

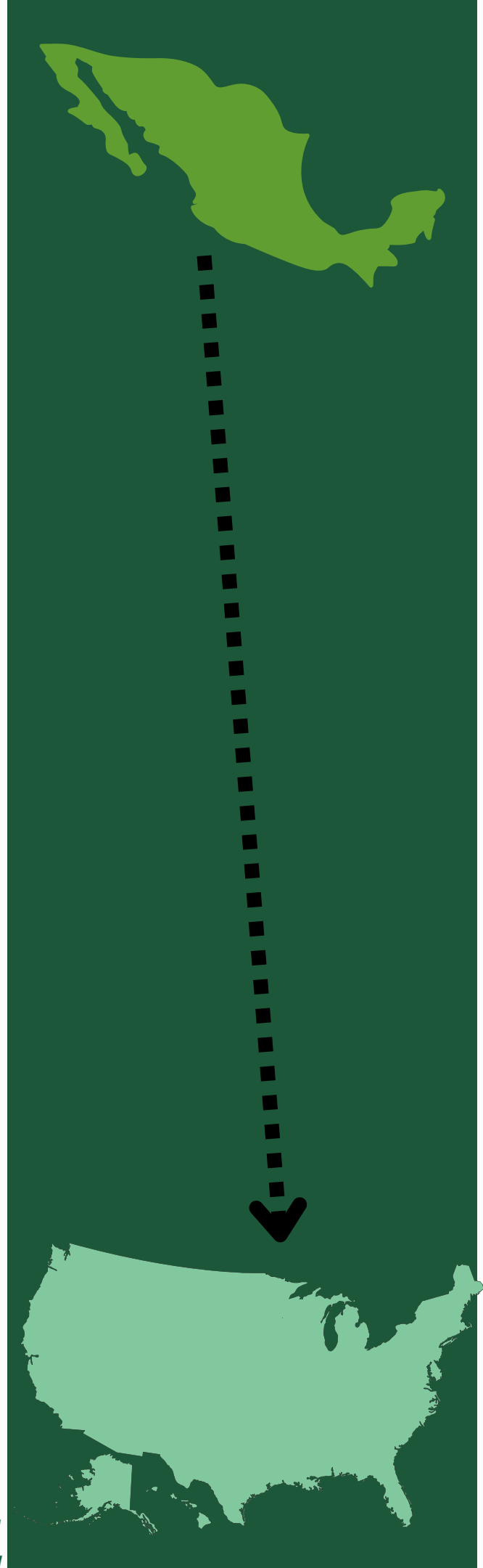
MEXICO & GLOBAL ECONOMIC JUSTICE: AN ANALYSIS ON THE CARTER (1977-1981) ADMINISTRATION

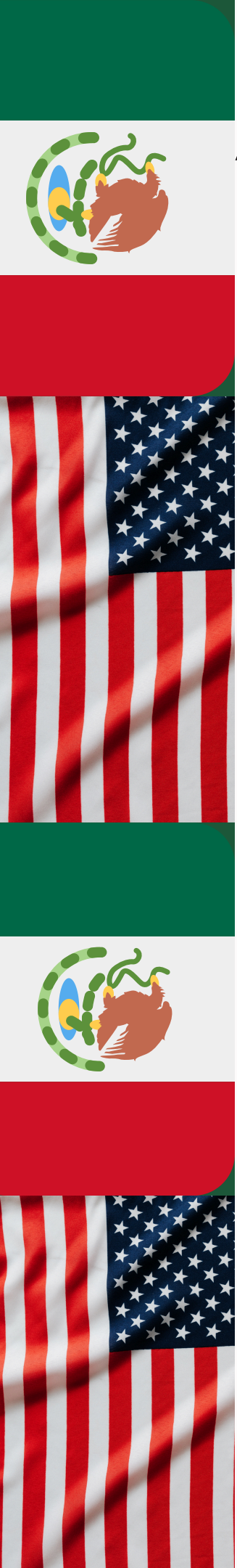
OUR Undergraduate Research

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Abstract

As a leader of the Global South with the longest border with a Global North country, Mexico leveraged its strategic position to influence international dynamics significantly. This study examines U.S.-Mexican relations during the Carter administration (1977-1981) and the presidency of José López Portillo (1976-1982), highlighting three critical developments.

Firstly, Mexico's ability to influence the appointment of U.S. ambassador Patrick J. Lucey showcased its diplomatic leverage. During Carter's administration, Washington needed Mexico to increase its oil output due to Middle Eastern instability and anti-American sentiment in Iran. To meet this objective and appease President López Portillo's request for a "non-hyphenated American" ambassador, Carter appointed Lucey, significantly impacting bilateral negotiations.

Secondly, the discovery of oil in Mexico elevated its international status, offering the U.S. closer access to crucial resources and strengthening alliances. This is linked to the "resource curse," where reliance on natural resources led to economic instability and political challenges.

Lastly, the dynamic between Carter and López Portillo showed initial cooperation but led to strained relations. Mexico's asylum to the Shah of Iran during the American hostage crisis in Tehran caused significant tension and contributed to Carter's electoral defeat.

