

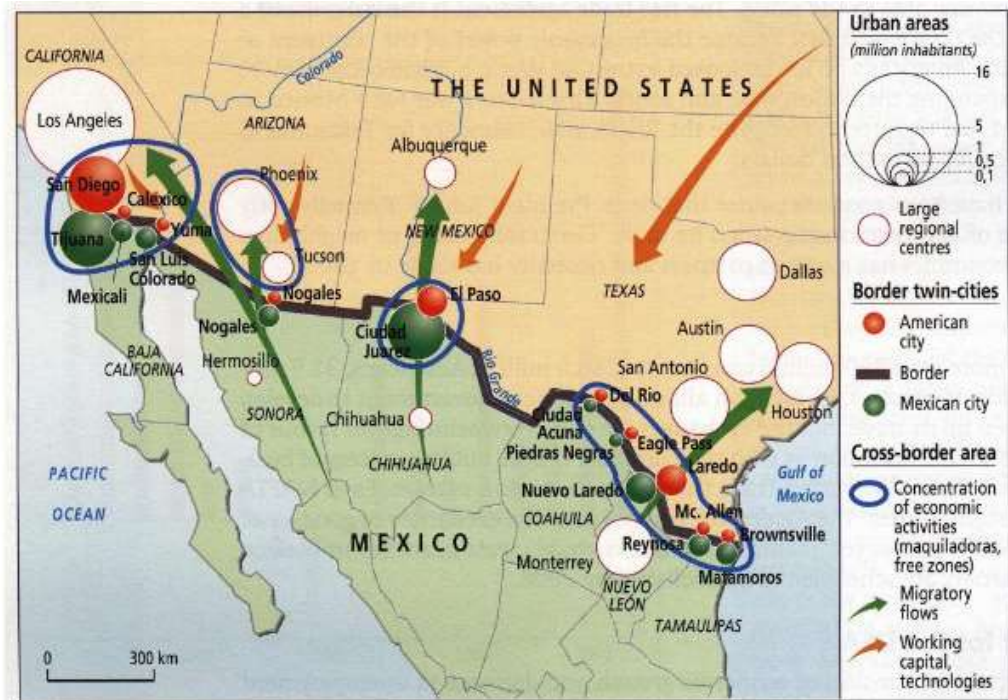
America, between tension and integration

Lesson 1

A case study: The US-Mexico border

Question : How does the US-Mexico border illustrate the both : tension and integration ?

Source 1 : Map of the border



Source 2 : Patrick Chappatte, « US Borders », NZZ am Sonntag (Zurich), May 22, 2006.



1. Introduce the document
2. Describe the relationships between US and Mexico throw the border.

Map :

Describe the border between the US and Mexico :

- From Pacific to Atlantic (Gulf of Mexico) : more than 3000 km length.
- All along the border : twin cities (examples)

Relationships as Relation between North and South

Aspects of integration :

- A common market : In 1992 was decided the NAFTA (US, Canada and Mexico), to develop exchanges.
- Maquiladoras : Mexican assembly plants that manufacture finished goods for export to the United States. The maquiladoras are generally owned by non-Mexican corporations (US TNCs=). They take advantage of plentiful low-cost Mexican labor, advantageous tariff regulations, and close proximity to U.S markets to produce such items as home appliances and automobiles.
- Flows of goods : manufactured in Mexico/ Services from US
- Touristic and Migration flows : the most crossed border in the world
- Financial flows (FDI)
- A cultural influence : birth of Mexamerica, development of tourism (Cancun)

Aspects of tensions

- Illegal flows : drugs, weapons, cigarettes, illegal immigrants = about 300,000 Mexicans illegally enter the USA each year
- ⇒ The fence is a 700-mile barrier that has been built all along the Mexican American frontier. The building of this fence was decided by the US government (Bush) and the goal is to prevent immigrants from entering the USA illegally. Actually, president Trump wants to reinforce this fence and to make the Mexican pay its construction (not decided and refused by the Congress)
- Inequalities N/S : Speak here about the GDP.

About the Cartoon :

This cartoon deals with the Mexican American border.

The picture is divided into two parts. A wall made of brick and barbed wires is dividing the land into two parts.

- On the left, we can see a man walking in the sand and judging from his hat, a sombrero, we can deduce that he is Mexican. It seems that he has been walking for a long time because he is sweating. He must be exhausted, hungry and thirsty.
- The country beyond the fence is the USA. We can make out skyscrapers in the background and a McDonald's logo in the middle of the desert. Those two elements are symbols of the USA. Moreover, the Star-Spangled banner (the American flag) and a placard that reads US borders are placed above the fence.

In the middle of the fence, there is a custom agent at a counter. This character is here to check the ID's of people who want to cross the border.

→ Message = Mexican people are leaving their country because they are attracted to the USA (the American dream). As too many Mexicans want to cross the border, the USA has decided to build a border with barbed wires so as to prevent illegal crossings. Moreover, it is clear that the USA are ready to sell

their goods, their products (their food and drinks in this precise case with Mc Do's) to Mexican people but they do not want them to cross the frontier. The USA want to take advantage of the Mexican money without letting Mexicans crossing the border. They do not want illegal people in their country but they do accept their money.

Vocabulary :

NAFTA : North American Free Trade Agreement

Social and spatial inequalities

Uneven development

Border control

Factory/plant

Cross-border worker

Flows of goods, of services, of information, financial flows, migration flows, touristic flows...

Immigrant, illegal immigrant

Foreign Direct investment (FDI)

Lesson 2

In general : America, between tensions and integration

I. Inequalities and contrasts... → Tensions

a. Cultural contrasts : Wasp model (English and protestants) / Latin and catholic

→ Acculturation process (Mexamerica for example)

b. Economic inequalities between the north and the south

= developed countries (US and Canada)

Emerging countries : Brazil

Developing countries called "Jaguars": Mexico, Argentina, Chile / Oil producers like Venezuela

And LDCs : in the Caribbean (Haïti) or Central America (Guatemala), Bolivia....

c. Hazards create vulnerability for the poorest

America is situated near the Fire Belt of the Pacific Coast, with many earthquakes.

We find all the climates with excess : Arctic cold, hurricanes, twisters, flood...

d. Political tensions

With the Monroe doctrine, Latin America was "the private game" reserve for the United States.

For ex, during the Cold war, the US has supported dictatorships in Latin America (Pinochet in Chile)

And that's why there are some military bases in the Caribbean sea.

Since 1962, the US have established a blockade against Cuba (this blockade could be made less strict because of the recent agreement between Obama and Raul Castro).

The continent hasn't known any war for more than 25 years. But :

In 2004, some countries joined Venezuela (and the leader Hugo Chavez + Castro) and concluded an alliance against the USA called BAPA, formally the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America

= the idea of independence and an alternative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA or ALCA in Spanish, an agreement proposed by the United States)

So, the main tension is an ideological opposition between liberalism and communism.

At last, many tensions are due to violence (because of poverty in the shantytowns) and because of criminal activities (of drug traffickers for ex)

II. Integration

- a. Describe the flows : migrations, goods, FDI, information, tourism, remittances...

Don't forget to show that this trade shows inequalities between N and S.

- b. Two alliances for integration on the continent

The NAFTA (explain)

The MERCOSUR

A Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) was a proposed agreement to eliminate or reduce the trade barriers among all countries in the Americas, excluding Cuba. But it's a failure for the moment.