

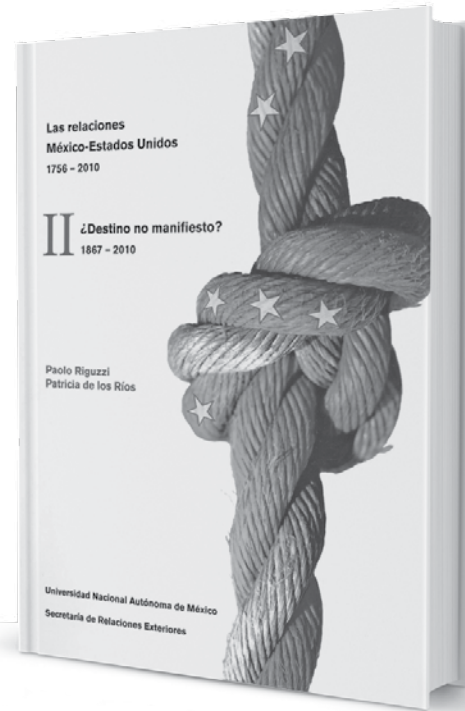
**Vecinos en conflicto. Argentina y Estados Unidos en las Conferencias Panamericanas (1880-1955)**

(Neighbors in Conflict. Argentina and the United States at the Pan-American Conferences [1880-1955])

*Leandro Morgenfeld*

Peña Lillo/Ediciones Continente

Buenos Aires, 2011, 448 pp.



**Las relaciones México-Estados Unidos 1756-2010, t. II, ¿Destino no manifiesto?**

(U.S.-Mexico Relations, 1756-2010, t. II, Non-Manifest Destiny?)

*Paolo Riguzzi and Patricia de los Ríos*

UNAM

Mexico City, 2012, 738 pp.

**V***ecinos en conflicto. Argentina y Estados Unidos en las Conferencias Panamericanas (1880-1955)* (Neighbors in Conflict. Argentina and the United States at the Pan-American Conferences (1880-1955) analyzes the relations between Argentina and the United States over a 75-year period. As the period began, in the late nineteenth century, Great Britain was still the world's hegemonic power; by the end, in the mid-twentieth century, the Cold War was already underway. Although the work covers only up to 1955, it is particularly relevant in today's context, specifically since November

2005, when the idea of creating the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) was scuttled. It is not by chance that that initiative was rejected from the South, particularly when Argentina was hosting the Mar del Plata Summit.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, bilateral relations between Argentina and the United States have centered on the U.S. strategy for economic and political domination, starting with the organization of the Pan-American Conferences, with an eye to creating a Pan-American Union. During these negotiations, the United States attempted to impose

itself as the hegemonic power in the region, limiting the influence of powers from outside the hemisphere, particularly Great Britain, but also including Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Holland. The United States was also reluctant to allow processes of sub-regional integration among Latin American countries, which might counter its interests.

At the 10 Pan-American Conferences that took place between 1880 and 1955, in general, diplomatic relations between Argentina and the United States were conflictive. This work goes beyond the simple description of diplomatic meetings. It delves into the interests of the different stakeholders, particularly Argentina's dominant classes, linked as they were to economic and social interests intertwined with European powers, specifically Great Britain. At the same time, the author explains that these frictions between Argentina and the United States occurred because the two countries' trade interests were competitive and not complementary. By contrast, Argentinean production complemented

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with the commercial needs of the European powers. The book argues that the non-complementarity of the Argentinean and U.S. economies has weighed heavily to create bilateral friction. This argument explains a great deal, regardless of the other variables mentioned in the existing literature to explain the bilateral conflicts, like Argentina's anti-imperialism, nationalism, and isolationism.

The links that Argentina has cemented with Europe have to a certain degree been an obstacle to the U.S. hegemonic project in the Americas. Morgenfeld describes both stakeholders at two different moments of the expansion of national capitalism: one as a rising power and the other as a dependent country. Argentina's dependency did not increase *vis-à-vis* the new power, but rather, it maintained old links with powers from outside the region. For the United States, the Pan-American Conferences were a scenario where it attempted to expand capitalism in order to counter European domination in Latin America and avert the creation of Latin Amer-

ican integrationist projects that would exclude it. Argentina, for its part, became an obstacle to U.S. hegemonic intentions in the hemisphere due to its important links with the European powers interested in investing there. In addition to looking at the political, economic, and financial aspects, this book centers on social, ideological, cultural, military, and strategic factors.

