

perfect justification⁹⁶ to wage war on so-called Global Terrorism, the US embarked on major conflicts by starting a war in Afghanistan in 2001 and invading Iraq to overthrow Hussein in 2003, under the widely known false flag of having hard evidence of the development of “weapons of mass destruction”.

In 1994, during the Clinton Administration, the US moved to support its economic drive to recover its competitive edge by massively offshoring production to cut operative costs, increase efficiencies, productivity and, particularly, shareholder value. Many sectors in the US, Mexico and Canada —beyond trade unions— were against the enactment of a free trade agreement. However, the lobbies of the mega corporations and their Wall Street institutional investors had more than enough clout to make the US Congress pass NAFTA. By the same token, Mexico's Robber Baron elite had no trouble ordering the Mexican Congress to pass the agreement, given that there is little separation of powers and the president customarily tells Congress what to pass and what to reject. In this way, the US extended in practice its economic territorial realm of production at a much lower operational cost without having to bring foreign workers to work in domestic factories. Bringing foreign workers was not only completely politically unfeasible among vast sectors of the population but also undesirable to the shareholders of the major corporations interested in passing the trade agreement. The 1994 NAFTA agreement took care for the time being of the economic front, but it was going to have a dramatic effect that would trigger Mexican immigration to the US. Seven years later the 9/11 attack would render another dramatic negative effect on the vast majority of Mexicans by triggering the criminalisation of migration. This was eminently the result of geopolitical systemic structures imposed by the US on Mexico, on the rest of the imperial periphery as well as on its allies of the G7 and the European Union.

All of these events are only a small part of the fiercest imperialist drive that the US oligarchy —the owners of the marketocratic system— has embarked on in its entire history. As earlier asserted, the so-called democracies of the world have never lived in a truly democratic ethos. Oligarchic elites have always monopolised the power for decision making to establish the ethos they deem the most convenient for their exclusive benefit. However, with the fall of the Soviet Block and the derogation of the regulations —prominently the Glass-Steagall Act— that were specifically designed to keep in check the natural predatory instincts of capitalism, the owners of the market embarked on a fully-blown securitisation of the economy. A wave of embezzlement scandals involving tens of billions of dollars exposed the emergence of a new generation of Robber Barons. The big difference with their predecessors of the Gilded Age of the late XIX century, was the technology that enabled them to perpetrate their malfeasance. The consequence is that such malfeasance bears a far more profound impact and global reach through the securitisation of the global economy. Hence, we almost immediately observed at the start of this century a spiral of corporate scandals involving US corporations that began with Enron and was followed by many others such as Adelphia, AOL Time Warner, Arthur Anderson, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Global Crossing, Halliburton, Johnson & Johnson, Qwest Communications, Tyco, WorldCom and Xerox among others by 2002.⁹⁷ We subsequently observed the collapse of the system when the casino-like financial markets' super speculative bubble burst in 2007 and triggered the worst US recession since 1929. An event which continues to have a profound effect to this date on a global scale. The privatisation and securitisation of every aspect of life has now taken a preeminence without paragon in the completely undemocratically imposed structures of the global system.

⁹⁶ Although virtually the entire spectrum of electronic and printed media that have overwhelming influence on public opinion followed the official narrative that the US was attacked by Middle Eastern terrorists, there is significant disagreement in some sectors that have expressed major doubts about the root cause of the attacks and the collapse of the WTC Twin Towers and other buildings. For instance, there are almost three thousand architects and engineers that believe that the official narrative about 9/11 has concealed major facts that would change radically the explanation about the root causes of the attack. They particularly point at major evidence of the use of explosives as the actual cause of the destruction of the World Trade Centre Twin Towers and Building 7. For this reason they have formed a non-profit organisation (Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth) to challenge the official story with a corpus of information to support its questions from a scientific and scholarly perspective. For further reference visit <http://www.ae911truth.org>

⁹⁷ Ted Nace: Gangs of America – The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005, pp 212.

Concurrently, as part of the geopolitical imperialistic agenda of the US oligarchy, vying for global influence and domination, there are clear evidences and consorted efforts to make the XXI Century the zenith of US imperialism. One of the clearest evidence of a vision to establish a US-dictated “new world order” was the think tank *Project for the New American (sic) Century* (PNAC). This was created by a neoconservative cadre of imperialist intellectuals that reverberated the idea of manifest destiny for the United States as a force for good. This organisation was founded William Kristol, editor of the neocon “The Weekly Standard” and Richard Kagan, a fellow of the Brookings Institution and a self-described “liberal interventionist”. The PNAC’s statement of principles (1997) exposes a rather messianic vision. It expresses dissatisfaction for what they considered an insufficient defence budget during the Clinton Administration and aims to rally support for *American (sic) global leadership through a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American (sic) principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States’ global responsibilities*. They believed that the US had to *strengthen its ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to its interests and values*. The US also had to *promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad and accept responsibility for America’s (sic) unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to US security, prosperity and principles*. *To be sure, the context is always the vision of the US corporate oligarchy, full of messianic dictums and double standards*. The statement had twenty-five signatories.⁹⁸ Ten of them went on to serve in the George W. Bush administration, including Cheyney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz. The project closed in 2007 but was replaced by the Foreign Policy Initiative –also with Kristol and Kagan– with the same imperial warmongering context. It is also not surprising that many policy making advisors to the Bush Administration came from large defence contractors such as Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman that embody the US military industrial complex.⁹⁹

The central geopolitical imperial interest of the US oligarchy has been, since the start of the postwar, the control of the world’s energy resources. This explains why the US is so enmeshed in the Middle East. Chomsky asserts that the imperial vision has been that control of the world’s energy reserves, particularly of the Middle East, would provide a firm control of the world, which, otherwise, would challenge the project of US global dominance.¹⁰⁰ For the nations of the Americas, after 9/11, the US unrelenting pursuit of global dominance meant a renewed attack on governments that moved to reduce at maximum the influence of US imperialism on what it has always considered its backyard. During the first decade, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela paid off their debts to the IMF as a means to end the favourite weapon of the US to exert control over their economic, political and social policies through the Washington Consensus. They also rejected in 2005 the US proposal to establish a “Free Trade Area of the Americas” (FTAA), which was nothing more than a copy-cat of NAFTA that would benefit primarily US corporations and the periphery oligarchies. As a consequence, the US resorted to engaging in bilateral agreements with South and Central American governments dominated by neoliberal sectors, such as Colombia, Chile, Peru, Central America and the Dominican Republic.

Needless to say that as US imperialism has increased its interventionism in all continents, frequently violating international law and the sovereignty of many countries, and increasingly doing it through military intervention, the world is no longer buying its thematic propaganda that claims that it is waging a war on global terrorism. ***John Berger put it right: Today the power of the same country which inspired such hopes has fallen into the hands of a coterie of fanatical (wanting to limit everything except the power of capital), ignorant (recognising only the reality of their own fire-power), hypocritical (two measures for all ethical judgments, one for us and another for them) and***

⁹⁸ Accessed from web archive on November 2017: <https://web.archive.org/web/20050205041635/http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>

⁹⁹ Ted Nace: *Gangs of America – The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005, pp 219.

¹⁰⁰ Noam Chomsky: *Who Rules the World*. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2016, p. 45.

ruthless B52 plotters.¹⁰¹ **For a majority of world opinion, the US is the biggest threat to world peace.** In essence, it is the main source of terrorism, for it inflicts pain on the lives of billions of people across the world. To be sure, the US citizenry remains in complete oblivion about the world's perception but global polls show the "leader" on the global war on terror is perceived as the "greatest threat to world peace" according to polls from the Win/Gallup International's annual End of Year survey.¹⁰²

For Mexico, the new imperialist drive after 9/11 meant the US demand for a crackdown on Mexican immigration, a war on drugs as part of the US new crusade described as the war on terror and the development of a joint policy to stop Central American immigration at Mexico's southern border. The US has been experiencing an increased flow of immigrants from these countries after decades of US backed efforts to maintain the status quo of extreme exploitation and systemic human rights violations carried out by repressive governments. The Iran-Contra scandal during the Reagan Administration is an emblematic illustration of US imperialism at work to squash any attempt to free these countries from far right oppressive regimes, which have continued until this date, with the most recent coups taking place in Honduras (2009) and Paraguay (2012), both with the tacit endorsement of the Obama Administration. The Mexican oligarchy, always enthusiastically disposed to fulfil all economic, social and national security demands from US administrations, was more than eager to serve its only true constituent and endorser of its otherwise illegitimate power. This produced tacit agreements to extend US national security to Mexico's southern border and allow several US agencies to openly operate in Mexican territory at will.

Mexico and its assigned role in the agenda for the materialisation of the New US Century

With the gradual implementation of economic neoliberalism in Mexico, the first item on the agenda advanced by the US and enthusiastically endorsed by its periphery partner to the South was so-called "free trade". This would consolidate the ethos of neoliberal economics imposed by the elites who would directly benefit by seeing the productivity and profitability of their investments increase exponentially in a sustainable fashion. A key tool for a renewed colonisation was the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). This agreement regulated trade of manufacturing products only. Commodities exported by the South were not protected. For a while, with the rules of trade explicitly designed for the benefit of the North, the South felt that it was at the losing end. Hence, most developing countries initially stayed outside for several decades to protect their economies from rather asymmetrical terms-of-trade. As the stepped up pressure of the centres of power made many developing countries relax their economic policies, they began to join the GATT, and TNCs established a dominant position in the periphery.¹⁰³ Mexico began opening its economy in the early 1980s, and as the oligarchy embraced neoliberalism it subsequently joined the GATT in 1986.

As free marketeering progressed, the timing for a "free trade agreement" became optimal. The North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA was the dream of Mexico's robber barons to consolidate the imposition of the new economic ethos in the country. For the US elite and particularly for the US shareholders of major multinationals it was also one more step in consolidating its grip on Mexico. Establishing a trade agreement that would enable them to extend their supply chains at a much lower cost would guarantee them an important boost to productivity, competitiveness and shareholder value. This would allow their companies to freely operate in the US, Mexico and Canada as if they were still in the same country. Foreign direct investment, capital goods, technology, raw materials, parts, and finished goods

¹⁰¹ John Peter Berger: The pain of living in the present world, Le Monde Diplomatique, English edition, February 2003.

¹⁰² Sarah Lazare: Biggest Threat to World Peace: The United States, Common Dreams, 31 December 2013.

¹⁰³ Álvaro J. de Regil: The Neo-Capitalist Assault: Development with Asymmetries: The Third World and its Post-War Development Strategies, Essay One of Part II (Asymmetric Order and Collapse), The Jus Semper Global Alliance, 2001, pp 6-16.

secured free passage to circulate around the three countries but workers would remain restricted to working in their own country of residence. This is in great contrast with the European Union, where, in addition to the free circulation of capital and goods, people are free to move, live and work in the member countries that participate in the Schengen Area, where passports and all other types of border controls at their mutual borders have been abolished.¹⁰⁴ This is because NAFTA is designed for the exclusive benefit of the big institutional investors who own the large corporations in the three member countries, whereas in the Schengen Area the European elite is also neoliberal but not as extremely predatory [and racist] as in the US.

Mexico's robber barons, led by the Salinas Administration who, as is customary, ascended to power in a blatantly fraudulent fashion, negotiated NAFTA behind civil society because it is an agreement against Mexico. Nothing in NAFTA has as its *raison d'être* the pursuit of human development. Thus, the supposed benefits are exalted and the risks and costs are hidden because the former were to be enjoyed by the robber barons whilst the costs were to be socialised. NAFTA is so pernicious that it served as the basis of the defeated Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The MAI was an attempt to impose a global constitution of rights for the owners of global capital. The MAI embodies the primeval element of neoliberalism. It is the clearest expression of its philosophy, where capital takes precedence over states and civil societies, since it attempts to impose rules that virtually destroy the concept of a sovereign state and of true democracy.¹⁰⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, from the Collège de France, provides an accurate description of its essence as *the political measure designed to call into question any and all collective structures that could serve as an obstacle to the protection of foreign corporations and their investments from national states; for the logic of the pure market aims to transform and destroy the obstacles: the nation, the workers and their unions, associations, cooperatives and even the family*.¹⁰⁶ In this way, the MAI pretended to suit the states. However, this is a practice that regularly takes place in NAFTA by using Chapter Eleven. The first historic NAFTA case was Metalclad against the Mexican State, where Metalclad, a US waste management company, successfully forced Mexico's federal government to compensate it –because a municipality denied Metalclad the license to open a toxic waste management site. Indeed, the case of Metalclad's victory against the Mexican State is emblematic. Chapter Eleven of NAFTA stipulates that disputes between companies and NAFTA states will be examined by an international commercial court, acting in accordance with the ICSID Convention –a World Bank-linked institution– (on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and nationals of other states).¹⁰⁷ In this way, Chapter Eleven of NAFTA imposes the tutelage of the owners of the market over the sovereignty of the states.¹⁰⁸ With NAFTA, US and Canadian corporations can claim national rights in Mexico; namely they can exercise the same rights as if they were Mexican persons. Of course, Mexican, Canadian or US citizens cannot go to the other member states and claim to have the same rights as their citizens. These rights are to be enjoyed exclusively by the owners of the market and their corporations.

NAFTA's rather pernicious effects destroyed or reduced the quality of life of millions of people in the three countries. However, it was in Mexico where the greatest damage was inflicted for the benefit of financial markets and their

¹⁰⁴ According to the European Parliament, in 2014 there were almost 1,7 million people in Europe who work in another Schengen country from that in which they live, and every day some 3.5 million people cross internal Schengen-area borders. In addition, there are some 24 million business trips and 57 million cross-border goods movements within the Schengen area each year. European Parliament –At a Glance, The economic impact of suspending Schengen, EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service. Author: Cemal Karakas, Members' Research Service PE 579.074 March 2016.

¹⁰⁵ Álvaro J. de Regil: The Neo-Capitalist Assault in Mexico: Democracy vis-à-vis the logic of the market, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, 2004, p 10.

¹⁰⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Essence of Neoliberalism," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English edition, December 1998.

¹⁰⁷ Arturo Rafael Pérez García: Una nueva forma de valorar el Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte, a partir de las controversias suscitadas de acuerdo con el capítulo once, *Revista del Centro de Investigación de la Universidad la Salle*, Vol. 5, núm. 20 (2003).

¹⁰⁸ Fernando Bejarano González: El conflicto del basurero tóxico de Metalclad en Guadalcázar, San Luis Potosí. In: Laura Carlsen, Tim Wise, Hilda Salazar (Coord.): *Enfrentando la globalización Respuestas sociales a la integración económica de México*. Colección América Latina y el Nuevo Orden Mundial. México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, Global Development and Environment Institute Tufts University, Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio, 2003.

shareholders. Let's briefly explore the agricultural sector, which has been devastated by US agribusiness. In Canada farmers have suffered adverse impacts since the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement of 1988. Although agricultural exports tripled from \$11 billion to \$33 billion from 1988 to 2007, net farm income fell more than 50%, from \$3,9 billion to \$1,5 billion. Thus Canadian farm debt more than doubled to \$54 billion. In the meantime, retail food prices climbed as farm prices fell. In this context, both Canadian farmers and consumers have lost in the post-NAFTA implementation period.¹⁰⁹ In the US, just between 1996 and 2001, farming subsidies nearly tripled to more than \$20 billion. However, net income of farmers dropped 16,5 percent, forcing about three-hundred thousand farmers out of business, with many rural communities forced to board up and to close stores, while a methamphetamine epidemic exploded in these communities.¹¹⁰ In Mexico, NAFTA immediately liberalised yellow corn whilst many other products, such as sugar, beans and white corn were gradually freed from any import tariffs. This cleared the way for agribusiness corporations such as Cargill and ADM to flood the market with subsidised products at prices below production costs in Mexico. The consequence is that millions of Mexicans were completely displaced and many towns were turned into ghost towns as people were forced to leave with their livelihoods completely destroyed.¹¹¹ This is without taking into consideration that the destruction of millions of livelihoods began in the countryside after 1992, in preparation for NAFTA, with the amendment of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. This devastating amendment was pushed by "Mafia state" president, Salinas de Gortari, to allow the privatisation of the ejido system,¹¹² which gave way to the ownership of many ejidos by large domestic and multinational corporations, for whatever use they chose to apply.¹¹³ *These constitutional revisions not only ended redistribution of land to the ejidos but also paved the way for mass transfer of rural land from indigenous communities to multinational food corporations* (Kelly 1994).¹¹⁴

By 2006 over two million agricultural jobs, including 1,7 million small farmers, were lost and workers, farmers and their families were forced to leave the countryside.¹¹⁵ In fact, between 2000 and 2005, more than 400.000 Mexicans, mostly from rural communities, moved annually to the US and by 2009 more than twelve million had moved to the US.¹¹⁶ Millions of Mexicans left their towns with three choices: move to the slums of Mexico's big cities and seek work, mostly in the underground economy at modern slave work wages, migrate to the US or join the ranks of people working for the drug cartels.

And yet public opinion in the US does not seem to —or does not want to— understand why there was a huge increase of Mexican immigrants flooding the border between 1994 and 2010 and what causes such a migration surge. Who are the winners? US corporate owners (the financial market institutional investors) and operators of industrial hog, poultry, dairy and cattle industries. These beneficiaries received an estimated \$35 billion in in-direct subsidies by buying animal feed crops at 20-25 percent below cost between 1997-2005. This provoked a huge oligopolisation in a country where the animal production of meat accounts for as much as the value of all other sectors combined.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ R. Dennis Olson: Lessons from NAFTA: Food and Agriculture, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Commentary, December 2, 2008.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Antonio de la Cruz: Nacen "Pueblos Fantasma" por pobreza e inseguridad. *Expreso.press*, 24 de octubre 2016.

¹¹² The Ejido is a historical concept of land use. It is a communal land to be exploited for agriculture and animal husbandry by and for the benefit of Ejido members. The Ejido came into force in the twentieth century as a result of the constitution of 1917 that emanated from the Mexican Revolution, redistributing the large properties that belonged to private owners. These landowners had previously dispossessed the original owners of their lands (indigenous and mestizo rural communities) after Mexico's independence. The ejido system is the traditional form of land use since the pre-Columbian era in Mexico and lasted for more than three centuries until the dispossession of communal land began in 1856 with the Ley Lerdo. The constitution of 1917 recovers the communal rights that later are gradually eliminated with the modification of article 27 in 1991.

¹¹³ James J. Kelly: 1994 Article 27 and Mexican Land Reform: The Legacy of Zapata's Dream (1994). Scholarly Works. Paper 668. http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship/668

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 541.

¹¹⁵ R. Dennis Olson: Lessons from NAFTA: Food and Agriculture, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Commentary, December 2, 2008.

