

CHALLENGING AUTHENTICITY

CHALLENGING BORDERS

(Research On U.S.A-Mexico Border)

PRESENTED BY

SUBMITTED TO:

Abstract and Keywords

Since Donald Trump's ruling in the United States kicked off, their relations with Mexicans started to take another shape. Trump's criticism towards Mexicans and endless threats to deport illegal border-crossers and his desire to erect a wall on the southern border has triggered a serious shakeup of the bilateral relations between the two countries. After years of cordial and fruitful relationships, today Mexico's central concern appears to be to resist Trump's administration. Some years back, Trump has gone ahead to generously give towards the construction of this "beautiful wall" which has so far stretched in the southern. U.S-Mexico border is not less than 3,000 miles - known not only by the concrete physical barriers but also by a policy that is failing to bring in limelight the issues behind illegal migrants of Mexicans.

Despite United States siphoning billions of dollars to go to border works, the affinity for work by migrants, pushes them enter the country at a higher rate each year. The 'beautiful walls' along the border were actually designed to regulate this flow but without felt benefits. Instead, these walls of division have facilitated the rise of human trafficking to remote places where migrant's attempts to put their lives at risk, as they try to gain their entrance to United States, thus becoming a challenging border with challenging authenticity.

Of late, America seems to be the hegemon, since Mexico is having less to say and act

Keywords: Hegemon a leader, country or group that is so strong and powerful over the other, thus having the ability to control the other.

Walls of Division

Regions that surround the border consists of a population estimated to be about 15 million people. The collaborative efforts between the two countries, that is, U.S and Mexico, on the border consists of coordination with the state and local officials on the infrastructure, transport systems, security matters as well as team work with bodies that look into migration issues, the overall natural resource and health systems.

This paper contains sections exploring on; the culture of people living along the border, their activities, politics revolving around the ‘beautiful wall’, violence experienced by migrants as they cross to either sides of the countries, what the two governments are doing about the situation as well as challenges and authenticity of living at the border. But first, let’s concisely describe the bilateral and economic relationship that has dominated for over 3 decades.

Grounded Relations

There exists a cohesive kind of a relationship between the two governments for a long time on resources mostly along the border region, where challenges such as increased population growth, massive migration to the cities and industrialization are highly experienced. Therefore, the relations of the two countries is very vital and strong for they share an over 3000 miles’ border, which has at least 50 entry points and the cooperation between the two countries has a unique effect on lives, be it on trade, education, citizen and security.

So, the bilateral relations between the two, is more than the so called diplomatic or official relationships. It encompasses commercial, education and cultural ties with hundred thousand legal border crossings each day. Additionally, around 2 million Americans live in Mexico, which tops as the foreign destination point for Americans.

U.S.-Mexico, Economic Relations

Mexico tops as position two in being largest exporters to United States and again grabs the third position still as the largest trading partner. In the year 2018, trade in goods and services amounted to approximately 700 billion dollars. So, on trade matters, Mexico exports are relied heavily in the United States market although the Mexico has decided to expand its export to different destinations in the world. Mexico has freely come out to be a promoter of free trade contracts with many nations across the world.

To summarize, the relations between the two are characterized by a solid structural relationship, incredibly difficult to modify. Lately, what we are seeing is the stability that has been there crumbling especially since the start of Trump's reign in America.

Let's now explore what has unfolded so far and the effects of American administration on Trump's 'beautiful wall'

A. Culture of People/Migrants Along the Border

According to a novel (Lisa See, 2009), the author has written explaining how to girls flew their cities when a bomb fell on in and set on a journey of a lifetime that takes through a Chinese culture, trying to adapt with them just because of a new problem that arose. The partial shutdown of the border, is like a bomb, by the US government under President Donald Trump, that saw Mexican migrants continued efforts of trying to enter the country, to seek a better future in U.S. Mexico having a population of more than 100 million people, have at least 40% living under the poverty level. With this rate of poverty, some have simply jumped over the high stretched wall while others have gone to an extent of seeking help from smugglers (whose work is to smuggle people across the border) so that they can succeed in crossing over. Those who live along the

trail migrants take, argue that, the wall has just become a nuisance to families since most of them have lost contact with their sons and daughters. According to (Walls of shame 2017), The wall has become a barrier, bringing divisions of family units between those who have sacrificed to move for better livelihood because the culture in Mexico, pays little on manpower. Data garnered from the United States Border Patrol Agency, has shown that the number of migrants without proper documentations from various points in Mexico was skyrocketing and Mexicans took 90%. Additionally, there were at least 6million illegal residents from Mexico, residing in the States. Thus, legal status required to crossover to United States, has become a constraint to many seeing that many families are without a contact with their loved ones who went to seek a better livelihood.