It divides the study into five periods. For each, the author analyzes the global context, the domestic situation of both the United States and Argentina, and the bilateral relationship itself, particularly the diplomatic links at the Pan-American Conferences. In each of these periods, Morgenfeld identifies temporary circumstances, but also points to ongoing conditions that constitute more structural aspects of the bilateral relations. The five stages are: 1) 1880-1914; 2) 1914-1929; 3) 1929-1939; 4) 1939-1945; and 5) 1945-1955. The continuity underlined by the author is Argentina's reluctance to follow U.S. policies in the hemisphere. This conflictive relationship, he emphasizes, did not stem from an autonomous stance, nationalism, radical Latin Americanism, or Argentina's anti-imperialism *vis-à-vis* the United States, but rather grew out of the strong socio-economic ties linking Argentina to Europe. Those ties centered on unequal terms of exchange for the South American country, the exchange of raw materials for manufactures, but also on its dependence on European capital and the arrival of European immigrants, which strengthened genealogical and cultural ties.

Historically, U.S. interests have competed with Argentina in trade, something that has continued into the twenty-first century. Morgenfeld illustrates this very well when he compares Argentinean reluctance in 2005, along with that of its Mercosur partners and Venezuela, to continue the FTAA negotiations if the United States did not commit itself to eliminate subsidies, particularly in agriculture. In 1889, Argentina had put forward a similar demand, requesting the elimination of U.S. protectionism of wool, another product in whose trade both countries compete.

Finally, it should be pointed out that one very valuable element of this book is its methodology and strategy for data gathering. Morgenfeld does not limit himself to secondary sources, although he also presents an extensive review of books published in the Americas on this topic. But the book also contains unpublished data springing from exhaustive research in the archives of both foreign ministries, used to corroborate the interests of the different stakeholders that have been intertwined in the bilateral relationship.

Morgenfeld's book can be compared with another contemporary publication that illustrates U.S. relations with another, less distant, neighbor: Mexico. The book *Las relaciones México-Estados Unidos 1756-2010, t. II, ¿Destino no manifiesto?* (U.S.-Mexico Relations, 1756-2010, t. II, Non-Manifest Destiny?) covers a longer period, 143 years, from 1867 to 2010, of which 75 coincide with the span of time covered by Morgenfeld.

Riguzzi and De los Ríos also divide their study into five periods, which end up being longer than those in Morgenfeld's work. The first two parts of the book on Mexico-U.S. relations cover approximately the entire period studied by Morgenfeld. Therefore, reading the two books can be very useful for scholars in inter-American relations, particularly those who want to find in history answers to questions about today.

The five periods in this book are as follows: 1) 1867-1913; 2) 1913-1950; 3) 1950-1982; 4) 1982-2000; and 5) 2000-2010. Each is subdivided into two-part chapters covering from 10 to 12 years. The first part of each analyzes the mechanisms and forms that being neighbors produce between the United States and Mexico. The authors look here at four spheres: economic interaction, population movement to both sides of the border, border issues, and cultural relations and perceptions. Each chapter's second section studies the issues of the bilateral agenda, analyzing political and diplomatic relations by looking at international, political, and economic issues. Among other things, the international agenda touches on the Pan-American Conferences. Therefore, it is interesting to compare Morgenfeld's book with this one, reading the second part of each chapter that deals with the agenda.

Both books' authors put forward the need to study bilateral relations looking beyond political and diplomatic issues. In the case of the Mexico-U.S. relationship, given the proximity of the two countries and the more than 3000-kilometer border they share, the intensity of bilateral relations is greater than in the case of the United States and Argentina. One hypothesis Riguzzi and De los Ríos present is that Mexico-U.S. bilateral relations have been increasing over the years in all spheres and have become increasingly complex. This is where the wealth of this book resides; it covers a long period, not only one important historic period, and explains aspects of today's situation.

The research methodology used by the authors of the book about Mexico and the United States is based on different sources and uses instruments and categories from sociol-

ogy, economics, political science, and international relations. Paolo Riguzzi is a historian specialized in economic history, and Patricia de los Ríos is a sociologist and political scientist; this means that they write from complementary disciplines, producing a more complete analysis. Leandro Morgenfeld, like Riguzzi, is a historian specialized in economic history; his book was taken from his doctoral thesis.