¹¹⁶ James M. Cypher: Mexico's Dependant Economy – Manufacturing wages lower than in China, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, A TLWNSI Issue Commentary, September 2017.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

Furthermore, as part of its complete adherence to the neoliberal mantra, Mexican governments dismantled all the safety nets that protected the rural sector and the urban poor. Four public entities stand out. CONASUPO, the key administrator of farming subsidies and food programmes for the poor was dismantled in 1999. Pronase, the national producer of seeds, was closed at the beginning of the Fox Administration at the start of the century. Fertimex, the national fertiliser producer, was privatised in the 1990s, and Banrural, the public bank that provided credit loans to farmers, was closed in 2003.¹¹⁸

As is customary, the closing of all four entities was covered in a thick veil of embezzlements and other corruption practices. The fraudulent practices against CONASUPO were blatant and thoroughly documented and stand out given its size and its impact on a large sector of the population.¹¹⁹ According to Mexico's 2010 census, 26 million Mexicans lived in rural communities, accounting for 23,5 percent of the population and all were regarded as enduring some degree of poverty. According to the Mexican government's National Evaluation Commission on Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), 58,2 percent of the rural population is poor and 34,8 percent are ill-protected due to their exclusion from at least one social service, such as education, healthcare, social security and appropriate housing. Only 7 percent of the rural population in 2016 is not poor and is not deprived of any social service.¹²⁰ Farming communities were completely abandoned by the state. NAFTA included 10-to-15-year tariff phase-out periods for corn and other basic grains, along with strict import quotas, to protect Mexican farmers against the highly-subsidised US agribusiness corporations. Yet the Mexican government, arguing a shortage of grains, opened the economy to US exports far above the quotas and then refused to collect import tariffs.¹²¹ On top of that, NAFTA triggered a tremendous health crisis for the vast majority of the Mexican population when it opened the gates to a flood of junk food imported from the US. This decision triggered an explosion in the incidence of obesity and malnutrition by allowing US corporations to flood the market with pernicious fast food and soft drinks imported tax-free from the US. Almost a quarter of a century later Mexico endures the world's second highest obesity rate and a growing child malnutrition crisis that did not exist before. Mexico's health ministry said in 2016 that 72% of adults were overweight or obese.¹²² Between 2000 and 2012 the prevalence diabetes in Mexico increased by 60% to a 9,1%, according to Mexico's National Institute of Public Health.¹²³ This has become a major crisis in public health. In 2017, the International Diabetes Federation ranked Mexico fifth among the top ten countries with diabetes (ages 20-79), only behind China, India, the US and Brazil, making this disease the main cause of death along with cardiovascular diseases in Mexico.¹²⁴ But North American companies are free to roam the country in pursuit of greater profits at the expense of public health, among many other costs. To be sure, the Mexican government acts in effect de facto as an agent of US big corporations and not as the agent in pursuit of the welfare of the Mexican Demos. There is a specific term in Spanish for this kind of demeanour: "cipayo", *Person who serves the foreign interests of a country, especially if he holds a political office.*

In the industrialised cities of Mexico, before NAFTA, the corporate sector was never willing to invest in research and development to produce capital goods and new technology. Mexican industrialists were happy with importing them, paying licensing royalties and selling to the imports-protected domestic market, where they were used to paying hunger

¹¹⁸ Erika Ramírez: TLCAN: El peor desastre para los campesinos, Contralínea, 10 September 2017.

¹¹⁹ Álvaro Delgado. La liquidación de la empresa, tierra sobre las pruebas contables de un fuerte daño a la nación. Impunes, los más grandes beneficiarios y cómplices del saqueo de Conasupo en dos sexenios sucesivos. Proceso, 4 de abril de 1999.

¹²⁰ Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social. Informe de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social 2016, Ciudad de México: CONEVAL, 2017, pp 32 and Statistical Annex, table 17.

¹²¹ Timothy Wise: NAFTA's untold stories: Mexico's grass roots response to North American Integration, America's Program Policy Report, June 2003.

¹²² James Whitlow Delano and Hannah Summers: The trade deal that triggered a health crisis in Mexico – in pictures, The Guardian, January 1st 2018.

¹²³ Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública: Encuesta Nacional de Salud y Nutrición 2012, p. 17.

¹²⁴ International Diabetes Federation: IDF Diabetes Atlas 2017, p. 47.

wages to their employees and particularly to their blue-collar workers. A comparison with South Korea clearly illustrates the cipayo nature of Mexico's robber barons. In contrast with South Korea's development path, Mexico's oligarchic class has never been interested in development with some degree of equity. Its only interest has been to rack short-term gains by cultivating its centre-periphery relationship. A comparison of South Korea and Mexico's economic paths followed since WWII is rather striking and clearly explains why Mexicans are in shambles more than two decades after NAFTA. South Korea's success vis-à-vis Iberian American economies is anchored on the fact, that from inception, it applied economic policy with a staunchly nationalistic lens in pursuit of growth with equity, and, until recently, fought to maintain in check the global neoliberal assault under the same lens. In other words, although the system is unquestionably capitalist and, thus, suffers from all of its inherent contradictions, South Korea's regimes, both authoritarian and of representative democracy, had a meaningful degree of unrelenting social commitment, quite possibly imbued by Confucian values as opposed to Iberian America's Western culture, where individualism stands out prominently. Consequently, at its root, Korea's economic policy during all of its development stage, until the Asian crisis, sought an endogenous development anchored on demand-side economics and applied a degree of social fordism, regardless of its contradiction with the natural instinct for short-termism and maximisation of profits prevalent in the chaebol culture of its business conglomerates. Indeed, South Korea took the decision from inception of its industrialisation path to become an exports powerhouse. Although it initially anchored it on cheap labour, it also concurrently worked to develop the economic structures that gradually would increase the added value of its exports with high-skilled labour and incipient but endogenous technologies. The South Korean State policy was essentially, for the most part of its development era, a "growth with equity" development paradigm anchored on nationalism. To accomplish this it was indispensable to establish a State-driven, instead of a market-driven economic policy, through the dirigiste State to discipline the South Korean conglomerates. In this way, all other elements, such as FDI, trade policy, monetary policy, R&D, Welfare State and other elements were envisioned in the context of a nationalistic pride to grow with equity. Hence, while Iberian America opted and stuck to a capital-intensive strategy that disregarded the need to provide employment in the formal economy, South Korea initiated its development path with a labour-intensive strategy that gradually achieved full employment. It could have not been accomplished in any other way.

A comparison with Mexico's industrialisation path provides an excellent illustration of the concrete differences in economic philosophy and management, for Mexico constitutes a paradigmatic case of economic development failure, exposing precisely what should not be done in economic development. As in the case of South Korea, Mexico also had a mixed economy with the State in the driver's seat of development and economic policy, with a strategic development plan set out to be implemented every six years. It had many State-owned enterprises, it nationalised the oil and light and power energy industries and it anchored its development on endogenous growth through import substitution, without seeking to become an export oriented economy. It also practiced –and continues to do so– a high degree of crony capitalism, with about ten large business conglomerates that remain after many were sold to global corporations. Crony capitalism inevitably carries inherent conflicts of interest and a monopolistic culture induced by the State. Crony capitalism between the State and chaebols is also endemic in South Korea. Yet, in deep contrast with South Korea, the Mexican political/business oligarchic class has always refused to break the dykes that hinder social mobility. Opposite to South Korea's model Mexico's model is anchored on the customary centre-periphery partnership. There is an implicit partnership between the metropolises, their corporations and the Mexican political/business oligarchy to maximise benefits by extracting maximum value from Mexico's natural and labour endowments. The nationalistic fervour rather evident in South Korea's capitalism is nowhere to be seen in Mexico's case. In other words, Mexico's cipayo culture carries an implicit agreement to partner with their tutors in the metropolises to profit over people and planet to maintain

at all costs a system of exploitation.¹²⁵ The following two charts clearly exhibit Mexico's labour exploitation illustrated by the development of hourly wages in the manufacturing sector and their equalisation in purchasing power terms in both countries since the 1970s.¹²⁶

Furthermore, many of Mexico's former large private conglomerates have been sold to foreign multinationals in many sectors, such as banking, retail, brewing, airlines, steel, automotive to name a few. By the same token, the State, despite the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1938 and of the power energy industry in 1960, has backtracked from 1982 onwards, pushing unrelentingly to dismantle the mixed economy, and privatise everything –including the social security health system– and guaranteeing high returns on investment to their foreign partners and tutors. Fervently following the dictates of the Washington Consensus, privatisation has been so pervasive that, for example, Mexico no longer has passenger train service. The new owners [Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific] of the rail tracks were not interested in providing passenger service, and the government felt no social responsibility to do so. Since 1982, the oligarchy in power has in effect pushed back to reimpose the conditions prevalent in the times of Diaz's dictatorship, before the Mexican Civil War of 1910, putting vast sectors of the economy in the hands of foreign multinationals. The last push to consolidate sheer neoliberal fundamentalism is to privatise the energy sector, which is already in the last phase of the process, despite being considered by most Mexicans as a matter of national security and the last bastion of nationalism.

South Korea endured dictatorships until the 1980s and then democratically-elected governments. In contrast, Mexican governments have been customarily authoritarian, a sort of a soft dictatorship that carry out mock electoral processes

Chart 1. Mexico and South Korea: total hourly compensation costs for production line manufacturing workers (2010 and 2015 are rates for all for employed in manufacturing)

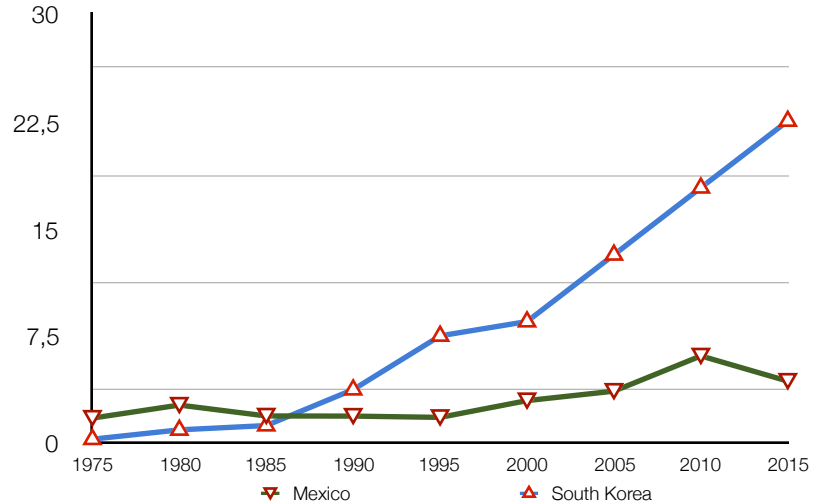
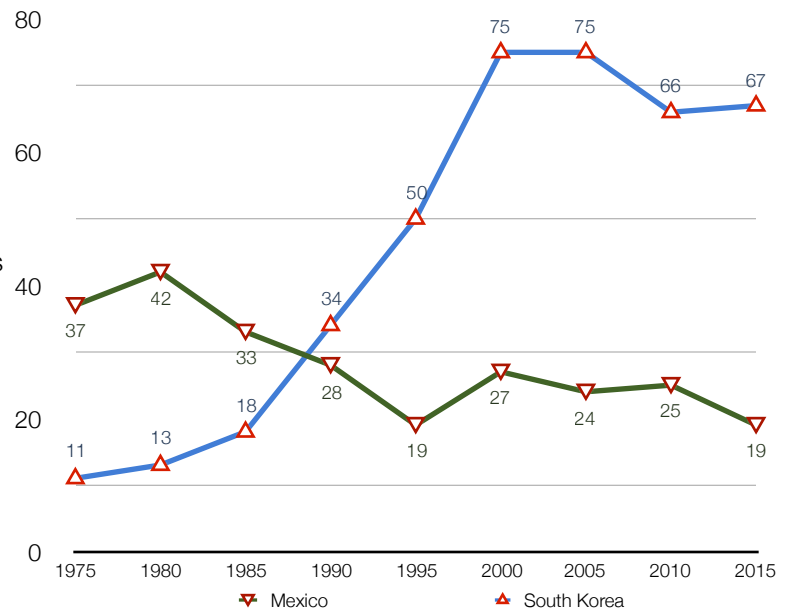


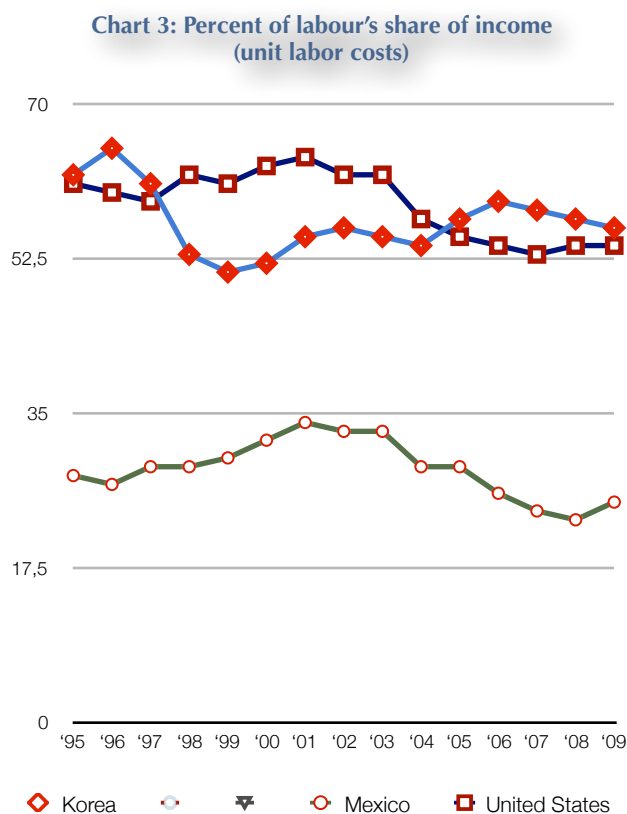
Chart 2. Mexico and South Korea: Living-wage equalisation index of total hourly compensation costs for production line manufacturing workers vis-à-vis the US (2010 and 2015 are rates all for employed in manufacturing).



¹²⁵ Álvaro J. de Regil: South Korea's tortuous road towards a living-wage ethos. A TLWNSI Living-Wage Assessment. The Jus Semper Global Alliance, October 2013.

¹²⁶ Charts developed using Table-T4 – Living-Wage-Gap and Equalisation analysis (vis-à-vis the U.S.) for production manufacturing workers in purchasing power parity terms 1975-2009 and Table-T5 – Living-Wage Gap and Equalisation analysis (vis-à-vis the U.S.) for all employed in the manufacturing sector in PPP for private consumption terms 1996-2015 for twelve selected economies. The Jus Semper Global Alliance,

every six years automatically endorsed by its foreign tutors. Nonetheless, in the last three decades the political class has immersed the country in an almost absence-of-the-rule-of-law ethos. As a result, the last administrations have enjoyed such impunity that they now openly act as business agents that no longer follow any type of development mission and bend the laws systematically in the interest of what can be regarded as, by all means, a “super oligarchic Mafia State”. The back pedalling of the Mexican State in its socioeconomic policies is rooted in the absence of a moral commitment amongst most people in power to make their country a place where the majority of the population can enjoy a dignified quality of life. Their only principle is the advancement and protection of their very private interests. They do not see themselves as public servants but as public-private merchants acting through the revolving-door system. Consequently, although Mexico is now an export oriented economy, it exports manufactured products of foreign corporations assembled in Mexico by using modern-slave-work wages. The overwhelming share of the income generated by these exports goes to foreign companies and residually to their Mexican partners. Chart three illustrates the huge gap in the labour's share of income for all economic sectors between Mexico, South Korea and the US.¹²⁷



The maquiladoras or assembly plants sector of mostly imported parts from US companies, was not significant until the 1980s when the new and staunchly neoliberal members of Mexico's robber class reengineered the economic structures of the country. Between 1981 and 2000, maquila/assembly plant exports grew 16 percent yearly, whilst manufacturing exports achieved 13 percent a year. This made manufactured goods 80 percent of total merchandise exports, with almost all exports (90 percent) bound for the US. Nonetheless, 42 percent of the value of exports came from US parts and materials;¹²⁸ a fact exacerbated because the vast majority of Mexican industrialists remaining continued with the tradition of seldom investing in R&D and in the development of a highly-skilled work force and of managerial expertise. James Cypher accurately assesses the vision of Mexico's *cupayo* elite, as one that sees Mexico's role as *limited to dumping – cheap labour, environmental and fiscal*.¹²⁹

Relative to the export of non-maquiladora manufacturing, the composition of exports clearly exposes the process of transformation of Mexico's economic structure from an import-substitution model into an assembly export model with a high content of imports. This destroyed the previous model, dismantled many processes that linked the development of endogenous manufacturing and replaced them with the increasing export of imported content in manufacturing. By 1999, the imported content –from the US and elsewhere– already had a share of 57 percent of total manufactured exports.¹³⁰ The automotive industry is an emblematic example of the abandonment of local content in manufacturing that is replaced with imports. The Decree of the Automotive Industry of 1962 required a minimum of 60 percent of local

¹²⁷ OECD Stat Extracts: Unit Labour Costs - Annual Indicators: : Labour Income Share Ratios Data extracted on 23 Sep 2013.

¹²⁸ James M. Cypher: Mexico's Dependant Economy – Manufacturing wages lower than in China, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, A TLWNSI Issue Commentary, September 2017.

¹²⁹ *ibid*.

¹³⁰ René Villarreal, *Industrialización, Deuda, y Desequilibrio en México (1929-2000)*, Fondo de Cultura Económica 2000, pp. 678.

content. The Decree of the Automotive Industry of 1989, five years before NAFTA, reduced local content to 36 percent. Given that the automotive industry is the main exporter of manufactured goods and considering its multiplying effects on many supplier sectors, such as glass, steel, tires and plastics, the impact of the local content reduction in the sector has a rather negative multiplying effect on all supplying sectors. This has dismantled a good part of domestic supply chains. Worse still, currently more than eighty percent of all exports come from around 500 large-scale companies, of which the majority are transnationals or domestic companies with foreign participation. We can infer then that the linkage of small

and medium enterprises the main generators of given its lack of linkage circuit of large domestic and the virtual which the government decades.¹³¹ This has productive chains in the neoliberal policies of the the domestic robber tutelary robber barons metropolises of the



in exports –traditionally jobs– is now minor with the oligopolistic and foreign companies abandonment with has rendered them for severely decimated the economy. The partnership between barons and that of the coming from the system has deepened

an export model that exacerbates the sale of labour at modern-slave-work prices. The end result is that Mexico has been reengineered into a maquiladora territory. This is, in effect, an incontrovertible fact not only for the exports of the maquila sector itself, but also because manufactured exports currently have such a low local content that Mexico has actually become an exporter of assembled imports.

For workers in the cities, economic reengineering translated into a deliberate systemic pauperisation of their standards of living through an explicit real wage erosion policy. Millions lost their jobs in manufacturing as small and medium size companies –which were responsible for the generation of the vast majority of jobs– were forced to close, first when Mexico joined the GATT and then when NAFTA came into effect, given that they were unable to compete with large US and other foreign corporations that flooded the market and bought many of the larger Mexican companies. Walmart bought the largest retailer. Heineken and InBev bought the two largest and centuries old brewing companies. Many small and medium Mexican companies also lost access to credit when the state development institutions of the old import substitution model were closed or changed their mission and financing became mostly a private business. Mexican banking which had a number of banks that had been in existence for over a century, were all sold to foreign banks, mostly from the US, Spain, Canada and the UK.

Wages, which have never provided a dignified standard of living to Mexicans in practically all economic sectors, reached their best position in 1981 and then began a constant descent, losing by now 80 percent of their real value. Let us succinctly address their decline from a comparative perspective using purchasing power parities (PPP) to assess their position vis-a-vis equivalent US wages in the manufacturing sector. Remuneration for equivalent workers doing the same work in two economies, following the principle of equal pay for equal work, should be at par in PPP terms. In 1981 hourly direct pay for Mexican production-line workers was equivalent to 40 percent in PPP terms to the hourly direct pay earned by their US counterparts. By 1995, the first year after NAFTA, this relationship had

¹³¹ Víctor Flores Olea y Abelardo Mariña Flores. *Crítica de la Globalidad. Dominación y Liberación en Nuestro tiempo.* Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004

[illegible]

¹³⁵ Informe 2014 del Observatorio de Salarios. Universidad Iberoamericana. Puebla)

or company indirect benefits) of all employed in manufacturing in Mexico, shows that not even these workers –the best paid– were able to afford it. Using 40 hours per week shifts over 4,33 weeks in a month would only buy 67,3% of this CBI.¹³⁶ Thus, the best paid workers –skilled manufacturing workers– would need to earn \$7,14 an hour, equivalent to a 48% wage increase, just to be able to afford the indispensable basket of goods or CBI in 2014.