Using sources like New York Times articles, López Portillo's speeches, U.S. Office of the Historian documents, and the Wilson Center, this research aims to provide insights into Mexico's diplomatic strategies and their impact on global economic and political landscapes during this critical period.

Goals of Research:

- **Symbiotic Relationship:** The research demonstrates the mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Mexico, highlighting how each country relies on the other for economic and social growth.
- **Diplomatic and Economic Dynamics:** It explores the intricate diplomatic and economic interactions between the two nations, focusing on trade, investments, and cooperative efforts.
- **Impact of Presidential Administrations:** The research examines how U.S.-Mexican relations evolved under different presidential administrations, assessing the impact of each leader's policies and decisions on bilateral ties.

Methodology for Historical Research on U.S.-Mexican Relations

Source Selection:

- Primary Sources:

- Speeches: Analyzed speeches from Presidents Jimmy Carter and José López Portillo to understand their public statements and diplomatic positions.
- Official Documents: Reviewed documents from the U.S. Office of the Historian to gather official records and correspondence related to U.S.-Mexican relations.
- Newspaper Articles: Utilized articles from the New York Times to gain contemporary perspectives on the events and their impact on public opinion.
- Wilson Center Source: Consulted “U.S. Ambassadors To Mexico: The Relationship Through Their Eyes” by Dolia Estévez to understand the influence of U.S. ambassadors on bilateral relations.

- Historical Contextualization:

- Chronological Analysis: Constructed a timeline of key events to contextualize the relationship within the broader historical framework of the late 1970s and early 1980s.
- Comparative Analysis: Compared and contrasted the diplomatic approaches and policies of both presidents to highlight shifts in U.S.-Mexican relations.

- Critical Evaluation:

- Diplomatic Interactions: Assessed the impact of major diplomatic events, such as the asylum of the Shah of Iran and Mexico’s oil policy, on the relationship between the two nations.
- Public and Political Reactions: Evaluated how domestic and international perceptions influenced policy decisions and diplomatic strategies.

- Synthesis of Findings:

- Integration of Perspectives: Synthesized insights from primary sources and secondary analyses to draw comprehensive conclusions about the dynamics of U.S.-Mexican relations during Carter’s presidency.
- Impact Assessment: Analyzed the long-term effects of these interactions on subsequent diplomatic and economic relations between the U.S. and Mexico.

Overview

The Two Presidents: Jimmy Carter and José López Portillo

Jimmy Carter (U.S. President, 1977-1981):

- Focused on human rights and a moral approach to foreign policy.
- Advocated for international cooperation and ethical diplomacy.

José López Portillo (Mexican President, 1976-1982):

- Aimed to elevate Mexico's global status through economic development and political reform.
- Promoted Mexico's growing oil industry as a key element of its international influence.

Key Context:

Economic Shifts: Mexico's oil discoveries increased its strategic importance.

Geopolitical Challenges: Both presidents navigated a complex international landscape marked by tension and change.

Notable Challenges:

Shah of Iran Asylum: Mexico's decision to offer asylum strained relations with the U.S. during the Iran hostage crisis.

Diplomatic Impact: Their relationship was marked by both cooperation and tension, reflecting the dynamic nature of U.S.-Mexican diplomacy during this era.





**UNITED
STATES**

TIMELINE

Rio Grande

*Gulf of
Mexico*

MEXICO

*PACIFIC
OCEAN*

Timeline of Key Events for U.S.-Mexican Relations During the Carter Administration (1977-1981)



1977:

- January 20: Jimmy Carter is inaugurated as the 39th President of the United States.
- April 20: U.S. President Carter and Mexican President José López Portillo meet for the first time in Washington, D.C., to discuss bilateral issues including trade, immigration, and energy.

1978:

- June: Mexico discovers significant oil reserves in the Gulf of Mexico, increasing its geopolitical importance.
- September 1: President Carter appoints Patrick J. Lucey as the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, fulfilling López Portillo's request for a "non-hyphenated American."

1979:

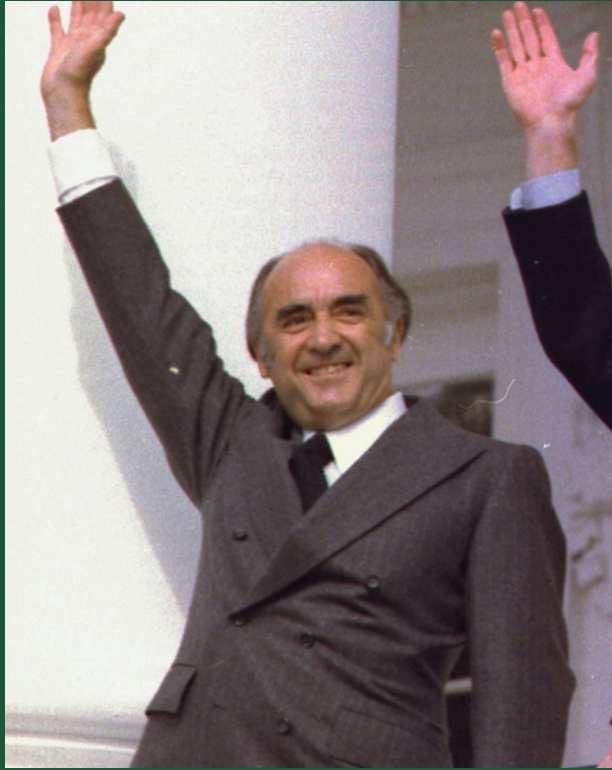
- March: President López Portillo visits Washington, D.C., and addresses a joint session of the U.S. Congress, emphasizing the importance of U.S.-Mexican cooperation and the potential benefits of Mexico's oil discoveries.
- July: The U.S. and Mexico signed agreements on energy cooperation and the sale of Mexican natural gas to the United States.
- November 4: The Iran hostage crisis begins, straining U.S.-Mexican relations as Mexico later grants asylum to the Shah of Iran.

1980:

- January: Tensions rise as the U.S. public perceives Mexico's asylum offer to the Shah as a betrayal, contributing to negative sentiment towards the Carter administration.
- May: Carter's second envoy, Julian Nava, is appointed as the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, in part to appeal to Latino voters in Carter's re-election campaign.
- November 4: Ronald Reagan wins the U.S. presidential election, defeating Jimmy Carter. The Iran hostage crisis and strained U.S.-Mexican relations are factors in Carter's defeat.

1981:

- January 20: Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as the 40th President of the United States, marking the end of the Carter administration.
- January 27: Presidents Carter and López Portillo meet one last time in Mexico City to discuss ongoing issues and reaffirm their commitment to bilateral cooperation despite past tensions.



PERCEPTION

an understanding of the two leaders:



President José López Portillo:

Domestic Perception:

- Known for his ambition to enhance Mexico's global status and economic development.
- His presidency was marked by efforts to modernize Mexico's economy and implement political reforms.

International Perception:

- Seen as a leader asserting Mexico's influence on the global stage, particularly through oil diplomacy.
- Controversial for his decision to grant asylum to the Shah of Iran, impacting relations with the U.S.

President Jimmy Carter:

Domestic Perception:

- Seen as a moral and principled leader focused on human rights and ethical governance.
- Faced criticism for his handling of Iran hostage crisis, which affected popularity and re-election prospects.

International Perception:

- Recognized for his efforts in promoting peace and international cooperation.
- Viewed as a President committed to addressing global issues with a principled approach

Findings: López Portillo and Carter Administrations

Diplomatic Dynamics:

- Influence of Ambassadors: Appointments like Patrick J. Lucey reflected U.S. efforts to manage bilateral relations amidst energy crises and political shifts.
- Personal Diplomacy: López Portillo’s request for a “non-hyphenated American” ambassador underscored Mexico’s strategic diplomatic approach.

Oil Discovery and Economic Impact:

- Resource Leverage: Mexico’s oil discoveries increased its significance in U.S. energy policy, impacting economic relations and bilateral ties.
- Resource Curse: Dependence on oil led to economic instability and political challenges, influencing the broader U.S.-Mexican relationship.

Asylum and Diplomatic Strain:

- Shah of Iran Incident: Mexico’s asylum offer to the Shah during the 1979 hostage crisis strained relations and was perceived as a betrayal, affecting Carter’s presidency.

Regional Influence and Policy:

- Solidarity with Nicaragua: López Portillo’s support for Nicaragua’s struggle and his advocacy for sovereignty challenged U.S. influence in Latin America, highlighting Mexico’s regional leadership role.
- Panama Canal Handover Speech: López Portillo’s 1979 address marked a significant stance against U.S. dominance, advocating for Latin American sovereignty and a new era of cooperation.

Domestic Policies and Development:

- Plan Integral de Gobierno (1977): López Portillo’s comprehensive strategy aimed at economic modernization, social justice, and institutional reforms. Key objectives included industrial growth, agricultural improvements, and infrastructure development.
- Impact on Bilateral Relations: The plan’s focus on reducing social inequalities and enhancing public administration influenced Mexico’s interactions with the U.S., affecting trade policies, immigration, and security cooperation.

-Congressional Address:

- Speech in 1977: López Portillo’s address to the U.S. Congress emphasized mutual respect and understanding, acknowledging power disparities while advocating for cooperation based on equality and shared responsibility.
- Focus Areas: Addressed economic disparities, migration, and drug trafficking, urging policies grounded in respect for sovereignty and regional cooperation. Reflected Mexico’s desire for a balanced and equitable partnership with the U.S.

Overall Significance:

- The López Portillo-Carter era highlights the interplay of diplomacy, economic factors, and regional politics in shaping U.S.-Mexican relations. López Portillo’s speeches, domestic policies, and regional strategies underscored Mexico’s advocacy for sovereignty, mutual respect, and social justice, impacting diplomatic interactions and setting the stage for a more balanced bilateral relationship.

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