

# Transnational Linked Fate and Identity in Support for a Mexico-U.S. Political Union

## El destino vinculado transnacional y la identidad en el apoyo de la unión política México-Estados Unidos

XAVIER MEDINA VIDAL\*

### ABSTRACT

This study is an empirical analysis using survey data on the attitudes and orientations of the Mexican diaspora in the United States to explain its support for a political union between the two countries. The author articulates a theory of identity and shared affinity to explain their views on this issue. Regression analysis reveals that transnational linked fate, the belief that what happens to Mexicans in Mexico affects the lives of people of Mexican origin in the U.S., and Latino identity are significant independent predictors of support for a Mexico-U.S. political union. These findings signal the importance of the experiences of Mexicans in the U.S. to our understanding of attitudes toward North American politics.

**Key words:** North American integration, linked fate, Mexican-Americans, public opinion, transnationalism.

### RESUMEN

Este estudio consiste en un análisis empírico que emplea datos de encuestas sobre las actitudes y orientaciones de la diáspora mexicana en Estados Unidos para explicar su apoyo a una unión política entre los dos países. El autor articula una teoría de identidad y afinidad compartida para explicar las visiones de esa población sobre esta cuestión. Un análisis de regresión revela que un destino vinculado transnacional, la creencia de que lo que les sucede a los mexicanos en México afecta la vida de las personas de origen mexicano en Estados Unidos y la identidad latina son factores independientes y significativos que predicen el apoyo a una unión política de México y Estados Unidos. Estos hallazgos señalan la importancia de las experiencias de los mexicanos en Estados Unidos para conocer las actitudes hacia la política norteamericana.

**Palabras clave:** integración norteamericana, destino vinculado, mexicoamericanos, opinión pública, transnacionalismo.

\* Diane D. Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society, University of Arkansas; dxmedina@uark.edu.

## INTRODUCTION

Over two decades after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) integrated the economies of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, the degree to which the people of these three sovereign states have come to identify with one another socially and politically has lagged behind state-level economic commitments. In as many years as trade and investment in North America have gone largely unencumbered by political interests, the people of the three countries have yet to forge a truly “North American” identity (Pastor, 2011). As recent U.S. public opinion research reveals, even just among African-Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, and Anglo-Americans, attitudes toward the construction of a border wall between Mexico and the U.S. and a pathway to citizenship for millions of unauthorized immigrants are sharply divided. A large majority of Latinos in the U.S. support a pathway to citizenship and oppose a border wall, while a plurality of Anglo-Americans holds opposing views, and African-Americans are the most ambivalent toward both actions (Medina Vidal, 2017). Given the polemical turn in the tone and tempo of Mexico-U.S. and North American relations now, over two decades after NAFTA was enacted, it has become apparent that understanding North American bonds in social, cultural, and identity-driven ways has failed.

In this study, I analyze the intersection of identity and North American politics and policy through the lens of the attitudes and orientations of people of Mexican origin in the U.S. One point of departure for understanding the importance of identity and transnational linked fate to the public support of deeper North American integration is an understanding of the lengths to which elite-level activism and scholarship have taken the idea of deeper integration. As a trade agreement, proponents of NAFTA and economic integration have concerned themselves almost exclusively with the agreement’s effects on trade and investment in the three member countries. Only a few exceptions to this general rule exist. Some scholars of North American integration seek common ground among all North Americans (residents of Canada, United States, and Mexico) beyond the more ubiquitous economic cooperation frame. Evidence suggests that all three publics of the three NAFTA-member countries are becoming more alike in terms of their values (Pastor, 2001; 2011). Basáñez, Inglehart, and Nevitte find more evidence of convergence or parallel movement than divergence in values among the three NAFTA country publics (2007). Indeed, the “NAFTA-plus” argument for political integration, advanced most vociferously by Pastor (2001; 2011) and former President Vicente Fox Quesada, have expressed the most concern for identity and transnationalism by querying whether a common North American identity is possible. Yet, Pastor concludes that the lack of institutional support in

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7492236>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7492236>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)