If we assess the affordability of the CBI against the 2014 monthly minimum wage of P\$2.018,70, it could afford only 12,3% of the CBI. In other words, to buy wages in 2014. However, according to 76% of all salaried workers earned five more than five minimum wages and Thus, we can very conservatively assert workers could not afford to buy the CBI only 3,4% of salaried workers earn more worse, the study reports that while in minimum wages, only 2,4 million did in been so predatory over the decades, lowest in the Americas, only at par with month).¹³⁹ This deliberate policy of oligarchs for their benefit and of their of economic refugees, millions of which any means available as a matter of



the CBI workers required 8,15 minimum INEGI, the government's statistics institute, minimum wages or less, only 8,4% earned 15,5% did not disclose their income.¹³⁷ that at the very least 80% of all salaried in 2014. In fact, a new study reports that than five minimum wages monthly. But even 2005, 4,5 million workers earned five 2017.¹³⁸ Indeed, Mexico's wage policy has that Mexico's minimum wage is now the Nicaragua (\$111 vs \$109 US dollars per pauperisation imposed by the Mexican partners to the North has triggered a mass have been forced to migrate to the US by survival, just like the economic refugees of

the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression in the 1930s in the US. As earlier noted, just between 2000 and 2005 more than 400,000 a year moved to the US; by 2009 there were more than 12 million.¹⁴⁰ The fact that the root cause of this migration is the economic structures that were imposed by the elites on both sides of the border in a completely authoritarian way on the vast majority of Mexicans is incontrovertible. Furthermore, the fact that this reality is always consistently and deliberately “overlooked” by most “analysts” and politicians tells a lot about the connivance of these elites to depredate Mexico bringing it back to conditions prevailing in the XIX century.

Opening Mexico's economy for the free access of mainly US, Canadian and European corporations to its labour pool under slave work conditions and its natural resources is the quintessential role of Mexico in the tacit agreement between the imperial oligarchy and its subdued oligarchic partner to the South. ***In the new world order, Mexico is assigned the task of serving as supplier of natural resources and labour resources at modern slave work prices in the international division of labour imposed by the US.*** Nevertheless, in addition to the economic role assigned to Mexico, Mexico's robber barons were also assigned the role of safe keepers by playing as proxies (or country managers in the neoliberal parlance of the Bretton Woods institutions) for US national security on its Southern border. The two main roles were to contain the river of economic refugees resulting from the same type of centre-periphery neocolonial relationship between the US and Central American oligarchs, and the “so called” US war on drugs.

¹³⁶ The Jus Semper Global Alliance: Mexico's Wage Gap Charts – Wage rates for all employed in manufacturing. Wage gap charts for Mexico vis-à-vis selected developed and emerging economies, with available wage and PPP data (1996-2015) November 2016, p. 14.

¹³⁷ INEGI: Indicadores estratégicos de ocupación y empleo, ENOE 2014).

¹³⁸ Instituto para el Desarrollo Industrial y el Crecimiento Económico, A.C. (IDIC): Agenda Mínima por México. Voz de la Industria Vol. 6 N° 114, Febrero 2018.

¹³⁹ Expansión \ datosmacro.com, consulted on 20/12/2017.

¹⁴⁰ James M. Cypher: Mexico's Dependant Economy – Manufacturing wages lower than in China, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, A TLWNSI Issue Commentary, September 2017.

Pseudo Drug War and Mérida Initiative as part of US Geopolitical National Interest

In addition to the assignment of providing free access to Mexico's territory for the exploitation of its natural and human resources, the US also works with the Mexican oligarchy to consolidate its national security interests in Mexico. National security interests means imposing the agenda required to maximise US economic interests through economic and security policies, namely the militarisation of responsibilities of federal and local law enforcement agencies in Mexico in line with the imperial agenda. This is in effect replicating its position in South America through its "Plan Colombia". Plan Colombia is a model of imperial interventionism used to stop any signs of insurgency using as a placebo the war on drugs and terrorism. It is a model that has been applied to the countries of Central America and Mexico, replicating what the US has done in Colombia. As Laura Carlsen explains, *the Bush plan for Mexico and Central America has always borne a close relationship to its southern predecessor. Plan Colombia began as a counter-narcotics plan, built along the drug war model of enforcement and interdiction and use of the army, with close US participation. Plan Mexico (later named Mérida) does not include US Army presence but relies on the same model.*¹⁴¹ Its purpose is to secure free access to the entire territory of Mexico for US economic and political/national security reasons, such as suppressing any attempt to oppose its geopolitical agenda in the region.

Plan Mérida is part of the US strategy for North America which in turn forms part of its strategy for the Americas, a region with potentially the greatest portion of the world's fossil fuels and the water reserves of the Amazonia and Orinoco basins as part of its global plan of domination. This strategy is centred on guaranteeing the sustained access preeminently of the fossil fuels required to sustain the levels of energy consumption demanded by its imperial metropolises. At least since the Carter Administration such imperial vision began to take form as the Peak Oil —the point when the maximum level of oil extraction is reached before a trend of terminal decline in extraction follows— was reached in the US in the 1970s. Hence Carter initiated what is now known as the Central Command or CENTCOM which is conceived to protect US vital interests. Carter made it clear when he informed the world that the US had the right to the use of any measure, including the use of force, to guarantee its vital interests.¹⁴² The quite evident context of all of these plans is that the US is **fixated** on arrogating the world.

In Mexico, the Alliance for the Security and Prosperity of North America (ASPAN) and the Plan Mérida constitute the two tools that consolidate US hegemony over its immediate backyard. ASPAN and Plan Mérida are part of the tricorn of the US imperial strategy in the Americas. They are intimately linked to the Proyecto Mesoamerica (covering from Southern Mexico to Colombia) and the Plan Colombia.

ASPAN is the deep submission of Mexico and Canada to the interests of US national security. It was agreed to in secret meetings in Waco, Texas (2005), Banff, Alberta (2006) and in Montebello, Quebec (2007) by Bush II, Harper and Fox / Calderón with the presence of the business elite –particularly the energy sector– of the three countries and the US military and security leadership. ASPAN imposes a supranational police-military state behind the Demos, the legislatures and the rule of law and constitutes the deep integration (looting) of natural resources, a labour apartheid and the sharp exclusion of the Demos and the legislative bodies from the "trinational agenda".¹⁴³ ASPAN bequests the energy resources of Mexico to the interests of the United States, for an absolutely secured access to energy is a crucial issue for US national security; hence the more than evident push of the Mexican governments since

¹⁴¹ Laura Carlsen: A Plan Colombia for Mexico, Foreign Policy in Focus, September 2010.

¹⁴² John Saxe-Fernández: "America Latina ¿Reserva Estratégica de Estados Unidos?" OSAL (Buenos Aires: CLACSO) Año X, Nº 25, abril 2009.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

the start of the new century to bequest Mexico's oil resources to US oil conglomerates. In the current regime in Mexico, the privatisation of its fossil fuels was secured with the change of the required constitutional articles that allow the state to provide contracts for exploration and exploitation to private, mostly foreign, companies.¹⁴⁴ This makes Pemex, the state oil monopoly, a virtual administrator of contracts and no longer a producer of crude oil and petrochemicals.

The Plan Mérida constitutes strictly the US security agenda imposed on Mexico under the pretext of the fight against drug trafficking, replicating the policy followed with Plan Colombia, but with the direct intervention of the Mexican military instead of the US military. In this way, along with the reactivation of the fourth fleet dissolved in 1950 –plus the seven naval and military bases authorised in Plan Colombia and the ones it already has in Central America and the Caribbean– the US unleashes an offensive of threat and harassment under the concerted management of its Northern and Southern military commands, including the ordering of potential invasions. It was the imperial reaction to the rejection of the FTAA by the majority of South America and the growing independence and rejection of US hegemony by Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina during the first decade of this century. The Mesoamerica Project focuses on the economic and social aspects; ASPAN focuses on energy security and the Plan Merida / Plan Colombia on military security. An extensive article by Nydia Egremy in Contralinea magazine, based on over two thousand files from the US Embassy in Mexico released by Wikileaks, exposes what it regards as the complete submission of the Mexican government to the dictates of the State Department, where the US Northern and Southern Commands, the US Department of Justice, the CIA, DEA and the FBI are involved.¹⁴⁵ This is the imperial hegemonic tricorn in the Americas. The governments of Mexico, captured by the Robber Baron elite, have consistently folded to US demands in exchange for their support to remain in power. These ominous cessions of sovereignty constitute acts of high treason, which in any country with a rule of law ethos would strip them of power and put them in prison for life.

Since this is not the case in the centre-periphery partnership, the human cost for the Mexican citizenry has been extreme and constitutes a low intensity war to crush any attempt to change the status quo. This devious policy jointly managed by the Mexican and US governments has evolved into a massacre of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans since the turn of this century. As is customary, with very few exceptions, this human drama has been deliberately neglected by US printed and electronic mass media. The war on drugs in Mexico began with Calderón, the agent in charge of the Mexican side of the oligarchic partnership during the 2006-2012 period. From the start of his term he brought the army and the navy to the fore, to take on responsibilities that in any country are the responsibilities of federal and local law enforcement agencies and never of a country's armed forces. Instead, Calderón imposed a quasi state of exception, since it was never officially declared. Calderón designated the army as the public force in charge of confronting the drug cartels and other modes of organised crime. He also used this policy to create a climate of insecurity, recklessness and repression of the common citizenry. Exhibiting



¹⁴⁴ Gaceta Parlamentaria: Proyecto de Decreto Por El Que Se Reforman Y Adicionan Diversas Disposiciones De La Constitución Política De Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos En Materia De Energía. Año XVI – Palacio Legislativo de San Lázaro, miércoles 11 de diciembre de 2013 Número 3925-VIII.

¹⁴⁵ Nydia Egremy: Wikileaks revela un gobierno mexicano rendido ante EU, 24 December 2010.

unabashedly his absolute contempt for the constitution and the rule of law, he replaced federal law enforcement forces with forty-five thousand troops actively involved. Furthermore, as could be expected, he refused to subject the hundreds of blatant human rights violations perpetrated by the army and navy to the office of the attorney general and agreed with the military hierarchy to have the military courts deal with such violations. This constituted in practice a carte blanche to act with impunity without any fear that any kind of judicial civil authority would take action on the matter. There is also extensive documentation publicly available about decades of collusion between several drug cartels and high level bureaucrats in federal and state governments and the military that makes it clear that the war against drug trafficking is not the Mexican and US governments' true objective but only a false flag. The ulterior motive is the military control of the population, particularly to crush the growing signs of exasperation, protest and mobilisation against the political-business oligarchy that has captured the country. A journalistic investigation found –based on the statements of a protected witness– that The Tijuana Cartel co-opted the intelligence elite, military and senior officials of the office of the Attorney General, the Baja California state attorney's office and the federal, highway, ministerial and municipal police.¹⁴⁶ A Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigation exposed the impact of the army's activity in the civil sphere in 2007 and 2008, identifying seventeen different types of crimes perpetrated by members of the army to seventy victims, regarded as collateral damage in its operatives. HRW found an absolute sphere of impunity, complacency and cynicism. Unlike in the civil sphere, access to information and transparency are regarded as obscene words in the military culture of rampant impunity.¹⁴⁷

The dominant climate of sheer impunity is an incontrovertible fact. Civil society has shown repeatedly the futility of facing the systematic violation of human rights by military forces in Mexico given the State of anomie imposed by the, literally, “Mafia State” in power. Since June 2009, well-known human rights organisations (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Prodh); International Commission of Jurists (ICJ); Human Rights Watch (HRW); and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) demanded the intervention of a UN special rapporteur before the office of Calderón to end military abuses and put an end to the military jurisdiction in cases of human rights violations against civilians.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the blatant violation of human rights in Mexico during the Calderón regime was so dramatic, that a group of citizens prepared and submitted in 2011 a seven-hundred page lawsuit signed by more than twenty-three thousand citizens to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague against Calderón, for crimes of war and against humanity. The Court accepted the lawsuit for initial review. However, as could be expected, after years of deliberation, the Court decline to include it in its list of cases. In a letter addressing the *Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme* (France) dated 22 October 2015, it argues that despite the extensive violations of human rights in Mexico, this does not necessarily constitute crimes of competence of the ICC. In particular, the Rome Statute requires that the alleged acts must be committed as part of a generalised or systematic attack against a civilian population to constitute a crime against humanity, or have been committed in the context of, and in relation to an armed conflict, to be a war crime. Obviously, the FIDH and many human rights organisations disagree and believe that there are enough elements for the ICC to open a preliminary examination in Mexico, which could lead to the identification and prosecution of those responsible for possible crimes against humanity that the Mexican state cannot or does not want to prosecute. The FIDH argues that "international criminal law does not require the existence of a conflict for crimes against humanity to take place, for one of the important achievements of the Rome Statute is, precisely, that it disassociates war crimes from those regarded as crimes against humanity".¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ José Reyes: En gobiernos panistas fortificó su imperio el cártel de Tijuana, *Contralínea*, 25 de octubre de 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch: Mexico – Uniform Impunity – Mexico's Misuse of Military Justice to Prosecute Abuses in Counternarcotics and Public Security Operations, 2009.

¹⁴⁸ Gloria Leticia Díaz: Demandan intervención de la ONU por abusos militares en México, *Proceso*, 2 de junio de 2009

¹⁴⁹ Marco Appel: La Corte Penal Internacional rehúye el caso de México, *Proceso*, 14 diciembre, 2017.

The ICC decision was taken after Peña Nieto —the current agent in charge of the Mexican side of the partnership— launched an extensive blackmail campaign against the ICC, using as the central argument that the Mexican government was the tenth largest donor of funds for the ICC and that the Mexican government is open to international cooperation on human rights and thus, the Courts intervention is unnecessary.¹⁵⁰ Peña Nieto is well-known for even worse and blatant human rights violations than Calderón as former governor of the State of Mexico (Atenco - 2006) and as president (Tlatlaya and Ayotzinapa - 2014). At the end, instead of Calderón being investigated for the alleged crimes against humanity he received from Harvard University, as a present, the first Angelopoulos Global Public Leaders fellowship, at its John F. Kennedy School of Government.¹⁵¹ Harvard was strongly criticised for such decision. *In awarding Mr. Calderón a high-profile fellowship, the Kennedy School is telling the world that former leaders, however questionable their leadership, are worthy of recognition.* Marion Lloyd, a Harvard alum and researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico writes in the Chronicle of Higher Education. *It is an unfortunate and dangerous message. An estimated 60.000 people died violent deaths during Calderón's presidency. Mexico's attorney general has documented 25.000 disappearances during that time.*¹⁵² As a good performer as proxy of US national interests in the region, he had to be honoured somehow.



The figures cited by Marion Lloyd as the human cost of Calderón policies, are in effect far smaller than even the official data. As journalist Alejandro Hope accurately asserts, for some strange reason, the official data is overlooked, even by the Mexican press.

used for violent Calderon from sixty to one-thousand.¹⁵³ according to INEGI, Calderon was deaths (homicides). government, the 60.280 deaths. So duplicated the total with his new policy to take care of responsibilities. For official number of his first four years



The usual figures deaths during the government range hundred However, the official figure for 121.463 violent Under the Fox official figure was Calderon amount of deaths of using the military civilian Peña Nieto, the violent deaths for (2013-2016) was

¹⁵⁰ Jorge Carrasco Araizaga: Cabildeo Peñaista en favor de Calderón, Proceso, 31 enero, 2015

¹⁵¹ Karla Zabudovsky: Exiting Mexican Leader to Go to Harvard, The New York Times, 29, November 2012.

¹⁵² Harvard Slammed For Giving Ex-President Of Mexico, Felipe Calderón, One-Year Fellowship: The Huffington Post, 7th January 2013.

¹⁵³ Alejandro Hope: Los 300 mil muertos, El Universal, 23/02/2016.

90.393 deaths, averaging 22.598 violent deaths annually.¹⁵⁴ A new report from the LA Times mentions 22,409 deaths in the first 11 months of 2017 —*more killings than in any year since the government began releasing crime data in 1997*.¹⁵⁵ But a new official report from the Mexican government recorded 29.168 homicides in 2017, a new historical record that increases the annual average to 23.912 violent deaths.¹⁵⁶ Thus, if we assume this sustained average, Peña Nieto will end his six-year term with a total of 143,473 violent deaths. This is quite credible given that in 2016 homicides grew to 24.559 deaths, an 18,3% increase from the previous year and by 18,8% in 2017 from 2016. This is the human cost for the people of Mexico of a joint policy between the US and its proxy for national security, the government of the Mafia State of Mexico. This war has been questioned for many years on both sides of the border by a wide diversity of analysts, who share the belief that it is only a pretext to impose on Mexico a militarised civilian life where the root causes of the drug trade are systematically avoided.

The root causes of the drug trade are very evident. One is the demand-side, the market demand in the US which has increased in a sustained manner as a result of the increase of inequality as the economics for the exclusive benefit of the less than one percent keep consolidating and sending millions of people in the US to Guy Standing's The Precariat. The recent Statement by NYU Law Professor Philip Alston —United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights— makes it clear that the less than once percent in the US is fixated on the pauperisation of the citizenry. ***"My visit coincides with a dramatic change of direction in US policies relating to inequality and extreme poverty. The proposed tax reform package stakes out America's (sic) bid to become the most unequal society in the world, and will greatly increase the already high levels of wealth and income inequality between the richest 1% and the poorest 50% Americans (sic). The dramatic cuts in welfare, foreshadowed by the President and Speaker Ryan, and already beginning to be implemented by the administration, will essentially shred crucial dimensions of a safety net that is already full of holes."***¹⁵⁷ The socioeconomic depression of many communities in the rust belt of the Midwest originates on the fact that they were forced to board up because they lost their livelihoods. This is due to a number of factors. Many US companies moved their jobs to Mexico after NAFTA or they chose to move jobs to China and South East Asia,¹⁵⁸ or their new technologies simply made many jobs redundant, or the increase of post traumatic syndrome in the military disabled many to be productive. All these factors triggered a sustained demand of met-amphetamines or harder drugs such as cocaine across the entire United States. Even Obama acknowledged it when he said in a speech in Mexico that Much of the root cause of violence that's been happening here in Mexico... is the demand for illegal drugs in the United States.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the US has been the leader for years in illicit drug use.¹⁶⁰ This is the direct result of the growing inequality that has excluded millions of people from their right to enjoy a dignified life. This is also the underlying cause of the sharp increase in the consumption of drugs documented in a growing body of research that supports the assessment that points at socioeconomic factors for the sharp increase of illicit drug use across the US. Additionally, the entire country is enduring an opioid epidemic to the point that many consider that ordering drugs is as easy as ordering pizza. You can order via

¹⁵⁴ INEGI: Estadísticas de Mortalidad: Defunciones por homicidios; Año de ocurrencia (1990-2016) : Total, Mes de ocurrencia : Total Consulta de: Defunciones por homicidio † Por: Mes de registro † Según: Año de registro.

¹⁵⁵ Kate Lithicum: The US tells citizens not to travel to five Mexican states. Los Angeles Times, 10 January 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Secretaría de Gobernación – Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema de Seguridad Pública: Informe de víctimas de homicidio, secuestro y extorsión 2017, 20/01/2018.

¹⁵⁷ Statement on Visit to the USA, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Washington, 15, December 2017.