Riguzzi and De los Ríos's book, like that of Morgenfeld, looks at each party's domestic situation; its great value resides in the fact that its analysis transcends political relations. Another common element can be seen in the structure of both books: all the authors are concerned with studying the impact of bilateral relations on both countries. Both books analyze how the United States became the hegemonic power in the twentieth century and how, between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, it competed with the European powers for that hegemony, particularly in the Americas. Despite pointing out that the United States is the dominant actor in both bilateral relationships, the authors also try to

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identify what consequences relations with Argentina and Mexico have had for the United States. Morgenfeld's book shows that Argentina was an obstacle for U.S. hegemonic plans in the region, for example, opposing the Pan-American Union because it was an economy that competed with, and did not complement that of the United States. In the case of the consequences for the U.S. of its relations with Mexico, Riguzzi and De los Ríos's book analyzes not only the political impacts, but also the social, economic, commercial, and environmental effects, among others.

Another feature common to both books is the analysis of the period spanning the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, which touches on the triangular relations with Europe. Morgenfeld's book mentions the Buenos Aires-London-Washington triangle. Riguzzi and De los Ríos's book deals with this situation particularly during the rule of Porfirio Díaz, when Mexico tried to balance the influence both of the United States and the European powers. However, the

authors conclude that the balance tended to sway toward the North, a trend which deepened during the Mexican Revolution and the two World Wars.

For its part, *Las relaciones México-Estados Unidos 1756-2010* emphasizes the asymmetrical relations between the two countries throughout their history. In the course of the twentieth century, specifically, Mexico only had to deal with one big issue: its relations with the United States, while the latter had to deal with several challenges, like its rise as a global power, the intervention of powers from outside the region, and the fear of the expansion of communism. In the twenty-first century, by contrast, the big fear is the expansion of international terrorism.

Alan Knight writes in his prologue to this book that, looking back, throughout the twentieth century, with only a few exceptions, Mexico-U.S. relations were conflictive. However, they were less problematic than expected, compared particularly with other “distant neighbors” that were constantly at

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odds, like Great Britain and Ireland, Germany and Poland, Russia and Poland, or Japan and China. On page 26, Knight writes, “At least during the last 163 years, these have been less serious and of lesser consequences than could be expected, given what had happened in the past and what happened in other parts of the world during those sixteen decades.” This is an interesting statement. It is also the opposite of some collective images of the bilateral relationship, suggested by the authors in their introduction, citing the terms “marriage of convenience,” “partners or adversaries,” “distant neighbors,” “unequal partners,” “the bear and the porcupine,” “common border and different paths,” or “ambivalent visions.”

The truth is that the value of this book resides in the fact that its vision is plural and not simply two-sided. The authors are concerned with analyzing various issues, with multiple dimensions. The work is organized on the basis of three inter-related considerations: 1) being neighbors as a geographical and historic dimension, in which they analyze specifically the topic of the border, waves of migration, asymmetrical inter-

dependence, the complexity of relations between neighbors, different interests, and the reconfiguration of national and international agendas; 2) bilateral relations beyond the political, taking into account other topics like economic, legal, cultural, scientific, demographic, and environmental issues, among others; and 3) asymmetry, which manifests itself in different spheres and at different moments. In this sense, the book proposes to analyze the bilateral relationship as a growing, increasingly complex, and non-linear link. The authors argue that, in the long term, relations will become deeper and broader in several spheres. While in the first volume of this work, covering the period from 1756 to 1867, the central focus is the issue of territory, this second volume analyzes a multiplicity of dynamics and bilateral interactions that have become more and more intertwined.

The title of the book is a play on words between Manifest Destiny and unmentioned issues. For the authors, both countries are destined to constant interaction, but these ties do not obey laws, single trends, or unilateral projects. The relations are complex, and those that are established in the political and diplomatic sphere do not necessarily coincide with those that intertwine on the social, economic, cultural, and other planes.

With regard to the temporal variable, the authors analyze moments of integration and isolation and argue that in the twentieth century, relations were marked by issues that are not strictly linked to bilateral relations as such. So, they also study the Mexican Revolution, as a domestic phenomenon, and the two World Wars, as external phenomena, as variables that intervene in bilateral relations. They study the international context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries just as Morgenfeld does in his book, through the analysis of the U.S. circumstances in the international scenario, when it was not yet a global power.

In short, both books are enormous contributions to the literature about U.S. bilateral relations with two neighbors, one geographically distant and the other close. Both analyze the 75 years in which the United States was gearing up to be a world power and increasing its relations with its neighbors in different spheres, beyond mere political and diplomatic encounters. Today’s complex reality of both bilateral relationships cannot be understood without the historic outlook that these two works provide. **MM**

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