

and economic shift in the United States (that will disproportionately hurt Mexicans living here) and a dramatic redefinition of the population of the American Southwest will combine to create a crisis that will not be easily solved by American technology and power.

The crisis will begin as an internal American matter. The United States is a democratic society, and in large regions of the country, the English-speaking culture will no longer be dominant. The United States will have become a bicultural country, like Canada or Belgium. The second culture will not be formally recognized, but it will be real and it will be not merely a cultural phenomenon but a clearly defined geographic reality.

Biculturalism tends to become a problem when it is simply ignored—when the dominant culture rejects the idea of formalizing it and instead attempts to maintain the status quo. It particularly becomes a problem when the dominant culture begins to take steps that appear designed to destroy the minority culture. And if this minority culture is essentially an extension of a neighboring country that sees its citizens as inhabiting territory stolen from it, the situation can become explosive.

By the 2070s, Mexicans and those of Mexican origin will constitute the dominant population along a line running at least two hundred miles from the U.S.-Mexican border through California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas and throughout vast areas of the Mexican Cession. The region will not behave as other immigrant-heavy areas have. Rather, as happens in borderlands, it will be culturally—and in many ways economically—a northward extension of Mexico. In every sense but legally, the border will have moved north.

These immigrants won't be disenfranchised peons. The economic expansion in Mexico, coupled with the surging American economy in the 2050s and 2060s, will make these settlers relatively well-to-do. In fact, they will be the facilitators of U.S.-Mexican trade, one of the most lucrative activities in the world in the late twenty-first century. This group will dominate not only local politics but the politics of two whole states—Arizona and New Mexico—and much of the politics of California and Texas. Only the sheer size of the latter two will prevent immigrants from controlling them outright as well. A subnational bloc, on the order of Québec in Canada, will be in place in the United States.

At a certain critical mass, a geographically contiguous group becomes conscious of itself as a distinct entity within a country. More exactly, it begins to see the region it dominates as distinct, and begins to ask for a range of special concessions based on its status. When it has a natural affinity to a neighboring country, a portion of the group will see itself as native to that country but living under foreign domination. And across the border, in the neighboring country, an annexation movement can arise.

This issue will divide the Mexican-American bloc. Some inhabitants will see themselves as primarily Americans. Others will accept that Americanism but see themselves as having a unique relationship to America and ask for legal recognition of that status. A third group, the smallest, will be secessionist. There will be an equal division within Mexico. One thing to remember is that illegal immigration will have generally disappeared after 2030, when migration to the United States will be encouraged as American national policy. Some on each side of the border will see the problem as solely American and will want to have nothing to do with it lest it interfere with peaceful economic relations with Mexico. Others, though, will see the demographic problems in the United States as a means for redefining Mexico's relations with the United States. In exchange for a hands-off policy regarding migration, some will want the United States to make concessions to Mexico or other issues. And a minority will advocate annexation. A complex political battle will develop between Washington and Mexico City, each manipulating the situation on the other side of the border.

Large numbers of senators and representatives of Mexican origin will be elected to serve in Washington. Many will not see themselves as legislators who just happen to be of Mexican origin, representing their states. Rather they will see themselves as representatives of the Mexican community living in the United States. As with the Parti Québécois in Canada, their regional representation will also be seen as the representation of a distinct nation living in the United States. The regional political process will be beginning to reflect this new reality. A Partido Mexicano will come into existence and send representatives to Washington as a separate bloc.

This state of affairs will help drive the reversal on immigration policy that is going to define the 2070s and the election of 2080. Beyond the demographic need to redefine the immigration policies of the 2030s, the ver-