¹⁵⁸ One estimate puts the number of production jobs moved from the US to Mexico and China each year, between 1992 and 2001 at between 70,000 and 100,000. Then the total number of jobs leaving the US for countries in Asia and Iberian America almost doubled from 204,000 in 2001 to as much as 406,000 in 2004. As referenced in: John Smith, Imperialism and the Globalisation of Production. University of Sheffield. PhD Thesis, July 2010, p. 66.

¹⁵⁹ Benjamín Powell: The Economics Behind the US Government's Unwinnable War on Drugs, Library of Economics and Liberty, 1st July 2013.

¹⁶⁰ Ann Simmons: Millions hooked on illicit drugs, as nations debate policy to tackle the problem, Los Angeles Times, 19 April 2016.

SMS and they are delivered by car.¹⁶¹ According to the National Survey on Drug Abuse and Health, ninety-two million, or 37,8% of US adults used prescription opioids in 2014. Big Pharma and doctors shared part of the responsibility for the problem, but socioeconomic forces such as unemployment, lack of health insurance, and poverty are all closely associated with a higher prevalence of prescription opioid misuse and use disorders among adults.¹⁶²

The other root cause is the supply side in which Mexicans play a big role. But what is the underlying reason of this as well? It is the destruction of the livelihoods of millions of Mexican families both in rural communities as well as in cities that have forced them to make three choices for survival: 1) condemn themselves to a life of absolute misery living in the slums of Mexican cities and working in the informal economy, which accounted for 54% of total employment in 2013;¹⁶³ 2) migrate to the US in pursuit of an uncertain minimum level of dignity and 3) join the drug cartels as peons. Consequently, the root cause of the supply side is a sharp increase of inequality —in a country that has always suffered high inequality— as the result of the collusion of the elites that materialise the US- Mexico centre-periphery partnership to plunder the country. ***Essentially, both in the US and in Mexico, the root cause of drug trafficking (supply side) and drug consumption (demand side) is structural systemic inequality imposed by the oligarchic elites of the centre-periphery partnership.***

Nonetheless, as we all know, the strategy followed by the governments of both the demand and supply side to reduce the use of illicit drugs has been for decades a military approach that has always remained unwinnable. The demand for illicit drugs is unwinnable because the majority of users are not involved in the warfares between drug traffickers and the forces fighting them. They are consumers, from bankers, politicians, athletes and college professors, to office workers, salespersons, and blue-collar workers who buy their drugs from regular small dealers.¹⁶⁴ These consumers belong to a wide socioeconomic spectrum that is far removed from the drug trafficking cartels. Hence, until the aforementioned root causes of addiction are seriously addressed and effective measures are taken to tackle the problem, demand will continue to increase. Yet, both governments deliberately neglect to address the problem from this perspective and insist on the military approach. Laura Carlsen points out the systemic hyperbole in US Political spheres about the drug war in Mexico with undertones that speak about potential military intervention in Mexico to prevent unforeseen circumstances if Mexico becomes a failed state or about potential terrorism... just in case. Carlsen asserts with good reason that Mexico is not a failed state but a tragic case of the results of failed policies on both sides, which both governments want to hide. And she points out the customary fact of public opinion manipulation: *In the past, exaggerated risk assessments, amplified by the media and accompanied by dire warnings to the public, prepare the ground for military intervention. They usually pack hyperbole or outright lies, the most recent example being the "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq.*¹⁶⁵ Carlsen exposes the hypocrisy of rhetoric of both governments conveyed in the US State Department's 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, pointing out that *The US government comes up with a speculative excuse for almost every poor result listed in its own report. In the doublespeak of the Mexican drugwar, organised crime branching out into new regions and new enterprises -human trafficking, for example - is a positive sign. Violence is progress. Murder is an indicator of success.*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Maxine Robin: Small Town America gets lethally addicted, Le Monde Diplomatique, English edition, February 2018.

¹⁶² David Blumenthal and Shanoor Seervai: To Combat the Opioid Epidemic, We Must be Honest About All Its Causes, Harvard Business Review, 26 October 2017.

¹⁶³ ILO: Informal Employment: Table MBL_524_EN, downloaded on 17/1/2018.

¹⁶⁴ Robert Joe Stout: Do the United States and Mexico Really Want the Drug War To Succeed? –The monthly Review, January 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Laura Carlsen: Drug War Double Speak, Common Dreams, 11 March 2009.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

The underlying reason behind the policies of both countries that are applied in connivance are the benefits that both the imperial and the client state elites get from imposing structures that guarantee them power and wealth. Stout clearly assesses the rationale behind the strategy to combat the drug trade: *Unfortunately, major questions that need to be answered are shunted aside by policymakers on both sides of the border and preference is given to partisan stances that have less to do with the drug trade or the war against it than they have to do with maintaining economic and political power. Neither government seems capable of asking: Can Mexico really afford to end the production and exportation of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, amphetamines, and designer drugs without its US-dependent economy collapsing?... As long as the assassinations, beheadings, cateos, and the majority of the corruption of government officials remain south of the border the United States can maintain its pro-military stance, send money and arms to Mexico's conservative government, and focus on more demanding issues.*¹⁶⁷

Malice towards Mexico: The Portrayal of Mexico as an exporter of crime in line with US national interest at the start of the XXI century

The consolidation of the Neoliberal ethos both in the US and globally has had a direct effect on the gross increase of inequality by excluding billions from a dignified life. This has given form to the Precariat including many who fall prey to drug addiction and drug and human trafficking.¹⁶⁸ In this context of exclusion, Mexico has been portrayed as the villain to the citizens of the so-called “beacon of democracy” and all good things. Mexico sends its poor (Precariat) and drug traffickers and this causes all sorts of social and economic problems that decrease the quality of life of US citizens. This is the context of all the propaganda fed through mass media in the US. The daily diet of this propaganda has been fed with special hyperbole after NAFTA triggered more inequality and exclusion on both sides, which in turn triggered an explosion of immigrants from Mexico escaping from the depredation of their hometowns.

Indeed, now that we have assessed that the true causes of Mexican immigration into the US are deeply rooted in the pursuit of the imperialist agenda of domination through a partnership with the local oligarchy, the hypocrisy used to criminalise Mexicans, as if they were a group of people trying to take advantage of a country that has nothing to do with its plight, is mean-spirited to say the least. However, this is nothing out of the ordinary in the customary fashion in which the US government and a large sector of US society acts. As a consequence, the criminalisation of immigration in general and Mexican immigrants in particular has increased exponentially both in new legislation and in propaganda to support the story that immigrants are invading the country, most of them “illegally”, and disrupting the *American (sic) way of life* by causing crime waves and depleting social services. ***The increasingly pugnacious demeanour used by a conservative-pseudo nativist-racist sector to attack immigrants from countries other than what they consider of European ancestry and particularly from Mexico and from countries predominantly Moslem, is tenacious and overwhelmingly anchored on prejudices, deliberate manipulation of information and outright lies to fulfil the imperial agenda.*** In the case of Mexico, as we have seen since the end of the bracero programme, US immigration policies have become more and more restrictive despite the fact that the imperialist agenda of neoliberal economics has expelled more and more Mexicans from their country and into the US as economic refugees; a fact that

¹⁶⁷ Robert Joe Stout: Do the United States and Mexico Really Want the Drug War To Succeed? –The monthly Review, January 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Precariat consists of a multitude of insecure people, living bits-and-pieces lives, in and out of short-term jobs, without a narrative of occupational development, including millions of frustrated educated youth who do not like what they see before them, millions of women abused in oppressive labour, growing numbers of criminalised tagged for life, millions being categorised as ‘disabled’ and migrants in their hundreds of millions around the world. They are denizens; they have a more restricted range of social, cultural, political and economic rights than citizens around them. See: Guy Standing: The Precariat – The New Dangerous Class, Policy Network Essay, 24 May 2011. The precariat is essentially a social class of people who suffer from job insecurity, a condition of existence without predictability or security (neither economic, nor temporal, nor social), which affects both material well-being and psychological equilibrium. The Precariat suffers from a lack of job security, including intermittent employment or insufficient, scarce, poorly paid or unpaid employment, causing a precarious existence that no longer receives social support in times of need due to the destruction of the basic structures of the welfare state. The Precariat is intimately related to the imposition of neoliberalism. See: Guy Standing: The Precariat – The New Dangerous Class, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

has never been acknowledged. They are just regarded as illegal immigrants who break the law of the “Home of the Free” in the usual parlance of the Establishment.

The criminalisation of Mexicans in particular and immigrants in general began with the new immigration policies enacted during the Clinton Administration and subsequently reinvigorated with Obama’s policies. Trump is just maintaining a continuum to the policies of two Democratic party presidents but applying them in an extremely hyperbolic and mean fashion. Clinton’s attack against immigrants — that was also instrumental in the creation of the world’s largest prison system¹⁶⁹— was enacted with the Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996. As Aviva Chomsky explains, Clinton initiated the drastic increase of immigration enforcement by explicitly converting the classification of many low-level violations into actual crimes, by massively expanding the border patrol and by facilitating deportation procedures.

Then Obama became the “Deporter-in-Chief” despite his taste for portraying himself as a welcoming and humanitarian leader. Obama’s “humanitarian” demeanour included three geographically based areas of immigration enforcement.¹⁷⁰ The first was interior enforcement where he looked good with specific protections from deportation enforcement such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) for nearly eight-hundred thousand so-called “Dreamers” as well as the low-priority ranking of their relatives, undocumented people with close community ties and those who joined the military. In contrast, Obama targeted the rest —those who did not meet the previous criteria— as high priority targets for deportation. He did this by endorsing the criteria of criminalisation that began in the 1980s and continued with Clinton and George W. Bush to massively incarcerate people who committed low-level crimes and who in their vast majority happened to be members of racial minorities, particularly blacks. This criteria is based on the development of strategies anchored on the quasi-fascist “Broken Windows” theory, that claims that committing low-level crimes eventually drives the same people to commit high-level crimes and, thus, incarcerating them will prevent them from actually committing them.¹⁷¹ Such theory “illuminated” some politicians, such as New York’s Giuliani to develop and implement the quasi-fascist “Stop-question-and-frisk” programme that, as could be expected, triggered massive racial profiling of blacks and Hispanics, which did not make a difference in crime prevention.¹⁷² The programme has been so heavy handed that it prompted George Kelling, one of the originators of the Broken Windows theory, to denounce the zero-tolerance approach as *zealotry and no discretion — the opposite of what I tried to preach*.¹⁷³ The result was that many immigrants, who predominantly happened to belong to racial minorities, were caught in the web of heavy-handed policing as the Reagan, Bush I, Clinton, Bush II and Obama administrations *bloated police department coffers and put tens of thousands more cops in communities of colour*.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, many low-level crimes under this criteria were enough to initiate deportation proceedings.



¹⁶⁹ Jeff Stein: The Clinton dynasty’s horrific legacy: How “tough-on-crime” politics built the world’s largest prison system, Salon, 13/04/2015.

¹⁷⁰ Aviva Chomsky: Making Sense of the Deportation Debate, Le Monde Diplomatique, English Edition, May 2017.

¹⁷¹ Adam J. Mackee: Broken windows theory, academic theory proposed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982 that used broken windows as a metaphor for disorder within neighbourhoods. Their theory links disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crime. Encyclopædia Britannica, Last Updated: 13-12-2017.

¹⁷² Michelle Lee: Fact Check: Trump on crime statistics and stop-and-frisk, 26 September 2016.

¹⁷³ Petra Bartosiewicz: Beyond the Broken Window, Part 8, Harper’s Magazine, May 2015.

¹⁷⁴ Alan A. Aja and Alejandra Marchevsky: How Immigrants Became Criminals, Boston Review, 17 March 2017.

Obama's second area of war waged against immigrants took place at the border with Mexico, and this was what earned him the label of "Deporter-in-Chief." His policy was to target recent entries for prosecution and criminalisation. As Aviva Chomsky explains, immigrants caught regularly sent back "voluntary departures" Their departures were deportation and, thus, In this way, over a were sent back Clinton and Bush Obama, they were fingerprinting them and with a deportation caught a second time, with a repeat



before Obama, near the border were and classified as without criminalisation. not recorded as were not criminalised. million immigrants annually during the Administrations. With criminalised by recorded as criminals order. If they were they were charged immigration offence.¹⁷⁵

This also created a business opportunity that gave way to the emergence of the immigration industrial complex, which can be described as the confluence of public and private sector interests in the criminalisation of undocumented migration, immigration law enforcement, and the promotion of 'anti-illegal' rhetoric. Tania Golash-Boza explains that the concept is based on ideas developed with regard to the prison and military industrial complexes. *These three complexes share three major features: (a) a rhetoric of fear; (b) the convergence of powerful interests; and (c) a discourse of otherisation. This gives meaning to the fact that Congress has not passed viable legislation to deal with undocumented migration, and instead has passed laws destined to fail, and has appropriated billions of dollars to the Department of Homeland Security to implement these laws. This has been exacerbated in the context of the War on Terror, now that national security has been conflated with immigration law enforcement.*¹⁷⁶ One clear explanation for the emergence of this complex comes from Wayne Cornelius, who points at *the political capital to be gained from being tough on immigration, the conflation of the Global War on Terror with immigration policy, and the 'insatiable appetite for immigrant labour - much of it low skilled - which is not satisfied by existing laws and policies'*.¹⁷⁷ This is exactly the same logic that gives meaning to the oligarchic centre-periphery partnership between the US and Mexico. It is the imposition of structures of exploitation and systematic human rights violations for the benefit of the less than one-percent on both sides. The prison system in the US has produced a for-profit prison system that, as of 2013, already housed a hundred and thirty-three thousand prisoners.¹⁷⁸ The leading profiteers are The Geo Group and CoreCivic (formerly Correction Corporation of America). Both companies happen to be the leading profiteers in the incarceration of immigration in so-called private detention centres contracted by DHS/ICE. In 2016, there were more than a hundred and eighty migrant detention centres, housing more than 33,000 detained immigrants, including children, with 73% housed in for-profit centres run by these profiteers or in conjunction with DHS/ICE.¹⁷⁹ These centres are legalised centres of slavery.

¹⁷⁵ Aviva Chomsky: Making Sense of the Deportation Debate, Le Monde Diplomatique, English Edition, May 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Tania Golash-Boza: The Immigration Industrial Complex: Why We Enforce Immigration Policies Destined to Fail. Sociology Compass, 3: 295–309. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00193.x 2009 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

¹⁷⁷ As cited by Gosah-Boza in: The Immigration Industrial Complex: Why We Enforce Immigration Policies Destined to Fail. Sociology Compass, 3: 295–309. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00193.x 2009 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

¹⁷⁸ E. Ann Carson, Ph.D., BJS Statistician: Prisoners in 2013. US Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 2014.

¹⁷⁹ Julia Edwards: Closing Private Detention Centers for Migrants Could Raise More Problems, Reuters, 9 September 2016. DHS/ICE are Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Detainees have less rights than inmates in prison, such as programmes to use their time productively. They have absolutely nothing to do unless they are willing to work at the rate of one dollar a day. Human rights violations take place every minute of the day as the standard, including the restriction and access to lawyers. *Private detention facilities often hold immigrants in well-documented appalling and inhumane conditions where abuse and neglect are rampant*, said US Senator Richard Blumenthal.¹⁸⁰

This policy includes the deadly apprehension methods of the US Border Patrol, which amount to abject “crimes against humanity” according to international law. Since the mid-1990s the Border Patrol implemented the federal government’s immigration policy of Prevention Through Deterrence. The strategy used can best be described as the implementation of the tactic of Chase and Scattered apprehensions in the wilderness area. This policy has been deemed by civil organisations as responsible for the disappearance of thousands of people, who have very likely died in the desert areas of the Mexico-US border. Prevention through Deterrence is also responsible for thousands of disappearances. A



report from the “No More Deaths” and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos” civil organisations indicates that the Border Patrol estimated border crosser deaths from the 1990s until 2015 of at least 6.029 border crossers. Nonetheless, the report indicates that audits suggest that the agency underestimates the number of border deaths by as much as forty-three percent.¹⁸¹ This would increase the total deaths to around 10.600 deaths [own calculation] of people crossing the border. However, there is also the case of thousands of disappearances that have been unaccounted for. One of the conclusions of part one of the report states that *We assert that the known disappearance of thousands of people in the remote wilderness of*

*the US–Mexico border zone marks one of the great historical crimes of our day. In turn, the aim of our research is a transformative one: we report our findings in order to challenge the Border Patrol to answer for these cruel enforcement practices—practices that are largely hidden from public view but that contribute to the shattering of thousands of lives, families, and communities.*¹⁸² Additionally, part II of the report denounces a border patrol practice that can only be regarded as sheer evilness, which is the perverse and deliberate interference and destruction of humanitarian aid provided by civil organisations in the US who work to prevent border crossers from dying, which can also be regarded as crimes against humanity. The report states that *In the desert of the Arizona–Mexico borderlands, where thousands of people die of dehydration and heat-related illness, Border Patrol agents are destroying gallons of water intended for border crossers. Border Patrol agents stab, stomp, kick, drain, and confiscate the bottles of water that humanitarian-aid volunteers leave along known migrant routes in the Arizona desert. These actions condemn border crossers to suffering, death, and disappearance. In data collected by No More Deaths from 2012 to 2015, we find that at least 3.586 gallon*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ A Report Series by La Coalición de Derechos Humanos & No More Deaths, *DISAPPEARED* (Introduction), December 2016. Available at: <http://www.thedisappearedreport.org/uploads/8/3/5/1/83515082/disappeared--introduction.pdf>

¹⁸² A Report Series by La Coalición de Derechos Humanos & No More Deaths, *DISAPPEARED –Part I: Deadly Apprehension Methods. The Consequences of Chase & Scatter in the Wilderness*. December 2016. Available at http://www.thedisappearedreport.org/uploads/8/3/5/1/83515082/disappeared_part_1.pdf



*jugs of water were destroyed in an approximately 800-square-mile desert corridor near Arivaca, Arizona. Furthermore, Border Patrol agents in the Arizona borderlands routinely intimidate, harass, and surveil humanitarian-aid volunteers, thus impeding the administration of humanitarian aid. These actions call into question the Border Patrol's own claims to be humanitarian. The practice of destruction of and interference with aid is not the deviant behaviour of a few rogue Border Patrol agents, it is a systemic feature of enforcement practices in the borderlands and a logical extension of the broader strategy of Prevention Through Deterrence.*¹⁸³

The third area of war mongering against immigrants during Obama's years is the Southern Border Programme, to be delivered courtesy of the Mexican oligarchy as part of its deal in the partnership with its Northern tutors. As with the economic and social consensus to impose rampant neoliberalism in Mexico, this programme is part of the Mexican oligarchy's responsibilities to fulfil the US so-called national security interests, complementing the Plan Mérida to guarantee the US national security agenda. The border programme is designed for the Mexican government to act as proxy of the Department of Homeland Security specifically to stop and deport all Central Americans or people from any other part of the world (including families and unaccompanied children) who attempt to enter US territory from Mexico's border. The order was to detain them and deport them. This has worked rather successfully for the US. In 2014 only 3% of Central American children apprehended in the US were deported, whilst in Mexico 77% or over eighteen thousand were deported.¹⁸⁴ This has provoked another major humanitarian crisis as thousands of economic refugees escaping from the US supported predatory practices of those in power in Central America have fallen prey to smugglers and human traffickers in Mexico. Given that the sheer neoliberal ethos imposed in Mexico eliminated passenger train service, most Central American refugees travel on the top of freight trains in the most unsafe and dangerous conditions. The freight train leaving the Mexico-Guatemala border has been nicknamed "the beast" and has been profusely covered by many journalists and researchers given that it is the vehicle of a myriad dramas of Central Americans trying to reach the US border.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the Mexican government has been accused of breaking both its own laws and international law. Amnesty International has denounced that Mexican immigration authorities fail to inform Central American migrants detained about their right to seek asylum and the protections they have under international law.¹⁸⁶



These are the components of the portrayal as criminals of the economic refugees that result from the neoliberal imperial ethos imposed by the US elite through their subordinate partners in Mexico and the rest of the periphery. These are the so-called "criminals" who are taking advantage of the US imperilling communities and depleting social services. Not only

¹⁸³ A Report Series by La Coalición de Derechos Humanos & No More Deaths, *DISSAPEARED –Part II: Interference with Humanitarian Aid, Death and Disappearance on the US-Mexico Border* December 2016. Available at http://www.thedisappearedreport.org/uploads/8/3/5/1/83515082/disappeared_report_part_2.pdf

¹⁸⁴ Aviva Chomsky: *Making Sense of the Deportation Debate*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English Edition, May 2017.