B. Activities

Over past three decades, the border enforcement and patrol have been enhanced leading to loss of lives or injuries of the migrants. The public health apparatus has noticed some broad racial and health shortcomings as a result of carelessness of immigration enforcers along the border zones. Therefore, the introduction of asylum applications for border crossers is giving the migrants the rights to international protection in the United States, from violations. Why are people requesting asylum at the U.S border?

(International Rescue, 2020) states that no one takes the decision to migrate lightly. Asylum seekers who travel to the U.S Border risk a perilous journey because staying home would put them in even a greater danger. Many are fleeing situations in Central America, Cuba and Brazil where families are no longer safe to go about their daily lives. The reason behind people filling asylums at the border is the growing insecurity, instability and violence.

In 2020, due to insecurity and instability, the former President of the United States, Barack Obama signed a bill which gave the Custom and Border Protection some hundreds of millions of dollars to enhance and improve security. In 2018, the United States embarked on the installation of facial recognition systems to monitor migrant activities along the wall. These systems are put in place to record images of people inside vehicles that enter and leave the country. Although the move has been strongly opposed by individuals and human rights bodies, United States has aggressively continued its monitoring and targeting of people at the border and surrounding regions.

Gangs have increasingly conducted criminal activities which include drug trafficking, smuggling of firearms and persons on the borders. The report further showed that criminal gangs have collaborated and formed networks of sub gangs along border cities in Mexico.

C. Challenges of Living at the Border.

i. Urbanization.

(Ford, Neil 2013) The process of moving from the countryside and into the cities is far from straightforward. Different people are motivated by different push and pull factors that include lack of employment, access to services and the perceived opportunities of the cities that encourage people to migrate. Such movements have been as a result of poor living standards in Mexico since poverty has been felt in large areas. People would therefore risk scaling dangerous walls for better pays since the culture in the borders pays little that can't sustain a whole family.

ii. Insecurity of immigrants.

(Oprah Book Club, 2020) speaks about violence and persecution and how each day hundreds of families' travel to the United States through the border, seeking safety from violence and persecution. She strongly came forward to say that migrants have legal rights to request asylums without being criminalized, turned back or separated from their children. Changes in the policy has contributed to an increase in the number of unattended migrants along and in the cities of Mexico and who are still prone to the same types of violence which originally drove many to make a decision of kicking off with the dangerous journey to the border, in the first place.

Mexico has been long affected by violence and harassment from drug cartels and criminal gangs and the danger has only been skyrocketing in the recent years. Children are reported to have been exposed to the risks of sexual abuse and harassment, gang recruitment and violence. Women have continued to be the targets of the border gangs engaging in all manners of immoral decadence. Most people who started on unsafe journey in unsafe place, embarked on unsafe journey and are still unsafe even where they are.

iii. Delays of services due to policy.

The policy changes by Trumps administration, have resulted to increasingly high population stuck in border cities along the U.S.-Mexico border. The U.S government has introduced a process of placing migrants to a daily limit of a fixed number who are to be allowed to enter and present themselves to the border enforcers. Again this policy is complicated in such a way that, it has caused some to patiently wait for months up to 12 months at the border cities in Mexico, so as to submit their requests to the authorities. In another scenario, sometimes even those that have applied and are able to make their claims to officials at the border are still sent back until their case can be heard by an immigration judge in the U.S.

iv. *Shortage of resources/necessities.*

Local communities in northern Mexico have worked valiantly to welcome turned back asylum seekers and keep them safe. But due to services that are stretched thin, shelters are often full at capacity, unable to accommodate more people.

Shelter capacity is very limited as (Oprah Book Club Episode, 2020) states and therefore people are made to live in makeshift camps, rented rooms and hotels. So, unavailability of vital services already is putting the lives of women and their children at a higher risk. These desperate moments of 'overpopulation' calls for funding and assistance to help those in need of the support. This plight of migrants has seen Catholic Church and other human rights organizations, playing a key role in setting up shelters and also providing vulnerable migrants with basic needs and/or necessities such as food and water.

v. *Gender-Based Violence*

Looking at Mexico alone, it has recently recorded a higher rate of gender-based violence. Women and children turned away at the border points again enter in a high risk of sexual harassment and violence by criminal gangs along the border. Approximately 66% of women over 15 years had experienced some form of violence and 44% have been reported to be abused by a partner. Over the last five years, there were cases of femicide i.e. the murder of women because they are women, and this took a share of 137%. Thus, the limited health, protection and legal services are exposing women and their children to dangerous zones.

(Refuge Women Resource Project, 2001) has advocated the need to house asylum seekers who are women and continue to point out how insufficient housing can increase the risks of these women experiencing daily violence and sexual harassment.