¹⁸⁵ Ruben G. Rumbaut: "La Bestia": Encounters with migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. *Academia*: https://www.academia.edu/20106153/La_Bestia_Encounters_with_migrants_from_Honduras_Guatemala_and_El_Salvador, accessed on 19/01/2018.

¹⁸⁶ Emir Olivares Alonso: *México vulnera leyes migratorias insiste AI: La Jornada*, 23 enero 2018.

do they get criminalised for trying to survive the misery directly triggered by the policies of those in power on both sides of the border but they are truly portrayed as a social stigma, a plague, a pandemic of ominous consequences in the anti-immigrant propaganda fed through mass media in an attempt to reach consensus in US public opinion that immigrants must be expelled.

Debunking the myths behind US malice towards México before and during Trump's administration

A narrative of malice against Mexico and its people has been fed to US societies since before half of Mexico's territory was taken by force by the pushers of the "Manifest Destiny" myth. But being a myth — despite being widely held as true by the manipulation of a large sector — it can easily be debunked with profusely documented hard facts. Focusing on the narrative used in the last two decades, including Trump's diatribe against Mexico, following is an assessment of the general anti-Mexican mythological narrative used to justify the policies advanced to fulfil the imperial interest of the less than one percent in power and the true facts that debunk such populist mythology.

- *Mexico is a poor country on the brink of becoming a failed state. It exports poor people that diminishes our quality of life.*

Mexico is a poor country indeed, but its root cause is the direct result of the centre-periphery partnership between the US and Mexican oligarchies. They have captured the country to exploit its people and deplete the country's resources for the benefit of the very private interest of their lot, which represents less than one percent. This system has been in existence for many decades and has been exacerbated since the Washington Consensus of neoliberal economics imposed a Modern Slave Work system in the early 1980s in Mexico and globally. The direct result has been the recolonisation of Mexico with the complete destruction of the livelihoods of millions of Mexican families across Mexico. This has destroyed entire rural communities and drastically reduced the quality of life of many millions of Mexican urbanites who work in all economic sectors, with nearly two-thirds now working in the informal economy for hunger wages. As a consequence, millions of Mexican families have opted for migrating into the US rather than subjecting themselves to survive as modern slaves or work for drug cartels. Therefore, we have a rather perverse system imposed by the "partnership" that cynically expels them from their country and then repeals them as if they were intruding into the realm of another country that has nothing to do with its plight. The members of this partnership are the direct authors and perpetrators of the policies that have been imposed on both sides of the border to exploit and then criminalise the millions of Mexicans that have been deprived of their right to enjoy a dignified life. **In every policy or action implemented on either side of the border affecting the people of Mexico, one partner is the direct perpetrator and the other is its accomplice in this perverse endeavour. Mexico is not a failed state. It is a state captured by this partnership of robber-baron elites as just one of many captured states that the imperial interests of those who hold the real reins of power in the US have imposed to dominate the world.**

- *Mexican poverty and instability exports criminals that rape and kill people and increase crime rates*

Actually the opposite is the truth. Several studies over many years have consistently found that, contrary to Trump and his apologists' claims, both Mexicans and immigrants in general have consistently shown much lower crime rates than the population born in the United States. According to a US Census and American Community Survey, the crime incarceration rate among immigrants is less than 50% of that of the native born (1,6% vs. 3,3%). Between 1980 and 2010, analysis of census data shows that immigrant men between 18-49 are between one-half and one-fifth less likely to

be incarcerated as those born in the US¹⁸⁷ Even the neoliberal Cato Institute assessed a wide spectrum of studies encompassing both micro level studies (US Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data from the institutionalised population) and macro level studies (macro level analysis of immigrant criminality) that seek to identify correlations between immigrants and criminality at the macro level. The Institute's conclusion is clear: *Both the Census-data driven studies and macro-level studies find that immigrants are less crime-prone than natives with some small potential exceptions.* Two major reasons are that given that immigrants can be deported and thus get double punishment (first they pay their sentence and then are deported) they are prone to commit less crimes. Another major reason is that immigrants self-select for those willing to work rather than those willing to commit crimes. In other words, their motivation for leaving their country is to work and not to commit crimes. According to this postulate motivated and ambitious foreigners are more likely to immigrate than the rest and therefore are less likely to be criminals.¹⁸⁸ But immigrant hate mongers, beginning with Trump, keep attempting to exploit specific cases, such as the killing of Kate Steinle in San Francisco in the most hyperbolic fashion to equate the killing of so-called “natives” as the customary work of immigrants. Nevertheless, the findings keep reinforcing the fact that immigrants are dramatically less prone to commit crimes than the native born. A study by the American Immigration Council concluded that **“For more than a century, innumerable studies have confirmed two simple yet powerful truths about the relationship between immigration and crime: immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes or be behind bars than the native-born, and high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime.”** This holds true for both legal immigrants and the unauthorized, regardless of their country of origin or level of education. In other words, the overwhelming majority of immigrants are not “criminals” by any commonly accepted definition of the term. For this reason, harsh immigration policies are not effective in fighting crime.¹⁸⁹ Lastly, as Aviva Chomsky points out, the fact that many minor crimes were redefined as felonies in the new system of criminalisation, primarily of minorities, many immigrants (including legal ones) were caught in that web. With Clinton's immigration reform, the most minor crimes became grounds for deportation even retroactively for small violations committed years before. With Obama, illegal reentry or using a false social security number automatically categorised immigrants as criminals and thus are logged to be deported.¹⁹⁰ These criminalisation policies naturally increase crime incidence among immigrants. In spite of this their crime rates have remained much lower than for the native population.

- *Mexico is a corrupt society and with a very corrupt political class*

In this case corruption is not a myth but a true and sad fact. Corruption in Mexico is endemic. Mexicans are used to solving many issues that have to do with bureaucratic red tape (permits, licenses, contracts...) with bribes. Unlike in the US, where it happens occasionally, in Mexico it is the norm. Dealing with the government at all levels implies dealing with corruption at one point in the process. Corruption in the electoral process at all government levels is so overt that few are surprised. What is really disturbing in the case of presidential elections, is the fact that international observers give credence to such travesty by qualifying it as clean but for a “few incidents,” and the next day all governments with vested interests in the outcome congratulate the winner. Normally, corruption begins with the bureaucrats or politicians in power to make things that are otherwise lawful, happen at a price. But corruption has been endemic for so long that it is difficult to point at where the corruption started, with the state or with the people when dealing with the state. However, corruption has worsened and become more sophisticated in the last three decades. With the imposition of neoliberalism, many traditional politicians have been replaced at the top of the government ministries with the so-called technocrats, many of them trained in US universities. This has created a revolving-door system where technocrats move between the

¹⁸⁷ Richard Pérez Peña: Contrary to Trump's claims, Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes, The New York Times, 26 January 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Alex Nowrasteh: Immigration and Crime – What the Research Says, CATO Institute, 14 July 2015.

¹⁸⁹ Walter E. Ewing: Daniel E. Martínez and Rubén G. Rimbaut: The Criminalisation of Immigration in the United States, American Immigration Council, Special Report, July 2015.

¹⁹⁰ Aviva Chomsky: Making Sense of the Deportation Debate, Le Monde Diplomatique, English Edition, May 2017.

private and public sector to enrich themselves and nauseate with the confidence of enjoying full impunity for all kinds of crimes. This has exacerbated the belief of many aspirers that joining the political class not to serve the citizenry but to enrich themselves in as much as possible while they hold a position of “public service” is a safe and valid route to success in life.

Nevertheless, corruption is endemic everywhere and is getting a lot worse. Worldwide, capitalism has made a mockery of representative democracy by replacing it with marketocracy, the dictatorship of the market.

The thing about corruption in Mexico from the US perspective, in media and in public opinion, is that it is perceived as a problem that does not exist in the US where corruption is regarded to be minor or the exception to the rule. However, corruption in the US is as endemic as it is in Mexico. The difference is that it is far more sophisticated and therefore not as overt by any measure.

The most important feature is its design to impose the marketocratic ethos where the market logic reigns supreme. Indeed, the most important feature in US corruption is the claim that the US is a beacon of democracy when, as previously explained, is a hoax, a true euphemism for the marketocratic system that has been imposed by the oligarchic class. This has made everything a merchandise, even aspects of life as fundamental as a human right. The most conspicuous case is the right to healthcare, which in the vast majority of so-called democratic societies is considered a basic human right. Nevertheless, marketocracy in the US treats access to healthcare as an area of commerce, as just another merchandise that providers can sell to those who can afford to pay for it. One could argue that the unquestionable fact that healthcare is treated in the US as merchandise is an ethical issue and not a question of corrupt practices. Nonetheless, the mere fact that healthcare is regarded as a marketable service, has allowed the marketocratic system to legalise what in other countries would be considered outright robbery. It is widely known in the US itself that the healthcare system is broken and completely biased in favour of corporate power, namely big pharma, insurance companies and private hospitals. Nobody knows what the true cost of healthcare is. Healthcare bills routinely show amounts that have nothing to do with the true cost. Then insurance companies pay only a fraction of the amount billed by providers. Yet the out-of-pocket healthcare cost could easily bring a whole family into bankruptcy even with insurance. Patients –who are treated as customers with a need for a marketable service and not as human beings with a health issue– could easily get hit with “surprise bills” for services that were not expected to be billed and where patients were misled on the out-of-pocket cost and never warned. For instance, the anaesthetist, or some other “service provider”, –unknown to the patient– that somehow intervened in a procedure with the customer, issues a bill for hundreds or thousands of dollars, without any prior warning by the insurance company or the “service provider” –typically the doctor– that actually interacted with his client. Yet this is a perfectly legal practice that is tantamount to legalised robbery. In the vast majority of the world, this is regarded as a blatantly corrupt practice. In European countries and even in many countries in Iberian America healthcare is a human right and thus, the states have public healthcare systems that are paid for by taxpayers. Thus, there is no out-of-pocket cost. Moreover, if the patient in these countries chooses to go with a private practitioner, the out-of-pocket cost is presented in detail before the service is provided and normally nothing changes at the end.

Marketocracy has captured democracy worldwide as sheer capitalism has privatised vast spaces of the public sphere, from healthcare to education, water and other utilities to name a few. ***However, marketocracy has been brought in the US to such an extreme that the market is virtually a demigod with the power to rule over the lives of every member of society.*** In the US corporations have been elevated to the level of persons. As previously noted, the US Supreme Court ruled in 2010 that corporations have the right to be treated as citizens as if they were human beings,

in order for them to exert their power to influence all electoral processes. By the same token, human beings have been downgraded to the level of mere consumer units as long as they have the power to consume to enrich the pockets of corporate managers and institutional investors. If they don't they are regarded as relics of another era, and have no right to exert the "nonsense" idea of the citizenry in a truly democratic ethos. This is corruption of the highest order. Moreover, corruption, motivated by sheer greed from Wall Street's institutional investors, was also blatant in the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act in 1999 and in the bailing out of the banks in 2008-2009. The US revolving door system, where politicians and representatives of corporations exchange positions (as regulators and corporate lobbyists) customarily results in a state of regulatory capture in favour of corporate power. The previously noted Rubin case with the Glass-Steagall repeal is a paradigmatic example of revolving-door corruption at the highest level. Gerrymandering is another classic case of corrupt practices in the US affecting electoral processes. The centre-periphery relationship in itself, where the US oligarchic class endorses, supports and works in connivance with their periphery partners to advance their mutual interests betraying their democratic mandate to procure the welfare of all ranks of their respective societies is undoubtedly the area of corruption in the US most onerous for the welfare of the societies of their periphery countries. Although periphery partners of the US oligarchs are by all means corrupt, the agenda that is carried out in the periphery is the US agenda of so-called national interest; namely the geopolitical capture of the political and economic agendas of the periphery countries and of their natural resources to favour such national interest.

Lastly, ***in case that oligarchs in a periphery country do not agree with the imperial oligarchs and refuse to impose their "US national interest", then the imperial systems of destabilisation are triggered gradually, from subtle to the most blatant and violent, depending on the situation.*** Since almost the start of the century, Venezuela has been submitted to a wide spectrum of destabilisation strategies advanced by the empire through its Venezuelan "cipayos"; particularly because the group in power since Chávez —despite the group's own corruption— has shown a clear disposition to reduce customary inequality and to openly reject the imperial "edicts" or any kind of interference. The strategies range from subtle to openly violent. They have included a coup d'état attempt against Chávez, economic sabotage aimed at provoking social unrest due to the scarcity of basic goods and the financing and strategic support of the opposition, under the Venezuela Freedom 1 and Venezuela Freedom 2, carried out by the US southern command.¹⁹¹ Lately, with the Trump Administration, the potential economic freezing of Venezuela, aiming to bring it into complete bankruptcy by blocking its main source of foreign revenue from its oil exports is being seriously considered. There is good reason for it in the imperial logic. It should be pointed out that Venezuela is likely the most precious jewel in the Americas coveted by the imperial oligarchs, and it is unbearable that a socialist government would keep US corporations from applying their predatory practices to maximise their shareholder value. Venezuela has oil reserves that are greater than the oil reserves of the entire Middle East; it has eleven thousand tons of gold mineral and significant reserves of coltan, uranium, thorium and natural gas.¹⁹² Hence, Rex Tillerson suggested that Venezuela's president might be removed by a military coup.¹⁹³

To be sure, the preferred approach is a subtle one. A case of subtle corrupting pressure to fold and abide by the US agenda became transparent when John Perkins, a self described "economic hit man" published his "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man". In his book Perkins describes the work of this kind of imperial operators succinctly as *highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign "aid" organisations into the coffers of huge*

¹⁹¹ Paul Dobson: The psychological war waged on Venezuela, Morning Star, 10 October 2016.

¹⁹² John Saxe-Fernández: Revolución y multipolaridad, La Jornada, 23 November 2017.

¹⁹³ Tim Young: Shades of Chile 1973 as US moves against Venezuela, Morning Star, 15 February 2018.

*corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet's natural resources. Their tools include fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalisation.*¹⁹⁴ Obviously, if the subtle or soft approach does not work, then violent approaches, such as in the case of Venezuela, are activated.

Brazil has been going through a similar blatant case of destabilisation, with Michel Temer as acting President, despite an overwhelming amount of evidence of being involved in numerous corruption practices. Temer manoeuvred as Vice President to impeach Dilma Rousseff for highly controversial corruption charges for breaking budget laws. Temer has gone through two impeachment processes and has been accused of criminal charges for embezzlement, with many involved in his cabinet. However, he enjoys the protection of the leaders of the lower house — many of which have also been implicated in the embezzlement of public funds — and the impeachments processes have been shelved. As could be expected, he immediately veered to the right in economic and social policies and realigned Brazil with US national interests. Temer immediately scaled back the social policies advanced by the Lula's and Rousseff's administrations — both from the Workers' Party — in the previous thirteen years. As a sample on his radical shift towards Washington consensus' policies, in his first week in office it was reported that moves are under way to soften the definition of slavery, roll back the demarcation of indigenous land, trim housebuilding programs and sell off state assets in airports, utilities and the post office. Newly appointed ministers also are talking of cutting healthcare spending and reducing the cost of the bolsa familia poverty relief system. Four thousand government jobs have been cut. The culture ministry has been subsumed into education.¹⁹⁵ Brazilians realised that these policies are in complete detriment of the majority of the population. Thus, they have reenergised and reorganised to support Lula da Silva as their next president for 2019, whom is enjoying wide support far ahead of the second candidate. Lula would surely stop the renewed neoliberal attack on social welfare. As a result, the right has mobilised by putting him in jail to ensure that the neoliberal policies aligned with US imperialism continue. In an unprecedented event, judge, Sergio Moro — a Harvard graduate trained in the US State Department who frequently travels to Washington — has launched lawfare against Lula to block any possibility of him reaching power and end the centre-periphery agreement between Brazil and the US robber baron elites.¹⁹⁶ Brazil has now been recaptured by the large agribusiness landholding oligarchs who now control Brazil's Parliament.¹⁹⁷

Needless to say that in the case of Mexico, the staunchly corrupt Mexican oligarchy, particularly since the 1980s, has always enthusiastically embraced the US agenda for its centre-periphery relationship. While Mexico's social indicators are clearly showing the consistent pauperisation of the vast majority of the population, the Mexican government has increased by 264% its purchase of military weaponry from its northern neighbour in 2016 vis-à-vis its 2010 expenditures, as part of the US-Mexico "Mérida Initiative" joint plan, whilst military weaponry expenditures for the rest of Iberian America diminished 39%, according to the World Bank.¹⁹⁸ Since the change of economic paradigm after 1982, and particularly since NAFTA, the Mexican oligarchy has devoted itself to the destruction of the social fabric, the pauperisation of the vast majority of the population, the privatisation of ample sector of the public sphere, the blatant violation of human rights, with hundreds of thousands of violent deaths, thousands of disappearances, and the deadliest country in the world for journalists in 2017,¹⁹⁹ among other niceties. Yet, in contrast with Venezuela and despite Trump's

¹⁹⁴ John Perkins: *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2004.

¹⁹⁵ Jonathan Watts: *Brazil's interim government wastes no time erasing Workers' party influence*, The Guardian, 20 May 2016.

¹⁹⁶ John Saxe-Fernández: *Moro y la "guerra judicial"* (Lawfare), La Jornada, 4 April 2018..

¹⁹⁷ Anne Vigna, *Lunch With the Ruralist*, Large landowners control Brazil's Parliament. Anne Vigna, Le Monde Diplomatique, English Edition, May 2018.

¹⁹⁸ John Saxe-Fernández: *Revolución y multipolaridad*, La Jornada, 23 November 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Stepehn M. Ellis: *Mexico most deadly country for journalists in 2017*, IPI, 19 December 2017.

pastime of bashing Mexico, there is no intention from the US to destabilise Mexico's mafia state and end its capture over Mexico, for its oligarchy's loyalty subserves to fulfil US national interests.

Therefore, Mexico is indeed a very corrupt country. However, the US is not only a very corrupt society as well, but also the most powerful instigator and stakeholder in the corruption –at the highest level– in Mexico and throughout the world.

- *Mexican mafias coming to the US fuel drug addiction*

Once again, ***the manipulation of the truth to suit the anti-immigrant narrative is clear and consistent with the fact that just as the root causes for immigration are never addressed, the root causes of drug trafficking are neither.*** As previously mentioned there is extensive evidence that the war against drug-trafficking is only a false flag to justify the direct intervention of US security and military agencies in Mexican territory to impose the agenda that best fulfils US imperial interests. Nonetheless, drug-trafficking and the associated Mexican drug cartels will not disappear as long as demand is not confronted directly by addressing the root causes of drug consumption. Meanwhile, the people most suffering from the collateral costs of drug trafficking are the Mexican people, given the explosion of crime and insecurity that has translated into hundreds of thousands of deaths of innocent people who happen to be in the public spaces where the Mexican military and police –acting as proxies in the implementation of the US security agenda south of the border– “fight” the US war against drug traffickers.

At the very least, given that the US elites in power are against it, the US citizenry must start demanding that the socially-rooted causes of drug addiction in the US be addressed instead of blaming the Mexican cartels and Mexicans with the customary populist and hyperbolic propaganda. The US has a huge drug addiction problem that has made it number one in illicit drug consumption and also number one in opioid consumption.²⁰⁰ As earlier noted, the underlying reason is the increasing inequality across the US social strata, with a mind-boggling concentration of wealth in a tiny elite of the less of one-percent that is the direct author of the growing inequality and all its collateral damage. If inequality is tackled, drug consumption will be dramatically abated and drug trafficking and the drug cartels will have little demand to fulfil and thus will disintegrate. This is the only way to cut drug consumption and violence with all its additional collateral costs – beginning with the destruction of the social fabric– and not the other way around, by waging war on drug traffickers and, by the way, imposing an imperial security agenda south of the border.

Violence in the United States is so endemic to its culture to the point that it elicits higher crime incidence elsewhere. In the case of Mexico, a paradigmatic case is the Fast and Furious fiasco. Given that the US is completely obsessed with the right to own firearms, the US government had the stupendous idea of smuggling firearms into Mexico to trace their path and hopefully catching big drug cartel lords; all this without the knowledge of the Mexican government. The result was that over two-thousand arms, including assault rifles, were allowed to be smuggled into Mexico. The Mexican government later reported that many crime scenes in Mexico included firearms from the Fast and Furious operation that killed or wounded at least 150 Mexicans.²⁰¹ It is startling that in a country so concerned about the danger posed by undocumented Mexican immigrants, it is not only not concerned about the fact that there are more than 300 million firearms owned by their citizens and that in 2015 –the most recent year with data– 9,3 million firearms were manufactured in the US, but actually keeps defending the right to own arms and could care less about its consequences. However, the effect in Mexico of this US firearm maligned obsession is that it experienced a twenty-year

²⁰⁰ Ann Simmons: Millions hooked on illicit drugs, as nations debate policy to tackle the problem: Los Angeles Times, April 19, 2016.

²⁰¹ Kim Murphy and Ken Ellingwood: Mexico demands answers on guns. A lawmaker says 150 have been killed or hurt by weapons that US agents allowed to cross the border. Los Angeles Times, 11 March 2011.

high in murders in 2017, of which sixty-six percent were committed with firearms, whereas in 1997 the rate was only fifteen percent. Moreover, seventy percent of the firearms found in the crime scene originated in the US²⁰²

Yet, given the fact that the US government and the oligarchic elite that controls it have no interest whatsoever in truly addressing the issue of drug addiction and drug related violence, the only way to do something about it is for the citizenry to first become well informed about the root causes and then demand from the government to change its policies. It will take far more than just writing a letter or making a call. It will take organisation and mobilisation to become direct stakeholders in overseeing how the government operates. It will take building a direct democracy ethos, where the citizenry takes control of the public agenda.

- *Mexico steals jobs because its wages are so low due to NAFTA, that US companies cannot resist transferring millions of jobs to increase profits*

For those who are vexed about the eleven million undocumented immigrants and particularly about the millions of undocumented Mexican immigrants that have “invaded” the country, they must first become aware and acknowledge that the huge gap between the wages paid in the US and Mexico is truly the root cause of why millions are forced to migrate to the US as economic refugees. They are fleeing from the Modern-Slave ethos that has been imposed in Mexico by the customary partnership between the US and Mexican oligarchic elites working in connivance. The problem is that the anti-immigrant sector wants to “think” that it has no responsibility whatsoever for the plight of these immigrants. Mexicans come to the US, particularly since NAFTA, because they are starving in their own land, want to live a dignified life and refuse to work in illicit activities or starving with the hunger wages of the informal economy. If wages are increased to the level required for them and their families to enjoy a quality of life worthy of human dignity, they would immediately stop migrating to the US and the issue of undocumented immigration would be solved rapidly and permanently. There is a carefully designed system of wealth extraction that has benefited the oligarchic elites on both sides of the border since the late XIX century, but this exploitation has become exacerbated with neoliberal globalisation since the mid 1980s and all the more so since 1994 with NAFTA. There are now US companies, such as the Offshore Group, that make their business out of alluring US companies to move manufacturing operations to Mexico. Their key point in their sales pitch is always cheap labour: *One of the primary benefits of manufacturing in Mexico is tremendous cost savings the country provides to businesses. Mexico boasts highly skilled, dependable labour that is 80 percent cheaper than the cost of the US.*²⁰³ Furthermore, knowingly or unknowingly this system has not only benefited institutional investors, but also many US workers and practically all consumers.

We have already explained in detail this very well calibrated system of exploitation of Mexican workers imposed by the US and Mexican oligarchies acting in collusion. As earlier argued, there is absolutely no economic reason to justify that Mexican workers earn a fourth or less of what they should be paid by US companies operating in Mexico for performing exactly the same task as their US counterparts earn, in purchasing power parity terms, other than increasing the return on investment of institutional investors. What is also little known is that another reason why Mexican workers as well as workers working for multinational corporations in the systems’ periphery earn hunger wages is because it serves to subsidise the wages that these same companies pay to their workers in their home countries or other metropolises of the system. The gap between what they pay to their periphery workers and their metropolitan workers is used in good portion to pay much higher wages to the latter workers. If US companies in the automotive, electronics or aeronautical

²⁰² Chelsea Parsons: American guns are killing our neighbours in Canada and Mexico, Los Angeles Times, 6 February 2018

²⁰³ The Offshore Group: Advantages of Manufacturing in Mexico, <https://offshoregroup.com/manufacturing-mexico/advantages-manufacturing-mexico/> accessed on 24 November 2017.

industries are allowed to pay one-fifth of what the same companies would have to pay to US workers for doing the exact same job and they get the same quality for products that will be exported globally, and the cost of operation, including land and electricity is also lower, why should they stay in the US from a return on investment perspective? Why should they if they get much higher operating revenues and this also enables these companies to pay much higher wages to the workers that they keep in the US, some to do exactly the same job and some to perform more knowledge-based work that pays a lot more? With this supply chain system, many of the salaries they pay in the US are subsidised by the meagre wages paid to Mexicans, which give companies enough margins to pay the much higher US wages. Furthermore, these much greater margins make the companies more competitive vis-à-vis Japan, South Korea, Germany and other players, allowing them to price their products at lower prices. If, on the other hand, they decide to produce everything in the US, which would force them to have much higher labour costs, they would have lower margins and higher end-user prices. Therefore, by expanding their supply chains to Mexico or China or other countries with large and high-skilled labour pools that bear much lower labour costs they are also benefiting their US consumers, because the prices they offer are also subsidised by the greater margins they obtain by lowering their global labour costs. This system is replicated across all sectors from low skilled garment industries that market a wide spectrum of apparel to aeronautical industries that output parts for engines or airplane fuselages. ***What NAFTA has done is liberalise the access to labour pools and natural resources, but not free workers to seek their best opportunities across North America. It is free trade for big business but not for the citizenry of Mexico, the US or Canada.***

NAFTA is a hoax that hurts many people. It hurts a portion of the labour force in the US that loses its jobs or sees its wages stagnate and it hurts millions of Mexicans who lose their livelihood or are condemned to earn a wage that is far from what is necessary to live a dignified life. On the other hand, it subsidises the salaries of a portion of US workers that have a job, it benefits millions of US consumers by paying prices that are subsidised by the hunger wages paid in Mexico, and it increases in a very significant way the profitability of corporations and their investors. It is clearly a win-lose system that has forced several hundred thousand US workers to lose their jobs and millions of Mexican families to flee their homeland in pursuit of a very uncertain future to survive.

In contrast, if the collusion of US and Mexican oligarchies to impose this system of exploitation is brought to an end and Mexican workers begin to see that their real wages are gradually increased until they reach a dignified level, a virtual circle would emerge on both sides of the border for the benefit of all, except for the institutional investors of the less than one percent. The wage gap between Mexico and the US is so wide that it can only be closed gradually until workers on both sides of the border, performing equivalent work for global corporations, get paid the same wage in purchasing power parity terms, following the basic principle of “equal pay for equal work of equal value” enshrined in Article 23 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁰⁴ As this gradually takes place, the flow of economic refugees from Mexico would diminish rapidly since they would have no incentive to take the risk of a hazardous journey in pursuit of a very uncertain future. Instead, their purchasing power would raise their standard of living and gradually join the middle class. This would increase demand for all sorts of goods and services dramatically, triggering in turn the creation of many jobs not only in Mexico but also in the US. Companies would no longer have the incentive to close down operation in the US in pursuit of lower labour costs. However, they would have a much greater market given that the expansion of the Mexican economy would increase demand and create a virtuous circle. They may still open new operations in Mexico, but only because it makes business sense as part of a global supply chain that is not based on hunger labour costs but

²⁰⁴ For a detailed explanation of these issues see: 1) Álvaro J. de Regil: *Mexico and living wages: the utmost epitomisation of social darwinism as a systemic public policy*, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, A TLWNSI living wage assessment, February 2012. 2) The Jus Semper Global Alliance: *Mexico Wage Gap Charts. Wage gap charts for Mexico vis-à-vis selected developed and “emerging” economies, with available wage and PPP data (1996-2015)*, November 2016

on efficient supply chains (logistics, source of raw materials, R&D...) where workers on both sides of the border earn equivalent wages for equivalent work in purchasing power parity terms.

Lastly, criticism of extremely low labour costs in Mexico is the only valid argument that the Trump Administration is currently using, as I write, in the renegotiation of NAFTA. Its negotiating team has repeatedly argued that wages in Mexico need to be raised substantially to stem the flow of jobs from the US to Mexico. To be sure, Trump's team has no interest whatsoever in ending the plight of Mexican workers in pursuit of a win-win situation. However, this is just part of Trump's customary demagoguery. As part of his populist propaganda to *Make America (sic) Great Again* he supposedly wants to reduce the wage gap to end the incentive for US companies to opt for offshore manufacturing. Yet he concurrently wants to increase the corporate goodies for the domestic less than one percent such as further deregulation of labour rights in the US. As Jeff Faux rightly argues, *For Trump to make good on his promise to the US workers who helped elect him, he would need to negotiate an agreement with enforceable labour standards and protections for human rights, democracy, and the environment equaling those given to corporate investors.* Moreover, given that Trump and his cronies are part of the club and he evidently denigrates Mexico, he has no intention whatsoever to help ordinary Mexican workers in order to help ordinary US workers.²⁰⁵

- *The U.S. has a 60 billion dollar trade deficit with Mexico. It has been a one-sided deal from the beginning of NAFTA with massive numbers...*

This is an actual tweet²⁰⁶ from Trump to use against Mexico with NAFTA where his anti-Mexican stance is exposed as the quintessence of fake news. In Trump's first year the US trade deficit in goods with Mexico was up 10,4% in 2017 to \$71 billion, the highest since 2007,²⁰⁷ despite his Mexico trade-bashing rhetoric that includes scrapping NAFTA unless it is revised to *make America (sic) great again*. It should be pointed out however, that Trump's anti-NAFTA hyperbolic fake news is just part of his anti-Mexico demagoguery. ***A great portion of the trade deficit with Mexico is a US surplus in disguise, for much of the imports from Mexico are components produced in the US then exported to Mexico for assembly and then re-exported back to the US as finished goods. The true trade balance is the difference between the value-added share of each country in an import-export transaction.*** In the case of Mexico, a great portion is just labour used to assemble US parts at much lower costs.²⁰⁸ But Trump is not only arguing this well aware that it is a wrong assessment of trade exchanges, but he is also attempting to use a cheap trick to make deficits with any country to appear even greater than they actually are to fulfil his rhetoric.²⁰⁹ He has attempted to treat "re-exports" —or goods that come into the US and are immediately shipped out again— not as exports but as transactions to be tallied on the import side of the ledger to make the trade deficit look much bigger.²¹⁰ This is exactly how he manipulates trade data between Mexico and the US, where a substantial percent of Mexico's exports to the US were actually US parts exported to Mexico. A report from the Wilson Centre shows that in 2010 a full forty-percent of the content of US imports from Mexico is actually produced in the United States.²¹¹ This is a result of a detailed analysis of the National Bureau of Economic Research.²¹² In 2010, according to the US Census Bureau, US exports of goods to

²⁰⁵ Jeff Faux: NAFTA, Trumped. Simply because Trump said NAFTA was bad for American workers, doesn't mean it wasn't. Just don't look to him for a fix. Democracy, A Journal of Ideas, 24 August 2017.

²⁰⁶ Trump's tweet dated 26 January 2017 at 5:51 am.

²⁰⁷ US Census Bureau: Trade in goods with Mexico

²⁰⁸ Chad Brown: Column: Trump's border tax is not the right fix for US-Mexico trade, PBS News Hour, 30 January 2017.

²⁰⁹ Opinion: A Trump Statistical Trade Trick – Officials borrow phony deficit math from liberal protectionists. The Wall Street Journal, 20 February 2017.

²¹⁰ Jessica Holzer: Economists to Trump: It's Not the Trade Deficit, Stupid, Foreign Policy, 22 February 2017.

²¹¹ Christopher E. Wilson: Working Together – Economic ties between the United States and Mexico, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, November 2011, p. 2.

²¹² Robert Koopman, William Powers, Zhi Wang and Shang-Jin Wei, Give Credit Where Credit is Due: Tracing Value Added In Global Production Chains, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 16426, Cambridge, Massachusetts: September 2010, revised March 2011, p. 38.

Mexico were \$164 billion and imports of goods from Mexico \$230 billion, with a gross US deficit of \$66 billion. Therefore, if 40% of Mexico's exports to the US are US exports to Mexico, then \$92 billion should be deducted from Mexico's exports for a net figure of \$138 billion of Mexico exports to the US. Consequently, the net trade balance is a US surplus of \$26 billion (\$164 billion exports and \$138 billion imports). Again the true trade balance between two countries is the net exchange of domestic value added in all the trade transactions.

- *There are a lot of "illegal" Mexicans because instead of getting in line they find it easy just to cross and avoid the process of proper entry to become a "legal" immigrant*

A common refrain among members of the anti-immigrant sector is the question of *Why don't they get in line instead of entering illegally?* For a portion of them this is a cynical posture because they well know that there is no line to enter legally. They ignore why there is no line and they are happy about it, yet they keep asking the question. Another portion adopts a rather hypocritical posture because they also know that there is no line but are completely opposed to an immigration reform that would provide a line to process applications within a reasonable time table, and yet they ask the question. There is a third portion that assumes that there is a line and naively out of ignorance think that immigrants prefer to bypass it and enter illegally as a matter of choice. However, we frequently hear on mass media that the US has a broken immigration system. This refers largely to the fact that the system is completely backlogged and offers very limited paths to legal immigration. Even for those who go through the legal process it could take decades to obtain permanent residence status. The system is broken because the Republican party has systematically refused to any fix because the underlying reason of most of its members is racism, namely they want to keep the racial status quo to limit at maximum immigration from what they consider non-white countries. Consequently the reason why there are eleven million undocumented immigrants living in the country is the bureaucratic backlog due to the refusal to fix it. Trump wants billions of dollars for immigration enforcement for ICE and for CBP (Customs and Border Protection) but not to reduce the immigration back log and to reduce the red tape. Immigration advocates argue that the promise of citizenship could end up being "in name only" for some undocumented immigrants, because instead of dying in the desert, they might just die waiting to become permanent residents.²¹³ Lastly, it is worth pointing out that the number of undocumented immigrants in the US has stabilised between 2009 and 2014 at around eleven million. However, while the number of undocumented people from all countries except Mexico increased by three hundred and twenty-five thousand for the period, half a million Mexicans left the US, more than offsetting the increase. ***Despite the increase in violence, the increase in poverty and inequality as a result of the US-Mexico oligarchic partnership and the increase of government authoritarianism and repression, the number of undocumented immigrants in the US who are from Mexico has steadily shrunk from a peak of 6.9 million in 2007 and is now more than one million below its peak.***²¹⁴

- *"Illegal" immigrants do not pay taxes*

Such statement has been repeated ad nauseam by anti-immigrant demagogues to manipulate public opinion in their favour. However, the opposite is once again the truth. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, undocumented immigrants contribute significantly to state and local taxes, collectively paying an estimated \$11.74 billion a year. They pay on average an estimated eight percent of their incomes in state and local taxes, which is their effective state and local tax rate, whereas the less than one percent of taxpayers pay an average nationwide effective tax rate of just 5.4 percent. If the hate-mongering and other like-minded fauna would agree to a comprehensive immigration reform that would grant legal status to all undocumented immigrants in the US, which would

²¹³ Suzy Khimm: How long is the immigration 'line'? As long as 24 years. The Washington Post, 31 January 2013.

²¹⁴ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn: Overall Number of US Unauthorized Immigrants Holds Steady Since 2009, Pew Research Centre, 20 September 2016.

#FactsMatter: Immigration Explained



No human being is illegal.



Phrases such as "illegal immigrant" and "illegal alien" replace complex legal circumstances with an assumption of guilt. They effectively criminalize the personhood of migrants, instead of describing the legality of their actions.



It is not a crime for an undocumented person to remain in the United States. "As a general rule, it is not a crime for a movable alien to remain in the United States."

Source: Justice Anthony Kennedy, *Arizona v. United States*, 2012



It is a violation of federal immigration law to remain in the country without legal authorization, but this violation is punishable by civil penalties, not criminal.

Source: U.S.C. § 1325 - US Code - Section 1325: Improper entry by alien

Immigration is not one size fits all.



Most undocumented immigrants cannot simply "get legal" and "be a citizen" by filling out paperwork or paying a fee.

The right way to immigrate was at one time to simply show up. Processing at Ellis Island involved health inspections and naturalization.

- Many of our ancestors would not have qualified under today's immigration laws.
- Many European immigrants benefited from "amnesty," such as the 1929 Registry Act.

Source: American Immigration Council

A border wall would be an ineffective immigration restriction.



An estimated 40% of all undocumented immigrants were visa holders, which means they entered the country legally.

Source: Pew Hispanic Research Center

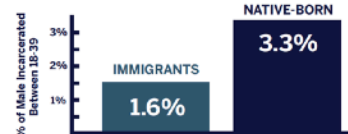


Asians are the fastest growing population of undocumented immigrants.

Source: Migration Policy Institute

Immigrants commit less crime than the native-born population.

Immigrants are less likely than the native-born to be behind bars.

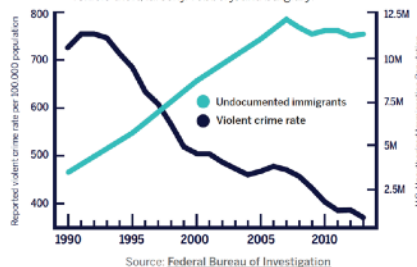


Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

Higher immigration is associated with lower crime rates

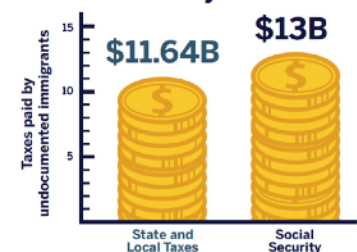
- Between 1990 and 2013, the foreign-born share of the U.S. population increased from 7.9 percent to 13.1 percent and the number of unauthorized immigrants increased from 3.5 million to 11.2 million.

- During the same period, the violent crime rate declined 48 percent—which included falling rates of aggravated assault, robbery, rape, and murder. The property crime rate fell 41 percent, including declining rates of motor vehicle theft, larceny/robbery, and burglary.