D. Politics Revolving Around.

From the day Trump launched his presidential campaigns in June 2015, the relations between the two countries have been on unstable ground. Trump's sentiments that Mexicans are involved in drug trafficking, engaging in crime and that they are rapist, have provoked disbelief in the entire government. These statements indicate that he views Mexicans not only as undocumented migrants but as gang of criminals, offenders who distract Americans' peace. In his book (Gabriella Lazaridis, 2012), the author states that 'migration issues have simultaneously given rise to issues of insecurity: on the other hand, security of borders, political, societal and economic security/insecurity in the host country'. This might be Trump's fear over Americans and probably, that's the main reason he is taking concrete and sound actions. Others fear that immigrants could be potential terrorists who may threaten the lives of American people and still others view them as a threat to national security and a challenge to the very existence and survival of the country. The American president went ahead to proposing programs to stop the arrivals of the nationals including Muslims. Has also enhanced massive deportation of undocumented persons. And to curb this challenge in advance, trump goes ahead to invest in the setting up of a wall, to control the movement of undocumented immigrants.

Mexico has come out to strongly oppose the establishment of the concrete wall as well as Trump's Administration Migration policy. Mexico has placed high importance on immigration for they send a lot, in terms of millions of dollars to the country. Later, mainly due to pressure by the Mexican society, the government of Mexico began to present tougher policies

towards the United States. Thus, secretary for foreign affairs Luis Videgaray, said that Mexicans won't pay for the wall because it does not make any sense but it's a matter of dignity.

Currently, due to the global pandemic that we all know about, that is, Covid-19, Trump administration is planning to deport all illegal immigrants and asylum seekers back to Mexico, basing his reasons on the threats Covid-19 poses to detention facilities. It's believed by the administration that the pandemic could spread rapidly since the migrants might be the key players in being the virus-carriers and this could hit hard on U.S government especially the United States border enforcers, leaving them and their systems extremely weak in monitoring the movements of all migrants to the states.

E. Extreme Violence.

Violence refers to the social forces that impose harm on people by weakening individual bodies and preventing them from their basic necessities. This approach is vital in helping to understand the complications that catalyze the violence faced by migrants on their way towards the U.S border. Violence encountered by migrants crossing over Mexico on their journey to United States cuts across the various forms of direct violence for instance beatings, kidnapping and rape cases. Looking at Mexico alone, it has recently recorded a higher rate of gender-based violence. Women and children turned away at the border points again enter in a high risk of sexual harassment and violence by criminal gangs along the border. Approximately 66% of women over 15 years had experienced some form of violence and 44% have been reported to be abused by a partner. Over the last five years, there were cases of femicide i.e. the murder of women because they are women, and this took a share of 137%.

(New York Times, 2020) on their part, deeply tells of an author who has written about border crisis and tells of a story of two who flew away from their home in Mexico after hit

men from a cartel dealing with drugs, murdered sixteen of their family loved ones. From this piece of sentence only, we are now able to get the display of events on the dangers encountered by these migrants and the presence of risks in the paths around the border. Tabling documentations on human rights violations and abuse, is the only way and initial step in tackling the violence present along the migrants' route, a responsibility that is straight forward. In the process of crossing, migrants face challenges such as extortion, exploitation, abuse, numerous kidnapping cases and even murder conducted by officials and criminal gangs alike. Systems to look into these plight and bring a long lasting solution are weak and what we are seeing is, the limited health, protection and legal services are continually exposing already weak persons such as women and children at risk.

F. Government Bilateral Talks.

In 2010, by then U.S secretary Hillary Clinton visited Mexico to engage in talks about security around the border after some killings of three people in connection with the United States. It's in the first three months of the same year, that reports on deaths related to drug trafficking, emerged leading to the two administrations to execute plans and systems to eliminate the existing problem. According to (Joel Bakan, 2005), brings out clearly that for over 15 decades, corporation between states has risen to becoming globes dominating economic institution. He believes that change people wanted to see is achievable through detailed reforms. Thus the visit by H. Clinton, was to ensure the social-economic status of the two governments, are maintained to the maximum. On July, The U.S government, just after the bilateral discussions, released a law that was to see state security apparatus check to authenticate migrants' legal status, while it still hit hard on migrants, for they were to really prove their legal presence in the United States. Later

it was strongly opposed on concrete grounds that the law would be a burden on aliens legally present in United States. This law, known as Arizona Law was challenged by the, then Barack Obama administration. (Michael Wolf, 2018) highlights how Trump administration has carried itself. He states, that, after Donald Trump was sworn in as an American President, the world can confirm about the stormy, outrageous and fierceness of the 45th President. He has continued to unfold how Trump has become a president of discord and disunion.

At least one year into presidency, Mexican president has embarked on a new task of invoking human rights bodies to ensure proper handling of immigrants along the border. It seems the Mexican government is acting slow and less towards ensuring her 'migrants' are safe at the border leaving the United States to take over, thus controlling both sides. There are those who have gone ahead to criticize the Mexican government for allowing its people to suffer in the hands of criminal gangs who target migrants for kidnapping and sexual harassment. Now, it has come to a concluded debate that, Mexican presidents are unable strengthen their migration policies and will have United States control them as they wish.

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