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

Annually, undocumented immigrants pay an estimated \$11.64 billion in state and local taxes, and pay \$13 billion to Social Security.



Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy
Social Security Administration

Immigrants start businesses and grow the economy.



Immigrants are more likely to start businesses than native-born Americans.

Source: Kauffman Foundation



Immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the U.S.

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine



If mass deportation were enacted, US GDP would drop by \$1.6 trillion.

Source: American Action Forum

allow them to work legally, their state and local tax contributions would increase by an estimated \$2.18 billion a year.²¹⁵ Furthermore, relative to federal taxes, according to the latest data from the IRS provided by the Taxpayer Advocate, the agency received in 2015 a total of 4.4 million tax returns from people without a social security number, who filed their returns with an ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number). In most cases, they lacked a social security number because they were undocumented.²¹⁶ Yet, in 2015, 4.4 million ITIN filers paid over \$5.5 billion in payroll and Medicare taxes and \$23.6 billion in total taxes.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Lisa Christensen Gee, Matthew Gardner, Misha E. Hill, Meg Wiehe: Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contributions, The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Updated February 2017.

²¹⁶ CDW, Form W-2 Database, Form 1040 Database (date drawn Dec. 16, 2015) (reflects data available from January to IRS, November 2015). An "ITIN filer" is defined as a tax return on which an ITIN was used for either the primary or secondary (e.g., spouse) filer or a dependent. The \$5.5 billion figure includes Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) and Medicare taxes reported on Form W-2 by primary filers with an ITIN and primary filers with an SSN if the secondary filer or a dependent used an ITIN. This figure does not include FICA and Medicare tax paid by Form 1040 ITIN filers who used a different taxpayer identification number (e.g., SSN) on Form W-2. IRS, CDW, Form W-7 data.

²¹⁷ Most Serious Problems — INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS. Report downloaded from http://taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov/Media/Default/Documents/2015ARC/ARC15_Volume1_MSP_18_ITIN.pdf

- *"Illegal" immigrants do not contribute to social security and yet they use and deplete our social services*

This is another misconception when not a blatant lie. According to Stephen Goss, Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration (SSA), unauthorised workers are paying an estimated \$13 billion a year in social security taxes and only getting around \$1 billion back. Goss explains that there are about seven million undocumented residents working in the US and 3,1 in this group are doing it by using fake or expired social security numbers. Nonetheless, they are also paying automatically payroll taxes. As a result these workers pay an annual net contribution of \$12 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund and about 100 billion into the fund in the last decade. However, because they are undocumented, it is unlikely that they will be able to benefit from the social security programmes in the future, such as pension and health services. Consequently, rather than costing the US taxpayer, they are benefiting US citizens by making a great contribution to the fund and getting very little from it. They are actually subsidising the system.²¹⁸

Contrary to the customary anti-immigrant propaganda, immigrants not only pay billions of taxes and contribute far more than their share into the social security fund, but they also have numerous positive effects on the welfare of the country according to a study on the economic and fiscal consequences of immigration:²¹⁹

- ✓ Immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the US
- ✓ Some evidence on inflows of skilled immigrants suggests that there may be positive wage effects for some subgroups of native-born workers, and other benefits to the economy more broadly.
- ✓ When measured over a period of 10 years or more, the impact of immigration on the wages of native-born workers overall is very small.
- ✓ There is little evidence that immigration significantly affects the overall employment levels of native-born workers.
- ✓ Parting from a market-based consumerist context, immigrants' contributions to the labour force reduce the prices of some goods and services, which benefit consumers in a range of sectors. Moreover, new arrivals and their descendants are a source of demand in key sectors such as housing, which benefits residential real estate markets.
- ✓ Immigration is integral to the nation's economic growth. The inflow of labour supply has helped the US avoid the problems facing other economies that have stagnated as a result of unfavourable demographics, particularly the effects of an ageing workforce and reduced consumption by older residents. In addition, the infusion of human capital by high-skilled immigrants has boosted the nation's capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological change.
- ✓ Additionally, immigrants are also twice as likely to start businesses than native-born entrepreneurs. In 2016, the native born entrepreneurial rate was 0.26%. The immigrant entrepreneurial rate was 0.52%. Immigrants consistently start businesses at higher rates than the native born.²²⁰

- *We are experiencing an unprecedented explosion of Mexicans entering "illegally" our country and we must stop them at once*

Firstly, the US historical record on Mexico has always been a story of aggression, destitution, exploitation, racism and criminalisation. The most conspicuous events in this record are ominous and clearly attest to the unrelenting aggression of the US against Mexicans. To start with, one-fourth of the present US territory was taken by the US by force in the nineteenth century. Subsequently, over two million US citizens of Mexican descent were expelled from their country in the first half of the twentieth century due to the endemic racism of the dominant group. Beyond the extreme damaged

²¹⁸ Roy Germano: Unauthorised immigrants Paid \$100 billion Into Social Security Over Last Decade, Vice News, 4 August 2014.

²¹⁹ The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration. The National Academies Press, 2016.

²²⁰ 2017 Kauffman Index of Startup Activity Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

inflicted on Mexicans by NAFTA since the start of this century, US foreign policy has been imposed and continues to be imposed on Mexicans in their own homeland in connivance with the Mexican oligarchy acting as proxy for the US to fulfil US national security interests. All of this has driven millions of Mexicans North as economic refugees. Then domestic US policy has focused on criminalising them and driven them South. The end result is that since 2009 undocumented Mexicans in US territory have been steadily decreasing and are now at their lowest point. Therefore, contrary to what some propagandistic media and “opinion” manipulators writing editorials retort to when talking about “illegal” Mexicans and immigrants, there is no explosion whatsoever of Mexicans entering the US as for now there are over a million less undocumented Mexicans in US territory.

In summary, in the last two decades three specific and very significant events of US policy have driven Mexicans North and then South. US trade policy with NAFTA and US foreign policy with its war on drugs have pauperised millions of Mexican families and produced hundreds of thousands of violent deaths in Mexico, driving Mexicans North. Then, immigration policies, purposely amended in the last two decades to criminalise immigrants instead of providing a path to their legalisation and full integration into their communities, have driven over a million Mexicans South.²²¹ More specifically, ***the number of undocumented Mexican immigrants living in the US has declined by more than one million since 2007***. This is confirmed by the fact that US border apprehensions of Mexicans has steady fallen to historic lows. In fiscal 2014, 229 thousand apprehensions were recorded.²²² In fiscal 2016, 193 thousand Mexicans were apprehended. This is a sharp drop from a peak of 1.6 million apprehensions in 2000.²²³

- *Building a wall will stop on its toes illegal immigration coming from Mexico*

This is the utmost and most symbolic dream graphically depicting Trump and his cronies racial hate mongering. Trump does not just hate Mexico, but he is known for his antipathy against Iberian America. Years before he began expressing all kinds of rubbish with malice against a Mexico full of “bad hombres”, he grumbled at a whistlestop trip to Río de Janeiro in 1989, where he refused to

spend even a single night in Río, but yet had time to comment that there were a few wealthy people in Brazil, implying that it was a poor country, as if that was a reason to repudiate it.²²⁴ Trump’s wall is symbolic of what a person would do every time a neighbour knocks on his door if he truly hates his guts; especially after the first person has spent his life ransacking his neighbour’s property, taken half of his land by force, bad mouthed the members of the neighbours family and done every conceivable thing to make their life insufferable. Trump knows very well that the



US has always taken advantage of Mexico, that a good portion of present day US was Mexican territory taken by force,

²²¹ David Bacon: How US Policies fuelled Mexico’s great migration: The Nation, 23 January 2012.

²²² Jens Manuel Krogstad and Jeffrey S. Passel: US border apprehensions of Mexicans fall to historic lows, Pew Research Centre, 30 December 2014.

²²³ Ana Gonzalez-Barrera and Jens Manuel Krogstad: What we know about illegal immigration from Mexico, Pew Research Center, 2 March 2017.

²²⁴ Tom Phillips: While Trump eyes Latin America with malign neglect, China sees opportunity, The Guardian, 9 February 2018.

and that Mexicans have customarily been treated in a discriminatory manner regardless of their place of birth. However, he doesn't care about it and he does not want to bear the true facts in mind. His narcissist mindset deprives him of any humanity to even consider the unfairness of his pathetic judgements over Mexico and its people. He is a hardcore capitalist, which makes him a person who always seeks to defeat any perceived adversary of his interests instead of looking for win-win situations. That is why he claims that his way is *America (sic) first*. He is also a hardcore racist and a well-known abuser of anyone's rights, such as woman, or any person who does not fit with his chauvinistic scheme of a superior race, namely northern European. Consequently, in his most primeval instincts, he wants to shut the door to Mexicans in his attempt to get rid of as many of them as possible. However, this is all worsened by the fact that he has been repeatedly assessed as a person with a clear narcissistic personality disorder. A letter signed by thirty-three psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers describe him as a person whose *speech and actions demonstrate an inability to tolerate views different from his own, leading to rage reactions. His words and behaviour suggest a profound inability to empathise. Individuals with these traits distort reality to suit their psychological state, attacking facts and those who convey them (journalists, scientists)*.²²⁵ In fact, clinical psychologist George Simon affirms that Trump's narcissism is *so classic that I'm archiving video clips of him to use in workshops because there's no better example of his characteristics, ... Otherwise, I would have had to hire actors and write vignettes. He's like a dream come true*.²²⁶

Nevertheless, Trump's wall to send Mexico into US oblivion is not an original creation of his imagination. The wall on the border has existed since 1994 with Democrat Bill Clinton and has gradually expanded with the Secure Fence Act of 2006 signed by George W. Bush. The Mexico-US border is 1954 miles long. As of early 2017, approximately 650 miles of border fence already exist: 350 miles of primary pedestrian fencing, 300 miles of vehicle fencing, 36 miles of secondary fencing behind the primary fencing, and 14 miles of tertiary pedestrian fencing behind the secondary fence. Many of these fences are additionally equipped with surveillance tools, towers, cameras, motion detectors, thermal imaging sensors, stadium lighting, ground sensors, and drones to stop everything from people to drugs. In 2008 the US Congress agreed that this was sufficient and more walls were unnecessary. However, Trump's obsession to calm his narcissism and hatred of Mexicans wants to fence every single inch of the two-thousand mile border with at least one fence if not two or three barriers. Many objections have been raised against such imaginary, such as cost, technical complications, damage to the environment and the expected increase in deaths not just of Mexicans but from the increasing number of people from many parts of the world.²²⁷ These people have also been displaced by the extreme system of global capitalism imposed by the US and its crony metropolises worldwide, increasing inequality to rampant levels in both rich and poor countries.

The fact is that ***the wall is just a symbol of sheer hubris, jingoism and dishonesty of some power groups in the US represented mostly by the Republican party, who also share with Trump a deep racist streak in their character framework***. One of the most strident anti-immigrant rabble-rousers is Milo Yiannopoulos, a former editor of Breitbart News, the outlet well known for catering to an über conservative audience by using material that has been called misogynist, xenophobic and racist.²²⁸ Yiannopoulos, not even a US citizen, taking on the opportunity offered by Trump's unrelenting attack on Mexicans, came out of the racists' closet attempting to organise an event that he named "ten things I hate about Mexico", where he planned on gloating over Mexico bashing at UCLA. Fortunately, the "event" was cancelled by the organisers, a group of Republican students. UCLA's Chancellor, Gene Block, expressed relief explaining that The title of the talk referenced what the speaker 'hated' about Mexico — a country with deep ties to our

²²⁵ Opinion letter to the editor Charles M Blow. Mental Health Professionals Warn About Trump, The New York Times, 13 February 2017.

²²⁶ Henry Alford: Is Donald Trump actually a narcissist? Therapists weigh in!, Vanity Fair, 11 November 2015.

²²⁷ The High Cost and Diminishing Returns of a Border Wall, American Immigration Council, 25

²²⁸ Michael Grynbaum and John Hermann: Breitbart rises from outlier to potent voice campaign, The New York Times, 26 August 2016.

city, our state and our nation. This is also a country that is an important part of the heritage of many Bruins," he said. "The expression of disdain did not appear to be an attempt to engage in reasoned discussion, but rather a move by the speaker to gain notoriety through a mean-spirited, racially tinged publicity stunt."²²⁹

In line with this mind set, Trump's wall, to gloat even more in his hatred of Mexico, is nothing more than a propagandistic distraction, a symbol filled with hyperbolic statements to justify the criminalisation of immigrants whilst concurrently avoiding addressing the root causes. Trump and his like-minded groups of so-called nativists refuse to address the root causes of immigration that are deeply rooted in the imperial system emanating from the North side of the border. If the causes were to be addressed we would immediately solve the issue. Their ulterior motives for unrelentingly insisting on the criminalisation of mostly immigrants who do not conform to their racial identity is obviously sheer racism as well as their imperial, Darwinian, über predatory capitalism, both deeply entrenched in their malignant ethos. Such ethical framework notwithstanding, people will continue to find ways to cross the border as a matter of survival, as long as the root causes of immigration are not addressed, regardless of how many border fences the US builds and how much stronger their criminalisation is augmented. They will never stop unless the imperial arrogance of these power groups and their apologists take the demential step to exterminate millions of Mexicans and people from other countries before they even attempt to cross the line, which, given their malady, could be possible.

The irrelevance of Trump's anti-Mexico stance

The mythology behind the narrative about Mexico that has been applied in the US with deep malevolence is truly the epitome of fake news to manipulate public opinion to fulfil the interest of the US oligarchic groups. Under the aegis of US imperialism, they seek to exploit Mexicans with no costs to be taken. Namely, exploit Mexicans, mostly South of the border, allow some to migrate North and then expel them as if they were disposable labour units with no human rights.

Mexicans have been systematically bullied, exploited and discriminated since the US took by force more than half of its territory. There is a long history of profusely documented events that stand out for their stark violation of the most basic human rights, such as the expulsion of as many as two million US citizens of Mexican descent to “repatriate” them to Mexico in the 1930s.

As we have exposed throughout this work, an extremely Darwinian Marketocratic culture with no paragon in history dominates the United States. Here the market reigns supreme over the lives of people as nowhere else in the world, with labour seen as merely a component still relatively necessary for the reproduction and accumulation of capital.²³⁰ For the US oligarchy, Mexicans in particular are regarded as very cost effective desirable labour units for specific tasks regardless of their location, but only to be



²²⁹ Teresa Watanabe: Milo Yiannopoulos' UCLA talk on what he hates about Mexico canceled, Los Angeles Times, 14 February, 2018.

²³⁰ It is expected that, in the context of an unsustainable market-driven ethos—robotics and artificial intelligence will gradually do away with human labour.

used strictly on demand. If the social and economic imperial policies imposed on Mexico forced Mexicans to migrate to the US, the oligarchy wants to expel them as soon as they deem necessary. A different nationality with an irregular immigration status is the justification customarily used for such policy. The true reason is of course their ethnicity, which is deemed inferior by the dominant group's deranged mythology of white supremacy. Racism is so deeply ingrained in the DNA of the US oligarchy driving the marketocratic system, that they want to use Mexicans and other minorities as they please, but are adamantly opposed to integrate them into the US social fabric. They want to keep the status quo where so-called "white" Europeans, preferably Northern Europeans, would still be the dominant group. Trump by all means is the epitome of this vision in the most populist and archaic fashion.

Despite Trump's bigotry, both countries are irremediably bound together to a very meaningful degree in the economic, political, social, environmental and cultural dimensions due to their very inauspicious geographical destiny. Unfortunately for Mexico these dimensions are being dramatically shaped by the driving force of the US Marketocratic ethos advanced globally. Yet, with its utmost proximity and the deliberately induced limitations to overcome and neutralise the overbearing power of US imperialism, Mexico is in an extremely weak position to stop its nefarious effects. Such effects are premeditated and deliberately calculated and apportioned by the oligarchs of the centre-periphery partnership. As a result, the inevitable consequences in the usual form of even more inequality, destitution, forced migration, drug trafficking and violence will continue to affect both countries, regardless of how many policies are designed to disregard or deviate attention from such premeditated effects. ***As long as the underlying root causes covered in this paper are not addressed by the oligarchic elites in both countries, their costs will continue to rise on both sides of the border.***

Realistically, it is rather unlikely that things will change in a meaningful way for the better. The US oligarchs have no intention whatsoever of addressing the root causes of this human drama for the simple reason that these causes have been deliberately conceived and imposed to benefit their insatiable appetite for economic and political power imperially. Sheer greed for power and wealth alone is at the core of the driving force behind the policies advanced by US imperialism throughout the world to impose the Marketocratic paradigm as the demigod of this anthropocentric era. The unrelenting pursuit of more power and wealth by the imperial robber baron's elite of the less than one percent has no qualm in not only violating a wide spectrum of human rights of Mexicans or of immigrants from any nationality, for they also violate the rights of their most fervent domestic apologists, so prone to racism. This is so because the US oligarchic elite has deliberately imposed the same paradigm domestically, increasing inequality dramatically and sending millions of US citizens to join the ranks of the Market's Precariat. In a population so deliberately acculturated to compartmentalise every aspect of life with a racial optic, Trump's populist strategy harangued the mass of so-called European stock to rise to stop the other races from overtaking their "European and Christian nation" and to stop countries like Mexico from "laughing" at them and taking their jobs. According to his demagoguery record on Mexico, Trump pontificated on June 2015: *When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically. The US has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.*²³¹ Nonetheless, as expected, in his first year he already managed to establish a tax reform for the less than one percent in stark contradiction with his populist stance and, unsuccessfully, put all his effort in eliminating the Affordable Care Act. Despite their stark populism, oligarchs lack any trace of humanity in their spirit and thus Trump has no qualm in not only keeping

²³¹ Katie Reilly: Here Are All the Times Donald Trump Insulted Mexico. Times, 31 August 2016.

but also exacerbating the structures that are depredating the rights and quality of life of his own constituents. By the same token, despite Trump's anti-Mexican stance, the Mexican oligarchs are also fervent apologists of this Darwinian drama, for the same human passions of greed for power and wealth emanating from their US tutors, and so they have no morals that could encumber them from violating the rights of the Mexican people in a very conscious, deliberate, enthusiastic and perverse manner.

Trump's fake news on Mexico to fulfil his anti-Mexican stance is deeply anchored on his endemic racism. This is his overarching motive. A case that blatantly exhibits Trump's racist DNA is his scrapping of the DACA programme where Mexicans hold a substantial majority. DACA protects about eight-hundred thousand undocumented immigrants that were brought as children to they know as their Trump attempted Dreamers as a bargaining fulfil his most dear end to the US relationship over twenty-five billion and to increase exponentially²³³ even assessed as completely drastic and sustained drop Fortunately, his attempt to



the US, the only country home.²³² This is why repeatedly to use the chip to get the budgets to obsessions to put a virtual with Mexico. He wants dollars for his beloved wall immigration enforcement though it has clearly been unnecessary given the in border detentions.²³⁴ use the Dreamers as a

bargaining cheap just got annulled by the Supreme Court when it refused to take Trump's appeal before a Court of Appeals would even hear Trump's case against a Courts ruling in California that keeps DACA for Dreamers. This provides the Dreamers an extension of its DACA protections and made Trump's 5th of March 2018 deadline for a Congress' solution –which he systematically torpedoed– a moot point.²³⁵ Needless to say that Trump's gaming of the Dreamers' lives to fulfil his hate-mongering agenda with Mexico blatantly exhibits how low his morals are. Even in a society that has become increasingly lacking a humanitarian demeanour it is still basic common sense for the majority to support Dreamers and all young adults who came as children. It is estimated that 1,8 million is the actual potential Dreamer population²³⁶ and the vast majority of the population wants to give them a safe and quick passage to citizenship. This is so evident that over 86% of the population, including 76% of Republicans wants the Dreamers to stay, and 79% of the population support a path to citizenship for Dreamers in the most recent poll.²³⁷

Trump's Mexico bashing demeanour —to use it as one of many scapegoats for a myriad of issues where the main responsibility clearly lies within those holding the strings of imperial power— will continue for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, the feeble excuses he uses will not allow him to materialise his goal to reduce to a minimum the many economic, social and political links between the two countries. These distant neighbours will remain inextricably linked regardless of who sits in the Oval Office. ***Despite the enormous asymmetric conditions of US-Mexico relations,***

²³² Gustavo López and Jens Manuel Krogstad: Key facts about unauthorised immigrants enrolled in DACA, Pew Research Centre, 25 September 2017.

²³³ Steve Holland: Trump budget to include \$3 billion for border wall: official, Reuters, 8 February 2018.

²³⁴ Joseph Flores: Don't Be Fooled by Trump's Bogus Border Security Demands, Rewire, 14, February 2018.

²³⁵ David G. Savage: Supreme Court extends relief for 'Dreamers,' refuses to rule now on Trump immigration plan, Los Angeles Times, 26 February 2018.

²³⁶ Migration Policy Institute: Estimating the DREAMer Populations that Could Benefit Under Senate Legalisation Proposals, February 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/estimating-dreamer-populations-could-benefit-under-senate-legalization-proposals-february>

²³⁷ Americas Voice: Quinnipiac Poll: 86% of Americans, Including 76% of Republicans, Want Dreamers to Stay in America, AV Press Releases on January 11, 2018

there are too many reasons as well as very powerful interests, including those of many in the oligarchic class that Trump belongs to, that will adamantly oppose him on his policies against this specific shithole country, if we use his lexicon. His extreme views on many areas of government policy will also make it highly improbable that he will win a second term. Hence, relative to Mexico, ***except for some increase in the abuse of power in immigration and the cooling of relations between governments, Trumps' war on Mexico will have no relevant consequences of any sort.*** Unfortunately, things will not improve much for the vast majority of Mexicans on both sides of the border as long as the collusion of the oligarchic class of both nations continues to keep the status quo. By the same token, things will not get better as well for US citizens who have seen their livelihoods negatively affected by this partnership, one of many in the global system driven by US imperialism. Nothing will change for the better until the huge contradictions of the system and the impossibility of its geological sustainability will drive it into its own demise.

Potential solutions and prognosis

It should be evident that US malice over Mexico is not a unique situation of imperial aggression on Mexico per se. It is just one iteration in the long history of US imperialist aggressions to fulfil its so-called national interests anchored in the inherently malevolent spirit of manifest destiny. It has denied the right to a life with dignity to millions of Mexicans but it is not the most inhumane and perverse in the imperial track record for nearly two centuries. US imperialism in Vietnam, Laos, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yugoslavia and Palestine, to name a few, has been far more perverse and violent to the point of making some of these countries almost failed states or non-existent, such as Palestine. The case of Mexico is just the oldest and longest running in history for the simple fact of sharing a two-thousand mile border.

The state of the world in this dire anthropocentric era continues to alienate people from the most pressing issues that affect us all directly. Peace among nations, equality, social justice, health, education, freedom, a sense of security, protection of personal privacy from the surveillance coming from increasingly proto-fascist state apparatuses and the health of the planet itself are all in clear decay worldwide. The sustainability of humanity, of all living species and the natural resources of our planet are threatened with irreversible consequences. Increasingly more and more people sense with alarming concern that unless we start today to put an end to the marketocratic system that is destroying us, humanity will not get to see the Twentieth-Second Century, at least envisioned with people living in a dignified manner and not with the few remaining surviving in the middle of miasmas. Thus the least that we can do is to get organised to overcome this Darwinian system and build a completely new paradigm not just for the benefit of Mexicans or North Americans but for the welfare of people and planet in a truly democratic ethos.²³⁸ The plight of Mexicans is only one of the most prominent examples of how the collusion of the centre-periphery elites of the world can devastate a country and pauperise its people in a matter of a few decades for their sole benefit. However, the problem and its root causes are global. Thus we need to organise globally for the simple reason that the global marketocratic system has captured the world.

In a true democracy, we the Demos are the sovereign citizens of the state. Thus the least that we can do in both nations is to try to organise in a very peaceful and concerted manner to limit in as much as possible the dehumanisation of our daily lives in a very practical manner. The first thing is to do away with our embedded sheer individualism. This moral stance embodies the shackles that keep us away from a sense of community, unity and solidarity. Individualism is fed every second of the day by a mass bombardment of propaganda in the form of “news” and advertising that “invites” us to believe whatever the market says and consume as much as possible so that we can feel satisfied and at ease. It is the

²³⁸ Álvaro J. de Regil: True Sustainability and Degrowth in the Citizens Imaginary, The Jus Semper Global Alliance, June 2016.

structural propaganda model designed to serve the US oligarchic elites who own the market.²³⁹ In this way we are alienated from our role as sovereign citizens and transformed into disposable consumer units for the market demigod, and deprived of any discernment capacity and of the critical thinking that is indispensable to question the system and aspire to truly be free. This is how the minds behind this system disable us from questioning a wide spectrum of policies that negatively affect our lives directly in both countries and across the global marketocratic system. For instance, why should we allow the fundamental human right to health –as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948– not to be upheld in the United States, and instead regard our access to healthcare as a privilege that has to be purchased as a consumer service? In stark contrast, because of marketocracy, a vast sector of the people and not just the politicians, have been manipulated to be obsessed with upholding the right to own arms, to the point that it is treated as a human right. This is the only country in the world where this is allowed to the point of social dementia. The National Rifle Association has powerful leverage with politicians who either vehemently support the right to own arms or do not dare to oppose it because their constituents may be fervent lovers of the Second Amendment and selling weapons is also a big business for both public and private actors. It does not matter how many massacres occur. The latest iteration was Florida where an expelled high-school student murdered seventeen students and staff in February 2018. As could be expected, Trump's reaction was to insistently argue that the solution is for teachers to carry concealed weapons to protect students.²⁴⁰ The Second Amendment remains untouchable and as usual its apologists are waiting for the incident to lose prominence in the public's top of mind until the next massacre takes place and then forgotten once again. The key to this issue is again the market logic fed by greed, in this case by the owners of the arms industry to enrich themselves ad nauseam.

Nevertheless, ***if we start thinking in terms of universal human rights, which is the foundation of a truly democratic ethos, and not in terms of the market logic designed for the benefit of the less than one percent, then we will begin realising that our individual well-being depends as much on caring about the well being of our fellow human beings as we care about our own.*** If we do this, then we can start organising in a peaceful, rational and strategic manner to overcome the most important hurdles that have alienated us from the public sphere so that we can build a truly democratic ethos to replace the marketocratic demigod. Consumerism is the drug, the carrot stick that keeps us apart from the true well-being of our own and of every rank of society. Consumerism is the seemingly insurmountable hurdle that prevents us from taking on our role as citizens to be in control of the public agenda and ensure that the public servants that we elect work for the welfare of every rank of society and not to enrich themselves and those behind who think they own the world. Political tribalism is another major hurdle, to the point that the public arena is so polarised that we can hardly succeed in establishing a rational dialogue with people in the other pole of the spectrum. We all selfishly care about our own wellbeing but for many it is hard to agree that constructive win-win initiatives instead of destructive win-lose ideas will have a far greater chance to enable us to fulfil the welfare of our own families. It is the extreme selfish individualism induced by the marketocratic's weapons of mass manipulation that keep us in shackles that block any kind of social understanding. Hence we must work hard to establish a constructive dialogue that seeks to benefit all.

If we address the issue of US-Mexico relations from such perspective then we can focus on the root causes of all the costs that are negatively affecting the citizens of both nations. The first step is to make the time to get informed. The very least that we can do is to truly get informed and to create awareness within our sphere of influence to end the alienation and manipulation of people on both sides of the border. If we commit to it we should be able to clearly identify that the

²³⁹ Edward S. Herman with forward by Robert W. McChesney: The Propaganda Model Revisited, Monthly Review; Vol. 69, No. 8, January 2018.

²⁴⁰ Trump insists on arming teachers despite lack of evidence it would stop shootings, The Guardian, 22 February 2018.

most fundamental hurdle to overcome is the centre-periphery relationship that is creating millions of losers on both sides for the benefit of a tiny corrupt elite of oligarchs. It should be pointed out that the oligarchic class is overwhelmingly politically represented in both countries by the political systems. That is to say that the two-party system in the US and the multi-party system in Mexico exist to protect the interest of the oligarchic class. It has always been this way. With few exceptions one cannot find politicians that made a political career out of their commitment to procure the welfare of every rank of society, and with special emphasis on the dispossessed. For evident reasons, in the context of true democracy, the dispossessed must take precedence. However, as could be expected, this is anathema to the Marketocratic system that has corrupted the political system to its core. Hence, it is money that determines the future of politicians and not their success in serving the true common good. Consequently, we must organise to change the rules of the game to replace marketocracy with a direct democracy system. To be sure, given that this is anathema for the political class it will oppose it vehemently. Yet, if we do not put an end to this concerted system of exploitation, then we cannot aspire to solve any of the very damaging effects that it has on both societies. Either we get organised or we will succumb to the will of those who think they own the world.

Let us translate this predicament into very practical terms. If, for instance, we do not force the US political class to stop endorsing the blatantly fraudulent elections that secure in power the robber barons of Mexico we cannot aspire whatsoever to put an end to the Modern-Slave work system endured by Mexicans. Therefore, they will continue to migrate to the US, at whatever cost as a matter of survival, with all the negative collateral damage that this entails for both sides.

Another fundamental topic is NAFTA. For the remainder of his term, it would be a miracle to see Trump truly addressing the key trade issues damaging the people of the US let alone of all three countries. Trump's ulterior motive in his threat to scrap NAFTA is not really a tactic to work out a deal that would benefit the common citizen. When he says *America (sic) First* he is not even seeking a win-lose agreement that would benefit US corporations in detriment of Mexican corporations. His true motive with NAFTA is to disengage the US from Mexico as much as possible from every perspective because of his embedded bigotry that makes him abhor many peoples of the world, but particularly Mexicans for being next door. Undoubtedly, Mexico is in the upper echelons of Trump's list of his so-called "shithole countries". Thus, his goal is to scrap the agreement unless he gets an extremely beneficial deal to the detriment of Mexico.

To address this topic, the key practical step that we could take is to put an end to NAFTA as we know it today, for it is clearly designed to benefit the oligarchs of both nations at the expense of the vast majority of its citizens. The nefarious NAFTA is a weapon of mass destruction of social welfare and of sheer enrichment of the robber baron elites in North America. The template of US imperial trade agreements is NAFTA, a contract to reduce to the lowest common denominator the sovereign powers of national states to enhance to the highest possible level and armour plate the interests of international investors and their corporations. But despite its lopsided conditions on behalf of the oligarchs, it was deemed not to be enough. Hence, NAFTA was going to be enhanced with its 2.0 version: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) –which involved twelve nations– pushed by Obama but dumped by Trump for purely campaign propaganda reasons. However, when Trump dumped it, Mexico, Canada and other countries, captured by their respective oligarchies, revived it and signed it as the "Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership" or CPTPP, also known as TPP-11. Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam signed on to it, which is a clear indication that they have no intention of fulfilling their most basic democratic responsibilities. Public Citizen comments: *it is beyond perplexing that Canada and Mexico would agree*

to expand their liability to these ISDS (investor-state dispute settlement) attacks on their laws in the TPP-11.²⁴¹ It appears that Public Citizen is not aware that the national states of these countries are captured by the global marketocratic system, just like in the US. Thus, we should be sure that in time, if we allow it, the US will revisit this treaty, join it and reinforce it for the benefit of its institutional investors.

If we are going to have a trade agreement, we must make sure that it is for the benefit of the majority. Otherwise, it will be better for the citizens of Canada, Mexico and the US not to have a trade agreement at all. There are very conspicuous elements of NAFTA that must be completely scrapped and replaced with new rules. One fundamental element is the labour chapter, where the Mexican oligarchs must be forced to agree to the gradual increase of real wages in such a way that within a reasonable period of time, such as twenty-years, real wages in Canada, Mexico and the US become equal in purchasing power parity terms, for equal work of equal value. In this way, Mexicans will stop fleeing from their country as economic refugees, solving many major social problems engulfing North America and creating many jobs on both sides as consumer demand increases, following market logic. Another fundamental element is the ending of the arbitration scheme (Chapter 11) that replaces the sovereign judicial systems of each nation with private arbitrators (ISDS) that largely benefit the welfare of corporations and not of the citizenry. Corporations typically use it to argue that national laws may negatively affect their expected profits and seek compensation in a binding arbitration tribunal. As previously noted and in case you have not noticed this is the norm now in the US. Banks, healthcare providers and many other organisations that people deal with on a daily basis force their clients to give up their right to use their judicial system in case of a dispute and accept to take them with private arbitrators who frequently side in favour of corporations. People are no longer the Demos, the citizenry. We are merely consumer units as long as we have disposable income to buy products and services. This is the norm domestically and they are making it the norm for all trade agreements. Another major element of a revised NAFTA is that every single chapter must be discussed and negotiated in full transparency with nothing negotiated in private. The TPP-11 was negotiated from the start in the most secretive fashion, completely behind closed doors. A new NAFTA that is good for the people would require not only complete transparency but also the voice of many true citizen organisations and not just the voices of the corporate lobbyist representing the owners of the market, as is customarily done.

Unfortunately, the systematic alienation of people has been so effective that I sense the odds in favour of galvanising enough people in the world to take on the system in an organised and peaceful manner to be yet unrealistic. Despite the benefits of an unimaginable abundance of information and ways to convene for people of like-minded perspectives, selfishness and a sense of unattainability and hopelessness dominates the spirits of the vast majority. There are concrete events of social mobilisation that have forced the dominant powers to change their plans or at least delay them. One was the opposition of many non-profits that were able to galvanise over twenty-thousand people from many countries to the Seattle round of the WTO in 1999, where the MAI was defeated. However, this only delayed the plan to impose trade agreements that only provide freedom to investors and their corporations to roam the world in pursuit of the maximisation of their shareholder value. NAFTA was already in place at the time and, after the FTAA was rejected by the major South American nations, bilateral agreements followed with many countries in the area. These agreements achieved the same goals from a US perspective for many US corporations. Hence, this experience should help us to infer that we would need to do far more organising and in a permanent manner to achieve the required critical mass to tangibly change the system. Both the problem and the solution lie in the citizenry. We, the Demos, are the sovereigns of

²⁴¹ Public Citizen: TPP-11 Countries Announce a Deal — While We Dodged a Bullet on ISDS Expansion Here, Our International Allies Face a Major Fight, Public Citizen, Eyes on Trade, 24 January 2018.

our nations. We are both those who tolerate the rule of the oligarchies but also the only ones who can change the course of our destinies.

Potentially, there is more than enough discontent in the peoples of the world to envision an organised movement. As noted earlier, the first step is to build awareness. We would need to create a critical mass of people who break with their induced anaesthesia and become aware about the dire situation of humanity in our time and the root causes of it, which are purely anthropocentric. We would need to make them aware about how this directly and very negatively affects their lives for a dignified future. Then and only then we could aspire to end the marketocratic capture of our nations to build an ethos of true and direct democracy where we can build a new paradigm for the welfare of the people and the planet and not the Market. Until then we can start by focusing on very concrete and realistically achievable goals. In the case of Mexico and the US there are two concrete goals. The first goal is put an end to NAFTA and craft one for the benefit of the people of all three nations. This would entail at its minimum, forcing the Mexican government to gradually equalise wages as explained above and putting an end to Chapter 11 that supplants the judicial systems of nations with private arbitration tribunals. This is a perfectly achievable goal if we really move to get informed and strategically organise with enough critical mass to force negotiators to comply at the very least with the aforementioned labour and dispute-resolution demands. If a new trade deal stipulates as a fundamental aspect of the agreement that labour compensations of all the nations would be equalised in real terms over a predefined term, we would be already solving the main root cause of Mexican flight as economic refugees to the US, with all of its additional implications. If we are also able to reestablish the power of the national judicial systems, we would be restoring the sovereignty of the state over the private interest of investors and their corporations.

Unfortunately, NAFTA 2.0 is currently stuck on its seventh round of negotiations, as I write, and it is facing very little organised opposition from the citizenry of any of the three countries. Only six of thirty chapters have been closed, but the opposition comes from a few NGOs with little involvement from the general citizenry in any of the three partner countries. Thus, we are quite behind what we would need to do to realistically force governments to address the labour and dispute-resolution demands. Hence, objectively it will be quite difficult to force these amendments unless we are able to act before the negotiations arrive at their conclusion possibly not before the end of the fall of 2018.

The second goal is to put an end to the centre-periphery oligarchic relationship that nullifies any attempt of the Mexican electorate to bring to power governments that work for the benefit of the Mexican citizenry and not for the less than one percent elites of both countries. This is a far more complex objective given the long-standing and consolidated relationship that makes both elites collude to fulfil their respective interests. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to expect to succeed in this goal if we first are not able to force a radical change in the negotiation of a new NAFTA as described above. If we are able to radically change NAFTA relative to the labour conditions and judicial sovereignty of each partner country, we would be already changing to a degree the centre-periphery partnership. Thus embarking on this far more ambitious goal is contingent on the results to be achieved in the renegotiation of NAFTA. However, given that the organisation of a citizen movement with the required critical mass to force a new NAFTA that benefits the people and not investors is too little so far, materialising the second goal is until now all the more unrealistic.

Time will tell if we really care about the future of the upcoming generations or if we are too selfish to move from our comfort zones and remain immobilised. ***What we must bear in mind is that in all countries both the problem and the solution lie in the Demos.*** That is why the old adage from Joseph de Maistre remains as valid as always: “Every country has the government it deserves”. That is: “the peoples of the world, whether by action or by omission, have the government we deserve”.

Lastly, beyond putting an end to the malice that the US has applied against Mexico and many other nations throughout its history to fulfil its imperial appetite; beyond changing NAFTA to end the exploitation of Mexican workers or to end the supplanting of the judicial sovereignty of every country; beyond ending the centre-periphery relationships across the world, none of this makes any sense if we do not realise that we need to replace the current marketocratic paradigm with a people and planet paradigm for the simple reason that the former is utterly unsustainable from a planetary perspective. Why is it unsustainable? Because beyond the many contradictions of capitalism and our philosophical beliefs in favour or against, it can be asserted as an axiom that **capitalism and its marketocratic system are completely unsustainable for the simple reason that it requires the infinite consumption of resources in a planet with finite resources**. Hence it must be replaced as soon as possible if we aspire to bequeath to future generations a planet worthy of human dignity. **I state this well aware that we may have already crossed a threshold where this is not possible, and that even if, for a miracle, all leaders of the world would agree to do without capitalism and replace it with a people and planet paradigm at once, it may be already too late to reverse the damage we have inflicted on the planet to make Mother Earth truly sustainable for humans and all other living species**. Therefore, as previously noted, organising must be to overcome this Darwinian system and build a completely new paradigm not just for North Americans but for the welfare of people and planet in a truly democratic ethos.

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❖ **About Jus Semper:** The Living Wages North and South Initiative (TLWNSI) constitutes the sole program of The Jus Semper Global Alliance (TJSGA). TLWNSI is a long-term program developed to contribute to social justice in the world by achieving fair labour endowments for the workers of all the countries immersed in the global market system. It is applied through its program of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and it focuses on gradual wage equalisation, for real democracy, the rule of law and living wages are the three fundamental elements in a community's quest for social justice.

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